- **TITLE:** Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition
- **Sub-title:** An enquiry into how our community of creative technology practitioners understand and enable life-affirming futures

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Summary

"How do you wayfind through a present that is so unequal to a future that is so uncertain?" - Jo Lansdowne, Executive Producer, Pervasive Media Studio

Watershed is a cross artform organisation based in Bristol, where people come together to be immersed in our cinema programme, to break bread together in our café/bar, and to participate, produce, and prototype all sorts of wondrous things in Pervasive Media Studio (the Studio). The Studio is a research and development space supporting a community of practitioners at the meeting point of art, technology, and society. It is housed within and produced by Watershed, but run as a collaboration with the University of the West of England (UWE) and the University of Bristol.

We are based in Bristol in the south west of the UK, a place famous for its creativity and activism. Although we are a small city, we are home to a global centre of natural history film making and have very active performance, music and digital media sectors. Our most famous artists are probably Massive Attack and Banksy, whose unorthodox approach captures something of the spirit here. With the work of Bristol-based [Black & Green Ambassadors](#) and [Tori Tsui](#), and birth of Extinction Rebellion just round the corner, Bristol

is a hot bed of climate action, becoming the UK's first European Green Capital in 2015 and Greta Thunberg's chosen UK city to visit in the 2019 school strikes for climate. Like many places we hold multiple contradictions; 92 languages are spoken in Bristol but while we are a city that often understands itself as generating independent voices, valuing sustainability and embracing diversity, we are also [one of the most segregated places in the UK](#).

Bristol is a port city, and was Britain's [premier slaving port by the late 1730s](#). It is estimatedBristol's merchants were responsible for, and benefited from, the transportation of over 500,000 enslaved African people to the Caribbean and North America – the profits from which helped the funding of many statues, buildings and public institutions. In 2020, the statue of slave trader Edward Colston was pulled down and thrown into the harbour just outside Watershed – but while this marked an important moment of public recognition, in many ways the city still needs to fully reckon with its history.

Watershed recognises and is increasingly impacted by the compounding [social](#) and [environmental](#) crises on our doorstep, and we know culture has a crucial role in helping inspire, educate, inform and advocate for change. We recognise climate breakdown is inextricably linked with the ongoing history of colonialism that manifests in the present, and is a symptom of the failures of our global economic system. We understand the importance of intersectional action, and as part of Bristol's [Climate Leaders group](#), we work with our

city and sector to advocate for inclusive climate action including being in the first wave of signatories of [Bristol's Just Transition Declaration](). Part of this commitment is the recognition that climate action narratives have sidelined many voices of marginalised and/or Global Majority peoples.

In the second half of 2023 we began conversations with Dr. Erinma Ochu- who had recently joined the studio community, mapping out connections and the potential for mutual learning between their [transdisciplinary research]() and focus on the worldmaking potential of subcultures of technology and our interest in responsible R&D and alternative technologies, and our role in climate action as a medium sized cultural organisation. What resulted was an idea for a co-produced enquiry within Pervasive Media Studio which would seek to integrate [our previous work]() looking at responsible and inclusive innovation and a creative just transition, into a new climate action wayfinding methodology. This enquiry, called *Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition*, would centre voices of marginalised individuals within our shared studio community. We would use guided facilitation to support community-led conversations on the intersection of creative technology and climate and to interrogate our position as advocates within this transdisciplinary sector.

With agreed shared aims, Biologist and Storyteller, Dr. Ochu invested funding into this enquiry, from their role as lead on the Storytelling and Worldmaking strand of the [UK-wide]()

[NERC Community for Engaging Environments](#) initiative (grant number [NE/S017437/1](#)). This co-created enquiry aimed to expand the cultural ecosystem through this investment, and such an expansion is crucial towards enabling a just transition and supporting how we think of enacting the principles of a green economy.

Our approach focused on bringing together 15 members of our [Pervasive Media Studio community](#) together with our staff delivery team. These 15 participants self-nominated to participate in this programme, based on an open call that required reflection on positionality and suitability to take up space within the programme. Our objective was to curate a group where we could engage a wide range of lived experience, including those currently marginalised by the climate crisis. As a collective, we aimed to examine technologies and their past, present, and future role in climate justice (and breakdown) and explore what the alternatives could be, through a process of carefully facilitated design thinking.

Emergent themes from a range of workshops we held included: that technology is a product of context and can be disrupted, changed, altered, and reclaimed; the role of an ecofeminist lens in understanding extraction and regeneration; the use of place-based focus as a conduit for meaningful conversation and; that 'extraction' and 'regeneration' exist on a spectrum as opposed to a binary, and entities can be located within both at the

same time. As with other work we've done in the studio a large part of our learning was processed-based; this has led us to highlight some processes we used in the toolkit section of this report, which we hope will support other researchers and practitioners in thinking about co-creating spaces and holding conversations that centre care, within action research.

Background

Watershed turned 40 years old in 2022, with Pervasive Media Studio turning 15 that same year. These significant markers inspired deep reflection on what our communities value from us and what they want us to be, as well as what our responsibilities are as a cultural beacon in Bristol and the West of England region. In 2019, we joined like-minded organisations in declaring a climate emergency, recognising the urgency to act quickly and ambitiously to combat climate change. As part of this reflexivity we know that tackling the climate crisis is about more than just reducing our emissions but also shifting our culture from extractive to regenerative, from individualist to collective, from linear to circular. The ability of the arts and arts & culture sector to inspire, inform, critique, deconstruct, reframe, open-up and invite people to climate debate and decision-making, is crucial in this shift.

At Watershed, we recognise the importance of a fair and just transition to a green economy which considers the Green Economy Coalition's five principles (wellbeing, justice, planetary boundaries, good governance, efficiency & sufficiency), where no one is left behind and where communities and ecosystems flourish. For the past three years, we've been thinking about the principles of climate justice and how they might apply to our work.

In line with demand from our communities, we have progressed our thinking around Watershed's evolution to ensure it will be a flagship centre in Bristol for inclusion and environmental sustainability, building on our sector leadership in this area. Towards making meaningful and useful work, we have engaged in a process of slow, and future-facing conversations about inclusive and sustainable- and even regenerative- R&D.

Context

The climate crisis is a crisis of culture. It is not an apolitical environmental phenomenon but the consequence of a society that values individualism and disconnection from each other and the earth itself. It will not 'affect all of us equally', but disproportionately impact those who have contributed the least to climate breakdown, making life worse for those already marginalised. Within this, our technology ecosystem has a crucial role to play as the tools

with which we so often interact with the non-human world- technology- holds the power to either alienate and extract, or connect and regenerate. At the heart of the problem is a world where technological development is driven by wealth and power accumulation, is synonymous with high tech products, and a field where only 'experts' can innovate.

Working with UWE Bristol, Watershed has long understood ourselves as being part of a cultural ecology - a network of interdependent actors within which our work is situated. In 2010 we partnered with the International Futures Forum to publish Producing the Future, where we used the framework of the Three Horizons as a model for recognising our role as innovators. In 2021, we built on this with Towards Equitable Futures, a project that combined Bill Sharpe's Three Horizons framework with an inclusion methodology developed by Zahra Ash-Harper to convene a Future Visioning Group that explored how to seed change while fully recognising the power dynamics of the present. More recently, research led by Tony Bhajam has grounded us in understanding how best to use our capacity, resource, and power to enact change within our sphere of influence. Our approach understands everyone as a researcher and a producer of knowledge, opening avenues to challenge the prevailing form of technological innovation by embracing many forms of knowledge production.

In parallel, action [research undertaken by Zoe Rasbash](#) in our creative technology community over the past two years has revealed the prevalence of apathy and overwhelm rooted in fear, in relation to both climate crisis and much of the public discourse around it. This work informed the development of our [Climate Action Toolkit](#) for artists and small creative companies. Our collaborative exploration with [tiata fahodzi,](#) the UK's leading British African heritage contemporary theatre company, [Black Earth](#) exposed the nature of climate justice work for arts organisations as complex and sprawling, and highlighted the need to resource Black and PoC leadership to breathe, grieve, slowly untangle, and not expect quick fixes.

