



MAKING FOR CHANGE: WALTHAM FOREST

Francesco Mazzearella

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All the makers, fellows and radicals who have participated in this project. It is through their aligned values, creative skills and continued engagement that positive change has been activated.

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COUNCILLOR PAUL DOUGLAS
Waltham Forest Cabinet Member for Culture



“One of our main ambitions of being the first London Borough of Culture has been to support growth and highlight the cultural opportunities within our community. I am incredibly proud of the work we have achieved, with thanks to the support of the Great Place Scheme and London College of Fashion, UAL. Making for Change: Waltham Forest has provided a platform for the next generation of artists and creatives to nurture their talents and I am excited to see how this programme will develop in the future.”

LAURA GANDER-HOWE
Director of Public Engagement and Culture at London College of Fashion, UAL



“Making for Change: Waltham Forest is an amazing collaborative project which has contributed to the development and nurturing of local creative talent. By introducing a number of initiatives across the school curriculum and within manufacturers and the local community, we have seen what can be achieved when you bring young people, researchers, artists and designers together, to push forward the message that fashion can be fundamental in creating positive change.”

Executive Summary

This report documents the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project led by Dr Francesco Mazzarella, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF), in partnership with London College of Fashion, UAL (LCF) and London Borough of Waltham (LBWF) for London Borough of Culture 2019 (LBOC) and the Great Place scheme.

Waltham Forest is home to an exciting range of fashion businesses and other creative enterprises, with exceptional artisanal heritage as well as a strong aspiration for sustainability. Yet the area is noticeably affected by inequalities and challenged by related concerns regarding deprived youth, skills shortage, decline in fashion manufacturing and high unemployment rates. With these challenges in mind, the aim of the project was to explore ways in which fashion and making can be used as catalysts for positive change and to activate legacies within the local community. In order to achieve this aim, participatory action research was undertaken through a range of activities in relation to education, manufacturing and community engagement, grounded in the themes of makers, fellows and radicals.

OUTCOMES

A total of 1550 participants engaged in the project, including LCF staff and students, alongside Waltham Forest residents, and volunteers through the ‘Legends of the Forest’ and ‘Future Creatives’ programmes. As outcomes of the project, educational resources were developed to support local students in developing skills around sustainability and making, as well as increasing their understanding of the career pathways available to them in the fashion industry, in line with LCF’s overarching strategy for public and community engagement. Three research residencies contributed to embedding sustainability and innovation within heritage fashion manufacturing businesses. The project team also engaged the local community in collaborative making activities which contributed to nurturing social agency and developing a culture of fellowship, whilst also demonstrating ways in which fashion contributes to shaping Better Lives, one of the core values at LCF. Finally, through piloting cross-sector collaborations, a long-term partnership was built between LBWF and LCF with aligned strategic objectives and shared plans aimed at place making and creating tangible legacies within the borough, such as the very first fashion hub of the Fashion District which was established in a formerly disused supermarket space.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For London College of Fashion

- It is recommended to further develop the approach devised and implemented for this project and test it in other contexts in order to build a model of working that contributes to place-making and is transferrable to other east London boroughs.
- To deliver CPD sessions in Waltham Forest-based schools in order to train teachers in using the resources created, with support from LCF.
- LCF researchers could continue to develop and deliver Collaborative Unit projects based on their own research as these foster knowledge exchange with organisations in east London and provide students with enriching learning experiences.
- For CSF to continue working on the policy recommendations for recycled polyester developed through the research residency at Wagland Textiles in order to implement legislative change within the fashion industry. It is also recommended that the white paper is shared with the Environmental Audit Committee to contribute to furthering the Fixing Fashion Report, and to collaborate with the lobbying organisation Fashion Roundtable.

- Building on the success of working collaboratively across research, knowledge exchange and education through this project, applying the ‘Fashion Futures 2030’ teaching resource through knowledge exchange with community members (e.g. through ‘Art for the Environment Residencies’) could be considered. This could in turn inform on-going research on fashion design for sustainable futures.
- An opportunity for the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ showcase emerged to travel to the Fashion Space Gallery at LCF with the aim of further inspiring students and staff about how fashion and making can activate social change.

For London Borough of Waltham Forest

- To continue investing and collaborating with LCF and take joint actions across the partnership plan in order to support businesses, strengthen existing networks and enable them to thrive, particularly in relation to the longer-term vision of the Fashion District.
- To map out and better understand all the different programmes existing across different departments of LBWF and consider how they could be joined up or better developed through embedding some of the learning from ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ activities.
- To strengthen the collaboration with LCF and deliver networking events for fashion enterprises with a focus on sustainability and innovation, as well as workshops and career fairs in local schools.
- To develop a communication strategy, which includes a map of the local businesses and activities, in order to raise the profile of the sector and communicate the unique story of local makers with their artisanal heritage and skills.

For the Local Community

- Local school teachers could use the openly accessible educational resources developed by LCF and embed them into their curriculum.
- Local residents – especially young people – could learn and preserve the craft skills of Cactus Leather through apprenticeship programmes, such as ‘Future Creatives’.
- To maximise the opportunity that the likely implementation of the Wash Lab in east London could provide for local fashion designers, makers, students, researchers, and community members to experiment and pioneer the development of a new UK denim aesthetic.
- There is room for local residents to deliver creative workshops, pop-up shops, and exhibitions, either in the communal area of Arbeit Studios Leyton Green or at Forest Recycling Project or in other venues across the borough.
- There are opportunities for the local community to participate in making workshops delivered by social enterprise JOA as a way to enhance social agency and wellbeing and contribute to fashion sustainability.



Making for Change Waltham Forest showcase.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

PROJECT TEAM

London College of Fashion

Dr Francesco Mazzarella Making for Change: Waltham Forest project manager
Laura Gander-Howe Director of Public Engagement and Culture at LCF
Anna Millhouse Senior Project Manager (Stratford) at LCF
Mina Jugovic Making for Change: Waltham Forest project assistant
Helen Lax Director of Fashion District at LCF
Anna Fitzpatrick researcher in residence at Wagland Textiles
Anna Schuster researcher in residence at Blackhorse Lane Ateliers
Xandra Drepaül researcher in residence at Cactus Leather
Fiona McKay Making for Change: Waltham Forest showcase curator
Camilla Palestra Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030 exhibition curator
Chloé Vasta workshop facilitator and exhibition invigilator
Violeta Vasquez Lopez exhibition invigilator
Philip Bodger exhibition invigilator
Megha Chauhan evaluation assistant
Olivia Weber workshop facilitator
Tiff Radmore Fashion Futures 2030 resource developer
Jo Reynolds Forest Coats project manager
Romero Bryan Fashion Club tutor
Hannah Middleton Fashion Club tutor
Susanna Cordner Forest Fashion Stories facilitator
Claire Weiss workshop facilitator

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Carolyn Roche Great Place Programme Manager
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Detail of Forest Coats.
Photograph: Adam Razvi.

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Introduction

Introduction

This report documents the ‘[Making for Change: Waltham Forest](#)’ project led by Dr Francesco Mazzarella in partnership with [London College of Fashion](#) (LCF) and London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) for [London Borough of Culture 2019](#) (LBOC) and the Great Place scheme. Adopting a design activist approach, the project aimed at engaging, through fashion and making, local schools, businesses, residents and hard-to-reach communities in order to develop and retain creative talent in the borough and address issues affecting the community, such as deprived youth, skills shortage, fashion manufacturing decline and unemployment. The project also aimed at bringing together LCF and LBWF as long-term partners with aligned strategic objectives and shared plans beyond LBOC 2019, contributing to the LCF Knowledge Exchange framework and East Bank Strategic Objectives.

The report starts with an overview of Waltham Forest and its fashion-related activities to set the context and background of the project. It also outlines the research aim and objectives as well as the methodology that guided the development of the project in relation to its main areas of work: education, manufacturing, community engagement and legacy. In the concluding chapter, the overall outputs and outcomes of the project are discussed in relation to the key themes emerging from the research: sustainability awareness, empowerment and skills development, career pathways, community engagement, and partnership building. The final section of the report outlines the limitations of the project and recommendations for next steps.



E17 giant crochet made at Forest Recycling Project.
Photography: Eric Aydin-Barberini.

1.1. WALTHAM FOREST

Waltham Forest is a North-East London borough with a population of 275,505 residents, expected to increase to 291,500 by 2021 (London Borough of Waltham Forest, 2017). The borough is ethnically diverse: 68% of the total population is from BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) groups as compared to 55% in London (ibid.). The diverse social fabric of the borough is a result of residents being born outside the UK, primarily in Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Jamaica and India, constituting 35% of the local population (ibid.).

Although income in Waltham Forest is lower than London average and inequality is evident in employment and pay across BAME groups, recent employment figures show a sharp growing rate of new businesses and of self-employment; the number of new businesses and start-ups increased by around 47% in recent years (A New Direction, 2019).



Walthamstow market.
Photography: Eric Aydin-Barberini.

In 2015 Waltham Forest was ranked 35th in England for multiple deprivation out of 326 local authorities (London Borough of Waltham Forest, 2020). Several neighbourhoods in the borough are among the most deprived in England, including Priory Court Housing Estate, which is in the top 10% of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England, with significant economic divisions within the ward (William Morris Big Local Plan, 2015), as highlighted by one project partner.

“60% of children in the borough experience trauma as part of their everyday lives; furthermore, people who live here cannot afford to do so unless they’re working. We experience real difficulties in housing allowance and the benefit caps”
– *Employment and Training Coordinator for Early Help Service at LBWF.*

Waltham Forest has a population slightly younger than average, with 33% of residents aged 0-24 years as compared to 31% in London. This allows for initiatives and developments to engage with the potential young talent pool. Although the students in the borough do not achieve grades AAB or better at A-Level, and Ebacc (A New Direction, 2017), there are a relatively high number of Artsmark registered schools (20% of LBWF schools) and the highest number of Arts Award moderations of any borough (ibid.), shining a light on the creative inclination within the borough on the education front.

1.1.1. FASHION AND THE CREATIVE SECTOR

The heritage of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th and early 20th century underpins the growing creative industry and grassroots ‘making’ initiatives of Waltham Forest and its fashion industry. A cluster of creative industries can be found along the Victoria Line especially around Waltham Forest’s Blackhorse Lane and Walthamstow Central stations, which are major growth areas in the borough. Apart from well-established businesses and start-ups, there is also a growing number of creative initiatives led by local residents, including E17 Art Trail and E17 Designers, revealing more untapped talent which needs surfacing (A New Direction, 2019). The growth rate of the creative and digital sector in Waltham Forest has been twice as fast as the London average in the last three years (32% versus 14%). This is due to the 1,980 businesses that provide employment to around 3,000 people accounting for 4% of jobs in the borough (Think Work, 2018).

East London is growing in reputation and importance as a location for fashion design businesses (BOP Consulting, 2017). In east London, fashion has created 36,000 jobs (including advertising, retail, design, manufacturing and distribution), due to 30% of fashion small and medium enterprises (SMEs) based in east London (Fashion District, 2019). These fashion businesses comprise of clothing retail or fabric merchants (55% of the total), followed by designers, cutting, manufacturing and specialised crafts such as embroidery, beadwork and leatherwork. (A New Direction, 2019). Furthermore, Walthamstow is in the top 8% of all UK Parliamentary Constituencies when it comes to the number of people employed in the fashion industry. These numbers illustrate the need to tap into the local talent pool which would enable the growing younger population to access and exercise social and economic equality.



William Morris Gallery.
Photography: Eric Aydin-Barberini.

1.1.2. CHALLENGES TO GROWTH

As explained further in Section 3.4.1, with the objective to understand the key local priorities of LBWF for a partnership plan with LCF Fashion District, A New Direction (2019) conducted a review of around 50 research papers, strategies, studies and data reports. The data collected through primary and secondary research – especially informal interviews with local fashion community representatives, partners, training providers and young people – contributed to highlight the challenges for the local fashion industry to grow, as experienced in the local area and further discussed below.

Education

- Recent pressures on the school art curriculum have reduced creative and cultural education for students, with a de-prioritisation of creative subjects and design-led thinking approaches;
- Career advice provided at present does not align with current trends and rapid changes in the creative industries;
- There is a lack of sector-specific support to enable career advancement and growth once employed;
- There is a gap in skills and resources available to borough-wide faculties to teach fashion/textiles as well as technical/digital skills within the curriculum;
- Although there is an interest in localism – with schools being hyperlocal – they often work in isolation, very much disconnected from the abundant assets locally available, which can remain untapped.

Community

- Local people feel disconnected from the creative workforce, which can be seen as exclusive and unrepresentative of the diversity of the local area;
- There is an absence of visible opportunities for the Asian community with a background in textiles and wanting to return to work;
- Amongst the youth, there is a growing consciousness of waste and ethical considerations in fashion;
- There are significant financial challenges for families of lower socio-economic background. The local community adopts a ‘make do and mend’ or ‘reduce, reuse and recycle’ approach to sustainability which is primarily driven by economic necessity and only secondarily by environmental, social and cultural concerns.

Business

- The borough is rich in local heritage and specialist craftsmanship;
- There is a lack of connectivity across the local fashion industry which is made up of small businesses and discrete initiatives, leaving the makers/manufacturers feeling isolated. This highlights the need for a supportive infrastructure to nurture collaborations between designers/makers;
- A growing attraction to fast fashion over craftsmanship has led to the disappearance of specialist technical skills and shortage of skilled workforce. There is a need to retain and protect the remaining existing skilled workforce and to train-up new potential employees to maintain the rich cultural fabric of the borough;
- The demand for workspaces outstrips the supply. Since rent is sharply increasing, several creative businesses are moving out of the borough or fearing the prospect of having to do so.

1.1.3. WALTHAM FOREST LONDON BOROUGH OF CULTURE 2019

In 2019 Waltham Forest was elected the Mayor’s first London Borough of Culture. The award, the flagship programme of the Mayor’s culture strategy, was a new initiative launched by Sadiq Khan to put culture at the heart of London’s communities. More than 15,000 people backed LBWF’s bid aimed to inspire 85% of households to participate in the cultural year, engage every local school in the arts and culture, and attract over half a million new visitors to the borough. Waltham Forest, London Borough of Culture 2019 was grounded in the themes of ‘Radicals’, ‘Makers’ and ‘Fellowship’ and explored ‘culture as identity’, spread ‘culture in every corner’, fostered the ‘cultural capacity’ of the borough, and encouraged ‘culture as a career’ opportunity (London Borough of Culture, 2019). The programme shone a light on the character, diversity and cultures of the borough through a year-long celebration of the real cultures of London by the people who live in the borough. Over 1,000 local residents volunteered as ‘Legends of the Forest’ at community events throughout the year to ensure the success of the programme.

1.1.4. THE GREAT PLACE SCHEME

Alongside the London Borough of Culture, Waltham Forest has been awarded a grant from the Great Place Scheme supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund, to put arts, culture and heritage at the heart of the local community over two years. The funding has supported a number of pilot projects, initially across Walthamstow, aimed at supporting new culture led partnerships, developing a long term cultural vision and building new opportunities for shared learning. The programme, called Creative Connections, kicked off with a series of ‘cultural conversations’ and networking events for residents and local businesses.



The Waltham-Forest community supporting the bid for London Borough of Culture 2019. Photography: Eric Aydin-Barberini.



1.2. LONDON COLLEGE OF FASHION

One of six colleges of University of the Arts London (UAL), London College of Fashion (LCF) has been a world-leader in fashion education for over 100 years. LCF is composed of three Schools: the School of Design and Technology (SDT), the Fashion Business School (FBS), and the School of Media and Communication (SMC). Through inspirational teaching, LCF nurtures the next generation of creative leaders and thinkers who work in responsible, analytical and ingenious ways. In the School of Design and Technology for instance, a combination of heritage and radical thinking, craftsmanship and new technologies are taught in order to develop innovative ideas and implement new practices to bring them to life. LCF is also committed to nurturing every student’s distinctive voice, facilitating their learning to challenge and define the future of fashion through cutting-edge media approaches across all channels: broadcast, print, digital, interactive, experiential, and experimental. LCF has strategic partnerships with brands, commercial and not-for-profit organisations aimed at supporting local and global enterprises; these connections are mutually beneficial for LCF students and external partners.

One of the core values at LCF is ‘Better Lives’, which means using fashion to drive change, build a sustainable future, and improve the way we live. Social responsibility, diversity and sustainability are embedded into the curriculum of LCF’s undergraduate and post-graduate courses. LCF engages with local residents and communities through participatory fashion education and research projects and works with young people in partner schools and Further Education (FE) colleges in Greater London to support them to apply for and progress onto LCF or UAL courses. In particular, the Social Responsibility team at LCF has extensive experience in working with women in prison to aid their rehabilitative journeys, by giving them professional skills and qualifications in fashion and textiles, and supporting them upon release.

Currently, LCF has six sites spread across the city, but in 2022 it will move to a new single-site campus in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park; there will be an accessible and connected physical space to advance and redefine the discipline of fashion. The new campus will be located within what has been named East Bank, a new £1.1 billion powerhouse of culture, education and innovation which will be built in Stratford, east London. East Bank will be spread across three sites: Stratford Waterfront (hosting LCF alongside BBC, the V&A and Sadler’s Wells), UCL East (University College London’s new campus) (Mayor of London, 2020). The new LCF’s campus will build on the East End’s centuries-long heritage in the fashion and garment manufacturing industry, support existing enterprises in east London and create further initiatives for the area fostering economic prosperity and social engagement. In light of its move to Stratford, the College has developed the ‘Making Connections’ programme of public and community engagement activities, driving transformation, regeneration and innovation across east London. Under this overarching strategy, partnerships are being forged, opportunities unlocked, and connections with local industries, schools and communities built. These will contribute to making east London a thriving place to grow up and start a creative career, taking full advantage of the opportunities this new cultural destination is beginning to offer. It is envisaged that the new LCF’s campus will spark further collaboration, experimentation, and inspiration, all under one roof. In doing so, LCF will continue to pioneer how we all conceive, practice and use fashion. LCF will shape culture, economics, society and the environment through fashion, and ultimately, it will contribute to shaping better lives.

1.3. CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE FASHION AND ITS ROLE IN FASHION ACTIVISM

Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF) is a UAL research centre based at London College of Fashion. It explores fashion’s relational ecological, social, economic and cultural elements to contribute to sustainability through research, education and knowledge exchange with the wider industry. The work of CSF explores vital elements of LCF’s commitment to Better Lives, using fashion to drive change, build a sustainable future and improve the way we live.

In 2018 Francesco was appointed as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at CSF, sponsored by the Sheepdrove Trust, with the aim to explore ways in which design activism can be used to create counter-narratives towards sustainability in fashion. In fact, to counter the mainstream fashion system – which is proving unsustainable in terms of environmental stewardship, social equality, autonomous livelihoods and cultural heritage – designers are becoming ‘agents of appropriate change’ or ‘catalysts for systematic transformation’ (Banerjee, 2008). An increasing number of designers are playing an activist role (aimed at making things happen), going beyond the well-recognised role of the designer facilitator (supporting on-going initiatives) (Manzini, 2014). Design activism can be defined as;

“design thinking, imagination and practice applied knowingly or unknowingly to create a counter-narrative aimed at generating and balancing positive social, institutional, environmental and/ or economic change” – *Fnad-Luke, 2009, p. 27.*

With this in mind, Francesco has explored the crucial role that design activism can play towards fashion sustainability and social innovation and identified gaps in knowledge in relation to roles, values, skills and methods that fashion activists can adopt, as well as some of the challenges and opportunities for design activists in transforming the fashion system towards sustainability. Within this research context, CSF was evidenced as a relevant case to investigate issues around fashion activism owing to its over ten years of experience in opening up pathways towards ‘building a transformed fashion system’ (Fitzpatrick & Williams, 2018). In a paper written by Mazzarella et al. (2019), past and current fashion activism projects undertaken by members of CSF are presented as exemplar approaches to fashion design for sustainability and social innovation.

As part of his role, Francesco also represents the Centre within the Change Network, an LCF committee established with the College’s move to Stratford as a focus. Forming the Change Network and having Francesco as a member, opened up strategic opportunities and connections with organisations and communities across east London to take place ahead of the move in 2022, rather than ‘parachuting’ into Stratford without any engagement with or relevance for the local community. Francesco worked with a range of stakeholders in a participatory design research project aimed at activating change from within the system, adopting a ‘quiet’ form of fashion activism, an embedded and situated approach to co-designing meaningful social innovations within the local community. In fact, within the wide range of approaches to design activism, Mazzarella (2018) argues for the need to adopt a ‘middle-up-down’ approach, bridging bottom-up social innovations developed by grassroots communities with top-down strategies and services deployed by governments and other support organisations.



1. Processions project by Professor Lucy Orta.
2. Craft of Use project by Professor Kate Fletcher.



Creative Repair Workshop at Forest Recycling Workshop.
Photography: Francesco Mazzarella.

