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Summer School Exploring Community Engagement for Research: Power, Impact, & Collaboration 11th – 13th July 2017 | LICA Building, Lancaster University





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Arts & Humanities Research Council





In July 2017 nineteen Early Career Researchers from across the Arts and Humanities participated in the second Leapfrog Summer School at Lancaster University. This event offered an opportunity to exchange insights on broader aspects of research and career development, including approaches to generating research questions, and engagement with diverse public audiences both for research and sharing ideas.

Featuring presentations and workshops from the wider Leapfrog team, the Summer School also welcomed a series of international speakers including Lady Rachel Cooper OBE, Dr Tom Wakeford, Stéphane Vincent, Lilas Ozanne, Ken Barnsley, Dr Cath Larkins, and Sue Flowers, who delivered keynotes and lightning talks across the event.

Areas for discussion included:

- Participation and co-production with communities
- · Methods and tools for community engagement
- · Engaging with diverse and minority communities
- Approaches for capturing the value of effective community engagement
- The challenges of evidencing the impact of effective community engagement

The Summer School offered an inspirational and supportive space for a select network of ECRs to develop a collective understanding of various aspects of community engagement, and to consider how they might work together in the future.

This report sets out the presentations and activities that took place across the three days and provides reflections on the discussions that took place.

Summer School Delegate Introductions



## **The Summer School Programme**

In designing the Summer School programme the Leapfrog team assigned each day of the event with a broad theme. Day 01 sought to unpack the fundamentals of community engagement in research; Day 02 focused on how community engagement can make a difference by contributing to academic knowledge and be of direct benefit to society; and Day 03 explored ideas of participation, collaboration, and the ways in which researchers can engage productively with communities as a core element of engagement. In addition to an icebreaker and reflection session, activities comprised three keynotes; two shorter lightning talks; three interactive workshop sessions for all Summer School attendees; and four sessions in which delegates were invited to present their own research and consider how it relates to wider principles and practices of community engagement.

As a space for capturing their emerging responses to the prompts *what is community engagement?*; *how is community engagement done?*; and *how can community engagement make a difference?*, attendees were encouraged to capture key elements from the activities that resonated with them on coloured paper squares and to pin these to three large format boards. These formed a shared repository of insights to be built upon across the event.

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# Day 01: What is Community Engagement?

The 2017 Leapfrog Summer School opened with a welcome presentation, which was followed by an introduction to the Leapfrog project, given by Professor Leon Cruickshank. The delegates were then invited to take part in a group icebreaker activity, *Sharing Research Stories 01*, facilitated by Dr Cara Broadley and Dr Michael Pierre Johnson. In pairs, attendees shared with each other their research interests, their own strengths and weaknesses, their research idols, and ideas for a research project they would like to get funding for. Recording these research stories on a template, each pair then introduced themselves to the wider group, and pinned their templates to a large board for the rest of the Summer School.

Following this was the first keynote presentation, *Creativity through Participatory Action Research: The Bumpy Road from Wigan Pier to People's Knowledge*, delivered by Dr Tom Wakeford. Tom is a Reader in Public Science and a lead practitioner at Peoplesknowledge.org, based at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience in Coventry. In his presentation, Tom introduced a series of participatory action research projects and described the ethical tensions and challenges he faced when working in a range of international contexts.







Delegates watching Dr Tom Wakeford's keynote

In the afternoon, the first and second breakout sessions took place. These were chaired by Dr Paul Smith, where the following delegates presented:

### Breakout Session 01:

Dr. Helena Sustar, a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Design, Aalto University, School of Art, Design and Architecture, presented her insights on designing for empathy in complex governmental systems with a particular focus on the context of immigration and refugees.
Jimmy Paquet-Cormier, an Assistant Researcher at the Royal College of Art and studying for a PhD at Lancaster University, discussed his experiences of public engagement as a community of practice and shared his insights into developing adaptive solutions to climate change.

