EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH SPORTS

ACTIVE LIFE CLUB

BME YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

BY ACTIVE LIFE CLUB RESEARCH GROUP

GOVANHILL, GLASGOW

WWW.ACTIVELIFECLUB.WORDPRESS.COM

MARCH 2012

Chair's Introduction

Active life Club (ALC) is an organisation run since 1999 by unpaid volunteers with no core funding. It provides a range of recreational and diversionary activities for young people from the Govanhill, Pollokshields, Toryglen, Kings Park and Mount Florida areas of Glasgow. ALC aims to promote the social, physical and mental well-being of disadvantaged and excluded groups in Glasgow. It believes in the abilities and contribution of young people. It develops short sports programmes with different communities to build religious and racial understanding and provides tailored provision for young people to become active citizens.

Over the years ALC has used sport and other means to engage young people in leadership. Members have been involved in Speak up be Heard, Show Racism the Red Card, SEMPERscotland, a leadership development residential course, consultations, focus groups, giving speeches at events, coaching and mentoring and becoming office bearers on the Management Committee. The club and young people have won many awards for being an excellent model of practice.

This research project is unique as the young people have stayed actively involved for eighteen months. Completing and presenting research findings has taken their learning to another level. This young Research Team is now competent to play an active role in researching other community issues. I am delighted that they are receiving Millennium Volunteering Certificates for their contribution.

It makes me proud that a small voluntary project is making a big contribution in the lives of young people. I strongly believe that ALC is offering an excellent model of practice, and with the right financial support it can offer a well needed service to many more young people. I am very thankful to the young people for their commitment and dedication to bring change and for working under my leadership. I thank the university researchers Katie and Richard for giving their time to this project. We are also thankful to partner agencies in trusting and working with us to inspire generations to come.

Raza Sadiq, Chairperson, Active Life Club. March 2012.

Foreword

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is often lauded as an ideal research process by academics and teachers of research methods courses.

However, the reality of research participants identifying the research topic, designing the project and conducting the research whilst also contributing their own experiences to the data and its analysis is hard work, complex and can appear messy. Maybe that is why there are relatively few examples of PAR available for others to learn from. The publication of this report of the PAR collaboration between Active Life Club Research Group and the volunteer university researchers is therefore significant. Not only does it demystify the processes and techniques of research, but it clearly demonstrates the research and employment-related skills and critical knowledge gained by the young researchers, making a strong case for future PAR projects.

Beyond the benefits gained through the process of research, the findings of the report are of great value to policy makers, education and employment-related organisations. The long-term and in-depth research has exposed hidden issues relating to the paucity of high quality work experience opportunities and employability advice accessed by BME communities in Glasgow. All the authors must be congratulated as through making these issues visible to diverse audiences, they are contributing to a brighter future for young people in Glasgow and elsewhere.

Dr. Georgie Wemyss, author *The Invisible Empire: White Discourse, Tolerance and Belonging* (Ashgate: 2009)

Contents

About Active Life Club 1

About this project 2

Developing the research project 4

Objectives of the research project 6

Research methods 6

Learning by doing research 10

Literature and policy context 11

Research findings 15

Concluding themes 32

References 34

Contacts 34

Acknowledgements 34

About Active Life Club

Active Life Club (ALC) has provided leisure, networking, training and lobbying opportunities to young people in the south side of Glasgow since 1999. A voluntary management committee led by Raza Sadiq has made sure that ALC is open to all. It has a particularly strong representation from BME youth, notably those from South Asian backgrounds aged between 12 and 22.

An initial focus of the club was to provide opportunities such as football, badminton and cricket to young people. As the club evolved, residential and outdoor pursuits were organised to develop leadership skills; group members have experienced life coaching and mentoring and have shadowed politicians. Raza's interest in community development has created a range of personal learning opportunities for group members such as skills accreditation in football, cricket, badminton and canoeing, first aid and child protection, committee skills, time management, project management, fund raising and youthful leadership. Local events such as community cricket matches and forums with the police have helped to open dialogue within the community; Eid events in the local park have helped engage with diverse communities, as has an Islamic Art Exhibition and working with the media. Over the past twelve years, Raza has supported the young people in a range of ways, helping them with their personal goals, providing information about local opportunities, supporting them with school and other learning and advancement, and adding to their opportunities to find work and training.

September 23, 2010: Active Life organised a 6-a-side cricket tournament at Clydesdale Cricket ground to raise around £8000 for the victims of the monsoon floods in Pakistan

About this project

Early in 2010, two researchers from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Strathclyde, Richard Brunner and Katie Hunter, interviewed members of Active Life Club for a research project exploring the lives of Scottish Pakistani people. Meeting with volunteer ALC leader Raza Sadiq afterwards, the researchers discussed ways in which they could make a contribution to thank the members for helping them. Raza suggested that several members could benefit from research skills training as they were starting to use these at school, college or university. In November 2010, the researchers met with the group and suggested that together they embark on a research project as a way to learn about research methods. The members involved became **Active Life Club Research Group**, with everyone giving their time voluntarily.

A collaborative Participatory Action Research project was devised that had both a research and a developmental aspect. The research aimed to explore young peoples' experiences of school, college and university work experience placements. The developmental aspect aimed to discover ways in which engaging in the research process and exploring this issue could help ALC members with their own circumstances.

Research group meeting

Members of Active Life Club and the university researchers worked together to choose the research topic, develop research questions, collect and analyse data and write the report.

Using a participatory approach to the research gave ALC members opportunities to use research skills, develop a critical understanding of an issue of importance to them and to widen and strengthen their network of contacts and support.

This project was also of benefit to the university researchers in allowing them to understand the lives of ALC members and in providing them with an opportunity to develop a participatory research project that could directly impact on the lives of these young people.

The research was conducted between November 2010 and September 2011, and was launched in March 2012.

BME Youth Unemployment: a fresh perspective is a collaborative project. The report was drafted by the university researchers with ongoing comments discussed and finalised by the whole group.

Authors
Abdullah Din
Adil Sattar
Atif Javaid
Katie Hunter
Laraib Raza
Osman Mehmood
Raza Sadiq
Richard Brunner
Sadia Anam
Zuhair Rauf

March 2012

Developing the research project

Participatory Action Research

From the outset, Participatory Action Research (PAR) approaches were adopted to deliver research skills training to ALC Research Group, rather than using traditional teaching methods. As the young people were at different stages in their educational careers, it was hoped that a PAR approach would have applicability to any school, college or university course or personal interest of the ALC members; that it would avoid replicating school experiences of learning; that it would be fun for a group who were all volunteers; and that the sustained nature of a PAR project would be a memorable experience for the young people. The project was therefore envisaged as collaborative learning, rather than a 'teaching' project. A key feature was the way in which the group were not only conducting a research project but were also research participants with their own experiences contributing to the research findings.

