

OUR NEWHAM



## About Protection Approaches

Protection Approaches is a London based charity committed to ending all identity-based violence. We do this through our grassroots engagement with young people and communities, and our work with policy makers.

Identity-based violence is any act of violence where the perpetrator targets someone because of how they view their victim's identity for example gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious, or political affiliation. Identity-based violence encompasses hate crimes against individuals, acts of terrorism, and mass atrocities such as ethnic cleansing and genocide. Identity-based violence affects people all over the world. While its victims and the ways in which it manifests often look different, what causes and prevents identity-based violence are very often the same.

We believe the responsibility to tackle identity-based violence - including the prejudice, discrimination and marginalisation preceding such violence - stretches from local communities to global leaders.

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Protection  
Approaches

SUPPORTED BY  
**MAYOR OF LONDON**



**ROMA**  
SUPPORT GROUP



## About Our Newham

Funded by the Mayor of London's Young Londoners Fund, Our Newham is a two-year project coordinated by the charity Protection Approaches supporting young people in Newham, East London to identify, explore, and tackle issues of marginalisation in their communities.

This publication presents incredible works of art created by young people during the first phase of the project. Over 8 months a cohort of young people from Newham's Youth Zones and Newham based Roma Support Group worked with four wonderful artists: Laila Sumpton, Szymon Glowacki, Becky Warnock, and Heather Gani.

During a series of workshops they explored issues related to prejudice, community, and identity through photography, poetry, painting and sculpture. The artworks in this publication were first exhibited at a special event at Stratford Old Town Hall and then for more than a month in the atrium of the Newham Council Headquarters.

This Artbook presents the young people's art, thoughts, and feelings to the wider Newham and London community. It marks the start of a conversation that will take place over the next phase of the project looking at how we can all work together, whatever our age, background, profession, or belief to develop community approaches to confronting marginalisation and celebrating all our identities.



Young people at Shipman Youth Zone working on paper mâché masks

PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW  
SOMETHING ABOUT OUR CULTURE.  
USUALLY WE ARE SCARED  
OF UNKNOWN.



POWER

you might  
NOT KNOW THAT  
BUT WE COME  
FROM INDIA



I want everyone to  
know that I'm Roma.  
I want to  
be proud of it

I DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO  
KNOW. SOME PEOPLE DON'T LIKE ROMA.  
THEY MIGHT STAB OR SOMETHING.



SOMETIMES  
you have to wear  
a mask to survive

Not many things to do  
around here. It is not a  
safe area. A lot of stabbings.



WHERE DO WE COME FROM?

Amaro - Roma Youth Club





THERE ARE DAYS  
WHEN I'M SCARED  
IN THIS AREA

" I dont think  
it is safe here "

World without hate  
would be a better  
place.

The language  
of Roma is  
ROMANES.



young people  
should be  
HEARD!

I teach my grandchildren  
how to be proud of our  
culture.



people just talk and  
promise but they dont  
DO MUCH



"We worked on the piece as a group. Our parents and grandparents joined and were telling stories about the times they were travelling in caravans. A lot of young Roma do not know much about their origins. A lot of non-Roma do not know who the Roma are. I hope this piece will give them the opportunity to get to know us a little bit more."



## AFRO MUSIC

Kyra, Hannan, Safiya, Boia, Abigail  
Little Ilford Youth Zone

“This picture made us think about Afro music back in the day. We think about our ancestors and musicians. She is embracing Afro hair. You need to love you for you, you won't accept yourself if you don't.”



