Sharing learning from the co-research project Nothing about us without us

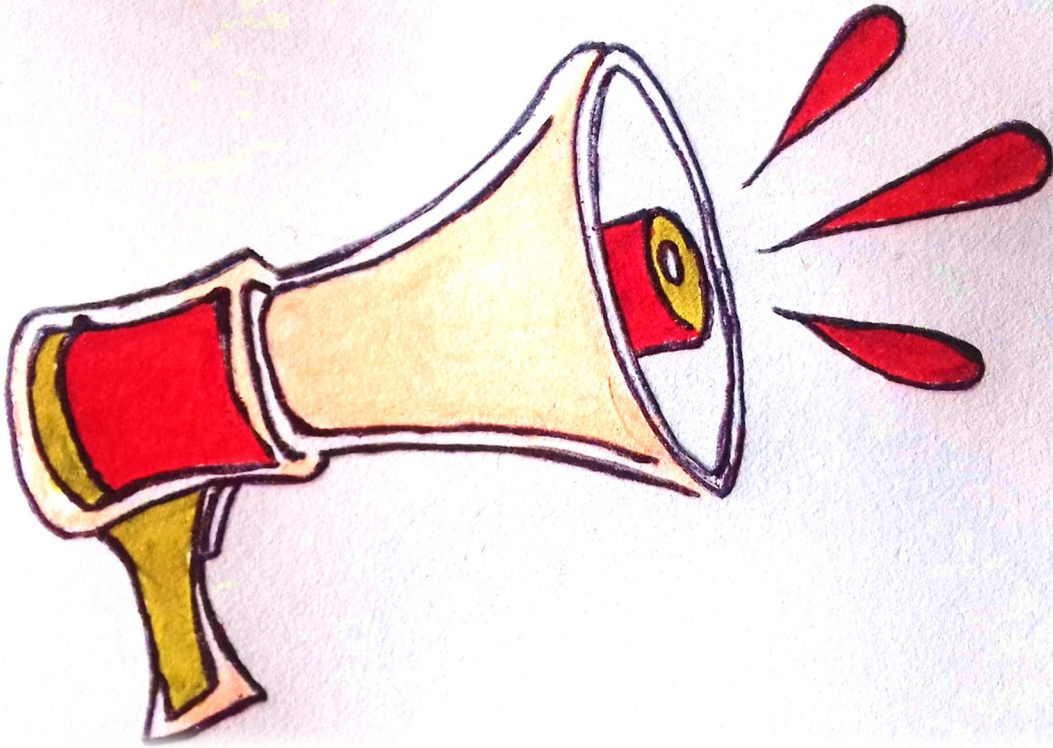**Thurs 22 July 2021 – Boingboing Online Resilience Forum**

Outline for todays session:

- Overview of study;
- Feedback from areas;
- Other ways of learning (i.e. literature review, reflective feedback);
- Breakout rooms;

Aim to share our learning and inspire action

Nothing About Us Without Us (NAUWU) Aims

- **Complete a 'literature review' around building young people's positive identities when they are facing many disadvantages.**

- **Involve young people in finding out about activism in the past (Blackpool), present (Newham) and future (Cornwall) and what this means for them.**

- Survey young people in Blackpool, Newham and Cornwall around young people's identity, civic activism and wellbeing.

- Hold a big event to share our learning (aka this event today☺)

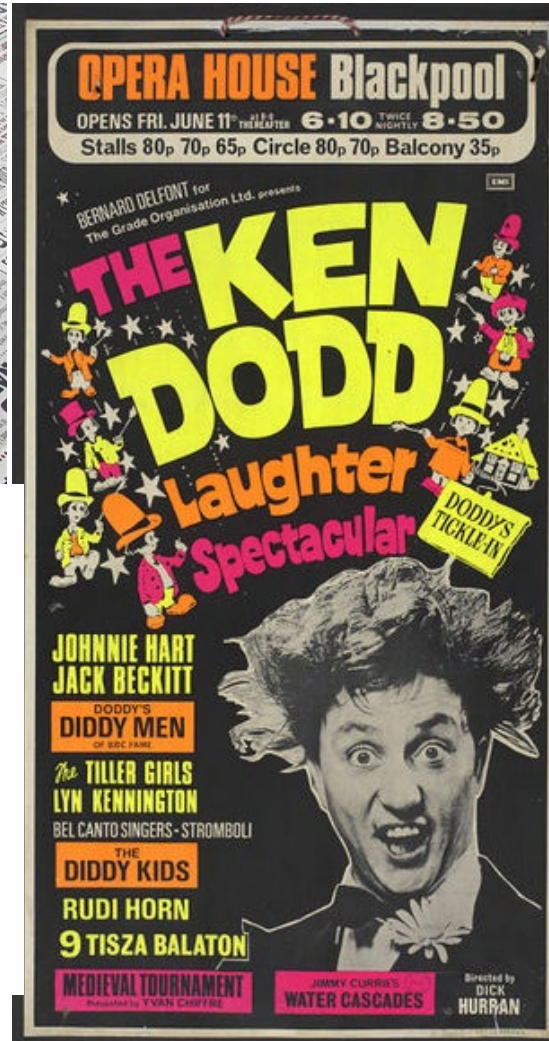**Everything is co-produced.** You can read more about the overall study here

NAUWU

Jordan Wood – Youth Engagement Worker
Danielle Aoslin – Peer Youth Engagement Sessional Worker

Blackpool - Past

Blackpool - the Past

JOIN THE RESILIENCE REVOLUTION

Beating the odds, whilst changing the odds

Danielle's Story

So what does that mean?

