We are NOT Designers

Pattern making and garment making as practices of co-design for social change

By

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Abstract

Set within a global context increasingly hostile to women and girls, this doctoral research project investigated how fashion design, and more specifically, the practices of making patterns and garments, can give them tools to enhance their agency and build community resilience. This research aimed to explore how pattern making and garment making can be used to foster social change with a group of women from the margins. The methodology consisted of participatory practice research, comprising the delivery of participatory pattern making and garment making workshops designed to support women in developing their creative practices. This approach was complemented by semi-structured interviews with several pattern makers and socially-engaged designers and researchers. Findings from the interviews led to defining a new framework to analyse projects of fashion design for social change. An open and inclusive definition of pattern making and garment making was formulated, and the practice was deconstructed into a set of five core elements, rethinking the field of pattern cutting. Two years of participatory practice research with a group of women in a deprived area of London, revealed that participating in the project fostered skill building, creativity development, community engagement, and the improvement of their wellbeing and self-confidence, leading some of the women to enrol in fashion design education, deliver community workshops and start a social enterprise. By applying the framework, built upon insights from the interviews, to the participatory practice research, this study uncovers how pattern making and garment making can be used to co-design social change with a group of women when employed with a ‘sororalistic’ approach led by empathy. In conclusion, the thesis promotes a more inclusive and open practice of pattern making and garment making, offers an original contribution to the field of fashion design for social change both in theory and practice, and adds to the collective effort towards shaping fairer and more equitable societies.

Keywords: pattern making; garment making; fashion design; design for social innovation; participatory practice research.

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I thank my friend Kaz for helping me keep physically and mentally fit.

Since I received UAL's acceptance to start this PhD, I had my second child, went through a pandemic, moved house twice, and turned forty. Needless to say, the last five years have had their loads of challenges. I have come across many moments of doubts, wondering if I should abandon the PhD, driven by 'woman's guilt' and an overwhelming mental load (and lack of sleep). But here I am, hopefully soon becoming a Doctor – not the type that treat people, as I tell my children. I would not have been able to go through all of this and complete the PhD without the unlimited and unconditional support of my husband.

Huge thanks to my children, Nina and Marco, who cheered with me every time I completed a chapter of my thesis and whose laughs (and arguments) remind me every day that the most important thing in life is kindness.

Positionality statement

I acknowledge the fact that my European background and whiteness have brought and keep on bringing me privileges and have shaped my way of perceiving and experiencing the world around me, including how this research, based in London, was undertaken. At the same time, like most participants, I was not born in the UK. And as many of them did, my mother left her country of birth in the hope for a better future and raised her children in a place whose language and culture she did not know. By recognising my privileged position and by also valuing our commonalities, my aim was to create a safe space for women to connect through the act of making and express their creativity. In that space, I have myself learnt a lot from the women and through the process, and grown as a researcher, maker, and woman.

In the current troubled world, I hope that this work and the women who have shared so much to make it happen will inspire readers to gather with like-minded people, and, in turn, collaboratively make good things happen.



Family picture: my daughter (left) and my great grandmother (right), supporting each other and passing on making skills (photo by the author, 2018).

1. Introduction

We are women who weave dreams and sew scars,

Women who join pieces and scraps.

We are women that weave

With our ancestors between our fingers.

We are women who weave the future

And the shapes we have not seen.

We are women who design

With threads, art, and words.

Poem by Jadilla, project participant

Just like this poem, this thesis advocates for the power of creative women to preserve the past, support the present and shape the future through their own acts of making. The practice of making together connects women to their selves, to their stories, and to their communities.

This chapter serves as a reminder of the challenging realities of many women in the world and in London, that motivated this research. It presents the emerging field of Fashion Design for Sustainability and introduces design for social innovation and the practice of pattern making as the main fields of research for this study. The research questions, aims and objectives are also presented, followed by an outline of the thesis structure and its chapters.

1.1. Context

This research project spread over five years, during which women's and girl's rights all over the world have been under constant threat. At a more local level, for this thesis, the area of Somers Town, in the London borough of Camden, seriously suffers issues of deprivation, such as income deprivation, unemployment, low levels of education and poor health, particularly affecting women and children.

1.1.1. General context

This research project started in 2020, when the world was going through the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2022, the first making workshops engaged three women in London. Both the participants and the researcher were happy to meet each other and make garments together, but behind the face masks all shared how tough the previous two years had been.

Two years of pandemic have affected us all but have particularly impacted the lives of women and girls. According to UN Women (2022), the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified gender-based violence, pushed even more women into extreme poverty, leading to more girls leaving school and increasing the risk of child marriages (Tooyoungtowed, 2021). The pandemic has deprived many women from their livelihoods due to job loss and increased domestic burdens (UN Women, 2022).

Since then, the situation of women's and girls' rights have only got worse. In August 2021, the Taliban took power in Afghanistan and have progressively restricted women's and girls' rights to education, employment, healthcare, erased them from public life, and increased gender-based violence, feminicide and child and forced marriage (Amnesty International, 2025). In June 2022, the overturn of the *Roe v Wade* case by the American Supreme Court eliminated the federal right to abortion. In England and Wales, violence against women and girls is described as an epidemic (NPCC, 2024). Unfortunately, there are many more events, facts, and statistics worldwide that show how "in every

corner of the world from push back to roll back women rights are under attack" (United Nations, 2025). Nevertheless, "we cannot stand by as progress is reversed. We must fight back[1]"(*ibid*). Evidence suggests that providing women with the tools to build resilience, empowering them and giving them access to the labour market can reduce poverty, improve the health, nutrition and education of children and contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2016). As declared by António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, "simply put, when women and girls rise, everyone thrives" (United Nations, 2025).

In view of this alarming broad context, this research sought to contribute to supporting women in developing these tools, albeit at a modest and micro level by focusing on a diverse group of women in a deprived neighbourhood in London.

1.1.2. The local context

As part of this participatory practice research project, making workshops were delivered with women residing in Somers Town, in the London borough of Camden, for more than two years.

Somers Town is a neighbourhood situated in Camden, a borough in the North-West of London. Although Camden borough ranks as average in terms of deprivation for a London borough, it counts eight LSOAs[2] within the 15% most deprived of England by Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in 2019, one of them being St Pancras and Somers Town ward (London Borough of Camden, 2019).

[1] From the remarks by António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, on the International Women's Day 2025.

[2] LSOA: Lower-layer Super Output Area, homogenous small areas of relatively similar population size. Camden counts 133 LSOAs.

Somers Town is bordered to the East by St Pancras train station, to the West by Euston station and the High Speed 2[3] railway construction site, and to the South and North by two main roads. It is surrounded by many key organisations: national and international train stations, the British Library, The Francis Crick Research Institute and Central Saint Martins (CSM), UAL, to name a few. This position makes Somers Town a well-connected neighbourhood, next-door to the Knowledge Quarter[4]. Pancras Square, a few metres away, is home to London Borough of Camden's office and international companies such as Google and Universal Music (Figure 1.1). In 2008, Somers Town was the set for an award-winning comedy-drama film, *Somers Town,* directed by Shane Meadows (*Somers Town*, 2008).

[3] HS2 is Britain's new high-speed railway connecting London to Birmingham.

[4] A cluster bringing together "knowledge resources ranging from the world's earliest books and manuscripts to the latest fashion and creative designs and cutting-edge medical research" (Knowledge Quarter, n.d.)

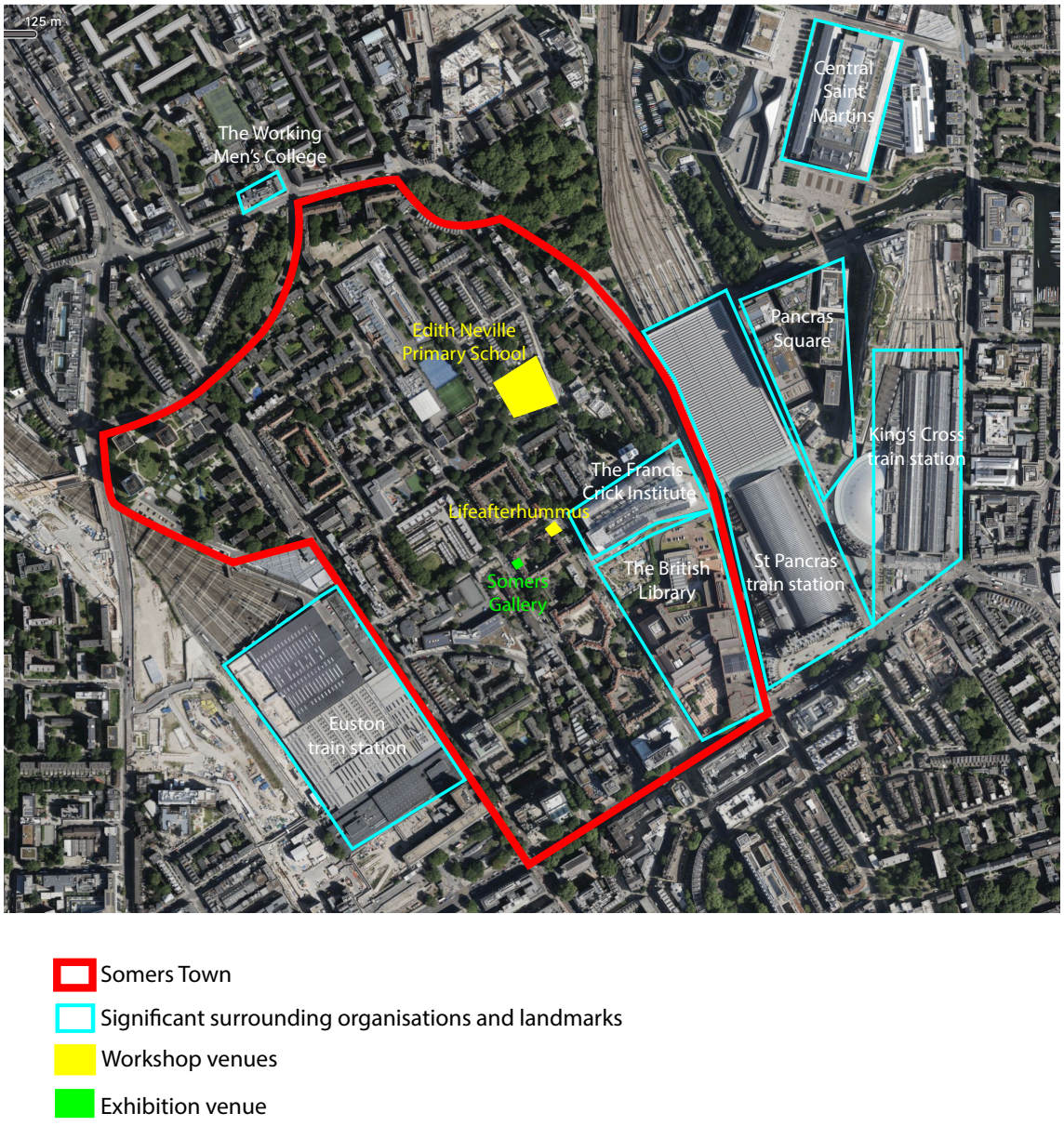


Figure 1.1: Map of Somers Town and surroundings (Source: Google Maps).

According to the Camden ward profile report, in 2019 the ward of St Pancras and Somers Town counted a population of about 18,000 people, expected to increase by 30% to 2029 (London Borough of Camden, 2020)[5]. The population is generally young, and is ethnically diverse, with strong Bangladeshi and Black

[5] The most recent data available for Somers Town only is from the Camden neighbourhood profile report published in 2015. Data shows the same trends as in the broader ward.

African communities and almost one third of Islamic faith (London Borough of Camden, 2015 and 2020).

Despite its central position and proximity to a dynamic and modern area, St Pancras and Somers Town is the most deprived ward in Camden, ranking first in terms of overall IMD and against most indicators of deprivation. Income deprivation, unemployment and low levels of education, skills and training are at the worst level in the borough. People seriously suffer from poor health, deprivation, and disability issues. Income deprivation severely impacts children and the elderly, for which the ward ranks in the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England (London Borough of Camden, 2019). Women in Camden particularly struggle with the cost-of-living crisis, generating stress, anxiety, and isolation (Camden Women's Forum, 2023), and – in the same way as in England as a whole – domestic violence and abuse are an increasingly worrying issue in the borough (Camden Women's Forum, 2021).

In view of these challenges, Somers Town has become a central hub of collective action. Considerable investments and numerous initiatives have been activated by a network of voluntary and community organisations, public bodies, universities, and enterprises to make it a more equitable and sustainable neighbourhood. Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods 2030, funded by Camden Council and supported by the Mayor of London, is a programme focusing on empowering residents and organisations to deal with climate change in the neighbourhood (Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods 2030, n.d.). T- Factor, a European-wide project[6], led by Central Saint Martins (CSM) in the UK, was delivered between 2020 and 2024, in partnership with local organisations, to explore "temporary urbanism that can contribute to inclusive, sustainable and thriving futures" (T-Factor, 2024) in the Somers Town and Euston area. A network of charities and organisations also supports the residents with their everyday needs, such as education, employment, food, health, wellbeing, and more.

[6] https://www.t-factor.eu/

Considering this challenging context, this research project aims to contribute to the collective effort towards improving the lives of women in Somers Town.

1.2. Scope and direction of the research

The scope of this research lies within the emerging field of Fashion Design for Sustainability (FDfS), defined by Professor Dilys Williams[7] (2019, p.1) as a field of research that "explores living well together in nature through fashion's social, industrial, cultural, economic and educational dimensions from micro to macro scales". FDfS explores four interdependent agendas: society, nature, economy, and cultures (*ibid)*. Although this thesis acknowledges the interconnectedness between these Fashion values (Mazzarella and Williams, 2022), its primary focus is on the social role of fashion design to enhance people's lives, addressing their problems, desires, and aspirations, contributing to the improvement of their wellbeing and agency, through collaborative and participatory approaches (Gwilt, 2015).

In this regard, it is important to clarify what fashion design means in the context of this research. Richard Sorger[8] and Jenny Udale[9] (2017), in the book *The Fundamentals of Fashion Design*, state that "fashion is a constant search for the new. It is hungry and ruthless" (p.8), a description far from the idea of *Fashion Design for Living*, explored by Alison Gwilt[10] (2015) through examples including design 'for ageing well' or design 'for maintaining Mexican communities and their traditional crafts'. In fashion design education manuals, fashion design is still described as the sketching of designs and the development of collections (Sorger and Udale, 2017; Hopkins, 2022), primarily

[7] Professor Dilys Williams FRSA is Founder and Director of Centre for Sustainable Fashion, a University of the Arts London research centre, based at London College of Fashion, which she established in 2008.

[8] Richard Sorger is Associate Professor and MA Fashion Course Leader at Kingston University, UK.

[9] Jenny Udale is Lecturer in Fashion and Textiles at the Open College of the Arts, UK.

[10] Alison Gwilt, Ph.D, is Professor of Design at the University of New South Wales, Australia.

supporting an industry valuing aesthetics, and missing the point of the positive contributions that fashion designers can make in our societies, as explored and promoted by Alison Gwilt (2015) and Dilys Williams (2018). In *Fashion Design: The Complete Guide* (2022) John Hopkins[11] differentiates 'fashion' from 'clothing' and 'dress'. He argues that "fashion design, is more ideologically and practically attached to notions of modernity and systems of change as part of a dynamic process that encourages active participation and imagination" (pp.2-3). For him, folkloric and traditional dress as well as crafts are not part of fashion design unless incorporated by fashion designers in 'folkloric-inspired collections that use craft-based materials and techniques'. In *When Clothes Become Fashion*, Ingrid Loschek[12] (2009) explains that fashion is a social construct that uses clothing as a medium: fashion does not exist without the social validation of some clothes by a society or a group of people of some clothes, otherwise defined by their economic and utilitarian terms, as fashion. The practice of fashion design is therefore reserved to expert fashion designers. This depicts fashion design as exclusive and, frankly speaking, unfair and discriminatory.

Fortunately, within FDfS a broader and more inclusive definition of fashion design is emerging. For Dilys Williams (2018, p.75), fashion design is "an activity that fundamentally weaves together the practices, skills, and materials associated with clothing the body", in other words the "fashion-related activities" that encompass the "design, making, marketing, buying, wearing, caring and end of life of clothing" (*ibid,* p.76) and, for the purpose of this research, also pattern making. In unison with Alison Gwilt (2015), she urges fashion designers to re-invent themselves and open their creative practices to participation and collaboration with others to enhance life for people and communities. Fashion design is not only about designing products anymore, instead it is also about designing services, systems and practices that foster social change.

[11] John Hopkins is Senior Academic of Fashion and Textiles at the Winchester School of Art, UK.

[12] Ingrid Loschek was, until her death in 2010, Professor in the history and theory of fashion at the University of Applied Sciences, Pforzheim. She was a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University and Guest Professor at Universities in Tokyo and Cairo.

1.3. Aim, objectives, and research questions

Given the local context and the definition of fashion design set out above, the aim of this research was to explore how pattern making and garment making can be used to foster social change with a group of women from the margins.

To meet this aim, three objectives were defined:

1. To critically review literature on fashion design for social change, design for social innovation, and pattern making to evaluate the practice's potential for social change.

2. To gather experts' perspectives on fashion design for social change and pattern making to develop a profiling framework for the analysis of projects and to formulate a more inclusive definition of the practice.

3. To develop and apply a participatory practice research approach to pattern making and garment making and evaluate its potential to foster social change with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood of London.

The following research questions drove this investigation:

- What are the characteristics of a project of fashion design for social change?

- How can the practice of pattern making and garment making be more aligned with the principles of design for social innovation?

- How can pattern making and garment making be used as a fashion design practice to foster social change with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood of London?

1.4. Thesis outline

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters organised as illustrated in Figure 1.2 and summarised in the following paragraphs.

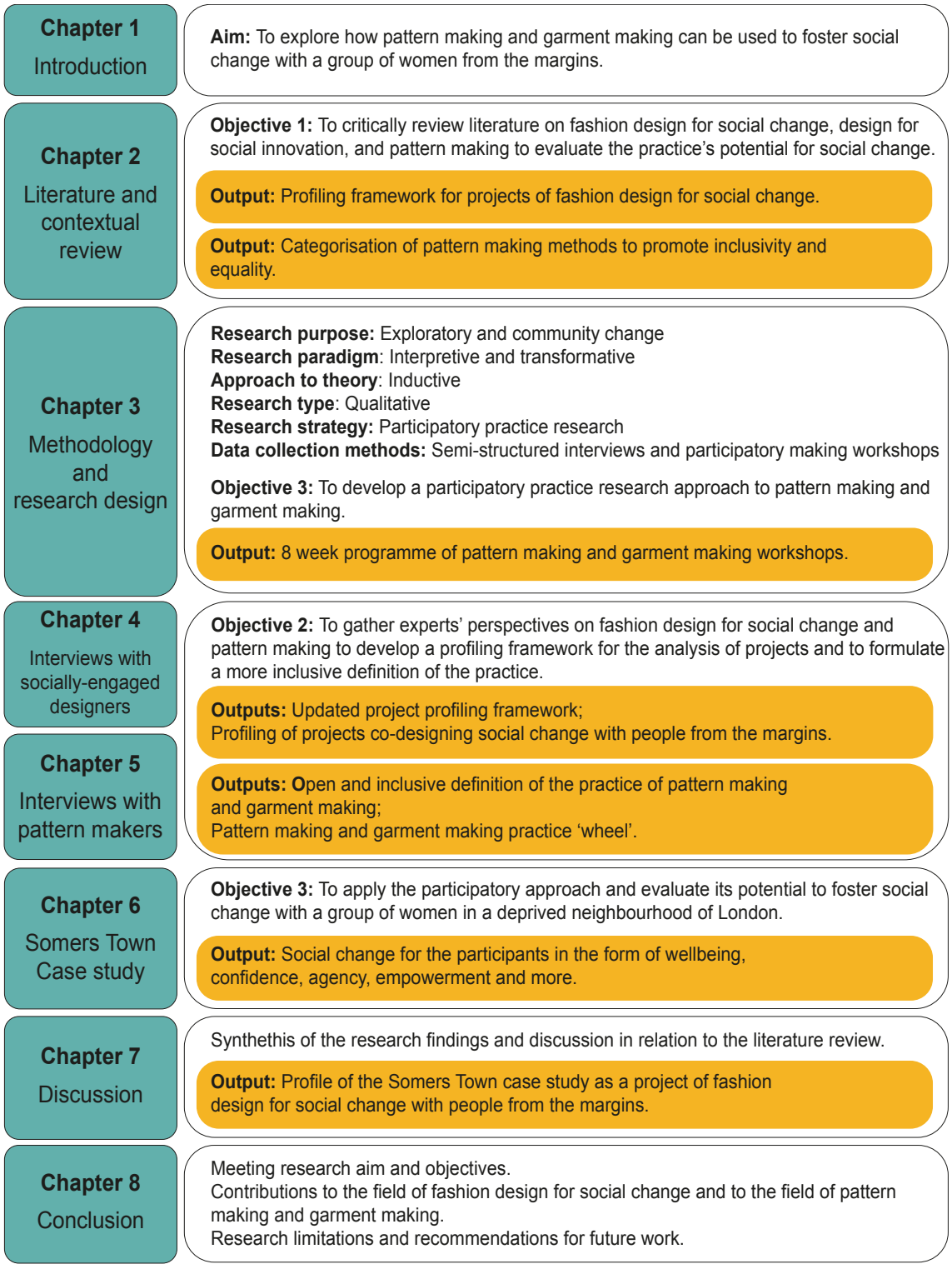


Figure 1.2: Thesis outline.

Chapter 2: Literature and contextual review

This chapter reviews the literature, practice, and context relevant for this research. It brings together two fields of research – design for social innovation and pattern making – exposing the knowledge gaps that this project aimed to tackle. The first section highlights the link between fashion design and social change. Various definitions of design for social innovation and social design are discussed, explaining the concepts of 'social change', designers' roles, participation, and innovation. This leads to the formulation of a definition of design for social innovation to be used in this project. This section also identifies collective making as a useful participatory method to engage people and lists its numerous benefits. In this chapter, the need for a framework to analyse projects of fashion design for social change is also highlighted and a first framework is formulated. The subsequent section focuses on pattern making and challenges the Western-centric definition of the practice. By reviewing the work of pattern makers and designers, the section exposes the reasons why the field needs more equality and inclusivity and suggests an original categorisation of pattern making and garment making methods. Finally, the relationship between pattern making, garment making, and social change is discussed.

Chapter 3: Methodology and research design

This chapter presents the participatory practice research and explains the reasons why this was considered the most suitable methodology. The research design is discussed in detail, alongside the methods chosen for data collection – *i.e.,* semi-structured interviews and participatory making workshops – and thematic analysis. This chapter also discusses the sampling and recruitment strategy, and the ethical implications of the project. The rationale behind the programme of pattern making and garment making workshops is also described.

Chapter 4: Findings from the interviews with socially engaged designers

This chapter brings together the findings from the analysis of the interviews with designers, researchers, and practitioners who employ fashion design to foster social change with marginalised people. It explains the reasons why the interviewees believe that fashion design is an effective vehicle for social change and discusses their input on refining the framework to analyse projects of fashion design for social change. The projects discussed in the interviews are analysed using the framework elements – theme of reflection, collaboration, social change, and innovation. Similarities and differences are deduced, resulting in the identification and profiling of a specific type of project of fashion design for social innovation.

Chapter 5: Findings from the interviews with pattern makers

This chapter discusses the findings from the analysis of the interviews with pattern makers. It explains the interviewees' perspectives on the choice of the term 'pattern making' rather than 'pattern cutting'. Their feedback on the categorisation of pattern making methods is analysed, leading to an original understanding of the field, that deconstructs pattern making and garment making practice into a set of five elements. The reasons why this perception brings much needed inclusivity, equality, and creativity into the field are discussed. The last section of the chapter suggests an open and inclusive definition of the practice of pattern making and garment making, necessary to consider it as a potential vehicle for social change.

Chapter 6: We are ~~not~~ designers: Case study with women in a deprived area of London

This chapter reports on the development, delivery, and legacy of participatory pattern making and garment making workshops conducted with women in Somers Town, London Borough of Camden, between May 2022 and July 2024. It covers the delivery of three series of eight participatory making workshops,

one series of eight advanced sewing workshops, and follow-up drop-in sessions in two different venues, as well as the organisation and delivery of an exhibition, alongside a cultural programme of events, in a local art gallery. Many pictures illustrate the work delivered, the creative journey and accomplishments of the participants. Findings from the data analysis are discussed to highlight the outcomes and social impacts generated as well as the challenges encountered.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter synthesises the key research findings and discusses them in relation to the body of knowledge reviewed in the literature and contextual review. It evaluates both the framework to analyse projects of fashion design for social change and the set of constitutive elements of pattern making and garment making practices. This chapter's main purpose is to apply the framework to the case study conducted with women in Somers Town and triangulate the findings with the literature and contextual review. In this way, the chapter demonstrates how the work delivered in Somers Town is similar to or differs from other projects studied and that it is indeed a project of fashion design for social change.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

After a short summary of the whole project, this chapter discusses how the research aim and objectives were met. It reflects on the original research contributions to the theory and practice of fashion design for social change, as well as pattern making and garment making. Finally, the chapter considers the limitations of the research and outlines recommendations for future work.

2. Literature and contextual review

This research project originally connects two fields of study – design for social innovation and pattern cutting[13] – until now largely considered unrelated. This section introduces the relationship between fashion design and social change and reviews the field of pattern cutting, evaluating its potential for social change. The chapter outlines the knowledge gaps that this research contributed to addressing and introduces original definitions and frameworks.

2.1. Fashion design and social change

This research is situated at the intersection of the fields of fashion design and social change and, more precisely, within research that uses the practice of 'fashion design and making' as a research method and an approach to foster social change. Before considering how design relates to social change, it is important to remind ourselves of the general social impacts of fashion.

Fashion can act as a powerful tool for social impact, either in a destructive and alienating way, or as a tool to improve people's lives. The current unsustainable fast fashion system based on "over-production and over-consumption" (Black *et al.*, 2021, p. 4) can have a destructive impact on people. Forced or underpaid labour, poor working conditions, labour rights violations, discriminations, and work insecurity are unfortunately still a reality inflicted by the fashion industry in many parts of the world (Minney, 2017; Ditty, 2017; Mazzarella and Williams, 2022; Sullivan, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed and aggravated these issues, making lives even more challenging for many fashion workers, especially women who make up most of the garment factories' workforce (Labour Behind the Label, 2020; Hansen *et al.*, 2021).

[13] In this chapter, the terms pattern cutting and pattern making are used interchangeably, because pattern cutting is commonly used in the UK, and pattern making in the USA to name the same practice. In Section 2.3.3., the meaning of the term pattern making and its relevance for this research are discussed.

On the other hand, fashion is also a strong force for positive change. In various forms and at different levels, fashion acts as a powerful tool to support more sustainable ways of living. Activist movements (*e.g.*, Labour Behind the Label, Fashion Revolution, XR Fashion, Fashion Act Now), academia, businesses, and designers (*e.g.,* Katharine Hamnett, Vivienne Westwood, Sarah Corbett, Otto von Busch, Helen Storey, Bethany Williams, and Laila Tyabji) are crucial to expose, research, advise and educate on social issues in the industry.

The fashion activism campaign “Who made my clothes?” (Fashion Revolution, n.d.) (Figure 2.1) aims to shed light on the lives of garment workers and give exposure to the labour behind our garments that deserves to be remunerated fairly.



Figure 2.1. 'I Made Your Clothes' Campaign by FashionRevolution (source: Anchal Project, 2017).

Centre for Sustainable Fashion, UAL (CSF) partnered with Kering, Vogue Business and IBM, to develop a knowledge exchange programme, called *Fashion Values* – covering the themes of society, cultures, environment, and economy – with the aim to educate and empower the next generation of designers to contribute to a fashion system "grounded on values of care, empathy, equality, collaboration and creativity" (Mazzarella and Williams, 2022, p.4).

In the fashion industry, many brands all around the world promote sustainable and social justice values (such as London-based brands *Bethany Williams* (Figure 2.2) and *Raeburn*, Australian fashion social enterprises *Clothing the Gaps* and *HoMie* (Mazzarella, 2025), among others) by listening to the needs and aspirations of marginalised minorities, paying a living wage, and offering training and work opportunities to marginalised people. The UK-based project *Fostering Sustainable Practices* (Black *et al.*, 2021) shows that purpose-led and sustainability-driven design-led fashion Micro and Small Enterprises[14] (MSEs) have the potential to catalyse radical change in the fashion industry.



Figure 2.2: Project team members, *Bethany Williams* and *Making for Change* collaboration, Poplar Works (photo by Hidhir Badaruddin, in Reid, 2021).

[14] Office for National Statistics and EU definition: micro businesses have 0-9 employees; small have 10-49; medium have 50-249.

Participatory practices of fashion design and textile crafts can also foster empowerment, community engagement and wellbeing within marginalised communities, by engaging people through collective making. For example, the *Making for Change: Waltham Forest* project (Mazzarella, 2020, Mazzarella and Black, 2022) used fashion activism and making to tackle locally experienced issues (such as deprived youth, skills shortage, decline in fashion manufacturing, unemployment) and foster social change within a community.

These businesses, research and community projects are creating a counter-narrative to the mainstream fashion system by including the voices and practices of marginalised people and communities.

2.1.1. Design and social change

This section does not aim to exhaustively review the wide field of design and social change. Instead, it gives an overview of some of the many concepts, terminologies, and definitions that authors have formulated. It shows the complexity of the field and tries to make sense of it for the purpose of this research.

As mentioned by Claudia Banz [15] (2018), organiser of the conference *Social Design: History, Practice, Perspectives* (2014):

> The possibilities and limitations of design for the positive and socially conscious shaping of society and the environment have been pondered, argued, and negotiated intensely and not without controversy ever since the 1960s (p.88).

In the 1970s, designers began to acknowledge more openly their impact on the world and recognised that their skills could be used to tackle social issues

[15] Claudia Banz is a German curator, exhibition organizer, and expert in both design and art history and material culture. She is Director of the Weltmuseum Wien since February 2025 and has curated exhibitions and written about current design issues and speculative futures.

(Height, in Bicknell and McQuiston, 1976) instead of supporting a type of progress that led to the exploitation of humans and the environment (Sachs, 2018). In his still influential book *Design for the Real World*, Victor Papanek (1971) denounced the damage caused to the environment by the way design has been employed. He initiated the social design movement that brought societal and environmental consciousness to the field, advocating for design practices that address real-world human needs. In *Design for Society*, Nigel Whiteley (1993) criticised the consumerist design of the 1980-1990s in the UK and Europe and reiterated the urge for designers to use their skills for social and environmental goals. Social design has progressively evolved from "design for society" to "design with society" (Sachs, 2018, p.27) by creating new social models to address increasingly complex problems. Ezio Manzini[16] (2015) has pioneered the field of "design for social innovation", the main purpose of which is to change the way societies work and how people interact to address social needs and foster sustainability, as discussed in the book *Design, When Everybody Designs*. Definitions seemed to differ in the past. Social design was defined as focusing mainly on problems such as poverty and social exclusion, and social innovation was referring to social interactions (see Section 2.1.1.1.). More recent evolutions, driven by an alarming reality marked by environmental, social, and economic emergencies, tend to blur the differentiation between social design and design for social innovation. Participation of under-represented and marginalised groups of people in the design process has become a condition for successful design addressing their needs. Researchers now talk about *Design Justice* (Costanza-Chock, 2020), *Design[ing] Social Change* (Noel, 2023), and *Design Practice and Education for Social Change from the Margins* (Casas-Romero and Mazzarella, 2024). Amid the array of definitions and terminologies, most authors mention similar key elements: social change, the role of design and the designer, participation, and innovation.

[16] Ezio Manzini is a key expert in design for sustainability and social innovation. In 2009, he founded the international Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability (DESIS) network. His inspirational book *Design, When Everybody Designs* was published in 2015.

2.1.1.1. Defining social change

For some authors, the change generated through design for social innovation must benefit the public or society as a whole (The Stanford Social Innovation Review, and Gillwald, both cited by TEPSIE, 2014). TEPSIE[17] gives the example of Facebook that has revolutionised the way people interact with each other.

At a macro level, social change should impact society in a systemic way and social innovations should reshape society by promoting and creating new social relations. Geoff Mulgan[18] *et al.* (2007), Robin Murray[19] *et al.* (2010), and Manzini (2015) argue that design for social innovation creates new social forms or collaborations that reshape society by suggesting more sustainable and resilient societal models, capable of solving their own issues and prepared for future challenges. However, for others, social change falls within a 'social justice' narrative (Britton, 2017; Noel, 2023). Alastair Fuad-Luke[20] (2009) defines designers as people "who use the power of design for the greater good for humankind and nature" (p.20).

Social change is about "pressing unmet needs" (TEPSIE, 2014, p. 11) of marginalised or "underrepresented groups" (Noel, 2023, p.x) linked to issues such as inequalities, poverty, lack of opportunities and social exclusion. Sasha

[17] TEPSIE is an acronym for The Theoretical, Empirical and Policy Foundations for Building Social Innovation in Europe. It was a research project funded by the European Union.

[18] Geoff Mulgan is Professor of Collective Intelligence, Public Policy, and Social Innovation at University College London (UCL). From 2004 to 2011, he was CEO of the Young Foundation, a UK not-for-profit organisation focusing on design for social innovation.

[19] Robin Murray was a British industrial and environmental economist who advocated for humanist principles for fairer social and economic organisations.

[20] Alastair Fuad-Luke describes himself as "a facilitator, educator, researcher, writer and activist who promotes design to encourage a transition to more sustainable, just and joyful ways of living", who has "worked in design-based eco-social thinking, research and practice in academia and in social, public and industry sectors" since the 2000s (Fuad-Luke, 2025).

Costanza-Chock[21] (2020, p.6), in her book *Design Justice*, mentions rethinking "design processes, center[ing] people who are normally marginalized by design". Lesley-Ann Noel[22] (2023) urges designers to recognise oppression, listen to and observe oppressed people, and together co-design equitable futures. She defines social change as "change that moves [oppressed and vulnerable] people beyond surviving to thriving" (p.x).

Manzini explained the double meaning of the adjective 'social' in social design and design for social innovation: he stated that social design focuses on addressing "particularly problematic situations (such as extreme poverty, illness or social exclusion, and circumstances after catastrophic events) to which both the market and the state fail to find solutions" (2015, p.64), while in design for social innovation, the term 'social' refers to "the way in which the society is built" (2015, p.64). He also acknowledged, however, that this differentiation tends to blur. This is even more relevant in the current age of polycrisis, marked by interconnected environmental, social, and economic challenges. In 2023, Cecilia Casas-Romero[23] and Francesco Mazzarella[24] launched the Cluster 'Design from the Margins' within the international DESIS[25] network, founded by Manzini in 2009. The Cluster is specifically focused on social design educational interventions bringing together students and marginalised communities. At the Third ESDA DESIS Social Design Days, in Zaragoza, Spain, in March 2024, Manzini confirmed that the focus of design for social

[21] Sasha Costanza-Chock is Head of Research at One Project, a foundation focusing on co-creating more sustainable futures, member of the Design Justice Network, and faculty associate at the Centre for Internet and Society at Harvard University.

[22] Lesley-Ann Noel is Dean of Design at OCAD University, Canada. She focuses on equity, social justice and the experiences of people who are often excluded from design education, research, and practice, with the aim to decolonise design. She is the author of *Design Social Change*, published in 2023.

[23] Cecilia Casas-Romero is Teacher of Social Design and Photography at ESDA, *Escuela Superior de Diseño de Aragón*, Aragon School of Design.

[24] Francesco Mazzarella is Reader in Design for Social Change, at London College of Fashion, UAL.

[25] Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability: an international network of schools of design specifically active in the field of design for social innovation and sustainability.

innovation should now shift “from those rich in time, energy and resources to those who are poor in these and from the centre to the peripheries” (Manzini, 2024, p. 88).

2.1.1.2. Defining the roles of the designer

Papanek (1971) highlighted the ethical and environmental responsibility of design and argued that designers should focus on addressing real human needs. The role of design, however, has since evolved from designing products, towards increasingly focusing on complex socio-technical systems (Ceschin and Gaziulusoy, 2016). For Michael Krohn[26] (2018), Professor for Design at the Zurich University of the Arts and Head of the Centre for Sustainability, social design is both about “designing social conditions and circumstances as well as designing artifacts and systems” (p.133). Design thinking can indeed generate innovative approaches to tackling complex issues, such as the improvement of the quality of life and living conditions of people.

According to Manzini (2014, p.65), the role of design is to make “social innovation more probable, effective, long-lasting, and apt to spread”. Designers, “design experts” (Manzini, 2015) or “design catalysts” (Britton, 2017), use their professional knowledge, creativity, and culture to “trigger and support […] open-ended co-design processes, […] to conceive and enhance clear-cut, focused design initiatives.” (Manzini, 2015, p.54). For Noel (2023), two key elements of the ‘recipe’ to create change is having “a vision of the finished dish” and “a knowledge of the steps and methods” (p.ix), which echoes Manzini’s design mode where critical sense, creativity, and practical sense to find feasible ways to “make things happen” are essential (Manzini, 2015). In this, designers can assume different roles, from the well-recognised roles of mediators and facilitators to catalysts and design activists (Manzini, 2014). In similar lines, Fuad-Luke (2009), in *Design Activism,* defines a design activist as “a free agent;

[26] Michael Krohn is Professor of Design at Zurich University of the Arts and Head of the Centre for Sustainability.

a non-aligned social broker and catalyst; a facilitator; an author; a creator; a co-author; a co-creator; and a happener (someone who makes things happen)" (p.20). In her PhD thesis at University of Northumbria, Lauren Tan (2012) identified and discussed seven roles of the designer in design for social good: researcher, facilitator, capability builder, social entrepreneur, provocateur, and strategist. The distinction between the roles, however, is blurred, and designers take many roles simultaneously. The more participatory the design process, the more complex the designer's role is (Tan, 2012). Therefore, designers must be able to understand the context in which they operate to find the appropriate mix of roles to play (Tan, 2012, Manzini, 2015).

These roles must also consider the position of the people designers work with. Designers do not seek to control the process of innovation or its outcomes and do not see their expertise as the only right way forward; instead, they value people's knowledge and experiences. Manzini (2015) talks about *diffuse design*, "put into play by "nonexperts", with their natural designing capacity" (p.37), in opposition to *expert design*, performed by trained design professionals (*ibid*). This leads to a blurred distribution of roles, with the user also becoming a designer (TEPSIE, 2014; Manzini, 2015; Hirscher, 2020a). Costanza-Chock (2020) instead rejects the idea that designers are experts and values everyone's knowledge and expertise in their own lived experiences and challenges. In this case, when the design role is shared between designers and the community, everybody contributes to the design process, effectively co-designing more sustainable solutions, in line with Manzini's (2015) *Design, When Everybody Designs*. For Costanza-Chock (2020, p.6), however, design takes a more caring role and consists in "sustain[ing], heal[ing] and empower[ing] our communities". To do so, active listening and empathy are essential to fully understand communities and co-design with them (Gamman and Mazzarella, 2024). Finally, the designer should not be responsible for "the success or failure of social innovation initiatives" (Thorpe and Gamman, 2011, p. 224). The "good enough designer" does "what [he/she] can, working with other social actors to leverage community assets to effect positive change, but do not seek to take upon [him/herself] to try to do it all, for other social actors" (*ibid*., p. 221).

2.1.1.3. Defining participation

As mentioned in Section 2.1.1., design evolved from design 'for' to design 'with', and to design 'from' (Casas-Romero and Mazzarella, 2024) and 'by' people (Lee, 2024). Social innovation initiatives can indeed be activated by decision makers and experts (top-down approach), communities (bottom-up approach), or in a more hybrid way (Manzini, 2014) also defined as the 'middle-up-down' approach by Francesco Mazzarella (2018). In any case, participation and collaboration are crucial pre-conditions for successful social innovation processes (Murray *et al.*, 2010; Thorpe and Gamman, 2011; TEPSIE, 2014; Manzini, 2015; Britton, 2017). Manzini (2015) links social innovation with Amartya Sen's capability approach (1999); from this perspective, social innovation is about considering people not as part of the problem to be solved, but as part of the solution, or as assets and having the right to achieve positive social outcomes. The beneficiaries of social innovation projects should be considered as subjects who want to improve their capability to act upon their own lives. This also recalls Paulo Freire's (1970, p. 58) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, according to which "to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects". Ezio Manzini and Virginia Tassinari[27] strongly stressed the crucial role of end-users as active "agents of the solution" (2012, p.5) and as the condition for viable solutions. Costanza-Chock (2020) and Noel (2023) also argue that designing change must be a collaborative and equitable process that values the knowledge and expertise of people. Adam Thorpe[28] and Lorraine Gamman[29] (2011, p. 221) reject a paternalistic approach and promote "maternalistic and fraternalistic approaches to co-design" where the designer and other actors share, either partially (for

[27] Virginia Tassinari is Assistant Professor at the Human-centred Design Department of TU Delft in The Netherlands and a member of the DESIS international network.

[28] Adam Thorpe is Professor of Socially Responsive Design at Central Saint Martins College, (UAL). He is Co-Director of the Design Against Crime (DAC) Research Lab and member of the Coordinating Committee of the UAL DESIS Lab.

[29] Lorraine Gamman is Professor of Design at Central Saint Martins, UAL, and Director of the Design Against Crime (DAC) Research Lab, which she founded in 1999.

maternalistic) or equitably (for fraternalistic), the responsibility and agency in the design process of social innovation.

Co-design is mentioned by authors as an efficient participatory method to design social innovation with people (Thorpe and Gamman, 2011; Manzini, 2015; Noel, 2023) that values their voices as crucial contributions to the problem-solving process and that ensures the development of more successful solutions. Manzini (2015) describes co-design as “social conversations” (p.48) between different actors, marked by complex, dynamic, creative, and proactive design processes. For Noel (2023), co-design processes are supportive and inclusive collaborations between people who might not think in the same way. The process of co-design relies on trust and empathetic relationships, where power is shared between design experts and non-experts, and where design capability is collaboratively built (*ibid.*).

2.1.1.4. Defining innovation

The above-mentioned design approaches show a rupture, or discontinuity, with the current state of things, a form of innovation compared to the context-based reality and a search for better and more sustainable solutions to experienced problems. Social design addresses challenges “to which both the market and the state fail to find solutions, and which therefore pose (or should pose) the need for urgent intervention from some other quarter” (Manzini, 2015, p.64). In *Design Social Change*, Noel (2023) encourages designers to challenge the *status quo*. Design for social innovation aims to offer better alternatives to problems that have not been solved or are badly handled by “old ways” of doing (Mulgan *et al.*, 2007; Manzini, 2015).

Most often social innovation is not radically new *per se*, but instead refers to approaches that are new to a context, disrupting local ways of doing and thinking (Mulgan *et al.*, 2007; TEPSIE, 2014; Manzini, 2015), or recombining existing “resources and capabilities to create new functions and new meanings” (Manzini, 2015, p. 13). Creativity, unconventionality, and problem-solving – as

aspects of design thinking – are key to developing these innovative approaches (*ibid*.).

2.1.2. Initiatives and projects of design for social innovation

The previous section presented the social role of design and revealed that social design and design for social innovation tend to converge towards a participatory and decentralised approach of design that focuses on addressing the social needs of marginalised communities whilst fostering new social relationships.

The next level of inquiry lies in understanding what projects of design for social innovation look like in practice, what they have in common and what differentiates them from other projects. Manzini defines this type of projects as follows:

> Design-driven processes with a particular characteristic: those who 'design' constitute a very diverse group of social actors who consciously or not, adopt ways of thinking and competences that are in all respects forms of 'design thinking' and 'design knowledge (Manzini and Tassinari, 2012, p.6).

For Manzini and Tassinari (2012), social innovation initiatives aim at creating enabling systems and promote a range of sustainable qualities. An enabling system is defined as:

> A system that provides cognitive, technical, and organisational instruments so as to enable individuals and/or communities to achieve a result, using their skills and abilities to the best advantage and, at the same time, regenerating the quality of living contexts, in which they happen to live (Manzini and Tassinari, 2012, p.7).

The sustainable qualities promoted by design for social innovation include long-lasting deep human relationships, ecology of time, meaningful work,

collaboration by choice, human scale, cosmopolitan localism, and enriching complexity (Manzini and Tassinari, 2012, pp.9-10). The authors also mention common actions of social innovation initiatives that consist of (re)discovering the power of cooperation, recombining, in a creative way, already existing products, services, places, knowledge, skills and traditions or relying on own resources without waiting for change to emerge from institutional organisations (*ibid*, p.5).

The international DESIS network has undertaken and published a mapping of design for social innovation projects following two axes: themes for action and themes for reflection. Themes for action are described as the sector, area, or field where the project is trying to create change (*e.g.*, food, healthcare, clothing, housing, transport, etc) while themes for reflection are the projects' main aim and area of development (*e.g.*, product or service design for social innovation, co-design, infrastructuring, etc.). DESIS projects are organised in a double-entry table following these two axes (Figure 2.3). Each project is represented by a number that leads to the project report when selected. These project reports, albeit following a similar structure, appear generic with broad descriptive titles which make it difficult to identify common characteristics and differences between projects, *e.g.,* the bamboo bicycle in Indonesia (Tokyo Zokei University, n.d.) and the slow food movement in Italy (Manzini, 2015).

	Food	*Making*	*Clothing*	*Caring*	*Housing*	*Place-making*	*Others*
Product for SI	12	37 46	23	(12)			30
Service for SI	32			5 24 25 28 33 35 44	22	19 (32)	
Infrastructuring	9					20 31	
Digital SI				16 18 (35)			
Income generation/ entrepreneurship	26	27 42	34	29		10 21	7
Environmental concern		43			41		15 (30)
Co-design	(1) 38	8				1 2 3 4 6 (8) 11	(11) 17a 17b
Design/art performances						(6)	13
Scenario building/ envisioning				40 45		36 39	
Design theory and practices			(34)				14 (17a 17b)

Figure 2.3: DESIS project map (source: DESIS network, 2020).

TEPSIE (2014) also offers a detailed definition of social innovation initiatives and lists five key attributes and four optional factors. These attributes describe initiatives of social innovation in line with TEPSIE's definition:

> We define social innovations as new approaches to addressing social needs. They are social in their means and in their ends. They engage and mobilise the beneficiaries and help to transform social relations by improving beneficiaries' access to power and resources (2014, p.14).

TEPSIE's five key elements are that social innovations are new to the context in which they appear, meet social needs, are put into practice, engage and mobilise beneficiaries, and transform social relations (*ibid,* p.14). The four additional factors are that social innovations are usually bottom-up initiatives, present a high level of uncertainty, might become mainstream, and might provoke unexpected negative consequences (*ibid*, p.15).

In the book *Social Design, Participation and Empowerment*, Angeli Sachs[30] (2018), lists the criteria for the selection of the projects discussed in the book:

> Social and creative quality of the project, the transparency of the corresponding processes, the dialogue with and participation of the people involved in the project, their empowerment in the sense of building their own basic necessities, the transformation of social conditions, and the sustainability of the initiatives (p.28).

These selection criteria reflect the book's definition of social design as an approach that addresses critical social and environmental needs of marginalised people through participation and empowerment.

[30] Angeli Sachs is an art historian, curator and museologist who has curated numerous exhibitions and contributed to and edited publications on architecture, design, art and culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She was Professor and Head of the Master of Arts in Art Education Curatorial Studies program at Zurich University of the Arts.

This array of qualities, elements, factors, or criteria describing initiatives of design for social innovation, and summarised in Table 2.1, illustrates how difficult it is to describe and analyse projects of design for social innovation.

Albeit diverse, these lists of attributes cover similar themes. When considered together with the definitions discussed in Section 2.1.1. the following three themes emerge: participation and collaboration, social change, and innovative processes of design.

Manzini and Tassinari (2012, p.7 and pp.9-10)	DESIS	TEPSIE (2014, pp.14-15)	Sachs (2018, p.28)
Line of action: • Generation of enabling systems Qualities: • Deep relationships • Ecology of time • Meaningful work • Collaboration by choice • Human scale • Cosmopolitan localism • Enriching complexity	Project categories: • Theme for reflection • Theme of action Profile categories: Context, Project, Design Process, Governance and policy making, Activism and civic participation, Social interactions and Relations, Production, distribution and consumption, Skill training and design education, Job Creation, Storytelling and visualisation, and more	Key criteria: • New to the context • Meets a social need • Put into practice • Engage and mobilise beneficiaries • Transform social relations Additional possible factors : • Bottom-up initiatives • High-level of uncertainty • Embedded in routines, norms and structures • Negative unintended consequences	Criteria for project selection: • Social quality of the project • Creative quality of the project • Transparency of the processes • Dialogue with and participation of the people involved in the project • Empowerment in the sense of building their own basic necessities • Transformation of social conditions • Sustainability of the initiatives

Themes:
Participation and collaboration
Social change
Innovative processes of design

Table 2.1: Qualities, elements, and factors of initiatives and projects of design for social innovation (table by the author).

These three elements of design for social innovation – namely participation, social change, and innovation – can be observed in projects occurring in many fields, including in fashion, as shown by the DESIS map (Figure 2.3).

2.1.3. Fashion design for social change

Fashion designers are rarely described as actors of social change but, within a broad definition of fashion design[31], their roles are evolving towards more social consciousness and action. Dilys Williams (2018) talks about the fashion designers as a 'host' that "foregrounds public agency by creating conditions where a series of autonomous, authentic progressions of garment wearing and making might take place over time with a range of participants" (p.79), to foster connections between people. Fashion designers can take a new role of "making for a purpose, leading to creating sustainable livelihoods and bettering lives" (2023, p. 284), as demonstrated by Sandy Black[32] and Helen Storey[33] through Storey's professional journey as a designer, and in particular her work as UNHCR Designer in Residence in Zaatari refugee camp. This new role and the different forms it can take were remarkably displayed in the 'Fashion Emergent Futures' section of the 'Designed for Life' exhibition at LCF from October 2023 to January 2024 (de Greef, 2024). This research builds on the work of researchers that have used participatory methodologies and fashion design, garment making or textile practices to engage marginalised people and foster social change, such as, among others, Storey's *Love Coats* project with Syrian

[31] Fashion design is "an activity that fundamentally weaves together the practices, skills, and materials associated with clothing the body" (Williams, 2018, p.75).

[32] Sandy Black is Professor of Fashion, Textile Design and Technology at LCF, UAL. She is the author of many pioneering texts on sustainable fashion and knitwear design. She is founder and Editor-in-Chief of the journal Fashion Practice: Design, Creative Process and the Fashion Industry (Routledge Journals), published since 2009.

[33] Helen Storey is Professor of Fashion and Science at LCF, Helen Storey is a social artist and designer living in London. In 2018 – 2023 she was appointed the first UNHCR 'Designer in Residence' at Zaatari Refugee Camp, Jordan.

girls and her work in refugee camps in Jordan (Figure 2.4), Mozambique and Malawi (Loukia, 2017; Black and Storey, 2023), Lucy Orta's work at HMP Downview (Studio Orta, 2018), Anja-Lisa Hirscher's making spaces (Hirscher, 2020a), Francesco Mazzarella's projects *Forest Coats* (Mazzarella and Black, 2022) (Figure 2.5) and *Decolonising Fashion and Textiles: Design for Cultural Sustainability with Refugee Communities* (Morgado de Queiroz and Mazzarella, 2024), Lucy Orta's *Traces: Stories of Migration* project (Orta and Fulton, 2025), and Melbourne-based *The Social Studio* working with refugee and migrant communities (Cooke D., 2024). The Stitching Together research network[34], led by Emma Shercliff[35] and Amy Twigger Holroyd[36], also explores participatory textile making methods and offers a collection of case studies that bring people together to create change through making.



Figure 2.4: Storey's *Love Coats* project at Zaatari refugee camp (source: Loukia, 2017).

[34] Stitchingtogether.net

[35] Emma Shercliff is Associate Professor of Textiles and Participatory Making at the Arts University Bournemouth.

[36] Amy Twigger Holroyd is Professor of Alternative Fashion Systems at Nottingham School of Art & Design.



Figure 2.5: The *Forest Coats* project (photo by Adam Razvi, in Mazzarella, 2020).

Collective making or 'social making' (Hackney, *et al*., 2022a), in general, not only in fashion, can bring about many benefits to participants (as discussed by Caulfield *et al.*, 2018; Gamman and Thorpe, 2018; Hunter, 2019; Mazzarella, 2020; Caulfield and Allum, 2021; Hackney, *et al.*, 2022a; Kaszynska, Thorpe and Mitchell, *et al.,* 2022; Morgado de Queiroz and Mazzarella, 2024), including:

- Skill acquisition and improvement;
- Development of life and social skills;
- Improvement of mental-health and personal wellbeing;
- Enhancement of self-confidence and agency;
- Community engagement;
- Empowerment and hope for the future.

The action of making, in itself, is a human instinct, a universal human skill (Charny, 2011). According to David Gauntlett[37] (2018), people instinctively experience a "drive to make" (*ibid.*, p.33). Both Daniel Charny[38] and David Gauntlett celebrate the act of making, as an offline non-digital physical activity, for its many benefits and meanings, including:

- Making connects cultures, communities, and generations.
- Making is a source of satisfaction, happiness and pleasure for the maker who achieves a finished product and to others who can see and use it.
- Making brings a sense of achievement together with a sense of freedom, agency, and empowerment.
- Making is a form of knowledge that cannot be expressed with words. It is a way of learning and accessing new knowledge and understanding the world as well as a way of sharing that knowledge.
- Making is a form of expression of one's ideas and emotions and a process of making one's personal identity.
- Making is a thinking process and a design process. The hand and the brain work together in planning and executing the act of making.
- Making is an expression of life in both the way things are brought to life and a sense of being alive through the process of making.

Reflecting on her project *Pockets of Love* in Malawi, Helen Storey (2025) discusses the meaning and benefits of making. Both refugees in Malawi and students in London related to making in the following ways:

[37] David Gauntlett is Canada Research Chair in Creativity at The Creative School, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto. He is the author of several books, including *Making is Connecting* (2011, second edition 2018).

[38] Daniel Charny is Professor of Design at Kingston University London. His research interest lies in the role of design, making and creativity for social change. He curated the exhibition *Power of Making: The Importance of Being Skilled* at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in 2011-2012.

- Making is self-expression.
- Making is love and care for others.
- Making is having something to share with the world and a way to generate revenue.
- Making is a form of meditation.
- Making is a way of creating tools to improve life.
- Making is the acquisition of new skills.

Helen Storey's project also reflects the fact that making is a form of creative communication between people, even from afar, in this case between refugees in Malawi and students in London. Storey also mentions that the making of the *Pockets of Love* blanket by refugees contributed to a collective healing process from shared trauma.

Making can also generate health benefits and contribute to people's healing following a trauma or loss. Fiona Hackney[39], *et al.* (2022a), mention that "making helps us process meaning out of trauma and loss, aid healing and recovery, and reclaim identity and sense of belonging" (p. 1573). In her book *Threads of Life*, Clare Hunter[40] (2019) gives many examples of how needlework such as embroidery can be a useful tool towards recovery. She tells, for instance, how a mentally ill and traumatised First World War soldier used embroidery to depict the *Evacuation of Dunkirk* (pp. 36-38) and how hand stitching was used in post-war rehabilitation (pp. 42-48).

All the benefits of making, both as a collective and individual activity, are summarised in the concept and approach of 'well-making', a combination of the words wellbeing and making, defined by Hackney, *et al.* (2022b), as an

[39] "Fiona Hackney is Professor of Fashion at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. Her work explores how social design and co-production methodologies can increase community assets and agencies to work purposefully for change for good (Hackney *et al*., 2022a).

[40] Clare Hunter is a banner-maker, community artist and textile curator.

approach “using creative making, in all its forms, as an engagement tool to work with communities on co-designing change for good” (p. 284).

Reviewing the above-mentioned projects and other similar projects reveals that many fashion design and textile craft practices are used during participatory making workshops: sewing, embroidery, crochet, knitting, weaving, embellishment, customisation, appliqué, patchwork, fabric dyeing, among others. These practices bring many benefits to participants linked both to the individual and collaborative practice of making as listed above. However, one can notice that, despite the variety of crafts and practices employed, pattern making – as the step of fashion design that defines the construction of a garment – does not seem to have been used as a collaborative making practice. Participants are most often not given a choice in terms of garment design, pattern, and construction process. For instance, the zero-waste pattern for the coats made by the participants of the *Forest Coats* project (Mazzarella and Black, 2022) (Figure 2.6) was not developed by the participants, nor was the coat pattern for the *Love Coats* made by the girls of Zaatari refugee camp (Loukia, 2017). This leads to explore what pattern cutting is and the reasons why it has not been considered as a participatory practice.

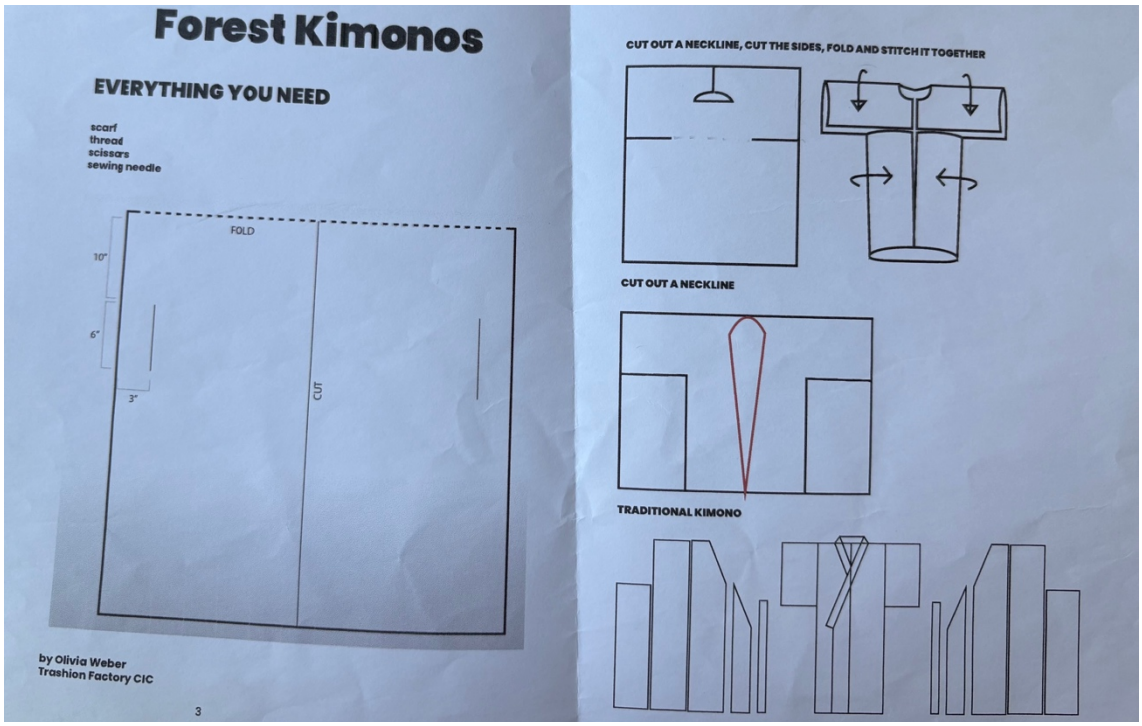


Figure 2.6: *Forest Kimono* Pattern by Olivia Weber (photo by the author).

2.2. Common understanding of the pattern cutting practice

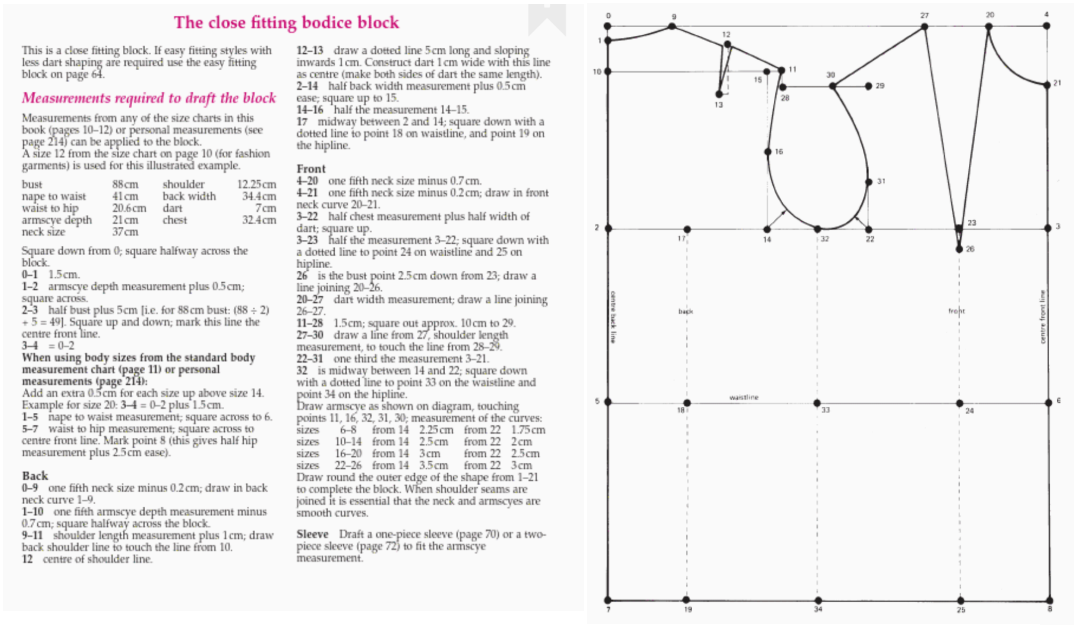
In Western countries, the field of pattern cutting is split into two main schools of thought: metric pattern cutting[41] and creative pattern cutting. This section challenges this dichotomy and argues that the field should aim for more inclusivity.

2.2.1. Metric pattern cutting

Metric pattern cutting is the "drafting [of] the paper pattern 'flat' on a piece of paper, relying on the measurements of the human body as a guide" (Lo, 2014, p.6) (Figure 2.7). This process creates "a set of flat pattern pieces that, when cut in fabric and sequentially stitched together, creates the garment" (Hardingham, 2016, p.97). This is the most common method employed in the fashion industry (Shoben and Ward, 1980; Jenkyn Jones, 2011, Simões, 2012; Rissanen, 2013). With the aid of CAD (Computer-aided-design) software, used to draw the pattern pieces from pattern blocks[42] digitally, this method makes the garment making process from design to production time-effective and accurate (Lo, 2014) and thus favoured by the industry. Metric pattern cutting is also the "near-universally dominant" method taught today (Lindqvist, 2015, p.69).

[41] The term "metric pattern cutting" is preferably used, in line with Aldrich's books (2004, 2009, 2011, 2023, 2015), instead of "flat pattern cutting" to distinguish that method from other flat ways of cutting garments.

[42] Pattern blocks (or slopers in the USA) are the basic pattern templates for each part of the body. Drawn from standard measurements, they are the starting point for the development of new designs thanks to a series of manipulations: moving seams, manipulating darts, adding pleats and gathers, widening. Most companies have a set of blocks in line with the style and fit that they promote (Jenkyn Jones, 2011, Lo, 2014).



The close fitting bodice block

This is a close fitting block. If easy fitting styles with less dart shaping are required use the easy fitting block on page 64.

Measurements required to draft the block

Measurements from any of the size charts in this book (pages 10–12) or personal measurements (see page 214) can be applied to the block.
A size 12 from the size chart on page 10 (for fashion garments) is used for this illustrated example.

bust	88 cm	shoulder	12.25 cm
nape to waist	41 cm	back width	34.4 cm
waist to hip	20.6 cm	dart	7 cm
armscye depth	21 cm	chest	32.4 cm
neck size	37 cm		

Square down from 0; square halfway across the block.
0–1 1.5 cm.
1–2 armscye depth measurement plus 0.5 cm; square across.
2–3 half bust plus 5 cm [i.e. for 88 cm bust: (88 ÷ 2) + 5 = 49]. Square up and down; mark this line the centre front line.
3–4 = 0–2
When using body sizes from the standard body measurement chart (page 11) or personal measurements (page 214):
Add an extra 0.5 cm for each size up above size 14.
Example for size 20: **3–4** = 0–2 plus 1.5 cm.
1–5 nape to waist measurement; square across to 6.
5–7 waist to hip measurement; square across to centre front line. Mark point 8 (this gives half hip measurement plus 2.5 cm ease).

Back
0–9 one fifth neck size minus 0.2 cm; draw in back neck curve 1–9.
1–10 one fifth armscye depth measurement minus 0.7 cm; square halfway across the block.
9–11 shoulder length measurement plus 1 cm; draw back shoulder line to touch the line from 10.
12 centre of shoulder line.
12–13 draw a dotted line 5 cm long and sloping inwards 1 cm. Construct dart 1 cm wide with this line as centre (make both sides of dart the same length).
2–14 half back width measurement plus 0.5 cm ease; square up to 15.
14–16 half the measurement 14–15.
17 midway between 2 and 14; square down with a dotted line to point 18 on waistline, and point 19 on the hipline.

Front
4–20 one fifth neck size minus 0.7 cm.
4–21 one fifth neck size minus 0.2 cm; draw in front neck curve 20–21.
3–22 half chest measurement plus half width of dart; square up.
3–23 half the measurement 3–22; square down with a dotted line to point 24 on waistline and 25 on hipline.
26 is the bust point 2.5 cm down from 23; draw a line joining 20–26.
20–27 dart width measurement; draw a line joining 26–27.
11–28 1.5 cm; square out approx. 10 cm to 29.
27–30 draw a line from 27, shoulder length measurement, to touch the line from 28–29.
22–31 one third the measurement 3–21.
32 is midway between 14 and 22; square down with a dotted line to point 33 on the waistline and point 34 on the hipline.
Draw armscye as shown on diagram, touching points 11, 16, 32, 31, 30; measurement of the curves:

sizes	6–8	from 14	2.25 cm	from 22	1.75 cm
sizes	10–14	from 14	2.5 cm	from 22	2 cm
sizes	16–20	from 14	3 cm	from 22	2.5 cm
sizes	22–26	from 14	3.5 cm	from 22	3 cm

Draw round the outer edge of the shape from 1–21 to complete the block. When shoulder seams are joined it is essential that the neck and armscyes are smooth curves.

Sleeve Draft a one-piece sleeve (page 70) or a two-piece sleeve (page 72) to fit the armscye measurement.

Figure 2.7: Metric Pattern Cutting: Instructions for a close fitting bodice block (Aldrich, 2015, pp. 62-63).

In academia, metric pattern cutting has been researched for its technicality, with the study of construction, measurements and fit between different methods (Gill and Chadwick, 2009; McKinney *et al.*, 2012) and the development of new pattern cutting systems – for example, Maria Tsakalidou's research on developing blocks for asymmetrical bodies of teenage girl with scoliosis of the spine (2016) as well as methodologies to create patterns for the moving body as discussed by Inês Simões (2012), Martina Steinmetz (2012) and Rickard Lindqvist[43] (2015).

Metric pattern cutting has been described as "a methodical and mathematically complex discipline, divorced from creativity" (Almond and Power, 2018, p.34). As a quantitative system, it is not seen as a creative practice of fashion design (Jenkyn Jones, 2011; Lo, 2014; Lindqvist, 2015) but as a method that serves to develop "variations of already existing designs" (Lindqvist, 2015, p.75). This

[43] In *On The Logic of Pattern Cutting*, Lindqvist (2013), focusing on the close relationship between body and cloth, identifies two groups of pattern cutting approaches: pre-tailoring methods (*i.e.* wrapping and rectangular cutting) and contemporary methods referring to the tailoring matrix (*i.e.* draping, flat pattern cutting and block manipulation) criticised as lacking the connection with movement.

consideration is corroborated by the technical role attributed to pattern cutting within the 'traditional' fashion design process. In the industry, fashion design most often happens as a linear one-way process where each step is conducted consecutively (Rissanen, 2013; Kuznia *et al.*, 2016). Pattern cutting has traditionally been the step following the design of a garment, translating the designer's sketches into patterns, and preceding manufacturing (Lo, 2014; Shah, 2015; Hardingham, 2016; McKinney *et al.*, 2016). Its role is then to "realise the vision of the designer, transforming a 2D design into a 3D garment" (Kuznia *et al.*, 2016, p.149), or in other words, it is "the process of creating and adapting pattern shapes from a two-dimensional drawing into a three-dimensional form" (Hopkins, 2022, p.109). Even though several authors highlight the importance of the collaboration between the designer and the pattern cutter (Shoben and Ward, 1980; Jenkyn Jones, 2011; Lo, 2014), the fashion design process is often described as hierarchical (Davies, 2010; Shim, 2012; Rissanen, 2013; Almond and Power, 2016; Kuznia *et al.*, 2016) and pattern cutting is typically seen as a sub-function of effective design. The designer, who creates the sketches, is thus placed at the top of the fashion design chain as the predominant owner of creativity (Davies, 2010; Rissanen, 2013; Kuznia *et al.*, 2016) and as the only one worthy of recognition and esteem (Shim, 2012).

2.2.2. Creative pattern cutting

This hierarchical conception of fashion design and this definition of pattern cutting, deprived of creativity, is criticised by several designers, pattern cutters and researchers (Almond, 2010; Jenkyn Jones, 2011; Rissanen, 2013; Roberts, 2013; Lo, 2014, Almond and Power, 2016; Iszoro, 2016; O'Neill, 2021). They promote a more equitable distribution of the creative role and ask for more recognition of pattern cutters within fashion design. In the industry and in educational settings, we also talk about creative pattern cutting. For instance, although London College of Fashion (LCF), UAL, makes less of a distinction between creative pattern cutting and industry-orientated pattern cutting, and

promotes creativity in all areas, with a unique MA Pattern and Garment Technology focusing on creative and innovative technical skills[44] (UAL, 2025), other Higher Education Institutions such as the University of Huddersfield, specifically offer Master's degrees in creative pattern cutting (University of Huddersfield, 2022). Often aimed at developing new aesthetic possibilities, creative pattern cutting is usually associated with draping on the stand (Di Marco, 2010; Jenkyn Jones, 2011; Abling and Maggio, 2016; Amaden-Crawford, 2018) which is often described as the most creative method of pattern cutting (Almond, 2010; Joseph-Armstrong, 2014) and associated with famous fashion designers (Figure 2.8).



Figure 2.8: Designer Zac Posen draping in Central Park, New York (photo by Corey Tenold, 2020, in Iman, 2020).

[44] The MA Pattern and Garment Technology at LCF used to have two pathways, creative pattern cutting and commercial pattern cutting. This was still the case in 2018, when the researcher completed her MA, but one unique pathway was created the following academic year.

However, creative pattern cutting is much more than draping. Firstly, it involves the recognition and the promotion of the crucial role and creative potential of pattern cutting within fashion design (Nakamichi, 2010, 2011, 2016; Almond, 2010, 2016, 2018, 2019; Sato, 2011; Rissanen,2013; Ohrn-McDaniel, 2013; Roberts, 2013; Almond and Power, 2016; Iszoro, 2016).There are many different approaches to fashion design practice and the separation between the design and the pattern cutting roles are not as distinct as traditionally presented in a hierarchical and linear one-way process of industrial garment manufacturing (Section 2.2.1.). These roles are closely interlinked, even merging with one another when pattern cutting becomes the "design ideation tool" (Rissanen, 2013, p. 137). Many fashion designers are skilful in pattern cutting methods and might use them to design. Some examples were Madeleine Vionnet, Charles James, Cristóbal Balenciaga, Halston, Madame Gres, and Alexander McQueen (Almond, 2019, O'Neill, 2021). Pattern cutters are creative talented people who have advanced technical skills and knowledge about the structure and construction of a garment (Lo, 2014, O'Neill, 2021), leading to "technical wizardry"[45] (Almond and Power, 2016, p. 2) and infinite creative potential (Almond; 2010; Jenkyn Jones, 2011; Roberts, 2013; Craft Council, n.d.).

Creative pattern cutting is also about researching and developing new ways of designing where pattern cutting takes the lead (Kuznia, *et al.*, 2016). For Kevin Almond[46] and Greg Climer[47] (2023), pattern cutting "is often taught separately from design; however, pattern making can also be a source of inspiration for design" (p.149). By placing pattern cutting at the centre of the design process, those new design approaches challenge traditional methods and take more

[45] For other mentions of the magic of pattern cutting, see Jenkyn Jones, 2011; Nakamichi, 2010, 2011, 2016; Orta, n.d.

[46] Kevin Almond is Associate Professor at University of Leeds, UK, and Leader of the Textiles and Fashion Research Group. He founded the International Conference for Creative Pattern Cutting and has published extensively about pattern cutting.

[47] Greg Climer is Associate Professor of Fashion Design at California College of the Arts. He is an artist, designer, and a trained pattern maker.

creative risks as a way to “create new possibilities” (Rissanen and McQuillan, 2016, p. 84).

Some examples are Shingo Sato’s (2011) and Tomoko Nakamichi’s (2010, 2011, 2016) methods that challenge conventional blocks and techniques to create bold designs. Driven by sustainability, zero-waste fashion design (Rissanen, 2013; Rissanen and McQuillan, 2016; McQuillan, 2019) uses pattern cutting as a “fashion design tool” (Rissanen, 2013, p. 76) (Figure 2.9).



Figure 2.9: Zero-waste pajamas and pattern (Rissanen and McQuillan, 2016).

In search for new volumes and aesthetic expressions, some researchers start from shapes that fully break with traditional metric pattern cutting. For instance, Linda Ohrn-McDaniel studies how to create shapes with a circle (Ohrn-McDaniel, 2013), and Laura Hardingham’s students create garments using cardboard boxes (Hardingham, 2016). Adopting a more radical approach, Julian Roberts’ Subtraction pattern cutting (Roberts, 2013), and Eva Iszoro’s Accidental cutting (Iszoro, 2016) (Figure 2.10) rely on randomness, chance, trial, and error.



Figure 2.10: Accidental Cutting Method: prototype and pattern (Iszoro, 2016, p. 7).

Roberts (2013) summarises his approach as follows:

> When you explore new techniques and methods of making, you deal with chance, luck and hope. Sometimes you completely mess up; sometimes the mistakes are really much better than what you were hoping for; and sometimes you discover something about cloth you didn't realize was possible (p.15).

2.2.3. Challenging the global practice of pattern cutting

This dichotomous description of the pattern cutting field exists in a Western-centric approach to fashion design, sometimes at the expense of indigenous or traditional ways of constructing a garment. Historically, metric pattern cutting has been brought to and imposed on colonised people by the wives of missionaries as the way to construct 'civilised' fashion in opposition to traditional outfits such as leather clothing. For instance, in the mid-nineteenth century, missionaries in Namibia introduced European Victorian-style long dresses to the Orlam and Herero women, redefining not only the way they dressed, but also the social structures, traditions, and cultural identity (Hendrickson, 1994) (Figure 2.11).



Figure 2.11: Herero women wearing long Victorian-style dresses (photo by Jim Naughten, 2013, p.39 and p.1).

More recently, globalisation has brought Western clothes to the Global South, replacing traditional clothing and ways of constructing them; for example, Western garments have replaced traditional Indian garments, (Fletcher and Fitzpatrick, 2021). The exhibition *Africa Fashion* (2022) at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London, showcased fashion from the African continent, but it can be argued that most garments on display were based on Western designs and following European garment construction standards (see Alphadi skirt suit, Figure 2.12). Indeed, many of the designers showcased trained in European fashion institutions (*e.g.* Alphadi studied in Paris).



Figure 2.12: Ensemble, jacket, and skirt, designed by Alphadi, Niger, 1993 (Alphadi, 1993).

Traditional and indigenous pattern cutting, and garment construction techniques should also be taken into consideration when exploring what defines fashion in and from Africa. In the case of this exhibition, they apparently have mostly been replaced by European metric pattern cutting methods. Only two designers

showcased in the ‘Africa Fashion’ exhibition, Shade Thomas-Fahn and Naïma Bennis, seem to have developed designs based on traditional silhouettes and traditional ways of constructing garments, namely fabric wrapping, and garments based on rectangles.

In their book chapter addressing the issue of cultural appropriation within the pattern cutting field, Almond and Climer (2023) also note that Western pattern cutting dominates how the craft is taught globally:

> Cultures, which have their own pattern cutting traditions, teach the craft using a western methodology. For instance, Bunka Fashion School in Japan teaches western pattern cutting despite Japan having a rich history of garment making, where cutting emanates from Eastern traditions (p.149).

Indeed, global fashion schools teach pattern cutting mainly in three different ways, metric pattern cutting, draping on the stand, and 2D and 3D software (Almond and Climer, 2023), ignoring local knowledge about garment construction and replicating the Western dichotomous definition of the craft as previously discussed (Sections 2.2.1. to 2.2.3.).

In line with Almond and Climer’s aim to decentre “Western pattern cutting approaches within the fashion industry” (2023, p.150), it is crucial for this research to consider a broad and inclusive definition of pattern cutting that encompasses the many traditional and indigenous ways of constructing a garment, too often omitted in a Western-centric definition of fashion design. In this context, Alistair O’Neill’s[48] definition in the book *Exploding Fashion: Making, Unmaking, and Remaking* (2021) appears particularly suitable:

> Pattern-cutting involves a technical, conceptual and creative transformation: it turns two-dimensional cloth into three-dimensional garment form, changing fabric into fashion. (O’Neill, 2021, p.9)

[48] Alistair O’Neill is Professor of Fashion History and Theory at Central Saint Martins, UAL. He is the author of *Exploding Fashion: Making, Unmaking, and Remaking Twentieth-Century Fashion* (2021) that explores the role of innovative pattern-cutting in twentieth-century fashion design.

2.2.4. Pattern cutting and social change

> Pattern-making is a concrete political form. It's the structure of everything we are debating, yet we rarely talk about it. […]. But patternmaking is a foundational form, one that determines the way we understand of and perceive people, cloth and clothing, a framework that is related directly to the body and the systems that it relates to (systems of use and consumption, sustainability, environmental justice, etc.) (Cuba, in Noel 2023).

Lucia Cuba[49] perfectly summarises how important but un-acknowledged the role of pattern cutting is, not only within the fashion industry (as discussed in Sections 2.2.1. and 2.2.2.), but also within our societies. Because of its central role within the fashion design process, pattern cutting has indeed made possible and accompanied significant changes that have had a decisive impact on people's lives.

- Pattern cutting for fostering a sense of agency

The home-sewing movement is a way of giving people agency on what they wear. Since the mid-19th century, the development of the paper patterns (Figure 2.13), first sent via mail and now also in digital form, paired with the improved availability and affordability of the domestic sewing machine, has offered detailed and graded patterns[50] for sophisticated designs to home-sewers. Over the years, many pattern publications appeared – *Butterick* (1863) and *Harper's Bazar* (1867), *McCall* (1871), *Vogue* (1899), *Simplicity* (1927), *Burda* (1952). Home-sewing was very popular from the 1860s to the 1920s. After the First World War, women's increased access to high education and into the

[49] Lucia Cuba is a designer, textile artist, and scholar. She is Assistant Professor of Fashion Design and Social Justice and Co-Director of the MFA Fashion Design and Society programme at Parsons School of Design. Her work focuses on exploring fashion, social justice, and critical design, expanding fashion's role towards addressing social, ethical, and political challenges.

[50] Graded patterns are flat patterns available in many sizes.

workplace, together with the development of affordable ready-made garments, led to the redefinition of home-sewing – from an activity driven by necessity, to supporting the war effort, to becoming a hobby facilitated by better technology (*i.e.,* better sewing machines, improved patterns, and the internet) (Spanabel Emery, 2014). Since the 2000s, home-sewing has gone through a revival thanks to a wide offer of patterns and the influence of television reality shows like *Project Runway* (since 2004, in the USA) and *The Great British Sewing Bee* (since 2013, in the UK).



Figure 2.13: Skirt pattern by *Simplicity*, 1968 (Commercial Pattern Archive, in Spanabel Emery, 2014, p.182).

From home, people with all types of sewing experiences can make unique garments that fit them exactly the way they want, promoting individuality, satisfaction, and a sense of achievement (Spanabel Emery, 2014). Makers are also given a certain freedom on the designs thanks to books and online resources detailing instructions on how to adapt, adjust, 'hack' or "franken-

pattern[51]" (Fehr, 2024, p.60) the patterns to one's taste, needs and/or morphology. Home-sewing brings many benefits to the makers: definition of their own identity, sense of achievement and pride, development of their creativity. Online 'sew-alongs'[52] and social media also create a sense of community between home-sewers.

As a broader movement, home-sewing challenges the normative and non-inclusive fashion industry, in particular in terms of sizing and fit. With her digital sewing pattern brand *Fehr Trade*[53], Melissa Fehr (2024) offers activewear patterns to a wide range of home-sewers, with the aim to empower them to exercise more by taking ownership of the clothes they wear. Rosie Martin (2016), in her book *No patterns Needed*, brings a DIY approach to home-sewing, opening the activity to even more people, and suggests bypassing printed patterns and sizes by using rectangles, circles, and triangles, and simple everyday tools to make garments that fit every body shape and size (Figure 2.14). Home-sewing can also lead to greater awareness and agency towards sustainability in fashion (Cooke S., 2024). In the project *S4S Designing a Sensibility for Sustainable Clothing* (Saunders *et al.*, 2024), participants engaged with pattern cutting, using a vintage 1940s paper pattern, among other participatory learning practices, as a way to help generate new social practices towards more sustainable clothing choices.

[51] Franken- pattern: "unofficial sewing term for combining several existing patterns together into one garment" (Fehr, 2024, p. 60).

[52] Sew-alongs are led through social media by a host organisation or maker, and bring together people who sew the same garment or item at the same time. Participants can easily see each other's progress and final garments by sharing photos and videos.

[53] https://shop.fehrtrade.com/

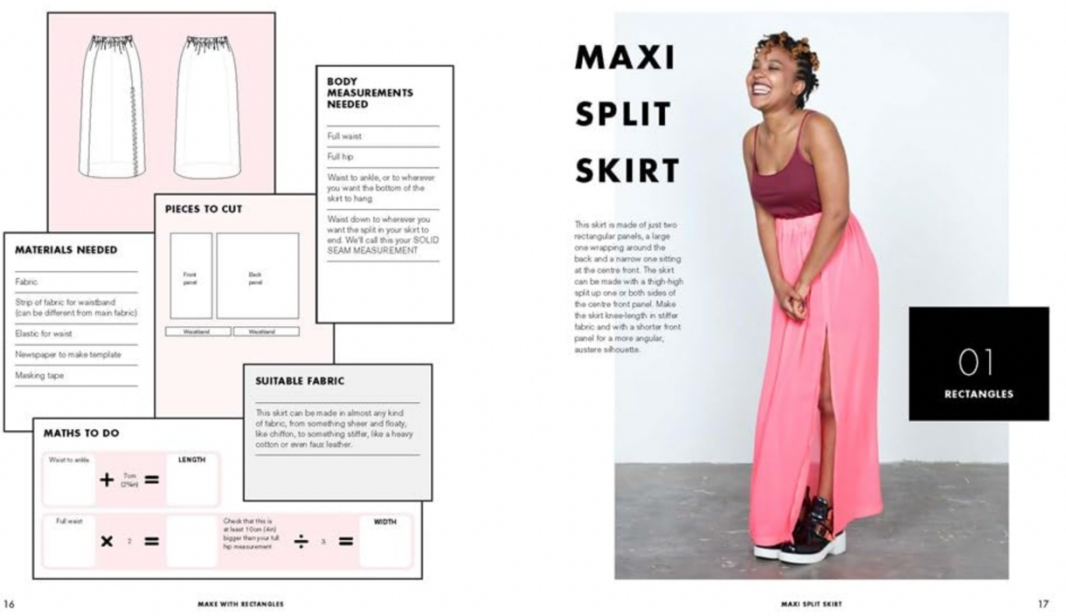


Figure 2.14: Instructions from the book *No Patterns Needed* (Martin, 2016, pp.16-17).

- Pattern cutting for inclusivity

Pattern cutting has helped many people previously excluded from the fashion industry to enjoy clothing and participate in social life, by creating garments that fit their bodies, bring autonomy, dignity, and self-expression in the way they dress or that allow them to exercise.

The dominant sizing and fitting norms of the fashion industry often do not consider the diversity of body shapes and excludes many. The project *Fit But You Know it*[54], led by Olivia Hegarty[55], challenges the Eurocentric norms of fit by valuing tacit knowledge when constructing garments and thus bringing more inclusivity to fashion. Research and brands advocating for more inclusivity have developed innovative pattern cutting solutions to bring comfortable and fashionable garments to everyone. Maria Tsakalidou's PhD research (2016) adapted the pattern blocks to girls with scoliosis of the spine. In the book *Just Fashion: Critical Cases on Social Justice in Fashion,* Cally Carbone (2012) highlights the need for specifically designed garments for people with Down's

[54] https://fitforpractice.myblog.arts.ac.uk/

[55] Olivia Hegarty is Senior Lecturer in Creative Pattern cutting at London College of Fashion, UAL.

syndrome. Adaptive wear challenges the current fashion industry, revolving around the able body, by designing garments for disabled people. Adaptive clothing allows people with disabilities to participate in social and professional life, have greater agency, dress on their own and exercise, supporting healthier and active lives and improving self-confidence, mental health, and aspirations for the future (Fowles, 2021). The brand *Unhidden*[56] aims “for dignity, comfort and style” (Jenkins, 2024, p.182) for disabled young professionals by making fashionable and adapted easy-to-put-on garments (Figure 2.15). To help designers create adaptive clothes, as part of her PhD research, Jennifer Poage (2022) developed a toolkit to design sportswear for consumers with upper limb impairment or difference.



Figure 2.15: *Unhidden* seated wrap twill trousers (source: Unhidden, 2025).

[56] https://unhiddenclothing.com/

Pattern making, by addressing ill-fitting sportswear, has supported the inclusion of all types of people in sports and physical activities, thus contributing to shifting the narrative that sports should be for everyone. The project *Politics of Patents*[57] (Figure 2.16), led by Kat Jungnickel[58] at Goldsmiths University of London, investigated how clothing and citizenships are linked. In particular, the project focused on how clothing technical innovations between 1890 and 1940 supported women in participating in active social lives and physical activities such as hiking, running, and cycling, challenging the socio-political norms of the time (Jungnickel, 2024).



Figure 2.16: John Noble's 1895 'New Convertible Costume' (Los Angeles Herald, 1895, p. 18, in Jungnickel, 2024, p. 590).

More recently, the creation of the Burqini (Figure 2.17), a modest all-over body-covering swimwear, has changed the lives of Muslim girls and women all over the world, allowing them to participate in swimming activities, be it for leisure or

[57] https://www.politicsofpatents.org/

[58] Kat Jungnickel is Professor in the Sociology Department of Goldsmiths University of London. Her practice-based research focuses on the role of technologies in relation to mobilities, bodies, gender, and DIY cultures.

competition. The Burqini has contributed to changing attitudes towards Muslim women in sports (Zanetti, 2024).



Figure 2.17: Women wearing burqinis, by Aheda Zanetti (source: Zanetti, n.d.).

- Pattern cutting for better living

As societies evolve and lifestyles change, garments must adapt to new needs and requirements of wearers. Pattern making has accompanied and facilitated social movements by improving the functionalities of garments and making them fit to the lifestyles of the time. These innovations have been determinant for the emancipation of women in supporting their active personal and professional lives. As mentioned in the previous section, pattern making innovations had a significant role in enabling women's access to sports (Jungnickel, 2024). In the workplace, women also suffer from ill-fitting clothing. Having experienced it herself, Mimosa Schmidt (2024) created the brand *SÜK*, designing workwear that fits all body shapes, bringing comfort, safety, and confidence to women in usually male-dominated work environments such as building sites and long-haul ships (Figure 2.18). In police forces, more 'sculpted' uniforms are now available to female officers, improving their fit and functionality (Black and Kapsali, 2005). Martina Steinmetz's (2012) work on the

woman's business suit also focused on bringing more comfort and movement to women at work, in public transports, and at home.



Figure 2.18: *SÜK* Ringer Suit (source: SÜK, 2025).

Another area of improvement for women through pattern making innovation is maternity wear. Comfortable and practical garments and underwear that fit a pregnant body and make breastfeeding easier in public spaces help mothers maintain a social life, which contributes to improving maternal mental health and reducing the risk of postpartum depression.

- Pattern cutting for art and activism

In some cases, pattern cutting and construction choices are made to represent specific values or a change that a project is aiming to activate. Lucy Orta, for instance, has used pattern cutting to raise awareness of social issues. She

“drew on the knowledge [she] had of pattern cutting” (Orta, 2024, p.139) to create the *Habitent* as part of her *Refuge Wear* work. The *Habitent* (Figure 2.19) is a combination of a tent and a garment, drawing attention to homelessness and a failing social system.



Figure 2.19: Lucy Orta's *Habitent* (source: Orta, 2024).

In the *NEXUS Architecture* project (Orta, 2024), a rectangle, sewn into a tube, connects people wearing overall suits (Figure 2.20). The simple rectangular pattern piece serves here as a metaphor for the nexus, the social link between people.



Figure 2.20: *NEXUS Architecture* COP26 (photo by Lorenza Demata, in Lucy + Jorge Orta, 2021).

The project further evolved to represent the diversity of personalities of the participants. The experimental project called *D'FORM Emotive Nexus* (Orta, 2004) offered the possibility to personalise the basic worker's overall pattern block through an online interactive design programme (Figure 2.21).

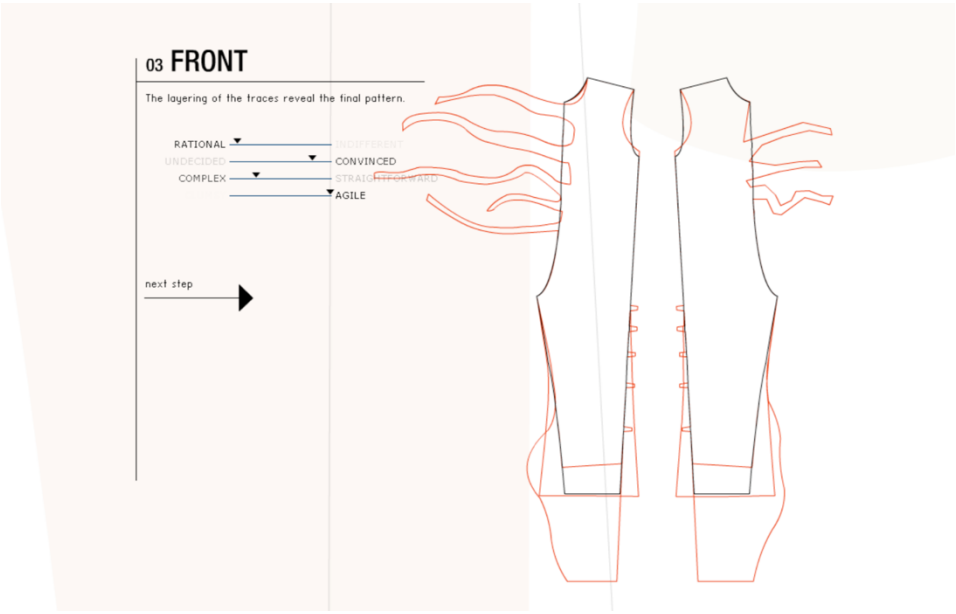


Figure 2.21: *D'Form Emotive Nexus* design programme (source: Orta, 2004).

Another example is the jacket created as part of the *Community Couture* project that gathered thirty-seven stories and was loaned by different wearers with the aim to explore how fashion can connect people (St Clair Morgan, 2021). LCF alumna and founder of the project, Aniela Fidler-Wieruszewska made the conscious and explicit choice to use zero-waste pattern cutting as a metaphor for not leaving anyone behind (Figure 2.22).



Figure 2.22: Instagram post by *Community Couture* (source: Community Couture, 2021).

2.3. Knowledge gaps and conclusions

Within the wide field of fashion design, a more inclusive and purpose-driven narrative is being created to which this research aimed to contribute. This doctoral project sits within the field of research that uses the practice of 'fashion making' as a research method and an approach to foster social change within marginalised communities.

By bringing together the fields of design for social innovation and pattern making, the review of the literature has led to the identification of the following knowledge gaps:

- A framework to describe and analyse projects of fashion design for social innovation is missing.
- The practice of pattern making lacks inclusivity and equality.
- There is no example of a project of fashion design for social change employing pattern making and garment making as participatory practices with marginalised people and communities.

The analysis of the literature review served as a starting point to addressing the first two knowledge gaps identified through the development of a theoretical framework to analyse projects of design for social innovation, and a categorisation of pattern making methods.

2.3.1. A definition of design for social innovation for this project

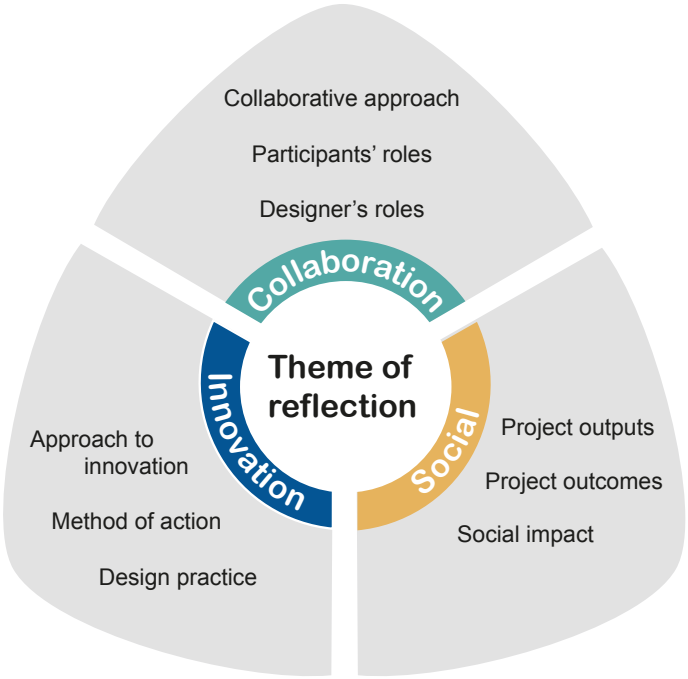
The previous sections have presented a wide spectrum of approaches of design for social innovation, but considering the current social, environmental, and economic state of emergency around the world, these approaches tend to merge towards one that values equity and social justice and where participation of under-represented and marginalised groups of people is crucial to solving their social needs. This doctoral research sits within this perception of design for social innovation and suggests the following definition:

> *Design for social innovation is anything (e.g., products, systems, services, etc.) that designers can do to support the development of innovative approaches that address social needs of marginalised groups of people and foster more sustainable and resilient social relationships. Innovative approaches use existing methods or a combination of methods in new ways or in new contexts. Social innovation is intrinsically participatory and engages the beneficiaries in the development of their own voices, agencies, and practices.*

This definition brings together the different aspects discussed in the previous sections – it emphasises the multiple roles that design can play in contributing to addressing the social needs of marginalised groups of people and the necessity for them to participate in a process enacted through new social relationships. This definition emphasizes the strong relationship between innovation, as a context-based concept, and social change. To highlight the innovative aspect of design, the terminology ‘design for social innovation’ is here preferred.

2.3.2. A framework to analyse projects of fashion design for social innovation

The literature review uncovered the lack of a clear, shared understanding of projects of design for social innovation. As shown in Table 2.1., authors list many different characteristics of projects but no clear practical definition can be formulated. The analysis of these lists of attributes, together with the definition formulated in Section 2.3.1., allows for the further unpacking of the core elements of design for social innovation, leading to the development of a framework to analyse projects, as described in Figure 2.23.



Element	Description
Theme of reflection	What are the project's main aim and area of development? Ex: Product or service for social innovation, infrastructuring, digital social innovation, income generation/entrepreneurship, environmental concern, design theory and practice, activism, co-design, …
Collaborative approach	What is the collaborative or participatory approach of the project? Ex: Maternalistic, fraternalistic, teaching, mentoring, …
Participants' roles	In which way are participants agents in the process? What are the participants' roles and how much are they involved in the design process? And at what stage of the design process do they participate? Ex: initiators, (co)-designers, input givers, makers, entrepreneurs, students, end-users, …
Designer's roles	What are the designer's roles? Ex: strategist, researcher, facilitator, activist, educator, maker, storyteller, sense maker, …
Project outputs	What does the project achieve as an output of its activities? Ex: new products, services, processes, markets, platforms, organisational forms, business models, …
Project outcomes	For participants: What outcomes does the project achieve in terms of social change? Ex: skill acquisition, wellbeing improvement, community engagement, self-confidence, employment, …
	For the designer: What outcomes does the project achieve in terms of social change? Ex: skill acquisition, wellbeing improvement, community engagement, self-confidence, self-growth, …
Social impact	What long-term social changes is the project aiming for? Ex: well-being, place-making, problem-solving, agency, community engagement, employment opportunities, education, social inclusion, sustainability, …
Approach to innovation	How is the project innovating? Ex: challenging traditional ways of doing, introducing ways of doing in a new context, reconsidering traditional ways of doing in new ways, recombining existing resources, inventing something completely new, rediscovering the power of cooperation, …
Method of action	What are the methods used to activate the innovation process ? Ex: focus groups, interviews, making workshops, collective making, …
Design practice	Which design practice is used? In the specific case of fashion design, which practice of fashion making is used to engage participants? Ex: drawing, crochet, sewing, embroidery, …

Figure 2.23: Framework to analyse projects of design for social innovation (illustration by the author).

Bringing together DESIS' core element, Manzini's 'meaningful work' quality and TEPSIE's types of social innovation, the theme of reflection is central in the framework and relates to the project's main aim and area of development. The three key elements of 'collaboration', 'social change' and 'innovation' are split into three sub-elements each:

- 'Collaboration' covers the roles of the designer, the roles of the participants or beneficiaries, and the nature of the collaboration between them. This element echoes the collaborative aspect of design for social innovation, based on relationships between designers and participants as well as the crucial role of beneficiaries in determining the solutions and their successful implementations (Manzini and Tassinari, 2012; TEPSIE, 2014; Costanza-Chock, 2020; Noel, 2023).

- 'Social change' relates to three levels of change generated by the project – outputs, outcomes, and impact – in line with the Theory of Change (Dhillon and Vaca, 2018). This core element of projects of design for social innovation refers to the change generated by the project that addresses the needs and challenges of under-represented, marginalised, or vulnerable groups of people (TEPSIE, 2014, Costanza-Chock, 2020; Noel, 2023).

- 'Innovation' refers to how the project defines, generates, and concretely implements innovative processes. This core element relates to the fact that design for social innovation is new in the context where it appears and that it is practice-based (Manzini and Tassinari, 2012; TEPSIE, 2014). In the case of this research focusing on fashion design, pattern making, and garment making, this also includes the design practice selected for the project.

2.3.3. Pattern making as a holistic practice of fashion design

From the literature reviewed, it became clear that the pattern cutting field needed a review of its definition. O'Neill's broad definition of pattern cutting

(Section 2.2.3.) also questions the meaning of the term ‘pattern cutting’. Many terms are used to refer to pattern cutting, often interchangeably. Differences might come from the fact that authors have different cultural and geographical backgrounds. For instance, pattern making is preferably used in Australia and the United States, whereas pattern cutting is a UK term. In his PhD thesis, Timo Rissanen[59] (2013), who has worked in Sydney and New York City, explicitly chooses to use the British term ‘pattern cutting’ because “the inclusion of the word ‘cutting’ implies a closer engagement with cloth, particularly in the context of zero-waste fashion design“ (p. 171). Some authors, researchers and pattern cutters seem to prefer the term ‘pattern design’ to emphasize the link between pattern cutting and its role in fashion design (MacDonald, 2010; Sato, 2011; Simões, 2012; Calvo, 2021). In other contexts, terms such as pattern engineering (Wang, 2011) and technical design (Almond, 2016) highlight the technicality of the practice. Considering the numerous terms used and their meanings, it is important for this research to use the one that best reflects its intention.

Many research projects in this field focus on the relationship between pattern cutting and design, but limited focus seems to be given to the relationship between pattern cutting and the actual making of the garment. Authors and researchers do mention them as consecutive steps in the fashion design process and highlight the importance of communication between designers, pattern cutters and machinists (Jenkyn Jones, 2011; Lo, 2014), but they do not question or explore that relationship further. Instead, pattern cutting and garment making are intrinsically connected, even being a unique activity in some cases. Therefore, for this research, the term ‘pattern making’ is purposefully chosen. The word ‘making’ implies a more holistic view of the design and making process and the role of ‘pattern cutting’ at every stage of fashion design. By using the term ‘pattern making’, the intention is to:

[59] Timo Rissanen is Associate Professor in Fashion and Textiles at University of Technology Sydney, Australia. He completed a PhD focusing on ‘Zero-waste fashion design: A study at the intersection of cloth, fashion design and pattern cutting’ (University of Sydney) in 2013 and co-authored the book *Zero-waste Fashion Design* (2023) with Holly McQuillan.

- Acknowledge the different ways in which a garment can be designed, constructed, and made;
- Promote the different aspects of the practice, both technical and creative;
- Acknowledge its various dimensionality;
- Include the making of a garment within fashion design and bring closer together, even merge, the roles of designer, pattern cutter and maker.

