

Sparking Creativity: Co-Designing with Children

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Co-Designing with Children at the Missouri History Museum

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Find yourself here.



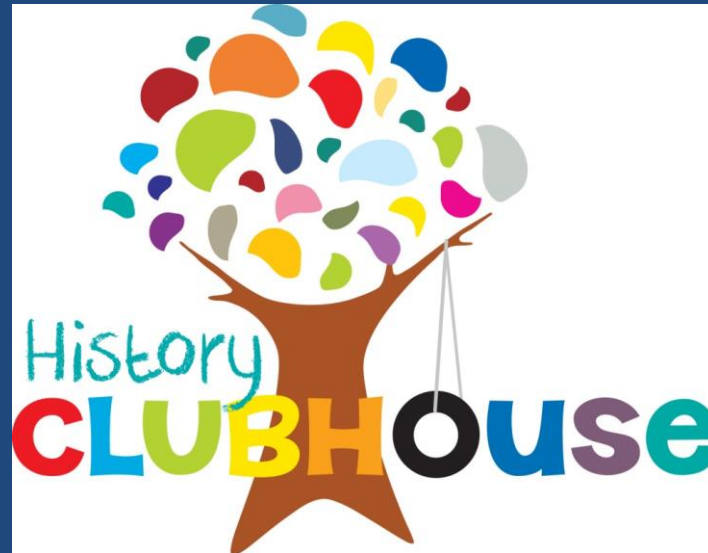
“Kids don’t have the ability to understand history.”

“History is boring.”

“A museum is not a good place for young children to go.”

History Clubhouse

- Learn about St. Louis history in a way that is interactive and fun
- For kids ages 2–10 with their families or caregivers
- Everything is hands on
- FREE



Early Content Decisions: Historically Significant STL Places



Soulard Market, 1929



Ancient city of Cahokia



Forest Park, 1904



Downtown, present day



Mississippi River, early 1870s

Early Content Decisions: Family Focus Groups

Who is in your family?

Where does your family live?

Where did you visit?

Has your family been there before?

What did you do when you visited?

What is going on in each picture?

What did you like most?

What do you wish you could have done while you were there?



Full-Scale Prototype

History Clubhouse: Let's Build It!



Feedback Stations



Banner Contest



Let's Build the History Clubhouse Weekends



Takeaways

- Design and Durability
- Experiences and Safety
- Interpretation and Labels



End Results

Excitement, Fun, Quality, Trust, Investment



Co-designing Young V&A

Dr Helen Charman

Director of Learning, National Programmes and Young V&A

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK



Young V&A

National museum co-designed with children and young people

£13 million capital project investment

National collection displays spanning 5000 years

Three new permanent galleries: Imagine, Play and Design

VISION

Four aims to develop the **creative confidence** and **design skills** vital to **help Gen A thrive**



Inspire

children and young people's **creative agency** and voice through engagement with the V&A collections and themes relating to art, performance, and design.



Empower

educators to drive forward **creative education** in art, performance and design from early years to secondary school.



Connect

children and young people with the ingenuity of **designers, entrepreneurs, innovators and inventors** and with each other.



Influence

the sector in **inclusive museum practice** for children and young people.

VISION: Reach

Foregrounding the **world-changing creative potential** of Gen A from the hyper local to the global

Local



An **anchor organisation** and powerful community asset relevant to the lives of local children, young people and their families.

National



A **national resource** for creative education with HQ in East London, developing an ecology of programmes and partners nationwide.

International



An **advocate and platform internationally** for the critical value of creative education for the young.

CO-DESIGN

Co-design is the practice by which users become active, creative participants in the design process.

Co-design



Co-curation



Co-production



Co-design is about designing with, not for.

Co-design Workshops: Early Design Development

The 22 co-design workshop sessions with project architects De Matos Ryan aligned with Stage 2 brief development and enabled us to bring together visions, hopes and ideas with people of various generations, interests and abilities. Co-design groups involved in Stage 2 were:

- East London Primary Schools
- Early Years Children's forums with parents/carers
- Teachers Forums (Primary and Secondary)
- SEND teacher's
- Regular Museum users
- Local community who don't use the Museum
- Activity Workshop Assistants
- Learning Team Workshops
- Primary School children and their parents



De Matos Ryan Workshops : Early Design Development

The co-design approach has delivered three broad architectural concepts:

