Engaging with the community and other stakeholders as part of a YSA project

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LOCAL COMMUNITY

STUDENT COMMUNITY

SCHOOL GOVERNORS

PARENT COMMUNITY

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SECTION 1

Community Engagement

This section of the guide provides an overview of the 5-step process, the 10 key fundamentals, and the benefits of engaging with the community in delivering Youth Social Action projects.

Summary

A key part of the 10 fundamentals is to engage with relevant stakeholders.

" Young people should engage with relevant stakeholders to make their actions more meaningful, make the projects real and engage in support of additional resources."

This guide can help users maximise the impact of working in partnership with the local community, the student community, the school governors and the parent community.

Section 1:

This section focuses on the 5-step process and the key fundamental steps, which are the underlying principles of the Youth Social Action project. It also includes an introduction to community engagement the benefits of engaging and working with the community, with some figures of impact based on the WeWill project.

Section 2:

This section of the guide focuses on the various roles within a school that can support the community engagement aspect of Youth Social Action. These include the roles of the:

- The role governors can play in monitoring and supporting the delivery of Youth Social Action throughout the school.
- The role of young people participating in Youth Social Action. It also includes examples of some community-based projects which young people have led.
- It includes working with the local community and participating in Youth Social Action. It also includes how this can be used through the transition process and on a school-to-school basis.
- Working with the parent community on Youth Social Action.

Section 3:

It looks at how to engage the community through the five-step process. It provides some ideas on how to engage the community through the topics of Poverty, Inclusion and Diversity, Healthy Habits, and Climate Change. The section also includes an example case study of how the Gateway Learning Community has effectively used working with its learning community through Youth Social Action.

5 Key Steps to Implement Youth Social Action (overview)

The Ormiston Trust suggests that every YSA project follows key steps to implement high-quality YSA at scale successfully.

Inspire

The first step involves understanding what youth social action is, what the benefits are, engaging key student and staff leaders, deciding on how you will integrate action into your school setting, and inspiring students about what is possible. Some basic skill training will be started up, as will discussion of YSA social issues in lessons.

Explore

The second step involves young people continuing their basic skill development, learning about the world around them and key social issues, what they are passionate about, and the issue(s) they want to act upon. Groups of young people are starting to emerge, as are potential plans to make a difference based on the research they are gathering.

Plan

The third step involves young people taking on key roles and working in defined groups; building their skill sets and confidence as a team, conducting further research, identifying delivery partners, and creating detailed project plans to make a difference. Young people continue to reflect about what they are learning, and are growing in confidence as they prepare to deliver their plan.

Act

The fourth step involves young people fundraising to generate extra resources, delivering their plans of action, collecting evaluating data, and adapting plans where necessary, all with the support from key staff facilitators.

Reflect

The final step involves finishing the collection of evaluation data, assessing the overall impact, learning about what can be improved and celebrating success. Young people are reporting with staff to key stakeholders about what they have achieved and looking for new opportunities to engage.

Each of these steps can involve engaging with the wider community and or other key stakeholders

The 10 underlying fundamentals of Youth Social Action (YSA) to maximise impact and sustain practice in schools

Opportunities for reflection and evidence of impact

Young people are given the opportunity to reflect on the impact that social action has had on themselves, their school and local community'

Relevant stakeholders are engaged

Young people should engage with relevant stakeholders to make their actions more meaningful, make the projects real and engage in support of additional resources.

Action is meaningful and tends to be local and visible

Young people should lead and be encouraged to address a cause which is meaningful to them and others.

Action involves effort and challenge

Young people need to put in effort and be given support to overcome any challenges associated with addressing a cause.

Youth Social Action is part of the Curriculum

During lessons and throughout the school day, staff should provide opportunities for young people to discuss, critically reflect on, research and plan their Youth Social Action project.

Facilitated by well-supported, trained and passionate staff

School staff will need to be 'supported' and given the key tools to deliver effective Youth Social Action.

Driven by Young People

Young people will need to feel like they have a predominant say In the choice of their Youth Social Action project and/or how to address a cause specifically.

Skills Training for Young People

Young people are taught key skills (i.e., teamwork, communication, etc.) to deliver a Youth Social Action programme effectively.

Embed Youth Social Action

Youth Social Action is embedded into the school culture and practices with opportunities available for young people to progress onto new projects within or outside school settings.