2.3.4. An inclusive map of pattern making methods

Based on this definition of the practice, the Western dichotomy of the field can be challenged to bring more inclusivity. Rejecting the Western-centric categorisation based on creativity potentials, design purposes, and geographical or cultural origins, it is possible to consider all pattern making methods equitably and broaden their possibilities for creativity and innovation. Pattern making methods can be analysed from a technical standpoint. This thesis suggests four categories of methods based on the starting point of the pattern making/design process (Figure 2.24). This categorisation is not mutually exclusive nor collectively exhaustive and is open to be completed with other methods.

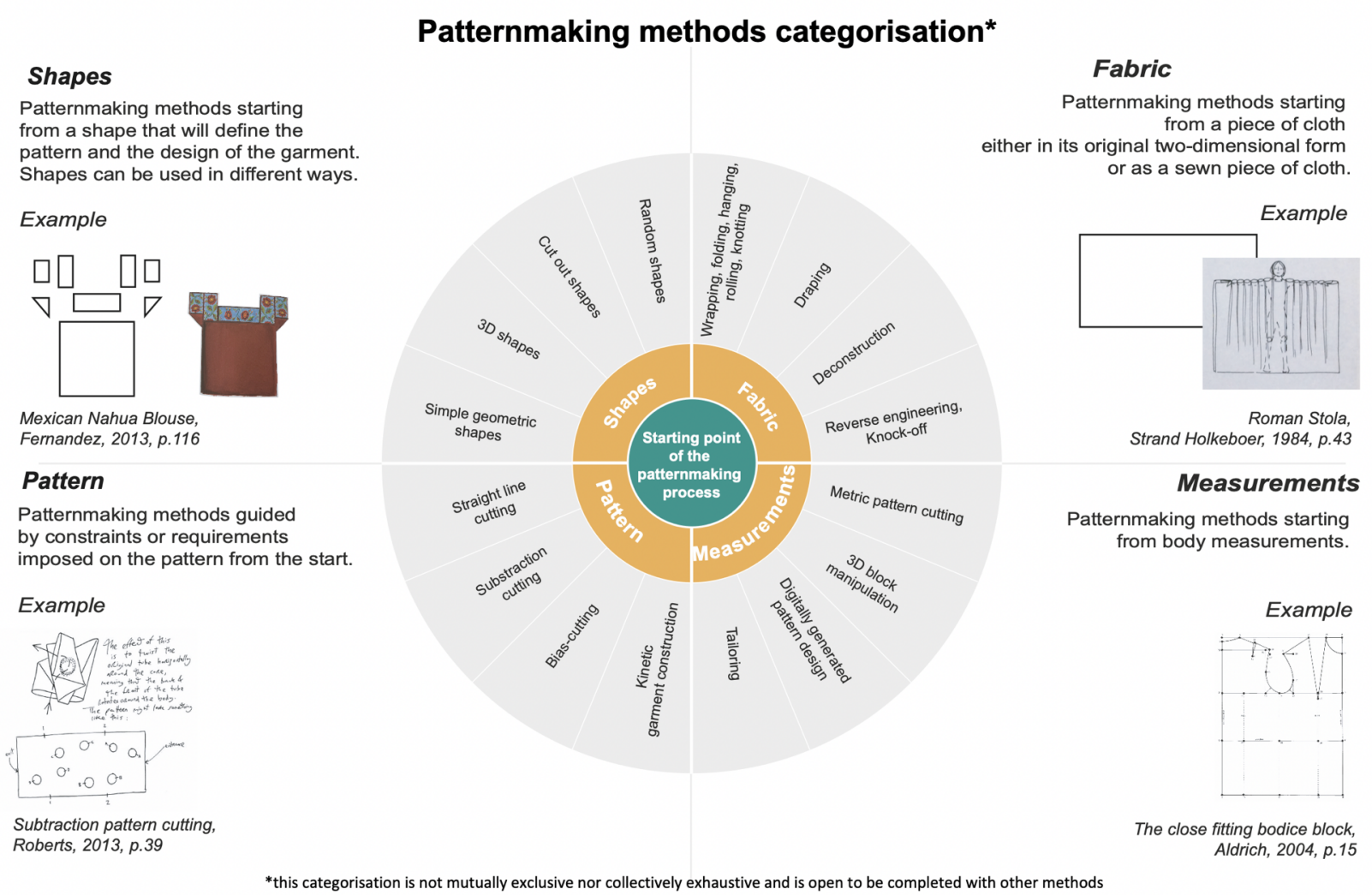


Figure 2.24: Categorisation of pattern making methods (illustration by the author).

The four categories are defined as follows:

- *Measurements*: The first category consists of pattern making methods that start from body measurements. Among others, these include metric pattern cutting (Aldrich, 2004, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015; Jenkyn Jones, 2011), 3D block manipulation (Nakamichi's Pattern Magic approach, 2010, 2011, 2016; Sato's transformational reconstruction method, 2011), digitally generated pattern design (see Regenerative Pattern design, Calvo, 2021) and tailoring.

- *Fabric*: Other methods start from a physical piece of cloth either in its original two-dimensional form or as a sewn piece of cloth. Draping on the stand is naturally positioned in this group. Traditional and indigenous ways of constructing garments such as wrapping, folding, hanging, rolling, or knotting fabric to cover the body also sit in this category – *e.g.,* indigenous Mexican garment construction (Fernández, 2013), Indian Saris, Greek chiton, Roman toga, Nigerian wrapped iró skirt (Checinska, 2022). Other methods, such as deconstruction, reverse engineering, and knock-off techniques (Joseph-Armstrong, 2014) start from an existing garment.

- *Shapes*: Other approaches start with a shape that will define the pattern, design and making of the garment. Shapes can be used in different ways. Some traditional garment construction methods consist of stitching together simple geometrical shapes, such as rectangles, circles, and triangles (*e.g.,* Japanese Kimono, traditional Afghan dresses, Mexican Nahua blouse). Some designers have also experimented with simple geometrical shapes, such as Madeleine Vionnet (Kirke, 2012), Isabel Toledo (Steele and Mears, 2009) and Yoshiki Hishinuma. Three-dimensional shapes (Nakamichi, 2010, 2011, 2016) and shapes cut out in the fabric (Doshi, 2017), shapes based on existing objects or as a result of randomness (Iszoso, 2016) can also act as the starting point of a design.

- *Pattern constraints*: The last category is defined by constraints or requirements that are imposed on the pattern from the start. For instance, for the researcher's Masters' project at LCF, she developed patterns for garments that required only straight sewing during the production phase. Lindqvist's (2015) kinetic construction system follows Langer's body lines[60]. Other pattern making methods require the fabric to hang on the bias, such as Vionnet's work (Kirke, 2012) and the bias-cut tube (Bramson and Lenahan, 2014). Finally, Robert's subtraction cutting (2013) is based on the removal of fabric to create ways of wearing clothes on the body.

Zero-Waste Pattern Cutting (ZWPC) is not present in this categorisation. ZWPC is defined by a strong initial constraint, designing a garment using the whole rectangle of cloth, leaving no fabric waste. However, this particular approach to fashion design can be defined as an application of other methods. Indeed, a zero-waste design can be achieved by using many different methods or a combination of methods.

By organising and categorising pattern cutting methods as equal alternative ways to create garments, disregarding what this thesis argues are arbitrarily allocated creative potentials, it offers a 'toolbox' from which methods can be selected and combined to develop new ideas. In such a way, the methods are also dissociated from areas and fields where they might be most commonly applied (*e.g.,* Roberts' subtraction pattern cutting for the development of new aesthetics and the use of reverse engineering to study and reproduce historical garments). A method or a combination of methods can then be more easily considered in new ways and areas, fostering creativity and innovation.

This inclusive and equitable definition of pattern making is essential to avoid perpetuating a restricted Western-centric view of the field and explore the

[60] "Langer's lines (Langer, 1861), a model used in surgery, denote the anisotropic qualities of the human skin ['the grain direction' of the skin]. Along the lines, the skin is less flexible and across the lines it has more flexible qualities, thus Langer's line may also be used as a notation of the movement scheme of the body" (Lindqvist, 2016, p.109).

potential of the practices of pattern making and garment making to foster social change.

2.3.5. Pattern making to foster social change

The review of the pattern making field revealed that, despite a lack of inclusivity and equality within the practice, pattern making has enabled some social changes, such as fostering inclusivity in the fashion industry and improving wearers' wellbeing and self-confidence, and has been used to convey social messages. However, it also demonstrated that pattern making has not been used as a participatory approach with marginalised people for four main reasons:

- Pattern making is commonly considered too complex, mathematical, and difficult to learn.
- Pattern making is usually viewed as a technical rather than creative practice.
- Pattern making is seen as being reserved to trained pattern makers and designers.
- Pattern making lacks inclusivity and equality of methods.

By applying the principles of design for social innovation to the pattern making practice – namely participation, inclusivity, and equality – and building on the inclusive definition and categorisation of the practice, uncovered in the previous Sections 2.3.3. and 2.3.4., this doctoral project aims to overcome these obstacles. Pattern making, as the knowledge and creative practice of garment construction, has the potential to empower people to create their own garment designs, in particular when considering a wide array of methods. This research suggests opening to 'non-design experts' an area of fashion design that has been restricted to expert pattern makers until now.

Therefore, an original methodology, in line with the definition of design for social innovation formulated in Section 2.3.1., was developed (Chapter 3): a collaborative, participatory practice-based approach based on the creative recombination of pattern making methods, to engage beneficiaries in the development of their own creative voices and practices.

3. Research methodology

This chapter explains the methodology underpinning this research project. It presents the research philosophy, its purpose, paradigm, approach to theory development, and research strategy, and explains the research design in detail, including the methods and procedures adopted to collect and analyse the data. The methodology builds on two approaches selected as the most appropriate, the 'research onion' (Figure 3.1), developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2023), and Leavy's elements of research (2017) (Table 3.1).

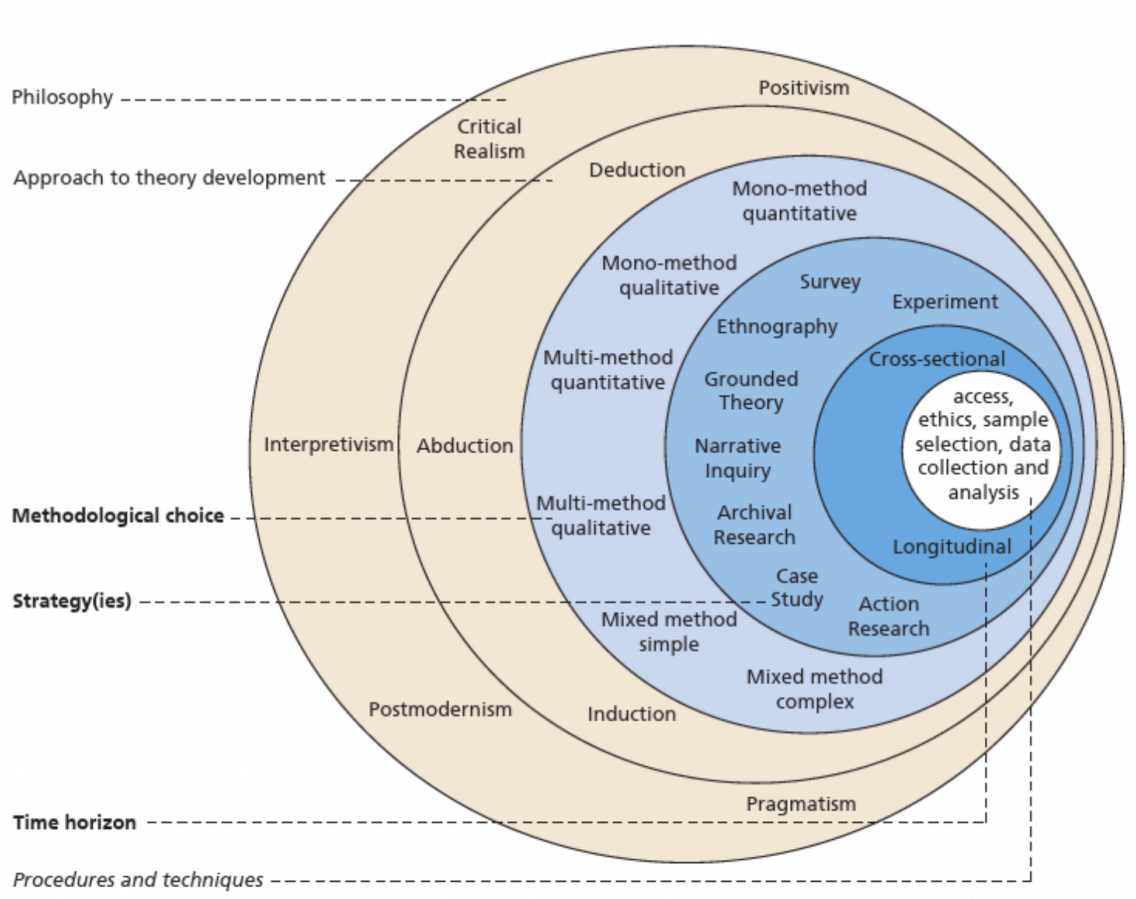


Figure 3.1: The 'research onion', Saunders, Lewis and Thornhil (2023, p.177).

Table 3.1: Leavy's elements of research (Leavy, 2017, p.11).

Philosophical	Paradigm: - Ontology - Epistemology
Praxis	Genre/design Methodology: - Methods/practices - Theory
Ethics (philosophical and praxis)	Values Ethics Reflexivity

While Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill offer a clear and useful framework to structure a methodology and research design, Leavy suggests approaches, purposes and strategies that align with the social purpose of this project. For example, in addition to exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, and evaluative research purposes, Leavy mentions two other possible purposes: ‘community change or action’ and ‘evoke, provoke or unsettle’ (2017, p.6). Authors also disagree on the different types of approaches to research design. For Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, the three possible research types are quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method, while Leavy also includes arts-based and community-based participatory research design approaches. The way they define each layer of the research methodology also differ. For instance, interviews constitute a research strategy for Leavy, while they are a qualitative research method for Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill. Therefore, this research builds on both sources to build a bespoke methodology, as described in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Overview of the elements of this research project.

Research elements	for this project		
Ethical values	Participation, Inclusivity and Social Justice		
Research purpose	Exploratory and Community Change		
Research philosophy paradigm	Interpretive and Transformative		
Approach to theory development	Inductive		
Research type	Qualitative		
Research strategy	Participatory practice research		
Data collection methods	Semi-structured in-depth interviews	Participatory making workshops	Panel discussion
Sampling strategy	Purposeful sampling	Self-selection sampling	Purposeful sampling
Data analysis	Thematic analysis	Thematic, chronological and quantitative analysis	Thematic analysis

3.1. Research philosophy

As discussed in the literature and contextual review (Chapter 2), this research is guided by the principles and values of design for social innovation (as per the definition formulated in Section 2.3.1.), namely participation, inclusivity, and social justice. The purpose of this research is exploratory and is about fostering community change, as defined by Leavy (2017). Indeed, this research aims to investigate an under-researched topic, namely pattern making as a participatory practice for social change, and to generate social change with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood.

This qualitative research values the participants' voices and practices as meaningful interpretations of the world. It follows an interpretive paradigm (Leavy, 2017; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023) in the sense that it values multiple subjectivities, including that of the researcher's[61]. At the same time, it shares aspects of a transformative paradigm (Figure 3.2) that states that

[61] Chapter 6 about the delivery and analysis of the participatory practice research is written in the first person.

“research should be empowering, emancipatory, and transformative (in whatever ways are possible)” (Leavy, 2017, p. 234).



Figure 3.2: Leavy’s transformative paradigm (Leavy, 2017, p. 234).

This philosophy posits that “research should be inclusive, participatory, and democratic, involving non-academic stakeholders during all parts of the process” (Leavy, 2017, p.13). This thesis adheres to most concepts suggested by this research philosophy, but the practice showed that it is challenging to involve other stakeholders in every step of the process. First, this approach requires an initial phase of engagement and time to build a relationship with the community gatekeepers and project participants. For this research project, the design and organisation of the first phase was elaborated exclusively by the researcher. Greater participation, responsibility, and agency in the process for the participants emerged later, once the relationship and trust were established. Moreover, the project outcomes and findings were discussed with its various participants, but this thesis was exclusively written by the researcher. Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that non-academic stakeholders were involved as much as possible and as much as they wanted during all parts of the process.

3.2. Data collection methods

In line with this research philosophy, and to answer the research questions (Section 1.3.), three data collection methods were adopted:

- Semi-structured interviews;
- Participatory making workshops;
- Panel discussion.

The approach combines interviews with experts and participatory making workshops with women in a deprived area of London. A panel discussion with a selected group of different people who played different roles in the project completes this approach. Figure 3.3 summarises the research design of this project, bringing together the methods and the research objectives.

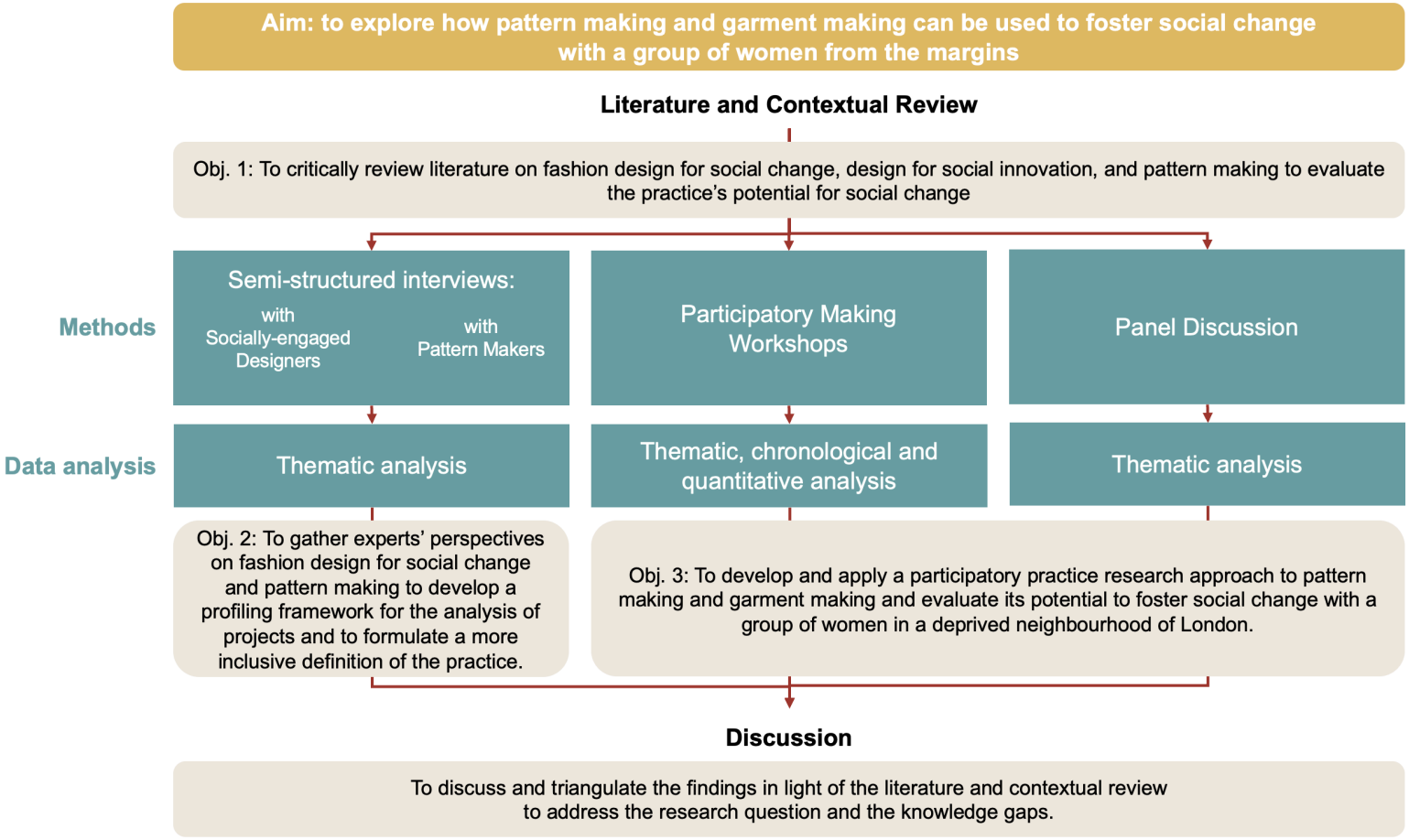


Figure 3.3 Research design of this doctoral project (illustration by the author).

3.2.1. Semi-structured interviews

This phase of the research was informed by the literature and contextual review, which highlighted a need to develop a framework for the analysis of projects of design for social innovation and more specifically in the field of fashion design, and a lack of inclusivity and participation in pattern making practices. Interviewing experts in fashion design for social change and pattern making was deemed a suitable method to gather a deeper understanding of both fields. Semi-structured interviews generate a conversation between the researcher and one participant guided by a set of questions: the participant uses their own language to answer the questions and discusses the topics introduced in as much depth and detail as they like (Leavy, 2017). Two interview guides with a set of questions, one for each group of experts – socially-engaged designers and pattern makers – were prepared in advance (Appendices 1 and 2). Each interview lasted approximately one hour. After a short presentation of this research project's participatory work, questions were asked in the same order to all experts, but the discussion took different directions depending on what the interviewees found worth mentioning or what the researcher wanted to explore further.

3.2.1.1. Interviews' objectives

Three objectives were set for the interviews with socially-engaged designers:

- To discuss the potential of fashion design as a vehicle for social change.
- To evaluate how useful the framework (Section 2.3.2.) could be to analyse projects of fashion design for social change and improve it.
- To collect a series of project profiles based on the framework and identify commonalities and differences between them.

Using the framework to analyse projects of fashion design for social change, the experts were invited to talk about how they use fashion design as a practice for

social change. They could either explain their practice as a whole or focus on one specific project and evaluate the proposed framework in context.

Pattern making experts were interviewed contributing to meeting four objectives:

- To discuss the proposed definition of pattern making and the choice of terminology, *i.e.,* the term ‘making’ instead of ‘cutting’ (Section 2.3.3.).
- To discuss the categorisation of pattern making methods (Section 2.3.4.).
- To understand in what ways pattern making differs from other fashion design practices.
- To evaluate the potential of pattern making and garment making to foster social change.

3.2.1.2. Sampling strategy

A purposeful (also called purposive) sampling strategy (Leavy, 2017; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023) was implemented to select a small number of experts, whose practice, experience and knowledge were relevant for this research. Two groups of experts were selected: socially-engaged designers and pattern makers. The experts were identified through a literature and contextual review and through the researcher’s network of former colleagues and tutors. Within each group, experts formed a diverse group of interviewees in terms of expertise, practices, and geographies, to foster a better identification of key themes (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

All interviews but one were conducted through an online meeting platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, which allowed to reach experts from different countries such as Australia, the USA, Kenya, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and many cities in the United Kingdom.

- Sample of socially-engaged designers

The experts in the field of fashion design for social change interviewed for this project are researchers and professors exploring fashion design as a means to foster social change, as well as social entrepreneurs who have set up training centres and companies to upskill and employ marginalised and vulnerable people. All had in common their use of fashion design to generate social change but had different approaches to it and worked in different contexts. In the end, eleven experts representing a balanced sample of academics, researchers and socially-engaged entrepreneurs and designers, operating in different parts of the world, were invited and seven accepted to be interviewed (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: List of socially-engaged designers interviewed.

Interview date:	13.06.2023
Expert:	**Olivia Weber**
Profile:	Graduated from the MA Fashion Futures course at LCF, Olivia Weber is experienced in delivering co-design and making workshops in sewing and embroidery, in deprived areas of London. She founded a community interest company, *Trashion Factory*, which at the time of the interview, was based in Leyton, London, UK. Olivia Weber now runs an embroidery design studio, Olivia Lara Studio, based in Margate.
Interview date:	12.07.2023
Expert:	**Prof. Helen Storey**
Profile:	Professor of Fashion and Science at LCF, Helen Storey is a social artist and designer living in London. In 2018 – 2023 she was appointed the first UNHCR 'Designer in Residence' at Zaatari Refugee Camp, Jordan. In 2022, her work extended to refugee camps in four countries in Africa.
Interview date:	25.07.2023
Expert:	**Dr. Anja-Lisa Hirscher**
Profile:	Based in Germany, Anja-Lisa Hirscher is a designer-researcher interested in exploring design as a means for engaging, educating and skilling people in alternative, local and more sustainable modes of production and consumption of clothing. She published her PhD thesis 'When skilful participation becomes design: Making clothes together' in 2020 (Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture).

Interview date:	26.07.2023
Expert:	**Philippe Guilet**
Profile:	Founder and creative director of *Projet Renaissance* (Fontenay-Sous-Bois, France), Philippe Guilet set up a luxury fashion upcycling and training centre for marginalised people with limited access to work.
Interview date:	02.08.2023
Expert:	**Prof. Lucy Orta**
Profile:	Lucy Orta is a socially-engaged visual artist and Professor at LCF, based in both London and Paris. She often adopts co-creation and inclusive methods to represent communities. She has collaborated with a wide range of people, often those at the margins of exclusion, such as prisoners, asylum seekers, homeless people and care hostel residents, to empower participants through creative practice. Her work spreads all over the world and has been exhibited in major museums.
Interview date:	04.10.2023
Expert:	**Joanna Maiden**
Profile:	Founder and CEO of *SOKO Kenya*, Joanna Maiden, originally from the UK, has set up an ethical clothing manufacturing company in rural Kenya.
Interview date:	01.12.2023
Expert:	**Claire Swift**
Profile:	Director of the Portal Centre for Social Impact at LCF, Claire Swift leads the *Making for Change* project at HMP Downview and Poplar Works, in London, UK.

- Sample of pattern makers

In a similar way, the review of the literature about pattern making was the basis for selecting experts to interview. Pattern makers were selected based on their expertise, their professional experience and personal practice. For instance, course leaders and professors brought a broad understanding of the field while pattern makers with more specialised practices represented each category of methods illustrated in Figure 2.24, namely measurements, fabric, shapes, and constraints. A diverse list of twenty-one designers and pattern makers from the industry and academia was compiled, from which ten were interviewed (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: List of pattern makers interviewed.

Interview date:	15.06.2023
Expert:	**Alberto Atalla**
Profile:	Associate Lecturer in Cultural and Historical Studies and practice-based PhD researcher at LCF, Alberto Atalla's interests focus on gender, fashion history, material culture, embodied research as a process of knowing and re-making.
Interview date:	16.06.2023
Expert:	**Susanne Baldwin**
Profile:	Susanne Baldwin was Course Leader of the MA Pattern and Garment Technology Course at LCF, UAL, until 2018 and is now Associate Lecturer at LCF.
Interview date:	05.07.2023
Expert:	**Alexis Scott Cawley**
Profile:	Current Course Leader of the MA Pattern and Garment Technology course at LCF, Alexis Scott Cawley previously worked as a freelance designer and creative pattern cutter for various brands. His personal practice focuses on exploring garment development in denim and workwear.
Interview date:	05.07.2023
Expert:	**Olivia Hegarty**
Profile:	Olivia Hegarty is Senior Lecturer and Unit Leader in the BA (Hons) Fashion Design Technology: Womenswear at LCF. As a practice-researcher she focuses on tacit knowledge and garment fit within fashion design education.
Interview date:	19.07.2023
Expert:	**Julianne Bramson**
Profile:	Julianne Bramson is a sewing teacher in California, USA, and has co-authored with Susan Lenahan the book *Bias Cut Blueprints, a Geometric Method for Clothing Design and Construction* in 2014.
Interview date:	20.07.2023
Expert:	**Rickard Lindqvist**
Profile:	Fashion designer and founder of Atacac, based in Sweden, Rickard Lindqvist focuses on making garments considering movement first. He published his PhD thesis 'Kinetic Garment Construction' in 2015 (University of Borås, Sweden).

Interview date:	26.07.2023
Expert:	**Dennic Chunman Lo**
Profile:	Former head of pattern cutting at ASOS, current Fashion Pathway Leader at Cambridge School of Visual and Performing Arts, UK, Dennic Chunman Lo is the author of the book *Pattern Cutting* (2021).
Interview date:	03.08.2023
Expert:	**Kevin Almond**
Profile:	Associate Professor at University of Leeds, UK, and leader of the Textiles and Fashion Research Group, Kevin Almond is also the founder of the *International Conference for Creative Pattern Cutting* and has published extensively about pattern cutting.
Interview date:	07.09.2023
Expert:	**Timo Rissanen**
Profile:	Associate Professor in Fashion and Textiles at University of Technology Sydney, Australia, Timo Rissanen completed a PhD focusing on 'Zero-waste fashion design: A study at the intersection of cloth, fashion design and pattern cutting' (University of Sydney) in 2013 and co-authored the book *Zero-waste Fashion Design* (2023) with Holly McQuillan.
Interview date:	04.10.2023
Expert:	**Holly McQuillan**
Profile:	Holly McQuillan is Assistant Professor at Technische Universiteit Delft, Netherlands. She published her PhD thesis, 'Zero Waste Systems Thinking: Multimorphic Textile-forms' (University of Borås) in 2020 and co-authored the book *Zero-waste Fashion Design* (2023) with Timo Rissanen.

3.2.1.3. Data analysis procedures

With the consent of the interviewees, the interviews were recorded through video or audio[62]. All interviews went through a process of thematic analysis,

[62] Originally, the interviews were supposed to be audio-recorded only but some online meeting platforms did not make that option possible. Consequently, interviewees agreed to be video recorded.

following five main phases of analysis and interpretation, inspired by the process presented by Leavy (2017, pp. 150-153)[63]:

a. Data preparation and organisation

The recordings were transcribed word-for-word (Appendices 3 and 4) in their entirety either by the researcher or by a professional transcriber. They were organised by type of interview and labelled with the date of the interview and the name of the interviewee.

b. Initial immersion

The recordings were listened to or watched in their entirety a first time. The tone and the non-verbal communication of the interviewees were noted for the analysis. For instance, when Helen Storey talked about her experiences in refugee camps, her watery eyes were an expression of her emotional involvement with the people she works with and the impact that working with them has on her. This phase helped the researcher refamiliarize herself with the data and identify key themes.

Transcriptions were then read separately, listening to fragments of the recordings when necessary, to extract the discussions' key elements, paying attention to the meanings and implications, key topics and quotes. From this phase, transcript summaries (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023) were produced in the form of project profiles for socially-engaged designers (Appendices 5 to 11) and discussion summaries for pattern makers (Appendices 12 to 22).

In her book *Creative Research Methods in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide* (2015), Kara advises to "involve participants in the analysis, for confirmation and reciprocal learning" (p.100). In line with this principle, the full transcription of the interviews, the project profiles and a discussion summary

[63] Leavy suggests five phases of analysis of the data – data preparation and organisation, initial immersion, coding, categorising and theming, and interpretation. This research follows a thematic analysis rather than a coding analysis. Therefore, the coding phase is replaced by a theming phase.

were sent to the socially-engaged designer for feedback, discussion and revision. Pattern makers were sent a discussion summary and a summary of the outputs generated by the analysis of their interviews. Five interviewees (three socially-engaged designers and two pattern makers) replied with feedback, comments and more details about their projects. Three of them also sent additional reports and articles complementing the discussions.

c. Data theming

The following phase consisted in theming the data (Saldana, 2009). Saldana (2009) defines a theme as “a phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means” (p.121). Unlike a code, that is brief, a theme refers to an extended statement that emerges from the data and that “at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p.4). Borrowing from Saldana’s coding approaches[64] (2009), a mixed approach of three methods was used: simultaneous, structural, and descriptive. A simultaneous approach, that allocates two or more themes to the same data fragment, was favoured because of the complex meanings of some topics discussed. Because of the nature of the semi-structured interviews, some themes driven by the interview guides and the research questions (Section 1.3.) was helpful for the analysis. Finally, descriptive themes were developed by the researcher to best label each data fragment on specific topics discussed during the interviews. Themes were constantly compared and reviewed to ensure consistency (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). This theming process created a “web of connections” (*ibid.*) between the interviews. This phase was completed using the software ATLAS.TI for qualitative data analysis.

[64] Saldana focuses on coding methodsbut some aspects of coding can be applied to theming methods.

d. Categorising

The themes were then reviewed, optimized, and categorised. Similar themes were grouped together into broader ones and clustered into categories and sub-categories relevant for the research (Figure 3.4).

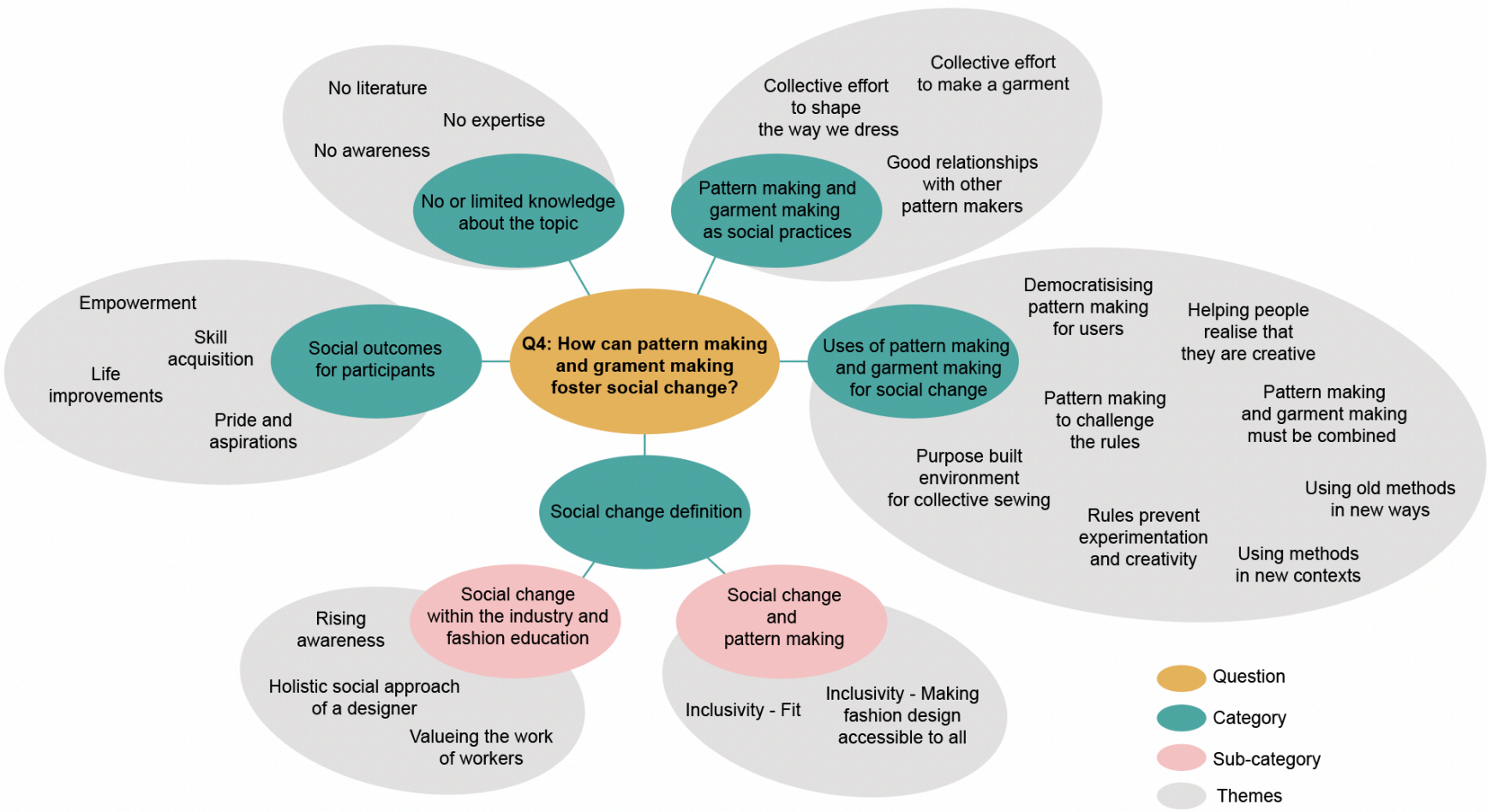


Figure 3.4: Theme categorising sample - Interviews with pattern makers (illustration by the author).

e. Interpretation

The last phase of the qualitative data analysis involved interpreting the themes. Relationships between categories were identified in order to “weave various themes together into a coherent narrative” (Saldana, 2009, p.121). For interviews with socially-engaged designers, this phase led to the description of a particular type of project of fashion design for social change (Section 4.4.). The interviews with pattern makers led to the identification of five core elements of the pattern making and garment making practice (Section 5.2.4.) and an original definition of the field (Section 5.4.).

3.2.2. Participatory practice research

The research strategy adopted for this project was ‘participatory practice research’. This builds on two types of strategies: participatory action research and practice research.

Participatory action research involves partnering with non-academics to co-research and generate knowledge on a topic or an issue that they are facing following a collaborative and participatory process (McIntyre, 2008; Letiecq and Schmalzbauer, 2012; Leavy, 2017). It values people and their knowledge and skills, and it places them as co-researchers in the project. Participatory action research is a powerful approach to understand people’s experiences and their process of sense-making. Leavy (2017) refers to this strategy as community-based participatory research:

> Community-based participatory research has a real-world goal beyond creating knowledge for the sake of knowledge such that the social action and social justice imperatives driving the research must remain in focus (p.240).

Practice research values practical and tacit knowledge as much as theoretical knowledge and places practice at the centre of the inquiry (Vear, 2022). It develops situated practices that contribute to knowledge in the form of “new

concepts/designs and new knowledge, relevant to and for assessment by the community in the situation, as well as in new concepts/designs and new knowledge for design practice and for design research" (Kaszynska, Kimbell and Bailey, 2022, p.4).

Participatory practice research combines elements from both strategies. The object of research is not the researcher's practice but the participants' practices and their outcomes, both tangible (*i.e.,* artefacts or designs) and intangible (*i.e.,* the changes generated by the practice). In this, the role of the designer is to build on her own practice to develop the conditions and infrastructure[65] for the participants to develop their own practice and thus create change.

3.2.2.1. Participatory making workshops

To engage community members in developing their own pattern making and garment making practice, participatory making workshops were deemed as an obvious method for this project. On one hand, pattern making and garment making are crafts of fashion design that must be physically experimented with. On the other hand, workshops enable participants to engage in activities that lead them to "ideate, develop, envision and sketch together, to imagine future design objects or services and their uses" (Leavy, 2017, p. 25).

In fashion design, collective making workshops are often used to involve community members (Mazzarella, 2020; Mazzarella and Black, 2022; Kaszynska, Thorpe and Mitchell, *et al.*, 2022). For instance, in the *Forest Coats* project, Francesco Mazzarella (2020) used participatory action research as a strategy and organised making workshops to engage with the community. He explains that these workshops were particularly efficient at enhancing wellbeing and generating a feeling of empowerment in the women who participated.

[65] Hirscher (2020) defines infrastructuring as the building and transferring of skills to create the environment for opportunities to emerge.

Hackney *et al.* (2022c) explain that collective making workshops create “a bloom space for engendering wellbeing through making” (p.319).

For this research, a programme of workshops was developed and delivered following a ‘maternalistic’ approach to co-design (Thorpe and Gamman, 2011, p. 221). This means that the workshops were designed in such way that increasing doses of creative ’optimal frustration’ were introduced; “that is, just enough to create a proper environment” (*ibid.*) for the participants to progressively transition towards full creative agency. This participatory approach consisted in a series of eight making workshops that was advertised to the participants as a ‘Journey to Creating Your Own Garments’ (Figure 3.5).

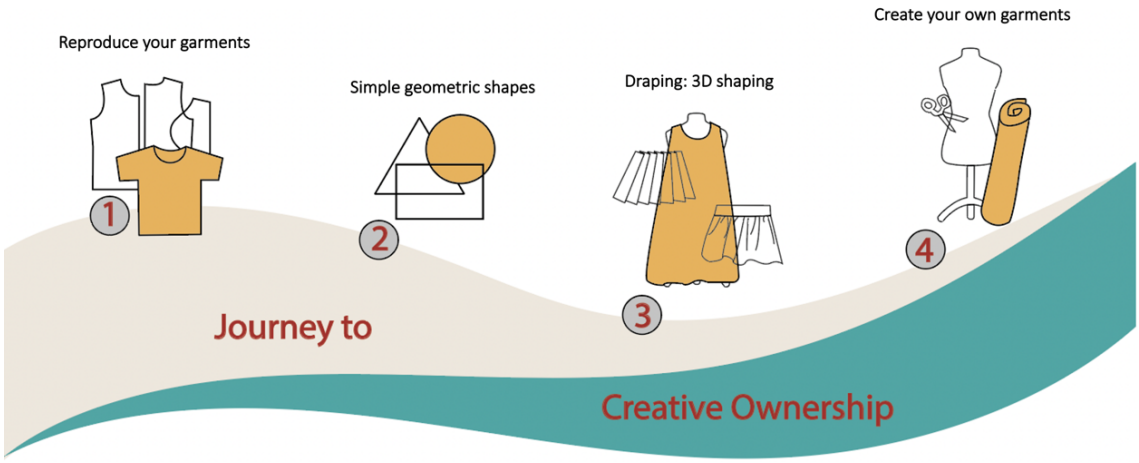


Figure 3.5: ‘Journey to creating your own garments’ programme of workshops (illustration by the author).

The ‘journey’, built around pattern making and garment making as fashion design practices, aims to progressively lead participants to develop their own practices. It is split into four ‘units’, each made of two sessions, that together create a complete and coherent programme of workshops introducing a purposefully and carefully selected set of pattern making and garment making methods. Based on the categorisation of methods presented in the literature and contextual review (Figure 2.24), the methods were selected based on the following criteria: accessibility, replicability, transferability, completeness, inclusivity, diversity, and coherence of the journey as a whole. The first three

units introduce three different pattern making methods, namely reproducing a garment by copying its pattern, using simple geometrical shapes to create garments, and modifying a simple dress using draping techniques. In the last unit, participants create their own garment, based on their own creative and making choices. Each unit builds on the skills practised during the previous ones and introduces another level of agency within the design process. Tables 3.5 to 3.8 present an outline of each unit and details the rationale behind the choice of each method.

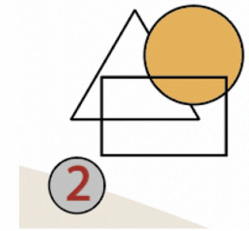


Reproduce your garments

2 sessions

Activities	Rationale	Skills learnt/practiced	Physical outcomes
• Analysis of own garment: before the session, participants are asked to bring a garment (a simple top or dress) in a woven fabric. As an ice-breaking activity, each participant will in turn present their garment and explain why they chose it. Then they will be asked to draw on paper the pieces that make up the garment as they imagine them (i.e. front, back, sleeves, ...). • Reverse engineering: Draw the garment's pattern together with the researcher (step-by-step approach) and learn how to use it to make other garments. • Compare and discuss what was initially drawn and the real pattern of the garment.	Garment as starting point: Starting from a physical garment known to the participant, this activity makes pattern making more tangible and illustrates the relation between 2D and 3D shapes.	• Understanding of the basic principle of pattern making. • Reverse engineering: creating a pattern from an existing garment. • Tracing pattern pieces on paper and cutting them. • Analysing the construction of a garment. • Reproducing existing garments. • Using a sewing machine.	• Step by step instructions on how to draw a pattern from an existing garment and reproduce a garment. • Pattern for a garment. • Copied garment as a toile.

Table 3.5: Workshop Unit 1 - Reproducing a garment (illustration by the author).

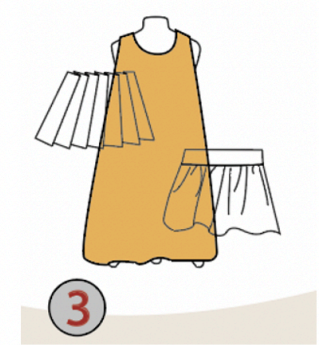


Simple geometric shapes

2 sessions

Activities	Rationale	Skills learnt/practiced	Physical outcomes
• Introductory activity: Discuss garments made of simple geometric shapes (circle, rectangle or triangle) and discuss what they look like. • Make a garment using simple geometric shapes: Participants make a simple pattern and garment using rectangles, circles or triangles. Participants choose from a list of suggested garments, with instructions, or design their own garments. • Compare and discuss what was initially drawn, the basic geometric shape used and the final garment.	Flat geometric shape as starting point: Starting from a simple geometric shape, this activity makes fashion design and pattern making more approachable and initiates participants into using flat shapes to create 3D shapes. Many traditional and historical dresses are constructed with simple geometric shapes.	• Creating an original pattern and garment from a simple geometric shape. • Taking and calculating simple measurements. • Drawing on fabric. • Cutting fabric. • Using a sewing machine. • Understanding a garment's construction.	• Step by step instructions to make patterns and garments from simple geometric shapes. • One garment for an adult or a child made in calico fabric.

Table 3.6: Workshop Unit 2 – Simple geometric shapes (illustration by the author).

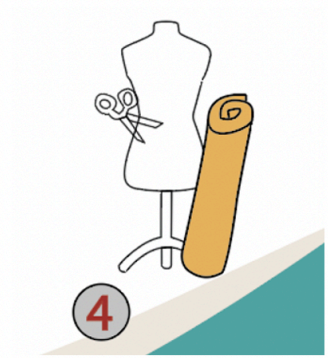


Draping: 3D shaping

2 sessions

Activities	Rationale	Skills learnt/practiced	Physical outcomes
• Give shape and volume to a dress: the researcher brings a "dictionary" of shaping techniques (darts, gathers, pleats, …) with physical samples for the participants to browse and get inspired from. • Using these samples and other techniques (e.g. adding or removing fabric, sleeves, …), participants create shape and volume in a long trapeze dress (trapeze dresses in calico fabric made by the researcher). • Present garment : which techniques, why, …	Fabric as starting point: this activity introduces draping as a 3D approach to pattern making and fashion design. It brings the creative ownership a bit further but still within some boundaries and guidelines. Draping from a trapeze dress makes the final garment wearable and removable from the stand. It also gives an example of how different pattern making techniques can be combined to create a garment: reverse engineering (top), using a circle (dress) and draping. These techniques can also be used to upcycle or customize existing garments.	• Creating 3D shapes and volume by manipulating fabric. • Learning about and using different shaping techniques (including participants' own technical knowledge). • Technical sewing skills.	• A unique dress for an adult or a child made of calico fabric. • Instructions to reproduce the trapeze dress and the shaping techniques.

Table 3.7: Workshop Unit 3 – Draping (illustration by the author).



Create your own garments

2 sessions

Activities	Rationale	Skills learnt/practiced	Physical outcomes
• Introductory activity: Present and discuss personal project. • Make your own garment: in collaboration with the researcher and other participants, each participant defines her making process and creates her own garment. • Present garment: Present the garment, the design and making process.	As a final project, participants get full leadership on the fashion design process using techniques introduced in the previous workshops and other techniques that they might already know or want to learn. This activity allows participants to have full ownership of the fashion design process. Some might want to reproduce garments for their children, others to start a portfolio, or more.	• Bringing together different techniques and designing the making process. • Decision making. • Technical skills.	• A unique garment fully designed and made by the participant (in calico fabric or fabric of choice).

Table 3.8: Workshop Unit 4 – Create your own garments (illustration by the author).

Metric pattern cutting was intentionally left out not only because it is a complex and slow method to learn, but also because it stands for a Western-centric understanding of fashion design (Section 2.2.3.).

Each workshop unit was accompanied with a set of hand-outs and instructions (Appendix 23) to support the participants during the activities. For the draping unit, the researcher cut and sewed trapeze dresses before the session for the participants to focus on the draping aspect of the workshop (Figure 3.6).



Figure 3.6: Trapeze dress for the draping sessions (photo by the author).

To facilitate the sessions, the researcher also prepared a series of samples and toiles. These physical samples were very useful to demonstrate the methods and inspire the participants. These included the following:

- A copied pattern and a toile for a woman's dress and a child's apron (Appendix 24);

- A pattern and a finished garment for a child's top made of rectangles and circles (Appendix 25);
- A long dress made by reproducing the bodice and sleeves of a dress and by adding a ruffle skirt made of rectangles (Appendix 26);
- A half-size sample dress draped from a trapeze dress (Appendix 27);
- A series of samples of seam finishes (Appendix 28);
- A book of samples presenting different shaping techniques, including darts, pleats, tucks, gathers, ruffles, among others (Appendix 29).

Most of these samples and toiles were inspired by a first visit to the family centre where most of the workshops were delivered. By observing the women visiting the centre, the researcher noted that modest wear was used by most women and that they all had children. Although their dresses all looked similar, their designs were different, with details such as ruffles, tucks, gathers, elastics, zips, or buttons. This allowed to create a set of tools and hand-outs contextually appropriate for the participants.

During the sessions, the participants had free access to all the tools, equipment, and material necessary to complete the workshop activities. The equipment and tools were either adapted and/or sourced from easily available retailers at reasonable prices so that the methods practised during the sessions could be replicated outside the workshop setting. Affordable domestic lockstitch sewing machines were used and technical equipment was replaced as much as possible by more accessible objects. For instance, pattern master rulers, commonly used by pattern makers to trace, were replaced by a set of school rulers and a plate was used to trace curves (Figure 3.7). The material used was calico fabric, an inexpensive unbleached woven cotton fabric, usually found in pattern making and fashion design workshops to develop toiles for new designs. Although this choice of fabric prevented the participants from completing wearable garments, it helped them to release their creativity and lift their worry of making mistakes and wasting a more expensive and delicate fabric.



Figure 3.7: Participant using accessible unexpensive tracing tools (photo by the author).

3.2.2.2. Participatory research context and community gatekeepers

One of the common challenges in participatory research, especially for a researcher external to a community, is to gain access, recruit and retain project participants (Leavy, 2017; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). Participatory practice research is a relational approach, and building a rapport with organisations trusted by the community is essential (Leavy, 2017).

For this project, the strategy applied to recruit participants entailed contacting organisations and charities supporting residents in a deprived area of the London borough of Camden. Being a resident in the borough reassured the organisations that the researcher's involvement in the community was not merely motivated by research interests but also by a genuine drive to support the local community in the longer term. This allowed creating a rapport with the Head of a local foodbank, Lifeafterhummus, for the delivery of pilot workshops,

which served to build credibility in the neighbourhood and connect with the family centre at the local primary school. For both organisations, the process of gaining access happened in three steps: an introductory email, followed by a first meeting and the participation in an outreach event to meet members of the community and present the project.

In the end, the project received the support of two organisations in Somers Town: Lifeafterhummus Community Benefit Society, and Edith Neville Primary School, which are presented below.

- Lifeafterhummus Community Benefit Society

The community benefit society Lifeafterhummus (Figure 3.8) offers vital support for many families in Somers Town through their social supermarket[66], re-use centre and redistribution network.



Figure 3.8: Farrah Rainfly, founder of Lifeafterhummus, in the food bank (photo by Lifeafterhummus).

[66] Social supermarkets sell safe, in-date, edible food wasted in the grocery retail supply chain at low prices to local people on low incomes who struggle with food poverty (Greater London Authority, 2025).

Lifeafterhummus redistributes supermarket surplus and pre-loved items ranging from clothing, toys, books, kitchen, homeware, and more, to local households, hostels, after-school clubs, nurseries, and schools. Its founder and operations manager, Farrah Rainfly, advocates for the creation of “hyper-local food waste zones [that] present a major opportunity to reduce hunger and carbon emissions” (Casey and Rainfly, 2024). In early 2022, Lifeafterhummus operated as a foodbank and Farrah Rainfly, willing to diversify its support to the community, supported this research project and offered to use one of the storage rooms of the centre. In addition to offering a venue, equipment and materials, Farrah Rainfly was a strong supporter of the project, acting as a gatekeeper, sharing advice on funding and knowledge about the community and its politics.

The first series of workshops was delivered at Lifeafterhummus as a pilot project with three participants from May to July 2022. The learnings from this first iteration informed the delivery of subsequent workshops with more participants in a different organisation. This pilot also served as a way for the researcher to get introduced to the community and build a precedent for the further development of the project.

- Edith Neville Primary School

At the end of the pilot project, Farrah Rainfly introduced the project to the local primary school to reiterate the programme of workshops with a larger group of women. Founded in 1874, Edith Neville Primary School, is a community school providing full-time education to about two hundred pupils aged between three and eleven years old. As a reflection of the neighbourhood, many children speak English as a second language and come from large families with limited income. In 2005, education writer Wendy Wallace spent five terms observing pupils and staff and published a book about the school, *Oranges and Lemons, Life in an Inner City Primary School.* The book offers a detailed account of the everyday life, successes, challenges, and failures, of an inner-city primary

school and its community in a deprived neighbourhood of London. The book has become a crucial reference for trainee teachers.

As part of the first phase of a broader regeneration project in Somers Town, led by Camden Community Investment Programme, a modern building was completed in 2019 for Edith Neville Primary School (London Borough of Camden, 2021) (Figures 3.9. and 3.10).

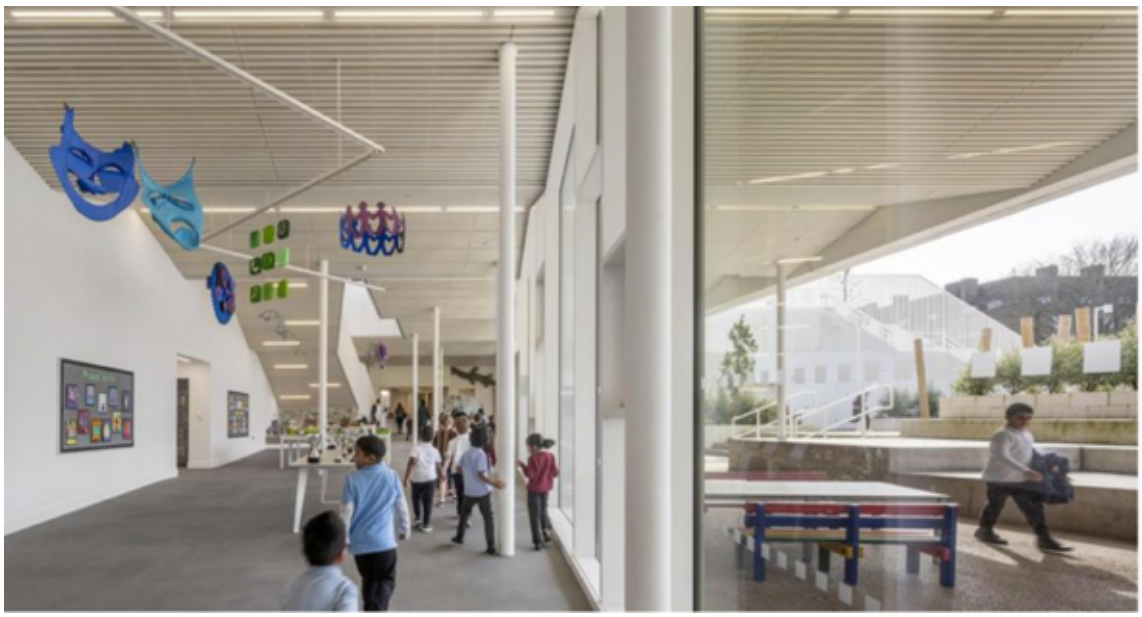


Figure 3.9: Edith Neville school, entrance hall (source: Edith Neville Primary School, n.d.).



Figure 3.10: Edith Neville school, playground (source: Edith Neville Primary School, n.d.).

In 2023, the last Ofsted[67] inspection gave an overall school rating of 'outstanding'. In addition to excellent support to children, the school also cares for their families. The Ofsted report stated:

> Leaders' support for parents and carers is excellent. The family centre, which is run by the school, helps create a strong, trusting partnership between the school and families. This enhances pupils' learning, personal development, and behaviour (Ofsted, 2023).

The family centre, led by Amy Hagemann, and supported by Family Liaison worker Laura O'Donoghue, organises activities, workshops, courses, and outings for the families and benefits from a dedicated room in the school premises. Activities range from stay and play with young children, ESOL[68] courses, baby yoga, swimming, and more. Following the recommendation from Farrah Rainfly, Amy Hagemann was enthusiastic to offer garment making as an additional activity to the school parents and embraced and supported this research project enthusiastically. Laura O'Donoghue, the Family Liaison worker, played a key role in recruiting participants for the workshops and introducing the researcher to the school staff. Both Amy and Laura shared valuable insights about the school, the families, and the community, which helped the researcher understand the context and adapt the approach accordingly.

Between September 2022 and March 2023, three series of workshops were delivered at the school: two iterations of the original pattern making and garment making workshops (as described in Section 3.2.2.1.) and one series of eight workshops focusing on more advanced techniques, as requested by the participants. These workshops were then followed by weekly drop-in sessions from April 2023 until June 2024. Since 2024, workshops and drop-in making sessions are still taking place at the school, organised, and delivered by the participants themselves.

[67] Ofsted is the British Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

[68] ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages.

3.2.2.3. Sampling strategy

For all iterations of the programme of eight workshops, once it was agreed with the gatekeepers that the project would take place, the workshops were publicised, and the participants were selected. The initial criteria for recruiting the participants were as follows:

- Being a woman living in Somers Town.
- Ideally having some sewing experience and knowing how to use a domestic sewing machine.
- Already receiving some support from the gatekeeping organisation and visiting their facilities regularly.

For the pilot workshops, the project was publicised at the foodbank, the local state school and at an outreach event organised at Lifeafterhummus during which residents were invited to contribute to making a Collective Dress[69] (Figure 3.11). Following a self-selection approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023), the participants signed up by sending an email or by contacting Lifeafterhummus.

[69] The collective dress consisted in a sleeve-less trapeze dress that visitors could freely modify by draping the fabric or adding fabric to it.



Figure 3.11: Outreach event at Lifeafterhummus (photos by Farrah Rainfly, 2022).

For the subsequent series of workshops at Edith Neville primary school, a first visit to the family centre was useful to introduce the project to parents and gauge their interest. The project was then publicised by the Family Liaison and in the centre's activity timetable. Two participant sampling strategies were applied. First, a 'self-selection sampling strategy' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023) was adopted; this meant that women who fulfilled the criteria for participation voluntarily signed up. This was followed by a selection based on subjective judgement by the Family Liaison worker who would prioritize some mothers in greater need. Later, word of mouth by participants became an efficient way to recruit more people. Recruitment and sign-ups were fully managed by the Family Liaison.

3.2.2.4. Data collection and analysis procedures

During the workshops, in a similar way as for an ethnographic study, qualitative data was gathered through "watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions […], collecting documents and artefacts" (Atkinson,

2007, p.3). The different types of data gathered during the sessions were as follows:

- Fieldwork observations and reflective journal: The researcher and a workshop assistant took notes about participants' behaviours, interactions, comments, ideas, and questions. As soon as possible after each session, the researcher wrote down all observations in a standardised template, including a description of her own reactions, thoughts, and feelings (Appendix 30).

- Questionnaires: Participants self-assessed their own skills and level of participation in the project at different moments of the journey (Figure 3.12 and Appendix 31).

- Photography: The researcher and the workshop assistant regularly took pictures during the sessions.

- Participants' notes: Participants were given a booklet with instructions and references, on which they could write and draw.

- Physical artefacts: The patterns and garments made during the workshops were kept by the researcher for a week to be studied in detail.

In addition, the notes from meetings with the gatekeepers completed the data gathered during the workshops.

Units	Sessions	Participant questionnaires	Description
 Reproduce a garment	Session 1	Introductory questionnaire	Expectations; Skills self-evaluation; Demographics
	Session 2	Short end-of-unit questionnaire	Feedback on unit content, duration and organisation; Enjoyment; Wellbeing; Skill acquisition
 Simple shapes	Session 3		
	Session 4	Short end-of-unit questionnaire	Feedback on unit content, duration and organisation; Enjoyment; Wellbeing; Skill acquisition
 Draping	Session 5		
	Session 6	Short end-of-unit questionnaire	Feedback on unit content, duration and organisation; Enjoyment; Wellbeing; Skill acquisition
 Create your own garment	Session 7		
	Session 8	Final questionnaire	Feedback on overall journey; Well-being; Community engagement; Skill-acquisition; Creativity; Empowerment and agency; Aspirations

Figure 3.12: Feedback questionnaire schedule (illustration by the author).

Two different approaches of qualitative data analysis were adopted: thematic analysis and chronological comparisons. This was complemented by a short quantitative analysis of the feedback questionnaires (Figure 3.13).

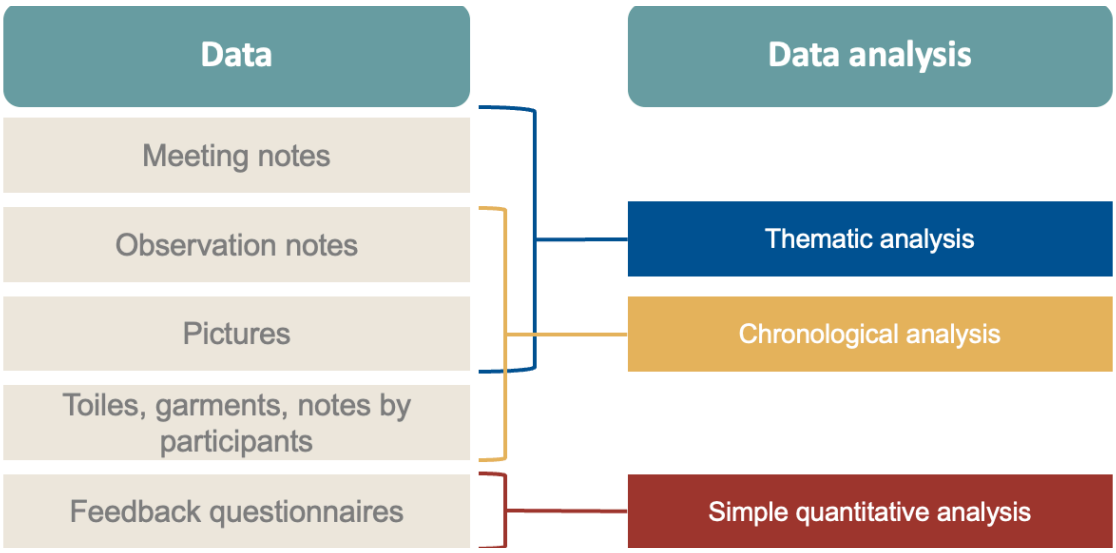


Figure 3.13: Data analysis methods for the participatory making workshops (illustration by the author).

- Thematic analysis

The participatory practice research generated a large volume of qualitative data. In a similar way to the data gathered through the interviews, a process of thematic analysis was adopted following the same five steps:

a. Data preparation and organisation

Observation notes, pictures and meeting notes were clearly labelled for analysis on the software ATLAS.ti.

b. Initial immersion

The data covered two years of participatory engagement in Somers Town. As a consequence, before coding the data, every single document was read and reviewed by the researcher to refamiliarize herself with the observations, the pictures and the notes.

c. Data theming

For this phase, three hundred and eighty-two documents (including thirty-nine fieldwork observation notes, two sets of next-step discussion notes, two documents with notes from meetings with the gatekeepers, and countless pictures) were analysed. Because of the diverse set of documents and the complexity of the social interactions observed, a simultaneous descriptive theming method was used. This involved allocating one or multiple descriptive themes to data fragments.

d. Categorising

This phase consisted in reviewing and revising the themes, eliminating redundancy, merging similar themes, improving the theme labels, and even pruning them when necessary. Given such a large volume of data, this phase required many iterations. Afterwards, these themes went through a categorising process. The categories identified from the data gathered during the workshops were as follows:

- Workshops – activities and organisation

- Gatekeepers
- Workshop assistants
- Researcher's role
- Description of the participants
- Participants' outcomes
- Participants' outputs
- Researcher's outcomes
- Challenges for the project
- Legacy.

Within each category, sub-categories were identified. As an example, ten sub-categories were identified under the category 'Participants' outcomes' (in brackets, examples of themes relating to the sub-category):

- Skill acquisition (Technical skills, learning through making)
- Knowledge acquisition (Awareness about the industry, knowledge about garment structure)
- Becoming designers (Design role, design through making)
- Creativity development (Trying new things, inspiration)
- Community engagement (Helping each other, becoming part of a group)
- Engagement and motivation (Strong commitment, perseverance)
- Wellbeing, pride, and satisfaction (Achievements, wellbeing)
- Confidence improvement (Confidence, trying new things)
- Agency and empowerment (Ownership, autonomy)

- Ambition and plans for the future (Further education, make to sell).

e. Interpretation

The last phase in the thematic analysis process entailed interpreting the data by identifying connections between the themes and in light of the findings from the literature and contextual review and the interviews.

- Chronological comparison analysis

The second method employed to analyse the qualitative data collected through the participatory making workshops (including observational notes, pictures, toiles, garments, samples and participants' notes and drawings) was chronological comparison analysis. The individual journeys of eight participants, who completed the entire programme of workshops, were analysed in a chronological way to identify patterns of evolution (Gibbs, 2018) in terms of behaviours, skills, and creative agency (Appendix 32).

Garments were analysed in a systematic way following a process often found in garment analysis and garment technology studies where the researcher looks at details of the garment to evaluate how they are made. Pictures of the artefacts and description notes were taken to record the techniques employed. This study served to identify, for each participant, patterns of improvements in the quality, level of difficulty or level of risk-taking and agency in designing and making the garments.

- Analysis of the feedback questionnaires

Finally, the quantitative data gathered through the feedback questionnaires at the end of each unit and at the end of the programme of workshops was analysed to describe the demographics of the participants and their answers to satisfaction questions.

The results of the analysis process were then interpreted together to identify significant themes for the research (Chapter 6) and discussed in light of the literature and contextual review and the findings from the interviews (Chapter 7).

3.2.3. Panel discussion

At the end of the third series of workshops, the participants' creative journeys deserved to be celebrated. Therefore, an exhibition and a series of events including an opening evening, a panel discussion and a workshop were organised over a week in a local contemporary art gallery in October 2023 (see Section 6.2.4.). Although these events emerged as an opportunity and an output of the project rather than being part of the initial research design, they contributed to the understanding of the project's outcomes. The panel discussion, in particular, served as a method to collect data about the project's impact and how it was perceived by different stakeholders.

On Friday 20th October 2023, the panel discussion, chaired by Sandy Black (Professor of Fashion and Textile Design and Technology at London College of Fashion, UAL), brought together four panellists actively involved in the project, Somers Town and Camden to discuss the meaning, significance and role of the project and the exhibition in the local community. In preparation for the discussion, the panellists were asked to think about the following questions:

- What is the role of making in community projects?
- What does the exhibition's title *We are ~~not~~ designers* mean to you?
- What roles can designers play? Who can play these roles?
- What does it imply for the future of this project and for other projects?

The panellists were (from left to right, Figure 3.14):

- Joana Monteiro, PhD Student for this research.

- Angela, project participant, workshop assistant and key member of the group.
- Adam Thorpe, Professor of Socially Responsive Design at Central Saint Martins, UAL, who has worked extensively on research and knowledge exchange projects in Somers Town.
- Natasha Friend, director of Camden Giving, a local participatory grant making organisation, key supporter of the project.



Figure 3.14: Panel discussion in the gallery, 20.10.2023 (photo by Eugenie Flochel, 2023).

With the panellists' and audience's consent, the discussion was audio-recorded. It was then professionally transcribed (Appendix 33) and thematically analysed conjointly with the data collected during the participatory making workshops. The results of the analysis are discussed in Section 6.3.

3.3. Ethical considerations

Following the UAL Research Ethics guidelines, the methodology and methods used were designed in line with the principles of respect, justice, and

beneficence. Because of the nature of the study and the vulnerability of the groups involved, some risks remained, including physical, psychological, and economic harm. Risks for the research team included psychological harm linked to getting emotionally involved with people. However, all possible steps were taken to minimise such risks. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, a clear data management strategy was outlined to safeguard the participants' identities and interests. Two Research Ethics Applications were submitted and approved by UAL's Research Ethics Sub-committee. The research participants were given a Participant Information Sheet and signed an Informed Consent Form (Appendices 34 and 35). They were aware that participation in the research was voluntary and had the right to withdraw at any point without having to give a reason. Interviewees were asked permission to mention their names in the thesis and were sent a summary of the discussion and a full transcript of the interview for feedback, revision, and discussion.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the pilot workshops took place, all possible measures, in line with UK government guidelines, were put in place. For instance, face masks were worn, all equipment was sanitized before every session and each participant was given a set of tools so that they did not share them with others. For the subsequent workshops, government guidelines relaxed and workshop conditions normalised.

The next three chapters focus on the findings emerging from the research. First, the results of the analysis of the interviews with socially-engaged designers, followed by the interviews with pattern making experts, are discussed. The findings from the pattern making workshops are then analysed in detail to articulate the impact generated by the programme of workshops.

4. Findings from interviews with socially-engaged designers

This chapter discusses the findings from the interviews with socially-engaged design researchers and practitioners. A short bibliography of the experts interviewed, and the dates of the interviews can be found in Table 3.3. Project profiles, following the framework for analysis of projects of design for social innovation (Figure 2.23, p.60), were generated from the discussions and can be found in Appendices 5 to 11. Figures 4.1 to 4.7 present a short summary of the interviewees' projects.

Olivia Weber

Designer/Project lead: Olivia Weber, sustainable fashion entrepreneur and feminist embroidery designer.

Project name: *Trashion Factory* – t-shirt embroidery project.

Project description: *Trashion Factory*, based in Leyton, London, used to take clothes from recycling warehouses that would otherwise end up in landfills and remake them into 'trashionable' wardrobe staples and one-off pieces that were released online. Alongside bespoke upcycling services, *Trashion Factory* provided weekly craft workshops for women in the local area teaching new craft and making skills, including embroidery. The T-shirt embroidery project involved local women in designing and manufacturing their embroidered T-shirts to sell online.



A participant embroidering her t-shirt during a workshop (Source: Olivialarastudio, 2022).

Figure 4.1: Olivia Weber's project summary.

Helen Storey

Designer/Project lead: Helen Storey, Professor of Fashion and Science at LCF, UAL.

Project name: *Zaatari Action*, Zaatari Refugee Camp (Jordan); *Vital Signs*, Maratane Refugee Camp (Mozambique), Dzaleka Refugee Camp (Malawi).

Project description: In 2019, Helen Storey became the first designer in residence at Zaatari Refugee camp, in Jordan. Her role as a designer has been to work in collaboration with Syrian women and girls to co-create projects using fashion and design thinking, that would create a meaningful change to the improvement of their lives. The project has since expanded to African refugee camps where Helen Storey continues to work with women and girls.



Zaatari camp women and Helen Storey pose for a group photo during a creating the scent of Syria workshop (Source: London College of Fashion, 2025).

Figure 4.2: Helen Storey's project summary.

Anja-Lisa Hirscher

Designer/Project lead: Anja-Lisa Hirscher, Lecturer in "Design Ethics & Sustainability Communication" at the Masters Design and Communication for Sustainability, Hochschule Neu-Ulm, Germany. Designer-researcher interested in exploring design as a means for engaging, educating and skilling people in alternative, local and more sustainable modes of production and consumption.

Project name: *When Skilful Participation Becomes Design: Making Clothes Together,* PhD research (Aalto University).

Project description: In her doctoral research, she explores "matters of skilful participation in relation to the designers' role, and the social and material changes which occur in alternative spaces of peer production when diverse people make clothes together" (Hirscher, 2020, p.2). With the creation of peer production makerspace settings (co-sewing cafés, makershop) focusing on making garments in participatory and collaborative ways, Anja-Lisa Hirscher explores the roles of designers and users and how they evolve and blur in situations of participatory design.



The Co-sewing café, 2016, South Germany (Source: Hirscher, 2020).

Figure 4.3: Anja-Lisa Hirscher's project summary.

Philippe Guilet

Designer/Project lead: Philippe Guilet, former design assistant to Karl Lagerfeld, Thierry Mugler and Jean-Paul Gaultier, founder and creative director at *Projet Renaissance*.

Project name: *Projet Renaissance*.

Project description: Founded in 2018 in Val-de-Marne, France, by Philippe Guilet, *Projet Renaissance* ('rebirth' in French) aims to prove that Haute Couture can be led by social and environmental purposes:

- By upcycling second-hand high-end garments into unique Haute Couture pieces.
- By providing training opportunities in Haute Couture craftsmanship and know-how to immigrants, refugees, and low-income local residents, who face challenges to find work opportunities, and by providing a route to employment within the luxury fashion industry.



Projet Renaissance workshop (Source: Projet Renaissance, n.d.).

Figure 4.4: Philippe Guilet's project summary.

Lucy Orta

Designer/Project lead: Lucy Orta, visual artist, member of the Centre for Sustainable Fashion and Professor and Chair of Art and the Environment, LCF, UAL.

Project name: *Traces: Stories of Migration*.

Project description: "Between 2021 and 2023, Lucy Orta engaged with communities across London boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets with the support of *Making for Change*, as part of LCF's The Portal Centre for Social Impact. The programme of collaborative workshops was centred around storytelling and textile heritage, using the medium of cloth and stitch as a common language through which multigenerational migration histories take form. 77 participants took part and created 'Story Cloths' in response to the process" (Orta and Palestra, 2023, p.3). The stories inspired Lucy Orta to create a collection of textile portraits of the participants.



Traces of Migration community workshop, Lucy Orta with a participant (Source: Orta and Palestra, 2023, pp. 4-5).

Figure 4.5: Lucy Orta's project summary.

Joanna Maiden

Designer/Project lead: Joanna Maiden, Founder and CEO.

Project name: *SOKO Kenya*, "Cutting a new pattern for the fashion industry".

Project description: Founded in 2009, *SOKO Kenya* is an ethical clothing manufacturer in Kenya that puts people, communities and life at the heart of everything they do. With values of equality and quality of life for all, *SOKO Kenya* produces quality garments which improve the quality of life for employees and customers alike. *SOKO Kenya* is a living wage employer, with a price structure ensuring that employees are fairly remunerated and that their families can thrive. They also engage with partners to bring education, skills and female empowerment to the wider community via the *Community Trust* and the *Kujuwa Initiative*.



SOKO Kenya Factory (Source: SOKO Kenya, no date).

Figure 4.6: Joanna Maiden's project summary.

Claire Swift

Designer/Project lead: Claire Swift, Director of the Portal Centre for Social Impact at LCF, UAL.
Project name: *Making for Change*, HMP Downview women prison and Poplar Works.

Project description: Established in 2014, *Making for Change* Fashion Training and Manufacturing workshop at HMP Downview is a partnership between HM Prison Service and LCF. *Making for Change* provides training in fashion production skills and accrediting participants with industry-recognised qualifications; offering a route away from re-offending whilst simultaneously addressing the skills shortage within the UK fashion manufacturing industry.
Making for Change, Poplar Works is a community-focused fashion training and manufacturing unit based at Poplar Works, offering accredited training and employment opportunities for women from marginalised community groups and ex-offenders.



Making for Change Training and Manufacturing workshop at HMP Downview (Source: Caulfield, Curtis and Simpson, 2018, cover page).

Figure 4.7: Claire Swift's project summary.

4.1. Fashion making, an effective vehicle for social change

During the interviews, experts were invited to reflect on their own practice and discuss the reasons that brought them to employ fashion design practices for social good. Not all interviewees identified themselves as fashion designers, have graduated from a fashion institution, or worked in the fashion industry, but all use fashion design, garment making, or textile craft within their research and practice as participatory methods to activate social change.

Four interviewees mentioned that one of the benefits of fashion in general resides in its universality. Claire Swift believes that fashion *"crosses all sorts of boundaries"* and that *"everyone relates to fashion in a certain way"*. For her, fashion is inclusive, in the sense that *"even women in prison will talk to you about fashion"*. She argues, however, that there should be a better word than fashion to describe it, maybe clothing, garments, or making, because fashion, *"in the grand sense of the word"*, can appear exclusive. Both Olivia Weber and Anja-Lisa Hirscher pointed out that everyone owns and wears clothes, and as such, there is a basic connection with fashion which is the simple fact of covering one's body. Also referring to this basic use of cloth, Lucy Orta conceives the cloth as *"a membrane around the body, beyond the human skin"*, but she specified that cloth is also a *"way of interacting with the environment and with other people around you"*, evidencing the intrinsic social aspect of fashion.

Claire Swift and Lucy Orta agreed that fashion can be a vehicle for self-expression, communicating one's identity and story. For Olivia Weber, fashion is so intrinsically connected to one's self-image that it can be used to work on mental health. For Claire Swift, fashion goes beyond the individual self, *"it's about an expression not only of yourself, but of your family, of your history, of your culture. […] Fashion has the ability to tell stories across generations, to connect people, cultures and [spark] conversations"*.

Although fashion is universal and reaches everyone in different ways, it is the process of making that was predominantly discussed as a practice that has a

strong potential to generate social change. All interviewees employ garment making or textile crafts practices in their projects (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Making practices employed by the interviewees in their projects.

Expert	**Project**	**Making practice**
Olivia Weber	*Trashion Factory*	Hand and machine embroidery, machine sewing.
Helen Storey	*Zaatari Action*	Hand and machine sewing, embroidery and embellishment on clothes, soap and perfume making, jewellery making, beauty and make up.
Anja-Lisa Hirscher	Peer production makerspaces	Garment recycling and upcycling, machine and hand sewing, crocheting, visible mending.
Philippe Guilet	*Projet Renaissance*	Professional craftsmanship for luxury fashion, upcycling, deconstruction and reconstruction, hand and machine sewing.
Lucy Orta	*Traces: Stories of Migration*	Appliqué, embroidery, stencilling, block printing, image transfer, machine sewing.
Joanna Maiden	*SOKO Kenya*	Cut and sew manufacturing.
Claire Swift	*Making for Change*	Machine sewing.

Making textiles and garments is often considered an activity accessible to all in terms of equipment, materials, and skills. Anja-Lisa Hirscher, for instance, who had no experience in pattern making, developed simple patterns based on her own basic skills that are suitable to complete beginners, to deploy in making workshops in Helsinki, as part of the EU-funded project *Make{able}* in 2013 (Figure 4.8).

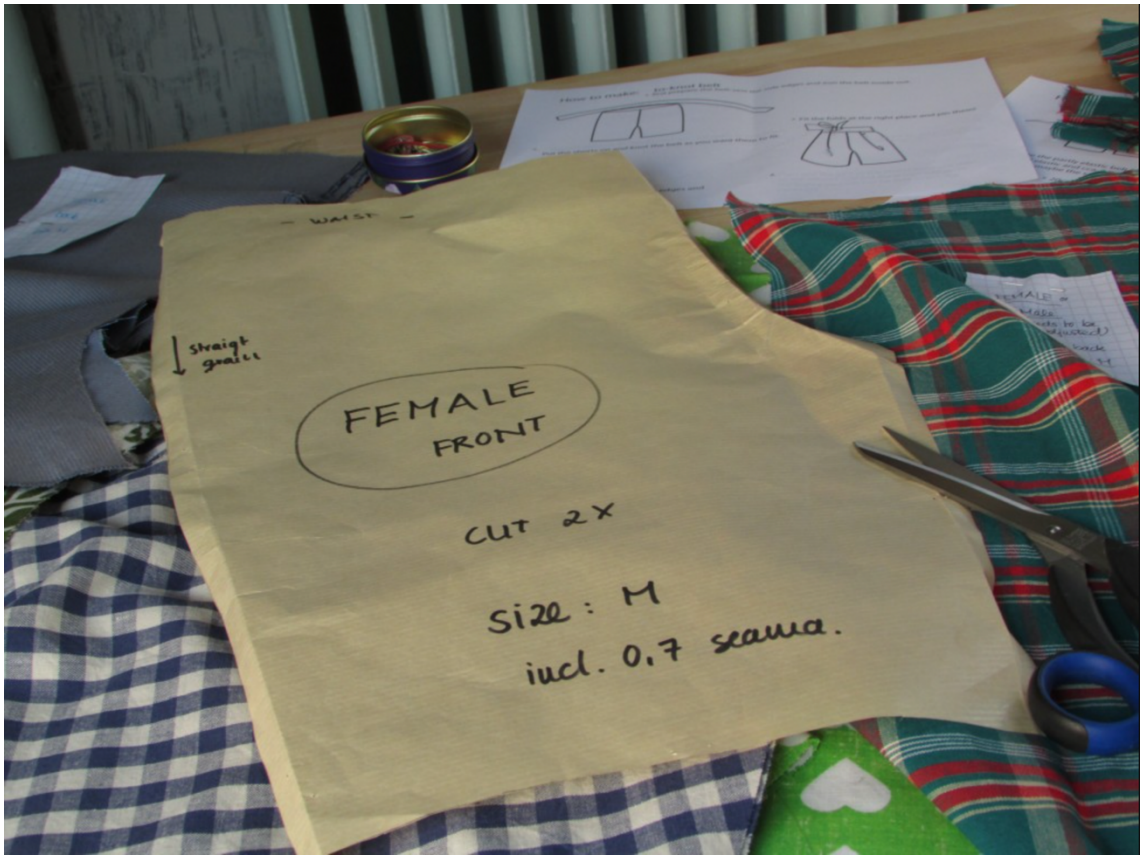


Figure 4.8: Short patterns developed by Anja-Lisa Hirscher (Source: Anja-Lisa Hirscher, 2020b).

Both Anja-Lisa Hirscher and Olivia Weber explained that, by reducing complexity, garment making becomes an inclusive activity accessible to all. Lucy Orta, Claire Swift, and Olivia Weber stated that making also allows participants to express themselves, and connect with their family, cultures, and history. For Lucy Orta, textiles and stitches are *"a language […] intimately connected to our personal identities, memories and emotions"*. In *Traces: Stories of Migration*, the cultural and historical context in which the project was embedded led to using the crafts that represented and expressed the identity of the community, namely embroidery, print and appliqué (Figure 4.9).

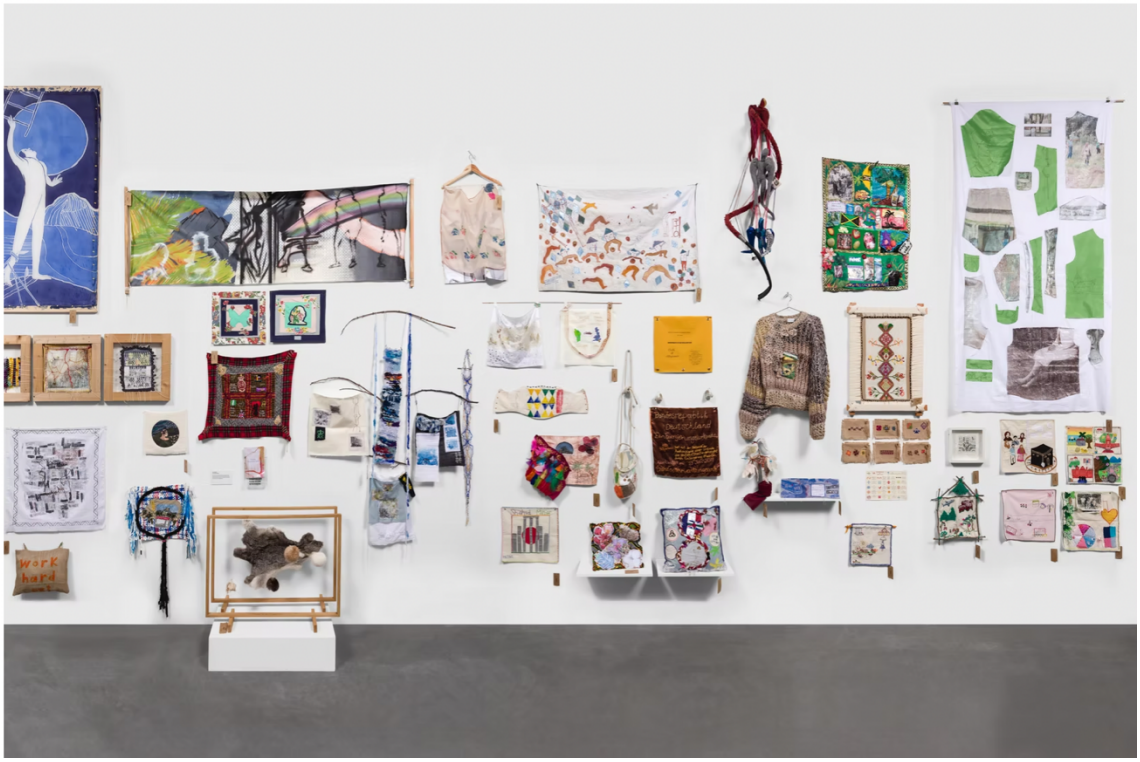


Figure 4.9: Participants' 'Story Cloths' made during *Traces: Stories of Migration* workshops (photo by Jack Elliot Edwards, 2023).

For all the interviewees, building trust, equal and genuine relationships are necessary to generate change, and making together can foster such relationships. For Claire Swift, at *Making for Change*, making is much more than producing garments: it is about creating relationships and connections. The reason why making together is so valued is that such a process erases differences. Claire Swift shared that making together with the women participating in the *Making for Change* programme brings them all to a similar level, overcoming hierarchies, differences and barriers such as culture or race, and allows them to connect as women and envision the future together. In a similar way, Helen Storey sees 'magic' within the process of making together as it connects people through their commonalities, despite all the stark differences (Figure 4.10):

> "*That is one of the powers of making together – perhaps the only place [where] there can be any equality between us. It's in the making process itself, there's magic there. Making makes you equal for a moment*".



Figure 4.10: Helen Storey with the embroidery ladies from Zaatari and Salma Al Qatawneh of Turquoise Mountain (photo by Turquoise Mountain, 2022).

The analysis of the interviews also showed that fashion making facilitates a holistic approach towards sustainability. For most projects, in addition to a strong social purpose, the focus also lies in conversations on the environment, culture, and the economy, such as reducing waste and valuing traditional making techniques of participants, as well as on how to create an economically viable model (see Section 4.3.1., ‘Themes of Reflection’).

To conclude, the interviews demonstrated that fashion making can be a powerful practice to foster social change, thanks to its universality, accessibility, inclusivity, and potential to foster social, environmental, cultural, and economic sustainability. As a collaborative social process, fashion making rubs out

differences and hierarchies between people and facilitates the building of trust and equal relationships.

4.2. Reviewing and refining the framework

One of the objectives of the interviews was to test if the framework for projects of design for social innovation could be useful to experts, and simultaneously improve it to better represent the reality of such projects.

The interviews relied on a first version of the framework, drawn as an outcome of the literature and contextual review (Figure 4.11, previously seen on p.60, Figure 2.23). The first version was discussed during the first two interviews only. From these first discussions, three missing elements emerged: challenges, ripple effects, and the social impact on the designer. An updated framework was then discussed with other interviewees to test and validate the changes. Another social element was added to include the roles of other stakeholders involved in the projects.

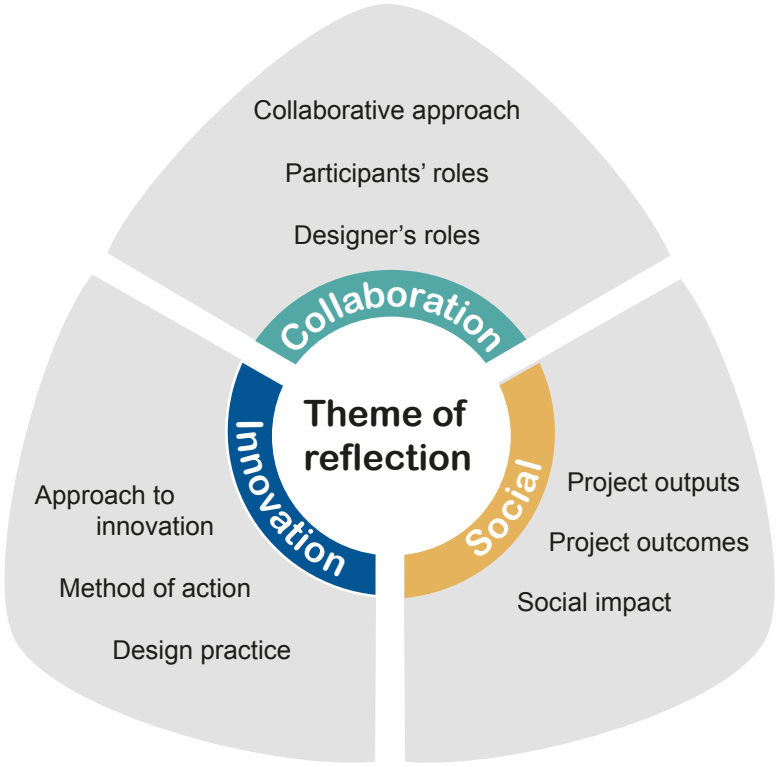


Figure 4.11: First version of the framework to analyse projects of design for social innovation (illustration by the author).

4.2.1. Challenges

Since the first interview, it was clear that the framework had to include an element about the challenges related to setting up and running projects of fashion design for social change. As mentioned by Olivia Weber, too often when evaluating projects, the focus is on the project's positive results and benefits for participants. Difficulties, challenges and what does not go as planned are often omitted or minimised; instead, there is real benefit in looking at what does not go well. Helen Storey emphasized the importance of reflecting on the challenges and difficulties:

> *"Designers must reflect, without defensiveness or worry, on the questions they have not found an answer for, or on what they might have unwittingly actioned along the way – they need to embrace the difficulties, mistakes and things that do not work as well. These aspects of a project are as important for the legacy, as the positive changes".*

Focusing on the challenges, difficulties, and mistakes is a way for designers, participants, and other stakeholders alike to grow and do better in the future. Learnings can then be shared with others.

4.2.2. Other stakeholders' roles

No project is successful in silo. The interviews revealed that an element was missing within the 'Collaboration' section of the framework. All projects studied were the fruit of collaborations, partnerships, commercial agreements, and joint efforts between people and organisations who share similar values. From funding organisations to industry partners, government support to community gatekeepers, universities and more, projects bring together many diverse stakeholders who determine the delivery and success of a project.

4.2.3. Project outcomes for the designer

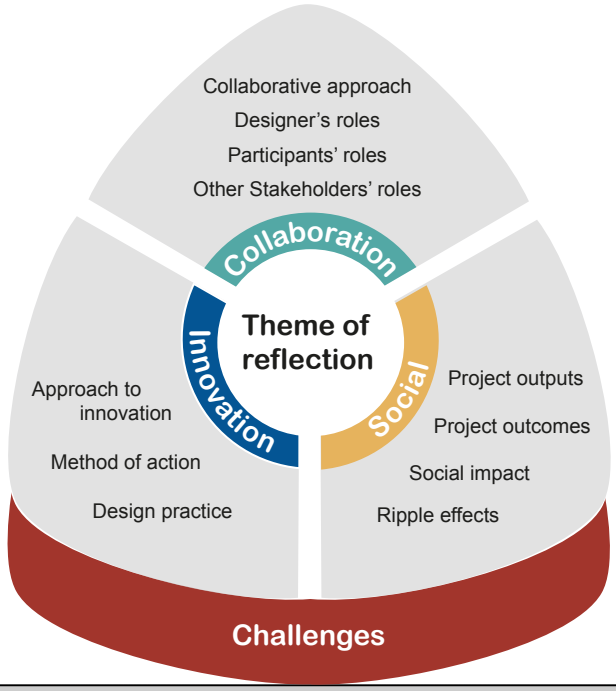
Publications about participatory community-based projects usually focus on the benefits for the participants but seldom mention how the design and research teams are also impacted. Most interviewees, however, shared how their projects have impacted them, even more so when working with vulnerable and marginalised people. Their personal experience and emotional involvement in the projects generate change for designers, researchers, and wider teams on many levels, including skill acquisition and personal growth. This is discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.3.2. To reflect this research finding, the element 'social outcome for designers' was added to the framework.

4.2.4. Ripple effects

The analysis of the interviews revealed that most of the projects inspired other people and organisations to undertake similar initiatives, to embrace similar values and to activate change within their organisations, communities, or fields. The projects analysed have had an impact beyond their areas of action, which was not originally expected. This broader unexpected impact has been added to the framework as 'Ripple effects'.

4.2.5. Final project profiling framework and evaluation

By including these additional elements, one of the outcomes of the interviews was the definition of a refined profiling framework to analyse projects employing fashion design methods for social change. In Figure 4.12, each element is described with a question and some examples to facilitate the profiling of projects.



Element	Description
Theme of reflection	What are the project's main aim and area of development? Ex: Product or service for social innovation, infrastructuring, digital social innovation, income generation/entrepreneurship, environmental concern, design theory and practice, activism, co-design, …
Collaborative approach	What is the collaborative or participatory approach of the project? Ex: Maternalistic, fraternalistic, teaching, mentoring, …
Participants' roles	In which way are participants agents in the process? What are the participants' roles and how much are they involved in the design process? And at what stage of the design process do they participate? Ex: initiators, (co)-designers, input givers, makers, entrepreneurs, students, end-users, …
Designer's roles	What are the designer's roles? Ex: strategist, researcher, facilitator, activist, educator, maker, storyteller, sense maker, …
Other stakeholders' roles	Did you collaborate with other stakeholders? Ex: gatekeepers, funding organisations, space
Project outputs	What does the project achieve as an output of its activities? Ex: new products, services, processes, markets, platforms, organisational forms, business models, …
Project outcomes	For participants: What outcomes does the project achieve in terms of social change? Ex: skill acquisition, wellbeing improvement, community engagement, self-confidence, employment, …
	For the designer: What outcomes does the project achieve in terms of social change? Ex: skill acquisition, wellbeing improvement, community engagement, self-confidence, self-growth, …
Social impact	What long-term social changes is the project aiming for? Ex: well-being, place-making, problem-solving, agency, community engagement, employment opportunities, education, social inclusion, sustainability, …
Ripple effects	Was there any unexpected impact on situations not directly related to the project? If yes, which ones? Ex: Inspiration for other projects, lateral impact on the community, teaching curriculum, …
Approach to innovation	How is the project innovating? Ex: challenging traditional ways of doing, introducing ways of doing in a new context, reconsidering traditional ways of doing in new ways, recombining existing resources, inventing something completely new, rediscovering the power of cooperation, …
Method of action	What are the methods used to activate the innovation process ? Ex: focus groups, interviews, making workshops, collective making, …
Design practice	Which design practice is used? In the specific case of fashion design, which practice of fashion making is used to engage participants? Ex: drawing, crochet, sewing, embroidery, …
Challenges	What are the project's main challenges? Ex: Difficulty recruiting participants, lack of or difficulty getting funding, difficult access to material and resources, lack of support from authorities,, …

Figure 4.12: Final version of the framework to analyse projects of fashion design for social change (illustration by the author).

The main purpose of this framework is to create project profiles from which key attributes and characteristics of fashion design for social change can be extracted, but it can also be useful to designers and researchers to analyse their own practice. Three interviewees found the framework useful when applied to their own projects. Olivia Weber compared the framework to the writing of a funding application and an end-of-project report combined, giving a holistic view of the project, and helping to keep in mind the objectives and to refocus the activities if necessary. Claire Swift found the framework useful *"to define"* and *"position what it is that [they] do and how"*, thanks to how the framework unpacks the different elements of a project. According to Anja-Lisa Hirscher, project profiles can be useful to share experiences, best practices, and learnings as well as challenges and difficulties, helping other projects to start up.

4.3. Projects of fashion design for social change: defining a typical profile

The framework was used to create individual project profiles that were analysed following a thematic analysis approach. This process facilitated the identification of similarities and differences between projects, resulting in developing a profile of projects of fashion design for social change, as discussed in this chapter.

4.3.1. Themes of reflection

As described earlier, at the centre of the framework, the section 'theme of reflection' is the project's main area of development. The analysis of the interviews revealed that the projects focus on common themes. First, all the interviewees work with vulnerable, marginalised, or under-represented groups of people. Some, like Olivia Weber, Helen Storey and Claire Swift focus on women and girls in situations of vulnerability, such as women living in deprived areas of London or in refugee camps, women in prison or ex-offenders. Women

empowerment is a strong focus of their work. According to Claire Swift, the current patriarchal societies set up too many barriers for women to be able to thrive, thus depriving the world from their *"thoughtfulness, kindness, compassion, caring, and creativity"*. Other interviewees work with different types of marginalised communities: descendants of migrants in London (Lucy Orta), immigrants, and refugees in Parisian suburbs (*Projet Renaissance*), in Italy or Germany, and residents of rural German villages (Anja-Lisa Hirscher). In rural Kenya, Joanna Maiden trains and employs both men and women in *SOKO Kenya*'s factory; however, the 'Kujuwa Initiative' is also strongly focused on contributing to the improvement of women and girls' health (Figure 4.13).



Figure 4.13: 'Kujuwa Initiative', by *SOKO Kenya* (Screen shot from the video on Kujuwa Initiative's website).

This links back to the definition formulated in Section 2.3.1. for which design for social innovation addresses the social needs of marginalised groups of people. All projects studied are driven by a strong social purpose, that is the creation of meaningful change and the improvement of people's lives, the desire to create opportunities for the participants and consequently create some sort of

empowerment. Many projects focus on creating access to training and employment opportunities while others focus on giving a voice to marginalised communities, often through creativity development.

To create such opportunities, ‘infrastructuring’ constitutes a major part of the work delivered through the projects. Anja-Lisa Hirscher describes ‘infrastructuring’ as the setting up of the conditions for a project to be successful, such as place, equipment, materials, facilitation, supporting networks, sharing of skills, the conditions enabling a successful long-term legacy, as well as creating equitable relationships based on trust. ‘Infrastructuring’ can be a needed precondition for setting up participatory making and creative workshops, like in Lucy Orta’s *Traces: Stories of Migration* project and Helen Storey’s work with the TIGER girls in Zaatari refugee camp, and the opening of training and manufacturing workshops such as *Making for Change*, *SOKO Kenya*, and *Projet Renaissance*.

In addition to a strong social purpose, all projects share a wider concern towards sustainability. Most projects studied also consider environmental issues, cultural sustainability, and economic viability. For example, *Trashion Factory*, *SOKO Kenya*, *Making for Change*, and *Projet Renaissance*, all aim for a reduction of waste and use upcycling as a design practice. In refugee camps, Helen Storey’s approach to environmental issues is to make things from readily available resources. Lucy Orta works with natural materials, and Anja-Lisa Hirscher aims to foster more sustainable consumer behaviours towards fashion by promoting repair and upcycling. Attention is also given to people’s cultures and how to preserve them. Helen Storey discusses the challenge of being true to the women refugees’ culture and faith while selling their handmade products to international customers. At both *SOKO Kenya* and *Projet Renaissance*, employees and apprentices’ traditional making crafts are integrated within some of the designs. Finally, most interviewees mentioned that making the projects economically sustainable is a major objective within their work. All projects embody a holistic approach to sustainability. With their social focus and holistic approach to sustainability – both too often lacking in the mainstream fashion industry – all projects studied share the overarching aim of challenging the

current system and proposing new narratives grounded in values of care and equity. All projects demonstrate that fashion can be *“a force for good”*, as stated by Joanna Maiden, by challenging the designer’s roles, opening fashion design to marginalised communities, and infrastructuring the conditions for new opportunities.

4.3.2. Collaboration

This section focuses on the ‘collaboration’ element within the framework, bringing together the findings from the analysis of the interviews about the sub-elements that compose the collaborative aspect of the projects: the collaborative approach, the roles of the designer, the participants and other stakeholders.

4.3.2.1. Collaborative approach

Within the ‘collaboration’ section of the framework, the ‘collaborative approach’ element describes the participatory approach employed in projects. The interviewees use different approaches to collaboration, some even employing a combination of them.

For this specific analysis, Lucy Orta’s *Traces* project is not included. Lucy Orta’s project differs from the others because a strong focus of the work was the development of Lucy’s creative practice. This sets Lucy’s project apart from the others where the development of the designer’s practice is not as central.

The other six projects can be divided into three different groups based on the type and level of engagement in the design process by the participants.

- Training and Employment

The first group uses training and employment as an approach to generate change. They are similar to training organisations and companies, but they

recruit trainees and employees from marginalised communities. Their training programmes and work policies can be more collaborative and participatory than traditional fashion institutions and organisations, but a certain level of hierarchy remains between the designer and the participants. *Projet Renaissance* (Figure 4.4), for instance, is a training centre specialising in *haute couture*, employing marginalised people. Relationships between the designer and participants are based on trust and mutual respect, with the possibility for participants to bring their ideas into the garment designs, but the common hierarchy between the fashion designer or creative director, such as Philippe Guilet, and the makers is still present. At *SOKO Kenya* (Figure 4.6), collaboration goes a little bit further than training and employment. Joanna Maiden, CEO and Founder of *SOKO Kenya*, mentioned that the whole team shares the same values and that some members of the team have been working with her since the early days, contributing to the development of the business model. Local textile crafts are considered within the development of the designs and Joanna Maiden also mentioned the close collaborative relationship with clients who share similar values. *SOKO Kenya* is a cut and sew production factory in a more traditional sense and innovates by offering all the extra support and benefits to its trainees and employees and the education and charity work within the community.

