

The Spacemakers Project.



Young people designing a public space.



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The Spacemakers Project.

Part One of the report tells the story of the Spacemakers Project. This part of the report describes the project and draws out some of the impacts the project has had upon the young people as well as the adults participating and managing the project.

Part Two of the report sets out to show how the project demonstrates good practice in relation to current youth practice, the Youth Matters framework and Change for Children agenda.

Part Three of the report assesses the Spacemakers project against research into youth participation and involvement in regeneration. It attempts to draw out some key lessons for the future involvement of young people in community action in shaping the urban environment.

Spacemakers Project Staff Team

Mark Rooney - Project Manager

Paul Spatchurst – senior assistant youth worker at Hareclive Youth Centre

Mike Snow - mentor at Withywood Secondary School

Claire Warren - mentor at Withywood Secondary School.

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Part One

The Spacemakers Project.

Background.

Spacemakers was a two-year project that ran from September 2002 to November 2004 in which young people, who were aged thirteen when the project started, designed a public space within their own community in the Hartcliffe and Withywood area of Bristol.

Objectives

The project partners developed some key objectives, which developed during the project. These were:

- ❑ to involve disenfranchised youth in shaping their environment;
- ❑ to create a sense of ownership, and develop feelings of community;
- ❑ to improve the young people's feelings of self-worth and career prospects.

Starting points.

The area of Hartcliffe and Withywood is part of a single regeneration area with strong indicators of deprivation, challenging social issues, unemployment and under-developed public spaces. Community representatives and professional workers have focussed on a variety of local strategic priorities including projects that support young people in their personal development and their involvement in the local community regeneration activities.

Major community redevelopment plans drew attention from a variety of other professional interests. Spacemakers resulted from discussions by like-minded individuals within The Architecture Centre, Bristol, The Glasshouse, London,

Bristol City Council and Hartcliffe Community Campus.

Representatives from these organisations formed the project steering group. In July 2002 they appointed Mark Rooney, an architect with experience in marketing and as a football coach, as project manager. Other partners included mentors from a local school and a youth worker from the youth locality team. Shortly after this a project artist, Kathrin Böhm also joined the project. Towards the end of the project a Landscape Architect, Greg White of Loci Design was appointed by the young people in the project to help them realise the final brief.

Funding and support-in-kind was given by Withywood Community School, youth locality team and Architecture Centre, and further grants were awarded by ERDF Urban 2, The Home Office, Living Spaces (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) and Children and Young People's Services at Bristol City Council.

The total budget for Spacemakers was approximately £202,250, with £150,000 allocated to capital costs.

The Spacemakers project team.

The day-to-day activities of the project were managed by Mark Rooney, who worked closely with Paul Spatchurst a youth worker, and Mike Snow and Claire Warren, mentors at Withywood Secondary School. There had been a long history of quality professional collaboration on projects for meeting young people's needs between the youth centre staff and the Withywood Community School staff over a number of years. The project relied on a mix of paid employees and time given in kind

to the project. This was distributed as follows:

Mark Rooney - Project Manager
(Employed 18.5 hours in 1st year and full time thereafter)

Paul Spatchurst – senior assistant youth worker at Hareclive Youth Centre (allocated 8 hours per week throughout the project)

Mike Snow and Claire Warren - mentors at Withywood Secondary School (within existing working remit)

The professional mix of the project staff proved to be a vital ingredient to the success of the project.

Early project activities centred round the recruitment of the young people for the project. This was a complex two-month process. Open evenings for young people and their parents were held at local schools and youth organisations. These events set out the intentions of the project and the range of experiences that were planned for any young person who joined in the project.

The eventual group included 16 young people aged 13 – 15 from a range of backgrounds, and an equal mix of boys and girls. Over the duration of the project this reduced to ten young people. The young people who formed the initial group said that their parents showed strong support and encouraged them to sign up, 'as this kind of opportunity will never come again'. Adult representatives from the schools and youth locality team that had helped recruit the group became part of the project team.

The Spacemakers then met every two or three weeks, mainly in the evenings and at weekends in the local youth centre. In the early stages of the project 6 young people decided for different reasons to leave the project.

