THE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO

PARTICIPATORY CITY

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT PARTICIPATORY CITY

Participation in practical everyday activities transforms peoples lives and the neighbourhoods in which they live. Participatory City amplifies the scale of these activities; grows new projects, and builds support platforms.

This Illustrated Guide is an introduction into how Participatory City is intended to work, as well as describing it's potential to impact on many serious interconnected social problems.

It is based on the research documented in the report 'Designed to Scale - Mass participation to build resilient neighbourhoods', and more detail can be obtained in that publication.

The key finding of this work has been that increasing participation in practical everyday activities to high levels could help to transform people's lives and the neighbourhoods in which those people live.

While this new type of 'participation culture' remains unsupported, small scale and fragmented, it will continue to be only an optimistic flickering of a brighter future, without fully realising it's potential to be a key building block for building sustainable cities of the future.

Participatory City will be working in neighbourhoods to achieve the necessary scale, creating strong support systems that encourage people to test ideas and grow new projects. Over time these projects will develop into a dense network of participation opportunities that will generate many benefits for people and their families directly, and for the neighbourhood as a whole.

THE DEMONSTRATION NEIGHBOURHOOD

Participatory City is currently in the process of developing a large Demonstration Neighbourhood to scale up this type of practical participation to the high levels our research indicates are needed to achieve transformative benefits.

The aim is to complete the research and development process over a 5 year period, working in a city area with approximately 200,000 to 300,000 residents.

CITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

In addition to the first Demonstration Neighbourhood, Participatory City will be working in other cities across the UK and the world in collaboration with city governments and partners.

READING TIME

This Illustrated Guide has been designed to be read and absorbed quickly, the estimated reading times are as follows:

Basic   20 minutes
Detailed   40 minutes

SUPPORT

Participatory City is supported by Lankelly Chase Foundation. Lankelly Chase aims to bring about lasting change in the lives of people currently most disadvantaged in our society.

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Community Lover's Guide
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ABOUT 'PARTICIPATORY CULTURE' PROJECTS

CITY NEIGHBOURHOODS MADE BY EVERYONE, FOR EVERYONE

In recent years local people have been inventing unique and imaginative projects across the world.

These projects see people working together on practical ideas that make their neighbourhoods more exciting and enjoyable places to live.

We refer to these types of projects as 'participation culture'.

By taking part in these projects people become creators of the places in which they live - becoming collaborators and co-producers as well as consumers.

Taken together in one place these many ideas could make life better for people and for the planet.

And that's the Participatory City idea in a nutshell:

Places created by many people working together through a large network of practical 'participatory culture' projects and community businesses, built into the fabric of everyday life.

Putting people at the heart of how a neighbourhood works.

Places made by everyone, for everyone.

Creating vibrant places that leave no one behind.

GROWING MORE FOOD LOCALLY

DISTRIBUTED RENEWABLE ENERGY

REPARING + SHARING

BAKERY

COMMUNITY OWNED BUSINESSES

WORKING TOGETHER IN SHARED LOCAL SPACES

COMMUNAL MEALS

BATCH COOKING IN COMMUNITY KITCHENS

SHARING SKILLS + KNOWLEDGE

WORKSHOPS FOR MAKING OPEN SOURCE PRODUCTS

PARENTS MAKING BABY CLOTHES, FOOD + TOYS IN SHARED WORKSHOPS
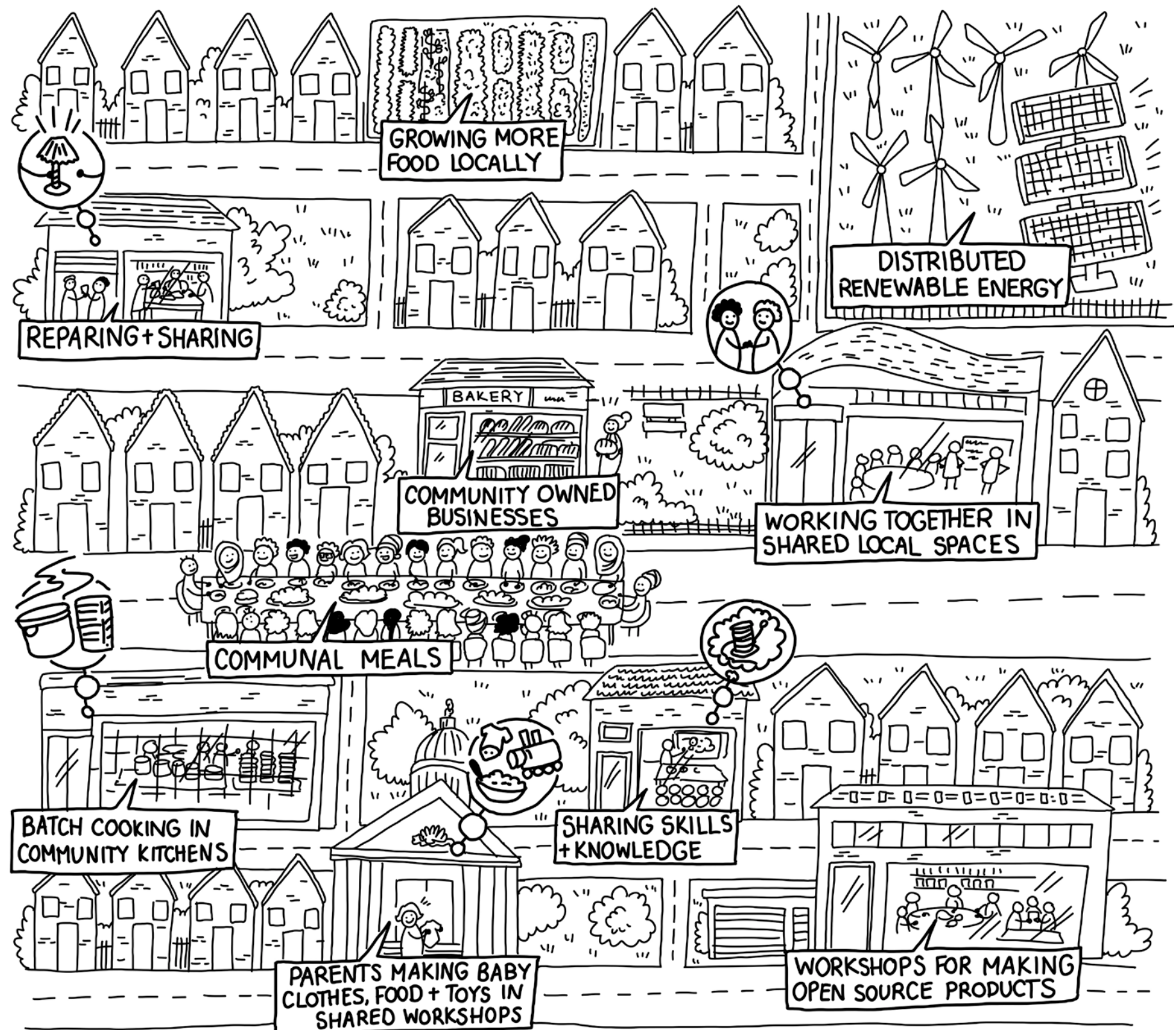
MAINSTREAMING PRACTICAL PARTICIPATION

Through 6 years of research and testing we have developed an effective way to start many projects in one place.

The idea of participating on a much larger scale than we see currently means that participation cannot remain at the margins, but needs to become a 'mainstream' activity, built into the fabric of everyday life.

For this to happen we need to create a new type of collaborative neighbourhood culture - that is highly accessible, highly attractive, highly convenient - for every one, every day.

We have longitudinal research and first hand experiences that indicate that if we can design participation to be more accessible, attractive and convenient, that significantly more people will want to get involved in neighbourhood projects than the 3% involved today.

Participatory City will work with local people to start dozens of different projects in neighbourhoods. These projects will enable many people to participate in a choice of 100+ small, practical opportunities every week.

By year 5 of growing projects and creating participation opportunities we aim that 30% of people, at any one time, will be able to participate regularly (3 times a week). That's a dramatic increase in participation opportunities, compared to most neighbourhoods currently.

These projects will be co-created by everyone living in the neighbourhood - not by the heroic or extraordinary efforts of a few individuals - as we so often see today.

And they won't be delivered as a service by the local council.

Instead, these projects will be created by many people collaborating (local councils, organisations and businesses included), and often simply doing more everyday things together, rather than alone.
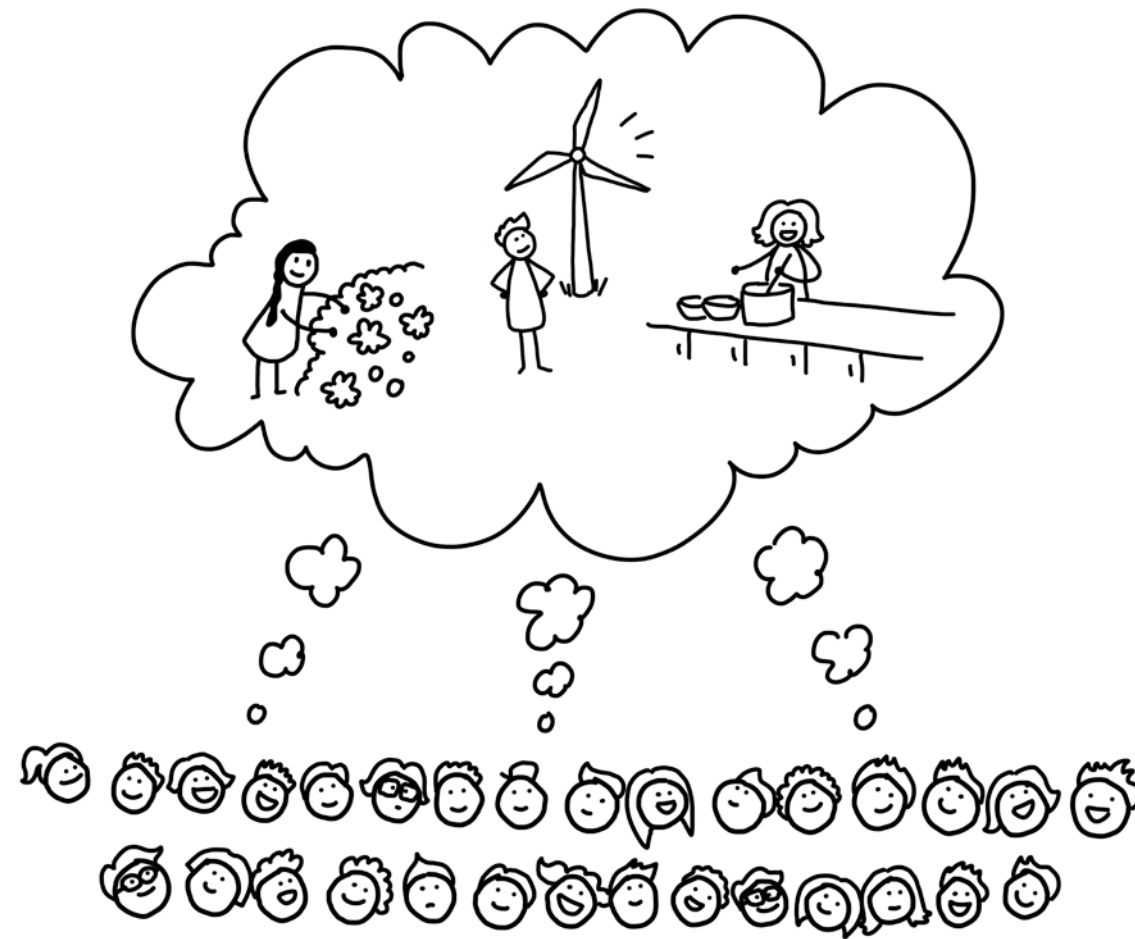
RECENT RESEARCH SHOWS THAT ONLY 3% OF PEOPLE IN THE UK ARE INVOLVED IN NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECTS, WHILE NEARLY 60% AGREED THAT THEY WERE WILLING TO WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD (12% STRONGLY AGREED)

Understanding Society - The UK Household Longitudinal Study. (1)
Survey size for the above question was 50,000 people.

# EXAMPLES OF HOW PARTICIPATION CULTURE PROJECTS WORK

TRADE SCHOOL

Trade School is an alternative, self-organised learning space that runs on barter. Anyone can teach anything they are passionate about or skilled at - experience, practical skills and big ideas are all valued equally. No money changes hands, instead teachers say what they'd like in exchange for giving their class, and pupils sign up by agreeing to bring a barter item from the list.

The barter mechanism means there is no financial barrier to attend a class and learn a new skill. The open offer to teach creates opportunities to share and practice underused skills. The informal atmosphere and exchange creates new social connections.

BRING A BARTER ITEM
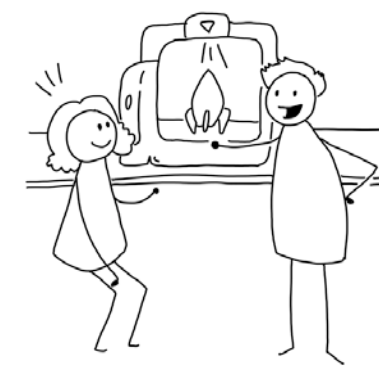
TEACH AND LEARN

SHARED BENEFITS

BZZ GARDEN

Bzz Garden is a project to encourage bee-friendly planting and shared food growing in public spaces.

It aims to create a multitude of small gardens to support the local bee population and produce locally grown food.

People are invited to grow in underused patches, street planters, front gardens or window boxes. People can share tools, plants and knowledge to beautify the neighbourhood and create a publicly enjoyed focus for enthusiastic gardeners.
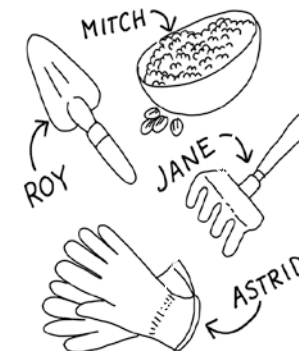
BRING EQUIPMENT

MAKE A GARDEN

SHARED BENEFITS

GREAT COOK

The Great Cook is a project where people come together to batch cook meals, and take home portions for the week. Anyone can offer to share a recipe they enjoy making at home, and just multiply the ingredients to create a large batch.

People join in by registering to bring one of the ingredients needed for that dish.
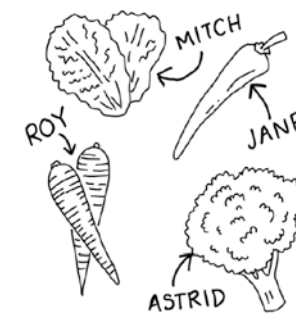
BRING INGREDIENTS

BATCH COOK FOR HOME

SHARED BENEFITS

02

WHY IT'S WORTH DOING

COLLECTIVE BENEFITS OF MANY PROJECTS

DIRECT IMMEDIATE BENEFITS

NEIGHBOURHOOD BENEFITS

NETWORKED EFFECTS

SOCIAL CAPITAL STUDIES

COLLECTIVE BENEFITS OF MANY PARTICIPATION PROJECTS

A small prototype support system was created to test a new way of growing a large network of projects. This was done in West Norwood, London, in 2014/15.

The project was called The Open Works and over 12 months it created a network of 20 practical projects in collaboration with 1000+ local residents.

We conducted in-depth interviews at the end to measure the effects of participation and to understand better how benefits are generated in a neighbourhood with a large number of projects and participation opportunities.

We asked participants what they thought the impact was of having the larger network of projects.

