

Young People and the 2012 Olympics

Teenagers living in the London Borough of Newham today will be young working adults in 2012. Some of them will be married with children of their own. The success or failure of the massive project to regenerate the area via the Olympic Games will have a profound effect on the life chances of these young people, most of whom are still at school at the moment.

The Architecture Crew is a forum for young people aged 13 to 19 to voice their opinions about the regeneration of their homes and neighbourhoods. Facilitated by Fundamental, the Architecture Crew has carried out two studies investigating the likely impact of the Olympic Games. We report here on their findings and the messages they would like to send to those responsible for the Games and in particular the planned legacy of 2012. These projects may be small in scale, but they supply vital insights into young people's perception of the 2012 Olympic Games.

Five messages for the organisers of the 2012 Olympics

→ Ordinary people care about their neighbourhood and their future. Think about where poor people living in run down areas are going to live when the new homes and improvements are finished. Listen to local people to find out what will work – don't just ask them to approve plans that have already been drawn up.

- Local people must be asked before large sums of money are spent on public art. They may prefer the money to be spent on a badly needed new building, which could double as a landmark for the area.
- When money is spent on facilities like sports centres, make sure that local people with the least money can afford to watch the Games and use the facilities once the Games are over. Make entry free or have special rates for local people.
- Be honest about what opportunities are available to local people. Jobs created by hosting the Games may be temporary. And small businesses may struggle to survive.
- Don't assume that all young people will want to volunteer during the Games. Many just want to get paid work and believe that it should be possible to be involved this way.

The Word from Manchester

East London's Architecture Crew went to East Manchester to find out about the 2002 Commonwealth Games and see what lessons they could offer to the 2012 Olympic Games.

- Local people have been consulted often and in detail about the neighbourhood redevelopment project known as New Islington Millennium Community. But the new housing and shops being developed seem to be aimed mainly at wealthy people from outside the area. Young people have taken part in one off projects, such as designing a new bus shelter, but don't seem to be part of shaping their new neighbourhood.
- The B of the Bang is a sculpture in East Manchester that was built to celebrate the 2002 Commonwealth Games. People we spoke to described the B of the Bang as an

eyesore, dangerous and expensive, although some said that it looks beautiful at night. One local shopper we interviewed said, "they could have spent the money on something better for the kids around the area".

- The 2002 Commonwealth Games improved East Manchester, gave some young people the chance to volunteer at major sporting events and left behind some great sports facilities. But entry to watch events or use the facilities is not cheap - £5.80 to book a badminton court is a lot of money for the average local 15 year old.

The Big Sunday youth consultation

The Architecture Crew carried out a short survey of 13 to 19 year olds who attended Newham's Big Sunday community event which focussed on 2012 and the prospects for change. These findings are based on 70 questionnaires.

- Nearly all the young people we spoke to would like to be part of the Olympics through paid work. Four in ten young people who want paid work during 2012, would like jobs helping to design the new facilities being built for the Games.
- Three quarters of young people questioned said that they would also like to volunteer during 2012, but a significant minority said they would not be interested in this, suggesting that there is more support for paid work opportunities.
- Nearly all the 70 young people wanted the new sports facilities built for 2012 to be opened to the public and local schools or sports clubs after the Games finish.



About Fundamental

Fundamental Architectural Inclusion is a not for profit organisation based in East London that seeks ways for young people to genuinely participate in the planning and development process of regeneration in their neighbourhoods. The Architecture Crew is facilitated by Fundamental and invites young people aged 13 to 19 to come together and give voice to their views about their local built environment. This is the first forum of its kind in the country and has just secured core funding from the Big Lottery Young People's Fund for three years following a highly successful pilot period.

About the projects

Each project was developed over a series of participatory sessions. The Word from Manchester took place in May half term 2005, and draws its findings from interviews with local residents, question and answer sessions with English Partnerships, Sports City and young people from the Manchester Youth Volunteer Programme (MYVP), reviews of websites and local publications. The Big Sunday consultation took place in February 2006.

The Word from Manchester and the Big Sunday consultation were carried out with the support of the Local Network Fund and London Borough of Newham respectively. Fundamental does not necessarily share the views expressed here by the researchers. © Fundamental Architectural Inclusion April 2006