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Co-designing tools to empower further, independent co-design: collaborating with diverse individuals with lived experience of food poverty

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Abstract: Food poverty is an acute, growing and highly impactful social, political and practical challenge for the UK in 2019. This paper describes collaborative design undertaken by researchers from the Leapfrog project and practitioners from Food Power, a national network tackling food poverty. In this paper we describe 3 elements of a substantial co-design research project. We describe how co-designers from very different constituencies (in age and location) developed tools and resources that helped the voice of people in food poverty be more clearly heard. The aim of this project is for the clear articulation of the impacts of food poverty to effect policy and policy maker. Helping in the long term to remove the need for food banks and other tactical responses to systemic food poverty challenges. The case studies presented have wider implications for the creation of tools and resources to help co-design, mass creativity and engagement at scale.

Keywords: co-design; tools; engagement at scale; food poverty

1. Introduction

Food poverty is an acute, growing and highly impactful social, political and practical challenge for the UK in 2019. The scale of food insecurity challenges is still being discovered, but recent reports show that nationally 8-10% of UK households experience food insecurity (Sosenko et al., 2019), with 13% of adults experiencing some form of food insecurity (Lambie-Mumford et al., 2019). These national averages values can have huge differences across regional and demographic boundaries. For example, at 52.4% the city of Blackburn has one of the highest levels of child poverty after housing costs are accounted for (Stone and Hirsch, 2019).

This paper describes collaborative design undertaken by researchers from the Leapfrog project and practitioners from Food Power, a national network tackling food poverty. Through a 10-month collaboration with Food Power, starting in November 2018, 'Tools

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for Empowerment' formed part of 'Scaling Up Leapfrog: Improving a million creative conversations'. This was an Arts and Humanities Research Council project seeking to explore how co-design can enable organisations to reach new scales in their work. Leapfrog researchers worked across sites in Darwen (Lancashire, UK) and Newcastle (Tyne and Wear, UK) with a range of individuals with lived experience of food poverty. Our approach was not to design solutions to food poverty challenges. The practical focus of the collaboration was co-designing reusable, adaptable tools, an approach previously applied by Leapfrog in a range of public sector contexts (Cruickshank et al. 2017, Whitham et al., 2019).

The co-designed tools we describe in this paper respond to the scale of the food poverty challenges across the UK. They centre on enabling individuals to explore, capture and share lived experiences of food poverty and food availability in their localities, and translate these experiences into stories that will be meaningful in local, national and international contexts. The aim of the research presented here was to explore how short-term design research initiatives can empower individuals and catalyse long-term transformations in the scale and impact of existing organisations and networks. The intent is to empower individuals to participate in the public discourse surrounding food poverty and strengthen existing networks and infrastructure that are responding to existing and emerging challenges of food poverty and insecurity. Our approach explicitly responds to the scale and resourcing of the Leapfrog £1.3m AHRC (UK research council) funded project and the scale and strategic intent of Food Power. The tools co-designed through this project are now available freely through the Leapfrog project website alongside over 50 other tools (www.leapfrog.tools), collectively downloaded over 5,000 times.

We firstly review related research literature before introducing the work from the perspective of our collaborating partner Food Power. Three case studies follow this, each exploring a different aspect of the Tools for Empowerment project in relation to collaboration across diverse age and geographic locations, empowerment through embedding new understanding and the ongoing impact of the collaboration on the national Food Power network. The paper concludes with a comparative discussion of the case studies, conclusions and recommendations undertaking collaborative design directed at scales beyond particular projects and localities.

2. Collaborative Design and Scale

Design research has produced an established body of literature engaged with impact beyond the immediate work of the designer. Participatory Design (PD) places the involvement user or beneficiaries as a central concern (Simonsen & Robertson, 2013), providing methods to enable non-designers to participate in design activities (Sanders & Stappers, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Bratteteig et al., 2013; Eva et al., 2013). PD and co-design offer a means for designers to open processes and projects to the creative ideas and actions of many people.