Choosing a research topic

The group spent the first six, fortnightly sessions with the researchers discussing issues facing ALC members, and learning about research conducted by other groups of young people. Expectations of what a research project would deliver in terms of action and change were discussed, and previous experiences of participating in research talked about, so as to begin to think what shape the project would take. Through discussion, interests were negotiated towards identifying research questions.

Research questions

The research questions developed through the project were:

- How do young Scottish Pakistani people in Glasgow enhance their employability through work experience placements and broader activities?
- What can make some of these young people feel 'stuck' whilst going through this process?
- What is it about the experiences of Scottish Pakistani young people which can make them think it is their own fault if they cannot find work experience placements or meaningful employment?

These questions focused on a problem affecting members of Active Life Club in terms of gaining meaningful work experience or employment which related to their skills, qualifications and interests.

Using a Participatory Action Research approach would allow the research group to identify and challenge aspects of this issue, including the sense of it being a burden on young people, and their sense that finding work experience placements and meaningful employment was solely down to them. By exploring the experiences of ALC members and their peers, the group could identify processes which created this deficit view, and gain an understanding of the forces that may help to lift them out of this position.

In considering what new information this research could add, the researchers highlighted the unique insights that the young people could bring to the topic due to their closeness in age to those being researched and by incorporating their own experiences, and those of their friends and family through group discussion.

Administration

Raza supported ALC members to take ownership of the research project by getting the group to elect their own leader to coordinate communication with the researchers and take minutes. A Facebook group was set up to facilitate contact. Meetings continued on occasional Saturdays, and on Tuesday evenings every two to three weeks for about an hour from October 2010 to July 2011, resuming again in September 2011 to finalise the report. Meetings between January and March 2012 focused on the launch event which combined disseminating the findings of the research with showcasing the contributions Active Life Club has made in the community.

Displays to showcase the work of Active Life Club at dissemination event

Objectives of the research project

The research dimension of the project involved the researchers facilitating group sessions to achieve the following objectives:

- To explore the extent to which young people experienced meaningful work experience placements

- To give young people from ALC an insight into a research process and experience of using relevant research methods

    - To identify and engage with the issue (see above) to be the focus of the research
    - To develop research questions and interview schedules
    - To identify research participants from which to collect data
    - To engage with ALC research group members to capture their own experiences as data
    - To gather and analyse data and to feed findings back into project development

- To disseminate the emerging findings of this work effectively to a varied audience

The developmental aspect of the project ran in parallel with this process with these objectives:

- To discover how critical engagement in this process could provide a catalyst for a change in terms of research group members' understanding of their own circumstances, their insight into the way that work experience and work placements are organised, and their understanding of the 'unwritten rules'

- To support members in a number of activities such as developing and strengthening networks and enhancing their CVs necessary for work and placement applications

Research methods

The research process had several interlinking strands: interviews, a series of case studies involving members of the research group, and the developmental process outlined earlier.

Research team in action

Interviews

Firstly the group identified young people to interview individually or in pairs about their experiences of work experience at school or finding placements at university or college. The group devised an interview schedule to guide the interviews which mainly took place with young people who attended ALC on a Saturday to play football or cricket. The interviewers described the aims and ethics of the project and audiorecorded conversational-style interviews with these participants.

The twelve interviewees ranged between ages 16 and 22 and were mainly male. Almost all were Scottish Pakistani and all except one had grown up in Govanhill. Older interviewees were interviewed about both school and college or university work placement experience. Therefore collectively, interviewees' experiences of school work placements covered the past six to seven years. College and university experiences were clustered over a much more recent period of time.

Table 1 below is an anonymised summary of the key characteristics of interviewees.

Table 1

Pseudonym	Age / Gender	Stage of Education	Work/education status when interviewed
Imran	16/male	S5	Looking for full time summer job.
Bilal	20/male	3rd Year University	Looking for work experience relevant to university course, also looking for a part time job.
Yaseen	20/male	3rd Year University	Looking for work experience relevant to university course, also looking for a part time job.
Hamza	22/male	Honours completed	Looking for work related to his degree.
Sufiyan	20/male	College	Looking for a part time job
Shazad	16/male	S5	Studying
Ali	20/male	3rd Year University	Work placement related to his course in Sweden.
Arfan	16/male	S5	Studying
Adam	22/male	Honours completed	Looking for work related to his degree.
Tasleem	17/female	S6	Studying
Nurgis	20/female	2nd Year University	Studying
Abdul	17/male	College	College

A series of case studies

The second strand involved drawing on past and current experiences of members of the research group. Group members' perceptions of their past experiences of seeking work, work experience and work placements provided a rich source of data, as did their attempts to find work, work experience and work placements during the period in which the research was being done. These case studies influenced both the development of the project and provided data to

complement that drawn from interviews. This data is incorporated into the research findings below. The following approaches were used during the project to draw out these experiences:

Discussion

- Facilitated discussion – findings emerged through individual stories about personal experiences being told by group members at fortnightly meetings, and through general opinion expressed about the issues
- Group meetings were audio recorded or notes were taken
- Ongoing discussion with Raza about emerging issues.

Observation

The university researchers met with, discussed and listened to the experiences of the group during the project. These activities helped the researchers to understand the issues involved in finding a 'good' work experience placement.

Activity

- The university researchers accompanied group members to careers fairs, helped with CV development, supported applications for work placements, introduced some of the young people to their own university contacts and other sources, and facilitated peer learning
- Individual group members reported back to the rest of the group on their efforts to find work, work placements, training and CV development
- Statistics and policy about young people and employment in Govanhill and Glasgow were collected and discussed.