Our approach to research has always resonated with our collaborators at UWE, with the [Digital Research Cultures Centre (DCRC)](#) being based within the studio. And in the second half of 2023, we were recognised for our work and expertise by Dr. Erinma Ochu- Wallscourt Associate Professor in Immersive Media based in the DCRC. Dr. Ochu committed to supporting an enquiry into future-thinking that we would facilitate, financed by their work in [Engaging Environments](#)- which is funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). This generous opportunity from Dr. Ochu emerged from their intellectual activism and justice-oriented research praxis, in line with Black feminist study, and grounded in [the Black Radical Tradition](#)- as articulated by them in their *[A luta continua...remix](#)* blog post. And through conversations that were sparked by a myriad of experiences and previous

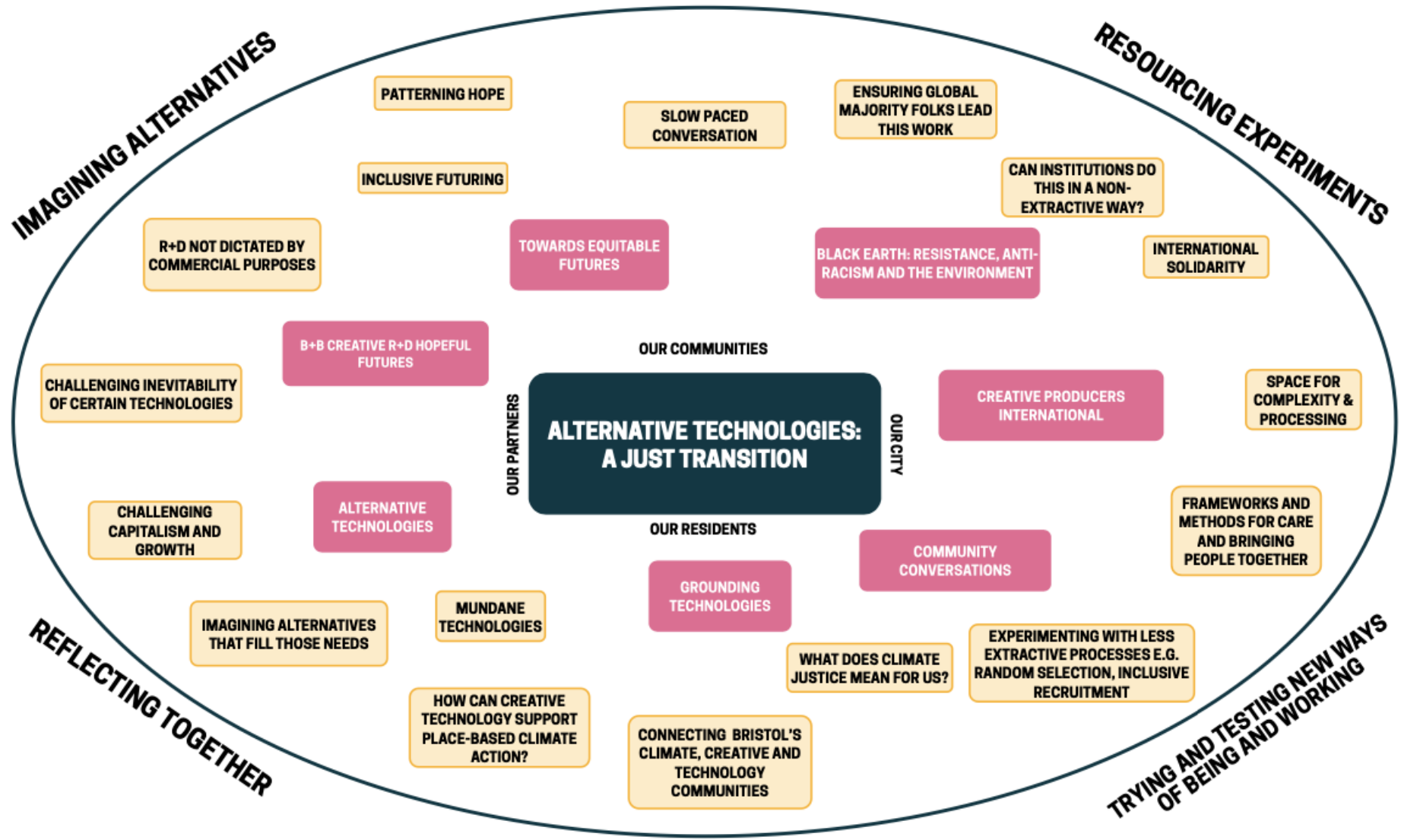projects, *Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition* was born.

Figure 1 attempts to map the amorphous learning journey we have been on over the last five years, informed by our evolving projects and associated research questions, our collaborations with partners, our resident community challenging us, and our experiments in how we develop as an arts organisation to serve our communities in the face of compounding social, environmental and financial challenges.

ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES: A JUST TRANSITION

IMAGINING ALTERNATIVES

RESOURCING EXPERIMENTS

REFLECTING TOGETHER

TRYING AND TESTING NEW WAYS OF BEING AND WORKING

OUR COMMUNITIES

OUR PARTNERS

OUR CITY

OUR RESIDENTS

- PATTERNING HOPE
- SLOW PACED CONVERSATION
- ENSURING GLOBAL MAJORITY FOLKS LEAD THIS WORK
- INCLUSIVE FUTURING
- CAN INSTITUTIONS DO THIS IN A NON-EXTRACTIVE WAY?
- R+D NOT DICTATED BY COMMERCIAL PURPOSES
- TOWARDS EQUITABLE FUTURES
- BLACK EARTH: RESISTANCE, ANTI-RACISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT
- INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY
- B+B CREATIVE R+D HOPEFUL FUTURES
- CREATIVE PRODUCERS INTERNATIONAL
- SPACE FOR COMPLEXITY & PROCESSING
- CHALLENGING INEVITABILITY OF CERTAIN TECHNOLOGIES
- FRAMEWORKS AND METHODS FOR CARE AND BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
- CHALLENGING CAPITALISM AND GROWTH
- ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES
- COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
- GROUNDING TECHNOLOGIES
- IMAGINING ALTERNATIVES THAT FILL THOSE NEEDS
- MUNDANE TECHNOLOGIES
- WHAT DOES CLIMATE JUSTICE MEAN FOR US?
- EXPERIMENTING WITH LESS EXTRACTIVE PROCESSES E.G. RANDOM SELECTION, INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT
- HOW CAN CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT PLACE-BASED CLIMATE ACTION?
- CONNECTING BRISTOL'S CLIMATE, CREATIVE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMUNITIES

"At a time when organisations are struggling to instigate and effect change, being part of a program that embraces experimental new methods and equity with nuance and care to enable an intergenerational and intercultural mix of participants to collectively explore how to address global issues, fills me with hope."- Imwen Eke

Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition; Aims & Objectives

Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition is a co-created enquiry that sought to use a community-based approach to integrate our previous work looking at a creative just transition, into a new climate action wayfinding methodology. Our approach focused on bringing together 15 members of our Pervasive Media Studio community together with a delivery team made up of Watershed and UWE staff. As a collective we aimed to examine technologies and their past, present, and future role in climate justice (and breakdown) and explore what the alternatives could be through a process of carefully facilitated design thinking. Our objective was to curate a group where we could engage a wide range of lived experience, including those currently marginalised by the climate crisis. In doing so, we were further asking how the design of the programme and space might model the difference we are trying to build together.

We speculated that themes of interest might include environmental racism, effects of the climate crisis on disability, inclusive accountability, non-human life and lifeforms (organic and non-organic) and inanimate objects as stakeholders in this work, and digital harm. Our commitment was to recognise and welcome emotion and lived experience as valid, while seeking to support people in harnessing this as fuel for change and commitment to action.

Questions guiding our methodology were:

- How do climate action, social justice, and creative technology come together as a driver for designing regenerative ways of living?
- How do we honour a collaborative and generative early-stage process in any future research and development projects and enquiries?
- How do we share the results of a deep dive set of conversations with a necessarily small group, across our wider community in a meaningful way?

Additionally, we committed to:

- Share knowledge to enable everyone across our organisation and community of 200 Pervasive Media Studio Residents to mobilise towards a more regenerative future.

- Engage our wider audiences in conversations around the environment and climate justice through sharing events and wider cultural programming.
- Be transparent, accountable and honest along the way

"Innovative, risk-taking facilitation doesn't have to be scary - it can instead by full of warmth, kindness, spaciousness, ease and trust."- Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition Participant

Methodology

Delivery team formation & planning → Self nomination selection process → Interactive and responsive workshop series → Staff debriefing & participant evaluation → Production of report & zine

- **Self-nomination as a participant selection process**

We opted for a process of self-nomination, which is something we have previously used once before within the studio to get a pool of candidates who were interested in becoming Resident Representatives. In the case of getting our Resident Representatives, people self-nominated, after which we used our [tried-and-tested random selection method](#) to pick two names out of a tombola.

The idea behind a self-nomination process, in the context of how we've used it in the studio, is to avoid a process whereby people are expected to compete, and be judged, for the value of their contribution. Instead, the onus is placed on potential nominees to assess their positionality, based on a few questions we provide them with, and decide for themselves whether or not it is appropriate for them to take up that specific space, place, and/or opportunity.