In the last decade PD researchers have proposed shifting the focus of PD theory and practice from artefacts and processes (as exemplified in Ehn, 1988) to infrastructures and processes

of infrastructuring (Björgvinsson, 2008; Hillgren et al., 2011). This shift in intent and scale recognises the mutual learning in designers and participants who undertake PD initiatives, and the effects on connectivity and capability within organisations, communities and networks that these initiatives can bring about. By focusing on ongoing and open changes to infrastructures, researchers have proposed framing PD as a means to enable democratised innovation (Björgvinsson et al., 2010), recognising that PD initiatives need not prescribe the goals or intent of collaborative activity.

The shift in scale from artefact to infrastructure accompanies ideas of enabling unpredictable action by design beneficiaries. The concept of Metadesign (Fischer & Giaccardi 2004, 2006) differentiates itself from user-centred or participatory approaches by explicitly seeking to enable the evolution of design outcomes by users. Ehn contrasts Metadesign with PD approaches to designing for ‘use before use’ (Ehn, 2008), conceptualised by Redström in terms of ‘design time’ and ‘use time’ (Redström, 2008). Both Metadesign and concepts such as *‘design after design’* point towards enabling unexpected action independent of the designer by looking beyond a particular design project or outcome.

In this paper we draw on ideas of infrastructuring, facilitation and sustainability to position our co-design collaboration with Food Power. As other researchers have found, there is a persistent risk that the initiatives will stagnate when researcher time or project funding ceases (Prost et al. 2019). The interest in sustainability and escaping the scale of particular projects is raised explicitly the work of Prost et al., as they sought to create a Food Hub that could persist independently from their expertise and resourcing of their research (2017, 2019).

Orienting collaborative design away from particular outcomes and towards networks is one means to address the sustainability challenges (Iversen & Dindler, 2014) of projects and localities. For example, Manzini and Rizzo (2011) describe *‘framework projects’*, and Britton (2017) describes *‘platform organisations’*. Here designers infrastructure and connect as facilitators and activists (Manzini, 2015), acting as mediators and instigators (Björgvinsson et al., 2010; Binder et al., 2015). At this scale the designer is agnostic and open to particular issues as they seek to engage and empower individuals (Cruickshank et al. 2013), trigger further initiatives, and to build capability and resilience across networks and communities.

3. Tools for Empowerment

Food Power is a national 4 year £4 million pound Big Lottery funded programme managed by Church Action on Poverty and Sustain aiming to tackle the root causes of food poverty through people powered change. In ‘Tools for Empowerment’ Leapfrog worked closely with Food Power’s Empowerment officer who supports over sixty local food alliances across the UK to build capacity, with local empowerment at its core. Recruiting and empowering individuals with lived experience of food poverty is central to Food Power’s strategy of advocating for long term sustainable solutions. Whilst emergency provision is needed to stop people going hungry, food banks are only a sticking plaster to the underlying issues that

cause food poverty, including low pay, an inadequate benefit system and rising living costs. Through amplifying the voices of those who have been impacted directly, Food Power aim to fully understand the root causes of food poverty and identify sustainable solutions. To pilot this approach, individuals with lived experience of food poverty were recruited into alliances to explore how they could be empowered and involved as experts at a strategic level. Each pilot explored different methods of involving those with lived experience with the intention to share this learning with other alliances across the UK.

When the Leapfrog 'Tools for Empowerment' project began in November 2018 Food Power was working with six pilot areas. Food Power had found that recruiting and supporting individuals within the pilots wasn't without its challenges. Often those experiencing food poverty didn't self-identify as being in poverty. "It was very much their norm and individuals were hesitant to talk about personal experiences due to risk of stigma or exposing themselves" (Pearson, 2019). Initiating open conversations where Food Power could draw out an individual's lived experience to influence policy on a local and national level was often difficult. However, it was evident that individuals were so much more than their lived experience. They had assets, knowledge and skills, with stories and expertise to unlock, with intrinsic knowledge of surviving living in food insecurity and knowing from a grassroots level what support helps or hinders.