Learning by doing research

During the project, the following research skills were used by ALC Research Group members:

- Reviewing secondary research, notably *Plassey's Legacy: Young Londoners explore the hidden story of the East India Company (2010)*
- Devising research questions (e.g. how have young people from Govanhill experienced work experience at school or finding meaningful work placements at university?)
- Research ethics (creating an Information sheet and Consent form for interviewees to sign, so they would know that what they said would be anonymous)
- Writing interview questionnaires about school and university work experience and placement experiences
- Recruiting interviewees
- Conducting research interviews (audio recorded for transcription and analysis)
- Devising research interview questions for a key informant
- Interviewing a key informant
- Video recording research interviews
- Transcription (typing up the recorded research interviews)
- Critical thinking (ALC Research Group members questioning what they previously thought they knew because of the discoveries made through the research)
- Data analysis. The project developed an innovative method of analysing data collected. The interview transcripts were read out at ALC Research Group meetings, with group members playing the different roles. The interviews were then discussed, comparing interviewees' experiences with members' own knowledge.

Other generic skills were also used:

- Teamwork; electing a research team leader; decision-making (e.g. deciding what topic to research).
- Team leader roles: task allocation, minute-taking, communication with the group by text and email, keeping a portfolio of the work conducted.

Literature and policy context

There is policy literature relating to young peoples' work experience and placements in Glasgow, previous research into black and ethnic minority young peoples' experiences, and data about the population of Govanhill.

The Glasgow Community Planning Partnership (GCCP) statutory Single Outcome Agreement (29 July 2009, at www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/A5D72770-3993-438F-B034-1E9CF547CDEA/0/GlasgowsSOA200910Final.pdf, sourced 25 February 2012) sets out plans that aim to contribute to the Scottish Government's fifteen national outcomes. Local Outcome 21 for Glasgow is aimed at children and young people:

> *'One of the primary goals of the Partnership is to create a learning Glasgow which ensures that children and young people have core skills, are confident and able to achieve their full potential, and which promotes life long learning and skills development of all citizens. To do this we must ensure that children and young people receive the best possible educational and vocational support to help fulfil their potential'* (2009: 39)

This goal aims to guarantee ('ensure') core skills and confidence to all young people through the 'best possible' educational and vocational support. This must include work experience at school and work placements at university. Local Outcome 21 also says:

> *Partners will work together to offer assessment and guidance to improve progression and increase aspirations with additional emphasis on increasing awareness of … the needs of young people from the Black and Minority Ethnic community in order to improve access to learning and to maximise opportunities that will help them achieve their full potential.* (2009: 39)

This proposes that assessment and guidance services should be working together to maximise opportunities for the black and minority ethnic community As the ALC research group and the sample of interviewees for the study was made up of ethnic minority young people, mainly Scottish Pakistani, the research provides insight into how this policy is working for young BME people.

Glasgow City Council also has responsibilities to support young people to fulfil their potential. The Council's factsheet on education (www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/AboutGlasgow/Factsheets/Glasgow/Education.htm, sourced 6 June 2011) notes:

> ***'Careers Scotland***
> *The Council works closely with Careers Scotland to provide guidance and advice on careers and job opportunities for people of all ages, especially young people about to leave school. The Council also co-operates with Careers Scotland to provide enhanced liaison and co-operation between business/industry and schools.*
>
> ***Glasgow's Vocational Training Programme***
> *The programme offers quality vocational training opportunities to young people throughout Glasgow's secondary schools. In addition, vocational training programmes have been further developed and targeted to meet the needs of other groups identified by the Council to ensure that the young people in Glasgow of secondary school age have the opportunity to flourish into the world of work, further education or training.'*

These re-emphasise how the Council and its partners have a responsibility to support young people both at school and when leaving school. It states that it does this firstly through co-operation between the Council, Careers Scotland (now Skills Development Scotland), business/industry and schools and secondly through quality vocational training being offered at school enabling young people to flourish after leaving school.

These commitments might be expected to have tackled issues raised in an in-depth research report *Employment aspirations and experiences of Black/Minority ethnic young people and their parents in Glasgow* (Rutherford et al 2003). This qualitative study involving forty four young people and nineteen parents saw BME young people indicating a taste for professional careers other than the *'traditional ones of law and medicine'* alongside a corollary need for Black/Minority ethnic young people to have networks and contacts outside their own community to boost chances of getting these jobs (2003: 42); indicated a lack of parental information about education and training options; suggested that BME young people experiencing low-skilled, low-pay jobs may drag down their future career preferences; and recommended *'Tackling the inadequacy of work experience choice whilst at school'* (2003: 5), in particular to support

students who are not ready to make a positive choice to test their career aspirations (2003: 31).

Similarly, Cassidy et al in *Young people's experience of transition to adulthood* (2006), exploring the views of both ethnic minority and white young peoples' experiences of transition to adulthood in Scotland found it *'surprising'* (2006: 14) that school work experience was not important for ethnic minority young peoples' career choices, found that wider work experience whilst at school tended to be gained through BME students' families, and indicated that families tended to strongly influence choices of further and higher courses taken by ethnic minority young people.

This study suggests that the issues raised in these reports are still relevant in 2011 for young Scottish Pakistani people from Govanhill.

Govanhill

All the young people interviewed for the study and in ALC Research Group grew up in Govanhill; most still live there. Data on the population of Govanhill can be accessed through the Glasgow City Council City Ward factsheet 2009 for Southside Central Ward, which covers a similar area. It allows comparison of the characteristics of Southside Central with those of Glasgow as a whole. Southside Central has 11.4% ethnic minorities, compared to 5.5% for the city as a whole. Over 90% of dwellings are flats, compared to 70% city-wide. 5.8% of Ward residents are unemployed compared to 5.4% across the city and 28.4% of people are on benefits compared to 24.3% in Glasgow. Southside Central residents are less likely to be in professional jobs, and more likely to have never worked (11.8% compared to 8.7%), and are less likely to have a car (68.2% compared to 56.2% do not own a car).

These figures indicate that residents of Southside Central, which includes Govanhill, have less chance of a well-paid or professional job, and are more likely to be on benefits or to have never worked, than the residents of Glasgow as a whole. The ethnic minority population in this area is also more than twice as high as the city as a whole.

This study, exploring how young ethnic minority people from Govanhill are supported to find work experience at school and work placements at university, therefore engages with the findings of previous studies into young BME people; aids understanding of whether the policies of Glasgow Community Planning Partnership

and Glasgow City Council are reaching young BME people; and adds data about the experiences of young people that may inform action on inequalities currently seen between Govanhill and other areas in the City.

Research findings

Introduction

This section outlines key themes to emerge from in depth analysis of the interviews and research group members' experiences as summarised in **Table 1** above. The three subsections relate to: school work experience placements; college and university placements; and issues related to guidance and support, which influence both students' school, college and university work placement opportunities. The findings are illustrated by quotes from the interviews conducted by the research group.

