

Scaling up Co-Design

A journey of collaboration in research,
practice and communities



Definitions

Co-design refers to the process where people share the conceptualisation and production of action and knowledge.

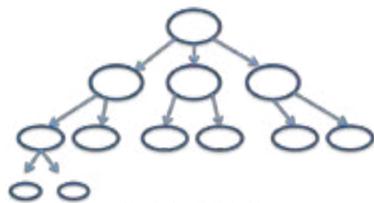
Scaling up has multiple interpretations and shapes such as extending, reaching out, reaching up or connecting. Here are some of the ways we tried to visualise them:



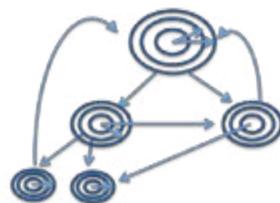
Scaling up as **extending out**: offering more, reaching more people



Scaling up as **extending up**: having a larger impact, influencing general practice



Scaling up as **spreading out**: cascading, a tree or pyramid model



Scaling up as **connecting**: connecting practices at multiple levels, a network model

Co-production workshops are face-to-face meetings that allow us to:

- ‘*Explore*’ ideas for projects
- ‘*Propose*’ ideas for projects
- ‘*Reflect*’ on the effects of projects

Cross-pollination is a process where project partners share and identify common and complementary interests, competencies and live projects in order to collaborate on joint work.

Foreword

Our quality of life often relies on the creative actions and knowledge of civil society, whether focussed on the built environment, technology, disability, health or other socio-economic issues. The work of charities, social enterprises, not-for-profit organisations and of academic institutions is part of this civic space and their actions interact with private sector organisations, governmental bodies and above all, with people.

This booklet presents some key moments and learning from collaboration between civil society organisations and academic institutions through **Scaling up Co-design Research and Practice**, a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under the Connected Communities programme.

The Scaling up Co-Design project set out to explore **how the impact and reach of the work of civil society can be scaled up through co-design practices** (and how co-design practices can be cascaded more widely in civil society). This meant not only using co-design to scale up the impact and reach of our practices and knowledge, but also to bring positive change to the people and communities with whom we work.

In this project, civil society organisations and academic institutions co-designed a range of projects, including activities for community engagement in urban design, media training, journalism, IT training for volunteer organisations and co-design of smart environments for independent living.

This booklet will provide insights into the meaning and potential of co-design practices and will explore the multiple interpretations and approaches to “scaling up”, through extending, reaching out, reaching up or connecting.

We hope our reflections and concrete examples of how co-design has been used to enhance the impact and reach of our civil society organisations, and its social and economic value to people and communities, will inspire you to explore the potential of co-design and collaboration to scale up your own impact and reach.

Partners

What did partners set out to learn or experience through this project?

“

How do we encourage more (collaboration) co-design especially to smaller groups such as those with a disability who traditionally have been difficult to engage with – ideally to define a model for engagement?

– Colin Foskett, Blackwood Foundation

”

“

How could we get communities to start ‘designing’ solutions rather than ‘planning’ actions?

– Busayawan Lam, Brunel University

”

“

To understand methods that can contribute back to [community] organisations to help them develop their capacity.

– Hannah Goraya

”

“

I am interested in the wellbeing of the organisations that we have assembled and hope to make the project useful to them.

– Ann Light, Northumbria University

”

“

We are interested in trying to address some of the issues we encounter around collaboration and online tools for the non-technical organisations and communities we work with.

– Paula Graham, Fossbox & Flossie

”

“

How can small organisations that are providing technical or design services be more effective and extend their capabilities – do more with less?

– Andy Dearden, Sheffield Hallam University

”

“

We hope to build capacity and extend our reach (widen my micro thinking!) to make us, and the organisations we support, more financially sustainable.

– Justine Gaubert, Silent Cities

”

“

How can co-design be applied to extend reach and impact for organisations working within communities, both for the organisations themselves and those they support?

– Sophia de Sousa, The Glass-House Community Led Design

”

“

This project gives me the opportunity to reflect on the present and develop some principles to extend this [co-design] practice to other projects and with other partners.

– Katerina Alexiou, The Open University

”

“

An opportunity to bring to the fore new forms of co-design practices that are based on the academic-community organisation partnerships and aim to address complex issues through co-design.

