

A

*practical*

resource

to help

architects

engage

with

young people



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Why you should use this

This document provides everything you need to run a creative education workshop for young people. You don't need to find anything else. It's all here.

Take it, adapt it, use it however you want. It's open source.

The structure and content of the workshop has been co-designed with a group of young people, in collaboration with educational charity Global Generation. It assumes a 2 hour session but you can extend that for as long as you need.

The core purpose is to help young people see themselves as creative. That's the starting point for any future learning or career choices that might take them down the road that leads to architecture, design and so many other jobs in the creative industries.

You have to see yourself as creative. And see the relevance of creativity to success.

**Find out more at:**

[heatherwick.com/studio/ideas](https://heatherwick.com/studio/ideas)



## 1.2 Understanding the need

Government priorities around both funding and STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) have meant that creative education has suffered significantly in English state schools for more than a decade. The current EBacc (English Baccalaureate) measurement system does not give schools any credit for students participating in creative subjects. That leads to a reduction in the number of hours allocated to creative subjects and a reduction in the opportunities for students to continue with these subjects after Key Stage 3, which ends when young people are aged 14.

Between 2010-22, entries for Design and Technology GCSE fell by a staggering 71%.

As a consequence, there is a real risk that a whole generation will grow up without effective access to creative skills and understanding, unless it is provided outside of the normal school curriculum. This is problematic for the entire workforce and especially for creative professions such as architecture. There is also a strong equalities dimension to this issue because young people from low-income families usually have the least access to art and culture outside of school.

That is why we have produced this resource: to help every design studio and architecture practice engage with young people and bring alive all the opportunities that await them in the creative world.

There are 6,000 architecture practices in Britain. If every one of them ran two workshops each year with a class of Year 8s, that would bring creative education to a third of a million young people.



## 1.3 Gatsby Benchmarks

Since 2013, schools have been formally obliged to provide their students with career encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace. For many teachers, this is a very challenging obligation to fulfil. Running this workshop will help your local school achieve their Gatsby 5 and 6 benchmarks. It represents an important community contribution. More detailed information on the Gatsby benchmarks is available here:

<https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>



## 1.4 Learning Outcomes

Given this context and in line with the Gatsby benchmarks, this workshop provides young people with an inspiring creative session, during which they can gather information on possible future pathways to the built environment sector. They will hear from current employees and see a workplace for themselves. During the design challenge, they will also learn to work collaboratively and creatively on a relevant brief and receive feedback from employees working in the creative industries.

## 1.5 Benefits for your practice

Most architects become very proficient at presenting to clients. But presenting to a group of young people requires a completely different set of communication and facilitation skills. It's more like a form of community engagement and develops exactly those techniques which are rarely taught in architecture school. So running this workshop will benefit your own team as well as the participants. It's a two-way training exercise. It also directly delivers social value and articulates the social mission that motivates many designers. Working with young people reconnects you with the lived experience of a different part of society and makes your own work as a professional better informed, more insightful, and more empathetic.

## 1.6 Two resources

This document is one of two resources you will need:

- \* a **Practice guide**, for preparing and delivering the workshop (this document)
- \* a **Presentation template**, for use during the workshop (a separate PowerPoint)

All the material is editable. You are welcome to amend it to suit your own priorities and practice. The guidance and tips are based on the experience of delivering a large number of workshops in different locations for different age groups in a post-Covid environment. The material is targeted at students aged 10-14 but could be tailored to suit any age group.



## 2. WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Timing	Activity	Notes
0.00	Arrival	Coat and bag stash, toilet, food, name badges
0.10	Practice Introduction	Slide show: who we are and what we do
0.20	Tour	In small groups to see different models and people at work
0.35	Briefing	Explain the brief for the Making activity
0.40	Deciding	In small groups, students agree collective decisions about what they are going to build
0.50	Creating	40 minutes for students to build their 3D model in response to the challenge
1.30	Presenting	Students showcase and explain their solution to the other teams
1.40	How Did I Get Here?	A diverse group of 3 practice (studio) members talk about their career journey using 4 different images
1.55	Questions & Closing	Farewells and group photograph
2.00	Ends	Young people depart



### Tips:

- \* Be flexible with timings and feel free to move onto another task earlier or later than planned if you think students are losing focus or need more time. Activities are likely to shift and things don't always go to plan.
- \* Avoid looking at your phones. Students read this as a lack of interest or commitment, and you undermine your colleagues if you use your phone while they are speaking or at any point during the workshop.