1. School Work Experience Placements

Most opportunities for school based work experience in the sample were offered in S4, with some students arranging extra work experience in S5. There was a mixed response as to whether the young people perceived that they gained anything valuable from school work experience.

A lot of work needed to be done by the young people in order to secure a placement, to get something from the placement itself and to make the most of it in terms being able to talk positively about it and translate it into something useful for their CV.

- ### Something for the CV

For some participants, the chance to gain experience in the world of work and add something to their CV and/or to gain contacts for potential future employment seemed a valuable dimension of school work experience.

> First I started off, you had to send like typed letters, you weren't typing them, you were given a bunch of letters, you had to fold them, put them in envelopes and send them, and then next day, I was doing the weekly record of takings where you go through records on the computer and you find out what the different departments, like the different House of Fraser branches – how much money they've took, and if they've completed and if they haven't then you send out a reminder.
>
> *Was this placement interesting and helpful for you?*
>
> Yeah – it was good, it was something to add to your CV. If I hadn't gone I wouldn't have much to write on my CV but obviously that I went it was good experience … they were all friendly, helpful.
> (Abdul)

In contrast, for others school work experience did not allow them to use enough skills.

> They gave me bad work to do. It's not even worth doing like photocopying stuff, um like donkeywork basically. Obviously I'm not going to learn anything if I'm just photocopying things … my attitude towards it, I was immature, childish, I should have had a more professional approach, a more mature approach towards it because obviously work experience is important, you do need it.
> (Nurgis)

Others faced difficulties in translating what they did into something useful for their CV even when, as can be seen here, their placement could be seen as highly relevant to their future career.

> I wanted to work in the body shop but I was put in the parts department and I was by myself... we were supposed to do one week but we only did I think two or three days ... the rest of the group were under the body shop department whereas I was in the parts department… I was bringing in orders and stuff so it wasn't the experience that I was looking forward to or hoping to achieve. So it was more merely just taking numbers and writing down stock codes and stuff so it wasn't anything related to the engineering degree that I wanted to go forward with.
> (Bilal)

- **Work experience and career plans**

For some young people, difficulties arised with actually securing a placement in the first place. Some described how they missed the deadline, that they did not have a plan, that it was their fault they had not come up with a plan, or that they had not spoken to the right teacher.

> *I would like to ask you about your experience at work placements at school, have you done any yet?*
>
> No I haven't, I haven't done any...
>
> *So who's fault do you think that was, do you think it was your fault?*
>
> Me, aye my fault, I wasn't really interested in it
> (Arfan)

Others experienced a weak connection with the teacher who organised placements, or, as in the following instance, they took too long to approach the relevant teacher:

> They just asked me 'do you want to find one through the school?' They gave you a website … but by the time I had done it half of the vacancies

> would have been taken up so there was not really much hope so I thought I would just go out and do my own thing ... I never looked at it, it was the teacher who told me, he goes 'you are quite late and like there's only about four vacancies left', out of I don't know how many it was, about a hundred or something so I just realised …they would have sent me to a nursing home or a childcare centre or something like that ...
> (Imran)

For those than managed to secure a placement there was the sense that this was devalued due to their not having a career plan. Imran described his work experience placement at his uncle's garage as *'just wasting a week and that was the best way to do it'*:

> If I had had more choices? Um, that's another thing really, I didn't have much of a plan so if I did have a plan of what I wanted to do in the future or one course that I wanted to stick with then I would have stuck by that I would have went somewhere in pharmacy, I would have went to Lloyds pharmacy or a chemists or something. But at that time I didn't have much of a plan so I just went wherever.
> (Imran)

By the time career plans had formed some felt it was too late. When Tasleem tried to organise her own work experience placement in S5 at a local primary school she discussed how only those taking less academic course options could use school time for this purpose:

> They only offered it [work experience placements] to people who are doing SVS [Social and Vocational Skills] … You can go ask anyone in my year, nobody's had it unless they've done SVS and not even many people got to do it … So we've not been offered it once … we did ask, like we were on study leave and she said 'no' and at the time I wanted to do primary teaching and I already asked a primary school about it and they were happy to do it with me but the teacher just never got round to helping as such and they were just saying 'you can't do it because you're on study leave', so I never got a chance to.
> (Tasleem)

In group discussion with Raza, he felt that being told 'no' by somebody in a position of authority could easily deter young people from pursuing their original career dreams. Rather than pursuing a teaching qualification, Tasleem is now taking a hair dressing qualification through a local academy.

Hamza, who had already graduated from university, reflected back on how his school work experience could have operated differently. He identified that whilst it might have helped him to gain useful experience of the workplace in general, he had the problem of not

knowing what career to pursue when in S4. However, this continued on into university:

> *Going back to yourself, how would you fix that, going back what changes would you make?*
>
> That's a good question. What I'd do is, I'd put more thought into my work placement in fourth year, and I'd go and see different companies.
>
> *Fourth year uni?*
>
> Fourth year school. Yeah, I'd start from school and work my way up. So at school I would think about what I was really interested in and go and do a placement with the company that could give me the best chance. And then what I'd do is in uni...
>
> *Were you focused in fourth year by that time about what you wanted to do?*
>
> I had no idea… Even at uni I had no idea what degree I was going to do, it was just because I got in for that degree! It wasn't focused and it's still not focused. Um, but what I'd do in uni is in second year, I mean I was doing a lot of stuff in second year as well … I was doing a shadowing scheme and obviously they were helpful, but I would start to think seriously in second year about whether I wanted to do some kind of sandwich degree or some kind of summer placement instead of leaving it to the last minute … That's something I've noticed, there's not that really that much push from Asian families, I was getting pushed but not in any particular direction, it was just do well, go to uni, that's true.
> (Hamza)

Hamza had a friend who had pursued accountancy directly from school and was now earning about £40K salary. Hamza attributed this to his friend's S4 work experience placement with an accountant, and that he always knew what he wanted to do. Hamza's friend's father was an accountant and had secured his placement, and as such, may have been influential in shaping his career choice. This contrasted sharply with Hamza's own experiences of education, work and family, without professional role models in his life. Most interviewees were also in this position.

