

# Reducing community conflict:

## An Ubuntu Approach

*Jointly funded by the Mayor of London's office for Policing and Crime and Sir John Cass's Foundation*

An evaluation report for the Tutu Foundation UK and  
Youth Futures

Prepared by Bankole Cole and Nadia Habashi

2019



The Ubuntu Round-Tables Project Partnership

**MOPAC**

MAYOR OF LONDON  
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME





The Ubuntu Round-Tables Project Partnership

# **EVALUATION OF THE DESMOND TUTU FOUNDATION (UK) AND YOUTH FUTURES' UBUNTU POLICE-YOUTH ROUNDTABLE PILOTS IN 10 LONDON BOROUGHES**

*Jointly funded by the Mayor of London's office for Policing and Crime and Sir  
John Cass's Foundation*

**Final Report  
June 2019**

**Dr Bankole Cole,  
The Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice,  
Department of Law and Criminology, Sheffield Hallam University  
and Dr Nadia Habashi, FRSA.**

**Sheffield  
Hallam  
University**

Helena Kennedy  
Centre for  
International Justice

## Table of contents

Foreword by Clive Conway, Chair Tutu Foundation UK

Acknowledgements

### Executive Summary

Introduction	6
Context	6
Background	7
Ubuntu	8
The Evaluation	9
The Roundtables	10
Findings	11
Conclusion	15

### **1. Introduction** **17**

1.2 Background	17
1.2 Context	19
1.2.1 Ubuntu	22
1.3 The conditions under which the Ubuntu Police-Youth roundtables took place	23
1.3.1 Cuts in public spending affect youth provision	24
1.3.2 Youth crime	24
1.3.3 Increase in link between youth ethnicity and social inequalities	25
1.3.4 Policing	26

### **2. The Ubuntu Police-Youth Roundtables** **27**

2.1 Stage 1 Recruitment and training of Ubuntu Youth facilitators	28
2.2 Stage 2 Police Briefing sessions	30
2.3 Stage 3 Youth Briefing or introductory sessions	31
2.4 Stage 4 Round Table 1 Larger group discussions	33
2.5 Stage 5 Round Table 2 Smaller group discussions/ Interactive Group discussions and role plays	34
2.6 Reflection sessions	35

### **3. The evaluation** **37**

3.1 The survey	38
3.2 Analysis of data	38

<b>4. Findings</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 Perceptions	41
4.2 Expectations	41
4.2.1 Youths	41
4.2.2 Police Officers	44
4.3 Beliefs	50
4.4 Sustainability	51
4.5 Impact	53
<b>5. Summary and conclusions</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>6. List of recommendations</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>7. References</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Annex 1</b> Programme Description	64
<b>Annex 2</b> Tutu Foundation UK – Youth Futures partnership	66

**Foreword by Clive Conway, Chair, Trustees, Tutu Foundation UK**

The Tutu Foundation UK and Youth Futures (see Annexes 1 and 2) are pleased to publish this evaluation report on the innovative partnership programme of Police-Youth Round Tables (RTs), set within the Ubuntu philosophical framework. The RTs, discussed at length in the report, ran in London over the period 2017-2018. Ubuntu is a concept which has been promoted strongly by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu whose work inspired the creation of the Tutu Foundation UK and whose warm support it continues to enjoy. The concept of Ubuntu defines the individual in terms of their relationships with and responsibility towards others; it expresses the interconnectedness, common humanity and the responsibility of individuals to each other.

The programme was a pilot programme to help us shape future such work and the evaluation ran alongside it, using a formative approach, i.e. one which enabled the evaluators to feed back insights as the programme progressed, to help it adapt the approach on an ongoing basis to more fully achieve its stated goals. As a pilot programme, we expected that it would be faced with a number of challenges as the programme progressed and this proved to be the case. Working in partnership with a very wide range of partners and actors including police forces from a number of areas, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, Youth Futures - a prominent youth organisation and our key partner - young people themselves, some of whom were trained to become facilitators within the Round Table programme, key members of the Tutu Foundation UK Board of Trustees and others, there were frequent occasions when goals needed to be clarified and methods refined. At times, as a result of organisational difficulties amongst some partners, and the closure of some youth projects, it was necessary virtually to restart elements of the programme leading to delays in its execution. Given the extremely difficult and contested context of growing debates about police-youth interactions, racism in public policy, public expenditure cuts and knife crime, it is to the credit of all those engaged in the programme – too many to be identified individually - that the programme was completed as fully as it was.

The overall impact of this work can only be judged over a longer period of time. One immediate measure of success will be the continuing involvement of police and young people in such work; another is the commitment of the Foundation to seeking funding support for widening and deepening this work. Some of the comments of both young people and serving police officers give good grounds for optimism in this respect. The team's report does not spell out a picture of unalloyed success, nor would we have expected it to do so. We have taken the decision to publish the report, warts and all, whilst not necessarily agreeing with every conclusion of the evaluation team, as a measure of our commitment to ensuring that the lessons of what we believe to be highly significant work are absorbed and acted on in future work by others alongside ourselves. We commend the report to you and welcome feedback and support from anyone interested in helping to encourage its future development.

**Acknowledgements**

The Evaluation Team would like to thank Professor Gary Craig, Emeritus Professor of Social Justice and visiting Professor, School of Law, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, for his support during the research. The Tutu Foundation UK and Youth Futures would like to acknowledge the generous support of the Sir John Cass's Foundation and MOPAC (The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in London). Their continuing interest in this work has been of immense importance.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Following a successful Ubuntu police-youth roundtable pilot at Camberwell in the London Borough of Southwark in May 2016, the Desmond Tutu Foundation UK (TFUK), in partnership with the London-based youth organisation Youth Futures (YF), acquired funding from the Sir John Cass's Foundation and the Mayor of London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to conduct further pilots in 10 London boroughs. This funding was secured in July 2016. The 10 London boroughs for the pilot were selected in consultation with MOPAC and they included the London inner city boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Enfield, Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. Due to a number of unforeseen challenges and delays, the roundtables (RTs) were finally conducted in seven boroughs. The boroughs where round tables were not completed were Brent, Enfield and Lambeth.

1

## Context

The 10-borough Ubuntu roundtables (RTs) took place against the backdrop of continued strained relationship between borough police forces in London and youths living predominantly in the inner city areas of London. This strained relationship has a long history dating back, perhaps, to the 1950s and is centred around allegations by black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) youths and communities of indiscriminate and racist policing of BAME communities particularly in relation to the use of stop and search powers by the local police against predominantly black youths, and their victimisation also by the police. The result has been the growth of deep mistrust and lack of confidence in the police by inner city BAME youths. The Metropolitan Police and other UK police forces have tried in several ways to engage with young people in order to improve trust and confidence but most of these methods have been police-initiated (top-down) and have remained at the level of giving information and 'education', although some attempts have been made to involve youths in the process. (see Figure 1). However, the fact that police engagement with youths might be more impactful if it was youth-led and the agenda set by the youths themselves has been acknowledged by both senior politicians and the police.

In addition, the RTs took place amidst significant cuts in public spending affecting youth provisions, a persistent problem of youth gang activities in London inner cities and increasing concerns about the rising numbers of BAME youths becoming involved in weapons-related crimes (mainly knife crime) both as offenders and victims. Desperate attempts by government to introduce a 'public health' approach to addressing knife crime, including the publication of a Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government, 2018) and the creation of Violence Reduction Units, are yet to produce significant results. More importantly, it is doubtful how many of these initiatives are youth-led or involve a significant input by young people to address the causes and provide well-informed solutions. Meanwhile, child poverty and social inequalities have continued to increase in the UK particularly in areas where these crimes have been taking place,

---

<sup>1</sup> Although it is hoped the project may return to these areas at a later date.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

which are also places where disproportionate numbers of BAME youths have historically lived (see Chattoo, Atkins, Craig and Flynn, eds. 2019).

### Background

The Ubuntu police-youth roundtable is a youth-led police-youth engagement initiative that was developed and delivered by Youth Futures in partnership with the Tutu Foundation UK (TFUK). TFUK is a UK-based charity organisation with a track record in building peace in fractured communities in the UK using a model inspired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu's peace and reconciliation work and the concept of Ubuntu. Youth Futures (YF) is one of London's most active youth organisations. The organisation was founded in Camberwell, in the London Borough of Southwark in 2012 by Joseph Duncan who had trained in one of the Tutu Foundation UK's early Conversations for Change Programmes. The young people that Youth Futures (led here by Mark Murray) works with, developed the "Youth Futures Round Table" discussion programme with the local police in Camberwell.

According to Mark Murray (n.d.) the purpose of the police-youth RT is:

*"to give both young people and representatives from State institutions the opportunity to be heard without feeling as if they are being backed into a corner"* (Mark, Youth Futures Youth Leader).

The main aims were to enable both young people and the local police:

*"to recognise the 'other' as human beings and enable them to break down some of the barriers that currently hinder police relations with the community through understanding and seeing a different perspective. The young people will get the opportunity to voice their opinions, as well as provide them with an insight into policing. Overall this project will help change heads, hearts and attitudes resulting in an engaging and efficient police and community relationship"* (Ibid, p.x).

The stated aims of the Ubuntu Police-Youth RTs are to:

- bring disenfranchised young people and their local police officers together to build respect and understanding and so reduce Police-Youth antagonism and build the trust that underpins safety on our streets.
- provide the members of the police force working on the ground and the young people in these deprived communities with the skills and confidence to listen to and express themselves to each other.
- enable the police and young people to build trust so that they can work with and talk to each other in order to build safer communities (for a brief summary of the project see <http://tutufoundationuk.org/projects/better-policing>).

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

The following specific objectives of the 10 boroughs project were presented to the evaluators, namely to:

1. deliver a total of 20 Ubuntu roundtables in the 10 selected boroughs.
2. develop a customised training package for 'Ubuntu' youth facilitators.
3. recruit and train 30 young people as 'Ubuntu' Youth Police Facilitators from the 10 boroughs.
4. secure the involvement and active participation of Police Borough Commanders and their staff in the initiative.
5. develop and deliver a customised training package for participating police officers/staff at borough level, underpinned by the principles of 'Ubuntu' and police-youth engagement.
6. build capacity and competence in the voluntary and community sector in the 10 boroughs in order to improve police-youth engagement through the principles of 'Ubuntu'.
7. identify youth policing issues in the 10 boroughs.
8. improve police awareness of issues affecting marginalised young people in the 10 boroughs.
9. reduce police-youth tensions in the 10 boroughs.

It was envisaged that through this process, the young people would be empowered and learn skills (e.g. communication skills) that would enable them to relate better with police officers. It was also expected that police officers who participated would have a better understanding of youth behaviour and issues generally and specifically in their own policing areas and that this would promote better policing and community safety.

## Ubuntu

Ubuntu is an African concept derived from an Nguni (isiZulu) aphorism: *UmuntuNgumuntuNgabantu*, which can be translated as "a person is a person because of or through others" (Tutu, 2004:25-26). Ubuntu embraces a world view that we owe our selfhood to others. The concept has been described in many ways but mainly in terms of the capacity to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and respect. Samkange and Samkange (1980), assert that one of the key maxims of 'Ubuntuism' is that: "To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them" According to Nelson Mandela, it is a way of life which underpins an open society (Mandela, 2006: xxv). Archbishop Desmond Tutu stated in '**No Future Without Forgiveness**': "A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed" (Tutu, 1999:34-35). In essence, the concept of Ubuntu defines the individual in terms of their relationships with and responsibility towards others; it expresses the interconnectedness, common humanity and the responsibility of individuals to each other. Thus, the individual identity is replaced with the larger societal identity within the individual. This places high demands on the individual to behave in the highest standards and to portray the highest possible virtues that society strives for, which includes caring for each other's well-being.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

According to Khomba, (2011:131):

“People who truly practise Ubuntu are always open and make themselves available to others, they are affirming of others [...] With Ubuntu, one has a proper assurance that comes with the fundamental recognition that each individual belongs to a greater community”

Ubuntu provides the philosophical foundations that makes the Ubuntu police-youth RT initiative quite unique when compared with other youth-led police engagement initiatives where young people lead the events but there are no theoretical foundations other than an attempt to give young people an opportunity to 'talk to the police and ask questions'. What the Ubuntu Police-Youth RT claims to have that is distinctive is the underlying ambition that the young people who take part can, through the process, re-build relationships between themselves and the police, promote good relations, change mind sets to positive thinking about youth and community policing issues and perhaps attempt some form of conflict resolution or crisis management, if possible. In her oral evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into the Macpherson Report: Twenty Years On, Baroness Lawrence stated the importance of engaging young people at an early age but fundamentally she stressed:

*“The older generation talking to young people doesn't reach them, so you need their peers to go in and speak to those kids and let them know what the reality is”* (HASC, 2019:11).

### The Roundtables

The Ubuntu Police-Youth Roundtable is a series of events in five main stages, namely:

- *Stage 1:* A youth facilitator recruitment and training session run by YF. This was done by means of a youth facilitator training pack developed by YF. Trained facilitators are crucial to the success of this project. They are expected to lead the sessions in Stages 3, 4 and 5 and participate fully in Stage 2.
- *Stage 2:* A police briefing session led by project manager assisted by key youth facilitators. At this session officers that are attending the RTs are provided with information about the project; its aims and objectives and given a 'taste' of what to expect at a RT in mock sessions led by the facilitators.
- *Stage 3:* A youth briefing and agenda-setting session with local youths from the wider community who have indicated willingness to participate in the RTs. At this session, the topics and issues that the youths would like to discuss with the police are discussed and listed.
- *Stage 4:* Roundtable1(RT1): Large group discussion sessions led by youth facilitators.
- *Stage 5:* Roundtable 2 (RT 2): Small group discussion/interactive sessions and role-plays. The small group sessions address specific issues that have occurred at RT1 but need further debates and other policing issues that require more in-depth discussions. The role plays are based on key issues raised at RT 1. The most common theme for the role plays was police stop and search with officers playing the role of youths being stopped and searched and youths playing the role of the officers that have stopped them.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

- Reflection session (optional). Unlike the Camberwell pilot, there was no specific session after the RTs to reflect on the outcome. Instead, summary sessions took place at the end of Stage 5 and notes were made of comments and suggestions that were made by participants, for example, on the way forward. (See Figure 2).

## The Evaluation

TFUK/YF expressed a desire for the evaluation of the 10 borough roundtables to be **formative** in nature. “*This means that the evaluation will be continuous and feedback into the process to improve the current project*” (Tutu Foundation MEMO 15-11-18 - Ubuntu Police-Youth forum – July 2015). In addition, “*each stage of the project will be assessed using a simple quantitative and qualitative feedback assessment method*” (*Ibid*). Formative evaluations are helpful for pilot projects in the sense that they can be used as a monitoring device that would enable the project planners to reflect on performance and make adequate modifications in order to improve performance (Scriven, 1966; Stufflebeam, 2001).

The aim of this evaluation was: To assess the Ubuntu RT process in terms of the extent to which the stated aims and objectives have been met and provide recommendations, advice and suggestions regarding how the process could be improved, and its sustainability strengthened.

The research question for the evaluation was: Whether adopting the principles and values of Ubuntu in a police-youth engagement initiative would improve youth trust and confidence in the police as well as improve police understanding of youth issues to the point that this would bring about a better relationship/understanding between young people and the police that would lead to both the police and young people willingly working together to address local youth policing issues identified by young people.