## DAVE

Fariha, Tomiwa, Myton, Safia, Bola  
Little Ilford Youth Zone

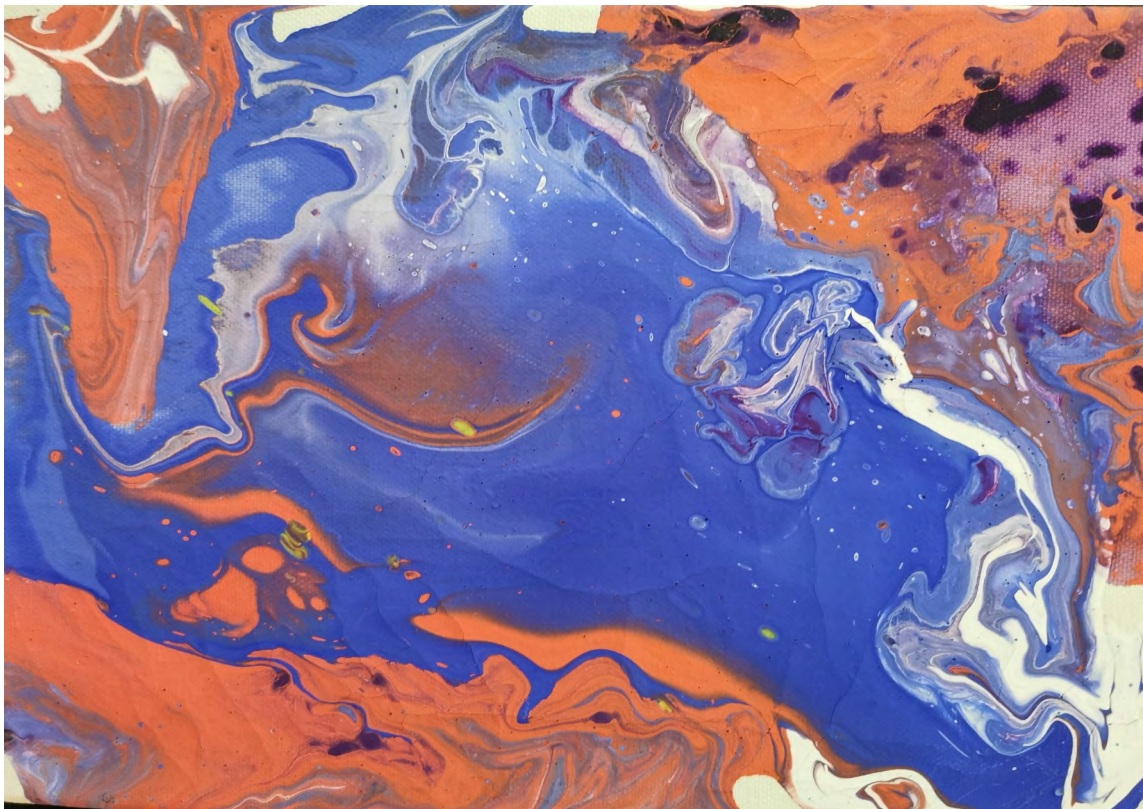
“We used different colours because it's more interesting, every colour represents his different emotions. We are a mixture of many influences. His music has amazing word play and his films are creative. He embodies his music which is why we wrote the lyrics on his top. Black is beautiful.”





Kyra starting a new piece.





ABSTRACT ART

Shipman Youth Zone

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## Our Invisible Struggle

It puts you in a dark place  
different shades of worry  
all mixed together in your mind.  
It takes over you whole body-  
controls how you behave,  
controls how you see,  
controls how your brain reacts  
and struggles with life.  
It puts you in a dark place  
but there's an urge to release,  
to let it go free  
if you and others  
can see and say  
that what tangles your mind  
can still be lifted away.  
It puts you in a dark place  
but we need to see and tell  
when a crowded class  
makes you feel alone,  
when deep school panic  
makes you gasp for air  
and teachers seem too tall  
to listen or care.  
It puts you in a dark place  
but we need to see and tell  
the crimes we've seen,  
the hungers that hold souls,  
the peers that lead you  
down their roads

when all along you know  
there are better places to go.  
It puts you in a dark place  
when each tweet and chat

Is like a magnet  
trying to bring you down  
whilst strangers and stories of hate  
get into your head and stay.  
It puts you in a dark place  
but we need to see and tell  
parents who say it's the devil  
that we cannot know stress  
that we can never understand  
what they've been through.  
They sigh and say  
that we should just sleep,  
turn our phones off  
and have a glass of water.  
We need to get out of these dark places  
we need to work together to make spaces  
where we can hear, and learn and say  
how light can be let in  
so we can see the day.

