

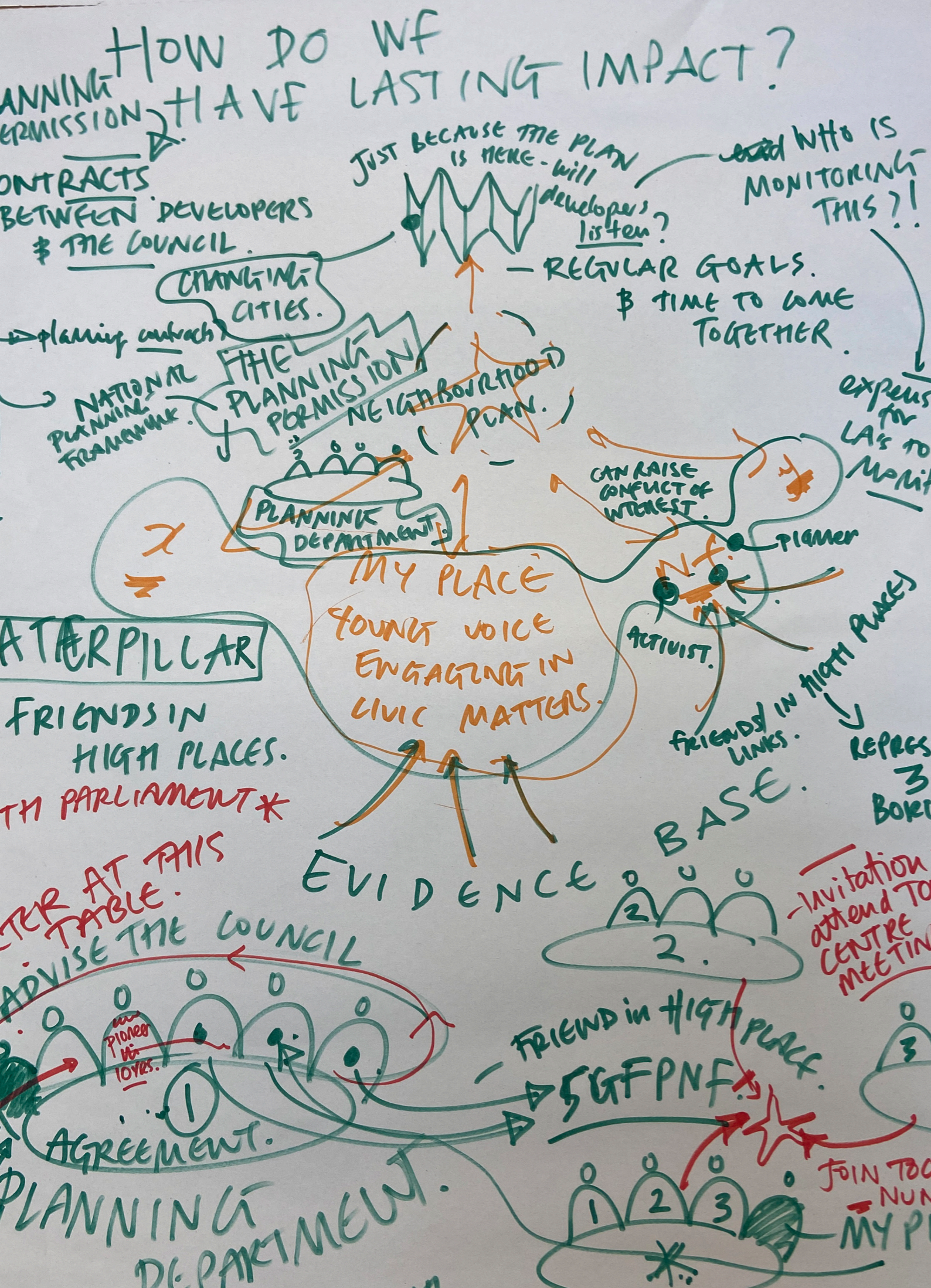
my place

FINSBURY
PARK

IMPACT REPORT







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1. WHAT IS MY PLACE?

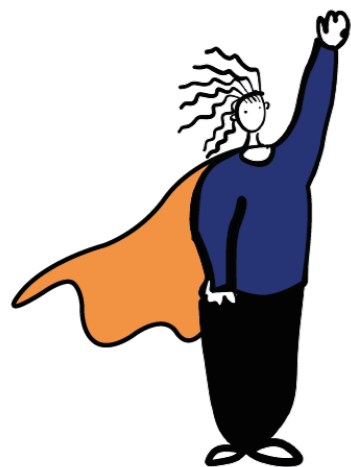
My Place employs local young people (aged 13-18) to be trained as researchers, advocates and leaders for the diverse communities they represent. It connects these young leaders with local Planning decision-makers and supports these new partnerships to co-create solutions to community issues, based around a new

development or regeneration area. My Place's method is innovative within place making and regeneration; young people accessing and advocating on behalf of the diverse voices of their wider community, not just other young people, is genuinely pioneering.



OUR VISION

A world in which local communities - including young people - have a meaningful say in the decisions that affect the future of the places where they live, and are able to shape their neighbourhoods in partnership with decision-makers



OUR MISSION

To create more inclusive decision making processes that better serve local communities by empowering young people to be researchers, advocates and leaders for the diverse communities they represent, and supporting ongoing partnerships between young people and decision makers that deliver positive outcomes for communities

"I BELIEVE MY EXPERIENCE WITH MY PLACE WILL BE VERY BENEFICIAL FOR MY FUTURE, PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY" - HAYDEN, PIONEER

Listening to the community

The process of turning My Place from an idea into reality took time, during which our small team laid the groundwork for the amazing achievements of the My Place Pioneers. We began with just the outline of a My Place vision and a small but super team... We started our Finsbury Park journey by listening and learning from those with experience and knowledge of the issues we aimed to address; young people and the local community living and working in Finsbury Park



Through workshops in local youth hubs and conversations with local community groups we learned about the issues people were facing in their neighbourhoods, and how an initiative like My Place could best support and empower them. These conversations with the Finsbury Park community were invaluable in shaping what My Place would go on to be and young people continue to shape My Place as it grows



Alongside these local conversations, we brought together a diverse wealth of knowledge and expertise through the My Place Advisory Board. Its membership includes architects, researchers, youth workers and teachers, as well as 50% young people. The Advisory Board has played a critical role in guiding My Place from its early development and embodies our commitment to collaboration, self reflection and headlining young voices

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

My Place is the brainchild of Clare Richards, an award-winning documentary film-maker, turned architect, turned philanthropist. Her work in all these sectors focusses on listening to, and valuing unheard voices. In 2019, her film 'Regeneration Divide' was presented at the London Mayor's Homes for Londoners Conference, and with it, the seedling of an idea for My Place.