- Co-design

The next level of collaboration and participation within the design process is exemplified in Olivia Weber's work with ladies in Leyton, and in Claire Swift's *Making for Change* in Poplar. Co-designing is a strong element of both London-based projects. While Olivia Weber wants to share the design role with the participants involved in the creation of the garments, *Making for Change* empowers women to participate in the design of the project model itself. Olivia Weber explained how all products developed are co-designed with the participants by transferring the design agency to them through a series of workshops to improve their design and making skills as well as their self-confidence. In the same way as *SOKO Kenya*, *Making for Change* in Poplar offers training and employment to marginalised communities, namely ex-offenders and women living in a deprived area of London. However, the Poplar-

based training workshop differs from the previous group of projects in that it trains and employs people. As Claire Swift explained, the whole project has been developed in collaboration with the women themselves through community engagement activities and consultations:

> *"Individual interviews, group interviews, focus groups, and all of those things we've done to be able to really refine and develop the model that we've developed here"*.

The programmes of workshops are also developed in consultation with the women, based on their interests and aspirations. At *Making for Change*, the team *"always think[s] about who we're working with and how we work with them and what their needs are"* (Claire Swift).

- Peer-to-peer collaboration

The last group of projects employs a peer-to-peer approach to collaboration within a decentralised design process where any type of hierarchy is erased as much as possible, and all actors interact as equals. A peer-to-peer approach differs from co-design because it is about designing together as peers instead of designing with others. Claire Swift also mentioned how important it is to create a space for equality and connection for the success of *Making for Change* where women connect through creating things together, despite their differences. Peer-to-peer approaches are particularly strong within Helen Storey's work in Zaatari refugee camp and Anja-Lisa Hisrcher's peer-production spaces. For both projects, reciprocal knowledge exchange amongst participants and between participants and designers is the basis of the collaboration. Helen Storey takes the idea even further by talking about genuine relationships as the basis of the collaboration because she believes that equitable relationships will allow for participants and designers to *"read each other"*, to relate and empathize and thus create a form of deeper collaboration that do not need words to be expressed – this is particularly relevant in cases where there are language barriers and cultural differences between designers and their collaborators.

Three different approaches to collaborating have emerged from the analysis of the interviews: a more traditional approach based on training and employment, co-designing with participants, and peer-to-peer collaboration. While both co-design and peer-to-peer design refer to participatory collaborative design approaches, they differ in power dynamics, and the roles participants play. Co-design approaches emphasize collaboration with participants, but designers still play a guiding role and retain control. Peer-to-peer design instead refers to a more decentralised, horizontal model where all, designers and participants, collaborate and contribute skills and knowledge as equals.

While all approaches aim at creating social change within the communities where they are implemented, peer-to-peer approaches foster more agency within the design process and are thus more in line with the definition formulated earlier: design for social innovation implies the participation of the beneficiaries in the development of their own voices and practices.

4.3.2.2. Designer's roles

Not all the interviewees identify themselves as fashion designers or designers. However, it is important to highlight that the definition of a designer in the context of this research goes beyond the designer of things. What the interviewees do have in common is that they envision new possibilities and design the process to turn these into realities. Their main role is to enable change to happen. Within this overarching role of change enabler, designers play many roles, some commonly seen and talked about in the literature, others less so.

As mentioned in the literature review, designers use their design expertise to create the enabling conditions for social change to happen. The projects studied also illustrate these expert roles. In some projects, designers are seen as creative experts (Helen Storey), artists (Lucy Orta), or fashion designers (Olivia Weber, Philippe Guilet, Joanna Maiden) who use their design skills to create the

necessary conditions for projects to happen. As experts, designers sometimes act as teachers, educators, and mentors, passing on skills to participants.

The role most often mentioned during the interviews is that of facilitator. Anja-Lisa Hirscher describes her role of facilitator as *"reducing the barriers"* to make things happen, while Olivia Weber describes it as a *"conversation facilitator"*. Being a facilitator implies many roles such as project designer and project manager, problem solver and strategist as well as network builder and more, which echoes Manzini, Fuad-Luke and Tan, cited in Section 2.1.1.2.

Linked to the facilitator role in a context of collaborative work is that of relationship broker, builder, or facilitator. Within this role, the designer creates the conditions for interactions and relationships to form. This happens during projects but sometimes it is necessary to make these interactions and relationships happen before a project starts or takes place. In the extreme context of a refugee camp, Helen Storey talks about the *"peace and reconciliation"* work that she and her team had to do to create trust among participants before starting the project. Helen Storey was surprised to see that neighbour groups of residents did not know each other and would not interact. To get them to work together, Helen Storey and her team organised an activity that challenged them to trust each other:

> *"We paired everybody up across the different communities. […] One of [them] is blindfolded. [...] And what you did is you put your trust in the person who could still see. who had their arm around you, and the job they had to do was to walk around this very sparse, barren municipal place and find one thing that they found was beautiful. And it could be, you know, a weed growing out of a crack. […] then the person who was blindfolded had it described to them by the person that could see and then they swapped over, and they thought it was hilarious. [...] Off came the blindfold, they switched, and we were off".*

Claire Swift shared that she *"feel[s] like [they] design the spaces to enable interactions to happen and, [they] try not to impose or take over or dictate or direct, but [they] just enable that space"*.

Connected to this role of relationship facilitator, especially with marginalised people, some interviewees mentioned that they have helped participants improve their confidence to engage with others and with the activities offered. Olivia Weber sees herself as a *"self-confidence promoter"*. She argues that participants, who are used to being in a more traditional learning position, lack confidence when asked to take a designer role. Designers must support them in developing their self-confidence and self-worth, which will help them build the relationships needed to create change.

In co-design and peer-to-peer design approaches, designers play a strong collaborative role. Collaboration is facilitated by events and spaces that contribute to erasing hierarchies amongst participants, and especially between participants and designers. Claire Swift talked about 'making' a space for equality and connection. Within these spaces, designers and participants might share the same roles: they are makers, collaborators, co-designers, and co-producers. In some instances, designers even learn from participants. For Anja-Lisa Hirscher, being a non-expert has even made it easier to facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration between herself and the participants because the participants did not see her as more knowledgeable than they were. In this context, everyone learns from each other.

Many interviewees mentioned how important it is for designers to listen to participants, to their needs and aspirations which will shape the project and contribute to defining its outcomes. Helen Storey argued that listening and observing should be done at a deeper level and that designers should read all types of languages, not only the words or the obvious interactions. She advised designers to attune to all the unspoken languages and develop the skills to read them, especially when working with marginalised communities, to reach the meaning and knowledge behind unspoken words. As a designer, in the sense of a facilitator and observer and less as someone who designs 'things', Helen Storey shared about how she had to develop her *"ability to read what's going on in [people's] mind, which means the clues that come from posture, the clues that come from facial expression, the clues that come from where a hand goes first"*. For her, there is embedded meaning within the acts of making:

> *“There is an unspoken narrative about that person that they may not even notice for themselves. It’s dipping more into the psychological and the emotional, something you might be witnessing, you might find other ways of knowing about how women construct change, how women approach change, how women get to a place of empowerment and confidence, through the marks that they make and the changes that they make to the garments along the way”.*

If understood and interpreted appropriately, without any projection of personal frame of thoughts, these unspoken languages lead to deep knowledge and understanding and the formation of genuine trust and relationships. The designer becomes a translator of unspoken languages into knowledge and meaning.

Ultimately, designers should reach a level of empathy with participants that will ensure the project outcomes really meet the participants’ true needs. Helen Storey mentioned that designers must refrain from bringing European privileged frames of thoughts and must *“undo”* themselves and *“take off their emotional coat”.* This process of “*undoing oneself*” contributes to the creation of deep emotional connection and empathy with people, which, according to Helen Storey and Claire Swift, are conditions for such projects to foster real and long-lasting change. For Helen Storey, working in refugee camps, being emotionally unguarded is a condition to create genuine relationships and trust and access all the knowledge that people have to share. *”If you don’t, you will miss something”, and “as a designer, you don’t see these things if you keep your coat on”* (Helen Storey).

Finally, once projects are over, designers must take two additional roles. First, designers must look back at the project and extract all knowledge, not only from what worked well, but also from what did not work well or as planned, from the challenges, difficulties, and mistakes. As mentioned by some interviewees, end-of-project reports often focus almost exclusively on positive outcomes. Designers, however, must reflect on the difficulties, mistakes and things that do not work as well. The final role of designers is to pass on this knowledge to the designers of the future.

The analysis of the interviews has contributed to list an array of diverse roles for designers who collaborate with marginalised people to foster social change and showed that designers play many roles simultaneously that can evolve along a project. Claire Swift, for instance, states that her team at *Making for Change* plays a combination of roles: *"I would say we are an educator, facilitator, strategist, we provide employment opportunities, but also we provide guidance and employability".* All these roles can be summarised in five categories (Figure 4.14):

- Facilitator as project manager focusing on the material and skill 'infrastructuring' of the project;
- Facilitator as relationship builder that creates the conditions for interactions to happen;
- Collaborator as a peer with participants;
- Observer and listener of spoken and unspoken languages and translator of the embedded meaning and knowledge;
- Empathetic designer who creates a deeper emotional connection with participants.

Designers aiming towards social change might cover some or all of these roles, in different ways, at different levels, and in different moments of a project. These roles might also be split between many members of the project team.

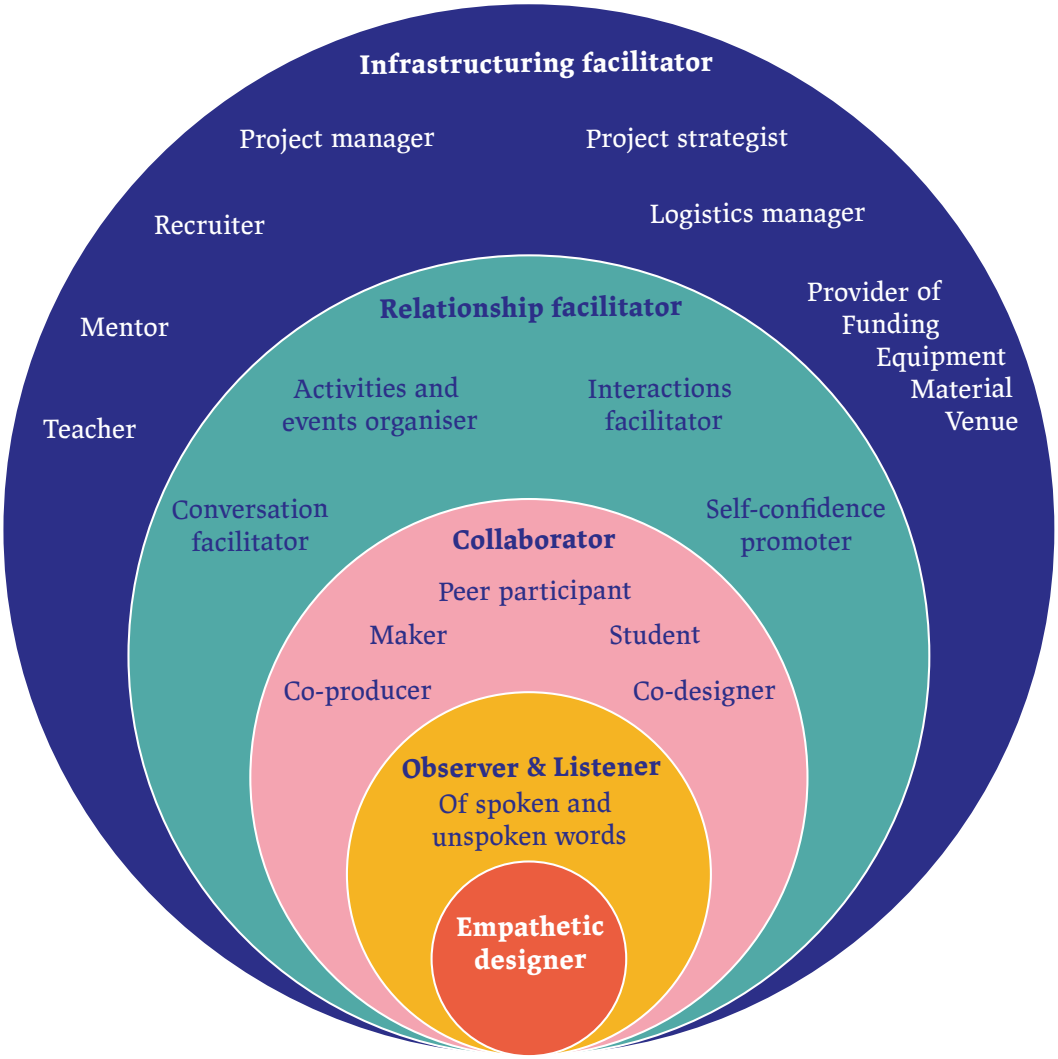


Figure 4.14: Designer roles in projects designing social change with marginalised people.

4.3.2.3. Participants' roles

In the projects studied, participants appear to play many roles and in some cases those roles evolve during and after the projects.

In all the projects discussed during the interviews, participants are makers, but they do not have a design role in all of them. The roles of the participants go hand-in-hand with the roles of the designers. As designers encourage participants to develop their own design skills, participants have more opportunities to act as designers or co-designers. Projects differ in how much design agency participants have. For instance, *Projet Renaissance* is a training

institution where apprentices learn *haute couture* skills and make the outfits designed by the creative director, but their design role is limited. The same happens at *SOKO Kenya* where designs are developed by the clients. In Anja-Lisa Hirscher's and Helen Storey's projects instead, participants are designers of the artefacts that they make and are even designers of the project itself.

In projects – such as those led by Olivia Weber – where participants play a design role, there is an evolution in their roles along the process that is closely connected to the improvement of their self-confidence. They often start as learners who see the designer or project lead as the expert teacher. As their confidence and relationships grow, and depending on how the project is organised, participants might shift towards more designing roles within the project itself and its legacy. Claire Swift talked about co-designers of the project. Both Helen Storey and Anja-Lisa Hirscher talked about how participants design the legacy and their role of leaders of the project going forward.

Participants also help and advise each other in the making process and become teachers and mentors for others during and after the project. Emotional support also occurs as participants share about their lives and lead them to become friends.

In some cases, such as in Helen Storey and Lucy Orta's projects, some participants are also artists; in other cases, such as *Making for Change* and *SOKO Kenya*, participants become employees within the project.

To conclude, the analysis of the interviews revealed that participants can take many roles within projects of fashion design for social change. In some projects, participants move towards design and co-design roles and this shift increases the chances of a project becoming self-sustained without the need of the designer's presence in the long term (Figure 4.15).

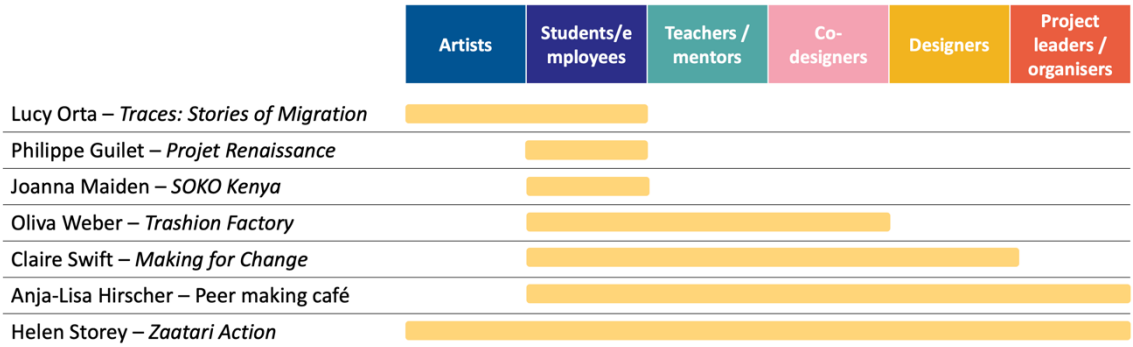


Figure 4.15. Participants' roles in the projects studied.

4.3.2.4. Other stakeholders' roles

None of the projects studied worked in silos. The collaboration goes beyond the designer or project team and the participants. There are many other organisations and people who take part in the collaboration and make such projects a reality.

Related to their 'infrastructuring' role, designers and project leads are often affiliated with or partner with organisations and people who share capacity and knowledge (*e.g.*, Lucy Orta, Helen Storey, and Claire Swift benefit from the wide array of skills and knowledge available within London College of Fashion). The team is made of people with complementary skills and expertise to support the project in the best possible way.

Funding organisations were often mentioned and discussed during the interviews. Finding funding for such projects is a major challenge. Even if project leads do not always align with the funders' expectations, government entities, universities, fashion brands, companies, and other funding organisations play a crucial role to make projects possible by granting the financial resources to remunerate people, purchase materials and equipment, hire venues and more. Some organisations contribute to projects in other ways by donating materials and equipment or offering a venue in kind. These collaborators and partners are also crucial for the 'infrastructuring' of projects.

When working with people, and even more so with marginalised communities, gatekeepers facilitate access and safeguard participants' safety and interests. Without them, it is very difficult for designers to recruit participants. Gatekeepers are usually organisations that have been working with a certain community for a long time and have built trust and strong relationships with its members. Claire Swift worked with community organisations in Poplar, London, to meet local women. Helen Storey collaborates with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in refugee camps. *Projet Renaissance* recruit apprentices with the help of a government training organisation.

To support participants in learning new skills, external experts, from the fashion industry or education institutions, might take part in the project. For instance, Claire Swift works with tutors and students from London College of Fashion. Professionals from Elie Saab taught embroidery to women at Zaatari refugee camp with Helen Storey.

Knowledge and skills can also be shared with other projects and organisations that undertake similar work and share similar values. Organisations can come together with complementary making skills to develop creative collaborations. *Projet Renaissance*, for instance, develops designs with the Moroccan Association Timendotes and the Indian embroidery Kalhat Institute.

For projects that aim at developing enterprise models, partnering with businesses and clients is a condition for the development of the ventures. *SOKO Kenya*, *Projet Renaissance*, and *Making for Change*, all work closely with brands who share similar values. Selling platforms also enable participants to sell the products they make (*e.g.*, Olivia Weber sold the embroidered T-shirts made by participants on the online marketplace Etsy).

Some projects focus on training participants in making and employability skills. Project leads work closely with universities, brands, and manufacturers to create employment opportunities. *Making for Change,* for instance, collaborates with local manufacturers to tailor the training programme to the needs of the industry and to advocate for recruitment and employment models to adapt to the needs of the employees.

Once projects finish, their legacy also relies on other stakeholders. Projects often stay alive and develop further thanks to the networks and the infrastructures put in place during their lifecycle. Participants who become leaders may rely on these collaborations for funding, space, future project developments, and more.

Overall, the interviews show that, to be successful and expand, projects of fashion design for social change must collaborate and partner with other stakeholders.

4.3.3. Social change

With reference to the four different levels of social change (outputs, outcomes, social impact, and ripple effects), this section discusses the results of the projects and how the experts interviewed define social change.

4.3.3.1. Project outputs

The easiest results to measure and quantify are the projects outputs, *i.e.*, the products of the activities undertaken during a projects. In most projects, these are measured in number of workshops delivered, number of participants involved and number of garments, products, or artefacts made. When the project also has a business component, interviewees talked about the number of products sold and the number of commercial and business partnerships created. Events such as exhibitions in which the participants' work is showcased and celebrated often conclude projects and contribute to sharing the results with a broader public. Publications, articles, and documentaries, especially when the project is associated to a university are also significant outputs.

In addition to these easily measurable outputs, some interviewees also mentioned the training and business models that are designed and set up

during the projects. These outputs are clearly defined and can be replicated in other contexts. *Made in Zaatari*, for example, is a centre for female entrepreneurship. Joanna Maiden's work in Kenya has led to the creation of the sewing school Stitching Academy, *SOKO Kenya* Factory, and the 'Kujuwa Initiative'. *Making for Change* has developed an accredited training programme, Level 1 and level 2 ABC Qualification in Fashion and Textiles. *Projet Renaissance* has also created a unique training approach in luxury fashion bringing together upcycling and *haute couture*.

4.3.3.2. Project outcomes

Outcomes are the shorter-term changes that happen as a result of the project activities. The interviews revealed that project outcomes had to be split into those for participants and those for designers.

4.3.3.2.1. Project outcomes for participants

Interviewees mentioned many benefits for the people who take part in their projects. Not only do they echo the list of benefits brought about by participating in collaborative making, as described in the literature and contextual review (see Section 2.1.3.), but they also add to it.

The list of outcomes and benefits for the participants of the projects studied is long and even more so if the scope of action of the project includes a broader support for the participants to face life issues. Drawing on the findings from the interviews, a new list of equally important benefits for participants of projects of fashion design for social change can be formulated:

- Acquisition and improvement of making skills
- Development of creativity and self-expression

- Acquisition and improvement of life, social and employability skills
- Generation of a sense of pride and achievement
- Improvement of mental health and wellbeing
- Improvement of self-confidence
- Enhanced sense of agency
- Empowerment, ambition, and hope for the future
- Recognition of participants' skills and capabilities
- Community engagement and community building
- Access to training and employment opportunities
- Access to a safe space and extra support
- Preservation of participants' cultural heritages and traditional crafts

These outcomes do not happen separately but are interrelated. For instance, the acquisition of making skills and the development of creativity and self-expression can evolve together and lead to a sense of pride and achievement, improve wellbeing and self-confidence. Participants who acquire both making skills and employability skills feel more confident to access training and employment opportunities. Participants who access a space where they feel safe and receive support will feel more confident to acquire new skills, express their creativity and will more willingly engage with the community. Not all projects will achieve all these outcomes and not all participants experience the projects and benefit from them in the same way. However, albeit not exhaustive, this list gives an extensive idea of the type of outcomes for participants that can be generated by projects of fashion design for social change.

- Acquisition of making skills

All the interviewees talked about the making skills that participants acquire during the projects, either through collaborative making sessions where skills are learnt from designers or peer participants or following a structured training programme. These skills range from embroidery, sewing, pattern making, textile-based crafts, professional clothing manufacturing, and more (Table 4.1).

- Self-expression and creativity development

Along with acquiring new capabilities or strengthening their making skills, participants develop their creativity and express themselves through their artworks. In some cases, such as Lucy Orta's *Traces: Stories of Migration* and Helen Storey's *Love Coats* project with the TIGER girls in Zaatari camp, one of the objectives is to develop the participants' creativity and lead them to express themselves through, respectively, their Story Cloth (Figure 4.9) and embellished coats (Figure 2.4).

Other projects instead focus on professional training and garment manufacturing, but participants feel motivated by their learning and access to diverse sources of inspiration and manage to be creative outside the training or work context. Joanna Maiden mentioned that employees are proud of the garments they make at *SOKO Kenya* and that this inspires them to create their own designs and garments: *"A month or so later, the team are wearing clothes that they've made that have nods to what we've produced".*

- Sense of achievement and wellbeing

By making and completing a piece of clothing or artwork, sometimes representing one's personal identity, culture and history, participants feel proud and get a sense of achievement. During the making workshops she facilitated, Anja-Lisa Hirscher observed how amazed participants were when completing a garment: *"For the participants of course, it's 'Wow! I made this'"*.

This feeling is heightened when the garments or artefacts are showcased and celebrated during exhibitions and events, or even worn by celebrities. At *SOKO Kenya*, the employees were particularly proud when, in 2010, Michelle Obama

wore two garments made in the factory. For Philippe Guilet, pride in the garments made happens through the exceptional craftsmanship that the trainees progressively acquire. Claire Swift explained that at *Making for Change*, *"wellbeing, aspiration, hope, resilience, self-confidence, self-esteem"* are measured through individual interviews, group interviews, and focus groups, and are determinant to refine the project model and make sure that the participants' needs are met.

This sense of achievement, together with the healing benefits of making, supports the improvement of the participants' mental health and wellbeing and eventually their self-confidence – in line with the concept of 'well-making' (Hackney *et al.*, 2022b), explained in Section 2.1.3. In all the projects studied, participants are said to have more agency and ambition. For instance, participants are more confident to find employment (*Projet Renaissance*, *Making for Change*) or become project leaders themselves (Helen Storey's *Zaatari Action* project, and Anja-Lisa Hirscher's sewing cafés). Empowered participants have more hope for the future and their involvement in projects opens new horizons.

- Life skills and employability

Participants also develop other types of skills through such projects. By collaborating with other people, participants develop life skills such as empathy, patience, tolerance, self-regulation, and teamworking. Employability skills are also a focus of projects such as *Making for Change*, *SOKO Kenya*, and *Projet Renaissance*.

- Access to opportunities

As a result of their engagement with projects, skilled, empowered, confident participants discover and gain access to new networks and opportunities for further training, employment, or entrepreneurship. For instance, *Making for Change* participants with the ABC qualification in Fashion and Textiles have joined employability training programmes and secured full-time employment. Tarek Mohamed Hamden, an artist from Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan has exhibited his work in London and at Venice Design Biennale in 2021, selling his

work internationally (Figure 4.16). One of the participants in Lucy Orta's project has applied for a PhD at London College of Fashion, while *Projet Renaissance* apprentices have found employment opportunities with Yves Saint Laurent and other luxury brands.



Figure 4.16: Catalogue for Tarek Hamden's first exhibition in London (Source: Centre for Sustainable Fashion, n.d.).

- Community engagement and community building

Participating in such projects also brings about outcomes related to community engagement and community building. By making things together, participants build relationships and friendships and create a community of makers who support each other. Some interviewees also mentioned that participants' creative and personal journeys have impacted their relationships with their families and friends. Olivia Weber mentioned how some participants are now considered as capable and creative makers by their relatives. At Zaatari refugee

camp, participating in Helen Storey's project and coming to the *Made in Zaatari* centre has challenged traditional gender-based social norms. Claire Swift argued that involving the wider family and community is necessary to overcome cultural barriers and for participants to see the benefits on *"their mothers, wives, daughters and daughters-in-law"*.

- Cultural sustainability

In some cases, projects also give space for participants to practise their traditional crafts and therefore contribute to sustaining and promoting their cultural heritage. For instance, both *Projet Renaissance* and *SOKO Kenya* bring traditional techniques from the participants' cultural backgrounds into the designs.

- Safe space

All projects are based in a physical space where participants find safety and support. It can be about both physical and psychological safety so that participants can express themselves freely, share about their lives and support each other. Claire Swift defines *Making for Change* as a space for equality and connection. In some cases, these safe spaces come with additional functions, such as childcare and health support. *SOKO Kenya* is particularly structured to support people holistically in lots of different aspects of their lives. The Stitching Academy teaches professional sewing skills as well as financial literacy, money management, formal employment, family planning, health advice and more. The 'Kujuwa Initiative' supports schoolgirls and provides advice and a safe space to teach and talk about women's health. Employees at the factory get paid a living wage and have benefits such as childcare, private pension, help with debt management and financial literacy. They also react to the issues that the community faces and develop training and education programmes to change the behaviour and culture within the community. For instance, with the rise of sexual violence against women, they have put in place a dedicated training programme for staff.

4.3.3.2.2. Project outcomes for designers

The interviewees agreed that designers and teams are also impacted by their projects. It is a natural and human process, even more so when working with vulnerable and marginalised people. Lucy Orta argued: *"I think it's not just about the participants, it's also about the team members going on to do or to create or to become empowered through the project"*.

In most cases, the designer and team acquire skills linked to the setting up and management of the project. Olivia Weber mentioned the business development skills she acquired thanks to setting up *Trashion Factory*. Anja-Lisa Hirscher improved her skills in workshop facilitation in addition to learning about pattern making and garment making. Many interviewees talked about learning through trial and error. Joanna Maiden talked about her *"massive steep learning curve"* over the years as she set up and grew *SOKO Kenya*.

Other designers have seen their creativity develop thanks to their projects. Lucy Orta is a great example as she has developed her own artistic practice by making the participants' portraits with techniques that she had never used before. In the same way as participants, designers also benefit from new networks and connections created thanks to their projects, that can bring about opportunities for future projects, collaborations, or employment.

Many interviewees highlighted the impact that projects had on them personally and how they might have changed their lives and their perceptions of themselves and the world. As argued earlier, trust and genuine relationships are key for the success of such projects and, despite ethical recommendations for keeping a certain distance with participants, designers and project teams often get personally and emotionally involved. Thus, projects of fashion design for social change, and probably projects of design for social change in general, not only impact participants, but also impact designers and project teams beyond the obvious learning of project management skills. Helen Storey emphasized how much working in Zaatari refugee camp has changed her. When working in contexts of extreme deprivation, Helen Storey suggests standing back and letting an undoing of the 'self' happen. She shared that the first person she met

when she entered the camp was herself, her own inner world, and its response to what she was witnessing.

> *"Designers must re-evaluate their approach, ideas and beliefs and agree to stand back sometimes, instead of pushing and controlling. […] That is the new learning of how a designer can experience themselves being sculpted by an environment that they're working in, as opposed to only going with the skills that you are already confident in, or you feel are worth imparting. It's the reverse. […] How [a project] changes you also, is absolutely key".*

The context of refugee camps is extreme and is very likely to impact anyone at a more personal and emotional level, but Helen Storey is not the only one talking about the designer's personal growth. Olivia Weber mentioned that she went through a personal re-evaluation, while Joanna Maiden had to overcome her personal questioning and *"moral inventory around [her] beliefs"* and about *"being a white middle-class woman"* founding and managing an ethical company in Kenya.

4.3.3.3. Social and economic impact

As defined in the framework (Figure 4.12), social impacts are the longer-term changes resulting from projects. Social impact takes time and some of the changes generated by the projects studied might not be visible yet and are still to come. In some cases, however, some change can already be discussed.

Many interviewees mentioned economic sustainability as a condition for long-term social impact. It is indeed often described as an objective of the projects. For the projects that aim at developing a business model, economic sustainability is key for the long-term viability of the venture and consequently the long-term support of participants and their communities. Revenue must be generated to cover projects' running costs, remunerate people, and reinvest in the business. Working on *Trashion Factory*, Olivia Weber and her participants have designed, produced, and sold T-shirts, generating revenues to remunerate

participants and reinvest in the project. *SOKO Kenya* and *Making for Change* have succeeded in setting up professional manufacturing business models. Developing and selling products made in Zaatari refugee camp was one of the focuses of Helen Storey but also one of the main challenges. Helen Storey shared her concern with *"how, in a place of dust and poverty, you create something of quality and beauty"* that sells internationally, despite all the governmental barriers, but avoids *"poverty purchase"* and simultaneously honours the makers' culture, traditions, and faith.

Participants might find employment within these ventures or might use them as platforms towards other work opportunities or entrepreneurial ventures. The long-term social impacts created for participants by economically viable enterprises include benefitting from a fair and secure remuneration that ensures financial independence and security and supports personal and family needs such as healthcare and children's education. In addition to supporting employees with fair remuneration, offering a caring and supportive environment is crucial. Joanna Maiden shared that *"the factory is not just about a job, it's about the kind of ecosystem, in terms of the support that we offer. [It] makes a big change and we've seen women leave abusive relationships because they've got their own bank account and confidence and understanding of how to use their money".*

As a result of greater remuneration and access to information, education, and better services, people see their living conditions improve. By providing access to healthcare services and educating women and girls about female health, *SOKO Kenya* contributes to safer and healthier living conditions.

In the long-term, participants might also find their life purpose and a vision for their own future. For instance, women prisoners who have taken part in the *Making for Change* training programme are less likely to re-offend after release. Helen Storey also mentions giving the Zaatari girls an alternative outlook for the future. *Projet Renaissance*'s objective is to guide the apprentices towards social reintegration through work.

Another long-term impact observed in the projects studied is the development of more sustainable behaviours towards fashion. Because of their holistic approach to sustainability, such projects influence the participants and the communities in which they are embedded, not only socially but also with their approach towards environmental sustainability. Anja-Lisa Hirscher talked about more sustainable consumer behaviours. *Projet Renaissance* and *Making for Change* both focus on upcycling, which also influences the participants' practices beyond the project.

Altogether, the projects studied offer alternative, sustainable practices and narratives to the communities and the current fashion system. On one hand, such projects contribute to changing the mentalities within the communities themselves. According to Claire Swift, cultural barriers can be a strong hindrance to the development of women. In this regard, she stated: *"in the patriarchal societies in which we live, there are so many barriers stopping women from thriving and thus depriving the world from their thoughtfulness, kindness, compassion, caring and creativity"*. That is the reason why she involves both families and the broader community in the work of *Making for Change*. Helen Storey also contributes to changing the mentalities within the refugee camps where she works and beyond by showing that beauty can come from extreme conditions of deprivation. These projects aim at overcoming the challenges that hinder marginalised communities to thrive. On the other hand, the projects studied also challenge the current fashion industry. For instance, *Projet Renaissance* and *Making for Change* promote alternative recruitment routes for both sew-and-cut and Haute Couture businesses by training marginalised people who would not have access to these employment opportunities. Olivia Weber and Anja-Lisa Hirscher challenge the roles of the designer and the whole traditional design process.

Finally, place making can also be the result of projects of fashion design for social change. Place-making is "a process that enables communities to shape their own environments" (Huang and Roberts, 2019). Helen Storey stated that in Zaatari refugee camp, the *Made in Zaatari* centre *"was set up for encouraging the creativity and empowerment of women"*, where they develop entrepreneurial

ideas such as beauty salons, childcare and soap and jewellery making. The centre is a safe space where women, out of the extreme conditions of a refugee camp, can shape the place they want to live in.

The longer-term change generated by a project of fashion design for social change is difficult to anticipate and can take many forms. The following list summarizes the social changes witnessed by the designers and practitioners interviewed as results of their projects:

- Participants' financial independence and security;
- Improvement of participants' living conditions;
- Definition of a life purpose and positive vision for the future;
- Adoption of a more sustainable behaviour;
- Contribution to changing mentalities towards social justice within communities and the fashion industry;
- Enhanced sense of place.

4.3.3.4. Ripple effects

In addition to social outcomes and longer-term changes, most projects generated impacts beyond their original scope.

Some projects such as *SOKO Kenya* in a Kenyan rural village, *Making for Change* in East London, and Anja-Lisa Hirscher's work in German rural villages brought new strength and energy to the communities where the design interventions took place. The projects convey a positive message of possibilities, agency, and empowerment and, thus, are sources of inspiration for other local and international projects not directly connected to them. Olivia Weber's work inspired other community members to start their own workshops. Following the creation and success of the *Made in Zaatari* centre, other soap

making labs opened around the refugee camp. The project also inspired the opening of an innovation lab at Al-al Bayt University in Jordan and the UNHCR started new collaborations with Helen Storey in refugee camps in Africa. Philippe Guilet also got inspired by the *Making for Change* project to collaborate with a local prison.

At societal level, these projects trigger conversations and help change mentalities on social justice issues. By engaging the general public through the *Traces: Stories of Migration* exhibitions and events, Lucy Orta's work with first and second-generation migrants has generated wider conversations about migration and immigration. Joanna Maiden, Helen Storey and Claire Swift feel passionate about women's rights and raising awareness of violence against women. In Claire Swift's words, *"violence against women and girls is the biggest pandemic that we would ever have to face in our lifetimes, ever, for infinity and beyond".*

Finally, learnings from these projects are brought back to education institutions to inform curricula and train future designers. Alongside Helen Storey and Lucy Orta at LCF, UAL, Claire Swift's work at *Making for Change*, Poplar Works, and her role as Director of the Portal Centre for Social Impact at UAL are crucial within the university to create a space for people to become the designers needed for a better future.

4.3.4. Innovation

The analysis of the interviews revealed that all the projects are fostering innovation in their own way, by challenging the *status quo* of the fashion industry, either through new approaches or using existing methods in new ways in contexts of vulnerability and marginalisation.

4.3.4.1. Approach to innovation

In all the projects studied, innovation is driven by the urge to challenge the current fashion system and create new models and narratives led by values of care and equity. The analysis of the interviews led to identify five different approaches to innovation, usually not applied on their own but most often jointly.

One of the approaches identified was the creation of something radically new. Both *Making for Change* and *Projet Renaissance* have developed a bespoke training programme adapted to the needs and aspirations of the communities they work with and responding to industry demands. With its strong focus on environmental sustainability, Philippe Guilet has based the whole training and practice of *Projet Renaissance* on an innovative approach to *haute couture* upcycling (Figure 4.17).



Figure 4.17: The *Renaissance* method, upcycling luxury garments (Source: Projet Renaissance, n.d.).

Innovative models can also be created using existing assets. Anja-Lisa Hirscher argued that to create something new, one does not need to buy or acquire new things. Instead, people can build on and revalue what they already have:

> *"[The participants innovated by] using the existing resources, if it's materials, space, people, and creating something completely new from them. […]. So, [innovation emerges through] bringing all these tangible materials together and then creating this place for exchanging skills, for working together somehow"*.

"How in a place of dust and poverty, you create something of quality" is one of Helen Storey's challenges. Refugee artist Tarek Hamden has found his own way by craving everyday objects into artworks, later exhibited, and sold abroad.

An approach identified in most of the projects studied is to innovate by bringing existing methods and tools to new contexts. For instance, Helen Storey was the first UNHCR Designer in Residence and introduced participatory making methods that are common in other contexts but that had not been used in the deprived context of a refugee camp. She shared that "*[the team and the participants] also realised the power of asking something you've never been asked to do before, particularly if it's done with care. It is very bonding".* With *SOKO Kenya*, Joanna Maiden built a fashion factory in a rural Kenyan village. *Projet Renaissance* innovates in two ways: on one hand, the project brings upcycling to *haute couture*, and on the other, it brings *haute couture* to deprived Parisian suburbs.

This approach is very close to another one, which is about reconsidering existing ways of doing things with a different purpose. For example, peer making is used to foster sustainable behaviour in Anja-Lisa Hirscher's sewing café. Lucy Orta focuses on employing participatory practice-based methodologies, in particular textile making processes, to foster the development of individual artistic practices and explore the histories of the local community. *SOKO Kenya* explores the potential of a fashion factory to be a force for social good. *Projet Renaissance* uses *Haute Couture* for social justice and environmental sustainability purposes.

The last approach observed entails innovating by connecting separate problems and finding joint solutions. It is the case of *Making for Change,* which aims at developing an accessible training and employment programme for marginalised women, to address the shortage of technically skilled staff within the London fashion manufacturing industry.

As a summary, the approaches to innovation identified through the interviews are:

- Creating a completely new model;
- Creating something new by recombining, in a creative way, existing available resources;
- Bringing existing methods and tools to new contexts;
- Reconsidering an existing approach for a new purpose;
- Connecting problems and finding joint solutions.

This list is, of course, not exhaustive and there might be other approaches to innovation, but it complements the approaches discussed in Section 2.1.1.4., that presents innovation as a recombination of existing assets in creative ways, and in Section 2.1.2. that discusses what projects of design for social innovation are in practice. Simultaneously, the projects studied also illustrate Manzini and Tassinari's (2012) list of common actions of social innovation initiatives: to (re)discover the power of cooperation; to recombine in a creative way already existing assets; to rely on their own resources without waiting for a general change from institutions.

4.3.4.2. Methods of action

A wide array of methods is employed in the projects studied but the most often used consists in participatory making workshops. These workshops bring people together to make, either as part of a series of workshops with a defined

topic and objective (for example, Lucy Orta's textile craft workshops in the *Traces: Stories of Migration* project, and the coat making workshops with the TIGER girls at Zaatari refugee camp) or as less structured drop-in making sessions with a peer-making approach (*e.g.*, Anja-Lisa Hirscher's sewing cafés).

Some projects have developed full training programmes or courses with a structured curriculum and a 'learning by making' approach, such as *Projet Renaissance*, *Making for Change*, and *SOKO Kenya*. At *SOKO Kenya* and *Making for Change*, employment within the organisation itself is also one of the ways to support participants. Other methods mentioned by interviewees are educational workshops, brainstorming sessions, and storytelling.

4.3.4.3. Design practice

The projects studied show that many design and making practices can be used to engage participants. All projects employ garment making and textile crafts, but other practices are also used.

Many projects employ textile craft practices, either in an amateur or professional capacity. Participants practise embroidery, crochet, mending and various types of textile embellishment techniques. In some cases, this handwork is a form of meditation practice. Olivia Weber, for example, encourages participants to meditate while embroidering. The slow process of hand embroidery and hand-stitching in general is about taking the time to stitch and having a break from one's mental load and anxieties, which can have wellbeing benefits.

Textile crafts are also associated with self-expression, where stitching becomes a form of language. Lucy Orta shared that *"for [her] what is important is that stitch becomes a language for expression, and it's not linked to fashion or design practices, it's linked to a visual language that talks about identity – cultural and social identity"*.

Other practices are instead strongly connected to garment making. In a peer-making context, Anja-Lisa Hirscher shared that machine sewing was usually favoured by her project participants because they wanted to get to a final wearable garment quickly. Garment making is also practised in a business context. Both *SOKO Kenya* and *Making for Change* focus on training and employing people in cut and sew manufacturing, while *Projet Renaissance* focuses on *haute couture* making practices applied to the upcycling of high-end garments.

To a lesser extent, other practices are also used in the projects studied. In her effort to transfer designing roles to participants, Olivia Weber has used fashion design practices like mood boards and collages for participants to express their design ideas. Other practices not related to fashion and textile are also used, such as photography and filming in Lucy Orta's *Traces* project.

This list of design practices is not exhaustive and is specific to the projects studied, but it still highlights the fact that garment making and textile craft practices are often favoured in projects of fashion design for social change.

4.3.5. Challenges

All the interviewees mentioned the challenges faced when setting-up and running their projects, and emphasized how important it is to talk about, analyse, and learn from them. Challenges also define the project trajectory, and learnings are key for its development and the generation of other initiatives.

4.3.5.1. Financial challenges

The interviewees often mentioned the lack of and the difficulty to find funds as one of the main challenges they face. When planning a project, designers must estimate a budget and find the funds to cover the costs of delivering the project. Not only such projects are difficult to cost, because of uncertainties, but finding

funding organisations that align with the projects' values and aims can also be challenging. Sometimes funding is limited, imposing restrictions on the project scope and limiting its broader potential.

To avoid reliance on external funding, some projects develop a business activity to generate revenue and cover their costs, but this comes with its own set of challenges. Economic sustainability is indeed difficult to achieve. Helen Storey willingly spoke about the challenges faced in Zaatari refugee camp when trying to make products locally to sell abroad. In the specific context of a refugee camp, the possibility to sell products made by refugees, to be able to earn a living from them, relies on the law and politics of the hosting government. Employment law and right to work, taxation regulations and the relationship between the hosting government and the refugee camp determine the *"bandwidth of possibility in [their] life".* In addition, in Zaatari, refugees are not allowed to own their own IP, and this makes the process of co-design and their ability to become autonomous and sustainable difficult. Endemic poverty often prevents the development of a local market for locally made products. Helen Storey talked about *"the poor selling to the poor"*. The products that can be sold internationally, for a higher price, are often not the products that the local people need or can afford. So, the focus has been on developing products that the international market might want – *"that's where the margin is"*. Then, the additional challenge is to develop products appealing to the international customer that are also true to the makers' culture and faith, while trying to avoid the creation of 'poverty purchases' where international customers don't particularly value the item that they are buying but *"they do definitely want to put money in the hands of the person who made it"*. Helen Storey's account summarises well most of the barriers that business ventures might face: lack of a supportive governmental and legal structure, the difficulty to find a market, the paradox of developing and selling products to a diverse customer but still faithful to the identity and culture of the maker, the difficulty to make high quality products in contexts of precarity. To this list the uncertainty of clients' orders and the challenge of generating enough revenues to cover the costs can be added. Anja-Lisa Hirscher and her participants also tried to open a shop, selling designer products, but the revenue generated did not cover all the costs

involved. Anja-Lisa Hirscher argued that *"[she has] seen popping up every once in a while, sewing cafes or this kind of workshop stuff and then they close again, because it's not financially viable in our capitalistic system; these kinds of values are not matched value"*.

4.3.5.2. Cultural challenges

All the projects are specific to the contexts, places, and cultural environment in which they are embedded. Some challenges emerge from the friction between the local traditions and social structures and the project's approach and desired outcomes. With reference to their own projects, Helen Storey, Claire Swift, and Joanna Maiden all mentioned cultural barriers that stop women from thriving. According to Claire Swift, one of the roles of *Making for Change* is to understand and find solutions to overcome what is really preventing women from reaching their full potential. In this regard, Claire Swift explained:

> *"It is very difficult to understand why some women who seem to have the skills will decide not to pursue [working for Making for Change]. […] It's working out whether they're not allowed to become more independent and so therefore there's that reluctance to take ownership of something or push themselves forward to do something. It's very difficult to work out what it is that is disabling that".*

For Claire Swift, building close long-term relationships based on trust is key to understand the individual barriers faced by women. During conversations, often around some making activities, women might talk about cultural barriers such as disapproval from family members and *"reputational risk"*. Relationships between women and men were also mentioned by Helen Storey, who stated: *"what happens to men when women become empowered, particularly in a place like Zaatari"* is important to consider. Some men might not appreciate their wives' empowerment. In Kenya, Joanna Maiden and her employees deal with an increase in violence against women in the community. As mentioned previously, one of the outcomes of such projects is their contribution to

changing mentalities towards social justice, but this is not an easy task and communities might be reluctant to change, especially in certain cultures.

4.3.5.3. Challenges with participants

Some designers find it hard to recruit and retain participants for their projects. Commitment might be low because of other priorities and cultural barriers, and participants dropping out can jeopardize the success of projects. Inconsistency in attendance and low commitment can also lead to issues of consistency and retention of skills learnt by participants and prevent the development of high-quality manufacturing activities. Lucy Orta also mentioned how difficult it is to plan projects catering for different levels of participants' abilities and skills.

For Claire Swift though, the 'Universal Credit Trap', linked to the UK Government benefit, is the main challenge when developing production workshops. Some women might worry about losing their benefits for the family if they are remunerated for their contributions to projects.

These appeared to be common challenges in the projects studied but, as projects are context-specific, many other challenges can arise.

4.3.5.4. Challenges for designers

Designers also face several personal challenges when working on projects of design for social change.

Anja-Lisa Hirscher mentioned the workload that such projects create for a small team. Projects of design for social change involve lots of work, often more than anticipated. Due to limited budgets, difficulty to find people or designers working on all fronts, facilitators and volunteers end up working much more than expected.

On a more personal level, many interviewees talked about the designer's challenge to review and let go of their own beliefs to avoid a colonising approach. For instance, Joanna Maiden shared about overcoming the personal questioning and *"moral inventory about [her] beliefs"* and about *"being a white middle-class woman"* founding and managing an ethical company in Kenya. Helen Storey argued that one of the designers' challenges when working with marginalised people is to understand the trauma, history, and stories of people and adjust their personal expectations and not impose Western-based goals. She invites designers to *"undo themselves"* and empathise with people, which can be challenging and come with some risks, such as exhaustion, emotional overload, vicarious trauma, and even post traumatic disorder in extreme situations.

4.3.5.5. Challenges with other stakeholders

As mentioned earlier, projects involve many organisations and managing everyone's agendas and expectations can be challenging.

- Funding organisations

Disagreement can occur with funding organisations. Indeed, funders and designers might have different expectations and might not define a project's success in the same way. For Helen Storey, we should redefine success and not measure it based on funders' expectations that are often *"predicated from a place of privilege, not from knowing, for example the smell of poverty, the lived experiences"*. Helen Storey also stated that success is in the *"quality of your relationships"*, in how *"anyone's life was actually improved and sustained. […] Often, working closely with a community leader, a strong woman, who will herself work with five hundred other women, is a way to ensure sustainability of what works"*. This raises the question of how to define success for such projects and how to measure it.

- Education institutions

Within university contexts, it might be challenging to demonstrate the value of socially-engaged design. One of the challenges is to raise more awareness of the work and its value within education institutions and to reflect the learnings back into the curriculum to create a space for students to become the designers needed for a better future. Claire Swift, Anja-Lisa Hirscher, and Helen Storey mentioned that they try to involve students in their projects but that without fully supportive institutions and curricula, it is difficult to attract them.

Another challenge within universities, mentioned by some interviewees, is the lack of an ethics framework that reflects the reality of projects of design for social change. Universities and the research world in general have made progress in terms of ethics for research aimed at social change in contexts of marginalisation but, according to Helen Storey, there is still much more to be done to catch up with the urgency of the work undertaken in the humanitarian sector.

- Industry partners

Relationships with industry partners might also present some challenges when projects aim at changing the ways things are usually done. For instance, *Making for Change* partners with industry manufacturers to create employment opportunities for participants who complete a qualification, but some manufacturers might be reluctant to change their working practices.

As mentioned earlier, these projects are driven by the urge to challenge the *status quo* and offer alternative narratives. It seems natural then that they face frictions or oppositions.

4.4. Profiling projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins

Building on the findings from the interviews, although all projects use fashion design, garment making, or textile crafts with a social purpose, two different types of project profiles appear. The projects studied give different levels of design agency to participants: some approaches are more traditional, relying on training and employment, while others challenge the designer's role and open it up to the participants.

As per the definition formulated in the literature and contextual review[70] (Section 2.3.1.), this research aligns with the definition of design for social innovation that promotes a decentralisation of the designer role, where participants have more agency in the definition and implementation of a project. This type of approach appears to be based on deep, long-lasting relationships rooted in trust, equity, and care, between marginalised communities and empathetic designers, and seems to set the conditions to foster deeper and long-lasting empowerment of participants.

Because of this decentralisation of the designer's role, these projects also present a more open approach to designing, where things are not pre-set but evolve during the project. The emphasis is on the process itself and the journey that the project and the collaborators take. In these projects, design is considered as a verb, rather than a noun. Designing is an action as described by Noel in her book *Design Social Change* (2023).

The question of the legacy of these projects is also crucial. The projects that give more designing roles to participants lead to participants taking ownership of the project and its evolution. The legacy does not rely on the designer but builds on the material and immaterial infrastructure designed together and is led by empowered participants.

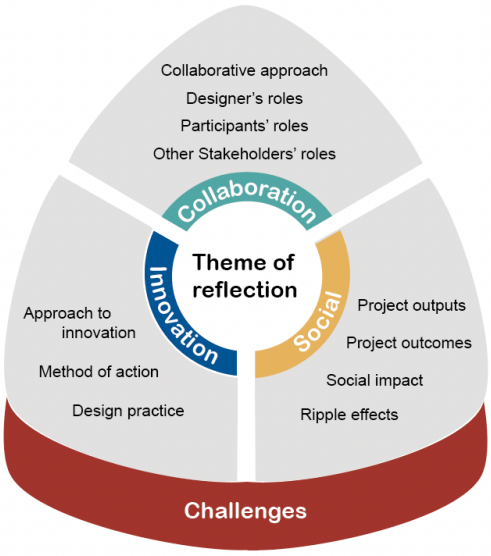
[70] *"Social innovation is intrinsically participatory and engages the beneficiaries in the development of their own voices, agencies, and practices."*

Therefore, these projects of fashion design for social change deserve to be specifically acknowledged. Labelling them all under the term ‘fashion design for social innovation’ does not seem accurate. Projects decentralising the designer role and employing design as a collaborative process call for a specific term. Building on the literature and contextual review and the analysis of the interviews, and in line with the emerging DESIS cluster ‘Design from the Margins’, this research suggests a new term to specifically identify this type of projects: projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins. These projects are grounded in values of trust, equity, and care and have five main characteristics:

- Decentralised design role;
- Empathetic designers;
- Deep long-lasting relationships;
- Focus on designing as a process;
- Legacy led by empowered participants.

Based on this new terminology and the findings from the interviews, it is now possible to draw a profile of such projects in the context of fashion design and making using the framework previously discussed (Section 4.2.5., Figure 4.12 p.121) (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Profile of a project of co-design for social change with people from the margins in the context of fashion design and making (illustration by the author).



Element	Description
Theme of reflection	Challenging the current fashion system; 'Infrastructuring' the conditions for marginalised communities to create change
Collaborative approach	Relationships based on trust, care and equity enabling co-design and peer-to-peer design
Designer's roles	Change enabler driven by empathy
Participants' roles	Project collaborators sharing design roles
Other stakeholders' roles	Any role that supports the project and its legacy
Project outputs	Any direct quantifiable outputs of the project activities
Project outcomes	Participants: acquisition of making and life skills leading to personal growth, wellbeing and confidence improvement and access to life opportunities
	Designers: professional, creative, and personal growth
Social impact	Impacts that effectively improve the lives of marginalised participants and communities in the longer term
Ripple effects	Unexpected impacts beyond the original scope of the project, inspired by messages of possibilities and empowerment and driven by values of social justice
Approach to innovation	Approaches most often built on existing tools and methods recombined in new ways and introduced in new contexts
Method of action	Methods relying on participatory making
Design practice	Textile crafts and garment making practices
Challenges	Challenges related to delivering the project with marginalised communities

‘Projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins’ focus on challenging the current fashion system and offer alternative narratives grounded in values of care and equity. The main theme of reflection is the ‘infrastructuring’ for the co-design of meaningful change to the improvement of the lives of vulnerable, marginalised, and under-represented communities, supported by a holistic approach to sustainability. To do so, the collaborative approach relies on building long-lasting, genuine relationships based on trust, care, and equity as the basis for co-design and peer-to-peer design.

Designers have an overarching role of enabling change that encompasses many roles (Figure 4.14) that can evolve over time during a project. Participants, acting as collaborators, progressively gain creative and design agency and move towards designing roles. Participants go through their own journey and roles change as they gain confidence and agency. Other stakeholders, who share the projects’ values, can take any role that supports the project and its legacy.

In terms of results, project outputs are direct quantifiable products of the activities; but success is not necessarily measured in terms of high numbers but rather by the depth of the change generated. Social outcomes are short-term impacts on both participants and designers. Participants benefit from the project in multiple ways, from skill acquisition, mental-health and wellbeing improvement to empowerment and access to opportunities, with the overall result of improving their lives. The outcomes for designers are often overlooked, but they are a determining element of such projects. Designers often acquire and strengthen project management skills, feel inspired and develop their own creative practice or access further opportunities. However, the distinctive outcome of such projects for designers is the personal journey of self-growth, driven by empathy and the personal and emotional involvement with the project’s participants and context. Longer-term social impacts are often defined by the context in which the project is embedded and not set beforehand from the designers’ or other stakeholders’ expectations. Projects effectively improve the lives of marginalised participants and communities in the longer term. Projects also contribute to changing mentalities towards social justice within

communities and the fashion industry. Projects that focus on co-designing change with marginalised communities also have unpredictable impacts beyond their original scope, called ripple effects. By sharing positive messages of possibilities, agency, and empowerment, such projects inspire other people and organisations and contribute to raising awareness and conversations about wider issues of social justice and sustainability.

Driven by the urge to challenge the current fashion system and create new narratives about social justice, the approaches to innovation often build on existing tools and methods, combine them in new ways, and introduce them in new contexts with a social purpose. Radically new approaches are also possible. These innovative approaches rely on methods primarily based on making. Participatory making workshops, training programmes and other making activities are core to these projects. The central making activities might be complemented by educational workshops, brainstorming sessions, storytelling, and more. In the context of fashion design, the practices focus on making textiles, garments and accessories, with often an objective to make products to sell.

These projects face many challenges. While some challenges are project specific, others, related to contexts of vulnerability and marginalisation, are common to this type of initiatives: financial challenges, cultural challenges, challenges for participants, with other stakeholders, and personal designers' challenges. Projects of co-designing social change with marginalised people are complex and need time. It takes time to build relationships with people, for designers to 'undo themselves', and for designers and participants to 'read each other'. Only then, the process of co-design or peer-design can really start. Finally, this particular type of projects raises the question of how to evaluate their results and impacts, and how to define success. The common quantitative evaluation approach is here challenged and a qualitative approach valuing intangible outcomes is favoured. Indeed, this project profile defines success by the quality of the relationships built and the long-lasting change created for people, participants, and designers alike. It challenges our Western lens and forces us to question our consideration of progress and our expectations of

success or empowerment and what ‘change’ means in contexts of vulnerability and marginalisation.

5. Findings from the interviews with pattern makers

This chapter presents the findings from the analysis of the interviews with pattern makers. It echoes the conclusion of the literature and contextual review in the way it challenges the common Western binary perception of the field (Section 2.2.) – split between metric pattern cutting and creative pattern cutting – and reveals that interviewees promote a creative and inclusive vision of pattern making. The interviewees' views about the potential contribution of pattern making and garment making towards social change are also discussed. Short biographies and the interviews' dates can be found in Table 3.4. The summaries of the discussions can be found in Appendices 12 to 22.

5.1. Pattern Making: terminology choice and implications

In the literature and contextual review, Section 2.3.3. explains the choice of the term 'pattern making' to refer to the practice of "turn[ing] two-dimensional cloth into three-dimensional garment form, changing fabric into fashion" (O'Neill, 2021, p.9). The word 'making' implies a more holistic view of the design and making process and the role of 'pattern cutting' at every stage of the fashion design process. By using the term 'pattern making', the intention is to:

- Include the making of a garment within fashion design and bring closer together, even merge, the roles of the designer, pattern cutter and maker;
- Promote the different aspects of the practice, both technical and creative;
- Acknowledge its various dimensionality (2D and 3D);
- Acknowledge the different ways in which a garment can be designed, constructed, and made.

The first objective of the interviews was therefore to discuss this definition and debate if ‘pattern making’ was an appropriate choice of terminology for this research.

The suggested definition above generated insightful conversations about how the interviewees defined their field of practice. Julianne Bramson and Olivia Hegarty deplored that pattern cutting is still ‘unfairly’ perceived by students and project participants either as a difficult and mathematical activity, associated to metric pattern cutting, or as a creative approach to designing reserved to fashion designers, namely draping. The overall consensus was indeed to promote *“a broad thinking and appreciation of different types of pattern cutting”*, as summarised by Susanne Baldwin, to recognise its creative potential, and advocate for its design status. Both Lex Cawley and Olivia Hegarty stated that their role as educators was to convey that open and creative perception of the practice to fashion students. Timo Rissanen mentioned that all types of garment construction should be valued and explained the concept of ‘fashion design without designers', referring to garments that are made by non-professional designers but should be valued as fashion design regardless. Dennic Chunman Lo suggested an even broader definition that goes beyond fashion, presenting pattern cutting as a universal skill of conceptualising three-dimensional shape; for him, *“pattern cutting is just a kind of packaging”* that can be used to cover anything, from a human body to chairs and tables (or a plastic dinosaur toy, Figure 5.1).

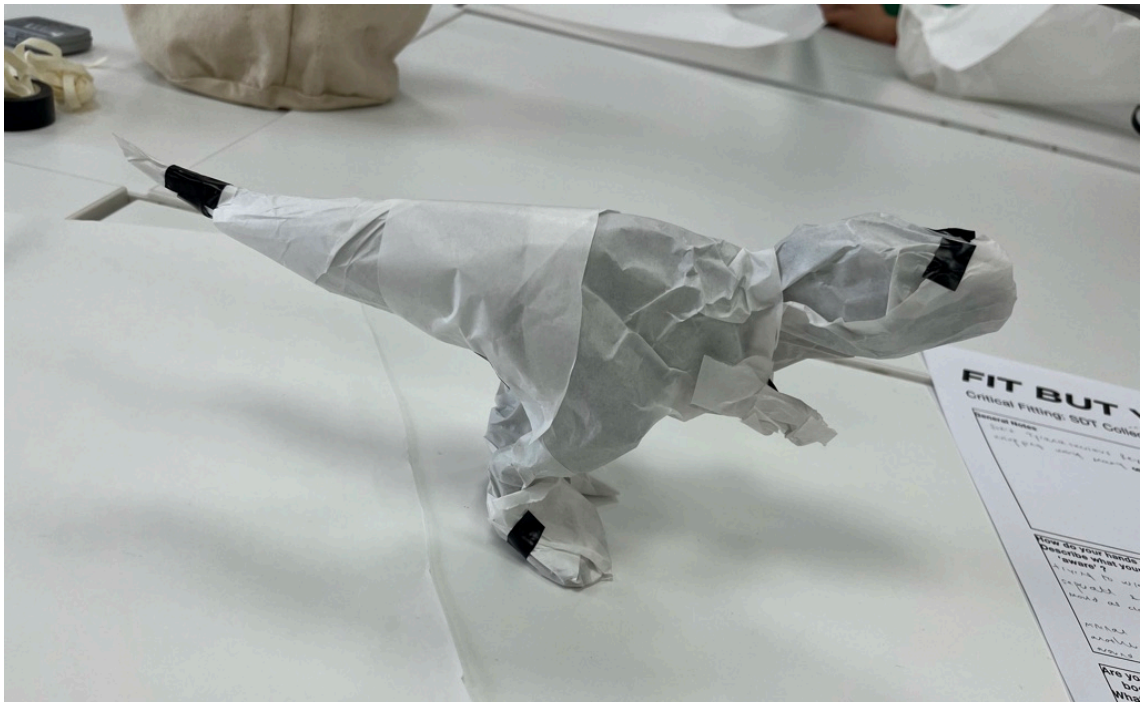


Figure 5.1: *Fit But You Know It* workshop, by Olivia Hegarty at LCF, 17 May 2023. Plastic toy dinosaur covered with pattern paper by the researcher (photo by the author).

While the interviewees agreed on a broad definition of pattern cutting that encompasses different ways of cutting and making a garment, the discussion about the terminology raised contrasting opinions. As Kevin Almond mentioned, there are many terminologies to refer to the field and there are so many ways to pattern cut, that it seems natural to have different names for it. Apart from Dennic Chunman Lo who did not mind which terminology was used, interviewees acknowledged the embedded meaning and connotations of the words we choose. As Holly McQuillan pointed out, *"words are important, the way we use language is how we make the world"*.

Lex Cawley, Dennic Chunman Lo, Holly McQuillan, and Timo Rissanen mentioned that the term 'pattern cutting' is mainly used in the United Kingdom, while 'pattern making' is used in America, New Zealand, and in Australia. Lex Cawley, for instance, uses the term pattern cutting *"purely down to the fact that [he] is English"* and he sees *"pattern making as an Americanisation of the term"*. He acknowledged, however, that pattern cutting might be seen as more traditional, *"slightly old-fashioned"*, but for him the terms are interchangeable,

and both refer to the same broad understanding of the field, as per the definition above. Rickard Lindqvist, whose practice focuses on kinetic garment construction, also preferred the term ‘pattern cutting’ to describe his practice. While he pointed out the fact that *“cutting implies some kind of making”*, the act of *“cutting into a piece of fabric is very crucial, […it is] one of the core things”* in his practice. He acknowledged, however, that the reasoning behind the definition and the choice of the term ‘pattern making’ might make more sense for a different practice in a different context.

Indeed, Kevin Almond, Alberto Atalla, Susanne Baldwin, Julianne Bramson, Olivia Hegarty, Holly McQuillan, and Timo Rissanen liked the term ‘pattern making’. For some of them, the word ‘making’ includes more than just the cutting of fabric or the making of the garment. Susanne Baldwin, Julianne Bramson, Holly McQuillan, and Timo Rissanen described ‘pattern making’ as a holistic term that encompasses the broader design process and brings together all the skills needed to make a garment. According to Holly McQuillan, this is even more visible in the context of ZWPC where the design, the form, the pattern, the construction, and the marker[71], are intertwined and made simultaneously (Figure 5.2).

[71] A marker is a cutting guide showing the most efficient placement of the pattern pieces on the width of cloth. The industry average yield is 85%, resulting in 15 % unused cloth (Rissanen and McQuillan, 2016, p.210-212).



Figure 5.2: Zero-waste pattern for a motorbike jacket (photos by Holly McQuillan, source: Rissanen and McQuillan, 2016, p.110-111).

‘Pattern making’ also seems more inclusive of different ways to construct a garment. Olivia Hegarty mentioned that she could relate to this terminology, as her work focuses on researching different ways to construct a garment, with and without patterns, in particular when relying on tacit knowledge. Alberto Atalla also perceived the term as *“more open to creativity, because cutting is something very specific”*.

The term ‘making’ also relates *“to making things and craft”* (Kevin Almond). While this can be perceived as a less prestigious aspect of pattern making compared to a more expert and technical approach to pattern cutting, as explained by Holly McQuillan, it also refers to its connections to the other skills involved in the making process and to the more inclusive and humble aspect of crafts and making something with your hands. Timo Rissanen also mentioned this connection with crafts. He explained how he used to critique students’ work

as *“looking homemade”*, but with experience, he now sees beauty in the ‘homemade’ and values the work and skills behind it.

Finally, in the context of this research, Timo Rissanen also mentioned how making is *“not just [the] making of garments”* but it is *“also looking at [the] making of individuals, making of designers […] making of communities”*.

There are many terms to refer to the same field of practice, but the choice of terminology comes with embedded meaning and implications. All terminologies are equally valid in their own contexts and, as mentioned by Kevin Almond, Lex Cawley, and Rickard Lindqvist, the choice is determined by the researcher or practitioner and what relates most to their practice (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Terminology preferred by the pattern makers interviewed.

Term preferred	Interviewee	Reason
Pattern Making	Kevin Almond	'Pattern Making' values the link between the practice and the act of making things and crafting.
	Alberto Atalla	'Pattern making' is more open to creativity.
	Susanne Baldwin	'Pattern making' values all methods to construct a garment, considering the practice as fashion design, and bringing together all the skills needed to make a garment.
	Julianne Bramson	'Pattern making' is the American term.
	Olivia Hegarty	'Pattern making' refers to different ways of constructing a garment, including tacit knowledge.
	Holly McQuillan	'Pattern making' values the practice as fashion design and brings together all the skills needed to make a garment, particularly evident in zero-waste pattern design.
	Timo Rissanen	'Pattern making' values the practice as fashion design and brings together all the skills needed to make a garment. 'Making' refers to making individuals and communities.
Pattern Cutting	Lex Cawley	'Pattern Cutting' and 'Pattern Making' are interchangeable but as an English pattern cutter, he prefers the British term.
	Rickard Lindqvist	'Cutting' implies 'making'. The act of cutting in cloth is core to his practice.
No Preference	Dennic Chunman Lo	'Pattern cutting' and 'Pattern making' refer to the same universal skill of conceptualising 3D-shapes.

In the context of this research, the term 'pattern making' is preferred. This analysis has reinforced the definition formulated at the beginning of this chapter and has added another layer related to its relationship to crafts. The term

‘making’ removes the idea of pattern cutting being an expert practice and makes it a more accessible and humbler field of practice. To echo Holly McQuillan’s words, the choice of terminology should reflect the world we want to create: choosing ‘pattern making’ advocates for an open, inclusive, and creative field of practice.

5.2. Mapping the field of pattern making

During the interviews, the pattern makers were invited to share their feedback on a diagram illustrating a preliminary mapping of pattern making methods. Figure 5.3 (previously seen on p.64, Figure 2.24) presents a categorisation of pattern making methods based on the starting point of the pattern making process. This categorisation emerged from the literature and contextual review and is explained in detail in Section 2.3.4. This mapping of the practice was discussed, challenged, and expanded with the interviewees, and other possible categorisations were suggested.

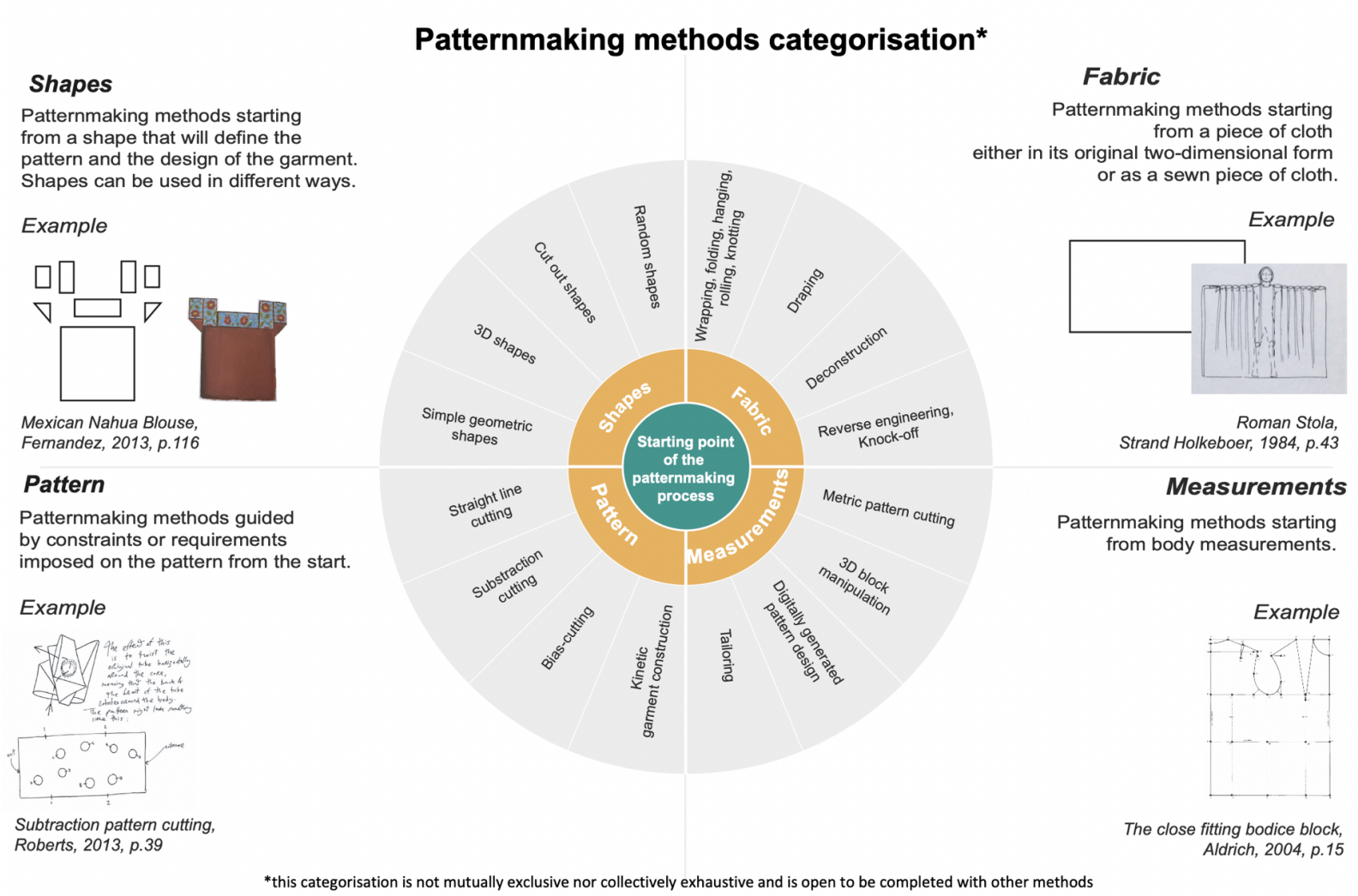


Figure 5.3: Pattern making methods categorisation, presented to interviewees (illustration by the author).

5.2.1. Mapping the field, a useful exercise

The interviews generated insightful conversations about the purpose of mapping the field and in what ways this exercise could be useful.

For Kevin Almond and Susanne Baldwin, this 'wheel' helps explain what pattern making is and can support a discussion about the practice. For Susanne Baldwin, the chart is *"really effective"* visually and could be the basis for a programme of teaching pattern making, while Kevin Almond referred to it as a mind-map. According to Dennic Chunman Lo, the diagram breaks down what pattern making is both consciously and unconsciously. Olivia Hegarty also mentioned that it unveils the tacit knowledge that is often unacknowledged within the field.

This way of considering pattern making can also foster creativity. Dennic Chunman Lo particularly liked the idea of using the 'wheel' as a board game, combining different methods and elements, to explore new ways to design. For Kevin Almond and Timo Rissanen, it can be a tool to break the rules and misconceptions of pattern making. Timo Rissanen liked *"the wheel, because it is dynamic, you can go around it in either direction and just explore, with curiosity and an open mind*. […] *It is exciting"*.

Finally, Alberto Atalla, Kevin Almond, Susanne Baldwin, Dennic Chunman Lo, and Timo Rissanen agreed that this chart promotes equality between pattern making methods. There is no hierarchy between methods, they are all different creative ways to achieve a design, from more traditional metric pattern cutting to intuitive approaches of fabric wrapping. Indeed, Kevin Almond described his pattern making practice as a *"quite intuitive"* approach:

> *"Anything's possible and it doesn't matter what method you use to create a garment, as long as the finished toile and the finished garment realise what you wanted to achieve as a designer and looks amazing"*.

Because there is no 'proper way' to make a garment, as mentioned by Kevin Almond and Timo Rissanen, it also opens pattern making to people who would not feel comfortable with the more traditional methods and, as mentioned by

Alberto Atalla, gives them the space to find or create the method that would allow them to best express their creativity.

5.2.2. Categorising pattern making methods, a difficult exercise

The first reaction to the categorisation presented in the framework was the acknowledgment that it is difficult to categorise pattern making methods. Lex Cawley commented that *"it is almost impossible to completely categorise it"* and that *"it could almost be divided in an infinitely large number of ways"*. Kevin Almond, Susanne Baldwin, Lex Cawley, and Dennic Chunman Lo shared the same opinion: there is *"no clear-cut"*, *"no strict boundaries"* between the categories. Categories are interrelated and one method can be placed in many categories. This reasoning also challenges the initial principle of this categorising exercise that considers the starting point of the pattern making process: all interviewees considered a pattern making method as a whole and not as a linear process where a starting point can be isolated.

For Kevin Almond, Dennic Chunman Lo, and Timo Rissanen, the four categories presented in the diagram – shapes, fabric, measurements, and pattern constraints – made sense, but instead of being considered as separate, they were discussed as interrelated constituent elements of any pattern making practice. Dennic Chunman Lo explained that *"these four [categories] actually summarise what we do consciously or subconsciously to try to create something"*.

The other main question about this categorisation was about the role and the place of the body within pattern making. Timo Rissanen suggested to call the 'measurements' category, 'body measurements', while Rickard Lindqvist argued that the body should be the starting point of all methods and suggested placing it at the centre of the categorisation structure. For Holly McQuillan, many methods start from the body to create a garment but not all of them. The body interacts with the shape, fabric, measurements, and constraints of the pattern

and garment made and the categorisation in Figure 5.3 does not illustrate that aspect.

During the interviews, alternative categorisations were discussed. Lex Cawley suggested a few different ways to group the methods:

- Methods could be split between creative pattern cutting and production or traditional pattern cutting methods.
- Another categorisation could imply splitting the methods between those starting from fabric (ex: draping techniques) and the methods starting flat on paper or digitally.
- The categorisation that seemed to make more sense to Lex Cawley was splitting methods between those starting two-dimensionally, such as block manipulation, and methods starting three-dimensionally, like draping. Then both these categories could be split again into 'garment-first' and 'process-first' methods. In a 'garment-first' method, the garment, which has been designed beforehand, defines the process. These methods have a set design as starting point and a result to achieve. On the other hand, 'process-based' methods use the process of pattern cutting to design the garment. The results are unpredictable, and the process is more experimental.

Another approach – suggested by Olivia Hegarty – could be to divide methods between industrialised processes based on flat paper or digital patterns on one side, and more intuitive or tacit processes that do not use paper patterns and rely for instance on wrapping fabric around the body on the other side. Rickard Lindqvist echoed Olivia Hegarty's suggested categorisation. He argues that *"it's the act of cutting into the fabric that creates a pattern and, if there is no cutting then there is no pattern"*, in the sense of a flat template used to make garments. He suggested differentiating dress wrapping constructions, such as historical garments and saris, that do not require any cutting, from industrial pattern cutting that produce templates to make garments.

The interviews revealed that categorising pattern making methods is not easy and that it can be done in many ways. As the interviewees have noted, in any categorisation, categories are not mutually exclusive, and pattern making practices should be considered as a whole and not as linear processes.

5.2.3. Pattern making practices as combinations of methodological elements

When considering pattern making practices in their entirety and as *"iterative processes"* (Holly McQuillan), we realise not only that they can be placed in different categories (Figure 5.3), but we also see pattern making practices as combinations of methods and elements from all four categories. According to Dennic Chunman Lo, *"each one [of these four elements] exists in some way in all our practices when we try to create clothing or think about clothing"*. Holly McQuillan gave a few examples of practices that combine different categories together: tailoring, for instance, has an element of drape when the garment is fitted and the fabric hangs, moves and distorts on the body; 'kinetic garment construction' relies on the body but also relies on the fabric and works with measurements, albeit not numerical measurements. Alberto Atalla, Lex Cawley, and Dennic Chunman Lo mentioned how draping and metric pattern cutting methods are very often combined. Olivia Hegarty described Usha Doshi's[72] (2017) *Creating with Shapes* method with simple geometric shapes as a crossover of elements from the 'shapes', 'constraints', and 'fabric' categories (Figure 5.4).

[72] Usha Doshi is the author of the book *Creating with Shapes* (2017). Usha Doshi was a member of COS design studio and pattern cutting teacher at the Royal College of Art. The pattern cutting method presented in the book explores the possibility of using basic shapes – square, rectangle, triangle, diamond, circle, oval, and octagon – as cut outs in the fabric to create garments.

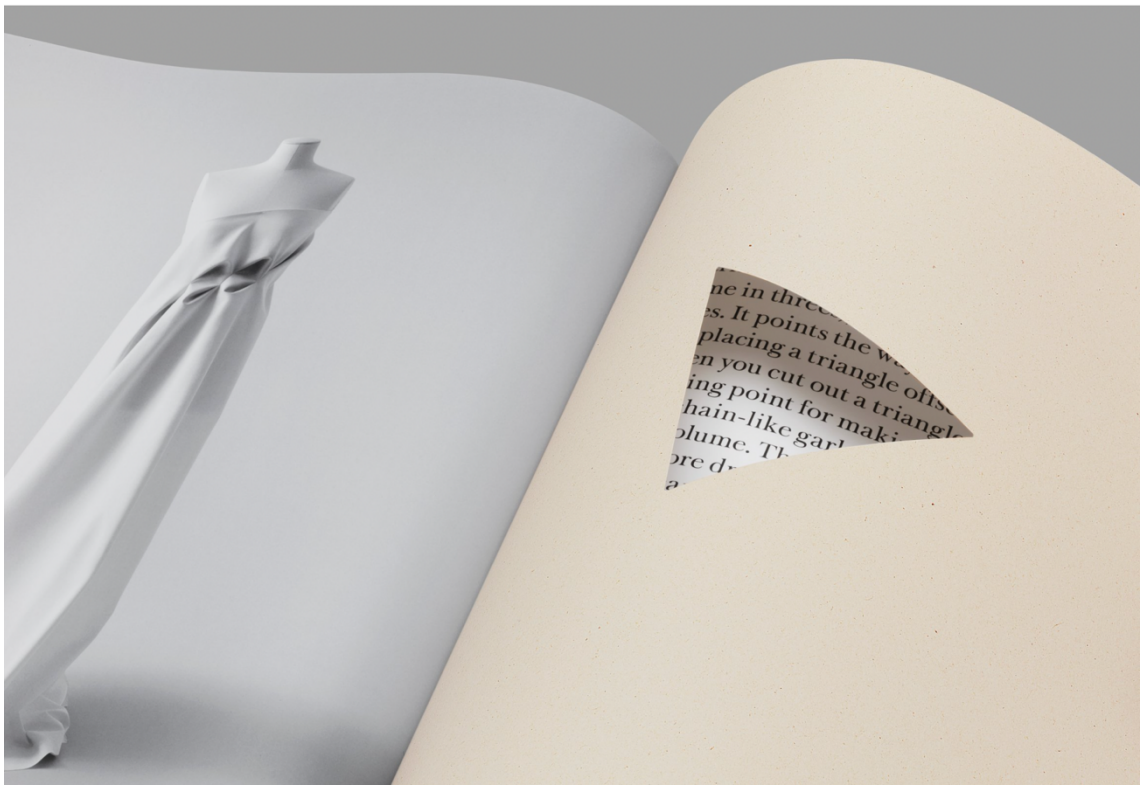


Figure 5.4: Usha Doshi's *Creating with Shapes* book (photo by Angela Moore, source: Graphic Thought Facility, 2017).

Julianne Bramson also analysed the bias-cut blueprint method developed in her book (Bramson and Lenahan, 2014) (Figure 5.5) and commented that the method fits in all four categories: it starts with simple geometric shapes; as constraint, the seams must be on the grain of the fabric as much as possible; the fabric, hanging on the bias, determines the fit by its amount of 'bias collapse'; and for her, fit is a *"math problem"*, therefore measurements are key.

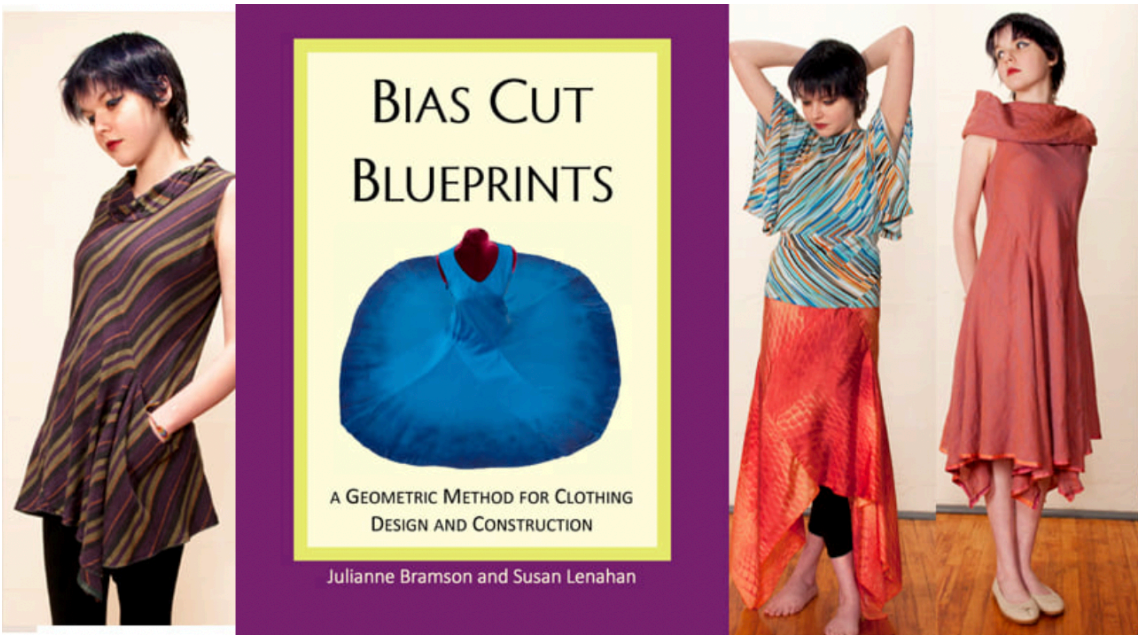


Figure 5.5: *Bias Cut Blueprint*, Julianne Bramson and Susan Lenahan (2014).

Envisioning pattern making practices as combinations of methodological elements opens the field to more creativity. For Susanne Baldwin, categories are *"not standalone, and that's where the creativity comes in, to an extent"*. Dennic Chunman Lo compared the chart, that he described as a 'wheel', to a *"board game"* that can foster creativity, without the barrier of seeing pattern cutting as an expert mathematical discipline. During the interview, he imagined combining blocks with simple geometric shapes, mathematical concepts such as multiplication and geometry, and subtraction pattern cutting. To represent these combinations, the chart should be more dynamic. Alberto Atalla suggested using arrows to illustrate how methods combine, while Olivia Hegarty suggested the image of a sphere where elements connect.

Drawing on the findings from the analysis of these interviews, a new perception of the field was developed: pattern making emerged as an open dynamic practice that combines different methodological elements.

5.2.4. Deconstructing the practice: the pattern making and garment making ‘wheel’

The diagram first presented to the interviewees (Figure 5.3) suggested to categorise methods based on the starting point of the pattern making process. The findings from the interviews led to re-evaluating and questioning that categorisation process. The interviewees challenged the relevance of categorising methods based on the starting point of the process and suggested instead considering the pattern making methods and practices in their entirety. Some interviewees suggested categorising methods based on their 2D or 3D approaches instead, but that would not be accurate either. In fact, some approaches start flat on paper or fabric and others start three-dimensionally but most converge and have both 2D and 3D elements combined, and a physical 3D garment is almost always the result of the whole process. Considered in their entirety, pattern making practices combine many methods from different categories. For instance, one could say that Usha Doshi’s ‘Creating with Shapes’ approach with simple geometric shapes cut-outs is a combination of four elements from all four categories:

- Shapes: Usha Doshi's starting point is simple geometric shapes such as squares, rectangles, triangles, and circles.
- Constraint on the pattern: the shapes are exclusively used as cut-outs in the fabric.
- Fabric: the shapes created are then draped on a mannequin to develop new designs.
- Measurements: the dimensions of the shapes cut out determine the designs.

As mentioned by Dennic Chunman Lo, all pattern making approaches have elements from all four categories. Every approach could therefore be described as a combination of the four following elements:

- Shape: All pattern making approaches use shapes. Shapes can be defined at the beginning and determine the process but can also be determined during the process itself.

- Material: Pattern making and garment making do not involve only paper or fabric, but many types of material can be used. Garments can be made of plastic bags, cardboard, and many other materials[73]. This element is about the type of material and the interventions applied to the material.

- Measurements: All pattern making practices aim at making an item that will be worn, used for a certain purpose or follow a certain design idea, meaning that the item must follow a certain set of dimensions and body measurements. Measurements can influence the process itself, such as the size of a certain shape for instance. Measurements can be numerical or abstract and use other references.

- Pattern constraints: A practice might present an element of constraint or requirement that will drive the process.

Each element might be more or less defining for each approach. For instance, Winfred Aldrich's metric pattern cutting relies mainly on body measurements to trace on paper and create flat shapes as pattern pieces. Accidental cutting instead relies on random shapes and the properties of the fabric to design new aesthetics.

In addition to these four elements, a central element mentioned by many interviewees must be included as the initial driver of the process, *i.e.* the body. To echo Dennic Chunman Lo, however, and his broad definition of pattern making, the 'body' here should represent the human or non-human body, mobile or immobile, that can be 'packaged' (borrowing Dennic Chunman Lo's

[73] Even meat has been used to make garments. In 2010, the singer Lady Gaga appeared at the MTV Video Music Awards with a dress made of steak.

expression during the interview) and to which pattern making and garment making are applied.

These five elements are summarised in Figure 5.6.

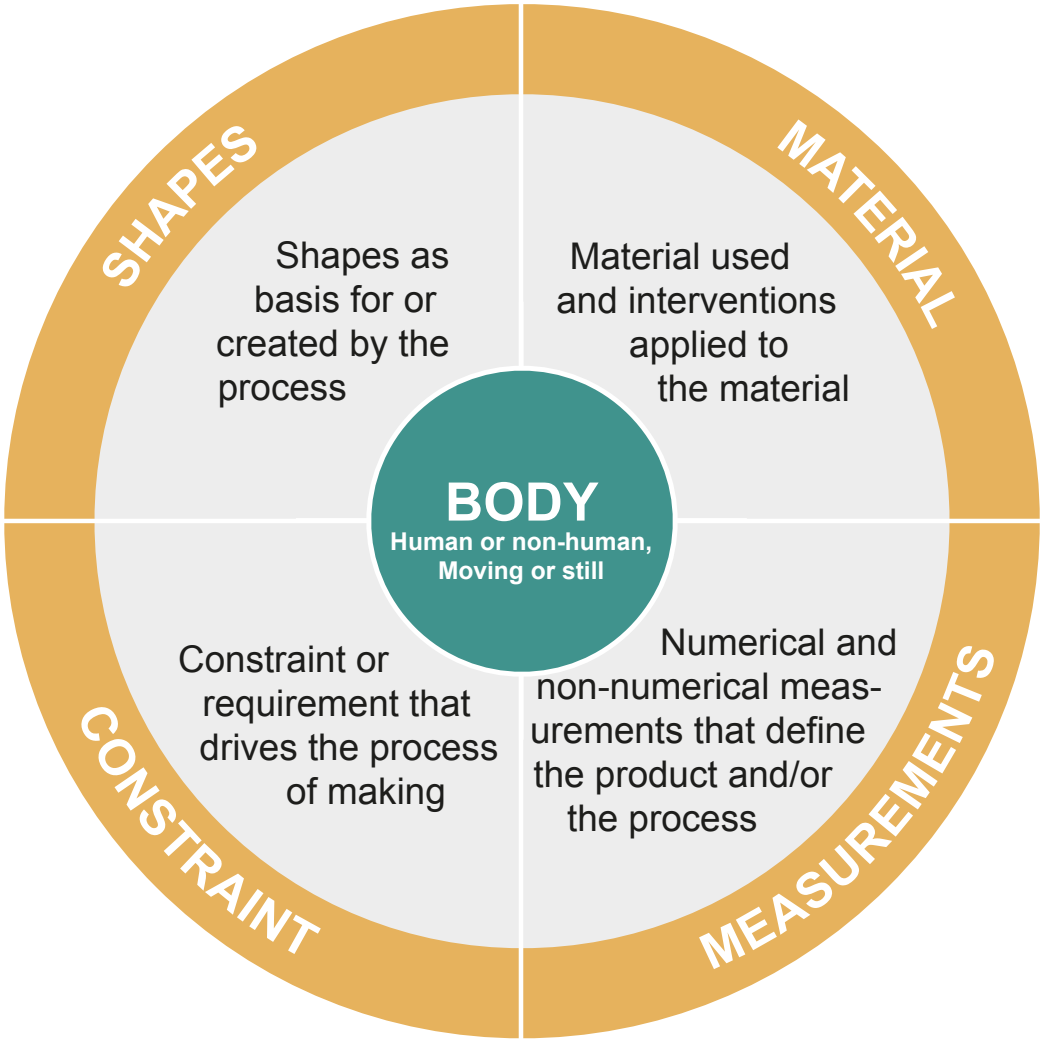


Figure 5.6: Pattern making and garment making wheel: key elements of a pattern making and garment making practice (illustration by the author).

This ‘wheel’ was sent to the interviewees for review. Julianne Bramson and Olivia Hegarty replied sharing feedback and both reacted positively to this original definition of the pattern making and garment making practice. Julianne Bramson stated:

“I really like the more simplified diagram. It is easy to grasp and also quite inclusive of a very diverse field. I am impressed that your research, which has been far and wide to include all the different ways that humans use their minds and materials to create clothing, has managed to consolidate the myriad of processes down to just 4 basic concepts.”

Thanks to the analysis of the interviews, the categorisation of pattern making methods was replaced by the definition of five core elements that constitute any pattern making and garment making practice. This way of envisioning the field opens the doors to even more inclusivity, innovation, and creativity. It not only brings all methods down to a set of elements combined in different ways, but it also allows for an infinite number of approaches. Envisioned this way, a discipline that seemed rigid and conventional, with a series of mathematical rules to follow, now appears fluid and open to any type of creative approach with an infinite number of possible combinations between the elements. While only a few examples can be presented in this thesis, there is plenty of room to explore new ways to use measurements, materials, shapes, and constraints to clothe all types of bodies and expand the field further.

5.3. Pattern and garment making’s potential for social change

Section 5.2. revealed that pattern and garment making can be an open, inclusive, and creative practice. This sets the basis to discuss the practice's potential for social change. This section reports on the interviewees’ opinions on how pattern making and garment making can foster social change. It starts with a discussion about what sets pattern making apart from other fashion practices, before diving into how pattern making and garment making can generate social change.

5.3.1. Pattern making, a discipline apart from the other fashion design practices

All interviewees share a sense of pride in being a pattern cutter or pattern maker and most criticised the old-fashioned linear hierarchical view of fashion design, still embedded within the industry and education. Lex Cawley commented:

> *"People think that a designer draws, a pattern cutter makes, sewers sew, and you have a final garment. Actually, I think [that] the process is far more interlinked and far more curvier than that. It doesn't just go on a straight line, there's feedback loops throughout and everyone works really closely".*

Indeed, collaboration between all actors involved in the fashion design process and the valorisation of everyone's skills and expertise are key for the development of good designs. Timo Rissanen, for example, shared about how he worked closely with machinists to develop better designs and improve the construction process. For him, "*there is magic"* in the *"collective effort that it takes to make garments".*

Within this collaborative process, pattern makers take a central role in terms of communication and responsibility because they directly liaise with all the actors involved in the process. Dennic Chunman Lo even stated that *"without the pattern maker, fashion won't happen"*. The whole fashion design process relies on the pattern maker who will determine how to achieve a functional and beautiful garment. That is the reason why, according to Lex Cawley, despite being often less famous, the pattern maker is as important as the designer.

Many interviewees stated that a good understanding of pattern making is necessary for good design. According to Alberto Atalla, Lex Cawley, Dennic Chunman Lo, Olivia Hegarty, and Timo Rissanen, designers must understand the process of pattern making to create good designs. If they do not, they risk creating designs that lack *"dynamism and power" (Olivia Hegarty)*, do not match their initial idea, are faulty technically or are simply bad. Lex Cawley mentioned many famous successful designers who also were excellent pattern makers and

used their pattern making skills to design: Alexander McQueen, Cristobal Balenciaga, Madeleine Vionnet, and Azzedine Alaia.

According to some interviewees, not everybody can be a pattern maker though. For Dennic Chunman Lo, the pattern maker must have '*the sort of eye*' to understand the three-dimensional construction of a garment. Lex Cawley highlighted that pattern makers differentiate themselves from '*traditional'* fashion designers because they do not want the attention as much and they focus on the practice of making garments. Holly McQuillan also commented that she does not work in the industry because she *"doesn't fit the mould".* Her design practice is driven by the material and the three-dimensional process, not by sketching on paper. Alberto Atalla, Susanne Baldwin, Julianne Bramson, Rickard Lindqvist, and Holly McQuillan, all shared that the practice of pattern making fits the way "*[their] brains work"*.

There are many aspects of the practice of pattern making that make it so special to the interviewees, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

- Pattern making as a process of turning ideas into reality

Pattern makers' technical knowledge translates designs into physical garments, turning a piece of fabric into an item of clothing. Pattern makers visualise the process, the challenges involved, and find creative solutions to construct a three-dimensional functional garment. Alberto Atalla explained how his pattern making skills allow him to see the limits and the adaptations required for a design to materialise. For Timo Rissanen, *"part of the magic of fashion"* lies in transforming a piece of cloth, "*through the work that you do and the thinking that you do and also the actions that you take […] into something that ideally has an incredible impact on the person that puts it on"*.

- Pattern making as a process of turning 2D into 3D

Understanding the relationship between two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality is an aspect of pattern making that interviewees particularly relate to and enjoy. Rickard Lindqvist explained that turning two-dimensional fabric into three-dimensional garments came easy to him and led him towards a career in pattern making and fashion design.

- Pattern making as a technical process

Some interviewees, such as Alberto Atalla, Susanne Baldwin, and Julianne Bramson, particularly appreciate the technical aspect of pattern making. They acknowledged the fact that they prefer a "*methodical and technical approach"* to design and that their technical skills allow them to solve problems and achieve the desired results.

- Pattern making as a material and practical process

Pattern making is a material practice in many aspects. Firstly, it is about working with the fabric or, in a wider sense, with materials. According to Olivia Hegarty, to develop effective designs, one must listen to the materials and develop a sensitivity about what materials can do. Julianne Branson also particularly enjoys working with the drape of the fabric to develop well-fitted garments. Rickard Lindqvist's whole practice relies on the relationship between the fabric's natural qualities and body movements. Many interviewees value the interaction with the fabric. Touching, feeling, handling, moulding materials with their hands, using their haptic skills, is part of the design development method that they particularly enjoy and find relaxing or stimulating. Thus, three-dimensional experimentations and the process of physically transforming materials into something else is also one of the appeals of the practice of pattern making. Finally, this process leads to the creation of a physical and tangible outcome, a garment, that brings a sense of achievement.

The interviewees shared that all these characteristics make pattern making special to them but regretted that they (as pattern makers) are not valued for

their full creative potential within the fashion industry. The interviews confirmed that pattern making is indeed a creative practice of fashion design and that pattern makers are "*three-dimensional designers"* (Dennic Chunman Lo), 'magicians' that turn ideas into reality.

5.3.2. Pattern making, garment making, and social change

Pattern making has a crucial role within the fashion design process. It is both a creative and technical process that relies on practical problem-solving and experimentation. With this definition in mind, when asked about how pattern making and garment making could foster social change, some interviewees acknowledged the fact that they had never thought about pattern making in such a way and felt that they had limited knowledge to answer the question. This finding confirms the relevance of the research questions (Section 1.3.) suggesting that bringing together pattern making and social change makes an original contribution to knowledge. The discussions revealed, however, that most of the interviewees already had encountered the social potential of pattern making and garment making without realising it.

Timo Rissanen, for instance, analysed his own experience within the industry and identified some social aspects to it. He particularly enjoyed the social interactions with other pattern makers and machinists, from whom he learnt a lot. At a wider scale, he believes that there is something intrinsically social and fundamentally human in the "*collective effort over countless generations of humanity of shaping flat things […] to cover our bodies in ways that are considered socially acceptable […] and fashionable".*

While some interviewees had some ideas about how pattern making and garment making can relate to social change, for others, the question of the definition of social change initially arose. For Kevin Almond and Rickard Lindqvist, the meaning of the term social change is too broad and needs to be defined clearly. During the discussions, however, all interviewees identified

some type of social change that can be generated from pattern making and garment making practices, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

- Making inclusive garments

According to Alberto Atalla, pattern making has a key role in accompanying or even enabling some wider social changes. He took the example of 19th century women who started engaging in sports. Their garments at the time were not adapted for cycling or running, so they needed to be adjusted to be more functional. These changes were realised through pattern making. He also gave the more contemporary example of the brand Nike that developed modest activewear and sportswear for disabled people, enabling everyone to exercise. Olivia Hegarty's work also focuses on making garments more inclusive by exploring the relationship between pattern making and fit: by making garments that have no fit built into them, these garments can fit anyone across genders, disabilities, etc. and challenge standardised norms of fit and sizing.

- Making fashion design accessible to all

Julianne Bramson, Lex Cawley, and Holly McQuillan all mentioned that introducing pattern making and garment making to people who feel excluded from the 'fashion world' opens fashion design to everybody and breaks the stereotypes associated with a field perceived as reserved to expert pattern cutters and fashion designers.

- Generating social outcomes for participants

Some interviewees had observed some social outcomes generated by the practices of pattern making and garment making through their own work or that of other practitioners. However, it is important to acknowledge that some interviewees might have been influenced by the results of the work delivered in

Somers Town. The social outcomes, mentioned by the interviewees as results of using pattern making and garment making with a social purpose, mirror the list formulated in Section 4.3.3.2.1.

- Skill acquisition

Susanne Baldwin mentioned that there is an opportunity for people to acquire technical skills that can lead to employment. She compared this research's fieldwork with how institutions such as LCF used to operate. LCF and other High Education Institutions were set up as technical schools, teaching dressmaking and pattern making technical skills to create opportunities for girls and young women to have a trade and go into employment.

- Pride and self-worth

Even with simple pattern making and garment making skills, making something from beginning to end is a very rewarding process. As mentioned by Dennic Chunman Lo, *"teach[ing] them [something] as simple as making a square bag, [in which] you can put something, the pride is priceless"*. With a simple process involving folding, marking a few lines with chalk, and making a few cuts, Holly McQuillan explained how participants in her zero-waste fashion workshops felt the process was *"magical"*. According to Lex Cawley, this sense of pride and achievement is enhanced when teaching pattern making because of the crucial role of pattern making within the whole design process:

> *"If you are teaching someone to cut, it allows them to almost construct something from nothing. So, maybe it gives a higher sense of achievement"*.

Holly McQuillan also talked about one of her projects in a Turkish manufacturing company during which she worked with women employees on reducing waste produced by marker layouts. The women's knowledge and expertise were crucial to the success of the project but had been undervalued by the company. The ladies felt *"surprised"* that their work could be considered as creative and as *"a benefit to the company, to the industry as a whole […] and to the women themselves"*.

- Agency and empowerment

The interviewees discussed a few diverse examples of agency and empowerment driven by the practices of pattern making and garment making. Holly McQuillan mentioned a broader sense of agency within the current fashion system. By understanding pattern making and garment making, people understand better how their own clothes are made and have more agency and power within the fashion system in which they participate:

> *"I think that anything that simultaneously gives a sense of autonomy and control and skills and self-worth to people and helps to lift the veil away between them and the industry is doing some heavy lifting when it comes to social change and innovation"*.

Timo Rissanen also mentioned that, by knowing how to make their own clothes, people have the power to make exactly what they need and negotiate conversations about modesty, gender, faith, etc. Lex Cawley also mentioned that knowing how to pattern cut is very empowering because it allows to *"construct something from nothing"*.

- Community building

Timo Rissanen mentioned a project undertaken in Japan, led by Pascale Gatzen[74], during which museum employees designed, cut, and made their uniforms. He explained that this experience created a strong sense of community between the employees who supported each other in the making of their uniforms even after the researcher had left.

Kevin Almond pointed out that the social benefits generated are not exclusive to pattern making and garment making but are common to other craft-based disciplines. He summarised these benefits in the following statement:

[74] Pascale Gatzen is Head of the Fashion Design Master's programme at ArtEZ, Netherlands. At the time of the project mentioned by Timo Rissanen, she was associate Professor at The New School in New York.

