A community led collaborative project like this can only emerge from longstanding relationships between our community networks, residents, Universities, and their staff and students.

Just Space is an informal alliance of around 250 community groups, campaigns and concerned independent organisations which was formed to act as a voice for Londoners at a grassroots level.

Historically our interests have been in influencing planning processes, as we consider it important that people affected by those decisions feeling a sense of community ownership and involvement in how they are made and their impact on communities we live in.

Like any aspect of knowledge creation and sharing, the language and culture of the process can seem technical, intimidating and often daunting for the majority of people, even though the issues themselves are readily understood: housing, community space, green space, jobs, transport, pollution, and so on. The aim of Just Space is to improve public participation in such processes as they profoundly affect us.

These needs and pressures have led to positive relationships and they have produced social change at local level that we hope to now bring to this project. The Network also has built up excellent and mutually beneficial links with some of the Universities in London whose staff and students provide research that the network shares alongside their own grassroots evidence at London Plan hearings or in other contexts. It deepens our understanding of our own communities and can help shape neighbourhoods and local economies through these links, by taking an evidence based approach. As a result of forming these bonds, it makes sense to share them more widely across more Universities and community groups so that the focus of research, learning, and the strength of our communities are all enhanced and shaped to better meet the needs of all our communities.

Richard Lee
Just Space, Co-ordinator
Introduction to Our Project Collaborate!

We know London is a complex and multi-layered place, right from the neighbourhood to the City of London. As home to Parliament and UK’s economic engine, London is also highly important to central government. All these layers of decision-making sit along with our efforts as citizens and communities to shape the places and future we want. Amongst the many forces that shape decisions in London, the main driver remains economic interests, and an effective community voice remains hard to secure and maintain. ¹ Universities have been primarily about research and learning. Most university staff and students undertake research to respond to our own curiosity and the needs of government and business. Our educational goals are also partly linked to preparing people to work in those organisations. Community-led agendas have typically had less purchase over what universities do, and community access to university resources has been limited to date. And yet, in an increasingly unequal society, the needs of ordinary citizens and communities are ever greater. ¹ In contrast to the state and business sectors, community voices have very few resources to draw on to engage with and influence the complex processes that make London work. Within the cacophony of modern living, the role of small grassroots community organisations is vitally important, as we are closest to the point of need and interest. We bring the strongest potential for connection with local residents and communities. We might be the most flexible, dynamic and responsive - yet we are also the most poorly resourced to take on the task. ¹

Just Space, as a London-wide network of community organisations has offered mutual support to ensure the balance is redressed in relation to planning issues¹ since 2006. Led by the direction of its members, Just Space would now like to broaden its remit to:

• Broker London’s Universities and community groups in collaborative relationships and gain beneficial impact;
• Reflect London’s diversity and share its strong connections with Universities within and beyond London;
• Ensure community leaders have access to the partnerships, knowledge, skills needed to strengthen their efforts;
• Anchor the effectiveness of community economics to deliver on reducing inequality;
• Deepen the influence of local people to shine through in how we shape our city.

The need for people to come together is ever-increasing, so it is troubling when so many community spaces are under threat. Social infrastructure, including creating and sharing knowledge, is vitally important in the context of austerity. As publicly funded institutions universities are accountable for the impact that their work has on UK society and the economy. Closer partnerships with communities will help to demonstrate this, and to make sure Universities are serving London in all its diversity.

Just Space and UCL have developed this project jointly, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. It builds on work already undertaken by Just Space and its members. The project has been based on a series of events, to formulate the project’s thinking and direction. The collaborative case studies shared so generously by you all give us a glimpse of what is possible when universities and grassroots community groups work together. It is our intention that with your input and support, build on this process and bring on board the leadership and networks of the smallest community groups with a network of London’s Universities to collaborate, more often, more systematically and have an impact on the wider issues affecting the life of ordinary people in London. We would like to acknowledge those who have participated in Community and University members of the Steering Group with such dedication to make this development process come alive. We are at the start of a journey, and the project has begun developing a momentum that we hope to see build with you into a meaningful plan of action, that is community-led, engaging and creative, and remains rooted in the experience of communities.

Professor Sarah Bell, UCL
Sona Mahtani, on behalf of Just Space

Sources:
¹ Briefing Note: Michael Edwards, UCL Collaborations with community groups (paras 1-4)
² Ben Vulliamy, York Students’ Union
Serving Local People Means Opening Up to Them
Joint Steering Group

Richard Lee
Richard brought together Just Space in 2007 to influence the spatial strategic plan for London - the London Plan. The Just Space network has nurtured a huge amount of experience and knowledge from London’s diverse community organisations. This has been channelled into making policy proposals for a fair and sustainable London. Universities have played an important role in supporting the work of Just Space, meeting the needs of community groups through research, teaching, student volunteering and the free use of University space. Just Space publications include Towards a Community-Led Plan for London (2016) and Social Impact Assessment in London Planning (2018).

Professor Sarah Bell
Sarah is Professor of Environmental Engineering and Director of the Engineering Exchange at UCL. She investigates bottom-up approaches to community engagement in infrastructure provision, with a particular expertise in urban water systems. She also facilitates engagement between local community groups in London and engineering and built environment researchers and students at UCL.

Toby Laurent Belson
Toby is a community Artist and Designer. He was born, raised and resides in West London. He has run a local community arts group, Brownbaby, since 2007, and has held various governance roles. Since 2015 he has dedicated much of his spare time (and then some) to 4 local campaigns to protect and enhance community assets. Toby’s community practice includes a wide range of disciplines with a focus on techniques that enable individual participants efforts to be brought together into a larger whole. Since 2006 he has produced many group mosaics, public installations, school exhibits, magazines, screenprints, murals and radio shows, working with hundreds of young people. He has designed and painted a number of bridges in North Kensington with public art charity Urban Eye, as well as producing the odd piece of street art. Since 2017 he has led a creative community response for Grenfell at Notting Hill Carnival, and has produced the Green for Grenfell illuminations, including the lighting of many local and London-wide landmarks including Grenfell Tower itself, to mark the date of the devastating fire.

Eileen Conn
Eileen has lived in Peckham for over 40 years, and has been a local community activist for most of that time. She is a former Whitehall senior civil servant, and is author of the ‘social eco-system dance’ model of community engagement. She has received several awards for her community work, including an MBE. She is co-ordinator of Southwark Planning Network for community groups, an active member of Just Space, and co-ordinator of Peckham Vision, a community action group. Peckham Vision has led the way in encouraging an integrated vision of the town centre, utilising heritage, re-using old buildings and pioneering methods for a collaborative approach including the community.
Shirley Hanazawa
Shirley is Canadian and a resident of Tottenham for 35 years. She has a deep insight into public health issues and has a Masters in Human Nutrition from a public health perspective.

Shirley has been active in Tottenham based organisations, including Ward’s Corner Community Coalition since 2007, and subsequently Our Tottenham.

Hester Gartrell
Hester is a senior access officer with Birkbeck’s Access and Engagement Department. Access and Engagement aim to address the difference in take up and outcomes of higher education opportunities between different social groups and their work takes us out and about to local communities, colleges and adult education services and workplaces across London. Hester mainly works in the London Borough of Newham working with residents and local organisations to provide learning opportunities and advice, guidance and information on Higher Education to residents. Prior to working at Birkbeck, Hester has worked at a number of small and large children’s and families charities across the UK. She has a MSc in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies from Edinburgh and an interest in religious understandings of children’s rights.

Sarah Gifford
Sarah is the Community Engagement Officer at Queen Mary University of London. After studying for a degree in Modern and Contemporary History at QMUL, Sarah worked within Queen Mary Students’ Union to develop the student volunteering programme (QMSU Volunteering) and other community engagement and student-led initiatives in East London. Sarah is now working on engaging the local community with the Life Sciences Initiative and its research.

Christine Goodall
Coordinator of the HEAR Equality and Human Rights Network, a pan London network of voluntary and community sector groups, both formalised and unconstituted, but with a strong focus on grass roots and user led groups, and ‘experts by experience’. Christine also teaches on social policy and equality related topics for Staffordshire University, and has conducted research for the UNHCR ‘New Issues in Refugee Research’ programme, including relations between host communities and new arrivals, forced migration, internal displacement and faith based social action. She has also contributed to work on approaches to researching trust at a community level.

