

Improving social integration outcomes in London



RICH MIX

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MON - FRI: 9AM TO LATE
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35-47 BETHNAL GREEN ROAD
LONDON E1 6LA

BOX OFFICE: 020 7613 7498
RICHMIX.ORG.UK
@RICHMIXLONDON

YOUR LIFE

SHIRLEY

MOGUL MOWGLI

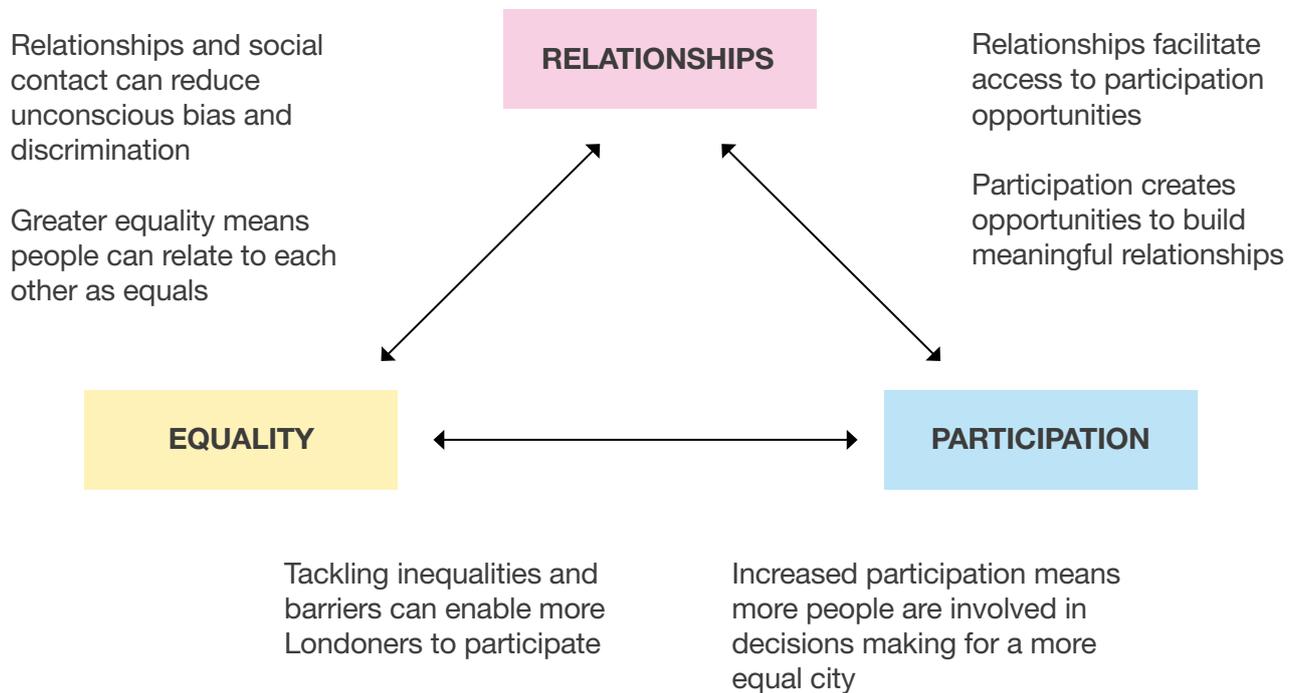
R I C H M I X

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Improving social integration outcomes in London

In London's first ever Social Integration strategy, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, set out his vision for a more socially integrated London. This means giving people more chances to connect with each other in positive and meaningful ways and enabling Londoners to play an active part in their communities and the decisions that affect them. It also means reducing the barriers and inequalities between us, so that Londoners can relate to each other as equals.

Figure 1: Understanding social integration

The Mayor's strategy highlights the importance of the built environment in supporting a more socially integrated city. London's neighbourhoods, high streets and public spaces are vital spaces for bringing people together, joining in locally and accessing important services. Local authorities and other organisations have a fundamental role in steering regeneration towards socially just outcomes, such as inclusive and accessible public spaces, equal recognition of needs and aspirations of diverse groups, and participatory decision-making on issues that affect their lives.

In 2019 the Greater London Authority (GLA) commissioned the Social Integration Design Lab¹ and the subsequent Social Integration and Regeneration Learning Network². Building on this work, as well as the GLA's Regeneration team's wider social value ambitions, the GLA appointed Design Council to deliver a programme of support to a selection of Good Growth Fund (GGF) projects awarded funding in 2020 to help them engage with and deliver on the Mayor's vision for a more socially integrated London.

The [Good Growth Fund](#) is the Mayor's £70 million regeneration programme to support growth and community development in London. Working with the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP), the fund supports innovative, best practice regeneration activities. This latest round of the Good Growth Fund has re-emphasised the potential for projects to have an impact on social integration in the neighbourhoods and communities in which they are delivered.

This report outlines the key insights and findings from Design Council's engagement with colleagues from the cohort of Good Growth Projects. We hope this report inspires others seeking to improve social integration outcomes through regeneration, for the benefit of all Londoners.

