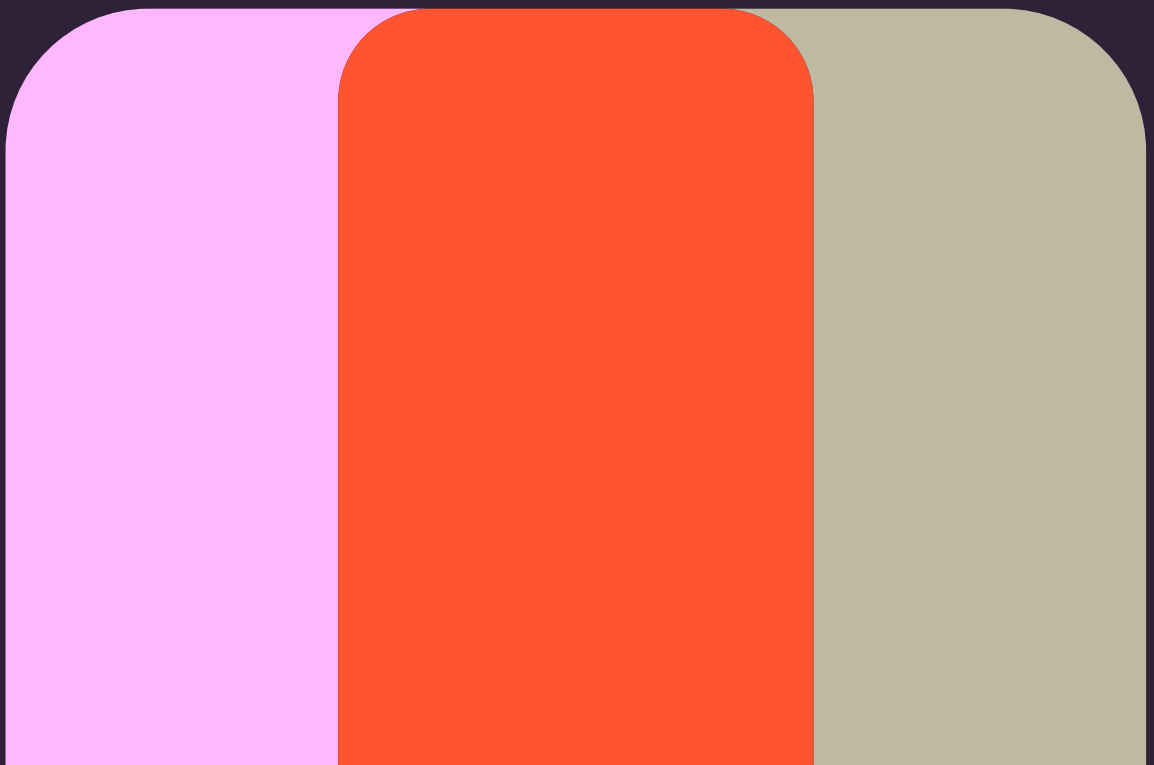
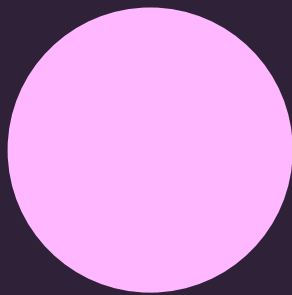


UKREiiF 2024

Youth engagement workshop report

# The power of engaging young people



# Overview

## What better way to understand how to engage young people, than from young people themselves?

That's Regeneration Brainery's approach, focusing on bringing the voices and experiences of 14-21 year olds to the property industry and acting as a gateway into future careers.

UKREiF provided the perfect opportunity for leading built environment specialists to come together and learn how to effectively engage a younger demographic.

In partnership with Socius and Meeting Place, an hour-long workshop helped us think, listen and explore what the industry should be doing to provide a platform for young people and to give them access to skills and training.





## The potential impact

By engaging young people at an early stage OF development and design, we are helping to make steps towards:

- **Boosting diversity** in the property and regeneration industry
- Combatting the lack of **effective, hands-on work experience**
- **Increasing job awareness** and mobility
- **Tackling the skills shortage** in the industry
- Giving diverse young people **opportunities to kickstart a career** that suits their skills and aspirations





# Engaging young people

Our top five key takeaways for engaging young people during the planning, delivering and operation phases of a development focus on valuing time, choosing the right place and being creative in how we present ideas.