- **Using family contacts for placements**

When participants had been dissatisfied with the work experience on offer, some had searched for their own placements. The research group discussed the issues arising from one interview where the participant had moved schools, missing out on a placement at Marks and Spencer provided by his old school and instead worked at his uncle's shop. At interview the participant felt he would have gained

more skills working in Marks and Spencer. The interviewer recognised and foregrounded some of the high level responsibility the young person was given in his family business which he may not have gained in Marks and Spencer.

> I worked in my uncle's shop.
>
> *In your uncle's shop? What did you do?*
>
> Managing the till.
>
> *Wow! Ok. What responsibilities does that involve?*
>
> (laughs) Putting money in the till and that's it.
>
> *Handling money?*
>
> Yeah.
>
> *That's a big responsibility. How often do you do that?*
>
> I just did it for the one week and that's it. Just to make up for the work placement that I missed...
>
> *Cos the school one didn't work out? So what did you learn during your time in your uncle's shop?*
>
> Basically just how to manage the till. I sat there all day, that's it.
>
> *Did you have to talk to people or anything?*
>
> No [silence]. Kind of people would just come in, buy their stuff and leave. (Shazad)

In contrast, another respondent talked about how they valued work experience at a well-known company, House of Fraser.

> Well I was just looking for ones that you could write on your CV,
> House of Frasers is a well known company, you could write if I've done a work placement for them it would be good on your CV.
>
> *So you said that House of Frasers is the best but do you think schools should contact other companies that are well known and stuff so like - ?*
>
> Yeah – they should go to better known companies, would actually help a lot more, because they've to get their reputation –
> (Abdul)

Group members contrasted their experience of working for family members with working in 'mainstream' workplaces noting that 'mainstream' employers, household names, looked *'better'* on a CV to prospective employers. When the university researchers

foregrounded that the young people appeared to gain more responsibilities and therefore wider skills and experience when working in family businesses at a young age than they could in a 'mainstream' business, the group found it hard to see it this way. They described other, negative issues affecting them when working for a family business such as having too much responsibility, low pay and working long hours. One of the university researchers helped a group member to build their CV, specifying the responsibilities and skills they had gained by working in the family shop.

Yaseen's CV prior to the research project:

Employment Experience

Dates	**Job Title**	**Employer**
2006- Present	Sales Assistant	Bargain Store

Bargain store is a family owned business. Whilst working there I have learned important skills like communication, customer service, cashier and stock taking. This has allowed me to gain some work experience first hand.

Yaseen's CV changes in discussion with researcher:

Employment Experience

Dates	**Job Title**	**Employer**
2006- Present	Sales Assistant	Bargain Store

Part time employment in a business owned by my parents. The responsibilities that I have are cash handling, stock taking, reconciliation, dealing with customers and opening/closing the shop. This has allowed me to gain important skills such as communication, customer service, team work and trustworthiness.

2. College and university placements

Some members of Active Life Club Research Group were now at college, university or had left university. The data presented below largely comes from experiences within the group as well as drawing on some interview data.

- **Non-traditional Higher Educational entrants: Lacking informed choice and playing 'catch up'**

Most interviewees over 17 were the first generation of their families to attend college or university in the UK. In discussion, the group felt that parents valued university education and wanted their children to get a degree. In part, this was socially expected within the local Scottish Pakistani community. However whilst parents were encouraging, the group felt that their parents could not provide informed advice on specific universities or courses, as reflected in Hamza's comments (above). Most participants were studying for courses of which their family had little or no experience. Parents did not have connections to employment, placements or training related to the types of courses that their children were now pursuing. Research group members at university had learnt in the process that some universities had a higher status than others and talked about this in terms of how employers would now be likely to view their qualifications.

Only one research group member had gained direct entry from school into the institution they were currently studying at. Most had entered university via college as shown below:

	1st institution on leaving school	**Transfer to 2nd institution**
Hamza	University of West of Scotland (pharmaceutical science)	Into 2nd year Glasgow University (Microbiology)
Sufiyan	Stow College (HNC Electrical and Electronics)	Plans to enter 3rd year at University of West of Scotland or Strathclyde University (Engineering)
Yaseen	Glasgow Metropolitan College (HND Information Technology)	Into 3rd year, West of Scotland University (BSc Business Technology)
Nurgis	Langside College (Interactive Media)	Into 2nd year Glasgow Caledonian University Interactive Media Development
Bilal	Glasgow Metropolitan College (HNC Business Studies)	Into 1st year, University of West of Scotland (Business and Accounting)

The areas of study chosen by the group: IT, engineering, finance, microbiology, are all areas closely related to industry and in which academic work is enhanced by experience within the relevant industry area. This is made explicit at the education institutions where for some courses provision is made to take a year out to complete a placement before finishing the course. Within the group discussions, it came to light that placement information was given in years one and two of courses. For example second year degree students were informed to take a placement in their third year. As non-traditional Higher Educational entrants, commonly transferring to second or third year at university from college, the young people felt that they had to pursue placements at a very late stage. In some cases, missed information could result in 'playing catch up'.

> I think they should give more info about vacancies because I've been told recently that because I'm in third year, they don't take on third years. It's no use to me now. If I had known this before then I would have applied during second year. More in depth info should be given beforehand so we know what's happening but I think there should be more support, they should be on-hand helping you in the process of your application form.
> (Bilal)

Coming in to a course late had a further impact. Hamza described balancing the demands of study with finding extra opportunities to enhance his CV:

> During uni I was trying to arrange things but you know uni work was pretty hectic so I didn't really get round to that ….I think I left it too late for that. By the time I started to think about work placement and jobs I was already in fourth year, and I didn't actually start applying until I think six months before I graduated, so I think I left that a bit too late.
>
> *Right, right. And was there any specific reason for that or just or was it just not in your mind about work experience?*
>
> I think I had it in my mind that I wanted to get the degree over and done with and not do anything that would cause me any extra effort or that would take any extra time because there are work placements that you can do, summer placements and all the rest of it, and at the time they look as though it's just a waste of time, you're wasting your own time.
> (Hamza)

Similarly Bilal talked about the extra work involved in finding a placement:

> …it's just about chasing up people and you do need, I mean you can't always sidetrack from your coursework and your exam and your studies

and then go off looking for a placement so you kind of have to balance both parts of your university life so it is a bit difficult.
(Bilal)

- **Not wanting to leave university with 'just a degree'**

It was widely accepted by the young people that it was beneficial to leave university with 'more than a degree', and that volunteering, internships or work placements would improve their chances of finding work on graduation. Hamza, a research group member, was struggling to find work on completion of his degree. Below Hamza tells the story of the journey he has taken to try and find work experience within his specialism.