1

In and Out



2

Up and
Down



3

Around
and
About

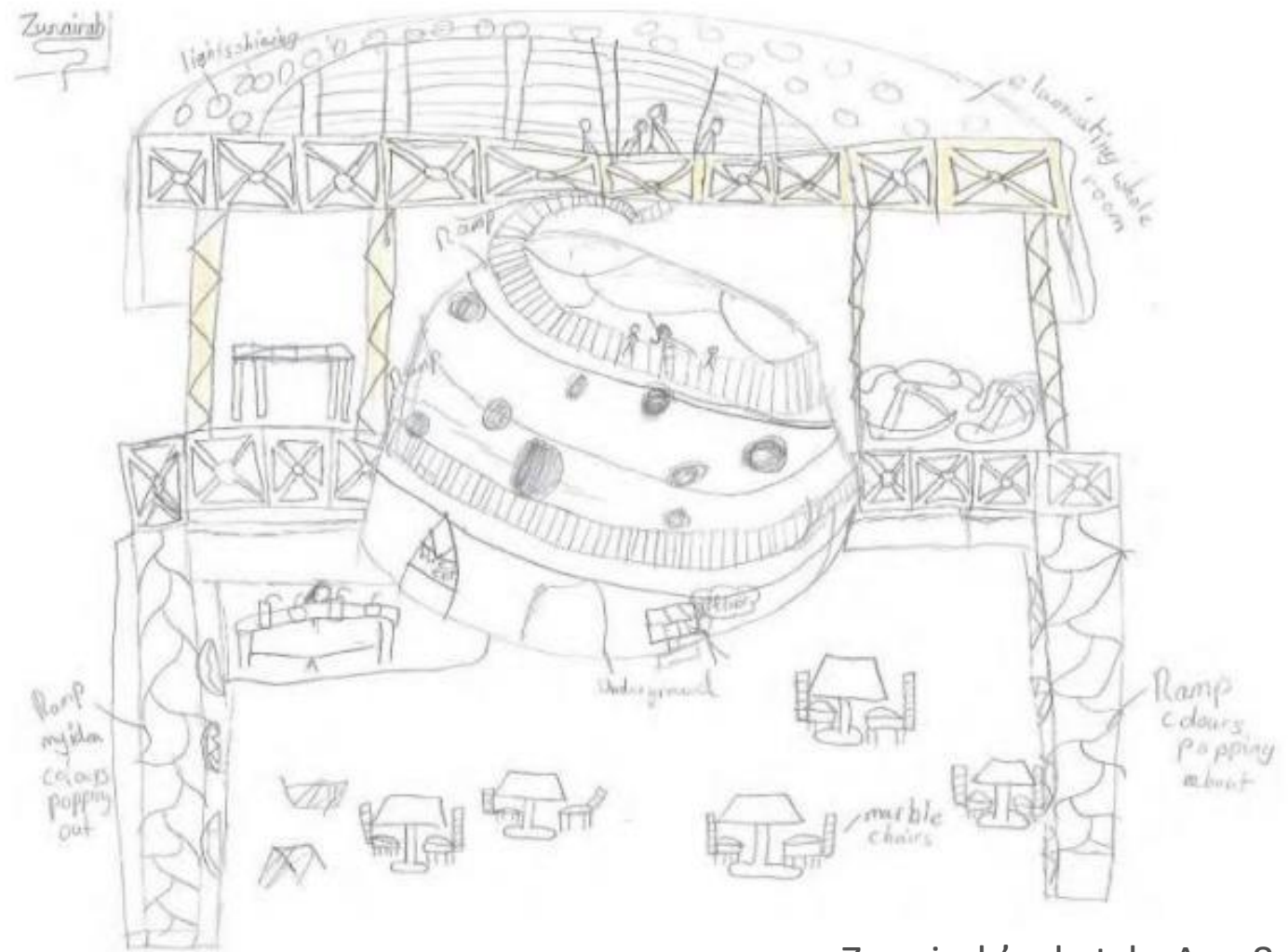
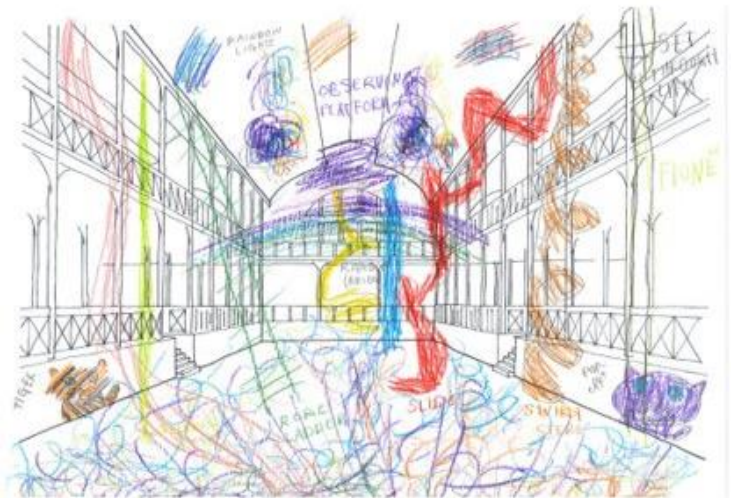
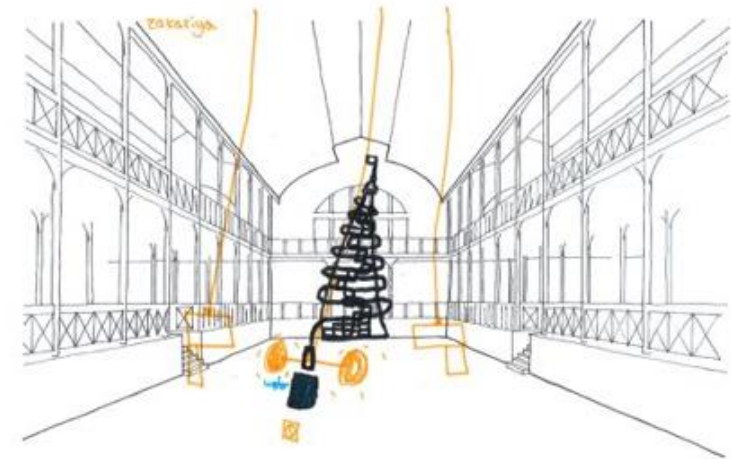


