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THE YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO EAST LONDON

A cSPACE PROJECT 2007 – 2012

AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION *Dr. John Cockram, University of East London*



*The Young Person's Guide to East London [YPG2EL] is a project initiated and co-ordinated by cSPACE Arts Organisation; an ambitious venture stemming from a more localised pre-cursor project – *The Young Person's Guide to the Royal Docks*.*

The following document is an independent evaluation by Dr. John Cockram of the University of East London. The information gathering for this report was conducted from October 2011 to December 2012. Overlapping this exercise was the London 2012 Olympic Games; which provided considerable stimulus for the project and, at least as originally envisaged, its logical conclusion. As the London 2012 Games approached, with visitors arriving from over the globe, the organisation realised that scope existed for a more international application of this online initiative. At the time of publishing, plans are under way to extend the guide to involve the work of young people from other countries, via *The Young Person's Guide to The World*, including those from Rio, in the run up to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

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YPG2EL: project aims & East London's young people

Leeson: cSPACE is an arts organisation that aims to promote the vision, ideas and aspirations of local communities, in the public domain, through the arts. We work through a variety of communities: young people, older people and particularly around East London ... for this project we've worked with a range of different organisations because we've wanted to reach all sorts of young people. So as well as school and colleges, we've worked with youth centres, support groups, youth offending teams, informal community education – the Peacock Gym for example in Canning Town...

When I say “this isn't just an education project we are doing with you, we want your expertise and contribution, only you know where good places are to go and there are thousands of people who would like to have that information, so whatever you do will be seen by thousands of people and used”, then I think they respond really well to that. And I would say that's, actually, quite common to most cSPACE projects. We work with communities because of their expertise; we're not trying to offer them something, take them something; we are trying to build on their skills, experience and knowledge and bring that into the public domain, and get that valued. So I think the young people really respond to the fact that their own experience, their own life experience is being valued ... there has been huge, huge enthusiasm.

At the time of publication, the YPG2EL is an active site on the web. Appendix two provides independent verification of global usage, distribution across countries etc., with 21,080 unique visitors and 65,657 page views since the commencement of Transformers funding in July 2012.

Evidence on the web:



Evaluation: introduction & brief

cSPACE artist director, Dr. Loraine Leeson, provided Cockram with a straightforward brief: to obtain balanced feedback about participant involvement in the project across the five East London Boroughs involved: Hackney, Waltham Forest, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Greenwich. Cockram was asked to explore four key issues; the sectional thematic of this report: Skills, Confidence, Project Process and Project Outputs.

Participating organisations & institutions

Whilst evaluation funds did not afford a detailed exploration or comparison of various organisational or institutional involvements within each borough, it did allow a range of settings across the broader East End social geography to be studied; a series of 'snapshots' of the opinions of differing young people and the respective adults working with them, in one context per borough. For the purposes of this publication, and in order that the reader may easily trace the responses of any given constituency, each organisation's conversational extracts has its own coloured font thus: Further Education [[B.Six College, Hackney](#)]; Sixth Form Education [[Sir George Monoux College, Walthamstow](#)]; Special Needs [[Tower Project, Tower Hamlets](#)]; and in the voluntary sector: a community organisation working with East European Roma refugees and migrants in Newham [[Roma Support Group](#)] and, in Greenwich, a branch of the YMCA [[YMCA Thames Gateway](#)]



Methodology:

A blended approach, triangulating qualitative and quantitative information across:

- Source – focus group interviews with young people; separate staff interviews [individual or joint]; and questionnaires for the young people
- Participants: partnering staff, cSPACE staff and young people working on *The Guide*
- Partnering groups - secondary / further education / voluntary sector / special needs
- Time - questionnaires completed by young people during the project [forty seven returns] with focus group interviews and individual interviews some weeks later; providing memories of lasting impact

Questionnaire: ‘closed’, graded-response question. Whilst the rate of returns varied between organisations, and hence statistical significance, they do provide some numeric counterpoint to more qualitative material gathered from interviews between young people and staff. The data is translated into histograms, showing responses from each organisation, [Appendix 1] and pie charts within the main text, to indicate aggregated responses from all questionnaire returns.

- *Interviews with Young People:* These were group situations, where people were treated mainly as ‘respondent’ participants – answering fairly ‘closed’ questions in order to elicit information in relation to the key themes. On occasion, and as triggered by specific responses, the approach to questioning moved to a more ethnographic approach, enabling participants to shift from ‘respondent’ to ‘informant’: to spontaneously provide colour and linguistically and semantically construct and elaborate upon their worlds and responses to the opportunities which the project provided.

- *Interviews with adults;* either in pairs or individually; the latter conducted twice over the telephone due to logistical constraints; all captured on digital recorder to facilitate retrieval and use. The approach to the interviews was the same as with the young people, above.

All the young people were from twelve upwards. Whilst the issue of confidentiality / anonymity was discussed, all freely consented to their first names being used in the report text. All but one, whose wish was obviously respected, agreed to their photograph being used; with the usual protocols with the schools adhered to.

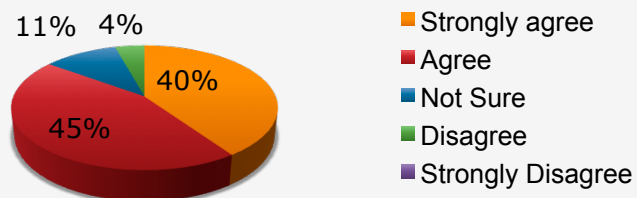
Where names have not been used, it has either been to prevent embarrassment, or, as in the case with Roma service users, where it was difficult to disentangle ‘who said what’ in fast, dynamic and somewhat exuberant exchanges.

Method:

EVALUATION THEMES: SKILLS

Aggregated responses from all questionnaire returns

Do you feel you have learned new skills on this project?



The chart and quotations cited in this section provide convincing evidence that the YPG2EL delivered very strongly in terms of photographic skills [85%]. Leeson helpfully contextualises:

“Young people really respond to the fact that their own life experience is being valued; and that makes them interested in learning new skills to do it better... there isn't much time ... to give them a lot of skill, but I structure things very carefully to enable them to be able to represent their ideas in the best way possible”

Roma Member: “... we learnt how to use a proper camera; like, how to take proper close-up pictures! ... I didn't use a camera before - I didn't know what to do! “

Roma Director, Tania... “ Handling a professional camera was a new experience for most of them, so they definitely learnt how to work those cameras! ... “

YMCA member Ryan: “... we learned how to do research, before you take photos... take down notes: where it is, how you get there:



Ryan's younger brother **Grant**: "...we learnt different skills with the camera; we learnt about landscape and portrait formats; how to take photos at different angles, get a better picture; confidence really, speaking to other people like Ryan said...communicating with other people where to go and stuff like that... **Ryan**: we've learnt ...how to use the camera properly – like using different settings for different lights; we've learnt different things that we wouldn't normally have known – we've only used our phone cameras. Learning how to use [a proper camera] in such a short period of time, was really good..."

YMCA Youth leader, **Leah**: "...they didn't know how to turn a camera on - It was that bad! ... When Loraine came, they started getting a bit more excited, seeing what they could do with the camera..."

Switching from the voluntary sector to formal education, the following group interview exchanges between the researcher and students at BSix College in Hackney, demonstrate that the acquisition of skills was not restricted to the technicalities of the camera and the properties and qualities of film:

JC: ... how have you responded to the project, in terms of technical skills and professional skills? **Tsitsi**: ... I learnt how to take a really good picture in terms of considering colour ... and also, taking it from an angle you normally wouldn't see it from, to make it more interesting...also, I think that you learned organisational skills and time-management; managing your time and your work ... **Simon**: I learned some quite useful skills from this project and my 'teacher' Loraine. She talked about using some techniques to create depth: so you take a photo of something close-up ... from the background - so you can see the distance **JC**: so, 'depth of field' related pictures? ... **Simon**: yeah and I also used some techniques from Photoshop, how to play with the levels to make it more colourful or darker or lighter ... that was really new for me, and useful ... **Malik**: for me ...it was more a kind of reminder, because I'd taken a photography course before ... but I did learn to do a couple of new things ... on Photoshop, how to work on exposure and things like that and the actual changing of it and 'enhancing' it without changing the original too much ... **JC**: O.K., so, post-production work? **Malik**: Yeah. **JC**: and was that useful? **Malik**: for me, yeah...

Marcus, the students' teacher, simultaneously brought an important issue into focus: whilst new things had been learn in terms of the functionality of camerawork, and how his film students absorbed such information, for him, the nub was the more qualitative and subjective issue of aesthetics and creative interpretation; corroborated independently by teacher Eileen, at Monoux, who spoke about students "starting to develop a really good 'eye'... The experience, therefore, for Marcus, of Leeson's presence as 'artist' rather than 'proto-teacher' was, seemingly, incalculable:



JC: ...how did you feel the young people responded or benefitted [or not] in terms of skills development and competencies?

Marcus: yeah, that was very good. That was excellent, in terms not only of planning but also in terms of the photographs. And that works on two levels for me: the first thing was the 'nuts and bolts' of using the cameras and doing a little bit of Photoshop, which introduced them in a simple way to Photoshop, which was great, which was brilliant, but in terms of Media - because we do Film or T.V. here and we don't actually do a photographic unit - it really made them consider framing, perspective, focus, where to place the camera. That was brilliant. They can translate that now into their film-making; so on that level it was more important than skills acquired in that respect, rather than technical skills - although they did pick up some technical stuff as well but the actual aesthetics of how the frame looks and things like that, we could really explore, and that was excellent. **JC:** so are you talking about them exploring their own creativity rather than, necessarily, what the buttons do on the camera? **Marcus:** yes. They did learn some elements of what was required - they leaned as much as they needed to learn in terms of buttons on the camera and Photoshop **JC:** right **Marcus:** but I think it was more valuable in terms of the aesthetics of it and that was better for them in terms of translation into the moving image and films ... and I think it will, because they really learnt the visual language of what makes a picture look interesting and engaging. So that was brilliant...

For art students at Sir George Monoux College in Walthamstow

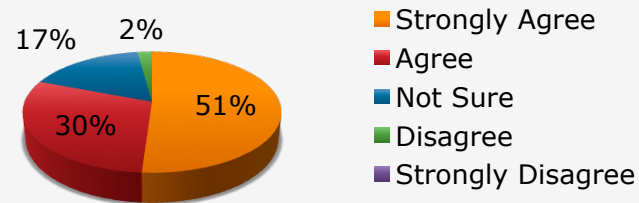
JC: Let's look at the issue of skills first in relation to the project... did you learn any particular skills? **Jesse:** Yeah, I learnt a lot more about photography...I was not that interested in photography before the project and ... I feel I've improved a bit more: I took nice shots and made them look attractive; to make sure I got the right focus, the right image, to make it look appealing [murmurs of agreement] **JC:** OK. So you weren't particularly considering yourselves photographers beforehand, but you became more interested in the camera and what it can do, is that what you are saying? **Jesse:** Yeah, and learning a little bit more about the camera as well - the functions **JC:** and what did you learn about the camera then Michael? What were the areas that you developed? **Michael:** I learnt to use it in different ways, like how different focuses can give you different effects **JC:** right... **Michael:** like, focusing outside the background and more focusing into the image itself **JC:** so, what kinds of things were you considering when you were taking the photographs Michael? You were talking about 'different shots' a minute ago; tell me about the shots you were taking **Michael:** er... focusing out the background and focus on one thing straight in the centre **JC:** Yes? OK. And you were nodding your head a minute ago, Amy, about the camera. Tell me a little about what you learned? **Amy:** I tend to just take pictures normally, and I learned how to make the picture 'blurry' and use different F-stops, yeah... **JC:** OK. Was that new information for you; were they new skills? **Amy:** yep.



Whilst the students were acknowledging the practical instruction they had received about using cameras effectively, Eileen, as with Marcus independently at BSix, seemed to focus on aesthetics and judgement:

JC: The 'skills' aspect of the project: can you tell me anything about that? **Eileen:** Yes. It covered the photography side which they needed to know ... and to have a really good brief to it meant that we were taking them out of the college environment, which is sometimes quite limiting ... the scope was better: we could go out and explore places and look at the detail of things **JC:** and what did you observe in the pupils in terms of the way they were acquiring skills? **Eileen:** Yeah! Some students were really starting to develop a really good 'eye'. So they would be quite discerning about the pictures they were taking and trying to get it right... in their photography skills, they were starting to develop a lot more... there was a lot of initial research the students had to do; their literacy, because they had to go and find the information about how to get to these locations; and their locality as well. And then, also the idea of going out as an artist and trying to find inspiration in what they were looking at ...

Has the project made you more interested in taking pictures?