The evaluators adopted a mixed methods research approach including the following:

- Surveys using BEFORE and AFTER questionnaires to assess change in perceptions, expectations and beliefs before and after participation in the RT events.
- In-depth interviews with key actors namely the project manager and samples of participating police officers and young people.
- A focus group session with youth facilitators. The focus group was to give the facilitators an opportunity to reflect back on their experience and performance, to voice their concerns and to express their views on the future development of the project idea and sustainability.
- Observation of all sessions – police and youth training and briefing sessions and all RT1 and RT2 sessions. Field notes were written from these observations, including the collection of information, for example, stickers and group discussion topics and notes.
- Continuous feedback to the project team at different stages of the development of the project.

Survey data was analysed for simple numerical statistics using excel spreadsheets while the in-depth interviews were analysed for themes using the NVIVO software, It is important to note that the evaluation did not include an assessment of impact, for example, in terms of impact on community safety or other youth-police problems in these communities or impact on the police and young people themselves. The

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

evaluators identified the youth training element as an area for future development that could be utilised in other youth ventures. Although the current structure is adequate for what it is set up to achieve, there may need to be some fine-tuning if the Ubuntu RT idea is to be used in other specific areas. The evaluators are of the opinion that the Ubuntu framework is a solid foundation upon which new ideas can be developed but more research is needed in order to identify how the concept could further be used.

### Findings

- All 14 RTs were delivered in the 7 boroughs.
- A youth facilitator training package was used for the training of the youth facilitators but it is not an accredited training programme.
- Thirty-five young people were trained as youth facilitators although the participation of the newly-trained facilitators was minimal during the roundtables.
- Seventy-six police officers of various ranks and 243 young persons completed the survey questionnaires. The young people included 54 males and 73 females. The age groups of the youths included 12 – 17 year olds (82.9%); 18 - 25 years olds (14.0%); Age Not Stated (3.1%).
- Attempts were made to have police briefing sessions prior to each RT. These sessions were informative and adequate in preparing the police officers for the task ahead. However, this was contrary to what was proposed which was to have a customised training package for the police. The evaluators are of the opinion that customised police Ubuntu training would be ideal but it is an idea that might need to be developed as a separate police training resource for engaging with young people.
- The young people identified a variety of youth-policing issues and topics for debate at the RTs. The topics chosen included: young people carrying knives and in groups; police use of body cameras; stop and search (of black youths); the punishment of young people who use illegal drugs (mainly cannabis); gangs; young people congregating around shopping centres (public order issues); joint enterprise; foreign young people; respect; importance of raising awareness of rights; fear of reporting crime –intimidation- being labelled a ‘snitch’.
- Prior to the RTs taking place, both youths and police officers claimed to have had negative experiences of each other with the police expressing more negative views than the youths. This position appeared to have changed significantly after the RTs with both parties expressing positive views of each other. Examples of statements made included:

*"It helped me see how police officers just genuinely cared. And there were some police officers who genuinely cared, who stayed behind just talking with us and they were genuinely engaging and talking with us as they just wanted to. This showed me that despite the officers we are currently working with, [...] there were other officers who were nice."* (Young Person)

*"I think that we do need to change our approach, I do think that the project is useful and I think that it is a way forward because, particularly from the point of view that it is a neutral way of the*

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

*youth being able to get access to the police, I think it's a good thing, and I would love to see it continue, I think that if you don't have it continuing that's not going to get a legacy outfit. Also, it would be good if all new officers went through the programme. I think this project could be quite successful, to have it as part of the probationer programme.”(Police Officer)*

- Both youths and police officers had very high expectations of what they thought the RTs might be able to achieve for them. On the one hand, the young people expected to learn more about the police and what they do, and, more specifically, how the RTs might be able to improve the perceived hostile relationship that currently existed between the police and youths in their communities. Police officers, on the other hand, were hoping that the youths would learn more about who they are and what they do; more specifically, that the police are not there to intimidate but to help them. There was no evidence that all expectations were met after the RT but there was, certainly, some evidence that both parties appeared to have learnt/gained from the experience. Comments included:

*“What I liked about the roundtable was that it gave an opportunity for people who wouldn't normally want to interact, an opportunity to do so; had an opportunity to get together and the body language was positive and getting them in an environment where they would engage with each other was really useful and I guess what I would like to see is more of the kind of police officers meeting young people and having those, even if it's about having a chat about random stuff. (Police Officer)*

*"It has helped me get a better understanding of the police and to think of them as humans, to see them as normal people who live their lives and have families and that it's not always their fault, sometimes it's not always the police's fault," (Young Person)*

- However, there were a few concerns that relate mainly to how the project was delivered. Young persons complained about not being able to put their points across because the time was too short. Police officers also complained about the time being too short and some sessions being "a bit manic". In addition, some police officers thought that the sessions were biased against the police. This was due to how questions were framed and how they thought that the young people were being 'led on'. These concerns were not addressed because the 10-borough pilot, unlike the Camberwell pilot, did not – because of limits on resources available - have a follow-on session that would have enabled the participants to feed back on their performances, address concerns and plan for the future.
- Both youths and police officers upheld the view that the RTs have the potential to improve relationships and understanding between the local police and young people. Some youths said that the RT has enabled dialogue between themselves and the police that was not there before and that it has the potential to build peace in their communities as well as promote a sense of community. Other youths claimed that the RT might be a useful tool in resolving conflicts and that it has the potential to address some youth criminal activities such as gang violence but not antisocial behaviour.
- Although some officers did not think that the RTs provided a realistic insight into how they police their communities, nor did it go far enough in helping the police and young people to understand what the real challenges are that police face in the boroughs, there was an overwhelming belief

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

amongst police officers that the Ubuntu RT idea is a police-youth engagement approach that 'can work'. The majority of police officers and youths claimed that they understood the concept of Ubuntu and agreed with many of its values. According to a police officer:

*"The Ubuntu project was a great idea and it is the sheer idea and the theoretical of it that is fantastic. The idea of roundtable discussions where everyone is equal and everyone has a similar voice. I believe that that idea eliminates the main concern that young people have about dealing with and talking to the police. This idea of free conversation, that doesn't have repercussions so that you can actually speak as long as you are being respectful, everyone will listen to everyone, and when police say stuff they realise that they are not going to be seen as someone giving some boring old lecture on the street. They are seen as being for lack of a better word a friend and giving advice."* (Police Officer)

- All participants (police and young people) thought that the project has potential for sustainability but this will depend on a number of factors. Some police officers thought that sustainability would be dependent on commitment of more funding to the project, for example, through central government. *'Continuous commitment by all parties to continue to engage in building a better relationship for the good of the whole community'* was another point raised by a police officer. Interviews with police officers revealed that this is possibly an area where more training is needed for police officers. According to a police officer: *"we need to have some professional qualification around this and this is what we are arguing for currently"*.
- The youths said that sustainability is possible if the commitment between the police and youths is well-maintained. Some of them thought that taking the idea into more schools would be beneficial as more children will be involved and youths will be drawn into the habit of expressing their feelings and engaging in purposeful dialogue over issues that concern them and authority figures. Police officers agreed with the youths on the suggestion that the idea should be taken into more schools. According to one police officer: *"I think this will have an even bigger impact if introduced at primary school age before views are influenced by friends and media"*
- Both youth facilitators and project manager agreed that the lack of a follow-up with the young people and police officers after the RTs was a major flaw in the programme that ought to be changed if the programme is to have lasting impact.
- The facilitators and the project manager also supported the view expressed by the evaluator that the facilitator training programme ought to be accredited. The trained facilitators thought, however, that the training content should be more than just acquiring communication/facilitation skills but should also include managerial and research skills so that they are able to take on more roles in the organisation of future RTs.
- The facilitators thought that the RTs have had some impact in the following ways;
  1. The fact that they were able to engage with a diverse group of youths:

*"We had kids who are in gangs, selling drugs and using knives,[...] many many kids who were in those situations and who would [normally] not want to partake in these things."*

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

*“There were young people who were on the verge of committing crime, I would say from my own experience.”*

*“ [ ] we also saw the most innocent young people participating, even in their cases, there was still a massive bridge between them and the police; they still had all the [negative] views about the police.”*

*“That’s the good thing; we didn’t just reach the people who commit violent crime. Now they [police] know that there are a lot of young people who aren’t committing crime, there are young people with good intentions.”*

2. The belief that the RT has started a process of building bridges and changing perceptions:

*“We have gotten responses whereby young people didn’t [originally] want to sit next to the police and by the end they are joking with them like they have known them for years.”*

*“I would say that just having that rapport with police officers makes such a difference for a young person; the only time that a young person interacts with the police, is when they get stopped and searched or when they see other people get stopped and searched.”*

3. Some young people claimed that they had been educated by the experience:

*“... young people said that they felt like they have educated themselves.”*

4. There was some indication of increased police awareness of youth issues and, therefore, the potential that some officers might have changed their views about their local youths:

*“We have had a lot of police saying that they want to keep in touch with the young people so that they don’t feel like outsiders being in the police force.”*

*“We had police officers saying that they would like to be an ambassador of the Ubuntu message, and that they would challenge any bad practice that they saw. Many young people also said that they would not [no longer] call the police names.”*

*“I [overheard] a police in officer saying “oh wow we can do more things like this to better engage the community”.”*

5. There was some indication that this might be a good approach to addressing youth’s involvement in knife crimes

*“When young people do things like this to better engage with the police, I think then they would think twice about carrying a knife. They could disclose certain [information to the*

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

*police] and get the right advice and be comfortable in going to the police when they feel threatened instead of picking up a knife.'*

*"The simplest thing of getting an officer into a room can lead to people trusting people and then telling them the issues. But the government wants data and evidence; and it's not just about that."*

*"When I was young, when I was [a young offender with] the YOT, I did a knife workshop six times. Six victim awareness and I reoffended."*

*"There is a potential for impact if someone like [specific facilitator] is saying this is what happens if you do this. They will listen to him."*

*"If you set up a roundtable about knife crime, you would get young people who have been stabbed or arrested for knife crimes. But that was the problem with [borough] where the young people were sent to the roundtable as part of their order; it is better when you get people coming in of their own accord; people who want to learn. So it shouldn't be mandated. It should come from the young people themselves."*

### 6. Impact on the streets:

During his interview, the project manager recalled some incident that took place after the RTs, where a police officer and a young person who had participated in the RTs met on the streets and the young person had said that they were treated 'a lot better'.

## Conclusion

The evaluators are of the opinion that, overall, this is a successful pilot in the sense that:

1. The strengths and weaknesses of the project were identified and ample opportunities provided for refinement through a formative evaluation process. Many of the identified flaws were addressed successfully during the life of the programme. The evaluation has helped in further highlighting, through recommendations, areas where further developments might be required including areas where further funding might be needed for these improvements to take place; for example, funding may be required for the development and accreditation of a youth facilitator training programme, the development of the RT idea to enable it be applied to other specific youth-related issues and further research into the practical uses of Ubuntu in the management of social issues or crises involving youths (and adults).
2. It was a valuable learning experience for the youth facilitators who have been tried and tested in various situations. There is firm evidence that they are ready to move on doing similar projects and to perform very well.
3. The project team has achieved many of their aims and objectives and presumably more confident to conduct more RTs in other places.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

4. The police officers that participated in the RTs generally recognised the need for more constructive dialogue with young people on social issues and for such dialogue to embrace Ubuntu principles and values. Ubuntu appeared to have provided the framework that was lacking in previous police engagements with youths in London.

# 1. Introduction

This report contains key findings from an independent evaluation of the Tutu Foundation UK/Youth Futures Ubuntu police-youth roundtable (RT) pilots in 10 London boroughs that was jointly funded by the Sir John Cass's Foundation and the London's Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). The project was started in October 2016; however, due to a number of unforeseen circumstances including incidents of weapon-related (mainly knife) crimes in London in which youths in some of these areas were involved as victims, and the additional pressures that were put on London's police forces following outbreaks of terrorist incidents in London at the same time, the project team was not able to carry out the roundtables (RTs) in all 10 boroughs. This report includes findings from the seven boroughs that were covered by end of 2018, consisting of the London Boroughs of Haringey, Islington, Lewisham, Waltham Forest, Newham, Barking and Dagenham and Tower Hamlets.

The report is in six main sections, namely: (i) Introduction, (ii) The Ubuntu Roundtables, (iii) The Evaluation Methodology and Analysis of Data, (iv) Findings, (v) Summary and Conclusion, and (vi) List of Recommendations. Specifically, the report focuses on areas where the projects' aims and objectives were attained, including evidence of good practice. It also highlights areas where further developments might be needed in order to improve the RTs, increase their sustainability and impact.

## 1.1 Background

The Ubuntu Police-Youth Roundtable is an initiative that was developed and delivered by Youth Futures in partnership with the Tutu Foundation UK (TFUK). TFUK is a charitable organisation with a track record in building peace in fractured communities in the UK using a model inspired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu's peace and reconciliation work and the concept of Ubuntu. Ubuntu is a traditional Southern African philosophy that emphasises our common humanity; our connectedness and interdependence as fellow human beings. In order to successfully tackle the anti-social behaviour and violence in communities, the Tutu Foundation UK "recognises that underlying attitudes and behaviours must be addressed in order to build a lasting peace" (TFUK Memo, 14 July 2015). TFUK had already built a successful Conversation for Change programme in the UK, especially in London although sessions in this programme were held outside London also. The aim of the TFUK Conversations for Change initiative is:

*"to bring together people who are from different social communities but in the same geographic community. Using an Ubuntu framework, Conversations for Change enables them to understand each other, the community and why conflict arises so that they can create practical ways to overcome tension and conflict and then begin a process of making changes in themselves and their communities"* (14 July 2015 Memo, *op.cit*).

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

'Conversations for Change' has addressed gang violence, abuse on public transport, bullying and neighbourhood tensions across the country. In London, the Tutu Foundation UK has run successful Conversations for Change programmes over several years in Southwark, Croydon, Sutton and Newham. The organisation has trained 122 community facilitators and 26 mediators (*Ibid*).

Youth Futures (YF) is one of London's most active youth organisations. The organisation was founded in Camberwell, in the London Borough of Southwark in 2012 by Joseph Duncan who had trained in one of the Tutu Foundation UK's early Conversations for Change Programmes. The young people that Youth Futures (led here by Mark Murray) works with developed the 'Youth Futures Round Table' discussion programme with the local police in Camberwell.

According to Mark Murray (n.d.) the purpose of the police-youth RT is:

*“to give both young people and representatives from State institutions the opportunity to be heard without feeling as if they are being backed into a corner”* (Mark, Youth Futures Young Leader).

The main aims were to enable both young people and the local police:

*“to recognise the 'other' as human beings and enable them to break down some of the barriers that currently hinder police relations with the community through understanding and seeing a different perspective. The young people will get the opportunity to voice their opinions, as well as provide them with an insight into policing. Overall this project will help change heads, hearts and attitudes resulting in an engaging and efficient police and community relationship”* (*Ibid*, p. x).

The ultimate goal is to facilitate the establishment of self-perpetuating local forums for discussion and engagement between police and the local youth community.