Town Square: Staircase co-design



CO-DESIGN

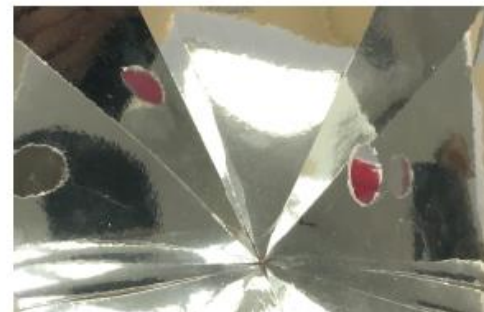
Kaleidoscope staircase sketches



Zunairah's sketch, Age 8

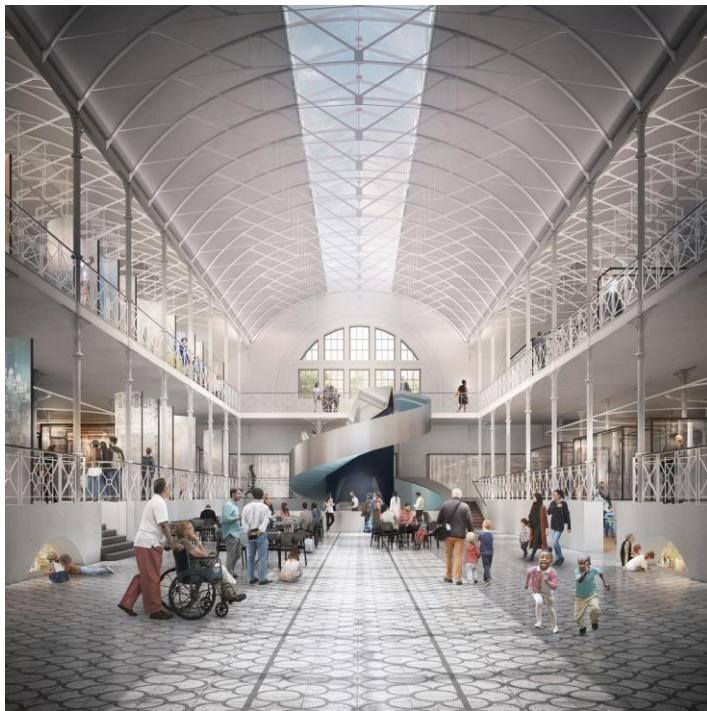
CO-DESIGN

Children's co-designed prototype models for the staircase

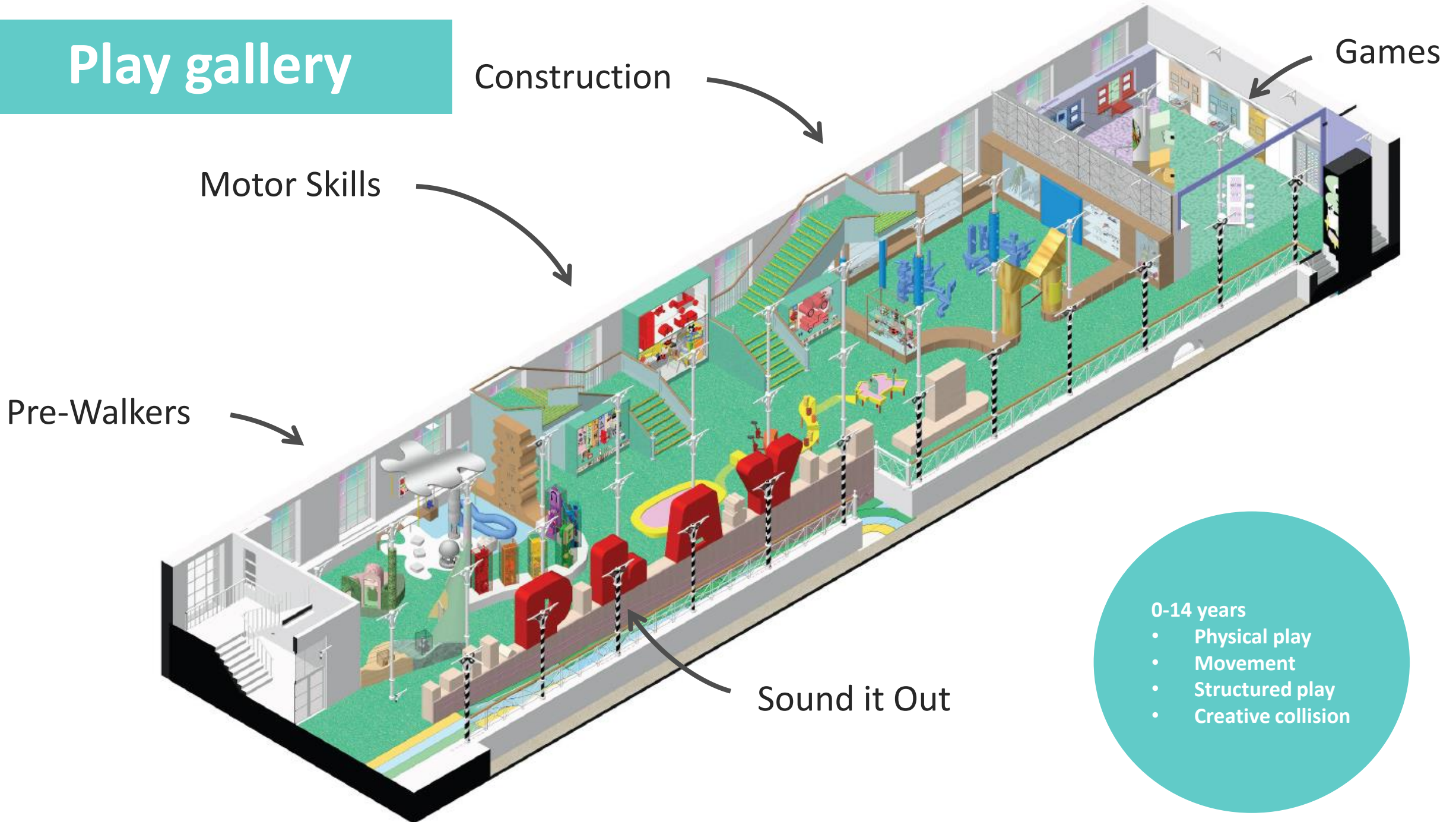


CO-DESIGN