Fully supported by the school leadership

School leaders will clarify the purpose of Youth Social Action in their setting, inspire and engage staff and young people, and ensure suitable and sufficient staff and financial resources are in place.

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What is community and stakeholder engagement?

Community and stakeholder engagement in a youth social action programme involves young people working with other interested individuals or organisations to deliver action and change. The engagement can help increase access to students' learning opportunities, boost student retention, promote optimism among teachers, and improve children's school attendance rates."

One of our key programmes over the last six years has been uniting young people with a shared belief in the power of **youth social action**. This programme takes the lead from young people, who can both develop their skills, resilience, and well-being and create change to tackle issues they care about.

We know that we can make a difference by partnering with and investing in schools, charities, and organisations. Based on a sample of:
- 9,916 pupil surveys
- 180 YSA leads/teacher surveys
- 41 head teacher surveys

Impact on wider community outcomes:
- 85% of the project leads, and teachers said that YSA can help improve relationships between young people and people in their community
- 72% of community members said that YSA had a positive impact on the community
- After participating in the YSA programme, students indicated they felt more connected to and closer to the community and social issues.

Engagement in the community is a key focus area recognised by Ofsted which are part of the OFSTED descriptors for evaluating behaviour, attitudes, leadership, and management.

- Within leadership and management, to obtain a grade, good leaders effectively engage with pupils and others in their community, including, when relevant, parents, employers, and local services. Engagement opportunities are focused and have a purpose.

- Within behaviour and attitudes to obtain an outstanding grade, pupils consistently have highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education. They are highly motivated and persistent in the face of difficulties. Pupils make a highly positive, tangible contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. Pupils actively support the well-being of other pupils.

Benefits of Developing Community Engagement

This visual shows the benefits of Youth Social Action in a school and its local community.

Impact of effective community engagment

- Developing Citizenship and Social Responsibility
- Strengthen the school's family engagement work.
- Practical Learning Opportunities
- Real-World Learning Opportunities
- Increase effective collaboration and boost visibility
- Strengthen the learning and teaching experiences offered by the school, bringing in resources and enriching the curriculum.
- Addressing Resource Constraints
- Parental Involvement
- Diverse Perspectives and Cultural Awareness
- Improved School Environment
- Improving School Image and Reputation
- Community Engagement and Citizenship
- Building Partnerships and Networks
- Enhancing Student Engagement and Leadership
- Addressing Community Needs
- Responsive Education
- Bridging School and Community

SECTION 2

Community Engagement

This section of the guide focuses on the role governors, student community, the local community and the parental community can play in supporting and monitoring Youth Social Action.

Youth Social Action and the Governors

LOCAL COMMUNITY

STUDENT COMMUNITY

SCHOOL GOVERNORS

PARENT COMMUNITY
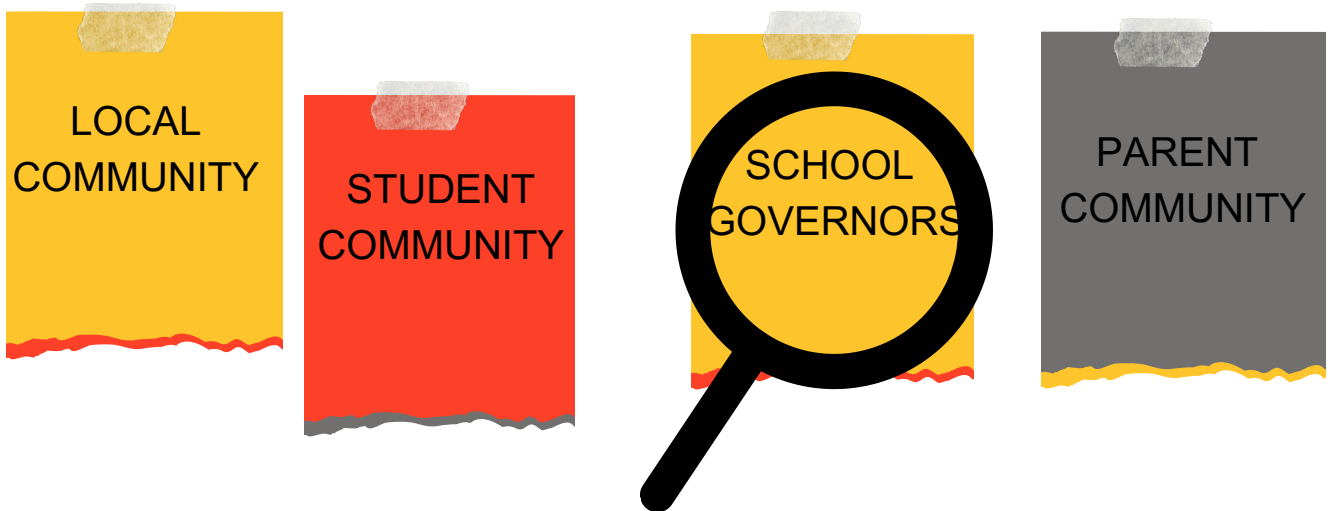
The School Community - Governors

