STARTING FROM VALUES

Evaluating Intangible Legacies of Connected Communities Projects

What we mean by 'starting from values' is taking what is important to people and organisations in their work as the starting point to evaluate projects.

Why the values lens?

Projects often involve working with different partners and stakeholders involved, and they will share values, but also have their own.

Definition - we understand values as 'principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgement about what is important in life'

Oxford English Dictionary

Evaluating the outcomes of projects tends to reflect the values of funders and what can be easily measured... but...projects often involve different partners, with different interests and values. And what is important to them may be difficult to capture or evaluate.

What is 'starting from values'?

As our starting point for this project, we used a values-based approach to project evaluation, which had been developed through a previous EU-funded project.

The broad stages are:

- eliciting values (finding out what's important to people)
- prompting new thoughts and clarifying what these values might 'look like'
- identifying and mapping values-based aspects (processes and/or outcomes)
- reflecting on the overview to articulate legacies

Context of this work

The work presented in this booklet has been carried out in the context of research funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), through the Connected Communities theme which focuses on funding and supporting community-engaged research.

Our question

We set out to explore the following question: 'what difference have Connected Communities projects made: what are their legacies?'

Community-engaged research tends to be evaluated in research terms. This does not reflect the broader legacies for all partners and participants.

Our approach

'Starting from values' re-sets the balance and provides a mechanism for understanding and valuing different perspectives. It also gives space and a language to articulate less 'tangible' aspects of project legacies.

What have we found?

A values-based approach to understanding the legacies of community-engaged research can:

- Unearth 'new' legacies and a deeper understanding of 'known' legacies
- Enhance existing legacies
- Create confidence to articulate broader and deeper aspects of legacies
- Enhance collaborative working within partnerships

Broader benefits of 'starting from values'

The project led to additional benefits for community partners: energising key members of staff and articulating the values of their own organisations. This has also led to being better equipped to negotiate their role in future partnership work.

The project has also inspired partners to develop new projects with values approaches at the heart of design and delivery, and led to new research ideas and practices.

This project was born from a shared interest in exploring the legacy of community-engaged research projects through the lens of values.

The project brings together a broad range of collaborators from different disciplinary and practice backgrounds, with expertise in **co-design** and **co-production**, research in **authority** and **participation** and **values-based** approaches.

Partners include community organisations and academics from the **Scaling-Up Co-Design Project** and **The Authority Research Network** which have received funding through the AHRC Connected Communities theme, as well as researchers from the University of Brighton and five academic advisors.

Blackwood Foundation is a UK-based charity that helps disabled people of all ages to live more independently and improve their quality of life.
Fossbox CIC 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 public participation and leadership in the design of the built environment.
Academic partners. These include researchers from the University of Brighton, The Open University, Cardiff University, University of Northumbria, Sheffield Hallam University, Brunel University and the University of Sussex.

We started by investigating values and legacies within two different contexts. We did this by co-designing locally relevant values-based approaches.

CASE STUDY . The Authority Research Network
We investigated... the **values** of the network
and **legacies** of relevant joint projects led by members of the Network.

CASE STUDY . Scaling-Up Co-Design
We investigated... the **values** of the project team
...**values** of the community partners
and **legacies** of the project from these different values perspectives

This in-depth work allowed us to develop approaches for other collaborative projects. We worked with a further **six** projects to explore values and legacies.

An important part of the project was for partners to develop expertise in 'starting from values' in their own contexts, but also through working with other projects and organisations.

This 'meta-design' aspect of the project helped to **build capacity**.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED . We then looked across our experience to identify what we learned from the values approach. What more have we learned about project legacies?

SO WHAT? The values lens tends to unearth less tangible dimensions of project legacies. Why is capturing these important?

Introducing the Authority Research Network

The Authority Research Network (ARN) is an expanding research collective which engages with questions of authority, positive power, political subjectivity and experience through developing strong social theory and links with practice.

It was initiated by a group of doctoral students. Members collaborate through conceptual retreats and joint research projects.

" *we really wanted to form something that would be doing theory, taking theory seriously, creating real spaces for thinking deeply, thinking critically, but also thinking together through friendship and through supporting each other"* Claire, University of Warwick

Projects in the Connected Communities theme were funded with the aim of building a new interdisciplinary research community and were explicitly theoretical.

