

Positive Pathways for Young People Research Report



Fundamental
Architectural Inclusion

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Fundamental Architectural Inclusion is an architecture centre that seeks new ways for communities to participate in the transformation of their neighbourhoods. All projects are dynamic, creative and designed to embrace diversity, engaging groups that might otherwise find themselves excluded. Fundamental is an effective conduit, which creates a unique dialogue between the grass roots and the decision makers.

Positive Pathways for Young People

The project

The Positive Pathways for Young People pilot programme (PPYP) aimed to engage young people who are at risk of becoming ‘NEET’ (not in education, employment or training) in the Olympic, Paralympic and Legacy developments. The programme explored the possibility of using the exciting transformation of the landscape of East London as a catalyst for motivational change: raising aspiration, supporting personal development and progression and signposting new opportunities. The aim of the pilot programme was to address the barriers to young people’s uptake of educational and work opportunities across the five host boroughs and, through a process of action-research, develop a sustainable model of support in the run up to 2012 and beyond. The approach was multi-disciplinary, using creative learning experiences as a way in to wider issues of regeneration and sustainable development.

This research asks two key questions. Firstly, whether there are particular attitudes amongst disaffected young people who are at risk of becoming NEET towards dramatic and sudden changes to the physical and social landscape arising around the Olympics. Are young people at risk of being NEET in the host boroughs interested in the Olympics regeneration or not, and why? The second, related question is whether there is scope to engage disaffected young people who are at risk of becoming NEET through Olympics regeneration education and involvement. What is the optimal approach to encourage these young people to engage with local developments and opportunities?

The NEET issue

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) emphasises that meeting the needs of young people who are NEET or at risk of NEET requires a multi-agency approach: ‘no single agency holds all the keys to reducing NEET; LAs, schools, the Learning and Skills Council, youth support services and employers all have key roles to play’¹. This report opens up a discussion about the potential contribution of built environment education, in particular the Olympics, in working with the NEET group.

The government defines the ‘NEET generation’ as those young people aged between 16 and 24 years of age who are not in education, training or employment. In 1997, the proportion of NEETS caused alarm as it reached 15%. The national estimate for the number of young people not in education or employment is 959,000, with at least 10 % of 16–19 year olds being NEET, a 2 % rise between comparable periods in 2008 and 2009. Some suggest that the figure is up to 20 per cent of 16–19 year olds (IOE).

Estimated Number NEET in each Olympic borough

	2008	
Hackney	400	10%
Greenwich	600	9.5%
Newham	640	7.7%
Tower Hamlets	390	6.7%
Waltham Forest	400	4.7%

These figures, taken from the Connexions statistics, are not comparable to the national statistics.

Amongst young people at risk of becoming NEET are those who are permanently excluded from education. The most recent DCFS statistics (2006–7) show that 512 children and young people were permanently excluded from school across the host boroughs. Some of these young people are included in the system through pupil referral units or other alternative education provisions, although they remain vulnerable to becoming NEET as some have less chance of gaining qualifications.



Acetate drawing at Holden Point

Research Method

The action research project involved a range of taster sessions in which young people were engaged in different activities and given information about the Olympic regeneration through various creative methods. Sessions lasted for around three hours. Fieldwork was carried out in November and December 2009, with a group of 13 young people, although group sizes varied widely. The research is combined with a literature review, and the film footage produced by the young people was used as a data collection method as well as a project output.

Baseline visit: A baseline visit, in which the project was explained to the young people, and they were asked to capture their thoughts by interviewing each other, on how they felt about the Olympic developments.

Acetate drawing at Holden Point: Young people were taken up to Holden Point, Newham's official Olympic viewing point. Their feelings in the taxi there, and their reaction to the view were recorded to film. The young people were asked to draw the scene onto acetates and then to add what they would like to see on it. The discussion around this activity was recorded.

Jigsaw mapping and model making: Young people were shown a slide show of the Olympic developments, with artist's impressions of the Westfield Centre shopping areas, the stadiums, and new housing. Young people were asked to locate themselves on a large jigsaw map of the borough, then to choose a segment of the jigsaw and to mark on the roads, and the key sights in that area. The young people were then asked to plot onto the map the new developments. Discussion around this activity was recorded.