¹ www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/all-us-mayors-strategy-social-integration/social-integration-design-lab

² www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/centres-groups-and-units/social-integration-and-regeneration-learning-network/

INTRODUCTION

This programme brought together 10 Good Growth Fund projects, all focused on regeneration activities across London, and their partners. Each with a shared vision; to improve social integration outcomes in their neighbourhoods and local communities.

Over the course of three months, we ran online workshops, and coaching to explore participants' social integration ambitions; learn about the work they are doing to achieve this (i.e. through spatial design, social activities, and governance); and share best practice examples, case studies and advice.

This report highlights the key findings from the programme and will serve as a useful guide for others seeking to improve social integration outcomes through community regeneration projects.

WHAT WE DID

Our work started with a rapid evidence review, the key findings (see p.10 -12) from which informed the development of an initial set of 10 design principles (see p.14-15). These principles enabled us to stimulate discussion and debate among GGF project participants and key partners on how the design of different built urban environments promote social integration. And, more importantly, how participants were seeking to improve social integration outcomes in the context of their projects locally.

The series of workshops and coaching support that we went on to run enabled us to explore the work being done across the projects and, by connecting projects with one another, establish a community of practice. An overview of each project can be found on pages 20 and 21 of this report. During our engagement common themes, insights and tactics began to emerge, leading to the next iteration of the design principles (see p. 27 - 28).



Maayan Ashkenazi

We worked with Maayan throughout the project, an urban designer, anthropologist and architect, who provided specific academic and practice-led expertise on the relationship between social integration and the built environment.



June

2020

Discovery work into the role of the built environment in improving social integration. Including an analysis of existing frameworks, tools & work in this space.

ACTIVITIES:

- Rapid evidence review
- Analysis of key findings
- Synthesising initial set of design principles

Relevant chapter:
Key findings

July

2020

Using key insights from discovery to co-define an initial set of design principles to test with GGF projects & key stakeholders.

ACTIVITIES:

- Workshop bringing together the GGF projects to; get to know one another, share an overview of their projects and discuss what social integration means in their local context
- Deep dives into each project
- Ongoing analysis of emerging insights & learning

Relevant chapter:
An initial set of design principles

August

2020

October

2020

Collating insights, feedback, tactics from GGF projects, the GLA and other key stakeholders to develop the next iteration of the design principles.

ACTIVITIES:

- Workshop bringing the GGF projects back together to share key learning, insights & tactics with the group
- Deep dives into each project
- Ongoing analysis of emerging insights & learning

Relevant chapter:
Overview of projects & tactics

Delivering the next iteration of the design principles for projects to apply and test in practice.

ACTIVITIES:

- Report to share & scale key learning across the sector
- Delivering a set of co-designed design principles

Relevant chapter:
The next iteration of the design principles

Rapid evidence review – key findings

Our rapid evidence review analysed several publications and interventions on social integration. These included The Mayor’s Strategy for Social Integration³, the Social Integration Design Lab 2019 Report⁴, existing toolkits and frameworks for achieving social integration, and Design Council’s thought leadership around inclusive environments⁵. These all prompted a common question: how do you design for different people ensuring the breadth of their individual identities are embraced throughout the process? As highlighted by the Design Lab, we “need to move beyond an emphasis on ethnicity and nationality as points of difference”.

This enabled us to shift the perspective from designing a place to creating shared experiences that enable people to come together to build relationships across difference: we called this designing for the relationship in-between.

It is about the quality of connections between people and the sense of belonging that individuals have with a place. Understanding these personal and unique relationships is fundamental to designing places that everyone can access, enjoy and thrive in. This spans both the individual relationships people have with others in a place (from meeting with family and friends to the 'chance encounter' with a stranger) through to the relationships people have with the built environment, and the organisations and activities that happen in a place.

For example, how do you design for a grandmother still learning English with her toddler grandchild? Where do they go for an ice-cream? How do they meet their neighbour and for that brief hello to have a chat about the street? How do they share that wider space with teenagers, so that everyone comes to use the space, in different ways, at overlapping times?

At the heart of our thinking was the following question: what kinds of spaces allow those relationships to thrive — as family, friends or strangers?

The findings below informed our approach for the co-design process and provided a starting point for the GGF projects to reflect on their own practice.



³ www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_social_integration_strategy.pdf

⁴ www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/all-us-mayors-strategy-social-integration/social-integration-design-lab

⁵ www.designcouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/built-environment/inclusive-environments

DESIGNING FOR THE RELATIONSHIP IN-BETWEEN

Designing for the relationship in-between means going beyond person-centred design to relationship-centred design that embraces people's differences. And that means attending to people's social relationships as much as their political and economic relationships – those defined by power dynamics or commercial gains. People need the right kinds of places to be designed for relationships to flourish — as places of livelihoods, as civic spaces, as a home.

RELATIONSHIPS TAKE TIME

Designing for relationships also means going beyond a single point of contact. It means looking towards a meaningful relationship in the long-term. The greatest asset of all of our participants' projects were the committed, nuanced relationships they had developed through being deeply embedded in their communities. Strengthening this was crucial, recognising their unique nature was key.

