

BRIGHTBOX

OUR IMPACT

2020 REPORT

Learn more about how we're
co-creating makerspaces
in every community.





**“Power shared by everyone
in the community.”**

MISSION/ VISION/ VALUES

Power shared by everyone in the community.

Imagine a world where people of all genders and from Black and working-class communities are included in decision making. A future where lived experience is valued, and power is not given to individuals but is shared by communities through resources and equitable opportunity. That's our vision. And we believe creating makerspaces in every community can take us there.

Our Why

We value and believe in the potential of all people and care deeply about their futures.

To have the impact we want to have, we can't make and run. We're in it for the long-term.

A one-off workshop isn't going to get us to our end goal. While that may help a handful of people, Brightbox is about more than just the people who attend our programmes.

“We're a small-but-mighty piece in a much bigger picture.”

Our Values

Inclusive

Everyone deserves access to role models and career opportunities, no matter their gender, race, or background. We value lived-experience and make sure that everyone has a voice in everything we do.

Playful

We take risks, make bold decisions, and have fun doing it. There's no question too silly for us. We're human first and should enjoy what we do.

Transparent

We openly share our challenges, barriers, successes and failures. Everyone makes mistakes, and when that happens, we share our learning and make sure we do it better next time. For co-creation to work, everyone involved needs to be open and honest.

Everyone is a learner

We're all learners and educators. Everyone has something to contribute; expertise and experience that should be valued.

Integrity

We hold tight to our values, while still creating and welcoming discussion to help us improve our understanding and become better.

Discover more at:

Facebook: Bright Box Makerspace

Instagram: @brightboxmakerspace

Twitter: @brightboxmaker

TEAM STATEMENT

This year has been a challenging year for everyone, not least our communities.

As the pandemic unfolded, our team has had many discussions about how we could best support our communities through the crisis and beyond. Our provision and support have always been centred around community making, sharing resources and space. With the onset of the pandemic and the temporary closure of libraries and community organisations, we realised the need to adapt our services.

Heading into our third year of trading, and being a small team, we were able to remain agile and adapt to support community needs. We decided to spend some time listening and learning, we talked to our communities and asked what support they needed from us. We've also spent some time working with libraries to understand how they can best serve their communities. Through a difficult year, they have continued to offer support where they can and are keen to understand how community needs are changing in the current context.

Our communities have shown great resilience through 2020. They have seen resources stretched and the closure of community spaces they would usually access to socialise, learn and get support. With limited access to spaces and each other, we have seen the need for increased support with mental health and an increasing need for extra-curricular support to address digital and attainment gaps. We've also seen communities pull together and support each other; we've seen young people really take the reins and try to make their communities safer, cleaner and more welcoming spaces.

Now more than ever, children and young people need our support to close the attainment and digital skills gaps. These challenges have been exacerbated by the pandemic and our team is dedicated to supporting under-represented genders, Black communities and working-class communities with equitable access to informal learning opportunities, co-designed with communities.

We hope you enjoy reading about everything we've done this year.

Take care,

The Brightbox Team

“Now more than ever, children and young people need our support.”



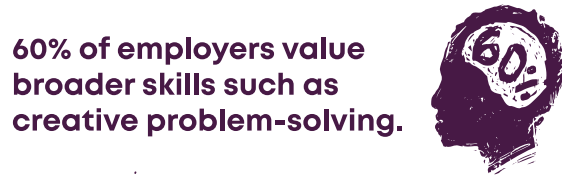
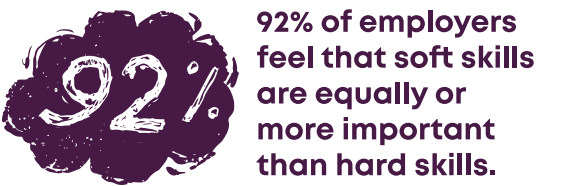
THE CHALLENGE

We serve marginalised genders, Black people and working-class communities, and the intersections between them.

As a team with lived experience, we understand the ways in which our communities are under served and undervalued.

Statistically, our communities are consistently under-represented across tech, engineering and creative industries. These statistics are not easily overcome and are flawed.