They enabled members of the ARN to more effectively connect with academics and practitioners, and move the theoretical work being developed into new domains.

Joint projects led by ARN members funded through the Connected Communities theme

Immanent Authority and the Making of Community - the role of arts and culture in creating more egalitarian power relations

Authority, Knowledge and Performance in Participatory Practice

Emergent Autorities - Creative / Performative Approaches to Democracy and Authority Research

Democracy's Non-Human and Non-Living "Others" - A Cartography of Creative Listening Practices

Whose values? Which legacies?

Members of the network were interested in articulating what is important to them as a collective, and capturing the legacies of multiple joint projects through this lens.

ARN Authority Research Network

STARTING FROM VALUES

What did we do?

The values elicitation process was integrated into a research retreat, which is the main form of collaboration for the ARN.

This took place through several steps...

1 walk and talk...about values

2 diagramming

3 collective brainstorming and using values prompts

What did we come up with?

The values elicitation process led members to identify five important shared values for the ARN.

These were then used as the basis for identifying and articulating legacies of joint projects led by members of the ARN.

an experimental attitude towards research and knowledge

creativity is valued

Resisting superficiality and creating deep, lasting connections and collaborations

People celebrate nature and the wider community of life (human & non-human)

The network contributes to the thinking and practice of equality and the making of the commons

WHAT DID WE FIND?

'Slow thinking' is invaluable and influences practices within and beyond the Network.

A central part of research retreats, 'slow thinking' opens up spaces to listen to different kinds of thoughts and ideas, engage with different or new kinds of communities - human and even non-human.

Slow thinking is the practice of 'unthinking', developing ideas at a slower space, and taking that thinking into 'in-between' spaces like cooking, walking ...

" *Valorising the 'slow' is really important... we create these incredibly intensive environments which are really productive and exhausting at the same time but that are also fun, and happy and full of life"* Leila, University of Brighton

Slow approaches to thinking have influenced ARN members in their research, teaching and community engagement activities.

" *We've developed a strong toolkit for short practices for getting people to stop and reflect on things in different ways before you start discussing them, before you start speaking."* Sam, University of Bristol
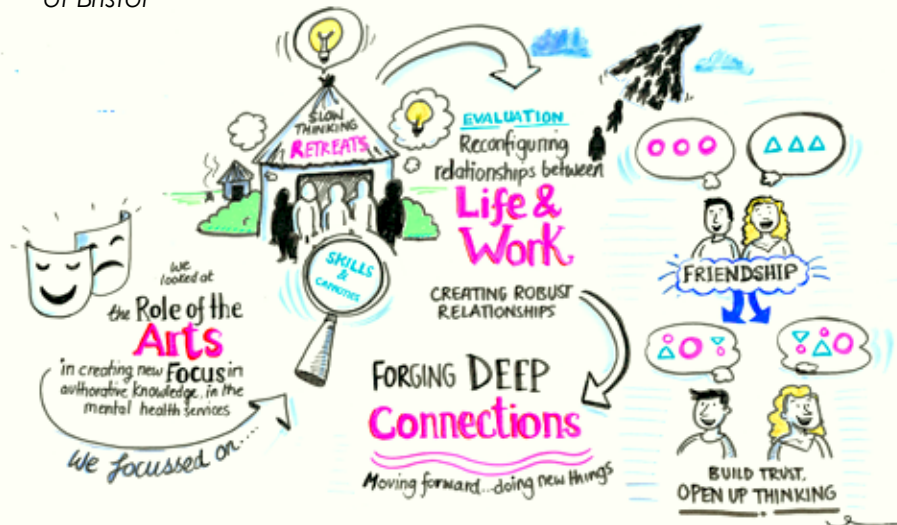
Friendship is a key legacy for ARN. Building possibilities of friendship as a way of doing academic work.

Friendship is a condition for doing good thinking and theorising.

" Actually, these forms of friendship or joy or creativity, are an important part of research. They are essential things to be doing if we want the research we are doing to have the effect we are wanting it to having in society." Julian, Cardiff University

Friendship shapes how we define ourselves as academics, how we build relationships with collaborators, develop projects or supervise our students.