1.4. THE ‘MAKING FOR CHANGE: WALTHAM FOREST’ PROJECT

Francesco’s investigation on fashion activism has informed a participatory action research project called ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ and developed by LCF in partnership with LBWF for LBOC 2019 and the Great Place scheme. The project explored ways in which fashion activism can be used to listen and respond to locally experienced issues and trigger participation across a wide range of public and institutional organisations. ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ comprised of a range of activities in relation to education, manufacturing and community engagement, grounded in the themes of makers, fellows and radicals. The project – supported by a total funding of £76,000 – was developed in two phases. During the first phase (November 2018 to January 2019) Francesco undertook a residency at Waltham Forest Town Hall in order to scope the project in consultation with different departments (Culture, Education, Business Growth, and Regeneration). After a successful presentation of the project proposal, Francesco embarked on the second and main phase of the project (March 2019 to January 2020) with funding from LBWF and Great Place: Creative Connections, a programme supported by Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

1.4.1. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The overarching aim of the project was to explore how fashion and making can be used as catalysts for positive change and activate legacies within the local community. In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives were set:

1. To develop educational resources to support students in developing sustainability and making skills and to increase their understanding of the career pathways available within the fashion industry;
2. To undertake applied research in order to embed sustainability and innovation within heritage fashion manufacturing businesses;
3. To engage the local community in collaborative making activities aimed at nurturing their social agency and a culture of fellowship, whilst also demonstrating ways in which fashion contributes to shaping better lives;
4. To pilot cross-sector collaborations and build a long-term partnership between LBWF and LCF with aligned strategic objectives and shared plans towards activating radical change and creating tangible legacies within the borough with the aim to make it a better place to live and work.



Beadwork at Couture Beading.
Photography: Eric Aydin-Barberini.

2

Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for this project. It outlines the research strategy and design, with the methods adopted for data collection and analysis in order to address the aim and objectives of the research.

2.1. PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The main purpose of this project was to empower local students, businesses and hard-to-reach communities, by giving them the skills, voice and agency to contribute to social innovation and sustainability. The research also sought to develop fresh insights in relation to the emerging field of design activism, exploring the potential for fashion and making to activate positive change and to create meaningful legacies within the community. To enable the project to be conducted from an insider's point of view, with first-hand understanding of the participant's day-to-day realities and their diverse social worlds, the researcher established inclusive relationships with the groups involved and gathered rich insights and direct knowledge of their experiences. The project involved an in-depth investigation of qualitative data collected from purposively selected groups of people participating in the research, using Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a research strategy. A collaboration between the researcher and participants was created to explore socio-economic issues within a specific research context and enable the development of interventions, innovations, or practices to address the very same issues (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003).

Francesco and the participants in the Forest Coats programme.
Photography: Adam Razvi.



Table 1: Timeline of the project

Themes	Activities	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	June 19	July 19	Aug 19	Sept 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20
Education	Activating Change		Development										
	Innovation Challenge		Launch & Brief	School work		Submission	Prize-giving						
	Fashion Futures 2030			Development			Testing	Design	Refinement	Delivery	Launch		
	Fashion Club									Development	Pilot	Delivery	
Manufacturing	Fashion London								Soft Launch				
					Recruitment		Cactus Leather						
	Research Residencies							Recruitment		Blackhorse Lane Ateliers			
								Wagland Textiles					
Community Engagement	I WANNA BE ME - I WANNA BE (E)U		Idea Generation	Making and Showcasing									Evaluation and Reporting
	Co-making Workshops		Communication	Delivery 1	Delivery 2	Delivery 3							
	Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030			Curation, Production		Exhibit Breakdown							
	Forest Fashion Stories				Design	Communication	Delivery						
	Art for the Environment Residency							Call	Selection	Residency	Exhibition		
	Forest Coats					Organisation	Communication			Making			
	Better Lives Symposia				Organisation	Symposium 1			Organisation	Communication	Symposium 2		
	Making for Change Showcase							Curation	Communication	Production	Set-up, Exhibit Breakdown		
Legacy	Partnership Plan				Research		Partnership building		Report writing				
	Fashion Hub						Marketing of studios		Businesses moving in	Launch			

2.2. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Based on these premises, the project was developed in two phases.

- A research residency was undertaken by Francesco at Waltham Forest Town Hall from November 2018 to January 2019 for the scoping of the project. This first phase aimed to identify a suitable scope for the project, detail its outputs and expected outcomes, as well as define the project timeline and budget. In order to do this, ethnographic methods (i.e. participant observations and unstructured interviews) were adopted in consultation with people from diverse departments (Culture, Education, Business Growth, and Regeneration) and partnerships with local organisations (schools, fashion manufacturing businesses, social enterprises) were established to deliver the project. Following Malinowski (1987), ethnography took place through the researcher’s immersion in the local context in order to observe people in their natural environment for an extended period of time and discover the perspectives of local community members. Throughout the ethnographic investigation, field notes were written in order to capture the researcher’s comments and insights were gathered from the interaction with the participants, paying a great deal of attention also to contextual elements.

- The second and main phase of the project consisted of a range of participatory action research interventions within local schools, manufacturing businesses and communities; these were delivered from February 2019 to January 2020 as per the timeline in Table 1.

Throughout this phase of the project, multiple data collection methods were adopted in order to address the research aim and objectives, as outlined below and summarised in Table 2:

- Desk research was carried out to review literature and various practices on fashion and sustainability, and develop an informed perspective on the subject of the project to guide the research.
- Co-creation workshops were conducted as an act of collective creativity applied and shared by people participating in the project, as stated by Sanders and Stappers (2008). During the workshops, design facilitators used a set of tools to encourage the participants to generate ideas resulting in the development of physical (mostly textile and fashion) artworks.
- Semi-structured interviews were carried out by researchers in residence to build knowledge through discussions around interviewees’ about their experiences (Cohen et al., 2013). Interviews were also conducted by Francesco at the review meetings in order to evaluate the outcomes of the residencies.
- Scenarios were developed to help envisage and predict a future state, whilst also raising questions and issues to interrogate these future visions (Milton & Rodgers, 2013). This method allowed the team to envisage how a Wash Lab could be developed in east London and led to a better understanding of the best business scenario for the local manufacturer.
- A focus group – a method to gather insights from more people at the same time (Bryman, 2016) – was conducted by the researcher in residence at Blackhorse Lane Ateliers to review and corroborate the future scenarios through the perspectives of different stakeholders.
- Prototypes were built by the researcher in residence at Blackhorse Lane Ateliers during a field trip to Jeanologia, to understand the diverse aesthetics of customised jeans and the laser technology used to create them.
- Panel debates were organised to showcase the outcomes of the project through the perspectives of different stakeholders and to gather feedback from a wider audience.

- Exhibitions were used as a research method to showcase (through a multitude of media, such as artefacts, photography, video, and texts), the outcomes of the project, raise people’s awareness about specific issues and gather insights from the visitors.
- Questionnaires and surveys were conducted by the researcher to gather feedback from the project participants and insights on how to improve the subsequent steps of the participatory action research. Depending on the nature of the project’s various activities, different formats were used to gather feedback, either in writing, or through online surveys set up with the support of evaluation consultancy The Audit Agency. The questionnaires and surveys allowed gathering of information in relatively simple and quick ways. To counter the issues of low respondent rates and the relative lack of in-depth answers, the questionnaire responses were complemented by other in-depth qualitative data collection methods, such as participant observations.

Table 2: Multiple data collection methods adopted in different phases of the project.

Methods	Project Phases
Desk Research	Cactus Leather Blackhorse Lane Ateliers Wagland Textiles
Co-creation workshops	Collaborative Unit Fashion Futures 2030 Fashion Club Cactus Leather I Wanna be me, I Wanna be (E)U Co-making Workshops Forest Fashion Stories Forest Coats
Interviews	Cactus Leather Blackhorse Lane Ateliers Wagland Textiles
Scenarios	Blackhorse Lane Ateliers
Focus Group	Blackhorse Lane Ateliers
Prototype	Blackhorse Lane Ateliers
Panel Debate	I Wanna be me, I Wanna be (E)U 2 x Better Lives Symposia
Exhibition	Art for the Environment Residency Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030 Making for Change: Waltham Forest showcase Cactus Leather
Questionnaire	Fashion Futures 2030 Fashion Club I Wanna be me, I Wanna be (E)U Art for the Environment Residency Forest Coats
Survey	Collaborative Unit Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030 2 x Better Lives symposia Making for Change: Waltham Forest showcase

2.3. DATA ANALYSIS

Over the course of this research project, large amounts of qualitative data were collected, in a range of formats, such as field notes, post-it notes, audio recordings, and photographs. The data was thematically analysed, through a manual and iterative process, to synthesise data in relation to codes, make comparisons between identified themes and draw conclusions from the findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994). ATLAS.ti software was used for manual coding, where raw data (such as audio transcripts, research reports, feedback questionnaires and online survey responses collected through the project activities under the three main areas of education, manufacturing, and community engagement) were imported for analysis (Figures 2, 3, and 4). In this thematic analysis, codes emerged from the data through an inductive process (Sadler, 1981) following the impact evaluation framework developed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO, 2018). Frequently recurring codes were then clustered into themes, and software-generated word clouds were used to validate the themes. Finally, as a result of the impact evaluation process, the outputs (i.e. the goods, services or products being delivered) and outcomes (i.e. single, measurable changes) produced were outlined for each step of the participatory action research.

Figures 2, 3 and 4: Codes and themes emerging from the data analysis.

Zero-waste Pattern Cutting Workshop.
Photography: Guillaume Valli.



Figure 1: Analysis of data collected through the Education activities

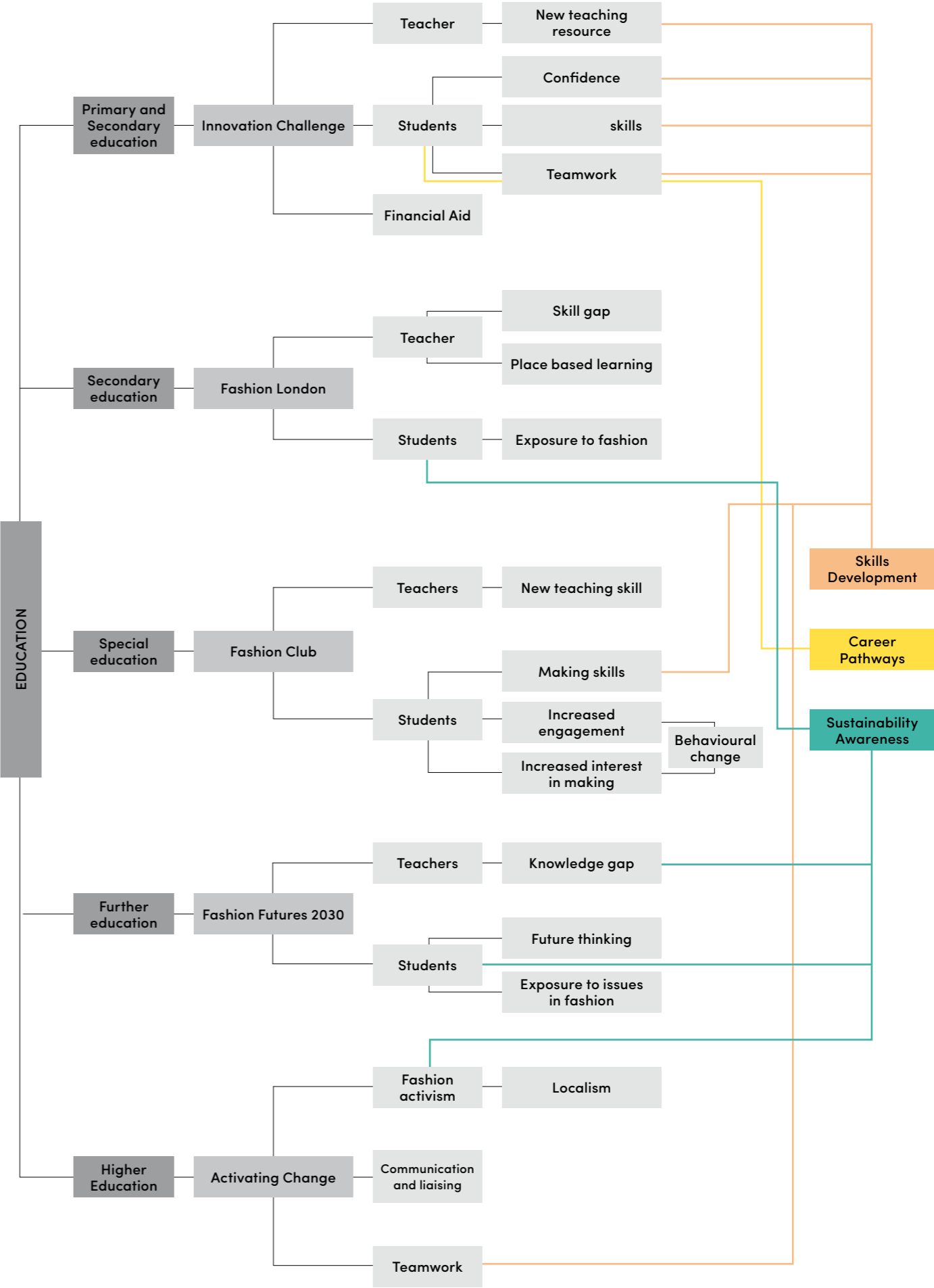


Figure 2: Analysis of data collected through the Manufacturing activities

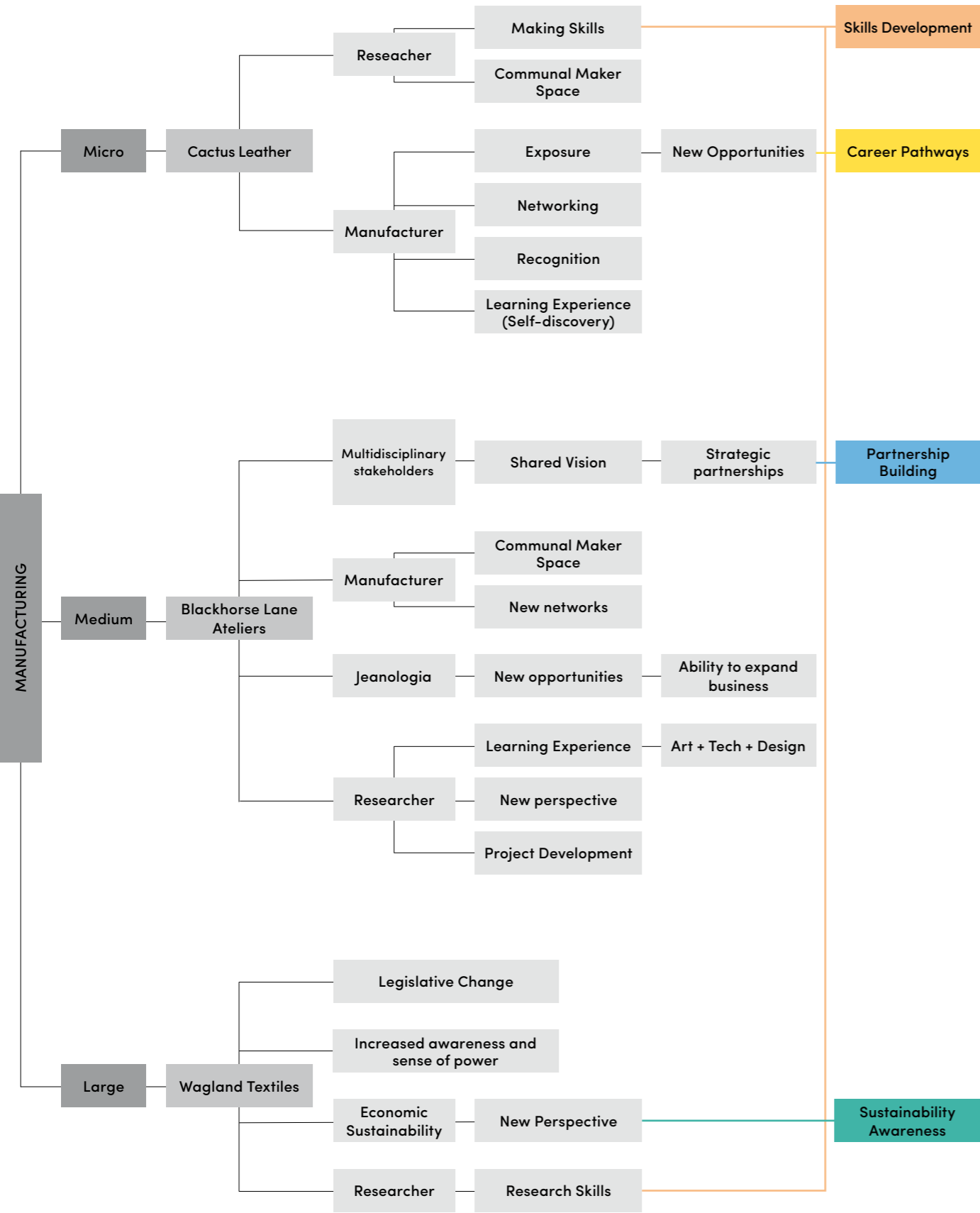
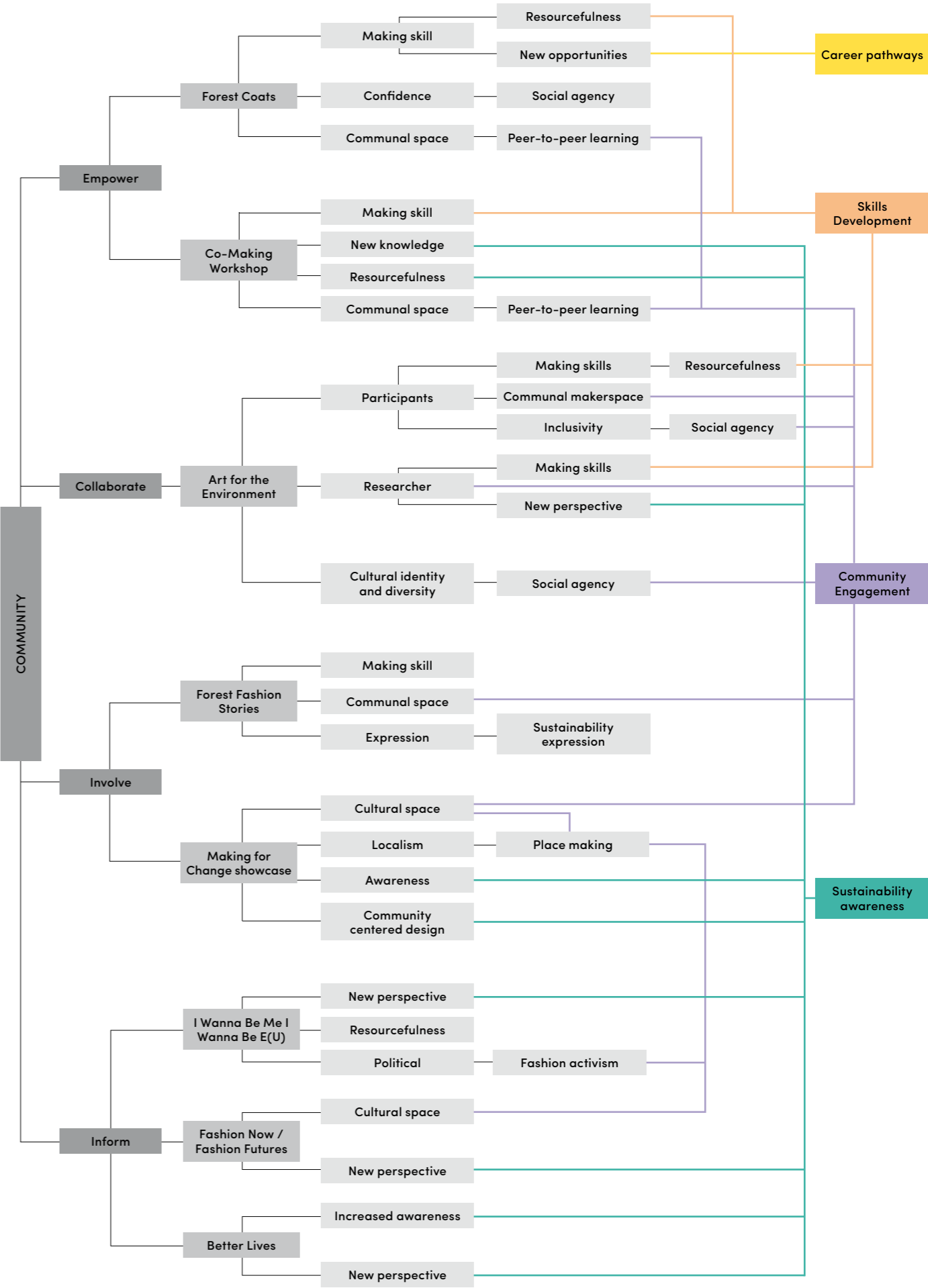


Figure 3: Analysis of data collected through the Community Engagement activities





2.4. PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

The qualitative nature of the research project led to the use of a purposive sampling strategy (Mays & Pope, 1995) to explore how fashion and making can be used to activate positive change in a specific community. The researcher selected participants who met specific criteria due to their experience and expertise, as shown in Table 3, which provides a breakdown of the 1550 participants who engaged in each step of this participatory action research project.

Table 3: Number of people participating in each activity of the project

Activity	Nr Participants
Forest Fashion Stories	600
Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030	163
Making for Change showcase	125
Cactus Leather	68
Activating Change	88
Innovation Challenge	73
I WANNA BE ME – I WANNA BE (E)U	66
Art for the Environment Residency	66
Fashion Hub launch event	60
Co-making workshops	43
Better Lives symposium 1	40
Better Lives symposium 2	38
Wagland Textiles	28
Blackhorse Lane Ateliers	28
Fashion Futures 2030	27
Forest Coats	18
Fashion Club	10
Fashion London	9
Total	1550

2.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout this action research project it was crucial that the researcher followed ethical considerations in order to protect all participants and their interests. The project followed the standards and codes of conduct defined by the Research Ethics Sub-Committee at UAL. An ethical clearance checklist and risk assessment forms were compiled by the researcher and validated by the University. Participants were given an information pack containing details about the background, purpose and delivery of the project’s activities, including information about their right to withdraw their contribution to the project any time. At the start of each co-creation session the participants signed an informed consent form, agreeing to take part in the project and for their contribution to be recorded – via text, audio, or photographs – so that anonymised quotes could be used in future research outputs.