OPEN-ENDEDNESS

Closely related was this: relationships take time and the most meaningful ones are always changing. That means they must go both ways, representing a balanced and reciprocal exchange. And the best ones are always open-ended: they should not be confined to a specific point in time or point in the process but continue to evolve throughout a project.



An initial set of principles

The first iteration of design principles encompassed a range of strategies and were discussed in relation to how they could support one (or more) of the Mayor of London's three social Integration pillars. They were prompted by three questions:

RELATIONSHIPS**HOW DOES THIS SPACE ALLOW ME TO ENCOUNTER DIFFERENCE?**

1. Design for conviviality (including conflict alleviation design, as well as a variety of place-making principles)
2. Design outdoor public spaces as outdoor rooms, where it feels like things can happen
3. Make use of central anchors to sustain smaller destinations

PARTICIPATION**HOW CAN I JOIN IN? HOW DO WE PERSONALISE WHERE WE LIVE AND WORK TO MAKE THE RIGHT 'FIT'?**

4. Design for adaptability: design 'unfinished' spaces that encourage personalisation, ongoing interaction and local character
5. Design for change
6. Co-produce and co-design: to build trust between communities, authorities and anchor organisations

EQUALITY**DOES THIS SPACE FUNCTION FAIRLY?**

7. Design out inequities that create gender disadvantages
8. Design out inequities that create age-related disadvantages
9. Programming and management (social equity is a dynamic process which often needs formal structures of support)
10. Write social value into the procurement process

GOOD GROWTH FUND PROJECTS

Connecting Camberwell

Magda Bartosch, Regeneration Manager, Southwark Council

Connecting Kenley

Juliet Stevenson, Regeneration Manager, Croydon Council

Gramophone

Alex MaCaulay, Development Director, Really Local Group; Isra Al Kassi, Marketing and Programme Manager, Really Local Group

Kings Head Theatre

Fiona English, Executive Director

London School of Mosaic

David Tootill, Principal; Dr. Silvie Jacobi, Head of Education

North End Road

Chris Patterson, Area Regeneration Manager, Hammersmith & Fulham Council

Rich Mix Cultural Foundation

Judith Kilvington, CEO; Negede Assefa, Head of Cinema and Operations; Selma Willcocks, Head of Marketing and Communications; Joanne Williams, Executive Coordinator

The Old Vic Theatre Trust

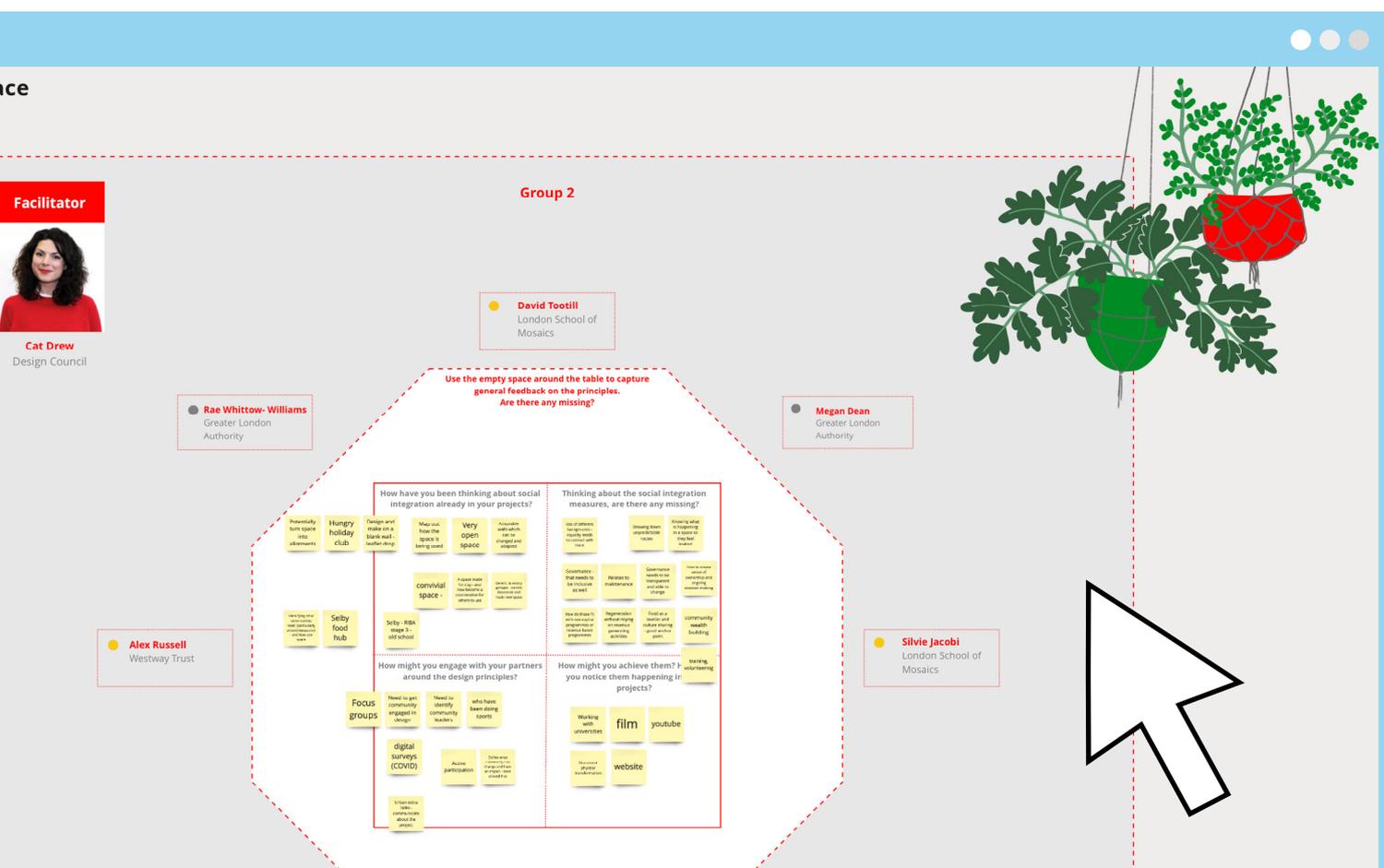
Sam Morley, Co-Director of Development & Hannah Fosker, Education and Community Director & Rowena Russell, Associate Director of Business

