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# The Think Project Interim Evaluation

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## Abbreviations

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| ACPO              | Association of Chief Police Officers                  |
| BME               | Black and Minority Ethnic                             |
| CF                | Communities First Partnerships                        |
| CONTEST           | UK counter-terrorism strategy                         |
| CSP               | Community Safety Partnerships                         |
| EYST              | Ethnic Youth Support Team                             |
| NEET young people | Young people not in education, employment or training |
| OSCT              | Office for Security and Counter Terrorism             |
| WECTU             | Welsh Extremism & Counter Terrorism Unit              |

## **1. Introduction**

This report presents the Interim Evaluation of the Think Project. It provides an evaluation of the activities to date from March 2012 to September 2013 and will be followed a final evaluation report in 2014.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of Think project delivery and operation during this set-up phase to provide considerations for activity going forward.

### **1.1 The Think Project**

The Think Project is a three year project being managed and delivered by EYST between April 2012 and March 2015 and supported through BIG Lottery Innovation Grant funding. EYST is a beneficiary-led voluntary organisation which aims to support ethnic minority young people living in Wales, and aims to address racism and far-right extremism in young people in Swansea.

The project was initially an innovative pilot project funded through the Welsh Assembly Government Community Cohesion Fund forming part of the Welsh Assembly's response to preventing violent extremism and strengthening community cohesion in Wales. The pilot project offered disengaged young people in Swansea the opportunity to take part in a programme workshops giving young people the facts about race, religion and migration, and using these to challenge racism and to refute myths and stereotypes. The recent award of BIG Lottery Innovation Grant funding is enabling EYST to take the outcomes from the evaluation of the initial small, pilot project forward into a significant longer-term project that will enable the development, testing and evaluation of new ways of working with disengaged young white people in Wales.

The Think Project programme of activity consists of structured workshops delivered over a six to eight week period to eight groups of young people each year exploring areas such as identity and culture, diversity, migration and asylum, and understanding extremism.

### **1.2 Approach and Methodology**

The evaluation methodology uses a logic chain approach based on a before-and-after research design with an element of longitudinal research blending qualitative and quantitative assessments and data.

#### **1.2.1 Research methods**

Research methods throughout the evaluation process have included:

- *Desk review*: management information, documentation and monitoring data on the performance of the project; relevant published population, attitudinal and behavioural data; and, current government policy and related research literature.
- *Pre and post questionnaires*: collating the views of young people including outcomes, distance travelled and impact.
- *Where I Live*: activity completed by the young people to support them to start thinking about the environment in which they live.
- *Young people project completion interviews*: gathering in-depth qualitative data on the longer-term impact of the project.
- *Project session records and evaluations*: compiled at the end of each Think Project sessions by the tutors.
- *Impact evaluation record*: completed by education providers one month following the completion of the Think Project within their organisation to assess embedding of the Project amongst learners and any organisational impact.
- *Partner interviews*: informing issues surrounding context, delivery, impact, net outputs, added value and lessons learnt.

Throughout the delivery of the Project the project workers have used formal evaluations to record the progress and outcomes of each of the sessions delivered. As a tool they have been well used during this post-baseline phase and have provided key insight into the functioning of the sessions. Further to this, they have enabled the project workers to assess what does and does not work which has lead to the fine-tuning and adapting of the use of videos, discussions and debates.

### **1.3 The Report**

This evaluation report is presented five sections. Section 2 provides an overview of the development, progress and delivery of the Think Project to date. Section 3 examines the outcomes of the project and Section 4 brings together the overall conclusions and considerations for the continued development of the project.



## 2. Progress and Delivery

Following on from the Baseline Evaluation, the Think Project has continued to build on the work undertaken during the first six months of delivery. This section considers the development and delivery of the project to date examining delivery elements including management and project activities.

### 2.1 Going Forward From the Baseline

The key challenges and questions the Project has faced as it has moved forward from initial development and delivery into a phase of concentrated delivery have been about: how to ensure that it continues to be part of developments and agendas for Swansea and Wales so that the potential strategic significance of this can be maximised; and how to start building its legacy and sustainability.

It is clear that the project provides real innovation with a targeted programme of activity that is not part of mainstream education and supports those young people who are often at risk from being disengaged. In addition, the topics the Project covers are often difficult and challenging not only for the young people taking part but also for the agencies and organisations within Swansea. As such they are not topics that have been dealt with before and as a result, the Project is bringing real recognition of the full picture of extremism and its effects. This brings with it challenges around recognition within the strategic community in Wales of far-right extremism as an issue and the capacity to address this beyond the lifetime of the Think Project. There are distinctive challenges in getting all of the needed agencies engaged and moving those agencies which are, beyond being 'observers' into agencies that are taking real action to move the Project on to a sustainable footing. In addition, a change here will support the Project to move beyond being seen as a 'Swansea' needed project and to become best practice within Wales.