## 3. LOGISTICS

### 3.1 Facilitators

You will need three people from your team to deliver the session. It is a different experience to presenting to colleagues or clients and careful preparation will ensure that the experience is positive for everyone involved. At a minimum, this means ensuring each facilitator is familiar with the aims, presentation and creative task as well as the learning outcomes. They will need time to practise and coordinate their delivery and a trial audience to give constructive feedback. But the more you do it, the better you get.



#### Tips:

- \* Support and professional Youth Engagement Training is available both online and in person and details of some providers are given at the end of this document.
- \* Try to select volunteers with different backgrounds and different qualifications to relate to as many different young people as possible.
- \* Your youngest team member may have limited professional experience in your practice but can have a huge impact with a teenage audience. And this kind of activity can be a powerful way of bonding your own teams.

### 3.2 Students

Most classes have around 30 students. Make sure that you know the number and age of students, plus the number of teachers and accompanying adults. Be aware of SEN (Special Educational Needs) and neurodivergence. The teacher can provide tips on how you should tailor your presentation/material in a way that respects the needs of specific students.

With a class of up to 30 students, we recommend dividing them into groups of four or five. This ensures that everyone gets - and stays - involved, and each group has to work with a range of ideas and different perspectives. A lot of school work is done individually, so demonstrating that the workplace is a team environment is a hugely important part of your message. The teacher is the best person to organise the groups and you can ask them to do this in advance of the session.

Schools will not be able to provide you with a full list of student names because of GDPR regulations, but you can ask for the name of visiting adults. Consider having three facilitators for a class of 30. Students will often feel shy asking questions in front of their whole peer group but will open up much more enthusiastically in smaller groups.



### 3.3 Materials list

Ideal materials are card, paper (of different colours and weights) together with some kind of fixing material. Depending on the age (and focus) of the group, it may be most appropriate to use masking tape, blue-tack or PVA. Remember that students will be cutting with scissors (not scalpel knives) so avoid heavy weight materials.

You might want to have a particular focus that suits your practice ethics: for example, no plastic, only recycled materials or by adding something more unusual: cork, sponge, lasagne sheets, leaves or bark perhaps. Students will not expect expensive or high-quality materials. The creative challenge is about getting them to realise their ideas in 3D in a short time frame so they get a memorable taste of what you do for themselves.

As a minimum, each group (of 4-5) students will need:

- \* 5 Post it notes
- \* 5 pencils/pens
- \* 5+ sheets of A4 paper
- \* 5+ sheets of A4 card
- \* 2 pairs of scissors
- \* 1 roll masking tape

### 3.4 Photography

Check photo permissions with the school and teachers well in advance. Different schools will have different permissions and levels of privacy. Photographing the final models with the facilitating team will give you good evidence that can be freely shared.

### 3.5 Risk Assessment and Safeguarding

No facilitator or staff member should ever be alone with any young person. Avoid all physical contact except where absolutely necessary in the case of an emergency. Make sure that any questions are appropriate and inclusive, remembering that individuals in the group may have very different home lives. Students will be the responsibility of their teachers at all times during the session. In the unlikely event that you see or hear something of concern, you should inform the teacher.

As the students will be coming into your workplace, a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate is not required.





However, you should complete the Risk Assessment (see our template below) and the school may ask for this in advance of the visit.



### Tips:

- \* You can arrange the class based on permissions, setting one side of the room with people who can be photographed – making it easier to remember who can or can't be captured.
- \* Make sure you have somewhere convenient to put a lot of coats and bags!
- \* Toilets and drinking water are a requirement
- \* Avoid offering food without consultation with the teachers first as students may have allergies and/or dietary requirements.
- \* Younger staff members may be more relatable for these students, even if they are less experienced. If you can select staff who are local to the school or have other relatable links, that can work well.