1. Participants in the Forest Fashion Stories workshop at the Walthamstow Garden Party.
2. Tutor and participant in the Forest Coats programme.
Photography: Adam Razvi.





Workshop led by the GenGreen team at Waltham Forest College.
Photography: Curtis Gibson.

3

Project Development

The ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project comprised of a range of activities developed within three main areas of work – education, manufacturing, and community engagement – all contributing to the overarching aim of activating legacies within the local community. The following sections report on the development of the project across all its areas.

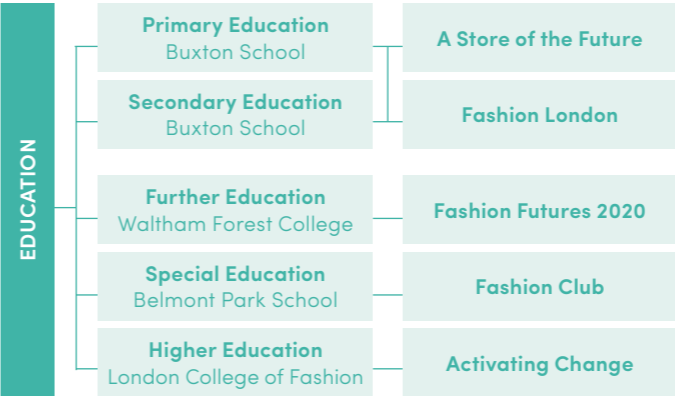


Workshop led by the GenGreen team at Buxton School.
Photography: Curtis Gibson.

3.1. EDUCATION

With the forthcoming development of the new cultural and education district in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, East Education has been created as a long-term vision of the East Bank partners. This is a major initiative that will ensure children and young people benefit from the unprecedented growth of creative and knowledge-driven organisations centred on and around the Park. In addition to its pivotal role in the development of the East Education strategy, LCF has developed partnerships with selected schools in east London, co-designing curriculum projects, delivering workshops and enrichment activities and supporting teachers through Continuing Professional Development (CPD). LCF academics, alumni and students contribute their time to deliver exciting content for young people at both primary and secondary schools. LCF’s Insights programme provides a range of activities to inspire young people hoping to carve their careers in fashion.

The educational programmes developed for the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project were co-designed with local schools and colleges across all education stages. Buxton School, Waltham Forest College and Belmont Park School (a special school catering for secondary students with Social, Emotional, and/or Mental Health issues) played an active part in developing and facilitating delivery of projects within their settings. Taking into consideration the schools’ different needs, timings, and scheme of work requirements, a programme of activities was designed and delivered: a collaborative project ‘Activating Change’, a school Innovation Challenge, Fashion Futures 2030, Fashion Club, and Fashion London. The following sections explain each of them in detail.



3.1.1. ACTIVATING CHANGE

The Collaborative Unit is a mandatory unit for LCF postgraduate students from across the three LCF Schools (School of Design and Technology, Fashion Business School, and School of Media and Communication) who have a unique opportunity to work collaboratively and with external partners on specific project briefs. The Unit was set up in 2014 in response to demand from students and the fashion industry to connect with external partners with the aim to innovate, explore developmental processes and to engage with collaborative working practices. The Unit is student-led and provides opportunities to apply for one of the many project briefs set up by the Collaborative Unit staff, or to conceive their own project concept in conjunction with other students and/or external collaborators.

‘Activating Change’ was a Collaborative Unit brief created by Francesco as part of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project, which aimed to equip MA students from LCF with an activist mindset to challenge the currently unsustainable mainstream fashion system, and to create sustainable counter-narratives. From February to May 2019, three teams consisting of four MA students from across the College were given an opportunity to address sustainability issues in relation to culture, education, and manufacturing within the context of Waltham Forest. The students were guided through a process of thinking and making together, working in teams, and collaborating with the local community at venues across the borough – One Hoe Street, Waltham Forest College, Buxton School, Belmont Park School and Forest Recycling Project. They developed fashion activism interventions to tackle local sustainability issues in a number of ways. For example, one team produced the fanzine ‘Clothing Community Stories’ (bit.ly/31wpuAX) aimed at showcasing alternative clothing practices and celebrating the network of independent craftspeople and small-scale businesses that are vital for community resilience, shaping the unique cultural identity of Walthamstow. The self-titled GenGreen students’ team facilitated a series of educational and creative workshops in local schools, encouraging the next generation of fashion designers to explore sustainable issues, engage with social media and craftivism to activate positive change, as documented in a fanzine (bit.ly/2Spnxf4), website (bit.ly/37cOyrC) and social media account (<http://bit.ly/31wmZlu>). The third team conceived a closed loop system for pre-consumer textile waste in Waltham Forest whilst also creating pathways for collaboration and skill sharing among local fashion designers and makers.

The feedback received from the students through an online survey revealed that three quarters of them were interested in fashion activism and this is why they applied for the ‘Activating Change’ brief initially. Furthermore, the briefing session included a workshop activity facilitated by Francesco which helped the students independently form teams and refine the focus of their projects as they were encouraged to reflect on the personal values and skills they could bring to the team and shape a shared vision of what sustainability in fashion culture, education, and manufacturing might look like.

“[My main take-away was the] flexibility and ability to work with the project participants on an equal, respectful basis without forcing the ‘vision’ of the project onto others.” – *Student 1*

Half of the participating students stated that their motivation to take part in the project was to gain new skills and further contribute to their professional careers in fashion sustainability. At the end of the project, all the students asserted to have gained new skills, especially with regards to teamwork and communication. The students really owned their projects and developed meaningful outcomes grounded on true collaboration amongst each other and with a multitude of stakeholders. Through their projects, the students have also built and strengthened relationships with a range of organisations (not only

industrial businesses, but also social enterprises, local government, public schools, and members of the local community).

“I learnt that collaboration is key and that there is a large need and desire for sustainability to be embedded into the core of education. This is something which has potential for growth and fashion could be used as a vehicle for creative communication around such issues” – *Student 2*

On the other hand, one of the major challenges experienced by the students was the lack of time and knowledge about the borough prior to the workshop, which didn’t allow them to deeply embed themselves in the local community. Nevertheless, undertaking such a collaborative project is particularly relevant these days as the designer is increasingly required to tackle complex, real-world challenges across different domains. Throughout the development of their projects, the students realised that their role as designers is varied and amplified as they were primed to identify the values that drive their practice and further develop skills and methods suitable to respond to the challenges encountered throughout the hands-on participatory process of activating change. Besides contributing to the students’ personal growth, this project also offered an invaluable opportunity to develop a range of concrete outcomes that can enrich their portfolios and contribute to their future careers.

“The major take-away for me personally was that fashion activism can manifest and be practised in a multitude of forms. A lot of times it’s about being a silent observer, an active listener and a facilitator.” – *Student 3*

This project was also particularly relevant for CSF which aims at embedding sustainability within education across LCF. In fact, the projects that the students developed highlighted the contribution of fashion activism to the field of design for social innovation and sustainability. The students have designed and delivered a range of



Launch of Clothing Community Stories fanzine at One Hoe Street.
Photography: Francesco Mazzarella.

interventions that have contributed to expanding the array of formats in which fashion activism can manifest (from manifestos, to fashion artefacts, through to fanzines, pop-up events, educational resources, videos, and conceptual circular systems). Finally, the ideas that the students developed are contributing to raising people’s awareness of sustainability issues in the fashion system, and co-creating social, cultural, economic, and environmental value.

“[This project prompted me] to adapt my way of thinking and communicating necessary messages about sustainability in a positive light, and find ways to connect fashion and the environment in a clear and creative way that engaged the participants” – *Student 4*

Building on the skills and approach learned through her experience as a student participating in the Collaborative Unit ‘Activating Change’, Jade McSorley has set up her own project brief titled ‘LoanHood’ for the new cohort of students in 2019/2020. Moreover, the outcomes of the students’ projects have informed the outline of a new project brief titled ‘Social Fabric’ for a Collaborative Unit starting in 2020 which will help move the projects forward. Finally, the outputs and outcomes developed through the Collaborative Unit ‘Activating Change’ are summarised in the below Table.

OUTPUTS
The fanzine ‘Clothing Community Stories’ was published online and 200 printed copies were distributed across Waltham Forest alongside the launch event at One Hoe Street.
Fanzine, website and social media account reporting on 2 workshops delivered by the GenGreen team to a total of approximately 55 school pupils.
Report on focus group (attended by 9 local makers envisioning a closed loop economy) and upcycling workshop (attended by 5 school pupils).

OUTCOMES
LCF students nurtured an activist mindset, developed teamwork skills and gained experience in community engagement. The GenGreen team was finalist of the Green Gown Awards UK & Ireland 2019 for the ‘Sustainability Champion Student Category’.
New Collaborative Unit ‘Social Fabric’ was launched in February 2020 and another brief was set up by student Jade McSorley.
Enhanced awareness of sustainable fashion and experience in craftivism for students participating in workshops, and empowerment of business owners being showcased in the fanzine.

3.1.2. A STORE OF THE FUTURE

The Innovation Challenge was the second annual East Education Schools competition designed for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils (aged, respectively, between 7 and 11, and between 11 and 14) from schools across the six boroughs of the Fashion District in East and North London (Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Haringey, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest). The Fashion District is a cluster of businesses, academic institutions and investors with the ambition to “make London the global capital of fashion technology” and “drive economic and social transformation” (Fashion District, 2019). Participating in the challenge provided a unique opportunity for young people to engage with the recent developments of the East Bank; the award was also a valuable resource for schools to further develop the creative curriculum, as stated by a local school teacher.

“The Store of the Future Challenge seemed, at first, like a creative way to engage primary and secondary children in the new and upcoming East Bank facilities. After reading through the clear and concise booklet and reflecting on the content of the training evening, I realised it would provide so much more than that for the children at Buxton School, in a disadvantaged area. Especially due to the current government funding cuts to education, the possibility of winning a cash prize towards the creative curriculum was an added incentive.” – *Teacher*



Runner-up team.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

Throughout November and December 2018, LCF consulted teachers from primary and secondary schools across east London to discuss the format and content of the challenge, shaping and ensuring it was relevant and accessible for teachers as well as students. This consultation resulted in the formation of an online pack consisting of workshops/sessions accompanied by a downloadable powerpoint, with examples that highlight each topic in real-world scenarios, created to support teachers in delivering each stage of the project in the classroom. The support material consists of eight sessions ranging from drawing activities around designing spaces, introduction to retail technology, brainstorming sessions, idea development and presentation skills, teaching students how to confidently pitch their ideas. The Innovation Challenge was recommended to be run within a weekly art, design or tech class, as a cross-curricula topic for a class group or as an After-School Club group project. In particular, the theme ‘A Store of the Future’ invited students to think about how new technologies could change the way people shop and challenged them to use their imagination to invent their own concepts for a store of the future. Encouraging students to work in teams, the challenge helped them build digital and problem-solving skills, develop their confidence in generating ideas and present work.

“I had children from different classrooms across the year group with differing academic and social abilities, that had developed their presentation, drawing, computing and designing skills, during one of the most challenging of their primary school years. The Store of the Future was their first real-life encounter with the fashion industry – it inspired and nurtured creative minds – in the most outstanding way, cleverly linked to real-life sustainability issues.” – *Teacher*

The award of the value of £1500, sponsored by Unibail Rodamco-Westfield, was given to the project ‘The Old to the New’ developed by a team of primary students from Buxton School in Leytonstone, who tackled the issue of plastic waste. They conceived a ‘clothes generator 3000’ with a tablet for shop customers to turn plastic bottles into thread to manufacture clothes, promoting recycling as well as reusing. Amongst all the submitted projects, other two Waltham Forest-based schools received runner up prizes of the value of £500 each. They are the self-defined ‘Team Jobs’ from Thorpe Hall Primary School who presented their ‘Teleporter Design’ and a team of secondary school students from Buxton School who proposed a VR shopping experience titled ‘Shop Wear’. Besides the cash awards, participating in the Innovation Challenge had a positive impact on both the teachers and the students who developed an interest in sustainable fashion, as evidenced by Rochelle Blake, Primary Art Teacher at Buxton School.

“The Challenge was, from a teaching point of view, the highlight of my teaching career. Important links were made with local industries and stakeholders. But most importantly, the children will remember the experience for the rest of their lives. Whether they had lost or won, I am certain that they have been inspired – just like I was – to develop a love towards fashion, most significantly sustainable fashion.” – *Teacher*

OUTPUTS
Teaching pack developed and made accessible to teachers.
73 students in total participated in the Innovation Challenge.
18 projects were submitted to the Innovation Challenge.

OUTCOMES
Cash prize of £1500 awarded to Buxton School towards the development of creative curriculum, and runner-up prizes for Thorpe Hall Primary School and Buxton School (secondary).
Students developed presentation, drawing, computing and designing skills, had their first experience with the fashion industry, and gained awareness of sustainability issues.
Teachers made contacts with local industries and stakeholders.



Students at the award-giving event of the Innovation Challenge.
Photography: Adam Razyv.

3.1.3. FASHION FUTURES 2030

‘Fashion Futures 2030’ is a toolkit developed for teachers to aid their students in developing sustainability knowledge and critical thinking skills by responding to future scenarios based on environmental, social, cultural and economic changes. The content was informed by research undertaken by CSF, with input from Forum for the Future, originally for the ‘Fashioned from Nature’ exhibition at the V&A Museum London and then developed into two toolkits, one for Higher Education tutors and one for businesses, both launched at the Copenhagen Fashion Summit in 2019.

For the purpose of ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’, Tiff Radmore (Lecturer at LCF) tailored the existing research into a novel toolkit designed for teachers in the UK working with 16–18-year old pupils. Following consultation with three schools in Waltham Forest (Buxton School, Waltham Forest College, and Belmont Park School), gaps in skill sets were identified in the expectations of schools and colleges to teach around sustainability in art and design subjects. On 10th July 2019 Tiff organised for ten students from Belmont Park School to visit the ‘Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030’ exhibition at Arbeit Studios Leyton Green in order to raise students’ and teachers’ awareness of the research content underpinning the toolkit. Moreover, on 30th October 2019 Tiff facilitated a pilot workshop with seventeen 2nd year textiles students from Waltham Forest College to launch the resource.

The ‘Fashion Futures 2030’ toolkit guides students through an exploration of issues around fast-fashion and sustainability, with a focus on ‘street style’. Fashion is a unifying subject and relates to our own identity, thus was identified as an ideal and accessible subject to learn about sustainability. The resource was designed to be taught as a full scheme of work within the curriculum or as part of a collapsed curriculum. It can also be used for team teaching with other subject teachers and as an enrichment or project challenge developed for GCSE AQA curriculum, A-level and Foundation Diploma study. In particular, the resource is built upon a 12-week scheme of work, with ready PowerPoint presentations for each session and worksheets. In using the toolkit, students are invited to work through two phases. The first introduces and contextualises the programme, encouraging research and fact finding. The second part gives students a chance to deepen and extend their fashion skills by experimenting with art, design and textiles and media-based subjects. The resource has been launched and made openly available on the CSF website for teachers to download and use: sustainable-fashion.com/projects/fashion-futures-2030-toolkit

Through their participation in the pilot workshop, the students were provided with insights into the state of the art of the fashion industry and were encouraged to reflect on the relationship between fashion and nature. They particularly enjoyed how the workshop facilitator raised conversations around fashion influencers and high-street fashion to frame and contextualise ‘Fashion Now’. They also started thinking about what the fashion industry could look like in the future and developed design ideas via individual and group activities, as evidenced by the students’ quotes below.

“I learned how the planet is suffering” – *Student 1*

“The workshop has made me think about my options when buying my clothes” – *Student 2*

“The workshop inspired me to think differently. [...] I will be making my own clothes and taking care of the ones I have” – *Student 3*



Students participating at the Fashion Futures 2030 workshop at Waltham Forest College.
Photography: Francesco Mazzarella.

Dawn Masharafie (Teacher in Fashion & Textiles at Waltham Forest College) was delighted to host the ‘Fashion Futures 2030’ workshop and expressed that she would encourage other schools to engage with the resource. In fact, teachers rarely have opportunities to investigate and research things in depth, therefore they experience difficulties in teaching around sustainability. Instead, this resource was built upon substantial research and was made openly available to fill that skills gap. Overall, the teacher emphasised that the ‘Fashion Futures 2030’ resource provides a holistic learning experience and contributes to raising aspirations in young people to appreciate the range of opportunities and careers available in the fashion industry.

OUTPUTS

- Teaching resource developed and made available to fill the skills gap in teaching around sustainability.
- 7 students participated in 2 pilot workshops.

OUTCOMES

- Opening up new ways of working and synergies across research (CSF) and education (local schools).
- Students gained awareness of sustainability issues in the current fashion industry and started thinking about more sustainable fashion futures.

3.1.4. FASHION CLUB

‘Fashion Club’ comprises of a series of workshops delivered by Romero Bryan (Short Course Tutor at UAL and fashion design practitioner) and Chloé Vasta (graduate from the MA Fashion Futures at LCF) to a group of four students (having social, emotional and/or mental health issues) attending Belmont Park School. ‘Fashion Club’ was designed as a special module to help the students develop work for their GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) portfolios and widen their understanding of the growing range of career options across fashion. Tapping into their personal interests and hobbies as inspiration for creating a one-off garment designed for themselves, the students were taken through an exciting series of activities to translate their ideas into reality.

In order to start establishing a relationship with Belmont Park School and test how LCF could deliver the ‘Fashion Club’ within the school’s timetable, a pilot workshop was delivered on 14th November 2019 by Hannah Middleton (Lecturer at the Fashion Business School, LCF) and Deborah Nzebele (LCF graduate and ArtsTemp tutor). At the pilot workshop, each student was invited to bring three objects and talk about how these represent things they are passionate about; this prompted a collective reflection and discussion around the links between fashion and self-expression. After collecting inspiration from magazines, each student created an inspiration board to express themselves and then transferred their ideas into clothing designs which were presented to the rest of the group. Finally, each student used available materials (pre-consumer waste fabrics, plasticine,

tissue paper, etc.) to create fashion items that expressed their own personal identities. For example, one student focused on making three necklaces using components of a disused computer that he disassembled, showing his hands-on skills as well as his in-depth knowledge of computer hardware. Another female student made a doll out of plasticine and created a dress for it out of fabric scraps and lace trims; the doll was displayed inside a cardboard box, imitating the ancient Romans who used to communicate their fashion trends by dressing up dolls and shipping them in boxes.

“The best aspect was seeing the students being able to express themselves freely, talk about themselves, and learn new skills – using a sewing machine” – *School teacher*

Through participation in the ‘Fashion Club’, it emerged that the students developed skills in manipulating fabrics and customising t-shirts which can now be included in the GCSE portfolios. All the students – who had never sewn before – tried using a sewing machine and enjoyed the act of making.

“The hands-on work worked well for me” – *Student 1*

This was also possible thanks to the good teaching skills of the LCF tutors who made the students feel comfortable in trying something new and accept a trial and error process. Furthermore, the satisfaction of making things by themselves and which they could

wear contributed to shifting their perception of fashion and their initial biases that sewing is an activity only for girls as they felt empowered to make things that they like and express themselves through fashion.

“The preparatory sample work was really useful to help build up student’s skills in working with textiles. The idea that they can manipulate fabrics to make 3D forms was a great development in their thinking. They are now more confident in applying this learning to their wider portfolio. [...] Upcycling or redesigning a white t-shirt is a really interesting concept, however the students became preoccupied with drawing or painting onto the fabric. It would have been useful to try and get them to apply some of their 3D learning, and utilizing Chloé’s expertise with the sewing machine” – *School teacher*

Based on insights gained through participant observations and feedback collected through evaluation questionnaires, it resulted that more time was needed to deliver the ‘Fashion Club’ and achieve better results. In fact, the students felt pressured for time towards the end of the day, thus the teacher recommended that the delivery of the Club could have been split over two days in order to keep the momentum, but also maintain the development of the ideas fresh in the students’ minds without too large a time gap in-between sessions. It was evident that it is particularly important to take time constraints into account when working with students with social, emotional, and/or mental health issues, who express anti-social behaviours and have limited attention span.

“There were moments in which I struggled to be engaged” – *Student 2*

With this in mind, although the LCF tutors had devised a scheme of work, they had to be very flexible in the delivery of it and had to spend a significant amount of time in building a trust relationship with the students. Furthermore, thinking through making resulted to be an effective way for the students to engage with the tutors and the proposed activities.

“I think that a course like this should be rolled out over a longer period of time. [...] It took a while to get through the students at first; as expected, they had reservations about meeting new authoritative figures. [...] As I felt, we spent most of the week 1 session, which was under 2 hours, just introducing ourselves and getting to know the young people themselves, as opposed to working into the project’s brief and meeting its objectives. [...] I believe that, if we had at least 2 or 3 additional sessions, the outcome of the final t-shirts would have been to a higher standard and shown more links to their GSE artwork” – *LCF tutor*

Beyond the development of making skills, ‘Fashion Club’ contributed to a progressive increase of the students’ engagement with the tutors, resulting in a change of behaviour and a better way of relating to external people. Moreover, the students – who initially showed lack of aspirations and hope in their ability to find a job in the creative industries – developed an increasing understanding of the wide range of career options in the fashion industry. Even though most of the students felt the workshops did not inspire them to work in the fashion industry, they all agreed that it helped them towards their GCSE art portfolios.