Relationships
Time
Honesty
Fun
Opportunities
Making Change
Mutuality

Find out More!

- The Resilience Revolution: https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Health-and-social-care/HeadStart-Blackpool/HeadStart-Blackpool.aspx

YOUTH ACTIVISM IN NEWHAM

IDEAS/ CREATIVITY

VALUES

ENGAGEMENT

CAMPAIGNS & THEMES

FUNDING

PARTICIPATION

VCS

CODY DOCKS

ROYAL DOCKS ENTERPRISE ZONE

Rein

West Silver Town Foundation

QUEEN ELIZABETH OLYMPIC PARK

LLDC – Have a YP panel

Aisha - Populo

SENDIAS
Shaa Philbert

BONNIE DOWNS

COMMUNITY LINKS

RD82

Renewal
Have a group of YP that provide a voice

Sendias – Youth Panel/Members committee

East London Dance

Members Steering Group

Your Time
Kids Time Steering Group

Fight For Peace

Aston Mansfield
Youth Facilitators / Social Action
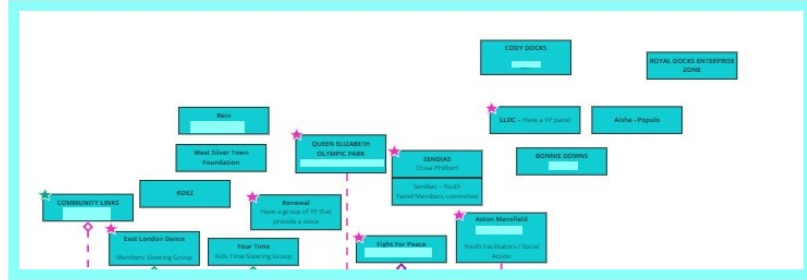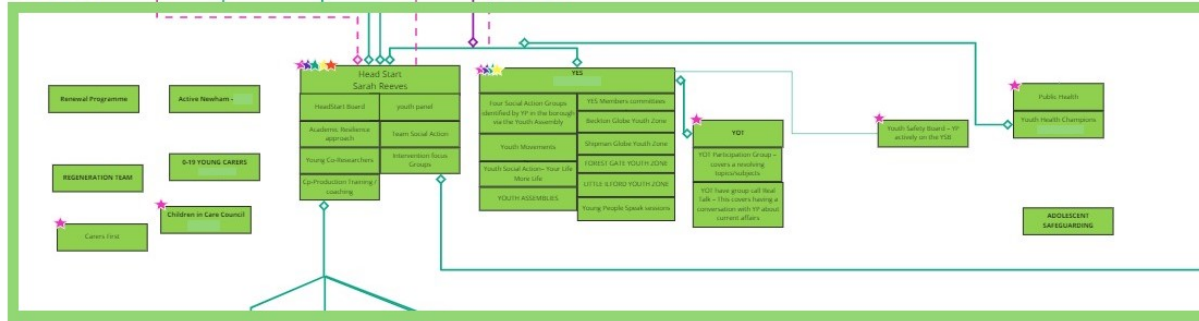
Legend
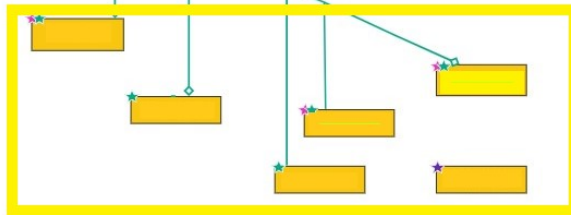
★ Active Youth Participation / Co-Production Groups
★ Embedded Co-Pro / Participation Workers
★ Practice Champions
★ YP Voice 'events'
★ YP involved in leadership / strategy

—— Strong Partnership working
- - - Adhoc joint working
◇ 2 way flow of information
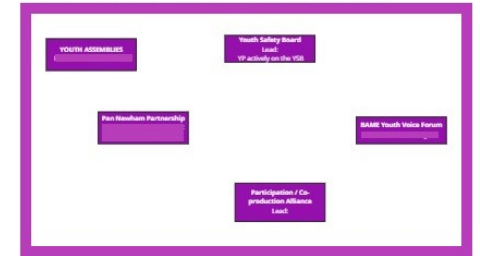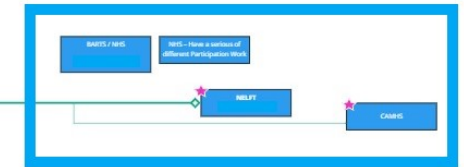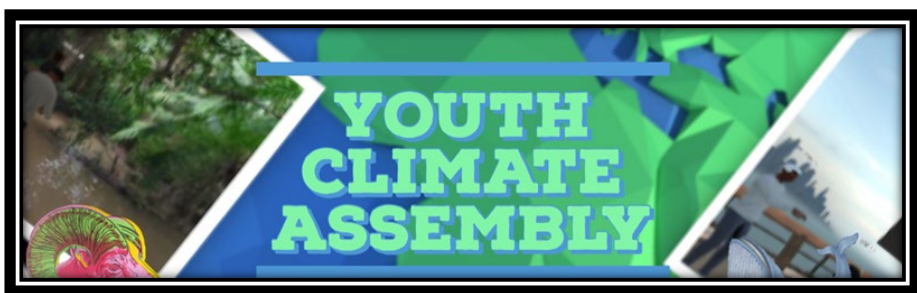→ 1 way flow of information

