

NOT-EQUAL

EPSRC NetworkPlus: Social Justice through the Digital Economy Project Final Review Form

Please submit this form within one month of completing your project to notequal@ncl.ac.uk.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Lead Applicant (PI): Artemis Skarlatidou Email address: a.skarlatidou@ucl.ac.uk Job Title: Senior Research Associate Department: Geography Organisation: University College London	Co-Investigators (names and organisations): Dr Reka Solymosi (Univ. of Manchester), Froi Legaspi (Citizens UK) Supporting Partner(s): Schools in Hackney (members of Citizens UK network) Project Title: CIN-CITY ‘Civic InnovatioN in CommuNITY: safety, policing and trust with young people’ Project Tagline: SAFETY DIGITALLY CO-DESIGNED BY YOUNG PEOPLE TO TACKLE KNIFE CRIME IN LONDON Reference Number: NE36

1. SUMMARY

Please outline the research challenge and question your project aimed to address, in less than 100 words.

Knife crime offences in England and Wales have hit a record high since 1946 (Independent, 2019); most incidents in the capital involve young people 10-25 years old (Evening Standard, 2019). A lack of trust in policing is identified as major reason behind knife crime in academic and policy research. In Cin-City we worked directly with young people and police officials in Hackney to capture their trust perceptions using the mental models approach from Risk Communication, and an app to capture young people’s ‘fear of crime’ feelings in this area. Through the direct engagement of those mostly affected we aimed at identifying suitable and locally-relevant interventions, which may have a true impact in reducing knife crime and improving trust-in-policing.



2. APPROACH

Please provide a summary of the approach of your research project, including any deviations from your work plan, the reasons for this and how you addressed any issues.

Knife crime offences in England and Wales have hit a record high since 1946 (Independent, 2019), with an 80% increase during the last five years only (BBC, 2019). About a third of the nationally recorded offences take place in London (The Guardian, 2020), while two thirds of knife crime incidents in the capital involve young people 10-25 years old (Evening Standard, 2019). In 2017 the Mayor of London announced that tackling youth violence and knife crime in London has become top priority (Mayor of London, 2017), and introduced a public health approach which emphasises collective responsibility for the prevention and reduction of the risk factors which evidently increase the likelihood of a knife crime incident to occur in the first place. The most widely acknowledged reason behind knife crime has been a lack of trust in policing, nevertheless what causes it and how trust can be re-established has received very little attention especially in specific crime contexts. In Cin-City we attempted to address this issue using two main methodological instruments: a. the mental models approach from the Risk Communication field to capture and subsequently compare police officials' and young people's perceptions around knife crime and trust in policing as well as their needs and expectations; b. the Fear of Crime App to capture how people experience and feel about knife crime in their local areas.

We worked with young people 16-24 years old from two colleges in East London, as initially planned. The first deviation from initial plan concerns our participation numbers.

- We have initially anticipated to engage with **20 young people and 5 police officials** in the interview process for the construction of mental models. Due to the covid19 outbreak and the closure of schools (including the colleges that we collaborated) we interviewed 16 young people and 4 police officers (i.e. a total of 20 instead of 25). Although we managed to conduct some online interviews, extending them further was extremely complicated due to the college's ethical procedures and restrictions – i.e. a member of staff had to be present at all interviews, due to several members of staff being furloughed, because of covid19, their time and availability to do so was extremely limited.
- We have initially anticipated to collect data using FoCA from 200 students. This was not possible as the application at the moment runs only on Androids and students from the two colleges in their significant majority had only access to an iphone. To address this issue we organised two full-day workshops on the 3rd and 10th of March (2020) (i.e. prior to the covid19 outbreak) where we distributed Android phones (owned by the extreme citizen science group at UCL) and engaged 50 people in total who captured and collected data retrospectively. We asked them during the day to further interview their peers and capture additional data. Although more workshops were planned for April, these could not take place due to the schools' closure and the reasons outlined above. We collected about 100 reports in total (which means that each participant interviewed at least one more person), and which gave us a good understanding of how they feel about crime in their area and mostly outside of it, in areas with which they are less familiar.

In terms of project outputs we initially anticipated the following:

1. Expert and young people's MM, their comparison to reveal needs and how engagement should be approached to improve their trust.
2. FoCA designed and piloted in Cin-City.
3. Data (collected by 200 people) on perceptions and experiences of knife in situational contexts.
4. Community-engagement activities to train and co-design with young people.
5. Dissemination-communication outputs to share Cin-City research findings.
6. Funders report.

Apart from 3 (which concerns the engagement numbers; see above) there was no other deviation from our initial plan.

In terms of activities, our only deviation from our initial plan concerns the roundtable event scheduled to take place in April 2020, which did not happen for the previously mentioned reasons. However, it is something we will look into organising in the future (i.e. when governmental restrictions allow for such an event to take place and when participants feel comfortable to attend).

3. ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS

Please list any outputs from your project to be entered in the Not-Equal Researchfish submission. These include events, publications, workshops, webinars, invited talks, media coverage and tools (please include links to open source, git-hubs if relevant) that have resulted from your project.

Please include the following for each entry:

Title: CinCity Introduction Sessions (x2)

Date: 19th November 2019

Type of Event: Workshop

Number of People Reached: 90

Primary Audience: YOUNG PEOPLE AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES AT NEW CITY COLLEGE IN HACKNEY

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Building participants' research skills; Experience with academic project

Title: CinCity project planning meetings

Date: 14th January 2020

Type of Event: Roundtable/Workshop

Number of People Reached: 10

Primary Audience: YOUNG PEOPLE EACH AT NEW CITY COLLEGE IN HACKNEY

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Building participants' research skills and project planning/co-design; Experience with academic project

Title: CinCity project planning meetings

Date: 3rd February 2020

Type of Event: Roundtable/Workshop

Number of People Reached: 10

Primary Audience: YOUNG PEOPLE EACH AT NEW CITY COLLEGE IN HACKNEY

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Building participants' research skills and project planning/co-design; Experience with academic project

Title: CinCity project planning meetings

Date: 25th February 2020

Type of Event: Roundtable/Workshop

Number of People Reached: 10

Primary Audience: YOUNG PEOPLE EACH AT CITY AND ISLINGTON COLLEGE

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Building participants' research skills and project planning/co-design; Experience with academic project

Title: CinCity Project Dissemination Event & Recruitment

Date: 20th January 2020

Type of Event: Event (with students running a kiosk; cincity flyers etc)

Number of People Reached: Over 200 in total

Primary Audience: NEW CITY COLLEGE STUDENT UNION/ ALL NEW CITY COLLEGE STUDENTS



Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Improve participants' organising, planning and engagement skills; Experience with academic project; Identify and generate interest in leading relationships with MET Police and their communities

Title: CinCity Project Dissemination Event & Recruitment

Date: 27th January 2020

Type of Event: Event (with students running a kiosk; cincity flyers etc)

Number of People Reached: Over 200 in total

Primary Audience: NEW CITY COLLEGE STUDENT UNION/ ALL NEW CITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Improve participants' organising, planning and engagement skills; Experience with academic project; Identify and generate interest in leading relationships with MET Police and their communities

Title: CinCity Project Dissemination Event & Recruitment

Date: 3rd February 2020

Type of Event: Event (with students running a kiosk; cincity flyers etc)

Number of People Reached: Over 200 in total

Primary Audience: NEW CITY COLLEGE STUDENT UNION/ ALL NEW CITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Improve participants' organising, planning and engagement skills; Experience with academic project; Identify and generate interest in leading relationships with MET Police and their communities

Title: Networking event with the Mayor of Hackney

Date: 29th November 2019

Type of Event: networking event

Number of People Reached: 15

Primary Audience: Community groups and associations in Hackney; Politicians; Police Officials; 2 young people from collaborating colleges

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Project dissemination; Skills in leading relationships with MET Police and their communities

Title: Networking event at St Anne's Hoxton

Date: 11th February 2020

Type of Event: networking event

Number of People Reached: 9

Primary Audience: SOCIAL JUSTICE, ACADEMIA, EDUCATION OR COMMUNITY AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Project dissemination

Title: Blog Post

Date: 5th February 2020

Type of Event: NA

Number of People Reached: 111

Primary Audience: Academics, Young people and their peers participating in the project

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Project dissemination

Title: Blog Post



Date: 18th February

Type of Event: N/A

Number of People Reached: 55

Primary Audience: Academics, Young people and their peers, police officials participating in the project

Key Outcomes/Impact: Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data; Improve understanding of methodology, research aims etc

Title: Meeting with Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)

Date: 18th September

Type of Event: networking event

Number of people reached: 3

Primary Audience: Managers at MOPAC re: police engagement strategies and our research findings.

Key Outcomes/Impact: Disseminate findings to government agency responsible for monitoring the Metropolitan Police. Networking with senior police officers.

Title: Blog Post

Date: Forthcoming

Type of Event: N/A

Number of People Reached: N/A

Primary Audience: Academics, Young people and their peers, police officials participating in the project

Key Outcomes/Impact: Disseminate findings; Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data

Title: Journal Paper

Date: Forthcoming

Type of Event: N/A

Number of People Reached: N/A

Primary Audience: Academics, Police officials

Key Outcomes/Impact: Disseminate findings; Improved understanding of youth violence and knife crime in London using scientific data, *GENERATE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO EXPAND APPROACH AND ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS LONDON*

4. INSIGHTS & IMPACT

Please describe the findings of your project and their significance in relation to potential or actual social impact.