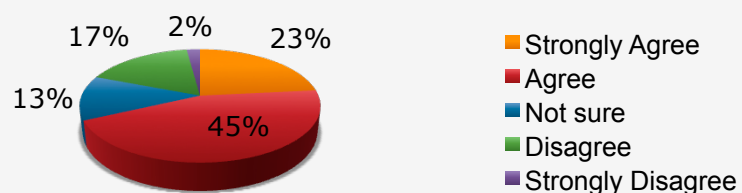
In considering Eileen's account of students developing a good 'eye', it is interesting to then reflect on Jesse's individual claim [p8] that she had not been very interested in photography prior to YPG2EL [reasonably implying she had consequently become so] and then triangulated these sources with questionnaire data: the chart opposite shows that the YPG2EL caused three quarters of respondents [81%] to develop an increased interest in taking photos as a result of their involvement, with virtually half of them strongly testifying to this elevation in interest...



With this in mind and moving constituency and context from sixth form students, at Sir George Monoux College, to young adults with special needs at the Tower Project, in Tower Hamlets, the response to this issues was unanimous: although the numbers of questionnaire returns were small [six], histogram representation of the data available demonstrates an equal distribution between service users who either agreed or strongly agreed that involvement in the YPG2EL had made them more interested in photography. This resonated in the way interview respondents spoke about these acquired skills in the interview situation:

JC: Can you tell me a little bit more about skills? You might have to start this for me, Kelly! You said you were pleased to be involved with the project because you wanted to learn how to use a camera... Can any of you tell me about the skills you learnt? Tim: we learnt, when we went out, how to turn them on ... and to put them in focus, JC: OK, so the technical skills about working a camera? Tim: yes, and we learnt how to use the tripod ... JC: OK. And you were looking forward to using the camera Kelly? Kelly: Yeah, I was... JC: what did you learn about taking photographs? Kelly: I learnt about how to turn them off and how to turn them on ... and how to get the picture bigger and smaller ... and how to see things clearly...

Has the project helped with your school work or out of school activities?



... Whilst at Monoux, teacher Eileen considered the 'skills' offered within the broad context of the National Curriculum:

"... It covered the critical 'key skills' and then there was a really important practical, vocational side to it as well. It met both sets of objectives in terms of what I would like a successful project to look like..."



At BSix, students initiated conversation, in essence, in relation to these two educational foci - key skills and vocation – in relation to the issue of personal 'identity' and anticipated futures:

***Tsitsi:** at first, I didn't think it was going to involve that much paper-work; I didn't even think it was going to involve any paper-work - because I just thought it was going to be us taking photos and me handing them to Loraine; but then, getting into the process, I realised that there is a lot of paper-work that you have to do. Like legal things; I mean permission to take photographs of the area you want to take in ... And also, when it comes to putting pictures on the website, you have to make sure that everything you write, the information about everything, is correct. No grammar mistakes or anything like that. I realised that it's very important that everything is perfect! **JC:** That's a good observation. So, really, what you're saying, I think, is that in terms of a member of the public, what they see is that [pointing to an imaginary photo]. They don't know anything about you: your past; your educational abilities; whatever; so what they see is 'there'? **Malik:** so, it's like your work is a representation of you. **JC:** That's an interesting way of looking at it...*

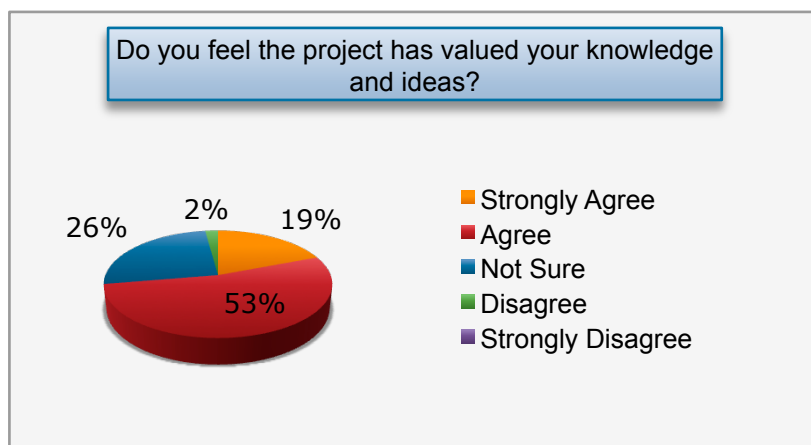
In addition to the acquisition of skills within schools and colleges described above, accompanied as it often was by social and interpersonal development and aesthetic judgement, an investigation of individual organisation histogram data indicates that there was not only a significant uptake of skills from the total participant population [85%] but also an unequivocal and unanimous response from the voluntary sector about this: with 64% feeling very strongly that they had learned new skills and also expressing an interest in more photography in the future. Dynamically expressed through group interviews – especially at Roma but also the YMCA, and singularly with the adults working with them, was the issue that, for a number of these young people, they had never used 'proper cameras' before at all, being more familiar with a mobile phone picture-taking culture.

The question is, whether this is simply a matter of youth culture, 'access' – to equipment and skills, otherwise unobtainable to them, or both. Irrespectively, what conversations within group interview situations conveyed, was a level of excitement about the experience – as testified in comments of the young people themselves – particularly at Roma. Crucially, the mechanistic aspect to the experience was only part of their story – as will be discussed in the section on confidence.



EVALUATION THEMES: CONFIDENCE

Aggregated responses from all questionnaire returns



Project-generated confidence is demonstrated in this section in differing ways. In terms of Leeson's primary project rational [project aims, p 3]— harnessing and valuing the ideas and expertise of the young, regarding places of interest and worth in their communities likely to inform others their age - the project appears to deliver. The opposing chart shows 72% felt their knowledge and ideas were indeed valued; with consistent 50%+ scores in all constituencies [sometimes well over this] as histograms show [App 1] - apart from the Samuel Monague centre, where statistical significance is doubtful, due to low questionnaire returns –[q. 4]

Leeson provides further insight:

“ In terms of the confidence side of things ... I think it's common to a lot of young people that they don't feel they're impacting on the world; and particularly where they've had very challenging backgrounds. And so, I think by starting this off, assuming their expertise, which of course they do have, and building on it, that kicks it off to a good start and they feel valued from the beginning; and out of that, they pull out of the hat amazing abilities... “



One YMCA service user, unwittingly validating Leeson's concern for young people who don't feel they're 'impacting' on the world, speaks of his developing creative responsibility for cultural identity and, consequently, a sense of increased personal maturity:

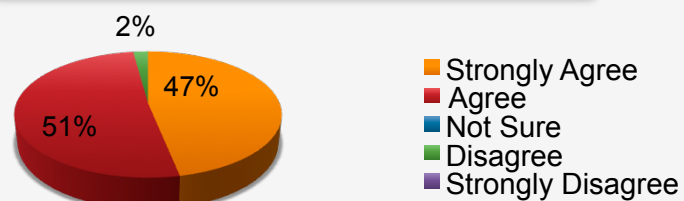
Ryan: *it made us feel that we were being treated older...we got to make the decisions on what we wanted... whatever we wanted and we liked and what we thought looked appealing, we could choose it...* **JC:** *so these were your decisions and your 'take' on the world, in a sense?* **Ryan:** *yeah...*

YMCA Manager, Leah, speaking in a one-to-one interview, corroborates this growth rather more effusively:

Leah: *... When Loraine came, they started getting a bit more excited, seeing what they could do with the camera and where they could be going; because it's their own ideas of what they wanted to do. I was great for them because they could say: "right, I want to go to this place; this is what I want to do ... it's boosted Ryan's confidence a hell of a lot ... when he first started as a young person here, he's literally progressed from day one. From him doing this project, he's now a volunteer youth worker here; and he volunteers every hour he can! ... It's boosted him so much that he gets along with every one person here and every one gets along with him and his confidence is through the roof. JC: a success story? Leah: It really, really is! If it wasn't for this project, Ryan may not be where he is right now JC: really? Leah: because he wanted to do photography and things like that; now he's done that and now we've seen how he's progressed and how well he's done everything and he is really a star student here ...*



Do you feel more confident in using a camera?



98% of returns expressed increased confidence in camera use after the project – the most impressive statistical outcome. Despite Leeson saying that “*there isn’t much time ... to give them a lot of skills*” [p 6], clearly a seasoned attention to project structure paid off. This is what teacher Eileen, at Monoux, had to say: “*whenever Loraine would come in, maybe three weeks had passed, so I was able to show her where we were at and she could fill me in, a little bit, in terms of where we needed to be with the project...she was able to manage me a little bit on the creative side and say “we need to time-manage, to get this done”*”

Over at BSix, teacher Marcus and his students gave opinions during their respective interviews:

JC: ...would you like to say anything in relation to confidence? **Marcus:** Because they did it individually – because we don’t tend to make films individually, this was excellent for that – if you’re doing it individually, you can’t hide anywhere but you can hide in a group and sometimes that has happened; and with students who have confidence issues it has helped them tremendously ... They understood that they can actually go out and do it themselves and that they can produce some good work...

JC: ... Has the project made you feel different about yourself or your abilities? **Tsitsi:** ...just confidence in terms of how you use the camera **Malik:** Yeah. Definitely. It’s the same thing for me...**Tsitsi:** I mean before, if you were using the camera, you would not take an interesting angle but now you have the knowledge and information in order to take it from an interesting angle - to make something interesting **JC:** and can you relate to that in terms of film? **Malik:** Yeah, yeah, a lot, yeah ... at the beginning, when it came to taking pictures ... I felt “oh, it’s just a picture”, I can take it any time, but now, I’d say, because of working with different people like Loraine and Ashley, I take into consideration each picture - it actually makes me think “oh, this is an aspect...” ... it’s like opened a door ... photography’s also an option for me... [The website] shows we are capable of very professional work. For example, if someone wanted to do that as a job, later on, referencing back to that will show they’ve done this before...



As Eileen considers the project's effects on Monoux pupils [it *"freed them up ... to be a bit more confident and maybe take more 'risks'..."*] she corroborates the thinking of BSix teacher Marcus [p 8]: the value of the artist for developing aesthetic awareness and creative judgement. For students however, reflection was as much about 'team working', social development and integration:

Jesse: ... [the project] got us more confident, more talkative, more social ... it helps get the class a bit more together as well... You sort of learn new things off each other as well. So, say, someone is a little better at doing this, how you do that, you sort of learn about yourself as well... **Michael:** yeah. I'm dyslexic and I can pretty much get some good words in but I just can't write it down so I got someone else to write what I say... **JC:** How did it make you feel, having to engage with people outside of the school, people you don't know, about your interests? **Jesse:** I was so pleased with it! I mean, you're getting into the project and you sort of forget about [lack of] confidence and stuff like that! **[Students laugh]:** ... you just get talking to random people you don't know ... and they're happy to give you something back! They've lived round the area for a long time so... it was OK, yeah. **JC:** So how did that make you feel about yourself, doing those kinds of things? **Michael:** a lot older! **Jesse:** I was enjoying it!

The Roma Support Group Director, Tania, commented on her observations about confidence in relation to image-making:

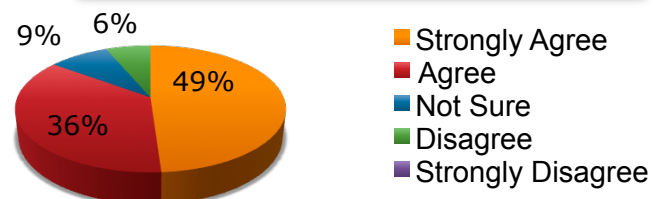
.. I would really relate it to the project itself... a few of them were accompanied by Loraine and one of her assistants, and because they were involved in the visual arts, I remember them giving them ideas, new ideas of how to take pictures ... in a different way...

Although Roma service users discussed practical skills and aesthetic development, thoughts regarding confidence seemed to run deeper, as with Monoux students, being focused on the matter of cultural identity and personal self-worth; inexorably bound-up and enabled within a context of 'trust' and 'responsibility', in relation to handling and using camera equipment...

Roma member: ... someone outside the [Roma] community, gave them the opportunity to actually use cameras they wouldn't be able to use, and to actually trust them! They gave us the confidence to be able to use them... They made us think that they actually cared about Roma children **JC:** That's interesting. So you've come up with words like 'responsibility' [being given the cameras to use], 'trust', ... and what was the last thing you said? **Member:** [with others chiming in] 'confidence'! ...[cSPACE] made us think ... like, they're not those people who come along and think, 'gypsies are really bad'... they made us feel important, not bad. I don't know, they made us stand out in a way... We all judge people, different people, on how they look, but they give us a chance ... they didn't have to look at our clothes, most were wearing track-suits, but that didn't actually matter... the real important thing was who we were, and how they saw us... **JC:** so it was an issue of identity was it? **Members:** [collectively] yeah!