Building the Spacemakers Team

The project staff planned a visit to Trafford Hall, the National Tenant's Resource Centre in Manchester. This centre specialises in supporting adults and young people from communities becoming actively involved in community regeneration. The purpose of the visit was to introduce all the team, young members and adults to some of the concepts and issues that the project was addressing.

This visit proved to be a significant event for all concerned.

Prior to the visit the young Spacemakers had formed two distinct friendship groups. The professional workers came from different backgrounds and had different levels of knowledge about young people in general and of the specific young people on the visit. In addition, their knowledge varied on the issues of regeneration and the development of public spaces. The experience and issues confronting them were new to all of them; everyone had their own anxieties about the event and this placed everyone in a similar learning position.



They all took part in a three-day course about the design of public spaces at Trafford Hall, the National Tenant's Resource Centre in Manchester, where

they learnt about regeneration issues, public speaking, planning and negotiating.

The Course that was delivered at Trafford Hall was a bespoke programme of activities that was delivered by two individuals from PEP (in collaboration with SPACEMAKERS staff).

The programme of activities included a warm up session on arrival, a getting to know you session and an initial talk that introduced the young people to the world. Other key activities were:

Planning for real – young people made models of their environment which were then used to show the best and worst parts of their environment, how they used their immediate environment and changes they would like to see. This was a colourful and lively session.

Negotiation workshop – This workshop concentrated on the young people roll playing the characteristics involved in a certain situation – in this case a contentious local housing development. The roles they played were local residents, developer, contractor and local authority officers.

Promotion and communication workshop. This workshop conveyed to the group the importance of good communication and promotion. The various groups came up with a wide range of ideas on how best to promote their project. These included rapping / Djing, web sites, public presentations and TV and radio promotion.

A trip into Manchester. This afternoon session broke up the three-day course with a tour of Old Trafford and the Lowry museum. A round up session where the group reflected on the course and what they had learnt. This was done with the use of “post it notes” and video.

By the end of the three days, the young Spacemakers said they had become one group. They also said that after this experience they had a clearer idea of what the project was really about and this boosted their confidence and they said that they felt that they could achieve something good.



The adults had also developed new perspectives on the young people and the development issues of the project. A relationship had developed between the adults and young people in which they had become a single team with a common purpose.

Developing shared knowledge about public spaces.

Following the experience in Manchester a series of research visits to public spaces and buildings were organised, firstly in Bristol, then to nearby Westonbirt Arboretum, and later to locations further a field such as Glasgow and the Eden Project in Cornwall and finally to parts of The Netherlands.

On each visit to a public space a similar visit format was followed. The young people were firstly asked to explore the space and to take notes of what they saw. Following this they met up on the site and shared their observations and ideas about the

public park space. The adult members of the team used these sessions to draw out the young people's ideas and to demonstrate that it was their ideas and perceptions that were the important ones, not necessarily what the adults thought. In all processes the young people made the key creative decisions throughout the project.

Over time this process of analysing the public park spaces enabled the group to develop a framework of ideas of what for them made for a 'successful' public park space.



This framework included consideration of:

- ❑ the range of people for whom the park was designed,
- ❑ involvement of local people in the design of the spaces,
- ❑ the level of actual use,
- ❑ the type of features in the park,
- ❑ use of colour,
- ❑ types of materials used in features,
- ❑ how the features were arranged in the space,
- ❑ how the space was cared for,
- ❑ the size and location of the public space within a local community.

The young people also came away with specific ideas around certain features that they liked and might want to incorporate in their own design for a park, as well as

knowledge about what features did not work in a park.

“It's more than just building a park”.

The adult team members were committed to young people as individuals and saw the personal development of the young people as a central purpose in all activities. This commitment is exemplified in the key objectives for the project.

The experiences of travel, new social settings, new cultures and places in this phase of the project were eye openers for many of the young people, and the adults saw these aspects as very important. The adults talked through each experience with the young people using the opportunities to deepen relationships and the young people's understanding about the world.

Mark Rooney: “As the education officer the main support was around the issues of support for presentational and communication skills. Helping to develop expectations and broaden horizons by enabling them to have new opportunities and experiences e.g. work experience- the process of travel – flying new to many – going to different locations and being helped to relate them to their own environment.”