It's clear that social action holds a variety of benefits for pupils, their schools and wider communities. From increasing the chances of a young person's employability and character development to young people caring about and influencing their school communities and the potential to impact those who are most vulnerable in society positively.

Governing bodies are accountable for the school's strategic direction and the quality of education provided. As such, they have a key role in supporting community engagement. They can ensure inclusive practises are taking place to enable everyone to take part and all voices to be heard to deepen understanding and build trusting relationships and engagement with the community.

Governing bodies can appoint community governors who also focus on Youth Social Action to represent the wider community interests of the school.

Role of Community Governors in Embedding Youth Social Action

Community governors can help to improve community engagement as they:
- Know the community
- Governors may have links to many active community groups and assets which can be utilised to embed Youth Social Action.
- Governors can support the development of strategic partnerships
- Through observing lessons, governors can monitor the delivery and impact of Youth Social Action on young people.
- They can have input into policies and procedures regarding Youth Social Action.
- Governors can ensure that youth social action is on the agenda in SLT/Governor meetings and that actions are being followed up on.

Youth Social Action and the Student Community

LOCAL COMMUNITY

STUDENT COMMUNITY

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This section of the guide focuses on the benefits of young people participating in Youth Social Action. It also includes examples of some community-based projects.

Youth Social Action and Student Community

Through Youth Social Action, young people can:

- Have their voices heard when decisions are being made that affect their lives
- Be involved in decision-making processes.
- Participate in developing community engagement strategies so that they can share their views on their community from diverse perspectives**.**
- Provide Real-World Learning Opportunities
- Cultural Exchange and Diversity Awareness
- Improving School Image and Reputation
- Developing Citizenship and Social Responsibility
- Practical learning opportunities
- Work experience opportunities
- Encouraging Parental and Family Involvement

Examples of some of the projects which took place as part of the #WeWill programme:

Poverty - Sparkle and Shine - St Peter's Farnworth Academy

This is in line with the school motto, Learn, Sparkle and Shine. The St Peter's Youth Socal Action project, which collaborated with a **local hospice and an outreach project**, helped impact the young people as individuals (sparkle) and the wider community, creating connectivity and a sense of belonging (shine). This includes creating and delivering care boxes and working with the local hospice on a charity fun day, raising £450! They also visited the **Bolton Council mayor's parlour** and interviewed him on local council processes.

The young people felt empowered by their actions and thought they had achieved a lot to support their local community. They also learned about the challenges faced by others.

Poverty - Working with Bradford Homeless Outreach St Bede's and St Joseph's

The Youth Social Action project started with a challenge: giving young people sign language lessons which they had never tried before. This challenge aimed to change the pupils' mindsets and demonstrate that they can achieve what they want when they set their minds to a project.

Young people created and delivered care packages for homeless people. **Working with Bradford's Homeless Outreach organisation,** the young people determined what was needed before they reached out to their local community to collect the items; these included hygiene products, blankets, and warm clothing.

The Youth Social Action project allowed students to see potential careers, including youth work, business management, and social enterprise. The Youth Social Action enabled further implementation of character Education and its six virtues: Service, Self-Control, Autonomy, Aspiration, Courage, and Reflection. This project supported the students in developing their character through all these virtues.

Delivering care packages to people experiencing homelessness opened the young people's eyes to the realities of life for many people. They could see how their hard work in making the care packs was valued and how much it meant to people who had nothing. It was a very humbling experience for all.

