

Channel 4 - Events
Teens, Travel and Public Space
8 September 2009

Opening Remarks

Matt Locke

Commissioning Editor, Channel 4 Education

I am going to give you a brief context about why you are here and what we want out of today. As many of you know, Channel 4 Education normally has a couple of themes each year that we commission against and one of our themes for next year is territories. We spoke about this at a briefing in June. We used territories as quite a broad theme and many of the ideas we were getting back were dealing with issues like gangs and really quite entrenched problems of social deprivation in teens. To be quite frank, I think that is going to be a tough one for us to deal with for lots of reasons, partly because what we try to do and like to do at Channel 4 Education is projects which try to help a lot of teens in very different social situations and also make a real change. One of the problems with gangs is the social and economic issues around gang behaviour are so deeply entrenched it is very hard to know how we can make a big impact.

Therefore, I have refocused the brief more to focus on teens and travel and public space, because what a lot of teens share from the age of 10 upwards are the problems and opportunities of travelling in public space – whether that is getting from home to school, from home to college or from home to work. All teens are commuters in a way, yet teens' relationships with public space is complex and often problematic. Therefore, what we want to do is deal with the territory theme, but rather than dealing with it via the extremes of people who are stuck in endemic problems with gangs, deal with a much broader swathe of youngsters who have to traverse public space and have huge issues with that.

Now, we did not have any research to back up our hunches that this was going to be a big issue, so we asked Jenny Owens and Ruby Pseudo Consulting, who are experts in doing work with teens. They work with a lot of mobile phone and sportswear brands looking at teen issues and their consumption of technology and use of public space. Over the last couple of months, Ruby has been doing some brilliant research with teens around the UK, asking them what their issues are with the use of public space and what their tactics are for dealing with them. We wanted to commission that research, share it with you and then see you all over the next couple of weeks, month or so coming back to us with ideas that we can commission to address these issues. As I said, what we are looking for are ideas that can be picked up and used by lots and lots of teens, not necessarily only those who are at the very extremes of gang behaviour, but dealing with everyday kids' issues and the issues of public space.

I am going to let Jenny do the presentation and then we will have a Q&A session at the end. I will now hand over to Ruby and Shaun.

Teens, Travel and Public Space

Jenny Owen and Shaun

Ruby Pseudo Consulting

Jenny Owen

I. Ruby Pseudo Consulting

As Matt said, I am Jenny Owen. My granddad was born ‘Owens’, but died ‘Owen’, for some reason. I normally have to explain that because most people think I am Ruby and they get very disappointed when I walk into the room and say I am Jenny, but Ruby is, in fact, my pen name. My pen name is Ruby Pseudo and I run Ruby Pseudo with: Shaun, who is the next-oldest person after me; with Rosie, who looks a bit like Madonna, and she is 23. ‘T’ used to carry a knife. He is from Leytonstone and used to be part of the whole gang thing – quite a pseudo gang thing, not too bad. He is now a 19-year-old ‘It’ boy. There is also Ellie. As well as us on a daily basis there are 500 kids worldwide with whom I work. The reason we keep it at 500 is because it means it can expand and contract as much as I need it to. When it is with 500 kids it means that we can keep quite a personal relationship with them. If you saw my desktop, it said ‘Romania Expenses’ at the top, which was Shaun and Rosie’s expenses from going to Romania to wish one of our bloggers a happy 18th birthday. She is the youngest blogger in Romania.

The one thing about us – and this is why I like working with Matt – is there is no bullshit with us. If I do not know the answer to something, I will ask kids. We always tell the truth; I think that is why a lot of people choose not to work with us, because there is no sycophancy. Everything you see here, therefore, has come from the kids; there are none of our own hypotheses. If it was a hypothesis and we have been able to prove it, we will show that through what we say about the kids. Lastly, it is not about hearing of the kids, it is hearing from the kids.

I call them ‘kids’ because I do not really like calling them ‘young people’ and stuff. I hope no one is offended.

II. Research Design

Shaun and Sarah worked on this as well. There were face to face interviews, *ad hoc* interviews, online interviews, they would wander into community centres and parks and speak to people on tubes. We had 26 key respondents we spoke to in a face-to-face interview save for Aberdeen which was a telephone interview, a testimonial and then they also had to fill in quite an extensive online questionnaire. On top of that, we interviewed an extra 44 people, so in total we interviewed 70 kids across the UK, which although it is not a big quantity it is more about the ‘goose bump’ insights that come along with that.

Shaun

As Jenny pointed out and as Matt alluded to in his introduction, it was about the everyday kids, so this was, as she said, 26 respondents across the country who were a good mix of age, creed, race,

class, wealth, although all those things are slightly un-PC to bring up. We feel that there was a good mix of the known and the unknown with regards to travelling around safely or being streetwise. We have just highlighted London here because there were more people from London; we over-specified on London given the Rowntree report.

Jenny Owen

I am going to reiterate your point about everyday kids. I think some of the statistics that you will see in here are interesting. We are not talking about kids from just privileged areas or underprivileged areas. We are talking about kids from absolutely everywhere. Out of the 26 respondents there was only one person who was a reformed and ex-gang member, but with the statistics you have to keep in mind that it was not gang culture research – you made a very big point of it not being gang culture research. It was kids from across the UK from the age of 14 and we cut it off at 17, because normally they can drive at that point.

As Matt also said at the beginning, the Rowntree report by Kintree and about five other people showed that territory is placing constraints upon young people and we wanted to find out what those constraints were, what the implications were and exactly what the nuances were within it.

Shaun

These are the 26 key respondents. As I said before, they are of various classes and wealth – just trying to cover all the different areas of society.

Jenny Owen

III. General Findings

Here are the topline findings; in fact, this is more of a contents page. In terms of gender differences, there are things like females tend to think sex is violence, they do not see it as what violence really means. It is about invisibility, safety in numbers, deliberating and deciding daily. The kinds of concerns and considerations that they have on a daily basis were not something that I had to fathom when I was their age at all. We talked about school rivalry, because that still exists. I think a few of these are assumptions. They are things you could probably put your money on and say, 'I think these are some of the problems facing kids' and what we try to do is delve a bit deeper and explain it in a way that they would explain it best.

IV. Towns and Cities versus Rural Areas

In terms of the big cities and towns and the rural areas, which was how we divided it, it is interesting that for both of them their immediate area is where they feel safe. In the big cities and towns it is their local area, for example someone from SE1 versus someone from SE23, that is where they start feeling unsafe or a bit wary in their local areas, whereas in the smaller rural areas they still feel quite safe. There is also the converse with big cities and towns: the further away they are the safer they feel. For example, if they are shopping in the middle of town, if they are from the west and they are over in the east, they are so anonymous at that point that they are not that worried, whereas in rural areas they stick out more. For example, kids in Cheltenham who went to Gloucester and were dressed as a scene kid, as they explained themselves, felt less safe because they stood out far more.

V. Travelling Around

Fifty-two percent agreed that there were certain areas of where they were that they would avoid; again, this is everyday kids. Forty-three percent said you had to know what bits of your area you can safely go in and what bits you cannot. Thirty-six percent said there were bits of their areas that intimidated them so they would always avoid them. The areas that they avoid and what makes them avoid an area we talk about later. Thirty-five percent agreed that they wished it was easier to get around their own areas and 30% said they wished it was safer to get around their own areas. At the end of the document we look at what we as adults have put into place to try to help kids travel from A to B and then we discuss some of the solutions that they thought would be best for getting from A to B.