Supporting the young people in accessing work experience was seen as an important bridging activity in which the experiences of the project and the confidence and skills that had been developed could be applied in new life situations.

Keeping the young people's interest.

Maintaining interest on a project spanning two years is a challenge for any project staff working with young people. Mark Rooney worked hard to ensure that the 12 young people remained involved throughout the whole of the two-year project, especially as Spacemakers was voluntary and additional to their school commitments. This effort to maintain interest and focus was supplemented strongly by the support provided by Paul as youth worker as well as Mike and Claire in their respective mentor roles.

This was also achieved by ensuring that every activity was designed to be enjoyable and practical, and specialist terminology was avoided. If a young person were absent for a while, Mark Rooney would visit their homes and talk to them and their parents. In this way adult members of the team helped the young work through difficulties and provide a bridge for them to continue involvement in the project.

The research trip to The Netherlands took place at a late stage of the project, and was used as an incentive to keep the young people involved.



Spacemakers thinking about their own locality.

The Spacemakers took part in workshops in which they used large-scale maps of the area of Hartcliffe and Withywood. They annotated the maps to show the locations where young people liked to hang out and the facilities that were of interest and importance to them. From this a clear picture emerged as to an understanding of the priority areas in the locality from the young peoples' perspective. One interesting factor that emerged was the importance to young people of the location of the 'green boxes', which were the local electricity distribution power boxes, used as meeting and hanging out places.



In February and March 2003, the Spacemakers staff group identified ten local open space sites that were available for development and which would be suitable for the Spacemakers to consider. These ten open spaces were spread geographically across the local wards.



The Spacemakers visited each site in turn and used the knowledge gained on all their other visits to collectively analyse the plus and minus points of each site. This involved consideration of the size of the space, its location within the community, current usage, pathways, other local facilities nearby, potential for vandalism, ease of management and oversight as well as their own local knowledge of the specific site.



Their final choice, by vote, was a prominent site in part of Wilmott Park, opposite one of the local youth centres and near to roads and a shopping centre. What proved a crucial factor to the choice of the site, however, was the presence of a group of mature oak trees, which they wanted their scheme to celebrate.

Spacemakers working on designs for the chosen site.

The young people then worked with the artist Kathrin Böhm in the area of Wilmott Park they had chosen, creating a temporary timber shelter and a painted concrete plinth. This work helped the Spacemakers understand the design and construction process, and developed their understanding of the site, and was a crucial part of the process of developing the brief. Kathrin Böhm describes her work as being "concerned with setting up a process of active participation where the given roles and procedures within a design project can be questioned".

As a complementary activity to the project, artist Cleo Broda produced a set of postcards about the everyday life of Hartcliffe and Withywood.

Appointing a landscape architect.

An advertisement was placed in Building Design, to which seventeen landscape architects responded. Responses were received from one Bristol based practice; one from Germany and the rest were from other parts of the UK

The Spacemakers developed a set of criteria to judge the applications and they short-listed three landscape architects. They were quite clear that the principles that guided the project to date, namely that the development of ideas were young person led and adult supported should inform the selection process and working relationship with the chosen landscape architect.

The Spacemakers were supported in developing a presentation to give to each of the candidates as an introduction to the interview of each candidate.

This presentation set out the aims and objectives of the project and the priorities of the young people. Three sets of young Spacemakers made the presentations and then interviewed the landscape architects with a set of their prepared questions. The Spacemakers were present during the interviews, which were conducted by the steering group.

The Spacemakers made the final decision to appoint Greg White of Loci Design as he most closely fitted the criteria that they had determined.

Working on the design for the Spacemakers Park

The Spacemakers worked on design ideas with Greg White over a period of about three months.

The young people created a 'Wish List' that included a shelter, a stream and a bridge as well as an aerial walkway between the trees. They were aware that some of their ideas might be too expensive or impractical at the outset and so they refined their ideas over time.

