

GREATER MANCHESTER



HUMANITY
PROJECT

2025

This report is a draft, to share with
Humanity Project partners
- feedback very welcome!

ABOUT HUMANITY PROJECT

Why we exist

Humanity Project exists to create assembly culture: a new kind of politics that makes our lives better where we live.

What is Assembly Culture?

Assembly culture is the freedom to speak and be listened to, an opportunity to hear what each other thinks and wants. By taking back power from politicians who've stopped working for us, and a media that doesn't want us to talk to each other, assembly culture is us finding a way forward together. It's a way of governing our own freedom, where everyone's voice is equal. Assembly culture is a new kind of people-led politics that gives us control of what matters to us where we live.

The Bigger Picture

Humanity Project also connects our neighbourhood to your neighbourhood and to a national conversation where we all get to be heard and be part of something bigger than any one of us – that's how we'll build the kind of people-powered movement big enough to stop the source of the fires.

Vision

That's why our vision is for a bottom-up, people-led assembly culture where everyone is listened to, making politics fit to deal with the problems we face in the UK today.

The Plan

Community organisations in 22 low-income neighbourhoods across the UK have begun to create a wave of joyful, bottom-up Popular Assemblies. The process starts with recruitment, training, listening, strategy, event design, hosting and then supporting actions. In each place, the process will look different, but the principles are the same.

GREATER MANCHESTER HUMANITY PROJECT

Origins

This year, the legendary RECLAIM closed shop. The organisation has carried out incredible work alongside young people to challenge inequality and amplify working-class voices in our city.

The impact of the community, campaigns, and the leadership they've helped nurture will live on. Thank you to everyone who supported the organisation – staff, young people, partners, and allies.

While this chapter has ended, another has begun with Humanity Project.

The Pilot Phase

The work in Greater Manchester kicked off with a gathering in July. Following that, a group of locally-rooted organisations started their journey in people-powered democracy.

Map of partner locations



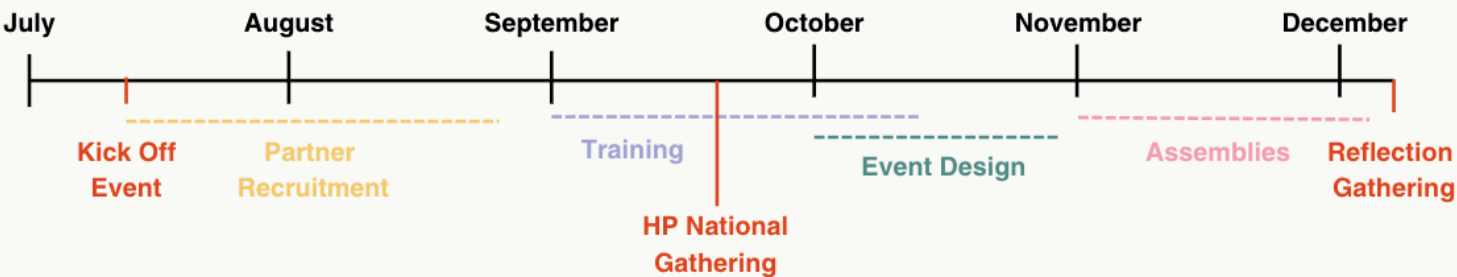
All HP Locations



HP GM Locations

Once the partners had been recruited each agreed to put on an assembly. Supported by Humanity Project facilitators, each organisation built their skills in listening and facilitation. Following that, each organisation was supported to design and deliver their events.

TIMELINE



IN NUMBERS



10
Boroughs of GM



11
Organisations



11
Events



278
Participants



36
Trained in listening
and/or facilitation

We Are Explorers CIC

We Are Explorers CIC hosts person-led, engaging and safe Neurodivergent-friendly spaces for the LGBTQ+ community, and have recently expanded their work into Bolton via a partnership with Bolton council. We Are Explorers CIC's mission is to make the world a better place for Neurodivergent LGBTQ+ individuals. In addition to creating safe spaces in Greater Manchester, they deliver training on the intersection of Neurodivergence and LGBTQ+ identities across the country.

32 participants explored:

How can we tackle gender topics in Bolton?

&

How safe does the wider community feel?

Including children and young people was great, as we got to hear their unique perspectives. ... We would definitely include art again, and probably do it as a more structured session, although the drop in was also valuable.

