

Belonging Periferer Chez nous

# ***Belonging:*** **Message to Policy Makers**



manifesta



RUNNYMEDE

# Contents

Introduction	3
Section 1 – Project Background and Methodology	4
Section 2 – Background on the Three Locations	6
Section 3 – Analysis of the Films Made by the Young People	9
Section 4 – How the Films Address Various Policy Themes	10
Conclusion	14

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# Introduction

'Jusqu'ici tout va bien. Jusqu'ici tout va bien. Mais l'important c'est pas la chute, c'est l'atterrissage'.<sup>1</sup> This line in the movie 'La Haine', directed by French Director Matthieu Kassovitz about the lives of youngsters on a council estate on the outskirts of Paris, is repeated throughout the film like a mantra, implying that the situation of disillusioned youth, stuck in their derelict suburbs and facing social exclusion and racism, is alright so far, despite regular outbursts of violence and outrage at the situation they find themselves in, but a real explosion is never far away. This is the general feeling of the people concerned, as well as observers regarding issues which policy makers have now come to label community cohesion or integration.

In fact, France did experience its rather brutal 'landing' when the suburbs of many French cities exploded in riots in November 2005, resembling those that had been witnessed in the UK some 25 years before in Brixton, and only four years previously in the northern mill towns of Bradford, Oldham and Burnley.

Riots are one extreme way for people to express their views and grievances when facing injustices, institutional racism and socio-economic inequalities such as the ones experienced by many young people across Europe. Each riot brings with it a series of reports, studies and policies, wishing to address its cause.

An indirect message of these riots is also the need to listen to young people's views on topics which are so crucial in shaping the kind of society we live in. Topics such as belonging, integration, social inclusion, equal opportunities, diversity etc... are not just buzz words but rather the daily experiences of young people living in London, Lisbon and Paris and it is important to pay attention to their interpretation of such concepts.

With that in mind, Runnymede and Manifesta embarked on a new project that encouraged a group of teenagers in London, Lisbon and Paris to express their views on what it means to belong to a particular place or community, doing so through the making of short films. With those films, this report is an attempt at starting a discussion informed by young people on those very issues. It aims to relay the thoughts of young British, French and Portuguese people on a number of themes linked to belonging and offer some interpretation of those thoughts into policy messages that will hopefully spark further discussions in the respective countries of those young people, taking into account the local contexts within each location.

# Report Content

This report sets out to offer a policy interpretation of the discussion held by the young people and the key policy messages emerging from their films. It is divided into the following parts:

- Section 1 provides some background information on the project and the methodology guiding us to draft this report.
- Section 2 offers a short snapshot of the three areas that were chosen, and which are home to the young people who participated in the project. This will serve as a useful reference to understand some of the issues raised by the young film makers and place their experiences in context.
- Section 3 provides a short analysis of the films produced by the young people, outlining the similarities and contrasts observed in the three locations.
- Finally, Section 4 places some of the discussions and messages from both the films and the dialogue between the young people in the wider policy context, offering a unique opportunity to interpret their artistic expression through a policy lens.

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<sup>1</sup> 'So far, it's all good. So far, it's all good. But what's important is not the fall, but the landing.'

## SECTION 1 – PROJECT BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

### Film screenshots



### Background to the project

*BELONGING* is a transnational initiative designed to enable young people to explore themes of belonging, intercultural dialogue and identity, in their local areas, using arts and filming. Working in suburban locations with local young people from culturally mixed backgrounds – in London/Newham, Lisbon suburb/Casal da Boba and Paris/20th arrondissement, the project organized a series of video workshops, one in each location, with key local partners.<sup>2</sup>

*BELONGING* encouraged the young people to talk about what belonging means to them, in particular in relation to managing multiple, flexible identities while belonging to more than one place.

Working in small groups with creative video artists and film-makers, the young people each made their own up to 3-minute films on the topic of their choice. The objective was to deliver youth voices and perspectives on these major issues, in video.

The 43 short films that resulted from the workshops provide an interesting picture of life today and a valuable insight into the contemporary thoughts of young people in city contexts. Chosen for their distinctive nature, each of the three city locations has its own local history. The distinctive nature of each location appears in the background in most of the films, and in some cases comes very much to the fore.

In addition, a group of 18 young people (six from each city) met in a roundtable in Paris, alongside the closing ceremonies of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

Using the 43 short films produced in the workshops as a starting point, they engaged in both formal and informal exchanges around the idea of 'intercultural dialogue', belonging and identity and talked about the potential relevance for developing a shared European identity.