One of the most difficult things Food Power and their alliances do is talk to people about their experience of food poverty. People often do not realise that their relationship with food is not ideal in terms of quantity and quality. The 'Tools for Empowerment' project aimed to address this by co-designing tools which would help to structure and capture conversations about food and food poverty in a positive, non-confrontational way. The outcome would be a series of tools and resources to engage young people and adults in conversations around food and food poverty, both those with lived experience and keen activists. Food Power also hoped that engaging people in the co-design process (as opposed to just asking them to tell their story) would further empower individuals through giving them confidence. Lobbying or advocating on behalf of yourself or others as an individual with lived experience can be difficult if people don't feel as knowledgeable or powerful as the person or organisation they are communicating with. Leapfrog and Food Power hoped that taking part in the co-design process would increase people's confidence and ability to speak truth to power in future activism or campaigning activities.

4. Co-Design Approach

The ten-month co-design process took place across Darwen and Preston in Lancashire and the Byker Estate in Newcastle. The first co-design workshop developed a narrative around food and storytelling in ways Leapfrog and Food Power hoped would lead to more in depth conversations, but in a dignified, sensitive way. Ten young people came together in an inclusive environment where everyone participated as equals. The facilitation of this first session explored 'What makes a story powerful?' Using their responses, the group looked

at existing Leapfrog Tools and started to adapt them in ways in which would allow them to capture powerful stories about food. The creativity of the young people was evident. In addition to adapting four Leapfrog tools they also had ideas for new tools.

A second workshop later took place in Preston in February 2019 with a wider group of young people who tried out prototypes of the tools and evolved the designs. A third workshop took place at Food Nation in Newcastle in March with four adults with lived experience of food poverty from the Byker estate. They co-designed alongside engagement professionals from Food Nation, a social enterprise aiming to create a healthier food culture in Newcastle upon Tyne. This group were able to refine and adapt the tool prototypes to suit their own locality, something Food Power felt was important as stories were often very localised. Here the group were more confident in talking about their experiences of food poverty. The tool prototypes evolved to respond to their insights and experience of practically supporting their communities and talking to people at the local food bank. New tools were also created through new themes emerging from the group. For example, nostalgia the sharing of recipes such as 'Saturday stew' and buying and cooking food.

Additional co-design workshops were delivered in each locality during April and May 2019, each one building upon the feedback and ideas of the co-designers involved. As individuals became more engaged both the tools and people's confidence further developed. Valuable insights into the issues that affected people around food and food poverty emerged. Food activists, and individuals with lived experience worked alongside Leapfrog, Food Power and Food Nation to co-design tools in an open, inclusive process.

The Tools for Food Stories toolbox was shared at Food Power's national conference in June 2019 to over 100 attendees. The link to the toolbox sits on the new Sustainable Food Cities website, a national programme of nearly 60 Food Partnerships around the UK led by Sustain, The Soil Association and Food Matters. "The tools have since been used by 35 food alliances across the UK, their adaptability allowing them to be used in numerous ways, from icebreaker and recruitment to activism and campaigning" (Pearson, 2019). This sits well alongside Food Power's strategic aims as they explore post funding sustainability and the future role those with lived experience can play. The individuals involved in the co-design process have since moved on from developing practical ways to tell their own stories and capture the stories of others in their localities, to having political impact at a national and international level.