The diagrams that follow show how repeated participation, by a very high number of local people, will add up to create important benefits, and contribute to making neighbourhoods sustainable long term: socially, economically and environmentally.

PHYSICAL + MENTAL HEALTH

EMPLOYMENT, SELF-EMPLOYMENT + HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

ADDS UP WITH REPEATED PARCIPITATION

HAPPINESS + WELLBEING

ACCESS TO NETWORKS

SAVING MONEY (SHARING, REPAIRING, MAKING, BULK SHOPPING, BATCH COOKING)

LEARNING

CONFIDENCE

GROWING IDEAS + CREATING NEW LIVELIHOODS

DIRECT + IMMEDIATE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS TO INDIVIDUALS + FAMILIES ADD UP
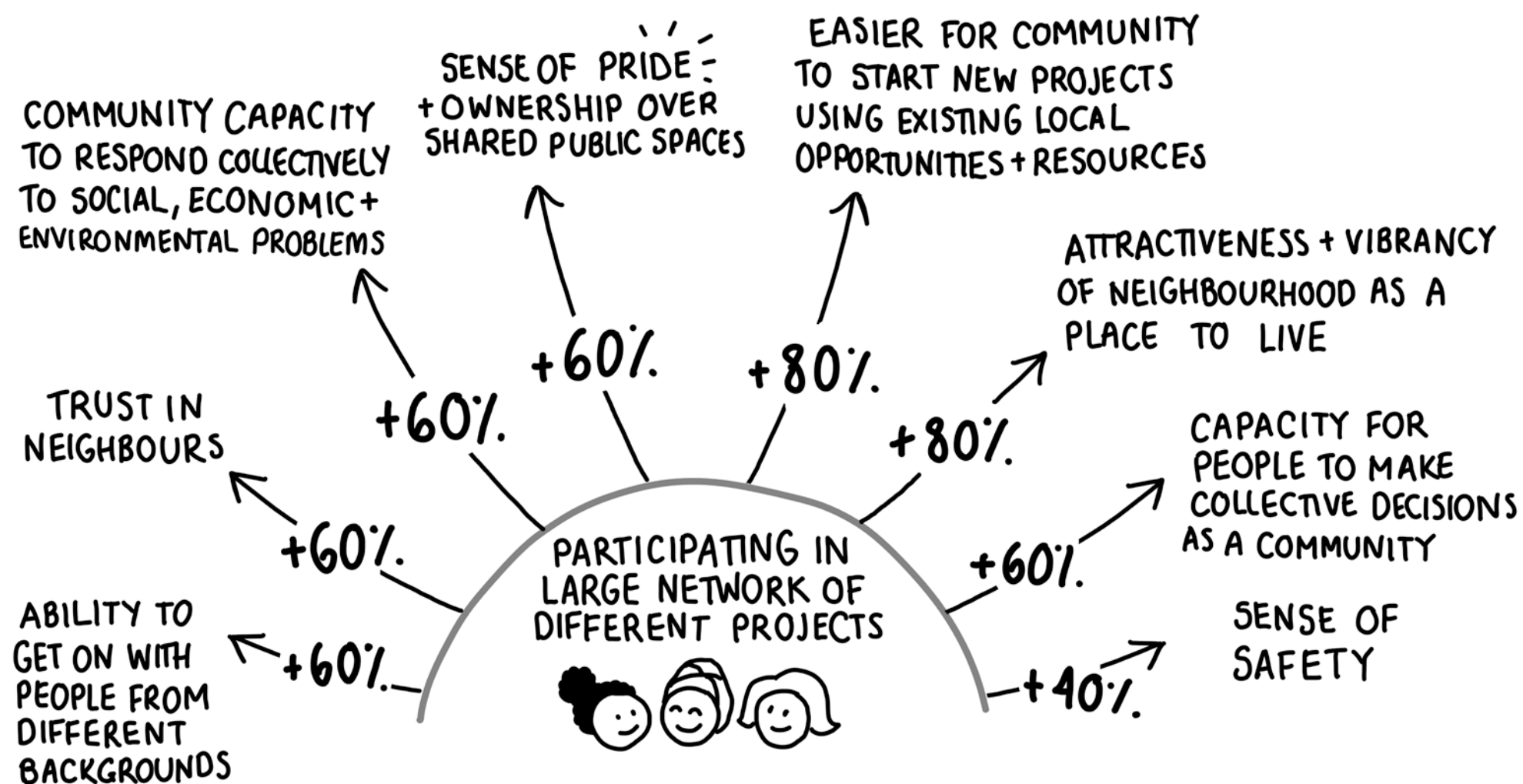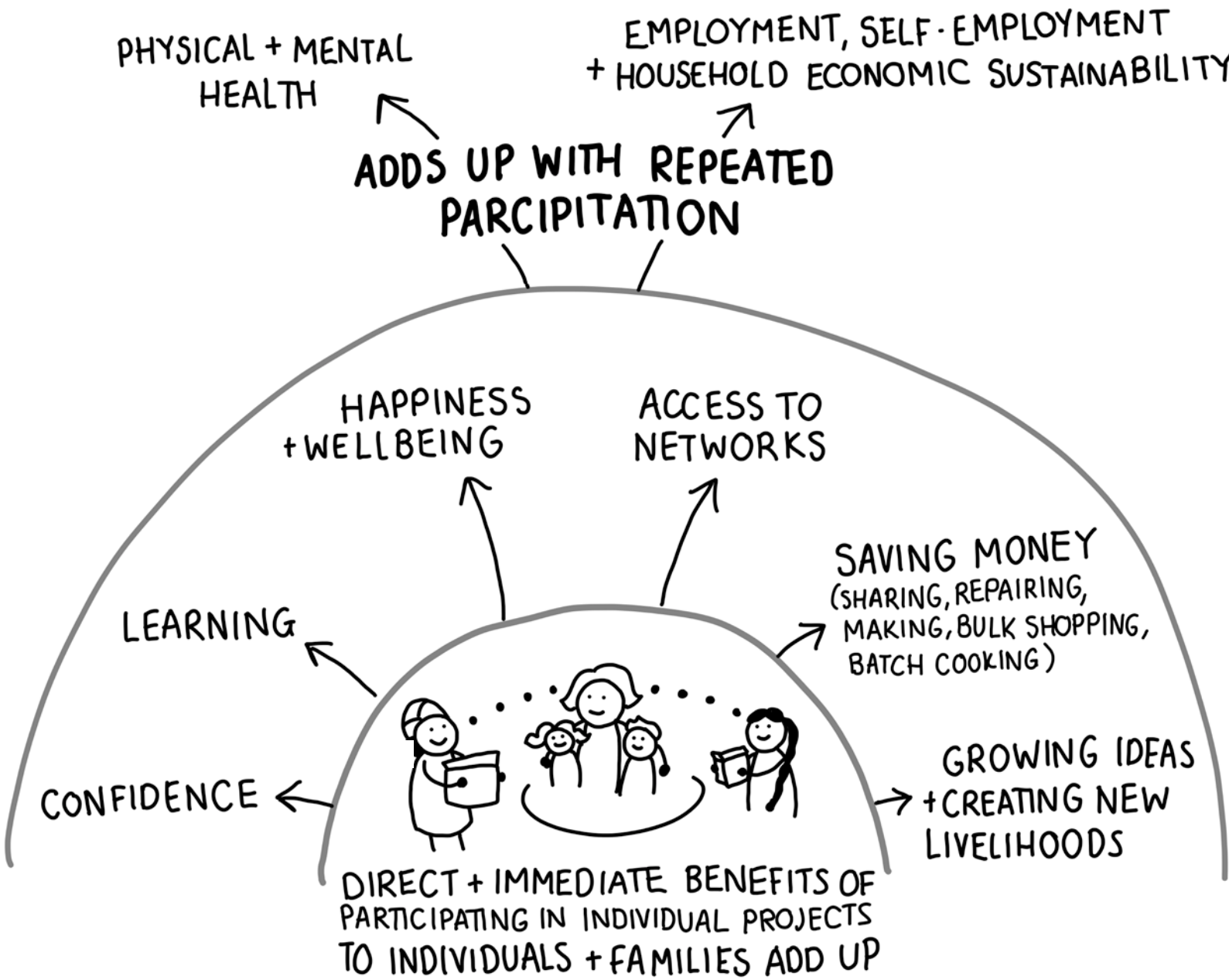
COLLECTIVE BENEFITS OF MANY SMALL ACTIONS, BY MANY PEOPLE

NEIGHBOURHOOD REDUCED CARBON FOOTPRINT

NEIGHBOURHOOD LIFE·LONG LEARNING CULTURE

NEIGHBOURHOOD GREENER + CLEANER

ADDS UP WITH REPEATED PARCIPITATION

RECYCLING

CYCLING + WALKING

LEARNING ACROSS MULTIPLE PROJECTS

PUBLIC GARDENING

SHARING

BATCH COOKING

REPAIRING

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

COLLECTIVE BENEFITS TO PEOPLE + NEIGHBOURHOOD TO MANY DIFFERENT ACTIONS ADDING UP

BENEFITS OF MORE PEOPLE KNOWING AND TRUSTING EACH OTHER THROUGH NEW DENSE NETWORKS
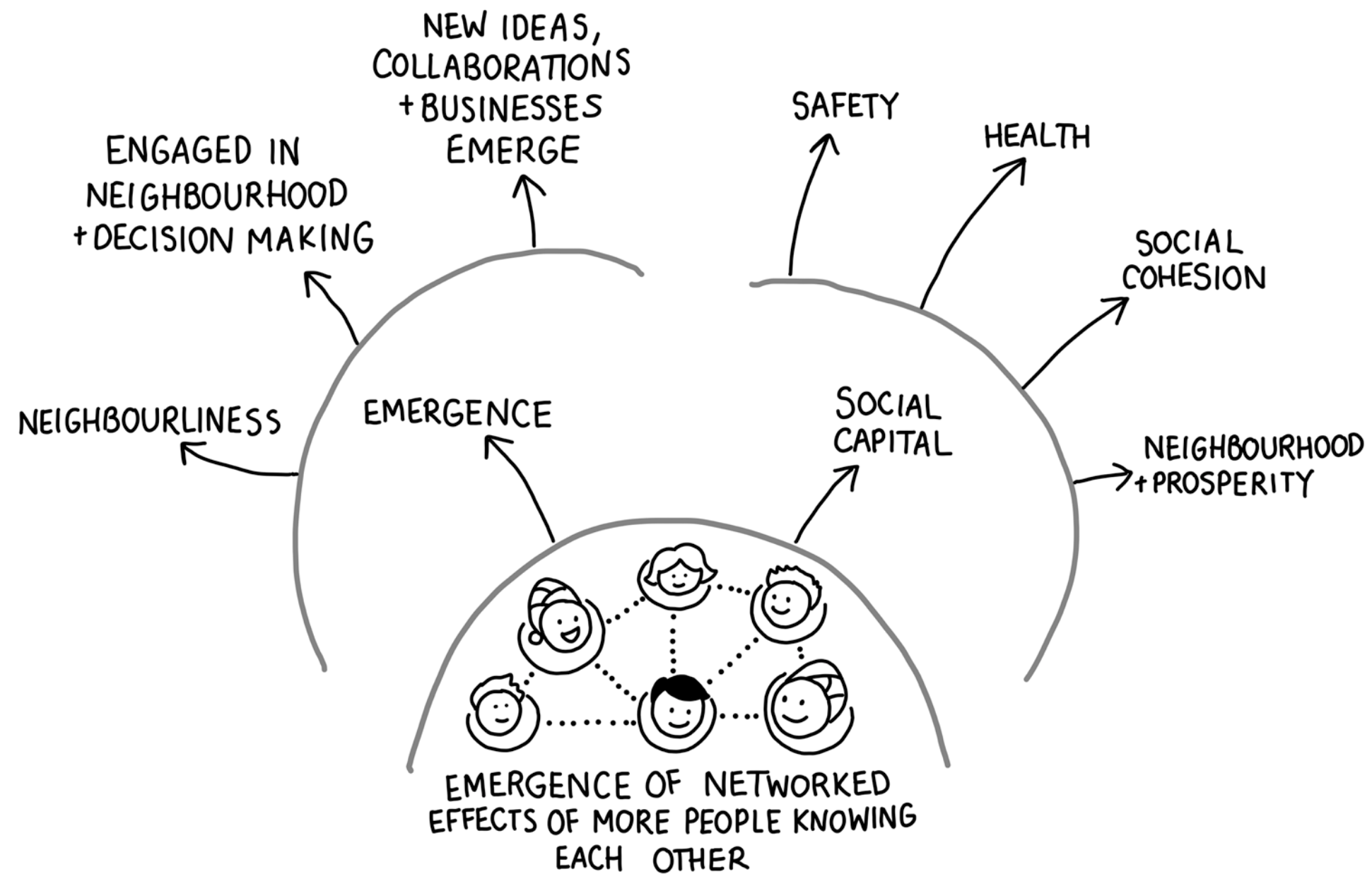
EXAMPLE RESEARCH STUDIES OF THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED SOCIAL CAPITAL (CONNECTIONS WITH NEIGHBOURS)
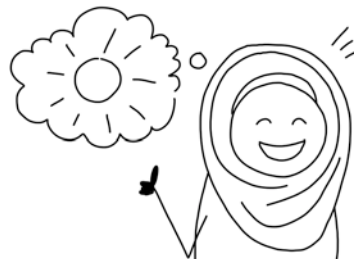
Social capital boosts health and decreases anxiety. (1)
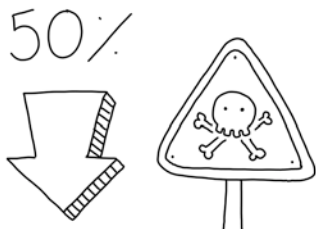
Strong social relationships reduce mortality risk by 50%. (2)
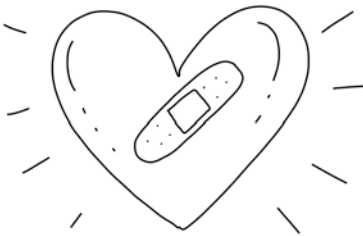
Community cohesion reduces risk of heart disease. (3)

Civic involvement creates positive relationships between parents a children. (4)

Social capital builds resilience and creates positive life outcomes. (5)

Civic participation boosts academic achievement. (6)
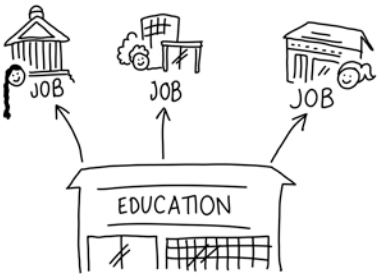
Social capital more important to education outcomes that education spending. (7)

Social capital stimulates entrepreneurship. (8)

Neighbours working together reduces unemployment. (9)
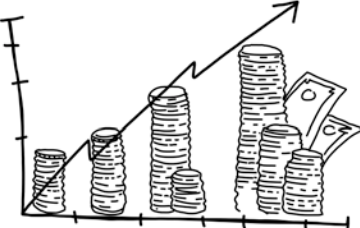
Civic community associated with economic growth. (10)

Increased trust associated with economic growth. (11)

Social capital increases household income. (12)

Attachment to place increases economic growth. (13)

Social capital increases political participation. (14)
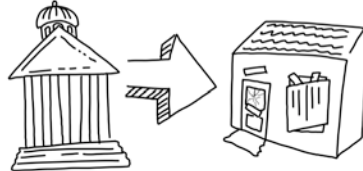
Social capital boosts government performance in poor communities. (15)

Bridging social capital stimulates climate change action. (16)

Social capital and family participation associated with less violent behaviour. (17)

Civic participation related to lower crime rates. (18)

03

HOW WE DO IT

WHY DON'T PEOPLE PARTICIPATE?