Do you feel proud of the photographs you've taken?



The questionnaires showed that 85% of participants felt pride at their contributions to YPG2EL. Tim, a service user at Tower Project, speaks persuasively below about how participation had made him feel; staff members Laria and Adam, helpfully and independently describe the beneficial and profound impact which creative and technical processes can offer those in the Special Needs sector:

JC: When you were doing this project, would you like to tell me anything about confidence? **Tim:** it's a really good opportunity
JC: Yeah? Tell me a bit more? **Tim:** and it's really quite interesting to have such a fantastic project **JC:** and how does that make you feel? **Tim:** it makes me happy **JC:** happy? So it boosted your feelings of happiness? **Tim:** yes. Yes...

JC: Would you like to say anything about confidence? **Laria:** They felt professional when they saw their work online, they felt they'd done something, they realised they had done well and they felt really proud of themselves ... **Adam:** some people are very confident to start with, but some people just need a bit of help – those that are more doubtful of their own abilities. I say that the process the lady chose, to show them how to use the equipment, which was the main part of the project and then showing them what to look for, I'd say that their confidence was boosted by that particular task... **JC:** Right. I remember you saying that there were particular participants ... who were confident anyway, who would respond to that kind of thing; but that there were other service users who **Adam:** are less confident **JC:** less confident - and benefit? **Laria:** Yeah **Adam:** and have more anxiety or are more nervous in some situations... then they would take an image, and take it at a certain angle, taking that bollard, with a patch of grass and an old coke can next to it, or whatever it was... and whatever they were doing, they were making the decisions to do that **JC:** OK. So, actually, 'pressing the shutter' gives the student the chance to be responsible ... in this case for an image? **Adam:** Yes. **Laria:** ... and to think about the best way to describe each location...



It is clear that many participants expressed a developed confidence in relation to YPG2EL involvement, with a seriously impressive 98% testifying to this in terms of camera use. Additionally, there is a high score of 85% for the 'pride' felt by them as a result of their achievements; testified in many instances through persuasive accounts by the adults working with them. However, it is the result of 72% about young people having felt that their ideas and knowledge were valued, which offers a particularly interesting and additional insight not only into confidence but also personal growth and identity. We have previously established the importance, for Leeson herself, of creating contexts which enable young people's life experience to be 'valued' [p3]; and that it is this acknowledgement, on their part, which she feels has an impact on receptivity to new skills – skills which may be necessary for them to effectively describe that experience and hence convey identity. In essence then, rather than looking at confidence as a 'product' or outcome of educational experience, which of course it often and invariably is, there is the sense that it can also be consciously constructed and utilised as experiential, cultural and pedagogic drivers, for the enhanced assimilation and utilisation of information within socio-educative process [an example of this being the 'trust' which Roma girls felt, at being allowed to use the cameras to convey their world; with this trust in turn then appearing to stimulate interest and find its translation into a heightened application to the task in hand.

At Monoux, teacher Eileen talks about the importance of the students being 'hooked', in relation to establishing subsequent engagement within educational and personal progress. Leeson's ideas, expressed in an independent interview, resonate with this. In her desire to stress that the YPG2EL is not an 'educational' project, she describes the eliciting of interest through considering the word 'education' in relation to its Latin root Educare: 'to draw out'. Both teacher and artist's ideas, here, are of course inexorably linked to the pivotal issue of 'relationships'; upon which Eileen also offers some useful thoughts. Central to her thinking is the value of an 'outsider', such as Leeson, coming into the classroom, and the relationships which may be forged with pupils unencumbered by an agenda of assessment. The conversations informing the above are set out below as stand-alone extracts. A question which may reasonably be asked in light of these things, and in direct relation to confidence development, is the extent to which effective 'educare' is facilitated through the adult role of 'teacher' or 'artist'; as accompanied -or not- by institutionally or 'educationally' imposed demands; and, importantly, how this is perceived and felt by the young themselves, within creative encouragement and instruction. What was interesting in this study, within the interview conversations, was that young people's talk of confidence seemed at its most animated within in the voluntary sector; bound up as it strongly was with those expressions of identity brought about through newly learned creative skills and culturally explored means which might otherwise not have been open to them. What seemed central within much conversation, either explicitly or implicitly, was 'relationship' as enacted through project process.

Leeson: *in terms of the confidence side of things, yes, I think it's common to a lot of young people - they don't feel they're impacting on the world; and particularly where they've had very challenging backgrounds. And so, I think by starting this off, assuming their expertise, which of course they do have, and building on it, that kicks it off to a good start and they feel valued from the beginning; and out of that, they pull*



amazing abilities and what I then do, and of course there isn't much time in the project to give them a lot of skill, but I structure things very carefully, to enable them to be able to represent their ideas in the best way possible. **JC:** That's really interesting because one often talks in these types of projects about how skills can generate confidence, which of course they can, but what you seem to be suggesting is that it also works the other way: by acknowledging people themselves **Leeson:** yes **JC:** and enabling them to be confident **Leeson:** yes **JC:** they then produce better material **Leeson:** Yes. Yes. I think the best education, and it's not an 'educational' project, the best educational experience, is when a learner is a self-starter: and if they're doing it because they want to do it. So, although this is sometimes woven into a curriculum, where they are automatically there, I think they're doing it because there's a value to them ...

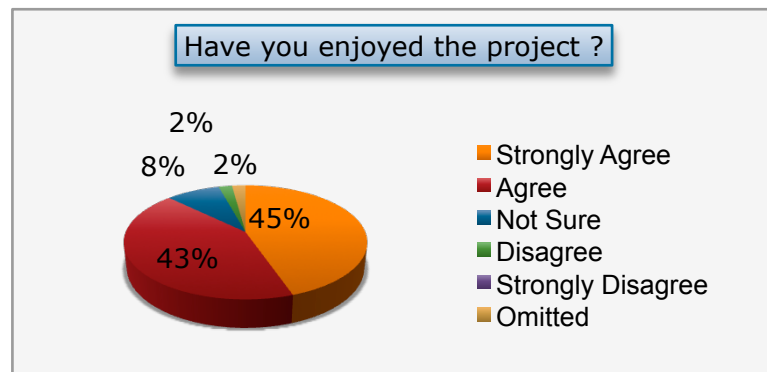
JC: you used the term 'hooked' earlier Eileen... **Eileen:** yeah **JC:** right at the beginning. Presumably if students are hooked on something, their behaviour is going to be more positive and engaged **Eileen** yeah, that's right. And there were some really interesting photos where Loraine drew the students' attention to the playground, like some swings, so it was really nice but it wasn't just ...I mean we ended up looking at some quite significant buildings in Walthamstow but it was nice that on that website, there was quite a lot of general photos of people and photographs of quite obscure things; that really interested the students as well; because then they go back and think about their communities. ...



EVALUATION THEMES:

PROJECT PROCESS

Aggregated responses from all questionnaire returns



BSix teacher Marcus: ... I think sometimes you can get a bit jaded with the so-called, you know, 'too cool for school' cynicism of teenagers – because they want to look cool all the time but they really responded; they can't be enthusiastic about anything, you know what teenagers can be like ... but they were very enthusiastic, they really enjoyed it. They said it was the best project they'd done this year...

The chart opposite suggests an impressive response from young people - with 88% enjoying the project. Whilst this result cannot be considered definitive, as returns would be needed, from everyone involved, it does give a sense that very few young people did not enjoy themselves. Given this, now is a good time to expand on the involvements and effects of project process. We already know that for cSPACE, as an incoming arts organisation, structure was crucial [Leeson, p 6]...

George Monoux teacher, Eileen, describes the appeal and value of the YPG2EL in relation to school programming:

Eileen: Because there was a definite brief and outcome that had to be achieved, I felt secure bringing it into the BTec and actually teaching it in terms of the unit. ... There was a lot of initial research the students had to do; their literacy, because they had to go and find the information about how to get to these locations; and their locality as well. And then also the idea of going out as an artist and trying to find inspiration in what they were looking at...

... With any teaching, the only way you're going to engage them is to make them think about their place in the world. I mean, often we do that in the lessons but I don't think we have that real 'focus'...



In students' talk of process, the focus is on socio-geographical knowledge and personal and social growth, as well as 'research':

JC: tell me a bit about the project process ... perhaps leads me through the project. What happened? **Jesse:** the first step was knowing what the project was about. **JC:** and what was your understanding about that? **Jesse:** we sat down and got talked through it and we thought: "Ok, so we've got to and find different areas of Walthamstow ... and take different photos of anything that would look interesting and do a bit of research as well. **JC:** What kind of research? **Michael:** history stuff. There was this Beryl that we heard about from the Middle Ages: they used to dunk witches and that! **Amy:** yeah! [Considerable laughter] And drown them – in the olden times ... **JC:** Beryl? **Amy:** they drowned them in, like, BARRELS! **JC:** Oh! Barrels! Sorry! ... [Laughter] **Michael:** if you were accused of being a witch you were drowned as a punishment ... **JC:** Oh! ...

JC: ... so that was quite interesting then, finding out extra information on the history of the area, presumably? **Michael:** yeah **JC:**... Is that something that was more part of the school's agenda, to get you doing web research? [General murmuring] **Jesse:** a bit of both ... a bit of it also, was that we wanted to know as well, about the history **Michael:** plus we were curious **JC:** OK. But was Eileen sort of interested in you doing that web research as part of your studies as well? **Jesse:** yeah, a bit. **JC:** I mean, obviously I know you'll have been using the Internet beforehand, but... did you think about Internet research in a different way? Did what the school was doing about the history of the area and what you were doing about the locations, did that make you think anything about your research skills? **Michael:** I think some of us went to talk to people inside a museum didn't we... **Jesse:** Yeah, we went to the museum and we did talk to some of the people about the past history around Walthamstow ... **Michael:** and we got leaflets as well **Jesse:** yeah. **JC:** ... that's interesting. So in terms of 'process' we're not just talking about pressing the shutter of the camera, we're talking about actually talking to people we haven't met before about your project? **Jesse:** yeah! **JC:** How did that make you feel, having to engage with people outside of the school, people you don't know, about your interests? **Jesse:** I was so pleased with it! I mean, you're 'getting into' the project and you sort of forget about confidence and stuff like that! [Students together: laughter] **Jesse:** You just get talking to random people you don't know **JC:** you just got stuck into talking? **Jesse:** yeah! And they're happy to give you something back! They've lived around the area for a long time so... it was OK, yeah. **JC:** So how did that make you feel about yourself, doing those kinds of things? **Michael:** a lot older! **Jesse:** I was enjoying it! **JC:** you were enjoying it? **Jesse:** yeah, I was enjoying it, **JC:** you were enjoying it? **Amy:** I was enjoying it too **Jesse:** yeah, because I was enjoying what I was doing with the project, so **JC:** That's interesting because that's practical as well, isn't it? Talking to people. It's not just reading a book about what people say, it's about practical stuff... **Michael:** it's learning beforehand as well... **JC:** pardon? ... **Michael:** sorry, I'm a bit quiet! **JC:** well, we all work in different ways don't we! **Amy:** I'm a bit quiet too! **JC:** that's OK! But nevertheless, you managed to do these things, which was presumably good? **Michael:** yeah ...



Roma members seemed to be in general agreement, as were other participants across the groups, that the process had worked well. The question in this instance, precipitated thinking about particular technical challenges:

JC: ... In terms of the process of the project; being introduced to it; shown the cameras; shown the web site; how did you feel the process of the project went? ... **Member:** Well. Great. ...What I found hard was editing the pictures! I found that so hard [laughter]
JC: so that was a new challenge was it? **Member:** Yeah! [Murmurs of agreement]. I didn't know the software at all, so I was, like, 'how do you use the software!' ... Everything went well, because they really did help us a lot: the editing – they told you how to do it... and how editing it tells other people about your point of view...