- Jam, facilitator



Bolton, 01/11/25

We Are Explorers welcomed adults and young people with a creative collage activity, leading into a conversation that generated insights including:

- True inclusivity goes far beyond ticking boxes –it's about lived experience, informal spaces (like art or family hubs), and organic conversations.
- Labels (e.g., gender, sexuality) create stigma but can also build connection and visibility; the tension isn't easily solved by "just be open."
- Kids often absorb rigid gender norms unintentionally, even in spaces that claim inclusion—habits are persistent, not easily fixed with policies.
- Real change comes from mixing communities and gentle engagement, not forcing diversity or preaching—trust and curiosity matter more than declarations.

Contact: jam@weareexplorers.org

Ridgehill Together CIO

Ridgehill Together exists to benefit residents of the Ridge Hill area of Stalybridge in Tameside, through its local hub and community-led activities.

34 participants explored:

What do you want from your community hub?



Tameside, 26/11/25

It's been really, really good. I've found out Ridgehill Together are actually doing a lot more than we know about.

- Jo, participant

We were pleased to see some new faces we'd not seen before. Next time we will identify a specific issue for debate and action.

- Philip, facilitator

This assembly focused on Ridge Hill's new community hub, welcoming new people who have not previously engaged with Ridgehill Together. The conversations found that participants wanted their community hub to offer more than activities – they desired genuine connection, company, and inclusivity.

People emphasised safe social spaces, multi-generational events (games, exercise, cooking), and practical support like transport, childcare, and food. They also valued volunteering opportunities that feel welcoming and meaningful, not obligatory.

There was a call for visible transparency, shared decision-making, and easy ways to get involved, especially for those hesitant or isolated.

In short: a warm, flexible “home base” where all ages are valued, basic needs are met, and relationships are prioritised over programmes.

Contact: ridgehilltogether@gmail.com

Stockport Race Equality Partnership

Stockport Race Equality Partnership (SREP) exists to integrate communities in Stockport and improve outcomes for ethnically diverse communities through events, advocacy and provision offered from its cultural and wellbeing hub in Stockport town centre, 'The Space'.

35 participants explored:

What does diversity look like in your community?



Stockport, 27/11/25

We got very good feedback from the community we serve, to understand their feelings and the issues they struggle with.

It was an amazing event.

- Iman, facilitator

I've been quite humbled by some of the comments that have been made. ... Anything that can make these spaces better for people to integrate and feel more welcome in this country I'm all for.

- Christine, attendee and local politician

SREP's inclusive conversation around diversity found that:

- Diversity has a double-edged sword: it is valued for unity and creativity, yet participants felt it also breeds division, misunderstanding, and fear – particularly as systems and communities fail to adapt.
- Belonging is fragile: superficial "welcome" is common, but true acceptance is tenuous; linguistic, cultural, and economic barriers breed lasting isolation.
- Policy gaps exacerbate exclusion: procedural ambiguity and lack of systemic support (in housing, education, legal rights) leave people stranded, intensifying mistrust and undermining resilience.
- Ignorance, not malice, is a core barrier: social media and lack of early education perpetuate ignorance and anxiety, often more than overt hostility – transforming "diversity" from strength into a daily struggle.

Contact: aba@srep.co.uk

Support & Action Women's Network

Support & Action Women's Network (SAWN) works predominantly with Black African women and families in Oldham, to realise their full potential through solidarity, opportunities, support groups and services.

15 participants explored:

Experiences of immigration

Today was an experience that will probably influence what happens next both in my personal life and in my work life.

- Karen, facilitator

Wow, it's been so connecting...to find that support and that space of healing, of hope, and of sisterhood.

- Folashade, facilitator



Oldham, 02/12/25

SAWN led a supportive conversation where women shared their experiences of coming to the UK and the challenges they have faced, including mental health struggles, stigma, poverty, limited access to education and employment, and risk of homelessness, as well as what has helped them, such as friends, church, local authorities, and charities.

Conversations were weaved into wellbeing practices and communal singing. The group is now looking at creative ways to share their stories, such as song and poetry.

Contact: sawn.org@gmail.com

Caring and Sharing Rochdale

Caring and Sharing Rochdale stands with vulnerable individuals, with a particular commitment to migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers within the BAME community, by providing services including practical support, the promotion of health and wellbeing, skill-building, and community events.

18 participants explored:

Access to healthcare

The experience was amazing. I was very anxious when it started, but over time I built momentum, and I also felt very supported by my colleagues as well as attendees.

- Faith, facilitator

When I came here I felt a bit heavy, and after meeting these new people, sharing ideas and sharing where I have been, I feel very good. ... We need to have more of these meetings.

