

Eastside Young Leaders' Academy: Community Survey (April 2018)

Executive Summary

In April 2018, EYLA carried out a far reaching online survey of children & young people, parents and teachers in our catchment area to gain a better understanding of their perceptions on the needs and challenges of Black African Caribbean children and young people in East London. The results of this survey are set out below and will help us continue to develop our programmes to better serve our community.

The survey results give a broad overview of the challenges faced by children and young people across a number of indicators including family & home life, school, behaviour and motivation, dangers outside of school and the support provided by community and voluntary services. A key theme to emerge from the survey was the multiple nature of the needs and challenges young people face.

Key findings include:

- Children and young people are growing up in households dramatically at odds with national averages and with a much higher percentage living in lone parent households, workless households and in private rented accommodation;
- Children and young people face huge challenges in terms of their motivation and associated issues around emotional and behavioural difficulties that present considerable obstacles to their learning and development;
- Out of school learning and other positive community activities are very difficult to access for the majority of children and insufficient to meet their needs according to parents and teachers;
- Gangs and knife crime are a very real and present danger to almost half the children surveyed and the biggest threat to their safety according to both parents and teachers;
- Parents and teachers both have a bleak assessment of their children's future life chances and in the case of teachers, expect a significant proportion of their pupils to be not in education, employment or training when they leave school; and
- Teachers believe that around half of their students would benefit from attending EYLA.

Methodology

Three different surveys were designed to suit each of our three target audiences. The surveys were completed at various venues and locations across East London including seven primary and secondary schools in Barking & Dagenham, Hackney, Haringey, Newham and Waltham Forest. Surveys were also completed on three open days held at EYLA premises on the weekends of the 21st April, 28th April and 5th May. Surveys were also shared by children, parents and teachers via text message, email and social media.

The sample sizes for each target audience were outstanding – 1,004 children and young people (aged 10-16), 362 teachers and 423 parents completed a survey, giving a total sample of 1,789 people. Approximately, 25% of the children and young people's survey was completed by students who currently attend EYLA.

Home Life

A number of findings from the surveys around the home life of children and young people surveyed demonstrate the stark difference with national averages. For example, only 23% of children and young people said they were living with both parents. National research suggests the average is 67% and 45% in low income households (Department for Work and Pensions 2013). Meanwhile, it is estimated that 25% of families with dependent children nationally are lone parent households (Office for National Statistics 2014) whilst in our survey 44% of children said they lived with only one parent. Significantly, 12% of children surveyed said they were living with an unrelated carer.

The gap with national averages also proved to be the case with the housing status of parent's surveyed. Just 18% of parents said they were homeowners compared to a national average of 51% whilst 10% said they were living in temporary accommodation. Meanwhile, 14% of parents said they were unemployed almost 9-10% higher than the national rate of 4.2% and the London rate of 5.2% (Office for National Statistics 2018).

School

Children and young people gave a mixed account of their experience at school with 20% saying they enjoyed school compared to 29% who said they didn't; a further 46% said they sometimes enjoyed school. Their motivation and approach to school work and homework was also mixed. For example, 34% they did not work hard at school or at homework whilst 47% and 44% respectively said they sometimes work hard at school and homework.

However, the level of temporary (39%) and permanent exclusions (19%) of the young people surveyed demonstrated very serious concerns around their participation in education and learning, and once again, the rates of exclusion are dramatically higher than national averages – (4.29% for temporary exclusions and 0.08% for permanent exclusions).

Not surprisingly over half of teachers (51%) said their biggest challenge was their pupils' motivation and attitude towards school. A further 41% said their biggest challenge was their pupils' emotional and behavioural difficulties whilst over a third of teachers (34%) said they had been physically assaulted by a pupil. When viewed alongside the percentage of parents who said they struggled with their child's behaviour (52%) it becomes clear that attitude and emotional and behaviour difficulties pose very considerable obstacles to children's learning and development.

Out of School Learning

Only 18% of children said their parents regularly helped them with their homework whilst 40% said their parents never helped them. Meanwhile, only 17% of children in the survey said they were attending any kind of out of school tuition. Given around 250 existing EYLA students also completed the survey, the net percentage of children in our catchment area and community who are attending after school tuition and support is much closer to zero.

Beyond the limited learning opportunities available to children and young people there also appears to be a dearth of other community based activities. For example, only 23% of children and young people said they attended any kind of youth club (only 15% of parents said their child attended a youth club). Interestingly, 65% of teachers and 55% of parents think there are not enough out of school activities available to their children.

Anti Social Behaviour

In the absence of constructive out of school activities it is not surprising the high percentage of children who said they had participated in some form of anti-social behaviour. In particular the surveys made very real the dangers posed to children by gangs and knife crime. Almost half of children surveyed (40%) said they had had some contact or participation in local gangs whilst 43% said they had been or know of close friends or family who had been victims of knife crime. Almost a quarter of children surveyed had been in trouble with the police (18% of parents said their child has been in trouble with the police).

Parents and teachers were in agreement the biggest danger to children is local gangs – 58% and 56% respectively. Meanwhile, 59% of teachers said they worried about their pupils' safety when they left school.

Future Life Chances

Whilst children and young people surveyed (52%) had a broadly optimistic view of their future life chances parents (39%) and teachers (69%) were in agreement that they feared for their children's future. Teachers also said they thought around 25% of their pupils would not be in education, employment or training (NEET) when they left school.

Ray Lewis, CEO of EYLA, commented:

“The sheer range of challenges our young people have to deal with is laid bare by this survey and demonstrates just why EYLA is so vital in providing alternatives to the violence, poverty and exclusion they experience in their daily lives”



About EYLA

Based in the London Borough of Newham, since 2002, EYLA was set up by community leaders to work with local, disengaged, disadvantaged boys identified as being at risk of social and educational exclusion. Eastside was established with a mission of social mobility and inclusion: referred boys and now girls are typically aged 8 -16.

EYLA runs education programmes for primary and secondary aged children and young people. We provide alternative provision and also operate a full supplementary education programme including out of school tuition, leadership training, in-school workshops and a scholars' programme which provides opportunities for children and young people to attend state and independent boarding schools. We work with children and young people many of whom live in challenging home circumstances and those that may have experienced interruptions to their education. Our programmes remove barriers to learning, support educational recovery, accelerate learning and offer enrichment and extend opportunities. We work ruthlessly towards levelling the playing field for children who experience social and education disadvantages.

Our programme has proved highly effective. For example, amongst the 19 young leaders who took their GCSEs last year, 95% achieved grades A-C (compared to a national average of 66%). Meanwhile, amongst the 16 young leaders who took A' Levels last year 94% achieved 3 A' Levels and 81% secured a place at university. Indeed, as of 2017 80% of our Alumni were attending university or had completed their degree.

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