Twenty-seven percent of the total respondents agreed that it can feel awkward and that they can feel slightly uneasy about travelling around. We spend our whole time travelling on tubes and trains without much care in the world, although last night I walked past someone who said, 'You have to get down here and bring a shank', which made me say, 'Oh good, I will go home then.' It is easier for us to move around. Of all the respondents there were only two who ever took taxis. For them, they have to plan things and they have to be on constant alert to move around.

VI. Incidents

This is interesting: 64% of them had had things happen to them, from brothers being slashed down their back to one girl, 'O', she goes to the 'stab school' – I promised Shaun I would not do any of them, but she called it the 'stab school' – where another girl smashed a bottle in her mate's face. We had 'E' in west London who is mugged so often he just carries a brick around with him. I have given him phones before and he just hands them to his mum.

Shaun

By 'brick', she means a brick-like phone, not a real brick.

Jenny Owen

A kid will tell you, 'it is a Nokia', but they are one of my clients so I should not say that. It is a Nokia phone. He carries an old phone and we talk about phones later on as well, but the fact is that 64% of them had an anecdote to relate that involved being stabbed, being mugged or even being killed, and it is almost normal to them. I think some of that is from the media, but it is part of their life.

This was really difficult research for me because I tend to talk about folklore and the media turning them into folk devils and things like that, whereas the fact that it is not just gangs having to deal with this was difficult.

Shaun

VII. Gender Differences

There were some quite stark differences between the genders immediately, which Jenny alluded to earlier. The first one is the type of violence which both experience and the differences in locality.

For girls, the larger cities, such as London, Birmingham and Bristol, they found that more populous areas were, by and large, safer. They felt that they were not alone and they felt safer when there were in large groups. For boys, it was the opposite, which we will come on to shortly.

With regard to the different types of violence they faced, for the boys it was much more physical and aggressive, whereas for the girls there were a lot more sexually explicit worries, which is probably to be expected: rape, being heckled by groups of boys, and paedophilia.

For boys hanging around in groups there tends to be a sliding scale of when you feel safe. These blocks represent a person each. When there is one person there is no responsibility for others, which is good. With two the feeling of security increases and then you have the sweet spot, which is three or four. After that, as the slide says, bravado tends to kick in and they themselves become perceived, rightly or wrongly, as either marking someone's territory or creating excitement.

Jenny Owen

If they are scared of other gangs, when you get to six or seven kids you look like a gang, so you are almost inviting trouble. Also, as it says here, with five or six people you have a united bravado and we found from the anecdotes that they were just pushing people a bit more than normal.

This feeling safest by themselves is just a masculine trait though and a lot of that is to do with 'I do not have to be responsible for my girlfriend anymore' and they just had to look after themselves. The sweet spot is around three or four though.

One of the weirdest things I found from this research was the language that girls use to talk about these sexual problems. Even when they said girls had to deal with violence that violence was sexual violence. Sometimes they spoke about being mugged, but they would never speak about being stabbed or killed; it was just something they did not think occurred to them. The language that they use is parental and quite antiquated. It was things like you have to be careful of peeping toms. 'N' was talking about 'disgusting monsters', we heard things like 'hairy old men.' It is almost as if because of this outdated way of speaking it does not translate into the modern age, there is something almost quite fairytale about it. We have also written 12,000 words on this, and one of the things that we say is that there is no enchantment in rape and the fact that they are speaking about it with these quite softly-softly childlike words I think is quite interesting. There was no real, strong language when they were talking about paedophilia or about rape. As you can see here, 'N' says, 'You have to be streetwise about it.' Being streetwise, as you can imagine, is normally about what you are wearing. I love this misspelt quote from 'A' about the fact that she is a girl is why she does not get approached.

Shaun

VIII. Location Differences

There were some differences, as you would imagine, between the rural and urban locations in terms of the type of violence thought of. This is mainly aimed at boys. In rural and more provincial towns the violence that they worried about or, indeed, encountered seemed to be much more ad hoc, spurious and opportunistic, bred more out of boredom as opposed to any kind of deep-rooted antipathy towards someone else, for example. Although it seems quite perverse to say that the beatings meted out were more fitting of the crime, you could historically frame the violence in

terms of what probably we all had at school in the playground, like a few punches thrown but nothing too sinister. Grudges also tended to be slightly more transient and short-lived, with quite a big hullabaloo when stuff kicked off and then dying down reasonably quickly.

In the inner city areas, all what I have just said does go on, but there was a difference in terms of the violence meted out, there seemed to be more worry about the means of it – weaponry, tooling up, guns, stabbings, all the stuff that Kintreee *et al* covered in broader detail. In addition, the bordering areas of where violence occurred tended to be of similar socioeconomic means, so the violence tended not to be class-based. In the provincial areas it was more class-based, however. It was drawn more along youth culture lines, picking differences in the way they speak, which school they go to and their sartorial form (if they are goths or whatever), and there was a lot of use of the word ‘chavs’, picking up on these things and your look and standing out and being different.

Postcodes also played a large part in the inner city. It tended to be much less about how people looked and more about ownership and power over one’s area or ‘manor’, as they put it, and the violence was a lot more targeted because of these more deep-rooted problems. Grudges also tended to hold sway over areas, schools, a lot more. There were numerous examples of people being stabbed that we heard about, altercations over mobile phones, which then were seemingly sorted out at the time except for one tragic case we heard about of one child in Southwark who was stabbed and then died of a seemingly nonsensical altercation earlier.

These are some of the things that were said. This is when Jan was in her school. I think this was leading up to the aforementioned incident.

Jenny Owen

There was something that ‘J’ said that I quite liked: she did her homework to keep herself out of trouble, which is not the reason you should do your homework.

IX. Taking Places Off the Map

We talk about taking places off the map. There are lots of bits of London and the UK that just become invisible. The first example I am going to give is London. This is ‘N’ and ‘I’ marking off the tube map. You can see ‘I’ opening quote. She is from east London, Essex – she will call it east London. She blocks off Walthamstow, Hackney, Peckham, Brixton and anywhere with a bad reputation, which means if this is the tube map, she has just blocked off this. In fact, when we gave the tube map to ‘I’ and ‘N’ they blocked off this. Much of that is urban myth, it is stuff they have heard or read in the paper. They did not block off where I live, so that was nice, but they are just places they will never visit.

I started doing this map and then it got to 6am and I stopped, but you can already see the number of places they are blocking off. When you look at Brixton in context, if Lambeth has the largest population of any borough and a quarter of Lambeth is Brixton, they are completely invisible to ‘I’. She has just decided not to go there. One of the things we spoke about in the initial meetings was deciding things like whether to go to a concert or not and a lot of kids just will not see a band play in Brixton because they do not know how to get there or back safely or they just would never go to Brixton. I think for anyone in south London or working with kids in south London this is not something that is new to us, but I do not think we can ever underestimate that Thames divide. It is basically north, east and west versus south.

X. Avoided Places

This seemingly lovely picture was another one of the surprises that came out of the research. Public parks are places that councils have given over as happy, friendly, civic places. They are being written off left, right and centre. We heard about duck pond, we heard about Clay Hill Park, Greenhead Park, Huddersfield Park, Surrey Park and Burgess Park.

On top of that, other places that they are avoiding are supermarkets, which came up time and time again. From my point of view, a lot of these places are just invisible. To me, as an adult, I do not look at what is happening behind the supermarket, but it kept coming up as a place where kids were doing drugs or where kids were drunk.