"It's like using art or using any sort of craft-based thing, if you're working with disadvantaged people, you want to give them something, you want to use it to improve their lives, to educate them, to give them hope, to give them a level of aspiration, etc. And by empowering them with that, making them recognise that they have an ability, and they can create something three-dimensional that could be worn on a body in whatever context. Maybe it makes them look a billion dollars or maybe it's just something functional for them to wear. The fact that they have been able to do that, and they've learnt something that they didn't have before, impacts on social change, because those people then feel empowered, they feel better, they feel they've got something to offer to society."

Some interviewees mentioned some conditions that need to be in place for pattern making and garment making to create the above-mentioned social outcomes.

First, Lex Cawley highlighted the fact that pattern cutting can foster some kind of social change only if combined with garment making. According to him, pattern cutting (Lex Cawley preferred this terminology) achieves a pattern, while the social impact will be generated only if there is a physical garment that can be worn at the end of the process. For other interviewees, instead, the making of the garment is implicitly included within the term 'pattern making' and they do not separate the final garment from the pattern making process itself.

Related to this strong emphasis on the making of clothes, Susanne Baldwin envisioned the approach of this research as a return to alternative ways of acquiring clothing, when people used to make their own garments. Julianne Bramson also compared this research's approach to home sewing. Susanne Baldwin explained, however, that pattern making and garment making can foster social change if a dedicated social space is set up for people to meet and sew together. According to her, envisioning the pattern making and garment making practice as a social practice is necessary to foster social change.

The interviewees often mentioned that pattern making is perceived as difficult and mathematical. Holly McQuillan argued that by removing technical barriers, it

can become accessible to anyone. In the context of zero-waste pattern design, Holly McQuillan explained that, by reducing the complexity of the whole process and allowing people to make their own garments, she made people feel *“like they have done something magical”*.

Both Susanne Baldwin and Holly McQuillan stated that for pattern making and garment making to foster social change, it is crucial to keep a sense of experimentation and creativity and not be constrained by the idea that there is a correct way or a professional way to make a garment. Susanne Baldwin argued that introducing patten making and garment making to people without a technical background frees them from conventional technical rules*: “They don’t have those anxieties about where the dart needs to go. They’re just going for it. I think that’s quite liberating”*.

To conclude, the analysis of the interviews revealed that pattern making and garment making have indeed the potential to foster social change, but to do so, they should be considered jointly as a social process, in an open, creative, and accessible way, as further discussed in the next section.

5.4. Pattern making and garment making, an open and inclusive practice that can foster social change

This chapter revealed that the combined practice of pattern making and garment making can be described as an open and inclusive practice of creative fashion design that can foster social change. To conclude this chapter, an original definition of the combined practice of pattern making and garment making can be formulated:

> *Pattern making and garment making are design practices that turn materials into garment forms.*

This definition builds on the findings from the analysis of the interviews and expands O'Neil's definition[75] towards more inclusivity and creativity.

Reflecting on the implications of the definition and the choice of the 'pattern making' terminology, as argued in the literature and contextual review (Section 2.3.3.) and discussed with the interviewees, the intention behind formulating this new definition for the field is:

- To advocate for pattern making and garment making as design practices.
- To elevate the status of making and its relationship to craftsmanship, too often under-valued in the fashion industry.
- To promote the different aspects of the practice of pattern making and garment making: technical, creative, material, practical, experimental, and problem-solving.
- To acknowledge its various dimensionalities (2D and 3D) and the ways in which they can be combined.
- To expand the field beyond fabric and paper by including all types of materials.
- To include all the ways in which a garment can be designed, constructed, and made, and open the field to more experimentation.

Supporting this definition, the pattern making and garment making 'wheel' (Figure 5.6) breaks down the practice into five elements, namely 'body', 'material', 'measurements', 'shapes', and 'constraints'. These can be combined in an infinite number of ways to foster creativity and experimentation.

This definition of the practice breaks away from the limited Western perception of pattern cutting – too often perceived as split between metric pattern cutting

[75] *"Pattern-cutting involves a technical, conceptual and creative transformation: it turns two-dimensional cloth into three-dimensional garment form, changing fabric into fashion."* (O'Neill, 2021, p.9)

and draping, and reserved to expert pattern cutters – and instead values all ways of constructing garments and brings inclusivity and equity to the field. It sets the basis for the practice to be considered as a method that can foster social change. The interviewees mentioned many positive outcomes that can be generated by pattern making and garment making practices – skill-acquisition, pride and self-worth, agency and empowerment, and community building. As the interviewees highlighted, pattern making and garment making practices are more likely to be considered as vehicles for social change, in particular if:

- Applied jointly;
- Envisioned as a social practice;
- Made accessible to everyone;
- Open to experimentation and creativity.

This consideration of the combined practice of pattern making and garment making opened the field to the values of social justice – equity, diversity, inclusivity, accessibility, and participation – and informed a case study conducted with women in a deprived neighbourhood of London. The next chapter presents the development, delivery, and analysis of the participatory practice research based on pattern making and garment making as vehicles for social change.

6. We are ~~not~~ Designers: A case study with women in a deprived area of London

This chapter reports on the development, delivery, and legacy of pattern making and garment making workshops conducted with women in Somers Town, London Borough of Camden (see Section 1.1.2. about the local context), between May 2022 and July 2024. It details the delivery of the workshops and presents the results of the analysis of the data gathered throughout the participatory practice research. Finally, it discusses the challenges faced, the legacy, and the implications for the future of the group of participants. Many pictures illustrate the results of the practice research, but additional pictures of the workshops and the artefacts made can also be found in Appendix 36.

In this chapter, the first person is used when talking about the role of the researcher in facilitating this participatory practice research. As explained in Section 4.3.2.2., the emotional and empathetic connection between the researcher and the participants are key to the success of the project. Therefore, some aspects discussed in this chapter feel deeply personal. This is also in line with the interpretivist paradigm underpinning the project (Section 3.1.). When consent was given, the participants are also identified by their first name.

6.1. Making the project possible

Like other participatory projects, many enabling factors influenced the delivery of pattern making and garment making workshops in Somers Town. As explained in the methodology (Section 3.2.2.1.), the programme of workshops was designed to be as inclusive and accessible as possible, and its delivery would not have been successful without the support and collaboration of gatekeeping organisations (Section 3.2.2.2.). The work delivered in Somers Town was possible thanks to the generous support and contributions of many organisations and individuals.

A significant share of the contributions was made in-kind. The workshops would not have been possible without the support of a local food bank and the local primary school who offered access to venues, equipment, and materials, and supported community engagement. Both organisations also shared valuable advice and helped with the funding applications. Olivia Weber[76], who worked as assistant during the first two rounds of workshops, generously donated three sewing machines to the project. Finally, as the instigator, facilitator, and researcher, I lent and donated materials, equipment, and resources to the project (*e.g.,* mannequins, a sewing machine, books, fabrics, and more).

In addition, many people, Somers Town community leaders, residents, and LCF members of staff, volunteered their time to the project. From advising on the organisation of workshops, exhibitions, and events, to helping set up the exhibition or participating in the panel discussion, people's time was a valuable resource.

As a Camden resident setting up a project with a social purpose in the borough, I was able to apply for funding from Camden-based organisations. Camden Giving, a participatory grant-making charity, funded three rounds of workshops: these funds helped buying equipment, materials, and remunerating people (£5,254 in total). The Francis Crick Institute contributed £2,000 to funding the design and delivery of an exhibition and event in a local contemporary art gallery to celebrate the participants' journeys. In addition to these local grants, both my annual UAL PhD support funds for the academic years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 (£2,400 in total) were spent to cover the curation and graphic design costs of the exhibition.

[76] Olivia is the Founder of a community interest company called *Trashion Factory* and based in Leyton at the time of writing, but later renamed as Olivia Lara Studio and relocated to Margate, where she runs an embroidery design studio.

6.2. Project development

During over two years, three rounds of eight pattern making and garment making workshops, as explained in the “Journey to creating your own garments” programme (Section 3.2.2.1.) (Figure 6.1, previously seen on p.87, Figure 3.5), were delivered. During these workshops, participants learnt about and experimented with different methods of pattern making and garment making, namely reproducing a garment, creating garments with simple geometric shapes, and draping.

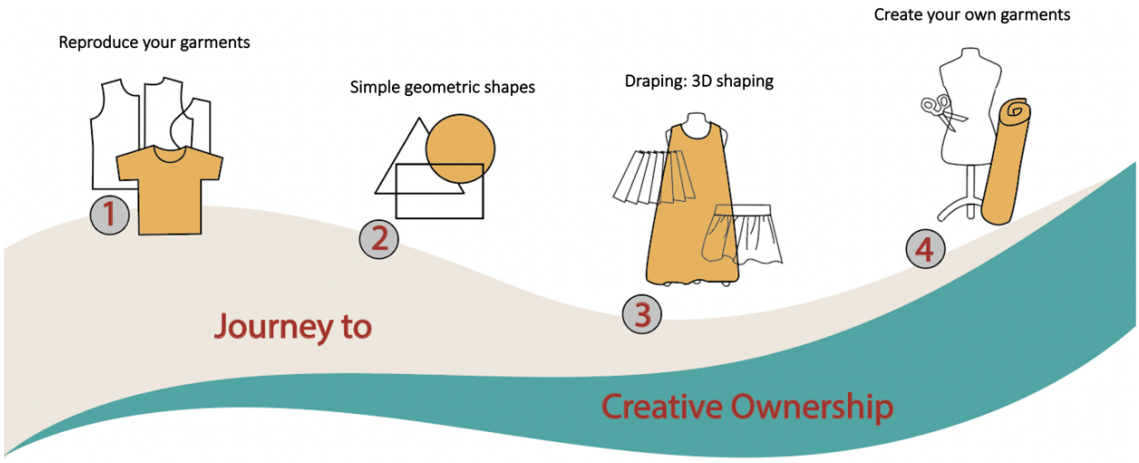


Figure 6.1: ‘Journey to creating your own garments’ programme of workshops (illustration by the author).

Each round of workshops built on the previous one and changes were made to better adapt the approach to the participants’ needs and expectations. As a follow-up, an additional series of eight workshops for more advanced makers was collaboratively designed with the participants and delivered. Weekly drop-in sessions followed for more than a year. An introductory visit at the Working Men’s College, an adult education institution located in the neighbourhood (Figure 1.1), was organised for participants who wanted to further their fashion knowledge. The project culminated with a one-week exhibition and events in a local contemporary art gallery, Somers Gallery, to celebrate the participants’ journeys and achievements. Figure 6.2 presents a short timeline of the project (a more exhaustive timeline can be found in Appendix 37).

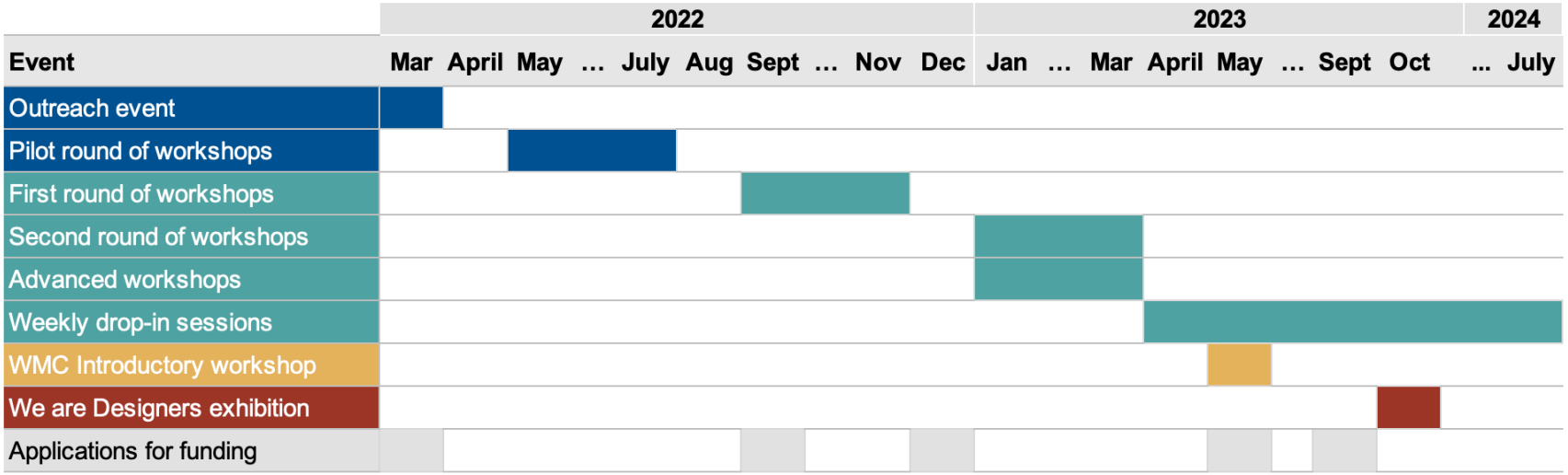


Figure 6.2: Project timeline.

6.2.1. Pilot series of workshops at Lifeafterhummus

Workshop key facts:

- Dates: 16/05/2022 – 18/07/2022, Mondays, 9:30am-12:30pm
- Duration: Nine weeks
- Venue: Lifeafterhummus Community Benefit Society
- Number of participants: Three
- Workshop assistant: Olivia Weber

From May to July 2022 a pilot round of workshops, partially funded by Camden Giving through the "We Make Camden Kit" programme[77], was delivered at Lifeafterhummus Community Benefit Society (Section 3.2.2.2.). The objective was to test the programme of workshops, meet residents, better understand the context, and build credibility within the neighbourhood, with the aim to connect with other local organisations.

For nine weeks, three women, who considered themselves beginners in sewing and with limited pattern making knowledge, took part in the workshops. Every Monday morning from 9:30 to 12:30, during children school hours[78], we met for three hours to explore pattern making and garment making (Figure 6.3).

[77] We Make Camden Kit is a partnership between Camden Citizens, Camden Council, Camden Giving, and Camden businesses to support and fund ideas from Camden residents that will help achieve four core missions: diversity amongst people in power, opportunities for young people, food for everyone and sustainable neighbourhoods (Camden Giving, n.d.).

[78] Two participants had school-age children. The workshops were organised during school hours so that no extra childcare was necessary.



Figure 6.3: Poster promoting the workshops at Lifeafterhummus Community Benefit Society (illustration by the author).

The sessions were led by me with the support of a workshop assistant, Olivia Weber, experienced in running community making workshops in deprived areas of London. Her role entailed supporting the participants during the creative process including making, sewing, cutting, or answering any questions they had about the project and activities. She also took fieldnotes and pictures.

The workshops took place in one of the storage rooms. The room was small and stored cooking equipment, limiting the space available (Figure 6.4). Tables were set up and folded for every session and the corridor also served as a space for ironing and cutting fabrics and garments.



Figure 6.4: Workshop at Lifeafterhummus (photo by Olivia Weber).

Despite the space constraints, the participants were able to develop their own designs for every ‘phase of the journey’. An array of artefacts, at different

stages of completion, was produced, showcasing the wide variety of techniques that the participants experimented with (Figures 6.5 to 6.8).

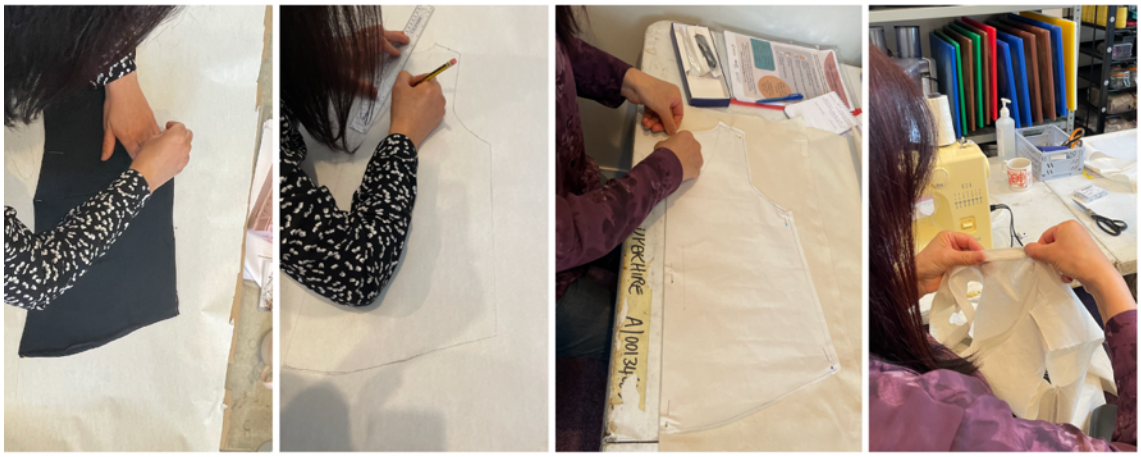


Figure 6.5: Participant copying a pattern and making a toile for a simple tank top – Unit 1 (photos by the author).



Figure 6.6: Participant making a one-shoulder top based on rectangles and circles - Unit 2 (photos by the author).



Figure 6.7: Participant draping a waistcoat with pleats from a simple sleeveless trapeze dress – Unit 3 (photos by the author).



Figure 6.8: Participant making sofa covers - Unit 4 (photos by the author).

This pilot was very useful to review and adjust the content of the workshops so that they would fit within eight weeks for the next iterations. For this first series, an additional session was organised at the request of participants who needed more time to complete their projects. In the following iterations of workshops, a few changes were made, such as removing the introductory activities for each phase, relying less on the written instructions, and spending more time delivering a practical demonstration of the making activities.

6.2.2. ‘Create your own Garments’ workshops at a local primary school

Workshop key facts:

- First series of workshops:
    - Dates: 27/09/2022 – 22/11/2022, Tuesdays, 1pm-3:20pm
    - Duration: Eight weeks
    - Venue: Edith Neville Primary School
    - Number of participants: Seven
    - Workshop assistants: Olivia Weber and Chnar (former participant and local resident).
- Second series of workshops:
    - Dates: 17/01/2023 – 14/03/2023, Tuesdays, 1pm-3:20pm
    - Duration: Eight weeks
    - Venue: Edith Neville Primary School
    - Number of participants: Seven
    - Workshop assistants: Chnar and Angela, former participants and local residents.

After the pilot workshops, two series of eight workshops were delivered between September 2022 and March 2023 in the local primary school. Both rounds of workshops were funded by Camden Giving.

The first series of workshops at the school was the natural subsequent phase of the research after the pilot workshops. The workshop series was met with high interest from the school parents and in fact it was soon over-subscribed. To satisfy the waiting list, a second iteration of the workshops was delivered. This not only increased the number of participants, but also allowed implementing the methodology with two different groups of participants, gathering more data for the research, and simultaneously created an opportunity for more advanced participants to be remunerated as workshop assistants. As the number of participants was higher in the second iteration, the workshops were delivered with the support of two assistants.

The tools, equipment and materials used in this iteration were the same as for the pilot, to ensure the workshops were accessible to all participants. The workshops were delivered in two different rooms, the Family Centre and the school meeting room, depending on availability. The Family Centre is a smaller room organised to welcome children and parents for the centre's activities. In this space, foldable tables needed to be set up and stored for every session, while the meeting room was a much larger and bright room where tables and chairs were already available (Figure 6.9 and 6.10). The school also provided space in a small storage room to store all the materials, equipment, and participants' work in progress.



Figure 6.9: Workshop in the Family Centre, Edith Neville Primary School (photo by the author).



Figure 6.10: Workshop in the meeting room, Edith Neville Primary School (photo by the author).

In total, fourteen women, all local residents or school parents, participated in the workshops (seven participants per series of workshops). The first series of workshops was overall more successful than the second one because of a stronger commitment and a more consistent attendance of participants.

In the same way as during the pilot, the participants experimented with three different methods of pattern making and garment making and developed many patterns, samples, toiles, and garments (Figure 6.11 to 6.12). During the workshops, a large amount of data through observations and pictures was gathered for analysis.



Figure 6.11: Patterns, toiles, and garments made during the first series of workshops at Edith Neville Primary School (photos by the author).



Figure 6.12: Patterns, toiles, and garments made during the second series of workshops at Edith Neville Primary School (photos by the author and a participant).

Each series of workshops ended with a little celebration with food that participants prepared and brought from home. As we enjoyed the food, the participants verbally shared feedback and brainstormed ideas to inform the co-design of the following steps for the group. To celebrate the achievements, a school assembly was organised after the first series of workshops and the participants received a certificate of attendance from the school. The

participants showed their designs to the children and explained what the workshops consisted of and how they created their garments (Figure 6.13).



Figure 6.13: Mannequins and presentation ready for the celebrative assembly at school (photo by the author).

6.2.3. Advanced garment making workshops

Workshop key facts:

- Dates: 19/01/2023 – 16/03/2023, Thursdays, 1pm-3:20pm
- Duration: Seven weeks
- Venue: Edith Neville Primary School
- Number of participants: Eight

- Workshop assistant: None. Participants worked collaboratively and helped each other.

The participants from the first series of workshops at the school were eager to learn more advanced techniques. A brainstorming session was organised to co-design additional sessions. All participants were driven by the same desire to keep sewing and making together, and learn more technical skills. Consequently, an additional series of eight workshops co-designed with the participants was delivered between January and March 2023. The participants from the previous pilot at Lifeafterhummus were also invited to join.

As requested by the participants, these sessions were delivered in a more traditional format during which I would demonstrate a specific technique and then they would reproduce it. The participants expressed the need to learn more about inserting different types of zips on garments and accessories, creating buttonholes, sizing and grading, make to measure and alterations, mending, making different types of garments, sewing different types of materials, and being more confident with the sewing machines. They felt that by acquiring these skills, they would feel more confident in supporting other participants during future workshops that they would deliver. The focus of the activities was chosen collaboratively on a week-by-week basis in response to the participants' suggestions. During these sessions, the participants made technical samples, toiles, garments, and accessories (Figure 6.14).



Figure 6.14: Garments, toiles and samples made during the advanced technical sessions (photos by the author).

As part of these sessions, a visit to the local market was organised for the group to look at locally available fabrics. The group chose and purchased a selection of different types of fabric to experiment with during the sessions (Figure 6.15).



Figure 6.15: Visit to the local market (photo by the author).

Many participants expressed a desire to strengthen their pattern making and garment making skills and enquired about courses. At the beginning of 2023, I contacted the Working Men's College, a local adult education college (See map on Figure 1.1) to organise a visit for the participants. On 24th May 2023, a group of six participants, who had previously attended different iterations of the workshops, visited the College for an introduction to the fashion courses available and a patchwork workshop (Figure 6.16).



Figure 6.16: Patchwork workshop at the Working Men's College (photo by the author).

At Edith Neville Primary School, the work with the group of women started with the series of workshops following the methodology initially developed by me, but organically evolved towards other activities, co-designed with the participants.

6.2.4. 'We are ~~not~~ Designers' – A celebratory exhibition and event series

To celebrate the individual and collaborative creative journeys of the women who participated in a year and half of workshops for this project, an exhibition was organised in a local contemporary art gallery (Figure 6.17). The exhibition's title was 'We are ~~not~~ designers' (written with the 'not' struck through with a

representation of a zig-zag stitch). It refers to a participant's comment when faced with the challenge to create her own designs. Such a title evokes the participants' journey to overcome the challenge and effectively become designers, proudly gaining the confidence to embrace a new identity as creative people. The four-day exhibition was complemented with a series of activities: an opening evening with music and food, a panel discussion, a creative making workshop, and a fashion show (Figure 6.18).



Figure 6.17: 'We are ~~not~~ Designers' Exhibition poster (graphic design by Maciej Rackiewicz, photos by the author).

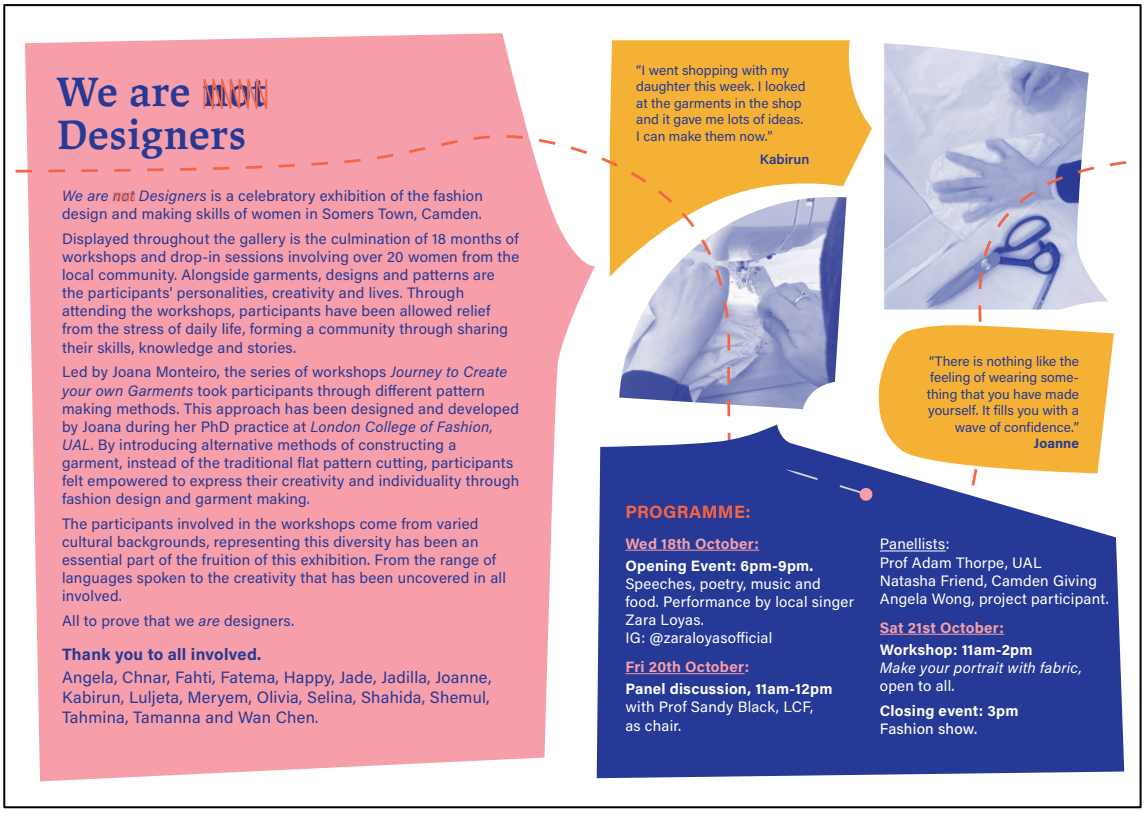


Figure 6.18: Exhibition brochure (graphic design by Maciej Rackiewicz, photos by the author).

Funding from the Francis Crick Institute and the UAL PhD annual allowance contributed to purchasing equipment and materials, paying for the catering, and remunerating the team involved in the development and delivery of the exhibition, namely the curator Louise Thornton, graphic designer Maciej Rackiewicz, and photographer Eugénie Flochel. In addition, in-kind contributions complemented the funding and made sure that the exhibition was a success. For instance, chairs for the panel discussion were brought from the school by the caretaker.

The exhibition was planned well ahead to allow for the slow process of fully designing it with the participants (Figure 6.19). Curator Louise Thornton and graphic designer Maciej Rackiewicz visited the participants regularly to gather inputs, share ideas, and validate concepts for the exhibition (Figure 6.20).



Figure 6.19: Workplan for the design and delivery of the exhibition.



Figure 6.20: Graphic designer Maciej Rackiewicz, exchanging ideas with the participants for the exhibition poster (photo by the author).

The aim of the exhibition was to celebrate the creativity and fashion skills of women in Somers Town. Therefore, the exhibition showcased many artefacts

both made during the workshops and individually at home. These included: finished garments, toiles, samples, sketches, embroidery artworks, patchworks, patterns, and pictures. The exhibition assets included labels describing the items with a quote by the maker (Figures 6.21 to 6.27). The artefacts were organised in three themes:

- ‘Creative Journeys’ presented individual participants’ profiles and journeys, with a focus on the key participants taking a leadership role in the group (Figure 6.21).
- ‘Creative Community’ focused on the social aspect of the project and the diverse creativity of the participating women (Figure 6.22).
- ‘Creative Practice’ highlighted the technical skills of the participants (Figure 6.23).



Figure 6.21: 'Creative Journeys' section of the exhibition (photo by the author).



Figure 6.22: 'Creative Community' section of the exhibition (photo by the author).



Figure 6.23: ‘Creative Practice’ section of the exhibition (photo by the author).



Figure 6.24: Patterns exhibited on a wall and screen showing pictures of the workshops (photo by the author).



Figure 6.25: Toiles of dresses made during the draping sessions (photo by the author)



Figure 6.26 Sofa covers made by a participant during the workshops (photo by Eugénie Flochel).

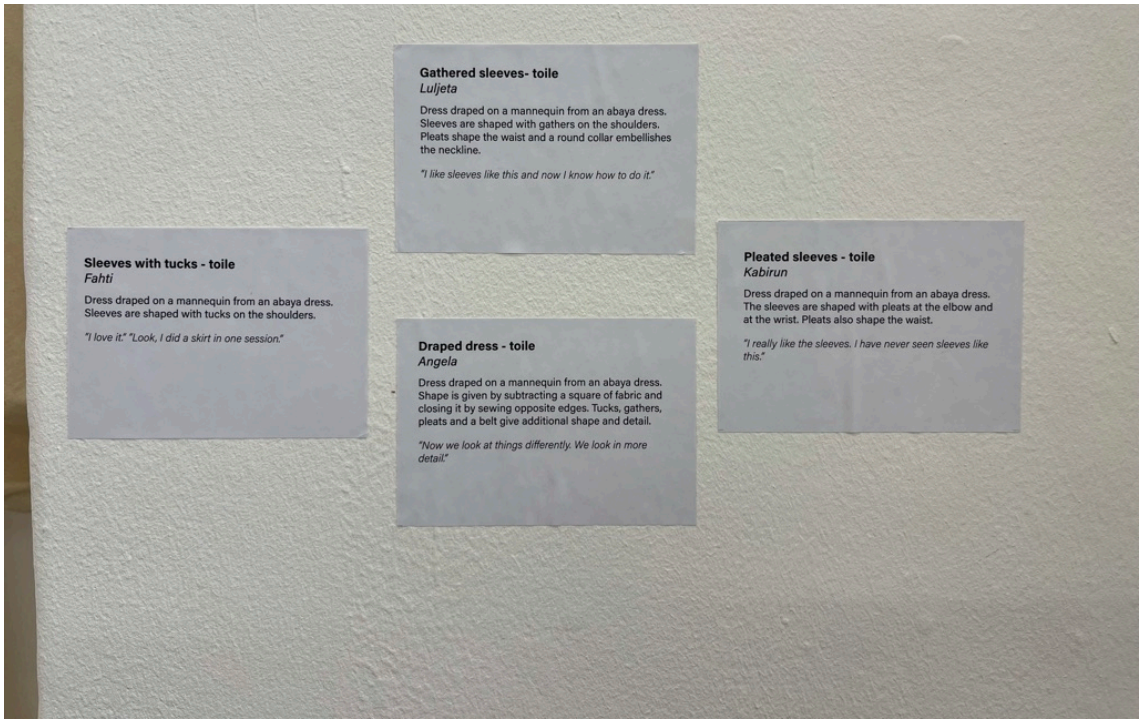


Figure 6.27: Labels for items exhibited with makers' quotes (photo by the author).

An artwork was specifically created for the exhibition to represent the diversity of the group and its creative journey. The phrase ‘We are not designers’ was printed on a piece of cotton fabric in twelve different languages[79], representing the diversity of the participants, including myself (French). For each language, the word meaning ‘NOT’ was crossed out with stitches made on the sewing machine by the participants, transforming the sentence into ‘We are designers’. The banner was exhibited in the gallery window as the women’s manifesto (Figure 6.28).



Figure 6.28: 'We are designers' manifesto in the gallery window (photo by the author).

Another significant contribution to the exhibition was a Mexican dress, made collaboratively by the group members (Figure 6.29). The dress was commissioned by the organiser of the Somers Town Day of the Dead festival, happening at the end of the same month. The dress was worn by a singer on stage during one of the festival concerts (Figure 6.30).

[79] From top to bottom: Danish, Cantonese, English, Chinese, Albanian, Bengali, French, Arabic, Somali, Tifinagh (Berber), Spanish, Kurdish.



Figure 6.29: Mexican dress made collaboratively by four participants (photo by the author).



Figure 6.30: Singer wearing the Mexican dress at the Day of the Dead festival on October 28th, 2023 (photo by the author).

The exhibition was promoted around Camden borough with posters distributed in shops, restaurants, cafés, and community organisations (Figure 6.31). Posters and flyers were also left at CSM. An Instagram profile[80] and Eventbrite pages were created for the event and images were designed by the graphic designer to promote the exhibition and the individual events.



Figure 6.31: Exhibition flyers on a table in a Somers Town community centre (photo by the author).

The exhibition lasted four days and generated significant interest from local residents and organisations. UAL students also visited the exhibition. Feedback from visitors was gathered in the form of messages left on fabric cut in shapes of pattern pieces and pinned to a mannequin (Figure 6.32).

[80] @stitchbystitchst, https://www.instagram.com/stitchbystitchst/

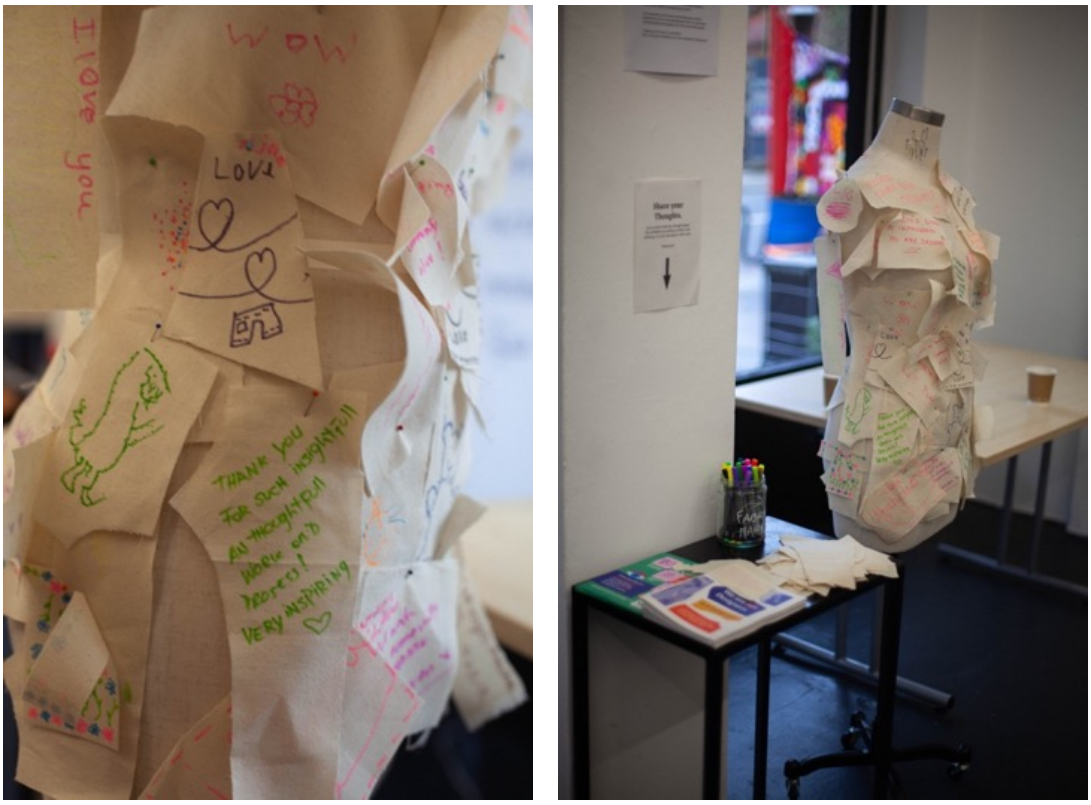


Figure 6.32: Exhibition feedback messages pinned on a mannequin (photos by Eugenie Flochel).

On Wednesday 18th October 2023 the opening event brought together participants, families and friends, community members, funding partners, UAL students and staff, Camden journalists and Council representatives (Figures 6.33 and 6.34). The catering was provided by a group of residents who met weekly to cook together and share recipes[81]. The evening started with three speeches about the project and the value of community projects, delivered by me, followed by Farrah Rainfly from Lifeafterhummus, and Amy Hagemann from the school family centre. Jade, one of the participants then read poems that she wrote, inspired by the group of women making fashion together (Figure

[81] Following the event, the cooking group trained to obtain their food and hygiene qualification with the ambition to set up a catering business.

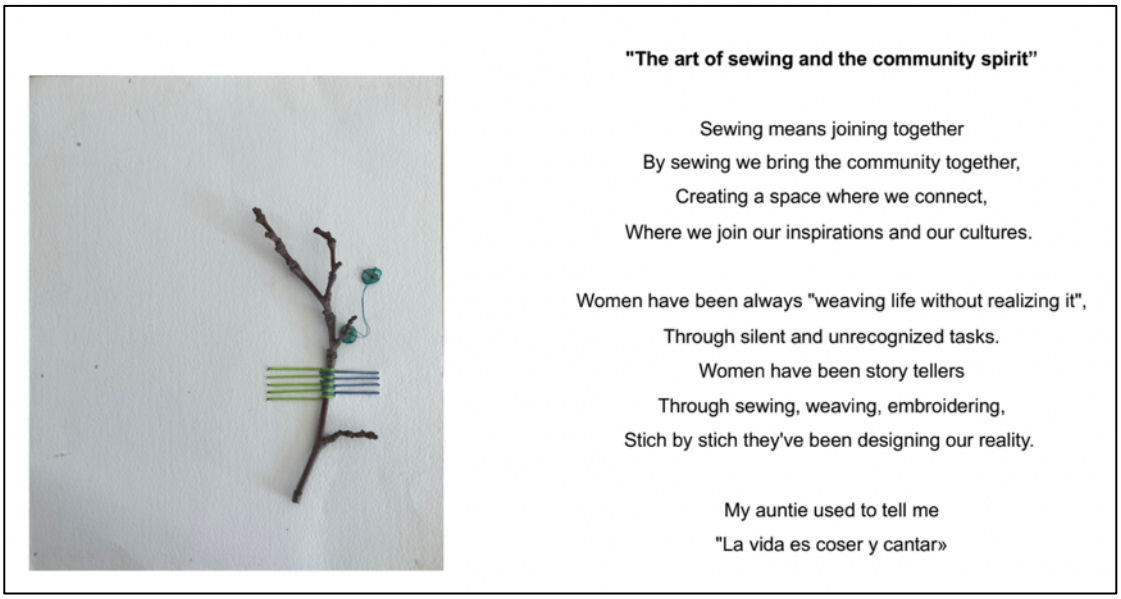
6.35) and a local singer was invited to perform (Figure 6.36). The whole event was a very joyful and celebratory evening.



Figure 6.33: Opening event, view from the road (photo by Eugénie Flochel).



Figure 6.34: Opening event (photo by the author).



"The art of sewing and the community spirit"

Sewing means joining together
By sewing we bring the community together,
Creating a space where we connect,
Where we join our inspirations and our cultures.

Women have been always "weaving life without realizing it",
Through silent and unrecognized tasks.
Women have been story tellers
Through sewing, weaving, embroidering,
Stich by stich they've been designing our reality.

My auntie used to tell me
"La vida es coser y cantar»

Figure 6.35: Poem and embroidery by Jade, project participant (photo by the author).



Figure 6.36: Local singer performing during the exhibition opening evening (photo by Eugénie Flochel).

On Friday 20th October 2023 a panel discussion, chaired by Professor Sandy Black (LCF), gathered four panellists who had been involved in the project in different ways – me; Angela, one of the participants; Professor Adam Thorpe (CSM) who has worked extensively on research and knowledge exchange projects in Somers Town; and Natasha Friend, director of the funding organisation Camden Giving (Section 3.2.3.). The event took place in the gallery, surrounded by the exhibits (Figure 6.37), and catered by the group of cooking parents with delicious pastries. In addition to questions related to the impact of the project and its legacy, the roles of collective making activities in the community and of the designer, the discussion touched upon how to define communities, challenged the meaning of and explored alternative words for 'empowerment', unpacked the meaning of design and being a designer, discussed the ripple effects of the project within the wider community and beyond. The funding system in Camden was also discussed as well as how to share the outcomes of the project and exhibition further, beyond Somers Town.



Figure 6.37: Panel discussion in the gallery during the exhibition (photo by Eugénie Flochel).

The exhibition ended on Saturday 21st of October 2023, with a textile workshop to create portraits with fabric (Figure 6.38), followed by a celebrative fashion show with the participants (Figure 6.39).



Figure 6.38: Fabric portraits making workshop (photo by the author).



Figure 6.39: Celebratory fashion show with the participants and their families (photo by Eugénie Flochel).

A week later, a whole session was dedicated to debriefing about the exhibition and the events with the participants. The group shared their positive feedback about the week-long exhibition that brought together the community and how proud they were to have their work showcased. Lessons were learnt for possible future exhibitions and events. The exhibition was considered too short, and more organisations could have been invited to reach a broader audience.

Two years of workshops, various outings, and a week-long exhibition and events generated a wealth of data in the form of observations, pictures, and recordings as well as physical items such as garments, patterns and more. The results of the analysis of this data are discussed in the following sections.

6.2.5. Project outputs

During more than fifty workshops, nineteen participants designed and made numerous garments, toiles, and samples – which act as physical testimonies of their creative journeys – many of which were showcased during the 'We are ~~not~~ designers' exhibition.

In addition to the exhibition in Somers Town, the research and its results were also presented at the 'Fashion Now! International Research Day' Conference in Rimini, Italy, in November 2022. Following the event, an article was published in ZoneModa Journal[82] (Appendix 39) in October 2023. In November 2023, I was invited by Camden Giving to take part in a panel discussion for Camden community leaders in the Google offices about the role of joy in participatory work. The research was also displayed as part of the exhibition 'Designed for Life' at LCF, in January 2024.

[82] https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2611-0563/17942

The group's achievements were highly celebrated by the school, the community, and more widely in the borough. During one of the sessions, the group received the visit of a journalist and a photographer from Camden magazine. A short article was published in the printed magazine (Figure 6.40) and a longer article on their website[83], acknowledging the work that the group had realised. The project was also featured at two We Make Camden: State of the Borough summits[84], in 2023 (Figure 6.41) and 2024 in a video[85] and a large print on the wall of the conference room (Figure 6.42).



Figure 6.40: Article published in Camden Magazine, Spring 2023, p.9.

[83] https://www.wemakecamden.org.uk/journey-to-making-your-own-garments/

[84] We Make Camden Summit is an annual event organised by Camden Council to reflect on the borough's progress towards the We Make Camden missions: diversity, young people, food, estates and neighbourhoods. (https://www.wemakecamden.org.uk/)

[85] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDPckMB3ZtY



Figure 6.41: Poster about the project, We Make Camden Summit 2023 (photo by the author).



Figure 6.42: Poster about the project, We Make Camden Summit 2024 (photo by the author).

6.3. Results of the data analysis

This section discusses the findings from the analysis of the data gathered during the workshops and the panel discussion. The analysis reveals some themes which align with the key elements of the social design framework discussed in Chapter 4 (Table 4.2). The objective of this section, however, is not to explain if or how the work delivered in Somers Town matches the framework, which will be discussed in detail in the Discussion Chapter (Chapter 7). Instead, this section aims at highlighting the significant conclusions, outcomes, impacts and challenges of the project.

6.3.1. Participants' perspective

This section focuses on the findings regarding the workshop participants. First, it presents a better understanding of the participants' profiles gathered from the data analysis. Then, their roles during the workshops are analysed. Finally, the outcomes and benefits of their participation are discussed.

6.3.1.1. Participants' profile

The analysis of the data led to a better understanding of the participants and a more accurate and detailed portrait of the nineteen women[86] who chose to participate in the workshops. The participants were all women aged thirty to forty-nine years old. All, except from one, were mothers, and most of their children were attending or had attended Edith Neville Primary School, where most of the workshops took place. To accommodate for the participants' parenting obligations, babies and toddlers were sometimes brought to the

[86] Nineteen women took part in at least one workshop: ten completed the programme; three attended half of the workshops; six attended three or fewer sessions.

earlier sessions[87]. All women lived or worked in Somers Town or in its close vicinity. Three participants mentioned having some kind of part-time employment. Even though about half of the participants belonged to the Bengali community, the group was very diverse, with ten countries represented: Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, Iraq, Morocco, Netherlands, Spain, and Somalia[88]. Besides this, Olivia Weber (who worked as workshop assistant) is from Switzerland and I have French and Portuguese nationality. Thirteen of the participants were of Muslim faith and most wore the hijab and floor-length long-sleeved garments. Most of the women were the first family generation to have moved to the United Kingdom. Twelve women out of fourteen participants who answered the feedback questionnaire indicated that English was not their first language.

According to the Head of the Family Centre and the Family Liaison, most of the women who attend the Centre's activities come from low-income families and are unemployed. They depicted an overall socio-economic situation, affected by deprivation, isolation, and depression that still looked like the one described by Wendy Wallace in her book *Oranges and Lemons* from 2005. They described the participants, in particular from the Bengali community, as women with heavy family burdens, often with many children to care for and having to please high expectations from their families. The women were also described as not being educated to be creative and having limited opportunities to develop and express their individuality.

In terms of garment making skills, eleven participants mentioned that they had already used a sewing machine before, while three had never used one. The group was essentially formed of beginner sewers[89] (as indicated by the

[87] The participants later expressed that they preferred for children not to be present in the workshops, so that they could focus on the making and fully dedicate the two hours of activities to themselves.

[88] During the drop-in sessions that followed, the participants also came from Afghanistan, Colombia, Italy, and Jamaica.

[89] Skill levels were defined as follows:

- Complete beginner: never used a sewing machine before and does not hand-sew.

participants in their first questionnaire before starting the activities) (Figure 6.43) who had previously made items ranging from simple tote bags and tops to more complex dresses and trousers.

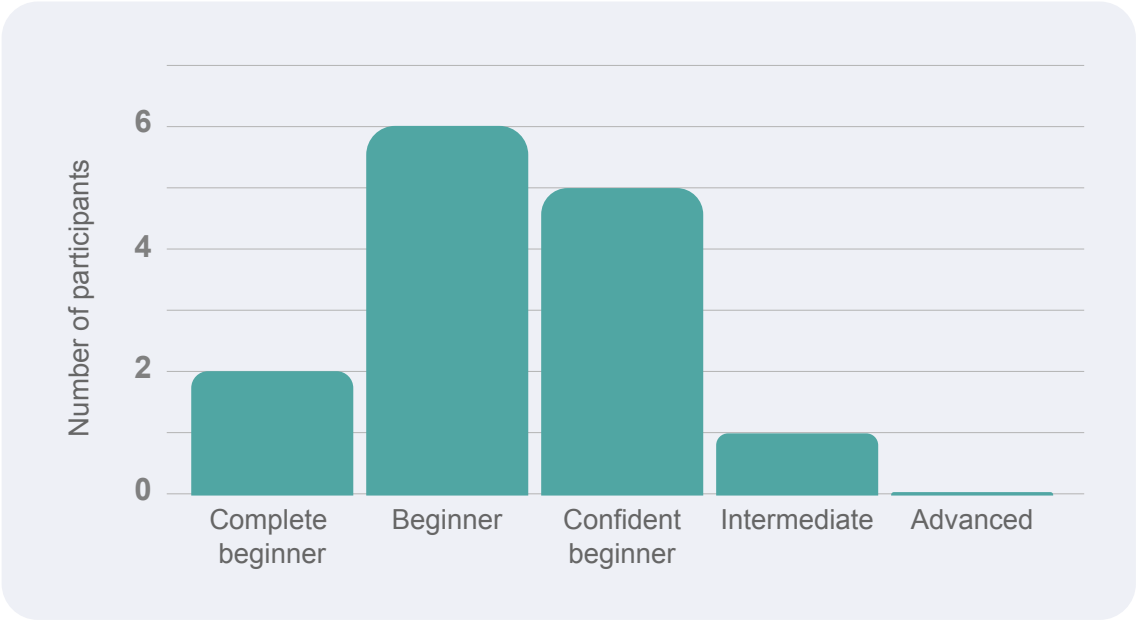


Figure 6.43: Number of participants per sewing skill level, as answered by participants in the introductory questionnaire (n=14) (illustration by the author).

For those who already knew how to sew either by hand or using a machine, eight respondents shared that they had learnt how to sew in their native country from a female relative, a mother, grand-mother, aunt, or sister. Others learnt by attending courses, on their own, or from a male relative. The participants had

- Beginner: able to follow simple instructions, sew a straight line and have made simple items (*e.g.*, gathered skirts, tote bags and pillow cases in woven fabrics).
- Confident beginner: can confidently follow pattern instructions, sew straight and curved seams, make pleats, and have made a few simple garments (*e.g.*, simple top or dress); first experience with different fabrics, zippers, buttonholes.
- Intermediate: experience with different fabrics, able to make different finishes (*e.g.*, French seams, rolled hems, bindings), starting to learn how to adjust patterns for style or better fit.
- Advanced: able to construct a garment without looking at instructions and solve problems by herself, able to make complex garments (*e.g.*, shirts, trousers, tailored jackets, lined coats) and work with difficult fabrics (*e.g.*, knits, wool, special occasion fabrics), can make many kinds of seam finishes and line garments.

limited experience in pattern making. While most participants (eleven out of fourteen respondents) had already modified a garment to improve its fit, only three participants had made a pattern from measurements or from another garment (Figure 6.44).

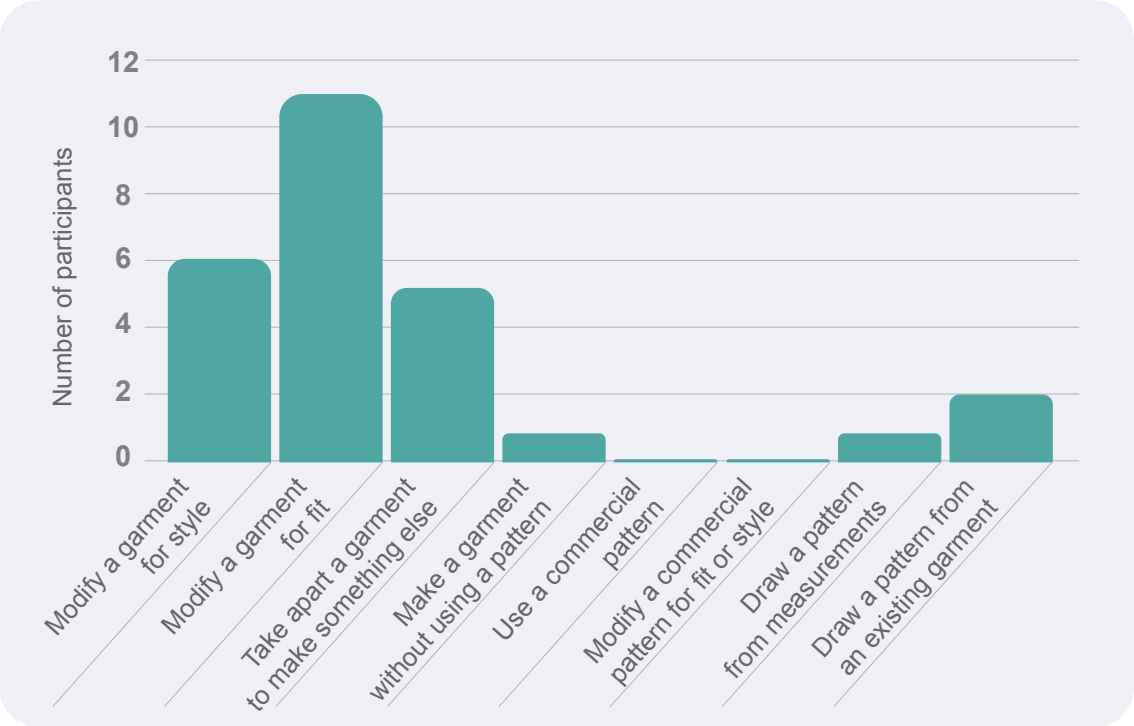


Figure 6.44: Number of participants who had experience in different pattern making activities, as answered by participants in the introductory questionnaire (n=14) (illustration by the author).

Before starting the workshops, when asked about their level of confidence with the methods that were going to be introduced during the programme, the respondents showed more confidence with the first method (*i.e.* reproducing a garment), and less with the more creative methods (*e.g.,* draping and creating their own design) (Figure 6.45).

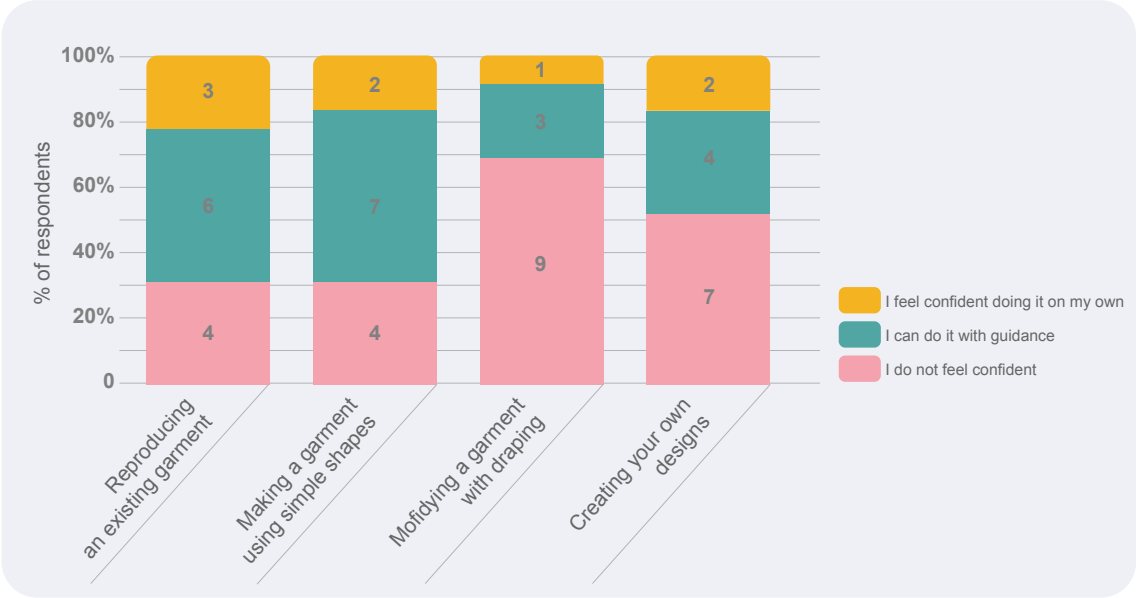


Figure 6.45: Participants' level of confidence for each pattern making method of the workshops, as answered by participants in the introductory questionnaire (n=14) (illustration by the author).

The participants were motivated to join the workshops mainly to learn skills, experience something new, and create their own garments, either for themselves or their children. Social and environmental reasons were not mentioned as often (Figure 6.46). At the school, most women already knew each other from attending the activities organised by the Family Centre and came in groups of two or three, but some, new school joiners, hoped to meet new people and make friends.

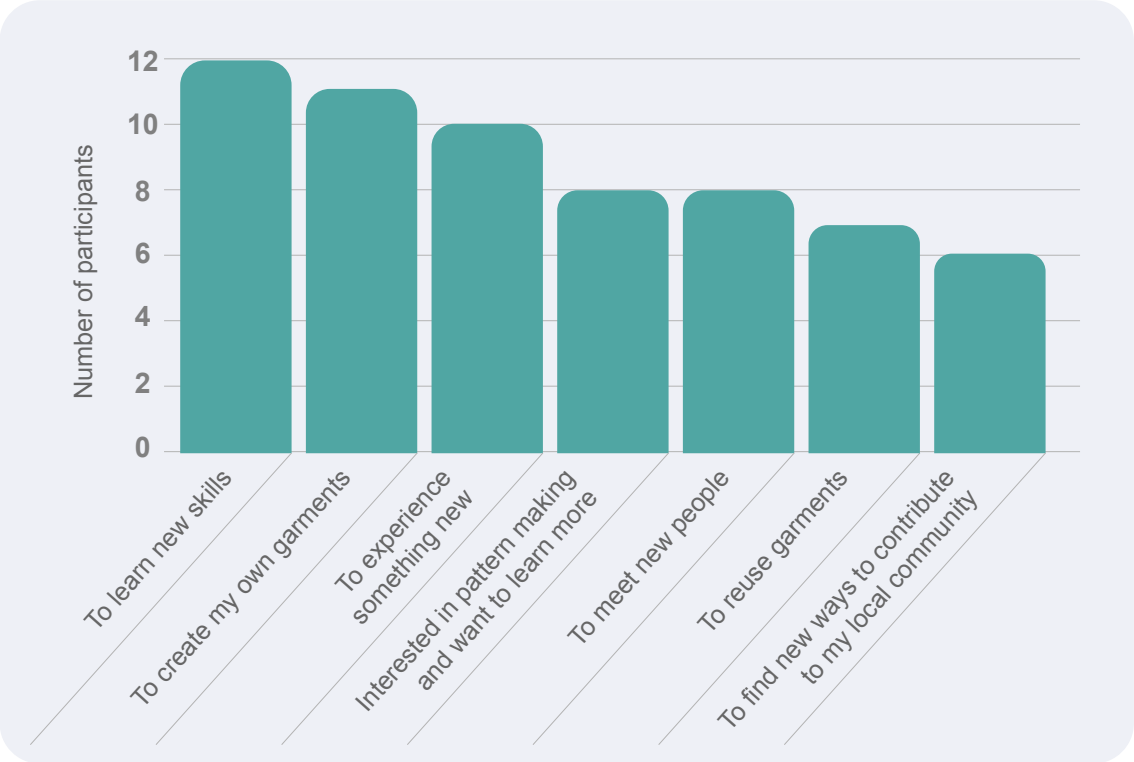


Figure 6.46: Number of participants per reason to participate in the workshops, as answered by participants in the introductory questionnaire (n=14) (illustration by the author).

This diverse group of women went through individual and collective creative journeys over the course of this two-year-long engagement. The following sections discuss the roles that the participants took during the process as well as the outcomes that were generated as a result of their participation in the project.

6.3.1.2. Participants' roles

Observing the participants during the workshops (including the pilot) revealed the different roles that they played and how they evolved.

The first role to acknowledge is that of being a member of the group. The workshops were designed with a strong social focus to foster collaboration and participation. Within this group, the participants played a crucial role in supporting each other: women signed up to the workshops with their friends;

some participants supervised friends' children so that they could focus on their making; more skilled English speakers provided some language support to others who struggled to understand and communicate; mothers shared about their children's lives and exchanged opinions and advice about schools. The participants who were shyer or had just arrived in the neighbourhood or the school progressively got to know other participants and friendships grew.

This role of support to one another went hand in hand with them making things together. In every session, the participants were creating things with their hands: tracing, cutting, sewing, manipulating fabric and more. The participants even collaborated on the making process: two friends for instance insisted on working together, making a long dress with raglan sleeves and took turns on the sewing machine. The dress made for the Mexican celebration (Figures 6.29 and 6.30) also illustrated the collaborative work that happened during the sessions: five participants collaboratively designed and made the dress, looking for inspiration, collecting materials, splitting the tasks, and bringing the garment pieces together. Garment making, individually or collectively, was at the core of their participation in the project. While the other roles evolved along the sessions, their role as makers was always central and led their journey as they became more skilled and confident.

As mentioned previously, the participants were mainly drawn to the workshops to learn new skills (Figure 6.46). Their first approach to the workshops was as learners, eager to acquire new skills and knowledge from a teacher that they considered more knowledgeable. During the first workshops at the school, the participants explained the reasons why they had signed in. For instance, one participant said: *"When I heard that a professional was coming to the school, I wanted to come and learn",* and another stated: *"I can sew but I want to learn the proper way to cut"*. This was also visible in their initial passive behaviour during the sessions: at first, the participants would usually wait for instructions to follow and felt challenged when the instructions became less defined.

Evolving from this learning role, some more advanced participants became more confident in helping others in the pattern making and garment making process. The participants often helped each other with basic and more technical

tasks, such as threading a sewing machine, copying a pattern from a garment or with specific techniques (*e.g.*, creating gathers on a skirt). Support and advice were also shared about the designs and how to construct them.

This supporting role became prominent for some participants who, in addition to being more experienced in garment making, also seemed to enjoy sharing knowledge with others, so much so that two participants became workshop assistants and were remunerated for their support. Chnar became workshop assistant after completing the pilot series of workshops at Lifeafterhummus, while Angela started after completing the first round of workshops at the primary school. Their role ranged from demonstrating the techniques introduced during the workshops, helping less experienced participants, guiding and assisting the others in their making, suggesting ideas and solutions to technical problems.

As the workshops evolved towards less guidance and more creative freedom, some participants developed a more designing role. Progressively, and each at their own pace, some participants developed the skills needed to design their own garments. Some participants felt comfortable taking design decisions from the start and grew towards full design agency, while others took smaller steps, but all took independent decisions on their designs. For instance, one participant completely transformed a long trapeze dress into a waistcoat with darts (Figure 6.47), while another kept the original dress and added details such as pleats, gathers and a bow (Figures 6.48). As shared by a participant during the panel discussion, everyone can be a designer:

> *"If you have got the help and support and also the encouragement from the people in the group, then, yes, I think everybody can be a designer".*



Figure 6.47: Waistcoat draped from a trapeze dress by participant (photo by the author).



Figure 6.48: Dress draped from a long-sleeved trapeze dress by a participant (photo by the author).

Alongside developing their technical skills and freedom to experiment, some participants also became pattern makers and garment technologists and could determine the construction process to achieve their designs. For Angela, for example, who was a more advanced sewer, the development of the pattern based on a circle for a child's rain cape went through many iterations. Once satisfied with the toile and how it fitted her children, she explored fastenings and seam finishings (Figure 6.49).



Figure 6.49: Design steps for a child raincape by a participant: patterns and toiles (photo by the author).

The participants also played a key role in co-designing the workshops, the exhibition, and associated events, and were central in co-designing the future of the group's activities. Indeed, their feedback was not only gathered via the questionnaires, but at the end of each series of eight workshops, a session was dedicated to brainstorming and discussing the participants' aspirations for the

group. The most confident participants also shared their thoughts and feedback during the workshops to the group who then considered the suggestions and discussed how to integrate them. For instance, one of the participants suggested to dedicate some time at the end of a unit (every two sessions) for them to present their toile or garment to the group. This was implemented straightaway and highly appreciated by everyone. Other topics discussed were the skills they wanted to learn, the format and structure of the sessions, and the possibility to make items to sell at the school summer fair. For the exhibition, the graphic designer and the curator spent many sessions gathering the participants' ideas, interviewing them, and validating concepts, so that the event was a truthful representation of the group's journey and values.

In summary, the project participants took many roles throughout the project. While some roles remained constant all along the workshops, namely supporting each other, learning, making, and collaborating, others evolved over the weeks. The participants helped each other on more technical matters, and some played a teaching role. They designed and made their own garments, acting as designers, pattern makers, and garment technologists. Finally, they became co-designers of the project and its legacy. These roles evolved and took shape conjointly with the various outcomes that emerged from their participation.

6.3.1.3. Outcomes for the participants

The workshops seem to have successfully reached the short-term goals originally set. The interpretation of fieldnotes, pictures, participants' feedback questionnaires, their notes, and the analysis of the physical patterns and garments made during the sessions, reveal that participating in the workshops had some positive impact on the women.

However, not all the participants benefitted from the workshops in the same way. First, the participants who attended all or most of the sessions benefited the most. Ten women were consistent in their attendance, three attended four

sessions, while six have not attended enough sessions for observations to reveal the outcomes they might have experienced. Second, more proactive, enthusiastic, and dedicated participants seemed to have improved their skills and enjoyed the workshops most. For the participants with a consistent attendance and a stronger dedication to the workshops, positive outcomes were more easily observed at different levels.

- Skill improvement and acquisition

By participating in the workshops, the women have developed and improved many skills. The improvement of their technical making skills was evident when analysing their toiles and garments, but the skills acquired and improved go beyond the technical aspect of the project.

At the beginning of each workshops series, most participants declared to be beginners in sewing (Figure 6.43). During the workshops, many participants used a sewing machine for the first time while others significantly improved their speed and accuracy. Many sewing techniques were discussed and practised, such as gathering fabric, sewing darts and pleats, attaching fastenings, working with different types of fabric, and more. Not only the participants' sewing skills visibly improved, but the women also felt more at ease with using the machines on their own.

In terms of pattern making, at the beginning, all the participants declared having limited knowledge of garment construction. Only two participants mentioned having tried to make a garment using a commercial pattern before. During the workshops, the participants learnt about three different techniques of constructing a garment – copying a garment, using simple geometric shapes, and draping. By experimenting with these techniques, the participants developed key pattern making skills: understanding the relationship between 2D and 3D shapes, tracing patterns, constructing garments, measuring a garment, a body, and a pattern, creating volumes and shapes. Practical pattern making skills were also developed, such as tracing, cutting paper and fabric, technical drawing, and using a mannequin, for instance. In addition, as they were developing and making their own designs, other questions and topics related to

garment technology (*e.g.*, seam finishes, fastenings, grading and fit, working with different fabrics, using interfacing) were also raised and discussed.

The participants demonstrated their new skills by replicating these techniques to make garments for themselves or their children. One participant reproduced one of her dresses at home by using the technique introduced during the first workshop unit (Figure 6.50). Many participants used simple geometric shapes to make skirts (Figure 6.51), while two others used both these techniques to make garments for their children (Figures 6.52 and 6.53).



Figure 6.50: Dress made by copying the pattern from an existing garment (photo by the author).



Figure 6.51: Skirt made with rectangles of fabric by a participant (photo by the author).



Figure 6.52: Dress and skirt made by combining copying a pattern from another garment and simple geometrical shapes (photo by the author).



Figure 6.53: Dress made by copying another garment and using geometrical shapes (photo by the author).

Learning through making was the approach adopted. The participants were often making something or experiencing a certain technique for the first time. This led to challenging situations where mistakes were made, and feelings of frustration and impatience were provoked. These were opportunities for the participants to embrace the learning process of trial and error and improve their abilities to deal with mistakes and frustration. Perseverance, patience, learning from mistakes or transforming mistakes into design features were skills that the participants had to develop and exert in the context of pattern making and garment making. One participant, for instance, found it difficult to trace and cut straight rectangles and cut the fabric three times before cutting the right-size rectangles for a top. Unpicking was also a frustrating activity that happened regularly, but as mentioned by Shahida, one of the participants at the school: *"It is ok, we are practicing".* Many had to learn to be patient and not rush into cutting their final fabric for instance or omit measuring their pattern pieces. Jade

liked to remind the group that *“[her] aunty used to say: to go fast, go slow”* as it would prevent mistakes being made.

This enhanced understanding of garment design, construction, and making led the participants to develop garment analysis skills. Not only did they look into their wardrobes for garments made of simple geometrical shapes, but they also investigated how their garments were made, analysed clothes found in shops, and developed a critical sense towards the fashion industry. The participants started questioning how garments are made, the work involved in making them, the quality and sustainability of garments sold by high-end brands. One participant declared that she will “*never buy a dress with gathers anymore, now that I know how hard they are to make”.* Another went shopping with her daughters, but realised how badly the garments were made and decided to make her daughter’s dress herself instead. The participants regularly shared pictures of garments and accessories seen online or in store that they thought could easily be reproduced.

By embracing the learning process of trial and error, together with the development of their technical skills, some participants became more confident in suggesting solutions to problems encountered while making their garments. These problem-solving skills manifested mainly towards the end of the workshop journey when participants had more agency over the making process. Suggestions made by the participants covered alternative techniques to reach a similar result, for instance: gathering fabric on the sewing machine with different settings; copying a garment directly on the fabric instead of using paper first; techniques to trace large circles. Solutions were also found for mistakes or to improve the design or fit of a garment. To make a dress longer, a participant modified the waistline and inserted a waistband to add a few centimetres to the dress.

The development and exercise of these skills – technical garment making skills, dealing with mistakes, garment analysis and problem solving – in a context designed for them to create their own garments led to the development of design skills. A few participants already showed some of their design ideas in

the first sessions by modifying the copied garments or creating original garments with rectangles (Figure 6.54).



Figure 6.54 Top made with rectangles (photo by the author).

However, it was mainly from the fifth workshop, when the draping activity was introduced, that the participants were more challenged to create their own designs. When introduced to the draping activity, the first reactions were always of confusion. The participants did not know what to make or how to start modifying the dresses on the mannequins. One participant found it "*very challenging because usually [they] are told what to do, [they] have instructions to follow*". Many started manipulating the fabric saying that "*[they] had no ideas"*, and that "*[they] were not designers"*. The participants experienced the frustration of creating their own designs without a clear idea of what the final garment would look like, something that they were not used to. With support from the workshop assistants, the other participants and myself, and the help of

the tools available, such as the collection of technical samples, all the participants had draped a dress on the mannequin by the end of the first draping session. The participants learnt to look for inspiration: some felt inspired by garments they already owned or clothes they saw in shops; others found inspiration in a particular technique, such as darts, pleats, or tucks; inspiration also came from observing other participants. Moreover, all of them experienced fashion design through making. During the making process, new ideas often emerged, and the participants were able to try them out and change their original design, often surprising themselves along the way. Although sketching was not an activity that the participants were explicitly asked to engage with, a couple of participants enjoyed drawing their designs (Figures 6.55 and 6.56).



Figure 6.55 Technical sketch for a dress, by a participant (photo by the author).



Figure 6.56: Sketch for the Mexican dress design, made by a participant (photo by the author).

- Creativity development

During the workshops, the participants were introduced to pattern making and garment making techniques in a context that gave them the freedom to create their own designs instead of following instructions to make a garment imposed on them. The set-up, in terms of space, equipment and materials, as well as skills required and activities proposed, enabled the participants to experiment and be as creative as they wished. The variety of garment types made, and the techniques used illustrate that point: simple tops, complex tops with ruffles, dresses and skirts with pleats, gathers, tucks, buttons and elastics, a waistcoat with intricate darts, a Victorian skirt with a box pleat, sofa covers, a rain cape, zipped bags, and more.

Being challenged to try something new seemed liberating for some participants: after the initial surprise of having to drape on a mannequin, all participants created original garments, but three participants particularly enjoyed and

amazed themselves by creating unique designs. Kabirun, participant at the school, declared "*I have never seen sleeves like these"*, reflecting on the design she draped on a simple trapeze dress after having said that she was not a designer (Figure 6.57).



Figure 6.57 Sleeves designed by a participant (photo by the author).

Another participant was particularly proud when a visitor said that her dress looked like a Vivienne Westwood's design and that she would wear it. The participants expressed their individual personality through their designs. The workshops gave them a dedicated space and time to express who they were. As noticed by one participants, the diversity of personalities in the group manifested in the diverse designs draped from the exact same dress as a starting point (Figure 6.58).



Figure 6.58: Dresses draped by participants from a simple trapeze dress (photo by the author).

The analysis of all the draped dresses revealed that their creativity was influenced by their faith and their cultural background: all the participants who wore occidental clothes made more structural changes to the trapeze dresses, while participants who wore the hijab and modest dresses kept the shape of the dress and worked on adding details around the waist, the sleeves, or the neckline. For some of them, fashion became a form of expression that they had not considered before. They used the garments to pass on meaningful messages. Wan Chen, participant at the school stitched a heart as an appliqué and explained that "*the heart is because we need to love ourselves and love others.*"

The chronological analysis of the participants' garments and toiles also showed the progressive development of the participants' creativity over the weeks. Kabirun, who completed the first series of workshops at the primary school, for

instance, originally preferred following instructions and did not consider herself as a creative person. Step by step, she brought in her own design ideas and felt more confident in her creative skills. At home, her family also noticed her creativity and started calling her a designer. In the final feedback questionnaire, all the participants said that they “definitely” felt inspired and intended to use their pattern making and sewing skills in the future, and eighty-eight percent of them felt generally more creative.

Finally, four participants (including the two workshop assistants) developed their making and creative practices in very personal directions. Angela made garments for her daughters using no patterns, developing the design while making, starting from an idea and the fabric available to her, mixing draping, geometrical shapes and flat pattern making. Chnar preferred copying her garments and using commercial patterns. Jade enjoyed upcycling and mending garments. Joanne chose more technical garments that allowed her to learn new techniques. These four participants formed the team leading the group, organising, and facilitating workshops once I left.

- Workshop assistants

As an evolution from their role as participants during the pilot and the first series of workshops at the school, two women, Chnar and Angela, became assistants during the subsequent sessions. Both were experienced sewers and demonstrated a willingness to help other participants. Their time was remunerated thanks to the funding received.

Their role consisted in supporting me in the organisation and delivery of the workshops. In addition to setting up the space, their main role was to support and guide the participants in their making practices, ranging from setting up the sewing machines, demonstrating some techniques or giving advice on the designs and methods. As former participants, they also presented the toiles and garments that they had made during previous iterations of the workshops, which created a connection with the participants who could easily relate to them.

In addition to improving their technical knowledge by answering a multitude of technical questions, acting as working assistants also led them to develop the

skills needed to support others and facilitate making workshops. It can be challenging for a workshop facilitator to find the right balance between helping, guiding, and letting the participants try and learn from mistakes, while considering the person's abilities and personal challenges, and being open to unfamiliar making approaches. Both sometimes needed a reminder that they should not complete a task for the participants, but instead should guide them through it. In addition, they were both exposed to the logistics of organising and delivering the workshops, which was very useful once they started delivering the workshops themselves. Overall, acting as workshop assistants progressively increased their confidence to become leaders of the group.

- Participant engagement and community building

As described by Adam Thorpe during the panel discussion, the project created a 'community of practice' around pattern making and garment making, and a 'community of interest' where diverse women, who have many things in common, come together to share their interest in making garments.

One participant mentioned that "*it is not the same sewing at home. It is nice in a group, we make together.*" Indeed, during the workshops, making things together involved inspiring and motivating each other, sharing skills and stories, supporting and encouraging each other, and celebrating everybody's achievements. It also meant making friends. Seven out of eight questionnaire respondents mentioned that they have made new friends and that they feel more connected to their community. As the sessions progressed, the women got to know each other better and shared more about their lives, supporting each other with personal matters as well as technical sewing questions. During the panel discussion, Angela, participant and workshop assistant, shared that she was not expecting the workshops to have such a strong social aspect:

> "*Compared to other workshops, in this type of workshop, you're constantly interacting with people, you're constantly talking, exchanging ideas. And, with that, I think it helped build the relationships, helped really much in building that community that I didn't really expect at the time before I joined*".

Natasha Friend, director of the funding charity Camden Giving, also argued during the panel discussion that:

> "*People coming together with a task does seem to be that thing that unites, and then from that you get this by-product of wonderful community cohesion*".

In such a diverse group, making played the role of 'task', overcoming language challenges and bringing participants together.

The final exhibition celebrated the sense of community that was achieved through the making process. In particular, the opening event brought together so many people and was such a success that the gallery owner shared that "*In one night, you have brought the community together. We have tried to do that for so long"*. Jade, a key participant, got particularly inspired by being part of the making community and beautifully expressed her feelings in poems that were exhibited in the gallery:

"The art of sewing and the community spirit"

Sewing means joining together

By sewing we bring the community together,

Creating a space where we connect,

Where we join our inspirations and our cultures.

The building of this community was facilitated by the infrastructure that was put in place around it. A space, a regular weekly time, the support from the family centre, a set of activities designed around making, and the setting up of a communication channel (a WhatsApp group) for participants to keep interacting outside of the sessions, were all crucial factors for the community to emerge. One participant acknowledged how important the infrastructure is:

> "*I think [that] this space gave us the opportunity to learn in community and do something as a community, not as an individual. […] In the society that we live in, I think [that] there should be more of that*".

- Wellbeing, sense of achievement and pride

All eight questionnaire respondents enjoyed the workshops and considered that the project ‘absolutely’ (six respondents) or ‘partially’ (two people) met their expectations. They were all happy with the quality of the workshops, considered it ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’, despite most of them wishing for the workshops to be longer. The participants said that they felt comfortable within the space and the way the sessions were organised.

For some participants, attending the workshops and making garments together became a source of joy and a way to improve their wellbeing. One participant stated: “*I loved the relaxed environment and great atmosphere*”. In both venues, the gatekeepers commented on how participants smiled and looked happy during and when leaving the workshops. Some participants also shared that every week they were looking forward to coming and often expressed how much they enjoyed making things as a group, with statements such as “*I am really enjoying”, “I love it”, “I am so happy”, “I love coming, it is so good and satisfying, we can make things so quickly”.* During the panel discussion, Angela shared that, at first, she had joined the workshops to learn new skills and meet people, but that “*throughout the process it changed, because […] [she] felt that it improved [her] mental health and also reduced stress”.*

The participants also experienced a great sense of achievement in completing garments, especially their own designs, and succeeding in doing something that they previously considered very difficult. Comments such as “*it looks really good”, “I like it”, “I made a skirt in one session”,* illustrated that feeling of overcoming their initial doubts and achieving their objectives. For beginners, a significant achievement was being able to use a sewing machine which could feel intimidating at first. Jade felt particularly proud of herself: “*My objective was to feel more comfortable with a sewing machine, and I can use it now”.* Some participants also acknowledged their new skills: for instance, Luljeta, who completed the second round of workshops at the primary school, mentioned: “*I like sleeves like this and now I know how to do it”*. Another participant was particularly happy to have practised draping darts.

The participants enjoyed showing their achievements at the end of the sessions and during the exhibition. They also felt proud to be acknowledged as creative people by other members of the group, their families and friends, the local and wider community. Their achievements were celebrated not only during the exhibition in Somers Town, but an article was also published in the Camden Magazine and online in March 2023[90].

- Self-confidence

The analysis of the feedback questionnaires filled in at the end of the workshops revealed that the participants felt more confident in their sewing, pattern making, and fashion design skills than when they started the project (Figure 6.59).

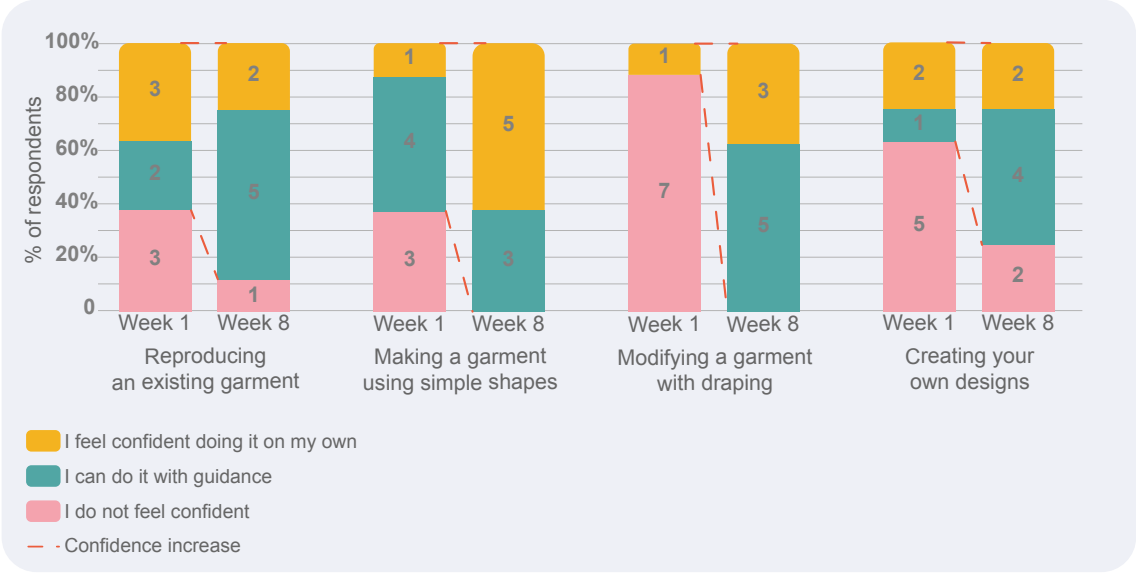


Figure 6.59 Evolution of the participants' confidence in their making skills (illustration by the author).

Their confidence grew together with their technical skills and achievements. It manifested in concrete ways during the workshops; for instance, in the way they used the sewing machines with more confidence; in trying things out without asking for validation beforehand; or in attempting more and more difficult techniques. One participant shared: *"I feel more certain of myself using the*

[90] https://www.wemakecamden.org.uk/journey-to-making-your-own-garments/

machine. It reminded me of my passion for sewing. It illustrated areas I had more skills in than I thought, and areas that were entirely new to me." Many participants were surprised to realise that certain tasks were not as hard as they seemed: "*To create that shape, it looks difficult, but it is actually very simple.*" Their overall confidence manifested in their eagerness to make garments for themselves and their families, knowing that they finally had the skills to achieve them. One participant commented: "*I am just starting to feel confident making my own designs. I see things and I feel that I can try to make them. My daughters say that I want to make everything now".* Confidence in their technical skills also seemed to be a condition for them to feel confident in supporting other participants, which was the reason for delivering more technically advanced workshops.

The participants' self-confidence grew thanks to the way in which the workshops were organised. They valued the supervised and guiding approach that let them experiment, with the safety of having someone to ask for help if needed. Some participants commented: "*With supervision, I feel confident, because I can ask you", "I do feel confident because you give measurements and ideas", "Here we've got the examples, the book of ideas. On our own, we are not sure about what to do".*

For many, self-confidence was affected by the language barrier. In a way, the workshops were a chance for participants to practise their English language skills and they were encouraged to present their achievements in front of the group. They also learnt new vocabulary. In another way, in the context of these workshops where English was no-one's first language, the ESOL[91] challenge was somehow lifted and another language was used to communicate, that is the language of making. This was used by the participants to express their creativity and to communicate with others. Indeed, showing, demonstrating, drawing, and making were often more efficient ways to communicate than with words. The use of the language of making alongside English allowed some participants to feel more confident. One participant felt very self-conscious about her level of English, which made her doubt her capacity to support others

[91] ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages

during the workshops. With the improvement of her technical skills and ability to communicate through making, she overcame the language barrier and became a workshop assistant, and later a leading member of the group.

- Sense of agency

The analysis of the observational notes and the chronological reports revealed that, through the workshops, the participants increased their sense of agency both in the making process and the development of their designs.

Indeed, as the weeks passed, it was noticeable that the level of supervision and guidance from me and the workshop assistants became lighter, despite the activities becoming more challenging with less written instructions. Most participants became more independent and autonomous in making their own decisions and finding solutions. While at the beginning they preferred following instructions, asked for validation when trying new things, and were worried about making mistakes, they progressively took more ownership of their projects, suggesting other ways of doing things, bringing their own fabrics, patterns, and garments.

Their agency also manifested in their designs. Most participants gained a sense of their own power to create whatever garment they wanted. Some of my observational notes read:

> "*Both have modified the original design a lot and made something that was more in line with their aspirations and style preferences*".

> "*The final dress looks very different from the original basic design suggested as a starting point. [The participant] has taken full ownership of the design and process*".

Autonomy and ownership of their design and their making practices were observed in most participants, for some since the first session, for others it progressively appeared and grew over the course of the activities. Some participants even felt confident enough to challenge the organisation of the workshops and bring their own projects. For instance, during the pilot workshops, Jade brought her own fabric to make covers for her sofa, stating

that "*[she] felt too frustrated last week. [She] prefers working on a project that inspires [her]".* The development of the participants' agency showed that the workshops and the environment created allowed them to have the freedom and sense of power to choose what they wanted to do. The Family Liaison also remarked that developing their creative and making agency within the workshops could translate into more agency in their own lives, especially for women whose lives are mainly dictated by their husbands and families. She commented that "*it is good to make them have initiative, in general in their lives*".

- Ambition and plans for the future

At the end of each series of eight workshops, participants were worried that the group would stop meeting every week. Although some participants had a sewing machine at home or had access to one outside of the workshops, they were all keen to keep making things together regularly. During the final brainstorming session, the participants decided to organise drop-in sessions that would follow the workshop series.

Many participants expressed the desire to join further education in fashion making. A list of possible courses around London was distributed and I organised an introductory morning with the fashion department at the Working Men's College, an adult education college in Camden Town (Figure 1.1). During that session, in addition to a full introduction of the College and the different fashion courses available as well as fees and funding options, a patchwork workshop allowed the participants to experience making within a fully equipped fashion studio. Six participants attended the morning and left with a patchwork sample made during the session (Figure 6.60).



Figure 6.60: Participants showing their patchwork in front of the Working Men's College (photo by the author).

The participants also expressed the desire to make items to sell. During the brainstorming sessions, they mentioned selling small accessories (*e.g.,* scrunchies, headbands, bags, pencil cases, baskets, and more) at the school fair and local markets. They brainstormed how to make them and how to source the fabrics. For instance, they planned to work "*like in a factory*" by splitting the steps and thought about recycling donated fabrics. This translated into commission sales, further discussed in Section 6.3.3.

The analysis of the observations, the feedback questionnaires, and the toiles and garments showed that participants have benefited from the workshops in many ways. This was also observed by the gatekeeper who remarked that she had seen some parents flourish thanks to the sewing sessions.

The participants benefited in many ways from the project, developing both technical and personal skills, opening new opportunities for the future. Their creative journeys led them to become designers of their garments and of their group.

6.3.2. Researcher's perspective

During this two-year long project in Somers Town, I played many roles that evolved along the way. I realised that the project had not only benefited the participants, but it had also impacted me personally. This section discusses these roles and outcomes.

6.3.2.1. The researcher's roles

The very first role that I had to take was to create the conditions for the project to happen, that is the project infrastructure. This included finding the right partners, applying for funding, securing a venue, materials, and equipment. As a project manager, I had to prepare and monitor the budget, recruit assistants, and more.

Once these conditions were fulfilled, I delivered the workshops during which I played many roles simultaneously. The first role I played, and the one that I was registered as at the school, was 'teacher', despite insisting on not being called 'the teacher'. However, during some sessions and mainly at the beginning, teaching was indeed part of my role. The participants were not always familiar with some techniques and some teaching, through demonstrating, was inevitable. My approach was, however, based primarily on guiding and suggesting techniques for participants to develop their own designs rather than imposing them. This label as teacher illustrates the participants' initial perception of me as a more knowledgeable maker. One participant mentioned that she was coming to the workshops to learn from '*a professional'*. To balance

their perception and promote an open and collaborative approach, it was made clear many times that I sometimes did not know the answer to some of their questions and that a solution could be found together through research and experimentation.

Related to this teaching role and the participants' perception of me as a more knowledgeable maker, I gave continuous technical support to the participants. This role, dominant during the first sessions, progressively shifted towards the participants themselves who grew in confidence and skills and relied more on each other for help. The workshops assistants also fully took on this role by the end of the last iteration of workshops.

The support I gave went beyond technical advice. Motivating, inspiring, and managing participants' aspirations were crucial attitudes for the success of the women's participation. This role was about finding the right balance between giving instructions and guidelines without imposing a direction, letting the participants' experiment and learn from mistakes, while considering their skill levels and aspirations so that they wouldn't feel frustrated if they couldn't achieve too ambitious designs or uninspired if making too simple items. The objective was to help them progressively build their skills and confidence without them feeling too disheartened by the failure. This led to developing tailored guidance for each participant with the help of the workshop assistants.

To reach that level of support, listening to and observing the participants during the workshops, while they were making and interacting, were crucial. Some participants were more confident in expressing their ideas, preferences or needs, while others needed more proactive support. The body language was as meaningful as the spoken words. For instance, a participant staring at a mannequin meant that she needed some help to start draping. Another participant shaking her head in silence meant that she was not feeling confident. Observing the participants also allowed me to identify areas in which participants were more skilled. One participant, for instance, particularly enjoyed upcycling garments; another's first lines of stitches on a sewing machine were beautifully straight. By observing and noticing the strengths and achievements and highlighting them, I also helped lift the participants' self-confidence.

As the participants enhanced their skills and confidence and relied more on each other, my role shifted. Less technical support was needed, motivation and inspiration came from other sources and the roles between the participants and me became more even. I became a maker and started bringing my own sewing and knitting projects to the drop-in sessions and even contributed to the production of some commissions.

Alongside these roles, I constantly had in mind to prepare and co-design the workshops and their legacy with the participants. Thanks to the feedback forms and regular brainstorming sessions, the workshops were adjusted to meet the participants' wishes. By facilitating conversations between the participants and analysing their inputs, I supported the women to co-design the future of their group. To support the legacy of the project, I helped to create a network of collaborators such as CSM, Camden Giving, and local organisations, and sought opportunities for further education (*e.g.,* Working Men's College) and business collaborations (such as commissions).

Finally, for the final exhibition and the events organised as a celebration of the women's creative journeys, I managed and took part in all the roles involved in the organisation of such events: from applying for funding to managing the budget, hiring a venue, finding the equipment, recruiting and managing a curator, graphic designer and photographer, through to hosting an opening event, speaking at a panel discussion, and more.

6.3.2.2. Outcomes for the researcher

In community projects, the focus is often on the benefits generated for the participants. During this project, however, in addition to the skills and benefits associated to completing a PhD research, I observed the positive impacts that engaging in pattern making and garment making activities with women in Somers Town had on me. Some impacts were predictable while others were unexpected.

Through this doctoral project overall, I developed many skills. My critical and reflection skills have improved considerably since I started this project. Writing this thesis, and presenting the research at events, have definitely improved my ability to express my ideas and reflections both in writing and orally. I have become a better workshop facilitator. Over the course of two years, I have applied for four sets of funding and have become more efficient at preparing the applications. All these skills are transferable to many future career choices. This practice research has been invaluable for me to – hopefully – get the PhD qualification and open many doors for further personal and professional development. Through this research, I have also connected with many people and organisations that brought work and collaboration opportunities.

Relating to the planning and delivery of the workshops, the first and obvious outcome of such an experience was the acquisition and development of an array of skills, ranging from project management, budgeting, facilitating workshops, organising an exhibition and events, and more. By being exposed to so many techniques and garments and supporting so many participants, my pattern making and garment making skills also improved, together with my creativity. Softer skills – such as listening, observing and communication – were developed further, in particular within an unfamiliar context.

One of the unexpected impacts of the project was how it positively impacted my wellbeing. On the 15th of March 2023, I wrote in my observational notes:

> "*I was having a difficult week with my children, and I did not feel like I had enough energy to go to the sessions. But of course, I went and afterwards, I realised that it had energised me and, on my way back, I was feeling better."*

There was a sense of achievement and pride in supporting the participants make their own garments and develop their own creative practices, intensified with the exhibition and the opening event that brought a great feeling of joy. But the constant source of wellbeing was the support group that the women formed for me as much as for themselves. Despite all the differences, the participants and I had in common many aspects of our lives, as makers, women, mothers,

and London residents born abroad, forming a community of women supporting each other. This created a strong emotional connection, trust, and sense of empathy with the participants. Both for the participants and myself, a strong sense of commitment to each other and the group was built.

I also noticed a shift in the way I perceived myself. For the last four years, I have questioned the roles of the designer and undertaken this research in line with a broad definition, but I realised that I had never identified as a designer before. The exclusive and restrictive definition of the designer who designs garments, was unconsciously embedded in my mind. Although I was a designer in both the traditional and broader sense, I started to feel like one only as a result of this participatory research project. I can now confidently say that I am a designer, as stated in the exhibition banner.

In addition, the whole project led to a critical reflection on my personal journey, enquiring about my own family history and understanding of my professional choices.

6.3.3. Legacy and social impact

The legacy and the researcher's 'exit strategy' were continuously considered during the development of the project. The whole unfolding of the project purposefully led towards passing over the running of the group to the participants. The women often expressed their worry about the continuity of the group after the eight weeks of workshops or once I would leave. They were keen to learn more and improve their making skills in the collaborative context of the group that was created through this project. The pattern making and garment making workshops set up the stepping stone for the participants to continue the work achieved and to access and create new opportunities for themselves. My role then entailed supporting them to co-design the future of the group.

The women, the gatekeeper, and I experienced that the best people to take over the project were indeed the participants. The participants were involved in

the development of the project since the start, they built a relationship with the gatekeeper and knew how to work within the school. One external collaborator, involved in the delivery of a training programme in the neighbourhood (which two women of the group attended), visited the workshops regularly. With time, she expressed the desire to be more involved, and possibly take my role as facilitator of the workshops. However, her sudden sense of leadership towards a group that she had just joined was not appreciated by some participants and the gatekeeper. Building a relationship based on trust takes time. Humility, listening skills, and adaptability to the context in which one gets introduced are key skills for any researcher or facilitator.

- Further education

During the workshops, a few participants expressed the desire to improve their fashion design and sewing skills further by joining an education institution. A strong connection was created with the Working Men's College. Joanne, one of the first three participants applied for a one-year long course in Fashion design (Levels 1 and 2) and joined the College in September 2023. Once graduated, she returned to the group in Somers Town with the intention to share her new skills and experience with the women. She became one of the key members of the group, organising and delivering workshops for the community. In October 2024, she enrolled in a pattern cutting short course to further improve her skills. Chnar, also one of the first participants at Lifeafterhummus and workshop assistant afterwards, also enrolled in a professional sewing skills course for two terms. Both short courses were paid for with the group's revenues generated from the commission sales (see section below). Both are now key organisers of the sewing workshops taking place at Edith Neville Primary School where they teach and support other women to make their own garments.

- Stitch by Stitch – Community Sewing Somers Town

One of the main outcomes of the participatory practice with the women was the creation of a strong core group of four women who were determined to keep the group going. Once they felt confident to carry on without my constant presence, these four women took the lead on organising and delivering structured pattern

making and garment making workshops and drop-in sessions for other women in Somers Town, effectively taking the roles of project leaders, facilitators, and teachers. Two of them had worked as workshop assistants in the previous workshops and one completed the Fashion Design course at the Working Men's College. Three of them had participated in the pilot workshops (Figure 6.61 presents the evolution of the participants).

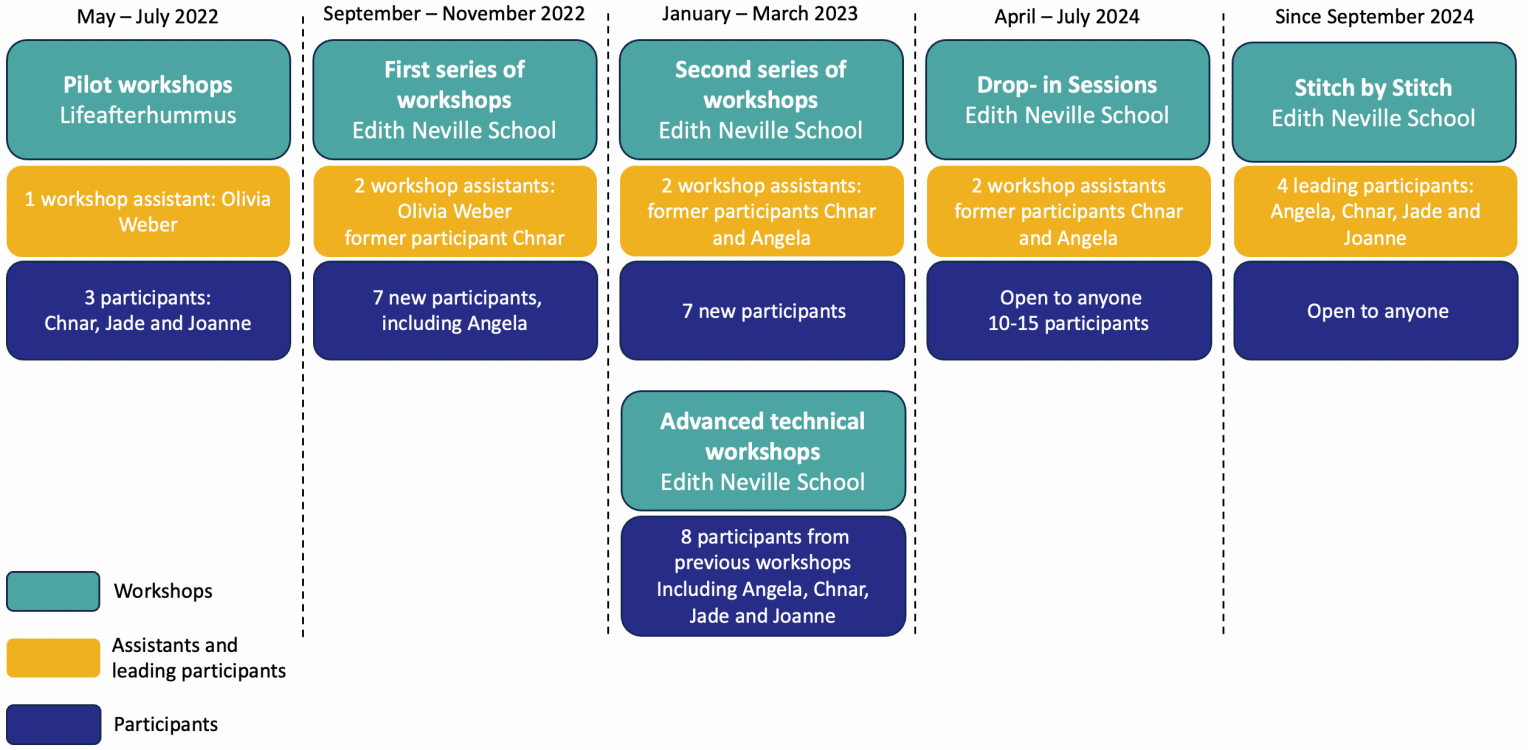


Figure 6.61: Participants' evolution over the course of the project (illustration by the author).

To continue the group's activity, they benefited from the strong support of the school family centre and kept the equipment and materials purchased or donated for the previous workshops that I had run. After a brainstorming session involving all the participants, during which forty-eight names were mentioned, 'Stitch by Stitch, Community Sewing Somers Town'[92] was chosen as the group's name. An email address and an Instagram page were set up to support the group's activity and a poster was created to advertise the group (Figure 6.62).

[92] 'Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town' is referred as 'Stitch by Stitch' in the text.



Figure 6.62: Poster advertising ‘Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town’ (design by the author).

To support the development of the group, two leading participants, Angela and Chnar, also attended an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) delivered by Somers Town Community Association, Camden Council and CSM, as part of the Somers Town Future Neighbourhood programme. The ten-week training programme, delivered between September 2023 and May 2024, aimed at supporting local people to develop fundable projects that benefit the community and the planet, covering market research, product development, business models, funding applications and more. The Stitch by Stitch participants developed two individual ideas about upcycling materials into bags, and a joint project for the future development of Stitch by Stitch. With the support of the EPQ team and myself, they designed a ten-week programme of workshops focusing on sustainable fashion and prepared an application for funding. Inspired by the eight-week 'Journey to creating your own garments' designed for this practice research, the new programme covered mending and alterations, copying a pattern from a garment, ZWPC with geometric shapes, and upcycling garments with draping. Stitch by Stitch were successfully granted the funding from Camden Giving in May 2024 and delivered the workshops from October 2024 to January 2025 at the school family centre.

At the time of writing, Stitch by Stitch delivered making drop-in sessions on Monday afternoons and structured garment making workshops on Friday afternoons, but the participants expressed their desire to meet more often and develop the group's activities further. Stitch by Stitch relied on the primary school for a space to deliver the workshops and to store the equipment and materials. Therefore, the next major step for Stitch by Stitch to develop further would be accessing other making spaces. Two options were considered: accessing shared spaces equipped with sewing and making equipment or setting up a dedicated space exclusive to the group.

The first option requires finding local organisations that have a room available and possibly sewing and making equipment and coordinating its occupancy with other groups of users. Although Stitch by Stitch owns eight sewing machines, it is logistically difficult to move them from their storage space in the school on a regular basis. Stitch by Stitch and the organisations must also align on their

values and how they intend to support the community. The ladies have already initiated conversations with two organisations in Somers Town to share their spaces, but no agreement has been found yet. The second option involves a bigger commitment from the group to set up a dedicated space in Somers Town from where to deliver more workshops and courses to a broader audience and develop a social enterprise. Such a space would need to have a room large enough to accommodate the sewing equipment, a cutting table and storage space. I visited two premises and discussed with the women to understand the feasibility of setting up such a workshop space. In addition to the room, there are a few additional requirements to consider: an affordable rent, safety, accessibility, ideally visibility from the street and its proximity to the participants, in Somers Town or its vicinity. This would require finding the financial resources to start an activity and generate enough and constant revenue to pay the rent.

- Social entrepreneurship

After the first series of workshops at the school family centre, the participants started expressing an ambition to make products to sell and generate revenue to support the group's activity. Initially, they considered events such as the school summer fair for which they would make a certain number of small accessories such as scrunchies, bags, headbands, and bookmarks. However, two participants worried that the business activity would overcome the social and informal aspects of the group. One participant said *"I worry about the pressure of having to make to stock. I like the idea of the workshops, but I also like to be casual."* Finding the time and capacity to make enough products also was a worry.

In June 2023, their first retail experience came from a commission for a private client, a friend of mine, and served as a pilot 'production project'. The four makers made forty bookmarks/penholders and experienced the whole production and selling process for the first time (Figure 6.63). This included costing and pricing, negotiating technical skills and aesthetics, considering resources, materials, and equipment, monitoring quality, and understanding customers' requirements. It also generated awareness about sustainability as the makers wanted to generate as little waste as possible. The makers also

discussed and implemented making methods to shorten production times. For instance, they used rotary cutters instead of scissors to cut the fabric and decided to implement a ‘production line’ (Figure 6.64).



