

Intergenerational Work & Social Cohesion

SPLASH – South Poplar & Limehouse Action for Secure Housing & the Environment

SPLASH is a voluntary organisation formed in the 1980's by the five Tenants Associations in Blackwall. SPLASH supports and engages the multi-cultural community in Blackwall and South Poplars with programmes including supporting:

- Community Development and Basic Skills
- Children and Young People
- Community Arts
- Health Awareness.

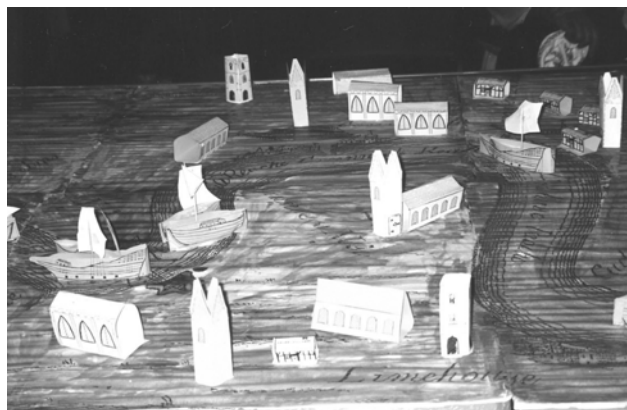
After members of SPLASH showed their interest in NIF's Youth Development Programme (which they had seen on our website), NIF met with members of the SPLASH Team to look at the development of a project, principally aiming to engage young people from a multitude of ethnic backgrounds from the South Poplars area, to work with these young people exploring the historical richness of Blackwall and the local community. It was felt that exploring the history of the area with young people and giving them a 'common interest' would be a good opportunity in terms of supporting social cohesion.

SPLASH were aiming to use the project in order to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the first sailing from Blackwall to Virginia in the Americas. Exploring the project in detail, it was envisaged that this would be a great opportunity to engage with the community and young people and to try and bring young people together through a history project using the focus of this 400th year celebration.

The idea was to build a 3 dimensional model of the community as it is now in the 21st Century and how it would have looked 400 years ago then, using the process to get the community to talk to each other and engage with young people in particular.

South Poplars has undergone a number of 3 dimensional based community consultation events and it was felt that this event would not necessarily be used as a focus of consultation, but to celebrate the historical background and changes to the area whilst giving young people an opportunity to share a common interest.

Build Your Own Community



The first event 'Build Your Own Community' brought together representatives from the older generation of the community and young people including members of the Bangladeshi community. The interaction here was very positive and a positive degree of cohesion took place.

It was good to see members of varying cultures share common values including an interest in exploring their area. This session was used to prepare the next - developing a 3 dimensional model of Blackwall and the Isle of Dogs 400 years ago.

The second event brought together around 25 members of the community of older and young people.

All ages, from both the white and Bangladeshi communities, were well integrated and there was a good level of social cohesion and a feeling of 'community' by local residents previously divided by cultural differences and tensions.

Running alongside these 2 community events, the young people were given disposable cameras for them to capture things that were prominent / or of importance to them for us to capture in a collage. A small group of young people responded very well to the photography exercise and this started the process of giving them ownership of the project from its inception.

Two learning points from this work has been that engaging young people works well when it's fun and creative, but most fundamental to the project's success, was giving young people who had not necessarily met before a project which allowed them to share a common interest or common understanding.

Young People & History

Using the context of the history of an area with young people can, in its broader sense, be an attractive way of bringing young people together. The history of an area can be used positively to support social cohesion; whilst helping to pull together young people with a citizenship focus and to share a common interest. It is however, important to keep the momentum going with such projects to ensure longer term social cohesion.

Members of the SPLASH Team also commented on how this project can be expanded and replicated in the future, to engage young people from refugee communities and to use the process of using the areas history as a method of integration and supporting citizenship.