

The Architecture Crew reaches out

Getting young people actively engaged in the transformation of their communities into happy, thriving, sustainable places in which to live and work – these are core aims of the Government's policies on youth, on education, on regeneration. Fundamental has been at the forefront of youth engagement in regeneration for five years and in 2004 set up Britain's first youth architecture forum (known locally as the Architecture Crew). Fundamental's youth projects are ideally placed to unlock the potential of literally hundreds of young people to make the positive contribution to their communities that the Government is looking for. But some young people need us to make the first move. That's why we have embarked on a programme of youth outreach taking the Architecture Crew offer out to young people where they are.

We are also very excited about our developing plans for a mobile Architecture Centre which we are working on with the Architecture Crew and which will become a vehicle to take our programmes out to Newham's youth centres and other sections of the community.

This edition of Soundings presents what we learnt from talking to youth workers about the young people they work with and from Architecture Crew workshops about what a mobile Architecture Centre might look like.

How much do young people know about local regeneration?

- Three quarters of the 12 youth providers we interviewed, described their service users as having low or medium awareness of regeneration.
- Only three youth providers described their service users as having high awareness of regeneration compared with seven providers whose users have accessed some form of regeneration activity through their centre.
- Young people with high regeneration awareness have had the opportunity to engage in activities that are explicitly about regeneration, which bring them into direct contact with local officials or regeneration professionals.
- Our findings suggest that girls may be more likely than boys to gain access to these opportunities that lead to higher regeneration awareness.
- Young people with low regeneration awareness appear less likely to travel outside their neighbourhood, according to our interviewees.

How can we tackle regeneration awareness among Newham's youth?

- Youth providers were aware of several sources of regeneration information and one off activities and events that their service users had accessed, but were not always confident that these were effective in raising awareness of local regeneration. (The information and activities may have benefited the young people in other ways).
- Regeneration awareness activities need to tell young people about the opportunities that are available to them and how to access them; and need to use cross cutting themes that interest the young people as a way to introduce regeneration issues.
- Most youth providers believe their service users prefer activities that are fun, informal and are very different from school. However, it is possible that youth providers working with excluded young people may recommend a more structured and formal approach.

Would a mobile Architecture Centre help?

- The idea of the mobile Architecture Centre got a positive reaction from all the youth providers interviewed for this research. One interviewee hoped that it would be possible to host the mobile on a regular basis so that it becomes part of people's lives.
- Several interviewees thought that a guiding principal should be that young people are involved at every stage in the process of developing the mobile and its content.
- Despite their lack of experience in hosting mobile services, the interviewees did not perceive any major practical barriers to hosting a mobile Architecture Centre.

The mobile Architecture Centre

Working with Fundamental's architectural educators and structural engineers from Atelier One, the Architecture Crew have begun to develop the idea of a mobile Architecture Centre. The words and images below show some early experiments in design and some of the key words they came up with to describe their concept.

Be

**kind to the environment sustainable
rechargeable pleasing foldable
bigger than it looks multi-functional**

Do

**spread the word communicate
regeneration in the community**

Say

**cool fun multi-cultural compact
environmentally friendly modern
power it is us**



About Fundamental

Fundamental Architectural Inclusion is an architecture centre that seeks new ways for communities 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 – 19 to come together and give voice to their views about their local built environment.

About the project

This report sets out the main findings from three research and consultation tasks: interviews with a sample of 12 Newham youth providers, statistical information about the young people who use the 12 youth services we included in our sample and a discussion with older members of the Architecture Crew taking part in the development of the mobile concept. The main aim of the research was to strengthen our

understanding of the views of youth providers in order to build these into the development of our youth outreach programme; and to test their reactions to the idea of a mobile Architecture Centre.

For further information contact Fundamental on 020 8471 7929 or visit www.fundamental.uk.net

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