Roma Director, Tania, talks about her initial expectations, positive response to process and about how the YPG2EL process might be improved:

JC: ...when you were approached by cSPACE, about participation in the Young Person's Guide to East London, could you tell me what your first thoughts were? **Director:** ... I was very positive...part of my job is to create partnerships, especially with Young Roma, to experience various aspects of life, so when I heard of Loraine and what she does and building a partnership with her, I was really excited and thought her expertise and project would really merge well with what I do. I was really excited. I really welcomed the idea...it was really well structured, well organised; myself, I enjoyed it thoroughly! I have to say, it was really short. They would have benefited from having more mentoring... it would have helped if the project had been a little bit longer

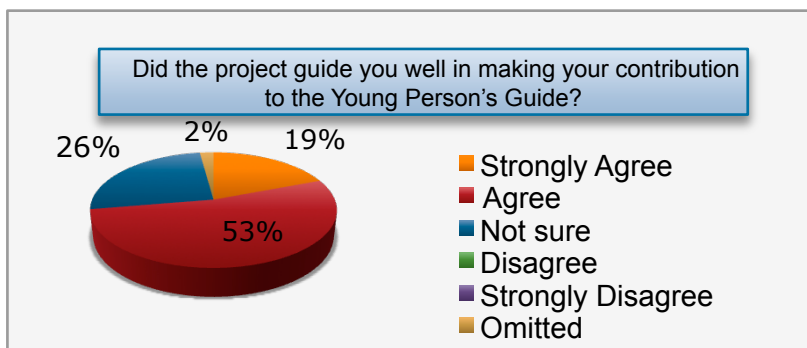
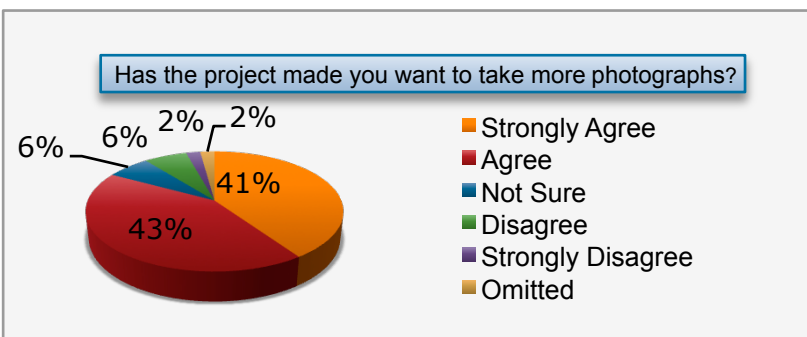
This desire to have more time working on the project was echoed by a member at the YMCA ...

... **JC:** any aspects of the project that could be improved? **Ryan:** just to make it longer really!...



... At Sir George Monoux, pupils gave their opinion ...

JC: ...If you could offer some advice to Loraine, or some feedback, what would you say to her in terms of how it might be improved? **Amy:** I think I'd say to make it a bit longer. **JC:** longer? **Amy:** Yes. Because it felt too short, when we did it. It went too quickly **Jesse:** actually, yeah. We went round a couple of areas but I would have liked to have seen more, because the project wasn't very long. **JC:** So it kept your attention? **Jesse:** yeah **JC:** and you would have liked to have done it a bit longer? **Jesse:** yeah, a bit longer, and to have gone into a bit more detail about Walthamstow...



... at BSix, teenage counterparts discussed 'process':

Malik: ...I think it was very well laid out, the project: there was a good introduction to the project; and a very good explanation by Loraine at the beginning as to what was required and what was expected. And throughout, the project was kept at a steady pace. The only thing I would say that could have been changed was the duration perhaps? Given more time to take pictures **JC:** OK.. **Malik:** and to edit and do the pre-production process before as well. Because, for us, it was fairly rushed because we only had a certain time to do it... **JC:** So, although the project was well laid-out, well supported and introduced, you felt that was not necessarily matched by the time frame you had to go through? ... **Malik:** Yeah, that's the only thing I would say...

A telephone interview with course leader Marcus, secured his particular view on process as he raised the time-issue:

Marcus: ... I think it worked out fairly well. The only thing that didn't work so well for us was ... the idea of the unit was for us to take photographs and for students to get



*Individual feedback, on those first photographs and then for them to go out again, and take more photographs, you know, taking on board the feedback that they had been given initially. We didn't... I don't think that was a fault of Loraine, I didn't... or it wasn't stipulated and that wasn't followed through as well as it could have been. **JC:** Right. Can you give us a sense of what might have been the cause of that? Was it a timetabling issue, an issue of not enough time, a lack of clarity about the process? **Marcus:** I think, because it was the first time I'd done it, I'd written the assignment brief without ... I was fully briefed on it by Loraine but because I hadn't done it before I think it might have been an issue with me creating more time for that feedback process to happen you know **JC:** OK... that's helpful. I think, actually, a number of other students, not just at BSix but elsewhere, have said that, generally, they would have appreciated more time on the project because they were getting into it and would have liked to have done some more, basically... **Marcus:** yeah, yeah. I'd think so. I'd say so...*

***Marcus:** I think sometimes you can get a bit jaded with the so-called 'too cool for school' cynicism of teenagers – because they want to look cool all the time but they really responded; they can't be enthusiastic about anything, you know what teenagers can be like... but they were very enthusiastic, they really enjoyed it. They said it was the best project they'd done this year...*

The level of cross-sector engagement and enjoyment in the project, the desire to have more time working on it, the elevation in interest about taking photos in the future and the pride in those already taken, as discussed, are powerful, positive results; particularly when considered in light of what Leah at the YMCA, has to say in relation to the delivery of activities to young people - in school or out:

'... If you say to them: "you have to do this, you have to do that", they will literally cross their arms and refuse to do it.'

For her own part, this is what she went on to say about the process generally:

*...**Leah:** I would recommend it to all different youth clubs around because it is as simple as anything. Loraine phoned us up. And Loraine organised most of it. All she really wanted was our young people. And we found our young people that wanted to do the project and from the start to the end, it's been a great process. ...*



Across the voluntary and special needs sectors, adult talk of process was interestingly and perhaps understandably, centred on social development, integration, opportunity and issues of identity – both enacted and perceived. That the YPG2EL proved a mechanism for such things was discussed both by the young people themselves and the adults working alongside them. On the part of teachers, conversations about process seemed to emphasise ‘delivery’, scheduling and institutional requirements to secure external links; and against this, self-examination about the extent to which they themselves facilitated and time-managed the YPG2EL opportunity that had come their way.

As addressed earlier, central within much conversation about process, either explicitly or implicitly, were ‘relationships’; as channelled through project process; not simply between the young participants and those involved in YPG2EL delivery but also between Leeson / cSPACE staff, organisation volunteers and teachers; and, by extension, the issue of how adult identities and roles are framed, facilitated or impeded by the presence of organisational / institutional expectations. Eileen, teacher at Monoux provides some hint of this below, where stand-alone conversational extracts ‘flesh-out’ much of the above:

***JC:** OK. perhaps we could look at what the implications, difficulties and benefits are, of this kind of external project and working with such external agencies outside the school. What kind of part do they play? **Eileen:** Oh, I think they're crucial. And throughout the time that I've taught, I've made the effort of trying to go beyond the classroom and have always run projects with galleries or, if I've had the chance to have people come in; so it's something in my background from before as a manager and 'gifted and talented' Coordinator. It enhances and enriches the experience. Just having someone else who isn't a teacher; who can come in and meet the students at their level... it's really nice to have someone come in because it shows they're cared for. And I know when they come in, they'd be asking when she would next be coming in again; because she just has to come in and show them something... **Eileen:** and it was really good for me to see their relationships with Loraine as an outsider as well **JC:** Oh, really? What did you observe? **Eileen:** I think there was a lot of respect built up, straight away. They were able to see somebody that comes in, who has a lot of experience and knowledge, clearly, and just talk on their own terms with them and not worry about things being 'assessed' but getting them interested in a project that's wider...*



Eileen: when she was with them, they were a lot more relaxed, actually, than they were with me! **JC:** that's interesting. Is that because she wasn't a teacher do you think? **Eileen:** Oh yes. Definitely. Definitely... and she had a very good relationship with them. She was calm and didn't try to rush them through things as I might do **JC:** or need to do because of the curriculum? **Eileen:** yes, yes. Like on the 'one to one' when she was working with them and using the camera. Things like that. And, the work that they had done, she treated it with respect on a profession level... **JC:** and what about for you? **Eileen:** ... teaching a subject on your own, it's nice to have somebody else to talk with; and say how things are getting on, on a general level, week by week. Whenever Loraine would come in, maybe three weeks had passed, so I was able to show her where we were at and she could fill me in, a little bit, in terms of where we needed to be with the project...she was able to manage me a little bit on the the creative side and say "we need to time-manage, to get this done"...

In relation to cultural and creative activity in both educational and voluntary sectors, a reasonable question in light of 'relationship' and 'engagement', is to ask about the nature of the funding mechanisms and hierarchical structures brought to bear on cultural delivery for the young, and to query the extent to which they allow for flexibility of 'relationship' and 'role'; and, by extension, the potential for the gentle eliciting, or *educare*, of confidence in order to sensitively connect with the reality of a young identity and its 'place' within the world. As Leah, manager at YMCA has already helpfully pointed out: "If you say to them: "you have to do this, you have to do that", they will literally cross their arms and refuse to do it". Arguably, and as this evaluation seems to suggest, much of the success of the project within the voluntary sector, comes about through the absence of an hierarchical frame and organisational or procedural imposition.

An additional and unexpected outcome of this evaluation was the issue of 'organisational status'; and the pride acquired across sectors in terms of an organisation's or institution's affiliation to a successful and stimulating project, as evidenced below:

Eileen: The plan was to put [the guide on show] in the library; or the big screen in Walthamstow, which is run by the BBC, was going to show it. But it's time on my part as well because of the restrictions of college with deadlines. But there was so much potential with that actually **JC:** yes? **Eileen:** I mean it's on the college website but we could have done a lot more with it in terms of exposure for our college **JC:** for the college? **Eileen:** to say, "this is the course we run here" because we're quite unique... I think it was only us and Leyton sixth form from this borough, which did it. So it would have been really nice for us to do something to advertise and promote. **JC:** Is that something you'd still like to do? **Eileen:** Yes. Yes ...

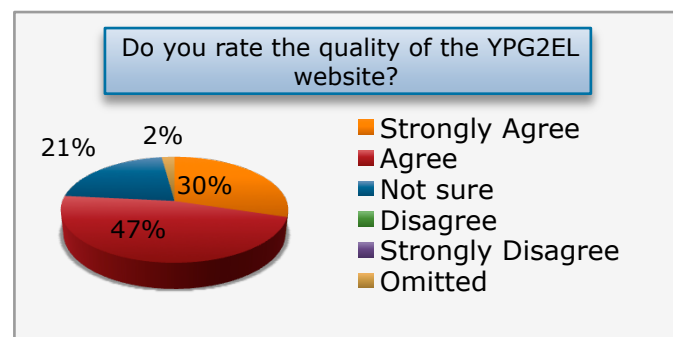


Leah: ...Obviously, with the website, we've shown our head office and they're so proud of it that they're going to be putting it in their newsletter ... with Ryan and grant, we've had them in the newsletter to say they've started it and this is what they are doing **JC:** so they're case studies for the YMCA? **Leah:** so now, it's going in the newsletter to say they've done it, this is what they've done and here's a booklet for it as well...



EVALUATION THEMES: YPG2EL PRODUCTS

Aggregated responses from all questionnaire returns



JC: In terms of the website and the photographs, how do you feel about these now? **Leeson:** I feel very proud of them actually. I work with a very good designer, who I've worked with for many years, who really understands and has worked with me on how to produce outputs that are of professional quality and the same time absolutely based around the production of the participants and so, all the photographs on the website and in the newspaper are by the young people...the design helps them look at their best; so you don't look at it this and say "this is an educational project", or it's nice that they've done it but, you know, you actually look at it as a professional resource. I think that's the other thing that's actually inspired the young people: that it is professional what they are doing **JC:** - presumably, for a number of organisations that you work with, that notion of a professional self is probably one of the furthest things from their minds? **Leeson:** Yes, yes. And I think there are young people from the most unlikely backgrounds that have really blossomed...

BSix - Malik: ... it's a well laid out site. I pointed out, when I first saw it, that the colours are very well chosen. Usually, you see something very 'clean' very 'grey' because it's for adults; but it's got loads of fun colours; graffiti style things... it does appeal a lot to people our age **J.C:** Do you think it would grab people's imagination? **Malik:** yeah. **J.C:** What do you think about people coming from other parts of the world, to London? Is it accessible, do you think; across cultures, for example? **Malik:** yeah, I mean English is an international language. Plus, it's picture-based, that's the most important thing; that would make it very easy access for other people.

Marcus: that's another great thing about this project: they could actually see their work out there in the world, people looking at it. And they're going to have audiences in the future, hopefully ... that was a great thing. To 'externalise' it and to get it out there, was brilliant. They responded really well to that. They were really excited by it **JC:** so they felt a sense of excitement; presumably they felt quite proud, did they, of their photos? **Marcus:** they were very proud, yeah...



At BSix:

JC: Going back to what you were saying earlier, in your own ways, about having your own 'voice'; tell me about that, in relation to what you see on the web? **Malik:** From what I saw at first, when I first saw the pictures, I was kind of thinking "wow!" people will like this, it's really, really good. It kind of does represent 'us' as teenagers really well, 'cause it shows we are capable of very professional work. For example, if someone wanted to do that as a job, later on, referencing back to that will show they've done this before **JC:** So that would be good for future work prospects? **Malik:** yeah...

