

The Cultural (Re)Generation

Building Creative Places for Young London



A.N.D

A new direction for arts,
culture and young london





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About this report

This report is for housing developers, London's councils, the Greater London Authority and the wider public sector, community groups, arts organisations, and everyone interested in making London a flourishing and creative place to live where children and young people can enjoy and take part in the fantastic range of arts and cultural provision in the capital.

It explores how new housing developments can play a role in building opportunities for children and young people to access and participate in creativity, arts and culture. We believe this is important to sustain London's reputation as a cultural capital and a leader in the creative industries, as well as critical to the health and wellbeing of the younger generation.

This report has been commissioned by A New Direction and written by Nicola Bacon and Christina Bayram from Social Life.

A New Direction helps London create, think and learn. We work to ensure that all children and young people get the most out of London's extraordinary creative and cultural offer. Through our partnerships we create positive change across schools, education and communities.

www.anewdirection.org.uk

Social Life was set up by The Young Foundation in 2012, to work on innovation and placemaking. All our work is about the relationship between people and the places they live. We work in the UK and internationally.

www.social-life.co



Image Roger Brown for A New Direction



About this report



Introduction

“...The government and the cultural and creative industries need to take a united and coherent approach that guarantees equal access for everyone to a rich cultural education and the opportunity to live a creative life. There are barriers and inequalities in Britain today that prevent this from being a universal human right. This is bad for business and bad for society.”

— Vikki Heywood CBE, Chairman of the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value¹

Children and young people living in London grow up in one of the most creative cities in the world. Being able to take part in, and experience, art and culture helps children and young people thrive.

Enrique Peñalosa, former Mayor of Bogotá, famously commented: *“Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people.”*²

As a city, London needs its young people to learn to be creative, so they have the skills, abilities and life experiences that will enable them to succeed in the job market in the future as well as for their future wellbeing and happiness.

London’s creative economy is flourishing, and new housing developments are dramatically reshaping parts of the city. However, we are seeing evidence of a twin track city: some Londoners are prospering; yet a disproportionately high number of 16–24-year-olds in London are unable to find work (18 per cent compared to the UK average of 15 per cent).³ London has the strongest economy of all the regions and countries in the UK, but 37 per cent of children are living in poverty.⁴



In this report, we explore how addressing the needs of children, young people and families to play, create and learn can be an integral part of placemaking and the development process benefiting developers, councils and residents as well as all young Londoners into the future.

THE CREATIVE CITY

London is culturally rich. It includes historic cultural clusters like the West End theatre district as well as neighbourhoods where the arts scene has developed spontaneously in recent years like Shoreditch and Peckham. The city's animation grows out of the blend of the new and old, high art and pop culture. This intricate blend of planned and unplanned identities makes London's neighbourhoods iconic and distinctive; they are defined by the people who activate them and dream up their designs. Over the centuries, London has been shaped by the ideas of a diverse, creative and energetic population.

Today, three million people are employed in creative jobs in the UK, the sector is now worth £84bn in the UK, and provides one in every six jobs in London.⁵ In the last decade, the growth rate of the creative sector outpaced the growth of the economy as a whole. Nesta's wider definition of the creative economy – which includes all those whose work involves generating new product or content – estimates that this accounts for 2.6 million jobs, making it bigger than the manufacturing and construction sectors.⁶

There will be high demand in the future for people who can draw on both creative and digital/tech skills to work in the creative economy. Employers report that it is now more important than ever to have people who are team players, who can think differently, and be flexible and creative.⁷ Currently our education system is not supporting enough people to develop this blend of skills and capabilities.⁸

THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AS CLASSIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA & SPORT

Advertising & Marketing

Architecture

Crafts

Design: product, graphic & fashion design

Film, TV, video, radio & photography

IT, software & computer services

Publishing

Museums, galleries & libraries

Music, performing & visual arts



“Because of rapid economic and social change, schools have to prepare students for jobs that have not yet been created, technologies that have not yet been invented and problems that we don’t yet know will arise.”

—
Andreas Schleicher
Director for Education & Skills, OECD⁹



Access to the arts and culture and, crucially, the ability to participate and create, helps children and young people develop life skills and wider emotional capacities that they may not get through mainstream education.

If we want to grow the amount of cultural provision in London for young people, and make sure that all of London’s children and young people have the opportunity to experience and capitalise on it, we need to build new partnerships and think creatively about funding and support. The reshaping of the city through new housing development offers possibilities for progressing this agenda. One developer interviewed for this report described investments in creative and cultural provision: “*they are often not the ‘driver’ of profit, but are the ‘unlocker’ of profit.*”¹⁰

THE BENEFITS OF BUILDING CREATIVE PLACES

- *For London:* making sure that the right skills and abilities are nurtured in London’s young people and that new housing developments become flourishing neighbourhoods
- *For local communities:* helping improve children and young people’s wellbeing and mental health
- *For children and young people:* increased confidence, wellbeing, a better education and skills and experiences that enable them to thrive as adults
- *For housing developers:* supporting long-term stability of local areas by building strong social relationships, attracting families by creating good facilities for children and young people, and providing positive activities for people of all ages.

The context

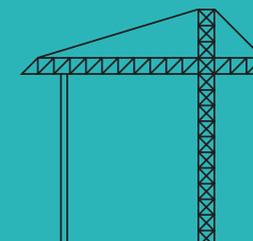
“The science of how to do the technical parts of community development is well understood – how to build water infrastructure, housing units, transportation systems – but we ... have forgotten about the ‘people’ part of the equation. How do we build places where people actually want to live their lives? How do we build strong social ties? The secret lies partly in the arts.”

— Ben Hecht President & CEO of Living Cities¹¹

London’s population is at an historic high of 8.6 million people. From 2011 to 2021, the city is expected to grow by a further million people.¹² City Hall estimates that London will need to build 600 more schools, 1.5 million more homes, and 9,000 more hectares of accessible green space to support population growth.¹³

The GLA estimates that in 2015 there were over 240,000 homes either under construction or with planning approval (but not yet being built).¹⁴ Very large new housing developments are proposed in areas outside the centre, including 25,000 new homes in Park Royal.¹⁵ Even if Brexit depresses the housebuilding industry, and housing policy changes, there will continue to be pressure to build new homes, as current levels of planned housing are not enough to meet population growth and pent-up demand. There are significant concerns about housing affordability, so it is critical that new housing developments become places where everyone can thrive and reach their potential.¹⁶

London’s population is becoming ever more varied, in terms of life experiences, ethnicity and religion, and people’s expectations of how they choose to live. Over the last 10 years, the population has become more diverse, younger, and more transient.¹⁷ And for many, the city is becoming a more difficult place to live. Twenty seven per cent of Londoners live in poverty after housing costs are taken into account, compared with 20 per cent in the rest of England; high housing costs increase stress for people on low incomes. There are now more Londoners living in poverty in private rented housing than there are in social rented or owner-occupied homes.¹⁸



1.5m

The number of new homes City Hall estimates London will need in order to house its growing population



