

# PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

Connection

Wellbeing



Community

Safety

© Julius Amadi

## CONNECT STUDY

CONtributions of social NEtworks to Community Thriving

# About CONNECT:



The CONtributions of social NEtworks to Community Thriving (CONNECT) study helps us understand the best ways to promote good mental health among racially minoritised communities.

We know that minoritised communities, which include those who have been historically excluded from involvement in our cities, as well as those continuing to face other barriers to civic participation, experience poorer mental health than others.

People usually belong to more than one social group (intersectional) which may lead to different experiences. The CONNECT study focuses primarily on Black and other racially minoritised groups, with an intersectional focus accounting for gender, sexuality, migration, socio-economic status, and more.

CONNECT has worked to amplify community voices to foster more equitable, health-promoting neighbourhoods. Through diverse methods, our projects have sought to understand community experiences of food insecurity, skills, employment, violence against women and girls, and community safety.



# About the project:

Photovoice is a qualitative research method often used to gain insights into community research and give voice to those socially excluded in society.

Taking a participatory action research approach, Photovoice participants click and select photographs in relation to broad research aims. Following this, community strengths and concerns can be explored and turned into actionable knowledge.

This zine features photographs taken in either Southwark or Lambeth, alongside captions and discussion points. The photographs represented things that participants felt were important areas of reflection and discussion in their communities.

The participants also grouped their photographs into themes after writing captions and discussing how they all intersect, whilst relating them to the CONNECT research aims. The themes are:

1. Inequalities
2. Connection
3. Food Insecurity and Cost of Living
4. Power and Family
5. Protecting Women and Girls
6. Education, Knowledge and Learning
7. Safety and Health
8. Mental Health and Wellbeing

## **THEME ONE: INEQUALITIES**

**Participants grouped the following photos under the theme of inequalities, noting how they represented issues from policing to housing.**



# Police Presence

© Perkins



Crime rates in Brixton rising. Police presence remains at the ultimate low.

**‘The disproportionate  
policing happening in  
Brixton compared to  
other areas of London.’**

**‘The inadequacies  
of the police force  
in mitigating crime.’**

# Lambeth Housing's Homeless Neighbours

© Perkins



Growth and development in the community whilst homelessness remains the same.

‘Lambeth’s lack of action around housing and homelessness.’

‘The irony of a homeless person sleeping next to Lambeth Council and Housing offices.’

‘Gentrification and the realities of local people living in South London.’

# Spreading Love to the Community

© Shaz



**The hub strengthens communities and supports low-income families, but it's not heavily promoted and relies on word of mouth.**

**'It fosters a strong sense of community and allows people experiencing loneliness to socialise.'**

**'Many people don't know about community hubs like these because of misinformation and disconnect.'**

# A Home Away From Home

© Vanessa Fabz



A flat that is considered dangerous but a home to many.

‘When I moved into this building at a young age, I felt intimidated by its appearance and its location (Peckham).’

‘Challenge the stereotype that these homes are “ghetto.”’

‘This block of flats is due to be demolished by 2027 due to fire safety concerns but this means people have been abruptly forced out their homes with little consideration of their welfare.’

# A New Housing Development

© CW



How will this help the local community?

**‘New housing developments, including changing social housing into new builds, means that people who used to live in these areas can’t afford to anymore.’**

**‘Are new builds the solution to the housing crisis? What can be done to support the local communities in Lambeth?’**

# The Reality of Housing Insecurity

© CW



Highlighting the complexities of homelessness.

**‘The complexities around being homeless, including issues of safety, theft and turf wars.’**

**‘The various reasons for being homeless such as rises in the cost of living, but also personal reasons such as family relationships and trauma.’**

## **THEME TWO: CONNECTION**

**Participants grouped the following photos under the theme of connection, looking at community, social inclusion and multiculturalism.**



# Donation in Action

© Elegant Flavour



Interactive social gatherings within the community they live in.