Hamza's journey

I am a 23 year old Glasgow University graduate. I graduated in June 2010 with a Microbiology degree and I am still seeking employment using these skills in March 2012. I come from an Asian/Pakistani family background and I was the first person in my immediate family to go to university.

After graduating, I applied to a number of companies in my sector without success so I then applied to companies from a wide variety of sectors. After repeated rejections due to lack of experience, I considered a work placement scheme run by Forth Valley College, as this would have allowed me to fill the gaps in my knowledge and learn hands-on skills, but decided against this as the college was too far away from where I live.

I have two other BME friends in my position, both have 2:1 degrees from top Universities and, like myself, both are still seeking employment. Both of them have gone back to university in order to 'ride-out' the slump in jobs. They now face years of further education until they graduate and both are struggling financially to meet the cost of tuition and living expenses.

Many people I have spoken to are considering further education (Masters, PHDs etc) in order to ride out the recession. This puts additional pressure on places and university funding. I have also been advised to follow this route but I feel that I should only consider further education if it truly interests me and not for the sake of it.
The number of BME people in Science is extremely low. I was the only Asian person in my class for the last two years of my course.

The lack of jobs and funding will only exacerbate this problem.

Having thought about what I have achieved during my university career, I have concluded that my degree was essentially a waste of time as an employability exercise – it would have been much more beneficial if I had started working as soon as I left school and done the degree part-time. Indeed, I did have a Civil Service job lined up at the time but I felt that a degree would make me much more employable. This has not been the case.

I also feel that my degree failed to provide me with the basic hands-on skills required to work in a laboratory, a key requirement of any job in Microbiology. Greater focus was given to teaching a wider variety of modules than to equipping students with employability skills they would use in the workplace. I was also not advised until the end of my third year that the course had not been approved by any accrediting body. This not only put me at a serious disadvantage compared to students from other universities but also barred me from some jobs in the NHS without a costly top-up programme at another university. If I had been advised of this lack of accreditation I would have moved to another university which did offer accreditation. This lack of foresight by universities needs to be addressed to prevent future students from falling into the same trap I did.

During my work within the Active Life Club Research Project, one of the researchers put me in touch with someone from the University of Strathclyde who was able to set up a Work Placement for me within the University Biochemistry department.

This experience has been immensely useful to me in terms of learning hands-on lab skills and how to apply these in a commercial atmosphere. While this experience does not automatically guarantee me a job, it does put me in a better position than graduates with no experience. Although my job search has been slow I am constantly looking for new avenues – recently I have begun applying to jobs in England and overseas. This placement was beneficial to me because it gave me hands-on skills but also gave me a real insight into the work carried out in a laboratory and I am now much more confident in finding work within my chosen sector.

Hamza identifies the tendency of continuing in education as a means of avoiding a difficult job market, alongside making the point that work placement opportunities can come from networking with people.

In this case the university researchers used their professional connections to support Hamza. At the time of writing, those organising the placement were helping Hamza apply for jobs and identifying further work experience opportunities. Hamza commented to Raza one day, *'looking back I should have done an apprenticeship rather than a degree'*. In group discussion, Raza did not agree with Hamza's views but recognised that these young people needed much more added support to translate their qualifications into employment opportunities due to lack of professional connections.

Yaseen attended a careers fair organised by his university to try and get work experience that would enhance the qualifications for which he was studying. Participants were told that some of the internships designed for people mid way through their studies were being filled by graduates who had completed their studies, suggesting that the pressures to get unpaid work experience are increasing. Yaseen's story is below.

Yaseen's story

Yaseen is 20 years old. He left school with two Grade C Highers in computing and physical education, and two Int. 2 grades (Maths C and French B). His Standard Grades include Modern Studies (3) and English (4). He got into a local college to take an HND in Information technology, then into a local university where he is in his 3rd Year of a degree in Business Technology. Yaseen was aiming to take a year out of his course to pursue a work placement or internship.

At the careers event Yaseen met the Employer Engagement Co-ordinator (EEC) from a scheme representing communications technologies (ICT) industry. Yaseen emailed her after the event about finding a placement. The EEC said she would also be able to look over Yaseen's CV. She emailed back to say 'it was fine'. Two or three emails were exchanged asking Yaseen if he had registered on their placement database, and asking Yaseen to let her know the roles he was looking for so she could keep him in mind for any positions. As the system was new, there were only 15 vacancies available on the database. Yaseen applied for two placement schemes but was unsuccessful.

One of the researchers then asked his brother-in-law, a career IT professional, to look over Yaseen's CV and give comments, so that he would have more in-depth feedback from an 'industry insider'.

Over a page of detailed comments were provided with specialist insights. Comments included: *'Attention to detail matters in IT because a tiny error in a spreadsheet or project plan can be devastating. So when someone misses details on their CV (e.g. wrong spellings), it rings alarm bells very loudly. Check these carefully.'* Also *'Which of Adobe's products has [Yaseen] used: Photoshop? Flash? Shockwave? Creative Suite? More importantly, what has he actually done with any of the applications he's listed?'*

He also provided comments indicating that 'industry insiders' value experience in voluntary groups, such as ALC: *'He could be clearer about his involvement in the Active Life Club and the qualifications he got there and why he got them. I think there could be another good story to tell here. It would be even better if he was using his IT skills to help the club in some way: book-keeping, membership management, web site, blog, newsletters, etc.'* He suggested that ALC may also be a route to enhancing skills and finding employment: *'His best prospects for finding something could well be through his existing contacts. Small businesses may appreciate some help with small-scale projects like updating a web site or setting up a simple database. So if they can get someone to do the stuff they can't find the time or skills to do... Another approach would be to create a project at the Active Life Club and work on it all the way through from design to implementation: doing a web site for them or something like that.'*

Yaseen and the researcher met for a number of one-hour sessions to work through changes to Yaseen's CV – changes that Yaseen has confidence are worth making to increase his chances of getting a placement or work experience in IT. Through Yaseen being an ALC member, he has gained access to specialist advice completely outside the formal channels of the Council or Careers Scotland.

Hamza and Yaseen benefitted in both cases by linking more closely with 'industry insiders'. These connections were developed because of Active Life Club's work with the university researchers, providing professional links which would not ordinarily have been accessible to the young people. Raza is keen to foster the kinds of professional connections which occurred through this project, which may boost skills and improve CVs for other ALC members and make a difference in gaining work placements, so the young people involved have an enhanced chance of getting more than 'just a degree'.