The Staircase



Play gallery

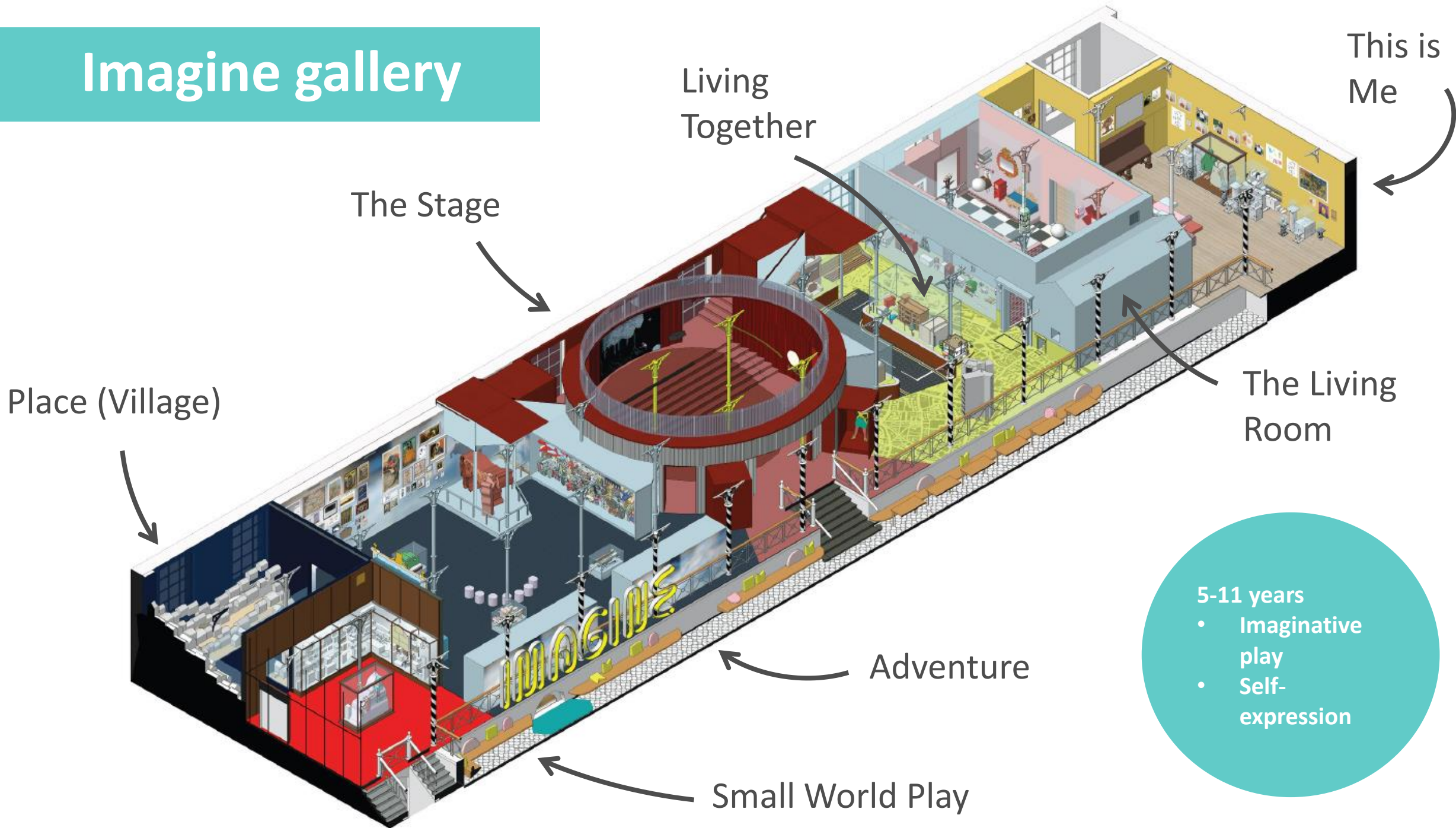


0-14 years

- Physical play
- Movement
- Structured play
- Creative collision



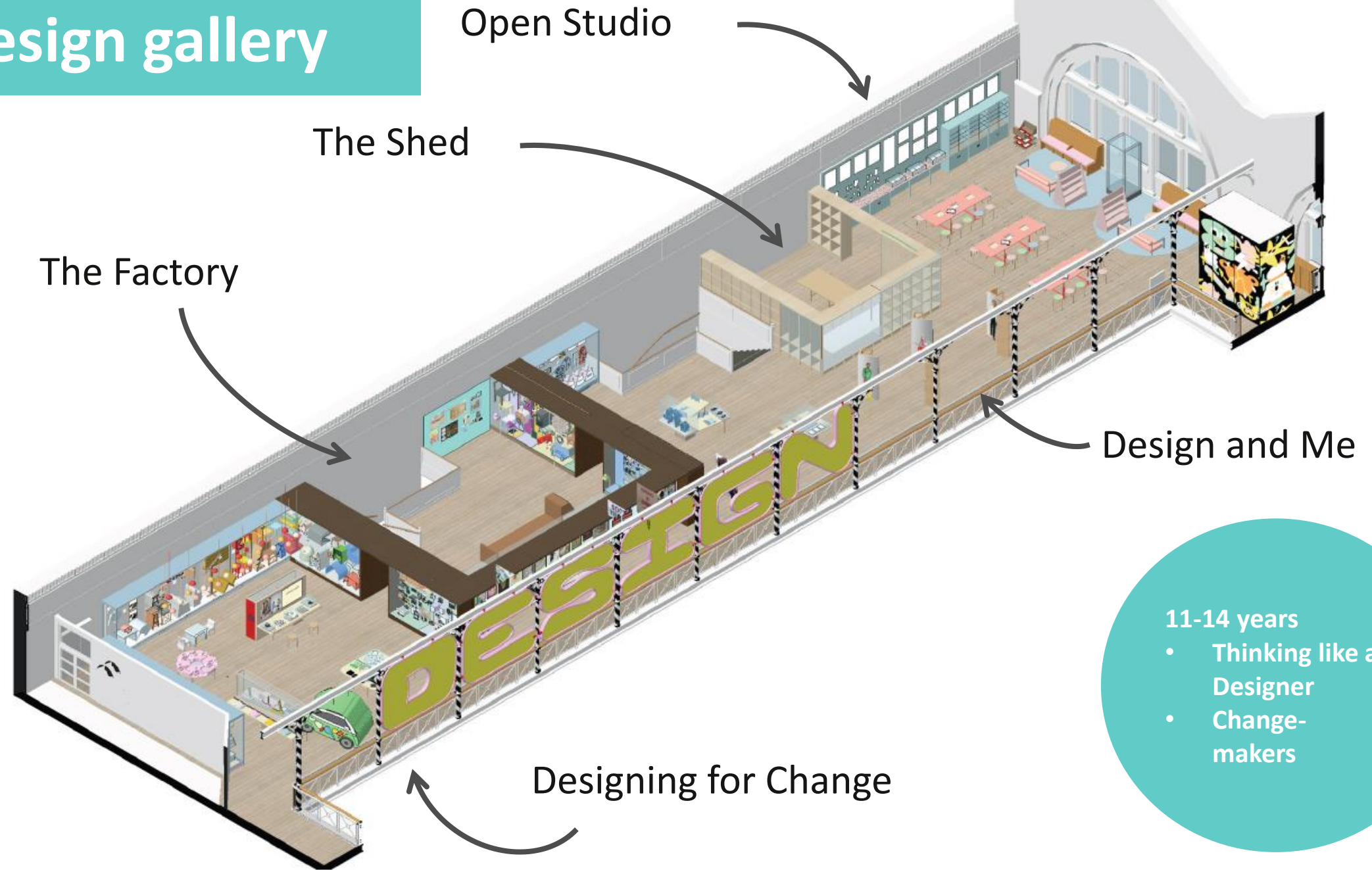
Imagine gallery



- 5-11 years
- Imaginative play
 - Self-expression



Design gallery

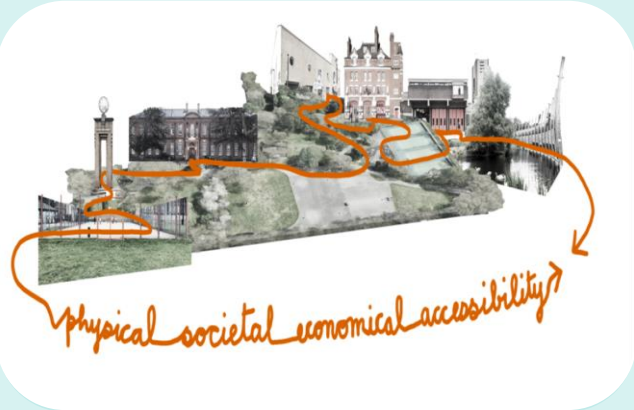


- 11-14 years
- Thinking like a Designer
 - Change-makers



Building our Learning Programmes

Voices informing our plans and content:



Co-design

Base build
Fit-out

Co-creation

Gallery content
Young V&A Collective

Convene

Stakeholders
Thinkers
Peers

PLAY co-creation project

The Play Hacks project is the co-creation project for the [Play Gallery](#) at Young V&A.

- **Key message:** You can support your child's growth and development by recreating simple play principles at home
- Invited families from East London Primary School
- 104 instances of engagement (8 families per session)
- Ages spanning across 0-11 years old