- Xana, participant



Rochdale, 17/11/25

This conversation around access to healthcare generated key insights including:

- NHS care isn't just stretched thin, it's fundamentally misaligned with patient realities.
- Routine pain and women's health issues are downplayed, especially among minorities.
- Bureaucratic inertia—long waits, impersonal virtual appointments, and cancellation chaos—drives many to seek faster, more humane care abroad.
- Cultural biases and poor communication aren't minor—they're corrosive, making patients feel ignored and powerless.
- Urgent care gets quick response, while chronic or complex needs are sidelined.
- The real challenge isn't simply resource shortages—it's a systemic inability to listen well, act quickly, and honor diverse patient experiences.

The group agreed that future assemblies to continue this conversation are needed.

Contact: info@caringandsharingrochdale.org

Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Forum (PVNF)

Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Forum is a volunteer-run group aiming to influence the development of Prestwich in the interests of people living there. The group recently developed a draft Neighbourhood Plan with the community, which, if approved, will become part of the statutory development plan used by Bury Council and will be important in guiding development and investment into the area, including decisions on planning applications.

40 participants explored:

The draft Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Plan



Bury, 23/11/25

The tone was collaborative rather than adversarial. ...

A few attendees have contacted and requested to attend Board Meetings and become involved in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- Carol, facilitator

PVNF used this event to gauge residents' feelings on the draft Neighbourhood Plan for the area, in areas including: housing, local centres and business; green spaces; design, quality & heritage; and movement & accessibility.

Attendees agreed to hold another assembly in March 2026 to share the final draft plan before it is considered for a public referendum.

Contact: carol_longshaw@hotmail.com

Wigan and Leigh Community Charity

Wigan and Leigh Community Charity promotes the role of the social economy in Wigan and Leigh, through community organising, community business asset management, and neighbourhood planning.

12 participants explored:

The Platt Bridge Neighbourhood Plan and newly designated town centre



Wigan, 18/11/25

We completed our Neighbourhood Plan in January, so this was our first opportunity to really start to take a lead on the plan that Platt Bridge is going to become a town centre as part of the local plan....We've got people interested in being more community organisers, which is great to see.

- David, facilitator

At this event, attendees were asked three questions using a range of creative participatory co-design techniques.

Key themes discussed in response to the question 'what makes a great high street?' were: increased retail options for customers and business owners; well-designed and functioning town centre (safety & design issues); active travel - walking/cycling/buses; community facility & organisation enhancement/support and flood resilience.

Contact: d.baxter@wlcommunity.org.uk

Friends of Stretford Public Hall

Friends of Stretford Public Hall is a co-operative whose 800 members collectively own Stretford Public Hall, a Grade II listed building and community hub offering accessible community space and a programme of cultural events and activities.

15 participants explored:

What it is like living in Stretford?



Trafford, 02/12/25

*People had some good ideas,
we had very nice
conversations and they have
been able to make good
suggestions for what we might
be talking about at our
People's Assembly, which is
really helpful.*

- Melanie, facilitator

Friends of Stretford Public Hall held an exploratory assembly event with residents of the area, to hone their key question for a follow up assembly.

Facilitators led group conversations around the following four questions: What do you love about Stretford? Is there anything you would like to change about living here? What is challenging for you at the moment? What would you like the Stretford Assembly to talk about?

Key issues raised included travel links, community cohesion & inclusion, green spaces, safety & security, and development.

Contact: friends@stretfordpublichall.org.uk

Salford Forum for Refugees and People Seeking Asylum / Visible Outcomes

Salford Forum for Refugees and People Seeking Asylum is a campaigning organisation that brings together Salford-based community groups that are responding to issues affecting refugees and people seeking asylum, and provides training and advice services through its social and charitable organisation Visible Outcomes 4 U.

25 participants explored:

How can we work together in a changing environment for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers?



Salford, 29/11/25

We had men and women from different communities, a true face of the UK. This is what we want to encourage...we need to have communities coming together and people speaking with each other, not speaking at each other.

- David, participant

This assembly included music and guest speakers to stimulate discussion, which found that standard "integration" narratives miss that migrants face institutionalised invisibility: they're denied a voice, dignity, and agency. Not simply because of language barriers, but a system profiting from their silence. Migrants face the double insult of barriers to work and then exploitation if they can find a job. Age makes this problem of invisibility worse as older arrivals struggle a lot. What was found to help: shared narratives, cross-ethnic alliances, disrupting tokenism, confronting policy, and centering lived pain, not pity.