We have all believed for a long time that lots of people involved in local activities would make a big difference to people and neighbourhoods.

This is not a new idea.

Many approaches have been tried, by many different people, but we have discovered collectively that creating a lot of neighbourhood participation is very hard to achieve, and even harder to keep going.

Participation in neighbourhood activity across the UK is very low compared for example to sports clubs and religious organisations. We have many wonderful examples of strong, growing neighbourhood projects, but we also see many that are isolated, struggling to survive working on their own, and often small scale and low impact.

Successful projects who want to help other neighbourhoods replicate new models are also struggling to do this, because our current emphasis on single projects and entities makes that very difficult.

We started by asking 1000s of people across the UK what they thought about participation, about starting projects, and why the current way of doing things isn't working for many them.

The primary conclusion from this research was that we needed to redesign how participation works at neighbourhood level, and the following pages describe how the research contributed step by step to the strategy we came to prototype and test.

People's lives have become very busy and many individuals and families find it difficult to keep a balance between the demands of school, work and family.

People have also become less patient. Twenty years of the internet have made people accustomed to things being interactive, interesting and fast.

This new cultural impatience extends to local involvement. If activities aren't effective, don't do what they set out to do, or aren't enjoyable, people will just drop out.

TIME + COMMITMENT SCALE

100

0

COMMUNITY BUSINESS

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

WORKSHOPS

MORE PEOPLE HERE
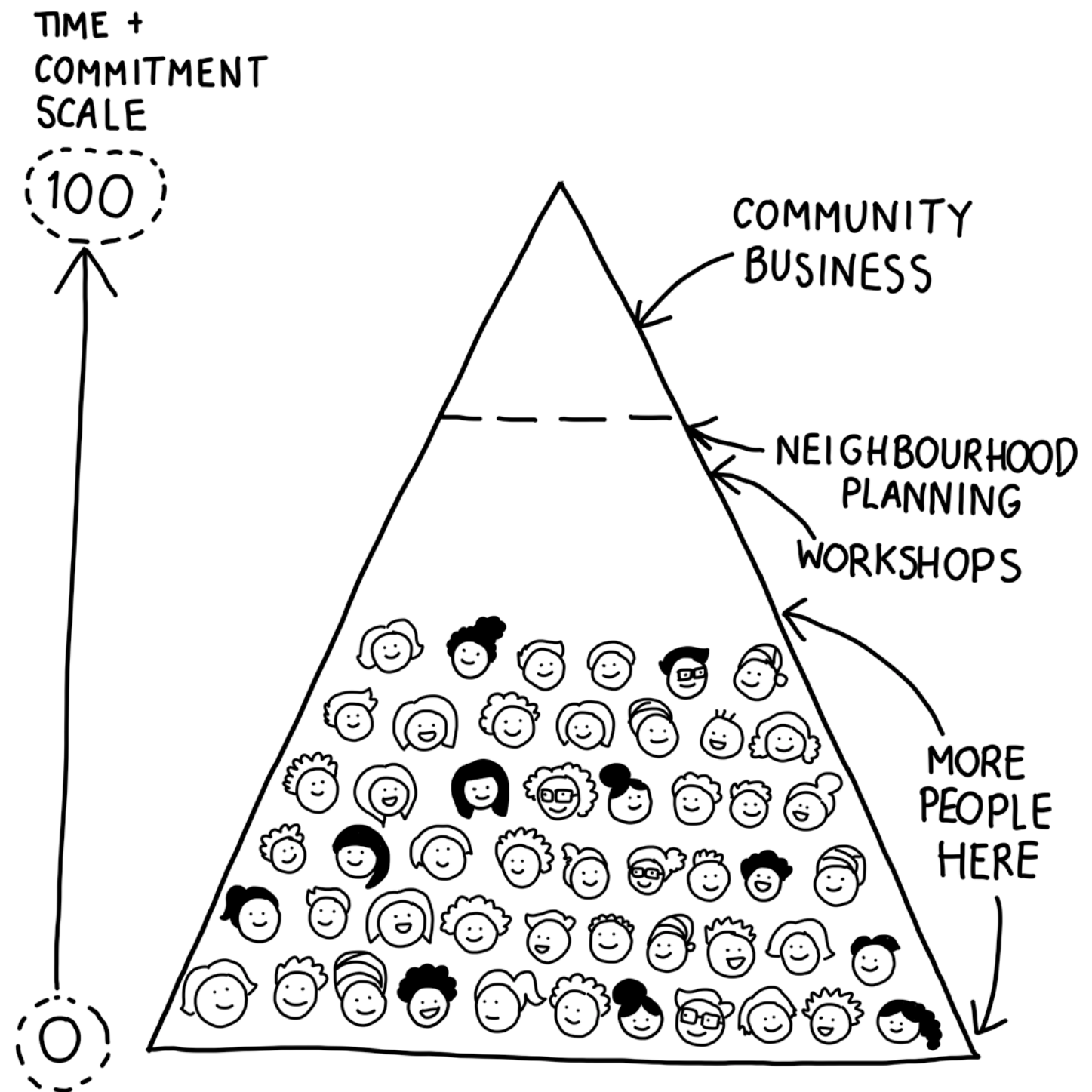
WHY DON'T PEOPLE PARTICIPATE?

So what's so different about how Participatory City plans to start and grow this many projects with local people, when so many other approaches have continued to find this very difficult?

Two things are new in the Participatory City approach:

1.The new 'participatory culture' model

People working together on practical projects with everyone on an equal footing, co-producing tangible things.

2. The method by which a large network of projects will be built.

We learned everything directly from talking to people, studying innovative citizen projects and testing different methods and strategies.

We wanted to know why so many people want to live in vibrant, active communities, and yet places today have very low levels of participation.

Firstly we asked people why they weren't taking part at the moment, and what we could change to encourage more people to get involved.

NOT ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES

There aren't enough opportunities to take part.

There aren't enough types of activities that fit people's skills and ideas.
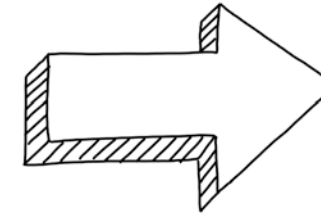
MAKE MORE OPPORTUNITIES

More opportunities.

More variety.

Closer to home.
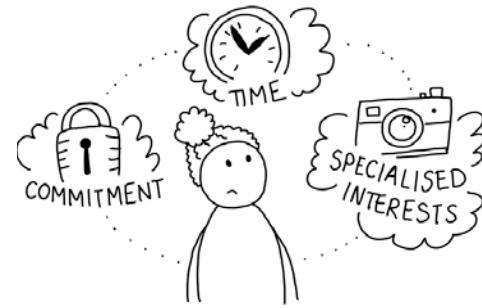
OPPORTUNITIES DON'T FIT

Activities and projects don't fit with people's lives, their commitments, studying, working and caring for families.

Opportunities that exist require too much time, too much commitment, often too specialist.
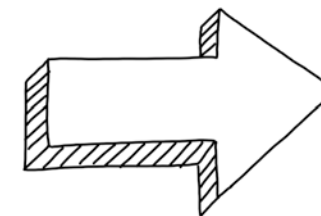
MAKE OPPORTUNITIES FIT BETTER

Less time and commitment.

More flexible.

More practical and social.

OPPORTUNITIES FEEL EXCLUSIVE

Activities often feel exclusive or too confrontational.

Opportunities often appear to be more suited to very confident or educated people ... or for people that already know each other well.
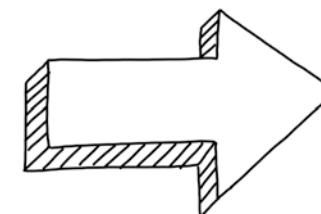
MAKE OPPORTUNITIES INCLUSIVE

Design projects to be more open in structural, cultural and logistical ways, with everyone on an equal footing.

Make it possible to start small and simple so that there are more opportunities to grow confidence one step at a time.

WHY DON'T PEOPLE START AND GROW PROJECTS?

We visited successful participation culture projects across the world to discover their experiences and asked people what they thought their projects needed to get started and grow.

STARTING ANYTHING FEELS RISKY

People find it difficult to develop ideas and find it risky to start them because they feel exposed publicly and think the ideas might fail.
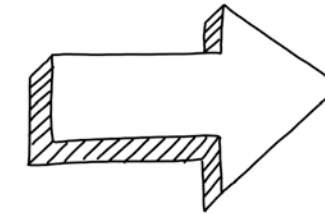
REDUCE OR SHARE RISK

Make it easier to start and grow ideas. Reduce and share personal risk so people feel safer to test early ideas, even if some don't work.
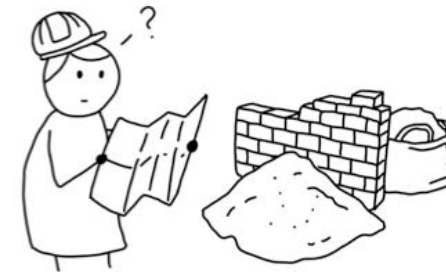
NOT ENOUGH SUPPORT

Most people have never started a neighbourhood project and need more support. They want to collaborate more effectively for projects to keep going, grow or replicate them. People too often expected to just 'get on with it' by themselves without the experience.
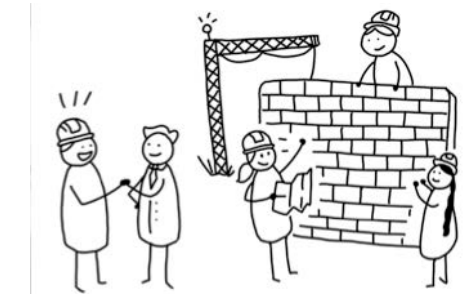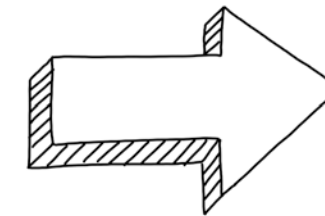
SUPPORT & LEARNING LONG TERM

Create new ways for local government and institutions to collaborate and support projects better and create a learning culture long term.

Help more people to be involved to grow their expertise.
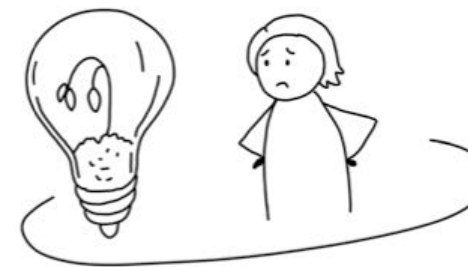
MANY VALUABLE IDEAS ARE SMALL

Not all useful or valuable ideas are sustainable on their own.
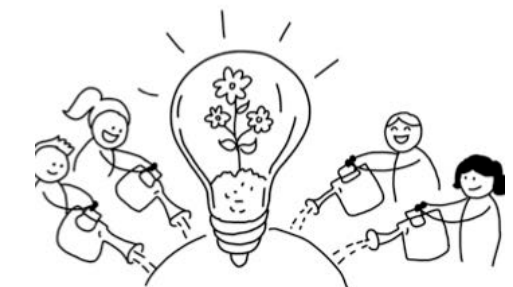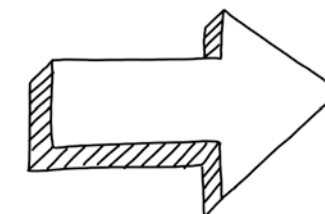
VALUE & SUPPORT SMALL IDEAS

Support collections of projects and activities, not just individual ones.

8 REASONS WHY IDEAS AND PROJECTS DIE

Imagine a neighbourhood where every day local people have ideas to make the place and people's lives better.

We asked people what happens to them all? Why don't these many ideas get started, or grow ... and so many die?

People described 8 different reasons why they found that ideas don't get started or grow.

1
LACK OF SKILLS, TIME OR CONFIDENCE

Ideas can fizzle on the spot. Bringing people together to grow an idea just seems too much. Where and how to find the people, skills and resources the project needs?

2
CONSULTATION OR FAILED/ TEMPORARY PROGRAMME

These ideas get generated with much initial excitement through public consultation or new temporary programme ... and die in the pages of a report.

3
TOO MANY MEETINGS AND TOO LITTLE ACTION

These ideas die because of meetings that are boring, ineffective or contolling style. Also connected to having too much money.

4
WAITING TOO LONG

These ideas die because after applying for funding the wait is often so long, everyone loses their enthusiasm and goes and does other things.
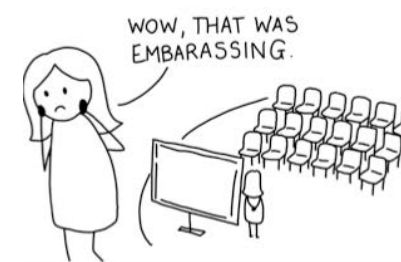
5
NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE

People don't know about the project and don't turn up.

Traditional flyers and notice boards aren't working, and feels too competitive rather than collaborative.

6
MISSING PRACTICAL ELEMENTS OR RESOURCES

When you have some things in place for success, but are missing crucial elements, such as effective promotions, experience, methods or visibility.

7
RELIES TOO MUCH ON HEROES

One or two people carry too much responsibility, the heroes. When they get tired, move area, get a job, have relatives to care for ....the project dies with them.

8
FOCUS ON SINGLE, NOT COLLECTIONS OF MODELS

These are usually ideas too small to be sustainable on a revenue model on their own because the market isn't big enough. They could be sustainable as a collective or co-production model.

WE TURNED THESE INSIGHTS INTO 2 SETS OF DESIGN PRINCIPLES

SET 1

10 PRINCIPLES TO MAKE IT EASIER AND MORE EFFECTVE TO PARTICIPATE REGULARLY

USEFUL, WITH VISIBLE DIRECT **BENEFITS** TO PEOPLE + THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

MORE OPPORTUNITIES

MORE VARIETY

less time + commitment

MORE FLEXIBILITY

MORE PRACTICAL + SOCIAL **EVERYONE EQUAL**

MORE OPEN

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW CONFIDENCE

CLOSER TO HOME

MORE COLLABORATIVE CULTURE LESS CONFRONTATIONAL OR BORING

WE TURNED THESE INSIGHTS INTO 2 SETS OF DESIGN PRINCIPLES

SET 2

10 PRINCIPLES TO MAKE IT EASIER TO START, MAINTAIN AND GROW PROJECTS

MAKE IT EASIER
TO START + GROW IDEAS

WORK QUICKLY
DON'T LET ENTHUSIASM DIE

REDUCE + SHARE
PERSONAL RISK

PROPER CO-PRODUCTION DESIGN
NOT JUST EVENTS

PROMOTE
EFFECTIVELY

MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED AS CO-BUILDERS,
LESS HEROES

PROJECTS
NEW WAYS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT + INSTITUTIONS TO COLLABORATE + SUPPORT PROJECTS

SUPPORT COLLECTIONS
OF PROJECTS, NOT JUST INDIVIDUAL ONES

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW CONFIDENCE

DEVELOP A SUPPORT SYSTEM
NOT JUST GRANTS

WE DESIGNED TWO SYSTEMS THAT FIT TOGETHER

WHAT EACH SYSTEM CONSISTS OF

PARTICIPATION SYSTEM (ECOSYSTEM)
A COLLECTION OF MANY + VARIED 'PARTICIPATORY CULTURE' PROJECTS

SUPPORT SYSTEM (PLATFORM)
A COLLECTION OF MANY SUPPORT ELEMENTS SHARED ACROSS ALL THE PROJECTS: PLATFORM DESIGN TEAM, FUNCTIONAL SPACES, PROJECT IDEAS, ORGANISING, INSURANCE, PROMOTIONS, DIGITAL, METRICS, ETC

WHAT EACH SYSTEM DOES

PARTICIPATION SYSTEM
MAKES IT EASIER FOR MANY PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE REGULARLY IN PRACTICAL PROJECTS THAT FIT WITH THEIR EVERYDAY LIFE.