Also, there is a place of natural beauty where we might walk with our dogs and kids would never go because it just so remote.

'O' made a big point about the fact that her school was in the middle of an estate and it meant that she knew how to deal with that a lot better or at least to knock some of the presumptions on the head. However, for most kids it was, 'I would never go near this estate', 'I would never go near this estate.'

Shaun

XI. Route Changing

Another thing that was common was route changing. This can be broken down into two main areas: pre-emptive route planning almost and a reactive way of getting around.

The pre-emptive route changing was not a norm, but it was interesting to see that the two different ends of the socioeconomic and social spectrum were the ones affected by this the most. They were people who were younger, had a limited but certain amount of autonomy over their leisure time and there were also people who were involved in gang-related incidents and things like that.

Jenny Owen

Just going back to the slide you missed, lots and lots of kids said 'litter' and we can see this as a problem that youth create, but in fact it is something that is quite a warning to them to stay away from an area. They spoke about smashed up telephone boxes, they spoke about a lot of litter and when we were speaking to 'R' and delved a bit deeper it was basically about the fact that that area then smacked of somewhere that, first of all, no one went to and no one cared for, so straight away it was somewhere they would choose not to go to.

Homeless people also came up as a really big problem: homeless people asking them for money, homeless people being drunk, homeless people shouting at them.

Us in a pub on a Friday or a Thursday or whenever, when we are hanging outside pubs and we are drunk (that might just be me) is a really scary thing for these kids. We interviewed kids up to the age of 17, so it is not only the 12-year olds who thought it was intimidating and I think that is something that we can easily forget when we are out there.

Noise came up as well, even the noise of dogs barking. There was a survey that came out recently from the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) about how kids are using dogs more. I look after someone's dog, because he was banned and I get stopped all the time and people want to know if she is breeding, because that is the new weapon. You can stop a kid for carrying a knife, but you cannot stop a kid at the moment for walking a dog and so dogs are the new weapons. Therefore, even the sound of dogs barking was putting kids off areas.

Shaun

In conversation with 'J', as you see she lives in Peckham in Southwark, and this quote indicates the very *laissez faire* attitude to changing her routes, which was constant across the board, the fact that people wanted to change their direction, the speed at which they walked and their routes. This elicited almost no annoyance, it was very much accepted, so for 'J' to say the police cordons are just a bit of a bother was quite revealing, I thought.

Jenny Owen

There is nonchalance about what they have to deal with, whereas to me, I just think that is ridiculous. I cannot believe that they have to navigate around their own cities like that. There is something quite sad in the fact that to them it is 'well, that is part of what we do.'

Shaun

As I said, traversing an area did not elicit much annoyance at all, but once someone had gone from A to B any need for them having to move on, because someone is telling them to piss off their football pitch or whatever, did annoy. I think we cover that in the conclusions.

Jenny Owen

My apologies for there being a graffiti image. I tend to not use graffiti images. I love this. If you do not mind, I am going to read this out because the areas that he covers off are hilarious.

'I do feel cautious, for example, when I go to London with friends. I make sure that I do not take valuables. I keep my money close and on my person. I also feel that my clothing choice reflects on whether I am a target or not. As I have quite a smart dress sense, some people assume that I have a lot of money and valuables on me and this can encourage people to approach me in order to steal my valuables. Subsequently, I do make a conscious effort to not openly advertise that I have my phone on me and I tend to stay in a large group so as to not appear as if I am alone and an easy target.'

That is a summation quote in itself. It touches on all of the main things that these kids were speaking about.

XII. Taking Possessions Outside

Some more of the things that they have to deal with we are going to discuss here. We talk about them being post-modern and maverick, because everything we might have had to deal with or we can presume they deal with they have all added their own twists to, to make it make more sense for

their life. For instance, some kids who were taking their phones out of the house were using things like Google Maps outside. A lot more kids have two phones.

I normally talk about 'triple tech teens' and quite often that is about swapping their SIM cards over, but now it is also about how this phone can leave the house and this phone cannot. So many kids have iPods and we heard about Nano Chromatics and all the different iPods. They are not leaving the house. They listen to them in their bedroom because they cannot listen to them outside. If they are going out with their iPod, their white headphones are stuffed down their top, which is something that we all see; it is that homogenous earphone thing.

The possessions that they decide to take out with them are interesting because there is a kind of duality. Whilst they know that having their phone on them makes them a main target, it is also something that is imperative for them to take out with them.

There are also constant deliberations and considerations. I love this quote from 'O', saying, 'It is not just about planning a journey or thinking about your journey, but it is about considering what you really need compared to what you really want.' What I love with girls though is they say things like, 'I would never take my expensive makeup out, but I take my foundation, my mascara, my eyelash curlers.'

As I said, iPods do not really leave the house. If kids are in groups, their clothing can remain the same, but as 'G' says, sometimes he will just tone it down. There is the duality of phones, the expensive makeup and then money. One of the things that they do is whilst they might not plan their whole journey they will plan how much money they need. Over and over again we heard that they only take the amount that they need. There is also invisibility in a lot of this research. The kids become experts in being invisible. It is all about averting other people's gaze away from you and making sure you do not stand out.

Again with the phone, although they did not want to get their phone out, at the same time it was one of the first things they would do. They would pretend to text people, they would pretend to call people. I have seen kids pretending to answer the phone and then it ringing and it is because it is a safety thing. There is a quote in the research where a girl says, 'If something did happen to me at least someone would know.' Part of me is thinking 'but what would they do? All that would happen is they would hear it.'

Another thing that we talk about later is they do not know who to call, so they are calling their own peers or friends, who do not know how to help and will just say, 'Oh shit, are you okay?' that sort of thing.

Fifty-three percent of the total respondents left things at home. We do not consider what we take out. We do not go 'can I take my BlackBerry with me today? I cannot, I am going to Euston.' It is not something we have to consider at all. I do not know why I said 'Euston.'

XIII. Public Transport

If you were sitting on the top of the bus, where would you sit? Here is the answer. Do you know why you sit on the left-hand side of the bus? You can see people getting on, so that is the first safest place to sit on the bus. The second safest thing to do is to sit from the middle towards the front and straight away you are literally putting your back to people. The safest place you can sit on

the bus is here, because you can see who is getting on, you have your back to every single person behind you and you are three seats away from the stairs, so you can get off at any moment.

With buses, during the day they will all sit upstairs and from the middle forwards. For poor Jan, she was scared from 2pm onwards, which I thought was quite early, but at night you would sit downstairs next to the driver.

Shaun

It depends on the bus route as well, especially if you are in uniform and you go to a school that is in another borough, the insights we received from the kids we interviewed and from the online survey say that they certainly had a preference for sitting downstairs.

Jenny Owen

'B' is very interesting. He is the guy who used to be in a gang and has reformed. More than anyone else he had to be wary of what he was doing. He also talks about friends of his who cannot help their mum with the shopping at the supermarket because they had to go through certain areas to help bring the shopping back. This was causing big problems within the family.

Shaun

XIV. Current Fixes

There was no enthusiasm for increased CCTV. Kids are recognising that it does not seem to be doing much, it makes no difference. On this slide, 'C' from Birmingham points out quite clearly that they are only going to catch someone after they have done something. There is definitely an appetite for fewer deterrents in terms of being watched and more hands on bodies on the street.