– Theo Zamenopoulos, The Open University

”

Partners *(continued)*

Project partners

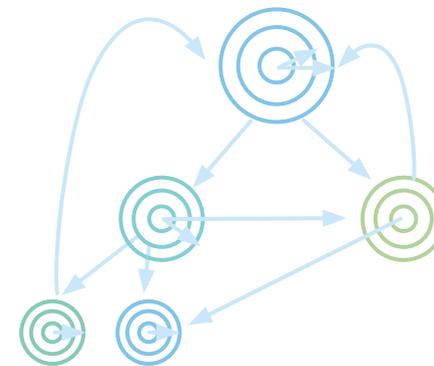


- **Blackwood Foundation** is a UK-based charity that helps disabled people of all ages to live more independently and improve their quality of life.
- **Flossie** is a women-led organisation actively supporting women in the digital world.
- **Fossbox** is a non-profit organisation specialising in open innovation, meta-design and open source solutions for social impact.
- **Silent Cities** is a social enterprise that aims to build creative environments where silent voices can flourish.
- **The Glass-House Community Led Design** is a national charity supporting and promoting public participation and leadership in the design of the built environment.
- **One Westminster** is a local charity transforming lives in Westminster communities by supporting local volunteering and community action.

Acknowledgements

Beyond the core project partners, many other organisations, groups and individuals became involved in the Scaling up Co-Design journey. These are:

Yodit Stanton, Atomic Data Labs	OpenStreetMap France
Bournemouth School of Architecture, Arts University Bournemouth	Opensensors.io
Chandrika Cyclic, Brunel University	Sacred Heart Catholic School
Citizenship Foundation	Silent Cities Community Journalists, especially El Veasey and Faiza Omar
George Perfect	Maja Jorgensen and Louise Dredge, The Glass-House Community Led Design
Lend Lease	



Co-designing the Scaling up Co-Design project

Scaling up Co-Design was part of an AHRC scheme, Connected Communities, which emphasised the involvement of community organisations in the conception and production of research. It followed a staged funding process in which phase two (co-production) was conditional on the successful completion of phase one (co-design).

Each of the partners came to the project with some experience of co-design. We had all applied it in our practice and were already outspoken ambassadors for this collaborative approach. We shared a curiosity in how others used and approached co-design, and also the desire to engage more people in this practice.

All partners saw this particular strand of AHRC funding dedicated to co-designed research, as an unusual opportunity to co-design research questions and activity that could scale up co-design in our practice and in supporting communities on the ground. Scaling Up Co-Design was also a rare opportunity to explore whether the very process of civil society and academic partners actively and equitably co-designing research could increase the scale, reach and impact of that research.

In February 2013 the 'first' journey of this project began, with its aim to define the more specific research questions and create a proposed model of co-design practice.

The 'first' journey: towards a model of co-design practice

The proposed model of co-design practice was conceptualised in phase one of the project, which defined the research aims, objectives and approach to co-design. We also produced a shared code of practice for our collaboration. We did this mainly through co-design workshops but also online video conferences and interactions on a prototype online collaboration platform called *cohere*.

This process revealed what became the defining features of the project:

- a commitment to openness and shared decision-making
- that the project should build on existing work, enhance it and take it in new directions,
- the need to create a space for experimentation that respects the partners' different situations, resources and ambitions, creates new opportunities to build knowledge and extend practice, and crucially, helps people through co-design.



Spotlight on co-design approach

The first workshop adapted a Glass-House technique called Design by Consensus, a role play workshop that aims to explore the needs and aspirations of a diverse group of stakeholders in negotiating a collective vision for change. The adapted version helped us build a better understanding of each other's research ambitions, opportunities and challenges in order to develop shared objectives and approaches to our collaborative research.

Co-designing the Scaling up Co-Design project *(continued)*

Breakthrough moments: the proposed model of scaling up co-design

BREAKTHROUGH 1: The meanings of scaling up

'Scaling-up' might mean different things, namely:

- *extending out* (reaching more people);
 - *extending up* (reaching policy makers);
 - *spreading out* (cascading co-design practices); and
 - *connecting* (connecting people and practices) to improve effectiveness.
- 

BREAKTHROUGH 2: Our objectives

Building model(s) of co-design practice (between civil organisations and academic institutions) that would help us:

- 1 Address issues that we couldn't before,
 - 2 Deliver the same or more outputs with fewer resources,
 - 3 Reach and help more people and communities,
 - 4 Diversify the offering and engagement with communities,
 - 5 Cascade co-design practice to wider society.
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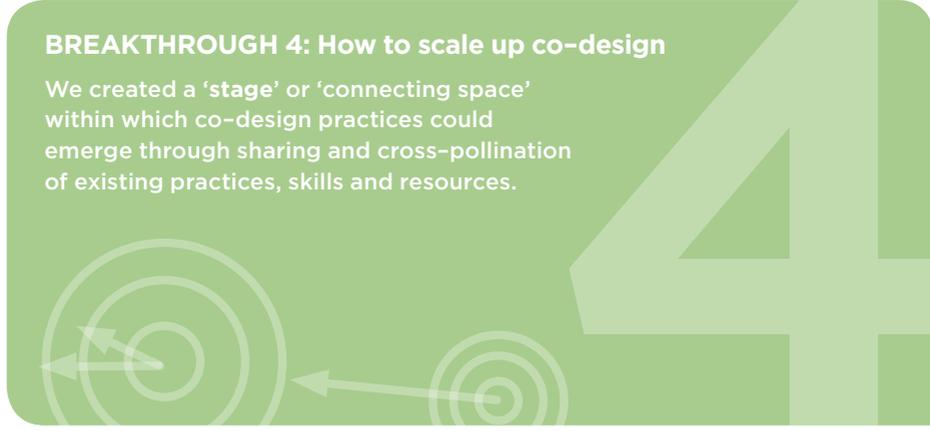
BREAKTHROUGH 3: A code of practice

A code of practice based on shared values and ethics with four key principles:

- Being open about what we want and need from our collaboration
 - Respecting each other's desires and needs
 - Mutual development towards a shared vision
 - Focus on the desires and needs of community (partners and beneficiaries)
- 

BREAKTHROUGH 4: How to scale up co-design

We created a 'stage' or 'connecting space' within which co-design practices could emerge through sharing and cross-pollination of existing practices, skills and resources.



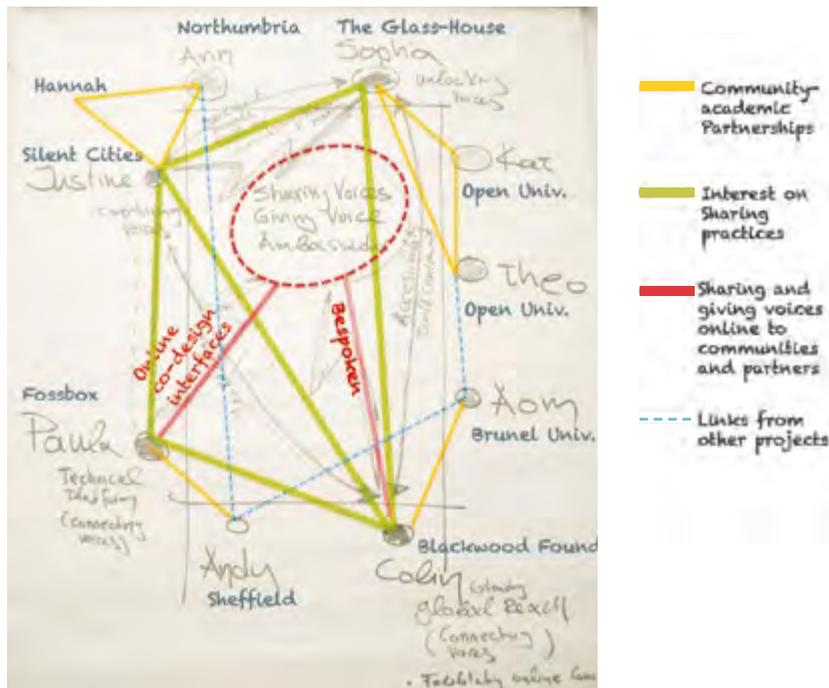
Co-designing the Scaling up Co-Design project *(continued)*

Co-production workshops: the stage for cross-pollination

Our co-production workshops became our main stage and mechanism for cross-pollination.

A stage for exploration

The workshops were a stage for exploration: we invited everyone to talk about live projects and those under development, and threw personal and organisational “tools” on the table. We considered where and how other people’s tools could help us deliver our own projects and then how this could enhance our offer to participants and beneficiaries. This is the very meaning of cross-pollination.



Visual reflections about the connections between people & projects.

A stage for proposing cross-pollination projects

The workshops were also a stage for proposing cross-pollination projects. We created maps of ideas and explored how the various partners, as well as other people and organisations might be drawn into our scaling up activity.

The principle was to work as a flexible network of resources, relationships and projects. New ideas were developed as the project continued, with new variations and directions emerging from the original cross-pollination projects.

A stage for reflection

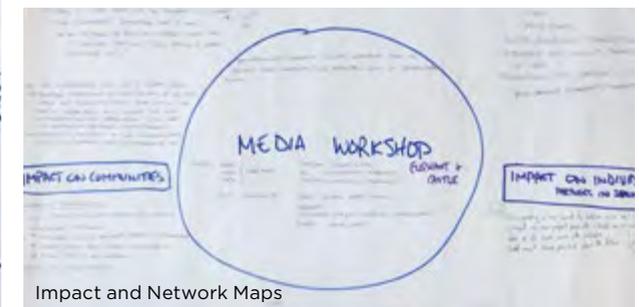
Our co-production meetings were also a stage for reflection on the effects and progress of suggested projects and our values and aspirations. It was a stage that allowed time to think about the effects of our practices on civil organisations, communities and individuals. We used various methods to elicit these reflections.