### Methodology

Our approach in drafting this report was driven both by the films made by the young people in their respective cities and the outcome of discussions held between the young people who met at the roundtable organized in Paris.

The following methods were included in the project's implementation:

#### Film-making workshops

Workshops with young people were organized in each city and lasted around 5 days.

In each workshop – prepared and facilitated by video artists, a local historian, the local coordinator, the project director and the executive producer – the young participants:

- researched and explored, in their particular cities and neighbourhoods, past migrations and their related heritage of convivial successes as well as struggles to belong;
- developed their ideas and stories – using new learning in relation to their own contemporary experience;
- learned to express their exploration and interpretation of their research creatively through the use of digital media;
- produced short up to 3-minute films informed by their historical research and personal interpretation of the material.

#### Analysis of films

Each young person made a film describing his/her perception of belonging and what it means in his/her local context. An analysis of the films was carried out, outlining the contrasts and similarities across countries and teasing out the various interpretations given to the concept of belonging by young people. This analysis also brought out various policy themes which are discussed in the report.

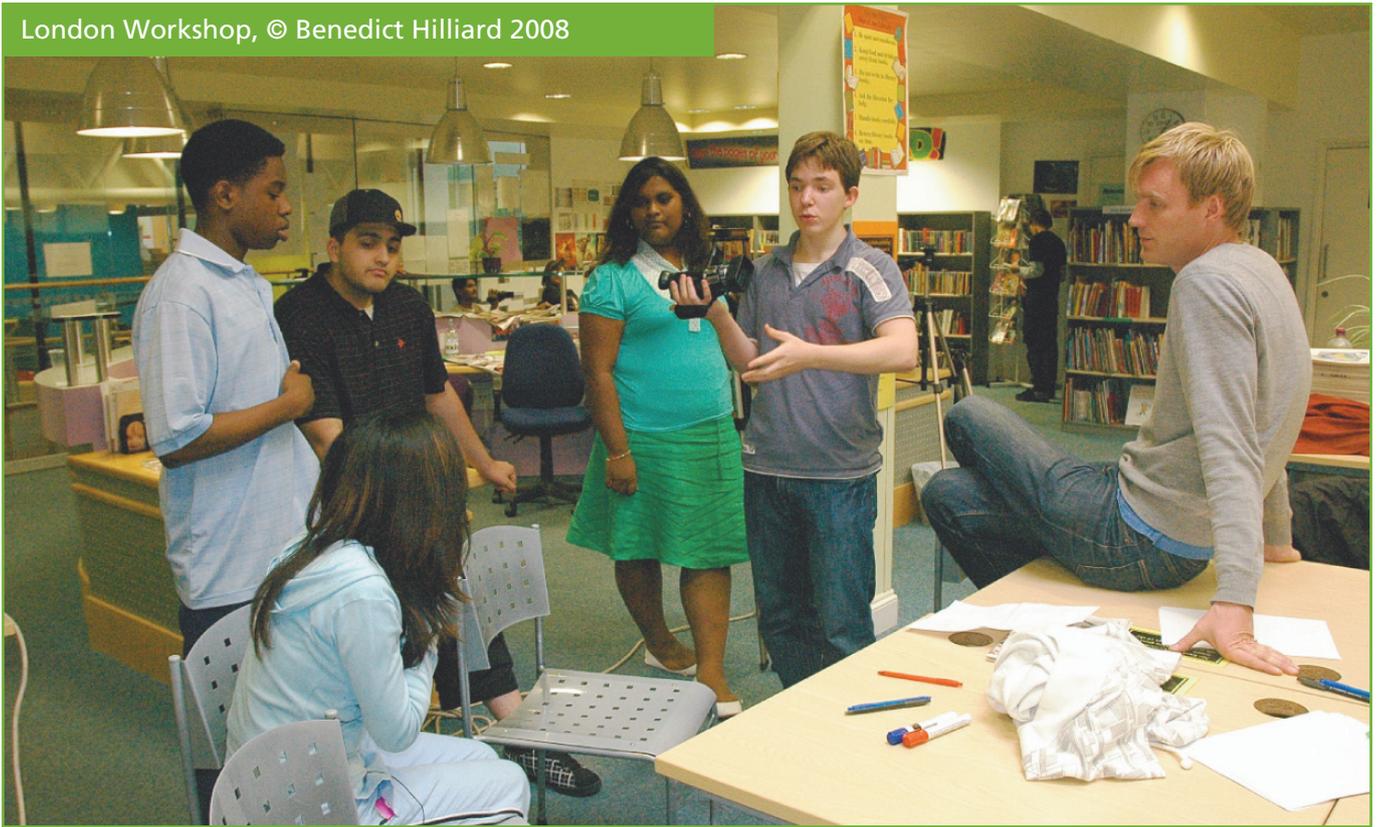
#### Roundtable Discussion

Six young people from each of the three cities met in a roundtable in Paris, alongside the closing ceremonies of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Using the short films produced by the young people as a starting point, they engaged in both formal and informal exchanges around the idea of 'intercultural dialogue', belonging and identity, focusing on three activities:

- *first*, through peer discussions on the films produced and their implications for the development of intercultural dialogue practices;

<sup>2</sup> The local partners are *Forest Gate City Learning Centre and NewCEYS* in London - Newham; *Vende-Se Filmes* in Lisbon; *Collectif Tribudom* in Paris.

London Workshop, © Benedict Hilliard 2008



- *second*, through engagement with European and national policy makers, interested in intercultural dialogue and youth participation policies;
- *third*, through the involvement in intercultural activities, in partnership with the prestigious museum La Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration in Paris.

Building on their experience of making the short films, the young people examined notions of belonging and identity and investigated the potential relevance for developing a shared European identity. Their discussions also focused on mechanisms that allow for young people to promote social change at local, national and European levels.

This report is therefore the outcome of both an analysis of the films made and the discussions held at the roundtable between the young people from the three countries. It aims to be a contribution to policy discussions on the themes of belonging, identity, cohesion and integration.

## SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND ON THE THREE LOCATIONS

The three locations chosen for organizing the workshops were the London Borough of Newham, the Cité des Amandiers estate in the 20th District of Paris, and Casal da Bobal in Lisbon. These areas have a number of similarities in their population make-up and histories. Common features to the three areas include:

- “Young Neighbourhoods”: these areas all have a high proportion of young inhabitants. Those under 24 years of age make up 27.31% of the population in the 20th District of Paris, 41% of Newham and 49% of Casal da Bobal.
- Historically, these areas have seen the settlement of large numbers of migrants, mainly from former colonies, migrating to the country to fill labour shortages. As a result, these areas all have high proportions of ethnic minorities and migrants.
- The areas all suffer from poor socio-economic conditions, with high unemployment rates and low education attainment.
- Two out of the three areas (Casal da Boba and the Cité des Amandiers) have witnessed significant tensions between young people and the police.

### Casal da Boba, Lisbon, Portugal

Portugal was traditionally a country of emigration before it became a country of immigration in the early 1960s with the arrival of African migrant workers, mainly from Cape Verde, to work in construction and manufacturing jobs to fill the growing labour shortages associated with the emigration of Portuguese men to other European countries. Decolonization

in the 1970s led to further immigration from Cape Verde and Angola in particular. Later in the 1980s and 1990s, with increasing demand for labour, Africans, Brazilians and Eastern Europeans were granted the right to settle. Since Portugal joined the European Union (EU) in 1986, other groups from Africa and South America have immigrated to Portugal with, recently, a rise in immigration from other countries, such as Ukraine, Moldova, Russia and Romania.

Migrants from Cape Verde in particular settled down in the *Bairro de Fontainhas*, *Vendas Novas* and *6 de Maio* in the district of Amadora on the outskirts of Lisbon. These new settlers built their own houses, extending them gradually as their families grew by adding a floor to their dwelling as is traditionally done in Cape Verde. The houses were precarious and the streets narrow, but this encouraged a strong sense of solidarity and cohesion amongst inhabitants and made relationships with neighbours crucial to people’s social lives. When landowners reclaimed *Bairro de Fontainhas* and its surrounding neighbourhood, local authorities created a relocation program for all its inhabitants. In 2002, most were relocated to *Casal da Boba*, a new purpose-built development, which is now home to the young Portuguese workshop participants. As the families moved from their old neighbourhood into these new blocks of flats, their lifestyle changed dramatically: the buildings in which they now lived were not conducive anymore to the kind of tight-knit community developed in their former neighbourhood and people felt more isolated from each other.

The neighbourhood is composed of different groups but is not very diverse: in 2005, 63% of Casal da Boba inhabitants were of Cape Verdian origin, while 31% were of Portuguese

Screenshot from *O meu bairro*



Screenshot from Newham's rubbish?



origin, 5% of Angolan and Sao Tomé origin, and 1% Gipsy.

Currently, low levels of education, lack of qualifications and therefore high unemployment rates are strongly affecting the younger generation which constitutes nearly half the population of *Casal da Boba* (49% is between 0 and 24 years old).