JC: How did you feel about the shots you took? **Malik:** For me, because I had to go and take a photo of a place near my house which I visit regularly [it was a chicken and chips shop] **JC:** OK **Malik:** because it's a place that I visit regularly, I want to represent it really well. Because it's something that's related to my life and I thought if I take a bad picture, people will think "Oh, it's not an interesting place". So that really gave me good motivation to take a good picture... **JC:** OK. So there can sometimes be an emotional angle to your work? **Malik:** yeah...

Marcus: ... In terms of the photographs they produced, I was really pleasantly surprised with the quality of work they produced in the end ... they really took on board the whole aesthetics of a photograph or a shot. The outcomes were much better than I initially anticipated ... **JC:** what about the photographs, Marcus, in relation to the website when you looked at the website and saw how the students' photographs worked in relation to that? **Marcus:** Oh, they looked great. They looked really good! If anything, they look better on the site than they do, you know, on our computers here – than the original photographs. And they loved it. They loved it.

At Roma:

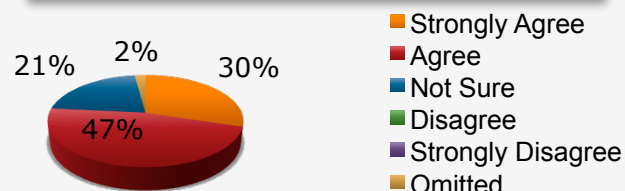
Roma member: I thought it was kind of different: when people talk about a guide to London, you would say 'Big Ben', and stuff like that, yeah ... but when [Loraine] said 'East London', I said "there's nothing important in East London [!] She's like, "but we want people to go and see places that they don't normally see" ... we call them 'sly' places – places no one knows about!

JC: How do you think the guide will be received by, young people of your age, visitors to London? Is it accessible do you think? **Member:** I think they'll find it interesting! ...especially people travelling from other countries. So, they won't know where St. Mary's Park is, they won't know where Priory Park is because it's their first time in the country...

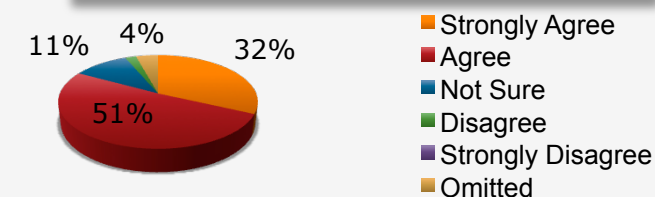
Director: ... they selected two of our pictures, two of the pictures the Roma children took, enlarged them and made them as the two main inserts in the guide [laughs] ... **Res:** what are your views on the website? **Director:** it's great!



Do you think the website will communicate well to people visiting London from other parts of the world?



Would you recommend this website to others?



At the YMCA **JC:** When you look back at the guide now, what do you feel about the photographs that you've taken and the website itself? **Ryan:** I feel proud, really. Because you could see it in the newspaper and on the website; people around the world can look at it and see your picture on there. The feeling? It's happy really. It's freedom basically... It will be easy for [young people around the world] to understand; its not using words that are advanced, it's using basic terminology - its easy for them to understand... **JC:** so it's using young people's voices, is that what you are saying? **Mem:** yeah...

At the Tower Project :

Tim: So when it's finished, whose going to use this website? **JC:** That's a very good question. I think Loraine's hope, is that it's going to be used by young people when they come to the Olympics **Tim:** Yeah? **Kelly:** oh wow! **Res:** that people from all over the world, will use the web site ... so you can feel that the photographs that you've taken are going to be seen by people all over the world **Tim:** Yeah!

Malik: when I initially heard about it, I thought it was a really good idea – for anyone coming into the country it would be quite typical to go to the Millennium Dome and things like that. And, plus, if you do get people who are younger, who are coming into the country, you would want to see the country as the young people who already live there see it; rather than going to places that are seen as tourist sites but aren't exactly interesting for you as a teenager...



Whilst positive questionnaire data is impressive, it is the colour of conversations fleshing-out numeric skeletons which more fully conveys a sense of product quality and social impact – not only upon the creative sensibilities and pride of the artistic producers and originators, the young people themselves, but also for the target audience of global counter-parts. These conversations are set out free of interruption:

At Sir George Monoux College: **Eileen:** ... with any teaching, the only way you're going to engage them is to make them think about their place in the world. I mean, often we do that in the lessons but I don't think we have that real 'focus'...

Eileen: they were really chuffed to see their pictures. I mean, it's not every day you get to put your pictures on a website! They were really impressed when they saw their pictures live on the screen! ... And there were some really interesting photos ... it was nice that on that website there was quite a lot of general photos of people and photographs of quite obscure things; that really interested the students as well. Because then they go back and think about their communities and again, this website - it was quite a well laid-out website - they seemed to think it was a good one for young people, from what they said about it **JC:** right **Eileen:** so, showing them a project that is well put-together and professional ...

Jesse: ... you go onto the website and you can click on different parts; so if you click on Walthamstow, you can click on where we went round. We went round a church area, so, yeah, you could click onto the church, the photos of what we took round the church and around the gardens as well and the cottage... it's all very, how should I say, 'planned'... **JC:** and what did you feel about the photographs you took? **Jesse:** when we was taking them first-hand [strokes chin] I thought 'it doesn't really work! ... until you are learning a bit more about the camera; fiddling about with it a bit more: having a go at zooming in, focusing; the pictures actually look a bit more better ... **JC:** and what do you think about the website itself? **Jesse:** It's really useful I looked at other areas; areas like Hackney and I looked at them and thought: 'really, really good shots' and other parts, like I said, that I've never seen. Where you live, sometimes you walk around that same area and never see... **Michael:** It is short and it's organised. Organised and understandable **JC:** Is it? **Amy:** it all looks a bit abstracted... **JC:** You think it works well visually? **Jesse:** yeah. You don't have to go round saying "this area, that area", you just find it on the list, click on the area and it's got all the photos ...



At the YMCA **JC:** Can we talk a little bit about the outputs of the projects: so, the photographs themselves, the website and, although you haven't seen it yet, the newspaper. What's your view about those outputs? **Leah:** well, the pictures were brilliant; they absolutely loved the pictures themselves and they're so proud of them and we're proud of them as well! As soon as it went on the website, we showed everyone in our youth club and we had them all sitting around the table and said "look, this is what we've done" and because we've got our own little bit on there, which is obviously the YMCA Thames Gateway, they know that's their youth club; that's where we go; this is our thing... They want to do more of it. They go: "why can't we do it?" And now they hear that Ryan's going to be out distributing the newsletters "oh, can we help!"...**JC:** ... what you think of the website itself **Leah:** I think it's brilliant. Just going onto the website itself and having a look, you can press the A-Z and you can see – even without clicking on it – what areas they've gone to. Just think about how many young people have participated in this project ... it's such a great thing for young people to express and show their areas, of where they come from and work with all different people; and actually be able to show everyone, on the Internet, that this is what we've done... "This is us" We are young people but we're not as bad as the riots and things like that but we can succeed and do something. That's what I think is really, really good because you can go onto any website and see that young people are always talking about crime, or into crime and things like that. But actually showing that young people care about their area: "this is us. This is our area. These are our pictures. This is what we do." ... **JC:** So are you saying that it's a positive image of young people? **Leah:** yeah, it is. It really, really is. Because if you say to any person in the street; "what do you think of a young person?" They'll say: "oh, they did the riots"; "they're bad; they wear hoodies; they swear, they do this..." **JC:** negative stuff? **Leah:** yeah. So, if we say: "have you taken a look at this? This is what our young people have done..."

... and at BSix **JC :** What was your experience of the guide? How will it relate to young people - not just your students but those from all over the world? **Marcus:** I think they'll respond; the fact that you know other teenagers have put it together, that's going to be something to appeal to teenagers all over the place ... the fact that not everything on it is necessarily a landmark. There are lots of photographs and places that are recommended that are just places where teenagers hang out and find interesting and have meaning in their own lives. So, I think that's something that would really appeal to teenagers **JC:** Do you feel that visually it will connect; was it useable for example? **Marcus:** Definitely. Do you mean in terms of the layout of the site and everything? **JC.** Exactly. **Marcus:** Yeah. Fantastic, Yeah. I really liked it, personally. I think it's really nicely laid out. It's very aesthetically pleasing. I really like when you get a series of shots put together in a nice clean and simple way - it looks great ...



Towards the latter stages of this evaluation, it became clear that the YPG2EL project continues to develop in terms of its 'products':

Leeson: ...as well as an on-line guide, we've now produced a free newspaper guide. The idea is, that you actually look on-line before you go somewhere; when you're there, you actually want something in your hand. We produced something and decided to make it free – there's no point ... it's too complicated to sell something; but also it's for young people and we want to make sure it 'gets out'. So we produced five thousand tabloid-newspaper format guides, featuring every single site and a photograph by every single participant with about forty special featured photographs and a map to show where things are. And the Transformers' grant also allowed us to also budget to pay participants to distribute it. That's gone down extremely well. I think it's... I mean, of course, all young people want to earn money but I think it adds to the whole issue of people feeling valued for their work **JC:** and professional? **Leeson:** Yes. Yes. I think they feel valued, we're doing it at the London living age – so it's not even minimum wage. So they feel that they've done something worthwhile. And I heard from somebody at the Peacock Gym yesterday, about how their distribution went and he just said they work with some of the most difficult young people on this part of it, on this distribution. They went out in their minibus and they packaged them up and took them into places and they were very, very well behaved and assertive and all those things – it brought out absolutely the best in them...

The connection between being 'valued' [whether rendered explicit or remaining implicit] and 'pride', permeates much in this evaluation's qualitative accounts - and of course is conveyed directly and in associated ways, through the 'hard data' of the questionnaire returns in relation to cultural products: 85% of participants feeling proud of the photographs they took; 84% stating they would recommend the website to others; 77% 'rating' the quality of the site they had contributed to ... In addition and perhaps most importantly, it was an experience which was widely enjoyed – by 88%.

In terms of project development and cSPACE ethos, perhaps the most interesting feedback, was offered by staff at the Tower Project:

JC: ... could we just talk for maybe a minute about three final questions? What did you think about the guide as a facility on the web; and secondly, what areas did you think the project was very good in and what areas do you think it might like to consider for improvement? ... So: the guide itself. Is there anything you'd like to say about that? **Ilaria:** The Guide was very good because it showed lots of locations and probably, for people who don't live here, and don't know. But now it's on-line so people like tourists and other people, they will have a look at they will have a look at did you like that idea? **Adam:** Because, as you say, when you



go somewhere you 'do as the locals do' **Ilaria:** The people that live in the area know what is the best part of the area: the beautiful park, they go to church, then... **JC:** so they are the experts on their area? **Adam:** yeah... and everyone was young and you used people from our service and you got a result which gave a 'demographic' of society, from that part of society; Tower Hamlets has got a lot of different people living in it, so I thought that was impressive...

JC: ... so, plus points about the project and things that the project might like to consider? **Ilaria:** It should be longer, more time, so they can do more things. It was a good starting point, but still a 'starting point' **JC:** so you think that's something which cSPACE could consider, in terms of how they get the input of people; perhaps over a longer timeframe – to see more development, more of a run-in, that kind of thing? **Adam:** If I had two points to say how the project could be improved, I'd say that in the finished article of the project, on the website, I'd like more information about each site as opposed... I mean the pictures are fantastic but a little bit more instruction about what you wanted to see **JC:** ... I think there are websites aren't there, for certain locations? **Adam:** Actually you're right because I remember copying and pasting the website to the Tower Hamlets' council park. I don't know, maybe that's me being 'picky' **JC:** no, no. That's good. That's a good point... **Adam:** my feeling, when I looked at the website, was that it was very well made, the pictures are fantastic and they just speak a thousand words which is fine but I found some of the information was a bit lacking compared to the rest of the website. **JC:** OK. Usability? **Adam:** Yeah, pretty easy actually. I mean, maybe regarding the information maybe that's the thing: to make it easy, functional and quick **JC:** and is it a site, do you think, that would be accessed by young people? **Adam:** Yeah. I think so. I'd look into it. **Ilaria:** I think an interesting development to this project would be to mix the young people, these young people, with other young people **JC:** that's an interesting point **Ilaria:** that have been working on this project; to mix them all together, to see what they have to share **JC:** that's a very interesting point. So you'd get another benefit? **Ilaria:** to get a 'union' between them and the other people that would come. **JC:** What kind of groups do you think it would be good for the project to connect with, if the project was longer? ... and if there was the chance for your students to link up with other people? Would it be mainstream education, for example or... **Adam:** I think they could, yeah... I think mainstream education but maybe college years; maybe students who are between sixteen to eighteen; because I think they may have a greater understanding of what our students are going through...