We have a strong and growing network and it is being developed through deep connections. Our work contributes to rigorous theorising and practice around questions of authority, participation and the commons

" Starting from values helps to remind ourselves in the face of all the other pressures to speed up, to get stuff out there quickly, that we are producing strong work, making lovely deep relationships. It's been an incredibly productive exercise in helping us do that." Leila, University of Brighton

" The trust we have in friendship is something that is enabling... particularly of thought, creating this ability for thought, and *creative* thought, and *deep* thought" Claire, University of Warwick
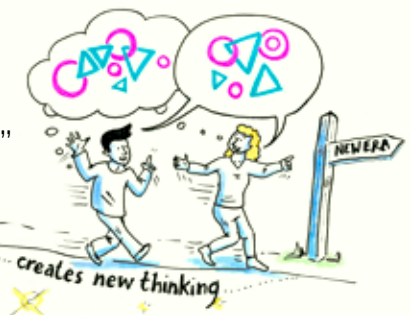
Introducing the Scaling-Up Co-Design project

Scaling-Up Co-Design was funded through the AHRC Connected Communities theme. It formally ended in June 2014.

The project set out to explore how the impact and reach of the work of civil society can be scaled up through co-design practices.

The project involved 6 community partners, 5 academic partners and an independent researcher.

Whose values? Which legacies?

The focus was to understand the legacies of the Scaling-Up Co-Design project, but from different perspectives.

As a collaboration between community and academic partners, we investigated legacies in terms of:

The shared values of the entire **project team**

The respective values of four **community partners** Blackwood Foundation, Fossbox and Flossie, Silent Cities and The Glass-House Community Led Design

" I think the approach was most powerful for community partners. It gave them space to think about their own values and how these interact with this research project, and other research projects potentially." Katerina, Open University

Community partners explored their own values, co-developing an approach suited to their specific context.

We then used these five different lenses to articulate legacies of the Scaling-Up Co-Design project.

STARTING FROM VALUES ... OF THE PROJECT TEAM

What did we do?

We started by brainstorming

We then used values prompts developed from a previous project

We adapted these to fit the collaborative research context and ran a second workshp with the project team

We identified important legacies

We finalised with an online poll

What insights did we gain?

The process helped the team to re-articulate shared values. We identified openness as a key value not only for the project but also as a condition for 'scaling-up' collaborative design practices.

Other shared values included   Testing ideas and approaches

Cross-fertilisation expands practices and inspires new ways of thinking

Achieving broader social benefit

Creating new and lasting connections

Doing more with less, adding value and enriching work of community partners

We also started to design approaches to explore not only the values that are shared but also individual and potentially contentious values.

By investigating legacies from a values lens, we gained a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the project's impacts.

" The importance of discovering these types of deep legacies is that you start understanding the reasons or conditions for success or failure of aspects of the project" Theo, Open University

STARTING FROM VALUES ... OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Silent Cities

Intangible legacies revealed by the values lens were energy, friendship, confidence and the importance of inspiration and new ideas such as cross-pollination.

> " Deep friendships gave me the energy and confidence to talk about co-design in an authoritative way. This enabled me to embed co-design into Sheffield's Big Lottery bid for 6m to reduce isolation and loneliness for older people. The bid was successful, with the work on co-design cited as the key factor." Justine, Silent Cities

Fossbox

Innovative partnerships and challenge generated new ideas.

> " As a result of the stalling of the Open Street Maps Smart Wheelchair Accessible Navigation project developed with Blackwood Foundation in the Scaling-Up project, we thought about, discussed and desk-researched issues around data privacy relating to 'big data'. Democratic deficit in 'big data' is now a key area for new work, and we have already run two pilot workshops." Paula, Fossbox and Flossie

Fossbox also designed and integrated digital tools to their values approach.

The values lens work very quick moved from looking at the legacies of Scaling-Up to thinking about how the values approach could help re-connect the organisation's design work with its advocacy work.

The Glass-House Community Led Design

Looking back on Scaling Up through a values lens allowed The Glass-House to explore a broader spectrum of legacies and provided a starting point for the development of a values framework for the organisation.