Values Mapping



Card Game Workshop



Impact and Network Maps

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? Cross-Pollination Projects

'Together, what we couldn't do on our own'

Community Journalists & Place Potential

The Community Journalism programme run by Silent Cities offered aspiring journalists, many of them with first-hand experience of silent issues, to develop their digital skills to explore Sheffield's silent issues – from homelessness to mental health. Silent Cities and The Glass-House Community Led Design identified an opportunity to support the journalists to explore issues around how place can exclude and include, through a day-long workshop run by The Glass-House. The workshop involved an interview with a member of Blackwood Foundation's Bespoken network, George Perfect, who gave the journalists his first-hand experience of navigating place with a disability. The journalists went out into the local area armed with various media tools to capture some of the opportunities and challenges of this neighbourhood, before producing and presenting powerful outputs on their sensory and emotional interaction with place.



Photo exploring exclusion in place captured by a Community Journalist

Young People, Media and Open Space in Elephant and Castle

The initial phase of cross-pollination between The Glass-House and Silent Cities revealed strongly the value of using media as a tool for people to explore their places and express their experiences – emotional, sensory and other – of these places. The Glass-House invited Silent Cities and a couple of 'graduates' of the Community Journalism programme to support a young people's project that had been initiated by a partnership between The Glass-House and the Citizenship Foundation, for developer Lend Lease. A one-day media training workshop gave young people (aged 14-15) at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Elephant and Castle a similar opportunity to explore their immediate surroundings within the school, culminating in the production and presentation of photography, film and podcasts based on this exploration. A further design training day took the students out on a study tour of local open spaces and helped them to create ideas for a new open space to be developed on the site of the old Heygate Estate in Elephant and Castle.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? Cross-pollination projects *(continued)*



Students in the schoolyard capturing place through media



Students learning about interviewing and audio skills



Students learning about photography



Open Spaces Study Tour

What was the most memorable thing you learnt today?

“

We've learnt from them, they've learnt from us and the collaboration is quite a feat in itself to do between a charity in London, a social enterprise in Sheffield, a mix of volunteers and a school.

- El Veasey, Community Journalist

”

“

How to use media to tell stories and how media can reveal the beauty in simple things we see everyday.

- Student from Sacred Heart Catholic School

”



Student producing media output



Mood board workshop

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Cross-pollination projects *(continued)*

Place approaches in design

The Glass-House were invited to run a workshop to introduce ideas about place for MA students of Design Strategy and Innovation and Design and Branding Strategy at Brunel University. The workshop brought together students from different backgrounds and disciplines and adapted elements from workshops delivered to Silent Cities' Community Journalists and students in Elephant and Castle, to help them explore their emotional and sensory relationship with their environment, and support them to embed a user-led approach in their practices.

This workshop reminded me that places are not built by engineers or architects or designers, buildings, places are built from the users. Remembering this is really important, and this is what I'll take away from this workshop.

– Design Masters student from Brunel University



Internet of Things / Diversifying Design

Through the mapping of the connecting space (Breakthrough 4), partner Fossbox identified an opportunity to test innovative approaches involving product design, architecture and human-computer interaction (HCI). At Flossie 2013 (a two-day women-only event to open up and diversify technology), an exploratory session that involved Fossbox, Flossie, Blackwood Foundation, the Open University, Brunel University and Sheffield Hallam University and architecture students from Arts University Bournemouth, led to an experiment with virtual participation for people with mobility issues. The AUB students learned about current technology trends at the event and worked with the Open University and other partners to explore ways in which emerging technologies could be integrated into the design of the built environment, with an emphasis on assisted living. While virtual participation proved challenging in this context, the cross-pollination in this instance inspired and contributed new ideas and skills and led to new collaborations.



WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

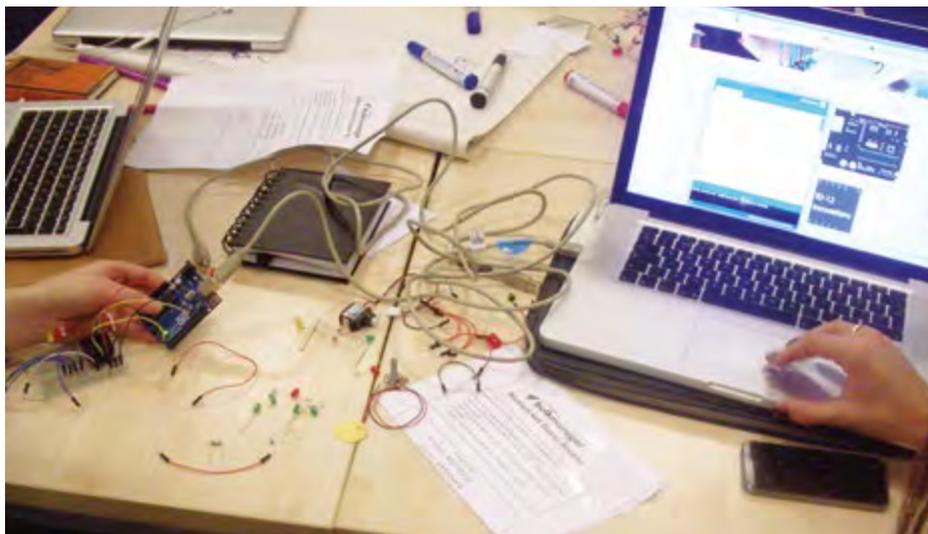
Cross-pollination projects *(continued)*

Accessible Navigation Mapping



Building on an existing co-design process between Fossbox and Open Street Map (OSM - www.openstreetmap.org) and a lack of data on obstructions facing wheelchair users in public spaces, Fossbox and Sheffield Hallam University worked with Blackwood Foundation and opensensors.io to develop an idea for automating accessible navigation by creating a data layer on OSM, populated with telemetry data from motion and location sensors in users' smartphones.

The Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014, in which Blackwood Foundation is a partner, was identified as an ideal opportunity to collect a large amount of data in a concentrated geographical area to prototype the idea. This collaboration is ongoing, with Fossbox and Sheffield University designing a participatory process around the project, working with local disability groups in Glasgow (facilitated by Blackwood Foundation) to source volunteers, while opensensors.io builds a phone app to automatically harvest data.



IT and Voluntary Sector Funding Applications

Fossbox, worked with Sheffield Hallam University and voluntary sector support organisation, One Westminster, to deliver training on using online collaborative tools to write funding applications. The first workshop explored distributed document editing with GoogleDocs and Skype, as well as the agile project management platform *Trello* (www.trello.com). Although participants were positive about the tools, there was no evidence after the workshop of the groups adopting them. Following this disappointment, One Westminster designed a novel way of using *Trello* to support groups in bidding. Checklists of the stages of developing a bid are common in the domain, but by embedding the checklist into a collaborative platform, it becomes possible to provide a co-production service where the support organisation can monitor work and provide guidance. After a single workshop demonstrating the tool to five organisations, two have already adopted the platform to develop a bid, and a third is considering it. This example shows the possibility of scaling up co-design by providing a socio-material infrastructure that is tailored to a specific need. This particular solution is being offered to groups that are already in contact with One Westminster, but radically enriches the quality of the offering.

Emma Plouviez and I have been experimenting with ways of encouraging organisations to make better use of online collaborative tools for about 3 years - working with Andy Dearden as part of 'Scaling Up' facilitated a real breakthrough in finding ways of tailoring mainstream tools to specific and commonly-understood needs.

- Paula Graham, Director of Fossbox

Being involved in this project helped me think creatively on how to deliver similar or even better services in different ways. I now look at how co-design principles could help me engage, train and support beneficiaries, especially in an online environment

- Emma Plouviez,
Organisational Development Officer
from One Westminster

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Empowering marginalised groups

The Scaling up Co-Design project set out to explore the impact of scaling up on research and practice, but with the commitment that its activities might have a transformative effect on the lives of people in the communities involved in the research. We wanted participation to bring something positive to participants, and also to empower them to be ambassadors and enablers of co-design and of our practices.

Silent voices

Following The Glass-House workshop with the Community Journalists, two Community Journalists – El Veasey and Faiza Omar – worked with Silent Cities’ founder Justine Gaubert and members of The Glass-House team to develop and deliver the media training day programme and contributed to the content of a Resource Book, produced by The Glass-House as part of the young people’s programme in Elephant and Castle.

While they contributed to the work of The Glass-House in London, El and Faiza gained valuable skills and confidence, valuable life and employment skills (El feels that this experience has brought a new level of awareness to her emerging work as an occupational therapist, while for Faiza the experience has shown her London in a new light and further inspired a desire to travel and to live in London), and they have continued to develop as Community Journalists delivering work for Silent Cities.

“

For me it’s been a really good experience because I’ve never done anything like this before, I’ve never worked with kids. I’ve been loving every single minute.

