



REWILDING YOUTH
EDUCATION FOR FREEDOM

Rewilding Youth Outdoor Community Kitchen Build Report



Background

This project took place across the summer and autumn period between July and October 2023. The location for the project was at Rewilding Youth - Rewilding Space, East Hull Community Farm, Hull.

The project built on the collaborative work we had already been doing through EBUKI with Annabel Cameron-Duff, Rebecca Reid, Graham Johnson and Miki Z where they had supported us to build, on the edge of a deprived housing estate in Hull, a roundhouse and a wattle and daub clad workshop space through working with young people and local community members.

Some of the young people we worked with along with a committed group of adult volunteers wished to build on the work we have been doing to create an outdoor community kitchen space through which they would work with EBUKI affiliates to extend the green woodworking and earth building skills that they had been learning.

The aim of the project was to work again with experienced earth builders to build a cob outdoor oven and construct wattle and daub fences to extend our workshop space to include a food preparation station and an outdoor cooking and feasting area.

This area will be used by the young people we work with from local schools, youth centres, targeted youth projects and the local community in which to learn how to prepare, cook and share delicious plant-based food in an outdoor setting. We also plan to deliver workshops in outdoor cooking using the earth built oven from this space and to increase people's knowledge of the capabilities of earth built construction.

The project was facilitated by 2 x earth building and timber construction experts (Annabel Cameron-Duff and Graham Johnson) who were supported by 4 x Rewilding Youth Staff and young people from the local community.

Costs:

The costs for the project were:

Earth Building trainer (Cob-Oven building support and training) 6 days @£250 per day = £1500

Green Woodworking trainer (Community Kitchen timber frame building support and training) 6 days @£250 per day = £1500

Materials: Oven = £500 Timber = £750

Travel expenses, subsistence and accommodation costs (for trainers) = £500

Rewilding Youth staffing contribution = £250

Process

We were already meeting with the young people who were involved in the build every Wednesday evening and they had created drawings and mapped out ideas for the community kitchen area. One of our trainers (Graham Johnson) had visited the group to discuss their ideas and assess whether these were practical and achievable. The young people then amended their plans appropriately. We also contacted Annabel Cameron-Duff and met with her several times via Teams to discuss the young people's proposal so that Annabel could plan as needed.

The project also involved the Rewilding Youth staff team who had already participated in wattle and daub and cob building workshops with Rebecca Reid and Miki Z earlier in the year in order that they too could support the build and pick up new skills. The whole process was documented in the form of photographs and videos, some of which can be seen in this report and further videos, photos can be found on our social media (Instagram and Facebook) via our Rewilding Youth accounts (@rewildingyouth).

Annabel worked on the project for 6 days where she travelled to and stayed in Hull for the duration.

The first 2 days were spent on site with the Rewilding Youth staff team to prepare materials and demonstrate some of the processes that the young people would be joining us to carry out over the next two days.

The weather was beautiful and the young people turned up on Saturday morning ready to spend the next two days learning earth building skills and constructing the large pizza oven out of cob and clay. They also planned to

make a bench/seat next to the oven for people to sit and eat as part of the outdoor kitchen.

Annable spent time with the group informing them about the structure of the day and also starting to look at basic cob-building techniques.



The first thing that the group did was to look at the structure and composition of the earth that surrounded them. Hull's soil is extremely clay rich so we had plenty of building material readily available beneath our feet. However, we did not want to dig up our beautiful rewilding space so a local construction business allowed us to take some of the sub-soil that they had excavated whilst digging foundations for a nearby housing development.



Annabelle then began to explore with the young people how adding different amounts of sand, water and straw altered the composition of the cob.

Then it was time to start treading the cob...



The young people worked really hard to produce several loads of cob which were wrapped in tarpaulin to protect them from the hot sun and they then moved onto creating the oven base from gravel and sand (Annabel and the Rewilding Youth team had created the wooden base structure in the previous days so this was ready for the young people to prepare and build on).



Annabel showed the group how to use a spirit level to make sure that the base was as level as possible in order to support the weight of the oven. This was a great introduction to how to use a spirit level as most of the young people had never used one before.

This task also encouraged the young people to work together and use their initiative to work out where to add/remove sand to make sure the base was perfectly level.





The group then moved onto filling the seat base with cob which they then compounded with their feet ready to build up the seat shape with thick, straw heavy cob.

The oven and bench were constructed out of cob and quickly dried in the hot sun. We set up a gazebo over the structures so that they did not dry out too fast and then began to prepare the clay for covering the cob.





We used some beautiful red clay which had been donated to us by a couple who had built their own earth built home in Poland and had a few bags left over. We love that the earth-building community is so generous with their own time and resources!



The clay was then applied onto the smoothed cob surface of the bench and oven and left to dry. We just had enough clay to cover the oven and bench and plan to add a further layer in the spring/summer when the air is less damp.



Annabel taught us how to apply the clay to the oven with a flat trowel and how to catch any fallen bits of clay so we wouldn't waste any.





Outcomes:

The project offered young people and adults living in our local community opportunities to develop new skills, particularly in the traditional areas of green-woodwork and earth building. These are ways in which we feel are a surefire way of connecting young people to their landscape. Through connecting young people directly with the earth and space around them is the best way to foster environmental agency which will impact ultimately on the wider planet. The outdoor community kitchen area will also provide a vital space for young people and adult community members to come together to prepare and share food. We also plan to run outdoor cooking workshops and events for the local community from the space once completed.



Upon completing the project we have been invited to Hull's Green Fair to deliver a talk on our earth-building projects to local green/environmental organisations. We have also been asked to deliver a lecture on Place-Based Pedagogy: Outdoor Education for a Changing World at the University of York's forthcoming Research Innovation and Collaboration conference in December 2023. Annabel Cameron-Duff also invited us to submit a video of the project for the forthcoming EBUKI Clayfest online conference in November.



Moving on...

Our projects with EBUKI have inspired us and the young people we work with in so many ways. Our view of building and construction has changed beyond measure and our approach to building our own rewilding space is now based on the principles of not only how 'green' and sustainable a material is but how local is it? How can we reduce our impact on the earth by using the materials that are around us and which are designed to stay where they are and to be used where they are.

Our move towards utilising concepts of place-based pedagogy in our practice has been largely influenced by the earth-building projects we have been involved in and the inspirational people we have met through EBUKI. Annabel Cameron-Duff, Rebecca Reid and Miki Z along with our more local Graham Johnson who has been involved in some way or another with the work of EBUKI for a number of years. All these people have and continue to inspire us in our work towards engaging young people in their local environment through literally building with it!

We are currently working on funding bids to create a post at Rewilding Youth for someone to be dedicated to developing and maintaining our earth-building projects through building a bank of volunteers, running regular workshops and sharing our skills across other youth and community projects in Hull and beyond.

Watch this space!