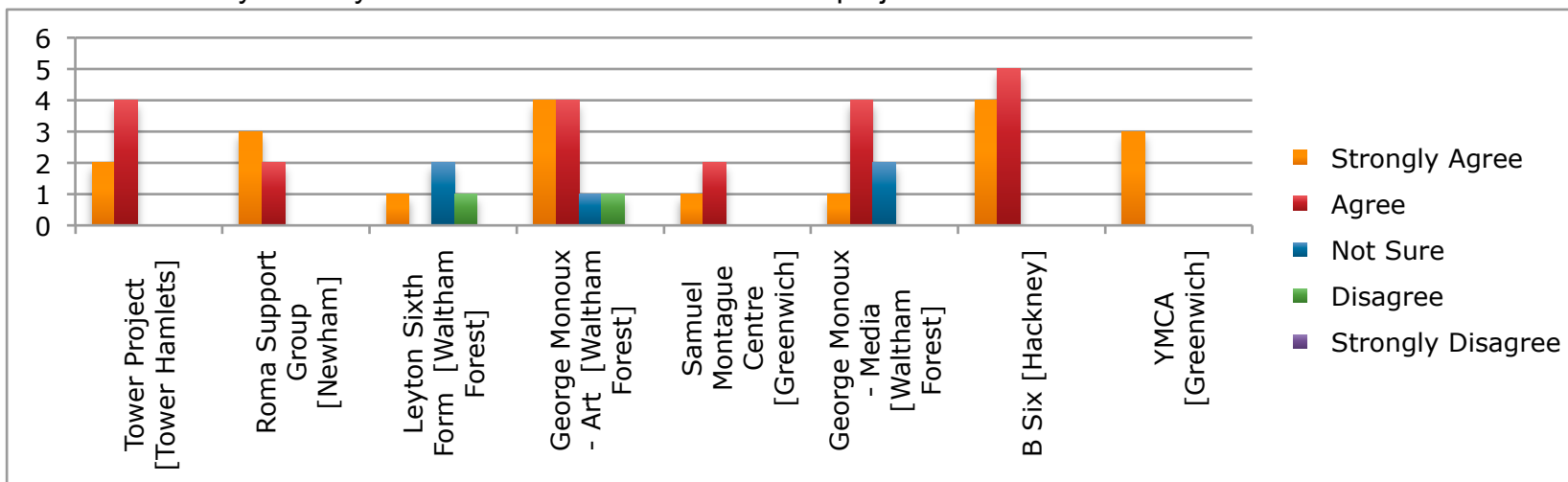
Amidst the variously informative accounts and statistics, there are perhaps two opposing pictures, which seem to encapsulate the considerable success of the 'YPG'. On the one hand there are the collective responses, not just from the young people but also from the adults involved, that additional time was desired by all for further creative exploration and cultural production – and for more experience of working directly alongside Leeson and others - as artists. On the other, there is the telling comment by Leah at the Thames Gateway YMCA, bringing together the key themes which underpin this evaluation: pride, identity, being valued and personal success:

***JC:** ... What do you think were the best aspects of the project - and were there aspects of the project that you feel might be developed or looked at? **Leah:** The best bit, I think, was them actually sitting down, viewing the pictures that they'd already taken and editing them and Loraine just sort of sitting there, giving them the guidance: "that picture is really, really good!" Sort of giving them 'the nudge', to say "you've done really well!" and seeing them with their faces brightening up and saying "I've done this!".... I can't think of anything that's a negative side of them doing this project... The only thing I could have done more, would be getting more young people involved in doing it. **JC:** ... So, more people, more access? **Leah:** Yeah...*