“(I learned from the workshop that) there are loads of different roles in the fashion industry” – *Student 3*

“It was a vital experience for these young people to meet professionals from the fashion industry who come from similar backgrounds. Most students assume that there are no career opportunities in the arts, or even that they have nothing to offer to the wider world. Chloé and Romero picked up on this and through their encouragement and professionalism, they have inspired our students to think about pursuing a career in fashion.” – *School teacher*

[...] “Student engagement is important – they have very little resilience which means that any setbacks which are ‘normal’ or to be expected can be devastating for students. All professionals working with these students need to understand and be mindful of this” – *School teacher*

Finally, ‘Fashion Club’ evidenced that, whilst the tutors tried to activate a positive change in the students, they also undertook a process of change in themselves. In fact, being exposed to this challenging context, made them question their own teaching practice and devise more flexible and mindful ways to interact with this group of students having very specific needs. Overall, based on feedback received from one of the LCF tutors, this process was very rewarding in the end as it led to feeding hope in vulnerable people, empowering them to achieve something and to believe in themselves.

“I’d definitely like to do more work like this, in and around the community, as it definitely felt very rewarding. Especially seeing that moment when you know as a tutor, you’ve seen your students have a lightbulb moment, and they too believe that they can achieve anything they put their minds to. [...] The teacher even said that the students have been asking about myself and Chloé, and when we are coming back in. This shows that they enjoy the work and our company as people” – *LCF tutor*

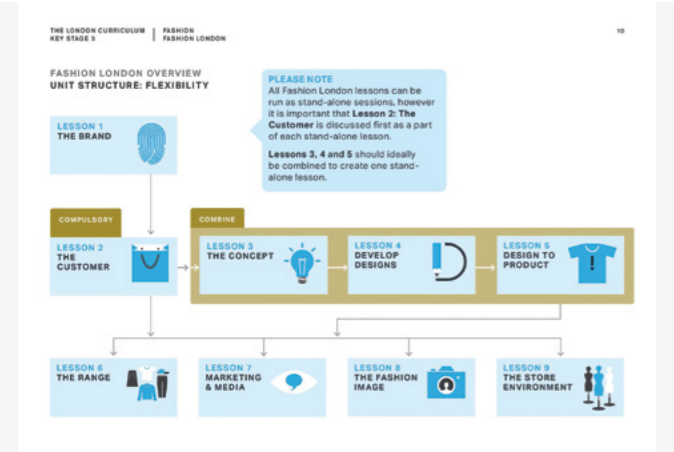
OUTPUTS
4 workshops delivered in a special needs school.
8 students in total participated in the Fashion Club (4 in the pilot workshop, and 4 in the subsequent 3 sessions).
10 artworks (4 customised t-shirts, 3 necklaces, 1 doll in a box, 2 balaclavas) were designed and produced through upcycling of waste materials.
OUTCOMES
The students gained making skills to create artworks and started to develop self-confidence. The students enjoyed the process and over time enhanced their engagement with external tutors and improved their behaviour.
LCF staff and alumni gained experience in delivering workshops in challenging contexts such as a special needs school.



Student participating at the Fashion Club at Belmont Park School.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

3.1.5. FASHION LONDON

‘Fashion London’ is a detailed programme designed for Key Stage 3 students (aged between 11 and 14) as part of the Mayor’s London Curriculum, aimed at bringing the national curriculum to life. Using London, its people, places and heritage as a source of inspiration, ‘Fashion London’ is designed to encourage the students to explore a wide range of career options within fashion. Although ‘Fashion London’ officially launches in 2020, teachers from Waltham Forest schools were already made aware of it at a soft launch event taking place at the William Morris Gallery on 18th September 2019 when Jessica Saunders (Programme Director for the Fashion Programme in the School of Design and Technology at LCF) presented the unit.



Overview of Fashion London. Design by LCF.

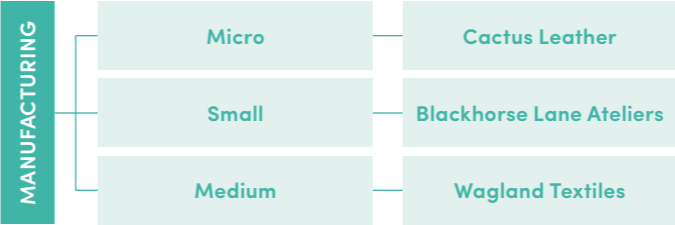
Consisting of nine lessons, the programme encourages students to research, design and market a fashion collection. Each lesson takes students through a three-step journey: discover, explore and connect. In the discovery phase, students are invited to explore the breadth of the fashion industry and the range of diverse roles within it. In this phase, the lesson theme is introduced and classroom activities are facilitated to allow students to record and document their learning. In the second phase, students are asked to explore London’s famous fashion landmarks and visit or research where and how the local fashion history has been developed. Finally, students are encouraged to connect their learning inside and outside the classroom in order to design and create a product, a brand and a media and marketing campaign.

‘Fashion London’ is designed as a modular system offering teachers the option to carry out the entire unit over time or select lessons and activities to suit their individual curriculum plans. All of the nine ‘Fashion London’ lessons can be run as stand-alone sessions: ‘The Brand’, ‘The Customer’, ‘The Concept’, ‘Develop Designs’, ‘Design to Product’, ‘The Range’, ‘Marketing and Media’, ‘The Fashion Image’, and ‘The Store Environment’. Furthermore, ‘Fashion London’ comprises of three lesson components: teacher resources (comprehensive lesson guides), classroom slides (resources for teachers to share with students) and student workbooks (activities, final brief, and reflection worksheets).

OUTPUTS
A teaching resource was developed and presented to a teachers’ network event.
EXPECTED OUTCOMES
Students are expected to work in teams and become more competent and expert in their design process and more confident in expressing themselves both visually and verbally;
Students are expected to gain a better understanding of what makes a strong product and brand identity and to apply these principles to their own and others’ work;
Students are expected to understand the range of careers available within the fashion industry.

3.2. MANUFACTURING

In collaboration with Annette Russell (Business Growth Officer at LBWF), Francesco visited 13 textiles and fashion manufacturing businesses based in Waltham Forest in order to understand their needs and aspirations. Through this initial scoping activity, it emerged that, although the overall decline of traditional textile manufacturing in the East End of London, a high number (over 40) of fashion businesses operate in the borough, and that fashion designers are increasingly returning to produce locally. In consultation with different members of staff at LCF and LBWF, three – micro, small and medium – textile and fashion manufacturing businesses were selected for hosting researchers in residence to address issues of economic, environmental, cultural and social sustainability. The decision was based on the businesses’ openness to collaborate and especially on the potential large-scale and long-term impact of their visions, benefitting not only the businesses themselves but having also positive impacts on the local community and the fashion industry at large. After Francesco set up three project briefs tailored to the businesses’ needs and aspirations, three members of staff at LCF were selected to undertake three research residencies for the duration of approximately three months each, part-time. The following sections report on the three research residencies undertaken at Cactus Leather, Blackhorse Lane Ateliers and Wagland Textiles.



Blackhorse Lane Ateliers.
Photography: Anna Schuster.



3.2.1. CACTUS LEATHER

Based in Leyton, Cactus Leather is a micro business led by Stephen Jones, the last remaining clicking press toolmaker in London. Traditionally, the East End of London was at the centre of fashion manufacturing, but skill-based businesses like Cactus Leather are becoming a rarity in the capital. Stephen has worked for 50 years with brands such as Ally Cappellino, Jimmy Choo and Clark’s Shoes. As part of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project, Xandra Drepaul (Lecturer in 3D realisation at LCF), undertook a research residency at Cactus Leather, collaborating closely with Stephen with the aim to retain and develop a sustainable future for this craft business.

Through her residency from June to September 2019, Xandra learned and documented the process of making clicking press tools. As an outcome of her residency, Xandra curated ‘Crafting Leather and Steel’, a week-long exhibition taking place at One Hoe Street to celebrate the unique skillset and creative process of Stephen and showcase how a piece of steel can be transformed into a leather cutting tool.

“In my opinion, the exhibition shows us the simple process and tools to achieve beauty in the craft” – *Exhibition visitor*

Alongside the exhibition, Xandra and Stephen facilitated two workshops, one conducted on 13th September 2019 and the other on 14th September. Both workshops began with an introduction to the craft, the process, materials, the tools and machines, followed by a demonstration by Stephen. Afterwards, Xandra facilitated a brainstorming session in groups, and the workshops concluded with the actual making of steel shapes and keychains.

(The workshop made me) “think that my skills can be developed further. The workshop helped me better understand the craft” – *Workshop participant 1*

The first workshop was targeted to people without craft experience and interested in learning the skill of steel bending in order to create their own clicking press tools. The steel bending workshop, lasting four-hours, was attended by seven people from arts and crafts industry, ranging from a print designer, a saddle maker, a ceramicist through to fashion students. Four out of seven participants had previous experience working with leather.

“I like how there were so many different types of people from different trades! It made way for some fun and interesting conversations” – *Workshop participant 2*

The second workshop was targeted to children for them to create custom keychains or unique artworks using offcut pieces of leather cut into different shapes using various clicking press tools. This three-hour long workshop was attended by eight adults with their children from the ages of three to ten. Participants in the workshop included a number of mothers from Clapton and Stoke Newington, locals from the borough, and three people who were visiting the street market.

Delivering the workshops also contributed to activating change in Stephen himself and opened up new opportunities for his business, expanding it from merely delivering commercial products and services to also training other people, especially the youth. Based on this successful experience, Xandra and Stephen planned further workshops to be delivered every second Saturday. In this regard, amongst all the people with whom Xandra got in touch during the residency, two people showed interest in future workshops and planned a visit to the factory, to know more about the process of making clicking press tools. Xandra created a mailing list which would help Stephen connect with people who could be involved through

future collaborative projects or workshops. Xandra and Stephen also planned a 8-hour long workshop including steel bending to make clicking press tools, leather cutting and making bags and accessories. Another business expansion idea was to organize open days in which the public could join guided tours of the factory or use the facilities and tools upon payment of a small fee. Further plans were made to get Stephen in touch with University students, in their final year, who might be interested in leather cutting, and use the clicking press tools as an alternative to laser cutting.

“The residency has not yet (improved my business), but it is going to. I realised that I like teaching people. The aim of this (residency) was not about growing my business but teaching people” – *Manufacturer*

- 1. Learn the Skill of Steel Bending.
 - 2. Cactus Leather workshop.
- Photography Julia Sabiniarz.



Overall, the residency – through a holistic exhibition of the craft process – had a positive impact on the local community as it raised people’s awareness of Stephen’s business, his craft and tools. The residency also made a positive impact on Stephen, who works in isolation, and through this project he got in touch with many people and realized that there is a growing interest in learning his craft, so that these craft skills can be preserved and transmitted to future generations.

(This project will activate positive change within the Waltham Forest community) “when I start workshops, and will pass my craft to others. [...] Many people showed interest; before I thought it was just me. I was surprised by all the people who came looking for me. [...] Even my grandson thinks that my craft is boring, but he took photos in the workshop; he got inspired and he cut some leather” – *Manufacturer*

The workshops have not been delivered yet due to personal circumstances and lack of time for Xandra who works almost full-time at LCF but she intends to pick this up during the Easter break. Another issue which has emerged is the fact that Stephen may be losing his workspace due to rent increase and is looking for another space where to move. This is his current priority and he would like to receive some support from the Council to tackle this issue; therefore, he is delaying the implementation of future workshops and other activities.

“My main issue is to find a place that suits all the things we want to do. I don’t want to move out of the borough after 16 years which I have been based in Waltham Forest” – *Manufacturer*

OUTPUTS
1 exhibition visited by approximately 50 people.
2 workshops (the first attended by 7 people from arts and crafts industry, the second attended by 8 people with their children).
1 online report .

OUTCOMES
The researcher in residence learned the craft skill.
The manufacturer was taken out from isolation and felt uplifted that other people are interested in his craft.
The researcher and manufacturer made contacts with potential workshop attendees to develop cross-disciplinary collaborations and provide further income for the business.

3.2.2. BLACKHORSE LANE ATELIERS

Blackhorse Lane Ateliers is London’s only craft jeans maker producing raw, selvedge and organic denim, right in the heart of Walthamstow. As part of ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’, the Ateliers hosted a research residency with Anna Schuster, graduate from the MA Fashion Futures at LCF and co-founder of the Waltham Forest-based sustainable fashion brand JOA. For the purpose of this residency, Anna investigated sustainability issues related to denim, one of the most water intensive materials used in fashion and focused on garment finishing processes. In fact, the production of a pair of jeans requires up to 7,000 liters of water (Levi Strauss & Co, 2015) and every year 1.7 million tons of chemicals are used to produce 2 billion pairs of jeans (Webber, 2018).

The residency’s central themes were technology, art and design. With this in mind, Anna explored and experimented with sustainable and efficient textile and garment finishing processes that would reduce water, chemical consumption and manual labour. In order to understand how the technology works, how it can be integrated into the design process, and what impact it can create in the denim industry, Anna spent three days in Valencia, at the headquarters of Jeanologia – the world leader in sustainable and efficient finishing technologies for textiles and other industrial applications. At Jeanologia, Anna used laser technologies to understand their function within mass-production and customization of jeans and show the potential of such processes to develop new UK denim wash aesthetics.

“Using technology does not mean to be sustainable per se, but we need to use technology to improve processes and develop innovative ways to design and make” – *Researcher*

During her residency, Anna was inspired by the companies’ visions to create an ethical, sustainable and innovative textile and fashion industry. In fact, Blackhorse Lane Ateliers is a socially oriented business, focused on quality and craftsmanship. Jeanologia’s vision is not only to develop and market their technologies, but also to make innovation accessible by educating their business customers and helping them improve every step of the textile finishing process.

“This research was a chance for me to explore two very interesting companies which have disruptive business models and integrate their values and visions into the development of future scenarios for democratising technology” – *Researcher*

Inspired by the companies she worked with, Anna envisioned a new fashion system grounded in localism and multidisciplinary collaboration, where transparent production processes are adopted, positive social impact is created and customers value long-lasting garments. In this vision, technology and innovation, as well as research and development (R&D) are accessible to micro and small enterprises.

“This residency added value to my practice, and reinforced it through a practical example of a community-focused business. It made me realise how a business can connect with the local community, embed their values and vision into a working business model, having sustainability at the core. I also learned how technology can support craft, how important is to make innovation accessible for everyone, to adopt transparent processes for the customer, and to collaborate across multiple disciplines” – *Researcher*

With this in mind, Anna developed four scenarios for a Wash Lab in east London equipped with innovative wash machines and laser technology. The Lab could be established either within the premises of Blackhorse Lane Ateliers, or in east London, or as an Innovation Hub



Laser customisation on jeans at Jeanologia, Valencia.
Photography: Anna Schuster.

within The Trampery Fish Island Village, or as a University Research Centre. The overarching aim was to create a multi-disciplinary space where designers, artists, scientists, fashion manufacturers and students can undertake research and development, local prototyping and production. This would also allow for the development of an innovative textile aesthetic specific to London, forward-thinking materials and laundry techniques. In this vision, collaboration is key to prosper and activate sustainable change in the fashion industry.

“The future needs spaces accessible to independent designers, local makers, small and medium fashion enterprises and especially students – the designers of tomorrow” – *Researcher*

As an outcome of this residency, a feasibility study was developed outlining the research undertaken, a comparative analysis of the Wash Lab scenarios and a detailed business case including financial data. The scenarios – especially those of an Innovation Hub within a fashion ecosystem or affiliated to local Universities – contributed to amplifying Blackhorse Lane Ateliers’s commercial vision to include also educational purposes in order to share the capital investment and sustain the Lab. The scenarios opened up new opportunities for the business, as a provider of services to other designers, requiring different considerations in terms of logistics, infrastructure, and so on. The residency also contributed to increasing the business’s network of contacts (such as LCF, LBWF, Jeanologia, The Trampery, Fashion District, the Greater London Authority) and made the business more widely known.

“Before we were focused on limited channels with the hope that someone would come and help us. Now we know that there are partners who can help us. [...] We have created valuable networks, beyond our commercial ones. We now understand the local Council better. Also, since we went to all these meetings at the University, now people know more about Blackhorse Lane Ateliers” – *Manufacturer*

Furthermore, the visual report produced by Anna proved to be very effective for the business to communicate their vision to other investors and fundraisers. For example, Anna helped the business in applying for a SME R&D support programme within the ‘Business of Fashion Textiles & Technology’ (BFTT) project at LCF, which could sustain the legacy of this initial short-term research residency. The application for the SME R&D support programme was successful and Blackhorse Lane Ateliers will be awarded £180,000 to undertake 24 months of R&D around the implementation of the Wash Lab which will contribute to the economic growth of the business.

“Having someone to put all the information together, producing an amazing visual report, was extremely valuable. The actual document is a tangible benefit to the project. Now we can go to other investors and fundraisers and can talk about our project in a more concrete way” – *Manufacturer*

OUTPUTS
20 people replied to the market survey, 8 people joined the focus group.
Customised denim samples, 4 scenarios, a report about a feasibility study for establishing a Wash Lab in east London.
1 online report.

OUTCOMES
Expanded network of stakeholders to implement the business’s vision.
Submitted application for £180,000 funding and accepted for the SME R&D support programme as part of BFTT.

3.2.3. WAGLAND TEXTILES

Founded in 1919, Wagland Textiles is one of the oldest textile manufacturing company in London, having headquarters in Walthamstow and managing a global supply chain to produce 11 million meters of fabric every year, mostly supplied to high-street fashion brands. As part of ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’, Anna Fitzpatrick, Project Coordinator and PhD Researcher at CSF, undertook a research residency at Wagland Textiles. The aim was to explore the role of legislation and public policy in fashion and sustainability.

The residency provided an unexpected opportunity for Anna to learn about textiles and also “the more hidden, often less glamorous, sides of the industry”, as she said at the final review meeting. She embedded herself into the business and discovered that relationships are key to many business endeavours and these were cultivated in a particular way at Wagland Textiles and across the supply chain. With this in mind, Anna collaborated with UAL student Julia Sabinarz to design a poster representing the relationships throughout Wagland Textiles’ fabric manufacturing. Hosting a researcher in residence had a positive impact also on Andrew Wagland, managing director of Wagland Textiles. In fact, through the collaboration with a researcher committed to activate change in the fashion system, Andrew had an opportunity to share his frustrations about the exploitative nature of the industry and gain hope that things can be done differently.

“The main thing for me has been to share some of my frustrations and annoyances with my trade, especially with people who are trying to make a difference. It is an industry full of exploitation, and this shouldn’t happen. [...] There is momentum outside of our industry and pressure inside”
– *Manufacturer*

During her research residency, Anna engaged with 20 people (parliamentarians, lobbyists and industry stakeholders) through mail correspondence, interviews and meetings, and interacted with 7 Wagland employees. In this way, she developed a scoping study into the public policy landscape with the aim of reducing the amount of virgin polyester in the economy. In particular, the research residency highlighted how around 60% of all garments are still produced from virgin polyester. In this regard, the research residency highlighted that it is very difficult for individual businesses like Wagland Textiles to break out of the prevalent model based on speed and volume, even if they would like to operate more sustainably. Anyway, as an outcome of this project, Wagland has gained a clearer idea of the unintended consequences of actions and the need for legislation to activate systemic change in the fashion industry.

“Legislative change could bring about improvements in this area and importantly, would create opportunities for agile businesses to benefit from. They’re obviously very keen for this to happen, but individually they don’t have the lobbying power to effect such change at a governmental level. [...] Anyway, the business now better identifies itself as a stakeholder with a voice which could and should be listened to” – *Researcher*

With this in mind, Anna explored the possibilities for shifting public policy towards the increased use of recycled polyester, which would contribute significantly towards a more sustainable fashion industry. The report produced as an outcome of this research residency includes recommendations, which could be of a regulatory, policy, incentivising or social nature. Each of these might work best for different businesses operating at different points in the supply chain, but some, such as trade policies, were deemed to have the most considerable potential.

One of the main challenges encountered during the research residency was the shortage of time for Anna, and at the final review meeting she recommended that it would have been more efficient if she undertook the work full-time within a shorter period, instead of stretching it from July to November 2019. Another significant drawback was the proroguing of parliament and subsequent election which made much more difficult to engage people who had previously expressed a willingness to be involved in the project. For instance Members of Parliament Mary Creagh and Anne Main had been engaged with bringing about change in the fashion industry, but both of them lost their seats in parliament after the election.

Nevertheless, Anna and Andrew are committed to present the policy recommendations developed through this project to Baroness Lola Young OBE (Member of the House of Lords) as outline for work for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Fashion and Sustainability. The ambition is also to share the white paper with the Environmental Audit Committee – once reconvened – to feed into furthering of the Fixing Fashion Report. Furthermore, the lobbying organisation Fashion Roundtable expressed interest in furthering this project through their work on Brexit.

“As a Council, you cannot do the lobbying, but you have the right contacts. I would love to have a tunnel wave, with the Council at the front, and it leads to the next level. This is how we should get this through. It is about little ripples, and putting them all together, we will have a big wave of change!”
– *Manufacturer*

Some of the new ideas that were developed through the research residency at Wagland Textiles are being taken into consideration by Andrew and there is the need to keep the momentum going, both within the business and the whole supply chain. There is also scope for a possible working group on rPET to be founded by Wagland, and there is interest in developing a procurement policy at Council level with Wagland supplying any rPET needed. However, since a single Council doesn’t have huge demand for uniforms, there could possibly be room for a procurement policy at central government. In this regard, Wagland Textiles is already developing a project on recycled fabrics for the uniforms of the Immigration Department, for which the business is producing 3,500 meters of fabrics.