Funding cuts for services for children and young people are also disproportionately hitting households living on low incomes. It has been reported that in real terms, English councils' spending on youth services fell from £1.2bn in 2010–11 to £791m in 2012–13. Funding for early intervention services for younger children in England has also shrunk, from £3.2bn in 2010 to £1.4bn in 2015. Seventy five per cent of mental health trusts froze or cut their CAMHS (children and adolescent mental health services) budgets between 2013–14 and 2014–15.¹⁹

Against the backdrop of pockets of extreme social need, London's built environment is changing rapidly. Brownfield sites that have been physically isolated from the rest of London are now being converted into mixed-use, mixed-income communities. Existing housing, including many large social housing estates, is being remodelled. All these developments face the challenge of building communities that work for everyone, blending the new with what exists already, and finding ways to guarantee homes and opportunities for long-standing residents on lower incomes.²⁰

These developments also face the challenge of attracting and retaining the new 'renter generation' – millennials who are non-homeowners.²¹ These millennials typically want a particular lifestyle, with cultural experiences, novel contexts to interact with art, authentic and flexible spaces for work and play, and a strong sense of place.²²

Developers have realised the benefits of culture as one way to approach this challenge and improve a development's competitive edge, support placemaking and build 'buzz'. Yet these creative placemaking and cultural strategies are often being used to attract Richard Florida's 'creative class' rather than nurturing talent from the ground up.²³ They often fail to benefit the children and young people most affected by redevelopment. At worst, cultural rebranding has been used to kick-start the transformation of local neighbourhoods from low-key, lower-value communities into market-led regeneration and displacement of long-standing residents.²⁴



Image From Plowright for A New Direction

Building places that work for children and young people is the first step in ensuring a place is sustainable over the long term. Yet children and young people are often seen as passive users of the city, rather than active players and voices in the development of new places. They can become victim and villain of new housing developments – young people are sometimes seen as anti-social and children are accused of causing noise and disturbance – especially when places are built without them in mind.

We argue that young people are and should be active agents in creating the city; as the future residents of the homes that are now being planned, and as London's future workforce, they should be given a central role in planning for the future.

What are the benefits of building creative places with and for children and young people?

“Participation in cultural activities can and does deliver a sense of belonging, trust and civic engagement [and] can not only lead to social regeneration but can be a catalyst for crime reduction and learning.”

— Department for Culture, Media & Sport²⁵

The benefits for London: making sure that the right skills and abilities are nurtured in London’s young people and that new housing developments become flourishing neighbourhoods. Creative places can:

- increase employability in the creative economy
- improve economic performance and attract economic investment
- minimise the skills gap
- support children and young people’s social and educational development.

For local communities: helping improve children and young people’s wellbeing, mental health and sense of belonging at a time of substantial cuts in services. Creative places can:

- boost resident participation in local decision-making
- improve the sense of place and quality of life in a neighbourhood
- engage people who are more difficult for services to reach
- help people look beyond their own narrow experience
- improve social cohesion, bringing together different groups.

“Having a cultural strategy offers a new dimension to community engagement and helps to create a stronger sense of local ownership of a new development. So, rather than think of the process in terms of making cultural contributions, we try to consider the fundamentals of placemaking and address this from the outset, not as an extra contribution dropped in halfway through.”

—
Sean Ellis
Chairman of St James²⁶

“Studies of mixed income communities show that most mixing across social groups takes place between children. It is these contacts — in nurseries, playgroups, schools and in public spaces — that provide opportunities for adults to meet and form relationships. Children provide a common ground and shared interest between people in different tenures. People with children have a high stake in the success of a neighbourhood and the quality of its services.”

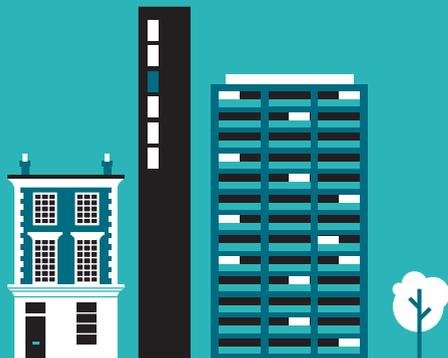
—
The Joseph Rowntree Foundation²⁷

For children and young people: increasing confidence, wellbeing, a broader education, skills and experiences that enable them to thrive as adults, opening up options to work in the creative industries. Creative places can:

- increase social and emotional skills and employability
- develop self-confidence, self-respect and sense of achievement
- develop social capital
- boost personal development, imagination and creativity
- improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.

For housing developers: supporting long-term sustainability of local areas by building strong social relationships, attracting families by creating good facilities for children and young people, and providing creative activities that build positive attitudes, sense of belonging and connection to place. Creative places can:

- change perceptions of neighbourhoods
- reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- boost quality of life
- increase belonging and sense of place
- attract investment
- increase community and local authority support for new developments
- build sustainable, inclusive communities that work for residents in the long term
- reduce costs of long-term management and maintenance
- improve corporate image and reputation.



What is a creative childhood?

“Growing complexity and unpredictability mean our economy and society demand ever greater creativity from workers and citizens.”

— Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce²⁸

A creative education starts from the earliest years, as children build creativity through play. This sense of discovery can be nurtured through an education that blends maths, sciences and literacy with arts, performance, music, culture and crafts, stretching minds and expanding imaginations. This has benefits for wider personal development and nurtures skills for managing the world. For those who choose to specialise in these fields, specialist education and training, apprenticeships and work placements build real-world skills and future employability.

A CREATIVE CHILDHOOD

1

[PLAY]

*Building creativity
through exploration
and fun*

2

[LEARN]

*Creative education
to identify and
nurture talent*

3

[WORK]

*Pathways
to creative
industries*



HOW CAN HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS HELP YOUNG LONDONERS HAVE A CREATIVE CHILDHOOD?

[PLAY]

Developers' remits are not limited to infrastructure and physical structures, and the demands of planning guidelines. Developers can play a key role in creating places that are high quality, exciting, well used, and tailored to the needs of local residents. They can:

- integrate play, discovery and adventure throughout the public realm and not limit children to designated play spaces
- provide play spaces for different age groups of children and spaces for young people to hang out
- co-design playgrounds with children and parents
- allow young people to design and build their own spaces
- host community events that engage children and young people in sport and creative expression
- celebrate local heritage through festivals, concerts or films
- use temporary, 'meanwhile uses' for projects with longer time scales to provide creative, child- and young people-friendly spaces and provision.