Through this middle phase of delivery, the Project has started to work to plan for and develop mechanisms to better build the strategic buy-in amongst both currently involved and wider agencies that will support the longer-term sustainability of the lessons learnt from the Project. It has engaged with the iCoCo Foundation with the aims to:

- understand key issues and challenges and improve ability to advocate
- advise on impact and sustainability (and possible adoption elsewhere)
- develop key lines of support narrative and advocacy
- develop support for materials use and techniques
- build understanding and support for the project
- to re-engage with key agencies with report from above and to engage new partners
- connect with policy and practice
- connect with academic community

## 2.2 Project Activities and Outputs

The Project has sought to work with young people who are vulnerable and at higher risk rather than becoming a project that is universal in nature and this is viewed as the right pathway. To date the project has delivered to 149 young people in 20 groups from five different agencies in Swansea, Llanelli, Neath, Merthyr, Gwent and Aberdare.

The Think Project programme of activity consists of structured workshop sessions based around core content mixed with open debate and practical tasks and covered a number of issues including:

- understanding identity and culture, looking at different identities and reasons behind choices.
- understanding diversity, different racial, ethnic and religious groups and respecting the right to dignity. The make-up of communities and what makes communities different.
- asylum seekers and busting the myths about benefits and jobs. Facts on migration, historical issues and how the media deals with migration issues.
- understanding extremism and the different types of extremism including Islamic and Far-right.
- visit to EYST and session with other ethnic youth workers.

Broadly, there has been little change with the activities delivered and the activities have worked well in engaging young people and fostering change. The work of the session leaders has been one of the key factors of success for the Project – their way of working and engaging with the young people has been talked about by the young people themselves, the Steering Group partners and by the agencies in which the Project has been delivered.

*“The key strengths of the Project are the excellent content and the outstanding individuals who deliver the sessions. They have an excellent balance of credibility and knowledge”.*

*Project partner.*

*“One of the key strengths of the Project has been creating a relaxed environment where pupils can raise questions and express themselves.”*

*Project partner.*

*“The strength of this project is only as good as the staff delivering it. EYST have very good people working on this and this is why the Think Project has been so successful in Wales.”*

*Project partner.*

*“The uniqueness of the project - working with vulnerable young people to challenge racist views in an interactive way.”*

*Project partner.*

## **2.3 Project Management**

The Think Project has continued to be viewed as well managed by EYST and they are seen as being the pivotal part of enabling the project to be successful. In addition, the Steering Group has largely functioned well and has continued to be well attended and has become well established within the represented agencies.

However, as earlier discussed, the Project is now moving into a phase of stretching to go beyond it being seen as a 'Swansea' project and one that has longer-term value and impact for the approach taken with vulnerable young people and community cohesion in Wales. To achieve this, the Steering Group will be required to evolve beyond meeting for operational functioning. This is the key challenge for the Project and one that will need discussion and action by the Group.

### 3. Outcomes of the Think Project

This section considers the outcomes resulting from the implementation of Think project. It examines the outcomes for both the young people and the organisations taking part in the project.

#### 3.1 The Outcomes and Impacts for Young People

##### 3.1.1 Young People: Their Initial Views and Opinions

The young people were asked to complete a questionnaire at the beginning of their first session that explored their initial awareness of and attitudes towards different racial and religious groups, their perceived understanding of these issues within their own areas, and awareness and attitudes towards asylum seekers, racism and extremism.

**Young people have an awareness of racism and define it as being mean or nasty to someone about their skin colour. However, most were unable to define an asylum seeker or extremism**

The majority of young people defined racism as being mean to someone about their skin colour or their religion – the words asylum seeker and extremism were less understood. For those who could define an asylum seeker the understanding ranged from being a person seeking a new life to someone who is seeking money, jobs, benefits and is an illegal immigrant. Most young people were unable to give a definition of the meaning of extremism and those who could understood it in terms of taking religion to an extreme.

**Young people are aware of different racial and religious groups. Most young people said they had friends from different racial groups but some of those also felt there were too many people from different racial or religious groups living in their communities**

All of the young people had experience of different racial and religious groups of people living in their local area – whether that was directly through friends or indirectly through the people that lived and worked within their own communities. Nearly three quarters (74%) of all the young people said they had friends from different racial groups.

**Despite often having friends from different racial groups some young people also had negative images of the different racial or religious groups living in their area**

Just over two fifths (42%) of those young people who had friends from different racial groups also agreed that *there were too many people from different racial or religious groups living in their area* and 49% agreed that *there were too many people from different racial or religious groups living in Swansea*. The most common reasons given for thinking this way was that these group of people are “taking all our jobs” or just that they felt there were “too many” of them. These views are not dissimilar to those young people who do not have friends from different racial or religious groups – here, 55% feel there are “too many” in their area and 60% “too many” in Swansea. When asked about why they felt like this many separated out their friends from “other people” not seeing their friends as being part of that group.