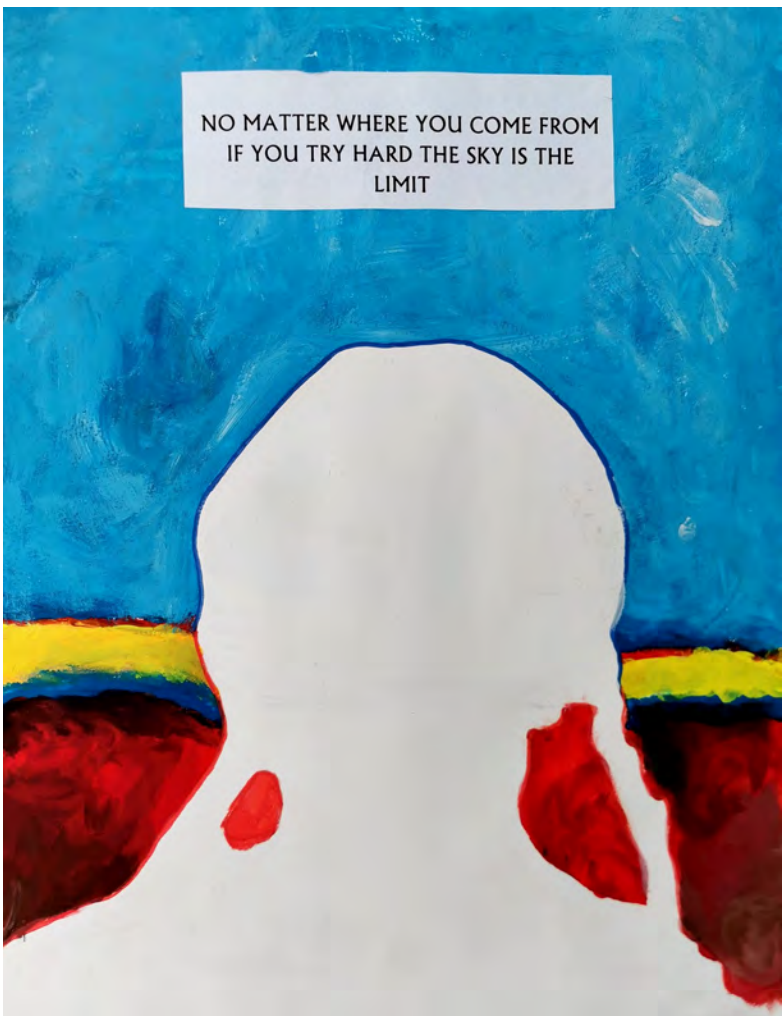
- By Fassal and Ella,  
Forest Gate Youth Zone



RED

Tifany  
Amaro - Roma Youth Club

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THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

Tanta  
Amaro - Roma Youth Club

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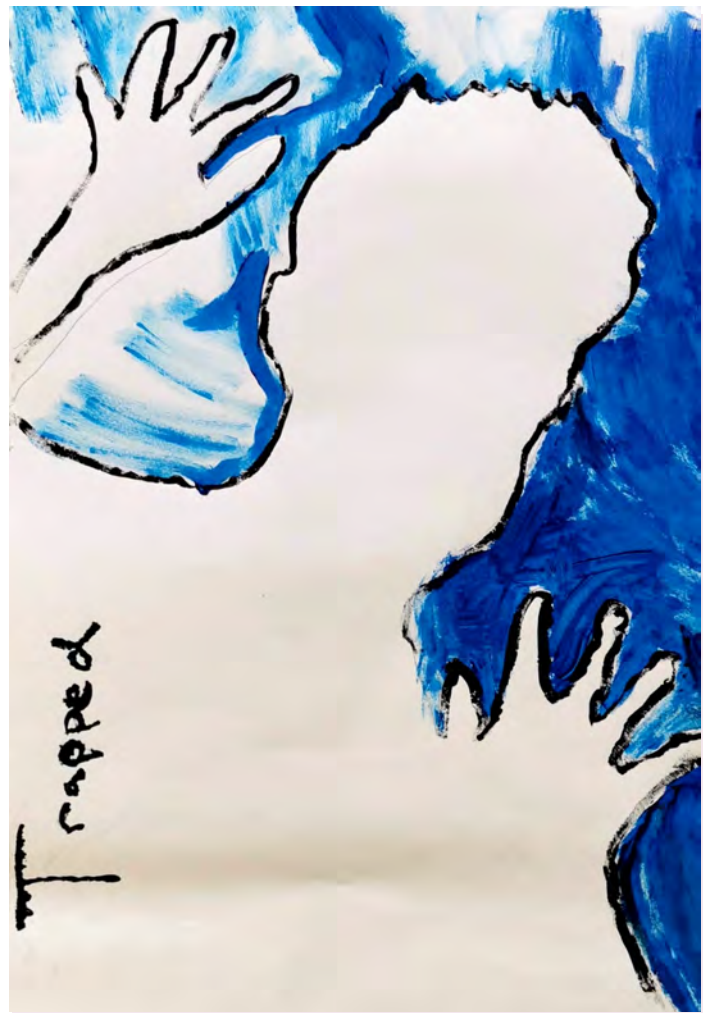