‘This photo sparked discussion around the need for funding local community spaces.’

‘The call to action shows how vital these experiences are for families.’

‘To those who are limited to properties who have not got a balcony or garden, this space enables them to have their own utopia.’

# A Cinema That Supports Its Local Community

© Vanessa Fabz



An independent cinema that takes pride in their local community.

**‘Peckhamplex is a great example of an independent business that gives back and adheres to principles of community and connection in terms of employment.’**

**‘We need more of these types of establishments in South London, especially in the era of gentrification.’**

# Here Today, Gone 2moro

© Perkins



**A job to be seen as less than, paying less than.**

**‘The importance of community workers was a recurrent theme across the workshops, from street cleaners to librarians to community hub workers.’**

**‘It’s important to advocate for community workers, especially in terms of employment challenges such as fair pay.’**

**‘Where we would be without our community workers?’**

# Leisure/Enjoyment Rooted in Strength and Safety

© Zyn

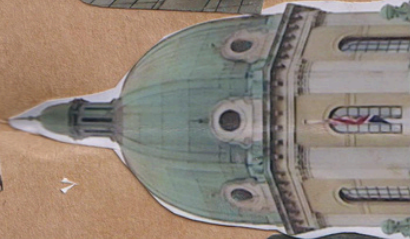


A hub for meeting old/new friends and making friends. Home away from home, strength and safety in leisure. Source of employment/income and poverty alleviation.

‘The photographer spoke about the beauty and leisure associated with the London Eye. They talked about it as being a place to create and share memories with kids and a point of escapism for families.’

‘Other group members shared this view and reminisced on school trips to the London Eye when they were younger. However, other group members spoke about the hostility they felt going into central London and how they felt looked down upon and unwelcome.’

COUNCIL HALL



Zyn



# **The Major Resting Place Both in Summer and Winter**

© Julius Amadi



**A Public Space – "busy chaos in a place of silence."**

**'Brixton is a multicultural hub, always awake and busy This tree and surrounding area hosts people from all walks of life, including those usually socially excluded such as people with mental illness.'**

**'The group agreed that there is a need for more inclusive, outdoor spaces like this for diverse groups of people to come together.'**

# Faith in Action

© Elegant Favour



Trees lining the road on a busy street and a liberating view of the church which has strong community involvement to help integrate the locals spiritually and physically.

‘Faith structures were a holistic point of support for many community members – spiritual, physical, mental and financial.’

‘The group spoke about the importance of investing in the maintenance of churches and other religious spaces.’

# United We Stand

© Curie Freeborn



**St John's Church at Waterloo was established by the government in response to the growing poverty amongst the people. Today it stands in glory and as a sanctuary to the marginalised in the community.**

**'The church is committed to activism as it regularly advocates for marginalised people within the community.'**

**'They exhibit niche artists in its basement, supporting the artistry of local residents.'**

**THEME THREE:  
FOOD INSECURITY AND  
COST OF LIVING**

**The group identified food insecurity and the cost of living as significant challenges in their communities and outlined the importance of community hubs supporting those struggling.**



# Community Hub and Foodbank

© Angami



**A foodbank and community hub offering free information and advice on filling out forms for benefits, GPs and welfare.**

**‘It’s vital for communities to have a space that not only tackles food insecurity but addresses intersectional issues around welfare, health and wellbeing.’**

**‘A place of warmth, community and giving.’**

# Bridging the Gap Between Surviving and Thriving

© Spawill



A focus on quality over quantity is important to avoid food insecurity.

‘The photographer talked about community members’ difficulties in accessing good quality food and how this often leads to poor nutrition and compromises people’s health.’

‘Local governments need to focus more on the quality of food provision over the quantity of food provision in their local area.’

# Community Shop

© Angami



Helps the community with by providing discounted food and a canteen for families.