SUPPORT SYSTEM
MAKES IT EASIER TO SUPPORT, MAINTAIN OR GROW COLLECTIONS OF PROJECTS

WHAT EACH SYSTEM ACHIEVES

PARTICIPATION SYSTEM
PEOPLE PARTICIPATING GENERATES MANY BENEFITS TO THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILIES + THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

SUPPORT SYSTEM
BUILD + SUSTAIN PARTICIPATION SYSTEMS TOGETHER WITH LOCAL PEOPLE
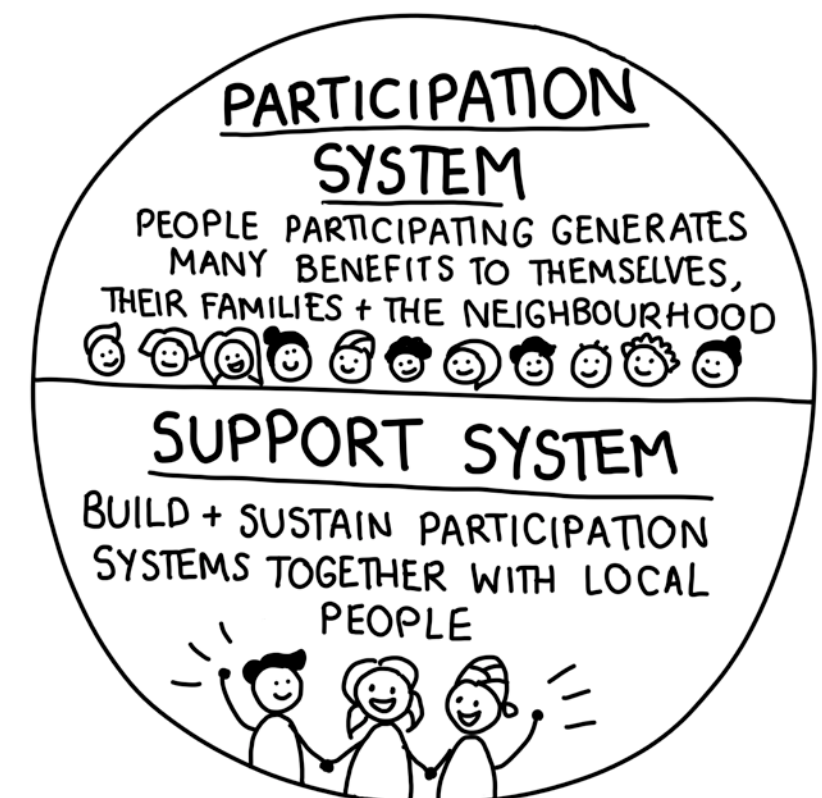
INCREASING THE BENEFITS OF PRACTICAL PARTICIPATION TO PEOPLE AND PLACES

6 years of research and prototyping revealed a straightforward cause and effect sequence for how increasing participation benefits people and neighbourhoods. This has provided a very simple and logical change process.

This process has also highlighted the importance of scale if we are to view co-creation and participation as a key building block for transforming places long term.

CREATES — CREATES — CREATES — CREATES

MORE SUPPORT STRUCTURES → **MORE PROJECTS** → **MORE OPPORTUNITIES** → **MORE PARTICIPATION** → **MORE DIRECT BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES + TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA AS A WHOLE**
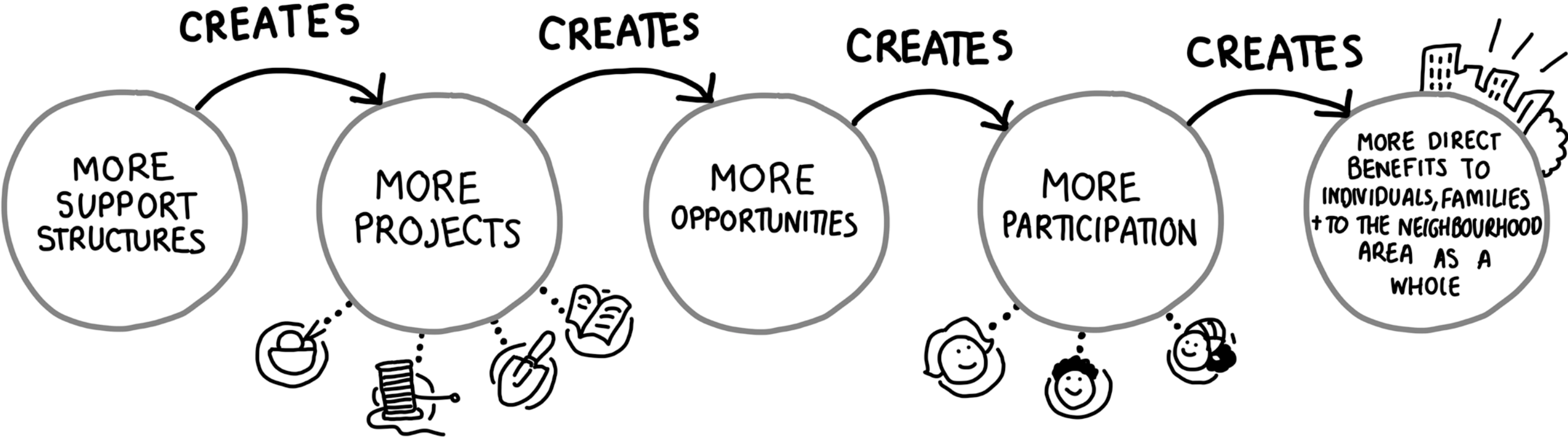
THE SUPPORT PLATFORM IN A NEIGHBOURHOOD

1
The support platform is a team of friendly people who know a lot about growing participation culture projects.

2
They are based in a high street shop in the middle of the neighbourhood.

3
The shop is bright, homely and welcoming... and a little unfinished here and there, leaving room for others to bring things along.
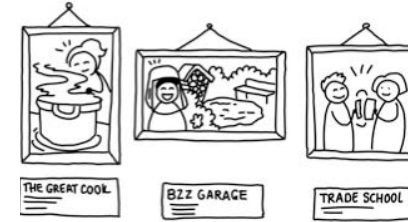
4
The shop has exhibitions of ideas from other places for inspiration, and many projects that you can take part in locally.

5
It also has cups of tea and biscuits.
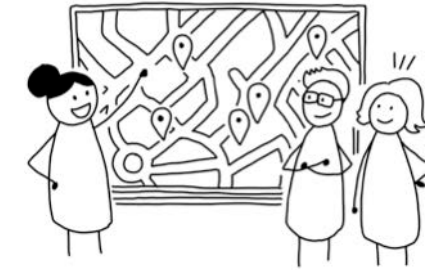
6
The team works with local people to map all functional spaces nearby that could be home to new activities.

7
The team talks to local businesses and organisation to see how they can work to co-design projects with local people. Given an opportunity eople are always very generous.

8
The team talks to people that come into the shop with ideas - and together they turn them into projects to test - joining up people who can work together.
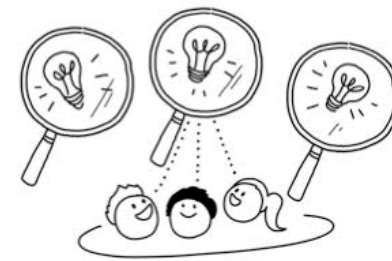
9
All ideas are tested and given the best opportunity to succeed. They develop to next stages if local people are interested and participate. People vote with their feet.
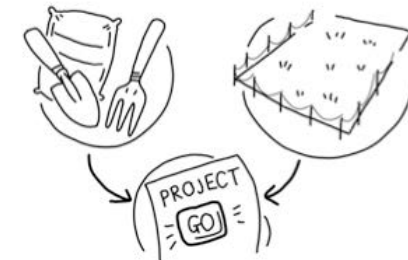
10
Projects are designed with people to incorporate the 10 design principles. Equipment and spaces are drawn together to kickstart projects.

11
Team gives encouragement throughout, reducing the sense of risk, and also reducing risk itself by helping the project ideas succeed.

12
The team and local people work together to create 100s of opportunities to participate. This happens very quickly.

13
Together they create local festivals and events to show what's possible ...

14
... workshops and co-design sessions that get people and organisations excited about project ideas.

15
They organise health and safety training and insurance.

16
They design newspapers, posters and flyers and send email newsletters.

17
They work with projects to build websites, set up twitter and facebook accounts etc.

18
The team keeps records of projects and participation - documenting & measuring everything that happens.

EXPERIENCE OF STARTING A PROJECT <u>WITHOUT</u> SUPPORT PLATFORM

1
A few of people have an idea.

2
They get advice about becoming a micro-organisation to get funding.

3
Apply for funding.

4
Wait, sometimes for just a few weeks, sometimes for months.

5
Decisions on funding get announced.

6
Some people can make a start on their idea.

EXPERIENCE OF STARTING A PROJECT <u>WITH</u> SUPPORT PLATFORM

1
Person comes into project shop and talks to team about an idea.

2
Works with team to develop idea and turn into a project design.

3
No one's enthusiasm has time to fade.

4
First event to test if local people like the idea and want to participate.

5
Team forming around the project - sharing local opportunities.

6
Developing project to next stage.

SOME PROJECTS WILL ALSO START TO HAVE NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW AND BECOME COMMUNITY BUSINESSES

Every year teams of local people will be invited on special programmes - to grow and start community businesses - examples below.

Many of these teams will emerge from their experiences of starting and participating in the large network of projects.

An annual social innovation start up fund will give grants and investment to these businesses and they will continue to receive ongoing support from the Participatory City platform.
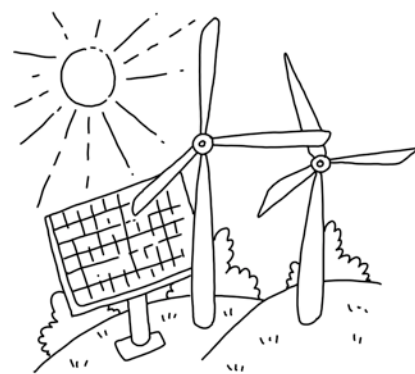
FOOD   **RENEWABLE ENERGY**   **RETAIL**   **TEXTILES**   **CHILDCARE**   **MICRO MANUFACTURING**
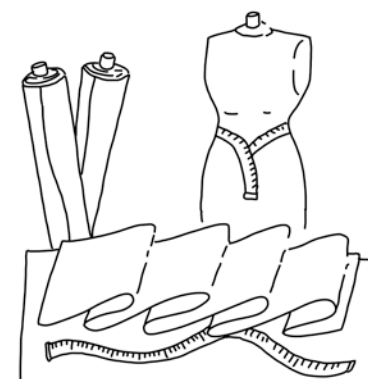
YOU HAVE REACHED THE END OF THE BASICS SECTION. FOR FURTHER DETAIL PLEASE CONTINUE READING.

WHY IT IS GOOD FOR TACKLING BIG PROBLEMS

EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The subject of inequality is under intense scrutiny by politicians, economists, sociologists, public policy experts, journalists and many more. Inequality and the poverty that comes with it is viewed by many as an unacceptable side effect of capitalist economic systems, and one that needs to be urgently addressed.

But it isn't easy to solve because it is created and reinforced by many different factors working together. Inequality isn't just a financial problem solved by redistributing money, it's a human and cultural problem too.

Inequality can show up most starkly in neighbourhoods where clustering of low income households concentrates and increases the problems - becoming more fixed over time and making many people feel trapped and hopeless.

How to deal with inequality and the issues around it is therefore extremely complicated and it is unlikely that single solutions will work on their own.

Here we describe briefly how inequality can become a big issue in neighbourhoods trying to improve and grow, and not leave people behind.

We also describe how living in a highly participatory neighbourhood could help to improve this situation.

GOOD NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR SLOW OR NO GROWTH

It is also worth noting that the participatory neighbourhood is about improving people's everyday life, not just about creating stepping stones to employment, although this is critically important. It is also about people living in good neighbourhoods, where it is easier to live healthily and well. This is equally important to people and places at times of slow or no growth.
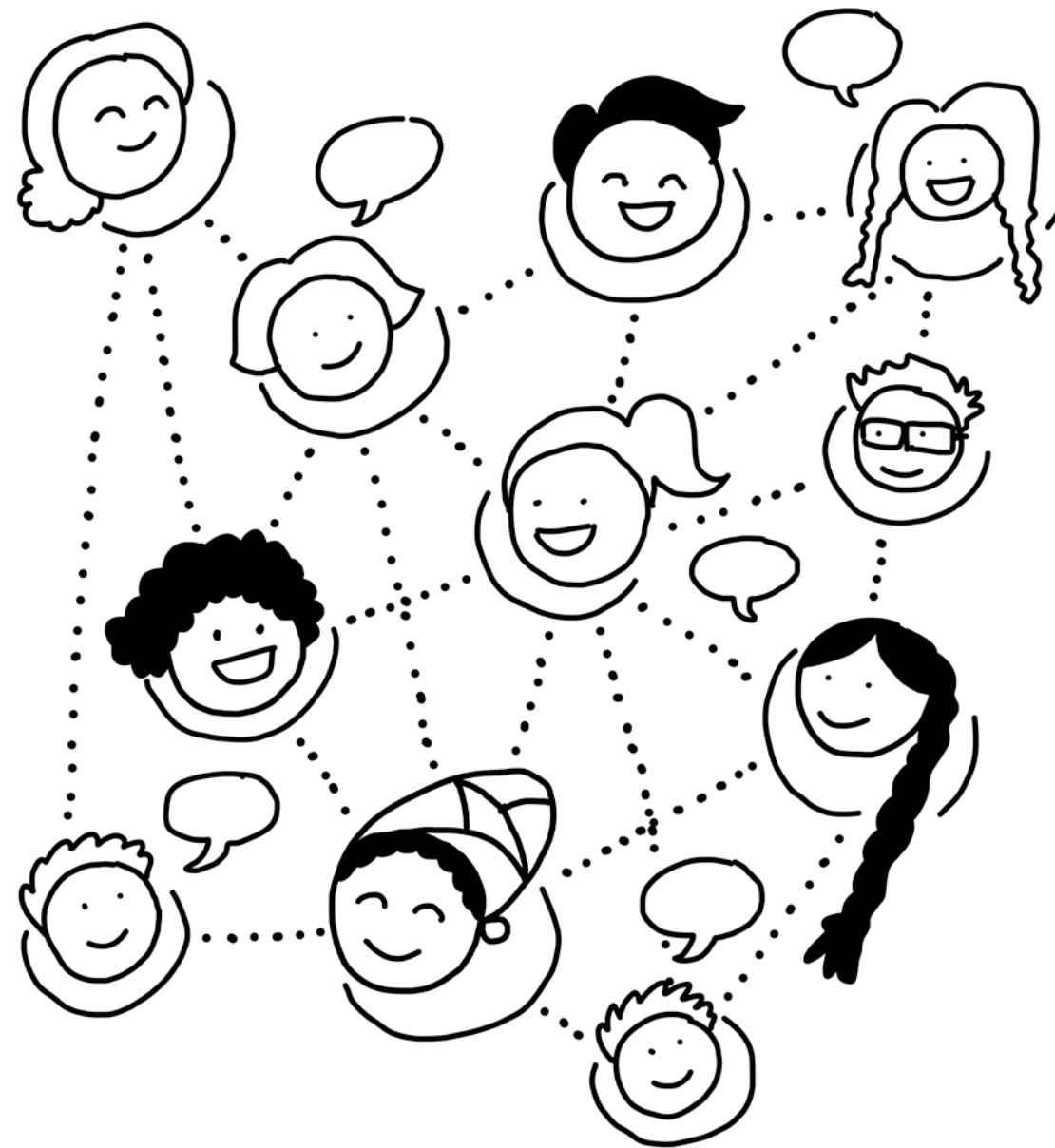
Reducing inequality is good for everyone.
How can we design neighbourhoods where everyone, regardless of their starting point, can benefit from the opportunities being created?

EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

CURRENT SITUATION

1
When neighbourhoods get investment they start to grow.

2
New houses and offices get built.

3
New businesses start and others move in.

4
Jobs get created and people compete for the new jobs.

5
Some people can get left behind.

6
Home rentals increase and some people on lower incomes have to move away i.e. gentrification.

7
The distance between many people's starting point and the new opportunities seem like a long way.
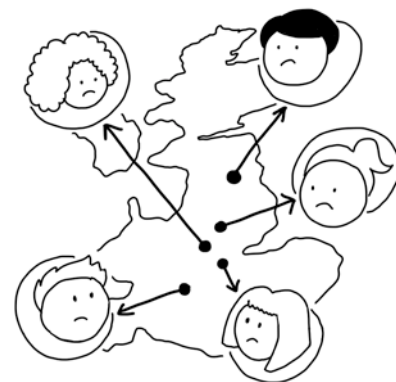
8
This type of growth has been going on for a long time - and its helped to create the high inequality and low social mobility experienced in the UK.
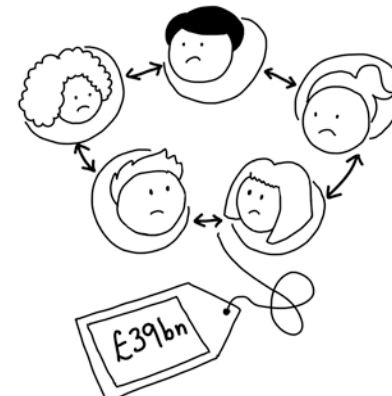
9
The overall cost of inequality to the UK is estimated as equivalent to £39 billion a year. (1)

10
We need to find new ways to improve neighbourhoods and create opportunities without leaving people behind.

EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

HOW LIVING IN A PARTICIPATORY NEIGHBOURHOOD WILL HELP

1

How can we design neighbourhoods where everyone, regardless of their starting point, can benefit from the opportunities that growth creates?

2

Regular participation is one of the ways we can do this. The large network of participation projects will offer 100+ opportunities every week for practical activity.

3

These opportunities will start at the smallest entry point and grow from there. This small, simple entry point is how to ensure everyone can join in and has access to the benefits of participation.
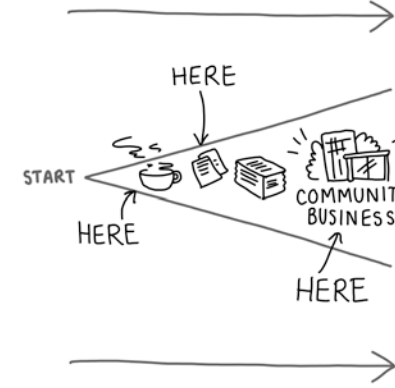
4

People can self-navigate. They can start participating where they want to, from sitting in and watching an activity for a while, all the way through to starting a community business.

5

They can try many different things - looking for what interests them and what they might have a talent for.

"We have already invented and deployed a near perfect tool to address equality of opportunity problems.

Extra curriculum activity is as close a magic bullet as we are ever likely to find in the real world of social, educational and economic policy.

Perversely, in the US, as the opportunity gap has widened, we have increasingly excluded poor students from participation in these activities."

Robert Putnam
Professor of Public Policy, Harvard University

6

A highly participatory neigbourhood could be described as an 'informal, high frequency, low commitment, non competitive, real world, life-long learning network'.

7

These many experiences will be stepping stones ...

8

... towards growing confidence, skills and new networks that will bring people closer to the more competitive opportunities ...

9

... towards employment, formal education and training...

10

... or to inventing their own livelihoods and starting businesses through access to the community business programmes and funding.

SOCIAL COHESION

Participation culture projects involve activities which are intrinsically appealing to many people, with many 'common denominator' activities - such as cooking, learning, making - experiences that co-produce something tangible as a group of equal peers.

Participatory culture projects attract a diverse range of participants, creating great opportunity for people from different backgrounds to get to know and trust each other, from different ages, cultures, incomes, genders or languages.

These are the seeds of how to create a collaborative culture in a neighbourhood, with networks of people who understand each other, look out for each other and respond to problems together.

1
Posters don't help people to get along together. Speeches don't work very well either - and certainly not on their own.

2
Practical everyday activities are common denominators, informal, short and productive. They attract people from all different backgrounds, ages, languages, genders, cultures...

3
Spending time with people from different backgrounds works to build friendships and cultural understanding. This works especially well when collaborating to create visible benefits for each other and their neighbourhood.
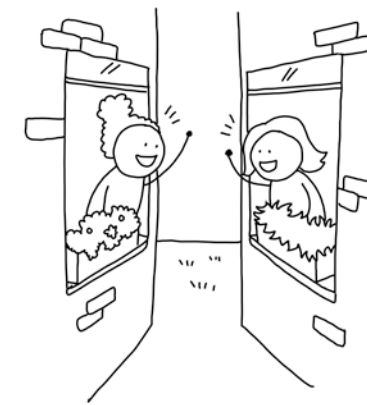
4
The Participatory City network of projects will dramatically increase the number of opportunities for these types of relaxed, positive interactions between neighbours.

5
Every week people will have 100+ convenient opportunities to spend time with each other — in many places this could be up to 400 more opportunities per month than they have at the moment.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Participants of the large test project thought that participating would achieve the following impacts on social cohesion.
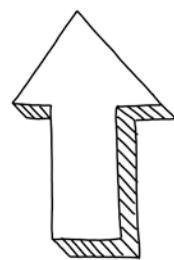
UP BETWEEN +40% +80%

Meeting a wider range of people than you regularly come into contact with.
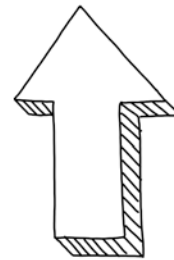
+60%

Ability to get on with people from different backgrounds.
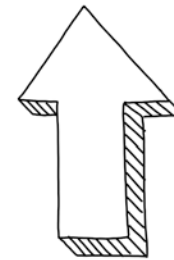
+60%

Trust in neighbours.
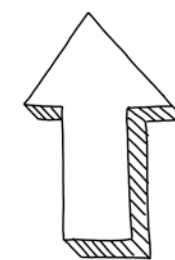
+60%

Capacity for people to make collective decisions as a community.
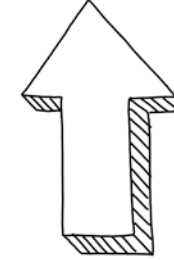
UP BETWEEN +40% +80%

Increased access to a wider network.

WELLBEING AND HEALTH

Studies suggest that everyday activities and practices can account for 40% of the differences between people's wellbeing - activities that we self initiate as individuals. (1)

The ecosystem of projects and activities will provide 100+ real life opportunities each week for people to self direct and enact the 5 Ways to Wellbeing recommend by the New Economics Foundation.

There are strong links between social connection and physical health (see page 13 for social capital studies). A meta analysis of 148 studies (209,000 participants) found that participants with stronger social relationships were 50% less likely to die compared to those with weak relationships. (2)

"Wellness is created and lived by individuals every day through their ability to care for oneself and others, being able to take decisions, and having a sense of control. These factors depend upon strong social networks and high levels of social connectedness"

Sir Harry Burns
Chief Medical Officer for Scotland

5 WAYS TO WELLBEING FROM THE NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION

A set of evidence-based actions which promote people's wellbeing.

CONNECT
Connect with people around you, family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time developing them.

BE ACTIVE
Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good.

TAKE NOTICE
Be aware of the world around you and that you are feeling. Savour the moment.

GIVE
Seeing yourself and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

LEARN
Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Participants in the large test project thought that participating would achieve the following increases related to wellbeing.

UP BETWEEN +40% +80%

UP BETWEEN +40% +80%

UP BETWEEN +60% +80%
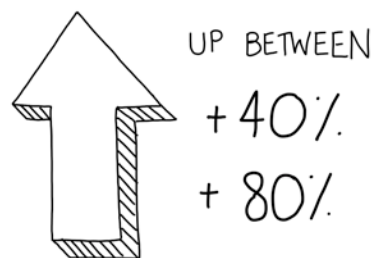
Participating in projects increased overall sense of happiness and wellbeing.
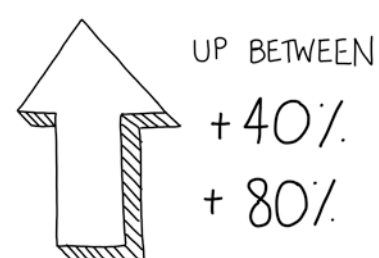
Participating in projects increased opportunities to learn or share skills.
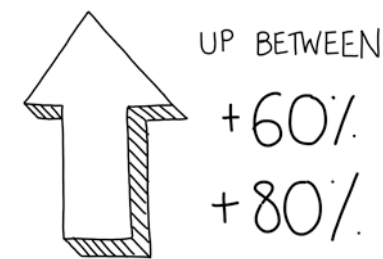
Participating in projects made people more connected with people living locally.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmentally friendly practices are a wicked problem. This means that the solution requires a change in mindset and behaviour from a great number of people - and we have tried many different top down ways to encourage this.

Most of these methods are based on marketing techniques and have had some success, but have mostly failed to get enough people living differently to make an impact on the overall problem.

TOP DOWN APPROACHES - WORKING THROUGH INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCE

| GUILT | ASK NICELY | EDUCATE / FINE | DOORSTEP NEIGHBOUR PEER PRESSURE | INCENTIVISE | NUDGE |

ENVIRONMENT

The 100s of different Participatory City projects will see local people using 3 ways to encourage each other to take environmentally friendly daily actions:

Transformation story
Inviting the whole neighbourhood into a transformation story about creating places for the future.

Convenient/practical
Creating concrete, practical, small scale, easy, opportunities to build environmentally friendly actions into their everyday life.

Social/collaborative
Make these projects and opportunities social, enjoyable, visible and collaborative.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES - WORKING THOUGH PRACTICAL SOCIAL PROJECTS

BIKE REPAIR STATIONS

PUBLIC TOOL SHARING

TREE PLANTING
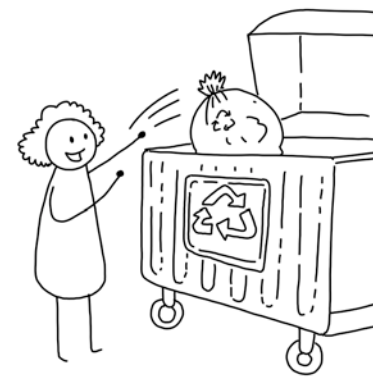
RECYCLING BINS
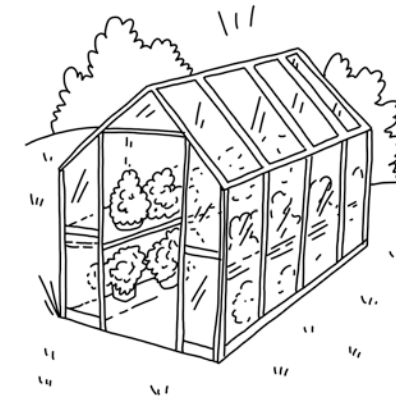
USING ALL AVAILABLE SPACES - GREEN HOUSES ETC
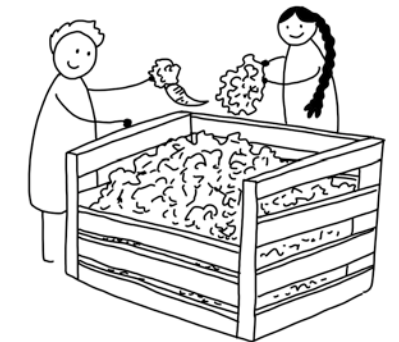
PUBLIC COMPOSTING

BATCH COOKING

URBAN FARMING

PUBLIC BEES (AND PUBLIC CHICKENS)

REGENERATING DISTRIBUTED LOCAL RENEWABLE ENERGY
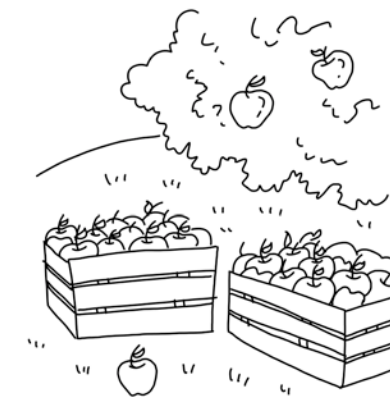
HARVESTING PUBLIC FRUIT

REDUCING LENGTH OF SUPPLY CHAINS

RESILIENCE

The study of individual and community resilience has revealed that it is often more effective to focus on increasing protective factors rather than trying to eliminate risk factors. Protective factors are conditions or attributes (skills, strengths, resources, supports or coping strategies) in individuals, families, communities or the larger society that help people deal more effectively with stressful events and mitigate or eliminate risk in families and communities.

"Investments to build resilience not only pay off on how effectively we recover after a crisis but how we recover from slow burn stresses, like inequality and poverty, that impair our capacity to be resilient."

Dr Judith Rodin
Rockefeller Foundation President

INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE
A few of many 'protective factors'

Friendships and support.

Access to networks and resources.

A sense of purpose and future.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RESILIENCE
A few of many 'protective factors'
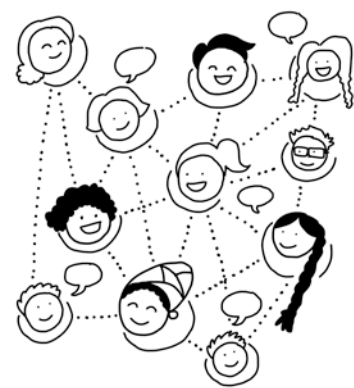
Social cohesion and dense networks.

Safe, secure, inclusive environments.

Opportunities to act e.g. environment activities.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Participants of the large test project thought that participating would achieve the following collective benefits to the neighbourhood.

+60%
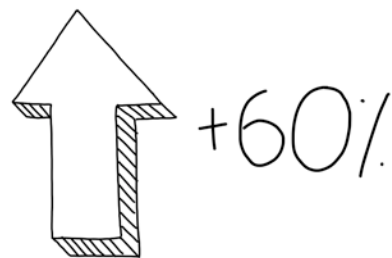
Increased capacity to respond collectively to social, economic and environmental problems.