Jenny Owen

The other thing is whenever we hear about CCTV it is, 'These men were caught on CCTV, we do not know who they are' and that is all they read constantly. They just have no belief in it at all and a police force recently said it one in a thousand things that they catch on CCTV that they solve from it.

I love this, it is just so rude. We heard this over and over again. It is an appropriation of what we think: 'I think they are really going to like table tennis. They are going to be so pleased' and it is like, 'I do not want table tennis. I just want somewhere I can go on the internet.'

We found this quite a lot. I doubt you have read the blog, but there is a very scathing post on there from me at the moment about appropriating youth culture. This is, 'Oh my God (OMG), my chunky just got funky', which means their Kit Kat has a foul smell, that is their national campaign at the moment, or depressed, 'My Kit Kat just got depressed'. However, it is not about assumptions and appropriating what you think youth want to do in their spare time and if you are going to give them a youth club it is not about putting what you think they want in it.

Shaun

XV. Feelings Towards the Police

There was not as much antipathy towards the police as you would think, although subsequent slides illustrate that there is. People want the police to perhaps not show so much force or hands on presence, but just to be around or surveying an area and they want the police to recognise where the trouble spots are, so as to make their job of getting from A to B that much easier.

Jenny Owen

XVI. The Teen Commandments

1. Solutions

At first, they found it hard to talk about solutions, so quite often in the interviews they said, 'I do not know, I do not know' and one of the reasons why we asked them to do a testimonial was because they had to write back to us and reiterate what they had said and include any solutions that they had come up with as well. As is my wont, I have done it as 'the Teen Commandments', so apologies.

2. Involve Kids

The first thing, as we have just discussed, is ask kids what they genuinely want and involve them. This is from 'R'. It is about these places being designed by children of the area and how adults have warped views of what kids want. Quite a lot of them had a cut-off point as well. They almost had a penalty system, so it was like after 17 it was 'Mate, you can drive, you do not need to be in this space. This space is more valuable to me.'

Another thing was if you do open the doors, a lot of kids felt that they could forgive other kids and it was not necessarily their fault and it was genuinely just boredom. In addition, they felt that if you offer them a helping hand and they still screw you over then they should be out. There was a lot of 'No, give them another chance' though.

3. Populate Places with People Kids can Respect

Populate their places with people they can relate to and respect. Again, 'N' is quite interesting because her brother is a mentor, her parents are youth workers and when you have someone that you can relate to it makes a difference. Volunteering is trendy almost, but quite often it is about 'this person has done a degree in this, so we will put them in that youth centre.' In fact, it is about getting people in the local area involved and people who can say, 'I used to be like you.' We did not hear about any of this. We heard about it from experts, but the kids were not aware of any kids like this working with or around any of the youth clubs.

Shaun

4. Cost

There was a big thing to do with the cost of being young, particularly in a large city like London despite the fact they have free travel and things like that. The kids in the west end, for example, would go and have a coffee and then they would have another coffee and then they are a fiver down. Whilst nobody is advocating giving free coffee away or anything like that, it is important to recognise that activities such as the cinema and things that kids do regularly cost money, so there should be free things that they want to do and one of the big things was the Orange RockCorps, was it not?

Jenny Owen

5. Orange RockCorps

Yes, getting people talking across postcodes and areas. Again it goes to forgiveness and open-mindedness that the youth have. They think it is about involving different postcodes and different schools into community projects. Something that we heard about and that I have always loved, we helped work on it this year, is the Orange RockCorps idea. I am sure you all know it, but if you do not, you volunteer for four hours and you get a free ticket. The great thing about Orange RockCorps, and again it goes back to the devil folklore of the youth, is when no brands are speaking to kids in an adult way and Orange RockCorps is saying 'I genuinely think you can make a difference.' This came up in the research over and over again.

Shaun

6. Organisations to Play a Bigger Role

There was one example where they wanted Transport for London (TfL) to recognise that some areas are not good to get to, so when a 14-year-old from SE-whatever wants to get to SE23 it would be useful if TfL recognised that getting there potentially, depending on the time of night, could be difficult and perhaps could suggest alternative routes. This is something that kids fathom for themselves and do on an everyday basis anyway.

Jenny Owen

The other thing here again is that they would not know who to ask for help, so if anything did happen on any of the London Underground or anything like that they genuinely would not know who to go to.

Shaun

7. Ensure Invisibility and Anonymity

They want to enjoy their places, as we said, but they do not have much trust in the police coming immediately, giving priority to getting a smack in the face in your local park. However, what they would like is to have almost a nudge service. This was raised a couple of times whereby perhaps

via a website or something on a more long-term basis the police can build up a database of complaints of where things happen without having to give your name or put yourself at risk. Particularly in more deprived areas there is an ingrained feedback loop of not wanting to report violence, etc, for the fear of more or retribution.

Jenny Owen

If you can have an app on your phone that says where all the hot guys are or where all the hot girls are, which you can, I do not know why you cannot have one saying, 'This is quite a dangerous area after this hour' and things like that.

In terms of time as well, we should not forget about the after school time. Whereas 3pm seems quite meek and mild to us, 3pm or 4pm is when the schools are out and that is when a lot of rivalry begins. I just thought I would throw that in there.

8. Create a Greater Sense of Ownership and Control

Create a greater sense of place and a greater sense of ownership and control by local residents. This is from the Kintree report that this research followed on from. It is one of the main things they said and it is what we based a lot of our research upon, whether kids agreed with it and how they thought they could implement it. There is a lady in Normand Park, which is a place in west London that had a lot of problems, and she is now a dedicated officer of the Park and her job is to get more and different people into the Park, because the more people you have in an area the safer kids feel. Therefore, if it is not just kids using an area, but kids and families, couples, everyone, it is a really simple thing, but populating areas brings safety.

Shaun

It also gives use value, so the space can be used for a wide variety of activities.

Jenny Owen

We have just done a big thing on binge drinking, interviewing 100 kids across the UK – that is big to me.

Shaun

Yes, regardless of whether it was a big urban space or a more rural or provincial town, one of the reasons they thought why kids just hung around was boredom, which then in turn leads to drinking. There is nothing particularly new here, I am sure you have all worked that out for yourselves, but it was interesting that the kids feel affected by it as opposed to the health risks and stuff that are associated with heavy drinking.

Jenny Owen

Kids are scared of other drunken kids as well.

9. Education

Educate kids on what to do in situations, because I genuinely think they do not know. They do not know what to do; they do not know how to defend themselves. There was a quote in the research where a kid said, 'I have no commonsense at all.' Why do they have no commonsense? We are sending kids off to university who do not know how to fend for themselves or cook, but we are also saying to kids at 12, 'You are grown up now, you can get on the bus by yourself', but they just do not know how to look after themselves. They do not know who to call; they do not know what to do. They are learning peer by peer and some of the language, as I said, is antiquated mother's language. A lot of people spent time just talking to their parents and they hope it filters through, but it has to be on every level.

10. Tools to Talk

This is something that I always say and I think it is good for you in the room as well. It is about giving them tools to talk: tools to talk to each other, tools to recommend things, tools to talk to establishment, tools to talk to TfL, tools to talk to people who can genuinely help them, which is either kids their own age, older kids or just people. I sound a bit preachy now, but the whole London Underground thing, they have to take on part of the responsibility. If you are letting kids move around your area, you have to take responsibility for that. Therefore, giving them tools to talk on as many levels as possible is one of the most important things, whether it is online or through their phone, it can be something as simple as texting or calling someone. Anything that can be done to help them we should do. Phone lines came up over and over again.