JOINT WORKING

YOUTH ASSEMBLIES

Youth Safety Board
Lead:
YP actively on the YSB

Pan Newham Partnership

BAME Youth Voice Forum

Participation / Co-production Alliance
Lead:

LBN

Kooth

Renewal Programme

Active Newham -

Head Start
Sarah Reeves

HeadStart Board

youth panel

YES

Four Social Action Groups identified by YP in the borough via the Youth Assembly

YES Members committees

Beckton Globe Youth Zone

Public Health

Youth Health Champions

Citizen UK

Academic Resilience approach

Team Social Action

Youth Movements

Shipman Globe Youth Zone

YDT

BUILD UE

0-19 YOUNG CARERS

Young Co-Researchers

Intervention focus Groups

Youth Social Action– Your Life More Life

FOREST GATE YOUTH ZONE

LITTLE ILFORD YOUTH ZONE

YDT Participation Group – covers a revolving topics/subjects

Youth Safety Board – YP actively on the YSB

REGENERATION TEAM

Co-Production Training / coaching

YOUTH ASSEMBLIES

YDT have group call Real Talk – This covers having a conversation with YP about current affairs.

LLDC

Carers First

Children in Care Council

Young People Speak sessions

ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING

HEALTH

BARTS / NHS

NHS – Have a serious of different Participation Work

NELFT

CAMHS

SCHOOLS

CAMPAIGNS & THEMES

YOUTH CLIMATE ASSEMBLY
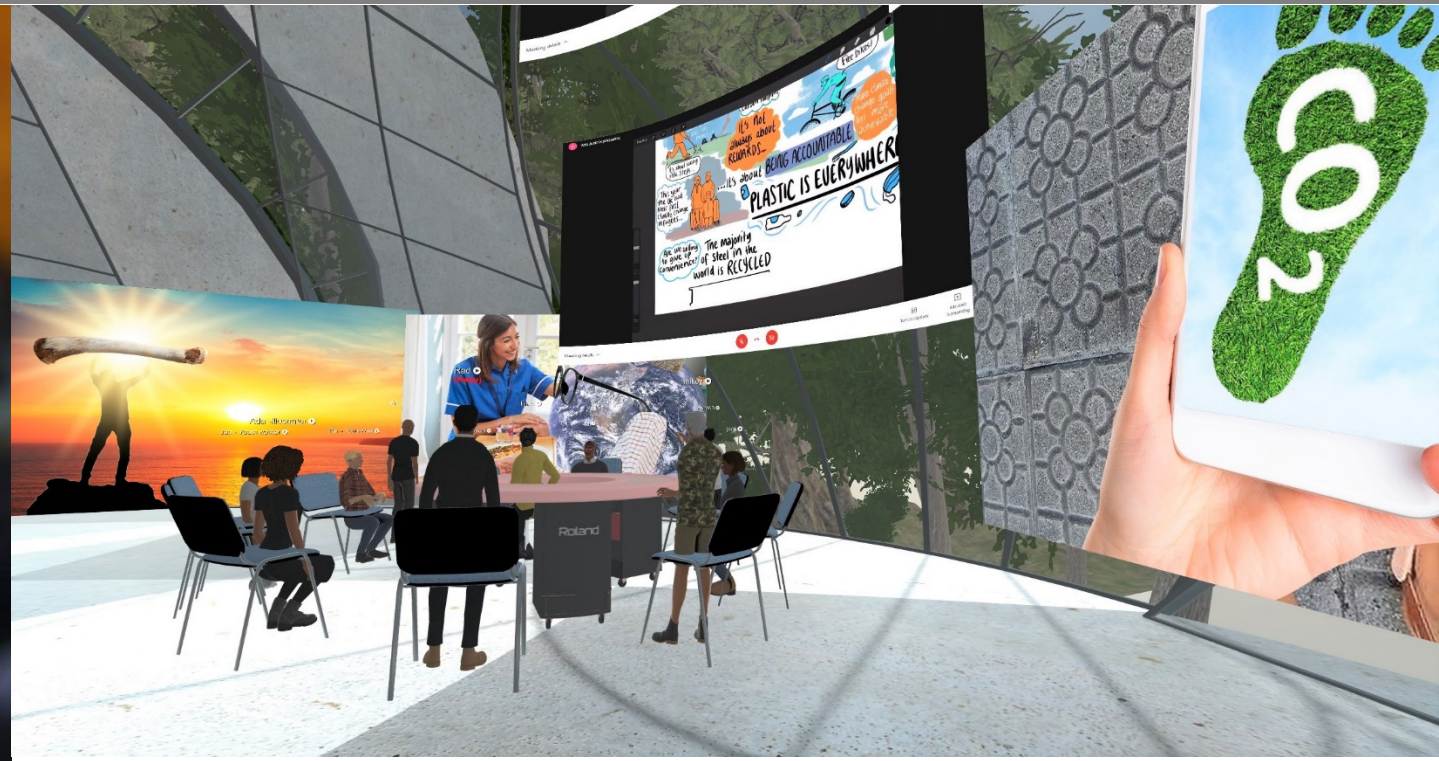
FUTURE

DESTROY RACISM.
BE LIKE A PANDA.

I'M BLACK, WHITE AND ASIAN.