### Newham, London, UK

The first wave of outsiders coming into Newham (from the rest of Britain and other countries) started with the building of the Royal Docks in the 1850s to make space for new, larger steam ships. The years that followed the industrial revolution brought migrant workers from Ireland, Germany, Italy, Poland and Russia to work and settle in the area. These were followed by Jews from Germany and Eastern Europe after 1900 and West Indian and Asian sailors and troops who had been demobbed after the First World War and chose to stay. By 1930, the area had the largest number of Black settlers in London.

In the decade following the Second World War, Commonwealth immigrants, mainly from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Caribbean moved into the area, having come to work in England to fill labour shortages in a period of growth and prosperity. In 1965, the borough of Newham was created from the amalgamation of the old boroughs of East Ham and West Ham. Extending from the East of the City of London to the North of the River Thames, the borough now comprises about 250,000 inhabitants.

It has become the most ethnically diverse borough in the UK: there are more than 30 different communities and 300 languages spoken across the borough. Sixty-one per cent of the population is of Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black African, West Indian or Black British, Chinese, or other origin. The borough has the second highest percentage of Muslims in Britain (24.3%). In recent years, Eastern Europeans from countries that joined the EU have also settled in Newham.

Newham is also the youngest borough in England with the

highest proportion of people under 24 (41%), and the lowest proportion of population over the age of 65.

In 2007, a television programme branded Newham the 'fourth worst place to live' in the UK.<sup>3</sup> The study took into account crime rates, school results, pollution, economic activity and property prices. At that time, the unemployment rate was of 6.7%, the second highest rate in London.

### The Cité des Amandiers, Paris, France

*The Amandiers* neighbourhood is located in the North East of the 20th district of Paris, in the *Belleville-Ménilmontant* area, situated on a hill overlooking the city. The area of *Belleville* was predominantly a working class neighbourhood until the 18th century, and became by the turn of the 20th century a place of refuge to many migrants fleeing persecution and economic hardship.

In the 1920s and 1930s Ottoman Armenians and Greeks settled in Belleville, followed by German and Polish Jews, as well as Spanish immigrants fleeing the 1936 Civil War. In the early 1960s, Algerian and Tunisian Jews fled conflicts in North Africa and settled in the area, as well as Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians, encouraged by French authorities to come and work in French factories. More recently, the 1980s saw the arrival of a significant Chinese community and Sub-Saharan Africans.

Nowadays, *Belleville* is still an area of Paris that many migrants first come to, upon their arrival, hence the great cultural diversity and the social fragility of the area – job opportunities are low, economic means precarious and social exclusion quite high.

*The Amandiers* neighbourhood is emblematic of these issues. As older housing was replaced by tower blocks and social housing estates in the early 1960s, the area witnessed 40 years of successive urban reconstructions and planning which has resulted in isolating the area further from the rest of the city.

Screenshot from *Un jour de plus*

The vast majority of families living there are from an immigrant background (North African, West African and, more recently, South-East Asian) with a higher proportion of foreign born people and migrants than the Paris average and inequalities in education in the district have affected access to social mobility

The rates of unemployment are higher in the 20th district than in Paris overall.

*The Amandiers* is a 'young neighbourhood' as the proportion of young people in the area is the second highest in Paris (27.41% of the population in the 20th district is under 24 years old).

*The Amandiers* has been portrayed as a 'difficult' neighbourhood by local authorities and the media. In June 2007, 25 year-old *Lamine Dieng* died during a police intervention in circumstances that remain unclear. Following his death, demonstrations by local residents angrily criticized the police's practices and violence in the neighbourhood, especially towards its young people. The event and its aftermath reinforced the feeling of exclusion and social difficulties which young people of migrant descent experience in urban areas in France.

## SECTION 3 – ANALYSIS OF THE FILMS MADE BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE

### LISBON Films: Neighbourhood and Community

Most of the Portuguese young people interpreted the notion of belonging as the sense of place within a particular neighbourhood, with its history and specific characteristics. Bearing in mind the local context, the Portuguese young people are very much aware of the neighbourhood changes that they feel have been imposed upon them, with the move from the previous areas the community lived in and the effects this has had on local community life and the cohesion of the neighbourhood. Other themes present in the Portuguese films and reflected in the conversations by the young people at the roundtable focus on the following:

- The expression of youth voices through various music and dance initiatives;
- Social exclusion and the lack of opportunities for young people to succeed;
- The presence of strong youth peer support, often serving as a proxy for family that is seen at times to be insufficiently supportive of the problems faced by young people;
- Intergenerational conflict and the perception by young people that they are being stereotyped by adults and institutions such as the police;

Casal de Boba Screening, © Benedict Hilliard 2008



### LONDON Films: Diversity and Identity

The young British people very much interpreted belonging as meaning identity, although in some cases they did also relate belonging to the neighbourhood, in particular to its diversity, with multiculturalism being the aspect that made most of the young people belong to this particular area. Other themes explored in the films and discussions included:

- Issues that affect young people more generally, mainly because of their age, such as bullying or different educational experiences leading to different outcomes;
- The relationship to the home country (and implications that this has for belonging in the area);
- Belonging as a broader issue (i.e. environment).