In this project we asked our community to reflect on the following questions before nominating themselves:

1. We are approaching the work with enthusiasm and curiosity. Are you interested in how climate action, social justice, and creative technology come together as a driver for designing regenerative ways of living?

2. Do you think you will bring different lived experience to the people whose voices are already widely represented in this sector/conversation?
3. Are you prepared to grapple with the complexities of issues such as environmental racism and re-making governance structures knowing that other individuals involved in this workshop series may be in different places on a journey of change than you are?
4. Can you commit to participation in all of the three dates?

Our invitation stated that if these four questions spoke affirmatively to people, all we needed was a brief email from them stating that they would like to participate in the project. We advised that we would then be operating on the basis that self-nominees would have answered 'Yes' to all four questions above, and as such they should not feel the need to justify their identity or lived experience to us within their self-nomination email.

Incidentally, we received 15 self-nominations which was the exact number of spaces we were looking to fill. If we'd received more, our plan was to use random selection to land on our final 15.

"It is a rare and special thing to be properly paid to be a fully present human being, trusting that I have something to contribute, rather than having to jump over hurdles to prove my worth, or being asked to offer something voluntarily. I think by doing this
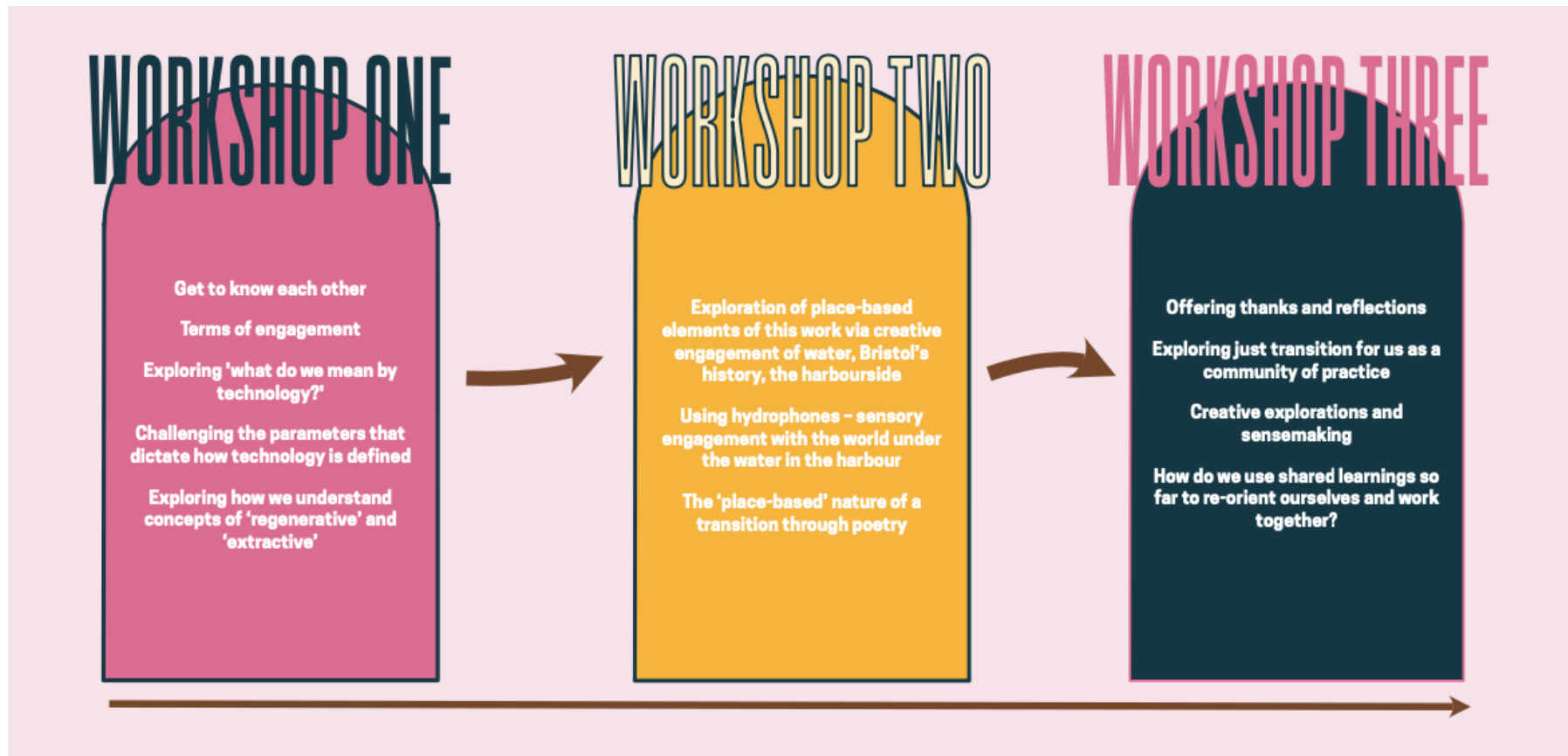
everyone was respected for the time they gave and the project actually did get its money's worth from the participants. It enabled a diverse group of people to take part and this was one of the most stimulating and rewarding parts of this project for me."- Jackie Head

"This was a gentle and enriching experience - to feel safe within a group of diverse backgrounds and expertise is a rare and beautiful occasion. It felt so meaningful and important to come together like this."- Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition Participant

- **Programming**

We had a series of three workshops over a six-week period (between February to April, 2023), with three weeks in between each workshop. With the flexibility this project afforded, we wanted to balance carefully designed activities while being responsive to the thematic threads that emerged from the collective. The programme brought together activities to explore different elements of a just transition and technology in novel ways:

WORKSHOP ONE

Get to know each other

Terms of engagement

Exploring 'what do we mean by technology?'

Challenging the parameters that dictate how technology is defined

Exploring how we understand concepts of 'regenerative' and 'extractive'

WORKSHOP TWO

Exploration of place-based elements of this work via creative engagement of water, Bristol's history, the harbourside

Using hydrophones – sensory engagement with the world under the water in the harbour

The 'place-based' nature of a transition through poetry

WORKSHOP THREE

Offering thanks and reflections

Exploring just transition for us as a community of practice

Creative explorations and sensemaking

How do we use shared learnings so far to re-orient ourselves and work together?

- **Evaluation**

Our evaluation took a two-pronged approach, gathering participant feedback via survey, and delivery team feedback via two guided reflection sessions.

For participants, we asked for feedback on the self-nomination process, the content and facilitation of workshops, extent to which access needs were met during the entire process, engagement with decompression spaces and the wider studio offer, points of learning from and impact of the programme, and how and whether participants wanted to continue a relationship with us and to future programmes.

Within the delivery team, we reflected on what we perceived to have gone well, what challenges came up, and what our future hopes were for the group, and the emergent shared learnings.

"The community intelligence from everyone was really special and integral in building our relationship with the changing nature of both climate change and technology. Building space for our curiosity and providing the necessary time for us to meditate on how tools and associations with technology can both harm and alleviate tensions has been a central focus for us. It was a privilege to share a space with everyone."- Alisha Morenike Fisher

Alongside the methodology described above, a parallel enquiry sought to interrogate governance and decision-making within the wider Studio partnership (Watershed, UWE Bristol, University of Bristol). We are aware that there are tensions in doing work that seeks to embed equitable processes of knowledge production within our long-standing hierarchical structure (you can find more about our partnership in this studio blog). In 2023

the Studio renewed our partnership contract with a set of commitments to: act as responsible producers of a diverse creative technology community; work in partnership with our residents to do together what we could not do alone; celebrate many forms of value and embed fair exchange in our work; direct resources towards a more equitable future, considering economic, environmental and social justice; and support experimentation in our community, enabling innovation for those most vulnerable to risk.

Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition supported staff from Watershed to work alongside two Resident Representatives, Lucy Turner and Imwen Eke, in asking questions of ourselves, our partners, and our wider community about how we could evolve our model to better serve these commitments. The insights from this process focused on agency, clarity, action and fair exchange, and will be shared further elsewhere.

Findings & Emergent themes

We have mapped our findings onto a matrix of nine emergent themes we believe are relevant to equitable participatory research and responsible R&D, which are: roots,

designing comfort, co-production, communication, intentionality & emergence, wellbeing, esteem & inspiration, legacy, and structure.

We focused on our work within the local context of Bristol and its harbourside (where Watershed and the Pervasive Media Studio are located), connecting this to global histories and realities. This place-based approach sparked meaningful conversations. For example, we used the nearby water body to discuss themes of extraction and regeneration, the water's role as a medium for the slave trade, and its ongoing significance.

