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# HeadStart Kernow Learning: Engaging young people meaningfully in digital co-researching: a case-study (November 2021)



Nothing About Us  
Without Us

Aged 16-24?

Live in Cornwall?

Passionate about Climate Change and  
the Environment?

Looking to gain skills and experience?

This is a unique opportunity to be involved in research which will involve people from different parts of the county and from different organisations (Boing Boing, University of Brighton and HeadStart). It is an opportunity to build confidence, experience, skills and knowledge as well as connecting with new people. Please see the NAUWU Application Form for more information.



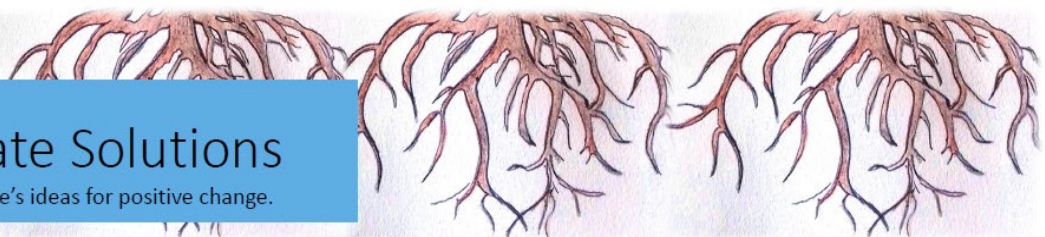
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## Climate Solutions

Young people's ideas for positive change.



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For more titles in this series see:  
<https://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/learning/local-learning>

## Summary

This is a case-study on the Cornwall experience of the 'Nothing About Us Without Us' (NAUWU) project, funded by the Medical Research Council. NAUWU investigates how civic activism can be used as an intervention to support mental health and is led by Boingboing in partnership with three HeadStart areas: Blackpool Council, Cornwall Council and Newham Council. You can read more about the project here: <https://www.boingboing.org.uk/civic-activism-mental-health-intervention/>

The NAUWU project was delivered in two phases (spring 2020-summer 2021), over the course of the coronavirus pandemic. Over this 16 month period the UK as a whole adapted to the necessity of digital and home working. There was a mass upskilling across the country in the use of online collaboration tools, settings, filters and 'the mute button'. Working online became more 'normal', online meeting etiquette developed, and the risks associated with data protection and safeguarding better understood and mitigated. Despite this, engaging young people digitally remained a challenge as established approaches do not translate to the online world. In Phase 1, engagement activities were quickly adapted to being delivered online, and showed us that an adapted approach to digital co-researching was also needed.

In Phase 2 (summer 2021) the three HeadStart areas worked in separate teams focusing on different areas of activism. Each team involved youth co-researchers, community partners (e.g. local council, third-sector groups) and academic researchers. Blackpool co-researched 'past activism', Newham 'current activism' and Cornwall 'future activism'. The three teams then came back together to share learning at the online NAUWU Resilience Forum on Thursday 22 July 2021.

The Phase 2 Cornwall team is a consortium of Cornwall Council staff, youth co-researcher, and PhD researchers from the University of Brighton.



Joe Bulman (youth co-researcher)  
 Viktoria Erlacher (University of Brighton)  
 Mirika Flegg (University of Brighton)  
 Hannah Tallis (HeadStart Kernow  
 Engagement and Coproduction Officer,  
 Cornwall Council)

This project was supported by Natalie Russell (HeadStart Learning Lead, Cornwall Council) and Janine Bisson (STEM Project Co-ordinator). Cornwall would like to thank Richard Lander School and Falmouth School and their pupils for taking part in this project.

The Cornwall team applied learning from Phase 1 and situated the co-research project to make it meaningful to young people. We developed our professional practice in digital co-researching, better defined the roles of the adult and youth

co-researchers and created an approach that successfully married co-production and research.