> " Linking legacies from Scaling-Up Co-Design to Glass-House values, gave us a different perspective on many of the impacts that we had already identified. For example, it deepened our understanding of the value of our strategic partnership with the Open University and collaboration with Silent Cities." Sophia, The Glass-House

> " Developing a values framework for our organisation has provided a practical tool to help us all think about our work more holistically." Louise, The Glass-House
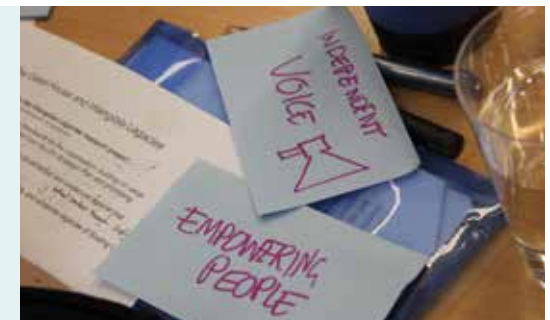
Blackwood Foundation

Co-design as standard in Blackwood Foundation's approach

We are feeding the co-design approach into strategic health and social care integration through the Scottish Collaborative Innovation Partnership Process, and high level discussions on housing strategy.

Another important legacy for us was to **transform the work of other partners** by raising awareness of accessibility and inclusivity issues.

> " We now listen, we now involve, we work with people to make sure homes are inclusive, and a lot of that work comes from the Scaling-Up Co-Design project." Colin, Blackwood Foundation

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

...SO WHAT?

What have we learned about legacies?

. Legacies imply a values judgement - this is often implicit

    . We all have different values

        . So legacies will look different if we look from different perspectives

           . Creative and critical approaches are key to do this

By starting from values, we can:
- → Identify new and deeper project outcomes and learning
- → Make space for deeply personal aspects of projects
- → Stand back from outcomes to articulate legacies

EVALUATING 'INTANGIBLE' LEGACIES?
Every legacy comes from different shades of outcomes:
less tangible   and   more tangible

energy ...   confidence to present ourselves as experts in co-design   ...   Age Better Sheffield Bid

Legacy = embedding co-design in community partners' practices

What else have we learned by starting from values?
Create space for articulating shared values, but also non-shared and even contested values.

"Cross-disciplinary and cross-sector research is always going to have challenging tensions, but this values approach helps people get down to the really important aspects and put other things aside."
Sophia, The Glass-House

Values can change through time.

Integrating a values approach at the start of the project has proven useful.

Starting from values has enabled partners to better negotiate shared objectives in future work.

Starting from values can help partnerships work more effectively.

Why do we think this approach is important?
Starting from values explicitly looks at project outcomes and legacies from **different perspectives**

    ...a project perspective   ...a community partner perspective

  ...an academic perspective   ...participants' perspective

The approach **lends authority** to a broader spectrum of outcomes and provides new mechanisms to say what we think are important legacies, in a rigorous way.

"You often go through a project and miss legacies... you feel them but you don't actually have the authority to articulate them."
Justine, Silent Cities

We need a NEW MECHANISM... ...to speak our own TRUTH To POWER

new measures = more control

By starting from the values of the Authority Research Network, we were able to really investigate legacies beyond the impact of single projects.

"When we are asked to evaluate our projects as individual projects we often lose what we've developed collectively... Thinking outside of the project to how we can evaluate ourselves as academics, or as a collective, is a really strong thing that we've gained by starting from our values." Leila, University of Brighton

Unearthed **new legacies** and **new layers and shades** to existing legacies

Enhanced legacies by providing a rigorous approach to deepening our understanding and thinking about next steps

A **new way of conceptualising legacies** as inherently values-based...
...and an approach for articulating these with **authority and rigour** that **recognises** the absolute need for **creative, arts-based and critical humanities** research and practice.

