# 'The Real Picture: strong communities or broken society?'

Citizenship through photography competition exhibition and adjudication event

**Portcullis House, 9 March 2010**

**Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme**

**LSIS** LEARNING AND SKILLS IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

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### Introduction

**This competition challenged young people to use photography to consider the concept of community cohesion and their views on strong communities and/or the idea of a broken society. The competition has been run by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme (www.excellencegateway.org.uk/citizenship) with the aim of providing an engaging focus for involving learners in topical and controversial issues by promoting creative approaches to citizenship learning.**

### Judging

Tonight is an opportunity for twelve shortlisted entrants to showcase their work. Our panel of esteemed judges will choose first, second and third place winners. The judging panel includes:

Dinah Caine (Chief Executive, Skillset)

Liz Craft (Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency)

Peter Kennard (Photomontage artist and Senior Tutor at the Royal College of Art)

Jan Newton OBE (former DCSF adviser on citizenship education)

Tom O'Leary (Head of Education, Houses of Parliament)

Gill Reynolds (Learning and Skills Improvement Service)

### Audience vote

An audience vote will be taken into account by the judges. To use your vote, after seeing the presentations, place the token provided in the ballot box next to the entry you feel most effectively explores the competition theme and demonstrates strong citizenship learning*.

* Citizenship education equips young people with the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an active, effective part in society as informed, critical citizens who are socially and morally responsible. It aims to give them the confidence and conviction that they can act with others, have influence and make a difference in their communities (locally, nationally and globally). (*Play your part post-16 citizenship guidance*: QCA, 2004)

### Programme

17.00    Registration, refreshments and exhibition

17.15    **Introductions and welcome**: Bernadette Joslin, LSIS Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme Manager

17.30    **'The Real Picture'**: shortlistees' presentations and questions from judges (image captions and context statements written by shortlisted entrants are reproduced in this booklet).

18.30    Drinks, canapés and networking while judges retire to choose a winner

19.15    **Keynote address and prize-giving**: Peter Kennard, Photomontage artist and Senior Tutor at the Royal College of Art

19.45    **Final remarks**: Tom O'Leary, Head of Education, Houses of Parliament

20.00    Close

## Images of our community, the positive and the negative
*Sophie Brown, Chris Hughes, Dan Jones, Alexandra Maynard, Joey Munthali, West Kent YMCA*

Strong communities or broken society – WOW this really got us thinking. We began by researching local stories from the media and looking at the positives and negatives of each story at that time (these we have highlighted on our montage – 'Save our Bandstand and some of the recent crimes that have been committed).

This then led to us looking at our community with fresh eyes. How would a stranger view us? We went round the town taking 'grot spots' and local landmarks.



### Negative
Highlighting the boarded up properties and the graffiti. We also showed one of our local pubs which has been the centre of much trouble. This sparked a debate on binge drinking and how the young are blamed for the rise in anti-social behaviour.

The hardest picture for us was taking one of our home – THE YMCA. You may wonder why it is in the negative. We have found that we face prejudice on a daily basis. We live in an affluent community and many assume we are homeless because of drugs and violence.

We hope that one day this picture will be on the positive. In our group and with our support workers we realised we are making a contribution to our community with the many projects we are involved in.



### Positive
We really noticed and appreciated how wonderful the architecture is in our town. There are wonderful projects and communities within communities.
We feel privileged to live in such a lovely town and hope we have captured some of this on film to share.

## Who would you be?
*Eleanor Page, Harlow College*

Although homelessness is not always on everybody's mind, it is a serious problem for those people who are living through it; homelessness is a haunting problem and very real. In my photograph I wanted to portray how one action can show the difference between kindness and ignorance. Someone in a cohesive community will try as much as they can to help that person, however someone in a non-cohesive community may ignore their problem, as if they are better than them or not worth their time and money. I used the same model as each character because I wanted to show that someone can be any of these people in any situation. When someone is in a bad circumstance you should do whatever you can to help them, how would you feel having nowhere to go, being stuck outside in the freezing cold, hungry and alone.



How would you feel? Would you want help? Who would you be?

## Take care of London
*Bright Ampofo, South Thames College*

In my ESOL classes we learn about community cohesion and what I understand is that people must work together for the help of the community.