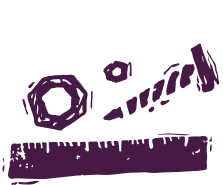
We know that the people living in our communities have limited tech and less access to extra-curricular activities that introduce them to role models and build confidence and skills.



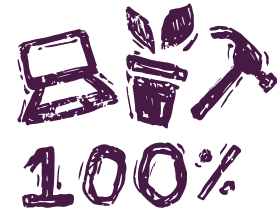
Our approach to co-creating community makerspaces places community at the centre of decision-making. Makerspaces are all about learning - we support organisations to provide opportunities for skill-building, improved confidence and increased understanding of careers across industry. Working with communities to understand their needs and challenges, we employ an asset-based approach that values community voice to redesign systems that better serve the needs of our communities through informal learning.



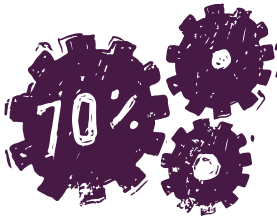
2552 This year we've worked with community partners to reach 2552 individuals



100% of survey responders identified they gained new skills.



70% have increased understanding of engineering



Ethnicity breakdown (Self-identified categories of beneficiaries):

Ethnicity	Percentage of total
Black	12%
Mixed	17%
African	3%
BAME	2%
Asian	5%
White	61%