In May 2016, the first joint YF/TFUK Ubuntu Police–Youth Roundtable took place in Camberwell with a provision made for attendance by an independent evaluator. The aims of the evaluation were to provide a critical assessment of the process and highlight areas for future development with regard to future usage of the concept and its sustainability. The evaluation report was generally positive (Cole, 2016) with the evaluator favouring further pilots in other London boroughs with a view to refining the process and acquiring a stronger evidence base for its sustainability, in terms of its adaptability to other areas of concern and a possible national roll-out. The evaluator also identified areas for review which included:

- The need for the process to be better structured so that both parties benefit (specific recommendations provided).
- The need for records of the events to be kept (e.g. minutes taken) so that mutually agreed outcomes can be referred to in future engagements and policy-making.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

- The development of the training elements of the project to be given some consideration for both the police and young people.
- Future evaluations to include instruments to assess impact in terms of benefits to young people, the community and the police.

In July 2016, the Tutu Foundation UK secured funding for the Ubuntu RTs to be piloted in 10 other London boroughs. The funding sources were the Sr John Cass's Foundation and the Mayor of London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). MOPAC made a number of stipulations to the funding, which were as follows:

- Identification and agreement of priority boroughs with MOPAC.
- Commitment of the local police and local authority to the project, as evidenced by a resolution of the relevant Borough Community Safety Partnership.
- For the additional pilot boroughs, evidence of match funding.
- For the seven boroughs to roll out, evidence of match funding and a successful evaluation of the project in the four pilot boroughs.

The 10 London boroughs for the project were agreed with MOPAC. The RTs were to be delivered in three timetabled tranches of 3–3–4 boroughs. Seven boroughs were completed in the following manner:

Tranche 1: Haringey, Islington and Lewisham (three boroughs).

Tranche 2: Barking and Dagenham and Tower Hamlets (two boroughs).

Tranche 3: Newham and Waltham Forest (two boroughs).

Boroughs not completed: Lambeth, Enfield and Brent (three boroughs).

## 1.2 Context

Over the years, a number of studies in the UK and the USA have documented the strained relationship between police officers and young people, specifically young people who live in inner city areas, are from lower socio-economic backgrounds, predominantly males, and from minority ethnic groups. These studies demonstrate that these youths may hold an implicit bias against police; moreover, they may demonstrate their perceptions of injustice and societal marginalization by acting disrespectfully towards police. Similarly, studies found that police officers may hold unconscious biases against minority youths and make assumptions about young people based on their race, age, dress and appearance.

The Ubuntu Police-Youth RT is set against a background of a historic strained relationship between the UK police, particularly in London, and youths in inner city and poor and deprived neighbourhoods in the UK. This strained relationship has resulted in a number of riots in which young people (mainly BAME) in these areas were disproportionately involved. One of the key

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

causes was perceptions of police indiscriminate targeting of young Black people, particularly in stop and search, and the apparent racist victimisation of young Black youths by police officers (Scarman, 1981; Solomos, 2003; Sanders and Young, 2007; Reiner, 2012). Since first published in 1992, Section 95 statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice have shown a persistent disproportional representation of minority youths in police stop and search and arrest figures, particularly in London (Cole, 2019).

In its inquiry into the relationship between children and the police, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children found the following;

*'There is a lack of trust in the police among many children and young people. Some children and young people fear the police. Encounters between the two groups are often characterised by poor and unconstructive communication and a lack of mutual respect. Experts told the APPG that it takes time and hard work to change these ingrained attitudes and behaviours'* (APPG, 2015:5).

The APPG also identified that there was a lack of evaluation into good practice of police-youth engagement activity (APPG, 2015:23).

The UK police, however, do not have a tradition of intimate relationships with young people in order to address their concerns or problems. Although police work has always included a general duty of safeguarding and protecting young people from harm and victimisation, these were performed within the general law enforcement responsibilities of the police. All police forces in the UK have youth-engagement policies/strategies but the common approach is predominantly 'top-down', although, as indicated in the following quote from the National Police Chief Council's document *Child-Centred Policing*, the police do recognise the need to work more closely with young people in an open and transparent manner, to improve communication by listening to them more and also prioritise early intervention:

*'The biggest challenge and arguably most critical areas for police work with young people is our relationship with them. In order to fully understand the impact of what we do and how we can improve our service to C&YP, we must be able to engage in an open and transparent manner. We must understand what works well in engaging with young people so that we can break down barriers and improve our relationship with them as well as consult with them when introducing policy and practice. If we are to improve the service we provide to C&YP we must listen to them and act upon what they tell us. In order to improve the trust and confidence of young people in the police service we need to improve our communication and interaction with them. They want to be treated fairly and justly but they perceive that much of the time they are not'* (NPCC: *Child-Centred Policing*, 2015: 12).

Since the inception of the police-school liaison schemes of the 1950s, the UK police have 'experimented' with different approaches to youth engagement but the bulk of what is currently

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

done, unfortunately, is information giving to 'educate' young people to understand the possible negative effects of being involved in deviant and criminal behaviours and how to be safe from criminal victimisation. Even where the engagement involves 'positive' activities in the community, the ultimate direction comes from the police. Latest attempts to 'reach out' to young people through social media have the potential to reach more young people but it is simply 'engagement from a distance'. To summarise, almost all police activities to engage with young people fall within the last rung of the ladder of engagement below (Figure 1). Most of what is done is not evidence-based; initiatives were not always the result of a consultative process with young people, not based on what the young people have identified by themselves as their needs and are generally not empowering in the sense that they are not led or managed by the youths themselves (see Lister *et al.*, 2015).



<b>Devolving Empowerment</b>	Giving young people responsibility for decision-making on direction of engagement and measurement of outcomes.
<b>Supporting</b>	Giving young people support on what they have identified as to how their needs and concerns can be addressed.
<b>Involving</b>	On-going efforts with young people to develop best approaches to engagement.
<b>Consulting</b>	Approach based on what has been agreed as a result of a consultative process between young people and the police.
<b>Evidence based</b>	Approach based on tried and tested methods that has worked with young people.
<b>Informing</b>	Information-giving; knowledge-based. Educating young people about what the police do and how they can be of help by being law-abiding.

Figure 1: Ladder of Engagement

That engagement with youths is more effective where the youths have ownership of the process (youth-led) is recognised by Rt. Hon Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) who, while speaking on gangs and serious youth violence in London said:

*“There are some huge Departments looking at this [...] None of them can possibly understand the issues being faced by young people on a daily basis. They all engage with young people, but they do so in a tokenistic way. They do so to tick the box that says, “Must engage with young people.” They do not engage in a youth-led way; no, they do so in a “led-youth” way. This whole approach needs to change. Young people and our communities have the solutions, because they are the ones facing the problems”* (Rt. Hon. Vicky Foxcroft, Hansard, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016)

The Ubuntu Police-Youth RT is a youth-led engagement initiative that was established on the principle that a youth-led approach to police youth engagement is more likely to open doors to

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

honest dialogue along the lines of what young people themselves have identified as the key issues confronting them; that it is empowering to young people and is more likely than other police-led methods to increase the trust and confidence of young people in the police and their activities in their communities. Research has already shown that community trust and confidence in the police will increase the willingness of community members to want to help the police in law enforcement issues.

### 1.2.1 Ubuntu

Ubuntu is an African concept derived from an Nguni (isiZulu) aphorism: *UmuntuNgumuntuNgabantu*, which can be translated as “a person is a person because of or through others” (Tutu, 2004: 25-26). In other words, Ubuntu embraces a world view that we owe our selfhood to others. Ubuntu has been described in many ways but mainly in terms of the capacity to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and respect. (Khoza, 1994; Poovan, *et al.*, 2006; Tutu, 1999). Samkange and Samkange (1980), assert that one of the key maxims of ‘Ubuntuism’ is that: “To be human is to affirm one’s humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them” According to Nelson Mandela it is a way of life which underpins an open society (Mandela, 2006: xxv).

There is a growing body of opinion that the practice of *Ubuntu* has the potential significantly to change the way groups of people interact with each other. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu stated in ‘*No Future Without Forgiveness*’: “A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed” (Tutu, 1999:34-35). As Khomba (2011) explained:

“The Ubuntu philosophy does not mean that people should not address themselves to a problem, but it does imply that they should look at whether what they are doing will enable or empower the community around them and help it improve. The Ubuntu philosophy also implies that if people are treated well, they are likely to perform better” (Khomba, 2011: 129)

In essence, the concept of Ubuntu defines the individual in terms of their relationships with and responsibility towards others. Ubuntu rejects the identification of people in terms of physical features; instead, it expresses the interconnectedness, common humanity and the responsibility of individuals to each other (Koster, 1996:99-118; Nussbaum, 2003:21-26; Khomba, 2011). We affirm our humanity only when we acknowledge that of others; it is through our interaction with our fellow human beings, that we discover our own human qualities. Thus, the individual identity is replaced with the larger societal identity within the individual. This places high demands on the individual to behave in the highest standards and

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

to portray the highest possible virtues that society strives for, which includes caring for each other's well-being.

Thus, Ubuntu is, essentially, a personal philosophy that calls on us to mirror our humanity for each other. Ubuntu rejects an 'us and them' thinking mode - judging people because they are (physically or socially) different or sticking to certain established stereotypes. If one regards someone else (however different) as a fellow human being, there is a greater chance of achieving understanding. And, achieving understanding is important and necessary because we are all interconnected. 'Knowing you could bring a world of meaning and interest in mine':

“People who truly practise Ubuntu are always open and make themselves available to others, they are affirming of others [... ] With Ubuntu, one has a proper assurance that comes with the fundamental recognition that each individual belongs to a greater community” (Khomba, op.cit: 131)

There is a growing worldwide recognition of Ubuntu as a progressive and integrative philosophy in businesses and in education. The practice of *Ubuntu* has already been embraced by corporations in leadership training programmes and corporate strategies. (Khoza, 1994). In the United States, it has been embraced by Universities and has been suggested as a way forward in the training of lawyers (Wichtner-Zoia, 2012). Ubuntu is also applied in the policing philosophy of other countries, for example, the Republic of South Africa; and, it is a growing concept in community policing in the United States. Most notably is how, in the field of politics, Ubuntu has been linked to the democratic process of allowing every individual to have their equal say in any discussion and on ultimately reaching an agreement acceptable to all”. The concept has also been applied or implied in the political processes of conflict resolution, peace-making or reconciliation.

Ubuntu provides the philosophical foundations that makes the Ubuntu roundtable initiative quite unique when compared with other youth-led police engagement initiatives where young people lead the events but there are no theoretical foundations other than an attempt to give young people an opportunity to 'talk to the police and ask questions'. What the Ubuntu Police-Youth RT claims to have that is distinctive is the underlying ambition that the young people who take part can, through the process, re-build relationships between themselves and the police, promote good relations, change mindsets to positive thinking about youth and community policing issues and to do this in a manner that is respectful and acknowledging of others' humanity. In other words, the young people see their communities as 'communities in transition', where they can play their part in the restoration of order and good relations, to promote the health and wellbeing of young people hitherto disaffected and marginalised (and demonised) and play their civic part in bringing about effective crime prevention and community safety through effective cooperation with the police.

Most recently, in her oral evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into the Macpherson Report: Twenty Years On, Baroness Lawrence stated the importance of engaging young people at an early age but fundamentally she stressed:

*“The older generation talking to young people doesn't reach them, so you need their peers to go in and speak to those kids and let them know what the reality is”* (HASC, 2019:11).

### **1.3 The conditions under which the Ubuntu Police-Youth Roundtables took place**

#### **1.3.1 Cuts in public spending affecting youth provisions**

In 2014, children and young people accounted for 37% of the UK population (the third highest figure in the EU-28). Two urban conurbations in the UK—Inner London (43.4%) and the West Midlands (41.8%)—were amongst the top five areas in Europe with the highest shares of youths in the total population in 2014 (Cole, 2019). This high figure has not been matched by adequate provisions for youths in these areas to address their health, education and welfare. Indeed, austerity budget cuts introduced in 2010 by successive governments have impacted adversely on local authorities in the area of council-funded youth service provision. In London, where the Ubuntu Round Table Project took place, there has been an overall budget cut of 46% since 2011-2012. There has been a slowing down of cuts during the periods 2017-2018 and 2018-19. In addition, there are planned £1.2 million in overall cuts for council youth services in London in the coming years (Berry, 2019:2).

#### **1.3.2 Youth crime**

Since the late 1990s, the numbers of young people involved in the criminal justice system appear to have been decreasing worldwide. In 2010, youths consisted of an average of 9.3% of the total numbers of convicted criminal offenders per 100,000 populations among the surveyed 28 EU countries (European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, 2014). In the UK alone, there were 27,900 young people sentenced in England and Wales, in the year ending March 2016. This represents a fall of 10% compared with the previous year and 71% since the year ending March 2006 (YJB/ MoJ, 2017). However, according to ‘section 95’ statistics on race and the UK criminal justice system (published since 1992), Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young people are disproportionately represented amongst the total number of youths caught up within the youth justice system, from ‘stop and search’ through to sentencing. For example, in the year ending March 2016, BAME young people accounted for 21,900 (25%) of arrests of young people, with 10,800 (12%) being from a Black ethnic group.<sup>2</sup> In the same year,

---

<sup>2</sup> The BAME population in the UK as a whole is around 15% of the total UK population.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

BAME young people accounted for 41% of the under-18 custodial population with black youths alone accounting for 21% of young people in custody (Youth Justice Board / Ministry of Justice, 2017). BAME youths are also overrepresented as victims of crimes compared with their White counterparts (Ministry of Justice, 2015; Uhrig, 2016). Available crime data in England and Wales shows that BAME youths are disproportionately represented among those experiencing racially-motivated antisocial behaviour and crimes, whilst the perpetrators of these offences are disproportionately white youths (Scottish Executive, 2005; Jansson, 2006; Times Online, 2009; Craig *et al.* 2009; Cole, 2019).

Of particular concern is the number of BAME youths increasingly becoming involved in weapons-related crimes both as offenders and victims. In the year ending March 2015, the percentage of BAME young people convicted or cautioned for possession of a knife or other offensive weapons was 39% of all those convicted or cautioned, compared with 16% for adults (Youth Justice Board / Ministry of Justice, 2016, p. 78). Reports have also indicated that BAME youths are disproportionately represented in youth criminal gang membership and activities (HM Government, 2007; Scottish Government Social Research, 2010a, b).

The year ending March 2018 saw the highest number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in England and Wales—40,100—the highest figure, since the introduction of the eight-year series. In 2017-18, 268 homicides were recorded involving sharp instruments including knives. This was an increase from 2016 recorded in the period 2016/2017.<sup>3</sup> The figures show that perpetrators and victims were disproportionately young people (mainly BAME) and the incidents were disproportionately in London inner city areas, including many of the boroughs where the Ubuntu Police-Youth RTs took place.

The increased level of knife crime has resulted in a flurry of activity resulting in: the introduction of a public health approach duty to tackle serious violence including a series of summits to tackle knife crime; a Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into Serious Violence; the introduction of the Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government, 2018); the creation of Violence Reduction Units; and the launch of the Youth Endowment Fund to create a generational shift in violent crime. In addition, on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the Home Secretary announced that the police forces in the following areas—London, West Midlands, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, South Wales and Greater Manchester—would be given more power to stop and search people without ‘reasonable suspicion’ and that police inspectors would be authorised to issue a Section 60 Order.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.3.3 Increase in link between youth ethnicity and social inequalities**

These 'reforms' have come despite the fact that child poverty and social inequalities have continued to increase in the UK particularly in areas where these crimes have taken place,

---

<sup>3</sup>House of Commons Library (2018). Knife Crime in England and Wales, Briefing Paper Number SN4304.