Figure 6.63: Bookmarks/penholders for the first commission (photo by the author).



Figure 6.64: Participants cutting fabric to make the penholders for their first order (photo by the author).

This first order was followed by two more commissions for Camden Giving: fifteen bookmarks in December 2023 and thirty-five bookmarks in July 2024, using upcycled denim (Figure 6.65). The commission-based production seemed to work well for the women as they could plan their workload, focus on one commission at a time, and not worry about stocking items that might not sell. The first premises for a business activity were thus built for the ladies to potentially set up a social enterprise.



Figure 6.65: Penholder-Bookmarks made for Camden giving (photo by the author).

The revenue generated by these sales (a total of £590) supported the group's activity (*e.g.,* buying materials and equipment) and sponsored Chnar and Joanne, two of the four leading members, to enrol in courses at the Working

Men's College to strengthen their skills and contribute to the pool of skills and experience of the leading and teaching team of Stitch by Stitch[93].

At the time of writing, to develop the business activity further and not rely exclusively on funding, the group was discussing the legal status that Stitch by Stitch should register as: a Community Interest Company, a cooperative, a charity, or a limited company. As a registered organisation, the group would be able to access larger funding and open a bank account.

- Collaborations

During the two years of involvement in Somers Town, I made many connections with organisations operating in the neighbourhood. Building connections with supporters and potential collaborators was important for the development of the project legacy.

A significant collaboration was initiated with CSM in Spring 2024. As part of a wider project aimed at regenerating the local market, CSM and a local organisation, Our Little Markets (OLM), set up a project to connect makers and traders to sell the goods made locally on the market with a focus on sustainability. Stitch by Stitch, represented by two leading members, was invited to create a brief for BA Womenswear students at CSM who were required to design products that could be made by Stitch by Stitch makers and sold via the OLM stall and online shop. After a project brief in May 2024, the students visited Stitch by Stitch workshops to gather insights about the group. Two Stitch by Stitch leaders, with my support, attended two crits (*i.e.,* group feedback presentations) at CSM to review the students' work and were invited to the final year fashion show. In addition to two complete outfit designs inspired by Somers Town, the students, working in groups, created open-source accessory designs[94], accompanied by instructions, patterns and short 'how to' videos

[93] The option to sponsor the enrolment of two participants to WMC courses was discussed between the four key leading members of the group and myself. Only the four of them contributed to the commission sales that generated the funds to pay for the courses and only two of them wanted to enrol. Everyone agreed that this was a good use of the money.

[94] The open-source designs can be freely shared, used and modified by anyone.

(Figures 6.66). Each group made ten of these products upcycling donated and remnant fabrics. The items were then donated to OLM to sell at Chalton Street market.



Figure 6.66: Examples of accessories made by CSM students: Dictionary bags and laptop cases (photos by the author).

The project culminated with a parade on Friday 14th June 2024 (a market day), from CSM's building to Chalton Street Market, where a fashion show was organised (Figures 6.67 and 6.68). The revenues generated by the market stall on the day of the fashion parade were kindly donated to Stitch by Stitch. In the longer term, the aim of the collaboration would be for the revenues to support the students, the development of Stitch by Stitch, and the Circular Economy Hub set up by CSM and OLM.



Figure 6.67: Fashion parade flyer (design by Heather Sproat, BA Womenswear course leader).



Figure 6.68: Students at the fashion parade on Chalton Street, June 2024 (photo by the author).

The collaboration between Stitch by Stitch and OLM was part of the wider project T-Factor Euston aiming at reviving the local market and was captured in a short participatory documentary[95] filmed by local residents (Figure 6.69).



Figure 6.69: Screenshot from the *Revival Threads* documentary video.

During the project, I played the roles of gatekeeping and safeguarding Stitch by Stitch, to support the women in a new context. The women involved shared that they enjoyed the project, in particular the interaction with the students and the exposure to their creativity. Learning from this first experience, the project was successfully repeated in 2025, without me – although I received regular updates from the ladies. The interactions and collaboration with the Course Leaders, the students and Stitch by Stitch were managed by the ladies who took turns in meeting the students at the family centre and visiting CSM for the crits. The project ended with a parade and a fashion show on Chalton street on Friday 20th June 2025 in front of the market stall selling the students' products (Figure 6.70).

[95] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vxWxLQCd2NRYPt4di8A0ALHTQ1tsklmq/view?pli=1



Figure 6.70: Students during the fashion show on Chalton street, in front of the CSM market stall, June 2025 (photo by the author).

Stitch by Stitch leaders also independently initiated conversations for collaborations with other organisations such as making workshops with Think & Do, a local charity focusing on sustainability, sewing workshops with teenagers in a senior school and a bag making and screen-printing project with a local visual artist.

After two years of participatory work, the participants and I have put in place the necessary infrastructure, skills and confidence, equipment, material, space, support, and funding, as well as a network of collaborators, for Stitch by Stitch to use the momentum created by the project and have a long-lasting positive impact in the community.

6.3.4. Challenges

Unlike many community-based initiatives for which funding is often a major challenge, the project was lucky to benefit from funding from local organisations that efficiently support small Camden-based projects. Working with the school family centre also significantly helped recruiting participants, which is commonly mentioned as difficult in similar projects. Other challenges were nonetheless encountered.

Some challenges were related to the context. Somers Town benefits from an active network of numerous voluntary and community organisations, public bodies, and universities, that all aim at supporting the community – socially, environmentally, and economically. It can, however, be challenging to navigate this busy network and understand the local politics. Indeed, finding the right gatekeeper for the project was not straightforward. Despite benefitting from spacious and modern premises, funding, some sewing equipment and materials, and being well known by the residents for running creative activities, the first organisation contacted, which was the biggest community centre in the neighbourhood, appeared not to be a suitable collaborator for this project. The programme of workshops did not align with their expectations and the way they wanted to offer sewing workshops to the community, in terms of content, delivery and timings. Despite all the favourable conditions and to keep the research in line with the original plan, the project was not carried out with them. For the exhibition, the choice of venue revived tensions and differences of opinions between organisations in the neighbourhood. As Stitch by Stitch became more visible in the neighbourhood, many organisations sought to get involved and collaborate. Selecting the right organisations to partner with was challenging. With the successful outcomes of Stitch by Stitch, it was important for me to safeguard the women and make sure that their achievements were accurately communicated and credited.

Delivering the workshops also had its own challenges. First, time management was sometimes difficult, and some participants complained that they needed more time to complete each unit of workshops. Then, some participants demonstrated a low commitment towards the project, which created complexity

in facilitating the sessions. Often due to factors such as family responsibilities, language or cultural barriers, irregular attendance, lack of punctuality, low engagement, and passive attitudes during the workshops increased the workload and negatively impacted the experience for more engaged participants.

The participants had different levels of skills and, while supporting them in the best way possible was rewarding, it was also demanding. Finding the right level of facilitation and guidance for each participant, in line with their skills and aspirations, almost creating a personalised approach, while allowing them to explore their own practice, was not easy. Such an approach, applied as equally as possible to all participants, was tiring, and brought continuous questioning about the adequacy of the guidance given. For instance, during a draping session, one participant wanted to drape on the mannequin with large pieces of cloth instead of using the dress I brought. I felt conflicted between how much guidance to give, knowing that the technique was too advanced for the participant but still wanting to let her experiment. Another episode was particularly upsetting for me and the participants: during a more advanced technical session, one participant left the room suddenly and never came back. The participant, with a quiet personality, was struggling with making her garment and felt overwhelmed. I felt particularly bad about failing to see that she needed help.

For two years, I enjoyed spending time with the women and became friends with some of them, effectively becoming a member of the community. This raised the ethical question about the emotional connection of the researcher with the participants. While this emotional connection surely contributed to the success of the group, it also meant that letting go of it was not easy. This also generated conflicting emotions about being friends but also keeping a certain professional distance: participants had my personal phone number as communication through WhatsApp was a condition for a successful communication, but I had to set boundaries and not reply to messages outside of working hours.

Finally, despite the infrastructure in place, the participants experienced some challenges in running Stitch by Stitch, without me. Two months after starting the delivery of the workshops on their own, the four group leaders felt overwhelmed by the work required and found communication between them difficult. Starting a social enterprise is challenging, even more so when one of the priorities is to keep the social and caring aspects that made Stitch by Stitch such a successful group of women. They had lost sight of the social purpose of Stitch by Stitch and realised that they did not have time themselves to make things during the sessions anymore. Working as a team was challenging. They asked me to help facilitate a conversation for them to realign their expectations, co-design a code of practice (Appendix 38), and agree on how to work as a team while still enjoying making things together.

In conclusion, the project, the participants, and I faced many challenges. Reflecting on them collaboratively with the participants also constituted an important step towards the long-term legacy and success of Stitch by Stitch.

6.4. Pattern making and garment making for social change

This chapter reported on two years of engagement with a group of women in Somers Town, delivering garment making and pattern making workshops. The analysis of the data gathered demonstrated that both the participants and I benefited from our involvement in the project in various ways. We played many roles which evolved as we grew in technical skills, creativity, agency, and confidence. Challenges were met and lessons learnt.

For the research, the purpose of this case study was to test the participatory approach based on a series of eight pattern making and garment making workshops (as described in Section 3.2.2.1.) and assess its contribution to social change. The approach was indeed tested and adjusted during three iterations and was complemented with additional support and events. Assessing its contribution to social change relies on the analysis of the data that shows the positive outcomes generated for both the participants and I (skill improvement

and acquisition, creativity development, engagement and community building, wellbeing, sense of achievement and pride, self-confidence, sense of agency, ambition, and plans for the future) and the creation of Stitch by Stitch, and its legacy, despite the challenges faced. The initiative, agency, and confidence developed during the workshops while creating garments expanded, leading some participants to join fashion education, become group leaders, deliver community making workshops on their own, and pursue business ventures and creative collaborations.

This shows how pattern making and garment making, in the context of a group of women in a deprived area of London, can foster positive social change when envisioned as collaborative practices, as in this research project. In this case, pattern making and garment making practices gave the women the confidence and agency not only to design and make their own garments but also to design and make their own future as a group and social enterprise.

As suggested by the exhibition's title 'We are ~~not~~ designers', participants became indeed designers. This challenges the common definition of design in two different ways. First it opens the horizon of who can design. Then, this also challenges the common idea of how to design and demonstrates that pattern making and garment making are, indeed, valuable practices of design. Finally, this case study contributes to redefining the role of the designer in multiple ways. The designer was not a designer of things, but a facilitator, project manager, teacher, and more. Observing, listening and, most of all, empathy are crucial skills to build genuine relationships with participants and co-design what they really need.

7. Discussion

This chapter synthesises the key findings from the research, emerging both from the interviews and the fieldwork, and discusses and interprets them in relation to the existing body of knowledge mapped in the literature and contextual review. The findings generated from the workshops in Somers Town are compared to the projects discussed with designers and pattern makers during the interviews. The framework to analyse projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins (Section 4.4.) was used to analyse the work delivered with the women in Somers Town and determine how this research contributes to the field of fashion design for social innovation. The programme of making workshops, designed for the participatory practice research, was also examined through the 'Pattern making and Garment making wheel' (Section 5.2.4.) to determine if it aligns with an open and inclusive definition of the practice.

Following the identification of a gap in the literature (Section 2.3.) concerning the use of pattern making and garment making practices to foster social change, the research project investigated both how to define projects of fashion design for social innovation and how pattern making and garment making can be more inclusive and open practices of design. A series of interviews with designers and pattern makers were instrumental in formulating the research. The methodology designed for the workshops gives an example of how pattern making and garment making can be used to foster social change within the context of a group of women in a deprived area of London.

The three key findings of this research can be summarised as follows:

- Projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins utilise processes of design grounded in inclusivity, equity, empathy, and the decentralisation of the designer's role.

- Pattern making and garment making practices can be constructed as open and inclusive practices of design and, as such, generate numerous creative possibilities.

- This research's participatory approach based on pattern making and garment making workshops generated positive social change with a group of women in a deprived context.

7.1. Co-design for social change with people from the margins

The review of the literature led to the formulation of a definition of design for social innovation (Section 2.3.1.) and the reorganisation and summary of constitutive elements, as described by various authors, into one concise list of three elements: Collaboration, Social Change, and Innovation, each presenting three sub-elements, and organised around a theme of reflection. This first version of the elements and sub-elements of design for social innovation was used to create a project profiling framework with questions (Figure 2.23, p.60) to facilitate the discussion with designers who engage with marginalised groups of people and use fashion design to foster social change. One of the outcomes of the interviews was an updated profiling framework with additional elements that complemented the literature and contextual review (Figure 4.12, p.121). Figure 7.1. shows the evolution of the framework[96].

[96] The first version of the framework is explained in Section 2.3.2., Figure 2.23 (p.60). The final version of the framework is explained in Section 4.2.5., Figure 4.12 (p.121).

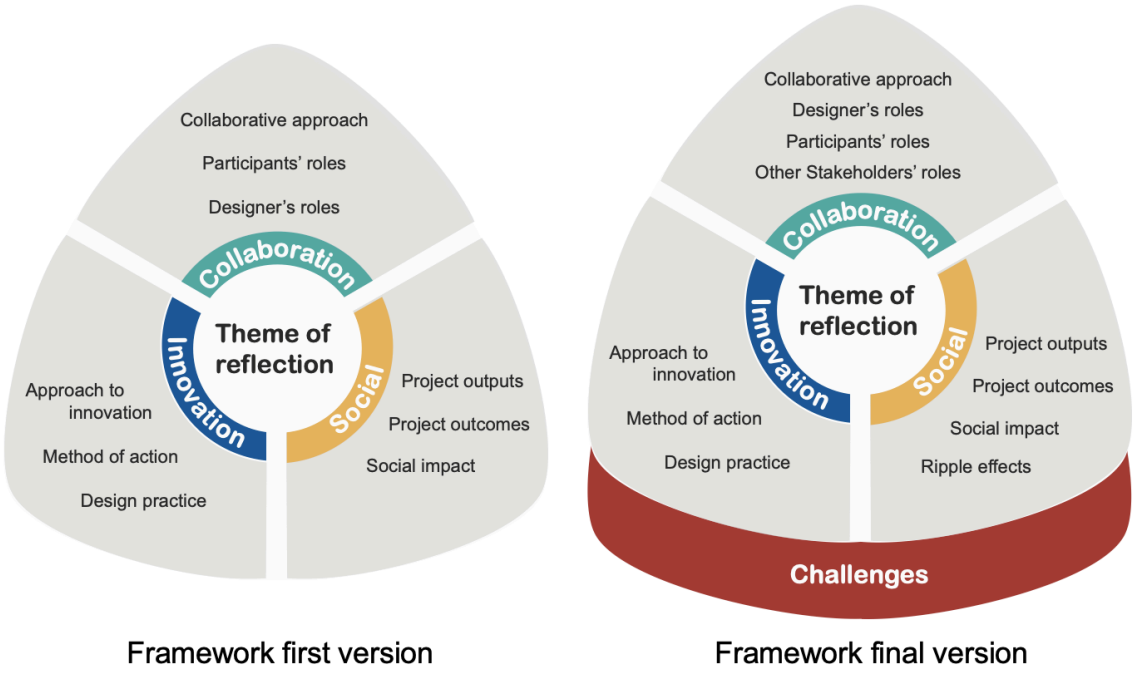


Figure 7.1: Framework summarising the elements of fashion design for social change, first and final version.

This revised framework was used to create project profiles for each interview (Appendices 5 to 11) that were then analysed to identify and describe similarities and differences between projects. The analysis of the profiles revealed that, under the umbrella of 'fashion design for social innovation', different approaches could be identified. One approach appeared particularly relevant to this research: one grounded in strong values of trust, equity, and care and characterised by a decentralised designer's role, empathetic designers, deep long-lasting relationships, a focus on designing as a process and on co-designing a legacy led by empowered participants. Projects applying this approach have therefore been identified as 'Projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins'.

In line with the authors reviewed in Section 2.1.1.2., this definition challenges the role of the designer as a creator of things, suggests many other roles (Figure 7.2, previously seen on p.134, Figure 4.14) and advocates for transferring the design power to participants in co-creation processes.

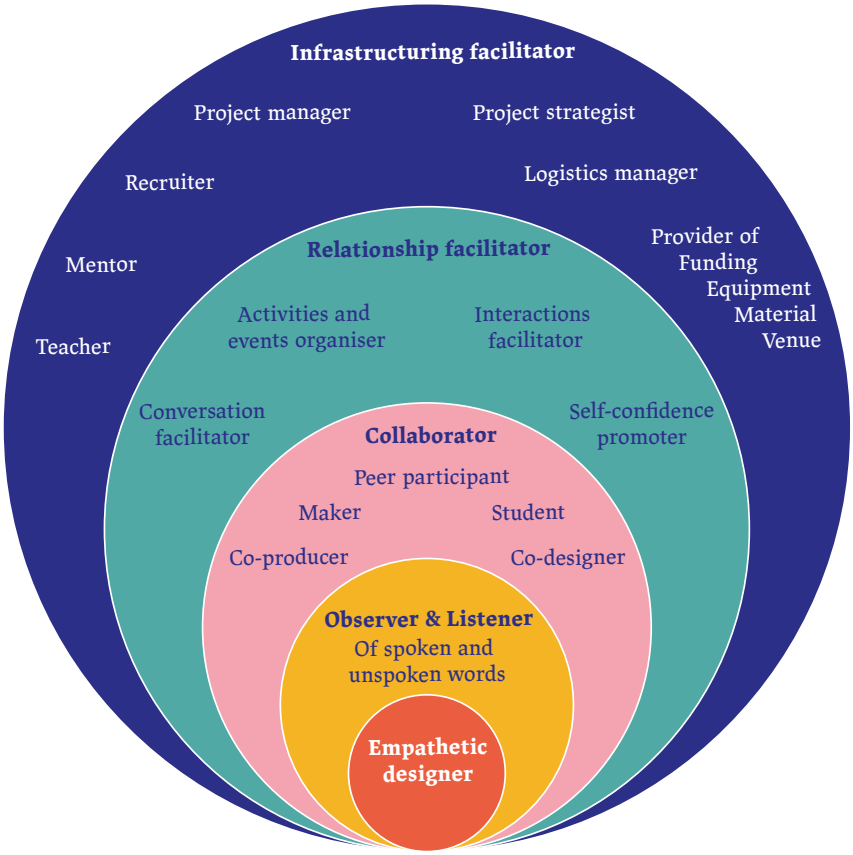


Figure 7.2: Designer's roles in projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins (illustration by the author).

In a way, the definition of 'projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins' aligns with the idea that designers "make things happen" (Manzini, 2014, p.66), in particular relating to their infrastructuring and relationship-building roles. This definition also aligns with the design justice concepts of centring the voices of under-represented communities and decentralising the designer's roles (Costanza-Chock, 2020). By sharing knowledge and tools, the designer is considered as a collaborator rather than an expert. In line with Noel (2023), this definition suggests a deeper empathetic role of designers, who must acknowledge their emotions, and develop the ability

to “listen to what [people] are saying when they are not saying anything” (*ibid*., p.39), relating to their observing and listening roles. While active listening and empathy are crucial to building trust (Gamman and Mazzarella, 2024) and genuine relationships, transferring the design power to people is the best way of ensuring that their needs are met (Noel, 2023) and that legacies successfully flourish in the long term. The roles of ‘Observer and Listener’ and ‘Empathetic Designer’ are indeed central for such projects, as illustrated in Figure 7.2.

Building on the profiling framework and the findings from the interviews, a detailed profile of projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins in the context of fashion making was outlined (Table 4.2). This is further discussed within the context of the workshops delivered in Somers Town in Section 7.3.

7.2. Pattern making and garment making as open and inclusive practices of fashion design

As stated in the literature and contextual review, this doctoral research critiques a Western-centric field of practice, commonly perceived as dichotomous, split between metric pattern cutting and creative pattern cutting, characterised by the underrepresentation of other methods of constructing garments. In line with the values of social justice and care, this doctoral thesis advocates for more recognition of pattern making as a creative practice of fashion design, and more inclusivity in terms of pattern making methods and who can pattern cut. Formulating a more inclusive and fair definition of the practice was seen as a condition for pattern making and garment making to be considered as possible practices to foster social change. To create change, a re-evaluation of the field of pattern making was necessary to avoid perpetuating the same narrow perspective and consider a more inclusive and open practice of design (Sections 2.3.3. and 2.3.4.).

The analysis of the interviews with pattern makers led to the formulation of a new definition of the practice, grounded in principles of inclusivity and creativity:

Pattern making and garment making are design practices that turn materials into garment forms.

The interviews also revealed that the first suggested categorisation (Section 2.3.4. and Figure 2.24, p.64) was inaccurate and virtually impossible to complete because of the interconnections between methods and practices[97] (Section 5.2.4.). Instead, five key elements, constitutive of any pattern making and garment making practice, were identified, defined, and organised in a 'wheel': body, materials, shapes, constraints, and measurements (Figure 7.3, previously seen on p.184, Figure 5.6).

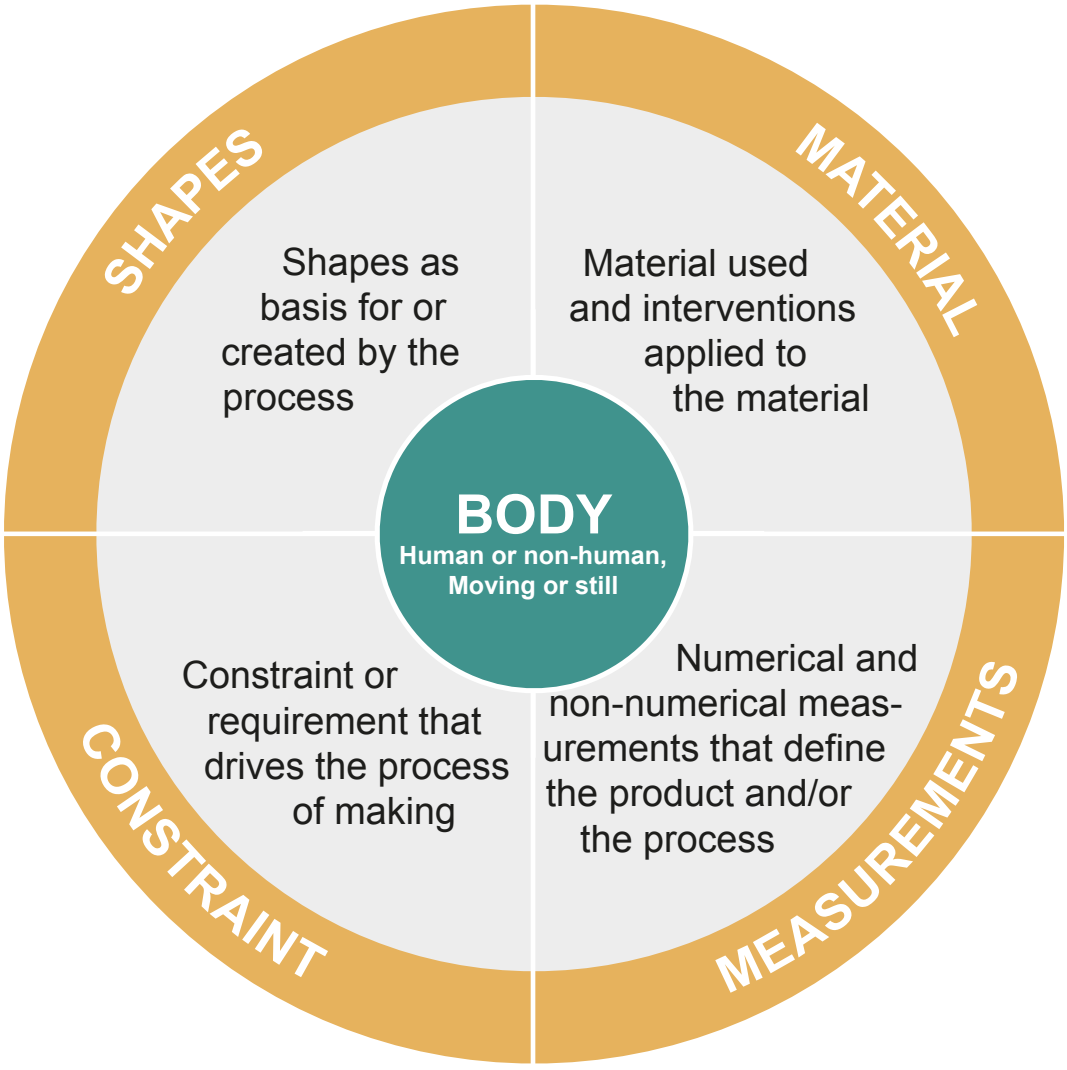


Figure 7.3: Pattern making and garment making 'wheel' (illustration by the author).

[97] The categorisation was however a useful step within the reasoning process and an effective starting point for the interviews.

This perspective is in line with researchers and practitioners who challenge traditional design practices and advocate for the recognition of pattern making as a creative approach with infinite potential to develop new ways to create garments (Almond, 2010; Jenkyn Jones, 2011; Rissanen, 2013; Roberts, 2013; Lo, 2014; Almond and Power, 2016; Iszoro, 2016; Rissanen and McQuillan, 2016; Almond and Climer, 2023). In his book *Free Cutting,* Roberts (2013, p. 32) states:

> Pattern-cutting is about possibilities and 'what if's' and experimentations and fuck up's and cool new things which unexpectedly surprise you. New ways of cutting come to life through a mixture of luck, risk, and mistake. Being amateur is always an advantage.

This simple diagram, although easy to understand, is representative of the very diverse field of pattern making and garment making. This definition of the field is free of any hierarchy between methods and offers an original way to look at one's own practice. It can also be considered as a tool to foster creativity within the field by creating infinite possible combinations of the elements and maybe participate in other fields of research such as how to foster creativity with fashion students or how to develop new making methods within a globally diverse approach to pattern making.

7.3. Pattern making and garment making to co-design social change with women in Somers Town, London

This section presents the findings from the two-year-long participatory practice research with a group of women in Somers Town, applying the framework to analyse projects of fashion design for social innovation defined as an outcome of the interviews with socially-engaged designers (Figure 4.12, p.121). The framework serves as a basis to discuss the project in light of both the literature reviewed and the projects mentioned by the interviewees. This section explains how the work delivered in Somers Town fits in, differs from, or contributes to the

definition of ‘projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins’ (Table 7.1, seen previously p.162, Table 4.2) and at the same time situates the project within the field of fashion design for social change.

Table 7.1: Attributes of projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins in the context of fashion design (Section 4.4.).

Element	Description
Theme of reflection	Challenging the current fashion system ‘Infrastructuring’ the conditions for marginalised communities to create change
Collaborative approach	Relationships based on trust, care and equity enabling co-design and peer-to-peer design
Designer’s roles	Change enabler driven by empathy
Participants’ roles	Project collaborators sharing design roles
Other stakeholders’ roles	Any role that supports the project and its legacy
Project outputs	Any direct quantifiable outputs of the project activities
Project outcomes	For participants: acquisition of making and life skills leading to personal growth, wellbeing and confidence improvement and access to life opportunities
	For designers: professional, creative, and personal growth
Social impact	Impacts that effectively improve the lives of marginalised participants and communities in the longer term
Ripple effects	Unexpected impacts beyond the original scope of the project, inspired by messages of possibilities and empowerment and driven by values of social justice
Approach to innovation	Approaches most often built on existing tools and methods recombined in new ways and introduced in new contexts
Method of action	Methods relying on participatory making
Design practice	Textile and fashion-based practice
Challenges	Challenges related to delivering the project with marginalised communities

7.3.1. Theme of reflection

To co-design social change with people from the margins, in the context of fashion design, the projects’ main themes of reflection should centre upon challenging the fashion system and its inequalities and participating in building

the infrastructure needed to create the conditions for marginalised groups to create the change they need. In Somers Town, both themes were central to the work undertaken with the women.

In the same way as the projects discussed in the interviews (Chapter 4) and some projects mentioned in the literature and contextual review (Section 2.1.3.), the workshops and exhibition delivered in Somers Town contributed to giving a voice to an underrepresented group of people, in and through fashion and making. The women involved in this research, a mixed group of women living in a deprived neighbourhood of London (Section 1.1.2.), constituted a similar group of participants to those in *Making for Change*, the *Forest Coats* project, and Olivia Weber's work, all based in East London. The fact of being a London resident born in another country was not a recruitment requirement, but the context in which this research was undertaken influenced the type of participants and is representative of a social reality in London. In the current fashion system, and society in general, such groups of women are not considered as creative people capable of designing their own garments and expressing their voices through their designs. A racist, unfair, and oppressive situation also deplored by Hackney, *et al.*, (2022a, p.1575-1576) in the creative industries in general. By giving them the means to develop their creativity, confidence, and agency, and effectively transferring the design power to them, these projects, including this research, denounce and challenge the inherent hierarchy and oppression of the creative industries. This is evidenced by exhibitions such as 'Shifting Narratives: Reciprocal Making and Learning Through Fashion and Textiles' at the Barbican Centre, London, in July 2024, 'Designed for Life' at LCF, in October 2023 - January 2024, or even, at a smaller scale, 'We are ~~not~~ Designers' at Somers Gallery, in October 2023, organised as part of this research. From mentions in articles and books, awards and even the conferment of an Order of the British Empire[98] to Claire Swift (*Making for Change* director), the overall recognition that these projects have

[98] A British order of chivalry rewarding regional or county-wide role in any field, through achievement or service to the community including notable practitioners known nationally (Honours and Appointments Secretariat).

received illustrate their significant and valuable collective contribution to changing the current fashion system towards more inclusive and equitable practices and narratives.

In Section 4.4., two different types of projects challenging the fashion system, each in their own way, were identified: while some projects rely on more traditional approaches like training and employment, others, more relevant to this research, focus on 'infrastructuring', *i.e.* creating the enabling conditions for marginalised people and groups to create change. In this context, 'infrastructuring' is about creating an 'enabling system', as described by Manzini:

> *"A system that provides cognitive, technical and organisational instruments so as to enable individuals and/or communities to achieve a result, using their skills and abilities to the best advantage and, at the same time, regenerating the quality of living contexts, in which they happen to live"* (Manzini, 2004, p.2; and Manzini, 2011; Manzini, 2010, cited by Manzini and Tassinari, 2012, p.7).

The work delivered in Somers Town is in line with this definition. The conditions – both for the delivery of the workshops and the development of a possible social enterprise 'Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town', in terms of skills required (creative and technical skills as well as organisational skills, confidence and more), equipment, material and supportive network – were the focus of the participatory practice research. In addition, as mentioned by Anja-Lisa Hirscher during her interview, building equitable relationships based on trust between the participants and the designer-researcher is also part of the 'infrastructuring' process and is one of the conditions for success. Thus, this project could be, in a much less extreme context, compared to Helen Storey's work in Zaatari refugee camp (Figure 4.2), that she describes as guided by trust and empathy (World Hope Forum, 2023), where she engaged with refugee women to co-design the conditions to develop further community engagement and revenue-generating opportunities.

7.3.2. Collaboration

This section focuses on the 'collaboration' element of the framework to analyse projects of design for social innovation (Figure 7.1 and Table 7.1). 'Collaboration' involves all project stakeholders, the designer-researcher, participants, and other entities, and describes how they work together.

7.3.2.1. Collaborative approach

Based on the findings from the interviews, the collaborative approach of projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins, in the context of fashion, was described as relying on relationships based on trust, care and equity, enabling co-design and peer-to-peer design. This echoes the work of Helen Storey, Claire Swift, and Anja-Lisa Hirscher who present 'genuine relationships' as conditions for social change. It also relates to two of the sustainable qualities of promising organisations described by Manzini and Tassinari (2012): fostering complex, deep, dense, long-lasting human relationships, and flexible collaboration, allowing people to play an active role in the construction of their desirable future.

What this definition does not mention, though, is that building strong, genuine, and long-lasting relationships takes time. Preliminary work is necessary to consolidate these relationships that will then allow for engagement in a process of co-design and peer-to-peer design. This research relied on many factors that contributed to progressively build relationships: the researcher being a Camden resident and seen as an insider, preparatory work that involved meeting with several local organisations, outreach events and visits, a pilot project, and participatory making workshops, delivered over two years.

The workshops themselves, however, were not initially co-designed with the participants. In her book *Design Social Change,* Noel (2023) describes the design process as an 'emancipatory approach' where "marginalized people drive the design and research process" (p.88). In the case of this research, the original design of the workshops did not originate from the community or from any preliminary collaborative work. The workshops were designed based on the

designer-researcher's own practice of pattern making and garment making and her understanding of the context, which were used as guidelines for a flexible delivery. In that sense, the participants did not have any agency in the original design of the workshops before they started, but progressively acquired confidence in designing their own garments and, at a later stage, in adapting the workshops to their needs. This approach also gave the opportunity to some participants to learn about how to organise and deliver workshops and gain agency in running the legacy project Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town.

This approach was originally thought of as 'maternalistic' (as described in Section 3.2.2.1.). Thorpe and Gamman (2011) describe such an approach as relying on "mindful 'dosing' of facilitation to other actors within the design process" by the designers who "try to enable other actors in the co-design process to develop and build their own capacity and resilience, and to draw upon their own assets, rather than focus only on unmet needs" (p.221). The delivery of the workshops, however, revealed a slightly different approach, that shares the progressive acquisition of agency and confidence of the maternalistic approach and the "equitable agency" of a 'fraternalistic' approach (Thorpe and Gamman, 2011, p.222), but also relied on strong genuine and long-lasting relationships based on trust, care, and empathy, that spread beyond the participation in the project. Therefore, this thesis proposes another familial metaphor for this approach based on sisterhood or sorority. In a 'sororalistic' approach, the designer-researcher plays the role of a 'big sister' who guides and supports the participants in developing their own voices and practices and in reaching full agency within the design process. This approach is grounded in values of mutual respect, trust, and care, and acknowledges the role of emotions in the development of both the relationships and the design process. The 'sororalistic' approach creates peer-to-peer relationships between the designer-researcher and the participants and between the participants themselves.

In this research's context, the 'sororalistic' approach was facilitated by the act of 'making together'. As mentioned by Helen Storey and Claire Swift during their

interviews, ‘making together’ erases differences, hierarchies and barriers and connects people through their commonalities. In the context of the workshops in Somers Town, ‘making together’ also recreated a structure of care and support that most participants, and in this case also the designer-researcher, have often left behind when moving to the UK: our grandmothers, mothers, aunts, and sisters who taught us to sew, crochet, knit, embroider, and much more.

7.3.2.2. Designer’s roles

For Manzini (2014, p.66), designers “make things happen” but, this thesis argues that this terminology keeps the focus on the designer as the main actor of change. Instead, in the type of projects that concerns this research, the role of the designer is about ‘enabling things to happen’ by co-creating with people the infrastructure and conditions that enable participants to initiate things and generate change. Therefore, the main agents of change are the participants themselves, enabled by the designer. Here, the designer is not seen as ‘change-maker’ but rather as ‘change-enabler’ that transfers the design power to the participants who are the main ‘change-agents’.

Similar to the projects led by Anja-Lisa Hirscher, Claire Swift, and Helen Storey, the work delivered in Somers Town relied on the designer-researcher playing multiple roles. The results of the analysis of the interviews revealed that the designer-researcher facilitates the ‘infrastructuring’ process and the building of relationships. This role relies on what some authors call the ’design expertise’ (Manzini, 2015), although Noel (2023, p. ix), in a more equitable way, refers to “the knowledge of the steps and methods”. Indeed, for this research, the design of the workshops relied on the designer-researcher’s own practice and knowledge about pattern making and garment making and her design skills, which cannot be considered as expert skills but rather at a level good enough to design and facilitate the process.

Designer-researchers also rely on participants’ skills and knowledge and together they co-design change. As mentioned by Helen Storey and Claire

Swift, and as experienced in this participatory practice research, roles not only blur (TEPSIE, 2014; Manzini, 2015; Hirscher, 2020a) but they move around, with designer-researchers at times becoming learners and participants becoming designers.

Co-design is, however, not enough to always create real long-lasting change on its own. As explained in Section 7.3.2.1., trust and genuine relationships are necessary in such co-design processes. To build these relationships, socially-engaged designer-researchers go through a process of questioning their positionality, the power dynamics at play in such collaborative processes, and the inequalities between them and the project participants, and must refrain from bringing their own frames of thoughts (as the interview with Helen Storey revealed). Emotions and empathy play a crucial role in this. Acknowledging one's emotions and letting empathy drive the design process with others are crucial factors to build those relationships, access new knowledge and foster valuable change, particularly when working with vulnerable and marginalised communities. Helen Storey (2022)[99] explained that:

> "*Though there can be a price to pay, as much as possible, it is better to work emotionally unguarded. Conversely, if, as an outsider, you can't, or choose not to stay sensitive, or vulnerable to seeing and feeling all that is within people and their surroundings, if you insist that your deadlines are the ones that matter, your ideas, whether co-created, or not, will miss the mark, and sometimes even do damage. Worst of all, you will let people down"*.

Both Helen Storey and Lesley-Ann Noel (2023) talk about the role of emotions in co-designing social change. During her interview, Helen Storey talked about designers having to remove their 'emotional coat', despite the risks it can entail in more challenging contexts[100]. Noel (2023) in the book *Design Social Change*

[99] Helen Storey's interview by Dr. Sass Brown for the World Hope Forum.

[100] Although not related to researchers in the design field, Fenge *et al.* (2019) also talk about the emotional risk of researchers who undertake research on sensitive topics (*e.g.,* faith and abuse, sex work, bereavement, domestic violence, criminal justice, etc.) and highlight the need for support and self-care.

mentions that emotions “help identify the issues that are meaningful to us and the people we work with” (p.57). Both agree that emotions are crucial to bond with others and access knowledge that would otherwise be missed. In a similar way to what Noel describes in her book, the designer-researcher in this participatory practice research project experienced many emotions that drove her work in Somers Town: “joy through the relationships” formed with the participants and “anger at the roadblocks” (Noel, 2023, p.57) and challenges faced, pride about the achievements, excitement and worry about things to come. In addition to observing and listening, the designer-researchers’ role expands and ‘feeling’ becomes a crucial design skill, beyond observing, listening, making, and communicating.

Although not mentioned in the literature or during the interviews, sharing the designers’ emotions with others is as important as being open to, acknowledging and working with these emotions. In Somers Town, the designer-researcher shared her emotions and vulnerabilities with the participants, and this made the relationships stronger by creating some kind of reciprocal empathy. In their work with prison inmates, Gamman and Thorpe (2015) talk about “Design for Empathy”, where design solutions help men re-engage with empathy. This research thesis instead focuses on ‘Empathy for Design’ where empathy leads the way towards better design.

7.3.2.3. Participants’ roles

In the literature and contextual review, the participants in projects of design for social innovation are mentioned as beneficiaries or users of the outcomes, act as collaborators, and can become co-designers or even designers. Instead, the analysis of the interviews revealed that participants can play many more roles, from learners to teachers and facilitators, and that these roles change and evolve over the course of a project. Often starting from a position of learner, participants might go through a journey towards increased design agency, guided by their ‘making’ practice. The participatory practice research in Somers Town shows a similar evolution of the roles of the participants, and this can also

be observed in Helen Storey's work in Zaatari camp, in Jordan, Claire Swift's *Making for Change* in London, and Anja-Lisa Hirscher's peer-to-peer making spaces in Germany. Participants make things happen and become designers of their garments, of the projects and their legacies, an idea encapsulated within the Somers Town exhibition's title 'We are ~~not~~ designers'.

7.3.2.4. Other stakeholder's roles

The interviews revealed the crucial role of other stakeholders in the success of projects of fashion design for social change. Collaborators make projects possible by bringing funds, equipment, material, skills, knowledge, and more. Creative and business partnerships help develop initiatives further. Gatekeepers are key for designers to access communities. All together, they form a network supporting projects and their legacies. In the same way, the work delivered in Somers Town was possible thanks to a network of organisations and people, including gatekeepers (Lifeafterhummus and Edith Neville Primary School), funding organisations (Camden Giving and The Francis Crick Institute), UAL, Working Men's College, Somers Gallery, the graphic designer, the exhibition curator, and many more.

After two years of participatory practice research, some of these stakeholders played more than a supporting role. The relationship with the gatekeepers became more than a collaboration. In a project with a 'sororalistic' approach, mutual trust, care, equity, and empathy naturally extended towards the gatekeepers, creating strong, genuine, and long-lasting relationships with them too.

7.3.3. Social change

As mentioned in the literature and contextual review, authors describe social change in many ways. This participatory practice research project relates to a

definition based on ‘social justice’ (Britton, 2017; Costanza-Chock, 2020; Noel, 2023) focusing on supporting marginalised people in situations of inequality, poverty, lack of opportunities or social exclusion in order to find and co-create solutions to their unmet needs and aspirations (TEPSIE, 2014; Manzini, 2024). Social change can take many forms and should not be measured only by how widely it impacts people but how deeply people are affected. The four elements of social change identified in the framework (Figure 4.12, p.121) (*i.e.*, outputs, outcomes, social change, and ripple effects) unpack the different layers of what social change means in this research.

7.3.3.1. Project outputs

The direct quantifiable outputs of the participatory practice research delivered in Somers Town are similar to the outputs generated by the other projects of fashion design for social change discussed in this thesis (Section 2.1.3., and Chapter 4). Details of the outputs of this participatory practice research can be found in Section 6.2.5.

In addition to these quantifiable outputs, the research also produced a methodology based on a series of eight participatory making workshops employing pattern making and garment making. This programme of workshops could be replicated in other contexts, in the same way as *Making for Change*, *SOKO Kenya*, and *Projet Renaissance* created replicable training programmes.

At the end of two years of participatory practice research, a solid infrastructure supporting the group of women has been put in place for them to carry on the project: a venue, a set time every week, equipment, materials, a network, a communication channel, a tested workshop model and a reputation in the neighbourhood. This constituted the infrastructure for the creation of the social enterprise Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town.

7.3.3.2. Project outcomes

The analysis of the projects discussed in the interviews and the first-hand experience in this participatory practice research, reveals that projects of fashion design for social change create positive outcomes not only for the participants, but also for the designer-researcher, gatekeepers, and other people who might not have been directly involved.

7.3.3.2.1. Project outcomes for participants

In Section 4.3.3.2.1., a list of outcomes that can result from projects of fashion design for social change was outlined, consolidating the findings from both the literature and contextual review and the results of the interviews. The participatory practice research in Somers Town generated similar outcomes, albeit not all of them. Table 7.2 compares the outcomes generated by the workshops with the list of benefits formulated from other projects studied.

Table 7.2: Project outcomes for participants of the pattern making and garment making workshops in Somers Town compared to outcomes generated by other projects of fashion design for social change.

Outcomes from projects of fashion design for social change		Observations in Somers Town
Acquisition and improvement of making skills	✓	Acquisition and improvement of pattern making and garment making skills, development of garment analysis skills and enhanced awareness of the fashion industry
Development of creativity and self-expression	✓	Development of original garment designs
Acquisition and improvement of life, social and employability skills	✓	Learning through trial and error, perseverance, patience, problem-solving skills, collaboration skills
Generation of a sense of pride and achievement	✓	Pride of reaching their goals, making and exhibiting their garments, and taking part in the development of the group, as well as being recognised as creative women
Improvement of mental health and wellbeing	✓	Workshops as a source of joy and wellbeing for participants
Improvement of self-confidence	✓	Enhanced confidence in pattern making, garment making and fashion design skills
Enhanced sense of agency	✓	Progressive acknowledgment of their power over the design process and the organisation of the workshops
Empowerment, ambition, and hope for the future	✓	Creation of a group of makers willing to carry on the project and keep on learning and making together with ambitions for the group
Recognition of participants' skills and capabilities	✓	Recognition from families, friends, the local and wider community of the participants' creativity and skills
Community engagement and community building	✓	Creation of a community of makers, creation of friendships, engagement with other local organisations
Access to training and employment opportunities	✓	Access to fashion design education and creation of entrepreneurial opportunities
Access to a safe space and extra support	✓	Safe space created during the workshops; Additional support delivered by the family centre at the school
Preservation of participants' cultural heritages and traditional crafts	✗	Not a focus of this research but can be explored by Stitch by Stitch

In line with what discussed in Section 7.3.2.3. about the roles of participants in projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins, this research argues that participants progressively become designers. Some authors (Thorpe and Gamman, 2011; TEPSIE, 2014; Manzini, 2015; Hirscher, 2020a; Costanza-Chock, 2020) and socially-engaged designer-researchers interviewed for this project (Anja-Lisa Hirscher, Helen Storey, Claire Swift, Olivia Weber) referred to participants as co-designers and designers. Anja-Lisa

Hirscher and Helen Storey also discussed how some participants became project leaders and ensured the projects' continuity and further development even without them. Therefore, an additional outcome should be discussed and added to the list: the acquisition and improvement of design skills.

These workshops in Somers Town constitute one example of how participants acquired design skills that go beyond designing garments but expand towards the newly defined roles of designers (as illustrated in Figure 7.2). First, they acquire skills to design their own garments. With the improvement of their making skills, a better understanding of garment construction and an enhanced sense of agency and self-confidence, participants designed and made original garments. Then, through brainstorming sessions, feedback forms and open conversations, participants were the agents of the group's future and four of them created Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town. Finally, linking back to the designer's roles discussed above (Figure 7.2), some participants acquired skills related to some of these roles, crucial to 'make things happen' and ensure a successful long-term legacy. Two participants became workshop assistants, who then took on the roles of group leaders, developed skills related to the facilitation of the infrastructuring of the workshops, such as teaching, project management, logistics management, applying for funding, monitoring a budget, and managing a group of participants. They also acquired skills as relationship facilitators, in particular the organisation of a ten-week programme of workshops focusing on sustainable fashion. Collaborating with and listening to each other and to the participants are also key skills for their roles of collaborator-designers. Learning from the designer-researcher and building on their own skills, the four key participants, now Stitch by Stitch leaders, have acquired and are still developing the skills related to many new designer roles: facilitator, communicator, maker, collaborator, listener and observer, and empathetic designer. The ultimate outcome for participants of projects co-designing social change would be to become the 'change-enablers' themselves.

7.3.3.2.2. Project outcomes for the designer-researcher

The analysis of the interviews has revealed the many ways in which designer-researchers and their teams are impacted by and benefit from the projects of fashion design for social change in which they are involved. During the work in Somers Town, the researcher experienced similar benefits which have changed both her practice, her career aspirations, and her perception of herself in the world.

As discussed in Sections 4.3.3.2.2. and 6.3.2.2., designer-researchers, including the author, improved their project management and facilitation skills, and some of them (such as Lucy Orta and the author) also developed their creativity and practice. The networks and collaborations created for the projects generated career opportunities as well.

Some interviewees, Helen Storey, Claire Swift, Olivia Weber, and Joanna Maiden, spoke about their personal journeys of ‘undoing themselves’ while collaborating with marginalised people, which changed them at a deeper personal level. For this project, the researcher also had a similar experience that led her to re-evaluate her career choices, consider future possibilities, and investigate her family history. This echoes Noel’s reflection on how designing change starts from reflecting on oneself and that some areas of research, such as designing for social change, “invite you to reflect on who you are while you do the research” (Noel, 2023, p.3-4).

Finally, the delivery of the workshops revealed another outcome that, despite not being clearly articulated during the interviews, must have been felt by other designer-researchers. The engagement with the group of participants brought a great sense of joy and wellbeing to the researcher. The mental health and wellbeing benefits felt by the participants also reached the researcher who felt part of a supportive community of makers with whom she shared commonalities.

7.3.3.3. Social impact and legacy

As discussed in the literature and contextual review (Section 2.3.1.), this research falls into the 'social justice' narrative (TEPSIE, 2014; Britton, 2017; Costanza-Chock, 2020; Noel, 2023) for which social change means addressing the needs of marginalised people. The analysis of the interviews led to the formulation of a list of longer-term impacts generated by projects of fashion design for social change and a definition of social impacts. Social impacts are context specific, usually not planned in advance[101], and are defined as benefits that effectively improve the lives of marginalised participants and communities in the longer term. The work in Somers Town also generated some longer-term impacts (Section 6.3.3.). These are discussed in comparison to the list formulated through the interviews (Section 4.3.3.) in the following table; however, it is important to acknowledge that other social impacts could manifest in the future (Table 7.3).

Table 7.3: Social impact generated by the participatory practice research in Somers Town compared to social changes generated by other projects of fashion design for social change.

Social changes from projects of fashion design for social change		Observations in Somers Town
Participants' financial independence and security	✗	Stitch by Stitch as a social entreprise has not yet generated income to remunerate group leaders
Improvement of participants' living conditions	✗	No long-term impact on living conditions observed yet
Definition of a life purpose and positive vision for the future	✓	Stitch by Stitch and participants have ambitions for the group
Adoption of more sustainable behaviour	✓	Stitch by Stitch focuses on sustainable fashion approaches
Contribution to changing mentalities towards social justice	✓	The project and Stitch by Stitch contribute to changing mentalities towards middle-aged immigrant women in London by giving them a voice through creativity and fashion design
Place-making	✓	Stitch by Stitch contributes to shaping Somers Town as a more sutainable and equitable community

[101] Although there can be an overall long-term objective for the project.

The creation of a more skilled community could be added to this list. In Somers Town, access to further education was determinant to the long-term impact of the project. Indeed, two participants, and now Stitch by Stitch leaders, joined courses in a local adult education college to acquire and improve fashion design and garment making skills that they would in turn share with other people. This also created an approachable route towards further education for other members of the sewing community, and potentially a virtuous circle where better making skills support the production of items to sell, that in turn generate revenues, that can sponsor other members to join courses and improve their skills.

Long-term social change and legacy are closely related. A successful legacy ensures that the positive changes created by the project will not only last in the long-term but will also expand in other areas and impact more people. Indeed, *SOKO Kenya* participants' financial independence and security are possible because they are employed by the factory. Changing mentalities take time and the projects' long-lasting effect relies on a legacy that will keep reminding the community about the impacts achieved. Stitch by Stitch (UK), *Making for Change* in Poplar (UK), *Made in Zaatari* centre (Jordan), and Anja Lisa's Co-sewing Cafés (Germany) are all centres that contribute to place-making and ensure long-lasting social impacts, relying on a solid infrastructure of people, skills, and collaborations. These legacies must be well-prepared early in the project and co-designed with the participants.

7.3.3.4. Ripple effects

Projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins do not happen in a silo, and the results they generate often spread beyond their original scope. As discussed in the interviews, such projects often inspire other initiatives, trigger conversations about social justice and influence education programmes.

The participatory practice research in Somers Town will hopefully inspire similar initiatives leading to further outcomes. At community level, the project in Somers Town have inspired a group of residents, who catered for the exhibition and events, to get a formal food and hygiene qualification to set up a catering business. Camden Giving, the organisation that funded the workshops, relies on these ripple effects to inspire other residents to start new projects, as is evident by the way they have promoted this project in the borough. Their outreach strategy is indeed based on communicating about other successful projects, interviewing grantees, publishing their stories, and inviting them to panel discussions and networking events.

Finally, as a PhD project, the learnings from this research will hopefully contribute to the training of the designers of the future and contribute to a wider conversation about social change, inclusivity, and equality, both in fashion and in design in general.

7.3.4. Innovation

This section focuses on the innovative approach implemented during the participatory practice research in Somers Town, and compares it to other projects analysed in the literature and contextual review and during the interviews. In line with the literature on design for social innovation, this research envisions innovation as an incremental process, not as something radically new, but rather as a reconfiguration of existing methods applied in creative ways and/or in new contexts (Manzini and Tassinari, 2012; TEPSIE, 2014).

7.3.4.1. Approach to innovation

As discussed in the literature and contextual review (Section 2.1.1.4.) and observed in the projects analysed during the interviews with socially-engaged

designers and researchers (Section 4.3.4.1.), there are many approaches to innovation. Usually, more than one approach happens simultaneously. In projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins, approaches to innovation are most often built on existing tools and methods recombined in new ways and introduced in new contexts. In Somers Town, the approach to innovation was not radically new, but it is innovative in five different ways:

- Bringing existing methods and tools to a new context

In the same way as Lucy Orta, Helen Storey, Anja-Lisa Hirscher, Claire Swift, and Francesco Mazzarella did, the project in Somers Town introduced participatory making as an approach to social change in a context where it had not been considered as such before. The participants mentioned sewing and various textile-based workshops that had previously taken place in the neighbourhood, but their format was more traditional and not oriented towards fostering participants' agency and empowerment.

Moreover, while the participants were familiar with garment making and sewing, only a couple of them had some limited knowledge and experience with pattern making. Creating garments with simple existing pattern making methods was an approach that had not been experienced by the group of women in Somers Town before.

- Recombining existing ways of doing

According to Manzini and Tassinari (2012), projects of design for social innovation innovate by "recombin[ing] in a creative way already existing products, services, places, knowledge, skills and traditions" (p.6). The pattern making and garment making methods introduced during the workshops in Somers Town are not new. All of them are methods regularly used to design and make garments. However, the informed selection of methods and their recombination into an original and coherent programme of workshops (Section 3.2.2.1.) that accompany the participants in their creative making journey is indeed innovative.

- Going back to old ways of doing

The analysis of the data collected throughout the participatory practice research in Somers Town revealed how some aspects of 'old ways of doing' emerged.

During her interview, Susanne Baldwin mentioned that the workshops in Somers Town reminded her of how dressmaking and pattern making used to be taught, focusing on technical skills, for women and girls to find employment. She also compared the project to past alternative ways of acquiring clothing, by making them, also mentioned by Julianne Bramson as home sewing.

On the other hand, in a world where anyone can learn anything via YouTube, Masterclass, Domestika, and other online learning platforms, the project in Somers Town goes back to the way women used to learn to make garments, from other women and by making them together.

This can be linked to Manzini and Tassinari's (2012, p.6) observations about how traditional ways of doing can be used to create innovative approaches and how "traditions may constitute valuable building materials for the future", because they rely on conviviality and the values of sharing.

- Reconsidering an existing approach with a new purpose

Garment making and fashion design are used as participatory practices for social change in many projects (Section 2.1.3., and Chapter 4). Pattern making, on the other hand, has accompanied and enabled some social changes (Section 2.2.4.) but neither the literature and contextual review nor the interviews with pattern makers have evidenced that pattern making has ever been used in a participatory way before. Indeed, pattern making, often considered too technical and not central in the fashion design process, is not thought about as having potential for social change. With the successful delivery of the programme of pattern making and garment making workshops in a deprived area of London and with the formulation of an open and inclusive definition of the practice (Section 5.4.), this research suggests instead a new purpose for the practice: pattern making, together with garment making, can be used to foster social change.

- Rediscovering the power of making

In Section 2.1.3., ‘making’ is defined as an essential human need: it is about connecting, collaborating, participating, empowering, sharing, expressing, feeling, knowing, thinking, imagining, experiencing, creating, doing, evolving, living, and more. Francesco Mazzarella and Seher Mirza (2023) also mention the powerful role of collective making for their project with refugee communities: making contributes to the making of identities, re-making of cultures, making of communities, and it fosters reciprocal learning. Adopting pattern making and garment making, this participatory practice research project illustrates the benefits generated by the making together of garments and accessories, but also the making of identities and communities. In a society that celebrates artificial intelligence, there is still significant value in rediscovering the power of making together in the real world.

7.3.4.2. Methods of action

In projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins, in the context of fashion, the method used to activate the innovation process relies on participatory making, often in the form of workshops. The making workshops delivered in Somers Town are similar to those delivered in other projects such as Anja-Lisa Hirscher’s sewing café and Francesco Mazzarella’s *Forest Coats*. These projects share an almost identical workshop format and similar requirements for the delivery: making workshops organised for similar groups of participants, mainly women with family commitments, living in deprived neighbourhoods.

Collective making workshops appear particularly efficient in involving people in projects of fashion design for social change, and one of the reasons could be that they bring people ‘joy’. In her book *Design Social Change*, Noel (2023) advises designers to focus on what brings people joy and happiness, instead of focusing exclusively on solving problems. Designers should “look for ways to make change through creating joyful moments in social movements” (*ibid*.,

p.62) because they “attract people and motivate them to stay involved” (*ibid*). Whilst Noel suggests ‘play’ as a way to access joy, this research argues for the power of ‘collective making’.

7.3.4.3. Design practice

During co-creation workshops, textile crafts and garment and accessory making are often used as design practices to engage participants. For this research, pattern making and garment making were chosen as co-design practices with women in Somers Town.

The literature and contextual review (Section 2.2.4.) revealed that pattern making has had a determining role in accompanying and enabling some social changes (*e.g.*, trousers for women, non-gender clothes, modest sportswear, and more). During the interviews with pattern makers (Section 5.3.2.), the social potential of pattern making and garment making was discussed. Applied jointly in a participatory way, these practices can generate social outcomes for participants, such as skill acquisition, pride and self-worth, agency, empowerment, and more, as demonstrated by the workshops in Somers Town (Section 6.3.1.3.).

This project introduces pattern making and garment making as processes to foster social change. The change is not enabled by the garments made but by the creative and design process which participants go through. As such, pattern making and garment making, as key practices of fashion design – covering all steps from the design to the making of a garment – introduced to makers who do not have a design education, or are not design experts, can be remarkably impactful in generating positive outcomes for participants.

To do so, pattern making and garment making practices must be inclusive and open, as discussed in Section 5.4. The programme of workshops ‘Journey to make your own garments’ was indeed designed following the principles listed as conditions for pattern making and garment making to foster social change:

- Pattern making and garment making were applied as joint practices.
- Both were envisioned as social practices, fostering interactions between participants.
- Both practices were made accessible by using simple inexpensive tools and by introducing more practical methods with less technical barriers.
- By reducing the barriers and disregarding conventional technical rules, both pattern making and garment making practices were open to experimentation by the participants.

The three pattern making and garment making methods introduced during the workshops in Somers Town, namely ‘copying a garment’, ‘creating with simple geometric shapes’ and ‘draping’, contributed to this approach. The rationales for the selection of the methods are explained in the methodology (Section 3.2.2.1.) but it is also useful to look at them through the lens of the pattern making and garment making wheel (Figure 7.3) and the key constitutive elements of practice. These three methods are a balanced combination of technical skills and creativity, building on concepts that the participants were familiar with. For all three methods, the participants were making a garment, most often for a woman or a child, in an immobile position, and the garments introduced were carefully selected to adhere to their clothing references. Participants used materials that they knew and expected to work with, namely fabric and paper. The measurements, either numerical or physical, were related to the human body, and no complex constraints to the design process were introduced. Finally, the shapes used as starting points for the patterns and garments were shapes familiar to the participants, either usual pattern piece shapes or simple geometric shapes.

The analysis of each of the three pattern making and garment making methods reveals that each of them introduced technical skills and design agency through a different element of the wheel (Figure 7.4). This shows that the three methods chosen constitute a coherent overall approach to pattern making and garment making for non-expert participants. The approach introduces three of the four elements separately in an approachable way while conjointly giving a broad

introduction to pattern making and garment making. In the last unit of the workshop programmes, the participants were free to use any of these methods, a combination of them, or any other method to make a garment of their choice. The only element that is not directly addressed by any of these three methods is the ‘constraint’ element. All three methods include some level of constraint but introducing a more restrictive constraint – such as cutting only straight lines or ZWPC – would have been considered too advanced.

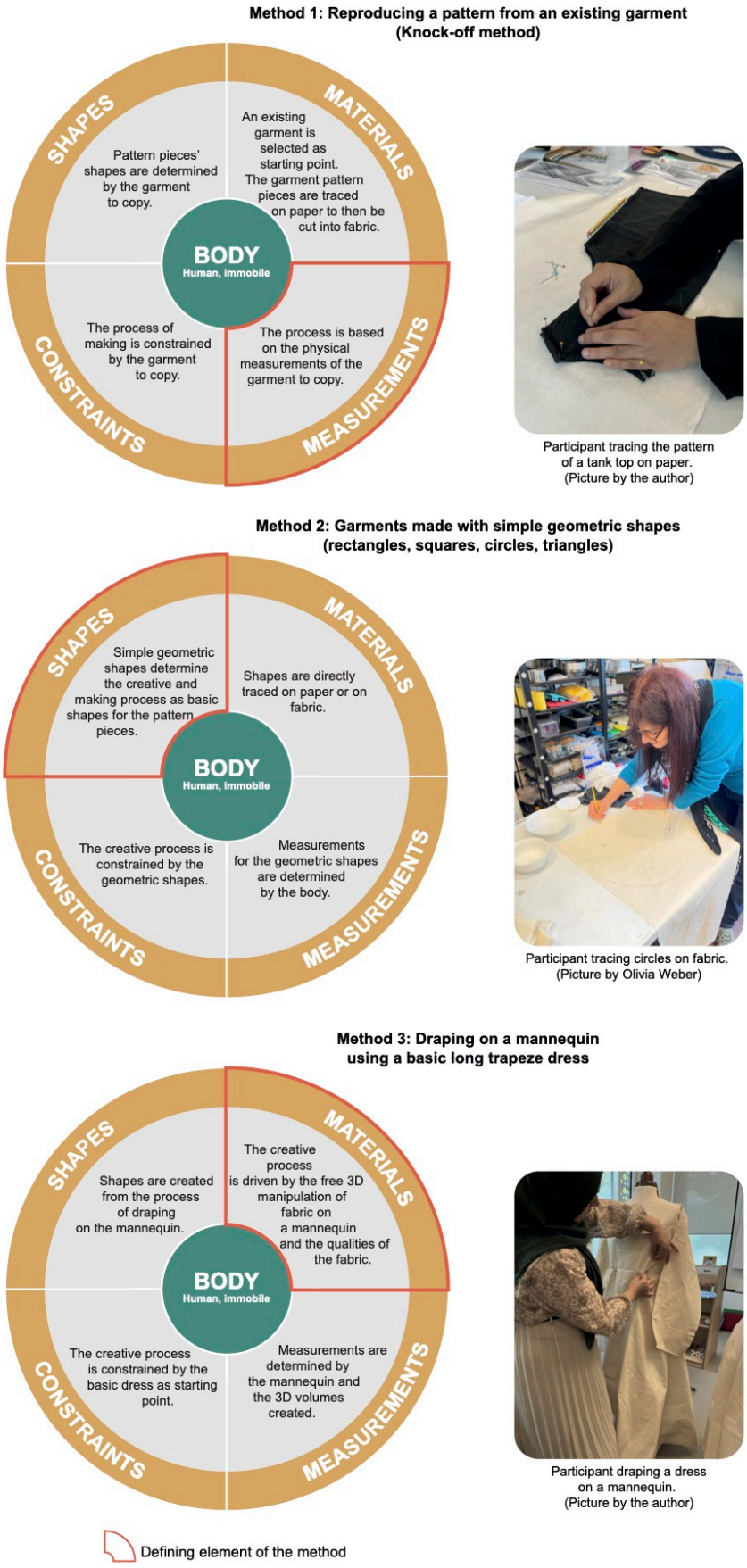


Figure 7.4: Pattern making and garment making wheels for the methods introduced during the workshops in Somers Town (illustrations and photos by the author).

The design practice employed in this project relies on an open and inclusive approach of pattern making and garment making practices. Its delivery in stages makes it approachable to participants and gives a comprehensive overview of the practice to non-expert designers.

7.3.5. Challenges

This research highlighted how important it is to focus on the difficulties and mistakes as much as on what goes well in projects of fashion design for social change. All interviewees involved in such projects readily talked about the challenges they face and highlighted how overcoming them was crucial for generating outcomes both for the participants and themselves and enable significant learnings for future projects (Section 4.3.5.). The work delivered in Somers Town also encountered its share of challenges and obstacles that were faced together with the participants as much as possible (Section 6.3.4.).

Some challenges are common to most projects, such as funding and participant recruitment. Others are specific to the context where projects take place and linked to the unique situations of vulnerability of the participants. Unfortunately, considering the current societal and geopolitical context, projects aiming to co-design social change with people from the margins will not only be even more needed, but will likely face even more challenges.

7.4. We are ~~not~~ designers: participatory practice research towards social change with people from the margins

The aim of this section was to discuss the findings of this research in light of the literature and contextual review, and evaluate if the project delivered in Somers Town, based on pattern making and garment making participatory workshops, could actually be defined as a ‘project of co-design for social change with people from the margins’. The discussion of each element of the profiling

framework, bringing together the literature and contextual review, the findings from the interviews, and the outcomes of the workshops, revealed that the project delivered in Somers Town does indeed fit the attributes of such type of projects. This research therefore offers a concrete and contextualised example of a project of co-design for social change with people from the margins in the context of fashion design and, specifically, pattern making and garment making (Table 7.4).

Table 7.4: Project profile for the pattern making and garment making workshops delivered in Somers Town.

Element	Description
Theme of reflection	**Challenging the current fashion system** by giving a creative voice to an underrepresented group of women in fashion and shifting the narratives towards more inclusivity and equity. **'Infrastructuring'** the conditions for a diverse group of women in a deprived area of London to create change.
Collaborative approach	**'Sororalistic' approach** relying on a slow process of building strong and long-lasting relationships based on trust, care, and equity, through making together, and acknowledging the role of emotions in the whole process.
Designer's roles	**Change-enabler driven by empathy** Roles: infrastructuring and relationship facilitation, co-design, making, listening, observing, and acknowledging others and one's emotions.
Participants' roles	**From design non-experts to designers** of garments and accessories, of the project and its legacy. Participants make things happen.
Other stakeholders' roles	Funders, gatekeepers, providers of materials and resources, advisors, partners, and collaborators. With the gatekeepers: strong genuine relationships based on a 'sororalistic' approach.
Project outputs	- 50 workshops - 19 participants - Numerous garments, toiles, and samples - 1 participant enrolled in a fashion design qualification - 2 participants enrolled in professional sewing and pattern cutting short courses

	- 1 week-long exhibition, with an opening event, a panel discussion, a textile workshop, and a closing event for the participants - 1 journal article - 1 article in Camden magazine - 1 paper presentation at a conference in Italy - 1 panel discussion in Camden, London - Project exhibited at two Camden Council summits and at LCF 'Designed for Life' exhibition - Replicable programme of workshops and a solid local infrastructure supporting the project legacy.
Project outcomes	**For participants**: - Acquisition and improvement of making skills; - Development of creativity and self-expression; - Acquisition and improvement of life, social and employability skills; - Recognition of participants' skills and capabilities by other community members; - Community engagement and community building; - Improvement of mental health and wellbeing; - Generation of a sense of pride and achievement; - Improvement of self-confidence; - Enhanced sense of agency; - Empowerment, ambition and hope for the future; - Access to training and employment opportunities; - Creation of a safe space; - Acquisition of design skills (facilitation). **For the designer-researcher**: professional, creative, and personal growth, career opportunities, mental health and wellbeing benefits.
Social impact	**Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town**: - Definition of a life purpose and positive vision for the future; - Adoption of more sustainable behaviour; - Contribution to changing mentalities towards social justice; - Enhanced sense of place; - Creation of a more skilled community.
Ripple effects	- Inspiration for a local cooking group to get training; - Project used to inspire other Camden-based projects;

	- Contribution to the training of future designers and to the broader conversation about social change, inclusivity and equality in fashion and design.
Approach to innovation	**Combination of five approaches to innovation**: - Bringing existing methods and tools to a new context; - Recombining existing ways of doing; - Going back to old ways of doing; - Reconsidering an existing approach with a new purpose; - Rediscovering the power of making.
Method of action	Eight-week programme of participatory making workshops, focusing on bringing 'joy' to participants.
Design practice	Pattern making and garment making practices as inclusive and open practices of fashion design, delivered jointly in stages, giving a comprehensive overview of the practice to non-expert designers.
Challenges	- Challenges related to a highly active network of organisations in the neighbourhood and its politics; - Time management and constraints; - Low commitment from some participants; - Difficulty in accompanying and guiding a diverse group of participants in terms of skills and expectations; - Challenges for the participants setting up and managing Stitch by Stitch.

This project profile summarises this participatory research, covering all aspects, from its aims and process to what went well and not so well. Its contribution to the wider field of knowledge as well as how it can inspire further research are discussed in the following chapter.

8. Conclusions

In 2020, this research project set out to explore in what ways pattern cutting and garment making practices could be used to foster social change with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood of London. Since then, the global political, economic, and social context has progressively become even more hostile to minorities, including women all over the world, with their rights increasingly threatened and their voices repressed. After five years of work, this research is still as relevant today, if not more, and aims at contributing, in a modest way, to the urgent and needed global movement of social change to counter the alarmingly dominant narratives of division, hatred and war.

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, the whole research was driven by values of inclusivity and equality. The literature and contextual review revealed that there are many definitions of design for social innovation and that this research relates to the value of social justice and is focused on co-designing innovative approaches with under-represented groups of people to address their social needs whilst fostering new social relationships. This research is focused on incremental innovation which is characterised by the creative combination of existing methods in new ways or new contexts instead of the development of completely new solutions. In the context of fashion design, many projects have been reviewed and this revealed that fashion co-creation and collective making are effective methods to engage people and co-produce change (*e.g.*, skill acquisition, mental health, wellbeing, empowerment, and more). Pattern making, however, was not perceived as such a participatory practice in the existing projects reviewed through this research.

In this thesis, the pattern cutting field was criticised for its lack of inclusivity and equality. Pattern cutting is too often described as a dichotomous practice – either as mathematical metric pattern cutting or as creative draping – reserved to expert pattern cutters or ‘genius’ designers. Alternative ways to construct and create garments are too often disregarded in favour of more Western methods, in particular metric pattern cutting predominantly used in the fashion industry. However, this research has highlighted how pattern cutting can be a powerful

source of inspiration, drive the process of design, even more so if construction methods are considered in a more inclusive and equitable way.

Following this statement, the term ‘pattern making’ was considered better suited for this research as it represented a more inclusive practice of design and embraces garment making as a continuum of the design process. The literature and contextual review revealed the necessity to map the field with a categorisation of the methods in a more inclusive and open way before exploring its potential for social change.

In fashion history and still today, pattern making is closely related to social change in the way it brings forth practical solutions, in the form of garments and accessories, that support social movements and facilitate the life of many people. The change generated is, however, often activated by the end-product and not by a participatory approach to the practice.

In the literature and contextual review, three gaps were therefore identified:

- There was no framework to define and analyse projects of fashion design for social change.
- There was a need to formulate a more inclusive and open definition of the field of pattern making.
- No example of a project of fashion design for social change employing pattern making and garment making as a participatory practice of design to foster social change was encountered.

To address these gaps, this research project employed a participatory practice research strategy, relying on two main methods: semi-structured interviews and participatory making workshops. Building on the literature and contextual review, interviews with socially-engaged designers led to the definition of a profiling framework for projects of design for social innovation (Figure 7.1). The analysis of the project profiles generated from the interviews revealed that not all projects implemented the same approach. Some are particularly characterised by values of care, inclusivity, and equity as well as a decentralisation of the design power. To differentiate them from other projects,

these were called ‘projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins’ (Table 7.1). The findings from the interviews with pattern makers helped formulate an inclusive and open definition for the joint field of pattern making and garment making and contributed to deconstructing the practice into five core elements (Figure 7.3).

Three iterations of an eight-week programme of participatory making workshops were delivered with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood of London. The workshops introduced purposefully selected methods of pattern making and garment making. The analysis of the data gathered revealed that positive social change was generated in the participants, the researcher, and the wider community, through the practice of pattern making and garment making.

By bringing together these findings, this thesis offers a contextualised example of how pattern making and garment making can be used as practices to foster social change, that can be used to inspire other projects.

This chapter brings together the previous sections and connects the findings to the research aims and objectives. Although the aims and objectives of the research were met and this thesis contributes original knowledge to the field, there are limitations to it. This is merely a modest stepping stone towards further research and, ultimately, a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable society.

8.1. Meeting the research aim and objectives

The aim of this research project was to explore how pattern making and garment making can be used to foster social change with a group of marginalised women. To meet this aim, three objectives were set. The following paragraphs summarise how the research objectives were achieved.

Objective 1: *To critically review literature on fashion design for social change, design for social innovation, and pattern making to evaluate the practice's potential for social change.*

The literature and contextual review on fashion design and social change showed that many researchers and designers use fashion design practices to generate change with marginalised groups of people. An extensive literature review of design for social innovation showed how wide the field is and initiated the process of situating the research within it. A definition of design for social innovation, relying on social justice principles, was formulated for the research and guided every aspect of the work delivered. A gap in the literature was identified relating to the analysis of projects of design for social innovation. Because of the many overlapping definitions, identifying exactly what the constituting factors of projects of design for social innovation are seemed challenging. As a result, a first version of a project profiling framework was drawn, bringing together elements from different authors and projects (Section 2.3.2.).

The literature and contextual review about pattern cutting highlighted that the discipline is still a specialist and yet undervalued field of practice. A need for a more inclusive and open definition of the practice that also acknowledges its creative and innovative potential was identified and the term 'pattern making' was thus deemed more suitable. As a first attempt to erase the hierarchies and inequalities embedded within the practice, pattern making methods were mapped and categorised based on the technical starting point of the design process. The social potential of pattern making was also investigated and, while pattern making has accompanied social change over the years and still does (Section 2.2.4.), it has not yet been considered as a participatory practice to foster social change (Section 2.3.5.).

Objective 2: *To gather experts' perspectives on fashion design for social change and pattern making to develop a profiling framework for the analysis of projects and to formulate a more inclusive definition of the practice.*

The profiling framework – as it had emerged from the literature and contextual review – was then discussed with socially-engaged designers and researchers whose work involved using fashion design practices and collective making with underrepresented, marginalised, and vulnerable people. The critical analysis of the interviews refined the profiling framework and revealed that the projects of fashion design for social change studied employed different approaches. One of these approaches particularly aligned with the core values of this research, namely care and empathy, participation, agency, and decentralisation of the design power. Therefore, a detailed profile of a 'project of co-design for social change with people from the margins' was formulated (Section 4.4.) and was subsequently used to evaluate the participatory practice research undertaken with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood of London.

The interviews with pattern makers confirmed the need for more inclusivity in the pattern making field but challenged the categorisation of the methods. The critical analysis of the interviews led to the formulation of a definition of the combined practice of pattern making and garment making as an open and inclusive fashion design practice (Section 5.4.). The findings from the analysis of the interviews also led to deconstructing the practice into five core elements, offering a fair and equitable way of considering different methods (Section 5.2.4.). Both the definition and the 'wheel' (Figure 7.3) promote inclusivity, equality, and creativity in the field. This understanding of the practice was therefore considered more in line with the core value of social justice, promoted by the definition of design for social innovation underpinning the research, and consequently more suited to foster social change. During the interviews, the social potential of pattern making was discussed and a list of conditions for the practice to effectively be used to foster social change was formulated, including the fact that it should be considered jointly with garment making (Section 5.4.).

Objective 3: *To develop and apply a participatory practice research approach to pattern making and garment making and evaluate its potential to foster social change with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood of London.*

Building on other projects of fashion design for social change and considering the many benefits of collective making (Section 2.1.3.), participatory making workshops were deemed a suitable method for this research. A programme of eight workshops, organised in four units, each introducing a different pattern making and garment making method, was designed with the aim to progressively guide the participants towards creative ownership. The methods introduced were carefully and purposefully selected to form a coherent and comprehensive introduction to pattern making and garment making (Section 3.2.2.1.).

The participatory practice research ran over twenty-seven months and involved a diverse group of women in Somers Town, nineteen in total. It covered the delivery of a pilot series of workshops followed by two iterations of the eight-week programme. More advanced workshops and drop-in making sessions were also organised at the request of the participants, and their creative journeys and collective achievements were celebrated during an exhibition in a local gallery. The analysis of the data collected during the workshops revealed the positive impact that the project had not only on the participants but on the researcher too. It also highlighted the 'sororalistic' approach of the project based on trust, equity and empathy and relying on strong relationships between the participants and the researcher. The researcher's engagement and the work of co-designing the project with the women contributed to building the necessary infrastructure for the creation of the community group and social enterprise Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town, a legacy managed by empowered participants (Chapter 6).

By meeting its aim and objectives, this research project offers a specific example of how pattern making and garment making can indeed be used to foster social change. This can be summarised as a project to co-design social change with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood of London, employing a 'sororalistic' approach relying on the delivery of a comprehensive programme of participatory pattern making and garment making workshops.

8.2. Contributions to knowledge

The main contribution of this research lies in its specific focus on using pattern making and garment making practice – in an open, inclusive, and participatory way – to foster social change, but along the research journey, other contributions also emerged.

8.2.1. Contribution to fashion design for social change theory

During the research, the need for a clear and concise list of defining elements of projects of design for social innovation was identified. Therefore, this thesis' first contribution to the field lies in the framework drawn from the literature and contextual review and the interviews that lists the elements (*i.e.*, theme of reflection, collaboration, social change, approach to innovation, and challenges) and sub-elements that allow for an easier, coherent, and systematic analysis of projects of fashion design for social change (Figure 4.12, p.121). This framework was used to create project profiles for each interview undertaken with socially-engaged practitioners and researchers (Appendices 5 to 11) and to analyse the participatory practice research undertaken in Somers Town. This profiling framework was here used in a fashion context, but could be easily replicated, tested, and adapted to other sub-fields of design for social innovation.

Through the analysis of these project profiles, this research contributes to a better understanding of the field of fashion design for social change by identifying different types of projects. In particular, this research has identified a specific type of projects grounded in values of trust, equity and care and characterised by a decentralised design role, empathetic designers, deep long-lasting relationships, a focus on designing as a process and on co-designing a legacy led by empowered participants – here defined as 'projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins' (Table 7.1).

At the same time, this thesis contributes to the broad discussion on the roles of designers in design for social innovation, and to the emerging discussion on the

evolution of the roles of fashion designers. It defines designers as change-enablers, rather than change-makers – in the sense that designers enable project participants to make change happen. It also illustrates the many roles they can play in co-creation processes (Figure 7.2), explicitly introducing the crucial role of the empathetic designer. The awareness and understanding of others' and one's own emotions becomes an essential skill to co-design social change. Empathy leads the way towards better design for social innovation.

Finally, this thesis also argues that these new roles should transfer to the project participants, during the process of co-creating change. Indeed, project participants should progressively take the designer's roles (as described in Figure 7.2) and become the empowered change-enablers that will drive long-lasting impactful legacies.

8.2.2. Contribution to pattern making and garment making practice

This research fits within a broader movement, supported by many pattern makers and designers, that advocates for the recognition of pattern making as a creative practice of fashion design, even going one step further by including garment making as a continuum of the design process. The thesis contributes to the field by bringing in more inclusivity and equality in two ways.

First, a more open and inclusive definition of the joint practice of pattern making and garment making was formulated:

> *Pattern making and garment making are design practices that turn materials into garment forms.*

Secondly, the practice was broken down into five core elements (Figure 7.3) – body, shapes, materials, measurements, and constraints – represented as a 'wheel'. This 'wheel' of elements that constitute any pattern making and garment making method challenges the common Western-centric dichotomous perception of the practice and erases any type of hierarchy between methods. This definition also opens the field towards more creativity by removing

conventional rules and offering an alternative way to conceive the practice as infinite combinations of the core elements.

8.2.3. Contribution to participatory methodologies in fashion design for social change

This thesis offers another example of how collective making can be an effective way to engage people and co-create social change. This research does so thanks to an original methodology which was developed, applied, and tested with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood of London. This participatory practice methodology based on pattern making and garment making workshops constitutes a significant contribution to knowledge by this research project for two reasons. For the first time, the combined practice of pattern making and garment making is introduced as an open and inclusive participatory practice, aiming to foster social change. The second reason is that the comprehensive programme of eight workshops, as designed for this research, can be easily replicated in other contexts and with other groups of people.

This methodology, however, cannot be considered on its own, but rather conjointly with the specific collaborative approach that emerged from the delivery of the workshops. This thesis explicitly introduces the concept of ‘sororalistic’ approach to co-design. This approach stems from the personal experience of the researcher during the twenty-seven months of participatory practice research with a group of women. The ‘sororalistic’ approach relies on strong and long-lasting relationships based on mutual respect, trust, empathy, and care, where the designer guides and supports participants in developing their own voices and practices and in reaching full agency over the design process. With such an approach, the project participants effectively become designers themselves and peer-to-peer relationships with the designers and between them unfold. In comparison to other approaches, the ‘sororalistic’ one more explicitly acknowledges the role of emotions in the development of both the relationships and the design process.

8.3. Limitations of the research

This research was successful in meeting its aim and objectives and contributes original knowledge in the fields of fashion design for social change and pattern making. However, there are some limitations to this study that could be the object of further work in the future.

8.3.1. Methodological limitations

The methodology for the participatory practice research in Somers Town generated insightful data and was successful in supporting the participants in their creative journey, but it could be improved in two ways.

First, the format of the series of workshops was felt slightly limiting by some participants. The programme comprised eight workshops lasting three hours each and split into four units, each introducing a different pattern making and garment making method. The selection and organisation of the methods as well as the number of workshops was carefully thought through at the beginning of the project but the limited time for each method generated frustration in some of the participants who would have preferred completing all the garments started, fully exploring each method introduced and maybe revealing their creative potential further. This was recurring feedback gathered from the participants both during the sessions and in the evaluation questionnaires. A different organisation of the workshops with a longer focus on each method and additional sessions could have been beneficial for the participants and generate insightful observations about how they would complete a wearable garment instead of a toile in calico fabric. Another possibility could have been to give them a choice of what method they would like to explore and deliver a more personalised journey but that might dilute the progressive acquisition of agency in the design process, and it would be more demanding for the researcher.

Most participants (fourteen out of nineteen) completed the evaluation questionnaires, which generated valuable data for the research, but the forms were lengthy and time-consuming. Language and writing barriers also made it

difficult for some participants to express their views. Feedback was also gathered during the workshops and brainstorming sessions, but a more inclusive method to gather the women's individual feedback, in an anonymous way, could have been beneficial to the research. One solution could have been translating the forms in different languages and simplifying the questionnaires, or having individual interviews conducted by a third party, or using art-based feedback methods such as the 'Head, Heart, Hand, Bag and Bin' drawing activity organised during the *Weaving the Threads of Refugee Entrepreneurs* project (Morgado de Queiroz and Mazzarella, 2024).

8.3.2. Participant sampling limitations

Another limitation of the research lies in the sample of participants, both in their diversity and the number of people involved in both the interviews and the participatory practice.

In terms of the interviews with socially-engaged designers, a more diverse group of interviewees would have revealed further insights. Indeed, out of seven interviewees, only two – Philippe Guilet (*Projet Renaissance*) and Joanna Maiden (*SOKO Kenya*) – were not either researchers or connected with LCF. Designers from ethical fashion brands or social enterprises were contacted but most did not reply to the invitation and those who did refused to be interviewed.

The participatory practice research workshops involved one group of women from one neighbourhood of London. Working with one group of people was deemed suitable for this type of qualitative research that looks for deep qualitative change rather than quantitative results, and feasible within the time limitations of a PhD programme. However, delivering the approach with another group of participants in a different context would have helped in testing the methodology further and comparing the findings between the samples of participants. Moreover, this research purposefully focused on working with women exclusively. Delivering the approach to a different group of participants in terms of gender identity would definitely impact the delivery and the

outcomes of the project, in particular in such a predominantly Muslim context. This would also contribute to assessing if a ‘sororalistic’ approach is gender based.

8.3.3. Generalizability limitations

The focus of the research on one group of women in a specific context makes it impossible to generalize the outcomes of this project, but the methodology and learnings can be adapted to other contexts. Being context-specific is in the very nature of social design projects, but other subjective elements also play a significant role. In particular, the researcher’s personality, skills, emotions, and personal history have contributed to the design and delivery of the practice research. Each designer-researcher is unique in their way of interacting and empathizing with others and will implement the approach in their own personal way, generating similar or different outcomes. Although a limitation to the replicability of the project, it is also a unique specificity of fashion design for social change projects with a ‘sororalistic’ approach, that acknowledges the role of emotions in research and practice.

8.4. Recommendations for future work

In addition to the improvements and possibilities described above, this thesis could be the stepping stone for further academic and professional work. Some of these recommendations are discussed below:

- Replicability of the framework for projects of design for social innovation

This thesis presents a profiling framework with elements and sub-elements of projects of fashion design for social change. This framework could easily be replicated in other fields than fashion design. For instance, new profiles could be generated for the projects undertaken by different Labs within the international DESIS Network and the Cluster ‘Design from the Margins’ and

compared to the previous DESIS profiles. This could lead to the identification of further similarities and differences between fields of practice and make an original contribution to the field of design for social innovation, comparing projects of co-design for social change with people from the margins.

- Designers' roles and ethics of care

This thesis explicitly introduces the empathetic role of designers in projects of fashion design for social change. In addition to exploring this role in other fields than fashion design, further research could investigate how designers implement that role. In addition, this role also poses the need to further develop and adopt a framework of ethics of care in projects of design for social change and how to safeguard and care for both the participants and the researcher while still allowing emotions to play a role in the research.

- Replicability of the pattern making and garment making wheel

The pattern making and garment making wheel could contribute to other research on how to foster creativity with fashion students or how to develop new making methods within a globally diverse approach to pattern making. It could be used in one or a series of workshops with fashion design and pattern making students who would be challenged to create new combinations of the five elements to design original garments. As demonstrated through the interviews with the pattern makers, the wheel can also be a useful tool to question one's practice and deconstruct its biases.

- Replicability of the participatory practice approach

This research project sets a precedent for pattern making and garment making to be used as fashion design practices to foster social change and offers an approach that could be replicated in other contexts. For example, the series of eight pattern making and garment making workshops could be delivered in the same way with *Making for Change* both in the women's prison and in Poplar Works. This project's methodology inspired the four Stitch by Stitch leaders to develop their own programme of workshops. A similar 'sororalistic' approach

and structure of workshops could also be applied to other making practices such as joinery, pottery, or jewellery making, etc.

This participatory practice research has already expanded beyond its initial scope with the development of a community art project in the London borough of Camden. The researcher has been exploring quilting as a form of activism to create a large artwork celebrating the diversity and creativity of the borough, involving five hundred people of all ages, gender-identities, backgrounds, faiths, and ethnicities, who created their own portraits using fabrics. The project, called *Portrait(s) of Camden*, was showcased at events and exhibitions around Camden, including the Human Rights festival for Refugee week in June 2025 (Figure 8.1), and a 'zine' has been produced to tell the stories behind the portraits.



Figure 8.1: Portrait(s) of Camden quilts (photo by Umpf Limited).

- Further research on the 'sororalistic' approach

This thesis presents a 'sororalistic' approach to co-design applied to the practice of pattern making and garment making. The approach deserves further

research in other fields and with more diverse groups of people, in particular with male participants.

- Securing a long-term legacy

Finally, there is an opportunity to build on the changes generated by the participatory practice research delivered in Somers Town. The community group and social enterprise Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town is flourishing, but a dedicated space, secured equipment and materials, the development of a successful business model, and access to funding, would allow them to develop their activities further and make their aspirations a reality. This raises the need to further investigate sustainable business models for design for social innovation projects and the strategies to successfully shift from social innovation to design for social entrepreneurship.

- Broader avenues of development

This research could develop to address multiple audiences. Its methodology could inform Design and Technology pedagogy, including A level education. Further research on teaching and pedagogy would strengthen this approach.

Theoretical discussions of making could expand through feminist and sustainability frameworks, while collaborative making practices, health, wellbeing, and community — building on the Camden Quilts project — warrant deeper reflection.

This project has investigated one approach to participatory pattern making and garment making to co-design social change with a group of women in a deprived neighbourhood of London. Further research can be pursued in many directions and inspire other ways of using the practice for social good. This project aims to inspire researchers, designers, and practitioners to reflect on how their practices can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future for all, in and through fashion and any other fields of practice. The overall ambition is that projects like this participatory research practice can create ripples that spread the values of care, empathy, equity, collaboration, and social justice.

Academic contributions

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview guide – Socially-engaged designers

Questions for discussion with interviewees

1. How does your research / practice or a project that you have worked on relate to the framework to analyse projects of fashion design for social change? Let's discuss each element within the context of your research / practice or a specific project.

Figure 1:Framework for analysing projects of design for social innovation



Element	Definition
Theme of reflection	What are the project's main aim and area of development? Ex: Product or service for social innovation, infrastructuring, digital social innovation, income generation/entrepreneurship, environmental concern, design theory and practice, activism, co-design, …
Collaborative approach	What is the collaborative or participatory approach of the project? Ex: Maternalistic, fraternalistic, teaching, mentoring, …
Participants' roles	In which way are participants agents in the process? What are the participants' roles and how much are they involved in the design process? And at what stage of the design process do they participate? Ex: initiators, (co)-designers, input givers, makers, entrepreneurs, students, end-users, …
Designer's roles	What are the designer's roles? Ex: strategist, researcher, facilitator, activist, educator, maker, storyteller, sense maker, …
Project outputs	What does the project achieve as an output of its activities? Ex: new products, services, processes, markets, platforms, organisational forms, business models, …
Project outcomes	What outcomes does the project achieve in terms of social change? Ex: skill acquisition, wellbeing improvement, community engagement, self-confidence, employment, …
Social impact	What long-term social changes is the project aiming for? Ex: well-being, place-making, problem-solving, agency, community engagement, employment opportunities, education, social inclusion, sustainability, …
Approach to innovation	How is the project innovating? Ex: challenging traditional ways of doing, introducing ways of doing in a new context, reconsidering traditional ways of doing in new ways, recombining existing resources, inventing something completely new, rediscovering the power of cooperation, …
Method of action	What are the methods used to activate the innovation process ? Ex: focus groups, interviews, making workshops, collective making, …
Design practice	Which design practice is used? In the specific case of fashion design, which practice of fashion making is used to engage participants? Ex: drawing, crochet, sewing, embroidery, …

2. To what extent do you think this framework provides a relevant and effective way to analyse projects of fashion design for social innovation?

3. What distinctive benefits do you think fashion design practices bring to the field of design for social innovation, compared to other practices?

4. Do you have any contacts, publications, projects to share that you think are relevant to my research?

5. Is there anything that we have not discussed that you think is important for the research?

Appendix 2. Interview guide – Pattern makers

Questions for discussion with interviewees

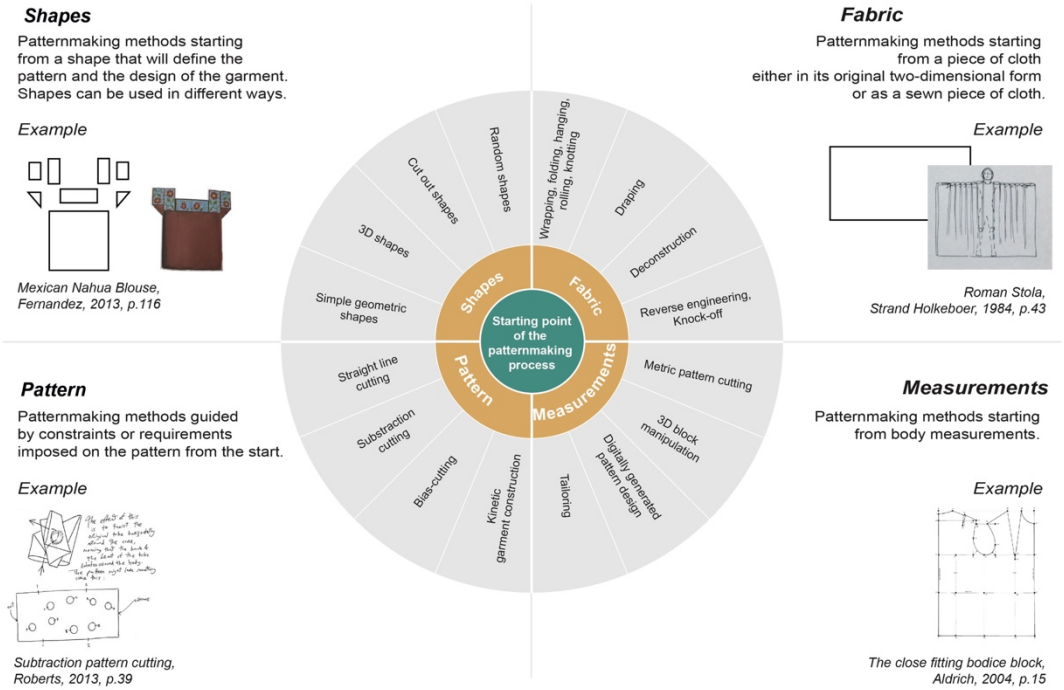
1. For this research, I deliberately choose to use the term ‘pattern making’ to refer to the practice of “turn[ing] two-dimensional cloth into three-dimensional garment form, changing fabric into fashion” (O’Neill, 2021, p.9). The word ‘making’ implies a more holistic view of the design and making process and the role of ‘pattern cutting’ at every stage of fashion design[102]. By using patternmaking, the intention is to:
    a. Acknowledge the different ways in which a garment can be designed, constructed, and made.
    b. Promote the different aspects of the practice, both technical and creative.
    c. Acknowledge its various dimensionality (2D and 3D).
    d. Include the making of a garment within fashion design and bring closer together, even merge, the roles of designer, pattern cutter and maker.

    How does your practice relate to this definition of patternmaking?

2. Based on this definition and on an inclusive approach towards all methods of garment construction, I suggest a novel categorisation of pattern making methods.
    What are your thoughts about this categorisation of pattern making methods? How does your practice relate to it?

[102] Fashion design is defined as the whole process from the ideation to the making of a garment.

Figure 1:Categorisation of patternmaking methods and examples*



*This categorisation is not mutually exclusive nor collectively exhaustive and is open to be completed with other methods

3. What differentiates pattern making from other fashion design practices? What makes it special to you?

4. In what ways do you think that pattern making has potential to foster social change?

5. Do you have any contacts, publications, projects to share that you think are relevant to my research?

6. Is there anything that we have not discussed that you think is important for the research?

Appendix 3. Interview transcript – Helen Storey

Interview with Helen Storey (HS) – Date: 12/07/2023; duration: 1h40'.

HS: Ohh, lots and lots of questions come up, but I think they might fit naturally into the conversation we have now.

JM: OK, so I'm going to keep… so this is… so the first question I wanted to discuss with you is about your practice and maybe if you want to talk about your overall work or if you want to choose one project in particular, maybe you're work in Zaatari or maybe your recent work in Africa and we can discuss the elements of that framework.
Or maybe if you've got already any comment on that framework that you know you'd like to share.

HS: Yeah. So I think it is probably the work in Zaatari and the more recent work in Africa that is most relevant to your project.

JM: Hmm.

HS: Um. I have lots of thoughts but I'm not sure they fit specifically into your boxes. Maybe.

JM: Ohh, it doesn't matter. The boxes are fluid, so they can…

HS: OK. By the way, I love the tailor's chalk shape. I think that's absolutely lovely

JM: Yes.

HS: That's really lovely. It talked to me. Ohh it's a very soft shape and it's a very unique shape.

JM: Hmm.

HS: I guess through all the time you were talking about your project and we often use words that almost lose their meaning because we say them so often, whether that's sustainability, the word pretty and now social change. So I was really interested in terms of you personally as what kind of change do you want to see?

JM: I think the main change that I want to see is for them to take... And I don't want to use the word empowerment, to empower because I feel it comes back to one of those words we use all the time as you said. But it's for them to take initiatives in what they want to do. So that the change they want is for them to define it. What I want to do is to kind of not push them, but see how they can take the first steps to make that change happen.

HS: Yeah.

JM: Does that make sense?

HS: Yes, yes.

JM: Because I don't. It's not about me defining which change I want to see. It's about them defining those changes they want and taking the first steps to make that happen.

HS: Yes.

JM: And the change, the impact I would like to have is that little bit where I make them do the first steps to have that change happen. And.

HS: Yeah, for the possibility of them discovering their ability to take that step.

JM: Exactly. So just for me. So I think if I can take that example of Joanne's, her name is Joanne. I am seeing her grow in confidence. In terms of making skills, but also… so that brought her into “okay, Now I feel confident I can apply for that”, and she took the decision to apply on her own.
So I think through the workshops she gained that confidence of “yes I can make and I'm good enough now” to… not even…. she was already good enough. It's just about her seeing herself as good enough to apply for that course. And I think that little change for me is what I want to see.

HS: Ohh. Ohh.

JM: That's what I'm looking for. Then it could be that. So she is applying for that. But it could also be one of the other ladies. So Kabirun, she didn't consider herself as a designer and she came to me and she said “I want to learn the proper way of cutting a garment”. But I don't teach
metric pattern cutting or flat pattern cutting, which was what she meant.

HS: Yes.

JM: In the fact that then she told me “I have no ideas” and her going out there looking for new ideas or seeing the garments in stores in a different way. That's the type of change I'm looking for.

HS: OK, so that suggests to me that when you talk about approach for innovation, for example. There is a form of language that might be an addition to how you're defining it.

JM: Hmm.

HS: In the sense that I think, part of the innovation is the facilitation for people to have the ability to discover themselves and discover their capacities.

JM: Yes.

HS: And of course, it gets framed in the word confidence, but actually I think part of the innovation is to do with the emotional and psychological side, not necessarily the things that we often name an innovation which can sound quite technical or practical. So um, that's something that I think that you are doing but maybe isn't being articulated as richly as it could be.

JM: Hmm.

HS: Ohh. I was also thinking about. And this is a bit of a tricky question, but what within your project are the things you think you can't answer, and sometimes when you name those things, and you look at them without any defensiveness or worry.

JM: Hmm.

HS: They can actually lead to realisations for you, being able to stretch what your project can deliver and discover.

JM: Hmm.

HS: So looking at what you cause along the way, what you're doing is you are quite rightly focusing on the positive and progress, but actually the problems and the obstacles and the things that don't work are just as important.

JM: Hmm.

HS: Because that's part of your learning process. Within this, this period of time as well.

JM: Hmm.

HS: So I was thinking about that and whether you can actually name the things that you feel are difficult, will never be answered or require a lot longer to answer than maybe the length of your project which speaks to what you were talking about in terms of legacy.

JM: Hmm.

HS: It was another thought. Um. In that sense, there might be something in your framework that's perhaps not missing, but again could be an enrichment of one of the categories that you're defining.

JM: Hmm.

HS: Um. I was really interested that they all started off with an Abaya.

JM: Hmm.

HS: Um, and again in the sense that I wondered whether there's anything to notice or to learn, in the nature of what it is, they have each chosen to change, and in noticing what it is, they have chosen to change, does that reflect at all on something that would normally be unconscious or something that might also be… they might experience as being socially restrictive. Which I've noticed just working with Syrian women, that their frame of reference is incredibly faith-based for perfectly understandable reasons, but so faith-based that it would actually stop a certain form of creativity.

Because I feel it challenges their own sense of modesty and their own sense of expectation, socially, of how they should be dressed. So given this is happening in London with all the influences of London and the fact that they perhaps are no longer living in the place they were born, I wondered whether there's also some new knowledge embedded in noticing those changes of how they changed their abaya. It's always always interesting to me when everybody starts off with something that is identical, that in their process of personalization or in the process of embellishment or adornment or any kind of change, there is an unspoken narrative about that person that they may not even notice for themselves.

JM: Hmm.

HS: So again, it's dipping more into the psychological and the emotional, but you might be witnessing, and you might have available to you other ways of knowing. About how women construct change how women approach to change, how women get to a place of empowerment and confidence, the marks that they make and the changes that they make to the garments along the way.

JM: And I've got pictures coming to my mind of them. Sorry, I wanted to see you at the same time, but because teams doesn't… I've got ideas of… so I can see the garments and the process of them making. And so when I think about all the Muslim Bengali or I've got one Moroccan or all the ones who are Muslim, they work on 3D, meaning that they manipulate the fabric, but they never ever cut it. Or maybe a few cut a little bit, but they added. Like a bow, they did pleats. But… they put elastics. But never cut. And then the others. Straight away. one of them from the Abaya address actually made a waistcoat.

HS: Yeah.

JM: They didn't, they saw less the dress. And I didn't, for some of them, I didn't introduce it as an abaya dress. I just said it's a long, very simple.

HS: Yeah.

JM: Tunique or dress because anyone can wear it anyway. And yes, and so the process was different straight away.

HS: And also it's like reading a different language if you like. Sorry. Can you stop sharing? So I'm not talking to myself.

JM: Um, I'll share my screen.

HS: Yeah.

JM: Sorry.

HS: OK. I find this and this. I think this has come from my experience of working in communities over the last six or seven years where I didn't share the language, I didn't share the faith.

I can't possibly know, although I've spent a long time with people who fled for their life where a war is still continuing. My own ability to read what's going on has had to evolve in my mind, which means that the clues that come from posture, the clues that come from facial expression, the clues that come from where does a hand go first, have become heightened in my mind and they've become almost like new designer tools, if you like. But when I say designer tools, I now mean designer as a facilitator or an observer. More than a designer that makes stuff. So I guess it's the, ‘evolution’ sounds too grand a word, but it's a sort of an evolution in my mind about what people, particularly from vulnerable communities, can teach me about the,

Another deeply obvious word which I can't bear resilience and what is around when resilience shows itself in. That shows itself through the process of making. So whether we've been making jewellery, soap, clothing, embroidery, painting, whatever the making has been and that's only been down to in some senses, where people already feel skilled. Because that's their entry point. It's showing me a completely new way of learning about women in their lives. Going down a bit of a rabbit hole here, but it's just, I found that so enlightening to notice the detail of where a hand goes first.
And as you say, you know someone more so-called courageous cuts a waistcoat. Whilst another will want to, almost tentatively change something. So yes, the change is there and it's a reflection of the change they want to make. But in a year's time, they might go straight in with a pair of scissors. And that is showing you something about the nature of women in their process of

discovering themselves and how they become more than they were when they met you, when they found you.