The outputs from Phase 2 demonstrate the success of the approach we developed to digital co-researching. Over April and May 2021 the Cornwall team of adult and youth co-researchers designed and delivered climate activism workshops to 33 pupils in two secondary schools (4 workshops in total)

- Group of four Year 10 pupils in Falmouth School
- Class of Year 7 pupils in Richard Lander School

Feedback from young people at the workshops contributed to local, national and international climate change discussions. They also informed the design and content of two Train the Trainer videos. These help young people think of ways to solve complex problems in their community and to think about how we are all connected and the value of people coming together to solve problems:

- Root Cause Tree Activity <https://youtu.be/XH8I5vTsY7A>
- Elm Tree Activity <https://youtu.be/YxuzHEfSyo8>

This case-study provides details on the digital co-researching approach we have developed as a team of co-researchers from Cornwall Council and the University of Brighton. It reflects on the learning from Phase 2 in Cornwall and identifies learning to further improve the effectiveness of digital co-researching.

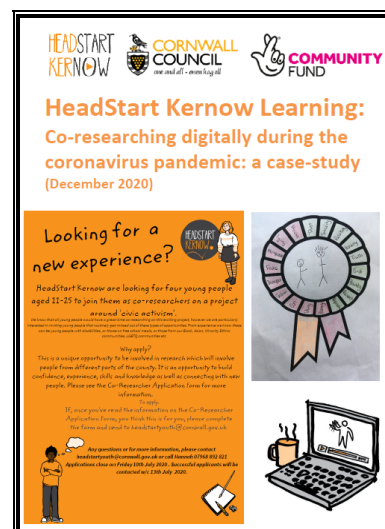
## Our Approach

### Reflective practice

During de-brief sessions in Cornwall the adult and youth co-researchers reflected on the co-researching process and the wider impacts and legacy of NAUWU.

HeadStart Kernow is a reflective learning team. Following Phase 1 Cornwall released a case-study on the practical challenges of digital co-researching. It describes how we recruited young people with lived experience of disadvantage to the project and supported them to engage.

The Phase 1 case-study provides examples of risk assessments, certificates, online engagement tools and other materials.

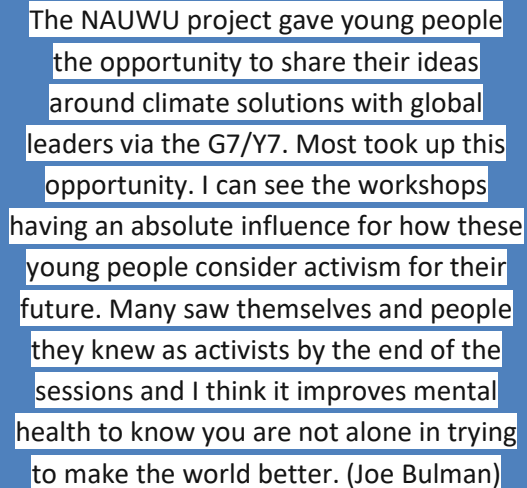


(Phase 1 report available at [www.headstartkernow.org.uk/learning/local-learning/](http://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/learning/local-learning/))

The Phase 2 youth co-researcher, Joe Bulman, provides a rich insight into his experience as a youth co-researcher in his blog (see appendix). He reflects on the positive impacts of the project on his development and future career and on

the impact the project had on the thirty young people who took part in the workshops in two schools.

Further feedback arose from discussions with partnering schools, and cross-partnership discussions across all the project areas.



The NAUWU project gave young people the opportunity to share their ideas around climate solutions with global leaders via the G7/Y7. Most took up this opportunity. I can see the workshops having an absolute influence for how these young people consider activism for their future. Many saw themselves and people they knew as activists by the end of the sessions and I think it improves mental health to know you are not alone in trying to make the world better. (Joe Bulman)

The youth co-researchers in the schools provided feedback on the workshops. Feedback included:

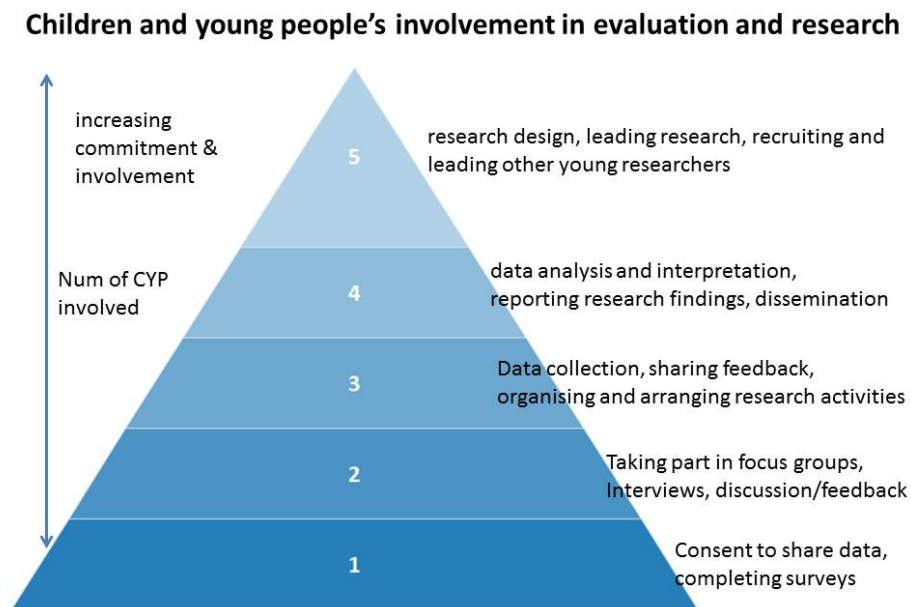
- Discussion about diversity and the inclusion of UK-based climate solution activists from minority ethnic communities
- Youth co-researchers in schools provided specific examples of climate activism that had inspired them

To demonstrate that we listened, we incorporated examples of climate activism from minority ethnic communities in our presentation slides for the conference and future workshops. We also developed Train the Trainer videos to support the training and development of youth representatives. We prepared reports for each of the partnering schools showcasing the ideas young people shared. We used visuals to make these reports accessible to students as well as schools' staff. To raise awareness, we talked about young people's expressed wishes around representation and climate solutions within and across partnering organisations. Wherever possible, we shared what young people said in their own words with decision makers. Decisions around how to 'act' on young people's ideas were made within our intergenerational team via reflective practice.

### **Meaningful engaging across the full range of the Engagement Pyramid**

The main benefit of co-researching is that young people are put at the core of research about their own emotional health and well-being. This is key to meeting the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states the right of the child to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously (Article 12).

The NAUWU project sought meaningful engagement with young people across the full range of the Engagement Pyramid (see chart below). At the top end children and young people have a leading role in research design and recruiting and leading other youth co-researchers. This involves significant participation and commitment from the youth co-researchers and support from adult co-researchers.



(Reproduced with permission from Lee Atkins at the Child Outcomes Research Consortium, based on the 'ladder of participation' (Roger Hart 2015))

We learned in Phase 1 that delivery model (e.g. delivering 100% online) impacts on the number of young people who can be meaningfully engaged at the top end of the engagement pyramid. Digital co-researching needs to be with much smaller groups of young people than in face-to-face work. In Phase 2 we recruited one youth co-researcher, as opposed to four in Phase 1.

In Phase 2 we took a blended approach, with opportunities available to young people across the Engagement Pyramid. In addition to the co-research elements at the top end of the Pyramid, Phase 2 of the NAUWU project involved co-design workshops for larger groups of pupils. This was a highly effective method for 100% online delivery.

### **A project with a purpose**

In the Phase 1 case-study we reflected on how 'co-production' and 'co-researching' are distinct, but complementary, specialisms. There was an apparent clash between the principles of 'equality of voice' in co-production, where projects are designed bottom-up, and the structure typically seen in research, which is often 'top-down'. The youth co-researchers in Phase 1 told us that they wanted more structure to the project in order to produce meaningful outputs.



Cornwall applied the learning to Phase 2 and spent considerable time planning the co-research project before recruiting a youth co-researcher. Our aim was to design a project that married two seemingly opposing constructs: structure with flexibility. During this process we better defined the role of the adult co-researcher as being one that provided structure to the project and a 'space' for the youth co-researcher to fill with their ideas.

Over several early planning meetings we situated the project within 'climate change' and 'the environment' because we knew that these were topics that young people in Cornwall cared about. The youth co-researchers in Phase 1 said that this was a topic that they wanted to explore more. 'Climate change' is also strongly associated with eco-anxiety. This made a meaningful link between civic activism and supporting mental health (the purpose of the NAUWU project).

### Climate anxiety

Through the work Cornwall Council supports on climate change, we know that for some people there are significant concerns and anxiety around the climate crisis. *Researchers coined the term "eco-anxiety" to describe chronic or severe anxiety related to humans' relationship with the environment.* There is an increasing realisation that for mental wellbeing and for positive outcomes for the planet to be achieved, we need to be looking to identify solutions rather than the problems.