<sup>4</sup>Police are to be given 'hugely effective' stop-and-search powers as Home Secretary overturns Theresa May's reforms. Steve Bird, The Telegraph, 30 March 2019.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

which are also places where BAME youth populations have historically been concentrated (see Chattoo, Atkin, Craig and Flynn, 2019).

### **1.3.4 Policing**

Police relationships with young people, particularly in the inner cities, remain strained in spite of attempts by the police to engage better with young people. Complaints from youths have remained focused on police indiscriminate or harsh treatment of young people particularly with regard to their use of stop and search. As indicated above, BAME youth remains disproportionately represented in police stop and search and arrest figures. The trust and confidence of BAME youths in the police have been historically low and have remained so for decades.

## 2. The Ubuntu Police-Youth Roundtables

The stated aims of the UbuntuPolice-Youth RTs are:

- To bring disenfranchised young people and their local police officers together to build respect and understanding and so reduce Police-Youth antagonism and build the trust that underpins safety on our streets.
- To provide the members of the police force working on the ground and the young people in those communities with the skills and confidence to listen to each other and express themselves to each other.
- To enable the police and young people to build trust so that they can work with each other and talk to each other in order to build safer communities (for a brief summary of the project see <http://tutufoundationuk.org/projects/better-policing>).

The following specific objectives of the 10 boroughs project were presented to the evaluators, to:

1. deliver 20 Ubuntu roundtables in the 10 selected boroughs.
2. develop a customised training package for 'Ubuntu' youth facilitators.
3. recruit and train 30 young people as 'Ubuntu' Youth Police Facilitators from the 10 boroughs.
4. secure the involvement and active participation of Police Borough Commanders and their staff in the initiative.
5. develop and deliver a customised training package for participating police officers/staff at borough level, underpinned by the principles of 'Ubuntu' and police-youth engagement.
6. build capacity and competence in the voluntary and community sector in the 10 boroughs in order to improve police-youth engagement through the principles of 'Ubuntu'.
7. identify youth policing issues in the 10 boroughs.
8. improve police awareness of issues affecting marginalised young people in the 10 boroughs.
9. reduce police-youth tensions in the 10 boroughs.

It is envisaged that through this process, the young people would be empowered and learn skills (e.g. communication skills) that will enable them to relate better with police officers. It is also expected that police officers who participate would have a better understanding of youth behaviour and issues and that this would promote better policing in the boroughs.

The Ubuntu Police-Youth Roundtable is a series of events in five main stages, including three crucial stages before the roundtables start, and two RT events (1 and 2). The Camberwell pilot (2016) had an additional 'reflection' stage which took place after the RTs and in a local police station. At that stage, the youths and police officers examined their performances at the RTs, deliberated on what had been achieved and suggested ideas on how to move forward. The 10-

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

project pilot did not include this stage, largely because of constraints on resources. Instead a brief summary session took place at the end of RT 2 that was meant to serve the same purpose. The police and the project management appeared committed to act upon the ideas for future development that were raised at the RTs, although doing so would probably take some time.

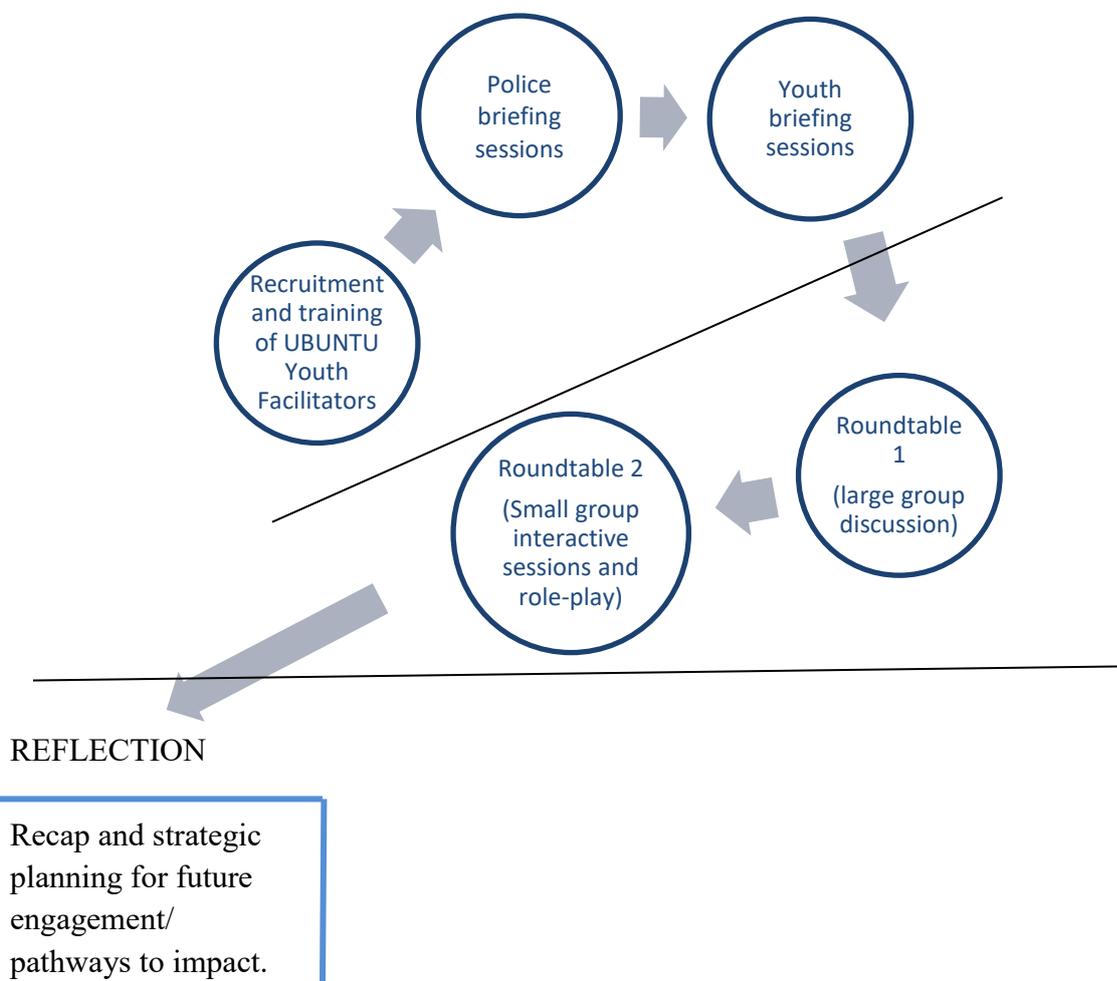


Figure 2: The YF/TFUK Ubuntu Police-Youth Roundtables

These five stages are as follows:

### 2.1 Stage 1: Recruitment and Training of UBUNTU Youth Facilitators

One of the aims of the project was that young people would be trained in facilitation skills and Ubuntu values so that they could facilitate the roundtables with the police. The recruitment of young people was undertaken through community engagement with youth and community provisions in each of the specified boroughs. A community engagement consultant was

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

employed in December 2016 by Youth Futures for this purpose. The community engagement consultant undertook a 'heat map'<sup>5</sup> exercise in order to identify existing youth provisions in the selected boroughs. This led to direct contact to enlist these youth provisions as 'partners' to the project. Successful enlistment of a youth provision meant that the management team was able to recruit young people from the selected boroughs and secure their involvement in the RTs. (Existing Youth Futures facilitators' local knowledge was also utilised in recruiting young people for the RTs).

Local youths aspiring to be youth facilitators for their boroughs were to undergo a facilitator training session run by Youth Futures staff. It is envisaged generally that trained Ubuntu youth facilitators will not only lead the youth briefing sessions where the agenda for the RTs are expected to be decided but also chair and manage all the RT events in their own boroughs. In addition, they are expected to participate in the training of future youth facilitators and have an input in the police briefing sessions (see below).

A training pack was developed by YF for the training of youth facilitators. The training explores 'Ubuntu Skills and Values' through a range of forums, group exercises, discussion groups and role-play. The values were identified to the trainees as follows: impartial; respectful; inclusive; compassionate; empathetic; authentic; good listening; ability to create a safe space; ability to hold people to account; and ability to ask questions.

In effect, the facilitator training programme is aimed at building confidence in youth facilitators to enable them to inspire others to communicate more effectively in group discussions and to develop basic leadership and management skills, including the ability to put participants at ease so that the process does not intimidate either the police or young people. In addition, the training is aimed at ensuring that the trainees understand the Ubuntu values that are to be applied at the RTs and are able to be fair and sympathetic to all participants by making sure that comments are not made that are offensive to others and that participants generally behave well during the process. Finally the facilitators should be able to make sure that discussions are not distracted from the set agenda and are able to summarise the activities in a detailed and constructive manner.

Prior to the training taking place, the evaluators noticed that the training pack to be used was not an accredited training programme which raised doubts as to its creditability as a training instrument (Volunteer Now, 2010). But, because the process of training accreditations is usually a long one and may not be completed before the RTs are scheduled to start, the project management team, on the advice of the evaluators, agreed to pilot the training pack and refine it for use at the training sessions, subject to clearance by the evaluators. This was to be understood as a temporary measure. The need to have the training pack accredited is a key recommendation in this report (see Recommendation 1).

---

<sup>5</sup> A heat map is a graphical representation of data where the individual values contained in a matrix are represented by colours.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

The training pilot took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Changes were made and approved by the evaluators before the training sessions started. The evaluators observed two training sessions that were undertaken at Regents University on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and at Beckton Globe Youth, Newham on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Considering the huge tasks expected of youth facilitators, it is essential that the youth facilitator training pack is refined to meet these requirements and be accredited by a reputable training/education accreditation body. This should be a mandatory requirement before any more roundtables are run after the completion of the 10-borough project.
2. Prior to the accreditation of the training pack, further research is needed into the distinctiveness of the concept of Ubuntu, its practical uses and the transferable skills that could be attained through a training in Ubuntu values. In addition, this research should identify how these transferable skills and values can be used by youths or persons engaging in crisis management, conflict resolution or peace building. There may also be an opportunity for the research to identify the general use of Ubuntu as an engagement tool to address community problems, including crime and how its impact can be measured.
3. Once the training pack has been accredited, the partnership could explore ways by which this training could be provided to a wider audience of young people in various contexts.

## **2.2 Stage 2: Police Briefing Sessions**

The police briefing sessions were run by YF's project manager accompanied by trained and experienced youth facilitators. The aim of this session was to prepare police officers for the RTs by explaining to them the aims and objectives of the project, including the meaning of Ubuntu and the centrality of the concept's values in the process; ask what their expectations of the RTs are, explain the youth-led nature of the process; discuss concerns or anxieties that they might have about the process and then highlight ethical and safeguarding issues that they should be aware of. In addition, the officers were given a brief opportunity to practise a discussion session led by youth facilitators present at the briefing. Analysis of police officers' responses to the AFTER police briefing questionnaire showed an overwhelming satisfaction with the experience (see Results and Analysis section for details). However, some police officers were concerned that the youth facilitators that ran their sessions were not from their own boroughs; they suggested that it would have been more beneficial and 'realistic' had the youth facilitator been local or, at least, had specific knowledge of local youth-policing issues. When this last query was put to the project managers by the evaluators, one of the reasons given for not having local facilitators present at some local police briefings was that most of the local facilitators

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

were newly-trained, very young and inexperienced and therefore not 'ready' for these sessions. Local youth facilitators were to feature more in the main RT events.

### **Recommendation:**

4. Locally-trained youth facilitators should, at least, sit in at police training sessions. It is crucial for local youth facilitators to 'get to know' the police officers that they might be working with in future engagements, post-RT.

## **2.3 Stage 3: Youth Briefing or Introductory Sessions**

It was envisaged that YF would be able to gather together the local youths in each borough in a briefing session before the RTs started. The purpose of the youth briefing sessions was to enable the young people to brainstorm on the youth-policing issues/topics to be discussed with the police at the forthcoming RTs. The young people were engaged in a number of exercises that enabled them to arrive at these topics. The session also included general information on the project, the concept of Ubuntu and Ubuntu values; and how to behave at RT sessions without embarrassing or upsetting anyone. These sessions were managed by YF and youth facilitators who were meant to make a list of the key issues that would be raised at the RTs.

It is not clear that this process occurred in all the RTs. In some of the RTs, young people turned up for the first RT event (RT1) that were not present at the youth briefing sessions and their lack of preparation was quite evident in some of the group discussions. In some sessions, however, the briefing sessions took place on the same day, just before the RT sessions. This is good practice as it enabled more of the youths that were at the briefing sessions also to attend the first roundtable (RT 1) but not necessarily the second roundtable (RT 2) that occurred a week later. Following advice from the evaluators, topics discussed at the youth sessions were recorded in written forms and brought to RT 1 by the youth facilitators.

The project management should be commended for being able to recruit young people 'from the streets' and from various backgrounds, including those who would normally not want to talk with the police.

The topics that were brought forward by the young people to be discussed with police officers at the RTs were varied but the following were the ones that occurred in most of the boroughs:

- Young people carrying knives and in groups.
- Police use of body cameras
- Stop and search (of black youths)
- Police accountability
- Perceptions of young people and the police being influenced by the media
- The punishment of young people who use illegal drugs (mainly cannabis)
- Gangs

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

- The police going into schools more
- DNA database
- Young people congregating around shopping centres (public order issues)
- Foreign young people.
- Why young people may not want to talk to the police
- Respect
- Impact of peer pressure on young boys and the glamorisation of ‘bad boy’ culture
- Joint enterprise
- Importance of the police undertaking more diversionary activities with young people such as boxing, sports.
- Importance of raising awareness of rights
- Fear of reporting crime –intimidation- being labelled a ‘snitch’
- Stereotyping of black young men

It occurred to the evaluators that these must be issues of great concern to young people in these boroughs. These topics could be grouped into the following categories: (i) topics that youths in these boroughs felt were worthy of discussion with their local police (ii) topics that they believe that they know a fair bit about that they could share with their local police officers (iii) topics that they would like to know more about and (iv) topics/problems on which they thought that youths and the police ought to work together in order to provide a better understanding or solution.

### **Recommendations:**

5. There was some indication that the programme organisers had difficulties recruiting young people to participate in the RTs, notwithstanding the remarkable efforts of the youth facilitators who were able to recruit some youths from the street. It is recommended that a more robust and sustainable strategy is adopted not only to recruit youth participants but also to ensure that the same set of young people who participate in the youth briefings (or at least a majority) also participate in RT1 and RT2. This will enable a better assessment of impact.
6. The programme management team must pay particular attention to safeguarding issues especially where very young children are to be involved in RTs that are taking place outside school hours. Serious thoughts must be given to ethical issues (e.g. obtaining parental consent) where very young children are being recruited for the RTs.
7. Attempts should be made to have briefing sessions on the same day as the first roundtable (RT1). This will ensure that the youths involved in the deliberations at the youth briefings will most likely be the same as those that will take part in RT 1. Having youth briefing sessions on separate days is not cost-effective.