## TRAPED

Szymon and Wojciech  
Amaro – Roma Youth Club

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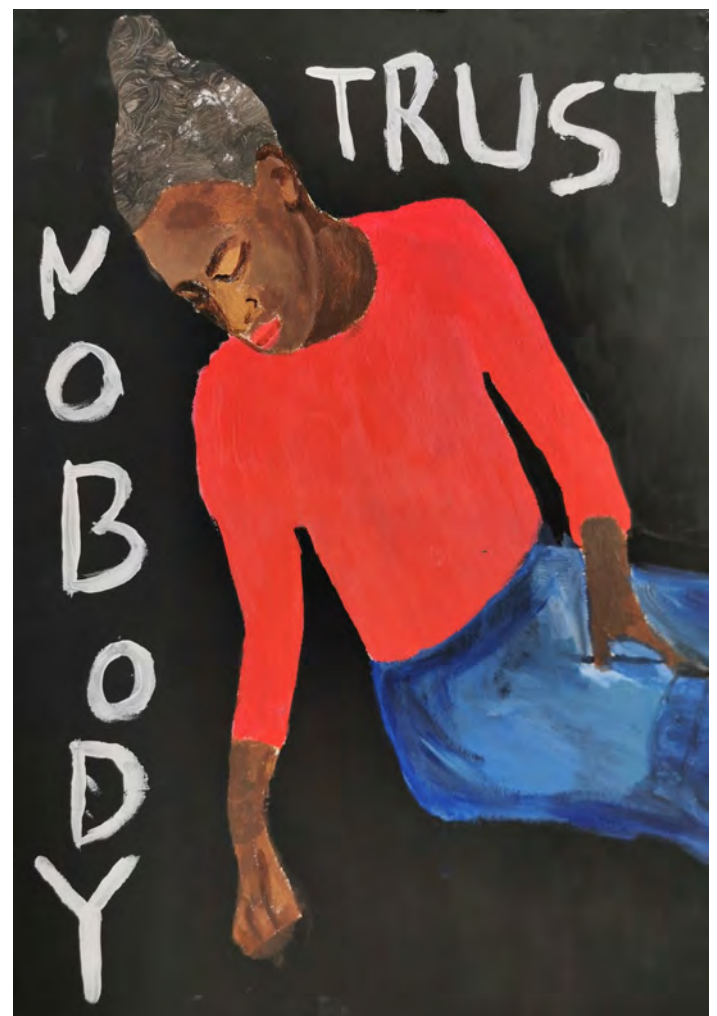
“Because some of us feel that way”



## TRUST NOBODY

Kyra  
Little Ilford Youth Zone

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## ABSTRACT ART

Melisa  
Amaro – Roma Youth Club

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“I enjoy this kind of painting. Just with colour and shapes you can show how you feel and let people guess it”





Getting messy and having fun.





NEGATIVE PEOPLE DON'T  
DESERVE A PLACE IN MY LIFE

Tommy  
Vocal Group - Shipman Youth Zone

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"It is about me hanging around with negative people who don't like being around people who have SEN. That is me saying – no wait, I am a young person with Special Education Needs and they don't deserve a place in my life if they are going to slag people with SEN."



JUST BE YOURSELF

Calum  
Vocal Group - Shipman Youth Zone

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"Three words about me? I am kind, lovable and caring "



## REANNE AND TINA

Reanne and tina  
Vocal Group - Shipman Youth Zone

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“There is so much negativity going on in Newham, knife crime etc. and it is so easy to be negative in life rather than positive. The quote on the artwork says it all – if we can spread love as much as we spread hate, the world would be a better place to live in.”



## IF

Dante  
Vocal Group - Shipman Youth Zone

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“You could be full / fall in love”





ME

Danielle  
Little Ilford Youth Zone

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PORTRAIT

Little Ilford Youth Zone

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## Questions

I wish there was an easier way to tell you guys how I feel  
But if you were able to feel my pain you'd know how unbearable it really is.  
They ask me if I'm okay and I've lied so many times that I cannot tell my lies from my truths.  
No but that's not what you want to hear right?  
You want to hear all about my wonderful day  
That I made a lot of friends  
That I learnt a lot in school  
That I ate a delicious meal for lunch today  
What if I told you...  
That I had the worst day ever?  
That I didn't make any friends because I was afraid?  
That I didn't learn anything today because I had a lot on my mind?  
That I didn't eat anything today because I didn't have an appetite?  
But what's the point?  
You'd just tell me that I had an awful day and tomorrow will be better...  
What if everyday was like this...would you notice?  
What if I needed serious help?  
What if the help I need is from you?