The Selby Trust

Purva Tavri, Independent Consultant; Paul Butler, Chief Executive

Thomas' Lane Yard

Sarah Walsh, Regeneration and Urban Design Programme Manager, Lewisham Council



GUEST SPEAKERS

Prof. Sergio Porta, University of Strathclyde
 Prof. Diana Stirbu, London Metropolitan University
 Sally Kneeshaw, Urban Regeneration and Social Integration Expert
 Barney Cringle, Senior Associate Director, prd solutions

GLA

Kat Radlett, Policy and Projects Officer (Social Integration)
 Molly Petter, Project Support Officer (Regeneration)
 Shona Scales, Senior Project Officer (Regeneration)
 James Parkinson, Senior Programme Manager (Interim),
 Regeneration & Economic Development
 Matthew Kleebauer, Senior Programme Officer
 Barry Fong, Senior Research and Statistical Analyst
 Mathilde Lebreton, Senior Project Officer – Regeneration
 Tim Rettler, Principal Project Officer, Regeneration

DESIGN COUNCIL

Cat Drew, Chief Design Officer
 Jessie Johnson, Programme Manager
 Maayan Ashkenazi, Built Environment Expert
 Simran Chadha, Project Assistant



Facilitator
Maayan Ashkenazi
Design Council

	Spatial design	
	<i>The physical design of buildings and sites including indoor and outdoor space</i>	
<div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">Relationships</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">Participation</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">Equality</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">Other</div>	Use local artists and residents to create artwork in the public realm	Run
	Use your building/site to become a home for community organisations and local groups	Map a g com
	Test new ways of working in your existing building/site to support the transition into a new building/site	En
	Dedicate as much of your building/site to community and/or public use	Setup
	Design your building/site for multiple purposes and users	Co lang
	Engage with 'hard to reach' or 'not yet considered' users of the building/site	Unde desi
	Spend time at the outset speaking to the local community about their hopes and fears	Unde mel
	Use 'soft nodes' to embrace and respect the context, history and heritage of your building/site	Us diffe
	Understand the relationship between your building/site and local transport access	Ide re
	Design buildings/sites with health and wellbeing in mind	Occu how pow

Today's speaker



Prof. Sergio Porta
 Director of [UDSU - Urban Design Studies Unit](#)
 University of Strathclyde

I am interested in what makes our cities a great place to live in, raise children, learn stuff, run business and have fun, for us as well as for the next generations, still remaining human. At the core of it all there is one game-changing lesson: the quality that makes our cities sound and enjoyable does not come by design. It comes by the uncoordinated efforts of people and organisations in time. Basically, it comes from history and evolution. Once you have digested this simple truth fully and in all its aspects - and indeed it takes time - then everything changes. Adaptability becomes paramount, people crucial, informal participation more important than formal participation, and you as a designer begin thinking differently. Ultimately, "design for change" becomes much more than a buzzword: it means that your mission is just to ensure the conditions (primarily spatial and environmental, in our case) for those uncoordinated efforts to emerge and evolve in a way that maintains the systems in operation (resilience) and is good for all (sustainability).



For best viewing zoom to 5%

Today's agenda

Workshop aims

- To get to know you and your projects
- Introduce Design Council and the co-design series
- Hear from Sergio Porta
- Explore the social integration principles in small groups

Please note that this agenda is indicative and might be subject to minor change.

Group 2

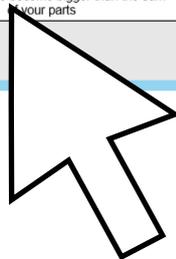
Group discussions

We have put you into breakout groups based on the common opportunities or challenges you have been facing. In your groups, we would like you to:

- Introduce yourselves briefly to the group
- Share a quick overview of your Good Growth Fund project & what it aims to achieve
- Using the table, identify the tactics you have been using to achieve social integration and share these with the group. Think about:
 - Spatial design – the physical design of your building / site
 - Social activities – the activities happening in / or around the space
 - Governance – the procurement, processes and systems surrounding the ownership of space
- Discuss what are you struggling most with in your project?