## **2.4 Stage 4: Roundtable 1: large-group discussion RTs (RT1)**

At RT1, the youth and the police finally met each other. In order to prepare the participants for the frank talks that were to take place, a brief ice-breaking session at the beginning was standard practice at the start of RT1. At RT1, the police and young people discussed a range of topics in large groups. Although the topics discussed were, presumably, those that had been agreed by the local youths at their briefing sessions (see section 2.3. above) the evaluators noted that in some cases, topics were brought into the discussion that were not on the youth briefing lists. This was to be expected, as controversial topics often led to other topics that were not originally planned but were equally as important as those already listed for debate.

A typical day in RT1 included:

1. An ice-breaking session.
2. The RT group sessions (the number of group sessions depended on the size of the participants but efforts were made to ensure that the police officers attending were equally distributed into all groups).
3. Break (refreshments provided).
4. Further discussions.
5. Summary, reflection and suggestions for the future.

The evaluators observed that, although the debates were heated and confrontational in some cases, both parties addressed each other with respect. No foul language was used by the young people and there was no indication that the police officers 'looked down' on the young people. BEFORE questionnaires were administered to all participants before RT 1 started. Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire items are presented in the section on Findings.

Analysis of the AFTER questionnaire revealed that the young people did not feel intimidated by the police; and the police, on their part, were very supportive and willing to answer questions. RT1 ended with a summary/discussion of what each party thought that they had gained from the discussions. However, no summaries or minutes of the meetings were given to the evaluators.

Whereas it is true that the evaluators did express their lack of support for the video-recording of events on the grounds that it might contravene data protection and privacy rules, there was no reason why the sessions could not have been audio-recorded.

The evaluators also observed that contrary to the assurance given by the project managers that trained local facilitators would lead and manage the RTs in their boroughs, this appeared not to have occurred in all cases. The evaluators also observed that in the majority of cases,

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

facilitation was done by Youth Futures trained and experienced facilitators, most of who were not from all the boroughs covered.

### **Recommendations:**

8. Attempts must be made to audio record all RTs. Future RT budgets should include costings for the recording, transcription and storage of minutes of all RT events for future reference or use, given appropriate safeguards for confidentiality.
9. Trained local youth facilitators should be allowed to participate much more in RT1, to gain experience. More importantly, their visibility to their local police is important as they may be the key participants or even leaders in future local police-youth Ubuntu engagements and activities in their own boroughs. This will take some pressures off the experienced YF facilitators who may remain as advisers and mentors to the new (and younger) facilitators. The need for this recommendation will become more evident as the experienced YF facilitators become 'older' and/or move on to other ventures.

## **2.5 Stage 5: Roundtable 2: Small-group discussions/ Interactive Group Activities and RolePlays**

Although it would appear that RT1 is the main event of the programme, in actual fact, it sets the scene for RT2 where some of the key issues that were highlighted at RT1 were later discussed in more detail in interactive small group sessions and a role play session in RT2. Thus, the two sessions are connected. RT2 took place exactly one week after RT1. The rationale for this was not, however, made clear to the evaluators.

The interactive small group sessions varied from borough to borough as they were based on specific controversial topics raised at RT1 in each borough. In these sessions, more in-depth discussions took place that clarified concerns and other matters that were not fully understood during the discussions at RT1. The role plays were based on topics chosen by the young people. Although the role play topics varied between boroughs, the general preference appeared to be for 'stop and search' role plays where the youths played the police and police officers played the youths being stopped and searched. The theme was generally around what the young people perceived to be a 'good' or 'bad' stop and search. The role plays were the most enjoyable according to both police and young people. More importantly, some police officers used the role plays as an opportunity to explain what they thought were misconceptions about stop and search or other policing issues acted out at the role plays. It appeared that the young people benefited from these explanations. In spite of the fact that the sessions were generally stimulating and educative, no recoding of the sessions was made (see Recommendation 8 above).

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

The fact that RT2 took place a week after RT1 raised questions as to whether the young people who attended RT2 were the same as those who attended RT1, more so as the personal details of the youths that participated in RT1 were not kept on record. An exception would be Barking and Dagenham where both RTs took place in a school. In contrast, the police officer participation was constant. The same officers took part in both RTs 1 and 2. (On the point that project management team must strive to make youth attendance at both RTs the same, see Recommendation 5 above).

In the AFTER questionnaire, both police officers and young people complained that they did not have enough time to talk about their topics. Judging by the long list of topics that preceded some of the RTs, it was not surprising that the management team was not able to cover all the topics listed.

### **Recommendations:**

10. The fact that young people and officers wanted to talk about specific issues in more detail suggests that the RT idea could be further developed so that it is adaptable to more in-depth discussion of specific topics/issues such as those mentioned by the youths on this programme, e.g. knife crime, youth illegal use of drugs (mainly cannabis) and gangs.

## **2.6 Reflection Sessions**

Although the roundtables ended with a short session in which both parties said what they thought that they had gained from the experience and some suggestions were made regarding the future, there were no follow-up sessions in which these ideas could have been developed as a way forward. This was in contrast to the Camberwell pilot (2016) where (a) there was a follow-up meeting between the facilitators and the police (at a police station) to reflect on the roundtables; the police then wrote up a short report on their experience, which was sent to the project team; and (b) the young people also staged two post-roundtable focus groups (one for boys and another for girls) to reflect on how they performed and to deliberate on how they felt that the roundtable idea could be further developed to enhance the relationship between the police and youths in the borough.

The evaluators recognized that time was an issue with the 10 RT project, compounded by significant delays and difficulties in getting participants on board.<sup>6</sup> The management team was quite stressed in terms of resources to manage the process.

The evaluators were mindful of the fact that this project was a very large one with a significant number of stakeholders. The amount of work that is required was not underestimated by the

---

<sup>6</sup> On occasions, key personnel changed or local projects closed and the process had to be restarted from scratch.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

evaluators. The scale of the project increased significantly from the experience of a single pilot in Camberwell in 2016 to pilots being required in 10 new London boroughs. The evaluators recognised that the success of the project was dependent on establishing and sustaining the participation of a range of diverse stakeholders, youth provisions, local authority Community Safety Partnerships and 10 London police organisations. In essence, the project was underpinned by continuous community and stakeholder engagement. The evaluators acknowledged and accepted that these took time to develop and sustain and they did cause significant delays. The overall budget for the project was severely strained by the extent of the work that emerged.

The project team took some strategic steps to address these practical issues; for example, by appointing a community engagement consultant in December 2016 and introducing a continuous assessment and monitoring of activities through introducing weekly project management meetings, which commenced in March 2017. These moves did provide better management but many of the problems remained as the majority of what needed to be done are linked to available funding.

As a result, the best that the project organisers could manage was to try to cover as many boroughs as possible. The management team should be commended for their efforts, in spite of limited financial resources. The evaluators are convinced that the inability of the project team to complete 10 boroughs as previously planned was due to these constraints.

### **Recommendations:**

11. Managing a project like this one requires substantial funding and expertise. It is essential that substantial provisions are made in future budgets for management and capacity building, in addition to funding for the routine tasks of getting participants on board for RT sessions, with an allowance needed for ‘false starts’.
12. The staging of follow-on meetings between the facilitators and the police (for example, at a police station or youth centre) is essential in order to reflect on the roundtables and plan towards the future of the relationship, including the search for new ideas on the expansion of the Ubuntu RT concept and its sustainability.

### 3. The Evaluation

The aim of this evaluation was: To assess the Ubuntu RT process in terms of the extent to which the stated aims and objectives have been met and provide recommendations/advice/suggestions regarding the future of the project and its sustainability

The research question for the evaluation was: Whether adopting the principles and values of Ubuntu in a police-youth engagement initiative will improve trust and confidence in the police and bring about a better relationship/understanding between young people and the police that would lead police and young people to willingly work together to address local policing issues identified by the young people?

TFUK/YF expressed a desire for the evaluation of the 10 borough roundtables to be *formative* in nature. “*This means that the evaluation will be continuous and feedback into the process to improve the current project*” (Tutu Foundation MEMO 15-11-18 - Ubuntu Police-Youth forum – July 2015). In addition, “*each stage of the project will be assessed using a simple quantitative and qualitative feedback assessment method*” (*Ibid*). In formative evaluations, projects or programmes are assessed during their development or early implementation in order to provide information on an ongoing basis about how best to revise and modify these in order to improve performance (Scriven, 1966; Stufflebeam, 2001). Formative evaluations are helpful for pilot projects and can be used for progress monitoring of on-going programmes (Scriven, 1966). In contrast, summative evaluations assess projects at the end of an operating cycle. Findings are then used to help decide whether future such programmes should be adopted, continued or modified for improvement.

In line with these demands, the evaluation team adopted a mixed methods approach including the following:

- Surveys using BEFORE and AFTER questionnaires to assess change in perceptions, expectations and beliefs before and after participation in the RT events.
- In-depth interviews with key actors: the project manager and samples of participating police officers and young people.
- A focus group session with youth facilitators. The focus group was to give the facilitators an opportunity to reflect back on their experience and performance, to voice their concerns and to express their views on the future development of the project idea.
- Observation of all sessions – police and youth training and briefing sessions and all RT1 and RT2 sessions. Field notes were written from these observations, including the collection of information, for example, stickers and group discussion topics and notes.
- Continuous feedback to the project team at different stages of the development of the project.

The evaluators would like the project team to note that whilst they recognised the need for an

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

assessment of impact of this programme, for example, in terms of impact on community safety or other youth-police problems in these communities, the evaluators worked with the understanding that the evaluation was to support the development of the project with a view to a ‘final product’ that might be subjected to further tests to ascertain its sustainability, impact or potential for impact. As a result, the evaluation focused mainly on identifying challenges at the different stages of the project that might need to be changed or addressed for the project to be sustainable and/or have an impact. Thus, the evaluators accept the limitation of this evaluation in the sense that it does not fulfil the demands of Recommendation 7 in the Camberwell report (2016) that specifically stated that further evaluations must look into impact in terms of benefits to young people, the community and the police (Cole, 2016). An initial plan to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the project was also shelved because of a lack of available resources

### 3.1 The Survey

For the survey, BEFORE and AFTER questionnaires were administered to ALL the young people and police officers that attended the briefing sessions and RTs. One hundred and twenty-nine (129) young people completed the BEFORE questionnaire at RT 1 and 107 completed the AFTER questionnaire at RT 2. As the questionnaires were anonymous, there was no guarantee that the same young people completed both BEFORE and AFTER questionnaires, neither was there any evidence that those that completed the questionnaires also attended the youth briefing sessions.

A simple head count revealed that a total of 243 young youths attended briefing sessions and RT1s and RT2s.

**Table 2: Surveyed youths at both roundtables (RT1 & 2)**

Boroughs	RT 1			Totals	RT 2 Totals only (Gender not recorded)
	Gender	Female	Not Stated		
	Male				
Barking and Dagenham	15	17	0	32	31
Haringey	9	4	0	13	11
Islington	6	4	0	10	16
Lewisham	2	9	0	11	11
Newham	13	9	0	22	13
Tower Hamlets	5	22	0	27	12
Waltham Forest	4	8	2	14	13
Totals	54	73	2	129	107

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

Table 2 shows the gender of the youth participants in all seven boroughs. It could be seen that the attendance was generally lower at RT 2 compared with RT 1. Slightly more females than males participated in the survey the majority whom were aged between 12 and 17 years old (81.7%). (see Table 3)

**Table 3: Age distribution of surveyed youths at RT1**

Boroughs	12 - 17	18 – 25	Over 25	Not Stated	Totals
Barking and Dagenham	32	0	0	0	32
Haringey	9	4	0	0	13
Islington	9	0	0	1	10
Lewisham	8	3	0	0	11
Newham	21	1	0	0	22
Tower Hamlets	26	0	0	1	27
Waltham Forest	2	10	0	2	14
Totals	107 (82.9%)	18 (14.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.1%)	129 (100.0%)

Seventy-seven (77) police officers of various ranks attended the events and 76 completed the BEFORE and AFTER questionnaires (completed the questionnaires: 98.7% completion rate). All police officers attended all events: briefing sessions, RTs 1 and 2. The majority of police officers were of PC rank (70.1%) (Table 4).

**Table 4: Surveyed police officers at briefing sessions and both roundtables (RT1 & 2)**

Boroughs	Gender		Officer Ranks (All Boroughs)	Numbers
	Male	Female		
Barking and Dagenham	10	4	Superintendents	1
Haringey	6	5	Inspectors	4
Islington	8	4	Sergeants (PS/APS/DS)	16
Lewisham	6	7	Constables (PC/DC)	54
Newham	5	3	PCSOs	1
Tower Hamlets	9	4		
Waltham Forest	4	1		
Totals	48	28		76

The questionnaires obtained a variety of data including the participants' perceptions, expectations and beliefs before and after the RTs. It must be stressed that, due to the fact that it could not be ascertained whether the same young persons and police officers completed the BEFORE and AFTER questionnaires, it was not possible to ascertain whether specific changes in behaviour had occurred. (See recommendation 13 below)

**Interviews:**

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they would like to be interviewed and to provide a contact phone number or address. Nine police officers, 19 young people and six representatives of the local youth provisions who supported the project in the different boroughs were randomly selected and interviewed:

**Table 5: Interviewees**

Boroughs	Police Officers	Youths	Youth Provisions	Totals
Barking and Dagenham	2	5	1	8
Haringey	1	0	1	2
Islington	2	0	1	3
Lewisham	0	3	1	4
Newham	2	7	1	10
Tower Hamlets	2	1	0	3
Waltham Forest	2	5	1	8
Totals	11	21	6	38

In addition, the YF manager and leader of the project were interviewed and a focus group was conducted with the main youth facilitators who led most of the training, briefing sessions and RTs.

### 3.2 Analysis of data

The data used for this report was analysed in two ways:

- A qualitative analysis approach was used to identify themes and quotes from the questionnaires in order to assess participants' answers to questions relating to their perceptions, expectations and beliefs before and after the RT experience. Complex statistical analysis (e.g. using SPSS) was not done but the data is available if this is required by the project team.
- A thematic analysis of interview data using NVIVO software

**Recommendations:**

13. Future evaluations must consider the collection and an assessment of behavioural data in order to assess possible change in behaviour as a result of the RT experience.
14. The use of control or comparable groups could be used in future evaluations in order to measure the effectiveness of the programme.
15. Future evaluations must also define and assess impact in terms of benefits to young people, the police and communities as well as in 'operational' and cost benefits or value for money (VfM) terms.

## 4. Findings

This section presents the results of the BEFORE and AFTER questionnaire survey and the in-depth interviews and focus group with key factors including samples of young people and police officers. It shows the nature and extent of participation and discusses findings in the context of the following themes: **Perceptions, Expectations, and Beliefs.** Observation data from field notes was used to support some of the concerns raised by participants. Participants' views on sustainability and impact are also presented in this section.

### 4.1 Perceptions

Both young people and police officers were asked if they or someone they knew had had a negative experience of each other. They were also asked about perceptions of each other prior to the RTs.

Forty-nine percent of the youths reported themselves or other persons known to them having had negative experiences of the police. In contrast, 83% of police officers said that they have had negative experiences of young people in the past.

Slightly over two-thirds of the youths (77%) said that young people in their boroughs 'somewhat' do not respect the police. The same number (77%) said that young people in their boroughs are moderately or completely intimidated or threatened by their local police.

Compared with the youths, 58% of officers did not think that young people in their boroughs respect the police. In contrast, 60% of officers said that they respect the youths in their area a lot/extremely. Only 23% of police officers agreed with the youths that young people in the boroughs are intimidated or feel threatened by the police.