Case studies



Pestalozzi



Montessori



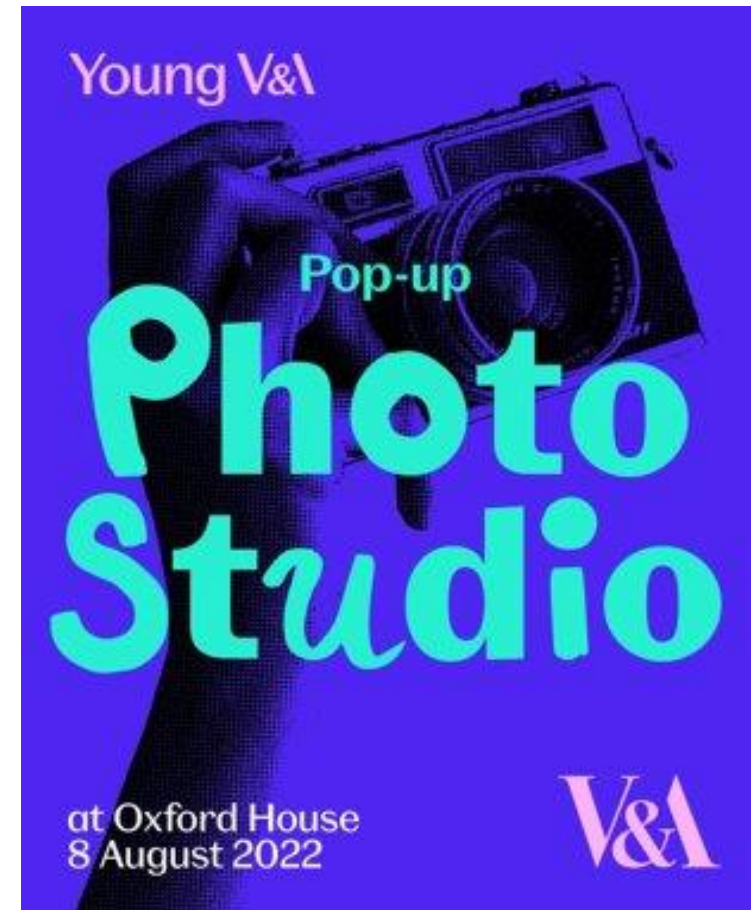
Froebel



IMAGINE co-creation project

The Pop-up photo studio is the co-creation project for the 'This Is Me' section in the [Imagine Gallery](#) at Young V&A.

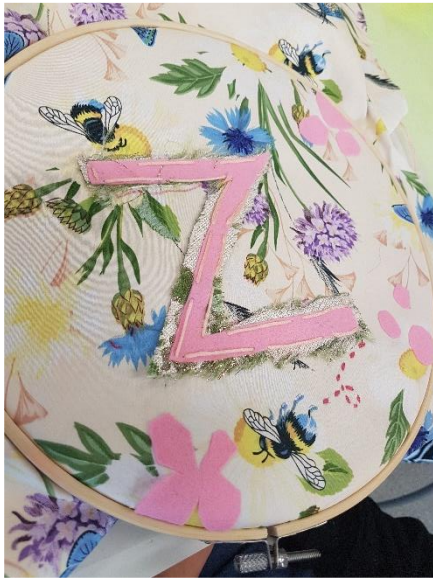
- Pop-up Photo Studio and Family Day
- Local children captured through portrait photography, showcasing their creative identities.



DESIGN co-creation project

The Young V&A Collective 'manifesto quilt' is the co-creation project for the [Design Gallery](#) at Young V&A.

- In collaboration with our community partner Spotlight
- 45 instances of engagement
- In response to V&A collections and the prompt 'Design can make things last longer'
- Planet positive textiles



Co-Design activity: understanding who we are designing with/for

Based on a workshop by Ella Britton, V&A Designer in Residence

Activity 1: 20 mins, small teams

Who do we think uses our programmes now?

Using single A5 sheets of paper/card/giant post its, describe the real people you have encountered who are part of your programmes. One person per card.

Make it visual, and think about:

- Who they are, how might you describe their story.
- Why were they part of your activity, think deeply about really what were there for. Their motivations and needs. As much as possible base this on a real conversation you have had and a real understanding you have.
- What benefit did they get from being part of your programme? Again, you might need to make assumptions here, but base this as much as possible on something you have seen or heard. Anecdotal or measured evidence is valuable here.



the **CHILD**
DEVELOPMENT
and **LEARNING**
EXPERT

"Challenge us
connect us
inspire us"



the **CREATIVE**
EXPLORER

"Bring Joy and
Wonder to
my life
and work"



the **EXPECTANT**
PARENT

"PREPARE ME
for BECOMING
my CHILDS
FIRST teacher"




the **EYES OPEN**
VISITOR

"up for a Fun
memorable
and
stimulating
Adventure"



the **HANDS FULL**
EDUCATOR

"Give us simple and
practical ideas
for classes and
make these visits
easy and FUN"



the **JUGGLING**
FAMILY

"Help us
match all
these different
energies.
Make it
safe. Make
it easy"



the **NEW**^{TO}
PARENT^{ing}

"Be my
support
during this
exhausting
and overwhelming
Beginning"




the **STRETCHING**
FAMILY

"keep us
connected
as a
family.
help us
make
memories"



the **PRACTICED**
CHILD
CARER

"Help me shape
and inspire their
Learning and
teach me
new skills"



The Rahman Family

Mabia and Arul Rahman have two boys [9yrs & 2yrs] and a girl [7yrs]. They live in social housing in Tower Hamlets, and the children attend the local school. The children have recently been to the Science Museum with school and went on an end of term trip to Thorpe Park - they particularly enjoyed the Angry Birds 4D experience and Mr Monkey's Banana Ride. The family have never visited the Museum of Childhood.

