

IMPACT REPORT: COMMUNITY YOUTH BOARD



bright box ★

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THE PROJECT

This year, with your help, we launched a new project: our Community Youth Board.

We started this project to provide young people with inclusive skill-building activities in our community Makerspace focussed on tech, engineering and arts, where they would design a 6-week programme for 60 further young people. In the face of the global pandemic, we had to adapt the project so that we could provide appropriate support for young people. We were no longer able to host indoor activities and were unable to meet in groups of more than 12, including the young people and facilitators.

We had originally adjusted the project to deliver online. However, when speaking to young people we realised that they had no support through the pandemic and this was affecting their mental health.

With the help of Parson Cross Initiative, we were able to use their allotment space to provide in-person board meetings for the young people. In addition, we adjusted the 6-week programme the young people were to design for a further 60 young people. Instead we designed and distributed making at home boxes with the help of young people, distributed through local food banks and social workers.



MEET THE BOARD



Jake* aspires to be a joiner and wants some help understanding how to get an apprenticeship in joinery

Mark* is interested in games design. He would like to work towards owning his own allotment



Anthony* likes the idea of music production and is interested in community leadership

John* is interested in website design and also wants to own his own allotment



David* wants to be a chef, owning his own restaurant someday. He wants a pizza oven so the community can learn how to cook

OUTCOMES

We set 3 outcomes for our youth board: learn a new skill, feel confident affecting change in their local community, and to progress into employment, education, training, or a volunteering role. These outcomes were designed to provide our young people with the skills and confidence to succeed in tech, engineering and creative industries and to measure the success of the project.

We have measured against these outcomes throughout the project, using survey feedback and testimonials from the young people, video footage, and feedback from our facilitators who are trained to recognise changes in participant journeys.



100% of our young people identified new skills they had learned

These skills included: understanding the use of different materials and the need for safety in the design and building process, how to make tiles, laying a foundation, negotiating with others, manual handling and woodwork.

Mike, one of our role models and facilitators, and also Pottery Manager at Art House Sheffield had this to say:

■■ The skills the young people have learned - designing, planning, and assessing a site for suitability accounting for design and safety considerations and safe handling of materials - are valuable for careers in creative industries. Creative problem solving, working as a team to overcome and adapt to unexpected obstacles, designing a site specific project that reacts to the surrounding environment and serves a specific purpose within that environment are all skills that they will need. ■■

100% of our young people demonstrated increased confidence affecting change in the local community

"We should set up a whatsapp group so that we can talk about what's happening on the allotments and make a plan"

"We should contact other youth groups so that they know the allotments are here and that they can use them"

"I think the pizza oven will really help the community, it's a good addition to the allotment"

"I think the community will enjoy learning to cook on the allotments"

This project brought together 5 young people who did not know each other. During the course of the project, we saw their confidence grow. They became more talkative, started asking more and more questions and showed an active interest in improving the community site and working with the local community. The youth board have taken responsibility for everything in the community space. They brainstormed ideas for the project, eventually settling on a pizza oven because they wanted something that could be used by the entire community. They created the schedule and designed how the pizza oven would look and work – even suggesting a rockery so it would fit into the surroundings. They created a list of materials, tools, safety equipment, questions we need to ask the allotment owner and other considerations of the wider community. They took on other projects around the allotments and are slowly turning a neglected space into a usable allotment for the whole community.



100%

of our young people have committed to continue volunteering in the allotment

When we started the youth board, 80% of the members were already in education, training, or volunteer roles. But, they are worried about what they are going to do once their college and training courses are complete. They also told us that they didn't think their college courses were good enough for them to succeed at university or in work. The pandemic has intensified this concern with the members unable to attend college in person.

Through this project, all of the members have committed to continue volunteering in the allotment, gaining valuable skills for employment. We have committed to continue working with the young people, providing them with the encouragement that they need at this critical time and supporting them with the transition from college and school into employment or further education.



OUTPUTS

3

role models from tech, engineering and creative industries interacted with young people

1

community pizza oven successfully built for use by the whole community

250

making at home boxes distributed to families in need

6

board meetings where the young people designed their own project and developed future planning for the allotment

5

young people living in the 30% most deprived communities in Sheffield provided with inclusive activities

1

neglected community space turned into a welcoming, usable allotment for the whole community

CHALLENGES AND LEARNING

We have faced a number of challenges with this project, not least dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Due to the pandemic restrictions, we reduced the number of people on the board to 5, to allow us to meet in a group with facilitators.

Moving the youth board activities to the allotment was the most appropriate location for the youth board to continue and best for the wellbeing of our participants. However, the site is very low tech. This meant that all tech brought in had to be battery powered. This has limited our ability to provide tech-based skill building for the young people. We are now working with the board to develop an online offering where we provide distanced learning opportunities for young people.

Reaching our inclusion targets for the board was challenging. We reached 20% participants from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds, 20% not in employment, education or training and all members were from 30% most deprived communities. We have learned from this project that we need to build and repair trust between different community groups so that the allotments can be an inclusive place for everyone. We are developing a community mapping project and working with the youth board to address the challenges around inclusion. The board have decided that we should add another 7 members with diverse experiences so we can better serve the community and be inclusive. Once government restrictions are eased, we will be recruiting for more members.



PROJECT LEGACY

This project was created to ensure that young people can succeed in tech, engineering and creative industries. We learned from young people that, by the time they reach 15, they already know what they would do. But, all of our youth board members felt that they weren't able to and would end up unemployed or in a job they dislike. Either because of their education, personal or economic circumstances. The global pandemic has intensified these concerns and led to young people feeling more and more isolated.

With the help of your funding we have been able to take the time to listen to young people, learning about how the pandemic has affected them and their career ambitions and prospects. More importantly, we've been able to support them through the pandemic with space to meet and inclusive skill-building. For the young people we work with, that have no other place to go, this support has made all the difference.

We have taken everything we've learned and decided to launch a one-to-one mentoring programme where young people get one on one access to mentors in an industry of their choosing and where we match their interests with high quality internships. We will also be looking to hire a careers coach that can support young people in key transition periods. In the aftermath of the pandemic, this support will be crucial.

We are in the early stages of development and are in the process of co-creating this with the young people, to understand what will be most beneficial to them. We hope to secure funding in 2021 to launch this programme.



THANK YOU

From everyone in Bright Box team and our community youth board members, we would like to thank the whole team at EN:Able Communities for your support throughout this project. This has been a challenging year for everyone including our beneficiaries and your support has made all the difference.