• Mirian Calvo, a PhD candidate studying at the Institute of Design Innovation at The Glasgow of School of Art and part of the Leapfrog team, shared insights from her current research around mutual and informal learning that can take place in co-design communities.

• Francesso Mazzarella, a PhD candidate studying at Loughborough Design School, discussed his doctoral research on co-designing situated services for sustainable futures, sharing his approach to meaningful social innovation in the context of textile artisan communities.

• Hayley Alter, a PhD candidate at Lancaster University and part of the Leapfrog team, presented her work on how design can support community engagement practitioners to appropriate and adapt tools for creative engagement.

### Breakout Session 02:

• Anna Louise Spencer, a doctoral candidate studying at the Institute of Design Innovation at The Glasgow of School of Art, shared her experiences of practice-based research in the context of rural village communities in the Scottish Highlands, where she has been working at the intersection of community development and socially engaged design.

• Anne Marie Carty, currently studying for a PhD at the University of Westminster, discussed her experiences of using video, film and narrative therapy techniques as tools for stimulating dialogues with and between rural communities and organisations.

• Dr Jeanne-Louise Moys, a lecturer at the University of Reading, shared her research on the transformative experience of printed and digital typography and how such interfaces can enable designers and non-designers to present information effectively.

• Victoria Squire, a lecturer at Plymouth University, discussed her practice-led research which focuses on a collaborative design toolkit through reimagining the qualities of letterpress.

• William Titley, a doctoral candidate studying at Manchester Metropolitan University, drew on his own social arts practice when discussing the relational experiences of live social practices and how these can be documented.

The first day of the Summer School was brought to a close with a drinks reception, where the delegates enjoyed getting to know each other and discussing their research interests in a more informal setting.

# What is community engagement?

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## Day 02: Making a difference through Community Engagement

The second day of the Summer School began with a keynote presentation, *Innovative Public Sector Engagement: Superpublic and Beyond*, delivered by Stéphane Vincent and Lilas Ozanne. Stéphane is the Director of La 27e Région (Region 27), where Lilas works as a Service Designer, and together they discussed their approaches to public sector engagement and ways of innovating practices in policy development in France.

Following this, the delegates participated in a workshop, *Co-design and Decision Making in Public Health*, delivered by Ken Barnsley. Ken is a public health specialist with Blackburn with Darwen Council Public Health Team. He has many years of experience of working with local communities to develop strategies and plans to improve Health and Wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. During the workshop, there were opportunities for attendees to discuss their personal perspectives and experiences of health, encouraging reflections on the origins of our own attitudes and behaviours around critical moments of decision-making.

Following Ken's workshop Professor Leon Cruickshank, Dr Roger Whitham, Dr Paul Smith delivered a presentation, *Sharing Approaches to Engagement Tools*, where they shared experiences of toolbox and tool-making from the Leapfrog project.

In the afternoon, the delegates participated in a second workshop, *Belts, Braces and Wings*, delivered by Dr Cath Larkins. Cath is a Reader in the School of Social Work Care and Community at the University of Central Lancashire and is the Co-Director of the Centre for Children and Young People's Participation. In groups, Cath invited the delegates to reflect upon their current work and share visually, through the analogy of belts, braces and wings, the key attributes and principles of their engagement practices. At the end of the workshop, each group presented their findings and pinned up their large illustrations.

Ken Barnsley introducing his workshop, Co-design and Decision Making in Public Health





Dr Cath Larkins introducing her workshop, Belts, Braces, and Wings Belts, Braces and Wings how to be easy to engage

Dr Cath Larkins, UCLan Leapfrog Summer School, July 2017



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Presentation of Leapfrog Tools Dr Roger Whitham



Following this workshop, the third and fourth breakout sessions took place. These were chaired by Dr Roger Whitham, where the following delegates presented:

Breakout Session 03:

• Dr Sarah Morton, a Research Fellow at the University of the Highlands and Islands, shared insights into co-designing behaviour change interventions in healthcare contexts.