### 4.2 Expectations

Police and youths were asked before the RTs what their expectations were and, after the RTs, whether those expectations were met or not.

#### 4.2.1 Youths

Most of the young people said that they had no specific expectations before the RTs; that they were curious and wanted to attend because when the project was explained to them, it sounded interesting. However, some young people had specific expectations. They saw the RT as an opportunity:

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

1. learn more about the police, what they do and why they make decisions that are unfair and appear to be deliberately targeting black youths (stop and search was overwhelmingly mentioned as an example).

1. understand why the relationship between the police and black youths in their community is so bad.
2. know what the police think about young people and what the young people themselves think about the police.
3. bring about change.
4. put their own points of view across, to get their voice heard and/or to share their experiences with other people.
5. improve their listening skills, build their confidence and ability to empathise with others.
6. find out how the relationships with not only the youth and police but with the whole community could be improved.
7. find out how to solve these problems and bridge the gap between young people and the police.

Superficially, the youths hoped that at the end of the process:

1. Young people would be nicer to the police (and vice versa).
2. The police would have learnt something.
3. The police and young people would walk away informed.
4. Young people and the police would see themselves as equals.
5. There would be mutual respect.
6. The police will listen more to young people; not judge them for what they look like.
7. There would be more communication and more peace on the street.
8. There would be a better understanding between young people and the police.
9. There would be reduced hostility in the community.
10. The police would understand our feelings.
11. The police would learn how enjoyable talking to young people is.
12. Young people would no longer be misunderstood.
13. The police would learn that young people are not all the same.
14. The police and young people can see and understand each other's perspectives; everyone would listen to both sides of the story and not blame each other.
15. Young people would no longer be intimidated by the police.
16. The police would stop targeting black people; the police would know the fact that it is not all young people who do bad things (they would no longer listen to stereotypes; they would no longer jump to conclusions).
17. Things would be set up to prevent crimes as much as possible.
18. More conversations would be open; free plenary conversations would be held.
19. That youths and police would walk away genuinely believing in where we are heading.

Responses to the AFTER questionnaire showed that 72% of the youths found the RT experience beneficial while 14% thought that it did not go so well and 14% did not provide a

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

comment. The answers of young people who claimed to have had favourable experiences included:

- My questions and those of my friends were fully answered.
- I now know that the police struggle.
- It made me change the way that I feel about the police (a bit).
- I understand the police differently.
- I learned a lot. I should not be scared now.

These young people specifically mentioned the small group discussion sessions and role play as the most interesting and beneficial events of the RTs.

More specific comments from the youth interviews included:

*"It has helped me get a better understanding of the police and to think of them as humans, to see them as normal people who live their lives and have families and that it's not always their fault, sometimes it's not always the police's fault,"*

*"I never really used to, I never really showed my feelings too much. And everyone can just tell me what they think of my situation. It was just good that [this time round] people listened to my story."*

*"It worked because everyone was nervous at the start and at the end we were busting jokes and we had that familiarity,"*

*"We walked into that initial session and there were police officers in their normal clothing; we got to know and learn their ages, names and backgrounds. I'm not surprised that we were shocked in many ways, so even that is a form of impact and it's a thing that we should see more of, as that instantly made the officers more relatable; there was a police officer younger than I am, in those little air max 97s and I couldn't believe it that she was a police officer, but have her in uniform then I would instantly judge her."*

*"It helped me see how police officers just genuinely cared. And there were some police officers who genuinely cared, who stayed behind just talking with us and they were genuinely engaging and talking with us as they just wanted to. This showed me that despite the officers we are currently working with, [...] there were other officers who were nice."*

The comments from those who said that the events did not go so well indicated, generally, that their main reason was the apparently 'overwhelming' nature of the experience and the feeling that they were not able to participate as fully in the sessions as they thought they would.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

Their comments included:

- I wasn't able to put my point of view across.
- People were going against my argument.
- There should be a little time to talk more.
- More time is needed to be prepared for such raw conversations.
- There should have been a solution or something to walk away with.
- I still think that more should be done but it was a great start.

Specific comments from the interviews included:

*"It didn't work because of the numbers. If there was 30 of us and 30 of them then it's okay: if you have more police there you get more opinions."*

*"Will the roundtables ever help? I don't know. One of the things that you have to realise, is what is it that young people and police officers want in terms of a better relationship? What does a better relationship actually look like? The fact of the matter is, there no way to define what that looks like. I don't think that the discussions did."*

*"I don't think these things work in general as in my experience nothing ever really works after all its only words."*

*"The officers seemed human in our presence in the first session; in the second one it was, they were like reading from a police manual transcript making sure they were saying the right things, because their manager was there."*

*"These issues are generational so change won't happen overnight."*

### 4.2.2 Police Officers

Police officers also had their expectations of what they thought that the RTs might be able to achieve. The reasons given by police officers for participating in the RT included:

1. I was nominated/selected by my superior officers. I was told/asked to attend. (For example "I was told to but I'm glad I was")
2. To understand how young people see the police.
3. To gain an understanding of why the youths don't like the police.
4. To acquire more knowledge and understanding of young people and build relationships with them.
5. To bridge gaps between youth and police in the community; to build bridges.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

6. To strengthen the work that I currently do as a member of the youth engagement team; to promote the work of youth engagement; to improve my skills on the youth engagement work that I currently do. For example,:

*"I am a schools officer covering 3 schools, I engage with young people daily, I want this opportunity to broaden my approach"; "I have recently moved to youth engagement and feel this would help me in my role"; "I enjoy community engagement and feel this will benefit me in future policing"; "I am the coordinator for the volunteer police cadets and have worked with young people for 18 years. I wanted to speak to young people who have misconceptions and try to encourage communication".*

7. To try and change the opinions of young people that not all police target the young hoodie stereotype.
8. To share my experience of being a police officer with young people and try to instil confidence in them.
9. To break down barriers and reduce tensions between young people and the police.
10. To listen to young people and learn from them; to understand young people more.
11. To learn and be able to move forward.
12. To improve community links.
13. To see the relationship with young people improve.
14. I am trying to create youth work in Tower Hamlets so need to build bridges.
15. I like working with young people. I find them very enlightening and feel it is good to stay up to date with where the young people are coming from.
16. I am becoming mistrustful and irritated by young people and I want to change that.
17. Looking for answers having witnessed knife crime and murder of two young people.
18. To gain a better understanding of why children commit crimes.
19. I came in my role as an officer investigating knife and moped crime.
20. For personal development; e.g. *"to improve how I communicate with young people"*.
21. I want to be involved in youth engagement.
22. A chance to speak to young people in a non-confrontational atmosphere and they know I'm there to listen.
23. To help young people in the community.
24. I am an ASB officer interested in engaging with youths.
25. I have always wanted to be a social worker.
26. *"If I can make a difference, just influence one life then together we may save another soul"*.

In terms of expectations, police officers saw their participation in the RTs as an opportunity to:

1. know what can be done to change the negative perceptions that youths have of the police.
2. build youths' trust and confidence in stop and search and how to improve cooperation.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

3. find out how youths and police officers can understand each other and learn from each other.
4. discuss sexual offences affecting youths – online grooming/exchange of images.
5. be able to present police perceptions on knife and moped crime; to talk about knife and moped crime, gang culture and drugs.
6. know why more young people from BAME backgrounds don't join the police.
7. learn more about what motivates children to commit crime and what can be done to encourage them to lead more positive lives.
8. know why young people carry knives; why so many young black men proportionately carry knives and are involved in violent crimes/stabbed.
9. discuss the role the media has played in fuelling stereotypes about police and BAME young people.
10. discuss how police and youths can work together in our borough.
11. convey that young people will realise that we all want to achieve the same thing - a safe environment.
12. educate young people on how we do our job.
13. know what young people would like to see police do better.
14. know what young people believe a police job is.
15. juust to listen.
16. understand why they do ASB [anti-social behaviour]; why they deal in drugs. Why can't they see beyond the streets and do something meaningful?
17. know the pressures that young people face.
18. know how we can work together.
19. understand why there have been so many conversations with police explaining their actions in contentious situations but people don't listen or won't accept our situation.
20. improve understanding, trust and better communication.
21. See that young people will stop causing ASB and dealing in drugs.
22. See that young people will understand that they can talk to us; police are also humans, we have families and we get up and come to work each day to help others.
23. communicate that hey will understand that we are the same as them.
24. suggest, hopefully, they will understand that we are on their side.
25. convey that young people will understand that sometimes officers get it wrong but don't take these (isolated) experiences to judge every single officer.
26. communicate hat young people will have a more positive image of the police, more trust and on that basis, build a better relationship.
27. and that young people will understand that most police join to make things better.

In the AFTER questionnaire, 84% of police officers answered 'yes' to the question: Was the exercise beneficial to you? General comments included "*Interesting*" "*I learnt something*" "*definitely*" "*very good experience*" and "*most enthusiastic and productive*".

In response to the question 'What went well?', the following comments were recorded from the police officers:

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

- The role plays (the most frequently mentioned - 32% of all responses).
- Discussion and challenging knowledge.
- All of it/everything.
- The interacting and speaking with the youths on how they feel.
- The ice breaker games were good.
- The group discussions.
- Listening to young peoples' views and making a connection with them.
- I enjoyed talking to hard-to-reach youths however, this was hard.
- Youth really listened to our points; enjoyed listening to see what we can do better.
- I enjoyed the positive interactions with young people and us seeing things from each other's points of view.
- I enjoyed answering questions about how certain situations make me feel as a human being.
- Being open and honest.
- Working one on one with young people and actually getting the opportunity to exchange views.

Specific positive comments from the interviews included:

*“Just like other officers, we do come across young people and we don't know how to deal with them; we have less time to do that and resources. I spoke to a young person last week and I recognized him from the project last week. I remember you! As police officers, we don't get time to walk down the road and do things like that anymore. The more we have positive discussions with young people to say things like, well actually it doesn't work like that, in terms of things like stop and search. If we start from the project and then link from that to a proper consultation with a panel and they can feed back honest young people's views that we can take forward; that would be great.”*

*“I think that we do need to change our approach, I do think that the project is useful and I think that it is a way forward because, particularly from the point of view that it is a neutral way of the youth being able to get access to the police. I think it's a good thing, and I would love to see it continue, I think that if you don't have it continuing that's not going to get a legacy outfit. Also, it would be good if all new officers went through the programme. I think this project could do quite successfully, to have it as part of the probationer programme.”*

*“What I liked about the roundtable was that it gave an opportunity for people who wouldn't normally want to interact, an opportunity to do so; had an opportunity to get together and the body language was positive and getting them in an environment where they would engage with each other was really useful and I guess what I would like to see is more of the kind of police officers meeting young people and having*

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

*those, even if it's about having a chat about random stuff. An opportunity for young people to see beyond the uniform and see the person, so that they can get someone to know and trust and not see them as a threat or an enemy, because if a young person sees the police as a threat or an enemy then they just close and the barriers go up, they won't engage and the trust and confidence goes away. We would suffer because we wouldn't have the relationships we wouldn't get the intelligence, we wouldn't be able to safeguard them in the best way possible, it's about them isn't it? We need to be able to do our job effectively otherwise we would be hindering our own progress. We have the Met values and we have the core values that everyone abides by, actually I would say that most people would subscribe to honesty and integrity, I can't see many people not agreeing with that. It's more important as police officers because people will form an opinion of the police based on the encounter."*

*"The Ubuntu project was a great idea and it is the sheer idea and the theoretical of it that is fantastic. The idea of roundtable discussions where everyone is equal and everyone has a similar voice. I believe that that idea, eliminates the main concern that young people have about dealing with and talking to the police. This idea of free conversation, that doesn't have repercussions so that you can actually speak as long as you are being respectful everyone will listen to everyone and when police say stuff they realise that they are not going to be seen as someone giving some boring old lecture on the street. They are seen as being for lack of a better word a friend and giving advice."*

In response to the question 'What didn't go so well?', the following comments were recorded from the police officers:

*"Sessions not long enough; not enough time; I would have liked longer to explain and explore some of the comments made."*

*"First day was good but the second day was not."*

*"Drama session was a bit manic, couldn't see what the aim was."*

*"Answering difficult questions."*

*"The debates were too vague."*

*"Order - individuals speaking without allowing others to finish speaking."*

*"Nothing felt positive."*

*"More role plays with more background knowledge would have been helpful. More structure and maybe smaller groups."*

*"I noticed that all of the facilitators were Black African Caribbean, but it didn't reflect the composition of the area; there were no Asian or Middle Eastern kids."*

Specific comments from the interviews included:

*"I did not have a single positive experience. The youth workers that were supposed to be role models for these members and to be a platform used to aid the rapport between the*

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

*police and young people had a biased view and encouraged the young members to have a negative view on the police in the community.”*

*“There were some young people who wanted to talk to us, if we could isolate them from the drug users and the gang members, maybe we could have got more value.”*

*“I did not feel comfortable or enjoy any part of the meeting, I do not believe it was beneficial to anyone who attended and felt like a targeted attack on myself and other officers who were present.”*

*“Sometimes it was as if the facilitators were trying to put words into the kids' mouths and accuse us of something we wouldn't do. It was a bit of a negative. I felt like some kids were a bit uncomfortable. Sometimes, I don't know if they knew what the facilitators were going to say, because some of them appeared shocked.”*

*“The problem with the Ubuntu project was that the idea was good but the delivery was uncontrolled and it was not done correctly and it was skewed in a way which made it so that police felt up against the wall and backed up when they should not have been.”*

*“How were the young people selected is something that I would really like to know as some of them were there presumably voluntarily and some of them appeared to have been forced to be there.”*

*“[A facilitator] came into that room, wearing one of the police officers' hats! Police officers' hats are personal, having somebody wear it... [the officer] felt humiliated that the person was wearing it to ridicule him, [The facilitator] said, no I want to use it as a prop, but nobody asked him if that could have been done, nobody would have said yes to that. And that's when I decided to take everyone home. Because it was just descending into chaos, I have spoken to some of the officers who had security issues, personal security issues, you know, young people coming up to them and saying, I am going to remember your face. In the other room, one of the other officers said that one of the children had picked up his hat and his body armour and again uninvited, you know; it descended into anarchy almost, people were hanging about in the corridor, they had stopped participating in the event.”*

### **Recommendations:**

16. Expectations of what the RTs could achieve were high amongst the police and young people. Complaints from participants were mainly from those who thought that their expectations were not met or that the RT didn't do for them what they thought that it was going to do. Participants' expectations must be discussed at Pre-RT sessions. It must be made clear to all participants at pre-RT briefings what the Ubuntu RTs is

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

designed for and what it can and cannot do. Participants must be made to realise that the RTs cannot address all expectations. It is important for the Ubuntu RT to have a clearly defined identity. This is also important for future marketing purposes.