Cornwall Council has worked alongside a primary school in west Cornwall to co-create a Children's Assembly activity for children to take part in as a mechanism for hearing their ideas, concerns and the things they wanted to celebrate. As part of this resource, it was identified that it was important for children and young people to identify the key things they would ask of decision makers and leaders but also to ask them to identify what they could do for themselves too. This helps to embed a way of thinking that encourages not solely the identification of problems, but of solutions.

This way of approaching the activity enabled young people to consider activities or actions that they could take as well as what was needed from others. Children and Young People are not passive recipients in our society, they are an integral part with skills, knowledge and assets. Activities such as this can help to instil a sense of belonging and connection together with an improved confidence and realisation that they can make a difference in ways that are individual to them and their circumstances.

Cornwall took a solution-focused and assets-based approach to digital co-researching. For example, we talked about finding 'climate solutions' rather than focusing on the 'climate crisis' and we focused on celebrating young peoples' everyday contributions. This is very important when working on topics of emotional health and wellbeing and with young people with lived experience of disadvantage.

The Cornwall team also identified a clear purpose for the outputs that we were going to produce. Cornwall Council declared a Climate Emergency on 22 January 2019 and a Climate Change Action Plan was developed to outline the work needed to become carbon neutral by 2030

([www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/climate-emergency/](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/climate-emergency/)). Cornwall had also recently formed a network of Carbon Neutral Cornwall Youth Ambassadors and there was increasing media and local interest in the forthcoming G7 meeting of world leaders at Carbis Bay in 11-13 June 2021 (with climate change a policy priority).

The G7 is the Group of 7 leading democracies of the world. The leaders met together in Cornwall in June 21 to discuss their joint policy priorities:

- leading the global recovery from coronavirus while strengthening our resilience against future pandemics
- promoting our future prosperity by championing free and fair trade
- tackling climate change and preserving the planet's biodiversity
- championing our shared values

(taken from [www.g7uk.org](http://www.g7uk.org))

We saw an opportunity for the outputs from the NAUWU project to make a real world impact. We linked up with the Y7 Cornwall at Cornwall Council, which was created to bring together ideas and to present a shared communication to the world leaders attending the G7 summit. This provided a platform for bringing together the voice of children and young people from Cornwall around what matters to them. It is distinct from the international Y7 (facilitated by Future Leaders Network).

We then further developed our team by bringing in colleagues who had a specific knowledge and skills in climate change and environmental issues as well as having an interest and understanding of activism. We worked with Janine Bisson in the Education Business Partnership who co-ordinates the Carbon Neutral Cornwall Youth Ambassador Network. This gave the team access to a number of schools across Cornwall via their Eco Leads. We brought in Viktoria Erlacher, a PhD student at the University of Brighton who works alongside Mirika Flegg at the Centre of Resilience for Social Justice and is a Boingboing CiC volunteer. Viktoria is working on a climate crisis piece of work alongside young people from HeadStart Blackpool.



Although we had a set output (i.e. G7/Y7), we co-developed additional outputs based on the needs and wishes of those we engaged with. For example, we developed some Train the Trainer videos and a blog around being a co-researcher when young people expressed that they wished to see more diversity around climate leadership. In this way, we were able to offer structure and flexibility.

### Recruiting the youth co-researcher

In Phase 2 Cornwall continued in our approach to actively recruit a youth co-researcher to the project (as opposed to inviting individuals already known to HeadStart). This approach worked well to sustain engagement over several weeks as youth co-researchers had a clear interest and commitment to the subject. We advertised for a youth co-researcher who had a specific interest in climate issues.