Nicolas Fonty
Nicolas is a designer, an independent researcher and an autodidact mapper. Through research, activism, practice and volunteer support, he has been involved in many civic mapping initiatives for community-led planning in London and Paris including JustMap, Occupy and Cartodebout and has mapped at metropolitan and local scales in Greater Paris. He is member of Civic Wise, an international network for civic design.
**Shibboleth Shechter**
Shibboleth is a senior lecturer on the BA (Hons) Interior and Spatial Design at University of the Arts London. Her research focuses on teaching and learning and takes the form of exhibitions, events, conference presentations and publications on themes of sustainability, co-design, civic participation, urban and community resilience and the civic university. Shibboleth is a University of the Arts London Senior Teaching Scholar and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

**Wilfried Rimensberger**
Wilfried was educated in Switzerland and attended postgraduate media and political communication studies in London. After a career as Swiss newspaper editor, international magazine publisher, foreign correspondent and communication advisor to international organisations, he established a name as creative producer, curator, promoter and author working with a string of international names across the creative sphere. His successes are based on innovative community building strategies. He also engages in voluntary housing and local community projects. His latest is Millbank Creative Works utilising creative and sustainability projects to overcome social fragmentation.

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**James Jennings**
James is responsible for developing and identifying networks, collaborations and strategic partnerships with the public, private and third sectors in and around London. He also contributes to UCL's public policy remit by connecting researchers and academics with policy professionals. James has worked extensively in local government, leading on economic development and business growth, regeneration, housing, policy and strategy for three local authorities. This work included change management, international links, embedding equality, diversity and inclusion policy and practice. He chairs a charity and a community development trust in south east London. In all of these experiences, James has developed and maintained relationships with a range of statutory bodies, businesses and education providers. James joined UCL from London South Bank University where he worked on complex change management and innovation projects. He has an MSc in Politics & Government.

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**Professor Darryl Newport**
As the Director of UEL’s Sustainability Research Institute, Darryl is an environmental scientist specialising in the built environment. His research and policy interests include renewable energy systems, sustainable construction through alternative material use and natural resource management. Darryl has worked on a number of major infrastructure projects in London including the 2012 Olympics. He is also closely involved in the development of the Institute for Sustainability - including the Sustainable Industry Park at Dagenham Dock.

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**Saif Osmani**
Saif is an interdisciplinary visual artist and spatial designer who works closely with universities over the last year on projects such as Art meets Science, Interactive Fashion and 3D printing workshops. His socially engaged arts practice has grown out of campaigning for community rights to safeguard public spaces. His interests lie with engaging diverse communities in co-design and in understanding cultural heritage of communities with protected characteristics. Over the last few years he has attempted to change London-wide policies through the Bengali East End Heritage Society and is working towards a neighbourhood plan with the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Planning Forum. He continues to hold art exhibitions as a means of having a conversation with local communities.
Matt Scott
Matt has worked in the Voluntary and Community Sector all his working life, in the North East, the East Midlands and since the late 1990s in London. He also teaches at London Metropolitan University. Matt is the Project Lead, responsible for the overall management and coordination of the Thames Ward Community Project in Barking and Dagenham, ensuring activities are delivered on time, within budget, and that targets are met. Matt has been developing strong working relationships with key partner organisations and will lead the feasibility study and work to establish a new Community Development Trust, a key outcome for the project’s forward strategy.

Dr Paresh Shah
Paresh manages research activities and networks at London Higher, covering areas such as commuter students, university teaching assessments, student housing and visa compliance. Paresh is also responsible for updating statistics about the university sector in London. Prior to joining London Higher in 2007, he was a researcher working in the biological sciences.

James Tortise-Crawford
As Head of Local Partnerships, James supports King’s work with and in our home boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Westminster. He works closely with local charities and community groups to strengthen and facilitate mutually beneficial relationships between our staff, students and local communities. James has responsibility for local programmes such as King’s Civic Challenge, which empowers teams of local charities working alongside King’s students and staff to co-create projects that address local challenges, and Board Bank, which supports King’s staff and students to become charity trustees.

Mama D Ujuaje
A Curator, drawing upon the pluriverse of knowledge: concerning nourishment, foodways and indigenous wisdom to facilitate learning. Employing creative and multi-sensory pathways, to deepen participant understanding and engagement. Founder of The Food Journey©: an immersive, multi-sensory experience which revisits food narratives and aids transformational reflection and attitude change.

Community Learning facilitator and organiser, who works on developing accessible, food justice advocacy and agency across a range of groups and platforms. Whole Earth health advocate, encouraging relational and accessible knowledge dissemination and sharing around well-being and resilience.
Trainer and facilitator in deep, earth centred learning and transformatory practice. Passionate about research and knowledge sharing, plant wisdom and lifelong – and fun – learning.

Victor Adegbuyi
Victor is concerned with the housing crisis in London and the post 2012 Olympics legacy. He is based in Newham and works on various housing related projects.
“HEAR Network is pleased to be part of this project because we think it important for our network of voluntary and community groups in London working on equality, rights and social justice issues, to build and strengthen links outside their own sector with both wider civil society institutions such as universities, think tanks and other policy bodies, and private business and the statutory sector. We can all learn from each other and collaborate to mutual benefit.

This project is an important part of building and strengthening such connections.”

Christine Goodall

“Universities and their students are always thinking big, but for a truly sustainable future they need to better understand how these ideas relate to people on the ground.”

Saif Osmani

“We build knowledge not to create structures in which to hold an elite discourse, but to use our building skills to provide resilient learning structures for our children.”

Community Elder

“Our communities need something different. And I believe our universities do too. Therefore creative involvement is needed in this strategy, in its formation and in its implementation. In particular, I recognise that we are communities engaging with institutions and I recognise that we are attempting to engage with them in ways that may well be challenging to their way of doing things. I also recognise that the multiplicity of communities and our cornucopia of issues present their own significant practical challenges, where creative and flexible ways of thinking and being may alleviate our tensions and foster connections.

Creativity is precisely about locating the hard to find and discovering that which you did not know you were looking for. It is useful when you want to do something different.”

Toby Laurent Belson
Project Team

Sona Mahtani
Sona Mahtani is Director of Beyond Just Now, a consultancy, and works in the UK and Europe. She volunteered at the Selby Centre, never realising one day, she would be Chief Executive of The Selby Trust. A transformation of sorts has been achieved over 10 hard years, moving from deficit to strength, ideas to practice and now with projects in heritage, community organising, local economic development and a prospective asset transfer. Sona previously managed community networks, a homelessness training & employment project, and worked in the HIV/AIDS sector. She is now setting up an organic farm, with an art school, a creative retreat and thrives most when talking about food, as well as eating it. She is a Communications graduate and a Post-graduate in Charity Marketing and Fundraising from Cass Business School.

Daniel Fitzpatrick
Daniel finished his PhD in Planning Studies at the Bartlett School of Planning UCL in 2017, investigating mutual housing models in London and their governance. Since then he has been a researcher at the Bartlett looking at formal and informal practices of estate regeneration and collective housing. He continues to research on planning, urban design, housing and governance issues. He has worked in India, Italy, Cuba, Chile, Nepal, and London, working on projects at different scales - from international development to regeneration and within local government.

“Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you want them to understand.”

Frantz Fanon,
The Wretched of the Earth

Decoloniality is an epistemic, ethical and political project. The world cannot be changed if the people who run the world do not change. And people do not change submitting to public policies and obligations.

Walter Mignolo,
The prospect of harmony and the decolonial view of the world
The Project Journey of seeking collective impact

Elements of the project have emerged gradually, leading to securing developmental funding and a 12 month project development period.

The outcome of the development phase will be a strategy to inform the future of the project.

The project has been conducted in phases of seeking collective impact, guided largely by an organic process of:

- Generating ideas and Dialogue
- Initiating Action
- Organising for Impact
- Sustaining Action and Impact

Generate Ideas and Dialogue

The aim was to take forward the proposal of Reclaim our Spaces (a network of community groups convened by Just Space and Ubele) for a community led knowledge platform and the Just Map register of 250 community groups and their resource needs. This led to the idea of a London wide civic or metropolitan school where Universities and other practitioners would form relationships with grassroots community groups and support their needs.