Inclusion and Diversity: LGBTQ+ issues and how, as a Catholic school, we can support students' Cultural Diversity and celebrate our school's diversity.

The Equality & Diversity group created an action plan to support students in the LGBTQ+ community in school. They invited **key speakers** into the school to understand issues regularly faced by this group. Information from the Diocese was sought, and drop-down sessions were planned across every year group in schoo**l.**

As a result, young people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community feel safer in school. They are also much more confident in being themselves and showing their true identity. They feel supported by key leaders in the community and attend youth clubs to support their identity and community.

The group will also launch a cultural diversity week in the autumn term to celebrate the 24 languages spoken in the school and celebrate all communities through art, dance, music and food.

Skills Learnt: Communication, Teamwork, Problem Solving, Reflection

Student Community - Questions to explore

How will the community connection benefit the young people?

What key skills can the young people learn from this experience?

What additional knowledge can the young people obtain from this experience?

How can this experience benefit the organisation?

Which aspect of the school priorities will this connection support?

Youth Social Action and The Local Community
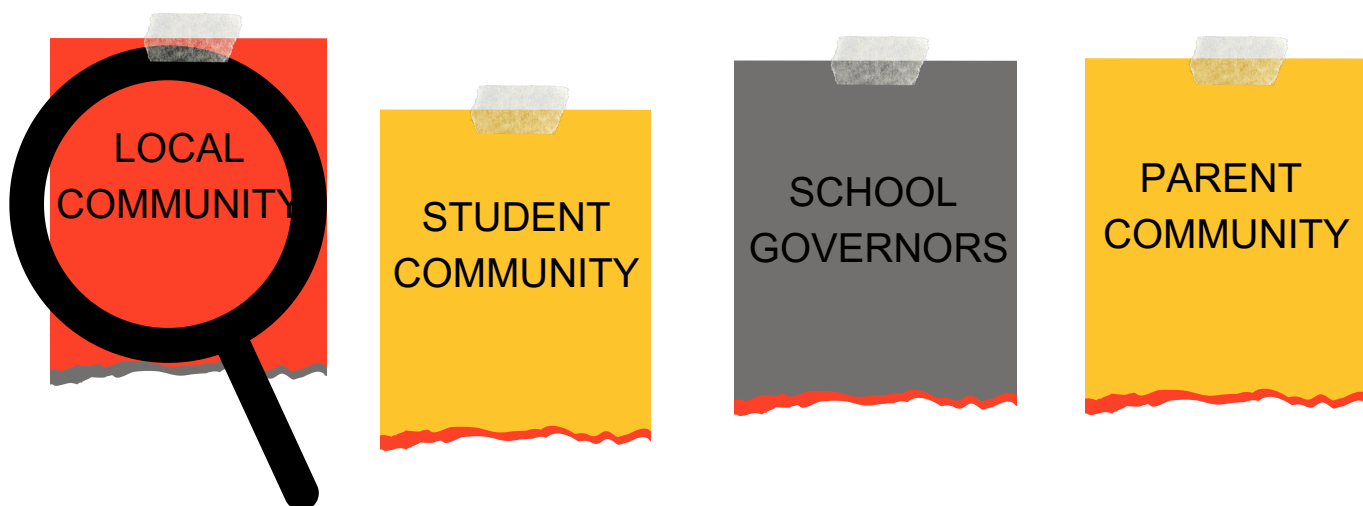
This section of the guide focuses on the benefits of working with the local community and participating in Youth Social Action. This also includes working within the transition process and on a school - to - school basis.

Youth Social Action and The Local Community

The community within which the school is located – the school in its geographical district and the people who live or work there. This applies not just to the immediate neighbourhood but also to the city or local authority area within which a school is located.

Schools must understand their local community to establish partnerships and determine how to work together best.

- collaboration
- information sharing
- joint decision making

Links with employers

- Link aspects of the Gatsby Framework to deliver career education within their school
- The opportunities can provide subject-related work experience within youth social areas.
- Links with employers can support the delivery of vocational qualifications
- The connections can help raise the profile of the local employment sector and develop place-based opportunities.
- They can build a positive relationship with the local community
- Employers can motivate and inspire young people
- Support local charities supporting local issues

Stakeholder - Local Community - Questions to explore

- How well does the school understand the local community and the opportunities it could provide young people for engaging in Youth Social Action?
- Does your senior team attend any local events you are invited to?
- Are there opportunities for any leaders to be part of any community boards?
- Do you invite the local community to any school events?
- Do you allow opportunities for your pupils to support community events?
- What opportunities do our learners and staff have to work with others to contribute effectively to become active citizens?