SketchUp session: Young people were taken to an IT resource centre. They were given a demonstration of the free 3D modelling package Google SketchUp. The young people were asked to create a model to a simplified design brief out of a choice: an Olympic stadium, the Aquatics Centre, Stratford City or a feature they would like to see in the Olympics development.

Film planning: Young people were shown creative documentary films by the Architecture Crew and other young people, and some examples of alternative genres. Use of stop frame and projection onto objects as possible creative film techniques were demonstrated. The young people prioritised themes around the Olympics regeneration based on their discussions over the previous weeks. They planned film content and style, while a small group developed music in response to the stimulus to put with the films.

Filming content: Young people recorded footage, voice over material and music to make short films about their attitudes and views around the Olympics. These films were edited. Young people watched back the film and were asked to reflect on the process.

Discussion and interviews: Young people's engagement with issues and activities was observed and discussed with them throughout the session activity. Some discussion of issues was recorded on film from each session. This was supplemented with three face to face in depth interviews in which young people discussed and developed research findings and reflected on the project activities.

Section 1: Understanding Attitudes

Positive responses to local developments

Young people were interested in the Olympics buildings. They were impressed by artist's images of the new developments, stadiums and housing blocks and had not seen these images or maps of the site previously. They responded well to looking at computer-generated images of the site. The young people often gave positive responses to the images they saw despite their reluctance to engage in the topic before the initial session. They were fascinated by the modern look of the developments: which they felt looked more like 'somewhere in America'. Young people were also engaged with the potential for the new physical developments to make social improvements, for example reducing crime. Some young people were excited by the idea of the shopping development as a new place to go for entertainment, and as a place to do weekend work. One young person felt that the improved environment would make people more inclined to use the outdoor environment locally.

'Is that the stadium? It looks like New York. It's nice. It will improve the area. There will be more things to do and that...It (the new housing) looks good man. It looks peaceful, if you don't want to fight or anything. You want to go for a little peaceful walk or sit down somewhere. A nice place.'

'They do look good. The area is going to be nicer; nice buildings, and all that. If you live in a nice area, you feel nice. If you live in a rubbish area, you don't feel comfortable. Having nice buildings, it will make you want to get out more...It will be better for visitors to West Ham football games.'

'I like the look of it. There are big, nice shops, nice clothes. It will be a nice place for young people to hang out. I'll use the shopping centre. I'll go there every day for shopping, food, to relax with friends. It might change the way I live because there will be more stuff around to do, more places to go and relax. You can't relax out in the cold. I am rarely out in Winter. I stay in and play Xbox. I would work in the shops. Then I could buy things there. I can't say I will, because other people might take the jobs before I get older.'

Lack of awareness of changes

The young people involved with the project had very little awareness of the Olympics regeneration, and therefore struggled to imagine what it might comprise and to articulate any potential benefits that the changes would bring to them. None of the young people had an idea about what would be built or where, and they did not have any ideas about the social or cultural changes that would come about alongside the built environment developments. Due to their lack of awareness, they had not given thought to how the developments might affect them. Through the course of the research they were made aware through, seeing the work in progress; artists images of the developments; and being given information about the type of changes that would occur. As a result of this the young people began to articulate views, both positive and negative about how they felt about the Olympics regeneration.

Lack of information about opportunities

There seems to be little information that is presented to young people about the real benefits that they will be able to access. Staff reported a lack of detailed and practical information delivered to young people about job opportunities that the Olympics will bring. Young people found it very hard to imagine what job opportunities may be available to them through the Olympics, what types of businesses would be opening, with what kind of jobs and career paths. They had little knowledge of the educational establishments in their area or the range of courses or careers that might be available to them.

'I want to be a construction worker. I am 15, when the Olympics comes I will be 17. I have not heard of any schemes. I would have gone on them. I would like more information.'

Some young people had little awareness of professions and found it hard to imagine themselves as having career options. One young person of 15 did not know what an architect or an engineer was, and when the roles were explained to him, replied, 'I can't design.' Another young person said that she wanted to go beyond the childcare qualification that had been suggested to her, she liked to think, to analyse situations. She had never heard of her local university UEL, and had no idea of what professions there might be where she could apply analytical thought. She was interested to know more about jobs around culture and research.'

'When I am 18 it will be a new area. It will be a good opportunity to get a new job: I don't really know what jobs there are I could do where you think.'