5. Introduction to the Case Studies

Drawing from these activities Leapfrog researchers identified 3 areas of insight that make a contribution to wider debates on co-design. The first case study describes the elements and interactions within the co-design process that enabled successful outcomes and embedded a sense of ownership of the tools across multiple localities. The second case study explores how a new understanding of their strategic roles as activists and campaigners was embedded in individuals through repeated use of the tools. The final case study describes how the

instructions for the Tools for Food Stories toolbox were designed to enable independent toolbox use by other alliances through using the contributions and perspectives of individuals with lived experience. “This has had the result of engaging and empowering far more people nationally than Food Power would have had the capacity to otherwise in a very practical way” (Pearson, 2019). The paper refers to the following people as actors in the case studies: Ben Pearson, Food Power’s Empowerment Officer and Penny and Heather, a mother and daughter with lived experience of food poverty on the Bkyer estate in Newcastle. Penny and Heather have played significant roles as individuals with lived experience of food poverty supporting people in their community in myriad ways. Over time their role with Food Power has grown to advocating for others in food insecurity on a national and international scale.

6. Case study 1: Effective co-design collaboration across diverse ages and geographic locations

This case study demonstrates how tools can be co-designed across different cultures, age groups and locations, without the need to start the process again in each locality. In this case, one of the key elements to effective co-design across diverse locations and ages was creating tools that appealed to a strong sense of intergenerational nostalgia about food. In the co-design workshops in Lancashire and Newcastle many of the co-designer’s favourite memories of food were related to nostalgia - the food they ate when they were little or that their grandparents cooked. In the first co-design workshop in Blackburn the young people came up with the idea for two decks of cards. The first was a Local Food Card Deck as shown in Figure 1 below.

In this first co-design workshop in Darwen the young people came up with a list of photos of food they would like to include in the pack. In Newcastle the adults with lived experience looked at the photos in the local Food card Deck so far. Ideas for photos of ‘Pease Pudding’ and other local ‘Geordie’ foods were added. Leapfrog provided the group in Newcastle with disposable cameras so Leapfrog could include their photos in the final card deck. Asking the different localities to provide their own photos for the Local Food Card decks was key in creating local ownership over the final card deck in both locations.

Figure 1 The Local Food Card Deck is a deck of 52 cards with photos of local foods to help break the ice and inspire people to share funny stories and tales about food.

The second tool that evolved across two locations was the Talking Food Card Deck. A tool the young people originally came up with in the very first co-design workshop. This was a deck of cards with one question per card to help start and structure conversations about food and food poverty. Figure 2 below shows the original questions the young people came up with in the very first co-design workshop.

Figure 2 The initial questions the young people came up with during the first co-design workshop to structure conversations and stories about food and food poverty.

During the second co-design workshop in Preston the group were invited to try out prototypes of the Talking Food Card Deck. One of the co-designers took the lead in editing the card deck of questions with feedback from the group. New questions that were added brought a sense of fun to the questions in the pack such as 'Do you like red or brown sauce?'.

Leapfrog presented the Food Card Decks as a work in progress to the adults with lived experience of food poverty on the Byker estate in Newcastle. Their opinions on the young people's questions was direct, insightful and sometimes hilarious. Comments such as "*Well that's just plain rude!*" abounded as they discussed each question in detail. One of the individuals with lived experience called Penny took the lead editing the questions as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Penny using her experience of supporting communities to refine the wording of some of the young people's questions, so they reflect the friendly, respectful way she talks to people on the Byker estate.

Throughout the editing process the group took care to respect the original intention of the questions. Penny highlighted which questions you might ask in an initial meeting or conversation and which questions would be considered follow up questions. This informed the development of the final colour coded themed questions in the Talking Food Card Deck which the Newcastle group named: Building Trust, Exploring Food and Talking Food Poverty.