Filming in Paris, © Manifesta 2008



### PARIS Films: Relationships and Alienation

The way that the French young people expressed their feelings around belonging was much less grounded in the physical space (neighbourhood) and much more about the interaction between individuals, and the impact of such relations on their lives. In particular, the themes emerging from this interpretation of belonging included:

- Racism faced by young black and minority ethnic people;
- Intergenerational misunderstandings and general stereotyped perception of young people by adults and institutions (especially the police);
- General issues affecting young people's daily lives (smoking, peer pressure, relationships, safety, sense of alienation);
- Impact of policies on the lives of young people that make it difficult to belong (i.e. immigration policy, security policy through violent police raids, etc.).

## SECTION 4 – HOW THE FILMS ADDRESS VARIOUS POLICY THEMES

### Racism

Racism is experienced by many of the young people present at the roundtable, whether in direct confrontations with the police as reflected in some films (*Le silence est le crime*), or in other social interactions, such as in restaurants or public transport (*Quatro euros, dos folhas de alface e o polícia* and *J'y suis, J'y reste*).

In some cases it is expressed in the films in more subtle ways. For instance, the racial stereotyping of a person living in England but with Estonian origins is brought out in his film through his expression of cynicism at the typical expectations of how he should behave and where he should belong (*Cultural differences*). Another example is the perception of young Black youth when seen hanging around in the street, with a woman crossing the road to avoid having to walk past them, fearing for her safety, or young white men asking if they can buy drugs from them (*Au Coin de ma rue*).

Police violence, and its link to racism, is a recurring theme in both French and Portuguese films, the most striking being the reference to a black young man killed in police custody (*Le silence est le crime*) and the silence surrounding the killing, in particular the treatment of the case following the young man's death. The victim's family was unable to see his body for four weeks after it was found and there has been no trial or charging of any police officers involved in the case. This and other films clearly show how government policies can impact on the daily lives of young people. This is explicitly the case for one young film-maker, writing a letter to her best friend who is now living in Belgium, after having been expelled from her home because of tighter immigration controls (*Merveille*.) The issue of raids on houses where undocumented migrants live or schools that are attended by undocumented children, and the rise in the rates in deportation, has been at the centre of debates by both policy makers and migrant rights organizations since Nicolas Sarkozy came to power in 2007. The film

brings out the very real impact of these measures on the life of a young girl.

Racism seems to feature more strongly in the French and Portuguese films than in the British ones. The general positive tone of the latter film seems to indicate at first that the British young people do not feel that racism is such a big issue in their neighbourhood. However, during roundtable discussions, the British participants spoke about the racism affecting young people in Britain. As expressed by one young British participant, the feeling is that they experience less racism as a result of living in Newham where ethnic minorities are the majority population of the borough, and that racism is more likely to be felt by young people living in less diverse neighbourhoods.

The clearer references to police racism in the France and Portugal might also be linked to the fact that these two countries have not yet recognized institutional racism within their police force in the way that the UK did ten years ago. This does not mean, however, that it isn't a reality, in particular in France, where it was precisely such an incident, between a young person youth and the police, which sparked the November 2005 riots in the suburbs of Paris. The young people are therefore highlighting, through their films, a reality that is largely ignored by their policy makers.

It is worth noting that in both the films and the discussion, racism is not a feature in itself and is generally part of an overall feeling of stereotyping and prejudice linked to their status as youth, as much as being Black (see the section on youth below).

#### Policy Message:

Discussion on institutional racism has not taken place across Europe but needs to be addressed, as it is a reality of young people's everyday life.