Attitudes towards employment

Some young people did feel they might work in the new development in first time jobs or weekend work, imagining themselves in retail jobs or maintaining stadiums. Some young people were not sure if they would be able to access these opportunities, fearing competition from older people and people from elsewhere. Other young people felt that the type of work opportunities that the Olympic developments would bring would not be of interest to them. One young person highlighted that rather than a lack of opportunity, the problem lay in the presence of illegal work such as drug dealing, which offered high financial reward and flexible working hours for young people who found it hard to think into their own futures.

'It's got nothing to do with me. It just doesn't fit in with my life style, music, relaxing, hanging out with my friends. There probably will be jobs but I won't want them. I want something that involves computers or music. It probably has got something to do with my education. I've seen some schools advertise the (Olympics) logo, but I don't really know what that means.'

Young person, before the project

Territory and feelings of dislocation

Some young people defined their local area by their postcode area and saw the Olympics regeneration through the lens of intra borough turf wars, feeling dislocated from the regeneration. One young person touring the area pointed out specific parks and roads and showed a very detailed knowledge of which gang 'owned' each area. This allegiance to a very localised area had several effects, one was to make the young people very focussed on a small geographic area and therefore to see the Olympics regeneration as distant activity, happening somewhere else. One young person expressed a resistance of change, when asked if he would like to see regeneration in his area, he said he would like to keep it as a 'ghetto', although his view did change on observing the Olympic development from Holden Point, to wanting to have some of the building regeneration in his area. Concerns were voiced over whether the young people would feel safe to go to the newly developed areas due to postcode tensions. Those who were involved in postcode area gangs felt that they would not be able to go to another postcode area without feeling 'paranoid' of being attacked by members of another group. Police interviewed by the young women acknowledged the real threat of fighting and serious harm attached to postcode area gang membership.

One session involving mapping with young people from the Stratford area and those from other areas, suggested that those from the Stratford area may feel more positive about themselves and their gangs because of the developments in their postcode; while those in other postcode areas may feel personally and in terms of their gang, more hard done by. Some young people spoke of their areas as the 'ghetto' and felt that their locality had been ignored. For some, increased knowledge about new buildings and facilities deepened the sense of their local community's abandonment.



Jigsaw mapping

Some of the young people did feel that they would be able to take advantage of the Olympic sites, despite their recognition that territorial issues would stop others from doing so. These young people felt that they would not be threatened within a different postcode area because they knew enough people across the different postcode areas to keep them from becoming a target. They knew these people from other areas through schools they had attended, or activities such as football clubs where the focus was on team sports and not on divisions.

'I am worried, but it would not stop me going there. I know a load of people from each area, because of football. It's not a problem when we play football. We are one big team; because I know all these people nothing will happen.'

Perceived inequality

Some young people felt disinterested in the Olympics regeneration due to negative perceptions of the developments. Some because they did not feel that the regeneration was doing enough for the local community. Some feared rising tensions as richer incoming communities arrived in areas where local residents struggle financially. One young person suggested that people struggling to get by on a day to day basis, to support their busy working and family lives, would feel the disruption of the Olympics development, more than they would notice any benefits which they had little time to take advantage of.

'Did we decide to have it here? I mean, were we asked? Do we want it here? I think if you went round and asked everybody, the majority of people would say no... People who are here they are not rich. That is why they are here. Otherwise they would move out. There will be trouble because all the people who can afford to live here they (the poorer residents) are not going to like them (the incoming residents)... Everyone has to get on with their life. They have things to do. They will be doing them. Work, family, it will be harder for them to get on with the everyday stuff.'

Feeling unwelcome

There was a feeling amongst the young people that the new developments were not intended for local communities, but to attract outsiders. They expressed that although they may wish to go to the plush areas, they would feel uncomfortable. Some felt that the new developments did not seem like real communities where everyday activities happened they looked too plush and polished in the artist impressions. They wanted to see areas where real people lived, people who hung out their washing to dry. Others had concerns that these areas, intended for city workers, would be places where they would stand out as having inadequate clothes, and therefore feel inferior. Others had concerns about the way that young people would be perceived in these areas which did not appear to have places where young people with little money could be together amongst the expensive looking cafes.

Frustration at poor local youth facilities

Young people and staff expressed disappointment that the Olympics would be a wasted opportunity to improve sports facilities for local youth. The presence of the massive stadium developments alongside poor local youth facilities made them frustrated.