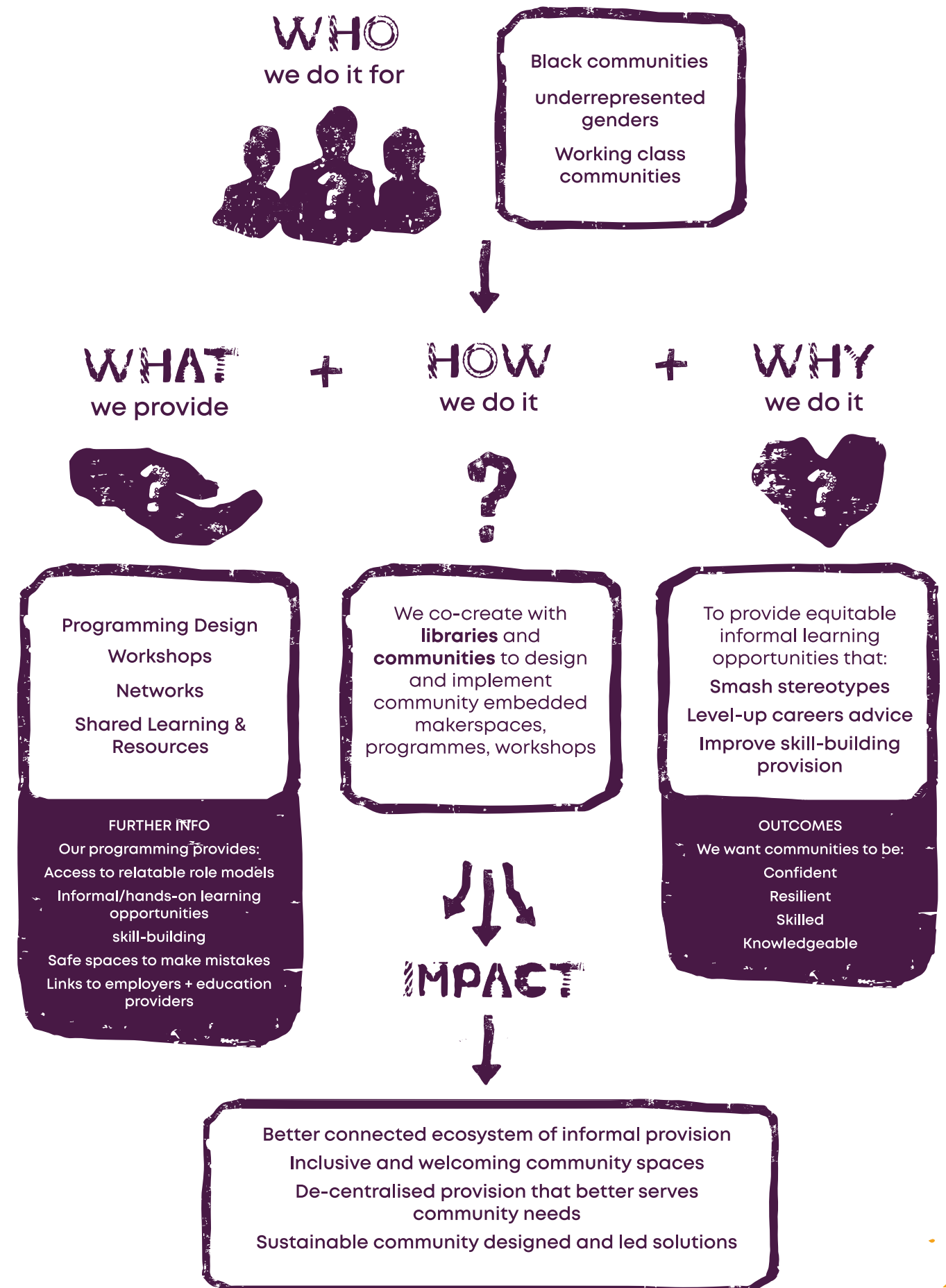
THEORY OF CHANGE

We want to see equitable access to social and economical opportunity for everyone.

How are we achieving this?

Creating cultures where children and young people are valued and have autonomy to implement their own ideas, we support organisations with programming that improves routes to employment in tech, engineering and creative sectors. Our focus provides informal learning opportunities centred on creative problem-solving, digital skills, confidence and understanding of careers and access.

“Children and young people are valued and have autonomy.”



OUTDOOR MAKERSPACE @ NORWOOD ALLOTMENTS

Our vision for this year: to give young people complete control over programming and provision and prove that they are best placed to decide what support they need.

So, we started our Community Youth Board project, giving 6 young people complete control over programming for an outdoor makerspace. We met with the six young people for the first time in September 2020 and partnered with Parson Cross Initiative to provide them with weekly access to a run-down allotment in Norwood.

These six young people hadn't been in a makerspace before, they were strangers to one another, and had spent most of the pandemic indoors with no access to support.

From the beginning of the project, our young people decided everything. They brainstormed what they wanted to do on the allotments and came up with all sorts of ideas including building a pizza oven, workshop, kitchen and shed. They discussed environmental impact, community use and logistics and settled on building a community pizza oven because the allotments previously had one and it is something that can be enjoyed by the whole community.


We facilitated the programme delivery, supporting the group with resources and connections to relevant role models.

Over the course of the project, we saw the groups confidence grow. They became more talkative, started asking more and more questions and showed an active interest in improving the community site and working with the local community.

"The skills the young people have learned - designing, planning, and assessing a site for suitability accounting for design and safety considerations and safe handling of materials - are valuable for careers in creative industries. Creative problem solving, working as a team to overcome and adapt to unexpected obstacles, designing a site-specific project that reacts to the surrounding environment and serves a specific purpose within that environment are all skills that they will need."

- Mike Scown, Pottery Manager, Art House

The youth board have taken responsibility for everything in the community space. They created the schedule and designed how the pizza oven would look and work - even suggesting a rockery so it would fit into the surroundings. They created a



"It helped me to have a positive mindset."

list of materials, tools, safety equipment, questions they wanted to ask the allotment owner and other considerations of the wider community. Each young person has shown real dedication to the project - turning up on wet & dreary Saturday mornings to help turn a neglected space into a usable outdoor makerspace for the whole community.

During the second lockdown, we have been unable to use the community space - or test out the pizza oven! - but our young people are itching to get back out into the allotments and finish all the projects they started.

- 6 young people meet professional and creatives & gain volunteer experience
- 100% learned new skills
- 80% saw the benefit of the project for the local community
- £55142 social impact generated, using the HACT model.

"Before joining the allotments I had never been in one before so I didn't know what to expect. I'm typically nervous and don't normally speak to many people however when I came to allotments for the first time, it was nice to be surrounded by welcoming people and helped with making a raised bed for the plants. From that point, we have done clay work, building a pizza oven including cutting up the wood that would be needed to fire it. Being at the allotments gives me a good chance to relax, have fun and do something productive."

- James



“Her eyes lit up remembering what we had done.”

MAKING AT HOME

One-off interactions with role models provide our communities with an introduction to tech, engineering and creative industries and an introduction to community spaces and support.

We work with organisations to develop and implement one-off activities for our communities that encourage repeat interaction.