- How well do we share skills, information, knowledge and experience across partners and partnerships?
- Are there opportunities to inspire, assess, plan, monitor and evaluate the work with each partner?
- Are you clear on what added value each partnership brings?
- Are you clear on what added value the school can bring to them?
- Are you clear on the impact on young people?
- Partnerships have clear agreements where the purpose, aims, roles and responsibilities are understood by all involved.
- How will you monitor impact?

School-to-School Engagement and Youth Social Action

School Transition

The school has effective relationships with its feeder settings to smooth transitions. Staff are well-trained on safeguarding issues and use multi-agency working to support families facing multiple problems.

School transitions are planned and seamless. Working with parents/carers, the school takes a strategic approach to develop community partnerships and multi-agency working to strengthen family engagement, strengthen the school, and drive up standards.

https://socialmediaforschools.co.uk/top-social-media-posts-to-engage-your-school-community/

What effective school-to-school practice looks like

A key part of the transition is ensuring the well-being of young people health, and the well-being unit of YSA provides ample opportunities to cover this.

The transition process supports the movement of young from one phase of education to another, positively impacting their academic outcomes. The YSA projects provide opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills of young people.

School-to-school collaboration

Schools that are geographically close often share the same wider community, community organisations and support services. Families will often have children and young people attending 2 schools within an area, in a primary and secondary setting. Therefore, these schools may have shared priorities and relevant information to share and may benefit from developing a place-based or cluster-based approach to their community engagement. This would ensure:

- a more effective use of funds and grants
- services for families are streamlined rather than duplicated
- a greater sense of collective agency

Youth Social Action and Parental Engagement

LOCAL COMMUNITY

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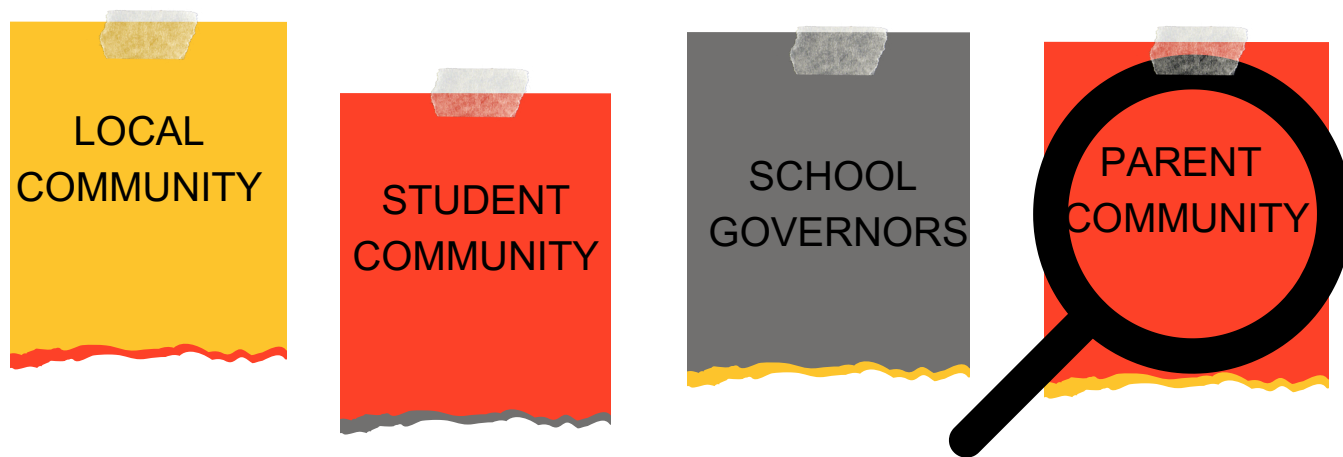
PARENT COMMUNITY

This section of the guide focuses on the benefits of including and working with the parent community on Youth Social Action.