**‘Many group members spoke about the importance of this community shop. It was seen as a vital part of the community, providing affordable nutritious food and being a place to socialise.’**

**‘We need for more shops like this to support local communities in Southwark and Lambeth.’**

<sup>2</sup>  
Strengthening Communities & Supporting  
families on low income. not  
heavily promoted and relies on  
word of mouth bringing the  
Community Together.

and very important that the mothers  
have somewhere to bring there  
children to play and have lunch  
and breakfast has all meals and  
breakfast is £1.50 and also the  
children have some have a happy  
involvement



## **THEME FOUR: POWER AND FAMILY**

**Group members felt that power and family were two principal themes in the photos. They split 'power and family' into two concepts: hope and freedom.**



# Hope, the Evidence of Things Not Seen

© Curie Freeborn



This Windrush memorial speaks to the strength of family and the power of unity.

‘Located in Waterloo Station, this photo represents travel and freedom: “there’s a future, things will be better, let’s think together.”’

‘It shows the power of family and hope.’

‘This statue was given as an example of how social monuments can be designed to create change.’

# Secure Housing

© Elegant Favour



A home showing their support for families in Gaza. This shows that their freedom of speech is being expressed without any limitation, a luxury not afforded to everyone.

‘The photographer voiced that they have lived in various temporary accommodation over the past 10 years, unable to express their social or political views on their doorstep. They feel this has limited their freedom to participate in activism.’

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‘The ‘Help Families in Gaza’ poster is advocating for the justice of Palestinian people and highlighting immigration issues in the UK.’

## **THEME FIVE: PROTECTING WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**Protecting women and girls from violence was an important theme for group members. This issue was often contextualised in terms of the specific safety challenges faced by racially or ethnically minoritised women and girls.**



# Places of safety and childhood memories

© Olamide



A young black woman on a swing, in touch with her inner child.

‘A lot of the time, violence against women and girls happens in spaces that should be safe, like a local park. The photographer talked about the effects of this on mental health as consequences of feeling constantly on edge and concerned for their safety.’

‘The woman in the photo is on a swing to represent being in touch with her childhood self and reflecting on the fact that black girls are often forced to grow up ahead of their time, particularly concerning issues of violence.’

# Let Black Girls Be Girls

© Vanessa Fabz



Coming from an African household or immigrant household, there is an expectation of the older sibling to take on much more responsibility than a child should. They may feel forced to do it due to feeling guilty or they have no choice but to do it.

‘The photographer spoke about the pressures of being a child from an immigrant background and the financial and career expectations placed on you at a young age to contribute to the family, and that these pressures carried on into adulthood.’

‘There was group discussion around this being a cultural norm and in some cases an honour, but that there is a need for parents to be held accountable when the burden placed on children to support the family is too high.’

October

14

© Olamide

RST ends 27 Oct

21

Gates close from

28

17:30

17:30

Gates open in the morning by 07:30hr.

Lambeth Service Centre: 020 7926 1000

Lambeth



# LOOK OUT

## FOR LAMBETH

# CATCALLING, HASSLING, PESTERING.

THESE THINGS ARE HARASSMENT.



Call it out. Report it.

# E-Scooters

**THEME SIX:  
EDUCATION, LEARNING  
AND KNOWLEDGE**

**Group members spoke about the importance of being able to learn and access knowledge, and the significance of spaces that offer this, such as libraries and museums.**



# Family Matters

© spawill



**Incorporating financial education in schools as part of curriculum to build better/stronger community security and family security.**

**'This photo opened up a discussion in the group around the importance of empowering individuals from a young age.'**

**'When young people are empowered, they can build connections with their neighbourhood based on communal care rather than relying on external government bodies.'**

# **Brixton Library, the Biggest in the Borough**

© Julius Amadi



**Collecting books back to the 10th century, a place of education and community.**

**‘The photographer described this library as a safe space and where they spend most of their time, commenting on the welcoming staff and the vast access to knowledge.’**

**‘Many other group members agreed with this sentiment and expressed discontent with the number of libraries closing down in recent years.’**

# Public Library

© Angami



A centre point for local information, social events and free access to education.