*- By Fatou, Forest Gate Youth Zone*



## VOCAL:

(Voices of Challenged Adolescent Learners)  
Vocal Group - Shipman Youth Zone

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Several young people created paper mâché masks and then painted them in different colours. The young people thought carefully about their choice of colours so that it would reflect their personalities and the moods they were in while creating the work. Young people with special educational needs often hide under a 'mask', choosing not to reveal that they have special needs. The quotes included on the canvases by the young people are powerful. Chosen to motivate everyone to never give up.



## Railway

It's currently 3:09  
Right now I'm on a journey to peace of mind,  
But there's so many lanes that prolong my destination,  
I wonder what's the time.  
We've gone through so many tunnels.  
Is there really an exit?  
Now I'm trying to find a new route  
but without a map I'll probably be  
another 17 year old that jumped in front of a moving train  
because she couldn't cope with pain  
Another point 1 to the populations suicide rate.  
Another lost life that's forgotten in time.  
Another talented female died  
because she couldn't get through,  
get through the barriers because  
she didn't have money to get a pass,  
but you had loose change in your pocket.  
Now you wish you played your part,  
but sorry I've speeded far ahead,  
she hasn't departed from the world just as yet.  
Now you have a choice to help direct  
but I know you'd rather get on board  
when I am taking my last step.

*- By Destiny, Forest Gate Youth Zone*





Discussion on the grass at Shipman Youth Zone



Szymon with some of the young people at Little Ilford Youth Zone



## A note from project coordinator, Szymon

Starting a new project can be a bit scary.

I remember the first session I did at one of the clubs. I had my paints with me, brushes, canvases – all the equipment I needed for a painting workshop. Little did I know that on this particular occasion the young people didn't actually want to make art... they wanted to make pancakes... we made pancakes.

This is a key factor to working with young people. Listen to them. That first session gave me an opportunity to get to know the young people that I had the pleasure to work with over the next few weeks in an activity that helped to bring us closer together and begin to understand one another.

It is hard to ask young people to express themselves through art. For some of the most marginalised communities having a brush and some paints is a novelty. Others feel vulnerable to put their feelings and ideas out for everybody to see and judge. We had to build mutual trust. I think we managed to do it and we created amazing art throughout the process.

I have no doubt that the experience was beneficial for the young artists but it became apparent that even more beautiful than the poems they wrote or paintings they created was what happened during the process of creating the art; all of the experiences we shared together. Eating food together, sitting on the grass relaxing, talking about what it is like to be a young person today.

After several sessions I could see how the young people evolved, their unique personal styles and personalities were coming through. Young people have dreams, they have hopes. It is our task to nurture those dreams and help them to fulfil them.

I would like to say a big thank you to Leila, Becky and Heather for creating amazing work with the young people.

I would like to give another big thank you to Jodie, Tommy and Tina for all their help and support. Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank all the young people from Newham for allowing me to enter their worlds and guiding me through them.

Szymon Glowacki

Outreach Officer - Protection Approaches



## EQUALITY

Faisolat, Abigail, Hannan, Kelsey, Shantey, Safiya, Bola  
Little Ilford Youth Zone