We have two comments to share about what activism means or what it is understood to be from some of the YP we spoke to:

1. a campaign where you actively try to make a change

2. voicing opinions about important matters

ENGAGEMENT

IDEAS AND CREATIVITY

- We observed some really effective and meaningful examples of young people and adults working co-productively to **find creative solutions** for some of the issues YP are being affected by

- We noticed **how much some youth work practices had changed** due to Government imposed restrictions linked to the global health crisis

- Some of the Young people and Youth Workers that we spoke to explained that **some of these practice changes should remain**

PARTICIPATION

- We learnt that **how** a group is facilitated is really important **to participation and talking 'with' young people**

- We observed how young people and older people work best together when the conversation is **balanced** and the space is a **shared** one

- We noticed a **flattening of power** – for example: anonymity of avatars, reduction of biases, more engagement than with f2f methods

- We observed participatory group facilitation where the voices of young people were **recorded and shared with policy**

FUNDING

A key finding was how transition from in-person activism to online activism can be difficult

While it does become more accessible to some young people, we found that others may be **digitally disadvantaged and lack the facilities** needed to participate in campaign groups that meet online

Nonetheless, some groups were able to **overcome these limitations** by providing young people with the equipment necessary to experience activism online

VALUES

We noticed how **passionate** young people are about the issues that matter to them, and how the youth groups that are making it possible for young people to be heard have a sound value base – **they value YP, they value what YP say**

We noticed when participation workers facilitating groups have a robust value base the work is **authentic and genuine**

**HeadStart Newham Team reflections on facilitating the co-research project**
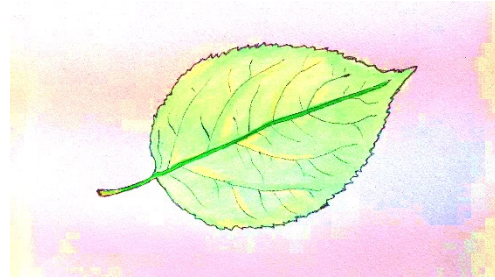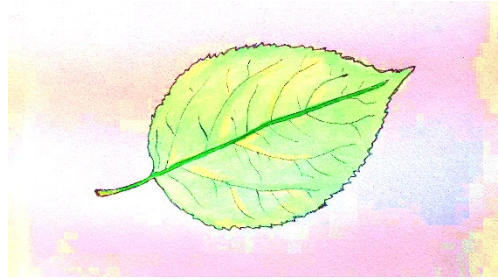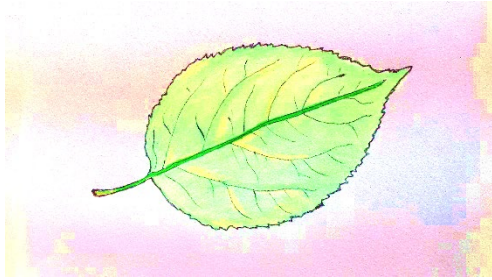
OUR REFLECTIONS

- Young people are living their lives. They are not waiting to grow up or to transition into adulthood. Youth is a life stage in its own right

- Young people are keen to get involved in activism and campaigns – they are passionate about the things that matter to them

- Young people are open to new youth work practices – they are keen to be involved in developing new ways of engaging

- The wisdom of older people is important to YP but they too have a view that is equally relevant and important

QUESTIONS:

- Could mapping out youth activism campaigns in a geographic area help to focus and mobilise collective youth voice/activism?

- Whose voice is being heard, and why? Whose voice is not being heard, and why?

- Do we always need a leader and does a leadership approach get in the way of useful co-production?

- What do we need to do to avoid adultism when designing activist projects?
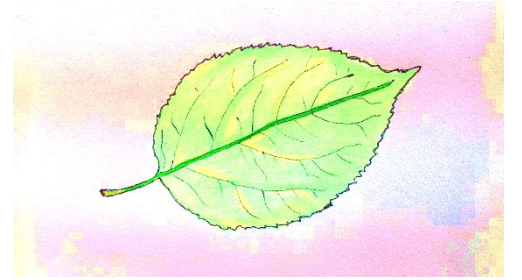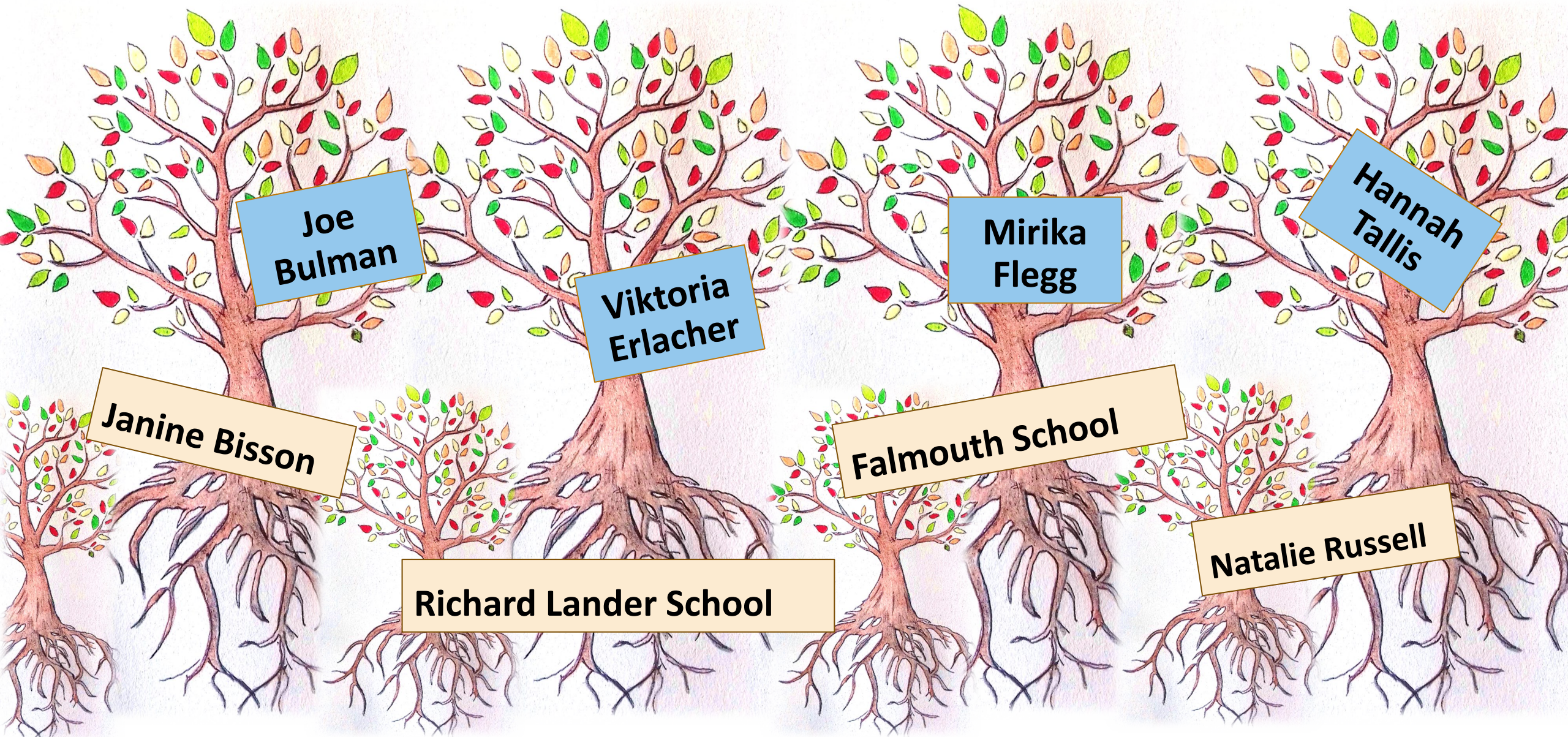
ACTIVISM IN THE FUTURE