– El Veasey, Community Journalist

”

Young People

Through a number of activities, led by The Glass-House in collaboration with project partners Silent Cities, the Open University, Blackwood Foundation and Northumbria University, and with other partners including Lend Lease and Sacred Heart Catholic School, a group of twenty Year 10 students were given the opportunity to develop their design and media skills to explore their place and think about the qualities they would like to see in a new open space to be developed in Elephant and Castle. Students not only developed design and media skills, but also improved their analytical, communication and team-working skills, and were empowered to contribute to the future development of their neighbourhood.

“

I like how I get to learn and think about things in a new way.

– Student from Sacred Heart Catholic School

”

“

The most memorable thing I learned today is that our opinions and voices actually affect the place around us.

– Student from Sacred Heart Catholic School

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“

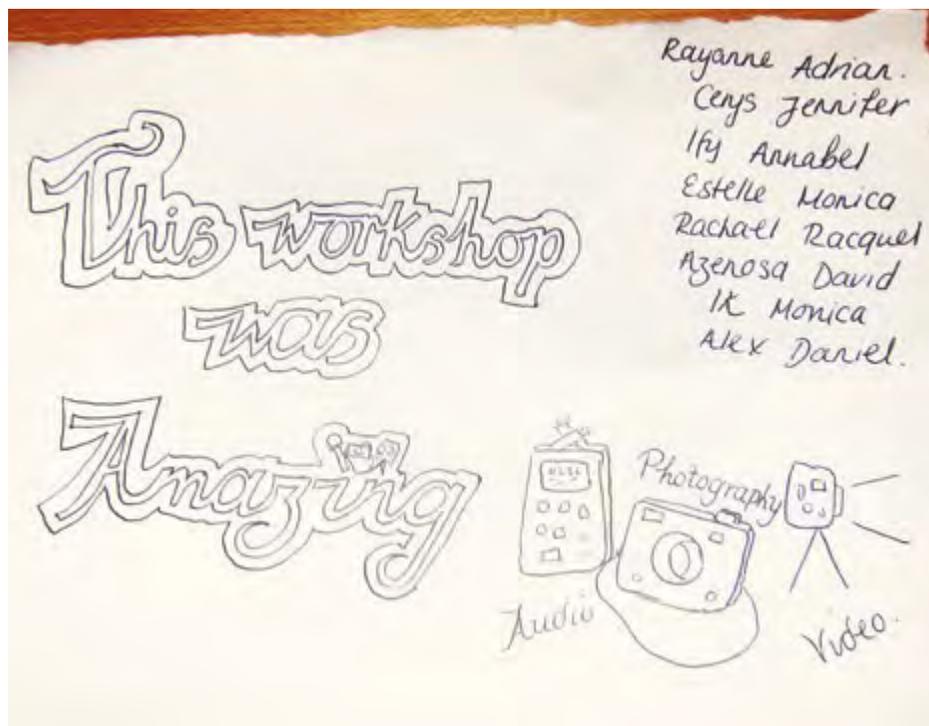
Every one of those presentations was alive with interaction, people and expression, demonstrated quiet thinking and a real people focus.

– Louise Dredge, Outreach and Impact Manager at The Glass-House

”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Empowering marginalised groups *(continued)*



'This workshop was amazing' poster made by a group of students and given to facilitators at the end of the session.

Disability and Independent Living

By engaging with members of Blackwood Foundation's Bespoken Network the project engaged individuals and groups dealing with issues related to disability and independent living. Through his presentation and discussion with the Community Journalists, George Perfect extended his experience of living with a disability to a Sheffield-based group to support them to build awareness of the issues he raised in their personal and professional lives.

The 'Accessible Navigation Mapping' project is engaging local Glaswegian disability groups to collect and inform data on their interaction with the city and its spaces, which will help to enhance the experience of other people with mobility issues during the 2014 Commonwealth Games and beyond.

Partnership between The Glass-House and Blackwood Foundation brought a representative of the Bespoken Network into the 2013/14 national Glass-House Debate Series, *Place Potential*. This brought issues around access and independent living into the dialogue on place, health and wellbeing, and helped Blackwood Foundation to consider how their work fit into the wider conversation around place.



Open Street Map - French demo

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Cascading influence and impact

Fostering co-design champions

Future Practice

One of the core opportunities to cascade co-design practices is linking to public events and conferences. Running co-design projects in such venues gives the opportunity for people to experience the co-design process, be inspired and ultimately transfer this knowledge to their context.

The Flossie 2013 annual event provided one such opportunity, in which six project partners collaborated and invited further participation from students of architecture from Arts University Bournemouth and other event attendees.