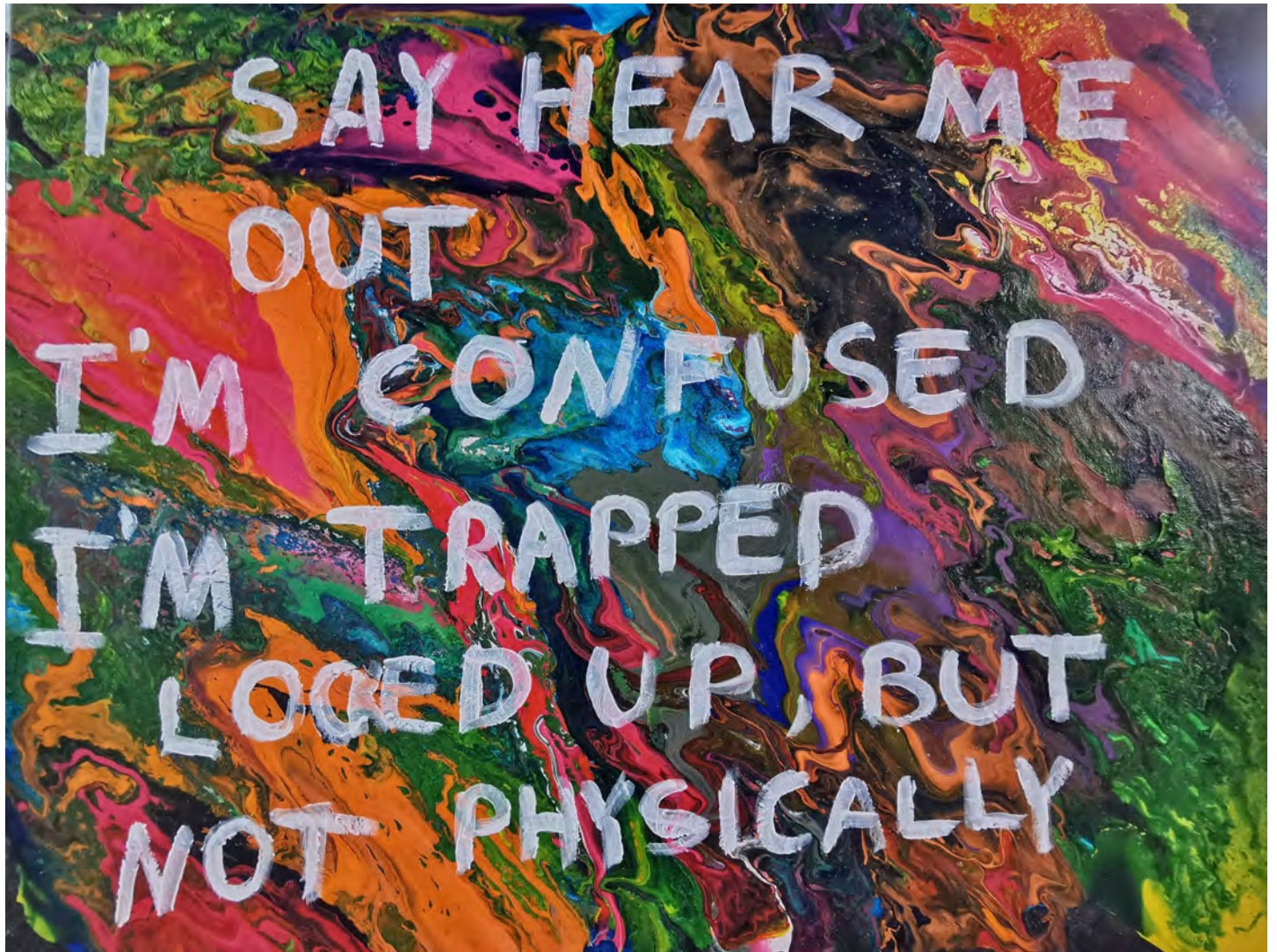
“We painted people who represent youth from Manor Park and Little Ilford Youth Centre. We stand together because we are strong, powerful and unique. We wanted to catch people’s attention with the colours. Don’t judge a book by its cover.”



## My roots

My roots are Portuguese Brazilian  
I want to make it far in life-  
become a professional footballer.  
My roots are Ugandan Pakistani  
even my grandfather makes beats  
and I make beats too  
in Uganda I know they play the drums.  
My roots are Pakistani  
I can understand what's being said  
but I cannot speak back.  
Sometimes they call me a terrorist  
or think I'm a thief when I step in a shop.  
My roots are Grenada, St Vincent and Nigeria  
I'm great- got the best of both worlds  
got the reggae and afro beats!  
My roots are Bangladeshi  
when people see me  
they think I'm Pakistani.  
My roots are Nigerian  
I don't let it affect me  
how you see me is your opinion  
but we are the kings of Africa. Fact.  
My roots are British Indian  
we play lots of sports  
and I play table tennis-  
got inspired by friends.  
I'm proud to be Indian-  
I eat lots of rice!

*- By young people from Little Ilford Youth Zone*



## SPLASHES II

Vocal Group - Shipman Youth Zone in collaboration with Amaro—Roma Youth Club

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## You're faking it!

I say that I am at breaking point  
I say I feel isolated  
I say I am fading and I can't be seen.  
You say I'm lying  
you say I'm mad  
you say stop playing.  
You think I have problems,  
you think I am fine,  
you think I should just breath.  
You think I should go,  
you think I should seek help-  
don't you think I already have!  
If I say I'm sad, don't think I'll be coming back to you.  
If I say I'm tired, don't think its physical pain.  
It's hard to say how,  
it's hard to say why,  
it's hard to hear the struggles  
it's hard to hear the pain.  
We must strive to be heard,  
we know that it's hard,  
we know that it's barbed  
even when I cry.