That is my last line. Thank you for listening.

Matt Locke

I found the whole visibility/invisibility thing really weird, because I can imagine teens want tools to make themselves invisible when they feel threatened, but I find it really sad when what we are trying to do to help kids travel in public spaces is make them disappear. One of the big challenges I think we have is there is not a public realm in the way there used to be that is shared. I think the message about getting more people to use public spaces together is a very interesting point, because in a way invisibility is the last resort. If nobody is going to be there to help you, the best thing you can do is make yourself disappear, when what we want to be doing is making you feel more confident.

Does anyone want to ask a question? As I said, what we tried to do is get some good, insightful, anecdotal research rather than quantitative research to spark off lots of ideas in your heads and I think there is a tonne there. Practically speaking, we are looking for projects that will kick off in 2010 and we can start development from January. At the moment, we have about £400,000 in the budget for this area, but that might change because we might be doing some work with 10 to 16-year-olds that we might be announcing soon. Therefore, we might be looking for projects that may be aimed at a younger age group and there might be more money there.

That is the kind of area we are looking in. It might be a project that rolls over from 2010 to 2011, in which case we might be able to spend more, but at the moment we are looking to kick off a couple of small projects or a big one, depending on the scale, and we want to address a lot of these issues. We want to try to get teens talking about the issues of public space, about transport. For me, there is lots of really interesting detail, such as where it is safe to sit on the bus and all the stuff

about tactics for getting from A to B, which I had a hunch about but it is brilliant to see it in the research as well.

Questions and Answers

Manisha, jamieoliver.com

This is really great. As Matt said, there are lots of different elements and things that we could unpick, but I am wondering if there is one central thing that we would like to change if we looked back on this project in 2011 and said, 'That was really successful'. Is it more about a behavioural change that would then be something that is quantitatively measured, like more kids travel further?

Matt Locke

I would not decide a project based on how well it is going to solve a particular problem. My general brief here is I think the research shows that there are lots of teens who have really quite nuanced problems with travelling in public space and I would just like them to feel more confident about being in public space. Some of those issues are really deep and entrenched and some of them, frankly, we all recognise from our own adolescence, but I think there are some particular things which have become quite bad that I think we should address. Now, we are not going to claim that we are going to save a generation or anything like that, but I do not think this is an issue which is discussed a great deal and it is not represented in the media very much. It is at the extreme, such as when someone is knifed and so on, that it hits the media, but the general story that lots and lots of kids have a pretty shit time using public transport and travelling in public space is an issue that I want to make noisier. I want to make it noisier to an audience that might be able to do something about it, but I also particularly and most importantly want to help teens help their peers have a better experience of public space.

Manisha

Just so that I am clear, is it about providing a forum where teens can help each other but also service the issues?

Matt Locke

Yes, ideally both, but it depends on the project and I am wide open to how you approach that. You could approach it through a factual project, through tools, through drama, through comedy. I really do not mind the approach. It is all your jobs to come back and pitch me ideas. It could be games, it could be whatever. What I am trying to address is helping teens understand that it is not just them having the issues, because it strikes me this is something that they probably do not discuss a lot amongst themselves.

Jenny Owen

Sometimes we heard that with the males it was bravado. They would not say things like, 'I really hate walking through there.' Some of it they all know. They know that High Street, Kensington is

one of the most dangerous places for a 14 and 15-year-old to be at the moment, which is ridiculous, it is High Street, Kensington, but it is a place that none of them will go to.

I think it is incredible that they all have to deal with this. It not as simple as going from A to B anymore, it is really complex, the considerations and everything that they deal with are ongoing.

Matt Locke

It is not just about the travel, it is about how you dress, it is what you leave behind, all that stuff.

Jenny Owen

Yes, and also what you are taking out with you, so you think 'what can I put in my bag?' We do not think that every morning.

Shaun

As I said during the presentation, they did not seem particularly bothered by a lot of it either. It is so ingrained in their everyday movement that staying alert or what we would probably state as being on edge is very normal and very regular.

Matt Locke

They have ingrained the whole idea that travelling in public space is going to be a problem to the level that they do not vocalise; they do not talk about it as a problem.

Shaun

Yes.

Matt Locke

And yet at the end they say, 'I have no commonsense', but they seem to have a lot of really sophisticated understandings and tactics for travelling.

Jenny Owen

I do think sometimes it is quite maladaptive though. I think that is one of the problems.

Matt Locke

Yes, it has become such a regular issue.

Jenny Owen

Yes, but a lot of it is almost a maladaptive form of coping though, like running into a shop is good, but it would be great if kids knew how to look after themselves. Girls talk about it more, but with boys there is that bravado.

Shaun

When we interviewed girls and we did it in pairs, we tried to do it away from a boy. Occasionally, we interviewed boys with girls because of time and one had recommended the other to be involved in the project, but where possible we tried to interview two girls together, because they have issues and perhaps a jumpy, quite brash 15-year-old is going to put them off vocalising some of their fears.

Jeremy

You touched on the difference between the rural and the urban areas, but obviously there is a lot of London and Birmingham research. Did you find that the fear factor was as great in urban and rural areas? You said they were more matter of fact about how they got through their day, but did that change depending on where they were?

Shaun

This was mainly based on what young people fear as opposed to what they have experienced, although obviously one informs the other. With regards to fear though, one of our first slides showed rural kids being further away from their entire vicinity let alone their very local and immediate surrounding area and they felt more at harm. They were worried about more urbanised areas. However, the fear of violence was ramped up anecdotally and factually in terms of the crime statistics published at the beginning of the year, because there is more use of extreme violence. Naturally, therefore, that feeds more fears about people moving around. I would say kids living in urban areas are probably much more streetwise, because there is a lot less grouping together in terms of youth cultures, there is less tribal behaviour and neo-tribalism going on and goths and scenesters and greebos and all these other things. That was continual in all provincial areas; it was touched on in more urbanised areas but it was much less. The violence was more sought out, I think.

Jenny Owen

In addition, the research was evenly split across the UK, so whilst we might have dug quite deep into London just for this presentation we made sure it was very balanced.

Participant

One of the things I was wondering was how much of the fear is based on real or imagined danger? With the High Street, Kensington, for instance, is it that it really is the most dangerous place or is it they perceive it as the most dangerous? Where is that fear coming from, because good parenting now means paranoid parenting and young children are allowed less and less space to develop independence when they are tiny, so by the time you are a teenager you have not learnt the skills to be independent. Parents are now saying, 'No, do not take the bus, I will drive you' and taxi-driving their kids around. Did they talk about that and how, 'My dad will drive me because he says...'? If that language they are using is the language of their mothers saying, 'There is a dirty old man hanging around there, you are not going on a bus', how much is that influencing their response to public space?

Jenny Owen

It is a Catch 22 situation, you can never tell a parent off for looking after their child, but especially with the girls it is almost like a fear factor. A lot of it is them saying, 'You must not do this because of this urban myth' and it comes in throughout. There are a lot of places with a bad reputation. Why does it have a bad reputation? It just has. The media and parents come into it quite a lot, so what they are hearing from their parents and what they are reading from the media is informing these decisions and it is difficult. Paranoid parenting is not helping, because it is not letting them go out there and work out how to genuinely cope with situations. So many of them just did not know what to do and we heard the quote about having no commonsense.

I think the other part of it is that it genuinely is happening; the fact that we had 64% of kids who could say something, for example.

Participant

Therefore, it justifies the paranoid parenting.