Built capacity among project partners by embedding the 'meta-design' approach.
Several partners have already facilitated the integration of values approaches in ongoing work with other Connected Communities projects:
- Authority Research Network – as a network
- Empowering Design Practices project
- Co-designing Asset Mapping: comparative approaches
- Ethno-ornithology World Archive project

Community partners have led the development of values-based approaches in their own organisations, and **achieved broader benefits.**

> " By running with it as an organisation we got a richer set of outcomes from the values approach."
> Louise, The Glass-House

New approaches for articulating values in collaborative projects

> " We have already started applying the approach in a new project in a slightly different way: as a catalyst for helping us develop our values. Ultimately it will help us capture legacies as well, but at the moment it guides our thinking about the strategic vision and what we need to develop in order to achieve the legacies we want to achieve." Theo, Open University

The project has inspired **...new areas of research and collaboration**

> " The values approach is opening up new projects. In addition to identifying legacies, it's also been a process of building on the legacy, going forward into new things." Paula Graham, Fossbox

> " Now I'm thinking about friendship...turns out it is incredibly important in all sorts of political radicalism, philosophical movements, religious organisations. So the process has taken me on to thinking about doing some research in the area." Claire, University of Warwick

....new approaches to teaching and learning

> " Being able to think about legacy more broadly also influences the way that I teach my design students. We tend to focus on measurable outcomes, but we need to start thinking about the happiness of people, the confidence or the creativity of the people who are doing the research with them." Aom, Brunel University

Are you collaborating with other organisations?

Are you in a partnership project?

Try the list of prompts we have developed for clarifying values in collaborative projects!

Visit the project website (link p.19)

The research creates/contributes to/............

positive social change/............, rooted in a

vision for a fairer/more just/............ society

The impact of the project is deep rather than broad

Academic and community

partners work together to

blur disciplinary boundaries

'Starting from Values' project team: Marie Harder, Julian Brigstocke, Katerina Alexiou, Theodore Zamenopoulos, Justine Gaubert, Colin Foskett, Sophia de Sousa, Paula Graham, Elona Hoover, Gemma Burford, Ann Light, Andy Dearden, Andy Cheng, Andrew Church and Busayawan Lam.

Authority Research Network members
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The Glass-House Community Led Design team
Louise Dredge, Lucia das Neves and Maja Luna Jorgensen

From the Scaling-Up Co-Design project
Hannah Goraya, El Veasey, Faiza Omar and Chandrika Cycil

Emma Plouviez from **Fossbox CIC**

Empowering Design Practices project team

Ethno-Ornithology World Archive project team
Andy Gosler, Karen Park, Felice Wyndham, David Nathan, Ada Grabowzka-Zhang, John Fanshawe and Heidi Fletcher

Ian Hargreaves from the **Creative Citizens project**

Hannah Scarbrough and Tyler Mears from **Rhondda People**

Ceri Davies and Dave Wolff from the **Community University Partnership Programme, University of Brighton**

Video production by Justine Gaubert and Sam Summers, Silent Cities

Illustrations by Karen Smithson and Eleanor Beer, Endless Possibilities

CONTESTED — SHARED AND IMPORTANT TO US
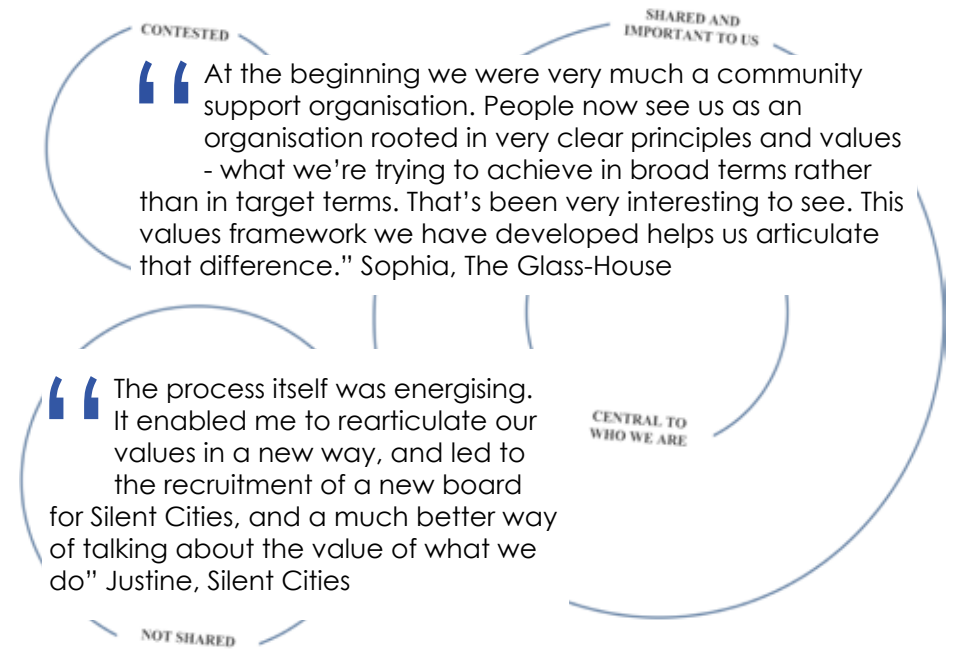
" At the beginning we were very much a community support organisation. People now see us as an organisation rooted in very clear principles and values - what we're trying to achieve in broad terms rather than in target terms. That's been very interesting to see. This values framework we have developed helps us articulate that difference." Sophia, The Glass-House