Emergent Themes	Roots	Designing comfort	Co-production	Communication
Intentionality & emergence	**Place-based workshop prompts:** It was very important to us that we think about ourselves and our work in a local context- ie Bristol and	**Remuneration & reparative rest:** Paying people to work with us is a basic expectation for co-production. All participants were paid fairly	**Making workshops that feel regenerative:** We were intentional in the atmosphere and energy we wanted to create in the space and did not want the	**Philosophical & intergenerational frameworks and lenses:** In exploring complex histories and futures, eco-feminism and queer ecology emerged as a way

	harbourside-based- linking our work to global histories and realities; also, acknowledging that the city of Bristol was involved in the transatlantic slavetrade.

Prompts from our surroundings – such as the nearby water body – were a useful example | for three-days' worth of work. One participant, Emmanuella Blake Morsi, signposted the concept of reparative rest fees- detailed by Rising Arts Agency through their Resourcing Racial Justice work. As a result, in addition to paying participants for taking part in workshops, we | workshops to be or feel extractive, or deeply energy-draining. To enhance comfort levels, we decorated our venue with plants and soft furnishings, laid out comfortable seating (based on access requirements that were raised), programmed numerous breaks from longer times to shorter bursts, and provided | for the cohort to think and verbalise relationally and with a planetary perspective. These lenses brought ancestral and future perspectives into the present. The presence of a baby in our midst (accompanying their mother who was a participant) highlighted our duty to future generations, with lightness and play. The representation across generations |

| | of something that is both extractive and regenerative due to its complicity as a medium for slave trade and its simultaneous potential as a continuous source of life.

Despite our preparation for sensitive discussions on necessary but potentially triggering topics, some | paid them for one day of rest each at the same rate of pay as for their participation.

Rising Arts Agency outline how this is particularly important when asking participants to engage in emotionally sensitive topics or identity-related topics. For our team | adequate and satisfying catering.

Content and format-wise, we also programmed delivery to have a mix of activities, small and large group discussions, call-and-response, and were often participant-led. Good food, space for silliness, laughter and reflection, and allowing space for people to bring personal | strengthened our collective intelligence and empathy.

Sometimes, theoretical exploration distanced us from the immediate realities of those most affected by climate crises and this caused some distress for those whose loved ones are suffering in the now. It's critical to engage more deeply with the |
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	participants were still affected, especially those with firsthand experience of climate change impacts outside the UK. Ensuring safety and trust in workshop spaces is crucial to respecting participants' decisions to engage.	these rest days supported the design of a programme modelling the difference we want to make, valuing the added labour of emotional work. Adequately resourcing community knowledge production and rest is a material response to the question, "[where is the care in the](#)	experiences all contributed to comfort.	urgency of the crisis and those on the frontlines. Christina Sharpe's *[In the Wake](#)* provided a valuable framework for balancing grief with finding ways forward through 'wake work.'

		creative sector?"		
Wellbeing	**Uprooting imposterism:** When bringing people together to discuss technology, an 'imagined expert' in the space often discourages engagement.

In our first workshop, people were invited to question the | **Decompression spaces:** We provided a confidential decompression space exclusively for participants facilitated by an expert producer. This producer provided the time and company- without staff members present- for | **Iterative and responsive programming:** After delivering the first workshop, it was clear that to fulfil our commitment to codesign, we would need to redesign our plans for workshops 2 & 3.

Adapting our plans gave us space to be responsive to what felt urgent to the | **Terms of Engagement:** The first workshop included a good portion of time for introductions, after which we engaged the group in a 'Terms of Engagement' exercise- based on the methodology in the Creative Producers International (CPI) toolkit- to co-create an |

| | definition of a technology, from a ['technology political'](#) perspective: interrogating the political roots of who designs, profits, implements, builds, and uses tech. This practice interrogated the imagined expert, unpicked the popular conflation of technology with | participants to unpick and untangle feelings that might have arisen during workshops.

For those interested in designing decompression spaces for programmes that may be difficult or triggering for participants, our learnings are: hold them the | group. Consequently, we did the same thing between the second and third workshops.

We were still able to incorporate some elements and activities that we had originally planned, but adapted them and added in new content and activities to fit the needs of the group. Some participants found the open | agreement about how we would engage with one another over the workshop series.

The delivery team had also previously created our own internal terms of engagement during our planning phases, about how we wanted to progress and interact along the timeline of this work. Whilst the terms of engagement co- |

| | 'big tech', and centred definitions and interpretations raised by the people in the room.

For a just transition, diverse forms of expertise are essential, especially led by those living locally, sidelined in the climate sector, from marginalised backgrounds, or | same day as the workshop so the feelings are fresh for participants; don't over-facilitate them; allow them to be free-flowing.

This space allows participants to connect and explore ideas informally. Offering one-to-one spaces is also important for those who | nature of the programme led to them feeling a bit lost at points, as the topic is so large and sprawling. Yet unanimous feedback was that every single participant found the programme impactful in some way. | produced by the delivery team had plenty overlap with that made by attendees, they were not identical, reflecting context- and group-specific needs.

Encouraging different group configurations to come up with their own terms of engagement allows for group-specific needs and concerns to be surfaced. This |
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	most affected by the climate crisis and the green transition. We didn't explicitly address imposter syndrome, and doing so could have reassured participants that community-led research should be at the heart of a just transition; it might also have fostered more open dialogue.	want to raise concerns about other participants, or who are processing something more personal.		project enabled us to practice turning our terms of engagement into a contract of care, which we expand on within the toolkit section of this report.

| Esteem & inspiration | Honouring local wisdom: It was important for us to include expertise that held local knowledge and an intimate awareness of history. Our aim was to create space for marginalized and Global Majority people to embody thought leadership. | Food & intentional catering We opted for [Houria CIC](#), which is a Bristol-based anti-slavery & anti-racism organisation, training & hiring female survivors of slavery in a Pan-African catering company. The delicious catering provided was | Buddy System: During the planning phase, we randomly split up our 15 participants into five groups of three each and made them aware of these small group configurations before the first workshop. We left it up to participants to decide how they would take their buddy groups forward, but suggested that | Co-facilitation: What we see, time and again, in our work is that co-facilitation seems to create a magical synergy between co-facilitators that infuses the space with camaraderie, and which participants enjoy.

Most of the chunkier sessions within our workshops were co-facilitated. This method also |
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| | In our second workshop, Ralph Hoyt- a Bristol-based poet, writer, and located audio designer- delivered a session grounding us in an awareness of our location; Bristol harbourside. Ralph's bespoke, deeply emotional and educative performance which | vegan, gluten-free, and nut-free- thus accounting for a number of specific dietary requirements.

Because this blanket approach was taken to cover for numerous dietary requirements, it made it easier for us to cater for any additional | these groups could serve as friendly check-in and debriefing stations between workshops.

Buddies were then able to advocate for each other's access needs, which made the task of caring for each other communal rather than just top-down. The buddy system also ensured that people arrived at the first workshop | offered support to co-facilitators in terms of how preparation, delivery, and evaluation were divided. It was a deliberate effort, on our part, to tackle the hierarchical nature of the workshop-facilitator and workshop-participant dynamic. By having co-facilitators physically dotted around the space, it also reinforced a |

| | incorporated call-and-response had a unanimously moving effect on the whole group. Ralph also led an activity using hydrophones, during which participants had the opportunity to listen to sounds from under the water in the harbourside. | dietary considerations.

Feedback confirmed that good and satisfying food always makes people happy and brings comfort. | with the expectation that there were others who would definitely be paired up with them, and no one would be left out. | circular energy as opposed to lecture-style hierarchies by the teacher standing at the 'front' or 'back' of the room. |

Legacy	Themes: Creative Technology & Just Transition	Feedback loop	Live scribing & visual story-telling	Terminology & meaning
	Our thinking was underpinned by how we can collectively dream about moving from an extractive to a regenerative economy in a place-based context; this is based on the principles of a Just Transition. In line with our climate	Our evaluation process used a survey to gather feedback on the self-nomination process, the workshop series itself, use of decompression spaces, degree to which we were able to accommodate participants' access needs, the impact of the programme, and future desires for this	We love fun and engaging output, so we planned to have a live scribe-Jazz Thompson-who would be a visual note-taker for us. We also planned for the whole collective (made up of the participants and delivery team) to respond to some artist-led prompts based on the drawings Jazz made, with short	The terms 'extractive' and 'regenerative', introduced in workshop one, did not have a unanimously agreed-upon meaning to this collective deeply engaged in social justice and equality work. This emphasized to us the importance of grounding ourselves in the language of the

commitments and research strategy, a just transition felt like an appropriate theme in which we could bring together the work our team have done on [inclusion](#) and [climate action in SMEs](#).

Creative technology took a back-seat, as the cohort focussed in on work and the network.

Only after sending out our comprehensive evaluation form and receiving responses did we pick up that we had not included the possibility for people to opt into further discussing any feedback they raised. As a result we contacted the sound bites. The aim was to produce a multimedia zine that would visually tell the story of the workshop series, whilst providing some audio elements that could make the piece multidimensional.