- 2016/7 – The Reclaim Spaces Campaign, required a knowledge platform and an online map to register community spaces under threat
- 2016/7 – The idea of a London wide civic or metropolitan school came about in which universities and other practitioners would form relationships with grassroots community groups and support their needs
- July 2018 - Tate Exchange - Event to stimulate interest in forming partnerships with Universities, discussing needs, wants and experiences.
- February 2019 – re-engaging all Steering Group partners and start to look for a project co-ordinator
- March 2019 – 1st Community Steering Group meeting held at Central House to share ideas about workshop topics and project development
- April 2019 – Dialogue complete and draft plan developed. Plan adjusted as a result of feedback about topics, focus and accessibility for audiences
- May 2019 – Universities Steering Group meeting held sharing news and updates about what they were involved with

Initiating Action

With the support of Public Works, Just Space held events at the Tate Exchange, which included a session on the contribution of Universities to meeting grassroots needs. This, for the first time, brought together community groups and committed academics from 11 London Universities. The outcome was the need for a series of discussions between London’s Universities and community groups, with proper resourcing.

- August-October 2017/8 - Mapping work, databasing. Wanted to continue building relationships and exploring what was possible.
- November 2018 – a proposal was submitted to the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
- January 2019 – confirmation of success with the proposal
**Organising for Impact**

- June 2019 – invitations go out for a July 2019 Joint Steering Group
- July 2019 – First Joint Steering Group meeting considers an early stage strategic direction, understand the project purpose and approach
- 26th July 2019 – Workshops exploring the Nature of Community and Building Mutually Beneficial Relationships in Social Justice and Economic Justice context
- August 2019 – Survey conducted with strong response rate and some collaborations underway
- 5th September 2019 – a Community knowledge workshop exploring the discomfort of preset agendas, being locked out, the insecurity of ‘not knowing’
- 5th September 2019 - jointly planning of the Conference
- 5th September 2019 - visit from International French transnational EU funded organisations exploring collaboration potential
- 23rd October 2019 – Action planning and pursuing social change – taking actions from lessons learnt and implications for the strategy from each workshop

**Sustaining Action and Impact**

- 27th October 2019 – Follow up with interested partners to pursue forward strategy
- 27th October 2019 – Survey of conference findings and following up on any collaboration potential
- November 2019 – Joint Steering Group to receive project report and confirm next steps for strategy development
- December 2019 – Community Steering Group to evaluate progress
- February 2020- Concluding Report for a range of positive outcomes emerging following the conference

**Workshop already held**

26 July 2019

**Some Examples of Community Needs**

- The need to have a dedicated space to meet, train and work in
- education and knowledge exchange
- knowing how to do (technical) tasks such as:
  - design a website
  - manage a twitter account
  - feasibility assessment for a site redevelopment
  - event facilitation skills
  - research skills

**Opportunities Identified by University Staff to engage with Community Groups**

- Long term Placements;
- Volunteering
- Internships
- Trellis project (UCL) with researcher-artists
- Working with football clubs
- Schools’ engagement as part of widening participation
- Community engaged learning (teaching)

- Co-production in health sciences (Research)
- knowledge exchange/ innovation
- widening participation (inspiration and skills development)
- co-design knowledge that is relevant and impactful
- global citizenship
- research skills (community research and citizens’ science)
- Grassroots organisations struggle with planning and accessing and sustaining involvement at strategic level
- Contact with students (MSc/ PhDs) in Stratford city
- with the use of mapping
- Laboratory work with local groups and involvement in ‘blue city’
- Refurbishment vs demolitions research
- Understanding of how institutions work – including use of organograms, making contacts, building networks and facilitating effective decision-making processes, by feeding in appropriately and ultimately influencing how decisions are made
Universities and Community Groups Working Together

Challenges:
- Developing a shared agenda and a commonly understand neutral framework to work together
- Understanding what each partner wants and needs – our bottom lines
- Challenging to measure value and change in communities
- Infrastructure may not be in place to gather evidence
- Being clear about what is negotiable and what is not negotiable
- Pressure for certain outcomes that are not important to communities or community groups

Benefits:
- Meaningful conceptual frameworks when developed consensually together
- Shared resources
- Maximised resources
- More output in less time for both parties
- Quality of data is enhanced

Issues raised in workshops:
- Challenging assumptions
- By helping open more doors for local people
- Securing assets of community value
- Capacity limitations
- Breaking down prejudices within institutions and communities
- Targeting universities supporting STEM
- Culture of change
- Tackling planning issues

10 Collaborate: a community led initiative

Challenges:
- Reach into local communities improved over time
- Connection to a divers range of local communities
- More effective proposals, evaluations and success rate
- Kudos
- Increased effectiveness
- Stakeholder influence arising by having this relationship
- Agency shared with communities
- Potential for raising more resources for deeper level impact
- Avoiding duplication of effort

Culture: the biggest challenge and opportunity
- A story to be told by people with a hybrid skills set who work flexibly in both sectors
- The architect, researcher, software engineer – all nomads and migrants find themselves sharing learning and engaging through teaching or volunteering, creating conversations between those in power and those which are powerless
- Conversations are needed about decolonisation and decoloniality in context of university – community group working together
- It is not a level playing field – how is institutional hierarchical power to be managed in this context
- Developing ways of addressing that power dynamics through shared learning.
- Universities tend, in general, to be driven with financial concerns that can be dominate decision making
- The pressure is for value to be quantifiable and achieve measurable change often without resources
- Strategies need to emerge to unlock resources that regularly release small scale funds to achieve more long-term sustainable vision
- Be able to negotiate timescales as the infrastructure in communities can be weak and/or changeable

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Why did we choose these workshop topics?

1. Workshop 1: What does decolonisation and decoloniality in learning spaces actually mean: A Community and Universities exploration
2. Workshop 2: The battle for community spaces
3. Workshop 3: A fresh look at community economic and industrial strategies
4. Workshop 4: A transformative strategy for collaboration - community groups and universities

We are at a key juncture for society itself. Times have changed for both Universities and Community Groups in a climate of:

- Greater austerity arising out of public sector cuts
- A climate of fear and aloneness in what we are dealing with on lots of levels including xenophobia, racism, poverty, loss of status, loss of jobs in the face of automation, downward wage pressure, shortage of social housing, poor health and increased loneliness
- More redevelopment with London Universities themselves having significant development interests
- Loss of staff and social infrastructure, and an increased focus on volunteering to deliver public services - particularly the case for community groups and Universities are ready to supply both staff and volunteers
- Growth in institutional recognition of the value of community engagement – with public and community engagement embedded in institutional structures
- Community groups recognising the value of health, economic, environmental and social impact assessments – to help assess progress down certain conventional routes which might work for larger scaled organisations but remains challenging for smaller grassroots groups often doing things that funders do not often value or fund
- Awareness of the potential gains, shared risk and benefits arising from partnering up

We wanted to choose topics for 3 main reasons:

- Engaging, meaningful and required solutions that related to real issues that were affecting us in our roles
- Opportunity to learn something new, share knowledge and find new perspectives on it – that takes advantage of the collaborative space we created
- Link the topics to our strategy so that we could not only grapple with the complexity of the issue, but explore how to tackle issues and if relevant, incorporate it for further consideration and action.

Workshop 1: What does Decolonising in Learning Spaces mean: A Community and University exploration


In order to create a strong strategy for the collaboration between communities and universities, we need to know - or at least try to know - how both these bodies relate to learning and to the production of knowledge/s. To really understand what these processes and outcomes are, we need to understand what they mean to each of these bodies and how they have unfolded over time up until the present and what they might develop into for more just future/s.

Workshop 2: The Battle for Community Spaces

What does ‘winning’ community space mean for us? Ownership, rights to develop, access or free space? How realistic is it and why is that your ask?

- Ownership or a Space to Be?
- Nothing going on but the Rent!
- Can Universities be Ethical Landlords?

Everything we do is rooted in our members and their communities. Interestingly space is being increasingly linked to mental and physical well-being and skills.