Cornwall/Kernow Reflections

Nothing About Us Without Us

Joe Bulman, Local Activist

Viktoria Erlacher, University of Brighton

Mirika Flegg, University of Brighton

Hannah Tallis, Cornwall Council

Meet Our "Tree Team"

Joe Bulman

Viktoria Erlacher

Mirika Flegg

Hannah Tallis

Janine Bisson

Falmouth School

Richard Lander School

Natalie Russell

What we did in Cornwall/Kernow

- **Co-produced a workshop series around activism in the future;**
  - Climate "solution" focus;
  - Aiming to be helpful to the local community (Y7/G7);
- **Ran 4 workshops (1 session in 2 parts @ 2 schools)**
  - N= 33
  - Mostly year 7's (N=27), some year 10's (N=6)
  - Blended learning (i.e. online facilitation with support from schools staff)

Elm Tree Story
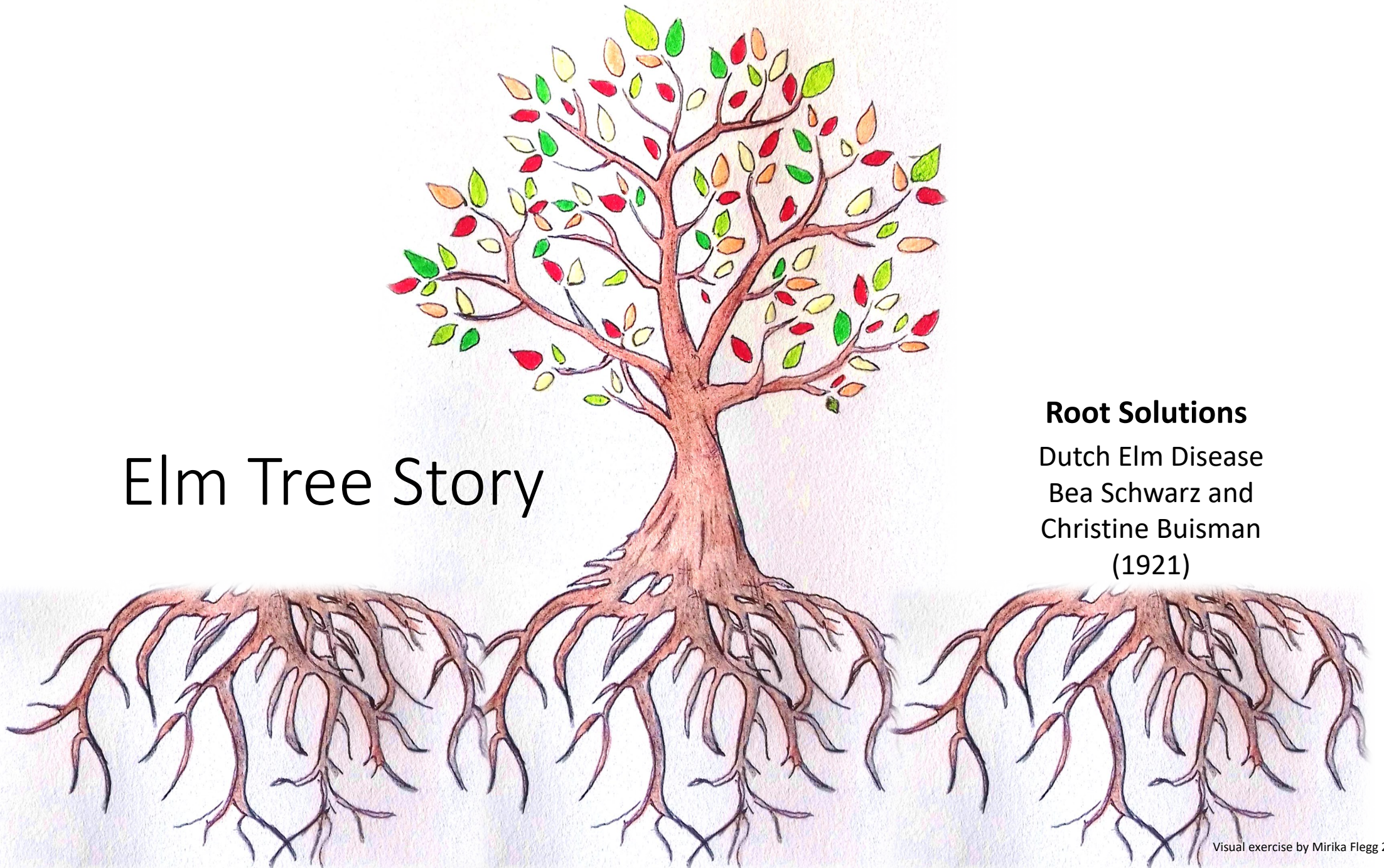
Root Solutions

Dutch Elm Disease
Bea Schwarz and
Christine Buisman
(1921)

Visual exercise by Mirika Flegg 2020

"We can all be activists"

everyday activism

everyday activism

Root Cause Tree Tool

What problems do you see in your world?

What policies, practices and structures reinforce these problems (i.e. what enables them)?

What are the historical, cultural and economic underlying causes of these problems (i.e. the root cause)?

Deforestation

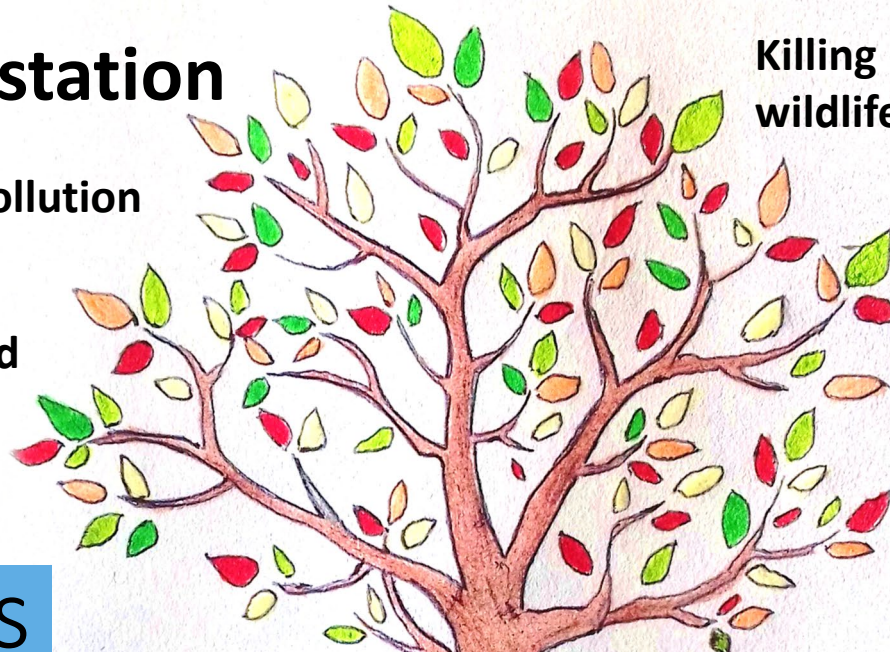Killing wildlife/Animals

Overconsuming

Air pollution

Overfishing

Forest Fires

Third World countries disproportionately affected

Excessive waste

(fast fashion, fast tech, sanitary products, plastics)

Frequent Responses

Carbon-based industries

No Car limit/too many cars

Chopping down trees & Deforestation

People can't be bothered (e.g., littering)