London is one the most popular cities that keeps together people from all parts of the world with different ethics and ethnic groups. Those who are here are trying to continue the work trying to help the system, give clothes, food or something else but there are some people, in particular the youth, who do not care about that: they are 'destroying' the community or the system and making the city untidy. Examples are stealing things or big graffiti on the wall and sometimes even on cars. I made this poster to show: 'Graffiti Van' representing the teenagers, 'Wrong Time' to show that people are crossing the road when the pedestrian crossing is still red. 'Rubbish at the back' shows people don't have the respect for the environment and they litter everywhere that they go.

### No one left out
*Alex Campbell, Croydon College*

I believe that it is important to inform the general public of the situation with homeless people in London and make them aware of the ways in which they can help. The goal of my design was to promote the Government action plan "No one left out", which aims to end rough sleeping in London by 2012. The plan will call on communities to get more involved in supporting those in their area at risk of rough sleeping, to help stop the flow onto the streets, ensuring that the right resources reach the right people at the right time. The original photo that I took for the poster was quite bright, I decided to darken the image to create a cold atmosphere, I also applied a filter effect to bring out the textures of the door and exaggerate the roughness of the environment. I created a custom paintbrush in Photoshop and turned the opacity down low to create a misty effect. I used darker tones towards the bottom of the poster and lighter tones towards the top.

I want people to see my image and imagine what it would be like to be in the same situation as the homeless person. I am pleased with the end result of my image and I think I have achieved what I set out to do.

### Alone together
*Ryan Hines, Croydon College*
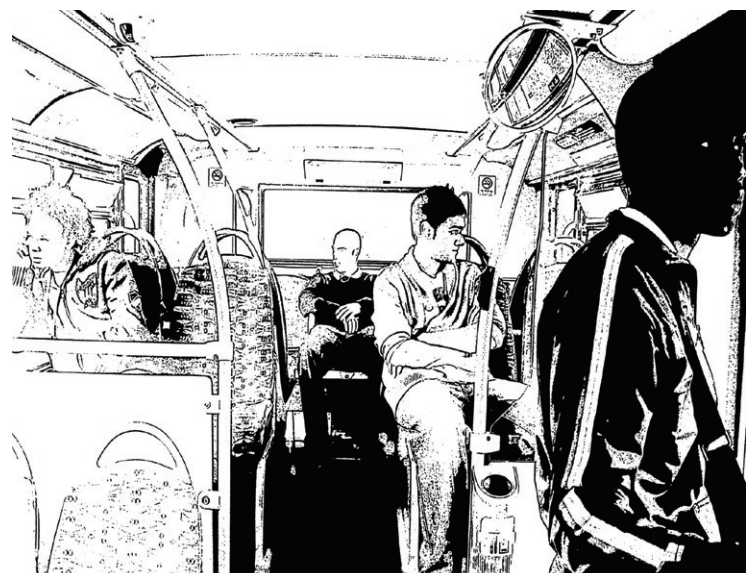


*'Unsociable, overwhelmed, under privileged, society failed.*
*Torn and tattered, alone and old,*
*a perfect portrayal to a world of cold.*
*Abstractly captured, distraught and deranged*
*it's a broken society that needs to be changed.*
*Battered and bruised, short and solitary,*
*the means of society overdone by negativity'*

This image is a portrayal of a broken society and how our everyday lives have been overwhelmed by a solitary and unsocial foundation. Not only does it show how communication has been tampered with through different kinds of technology, but also how ethnic minorities, ranging from mixed-race to Asian, are disrupted by fragmented communities.  Although the characters in the image are together they remain alone. They are totally oblivious of each other's existence and completely disconnected.  They are unaware of how society has dramatically failed in its cohesion and interaction. I wanted to push the fact that although colour is used everywhere in our day-to-day lives we seem to live in a colourless society, so I chose to portray a bleak contrasting, black and white view. Contrasts in culture and religion have been displayed in such a way that our need to have a sociable connection with one another has been messed with. Different ethnicities, cultures and religious beliefs are represented in the image, which suggests we want

to stick with the same 'type', but we should try to grow out of our stereotypical ways, come together and start sharing our beliefs and cultures with others.