In Phase 2 we learned that young people did not always see themselves or others like them as activists. However, it quickly became clear that they were actively taking steps to care for the environment. Throughout the NAUWA programme we developed our understanding of what motivates young people to engage AND have their contributions acknowledged. Throughout the NAUWU programme we developed our understanding of what motivates young people to engage:

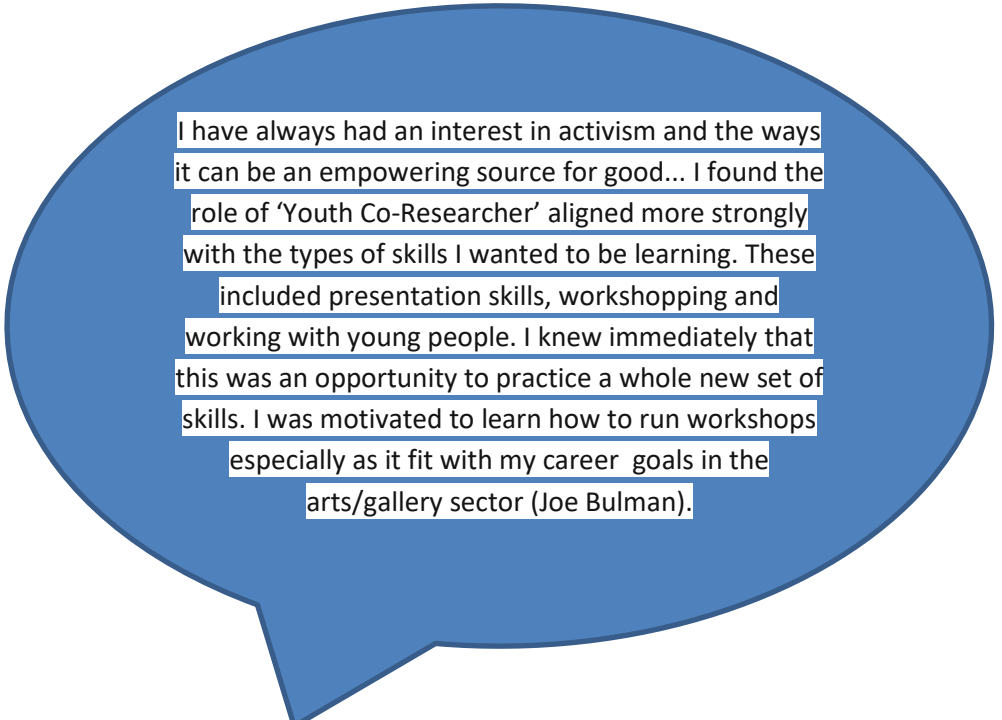
- to be involved in a purposeful and meaningful project
- to meet and work with new people
- to develop personal and professional skills, gain knowledge and get experience that can be used for their future career
- to have a say in how their ideas are shared with decision makers and acknowledged
- to see that their contributions are thoughtfully considered and acted on to create outputs that they are proud of



Cornwall advertised the opportunity to be a youth co-researcher through our networks, including social media.

We recruited a youth co-researcher who was on a KickStart Scheme placement with Cornwall Council. Kickstart is a government scheme open to young people who are: aged 16-24, currently on Universal Credit, at risk of long-term unemployment. Recruitment onto Kickstart was happening in the same timeframe as recruitment for NAUWU Phase 2 Youth Co-researchers and provided an opportunity for the young person.

The youth co-researcher was recompensated by HeadStart for his expenses through 'subsistence payments'. This was to align Cornwall with Blackpool and Newham who paid young people for their time and involvement. It ensured equality across the areas for the young co-researchers. The youth co-researcher was not motivated by money to apply but was pleased to have his contribution valued in this way.



I have always had an interest in activism and the ways it can be an empowering source for good... I found the role of 'Youth Co-Researcher' aligned more strongly with the types of skills I wanted to be learning. These included presentation skills, workshoping and working with young people. I knew immediately that this was an opportunity to practice a whole new set of skills. I was motivated to learn how to run workshops especially as it fit with my career goals in the arts/gallery sector (Joe Bulman).

### Engaging schools in co-research

We offered the Future in Activism Workshops to schools as part of our communication in the collaboration around activity for G7. As the focus was on climate and environment, we led with schools who had registered and vested interest through the STEM coordinator who also leads on Eco-Schools. We aimed to get two or three different groups of young people involved. We had two schools keen to engage straight away so dates and times were established.

## Summary of Learning

Digital co-researching requires different methods than traditional face-to-face engagement. A blended approach across the Engagement Pyramid is most effective in ensuring meaningful engagement with large numbers of young people in a project delivered 100% online.