### **Young people overestimate the number of people living in Wales from an ethnic group different to their own**

Nine in ten young people estimated that 25% or more of the people living in Wales were from a different ethnic group to their own. Over two fifths of young people (44%) gave a figure of 50% or more and one in ten a figure of 75% or more. This overestimate is likely to be as a result of many different factors. Some of the young people do live in areas that are more ethnically diverse than is seen on average across Swansea and Wales and so the proportion of people they see is higher than local and national averages. In reverse, some of the young people live in areas where there are very few people from different ethnic backgrounds and so these differences are more noticed. Further to this, as the influence of media reporting and social/family beliefs or that people from different ethnic groups are visually 'different' – and so are more recognisable – are factors that may play a part. Many of the young people after completing the Think Project talked about the influence of the media and their peer groups as a reason why they had thought there were *too many* people from different ethnic or religious groups in their area. Perceived issues of people from different ethnic groups “taking all of our jobs” – a common response from young people when asked why they felt there were *too many* – may also serve to put upward pressure of estimates.

### **Despite perceptions of “too many” - a lot of young people felt that there was something to be learnt from people with other cultures and backgrounds**

Just over half of young people felt that there was lots that could be learnt from people that were from other cultures and backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of those young people (78%) were young people who had friends from different racial groups.

### **In general, young people see that there is hostility within Swansea and Wales towards some racial or religious groups and a level of hatred towards foreign workers**

Young people perceive that there is hostility towards some racial and religious groups within Swansea and Wales. Nearly seven in 10 young people felt there were some racial or religious groups people are not liked by other groups of people in Swansea.

*“The young people have prejudice towards Polish people. They do not understand free movement between economic/European member states. They think that anyone different is an ‘illegal immigrant’.*

*Think Project session leader.”*

Foreign workers is a real issue for many of the young people and drives much of the hostility. Eight in 10 of the young people felt there was *hatred towards foreign workers coming into Swansea and Wales*. 66% of young people agreed that *it is not fair that a lot of jobs in Swansea and Wales are taken by people from other countries*.

*“All other people like the Polish are taking all the jobs so they should get sent back.”*

*“People are afraid of different cultures in case they do something bad in our country.”*

*“Polish – because they think they own the place.”*

*“There are a lot of Muslims in my area and they have like 10 children and are taking our houses.”*

*“Not enough jobs for British people but foreigners get a job here really quickly.”*

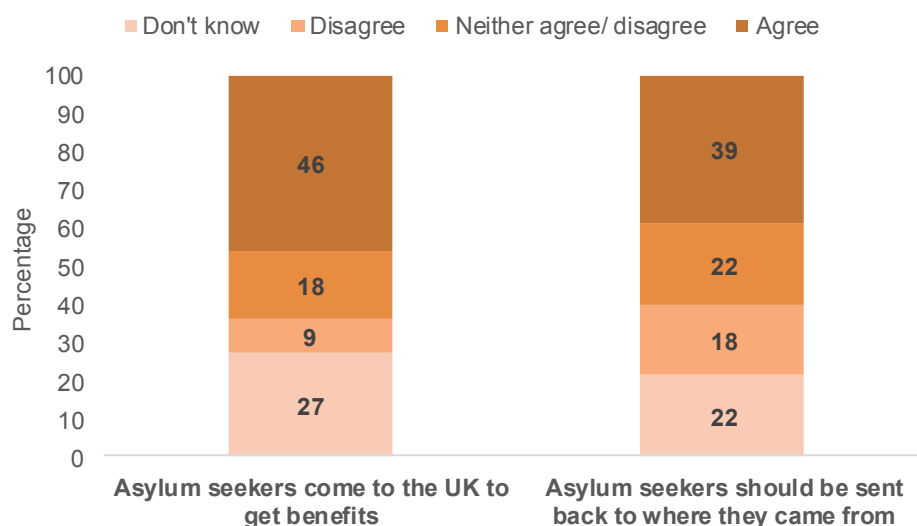
*Young people pre-questionnaire.*

### Many young people hold significantly misconceived views about asylum seekers and their entitlements in the UK

Asylum seekers – who they are, why they have come to the UK, and what they do when they have arrived – is a significant knowledge gap for many of the young people within the Think Project.

*“Some of the group had views on asylum seekers and didn’t agree with them being here and even thought they should go back. When I spoke to the young people about asylum seekers they were against them coming. When I carried on the discussion, one girl even said that this is what our parents taught us.” Think Project session leader.*

**Figure 1: Beliefs about asylum seekers**



Source: Young people pre-questionnaire, Think Project, 2013.

Only 9% of young people disagreed with the statement that *asylum seekers come to the UK to get benefits* and just under half felt this was true (Figure 1). Of those who “didn’t know” a number of those when asked to describe an asylum seeker stated that they either “come to get benefits” or “take all of our jobs”. Nearly four in 10 young people agreed with the statement that *asylum seekers should go back to where they came from*.