### The precinct
*Louise Pantani, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College*



I captured this photograph in an old shut down precinct, behind the back of the Ankerside shopping centre in Tamworth. I don't know why it was initially shut down, but from the looks of it, it mainly supported family shops, which is ironic due to the quote on the shop at the rear of the precinct which is the only one left open – it states in the window 'Beat the Credit Crunch'. It seems as if none of the businesses beat the credit crunch apart from this one. This image of 'The Precinct' raises the awareness of the fact that a lot of people lost their income and livelihood over this and it shows how their society broke down; how their heart of the community broke. Because of the challenges they faced, whether it was due to financial or personal reasons they had to leave. Precincts are frequently being shut down in many different towns and cities, making way for bigger and supposedly better shopping centres that will bring in more money, and in turn forcing small independent, often family-run businesses to close, losing forever such a valuable part of the community.

### Walk on by!
### Shannon Rose, Croydon College
'Exact numbers of homeless people are very difficult to ascertain given the transient nature of the homeless population. People, who sleep on friends' floors, stay in squats and other insecure accommodation are often not known. Even rough sleepers are difficult to count as people bed down at different times, move about, hide away and travel on all night buses'. Extract from: http://www.homeless.org.uk/policyandinfo/facts/statistics.

The truth is that the homeless and rough sleepers in London today are still a part of the community regardless of circumstance, they may be brothers, sisters, sons or daughters, and sadly spend the coldest, wettest and darkest nights on the streets.

My image, entitled 'Walk on by', captures the action of 'turning a blind eye', which I believe we are all guilty of at some point. Reasons for this may be lack of trust, actively avoiding eye contact or walking near the individual.

I wished to capture an image, which displayed true intent and reality, avoiding the artificial planning of a staged photo. My image, captured on a mobile phone was then sharpened using filters to enhance visual quality and definition.



A watercolour paper-based effect was used as a foundation, which blurred the image with matte colours, a dark stroked effect was then applied to redefine dark spots and detail and the end result is a classical, painterly effect. The image displays motion and reality making the homeless subject almost seem like they are part of the furniture.

### Preparing Christmas food parcels for the homeless and elderly. The Salvation Army, Hinckley, December 2009
*Rebecca Lee, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College*
To be able to photograph at the Salvation Army present wrapping, I had to speak to the people at Voluntary Action Hinckley and Bosworth to find out what was going on in my community and when. They were really helpful and got in contact with the right people and I went along to the event to see if I would be able to take some

pictures. Fortunately, they said it was all fine and I photographed the event as the volunteers packed the boxes of food and presents for the homeless and elderly. I think my picture montage entry for the competition shows a strong community because of the huge variety of people who are helping the community and those who are better off are donating their time and effort to brighten someone's Christmas who is less fortunate than them. I think the montage is quite appropriate because you can see everything that's going on to aid those in the community and you can see that all types of people are helping, regardless of their age or what they do. I think this shows a really strong community because everybody appears to be pulling together and doing something to make a difference. I think it shows the "real picture" really well too because you're seeing people doing good in their community which you don't usually hear about because the news is filled with bad things going on and stories of "broken society".

### CONTROL!
*Tiffany Crossland, Croydon College*



I fundamentally created this image to represent my views on the breakdown in society and the communication between communities; it shows the loss in aspects of control in individuals and how it can affect the overall idea of cohesion. With England officially being the 'most watched' country in the world, with over four million CCTV cameras this image also raises questions on the capability of community cohesion when our communities are policed so heavily by CCTV, showing the untrusting nature of our government and whether we are being watched too much or it's simply a necessary precaution. When looking for imagery I wanted a more symbolic message. Walking around Croydon I discovered an abandoned area with a few dilapidated buildings. Searching around the site for inspiration I found rubbish spread across the ground which is when I stumbled across a broken cassette with the words 'Control' on it. This really spoke to me as my views on society cohesion are a bit sceptical and the location coupled with my findings greatly inspired me.

The 'rubble-esque' ground was a perfect accompanying background as it lends a critically distressed appearance; I then further enhanced my message by using a grainy filter to add a dirty aged look.