3. Guidance and Support Issues

Certain other issues emerged as commonly important to both school and university work placement experiences. These can be encompassed as 'guidance and support'. The data in this section comes from both the interviews and from discussions amongst members of research group.

- **Support from school or university**

The research participants described a range of support at school and university level that helped them to find work experience and work placements. As discussed earlier, sometimes information given by the institution did not reach the students who would have benefitted. But as the following examples show, when institutions, or individuals within institutions were more proactive they could really make a difference and be seen positively by the students. In the school context, Arfan talked about his desire to be a PE teacher and how his guidance teacher helped him to find relevant voluntary work doing football coaching. This re-engaged him with the idea of valuing work experience.

> *That's good we've got an idea that you didn't engage with the whole process when it first came around in fourth year and has someone told you to get work experience now?*
>
> My guidance teacher, She just offered me, she goes 'football coaching will be good for you'
>
> *So it's the guidance teacher that really got you that, and did that make you think 'oh yeah that's something I want to do'?*
>
> Yeah
> (Arfan)

Ali was in his third year of studying Mechanical Engineering and was receiving help from his university to apply for a work placement related to his subject. The university approached prospective employers on his behalf, and he could also seek his own placement. At the time of interview he wanted a placement ideally outside the UK so he could gain '*more experience, learning different cultures, and a whole new lifestyle'.* Since interview Ali is undertaking a placement in Sweden. The following indicates the positive role his institution played for him.

> *Are the university helping you find a placement?*
>
> They are indeed.

Any luck?

Er, not at the moment.

How much choice do you have over placements?

I've got about seventy to eighty per cent of my own personal choice.

How many organisations have you applied to so far?

It's via the university so they've applied for about two or three...

What sort of companies are they?

They're in the engineering kind of field so there's different types, there's pipeline work and then there's some related to mechanical as well, so it's a different kind of design field it's in so there's a range all over the engineering field ...

What made you choose those particular companies to approach?

It's not me personally it's er through the university so it's open to the lecturer, the head, the school office so they tend to look for you more. So you can apply yourself – I have applied to Landrover Rangerover and I was declined I was unsuccessful for that. That was my own personal one.

Did the university lecturer advise you to apply to Landrover and Rangerover?

Er no that was my own personal choice so and there was Bentley in London as well and that was unsuccessful too ...
(Ali)

The support given is not always as active as the examples given above. The following describes Bilal's experience of applying for placements at university.

What's the process involved in finding that placement?

Go to the online Jobshop and they enrol you onto an online Management Vacancy site and they help you with your CV, then you're left alone to apply for jobs but they are there to help in the process of your application.

And the uni actively help you to find that placement?

They tell you that that all the jobs are advertised online so you just need to go through the process and apply yourself. If you need help, they are there to help you.

And how much choice do you have over your placement?

Trying to look for finance jobs, at least 80 vacancies there all over the world...

How many have you applied to?

At least 8/9.

What kind of companies are they? Big or major companies?

Major multinational companies.

What kind of responses are you getting from your applications?

That I don't meet the criteria.
(Bilal)

Bilal's experience is one of distance from his institution and isolation in the process, leaving him frustrated.

- **Support from wider sources**

A range of issues about the experience of seeking work experience as a young person surfaced in discussion amongst the ALC Research Group. It became clear how Raza had supported some of them in their transitions between school, college and university, as a volunteer taking a personal interest in them, encouraging them and looking for opportunities for them. This provided a distinctive type of support to that provided by schools, careers guidance, college or university staff. For example, Sufiyan was told at school that he did not have the grades to pursue a career in Engineering and that this avenue was closed to him. However on leaving school at 16, Raza identified a college course in engineering, helped Sufiyan with interview preparation, and supported him through the process of gaining entry. Sufiyan is now aiming to transfer to university on completion of his HNC.

As discussed in the previous section, Hamza and Yaseen were actively seeking a placement and internship. As part of the research process, the researchers accompanied Hamza and Yaseen to careers events run by Glasgow City Council and University of West of Scotland. The way that Hamza and Yaseen experienced these events was put in context by their involvement in the research, enabling them to think more deeply about the tactics and strategies involved in getting a placement, as demonstrated in the vignettes above. By getting to know Hamza and Yaseen, the researchers were able to identify more closely what they were interested in, help with CVs, provide links to work placement opportunities, and to use their own professional and personal networks to widen opportunities for

them. Through this Hamza gained a work placement in his specialist discipline at a university.

- **Forms of CV building activities and participation in 'the added extras'**

Raza helps to open up opportunities for the group by facilitating their engagement with the wider community, such as participating in community sport events and youth leadership activities. He also helps to open up opportunities such as outward bound activities which help ALC members to develop themselves personally. These approaches are both used to develop the confidence of group members and are used to evidence skills that can enhance CVs.

Further to this Raza has identified where he can support comparable aims to those supported through schools, such as overseas visits. In Raza's experience there can sometimes be reluctance by young Scottish Pakistani people to get involved in such activities. However Tasleem was keen to take part in a school visit to Malawi, but felt that the school were reluctant for her to take part because she is female and Scottish Pakistani. She was determined to go and the money that Tasleem needed to raise to take part included a fund-raising evening at which Raza encouraged ALC members to help. His purpose was to foreground to members how Tasleem's involvement in such activities was a reasonable aspiration for any of them, and was useful way in which to develop transferable skills.

This research project also provided a means by which group members could gain a wide range of research and generic skills (as listed in the above section 'Learning by doing research'), understand more about the issues facing their peers, engage with wider community issues, and link with professionals. It provided another means for ALC members to add to their skills and experience and to take incremental steps towards life and career goals.

At the end of the project, Active Life Club Research Group members considered what they had gained from being involved. The below quotes illustrate learning about the operation of school and university work experience and placements, highlight the way in which being involved in an action research project has developed 'critical thinking' in relation to their own circumstances and that of their peers, demonstrate wider transferable skills, and suggests what they learned about getting involved in a social research project.

