

Urban Theology Forum

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The 'Bromford Dreams' project draws on graffiti art as a means of sharing the ideas and spiritualities of unemployed young men from the Bromford estate in east Birmingham. The estate is amongst the 2% most multiply deprived neighbourhoods in the UK and in February 2012 had the second highest level of unemployment in the country. The 'Bromford Dreams' project which is co-funded by Arts Council England, the University of Birmingham and the Worth Unlimited youth organisation forms the conclusion to [Dr Chris Shannahan's](/staff/profiles/tr/shannahan-chris.aspx) two year research project analysing the impact that social exclusion has on the ways in which unemployed young men think and talk about identity, meaning, truth and spirituality.

During February 2012 we worked alongside the Muslim street artist Mohammed Ali to create the 'Bromford Dreams' cube which will be exhibited on the campus of the University of Birmingham until June 2012. Alongside a visit to Mohammed Ali's gallery and a Mosque in Sparkbrook the young men took part in a series of workshops. Arising from this they designed and then painted the 12 foot x 8 foot cube with images of powerlessness, hope, violence, solidarity, isolation and prayer.

On 23rd March the Birmingham Urban Theology Forum revolved around the Cube and served as a seminar to draw Chris Shannahan's research project to a close. An open air welcome event was held at which a young man Tyrone Morris performed one of his own rap music tracks. Following the open-air event a seminar, which was chaired by Professor Martin Stringer, was run at which Chris Shannahan, the youth worker Paul Wright and the artist Mohammed Ali presented papers. Joshua Deakin, another young man from Bromford offer a short reflection as part of the seminar which was attended by students and staff from the University together with people from faith and community groups across Birmingham. The seminar concluded with the showing of a BBC TV Midlands Today report on the project and the sharing of food.

[Learn more: Bromford Dreams project website](/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/research/projects/social-exclusion.aspx)
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