Next steps include taking these insight to local decision makers.

Contact: salfordrefugeeforum@gmail.com

Cheetham Hill Collective

Cheetham Hill Collective is a newly formed group of people living and working in and near Cheetham Hill, who came together in response to safety concerns in the area. Members of the group have been helping each other with emotional support and advice, and are now looking for ways to continue working together on issues affecting their community.

24 participants explored:

The trauma from and personal response to Hurricane Melissa



Manchester, 30/11/25

The ice breaker game which led into the questions worked well. Next time we will try using smaller groups.

- Lesmond, facilitator

This conversation was held in conjunction with a community games day which took place at the Rainbow Community Centre.

Participants were given a giant team jigsaw activity to transition into a sensitive conversation around Hurricane Melissa. Emotions in the community were explored, and there was consensus among the groups that action should be taken to support those affected, by donating through the church.

Contact: xlfirstlesmond@gmail.com

Ethnic Health Forum

Ethnic Health Forum is a non-profit tackling health and social care issues for ethnic minorities, by delivering culturally sensitive support services across Greater Manchester and awareness raising activities through digital media platforms.

25 participants explored:

Knife crime



Manchester, 20/11/25

Today was a great opportunity to listen to our community's voice. ... I think it was a good step forward, with participants, not me, looking for the next steps, and a next assembly.

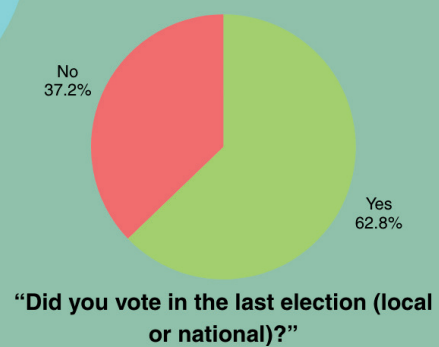
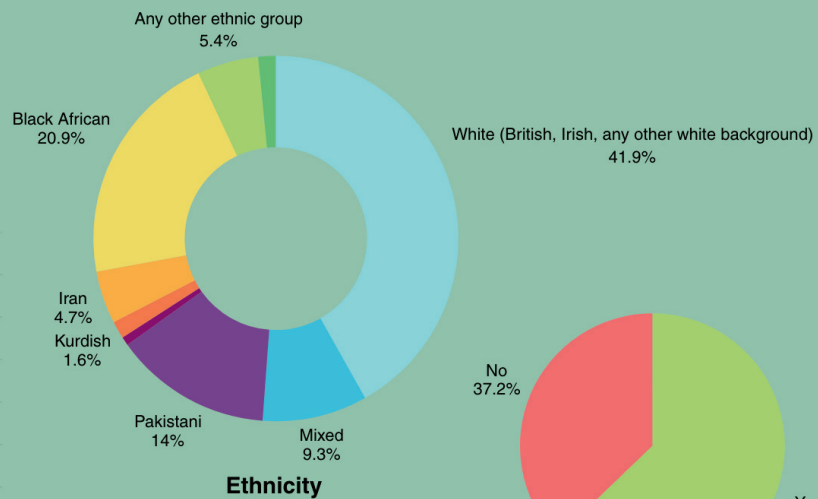
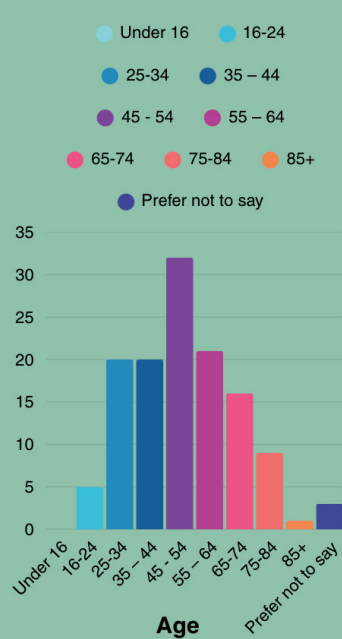
- Akhter, facilitator

Key insights found during this conversation held in Longsight included:

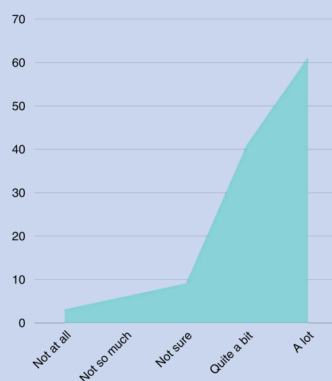
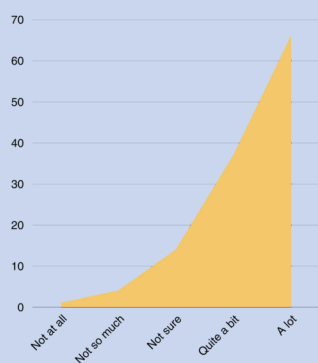
- Knife crime roots aren't just poverty or broken families; it's about intergenerational disconnection, lack of safe community spaces, and technology-fueled isolation.
- Prevention is undermined by blaming parents or schools—solutions require coordinated, multi-layered intervention.
- Reporting and engagement matter more than funding alone; under-reporting skews resource allocation, compounding neglect in high-need areas.
- Emotional safety, trust, and open communication are the solution - not rules and surveillance as crime deterrents.
- Youth need agency in community solutions - not just adult-driven programmes.

Contact: info@ethnichealth.org.uk

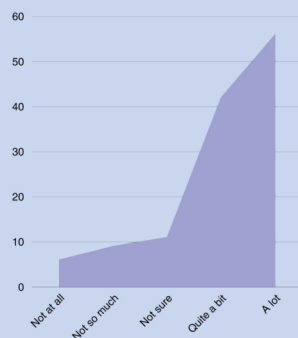
Who attended the assemblies?



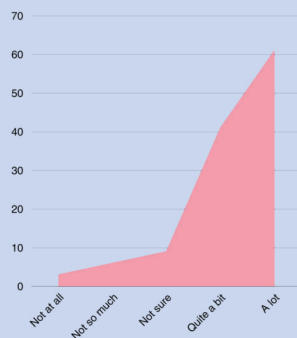
...and how were they impacted?



"I connected with someone I didn't already know"



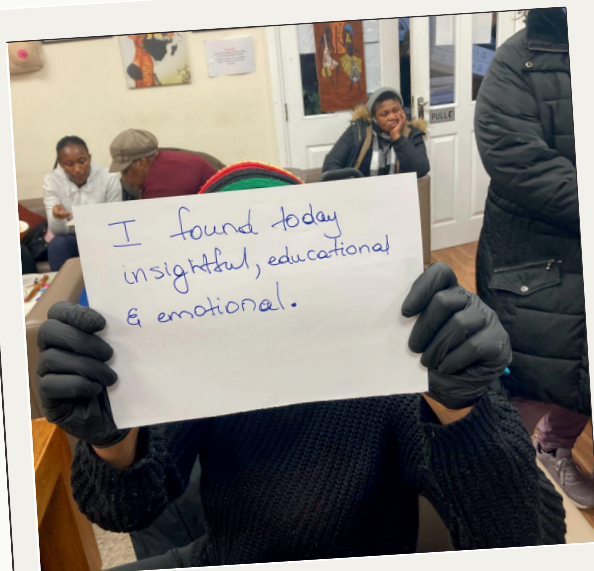
"I discovered common concerns with others"

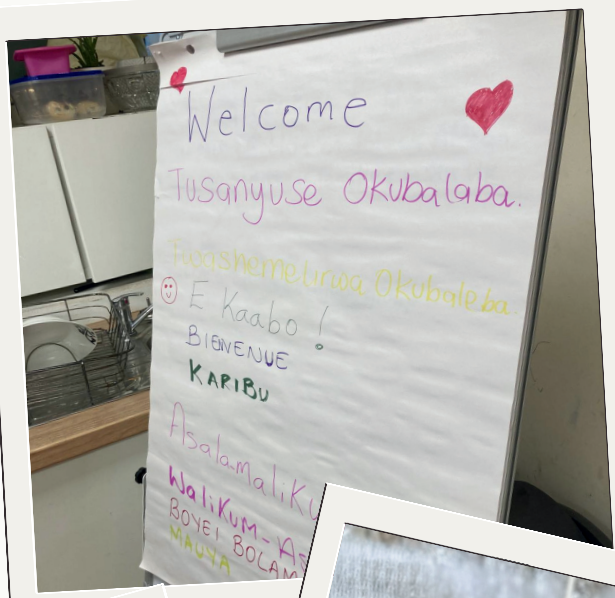


"I feel more likely to participate in community life"

"I learnt something new today"







THANK

YOU!

Huge thanks to our Greater Manchester
Humanity Project partners - your
engagement, enthusiasm, and
flexibility during this experimental
phase of work is driving us closer to
our vision of building assembly
culture in the UK.

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