“My kids have enjoyed making lots of different things and everything was there for them”.

The pandemic greatly limited our ability to support making and makerspaces in the ways we are used to: communities sharing spaces and resources and collaborating. Our team was forced to rethink our community support in the new context. How do we continue to support skill-building and build confidence in our communities when they aren't interacting with libraries and community spaces? What do we do for families that lack access to tech at home and can't access library services?

Our workshops were 40% female, 45% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. 80% living in economically deprived areas.

Teamed up with social workers and food banks to deliver Making at Home kits, with everything our communities needed to turn their homes into makerspaces! We reached 250 families with our kits and have been inundated with requests to make more.

Worked with Scouts, Voluntary Action Sheffield, Kids Invent Stuff and Create Sheffield to create and distribute making activities to 2285 families and young people.

Launched our tech loaning programme that distributes tech to families living in the most deprived communities.

85% would now consider a career in engineering.

As part of the boxes, we included a taster Girls with Drills activity adapted for safe use at home. Our Girls with Drills programmes are designed girls and women with the aims of increasing confidence and skills.

“It was really interesting to do with my daughter. She never seems interested when we do craft while she's doing it. But her eyes lit up remembering what we had done and which things she liked. The nail and string art was a massive hit.”





WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

We have learned so much this year. Through readjusting our programmes in response to the pandemic, we were able to work more closely with our communities to provide one-to-one support and consistent provision.

We've learned that leadership in community organisations does not reflect the community. This then reflects in the reach of provision and who in the community feels welcomed into spaces. In particular for referrals to our programming, we've found that we need to do more to reach Black people in our communities. We're listening and learning about how to create spaces that are truly inclusive and representative, and how to challenge leadership that is not reflective of the communities they serve. In 2021, we're partnering with more Black-led community groups and Black leaders and professionals, with dedicated funding for co-creating spaces with our Black communities. For makerspaces and programming to be truly equitable, we need to intentionally co-create welcoming spaces and partner with community groups that reflect our values.

The outdoor makerspace in Norwood provided the perfect opportunity to develop long-term support with young people over a 7-month period (and ongoing!). We learned from this programme the extent of the digital divide for our

communities and that there is a consistent lack of resource and provision to address skills gaps of all kinds.

Makerspaces in libraries and community settings are perfectly placed to bridge the gap between education and the workplace and co-design the additional support that our communities need. Makerspaces don't mean 3D printing machines and high-tech (though they can) – they're places for our communities to come together and learn skills: from writing a CV to coding, creative problem solving, teamwork and so many other skills. They are spaces that can provide access to employers, role models and information and guidance.

With the economic fallout from the pandemic, we can see that our communities face additional challenges accessing employment. With unemployment soaring, our young people are now competing with experienced applicants for the same roles, but with even less support than before the pandemic. In 2021 we're making the following commitments:

- We will increase the number of young people that can access ongoing support through community makerspaces we work on.
- We're creating 6 places on our community youth board, exclusively for Black young people
- We will support young people to co-design a bespoke careers information and guidance component to our makerspaces.



“Our communities have an abundance of aspiration.”

- We will encourage our partners and customers to provide access to employment opportunities, work-placements and mentors, and we'll make sure all our young people have access to additional employer mentoring and placements.
- We will provide tech loaning for all our young people and will support libraries and community spaces to provide digital inclusion programmes in their spaces.

In addition, we'll support all staff to access mental health first aid training so that our team are equipped to support our communities in any way they need, through the pandemic and beyond.

Our communities have an abundance of aspiration, they need from us equitable access to tools, opportunity and resources to achieve their goals!

To track our progress against our commitments, and hold us accountable, you can follow us on our social media channels where we post regular updates, or you can email us directly at hello@brightboxmakerspace.com

Facebook: Bright Box Makerspace
Instagram: @brightboxmakerspace
Twitter: @brightboxmaker



OUR FUNDERS:



Supported by



Social Enterprise
Support Fund



Sheffield
Technology
Parks



Designed by
maltbydesign.co

BRIGHTBOX

hello@brightboxmakerspace.com

Facebook: Bright Box Makerspace

Instagram: @brightboxmakerspace

Twitter: @brightboxmaker

www.brightbox.org.uk