Social activities <i>activities happening in/or around space at the street and neighbourhood scale</i>	Governance <i>The procurement, processes and systems surrounding the ownership of space</i>
educational programmes for the local community	Engage councillors, local residents, faith leaders and other community groups as part of your leadership and management
use existing anchor organisations and groups to build relationships with the community and connect the local ecosystem	Setup a community benefits society to engage local skills and expertise
engage partners that aren't your "usual" suspects	Bring the voice of the local community into your decision-making process through local anchor organisations and groups
use a Library of Things to support, engage and draw local residents in	Use your voice to campaign and support local community needs and aspirations
consider the role of food as a universal language that has the power to bring people together	Employ local residents and talent to capture the stories of your impact
understand the existing support gaps and design programmes/activities around these	Consider how you might use your project to support a network of first-paid opportunities
stand and engage with your community "finding pot" – where does your community naturally come together?	Develop a membership scheme for emerging businesses and start-ups
use your programming to bring together different generations, genders and cultures	Explore alternative funding opportunities that enable you to provide accessible and/or free activities
identify empty units locally that could be repurposed and setup to support local residents and community groups	Understanding existing barriers to engaging with the community and co-design a process to overcome these
use a market stall to engage and observe how local residents use the space shifting from the "designer" to the community	Bring together local organisations, businesses and providers to become bigger than the sum of their parts

- Relationships
- Participation
- Equality
- Other



Today's speaker



Prof. Diana Stirbu
Professor of Public Policy and Governance at London Metropolitan University

Diana joined London Metropolitan University in April 2010 after obtaining a PhD in management and governance studies from the University of Liverpool Management School. Since then, Diana has been an active researcher and educator in the fields of public policy and governance. She leads the [Master of Public Administration \(MPA\)](#) course and has acted as Head of Postgraduate Student Experience (fractional basis) since October 2019. In September 2019, Diana was promoted to Professor of Public Policy and Governance. Diana leads and co-leads a number of research projects and initiatives in the School of Social Professions, including the Greater London Authority (GLA) commissioned Social Integration and regeneration Learning Network, as well the Collective for Social Change, an interdisciplinary group across the University bringing together researchers and professionals committed to affecting positive social change through social impact and evaluation work.

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| ● Molly Petter
Greater London Authority | ● Mathilde Lebreton
Greater London Authority | ● Tim Retler
Greater London Authority | ● Megan Dean
Greater London Authority | ● Tina Jadav
Greater London Authority |
| ● Magda Bartosch
Southwark Council | ● Fiona English
Kings Head Theatre | ● Juliet Stevenson
Croydon Council | ● Purva Tavri
Selby Trust | ● Sam Morley
Old Vic Theatre |
| ● Alex Russell
Westway Trust | ● Silvie Jacobi
London School of Mosaics | ● Judith Kilvington
Rich Mix Cultural Foundation | ● Negede Assefa
Rich Mix Cultural Foundation | ● Selma Willcocks
Rich Mix Cultural Foundation |
| ● Diana Stirbu
London Metropolitan Uni. | ● Joseph Henry
Greater London Authority | ● Rae Whitrow-Williams
Greater London Authority | ● Sally Kneeshaw
London Metropolitan Uni. | ● Barry Fong
Greater London Authority |

Overview of projects and tactics

During our coaching sessions with projects, three key domains emerged for the projects: how **space** could be optimised as a shared resource, how **social activities** could expand their reach, and how **governance** could be used to ensure true diversity. As such we looked at the different tactics that projects were using to encourage social integration. These are highlighted on the next page.

CONNECTING KENLEY

- Providing a coordinated package of public realm, community space, sustainable transport and business support measures to bring together different parts of the community and provide civic infrastructure to enable good growth.
- *How might we connect communities together through the built environment?*

GRAMOPHONE

- The Gramophone project will transform an old vinyl pressing factory into an exciting new cultural and creative hub for Hayes. The venue sits within The Old Vinyl Factory development and will feature a cinema, live music venue and interactive exhibitions celebrating the site's history as a key part of the global industrial and music trade.
- *How do we make sure the space is embraced as a home and welcomes everyone in?*

KINGS HEAD THEATRE

- After 49 years, the King's Head Theatre, one of London's longest running and best loved LGBTQ+ venues, is moving and evolving into the home of young creative theatre companies, with a purpose-built new theatre, a main auditorium, a studio theatre and cafe/bar providing a creative hub with a dedicated training programme.
- *How do we make the most of the new space while celebrating the theatre's unique character and humble origins?*

LONDON SCHOOL OF MOSAIC

- Creating private and rented studios and flexible membership options for local artists to address the lack of affordable artist workspace in Camden.
- *How do we balance safe access to the space in a way that does not alienate our community?*