Jenny Owen

Yes, that is why it is like a Catch 22. In fact, I have been with 'E' and 'O', I was just talking to them and a load of kids came up and 'E' was like this, 'Seriously, leave me alone' and I said, 'All right.' I had no idea what was happening and he just walked off. He said, 'They jumped me last week.' These kids just bowled up while I was standing there and were like, 'Give us your phone, give us your phone.'

I live near High Street, Kensington, which sounds ridiculous, Ruby Pseudo lives near High Street, Kensington, and it is not bad. In the whole of London 25% is given over to housing estates and these people are living in very cramped areas and they just do not know how to talk to each other. There is almost no moral conduct. They do not know how to conduct themselves. They do not know enough about other people to be interested or to have things in common. The fact that Ollie says, 'I might get on really well with someone who mugs me' I think is quite interesting. It is as if they know that they could get on, but they do not know how to.

Shaun

The anecdote about High Street, Kensington came from 'O' and goes back to school rivalries. This was not so much a rivalry between two schools but the fact that there is such a high concentration of privately educated children around there. This is a very sweeping statement of people who send their kids to private schools, but perhaps they are the parents who are quite paranoid about their kids, not letting them go out and learn the formative life skills that you were talking about. Therefore the chavs (their word, not mine) have targeted this area because there are rich pickings, no pun intended.

Tom

That is fascinating research and I think it deserves a much wider airing because of the nuance in there and in a non-sensationalist way. Having done the research, do you think it warrants a teen

education project or an adult education project on perceptions of teenagers, because it seems to me that that is an enormous area where we should be focusing effort on the back of it?

Jenny Owen

I did this research following on from the underage drinking research and the same sorts of problems exist in both. They are subjects that parents have to speak to their kids about, but when we say with the last Teen Commandment that it is about giving kids tools to talk it is also about giving parents the tools to talk to their kids as well.

With the underage drinking research we were looking at basically the same problems and I think it is a case of targeting both. We did not interview parents for this research, but we did for the underage drinking and they did not know how to bring it up. They did not know the best ways to bring it up. They did not know how to bring it up without saying, 'You must not do this', which as we all know makes them go, 'I must not do what? What should I not do?'

Am I allowed to say I think adults have to be there?

Matt Locke

You can say whatever you like, Jenny. I would say that I do not have any sway over what Julian commissions for the main channel, but if you wanted to bring something that had a joint approach with another commissioning editor for peak then by all means bring it on. It is a really tough thing to do, particularly in 2010 when the budget is really tight; 2011 may be a bit more interesting. However, if there is a twin approach, I think it is hard to create one project that will reach both constituencies, really tough, but it is possible to do something aimed at teens that can inform or run in parallel to something that you might pitch at a peak schedule as well. I think it is the kind of issue that Channel 4 should be dealing with for all audiences, but there are very few levers I can use to persuade Julian that that is great, other than bringing in a fantastic project which we want to commission. I am more than happy to help someone do that though, if that is what they want to do.

Jenny Owen

I think one of the interesting things about educating parents here is when I was walking home last night there were four kids and I just smiled at them. That is my weapon, I smile and hope that that disarms them, or I say something like, 'Do you want to do some research?' One of the four kids looked at me and he was on the phone to his friend and he did not lower his tone, he was not showing off to me, he just realised he did not have to be saying anything any quieter, he said, 'Just bring a shank down.' He was basically saying, 'Come down with a knife, meet us, something is going to happen.' He looked at me and I looked at him and he knew that I had heard him and it did not bother him in the slightest. I think a lot of these kids go 'I know that kid is not going to do anything. I know that they are not going to tell anyone. I know that they do not know how to tell anyone because I do not know how to tell anyone.'

As I was saying to Shaun, I reckon that if my mum had walked past they would not have changed their way of speaking, because my mum does not know those words and even though she is the sort of person who would say, 'I tell you what, there are some very dodgy people on the corner', even though adults are the people who might be like, 'This should not be happening, I am going to do something, I am going to ring the police' or whatever there is to do – I think we also do not know what to do – they do not know the vocabulary that these kids are using. I do not want my mum to

walk around going, 'Your father has a shank', not that he would have. It is about this invisibility again. We know the language that kids use, but adults do not know it, so they do not know what kids are talking about. You could sit in front of someone on the bus and you have no idea what they are talking about. They could have just decided that they are going to rob you, grab your bag, divert your attention and get down the stairs. Therefore, there is also some sort of education about that without appropriating anything. It is about 'your kids are using these words', without putting it in a Kit Kat campaign.

Sally Ann, Sixth Sense Media

I have been working with teenagers for the past nine years and I wanted to ask you what you found, because in my experience in the regions particularly – I have been working in Manchester, Nottingham, Reading and Slough – what has really saddened me is the fact that the teenagers will not travel very far whatsoever, in the regions particularly rather than in London. I have done some work in London but I have worked quite a lot in the regions. What really saddened me, for example, was when we had a wrap party for one of our series they did not want to travel more than a quarter of a mile from where they lived. These were really tough young guys, some of whom slept with knives under their pillows. I wondered whether through your research you had discovered the limitations these fears are having geographically and distance-wise, because for me, what really shocked me was that their fear was seriously limiting where they were going and what they were doing, to such an extent that what I considered tough young teenagers did not know anything more than two or three streets from where they lived. There was no way they were going to travel into Manchester, a couple of miles, for a drink with us, and I wondered if your research bore out any of those results and if you had found that. The limitations that their fear had had on their knowledge of what I would call their local community really saddened me.

Jenny Owen

I think there are two things here. The first thing is we spoke to a social worker called 'J' who worked with kids who were tough and very streetwise. She organised for them to go to the cinema and none of them would go. They just said, 'I will not go there' and it was the cinema 20 minutes away and they just would not go.

The interesting thing with the kids that we spoke to, they were not considering college now, but it was more about things like 'I would never go to that gig.' If we started speaking to kids at that age when they are making those decisions, you will see that there are decisions to make. Even 'T', I wanted him to go to Goldsmith's and it was a huge deal, because he is a Leytonstone boy and it would mean going south. It is his biggest thing at the moment, it is like, 'I cannot believe I am going to be going to college in the south' and it is a really big deal.

Matt Locke

This is one of the things that really shocked us. We have an education advisory board and one of the guys on that, Tony Bravo, up until quite recently was running an academy in south London and he had spent quite a lot of time working with the local council and the police to make the area around his school safe so that his kids could get into school every day and feel quite safe about that. He knew he had to focus on that.

Then the diplomas came along, which are held up as a really positive thing for 14-19 education, which they are, but most of them are taught at tertiary and other colleges. Suddenly, therefore,

rather than keeping his kids in school until 19 and keeping that area safe, some of them want to do diplomas but now he is having to deal with helping them navigate from where they live to other postcodes and other colleges out of the area. So something that is seemingly unrelated to this issue, like bringing in a new form of higher education which seems to give kids more options, in fact is really problematic because of this issue of travel, transport and fear. That is what really shocks me, the fact that you do not take up an opportunity, which might have a huge effect on the rest of your life, just because you cannot travel two miles. That is what makes me angry and want to really do something about it.