'I reckon they could make more sports things round my area. They just knocked down a park and they put a traveller site there. The park they knocked down had a football pitch. They built a park with kiddie things in, but no football pitch. If I don't play football, I laze around, get bored and eat and get fat, it's not healthy.'



SketchUp session

Experience of inconvenience

Young people were also very aware and worried about the inconvenience that the build up to the Games and the Games themselves would cause for local people, traffic, relocation, and pollution. Some had fears about the impact of the event itself on the area. One young person feared the type of crowd aggression familiar to her from outside West Ham football games. She viewed the area from the perspective of a young person living with a local culture of aggressive behaviour and rudeness, with tensions between gangs and people from different national backgrounds.

‘After it will be a useful thing, we need jobs and housing. Once it happens, it will all be ok. It is just all the world coming together into one little place. Now, people from different countries who have got a problem with each other, stay out of each others’ way; people from Plaistow, Canning Town, Stratford, stay out of each other’s way. With the Olympics they will all come together. Some people will go for sports some will go for trouble. They will fight. No one has really thought through the trouble it brings...

‘They are knocking down my house. I am getting moved in a few months. I don’t want to move out of London. I don’t really care. I am angry with it really.’

Lack of belief in the potential for change

A huge preoccupation of this group was youth crime, whether they were victims or perpetrators. The overriding feeling was that the new developments would not do anything to reduce crime in the area. The young people felt that the Olympic developments could and should be an opportunity to reduce crime in the area. For example, one young person suggested that the new city should have a new postcode, so that it did not be claimed by one post-code gang, and could be used as a force for good as a gang-free zone.

Several young people expressed the view that the physical regeneration was not sufficient to change the nature of the area. One young person who found it particularly hard to engage was living in Canning Town, where a large regeneration development is underway and was persistently negative about her area and rejected the idea that it may improve. Another young person described a newly built area as he was driven past it, although this was architecturally a beautiful area, he said, the young people still behaved in an anti social way, without respect for their environment. Again he pointed to the underlying attitudes, suggesting that physical regeneration on its own could not bring change.

‘It doesn’t matter what you do. It’s still bad. You can rebuild it, but the people won’t change, the people will just wreck it again. You can’t change the people...London’s a bad place to live. But east London is a really bad one. The Olympics is nice. It is something big. If it is in Canning Town, where I live, there is so much crime. It’s terrible. Why put a world event somewhere like this? The place is getting worse.’

‘I mean they’ve got all these nice houses and building estates here, but the gang violence hasn’t gone down a bit. They’ve even put a curfew on this area (driving past new development) right now it might look nice and that but if you come down here at night... Look at that building there, it’s beautiful, but in a couple of days one of those windows is going to be smashed.’

A sense of waste

Young people were upset by what they saw as the waste of money on the Games themselves and the regeneration. This money, they felt would be better spent on the poor, the homeless, and on poor areas, directly. They could not see why the Games were needed as a catalyst for this change, and felt affronted by the implicit priorities in this situation, that is, they felt that people cared less about the poor than about sports. One young person when asked to draw onto the acetate over the view of the Olympics site drew a building where the Olympics would generate and send money for overseas development. There was no awareness of Olympic projects aimed at international sports development.

‘The Olympics is very good. They are spending obviously a lot of money on it, when they could just give that to the poor. But they’ve got to do what they’ve got to do.’

Discussion of attitudes towards the Olympics developments

The NEET problem can have local characteristics, and therefore needs locally relevant solutions. ‘The differentiated nature of those regarded as NEET and the fact that their circumstances are often rooted in local factors requires local authorities and civil society organisations to develop locally sensitive and flexible strategies.’² The research findings suggest that Olympics regeneration could be a part of the lives of the NEET generation in the Host boroughs. If gaps in information, and movements in attitude from negative to positive could be achieved and if postcode boundaries could be overcome, then it could be a vehicle for helping young people to build their self esteem; encouraging them to articulate their views; and leading them towards new topics of interest and employment possibilities.