Arul works in the local restaurant trade and Mabia looks after the home and family. Arul has an allotment and likes to grow vegetables traditional in Bangladesh for cooking. He learnt to do this from his Father and Uncles in Sylhet. Food plays a big part of their social and day to day life. Mabia spends a lot of time preparing and cooking food. Ramadan, Eid and Mela festivals are extremely important and the whole family and community participates.

Their Family is very important, with regular social gatherings with extended family. Aunties and Uncles often pick up each other's children after school and look after them on school holidays. The children speak English and Bengali at home and help older relatives who do not speak English.



Fear around safety and gang violence often keeps the children at home. The children spend their evenings on digital devices, playing Fortnite and talking online with their cousins who live in North London.

The children are far more tech savvy than their parents and often fix any problems with digital devices at home. Teenagers in the wider family have devices which the younger Rahman's aspire to.

The daughter looks up to her teenage cousins who are wearing stylish Muslim fashion like the 'urban hijab' look which is very different from her mother and grandmother's traditional dress. The boys love football and go to Mile End Park football sessions for their age groups after school run by the Bangladesh Football Association. Their favourite team is Barcelona, because Messi plays for them.

Rachael Goldsworthy

Rachael Goldsworthy is a Key Stage 3 DT teacher from Cambridge. She is the Head of DT Department and she has been teaching for 5 years. In her spare time, when she is not marking homework and producing lesson plans, she makes her own clothes. She is a member of her local 'Maker Space' and often develops her own DT projects. She is very competent at using machinery and digital tools. She enjoys the social aspect of the Maker Space and has a good sense of humour.

Rachael has a cohort of 120 children in year 8 who are about to make their GCSE options. She is passionate about her subject and wants to inspire more children to take it at GCSE and A level. She would love to take more of them to museums and galleries but the cost and logistics are prohibitive.

The school that Rachael teaches at is a Specialist Science Academy and has good connections with the university and the bio-tech community. However, Rachael wants to inspire her children to learn about past, pre-digital maker skills to improve their motor skills and understanding of design, making & craft. She wants to widen their career opportunities and encourage them to think about creative careers. Rachael has friends who are designers and makers and she invites them into to school to speak to the children and share skills and experience.

Rachael is a frequent museum visitor, often day tripping with friends to London to take in the latest exhibitions – she loves the V&A. She visits with her personal interests in mind but always has an eye to her teaching. She worries that some of the displays wouldn't engage her children very actively.



The Renaldi Family

Sara Renaldi is a 28-year-old mum with a young baby [9 months] and a son in reception class. She is nearly at the end of her maternity leave and her tether. Sara's husband, Paulo, is Italian and the children are being brought up bilingually. Paulo is about to take over on shared parental leave from his job working in IT & Tech Support for the NHS. Sara is an architect in an up and coming firm in Shoreditch. They live in Brockley in South London and Sara often visits the Horniman Museum and Gardens during the week with NCT group parents.

They take advantage of early years activities at museums and other cultural destinations as well as parent and baby groups in the local area including music classes and baby yoga. They are prepared to seek out good events which will engage both the children. During the week Sara needs to be back home in time for school pick up.

They like days out and want a rich variety of experiences and are prepared to research their options and take recommendations from friends and other parents. They will pay for exhibitions and events which they perceive to have cultural value. They will bring healthy snacks for their children but will buy their lunch and a coffee in the cafe. They are dabbling in veganism as a family, because one their friends has a Vegan café.

They don't take a daily newspaper but have alerts on their phones for breaking news. Paulo subscribes to the Times on his I-pad as he likes the weekend Culture supplement. They love to share their experiences on Instagram and maintain a blog for their family back in Italy.

Sara and Paulo are looking to find a reliable baby sitter so they can go out together again and have a date night.



Activity 2

1 week, 1 or 2 people each

Listening properly to their story

Go out into the galleries and connect with someone who you think will help you understand more about the people you are designing with or for. This could be a teacher, a family, a lone parent with a child, a teenager, or an grandparent. Buy them a coffee and ask for their help as you try and better understand the people you are creating your learning programmes for.

Through a nice in-depth conversation, you might want to explore:

- Who they are, how they live, what motivates and excites them
- What they care deeply about, what matters most
- Why are they here, what are they here to do
- If not here then where

These are not questions you would ask directly, develop your own interview framework based on open questions. You might simply guide and prompt as you let someone speak.

Listening is about silence and encouragement, not assuming you know what someone is trying to say.



Activity 3. 45-60 mins Small teams

What does this tell us?

Use this information to understand what impact you are trying to make and with who. One technique is with post-its, identifying:

- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Insight
- Needs
- Systems challenges

Use this information to underpin your Theory of Change:

What are you really trying to achieve, with **who**, and the final question will then be **how**? The **how** should always be last.



Thank you