Shaun

There are definitely two things here. South and east London would probably be more comparable to Nottingham certainly and Manchester with their quite well-publicised gun crime problems in the last few years. That would probably be more in terms of Southwark area, Newham and parts of Hackney where people do not want to leave their areas. 'J' lives on the Aylesbury Estate in south London, quite a notorious part of town, and she has gone down on several occasions walking her dog, reached the end and just turned back up, because there is a group there. This is not paranoia, because I had the impression that 'J' was one of the more scarily quite informed young people we interviewed. Whereas in more provincial and rural settings it was very much defined plots of land they avoided. It may be an estate or a park or a duck pond, but it would be places to avoid, they would not be trapped, so to speak, in an immediate area.

Jenny Owen

Manchester comes up in the research with a lot of the rural kids we spoke to saying, 'But I do think it would be worse in Manchester.' Many of their comments were about 'I think it would be worse in Manchester.' The other thing was it was always worse in Manchester but it was never as bad as London.

Paul Canty, Preloaded

Was there anything that came out of the research which had solutions that kids recognised, that they thought 'yes, something is being done that we recognise as a tangible benefit to us', whether it was schools or youth clubs or whatever? Was there anything positive that they said?

Jenny Owen

That is a really difficult thing and the answer is no, in all honesty. I think they appreciate that people are trying to do something, like pockets being built into school skirts where you can hide your phone. That has been done and it looks like it is just how you do the skirt up, but it is where your phone is. However, kids say, 'But then everyone knows and after three days you are still going to be robbed.' They all talk, they all know things, secrets do not really exist when you are that age because you whisper all the time and you tell people.

They appreciate that people have tried to put youth clubs in places, but then they say, 'I do not want to go there. It is rubbish. It is really uncool.' With parks, one of the final quotes was, 'There are all these places to play football and stuff, but no one is there and no one is looking after them.'

When I was at Nike they did a big thing where they congratulated themselves about building a basketball court in south London. They were like, 'Yes, we have given south London kids a basketball court. We did it by grinding up our shoes. This is a brilliant thing, great CSR strategy.' I had to go back three years later and say, 'You need to look after it though' and I think a lot of kids are like that. They are like, 'Yes, you gave me a basketball court, but do you want to do it up or do you want to put lighting there so I can play after 8pm and I can stay off the streets?'

I know that Hackney have just looked at lots of little areas that kids normally hang out in and they have reinvigorated them and tidied them up and it is that simple. I think that kids acknowledge it, but they are still being stabbed in the back and smashed in the face.

Participant

For me, one of the really interesting insights was how attuned teens were to the imagery of neglect. The fact that a space is not well lit, not many people in there, rubbish there, maybe someone drunk or homeless, just signals get out, do not even go there. That feels like such a changeable problem in many ways.

Shaun

'S' in the park in west London has a theory about reclaiming public space and giving it real use value across the board. Personally, I feel that is quite positive. It will perpetuate itself, because then paranoid parents will not be so paranoid and will let their kids run out and bump their heads and fall out of trees, which is what young kids are supposed to do, and kids would be more willing to do that without the risk of being heckled in rural areas or approached in more urbanised areas.

Jenny Owen

The other thing with Normand Park that I really like is that she is there between 3pm and 5pm every day in case you want to ask any questions. Just little things like that are cool. I quite like that. I know how to get hold of the person who looks after the park.

Just bringing people back into areas is one of the easiest things and to adults' credit maybe, but kids go, 'Yes, I know you gave me that, but you did not give me anything to do in it and you did not look after it and there is nothing inside it.' Empty spaces do not answer the problem.

Shaun

The little things to address, bits here and bits there, like the TfL system whereby they might be aware or the nudge system for the police over the long-term to build up a database so they know where kids are worried about, not explicit crimes, I think they are all listed quite a bit, but there is clearly no magic bullet here because it is to do with parenting and children themselves.

Participant

Is it getting worse? It feels like these are things that I have heard about quite a lot before. When I was younger, growing up, there were schools, there were gangs, you would not go into different areas. Certainly speaking to my dad, growing up in Glasgow in the 1960s there were the same

things, big teen gang problems and transport and so on. It feels like a lot of the same things, but is it getting worse?

Secondly, the gender divide I find fascinating. The levels and types of violence are fascinating and I wondered if you could elaborate a bit more on that.

Jenny Owen

In the white paper the gender differences bit opens up the fact that it has all happened before with mods and skinheads and so on, so some of this is not new. Again, just to reiterate, this research was not with kids involved in gangs. It was not a gang culture piece of research. These are everyday kids. Gangs have always existed and through history they make up every country's narrative, but this is now happening to kids on an everyday basis.

The worst thing that happened to me when I was growing up, and I grew up in Aylesbury which at the time was really rough. I always call myself a streetwise village idiot for growing up in Wendover and Aylesbury. I was hit around the head with a brick because I said no to going out with a boy. That was the worst thing I knew. I did not know people who carried guns. I did not know people who were stabbing other people. It turns out I knew one of the bombers, that was quite big, but at a middle class hero level I was not having to deal with those things and all our class heroes are having to deal with them now. Sorry to talk about class. I was surprised by how many incidents and anecdotes they had that were genuinely violent, horrible things that had happened to them. I tend to blame the media for stuff, but in fact a lot of it is happening, so I think it is worse.

Matt Locke

I would make another statement. Although the issue about gangs and territory has perpetuated itself for many years, I think for me the issue is that we have now structured a society in which physical and social mobility is more important to getting on than it was in other generations. My parents grew up and did not leave an area around Waltham Cross and Enfield for the whole of their lives and their parents before them. All of their lives were played out in a very, very small geographic space. They had jobs in that area, they met people from that area, they got married, their kids grew up in that area. What has happened, probably with my generation growing up in the 1970s, is there were greater opportunities to study and to educate yourself – I went away to Glasgow to go to art school and my mum was absolutely horrified that I had left that little bit of south Hertfordshire and north London that she had grown up in her whole life. We were the first people from my family to do that. Mobility is so important to getting on for generations post the 1970s and even more so now. All the opportunities we are offering our kids, so many of them rely on mobility and partly that is because of just economic centralisation. Shops, entertainment, all of that has tended to be centralised around big centres and much less of it is as hyper-local as it used to be.

I am making massive sociological statements now, but you almost have this bizarre thing where physical services are increasingly centralised, so you have big out of town shopping and entertainment complexes rather than local pubs and local shops and stuff like that. Then you have the hyper-locality of the internet and virtual spaces where you can just sit in your bedroom and meet everyone. It is the missing bit in your immediate environment which has become lost to various types of social use, either because physical social use is being concentrated in hyper-service areas or because you are just doing it online. In a way that is the problem. It is traversing the areas where that would normally be your whole life. My dad felt very comfortable around Waltham Cross, Cheshunt, Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Enfield, those areas because he grew up in all them and knew

them as a kid. There are generations now that do not do that anymore. You have your home and then you have the shopping centre and the entertainment complex.

I was shocked by the blacking out of the tube map and just seeing kids feel there are lots of areas they just do not feel comfortable in. So it might not be that the gangs are worse, but mobility is more important and so it is more of a pressing issue now, because if kids are going to grow and survive and take opportunities, being able to be confident about getting around is more critical to their success now that it perhaps was 30 or 40 years ago. That is just a hypothesis sitting here, but that is why we called it mobility research. The problems of not being able to get around are more important now than maybe they were before.

Participant

I have a question about how the kids were travelling or how they preferred to travel. Were they mostly walking? How were they getting about?

Jenny Owen

It is mainly walking. I have all the answers to this in the survey and I even looked at it this morning and wondered if I should put it in the deck. It is walking, it is parents, there were only two people using taxis. It is whatever is best to get there and sometimes walking is the easiest way, because a bus will not stop just because someone has got on who you do not like, you have to wait until the next stop. It is the same with tubes as well, so walking tends to be the main thing.