“As this is a new project, you can’t lose momentum. This is the right thing to do. We need to take ownership to make this happen. [...] Now people are more interested; our recycled range is now more appealing” – *Manufacturer*

Finally, whilst aiming at envisioning change in a business and across the fashion industry, through this research residency, Anna also experienced a process of change in herself and her understanding of sustainability to consider, besides environmental issues, also the economic consequences of any possible change.

“My academic background has tended to focus more on the social, cultural and environmental aspects of sustainability and it’s been really interesting to see some of these issues from the perspective of a small business owner. Whilst I think there’s an environmental imperative to sustainability issues, this residency has shown me how carefully we should consider the economic dimension to any possible change” – *Researcher*

OUTPUTS
White paper outlining policy recommendations towards the increased use of recycled polyester (through innovation policies, economic incentives, regulation, trade policies, voluntary actions or communication/campaigns).
OUTCOMES
The business gained a better understanding of the need for legislation to activate systemic change in the fashion industry and better identifies itself as a stakeholder with a role to play.
The researcher gained a deeper understanding of textile manufacturing and the relationships across the supply chain, and expanded her understanding of sustainability, to include also the economic implications of any change.

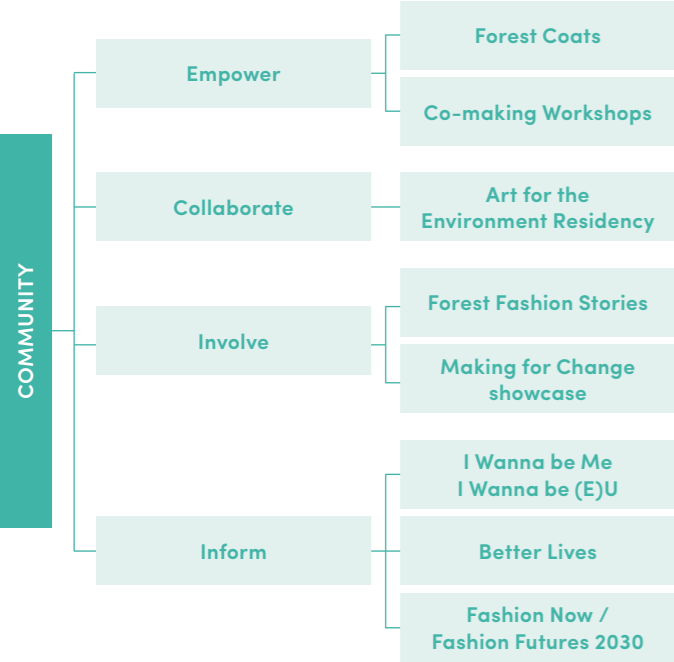


1. Fabric samples by Wagland Textiles.
2. Andrew Wagland, managing director of Wagland Textiles.
Photography: Eric Aydın-Barberini.



3.3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This section reports on the community engagement activities undertaken throughout the project. Local residents participated in a number of collaborative activities and creative workshops, through which they developed making skills, gained social agency and contributed to fashion sustainability. The community engagement activities developed as part of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project were: ‘I wanna be me I Wanna be (E)U, Co-making Workshops, Fashion Now/Fashion Futures, Forest Fashion Stories, Art for the Environment Residency, Forest Coats, two Better Lives symposia, and the Making for Change: Waltham Forest showcase. Adopting the Spectrum for Public Participation developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2, 2014) as a framework, the different activities were classified into various levels of community engagement (Figure 2). The lowest level includes activities whose purpose was merely to inform audiences or visitors; the activities in the subsequent level aimed at involve people in the development of the project; the subsequent level was based on collaboration with community members; the highest level of community engagement achieved empowerment.



3.3.1. I WANNA BE ME, I WANNA BE (E)U

‘I Wanna be Me, I Wanna be (E)U’ was an interactive live art performance, inspired by catwalk shows, which explored and expressed issues of fast-fashion, global trade, waste, and the socio-economic impacts of Brexit on fashion design and manufacturing businesses. It was conceived and put together by Alma Tischlerwood and Rosemary Cronin from international art collective Foreign Investment, in collaboration with Francesco and a team of four MA Fashion Futures students from LCF (Danica Dsouza, Marie Clare Jones, Silvia Martinez Cerezo and Jade McSorley).

After an initial briefing workshop held at LCF on 22nd March 2019, Alma and Francesco led three days of making workshops (from 3rd to 5th April 2019) at the social enterprise Forest Recycling Project, where pre-consumer waste fabrics were upcycled into a fashion collection. Consisting of ten different styles, all in the colours of the European flag, blue and yellow, the collection was embedded with messages taken from the protest against Brexit, which took place in the streets of London in March 2019. Five styles were conceived to represent the workers of the fashion industry, who were wearing blue aprons with statements related to Brexit. The other five outfits were more eccentric, to represent the luxurious over-consumers of the fashion industry. The catwalk show was performed on 5th April 2019 by non-models in an abandoned supermarket, still equipped with empty shelves and check-out tills, before it was transformed into a fashion hub as explained further in Section 3.4.2. One local resident volunteered as a Legend of the Forest to aid in the delivery of the event.

The live art performance was followed by a panel debate which comprised of an academic (John Wood, Emeritus Professor of Design at Goldsmiths College of London), a local artist (Hannah Ford, co-founder of art collective Invisible Numbers), a fashion manufacturer (Andrew Wagland, managing director of Wagland Textiles), and a representative of the APPG for Textiles and Fashion (Tamara Cincik, CEO and founder of Fashion Roundtable). Hannah Ford shared her experience in using the creative process to explore certain aspects of fashion design and manufacturing, tackling issues of pre-consumer waste fabric, for example. For her, fashion has a strong role to play in fostering community engagement and transforming society. In the face of Brexit and at a time when the role of art is under scrutiny, Hannah highlighted the value of art to represent ‘right’ ideas and open up challenging conversations about social and political issues.

Andrew Wagland emphasised the highly international nature of his company which produces millions of meters of fabrics every year and trades them globally across the fast-fashion industry. He stated that Brexit has already affected his business, since people have already lost their jobs and cannot afford to stay in the UK, and prices are also going dramatically up; overall, he believes that Brexit will reduce the dwindling production capability of the UK. Tamara Cincik also agreed that added costs and price increases after Brexit could render the UK fashion industry virtually unviable, commercially speaking. In a ‘No Deal’ scenario, there will be zero tariffs on products imported from the EU but not the other way around, therefore the UK market will be saturated by EU products entering the UK and small fashion brands will not be able to export into the EU.

Tamara also expressed her anger towards the lack of representation of the fashion industry within politics, an issue that led her to set up a mentoring scheme to get women into politics and founded Fashion Roundtable, a think-tank that acts on behalf of designers and SMEs and engages with the government in order to make the transition from Brexit work for the UK fashion industry. Finally, John Wood, contributed to the panel debate with his perspectives as an ‘outsider’ from the fashion industry and expressed his passionate concerns for ecological design issues. In fact, to counter

the current narratives of fashion as an exploitative industry based on over and fast consumption and dominated by a celebrity culture and glamour, he calls for designers to play an activist role by challenging the status quo so that third-world sweatshops and cheap, throw-away fashion becomes distasteful, old fashioned and irrelevant.

“Until now, the fashion world has seemed to be about what we wear and consume. More importantly, it is also about humans celebrating being alive in each present moment. For this idea to continue, we need to lift our heads upwards and to imagine worlds beyond the runway. [...] The obsession with maximising profits at the point of sale is a strategy that is long past its sell-by date” – *Panelist*

In response to the current times of political, economic and ecological uncertainties, the panel argued for a need of systemic change in the fashion industry. In order to counter the mainstream system of overproduction and overconsumption of fashion items across the globe, designers and students (as the next generation of designers) are summoned to challenge the business-as-usual and design financial innovations no longer geared around capitalism. From this perspective, Brexit was deemed by some as an emergency, an opportunity without choice to envision a micro, local utopia, a new vision for a better world based on new synergies across a diversity of local stakeholders and new lifestyles and innovation processes that could lead to wellbeing.

Overall, the event shined a light on fashion’s activist and environmentalist agenda within a Brexit context. This was a very challenging endeavour as most UK citizens are either disengaged or quietly seething about the UK’s painful and long-running divorce from the UK. Yet, through an interactive live art performance and a lively discussion among a wide diversity of speakers, the project proved to be an inspiring way to get an overview of a highly complex and broad-ranging set of issues.

“It is nice to see fashion have a voice about current political issues” – *Attendee*

Finally, given the success of the event, Francesco was invited by the curators of the LCF Arts Programme to redesign ‘I Wanna be me, I Wanna be (E)U’ and deliver it as part of the ‘Design & Politics’ season at Arcade East at LCF’s Mare Street building on 18th July 2019. The team was awarded a grant of £2,000 and delivered a performative art installation around a dinner which created a convivial space for the participants to collectively explore issues of fashion design and politics broadening out from the EU into personal politics.

OUTPUTS

- A collection of 10 garments made by upcycling pre-consumer waste fabrics.
- Interactive live art performance attended by approximately 60 people and a video of the fashion show.
- A panel debate made of 4 people discussing the social implications of Brexit on the fashion industry.
- An extra grant of £2,000 was awarded by LCF to the team for the project to be replicated as part of the ‘Design & Politics’ season at Arcade East.

OUTCOMES

- Participants increased their awareness of fashion’s activist and environmentalist agenda within a Brexit context.



I Wanna be me I Wanna be EU fashion show.
Photography: Gisela Torres.

3.3.2. CO-MAKING WORKSHOPS

In collaboration with Waltham Forest-based social enterprise [Forest Recycling Project](#) (FRP), a series of six co-making workshops were facilitated by Chloé Vasta, Olivia Weber and Claire Weiss, graduates from MA Fashion Futures at LCF and currently working as sustainable fashion designers. The workshops were led at Forest Recycling Project, whose aim is to reclaim, repurpose and resell waste materials, as well as offering volunteering opportunities to marginalised adults. Through making, they rediscover their enthusiasm, learn and share skills, and make a difference in the environmental sector.

Each workshop began with a short show and tell delivered by the workshop facilitators to inspire the participants. Chloé expressed her interest in craft, activism and sustainability. She highlighted the critical role the designer plays in society to nurture people’s skills and gain social agency. Olivia inspired the workshop participants by sharing her interest in sustainable design, zero-waste pattern cutting and creative production processes, and talked about her experience in setting up [JOA](#), a social enterprise based in Waltham Forest upcycling second-hand garments from charity shops into one-off bomber-jackets. Claire shared her passion for challenging our current material system and fostering collaboration between design and science to activate positive change; with this in mind, she co-founded [The Drop](#), aimed at building a community of individuals coming together at workshops to tune into their personal values and collectively rethink the future of fashion.



Embroidery made by participant at the creative repair workshop held at FRP. Photography: Francesco Mazzarella.

During Fashion Revolution Week, on the 24th of April 2019 a creative repair workshop was facilitated by Chloé Vasta and Olivia Weber. Participants brought garments that they had piling up at home that needed mending and explored different ways of repair, from embroidery to upcycling. Through feedback collected at the end of the workshop, one participant said: “I have learnt to darn something, and now I can finally wear my favourite trousers again”. During London Craft Week, on the 9th of May 2019 two natural dyes workshops were facilitated by Chloé Vasta and Olivia Weber. Using different types of food waste, from avocados to onions, members of the local community came together to harness the healing power of craft by utilising some of their everyday household items and create beautiful dyed fabrics. During the inaugural London Climate Action Week, on the 6th of June 2019, Claire Weiss and Olivia Weber facilitated two zero-waste pattern cutting workshops aimed at re-thinking clothing waste holistically. These workshops provided the local community with an opportunity to try out zero-waste pattern cutting. This is a fun and exciting method of creative pattern cutting. By working hands-on on fabrics, material waste is eliminated when producing garments. One participant in this workshop

stated that her key take-away was finding “inspiration and discovering to have been using zero-waste pattern-cutting without realising it”.

By participating in the workshops a total of approximately 43 local residents in total developed making skills as a way to enhance their social agency and their contribution to fashion sustainability. The workshops highlighted the positive impact of craft on people’s wellbeing, especially due to the pleasure of making things by hand, the satisfaction of achieving something, and the joy of making together with others. For one workshop participant, the main take-away was “the joy of mending in a group” and for another the best thing of the workshop was “meeting new people, being in a new venue, enjoying chatting while sewing textiles”. Another workshop participant also expressed that “craft, mending and making friends are good for the soul”.

Each ticket sold paid for another workshop that was then delivered to a group of marginalised volunteers from the Forest Recycling Project’s network referred from a charity partner. The volunteers would have not have had the opportunity to enjoy the same experience as paying customers otherwise.

Most of the participants expressed their desire for more workshops to be organised in the future, having more time and a larger space for these workshops so that they could better contribute to community-bonding. In view of future workshops, some participants recommended to improve the communication on the website, provide more information on fabrics (including their sources, and on dyeing processes) and to follow a tighter structure. Some participants also suggested to organise pop-up events as well as talks on fashion design and sustainable lifestyle, and to provide certificates of attendance, which could be valuable to some participants.

Taking this feedback into account, Chloé, Olivia and Claire organised three additional workshops (focused on natural dyes, natural paint, and making your own kimono) between the 5th of September and the 3rd of October 2019, without funding from ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ but supported through the sale of workshop tickets. They are planning on delivering more workshops in 2020. This shows that the collaboration with Forest Recycling Project and the workshop model piloted proved successful, so that a legacy could be activated and sustained beyond the timeframe and funding of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project.

OUTPUTS
43 people participated in 3 co-making workshops: natural dyeing, zero-waste pattern cutting, and, creative repair.
OUTCOMES
Participants developed a range of making skills to create artworks.
Tested model of collaboration with Forest Recycling Project to deliver and sustain further workshops beyond ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’.

3.3.3. ‘FASHION NOW/FASHION FUTURES 2030’ EXHIBITION

‘Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030’ is an exhibition consisting of two installations originally commissioned by the V&A Museum for the exhibition ‘Fashioned from Nature’ in 2018 exploring the relationship between fashion and nature. The installation was initially conceived by CSF’s Professor Dilys Williams and Renée Cuoco, in collaboration with the Director of the Fashion Space Gallery Ligaya Salazar and MA Fashion Futures students at LCF. In line with the ‘Making Connections’ strategy at LCF to make the work produced by its staff tour to east London, the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project provided an opportunity to bring the exhibition into Waltham Forest. With this in mind, Francesco collaborated with CSF’s curator Camilla Palestra to showcase ‘Fashion Now/Fashion Fututes 2030’ from 28th June to 21st July 2019 within the gallery space of the newly developed fashion hub, Arbeit Studios Leyton Green, which until recently was a derelict supermarket. One young guy from Walthamstow volunteered to help set up the exhibition as part of the Future Creatives programme at LBWF, and one UAL graduate invigilated the exhibition during its opening times.



Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030 exhibition. Photography: Guillaume Valli.

The exhibition contributed to raising people’s understanding of how every element of fashion comes from nature. In particular, by examining five contemporary fashion items, the ‘Fashion Now’ installation showed how we relate to nature across a five-stage fashion lifecycle, from design to make, acquire, wear through to discard. For the visitor, the installations raised questions around ways to develop a healthier relationship with nature in our fashion choices. Referencing eight elements of nature relating to the fashion’s lifecycle, the installations, based on familiar fashion dialogues, such as Instagram, purchase receipts, illustration and video, showed that fashion’s interaction with these elements frequently reveals an unequal partnership. Moreover, the ‘Fashion Futures 2030’ installation explored what fashion and nature might look like within four future scenarios, developed through research from CSF, with contributions from Forum for the Future. The scenarios are based on environmental, economic, social, cultural and technological changes taking place across the globe. In fact, although we cannot accurately predict the future, we can shape it through our values and actions. With this in mind, the scenarios were conceived not as predictions, but as stories of how the future might unfold. The visitors were encouraged to answer an online survey to envisage the effects their fashion habits would have on the environment, and find out which of the four scenarios would be the most suitable to them.

“The exhibition highlighted the responsibility we all have towards building a more responsible fashion industry, either as consumers or as practitioners” – *Visitor 1*

The exhibition proved to be a strategic opportunity for LCF to showcase the work of its staff and students to east London communities, in light of the College’s move to Stratford in 2022. 163 people in total visited the exhibition. They were from different age groups and backgrounds, mostly passer-by from the local community, not necessarily working in and around fashion, but they all showed interest in fashion sustainability. Feedback received from the visitors of the exhibition proved that a gallery space and exhibitions of this sort are very much needed in Waltham Forest, and Bakers Arms particularly where there is not such a provision of cultural sites. The area is currently undergoing rapid transformation and this exhibition provided the local community with an opportunity to explore the impact of fashion. On the other hand, since the venue was not yet open as Arbeit Studios Leyton Green and businesses were not working there, the venue was not quite known as a cultural destination and this affected negatively the engagement of the local community, as expressed by one visitor.

“For the future, I would recommend to invite other local businesses in the private view, so it’s not just fashion people – you’re showcasing it for the borough of Waltham borough, but I only saw fashion people there” – *Visitor 2*

OUTPUTS
1 young local resident volunteered as a ‘Future Creative’ to set up the exhibition, and 1 UAL graduate was hired to invigilate the exhibition.
163 people in total visited the exhibition.
OUTCOMES
The exhibition contributed to raising people’s awareness of fashion sustainability and engaged the local community with the work of LCF.
It highlighted the potential of the newly developed fashion hub as a cultural site.



Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030 exhibition. Photography: Guillaume Valli.



Slogan t-shirt design made by young participant at the Walthamstow Garden Party.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

3.3.4. FOREST FASHION STORIES

In Artillery’s ‘Grandad’s Island’ at Lloyd Park, during the Walthamstow Garden Party on 13th and 14th July 2019, Francesco together with Susanna Cordner (Senior Research Fellow at Centre for Fashion Curation) facilitated a range of drop-in workshops. Francesco and Susanna were facilitated by a local young lady who is trying to establish her position as a teacher in fashion design, and a volunteer from Forest Recycling Project who, after having attended the co-making workshops led by Francesco, was then empowered to deliver such community engagement activities outside of the familiar space of the social enterprise which she is part of, as recognition of her progression as a ‘green champion’.

Over 600 people (mostly local children with their parents, but also members of LCF) took part in the activities. They were given t-shirt paper templates as well as colouring and collaging materials and created over 250 slogan t-shirt designs communicating different messages that are important to them as individuals (e.g. ‘Be Here Now’, ‘Be Yourself’, ‘Be Happy’, ‘Be Bold’, ‘Dare to be Different’, ‘Pride’) and in relationship to the environment we live in (e.g. ‘Save our Planet’, ‘Save the Ocean’, ‘Love Animals’, ‘Buy Second Hand Clothes’). Many children enjoyed being photographed proudly showing the t-shirts they had designed as unique ways to express what fashion and sustainability mean to them. A few participants kept their t-shirt designs, while most of the designs were added to a washing line display which grew throughout the two days of the Garden Party. Furthermore, teachers from Waltham Forest College took away a t-shirt blank template with the purpose of facilitating a similar activity during the induction week, asking students to use this fashion item as a form of self-expression.

“This workshop is brilliant. It is just a simple activity, but it makes you think a lot” – *Participant 1*

The visitors of the LCF tent were also asked to write down their answers to questions in relation to their relationship to fashion, and what they think the fashion interests and hotspots in their local area are. Although not many people engaged in such activity, while the children were busy in designing their slogan t-shirts, the parents contributed to exploring what Walthamstow style is, what their clothes say about them, reflected on their attitude towards repairing their clothes, started thinking about the need for moving away from fast-fashion and making a personal commitment to climate emergency.

“I buy clothes from vintage/charity shops; this is my own approach to sustainable fashion” – *Participant 2*

Finally, the initial map that A New Direction had created of the fashion sector in Waltham Forest was enriched through contributions from the visitors of the LCF tent at the Garden Party. They marked the spots of their favourite fashion spaces (e.g. the market, local boutiques such as Glow, vintage shops like Gigi, the schools where children study fashion and textiles, Forest Recycling Project where they source pre-consumer waste fabrics, etc.). The information plotted on the map proved as a useful resource, for instance, for a lady who visited the LCF tent and who used it as a guide to advise her daughter on which secondary school to register.

“I wish there was more connectivity amongst local fashion businesses which currently are not very visible” – *Participant 3*

On 14th July Francesco and Susanna were invited on the ‘Dreamers & Diggers’ stage for a show and tell of the ‘Forest Fashion Stories’ collected throughout the series of drop-in workshops they facilitated throughout the Walthamstow Garden Party weekend. They encouraged a sharing of ideas around how to approach fashion in sustainable ways, in Waltham Forest. The presentation and conversation with the audience highlighted that the current fashion system is very layered and contributes to exploitation of resources within a global supply chain whilst also being deeply interwoven with political issues. It also brought up tensions between the use of the words ‘fashion’ and ‘style’; the latter was favoured when referring to using clothing as an empowering act of rebellion – e.g. against our status or the social class we live in – to challenge gender issues and to distort conformity.

“I think about fashion to resist it. I don’t want to be fashionable. [...] Style is tension, autonomy; it’s empowering. My style is my branding, my business card; it is what people remember me for” – *Participant 4*

Overall, the community engagement activities of ‘Forest Fashion Stories’ contributed to demonstrating fashion’s role in our personal, social, and cultural lives, and encouraged the sharing of ideas across age groups, communities and cultures. Although some participants at first didn’t feel very creative, then they all found their own way to express themselves and kept engaged in the making activities. On the other hand, the participants recommended to have a more visible branding for the LCF stall (in case it would participate again at the Walthamstow Garden Party in the future) in order to better attract audiences and make LCF more known to the east London community.