The adult co-researcher fulfils a specific role in providing structure to the co-researching project that facilitates the youth co-researchers to provide their ideas and input. The adult co-researcher must have advanced skills to create a space in which the youth co-researchers can flourish. Taking a solution-focussed and assets-based approach is key for projects involving young people with issues of mental health and wellbeing.

Part of the role of an adult co-researcher is to work with young people to identify the skills they need to develop to achieve their own personal goals via the project. It is about getting to know the young person's career and life ambitions and taking that extra time to think about what tasks they can be supported to undertake that will help develop these skills. If we had had a youth co-researcher with different career interests to the youth co-researcher that we were working with, we would have involved them in a different way. These projects are an opportunity to support young people's future employment so we take a primarily person-centred, but also development-centred approach in relation to that person's needs, wishes and goals.

### Learning from Phase 1

Adult co-researchers need advanced skills, including the ability to:

- build rapport with young people and use accessible language
- manage group dynamics and support quieter youth co-researchers to contribute
- reflect on the project, take feedback and make changes

### Learning from Phase 2

Adult co-researchers:

- set the tone and approach (solutions-focussed and assets-based)
- give strategic purpose to the project to make it meaningful
- shape the team and recruit specialist support and youth co-researchers
- create a 'space' for the youth co-researchers to fill with their ideas

Young people are motivated by many factors to engage in a co-research project. Interest in the subject and opportunity to gain experience and outputs that they can use to further their careers are more important. Paying for young peoples' time is an additional way to communicate to them that their contribution is valued and essential. However it is unlikely to be their main motivation for engagement.

A reflective learning approach is key to the success of the project. Application of learning from Phase 1 to Phase 2 resulted in project outputs and learning on digital co-researching.

## About the Authors

This report has been produced at Cornwall Council by Natalie Russell (HeadStart Learning Lead, Cornwall Council) and Hannah Tallis (HeadStart Kernow Engagement and Coproduction Officer, Cornwall Council). It is based on learning from the Phase 2 NAUWU project delivered in collaboration with Mirika Flegg (University of Brighton), Viktoria Erlacher (University of Brighton) and Joe Bulman (youth co-researcher). This project was supported by Janine Bisson (STEM Project Co-ordinator). We would like to thank Richard Lander School and Falmouth School and their pupils for taking part in this project.

## Acknowledgments and Thanks

'Nothing About Us Without Us' is led by the Centre of Social Justice at the University of Brighton with youth co-researchers who have experienced disadvantage. The project is funded by the government's Strategic Priorities Fund and delivered by the Medical Research Council with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Economic and Social Research Council as part of UK Research and Innovation. Project partners include the University of Brighton, Queen's University of Belfast, Blackpool Council, Cornwall Council and Newham Council.



**Medical  
Research  
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Humanities  
Research Council**



**Economic  
and Social  
Research Council**

HeadStart Kernow is part of the Together for Families directorate of Cornwall Council. Cornwall are members of the Child Outcomes and Research Consortium (CORC), which collects and uses evidence to enable more effective child-centred support, services and systems to improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Co-production is a key strand of the HeadStart Kernow programme.

The HeadStart Kernow programme is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. HeadStart aims to explore and test new ways to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 10 to 16 and prevent serious mental health issues from developing. To do this, six local authority led HeadStart partnerships are working with local youth co-researchers, schools, families, charities, community and public services to design and try out new Facilitator interventions that will make a difference to youth co-researcher's mental health, wellbeing and resilience. The HeadStart partnerships are in the following locations in England: Blackpool; Cornwall; Hull; Kent; Newham; Wolverhampton.

Cornwall would also like to thank the voluntary and community sector organisations in Cornwall who supported the recruitment process. We would like to thank the University of Brighton for the opportunity to join this research project with Blackpool Council and partners. It has provided us with an opportunity to explore our understanding of how to involve young people as co-researchers and add value to our HeadStart Kernow work.

## Resources and Further Reading

### Websites

Boingboing [www.boingboing.org.uk/co-producing-guide](http://www.boingboing.org.uk/co-producing-guide)

Child Outcomes Research Consortium [www.corc.uk.net](http://www.corc.uk.net)

HeadStart Kernow [www.headstartkernow.org.uk/learning](http://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/learning)

StartNow [www.startnowcornwall.org.uk](http://www.startnowcornwall.org.uk)

The National Lottery Community Fund  
[www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/headstart](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/headstart)

UK Research and Innovation  
[www.ukri.org/our-work/delivering-economic-impact/strategic-priorities-fund/](http://www.ukri.org/our-work/delivering-economic-impact/strategic-priorities-fund/)

Unicef [www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/](http://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/)

Y7 Cornwall [www.y7cornwall.co.uk](http://www.y7cornwall.co.uk)

## Guidance

Cornwall Council's 'Effectively Working Together with Young People: Engagement and Participation Guidance' available upon request.