‘The group expressed the many ways the library, and librarians, have supported them in the past (e.g., by sending correspondence, improving digital literacy and hosting kids classes) and that every effort should be made to keep libraries up and running in local communities.’

‘It was also described as a place to access knowledge and education and an essential community space.’

# Retro-resourceful

© Zyn



To show the rich knowledge of resources from old London which has made the tourist new London.

‘The photographer spoke about the importance of being able to share and pass on historical knowledge to children and future generations.’

‘The fact that the Imperial War Museum is free also highlighted as important as participants felt there are fewer and fewer free activities for families in Southwark/Lambeth.’

# Yesterday's Masterpiece in Clay-N-Gold

© Zyn



The artistry of calligraphy (words written in gold), a hub for information, teaching, growth and self-development.

‘The photographer admired the intricacies of the County Hall building and reflected on how the “new London” does not reflect the architectural beauty of “old London”.’

‘They felt this was a shame as creativity is an important and inspiring aspect of thriving communities, and that there needs to be more investment in creative pursuits in their local community.’

## **THEME SEVEN: HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**Various practical recommendations were made through participants' photos around improving health and safety aspects of infrastructure in Southwark and Lambeth.**



# Working to make London's roads safer

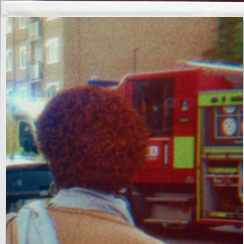
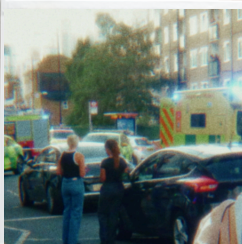
© spawill



Restrictions may cause congestion and more pollution in Brixton. Incentives should be offered for cheaper public transport to encourage public safety.

‘The photographer spoke about how they believe that the relatively newly introduced 20mph speed limit actually causes more harm than good, particularly in terms of traffic congestion, likelihood of accidents and increased pollution.’

‘They encouraged a push to improve access to public transport to alleviate the traffic burden on roads in Southwark and Lambeth.’



# Assemble!

© Burhan Ali



A fire assembly point

‘The photographer expressed their concern at this fire assembly point near their place of work due to small signage, proximity to waste and the inaccessible location.’

‘They talked about the need for comprehensive fire safety and broader health and safety measures in the workplace.’

# Safety – Know Your Role

© Burhan Ali



Pedestrians crossing the road despite signal on the green.

‘Multiple group members said they thought this crossing outside Brixton station was dangerous due to the heavy traffic congestion and the number of people.’

‘Though group members spoke about the fact that Lambeth Council has made various infrastructural changes in previous years to help mitigate this risk, the photographer still felt more could be done, including individual responsibility to adhere to traffic lights.’

# No Smoking Please!

© Burhan Ali



An underused and neglected space which can lead to disregarding the non-smoking sign.

'The 'no smoking' sign in the photo was discussed as being ineffective and reflected a broader problem of signage that does not effectively communicate its message'

This prompted a discussion about the accessibility of workspaces.

## **THEME EIGHT: MENTHAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

**Though mental health and wellbeing was a common thread through all themes, the group felt it also warranted a separate theme for one of the photos around nature and access to green space.**



# **The importance of nature/green space in promoting good mental health**

© CW



**Vauxhall City Farm.**

**‘The photographer spoke about Vauxhall City Farm being a place of solace and respite in a busy city and a place that they feel safe going to.’**

**‘This sparked group discussion around the importance of having access to free community nature spaces, particularly for children and young adults who can learn from these spaces.’**

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**The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the ESRC or King's College London.**

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**Zine design by Zoe Thompson of sweet-thang zine.**





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Mental Health

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