

Dalston Open Studios

Connecting creative industry with local people

Presented by Bootstrap Company in association with Hackney Council

D.O.S



November 2010

Project Context

As with the rest of London, the structure of the economy in Hackney is changing. Manufacturing has been on the decline since the 1970's and we have seen the emergence of new forms of industry. Hackney is now renowned for its vibrant creative economy. There are far fewer large employers in the Borough and there are a higher proportion of jobs in small businesses than the rest of London. Many of the small businesses in Hackney are successful enterprises that understand that the twenty-first century will depend increasingly on the generation of knowledge through creativity and innovation.

Bootstrap can be seen as a microcosm of this greater shift in the economy. The Print House was once home to the paint manufacturer Reeves and Sons who employed 200 factory workers. The same building is now home to 300 full time jobs employed in 120 different organisations.

There is diversity in this new creative economy that offers a unique environment for aspirational young people to develop their skills across a range of disciplines. Whilst Hackney is the fast growing heart of creative activity in London, young people in the area are not finding avenues into the industries that are flourishing on their doorstep. The majority of Hackney's working residents commute outside the borough to work.

There are barriers that exist between the creative economy and the young the young people of Hackney;

- Creative businesses are small and don't have the resources take on unskilled employees.
- The pathways into the creative industries are unconventional.
- It has become an accepted norm that new starters in the creative industries will work for free. This is not an option for many of the young people in Hackney.

Project Aims

Dalston Open Studios is the first step to overcoming those barriers. Using Bootstrap's unique relationship with the creative businesses in Dalston Open Studios aims to;

- Provide an opportunity for people in Hackney to see what's going on behind the closed doors of the creative industries in Dalston.
- Provide a starting point for future apprenticeships /mentoring programmes/work experience placements within the creative industries.
- Encourage creative businesses to start thinking about how they can work with young people and give back to the local community.

Dalston Open Studios Event

Dalston Open Studios is a weeklong series of events that will include;

- Panel discussions with leading creative practitioners highlighting the non-traditional routes into the creative industries
- The development of a series of learning tools that can be used in schools.

Project Partners

Dalston Open Studios is a partnership between;

- Bootstrap Company – co-ordinators of the Dalston Open Studios event.
- The Learning Trust – The local education authority developing partnerships with local schools.
- The London Borough of Hackney – The local authority who are interested in developing the creative economy for the benefit of the people of Hackney.
- Creative businesses – providing insights into the creative economy.

Project Outcomes

Dalston Open Studios will;

- Engage with 180 young people from Hackney.
- Work with three secondary schools to develop specific learning materials to use in classrooms.

Long-term goals

On the back of the first Dalston Open Studios event Bootstrap intends to develop a more holistic approach to engaging young people with the creative industries. By bringing together a range of partner's Bootstrap hopes to develop a long-term sustainable program that will;

- Inspire young people from Hackney to find ways into working in the creative industries.
- Raise awareness amongst young people of what's happening in the creative economy in their area.
- Provide a framework for young people in Hackney to develop the skills necessary to work in the creative industries.
- Develop a support structure that will enable the small to medium size creative businesses to work with young people.
- Provide creative industries with support and advice that will enable them to grow through the development of a creative industries specific business support pilot.
- Delivering a mapping/scoping study of the current state of the creative industries in Hackney and Dalston in particular with a view to the creation of a Creative Hub.

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