*“They just take over, take people’s homes.”*

*“An asylum seeker is a person who comes from a different country with not much money to get money for free over here.”*

*“[An asylum seeker is] Someone who comes to get benefits.”*

*Young people pre-questionnaire.*

### 3.1.2 Young People: Their Opinions After the Think Project

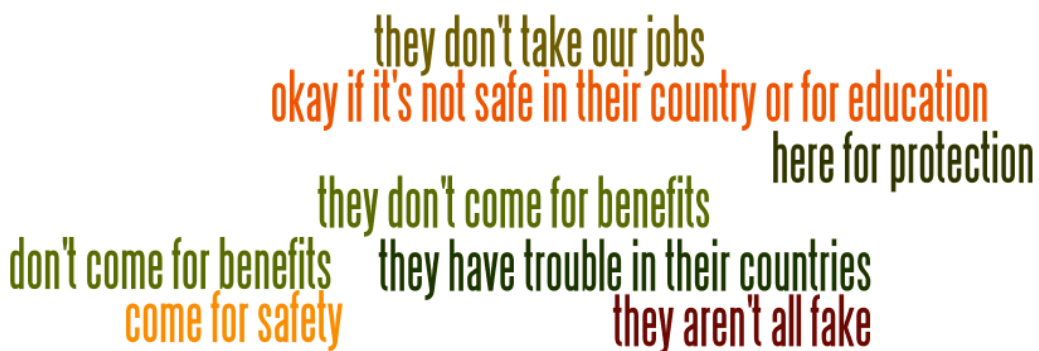
Following the completion of the Think Project programme of workshops the young people were asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of their final session capturing their learning and development.

#### Nearly all young people felt they had learnt something about racism, asylum seekers and extremism

Not only had the young people learnt something but their learning had broadened their scope of understanding – racism became more than being mean about someone’s skin colour. Some of the responses from young people include:



Asylum seekers was the area for young people where they lacked the most knowledge and the area that they enjoyed learning the most about – all, with the exception of two young people, felt they had learnt something about asylum seekers.

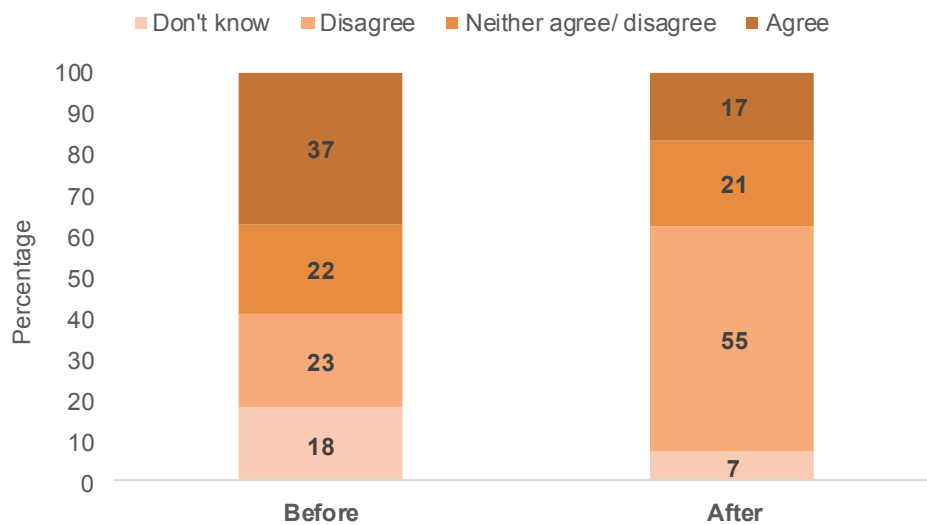


Having been an area that young people were largely unable to define, with the exception of two young people, all felt they had learnt about extremism and were now able to defined it.

**Pre and post surveys shows most young people expressed a change in their attitudes towards people from different races, religions and cultural backgrounds**

In comparison with the views of young people at the start of the project (23%), a far greater number of young people after completing the project (55%) disagree that that there are too many people from different racial or religious groups living in their area (Figure 2). In addition a far greater number of young people had an opinion that they wanted to share – the proportion of young people answering ‘don’t know’ dropped from 18% to 7% by the end of the Project.

**Figure 2: Too many people from different racial or religious communities living in my area, before and after surveys**

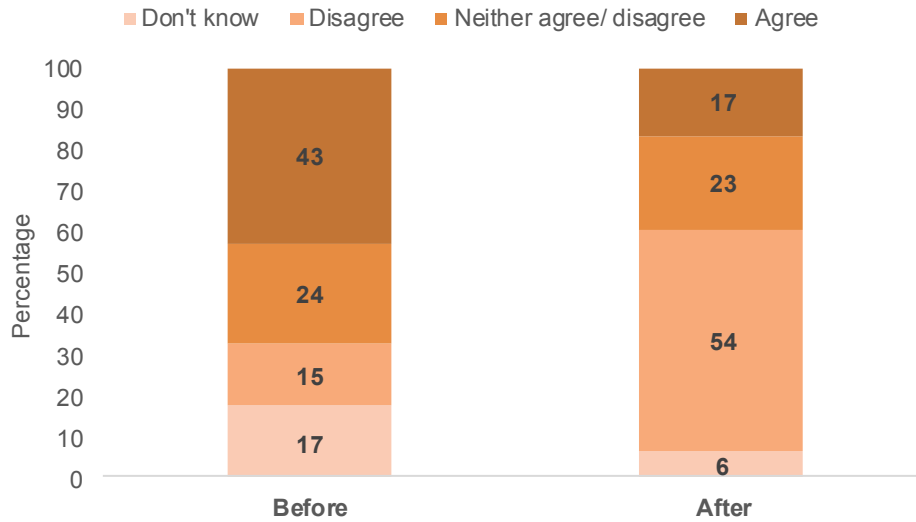


Source: Young people pre and post questionnaires, Think Project, 2013.