### We look, but do we see?
*Francesca Leigh Sharpe, Harlow College*

My montage shows all the things in our society that we know are going on but chose to turn a blind eye. I have included in my montage… A homeless person: symbolises lack of money, hunger, no home to go to and poverty. A Member of society that has been beaten up: this shows that in our society there is lack of



help on the streets to those under threat and random violence.  An empty alcohol bottle thrown on the ground: represents drinking on the streets instead of the privacy of a pub or our own homes. Under aged smokers: show how easy it is for the younger generation to smoke and degrade their health at such a young age, to develop cancer or other lung disease in the future. The hand full of drugs: shows the drug use of society and makes us

realise how many drugs there are that can harm us. The bag with the cannabis symbol on it, with fake cannabis inside: shows the drug use in people's lives, it also shows that people in our society grow and sell their produce to others, betraying our trust and breaking the law, we should all abide. The hand offering drugs: reminds us that the older generations sometimes influence the younger by offering them drugs, I have shown this by taking the photo from a lower perspective to give the impression you are looking through the eyes of a child. The sign that says 'ends': represents restrictions, termination of life or a length that has been reached and finally the graffiti at the top of my montage: shows lack of control and boredom of youths in society. I chose to put the images I have taken on the side of the building as it portrays actions that could be taking place within any building it also acts as a symbol towering over us, powering and proud-ness, these buildings are what make up our society.

### Where we used to sit
*Kelsey Stevenson, Croydon College*

The community cohesion project offered the chance to explore the positive and negative aspects of the local community. I based my photography on the negative side, around Croydon there is a lot of litter, vandalism and damage providing a great opportunity to capture an image that shows the effects of a lack of cohesion. The area I found shows neglect,
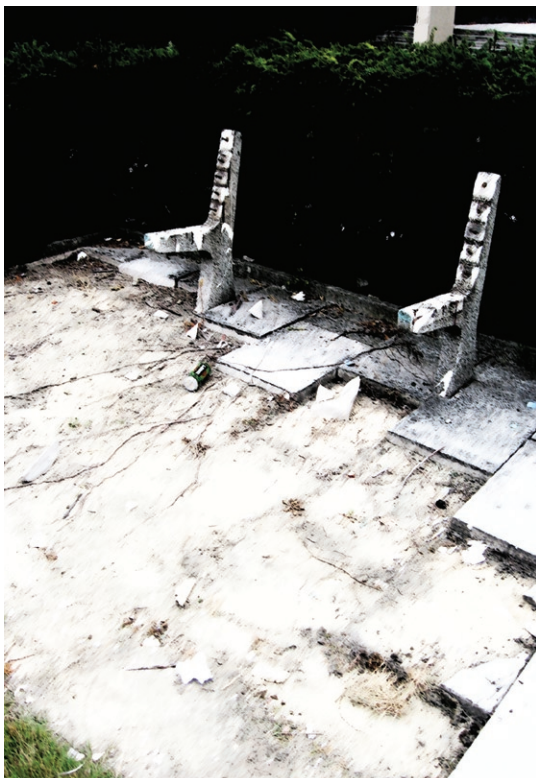


potential discrimination towards the disabled community, and the way it looks means no one will want to go near it. My image shows the remains of what used to be a perfectly good seating area within the community, which at some point got destroyed and abandoned as if left to rot, with nothing being done. My photography represents what used to be a community area, were people could sit, yet now has lost its function, and is a run-down, vandalised mess. The question is how long has it been like this and why has nothing been done? The angle I chose to take the picture at allows you to see the full view of the vandalised bench, the torn away paving as well as scattered litter representing a dysfunctional society. I have enhanced the original photo to exaggerate the detail with some added effects to highlight and sharpen the image. My aim for the photo is to show what used to be – what has somehow been destroyed – all because of the lack of priorities towards community cohesion.

### Where would we be?
*Phoebe Jones, Shrewsbury College of Arts & Technology*



On the news you see a lot of people moaning about immigration, but if there were no other cultures in this country we would all just be the same and the things we take for granted would not be there, like Costa, food chains, takeaways and all the amazing foods, ideas religions and festivals that exist now. I took the photos in Oswestry, a rural town, and Nesscliffe. I think the high street lost its character when I scratched out the takeaways – I found it difficult because it felt like an attack on these people – graffiti on doors etc., but I think it highlights the loss.