'Schools should see what [work experience] the student wants rather than guessing what they want – use a questionnaire or something.' (Yaseen)

'Schools could take on board themselves what kind of skills working in a [family] shop gives you rather than looking at the brands … the focus on the work experience website is on big stores, not tapping into smaller stores.' (Imran)

'It has opened my eyes to work placements.' (Yaseen)

'Those who organise work placements should make it work for you.' (Imran)

'At university you should go for your work placement right from the start.' (Imran)

'It was the right time for this project, building on our community work experience.' (Raza)

'I've been learning from the discussions … the project has been longer than other projects I've been involved with.' (Sufiyan)

'I would have said before that research would be pointless, but it's not.' (Sufiyan)

'It has helped us understand other peoples' experiences that we've not known. Now we know, because we've interviewed them, how they feel.' (Yaseen)

'It gives us knowledge – before it would be our story, now we are hearing other peoples'' (Sufiyan)

Concluding themes

When drawing conclusions from both the research process and from the research findings, four themes stand out.

- **Building professional networks for young people**

When young people such as those in this study are placed in the position of finding work experience at school, and to a lesser extent at university, they tend to rely heavily on the systems provided by schools and universities to help them to find appropriate opportunities. However those that were most successful had specific additional support from a teacher or tutor in the institution. The research highlights how these young people do not have their own professional contacts to help them secure opportunities in companies relevant to their courses or desired careers. In some cases, being told by careers advisors, teachers and those with authority that they cannot pursue certain options easily deters young people from seeking alternative ways to achieve their desired outcomes. **The study demonstrates the beneficial role that community leaders like Raza, and in a different way, professionals such as the researchers, are able to play in terms of providing knowledge of the 'system' and providing links to open up opportunities for young people without professional networks**. These types of relationship can make a particular difference for young people who come from families without professional backgrounds.

- **Filling in support gaps for young people**

Raza plays a key role as a volunteer in making sure that ALC members don't 'regress' or fall back on familiar or 'safe options'. The research suggests that young people without pre-existing professional networks need intense support. Individuals like Raza help them to gain rounded experiences that underpin their ability to access professional opportunities. This support includes identifying their highest aspirations, informing them of possibilities, honing CVs, support with attending interviews, spurring them on, and encouraging them to participate in supporting activities. This work is ongoing and multifaceted. **Many more adults could take on a 'critical mentoring' role for young people in disadvantaged communities similar to the role played by Raza.** The role requires understanding the priorities of the young people, helping them to value their experiences, helping them to think about accessing opportunities, and supporting them to navigate this process.

- **Boosting recognition for work experience in family businesses**

With intense competition for good jobs and a related need for a 'good CV', **the substantial work experience that some young people get within family businesses could be valued more strongly, with institutional recognition**. As this study has shown, young people may actually hold a wide range of responsibilities in a family business, although these experiences may hold their own stresses. However, young people with this type of experience placed higher value on short, fixed-term work experience in a 'mainstream' company. This underplaying of work experience gained at a young age in a family business may disproportionately affect the Scottish Pakistani community. There appears to be an opportunity for institutions to cultivate these experiences into something that is validated for the young people and for the businesses involved.

- **Challenges to the individualised model of career guidance**

'Too inexperienced', 'not focused enough', 'my fault' - echoes through the voices of the research participants. The current individualised model of career guidance and the transfer of the pressures of applying for jobs to an earlier stage, before graduation, in the form of placements, internships and work experience, increases the burden of responsibility on people at a younger age. The research process gave young people a chance to appreciate their own situation within the context of others, and to critically engage with opportunities presented to them. This process demonstrated to the young people that there is a social context within which opportunities are made available to them, and which results in some experiences being valued more than others, and in some opportunities being difficult to obtain. **By helping young people understand the context of their efforts to find work experience, the pressure on them individually may be reduced, and the real barriers may be addressed strategically by institutions.**

References

Ali R., Jamal I., Chowdhury L., Brick Lane Circle (Eds) (2010) *Plassey's Legacy: Young Londoners explore the hidden story of the East India Company*. Brick Lane Circle.

Cassidy C., O'Connor R., Dorrer N. (2006) *Young people's experience of transition to adulthood*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation/University of Stirling.

Rutherford F., Wagner F., Netto G. (2003) *Employment aspirations and experiences of black/minority ethnic young people and their parents in Glasgow.* Heriot Watt University - Centre for Research into Socially Inclusive Services, commissioned by Glasgow Anti- Racist Alliance.

Contacts

Active Life Club, Govanhill Workspace, 69 Dixon Road, Glasgow, G42 8AS activelifeclub@hotmail.com

Katie Hunter, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow G13 1PP katie.hunter@strath.ac.uk

Richard Brunner, Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research, School of Social and Political Sciences, Adam Smith Building, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8RT
r.brunner.1@research.gla.ac.uk
(Richard Brunner moved from the University of Strathclyde to the University of Glasgow in October 2011).

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the young people who gave their time to be interviewed for this study.

Thank you to the following organisations for their financial contributions towards the printing of this report and for their support for the launch event held on 21 March 2012: University of Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, British Transport Police, Pollokshields and Southside Central Community Planning Partnership, SEMPERscotland, One Workplace Equal Rights (Scottish Trades Union Congress), Skills Development Scotland, Coalition for Racial

Equality and Rights, Glasgow City Council, Snax 4 U Ltd, Volunteer Centre Glasgow.

Thanks to all Active Life Club members 2010-11.

Katie Hunter has worked as researcher on a number of projects focusing on education and inequality and is currently in her final year of PhD study at the University of Strathclyde. She has previous experience of working on an action research project looking at the experiences of adults with learning difficulties and adult literacy provision. Prior to this, she worked as a literacy and ESOL tutor both in Scotland and abroad.

Richard Brunner spent three years as Research Fellow in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Strathclyde working on a range of equality and diversity-focused research projects. He has previously worked with homeless people, as a mental health advocate, with tenants' groups, and as a social policy analyst in the voluntary and statutory sectors. His current research interests include disability, mental distress, identity, diversity and social inclusion, including application of the capability approach.

Katie and Richard have both worked on an ongoing research project focused on a secondary school in a disadvantaged area of Glasgow, led by Alastair Wilson, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Strathclyde. The project has included developing a mentoring project in the school alongside research to understand young peoples' social networks. This experience has influenced the approach taken in the project with Active Life Club.

This report and a four page summary report are available at http://activelifeclub.wordpress.com/.

Please cite as Anam, S., Brunner, R., Din, A., Hunter, K., Javaid, A., Mehmood, O., Rauf, Z., Raza, L., Sadiq, R., Sattar, A. (2012) BME Youth Unemployment: A Fresh Perspective. Glasgow: Active Life Club.