Cornwall Council's 'Commissioning Toolkit', in particular the 'co-design engagement plan' available at [www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-services/one-vision/projects/commissioning/commissioning-toolkit/analyse/co-design-engagement-plan/](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-services/one-vision/projects/commissioning/commissioning-toolkit/analyse/co-design-engagement-plan/)

Blackpool Council and Boing Boing's 'The Revolution Researchers Guide to Co-Producing Research' available at [www.boingboing.org.uk/co-producing-guide/](http://www.boingboing.org.uk/co-producing-guide/)

CORC's case-study on '*Engaging Children and Young People Meaningfully in Evaluation and Research: Learning from HeadStart*' available at [www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit/sites/evidence-based-practice-unit/files/engaging\\_cyp\\_in\\_meaningful\\_research\\_learning\\_from\\_headstart.pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit/sites/evidence-based-practice-unit/files/engaging_cyp_in_meaningful_research_learning_from_headstart.pdf)

HeadStart Kernow (December 2020), Co-researching digitally during the coronavirus pandemic: a case-study (December 2020), available at [www.headstartkernow.org.uk/Learning/HSK Learning Co-researching digitally.pdf](http://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/Learning/HSK_Learning_Co-researching_digitally.pdf)

## Appendices

Joe Bulman blog (taken from [www.boingboing.org.uk/youth-activism-cornwall-co-research](http://www.boingboing.org.uk/youth-activism-cornwall-co-research)).

### Reflections from a Youth Co-Researcher Mapping the prominence of activism in Cornwall

Posted by CRSJ / Boingboing / ResilienceRevolution | Jul 20, 2021



### Reflections from a Youth Co-Researcher Mapping the prominence of activism in Cornwall

By Joe Bulman

If you are thinking about getting involved in co-production work, this blog is for you. Here, I share my experiences about my first project as a youth co-researcher on the Nothing About Us Without Us (NAUWU) Project and introduce some of the resources we have created.

The Nothing About Us Without Us (NAUWU) project considers links between activism, identity and mental health. Young people in Cornwall, Blackpool and Newham have co-produced the research and all the activities. You can read more about it [here](#). In Cornwall, the NAUWU project focused on Activism in the Future and included a number of workshops in schools around climate solutions. The G7/Y7 was coming to Cornwall, and it was a real opportunity for

***"The G7/Y7 was coming to Cornwall, and it was a real opportunity for young people's voices to create positive change, building their resilience in the process."***



young people's voices to create positive change, building their resilience in the process.

***"I found the role of 'Youth Co-Researcher' aligned more strongly with the types of skills I wanted to be learning. These included presentation skills, workshopping and working with young people."***

I was connected to the NAUWU project through Cornwall Council. After getting in contact with them in the pursuit of a Kickstart scheme, I found out about the NAUWU co-researcher role. I have always had an interest in activism and the ways it can be an empowering source for good. Up until then, I had only explored this interest through short-lived protests or small changes I could make in my daily life. I found the role of 'Youth Co-Researcher' aligned more strongly with the types of skills I wanted to be learning. These included presentation skills, workshopping and working with young people. I knew immediately that this was an opportunity to practice a whole new set of skills. I was motivated to learn how to run workshops especially as it fit with my career goals in the arts/gallery sector.

The process happened quickly. Once the first few emails were sent, I soon found myself in the midst of the project planning process. I was instantly considered vital to the success of the workshops by my co-workers, Hannah Tallis and Mirika Flegg. Initially, I was worried I might not have much to offer to team, but I quickly learnt that my insights and skills were hugely respected as a key member of the group. Although I originally thought this was just a way to gain professional experience, I soon learnt that I had the opportunity to push myself in all aspects of workshop management and had been granted rich insights into how these workshops develop and present themselves differently again and again. I quickly learned that my perspective as a young person was also hugely valuable because I could relate strongly to the young people and had a good idea of what they would want from a workshop.