Workshops were held which explored each of the elements they wanted, as well as the park as a whole. They did a lot of sketching and made a series of plasticine models. The young people said that each time they presented a new set of ideas to the landscape architect, Greg went away and came back with a possible solution, 'he worked around our ideas to make them possible.'

Greg White says that his role in the process was to "*refine their desires into something workable*".

They consulted disability access advisers and also considered the safety and maintenance of their designs.

The Spacemakers had particularly strong views about materials. This had developed over the course of their visits to other public spaces. They were concerned about vandalism and in particular, arson. No timber was to be used, and everything was designed to be as indestructible as possible. They were also faced with hard choices when the price of steel suddenly doubled and they were forced to rethink elements of the scheme.

During the course of developing ideas for the site an unexpected discovery of was made of moving water 2.5m beneath ground level under manhole covers at the site. The water was tested and proved to be clean, and the Engineers ARUP were appointed to devise a way of bringing the water to surface level without the use of pumps to create a watercourse through the site.

Spacemakers keeping the community informed about the development.

Much of the practical work was undertaken by the Project Manager and Landscape Architect, including fundraising and hiring contractors, however the Spacemakers took on key roles throughout the realisation of the project.

The work of Spacemakers became widely known by other young people through the natural networking of the young people across the local area. Some Spacemakers made a particular effort to share knowledge of the development.

The Spacemakers created 'flyers' describing the intentions for the park. They then distributed these to householders in the immediate vicinity

of the park. This process led to a number of conversations between the Spacemakers and local residents about the proposed development.



The project staff supported the young people in developing the presentation skills of talking to others about the project. The Spacemakers prepared and gave a presentation to fifty members of the local community, including some of those residents close to the proposed park as well as local representatives of key organisations. For this presentation the Spacemakers prepared models, plans, and displays as well as giving a verbal presentation. On separate occasions the Spacemakers made presentations to fund holders including Bristol City Council officers and elected members.

It was important that the local community were kept informed about the development throughout the project once work was to commence on site. This was partly achieved by the Spacemakers who were interviewed on a *weekly* basis by local radio and TV during the construction of the public space and its launch in November 2004.

From the moment that the work on site started and the young people were involved in telling TV and radio presenters of progress the Spacemakers realised that their project was for real. The project staff saw this as a significant moment for the young people and they

saw the young people grow further in personal stature at this point of the project.



This publicity and local consultation over the proposals helped the wider community to take greater “ownership” of the project and as a result the development of the park was largely unhindered by vandalism and theft during its build phase.

On the opening day that was attended by 150 people, many local, but also including senior representatives from local and city organisations the Spacemakers made further presentations on their work, which cemented in the minds of the local community the positive role that young people could play within their community.

This final presentation was the culmination of two years work for the Spacemakers. It was a significant moment in their lives that continues to have an impact upon them.

The Spacemakers Park

Spacemakers project led to the creation of an impressive public space that includes a futuristic looking shelter, a slide, a water channel and hard surfaces and benches on different levels.



The Spacemakers' public space is heralded by a dramatic custom-designed stainless steel shelter which sits on stilts at the highest point of the site. A stainless steel slide, also custom-built, has been set into the slope below, and this leads into the central area of the park, a bound gravel area cut through by the meandering white concrete watercourse and sheltered by ancient oak trees. Here, seating is provided and there are opportunities for quiet contemplation, enhanced by the sound of moving water. All elements closely follow the brief set by the Spacemakers and were designed to be both robust and elegant.

Mark Rooney, Project Manager, said: "There's a real element of play you can't help but see that young people were involved in the scheme."

Adele Sadd, one of the sixteen Spacemakers, said: "It's really good to see what we've made. People of all ages use the space, and I take my friends there. We really got what we wanted it was our project, it was in our hands, it was for ourselves." She also said that the scheme is holding up, in terms of vandalism: "There's a bit of graffiti on the shelter, but you can expect that, and some of the turf has been dug up, but that's all."

The young people really felt that they had achieved something that involved 100% of their ideas. On the day of the opening presentation as the young Spacemakers stood on the mound in the park with everyone else looking up at them they said that felt very proud of themselves. They also commented from conversations they had on that day that adults now realised that local teenagers could contribute something worthwhile for their community.