We tend to resort to live scribing in a good portion of our work. Whilst we value reports, visual story-telling group, and moving forward we pivoted towards reflecting back the language that kept coming up.

Further, in our exploration of the edges of technology, we found that technologies can move from extractive to regenerative, or even simultaneously be both. These realisations

| | the conditions in which technology is created and used – recognizing that a technology could be understood as extractive or regenerative or both, depending on contextual factors.

There was a focus on the role of technology in supporting granular steps | entire cohort to ascertain whether people wished and consented to being followed up with, specifically so we could address feedback and implement redress where necessary. We conclude that an evaluation process can be optimised by ensuring that participants can | helps us to emphasize our stance on the need for multiple formats of contributing to the canon within our sector. This multimedia story-telling also caters to various learning and knowledge acquisition preferences.

Within this work we view the *Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition* Zine as just as | encouraged us to ask questions about who defines technology, who owns it, and what is the context in which technologies are created; all towards a [technology political approach](.).

We sought terms and metaphors that captured this work's essence. "Life-affirming" proved useful. Additionally, many cohort members |
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	towards cultural shifts: bike booking apps, AI that could support frustrated policy makers to vent, and questions: could we communicate to mother earth through deep time?	opt into post-participation communications to address feedback.	important of a public witness document to us as this report.	used eco-feminist lenses and metaphors to explore the mutual exploitation of the earth and people.
Structure	**Positionality** Our intention was to hold an intersectional understanding	**Division of labour** Our team itself includes marginalised	**Testing live** There is a tension between iterative co-production and confidence – we	**Enacting our terms of engagement** Tensions arose in conversations

| | of discrimination and privilege in this work. The self-nomination process held some risk as it required us to trust that those who came forward would have appropriately reflected on their own positionality.

While the feedback from participants demonstrated | and/or Global Majority people – this diversity was important for delivering the enquiry and appreciated by our participants.

However at times, an uneven and unreasonable burden was placed on those most marginalised to, for example, process challenging | were running activities that we didn't know would work and changing things as we went.

This meant that at times staff were unclear about their roles, and also that some things we tried out didn't have the intended results. This kind of work carries risk, and a more expansive risk assessment and mitigation might have supported the | during workshops, and on a few occasions people felt that our terms of engagement had not been upheld.

This revealed a need to spend more time considering how to ensure terms are enacted and agreeing practical measures to protect and repair when they are not.

Where do we want to enable |
|---|---|---|---|

	that the space mostly felt safe and enabling, there were indications that some interactions had been extractive in nature, and/or that solidarity was not fully embraced and upheld across the board.	feedback and navigate uncertainty around discussing colonialism. We need to consider a team structure in which marginalised perspectives are centred and leadership shared while ensuring that emotional labour is fairly distributed.	delivery team during the delivery journey.	difference and disagreement, and what are our 'non-negotiables'?

"Being given a space, to breathe around our uncertainty for the future, without judgement and within community. It is the planting of these gentle places where you can hear the snails eating their lunch, and we can seed dreams of a future without fear."- Lucy Reeves Khan

Recommendations

"How do we better consider the mutual learning for self, solidarity with most affected communities and the planet, that is emerging from the workshops? Seeing this approach as kind of a different form of life-affirming way of working (i.e beyond net-zero) and expanding an institution's cultural ecosystem to weather any future shocks to Black and minoritised freelancers/SMEs and diasporan communities?" - Erinma Ochu

"Recognising technology as a colonial construct feels like a profound insight for me. I knew this intellectually, but the workshop helped to ground that knowledge in the everyday truth of our work. We need to reflect on what this means for Watershed/Pervasive Media Studio. If we want to move with technology towards a just

transition, how do we expand our understanding whilst still creating the coherence which enables people to find us, recognise us and access us (or am I thinking about that all wrong)?" – Watershed Staff Team Member

The process of this work and our findings lead us to the following recommendations for group-based work that seeks friendly and mutually respectful co-creation:

- **'Too many cooks'.** When attempting to co-design a programme, often many voices invited into the delivery team- with no clear roles assigned- can halt decisive action. In these instances, clear roles and responsibilities must be assigned. Division between a larger advisory group, and a smaller, more agile delivery team (of 3-4 people), can balance broad input with decisive action.
- **Invest in a good amount of time for a soft start *and* thorough introductions in workshops.** We like allocating enough time for people to actually settle into the space, at their own pace, and suggest a 30 minute 'slow start' programmed into your time. And also, while introductions are a basic part of most gatherings, we've found time and again that a sense of esteem and grounding can arise when enough time is given for people to share not just their names and pronouns (if they feel comfortable sharing the latter) but also a little bit about their practice and maybe even a mundane fun fact about themselves.

- **Honour local expertise.** Centring your enquiry around the unique local contexts, histories and relations, positions your cohort as experts. Inviting in those with a knowledge and deep understanding of the challenges of the local area, expands on a familiar context for participants to apply ideas and keeps theoretical explorations rooted in materiality.
- **Think about global connections**. Consider how the immediate environment and context might link the local to the global, supporting you to think with [planetarity](#).
- **Uncertainty on organisational positions will be reflected in uncertainty in facilitation.** It's important to name facts and be explicit in your stance around key topics, for instance: we accept that climate breakdown is inextricably linked with colonialism and empire, which cannot be decoupled from the development of technology in the West. If this isn't explicit, creeping uncertainty can lead to harms when holding discussions around these topics.
- **A place-based thing as a conduit for conversation can be provocative, but also triggering.** Consider how people with different lived experience might experience place differently, and appropriately mitigate risks.
- **Processes to call out white supremacy.** Whiteness shows up in research and development spaces in suffocating ways often invisible to its perpetrators. An ongoing and deeper investigation into how whiteness shows up in R&D in our specific context,

alongside processes for addressing it and redressing harms caused, is needed to truly embed the learnings from this enquiry.

- **Food is everything.** Intentionally inclusive and cosy catering brings people together and supports the collective in bonding over lunch periods.

- **From terms of reference to contracts of care.** To ensure people are upholding the shared values, regularly revisiting of terms of reference and how the collective can uphold them is needed. Further, access needs are not static; they evolve and change as people understand themselves more and gain trust and confidence in what the delivery team can and want to do to support them and their experience.

- **Mitigate for power dynamics.** Doing this kind of work diligently must include a deliberate plan for the creation of safety for both participants and delivery team members- especially for those whose lived realities are closely connected to the content. Think about implementing buddy systems, quiet spaces, decompression spaces, co-facilitation, and outlining clear mechanisms for issues to be raised; further, writing these plans into your contract of care.

- **Return to the material.** A Just Transition can link personal, community, and planetary concerns, investing in ideas, skills, and expertise to develop bioregional solidarity and resource chains. Consider how this can be done in practice such as a) expanding your creative ecosystem and sharing resource and knowledge to encourage symbiotic movement with those doing complimentary work locally, rather than working in

competition and b) exploring how you can materially support and build resilience in your specific context; for us that means considering how to best support minoritised freelancers and SMEs, and also their communities.

- **Beyond evaluation.** Ask people if they want to be contacted to discuss feedback they provide, and if they're interested in future work, in evaluation surveys.

"Keep making space for care and consideration even if it doesn't fully land with all. Let's connect with what has been said/done before, always listen to amazing Black women thinkers, sisters, elders, ancestors, grandmothers, and aunties, they keep me going. Lean into [Toni Morrison's thinking](#) on working through the crisis ' ...*that's where truth lies in our myths, in our songs, that's where the seeds are...It's not possible to constantly hone on the crisis. You have to have the love, and you have to have the magic, that's also life.*' The world is so unjust to so many people but my god the songs, the love, the magic is there for us, the rest is just noise."- Fozia Ismail

"Thank you for a truly wonderful experience. The collective care, thought and good vibes still reverberates with me. I learned a lot about technology. One of the main things I took away was that technology can above all, create community."- Natalie Hyacinth

Participants

1. Alisha Morenike Fisher. Design polymath, Entrepreneur and Innovator
2. Allie Joy. Cross-disciplinary Artist working with technology and film
3. Beloved Sara Zaltash. Artist, Astrologer, and Musician
4. Emmanuella Blake-Morsi. Award-winning Multi-disciplinary Arts Producer and Visual Storyteller
5. Fozia Ismail. Scholar, Creative Producer, Cook and Founder of Arawelo Eats
6. Ifẹ Grillo. Award-winning Performer, Writer, Campaigner, Producer, and Educator
7. Imwen Eke. Experience Designer, Social Games Practitioner, Creative Technologist, and Educator
8. Jackie Head. Environmental Campaigner; member of Co-ordinating team of Bristol Airport Action Network (BAAN)
9. Kai Charles. Activist, Artist, and Academic
10. Kexin Liu. Multi-disciplinary Artist and Design Researcher
11. Lucy Reeves Khan. Creative Producer and Founder of Window Wanderland
12. Natalie Hyacinth. Intersectional and Interdisciplinary Academic and Artist
13. Olamiposi Ayorinde. Multidisciplinary Artist, Researcher, Content Producer, and Curator
14. Roxana Vilk. Singer, Performer, and Filmmaker