The workshop was a unique learning experience for one of the participants – a PhD student with a background in social science and psychology. She said:

“

I'd read about these sorts of workshops from people but I wanted to go a step further to actually find out how is it done.

– Chandrika Cycil, PhD student at Brunel University

”

Chandrika used the Flossie workshop as a model for organising another design workshop focussed on the use of technology in family cars. She secured an impact acceleration grant from Brunel University to run the workshop and develop a new technology in collaboration with a designer. At the workshop, she invited students from Brunel University (particularly those interested in game design) and other designers to reflect on data collected from her PhD, and also to come up with concept ideas for future car technologies.



The feedback from Design Masters' students at Brunel University revealed the cascading impact of the workshop run by The Glass-House, in terms of their future practice:

“

It has made me think of innovating space differently, in terms of sensory and emotional experiences. The biggest takeaway for me from this workshop is to include all the stakeholders and their input while creating something new because it's easily overlooked.

”

“

What I'll take away from this workshop are some of the strategies that were used to bring us together. I thought the mood board exercise was really inspiring, there were images there to prompt you that you could gather together to come up with your own ideas.

”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Cascading influence and impact *(continued)*

Championing co-design in development

The series of workshops run by The Glass-House with Silent Cities, the Open University and other partners, gave students the confidence and skills to articulate their ideas for a new open space in a large-scale development in their neighbourhood. It allowed them to explore their relationship with the spaces and places they use on a daily basis, and in the presence of the development team, consider the various needs and desires of different users while expressing their own voices, as well as representing those of their local communities.



[The workshop was] beneficial for the young people to understand the development and what their role in designing it could be and who else they need to think of as park users.

- Sophie Thacker, Community Development Manager, Lend Lease

On the Community Journalists:

The people who've been through our programmes are now ambassadors to pass on their skills. This project has really made me remember that.

- Justine Gaubert, founder of Silent Cities



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Cascading influence and impact *(continued)*

Extending the practices and toolkits of individual organisations

The cross-pollination of media and placemaking practices extended the practices and toolkits of individual organisations and created ambassadors able to support and enable co-design practices in their own practice and communities.

In Practice

Through their work with The Glass-House, Silent Cities have introduced the themes of place and potential into their work. This cascading of co-design practice is one of the biggest achievements of the project in Sheffield, where Silent Cities and Hannah Goraya have developed the innovative Sheffield Age Better project - www.agebettersheff.co.uk - which aims to reduce loneliness and isolation among the older population in the city.

The close collaboration between The Glass-House and Silent Cities has demonstrated the value of media as an enabling tool for people to explore their relationship with place, and to express their ideas and feelings in this regard. The Glass-House plan to use media as a placemaking tool in future projects and has identified a number of opportunities for future collaboration with Silent Cities.

“

You've then managed to make it into something else that now we can use – so the whole approach has really evolved.

– Louise Dredge, Outreach and Impact Manager at The Glass-House

”

Toolkits

The **Trello tool** that evolved through collaboration between Fossbox, Sheffield Hallam University and One Westminster has now become a live resource for voluntary and not-for profit groups bidding for funding.

Placemaking resource book: Produced during the project by The Glass-House, with contributions from the Open University and Silent Cities, the placemaking resource book was created as an aid for students in their placemaking explorations and to provide a space for capture and reflection of their journey of creative learning. The resource book has since been embedded into The Glass-House practice, providing an additional resource for use in supporting people to interact and engage with issues related to their places. A bespoke version was created for participants in a young people's placemaking programme in London in Spring 2014.



Learning points: practice-based evidence of scaling up

1. Co-design can support scaling up

The proposed model did work for us. Here's how:

new people and organisations connected directly or indirectly with the activities of partners

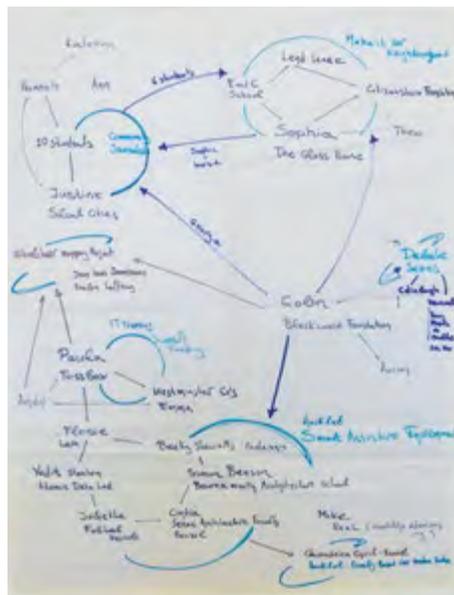
new collaborative relationships arose between partners

new projects or activities took place.