" The process itself was energising. It enabled me to rearticulate our values in a new way, and led to the recruitment of a new board for Silent Cities, and a much better way of talking about the value of what we do" Justine, Silent Cities

CENTRAL TO WHO WE ARE

NOT SHARED

" It was a revelation to be able to do an evaluation in a way that matched the aims and methodologies of our actual projects. It felt like it was opening up the project and brought out different ways that we saw taking it forward" Paula, Fossbox and Flossie

WATCH THE PROJECT VIDEOS TO FIND OUT MORE
Visit our project website to hear more about project partners' experiences and get inspired:

http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/starting-from-values-evaluating-intangible-legacies

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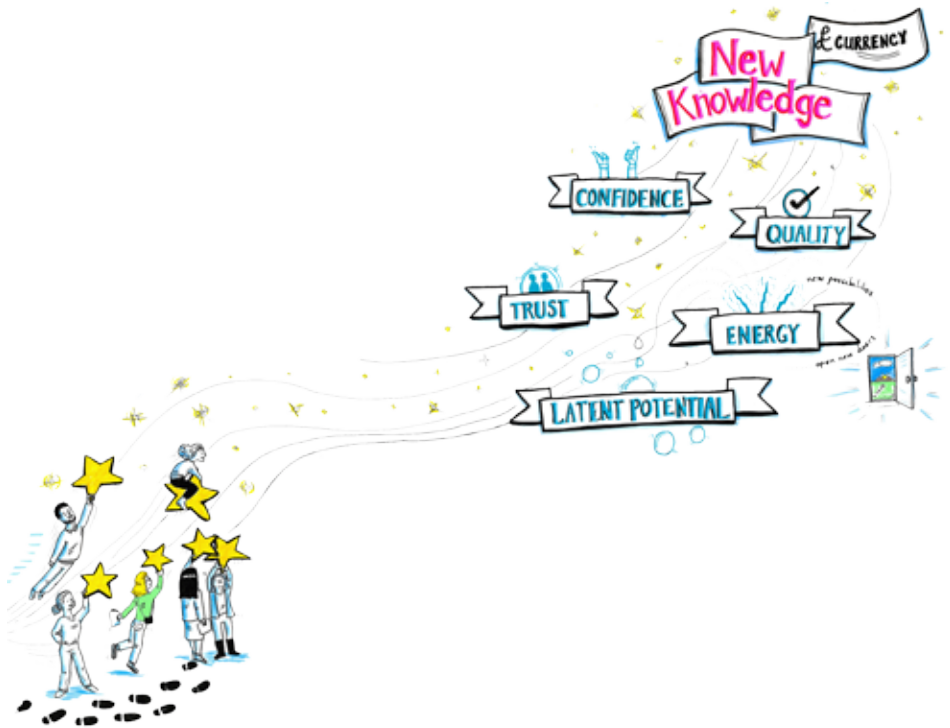
Starting from Values - Evaluating Intangible Legacies

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It is one of seven projects investigating the legacies of the
Connected Communities theme.

CONNECTED
COMMUNITIES

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