And then I thought maybe I'd jump to what I've learned about the relevance or what has happened to pattern making. For example in the work in Africa, both the Africa and in the Syrian camp which is pattern making, in a sense, has a privilege attached to it. And by that I mean there is no paper. There is nothing to cut a pattern into or from. And so, what I've observed, and I've observed it far more powerfully in the camps in Africa and now I'm talking about extreme environments of where women are encouraged to become empowered, is that their brains have evolved around, and because of, what they were never going to be able to get their hands on, which was paper. Often space, not enough even space to lay things out. And so most of the… they call it tailoring. But it's not tailoring as we know it. It's not sort of Savile Row tailoring, tailoring means anything that is sewn. And what the women do is they've developed a way of scanning a body. And making a dress or whatever is asked for that fits perfectly without a pattern. And they've learned that skill out of necessity. Because no one will train them to make patterns. And because, there aren't the facilities or the materials in order for them to go in that direction. So watching them do that across numerous different body types is astonishing. And it's totally taken for granted. It's as natural as breathing. And when I think about London College of Fashion and all the years that we've got excited about body scanners and all the technical side of things that actually the brain and the mind has a capacity to apprehend another human being both emotionally and physically to create a piece of clothing for that person that meets what that person is not just saying they want but is also not saying what they want. They're actually identifying female desire when it comes to the materiality of how they dress, literally by being in relationship. And that's the thing that's key. It's the ability to perceive the other and be in relationship that is determining the shape of that dress. The cut of that dress, the hang of the weight of that dress. And meeting what the woman who's coming, who says she wants a dress, needs and wants. So again, I guess I'm speaking to a different kind of skill set that you will develop. Or you can develop. And it may raise questions that you don't actually have, then have answers to or often what I find is it raises and this is where I think in terms of PhDs and unique new knowledge creation is important. It raises things that at first you don't even recognise because you're in such new space as a designer and whilst you're… The circumstances of your workshops in London are very different to the circumstances in a refugee camp. I still think these sorts of sensitivities and noticing things in particular ways is something that can be practiced and owned.

JM: Hmm. Yes.

HS: So I'm probably not fitting into any of your boxes, but. Ohh.

JM: It doesn't matter. Hmm. Now that would be... I would love to know more about the way they cut the garments. Part of the research I do, is looking at other ways of constructing and cutting pattern, not patterns, the garments. And we don't use.., we sometimes use paper, but sometimes we don't use paper and we use the fabric straight away.

HS: Hmm.

JM: And so I would love to… One aspect of pattern making that I'm interested in is how to. Ohh sorry, I'm going to put the … they're cutting something outside. How to, in a way, decolonise pattern cutting and because flat pattern cutting and metric pattern cutting has taken the lead in the world and how we should wear, cut the garments and the designs etcetera. So and there are so many other ways to do that they were not bring anymore. So that would love to know more about the way they do that in the way they describe and they do tailoring.

HS: Yeah.

JM: Really, really interesting.

HS: The other, the other thing. And again it kind of in a way speaks to our privilege is the phrase zero pattern cutting would be an anathema to them. It's always 0 pattern cutting because nothing can be wasted. In the camps as well, talking about sustainability, it's completely irrelevant. Um and frankly, a bit insulting. Because we only manage to survive by being, by living sustainable lives. Their lives aren't sustainable at many levels, but in being … every single atom is precious. However, it presents itself, or whether that's in the form of water or materials for the home or soap.

JM: So in a way, it feels that they don't have the… they can't think about wastes or because I don't have the choice and I was wondering so a bit linked to that is in the last article that you wrote with Sandy. And you talk about making for international market and I was so… was there any potential for a local market?

HS: I mean, in any country where poverty is endemic, local markets are very, very difficult. In that um. And there are slight differences between the Syrian camps and the African camps and it's very dictated quickly by the nature of the hosting government.

So everything from employment law, what you're allowed to make where you're allowed to work, through to laws around taxation. Um, most recently in Zalika camp in Malawi, for example, the government with an election coming up, has chosen to militarily enforce every refugee that's ever left the camp back into the camp. The camp was originally built for 10,000 and then there were when I was there, most recently, there were 56,000 in a camp that had been built for 10 and they were trying to push back another 10,000 so that the government could claim that they got their hands around and got control over the refugee situation. And all of those you know. How does something like that connect to what you're doing? What it means that in terms of the question you've just asked, is that depending where in the world you find yourself and which government, you will be subject as a refugee to different bandwidths of possibility in your life. In Zaatari. And this is where making for international markets became interesting and is still on and in some ways, parts of what we've done, we've managed to make sustainable and they don't need us anymore and other parts remain challenging. But for refugees in Jordan as a designer, you're not allowed to own your own IP. So that raises interesting ethical questions for us about how we co-create and who owns what. I've tried to lower that entirely, but institutionally, that's a difficult thing to reconcile. When they make for local markets, it's very different to when we're exploring together

what it means to make for others outside of your own markets, because to sell to yourself or to sell to your peers, you are just selling to people who also don't have any money or have very little money. So there have been two things we've been running side by side in Zaatari. One is making something that the international market might want cause it's not necessarily what the local market needs or would want and how in a place of dust and poverty you create something of quality. So that when people are buying it, they aren't buying it in terms of what people often call a poverty purchase, where they're just, they're buying it not because they value particularly the thing that they're buying, but they want to put money in the hands of the person that made it. And so I felt that part of my role as a designer or an artist or whatever I get called nowadays, was to go in and look at what the potential was for affecting something to become beautiful against all the odds of that being able to happen.

But also and again this speaks across language across faith and then across the life circumstance, what will the metaphors that we could come up with as designers that would allow us to make something that the international market might want some value. And at the same time, honours tradition, honours faith. On as all the hallmarks, if you like of what they've had in terms of design and aesthetic. And the way we ended up describing it was quite crude and basic, but it worked no matter who we were talking to, whether that was kids about making things or that was women or men about making things and the metaphor was that. And it happened whilst I was sitting on the floor of an artist's dwelling when we were just mixing paint together. If, for example, you look at what the hallmarks are of aesthetics in the Middle Eastern sense, it's often faith-based, symmetry is important. There are particular materials that are valued to which value is attributed, particular colours, colour themes and particular symbols. Let's call that blue. If you think about the West, which is often quite maverick and hybrid and experimental in terms of its materiality, in terms of the symbolism it might use. And let's call that red. What would our purple look like? So it became about making purple. So it's about mindfully hold in mind what is important in terms of that tradition. Knowing that that tradition and faith is not just important culturally, but it's actually how they get up in the morning. That that is what has … that is the only thing that has been transportable. Their faith and their tradition, nothing else has come with them, has been able to come with them and nothing else will be returned to unless until they can go home, which still 12 years later, is not looking likely. Whilst also embracing the idea of what this collaboration means across all these vast differences. And how does it represent itself in a product that others might want and pay for.

So that's the kind of how we get to the product, how to get the product out of the country and then to the people who might value it has been a wild experiment on a number of different levels. Is any of this still relevant to?

JM: Yes, yes.

HS: It's OK.

JM: Because one of the… absolutely it's in a different context obviously. But they want to make to sell, some of them. And it's always that question because

when you want or at least in London or in our European Western countries, where we want to make sustainably, things cost more.

HS: Hmm.

JM: And you want to pay a London living wage. So things cost more. So people who are living in Somers Town, they can't afford. So you end up making things that are going to be more expensive. And so for people who live in the, you know, wealthier neighbourhoods of London. So it's at a smaller scale, but it's the same. Um and how do you? So it's it's how do you make sure that the things they make are aligned with their… what they want to make or what they aspire to make. So is this. And also in terms of material, but of material you're going to use because of course I am PhD at LCF, so I looked at sustainably sourced materials or recycled or what do we what, … What makes most sense for us? But what makes more sense for them? So they go to the local market and they come with fabric from the local market and it's cheap. It's 2-3 pounds a metre, but it's polyester. So how, it all makes sense. It's different scale, different contexts. But yes, it does make sense.

HS: What you touch on there though is really interesting in the sense that again it's a sort of a bigger, wider consideration. Um, what happens when you work with people who want the thing that you're trying to give up?
And this is to do with the imbalance between the global north and the global South. So when I first went to Zaatari, I was really excited to see that Oxfam were in the camp. And that one of the things they did was that they collected all sorts of materials including left over or discarded clothing and then they would wash it and so on. The very first project I did there in 2016, which was known as the *Love Coats*, which was with the young girls who were between ages of eight and 18.

JM: Yeah, the TIGER girls.

HS: You might have read this in the chapter if you read the chapter. yeah, I thought I was being really clever by identifying a source of material that would never run out because I was trying to be really mindful of not setting up a different kind of dependency.

I would always have to be present or giving something in order for a project to happen, so I was trying to identify the things that would always be there and be imaginative once again about them. So the two fundamental mistakes I made and I had no idea I was walking into it. One was having identified the thermal blankets. So one of the things they said, they were very, very cold in winter because of course they're living in metal shipping containers in effect, which are fridges in the winter and ovens in the summer. So in the winter they said, you know, it goes down to minus 10 and we're just freezing or we want a coat. So that's where the Love Coat... So I thought reinventing the thermal blanket and turning it into something that was beautiful and desirable and had personality in it would be great. And the first time I suggested that I just got blank faces and was told through translation. ‘You don't realise, but that's actually the item that takes them back to the original trauma, because the first thing you do when you get entered the camp is you get handed this blanket’. So that was unwitting, but it's interesting how we got over that.

And then the other one was having got the clothes from Oxfam thinking great, we can use clothes that… we can just again reimagine them and recut them. Most of the girls pulled their scarves over their faces when they were looking at this. What I thought was a miraculous washed. Given that there's hardly any water in the camp and there's water restriction, washed clothes to kind of reinvent. But just harps back to my own bringing up, if you like, where you know jumble sales, I always thought of as a treasure trove. For them, they were the clothes of dead people. And so both in a sense catastrophic to begin with, and something that I could never anticipated in terms of risk assessment or an ethics form, because I'd never hear. But what was really interesting was their apprehension of our devastation of having made those heinous faux-pas brought us really closely together and the project so successful because we got over something together emotionally. And it ended up being an incredibly successful project. So this is where I think it probably is also the same for you in terms of you call it, you get called the teacher or slowly you get called something else or in the end your presence becomes less required because the success is the fact that they no longer need you.
Actually, it's the relational in this area of work and in this field of work, that's really, really important. And again isn't something that necessarily... I haven't seen the word relational, for example in any of your boxes, but I think it might be something that you can very legitimately bring into the frame. And I think that's what makes these things sustainable is the ability to go on the journey of what it means to be in relationship to people. Through any kind of project, and if that isn't there, in a way that is genuine and I don't use the word authentic cause again horribly over used word. The ability to relate. And the ability to empathise and read each other is actually what makes these projects sustainable. Not in the sense the project needs to last forever or go on for a long time, but that the person takes away with them and experience that is unforgettable. And becomes a part of their memory of how they know themselves and their confidence in the world. It's the sustainability of people's inner worlds, not just the sustainability of 'can the workshops continue? Will we be able to keep getting materials? What happens when the funding runs out? What happens when the project's over?' What you give them is something that they then carry inside them wherever they find themselves in life. But.

JM: Are you talking about the participants only or also the designer?

HS: It's both in different ways, yeah.

JM: Because that's something that you talk about in your articles or interviews, and there was a podcast as well, which is working emotionally unguarded. And I think that's something that I have experienced or I am experiencing myself and I think it's so, as you mentioned, it's so important in the relationship and I'd like to hear more about this because it goes against what we are being told in terms of ethics, etcetera. It's just a little example to illustrate, like in the ethics form I wrote, I will never give my personal phone number. That didn't happen because at some point we needed to have that WhatsApp chat, WhatsApp group so they all have my personal number. Or it is an illustration of the emotional involvement that, I have as well. And sometimes I feel torn and the bit. How do I find the balance between the two? Because I consider some of them my friends now.

HS: Yeah.

JM: Um, so it's really hard. So I'd like to hear more on how you manage that.

HS: So what you're shining a light on is the fact that even our ethics suffers from coloniality. Which is our ethics is not keeping up with what we as a university now say we're interested in, which is design that can change the world. That requires a completely different approach or in an enhanced and more nuanced approach than our current ethics forms allow for. Having said that, we've made a huge step change in recent years where we've gone from ethics as perceived as something as mitigations against risks, to considerations of care. That took a long time to get to that position, but the speed at which the world is working and the urgency of the times that we find ourselves in, means that ethics is not keeping up with the practice that you're doing or the practice that I'm doing or the practice Francesco's doing. Anybody who's going to step into the space of the vulnerable needs new considerations in terms of ethics. So. I find I have to write. I am forced to write the ethics forms in the ways in which they would like to receive them. Because frankly, they haven't got the 'bullocks' yet, I'm not sure I should use that word, for the ethics forms to reflect reality. But I think it's only a transitional moment because different situations all over the world for different reasons are having to make these changes and these adaptations, which is 'what does it mean to live a life of emergency?' and I think what's happened post COVID as we thought that was the emergency and we've gotten over it, haven't we? We dropped a lot of things we learned during that, which is how to live with emergency, and I think we still need to be living with what emergency means because of climate change. Because of the migration crisis. And if we don't, we're resisting all our futures. So. What was the original question you said about 5 minutes ago around ethics?

JM: It was about. So how you manage working emotionally unguarded?

HS: Yeah, that was it. So what I've experienced again cause I actually went from what I consider myself to be a sort of designer in the way that we've been defining designers, for the last 50 years. And then I went to the camp and I realised that the first person I met was me. My ethics, my sense of right or wrong and everything got challenged in a day. And then I had a choice which was I could keep my emotional coat on and be a visitor, or a tourist at its worst. Or I could drop what was familiar and just let's see what happened. And at the sort of threshold moment really where I decided that there is a cost to remaining that emotional and that opened to what is actually going on. The NGO's only do up to a certain point, and in fact they're trained to only do it up to a certain point, and they also have officials in place that if you experience something that you don't know how to process or it is so traumatising, you need help, you get help. Well, I found as I've fallen completely down the crack in the middle. I am not an official employee of the UN or the UNHCR and HR in UAL has no experience or reference points for working in such close proximity to vulnerability. We've done it a bit in terms of those amongst us who worked with prisoners, for example in prisons. Those of us amongst us who have worked in the area of mental health with the NHS and the NHS have similar kind of ethics approaches. But actually doing it somewhere else, in geographies that are a long way away, with long histories of deprivation. And for me, the one that really gets me is the gender-based violence. But the

reason why I've kept my coat off even though I'm officially diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, it's never really post because I keep going back, so it's not anything you get over, it's something you just keep going into, is because I spot an opportunity that if I kept my coat on, I would miss. And it's in the one sense it speaks back to the relational. Which is when you're working with people whose lives have been totally upended, who they choose to trust, particularly if you're not of their faith, particularly if you're not from their culture is a really interesting again added potential skill, if I can minimise it into such a narrow word, Which is, should be part of what it means to be a designer. And when I say what it means to be a designer, what it means to be a designer now, not what it means to be a designer, and either in the way we're still defining it to some degree, and certainly not in the way we've historically designed, defined what it means to be a designer. And it does come back to that relational. So one of the ways that you do build trust is when you look at that person in the eyes, they truly know you're feeling what they are trying to communicate. And you're not shutting it down into either I've got to go now or there's a form you can fill in for that. All the interview you can have for that. I mean, I find that refugees are the most over consulted, queue forming, patient interrogated people on the planet, which has strong ramifications of what does it mean for us as researchers and I realised very early on. And it was also part of why I felt like I fell through a crack was that, I felt I had to continue to call myself a researcher in order to be able to substantiate my role by being employed by university, whilst knowing that research was the most inappropriate thing you could possibly take into a refugee camp. And I've got a bit of a very boring mantra now that I've never met a researcher. I never met a refugee who wants to be researched or studied. It's a bit how dare you?

JM: Yes.

HS: And I've never met an NGO that really wants a light truly shone on it. Because of course there's things they can do and there's things that they need to do but can't because it's all so overwhelming. It's all so underfunded. And their To Do List is, you know based in war, gender based violence, poverty., lack of education. All those things, lack of life resources so. You know you have to redefine what success looks like in these spaces as well. The quality of your relationship is success. Not the things that we're normally persuaded to measure as being valuable. So it which often brings in and you might find if you stay in this space beyond your PhD is that the kind of, in the same way as the ethics is out of date, so is how we fund this out of date and funders expectations of the criteria for success as they define it. They are more interested in how many people you reached than whether anyone's individual's life was actually improved and sustained and sustainably so,… I have found methods for what I think success looks like. They don't tick the boxes that lead to funding in a natural way. And again, that's in a way how funding needs decolonising as well because its expectations are predicated from a place of privilege. They're not predicated from knowing the smell of poverty. That changes everything. Yes

JM: They want the results with numbers.

HS: Yeah. And you can give results with numbers. But you need to understand the nuance. So I now know if I do want to reach 1000 people, which sounds incredibly. Does not sound humble. Let's put it that way.
You work with a community leader or you work with a particularly strong woman who you know behind her stand 500 others. But if you try and reach the 500 others without her, without empowering her first, and they're not happy to fund it for one person. But I know that 500 other women in the years to come are gonna benefit from working very closely with that one person. It's a completely different model.

JM: I see it also in the generations to come.

HS: Yeah.

JM: And when you talk about the woman and you empower one woman, the impact is going to have on her daughters as well as the role model they get. For that's one thing that I look at a lot. It's really important I think.

HS: Yeah, yeah, and why they're so remarkable is they don't get paid to be remarkable. They don't get paid to hand it on. They don't get paid to stand up. [indistinct] I worked at work with. I had to negotiate very difficult relationships with men because they don't do this, they're not supposed to do this. They're a step behind.
They walk in the shadow of, and often gladfully so. It was really interesting when the culmination of working in Zaatari was the creation of something called the *Made in Zaatari Centre*, which was set up for encouraging the creativity and empowerment of women. And again, it was a real learning, watching the impact on men as that was being built by men. They were not gonna be allowed in that space.
And also looking at the impact on the women who then chose to come, and that each had a different story about how easy or difficult it was to come to the centre every day. From the [indistinct], which is women aren't allowed to ride bikes, you know, there's no transport in the camp. So unless they can get a donkey ride or they're gonna walk in the blazing sun or the cold for hours to get there. Women who became successful in the centre, who then went back to their residences, their home. And felt… And got stick from their husbands because they were the ones that were bringing the money in. That wasn't the way round God intended it. You know, and all sorts of situations in the name of progress we encountered. I don't know. Maybe power. What happens to men when women become empowered, particularly in a place like that. We had some success stories. We had some very kind of enlightened men, who say "OK, so I can see this is gonna work. My wife is gonna bring money into the family. But I don't want her going out there being a sales person for her things, so I will do that bit".

JM: Yeah.

HS: I will be the one that sort of meets whoever I need to meet to sell something and she will continue with the making. And they would find a deal to do.

JM: Yes.

HS: But that deal is evolution. How you reconcile the potential for a dysfunction between the genders and function again might be the wrong word to use, but. How about get to work through and gets work through a situation like that? Is part of the remarkable.

JM: And they become almost business, business partners or business. You know, that's a big evolution, definitely. And.

HS: Ohh, you are here to make babies and cook and look after me, you know that's the comfortable expectation.

JM: Hmm. Hmm. This is. Yeah, that's for some of the ladies I work with that's the expectation that children have of them. Their husband has of them. It's nice to see that it changes and that in themselves they don't see them, so they don't see themselves anymore as just that. But as creative people.

HS: I think that check is still easier in a UK or a Western context. Whether where... I mean, I met women who, who said thank you very much. I don't want to be empowered. I'm glad my husband's still alive. I'm glad my husband's here to walk behind him. I'm glad my husband appreciates my cooking and doing the washing and bringing up children. I do not want your empowerment. So I mean that speaks also to what happens when the thing that's on offer is not actually wanted.

JM: I guess we, so how do you react to that? You are there for people who want what you have to offer. But the ones who don't want it, it's OK, I guess. No. How? How do you feel when? Because you your idea of...

HS: Quite self-selecting, I mean the ones that aren't interested won't turn up and the ones that are interested will.

JM: Maybe they'll come. Yes, It's also interesting to see what we consider as, us as European woman, as progress, you know, as women who can walk and work and create freely. And what they consider progress or what they want to do.

HS: I mean I think most women. It's difficult, isn't? it's 80,000 people and here am I saying most women. But my experience of all the people that I've met there is that most women would prefer that it there had never been a need for them to work. But as they …how their lives were back in Syria felt right for them. But also when you look at what the UN is mandated to do, it's also coming from the UN and it's coming from NGOs who all bring in female empowerment as a key prerogative of what they are… need to be seen to be delivering. So in that sense, from a UN perspective, they also face these conflicts or potential conflicts, and it's why now why, what is normally determined as protection and livelihoods now have to work so closely together. Well, they have worked very closely together for years, but I don't think when they were originally created, they ever thought livelihoods and protection were gonna need to have such a tight connection as they do.

JM: What do they think? What do they? I'm conscious of the time we've been talking for more than an hour, so if you, you tell me when you have to go. And what do the mothers think for their daughters? In a context like that.

HS: What is interesting is what their daughters tell their mothers. I mean, you would expect, wouldn't you, that they…, It's the 'looking up to' that tells you

what you’re … The woman you're supposed to grow up to be, but actually in the camp. And again, it was it was instigated by the UHNCR very early on. They were confronted with early marriage, and they were confronted with raping and all sorts of things that happened in a camp context that become very heightened, um and they set up, I think it might have been in 2015 or 2014, so about two years after the camp's existence, first was something called the TIGER Girls, which is these inspiring girls enjoy reading, which was quietly to help address the early marriage situation so that young girls could experience relationships with other women, other mother figures if you like, who became known as the TIGER mentors. So what they would do, because girls go to school in the morning and then they come out and boys go to school in the afternoon. When the girls come out in the morning, they had the option to be able to go to different community centres to become a TIGER. And the TIGERS, they came up with that acronym for themselves and looking at all the artwork and all the things that I've come across. These issues of what happens. The day after a young girl starts her periods and how radically her life changes then, are in the centre of what the TIGER Girls were set up to do. But by default what it does is it shows the parents or. I mean there's a massive amount of female headed households there only, but it shows the parental figure that these girls are being shown that there's an alternative way to getting married and one is to be educated. And the other one is a kind of slow but gentle challenge to themselves about what women in the world could become. So for them, their idols become really, really important. Whether that, you know, a Syrian refugee athlete, Singer. And so the importance of role models both in the camp and externally become really, really important to the girls then thinking, wait a minute, there may be another way to do this.
What was really interesting was unlike working with the women where you could very well, I felt because of this tuning that goes on because you don't speak the language and you don't share the faith etcetera, unlike the women where you would see their personalities very distinctly it was, it was incredibly clear. And mostly by a face, you know, because much is covered up. You could apprehend who was a stand up comic almost like who got by on comedy, who got by on wisdom, who got etcetera. With the girls, you couldn't. And what I've noticed with the girls was that they were almost one personality. They were almost one person. And actually, I often wondered whether part of that was… part of that was to do with their age, partly to do with their experience of what it means to come to terms as fleeing for your life and losing people. I have a younger mind to deal with that as opposed to how their elders around them are dealing with it. But also it spoke, I think to the strength in numbers. But if you are going to challenge something as fundamental as changing the way, changing the destiny of a woman, changing the destiny of a young girl, you stick, you stick together. And so it was really interesting. It's TIGER girls, but actually I see a nature that they all share identically, irrespective of maybe coming from different parts of Syria, although most of them come from the same place but coming from different, you know, parental backgrounds. So these all … all these different elements speak to what you were saying earlier about what does it mean to keep vulnerable in these spaces. As a designer, you don't see these things if you keep your coat on.

JM: All those girls did they.. you know, when you did the Coats project with them, so you… did that come up and did, and at the same time did that group spirit come up and at the same time did they see it as an opportunity to express their individuality through the making. Could you see their personality?

HS: It was… the whole project was so much more than we thought it was going to be. Once we've kind of made peace. We had also set up relationships within a community centre without realising that they had never, they'd never even talked to each other. So there was one caravan that was for women to go and do their makeup in private and make each other up and wash each other's hair and things when they enter. Who never spoke to the caravan that was right next to it where… which was women who were making baby clothes and making clothes, who never spoke to the caravan on the other side, which was where the TIGER girls were and the TIGER girl mentors who never spoke to the one next to that which was full of… a form of library, books that you could borrow, etcetera. So we went in thinking all these people were connected and we got we said OK, the makeup people come along. We're gonna make the girls up for their show and the community makers come and help us cut a pattern that everybody can use and then looking around like Oh my God, these people actually don't talk to each other. So the project kind of reconfigured. The relational within the Community Centre, let alone what we were asking the TIGER girls to do. So when you ask about how what the kind of what, what was that group behaviour there versus individuality, the invitation was to discover individuality.

JM: Okay.

HS: And a bit like you saying, when you first meet your women, they said “But I can't design. I don't know where to start”. And they were like that. What do you mean individuality? I think most of the girls we worked with, hadn't started their periods. So they were still in the space of being allowed to dress like a Spice Girl for lack of a better word. Or dress how they wished. And I think their mothers and their parental figures actually enjoyed the freedom of being able, almost sometimes, to the point of doll likeness. You know, the indulgence in the prettifying of the girl, knowing that very soon she was gonna have to stop all that. So we got them, I guess you could say at a good moment of possibility of what a feeling free to discover who they were and how that might be represented on this love coat. And although the workshop, I think was only 10 days and it was 50 degrees heat, working with thermal coats, I mean it was just insane. To begin with, … it went on a journey. To begin with, they were constantly looking at each other like she's put a rose there so I'm going to put a rose here and copying became almost impossible to break. And then, of course, one asks the question, who are we to break that? You know, this is a survival mechanism they've come up with for themselves and we're stepping in and we're saying no. But who are you? You know, and all the rest of it. So you, you get challenged in a lot of ways. And in the moment, you have to decide, stand back or keep pushing. And that again is the new learning of how a designer can experience themselves being sculpted by an environment that they're working in as opposed to going in with the skills that you feel confident with or you feel are worthy of imparting. It's the reverse.

So you are in a constant state of undoing or of being undone. Whilst also carrying an allegiance to certain things which you think, you hope and you believe are worth still insisting upon. And for me, it was beauty. But also being open to my idea of beauty might not be your idea of beauty, but still trying to just say what we have in the air here is the possibility to realise something that you believe is beautiful.
And in fact, it's reminded me that the very first exercise we did before we started the project, and particularly when we thought Oh my God, these people don't actually talk to each other.
I go with this most amazing woman called Deepa. She's been on every trip I've ever been on. She's not UAL, but she's a… She works external to UAL, has done work in UAL. She's basically a conflict resolutionist and a peacemaker, she works all around the world, so she's a fantastic person to have in the room, as it were. Her ability to spot an emotional pin drop behind her head even. Do you know what I mean, she's just alive in that way. So, and I've learned a lot from her about that as well. Even more so now in Africa. yeah, so we played this game and the game she said “Well this needs rescuing. We're gonna have to come up. We're gonna have to play together first before we can even start this project”. So we'd set everything up and we said actually come out, don't start picking up the roses and it come out in here. We're going to pair you up. So we paired everybody up across the different communities. So you might have someone who does beauty with her arm around a TIGER girl, a TIGER girl with her arm around a community leader. One of you is blindfolded and we put a…, they used their scarves in a different way so that they couldn't see. That was interesting for another reason, I should tell you about but, but after we realised why blindfolding had other connotations. And what you did is you put your trust in the person who could still see who had their arm around you, and you, the job they had to do was to walk around this very sparse, barren municipal place and find one thing that they found was beautiful. And it could be, you know, a weed growing out of a crack. The look in that cat's eye, the way the birds are flying at the moment, the way the wind is moving the top, or then whatever it was, and then the person who was blindfolded had it described to them by the person that could see and then they swapped over and they thought it was hilarious. It was. It's like it's something that they had never been asked to do before and so that's when we also realised the power of asking something you've never been asked to do before, particularly if it's done with care is very bonding. Off came the blindfold, they switched, and we were off. It was fine, but we had to almost do that peace and reconciliation work. If you like, before you could start and we had to do it as well.

JM: Ohh yes.

HS: So the UNHCR person had to do and the security guard on the gate had to do it. You know, try putting a blindfold on the security guard. Not easy. That said, so that everybody was the same in a place where we clearly are not the same, but just that moment of experience where we each got to know what it was to have no site and to find beauty brought some level of equality and then of course the magic is that making makes you equal. You know. Me with a needle is the same as you with the needle. In fact, they are better with the needle, yeah.

So these are all sort of techniques if you like, or experiences that have deeply informed me as a designer, but also made me quite homeless now. So whilst these stories have a relevance to talking to students, for example, because they are, you know, our hope for the future in terms of the kind of designers we need rather than the kind of designers we thought we might need. One of the big challenges is how you bring this sort of experience back to the curriculum, then back to other staff and back to students. So whilst we're in Zaatari, I think it was about 8 different staff from different parts of LCF came out with me on different trips, so that was good. And with a couple of people, you know, they now can read my face because they have experienced what I've experienced and that's been really helpful. Ohh. In Africa that's not the case.

JM: Ohh.

HS: I'm not even sure if, at the moment it's safe enough to bring others out.

JM: OK.

HS: Definitely not students.

JM: Then the situation is much more difficult in Africa. And. So thank you. I felt.

HS: I don't know what's your boxes, but it might.

JM: And it doesn't…

HS: Yeah, but it might. Might inform the expansion of some of them.

JM: Yes, it opens them up for sure.

HS: Yeah.

JM: And yeah, boxes are here to. In a way to make things…

HS: Well, there are a start, you can't start without box in a way. Yeah.

JM: But exactly yes. It's a first shot at looking at things and then we open them up and things will never fully fit in boxes. And I think that's why we do what we do because we, we don't fit in boxes I guess, and that's how we make change happen or we try to make change happen and that's OK.

HS: But you could make a box which content is ‘This doesn't fit’.

JM: Yeah, no, exactly. But there was already a feel from my side that there's some… we need something there, about the challenges that we encounter when we work on projects like that. And then there is definitely something... So when I was reviewing after a previous interview, I've changed one of the boxes already, which was the impacts, social impacts, and I've split that into which is the impact on people, on the designer and need to find better words. But and the designer and on the participants. And there's definitely an impact on the designer that we never consider that is really important.

HS: Yes.

JM: And because we are not the typical researcher or designer. Because as you say, we need to open up the.. my project has opened up a lot about me and why and personal history. Because I was not in fashion before. My parents are from Portugal. They moved from Portugal to France and my mum was 19 when she got married. Then she moved to France. She couldn't speak the language. And ended up in a country a bit like in the situation… she was in a

situation of some of the ladies I work with. So. And the first picture, I have,… no the first picture she took in France, she was in the train crocheting. So in a way, so through the project it's been moving things in me. Right.

HS: I think how it changes you is absolutely key.

JM: And people ask me then why do you do this? Why did you change career like that? Because I was in business consulting before, so I did a business school. So nothing to do with what.. In a way, it informs what I do because I look at.

HS: Yeah.

JM: You know how to make the project sustainable, and of course I've learned a lot. But people ask me, why do you do that? and the … you and they.. I've had people tell me “So you haven't been working for X years”. Like. No, I've been working. It's just about the value that you put on the word ‘Work’ is different from what I consider today.

HS: Yeah.

JM: Um, yes, I don't have a salary. I don't have at the end of the month like I used to have, etcetera. But the value of what I do is different. So it's there's been all change and I have evolved and I've thought about my own history and in a way, so what I have realised that what I'm doing now is what my mom would have needed when she arrived in France kind of thing.

HS: That's all there. That's fantastic.

JM: And because so… she arrived, she was 19 and she was bored because my dad was on site, on building sites all week. And so she was lonely. So she got me. In a way, and when I talk to the people at the family centre, they tell me that's exactly what happens with some of the ladies here. They get a baby after a baby because they don't have anything else.

HS: Yeah.

JM: So yeah, so I think there's a big thing that needs to be included and we need to talk about it is how the researcher, designer or another name we might find for that person, is changed and moved or evolves through the process of design for social innovation, fashion design for social innovation, etcetera. And I think in my case it's been linked to making, crocheting, knitting and sewing. Because that's the support that was given to my mum when she was in France. She lost it when she arrived, euh when she was in Portugal. She lost it when she was in France.

HS: You. Yeah.

JM: And so yes. So I think that's definitely something that needs to be mentioned. We need to talk about that and that coat that we take off.

HS: Yes. Well, it might be a bit corny. Is what's round your neck a bird?

JM: Sorry.

HS: You have a necklace on at the moment. Is that a bird? Yeah.

JM: Yes, it is. Yes, it's a bird.

HS: I'm sort of wondering whether it's more about what happens when a designer is in flight. But with that freedom to navigate and reconsider where to land.

JM: Yes.

HS: And why?

JM: And why? Maybe you don't.. You don't.. And and and where? Where and with whom? With whom, that's what…

HS: Yeah.

JM: Was looking for yes. Thank you so much. Yes, it's been an hour 40. I would keep on talking to you and listen to you all day. Is there anything… I think we can maybe wrap up and I hope I will have other opportunities to meet and discuss

HS: Yes, if you get to a point in the project where something comes up that's interesting or something that feels like stuckness or very happy to talk to you again along the way.

JM: Thank you. Thank you. Is there anything you think that at this stage… well you've mentioned so much already. Or some challenges that you've encountered that you think I might encounter in the future or. I don't know, anything you'd like to add really.

HS: I won't put you off with those

JM: Sorry.

HS: I won't put you off with those.

JM: Okay.

HS: Ohh no, I think live it as you're living it. I guess. Because I've been slightly repetitive in where I put my emphasis, whilst we've been talking one of the things you might do is look back over what you've already done. Whether there's any sort of buried treasure there. When you look just through that kind of emotional, empathetic lens. Right from where did that woman first make a mark and why? can that tell me anything new that I might have missed? I think that that's perhaps the parting shot.

JM: Hmm, okay. Thank you.

HS: Alright then.

JM: Thank you so much. And Helen and I, what I'll do is when I usually… I try to do it take some time cause I have so much, so many interviews and but I go through all the transcription. And I try to make a summary of what we discussed or if I managed to you know, change the framework or put some things in the framework, then I'll send it back to you.

HS: Yeah.

JM: You can read it and you know if you've got comments or feedback and then I'll use that for my thesis.

HS: I think the only thing to be really careful with in terms of any contribution from me is context because some of the things that I've said outside of context

can sound, come across alarming and it's so just keep keeping those things connected.

JM: And anyway, before I use the, I'll do that summary and I'll try to write something.

HS: Okay. Yeah. Yes. Great.

JM: And with the context, and I'll send it back to you and you can add anything. And if you feel something is not quite right, please let me know and I'll change things okay.

HS: Lovely. All right.

JM: Okay, thank you so much and have a lovely day.

Appendix 4. Interview transcript – Timo Rissanen

Interview with Timo Rissanen (TR) – Date: 07/09/2023; duration: 57'.

TR: I think it's fantastic.

JM: Thank you. So, there we go, question one is about my definition of pattern cutting, so first the definition that I've got about patternmaking, but also my choice of using making and not cutting and what you think about it.

TR: Yes, I think it makes sense [laughs]. [Silence 00:16:35-00:16:45]. I think that's my Internet playing up.

JM: OK, I can hear you now.

TR: So, I'll start again. Yes, sorry, that's my Internet, I think.

JM: That's OK.

TR: Australian – we're not even going to go to that, the national Internet here is terrible [laughs]. Anyway, yes, I think making is, like you say, it's a really holistic term and it includes more than just cutting and so – and it's not just making of garments, I think your project is also looking at making of individuals, making of designers, like one of the slides just before, kind of, implied. Making of communities, there's all kinds of making that's embodied in the work that you're researching and also doing.

And yes, so, it's really great to hear that, and is that question, how does your practice relate to this definition of patternmaking for me, as well?

JM: Yes, it's for you. You know, when I say I want to include patternmaking over the whole spectrum of fashion design and see it as a practice of fashion design, I, kind of, know already, because I've read your PhD. But maybe your practice has evolved and today how you consider your pattern cutting practice.

TR: Yes. It's definitely also like – it's worth also acknowledging that when I was doing that work I was working with someone from the UK, because pattern cutting is almost exclusively used in the UK. Like in Australia we only talk about patternmaking, then I lived in the US for 10 years, it was only patternmaking. But I also think the Winifred Aldrich books really shaped my thinking at the time. But I do think that, like, yes, I barely use the term pattern cutting now, just because even the context I'm in, in Australia. Like most people talk about patternmaking and, yes, when you emailed and had the definition, your definition in there, it made sense to me.

And yes, making is such an important – like it is such a – it holds so much, that's what I like about the term making. And so I barely do patternmaking these days, I barely make any clothes, I do more textiles-based work. Although, funnily enough, I'm going to go to the US and some of that work will include some patternmaking again, I'm pretty rusty these days. I was much more skilled.

It's like going to the gym, if you don't do it, you get rusty, so I'm a bit rusty at the moment.

JM: It's because your practice evolved and your research work and your career moved.

TR: Yes.

JM: It's like riding a bicycle, if you get back to it.

TR: Yes.

JM: So, I'm sorry, I'm going to get back to all your practice in patternmaking and specifically about the zero waste pattern cutting fashion design. So, maybe I'll go back to that, I have to find the right word for that framework, categorisation, I'm not really sure. I think first, my first question is what do you think of this? Does that make sense to you? And then how would you place – I'd like to discuss with you how would you envision zero waste pattern cutting here, or maybe not in here? I don't know.

TR: Yes, look, first of all I think it's a really interesting categorisation and, yes, if anything, I mean, you have it in the text where it says measurements. You have body measurements underneath. Because when I first looked at it I was like, "Where's the body in this?" And then I thought it was in the measurements, of course all of it goes back on the body. In some way the Winifred Aldrich or any kind of drafting approach, like drafting from body measurements, there is that direct relationship with the body. So, it's a very nuanced thing, it's like might you put body measurements instead of measurements as the title?

I think sometimes in academia we spend too long – [laughs]. Like they matter, but then at the same time we have to also like constrain the amount of time we spend debating these. I thought your categorisation is really comprehensive and, like you said, they're not siloes, there's hybrid ways of doing things. And then coming to zero waste, like you said earlier, I haven't done a comprehensive assessment of each one, but my sense is that it, kind of, really depending on who is doing it, it can be all these things.

Because we all do things slightly differently and that's what – quietly, I can't laugh at people's faces, but I have met, both in industry and in education, patternmakers and patternmaking teachers who are extremely passionate, but they're also very right [laughs]. They are right about everything and if your thinking differs in any way from theirs, you're wrong. And, you know, when I was younger I used to be really scared of them and like I'm wrong. But I've met so many and I've encountered so many with different ways of thinking over the years, which I love, but also like it's given me the perspective that if you arrive at a garment that you're happy with, that works on the body and looks beautiful, does it matter so much how it got there? Sometimes it's almost like I feel like I've been in religious debates with people about you have to draw the arm hole like this or you have to measure this thing like this. And there's these very strict rules.

And the rules are helpful, of course, because they allow us to do things, they're really – they are key, they're important in terms of efficiency and so forth. But I think sometimes they can also start to blind people a little bit, like they become very fixed. So, I love this because for me there's open space to explore and to play, which is what zero waste fashion design for me is, as well.

Like people sometimes think it's just like I'm in some kind of paint experiment of trying to like [unintelligible 00:24:38] everything. And yes, in the first year of my PhD it pretty much felt that way, whereas now I'm more relaxed and I'm also relaxed, if there is a little scrap of waste somewhere, I'm not going to try and force it into somewhere. If the overall garment is beautiful and, yes, I'm much more relaxed these days, I think. I think this is great, I think I see some parallels, like you've expressed it differently to some things I've thought about back in my PhD days. But yes, I think the way you've visualised it, as well, I like the wheel, because for me it's dynamic, like you can go around it in either direction and just, sort of, explore, with curiosity and an open mind and that, to me, is exciting.

Yes, I think, like you said at the beginning, zero waste, depending on who's doing it and what they're doing it, it could be anywhere on the wheel, I think.

JM: I like what you said about the rules, as well, you know, you talk to people who have those set rules and that's the way you have to do it. Because when I started the workshops the ladies came to me and they said, "I'm so glad I'm going to learn from a professional the proper way of cutting a garment". And I looked at them and said, "I'm so sorry, but that's not what I'm going to teach you". Because what I'm looking at is alternative ways of making a garment, that bring you to a garment that is going to fit you and that you like, so this is what I'm going to do.

And actually I tried to ask them, "How would you do this?" Instead of, "This is the way we do". Because I learned from LCF, you know, I'm interested in how do you do it in a different way. So, yes, that resonates a lot with the way they came to me and even, you know, in a world where they are not formed and trained for pattern cutting, they always – they still think about it in a certain way that has been imposed to them. Say, OK, that's the way we're supposed to cut a garment, and I'm really glad today that some of them just – they got free of it.

And even the level of detail or the finishing, I tried to have them relax on this, as well, we don't have an overlocker, because it's expensive and difficult to use, so we look at alternative ways of doing it. It's not perfect, it's fun, at least it's unique, so it's all those things that when you learn pattern cutting and garment making in a more academic way, it has to be perfect sometimes.

So, I like this, and even me, in my practice, I relaxed a lot, because I was very perfectionist, every single seam had to be great and I loved French seam, because you wouldn't see anything. And now, after a year-and-a-half with them, I've relaxed so much, if my topstitching is not straight, it's fine, or, you know – which I think it's really good. Well, at least from my point of view and the way I'm developing the practice with them.

Great, thank you, so I'll – I'd like to – maybe I'll do something specific for zero waste and then I'll place zero waste methods or things that I – or people I've used and show [unintelligible 00:28:33] say, OK, zero waste could actually be in lots of different places.

TR: Yes.

JM: So, let's go to the next question. OK, so, in your view what differentiates patternmaking from other fashion design practices? Or, in other words, what makes it special to you? What does it bring to you, personally?

TR: Wow, these are such massive questions, they're really great.

JM: Because what I'm looking at is also the social value of patternmaking to the pattern cutter, as well.

TR: Yes. And for context I've had the opportunity of working for a fashion company where there were three of us working as patternmakers in the design room or the sample room, really, and also done a lot of work as a freelancer on my own, I mean this is more than a decade ago now. But certainly I did love the social aspect, when I was in a room with a number of other patternmakers, we had a really nice dynamic and I was the most junior one at the time and this was at the start of my career and I learned so much from the other two, as well as the sample machinists.

But even in a fashion company so much goes through them, because they liaise with the designers, they liaise with the sample machinist, often they liaise with production, when something goes into production. There is a lot of the, sort of, lines of communication goes through the patternmaker and so there's a lot of responsibility there too.

But on a personal level, like, part of the magic of fashion for me still is in that, because you have this length of cloth on a table that is just a length of cloth. And through the work that you do and the thinking that you do and also the actions that you take, that cloth then can potentially transform into something that, you know, ideally has an incredible impact on the person that puts it on. I mean that's what fashion, to me, should do.

Like when fashion can be transformative and like I mean in the morning when you get dressed and put something on and it's just kind of perfect. Some days I have that experience and other days it's like we'll just go with this, and obviously today – I've worked from home all day today [laughs]. Not [unintelligible 00:31:33], sorry. But very casual.

But yes, there is that like – and I've also been in situations where I was the designer, so I was patternmaking my own designers, and I've been in situations where somebody else was the designer. But either way, like, for me I did enjoy it, when I worked with good designers I really enjoyed being the part that helped make the idea reality. I did some work with some really bad designers too, [unintelligible 00:32:07] knock offs and I had no respect for that. But I also had to pay my rent and sometimes I was conflicted by also – yes, I basically just had to pay my rent.

But yes, I am grateful for all the years, because there is the perception that fashion designers are in the hierarchy below fashion designers and I've also experience in both educational situations I've worked at, where I've had students who've wanted to become patternmakers. And my colleagues have told them, "You've come to design school and you should be a designer, you know, being a patternmaker is beneath you". And I've said to those students over the years absolutely not, the patternmaking job, it also pays really well. For me, partly, in the early years, when I realised that I was earning more than my friends who are assistant designers, I should [unintelligible 00:33:24].

And yes, I don't believe in the hierarchy, I think it's a much more – like without patternmakers and particularly without good patternmakers, the designer's ideas, they do not exist, ultimately. And the same with sample machinists like

you, once you've worked with an amazing sample machinist, and I mean amazing in terms of the way they can think through how to make something in a way that is also as cost effective as possible, but also as beautiful as possible. I have had the privilege of working with some incredible sample makers over the years and I've learned so much from them as a patternmaker.

Because they've said, "If you change that little bit in the pattern, I can sew it like this instead of like that and it literally saves me five or 10 minutes," and it's like I didn't know that. And so, yes, for me there is still magic in it, I'm sure I – because it's been more than a decade that I did it professionally, in industry there's probably some rose-coloured or rose-tinted lenses that I think back with, because there were some really rough times, as well, in some jobs.

But as an activity, as part of the collective effort that it takes to make garments, to me it is really special, yes. There's magic in it.

JM: I fully agree, I love it. When I talk to people and say – my daughter tells everyone I'm a designer, but I don't feel like I am a designer, because people think straight away a fashion designer is that. So, I say, "No, I'm in the back stage, because that's what I like doing".

TR: It's a different type of designer, it's a more expanded idea of design. Because if you take a really broad definition of design and I can't remember which theorist might have provided that, but you are still intentionally shaping an outcome perhaps, but yes, anyway.

JM: Yes, people think about fashion designers, yes, maybe I am a designer, because I consider design as so broad. And actually the exhibition we're working on in October, the [unintelligible 00:36:04], and we called it We Are Designers, But We Are Not Designers, with the not crossed. Because for me even the ladies I work with, they are designers, because they design their own garments and they design their own creative process, they design their own pattern.

So, for me, as long as you gave them the tools and you believe in people, they are designers. Great, thank you, then the next question is about what do you think, what type of social – potential to foster social change has patternmaking for you?

TR: It's a great question and I hadn't really even thought about it until you emailed me, not in any sort of way, and I think you're probably answering this question with your PhD more than anyone has, to date, that I'm aware of. And yes, I – again, my experiences are in some ways maybe limited, but I think back to a couple of companies where there were several of us working as patternmakers. I do think that, you know – but it's not really social change, it's more organisational cohesion that I think we brought in.

JM: Sorry, my definition of social change is linked to more vulnerable people, women in particular, but social change can have a broad definition, other types of definition. And it's also if you think that social change can have another definition for you, you know, it can be very, very broad.

TR: I do find it helpful to actually think about it through your project and just hearing earlier and seeing some of the images and thinking about that. Like I do think that you're empowering people with the participatory work and that's also

already coming through with some of the quotes that you shared, as well. I think what it is, it's really giving people a sense of agency and agency in relation to these things that we all need for our daily lives. And in relation to our bodies, as well, you know, I could see – even though the identities were covered, I could see that at least one of the women, she was in a hijab. So, there's different ideas of modesty, as well, probably that you negotiate through the conversations.

And that, to me, is exciting too, because, you know, all of our worlds get to expand in those kinds of conversations where one might have grown up with one idea of what the world is like and then we encounter people who've grown up with a very different idea of what the world is like. And to me that's always interesting and really a delight and a privilege to be in those contexts. And yet, at the same time, there's something very fundamentally human that goes back millennia in this effort. And you could think about it as a collective effort over countless generations of humanity of shaping these flat things. Whether it's animals and now fabric, to cover our bodies in ways that are considered socially acceptable and part of whatever culture we might be part of. And in our day and age also probably fashionable, to some extent.

Yes, but before you emailed I hadn't even thought of – I think I had a very mechanistic idea of patternmaking, so even you contacting me has made me think actually a bit more. And it's silly though because there is one precedent that I can think of. So, a colleague at Parsons, she's not there anymore either, but she's in the Netherlands now. I don't know if you know of Pascal [Gatson? 00:40:51]?

JM: No.

TR: And she's a Dutch fashion designer shown in Paris back in the 90s, but then went a different path. But anyway, when she was at Parsons, when we were colleagues at Parsons she did a project with a museum in Japan where they were called guards, but they really were guides at the museum, but their title was guard, and they were women. Pascal worked with the guards where each of them designed and made their own uniform, which I also loved because they weren't uniforms, everybody's uniform was different, so it's kind of like the opposite of uniform.

JM: Yes, because uniform, uniformity, they should all be the same [laughs].

TR: But they made those things and they made the patterns, as well, and there is somewhere – I'll dig up, there is a blog, I don't think Pascal ever published anything about it, but there is a blog that she kept during the project, I'll find it. And if not I can email her and ask her if it's still live somewhere. But I remember both hearing her presentation about it and also reading the blog, like it was such a – there is probably some parallels to what you're doing, because the parallel for me is the empowerment that I hear in the women that you're working with, and also the women that Pascal works with. Because their worries were the same, like I don't know how to make clothes, how can I make my own uniform?

And then they also started helping each other, because Pascal was only in Japan for a set period of time, they didn't all finish their uniforms in that time and then they kept helping each other. And it was really beautiful coming together. I'll find something online for you and send it to you after.

JM: Thank you, that would be amazing, that sounds really interesting. Yes, I do think that pattern cutting, patternmaking in my case, I keep saying pattern cutting, brings people together when you're making together. It's another dimension from, you know, commercial patterns. So, one of them, she really likes using commercial patterns and she brought them, but then when you understand them and you know how to do them, even how to change commercial patterns, it brings another level of agency.

But if that's what they want to do, I kind of let them decide. Actually from the beginning I let them decide what they want to do, I just introduced some methods and it's really nice to see. And it's nice to see that now they're wearing the garments that they make, so that's nice.

TR: Yes, like that's – I used to be so dismissive of that in my arrogant younger fashion designer days, because I was like, "I'm the fashion designer, other people can't do it as well as me". Whereas now, having lived a bit and having had time to think and having time – like opportunities to meet people and maybe you get a little bit more humble over the years [laughs]. Yes, for me it's a joy to see people making clothes and I remembered writing a book review, I don't know if you know Amy Twigger Holroyd, she's at Nottingham Trent. When her book Folk Fashion came out about six years ago I wrote a review of it for a journal and I remember at the end of the review, I might have even written it into review, but I've been in critiques as a design educator where we – like a term that we use to critique students' work is, "That looks homemade".

JM: [Laughs] OK.

TR: And I'm pretty sure I actually say in the book review that from now on I will never use that as a critique again or a criticism, because if it looks homemade then great. Like there are more appropriate terms, like if it's – like I think sometimes homemade is, kind of, a – behind it there's something else. But if something is actually homemade, like that's beautiful, and yes, anyway, I have mellowed over the years.

JM: [Laughs]. Yes, so, one of the reasons that I chose to – so, that's a quote from one of the ladies, her name is [unintelligible 00:45:53], and when we started the sessions about draping, the first session she looked at me and she said, "Joana, we are not designers". And I said, "[Unintelligible 00:46:03], just pick up a mannequin and try, you've got nothing to lose, just try out". I had also, you know, a folder with lots of different ways of manipulating fabric, because some of them just went for it with scissors and others are a little bit more less confident in doing that.

So, I had that folder, I said, "Have a look, you've got dots, gathers," you know, simple things like that, or even you're cutting a rectangle in the middle, you can do that. And then she had two mannequins and she went back and forth to both of them, she didn't touch them, and she didn't put a pin. I said, "[Unintelligible 00:46:38], are you OK?" "I don't know what to do, I don't know what to do". And then she left and she went shopping with her daughter, she came back, she came straight to me, that's the lady that for the first three sessions I couldn't understand her name because she was so quiet and so shy. And then she came straight to me on that day saying, "Joana, I have so many ideas, I went to

do shopping with my daughter and I looked at the garments and they're so poor-quality," and I told her, "I can make that, I can make this".

And then, so, she picked one mannequin and she started draping the sleeves and she made amazing sleeves, like puffy sleeves that gathers, pleats here, pleats here. Pleats here, pleats here, and gathers here, and they were very nice. And she looked at me and she said, "I've never seen a sleeve like that," she was saying about her own work, and I said, "Yes, [unintelligible 00:47:33], because, you see, you are a designer". And she just smiled.

And then so I was always joking with her saying, "[Unintelligible 00:47:42], you are like McQueen now," and she was laughing. But from there I think she had that moment, like yes, I can, and it's not that difficult, or it's just let's take the risk, I've got nothing to lose. So, that's why that exhibition is called We Are Designers with the not – because in a way it celebrates their own journey. But to come back to what you're saying it's also sending a message saying that to be a fashion designer you don't need to go to Central Saint Martins. It's like it's good to go, if you can afford Central, but you can be a fashion designer even if you come from a deprived area of London, if you are a middle-aged woman with five children, with a culture that doesn't celebrate being a woman, etc., etc.

So, it's about that and that's exactly what you were saying, I guess, in the fashion designer thinking that only him or her is good at that and it's, kind of, democratising that skill of creating garments, really.

TR: Yes, and I think Madeleine Vionnet, who for me still is probably one of the greatest designers that ever lived, she didn't go to fashion school and she opened her own house. I think she was 39 and she had worked since about 12 and just learned skills gradually and then got to a point where clearly her brain was full of ideas what to do with those skills. And not that everybody wants to become a Madeleine Vionnet either, but like I mean Vivienne Westwood, as well, she didn't go to fashion school either. Again, she is one of the greatest designers for me.

And so, you know, you don't have to become a Vivienne Westwood, but the point being that if you just give it a go and keep doing it, it's like riding a bicycle, you get better at it. But it's like anything, any kind of complex skill, the more you do it, the better you get at it and yes.

JM: So, those ladies, they live – it's a 10-minute from Central St Martins and most of them have never been in front of Central St Martins. So, it's that idea of, yes, sometimes that elitism is – creates barriers. But, OK, anyway, thank you. So, I think we got through all my key questions, now it's more about if there's anything that you think that I'm missing or any important point that you'd like to raise.

TR: No, I think like the community aspect, again, neither of them focused on patternmaking, but there was this, kind of, focus on communal making in relation to garments. So, Amy's work, Amy Twigger Holroyd's work in her PhD, which became the book Folk Fashion. I mean her work is more in knitwear, but the community aspect was quite strong from what I can recall in her work, and then the project by Pascal. I'll find some links for you and send them to you, because I don't think there's like a single published paper about Pascal's project

in Japan, but the blog might still be – like there might be a WordPress blog that's still like somewhere in the depths of the Internet.

JM: When we used to use those blogs.

TR: Yes, and you may know this, but only because I've not looked at my PhD in a long time, but I can't remember if I did it in my PhD or I did it somewhere else. But somewhere I know I have talked about fashion design without fashion designers. And I didn't come up with it, it came from Bernard Rudofsky, who I cite in my PhD. He was this quite strange I think Austrian-American, like Austrian born, but lived in America, kind of defies definition. But in some ways I would call him a historian and a design theorist and a bit of an anthropologist. And he wrote a couple of really whacky books, but he also curated the exhibition in 1944 called Are Clothes Modern?

But anyway, outside of the focus on clothing he also wrote a book called Architecture Without Architects and that's where I came up with the fashion design without fashion designers. Because when I was looking at all those historical garments, like traditional garments, whatever you want to call them, whilst they weren't designed by a named designer, in my view you could argue that they were designed and refined by collective generations of people who were actually designing in that process. Even though they weren't professional designers.

And yes, I think there is immense power in that, the title of the book, We Are Designers, because you, kind of, argue for both, and yes, I would say that they are designers that you're working with and that's beautiful, actually. So, yes, I'll email you a couple of links after the call.

JM: OK, thank you.

TR: Yes, but I'm really looking forward to hopefully one day reading the thesis, as well.

JM: Thank you, let me know if you ever pass by London.

TR: Will do, I realise today that I'm actually there for a few hours next week. Yes, I have a stopover that's longer than I realised. It's still within the one day, but I arrive in the morning and fly out in the afternoon, and not quite long enough to do anything, but I'll probably be in London next year, so I'll let you know.

JM: So, I'll send you the invite anyway to the exhibition and then you'll have a link, we'll have an Instagram page, post some pictures, so if that's something you'd like to follow.

TR: Thank you, and there is a former colleague, one of my teachers actually, she lives in London now. She's English, but she lived in Australia for I think 30 or 40 years and moved back four years ago. And really interesting fashion person, I think she would love your project.

JM: What's her name?

TR: [Val Horridge? 00:55:01].

JM: OK.

TR: She's retired now, but she was my teacher back in the 90s, then we were colleagues, she retired in 2009 when I moved to New York, in fact we had a joint party, we had her retirement party and my farewell.

JM: I'll try to find her contact and I'll send the invite, that would be nice. Great, thank you so much. I was wondering if – I tried to contact Holly McQuillan, as well, to see if she would be interested in the interview. But I don't know, I tried on her website, because I couldn't find her contact details. Are you still in contact with her?

TR: Yes, we have been, because also the second edition of the book is about to come out. I got my copies yesterday or the day before and actually we exchanged a couple of messages on Instagram. But have you got her work email at [unintelligible 00:56:07]?

JM: No. Ask her if she's OK for you to send me the email address or – yes.

TR: It's her work email, they're public anyway.

JM: OK, I couldn't find any. She has a website, I contacted through the contact form on there, but then it was summer, people are busy, so it's OK.

TR: Yes, I do know she was on quite a long leave over the summer, so, yes, so she may have missed it completely.

JM: OK, thank you so much.

TR: No problem.

JM: Thank you, Timo, have a safe trip.

TR: Thank you and all the best with your amazing project.

JM: Thank you, all the best to you and thank you again for your time and, yes, it was amazing talking to you, because I remember seeing you in LCF and I follow you, I've read your books, so yes, I love your work.

TR: Thank you.

JM: Thank you so much, see you soon.

TR: Yes, take care.

Appendix 5. Project profile – Olivia Weber



Figure 1: A participant embroidering her t-shirt during a workshop (Source: Olivialarastudio, 2022).

Designer/Project lead: Olivia Weber, sustainable fashion entrepreneur and feminist embroidery designer.

Project name: *Trashion Factory* – t-shirt embroidery project.

Project description: *Trashion Factory* used to take clothes from recycling warehouses that would otherwise end up in landfills and remake them into trashionable wardrobe staples and one-off pieces that were released online. Alongside bespoke upcycling services, *Trashion Factory* provided weekly craft workshops for women in the local area teaching new craft and making skills, including embroidery. The T-shirt embroidery project involved local women in designing and manufacturing their embroidered T-shirts to sell online.

Element	Description
Theme of reflection	**Entrepreneurship:** Creating a fashion brand with social innovation values that collaborates with local communities to empower them **Activism**: Using fashion for feminism and women empowerment
Collaborative approach	Co-creation/co-design
Designer's and team's roles	**Conversation facilitator** to lead the participants' design process **Teacher** of different skillsets to enable the realisation of the designs **Maker** together with the participants First seen as the 'creative' person by participants Overall **project manager** **Self-confidence 'promoter**': participants need to gain self-confidence before seeing themselves as designers
Participants' roles	**Designers** first, then **makers** of their designs after acquiring specific making skills. Active participants in the **collaborative** learning, **supporters** of others' achievements and **co-designers**
Other stakeholders' roles	Funding organisations such as councils
Project outputs	8 workshops, 10 participants, ~15 different T-shirt designs, 3 designs chosen for production and for sale on Etsy, 3 participants trained in machine embroidery. 12 T-shirts sold, remuneration of 3 participants and reinvestment in the project
Project outcomes	**Participants**: **Self-expression** through design, creativity development, improvement of self-confidence and well-being, skill acquisition, giving some participants a purpose and change in perception from family members and friends **Designer**: Personal re-evaluation, identification of skill acquisition in business development, self-reflexion on personal entrepreneurial journey
Social impact	Improvement of self-confidence leading to **employability and community engagement**
Ripple effects	**Place-making**, with participants and other organisations inspired to develop making and other creative workshops in the neighbourhood
Approach to innovation	**Challenging the traditional fashion design process**: a Community Benefit Fashion Company, led by the community's creativity, making fashion design accessible to people who have no/little design skills and designing the products and building the brand with them**.**
Method of action	Participative and collaborative making workshops
Design practice	Mood boards and collage, brainstorming; hand and machine embroidery; craft meditation
Challenges	• Participant recruitment • Participant retention over a longer period of time for a project • Promoting self-confidence within participants. • Change takes time and the designer's involvement needs to be over a long period of time.

Appendix 6. Project profile – Helen Storey



Figure 2: Zaatari camp women and Helen pose for a group photo during a creating the scent of Syria workshop (Source: London College of Fashion, 2025).

Designer/Project lead: Helen Storey, Professor of Fashion and Science at LCF

Project name: UNHCR Designer in residence, Zaatari Refugee Camp (Jordan), Maratane Refugee Camp (Mozambique), Dzaleka Refugee Camp (Malawi).

Project description: In 2019, Helen Storey became the first artist in residence at Zaatari Refugee camp, in Jordan. Her role as an artist has been to work in collaboration with Syrian women and girls to co-create projects using fashion and design thinking, that would create a meaningful change to the improvement of their lives. The project has since expanded to African refugee camps where Helen continues to work with women and girls.

Element	Description
Theme of reflection	Researching **counter narratives for fashion's use and for design to play an activist role** in creating meaningful change to the improvement of refugee lives, with a focus on women and girls
Collaborative approach	**Genuine relationships** **Reciprocal knowledge exchange, collaborative partnerships**: refugees and researchers learning from each other
Designer's and team's roles	Collaborator, teacher, student, artist, facilitator, observer, and translator of knowledge (ie. seeing, reading, and interpreting the various languages in which knowledge expresses itself)
Participants' roles	Collaborators, teachers, students, artists, designers
Other stakeholders' roles	Gatekeepers: UNHCR Funding Collaborators and partners University support (UAL, LCF)
Project outputs	*Made in Zaatari Centre* for female entrepreneurship: soap and perfume making lab, training space for products and crafts, hydroponics garden, beauty salon, creche, and retail/gallery space to sell to visitors. Artistic opportunities: • Carving Time – an exhibition in London of work by artist Tarek Hamden from Zaatari Refugee Camp, Jordan. • Venice Design Biennale – Work by Tarek Hamden exhibited in Venice 2021, and sold, for the first time, to a Swiss Art Collector. Retail opportunities: • Collaboration with Turquoise Mountain to sell products internationally. Education and children: • *Love Coats* project and TIGER girls: Coat making and embellishment workshops with a closing catwalk show. • *Drawing Reality* – An online project to teach animation to the children of Zaatari during lockdown – sharing the youth experience of COVID-19 in camp and 18 months without school. Other projects: Masks 4 Zaatari
Project outcomes	**Participants**: Skill acquisition and creativity development, creation of strong relationships between peers and with other groups of residents. **Designer**: Self-development, skill acquisition, learning about oneself, 'undoing' oneself.
Social impact	***Love Coats* project**: bringing hope and an alternative vision for the girls' future; promoting a culture of upcycling. **Long-lasting legacy:** Self-sustained projects without the designer: Trained refugees to pass on the skills further and take the lead on future projects. Entrepreneurship and financial independence. Independence from NGOs.
Ripple effects	More soap making labs opened around Zaatari. Innovation Lab at Al-al Bayt University (Jordan). Collaboration with the UNHCR in other refugee camps in Africa.

	Learnings passed on within UAL curriculum.
Approach to innovation	Introducing existing methods in a new context Challenging available resources and conditions: “how in a place of dust and poverty you create something of quality.” (Helen Storey) Acknowledgement of emotions as part of the research and design process Genuine relationships to create long-lasting valuable change
Method of action	Making workshop and courses delivered by professionals (UAL, Elie Saab, …)
Design practice	Embroidery and embellishment on clothes, soap and perfume making, jewellery making, beauty and make up, crafts.
Challenges	Extreme deprivation and endemic poverty Hostile politics of hosting governments (Africa) Expectations of funding organisations Developing products that are both true to the makers’ culture and faith and appealing to the international customer Understanding the trauma, history and stories of people and adjusting the designer’s personal expectations and not imposing western-based goals Personal challenges of letting oneself being emotionally unguarded

Appendix 7. Project profile – Anja-Lisa Hirscher



Figure 3: *The Co-sewing café*, 2016, South Germany (Source: Hirscher, 2020).

Designer/Project lead: Anja-Lisa Hirscher, PhD Aalto university. Designer-researcher interested in exploring design as a means for engaging, educating and skilling people in alternative, local and more sustainable modes of production and consumption.

Project name: PhD research, When Skilful Participation Becomes Design: Making Clothes Together.

Project description: In her doctoral research, she explores “matters of skilful participation in relation to the designers’ role, and the social and material changes which occur in alternative spaces of peer production when diverse people make clothes together” (Hirscher, 2020, p.2). With the creation of peer production makerspace settings (co-sewing cafés, makershop) focusing on making garments in participatory and collaborative ways, Anja explores the roles of designers and users and how they evolve and blur in situations of participatory design.

Element	Description
Theme of reflection	**Infrastructuring:** Creating the conditions (place, equipment, material, facilitation, supporting network) for people to exchange and learn about sustainable fashion through peer-production of their own garments
Collaborative approach	**Peer-production**: participatory fashion making with a peer-to-peer approach
Designer's and team's roles	Designer and researcher, maker and facilitator (making the event possible, "reducing the barriers")
Participants' roles	From visitor and input takers to learners, active participants and makers, to then becoming teachers, designers and organisers
Other stakeholders' roles	Funding organisations
Project outputs	• About 60 workshops, hundreds of participants, numerous garments made • Co-sewing café still running, managed by three participants • Collaborations with local schools: delivery of upcycling workshops and organisation of a fashion show
Project outcomes	• **Participants**: Community engagement, skill acquisition and skill exchange through peer learning, improvement in self-confidence and agency, and empowerment • **Designer/researcher**: Skill acquisition in pattern making and garment making, improvement of workshop facilitation skills
Social impact	Place-making: creation of a safe place to meet others Development of more sustainable consumer behaviour towards fashion Occupation and sense of purpose to new project leaders
Ripple effects	• Reinvigorating of the village life
Approach to innovation	Creating something new for the community from existing directly available resources (participants sewing machines, old garments, …) Reconsidering an existing approach, peer-making, as a method to introduce sustainable behaviours of fashion consumption
Method of action	Participatory peer-making drop-in workshops
Design practice	Garment recycling and upcycling based on many different fashion practices (sewing, crocheting, visible mending, …) Emphasis on machine sewing
Challenges	Forming the next generation of designers Funding and economic sustainability • Workload for facilitators and volunteers

Appendix 8. Project profile – Philippe Guilet



Figure 4: *Projet Renaissance* workshop (Source: Projet Renaissance, no date).

Designer/Project lead: Philippe Guilet, a former design assistant to Karl Lagerfeld, Thierry Mugler and Jean-Paul Gaultier founder and creative director at *Projet Renaissance*.

Project name: *Projet Renaissance*, Val-de-Marne, France.

Project description: Founded in 2018 by Philippe Guilet, *Projet Renaissance* ('rebirth' in French) aims to prove that Haute Couture can be led by social and environmental purposes:

- By upcycling second-hand high-end garments into unique Haute Couture pieces.
- By providing training opportunities in Haute Couture craftsmanship and know-how to immigrants, refugees, and low-income local residents, who face challenges to find work opportunities, and by providing a route to employment within the luxury fashion industry.

Element	Description
Theme of reflection	Environmental concern: upcycling second-hand garment Social concern: providing training opportunities and access to employment to vulnerable communities Maintenance and passing on of skills and know-how: training focused on the techniques and know-how of French Haute Couture
Collaborative approach	Training
Designer's and team's roles	• Creative director, fashion designer • Mentors
Participants' roles	Apprentices
Other stakeholders' roles	• Support and grants from the French Government • Funding organisations (*e.g.*, Kering luxury group) • Industry partners (*e.g.*, Luxury fashion brands such as Alaïa, YSL, Chloé, Richmond) • Governmental training and employment entities for recruitment • Community partners
Project outputs	• 12 months training in Haute Couture practices • Annual fashion shows presenting the apprentices' work • 2 classes of apprentices graduated, new class in 2023/2024 • 1397 applications for 10 spaces • Graduates employed within large Parisian Haute Couture houses (*e.g.*, Saint Laurent, Chanel)
Project outcomes	**Participants**: • Skill acquisition in Haute Couture practices, techniques and know-how • Skill acquisition in sustainable fashion and upcycling • Improvement of self-confidence and life skills • Pride and sense of achievement • Financial stability and security: apprentices earn a minimum wage (SMIC), 80% paid by the government • Route to employment within the ateliers of Haute Couture and luxury fashion companies or path to entrepreneurship
Social impact	Social reintegration through employment
Ripple effects	Haute Couture and Luxury fashion companies diversifying their routes for recruitment Introduction of sustainable fashion practices (upcycling) within Haute Couture and Luxury fashion Changing mentalities
Approach to innovation	Reconsidering ways of doing with a new purpose: Reconsidering Haute Couture with a social and sustainable purpose Bringing ways of doing in a new context: Bringing upcycling to French Haute Couture and bringing Haute Couture to deprived suburbs Creating a new approach: Creating the *Méthode Renaissance* to deconstruct and reconstruct Haute Couture
Method of action	12 months training based on learning by making
Design practice	Upcycling

	Deconstruction and reconstruction Haute Couture practices and know-how based on craftsmanship, precision and attention to detail
Challenges	• Financial challenges

Appendix 9. Project profile – Lucy Orta



Figure 5: *Traces: Stories of Migration* community workshop, Lucy Orta with a participant (Source: Orta and Palestra, 2023, pp. 4-5).

Designer/Project lead: Lucy Orta, visual artist, member of the Centre for Sustainable Fashion and professor and chair of Art and the Environment, London College of Fashion, UAL.

Project name: *Traces: Stories of Migration*.

Project description: "Between 2021 and 2023, Lucy Orta engaged with communities across London boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets with the support of *Making for Change*, as part of LCF's The Portal Centre for Social Impact. The programme of collaborative workshops was centred around storytelling and textile heritage, using the medium of cloth and stitch as a common language through which multigenerational migration histories take form. 77 participants took part and created 'Story Cloths' in response to the process" (Orta and Palestra, 2023, p.3). The stories inspired Lucy Orta to create a collection of textile portraits of the participants.

Element	Description
Theme of reflection	**Story-telling:** Explore migration histories that are woven into the history and fabric of East London: Explore the experiences of first, second and third generation people affected by migration and the memories accumulated as people journey from one place to another, within the economic, cultural and historic context of the East End rag trade.
Collaborative approach	**Participatory art**: Facilitation of collaborative storytelling and textile craft workshops with communities
Designer's and team's roles	Artist and facilitator Team: Facilitators, teachers, and makers
Participants' roles	Learners, story tellers and artists
Other stakeholders' roles	7 supporting organisations across 2 east London boroughs supported with venues, resources and material, project collaborators, gate keepers and access to community, participant recruitment, organisation, and logistics. Funding partners: Fund providers
Project outputs	• Over 77 participants from 37 different countries of origin • Story Cloths: 67 original textile creative artefacts of different sizes 2D and 3D, in a range of textile-craft techniques that depict and resume each participant's migration journey and show the memories, histories and heritage of communities living in the East End • 50 textile portraits created by Lucy Orta: a collection of large format textile portraits of each participant inspired by the Story Cloths • Exhibitions at the Nunnery Gallery (1,635 exhibition visitors) and at LCF • 2 community showcases of the story cloths • Critical writing and essays by academics and early career researchers
Project outcomes	**Participants**: • Community engagement and connections, improvement of wellbeing and self-confidence, Creativity development. • Skill acquisition and development in textile-based crafts. • Knowledge exchange and reciprocal learning. • Expressing one's own voice and identity through art. • Connection to one's family history. • Sharing and empathy development between participants of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds **Facilitation team:** Skill development and development of own artistic practice

Social impact	• Participants:
	  ○ Creation of a shared identity with other community members
	  ○ Discovery of new network, avenues of creation, and new educational and work opportunities
	• Giving a voice to underrepresented communities and recognition of the value of diversity
	• Raising visibility and awareness about diverse cultural and social experiences of migrant communities and their contribution to the history of East London

Ripple effects	Side outputs:

	• Poetry book, *Needle Around her Neck* written by Natalie Abi-Ezzi a collection of poems weaving together migrant stories through the Rag Trade history, with participant stories • Film by David Betteridge: documenting the process of realising Story Cloths • Documentary photography by Lori Demata Education and employment opportunities: • Signposting pathways to vocational qualifications and job opportunities by community partners: BBBC referred 5 participants to the *Making for Change* training programme and 3 were recruited. • Professional development through employment with partner organisations for participants and team members: Bow Arts Employed 3 participants to run sessions in the public programme, 2 of them secured a studio space to further their practice; 1 facilitator finding a new employment opportunity • 1 participant applying for PhD programme at LCF • LCF curriculum projects Generation of connections: • Connections between boroughs and community centres • New connections with industry partners • Access to making spaces in East London Engagement of the general public, triggering wider conversations about migration and immigration, changing perceptions
Approach to innovation	Employing participatory practice-based methodologies for art, in particular textile-based making practices, to foster the development of individual artistic practices and explore local community histories
Method of action	Series of 7 weekly participatory making workshops (2 hours each)
Design practice	Creative activities undertaken during the workshops: 1. Storytelling 2. Textile craft: applique, embroidery, stencilling, block printing, image transfer, machine stitching 3. Photograhy 4. Filming 5. Exhibiting Oral story telling used as a device to develop pictorial narratives that are shaped into textile artefacts in activity sessions. Participants were also encouraged to share their own crafts and skills in textile crafts Lucy Orta's portraits using embroidery-applique in organza fabric
Challenges	• Working within budget and timeframe constraints that might limit the broader potential of the project • Budgeting and funding • Initial difficulty to recruit and retain participants, followed by adjustments to communication and high sign ups and low rates of drop-outs • Planning for divergent levels of participants' abilities and skills

Appendix 10. Project profile – Joanna Maiden



Figure 6: *SOKO Kenya* factory (Source: SOKO Kenya, no date).

Designer/Project lead: Joanna Maiden, Founder and CEO

Project name: *SOKO Kenya*, “Cutting a new pattern for the fashion industry”.

Project description: Founded in 2009, *SOKO Kenya* is an ethical clothing manufacturer in Kenya that puts people, communities and life at the heart of everything they do. With values of equality and quality of life for all, *SOKO Kenya* produces quality garments which improve the quality of life for employees and customers alike. *SOKO Kenya* is a living wage employer, with a price structure ensuring that employees are fairly remunerated and that their families can thrive. They also engage with partners to bring education, skills and female empowerment to the wider community via the ‘Community Trust’ and the ‘Kujuwa Initiative’.

Element	Description
Theme of reflection	Ethical and sustainable fashion manufacturing Building a fashion factory with a social purpose: Improving living conditions and life opportunities for people in rural Kenya
Collaborative approach	Stitching Academy: sewing training school *SOKO Kenya* factory: employment 'Kujuwa Initiative': education, employment
Designer's and team's roles	Project designer and strategist Network builder Employer and manager Enabler and problem-solver Listener
Participants' roles	Trainers and trainees; employees; makers
Other stakeholders' roles	Brands: Fashion designers and project partners Gatekeeper: first lady who introduced Joanna to a group of 4 makers in Kenya Funders (loans or donations): financial support
Project outputs	• Original business model • A clothing manufacturing factory, a charity and social enterprise • From 4 to 150 *SOKO Kenya* employees in 14 years • 80% of the graduates from the Stitching Academy in formal employment or managing their own income-generating business • Partnerships with brands around the world
Project outcomes	**Participants**: • Secure employment with a living wage • Skill acquisition in professional clothing manufacturing, life skills, employability • Access to health care services • Flexibility for single mothers and free childcare • Employee pension • Training in financial literacy, business and entrepreneurial skills • Education and training in female sexual health • Creativity development Sense of pride in making garments that are sold and worn internationally (cf. when Michelle Obama worn one of their dresses).
Social impact	**Participants**: Development of new work opportunities and entrepreneurial possibilities Better and safer living conditions (ex: reducing violence against women, female sexual health programme, living wages) Better life opportunities and a vision for a brighter future for participants and the wider community (ex: living wages paying for school fees, supporting girls to go to school by reducing period precarity) Long-term financial security (ex: with a pension) Wellbeing improvement Happier, healthier and confident community More certainty for the future **Project lead**: Personal development, growth and learning, "Massive steep learning curve"

Ripple effects	
Approach to innovation	"Building a profitable business founded on being a force for good": Expanding the role of a fashion factory as merely employer, by giving more than a 'job' but holistically supporting the staff and the whole community with challenges and issues that they face along their lives Challenging the common hierarchical and linear approach of the fashion industry and the brand-supplier relationship by building strong partnerships based on strong shared values
Method of action	Training courses and workshops, educational workshops, employment
Design practice	Fashion 'Cut & sew' manufacturing, professional sewing
Challenges	Overcoming the personal questioning and "moral inventory around [her] beliefs" and about "being a white middle class woman" founding and managing an ethical company in Kenya. Dealing with violence related issues within the community

Appendix 11. Project profile – Claire Swift



Figure 7: *Making for Change* training and manufacturing workshop at HMP Downview (Source: Caulfield, Curtis and Simpson, 2018, cover page).

Designer/Project lead: Claire Swift, Director of Social Responsibility at London College of Fashion

Project name: *Making for Change*, HMP Downview women prison and Poplar Works.

Project description: Established in 2014, *Making for Change* Fashion Training and Manufacturing workshop at HMP Downview is a partnership between HM Prison Service and LCF. *Making for Change* provides training in fashion production skills and accrediting participants with industry-recognised qualifications; offering a route away from re-offending whilst simultaneously addressing the skills shortage within the UK fashion manufacturing industry.

Making for Change, Poplar Works is a community-focused fashion training and manufacturing unit based at Poplar Works, offering accredited training and employment opportunities for women from marginalised community groups and ex-offenders.

Element	Description
Theme of reflection	Infrastructuring for the creation of opportunities for vulnerable women and creation of a more equitable model for the fashion industry Reducing barriers and creating opportunities for vulnerable women (local women and ex-offenders) and addressing the skill shortage within the UK and London fashion manufacturing industry
Collaborative approach	• Community engagement and consultation, co-design • Education, training, and employment
Designer's and team's roles	• Listeners • Facilitators and strategists • Educators and mentors • Employers and 'providers' of employment opportunities in garment manufacturing • Makers, co-producers, co-designers "*We design the spaces to enable interactions to happen and, as I said, we try not to impose or take over or dictate or direct, but we, kind of, just enable that space. And I think that's what we do quite well, and I think what we're quite good at is bringing the different collaborations together*."
Participants' roles	Students, makers, co-producers, co-designers
Other stakeholders' roles	• External contributors: mentors, teachers, facilitators • Funding organisations • Partners from the industry, universities, and the community • Evaluation organisations
Project outputs	• Accredited training programme: Level 1 and Level 2 ABC qualifications in Fashion & Textiles. • Between 2014 and 2021, 150 women prisoners have engaged with the programme, 64 have completed ABC Level 1 and 17 have completed ABC Level 2, 5 released women have secured employment related to their training, 80 community participants engaged through Poplar Works, 12 community participants engaged in ABC Level 1 and 8 in ABC Level 2, 4 community participants are in flexible paid work experience within *Making for Change* • Industry recognised manufacturing workshops, producing for clients • Participants develop technical folders and portfolios to show potential employers • Employment opportunities and enterprise support programmes • Collaborations with LCF students and alumni

Project outcomes	**Participants**: • Skill development and upskilling during training and employment at *Making for Change* manufacturing workshops in high-quality garment manufacturing • Improvement in mental health and well-being, aspirations and hopes for a better future, resilience, self-confidence, and self-esteem, leading to perseverance, ambition and agency • Sense of achievement • Improvement in social skills and behaviour (*e.g.*, Patience, tolerance, control of emotions) • Access to a safe, positive, and supportive environment • Community building and social support • Building of a supportive community and strong bonds with facilitators • Access to employment opportunities within the manufacturing workshop at Poplar • Acquisition of employability skills in the fashion industry
Social impact	**Participants**: Decrease of re-offending rate in women participating to the prison programme
Ripple effects	• Opportunities for further training and employment with partner organisations (*e.g.*, Participants joining the employability programme of Circle Collective, focusing on employability in retail and then finding full-time employment) • Learnings transferred into the university curriculum (LCF)
Approach to innovation	Developing an accessible training and employment programme for women away from opportunities, to address the shortage of technically skilled staff with the London fashion manufacturing industry: • Designing a bespoke training qualification programme and introducing it to situations of vulnerability: Designing a bespoke approach to training tailored to the needs and aspirations of women participants in situations of vulnerability, who do not usually have access to such training and qualification • Challenging traditional recruitment routes: Opening new routes for recruiting skilled workforce • Challenging traditional work organisation in the industry: Adapting the manufacturing and work model to the needs of the employees. For instance, adapting working hours to school hours and allowing more part-time work
Method of action	• Community based workshops • Training programmes: structured year-long programme with accredited qualification • Employment
Design practice	Garment making
Challenges	• Understanding what is stopping women • Cultural barriers • Overcoming the ‘universal credit trap’ • Adapting the employment model to caring responsibilities and other constraints and barriers • Involving LCF students in the project • Developing the project and going through organisational changes or programme changes with vulnerable people • Consistency and retention of skills learnt by women to unable consistent high-quality manufacturing activities (Caulfield et al., 2018, p. 28)

Appendix 12. Discussion summary – Socially-engaged designer

SOKO Kenya – Joanna Maiden

Topics discussed

- **Collaboration with employees**: Joanna Maiden shared that the people who first started working with her still work in the factory today. Joanna Maiden has built strong and long-lasting relationships based on shared core values.

  > "*In terms of our team people, you know, the people I started with are still with me and we […] we're very much a community. […] the values are core to everybody here*".

- **Building her team**: Joanna Maiden shared that she started working with four people after meeting a designer who was already manufacturing in Kenya. The team then grew and Joanna Maiden brought in expert people to train her employees.

- **Growing *SOKO Kenya***: Joanna Maiden explained that *SOKO Kenya* has grown "*organically over the time*", thanks to some small amounts of funds borrowed or donated, but mainly on their own thanks to the orders received through the years.

- **Collaboration with brands:** *SOKO Kenya* challenges the common client-supplier relationship and builds strong partnerships with brands that share their core values which ensures that the relationship will support and benefit all. At *SOKO Kenya*, people work closely with the brands to develop the designs, offering new techniques and skills that go beyond 'cut and sew', including suggesting incorporating local crafts in the designs. Joanna Maiden mentioned that they are developing skills and techniques that offers opportunity for people who do not know how to use professional sewing machines to join the team, for instance hand embroidery**.**

  > "*In terms of the brands that we work with, I'm really passionate about building partnerships and it not being the kind of, conventional client-supplier brand relationship. So, the brands that work with us are really bought into what we're doing, and we're really bought into them, so there's a real commitment to mutual growth, mutual success".*

- **Holistic support**: Joanna Maiden explained that at *SOKO Kenya*, they do not only offer training or a job but they support people holistically in lots of different aspects of their lives: the Stitching Academy teaches professional sewing skills as well as financial literacy, money management, formal employment, family planning and health advice, and more; the 'Kujuwa Initiative' supports school girls and teaches them about woman health and provides advice and a safe space to talk about periods (including, gifting period kits) in order for them to stay in school (period precarity and disinformation leads to girls leaving school); employees at the factory get

paid a living wage and have benefits such as childcare, private pension, help with debt management and financial literacy … They also teach entrepreneurial skills to staff members who can also run businesses alongside their job at *SOKO Kenya*. They have had to react to the issues that the community is facing and develop training and education programmes to change the behaviour and culture within the community. For instance, with the rise of sexual violence against women, they have put in place a dedicated training for staff members.

> "*The factory it's not just about a job, it's about the, kind of, ecosystem in terms of the support that we offer, makes a big change and we've seen women leave abusive relationships because they've got their own bank account and confidence and understanding how to use their money".*

- **Creativity development**: Joanna Maiden mentioned that employees are proud of the garments they make at *SOKO Kenya* and that it inspires them to create their own designs and garments.

> "*A month or so later the team are wearing clothes that they've made that have nods to what we've produced. That influence what we've produced by other designers, which I really like*".

- **Innovation**: With *SOKO Kenya*, Joanna Maiden is creating a new business model that has social good at its core and that goes beyond what other ethical and sustainable companies do.

> "*The whole words of ethical and sustainable, no one knows what they actually mean to their fully extent. So, let's just keep pushing the boundaries on that*".

Appendix 13. Discussion summary – Pattern maker, Alberto Atalla

Question 1:

With a background in both fashion design and pattern cutting, Alberto Atalla believes that it is crucial for a creative person in fashion to understand both fashion design and pattern making. A designer must understand the processes of pattern cutting and making and vice versa, a pattern cutter must understand the process of design.

Alberto Atalla's pattern cutting practice relies mainly on draping, but he might use other pattern cutting methods if needed. Draping allows him to express his creativity best:

> "*I leave my mind to travel with the fabric*", "*I don't make a drawing before because I don't want anything to interfere with my creativity when I am draping on a mannequin because I want it to flow and see where it can go".*

Alberto Atalla uses draping, a pattern making method, to design: "*I design with fabric*", without drawing beforehand.

In the industry, the process is linear and sequential from the designer to the pattern cutter and the maker. Alberto Atalla believes that in the industry, it is important to have that division of roles for each to become expert in their own practice. But all must know about the whole process and must work as a team and communicate to create well-designed and well-made garments. But still, one must acknowledge the creativity of pattern cutters.

About the definition, Alberto Atalla mentions that the term pattern making sounds more open to creativity than pattern cutting.

Question 2:

Alberto Atalla is of the opinion that every creative person must find the creative method that best suits her/him. Creativity cannot be limited to a method or a system. "*I think that [the categorisation] defines quite well the fact that there isn't a specific method to be a creative person, or to be a designer*".

After explanation, the categorisation of pattern making methods presented made sense to Alberto Atalla. But he mentions that the definition of each category should be clearer on the diagram itself.

We also discussed the cross-over of methods and how they can be combined. Alberto Atalla shared that in his own practice, he does indeed combine methods to design and that it makes sense but that this should be reflected in the diagram, maybe with arrows.

Question 3:

Pattern making skills translate the idea into reality by experiencing the technical limits and technical adaptations needed. To design a garment, the designer must understand its construction, must understand pattern making.

Pattern making also allows to design using techniques of pattern making, for instance using a certain shape or method. Alberto Atalla mentions the example of Raf Simons.

Alberto Atalla also shares that to be able to design, fashion designers must understand pattern making. In the industry, the designer and pattern maker roles are divided but they all must know about the whole process to be able to design and make a good garment. What makes pattern making special is that without understanding it, a garment cannot be designed and made properly.

Question 4:

"*I definitely know that pattern making can foster social change*".

Historically, pattern making has fostered social change. Alberto Atalla talks about how pattern making, and garment adaptations have allowed women to practice sport through times, for instance by adapting trousers, or creating garments for women wearing hijabs. Pattern making allows fashion to be more inclusive (*e.g.*, Garments for disabled people).

Personal benefit of pattern making:

- Pattern making brings the pleasure to make something and see it done but also the satisfaction and pride of knowing that one can make something: "*It's the pleasure of being able to see something come out and when you see it done, it's the pleasure that you have to believe that your hands could make those things*".

- Alberto Atalla shared how passionate he feels about being able to make with his hands, how pattern making allows him to create. He shares how he feels "*in a bubble*" and forgets about what surrounds him. Pattern making creates a safe space, a "*zone of comfort*" for him to forget about life anxieties and to express his creativity.

- Alberto Atalla also shared that he learnt how to sew with his mother, which shows that there is an emotional connection to making and pattern making.

Question 6:

AFRIL: Action For Refugees in Lewisham, delivering sewing classes to refugees to activate skill acquisition and community engagement.

Appendix 14. Discussion summary – Pattern maker, Susanne Baldwin

Question 1:

Even if her practice does not focus on pattern cutting at the moment of the interview, Susanne Baldwin's practice aligns with the definition "*because it encourages this kind of broad thinking and appreciation of different types of pattern cutting, and recognising of its potential".* This is a very important aspect of her work and the reason that led to the creation of the MA Pattern and Garment Technology at LCF: "*to elevate the skills of pattern and garment making to align with that kind of design status*". Despite the embedded hierarchy of the industry, all the designing, cutting and sample making go together to create a garment.

Question 2:

Susanne Baldwin really liked the framework because she found it "*a really useful tool to aid discussion about and explanation of pattern cutting*". She found the visual clear, succinct, effective, and helpful, and mentioned that it could be the basis for a "*programme of learning*".

About the categories of methods, she shared that the way in which methods were defined, and split was effective.

Susanne Baldwin agreed that methods cross over and are interrelated. Despite the difficulty to visualise it, it can be explained within the framework. To some extent, creativity also comes from the crossover of methods.

Susanne Baldwin also believes that there is no hierarchy to the methods, which is also one of the foundation principles of the MA Pattern and Garment Technology where there is no method "*more accomplished than the other. They are just different ways to achieve a pattern design*".

Should Zero-waste pattern cutting be included as a method in the framework?

For Susanne Baldwin, it should not be included in the framework. Zero-waste pattern cutting has become very popular in the last years and has even become "*a bit overrated*", catching too much attention, according to Susanne Baldwin. Historically or with simple shape patterns, there are many examples of pattern cutting creating no waste. Zero-waste pattern cutting today also has its limitations, in particular in commercial garment production. Susanne Baldwin gave the example of the bulk created when cutting without waste that would not be an issue with lightweight fabric (cf. historical shirts) but in commercial garment production that bulk is eliminated. Susanne Baldwin advises students to explore minimal waste pattern cutting instead, which has "*more scope*". For her, zero-waste pattern cutting should not be in the framework because the study looks at pattern cutting in a much broader way.

Question 3:

Pattern cutting appeals to Susanne Baldwin because of "*the methodical and technical approach*", which for her is also a form of creativity through problem solving.

> "*That methodical and technical approach, usually seen as separate to creativity, […] can contribute to creativity in a different way, problem solving, because you might have an idea for a design, but you need to employ problem solving to work out how you're going to achieve that design*".

Question 4:

Within the context of this research, Susanne Baldwin thinks "*that it has the potential to empower and to give the individuals the satisfaction of learning a skill*". These garment making skills can then be used to make their own garments or to find employment in the industry.

Susanne Baldwin also sees the approach of this research as "*a return to attitudes towards alternative ways of acquiring clothing*", when the high street was not available, and people would make their own garments.

In the discussion about the social aspect of the group making and sewing together, Susanne Baldwin also pointed out that participants "*are more inclined to go somewhere to engage in this, rather than sit at home or creating garments individually*". "*A purpose-built environment*" fosters the participants to get together and make.

Susanne Baldwin also found the whole approach interesting as it focuses on women who do not have any technical background. It avoids anxieties and rigidities linked to technical knowledge. "*They're just going for it. I think that's quite liberating*".

Question 5:

Historical input: Susanne Baldwin mentioned that the project shares similarities with the way that institutions like LCF, that was set up as technical schools, used to operate. Their purpose was to teach pattern cutting and dressmaking skills to women and girls from certain social groups to create employment opportunities.

Hierarchy within the project: Susanne Baldwin asked about how I managed the possible hierarchy that can settle between the designer/researcher and the participants. Following the presentation and our discussion, she found that it did not seem to be an issue.

Question 6:

- LCF's community work in East London
- Make the ASBCI aware of the research

Appendix 15. Discussion summary – Pattern cutter, Alexis Scott Cawley

Question 1:

Lex Cawley agreed with the definition and mentioned that it is the way he teaches as well.

> "*Pattern cutting is the art of making something that's two-dimensional, which is fabric, into something three-dimensional, like a garment, and using a series of tools and techniques*".

However, Lex Cawley disagrees on the distinction between the terms pattern cutting and pattern making. For him, they are identical, and the difference lies only on the fact that one term is used in England and the other in America. The term pattern cutting might imply a more traditional form but for Lex Cawley, they are interchangeable and his understanding of pattern cutting is broader and aligns with the definition formulated for this research. For instance, he mentioned that despite working mainly with draping and three-dimensional techniques, he still considers himself as a pattern cutter, and not a pattern maker, and defines his job as turning 2D into 3D.

Question 2:

We had a very insightful conversation about how to categorise pattern cutting methods. Lex Cawley challenged the categorisation shown during the interview and suggested a few other ways to categorise pattern cutting methods, acknowledging the fact that categorising the methods is actually a difficult task as some methods might simultaneously fall in different categories or in none of them.

The categorisations discussed were:

- Creative pattern cutting and production/traditional pattern cutting.
- Fabric-based pattern cutting and flat paper-based pattern cutting. But he mentioned that some techniques might fall in both categories or neither of them, such as traditional rectangle-based techniques.
- 3D vs 2D techniques

Techniques also combine in one's practice. They are not separated from each other in the practice.

He concluded that there could be an infinite number of different ways of categorising the methods but in the context of a practice-based research, the researcher defines what makes most sense for the research.

Finally, Lex Cawley shared an initial idea of categorisation that aligns with his practice:

- Techniques could be split between 3D and 2D categories, i.e. techniques starting from something three-dimensional (*e.g.*, Draping) or something two dimensional (*e.g.*, Metric pattern cutting).

- These categories could be sub-categorised into techniques that focus more on the garment and techniques that focus on the process. Garment first techniques have a garment design as starting point and objective to achieve. Process-first techniques are seen as more creative and experimental with unexpected results.

About Zero-Waste Pattern Cutting (ZWPC):

ZWPC could be split between garment-first or process-first approaches and the various techniques used in ZWPC would fit in all categories mentioned.

ZWPC is not an approach of pattern cutting because any technique could be used. ZWPC is about the result which is reducing waste. Lex Cawley gave many examples of techniques that work well or could be used to reduce waste. "*Zero-waste pattern cutting is not a method, it's a result*".

Lex Cawley also suggested a Venn diagram to represent the methods overlapping.

Question 3:

Lex Cawley shared that he preferred pattern cutting to fashion design because there is a physical and material element to it. He enjoys "*a job where at the end of the day there is a physical product that you can feel, you don't quite get that with design*".

He also mentioned that one of the frustrations as a pattern cutter, when working in a linear, hierarchical process, was to have to make garments, designed by the designers, that he did not really like. However, he argues that the process is not that linear as the roles are interlinked and that the pattern cutter's role is as important as the designer's. He mentioned some famous and successful designers who are pattern cutters but are known as designers and argues that to design well, one must know how to cut.

Question 4:

Lex Cawley mentioned that pattern cutting must be combined with sewing to have a potential social impact, and vice versa for sewing, which if taught on its own can be very passive. The whole process leading to a physical garment brings a higher sense of achievement.

Pattern cutting can also make fashion design more approachable and inclusive. It also demystifies the fashion designer as well as make fashion design reachable.

Question 5:

Fashion design is a very popular form of design, in the sense that anyone would be able to name famous fashion designers, which is not the case in other fields. In fashion design, the personality is at the centre. Pattern cutters meanwhile are more pragmatic and prefer "*making stuff*".

Question 6:

Lex Cawley suggested to reach out to pattern cutters working in the industry and more traditional fashion designers.

Appendix 16. Discussion summary – Pattern maker, Olivia Hegarty

Question 1:

Olivia Hegarty shared that she "*really likes*" the term pattern making as she can relate to its definition. This definition echoes her work about garment construction with and without patterns. She mentions some traditional techniques that do not require cutting the fabric and that are more intuitive, such as saris and wrapped dresses. In this context, "*it doesn't make any sense to use the word pattern cutting*".

Olivia Hegarty favours a distinction between industrialised processes and more tacit, intuitive processes which she argues should be introduced more into teaching practices.

Question 2:

Olivia Hegarty suggested to make the diagram "*more active*" where pattern cutting approaches are mapped as interactions between techniques.

Question 3:

Olivia Hegarty shared that she likes making because she likes handling material and using her haptic skills to create. For her, "*listening to materials and having a sensitivity around what materials can do is something that's really valuable for effective design*".

In her approach as tutor, she also shared that she encourages students to develop a "*sensitivity and a professional awareness of materials*".

For her, pattern cutting must be part of any design process to ensure the quality of the final garment.

Question 4:

For Olivia Hegarty, a designer can have a holistic approach to social change through their work and the messages that they choose to convey or through the way they work and how they interact with the whole design and making process. For instance, a designer's approach to pattern making might be a way to respect the craft and interact with different people and communities.

Another social change would be for "*pattern making [to] come into the scope of being a designer*".

Question 5:

Teaching pattern cutting:

- Olivia Hegarty shared that in the design and technology courses at LCF, there is a distinction between design tutors and tutors who teach pattern

cutting. Courses focus on design learning and design development and envision pattern cutting as a tool for creative development.

- Olivia Hegarty also explained about her approach to teaching pattern cutting. She avoids flat pattern cutting which might intimidate or deter some students, in favour of more tacit and intuitive approaches that foster a sense of agency around creating shapes and expressing their ideas. Olivia Hegarty's teaching practice brings together creative processes and technical processes. Olivia Hegarty calls her approach 'innovative pattern cutting'.

Decolonising pattern cutting:

- Olivia Hegarty is also running a project about decolonising pattern cutting. This project has many objectives. One of them is to include tacit knowledge and tacit processes in pattern cutting education. Another objective is to create opportunities for students to explore creativity in different ways and question the current ways in which pattern cutting, and more broadly design, are taught.

- The project's focus is on the relationship between pattern cutting and fit and how inclusive that relationship might be. Olivia Hegarty argues that cutting garments with no fit built in them, by using certain tacit and intuitive approaches, such as folding, tucking and draping instead of industrialised approaches, leads to more inclusivity in terms of fit. The focus is on decolonising the fit of garments by decolonising the pattern cutting processes employed to make them.

- Another aspect of fit built within a garment is the waste generated by garments that do not fit the wearers.

- Olivia Hegarty also suggested that we also need to decolonise our definition of a designer. While the industry still focuses on the super-star designer, Olivia Hegarty believes that design and design education is questioning that vision and opening the possibilities and ways for design towards more inclusivity.

- As a final idea, Olivia Hegarty suggested to connect the student pattern cutters and the 'civilian pattern cutters' together and learn from each other as a future development of the work.

Question 6:

- Donna Sgro

- Miranda Tsui

- Dr Nabil El-Nayal

Olivia Hegarty mentioned that she had a presentation to share.

Appendix 17. Discussion summary – Pattern maker, Julianne Bramson

Question 1:

Julianne Bramson shared that she can relate to the definition. For her, pattern cutting includes the whole process of design and making and is the basis of her practice.

She analysed her own practice through the diagram: her bias-cutting method fits in all four categories.

Question 2:

Julianne Bramson quickly mentioned that her practice combined techniques from all categories and analysed the bias-cut practice from her book in the following way:

- Geometric shapes: her bias-cut approach starts with geometric shapes, which are very efficient in terms of fabric usage.
- Constraint or requirement: most seams must be straight on the grain.
- Fabric: the choice of fabric determines the fit. The fit is defined by the amount of bias collapse in the fabric.
- Measurements: measurements are the starting point and the foundation of Julianne Bramson's practice. For her "*fit is a math problem*". "*If a garment is going to fit you, it just needs to have the math right*".

Julianne Bramson also mentioned how a friend of hers, who is a costume maker and pattern cutter, would use all the methods to get to the desired result.

> "*To go from a sketch to a garment, sometimes you need to use everything you know. Especially for something like costuming, where it's definitely not average, everyday clothes*".

Julianne Bramson also mentioned that home sewers also use many methods, and they might learn in a very similar way as the workshops that have been delivered during this research.

Zero waste pattern cutting: For Julianne Bramson, zero waste pattern cutting could be placed in all categories in function of the technique used to reach the desired result. She also sees the objective of not creating waste or reducing it as a restriction.

Question 3:

Julianne Bramson shared that she considers pattern making "*the entire inclusive term of everything*". Her approach relies mainly on pattern making and garment making. She explained that she does not sketch before making.

To make a garment, Julianne Bramson might use different approaches: she might go back to patterns that she already has and modify them or re-create patterns completely.

Julianne Bramson shared about her ‘pattern cutter’s brain’: when she sees a garment, she can picture the shape of the pattern piece.

Question 4:

For Julianne Bramson, pattern making makes fashion accessible to everyone.

Pattern making also allows the maker to use the resources more efficiently, reducing waste, cost and time in the process and thus having a positive impact both on people and nature.

Question 5:

Julianne Bramson’s practice:

- Julianne Bramson shared that she gets inspired by geometric shapes and by looking at historical garments.

- Julianne Bramson does not use fabric manipulation much. She prefers a more “*widespread approach*” based on bias cutting to make garments that fit more naturally. She said that she was not interested in making a form fitting garment because it doesn’t fit with her lifestyle.