The Intention

My Place delivers a message of hope in the face of a broken Planning system. It is a programme rooted in a strong belief that communities have the time, talent and leadership to work collaboratively with planning professionals to create places that celebrate diversity, and deliver empowered communities ready to evolve to the challenges and opportunities of our future.

The My Place pilot in Finsbury Park saw 14 young people (aged 13-18) who represent the super-diversity of their area employed as My Place Pioneers, working over their summer holidays and as a Saturday job thereafter. Trained as researchers, advocates and leaders for the diverse

communities they represent, My Place connects these young leaders with local Planning decision-makers and supports these new partnerships to co-create solutions to community issues, based around a new development or regeneration area.

Collaboration for us is threefold, it means collaborating with:

1. Local young people, as equal partners in all aspects of our work - from having equal representation on our Board, right through to equal say in the design and delivery of their research projects
2. The local community to better understand their needs
3. Experts, professionals, and partners who contribute their skills, time and expertise to our mission.

The Implementation

Following detailed consultation with local leaders of all ages, faiths, and professions we took advice from experts in the youth and planning sectors - including Partnership for Young London and Commonplace - to design the My Place training programme. Based on their lived experience of growing

up or studying in Finsbury Park, and with the support of PhD students, place-making professionals, and local young leaders, the My Place Pioneers developed their own social research questions to find out their local community's needs and wants. Once their research was completed, the Pioneers designed co-creation workshops with the Finsbury Park and Stroud Green Neighbourhood Forum, and other local decision-makers to share this knowledge. Our aim from the outset was to ensure that the fruits of the My Place Pioneers work would be embedded within future plans, and the connections between those in power and our young Pioneers would continue into the future.

The Impact

Whilst the full impact of My Place on changing the face and approach to development will only be felt in years to come, we produced 11 Indicators of Impact to demonstrate the measurable impact being a My Place Pioneer has had on the local young people as well as the impact we have had on local decision makers' understanding of the considerable benefits working with young people can have. By the end of the pilot, almost all of the pioneers

(91%) felt confident in their abilities to carry out and present research and their findings to others, and over half had an increased wealth of knowledge of local decision making systems in comparison to just 21% before they joined as Pioneers. This report presents a snapshot of what is possible, in a short amount of time, when developers invest in working collaboratively with the kids from the block.

Call to action

My Place needs bold, humble developers to continue this journey with; to accept that they need to change their approach, and to be courageous in bringing these young empowered Pioneers into the fold, to help them build for the future in which we are all thriving citizens. If this is you, then I encourage you to get in touch with the My Place team and discover what can be done together.



KERRI HALL
FOUNDING DIRECTOR
ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

"MY PLACE HAS BOOSTED MY CONFIDENCE. I'M MORE ABLE TO TALK TO PEOPLE, I'VE LEARNED THINGS I'M GOOD AT, AND I'M MORE VOCAL." - ALESHA, PIONEER

Why does the world need My Place?

As a resident of Woodberry Down, I was approached by Footwork to share my experience living in one of Europe's biggest single-site estate regeneration projects in a short film called Regeneration Divide. Upon reflection, I was surprised by how many thoughts and feelings I had about the process, namely the sense of betrayal and exclusion that my community felt. There were so many broken promises that made the process feel like lip service.

Growing up, I had always felt safe and comfortable. However, regeneration created a divide in the community, and I no longer felt welcome in my own neighbourhood. Past experiences of discrimination in less diverse areas made the changes on my estate all the more difficult to accept.

My experience of growing up on an estate undergoing regeneration was one of feeling misunderstood and unheard by the powers that be, and of being subjected to changes that had a negative impact on my sense of belonging and well-being. While working on a youth project in Woodberry Down, I was encouraged by a friend to apply for a role at

My Place (I was completely unaware at the time that the documentary I filmed years prior inspired this very thing!). Despite self doubts and feeling under-qualified, I got the job and here I am, over a year later, reflecting on the incredible successes of My Place.

It brings me great joy to be part of a project that has empowered young people to believe in their own power and to use that to shake things up. These young people have the opportunity to have a real say in their community, something that I wouldn't even have thought possible at their age. Working on this project has had a significant impact on my life and I will be forever grateful to my friend who pushed me to take on this job.



RICO PRINCE
PROJECT COORDINATOR

Regeneration all over the world promises inclusion, social mobility and safety, but all too often delivers segregation, a broadening socio-economic gap, and communities that feel unheard, unrecognised and scapegoated. Current legislation in England puts little pressure on developers to properly value, invest in and collaborate with the communities they are supposed to be serving. Yet, we know that these overlooked communities want to get involved, particularly young people.

2%

2% of the public trust housing developers, and only 7% trust local authorities to plan large scale developments (Grosvenor, 2019)

3% of local people get involved in discussions about local developments (Royal Town Planning Institute, 2017)

3%

89%

89% of young people have never been asked about the future of their neighbourhood, despite 97% wanting to have a say (Grosvenor, 2019)

COMMUNITY LISTENING WORKSHOP



"THEY SHOULD HAVE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION THE PEOPLE THAT ALREADY LIVED HERE BECAUSE THEY BUILT THIS COMMUNITY. THEY KNOCKED IT DOWN AND THERE'S NO COMMUNITY NOW."