The Reclaim our Spaces Campaign

An event was held in June 2016 at Conway Hall, organised by Yvonne Field and its report was authored by Santa Pendone.

It picked up on a wide range of issues affecting the pressure that London’s community spaces face when under threat. The event was co-ordinated in partnership with:

- Community Food Growers Network
- Conway Hall, Latin Elephant, London Gypsy and Traveller Unit
- Long Live Southbank, Mela, Migrants Rights Network
- Take Back The City, Three Acres and a Cow, UpRise.
The pressure on Community Spaces is a national issue, as echoed by Locality and The Co-op in “Endangered Spaces” (June 2019): Locality identified in ‘The Great British Sell Off’ shows the UK is losing over 4,000 publicly owned buildings and spaces every year. It is estimated 16,000 public and community spaces will be under threat by 2023, including parks and green spaces, libraries, leisure centres, swimming pools and youth clubs. The pressure on Community Spaces is estimated 16,000 public and community spaces will be under threat by 2023, including parks and green spaces, libraries, leisure centres, swimming pools and youth clubs.

**Definition of a Community Space**

By community spaces, we include community centres, music venues, libraries, pubs, open spaces and public spaces, youth centres, land for community food growing and street markets. Many community spaces across London have been lost in recent years and others are under threat of closure through a combination of austerity, privatisation and uniqueness of many community spaces and look after them for future generations is part of a continuing legacy.

**Key Statistics:**

- 56% of respondents feel more needs is to be done to protect community spaces.
- 58% rely on community spaces for socialising and making friends
- 73% of 25-34-year olds made friends at a community space.
- 50% of those under 55s rely on a community space to exercise and keep fit rising to 60% for Over 55s
- 48% community spaces provide a safe area
- Having a hub where people from all ages and backgrounds can spend time in without feeling intimidated.

**Most valued community spaces in the UK:**

- Parks (66%)
- Playgrounds (59%)
- Libraries (57%)
- Leisure centres (53%)
- Youth centres (52%)

04 Community spaces are essential to the achievement of lifetime neighbourhoods in which housing, health and education facilities, shops and other local amenities are affordable and accessible to everyone, now and for future generations, and there is support for community networks based on social co-operation and mutual support.

**Locality identified in ‘The Great British Sell Off’ shows the UK is losing over 4,000 publicly owned buildings and spaces every year.**

05 Community spaces are not just physical buildings, but social spaces where cultural expression takes place. These social spaces provide movement and interaction between different cultures and it is important they are integrated as well as truly accessible to all. 06 Housing estates provide a wide range of community spaces – community halls, open spaces, playgrounds and other facilities – which must be protected and their use encouraged. 07 Grass pitches (48%) 08 Community centres (49%)

- What can we each do to protect our community?
- What tactics are being used to kill off community spaces and what legitimate challenges can we make to protect them?
- Let’s talk about sharing spaces. What examples do we have where this has been done well?
- How can we activate University estate to be useful for community spaces?
- Are there any case studies we can draw on to show how it has worked?
- What challenges and what opportunities does it bring?
- What are the implications for the strategy?

Workshop 3: A fresh look at community economic and industrial strategies

London’s extreme wealth is matched by London’s extreme housing crisis.

- As an example, are co-ops a good way forward to redistribute wealth?
- Will sustainability reach the social economy, when it is so grant dependent to start up?
- What fresh ground can we break to promote higher wages in a high cost economy?
- Bearing in mind an ageing society, the future of mobility, clean growth and the AI and Data Economy, can we predict what work and jobs of the future are going to look like?
- What are the implications for the strategy of how Universities and community groups can collaborate?

Workshop 4: A transformative strategy for collaboration - community groups and universities

- The Civic University is a popular concept yet how can universities make it real on this project?
- What is the direction of travel of civic-minded Universities with regards to opening doors for the small community group working at grassroots level?
- What can we say about the use of estates in relation to groups needing decent community facilities?
- What are the forthcoming plans for 2020 and beyond that that we can engage with?
- What will success look like in 5 years?
King’s College London is offering local community organisations the opportunity to use King’s space with no hire fee, through a new space sharing programme. Local charities, voluntary groups and schools can apply to access King’s spaces for events including conferences, training days and AGMs.

To take advantage, organisations must be not-for-profit, be based in the London boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark or Westminster and be one of the types of organisation listed below:

- Charitable organisation (Registered Charity, Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Charitable company, Exempt or excepted charity)
- Registered Community Interest Company
- School
- Voluntary organisation. NB If your organisation is not registered with the Charity Commission or Regulator of Community Interest Companies, we ask that you meet two requirements, based on NCVO membership criteria:
  - you are an independent, self-governing body of people who have joined together voluntarily to take action for the benefit of the community, established otherwise than for financial gain; and
  - your aims, objects and methods of working are stated in a document that is available for public inspection.

NB Individuals are NOT eligible to apply.

Eligible usage
- Significant meetings, eg AGMs, board meetings
- Training, team building sessions and away days
- Invitation-only conferences, seminars and events
- Interviews
- NOT public-facing events (whether free/ paid ticketed or otherwise)
- NOT recruitment-related activity (please contact Careers & Employability)
- NB Successful applicants will need to adhere to King’s policies, which we will discuss during the application process. For example, see our joint statement with KCLSU on freedom of expression. Speakers at conferences, seminars and events will be subject to approval.
**Additional criteria**

- We will make available up to 10 opportunities to use space at King’s each term.
- We can only make spaces available if they are not in use for our education, research and service activities, and if our staff have capacity to support your activity.
- The maximum capacity of available spaces is likely to be 50 theatre style or 20 boardroom style.
- Organisations are eligible for one booking per term.
- Applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Where we do not have enough capacity to meet demand, priority will be given to proposals we consider likely to benefit most from the initiative.
- All attendees at events must be aged 18 and over.
- All catering must be ordered via King’s Food.

**Additional costs**

- Venue hire will be waived for bookings during 09.00 – 17.00, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays and closure days), including standard audiovisual (AV) and room setup.
- The below will incur costs that we will charge back to you; we will quote for these before booking:
  - AV staff and equipment for non-standard AV requirements (NB ‘standard’ varies by room)
  - Porters and furniture hire for non-standard room setup
  - Catering
  - Stewards for larger capacity or harder to find rooms, complex guest lists, cloakrooms etc
  - Security for out-of-hours events

**How do I apply?**

- Apply at www.kcl.ac.uk/local

Space is made available three times per year, at the start of each academic term (September, January and April). We can only take enquiries for the current term and availability is likely to decrease later in each term.

We review enquiries on an ongoing basis, and aim to respond to all enquiries within three working days and to make decisions within three weeks. It is unlikely we will be able to offer space if your enquiry is for a date within five working days.

If your proposal is successful, we will need at the appropriate time (which we will advise):

- Full attendee list
- Event plan, risk assessment etc
- Detailed requirements for AV, room setup and catering
- Signed hire agreement
- Purchase order for chargeable items, if relevant

If you have any further queries, please get in touch via local@kcl.ac.uk

We are currently taking space sharing requests until 23 December 2019.
The course is funded by the Council’s Tenant Fund. The purpose is to help residents engage positively with their social landlord, and to promote employment and education. It has been very successful in all of these aims. The four resident members of the Lewisham Homes management board all graduated from the programme, and the Chair of Lewisham Homes noted: ‘it’s fantastic to see how many are going on the further training and employment within housing’. A member of staff who participated in the course said: ‘As a caretaker, I found this course useful for me because I understand the history of estates, how the council works and what I can improve and more’

Community Mapping

Mapping for community-led planning and a fairer London.

JustMap is an ongoing collaborative map of London community resources, campaigns and projects.

It is based on public workshops organised at community events or festivals to collect directly from Londoners their intelligence of their city.

Its goal is to highlight communities resources and projects, to connect actors campaigning for a fairer London and to identify strategic cooperations.

justmap.eu
justplace-london.blogspot.fr
Teaching and Learning in the Community
Civic Design Course

Coordinator: Pablo Sendra

Community organisations: Granville Community Kitchen (partner) and William Dunbar and William Saville Residents’ Association (collaborators)

Coordinator of the collaboration with the campaigns: Leslie Barson

Collaborators: CivicWise

The aim of the Civic Design Continuing Professional Development Course is to teach urban planners and architects how to co-design processes and better collaborate with community groups. In this occasion, the course targeted professionals in architecture and urban planning rather than undergraduate students.