+80%
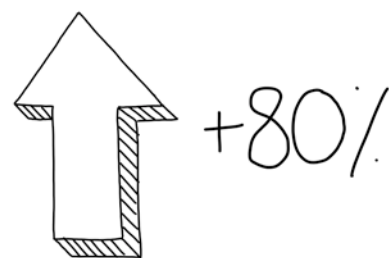
Increased capacity for people to make collective decisions as a community.

+60%
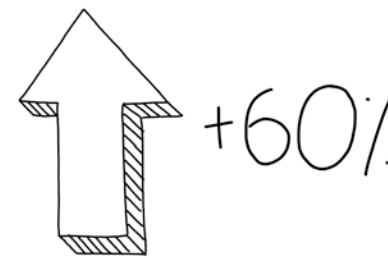
Easier to start new projects using existing resources.

BUILDING FUTURE CITIES

How will this new, highly participatory neighbourhood effect existing services?

The participatory neighbourhood will create a very new context for services and during the building of the first large Demonstration Neighbourhood the project will work to understand this impact.

The intention is to create a framework where a number of specialist areas can be explored in detail, as they intersect with the new participation systems of new projects and networks.

The idea is that the whole system, both professional and participatory, works together to achieve long term sustainability, and some of this will involve redesign.

Some of these intersections will be with local authority services or partner services which are described in the first diagram below.

They will also intersect with larger system innovations, such as the work being done globally on Open Cities, Smart Cities, Sharing Cities and Intercultural Cities, or the remodelling being done in philanthropy and charity, see second diagram.

WHY IT IS GOOD FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS OF PEOPLE

YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

YOUNG PEOPLE

RETIRED AND OLDER PEOPLE

SEVERE AND MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGE

DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM HEALTH ISSUES

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

GREAT PLACES TO GROW UP

Good places to grow up help keep young families closer to their grandparents, where they can share support as the children are growing up, and as the parents age.

EXAMPLE PARTICIPATION PROJECTS

PLAY STREETS
Play streets temporarily stop traffic in a residential street, creating and opportunity for parents to play safely outside.

DEPARTMENT OF TINKERERS
People dismantling everyday objects and building with the components.

TRADE SCHOOL
Alternative learning space that runs on barter. Anyone can teach - experience, practical skills and big ideas area all valued equally.

GREAT COOK
People come together to batch cook meals and take home portions for the week.

THE STITCH
A regular workshop for people who knit, sew, tailor, uploster and craft together. Special sessions for making clothes and toys for parents, grandparents and family friends.

Full details of the above projects that were part of The Open Works test project in West Norwood, London, can be found in the Project Directory of Designed to Scale report, pages 260 - 393.
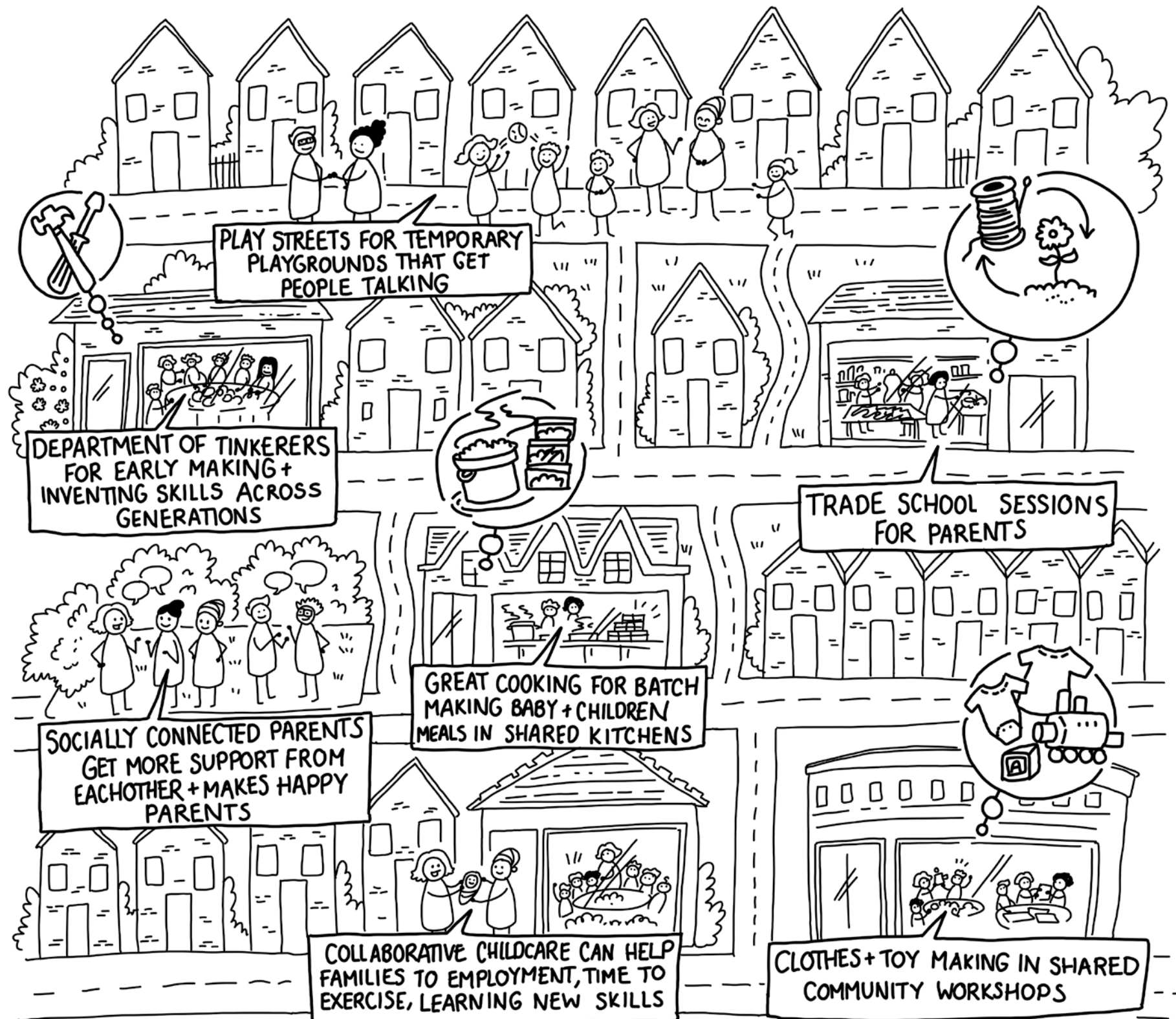
WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

There are 705,000 young people aged 16 - 24 in the UK who aren't in education, employment or training.

In the competitive environment for getting into further education, apprenticeships and employment, these young people are struggling to improve their life situations. Over time they can become depressed, unconfident or have health problems.

100+ opportunities every week for these young people to be involved in practical, short, informal, everyday activities will give them small stepping stones that will:

- Help them learn informally which could lead them to formal learning.

- Give them opportunities to gain confidence.

- Give them access to networks, spaces and support to grow ideas that could lead to employment or self-employment.

- Introduce them to new models and design processes and help them explore ideas around social innovation.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR RETIRED AND OLDER PEOPLE

GOOD PLACES TO GROW OLDER

Retirement is calculated to be one of the top 10 most stressful life events, and much of the stress comes from an abrupt change to social connection, and often a loss of purpose.

A lot of attention is being given to how to help people transition from working to retirement.

Imagine for a moment that you live in a neighbourhood that has grown the large network of participation projects and activities over a few years. You would likely have been taking part in many opportunities before your retirement, and would now simply have more time to do more of the social neighbourhood things you enjoy.

As people grow older many can become isolated and lonely. Living in a neighbourhood where there are many opportunities to remain social and connected, and which are also good places to grow up, could encourage families to remain living close to one another and also become good places to grow older.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING SEVERE AND MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGE

Severe and multiple disadvantage (SMD) is a shorthand term used to signify the problems faced by adults involved in the homelessness, substance misuse and criminal justice systems in England, with poverty as an almost universal complicating factor, and mental ill-health a common one.

SMD is distinguishable from other forms of social disadvantage because of the degree of stigma and dislocation from societal norms that these intersecting experiences represent.

The quality of life reported by people facing SMD is much worse than that reported by many other low income and vulnerable people, especially with regard to their mental health and sense of social isolation.

There are significant social costs associated with SMD, not least the potentially negative impacts on the children with whom many people facing SMD live, have contact with, or are estranged from. (Hard Edges report, Lankelly Chase Foundation, 2015)

1
People often face multiple challenges at the same time.

2
On average each UK borough has 1,470 people who have two out these three challenges. They cost on average £23m per year, per authority. (1)
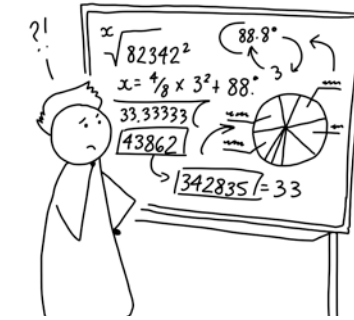
3
Complex problems can keep coming back or getting worse.
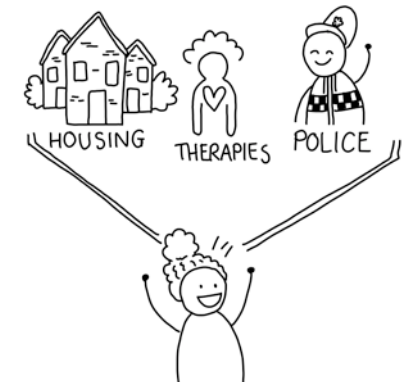
4
Professional services are doing a lot of innovative work to join up better so that they can focus more on the person than the individual issues.
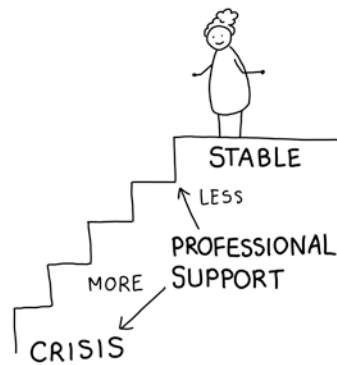
5
Reaching a point of stability is a very big step forward.

6
But for most people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage, it's the first of many steps to long term security and health.

7
Moving successfully from the professional support system and reintegrating into mainstream society can be a difficult transition point.
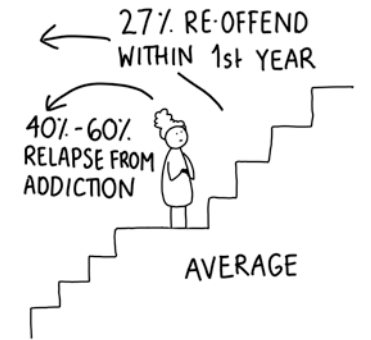
8
When people don't integrate successfully into mainstream society problems can re-surface.

9
What happens when people make a neighbourhood their home?

10
Some places can even feel hostile to people recovering from problems.

11
Even when a neighbourhood tries to help, they can make people feel worse.

12
Many of these well meaning ideas make people feel like they are always going to be labeled and judged. This is often referred to as 'stigma'.

SEVERE AND MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGE

HOW A HIGHLY PARTICIPATORY NEIGHBOURHOOD COULD HELP

1
Participation may be one of the ways we can help this situation. The large network of participation projects will offer 100+ opportunities every week for practical activity.
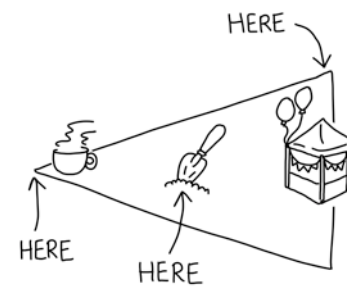
2
People can choose the activities that they can manage and what interests them - depending and what stage they are at.

3
Each of these activities and the people doing them become the entry points where people can 'plug in' into the neighbourhood networks.

4
Making new friends is key to helping people rejoin mainstream society.

5
The 'common denominator' activities are short, varied, local ... and everyone is on an equal footing. There are no qualifications to taking part in any activity - so no stigma.

6
What if even these simple activities seem too difficult at the beginning?

7
Professionals working with people will help them choose activities, introduce them or accompany them in the beginning if necessary.
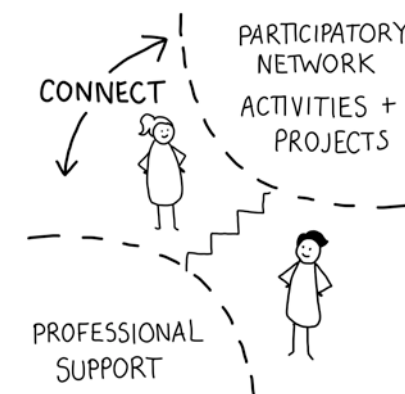
8
This will help to connect and bridge this early period of transition where professional support starts to reduce and the participation network can start to help.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM HEALTH ISSUES

The prototype project involved 12% of people with self-reported disability, which was representative of the local population as a whole.

It is believed that part of the reason for this high level of involvement had to do with how the opportunities were created i.e. low commitment, short periods of time, close to home, physically accessible, involving common denominator activities.

Our research shows that people can be put off participating if they perceive the demands of the activity to be physically or emotionally too high.

Comparison to general volunteering

In general terms volunteering projects can find it difficult to involve people with disabilities. There are many reasons for this including the structure and type of opportunities, but many volunteering opportunities are designed to help people with disabilities, rather than involving them as participants.

Currently only 3% of all volunteers have a disability - which is 14% lower than the proportion in the UK population.

PEOPLE PARTICIPATING WITH A DISABILITY

12%
PARTICIPATION CULTURE PROJECTS

3%
ALL VOLUNTEERING IN THE UK
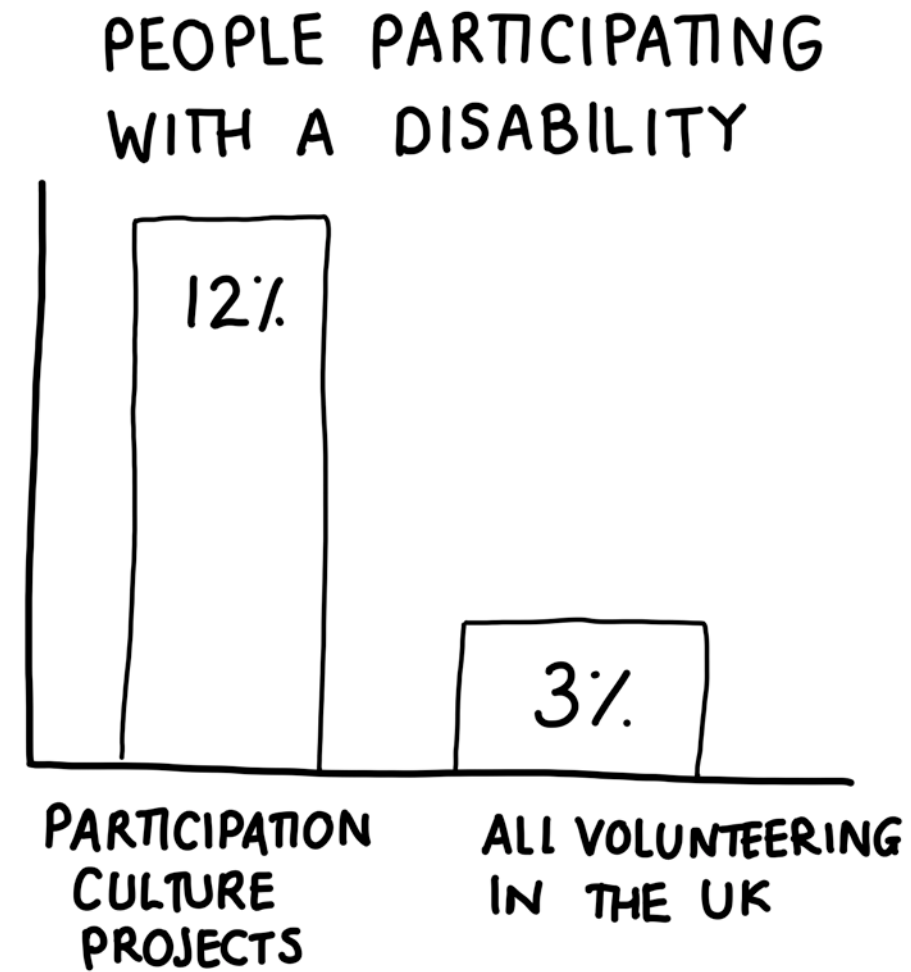
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. HOW DOES THE 'PARTICIPATION CULTURE' MODEL DIFFER FROM EXISTING MODELS?