Screenshot from *Entre deux*



## Youth

- Youth issues expressed in the films and discussions

Many films highlight issues and challenges affecting any teenager, whatever his/her background or origin:

- Friendship and peer support: Many films raise the issue of peer support and the importance of friends serving as proxy for their families (*O meu movimento*). The films demonstrate the need to be surrounded by friends to sometimes deal with difficult family situations (*Sempre a mesma história*).
- Peer pressure is also present in the films, highlighting the very real issues affecting some young people in neighbourhoods where the support mechanisms might not be appropriate. In the case of bullying, peer pressure can become a barrier to the feeling of belonging to a particular place (*My street*).
- Uncertainty about their future, including whether going to school is actually going to be of any use, given the widespread social exclusion experienced in the neighbourhood (*Vale a pena?*).
- Gender issues and relationships between men and women (*Le P'tit gars de Ménilmontant*, *Quand je vois tes yeux* and *Ma première fois*).
- Intergenerational misunderstanding and tensions (*Quel étage*, *Sans prévenir*, *Falamos a mesma língua?* And *Vale a pena?*).
- Family tensions (*Sempre a mesma história*, *Entre Deux* and *Sans prévenir*).

These are issues that any young person may experience at a given time. However, some of these issues are also compounded by the particular situation or characteristics of those young people (cultural, socio-economic and geographical). In particular, these are:

- Lack of opportunities and social exclusion, due to the areas that they live in (*Un jour de plus*, *Qui Vida...eh!*).
  - Stereotyping linked to a combination of their age and their origin/colour (*Au coin de ma rue*, *J'y suis j'y reste* and *Quel étage*).
  - Issues of identity resulting from their bi-cultural heritage, sometimes seen in a positive light (*A taste of Asia*, *Being here* and *Elles sont deux*) but also in more challenging ways (*Entre-deux* and *Le P'tit Gars de Ménilmontant*).
  - The difficulty of dealing with the legacy of their parents' burdens linked to their migrating from another country, as expressed by a young British roundtable participant.
- Youth empowerment (or lack of)

There is a sense in some films that opportunities are scarce, and due to the issues raised above, in particular a sense of unavoidable social exclusion, it is not worth investing in education or work (*Vale a pena?* and *Qui vida...eh!*), the opportunities are hard to come by and there is a general feeling of disillusionment, although the message is sometimes

more complex: some films do put forward ideas and initiatives that show that empowerment is possible, if not through institutions, then through self-development and motivation (*À procura de um sonho*).

It is difficult, however, to be optimistic when looking at the educational achievements and unemployment figures of the BME people in the three countries, let alone the specific areas that they live in (see local context section).

Boredom features strongly in one of the films; showing three young people hanging out by a wall in the neighbourhood, not knowing what to do with their time seems to indicate that the side of a wall is the only place they actually belong to. It also shows the lack of opportunities offered to them to have any interesting activities in their neighbourhood.