We utilised the learning from The Summer School 2018 to change the course for the 2019 cohort. Community activists collaborating with the 2018 edition suggested that community members could act as mentors of the students during the course. In response to that feedback, free bursaries are now offered to members of the community to take the course and act as a mentor for students and provide a helpful incentive. This provides continuity and helps the collaboration between students and communities sustain throughout the whole course, not just in the site visits and lectures.

The other main change is that the course is now ‘blended learning’, with two weeks of online lectures that provide knowledge to students on how to run co-design process and better collaborate with communities, and a three-day face-to-face course where students apply that knowledge and work in collaboration with community groups.

The lectures are given by UCL scholars as well as by professionals from the CivicWise network.

Key goals:
- With this blended format, students acquire knowledge and skills during the first two weeks and apply them to a real case in the three days of the face-to-face course.
- Community members can take the course for free, which also upskills community organisations in planning, and receive a document that is useful for their campaign.

Key achievements:
- Pablo Sendra (UCL) and Leslie Barson (Granville Community Kitchen) designed together the brief for the course.
- Students worked on two tower blocks from South Kilburn Estates that are earmarked for demolition by the South Kilburn Masterplan: William Dunbar and William Saville. Students co-produced evidence with residents on the experience of moving to a new flat when your home is demolished and on the importance of living in these towers for the residents.
- After that, students designed how a co-design process should be carried out and proposed a Community Plan that would refurbish the towers and build 32 new homes through infill development.
- The project was shared with residents in a final presentation in the gardens of the tower blocks.

Designing New Futures:
The residents, along with Granville Community Kitchen, Pablo Sendra and some of the students are continuing with this collaboration after the course and have now been awarded funding from the Higher Education Innovation Fund (Research England) to put together a Community Plan and explore how this collaboration between communities and university operates.
How can we build strong and successful community projects? What does our area, Newham, look like in terms of health, wellbeing and resilience compared to others in London and the UK? These were some questions we asked at our series of free Community Leadership workshops for Newham residents this September.

Hester is a Senior Access Officer in the Access and Engagement Department at Birkbeck. Hester is based in Newham and works with community groups, charitable organisations and residents. She distinguishes between the type of groups she works with: grassroots groups such as Friends of Stratford Park and Greenhands Newham which improve the environment, and structured community groups, that may sit within local authority or as a charity, such as MigrantHelp, or IntoUniversity, which both work in Newham.

Birkbeck is London’s evening university. Over 60% of the students are mature students and the 6pm-9pm teaching enables people to work and study at the same time. We also have a significant number of students who join us without formal qualifications. Hester’s role is focussed on Newham and is funded jointly by the London Legacy Development Corporation and Birkbeck. Her role is linked to the Birkbeck Stratford campus and has a geographic focus. There is value in being embedded in the community and local community initiatives seeing it as an important part of her work in the borough. For community groups one of the main needs is space and therefore some work involves hosting community groups for free at the Stratford campus, but we are involved in the community in a number of other ways.

After a year of working in Newham to deliver advice and support to local residents around higher education, attending community events and building partnerships with local groups, it became clear that there was an appetite and a need for local learning opportunities which would support people to make change in their community. This Community Leadership initiative offers a series of workshops on community leadership for community-facing residents (volunteers, community leaders, those working in community facing roles in the borough), and creating spaces for learning for community leaders. These workshops have been enthusiastically taken up and we are hoping to move forward by looking at how we can work with residents to deliver it – ‘working with, rather than doing to’.

Working with David Tross, who teaches on both programmes, we developed a series of free evening workshops for Newham residents which he delivered at East Ham Library. These workshops were very well attended with at least 24 local residents attending each week many of whom had not accessed formal learning for some years. Many of those attending brought significant experience in grassroots organisations, campaigning and project management locally. This seemed like a perfect fit, as the Certificate Higher Education and BSc in Community Development and Social Policy was already being delivered at the Stratford campus, and these initiatives could over time build up a groundswell of leaders, lecturers and a strong skills base locally to support people in Newham.

The workshops covered a range of areas, from health and wellbeing to how to develop and deliver a community project. While academic research was shared through the workshops, David also ensured residents had the space to share their own knowledge and experiences, and network with each other. One of the sessions led to someone finding the much searched for green sofa that they needed for their Mental Health Awareness day event!

Birkbeck see these workshops as the beginning of more meaningful interaction with residents. We are following up the initial four sessions with monthly or every two month meetings where we can work with those who attended the first four workshops to decide what’s next. In our session in November, one of the attendees will be delivering a workshop drawing on their own expertise and moving forward. We hope to create a space where residents interested in community action can come together, share their own knowledge and experience with each other through peer learning and say what subjects they are interested in. We also are hoping to continue doing open access workshops where we will continue to engage new residents who are either already making a change in their community or who are interested in getting involved.
Background
The community struggle for Wards Corner and Seven Sisters Market dates back to 2003, when the site was first listed by Haringey Council for redevelopment. Seven Sisters Market is made up of diverse ethnic traders and businesses and is located in Wards Corner Building at Seven Sisters, Tottenham. The market is also as known as Pueblito Paisa, a reflection of the predominant Latin American origin of the traders. The market plays an important cultural, symbolic, social and economic role for Latin Americans in London, and is listed as an Asset of Community Value. The wider city block also includes many traders and businesses providing specialist goods and services for other diverse ethnic and low-income groups, as well as terraced housing. The building which houses the market is owned by Transport for London, with ownership of the rest of the site being fragmented amongst a range of landowners.

In 2007 Haringey Council selected Grainger Plc as its preferred developer. The Grainger plan would demolish the entire Wards Corner city block, replacing it with zero affordable housing and chain retail shops and restaurants. Since then, traders, local businesses and residents have fought through the planning process, the courts, protests and demonstrations to stop the demolition of and to deliver their ambitions for community-led development and self-management at Wards Corner/Seven Sisters Market. Despite a disappointing outcome of the latest legal challenge of the proposed Compulsory Purchase Order to facilitate the Grainger development in October 2019, the struggle continues with further legal action under consideration, new protests planned, ongoing efforts to persuade Haringey Council and Transport for London to think again, and the latest iteration of the community plan out to consultation.

The community plan offers an alternative landmark development for Tottenham. The development's aim is to restore the iconic locally-listed Wards building which plays a pivotal role in Tottenham's identity and history. The Plan provides retail/café space, small business office space and important space for community uses such as childcare, advice services, meeting rooms and/or arts-exhibition space.

Following years of community action and planning, supported by a series of architects (Ricardo Pelayo, Glen Lake, Abigail Stevenson), planning permission was granted in 2014 (several previous iterations were not determined by the Council). Permission expired in 2017, after the standard three year period, as the ongoing Compulsory Purchase Order to facilitate the Grainger development the community plan due to limited resources. However, in 2019 the plan was resubmitted, led by architects Unit 38 (Ben Beach, David McEwen and Jamie Hignett). The plan remains out to consultation at the time of writing.

University collaborations
The varied groups fighting to save Wards Corner and Seven Sisters Market have worked closely with university students and researchers over the years, including:

“Expert” statements given in support of the public inquiry into the proposed Compulsory Purchase Order to facilitate the Grainger development and Haringey Council’s scrutiny review of matters relating to Wards Corner/Seven Sisters Market by Sara Gonzalez and Myfanwy Taylor (University of Leeds), Patria Roman-Velazquez (Loughborough University), Alexandra Xanthaki (Brunel University) and Michael Edwards (University College London).

In 2013/14, an excellent collaborative project produced an online 3D interactive model of the community plan developed through the Creative Citizens collaboration with the Open University and the Royal College of Art (Giota Alevizou, Katerina Alexiou and colleagues).

In 2014, Myfanwy Taylor (then at University College London) conducted intensive engagement work with market traders, businesses and community leaders during the consultation on the community plan as part of her PhD research.

