

Meanwhile Centre Evaluation

Address: 253 Hoxton Street, N1

Period of occupancy: 14 April 2010-14 June 2010

Total number of participants (all sessions free to attend)

- 50** Drop in advice on activating vacant spaces
- 390** To workshops, activities and wellbeing sessions
- 75** To 3 training and capacity building sessions



Before, During & After photos



Main Project: Kick Start Sessions

Activity

Drop in advice centre for people to come and find out more about the tools we've developed through the Meanwhile Project (www.meanwhile.org.uk) to support uses that benefit the community in vacant spaces and places across the country.

With help from Matt Weston at Slack Space Brighton the Kick Start sessions aimed to connect projects, property owners, local authority officers, community groups etc, uncover opportunities in the local area and overcoming barriers to realising projects. This project tests the model that could be replicated in other places.

The 4 sessions, held over a month, comprised:

Space Walk: A reconnaissance of empty, missing, out of action buildings around Hackney / Hoxton / N5. (Sat 8th May, 11am - 2pm)

- attendance 9, raining morning
- identifying opportunities for meanwhile activity in the defined area
- sections of map within walking distance, split into pairs, went off on bikes or on foot
- uploaded 150 photos and locations to Flickr

Project Development: Facilitated session with the focus on skill-sharing / swapping and trying-things-out. (Sat 8th May, 2 - 5pm)

- attendance 16, groups of 3 or 4
- upskilling to define and progress viable locations and deliverable projects
- worked in rotation to develop / get help on each other's projects:

(I have an idea but i don't have..... the money (7); the space (8); the connections (1); the time (1))

Practicalities Q&A: experienced projects and property professionals answer queries and issues from attendees. (Tue 11th May, 6 - 8pm)

- attendance 25, panel format, panellists being:

Jess Steele, Development Trusts Association and Meanwhile Project

Carolyn Paul, Renaisi

Hilary Clayton, Shoreditch Trust

Corinna Pyke, The Daughter's Project

Designing The Alliance: Workshop session to draw up plans for taking decisions forward. (Tue 25th May, 6 - 8pm)

- attendance 24, establishing a partnership for taking decisions forward
- the sun and arrow exercise/ consensus getting / brainstorming next steps

Future Priorities

1. The distance between the first session and the last (2 1/2 weeks) felt useful; giving people the chance to develop their projects and queries.
2. The first day could be delivered more economically as we might not always get the luxury of time or distance. For shorter time or less budget: run the Q&A session first (maybe including representation from the local authority and the

projects-side on the panel), then the designing the alliance session; the 'space walk' and 'project dev' are quite formatted and could be set up to run with minimal intervention from us.

3. Physical/digital map making was difficult. Could involve a designer/mapmaker next time.

Legacy

- engaged with 43 people with projects, 6 people without projects, 4 local authority representatives, 6 others
- a 'people database' of everybody who has engaged with the programme (see Appendix) and a list of next steps for everybody
- responded to local requirements for space
- developed local knowledge (into spaces, needs, a clearer idea of capabilities)
- unlocked locations and a shortlist of promising spaces
- built links between participants
- worked with undefined boundaries to allow for differing notions of the 'area'
- created a photo-resource: 150+ photos of empty properties
- engaged a large, open group of stakeholders to think about their roles in activating vacant spaces; co-designing a shared vision, goals, commitments and next steps. The group now meet regularly independent of Meanwhile Space.
- set-up a sub-community for Hoxton Meanwhile on the Ning site (see www.meanwhitespace.ning.com/hoxtongroup)
- the shop was subsequently let for a paying pop up shop

Pilot Projects

The Meanwhile Centre was also a place for projects to test, develop and fail cheaply, so they could be replicated in other places.

Project Name	Activity	What happened next?
Parlour Culture	Access All Areas exhibition and live performance art.	Successful exhibition, currently planning next location
Bunting Factory	2 days of drop in bunting making workshops.	Leased concept for House of Hastings. Gone on to run session as part of London Festival of Architecture.
El Clasico	Film screening and art exhibition of 6 graduate artists over 4 days.	Successful exhibition, currently planning next location

The Daughter's Project	Art exhibition, information for young girls and summarised performance of Angie Le Mar's play, <i>Do You Know Where Your Daughter Is</i> .	Continuing to develop funding options with Hackney council and others for a year long project. The play has since been performed as a fringe event at the Edinburgh festival.
Make-Do	Lucia and Nathan canvassed ideas and developed plan for skills swap project.	Unltd funding confirmed (Sept2010) and space secured in Somers Town for a 2 month project.
Niki's Pop-up Hair Salon	Dropin hairdressers	Niki got a job in a hairdressers.

Good News Stories

"This is the best thing that has happened to me since I've lived here"

Corinne Pierre, local resident.

"I just wanted to drop you a line to say thanks for your support and connection to Shoreditch Trust back in April, as it's now resulted in us taking on the space at 159 Hoxton Street for our 826 inspired project, which is now called the Ministry of Stories. Your encouragement and links to local people really helped us in our search for a home, and Hilary and Jack at Shoreditch Trust have been great. We're now recruiting volunteers, and fitting out the space, and hope to open for business in Sept/Oct."

Lucy Macnab, Co-Director, Ministry of Stories www.ministryofstories.org

"We went to Latitude festival with the bunting factory and met Sam Roddick. She loved the make market idea and we are meeting her to talk about ideas for collaboration. We are very excited about this and wanted to say thank you for helping us get started and get the make market out of our heads and into a space."

Antonia Halse, The Bunting Factory

Appendix: People Database

Please email Emily@meanwhilespace.com