The same is seen for young people responding to the statement that *there are too many people from different racial or religious groups living in Swansea* (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Too many people from different racial or religious communities living in Swansea, before and after surveys**

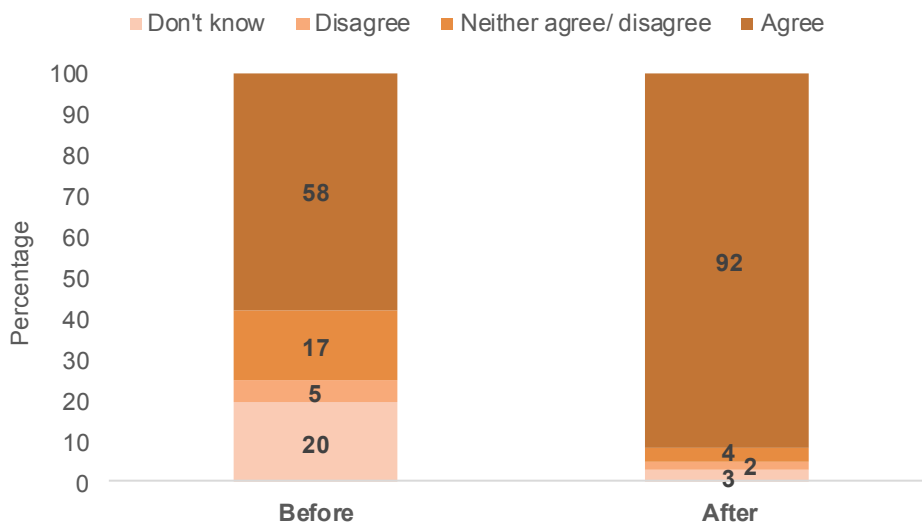




Source: Young people pre and post questionnaires, Think Project, 2013.

Before the start of the Think Project sessions over half of young people did feel that there were things to be learnt from people that come from other cultures or backgrounds. However, the proportion post project increased to 92% (Figure 4). Further to this, as with the other statements, young people were more willing and able to give a view on their own thoughts with the proportion who answered ‘don’t know’ dropping from one fifth of young people to just 3%.

**Figure 4: There’s a lot to be learned from people with other cultures and backgrounds, before and after surveys**



Source: Young people pre and post questionnaires, Think Project, 2013.

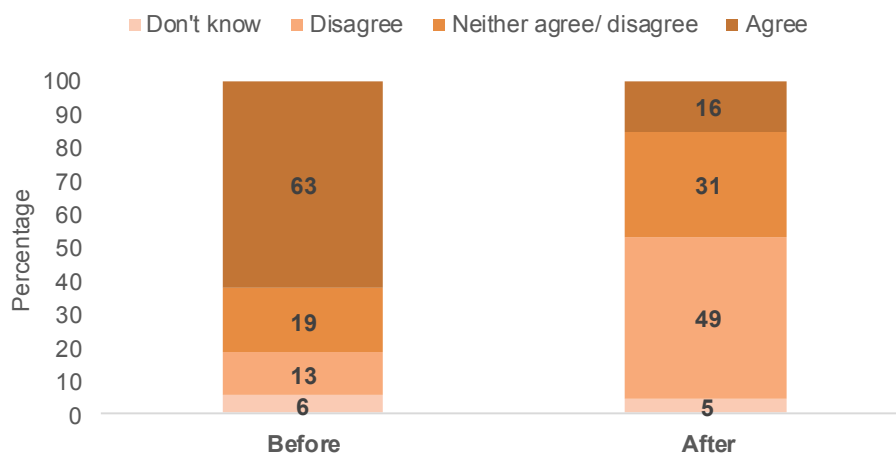
**Pre and post surveys shows most young people expressed a change in their attitudes towards foreign workers and asylum seekers with a number of myths being dispelled**

The proportion of young people who agreed that *it is not fair that a lot of jobs in Swansea and Wales are taken by people from other countries* fell from 63% to 16% following the completion of the Think Project sessions (Figure 5).

*“Some even had the belief that they were not allowed in Polish shops. So, I took one girl into a Polish shop and she was allowed in – this removed the myth.”*

*Think Project session leader.”*

**Figure 5: It’s not fair that people come and take our jobs, before and after surveys**



Source: Young people pre and post questionnaires, Think Project, 2013.

Further to this, the proportion who agreed that *asylum-seekers come to the UK to get benefits* fell from 46% to 3% with the proportion disagreeing rising from 27% to 71% (Figure 6).