OUTPUTS

- Drop-in workshops facilitated in Artillery’s ‘Grandad’s Island’ throughout the two days of the Walthamstow Garden Party.
- Approximately 600 people visited the LCF tent and over 250 slogan t-shirts were designed.
- A fashion map of Waltham Forest was co-created to highlight the participant’s favourite fashion spaces in the borough.

OUTCOMES

- The event demonstrated fashion’s role in our personal, social, and cultural lives through the statements and artworks developed by Waltham Forest’s youth and other residents.
- It encouraged sharing of ideas – across diverse age groups, communities and cultures – around how to approach fashion in more sustainable ways, within Waltham Forest.

3.3.5. ART FOR THE ENVIRONMENT RESIDENCY

Founded by Professor Lucy Orta, the ‘Art for the Environment Residency’ programme (AER) invites artists and designers from UAL to explore ecological and social concerns that define the twenty-first century, resulting in outcomes that challenge how we interact with the environment and each other.

Nicole Zisman (BA Fashion graduate from Central Saint Martins) was selected to undertake a 4-week residency in partnership with London Borough of Waltham Forest and hosted at Arbeit Studios Leyton Green. For her project, titled ‘So Let It Be Your Will’, Nicole employed community outreach and arts education to encourage six members from the Waltham Forest community to develop artworks that address identity issues, remove polluting objects from the environment and re-circulate them into art and design. For her residency, Nicole conducted an extended workshop, encouraging the participants to undertake research alongside her, to test a new system of creative education on a micro scale, in Waltham Forest. During three briefing sessions attended by a total of twelve local residents, Nicole introduced the role of fashion to tackle the climate crisis and showed emerging design methods being used to rethink our fashion production and consumption models. The workshop participants were asked to address both cross-cultural collaboration and re-purposing, by collecting garments that are significant to their identities and styling them to create new artworks. As an outcome of the residency, Nicole curated an exhibition to showcase her work and that of the six local people who took part in the project. The aim of the ‘So Let It Be Your Will’ exhibition was to celebrate the cultural identity and diversities within LBWF.



In her work, Nicole addressed two of her identity strata – her Jewish heritage and manufactured digital persona – and visualised them against two out of the four Fashion Futures 2030 scenarios developed by CSF. In order to express this, Nicole used multiple media, such as film, photogrammetry, bioplastic, second-hand mannequins, and her own clothes. The work acknowledged the differences and inherent separateness in possible future realities the two personas (Chanah and Tramadol Baby) may soon face. In particular, Chanah was developed in response to the ‘Safety Race’ scenario, and explored the action of walking, both within Jewish culture and through the lens of forced migration – in relation to the journeys of Nicole’s great grandparents from Holocaust-era Europe to Venezuela. Having the ‘Hyper Hype’ scenario in mind, Tramadol Baby was conceived within a space where manufactured digital identities are the norm, where consumption and digital stimulation are high whilst mental health deteriorates, and the masses are able to play the role of a designer through digital construction.

Two participants in the project were especially adamant about answering to the identity aspect of the brief, and developed artworks that were highly personal, poignant and productive, as highlighted by Nicole in her project [online report](#).

“Working with Serdar and Jennifer especially made me think about what kinds of bodies we design clothes for, and what kinds of needs and support for project development a community like Leyton might have. It made me rethink arts education even more than I already had been at the time of my application to this residency” – *Artist*

An unexpected outcome of the residency was the award of an extra grant of £1,000 for another AER undertaken by Harriette Meynell (BA Fine Arts graduate from CSM) in January 2020 at Arbeit Studios Leyton Green. At the interview for selecting the AER, Harriette’s project proposal was deemed by LBWF very relevant to the establishment of the fashion hub and the regeneration of the Bakers Arms area. Through her residency, Harriette conducted an exploration of the local area, interacted with local shop owners and focused on the symbolism of scaffolding as a sign of (re) development. Using photographs, tracing and sound, Harriette built an installation which invites the visitor to ponder the changes occurring in Leyton Green and London’s outer boroughs.

OUTPUTS
6 local residents participated in a 4-week long workshop alongside the artist in residence.
60 people visited the community exhibition ‘So Let It Be Your Will’.
OUTCOMES
The artist in residence advanced her practice and learned new skills in community workshop facilitation.
Community members used fashion to rethink their personal identities within the context of climate emergency.
An extra grant of £1000 was awarded to another UAL graduate to undertake an AER.

Portrait of Nicole Zisman (AER).
Photography: Andrew Mallison.



Forest Coats made by women for their children or for donation.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

3.3.6. FOREST COATS

‘Forest Coats’ is part of LCF’s ‘1000 Coats’ initiative, which consists of skills development workshops delivered to women’s sewing groups in order for them to create coats for their children. The aim is to use fashion and making to build communities and inspire social change. An original idea of artist Whitney McVeigh, 1000 Coats is a collaboration between east London communities and Social Responsibility at LCF in the run-up to the college’s move to the Olympic Park in 2022. As part of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project, Francesco collaborated with Jo Reynolds (Special Projects Manager at LCF) to design and deliver ‘Forest Coats’ as an eight-week programme for eighteen local women to learn garment construction skills through the upcycling of pre-consumer waste fabrics. The project was hosted at Priory Court Community Centre, thanks to the invaluable support of Juanita Azubuike (Employment and Training Coordinator for Early Help Service at LBWF) who recruited a group of women motivated to become part of the project and provided a safe space for the women to meet.

“Working with a selected group of women in a targeted way – which is what I am required to do – towards an outcome-based project, I have had to work with individuals and their stories every day” – *Community tutor*

The workshops were led by LCF alumna Olivia Weber (co-founder of Waltham Forest-based sustainable fashion brand JOA) and Claire Rain (local maker and sewing teacher founder of House of Stitch). Sessions were taught using hand stitching and domestic sewing machines; this ensured that all skills learnt could be replicated by the participants at home. The programme created a space for local women to come together, connect with neighbours and build self-confidence through learning new skills. Participation in the course was free of charge and all the resources and equipment were provided for free also.

“I’m so glad that Francesco enabled some change and got off the ground with this creative project. Through creativity, this has given such a relief for the group of people that were engaged in this, and for myself to do something positive. I think that it could have much wider implications” – *Community tutor*

The course began with a visit to Forest Recycled Project, where participants learnt about the organisation and the current environmental challenges that the textile and fashion industry is facing. The women selected fabrics which they then used to make a jacket either for their own children or for donation to the local ‘baby bank scheme’. The 18 jackets which the women produced are reversible and customised through beadwork or messages embroidered inside the pockets. The final garments were exhibited as part of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ exhibition over three weeks at Arbeit Studios Leyton Green, and were worn by 14 children at the ‘Forest Coats Fashion Show’ which took place on 14th December 2019. This provided an opportunity to celebrate the successful outcomes of the ‘Forest Coats’ project, strengthen the women’s community built through the programme, and further engage with other local fellows, makers and radicals.

“At the fashion show, we got back together to reinforce the relationships between people which is very important for people who live in isolation. When you’re in that position, it’s very hard to build bridges between each other. So, we contributed to having that recognised, having a space where people could do that, and then move forward” – *Community tutor*

The project was planned to support 10 women with low level sewing skills to make a jacket in 6 weeks, based on the 1000 Coats ‘Classic Coats’ advanced skills delivery, with a high number of teaching staff per participant (i.e. 1:3). On one hand, ‘Forest Coats’ was successful

as it effectively used simple and local assets: pre-consumer waste fabrics from FRP, a simple pattern designed by Olivia that enables customisation, the assistance of local maker Claire, and a safe space with easy access for marginalised women. On the other hand, over-recruitment and a very low drop-out rate impacted negatively on delivery, with women sometimes having to wait for a machine to become available and for teaching staff to help them when they were stuck. To accommodate for this, the project over-ran, with sessions increased from 6 x 3 hours to 8 x 3 hours. Despite this, the overall impact was positive, with participants feeding back that the combination of learning new skills from patient and friendly teaching staff and a safe and supportive social environment was what made ‘Forest Coats’ such an enjoyable experience for them. Everyone indicated that as a result of ‘Forest Coats’, they felt more creative in general, and inspired to sew and make more.

(My favourite part of the ‘Forest Coats’ was) “the practical nature of the project. The ease in getting help when I was stuck. The laughter and fun environment. Everything” – *Participant 1*

The 14 participants present at the final ‘Forest Coats’ session were asked to complete an anonymous feedback questionnaire. All participants indicated that they enjoyed ‘Forest Coats’, and that the delivery was of a high standard. The majority of the group initially enrolled to experience something new and to make friends, and everyone indicated that they had met new people and felt that they had made friends, with half of the group socialising with their peers also outside of session times. Contributing something to their local community was also a strong motivation for joining – and nearly all felt more connected to their community as a result. Initially, the participants were also keen to learn more about local initiatives and sustainable fashion, as well as developing new skills.

“The project has exceeded my expectations. Also, I made good friends to whom I can ask for help when making other things” – *Participant 2*

(What I liked the most about the project was) “how connected everyone is and very friendly” – *Participant 3*

A third of the group had previously constructed a similar garment, however half of the group had never used a domestic sewing machine. The majority agreed that participation in the project had helped to increase their confidence in garment construction, as well as their sewing skills in general. Two thirds of the participants felt confident that they could make the jacket again at home on their own, but that learning aids such as written/illustrated instructions and/or videos would be beneficial. Many participants indicated that they would like to increase their sewing skills further, specifically their pattern cutting skills, which would enable them to create their own garments.

“The project has given me confidence to think about the future. Stress really affects my health very badly, so being engaged in a laid back, but exciting project has been perfect for me” – *Participant 4*

“I feel my desire of coming back to work in sewing is becoming much more real. My skills about making plans for the future have improved” – *Participant 5*

‘Forest Coats’ also led to achieving unexpected outcomes. In fact, three women (from less advantaged backgrounds) participating in the project gained employment, and this in turn had a positive impact on their self-confidence and their ability to paving their own futures; in particular, two women were hired as hourly-paid assistant technicians at LCF, and one was hired to work part-time at JOA. Another woman resulted to be not only a participant in the project, but played the

role of an assistant tutor, helping others during the sessions. Given the women’s demand for more workshops also as a way to keep connected with each other, a second iteration of ‘Forest Coats’ was delivered by Olivia to 5 women at FRP for 5 weeks between December 2019 and January 2020, which led to the creation of additional 6 jackets to be donated to the ‘baby bank’. Through practice, it is evident that the women have significantly improved their making skills, enhanced their creativity, and feel more confident. Furthermore, two women have bought domestic sewing machines for themselves and they are enjoying practicing and refining their sewing skills at home in their own time. Building on the learning from this experience, Olivia is changing her business – currently registered as a limited company, i.e. ‘JOA Local Ltd’ – to a community interest company, and will continue delivering community workshops for women referred by Juanita as a way to sustain the legacy of the project.

“As our business is growing, we need to build up our manufacturing capabilities; we need to and train local women in tasks we need and employ them. With Gulzarine, we tested what she is good at, and hired her. If we could deliver more workshops for other women, they would learn skills, improve their confidence and mental health, and we could then point them to other employment opportunities” – *Tutor*

As next steps, Olivia will produce accompanying illustrated and written instructions, as well as an instructional video, which will be a tangible legacy from the project, ensuring the women can become independent in making their own garments. Francesco is applying for additional funding from LBWF to support the delivery of another iteration of ‘Forest Coats’ at FRP with a new group of volunteers, and one at Arbeit Studios Leyton Green for the initial participants to learn more advanced skills, such as zero-waste pattern cutting. Juanita is also pointing the women to accredited certification courses, e.g. Waltham Forest Adult Learning Services, and will arrange for the women to visit ‘Poplar Works’ (a garment manufacturing unit newly established by LCF) to explore potential opportunities for training courses and employment.

OUTPUTS
8 week-long programme to teach garment construction and embroidery skills;
18 women designed and produced 18 bespoke children’s jackets from pre-consumer waste fabrics;
A fashion show was held at Arbeit Studios Leyton Green where the 14 kids proudly modelled and showcased the jackets made through the project.
OUTCOMES
The participants felt empowered, gained confidence and developed sewing and garment construction skills; they also felt less isolated and more connected with fellow community members;
Two women were employed at LCF and one at JOA.
JOA shifted its business model towards that of a community interest company to continue delivering community workshops like those piloted through this project.

Jacket customised with beadwork on pocket by a participant of Forest Coat. Photography: Adam Razvi.



'Better lives' is a term used at LCF to define all the work done with the aim to create a socially and sustainable conscious future and improve the way we live. Through a wide agenda – which includes social responsibility, awareness-raising and collaborations – LCF encourages dialogue between staff, students and the wider community to develop an understanding and definition of what sustainability means to us. This is done in collaboration with industrial partners, local communities and especially disadvantaged people through projects like this that foster sustainability and contribute to place-making. To communicate this work, every year LCF organizes a series of 'Better Lives' symposia in its lecture theatre. Instead, for the very first time in 2019, Francesco took the opportunity of Waltham Forest London Borough of Culture to curate these events outside the College, as a way to engage a public audience – especially the east London communities – with the work developed at LCF under the 'Better Lives' agenda. In particular, Francesco organised two symposia – one themed around education and the other around legacy – in diverse venues in Waltham Forest. The symposia were delivered as part of a series of Cultural Conversations within the Great Place Scheme and were aimed at inspiring discussions around the project's activities and impacts, as expressed by one attendee via an online survey.

The first 'Better Lives' symposium took place on 12th June 2019 at Switchboard Studios to discuss LCF's work in educating the next generation of fashion designers, communicators and entrepreneurs, and explore their contribution to shaping better lives. The event was an opportunity to showcase the work developed for three Collaborative Unit project briefs set up by CSF members and external partners, such as LBWF, Whitefield Academy, and Kering. The aim of all these collaborative projects was to embody the Better Lives ethos which is embedded in all the LCF's activities to improve the way we live and activate change towards sustainability. The symposium included presentations of speakers from CSF – Dr Francesco Mazzarella, Julia Crew, and Gabrielle Miller – and 7 MA students and was followed by a panel and audience discussion, chaired by Dr Jessica Bugg (Dean of the School of Media and Communication at LCF). Alongside the panel debate, a pop-up exhibition was curated as an opportunity to showcase the students' projects. Through networking alongside a pop-up exhibition of the outcomes of the projects, the event offered an opportunity for the students to showcase the wide range of positive impacts they activated and discuss ways to take their projects forward. On the other hand, it may be argued that the event was too focused on the students' work and less engaging for the local residents, as expressed by one attendee.

The second 'Better Lives' symposium took place on 27th November 2019 at One Hoe Street with the aim to inspire a cultural conversation around the impacts and legacies activated through the 'Making for Change: Waltham Forest' project. Since the London Borough of Culture year was coming to an end, the symposium was an opportunity to discuss what legacies were activated beyond the project's timeframe and funding. Lorna Lee (Head of Culture & Heritage Services at LBWF) opened the event, followed by Francesco who introduced the 'Making for Change: Waltham Forest' project. He unpacked the values

The first symposium was attended by 40 people and the second one by 38 people; they were not only LCF students and tutors, but also project partners and members of the Waltham Forest community. Based on feedback collected through online surveys, the symposia contributed to raising people's knowledge of the project, to amplifying their understanding of sustainability including diverse – especially social – approaches to the topic, and to demonstrating fashion's contribution to shaping better lives. Some participants highlighted that participation in the symposia contributed to feeding their hope and positivity towards sustainability, making them feel empowered, inspiring creative ideas, and gaining valuable contacts for potential collaborations.

(My main take-aways were) “the diversity of the concept of sustainability in fashion” and “hope, positivity, empowerment, creativity, and contacts” – *Attendee 4*

2 symposia held to inspire cultural conversations around the project's activities and impacts.

Participants enhanced their awareness of the project, their understanding of sustainability in fashion, felt empowered, more hopeful and creative and gained valuable contacts.

[illegible]

aligning values
DESIGN FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
BE A CREATIVE THINKER
WE SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE
WE WANT TO HEAR THEIR VOICE
WE WANT TO PREPARE OUR STUDENTS TO GET BETTER JOBS
employment opportunities
VALUES ACTION VISION

accessibility
EVERYBODY SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO
EVERYONE is valuable
IT IS ABOUT LEGACY
WE HAVE TO WORK WITH INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR STORIES

partnership
preserving culture
LONDON COLLEGE OF FASHION
small interventions are really POWERFUL
WORDS without action are just poor hair

engage with the communities
IT IS ABOUT MAKING CONNECTIONS
engage with the communities
collaborating with SCHOOLS EDUCATION
MANUFACTURING

space
it is about creating
WORKING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

BETTER LIVES LEGACIES
Beyond Fashion Activism
IT IS JUST ABOUT WORKING TOGETHER
WE NEED TO BE PATIENT
Change doesn't happen in one day
WE WANT YOUNG PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE
IT IS ABOUT USING FASHION TO SHAPE BETTER LIVES
SUSTAINABLE fashion
WE SUPPORT GROWTH AND CREATIVITY
YOU HAVE TO BE CURIOUS
IT IS ABOUT MAKING CONNECTIONS
engage with the communities
collaborating with SCHOOLS EDUCATION
MANUFACTURING
WORKING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

3.3.8. ‘MAKING FOR CHANGE: WALTHAM FOREST’ SHOWCASE

To showcase the project’s activities in a meaningful and interactive way for the community, Francesco collaborated with CSF’s curator Fiona McKay and project assistant Mina Jugovic in order to design and produce the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ showcase. Kindly sponsored by the Sheepdrove Trust, the showcase was open to the public from 21st November to 15th December 2019 at the newly developed fashion hub, Arbeit Studios Leyton Green. A key curatorial aim was to create an accessible and inclusive space both for a variety of audiences from the local community, academic networks and industry, reflecting the impact of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project itself. This was part of the creative brief given to Dean Slydell (exhibition designer) and Studio LP (graphic designer).

The projects represented in the showcase were grouped into three thematic areas – ‘Education’, ‘Manufacturing’ and ‘Community’. Within each of the areas, the impact of each of the projects was communicated through a multitude of media to show three key elements: the artefact, the story, and portraits of the makers or members of the local community. Furthermore, the exhibition included a [film of the project](#) and three short films about the research residencies (at [Cactus Leather](#), [Blackhorse Lane Ateliers](#) and [Wagland Textiles](#)) which were produced by the agency Short Form upon a brief set up by Francesco and in collaboration with the Communications team at LCF.

The ‘Education’ area showed the project’s aim to embed sustainability and future thinking in young people’s education and enhance their understanding of the wide range of career prospects within fashion sustainability. This section manifested as an interactive table on which five teaching resources developed by members of LCF were showcased either through print or digital media. It included the fanzine produced by the ‘GenGreen’ team of LCF students participating in the Collaborative Unit ‘Activating Change’. The ‘Fashion Futures 2030’ toolkit was presented in an iPad for people to interact with the content of this teaching resource being developed for students to develop sustainability knowledge and future thinking. The ‘Fashion London’ unit was also showcased in an iPad for teachers to get familiar with this resource being developed as part of the Mayor’s London Curriculum. The ‘Education’ table also included the outcomes – three necklaces and a dressed doll – of the Fashion Club pilot workshop conducted with special needs students from Belmont Park School. Moreover, a hard copy of the teaching pack developed by LCF for the Innovation Challenge was displayed alongside an iPad showcasing the winning and runner-up project developed by students’ teams, respectively, from Buxton School and Thorpe Hall School. Overall, visitors interacted with the iPads in the education table, especially young people. As one visitor highlighted, this section of the exhibition demonstrated the value of “teaching sustainable fashion and textiles to children through actual experiences”. Inspired by the exhibition, another visitor recommended to “continue to promote fashion as a subject and discipline that is accessible to everyone”.

The ‘Manufacturing’ section showcased research residencies from three members of staff at LCF who worked with textile and fashion design and manufacturing businesses – Cactus Leather, Blackhorse Lane Ateliers, and Wagland Textiles – to address particular sustainability challenges. The work showcased in this section contributed to raising people’s awareness of heritage craft skills and the need to preserve them through passing them down to future generations. It also showed the potential of innovative laundry practices and laser-based finishing processes on jeans to reduce water consumption and chemical emissions; the visitors were also invited to vote between four possible scenarios for a Wash Lab to be established in east London. Moreover, five policy recommendations for sustainable fabric manufacturing were presented inviting the

visitor to express their preferences on them. Through the display of films documenting their experiences and finished garments, this section communicated the unique stories of local craftsmanship and heritage, and the LCF researchers’ visions and actions towards fostering sustainability and innovation.

(The project contributed to) “building connections between businesses and residents to maintain the local industry, striving for sustainability and helping local residents unlock their potential skills to be employed back into the community.”
– *Visitor 1*



Manufacturing section of the Making for Change Waltham Forest showcase.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

The ‘Community’ area showed outcomes of a number of participatory making activities and creative workshops which involved community members throughout the project. Indeed, crucial to the overall project was how members of community could feel proud from seeing their own work within an exhibition setting. In this section, two upcycled garments from the art performance ‘I Wanna be me, I Wanna be (E) U’ were showcased alongside a video of the event. Outcomes of the co-making workshops held at Forest Recycling Project were displayed to show the skills developed by the local community in creative repair, natural dying and zero-waste pattern cutting. On display there were also slogan t-shirt designs developed by kids participating at the Walthamstow Garden Party and a map of Waltham Forest fashion. A selection of four reversible ‘Forest Coats’ was also displayed to showcase the creative skills gained by a community of local women. Finally, the community section of the exhibition included an art installation developed by Nicole Zisman as part of her AER to represent her personal identity within a climate crisis scenario.