Parental Engagement and Youth Social Action

"Parental engagement in early years education is consistently associated with children's subsequent academic success. On average, parental engagement programmes evaluated to date have led to a positive impact of approximately four additional months of progress over a year. However, there does appear to be some variation in effectiveness between approaches, suggesting that careful thought is needed when developing and introducing parental engagement approaches and that ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential." Education Endowment Foundation

- Parental engagement positively impacts an average of 4 months of additional progress. It is crucial to consider how to engage with all parents to avoid widening attainment gaps.
- Consider how to tailor school communications to encourage positive dialogue about learning. There is some evidence that personalised messages linked to learning can promote positive interactions.
- Parental engagement strategies are typically more effective with parents of very young children. However, it is important to consider how to maintain parental engagement as children age. For example, providing flexible communications (e.g., short sessions at flexible times) might create opportunities for parents of older pupils to engage with the school.
- Consider what support you can give to parents to ensure high-quality home learning. For example, providing practical strategies with tips, support, and resources to assist learning at home may be more beneficial to pupil outcomes than simply gifting a book to pupils or asking parents to provide generic help to their children.

What Effective Practice Looks Like

- Using creative approaches to engage with families
- Youth Social Action learning promotes equality, fairness and diversity.

Parents

- Website
- Newsletters
- Celebration events
- Visual displays
- Social Media

Stakeholders - Parents - Questions to explore

- How do we ensure that relationships with parents, carers and families, the local community and partners are characterised by trust and respect?
- When developing your strategy for Youth Social Action, have you planned for opportunities where parents and carers can contribute to, participate in, and understand the YSA journey?
- Do staff support parents/careers actively engaging in the Youth Social Action Projects?
- Do you understand the contributions your parents could make to Youth Social Action based on their social, economic and cultural backgrounds?
- How will you involve your hard-to-reach parents?
- Partnerships have clear agreements where the purpose, aims, roles and responsibilities are understood by all involved. How will you monitor participation?
- How will you monitor the impact?

SECTION 3

Community Engagement

This section focuses on implementing community engagement through the 5-step process and the curriculum areas. It also includes a case study to show how community engagement is embedded through the YSA project.

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Community Engagement through the 5 Key Steps of the implementation process

The steps below explore how you can engage the community through the Youth Social Action project.

The inspire step fosters a deeper understanding of a chosen issue and why it is important. This could be through outreach to the community or learning from directly affected communities.

- This can be achieved by looking at case studies to obtain background information.
- Learn from guest speakers through assemblies.
- Decide on the purpose of community involvement and what you would like from them.
- Decide on who from the local community
- Decide on a communication strategy
- Learn skills needed to communicate.

Communication can be through email, letters, or other means, such as social media.

Potential partnerships must have clear agreements in which the purpose, aims, roles, and responsibilities are understood by all involved.

The explore step involves consulting the community to determine the purpose and objectives of community engagement. It is an opportunity to establish who is affected by the chosen issue, the capacity of community members to participate in the project and identify any barriers to participation.

- You can explore the topic.
- Look at the responses. If there are no responses, would you like to follow up on this?
- Decide what the next steps are based on the responses - do you need to follow up?

The plan step involves figuring out how you will be able to engage the community and the level of engagement that your project requires (see below). It is an opportunity to assess what resources you have and need, ensure all participants understand their role, and mitigate any potential risks to the project's success.

Step 1: Determine the support needed from the community

Step 2 - Come to an agreement which is beneficial for all involved.

Step 3: Ensure this is shared with all stakeholders.

Step 4: Ensure the agreement includes benefits for all stakeholders. Ask yourself what value it will add.

The act step involves implementing the community engagement plan and monitoring progress throughout.

The reflect step involves evaluating the success of the partnership with the community partners against the project's stated purpose and objectives. It is an opportunity to determine what change has occurred due to the engagement and what the next steps might be.

Step 1: Determine the value added to the project, school and business.