15. Tay Aziz. Community Organiser, Writer, Speaker, Filmmaker, Science Communicator and Activist

Delivery Team

1. Amy Densley. Research Centre Coordinator, DCRC, UWE + Pervasive Media Studio
2. Erinma Ochu. Wallscourt Associate Professor, Immersive Media, DCRC, UWE + Pervasive Media Studio
3. Furaha Asani. Research Lead, Pervasive Media Studio, Watershed
4. Jo Lansdowne. Executive Producer, Pervasive Media Studio, Watershed
5. Lawottim Anywar. Studio Coordinator, Pervasive Media Studio, Watershed
6. Martin O'Leary. Studio Community Lead, Pervasive Media Studio, Watershed
7. Melissa Blackburn. Knowledge Exchange Manager, UWE
8. Tony Bhajam. Creative Producer, Pervasive Media Studio, Watershed
9. Zoe Rasbash. Climate Action Researcher, Pervasive Media Studio, Watershed

Facilitation Support

Jasmine Thompson. Illustrator, Designer, Visual Journalist, Political Cartoonist, and Workshop Facilitator

Jazlyn Pinckney. Creative Leader, Creative Producer, Inclusion Specialist, and Public Scholar

Ralph Hoyte. Poet, Writer, Text-based Artist, Augmented Sound artist, and Public Scholar

"To truly get the space to imagine and reimagine the world around us, is not something I take lightly. With everything going on in the world, I was nervous to give myself to conversations that can feel doom filled. But the space we all created with each other was centred around political hope. The world is not doomed if we choose not to doom it, and that's exactly what we did over the course of the workshops. I trust the Watershed team to hold my emotions delicately and they didn't let me down."- Alternative Technologies: A Just Transition Participant

Glossary

Access Friction: According to [Calling Up Justice](#), "Access frictions refer to the challenges and barriers that individuals face when trying to access resources, services, or activities. These barriers can arise due to various factors, such as physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities. Access frictions can occur when serving one access need creates an access barrier for someone else. In the context of disability, access frictions are the obstacles that disabled people face when trying to access everyday services that non-disabled people often take for granted."

Alternative Technologies: [Permaculture Association UK](#) define this as "technologies that are more environmentally friendly than the functionally equivalent technologies dominant in current practice." The [General Multilingual Environmental Thesaurus (GEMET)](#) states that alternative technologies are those "that, as an alternative to resource-intensive and wasteful industry, aims to utilize resources sparingly, with minimum damage to the environment, at affordable cost and with a possible degree of control over the processes."

Black Feminism: The [Combahee River Collective](#), a Black feminist lesbian organization [active between 1974 - 1980](#), released [a statement](#) in 1977 that contained the following excerpt in their introductory paragraph: "The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual,

heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. As Black women we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face."

Black Radical Tradition: According to Dr. Dominique Thomas at [The National Center for Institutional Diversity](#), " the Black radical tradition is a collection of cultural, intellectual, action-oriented labour aimed at disrupting social, political, economic, and cultural norms originating in anticolonial and antislavery efforts." Mohamed Elnaiem [states that](#), "... the Black radical tradition is an international legacy of resistance that continues until the present."

Bioregionalism: [Earth.org](#) describes bioregionalism as a philosophy that suggests that political, cultural, and economic systems are more sustainable and just if they are organized around naturally defined areas called bioregions, similar to [ecoregions](#).

Citational Praxis: We are using this phrase to describe our commitment to intentionally referencing work that we have either directly drawn on or that has informed our ideas and work. In this report we cite through hyperlinking; at our gathering points, through vocal

credits and acknowledgements. We agree with Dr. Bianca C. Williams who states, "When I write and give talks, I shout out mentors, collaborators, and peers that have contributed to my work and made room for me in the academy. I do this not only because I'm grateful for their generosity but also because citations are theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical imprints. They let readers and audiences know where you have been, who you have been in conversation with, and where you want to go. Community members, friends, students who teach and help us cultivate ideas may not get cited in our bibliographies because they may be unpublished. But we find ways to cite these important contributors to knowledge-making in our texts and presentations. In a Black feminist praxis of citation that values a diverse set of knowledges, this citational practice is also important. In contrast to what much scholarly training seems to suggest, citation is not merely about finding gaps in other's arguments. It is about dialoging *with* those you have learned from, marking and valuing the collaborations between your thoughts and their work to create something generative."

Co-facilitation: James Smart at Session Lab defines this as, "…when two or more facilitators deliver a session as a team. Co-facilitators share the responsibility of everything from co-designing an agenda to delivering a workshop and following up with clients. Co-facilitation can come in different shapes and sizes. It might mean sharing the stage throughout a workshop or alternating who is the lead and supporting facilitator."

Workshopper have also produced an 'ultimate guide to co-facilitation', which includes best practice guidelines.

Colonialism: The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines colonialism as "domination of a people or area by a foreign state or nation: the practice of extending and maintaining a nation's political and economic control over another people or area". National Geographic have produced this essay that provides more information on colonialism, while Science Direct provide detailed definitions on different kinds of colonialism and adjacent concepts.

Contract of care: We are using this phrase to mean an agreement between all members of a collective – including participants and the delivery team- that centres care from start to finish. This contract goes beyond a typical 'terms of engagement' agreement and deliberately seeks to embed accountability mechanisms for how care starts and remains at the heart of the work. Roseanna Dias and Josephine Gyasi for Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) provide some provocations via a deck of 'A-Z of care' cards, which may be a useful starting point. You can also read this comprehensive article on contracts, community agreements, and more relational tissue.

Creative Technology: [Wikipedia defines Creative Technology](#) as "a broadly interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field combining computing, design, art and the humanities. The field of creative technology encompasses art, digital product design, digital media or an advertising and media made with a software-based, electronic and/or data-driven engine." Meadows School of the Arts provides a (non-exhaustive) list of [nine types of Creative Technology](#).

Ecofeminism: [Earth.org describe ecofeminism](#) as a framework that "examines how gender and nature intersect, specifically how binary definitions falsely categorise opposing groups, assigning disproportionate value to one grouping and encouraging hierarchical thinking."

Extraction: This is a process whereby something is removed, and usually with the use of force. In the context within which we used 'extraction' in this project, we understood it to be a process that could be enforced not just upon places and things, but on people and ideas as well.

Feedback Loop: We are using this phrase in the same context as [Survey Monkey's definition](#) which is "the process of getting feedback, acknowledging and responding to that feedback, and then putting it to use. This system turns input (feedback) into output

(actions) for your business. As a loop, the changes you make based on feedback will likely inspire new feedback in the future."

Green Economy: [The Green Economy Coalition's](#) vision of a green economy "provides prosperity for all within the ecological limits of the planet" as a "universal and transformative change to the global status quo, requiring a fundamental shift in government priorities to position social and environmental priorities above financial ones". It is based around 5 principles: (1) Wellbeing, (2) justice, (3) planetary boundaries, (4) efficiency and sufficiency, (5) good governance.

Global Majority: [According to Rosemary Campbell-Stephens](#), the scholar from whose work this term was coined, "Global Majority is a collective term that first and foremost speaks to and encourages those so-called, to think of themselves as belonging to the majority on planet earth. It refers to people who are Black, African, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or, have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities'. Globally these groups currently represent approximately eighty per cent (80%) of the world's population, making them the global majority now, and with current growth rates, notwithstanding the Covid-19 pandemic, they are set to remain so for the foreseeable future."

Imposterism: According to [Very Well Mind](#), imposterism- also known as imposter syndrome "is the psychological experience of feeling like a fake or a phony despite any genuine success that you have achieved. It can show up in the context of work, relationships, friendships, or just overall."

Interruptibility: Within Pervasive Media Studio, we use the principle of interruptibility to support collaboration. We encourage people to come into our space ready for conversation and unexpected collaboration and we know that looks different for everyone. So interruptibility within our space comes with the freedom for people to take time away, and to facilitate this we have a section with quiet desks, meeting rooms, and a dedicated quiet space.

Just Transition: According to the [Just Transition Alliance](#), this "is a principle, a process and a practice. The principle of just transition is that a healthy economy and a clean environment can and should co-exist. The process for achieving this vision should be a fair one that should not cost workers or community residents their health, environment, jobs, or economic assets."