Further enhancing the inclusivity of the exhibition was the Feedback Board asking the question: ‘How can fashion and making activate positive change in your community?’ where visitors could leave comments and suggestions, as per the below quotes.

(The project contributed to) “instilling pride and innovation into our community and amplifying capacities and confidence of those who may otherwise be overlooked” – *Visitor 2*

“It is inspiring to see shared skills learnt and what can be produced, as well as empowering communities and bringing about change in attitudes” – *Visitor 3*

From the start of the curation of the showcase, sustainability was a priority. The furniture of the exhibition was designed and produced

by Dean Slydell using DufayLite (100% recycled cardboard) laser cut. At the end of the exhibition, 70% of the furniture was gifted to tenants of Arbeit Studios for re-use, making the exhibition truly sustainable. Also, some of the project participants (Priory Court Community Centre, Belmont Park School and Forest Recycling Project) collected the signage and photos to replicate the exhibition in their own spaces. The ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ showcase opened its doors in the evening of 21st November 2019. Francesco gave the opening speech to provide an overview of the project and celebrate all the collaborative efforts put towards the development of the project and the curation of the exhibition. During the Private View, there was a real buzz with lots of people in attendance, all very interested and proud to be part of the project, bringing in family and friends from the neighborhood. Two local residents volunteered as ‘Legends of the Forest’ to ensure the event ran smoothly.

As part of the curatorial aim to create a friendly and accessible space, two LCF alumni – Chloé Vasta and Violeta Vasquez Lopez – were appointed to invigilate the three-week long exhibition. They were crucial in giving guided tours of the exhibition to visitors, sharing insights about the project to the visitors and inviting them to leave comments on the feedback board.

A total of 125 people visited the exhibition during the 18 days in which it was open to the public. Almost all the visitors were from Walthamstow, so the project team successfully reached out to the local community. The peaks of visitors were recorded during events specifically organised, such as the Private View, the curators-led guided tours, and the ‘Forest Coats Fashion Show’. Although the relatively low number of visitors, based on feedback collected through the observations of the invigilators, everyone coming in was very interested and engaged in the exhibition. In particular, the education and community sections of the exhibition fostered the visitors to get involved. In addition, the interactive installations in relation to the research residencies at Blackhorse Lane Ateliers and Wagland Textiles worked very well.

However, there were some significant limitations for visitors, one being that the front door had to be kept closed at all times for security reasons, which enhanced the potentially unwelcoming nature of the showcase, especially given such an unusual location for a gallery. Hence, passersby did express interest but still did not want to come in, even after being told that the exhibition was free and open to the public. Furthermore, when the space was used for workshops for the Common Room, this gave the impression to passersby that the space was a private co-working space, rather than a gallery open to the public. Based on their observations, the invigilators recommended to make better use of the shop window and curate weekly window displays as a way to effectively engage visitors from outside.

“Making for Change: Waltham Forest is such an amazing project and it should have more exposure” – *Visitor 4*

Some visitors expressed their willingness to get involved; therefore, there is room for organising creative workshops for local residents, either in the communal area of Arbeit Studios Leyton Green or at Forest Recycling Project or in other venues across the borough. These could be organised either by the businesses residents in the studios or by other project partners. Some visitors also suggested to use the gallery space for pop-up shops, exhibitions and workshops organised by local businesses themselves, who would manage the space, without the need for hiring invigilators.

Overall, the contribution of the showcase was twofold. It showcased the outcomes of the project to local residents, triggering their creativity and encouraging them to carry on similar projects or

starting new ones. It also demonstrated to the fashion community the crucial role of design activism and showcased how it can be used to activate social change. Finally, given the impact the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ showcase had on local residents and LCF students and staff, an opportunity emerged to make it tour – especially the community section as an exemplar of fashion design for social innovation – for instance to the Fashion Space Gallery at LCF, as expressed by one exhibition invigilator.

“I believe it would be very positive to display ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ at the Fashion Space Gallery at LCF. During the time the exhibition was on display, we could really see the impact the project had, not only for the people who took part in the workshops and activities, but also for the visitors who were able to witness the positive change that social innovation can activate. [...] Hopefully visiting the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ exhibition would inspire other LCF students and staff as well” – *Exhibition invigilator*



Overview of Waltham Forest showcase.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

OUTPUTS
2 local residents volunteered as Legends of the Forest and 2 LCF graduates were hired as exhibition invigilators.
4 films were produced and displayed (1 for the main project, and 3 for the research residencies).
125 people visited the 3 week-long exhibition which included 13 projects.
OUTCOMES
The way the exhibition was curated contributed to successfully engaging local residents who expressed their willingness to participate in future projects.
Visitors felt inspired about fashion design for social innovation and sustainability and suggested to make the exhibition tour to LCF to inspire other students and staff.
At the end of the exhibition, 70% of the furniture was reused by the businesses resident at Arbeit Studios Leyton Green, and some project participants collected the signage and photos to proudly replicate the showcase in their own spaces.

3.4. LEGACY

The ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ was conceived and delivered as part of London Borough of Culture 2019 and the Great Place scheme. Comprising of a range of activities in relation to education, manufacturing and community engagement, the project aimed at using fashion and making to tackle socio-economic issues, such as deprived youth, skills shortage, fashion manufacturing decline, unemployment. When designing for social change, it is imperative to ensure that investments and interventions lead to real empowerment and capabilities building so that communities become self-sustainable and resilient and not merely reliant on the designer leading the project. With this in mind, the ambition behind this project was to contribute to activating long-term legacies within the local community. Even though often the changes activated through this project are

mostly intangible and almost invisible or difficult to capture using quantitative metrics, through this report it would be appropriate and just to say that this project has indeed activated many legacies. In fact, it has evidenced itself as long-lasting through Francesco’s mentoring of his ex-students, encouraging them to take over the delivery of further workshops at FRP and Forest Coats, so that the project can continue and flourish self-sufficiently. This project has also informed Francesco’s teaching whilst working with various organisations, and creating networks between LCF and WFC. The following sections explain the partnership plan developed between LBWF, LCF and Fashion District having an aligned strategy and shared plans beyond LBOC 2019, and the fashion hub – Arbeit Studios Leyton Green – established as a tangible legacy from the project.



Thrive workshop at Switchboard Studios.
Photography: Francesco Mazzearella.

3.4.1. PARTNERSHIP PLAN

LBWF and LCF have developed a Partnership Plan to support the local fashion sector as part of the cross-borough Fashion District vision. The intention is to support the legacy of LBOC (which LBWF won for 2019) as well as LCF’s contribution to the Fashion District also in light of the College’s move to Stratford in 2022. To determine the joint ambition of the main partners and consider the factors required to drive the long-term growth of the local fashion industry, the development of the plan was commissioned to A New Direction, supported by a UAL Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

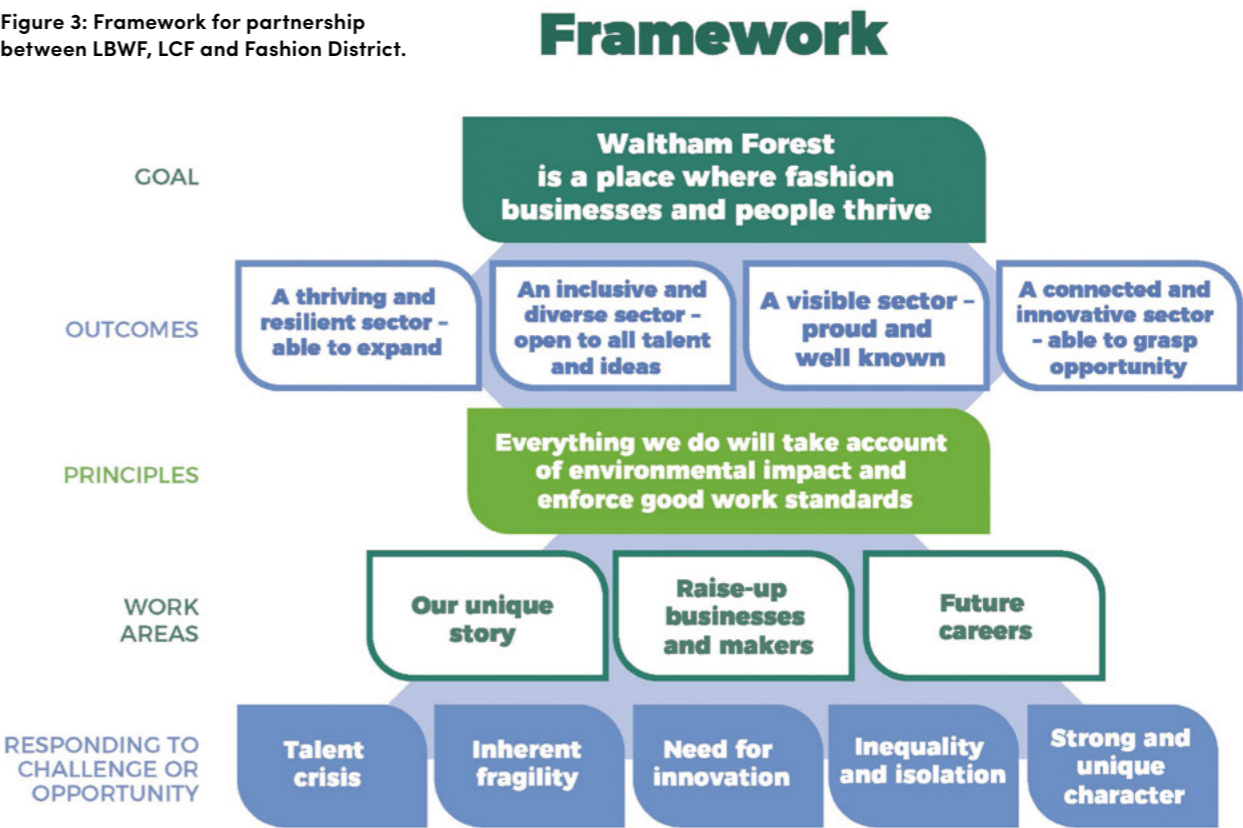
The plan aimed at providing the research, strategy and action-plan for the emergent partnership and at positioning Waltham Forest to be better able to support a thriving industry and local people to take-up opportunities in the fashion sector. It provided the framework to underpin the development of a strong fashion ecosystem in Waltham Forest by considering how to support local fashion businesses/manufacturers, build career pathways and support in-demand skills. The partnership plan had the following objectives:

- To create business growth opportunities for fashion SMEs and larger scale business manufacturers (linking to out of borough initiatives across the Lower and Upper Lea);
- To make fashion careers more accessible and attractive and create career pathways into the fashion industry within the borough;
- To create progression pathways within the industry and support in-demand skills;
- To enhance partnership working and stakeholder engagement across sectors and raise the profile of fashion within the borough and beyond.

To ensure that the plan was rooted within its local context, over 50 research papers, strategies, studies and data reports were reviewed. Key local people from the community, training providers and partners were identified. A focus group with young people aged 18 years was held. The research findings were then tested and insights gained into the ideas and priorities for local fashion businesses, education providers, partners and students at two ideas-generation workshops. Finally, two workshops with partners were held to co-define the ambitions and develop the strategy.

Findings from secondary and primary research informed the development of a framework (Figure 3) which outlines the goal underpinning the partnership, key outcomes to be achieved over the next ten years, the principles underpinning the strategy, and the work areas to focus on in order to address specific local challenges (A New Direction, 2019).

Figure 3: Framework for partnership between LBWF, LCF and Fashion District.



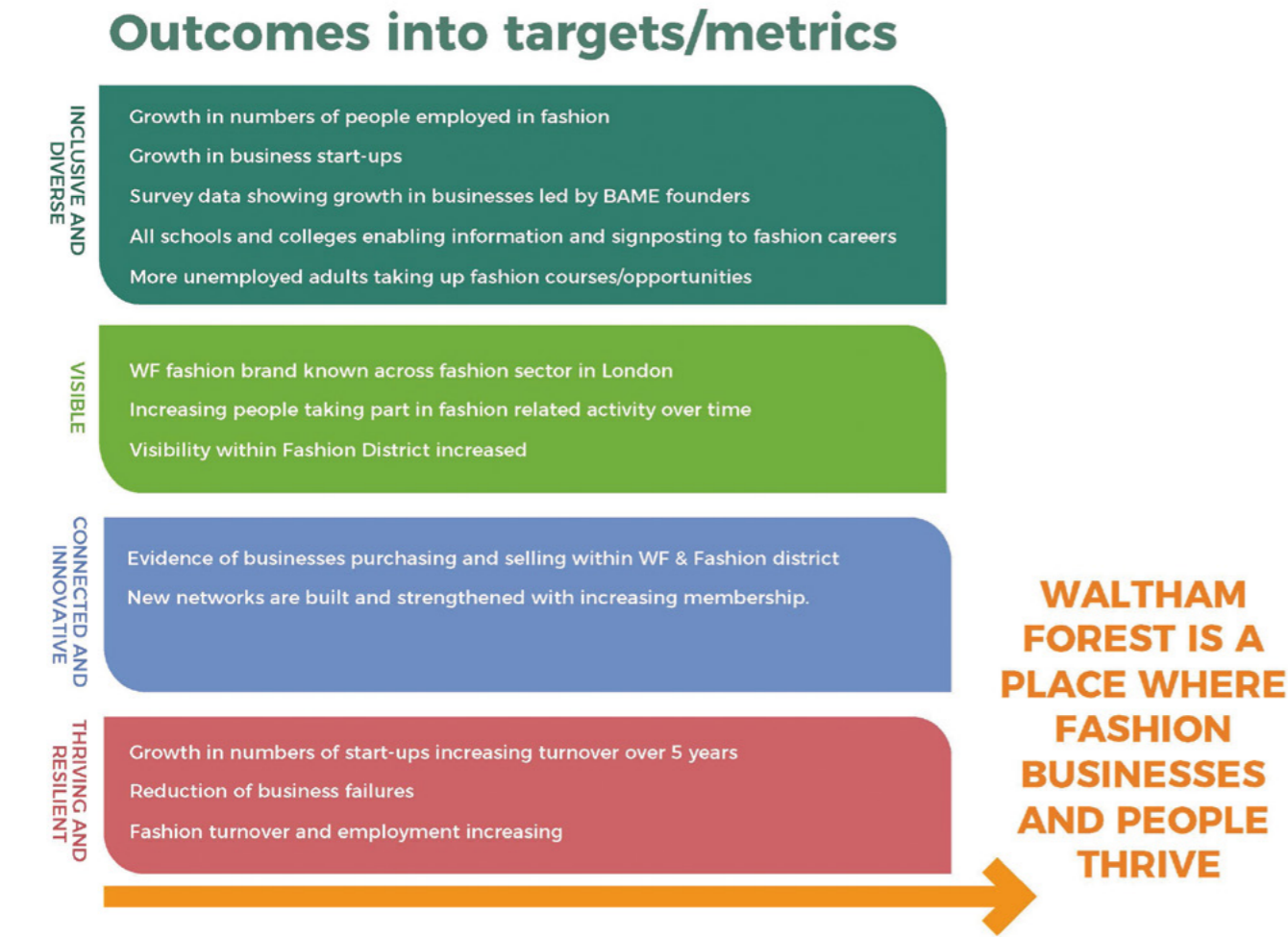
The partnership focuses on the needs of different beneficiaries, constructing an integrated provision which can utilise knowledge and capital across many programmes in order to build a local fashion ecology. This would contribute to the three work areas: ‘our unique story’, ‘raise-up businesses and makers’, and ‘future careers’.

- Our Unique Story: LBWF and LCF will build the unique fashion narrative for Waltham Forest and use this to attract new makers to the borough, build the community of existing makers and businesses, and promote the products and services produced in the borough.
- Raise-up Businesses and Makers: LBWF and LCF will invest in a programme of support providing the information and knowledge that businesses, makers and suppliers need to trade with each other and share skills. Over time, the partners will develop a physical hub for the fashion sector in the borough, promoting sustainability and new approaches to fashion making, selling and training.
- Future Careers: LBWF and LCF will work across the education system and industry to help young people and adults get the skills they need and be inspired to work in the industry and thrive within it.

“A Partnership Plan has been co-created between London Borough of Waltham Forest, London College of Fashion and Fashion District with the aim of building ‘our unique story’, raising up businesses, and contributing to future careers. Francesco, through the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project, has set the foundation for this network and activated the legacy of the London Borough of Culture” – *Fashion District*

The partnership sets the vision for Waltham Forest fashion to become thriving and resilient, connected and innovative, visible, as well as inclusive and diverse. With this in mind, it is important that the actions of the partnership align to the outcomes and that progress is measured over time, using some targets, as outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Outcomes set out by the Partnership Plan.



A joint team (from LBWF, LCF and Fashion District) is working on actioning the plan, with Francesco being one of the team. The intention of the Partnership Plan was to galvanise support and action from within the partnership and key players in the fashion sector in Waltham Forest and beyond. First actions will focus on ensuring the resource is in place in order to:

- Provide business support and engagement events for SMEs;
- Provide activity to build a proactive network of connected fashion businesses and support Arbeit Studios Leyton Green as a fashion hub;
- Build the story of Waltham Forest fashion to inform future communications;
- Explore the creation of a focused careers hub, driven by local colleges and LBWF.

To support the development of the three work areas, a Collaborative Unit project brief has been set up by Francesco, in collaboration with LBWF and Fashion District as one of the legacies of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project. 10 MA students from across the three schools of LCF have been selected to undertake the project ‘Social Fabric: A Sustainable Future for Waltham Forest Fashion’ from February to May 2020, working in three teams – one focusing on ‘mapping and storytelling’, one on ‘sustainability and innovation’, and the other on ‘skills and employment’.

Finally, it is important to highlight that implementing the vision of the plan requires resourcing. This means fundraising for capital and long-term programmes and, in the short-term, aligning resources to make sure that the programme can move forward. It is critical to ensure that the most is being made out of joining-up activities, resources and funding within LBWF and LCF so the plan is used as a strategic framework for fashion activity in the borough. This is expected to bring maximum impact across the whole range of ambitions and drive forward the strategic objectives of respective organisations.

For LCF the partnership is central to place-making activities furthering the external profile of the College through community engagement, progressing knowledge exchange (KE) activities, building research collaborations, and delivering their part of Fashion District. For LBWF, the partnership supports regeneration and economic growth strategies including the Town Centre Investment Fund, Integrating Communities, the Think Work Strategy, the legacy of LBOC 2019, and the memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Fashion District.

Sited within these joint strategies, LBWF and LCF are already joining forces to secure funding from their own and other resources by the end of February 2020 in order to deliver some of the activities set out in the partnership plan. As project plans develop, funding for key project will target appropriate partners and sources.

OUTPUTS
A report outlining the Partnership Plan between LBWF, LCF and Fashion District.
A team of stakeholders (from LBWF, LCF and Fashion District) has been established and is holding regular meetings to build legacy plans and resources.
A network of fashion businesses, schools and employers was built.
A Collaborative Unit project brief on ‘Social Fabric’ was set up for a.y. 2019/2020.
Upcoming application for funding by the end of February 2020.

OUTCOMES
A strong partnership was built between LBWF, LCF and Fashion District with aligned strategic objectives and shared plans.





3.4.2. FASHION HUB

In order to deliver the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project, LBWF intended to provide Francesco with a space in the Bakers Arms area. The property – owned by London and Quadrant (L&Q) and on a long lease to London Borough of Waltham Forest – was formerly a Morrisons supermarket, but has been vacant for several years. After consultation with several stakeholders and collective efforts, Arbeit Studios have rented the facility from London Borough of Waltham Forest, and in August 2019 the space was transformed into the very first fashion hub of the Fashion District.

“The development of Arbeit Studios Leyton Green has been a complex project, but it is special for us to be part of the Fashion District” – *Arbeit Studios*

“We are very proud to be the very first borough to have a fashion hub, a focus for fashion, creativity, activity, networking, which has been developed from the grassroots” – *Council*

As one of the tangible legacies of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’, Arbeit Studios Leyton Green provides affordable workspace and support for local businesses, flexible gallery space and delivers shared services for the borough. The fashion hub was opened at an event taking place on 2nd October 2019 with opening speeches from Helen Lax (LCF Fashion District), Hajni Semsei (Arbeit Studios), Rebecca Davies (LBWF), Councillor Simon Miller (LBWF Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Housing Development), Jonathan Collie (The Common Room), and Han Ates (Blackhorse Lane Ateliers). The value of the fashion hub is highlighted by the quote below from Councillor Simon Miller:

“My agenda is threefold: to create opportunities for residents and young people; to develop and retain creative talent, helping people realize their dreams and open up career pathways; and to make Walthamstow a place where people want to live. This fashion hub is addressing all these three objectives, and I am amazed to see that – in times of real uncertainty – we can create amazing opportunities, thanks to LCF and Fashion District which made things happen and are making a real difference. London Borough of Culture has put us on the map, and now that this year is coming to an end, we are looking for legacies – this is a meaningful community project, and we are genuinely grateful” – *Councillor*

The fashion hub is contributing to achieving the vision of the Fashion District, shining a light on the heritage of the fashion industry in east London and envisaging what fashion will look like in the future, through opportunities for skilling up, and supporting businesses. In fact, 12 independent local businesses currently work in the studios; they specialise in couture and sustainable fashion, creative accessories, design, printing, as well as reiki and reflexology. The hub is also a space used for events, fashion exhibitions, art residencies, sewing classes, craft workshops, and so on.

“It is exciting to see this space for craft and community coming to life, after we have almost lost our heritage know-how. It is promising that we will bring it back, we will be able to raise up the quality of manufacturing, and inspire each other” – *Manufacturer*

OUTPUTS

12 businesses resident at Arbeit Studios Leyton Green.