Food Power and food alliances across the UK have found the Local Food Cards and the Talking Food Card Deck to be a quick and easy way to break the ice and share stories about food. Despite the design, photographs and wording evolving at each workshop, each locality contributed to the tools at every stage. This diversity of authorship (and the capability to modify the cards locally) have proved to make the use of the cards more robust and more widely applicable than working directly with one specific group or location. This improved and strengthened the concept of the card decks, rather than taking away previous contributions or starting again. Having something practical to design enabled people from different ages, groups and backgrounds to come together to discuss their experience and come up with ideas in an inclusive process. This process both instilled confidence and helped

to empower individuals in their roles as food activists. The co-designers continue to use the Card Decks. Through their involvement in the co-design process they have ownership of the tools and are confident adapting them to work in different contexts.

7. Case study 2: Using tools to embed new understanding

This case study explores how the Food Safari and Caterpillar tools embedded a new understanding of their role as food activists campaigning for change. The young co-designers wanted to explore what food young people can afford and how healthy or otherwise it is in their hometown of Darwen.

As shown in Figure 4 a ‘Food Safari’ tool was co-designed to give the young people a menu of twelve mini food related research challenges.

Mains

The Shopkeeper
Interview a shopkeeper about the food they sell
Example questions:
• What sells the most?
• What sells the least?
• Most healthy thing you sell?
• Weirdest thing you sell?

The Shopper
Interview a shopper about the food they bought today
Example questions:
• Did you buy food today?
• How often do you shop?
• What is your favourite item from your bag?

The Eater
Interview someone eating on the go
Example questions:
• How would you rate what you're eating out of 10?
• How often do you eat it?
• How much did your lunch cost you today?

Desserts

Give it a go...
Introduce someone to a food you know and they don't

Something new...
Try something no-one in your team has tried before

Long distance...
Try a dish which originates furthest from the UK

Starters

Food Photographer
Collect photos of local food
e.g. Take away meals, Food items from shops, Menus in windows
• Make sure you record where you found the food on the map.
Take 10+ photos

Food Reporter
Capture some memories of local food
These could be...
• Places you used to get food when you were younger?
• Food you used to eat with your gran, granddad, parents or friends?
• A time you had a memorable meal?
• If you talk to people you don't know, make sure you tell them about this research.
Find 3+ stories

Food Mapper
Map where you can buy food locally
e.g. Restaurants, Supermarkets, Pubs, Vending machines
• Mark the name and location of each place on the map.
Map 10+ places

Value Dishes

Cheap as Chips

Healthy Price

Pound of...

Create your own
Set your own challenge to take on during the safari...

Figure 4 Image showing a section of the ‘Food Safari’ tool. Like a real menu the ‘Starters’ are simple activities to get people warmed up. Before printing people can add a map of their area inside.

For example, the popular ‘£2 Healthy Food Challenge’ showed how difficult it was to buy cheap healthy food. Several of the challenges involved interviewing shopkeepers and their customers which visibly increased young people’s confidence in talking to people they didn’t know. The Food Safari “felt ground breaking” to Food Power’s Empowerment Officer. “It empowered the young people to use the tool in a real-life setting, to choose their own challenges (or create their own) and find their own routes through the town in teams of activists, experts and allies” (Pearson, 2019). The tool took people on a journey which allowed them to see how local food scenes link to access, affordability and choice.

Two of the young co-designers that day were ambassadors for Children’s Future Food Enquiry whose findings were due to be presented at Westminster. To bring the news report to life a Channel 4 News crew filmed parts of the Food Safari. Later the crew went to one

of the young people's home for an interview about her family's experience of living in food insecurity. The 16-year-old girl gave a confident and articulate interview to Channel 4 about her experience. "A salad was £4.50 and a bacon butty was £2 so unhealthy food always the main option for everyone" (Channel 4 News, 2019). The Food Safari tool, though she was not using it at the time helped to frame her findings into food provision locally. It enabled her to tell her story in the context of wider food provision of her hometown.