Shaun

With regards to buses, which we touched on very briefly, there is definite recognition across the board, rural, provincial and built up urban, that there is a distinction between good buses and bad buses depending on time of day. That can be 3pm or 4pm when you are in your school uniform, which is the most obvious aspect of being different or having wealth implications, as we found in High Street, Kensington, or it can be late at night or area. Kids have free travel in London, but they do not have it in other places and that feeds into the money situation as well. In Birmingham, for example, buses are unbelievably expensive. I am from Bristol and I cannot believe how expensive a return to the centre is.

Mike

I have a question about Orange RockCorps. It was held up as a success. How did they deal with the travel issue and mobility, because presumably people had to get to the Royal Albert Hall?

Jenny Owen

Just the fact that they did not do it at O2 was the big thing. Nike always do their things at O2 and there is me and the head of marketing who both live in west London and we get an Addison Lee minicab. It takes kids three hours to get back from the O2. Ask any kid about trying to get to the O2; it is the most ridiculous place to get to, it is absolutely impossible.

Mike

If you live in Hackney you have to get to wherever it is, Kensington somewhere.

Shaun

As we have perhaps quite pompously put it, the periphery of danger is taken out of the mix because, as we said, the further away they are the safer they feel and with a big place like the Royal Albert Hall no one is going to be scared about going there. If you said to kids from Hackney, 'Come on, we are going to do it from Southwark youth centre' or something like that, the response might be, 'No, I am not going to do that.'

Jenny Owen

Loads of the kids who did Orange Rockcorps were from the east and it is exactly the issue Shaun just said. It is like, 'Yes, I am from the east, I have to go west, it is far away, I am absolutely safe there.'

Shaun

Also, there are lots of kids supporting Arsenal Football Club at the moment and they do not mind going to games.

Liza

I wanted to come back to the point about they will not leave their area because they are scared. For me, it is also in connection with them being behind a computer every day and forgetting the basic social skills. I think this is maybe one of the main things I would try to address as well, learning how to communicate again without emailing or something, but how to talk to each other, basically, like you said with the High Street, Kensington example.

Jenny Owen

I understand the point about blaming it on screen lives and digital lives, but that did not come up from the research. However, it is about manners and how to conduct yourself and grace – grace is my word, but there is a distinct lack of grace out there. They do not know how to talk to each other, so when a guy does speak to a girl in a nice way it is big enough for us to have heard it twice in the research, two anecdotes. It is only 25 kids, but two girls are saying, 'And then there was this guy and he stopped me and he was like "what is your name?" and he genuinely just wanted to know my name'. It was huge to them. So it is about teaching girls how to speak to guys and also teaching girls that not all men over 30 – and it is 30, so if you are over 30 you are a hairy, dirty monster; 30 is their benchmark. They do not know how to talk to each other and manners are lacking. You have black kids going to other black kids; you have west London kids going to other west London kids. They need to be interested in each other again and they need to find things to talk about, and there is a lot for them to talk about.

I find it really difficult to be rude about kids. I hate saying that kids have no manners, but they are not nice to each other. On a really basic adult level they are not nice to each other.

Liza

If they talked to each other it might resolve the myths a bit, because there are a lot of things they hear that are not true.

Jenny Owen

Yes, and that goes back to what 'O' said about how he might get on well with the guy who mugged him. It is that simple. He does not know anything about him other than this guy is a chav.

Shaun

I think some things work better in certain areas. For instance, community things to do with everything, such as something like Orange RockCorps that was wholly inclusive across the board, would be fine. If it was just a borough council saying, 'Let us get the kids from Peckham to play all the kids from Bermondsey' that is not going to work.

Concluding Remarks

Matt Locke**Commissioning Editor, Channel 4 Education**

That is a very good segue to a few things I wanted to say before we finish. First of all, thank you for staying for a very long time and I hope you found the informal half-hour networking whilst we got the computer working useful.

One of the things I want to say is about tone. I think it is really easy to come at this head on and I do not think that is necessarily going to be the right approach. What was really interesting for me in the research is a lot of teens do not realise this is a problem, so if you go out there and say, 'We are going to solve this problem for you', you might not get the engagement and the response. You might have to come at it from another angle, getting their interest in some other way and then using that as a way of dealing with the issue. It might be using fiction, it might be using comedy, it might be using games, it might be using something else: Orange RockCorps was a great idea; it was about a gig and the volunteer gets carried along with it. I do not think that we are going to do a big campaign about making streets safe, therefore. I think what we are looking for are projects that can get kids to discuss these issues, but we might have to use a slightly obtuse angle into that.

I think this is going to be something that we want to take a couple of cracks at. How many projects we commission next year is irrelevant in a way. I do not think we necessarily are going to solve this the first time and I think it is going to be an issue like sexual health and stuff like that that we constantly commission projects about. Therefore, even if we do not commission all the ideas that we receive this time around, I do think we are going to continue to look for them, so this is an area where we do want to see lots of ideas.

I am normally very nervous about using celebrities because I feel that that is such easy shorthand, but I think if we are looking for an approach to get to teens then the right way is to use good celebrities, not Z-listers who you just fly in for an issue, but people who can genuinely be authentic. What is important here is not so much the tone, doing something which is about this issue, but having the right voice. Having either a voice from this community or a figurehead who will represent and be authentic to the audience we are trying to reach is probably going to be critical, whether that is a fictional voice or a real voice, whether it is a teen as in projects like *Battlefront* we have done where teens are raising issues and being far more authentic to their peers than we could be, or whether it is using very well chosen celebrities to, in a sense, be an authentic voice. I think that is what I am looking for more than anything else. I am looking for authentic voices that we can use to reach teens and ways for them to then have a conversation about it themselves or with parents or governments or local councils or whoever.

The other point I would make is the one that was just made. I have a lot of projects pitched at me which are about following a brilliant community group that has been working for seven years in Peckham solving this issue. That is great, but we have to operate a scale. I want to do something that works across the UK and, quite frankly, I am not going to fund 400 community projects. That is just completely unfeasible, so we are going to have to operate at a different register from those brilliant projects that work because somebody spent seven years getting to know those teens and working really well with them. We cannot do that across 400 communities. We do have to try to find a way in which we can make a lot of people's lives better at scale rather than doing it with one community, so I do not want you to go down that dead end.

Therefore, do not go for the really obvious tone question and make a big serious project about gangs. Getting the voice right and something that scales is really what I am looking for. As ever, I am more than happy to meet people, have coffee, have conversations via email and stuff like that.

In terms of timing, this is for 2010, so I do not need ideas in the next couple of weeks, but I would say pretty much by the end of October I would want to know that there are a couple of ideas that I want to put some money into to kick off in January. However, as I said, this will be something that we will probably come back to a lot if we receive some money to commission for 10 to 16-year-olds. As I think this addresses a much wider age group and probably affects 10-to-16s more maybe than 14-to-19s, there might be some more money for us to have another couple of cracks at it, but I will not know about that for a while yet. At the moment, we have around £400,000 to spend in 2010, so bring me your ideas.

I also want to say I chose Ruby Pseudo very specifically because, as you can probably tell, they do really, really good research that cuts beyond a lot of the hype and the usual ideas, so a huge thanks to Jenny and to Shaun for doing a great presentation.

Thank you very much.

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J +44 (0) 20 7269 0370**