*- By Ella, Forest Gate Youth Zone*



## INVISIBLE

Anonymous  
Amaro – Roma Youth Club

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“I don’t think people notice me or what I say matters”





Szymon and Heather working with young people from Amaro Youth Club on new poses.



## ALL ABOUT ME

Nathan  
Amaro – Roma Youth Club

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## TRUST

Valentina and Danka  
Amaro – Roma Youth Club

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## PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Amaro – Roma Youth Club

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## AUNTIE

Mary  
Little Ilford Youth Zone

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#BSG #Auntie #AfroHair #BlackMagic  
#BrownSkinGirls #RealBeauty  
#BlackHistory #ILoveMe #Happy #Africa  
#Realness #BHM #: ) #L4R40 #BeMe





## OUR ROOTS

Little Ilford Youth Zone

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## BACK TO ROOTS

Nathan  
Amaro – Roma Youth Club

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# DIVERSITY

Tommy  
Shipman Youth Zone

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# UNIQUENESS

Shipman Youth Centre

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## WORDSMITH

NKaren, Serina, Amber, Dacosta  
Little Ilford Youth Zone

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“We picked Benjamin Zephaniah because he is an outspoken British Black male who is a favourite role model of mine from a working-class back-ground. He experienced tough things in life and turned his life around. He inspired me in high school as a white working-class girl. He cares about the world and is one of my heroes. Question every initial thought when you see a Black man and see the positivity, look beyond the stigmas you impose.”





JUST TRY HARDER

Brian  
Vocal Group - Shipman Youth Zone

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## SPLASHES

Vocal Group - Shipman Youth Zone

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# I come from

I come from-  
burgers eating,  
candy shops selling,  
young adults shouting,  
youth centres chilling,  
youth centres warning.

Can you hear me?

I come from-  
schools trapping,  
teachers neglecting,  
houses fighting,  
hospitals heaving,  
believers preaching.

Can you hear me?

I come from-  
cultures spreading,  
mums rushing,  
children laughing,  
men harassing,  
gangs trapping,  
mothers crying.

Can you hear me?

I come from-  
home leaving,  
carers earning,  
children losing,  
mothers changing,  
authorities abusing.

Can you hear me?

I come from-  
drill implanting,  
police judging,  
gangs roaring,  
postcodes warring,  
knives dripping,  
friendships falling.

Can you hear me?

I come from-  
dreams soaring,  
hopes birthing,  
employers barring,  
adults stereotyping,  
inspiration fading.

Can you hear me

We come from-  
gangs hustling,  
parks dealing,  
blocks smoking,  
youth dying.

Can you hear us?

*- by Forest Gate Youth Group including: Fatou,  
Destiny, Sofia and Fassal, created working with  
Laila Sumpton*





HOW DO WE FEEL...

scared of...

Darkness  
Judgement  
Fear  
Sorrow  
Loneliness

We like...  
...fine







## HOW DO WE FEEL?

Little Ilford Youth Zone

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"We are happy, we are sad, we are confused, we are scared, we have hope, we are..."



## SPLASHES OF EQUALITY

Amber  
Little Ilford Youth Zone

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“Everyone should be treated the same no matter what. When I painted this I thought of kids picking on other kids because of their skin colour. Globally online you see people being racist. We need more shared opinions because everyone's opinion matters.”