## Risk Assessment – a template

Hazard	Risk Level	Control Measures	In place
Parking	Medium	If appropriate, make sure the teacher and driver have the exact access instructions and location of designated parking space	
Arrival	Medium	Send a suitable, clear pedestrian route in advance with a minimum number of road crossings, and have the teacher's phone numbers to hand	
Building access	Low	Make sure arrival instructions are specific and accessible, plus the full address and contact telephone numbers on your confirmation email.	
Reception area	Low	If you have other visitors using this space, you may want to ask the student group to wait elsewhere while their teachers are signing in	
Toilets	Medium	Ensure sufficient spaces are free and accessible and check them before and after the workshop	
Lost coat or bag	Low	Designate a safe area for coat and bag drop. One facilitator to check the space is clear before the group depart	
Damage to office materials/ equipment	Low	Move precious objects out of the way and ensure students are working with appropriate materials only. Be aware of zones with increased risk (you're your model-shop), and make sure towels are to hand in case of water spillage	
Fire alarm or other emergency	Low	Ensure instructions and meet points are conveyed to everyone at the start.	
Pupil lost or separated from the group	Low	Ensure sufficient staff/student ratio, and maintain set groups throughout to minimise confusion	
Illness or injury	Low	Make sure a First Aider is on the premises and known to the facilitators	



## 4. WORKSHOP DELIVERY

### 4.1 Arrival (10 minutes)

On arrival, ask the students to write their first name on a label in large letters. It will make your communication with them more effective if you can use their name when addressing them. This can be part of your welcome time while students store their bags and coat.



#### Tips:

- \* Make sure you all have a name badge too. This initial activity encourages them to adopt a sense of responsibility and to begin the process of understanding office culture and expectations.
- \* Have several thick pens to do this simultaneously so that it doesn't take much time
- \* You could add a sticker onto the label to identify students who do not have photo consent. If you see the sticker in photos, you know it is not suitable for external use.

### 4.2 Introduction (15 minutes)

Begin with who you are and then move on to what the practice does. Strong visuals and short video or timelapse content really help. Keep words to a minimum on the screen so that the students are listening to you, with the images supporting your talk.

This is an opportunity to share what makes your practice special or different. Keep it clear and simple. Avoid a declaration of corporate values and objectives! Understanding that big structures and new places were actually built by real people can be a revelation for young people.



#### Tips:

- \* Speak to your audience, not the screen. Eye contact is very important and it's better to speak without notes. That allows you to read the room and shorten or adjust your comments if you see that your audience is drifting.
- \* Volume control is always an issue. Speaking to a large group of young people requires voice projection and practice. Don't underestimate this. Each facilitator will need to command the space and set a level of expectation around behaviour.
- \* Ditch the jargon. After so many years of professional





training, almost all architects slip into technical language without being aware of it. Young audiences will simply not understand this, so take the time to rehearse your presentations and speak plain English.

#### 4.3 Tour (20 minutes)

Put the students in small groups, having asked the teacher to set these groups in advance. Many young people will never have been in an office before. You are offering them an amazing insight into a world that is exciting and daunting. It's unlikely that the group will understand the range of different jobs done in your practice or the essential requirement to work in a team. Explaining these concepts in accessible and concise ways is invaluable. Models and material samples are also fascinating to young people.



#### Tips:

- \* Consider placing fragile or precious items out of reach or in a protective case. In this new environment, it is likely that students will want to touch and feel any objects or models that are within reach.

#### 4.4 The 'Making' Challenge (60 minutes total)

This is the heart of the workshop. You will task the students with building a structure. They have to do this as a team, responding to a brief which is set by picking words at random from three bags (or cups). One bag contains a set of adjectives (folded individually) which describe how it should feel, one bag contains different locations where it should go, and another different functions it must fulfil. They pick one from each and that's their brief.

The exercise is suitable for all ages but can easily be adapted. For instance, you may want students to all have exactly the same brief and therefore choose the criteria from the three baskets before they begin. Then they will all build to the same brief but the outcomes will be different. Alternatively, you might invite each team to come and pick one 'requirement' from each basket and then build their structure to these specific requirements. Each process will generate a slightly different discussion when they share at the end.



#### 4.5 Briefing (10 minutes)

Once students have settled, explain the task. Set this out simply and clearly with supporting words in large font on the screen. Make sure each stage is clearly time-bound with specific expectations for what needs to be done. They won't be familiar with the idea of a 'brief': you could use this moment to discuss what the word means (a 'task' or a 'challenge') and how it is used in architecture and design to commission work.