What inspired My Place?

The quotes above and right are among the opinions powerfully expressed by young people in two films Footwork made in 2019. They are experts: the first group having grown up with continual regeneration on a large North London housing estate; and the second, in Elephant and Castle, having experienced the harsh realities of their postcode boundary.

As this group explained, the dramatic physical transformation taking place around them doesn't even address their needs - for

neutral and safe places to go, for affordable activities and for proper opportunities. It was these views that sparked the idea for My Place. These young people instinctively recognised this to be a fundamentally unhealthy and inequitable situation and they felt motivated to do something about it. Their comments revealed to us the potential for young people to champion the places where they live: they hold valuable insights about their area, understand local dynamics and can access and talk to their communities in a way outsiders find

"THERE NEEDS TO BE A CHANGE WHERE EVERYBODY COMES TOGETHER... OR IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK OUT"

"EVERYONE MAKES AS IF TO LISTEN BUT THEN THEY DON'T ACT ON IT!"

difficult. So what if they became part of the solution? With training and a wage, could they help change fundamentally the way we involve communities in regeneration, while also expanding their own boundaries? We felt it was very important to find out and so in 2021 we decided to embark on a pilot of My Place in London's Finsbury Park.

As a documentary filmmaker and architect I have witnessed from both sides the damaging effects of the disconnect between communities - the people on the ground who are the life-blood of places and those involved in planning and regeneration. When people feel excluded from changes taking place around them they become distrustful, which simply serves to undermine the process. But experience has also shown us that when the two recognise and understand each other - so that what happens on the ground properly informs how local decisions are made - it builds trust, community resilience and the best chance of lasting positive change.

Footwork is a charity which funds and supports social change from within communities. We believe this starts with valuing local knowledge and experience and then by encouraging people's freedom to act in shaping the places in which they live. We presented the idea for My Place at the Mayor's Homes for Londoners Conference in 2019. That sparked lots of interest and we were determined to pilot the project and demonstrate its potential. Together with London Development Trust (LDT), we are delighted to have achieved this in Finsbury Park.



CLARE RICHARDS
FOOTWORK TRUST



Regeneration Divide

“As part of the 2019 London Festival of Architecture, Footwork produced two hard-hitting short films, in collaboration with community-based organisations. Each provides the point of view of local young people, whose experience reveals where social and physical boundaries collide

These videos each explore the theme of ‘boundaries’.

In the film, we follow a route, chosen by a group of five close friends, around the partly redeveloped estate where they have grown up - Woodberry Down in Manor

House, North London; one of Europe’s largest single-site regeneration projects. The young men, all members of the local football team, give a brutally honest first hand account of gentrification and its destructive impact on the pre-existing community.

The film was facilitated by Manor House Development Trust, the lead community organisation in Woodberry Down, and with the help of Redmond Community Centre and The Edge youth hub, and in collaboration with Redmond Rovers.

INTERVIEWING THE PUBLIC



Our 11 Indicators of Impact

In order to measure the impact of our work and ensure My Place makes a positive contribution to the young people, local communities and decision makers we aim to support, we developed a series of outcomes that we wanted to achieve, and indicators to help us understand our progress towards these outcomes. Using a combination of surveys and interviews with participants we measured our impact across the following indicators:

- 1

Recruit a diverse group of young people with the motivation to engage with their community and decision-makers to help bring about positive change
- 2

The methodology co-created with young people could be effective
- 3

That members of the young people’s community would respond to their approach, questions etc. and that they would give strong, informed answers

“WE CANNOT JUST LEAVE THE DECISIONS OF THE FUTURE OF FINSBURY PARK TO BE MADE BY THE OLDER GENERATIONS. THIS AREA IS INCREDIBLY DIVERSE AND DECISIONS NEED TO REPRESENT THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND MINORITIES THAT LIVE HERE TOO.” - SHUKRI, PIONEER

- 4

Young people have increased knowledge of local decision-making systems
- 5

Young people have increased skills for positive futures
- 6

Young people have increased integration and sense of value
- 7

Young people have increased social capital with decision-makers
- 8

Young people have strengthened character qualities
- 9

Decision makers have increased meaningful engagement with their young, and other marginalised constituents/users
- 10

Decision makers have increased understanding of the needs of young people
- 11

Decision makers have increased knowledge of the role young people can play in decision making

2. THE BIRTH OF MY PLACE IN FINSBURY PARK

Our method for creating change

The first thing the My Place team did to develop My Place in Finsbury Park was to research and distil into a core methodology the key elements of how young people can be empowered to become leaders and to come together with local decision-makers to co-create meaningful change.

Having considered aspects of best practice in both place-making and youth work, in combination with knowledge and experience of young people and community members in Finsbury Park gathered through a series of workshops, they arrived at the 3 Cs.

COMMISSION

We commission local young people to find out what their community values about their area, and how they want it changed

CONNECT

We connect our young, empowered leaders with local decision-makers and help them build active, ongoing relationships

CO-CREATE

We support these new partnerships between young community representatives and those in power to co-create the future of their area together

Equitable recruitment

Working with local schools and youth organisations, we recruited 14 young people aged 13-18, each passionate about making positive change in their community. Alongside providing opportunities for those

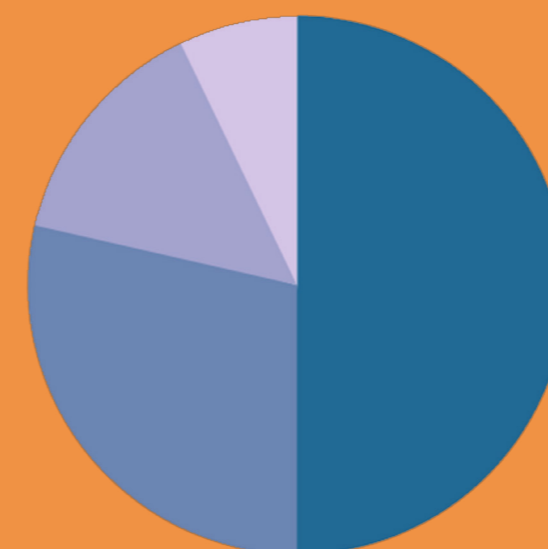
who may not have had the opportunity to get involved in social action, our key goal was to ensure that the young people we recruited were representative of the diversity of Finsbury Park.