Live Scribe: This is a person who attends a meeting and captures the likenesses of people within the meeting space and/or notable points that arise in the meeting. Live scribing can also be referred to as 'visual note-taking'.

Pervasive Media Studio: This is a creative R&D space in the Watershed building along Bristol's Harbourside. The studio is a Creative Technology Collaboration between Watershed, University of the West of England, and the University of Bristol. You can find out more about the studio's history in [this blog post](#).

Place-based: [Our Place](#) defines a place-based approach as "understanding the issues, interconnections and relationships in a place and coordinating action and investment to improve the quality of life for that community." The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) have published their findings on [the impact of place-based partnerships](#), which highlights the importance of this approach in research.

Planetarity: Planetarity was first used by Professor [Gayatri Spivak](#) in 1997, as a word to "set apart from notions of the planetary, planet, earth, world, global and globalization in their common usage." Professor Dana Burton [explains](#) Spivak's notion of 'planetarity' or 'thinking with the planet' as a practice and way of relating to each other and the world: "Rather than the 'global', which is often associated with capitalist or colonial projects, this term makes space for difference, indeterminacy, and uncanniness."

Positionality Assessment: This is a process, usually continuous, of self-reflection on our own understanding of ourselves, our worldviews, our privileges, barriers we face, and how

we locate ourselves within different contexts. The [Social Research Association](#), [Engineer Inclusion](#), and [TI International](#) are helpful resources for more information.

Queer Ecology: [For Environmental Studies](#) defines Queer Ecology as the endeavour to understand nature, biology, and sexuality in the light of queer theory, rejecting the presumption that heterosexuality and cisgenderness constitute any objective standard. It draws from science studies, ecofeminism, environmental justice, and queer geography. These perspectives break apart various dualisms that exist within human understandings of nature and culture.

Random Selection: A process of selection from a pool of applicants whereby a set number of applicants are picked at random, leaving selection to chance. This process can be done in many ways including using specific software which works as a random generator from a pool of input data, or by drawing tickets from a drum. You can find out more about how [we've used random selection in Pervasive Media Studio](#), and look through this [random selection guide](#) for information on how to implement this process in your own projects.

Regeneration: The [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#) uses such words as "renewal", "revival", and "restoration" to describe what regeneration means. This is how we have interpreted

this word, within the context of this project; being applicable to people, places, and things. The Climate Justice Alliance provide [a graphic of a Just Transition Framework Design](#), which depicts the movement from an extractive to a regenerative economy.

Reparative Rest Fees: These are fees paid to cover the time of a particular set of days, which [Rising Arts Agency](#) describes as being given "when individuals are asked to participate partly because of their lived experience."

Self-nomination: A process during which a person puts themself forward to take up an opportunity. Find out more about using self-nomination in selection processes, in the toolkit section of this report.

Technology Political: [A Growing Culture](#) defines this as "a way of framing technologies as neither 'good', 'bad', or 'neutral'. It suggests that, instead, technologies are the products of deeply political processes, knowledge, and systems."

Terms of Engagement: This is an agreement that is co-created amongst a group of people that outlines how they plan to engage with one another throughout the duration of their project. Find out more about building care into your terms of engagement in the toolkit section of this report.

Wake Work: This term arises from Professor Christina Sharpe's seminal work, *In the Wake: on Blackness and Being*, in which Sharpe states: "In short, I mean wake work to be a mode of inhabiting and rupturing this episteme with our known lived and un/imaginable lives. With this analytic we might imagine otherwise from what we know now in the wake of slavery." Professor Tiffany Florvil, for Black Perspectives, adds that "Wake work, for Sharpe, is an act of resistance that recognizes the on-going valences of colonialism and enslavement in the present. Moreover, it requires one to care for the living and the dead, which privileges mourning at all levels (local, national, and global) in the quotidian. But wake work is also a form of cultural consciousness and provides new forms of resistance that are tied to Black diasporic expressive practices and traditions."

Zine: This is an independently published booklet or collage of texts and images that can either be produced online or in hard-copy format.

Toolkit

- **Turning terms of engagement into a contract of care**
- **Co-creating nourishing workshop spaces**
- **Using self-nomination to curate a group**

(A)   Turning terms of engagement into a contract of care

This method is building upon the 'Terms of Engagement' workshop instructions from the Creative Producer's International Toolkit

Aim: To co-create a set of core values that guide group interactions, and to ensure that these values remain adaptable and are responsibly implemented within the group.

1. **Personal Reflections**

In advance of your workshop, send out the following provocations to members of the group. This gives people adequate time to reflect and prepare some points, if they wish to do so:

- How do we want to be together in the space?
- [For cohorts working in proximity for an extended period] How do we want to be together outside of this space? For instance, consulting each other/sharing ideas?
- How do we want to behave?
- How do we want to share?
- What do we need from each other?
- How can we support each other's access needs?
- What are our fears or uncertainties and how do we address them?
- How are we going to ensure that we implement these terms and keep one another accountable?

2. **Sharing your ideas**

Allocate a good chunk of time within your workshop, where the whole group can do some sharing. Use resources that allow you to capture your thoughts and responses to all questions, in a way that is visible to everyone in the group. Take the time to ensure that everyone in the group has the chance to share their idea. You may want to group similar ideas into themes, also making note of the themes that emerge.

3. **Group discussion**

Take the time to discuss each theme and the points that fall under them. Offer the time and space to group members to explain particular points they contributed- if they wish to do so. Use the following questions to guide this conversation:

- Is anything missing?
- Do you have any questions about any of the contributions?
- Will these thoughts support successful collaboration?
- How do we uphold these terms? What mechanisms can we use to evolve and keep adding to these terms, ensuring that the whole group is carried along and in agreement with new terms added?

4. **Share your collated Terms of Engagement, and check in**

After your workshop, collate your terms of engagement and share them with the group. Ensure that point people are identified within the delivery team, to whom participants (and also delivery team members) can come to with any project-related and adjacent issues.

At each meeting point with the group, allocate an introduction portion to check in on your terms of engagement, being guided by the following questions:

- Are the terms of engagement working?
- Has anything new come up?
- Is there anything the group should be aware of?

Some suggested points to cover in your Terms of Engagement include

- Attending to power dynamics in the room
- Communication styles, and how best to ensure that there is a balance of voices
- Being hard on ideas, and soft on people
- If you have an organisational document on expected behaviours for people accessing your space(s) and participating in projects you facilitate, a summary of these expectations can be included here.
- Raising issues appropriately, as soon as possible; not letting things fester, build, and remain un-addressed/un-redressed
- What are your non-negotiables? For instance, a 'non-negotiable' could be your organisational stance- and even your personal justice stance- that colonialism and climate breakdown are inextricably linked. How do you seed this non-negotiable into your work, and pre-seed it at the design stage?

- Thinking about how to embed an approach to trauma informed equitable futuring- [as written about in this blog post by Grace Quantock](#)

Some suggested multisensory actions and activities to include in your Terms of Engagement and group-based communication

- The use of [hand signals](#) as a language for courteous interruption
- An ideas board where people might want to 'park' ideas for discussion at a later time
- The presence of several stations where people can answer the same questions in different ways. For example, you might have one station with post-it notes; a second with paper that has a relevant prompt for free-hand writing; a third with play clay and other resources where people can make something; and a fourth with silhouettes of various things (like a window, park, or sunset over the sea), inviting people to add to the drawing.

(B)   Co-creating nourishing workshop spaces

Aim: To co-create a workshop space, with attendees, that centres care and comfort.

How can we design spaces and processes to ensure programmes are non-extractive for participants? How can we avoid depleting their energy and knowledge? How can we model the change we seek to create?

Creating an experience which affirms and nourishes participants means considering every touchpoint of a programme, from application process to the physical seating options in a space. A mosaic of different tools and approaches can be employed to answer these questions - below are some we experimented with, but by no means is an exhaustive list. In order to facilitate a space that is nourishing from start to finish, we recommend thinking how to implement the following points in a way that works with your team's capacity, resource, and power [Read more about 'capacity, resource, and power' as factors that fuel a change-making engine.]

1. **Administration**

Ensure that accessibility, reflexivity, and care are centred within your processes from planning phases to wash up. Some elements to consider include:

- **Use of a Self-nomination application process** [outlined in the toolkit section of this report.] This kind of process creates an invitation for people who are usually pushed to the margins of specific conversations, to participate and be centred within such a conversation in a responsibly held space.
- **Terms of Engagement** [outlined in the toolkit section of this report.] This process co-creates a set of core values that guide group interactions and includes guidance on how to support implementation and adaptation of these values. This is a good point during which you can transparently discussing with the group how best to mitigate power dynamics.
- **Evaluation.** It is critical to have clearly outlined feedback mechanisms and checkpoints from start to finish, both for participants and for the delivery team. It could also be helpful to further outline accountability mechanisms, and redress procedures that you can use in the event that something slips through the cracks. We advise a feedback loop, whereby you explicitly request from participants whether they would like a follow-up conversation during which the feedback they've provided can be followed up on.
- **Division of labour.** Another factor to consider when planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating workshops is how to divide labour within the delivery team. Clearly outlining and dividing tasks- as well as deciding how to hold everyone

accountable to their work- is also important in supporting all team members to gain a sense of ownership over their part of the project.