We interviewed 23 young people and police experts and constructed their mental models to reveal that young people proved extremely knowledgeable, especially when it comes to risks and motives of knife crime; a knowledge they have mostly gained through their personal experiences and those of their peers and communities, which align with both academic research literature and expert concepts. However, young people's understanding of policing approaches to knife-crime is not entirely aligned with all initiatives; young people are very aware of enforcement-based activities, but not aware of the community-building ones. This is not the first time, that proactive 'social' crime prevention strategies, such as community outreach schemes are rarely in the minds of the public when they are asked to consider the police function. **We have therefore concluded that it is extremely important to make young people aware of non-enforcement activities, as a means to foster trust and engagement, which would also create the basis for collaboration and communication exchange that young people and the police are think is necessary to reduce knife crime in the capital.** A further understanding, nevertheless, is required of those attributes and qualities which young people identified in our study as important in promoting trust (i.e. *professionalism, accountability, transparency, respect and fairness, empathy, protect and serve*). **We conclude that further research is necessary to investigate what are the interpretations and meanings which are assigned to them by young people and the police experts and perhaps**



the opposite of these conditions, in specific localised contexts. This is particularly important in subsequently promoting a shared understanding and appreciation of these attributes in police forces, while these findings can be also used to inform a repertoire of practices, as well as, training and guidance on the way police-youth interactions are handled. Investing in practices (and the ways they are being conducted) that have been identified by young people themselves for their trust-building potential it is likely to re-establish trust, encourage dialogue and help reduce crime.

We have also collected fear of crime data using the ‘Fear of Crime’ app from about 50 young people and **we found that young people encounter worrying events across their entire activity space, and not only within their local areas.** Specific events like seeing or hearing about knives, or experiencing some form of threatening situation (being followed, shouted at) can happen across their whole activity space, and so “local area” might need to be redefined from an administrative boundary such as “Hackney” to young people’s personal definitions of their neighbourhoods.

Accordingly, to further understand and identify patterns of worry about knife-crime amongst young people in London, we propose the collection of fear of crime data across their entire activity spaces.

There is scope to build trust and cooperation between young people and the police and partner agencies involved in the public health approach to tackle knife-crime, but there is work to do to marry up different perspectives and understandings of the components involved. We need to understand young people’s mental models and experiences across their entire activity space (and include people from various parts of London), raise awareness and engagement with non-enforcement related policing and partner activities, and continue to encourage efforts to build trust and cooperation between young people and the police to promote collaboration.

5. REFLECTIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Please list the key highlights from your project, summarize any lessons learned from this work and outline any future directions or plans to continue activities beyond this project.

Highlights

- Young people proved extremely knowledgeable, especially when it comes to risks and motives of knife crime; a knowledge they have mostly gained through their personal experiences and those of their peers and communities, which align with both academic research literature and expert concepts.
- Young people’s mental models mainly emphasise on ‘stop and search’ activities which they identify as having a strong racial bias, and which they describe as “unfair and abusive” while they feel that these activities are responsible for their complete lack of trust in policing.
- Young people’s understanding of policing approaches to knife-crime is not entirely aligned with all policing initiatives; young people are very aware of enforcement-based activities (i.e. mainly ‘stop and search’), but completely unaware of the community-building ones. It is extremely important to make young people aware of non-enforcement activities, as a means to foster trust and engagement, which would also create the basis for collaboration and communication exchange that young people and the police think are necessary for reducing knife crime in London.
- Young people encounter worrying events across their entire activity space, and not only within their local areas. To further understand and identify patterns of worry about knife-crime amongst young people in London, we propose the collection of fear of crime data across their entire activity spaces, which would help redefine “local area” from an administrative boundary such as “Hackney” to young people’s personal definitions of their neighbourhoods.

Reflections

Conducting research with young people so massively affected by knife crime has been an extremely motivating and rewarding experience. From the early stages of the project, it was clear that our participants felt extremely passionate about the topic and leading the change that we were trying to achieve. People – even outside our target audience - joined meetings because knife crime “has ruined their lives” and felt they “had to do something



to help others who face a similar problem”. Several participants expressed their interest in an internship placement at UCL to work in the project on a voluntary basis, while getting new skills from the research environment. The police experts who participated in the study showed also the same enthusiasm. However, getting the police attention at a higher level (as well as any political attention), sadly was extremely disappointing – which raises serious concerns about the importance that it is currently placed on public engagement in terms of better understanding people’s opinions for non-enforcement initiatives and their actual impacts to effectively tackle knife crime and deal with the problems of trust in policing.

MOPAC have released an action plan in response to Black Lives Matter. We have a meeting with MOPAC to discuss how our findings can be implemented London-wide with the Metropolitan Police, and gain relationships with senior police officers. We will also discuss the support they could provide us, as our current plan is to identify and secure funding which would allow us to continue our work around knife crime and young people and expand it to the rest of London.

Further Information

If you have any further questions regarding this form, please contact notequal@ncl.ac.uk or 0191 2088268.