14

Diverse local young people recruited from Finsbury Park

Equal gender split

50%



50% Black British/Black African/Black Caribbean

28.6% White British/White European

14.3% White and Black Mixed

7.1% Somali

IMPACT INDICATOR 1

Recruit a diverse group of young people with the motivation to engage with their community and decision-makers to help bring about positive change

"My Place is so diverse and a very accurate representation of our community. To be included in spaces and conversations about changes made within our community is amazing."

Shukri, Pioneer

"I CAN SAY WITH CONFIDENCE THAT THIS HAS BEEN THE MOST SPECIAL EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE SO FAR AND I'LL HOLD IT IN MY HEART FOREVER" - EMILY, PIONEER

Meet the Pioneers

Hello, we are the My Place Pioneers! We are a group of 13-18 year olds from Finsbury Park who are passionate about speaking up for our community and being involved in decisions about the future of our local area... we demand a voice for ourselves and our community.



ALESHA, 13

Alesha is 13 years old and lives in Highbury Corner. She is very excited to be a My Place pioneer because she wants to connect with others and hear what others have to say, and is very excited to see where this goes in the future



CHANNAY, 17

Channay is 17 years old and a local resident of the Finsbury Park area. She is a determined character who wants to provide local communities with a voice for future projects and improvements within Finsbury Park



DAVID, 16

David is 16 years old and lives in Finsbury Park. He is a highly talented footballer and is committed to going pro. David became a My Place Pioneer as he is determined to improve the local area for his family, friends, and wider community



EMILY, 14

Emily is a 14 year old living in Holloway and attending school in Finsbury Park. She is a musician and a chess player on the side and aims to use her passion for activism and politics to make changes in Finsbury Park



HANNAH, 16

Hannah is a young, passionate activist living in Highbury. She is highly empathetic and determined and became a My Place Pioneer to make great changes and impact her future in Finsbury Park. Hannah is also a member of the My Place Advisory Board



HAYDEN, 15

Hayden is 15 years old, born and raised in the Finsbury Park area. He is an intelligent and outspoken individual who hopes to improve the safety of Finsbury Park for everyone in the local community

IMPACT INDICATOR 2

The methodology co-created with young people could be effective

"The My Place Finsbury Park project demonstrated that genuine collaborations with young people can generate some excellent research whilst helping to build the skills of those involved."

Prof. Andrew Smith, University of Westminster

"MY PLACE IS NEW AND DIFFERENT FOR THE COMMUNITY. WE WERE ABLE TO INSPIRE OTHERS TO BELIEVE THAT CHANGE CAN AND WILL HAPPEN" - JULIA, PIONEER



JASON, 13

Jason, aged 13, is passionate about making a change within Finsbury Park and the community. He signed up to this project as he felt he would be a great candidate to make the area the better for both the young and older members of our local community



JULIA, 16

Julia is a young, amusing individual who lives close to Finsbury Park and spends a lot of time in the area, usually participating in sports. She is excited to implement her ideas and opinions to make local changes for the better. Julia is also a member of the My Place Advisory Board



NURIA, 15

Núria, 15, goes to school in Finsbury Park and cares deeply about the safety and welfare of the local community. She is extremely ambitious and aims to become a young community activist to change people's lives for the better

"MY PLACE HAS HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND MY VALUE AND HOW TO ARTICULATE MYSELF. I FEEL EMPOWERED TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT THINGS I DON'T AGREE WITH" - ALESHA, PIONEER



SHUKRI, 16

Shukri is 16 and lives and studies in the Finsbury Park area. Her favourite place in the local area is the mosque because she feels a strong sense of community there. Shukri aims to learn more about research methods and how to conduct research ethically



USHSEAN, 17

Ushsean, 17, lives in Finsbury Park and cares deeply about those who call it home. He is a creative, intelligent, opinionated young man working towards a career in music, and hopes to use all of his talents to make deep, lasting change for local communities

IMPACT INDICATOR 3

That members of the young people's community would respond to their approach, questions etc. and that they would give strong, informed answers

"Young people are an excellent tool for collecting data on social issues, the pioneer's confidence in speaking to the public was excellent, and the public seemed to openly discuss issues with young people that they perhaps may be less likely to if approached by adults."

Ross Bennett-Cook, PhD Researcher, University of Westminster

My Place Finsbury Park Programme Timeline

AUGUST

WEEK ONE

Meet your team and learn about the role of a My Place Pioneer



Pioneers are given introductions to research by University of Westminster, Alvin and friends

What is research?



"How can you use online methods in your research?"



"Let's ask the public about this topic"



Pioneers meet Commonplace and QoLF and begin to plan their research

"We are creating a community plan to make Finsbury Park better"



"Let's work together so that everyone's thoughts are included"



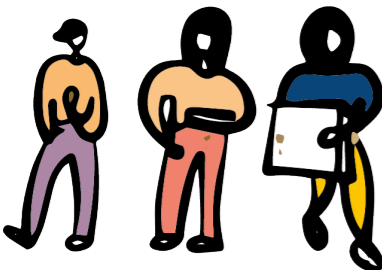
Pioneers meet members from the Finsbury Park and Stroud Green Neighbourhood Forum and learn about the neighbourhood plan

Pioneers learn about filming and how to interview people

"We will use our local knowledge to speak to diverse members of the community"



Pioneers present their research plans to PhD mentors



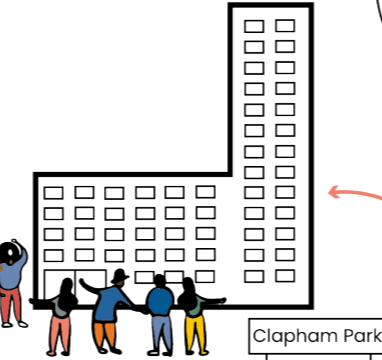
Pioneers visit Uni of Westminster to present findings so far to PhD students and academics

"The Clarion and Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing Association trips aided me with one of my extracurriculars where I won a certificate that could help me pursue a career in Urban Planning"

Shukri, My Place Pioneer

Pioneers visit Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing Association and Clarion Housing to learn about regeneration and how existing communities and developers can work together

WEEK FOUR



"I have really developed my confidence, as shown by the time I first interviewed people on my own. At first I wasn't confident to interview people alone, but with the encouragement of the My Place team I was able to succeed and carry out lots of interviews."