Insufficient regulations

Presidents and PMs not agreeing to policies to stop problems

Consumerism

People making problems worse without realising

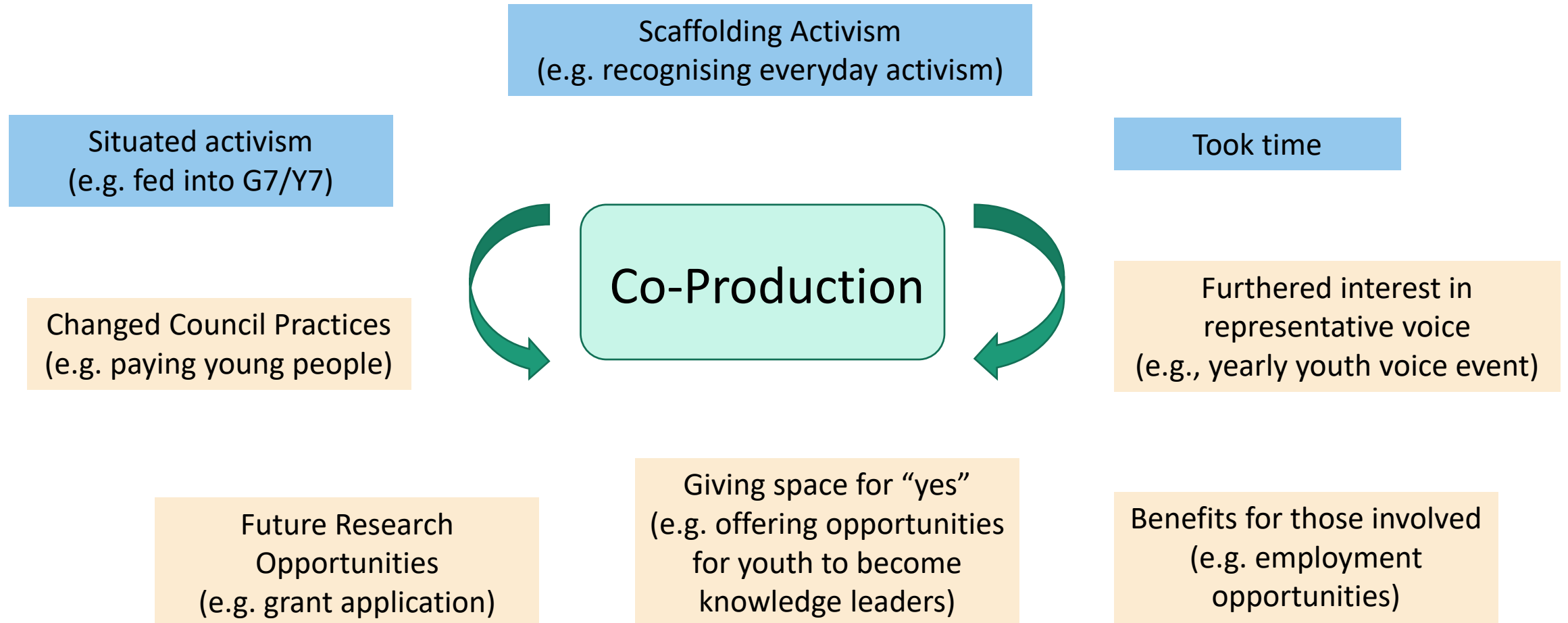Industrialisation & Industrial revolution

Imperialism

Capitalism

Nuclear Power
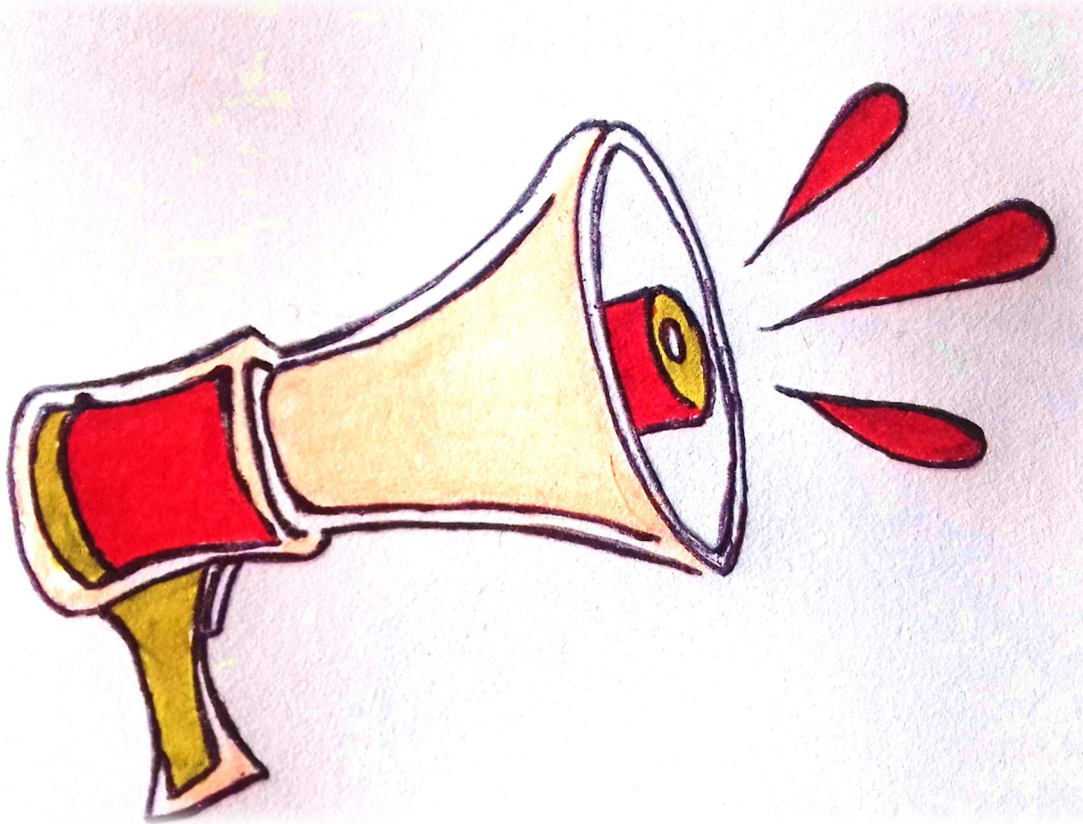
Unequal wealth distribution

Lack of representational voice (not all have space to express views)

Use of environmentally harmful travel (Cars & Planes)

Planting the seed of activism in the Future

Scaffolding Activism
(e.g. recognising everyday activism)

Situated activism
(e.g. fed into G7/Y7)

Took time

Co-Production

Changed Council Practices
(e.g. paying young people)

Furthered interest in
representative voice
(e.g., yearly youth voice event)

Future Research
Opportunities
(e.g. grant application)

Giving space for "yes"
(e.g. offering opportunities
for youth to become
knowledge leaders)

Benefits for those involved
(e.g. employment
opportunities)

Sharing our learning more broadly:

- 2 Train the Trainer Videos produced by the team- Release TBC

- 1 report produced by HeadStart Kernow after first part of the project.