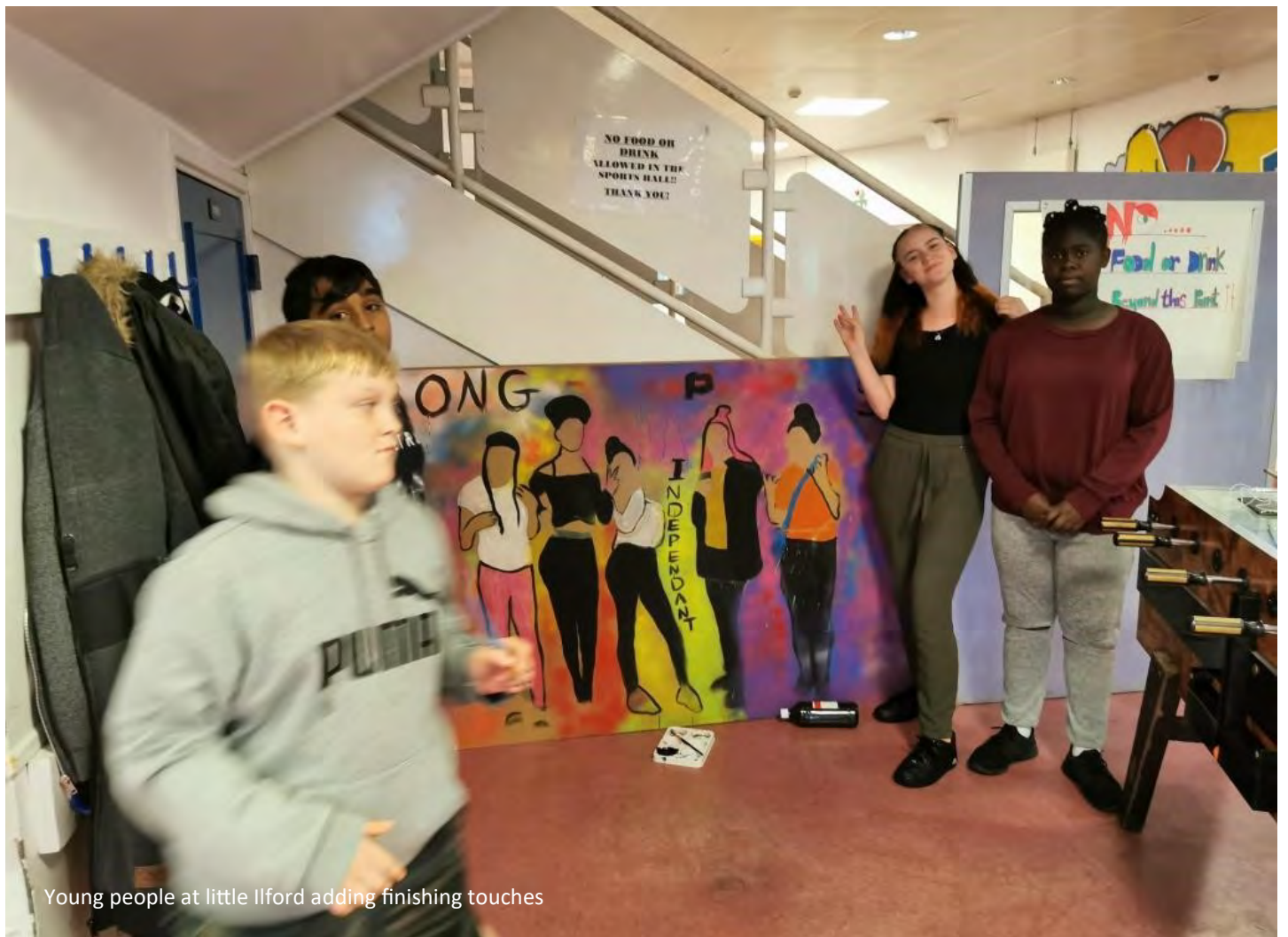
## Letters to mental health

Dear Mental Health,  
you are what keeps me up at night  
constantly feeling unwanted  
you make me feel accomplished  
hold on I lied...  
How can you make me feel good and bad  
How can something so 'small'  
Make me feel so unworthy?  
Why do you mistreat me?  
I used to think it's just a phase.  
You think you can take over me  
well...  
Know that you can but  
I'm telling you not to.

*- By Xoxo Bynum, Forest Gate Youth Zone*



Danielle and Szymon trying to find the perfect colour



Young people at little Ilford adding finishing touches





Friendship



Lazarus

## We hear a boy, We hear a boy

We hear a boy  
sitting in his room  
He's talking to himself how he nearly got killed  
but escaped his doom  
we hear him screaming at night  
about when he got cuts and into fights  
and how his pain is holding him tight.  
We hear him cry and cry  
but big boys don't cry so he sits and lies.  
The trauma and the nightmare  
visiting him in his dreams  
he is saying he is okay but  
really he wants to scream.  
Yes I know that boy, yes he is my brother,  
save young people now  
or you will lose them forever.

*- By Fiza, Forest Gate Youth Zone*



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- The arts facilitators, Heather, Laila, and Becky
- Staff and volunteers at the Roma Support Group
- Staff and volunteers at Shipman, Forest Gate, and Little Ilford Youth Zones and everybody working in the Newham Youth Service
- The team from Adfam



Members of the Roma Support Group youth group working with Heather

Protection  
Approaches