Alesha, My Place Pioneer

WEEK THREE



Pioneers start to go out into the community to conduct interviews

OCTOBER

8th October: Finsbury Park and Stroud Green Neighbourhood Forum design day

Pioneers work with the local community and built environment officials to co-design visions for the future of the Finsbury Park station quarter



"I think there should be more safe spaces for young people"

"Great to know a future Finsbury Park will be a more inclusive place"

"It was very powerful to hear the pioneers speak of their hopes for the area, vital in ensuring the voice of young people is heard. I really do hope they are able to continue feeding into and being part of the shaping of the place 'Finsbury Park' for the foreseeable future."

Clare Potter, Hackney Councillor

"I can't wait to put these ideas into practice"



29th October: Co-creation workshop

The Pioneers brought together local decision makers and community members through a series of workshops aimed at generating solutions to the issues revealed by the Pioneers research

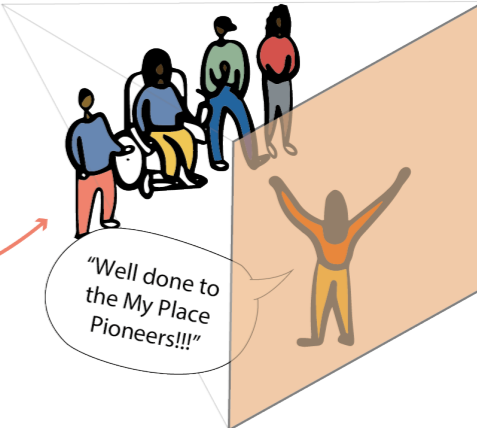
NOVEMBER

5th November: Manifesto writing workshop at Footwork



DECEMBER

3rd December: Celebration event & documentary screening





3. MY PLACE IN ACTION

Connect

The My Place pilot was designed to give young people the skills and a platform to engage with and work alongside their communities local decision-makers. The pioneers received skills training over 4 weeks to prepare them to identify matters of importance to the community and to inform how local decisions are made. They then embarked on two group research projects, exploring issues to do with regeneration and community safety.

TRAINING

The Pioneers received training in research, interviewing and recording techniques, delivered by academic researchers, built environment professionals and community leaders. This equipped them with the tools to discover what their neighbours want and need, the techniques to advocate on their behalf and the confidence to negotiate with the people who serve the community.

INSPIRATION DAYS

We took our pioneers on visits around London to speak with decision makers first hand so they could understand how the development system works and how decisions are influenced. This helped break down boundaries between the young people and those with decision-making powers, while exposing them to people and places that were altogether new to them.

FIELD WORK

Equipped with their own lived experience and new skills, our Pioneers designed their research projects. They went out into Finsbury Park to speak with people on the ground and find out exactly what they need to be able to thrive within their communities - both informally, such as in the park or the street, and more formally by arranged visits.

" I FELT MYSELF MATURE AS I STEPPED UP TO TAKE UP A LEADERSHIP POSITION WITHIN THE PROJECT, BECOMING MORE CONFIDENT WITH APPROACHING AND SPEAKING TO STRANGERS AND LEARNING HOW TO CONCISELY PRESENT MY THOUGHTS AND FINDINGS" - JULIA, PIONEER

Training

During their training the Pioneers learned how to design and deliver a robust, ethical social research project to gather and interpret the views of local people. They were supported by a number of leading organisations and professionals to develop their research questions, learn how to deploy various research methods, and understand how to tap into their lived experience to connect with diverse members of their community.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

Professors and PhD students from the University of Westminster taught the Pioneers about the social research process, research methods and ethics



Researchers from the Quality of Life Foundation supported the Pioneers to develop their research questions and methods. The Pioneers learned how social research can support positive change by gathering knowledge to better understand communities and the issues they face



Alvin from TAG Agency helped the Pioneers to connect with their individual and collective lived experience and understand how they can use this to access the voices of diverse people within their community

IMPACT INDICATOR 4

Young people have increased knowledge of local decision-making systems

"Genuinely it's nice to see that my daughter is being involved in things taking place in our local community and Shukri has also learnt more about how things are ran around here"

Shukri's mum

57%

By the end of the programme, 57% of pioneers agreed with the statement "I know how to influence the decision-making processes that affect Finsbury Park and its communities", in comparison to 21% prior to the programme

By the end of the programme, 50% of pioneers agreed with the statement "I know about local people and groups that can influence changes in Finsbury Park", in comparison to 21% prior to the programme