[LEARN]

Developers can support young people's creative learning by building spaces specifically for cultural uses – theatres, dance spaces and recording studios – and making sure that these engage with and involve young people living in the area. They can build partnership with local and city-wide (even national) arts and cultural organisations, and work collaboratively with schools and youth centres. They can:

- when building new schools, attract schools with STEAM²⁹ programmes or schools with creative learning built into the curriculum
- provide spaces for arts organisations to use for free or at subsidised rents if the organisation carries out art and outreach projects for young people
- support partnerships between arts and cultural organisations and schools, youth projects and organisations that work with local children and families
- create an artist-in-residence programme. For example, in exchange for rent-free housing, the artist could teach creative writing to children, lead jam sessions, hold public readings or create participatory art
- designate an area as a community learning garden or outdoor classroom
- integrate schools, community centres and leisure spaces to maximise community interaction between people of different ages and backgrounds
- involve young people in public art projects and creative placemaking
- develop a mentoring programme in which staff mentor and train local youth in in-house professional disciplines like architecture, urban design and project management.



[WORK]

The success of many developments depends on attracting long-term tenants. Developers can take an active role in building partnerships between arts and cultural organisations, educational institutions, the creative industries and councils. They can:

- attract tenants who can resource new partnerships to support creative provision and creative job opportunities
- support partnerships between schools, universities, creative industries and councils
- develop an apprenticeship and training programme so local young people can shadow an employee, find a mentor or a work placement in any business located in the site
- encourage employers to take on local young people in a range of professions and occupations.



Developers may say that this is a daunting list. But investments in building creative places for young Londoners do not need to be large or long term. Small, one-off investments can have huge impacts. For example, developers can organise a free or reduced price outing to see a performance or an exhibition. Circle Housing, Barnsbury, and other housing associations have partnered with Sadler's Wells to offer low-income households in Islington the opportunity to attend dance performances for a discounted price of only £3.³⁰

Creative places can also generate their own funding through advertisements. While extending the Copenhagen metro, the municipality used construction site hoardings as art displays and interactive play spaces. This project, called Cool Construction, was launched in 2011 and saw more than 100 projects completed and financed by the sale of advertising space on dedicated parts of the hoardings. One such project, *Happy Walls*, consisted of around 2,000 wooden pieces that people could move around to create their own artwork.³¹

Residents and tenants can also contribute to annual events and local culture and arts programmes. Since 2010, the Bermondsey Square Community Fund has collected money from owners and occupiers of Bermondsey Square as service charges. This has provided £169,000 in grants to support 84 projects, ranging from arts, film and theatre projects to heritage and education programmes that benefit the local community.³²

London could be the best city in the world for a creative childhood, yet many challenges stand in the way. These case studies show how investments in culture and creativity can help address four key challenges facing London, and the role that developers, councils, communities and others involved in shaping our built environment can play.



What has been done? Challenges and case studies



Challenge one

London is the richest and also one of the most unequal parts of the UK

London is the richest part of the UK but also the most unequal, with high levels of poverty.³³ Over the past two decades, the price of housing in London has quadrupled.³⁴ The housing crisis is the top issue for voters, and businesses are concerned about recruitment if people move out of London to cheaper areas.³⁵

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO LONDON?

Inequality is growing in London. Rising housing costs are suburbanising poverty, pushing people on lower incomes out of central London.³⁶ Research by the Social Integration Commission has found that there is less social integration by age, ethnicity and socio-economic class in London than in the rest of Britain³⁷ and there is a danger that as communities become more polarised by income they also become less integrated and less successful.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO PEOPLE SHAPING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT?

The former Mayor's London Plan aims to build new homes, combat poverty and inequality, and to promote employment, educational achievement, better health and improved social mobility. The Plan sets out new opportunity zones, mostly towards outer London in areas of high deprivation, many on brownfield sites.³⁸ Some elements of housing policy may change with the new Mayor of London now in place; however, the scale of housing planned is unlikely to decrease. For developers wishing to build sustainable communities into the future, building bonds between people in different tenures and from different backgrounds, and integrating existing and new residents will be important.

CASE STUDIES

Developers, artists, community organisations and councils are finding new and creative ways to address this challenge. These case studies show how public art can make a place undergoing transition feel valued, how an arts festival can build community in a regeneration site, and how participatory arts programmes can tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour.



Image Roger Brown for A New Direction

What has been done?

CASE STUDY ONE

How a partnership between a social housing group, school, and theatre generated and measured social capital

Partners New Charter Group, New Charter Academy, Royal Exchange Theatre
Location Ashton-under-Lyne, Greater Manchester, UK
Timeframe 2012–2015

In January 2012, the Royal Exchange Theatre, the New Charter Group and its Academy in Ashton-under-Lyne embarked on a three-year partnership. The partnership's aim was to explore the best methods to create sustainable cultural change in neighbourhoods.

The partnership carried out projects like 'Our Pals', a photography and drama exhibit written and developed by residents to explore ideas of community; 'Behind the Scenes Work Week' where academy students and New Charter tenants spent a week observing, learning, and working with professionals at the Royal Exchange Theatre; and 'Everyday Heroes' which turned the neighbourhood into an outdoor theatre, community members into actors, and streets into the stage.

OUTCOMES

The partnership was supported by a research framework developed in collaboration with Manchester University. This framework enabled the participating organisations to measure social outcomes.

THE RESEARCH SHOWED THAT:

- Student participants experienced increased self-esteem, confidence and a reduction in bad behaviour in school
- Participants improved their academic achievement and showed greater respect for their academy, teachers and peers
- Increase in school children and adults attending the theatre for the first time and an increased interest in the arts
- More interaction between residents of all ages and backgrounds, which has appeased social tensions and fear of anti-social behaviour.

This partnership proved that integrating schools into the community with arts as the delivery vehicle can lead not only to better individual wellbeing but also have larger societal benefits. The partnership's evaluation report *Growing from Seed* lists the impacts, lessons learned and recommendations for others in undertaking similar partnerships.³⁹

CASE STUDY TWO

How public art makes a place undergoing transition feel valued

Partners Acton Arts Forum, local artists, Ealing Council, South Acton Community Builders Co-operative Ltd (SCBC) and developer Acton Gardens LLP (partnership between Ealing, Countryside Properties and L&Q)

Location South Acton Estate, London, UK

Timeframe 2002 – present

The Acton Arts Forum has worked with local artists since 2002 on the South Acton Estate to bring a variety of art to the built environment. This ranges from Stik's *The Big Mother*, claimed to be the highest piece of street art, to ATM's birds and Carrie Reichardt's mosaics. The Treatment Rooms collective, Sr. X, Teddy Baden, Shift, Leonard, Zabou and Jay Mac have all been involved with another piece happening soon with Thierry Noir. Plans for a future Acton Street Art Festival are underway.⁴⁰

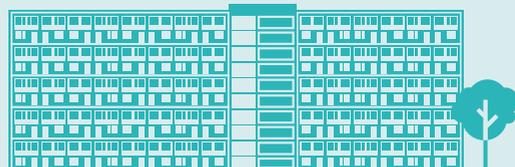
The model that has been developed has enabled a proliferation of street art opportunities that have benefited everyone who has been involved.

The imperative came from the Arts Forum who wanted to help address the blight on the estate. Funding has been piecemeal, with much time and resources donated by the artists. Ealing Council and the developer, Acton Gardens LLP, have also contributed a small amount of funding. Another piece of work in the new housing being built as part of the major regeneration scheme has been commissioned from Carrie Reichardt, which will provide a link between the old and the new.