17. Concerns or negative comments from participants about the process and incidents that allegedly happened and that appeared to have compromised the process should be addressed at the earliest opportunity after the RTs and acted upon. For example, concerns expressed by some officers that the youths were being 'led on' by facilitators and that there were personal security issues. This makes the need to have a post-RT session or focus groups even more essential (see Recommendation 12).<sup>7</sup>

### 4.3 Beliefs

Police officers and youths were asked if they thought that the RT had the potential to build up or improve the relationship between each other. Generally, the youths said that they believe that the RTs have the potential to build peace in their communities, improve relationships and understanding between the police and young people, and provide an opportunity to develop more efficient ways for the police to engage with youths in their boroughs. Some said that it can lead to the promotion of a sense of community. In addition, the majority of youths said that the RT has enabled dialogue between themselves and the police that was not there before. However, they were not so sure that the RT could create a long-standing relationship between the police and the young people but were confident that it might be a useful tool in resolving conflicts and that it has the potential to address some youth criminal activities such as gang violence but not antisocial behaviour.

Police officers, like the youths, upheld the view that the RTs have the potential to improve relationships and understanding between police and young people. Specifically, they thought that the RT has the potential to tackle underlying attitudes and misconceptions about the police and young people in their boroughs. In addition, officers thought that the RT is a police-youth engagement approach that 'can work', offering opportunities on both sides to voice opinions. In contrast, the officers did not think that the RTs provided a realistic insight into how they police their communities, nor did it go far enough in helping young people to understand what the real challenges are that police officers face in the boroughs. Like the youths, the officers thought that the RTs have the potential to be used to address community conflicts or crises but thought that more evidence is needed to convince them of its potential to address youth violence or antisocial behaviour.

Almost all the police officers and youths said that they understood the concept of Ubuntu and fully agreed with its principles and values. When asked which Ubuntu values they found most

---

<sup>7</sup> It is likely that the facilitators would have challenged at least some of these perceptions and this might have produced a more realistic understanding of what the process could offer..

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

relevant to the RT, the three most frequently occurring answers out of a total of 21 Ubuntu values listed for both youths and police officers were: respect, trust and understanding. The youths did not have a strong belief in the Ubuntu value that young people and the police have responsibility towards each other, whilst the police officers' lowest scoring was against the Ubuntu value that 'We are only human if we accept that others are human as well'.

### 4.4 Sustainability

Youths and police officers were asked whether they thought that the Ubuntu RT idea is sustainable in their boroughs and if so, what needs to be done to make this possible. The majority of young people thought that sustainability is possible if the commitment between the police and youths is well-maintained. Many of them thought that taking the idea into more schools will be beneficial as more children will be involved and youths will be drawn into the habit of expressing their feelings and engaging in purposeful dialogue over issues that concern them and authority figures. Police officers agreed with the youths on the suggestion that the idea should be taken into more schools. According to one police officer:

*'I think this will have an even bigger impact if introduced at primary school age before views are influenced by friends and media'.*

Some police officers thought that sustainability will be dependent on commitment of more funding to the project, for example, through central government. *'Continuous commitment by all parties to continue to engage in building a better relationship for the good of the whole community'* was another point raised by a police officer. Interviews with police officers revealed that this is possibly an area where more training is needed for police officers. According to a police officer:

*"We need to have some professional qualification around this and this is what we are arguing for currently".*

Both youth facilitators and project manager agreed that the lack of a follow-up with the young people and police officers after the RTs was a major flaw in the programme that ought to be changed if the programme is to have impact and be sustainable. According to a youth facilitator:

*"That's what the young people crave; the outreach, and when the outreach doesn't come, they get disappointed and they think that no one cares."*

The project manager added:

*"If I could go back in time and look at how we did the project, I think we would have*

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

*done the youth engagement differently. I think we would have listened to the evaluation team's advice early on when they said, we think you are trying to take on too much. To do the ten boroughs as deeply and as effectively as we were intending to is very difficult given what is available to us... so if I was going to do the project again, I think to do 6 boroughs with us having more capacity maybe to come back to the borough a few months later and do follow up, see what happens, bring the police back down and see if we can further establish the relationship."*

He continued:

*"Again, with regard to the youth engagement, it would be helpful if we were to do it again, to do it differently; maybe to set up a tender process, to put out the opportunity to youth projects in an area to apply to be the youth project that we will engage with and they will need to fill a certain criteria they need to be able to fit the criteria of the young people, the demographics, that we want to work with, they need to have the space available. They need to be willing to engage with us and the police and then they would get something in return for that, maybe funding for activities beyond the project to do with the police, maybe some support for the youth workers to do the engagement work, but that's a reflection of how we could have done the engagement differently."*

The importance of having accredited facilitator training has already been mentioned (Recommendation 1) and it is an idea widely supported by the facilitators and the project manager. However, the facilitators thought that the training should not only include the attainment of skills to enable effective facilitation or mediation but also 'developmental' skills in terms of management and research skills.

The facilitators said that it was their personal experiences and motivation that sustained them through the process, not their training. As one facilitator puts it:

*"I think like honestly, more than anything our experiences prepared us, not the training. The training is necessary and helpful but I don't think that we were as prepared as we could have been. I feel that we dealt with all challenges coming our way because of our experiences anyway. But as far as training is concerned there is a lot of training that we could definitely use. For the most part we have a way that we do it, which is not perfect but we do need more skills. The training was good; what we got for the space of time was enough, it was short but high impact. The management [should] help us to be better at researching, managing our findings and being able to relay that back to the young people."*

The facilitators would like to see changes made to the management of the project that would give them more say in how it is run. They believe that they have some 'expertise' and experience that are strategic to the success of the programme that should be acknowledged much more; for example, having experienced some of the issues being addressed and their local

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

connections to so-called ‘hard-to-reach’ groups.<sup>8</sup> Facilitators would like to be involved in the development of policy, the design of research instruments, strategies and if possible, what to look for in an evaluation; not to be seen as just ‘workers’ who deliver the goods (i.e. get young people in and run the sessions) according to the rules and instructions received ‘top-down’ from the project management. This, they said, did not reflect the true ‘youth-led’ ethos being projected by the programme.

### Recommendations:

18. Youth facilitator training should include opportunities for trainees to acquire management and research skills.
19. In response to the youth facilitators’ claim that they have more skills than were utilised during the RTs, it is recommended that the RT management team should look into how the facilitators might be more involved in the planning and running of the project as a whole other than simply running the RTs. This will truly reflect the youth-led ethos of the programme.
20. There should be a clear strategy on sustainability. A potential area for development with regard to sustainability is training. The view that was expressed by a police officer that officers “*need to have some professional qualification around this*” should be explored further in terms of the development of Ubuntu (youth engagement) training for the police. An accredited Ubuntu youth training programme could be rolled-out nationally.

## 4.5 Impact

As mentioned above, the measurement of impact was not one of the main tasks of this evaluation. Instead, the evaluators asked the key facilitators and project manager what they thought the impact of the project had been. The facilitators realised that although the project might not have had a ‘*huge impact*’, it is a step in the right direction. According to one facilitator:

*“I don’t think that there is any one project which is going to change the world or change the whole way something is done or run. I think that it will take many different approaches and views and ways of doing it. The issue that a lot of people have is that if something didn’t have a ginormous impact then it’s pointless, but the way that I think is that [we are] using this as a stepping stone; to make the community and police to talk to each other is a huge step forward as there are many steps to changing something*”

---

<sup>8</sup> The term ‘hard-to-reach’ is often used in a blaming way as if it is the fault of groups that they are hard to reach; more often, in our experience, it is organisations that fail to find effective ways of reaching these groups.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

*properly. In the simplest term what we are trying to do is that we are trying to build the initial bridge for them to have the initial discussions.”*

In their own words, the facilitators said that they observed that impact did occur in the following ways:

### **Engaging with diverse groups of youths.**

*“We had kids who are in gangs, selling drugs and using knives,[...]many many kids who were in those situations and who would [normally] not want to partake in these things.”*

*“There were young people who were on the verge of committing crime, I would say from my own experience.”*

*“In [ ] and [ ] we had offenders, the bridge between them and the police was the absolute furthest; we also saw the most innocent young people participating, even in their cases, there was still a massive bridge between them and the police; they still had all the [negative] views about the police.”*

*“That's the good thing; we didn't just reach the people who commit violent crime. Now they [police] know that there are a lot of young people who aren't committing crime, there are young people with good intentions.”*

### **Building bridges: changing perceptions**

*“We have gotten responses whereby young people didn't want to sit next to the police and by the end they are joking with them like they have known them for years.”*

*“Having those uncomfortable conversations in a safe place did help.”*

*“The young lady who had the domestic situation and she had 12 police officers rush her; she said she now wants to become a police officer. And that was [afterwards] later, I know we had a lot of people in Islington, said I didn't think that [police officers] would be real people. In most of the boroughs that was the main response.”*

*“I would say that just having that rapport with police officers makes such a difference for a young person; the only time that a young person interacts with the police, is when they get stopped and searched or when they see other people get stopped and searched.”*

*“Can I add to [... ]'s point please? I have been able through this project to feel comfortable around the police, but before I was not. It was genuine discomfort. I have memories of people in uniform, which was genuinely unpleasant. I can imagine a young*

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

*person not being comfortable around others would feel uncomfortable around the police and this would make the police suspicious. In environments like this the young people feel comfortable around the police and don't feel anxious. And this makes a difference."*

### Education

*"A lot of young people are unaware of their rights and a lot of things were established in these forums. Like even us we learnt a lot too."*

*"Some young people said that they felt like they have educated themselves."*

### Increased police awareness and empathy: Potential to change police views of youths

*"We have had a lot of police saying that they want to keep in touch with the young people so that they don't feel like outsiders being in the police force."*

*"We had police officers saying that they would like to be an ambassador of the Ubuntu message, and that they would challenge any bad practice that they saw. Many young people also said that they would not [no longer] call the police names."*

*"I [overheard] a police officer saying "oh wow we can do more things like this to better engage the community"."*

### Potential to address specific youth crime issues, for example, young people carrying knives

One of the key youth crime topics covered at the RTs was that of young people carrying knives. The debates on this topic were heated – as they have been nationally - but none of the youths came forward to say that they were carrying knives. This is understandable as there were several other topics covered at the same time. Nevertheless, the facilitators thought that the RT is a good approach to addressing knife crimes. These were some of the comments made by the facilitators on this topic:

*"Something like this is very necessary. [It is] 100% realistic that black young males from our communities do not call the police. That's because there is the stigma of 'you don't snitch', 'you don't call the police.' You don't do this or that. This didn't come out of nowhere. Right now we don't even report crimes. 'The law of the land' says that you don't."*

*"When young people do things like this to better engage with the police, I think then they would think twice about carrying a knife. They could disclose certain [information to the police] and get the right advice and be comfortable in going to the police when they feel threatened instead of picking up a knife."*

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

*“It could be a simple thing as in the roundtable a young person asks what is the penalty for carrying a knife and then they understand the consequences.”*

*“The simplest thing of getting an officer into a room can lead to people trusting people and then telling them the issues. But the government wants data and evidence; and it's not just about that.”*

*“When I was young, when I was [a young offender with] the YOT, I did a knife workshop six times. Six victim awareness and I reoffended.”*

*“There is a potential for impact if someone like [specific facilitator] is saying this is what happens if you do this. They will listen to him.”*

*“If you set up a roundtable about knife crime, you would get young people who have been stabbed or arrested for knife crimes. But that was the problem with [borough] where the young people were sent to the roundtable as part of their order; it is better when you get people coming in of their own accord; people who want to learn. So it shouldn't be mandated. It should come from the young people themselves.”*

### **Impact on the streets**

During his interview, the project manager recalled some incidents that took place after the RTs, where police officers and youths who had participated in the RTs met on the streets and the young people had said that they were treated ‘*a lot better*’.

### **Recommendation:**

21. In addition to Recommendation 15, future development of the programme must have a clearly defined pathway to impact, namely what would need to be done to ensure impact and how impact will be defined and assessed. This should also include a dissemination strategy.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

Having considered the unavoidable factors that caused delays and resulted in only seven out of the 10 Ubuntu planned police-youth pilot roundtables being completed as scheduled, the evaluators are of the opinion that the project team have achieved most of their key set objectives namely objectives 2, 3, 4 and 7 (see p. 22). In terms of the aims of the project, the team had been successful in bringing together a large number of disenfranchised young people in some of London's most deprived inner city areas and their local police officers in dialogue and activities designed to build respect and understanding and for each party to listen and deliberate on issues of common concern with a view to a better relationship. Analysis of responses from the BEFORE and AFTER Questionnaires and in-depth interviews revealed that both youths and police officers were confident that the Ubuntu RTs have a potential to build trust and confidence between police officers and young people and that it could be a more valuable alternative to current police-youth engagement initiatives.

The youth-led nature of the programme enabled the youths to present issues confronting their communities in their own ways and the police saw this as a unique way of learning about these issues from a youth's perspective. Both parties acknowledged the adoption of the Ubuntu philosophy as unique in the sense that it placed the discussions within a specific value system and 'ground rules'. In contrast, current police youth engagement initiatives have not been founded on particular philosophies but have been predominately guided by policies and directed mainly at information-giving and 'education'. Trust, respect and understanding were singled out by all participants as the key Ubuntu values that guided them mostly during the debates. Other Ubuntu values that the participants thought were helpful included: Openness, commitment, Tolerance, Responsibility, Communication, Cooperation and Positivity.

Most importantly, all the participants (police and youths) had a range of expectations on what they thought that the RTs might be able to do for them. This raised the issue of how expectations are managed so that the RTs are focused on what can actually be achieved. All participants said that they enjoyed the experience and felt that the Ubuntu roundtables have the potential to 'improve' relationships between themselves. Young people said that it gave them an opportunity that they have never had before and improved their knowledge and confidence. Police officers thought that it is a police-youth engagement approach that 'can work' and also an area where the police might need more training in future.

Negative comments included not having the time to put one's case across, the rather 'chaotic' nature of some of the activities and some officers feeling that the young people were being 'led on' by the youth facilitators. The police also thought that although the RT provided an excellent opportunity for dialogue that could lead to better performance in terms of police-community activities and operations, it did not go far enough in educating young people on the real challenges that the police face whilst policing the boroughs. This was somewhat contradicted

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

by the youths' overwhelming response that the RTs have enabled them to see the police as human beings and appreciate how difficult their job really is.

Finally, both parties were of the opinion that the scheme must be sustained. For the police, there has to be commitment on the part of politicians and funding. The project team realised the need for some changes to be made in the structure of the RTs for it to be sustainable. Most important is the urgent need to have the youth facilitator training improved and accredited.

Although the evaluation did not include tools for measuring impact, the project team thought that the project had impact in some specific ways; for example, in terms of: being able to access 'hard to reach' youths in the inner cities who would normally not engage with the police and make them to attend the RTs; youths admitting to having been educated as a result of the experience; evidence from youths and police officers that the project might have built bridges on which future positive engagements might take place; evidence that it might have changed some police officers' views of young people and evidence from the sessions that the project has a potential for being developed in order to address specific types of crime, for example knife crime. This last point came from the intensity in the debates around knife crime (amongst various other topics) that gave the impression that if knife crime were to be a RT topic, the potential is there for truthful and honest dialogue to take place between the police and young people that might become helpful or even crucial to the police in addressing this crime.