Young people, self-esteem and changing place

The research gives some insight into what the young people did find engaging, and why. However, understanding the negative attitudes of the young people about the Olympics regeneration is essential to re-engage them in discussion about the Olympics, helping them to re-tell their stories, and building their self-esteem in relation to the developments. The Olympics regeneration will radically transform the physical and social landscape of the Host boroughs, all of which have pockets of severe economic deprivation. It is now widely understood that a person’s sense of self esteem is fluid and relates to the stories they believe for example, about themselves, their friends, their families and the place where they live³. Adolescence is known to be a time when identity is formed, and therefore it seems reasonable to assume that the radical changes in the area will have some impact on the sense of identity of the young people living in the areas local to the Olympics. Our findings suggest that the Olympics regeneration may have a positive, negative or non-existent impact on the self-esteem of young people at risk of becoming NEET for reasons to do with their relationship with territory.

It seems very relevant that young people may feel uncomfortable in the new development areas because of their clothes, or because they are young, or because the areas are too polished, as if they are intended for people with money. Young people noticed the absence of places for young people to hang around. To access cafes they would need money. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) discusses the issue of deliberate exclusion by design, saying that ‘places in the centres of towns and cities which appear to be public realm but are in fact privately managed, may seek to exclude certain groups, often young people, to address fears about anti social behaviour.’⁴ Guidance on including young people in built environment education suggests that adults’ needs are often prioritised over those of young people⁵. The report highlights the importance of making all different groups of people feel ‘that they have the right to be there’ and it sets out principles for inclusive spaces based on a range of government policy documents. This research would suggest that it is important to see young people as social groups with their own needs in terms of feeling that they are welcome in an area and able to engage with, and work in the radically different area that is springing up around them.

Wider research supports the idea that territoriality amongst young people acts as a barrier to inclusion. A Joseph Rowntree Foundation study of six areas across the UK found that ‘the negative impact of territorial behaviour on young people included constrained mobility, problems with access to amenities and the risk of violent assault and criminalisation’. They found that young people were involved and affected by this to different degrees, but that the ‘substantial ‘social exclusion’ disadvantages for young people because of restricted mobility and conflict...merits being taken seriously as a problem in its own right.’⁶ The term NEET has been criticised for being too broad to describe a group comprising many different types of young people who are NEET for a wide range of different reasons. It is clear that this group comprises some who are largely disengaged from society and those who are very engaged but have been unable to find work or have failed courses for other reasons.² Of particular relevance to this study, is the reference to leisure activities. The report noted that even if transport facilities were provided, some young people would not travel to another territory for fear of attack. This has an important bearing on accessibility of available Olympic opportunities to some young people.

Accessing built environment professions

As an area rich with innovative design in the stadiums and related regeneration structures, it would seem feasible that young people in the Olympic areas may be hooked into an interest in becoming architects, or in other built environment professions. Architecture is a profession dominated by White middle class men, in the view of the head of the Royal Institute of British Architects.³ Statistically, 2 per cent of architects come from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. In this context it seems far-reaching to expect young people already excluded from school to be hoping to become architects. However, it is clear that these young people have the capacity to reflect and comment on their local built environment and socio economic condition. With encouragement and support they have the capacity to design ideas for buildings, stadiums and city models using computer aided design techniques. Perhaps crucially, these young people have an experiential understanding of what it is like to be young now, and to live in their local area and within current youth culture. If pathways for these young people into the range of built environment professions from planning to architecture, to space management could be made, then people with a lived understanding of some of the entrenched social issues which impact on built environments could find their way into the group who design, build, improve and maintain them.



Filming the neighbourhoods

Section 2: Assessment of Activities

This section summarises feedback and observation on the session activities. This feedback has informed the direction of this project, and the development of a set of activities which young people at risk of NEET or who are NEET are likely to respond well to in terms of enjoyment and learning about the Olympics regeneration and its opportunities.

The sessions, and discussion with the staff revealed a constant challenge to persuade some young people to see the world through any alternative paradigm to that of their own turf wars. This 'obsession' as one staff member described it, with postcodes, seemed at first to present a barrier to the young people participating with the activities or subject matter. It should be noted that this particular group had experienced the loss of a class member in the past year through gang related knife crime. The approach taken was to accept and listen to their views on their postcode issues and to use this as a route to engage with conversation about the Olympics regeneration. The results were surprising, in that young people who had been wholly negative or inarticulate about the Olympics regeneration produced very succinct and insightful pieces of comment through their film and voice over work.