During our reflection meetings we created maps that showed people, projects and cross-pollination relationships. See the difference between these maps:



May 2013



May 2014

2. There are different models and definitions of scaling up

We found that all different models of scaling up were used and were effective in different settings.

For example

- the **network model** was the core model in our research co-design.
- **cascading of co-design** practice was one of the biggest achievements of the project in Sheffield (e.g. Sheffield's Age Better project) and London (e.g. Chandrika Cycil running further Hacklabs).
- the **cross-pollination** of media and placemaking practices extended the practices and toolkit of individual organisations.

We also identified that 'Scaling up' can mean many different things. It can support the

'increase' in the number of people that carry out a practice

'repeatability' of a certain practice across different people and contexts

'enhancement' of the impact and social value of the practice

'extension' of people's own skills, networks or boundaries

“ Taking part in this project has helped me articulate the important distinction between scaling up the volume of our work and scaling up the impact and reach of each individual piece of our work. - Sophia de Sousa, Chief Executive at The Glass-House ”

Learning points: practice-based evidence of scaling up *(continued)*

3. Certain conditions support scaling up co-design

Scaling up was made possible due to certain conditions. Through various **reflection exercises** including a card game, reflections on impact, network mapping and values mapping, we identified the following key conditions:

1. Openness

- being open and clear about your priorities and conditions for working
- allowing designs and ideas to stay unfinished and to evolve naturally
- sharing and producing shared resources (creative commons)
- letting go/relinquishing control or ownership of methods and outcomes.

2. Safe space

The quality and impact of co-design depended on the creation of a safe space where partners can

- experiment in new ways
- question their own and each other's understanding of concepts
- feel trust and mutual respect
- have fun

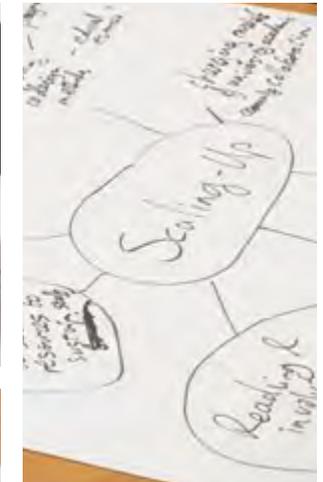
3. Capacity building

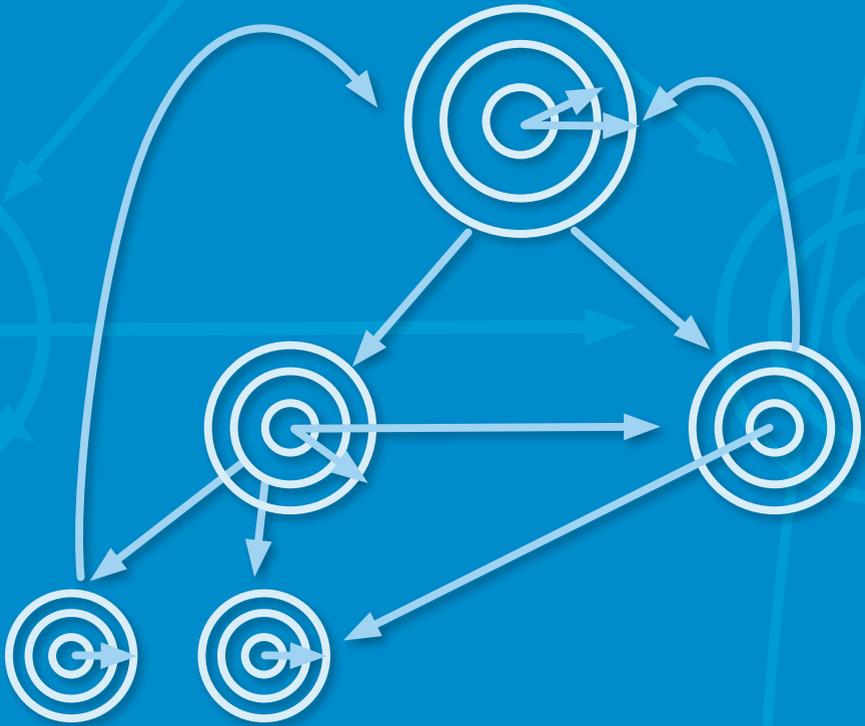
The value of co-design is its ability to build capacity at various levels:

- organisations,
- individuals within organisations
- participants/beneficiaries of co-design activities.

4. Shared Values

The creation of shared values (a code of practice for our collaboration) was both a vehicle and an outcome of co-design.





Produced by a partnership between _____ and the _____, on behalf of the _____ project.

Funded by _____ programme.



Booklet design by _____