*“They taught me a lot about asylum seekers and why they actually come here.”*

*“It helps people to learn about why foreigners come here.”*

*“Well, before I didn’t like them in our country but they [the project] made me realise everyone is different and you shouldn’t be racist.”*

*“Shows young people never to judge a book by its cover.”*

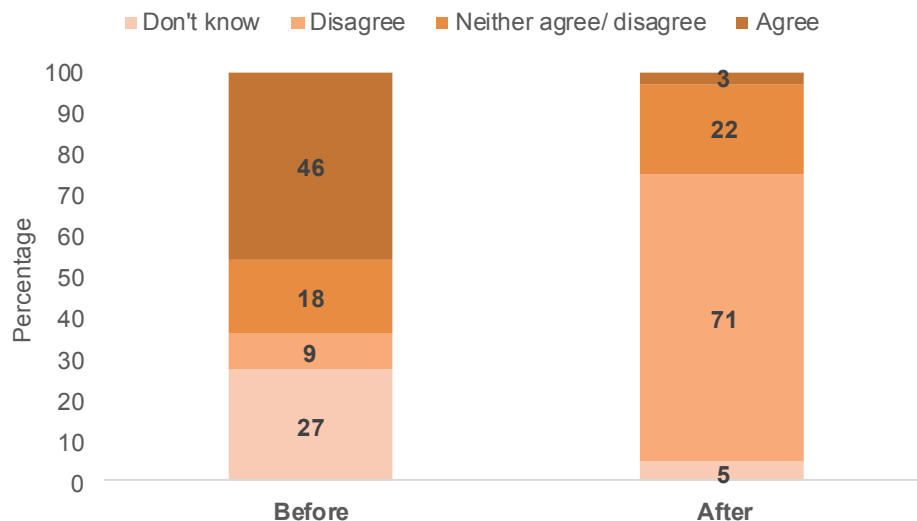
*“I’ve learnt that a lot of people are horrible to foreigners when they don’t know what they are here for.”*

*“I have learnt how to treat people.”*

*“It showed me not to believe the papers and there are reasons why people are in our country. Seeing the asylum seekers crying was hard.”*

*Young people post-questionnaire.*

**Figure 6: Asylum seekers come to the UK to get benefits, before and after surveys**



Source: Young people pre and post questionnaires, Think Project, 2013.

Again, the proportion of young people prepared to voice an opinion rose post-Think Project with the proportion giving 'don't know' as their answer dropping from over a quarter (27%) to 5%.

### **The views for some young people are deep-seated**

Whilst many young people recorded a change in their perceptions and views, there are still some young people who hold largely negative views. Indeed, 16% of young people still felt that a lot of jobs in Swansea and Wales are taken by people from other countries and a further 31% felt that they could not agree or disagree (Figure 5). For some young people the deep-seated nature of their beliefs are learnt and affected by influences such as their family, friends, people within their communities and media portrayals. Many young people talked about the news in conveying why they had the views they did and where those views had come from.

### **The estimates of the number of people living in Wales from an ethnic group different to their own decreased**

With pre-survey figures of over two fifths of young people (44%) giving an estimate of 50% or more, following the Think Project sessions only 62% now placed their estimate of the number of people living in Wales from an ethnic group different to their own at 5% or less. Only 1.5% still placed their estimate at 50% or over.

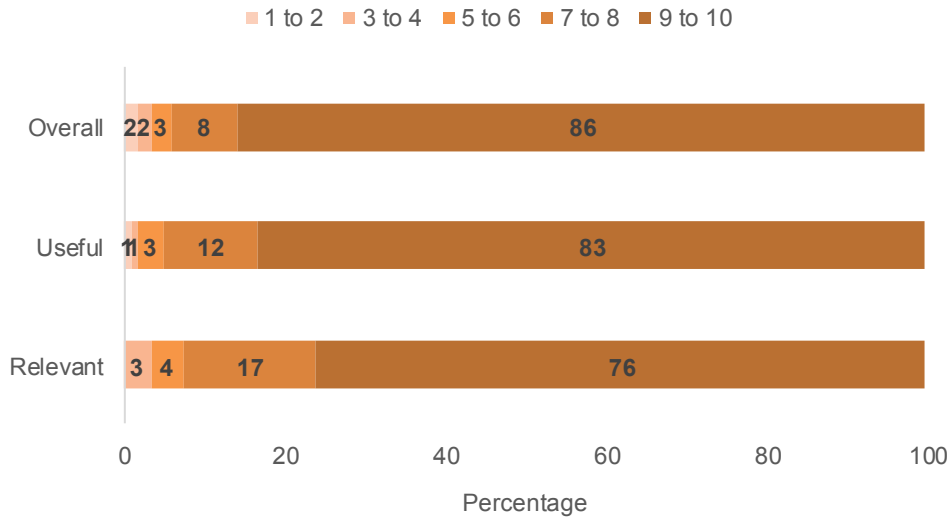
### **Generally, young people found the lessons they had taken part in relevant to them and useful and rated the course well overall**

Using a scale of 1 to 10 from negative to positive, nearly nine in 10 the young people rated the Project overall between a 9 and 10. Further to this, 83% gave a 9 or 10 for the lessons being *useful* and three quarters a 9 or 10 for the lessons being *relevant* (Figure 7).

*“Thank you for changing the way I think and I feel more inspired about other cultures.”*  
*“They were really interesting and informative and changed my views about events and cultures around me.”*

*Young people post-questionnaire.*

**Figure 7: Rating of the Think Project by young people**



Source: Young people post-questionnaire, Think Project, 2013.