50%

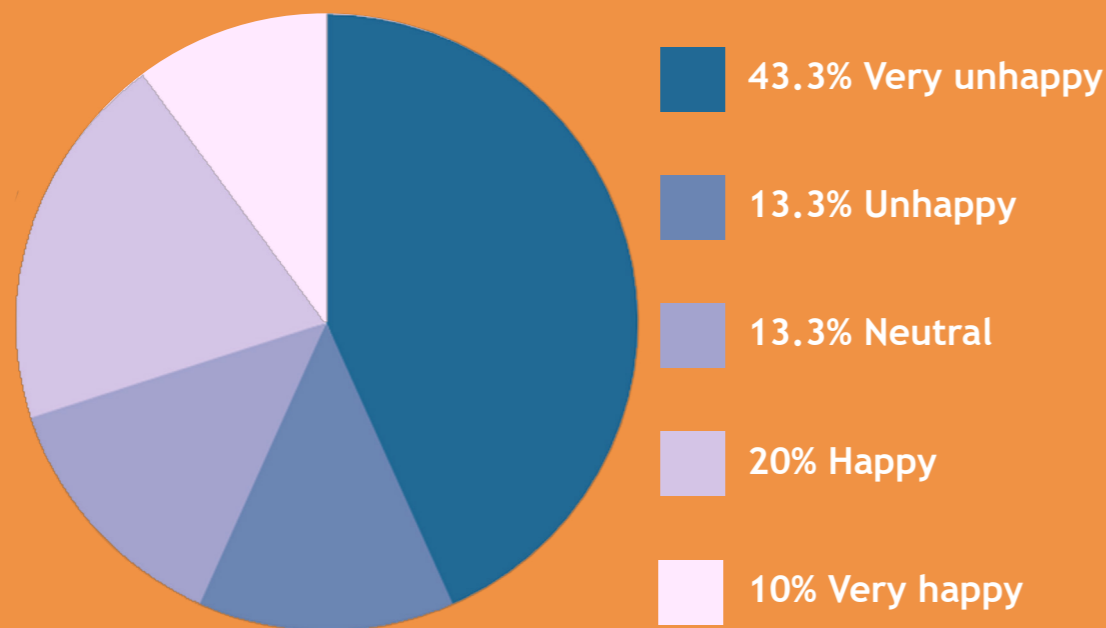
"I've enjoyed numerous things about doing this project, from being able to share my opinions and concerns regarding my environment and branching out to meet new people, to learning more about the regeneration, gentrification and the real estate industry."

Ushsean, Pioneer

Pioneers Research Summary

Having completed their research, the Pioneers learned how to analyse and present their findings in the form of a report, for use in a range of real-world settings. Below are some of the highlights from their research in Finsbury Park, intended to inform what changes might be made to benefit the local community. You can read their full findings [here](#). Importantly, they were able to use these research findings to begin constructive discussions with decision makers.

How do you feel about changes in Finsbury Park?



Many people felt negatively about how the Finsbury Park area has changed; over half of respondents felt it had changed, and less than a third felt positively about this change.

LEISURE

36% of respondents felt leisure facilities in the area are inaccessible, almost 8 in 10 people felt they are at least somewhat affordable

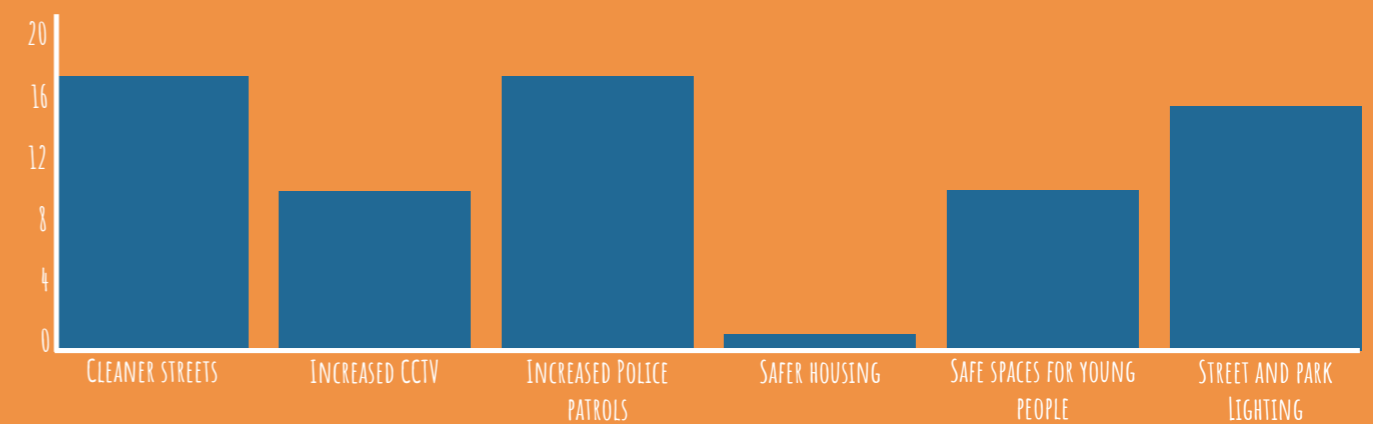
36%

SAFETY

60%

Over 60% of respondents had negative feelings about the safety of Finsbury Park, with almost three quarters of people feeling either unsafe or very unsafe

Which safety features do you feel need improvement?



Police patrols, cleaner streets, and street lighting are the elements of safety that people feel most need improving, with Finsbury Park station, Blackstock Road and the park itself being areas that people feel most need addressing in terms of safety.

IMPACT INDICATOR 5

Young people have increased skills for positive futures

“My Place has had a really positive impact on me; it’s helped me gain confidence and I’ve learned new things such as how to conduct research and how to work in a professional environment.”

Jason, Pioneer

CO-CREATION IN ACTION



“I WAS INSPIRED TO BECOME A MY PLACE PIONEER BY MY FRIEND AND FELLOW PIONEER USHSEAN, WHO EXPLAINED TO ME HOW FINSBURY PARK HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE AND WE CAN BE A PART OF THAT. THIS PROJECT HAS HELPED ME IMPROVE MY COMMUNICATION SKILLS WHICH I BELIEVE WILL HELP ME IN MY FUTURE, NO MATTER WHAT DIRECTION I DECIDE TO TAKE.”
- DAVID, PIONEER

Co-creation

Following the completion of the research, the My Place team turned its attention to bringing the Pioneers together with those who are actively involved in bringing about change in Finsbury Park. This included a range of stakeholders, such as Finsbury Park Trust, local Councillors and the Finsbury Park and Stroud Green Neighbourhood Forum (a group of local residents developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Finsbury Park).

The Pioneers hosted these stakeholders in a co-creation workshop, leading a series of discussions about how local decision making can best respond to and serve local people. This event has led to an ongoing working collaboration between the Pioneers and the Neighbourhood Forum. They have also been invited to conduct research for a new local skate park and attend regular Finsbury Park Town Centre management group meetings.