OUTCOMES

Community engagement and participation has been encouraged in all the work, and young people have come forward to become involved in workshops and in making. The art has made an estate that could have felt neglected and abandoned feel more cared for, increasing residents' sense of belonging and pride at a time of change, and appealing to new residents. The value to the regeneration process has been considerable. The Arts Forum is keen to roll-out their approach to other areas in London.⁴¹



CASE STUDY THREE

How an arts festival can appeal to a diversity of residents and support community cohesion

Partners Peabody (Trust Thamesmead) in partnership with The Link Thamesmead, Theatre Street Performing Arts, Thamesmead Youth Voice, Bexley College, Thamesmead Library, Now's the Time, and numerous other community and arts organisations in south east London

Location Thamesmead, London, UK

Timeframe annual event, 2015 and 2016

Peabody is working to ensure that culture and the arts play a central role in its regeneration programme for Thamesmead in south east London.

In 2015 the Thamesmead Arts Festival, initiated by Peabody, led by the community and supported by a number of local partners, attracted 1,500 people to 50 events over the May half-term. It brought people together to see and take part in a wide range of activities, including African drumming, maypole dancing, pop-up photo studios and cinema as well as performances by local choirs and dance groups. It was subsidised so that no session cost more than £1 to take part in. It also created the opportunity for conversations to take place about the wider Thamesmead context.⁴²

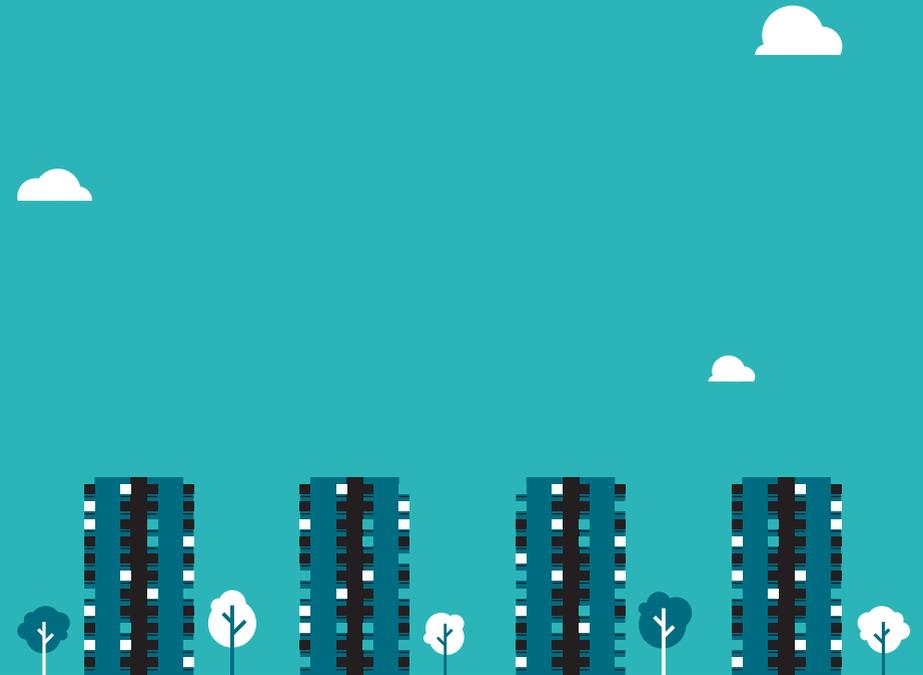
Stephen Howlett, Chief Executive of Peabody, said: *“We think the arts – in their many forms – are a really important part of regenerating Thamesmead and making it a place where people choose to live, work and visit. The festival provided an opportunity for the community to get together, to take part in something new, share their views and give us their feedback.”*⁴³

OUTCOMES

In 2016 the Festival will run over a weekend in September. Themed around ‘Made in Thamesmead’, Peabody will bring together well-known arts commissions and homegrown talent. The Festival is part of a wider cultural strategy, linked to Peabody’s regeneration programme.

“We think the arts – in their many forms – are a really important part of regenerating Thamesmead and making it a place where people choose to live, work and visit. The festival provided an opportunity for the community to get together, to take part in something new, share their views and give us their feedback.”

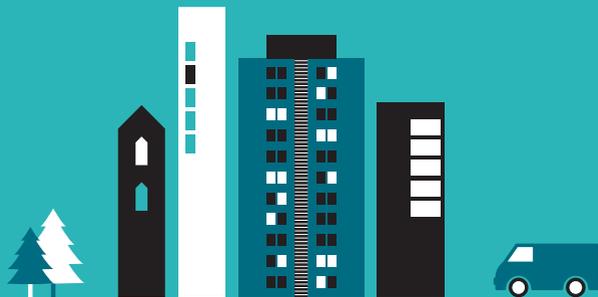
Stephen Howlett
Chief Executive of Peabody⁴³





15%

Police were able to point to an actual 15 per cent reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour after one year



CASE STUDY FOUR

How participatory arts tackled 'hotspots' of youth crime and anti-social behaviour

Partners Soft Touch, Leicester Council, Leicester police, various housing associations, residents and other local stakeholders

Location Leicester, UK

Timeframe 18 months, 2009–2011

The outer city estates of New Parks and Beaumont Leys have some of the highest youth anti-social behaviour in Leicester. Tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour in these areas was seen as a priority for the council and the police, as well as residents.

Soft Touch, a Leicester-based participatory arts and community development organisation, worked with the police and local stakeholders such as housing associations in 'hotspots', running street-based youth engagement sessions on Friday or Saturday nights using arts, crafts and music activities. These were run from a mobile studio.

Music was always offered and other activities changed on a demand basis to include, for example, leatherworking, jewellery making, and graffiti art.

OUTCOMES

Over a period of 18 months, the sessions engaged 470 young people from New Parks and Beaumont Leys. The police were able to point to an actual 15 per cent reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour after one year plus a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour call outs, which the neighbourhood policing units were confident could be partly attributed to Soft Touch's street-based work.⁴⁴

Challenge two

Changing preferences – parents want to raise their children in urban environments

Until recently, families have tended to move away from city centres as their children grow older. The significant improvement in London's schools, as well as the expense of moving to a bigger home, are now keeping families in the inner city; people often cannot afford to move for an extra bedroom.⁴⁵ Urban neighbourhoods are now becoming places that parents choose as places to raise their children.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO LONDON?

Losing families to other cities shrinks London's pool of skills and experience. Families living in inner cities can bring new energy and activity to neighbourhoods. Keeping families in the city centre also reduces the environmental implications of commuting.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO PEOPLE SHAPING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT?

High-density inner urban developments are becoming more popular as family homes. Developers and managing agents need to think about what facilities and services families will need to cater for children of different ages, as well as managing conflicts between people wanting peace and quiet and children's need to play and let off steam. If families stay in an area, it reduces transience and increases stability.

