

The People's Record: Olympic Memories

The project worked with young people from the Albanian and Bengali community in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham to record their views, aspirations and impact of the games and the Olympic Park site on the boroughs. Many of the young people and their parents are connected to the Olympic site, either through living next to it or working as builders on the site, but they feel alienated from it. Through this project the young people were trained in video skills, editing and oral history to create a 5 min video about changes in the area. Once a month, from September through to March 2011, they made recordings of different memories and created a video vox pop diary of the changes. They also worked in the local archives in all 3 boroughs, learning how to use the archives and to explore the history of their area. Finally, the young people and elders worked with an artist to develop a picture diary of the project as well as video diaries.

Target Audience

Young people from the Albanian and Bengali communities involved in the interviewing and recording process. The main audience for the video and interviews are local residents of Newham, Tower Hamlets and Barking and Dagenham.

Aim

Through recording the impact of the changes, the project aimed to engage young people within and outside the Olympic boroughs who feel alienated by the games or have no involvement due to economic, social and language barriers. It explored their hopes and aspirations for the future as well as engaging them in exploring the history of local communities, and the impact of changes on local people. The resulting video diaries will be a lasting legacy of the impact of the Olympics on local people and communities.

Process

The idea came from the Shpresa Albanian group who were concerned that they did not mix with other communities especially the Bengali community. The Albanian community, many of whom work on the building sites, are relatively new arrivals to the area and it was felt that many young people were not involved in any of the local activities taking place around the Olympics due to lack of confidence and language barriers.

The young people were recruited through the gifted and talented programme and identified by the teachers from Chisenhale School Tower Hamlets (a project partner). Eastside Community Heritage ran four school workshops in October and November with the school children learning about the physical geography and history of the area using archive footage and photographs from Tower Hamlets Archive, Stratford Archive and Eastside Community Heritage own archives. The workshops continued through January and February with the young people learning about oral history and interviewing techniques, throughout these workshops the young people were producing diaries of each workshop in preparation for the final video and the interviewing.

In February the young people toured the Olympic site for the second time and were prepared to interview older people and workers on the site i.e. a tour guide and people working in the view tube as well as older people we had identified from the local area who had interesting stories to tell. The young people also visited Shpresa programme and interviewed a group of Albanian women who had partners working on the site.

The young people recorded these stories on the Olympic site. The following 4 workshops

with the young people consisted of them working with an artist to illustrate the interviews and also working with a documentary film artist to edit the video diaries for their final film.

The film was screened at a school assembly where nearly all the participants who were involved attended, and the young people talked through the project process. We are planning another screening with the school later this year.

The project was managed by Judith Garfield who has over 15 year's experience of working in heritage and community based history and heritage projects. The organisation on average delivers 6 community history, heritage projects a year, varying in size. The project was delivered by a part time project officer who has worked with Chisenhale School in the past and has built up a number of local contacts, another project officer assisted with school workshops and our in-house video documentary artist delivered four workshops with the young people.

The partners involved in the project included: Stratford Archives, Tower Hamlets Archive, Chilsenhale school and Shpresa programme and the View Tube.

Number of participants

34 people participated in the project, of which 22 were new to the organisation. 20 of the participants were young people aged 14-24. The project benefited from the active involvement of 4 volunteers, 2 of which were new to the organisation.

20 young people from the local community were trained in video recording and editing and oral history recording. 20 people took part in the intergenerational events, with 10 being interviewed/filmed for stories and memories for oral history.

Impact and outcome

The young people gained skills in interviewing and video recording. The volunteers, of which 2 were new, gained skills in using the digital equipment/ the process of oral history recording, running events and training others.

Evaluation

A number of participants stated that the project has increased their knowledge and understanding, skills and enjoyment and creativity and had given them the chance to get more involved in the development of the Olympics and the Olympic park. 34 participants and 4 volunteers stated that they had enjoyed the project and it had inspired them, and 24 participants and 4 volunteers stated that they had developed new skills. The majority, 30 out of 34 participants agreed that they felt taking part in the project had increased their sense of community and strengthened public life.

Tips

- Good planning and working closely with the school so work could be continued before and after each workshop.
- Keeping parents informed of the project so after school workshops and trips could be organised quickly and efficiently
- Workshop monitoring forms to remind the young people of past workshops especially as there were gaps i.e. Christmas holidays
- Enough equipment and exciting activities to engage the young people and make history exciting

- Being flexible with workshop activities so the young people could play an active part and direct some of the workshop activities i.e. designing maps

Future development

There are plans to undertake more video interviewing with the school children. Lessons from the project are also being passed on by holding a development session for staff and project officer's working on the project. Feedback from the participants is also being incorporated into Eastside's strategic plan, and workshop materials developed throughout the project will be used as a blueprint for future workshops.

We are planning an exhibition with Tower Hamlets Archive on the Olympics to open next April and we will be using the material gathered throughout the project for a large exhibition and community history talks whilst the Olympic are in the area.

Project website :

<http://www.hidden-histories.org.uk/wordpress/>

<http://www.peoplesrecord.org.uk/>

Case study record created on:

05/07/2011

MLA funded:

Yes

Institution:

Eastside Community Heritage

Key partners:

Shpresa Albanian Group

Chisenhale School Tower Hamlets

Local archives in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham

Team members:

Judith Garfield, Director

Start date:

September 2010

End date:

March 2011

Contact:

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Eastside Community Heritage
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Work packages:

The People's Record

Domains:

Archives

Sector developing role:

Evaluation
Partnerships

Social groups:

Children and young people
Ethnic minority groups
Older people

Social outcomes:

Community cohesion & inclusion
Community empowerment & active citizenship
Learning & skills
Raising participation

Geographical Coverage:

London