IMPACT INDICATOR 6

Young people have increased integration and sense of value

“I could really relate to my fellow Pioneers and the My Place team and I got a sense of relief from learning that even though I have my own story, a lot of people can relate to me.”

Alesha, Pioneer

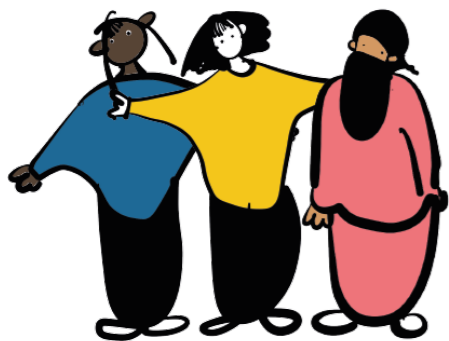
“Being able to use my personal skills to speak to the local community and help their voices to be heard has been my biggest achievement at My Place.”

Nuria, Pioneer

"THEIR DEVELOPMENT AS THOUGHTFUL, ACTIVE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WERE CAPABLE OF PROFESSIONAL-STYLE PRESENTATIONS OVER THE FEW MONTHS OF THE PROJECT WAS STRIKING AND IMPRESSIVE" - FPSG NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM MEMBER

My Place Pledge

The My Place Pledge was developed with the My Place Pioneers as a tool to support young people and decision makers to work together in partnership and to ensure that their contribution is valued and treated with respect. It provides a framework to set shared goals, to agree how the parties will work together and to ensure the meaningful involvement of local communities in place-making decisions. The Pledge will also ensure that My Place's values and methodology are upheld as it is applied in a range of different settings. It is currently being trialled on a major regeneration project, where My Place has been invited to set up its first project following the successful completion of the pilot.



BE INCLUSIVE

Young people all have different circumstances - recognise this and make every effort to remove barriers to, and encourage, participation including paying young people for their time. Actively seek to involve diverse young people



INVEST IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Invest time and resources (including senior staff time) into ongoing partnerships with young people and ensure that young people benefit from these partnerships e.g. through training, skills development, employment opportunities and enhanced networks. Ensure young people have the information and training they need to be able to perform their role successfully

"THE COMMUNITY HAS A LOT TO SAY AND MY PLACE HAS HELPED THEM FEEL MORE INVOLVED. FOR MANY PEOPLE, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY WERE ASKED TO SHARE THEIR OPINIONS." - CHANNAY, PIONEER



ENSURE MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

Actively seek to involve young people at all stages of projects, including planning, delivery and evaluation, and when this is not possible, clearly communicate why. Create ongoing opportunities for young people to have a meaningful say in their area and influence local decision making



COMMUNICATE TRANSPARENTLY

Give young people clear expectations regarding the aims and outcomes of the project, how they will be involved, and how they will benefit from it. Ensure there is regular, ongoing feedback with young people, and that outcomes from the project are shared with young people



VALUE YOUNG PEOPLE

Commission young people to access and advocate on behalf of diverse voices within their community (not just young people) and pay them a fair wage for this work. Recognise young people's knowledge of their area and community and value this equally alongside 'professional' expertise. Credit young people for their work in writing

4. DEEPER FINDINGS

Reflecting the project's goals and reviewing various examples of youth well-being and integration indexes (e.g., Youth Endowment Foundation), we designed a survey to measure the impacts of My Place on the Pioneers throughout the project. These surveys were carried out with the Pioneers both prior to, and at the end of their time at My Place.

"AS I MOVE ON TO ANOTHER CHAPTER OF MY LIFE, MY LEARNINGS FROM MY PLACE WILL BENEFIT ME - TEAMWORK, COMMUNICATION AND LISTENING SKILLS. I AM VERY THANKFUL TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF MY PLACE AND I AM EXCITED TO SEE WHAT COMES NEXT" - NURIA, PIONEER

At the end of the programme 10 out of 11 Pioneers felt that "they take an active role in their community", compared to 8 out of 11 prior to the programme - an increase of 18%

18%

91%

By the end of the programme 91% of pioneers felt they knew how to conduct research, in comparison to 45% prior to the programme

By the end of the programme, 91% of pioneers felt confident in presenting their thoughts to others, in comparison to 73% prior to the programme

91%

IMPACT INDICATOR 7

Young people have increased social capital with decision-makers

"We wanted to show the decision makers the value that young people have, and to have our views taken seriously to help deliver change - and I felt like we were taken seriously. The decision makers left feeling inspired whilst we, the pioneers, left with confidence that there will be a change in the future."

Emily, Pioneer

"It was very powerful to hear the pioneers speak of their hopes for the area, vital in ensuring the voice of young people is heard. I really do hope they are able to continue feeding into and being part of the shaping of the place 'Finsbury Park' for the foreseeable future."

Clare Potter, Hackney Councillor

IMPACT INDICATOR 8

Young people have strengthened character qualities

"I feel that it really built Emily's confidence and independence. She's matured into being a much more independent, self-motivated individual and has had a positive impact on her development."

Emily's mum

IMPACT INDICATOR 9

Decision makers have increased meaningful engagement with their young, and other marginalised constituents/users

"I found the experience of working with pioneers refreshing. I wanted to hear their opinions and views; they added vibrancy which is often missing from discussions about

Finsbury Park"

Hackney Councillor

ALVIN'S LIVED EXPERIENCE
WORKSHOP ON ANDOVER ESTATE



"I AM PROUD TO BE A MY PLACE PIONEER - NOT EVERYONE GETS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS HOW THEY FEEL AND REPRESENT THEIR COMMUNITY" - HANNAH, PIONEER

What is the power of My Place?

I agreed to chair the My Place Advisory Board because I know the transformative power of empowering local people to take ownership of their communities and drive social change. I also knew that within the founding team existed a legacy of supporting young people to build the worlds they want to live in. I knew from the jump, it was a project I wanted to be involved in.