Studies have shown that mixing between social groups typically takes place between children and their parents or carers, and that the interaction between adults taking care of children in public spaces, schools, playgroups and childcare centres, can encourage adults to meet and socialise.⁴⁶ Children and young people can be social catalysts.



Image Roger Brown for A New Direction

CASE STUDIES

These case studies show how young people can benefit from and be engaged in an area's regeneration and transformation. They show how an area's regeneration can become an extended classroom and a training platform to increase employability; how participatory budgeting exercises can give young people a voice in shaping their cities; and how partnerships between developers, schools, and local organisations can build a larger ecosystem of creative opportunities for young people.



CASE STUDY FIVE

How young people can learn from and help shape an area's regeneration

Partners for Education Links (Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership which consists of Wandsworth and Lambeth Councils, developers and landowners, Mayor of London, Transport for London and the Greater London Authority); for Cultivate (Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership, Enable Leisure and Culture, A New Direction, and Flow Associates)

Location Nine Elms, London, UK

Timeframe for Education Links (2014 – project completion in 15–20 years); for Cultivate (2015–2017)

Nine Elms on the South Bank is a massive regeneration area that covers 561 acres of land between Lambeth Bridge and Chelsea Bridge. Twenty-five thousand new jobs and 20,000 new homes will be built here over the next 15 years, in addition to two new tube stations, 6.5 million sq ft of commercial space and 30,000 sq ft of social infrastructure. The Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership has adopted a cultural strategy to guide investment in cultural venues, public art, festivals, creative workspaces and activities. Two programmes that are part of this wider effort – Education Links and Cultivate – are designed specifically to engage young people in creative placemaking and the cultural hub under development.⁴⁷

Education Links is a partnership programme that is using the regeneration of the area as an extended classroom, connecting local schools and college students with career and training opportunities in Nine Elms.

More than 1,500 young people have taken part in work experience placements, career taster sessions, construction site visits, career open days, apprenticeships and workshops that showcase careers in construction, engineering, design, landscaping, sales and other aspects of the development industry. The programme is run by Wandsworth and Lambeth Councils but relies on the area's developers donating their time and resources to support the programme. Given the regeneration of Nine Elms will last at least another decade, this ensures a steady stream of career opportunities.⁴⁸

Cultivate is an action research programme in Nine Elms on the South Bank, aiming to build a lasting relationship between young people living in and around the regeneration site with the numerous cultural and placemaking opportunities arising in the area.

By supporting the relationship between schools, developers and creative practitioners, Cultivate hopes to see a 'step change' in positive experiences of, and understanding of, cultural placemaking through a quality provision for young people. It is one of seven projects in London's Cultural Education Challenge, led by A New Direction.

Ravi Govindia, leader of Wandsworth Council and co-chair of the Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership, said: *"The Cultivate programme will help us shape and harness the cultural impact that this regeneration work will have on local young people. The project will involve them in the creation of a new cultural district, engage them in the arts and help them to discover the many career options the creative sectors have to offer."*⁴⁹



What has been done?

CASE STUDY SIX

How young people are given a voice and decision-making role in improving their city

Partners A steering committee of 25 organisations oversees the participatory budgeting process

Location Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Timeframe 2014 – present

Every year, the city of Boston gives young people an active role in choosing the allocation of \$1m of public money. The initiative, called ‘Youth Lead the Change’ was the first-ever youth-only participatory budgeting programme in the country.⁵⁰ Every year, Bostonians aged between 12 and 25 get to select which projects to invest in from a long list of proposals generated through a public crowdsourcing campaign. In past years, young people have chosen to fund park and playground upgrades, laptops for schools, a feasibility study for a skate park, surveillance cameras, better lighting and sidewalks to increase park safety, community ‘art walls’, Wi-Fi in schools and community centres and the expansion of the bike-sharing system.⁵¹

OUTCOMES

Young participants have reported social benefits, including a better understanding and awareness of community needs and government processes, as well as increased knowledge, skills and feelings of empowerment.⁵²

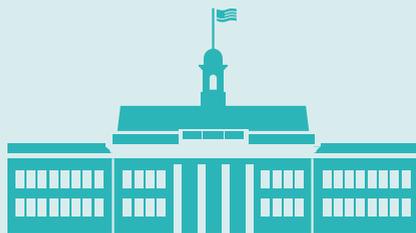


Image courtesy of City of Boston Department of Youth Engagement and Employment



What has been done?

CASE STUDY SEVEN

How a property developer's focus on long-term partnerships is fitting into a larger ecosystem of collaboration

Partners King's Cross Central Partnership Limited (a joint venture between Argent, London and Continental Railways and DHL), Global Generation, Fluid, Budding Brunels, UAL; Central Saint Martins, among others

Location King's Cross, London, UK

Timeframe 2002 – present

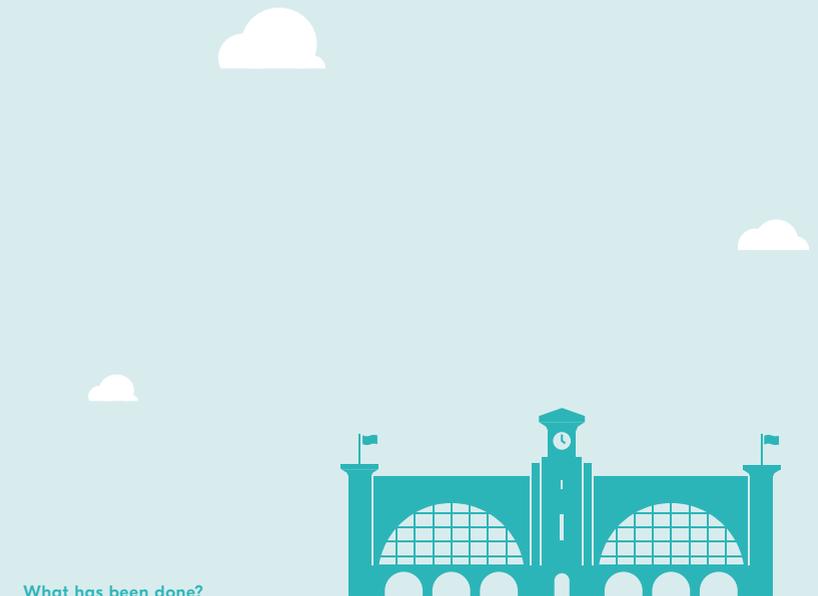
The redevelopment of King's Cross is often touted as one of London's most successful regeneration projects. Much of the focus has been on Argent's investment in the public realm, with 40 per cent of the site dedicated to landscaping and spaces for people to play, relax and explore. Argent's engagement with youth, and their efforts in building partnerships in the area, have also been important elements in the success of the area.