1. **Turn up consistently. We need long-term and meaningful connections with young people.** Rather than parachuting in for a one-off event, spend time building a rapport, be open and available and, every time you meet, show that you have acted upon the conversations.
2. **Value people's time. We rarely offer incentives for being part of the conversation.** We are asking young people who are time poor due to school and part-time job commitments, to add something extra to their daily lives and we need to value this accordingly. The more excited young people are to turn up, the greater their exposure to the project and the more invested they will be.
3. **Utilise the arts. By connecting with popular and local culture through social media, music and creative industries, we can spark the interest of young people.** This might include influencer and artist partnerships, building upon their connections to showcase the benefits that will be felt directly by a community.
4. **Change the system. Our ability to engage is trapped within the confines of budgets, planning requirements and a lack of top-down drive.** We have the opportunity, particularly considering changing political tides, to demand the industry to prioritise the voices of young people. This includes embedding effective engagement within the RIBA plan of work and pushing co-creation further.
5. **Consider mediums. So often, we only offer one channel for engagement for people who see and experience the world in starkly different ways.** We need to be open to exploring new venues for engagement, re-writing content to remove jargon and using visuals and graphics to guide presentations. Equally, by partnering with educational organisations and integrating live projects into the curriculum, we can impact both development outcomes and the long-term learning of students.







## Encouraging more young people to enter the built environment

Through listening and learning from Regeneration Brainery's Brainees experiences in entering the working world, studying or trying to access summer placements, we identified three ways to increase access to skills.

Firstly, **break down the barriers to access**. There are hundreds of young people who want to explore opportunities but not enough places available. Many firms only offer one or two summer work placements, internships, and apprenticeship programmes. For very little additional expense these could be scaled up across the industry, with two or three students coming in at a time and giving them chance to learn from peers.

We also need to ensure these opportunities are properly advertised and recruited for; giving a level playing field to all candidates and not favouring those who already know someone within the industry.

Part of this is also elevating and shining a spotlight on role models. A major barrier faced is a lack of representation for many young people and this leads to them avoiding the opportunities available if they don't think they fit the mould.

Secondly, **showcase a much broader range of roles**. Many of us find ourselves in jobs that we didn't even know existed when we were 16 years old. What's more, the younger generation are likely moving into careers that don't even exist yet.

We need to work alongside the education system to build resilience into the skills training that we are offering and help to promote non-linear paths into built environment careers.

We no longer have a system that needs to rely on everyone accessing higher education and the further education space has a real opportunity to create new pathways into training. This includes making the skills we teach more practical for life and not just industry specific, allowing for flex and change.

Finally, the industry needs to **allow for greater exposure to real projects**. Often our developments take place behind hoardings and scaffolding, with many of the public having very little insight into the processes behind the scenes. Young people are more likely to be passionate about exploring a career in the built environment if they have first-hand experience.

This could include open days and site tours or using digital tools to bring a scheme to life. For example, creative ideas such as QR codes, which spark intrigue, could be placed on hoardings, unlocking a world of augmented reality where users can see overlays of the inner workings of a building that they are standing in front of.



# Reflections

**As the future occupiers, managers and stewards of our buildings and spaces, young people are the most critical people to have at the table when we create places.**

The creativity and ability of young people to think outside the box can inject new life into the traditional development processes and approaches as we know them. Whether it's reimagining public spaces, incorporating sustainable design, or leveraging technology for smarter solutions, young minds often possess the ingenuity needed to tackle complex challenges.

When young people are actively engaged in the planning process, they develop a sense of ownership and pride in their communities. By actively and consistently participating, they feel empowered to shape the spaces where they live, work, and play. This sense of belonging fosters greater community cohesion and encourages young people to become stewards of their neighbourhoods, driving positive change over the long term. Giving the right incentives for young people to be motivated to participate is critical.

The industry needs to work to break down barriers and ensure that the right skills, engagement approaches and work opportunities are in place to help these young people explore the space and see the potential it holds. Many of the incentives for engaging in how we develop spaces and places links to the passion and drive of young people to see social change.


The power of engaging young people can be seen when we create space, listen, learn and empower future generations. This spans from engaging on specific projects to facilitating career progression and pathways to new opportunities.

Engagement with young people should not be limited to a tick-box exercise or a 'nice to have', it must become an essential part of our development process to ensure that we create spaces that have a long-term legacy.





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