**LSE GROUPS 2016 – Poverty and Inequality in London**

As the 2015/16 academic year drew to a close, some LSE students weren’t quite ready to wind down for the summer. Instead, they leapt at the chance to do some original research — through participating in the two-week intensive LSE GROUPS programme.

The 70 or so undergraduates from mixed years and a wide range of disciplines were divided into 10 groups, and had just eleven days to deliver finished research projects. During that time the students had to come up with research questions, conduct fieldwork, analyse data, produce graphs and visuals, write a research paper, and present their findings at a full-day conference.

The aim of LSE GROUPS, which has been running for six years, is to give undergraduates the opportunity to undertake real and original research. As students in a research intensive institution they are well placed to do this, and the skills they learn along the way – in critical thinking, communications and teamwork, to name just a few – will be of benefit throughout their time at LSE and beyond.

“We’ve seen you develop on a day to day basis, learning about how to do research, grappling with really difficult issues and coming up with a research question — which is often the hardest aspect in starting out on a research project,” said Claire Gordon from the Teaching and Learning Centre at the opening session of the GROUPS conference on 10 June. “We’ve also seen you learning techniques such as working in groups and working with people with different personalities and approaches to work.”

The 2016 LSE GROUPS theme, Poverty and Inequality in London, was chosen to tie in with the centenary of Charles Booth’s death later this year. It not only speaks to LSE’s founding principles of studying social and economic experience to make the world a better place, but also offered the students a very wide range of topics to pursue – from transport, architecture and leisure to education, social mobility and gentrification.

“One thing that you’ve achieved is genuinely valuable projects, on housing, communities, isolation and belonging,” said Neil McLean, director of the Academic and Professional Development Division. “As a society it is important for us to know how to respond to these needs.”

*For more about LSE GROUPS, see lse.ac.uk/tlc/groups*