

Bees For a Better World

Kings Cross, London

Global Generation

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Large scale permanent

Project overview

Global Generation worked with local young people, residents, a developer & locally based restaurants and businesses on an infrastructure project on the new Kings Cross to Development to improve bio-diversity habitats, raise awareness and monitor local bee numbers.

Elements - Planting pollinator friendly species within the public realm and restaurant forecourts

A walking trail with an associated app, unlocking discount vouchers to local restaurants for participation (available until Sept 2st & then again from May to Sept each year).

A Better World Ambassador programme including a summer school, photography and video production to enable young people to take a lead in planting & telling a new story for the future.

Numbers – 15 Better World Ambassadors, 15 local resident Twilight Gardeners, 318 people downloaded the app in the first ten days.



Photo: Caravan restaurant and bee trail stop

Cost – Restaurant and Public Realm Plants and planters - £26,000, Creation of the App £1750 plus £8,000 technical support donated pro-bono from Wolff Olins, Bees for a Better World Educational Programme including Ambassador training and support, Summer School, video production and teacher training £47,000 for one year (Heritage Lottery Funded) – Total £82750
318 people downloaded the app in the first ten days.

What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

Many parts of the Kings Cross Development were being planted for design and civic amenity rather than Biodiversity.

Young people were afraid of bees which was a barrier to practical action towards a positive future. The expectation of local residents & businesses was for multi-coloured double headed plants in the public realm and in their own courtyards and balconies, which in many cases were not pollinator friendly.

We wanted to make practice improvements, raise awareness and involve people in monitoring bee populations.

Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

There were no specific conditions other than - an awareness that multiple studies show that bee numbers are in decline locally and globally.

Global Generation's charitable remit to support young people to catalyse positive social and environmental change and to engage people of all ages in the natural environment.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The bee trail and app has been created through the collaboration of different parts of the community working together.

Local young people and families, business employees who come into Kings Cross to work by day – this includes youth volunteering lunch and learning sessions involving children, young people and construction workers.

- Creation of a Youth 'Better World
- Ambassador Group'
- Creation of Bees for a Better World Video.
- Working with Global Generation's Gardens Manager, Urban Bees, Argent and Willerbies Landscapes on Mapping the Bee Trail.

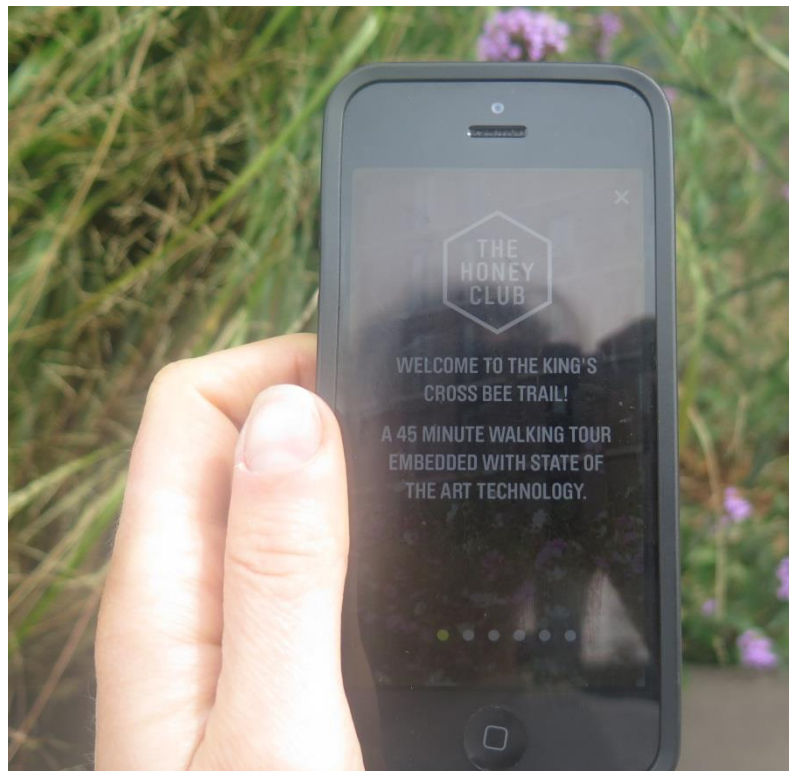


Photo: Kings Cross bee trail phone app

- Volunteer planting to enhance planting at all seven habitat stops of the Bee Trail.
- Work with Wolff Olins and Urban Bees (Global Generation's Honey Club collaborators) on the Bee App including content and technical aspects.
- Begin photography project with Global Generation's Better World Ambassadors
- Run the Summer School
- Launch the Bee App
- Participate and Learn
- Photography exhibition
- Lessons Learnt – the most important element is the creation of shared purpose amongst participants through
- providing opportunities to:
- Be hands on involved in the making of habitats, monitoring and documentation, events.
- Articulate their experience of being involved.
- This is scaleable but each Bees for a Better World project will be unique to the experience, interests and passions of business and community champions in each area.
- It can also be done on a small scale – i.e. under 5k including habitat enhancement, signage and app.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

I loved the fact that this project flourished between diverse parts of the community.

It didn't begin with a master plan, it was an emergent process which is helping to build a different kind of community in Kings Cross, one that is grounded in the patterns and rhythms of connection and creativity in the natural world.

The only way I can help my team, my sisters, is to be courageous. Sacrifice comes in when needed. Slowly, I levitate and push my way through the empty holes of the hive. Following my sense of smell, I skim through the flowers trying to find a flower good enough for my sisters. There it was. The gold nectar and pollen beamed up at me like a beacon. I felt like I was going to go blind but none of that mattered at the moment. After doing a dance to show my location to my team family. I realised why my sisters always said perseverance is key.

- Khalid (Age 11)



Photo: Bees for a better world summer school quote