



Inspiring the Next Generation

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Abstract

This paper presents a hands on approach to inspiring young students to consider careers in the industry through creative, interactive workshops with a real design challenge.

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1 Who are the next designers?

Each year the UK fails to produce enough engineering graduates to fill the roles available; the estimated shortfall is as much as 69,000 per annum [1]. This skills gap presents a risk to the UK economy [1]; Architecture and structural engineering currently draw professionals from a predominantly white, male and middle class subset of society [2-4]. This leads to an unrepresentative demographic taking decisions on our built environment. It also exacerbates the skills shortage by reducing the pool of available graduates.

To address these issues positive action needs to be taken. This can be tackled at a national scale by large institutions [5-8], but also at a local scale by small groups of self-organising young professionals.

This paper presents a series of projects completed in London between 2015 and 2017 by Scale Rule, a collective of engineers and architects. The project aimed to inspire key stage 4 and 5 students (14 - 18 years old) from demographics currently underrepresented in the built environment industry to consider careers in engineering and

architecture. The pavilion designed and built in 2016 for Clerkenwell Design Week is shown in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. 2016 'future of design pavilion',
Clerkenwell Design week*

By placing an emphasis on the creative aspects of built environment design, students who have no prior knowledge of the industry can develop an understanding of design and the profession. By liaising with schools pre-selected by educational charities including teach first and the access project we engage with students from lower income families and/or black or minority ethnic backgrounds.