RICH MIX CULTURAL FOUNDATION

- Expanding Rich Mix to introduce a new open ground floor, expanded Stage area, a new frontage onto Redchurch Street and enhanced frontage onto Bethnal Green Road.
- *How do we showcase the flurry of activity going on 'behind the scenes' so our community can experience it?*

THE OLD VIC THEATRE TRUST

- Delivering a new five-storey education, community and artist development space to form a social hub housing at Clore Learning Centre, a flexible studio space and a café-workspace with a play library for young and local people.
- *How do we design the space, so it is flexible, inviting and accessible to everyone?*

THE SELBY TRUST

- Developing a community-led multi-purpose centre in Tottenham for over 40 community and BAME-led businesses, providing offices, a café, food bank, sports facilities, and community spaces.
- *How do we hold onto the community centres unique culture when transitioning into a new space?*

THOMAS' LANE YARD

- Thomas' Lane Yard is the first phase of Catford's regeneration plan and will set the tone for good growth to come. The project includes the restoration of an important local asset, the Catford Constitutional Club, as a cultural and community venue with a reinstated pub. The Yard itself will be the site of new affordable workspace for SMEs and micro-businesses with an inviting public realm.
- *How do we create a neighbourhood hub that embraces the local ecosystem and inspires local businesses?*

SPATIAL DESIGN

The physical design of building and sites including indoor and outdoor space

- | | | |
|-----------|--|--|
| 01 | Use local artists and residents to create artwork in the public realm |  |
| 02 | Use your building/site to become a home for community organisations and local groups | 
 |
| 03 | Test new ways of working in your existing building/site to support the transition into a new building/site | 
 |
| 04 | Dedicate as much of your building/site to community and/or public use |  |
| 05 | Design your building/site for multiple purposes and users | 
 |
| 06 | Engage with 'hard to reach' or 'not yet considered' users of the building/site | 
 |
| 07 | Spend time at the outset speaking to the local community about their hopes and fears |  |
| 08 | Use 'soft nods' to embrace and respect the context, history and heritage of your building/site |  |
| 09 | Understand the relationship between your building/site and local transport access | 
 |
| 10 | Design building/sites with health and wellbeing in mind |  |

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The activities happening in/or around space at the street and neighbourhood scale

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| 11 | Run educational programmes for the local community | 
 |
| 12 | Map and use existing anchor organisations and groups to build relationships with the community and connect the local ecosystem | 
 |
| 13 | Engage partners that aren't your "usual" suspects |  |
| 14 | Setup a Library of Things to support, engage and draw local residents in |  |
| 15 | Consider the role of rood as universal language that has the power to bring people together |  |
| 16 | Understand the existing support gaps and design programmes/activities around these |  |
| 17 | Understand and engage with your community 'melting pot' - where does your community naturally come together? | 
 |
| 18 | Use your programming to bring together different generations, genders and cultures |  |
| 19 | Identify empty units locally that could be repurposed and setup to support local residents and community groups | 
 |
| 20 | Occupy a market stall to engage and observe how local residents use the space shifting power from the "designer" to the community | 
 |