Step 2: Celebrate the success of the project

Step 3: Discuss the next steps

Engaging with the community through curriculum areas

Poverty	Inclusion and Diversity	Keeping Healthy	Climate Change	Community Links
Raise awareness, challenge stereotypes and assumptions, and fundraise for those experiencing homelessness in your community	Campaign to raise the voices of community members from underrepresented or marginalised groups	Partner with your local care home to befriend older members of the community and help to combat loneliness, improve mental health, and promote physical activity	Hold a community art exhibition to showcase fine art, photography, short films, and performances that stimulate knowledge-sharing of climate-related issues	Local charities food banks local care homes hold events within the school and invite local community. Develop links with businesses focusing on reducing impact on climate change.
Organise a non-perishable food drive to give to your local food bank, or volunteer your time to cook for those experiencing food poverty in your community	Hold a community event that celebrates and promotes equity among diverse community groups (example focus: Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ+ PRIDE, Cultural Exchange)	Plant a school community garden and help to train younger students how to take care of it	Launch a social media campaign to highlight the climate crisis and reach out to relevant organisations and specialists for insights into what we can do to to help	Local gardening clubs Develop links with businesses focusing on reducing impact on climate change. Local church, mosque, temples etc focusing on helping reduce poverty Hold events within the school and invite members to the school
	Elect and train a team of anti-bullying ambassadors to stand up for those facing bullying in your school community		Start or join a youth-led climate movement	research into local organisations that you young people could join or create your own group to help with local issues
Investigate how these issues affect your community, collaborate on developing a plan to solve or mitigate identified challenges, and lobby to your MP for help in addressing them				
Investigate how these issues affect your community and educate others through outreach, workshops, mentoring and/or campaigning				

Overview of the project

- This programme followed the 5 stage approach and was delivered throughout the academic year.
- The programme focused on helping others based on significant community stakeholder engagement to understand key issues.
- It also focused on ensuring students learnt key skills for their future lives (i.e., communication, teamwork, resilience, conflict resolution, etc.). In line with their academy's focus on oracy, the programme provided as many opportunities as possible for young people to learn new skills and practice these skills. "Our pupils need to be able to communicate effectively to be successful in life" GLC.

Stage 1 - Inspire

Using the role model activities in the YSA passport, pupils took inspiration from Marcus Rashford's work on poverty during COVID-19. They decided to focus on poverty and its impact on their local area. The school had already worked with their local food bank in previous years. This was an opportunity to take the project further.

Curriculum input took place across a range of subjects with units arranged to allow learning to continue simultaneously through food technology, PSHE, geography, and drama. The curriculum's focus was to understand the reasons and impact of food poverty globally and locally, what being healthy entails, design features of products, understand how social media is used and use aspects of the media to promote their work safely.

Stage 2 - Assess

Based on their research, the students discovered, **"*Life expectancy in Tilbury remains ten years lower than in the rest of Thurrock, partly due to poor diet."***

Based on their research, the students focused on designing, promoting and implementing initiatives to raise awareness of increasing food poverty locally and help the Tilbury Food Bank mitigate its effects.

Cross schools approach

- To improve transition across the schools in their network, young people at GLC from years 4 and 9 worked together throughout the programme.

Local/national community links

Contact was made with:

- Local government / Local Authority to identify additional support and potential match funding
- Local charities (i.e. food banks etc.)
- National broadcast and print media to promote the All Different: All Equal: All Well Fed initiative

Stage 3 - Plan

To support the projects, the year 9 pupils adopted a business-like approach and established a management structure by creating roles, identifying the needs of individuals and providing the relevant training. The passport assessed pupils' skills and monitored and recorded progress.

Key roles

- To manage their project development and delivery, students are assigned leads to each key role, such as 'Communication Lead', 'Marketing Lead', 'Organisation Lead', 'Budget Lead', etc. Overall, the project trained each lead and showed them what a model project could look like.
- Each project 'Lead' had to manage their team. The students then selected/identified students who wanted to be part of each team.
- Leaders received badges so students could know whom to go to.

Stage 4 - Act

Projects delivered

- Designed and published a healthy eating cookbook using Food Bank supplies.
- Designed and produced sustainable packaging for food collection and distribution.
- Explored ways through social media to promote the project and gain support.
- Established, promoted and maintained a monthly food/funding collection system across Tilbury and Chadwell businesses.

The projects above were delivered and, in part, took place in lessons and after school.

Stage 5 - Reflect

- The young people 'reflected' throughout their journey using the passport, which also enabled them to assess the improvement in their skills from the start of the project to the end.
- Feedback was obtained from the primary school teaching staff and pupils on the enjoyment and benefits of the experience.
- Community baseline and post-event surveys demonstrate a greater awareness of food poverty and its positive impact.
- Newspaper articles and project deliverables were shared with the local community, parents and carers (i.e. recipe book)

The school has started an additional project to engage new cohorts of young people.

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