At its most difficult, the NEET problem sits in a world apart from mainstream society with unsavory and illegal activity existing as a norm. It is important to acknowledge the complexity of this world in order to understand that the solutions to the NEET problem need to be rooted in a deep understanding of the trenchant causes, situations and attitudes of young people in these worlds. 'The range of issues associated with young people in the NEET category comprises low educational attainment, homelessness, gang membership, early criminalisation, drug culture and dependency, care needs, teenage pregnancy, prostitution and, in many or even most cases, multiple and overlapping disadvantage, for example, pregnancy, drug dependency and crime.'⁶

Engaging young people with these range of issues is challenging, may take time and may not always look tidy or be contained within a simple lesson plan. Engaging on a personal level with issues that interest the young person, and using this to link in to the Olympics is one way to approach the engagements. The films demonstrate that this personal engagement can be a way in to engaging challenging young people.

The young people were interested to see the view of the Olympics, images and video with comment from other young people. They seemed fully engaged with watching the impressive pictures of the developments on a slide show. They also responded well to the comment from the Architecture Crew film which engaged with different views from the local community, and which they could relate their own feelings to.

Absenteeism is frequent amongst this group of young people in general. It is important in the design of sessions to ensure that each session stands alone so that someone attending one session may engage quickly and go away with learning. While the sessions may link and build, they do need to make sense to young people who find it hard to attend regularly.



Filming on the Greenway

Success of Engagement Activities

There is some evidence of positive learning experiences and increased knowledge through the session activities. Some participants were more aware of the changes and therefore felt better about their area, felt more confident in their skills.

'I don't like sitting down. But when I was out in the park, out filming, it was like going to have fun and work built into it. I like to know and understand things and just understanding it was good. The more I can know, the better it is. You explained how to do it, and I sort of did it. And it came out good. And that makes you feel good. The whole project has helped with media and music. We used cameras and understand shots more. You showed us the idea to shine things on it. That's given us more ideas.'

'Since the course, I've noticed more buildings going up. I've seen more go up. I've learnt that it's not all going to be in one place. That it's spread out. I feel proud. I know more what's going on, and it's better to know more than not to. If you know something about it, then you can get more interested in it. When I get older, it's going to be more jobs.'

Baseline visit: Young people interviewed each other. This worked in one group where there was some initial interest, in that group there was some engagement with the issues, as one young person felt he was being moved from his home because of the Olympics. In the other group, there was no sense of relevance. This activity may work later.

Acetate drawing at Holden Point: Young people were impressed by the view, and enjoyed the experience of seeing the site from up above. They were engaged in finding the sites to locate themselves. They engaged with drawing on the sites, and adding their own developments, with encouragement from staff. Adding their own wishes onto the picture opened up a space to discuss what they felt about the regeneration: for example, the young women drew a washing line, they wanted the city to be somewhere they could feel comfortable, with real people, not alienating and clinically modern. One young man drew a Ferris wheel, mirroring themes from the evaluation of the Bridging the Gap Programme about young people needing exciting, fun activities.⁷ He also drew pictures of charities that sent money abroad.

Jigsaw mapping and model making: Young people were very engaged with the slide show of Olympic buildings and Stratford City. They had not seen these images before and they seemed surprised by them. Young people engaged with the mapping exercise, finding themselves on the map, and locating places that they knew and used, such as a mechanics centre, the New Canteen. The group found discussion around the large table challenging: some were intimidated to speak in front of the others, they were not aware of potential opportunities so the opportunities mapping was not very successful. One or two of the young people engaged with the model making and one wanted to finish his model beyond the class. There was some fronting, with postcode tensions bubbling in the discussion, as the young people in the group came from different areas.

Sketch up session: The young men responded very well to this. The young men were interested in the activity, they all tried and managed to make models, they picked up the techniques very quickly. They enjoyed downloading pre-designed additions, such as cars, and fish and a logo of the games. When facing the computer, they could work without judgement from the rest of the group. When someone visited them or they were faced with the rest of the group, there was some fronting and disowning of their achievement. This could be the basis for a more extended project based around planning a city for example. However some of the young people enjoyed the activity in itself but were reluctant to engage with the wider picture.