- 1 blog written from Joe's perspective about his experience- Release TBC

Take an intersectional approach to climate change & consider class, race, gender, education, disability, local and international)

Teach people about littering and the need to recycle (they sometimes cause harm without knowing it)

Electric cars/minimising car use

Quotas for hunting and fishing. Stricter penalties for those that break them, and/or harm animals and wildlife.

Clear policies
(i.e. forestation, single-use plastic, pesticides, energy production, nuclear waste management).

Need recognition for climate activists from diverse communities (e.g. community awards)

Make it compulsory for all electronics to be easily repaired unless irreversible damage

Western countries should distribute free reusable period products to third world countries and the countries poorer people

Look at alternative energy sources (e.g. hydroelectricity)

Climate Solutions
Young people's ideas for positive change.

Reflective Feedback

- Interviewed community partners and young people involved in this project (N=8)

- Asked questions about experiences of involving young people in activities around activism *in an online environment*

- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2014)

Content also informed the analysis of the literature review

Reflective Feedback

- Young people engaged in activist activities;
- Young people did not relate to the term 'activism';
- Challenges around recruitment and engagement to online spaces;
- The need for the 'doing of activism', and clear aims and objectives to measure success;

Interrelational

Space

Clarity

Access

What past research tells us

- Most focused on excluded groups (i.e. low socio-economic status, minority ethnic, LGBTQ+);

- Activism was rarely defined, but used more frequently around excluded groups;

- LGBTQ+ focused papers often talked about different types of activism like "everyday activism" (Asakura et al., 2020)

- Theories of critical consciousness and community organising (Freire, 1973) often discussed.

Some Literature Review Findings

- Most stress the importance of adults facilitating activism opportunities (risk mitigation).
- Suggests links with improved mental wellbeing including:
  - self-esteem,
  - empowerment/civic self-efficacy,
  - coping,
  - self-reported health and wellbeing,
  - reduced internalising feelings,
  - improved sense of belonging.
- Links with identity less clear
  - Discrimination linked to desire for creating change;
  - Benefits of 'activism' linked to cultural/community identification;

Breakout Sessions:

What does this learning mean for us all

.....as researchers, communities, young people, commissioners and service providers who all have made a commitment to improve youth mental health.
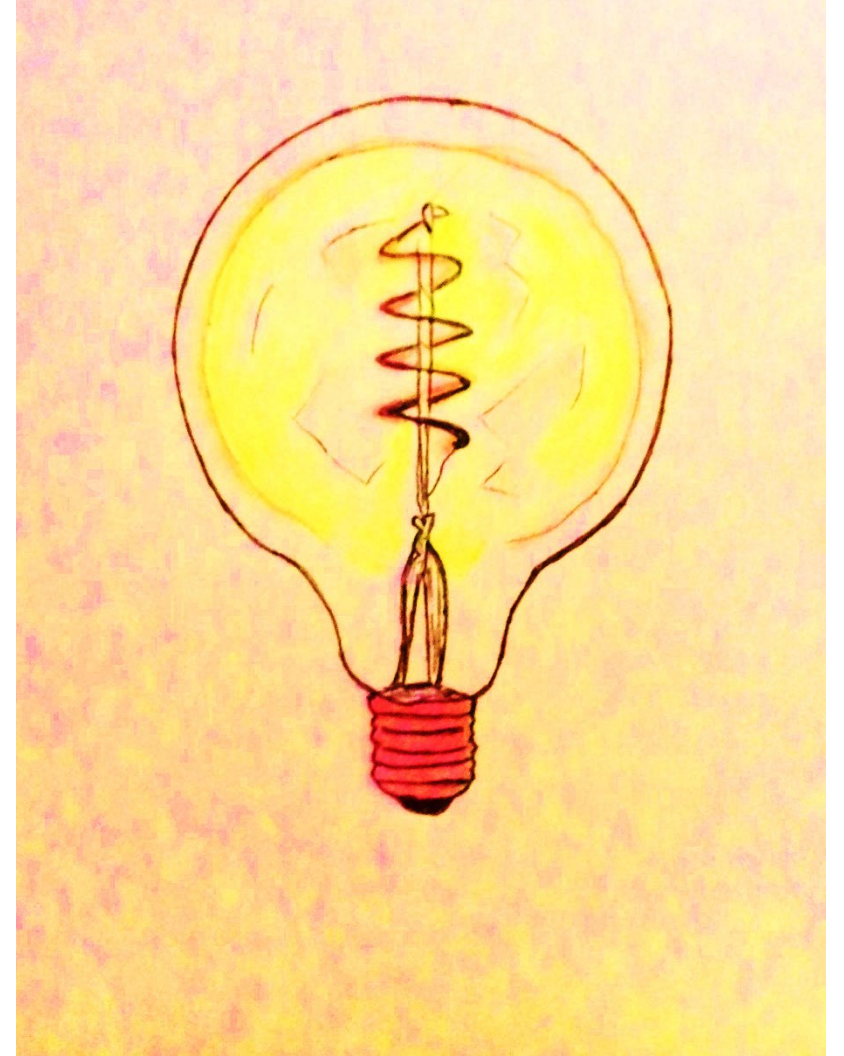
Questions?

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Original drawings by Mirika Flegg, 2020

Thank you   Thank you   Thank you

- Falmouth School
- Richard Lander School
- Showtown Blackpool
- South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership