

A Different Way of Seeing: a Landscape Film Project for young people



A Heritage Lottery Funded project by Up on the Downs that asked teenagers what the landscape means to them.



LOTTERY FUNDED



A Different Way of Seeing: Project Summary

This project aimed to capture participants' views on **what the landscape meant to them**. The project was designed to reach young people through the medium of film giving them both skills and insight into the world of cinema.

The project targets were amended from the original proposal because of a late start and smaller timeframe for the project's delivery. The tender had the following criteria;

Activity	Outputs	Outcomes
Deliver A Different Way of Seeing (a film-making project to engage young people with their local landscape)	50-100 young people (aged 13-18) participate in project 10 five-minute films produced 1 screening of films staged 150 DVDs produced	Insight into how young people use and value the landscape Young people develop skills in film-making and increase understanding of landscape Positive and sustainable relationships developed with a hard to reach group

The contractors who won the tender for carrying out the project were Folkestone based 'Screen South'. Liaising with officers from Up on the Downs they were able to engage with a number of groups from across Folkestone and Dover, reaching young people from different areas and backgrounds from refugees, Roma, Guides, Scouts as well as other interested young individuals.

To keep the films young person led and accommodating for the nature of the groups we had to be flexible and adapt our original plans so we could achieve more engagement. It was decided that to deliver the outcomes offering 'taster' workshops would be required. This was so we could meet the participant outputs as well as engaging with groups of young people who are more difficult to reach. Evening workshops gave teenagers advice and insight into the world of film, an introduction to Up on the Downs and a few hours making snapshot films, inside/outside and with their own artwork. These films were edited with input from Screen South to pull out the best bits of footage.



A special programme was put together for the Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN) refugee group as they needed more guidance and direction because of the language barrier.



Longer 4-5 day workshops were held in Dover and Folkestone. These were attended by a range of young people. The films produced from these were a true reflection of how they felt about the landscape. From horse riding to horror the local area was central to their theme and clearly mirrored how they think about the outdoors.



The following table shows how outputs and outcomes were altered in the interest of being more accommodating and flexible to teenage groups.

Activity	Outputs	Outcomes
Deliver A Different Way of Seeing (a film-making project to engage young people with their local landscape)	117 young people (aged 13-18) participate in project	Insight into how young people use and value the landscape
	15x one to ten-minute films produced	38 Young people develop skills in film-making and increase understanding of landscape
	1 screening of films staged	
	150 DVDs produced	Positive and sustainable

		relationships developed with a hard to reach group Some participants going on to BFI academy/film making
--	--	---

Screen South was an excellent contractor bringing in highly specialised (BBC) editors, producers, and directors for the young people to learn from. The experience for the young people was highly educational as a result of Screen South's professionalism in putting together workshops.

Interestingly, from watching the films produced we can understand that the landscape is indeed important to young people. They may not view it with a focus on heritage but it offers them a space for; rest, imagination, remembering people gone, playing sport, enjoying the river, looking cool, and being with friends, amongst other things.

A 'talking heads' evaluation film also captured the desire for more infrastructure to help young people enjoy the landscape. Things such as pools, treehouses and more formal structures for play and hang out seemed popular.

'I think (young people) do things that are new and fun' – Brodie 15 years

Film Review

Film making skills were certainly a positive way to engage and upskill young people. Landscape was a central theme to their films and provided an insight on what the landscape means to young people.

Exploring just a few of the films we can interpret how they might value the local area. Below is a selection to show the variety of the types of films produced. Please visit <http://www.uponthedowns.org.uk/Projects/People/A-Different-Way-of-Seeing.aspx> to view some of them.

A Fragile Chalk Landscape by Barnaby Brown gives viewers a thoughtful insight through his motion picture. Together with local poetry, youthful hip music and a mixture of scenes it is hard to get bored.

There is a large element of respect for nature and is as well structured as any nature documentary. He values Dover's landscape as proved by his detail in the shots.

Toby's Take on Dover by Tobias List expresses that the landscape is a big part of looking cool as he uses it as a place to 'dab'.

His film feels pretty youthful and conscious of how the landscape can make you fit in and look cool. Older people may not 'get' it but would find it fast paced and entertaining. Social media credibility often comes from dramatic landscape shots coupled with the in trend 'dab' move.

Another view is in the horror film **Blackout** by Viktor Janssens. The characters fearing the fantasy 'shadows' uses an abandoned building that is part of the local landscape. The imagination in this feature is inspired by the location. Again though not directly 'landscape focused' there is still obvious thought about how it makes them feel.



The refugee teenagers filmed great short films (**Playing Chess, The Unstoppable**) playing football doing stunts and chess in the landscape, to the soundtrack of their cultural heritage. The landscape is portrayed as a place they hang out with friends, be themselves, enjoy their culture not for nature interest but a place to be together to have fun.

The longest and most documentary-like film **Owl House Stables** featured a riding school. Filming included interviews and the daily routines of the young people. Although it centred on horses and horse care, they all agreed that going out riding in the landscape was their favourite part. The outdoors to these teenagers means being with their horses.

The talking heads film, **Evaluation**, had the young people gauging their experiences of how they feel about the landscape. Asking each other questions to each other and discovering that they value it highly but also consider their landscapes should have more formal structures and things to do.

Walking by Imogen Care was a great film example of how the natural environment offers two teenage friends places to relax and 'walk and stuff'. Edited in a completely unique style the watcher is left with no doubt that the girls enjoy the outdoors for unwinding with friends or alone.

Emily Fraser's, **Down the River**, film was the most ecologically focused feature with her values of the river for its beauty and environmental importance being portrayed. She uses her own written poetry and gentle lingering shots to emphasise the beauty and neglect of the urban River Dour.

As a way of celebrating the young peoples' achievements we held a screening event with the hope that all who participated would come along to see their work in the Folkestone Quarterhouse. The formal event was intended to share their films with family and friends. Thirty people turned up to the morning and all who came received their certificates from a public figure. It was unfortunate not all who were invited came along but, as previously highlighted, the nature of the group is that other priorities take precedence.

Summary and Thoughts

Interestingly, without much instruction other than make a film about 'what the landscape means to you' the open spaces were portrayed as something young people do think about often - be it in a positive way or not.

These observations are subjective but hopefully give an insight into what young people think about when they view the landscape. It may not be as traditional as anticipated but it provides a resource into how we think about providing access for young people. Hopefully, it can help to pave the way in how we can engage with teenagers in future projects with the lesson Up on the Downs has learned.

Lessons Learned : A Different Way of Seeing	
What's worked well?	<p>Developing an understanding of effective ways in which to reach young people i.e. through technology.</p> <p>Beneficial outcomes for young people interested in film to pursue with the right contacts. Some young people did this after the project end.</p> <p>Broad understanding has developed for the participants about how they view the landscape as mirrored in their films. Also, local contractors Screen South who see many young people now have an in depth knowledge of the local heritage as a place for future workshops.</p>



	<i>'Fantastic project, I have discovered so much about the local area and now know places close by I never knew existed!' Jo Nolan, Screen South</i>
What's been difficult / not worked well?	<p>Engaging with the mainstream education system to get young people involved.</p> <p>Getting groups interested in workshops was the most time consuming effort for the contractors.</p> <p>Longer workshops had to be cut down to reach our numbers.</p> <p>Initial targets for long workshops were too difficult to reach due to reduced timeframe, with more time we could have held more 4-5 day workshops with more substantial films being produced.</p>
What would we do differently?	<p>Have longer workshops to produce more in depth films to help develop skills further.</p> <p>Potential for more focused and topical theme that could be used to engage a more political audience e.g. 'What issues in the natural environment concern you'?</p> <p>Potential for higher qualification to be achieved.</p>
Lesson(s) for future programmes	<p>Only use schools if teachers are willing and committed to the project as exams will hinder and lengthen communication.</p> <p>Accepting landscape to teenagers is often thought of as urban.</p> <p>Teenagers do respond well to using technology as a vehicle for expression.</p> <p>Teenagers value the landscape in a way that is not always different from our own, wildlife, scenery, open spaces affect them in the same way but may not be the reason they go out.</p>
What's the vision for the future?	Have more young people aware and invested in their local natural/built heritage.
Any practical next steps?	<p>Share knowledge with other organisations looking to achieve similar engagement.</p> <p>Use films as a resource for future projects.</p>

Projects for engaging teenagers about the landscape do require more effort to make them relevant and environmental organisations often struggle to include young people in their members/volunteers/projects.

There is an element of young people having less interest in heritage at this age but equally for those teenagers interested in heritage there is a lack of provided access.

A Different Way of Seeing certainly can be seen as a success for it worked to include young people to think about the landscape in a relevant way.