Film planning: The young people were engaged with the prioritising session. They connected very strongly with the Architecture Crew film. They needed a great deal of support in each small group to develop their ideas for short films. Concentration and engagement with this task was challenging. They

did enjoy getting out and filming hands on, the girls were keen to interview others. Although the young people said that documentary style was boring, they did engage with the content, and were keen to carry out documentary style research. They were keen to use the projection technique.

A short exercise was devised as a part of the film planning process. This exercise was designed to try to help the young people connect the things that interested them, to the Olympics regeneration, to make it personal. The questions listed below were raised by the young people, or based on issues which were of interest to them. These were printed onto small cards and put into packs, given to small groups of young people. The young people were asked in their group to prioritise their top five questions. They were then asked to rank them in order of priority. They were asked to think about the top issue as a theme for their film.

- Could the Olympics stop postcode wars?
- Could the Olympics cut gun and knife crime?
- Could the Olympics make the area more stylish?
- Will there be more opportunities in the beauty business in the new city?
- Could there be opportunities for local musicians in 2012?
- Should the Olympic development include a theme park?
- Will there be nicer cars in the new city?
- What will the Olympics do for the local community?
- What jobs, and what careers will the new city and shops bring?
- Could and should the Olympics reduce poverty?
- Will the Olympics bring more affordable housing?
- Will the Olympics bring better youth facilities?
- Will local young people get more chance to travel after 2012?
- Are there enough sports opportunities for local young people?
- Will the Olympics reduce homelessness?
- Will the Olympics bring any arts opportunities for young people?

This exercise was succinct and easy to grasp, and the young people responded to the task well. Each group successfully chose five questions in five minutes and prioritised them in the next five minutes. The themes did lead them into their film topic. More could be made of this as a discrete activity to help show young people that the regeneration might be of interest to them, through connecting with issues that touch their everyday lives and interests.

Film Making: The young people responded well to having control of the camera and content. They enjoyed the filming process, and the process of conveying their own knowledge and views. The comment to camera and the voice over recordings show a marked increase in engagement with the issues around the Olympics regeneration to the initial sessions. The young people were impressed with the films once they had been put together and this made them feel more positive about their abilities. Young people who had been engaged from the beginning of the sessions showed most benefit from the work. Filming involved small groups of people and engaging the full group in activities concurrently was challenging.

Recommendations

Key findings from the action research project 'Positive Pathways for Young People' (PPYP) suggest ways forward in mobilising young people towards employment through engagement with the Olympics developments. These issues inform the development of the proposed programme of activities.

Awareness and information

The research suggests a lack of information about the scale, scope and social impact of the Olympic developments amongst young people. If presented in an accessible way, this information could improve self-esteem, feelings about the local area, and hope about future job prospects. Young people enjoyed learning facts through film, visual images, and site visits; they felt encouraged by being able to articulate their feelings towards the Olympics and engage with issue based discussion about the pros and cons of the developments; they enjoyed learning computer based architectural modelling skills.

Access to professional worlds

Research suggests that young people at risk of NEET find it hard to think about their future life, and therefore to imagine themselves in future employment. Combined with this is a lack of knowledge about what jobs are available, what these jobs involve, how they could be achieved, the salaries they command or what other benefits or drawbacks they may entail. The range of new work and career opportunities that the Olympics will bring to the area is huge, but is not clearly spelt out. Young people would benefit greatly from mapping of the specific jobs and opportunities that will become available; from the different career pathways in retail; to positions in social and cultural roles; to the range of careers available within the built environment professions. Ways in which they could move onwards from their current situation of limited prospects in terms of qualifications, towards higher expectations in the future, such as access courses, adult education, accessible higher education, might be introduced.

Addressing negative attitudes

The young people displayed a wide range of negative attitudes towards the Olympic developments. Giving the young people validation of their views and opinions about the developments gives potential for issue based discussion, and for offering alternative perspectives which can encourage young people to see the positive elements of the Olympic developments. There is potential for young people to see themselves in a more positive aspect through voicing their views and opinions on the Olympics developments via creative activities.

Young people's worlds

Keeping in view the worlds in which some young people live is crucial to building a meaningful programme of activities to motivate them towards employment. For example, barriers presented by territorialism are a very real factor that may prevent young people engaging with the developments. Illegal and informal employment alternatives available to young people may influence their views of formal opportunities. Tackling these issues are wider than the scope of the project, but engaging with discussion of ways in which individuals make decisions about these issues may be beneficial.

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End Notes

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