In addition, all but two of the young people (98%) felt the Think Project had something to offer other young people in Swansea. When asked why – young people gave the following reasons:



### 3.1.3 Longer-Term Impacts for Young People

It is clear that for many young people, in the short term, the project had an impact and for many changed their views on people who they saw as being “different” to them. However, the challenge for the Think Project is in making a lasting and long term difference to the young people who took part. And so, in addition to understand any potential longer-term impacts this evaluation worked with a group of young people on a one-to-one basis three months on from their completion of the Think Project. What was clear from the work with these young people was the clarity and strength of impact the young people voiced.

#### **Making the experience *real* is the key to long term impact**

For all of the young people having an asylum seeker come in and talk to them about their experiences was key to changing their attitudes. For some this experience was so powerful that it was still an emotional one three months on. The young people were very vocal that hearing a person describe their journey to the UK and the reasons why they came to the UK made the message *real* and mean something – it was something that they would not and could not forget.

*“It was really interesting with the asylum seeker – I didn’t understand who they were and what it meant to be an asylum seeker before that. She had been through it all – she could say how she felt. I felt sorry for her – she came for a better life.”*

*“I felt sorry for the asylum seeker – about the story that she told. It shocked me – it stays with you. I will remember her.”*

*“It stayed with me [the experience of the asylum seeker]. It actually hit me because of her story and hearing her experience.”*

*“Holding on to the things that we’ve all learnt might be difficult – it depends on the person. Hearing what she [the asylum seeker] said was really important for this – it made me feel. What she said made it matter.”*

*“The lady that came in to see us was good. They also showed us a video of a lady on a train [of a women being racially abused] and it made me think – why would you say that for no reason?”*

#### **All of the young people had used their knowledge to challenge others about the way they speak or talk about people who are “different”**

During the three months since their last session, all of the young people voiced times when they had openly challenged friends and family about things that they were saying that the young people felt were not right.

*“I don’t say that I’m going down to the Paki-shop anymore. Sometimes I say things to people about the things they’ve said and I’m happy to say what I think.”*

*“I was in town with friends and people shout at them. I don’t shout at them and I remember the thing that I learnt.”*

*“I have Polish neighbours and my brother was being mean about them. I told him off. It makes me feel better in myself and I know I’m saying the right thing. It makes me feel good.”*

*“Most of my friends know that I don’t like it because I’ve told them. I told them because it’s interesting and they don’t know about it. It’s important to tell them so they don’t judge.”*

*“A friend said to me that person looks like a terrorist and I said just because he’s black doesn’t make him a terrorist. It was easy to say – I didn’t have to think about it.”*

### **The media, family and friends are strong influencers**

The ability to challenge others and be comfortable with this is important for young people as family and friends and in particular the media were significant influences for those young people in terms of learning about others. Young people felt that the media did not do enough to support a positive image of foreign workers or asylum seekers and there was not enough overt coverage of the ‘real’ reasons why people come to the UK.

Other influences the young people talked about were the visual ones of seeing their local shops within their communities being run by people from ethnic backgrounds that were different from theirs. Some of the young people put their learnt understanding of foreign workers from the media, friends and family together with seeing people who are ‘different’ working in local shops and come up with the view that people from ethnic minority groups are taking all of their jobs.

### **3.1.4 Summary**

For the majority of young people the Think Project has had a significant impact in the short term and has put in place the building blocks for longer-term change. Not only have the young people themselves voiced a difference but the those who work with them on a daily basis have seen a change too.

*“Without the impact of the project I think many learners may not have changed their views and opinions in such a short space of time. As the project run over several days it had a huge impact on the learners. Every learner who has attended the course has changed their views of other cultures, races and religions in a positive way.”*

*School/College Tutor.*

The Think Project shows a clear mechanism for supporting young people to change their attitudes and behaviours and, particularly for this vulnerable group, there is currently no other mechanism to enact this change.

*"I do not think the de radicalisation or reduction in vulnerability would have happened without involvement in the project. Normal behaviour patterns amongst young people vulnerable to the extreme right-wing message tend to show an increase in their way of thinking, rather than a decrease. Normally their way of thinking, if left unchallenged, leads to a consolidation of belief and an escalation in behaviour."*

*Project partner.*

*"Whilst racism and associated issues are dealt with through the education system. The extra focus that this project has given has allowed barriers to be broke down and friendships built. The Think Project has encouraged participation from young people who would not necessarily have engaged and may continue to hold stereotypical views."*

*Project partner.*

The question is about the sustainability of this change as any change in the views and opinions of young people will evolve once a young person is away from the Think Project sessions and back amongst those things that influence their behaviour. However, the work with young people provides a good suggestion that the Project has the potential to make lasting change. Finding additional points along the journey of young people to reinforce the messages may lengthen and solidify the impact. Additional work by other organisations to educate and support key role models such as parents may also serve to sustain the impact.