Later in the project, Ben and Penny visited ImaginationLancaster to co-design a tool which would help capture learning, structure conversations and understand people's journeys as individuals with lived experience, or those involved in activism and campaigning. The tool was used on a trip to the US in September 2019, firstly to the 'Closing the Hunger Gap' Conference in North Carolina, and then in New York on field visits with Why Hunger. In under two hours a tool emerged, a colourful fold out caterpillar, playful yet practical, and something that could neatly sit in the back of notebooks. Once in the US, the tool as shown in Figure 5 became so much more than something to capture learning. It gently reminded the Food power team amongst all the activity and excitement of the trip what they were there to capture and learn.

Figure 5 *The Caterpillar tool breaks the journey of an individual with lived experience of food poverty into small steps such as policy change, activism and campaigning, speaking truth to power and what it looks like to have influence.*

Whilst in the US, the Caterpillar tool was used by Penny and Heather to reflect on conversations and note key findings. This helped them understand how some of the root causes of food poverty can be addressed through grassroots engagement as well as the actions and the outcomes they are working towards. "This confidence and structure are still with Penny and Heather even when they're not using the tool" (Pearson, 2019). In 'Tools for Empowerment' Food Power wanted to explore ways the power balance between engagement professionals, activists and campaigners could be more equal and enable individuals to have a more meaningful role. Participating in the co-design process and using the Leapfrog tools to embed a new understanding has helped to equal out the power balance when individuals with lived experience are working alongside engagement professionals. Some participants are now active and independent co-designers.

“They can now see and talk confidently about the bigger picture beyond helping somebody day to day. They understand where systems and policies might need to change, how they can engage effectively with authority figures and have influence when speaking truth to power” (Pearson, 2019).

8. Case study 3: Co-designing instructions using the voice of individuals with lived experience enabling independent toolbox use

A key component of co-designing tools is creating instructions for use. They need to be simple and clear so that anyone can adapt and use them. The instructions, which suggest multiple ways each tool can be used have proved critical when engaging and empowering people to use the Tools for Food Stories toolbox on a national scale. This case study recounts the process the Leapfrog team undertook to successfully co-design instructions which acknowledge the contribution and perspective of the co-design team. The toolbox which can be downloaded from (<http://leapfrog.tools/>) was co-designed to not only support conversations about food and food poverty but to be used in many different ways. For example, there are tools that can be used to structure conversations about shopping and cooking habits, a scribble on High Street and a Canteen tool. The co-design team’s challenge was to create instructions that inspire the user to adapt the tools to achieve their specific facilitation initiatives.

To co-design the instructions, Leapfrog and Food Power captured quotes and stories during the co-design workshops. These insights proved useful as a reminder of the original intention behind each tool. In the final co-design workshop in Newcastle in May 2019 Leapfrog focussed on co-designing instructions and suggestions for use for each of the eight tools. The group of twelve people was split into two and invited to develop examples of use for each of the tools from the perspective of the individuals by experience and engagement professionals. Each group was asked to complete a pro forma with the following three questions: 1) Who are using the tool with? 2) What are you trying to do? 3) How would it work? These examples revealed different stories around the tools that provided powerful insights and resulted in multiple mini case studies for how each tool can be used. Leapfrog drew on these examples to create the instructions for each tool. Leapfrog deliberately selected suggestions for use that were diverse and interesting to show a wide range of potential uses and inspire the user to come up with ideas of their own. The tool instructions reflect the multiple voices of the participants that co-designed and tested the tools. As shown in Figure 6 the co-designers were represented by three groups of personas: young activists, engagement professionals and individuals by experience.

Figure 6 The co-designers were illustrated in cartoons that provided, with their own voices, the context of the tools and recommendations of how the tools could be used. Using this approach to create the instructions gave this toolbox a unique character.