***"Initially, I was worried I might not have much to offer to team, but I quickly learnt that my insights and skills were hugely respected as a key member of the group."***

See also:



**Nothing about us  
without us: civic  
activism as a mental  
health intervention**

***"..we also found that including a diverse example of activists is also wise, as we are trying to represent a whole spectrum of people."***

When planning the workshops, we learnt so much from bouncing off of one another and sharing our knowledge as individuals. It really helped to have a team with a variety of talents and I believe this dynamic made a more cohesive presentation that the young people would respond too with greater success. I remember being encouraged to critique and produce what we would present, and how it would look. This formed an approach that not only sought to include famous activists that we all would know, but local activists too, as we wanted to push this idea that activism can develop anywhere. I believe understanding that parents and teachers can be activists helps too, because young people look up to them on such subjects. By the end of the workshops, young people had identified school staff that they felt made a big difference in their community.

After listening to what some of the young people had to say, we also found that including a diverse example of activists is also wise, as we are trying to represent a whole spectrum of people. This is to hammer home the idea that activism is open to all who strive to make a change for good, not just celebrities/famous people or those that have additional privileges because of class or race. In addition, I found that at the beginning of the workshops a few of the young people thought they didn't know enough about activism or mental health in order to truly participate. After a few slides and activities in our presentation however, these young people were actively discussing and commenting on why they thought activism was vital in local communities. This change in self-belief was a true theme of the workshops, and one I empathised with as I discovered how to present slides of my own, which is not something I have ever done before this project. I doubted my ability to even host such workshops, but through practice sessions, previews of the presentation slides and an open mind, I soon felt comfortable enough to take on a slide or two.

As a group, we produced two videos reflecting on our experiences of some of the activities that worked really well. These activities may help train other young people to do this sort of work. You can watch these videos here and use them in your own work:

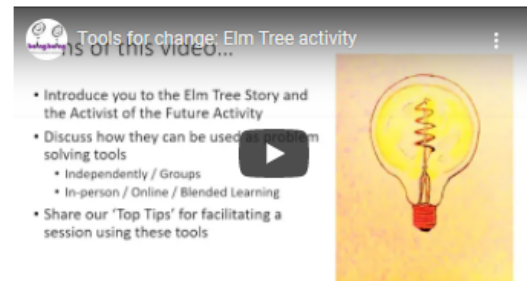
#### Tools for Change: Root Cause Tree Tool

A short train-the-trainer video introducing an activity that can help young people think of ways to solve complex problems in their community.



#### Tools for Change: Elm Tree Story

A short train-the-trainer video introducing an activity to help people think about how we are all connected, and the value of different people coming together to solve problems.



The NAUWU project gave young people the opportunity to share their ideas around climate solutions with global leaders via the G7/Y7. Most took up this opportunity. I can see the workshops having an absolute influence for how these young people consider activism for their future. Many saw themselves and people they knew as activists by the end of the sessions and I think it improves mental health to know you are not alone in trying to make the world better.

After we completed the workshops, I realised I had developed a range of transferrable talents of my own. Not only has this experience allowed me the chance to enact workshops with young people, but it has also developed my own knowledge about the environment, mental health, and what it can mean to be an activist as an individual. Personally, I have developed a range of diverse skills including problem solving the nuances of critiquing work you hope to present. In addition, I have hosted online workshops to a class of 20+ young people, which is another thing I have never had the opportunity to do before.

These skills in developing workshops, as well as a newfound knowledge regarding mental health and the environment, are key lessons I hope to take forward into my future career. I am now in full time employment, and I currently work for the Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange in Penzance as a 'Gallery Assistant.' I have always wanted to run my own arts workshops and the NAUWU project gave me an opportunity to learn the skills I need to do them in the future. I would strongly urge other young people to get involved with the work Cornwall Council, Boing Boing and University of Brighton produce. This process is enriching, and you will leave the sessions equipped with a whole new set of skills, that can be applied to any future career. As a co-researcher, you will be granted stewardship of a transformative project from beginning to end, work closely with a team of academics and have the chance to do things you never thought you could do. It is a flexible arrangement and one that can really enhance professional and personal development. If you have the time and resources, there is a wealth of experience that can be gained.

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