In 2019, Rebecca Neil and Mirelle Tchaphi (University of Westminster) provided planning advice and support while Myfanwy Taylor helped to coordinate the re-submission of the community plan as part of the University of Leeds Several Masters students, in particular Alice Devenyns (University College London MSc Urban
Studies) and Nuria Benitez (Royal College of Art), provided crucial support in trader and community consultation, whilst completing their dissertation research on different aspects of the market.

General assistance with a wide variety of campaigning, organising and fundraising activities, carried out alongside or as part of students and academics’ research. By learning about the campaign by getting involved in it, a number of researchers have gone on to join the campaign and/or continue to support it beyond the confines of their specific research project.

03 Reflections on the benefits and challenges of university collaboration

These varied collaborations have played an important role in sustaining the lengthy and still ongoing struggle to save Wards Corner and Seven Sisters Market, at a time when few other resources have been available and traders, businesses and residents have been at risk of burn-out.

Community groups involved have welcomed these collaborations, offering up their time to support students’ learning and their research projects and working to establish projects that are mutually-beneficial.

There has, however, been little if any coordination or partnership amongst the various universities and researchers involved, which has led to a rather ad-hoc approach at times. Collaboration has often been instigated by students/researchers, rather than the community groups involved; there is scope for the groups to take more control and leadership over priorities for collaboration. As research projects can be quite short-term, it would also be helpful to move towards longer-term collaborations in order to achieve mutually-beneficial desired outcomes for all.

Incorporating capacity building and skills development for traders, businesses and residents into any new university collaborations would also help to ensure the groups involved are strengthened.
Following a long battle with the new London Plan’s policy makers at the Greater London Authority’s Examination in Public to gain better recognition for the social role of street markets, Saif Osmani of Friends of Queen’s Market, alongside Mama D of Community Centred Knowledge, Just Space and Leeds University collaborated together to hold ‘The Future of London’s Street Markets’ conference in Brixton in south London.

The pressure on public spaces has meant that ethnic minority spaces and especially street market sites are being seen as lucrative real estate sites solely and not much consideration is being given to the social impact of new developments onto existing and long-standing communities. Their conference was to “counter” and offer alternative viewpoints to the London Mayor’s office hosting the 10th International Public Markets Conference held a few weeks earlier in London, where an average ticket was being sold at £500, well out of reach of ordinary Londoners who would normally visit street markets. A mixture of community members, markets activists, traders, local politicians and a member of the GLA Markets Board attended their free conference with food being served from Brixton’s food market.

A report is due to be released detailing the findings from the conference soon. To find out more, email streetmarketsuk@gmail.com
When considering the different voices and the range of narratives they hold concerning what London is and can be as a city, the voices we hear least from are not just those who are marginalised in its present but also those that are buried in its past.

What if planning, designing and consultations about London’s built environment and the future of its town centres; the state of its social infrastructure; its heritage and culture and the lives of its future generations were to take into account what can be learnt from a reflection of how London as we experience it in the present, was forged from the contributors to its past, both locally and internationally?

London is a world city in many ways: its food culture, its architecture, its places of interest and its market places tell a story of international connections of many kinds. From waves of immigration from places near and far and journeys of exploration and exploitation of places distant and close by, of trading and raiding, of industry and banking, of science and folklore, London is a city of many layers.

Community Centred Knowledge has explored these layers, curating an immersive theatre of London’s past, beginning with its river, the Thames and ending with the question of its possible disappearance in the future, if we are not mindful of how we shape it in the present.

The London Journey© enables the many voices of London to have a say in its self-definition and by so doing insert these into a shared vision of London’s future.

The London Journey is one that can be recreated across each of London’s localities, bringing their particular qualities of character and stories to bear in describing how London’s past has shaped the way it is today and as such presents a multi-voiced platform to articulate its future. As such the London Journey is a good basis for launching discussions between the many knowledges that London holds into a full and rich discussion about the next steps to be taken.

‘History is the tale of those equipped to make their own stories be the ones that are taught to the next generation’. (Mama D Ujuaje)

If your group or organisation would like to host the London Journey get in touch via communitycentredknowledge.org
“I felt from a community point of view there could be stronger impact for both community groups and universities from a longer-term commitment from universities when carrying out community based research and projects. Hopefully this type of relationship based on a co-ordinated participatory collaboration/partnership will result in sustained empowering support of communities and community run projects which at the same time would enable students to have a much more rich, meaningful involvement and learning experience with communities.”

Shirley Hanazawa

“Universities should serve the whole society and in a highly unequal London these collaborations do something to re-balance power. University staff and students learn a lot from the knowledge and experiences of community and activist groups and can help these groups to formulate and fight their campaigns with additional local and international evidence.”

Michael Edwards

“This project is very important so we can realise the significant potential for both communities and universities in working together. Universities can become more rooted in real world experience, and community groups working to give voice to unheard communities can be more effective.”

Eileen Conn
Food, in all of its forms, as ‘that which nourishes’ is vital to every human being and thus to every Londoner.

It has informed our everyday culture of living, how we plan and shape the city and informs how we both organise and learn how to socialise with each other. Yet Food is still the ‘elephant in the room’ of our conversations about community and how we do research or plan public engagement.

It is almost as if we do not shape our working days around food; or it does not underpin our basic vitality or lack of it. Food is the most taken for granted, yet critical aspect of our lives and yet we do not make it central to how we plan for the future or understand the present. We certainly do not analyse how food has been critical to our pasts and thus defines present day relationships with our own bodies, each other and our environments, regionally and internationally.

Community Centred Knowledge curated an immersive, multi-sensory experience called The Food Journey© to address some of the absence of a useful and popular food discourse, one that can be held at any level and scale of organisation.

Participants are blindfolded in order to access better their sources of knowledge and experience buried in the subconsciousness of their bodies – accessing their sensory intelligences - but excluding the eyes because of our habitual reliance on the eyes for what has been termed ‘The Imperial gaze’: a view of life from the privileged position of considering oneself the normal and central – universal – way and being in the world.

During the Food Journey participants are taken through a tactile and visceral journey, symbolic of the journeys undertaken by many of our common foodstuffs which also parallels the establishment of the colonial imposition of a particularly industrial and extractive food system upon the planet. There is time for reflection and discussion following the immersive experience, which is often transformative for participants.

The Food Journey has been running since 2014 and you can contact Community Centred Knowledge at communitycentredknowledge.org if you would like to bring the experience to your group or organisation.
Since 2012, LEAP Micro AD (which refers to the Local Energy ADventure Partnership) has been building a circular food-energy-waste model in the heart of London.

We specialise in micro-scale anaerobic digestion - a renewable technology that transforms food waste into biogas and a soil conditioner/fertiliser.

Our mission is to extract maximum value from organic wastes in ways that benefit the host sites, local communities and the environment.

Our research has led us to establish three pilot plants each demonstrating the model in unique settings including a community garden and centre (Calthorpe Community Garden near Kings Cross), next to a social housing estate (R-Urban Poplar – E. London) and a horticultural training charity (Sunnyside Rural Trust – Hemel Hempstead).

We have focused on recovering nutrients and energy from food waste to grow more food for the city, generating training and employment opportunities, and engaging people around recycling and the circular economy.

We are looking to translate the learning gathered over the last 7 years into the next generation of digesters, which we hope will help cities and rural areas manage their waste more sustainably and become more self-sufficient in the process.

The company evolved out of a cross-sector partnership involving community, private and academic partners.

We have a long-standing relationship with UCL, having done a number of collaborative projects with them over the years, developed working relationships with Brunel and Westminster Universities and are now involved in funding bids with the University of West London and Sheffield.
The Engineering Exchange (EngEx) at UCL aims to link up local community groups and research to do with engineering, buildings and the environment. We have responded to requests from community groups and delivered projects on a wide range of technical areas and topics:

- air quality and pollution
- energy and water infrastructure
- transport
- demolition of social housing
- neighbourhood planning
- waste
- noise
- technology
- building surveying and design
- area mapping

**The approach:**
The EngEx matches community groups with engineers and built environment specialists, who work together to tackle problems facing London communities which offers:

- Technical support for initial project scoping, and tangible action that leads to clear outcomes.
- Options for using a range of tools and methods to undertake field research, build an evidence base and incorporate technical skills and assessments that can strengthen engagement and influence outcomes in local policy and development.
- We gather feedback at the end of the project, and this may lead to further work.