The evaluators are of the opinion that, overall, this is a successful pilot in the sense that:

1. The strengths and weaknesses of the programme as a whole were identified and ample opportunities provided for refinement through a formative evaluation process. Many of the identified flaws were addressed successfully. The evaluation has helped in further highlighting, through recommendations, area where further developments might be required including areas where further funding might be needed for these improvements to take place; for example, funding may be required for the development and accreditation of a youth facilitator training programme, the development of the RT idea to enable it be applied to other specific youth-related issues and further research into the practical uses of Ubuntu in the management of social issues or crises involving youths (and adults).<sup>9</sup>
2. It was a valuable learning experience for the youth facilitators who have been tried and tested in various situations. There is firm evidence that they are ready to move on doing similar projects and to perform very well.
3. The project team has achieved many of their aims and objectives and presumably more confident to conduct more RTs in other places.
4. The police officers that participated in the RTs generally recognised the need for more constructive dialogue with young people on social issues and for such dialogue to embrace Ubuntu principles and values. Ubuntu appeared to have provided the framework that was lacking in previous police engagements with youths in London.

---

<sup>9</sup> We understand that the Trustees of the Tutu Foundation UK are taking these recommendations forward and seeking funding to develop new proposals based on them.

## 6. List of Recommendations

The recommendations fall into three broad groups as follows:

### ***The management of future RTs:***

Locally trained youth facilitators should, at least, sit in at police training sessions. It is crucial for local youth facilitators to ‘get to know’ the police officers that they might be working with in future engagements, post-RT. (Recommendation 4)

There was some indication that the programme organisers had difficulties recruiting young people to participate in the RTs, notwithstanding the remarkable efforts of the youth facilitators who were able to recruit some youths from the street. It is recommended that a more robust and sustainable strategy is adopted not only to recruit youth participants but also to ensure that the same set of young people who participate in the youth briefings (or at least a majority) also participate in RT1 and RT2. This will enable a better assessment of impact. (5)

The programme management team must pay particular attention to safeguarding issues especially where very young children are to be involved in RTs that are taking place outside school hours. Serious thoughts must be given to ethical issues (e.g. obtaining parental consent) where very young children are being recruited for the RTs. (6)

Attempts should be made to have briefing sessions on the same day as the first roundtable (RT1). This will ensure that the youths involved in the deliberations at the youth briefings will most likely be the same as those that will take part in RT 1. Having youth briefing sessions on separate days is not cost-effective. (7)

Attempts must be made to audio record all RTs. Future RT budgets should include costings for the recording, transcription and storage of minutes of all RT events for future reference or use. (8)

Managing a project like this one requires substantial funding and expertise. It is essential that substantial provisions are made in future budgets for management and capacity building, in addition to funding for the routine tasks of getting participants on board for RT sessions. (11)

The staging of follow-on meetings between the facilitators and the police (for example, at a police station or youth centre) is essential in order to reflect on the roundtables and plan towards the future of the relationship, including the search for new ideas on the expansion of the Ubuntu RT concept and its sustainability. (12)

Expectations of what the RTs could achieve were high amongst the police and young people. Complaints from participants were mainly from those who thought that their expectations were

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

not met or that the RT didn't do for them what they thought that it was going to do. Participants' expectations must be discussed at Pre-RT sessions. It must be made clear to all participants at pre-RT briefings what the Ubuntu RTs is designed for and what it can and cannot do. Participants must be made to realise that the RTs cannot address all expectations. It is important for the Ubuntu RT to have a clearly defined identity. This is also important for future marketing purposes. (16)

Concerns or negative comments from participants about the process and incidents that allegedly happened and that appeared to have compromised the process should be addressed at the earliest opportunity after the RTs and acted upon. For example, concerns expressed by some officers that the youths were being 'led on' by facilitators and that there were personal security issues. This makes the need to have a post-RT session or focus groups even more essential (see Recommendation 12). (17)

In response to the youth facilitators' claim that they have more skills than were utilised during the RTs, it is recommended that the RT management team should look into how the facilitators might be more involved in the planning and running of the project as a whole other than simply running the RTs. This will truly reflect the youth-led ethos of the programme. (19)

### ***Future research and evaluation:***

Prior to the accreditation of the training pack, further research is needed into the distinctiveness of the concept of Ubuntu, its practical uses and the transferable skills that could be attained through a training in Ubuntu values. In addition, this research should identify how these transferable skills and values can be used by youths or persons engaging in crisis management, conflict resolution or peace building. There may also be an opportunity for the research to identify the general use of Ubuntu as an engagement tool to address community problems, including crime and how its impact can be measured. (2)

The fact that young people and officers wanted to talk about specific issues in more detail suggests that the RT idea could be further developed so that it is adaptable to more in-depth discussion of specific topics/issues such as those mentioned by the youths on this programme, e.g. knife crime, youth illegal use of drugs (mainly cannabis) and gangs.(10)

Future evaluations must consider the collection and an assessment of behavioural data in order to assess possible change in behaviour as a result of the RT experience. (13)

The use of control or comparable groups could be used in future evaluations in order to measure the effectiveness of the programme. (14)

Future evaluations must also define and assess impact in terms of benefits to young people, the police and communities as well as in 'operational' and cost benefits or value for money (VfM) terms. (15)

In addition to Recommendation 15, future development of the programme must have a clearly defined pathway to impact, namely what would need to be done to ensure impact and

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

how impact will be defined and assessed. This should also include a dissemination strategy. (21)

### ***Impact and Sustainability (including training) : 1, 3, 18, 20***

Considering the huge tasks expected of youth facilitators, it is essential that the youth facilitator training pack is refined to meet these requirements and be accredited by a reputable training/education accreditation body. This is a mandatory requirement before any more roundtables are run after the completion of the 10-borough project. (1)

Once the training pack has been accredited, the partnership could explore ways by which this training could be provided to a wider audience of young people in various contexts.(3)

Youth facilitator training should include opportunities for trainees to acquire management and research skills. (18)

There should be a clear strategy on sustainability. A potential area for development with regard to sustainability is training. The view that was expressed by a police officer that officers “*need to have some professional qualification around this*” should be explored further in terms of the development of Ubuntu (youth engagement) training for the police. An accredited Ubuntu youth training programme could be rolled-out nationally. (20)

## 7. References

- All Party Parliamentary Group on Children (APPG)(2015) *Building Trust: One year on, Progress in improving relationships between children and the police*, London: House of Commons.
- Berry, S. (2019), 'London's Lost Youth Services, The dramatic disappearance of support and facilities for young people in London', A briefing by Sian berry member of the London Assembly.
- Chattoo, S., Atkin, K, Craig, G. and Flynn, R. (eds.)(2019) *Understanding 'race' and ethnicity: Theory, History, Policy, Practice* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Cole B (2019) 'Young people, 'race' and criminal justice' in S. Chattoo, K. Atkin, G. Craig and R. Flynn (eds)(2019) *Understanding 'race' and ethnicity* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Bristol: Policy Press. pp. 247 – 270
- Cole, B. (2016), *The Ubuntu Police–Youth Roundtables Project Evaluation*, Mimeo.
- Craig, G., Adamson, S. Cole, B., Law, I., Chan, C.K. (2009) *Hidden from public view? Racism against the UK's Chinese population*. London: DCLG/ Min Quan
- European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (2014) *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics*(5<sup>th</sup> edition) Helsinki: HEUNI.
- Hansard (3 March 2016), Rt. Hon Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) *Gangs and Serious Violence*, Vol. 606, Clm 1149
- HM Government (2007) *The Government's response to the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee Report: Young black People and the Criminal justice System*. London: TSO.
- HM Government (2018) *Serious Violence Strategy*. London: TSO
- Jansson, K. (2006) *Black and minority ethnic groups' experiences and perceptions of crime, racially motivated crime and the police: findings from the 2004/05 British Crime Survey* London: Home Office.
- Khomba, J.K. (2011) *Redesigning the Balanced Scorecard Model: An African Perspective*. Unpublished PhD thesis., University of Pretoria, South Africa. (Chapter 4: The African Ubuntu Philosophy)
- Khoza, R.J. (1994). 'Managing the Ubuntu way' *Enterprise Magazine*, October: 4-9.
- Koster, J.D. (1996). 'Managing the transformation'. In: Bekker, K (ed.) *Citizen participation in local government* (pp. 99-118). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

- Lister, S., Adams, B. & Phillips, S. (2015), 'Evaluation of Police-Community Engagement Practices. An Exploratory Knowledge Platform for Policing: Exploiting Knowledge Assets, Utilising Data and Piloting Research Co-production', University of Leeds.
- Mandela, N. (2006). 'Foreword', In: Khoza, R.J. (2006) *Let Africa lead: African transformational leadership for 21st century business* Johannesburg: Vezubuntu.
- National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC)(2015) *Child-centred policing: National strategy for the policing of children and young people*. London: NPCC.
- Nussbaum, B. (2003). 'Ubuntu: reflections of a South African on our common humanity. *Reflections* ', 4(4):21-26.
- Poovan, N., Du Toit, M.K. and Engelbrecht, A.S. (2006). ,The effect of the social values of Ubuntu on team effectiveness'.*South African Journal of Business Management*, 37(3):17-27.
- Reiner, R. (2012), *The Politics of the Police* (Fourth Edition) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Samkange, S. and Samkange, T.M. (1980), *Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy*. Salisbury : Graham Pub.
- Sanders, A., and Young, R. (2007), *Criminal Justice* (Third Edition), Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Scarman, Sir. L (1981), *The Brixton Disorders: 10-12 April 1981* (Cmnd 8427) London: HMSO.
- Scottish Executive (2005) *Measurement of the Extent of Youth Crime in Scotland*. Edinburgh: DTZ PideaConsulting.
- Scottish Government Social Research (2010a) *Troublesome Youth Groups, Gangs and Knife carrying in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Queens Printers of Scotland.
- Scottish Government Social Research (2010b) *Gang membership and Knife carrying: Findings from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime*. Edinburgh: Queens Printers of Scotland
- Scriven, M. (1966), *The Methodology of Evaluation*, Publication 110 of the Social Science Education Consortium.
- Solomos, J. (2003), *Race and Racism in Britain* (Third Edition), Basingstoke:Palgrave Macmillan.
- Stufflebeam, D. (March 2001), *Evaluation Models: American Evaluation Association Special Issue 89*, Spring pp.7-98,.

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

Times Online (2009) 'Rise in race crime against non-whites: Around half the victims of race crimes in Scotland were of Asian origin and 95 percent of the perpetrators whites' March 31. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/scotland/article6011657.ece>

Tutu Foundation UK (TFUK) (2015) Memo 15-11-18, 14 July 2015

Tutu, D. (1999), *No future without forgiveness*, London: Random House.

Tutu, D. (2004). *God has a dream: a vision of hope for our future*. London: Rider.

Volunteer Now (Jan 2010), *Developing accredited training for volunteers*.

Wichtner-Zoia, Y. (2012) "Ubuntu" is powerful thinking,  
[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/ubuntu\\_is\\_powerful\\_thinking](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/ubuntu_is_powerful_thinking)

YJB/MoJ (2017) *Youth justice statistics 2015/16 England and Wales*, Statistics Bulletin, Executive Summary. London: Ministry of Justice

## **Annex 1: Programme description**

### **Helping young people manage conflict with the Police**

The Ubuntu Round Tables Project brings disenfranchised young people and their local police officers together to build respect and understanding and so reduce Police-Youth antagonism and build the trust that underpins safety on our streets.

The project has been created through a powerful partnership between Youth Futures and the Tutu Foundation UK, and is born out of one young man's vision for change following a disrespectful and upsetting stop and search. The project creates a framework that enables local young people to invite their local Police Officers to engage with them in a discussion facilitated by other young people. The topics are chosen by the participants during a preparation process ensuring that they are locally relevant.

The Youth-Led philosophy that underpins the project recognises and works to mitigate the power imbalance that exists between the young people and the police to create the opportunity for all participants to talk openly and honestly

The project creates an environment that enables disaffected youth and police to be open to each other, with an aim of deepening understanding and respect both ways. Together they engage in exercises requiring frank speaking and respectful listening. The outcomes are tangible, for example when the police invited the young people to conduct a stop and search on themselves. The young people experienced the responsibility that goes along with power while the police put themselves in a vulnerable position.

This is, essentially, a community mediation project led by communities in different areas with the support of the Partnership. It is designed to enable the Police Officers to understand young people as real people, and to enable young people to appreciate and begin to trust the humans behind the police uniforms. The skills learnt and the experience of taking part are passed on to peers.

### **Creating opportunities for young people**

An essential element of the Ubuntu Round Tables project is that it is Youth-Led. The project management framework provided by the Tutu Foundation – Youth Futures Partnership is designed to enable and empower young people to take control and to organize. The project creates opportunities for young people who have a mistrust of police officers to gain training and then work as facilitators mediating between groups of local young people and local police officers.

The project provides formal, apprenticeship and informal training opportunities for young people to learn facilitation and leadership skills. We train our own facilitators through shadowing, mentorship programs and formal accredited training. We create opportunities for trainee facilitators to work with experienced facilitators. The Partnership creates a project management framework that specifically includes roles for apprentice project leaders and managers so that they can become accomplished project leaders themselves. There are

## Reducing community conflict: an Ubuntu approach

many opportunities for voluntary work. The initial training receives a small payment and the formal apprenticeship, facilitator and project leadership roles are all paid.

Through this project the young people who are leading and facilitating it have worked with over a hundred police officers, over 200 young people and presented their work at a Parliamentary symposium alongside David Lammy MP, demonstrating the importance of community policing and the importance of nurturing relationships and common ground between police and those that are being policed.

An essential part of the long term viability of this project is to train new young facilitators from the communities we work with so that the project is always led by young people who intuitively understand and can build trust in the communities they are working with. By building capacity the Partnership helps Young People help and support their own communities. The plans in the pipeline for Phase 2 will deliver even more.

### **Creating safe spaces for young people and communities**

The Ubuntu Round Tables Project begins with training and discussion sessions for the Police and Young People as separate groups. These sessions establish expectations, ground rules, areas for discussion and build trust with the facilitators. These are followed by the Ubuntu Round Table sessions themselves during which the Young People and the Police engage in facilitated discussions and role play.

The structure of the project recognises and works to mitigate the power imbalance that exists between the young people and the police. It is for this reason that the facilitators are largely 25 or under, black or from an ethnic minority, and may have been in difficult interactions with the police themselves. They have developed their own respect for individuals whoever they may be. This makes them safe from both perspectives and easier for the young people to relate to and to trust. Their way of being with young people and police alike inspires the confidence of all.

The exercises are carefully crafted to reveal the underlying issues that those present wish to talk about, including violence on the streets, drugs related crime, stop and search, in a way that there will be no 'come-back' from an opinion voiced. Everyone is required to be respectful and to listen whether or not they agree. It is the facilitators firm presence and gentle, subtle guidance that creates the safe environment for these frank exchanges. The Project's strengths are that it is Youth-Led and that the power relationship between the police and young people is skilfully managed by the facilitators to create the opportunity for all participants to talk openly and honestly. The project is building the capacity of the young participants to mediate in challenging situations, to help the police see the person behind the suspect, to help the young person see the human behind the police uniform, to begin to build mutual trust and respect in communities across London.

## **Annex 2**

### **Tutu Foundation UK – Youth Futures Partnership**

*The Tutu Foundation – Youth Futures partnership exists to implement and develop the Ubuntu Round Tables Project, a project that we have created together. Everyone involved in the partnership has contributed different ideas, strengths and capabilities. It is this diversity of skills and knowledge that has enabled the project to grow and will enable the project to thrive in the future. Together we are stronger and more capable. Together we are able to share the Ubuntu Round Tables Project with more people so that, together, we can help more communities across the UK.*