2. HOW DOES THE PLATFORM APPROACH DIFFER FROM OTHER PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES TO ENCOURAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY?

3. HOW DOES FUNDING THROUGH THE SUPPORT SYSTEM (PLATFORM) COMPARE TO OTHER FUNDING STRATEGIES?

4. HOW DOES THE DESIGN PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATORY CULTURE PROJECTS DIFFER TO OTHER WAYS OF DESIGNING?

5. HOW DO EXISTING PROJECTS AND ORGANISATIONS RESPOND TO THE NEW SUPPORT SYSTEMS STARTING IN THEIR AREA?

6. COULD EXISTING LOCAL ORGANISATIONS CREATE THE SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATORY SYSTEMS?

7. DO ALL THE PROJECT IDEAS COME FROM THE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD?

8. CURRENTLY ONLY THE STRONGEST IDEAS SURVIVE, ISN'T THAT A GOOD THING?

9. WHEN CAN THE SUPPORT SYSTEM STOP AND LET PEOPLE GET ON WITH IT?

10.   HOW DO WE KNOW THAT THE PARTICIPATION SYSTEM IS WORKING - SO MANY SMALL ACTIONS ACROSS SO MANY PROJECTS?

11.   HOW DOES THIS FIT IN WITH DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS?

FAQ NO.1
HOW DOES THE 'PARTICIPATION CULTURE' MODEL DIFFER FROM EXISTING MODELS?

In most communities there are always several groups, clubs and activities. Many people enjoy taking part in them and they contribute a lot to local communities. In fact society has invented many different ways that people can take part in improving in society.

Each of the different ways we can participate is shown on the chart - although there are many projects which cross over this general segmentation. You may have taken part in several different types of participation already over the course of your life. If you have, you will recognise that each of these models has a set of practices, methods and behaviours depending on what they are trying to achieve.

The Representative model aims to elect individual people to represent a larger group of people's interests and direct resources where they are needed most. A group or panel of representatives assist in the decision making that directs resources. Representative models include elected members on the local council, members of Tenants and Residents Committees and school Parent Associations.

The Charity model aims to connect and direct resources to people in need, through fundraising, organising professionals and volunteers to help people with high levels of need.

The Challenge model aims to bring pressure and lobby government and institutions to change how they work or to change decisions they make. Challenge model practices often try to bring a lot of people into that conversation through signing petitions or taking part in protest marches.

The Association model is the term that mainly refers to local groups and clubs. People join clubs as members and take part in specialist activities such as sports, reading, rambling etc. Associations often involve paying a membership fee to the local or national organisation that organises the activity.

The Participatory City model is aimed at supporting a new type of participation that citizens themselves have been inventing over recent years. These type of new 'participation culture' projects involve activities which were intrinsically appealing to many people. The projects are often based on practical 'common denominator' activities such as cooking, learning, making, repairing - co-producing something tangible as a group of equal peers.
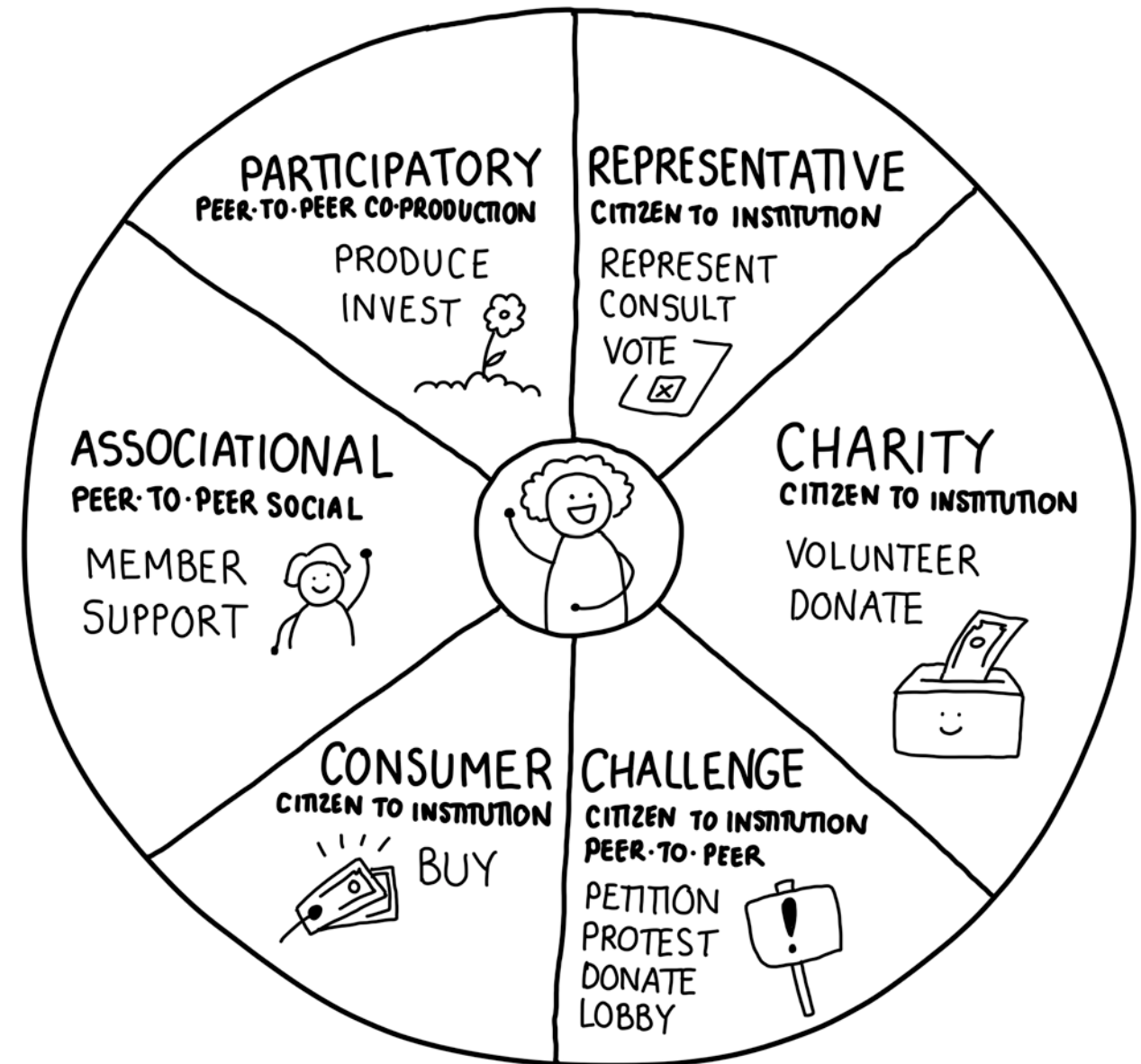
FAQ NO.2
HOW DOES THE SUPPORT PLATFORM APPROACH DIFFER FROM OTHER PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES TO ENCOURAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY?

NEIGHBOURHOOD APPROACHES

There are a number of professional practices which have evolved to stimulate and support different types of participation described in the previous section. These include Community Development (representative, charity, associational), Community Organising (challenge, sometimes associational) and Asset-based Community Development (associational, represenative and charity, sometimes challenge).

These practices are interrelated, and in some instances have evolved from each other e.g. Asset-based Community Development emerged from early forms of Community Organising.

The practices mentioned above have some broad common features (such as a focus on social justice) and some shared methods (such as door knocking and listening), but today they largely have separate ideologies, types of training and institutional support. How these different approaches are practiced can differ from neighbourhood to neighbourhood and from country to country.

The Participatory City model does not have its roots in the professional practices mentioned here, but in citizen designed projects instead. It could be described broadly as an 'asset-based' approach - as the design process usually begins with drawing together existing opportunities. (See design processes comparison on page 53.)

The Participatory City approach has evolved primarily through the study and analysis of citizen's new practices. These innovative people have been independantly developing new participatory models in different neighbourhoods across the world - referred to collectively here as 'participation culture'.

The Participatory City approach is part way through a research and development process, and early evidence shows that new support frameworks work effectively to start, sustain and grow large networks of these types of projects. This evidence has indicated that participation of this kind, on a significantly increased scale, has the potential to generate important benefits to transform people's lives and the places they live.

DIGITAL APPROACHES

In addition to the approaches mention, which tend to work face to face at neighbourhood level, there are also more recent digital techniques and tools, and which often work at city or country level.

Many of these tools are designed to encourage and enable:

- Increased levels of democratic oversight, e.g. transparent government websites. (Representative)

- Increased levels of digital activism e.g. online petitions and campaigning apps. (Challenge)

- Increased levels of crowd funding with citizens, e.g. co-investing in shared public resources. (Participation culture)

- Increased levels of crowd sourcing with citizens, e.g. looking for new ideas and solutions to challenging problems or reporting problems such as potholes. (Representative and participation culture)

FAQ NO.3
HOW DOES FUNDING THROUGH THE SUPPORT SYSTEM (OR PLATFORM) COMPARE TO OTHER FUNDING STRATEGIES?

Four of the most commonly used funding processes are compared here to funding through the Participatory City platform. This simplified comparison focuses on the processes, who decides if an idea is good enough to be funded, how that decision is made, and how sustainability is determined.

The Participatory City model is intended as a long term method of achieving outcomes in a neighbourhood. The funding model for the platform will be sustained through the development of local Foundations that will include contributions from local and national government, foundations, philanthropists, housing associations, businesses and local residents. The collective finance model relies on effective new metrics to measure the aggregation of many small actions and their benefits.

NATIONAL FUNDER

FUNDER
OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS (THEME/OUTCOME)

FUNDER
IDEAS + APPLICATIONS FROM PEOPLE

FUNDER
APPLICATIONS PROCESSED BY FUNDER TEAM

FUNDER
GRANTS (+ SOME LEARNING SUPPORT) GIVEN TO BEST INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS (SHORT/ LONG TERM)

FUNDER DECIDES IF BID IS GOOD VIA A BID + SELECTING (BASED ON IDEA, EXPERIENCE, TEAM, TRACK RECORD etc)
% OF IDEAS GET FUNDING
PROJECT STOPS WHEN FUNDING STOPS

NEIGHBOURHOOD ANCHOR/PANEL

FUNDER
LOCAL ANCHOR INSTITUTION
OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS (THEME/OUTCOME)

FUNDER
LOCAL ANCHOR INSTITUTION
IDEAS + APPLICATIONS FROM PEOPLE

FUNDER
APPLICATIONS ASSESED BY ANCHOR ORGANISATION AND/OR LOCAL PANEL BASED ON CRITERIA + FUNDING EXPERIENCE
PRIMARY DECISION MAKER: LOCAL ORGANISATION/REPRESENTATIVE PANEL

FUNDER
LOCAL ANCHOR INSTITUTION
GRANTS (+ SOME LEARNING SUPPORT) GIVEN TO BEST INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS (SHORT/ LONG TERM)

LOCAL ORGANISATION OR PANEL DECIDES IF PROJECT IS GOOD VIA BID + SELECTING (BASED ON IDEA, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE, TEAM, TRACK RECORD etc)
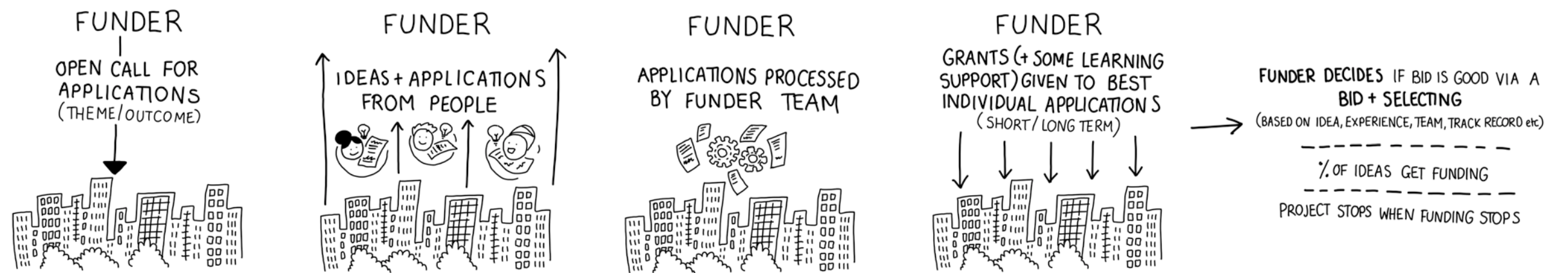% OF IDEAS GET FUNDING
PROJECT STOPS WHEN FUNDING STOPS

FAQ NO.3
HOW DOES FUNDING THROUGH THE SUPPORT SYSTEM (OR PLATFORM) COMPARE TO OTHER FUNDING STRATEGIES?

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

FUNDER
OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS IN A NEIGHBOURHOOD (THEME/OUTCOME)

FUNDER
IDEAS + APPLICATIONS FROM PEOPLE

FUNDER
APPLICATIONS ASSESED BY LOCAL RESIDENTS + THEY ARE INVITED TO VOTE FOR ONES THEY LIKED THE BEST
PRIMARY DECISION MAKER: LOCAL RESIDENTS

FUNDER
GRANTS GIVEN TO BEST INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS (SHORT TERM)
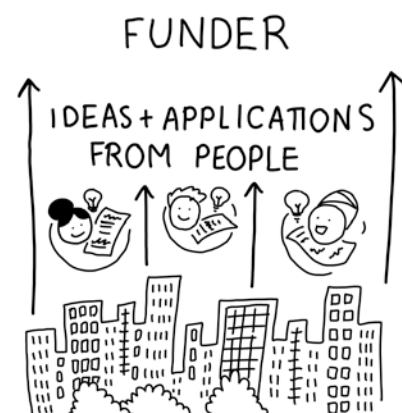
PEOPLE IN NEIGHBOURHOOD DECIDE IF PROJECT IS GOOD VIA **BID + VOTING** (BASED ON IDEA, EXPERIENCE, TEAM, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, TRACK RECORD etc)
% OF IDEAS GET FUNDING
PROJECT STOPS WHEN FUNDING STOPS

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTICIPATORY CITY PLATFORM

FUNDER
PARTICIPATORY CITY PLATFORM

FUNDER
BUILD SUPPORT PLATFORM SITUATED IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

FUNDER
NO INITIAL ASSESMENT IS MADE - ALL IDEAS RECEIVE CO-DESIGN SUPPORT AIMED AT TESTING + GIVING ALL IDEAS BEST CHANCE AT SUCCESS

FUNDER
NO GRANTS GIVEN TO PROJECTS - PEOPLE CO-CREATE A NETWORK OF MANY INTERCONNECTED PROJECTS WITH SUPPORT RESOURCES
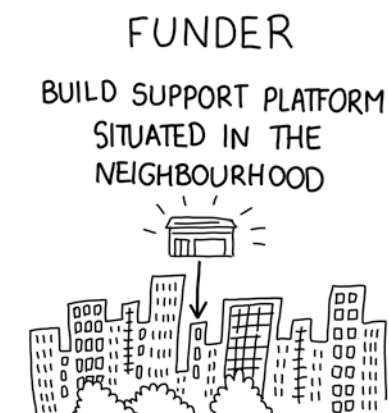
PEOPLE IN NEIGHBOURHOOD DECIDE IF PROJECT IS GOOD VIA **PARTICIPATION** (BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCE OF BENEFITS + SEEING BENEFIT TO OTHERS)
NEARLY 100% OF IDEAS GET TESTED
PROJECT STOPS WHEN PEOPLE STOP EXPERIENCING BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING OR SEEING BENEFIT TO OTHERS

FAQ NO.4
HOW DOES THE DESIGN PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATORY CULTURE PROJECTS DIFFER TO OTHER WAYS OF DESIGNING?