The impact of the project upon the young Spacemakers

This project spanned an early period of these young people's journey into adulthood and has played a role in supporting the young Spacemakers transition towards their adult lives.

The two-year span of the project provided a consistent focus for the young people and this, allied with the consistent supportive approach of the staff provided a point of stability for them. The project had a defined beginning middle and end and enabled the project staff to develop a relationship with the young people that stood outside of the normal hierarchical teacher / pupil, youth worker / young person roles and was more of a genuine adult / young person partnership in pursuit of a shared goal.

A factor in the 'shared goal' arose from the fact that both the workers and young people lived in the area and shared a joint commitment to see improvement in the lives of local people.

National Youth Agency research shows that young people forge adult identities in different areas – education, work, leisure and domestic life. The more competent young people feel and the more recognition they receive in a particular area, the more they are likely to invest in that aspect of adult identity. The Spacemakers Project has provided the young people with a range of personal, social and communication skills, knowledge and understanding about themselves and of the processes involved in project development, teamwork and community action.

A key influence on young people's transitions to adulthood is their ability to access a broad range of adulthood role models. Throughout this project the young people have worked with strongly supportive adults and in so doing have learnt some critical lessons about the

nature of adult role models. They have been very directly involved in adult activity and this has had an influence upon their view of their future lives.

One significant outcome of the Spacemakers project is the change in outlook of the young people who participated who are now likely to consider more ambitious education and career options. Adele Sadd said, "we've got more confidence. We did a lot of public speaking and we got better and better at it."

Now aged 16, the Spacemakers have arrived at the following points in their lives. The ten Spacemakers are in full time courses, either vocational or academic. Five of these are taking "A" level courses and have expressed an interest in pursuing university places. All the Spacemakers remained involved with the scheme until its completion, and they are keen to extend the activity. Some still remain actively involved is looking after the park as well as using it to meet friends.

Part Two

Spacemakers and Youth work practice.

The Spacemakers staff included a senior assistant youth worker Paul Spatchurst working under the leadership of the youth locality team senior worker Richard Yates.

Throughout the Spacemakers project the principles that guide the work of the Young Peoples Service's informed the working practices within the project.

The working relationship between Paul Spatchurst as youth worker and Mark Rooney with an architecture background was one in which collaboration and the exchange of professional knowledge about successful working practices with young people formed an ongoing fruitful debate. This positive working relationship and exchange was crucial to the success of the project.

Over the two-year period the activities within the project have very clearly demonstrated the various stages of development outlined in the curriculum model for the Young Peoples Service as well as the related levels of participation. From a very early point the young people were involved in the higher 'Stages' of activity in that curriculum model and increasingly led the direction of activity.

For valid reasons the visits to different locations were adult organised and led, but once within a location the adult role moved to support for the young people to assume a lead in the analysis and development of ideas for their park.

The degree of influence by the young people strengthened as the project reached the final development phase.

By then they had a clear view as to their place and the role that adults had in helping them realise the final outcomes. The young people were clear that it was they who led the generation of ideas and that the adult's role was to help them realise those ideas.

It is clear from the project analysis that the development of the skills of the young people was seen as crucial by the adult team members. Building upon the initial work at Trafford Hall the adults consistently built skill development into the programme. Arising out of the natural context of the needs of the project the adults ensured that that opportunities to exercise all the skills understanding and abilities as outlined in the Young Peoples Service curriculum guidance were made available to all the young people through the duration of the project. The adults deliberately planned that every young person would experience different roles within each element of the project development.

This approach played a crucial role in strengthening team rapport and critical understanding about collaboration in project development.

Youth Matters and Spacemakers

Brief consideration is next given to the place that the partnership working, activities and outcomes that formed the Spacemakers project have when set against future developments as outlined in the current Youth Matters consultation.

The Youth Matters document sets out a Vision, Challenges and Principles and an approach to Reform. It offers for consultation a new strategy for providing opportunities, challenge and support to young people. A vision to see services integrated around young people's needs

helping all teenagers achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes to the greatest possible extent.

The proposals aim to address four key challenges:

- how to engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the services they receive;
- how to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities;
- how to provide better information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives; and
- how to provide better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble.

