

My Place - Woodco Report

Background

The My Place concept was born from a [2019 film by Footwork](#), made with a group of young people from Woodberry Down. In 'regeneration divide' young people documented their feelings about being excluded from the process and the impact on the community in which they grew up. Their comments show the potential for young people to be a powerful voice for their community and re-build trust in development.

Why My Place exists

Our mission is to train and empower local young people to be leaders of their wider communities and support them to co-create the future of their neighbourhood with those in power.

Our vision is a world in which existing communities - represented by young people who have been trained as researchers, advocates and leaders - co-create the future of their neighbourhoods with those in power.

Most people are not meaningfully engaged in decisions about the development of their neighbourhood. Young people are already involved in their communities and want to take action on issues happening around them.

The current system doesn't currently incentivise genuine co-creation of places between those in power and the people who live in these places already. Existing communities have often been pushed to one side. Forgotten at best. Blamed and displaced at worst.

My Place is very much about local people and this is something that is embedded and is part of the identity of the project. As such, My Place hired two young local residents to run and deliver the project, Rico Prince and Zimmie Sutcliffe.

What did we do in Finsbury Park?

We trialled an innovative approach to place making centred on meaningful power sharing and co-creation between existing communities; led by empowered young advocates and local decision makers.

How did we do this?

At the end of spring, we recruited a diverse group of 14 young people aged 13-18 years old who live or go to school in the Finsbury Park area. During the summer holidays, we put the Pioneers (that was their job titles) through a 2 week intensive training programme where they were taught about different research methods, ethics and strategies with support from our partners. Moreover, in that time the young people also designed their research,

planned their delivery strategy and then went out and conducted their research in the following two weeks.

Following all the hard work that the Pioneers did in the summer, they then went on to analyse their research and put together a report in which they shared with local stakeholders at a co-creation event that they planned and hosted.

Everyone who got the opportunity to meet the Pioneers was thoroughly impressed and was very supportive of them and the project. Since then they have been invited to local stakeholder meetings and they were also commissioned by Haringey council to do a separate piece of research that would be used to develop the skatepark in Finsbury Park.

In December the project in its previous form came to a close for the young people with the Pioneers hosting a celebration event to showcase their documentary that is about their journey through the project. The event was also to celebrate them and their achievements.

What's next?

At the moment, My Place is putting together an impact report that will be released at the beginning of spring and we are planning how we're going to exhibit the project at The Festival of Place.

Moving forward, we're currently having discussions with NHG about setting up a youth forum and training project in Woodberry Down. Moreover, we're also applying for funding to continue and spread the project in different places as well as exploring other opportunities for the concept of My Place and how it can be embedded into decision making.