Key:  RELATIONSHIPS  EQUALITY  PARTICIPATION

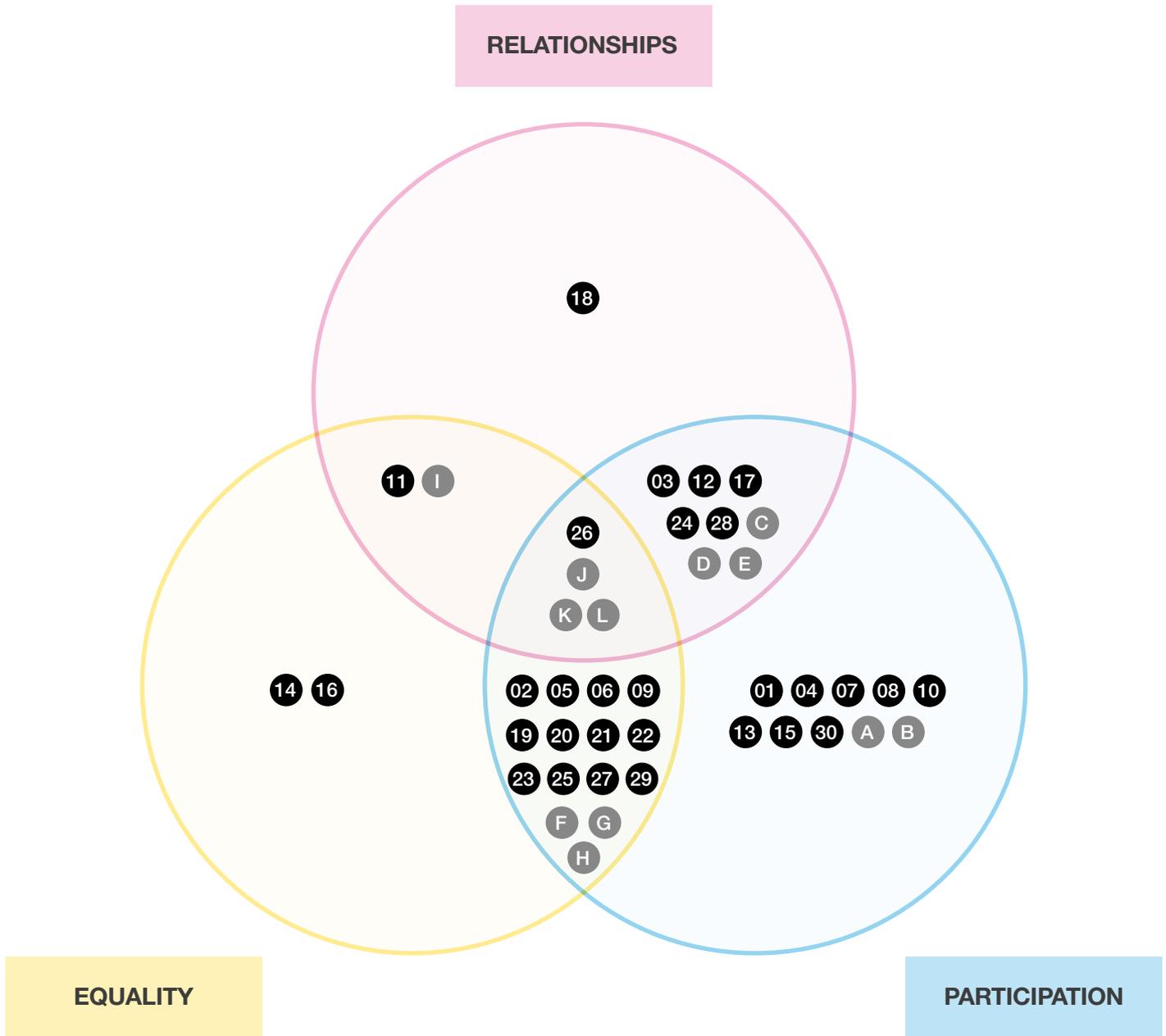
GOVERNANCE

The procurement, processes and systems surrounding the ownership of space

21	Engage councillors, local residents, faith leaders and other community groups as a part of your leadership	 
22	Setup a community benefits society to engage local skills and expertise	 
23	Bring the voice of the local community into your decision-making process through local anchor organisation and groups	 
24	Use your voice to campaign and support local community needs and aspirations	 
25	Employ local residents and talent to capture the stories of your impact	 
26	Consider how you might use your project to support a network of first-paid opportunities	  
27	Develop a membership scheme for emerging businesses and start-ups	 
28	Explore alternative funding opportunities that enable you to provide accessible and/or free activities	 
29	Understand existing barriers to engaging with the community and co-design a process to overcome these	 
30	Bring together local organisations, businesses and providers to become bigger than the sum of your parts	

Recurring spatial design tactics that were recommended throughout our engagement with the projects

A	Consider the different levels of engagement of your building/site e.g. public, semi-public, semi-private and private	
B	Embrace the 'Power of 10' - you need 10 different things for people to do in a public space to make it successful	
C	Use soft furnishings in your outdoor space to encourage "positive loitering" and welcome people in	 
D	Create a spatial map of your building/site to understand the natural hotspots of your space - ask users to plot their favourite places to hang and why	 
E	Consider how to showcase the activities of the building using physical and metaphorical windows	 
F	Think of the movement between spaces and how these might serve additional purposes rather than just getting from A to B	 
G	Design with flexibility in mind from the outset	 
H	Carefully consider the positioning of the toilets - place them in a location that encourages people to move through the space	 
I	Consider natural light, acoustics and access to outdoor space to organically partition space	 
J	Use the concept of 'social distances' to divide up space in a considered way	  
K	Think about fun, engaging and playful ways to gain feedback and evidence the impact of your space	  
L	Carefully consider the design of your entrance space and understand the views from every angle	  



The Venn diagram above maps the tactics being deployed by the GGF projects (numbers) as well as those tactics we recommended (letters).



The next iteration of the design principles

Throughout our engagement with the projects, several common themes continued to emerge. These included shared tactics, challenges, strategies, and concerns. We recognise that some of these themes create the conditions to improve social integration while others represent discrete interventions that can be used as catalysts. These themes represent the next iteration of the design principles, which we encourage projects to put into practice and evolve as their work continues.

These principles summarise our observations from working with the GGF projects involved in this cohort. They do not represent a finite list; rather each principle has prompted questions to invite further experimentation. In addition, these principles could be achieved through spatial design, social activity or governance, and can support social integration by enabling the building of relationships, participation and equality.

1

CREATING PLACES THAT ARE FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE

Having a space that people feel comfortable enough to ‘take over’ creates authenticity and a sense of shared ownership. How might you ensure spaces can change with changing circumstances? What sorts of strategies exist to allow users themselves to adapt the space and make it theirs, without creating exclusion?

2

DESIGNING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

A key concern for all the projects was both spatial and scheduling strategies for creating dense and vibrant programmes within limited spaces. How do you balance multiple uses within a space without compromising on the overall experience?

“At the moment, you walk in [to our building] and you have no idea what is going on...which is such a shame. There is so much amazing activity going on behind the scenes.”