The approach to reform is based on six underpinning principles:

- making services more responsive to what young people and their parents want;
- balancing greater opportunities and support with promoting young people's responsibilities;
- making services for young people more integrated, efficient and effective;
- improving outcomes for all young people, while narrowing the gap between those who do well and those who do not;
- involving a wide range of organisations from the voluntary, community and private sectors in order to increase choice and secure the best outcomes; and
- building on the best of what is currently provided.

In reviewing the Spacemakers project it is clear that it embodied some of the key underpinning principles as well as the intention to help all teenagers achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes to the greatest possible extent.

Spacemakers project outcomes set against the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

The Spacemakers project has involved considerable personal commitment and the investment of time and energy to make a difference in the lives of a small group of young people.

The project staff and young people are aware from their different perspectives of the impact the project has had upon their lives, and both adults and young people, and of how they have 'grown', through their mutual involvement in the project.

The adults brought to the project a certain set of values and beliefs about young people and views of how involvement of the Spacemakers project would contribute to the young peoples personal development.

The start of the project predated the Every Child Matters framework for thinking about support for the development of young people. The Spacemakers outcomes are mapped against this new framework below.

Being healthy – (enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle.)

Project staff supported the young people in addressing emotional and personal issues that arose throughout the project

The young people have developed in confidence and self esteem.

Parents positively supported the young peoples involvement

Staying Safe – (being protected from harm and neglect.)

All relevant CRB checks were made.

All activities involved risk assessment planning.

The young people were made aware of relevant safety issues in all activities in UK and abroad.

The young people have become more fully aware of these issues.

Enjoying and achieving – (getting the most out of life and developing the skills of adulthood.)

The young people were actively encouraged to attend and enjoy school

They were supported in developing personally and academically

All activities for young people were tailor made and of high quality

All the young people were supported to develop their personal skills and attributes whatever their personal starting point

All the young people are on academic or vocational courses, 5 at 'A' Level standard

Making a positive contribution – (being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour)

The young people were helped throughout the project to develop socially and emotionally

The young people were supported as part of the project to manage changes and respond positively to the challenges in their lives

The young people have had a significant involvement decision-making, support and involvement in community regeneration and environment.

The young people were directly involved in creating a space designed to encourage positive social behaviours.

Economic wellbeing –(not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.)

The project activities acted as an important bridge for the young people in preparing for their adult lives.

The quality of the activities in the project has had a positive impact on the young peoples attitude to learning and the effort applied to the school-based curriculum.

The project has enabled young people to generate their own solutions to address the needs of their peers and the wider community

The project has involved significant integrated partnership working of statutory services, community based organisations and the private sector in enabling realisation of the outcomes for the young people and the community.

The melding of the different professional perspectives on young people, their needs and development in the context of a community regeneration activity has enabled a project to evolve that has addressed in a significant way a number of the strands of the Youth Matters Vision and Principles.

Part Three

Spacemakers and regeneration practice involving young people.

This section of the report draws upon research by youth organisations and government departments. These highlight the support needed by young people and the core issues emerging in planning work with young people in regeneration activity.

A study, by Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Annette Hastings and Keith Kintrea of the University of Glasgow, investigated the extent to which urban regeneration projects have met the needs of young people aged 16 to 24 years old. Some of their findings are of direct relevance to the Spacemakers Project.

Extract from their findings: Support for youth involvement

“The intensity of support required to facilitate youth involvement was far greater than for equivalent adult structures. There was a need for dedicated workers who were responsible for supporting youth involvement within the initiative. These additional support needs stemmed from a number of factors. For example, young people were generally less confident and experienced in formal settings than adults. There were also difficulties relating to the cynicism and disaffection of some young people, although these were less significant barriers to participation than anticipated.

Building the skills young people need to participate took far longer than for adults. This was mainly because youth representatives were normally 'starting from scratch' with no previous

involvement in community activism. Thus youth involvement projects must be scheduled early in a regeneration initiative if they are to have any hope of making a worthwhile contribution. Short-term initiatives may experience difficulties in securing any meaningful youth involvement.”