OUTCOMES

Needs and aspirations for the long-term use of the space were identified through engagement with the local community, designers and manufacturers;

Exchange of resources and contacts across partners (LBWF, LCF, Arbeit Studios);

Transformation of a disused space owned by LBWF into affordable workspaces;

New businesses (including JOA, founded by 3 LCF alumni) moving into Waltham Forest and contributing to the local economy.



4

Conclusions

In this project, a fashion activism approach was adopted to tackle socio-economic issues experienced in Waltham Forest, such as deprived youth, skills shortage, fashion manufacturing decline, and unemployment. Using fashion and making, the project team engaged local schools, fashion businesses and the local community to activate positive change and long-lasting legacies within the borough. The project contributed to demonstrating the activist role that the designer can play in order to challenge the unbalanced status quo and create counter-narratives towards sustainability in fashion.



Visitors of the Making for Change Waltham Forest showcase.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

Multiple methods were adopted to respond to challenges encountered throughout this participatory action research process. This led to raise people's perspective of fashion sustainability and empower them through building capabilities and making them start paving their own career pathways, as well as enhancing community engagement and partnership building. The project also showed a wide array of formats in which fashion activism can manifest itself (from fashion artefacts, to educational resources, fanzines, policy recommendations, live art performances, panel debates, exhibitions and films) in order to raise people's awareness of sustainability-related issues in the fashion system and co-create social, cultural, economic and environmental value.

The findings from this project have also informed Francesco's teaching practice and led to the development of research outputs contributing to advancing the discipline of fashion design for sustainability and social innovation. Furthermore, the success of this project has contributed to Francesco's personal and professional growth, as he secured a full-time and permanent position at LCF, and this has extended the opportunity for him to continue working with the project partners in the future. He also collaborated with various organisations and created networks between LCF and LBWF. A model for LCF to collaborate with a local government was therefore piloted, and provides an opportunity to deepen the partnership, but could also be scaled up and out to other boroughs in order to further contribute to place-making. This project has also reinforced Francesco's values, which are to rescue cultural heritage, fight social inequalities, make local economies flourish, and enhance environmental stewardship. Finally, it resulted that, thanks to aligned values, creative skills, and continued engagement, positive change was activated.

In the following sections, the outputs and outcomes developed through this project are summarised together with the limitations experienced, while recommendations for further work are outlined.

Jacket made by one participant of Forest Coat.
Photography: Adam Razvi.



4.1. OVERALL OUTPUTS

As a result of the impact evaluation process, the overall outputs produced throughout the project (in terms of quantitative results being delivered) are outlined and are summarised below.

- A total of 1550 people engaged in the project;
- 8 local residents were involved in the delivery of the project’s activities, also in collaboration with the ‘Legends of the Forest’ and ‘Future Creatives’ programmes managed by LBWF;
- Approximately 600 people visited the LCF tent throughout the 2 days of the Walthamstow Garden Party; as a result, over 250 slogan t-shirts were designed and people’s favourite fashion spaces were plotted on a map of Waltham Forest fashion;
- Approximately 133 students from Waltham Forest-based schools participated in creative and educational workshops delivered by LCF;
- 12 MA students participated in the Collaborative Unit brief ‘Activating Change’ in 2019 and a new brief on ‘Social Fabric’ was set up for 10 MA students to undertake in 2020;
- 78 people in total attended 2 ‘Better Lives’ symposia;
- Approximately 43 people participated in 3 co-making workshops;
- Building on the LCF ‘1000 Coats’ initiative, ‘Forest Coats’ was conceived as an 8-week long programme using local assets, resulting in:
 - An efficient and replicable model aimed at community engagement, creative skills development, and fabric upcycling;
 - 18 coats were made by 18 women for their own children or for donation to the ‘baby bank’;
 - 14 kids proudly worn the coats at the ‘Forest Fashion Show’.
- 1 UAL graduate and 6 members of the local community participated in a 4-week long ‘Art for the Environment Residency’, and an extra grant of £1,000 was awarded by LBWF to another UAL graduate beyond the timeframe of this project;
- A cash prize of £1,500 was awarded to Buxton School towards the development of creative curriculum, having won the Innovation Challenge. Two runner up prizes of the value of £500 each were awarded to a student team from Thorpe Hall Primary School and to a secondary school student team from Buxton;
- 3 teaching resources (‘A Store of the Future’, ‘Fashion Futures 2030’, and ‘Fashion London’) were developed for schools and colleges and made openly available for teachers to download and use;
- 3 reports were produced to document 3 research residencies undertaken in local fashion manufacturing businesses.
 - A model for workshops to be jointly delivered by LCF and Cactus Leather was tested and further workshops will be delivered to transfer heritage craft skills down to future generations and provide the business with an extra source of income;
 - A feasibility study was produced to inform the development of a Wash Lab in east London, providing sustainable and innovative finishing technologies for textiles. The researcher in residence contributed to Blackhorse Lane Ateliers’ application for £180,000 funding and consequently the company was selected for the SME R&D support programme as part of the BFTT project;
 - A white paper outlined policy recommendations towards the increased use of recycled polyester (through innovation policies, economic incentives, regulation, trade policies, voluntary actions or communication/campaigns).
- A wide range of fashion artefacts (such as customised t-shirts, denim samples, the fashion collection ‘I Wanna be me, I Wanna be (E)U’, embroidered and naturally dyed fabrics, kimonos and children’s jackets) were co-created with the local community, mostly by upcycling textile waste;
- 4 exhibitions (i.e. ‘Crafting Leather and Steel’, ‘Fashion Now/Fashion Futures 2030’, ‘So Let It Be Your Will’ and ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’) were designed and delivered in Waltham Forest, and visited by a total of approximately 398 people;
- 4 films (1 for the main project, and 3 for the research residencies) were produced as a lasting legacy of the project;
- 2 live art performances were organised (1 in Waltham Forest and 1 at LCF Mare Street) to raise people’s awareness of the socio-economic implications of Brexit on the fashion industry;
- A number of research outputs (such as a keynote talk at a Conference in Bangkok, Thailand in March 2019; a paper published and presented at the EAD Conference in Dundee, UK in April 2019; a talk at Fashion Revolution Turin, Italy in April 2019; a keynote talk at an event organised by Patternity in London, UK in June 2019; a talk at an event in Tokyo, Japan in July 2019; and various teaching materials) were produced so far, and others will be developed in the near future;
- A formerly disused supermarket was transformed into the very first fashion hub of the Fashion District. It provides affordable workspace for 12 businesses (including JOA, funded by 3 LCF graduates), flexible gallery space, and support services for the local community.

4.2. OVERALL OUTCOMES

The process of thematic analysis of the data collected allowed for the outcomes of the project to emerge. These were clustered into five key themes: sustainability awareness, empowerment and skills development, career pathways, community engagement, as well as networking and partnership building. The following sections explain each of these thematically clustered outcomes in further detail.

4.2.1. SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS

- Through participation in the Collaborative Unit ‘Activating Change’, LCF students nurtured an activist mindset. This mindset development was also confirmed by the fact that the GenGreen team was selected as a finalist in the Green Gown Awards UK & Ireland 2019 for the ‘Sustainability Champion Student Category’.
- Young students from Waltham Forest-based schools also expanded their awareness of sustainable fashion and experience in craftivism.
- The researchers in residence gained a deeper understanding of textile manufacturing and enhanced their understanding of sustainability, to include the economic, cultural, social, and environmental implications of any change.
- The local community increased its awareness of the contribution of fashion design towards sustainability and social innovation and revealed to have gained a better understanding of how they could approach fashion in more sustainable ways, within their borough. In particular, ‘I Wanna be me, I Wanna be (E) U’ demonstrated fashion’s activist and environmentalist agenda within a Brexit context, and the symposia shed a light on how fashion can contribute to shaping better lives. Furthermore, community members participating in the ‘Art for the Environment Residency’ gained experience in using fashion to express their personal identities and cultural diversities within the context of climate emergency.



Better Lives symposium on education.
Photography: Guillaume Valli.

4.2.2. EMPOWERMENT AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- LCF students participating in the Collaborative Unit ‘Activating Change’, developed teamwork skills and gained experience in community engagement. The Art for the Environment resident advanced her practice and learned new skills in terms of community workshop facilitation.
- Students from local schools participating in the ‘Innovation Challenge’ developed presentation, drawing, computing and designing skills.
- Special needs students from Belmont Park School gained making skills, enhanced their self-confidence and over time improved their behaviour.
- The manufacturers hosting the researchers in residence gained a stronger voice in activating positive change in the fashion industry. In particular, Stephen Jones, the last remaining clicking press toolmaker in London, felt uplifted that other people were interested in his craft. Other business owners felt proud to be showcased in the fanzine ‘Clothing Community Stories’.
- Through a series of co-making workshops and the ‘Forest Coats’ programme, members of the local community – including often marginalised people – gained skills in creative repair, natural dying, zero-waste pattern cutting, embroidery, and garment construction. Having built capabilities, people felt empowered, more hopeful and this in turn enhanced their self-confidence.
- The journey of empowerment was particularly evident in one young lady who improved her skills and confidence exponentially within just a few months through engagement in the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project activities. In fact, she first attended the co-making workshops delivered at FRP, she then facilitated her own workshop within the familiar environment of the social enterprise, and was subsequently hired by Francesco to deliver workshops with hundreds of people at the Walthamstow Garden Party. Finally, she created and showcased her own artworks as part of the AER exhibition.



Claire Swift giving a certificate of participation to one of the women from Forest Coats.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

4.2.3. CAREER PATHWAYS

- Through participation in the educational workshops delivered by LCF in Waltham Forest-based schools, students gained an understanding of the wide range of careers available in the fashion industry.
- 3 women (from less advantaged backgrounds) participating in the ‘Forest Coats’ project gained employment: 2 as technicians at LCF, and 1 was hired by sustainable fashion brand JOA; this achievement had significant implications for them to gain self-confidence and pave their own futures.
- The project provided LCF graduates with an additional source of income for the delivery of workshops, exhibition invigilation, photoshoots, and other activities. In particular, three LCF graduates established their sustainable fashion brand JOA in one of the Arbeit Studios Leyton Green, have embedded their lives in Waltham Forest’s community and are contributing to the commercial sector of the borough. Furthermore, building on their learning from the ‘Forest Coats’ project, they decided to switch their business model into that of a social enterprise, making long-term plans to continue deliver creative workshops for disadvantaged communities.



One of the Forest Coats participant learning to use a sewing machine.
Photography: Adam Razvi.



Forest Coats workshop at Priory Court Community Centre.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

4.2.4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- The project participants gained social agency and became more connected with fellow community members; some people expressed also to have felt less isolated upon participation in the project’s activities.
- ‘Forest Coats’ was probably the most powerful initiative in terms of community engagement. In fact, it offered a safe space away from everyday life challenges for the women to engage in making activities; as a result, they were able to reduce their negative emotions and increase their wellbeing.
- Participation in a number of exhibitions and symposia has meant that the local community was able to engage with the work of LCF prior to the College’s move to east London in 2022. Furthermore, the community expressed willingness in getting involved in future projects.
- Finally, it was motivational and empowering for the participants to know that their work would have been exhibited as part of the final project showcase.

4.2.5. NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

- A model for long-lasting collaboration across departments at LBWF and LCF was piloted, and a network of partner organisations was built across the borough. A core partnership has since been built with Forest Recycling Project, which hosted a series of co-making workshops and a second iteration of ‘Forest Coats’, beyond the timeframe and funding of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project.
- A partnership plan was built between LBWF, LCF and Fashion District outlining the vision for a thriving fashion industry and setting out work areas and outcomes to be achieved in order to build the legacy of LBOC 2019 and in light of the College’s move to east London. As part of the partnership, a team of key stakeholders was established and is meeting regularly in order to deliver the outcomes set out by the plan.
- Another core partnership was established between LBWF and Arbeit Studios, which led to the transformation of a disused supermarket into the very first fashion hub of the Fashion District. This is one of the tangible legacies activated through the project.
- School teachers, LCF researchers, and manufacturers expanded their networks of contacts in view of potential collaborations. In particular, during the research residency, Xandra Drepaal and Stephen Jones developed a positive personal and professional relationship which is likely to prosper into further collaborations.

4.3. LIMITATIONS

Although the project allowed gathering interesting findings and creating positive impacts, several limitations were experienced throughout this process, as acknowledged below. The limited timeframe of the project to be delivered within the year of LBOC 2019 meant that the project team had to work under significant time pressure. Nevertheless, the quantity and quality of the project deliverables exceeded the funders' expectations, also considering the resource and funding constraints.

The short-term nature of the evaluation process developed for this report meant that it was not possible to measure any longer-term impact of the project. It is important to highlight that this is a recurring issue in any social innovation projects; in fact, social impacts require a very long time to become manifest, often beyond the project's timeframe. Furthermore, the outcomes of such projects are usually intangible and difficult to capture and measure using quantitative metrics; however, there is evidence of several long-lasting legacies being activated within the local community, as discussed in Section 3.4.

Another limitation identified is the relatively small sample of participants in the project; however, this was deemed more than adequate for this type of qualitative research. Meaningful data was collected through deeper engagement with fewer participants. For example, although a small amount of people responded to the online surveys, the responses were complemented by in-depth qualitative data collected using other methods, such as participant observations.

In terms of project management, several challenges were experienced by Francesco throughout the project. For example, the workload has been too large to be sustainable by a researcher hired to work part-time on the project; in fact, almost every day there were some monitoring or administrative tasks to be completed, and every step resulted to be far more time consuming than envisaged. Having to deliver an event almost every week felt quite exhausting for the researcher, but also extremely rewarding at the end, when positive feedback was received and social impact evidenced.

Furthermore, the project contributed to demonstrating the true nature of working as a design researcher within an academic institution. This implies having to complete numerous administrative tasks, handle several legal and financial issues, undertaking evaluation procedures and continuous reporting to many different stakeholders and audiences. However, through this experience, Francesco gained a great deal in terms of administrative and management skills, and built a large network of contacts, which is truly invaluable.

Finally, perhaps most relevant to those who study and practice design activism, it is important to highlight that activating change from within the system – LCF and LBWF as public organisations – implies facing significant institutional barriers. Perhaps another route could have been to activate change from outside the system using a disruptive approach, but this would have been likely unsuccessful in this context, given that this project was funded by a local government. Hence, a 'quiet' form of activism was adopted as an embedded and situated approach to co-designing meaningful social innovations within the local community. Francesco acted as a catalyst for residents to think and do things differently, being an outsider to the local community, whilst at the same time having insider know-how as he was a former resident of Waltham Forest. This dual position of outsider/insider has perhaps had a beneficial effect in activating positive change within the borough.

4.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

For London College of Fashion

- It is recommended to further develop the approach devised and implemented for this project and test it in other contexts in order to build a model of working that contributes to place-making and is transferrable to other boroughs.
- To deliver CPD sessions in Waltham Forest-based schools in order to train teachers in using the resources created, with support from LCF.
- LCF researchers could continue setting up Collaborative Unit projects based on their own research as these foster knowledge exchange with organisations in east London and provide students with enriching learning experiences.
- For CSF to continue working on the policy recommendations for recycled polyester developed through the research residency at Wagland Textiles in order to implement legislative change within the fashion industry. It is also recommended that the white paper is shared with the Environmental Audit Committee to contribute to furthering the Fixing Fashion Report, and to collaborate with the lobbying organisation Fashion Roundtable.
- Building on the success of working collaboratively across research, knowledge exchange and education through this project, applying the 'Fashion Futures 2030' teaching resource through knowledge exchange with community members (e.g. through 'Art for the Environment Residencies') could be considered. This could in turn inform on-going research on fashion design for sustainable futures.
- An opportunity for the 'Making for Change: Waltham Forest' showcase emerged to travel to the Fashion Space Gallery at LCF with the aim to further inspire students and staff about how fashion and making can activate social change.

For London Borough of Waltham Forest

- To continue collaborating with LCF and take joint actions across the partnership plan in order to support businesses, strengthen existing networks and enable them to thrive, particularly in relation to the longer-term vision of the Fashion District.
- To map out and better understand all the different programmes existing across different departments of LBWF and consider how they could be joined up or better developed through embedding some of the learning from 'Making for Change: Waltham Forest' activities.
- To strengthen the collaboration with LCF and deliver networking events for fashion enterprises with a focus on sustainability and innovation, as well as workshops and career fairs in local schools.
- To develop a communication strategy, which includes a map of the local businesses and activities, in order to raise the profile of the sector and communicate the unique story of local makers with their artisanal heritage and skills.



For the Local Community

- Local school teachers could use the openly accessible educational resources developed by LCF and embed them into their curriculum.
- Local residents – especially young people – could learn and preserve the craft skills of Cactus Leather through apprenticeship programmes, such as 'Future Creatives'.
- To maximise the opportunity that the likely implementation of the Wash Lab in east London could provide for local fashion designers, makers, students, researchers, and community members to experiment and pioneer the development of a new UK denim aesthetic.
- There is room for local residents to deliver creative workshops, pop-up shops, and exhibitions, either in the communal area of Arbeit Studios Leyton Green or at Forest Recycling Project or in other venues across the borough.
- There are opportunities for the local community to participate in making workshops delivered by social enterprise JOA as a way to enhance social agency and wellbeing and contribute to fashion sustainability.

Tutors and participants in the Forest Coats workshop.
Photography: Adam Razvi.

LOOKING FORWARD

As Waltham Forest’s year as LBOC has come to an end, there is a need for further funding for follow-on activities to sustain the legacies that have been activated through the project.

Building on two key areas of the ‘Making for Change: Waltham Forest’ project – education and community engagement – a grant application of £5,000 was submitted to HEIF (Higher Education Innovation Fund) to focus particularly on building the legacy of ‘Fashion Futures 2030’, as outlined in the following Sections A and B.

A) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers

The ‘Fashion Futures 2030’ teaching resource toolkit has been launched and is available on the CSF website for teachers to download. However, further funding would allow for CPD to be delivered to 15 teachers in Design & Technology and/or Art & Design/ Textiles and Media. 3 borough-based CPD twilight sessions (in Waltham Forest, Newham, and Hackney) will be delivered between May and July 2020 to train teachers from target Colleges in using and applying the teaching resource. 3 LCF students will assist the local teachers in delivering the ‘Fashion Futures 2030’ sessions.

B) Art for the Environment Residency

Building on the success of the ‘Art for the Environment Residency’ undertaken by Nicole Zisman in 2019, there is an opportunity to further explore issues of climate change, cultural identity and diversity in response to the Fashion Futures scenarios developed by CSF. A group of 2-4 UAL students will undertake a new AER focusing on one of the four fashion future scenarios, using different art and design media to respond to them. For a period of 4-8 weeks in June-July 2020, the collective AER will be based in a venue in Waltham Forest (Arbeit Studios Leyton Green or Winns Gallery) to explore the scenarios through immersion in the natural environment and engagement with the local community in co-designing creative outputs that embed sustainability and contribute to an enhanced sense of place.

Based on recommendations from one of the researchers in residence, Francesco also applied for £17,000 as follow-on funding through the Great Place scheme to develop a project in collaboration with Blackhorse Lane Ateliers from February to October 2020, as outlined in Section C.

C) ‘Shift the Power, Switch the Button’

The proposed idea is to turn knives – the very weapons that can take a life – into something that could support a life. A knife is only dangerous in someone’s hand. Up until that point, it is just a piece of metal. In order to shift this narrative, we propose to turn knives into buttons and rivets to make customized pairs of jeans donated by Blackhorse Lane Ateliers. With the right support, it is envisaged that those jeans will help create a knife crime awareness campaign in Waltham Forest. The aim of the project is to illustrate to young people that they have a choice in shaping their lives to be more purposeful, through fashion, making, and creativity. Furthermore, participating in work placement experiences in creative industries, young people will gain skills that will have a lasting impact on their lives. Throughout the project, a film will be produced to capture the journeys of the young people and the positive changes the project has activated in their lives. A fundraising event – consisting of a panel debate and pop-up exhibition of the bespoke collection of jeans made by the young people – will be organised in October 2020 at Central Saint Martins. The funding raised will contribute to establishing a social enterprise to sustain on-going activities focused on using fashion to fight knife crime.

Moreover, in order to amplify the impact of ‘Forest Coats’ in terms of community engagement, LBWF has provided Francesco with a grant of £4,000 to support the delivery of another iteration of the project, as outlined in Section D.

D) Forest Coats Legacy

Building on learning from the previous experience, and in consultation with key stakeholders, the new project proposal is conceived to be delivered in two parts: one with a small group of new volunteers at Forest Recycling Project (FRP), and another series of workshops at Arbeit Studios Leyton Green with the former group of participants learning more advanced skills (i.e. zero-waste pattern cutting). Both programmes will be led by LCF alumna Olivia Weber (co-founder of Waltham Forest-based social enterprise JOA) who has developed the pattern of Forest Coats. To assist in the delivery of the two programmes, two women who previously participated in the Forest Coats project at Priory Court Community Centre will be hired, in order to train the new participants in the skills they have previously gained. The choice of the tutors has been strategically made in order to provide employment opportunities to local residents, whilst also boosting their confidence, and ensuring long-lasting engagement with the local community for on-going delivery of the project. Furthermore, multi-media instructions (using text, visuals and video) will be designed by Olivia and made openly available as a long-lasting legacy of the project, for people to continue learning making Forest Coats on their own.



Detail of embroidery made by a participant of Forest Coats.



Fabric detail of one of the Forest Coats.
Photography: Adam Razvi

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Fashion Now/Fashion Futures exhibition.
Photography: Guillaume Valli



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