• Dr Sarah Rhodes, a Research Fellow at the University of the Arts London, presented her work using participatory design processes to bridge the divide between marginalised groups, exploring its utilisation for social innovation and sustainable practices.

• Amy Godfrey-Smythe, an Outreach Officer at Gloucestershire Care Services Community Partnerships, discussed current approaches the NHS use to engage with the public in order to understand and evaluate appropriate and accessible services.

• Dr Kelly Bracewell, a Research Assistant at the University of Central Lancashire, shared her insights into working collaboratively with vulnerable young people who have experienced domestic violence refuges.

• Dr Marianne McAra, a Research Associate at the Institute of Design Innovation at The Glasgow of School of Art and part of the Leapfrog team, reflected on her PhD research around understanding the relational dimensions of participatory design when engaging with young people.

### Breakout Session 04:

• Rosendy Jess Galabo, a doctoral candidate at Lancaster University and part of the Leapfrog team, shared insights from his research centred upon understanding how engagement tools can be used and adapted to fit with specific contexts.

• Dr Ida Telalbasic, a Lecturer at Loughborough University London, presented her research on different kinds of economies and discussed how economies can be democratized through design, reflecting upon design's transformative potential.

• Laura Wareing, a Research Associate at Lancaster University and part of the Leapfrog team, discussed the use of collaborative design processes to create effective, creative tools for public sector engagement practitioners and how tools can translate engagement into evidence.

• Dr Marsha Bradfield, an Associate Researcher at Chelsea College of Arts, reflected upon and provided a series of provocations around the popular notions of *Big Society*, Customer Service and the Feel Good factor.

The second day of the Summer School closed0 with a dinner, which provided another great opportunity for the delegates to further network.

Delegate discussions

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Sharing insights around community engagement



# Day 03: Doing Community Engagement

The final day of the Summer School began with a keynote presentation, *Engagement through Making*, delivered by Lady Rachel Cooper OBE, Distinguished Professor of Design Management and Policy at Lancaster University and founding Director of ImaginationLancaster. In her presentation, Rachel shared her vast experience of delivering complex research collaborations, oriented around identifying simple drivers behind the key actors.

Before lunch, two lighting talks took place, the first of which, *Co-designing Community Engagement*, was delivered by Professor Leon Cruickshank. Leon is the Director of Research for ImaginationLancaster, Professor of Design and Creative Exchange at Lancaster University, and Principal Investigator for Leapfrog. Leon presented Leapfrog's approach to co-design, community engagement practices, and shared insights into the process of tool dissemination.

The second lightning talk, *Creative Approaches to Community Engagement: the work of Green Close*, was delivered by Sue Flowers. Sue is a practicing artist and the director of Green Close, a pioneering rural arts organisation based in North Lancaster. She has led on the development and delivery of numerous high-quality arts, heritage and engagement programs across the North West, including the widely acclaimed Lancashire Witches 400 project of 2012, insights from which she shared in her presentation. This project collaborated with community members in a number of creative interventions in the design, development and launch of a 50-mile public path, which commemorates the 400th anniversary of the trails of the Pendel witches.

In the afternoon the final workshop took place, which was delivered by Dr Roger Whitham from Lancaster University. Roger is a designer and a researcher with a range of commercial and academic experience. His research interests revolve around designing interaction; physical, digital, human-to-computer and human-to-human. In groups, time was spent discussing how the Leapfrog tools could be re-appropriated, adapted and improved. After a speedy process of prototyping, each group presented their newly hacked tools to rest of the delegates.

The Summer School came to a close with the final activity, *Sharing Research Stories 02*, facilitated by Dr Cara Broadley and Professor Leon Cruickshank. As a way of concluding the past three days, the delegates were invited to share their reflections and, in pairs, discuss their plans in terms of any future collaborations with other delegates, what they learned from the Summer School and who they would like to keep in contact with. Captured on templates, these insights were shared with the wider group and then pinned up on the delegate board.