Tell them you are not looking for the right answer or a perfect solution. It's about their creativity and ability to work together. Indeed, reinforce the idea that there is no such thing as a single right answer in the world of work. Young people often only have experience of exams and marks which maintain there is only one route to success and the rest is failure!

#### 4.6 Deciding (10 minutes)

Break the group down into teams. Each team now has their brief, picked from the bags. They need to discuss and agree what they want to build. Give them time to discuss and share ideas together. They might record suggestions on post-it notes. Encourage each team to agree what they are building and how they will allocate roles between them. They might want to sketch an outline of the structure they want to create. Ask one representative from each team to come and collect the materials. (Putting them out earlier is a distraction).

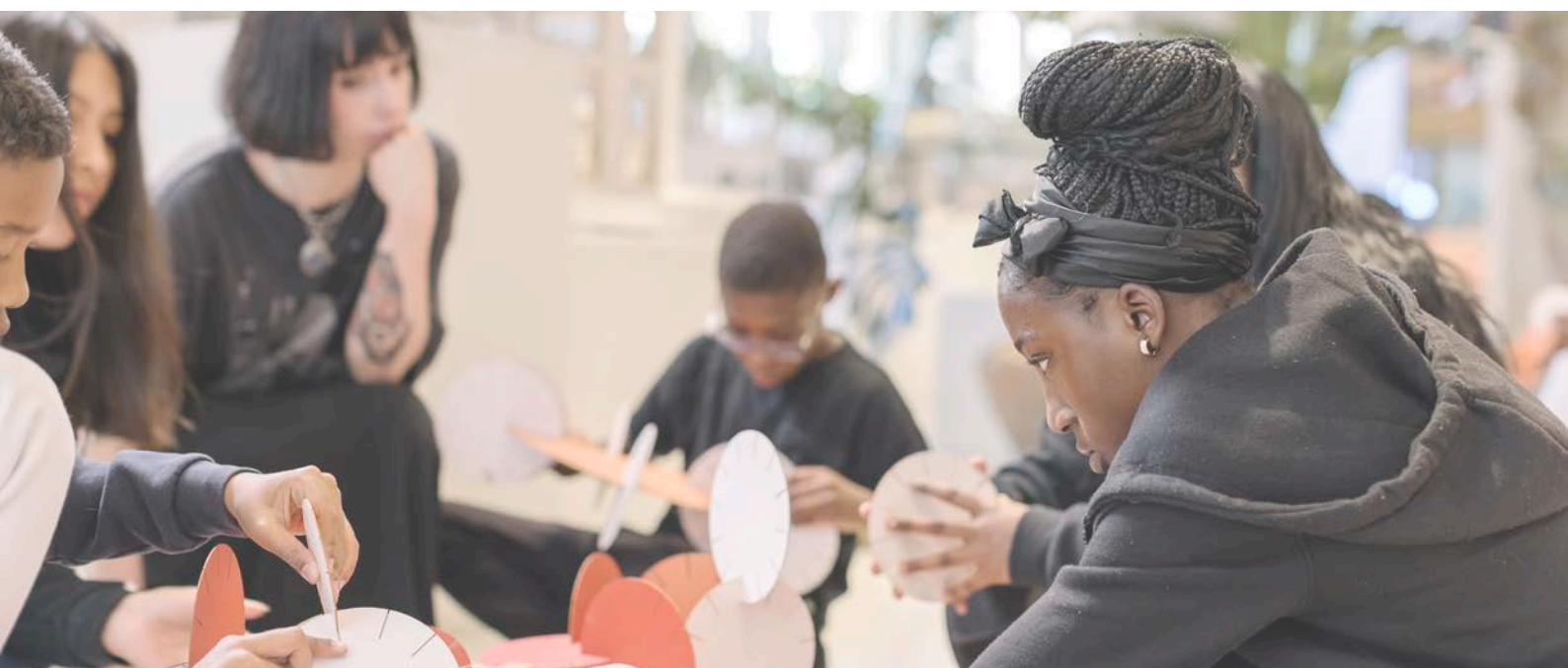
#### 4.7 Making (30 minutes)

Then it's time for making! Although models can be made with a huge variety of different materials, you may find it more effective to keep the choice limited to encourage greater creativity. You could give each team a different colour of card to distinguish them, or give all groups the same materials. A certain amount of competition can be a positive. But keeping the playing field level is essential.