From the beginning of the redevelopment process, Argent wanted to design a space that could work for all ages. In 2002, they commissioned Fluid to carry out community outreach, with a specific focus on youth. Fluid held public open days, interviews with youth agencies, and workshops with local schoolchildren and young people. The outcome of the engagement process was a series of youth-specific projects with ideas like a 'drop-in town hall', some of which were integrated into the development or function as meanwhile projects.⁵³

Beyond ideas, this intensive engagement process enabled Argent to develop long-term relationships with local youth organisations and schools and build a positive reputation within the local community.



Global Generation (GG) is one organisation that has formed a long-term, mutually beneficial partnership with Argent. GG is a charity that works with residents, workers and visitors in King's Cross to teach people about nature and ecology through cooking, food growing, creative writing and carpentry, and is now based in the Skip Garden in the middle of the King's Cross development. The Global Generation skip garden came into existence through ongoing conversations between GG and Argent, which ultimately led to the conceptualisation of the portable skip garden. Argent, in combination with Guardian News & Media, provided the necessary match funding from the Lottery Grant for the idea to come to fruition.⁵⁴ This relationship between Argent staff and GG continues today, as Argent employees volunteer and support GG's Business BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) students set up their own enterprises and participate in their Lunch & Learning sessions. Argent also supports the 'Friday Night Out' project run by Global Generation (in partnership with Arsenal in the Community, Arsenal Foundation and Islington Giving), which provides space and activity for 11- to 14-year-olds to play football, cook and participate in other activities in King's Cross for free.⁵⁵



Budding Brunels is another programme run in partnership with Argent and UAL: Central Saint Martins which offered young people the opportunity to network with members of various construction professions, and develop interview and design skills through a three-day challenge. The mixed-use buildings of King's Cross were the subject matter, in which participants were challenged to redesign a building. They were guided by experts to bring their ideas from sketches to 3D models. The three-day challenge ended with presentations to a panel of experts. A number of participants benefited from work experience placements with industry partners located in King's Cross afterwards.⁵⁶

The Knowledge Quarter, a consortium of organisations within a one-mile radius of St Pancras, is working to increase collaboration between the knowledge community. This large network of companies forming around the regeneration area has the potential to augment Argent's existing partnerships. The KQ is now delivering conferences to showcase industries and career opportunities available to young people in the area, and how schools can arrange their own career events.⁵⁷ KQ, in partnership with Camden Council, recently launched an apprenticeship scheme for young people with buy-in from members to help build a pipeline of talented and motivated individuals in the science, technology and creative industries.⁵⁸

OUTCOMES

Argent said they also have plans to facilitate connections between local schoolchildren and the wide range of corporate tenants moving into King's Cross. Imagine the learning opportunities for young people if they can tap into this wide network of creative talent. While still in the development phase, we challenge Argent and others to turn these ideas into a reality.⁵⁹



40%

40 per cent of the king's cross site is dedicated to landscaping and spaces for people to play, relax and explore



Challenge three

Local play budgets have been dramatically reduced

One report found that councils' overall spending on play fell by nearly 40 per cent between 2010–11 and 2013–14.⁶⁰ This has led to reductions in provision and the privatisation of some former play areas. Over the last few decades, increasing traffic, concerns about safety and negative perceptions of young people, have led to the decrease in opportunities for play.⁶¹ An ICM survey found that 90 per cent of adults played outside when they were children, compared with only 33 per cent of children today.⁶²

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO LONDON?

Children and young people need space outside of their homes and schools to socialise, explore and interact with the people and the world around them. For children growing up in apartments with little or no outside space, this is particularly important. Nearly 400,000 or 24 per cent of London's children live in overcrowded homes.⁶³ Outside play gives children the opportunity to stay healthy, and is important in tackling obesity. In recent decades, as children's outdoor play has reduced, child and adolescent depression has been on the rise.⁶⁴ Spaces for play offer what no education system can, an ecosystem of experiences to foster a more creative learning experience and happier childhoods.

"Today's children are disappearing from public space – certainly in their primary school years. This is the age of the 'battery-reared child' in which the play of children is being constrained and confined as never before."

— The All-Party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood⁶⁵

A 'battery-reared' childhood – where children are confined to their homes with structured activities and a formal education focusing narrowly on future employability – impacts on the quality of life in our city, from health, happiness and wellbeing, to our ability to fuel our creative economy.⁶⁶



WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO PEOPLE SHAPING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT?

Requirements for open space and play provision are part of planning guidelines and obligations. However, building spaces that work for all age groups is difficult to do well. Working with the local community, especially young people, in co-designing and co-creating these spaces helps build community, nurtures young people's abilities to express themselves creatively, and increases a sense of ownership which reduces the likelihood of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.⁶⁷ It also improves parents' and young people's relationships with the developer. Short-term investments in play spaces co-designed with the community have long-term benefits.

CASE STUDIES

These demonstrate the power of community-led designs and how discarded and recycled objects can be transformed into play spaces that fuel children's imaginations.



What has been done?

CASE STUDY EIGHT

How community-led designs engaged children and parents in upgrading play spaces to meet the residents' needs

Partners Barking Riverside Limited (Greater London Authority and L&Q), make:good

Location Barking Riverside, London, UK

Timeframe Co-design process (August–September 2013); playspace opened (May 2015)

Barking Riverside is a brand-new neighbourhood being developed on 443 acres of a former power station site in east London along the River Thames. Barking Riverside Limited, a public-private partnership, has planning permission to build 10,800 homes, 65,000 sq m of commercial floor space, new community and leisure facilities, schools and retail centres. About 700 homes have already been built and occupied, and there are plans to build 600 homes per annum on the site.⁶⁸

The site has a clear focus on environmental sustainability, with ample amounts of natural open space integrated into the public realm. Yet once the first round of residents began to move in, Barking Riverside Ltd realised parents and children were not using one of the play spaces as intended. The play provision was underused and some residents felt the site's natural water features were a potential safety risk for young children. Barking Riverside Ltd responded by commissioning make:good to co-design a new space, to understand why the existing play provision was not meeting residents' needs, and what residents moving to the area wanted to see.

make:good involved residents in the co-design process. They employed various engagement tools like a mobile cardboard play factory, thumbs up/thumbs down feedback cards, as well as a study trip in which they took 20 parents and 27 local children, along with staff from Barking Riverside Ltd and a local councillor, to the Olympic Park playgrounds.