Lady Rachel Cooper delivering her keynote, Engagement through Making

Professor Leon Cruickshank discusses co-design for community engagement



Sue Flowers' lightning talk, Creative Approaches to Community Engagement









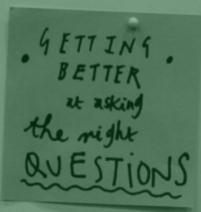


# **Capturing Insights into Community Engagement**

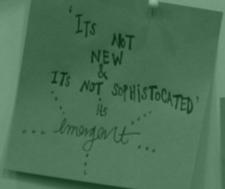
A core aim of the Summer School was to unpack the distinguishing features of community engagement, its significance in contemporary society, understandings of key debates, and speculations around its future development. In the following section we will summarise the key insights captured by the delegates and the Leapfrog team.

### What is community engagement?

Defining community engagement was a key topic of conversation throughout the Summer School, with attendees focusing on different aspects and approaches. As both a process and an outcome, community engagement was characterised by overarching notions of conversation and dialogue, with an emphasis on 'asking the right questions', 'evaluating and managing participants' expectations', and integrating 'voices, viewpoints, and visual signs', with design being deemed an appropriate approach for 'constructing the conversations'. In this sense, the particular nature of the engagement is emergent and dependent on the local context, and part of the practice is working with people to establish an understanding of the problem. As a 'relational and creative unravelling of everyday life', community engagement is 'bespoke, reflective, and takes time'. Overarching perceptions of community engagement ranged from broad and open-ended – 'Consultation, involvement in decision-making, a more collaborative approach or empowered action' - to more specific notions of relationships and impact centred around 'the art of conversation at the boundary of bureaucratic power'. Such notions of power encompass attendees' beliefs that community engagement involves 'more than a choice of words, but a choice of values', as well as concepts of dissensus and agonism associated with 'surfacing tensions'. In this sense, some attendees underlined that community engagement is 'not feel good', 'not the big society or a replacement to welfare provision', 'not customer service', and 'good feedback doesn't mean that the engagement has been effective'. In terms of its practical and relational qualities, community engagement 'values and appropriately extends the status guo' and establishes interconnected and dynamic 'horizontal and bi-directional' human relationships between institutions and society. With an overarching focus on changing behaviours and mindsets, community engagement has the transformative capability of 'enabling people to make the best contribution they can' and 'has the means to re-shape the structures of power and sociopolitical perspectives'.



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### How is community engagement done?

Considerable time and space during the Summer School conversations was devoted to attendees' reflections on methods, approaches, and attitudes underpinning community engagement. As a means of 'building on what is' in order to hack and change established systems, community engagement is a collaborative and reflective process that seeks to bring people's experiences and knowledge of the wider system together. In terms of the position and practices of the researcher, value was identified in 'being mindful of cultural differences', 'being embedded in community life', appreciating the value of the immersive phase', and producing 'candid, honest account of our experiences of fieldwork'. Reflective practice was discussed as supporting researchers to apprehend their own roles and power and the need to be a participant in the process, as well as a facilitator. Values of respect, humility, openness, transparency, and flexibility were highlighted as supporting researchers to critical distance themselves from the issues being explored and allowing them to become 'learners rather than teachers'. Discrepancies and divergences were raised around notions of power and difference amongst researchers and communities, with attendees debating the extent to which we can understand communities' experiences, how we identify ourselves as outsiders, acknowledge and foreground commonalities, and reject the concept of 'the other' in order to refine expertise. This local, contextual vision of community engagement extended into discussions of actively making ourselves more available and reachable to diverse and distributed communities. The value of word-of-mouth (particularly in remote and rural geographies) to initiate connections, locating relational threads and tapping into existing networks, fostering motivation and autonomous collaboration, and offering participants multiple entrance and exit points were key points raised here. Ideas of 'connecting through making and learning together' and developing methods for establishing understanding and trust were debated, alongside the benefits of engaging 'with tools and approaches that are not prescriptive' and 'co-designing the method and not just the output'. This led to accounts of particular tools and techniques attendees had applied in their own research and found beneficial in creating productive conversation. With a focus on participatory, visual, and creative methods including video ethnography and pop-up engagement, this included examples of tools for creative expression, breaking cultural barriers, giving voice, and helping people to create their preferred account and empowering their contributions. Such negotiation and choice can enable participants to 'direct the research path', provide them with 'ownership and agency in the process', and as a result, develop their own skills and competencies as a lasting legacy of the research.