The tools are contextualised in the fields of activism and campaigning and are designed to open up conversations and capture stories about affordability and access to food. On the other hand, having three different voices on the instructions serve as an example of the versatility of the tools since they can be used by young people, experts and professionals. Featuring their voices in this way conveyed the power balance of the co-design process, in which each co-designer was equal, no matter the role they played. The instructions included two or three suggestions of different ways the tool could be used along with facilitation tips about the structure and mechanics of adapting and using each tool. To help people see the range of tools within the comprehensive toolbox Leapfrog co-designed a Toolbox Menu as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7 The menu for the Toolbox for Food Stories gives a clear overview of the tools within it as well as acknowledging through cartoon illustrations of the co-designers how the toolbox was created.

Using cartoons of individuals in this way has given the participants a sense of ownership. The illustrations of key participants made them feel that the tools belonged to them. The way that the instructions were written, acknowledging and giving voices to the co-designers of this project gave them a sense of empowerment and pride in what they had created. Penny recently requested that 300 copies of each tool were printed and posted to her so she can run her own tool sharing workshops with a ready supply of the tools and Card Decks to hand. The impact of providing these clear, colourful instructions has enabled up to 69 Food Alliances across the UK who wish to engage and empower individuals with lived experience in conversations to do so without the need for face-to-face support or training from Food Power's Empowerment Officer.

9. Conclusion

In this paper Leapfrog describe 3 elements of a substantial co-design research project, and how co-designers from very difference constituencies (in age and location) developed tools and resources that helped the voice of people in food poverty be more clearly heard. The aim of this project is for the clear articulation of the impacts of food poverty to effect policy and policy maker. Helping in the long term to remove the need for food banks and other tactical responses to systemic food poverty challenges. The case studies presented here have wider implications for the creation of tools and resources to help co-design, mass creativity and engagement at scale.

The research team have established that it's possible to co-design with very distinctive hyper-local groups to meet their needs but further than this we have strong indicators that there are advantages in cross pollinating between these local groups. This was achieved through the sharing of co-design materials and tools between groups but also in bringing together co-designers with lived experience of food poverty with very different experiences to collaborate together.

Leapfrog at scale has also recognised that people with no prior co-design experience can become self-actualising, independent co-design practitioners. Co-Design participants have the potential to take ownership of the tools and resources they helped develop and apply them in their own way independent of professional designers or design researchers.

Finally, Leapfrog have established an approach to the creation of instructions (often more important than the tools themselves) that places the voice of co-design experts through experience at the centre of this communication. At a local level this has given a further layer of ownership and pride in their co-design work to participants who use the tools day in day out. Also (the researchers believe) giving the instructions an authentic voice and look of co-designers by experience makes the tools and resources more accessible and usable to all citizens outside academia.

10. Recommendations for future research

The impacts and effectiveness of this approach is still emerging. For example, some of the young people involved in 'Tools for Empowerment' were also involved in working with a young local film-maker to produce a powerful short film called 'Edgelands'. The film creatively amplifies the voices of young people telling their truth and stories in their language. In Edgelands, a land of forgotten estates, the film demonstrates the grim reality of issues surrounding food poverty, homelessness, and welfare. Food Power ran a workshop in December 2019 that brought a small group of people together including young people and individuals with lived experience to co-produce a resource that will sit alongside the 'Edgelands' short film. The resource will act as a catalyst for conversation around the themes within the film for use in schools, youth settings, community and faith groups. In the workshop the group adapted the Leapfrog Food Card Decks and created the 'Edgelands Discussion Card Deck' - 41 cards of questions to spark discussion on the issues raised in the film. The film has already been screened at a number of events nationwide and this resource will be used widely as they further promote the film (<https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/edgelands/>).

The research team are seeking other projects that have adopted a similar multi-participant group collaborative approach to corollate our findings. They are developing an extension of this work as part of the £13.2m Beyond Imagination project at Lancaster University. The team will co-design with experts through experience of activism, responding to activism in policy and service design across the spectrum, from national policy creation (Policy Lab) to regional government to community groups and activated citizens. Working directly with them but

crossing boundaries between issues. The team would like to research how to create a model of ethical activism that effectively engages with those in power positions.

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