1

SERVICE AND PRODUCT DESIGN PROCESS

- Need or problem is the starting point for the problem solving and design process.

- Assumes targeted solutions working independentally.

- Participation is predominantly service co-design and volunteering.

IDEAS SOLVE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS/NEEDS

USUALLY CREATES SERVICES THAT PEOPLE CAN VOLUNTEER FOR

IDENTIFY SPECIFIC PROBLEM /NEED

MANY IDEAS THAT COULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM

SORT IDEAS+SELECT BEST SOLUTION

GATHER RESOURCES TO EXECUTE IDEA

EXECUTE IDEA
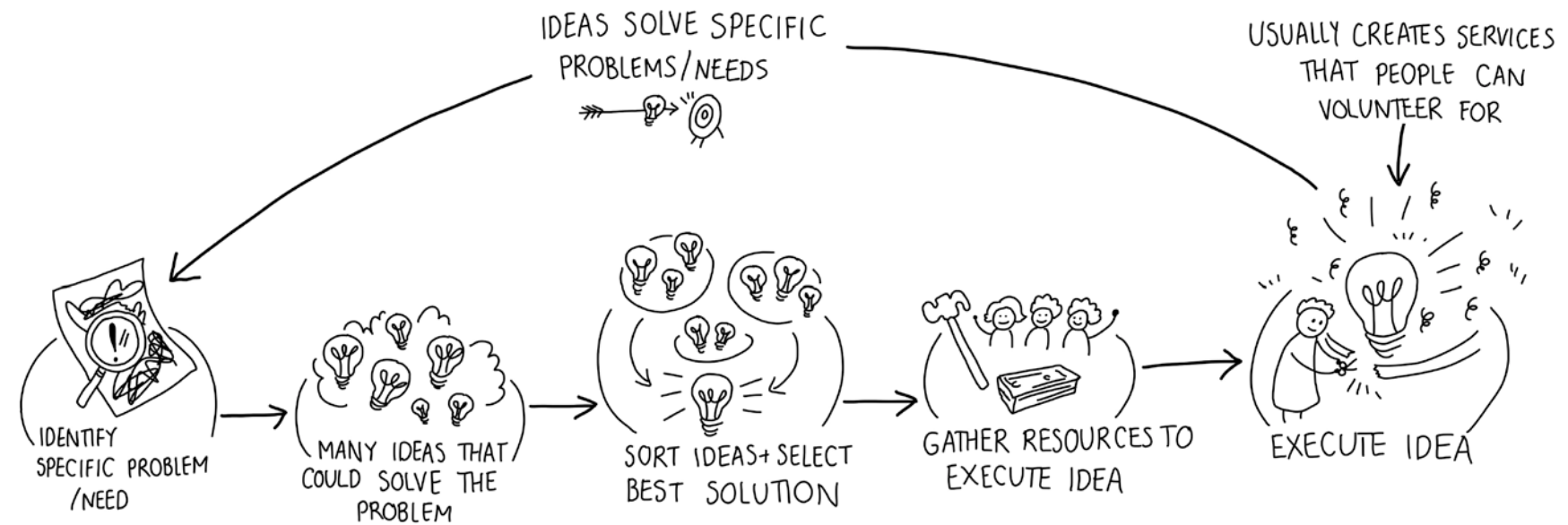
2

PARTICIPATORY CITY DESIGN PROCESS

- Vision and opportunity is the starting point for problem solving and design process.

- Assumes multiple solutions working together.

- Participation is predominantly project co-design and co-production, with shared benefits.

MULTIPLE PROJECTS CONTRIBUTE TO SOLVING BIG PROBLEMS AND CREATE A BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD

THIS PROCESS USUALLY CREATES PARTICIPATORY CULTURE PROJECTS THAT PEOPLE CAN CO-PRODUCE

BIG VISION TO ADDRESS BIG PROBLEMS FOR A BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD

MAP RESOURCES: PEOPLE, SKILLS, SPACES + ORGANISATIONS

DESIGN MANY PROJECTS USING RESOURCES

EXECUTE MANY PROJECTS
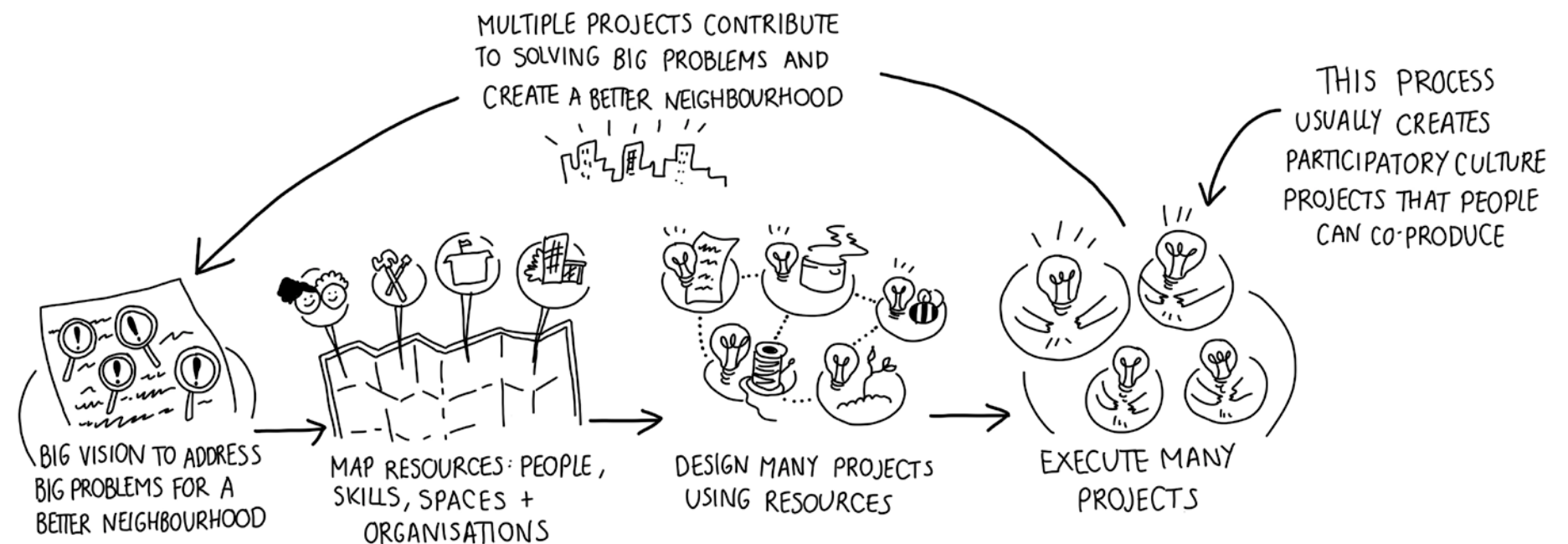
FAQ NO.5
HOW DO EXISTING PROJECTS AND ORGANISATIONS RESPOND TO THE NEW SUPPORT SYSTEMS STARTING IN THEIR AREA?

Experience shows that once introduced to the platform concept existing organisations respond in the following two primary ways:

Early Engagement

These organisations see that there is an opportunity to innovate their own work and that an ecosystem of mass participation will help their work, despite the fact that the platform will not be giving direct grants.

These organisations and groups become early collaborators on the participatory projects, offering underused space, involving their beneficiaries in participation opportunities and working hand in hand with the platform.

Late or no engagement

These groups or organisations continue to do the work they have been originally set up to do.

Positive responses outweigh the negative responses, as many people have been frustrated by the current systems of participation for a long time. Many people therefore appreciate the new opportunities to share and test ideas for improving the neighbourhood.

Negative responses have typically been very small and short-lived - usually focused on the fact that funding is not being distributed in the usual way i.e. no direct grants. Existing voluntary projects can compete with each other to get volunteers as well as funding, so they can initially worry that the platform might draw away their volunteers, but most of the engagement in the participatory projects tends to be largely new interest.

FAQ NO.6
COULD EXISTING LOCAL ORGANISATIONS CREATE THE SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATORY SYSTEMS?

Yes, this would work well if that organisation had the resources to create the essential combination of support elements, and the team had sufficient training for designing these types of projects and building the participation system.

3 - 6 months training in a neighbourhood with a working support system.
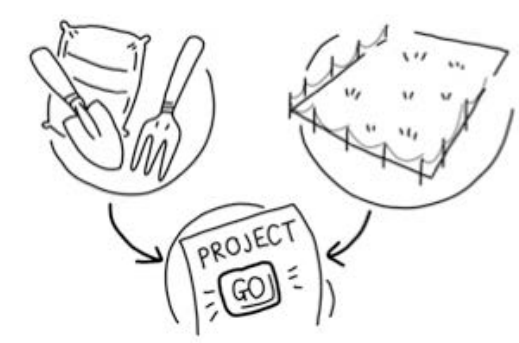
Essential ingredients and resources for the support system need to be in place.

FAQ NO.7
DO ALL THE PROJECT IDEAS COME FROM THE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD?

Ideas can come from anywhere. From the people who live locally, for other neighbourhoods across the world, from the local authority, from the many partners and collaborators.

Some existing open source projects are particularly good at surfacing people and ideas, and these are often used to kickstart activity in a new neighbourhood.

However, as a general rule only ideas that local people love and want to develop get tested in the neighourhood.

These are usually projects which get designed through putting together combinations of several ideas, utilising local resources and are built with people's drive and energy from that neighbourhood. This always makes every project, regardless of the idea's origins, different and unique because it can only be made in that particular way by the people that live there.

Ideas are plentiful. Their success and survival should depend principally on people's participation - this will only happen if they continue to experience the benefits directly and see it benefiting others.

FAQ NO.8
CURRENTLY ONLY THE STRONGEST IDEAS SURVIVE, ISN'T THAT A GOOD THING?

Often it's not the strongest ideas that survive, but the projects with the strongest people, with the most confidence, skills and time.

This has helped to create our current system for participation where only a very few people can weather the many pitfalls and difficulties to start projects or get involved. We often refer to them as the 'usual suspects', but in reality they are very resilient individuals and pretty rare. This is a key reason why so many people get excluded who should be benefiting directly from participation.

FAQ NO.9
WHEN CAN THE SUPPORT SYSTEM STOP AND LET PEOPLE GET ON WITH IT?

FAQ NO.10
HOW DO WE KNOW THAT THE PARTICIPATION SYSTEM IS GENERATING BENEFITS - SO MANY SMALL ACTIONS ACROSS SO MANY PROJECTS?

The support system and the participation system that it creates and sustains is not intended as a temporary intervention.

It has been designed to be a permanent method of incorporating participation and co-production into how we build sustainable neighbourhoods long term.

In the neighbourhoods where this strategy is practiced it is intended that a local endowment fund be created to support the platform for many years.

This fully collaborative model of achieving benefits for people and neighbourhoods, with residents, local government, businesses and funders working in concert, creates the demand for a new set of metrics that acknowledges the investment of time and money in this collective effort from everyone.

These new metrics will also need to reveal how much benefit is being produced. In other words, everyone needs to see the needle on the dial of neighbourhood improvement moving as the collective effort increases. Traditional top down institutions, but also participants, will be equally interested in the impact of their respective investments.

We are creating a new set of measures and methods to capture these shared benefits that people are experiencing first hand from participating.

It's important that these new metrics are captured, analysed and communicated as quickly, directly and simply as possible.

FAQ NO.11
HOW DOES THIS FIT IN WITH
DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS?

Researchers have catalogued 507 democratic theories, which shows how complicated democratic discussion can be.

For the purposes of this quick guide, we have compared five different ways that a person might democratically influence how £100 is spent in their neighbourhood.

On collective agency - Albert Bandura (2006)

"People do not live in isolation. Many of the things they seek are achievable only through socially interdependent effort. In the exercise of collective agency people pool their knowledge, skills and resources, provide mutual support, form alliances, and work together to secure what they cannot accomplish on their own. People's shared beliefs in their joint capabilities to bring about desired changes in their lives is the foundation of collective agency.

Perceived collective efficacy raises people's vision of what they wish to achieve, enhances motivational commitment to their endeavours, strengthens resilience to adversity, and enhances group accomplishments."

DEMOCRACY THROUGH REPRESENTATION

This is where people vote to elect a person to act on their behalf e.g. local councillor or panel member.

The decision about how and where to spend the £100 is made by this democratically elected group of people, who act in the interests of the people that voted for them.

DEMOCRACY THROUGH CAMPAIGNING

This is where people group together and campaign or lobby for the £100 to be spent on a particular thing.

This might be a situation where they disagree with the decisions of the elected representatives, or where there are competing interests e.g. a library vs a school.

DEMOCRACY THROUGH DIRECT VOTING

This is where people in an area might vote directly for projects. This can be called Participatory Budgeting and it invites people in the area to vote directly for what they think is most necessary - splitting the £100 amongst a few different ideas.

DEMOCRACY THROUGH CONSULTATION

This is where government or institutions seek people's opinions on specific topics prior to making a decision and designing a service.

Through this method it is intended that decisions or designs for the £100 would be better informed by incorporating the creativity and insight of people who might be closer to the situation, and thus more experienced about the service or situation.

DEMOCRACY THROUGH PARTICIPATION

This is the Participatory City model where the £100 creates new opportunities to grow ideas and projects in collaboration with local people. There are two types of democracy being exercised with this model.

1. Access and equality of opportunity
All ideas are tried and every effort is made to invite and include all people into the collaborative project growing process.

2. Participation
Projects grow or die based on people's participation and experience. They effectively vote with their feet based on the benefits of the project they directly experience, to themselves, to others and to the neighbourhood.

NOTES ON DESIGNED TO SCALE RESEARCH

The statistics quoted in this Illustrated Guide refer to sets of digital scales which formed part of the in-depth interviews with 110 participants of The Open Works project.

These participants were asked on scales of -5 to +5 what they personally thought were the benefits they experienced as part of participating in the different projects. They were also asked a set of questions which related to what they believed were the potential neighbourhood level outcomes of the large collection of projects.

Detailed summaries can be found in Designed to Scale, which can be downloaded from participatorycity.org.

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EVERY.ONE
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EVERY.DAY