



The Challenge Network

75 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7HS

contact@the-challenge.org

020 7921 4203

www.the-challenge.org

Young People from The Challenge speak out against London Riots

August 9th, 2011

Many young people have been shocked by the violence and lootings that has swept London and other cities over the last few days; they are worried about the image portrayed of their generation as a result of these events and are keen to show that not all young people are like this.

There are thousands of young people across the country engaging in constructive activities this summer, such as voluntarily taking part in schemes like The Challenge designed to build and strengthen communities. The Challenge brings together young people of different backgrounds and enables them to learn about people of other cultures and backgrounds, learn new skills, interact with local community groups and make a difference in their area through social action projects which are designed and delivered by the young people themselves.

So far this summer we have seen numerous teams of 16 year olds engaging with elderly people in care homes, arranging activities for children in play schemes, working with people with disabilities, and planning social action projects to be delivered in September.

In response to the riots young people from The Challenge have set up a page on facebook called "We are part of the solution not part of the problem", and a few have shared their thoughts about the events of the last few days:

"We as people need to look at a larger scale of things and not stereotype young people. The 2011 riots are no longer to do with getting a point across it is simply now an excuse to steal from shops. Having both Facebook and Twitter accounts I can personally see that all my friends/followers do not agree with what is happening in any shape or form. So, I think it's time that the government opened their eyes and not only notice 'young rioters' but also the young people who are not taking part in such a devastating event. We can make a change and that change can start now."

-Anthony Colairo, age 16

"I think this is no longer about the shooting in Tottenham, these youths are taking advantage of the situation and it's spreading, I don't think they're making a riot or a stand against anything they're just stealing, because its easy money, what they're stealing is a joke: rice, trainers, hair, watches, TVs, etc. they're angry at the government, their lives and the world."

- Nicole Dominguez, age 16



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"It's just an excuse and it is mindless. I know a group of people in my area are organising a group to go to town and help with the clear up, I'd love to, but I'm scared it's all going to flare up again and I don't want to be caught in the middle of it. A lot of people I know were discussing the violence over facebook and other social networking sites last night, the majority being young people. I fear now, the minority are going to spoil it for the majority, who are just as disgusted to see the destruction of neighbourhoods in our city."

- Jodie Nash, age 17

"I think that the rioting is completely unnecessary. I don't think that this can be justified in any way. When the rioting first started in Tottenham it got out of hand and innocent people were harmed. Buses burnt and shops - people's livelihoods unfairly destroyed. Then for everywhere else where rioting has kicked off, they are using this purely as an excuse to steal stuff. I feel for everyone who is living in fear because of all the scenes they are seeing on the news. This needs to be stopped. We are destroying our own city."

-Joshua Gooding, age 16

"Just this morning I was woken up by my mum to fix her car tyre which had been punctured more than once. She only wanted to go to work. What does the shooting have to do with her?"

The point is it's not about the shooting any more. It's just an excuse for people to lash out, get free stuff and start fires in places nowhere near Tottenham."

- Nosa Ohen, age 17

If you would like to speak to some young people directly, or know more about the programme, please get in touch.

Regards,

Daina Zvidra
External Affairs Associate
The Challenge Network
07908944335