This allowed residents to see the value of different ranges of play features as well as informal spaces. Afterwards, they undertook a participatory budgeting exercise where residents could rate their highest priorities for design. The final play space was developed from this feedback, and the park upgrades were installed in early 2015, with an event to celebrate its opening.⁶⁹

OUTCOMES

Matthew Carpen, Planning Director of Barking Riverside, said that getting the community to co-design the playground was empowering. It has made the space well liked, increased community ownership and self-policing of the area, and generated excitement and increased use. While he says there are no statistics to back it, there is definitely anecdotal evidence that this community-led process has led to less vandalism and anti-social behaviour, and to happier residents.⁷⁰ Similarly, research by the University of East London and ZCD Architects, funded by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), found Barking Riverside's public spaces to be well used by adults and children compared to other developments they studied across the UK. Users of the space were more likely to spend more than 30 minutes on site, compared to the other developments.⁷¹

The success of this project has led to an even bigger budget for another play space that is being constructed alongside the new school, which is currently under construction. make:good has been commissioned again for this project. Carpen is more ambitious about involving residents in this project, saying he not only believes the children have the right to co-design the play space but also help build it, working directly with the builders to create the new amenity from the ground up.⁷²



CASE STUDY NINE

How contemporary art is combined with play to support creative childhoods

Partners South London Gallery, Febrik, with funding from GAMA Property, Cecil and Hilda Lewis Charitable Trust, Midge Palley and The Childhood Trust's Summer Give. Since 2012 the project has been part of SLG Local, funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund and sponsored by Bloomberg.
Location Sceaux Gardens Estate, Camberwell, London, UK
Timeframe 2012 – present

The South London Gallery (SLG) opened its doors in 1891, with the founding principal to be a “gallery for the people of south London open to the public free, and on Sundays”. Since 2001, the South London Gallery has worked to develop a long-term education programme that involves local children and families in contemporary art.⁷³

The Shop of Possibilities, located on the neighbouring Sceaux Gardens housing estate, is an important initiative within this programme. Open since May 2012, The Shop of Possibilities began as a collaboration between the SLG, children living on the estate and practising architects Febrik, a not-for-profit platform for participatory art and design projects. The space was co-designed by local children in a former retail unit on the estate, and is still open to local residents for free, both after school and on Saturdays. It was created to be a social space that merges play with contemporary art. An interactive wall of ‘loose parts’, for example, is in constant evolution, with objects that are found, collected or donated becoming part of the ever-changing display and/or materials for children’s creative play. These objects require the children to use their imagination, so that buckets become drums, tape and old plastic become footballs, old tyres become playground equipment, and recycled objects take on new lives in ever-changing combinations. Periodically artists lead sessions, but the children’s freedom to develop their own playful, creative responses has always been key.⁷⁴



Image courtesy of South London Gallery

OUTCOMES

Projects at the Shop of Possibilities are closely developed with parents, children and Sceaux Gardens Estate Tenants and Residents Association. The programme has benefited hundreds of children from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds living on the Sceaux Gardens Estate, supporting their social development and increasing confidence. It has also created training and paid employment opportunities for local young people between ages 16–25 who have been recruited as Play Workers to help run the Shop, raising their ambitions and career goals whilst acting as positive role models for younger children.

Challenge four

Is our education system nurturing the right skillsets for future jobs?

The creative industries are the fastest-growing employment sector in the UK, yet despite a potential over-supply of new entrants, there is an increasing skills shortage. This is having a direct impact on the city's growth potential. Eighty per cent of London's tech companies say they could grow faster if technical skills shortages were addressed.⁷⁵ The industry is also hugely under-representative of minority groups, and this lack of diversity is a social and economical weakness.⁷⁶ Education, access to cultural provision and opportunities for apprenticeships in the creative industries offer young people the chance of moving into jobs of their choice.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO LONDON?

London's sustained population boom has led to a shortage in school places. This puts pressures on schools to accommodate bulge classes at a time when their funding is being cut.⁷⁷ Some families have to travel long distances to school. London's school system has improved recently with capital-wide investments, but culture, arts and creativity are being de-prioritised in the curriculum. The number of pupils taking GCSEs in design, drama and crafts has fallen significantly.⁷⁸ Given economically disadvantaged young people are less likely to engage in culture and art outside of school, this is furthering inequality in London's creative industries.⁷⁹

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO PEOPLE SHAPING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT?

New homes mean more people and pressures on infrastructure. Developers are often required to provide new schools. Choosing which school to bring into a new development can have profound implications on how well the new and existing residents are integrated. It also can be a deciding factor for parents in choosing to settle into the area. There is also untapped potential in many developments to take advantage of the creative businesses moving into new space.

CASE STUDIES

These show three initiatives that address youth unemployment, increase prospects for young people in careers in the creative industries, and provide learning opportunities outside of the classroom.



Image Roger Brown for A New Direction

CASE STUDY TEN

How a school is using its location in the heart of a new enterprise zone to forge partnerships and enable students to contribute to and benefit from the regeneration process

Partners Silvertown Oasis Academy, Newham Council, organisations located in the new Royal Dock Enterprise Zone

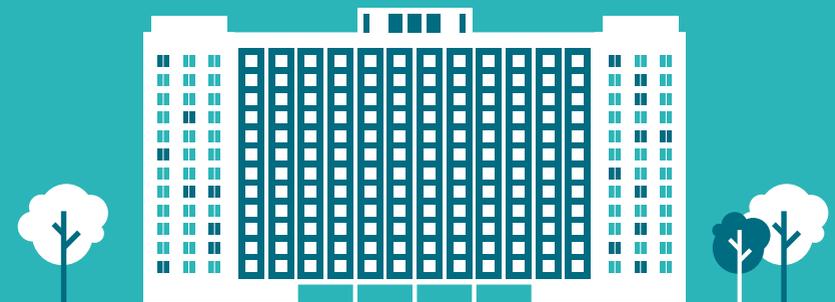
Location Silvertown, East London, UK

Timeframe 2014 – present

The Silvertown Oasis Academy is located in the new Royal Dock Enterprise Zone, which is seeing huge investment in ‘green’ and creative industries. Planned developments at Silvertown Quays and Royal Wharf will bring thousands of homes and job opportunities to the area, and the Academy aims to capitalise on these growth opportunities. The Academy is working to ensure that children and families benefit from and contribute to the regeneration process. The curriculum is built around creativity and discovery through volunteering and apprenticeship programmes. The Academy is working to forge partnerships with the local council, community and voluntary organisations, and private sector companies moving into the area.⁸⁰

Silvertown Partnership, a consortium consisting of Chelsfield Properties, First Base and Macquarie Capital, is set to regenerate Silvertown, a new development within the Royal Dock Enterprise Zone, into a creative enterprise zone to support makers and artisanal manufacturers.⁸¹ Think of all the opportunities for young people if partnerships within and beyond the Academy materialise.

“Planned developments at Silvertown Quays and Royal Wharf will bring thousands of homes and job opportunities to the area, and the Academy aims to capitalise on these growth opportunities.”





