

CASE STUDY 3

THINKTANK, BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE MUSEUM

Why take part?	The museum was planning a collaborative project for around this time. Staff wanted to link in with Takeover Day as it was felt this would give the children validation for their work and show how seriously the museum appreciated their involvement. With a new Participation Co-ordinator in post, involving young visitors was a priority for the museum.
Who took part?	Five 11-13 year olds. For Takeover Day the museum partnered with a local charity called 'The Feast' which works to create community cohesion between young Christians and Muslims in Birmingham. The Participation Co-ordinator looked at a number of children's organisations in the city and found that this group were best placed to work on the project. Spanning different ages and from a non-Science organisation they could also bring a new perspective to the task.
What did they do?	The group worked with museum staff to co-create a permanent family activity for the new 'We Made It' gallery which was due to open in February 2013.
How did they spend their time on the day?	<p>The group were given two main tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the morning, they looked at a variety of possible artefacts and selected the handling objects they would most like to see in the gallery. The children indicated their choices and reasons using post-it notes that they attached to photos of the objects on large wall displays.• In the afternoon, they were asked to test prototype demonstrations to see if they worked and come up with improvements. Exploring lightboxes, minerals and electrical circuits, the group trialled demonstrations and provided feedback, both in writing and verbally. <p>The group were also taken on a behind-the-scenes tour of the new gallery in development.</p>
What happened next?	<p>The feedback provided on the handling objects and prototype demonstrations was used by the museum staff to create the finished activity – a 'Sense Station' mobile handling and activity unit which is now part of the 'We Made It' gallery. The children were invited to visit the museum again for the launch of the new gallery and to see their finished activity. A particular highlight was seeing their photos and comments displayed next to the objects they had selected.</p> <p>This was the first time that the museum had run a co-created project and staff were pleasantly surprised by the children's input, selecting unexpected items and coming up with fresh activity ideas. As a result the museum has committed to carrying out more collaborative projects with young people and an additional spin off has been the creation of a Young People's Forum to enable this.</p>

'Takeover Day has helped us to formally display that as a museum we are focused on involving children and young people in our work.'