It is clear from the review of the Spacemakers Project that a number of crucial factors for success were understood from the outset.

The need for support for the young people in developing:

- social skills in unfamiliar settings
- skills and knowledge in relation to public spaces
- knowledge about regeneration
- skills on communication and presentation
- team work skills

The project plan was for a two-year period and based on an understanding that the above skills knowledge and understanding in the young people would have to be built incrementally over that period. It is clear that to a certain degree this was also true for the adults involved who found themselves in the position of learning more about the processes in which they were involved as the project progressed.

The workers remained with the project throughout and brought together youth work and other professional skills. The workers were deeply committed to the provision of support for the 'growth' of the young people. The young people opting into the project had demonstrated a commitment to stick to the project to its two-year end.

The Spacemakers project drew a team of adults together who had a mix of professional skills. Professional

knowledge of youth work in challenging settings and specific professional expertise in the intended park development. The adults were open to learning from each other and to mentor each other over key issues as they arose.

The National Youth Agency also undertook research and their key findings are also relevant to Spacemakers. Below is a commentary against some of the main research findings as they relate to the Spacemakers project.

Project planning - National Youth Agency - “Young people and regeneration projects.”

“Regeneration practitioners and decision-makers need to maximise the impact of youth-focused initiatives by ensuring good links to mainstream youth programmes.”

Commentary: The Spacemakers steering group comprised professional architect, Connexions mentors and a youth worker. Integration of youth work programme, processes and practices informed the approaches to the young people and their development within the project.

“Effective youth participation requires a dedicated worker, resources and that adult decision makers are prepared to listen to young people.”

Commentary: The Spacemakers project involved a dedicated worker over the full period of the project. Throughout the project all steering group members saw their role as supporting young people in their ideas and providing them with the necessary skills to realise their ideas.

“Youth workers or dedicated support staff may need to learn more about both regeneration and community participation in order to link youth participation into wide community and regeneration processes, and to help them to develop more accountable structures for youth involvement.”

Commentary: The youth locality team had developed a considerable bank of knowledge on regeneration issues through their involvement with the local regeneration partnership and area wide URBAN initiatives. The workers involved have developed their knowledge about the issues involved in engaging young people in regeneration processes.

This particular project did not have a remit to develop accountable structures for youth involvement except at the project level in which youth locality working practices and ethos informed the approaches to working with the young people and the degree of participation by young people in leading the project’s development.

“It is crucial to challenge inter-generational barriers by promoting projects which bring young people and adults together to discuss issues affecting their community.”

Commentary: The adults in the Spacemakers team started the involvement of young people in the project by introducing them to other adults in the Trafford Hall workshops who were experienced at developing the necessary skills for young people to become involved in community based issues. The programme enabled the young people to understand some of the key community regeneration issues and placed them in a better position to be taken seriously when working with local adults within their own local community.

Several opportunities were created to enable local exchanges of ideas between the young people and local adults. The young people made presentations to community groups, funders, TV and radio during the course of the project

“Community organisations need to prioritise the needs of young people as young people and not only as ‘future citizens’. They should try to build structures which link the generations and consider how their attitudes, procedures and language can inhibit youth participation.”

Commentary:

The local regeneration partnership and URBAN Partnership Group are committed to increasing the participation of young people local decision-making. This project exemplifies their commitment to achieve this end.

“Young people need to learn from other young people how to get organised. They also need to think about how their language and behaviour might build barriers between them and adults.”

Commentary:

The young people in the project have developed an understanding of what is involved in trying to bring about a positive change in a community setting. The workers have supported the young people to work through their understanding of the necessary social skills in settings where adults are involved.

**Office of the Deputy Prime Minister:
Creating sustainable communities:
Involving communities in urban and rural regeneration**

Involving young people.

The Spacemakers project is an example of one approach to involving young people in urban regeneration. Below is an extract from an ODPM policy statement within which the story of The Spacemakers can be seen.

In every area there are significant numbers of young people, and they can contribute much to the success of regeneration initiatives. Their imagination and creativity can be harnessed to produce exciting new approaches to dealing with old problems. Moreover, young people are a resource for tomorrow. The community leaders of the future are young people now. Bringing young people into the decision making process can be regarded as a long-term approach to community development and capacity building.