£1.8m

The amount of funding Brent Council, South Kilburn Trust and the OK Club recently won to support the creation of a long-term 'community and enterprise hub'



CASE STUDY ELEVEN

How local councils are helping young people break into the creative industries and tackle high levels of unemployment

Partners South Kilburn Trust, Brent Council, The Architecture Foundation and Practice Architecture
Location Brent, London, UK
Timeframe 2011 – present

South Kilburn Studios was founded in 2011 by The Architecture Foundation, Practice Architecture, the South Kilburn Neighbourhood Trust and Brent Council. The project initially came about in response to significant levels of unemployment in Brent with a dual goal to support start-up businesses as well as provide opportunities and experience for local young people. It began with a disused portacabin in South Kilburn, which was transformed into studio spaces available to creative start-up companies. These tenants, in lieu of paying rent, must pledge to train a local young person, host events and workshops, and invest their commercial time into supporting the ongoing regeneration of the area. Initially intended to be a six-month meanwhile project, the Studio's success has led to it gaining a more permanent existence. The Studio is currently funded and managed by South Kilburn Trust and Brent Council.⁸²

OUTCOMES

The project will soon get an extra boost of funding. Recently, Brent Council, South Kilburn Trust and the OK Club won £1.8m in funding from the GLA to support the creation of a long-term 'community and enterprise hub' in South Kilburn.⁸³

CASE STUDY TWELVE

How a developer's charitable foundation is helping young people to access employment opportunities in the creative industries

Partners supported by the Berkeley Foundation (primarily funded by the Berkeley Group), BEOPEN, and the Mayor's Fund for London; delivered by A New Direction, Create, MediaTrust and Watermans

Location London-wide

Timeframe 2014 – present

Creativity Works is a three-year programme which aims to tackle youth unemployment in London by providing pathways to job opportunities in the creative industries for young Londoners. Programme participants are between the ages of 17–24, have been to secondary school in London, and are not in employment, education or training. The programme equips young adults with skills and knowledge through industry-specific training, mentorship and work experience.

“London is one of the most creative cities in the world and we are proud to be part of that community. Growing new talent and helping tackle unemployment are major priorities for Berkeley. This programme gives young Londoners a stake in their city's creative future,” said Rob Perrins, Chairman of the Berkeley Foundation.



OUTCOMES

Eighty-five young people have been supported into employment, education or training by projects involving A New Direction. Across the programme to date, 117 young Londoners have achieved a positive outcome. As importantly, the programme is giving young Londoners who are traditionally underrepresented in the creative sector an opportunity to build transferable skills, increase their confidence and grow their talent.⁸⁴



What more can be done?

Participatory arts programmes and innovative partnerships can strengthen place identity and belonging and help reduce social tensions, anti-social behaviour and youth unemployment. All of these can be a huge commercial benefit for developers and offer vast social benefits to communities, now and in the long term.

London's built environment is undergoing massive changes. This presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a resilient city that is poised for the future. At present, thinking about the needs for children, young people and families to play, learn and create is an overlooked strategy for building successful places.

What are the ways to engage the diversity of people living in an area in a new theatre? How can youth participation in creative placemaking build young people's connection to and protection of a place? How can arts and cultural provision in new developments become truly accessible to all, no matter the age, background or income level?

Building imagination and creativity into young people's lives requires much more than building cultural and play provision alone. It requires partnerships, active engagement with the local community, and building a network of talent from the ground up. Even the smallest developments have the potential to make a positive impact in young people's lives and make London the best city in the world for a creative childhood.

The resources exist in the city to make this a reality. Help us find new ways to unlock these cultural riches and build creativity into the lives of all Londoners.

A New Direction is seeking new partnerships and collaborations to take forward this agenda.

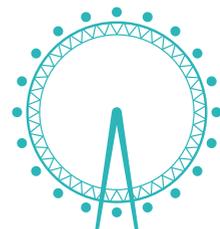


Image Roger Brown for A New Direction



What more can be done?

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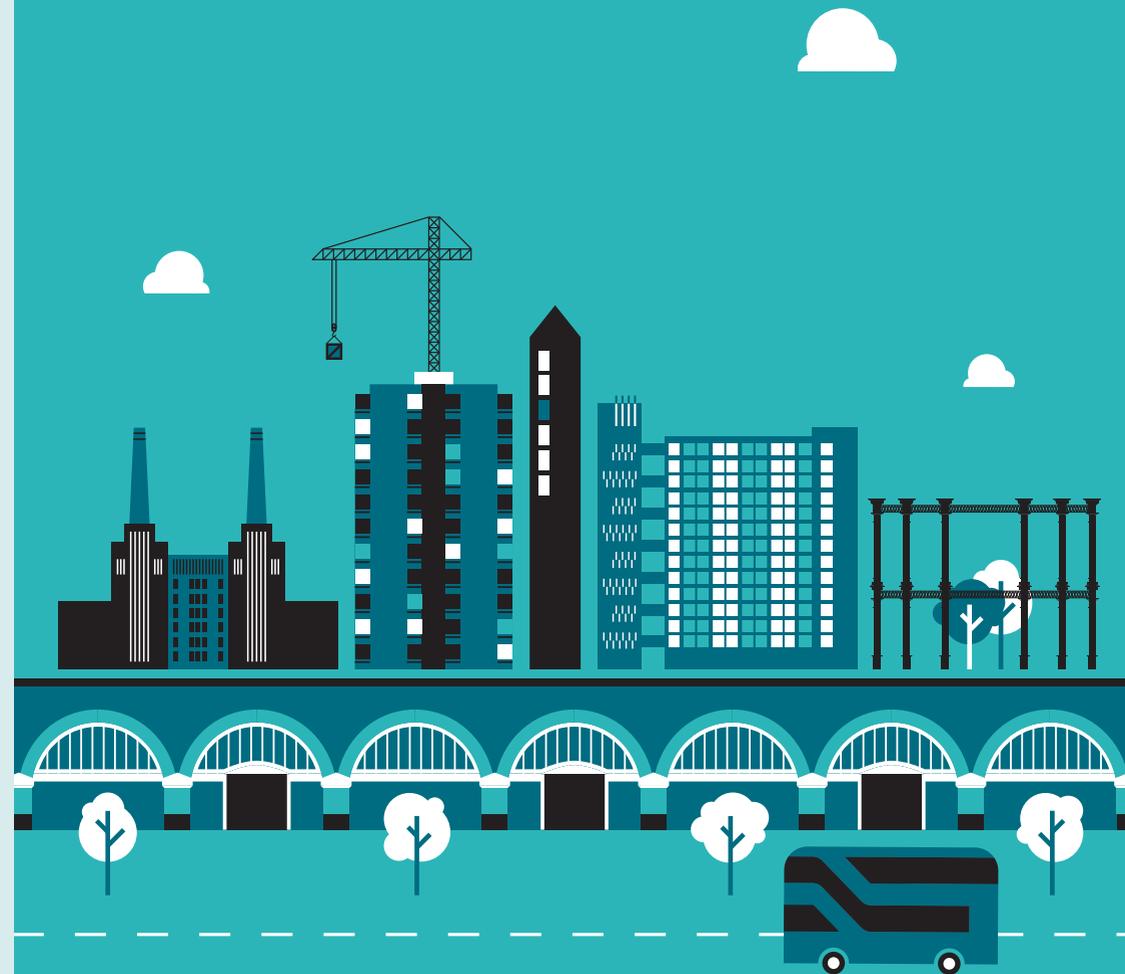
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CREDITS

Roger Brown Photos for
 A New Direction: Comber
 Grove Primary School and
 Kingsmead School.

Design by Blast
blast.co.uk

Printed in England by
 Gavin Martin Colournet
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