Zero-waste pattern cutting: Julianne Bramson likes to work with geometric shapes because it is very efficient in terms of fabric usage. Using the whole width of the fabric was very common in historic garments. As Julianne Bramson recalled, zero waste pattern cutting is not a new way of cutting garments, even if everybody is talking about it now as if they had invented it.

Pattern cutting and mathematics: Julianne Bramson mentioned that, although she loves the mathematical aspect of pattern cutting, she needs to tone it down because it can still intimidate students.

Julianne Bramson mentioned reconstructing existing garments into new garments as a method of pattern making that is accessible to anyone.

Question 6:

- Shingo Sato

Appendix 18. Discussion summary – Pattern cutter, Rickard Lindqvist

Question 1:

For Rickard Lindqvist, there is no pattern without cutting. The act of cutting into the fabric creates the pattern. He suggests that methods such as sari making could be neither pattern making or pattern cutting, but something else instead. Rickard Lindqvist also mentioned some methods of constructing garments that do not need cutting such as weaving.

Rickard Lindqvist defined the term 'pattern' as a "*a template*" for the garments, "*as in industrial or modern-industrial thing*" that is cut.

Rickard Lindqvist questioned the importance of differentiating pattern cutting from pattern making. He also shared that "*cutting implies some kind of making. To cut is to make something*". Although he thought about this during his thesis, it is less relevant in his current practice.

In his practice, the emphasis is on the cutting. Cutting is crucial in the work he does now, so Rickard Lindqvist relates more to the term pattern cutting.

Question 2:

Rickard Lindqvist looked at his own practice through the diagram. The body, and its movement, is the starting point of his practice and then the fabric and its drape. The pattern is a result of the process.

Rickard Lindqvist also shared that his practice has elements from all categories. It is a combination of all categories.

Rickard Lindqvist suggested for the body to be at the centre of the diagram as the starting point of all methods.

Question 3:

Rickard Lindqvist has a tailoring background and shared that he found pattern cutting easy. He was interested in creating three-dimensionally and came to fashion design through pattern cutting. The relationship between 2D and 3D was intuitive.

For Rickard Lindqvist, pattern cutting is about the relationship of the body and its movement with the fabric.

Question 4:

We had a great conversation about the meaning of 'social change'. Rickard Lindqvist mentioned that wearing his designs might facilitate some movements but "*it probably won't change your life too much*". His focus has not been on the social change that his practice could have but rather on the performance of the garments.

Question 5:

Rickard Lindqvist explained about his own practice from draping on a live person, digitalising the patterns and then working digitally in 3D. After years of work, Rickard Lindqvist has created many designs and patterns that can also be used to develop other designs either digitally or by printing them and draping them further.

Question 6:

On the Logic of Pattern Cutting, Rickard Lindqvist

Appendix 19. Discussion summary – Pattern maker, Dennic Chunman Lo

Question 1:

Dennic Lo uses the term pattern cutting because he studied in the UK. He mentions that pattern making is the American term. He feels proud to be a pattern cutter and does not pay too much attention to the terminology.

He actually feels prouder to be a pattern cutter than a designer because for him, pattern cutting is an art that not everyone is able to do.

Dennic Lo defines pattern making as a form of "*packaging*". In fashion, it is about packaging the body, but pattern cutting could be applied to anything, like furniture, sculpture, … Dennic Lo's understanding of pattern cutting is broad.

In the UK in particular, there is a sense of fun, where nothing is really wrong. One must take it seriously though, because "*that's your pride, that's your art*".

Dennic Lo concludes by saying that he does not have a definition but for him, pattern cutting is about being able to package three-dimensional form starting from a two-dimensional notion. It is the art of understanding 3D shape.

Question 2:

For Dennic Lo, all categories exist in some way in all pattern cutting practices.

Dennic Lo commented on the categories:

- Measurements and using blocks imply studying the human form.
- Shapes are the basis of everything, "*the fundamental building block of everything in the universe*". Garments and humans are geometry too.
- Fabric makes the garment. The right fabric must be chosen for the garment.

Dennic Lo mentioned that methods cannot be categorised so clearly, but for him, this chart summarises what pattern cutters do consciously and unconsciously to create something. Dennic Lo also suggested that there might be other categories to add.

Dennic Lo's practice consists in flat pattern cutting. Dennic Lo describes himself as "*an old-fashioned pattern cutter*", "*a basic block fanatic*". Dennic Lo prefers working with a block than draping because draping is inaccurate and "*it saves [him] so much time in the long run*". A good draper must be good with flat pattern cutting too.

Dennic Lo described his approach when creating with blocks. He explained how he creates by combining different methods and applying them to the blocks. He describes the categorisation chart as a "*board game*" that allows to mix different

methods together. He sees the chart as a tool to develop new ways of creating with pattern cutting, by combining different methods together.

Question 3:

For Dennic Lo, pattern cutting is at the centre of fashion. "*What makes it special is that without pattern maker, fashion won't happen*".

Pattern makers truly create something three-dimensional. Pattern making makes sure that a design works first. Pattern makers are "*three-dimensional designers*".

Question 4:

For Dennic Lo, it is important to find the right "*key*" to unlock different groups of people. So, the first step is to understand who the social group is, and then to find the right key. Learning pattern cutting and making garments can be a key for some social groups to unlock their problems and create a sense of pride and aspirations for the future.

Question 5:

Dennic Lo's teaching practice: Dennic Lo spoke about his way of teaching pattern cutting. He encourages his students to make mistakes and be creative with them. For him, teaching pattern cutting in the UK is fun, creative, and experimental.

Pattern cutting in the industry: Dennic Lo also spoke about the role of pattern cutting in the industry and how difficult it can be to lead the design through pattern cutting when it is not the way the industry works. He gave the example of introducing zero-waste pattern cutting in a fashion company.

Question 6:

SOKO Kenya, Joanna Maiden

Appendix 20. Discussion summary – Pattern maker, Kevin Almond

Question 1:

Kevin Almond mentioned that he has encountered many terminologies: pattern cutting, pattern making, pattern drafting, pattern creation. He is happy to use any of them and for him, the choice of terminology relies on the person and her/his practice, experience, and background. He gave the example of a friend who used the term pattern making because the word making relates to her craft background.

Kevin Almond mentioned that the most common term would be pattern cutting but that he likes pattern making for its association with making things and craft.

Question 2:

Kevin Almond found the categorisation useful for the PhD research, as a mind map that identifies different ways to make 3D garments. It also relates to the idea of having different terminologies associated to different practices.

Kevin Almond's feedback on the categories was that they are transferable and can apply to each other. Methods can be combined.

About zero waste pattern cutting, Kevin Almond mentioned that the method could be included in the pie. It is fine if not as long as the discussion and justification that led to that decision is clear in the research thesis.

Kevin Almond's pattern cutting practice is intuitive, based on the idea that "*anything's possible*" and "*any approach is good, as long as the end result looks fabulous*".

Question 3:

Kevin Almond shared that pattern cutting is a very satisfying craft, "*that wonderful skill of moulding something with your hands*".

He shared that he finds "*moving [the garment] onto the different processes really exciting*". He mentioned the British design, Jean Muir, who used to say "*to be a great designer, to work in the industry and be a really successful designer, technician, pattern maker, you have to fall in love with all the activities involved in making clothes*". Being in love with pattern making is being in love with the whole process of garment making.

Question 4:

Kevin Almond gave great advice on defining and unpacking the meaning of social change. He advised to define what social change means for the research very early in the thesis and to work on the title to make it clearer.

Within the context of disadvantaged communities, he mentioned that pattern making should be used to improve their lives and empower them.

Question 5:

We discussed the title of the research in depth, in particular the definition of social change and how to identify better the participants involved in the research.

Kevin Almond also shared that what is exciting with pattern cutting is that misconceptions and rules can be broken. You can invent your own way to pattern cut.

Question 6:

Almond, K. and Climer, G. (2023) Pattern-Cutting without Cultural Appropriation. In: Barry, B. and Christel, D.A., (eds.) Fashion Education: The Systemic Revolution. Intellect . ISBN 9781789386431

Appendix 21. Discussion summary – Pattern maker, Timo Rissanen

Question 1:

Timo Rissanen agrees with the use of the term 'making' instead of 'cutting' in the context of this research. For him, making covers more than just cutting, or even just the making of garments. It is also about "*making of individuals, making of designers, […] making of communities. There are all kinds of making that's embodied in the work that you are researching and also doing*".

Timo Rissanen also mentioned that pattern cutting and pattern making are used in different parts of the world and that it has influenced the way he refers to the discipline. He likes the word 'making' though because it holds much more meaning.

Question 2:

Timo Rissanen first asked about the body and where the body was in the framework. He associated it to the measurements category which he suggested could be renamed "*body measurements*".

For Timo Rissanen, the categorisation is comprehensive and agrees that categories do not work in silos and can be used in combinations.

Zero waste pattern cutting could be anywhere in the framework depending on the practitioner.

Timo Rissanen also shared that his previous experience and work with different people has developed and broaden his approach to pattern making and garment making. "*It's given me the perspective that if you arrive at a garment that you're happy with, that works on the body and looks beautiful, does it matter so much how it got there?*" Rules can be challenged with innovative ways to create garments.

Timo Rissanen appreciates the 'wheel' because it is dynamic and gives room to "*explore, with curiosity and an open mind*".

Question 3:

Timo Rissanen shared that as a patternmaker in the industry, he particularly enjoyed the social aspect of working with other patternmakers, from whom he learnt a lot. He also experienced how crucial the patternmaker is within a fashion company: pattern makers liaise with everyone within the company and have lots of responsibility.

Although he had less enjoyable experiences in the industry, Timo Rissanen shared that he enjoyed patternmaking and being part of turning an idea into reality.

On a personal level, Timo Rissanen shared that patternmaking is the magic that transforms cloth into a garment that can have an impact on the wearer.

Timo Rissanen also mentioned the perceived hierarchy between designers and patternmakers. He has experienced this hierarchical perception of roles, both in the industry and in education. Timo Rissanen does not believe in this hierarchy and values the crucial role of the patternmaker within the design process: "*without patternmakers and particularly without good patternmakers, the designer's ideas, they do not exist, ultimately*".

In the same way, he also acknowledged the importance of the sample machinists' role in the development of good design both in terms of the final garment and the construction and making process.

For him, "*there is magic in the collective effort that it takes to make garments*".

Question 4:

Timo Rissanen shared that he believes that the project is empowering the participants. By introducing pattern making to people who have no fashion design background, it is giving them a sense of agency which is needed in everyday life and in developing garments in line with one's cultural or religious needs.

Bringing people together from different backgrounds is also a chance and privilege to learn from each other and grow personally.

Timo Rissanen also mentioned that there is also a "*fundamental human collective effort*" that has shaped the way we dress today and over the years.

Question 5:

"*It looks homemade*": Timo Rissanen shared about his personal growth and how his perception of handmade, 'homemade' garments has changed. He now values the homemade as unique and meaningful.

Question 6:

- Pascale Gatzen and project with museum guards making their uniforms.
- Amy Twigger Holroyd, Folk Fashion.
- Bernard Rudofsky, Architecture without architects.
- Val Horridge

Appendix 22. Discussion summary – Pattern maker, Holly McQuillan

Question 1:

In New Zealand, pattern cutting is referred to as pattern making. But Holly McQuillan mentioned that when studying, it was referred as pattern cutting in some books. There is a cultural difference in the terminology used but as mentioned by Holly McQuillan, words are important as they define the world.

Although Holly McQuillan mentioned that pattern making and pattern cutting are essentially the same thing, there was this implied meaning that making was too crafty while cutting was more technical. Holly McQuillan disagrees with this perception and agrees that the term making implies a more holistic view of design.

In zero waste pattern design in particular, the design is intertwined with the construction, the form, the pattern, and the marker. Designing is also designing the marker and it is impossible to separate all the elements.

> "*Zero waste has always been very much about breaking down those hierarchies of what's important and valued in that process of the design and making of a garment*".

For Holly McQuillan, this definition does not relate to her current 3D weaving practice but in the context of a more cut and sew approach, the definition makes more sense.

Holly McQuillan also shared that she has encountered many workshop participants who are intimidated by pattern making because it is perceived as rather too mathematical or too creative. For Holly McQuillan, there is an issue about how pattern making is presented, as a special practice that only some people know how to do.

Question 2:

Holly McQuillan shared her thoughts about the categorisation of Kinetic garment construction: this method is about the body and its movement, and the pattern is a result of the process. It should be placed somewhere else or the wheel should be modified to include the body.

We discussed the place of the body within this framework, even though not all methods include the body from the beginning.

Holly McQuillan also pointed out the fact that this 'wheel' focuses on cut and sew pattern cutting.

Holly McQuillan also noted that approaches are combinations of methods that fall in different categories.

For Holly McQuillan, zero waste design is not a method but a philosophy, a high-level goal that can be reached using lots of different methods.

Holly McQuillan suggested adding another layer for the context or the philosophy of the practice.

Question 3:

Holly McQuillan shared that she has an experimental mindset that works well with material and process driven approaches. She shared that she has aphantasia and that is the reason why she does not design in the more 'traditionally' taught design approach which requires sketching a design before developing the pattern and making the garment.

She was driven towards zero waste design because she has always been concerned with nature and the environment.

This way of thinking, linked to a curiosity driven mindset, led her "*not to fit the mould*" and become a researcher.

Holly McQuillan is interested in the temporal states of materials and the translation from one state to another.

She also feels passionate about researching in a holistic practice-driven way. The focus of her research is not the design, it is about the process and how new processes can challenge the industry. "*I like that pattern cutting is a process, it's not an objective*".

Question 4:

With her project Make/Use, Holly McQuillan aimed at simplifying and democratising patternmaking and zero waste design. The project helped people realise that they were creative and brought them a sense of agency in the design process of the garments they wear. She compares the patternmaking process to magic: "*They feel like they've done magic, which makes them feel really magical, which I think everybody deserves to feel a little bit magical*". Holly McQuillan's approach promotes a freedom to create without rights or wrongs.

This understanding of patternmaking challenges the rules and ideas of expertise. Too often the "*idea that there's a correct way to do it or there's a professional way to do it comes in. So that sense of experimentation and creativity is lost*".

For Holly McQuillan, patternmaking can generate change in many ways:

- With students, teaching them the whole fashion design process and its environmental impacts and having them experience it can be transformational.

- Working with the public make them more aware of their place and role within a bigger system and can empower them to challenge it by giving them the skills to design and make their own garments.

- Bringing zero waste pattern making to a Turkish factory brought a new value to the work and creativity of under-estimated women, for themselves and for the company.

Holly McQuillan regrets that people do not know much about how their clothes are made. She thinks that "*anything that simultaneously gives a sense of autonomy and control and skills and self-worth to people and helps them lift the veil away between them and the industry is doing some heavy lifting when it comes to social change and innovation*".

Question 5:

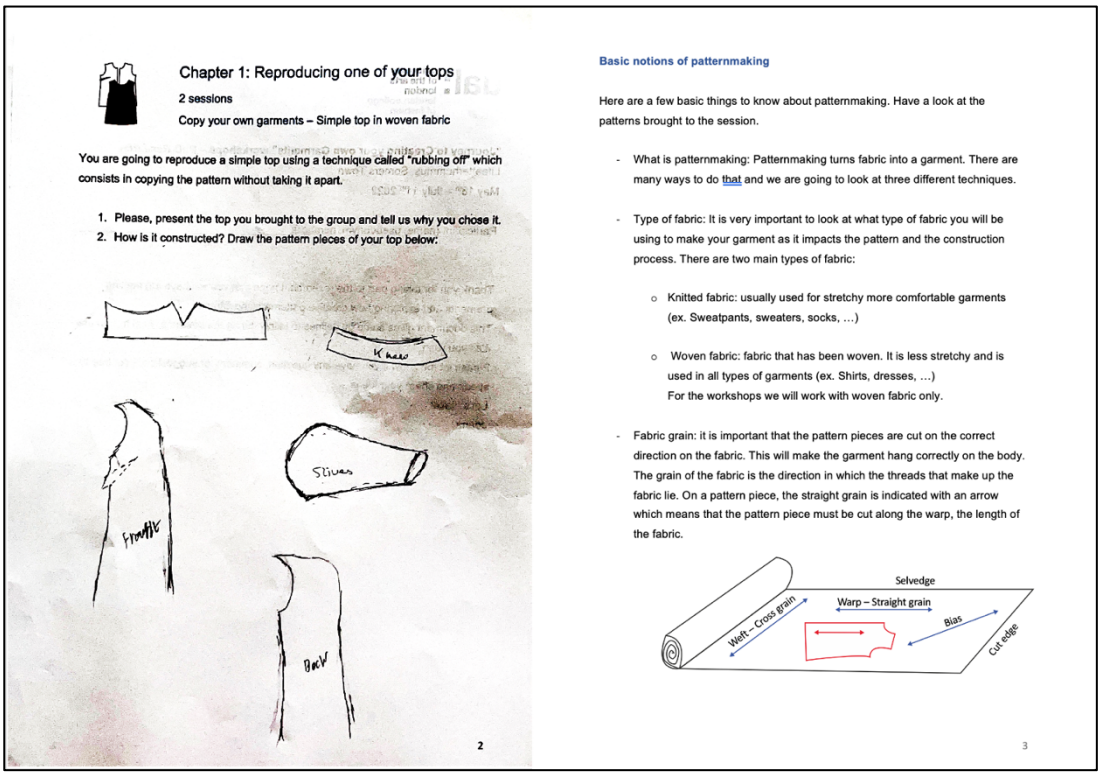
Holly McQuillan current practice focuses on 3D weaving to localise production by simplifying it.

Question 6:

- Zero Waste Systems Thinking: Multimorphic Textile-Forms
- Danielle Elsener, Decode Design

Appendix 23. Participatory workshop hand-outs

Hand-out pages gathered from different participants and from the blank document. Pictures by the authors.



Chapter 1: Reproducing one of your tops

2 sessions

Copy your own garments – Simple top in woven fabric

You are going to reproduce a simple top using a technique called "rubbing off" which consists in copying the pattern without taking it apart.

1. Please, present the top you brought to the group and tell us why you chose it.
2. How is it constructed? Draw the pattern pieces of your top below:

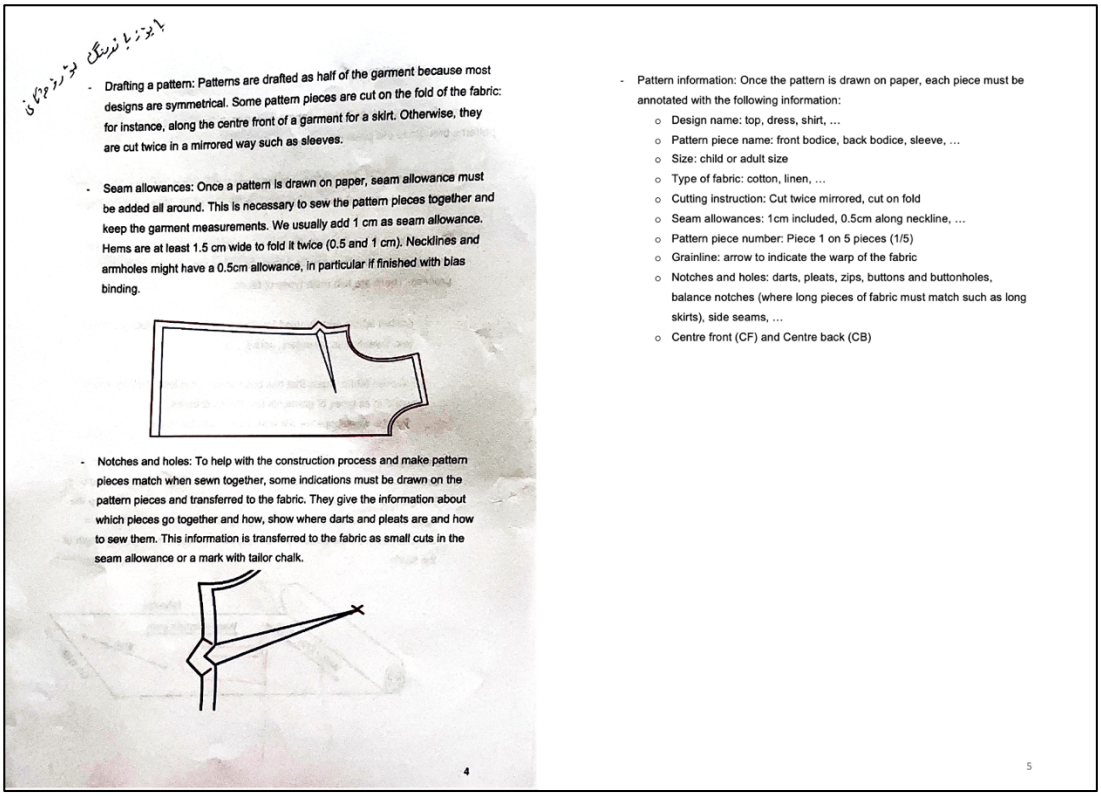
2

Basic notions of patternmaking

Here are a few basic things to know about patternmaking. Have a look at the patterns brought to the session.

- What is patternmaking: Patternmaking turns fabric into a garment. There are many ways to do that and we are going to look at three different techniques.
- Type of fabric: It is very important to look at what type of fabric you will be using to make your garment as it impacts the pattern and the construction process. There are two main types of fabric:
  - Knitted fabric: usually used for stretchy more comfortable garments (ex. Sweatpants, sweaters, socks, …)
  - Woven fabric: fabric that has been woven. It is less stretchy and is used in all types of garments (ex. Shirts, dresses, …)
    For the workshops we will work with woven fabric only.
- Fabric grain: it is important that the pattern pieces are cut on the correct direction on the fabric. This will make the garment hang correctly on the body. The grain of the fabric is the direction in which the threads that make up the fabric lie. On a pattern piece, the straight grain is indicated with an arrow which means that the pattern piece must be cut along the warp, the length of the fabric.

3



- Drafting a pattern: Patterns are drafted as half of the garment because most designs are symmetrical. Some pattern pieces are cut on the fold of the fabric: for instance, along the centre front of a garment for a skirt. Otherwise, they are cut twice in a mirrored way such as sleeves.
- Seam allowances: Once a pattern is drawn on paper, seam allowance must be added all around. This is necessary to sew the pattern pieces together and keep the garment measurements. We usually add 1 cm as seam allowance. Hems are at least 1.5 cm wide to fold it twice (0.5 and 1 cm). Necklines and armholes might have a 0.5cm allowance, in particular if finished with bias binding.
- Notches and holes: To help with the construction process and make pattern pieces match when sewn together, some indications must be drawn on the pattern pieces and transferred to the fabric. They give the information about which pieces go together and how, show where darts and pleats are and how to sew them. This information is transferred to the fabric as small cuts in the seam allowance or a mark with tailor chalk.

4

- Pattern information: Once the pattern is drawn on paper, each piece must be annotated with the following information:
  - Design name: top, dress, shirt, …
  - Pattern piece name: front bodice, back bodice, sleeve, …
  - Size: child or adult size
  - Type of fabric: cotton, linen, …
  - Cutting instruction: Cut twice mirrored, cut on fold
  - Seam allowances: 1cm included, 0.5cm along neckline, …
  - Pattern piece number: Piece 1 on 5 pieces (1/5)
  - Grainline: arrow to indicate the warp of the fabric
  - Notches and holes: darts, pleats, zips, buttons and buttonholes, balance notches (where long pieces of fabric must match such as long skirts), side seams, …
  - Centre front (CF) and Centre back (CB)

5

Drafting the pattern from your top

Materials:

- Simple top
- A large piece of cardboard to put under the garment as a padded surface
- Tracing paper
- Pins
- Ruler
- Pencil and pens
- Measuring tape
- Paper scissors
- Tape

1. Analyse your garment:
   a. How many pattern pieces has your top? Make a list and count how many of each piece should be cut:

2 pieces

   b. Make a list of details of your top: buttons and buttonholes, darts, zips...

   c. How are the edges and seams finished? Examples: overlock, bias binding, ... see the samples available.

   d. In which order are the pattern pieces sewn together? This is a first guide for later when you will be sewing the garment. It can be adjusted as you sew.

2. Draw the pattern: general approach:
   For each pattern piece, follow the following steps. We usually start with the largest piece.
   a. Place a large piece of cardboard on the table and a large piece of paper on top.
   b. Trace a straight line on the paper as guideline to place your garment. This line indicates the position of a straight sewing line or fold line on your garment. For instance, it can be the centre front or the centre back.
   c. Iron your garment carefully and place it on the paper in such way that the pattern piece that you are drafting is as flat as possible. If the pattern piece is symmetrical without a centre seam, fold it in half along the centre and pin the sides together. Align it with the line on your paper.
   a. Pin in place the garment on the cardboard with pins around the piece



   that you are drafting.
   b. Use another pin to punch the paper all around the pattern piece to draft it. Hold the pin perpendicular to the table. Be careful not to move the garment during this process. With curves, punch more holes closer to each other.
   c. Punch around the details as well such as buttonholes and pockets.
   d. Once this is done, remove the garment and draw the pattern following the little holes. Clean up the lines:
      - For straight lines, use a ruler
      - For curves, smooth the lines
      - For lines that meet the centre front, the centre back or a folded line, they are usually perpendicular to it unless it is a design feature (for example a V-neck)
   e. Repeat this process for all the pattern pieces.

   f. Check the measurements with the measureing tape:
Now that all pattern pieces are drawn on paper, we must check that the measurements of the pieces that are sewn together match. If they do not match, we can adjust the pattern. If the difference is too big, you might need to draft the pattern piece again. Check the following measurements on your pattern pieces:
   - Shoulder seams: front and back
   - Side seam: front and back

   g. Finish the pattern pieces:
      - Add balance notches along the side seam of the front and back pieces
      - Add seam allowances: usually 1cm on sides and centre back, 0.5cm along the neckline and the armholes (for bias binding), 2cm along the hem.
      - Annotate all the pattern information on the pattern
      - Cut the pattern

TIPS:

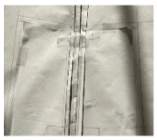
- Take notes as you go and analyse the garment.
- The process depends on the garment that you want to replicate. It is about looking at your garment, separate the pieces and draft each piece separately first.
- When folding a garment, stack the opposite seams together and pin them to prevent them from moving.
- Find the grainline.
- Always copy the same side of the garment.
- Check all the measurements of the edges that are sewn together before cutting your fabric.

Drafting more complex details:

- Darts: to copy darts, start from the line along which the dart is. Mark the dart and its width. Remove the garment, draw the dart by doubling the width and fold the paper as the dart on the garment and hold it in place with tape. Try to smooth the paper as much as possible. Place the garment back on top exactly as it was before and trace the whole pattern.




- Tucks: trace the whole pattern piece and mark where the tucks are and how they are folded. Measure the depth of the tucks and double the measurement. Remove the garment. Trace the lines of the tucks and cut the pattern along the lines. On another large piece of paper, tape the pieces in place one after the other leaving a gap as wide as twice the tuck depth between each piece. Fold the tucks on the paper as on the garment and hold with tape. Cut the pattern. Once cut, unfold the tucks.




- Elasticated edges: Stretch the edge and pin it in place before drafting the pattern.
- Gathers: measure the seam along the gathered piece. The flat measurement is usually 1.5 to 2 times that measurement.

3. Make your top:

Now you have the pattern for your top. After you have verified that the measurements match, you can cut your pieces in the fabric and sew your garment. As you go, write below the equipment and material needed, the construction sequence and all the comments to make the top:

1st. Attach the pattern on top of the fabric (along the direction of the grain).
2nd Cut the fabric.
3rd. Make sure the fabric is ironed and straight
4th Start sewing the sides of the top and then move to the shoulders An the Edges (Top-Top)
5th Bias binding and hem
6th Final ironing

TOILE (Prototype)

Is the new top similar to your original top?

How different is the pattern compared to the first drawing you did?

To know more, here are some useful sources:

- Online course on Domestika: Pattern Making Techniques for Recreating Your Favourite Garments: https://www.domestika.org/en/courses/2052-pattern-making-techniques-for-recreating-your-favorite-garments
- YouTube videos:
  - How to create patterns from existing clothing – simple top: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FEDhJeLf6o
  - How to create pattern from existing clothing – intermediate top: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCEs0SMyzDc
  - Learn Nancy's Top 10 Tips for copying ready to wear: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lehB8MwLcT0
- Book: Joseph-Armstrong, H. (2014) *Patternmaking for Fashion Design*. 5th ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education. Chapter 'Knock-off copying ready made designs' pp. 642-655

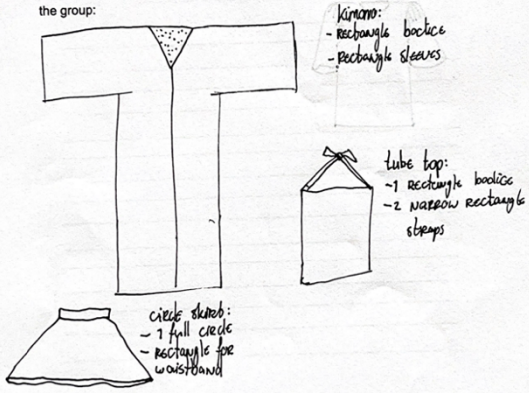
Chapter 2: Simple geometrical shapes

2 sessions

Make a garment from rectangles and circles

In this chapter you will create a garment from scratch using rectangles and circles. You can choose from three different designs that you will adapt to your taste and measurements.

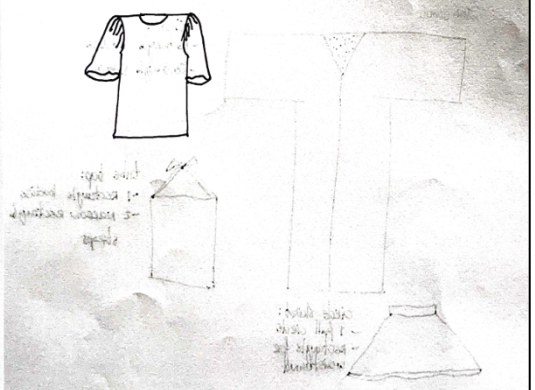
1. Please, draw a garment that you know is constructed with simple geometric shapes. What does it look like? What does the pattern look like? Discuss with the group:



2. Choose a design as basis for your design (Please circle):
   - Gathered skirt
   - Drape dress
   - Ruffle dress

3. Write down or draw below what you would like to make. You can change the details, the lengths, make a dress or a top, add pockets, … Let's discuss your ideas with the group.

Top w/ ruffle/flutter sleeves.



4. Write down here instructions and comments about making your garment

5. Show and present your garment to the group. Discuss

For more ideas on how to use simple geometrical shapes to make garments:

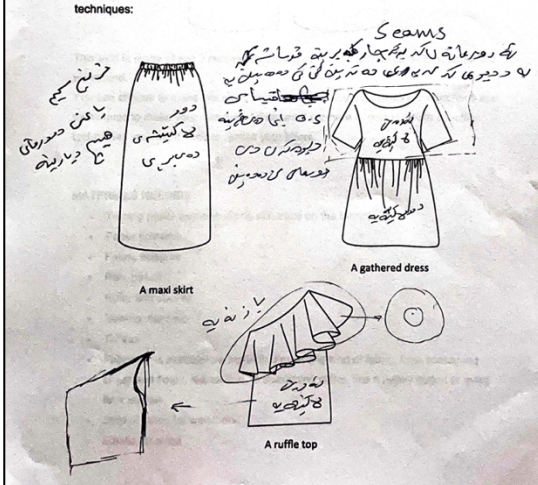
- Some historical and traditional garments are constructed with simple shapes:
  - Egyptian, Greek and Roman draped garments
  - Japanese kimonos
  - Traditional Afghan dresses
  - Traditional African dresses, tunics and trousers
  - And many more. The Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum have beautiful traditional and historical garments exhibited.
- Some designers have also used geometrical shapes to design: Hishinuma with triangles, Toledo with circles, …
- Youtube videos:
  - DIY Puff-Sleeve Dress – Made from just 4 rectangles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qB7G9TqBhpM
  - DIY Gathered Midi-Skirt (with Pockets) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFpB9yS12PU
  - Beginner Friendly Clothes to Sew https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ma7HLPjbvAU
- Book: Martin, R. (2016) *No Patterns Needed DIY Couture from Simple Shapes*. London, UK: Laurence King Publishing.

Chapter 2: Simple geometrical shapes

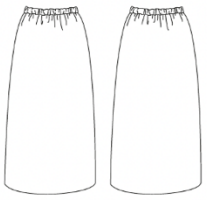
2 sessions

Make a garment from rectangles and circles – Instructions

In this chapter you will create a garment from scratch using rectangles and/or circles. You can choose from three different designs that you will adapt to your taste and measurements. The designs and instructions are adapted from the book 'No Pattern Needed' by Rosie Martin (2016). Please choose a design to use as basis for your garment. Have a look at some suggestions of what you can make with the same techniques:



MAXI SKIRT



This skirt is made of just 2 rectangular panels of fabric and 2 small rectangles for the waistband.

You can choose to make this exact skirt or you can use the following instructions and techniques to make your own skirt. Olivia and I are here to help you with specific techniques you might need to realise your ideas.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Tracing paper (optional if you can trace on the fabric)
- Paper scissors
- Fabric scissors
- Pen, pencil
- Ruler and square
- Sewing machine
- Thread
- Fabric: This skirt can be made in almost any kind of fabric, from something sheer and floaty, like chiffon, to something stiffer, like a heavy cotton or even faux leather
- Strip of fabric for waistband
- Elastic for waist

MEASUREMENTS NEEDED:

- Full waist
- Full hip
- Skirt length (from waist to where you want your skirt to fall)
- Elastic depth

MATHS TO DO:

Use the boxes below to write down your measurements and calculate the size of the rectangular panels.

Skirt length + 4 cm (2 in) = **PANEL LENGTH**

We add 4 cm as seam and hem allowances

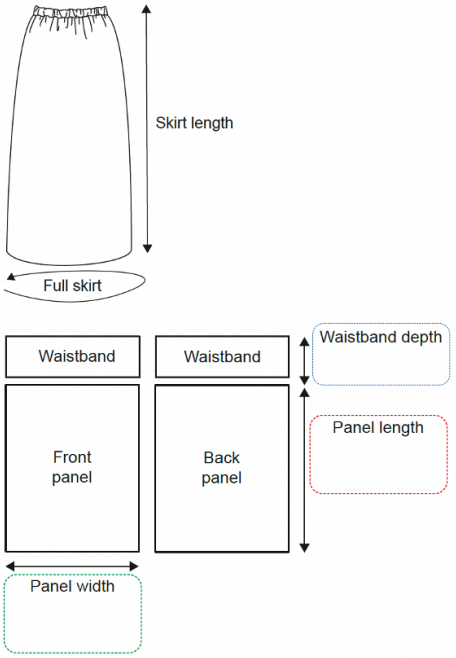
Full waist X 2 = **FULL SKIRT**

Check that this is at least 10 cm (4in bigger than your full hip measurement

FULL SKIRT ÷ 2 = **PANEL WIDTH**

You can divide the full skirt measurement by 3 if you want the front panel to be narrower than the back panel which will be 2/3.

Elastic depth X 2 = [ ] + 2 cm (1in) = **WAISTBAND DEPTH**

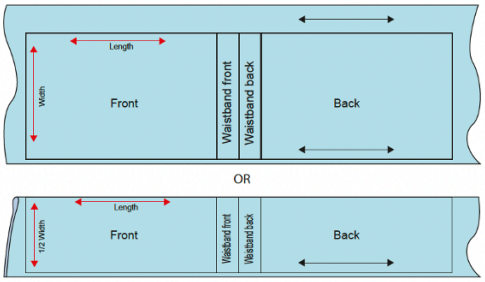


CUTTING AND SEWING INSTRUCTIONS

You are going to cut two rectangles that will form the main body of your skirt and two rectangles that will form the waistband.
If your fabric is delicate or wobbly, make a template from paper to cut your fabric, otherwise you can trace directly on the fabric as follows.

Cutting:

- Iron the fabric
- Trace the rectangles directly on the fabric with a pencil, pen or tailor chalk, a ruler and a square. Depending on the size of the panels and the width of your fabric, you can trace the full width panels on the fabric or fold the fabric in half and draw a rectangle half the panel width along the fold of the fabric. Then cut the rectangles.



OR

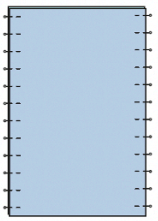
- You now have the two panels that make up the main body of your skirt and the two panels that make up your waistband.

Sewing:

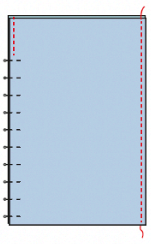
Main body of the skirt, side seams:
These instructions explain how to finish the seams with a zig zag stitch, if you would like to finish the seams with another technique like a French seam which works well here, have a look at the samples and Olivia and I will show you how to do it.

For a zig zag finishing:

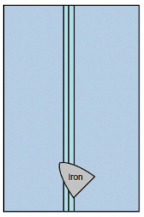
- Lay out your back and front panels on top of each other right sides together. Pin them together down both sides.

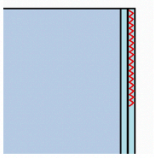


- Sew down both side seams with your stitches 1 cm from the edge (1 cm seam allowance). Run your stitches backwards at the start and end of your line of stitching to secure them.



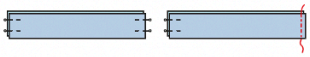
- Press open the seams that you have just created with the iron. Zig zag each seam edge separately.



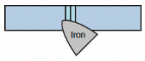


Waistband:

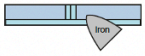
- Lay your two rectangles of fabric on top of each other, right sides together. Pin them together down both short edges. Sew down both sides with a line of straight stitches with 1cm seam allowance.



- Press the seams open.

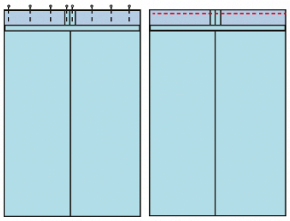


- Press up a 1 cm fold of fabric all the way along one of the long edges of this long circle.

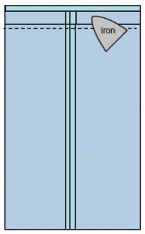


- Lay your skirt out with the right side of the fabric facing up and place the waistband all around the top at the waist edge, right sides together. The edge without the fold needs to run along the waist edge of the skirt. Pin these edges together, adding extra pins to catch the seam flaps of the skirt and keep them

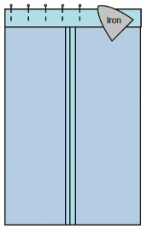
open. Match the side seams of the skirt and the waistband. Sew the waistband to the skirt all the way along this pinned edge with a 1cm seam allowance.



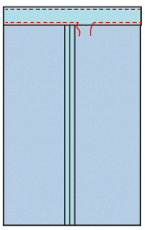
- Now flip the waistband up and press the waistband and the seam upwards, away from the skirt.



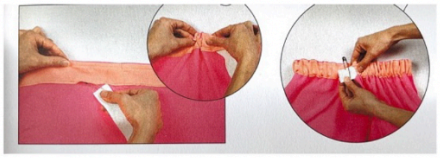
- Fold your waistband down towards the hem of your skirt on the wrong side of your skirt and press it so it sits about 1-2 mm below the top edge of your skirt. Pin it to the skirt in this position.



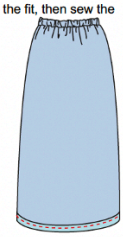
- Sew the waistband into place all the way around, with a line of stitches sitting about 3mm away from the top. Sew a second line of stitching along the bottom edge of the waistband with your stitches sitting 2 or 3 mm away from the pressed edge, leaving a hole to insert the elastic.



- Cut a piece of elastic as long as your waist measurement and push it through the waistband channel with a safety pin. Make sure the tail end doesn't disappear by holding it to the skirt with a safety pin.



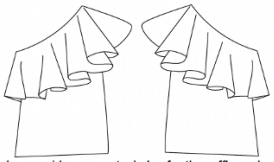
- When the safety pin emerges, use it to pin the two ends together, checking that the elastic isn't twisted anywhere. Try the skirt on to check the fit, then sew the pinned ends of the elastic together with a zig zag stitch. Close the hole by sewing it as you did for the waistband.



- Hem your skirt: Iron up a fold of 1 cm deep at the bottom edge of your skirt all around, then iron up a second fold 2cm deep. Pin the fold in place and sew it all the way around near the inner folded edge.

You have done a maxi skirt!

RUFFLE TOP



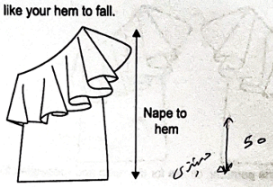
This top is made using a guide garment, circles for the ruffle and rectangles for the body. The neckline is gently gathered with elastic, giving the ruffle extra body. The ruffle is finished with bias binding, which can be pressed hidden under the ruffle, or used as a design feature in a contrasting colour. Add an extra ruffle to create even more waves and ripples. The top can become a dress as long or as short as you like. You can choose to make this exact top or you can use the following instructions and techniques to create your own design. Olivia and I are here to help you with specific techniques you might need to realise your ideas.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Tracing paper (optional if you can trace on the fabric. If your fabric is thin and floaty, trace the pattern on paper first)
- Paper scissors and fabric scissors
- Pen, pencil, tailor's chalk
- Ruler and square
- Sewing machine
- Thread
- Fabric: Use light and crispy fabric, or something weightier and slightly stiff to create a dramatic dress with a full-bodied, voluminous ruffle. Choose a drapier fabric to create a flowing dress with soft folds.
- Thin elastic
- Bias binding
- A guide garment: a sleeveless dress or top would be ideal

MEASUREMENTS NEEDED:

- **Full hip (if you are making a dress)**
- **Nape to hem: Measurement from the nape of your neck to where you would like your hem to fall.**

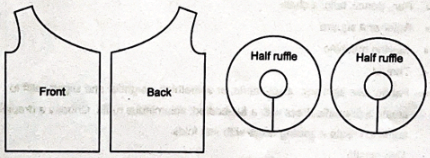


MATHS TO DO:

Use the boxes below to write down your measurements and calculate the size of the rectangular panels.

Nape to hem		4 cm (2 in)		TOP LENGTH
50	+		=	54
				47

PIECES TO CUT:

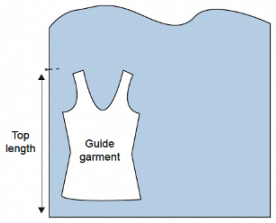


CUTTING AND SEWING INSTRUCTIONS

You are going to use a guide garment to draft the armhole and shoulder of the top. This will be the starting point of your top. Then the sides will be drawn using straight lines and the ruffle is made out of circles.
If your fabric is delicate or wobbly, make a template from paper to cut your fabric, otherwise you can trace directly on the fabric as follows.

Cutting:

- Iron the fabric and place it on a flat surface.
- Measure your TOP LENGTH up the selvage edge of your fabric and put a pin to mark that spot. Lay your guide garment on your fabric with the shoulder edge sitting just below the level of your TOP LENGTH marker pin.



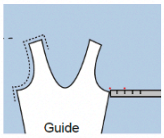
- Sketch around your guide garment with a pencil or tailor's chalk, drawing your lines about 1cm outside the garment (1cm seam allowance). Start at one armpit, draw up around the armhole and along the shoulder edge, then roughly sketch the first part of the neckline.



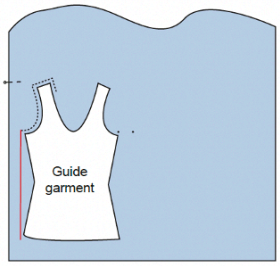
- Mark the other armpit point with a dot and bring it up by 1 cm for the seam allowance.



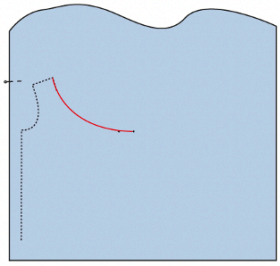
- If your guide garment fits you closely, measure about 8cm outwards from this armpit point and make a mark there.



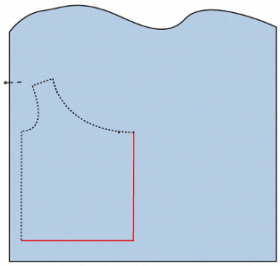
- Starting from the first armpit, draw a straight vertical line all the way to where you want the hem to fall.



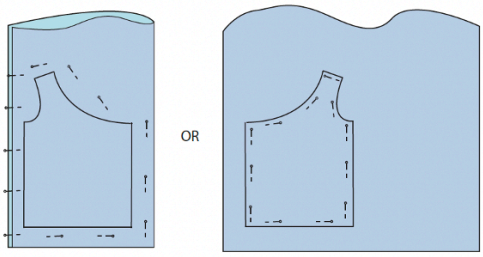
- Remove your guide garment and sketch a scooped neck edge. This can start from following the part of the neckline you already drew and should slope down towards the armpit point you previously drew.



- From that point, draw a straight vertical line all the way to where you want the hem to fall as on the other side and join the hem with a horizontal straight line.

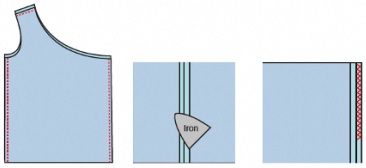


- If you fabric is wide enough, fold the fabric along the grainline and pin the two layers so that it doesn't move and cut your front and back pieces of the top. If your fabric is not wide enough, cut the front piece and use it to cut the back piece symmetrically.

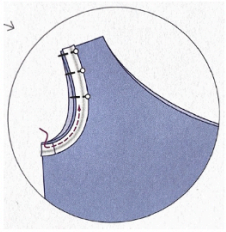


Shoulder and side seams:

- These instructions explain how to finish the seams with a zig zag stitch, if you would like to finish the seams with another technique like a French seam which works well here, have a look at the samples and Olivia and I will show you how to do it.
- Sew along the side seams and shoulder seam with 1 cm seam allowance with the right sides together. Press all your seams open with the iron and finish the raw edges with zigzag stitch.



- Finish the armhole with bias binding: Cut a piece of bias binding that is slightly longer than the distance round the armhole of your top. With the top turned the right way out, open out one side of the bias binding and pin it all the way around the armhole. Stretch out the lower, folded edge of the binding as you pin, to force it to bend with the curve of the armhole. Sew it to the armhole by doing a line of stitches in the crease. Then turn the top the wrong way out and press the bias binding down on the inside of the armhole. Pin it in place and sew it down. If you have never sewn a bias binding before, Olivia and I are here to help and demonstrate how to do it.



Cutting the ruffles:

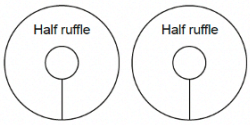
- Lay your garment out and measure along the neck edge of one side of your top with the tape measure. Place the tape measure along the edge to curve it as accurately as possible along the neck edge. Double that measurement and write that number down here:

Inner circles measurement



- Your ruffle is going to be made of a number of pieces of fabric that are the shape of ring doughnuts. The smaller the inner circle of the rings, the more dramatic and wavier your ruffle will be. Your whole ruffle is made of many rings of fabric that will be sewn together. The inner circle of the ruffle should

match the INNER CIRCLE measurement that you have just measured along the neckline. You should add the seam allowances of 1cm at each end to attach the rings together.

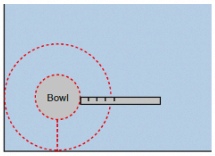


- If your ruffle will be made of 3 small rings of fabric to get some fairly dramatic folds, divide the INNER CIRCLES measurement by 3, add 2 cm of seam allowances to that and find a round object with a circumference that is at least that measurement. This object can be a plate or a bowl. If it is bigger, you can chop the excess fabric off later.

- Decide how deep you want your ruffle to be, add 2cm for seam allowance and write it down here:

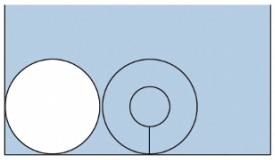
Ruffle depth

- Draw around your round object with a pencil or tailor's chalk. Using your ruler, make marks all around the small circle at your RUFFLE DEPTH. Cut a circle following these marks.

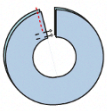


- Cut a straight line into your circle from the edge, then cut out the inner ring to create your doughnut shape.

- Use this first ruffle piece as a guide to cut the other pieces you need for the whole ruffle.

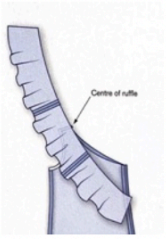


- Join your rings of fabric together to create a continuous ruffle. Lay out two rings, right sides together. Match up two of the straight edges and pin them together. Sew the two together with a line of straight stitch. Repeat that process to attach all the rings together. Press open your seams and finish the raw edges with zigzag stitch.





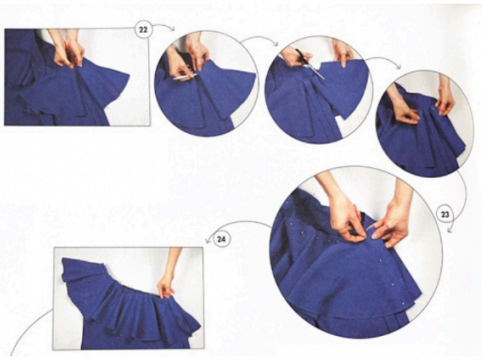
- Find the centre of the inner edge of your ruffle. With your top inside out and the wrong side of the ruffle facing you, line up the centre of the ruffle with the shoulder seam of your dress. Pin the ruffle to your dress here.



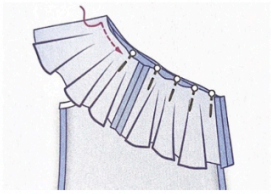
- Continue pinning the ruffle to the top. Put your pins in about 1 cm away from the edges of the fabric. This is where you will be sewing. Pinning at this depth will help avoid sewing pinches of fabric into the ruffle.

- Keep pinning bit by bit until you reach the armpit point. Do the same on the other side until the ruffle is almost totally pinned to the top. Pinch the two free edges of the ruffle together and mark the exact point they meet with a pin, a pencil or tailor's chalk. Trim off any excess fabric about 1 cm beyond that point.

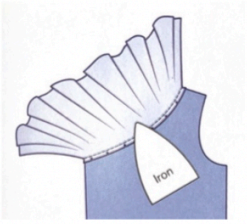
- Remove a few of the pins holding the ruffle to the top, then pin the two free ends of the ruffle together, with the right side together. Sew them together with straight stitch so your ruffle becomes one big continuous ring. Press the seam open, finish the raw edges with a zigzag stitch and repin the ruffle to your top.



- Sew the ruffle to the top all the way around with a 1cm seam allowance.



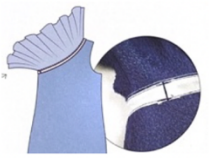
- Use the tip of the iron to press the raw edges down towards the dress.



- Create a channel at the neck edge with bias binding to thread elastic through: the bias binding must be wider than the elastic.

- Cut a piece of binding that is a few centimetres longer than your INNER CIRCLES measurement. Fold one of the short ends of the binding under and start pinning it to the top over the seam you pressed down on the right side of the top, under the ruffle. The top edge of the binding should run right under the line of stitching that joins the ruffle to the dress.

- Pin the binding all the way around, then tuck the short end of the binding under so that the two ends of binding just about touch each other.
- Sew the binding to the top all the way around, with your stitches running just below the top edge of the binding. Then run another line of stitching all the round the lower edge of the binding.



- Thread a long piece of elastic through the channel that you have just made with a safety pin, being careful not to let the other end disappear in the channel (you can pin it to the top with a safety pin).



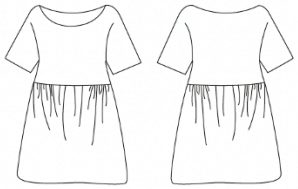
- Tie the ends together in a knot and try the top. Adjust that knot to adjust the tension of the elastic until you are happy with the fit. Once you are happy, trim the elastic and sew the ends together.

- Finish the edge of the ruffle with bias binding: you can choose to hide the bias binding on the inside of the ruffle or to sew it along the edge so that it shows and it can be a design detail. Have a look at the finishing samples. In both case you will need to pin the bias binding all around the ruffle edge and trim it to the correct length, adding 2 cm as seam allowance.

- Hem the bottom of the top by folding and pressing the edge by 1cm and then 2 cm. Pin the folded hem in place and stitch along its top edge.

You have made a ruffle top!

GATHERED DRESS



This dress features a wide neckline that does not require fastening. It can be made in any length, with an asymmetric hem, with more or less gathers, … You can choose to make this exact dress or use the same techniques to create your own design. Olivia and I are here to help you.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Tracing paper (optional if you can trace on the fabric. If your fabric is thin and floaty, trace the pattern on paper first)
- Paper scissors and fabric scissors
- Pen, pencil or tailor's chalk
- Ruler and square
- Sewing machine
- Thread
- Fabric: this dress suits a drapey woven fabric.
- Bias binding
- A guide garment: a garment made of woven fabric to help you mark the sleeves and neckline.

MEASUREMENTS NEEDED:

- Full hip
- Shoulder peak to shoulder peak
- Shoulder peak to elbow
- Nape of neck to actual hip
- Actual hip to desired length of the dress

MATHS TO DO:

Use the boxes below to write down your measurements and calculate the size of the rectangular panels.

Sleeve length

~~Shoulder peak to elbow~~ no sleeves X 2 = ~~0~~ + Shoulder peak to shoulder peak 44 cm = WIDTH 44 cm.

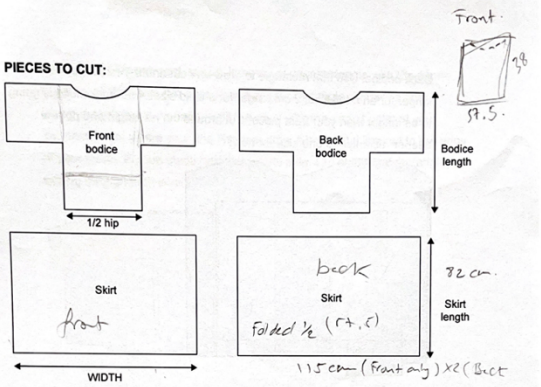
Nape of neck ~~to actual hip~~ 36 cm + 2 cm = BODICE LENGTH 38 cm

Actual hip to desired length 78 cm + 4 cm = SKIRT LENGTH 82 cm

Full hip 111 cm ÷ ~~4~~ 2 + 2 cm = HALF ~~QUARTER HIP~~ 57,5 cm

skirt width 57,5 x 2 115 cm.

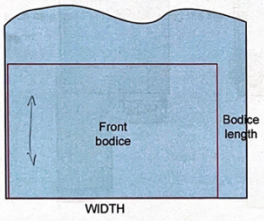
PIECES TO CUT:



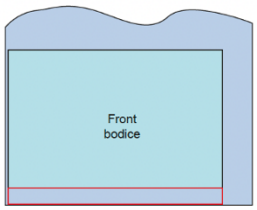
CUTTING AND SEWING INSTRUCTIONS

Cutting:

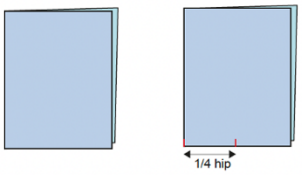
- Bodice:
  - Front bodice: Draw a rectangle with the WIDTH across your fabric and the BODICE LENGTH along the selvage. Cut the rectangle.



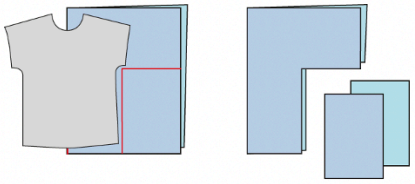
  - Back bodice: Use that rectangle to draw and cut another rectangle 4 cm longer for an adult size, 2 cm longer for a child size. Your back piece is going to be longer than your front piece. Cut around the rectangle and put the deeper rectangle to one side for now.



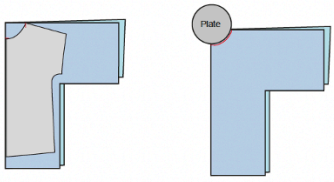
  - Fold your front bodice piece in half, taking care to match the corners and edges. You can pin the two layers together to prevent them from moving.
  - Measure your QUARTER HIP measurement out from the folded bottom corner and mark this point with a pin or with a pencil.



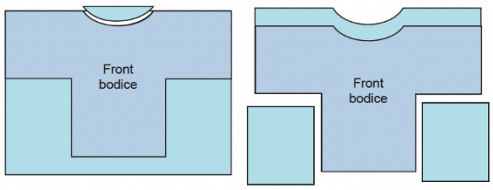
  - Take your guide garment and lay it on top of your rectangle with the centre front line aligned with the folded edge of your rectangle. Square a line upwards from the ¼ hip mark until it is level with the armpit point of your garment. From where your line finishes, draw a horizontal line out to the edge of your fabric. Put the guide garment to one side. Cut along that rectangle, cutting through both layers.



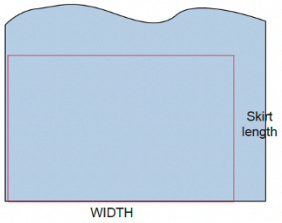
  - Now you are going to mark out a neckline. With your front bodice still folded in half along the centre front, lay the guide garment folded on top of your fabric, with the centre fold on top of the centre fold of your fabric piece.
  - Mark the edge of the garment neckline at shoulder level and the lowest point of the neckline on the folded edge of the bodice piece.
  - Draw a 1.5cm straight line at 90 degrees to the edge on both marks.
  - Join these two marks with a nice scooping line. You can use a round object such as a plate to help. Cut along the line, cutting through the two layers of fabric.



  - Lay the front piece on top of the back rectangle, with the top edges aligned, and cut out the same neckline. Then slide the front piece doan and cut out the two rectangles to create the sleeves. You now have the two bodice pieces.

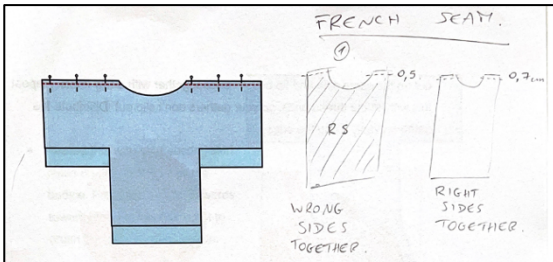


- Skirt panels: Draw a rectangle with the WIDTH across your fabric and the SKIRT LENGTH along the selvage. Cut the rectangle and use that rectangle as a guide to cut another identical rectangle.

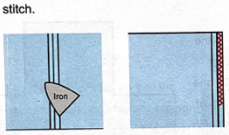


Sewing:

- Lay your back piece with your front piece on top of it, right sides together. Match up the shoulder seams and pin them together. Sew the pinned edges with a line of straight stitch.



- Press the seam open with the iron and finish the raw edges with zig zag stitch.



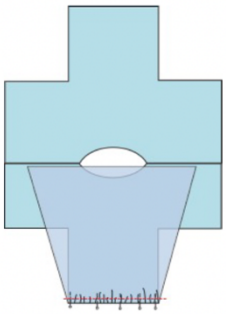
- Finish the neckline with bias binding.
- Now, you are going to prepare the skirt pieces to join them to the bodice. To gather the fabric, you are going to sew two lines of gathering stitch that run parallel with the top edge of the skirt pieces. Set your machine to sew a long straight stitch – the longest your machine will allow. Sew your first line of stitching at 1cm from the edge . Don't run your stitches backwards at the start or end. Remove your fabric from the machine then snip the threads, leaving long thread tails. Do another identical line of stitching at 0.5cm from the edge.
- Take the two threads that sit on the same side of your fabric and gently pull them sideways, pushing crinkles into the fabric and then shifting the crinkles along the lines of thread until the skirt piece is the same width as the bodice. If easier, you can also gather on the other side. Repeat this on the other skirt piece.
- Once you have the right width, take one of the individual threads you have been pulling on and gently pull it towards you. This will pull through a loop of thread from the other side of the fabric. Pull this thread through until it comes

out on the same side and tie both threads together with a few knots. Repeat this with all the thread ends, so your gathers don't slip out. Distribute the gathers evenly along the edge.

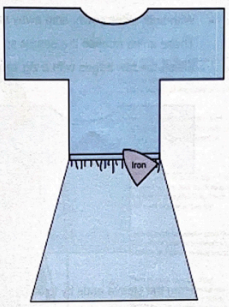




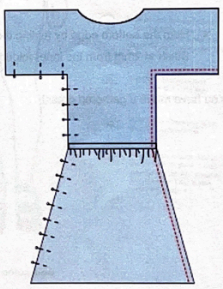
- Attach the skirt pieces to the bodice of your dress: Lay your bodice out flat, with one of your skirt pieces on top of it, right sides together. Match the gathered edge of the skirt with the bottom edge of the bodice piece, matching the centres of both skirt and bodice. Pin then sew the two together with a line of straight stitch that runs just below the line of the gathering stitch. Remember to set your stitch length back to a normal stitching length. Finish the three raw edges together with a zig zag stitch.

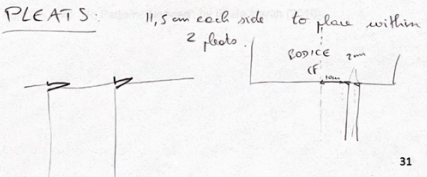


- Repeat this with your second skirt piece on the other side of the bodice. Press the seams upwards towards the bodice, trying not to crush the gathers with the iron.

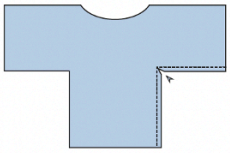


- Lay the garment out so that the right sides are together, matching up the armpit points and the waist seams. The bottom edges of the skirt should sit on top of each other. Pin the front to the back of the dress, all the way under both sleeves and down both sides.
- Sew the front to the back with a line of straight stitch at 1cm from the edge. Your line will turn a corner at the armpit point.



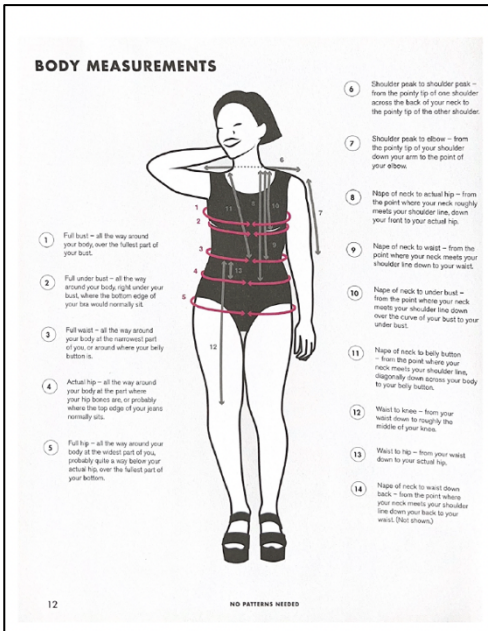


- With both sides sewn, snip away small triangles of fabric at each armpit point. These snips release the seams so you can open them out and press them. Finish the raw edges with a zig zag stitch.

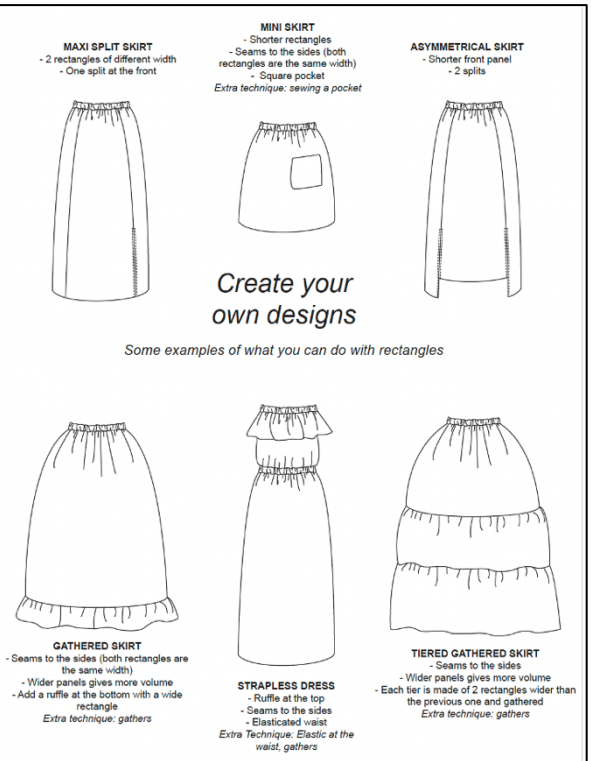


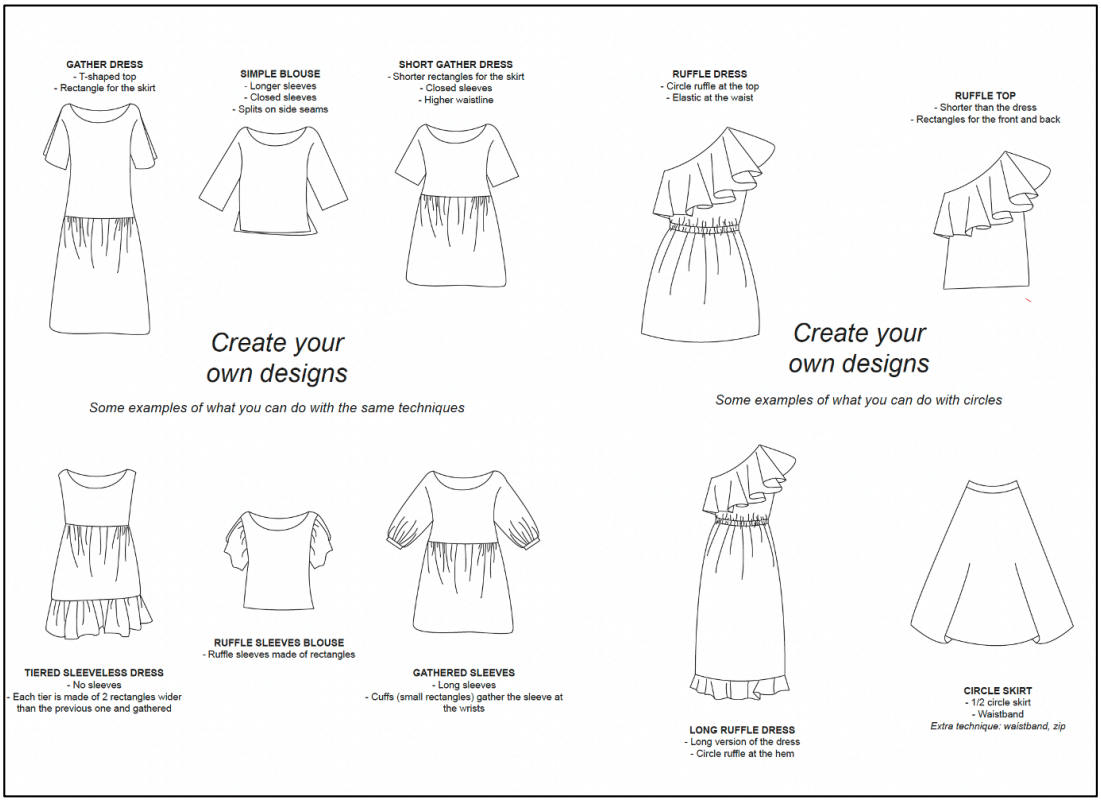
- Hem the sleeve ends by folding the edge twice by 1cm and stitch at 2mm from the inner folded edge.
- Hem the bottom edge by folding the edge by 1cm and then again by 2cm. Stitch at 2mm from the inner folded edge.

You have made a gathered dress!



Picture from the book 'No Patterns Needed', by Rosie Martin (2016).







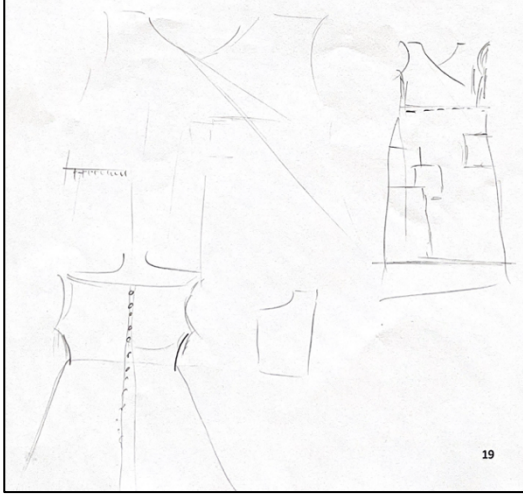
Chapter 3: Draping: 3D shaping

2 sessions

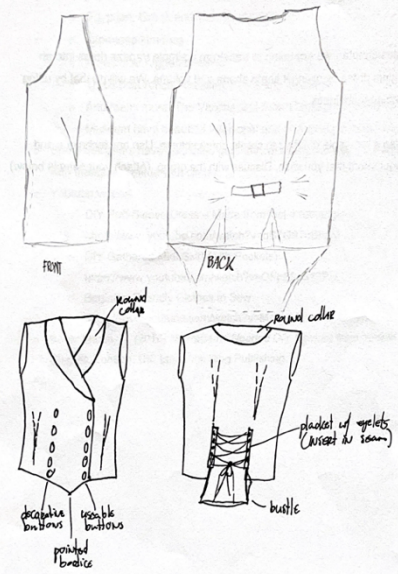
Create an original dress

In this chapter, we are going to transform a simple trapeze dress into an original dress by giving it some shape and volume. We will do that by using draping techniques.

1. Use a rectangle of fabric to create some volume. Use any technique and equipment that you wish. Discuss with the group. (Attach your sample below)



2. Using one or more shaping techniques, modify the trapeze dress. Check the techniques available or use any technique you know. Write down or draw your ideas below if you want to.



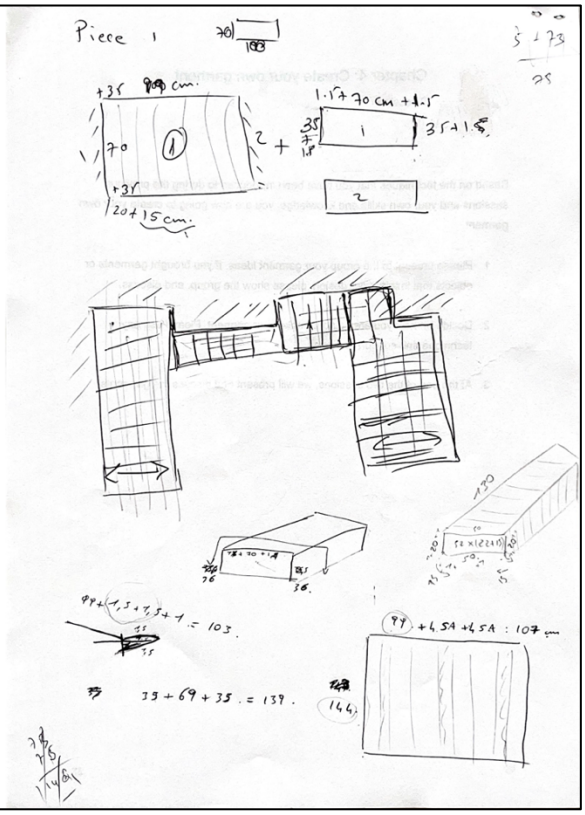


Chapter 4: Create your own garment

2 sessions

Based on the techniques that you have been introduced to during the previous sessions and your own skills and knowledge, you are now going to create your own garment.

1. Please present to the group your garment ideas. If you brought garments or objects that inspire your design, please show the group, and discuss.
2. Decide on how you are going to make your garment. Please use any technique and support you need.
3. At the end of the two sessions, we will present and discuss the garments.



Appendix 24. Samples of copied patterns and garments

(All photos by the author)

- Child apron: Original garment, pattern, and reproduced garment.



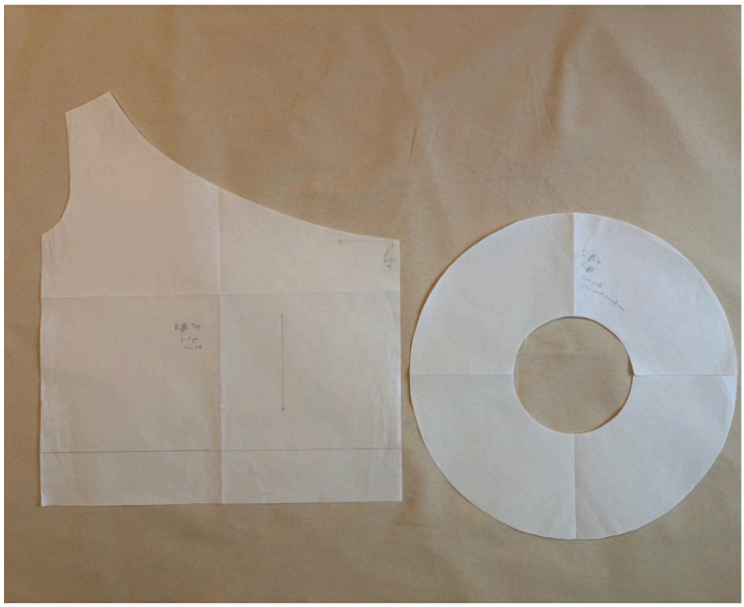
- Linen Summer dress: Original garment, pattern, and reproduced garment.





Appendix 25. Top sample made of geometrical shapes

(Photos by the author)





Appendix 26. Dress sample made by combining methods

The construction of this dress combined two methods: ‘copying a garment’ and using simple geometric shapes.

(photos by the author)



Original garment, reproduced pattern for the dress bodice (sleeve is too tight but was adjusted when cut and the mistake served to demonstrate to participants), and toile.

Appendix 27. Dress sample draped from a trapeze dress

(photos by the author)

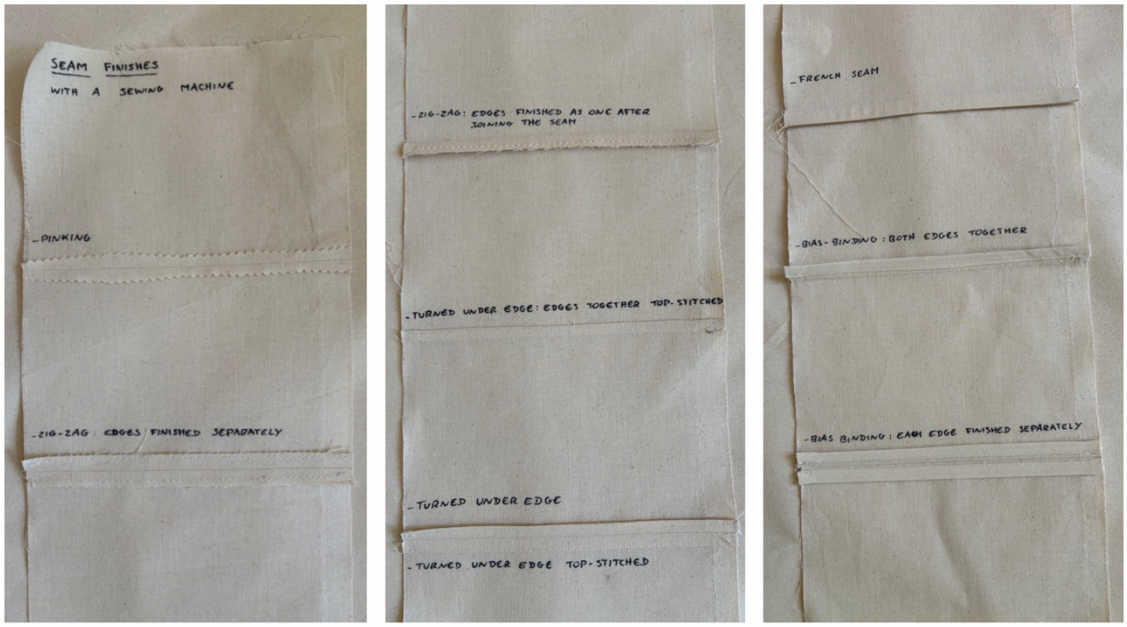




Trapeze dress pattern drafted from a circle and a triangle and toile after draping (1/2 scale).

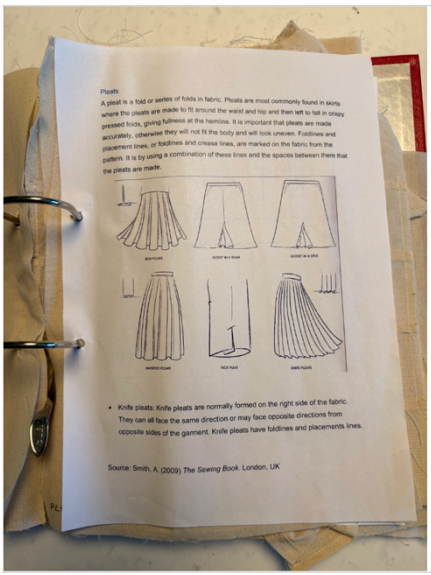
Appendix 28. Seam finishes samples

(photos by the author)

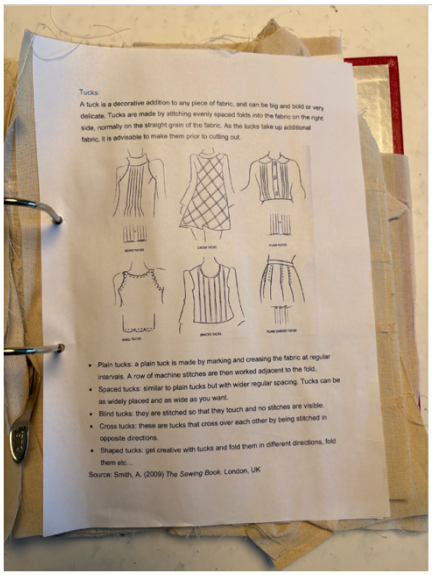


Appendix 29. Selection of shaping technique samples

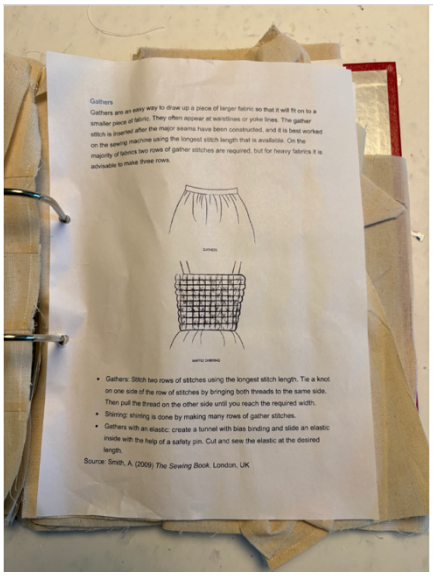
(photos by the author)











Gathers

Gathers are an easy way to draw up a piece of larger fabric so that it will fit on to a smaller piece of fabric. They often appear at waistlines or yoke lines. The gather stitch is inserted after the major seams have been constructed, and it is best worked on the sewing machine using the longest stitch length that is available. On the majority of fabrics two rows of gather stitches are required, but for heavy fabrics it is advisable to make three rows.

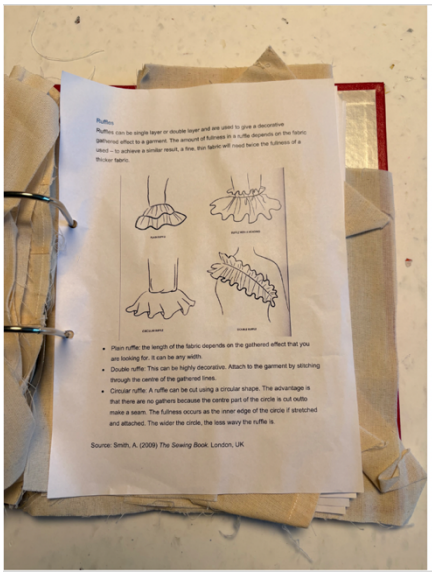
GATHERS

SMOCKED GATHERING

- Gathers: Stitch two rows of stitches using the longest stitch length. Tie a knot on one side of the row of stitches by bringing both threads to the same side. Then pull the thread on the other side until you reach the required width.
- Shirring: shirring is done by making many rows of gather stitches.
- Gathers with an elastic: create a tunnel with bias binding and slide an elastic inside with the help of a safety pin. Cut and sew the elastic at the desired length.

Source: Smith, A. (2009) *The Sewing Book*. London, UK





Ruffles

Ruffles can be single layer or double layer and are used to give a decorative gathered effect to a garment. The amount of fullness in a ruffle depends on the fabric used – to achieve a similar result, a fine, thin fabric will need twice the fullness of a thicker fabric.

SUNRAYS

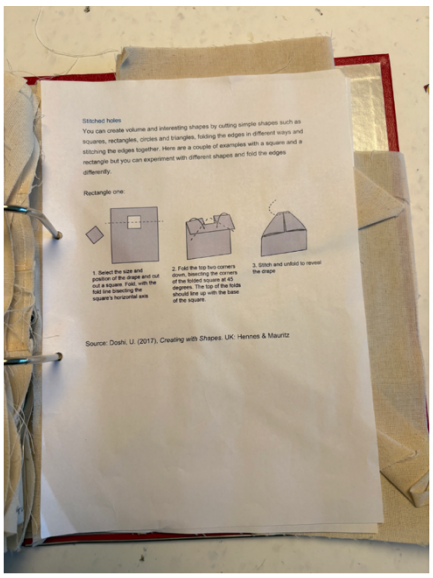
SINGLE LAYER

DOUBLE LAYER

- Plain ruffle: the length of the fabric depends on the gathered effect that you are looking for, it can be any width.
- Double ruffle: This can be highly decorative. Attach to the garment by stitching through the centre of the gathered lines.
- Circular ruffle: A ruffle can be cut using a circular shape. The advantage is that there are no gathers because the centre part of the circle is cut outto make a seam. The fullness occurs as the inner edge of the circle if stretched and attached. The wider the circle, the less wavy the ruffle is.

Source: Smith, A. (2009) *The Sewing Book*. London, UK





Stitched holes

You can create volume and interesting shapes by cutting simple shapes such as squares, rectangles, circles and triangles, folding the edges in different ways and stitching the edges together. Here are a couple of examples with a square and a rectangle but you can experiment with different shapes and fold the edges differently.

Rectangle one:

1. Select the size and position of the shape and cut out a square. Fold with the fold line bisecting the square's horizontal axis

2. Fold the top two corners down, bisecting the corners of the folded square at 45 degrees. The edges of the folds should line up with the base of the square.

3. Stitch and unfold to reveal the shape

Source: Doshi. U. (2017). *Creating with Shapes*. UK: Hennes & Mauritz



Appendix 30. Researcher's observation notes – Sample

Session 5: Ch3 'Draping'.

Observation site: Family Centre at Edith Neville Primary School, Somers Town

Observation date: Tuesday, November 1st, 2022

Start time: 13:00 End time: 15:20

Writing location: Home Writing date: Tuesday, November 1st, 2022

Participants present: 5 participants (All consented to have their first name): Shahida, Wan Chen, Angela, Kabirun, Happy.

Participants absent: Tamanna**,** Selina**,** Fatema.

Support team: Laura (gatekeeper)**,** Olivia Weber (workshop assistant)**,** Chnar (workshops assistant).

Description:

Today was the first session of Unit 3 'Draping'. After the experience of the pilot workshops, I was expecting this unit to be the most challenging for the participants. I am not giving many instructions while most of them expect that.

We started the session with greeting each other after a week of half-term. Laura came and we had a chat about the workshops and my PhD project. Angela also asked about my PhD and I mentioned that I also worked with women in prison. Laura also mentioned that someone from Camden Adult Learning centre wants to meet me. We also chat about the weddings that Shahida attended during the week. As Shahida was showing pictures of the weddings to Laura, I had to ask to start the session.

We started with answering the few feedback questions from the previous session. Then I introduced the unit about draping. With Olivia and Chnar, we had prepared the room with all the mannequins in a line with the Abaya dresses or trapeze dress on. I also brought my ½ scale mannequin with the example to illustrate what we were going to do. After I explained what draping is and that they were going to create their own designs by changing the dresses on the mannequins, they all fell silent and seemed very confused. Happy was looking at the mannequins, slowly shaking her head. Wan Chen was silent and very serious. Angela started asking questions very quickly about how you start, how you know what to do etc. Shahida was motivated to do it even if she was saying that she did know how to do it but she said that "we are here to learn". Their first reaction was of confusion and they felt a bit lost as they did not know how to start because there were no instructions and they had never done that before.

Olivia, Chnar, and I were looking at each other, trying to find ways to motivate the participants to move towards the mannequins. We also tried to tell them to think about this unit as an opportunity to experience new shapes, new designs, a bit like on a catwalk and that the garment does not have to be wearable. Shortly after, Angela said "I know what I am going to do" and moved towards a mannequin and started asking me questions. Slowly, they all moved towards a dress, and we led them to start manipulating the fabric.

The collection of samples was also very useful to have them start with some shaping.

Many started draping on their dress saying “I have no ideas”, “we are not designers”, “It is not coming to me”. But slowly, as they started manipulating the fabric, they seemed to feel better. Some might have felt confused still but they were experimenting. Not knowing the final design of what they were making seemed to confuse them and bring some frustration, that I call “creative frustration”. At the end of the session, they all had draped a new dress on the mannequin.

- Angela: Angela seemed to enjoy the challenge. She quite quickly started looking at the samples that I had brought and asked a few technical questions. After asking a few questions about how to start and which steps to do first, etc. She took the dress off the mannequin and started drawing tucks on the bodice front. She also liked the shape created by the subtracted square that I had made on the little dress and decided to use the same technique. She worked independently, asking a few questions every now and then. At the end of the session, we had a look at her design together and discussed what she would be doing next week.

- Shahida: Shahida decided to replicate the design of my little dress on a bigger dress. She looked at the samples and followed the instructions for the subtracted square technique. With Olivia, they drew the square and pinned it closed in order to assess its position and its size and shape. Shahida also wanted to remove the sleeves and used the pattern for the trapeze dress to cut the sleeves off. With Chnar, they looked at how to sew the bias binding on the inside and she started sewing the bias binding to one side. Shahida always wants to finish quickly at the end and starts rushing to finish something.

- Wan Chen: Wan Chen was very serious and silent during and after my introduction. She felt confused and lost, not knowing how to start. She doesn’t talk much. She then chose to work on the child’s dress. Olivia assisted her in starting her design. She quickly decided to make the dress shorter and kept on working independently. I stopped by her and as she was draping, she was telling me that she did not have ideas. At the end she had draped a dress with a heart appliqué and made a cape on the shoulders. She started sewing her toile towards the end of the session.

- Kabirun: she did not know how to start and she told me “we are not designers”. She was doubting that she could transform the dress into something else. She was not sure either to start with the trapeze dress or the abaya dress with sleeves. She first started pleating the trapeze dress around the waist. Then she moved to the abaya dress and pleated the waistline as well. She wanted to experiment with pleats but she was not sure how. I tried to help her envision different possibilities and she looked at the sleeves. To help, I put on the dress and she pleated the sleeves on me. We finished the session discussing the neckline and if she wanted to have a collar. We then had a chat about how to reproduce that design for her daughter. When I mentioned that the head teacher would like to exhibit their designs, she told me “we need to learn first”.

- Happy: Happy was slowly shaking her head after I introduced the session. She did not feel confident to modify the dress. As we motivated them to make a move towards a dress and start manipulating the fabric, she told me “It is not coming to me today”, “I don’t have ideas”. She then started creating long pleats that went all along the bottom part of the dress on one side, changed the shape of the sleeves and added a bow. The dress looked very elegant and balanced. She also mentioned that she would like to add an elastic on the sides and at the back. I could see that she was feeling more confident and was then drawing and writing on the dress. She also asked how to make the dress in a smaller size.

One important thing that I kept telling them was that this is an opportunity to experiment with new techniques and that there is no wrong answer. Halfway, I asked everyone how they were feeling, if they were feeling less confused now. They replied that they were feeling less confused but since they were learning, it was ok.

Quotes:

“it’s not coming to me today” Happy.

“We are not designers” Kabirun

“I don’t have ideas” Wan Chen

Researcher’s feeling and thoughts:

This unit was a frustrating one for the participants during the pilot workshops because there are limited instructions. The first shock happened today too. They were all quiet and did not know how to start. Still at the end of the session, they all had draped an original design. I am very impressed with their designs and how much they have achieved in one session despite the first shock.

It was difficult for me to try to motivate them without giving too many suggestions of what to do or without confusing them. Some of them have decided to replicate the techniques that I have used for the sample dress, with Shahida replicating it completely, instead of developing their own ideas. This was expected. Olivia also commented that some participants feel more confident like that.

At end of session:

They all had a draped dress on the mannequin:

Shahida: replicated dress based on the illustrative ½ scale dress → attaching bias binding channel for the elastic around the waist

Wan Chen: Child dress with cape

Angela: dress with tucks at the front and subtracted and folded square at front and back

Kabirun: pleats on sides of waist and pleated sleeves, bow at the front of neckline

Happy: Long pleats along skirt on one side with bow at top, curved sleeves with large cuffs.

Other Comments:

Laura has talked about me and the workshops with the person responsible for Camden adult education centre. She came to the workshop and asked for my details.

Appendix 31. Participant feedback form – Sample

ual: university of the arts london
london college of fashion

"Journey to Creating your own Garments" workshops – PhD Research

Lifeafterhummus, Somers Town May 16th – July 11th 2022

Introductory questionnaire

Thank you for coming today. Before we start, I would like to know a little bit about you. This questionnaire is anonymous. Your opinion is important for the research and will help to improve the workshops going forward. Please let me know if you have a question or need help.

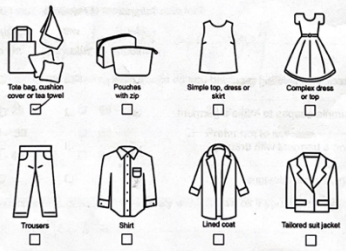
1. Garment making experience:

a. Have you used a sewing machine before? Yes ☑ No ☐

If yes, what is your sewing skill level? (Select one answer)

Beginner ☑ Confident beginner ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐

b. What have you sewn before? (Select as many answers as needed)



Other: I made curtains for my daughters without sewing machine.

1

c. Where and how did you learn to sew?

- My aunty taugh me to stich by hand.
- And in one ocasion I used the sewing machine at Calthorpe Community garden, by the guidance of one user.

d. Which of these activities have you done before: (Select as many as needed)

- Modify an existing garment for style ☑
- Modify an existing garment for it to fit better ☐
- Take apart a garment to make something else ☑
- Make a garment without using a pattern ☐
- Use a commercial pattern to make a garment ☐
- Modify a commercial pattern for fit or style ☐
- Draw a pattern from measurements ☐
- Draw a pattern from an existing garment ☐

e. How confident do you feel doing the following activities on your own:

	I do not feel confident	*I can do it with guidance*	*I feel confident doing it on my own*
Reproducing an existing garment	☑	☐	☐
Using simple shapes to make a garment	☑	☐	☐
Modifying a garment with draping	☑	☐	☐
Creating your own designs	☑	☐	☐

2

f. Do you know other crafts? If yes, which ones? (For example embroidery, ceramics, knitting, crochet, painting, ...)

I do ceramics and I can do basic knitting.

2. About you:

a. What are your main motivations for participating in this project? (Please select as many as needed)

- To experience something new ☐
- To learn new skills ☑
- To create my own garments ☑
- To reuse garments ☑
- I am already interested in pattern making and want to learn more ☐
- To get inspired on ways I could contribute to my local community ☑
- To meet new people ☑

Other reasons:

To engage more in the community.

b. Who do you want to make garments for?

for my daughters and myself.

c. Which of the following age groups do you belong to? (Please tick one)

☐ 18 - 29 ☐ 50 – 59 ☐ 80 or older
☐ 30 – 39 ☐ 60 – 69 ☐ Prefer not to say
☑ 40 - 49 ☐ 70 – 79

d. Which ethnic group do you identify with? (that's ok if you prefer not to say)

White other

e. Is English your first language? ☐ Yes ☑ No

3

f. Do you have any question or comment?

I'm so happy learning a new skill.

Thank you!

4

ual: university of the arts london
london college of fashion

"Journey to Creating your own Garments" workshops – PhD Research

Lifeafterhummus, Somers Town — May 16th – July 11th 2022

Chapter 1: Copy a simple top. Feedback questionnaire

It would be great to hear about your experience of the first chapter of the workshops "Copy your own top". This questionnaire is anonymous, so please do not be afraid to express any positive or negative feelings. Your opinion is important for the research and will help to improve the workshops going forward. Please let me know if you have any question or need help with answering the questions.

a. Did you enjoy the workshops? (Please tick one)

Yes, very much	I enjoyed it	Neutral	I did not enjoy it	No, it was terrible
☑	☐	☐	☐	☐

b. Would you feel confident reproducing the pattern from a garment, without help? Yes ☑ No ☐

c. Please, rate the quality of the workshops: (Please tick one)

Very Good ☑ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor ☐

d. Would you say that the duration of this first chapter is: (Please tick one)

Too long ☐ Just right ☑ Too short ☐

e. Any another comment:

I love how Joana and Olivia explain everything with so much detail.

Thank you!

5

ual: university of the arts london
london college of fashion

"Journey to Creating your own Garments" workshops – PhD Research

Lifeafterhummus, Somers Town — May 16th – July 11th 2022

Chapter 2: Simple geometrical shapes

It would be great to hear about your experience of the second chapter of the workshops "Simple geometrical shape". This questionnaire is anonymous, so please do not be afraid to express any positive or negative feelings. Your opinion is important for the research and will help to improve the workshops going forward. Please let me know if you have any question or need help answering the questions.

a. Did you enjoy the workshops? (Please tick one)

Yes, very much	I enjoyed it	Neutral	I did not enjoy it	No, it was terrible
☑	☐	☐	☐	☐

b. Would you feel confident making another garment based on simple geometrical shapes, without help?

Yes ☑ No ☐

c. Please, rate the quality of the workshops: (Please tick one)

Very Good ☑ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor ☐

d. Would you say that the duration of this first chapter is: (Please tick one)

Too long ☐ Just right ☑ Too short ☐

Any another comment:

I'm so pleased to be gaining confidence in a completely new skill.

Thank you!

6

ual: university of the arts london
london college of fashion

"Journey to Creating your own Garments" workshops – PhD Research

Lifeafterhummus, Somers Town — May 16th – July 11th 2022

Chapter 3: Draping

It would be great to hear about your experience of the third chapter of the workshops "Draping". This questionnaire is anonymous, so please do not be afraid to express any positive or negative feelings. Your opinion is important for the research and will help to improve the workshops going forward. Please let me know if you have any question or need help answering the questions.

a. Did you enjoy the workshops? (please tick one)

Yes, very much	I enjoyed it	Neutral	I did not enjoy it	No, it was terrible
☑	☐	☐	☐	☐

b. Would you feel confident using your draping skills to modify a garment, without help? Yes ☑ No ☐

c. Please, rate the quality of the workshops: (Please tick one)

Very Good ☑ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor ☐

d. Would you say that the duration of this first chapter is: (Please tick one)

Too long ☐ Just right ☐ Too short ☑

e. Any another comment:

It would require more time to finish certain garments, depending on how many different things you would want to add/modify the garment.

Thank you!

7

ual: university of the arts london
london college of fashion

"Journey to Creating your own Garments" workshops – PhD Research

Lifeafterhummus, Somers Town — May 16th – July 11th 2022

End-of-journey feedback questionnaire

Thank you for taking part in the "Create your own garments" workshops.
It would be great to hear about your experience of the whole project. This questionnaire is anonymous, so please do not be afraid to express any positive or negative feelings. Your opinion is important for the research and will help to improve the workshops going forward. Please let me know if you have any question or need help answering the questions.

1. Your experience

a. Overall did you enjoy the workshops? (Please tick one)

Yes, very much	I enjoyed it	Neutral	I did not enjoy it	No, it was terrible
☑	☐	☐	☐	☐

b. Overall, did the project meet your expectations? (Please tick one)

Yes, absolutely	Yes, partially	Neutral	Not really	Not at all
☑	☐	☐	☐	☐

c. As a direct result of your participation to the project, do you feel more confident in:

	Yes, definitely	*Yes, slightly*	*Same as before*	*No, I feel less confident*
Your sewing skills?	☑	☐	☐	☐
Your pattern making skills?	☐	☑	☐	☐
Your fashion design skills?	☑	☐	☐	☐

8

d. As a direct result of your participation to the project, how confident do you feel doing the following activities on your own:

	I do not feel confident	*I can do it with guidance*	*I feel confident doing it on my own*
Reproducing an existing garment	☐	☑	☐
Using simple shapes to make a garment	☐	☐	☑
Modifying a garment with draping	☐	☐	☑
Creating your own designs	☐	☑	☐

e. As a result of your participation to the project:

	Yes, definitely	*Yes, slightly*	*Neutral*	*Not really*	*Not at all*
Do you feel inspired to sew and make more?	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you feel generally more creative?	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you feel more connected to your community?	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you feel you have made new friends?	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐

f. If the opportunity comes about, would you like to exhibit your work?

Yes ☑ No ☐ Not sure ☐

g. Overall, how has participating to the workshops made you feel?

Very positive and involved.

h. Please note any specific skills you feel you have learnt through the project:

Using sewing machine, creating patterns and different techniques of sewing and cutting.

i. Do you intend to use your pattern making and sewing skills in the future? If so how?

Yes, adjusting it to my daughter size and making tops and skirts for her.

j. Were there any skills that you were expecting to learn, but you haven't?

No.

k. Are there any other skills that you would like to learn in the future?

I'd love to join in any other sewing sessions. Jasmin might she can and be able to do things with her guidance

2. Feedback on the workshops

a. Please, rate the quality of the workshops: (Please tick one)

Very Good ☑ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor ☐

b. Would you say that the duration of the project is: (Please tick one)

Too long ☐ Just right ☐ Too short ☒ (Slightly short)

c. How would you rate the following?

	Very good	*Good*	*Neither good nor poor*	*Poor*	*Very poor*
The organisation, communication and administration for the project	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐
The venue	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
The location	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐
The welcome you received	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐
The opportunity to learn new skills	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐

d. What did you like the most about the project?

On the exchange clothing at "Life after Mums" event. (Clothing Swap.)

e. What elements of the project do you think could be improved?

Adding a couple more of sessions (1 or 2)

f. Any another comment:

I loved the relaxed environment and great athmosphere

Thank you!

Appendix 32. Chronological comparison analysis – Sample

Analysis of participant development

Series of workshops: Family Centre at Edith Neville Primary School – Somers Town

Dates: September 27th – November 22nd 2022

Participant: Shahida

Date compiled: 09/12/22 (patterns and toiles)

Unit 1: Copying a garment

Type of data	Observations
Fieldnotes	• She brought some fabric to explain that she wanted to make a maxi dress. • She is very chatty and happy to share about her life with others. • She copied the pattern for a woman tank top. • Learnt to sew with her husband and still sews with him. • Wants to learn pattern cutting from measurements. She has cut sleeves before, but "they never come right". • Participant suggests alternative ways of doing things as she already has experience and knowledge. • Participant has a sewing machine at home. She stitched bias binding for the first time and really liked it. She stitched it without pinning it to the fabric.
Pictures	• She shows the fabric that she brought • Copying the tank top and adding SA • Stitching on the machine  
Pattern and toile	Simple woman tank top Pattern: one front, one back. Front has markings for both front and back for armhole. CF and CB angles are square. Back piece doesn't have any marking as it was drawn from the front. 

	Toile: neckline finished with bias binding. Stitching at 1mm from the edge is sometimes missing the bias binding. Sewing not really straight and SA not even all along side seams. Better on shoulders. 
Analysis	Skill acquisition: • Participant already knew how to copy a garment • Garment technology: bias binding Confidence: • Participant is quite confident about her making skills Aspirations: Participant wants to learn metric pattern cutting.

Unit 2: Making a garment with simple geometrical shapes

Type of data	Observations
Fieldnotes	• Participant is ambitious and wants to make a long dress with long sleeves and a collar. So, we modified the instructions with the rectangles to get closer to the design she wants. • Participant traces part of the pattern pieces on her own. • She is quite impatient and rushes some steps. • After a series of measurements mistakes and difficulties gathering the wide skirt, participant did not finish her dress and was disappointed but acknowledged that working with large pieces of fabric was more difficult and more time-consuming. • Participant also shared about her personal life with the group.
Pictures	Participant tracing rectangles with a 1m ruler and using a square ruler 
Pattern and toile	Maxi dress with T-shape bodice and 2 layers of gathers for skirt. Unfinished. Second layer is not fully attached to the first one. Pattern: drawn on fabric directly. Bodice: 1 front, 1 back, T shape. Long sleeves. Round neckline Skirt: 1st layer: one large rectangle. 2nd layer: 2 large rectangles.

	Toile: It fits really well on the mannequin around the neckline and the shoulders. It also sits well around the waistline. Selvedge is used for the wrists. The top front wrist to wrist is the width of the fabric. Skirt bottom layer: gathered with zig zags, gathers are opening. Stitching on straight lines on side seams are not straight. Rectangles cut on the width of the fabric Skirt upper layer: rectangle cut on length of the fabric with selvedge as hem. Gathers with one raw of straight stitching. Bodice and sleeves: stitching is better, straighter than in other places or during previous unit. 
Analysis	Skill acquisition: • The quality of her sewing is improving • Gathering technique • Pattern making • Garment construction • Patience Confidence: • Participant is ambitious • Participant is impatient Community engagement: • Participant enjoys the social aspect of the sessions.