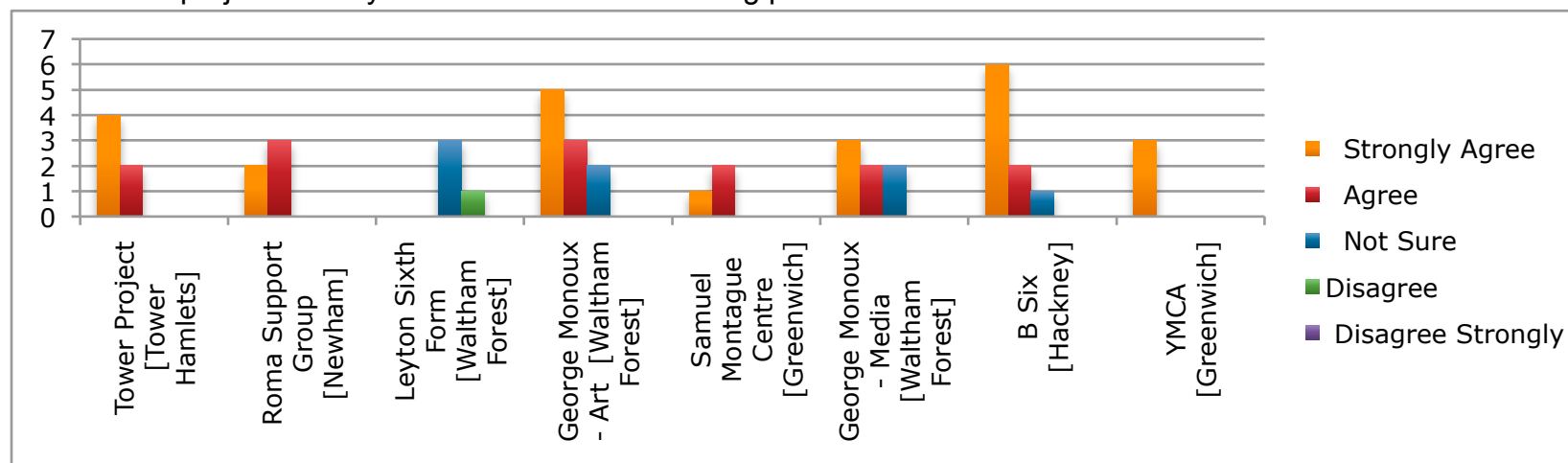


APPENDIX 1

1 SKILLS: Do you feel you have learned new skills on this project?

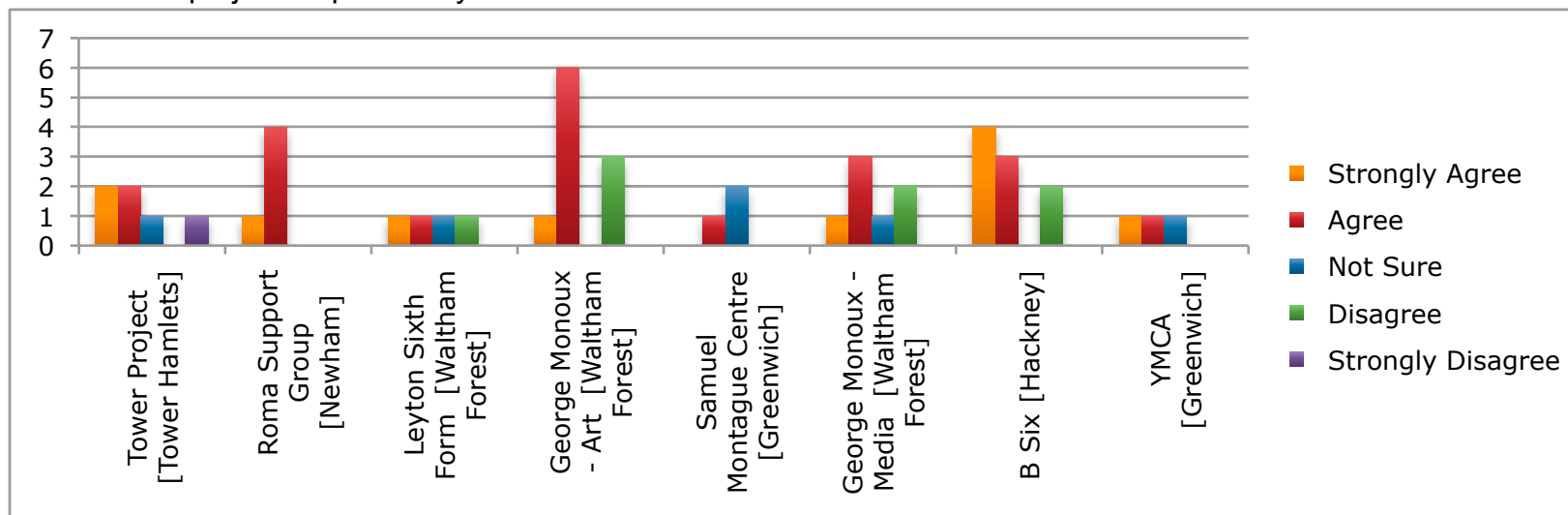


2 Has the project made you more interested in taking pictures?

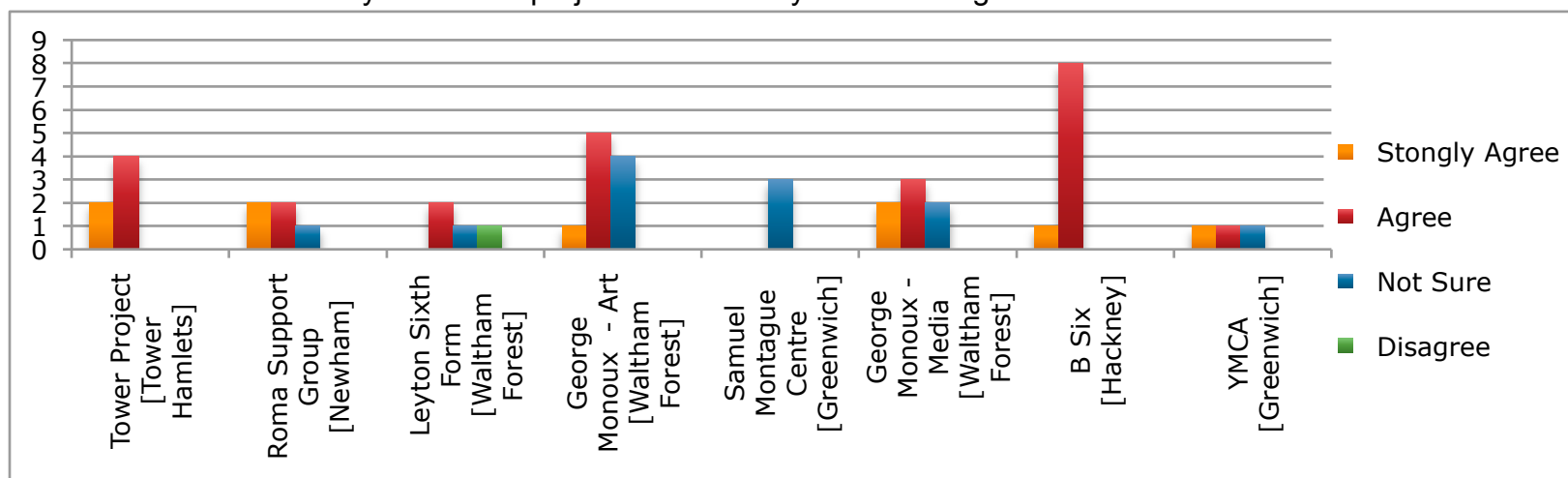


APPENDIX 1

3 Has the project helped with your schoolwork or out of school activities?

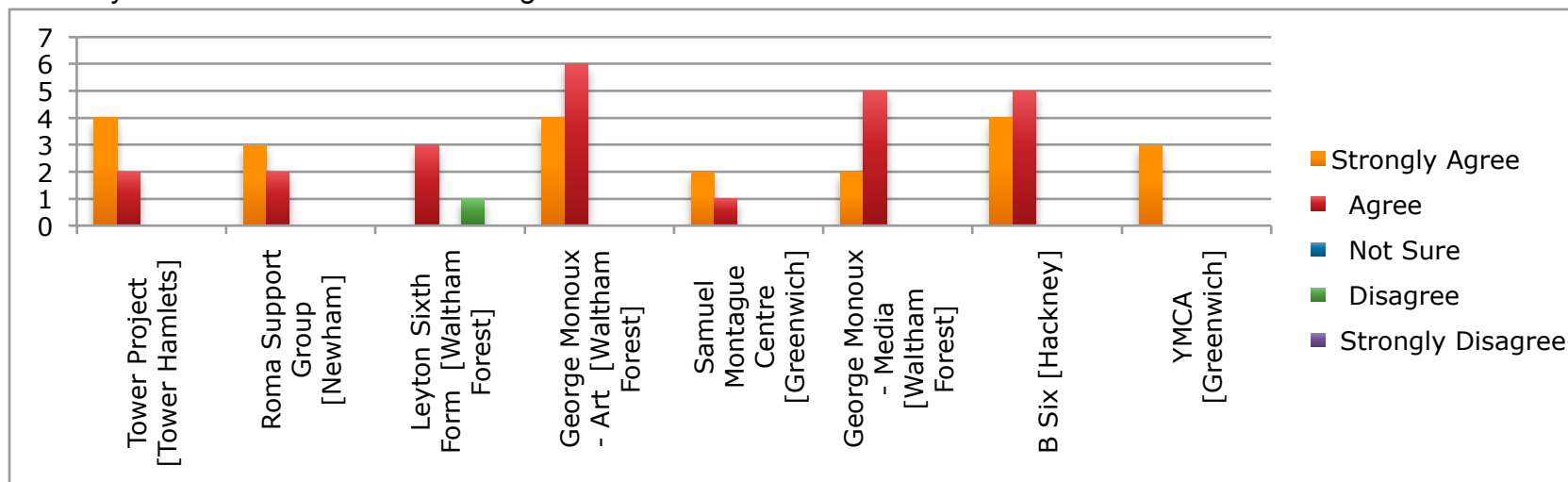


4 CONFIDENCE: Do you feel the project has valued your knowledge and ideas?

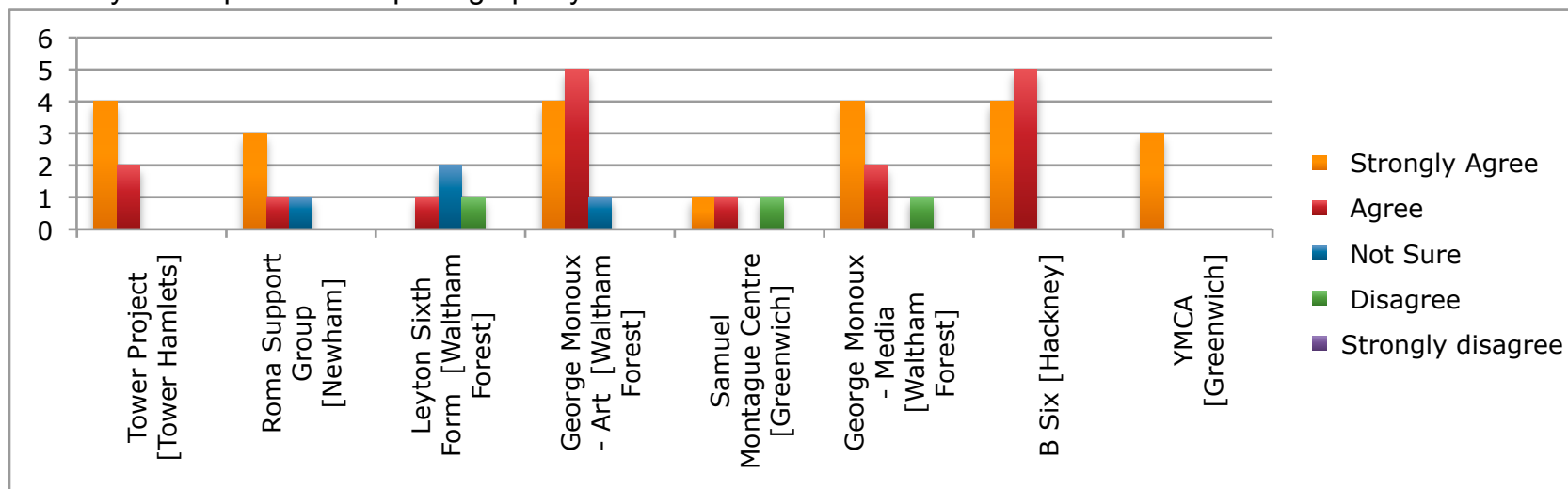


APPENDIX 1

5 Do you feel more confident in using a camera?

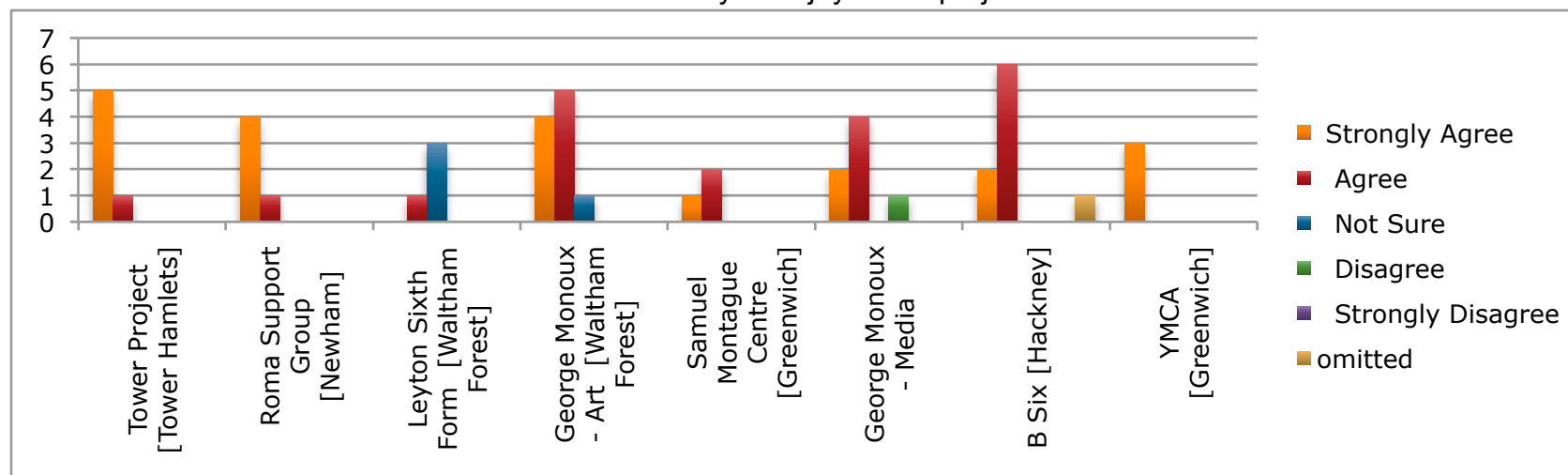


6 Do you feel proud of the photographs you've taken?

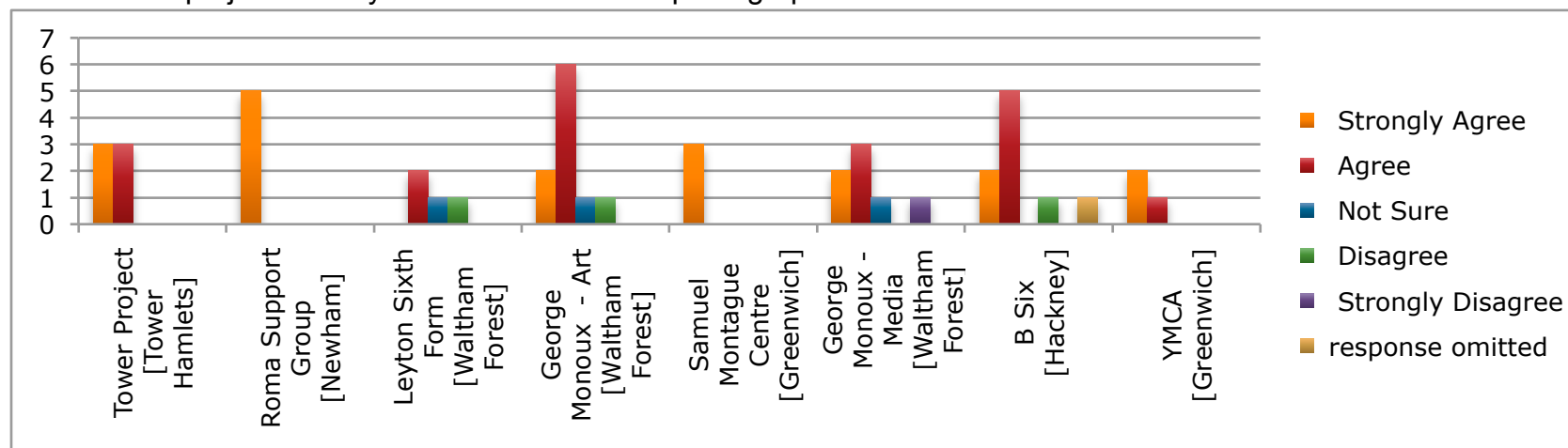


APPENDIX 1

7 VIEWS ON THE PROJECT PROCESS: Have you enjoyed the project?

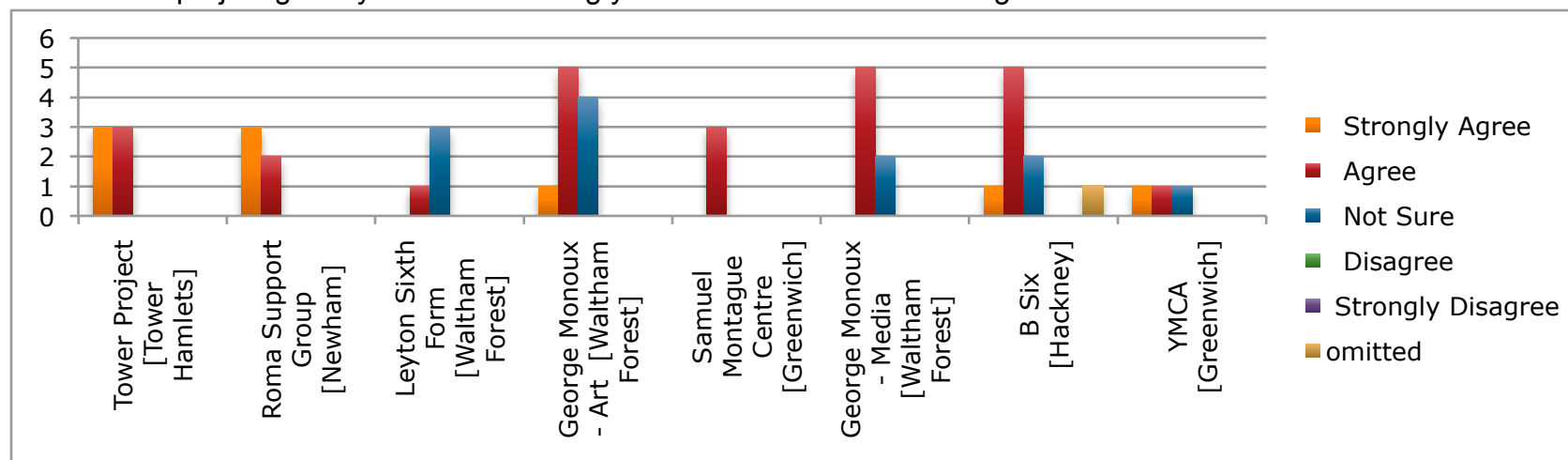


8 Has the project made you want to take more photographs?

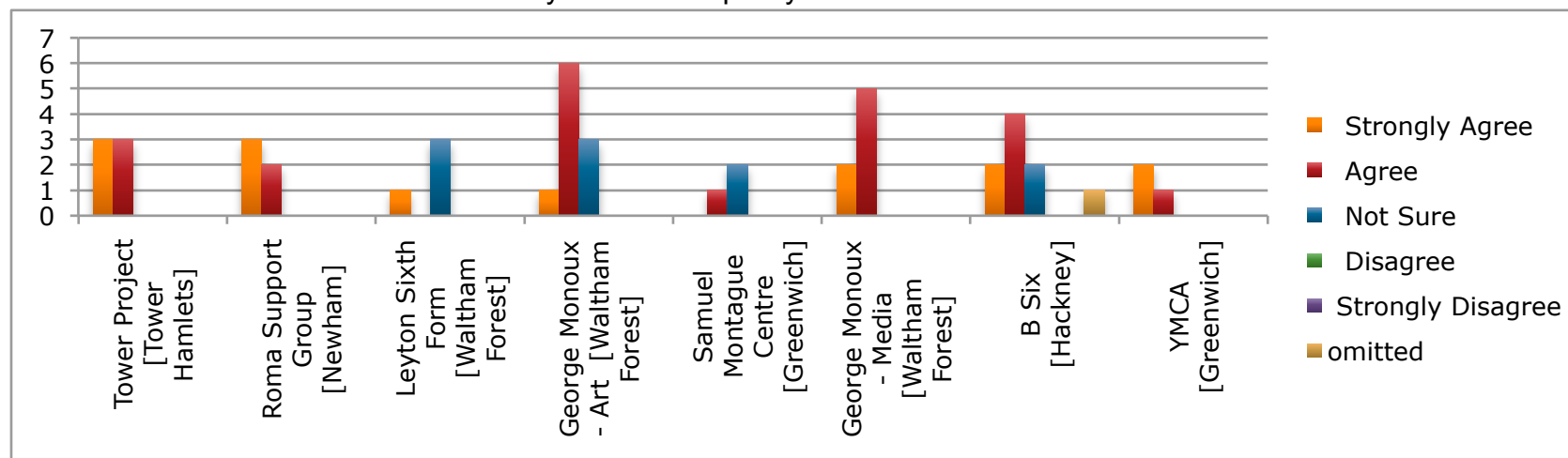


APPENDIX 1

9 Did the project guide you well in making your contribution to the Young Person's Guide?

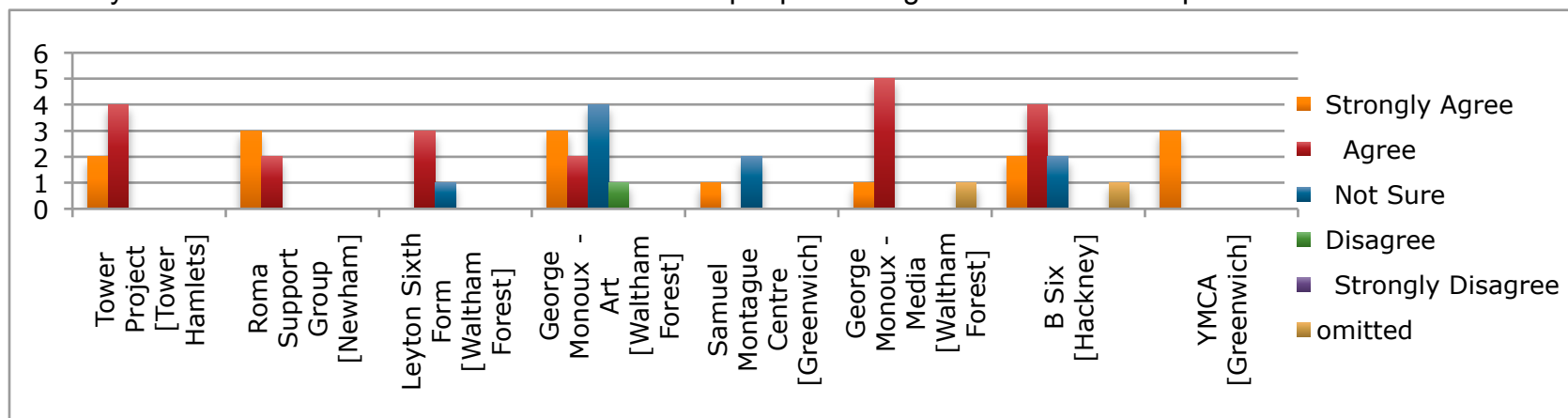


10 OPINION OF THE WEBSITE: Do you rate the quality of the YPG2EL website?

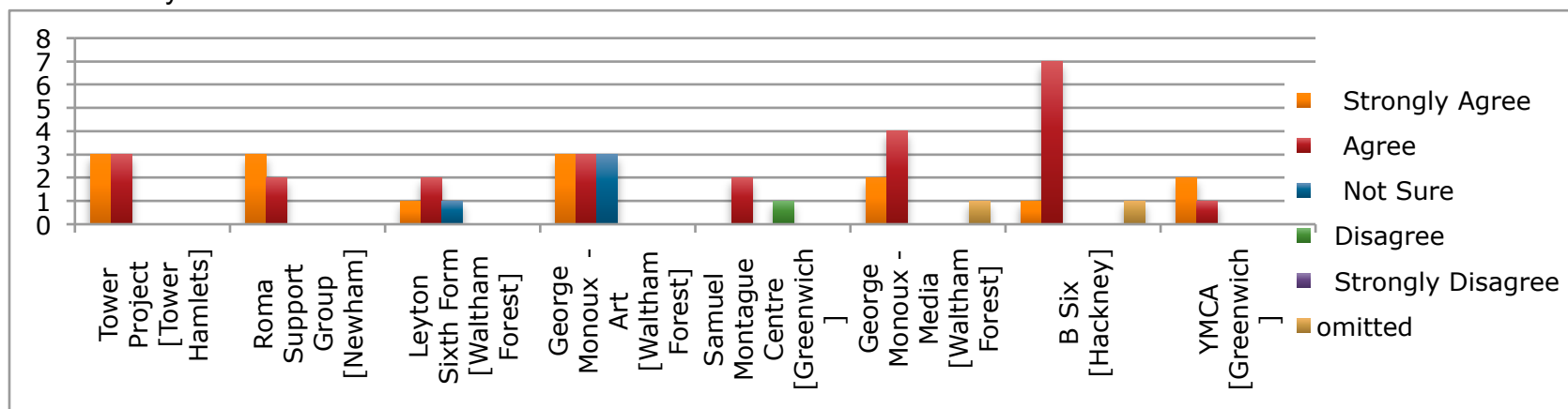


APPENDIX 1

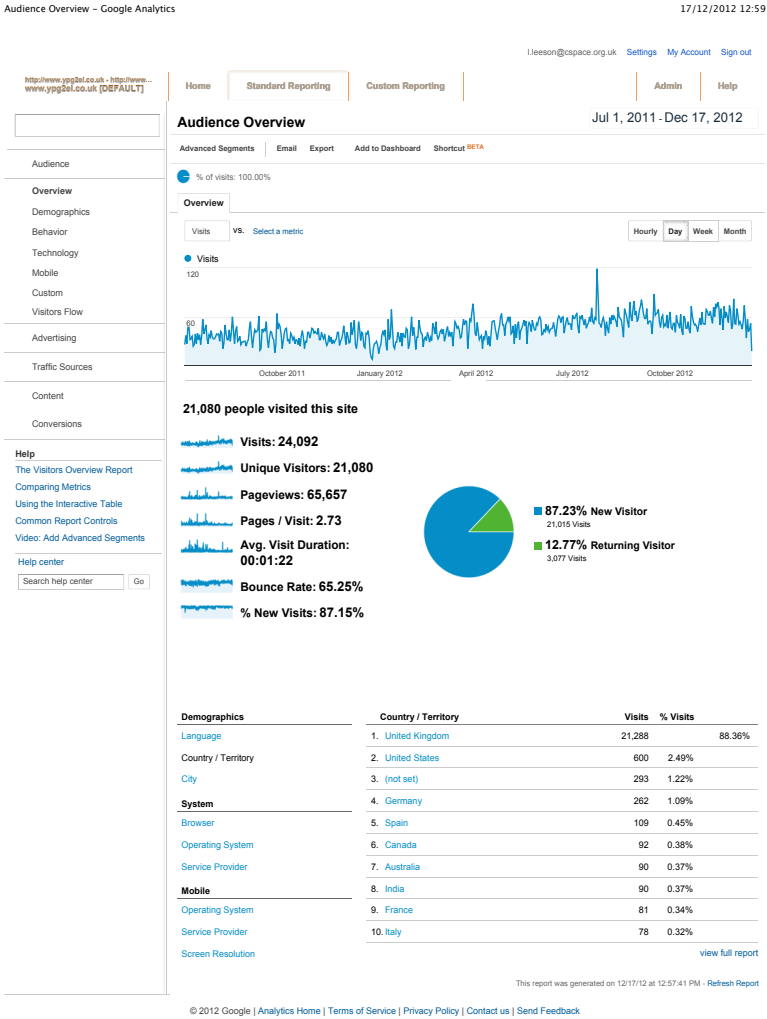