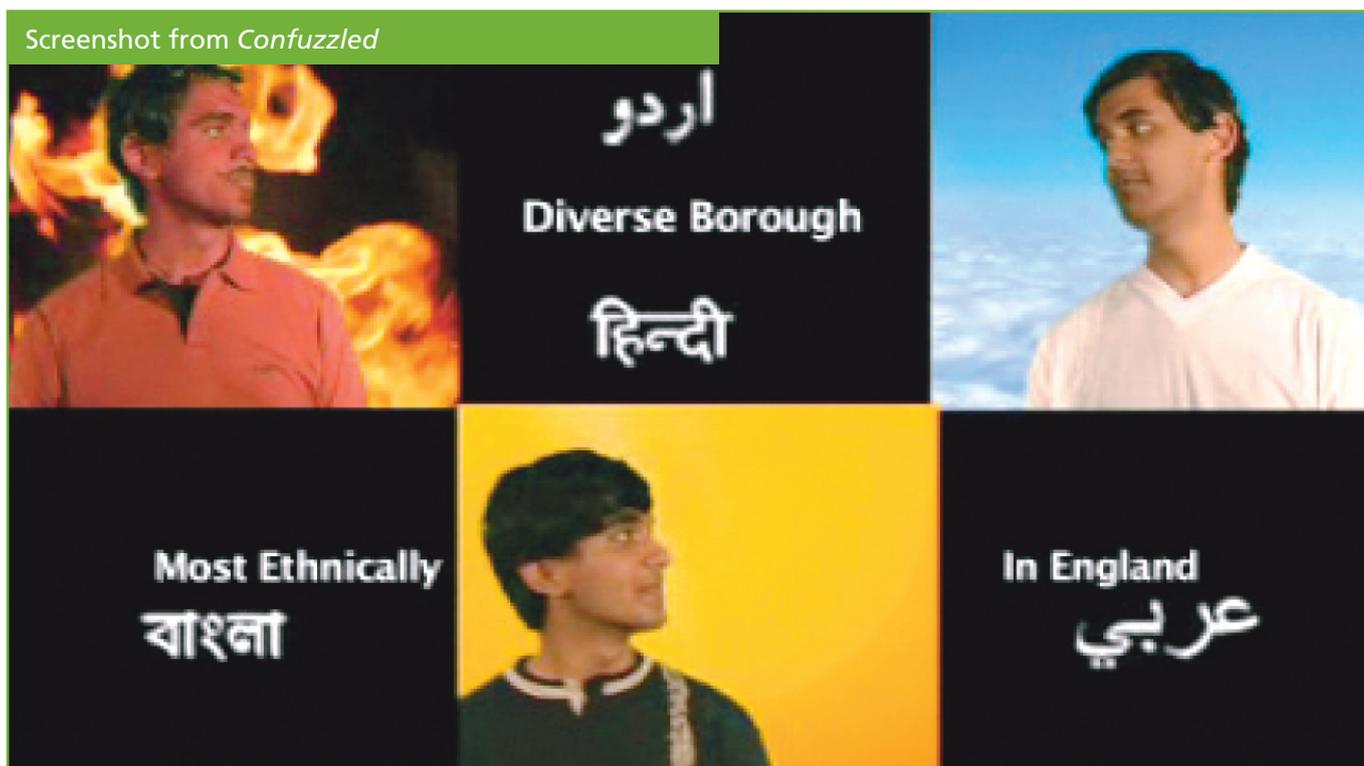
- Social exclusion

Social exclusion remains an issue that the young people are acutely aware of. This emerged in particular in the roundtable discussion, where they stated that a lot of the themes and situations they portrayed in their films were the result of social exclusion and marginalization. The film maker of *Le silence est le crime* explained how she felt that the way that the police had treated the case of the death of this young man was precisely because the latter came from a poor family; that what happened was very much because of where they lived (in a deprived area).

- Intergeneration relations

Intergenerational misunderstandings and conflict feature in a number of the films from all countries, whether it is conflict directly with the parents or with adults in general. Films such as *Quel étage* challenge directly the negative perception that different generations have of the younger members of society, whilst *Quatro euros, dos folhas de alface e o polícia* take a more ironic look at this issue by turning the argument on its head and suggesting that it is actually the restaurant that is trying to steal from or cheat the young customer.

In the course of the roundtable discussion, intergenerational misunderstandings and challenges were also raised; the young people from all the countries could relate to the general stereotyping that they felt was affecting their neighbourhood and their peers. It was also felt that parents have a role to play in this, and one of the messages that emerged was the need for parents to understand that they can also belong to the place they live in, even when they have left their country of origin behind. This message in particular brings up the issue of transferring conflicts of identity and the problems experienced by parents on to their children and the young people's reactions to that. Whilst the English young people felt that they had something to teach their parents in the way in which one can belong to two different places, in other countries, such as France or Portugal, the children of immigrants have often felt the weight of their parents' dilemmas and crises of identity and policy makers aren't always able to understand the impact of one generation's experience on the next.



In addition, whilst recognizing the hard and difficult economic and social situation experienced by their parents, the young people also complained about insufficient understanding and support from their families, when things were not going well.

## Community Cohesion

The British films focus on the multicultural aspect of where they live and the value of living in the most diverse neighbourhood in the country. However, they also point out that politicians do not value this diversity in the same way as they do, but instead tend to focus on the fact that Newham is one of the most deprived areas in the UK. There is a strong interpretation by the English group of belonging as meaning the diversity and multiculturalism, which is not so much the case for the other countries (*Confuzzled*, *A taste of Asia*, *Circling around*, *Veins in a body*, *Being here*)

In addition, it is perhaps worth noting that the majority of young people making the films in Newham had recently settled in the UK (as opposed to being born in England) and were displaying very positive messages linked to their own story of migration and their perception of the opportunities offered to them as recently arrived migrants. This contradicts the assumptions made by policy makers in recent policy and legislative proposals that use accusatory tones to suggest that migrants are unwilling or unable to integrate.

Community cohesion does not seem to be a policy concept developed in France or Portugal. France prefers to talk about social cohesion, rather than recognizing ethnic minorities, stating instead that being French is all that matters. This however does not exclude the existence of racism and prejudice based on the ethnicity of French citizens as highlighted in many of the films made by the young people.

### Policy Message:

Policy makers in particular in the UK have tended to oppose community cohesion and multiculturalism in the last decade – however, this does not seem to be reflected in the opinions expressed by the young people, who see this aspect very much as a crucial element in their community life.

The majority of migrants, whether young people or adults, are keen to integrate in British society and contribute to it, which should be regarded as positive by the government.

The hypocrisy of French institutions claiming that everyone is equal under the French constitution, and as a result refusing to recognize that being from a different ethnic background might lead to different outcomes, needs to be addressed by policy makers as it is experienced daily by French black and minority ethnic young people.