#### 4.8 Presenting (10 minutes)

Once each team has built a structure, invite them to come forward and present it to the whole group. They should explain what it is and how it fulfils the brief. This is an important moment. It develops presentation skills (oracy) and builds confidence in a task that is directly relevant to further training or employment. Make sure you comment positively on each team's ideas: it means a lot. Students getting feedback on their activity from the employer is also a formal requirement of the Gatsby 6 benchmark.

It can astonish young people that real life work always requires working in teams, and that listening and cooperating with your colleagues is a vital skill in the workplace. Be ready to emphasise and praise this. Much of the national curriculum is governed by specific right or wrong answers and students will be genuinely fascinated by the range of different ways their peers have responded to the brief and designed a solution.





### Tips:

- \* Keep students in the same small groups throughout the whole session. Allocate one facilitator to each.
- \* Avoid telling students what to do or how to do it. Their ability to experiment is a vital part of learning. Facilitators will be much more effective if you only offer light-touch support (watching from a distance, rarely intervening), rather than giving instruction.
- \* Clear timing is important here. Use a sand timer, a countdown clock on your presentation (or set the alarm on your phone as a last resort).
- \* If a group finishes early, extend the activity. Invite them to consider signage, lighting, benches, cost and access issues. This will also help any neurodiverse students who may not find it easy to participate in the team work.
- \* Encourage every member of the team to contribute during the presentation. This might just mean holding the model if one person is shy. But everyone should contribute and feel valued.

## 4.9 How Did I Get Here? (10 minutes)

The final part of the whole workshop focuses on careers. It's designed to start seeding the idea of a job in the creative industries and sparking an ambition to work in a creative environment. Each facilitator (a member of staff from the studio) explains their career journey from school and childhood to today, using a series of four pictures: one of them as a child, one as a student, one as a young adult, and one in their current role.

Students often feel huge pressure to make big subject decisions but with little understanding of what the consequences might be for their later career choices. Seeing the variety of routes, qualifications and experiences will be hugely reassuring for them. Sharing your failures also helps demonstrate that inevitable mistakes lead to improved outcomes not disaster!



### Tips:

- \* Make sure that the facilitators have a range of different roles, experience and backgrounds. As diverse a group as possible, to convey the idea that creativity belongs to everyone.
- \* Consider the age of the group and modify your story to suit your audience. (Year 9s may be starting to think about GCSE choices whereas Year 6 pupils may be thinking about the big move to secondary school).

- \* Highlight any work experience, clubs or activities that helped you discover what was right for you.
- \* Avoid declaring that you always knew this was the path for you! Or that your parents did the same thing. It will be intimidating to students who do not yet know what they want to do or do not have access to parental guidance in the same way.

#### 4.10 Closing (5 minutes)

Share the final slide on your presentation and reinforce our central message that everyone is creative – whatever you’ve been told and however you have felt – and that creativity lies at the heart of success – whatever you choose to do.

Invite the young people to say what they have enjoyed most: what has been fun, what has been surprising. And thank them for coming and contributing.

The teacher will want evaluation feedback from you on the behaviour and attitude of the group. (Again this is a formal requirement of the Gatsby 6 benchmark.)

Make sure you also ask the teacher, some students and any additional adults for feedback on your session. Handing out post-it notes and pens can be a quick, effective and anonymous way of collating this.

Ask your team facilitators for feedback. They might say that it has inspired them, that they are amazed by the originality of the students’ ideas and imagination. This gives you an important message to share in the practice and with your wider networks. They might also say it’s been terrifying running a workshop with a group of 30 twelve year olds and they would love more training.



#### Tips:

- \* Be conscious that it can be difficult to get students to settle again to listen after the excitement of the Making Challenge. Try to keep your final words very concise so that they leave your premises with that excitement.
- \* Make sure facilitators check the workspace and toilets for any forgotten bags, coats or other items. If you have permission, take a group photograph.
- \* Publish this internally and encourage the teacher to put this in the school newsletter and on their social media to spread the word.
- \* And don’t forget to say goodbye in person at the door to all the young people. Treat them with warmth and respect, as young adults, who could become creative leaders.