**The potential:**

- Resolving environment and building issues through creative collaborative opportunities between community groups, researchers and students
- Deriving mutual benefit by community groups creating opportunities to use the technical support that researchers bring
- Sharing fruits of world leading science that technical staff and researchers have developed to meet community objectives
- Increases the range and quality of learning experiences and application of research in real world environments to bear on issues important to communities
Key achievements:

- The EngEx has a steering committee including Just Space, Voluntary Action Camden, UCL academics and support staff, and engineering industry leaders.

- The EngEx works with a small team i.e. a Director and Communication Officer, both paid part-time, and 3 Co-Directors who are academics at UCL.

- An open approach to receiving ideas and making referrals: anyone is welcome to contact us with an idea or problem, but we may not always be able to help; our ability to support a project will depend on our contacts’ availability and skills.

Green Infrastructure in London

We led a series of activities funded by the Natural Environment Research Council to involve the public projects and a review of evidence about green infrastructure in London 2017

Improving air quality in Somers Town

EngEx and the Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum are working with the local community to tackle poor air quality in a time of change for the area 2018

Demolition or refurbishment of social housing?

London Tenants Federation and Just Space commissioned the EngEx to review technical evidence for refurbishment v. demolition of social housing 2014
Community Advice and Technical Support
Queen Mary’s College London – A Much Needed Community Service

Local advice offices, providing free-to-access advice to all, have been hit by the loss of legal aid contracts and up to 80% cuts in local authority funding. At the same time, the need for assistance with problems in areas such as debt, housing and welfare benefits is rising dramatically.

Whilst these changes have allowed many agencies to increase the number of clients they reach, there has been a reduction in face-to-face advice and specialist support. In particular, services cannot meet the high and growing demand for help with complex welfare benefit problems.

Law student placements and partnerships with university law schools can help meet demand for advice whilst enhancing student skills and employability. However, such projects require advice services to be able to provide appropriate supervisory support. Our success as the Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre (LAC) has been recognised by a number of distinguished awards.

In 2019:
• We were awarded the Principles Prize in the Teaching and Excellence Awards.
• We received the Richard Garrriott Public Engagement Award.
• We were selected as the QMUL representative for the Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE).
• Our activities as the Legal Advice Centre contributed to the wider School of Law winning The Best Contribution by a Law School at the annual LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards.

In 2018, we were honoured to be invited to the Houses of Parliament when we were nominated for the best contribution by a law school in the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards.

A Free Legal Advice Clinic (LAC)
The Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre is committed to providing free legal advice services for members of the public and Queen Mary staff and students, whilst meeting the educational needs of our students. We aim to comply with the professional standards applicable to the legal profession. We are not regulated by the Law Society of England and Wales and do not hold ourselves out to be a solicitor’s practice. We are however a member of LawWorks and are committed to Pro Bono Protocol.

Legal Advice Sessions
• Advice is delivered by LAC Student Legal Advisers under the supervision of qualified lawyers. If you have an advice session with us you will:
  • Attend an appointment with two LAC Student Legal Advisers and a qualified lawyer.
  • Receive free written advice within fourteen days.
  • The aim of the appointment is for us to understand your legal issues and to gather information, we do not provide legal advice during the appointment. Once we have considered your issue we ensure that any legal advice we provide is checked by a qualified lawyer. Then we will advise you on your legal position and what steps to take next.

We do not undertake casework or represent clients in the courts or at tribunals, but we can refer you to other free legal advice providers who are able to offer representation. You will need to visit a legal advice centre (such as ours) to get this referral.

As one client put it quite succinctly, “anything free today is rare, excellent legal advice for free is unheard of – but you get this from the Legal Advice Clinic at Queen Marys”

How to book an appointment:
by email and/or telephone.

Your enquiry will be assessed to see whether we can help you. If your case is accepted we will arrange an appointment for you to visit the Legal Advice Centre. You will need to bring any documents relating to your legal issue with you to your appointment. If you are not based in London we can offer Skype and telephone interviews.

The Legal Advice Centre is only open for appointments during term-time (October to May), we do not offer a drop-in advice service or provide advice by telephone. We aim to respond within three working days, but during times of high demand, this may take a little longer. We will always reply to your email or return your call.

Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre website
Twitter @QMLAC
Facebook QMULLegalAdviceCentre

Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre
Queen Mary University of London
327 Mile End Road
London
E1 4NS

lac.qmul.ac.uk
020 7882 3931
lac@qmul.ac.uk
Opening Times
Clinic appointments are available every Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:30pm during term time only.

Who we help
The clients who use our service are usually members of the public and staff or students from Queen Mary. We are able to advise on a wide range of different issues, with the aim of equipping our clients with the legal knowledge they need and an indication of the viability of their case. Based on our recent survey, 100% of our clients would use us again and recommend our service to a friend.

The public: We welcome all enquiries from the public and if for any reason we are unable to help you, we will direct you to another free legal advice provider.

Staff and students: Queen Mary staff and students are able to use our services but we are unable to help anyone wishing to pursue a claim against the College, its governors, another employee or a current student. We can however, provide you with the details of other free legal advice services that may be able to help.

All clients: In the event there is a conflict of interest between a supervising law firm and an aspect of your case, we will need to cancel your appointment. Where possible we will try to re-book your appointment with another supervising law firm. If this is not possible, we may not be able to take your case on.

Our students
Our advisers are selected via application, and undergo an extensive training programme with legal professionals, academic staff and the Queen Mary Careers service. Once trained, you will have the opportunity to apply your legal knowledge in a practical context, including interviewing clients and researching their case.

You will also be able to compete for one of the many work placements and mentoring opportunities the LAC offers with top City firms.

Our projects
The LAC runs several projects throughout the year including:
- Law in General
- Pink Law
- Law for the Arts
- Company Law (qLegal)
- Criminal Justice Project
- SPITE (revenge porn)
- Law for Forces (Supporting those who serve)
- Immigration Law
- Family Law

Our network
We work with over 80 solicitors from London firms such as Reed Smith, Miscon de Reya, Bross Bennet, Simmons & Simmons, Field Fisher Waterhouse and many more. We also have connections with criminal law specialists 15 New Bridge Street Chambers and a wide range of other organisations such as Lawyers Without Borders. These professionals work with us by supporting our client work and investing in the development of our Student Advisers.

Contact details:
Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre website
Twitter @QMLAC
Facebook QMULegalAdviceCentre
Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre
Queen Mary University of London
327 Mile End Road
London
E1 4NS
lac.qmul.ac.uk
020 7882 3931
lac@qmul.ac.uk
Our aim has been to create a transferable model of a local community hub utilising entrepreneurial approaches, creativity and sustainability projects as tools to overcome societal fragmentation. Bringing together these strands has become possible by co-locating in a University environment.

We have been successful in developing a 5 year pilot project with key neighbourhood stakeholders, including Chelsea College of Arts, Tate Britain and Millbank Estate. We have a unique model to strengthen and build new relationships with local ‘doorstep’ communities by developing participatory approaches with local stakeholders. Together we explore and share the lived Millbank experience, as for example per ualiresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/13023/ or facebook.com/millbankcreativeworks

**The approach**
Taking into account London’s dynamic creative economy we establish residencies and long-term collaborations with stakeholder organisations hosting individual projects and pooling resources, expertise and talents. This for maximum impact that supports the learning and living of local residents, businesses, university staff and students and visitors in the area.

**Key achievements**
Over a 5-year period tangible change in the cultural dynamics of university and community have been achieved by establishing our residency with an office at the Chelsea College of Arts and lead collaboration with BA (Hons) Interior and Spatial Design lecturers and coursework.

The following outcomes have emerged:

- Strengthening relationships between Chelsea College of Arts teaching staff and local residents and communities through continuous collaborations with students on research, design and arts projects addressing local community issues.