#### How can community engagement make a difference?

Focused conversations around the impact, legacy, and mutual benefit of community engagement were collated and organised in depth on the third board. Again from a researcher's perspective, attendees considered how community engagement can have a personal transformative benefit, and how challenges and perceived failures can offer valuable learnings and reflections. Underlining the importance of disseminating academic findings more broadly and to diverse audiences, many attendees recognised the direct, positive benefits of involving people directly in the research process. Community engagement can have a transformative effect on participants, catalyse 'changes in practices and behaviours', build 'platforms of equality', help develop 'negotiated meaning', and instigate 'joint action'. As an overarching theme of the Summer School, frameworks and approaches for measurement and impact were core topics of discussion, with attendees considering ways to develop alternative evaluation techniques and how to judge the quality of engagement. In this sense, the benefits of longitudinal engagement with communities were coupled with an emphasis on long-term evaluation to allow time to observe and interrogate the lasting effects of the research. This also included defining how meaningful conversations are being sustained, how our learnings cross different contexts, and can be scaled outwards from the specific to the general. In particular, the need to define evidence was acknowledged – from savings in financial costs, to recommendations informing new community development strategies, to shifts in communities' senses of agency and decision-making processes. Some of the attendees focused on the practice of asking evaluation questions and being wary of discerning success based on obtaining positive responses from participants. Attendees reflected on the challenges of demonstrating changes in the mindsets and cultures of participants when new behaviours can become so natural and embedded that they are difficult to track. Aligning these ideas around the outcomes of community engagement, attendees shared examples from their own work and wider bodies of research in which 'stories of small scale individual change', and tangible instances of 'resilience and flourishing' have been foregrounded as positive outcomes.

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# **Summer School Reflections**

The Leapfrog project dissemination aimed to seed new approaches in other projects and interventions with partners in the public sector. NGOs and local communities. The two Summer Schools within the project engaged with early career researchers focused both on the experiences and findings from Leapfrog and the more general areas of co-design, action research and consultation.

When asked to share with us the highlights of their Summer School experience, delegates found it useful to network with researchers at a similar academic stage, yet from a variety of disciplines and fields. Appreciating the diversity of approaches to community engagement was also a common theme across the feedback. This was particularly prevalent with delegates working out with the field of design, and the value of co-design approaches and creative tools for community engagement was noted. The 3-minute format of the delegate presentations was highlighted as an effective way for extending valuable time for deep discussion and debate within the breakout sessions, and the quality of the keynote presentations was recognised.

A key outcome of the Summer School were plans for future collaborations between delegates from different institutions, illustrating how valuable such an event is for early career researchers and practitioners in this field.

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Dr Cath Larkins engages the delegates in a creative warm-up exercise





Delegate discussion with Ken Barnsley

On behalf of ImaginationLancaster at Lancaster University and The Institute of Design Innovation at The Glasgow School of Art, The Leapfrog Team thank you all for participating in the Leapfrog Summer School 2017. We hope to continue our conversations following the Summer School through Twitter, Instagram and Facebook via #LFSummerSchool.

Find out more about Leapfrog and download our tools at http://leapfrog.tools.

Watch the 2016 Leapfrog Summer School film at https://player.vimeo.com/video/204044871.

Leapfrog – transforming public sector consultation by design is a £1.2 million 3 year Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project. The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: ancient history, modern dance, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, English literature, design, the creative and performing arts, and much more. This financial year the AHRC will spend approximately £98m to fund research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK. For further information on the AHRC, please go to: www.ahrc.ac.uk









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