The My Place pilot has gone from strength to strength. An inevitability because at its core we prioritised youth engagement; constantly asking how do young people benefit from all aspects of the project? This includes both equitable remuneration practices and ensuring capacity building and up-skilling. Following this, the secondary focus was on how we create real influence. Avoiding tokenism and feel-good symbolism,

we tapped on industry heavyweights and influential stakeholders to make sure that young people's voices went on to create demonstrable change.

I am so proud of My Place and everything it has achieved. I am hopeful that we will continue to hold young people and real social change central to the work. The My Place team will change the world, a community at a time.



ALVIN OWUSU-FORDWUO
ADVISORY BOARD CO-CHAIR

IMPACT INDICATOR 10

Decision makers have increased understanding of the needs of young people

"I would strongly recommend that other organisations participate in similar projects in the future. I certainly learned a lot about the value of co-producing research with young people, and about what young people think about key issues."

Prof. Andrew Smith, University of Westminster

"THE POINT OF THIS PROJECT IS FOR US TO BE HEARD, AND TO SPEAK FOR THOSE WHOSE VOICES AREN'T LISTENED TO - THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE." - NURIA, PIONEER

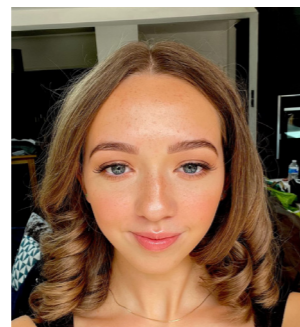
A note from the Advisory Board

My Place has been an amazing experience for me, it's been a place to share my views and opinions on having the younger generation getting involved in what happens around their local areas, and having their opinions put into action. As a young person myself, me and the rest of the Advisory Board have always chosen to make young people our priority.

I originally got this job through PLACED academy based in Liverpool (which is another amazing company encouraging young people to get involved in the built environment.) I joined the Advisory Board because I wanted to pursue my enjoyment in architecture and give children's opinions a platform to make a change.

Throughout all of this project I really hope that the young people will have been encouraged to keep pursuing dreams

that they are passionate about and keep voicing their opinions about the built environment, as it will inevitably be their homes and towns that they live in, so they have the right to have a say in the matter. This generation is full of strong minded individuals who are capable of improving our local areas for the better, and My Place is just the building blocks to help them find their passion, with fantastic guides to assist them on the way and encourage them to go further.



LOLA MCLOUGHLIN, 16
ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

IMPACT INDICATOR 11

Decision makers have increased knowledge of the role
young people can play in decision making

"Projects like My Place are crucial for capacity building, training, introducing technical language and so on for young people...equipping them to speak out. I realised that being paid and other incentives were very good for young people to feel valued and confident to say what they think - I would like My Place to come to my area as well!"

Sarah Beth Riley, architect at Be First and My Place Advisory Board member

"I had completely underestimated how good young people are at researching wider issues, and urban change more generally. Their skills and enthusiasm, combined with other people's eagerness to help them, mean that these young people were able to produce research findings that went far beyond capturing the views of their peers."

Prof. Andrew Smith, University of Westminster

"They continue to represent and speak for the young adults in the area and speaking for their individual familial and business communities"

Member of Finsbury Park and Stroud Green Neighbourhood Forum

"Involving young people will offer huge benefits by adding a greater diversity of voices which will enable stronger, more future proof choices to be made by decision-makers; leading to greater social cohesion, and enabling young people to develop their skills as community leaders and sense of ownership of Finsbury Park, the place; benefiting everyone in Finsbury Park now and going forward"

Cllr. Clare Potter, Hackney Councillor

5. MOVING FORWARDS

What happens next?

My Place has achieved so much in a short space of time. Seeing the growth and achievements of the My Place Pioneers has been truly inspiring. These young pioneers have showcased the potential of youth as community leaders. Fearlessly advocating for change, they actively pursue collaboration with decision-makers in Finsbury Park to make meaningful change in their communities. They have developed leadership skills, engaged in decision-making, and made a positive impact on their communities. The Pioneers have proven that young people can, and should be agents of change.

My Place is ambitious about the future of regeneration. Through this pilot, we have evidenced the impact it has had on the skills and character qualities of the young Pioneers. Their sense of agency has been transformed through learning how to make change in the 'real-world' - the communities they call home. The decision-makers involved in My Place are champions of our work and continue to seek further opportunities to engage with the Pioneers.

We are only just beginning to see the transformational potential of My Place in creating thriving communities, and we need more developers to join us. My Place is already expanding. We are currently involved in a large regeneration project in Woodberry Down, working with Berkeley Homes, Notting Hill Genesis and Hackney council to develop and improve My Place.

If you are a developer looking to do things differently, and willing to pioneer a new, more inclusive and celebratory way of developing communities, we want to hear from you. We know that young people have the knowledge, ideas and energy to help us all work towards a prosperous future where everyone can thrive. Come and join us.

Finsbury Park is just the beginning!



RICO PRINCE & ZIMMIE SUTCLIFFE
MY PLACE PROJECT COORDINATORS

MY PLACE CELEBRATION EVENT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My Place is proudly initiated and supported by Footwork and delivered in partnership with London Development Trust



With thanks to our funding partners:



Partners and Collaborators

Arsenal in the Community	Finsbury Park Trust	Partnership for Young
Arts and Media School	Imagine Places	London
Islington	Le Sainte Union Catholic	PLACED Academy
Betongpark	School	Platform Islington
Changing Cities	Levitt Bernstein Architects	Quality of Life Foundation
City of London Academy	London Borough of Haringey	St Mary Magdalene Academy
Highgate Hill	London Borough of Hackney	Tamanna Jahan
Clare Potter	London Borough of Islington	Thornton Education Trust
Clarion Housing	Lydia Batchelor	University of Westminster
Commonplace	Mer-IT	Young Hackney
Creating Ground CIC	Metropolitan Thames Valley	
Finsbury Park & Stroud	Housing	
Green Neighbourhood Forum	Open City Accelerate	Report design: Abbie Hedaux



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