11 Do you think the website will communicate well to people visiting London from other parts of the world?



12 Would you recommend this website to others?



APPENDIX 2

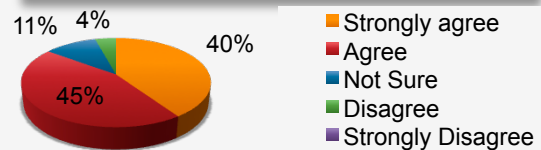


APPENDIX 3

SKILLS

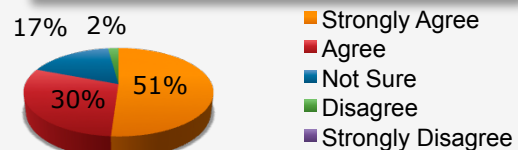
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Do you feel you have learned new skills on this project?



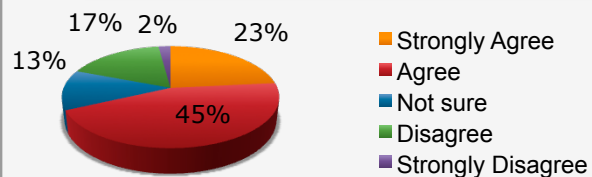
2

Has the project made you more interested in taking pictures?



3

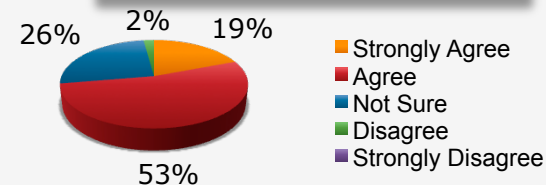
Has the project helped with your school work or out of school activities?



CONFIDENCE

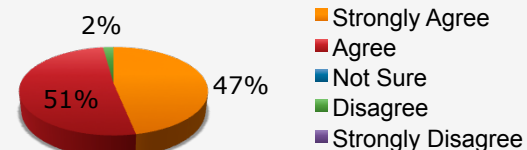
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Do you feel the project has valued your knowledge and ideas?



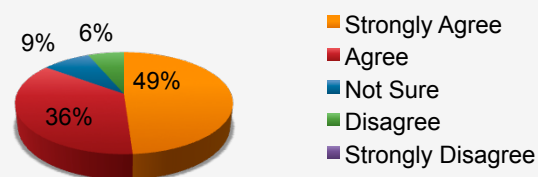
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Do you feel more confident in using a camera?



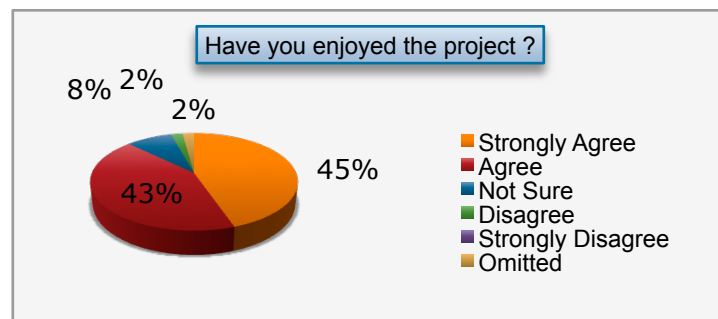
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Do you feel proud of the photographs you've taken?

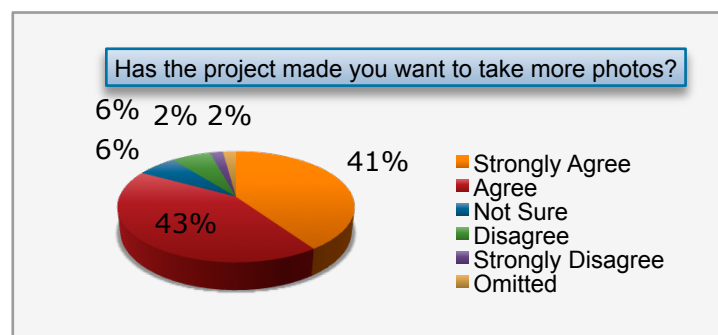


APPENDIX 3 VIEWS ON PROJECT PROCESS

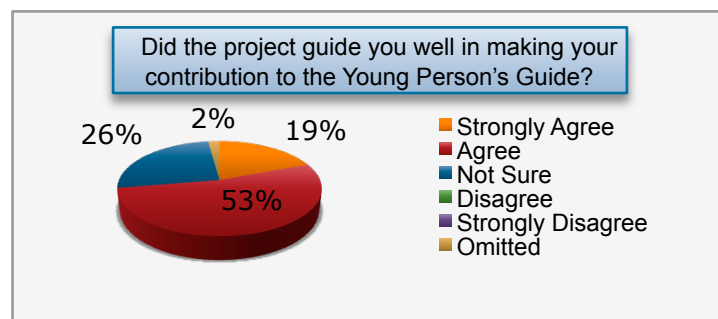
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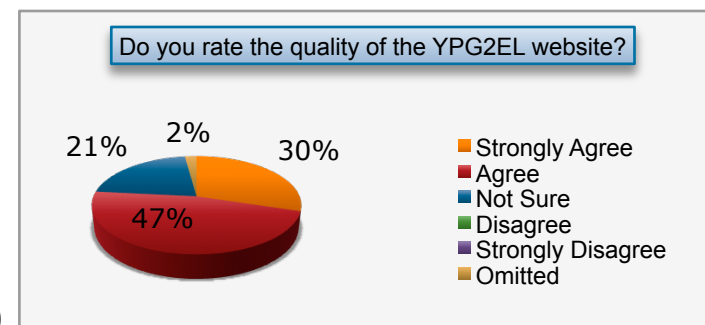


9



OPINION OF THE WEBSITE

10



11



12