*"It is very difficult to know the true long term impacts of this project, however the work being carried out educates young people to think and gather all the information available to them to make informed decisions. This could be a lifelong acquisition."*

*Project partner.*

*"Long term impacts can be difficult as their views can be changed through negative role models – for example parents."*

*Project partner.*

*"I think it is important to reinforce the work and messages that were delivered in these sessions in order to achieve long-term change – so at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Post-16."*

*Project partner.*

*"The long term impact will differ with every young person. However, the project teaches them to question the information they receive, and the source (i.e. family and friends, media) they receive it from. There are many challenges for making a long term change with young people, however in my opinion 'education' is the key."*

*Project partner.*

In addition, it is also about finding strategies to reach those for whom the project initially did not affect – for some young people, despite feeling that they had learnt something, a number still held largely negative views of other races, religions, cultures and asylum seekers.

### **3.2 Partners: Outcomes and Impacts**

Whilst the Project has had outcomes for the young people taking part, many of the organisations and agencies that are either involved in the Steering Group or as partner agencies for delivery, have seen their own impacts.

#### **Changing the way diversity is talked about – embedding good practice**

Some of the agencies in which the Project has been delivered have started to embed the experience of the Project into their approaches towards tackling diversity.

*“It has changed the way I tackle diversity – I now allow students to speak freely about their thoughts and fears and then we discuss how it impacts. Instead of political correctness and keeping things bottled up inside.”*

*Project delivery partner.*

*“I have learned new things. The way I educate about asylum seekers has improved. With the aid of the Think Project I have more knowledge to pass on to my learners.”*

*Project delivery partner.*

*“I think that even by sitting in the sessions as a supporting member of staff, it can possibly enable staff to better challenge any radical or discriminatory views.”*

*Project delivery partner.*

#### **Developing new ways of teaching and learning about extremism**

Further to embedding good practice and using the knowledge gained from the Think Project there have also been examples of delivery agencies further working with the young people who had taken part in the Think Project to develop peer teaching and learning.

*“Learners who have been part of the Project have now been part of a peer teaching session telling learners about what they found out during their time on the Think Project.”*

*Project delivery partner.*

*“As part of qualifications learners have written a newspaper article about discrimination. Learners have also written a letter to David Cameron expressing how they feel about how people are discriminated against in Britain and what they think should happen to change this. One example was running a project like Think in local primary schools/ community centres that parents could attend.”*

*Project delivery partner.*

#### **Influencing other programmes and projects**



The learning from the Think Project has also impacted on the delivery of other programmes with examples within the Project Partners where the learning has been incorporated.

*“The overall impact of the project has shown us that low level extreme right-wing thinking can be challenged and turned around. We are incorporating this way of working when dealing with young people (who are not suitable for project) who are vulnerable to extremism message.”*

*Project delivery partner.*

### **Building and strengthening partnerships**

Many of the partners have been working with EYST for some time and have long-standing partnerships. The strength of these partnerships has been a key factor of success as it has enabled the Think Project to ‘hit the ground running’ and recruit young people and deliver the sessions fairly early in the lifecycle of the programme. It has also meant that the Project has been delivering consistently since it started.

*“Through regular community engagement initiatives and regular attendance at EYST we have built up strong working relationships. These relationships have allowed us to work closely together and share information if required.”*

*Project partner.*

## **4. Considerations and Activities Going Forward**

### **4.1 Concluding Remarks**

It is clear from the analysis undertaken that the Think Project continues to deliver against its project outputs and is having a positive impact on both the young people and the organisations and agencies that are part of the Project. It is providing real innovation with a targeted programme of activity that is not part of mainstream education and supports those young people who are often at risk from being disengaged.

Not only do the young people identify that the Project has benefited them but also that it has a greater potential to benefit many more young people in Wales. These benefits are clearly being shown in the short term and are also being shown by the young people themselves as having the potential for having longer-term impact. However, the 'pull' from peers, mentors and the media is strong and a multi-agency, multi-intervention approach at different points in time in the journey of a young person, and indeed with parents, could help the long term challenge.

Further to this, positive role models and real stories from people from different ethnic backgrounds are important as it is these tangible things that really made the longer-term difference to the young people. Meeting asylum seekers and hearing their stories – so having positive experiences of diversity – is key to supporting young people to make significant change. Enabling young people to really feel what it is like embeds their learning and gives them the confidence to take it with them out of the Project and into their own communities.

For the organisations taking part there is evidence of the learning from the Think Project now being transferred into their own ways of working. There is clear development amongst the Partners in their knowledge and understanding of identifying and supporting vulnerable young people.

### **4.2 Considerations**

The key challenges for the Project are about ensuring that it continues to be part of the agendas for Swansea and Wales so that the potential learning from the Project can be shared and embedded within support for young people. In addition there are distinctive challenges in getting all of the needed agencies engaged and moving them beyond being 'observers' into agencies that are taking real action to move the Project on to a sustainable footing. A change here will support the Project to move beyond being seen as a 'Swansea' needed project and to become best practice within Wales. The Project is working with iCoCo on developing these areas but it is a challenge for the Steering Group to embrace.

The Think Project is not the whole solution to an issue that is present within Wales. The lessons learnt from the Project need to be incorporated collaboratively by the agencies supporting young people in Wales.