simArpa urban solutions

London Royal Victoria Docks

UX & Participation process benefits in urban planning

User experience (UX) and a better urban planning

User experience methodologies can be effectively applied to the urban planning process. In a clear strategy to transform urban spaces into human spaces, simArpa has implemented UX methodologies that enhance the relation between the built and the social space.

UX and the community involvement

There was no initial time spent at developing a vision for the Royal Victoria Docks in London. Indeed, a vision could not be determined until the local community had expressed their own visions for the area they live and experience every day. Instead of following a traditional vision approach, we undertook an integrated methodology, being simArpa a listener of the main public concerns taking place at the moment in the Docks.

The following local groups are considered to implement a successful vision from the early stages of the project:

- Residents from the Britannia Village
- DLR users
- Youth and Community groups in the London Borough of Newham
- East London Business Alliance
- Local faith groups in the London Borough of Newham
- The Newham History Society
- Newham good neighbours community
- Memebers of the Royal Docks Trust
- Newham Reuse Group

Project benefits of community involvement from the beginning

Involving the community into the project management from the very early stages has a huge impact on costs. The Royal Victoria Docks project finished with an approximate 20% below budget. Evolving the project in parallel with the community implies a smoother consultation process and a drastic reduction of the time spent on project iterations and amendments due to less disagreement between stakeholders.

Reducing financial costs seem the most positive contribution of a UX- community driven project, however, the social benefits at longer term are key to make the space a success. The strong community input ensures higher respect towards the most immediate environment and a pleasant symbiosis between citizens and the new developments.