Unit 3: Draping

Type of data	**Observations**
Fieldnotes	• Participant preferred replicating the design from the demo mannequin instead of developing her own design. • She analysed my dress and replicated the different techniques with the help of the workshop assistant • Participant rushes at the end of the sessions to finish. • She commented on how easy one of the techniques was to create a nice volume while she did it expect it to be so easy.
Pictures	Pictures show participant draping and pinching the fabric. She also cut the sleeves off the dress.

	
Pattern and toile	Maxi dress, sleeveless. Pleats created with sewn rectangle at the front and at the back. Elastic on the sides of the waistline that go to the pleat. Elastic is in bias binding. From the abaya dress: she cut the sleeves. Widened the neckline. I tried it on, and it looks very nice. It doesn't fit the mannequin I have at home now. 
Analysis	Skill acquisition: • Garment analysis • Variety of techniques to create volume • Intricate sewing techniques Confidence: • Participant is confident of her sewing skills but not of her design skills.

Unit 4: Personal project

Type of data	**Observations**
Fieldnotes	• Participant copies one of her dresses. She feels confident just cutting the paper around her dress. • Participant wants to make a few changes to the dress design and the workshop assistant helps her. • She is very enthusiastic about making this dress even if she finds it difficult.
Pictures	Participant cuts around the dress she wants to copy. She cuts her fabric using the patterns and sews the dress with Chnar's help. 

Pattern and toile	Participant completed the bodice of the dress. She did nice gathers on the shoulder 
Analysis	Skill acquisition: • Participant already has a good understanding of garment construction and how to copy a garment Confidence: • Participant is confident to do things her own way • Participants now feels confident modifying a pattern to create her own design Determination: she finds the process difficult but is determined to make the dress.

Conclusions: Participant is very social and enjoys the social aspect during the sessions. During the workshops, she has been challenged to slow down and be patient with the process of making a garment. Her sewing skills improved, and she experienced with difference techniques, challenging herself with techniques she did not know. She feels confident about her making skills but less so about her design skills and prefers being told what to do. In the last unit, she started developing her own design ideas to modify the pattern of a dress she likes.

What happened after the workshops: Participant took part in the more advanced workshops and visited WMC for the morning workshop about patchwork and course introduction. Afterwards, she came every now and then. She is now a chef at the local Bangladeshi community café.

Other comment: Almost no writing on the hand-out. Only writing for unit 2 and writing down measurements.

Appendix 33. Panel discussion transcript

20.10.2023

SANDY BLACK (SB): Hello, good morning [laughs] and thanks for coming. My name's Sandy Black, can you hear me, by the way? Yes, and I am a professor of fashion and textile design and technology at London College of Fashion, which is part of the University of the Arts London, UAL. And I have the pleasure of supervising the PhD project that has led to this wonderful exhibition, We Are Designers.
And in a moment, of course, it's Joana Monteiro's project, I'll ask Joana to say a few words to introduce the exhibition. But first I'd like to introduce the panel members and what we'll do then is have some questions and then talk about their involvement with community projects and what this exhibition might mean and its potential significance and its role in the local community.
But before we get started, just to let you know that this is a sound recording being made of this for the purposes of Joana's research only and there are some photographs being taken. But do let people know if you're not happy with that.
And so, to the panel. I'd first like to introduce Natasha Friend, who is director of a local funding organisation, Camden Giving, which is a key supporter of this project. Adam Thorpe, who's professor of socially responsive design at Central St Martins, which is also a UAL college, and who's worked a lot in Camden, I'm sure he'll let you know, and been a little bit involved in this project. And Angela, Angela Wong, who's one of the participants in the project and whose work you can see in this wonderful exhibition. And, of course, Joana Monteiro, who's the driving force really behind the project.
And so in a moment I'll hand over to you, Joana, to just introduce the project and the exhibition and then I'll ask each panellist to introduce themselves. There'll be a few further questions from me and then questions from the floor, which I hope you have. And then you can continue to enjoy the wonderful pastries, some of which I know have been baked by the parents' group, who cook together with the story garden in – I've forgotten the name.
Just behind here. But it's also one of the locals. So, over to you, Joana, just to introduce the project.

JOANA MONTEIRO (JM): Thank you, Sandy, and welcome to the We Are Designers exhibition, this is a culmination of 18 months of workshops, fashion making and garment making workshops here in Somers Town, with the lovely ladies who live and work here and some of you are here, thank you. My name is Joana Monteiro and I'm a PhD student at London College of Fashion and I live in Camden. My research focuses on exploring how patternmaking and garment making can be used as a tool for social change with women in London and I designed a methodology based on participatory making workshops.
It consisted of eight workshops, we met once a week for three hours and during those workshops we introduced [unintelligible] practice and experience with three different methods of patternmaking. So, methods of constructing a garment. We started with copying a garment that we already own, then we used simple geometric shapes, squares, rectangles, triangles and so forth, and then we used 3D shaping methods that we call draping.
The objective of this approach was to progressively lead the participants towards more agency in the fashion design process, so that they were able to make the garment from start to finish, so from the design to the making of the garment. I have been involved in Somers Town for 18 months and I've delivered those – so, the series of eight workshops three times, once at [unintelligible], Foodbank and Social [unintelligible] just around the corner, with Farah, the founder. And then we transferred the workshops to the local family centre in the local primary school, where [unintelligible] primary school.

And about 20 ladies took part to the workshops. Participating in the workshops has led to skill acquisition, as you can see around you, in fashion design, patternmaking, garment making. It also led the participants, the ladies, to build very strong bonds of friendships. It's improved from what I can see and from the feedback, from them and also the organisations involved, it has improved, participating in the workshop has improved their sense of wellbeing, but also sense of self-confidence.
And I can see from some of them that they are going further in their passion, you know, starting a qualification course and going back to education at the local adult education college. Or starting their own sewing groups and sewing workshops. Even we're talking about setting up a social enterprise. So, these are the types of outcomes that we can see, in addition to the wonderful garments and everything that you see. Thank you.

SB: Thank you, Joana, great. I've now asked Natasha to introduce herself and her work.

NATASHA FRIEND (NF): So, I work for Camden Giving, we are a local funder that gives grants of non-repayable finance to people doing social good work. Sort of, to understand how we do that and how we came to funding this exhibition it might be worth telling you a little bit about the funding sector, because it's not something most people get up in the morning and think about. But there are thousands of UK-based foundations giving grants to social good work across the country all the time. In most cases it's their board of trustees who are deciding how money is spent on social good work.
Statistics on foundations in the UK is that they are majority – sorry, the trustees of foundations in the UK are majority men, their average age is 65 and they are 99% white. That probably isn't the best group of people to be deciding what mothers in Somers Town need, so we work with a different model where we've worked with 250 Camdenites, who are typically people who would not be experiencing the wealth of Camden.
And we work with them and pay them and support them to decide where we should put money in Camden. And I say all of this to say that we only ever therefore fund things that are really wanted by people in Camden and people in Somers Town, in the case of Joana's project. So, I'm here having not decided to fund Joana, but on behalf of local people that really wanted this project to receive funding.

SB: Thank you, thank you very much. Can I ask Adam just to introduce himself, as well?

ADAM THORPE (AT): Yes, so, I'm Adam Thorpe, I work at Central St Martins, which is just on Granary Square, where the fountains are. I started out as a fashion designer, I wouldn't call it fashion, I'd call it clothing design. And our clothing design was always what we called socially responsive clothing design. So, mid-90s, lots of CCTV cameras, no legislation governing it, so we were like you put up the camera, we'll put up a collar until [unintelligible] about it.
The ability of design of clothing to make the invisible visible. Now I'm still interested in design and social issues, I'm interested in working with the people that are the experts of the experience of those challenges and issues. And I'm fortunate enough to work with many of our neighbours around Somers Town and also some of our council partners and community organisations to see where design and see where some of our students can also make a contribution to see where design can help and contribute to our neighbours achieving the goals that they want to achieve. So, that's what I do [unintelligible].

SB: Thank you, Adam. So, Angela?

ANGELA WONG (AW): Hi, my name's Angela Wong, I'm a member of the [unintelligible] of Somers Town [unintelligible] and I have been with them for about a year. That was when the eight weeks' course [unintelligible] that Joana mentioned, that happened. The reason why I joined at the beginning was because I wanted to learn something and what the course has given me was skills that [unintelligible] further. And I'm an intermediate sewer, I would say, so I already had some experience of sewing, but mainly on mending and small scale things.
So, with the course it equipped me with more skills, but what's then happened was after the eight weeks' course, [unintelligible] that's the end of it, was that I was invited to be one of the mentors for the next eight weeks' course. So, I helped out with helping the ladies in the course and then following on after that, the course became drop-in sessions. So, we continued from the course and become a mentor and then continued with drop-in sessions where you go there and if you wanted to make a bag. So, what we did was we made some bags together, we looked at [unintelligible], so, we done looking at exhibitions and designing a Mexican dress. And in between that we also did our own individual projects, where I made some dresses for my children and also some accessories, so small scale stuff.
But what it did was it, kind of, motivates you more to do more things. I have minimal experience in working with community projects, [unintelligible] normal person, which doesn't really get involved. Because when you work full-time or when you work you don't really get involved in that, but what it has given me, [unintelligible] involved with projects which I think is quite interesting, but also a nice experience.

SB: Thank you. Some really interesting comments, as well, that I see on the wall, you were saying it's far better, you know, coming to the workshops is far better than looking up in books or watching videos. And someone else, Jade I think it is, has said, "Sewing means joining together, and by sewing we bring the community together," and I think that's fantastic.
But can I just ask Joana just to say what's your background? Tell people your background.

JM: So, I was not in fashion before, I did a business course 15 years ago, but I've been knitting with my mother and grandmother since [unintelligible]. So, I had this making in me and I found that in the career that I had chosen there was something missing, there was people missing, making missing, that interactive we have, things that linked each other.
And so I joined evening classes at London College of Fashion, there was no qualification, just a certificate, and I said I want some more. So, then I joined the part-time masters, MA, at LCF and College of Fashion in pattern and garment technology. Entering my masters I looked at how pattern cutting can be used for social innovation, for social change, and I worked with ladies in a prison at HMP Downview in South London, with whom I developed a construction method based on straight lines. Which is a very simple way of sewing, that's what you start with, basically.
So, I was looking at how with beginner's skills you can make amazing garments and have those ladies thrive and design once they were released from prison. So, from there I followed up with a PhD because I just love academia and I love people and making.

SB: Thank you, I think it's just important and good for people to see a journey. It's all about journeys, I think, this exhibition. But picking up on making I just wanted to ask the panel what do you see the role of making as in the community projects? Starting with you, Natasha.

NF: Something I reflected on when our community panel decided to fund this is that there are arguably more immediate needs than making in a lot of lives and

communities in Camden. There's safety and there's the need to eat and there's the need to be warm and very immediate things and things that the panel that awarded this grant will know too closely to themselves at home, as well, themselves.
But it reminds me of the wonderfulness of Camden and particularly of Somers Town that people always want to fund and want to support and want to be part of creating and art and making. And that's such a wonderful thing that's, sort of, a human necessity and I'm not sure I totally know why that is. But I think it's partly that we can literally see things being made and destroyed behind us, we don't have to walk very far in Camden to see things being changed and moved and physically built. And I think the need for everyone in the community to be able to craft something with their hands and have their mark feels really important to Somers Town for lots of reasons, that it's not just that it's happening, it's also the garment you're making and people can do things themselves. It feels really important here.

SB: No, that's really interesting, and your participatory giving is something that is really important, as well, as you said earlier on, because of the involvement of people who have the direct experience. But making, going back to making, so, Adam, you started off as a designer and maker, I think, so, what do you think the role of making is in community projects?

AT: I like what you said about [unintelligible] agency, people being able to have the means to achieve what they want to achieve. I think the projects that we get involved with, they often [unintelligible] the idea that making makes things happen. So, you can be chatting about stuff, but then as soon as you actually start doing things, you start to see things that are more tangible. And once there's something there, you've made that, there's a process in the making of it that makes things happen for people to be able to develop skills and all these things.
Someone will go away, someone will come up to them and say, "I like that," and then that conversation goes on, "Where did that come from? [Unintelligible]? What did they do? They do it like this?" So, the materialisation of things, making things physical I think makes people happen.
I think the other thing that's important is making makes things visible, so, there's lots of things in the world that we can't see, but we do experience quite intensely in the way that Natasha was saying. So, the development that goes on, for example, we can be invited into conversations about that, we can see the development, sometimes we can't see where our opinions were listened to. And we can't say, hang on, we said we liked the green space, but now we've got a tower block, what happened there? You know, so we say one thing and then we get another thing and that's difficult and I think that with the making it makes things visible and it makes things tangible, which his especially important when we don't feel like we're being heard and we say one thing and something else happens. So, a lot of the work that we try and get involved in and a lot of the work we do is about trying to make sure that quite quickly in processes you go from chat to action. And making helps make that happen, and also, again, the things that you make then take on a life of their own, can be useful for the people that are using them.
So, yes, I think it's making makes things happen, making makes things visible, you can see the results, they can deliver immediate value and also it's [unintelligible]. When something's physical all of a sudden everyone can go, "No, not like that, that's not what we meant." Whereas if it's just in our head we've all got 10 different pictures of it, so, yes, they're just some of the things.
I mean I can go on forever about this, but products and making and the processes of making. So, I've just talked about the products of making and then you've got the process of making and we talk a lot about a thing called infrastructuring. It comes from a bunch of people in Sweden and they said instead of infrastructure just being like roads and buildings, the stuff that we need around us to help us live our lives and do

the things we want to do. They say that infrastructuring is – they say it's a verb, a thing we do.
And actually so by making, I think making's a form of infrastructuring and it means creating the conditions, so creating enabling conditions. So, I think making is a part of infrastructuring, so basically it creates network that enable you to do other stuff. It creates stuff that you can use in different ways, it creates connections and understanding about how to get – who to talk to, how to access the materials that you need. So, you know, you can do it for one thing and then you realise how you could do it for other things and actually it's good to learn to do it with things where no one's going to get hurt if it goes wrong. And you do that a few times and actually you can really start stepping up and getting involved in some of the bigger stuff, as well, as the many small things that are important.

SB: Thanks Adam. Angela, I don't know if you want to add to that from your perspective?

AW: Yes, I look at the role of making in community projects. It's really interesting, because from a personal viewpoint I joined the course mainly to gain new skills and to meet people and that was it at the time. And what I then found was throughout the process it then changed, because it then became something that I wanted to go to because I felt it improved my mental health and also it reduced stress. So that was, kind of, something you say actually – so, making something in a community setting is multifaceted. So, it, kind of, gives you all sorts of different things that you didn't expect. It is very – I find it's very different to attending a different kind of workshop, like [unintelligible] workshop that [unintelligible], because there's very minimum actions in those workshops. Compared to so much [unintelligible] this type of workshop, you're constantly interacting with people, you're constantly talking, exchanging ideas. And with that I think it helped build the relationships, helps really much in building that community that I guess you didn't really – I didn't really expect at the time before I joined.
But what I find I'm not quite sure is with community projects like this are we limiting the people who are only interested in that particular – so, it's kind of limited to a particular group. Because outside of that group, if you're not interested in sewing, if you're not interested in that project, then you are being excluded? Because you're then not part of that group.
So, the benefit I find is very personal, I find that I benefited in that group, but people outside that group, maybe the benefit is not as great, I don't really know. But I find it quite an interesting topic.

SB: It does seem to me, and Joana, you can come in on this, that it's about what individuals have – it starts out first and foremost with what individuals have gained from this participation in making together, and the idea of that being together. Joana, go on. Adam, carry on.

AT: I was going to respond to what Angela was saying, because I think you put your finger on something that I was thinking when you started the – when the conversation started and the question, which is what are we talking about when we talk about community? I think it's quite a contentious term, especially when you use it in the singular, community, rather than communities.
And I think what you're describing there when you're saying about the people that are interested in sewing, we can have communities of practice, so we all enjoy doing the same thing. We can have communities of interest, we're all interested in the same sorts of concerns or issues. We can have communities of geography where we're all in the same place. There's all these different ways of, sort of, looking at what community or communities are and I think it's just interesting because you described that.

I think that was how I understood part of the challenge, because I understood it services community of interest and community of practice, but maybe it doesn't service wider community of geography.

AW: Because I find that if you're working full-time you're never going to be actively involved in a community, it's very difficult you don't have the time to do it. So, it started only with a particular type of group that is mostly involved.

JM: If I can comment on that? Because I think the purpose of this exhibition and the panel today and the articles that have been written is actually to show the bigger or other communities what we're doing. And so the – on Wednesday when we had the opening event I had so many people coming and saying, "I want to join, I want to know how to make this." But I've also had a man in the afternoon, he came in and he said, "This dress, this looks like the type of hijab I wear." He went back home, came back, brought two [unintelligible]. He said, "If they make this, you can make this too. How can you make this for me?"
So, I see the impact much wider, if we talk about it, if we show what we can do, if we empower the women who participate to go out and further, just to talk to other people about what we do. So, I agree that there is a side of it that is personal, but if we manage it well into communicating to others, then there is a wider impact.
And also it can be in other areas, it can be, "That group of ladies, they've done that in sewing, why can't we do that in baking? In cooking?" In lots of different areas, as well. Because they managed to do it, we can do it. Can we reach Camden Giving to get some money to start? Can we do that, do this?
And I see it as an example of empowerment that can happen in other areas, does that make sense?

AT: What do you think about the word empowerment?

JM: In the case of this project, what I've seen is that some of the ladies I've started, they told me, "I'm afraid of using a sewing machine." Now they are happy to teach others and it's not something that I've taught them to do, it's them saying, "I feel ready, I feel I've got the skills and I feel confident that I can pass on the skills to someone else." In the context of this project that's how I [unintelligible].

AW: I mean I'll just add that I think it only happens if the people within the group have the support and help and I think because otherwise you're not [unintelligible] can't do it. But if you've got the encouragement and the people helping you, that –

AT: So, I think we need a new word, because empowerment for me, me means like I'm being given something and I don't think that's what happens. You can tell me I'm wrong, you can tell me that is what happened here, but in my experience that's not what happens. What happens is that you can create this space, which you've talked about, as well, a space that can facilitate perhaps people to be able to go on their own journeys.
But I think we almost need to do it from ipowerment or something, and my language isn't broad enough to know that that word is at the moment.

SB: What about inpowerment?

AT: I-N rather then E-M? Yes, maybe that's it, because it's something that people do for themselves and what any of us can do is try and create the conditions for each other to be able to, as you say, go on that journey. But that sort of power and agency is something I think that people do for themselves and if it's given to you then it's given from who? For what?

SB: Yes, I mean I think that –

AT: Do I have to give it back?

SB: – it's up to the personal journey. I mean the other word, and you've just used it, is agency, isn't it?

JM: Yes.

SB: But, in a way, a simpler word might be confidence, perhaps, I don't know whether people relate to that in the same way, but there is definitely a transition and people's testimonies are actually writing about or talking about that transition. But first of all you have to have the initiative and the space, and then the activity and making. Because I think there's lots of – I haven't got a pithy quote, but, you know, the idea of working with your hands and, you know, the intellect is also working in the same way. But it also enables a connection in a way that, you know, simply conversation or more formal occasions don't.

JADE: Yes, I think that it's also something powerful that happens in here. Let me explain, for example, in the educational system that we have, it's very structured. So, for me it's a very individual path that you have to go through, yes, in a very, you know, crowded places like universities or colleges or whatever. But at the end of the day it's just your journey, it's an individual [unintelligible]. Where here with this project I find that as the title of this panel is through patterns, I think, transformation of social –

JM: Social change.

JADE: Social change. And I think it does that, what it did actually is it's transforming the way that we see educational platforms or spaces or whatever. And there's a way of – and not every single one can learn in the same way. If you're not visual. But some people, they are more social, and some people, they are more individual.
And I think this space, it gave us the opportunity to learn in community and do something as a community, not as an individual. So, we, as an entity, this journey that brought us here today, it didn't bring us here as an individual, but as a community, which is an entity, and yes, in the society that we live I think there should be more of that.

SB: Yes, no, I mean that word and that idea, connections, no, thank you for that, Jade.

JM: And talking about the making. I was thinking about this all the time, but then yesterday I put some words on it. Now, in every culture there are traditions of making and when you get together and use your hands to make, whatever country you're from, you're sharing. "We do this that way in our country," "We do this too," and only this brings – it brings people together.
I think in the world if people would make together more and share food, that would be something, really, because now those traditions of making, making food, as well, as the group who have baked and [unintelligible] and today showed as well. Making together, because we all cook, we all make, we all embroider in lots of different countries and traditions and let's make together. Maybe we will understand each other much more.

SB: I liked your quote in the leaflet, Joana, that, you know, talks about bringing – making, patternmaking is fashion design, bringing closer together the roles of design and pattern cutting and making.

AT: It is good that we make together, in the way that you're describing, but how that happens then – so, we're making together and we're making around what are we making?

JM: Making is –

AT: But do we choose to make things together that we're both interested in making? Probably. Clothes, you know, we do a woodwork class, rather than a sewing class. So, we're creating these networks, so, I'm interested in the payout. So, if making together is this social transformative thing, then do we need to be making with people that aren't interested in the same things as us, as well as making with people that are interested in the same things as us? And isn't the world actually made anyway, so aren't people making together all the time to make everything around us? And isn't the problem that not everybody's involved in that making process?

SB: Then it becomes more about making and then decision making.

AT: Yes, I think making is about decision making and design's about decision making.

SB: Yes, you might have some thoughts on that because of the way you go about decision making.

NF: I've got more thoughts than probably anyone wants to hear. But yes, we'll intentionally always bring together usually between eight and 12 people who are working as a team to award grants and they are intentionally people that wouldn't meet together and that would have no reason to be friends. And I think like the thing that makes us – particularly over the last couple of weeks, it's like the joy in seeing people coming together that would not normally be friends and then go and get something to eat afterwards.
And the panel that are awarding grants to this group, as well, hearing a young woman asking an older woman that she would never have met otherwise about her experience of menopause and these wonderful things. And I think it wouldn't happen if we said, "Let's get 12 people together to do a social club and we're going to try and make you understand about each other's different lives." We get 12 different people together with a job to do, in our case it's move money, in your case it's design and make clothing. Like if people coming together with a task does seem to be the thing that unites, and then from that you get this byproduct of wonderful community cohesion and coming together.
And I think like projects like this are so important to Camden right now and I think, sort of, to your point, Angela, this won't be something that everyone comes and touches fabric and is part of this themselves. But I think, well, I hope that it's still something that benefits everyone that knows that you've gone and done that and there's some quite old, I think, now research that I can't remember where it's from about how London has perceived the V&A Museum and whether or not they value it existing. I don't know if you've heard of this.
They've surveyed – apologies if I'm misquoting, but they surveyed people that regularly go to the V&A Museum and people that had never been to the V&A Museum and asked them something like, "Do you value the V&A Museum?" And they all valued it the same, it didn't really matter if they were going or not, just the idea that it existed. So, I think to some extent the idea that women are coming together to make things in Somers Town to some extent is valuable to everyone here in the reverse way that if I were to ask people that lived in those houses over there, "What are your main concerns about what people need in Somers Town?" Homelessness would be in their top five, even though they aren't homeless. People want good things for their

community even if it doesn't directly do anything for them. So, I think there's a beautiful ripple that comes from this work that you've done.

AUDIENCE: Sorry, I was going to say something, it also has to come within your soul to do something, as well, you know? Because, for example, my mother was a master tailoress. And she would have loved to have seen all this. Sorry. Sorry, she passed away in 2020.
But I like it too, but because I have so many things to do, I can't join just yet, but it has to come within your soul to do something that you like, you know? You just can't participate in something just for the sake of doing it. So, I'm glad that I've seen all of this and I hope you guys go very far, because you've got potential and it's interesting, it's amazing, it's with style and panache, as well.

AW: I wanted to add one more thing, which was very interesting. So, when we did this exhibition and then we say, OK, let's see where we can distribute the leaflets. And suddenly I find out actually I know people who are interested in sewing, so I say to my friends and then found out that close by [unintelligible] Centre actually has a sewing group.
So, I contacted them and they were very interested and I think the lady came over. So, it's something you find out, OK, there's one – but before that, before this exhibition we were just individual groups. And suddenly you find out, actually, I don't think people know this and you're connecting with more people and what we discovered was that very close by in the [unintelligible] Centre they did have a sewing group.
So, by having this exhibition you suddenly found you [unintelligible] other places that you never thought you would, you knew ,and by talking to people, people say, "OK, I know this place."

SB: Expanding of networks and connections. Connection I think is an important word.

AW: And it draws people together.

SB: Yes, so, activities together and in a certain space, obviously that's what's coming out. You know, we can talk about different contentious ideas, but I think that the – you'll put something out, you get a lot back. This, sort of, reciprocity comes through. But I just wanted to talk about the title, which is We Are Designers, but there's a not in there crossed out. And I just wanted to understand more about the meaning of that and I don't know whether – I don't know if, Angela, you wanted to pick up on that or start with Joana.

JM: I'll start from explaining how this title came up, how we had the idea of this title. There's one lady who's not here today, for health issues, unfortunately, but Kabirun, she started the workshops with us at the Family Centre, at the school, and she was very shy. It took me three weeks to get to understand her name because I didn't know. And then when we were doing the draping she felt very lost, she didn't know what to do, she didn't have any instructions, I told her, you know, "Change the dress into something that you like, you want." And she went to one mannequin, to the other, she didn't know what to do.
And she looked at me and she said, "Joana, we are not designers," I said, "Kabirun, have a try, go, there's nothing to lose, this fabric is cheap, it's not nice, just go, just do something." And she didn't touch the fabric for three hours, she looked at it and she left, I could see she was quite – she was not really happy with herself.
She came the next week, running in the room, "Joana, I have so many ideas, I know what to do, I went shopping with my daughter and I saw all those dresses and now I know I can make them, they were so poor-quality." And she went to her mannequin and she started doing things and she made these amazing sleeves with pleats and

then she looked at me and she said, “Joana, I’ve never seen pleats like that,” and I said, “Well, because you are a designer.”
So, this, yes, it’s about the journey and how, again, you know, not empowering, but about how they see themselves and how we give them the opportunity to change their own – the way they see themselves.

SB: Yes, I think these words like designer come with a lot of baggage, a lot of preconceptions and, you know, also the idea of – within the fashion industry generally there’s a lot of division between somebody who’s a pattern cutter, somebody who’s a designer, somebody who sews. But what did it mean for you in terms of –

AW: I guess because I was part of the group, so I know what Joana was saying, we are not designers. If you look at the diversity of the group, and you look at the number of languages that 20 people spoke, it could be anybody, I guess, a designer can be anybody. But one question I asked myself was, well, does everybody want to be a designer? Some people might not and those who might not want to be designers just give that job to someone else.
But if you believe in yourself then I think anybody can be a designer, but also what [unintelligible] I think is somebody who helps, who would help. Because, as Joana mentioned, if you come into a room and you actually don’t know what to do, then obviously you’re not a designer because you don’t know what you’ve got to be doing and you don’t know how to do it.
Whereas if you have got the help and support and also the encouragement from the people in the group then, yes, I think everybody can be a designer.

SB: And do you feel like you’re a designer?

AW: I think I was always a designer [laughs]. I think that I’m quite a creative person to start, so if I look at something I always think, “Can I do this?”

SB: As you were saying, it’s more about the support and facilitation to draw out –

AW: Also within the group setting I think it encourages you more. So, it encourages you to do things, whereas you can think of lots of ideas but then end up not doing things. And when you see other people do it and then it bounces off ideas and you say, “OK, I can do that.” And if you can have a space to do it and you go there regularly, you know that I can do it then. Because most of the time you think of something you want to do, but then say, “OK, I’ll do it next week.”
But if you know that today I’m going to the workshop, I go there and I see other people do it, I think, OK, I’ll do it. And then what happens? When you go home you somehow still have got that encouragement, so you think, “OK, I need to finish that so that next week I can bring it in to show people.”
So, yes, so that’s I think the workshop helps and the people there helps.

SB: Absolutely, it’s all about that support and encouragement, isn’t it? But also it’s reclaiming some words and, you know, when we talk about design, as well, I mean I’m a designer in my own business, you’ve worked in pattern and garment technology. And, Adam, you started off, you know, really with a designing role. But, you know, I feel and I witnessed that that role has evolved, because designers can also be brokers and facilitators and activists. And making things happen, you know, and Adam you were saying making makes things happen and so we’re all designing our lives and designing our experience.
So, I don’t know, if there’s any comment you have about that?

JM: So, when I go back to pattern making there is something about pattern making and the reason why I want to use patternmaking. Because in the fashion world pattern makers or pattern cutters, as sometimes we call them, are not seen as fashion designers. And in a way what we're doing here is also to reset the roles. Because the reason why I use pattern making is I think you can be a fashion designer using pattern making as a fashion design tool. And this shows the fashion world that, yes, pattern cutters or pattern makers are fashion designers, as well.
And it also allows people, ladies that are not often seen as designers in society, to actually be designers and that's that powerful tool. I think pattern making is that powerful design tool that can allow people to improve themselves and become designers themselves.

JADE: Yes, I just agree with you. I do not [unintelligible] arts and crafts, you know like the things that they have there? I'm based in [unintelligible], but not for clothing, patterns that you can apply to clothing. So, when I do that what I have in mind is patterns first and then I apply them to arts with whatever I find on the floor, stitching. But what I'm thinking is in patterns actually and I'm designing.
I think it's about redefining, reinventing the word design in society, yes.

SB: Absolutely, did you have anything to add to that, Adam, on the designer role?

AT: Yes, obviously where we come from, so, Herbert Simon, a bloke called Herbet Simon wrote a book called *The Science of the Artificial*. And *The Science of the Artificial*, that's what he calls design, the science of the artificial. So, basically because designed stuff, it's not natural, it doesn't come from nature, it's made, it's artificial. So, he talks about design as being the science of the artificial and he talks about the fact that everybody designs.
So, he says everybody designs, that experiences a situation that is not ideal and applies some imagination to identify a preferred situation and then takes some action to achieve that situation. So, that's a design process and he says everybody that goes, "I'm not happy with this, I'd rather have that, this is what I'm going to do to get there," that person's a designer.
There's lots of different sorts of designer, lots of different sorts of design, so there's various references for it. But basically you can have what they call design for differencing. So, design for differencing is there's a chair, I'm going to make a different chair. What are you going to make a different chair? Because the situation I would use it in is different, it needs to be smaller, needs to be bigger, needs to be wider, needs to be comfier, whatever. It needs to be different, so design for difference.
We've got design for services and experiences. So, basically how am I going to experience the things around me? That's not instead of design for differencing, that's as well as, but it's a different kind of design. Design for differencing will sit inside a design for experience or service.
Then you've got design for systems and organisations and services sit inside systems and organisations. And then you've got design for social transformation, which is probably the most complicated design. Because design for social transformation, all the people involved have got a different opinion on what the outcome should be. So, if we go back to that everyone designs, preferable situation, don't like it here, rather be there, now how to get there. Rather be where?
When you're trying to do social transformation design, working together to get a different society and using design to help you do that, nobody's on the same page in terms of where the want to go to. So, then you have to design different ways, like your panel of different folks with different opinions being the ones that make the decisions together. That's a design that tries to address that idea that not everybody wants the same thing. So, how do you do this in a fair way?

So, there's lots of different types of design is what I'm saying. So, before we say everyone's a designer and we don't need the word design, there's quite a lot to think about when you think about design.

SB: Well, absolutely, such a broad interpretation that's possible. And, again, all these words come with their own background and their own, sort of, baggage. And something like this is helping to really unpack that and to give people – again, it's about going back to the agency and empowerment and the – yes, the ability to influence and to, sort of, make decisions and things that affect themselves and their world around. Perhaps we could just think a little bit about what might be next or the legacy of this work or how other projects might learn from this, and I'm thinking of you, Natasha, just to answer that to start with.

NF: Yes, I can say a little bit about why we funded this work to begin with. There are four Camden renewal missions that are everyone eats well every day, opportunities for young people, creative and sustainable estates and diversity of people in positions of power. And these are the big things that Camden citizens say they want to get to by 2030. No one, not Joana, not [unintelligible], not Camden Giving, not the council, not any of the knowledge institutions that exist here can achieve any of those on their own. They need lots and lots of people, we almost need to crowdsource the solutions to these challenges from everyone in Camden.
So, I hope that one of the ripple impacts of what you've done is that you've encouraged other people to want to be part of that sort of diversity agenda that you've started here. So, yes, I very much hope that if anyone is a Camden citizen and would like to apply to Camden Giving for funding, we're awarding 260 grants this year on a weekly basis. For projects like this and I really hope that other citizens can want to get their hands around working on this mission. I hope that it's joyous and there's things you can take from what's happened here going forwards.
So, that's our hope, this is the start of a snowball impact on achieving those missions together. And I hope, I suppose personally something that makes me really happy, I hope that I bump into women in the street in Somers Town that are wearing thing that they have made and that walking around Somers Town I see more things that are made, that are not made by developers and by people that have come and done things to people on Somers Town, but made by people that are here. It would be a wonderful thing, I think.

SB: Well, it's obviously an amazing setup, you know, that's a huge number of projects, actually, I'm really pleased to hear that amount.

NF: There's people everywhere doing amazing things in Camden, behind doors quietly, yes, so it's exciting that this is out to be seen through the glass window.

SB: What do you feel is next for the legacy of the project?

AW: So, well, just to say that currently I'm also working on an EPQ with Adam, which, kind of, looks at – with the participants there I see lots of potential with people who have got lots of exciting projects. So, I'm looking at designing [unintelligible] bag, so, bags that goes on the back of your bike. But also spending time looking at how we could grow or maintain or sustain this sewing group with Gina, who's sitting here.
And then also Chnar's looking at designing a bag, so we're looking at how do we take ideas forward? So then people who are looking at storytelling and workshops around mental issues. But all that is because I joined Joana's sewing group, before that I knew nothing that's happening in Camden or something like that. And then suddenly discovered all of these people actually doing wonderful things and thinking of ideas and I didn't know about anything about Camden either.

And then suddenly I discovered Selena, because I have children who went to [unintelligible] connected, and then you realise, “Oh, this is how it happened.” And by going to the story [unintelligible], I then discovered actually they’re doing lots of things there, book [unintelligible] and then we discovered the sewing group. So, suddenly we find out [unintelligible] Somers Town community. What you didn’t realise is I live in Camden, not that far from Somers Town, but I never knew any of this existed. And by just going to one workshop I then started [unintelligible] with all the people around and also starting to know what’s happening in [unintelligible], I can maybe do something, which I think is a wonderful thing that happened.

SB: Yes, great. Adam, did you want to say anything about legacy for projects such as this?

AT: Happy to help in any way I can.

SB: That’s fine, because I wanted to give the last word to Joana about how we’d like to see this continue.

JM: That’s a conversation that we have often with the ladies and I have a question often, “You’re staying?” [Laughs]. “You’re staying? You’re still coming? After half-term you’re still here?” So, now we’re working on how, you know, that confidence and agency that they have, how to apply it, how to implement it, how to make things happen. So, again, go back to the making, how to make things happen, connect. Camden [unintelligible] how to [unintelligible], also share my experience, because I didn’t know many people in Somers Town before I arrived.
So, this is what we’re doing now is making the next steps together. So, when we talk about designing, it’s also about designing the next step. But I don’t want to be the designer, they are the designers of their own future and the future of their own group and what they want to do with it. So, that’s, for me, the legacy I’m going to be working on now and obviously I’m here to help as much as I can, as they want me to [laughs].

SB: And, of course, there’s just a selection of the work here, there were 20 people involved and [unintelligible] shown here. No, that’s great, I mean there does seem – it really has shifted to a level that has given people – you know, we’ve talked about agency, empowerment, inpowerment, you know, basically connections and knowledge. And I just wanted to perhaps throw it open to anybody from the floor to make a comment or ask a question of any of the panel. Go on then, Francesco.

FRANCESCO MAZZARELLA (FM): Well, thank you so much, it’s so inspiring [unintelligible] the work. But maybe for me the most remarkable thing from this project is, as you were saying, Jade is your name? This project really allowed for so many diverse learning journeys. Because many other courses you say you make a coat, you make a skirt, whereas I think what’s commendable of you, Joana, is that you navigated so many different learning journeys and different processes at the same time. I think the complexity is really impressive and I wonder how – I mean I think a special ingredient in this is you. It wouldn’t be the same without you and I wonder what – you still have some time in your PhD to reflect on what were really the skills that made this project [unintelligible] and how can you pass these skills to others?
I know that you are also, kind of, challenging the role of the designers almost becoming invisible and passing onto others. But, as well, you said many things, not only you are a designer, you are a research, you applied for funding, that’s also an important skill. I don’t know if there were tensions sometimes in the building, the groups, but I’m sure you were also a community builder and storyteller and now creator of an exhibition.

I mean it's so much and how can someone else really navigate all these complexities at the same time and what skills are required? Also us, as educators, how can we educate the next generation of Joanas?

JM: [Laughs] [unintelligible] answer, because that's a big, big question, but it's funny because yesterday [unintelligible]. Yesterday I was thinking about that and I told him, I said, "I've set up this methodology," and I asked him, "How much is this methodology depending on me? Can I pass this methodology to someone else and then they will have a similar result, something that is as successful as we see this?"
So, it's something that I'm thinking about.

SB: Yes, you're already doing it through the fact that you're doing a PhD and it will be available for other people to learn from. Adam?

AT: I also think that it's highly context-specific. So, that's why I think there is work to be done around creating enabling conditions and in the way we were talking before, I think that what you've done together here does contribute to doing its own thing. But, as many people have already spoken about, the different ways that it gives an example to others, makes people realise what's possible, makes people go, "Where did you get the funding? I didn't know." That all contributes to enabling conditions.
The fact that you are now looking – working on your own space, system, way of maintaining access to a space and so on. Yes, I think people find their own ways, obviously, first of all, congratulations on brilliant work and congratulations to all of you on brilliant work, this is fantastic. I love some of these, I love [unintelligible] anyway, I really like [unintelligible], I really like calico. So, it's nice seeing the patterns and seeing the [unintelligible], and also what I love about [unintelligible] is you can see the detail more. You can see where the pleats are, you can see how things are constructed and there's some really, really nice work. So, yes, just congratulations.

SB: Yes, please.

NF: I give a lot of thought to what makes Joana and what makes all the other people that run community projects go really well. And at one point was quite obsessed that I could make it a science of what makes someone that gets a grant then go on and do something that is so much more than the sum of the parts? And I don't think I've quite worked out the scientific ingredient list yet, and I hope you don't mind me analysing you [laughs].
But what makes Joana Joana? And Troy, that runs the market stall, and Diana, and Selena, with her reading? And I think whenever I talk to those people they always are slightly obsessed with what they are doing in a wonderful way. Their love for what they're doing, be it this or a market stall, which is such a different thing, they think it's the most important thing that's needed for a community, because they love it so much. And I think that's what always drives things forwards is someone's personal love for work.
Rather than lots of people are engaged in communities and they're helping in different ways and you've had people helping with these projects, but the person that leads it forwards is always slightly wonderfully obsessive about it. And I think that's the ingredient maybe, it's a marvellous thing.

AW: I'll just add, yes, it's the passion, also it's the drive. So, when [unintelligible] I just go for it anyway, I don't know what the outcome is, but I'll go for it. I think it's the drive that makes things happen, so, [unintelligible].

SB: And willingness to maybe take a little few risks here and there.

AW: [Unintelligible] there's nothing to lose, let's go for it.

JM: And, as you've already said, Adam, about making it – find your own way. This is my way, [unintelligible], and I do hope that it doesn't lead people to copy or do exactly the same, I want people to do their own way.

SB: Or as an inspiration.

JM: Inspiration, yes, and we all have our own history, family history, personal history, we all – most of us are not born here, or if we are we have our history. I have history of migration in my family and I think that leads me to connect to the ladies in the group, as well. So, we all have our own history and we can use that as a fuel for – or a drive, as you say. You just have to make it personal, I think, [unintelligible] nothing to lose.

SB: Yes, risk-taking has rewards and I think the rewards are very evident in this fantastic exhibition and display and also the stories and the creativity and the poems and the performances and the Mexican dress. There's so many aspects that have come out of this and what people are getting personally that also then can perhaps feel that they can also give something, you know, elsewhere or to others and share what they've learned.
So, I think this works on so many different levels and, as I said, the academic level will be there as a, sort of, study that other people can definitely benefit from. But also this direct engagement and starting with that power of making, which I think – and then making together, and then also patternmaking. And everybody feels like they can create and create is design. Whatever words you actually label things with, it's very powerful, being creative, and it's really given everybody so much, both the participants and those who've come to experience and not least the lovely food [laughs]. Which I think was an added creative touch and other types of creativity being shown and community work and production.
I'm sensing that we're coming to wind up now, but I'd like to invite anybody from the floor to make [unintelligible].

AW: I've got a question. Joana, I wonder whether before this project started, whether you had a vision. Because what I see is a lot of the projects, people run courses, and quite often, I think Jade mentioned it, you go to a course, you do this and then that's the end of it. You never really then continue, or even connect with people who join the course. Whereas this is, kind of, [unintelligible].
So, when you started did you think that this is what I'm going to do or just –

JM: So, I had designed the methodology, I knew that I wanted to do the eight workshops and I knew what lesson I wanted to have in there, so the methods. Because it's difficult to go to a group of people and go, "OK, we're going to do some sewing," you need to have some guidelines. But most of it, although we had that guideline to follow, it's not like this, it goes like that.
I didn't know exactly where we were going to end up, I didn't know we were going to do an exhibition. I didn't know the links and the friendships that you would build. I knew that I was going to introduce these methods hoping that it would have some kind of impact, and I read, you know, because I'm doing research, I read about other community projects, other making projects, making together projects, etc. And I knew that making has an impact on wellbeing, on community engagement and self-confidence, the satisfaction of making something from start to finish, etc.
So, I knew those were things that were hopefully coming – going to manifest with what I was going to do. But I didn't have like a big vision of, OK, this is what I'm going to do, because this is not for me to have, it's as a group for us, because I'm part of the group, for us to define and design that together and see where we're going together.

So, my expectation was – what I was hoping to do is that through those we would build a vision together and then implement that vision together.

SB: Which I think you've achieved and I think everyone here –

JADE: I think also the most important ingredient is that she was a great listener and observer. Do you say in English, observant?

SB: Observant, yes.

JADE: OK, observant and listening, [unintelligible] the initial one, the first one, and the eighth week came and she was like, "OK, Jade, this is the end now," and I was like, "What's next?" And she was like, "The next is with another group of people," I was like, "No, I want to join" [laughs]. And then she said, "OK, write down exactly would you like to see in the future, or how can I improve the sessions?" So, I put it down, I want to continue, you know?
And she was like, "OK, let me to do the next one and then I will get in touch with you again for a drop-in session, I'll do something, a drop-in session or something, that we can come all together and continue that." So, I think, yes, rather than stick on her programme or her model or design, she left like an open door, like, OK, this is my design, but let's see others what they say and include that in the design.

CHNAR: Yes, she opened it for us. She opened it for us, it [unintelligible] when I saw the leaflet for the workshop, I said, "That's good," straight away [unintelligible]. Straight away she answered me, I joined the group, but after I knew that [unintelligible] not too much. But after she teach us the [unintelligible] pattern and how to do the straight line, I know. But not [unintelligible], but she teach us how to do this one.
After that I said to her, "Is that finished?" She is not sure that I am, because she was waiting for the answer [unintelligible]. After I go back home, she send an email, "Selena, do you want to join? Do you want to help me?" I say, "Yes, I want to."
Because I love – I want to be more learning, I want to – I said I want to be more learning, more sewing, more technique for the sewing. But she is very good, she is very help us.
I don't know what explain for everything.

JADE: It's beautiful, isn't it? When there is continuity in things.

JM: They say teaching a lot, but the thing is that's all the things they wanted to do. They came up with their own solutions very often and I was just there supporting and –

SB: Facilitating.

JM: – facilitating and giving some guidelines, and some technical guidelines sometimes. But, you know, one day Jade arrived and she said, "I don't want to do the draping, I don't feel inspired by it, I want to do my cushion covers, I want to do my sofa." And I said, "OK."

JADE: I was afraid of machine, I never, ever [unintelligible].

JM: And that was fine, she was doing overcalculation and everything and so already from then it's not – yes.

SB: Brokered and facilitated by you.

JM: Exactly.

SB: And many congratulations, and to everybody who's taken part. Does anybody have any final comments they want to make before we draw to a close? I sense that the pastries are calling [laughs]. You do, yes? Of course.

AUDIENCE: I mean, first of all, it's incredible and inspiring to see everything the groups achieved and it's been really lovely to be part of the group a little bit and see that in its process. They touched on continuity, there was a discussion about legacy, Adam, you spoke about infrastructuring. Although Camden Giving is incredible and a really innovative model, it does introduce a bit of a precarity because you have got funding that lasts a period and then it runs out.
First of all, do you think local government could or should be doing more to support this kind of work and, if you do, does anyone have any thoughts on what that kind of support could look like?

SB: [Laughs]. That's landed on your laps.

NF: I think they should, I think whether or not they can do that, I think, in current circumstances feels quite challenging. The fund that this has been funded through was started with some seed funding from Camden Council, and then what we've done as Camden Giving is [unintelligible] attract funding in from businesses.
I think my, like, big worry is the wealth that you physically see being made over there is not moving at speed enough to sustain projects like this. And I think there is a real desire to, sort of, find a business model to social action that means no one has to give funding to it ever again. My view, and this probably isn't the view of Camden Giving, but I'll take it, because no one else is here to challenge it [laughs].
Our view as a whole organisation is that actually all the time that a disproportionately large amount of wealth is being generated by a business over there, it should be flowing more into Somers Town, into other parts of Camden than it currently is. And it is wildly frustrating that these are small grants that are competitive. I think the thing that really is not good in Camden Giving's model is that it's competitive and that Joana had to compete to come and do this work.
I'm pleased that the fund that you applied to isn't overly competitive, so most people that apply to it get a grant from it, but nonetheless there is a, sort of, we have to come and ask and demonstrate that it's needed model to it that I find frustrating. And that frustration is because the wealth that's being made in Kings Cross and other parts of Camden is not generously enough truly, truly benefiting people around it in my opinion. But yes, there is a huge flaw, a huge flaw in that plan.

SB: Yes?

JM: I have a question for Adam [laughs]. We were talking about the wealth going from there to here, how can we bring this to there? Do you think we can exhibit or show this to the people there? Because people have to come here to see, but most people won't, because they go to [unintelligible] station and they leave and they don't even know this is happening here.
Can we bring this to, I don't know, Kings Cross or Central St Martins to show we're [unintelligible] around? So, also to the students of Central St Martins to say, "See? There is creativity around you, it's not only between the walls of Central St Martins," but, you know, and see a different kind of creativity. Or the same kind of creativity from different people so close.

AT: Yes, so, I reckon you could do it on – I mean I can't speak for the council, but we've done exhibitions before on the second floor of the council, which is the [unintelligible] that's open to all of us to be able to go in there to do our meetings and

what have you, when you meet council officers. And it also means that all the council staff get to see it, because it's where the coffee machines are, it's where the canteen used to be.
Central St Martins has got Window Gallery, which is the most accessible, it's in the public access crossing. There's, what, 4,000 people that want to put their stuff on it, so you'd have to join the queue and fill out your application and put your application in. And then the truth of it is is that, as you know, there's competition between the colleges, so they're all part of the university, but you're from London College of Fashion which is typically out in East London or down in [unintelligible] Street.

SB: Not anymore.

AT: Over in Stratford, yes. We're Central St Martins, that does come into it, even though we're meant to work as a university. We do work as a university, as in all of us are, but institutionally sometimes that's a barrier to being able to get a project that's come from this bit to that bit.
It's a good – I don't think anyone would want to admit to that, so it's a good lever to challenge people with if you're trying to get into the windows. Where else do you put it? Downstairs of [unintelligible] is meant to be a big public area, as and when it comes, isn't it?
A big thoroughfare that we're all able to access and do different stuff in, so you could go and have a chat to them, just say, "Look, we're doing this, when's that happening?"

SB: It would be good to try in Stratford, even though it's not the local area.

JM: I think it's good even to Stratford, yes, I think it would be to share between groups.

SB: Because obviously this has only been up for like four days or something, which is wonderful, but it's limited.

AT: But the other thing is, is this exhibition being promoted to, say, Knowledge Quarter? So, Knowledge Quarter is a membership organisation of all of the cultural – well, not just cultural actually, it's pretty much all the organisations [unintelligible], yes. So, you've got the Crick, you've got Google, you've got British Library, you've got the museum, all the rest of it.
You could write to Knowledge Quarter and basically say, "Look, we've got this exhibition going on, can you tell your members that it's happening?" Because that's a way of getting a wider group of people to know that it's going on.

SB: Well, I think definitely it's quite clear that there's a very big legacy that is developing and has got lots of potential to keep going, for other people to benefit from this project, not just the participants, but beyond. A great deal beyond.
So, there's an agenda here that both myself and Francesco, who's also supervising Joana, will be working with you on. But any final thoughts or comments from anybody?

LOUISE: Yes, I just want to say I'm so lucky to have been involved in this project and I think talking about the legacy, I think fashion and clothing is something that's so personal to each individual that people can relate to it. And that can help build on the legacy that is already starting.

SB: She was the curator working with Joana and there also is a graphic designer, who I'd just like to say now, you know, both congratulations for a wonderful exhibition and series of events. There's more to come tomorrow, two more events, packed in an awful lot into this four days. And I'd just like to thank Joana and thank all the panel for taking part and Angela and Adam and Natasha. And yourselves for being a really lively

audience, I know some of you are participants, but also to thank everybody who's contributed, such as Louise and the participants. And those who aren't here physically and whose work also couldn't be in the [unintelligible]. But there may be more opportunities to showcase in other ways, as well.
And yes, so, the supporters of the project and obviously Camden Giving, but also others. You mentioned –

JM: The Crick Institute.

SB: – The Crick Institute and [unintelligible], who spoke on Wednesday, who were the first people to give some space.

JM: Edith Neville Primary School.

SB: Edith Neville, yes. So, thanks to everybody who's contributed to this, it's been and is and will continue to be a really successful, exciting project that really will have impact, we know will continue to have impact. So, I feel that that's the end of the formal panel, but we've got now a few more pastries. [Applause].

Appendix 34. Interview information sheet and consent form

Joana Monteiro
PhD Student, London College of Fashion
j.monteirogobbi1@arts.ac.uk

ual: university of the arts london
london college of fashion

Information sheet to participating in semi-structured interviews
Study title: Mapping the field of fashion design for social innovation

What is the purpose of the study?
This study aims to investigate and map the field of fashion design for social innovation. This will be done by discussing your fashion design practices and projects from the perspective of design for social innovation.
The study also serves as an opportunity to discuss the first outcomes of the research generated from the literature review and the participatory making workshops conducted with diverse women's communities in London.

Who is conducting the study?
The study is conducted by Joana Monteiro, 3rd year PhD student at London College of Fashion (LCF), University of the Arts London (UAL), supervised by Professor Sandy Black and Dr. Francesco Mazzarella.

What will I be asked to do?
After a short presentation (10 minutes) of the research, you will be asked to answer some semi-structured questions (50 minutes) about your practice and/or a specific project during which you worked with communities using fashion design methods to foster social change. Following a framework (cf. figure 1), we will discuss the different elements that make your practice and/or project, an initiative of fashion design for social innovation. Finally, any advice or comment on the researcher's project would be welcome.

When and where will the session take place?
The interview will be conducted via an online meeting platform (Zoom or Teams) or in person in your own studio or at LCF premises, to be agreed together. We will agree a date and time that best suit both of us. The interview should take around one hour.

Is there anything I need to do beforehand?

Before the interview, you should read this participant information sheet and be aware of the aim of the study as well as what you will be asked to do. If you decide to participate to the study, you should sign and send your consent form back to Joana and send your available dates and times and preferred location for the meeting. You can think about a current or past project in which you have worked with community members, using fashion design to foster social change in order to contextualise your answers.

What do I get for participating?

You will have the opportunity to look at your practice and/or a specific project from a fashion design for social innovation perspective, contribute to the definition of a new framework of fashion design for social innovation and contribute to the mapping of the field. Your participation will be acknowledged as an expert contribution to the research. The outcomes of the study will be shared with you and, if you wish, you will be kept informed about the development of this research project.

Is there any risk for me to take part to the research?

All precautions have been taken to minimize any risks and we will comply with any government guidance at the time of the interviews (ex. COVID regulations). If you feel that you are encountering risks or harms due to your participation in this research, please let Joana know.

If at any time you feel any stress or distress caused by your participation in the research, please let Joana know. Support can be found from a dedicated counselling and mental health professional in your institution (such as UAL) or from the local NHS mental health helpline (found on https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline).

I have some more questions. Who should I contact?

You may contact Joana Monteiro, via email at: j.monteirogobbi1@arts.ac.uk

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

Yes. Your participation is voluntary. If at any time, before, during or after the interview you wish to withdraw from the study, you can do so by contacting the

researcher. You do not need to give any reason for your withdrawal. However, once the results of the study are submitted (expected to be by January 2025), it will not be possible to withdraw your individual data from the research.

What information will be collected? And how will it be used?

For the research, different types of information will be collected.

Your name and contact details will be collected in the consent form. This is important to document that you agree or disagree with the terms of your participation. The researcher might also use your contact details in the future to ask for further permission for events or publication. Your contact details will be safely stored and kept confidential in accordance with GDPR regulations and the UAL Guidance for Research Ethics.

The interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be transcribed and analysed and contribute to mapping the field. The outcomes of your interview will be sent back to you for feedback. The results of the study will be published in the final research thesis, in journal articles and books, and will be presented at conferences. You will be acknowledged as an expert contributing to the research. If you wish for your name not to be included in any publication, please inform the researcher in the consent form.

All the data will be safely stored in encrypted and password-protected files on a laptop or hard drive, never on the cloud, in line with UAL Guidance for Research Ethics. The data collected will be used only for the purpose set in this information sheet and will not be passed on to third parties. All physical copies of documents will be destroyed after completion of the PhD programme (expected to be in 2025). Digitalized data, including consent forms with contact details, will be securely archived and password protected in line with UAL guidance.

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?

If you are unhappy with how the research is conducted, please contact:

Secretary to the Research Ethics Sub-Committee Research. 5th floor

University of the Arts London

1 Granary Square, London N1C 4AA

Email: researchethics@arts.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 207 514 2113

Joana Monteiro
PhD Student, London College of Fashion
j.monteirogobbi1@arts.ac.uk

ual: university of the arts london
london college of fashion

Consent form to participating in semi-structured interviews

Please tick the box as appropriate

I have been given an information sheet explaining the study and I have read and understood it. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the interview and the research and have had these questioned answered satisfactorily.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time before submission of the thesis (expected to be before January 2025) without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to participate in the research project as outlined on the Information Sheet.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I consent for the interview to be audio recorded and for the recordings to be transcribed. Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree for the transcriptions of my interview recordings to be analysed and its outcomes to be used for the purpose of the research, including publication in the research final thesis, books, articles and presentations. Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree for extracts of the interview transcription or for the full transcription to be included as an appendix in the final thesis. Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree for my name to appear as expert in the field in the research final thesis, articles, books, and presentations Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree for quotes from the interview to be published in the final thesis, articles, books and presentations with the appropriate credit. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that I can contact the UAL staff if I have any concerns or further questions about this research. Yes ☐ No ☐

One signed copy will be given to you and one copy retained by the researcher.

My Contact Details:
Name:
Email:

Date:
Signed:

Any additional remarks or questions:

If you have any concerns about the research, you can contact the researcher:
Joana Monteiro
j.monteirogobbi1@arts.ac.uk

You can also contact the UAL Research Office using the contact details below for further advice and information:
Secretary to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Sub-Committee
Research. 5th floor
University of the Arts London
1 Granary Square
London N1C 4AA
Email: researchethics@arts.ac.uk
Telephone: +44 207 514 2113

Appendix 35. Participatory workshop information sheet and consent form

"Journey to Creating your own Garments" workshops at Edith Neville Primary School, NW1 1DN
Information sheet for participation in research

Research team: Joana Monteiro (PhD student at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London), Olivia Weber (workshop assistant)

Address where the workshops take place:
Family Centre, Edith Neville Primary School
174 Ossulston street, Somers Town
NW1 1DN, London

What is the project about?
The project is about researching how fashion design, using pattern cutting and garment making, can help people get and improve fashion making skills, engage with others and develop their creativity.
You will participate in 8 workshops called "Journey to creating your own garments" with other women. Different ways to create and make garments will be introduced and by the end of the workshops, you will know how to create original and unique garments. During the project and at the end of the workshops, you will be asked about your experience.

How long is the project?
The "Journey to Creating your own garment" workshops counts 8 sessions spread over 8 weeks. The sessions are organised every Tuesday starting on September, 27th, 2022 until November, 22nd, 2022 with a break on Tuesday, October 25th for school half-term. Each session lasts 2 hours and 20 min from 1pm until 3:20pm.

What am I going to do?
By taking part in the workshops, you will have the opportunity to share your experience of garment making and to participate in many activities related to fashion design. Activities will include analysing a garment, drawing patterns, cutting fabric, sewing, manipulating fabric to create shape and volume, designing and making your own garment. (Please refer to the workshops schedule for more details of what we will be doing).
During the workshops, you will interact and collaborate with the other participants and the research team. You will also be invited to ask questions, share your ideas and experience and give feedback.
At the beginning of the workshops, you will be asked to answer simple questions about your making skills. Regularly during the project, and at the end of the workshops, you will be invited to share your feedback and answer some written questions. All will be collected anonymously.
During the sessions, help and support will be provided by the researcher and the staff to complete the activities.

1

What if I don't want to participate in the workshops anymore?

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Just let one of the project staff (Joana, Olivia) know if you do not want to take part anymore. If you decide not to take part in the workshops or to stop coming after they started, it is absolutely fine and you will keep on receiving the same level of care and support from Lifeafterhummus and the UK authorities.

What are the benefits of participating in the workshops?

The workshops have been developed to focus on three areas:

- Skill acquisition: you will learn new fashion design methods and techniques and develop your fashion design and making skills
- Community engagement: you will meet new people and make together
- Express your creative voice: you will be able to express your creativity through fashion design and make the garments that you like.

At the end of the workshops, you will have reproduced the pattern for one garment, made a garment based on simple geometric shapes, created an original dress and designed and made your own garment.

By participating in this research, you will also contribute to the development of a new model in fashion that aims at improving people's lives.

Last but not least, we hope that you will enjoy the sessions, meet new people and have fun.

What are the risks in participating in the workshops?

All precautions have been taken to minimize the risks but if you feel that you are encountering risks or harms due to your participation in this research, please let one of us know.

If at any time, you feel any psychological discomfort (For example, low mood, difficulty socialising, fear, …), you can let one of us know and we will help you get the help you need. You can also contact the following organisation:

Camden Adult Social Care:

Phone: 020 7974 4000, select option 1

Textphone: 020 7974 6866

Email: adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk

Local NHS Mental Health support can also be found through https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline

What are the rules against COVID?

We take the risks linked to COVID 19 very seriously and, in line with government guidance, have the following rules in place:

- Sanitising gel will be available on site and everyone will be required to sanitise their hands on arrival.
- All equipment will be sanitised before and after the sessions. Each participant will have her own set of tools and an individual bag to store them.

- These rules might change in line with official recommendations at the time.
- In case of stricter regulations and in-person meeting not being possible, the research will be paused and resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

What information will be collected? And how will it be used?

For the research, different types of information will be collected.

Your name and contact details will be collected in the consent form only. This is important to document that you agree or disagree with the terms of your participation. The researcher might also use your contact details in the future to ask for further permission for events or publication. Your contact details will be safely stored and you will not be identified in the final thesis or other publications and presentations.

During the workshops, the research team may write what you say or do, as part of the documenting process. No personal information that could identify you will be recorded. We will also take pictures to document the activities but they will not show your face.

You will be asked to answer questionnaires anonymously. The first questionnaire is about your making skills and the following questionnaires will ask you about your experience of the workshops.

All of the data will be safely stored in encrypted and password-protected files.

At the end of the workshops, the patterns and garments that you make will be kept by the researcher for one week for further analysis. They will then be returned to you.

All the information collected will be analysed to determine if the participation in the workshops has generated skill acquisition, community engagement and creativity development. The data collected and its analysis will be published in a final thesis, journal articles and will be presented during conferences. A report will also be shared with Camden Giving that has funded the project.

We will also discuss with you and the other participants if and how you would like to share your experience and achievements with other people.

I must travel to come to the workshops? Do you cover the expenses?

Yes, your travel costs will be covered. Please bring a proof of travel and we will reimburse you.

I have questions about the research, who can I contact?

If you have any concerns about the research, you can contact the researcher:

Joana Monteiro
j.monteirogobbi1@arts.ac.uk

You can also contact the UAL Research Office using the contact details below for further advice and information:

Secretary to the Research Ethics Sub-Committee
Research. 5th floor
University of the Arts London
1 Granary Square
London N1C 4AA
Email: researchethics@arts.ac.uk
Telephone: +44 207 514 2113

ual: university of the arts london
london college of fashion

"Journey to Creating your own Garment" workshops
Activity list

Research team: Joana Monteiro (PhD student at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London), Olivia Weber (workshop assistant)

The whole journey counts 8 workshops of 2 hours and 20 minutes (from 1:00pm until 3:20 pm) split as follows:

1. Reproduce your garments: 2 sessions
2. Simple geometric shapes: 2 sessions
3. Draping: 3D shaping: 2 sessions
4. Create your own garment: 2 sessions.

The details of the activities are listed in the table below:

Chapter	Introductory activity	Making activity
1. Reproduce your garments 2 sessions	Analysis of own garment: before the session, participants are asked to bring a garment (a simple top) in a woven fabric (knitted and stretchy fabric are not suitable for the workshops because they require a different type of equipment) that they particularly like. As an ice-breaking activity, each participant will in turn present their garment and explain why they chose it. Then they will be asked to draw on paper the pieces that make up the garment as they imagine them (i.e. front, back, sleeves, …)	Reverse engineering: Following a step-by-step approach with the researcher, the participants will draw the garment's pattern and learn how to use it to make other garments.
2. Simple geometric shapes 2 sessions	Participants and the research team discuss which garments are made of simple geometric shapes	Make a garment from simple geometric shapes: Starting from simple geometric shapes (rectangle, circle or triangle), participants will make a garment either for an adult or a child..
3. Draping: 3D shaping 2 sessions	The session start with a discussion about how we create volume and the different techniques that the participants know.	Give shape and volume to a simple dress: The researcher brings a "dictionary" of shaping techniques (darts, gathers, pleats, …) with physical samples for the participants to browse. Using these samples and other techniques (e.g. adding or removing fabric, sleeves, …), participants create

		shape and volume in a long abaya dress that the researcher will have prepared in advance in calico fabric.
4. Create your own garments 2 sessions	Participants discuss their design ideas	Make your own garment: In collaboration with the researcher and other participants, each participant defines her making process and creates her own garment. The chapter ends with each participant presenting their garment, the design and making process.

"Journey to Creating your own Garments" workshops at Edith Neville Primary School, NW1 1DN
Participant consent form – Participant's copy

Research team: Joana Monteiro (PhD student at LCF, UAL), Olivia Weber (workshop assistant)

Please tick the box as appropriate

I have been given an information sheet explaining the project and I have read and understood it. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the workshops and the research and have had these questioned answered satisfactorily.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to participate in the research project as outlined on the Information Sheet.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I consent for pictures of my work to be used in the research final thesis, in articles and presentations.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I would like my first name to appear next to my work or any mention of my work in the research final thesis, articles and presentations.

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered 'no' to the previous question, would you like to use a pseudonym?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please write the pseudonym that you would like the researcher to use:

.....

I consent to complete a questionnaire on my making and sewing skills.

Yes ☐ No ☐

During the project, I consent to complete questionnaires to assess my participation in the research and give feedback.

Yes ☐ No ☐

At the end of the project, I consent for the researcher to keep the patterns and garments that I make for a week in order for her to analyse and document them.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that I am able to contact the UAL staff if I have any concerns or further questions about this research.

Yes ☐ No ☐

One signed copy will be given to you and one copy retained by the researcher.

My Contact Details:
Name:

Phone:
Email:

Date:
Signed:

Witnessed:
Name:

Any additional remarks or questions:

If you have any concerns about the research, you can contact the researcher:
Joana Monteiro
j.monteirogobbi1@arts.ac.uk

You can also contact the UAL Research Office using the contact details below for further advice and information:

Secretary to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Sub-Committee
Research. 5th floor
University of the Arts London
1 Granary Square
London N1C 4AA
Email: researchethics@arts.ac.uk
Telephone: +44 207 514 2113

ual: university of the arts london
london college of fashion

Appendix 36. Participants' artefacts and creative practice

(photos by the author and by Olivia Weber)

- Pilot workshops at Lifeafterhummus – Unit 1, reproducing a garment.



- Pilot workshops at Lifeafterhummus – Unit 2, creating garments with simple geometrical shapes.



- Pilot workshops at Lifeafterhummus – Unit 3, draping.



- Pilot workshops at Lifeafterhummus – Unit 4, participants create their own garments.



- First series of workshops at Edith Neville Primary School – Unit 1, reproducing a garment.



- First series of workshops at Edith Neville Primary School – Unit 2, creating garments with simple geometrical shapes.



- First series of workshops at Edith Neville Primary School – Unit 3, draping.





- First series of workshops at Edith Neville Primary School – Unit 4, participants create their own garments.



- Second series of workshops at Edith Neville Primary School – Unit 1, reproducing a garment.



- Second series of workshops at Edith Neville Primary School – Unit 2, creating garments with simple geometrical shapes.



- Second series of workshops at Edith Neville Primary School – Unit 3, draping.



- Advanced technical workshops at Edith Neville Primary School.



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Appendix 37. Detailed project timeline

- **October 2020**: Start of the PhD programme.
- **19th March 2022**: Outreach event with Lifeafterhummus to present the patternmaking workshops to the community
- **March 2022**: First application for funding from Camden Giving to buy equipment, material and remunerate a workshop assistant – Granted.
- **May-July 2022**: Pilot round of eight collaborative making workshops delivered at Lifeafterhummus – three participants.
- **September 2022**: Second application for funding from Camden Giving (granted) to remunerate two workshop assistants, including a previous participant (Chnar), and to buy material and equipment for a larger group of participants.
- **September-November 2022**: First round of eighth workshops at Edith Neville Primary School – ten participants, twelve people on waiting list.
- **November 2022**: Conference in Italy, 'Fashion Now! International Research Day', to present the outcomes of the first pilot workshops, followed by an article published in an academic journal, ZoneModa Journal in October 2023 (Appendix 39).
- **December 2022**: Third application for funding from Camden Giving (granted) to remunerate two workshop assistants, both previous participants and local residents (Chnar and Angela), remunerate some of my time (for the first time), buy material and equipment for two series of workshops.
- **January- March 2023**: Second round of eight pattern making and garment making workshops, and eight weekly workshops for more advanced makers, at Edith Neville Primary School – fifteen participants.
- **April 2023 and July 2024**: Weekly drop-in making sessions at Edith Neville Primary School, run by two participants (Chnar and Angela) and myself – 10-15 participants.
- **24th May 2023**: Private visit and workshop with the fashion and textile department at the Working Men's College. Following this visit, one participant applied for a qualification course in fashion.
- **July 2023**: First commission order of forty bookmarks for a private client.
- **September 2023 – September 2024**: One of the first participants completes level 1 and level 2 fashion qualification at the Working Men's College.

- **18-23 October 2023**: ‘We Are Designers’ exhibition at Javier's Somers Gallery, including an opening event, workshops and a panel discussion. Funded by The Crick Institute and PhD annual allowances from LCF and personal funds, this exhibition was a celebration of the creative work and journey of the ladies during the previous 18 months. A local cooking group was hired for the catering and a local singer was remunerated to sing at the opening event.

- **28th October 2023**: Performer singing at the Day of the Dead festival wears a dress made by the group.

- **November 2023**: Commission order of fifteen bookmarks for Camden Giving.

- **September 2023 – May 2024:** EPQ training at the Living Centre, two of the leading participants, Chnar and Angela, take part and develop personal project ideas and ideas for future development for the group. During the EPQ, they prepared an application for funding for Camden Giving, which was granted on May 28th 2024 for workshops focusing on sustainable fashion to take place from September 2024.

- **May 2024**: The group chooses the name ‘Stitch by Stitch Community Sewing Somers Town”.

- **13th May – 13th June 2024**: CSM, Stitch by Stitch and Our Little Markets collaboration.

- **June – July 2024**: Commission order of thirty-five bookmarks for Camden Giving.

- **October 2024**: WMC graduate joins Stitch by Stitch and takes a leading role. Two group leaders join short courses at the WMC.

- **November 2024 – February 2024**: Ten week sustainable fashion and garment making workshops, designed and led by Stitch by Stitch at Edith Neville Primary School.

- **February 2024 – July 2025**: Weekly drop-in making workshops led by Stitch by Stitch at Edith Neville Primary School.

- **May – June 2025**: CSM and Stitch by Stitch collaboration.

- **September 2025**: Stitch by Stitch moves to Richard Cobden Primary School on Camden Street.

Appendix 38. Stitch by Stitch Code of practice

Group members (in alphabetical order): Angela, Chnar, Jade, Joanne

Board of trustees: Amy and Laura from the family centre, Joana

These guidelines can be reviewed whenever any member of the group feels necessary. These guidelines' purpose is to help manage, organise, and deliver workshops in the community.

The purpose of Stitch by Stitch is to create a welcoming, open, and safe space for everyone who wants to make and socialise with a group of like-minded makers. Makers share making skills and knowledge and share about their lives while making together. It is a supportive environment both technically for the making and socially in our personal lives.

Board of trustees: Once every half-term, all key members of Stitch by Stitch to meet with Amy, Laura, and Joana, to catch-up about the group. Facilitators and board of trustees should meet at school on a Monday or Friday. The purpose of these meetings is:

- To catch up about the group's activity
- To discuss what is going well and what could be improved and brainstorm solutions
- To discuss participants' feedback
- To review these guidelines if necessary
- To discuss opportunities, collaborations, and future projects
- …

Workshops:

- **Participant recruitment and sign-ups**: Recruitment and sign-ups should be managed by Laura. The number of participants should be discussed with facilitators to determine capacity related to space and equipment. But Laura will manage the sign-ups from school parents and from external people. If someone unknown to the school asks to join, facilitators should inform Laura and redirect her/him to Laura.
- **Attendance**: Participants' attendance should be discussed with and managed by Laura. Laura knows parents very well and will be able to reach out to them.
- **Premises:** the sessions are hosted by the Family centre in a primary school. The sessions should at all-time be in line with the school health and safety guidelines.
- Sessions should be **relaxed and welcoming**. The social aspect of the sessions should always be a priority.
- **Everybody should be able to make, including the facilitators**.
- Drop-in sewing and making sessions are based on a **peer-to-peer approach** where everyone participates in setting up and tidying up and everybody learns from each other and supports each other.
- Key SbS members are not teachers. They **facilitate and guide** the sessions for everyone to enjoy making together. They do not have an

answer for everything and finding answers should be done in a **collaborative and participatory way** by and with the participants involved.

- Long series of structured workshops should be avoided as it requires too much work from the facilitators and limits the **creative and making freedom** that some participants are looking for in the drop-in sessions and the making time for the facilitators.
- If the group expresses the desire to learn a specific skill or technique, more structured and dedicated sessions can be organised for a couple of weeks, with a flexible approach.
- **Creativity** should be fostered and encouraged during the sessions. **Let's try new things!** There are so many ways to make.
- **Setting-up and tidying-up:** Everybody should be involved in both as much as possible, in line with the school's policy (participants should always be accompanied with a DBS checked facilitator).
- At the beginning of a session, participants should set up their sewing machines and get their equipment and material ready.
- At the end of a session, participants should tidy up their equipment and material. If they need to leave by a certain time, they are responsible to monitor the time and account for 10 min to tidy up.
- **Facilitators' roles**: Facilitating and guiding participants through their making. Encouraging them to find solutions, try out new things and experiment. We learn through making and making mistakes.
- **Communication**: Always communicate with kindness and open to new creative possibilities.
- **Feedback from participants**: once per half-term, organise a 30min unformal and relaxed feedback discussion with participants. If participants do not feel comfortable speaking in front of everyone, they can talk privately and anonymously to Laura who will then share the feedback with the facilitators.

Teamwork:

- Tasks and duties should be shared between the team members.
- No one should be overwhelmed by the amount of work required. Keep an open and honest communication between everyone and check on each other regularly.
- **Decisions**: decisions about the group, projects, collaborations, commissions, … should be made collaboratively. Everyone should give their opinion before any decision is made and a consensus should be found for everyone to be happy with the final decision. Decisions can be taken through WhatsApp chat or discussed during a Friday or Monday drop-in session.

- **Meetings**: Unless necessary, meetings should be kept unformal and short. They should happen during a drop-in session and allow for facilitators to enjoy making too.

Emails:

- Emails should be monitored once a week. An automatic message should be sent to people thanking them for reaching out to SbS, and saying that the email address is monitored once a week and that the group will get back to them then.
- It gives you time to discuss the topic and collaboratively agree how to reply.

Roles distribution:

- **Angela and Joanne : Manage emails :** Check emails once a week, share topics with the group, collect everyone's opinions and group's decision, and reply to the sender
- **Jade: Manage the WhatsApp group:** Communicate to the participants about sessions, times, events, … Manage the discussion on the WhatsApp chat with participants.
- **Chnar: Manage the commissions and items to sell:** Work out production times, materials and processes. Coordinate with other makers to produce the items.
- Estimate pricing collaboratively with the other makers.
- **Laura: Manage participants recruitment and individual communication, gatekeeper, ensure health and safety:**
    - Manage participants' sign-ups from school parents and from external people
    - Manage participants' attendance
    - Collect participants' individual feedback
    - Ensure that school's policies are followed
    - Ensure that everyone's happy and speak up if necessary

Let's keep in mind some of the key messages from our exhibition last year that celebrates a strong and supportive creative community:

Creative community: "There is so much behind our clothes…"

Creative journeys: "We are women who weave dreams and sew scars."

Creative practice: "There is nothing like the feeling of wearing something that you have made yourself."

Enjoy Making Together!

Appendix 39. ZoneModa Journal article

ZoneModa Journal. Vol.13 n.1S (2023)
Invited Essays
Fashion Now!
https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2611-0563/17942
ISSN 2611-0563

Patternmaking as Vehicle for Social Change: A Participatory Practice Research with Diverse Women's Communities in London

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Abstract

Often criticised for its negative social impacts, fashion can also be a powerful tool to improve people's lives. Many companies, research and community projects are creating a counter-narrative to the mainstream fashion system by including the voices and practices of marginalised communities. In community-based research, many fashion and textile techniques are used to engage people and foster social change, but there are limited examples of patternmaking being used in a participatory way for this purpose. Patternmaking is commonly considered a technical and uncreative step in the fashion design process. This research however presents patternmaking as a creative practice of fashion design and explores it through the lens of fashion design for social innovation. The aim is to explore how patternmaking and garment making can foster social change within diverse women's communities in London. The project employs participatory practice research as research strategy and the approach consists in a series of participatory making workshops, that progressively lead the participants to develop their own creative practice. Two series of workshops with women living in a deprived area of London have shown that participating in the workshops has led to skill acquisition, creativity development, community engagement and the improvement of wellbeing and self-confidence.

Keywords: Patternmaking; Garment Making; Social Change; Design for Social Innovation; Participatory Practice Research.

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Introduction

This article reports on the first two years of an ongoing research project that focuses on empowering women in a deprived area of London through fashion design. The choice of working exclusively with women is driven not only by the researcher's personal preference and family history but is informed by evidence that suggests that empowering women and giving them access to the labour market contributes to reducing poverty, improving the health, nutrition and education of children and is essential to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.[1] However, according to UN Women, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified gender-based violence, deprived many women from their livelihoods due to job loss and increased domestic burdens, and pushed even more women and girls into extreme poverty.[2] These are the reasons why UN Women advocates to focus on giving women and girls the tools to build resilience. Within this broad context, the research[3] seeks to contribute to that goal at its modest and micro level. It aims to explore patternmaking through the lens of design for social innovation and investigate the potential of patternmaking and garment making as a vehicle for social change. This project intends to answer the following research question: In what ways can patternmaking and garment making be used to foster social change within diverse women's communities in London? To answer this question, three research objectives were set: to map the field of patternmaking and analyse its potential as a method of fashion design for social innovation; to develop a participatory approach to patternmaking and garment making; to test the approach with groups of women and assess its immediate social impact.

Fashion Design for Social Innovation

This research sits within the field of fashion design for social innovation and more precisely within research that uses the practice of 'fashion making' as a research method and as a tool to foster social change with communities.

Social Impacts of Fashion

The current unsustainable fast fashion system based on "over-production and over-consumption"[4] has a destructive impact on people. Forced or underpaid labour, poor working conditions, labour rights violations, discriminations, work insecurity are still a reality, inflicted by the fashion industry, in many parts of the world.[5] Over the last few years, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed and aggravated these issues, making lives even more challenging for many fashion workers, especially women who make up most of the factories' workforce.[6]

On the other hand, fashion can also act as a powerful tool for the building of more sustainable ways of living, creating a counter-narrative to the mainstream fashion system by including the voices and

1. "Leaving No One Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development," United Nations, https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/full-report.pdf.

2. "COVID-19: Rebuilding for Resilience," *UnWomen*, accessed September 29, 2022, https://www.unwomen.org/en/hq-complex-page/covid-19-rebuilding-for-resilience?gclid=cjwkcajwjzmtbhb4eiwaynrmd-fqu525eq3gr2hntlyb3mb5rlfsbcaz_ln1vv-lsiubtn4nod3arrocwj8qavd_bwe.

3. This article presents partial results of an ongoing research project.

4. Sandy Black et al., *Final Report — Rethinking Fashion Design Entrepreneurship: Fostering Sustainable Practices* (London: Centre for Sustainable Fashion, no date), 4.

5. Safia Minney, *Slave to Fashion* (Oxford: New Internationalist Publications Ltd, 2017); Anthony Sullivan, "Britain's 'Dark Factories': Specters of Racial Capitalism Today," *Fashion Theory*, 26.4 (2022): 493–508, https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2022.2046861.

6. Christophe Hansen, Jafar Iqbal, Maansi Parpiani, Ridhi Sahai, Vaiddehi Bansal, Mithila Iyer, Michelle Davis and Kareem Kysia, "Ripped at the Seams: RMG Sector Workers During a Global Pandemic," *Journal of Modern Slavery*, 6.2 (2021): 79–105, https://slavefreetoday.org/journal_of_modern_slavery/v6i2a04_RippedattheSeamsRMGSectorWorkersDuringaGlobalPandemic.pdf; "Boohoo & COVID-19 — The People Behind the Profits," Labour Behind the Label, https://labourbehindthelabel.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/LBL-Boohoo-WEB.pdf.

practices of marginalised communities. Organisations and research centres such as Centre for Sustainable Fashion, UAL and Fashion Revolution are crucial to expose, research, advise and educate on social issues in the industry. Some brands promote sustainable and social justice values (e.g. London-based brands Bethany Williams, Lovebird, Raeburn), listening to the needs and aspirations of marginalised minorities, paying a living wage and giving training and work opportunities to more vulnerable people. UK-based project 'Fostering Sustainable Practices' shows that such purpose-led and sustainability-driven design-led fashion MSEs have the potential to bring radical change to the fashion industry.[7] Fashion crafts can also be used as a tool for empowerment, activism, and community engagement within marginalised communities.[8]

Design for Social Innovation

Within this broader research context, design for social innovation was deemed as a suitable approach to this project. The review of various definitions has led to the identification of the many elements that constitute design for social innovation: the definition of 'social', and 'innovation', the roles of design and the designer, its participative nature. This led to formulating a definition of design for social innovation appropriate for this research. Design for social innovation is anything that designers can do to support the development of innovative approaches that address social needs of vulnerable groups of people. Innovative approaches use existing methods or a combination of methods in new ways or in new contexts. Social innovation is intrinsically participatory and engages the beneficiaries in the development of their own voices, agencies, and practices. This definition builds on Manzini's[9] and TEPSIE's[10] definitions of design for social innovation. It also follows Thorpe and Gamman's maternalistic approach to co-design where the designer and other actors share the responsibility and agency in the co-design process of social innovation.[11] It also emphasises the multiple roles that design can play in addressing the social needs of vulnerable groups of people and their participation in the process of design.

Patternmaking and Fashion Design for Social Innovation

Keeping in mind the above definition of design for social innovation, we can investigate how fashion design can be used as a tool to engage non-expert actors and foster the development of their own voices and practices. This research builds on the work of other researchers, Storey's 'Love coats' project,[12] Orta's work at HMP Downview,[13] Hirscher's making spaces,[14] Mazzarella's 'Forest Coats' project,[15] among others, that have used participatory methodologies and fashion design practices to engage vulnerable people and foster social change. Fashion co-creation and collective making is a useful participatory method to engage people in fashion design practices. Collective making can bring about many benefits, including:[16]

7. MSEs stand for Medium and Small Enterprises. Black et al., *Final Report*.

8. See Francesco Mazzarella and Sandy Black, "Fashioning Change: Fashion Activism and its Outcomes on Local Communities," *Fashion Practice*, 15.2 (2023): 230–255, https://doi.org/10.1080/17569370.2022.2095729.

9. Enzo Manzini, "Making Things Happen: Social Innovation and Design," *Design Issues*, 30 (2014): 57.

10. TEPSIE, "Social Innovation Theory and Research. A Guide for Researchers," *TIPSIE*, 4 (2014), https://www.youngfoundation.org/our-work/publications/social-innovation-theory-and-research-a-guide-for-researchers/.

11. Adam Thorpe and Lorraine Gamman, "Design with Society: Why Socially Responsive Design is Good Enough," *CoDesign*, 7.4 (2011): 217–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2011.630477.

12. Loukia, "Story LOVECOATS at Za'atari Refugee Camp," accessed October 13, 2022, https://www.arts.ac.uk/colleges/london-college-of-fashion/stories/lovecoats-at-zaatari-refugee-camp.

13. "Procession Banners 1918–2018," Studio Orta, accessed September 29, 2022, https://www.studio-orta.com/en/artwork/689/procession-banners-1918-2018.

14. Anja L. Hirscher, *When Skillful Participation Becomes Design: Making Clothes Together*, PhD dissertation (Finland: Aalto University School of Arts. Department of Art, Design and Architecture, 2020).

15. Mazzarella and Black, "Fashioning Change".

16. Laura Caulfield, Kerry Curtis and Ella Simpson, *Making for Change. An Independent Evaluation of Making for Change: Skills in a Fashion Training & Manufacturing Workshop* (London: London College of Fashion, 2018), http://artsevidence.

- Skill acquisition and skill improvement.
- Improvement of mental-health and personal well-being.
- Development of life and social skills.
- Improvement of self-confidence and agency.
- Community engagement.
- Empowerment and hope for the future.

The review of the above-mentioned projects reveals that many fashion design activities and crafts are used during participatory making workshops, including sewing, embroidery, crochet, knitting. But patternmaking does not seem to have been considered as a participatory activity, while I suggest that, as the knowledge and practice of garment construction, patternmaking has the potential to empower people to create their own garment designs. That is the reason why this research suggests opening to 'non-design experts' an area of fashion design that has been reserved to expert pattern cutters until now.

Patternmaking

Metric and Creative Pattern Cutting

In the Global North, the pattern cutting field is split into two main schools of thoughts: metric pattern cutting and creative pattern cutting.[17]
Metric pattern cutting is the "drafting [of] the paper pattern 'flat', relying on the measurements of the human body as a guide."[18] This process creates "a set of flat paper or cardboard pattern pieces that, when cut in fabric and sequentially stitched together, creates the garment."[19] This is the most common method employed in the fashion industry,[20] and also the "near-universally dominant" method taught today.[21] Metric pattern cutting has been described as "a methodical and mathematically complex discipline, divorced from creativity."[22] Pattern cutting has traditionally been the step following the design of a garment, translating the designer's sketches into patterns, and preceding to manufacturing. Its role is then to "realise the vision of the designer, transforming a 2D design into a 3D garment."[23] The designer is thus commonly seen as the predominant owner of creativity and as the only one worthy of recognition and esteem.[24]

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org.uk/media/uploads/181030-making-for-change-min.pdf; Francesco Mazzarella, *Making for Change: Waltham Forest. Project Report* (London: University of the Arts London, 2020); Patrycja Kaszynska, Adam Thorpe and Samuel Mitchell, *MAKE (E)Valuation Report* (London: University of The Arts, 2022), https://www.arts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/332033/Final_Clean_MAKE_EvaluationReport_070222.pdf.

17. I choose to use the term "metric pattern cutting", in line with Aldrich's books. See: Winifred Aldrich, *Metric Pattern Cutting* (Oxford: Blackwell Pub, 2004).

18. Dennic Chunman Lo, *Pattern Cutting* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2014), 6.

19. Laura A. Hardingham, "How Can a Box Become a Garment," *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 9.2 (2016): 97, https://doi.org/10.1080/17543266.2016.1167254.

20. Timo Rissanen, *Zero-Waste Fashion Design: A Study at the Intersection of Cloth, Fashion Design and Pattern Cutting*, Phd Dissertation (Sydney: University of Technology, 2013), http://hdl.handle.net/10453/23384; Inês Simões, *Contributions for a New Body Representation Paradigm in Pattern Design*, PhD Dissertation (Lisboa: Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, 2012).

21. Rickard Lindqvist, *Kinetic Garment Construction Remarks on The Foundations of Pattern Cutting*, PhD Dissertation (Sweden: University of Borås, 2015), 69, https://www.academia.edu/11973607/kinetic_garment_construction_remarks_on_the_foundations_of_pattern_cutting.

22. Kevin Almond and Jess Power, "Breaking the Rules in Pattern Cutting: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Promote Creativity in Pedagogy," *Art, Design and Communication in Higher Education*, 17 (2018): 34.

23. Anna Kuznia, Alana James and Bruce M. Roberts, "Transforming the Sequential Process of Fashion Production: Where Zero-Waste Pattern Cutting Takes the Lead in Creative Design," *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 9.2 (2016): 149.

24. James and Roberts, "Transforming the Sequential Process"; Rissanen, *Zero-Waste Fashion Design*; Minna Shim, "Credit For Creativity: Fine Line Production," in *Just Fashion Critical Cases on Social Justice in Fashion*, ed. Otto Von Busch (New York: Selfpassage, 2012).

This hierarchical conception of fashion design and this definition of pattern cutting, deprived of creativity, is criticised by several designers, pattern cutters and researchers. They promote a more equitable distribution of the creative role and ask for more recognition of the crucial role and creative potential of pattern cutting within fashion design.[25] In the industry and in educational settings, we talk about creative pattern cutting. Beyond draping on the stand, creative pattern cutting involves researching and developing new ways of designing where pattern cutting takes the lead.[26] By placing pattern cutting at the centre of design, those new design approaches challenge traditional methods and take more creative risks as a way to "create new possibilities."[27] Some examples are Sato's transformational reconstruction method and Nakamichi's Pattern Magic approach, Rissanen's and McQuillan's zero-waste fashion design, Julian Roberts' Subtraction pattern cutting and Iszoro's Accidental cutting.

Challenging the Global Practice of Pattern Cutting

This dichotomous description of the pattern cutting field exists in a Western and Westernised approach to fashion design. It is crucial for this study to consider a broad definition of pattern cutting that includes the many traditional and indigenous ways of constructing a garment, too often omitted in a Western definition of fashion design. In this context, O'Neill's definition of pattern cutting appears particularly suitable: "pattern-cutting involves a technical, conceptual and creative transformation: It turns two-dimensional cloth into three-dimensional garment form, changing fabric into fashion."[28] This broad definition of pattern cutting also questions the meaning of pattern cutting itself. Many terms are used to refer to pattern cutting, often interchangeably: pattern cutting, pattern making, pattern design, pattern engineering, and technical design. For this research, I argue that pattern cutting and garment making are intrinsically connected, even being a unique activity in some cases. As a consequence, I deliberately choose to use the term 'patternmaking'. The word 'making' implies a more holistic view of the design and making process and the role of 'pattern cutting' at every stage of fashion design. Based on this inclusive definition, I suggest a different way of looking at patternmaking. I distance myself from the Western categorisation based on creativity potentials, and geographical or cultural origins, to consider all patternmaking methods equitably and broaden their possibilities for creativity and innovation. Therefore, I have chosen to analyse pattermaking methods from a technical standpoint. I have defined four categories based on the starting point of the patternmaking/design process (Fig.1): methods starting from measurements, from fabric, from shapes or from pattern requirements or constraints. By organising and categorising pattern cutting methods as equal alternative ways to create garments, disregarding what I argue are arbitrarily allocated creative potentials, it offers a 'toolbox' from which methods can be selected and combined to develop new ideas.

The literature review has revealed the following knowledge gap: patternmaking does not seem to have been considered as a fashion design practice that could be used to foster social change in a participatory way. By applying the principles of design for social innovation to patternmaking and by formulating a more inclusive definition, a participatory practice-based methodology that aims at engaging women to develop their own creative practice was developed for this study.

25. Kevin Almond, "Insufficient Allure: The Luxurious Art and Cost of Creative Pattern Cutting," *The International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 3.1 (2010): 15–24; Kevin Almond, "The Status of Pattern Cutting," *Fashion Practice: The Journal of Design, Creative Process and The Fashion Industry*, 8 (2016): 168–80, https://doi.org/10.1080/17569370.2016.1147692; Eva Iszoro, *Direct Methods of Creative Pattern Cutting, Pedagogy and Experimentation*, PhD Dissertation (Madrid: ETSAM-Architecture School, Polytechnical University, 2016); Julian Roberts, "Free Cutting," Tumblr, accessed May 18, 2019, https://subtractioncutting.tumblr.com.

26. Kuznia, James and Roberts, "Transforming the Sequential Process".

27. Timo Rissanen and Holly Mcquillan, *Zero Waste Fashion Design* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 84.

28. Alistair O'Neill, *Exploding Fashion Making, Unmaking, and Remaking Twentieth Century Fashion* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2021), 9.

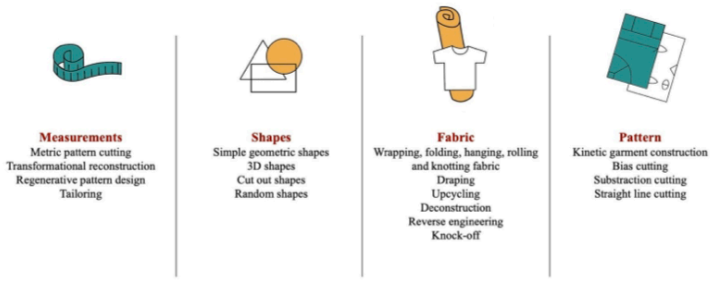

Figure 1: Categorisation of patternmaking methods. (Illustration by the author).

Methodology

Participatory Practice Research

This research is guided by the principles and values of design for social innovation, namely participation, inclusivity, and social justice. This qualitative research values the participants' voices and practices as meaningful interpretations of the world. It is situated within an interpretive paradigm in the sense that it values multiple subjectivities, including the researcher's,[29] but it also follows a transformative paradigm that "promotes human rights, social justice and social-action-oriented perspectives."[30] The research strategy adopted for this project is 'participatory practice research'. This builds on two types of strategies: participatory action research and practice research (Fig. 2).

Participatory action research involves partnering with non-academics to co-research and generate knowledge on a topic or an issue that they are facing following a collaborative and participatory process.[31] It values people and their knowledge and skills, and it places them as co-researchers in the project. Participatory action research is a powerful approach to understand people's experiences and their process of sense-making.[32] Practice research values practical and tacit knowledge as much as theoretical knowledge and places practice at the centre of the research inquiry.[33] It develops sited practices that contribute to knowledge in the form of "new concepts/designs and new knowledge, relevant to and for assessment by the community in the situation, as well as in new concepts/designs and new knowledge for design practice and for design research."[34] Participatory practice research combines both strategies. The object of

29. Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students* (Harlow: Pearson, 2019).

30. Patricia Leavy, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches* (New York: The Guildford Press, 2017), 13.

31. Leavy; Alice McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2008), https://dx-doi-org.arts.idm.oclc.org/10.4135/9781483385679.

32. Leavy.

33. Craig Vear, *The Routledge International Handbook of Practice-Based Research* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

34. Patrycja Kaszynska, Lucy Kimbell and Jocelyn Bailey, *Practice research in design: Towards a novel definition. Social Design Institute Working Paper* (London: University of the Arts London, 2022), 3.



Figure 2: Research methodology. (Illustration by the author).

research is not the researcher's practice but the research participants' practices and their outcomes, both tangible (i.e. artefact or design) and intangible (i.e. the change generated by the practice). In this, the role of designers is to build on their practice to develop the conditions and infrastructure for participants to develop their own practice.[35]

Research Methods

In order to engage community members, making workshops appeared as an appropriate research method for this participatory practice research. Workshops enable participants to engage in activities that lead them to "ideate, develop, envision and sketch together, to imagine future design objects or services and their uses."[36] In fashion design for social innovation, collective making workshops are often used as method to involve community members.[37] For this research, workshops have been developed following a 'maternalistic' approach of co-design: increasing doses of creative 'optimal frustration' are introduced; "that is just enough to create a proper environment"[38] for the participants to progressively transition towards full creative agency. Thus, the approach consists in a series of eight making workshops (Fig. 3), built around the definition of patternmaking as a fashion design practice, which aim is to progressively lead participants to develop their own practices.

The 'journey' is split into four 'chapters': the first three introduce three different patternmaking methods, namely reproducing a garment by copying its pattern, using simple geometrical shapes to create garments, and modifying a simple dress using draping techniques. During the last chapter, participants create their own garment, making their own creative and making decisions. Participants were recruited with the help of a gatekeeper organisation that supports the local community. Participants are women living in the neighbourhood, ideally with some sewing experience and visiting the gatekeeper organisation

35. Hirscher defines infrastructuring as the building and transferring of skills to create the environment for opportunities to emerge.

36. Leavy, *Research Design*, 25.

37. Kaszynska, Thorpe and Mitchell, *MAKE (E)Valuation Report*; Mazzarella, *Making for Change*; Mazzarella and Black, "Fashioning Change".

38. Thorpe and Gamman, "Design with Society," 221.

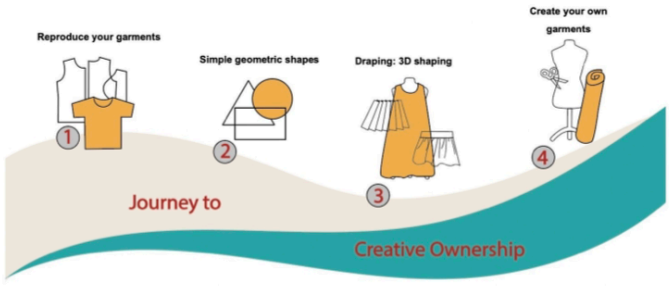

Figure 3: Journey to Creative Ownership: Patternmaking workshops. (Illustration by the author).

regularly. During the workshops, in a similar way as for an ethnographic study, qualitative data (i.e. observations, questionnaires, photography, participants' notes, physical artefacts) are gathered through "watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions [...], collecting documents and artefacts."[39] The qualitative data gathered are then analysed following two approaches: Thematic coding: categorising data under identified themes allows for the identification of insights from a large volume of qualitative data.[40]
Chronological comparisons: Each participant's journey is analysed in a chronological way to identify patterns of evolution.[41]
This should lead to a qualitative assessment of the short-term impact of the workshops and assess if the approach is successful in generating positive social change.

Participatory Practice Development

This section reports on the process and outcomes of the delivery of two series of patternmaking and garment making workshops in Somers Town, London Borough of Camden from May to November 2022.

Local Context

Somers Town, located between Kings Cross and Euston train stations, is considered one of the most deprived areas in England, suffering from multiple types of deprivation and social challenges: income deprivation, poverty impacting children (50.7% of children are living in poverty) and older people, unemployment, health issues (including anxiety and depression), crime and disorder.[42] A total of ten

39. Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: Routledge, 2007), 3.
40. Graham Gibbs, *Analyzing qualitative data* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2018), https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526441867.
41. Gibbs.
42. Camden Council, *Somers Town*, 2015, https://opendata.camden.gov.uk/Community/Camden-Neighbourhood-Profile-Somers-Towns/dv62-dsg9.

participants have taken part in the first two series of workshops. All of them considered themselves beginners in sewing and had limited patternmaking knowledge. Once a week, we met for three hours to explore and experiment with patternmaking and garment making. The sessions were led by the researcher and one or two workshop assistants, whose role was to support the participants.[43]
The sessions are designed in such way that the techniques can be replicated outside the workshop setting: affordable domestic sewing machines are used, and technical equipment is replaced as much as possible by objects readily available or purchasable at a low price. The material used is calico fabric, an unexpensive unbleached woven cotton fabric which helps participants to release their creativity and lifts the worry of making mistakes and wasting a more expensive and delicate fabric. As the workshops are organised in an open and adaptable way, the participants were able to develop their own designs for every 'chapter of the journey'. An array of artefacts was produced showcasing the wide variety of techniques which the participants experimented with (Fig. 4).



Figure 4: Dresses made by the participants during the draping workshops.

Outcomes

The review of the fieldnotes, the feedback questionnaires and the analysis of the physical patterns and garments made during the workshops, reveal that participating in the workshops has had a positive impact on the women. At workshop level, the participants seem to have experienced some positive change in the following areas:

- Skill acquisition: At the beginning of the project, all the participants declared to be beginners in sewing and to have limited knowledge of patternmaking. During the workshops, they learnt

43. Two participants from the first series of workshops were recruited as workshop assistants for the following workshops and were remunerated.

about and experimented with three different patternmaking techniques which empowered them to develop their own design ideas (Fig. 5). All have expressed a desire to learn more advanced skills and some plan to join formal training.

- Creativity development: the participants had the freedom to create their own designs. The variety of garments made (tops, dresses, trousers, skirts, waistcoat, sofa covers, capes) and techniques used (ruffles, darts, pleats, raglan sleeves, appliqués) illustrate that point. Moreover, all of them experienced fashion design through making. During the making process, new design ideas emerged, and the participants were able to try them out and change their original design idea, often surprising themselves along the way. As a result of their participation in the project, all of them said that they "definitely" felt inspired and intend to use their patternmaking and sewing skills in the future and most of them feel more creative.
- Community engagement: the workshops were an opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. Participants often helped each other and shared their knowledge and ideas (Fig. 6).

At a deeper personal level, their participation in the workshops has contributed to improving their well-being and confidence:

- Well-being: all the participants have enjoyed the workshops "very much" and consider that the project has met their expectations. The participants also experienced great satisfaction and pride in completing physical pieces of design. Indeed, all of them would be happy to exhibit their work.
- Self-confidence: All the women mentioned that participating in the workshops have made them feel positive and more confident in their sewing, patternmaking and fashion design skills (Fig. 7). This also manifested in more concrete ways during the workshops; for instance, in the way they used the sewing machines with more confidence or in trying things out without asking for validation beforehand.
- Agency and empowerment: Along the journey, the participants became more independent and autonomous in making their own decisions and finding solutions. While at the beginning they preferred following instructions, asked for validation when trying new things, and worried about making mistakes, they progressively took more ownership of their projects, suggesting other ways of doing things, bringing their own fabric, patterns, and garments.

The following quotes show the personal journey of one of the participants:
"We are not designers." (01.11.2022)
"I went shopping with my daughter this week. She liked a dress but it was poor quality. I told her that I can make it. I looked at the garments and it gave me lots of ideas." (08.11.2022)
"My daughter told her sister 'Look, mummy is becoming a designer'." (15.11.2022)

As a result of their participation in the workshops, participants feel empowered to be creative and express their ideas and individuality. Some have expressed the desire to pursue further fashion design education, made to sell and open a dedicated making space. It is still early to observe any long-term change, but some stepping stones have been laid for the participants to develop future opportunities for themselves and the community.



Figure 5: Participant sewing gathers on a domestic sewing machine.

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Figure 6: Two participants copying the pattern of a child's dress.

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Figure 7: Garment sketch with measurements and fabric sample made by a participant.

Conclusion

The preliminary outcomes of the workshops suggest that patternmaking and garment making can indeed foster social change when used in such a participatory way, thus filling the knowledge gap identified in the literature review. In the context of this study, two necessary conditions must be fulfilled for patternmaking to act as a vehicle for social change. First patternmaking is defined as a practice of fashion design and its crucial role at every stage of the fashion design process is recognised. Then a more inclusive approach to the discipline is followed, by equally considering various methods of garment construction, including those too often omitted in a Western definition of fashion design. Only then, can the values of social design for social innovation, namely participation, inclusivity, and social justice, be applied to develop a participatory methodology that allows the participants to develop their own practices. Therefore, this study not only presents a methodology of fashion design for social innovation, but it also suggests an original understanding of the field of patternmaking.

These first two years of research have also revealed some challenges that many community-based research projects face and that should be investigated further, such as accessing community groups, securing funding, evaluating social change, designing a legacy strategy, and managing the various roles of the researcher and designer.

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