## 5. FOLLOW UP

### 5.1 The Delivery team

While the event is still fresh in your minds, have a quick debrief to reflect on what went well and what could be improved. Ask for feedback from colleagues and observers, including the school. Be clear who is responsible for updating the materials and planning the next session.

### 5.2 Internal

Photographs, quotes and feedback can all be shared within the studio to help build a common commitment to working with young people. Make sure the workshop is logged for any social impact reporting that you do.

### 5.3 External

Sharing on your website and social media is important, providing safeguarding restrictions are observed. It's a way to champion creative education. Check with the teacher about whether you can tag the school or department in your post.

### 5.4 Training

Youth engagement is a skill as well as a passion. There are techniques you can learn, and organisations who can teach you how to do it well. This will also make you a better designer, able to involve other people in the creative process and reflect their ideas and aspirations in the places that you make. Here are three suggestions.

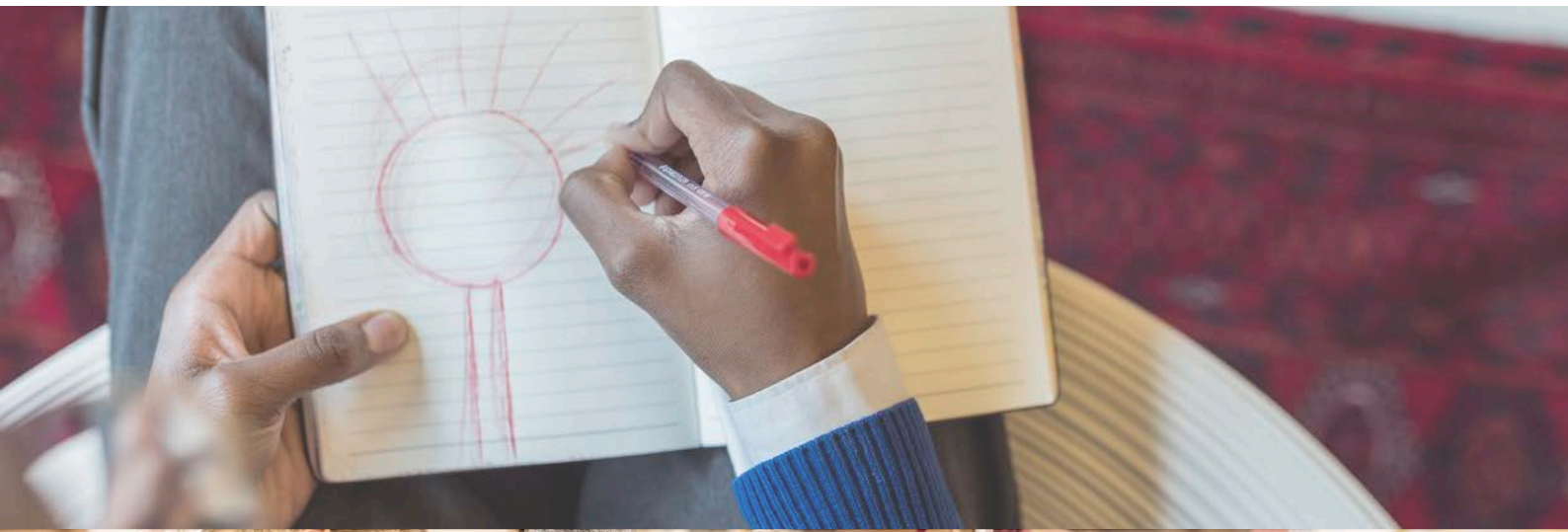
**Open City** run youth engagement training sessions for professionals who are planning to work with young people of different ages. Sessions run regularly throughout the year and give you the chance to try out different workshop techniques and topics as well as getting feedback on your presentation skills. Find out more at [www.open-city.org.uk](http://www.open-city.org.uk)

**2-3 Degrees** is a social enterprise that equips young people with the personal development skills needed to fulfil their potential. They also offer training to organisations who are seeking to work with young people and have a strong track record working on regeneration programmes and with major employers. [www.2-3degrees.com](http://www.2-3degrees.com)

**Global Generation** runs youth development and leadership programmes for young people. Taking inspiration from the natural world, young people gain the skills, experiences and connections to reach their full potential and contribute to their neighbourhood. Global Generation also offers training in how to work with young people. [www.globalgeneration.org.uk/](http://www.globalgeneration.org.uk/)









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