Frequently, young people have distinct needs, and experience different problems to other sections of society. Young people are often a focus of some elements of regeneration programmes. Involving them in project design and management can help to ensure that services for young people are appropriately targeted, and are fully taken up. Young people are also likely to have a different perception of living in an area than older people. Failure to take account of young people’s views may mean missed opportunities. It may also undermine the sustainability of the benefits secured by regeneration programmes.

However, involving young people in regeneration programmes is not straightforward. They are unlikely to participate in mainstream events set up to involve the community. A rather different approach is required to ensure their involvement.

Lessons for the future involvement of young people in urban regeneration initiatives in Bristol.

The Spacemakers project provides an exemplar of practice in the field of involving young people in urban regeneration.

It can be seen from the report that the project team engaged in practices that addressed some of the key requirements of successful practice that are known to be important from research on regeneration involving young people.

Project teams embarking on urban regeneration projects with young people need to understand the key findings of research in this field and build those findings into their project planning from the outset.

A critical factor for success is that youth workers form part of the professional team. Projects are then able to build best practice youth work into any programme.

A central commitment to the development of the individual, not just the project's physical outcomes, is an ingredient for successful outcomes.

Arising from above, supporting young people with the wider issues impacting upon them needs to be seen as a necessary component to any project

Developing a young person led adult supported ethos with all adults involved in such regeneration projects is a critical ingredient to secure full participation by young people.

Adults from different professional disciplines, who work to the above principles and who are open to new learning themselves, make for successful project teams

Keeping a unity of purpose throughout the project appears to be a vital ingredient of a successful project.

It appears that working on green spaces, rather than capital building work removes some development time constraints that might foreshorten the lead-time necessary to enable the full realisation of young people's involvement.

Public parks are an important resource in a city and research shows that many social and economic benefits flow from well thought out and maintained public spaces. This project has demonstrated that involving young people in their design can bring additional benefits on a number of fronts.

Making this Report.

This report has been compiled through reviewing existing publications that describe the Spacemakers project. From information gathered in several meetings with adult members of the team. A meeting with young people from the Spacemakers team and a review of existing research of good practice in the field of involving young people in urban regeneration.

Publications referring to The Spacemakers Project.

Case Study: Spacemakers: Angela Kingston, 2005. Public Art South West.

Learning through the built environment: By Teresa Dillon, Learning Researcher, NESTA Futurelab

Spacemakers: Examples of Excellence: Creating Excellence SW Regeneration Centre

Involving young people in the design and care of urban spaces

What would you do with this space? May 2004 CABA Space and CABA Education. *(Has a comprehensive guide to relevant research publications and organizations working in this field)*

Publications: Research on young people and regeneration

“Involving communities in urban and rural regeneration”: ODPM web site

Promoting community cohesion: the role of the youth service. Briefing papers from The National Youth Agency Website: www.nya.org.uk

Including young people in urban regeneration A lot to learn?: Joseph Rowntree Foundation The full report, by Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Annette Hastings and Keith Kintrea, is published by The Policy Press in association with the Foundation (ISBN 1 86134 119 9.)

Publications on young people and their development

Inventing adulthoods: young people’s strategies for transition: Youth Briefing no 13 Youth, Citizenship and Social Change.

Young people’s involvement in social action: Youth Briefing No 14 Citizenship and Social Change

website: <http://www.tsa.uk.com/ycsc>

Publications on public park spaces

Parks: RICS Foundation 12 Great George Street London SW1P 3AD United Kingdom
research@rics-foundation.org

LINKS

The Architecture Centre, Bristol: <http://www.arch-centre.demon.co.uk/pages/01centre/01centre.html>
Architecture Centre Network: <http://www.architecturecentre.net/>
Bristol City Council: <http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk/>
Bristol Legible Cities: <http://www.bristollegiblecity.info/>
Mobile Bristol: <http://www.mobilebristol.com/flash.html>
CABE, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment: www.cabe.org.uk/about/index.html
English Heritage: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/>
Spacemakers: www.arch-centre.demon.co.uk/pages/education/education_main.html

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