RichMix

3

PUBLIC FACE AND THE CHANCE ENCOUNTER

The importance of an ‘extroverted’ building, one that is characterised by an open spatial layout and embraces flexibility between public and private elements, must not be underestimated. Essentially, how do you design a space and building that speaks to and welcomes chance passers by?

4

BUILDING ITERATION INTO THE PROCESS

How might you think about prototyping and testing throughout the design process so you can learn from a ‘trial and error’ approach (with fewer of the risks)? What techniques exist for the testing and retesting of options with a range of users?

5

EMBRACING FOOD AS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

Food is one of the best ways to make a space a destination with universal appeal. It has the power to break down social, spatial and economic barriers that are often unconsciously present. How might you consider the role of food to bringing communities together, but also how it could be exclusionary, such as the cost?

“We’ve got a canteen at the front. Run by a local comedian and food artist. It provides healthy and great food. It’s creating a real buzz here.”

London School of Mosaic

6

DESIGNING SPACES WITH OVERLAPPING USES WITHOUT CAUSING TENSION

Having multiple things to do in one space is what makes them feel vibrant and alive. But how can these dense overlaps be balanced whilst minimising conflict and tension? For example, how can we consider natural light, acoustics and access to outdoor space to organically partition a space.

7

ENCOURAGING POSITIVE LOITERING

All the projects expressed a desire to create a space where people felt they could stay without spending any money — a rarity in London. How do we make people feel welcome and encourage them to stay, even without anything particular in mind, in order to increase the possibility for interactions between a greater range of users?

“We don’t question peoples need for the space – there is no urgency to figure out why people are there.”

Gramophone

8

DIVERSIFYING POWER STRUCTURES

True participation means being involved in decision making, as well as simply using spaces and services. What sorts of devices for more participatory and open decision-making processes and structures exist for projects to adopt in their communities?

9

DIVERSIFYING USERS BEYOND THE ‘USUAL SUSPECTS’

Closely related to the above, is the issue of diversifying the kinds of users who see the space as ‘for them’. This was a particular the case for the cultural centres, arts organisations and theatre spaces. How might you work with partners to ensure inclusive design is everyone’s priority?

“Sometimes theatre is seen as a space that is for a particular type of person...we want to welcome everyone into our space”

The Old Vic Theatre Trust

10

PRESERVING THE INFORMAL AND AUTHENTIC FEEL

The rough and ready ‘threadbare glamour’ (King’s Heads quote) is often what draws people in; making people feel its theirs and bears the characterful marks of the past. How do you keep the feel and the freedom to tinker whilst breathing new life into the space?

“When I stepped into the centre for the first time, I felt like I was back in India...it’s a different part of the world. It was so welcoming; we don’t want to lose this”

The Selby Trust

11

FROM PERSON-CENTRED TO COMMUNITY-CENTRED

All the projects were deeply embedded in their communities — the whole was always greater than the sum of the parts. There was a call for resources and strategies which addressed designing and thinking with a community in mind, as opposed to breaking it down to multiple ‘individuals’.

“We have ‘open for business’ sessions with local suppliers to encourage and support the local economy”

Thomas’ Lane Yard



Key recommendations

Building on the work already underway at the GLA and following on from our engagement with the GGF projects, we spotted these opportunities to support and further amplify the work of the regeneration projects to improve social integration outcomes across London.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS CONTINUE DEVELOPING TACTICS

As the projects are at various stages in their design journey, we suggest that project participants continue to put the design principles into practice. For example, by testing these out in their immediate teams, within their wider organisations, and with partners and the community, and by bringing together diversity of thought and practice to build on the existing tactics that have been collated and shared.

DESIGN WORKSHOPS TO EXPLORE KEY CHALLENGES

Projects balanced a sophisticated understanding of social integration and grassroots knowledge with practical design questions. To strengthen their work, project participants called for greater opportunities to get expert input, delivered in an informal setting. We recommend design workshops to bring together stakeholders and communities to explore key challenges while supporting the projects to put the design principles into practice.

ENABLE GREATER COHORT SHARING

The ability to share ideas within the cohort was highlighted as a key need, especially during the COVID-19 crisis, as many projects sought to respond with experience and swiftness to a fast-changing and uncertain contexts. The ability to hear what worked (and what didn't) in other projects during this time was highly valued. Cohort and peer learning should continue to underpin further engagement with the projects so that they can continue to learn from each other and evolve the design principles. One example of this in practice is the recently established Social Integration and Regeneration Learning Network run by the London Metropolitan University⁶.

COMPLEXITY AND EVIDENCE

Many of the projects involved complex, long-term relationships with their stakeholders. For many the need to translate that into evidence sparked concerns as to what aspects of their work 'count', and how to unpick issues which were almost always interrelated. In addition to the emerging evaluation toolkit, some projects would benefit from dedicated support from an evaluation expert to help projects identify proxy measures and make the connection between tactics and social integration outcomes.

⁶ www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/centres-groups-and-units/social-integration-and-regeneration-learning-network/



Design Council
Eagle House
167 City Road
London EC1V 1AW



info@designcouncil.org.uk



020 7420 5200



designcouncil.org.uk