2. **Designing workshops to go beyond just being accessible, but intentionally comfy!**

Think about how to take your workshop spaces from merely being functional, to being gatherings that participants can look forward to attending. Some points to consider include:

- **What it could look like for your specific group to not just bring people together to extract information or data from, but to create a transparently regenerative space?** And what does 'regenerative' mean in your specific place-based context? (see point '4' on co-creation.)
- **Food & intentional catering.** Within the group context, is there a way to be as inclusive as possible with catering? So, for instance, you may consider hiring catering that is vegan, gluten-free, and nut-free; and then from there handle case-by-case dietary requirements which still need additional considerations. Please note that there are many caterers who would indeed be able to meet these requirements whilst providing delicious, nourishing, and satisfying food.

- **Comfort levels in the space (seating, ventilation, different kinds of activities, etc).** Physical access needs might mean that people require soft seating, office chairs with arm rests, a table to lean on, free-flowing ventilation, a quiet space to gain respite from over-stimulation, and other requirements. Collating these requirements beforehand not only ensures that your team already plans how to meet as many of these requirements as possible, but that access friction can be identified in plenty of time. Further, using a variety of activities provides an array of offers that can cater to participants' learning preferences; for example, using a mix of small- and large- group discussions, freehand writing prompts, drawing prompts, poetry and prose prompts, making spaces with stationery and playdough, etc.
- **Interior decoration:** Don't underestimate the power of decorating a space to make it feel less intimidating and more informal. Sofas, soft furnishings, plants and posters can encourage participants to really settle into a space, make it their own, and even move things around to suit their needs – creating a feeling of shared ownership.
- **Live scribing.** Traditionally, gatherings might have a note-taker on hand or someone who is tasked with writing down minutes. A fun and engaging way to capture meeting learnings is through live scribing. A live scribe is someone who attends all meetings and captures a mixture of people in the space and notable points through visual notetaking. This results in a visual representation or snapshot of the gathering.

Examples of live scribing work includes work from [Jasmine Thompson](#), [Javie Huxley](#), and [Camille Aubry](#).

3. **Spaces to process:**

A workshop series might benefit from a safe space where workshop participants can gather for an informal debrief post-workshop, without the pressure of discussion points being captured. The delivery team may also benefit from reflecting on whether extra training support could help them develop context-specific self-empowerment. Consider the following when thinking about how to facilitate spaces and actions for reflexivity and debriefing:

- **Decompression spaces.** These are safe spaces exclusively for a specific group of people to come together and unpick ideas or points that might have come up in or around the workshop. We strongly suggest that a decompression space for workshop participants be produced by an expert facilitator who isn't part of the workshop delivery team, and that the workshop delivery team honour the intention of the space by not being in attendance. This will truly create room for workshop participants to untangle their thoughts in confidentiality.

- **Remuneration and reparative rest.** [Action research undertaken by Rising Arts Agency](#) has highlighted the benefit of paid rest; the premise being that socially just work- especially in the context of racial justice- should invest resource into paying people to rest especially when their participation in the work draws on their own lived experience.
- **Support structure for the delivery team.** Beyond outlining how labour should be divided in a project, it is very important that a point person- such as a project producer- be appointed to hold the project and connect all the moving parts. Another point for consideration is thinking about building resource into the monetary and time budget for fun and engaging bonding activities for the delivery team. Community participation projects should include enjoyment for the delivery team too!
- **Training needs of the delivery team.** Where resource is available, we recommend allocating budget for delivery team members to undertake training and/or other continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities that fall within the remit of the overall project.

4. **Programme: tackling power dynamics**

Programmes attempting knowledge co-production are often impacted by power hierarchies: between facilitator and participant, between those with existing

relationships and those entirely new to a group, between members of staff and freelancers- amongst others. Simple tactics can be employed to support participants to feel more comfortable to contribute and to lessen the impact of power hierarchies.

- **Buddy systems.** Randomly assigning buddy groups (between two or three people) and encouraging these groups to check in between workshops is a good way of supporting self-directed networking and reflection within the group. It provides another support structure whilst allowing participants to engage in conversations that do not necessarily have to be fed back to the delivery team or the collective. For workshop agendas that ask personal reflection, buddies can be encouraged to sense check, within their groups, how much they may feel comfortable sharing. The buddy system also motivates participants to become access advocates for each other (checking in on energy levels and access needs), further encouraging access to become a shared responsibility of the group and not just facilitators of the space.
- **Offering one-to-one meet ups.** These could be between a delivery team member and a participant to exchange knowledge and/or solidarities, between two delivery team members who would not ordinarily have the time to sit in conversation together, and between the decompression space producer and a participant or delivery team member to offer a more confidential decompression space.

- **Co-facilitation.** Co-facilitation models shared leadership and encourages a conversational facilitation dynamic. As far as possible, decentre the idea of a singular expert and rather practice how different people with different lived and learned experiences may contribute to a particular topic. Co-facilitation also supports facilitation team well-being, sharing responsibility of holding and addressing emotional or heavy moments, tricky questions, or moments of tension.
- **Citational praxis within outputs.** We strongly recommend being upfront with participants about whether or not there are expectations for output from your work; it is also important that people are not coerced into participation, and provide consent for all parts of the work they will partake in. Participants should be credited appropriately in all works and invited into the editorial process as much as possible within the parameters of the project.
- **Co-creation and co-production with participants.** All of these tactics establish an ethos of generosity and interruptibility crucial to co-production, where everyone's knowledge is valued and credited fairly. Modelling shared ownership and collective responsibility ensures the programme is relevant to, reflexive, and reflective of the diverse experiences and needs of the group.
- **Academic investments into arts organisations.** It's important to have a clear understanding of [the power dynamics present in any partnership](). Relationships between universities/research institutes and arts and/or community organisations

will typically have a dynamic underpinned by resource and power. Having an intentional partnership that cedes and spreads power and resource towards the community, or consistently supports and co-produces with the community, can produce trust and longtermism.

(C)   Using self-nomination to curate a group

Aim: To create an invitation for people who are usually pushed to the margins of specific conversations, to be centred within such a conversation in a responsibly held space. Self-nomination encourages an assessment of positionality and suitability before taking on an opportunity or taking up space.

The idea behind a self-nomination process is to focus the opportunity for participation to people who often find themselves decentred within the particular theme or subject matter that your opportunity covers. We suggest the following steps:

- Reflect on the subject matter you'd like to cover and identify the network and channels through which you will advertise your call.
- We strongly advise that where possible, remuneration is put in place to honour participants' time commitment.

- Using your project aims and themes, and drawing on the knowledge of your collaborators, co-create a set of questions that can inspire reflection and positionality analysis within those on the receiving end of your call. Here are four adaptable questions as a starting point:
1. We are approaching the work with [short description of your honest shared feelings, and/or logistical information]. Are you interested in [succinct clause that captures the essence of your gathering/programme/conversation]?
2. Do you think you will bring different lived experience to the people whose voices are already widely represented in this sector/conversation?
3. Are you prepared to grapple with the complexities of issues such as [subject-specific issues that the topic is bound to bring up] knowing that other individuals involved in this gathering/programme/conversation may be in different places on a journey of change than you are?
4. Can you commit to participation on [list specific dates]?

- Within your call emphasize that in order to self-nominate, people need to be able to answer 'Yes' to all the questions that have been provided. And if they do, what is needed next is a brief email that states they would like to self-nominate. NB: You can also state that by sending a simple email of self-nomination people are confirming that

they have indeed answered 'Yes' to all the questions, and as such they should not feel the need to justify their identity or lived experience to within their self-nomination email.

- If you have the capacity, it could be helpful to offer brief one-to-one chats in which people can ask you more questions about the process. Be clear that this is not an interview or a chance for people to get you to answer the questions for them, but rather just to provide clarity on the process, questions, and rationale behind the process, as well as to signpost to [helpful resources](#) which could support people in assessing their positionality and suitability to self-nominate. It's very important that you don't absorb the responsibility of answering questions for people, as this takes away their agency within the process.
- If more self-nominations are received than the number of opportunities available, we recommend running a round of random selection to land on a final participant list. This can also be explicitly included in the call to let self-nominees know that random selection will mitigate for a large number of applicants.