- Community, Neighbourhood Renewal and Urban Planning

Ownership of their neighbourhood is very much present in many films produced by the young people. This is especially an issue for the English and Portuguese groups but expresses itself in different ways. In London, there is a real gap between the perception of young people of their neighbourhood and the 'official version' of the area being the 'fourth worst place to live' in the country. In Portugal, the young people from

Casal da Boba had to adjust to moving from a slum area into new purpose built blocks of flats. Whilst some are nostalgic for the community life that seemed to be more vibrant when they lived in their previous neighbourhoods (*Regress ao meu bairro* and *Saudade*), others are working hard to reclaim this new territory and develop a sense of ownership of this new neighbourhood (*Boba*).

Similarly, the Portuguese group felt that they were alienated from Portuguese mainstream society, partly because of where they live (referring to the lack of leisure and other activities available to them). It is worth noting that Casal da Boba is located very far from Lisbon city centre (as opposed to the two other locations, Newham and the Cité des Amandiers in Paris) and that this has implications for their perceptions of where they belong in relation to mainstream Portuguese society. It is therefore difficult to compare the three areas, which have different geographical situations, and in turn face different issues.

The Portugal case is also interesting in relation to the implications for urban policy and its link with community cohesion policies (even though community cohesion might not have been conceptualized in the same way as in the UK). Very similar to the French policies of the 1960s and 1970s, the transfer of various communities from different slum areas into purpose built estates led to a breakdown of a community and neighbourhood life – although they had previously lived in precarious economic and social conditions, they had felt a strong social bond, which is missing in their new neighbourhood. This is still very much felt by the young people as well as their parents.

**Key Policy Message:**

Policy makers should consider the impact that urban regeneration policies might have on community cohesion.

In several ways, the young people reflect a sense of feeling safe in their neighbourhood. Whilst this can be seen as positive in relation to community cohesion, it is also problematic in that it isolates them in their neighbourhood. A young British person at the roundtable expressed how racism, for instance, does not affect her or her peers in Newham, but was likely to be experienced by other young people outside her neighbourhood, thus highlighting the perception that they are safe as long as they remain in their area. It is easy to see how that perception can have implications for the future opportunities of that young person, in particular in relation to accessing other parts of the city and what it might have to offer. Access is an issue in the three countries for those young people: the areas that they live in might be more or less distant from the centre of their respective capital cities (with the French and British having easier access to the centre of the capital than the Portuguese), but their own perception remains the same: the fact that going out of their neighbourhood or area is risky and takes them out of their safety zone. Policy makers therefore need to think about the implications that an area's achievements in the field of education or employment will have on a group of young people who do not see themselves exiting their area so easily. As highlighted in the local context section of this report, the three areas that the young people come from are underperforming in education and have higher than average unemployment rates.

**Key Policy Message:**

Policy should think about taking into account the feelings of belonging that limit a young person's prospects for future access to other areas and places that might offer different and better opportunities than their own neighbourhoods.

Screenshot from A taste of Asia



## Conclusion

When Runnymede and Manifesta began the *BELONGING* project we were keen to give voice to young people whose views too often remained unheard. The young people that we worked with in the UK, France and Portugal have surpassed our expectations in the depth of thought, quality of work, and insight into challenges that face all our communities. It is clear that despite many years of work to challenge racism and to support the marginalised in our societies, we still have some way to go. Policies should be relevant to those that they are designed to serve rather than designed for an 'ideal type' – people's identities, sense of place, and opportunities to influence change are important factors for those designing policy to consider; whether those policies impact on an entire nation, an institution, or a neighbourhood.

It is by listening to and engaging with young people in ways which they find inspiring, such as through film, that we can turn policy and practice to meet their needs and aspirations. There is much in these films to spark debate and further discussion so that we can move from 'Jusqu'ici tout va bien', to face a shared future confident that the scourge of racism can be eliminated so that our societies can thrive.



RUNNYMEDE

**Runnymede** is an independent policy research organization focusing on equality and justice through the promotion of a successful multi-ethnic society. Founded as a Charitable Education Trust, Runnymede has a long track record in policy research, working in collaboration with eminent thinkers and policymakers in the public, private and voluntary sectors. For further information visit [www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org)

manifesta

**Manifesta** is a not for profit company. Co-Directors Colin Prescod and Marion Vargaftig have been working and developing projects together since 1996 and bring extensive expertise in developing and delivering projects addressing cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and social exclusion/inclusion, using film and video production. For further information visit [www.manifesta.org.uk](http://www.manifesta.org.uk)



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