- Annual Millbank Award for student project with best community involvement

- Moat Community Garden at Millbank Estate as recognised informal meeting and learning space for all

- A data bank of projects documenting contacts, research, impact of creative and cultural dynamics, with artefacts from exhibitions, workshops and videos

- Chelsea and other UAL students working with MCW and local residents triggered annually programmed, 4-6 creative upcycling workshops at Tate Britain in collaboration with their Sustainability Team

- Enabling a strong relationship to be built between Tate staff and local residents

- MCW collaboration and participation in Tate Exchange workshops, presentations & artefacts

- Westminster Time Credit pioneer attracting hundreds more people to participate and tens more to volunteer

- Westminster Recycling Champion key member with £2000 Award that is being reinvested in MCW as a community led enterprise
Key success factors

Community is an experience and can only be lived when shared spaces are available and welcome. The community comes alive and gets stronger with regular participatory events, building trust and credibility by making things work and making artefacts and art for display in a meaningful context and encouraging dialogue. Every successful community project depends on 2-3 core people who can champion a cause, campaign or project and inspire others. Collaborative projects between diverse stakeholders with differing primary goals can gel with a skilled and trusted facilitator at the helm, who can then balance all stakeholders’ priorities to manage the creative process towards defined and shared goals. One of the reasons this has worked is that Chelsea senior lecturer Shibboleth Shechter and local resident/ MCW director Wilfried Rimensberger both wore two hats - Wilfried became part of UAL and Shibboleth became part of MCW. Using the language of entrepreneurship, creativity and sustainability is well-understood by communities and institutions alike and can be a useful tool to bring people together.

The Future Vision and the Role of The Creative Social Entrepreneur

The future demands flexible hybrid skills sets where robots and however otherwise needed institutional structures fail. In London’s creative sector the creative skills set of the future is a hybrid individual – who, based on trust built over time can create an elastic activity zone, managing expectations and move easily between diverse community to structured institution, back and forth, building and strengthening relationships and achieving high levels of social, cultural and economic impact. This is at the heart of our approach to offer a transferable local community based entrepreneurship incubator model that builds local residents’ creative ideas by providing (space, finances, support and inspiration) and contributing to an innovative neighbourhood culture based on creative and sustainability projects in support of local citizenship talents.
In 2019 Saif Osmani was a visiting fellow/artist-in-residence at Loughborough University London where he held a series of 3D printing workshops at Here East on the former 2012 Olympics site in Stratford where the population has been expanding to include more maker and creative, tech and business-based communities.

“It’s often felt by academia that real creativity happens takes place inside art schools without accounting for the huge amounts of creative activity already taking place inside communities. In a lot of cases these are a vital need to alleviating social diseases such as isolation and depression,” says Saif.

The 3D printing workshops using 3D pens took place at Here East as a means of opening up dialogue between new and long-standing communities and form part of Saif’s research on co-design as a means of engaging diverse communities to designing the future spaces they would like to see.
Directory

Victor Adegbuyi
victor@newhamunion.org
Victor is concerned with the housing crisis in London and the post 2012 Olympics legacy. He is based in Newham and works on various housing related projects.

Toby Laurent Belson
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sampilism.com
Brownbaby was set up to design, develop and run Arts & Humanities projects that explore, acknowledge and promote the reality of mixing and to serve the communities in which mixing occurs. Although the term ‘mixing’ comes to mean miscegenation, here it also means the act of people living together, side by side, as equals and in peace.

Robin Brown,
Grand Union Alliance
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The Grand Union Alliance (GUA) is a network of resident and community groups, voluntary organisations, individuals and small businesses from Hammersmith and Fulham, Ealing, Brent and Kensington and Chelsea, focused on trying influence plans for large scale development in Old Oak and Park Royal. It wants to see plans developed that will sustain existing communities and enhance what local people currently value in their neighbourhoods. The GUA is currently supported by Robin Brown of Just Space.

Eileen Conn
info@peckhamvision.org
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community shop:
Holdrons Arcade
Peckham Vision is a citizens’ action group. We work for an integrated town centre linking past, present & future for the benefit of all. We believe democracy needs informed and effective citizen participation.

Peckham Vision has an extensive on-line presence with frequent news up-dates through the website, social media and emails. Our community shop, in Holdron’s Arcade, 135a Rye Lane, SE15 4ST, is open Saturdays 2-5pm. Information displays and exhibition every day.

Granville Community Kitchen
in South Kilburn
@GranComKitchen
granvillecommunitykitchen.wordpress.com
Granville Community Kitchen is a community led initiative to develop a food hub that would enable the South Kilburn community to access healthy, affordable and sustainable food through a variety of food related activities. Phone/Text Dee on 07543824439

Christine Goodall,
HEAR Equality and Human Rights Network
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@HEAR_Network
HEAR acts as a strong pan-equality voluntary and community sector voice, knowledge base and source of expertise on equality issues. Its work centres on the principle that people with direct experience of discrimination are best placed to shape strategies to achieve equality.

Richard Lee
Just Space
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Just Space is a London wide network of voluntary and community groups working together to influence planning policy at the regional, borough and neighbourhood levels. It grew from sharing information, research and resources on the Further Alterations to the London Plan in 2007. The Just Space ethos is one of grass-roots networking, informing and supporting local communities so that their contributions to planning policy are empowering and effective.

Sona Mahtani, Director
Beyond Just Now
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Beyond Just Now works with a diverse range of organisations and regional networks to support them achieve their goals. Particular interest in community networks, community centres and hubs, supporting plans for income generation, and getting better at what they do best – community development. Trustee of London Sustainability Exchange.

Mama D, Community Centred Knowledge
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Community Centred Knowledge is a participant centred approach to learning and exploration combining the arts and sciences of open and grassroots learning spaces, so as to recognise the agency of the everyday, yet often marginalised, worlds of both the human and more than human.

Drawing from cultural representations such as immersive theatre, Ubuntu, wisdom tales of the Maafa, shamanism, proverbs, nourishment insights and the technologies of the everyday, Community Centred Knowledge works at and with the multiple scales of the community to facilitate learning, sharing and teaching as an aid to being
inquisitive and open to the gifts hidden in the challenges of modern living.

Curator of multi-sensory Journeys and embodiment drama, we seek to reveal ‘elephants’ which may get in the way of shared understanding and to make contact across difference a rewarding and transformational experience.

Wilfried Rimensberger
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@MillbankW
MCW is building an innovative, creative talent and entrepreneurial neighbourhood stakeholder platform overcoming social segregation. It provides access to a range of creative project experiences, skill enhancing volunteering in support of the local community and accompanied by research towards future ways of sustainable communities.

Saif Osmani, Bengali East End Heritage Society
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@avidartagency
The Society aims to highlight, retain and restore the Bengali community’s cultural and heritage assets within the East End of London. It wants to see critical responses to the policies and agendas that impact on the community’s right to have a fair say in a shared long-term legacy.

Matt Scott,
Thames Ward Community Project
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Thames Ward Community Project (TWCP) aims to be a catalyst for sustainable community-led change. The project will bring together schools, community groups and residents from across the Thames ward of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham over a period of three years to develop initiatives that will influence change by addressing job opportunities, improved environment, health and quality of life.

Wards Corner Coalition
Vicky Alvarez
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The Wards Corner Community Coalition (WCC) is a campaigning organisation made up of people living and trading in South Tottenham, working alongside other allies and social justice and environmental groups. We are resisting private sector development, which will first demolish and then rebuild the site above Seven Sisters tube-station (“Wards Corner”) for private gated flats and chain-store retail use. The proposals would displace a longstanding indoor market, local shops and many residents. We have found people with architectural and planning skills in our community to prepare and put forward The Alternative Community Plan for part of the site which is costed, feasible, and is the better option than demolition for many reasons. The community plan wants to benefit the entire community, the whole area and the world’s environment for years to come, with a vibrant vibrant hub of activity at a location where 10 million people utilise the Victoria Line per annum and which opens directly onto this prime location which currently houses a vibrant Latin American market.

Rokiah Yaman
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Community by Design is a not-for-profit social enterprise dedicated to delivering projects that combine social, environmental and economic outcomes. We develop creative solutions that contribute to the global movement towards greater empowerment, decentralisation and resilience. Our work spans environmental education, green construction and micro AD design and feasibility studies. In 2012, we formed a collaborative project called LEAP with the London Wildlife Trust and the Community Composting Network, Methanogen, independent engineers and AD academics to demonstrate and evaluate micro AD across a range of applications.

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