

Impact Summary

Making Spaces Project

The Making Spaces Project is based at UCL Institute of Education, in partnership with three makerspaces, Knowle West Media Centre, the Institute of Making and MadLab.

The project involved researchers, practitioners and young people working together to identify, try out and research the impact of practices that can help support equity and social justice for young people, particularly those from minoritised and marginalised communities. This summary presents headline findings from the first phase of the project (2020-2022).



Who was involved?



354 young people from minoritised communities



23 Youth co-researchers

“ The young people felt like they were equal researchers and that they were doing the project with UCL, not that they were being researched. They felt that their ideas were valued and they were heard. ”
Makerspace Practitioner



13 practitioners

“ The Making Spaces project gave us the space to trust our gut, take risks, and interrogate our programmes more rigorously. ”
Makerspace Practitioner



4 UCL researchers



3 makerspaces (Bristol, London, Manchester)

How did we collect data?



2300+ online data posts



105 youth produced artefacts and portfolios



37 individual interviews



14 youth co-researcher workshops



11 live session observations

Practitioner and organisation outcomes

1 More inclusive and participatory practice

“ We have – as a result of Making Spaces – embedded co-design with young people into all our applications for funding and strategising. This approach is fundamentally different.”

“ We have been aware for a long time that we wanted to be more inclusive of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Carrying out the project with specialists and experts in this field has given us knowledge and experience of best practice.”

2 New knowledge and understanding

“ Making Spaces has allowed us to think about how we operate as an online makerspace as we transitioned out of a bricks and mortar venue. It has been a highly valuable in how to build and retain an online community.”

“ Our partnership with researchers from the Making Spaces team gave us valuable insight into new audience that we were working with, and allowed us to access knowledge and information that we did not have the time or expertise to produce ourselves.”

3 Innovative practice

“ As an organisation we have loved working on this project [...]. The impact on the culture of [our makerspace programme] and our making projects with young people has given us space, language, tools and time to think more creatively and purposefully about the work that we are delivering.”

“ As practitioners, everyone involved in this project has been pushed to develop their own practice and think more deeply about how and why we engage young people in makerspaces.”

“ We have been able to develop the [makerspace] programme in a way that we wouldn't have had capacity to do before, which has allowed us to gain more funding.”



Youth outcomes

Agency

“If you want to run stuff in your way, if you have something that works easier for you, they will acknowledge that, take [it] on board and support you.” – Kallo

94%

STEM Skills and Knowledge

“[I developed] a better understanding of JavaScript which I use literally everyday now.” – Noffie

“It builds up your [STEM] skills to something bigger.” – Kallo

“[I] Learnt about 3D design, learning programmes, and making things.” – Dave

88%

Confidence

“The main thing I got was confidence. I wouldn't have had the confidence to apply for the job I have now, let alone pass the interview and everything if I hadn't done that course.” – Noffie

STEM Futures

“My career options have gone from Starbucks for the rest of my life to I can be a QA tester or a data scientist [...] whatever I choose really.” – Frank

85%

Recognition and Feeling Valued

“The team treated me like an individual, listened to my concerns and the problems I was having specifically and tried to help me with that. Everything was very personal.” – Noffie

75%

Sense of Community

“It's more of a community rather than a course where they just abandon you, which I really did like about [makerspace programme].” – Mushroom

69%

Using STEM to Challenge Injustices

“I created a workshop to design products for people in need, using technology like CnC machines, 3D printers and computers. I'd like to work with a homeless charity to ask if we can design things for the people they help.” – Phranke

63%

Inclusive STEM Identities and Representations

“Before this programme, I didn't have much direction. I wanted to get into tech but figuring out the necessary steps was difficult, I wasn't sure I could do it. This programme changed that - the mentors helped me figure out how to reach my goal and gave me the essential skills to get there. I'm now a lot more confident in myself, my coding skills and ability.” – Mushroom

62%

Job readiness

“She [makerspace mentor] just took me under her wing and made me believe in the skills I have. She pushed me to make my CV and applications better and she coached me and that gave me a lot of confidence.” – Callum

45%

22%

Mental health

“They worked wonders for my mental health.” – Frank

Percentages and participant quotes are based on data collected from young people attending online and face to face programmes lasting at least 1 month between [June 2021- October 2021].

The Making Spaces project is funded by Lloyd's Register Foundation:



MAKING SPACES

m4kingspaces.org/

@M4kingspaces