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Action and Research Centre

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**Citizens and  
inclusive growth**

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# About us

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## About the authors

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## About the RSA

The RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) believes that everyone should have the freedom and power to turn their ideas into reality – we call this the Power to Create. Through our ideas, research and 27,000-strong Fellowship, we seek to realise a society where creative power is distributed, where concentrations of power are confronted, and where creative values are nurtured. The RSA Action and Research Centre combines practical experimentation with rigorous research to achieve these goals.

## About Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is an independent funder of research for social change in the UK. It aims to reduce poverty and strengthen communities for all generations.

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# Introduction

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There are 13.5 million people living in poverty in the UK<sup>1</sup>, a reality that presents a powerful imperative for change. Against a backdrop of global political tension and economic instability; social exclusion and fracture, and growing distrust in democratic structures and established systems, a compelling case is mounting as to why we need a new model of economic growth.

The ‘inclusive growth’ agenda has gained traction in recent years. Inclusive growth recognises the limitations of ‘trickle down’ economics and is predicated instead on tackling inequality and poverty and creating shared prosperity. The causes and potential consequences of Brexit have also heightened political awareness and receptiveness to ways of making local economies work across the UK.

Around the world, greater focus is being placed on these challenges in the context of cities. In the UK, and England in particular, the process of devolution to city regions continues. For central government, the challenge is how to create the conditions for inclusive growth – both nationally, and at a place level. For cities and local authorities, the challenge is how to realise the principles of inclusive growth at a local level, particularly while still constrained by current systems, financial conditions and cultural norms. If the recent waves of political and economic disaffection are to be addressed, social and economic policy must become the flip side of the same coin and the effects of inclusive growth must be felt on the ground.

## **Citizens and inclusive growth**

Citizens and inclusive growth is a discrete programme of research that looks at the role of citizens in strategies for inclusive growth. It builds on the pivotal work of the RSA’s Inclusive Growth Commission and seeks to support impactful next steps by:

- Interrogating what citizenship means and how it corresponds to inclusive growth
- Examining participatory models, their strategic design, delivery and oversight
- Reviewing the efficacy of citizen engagement methods and mechanisms, and
- Making recommendations in support of inclusive, innovative, and impactful approaches to citizen participation in inclusive growth.

1. Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) 2016

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# Research overview

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People are the starting point for this project. The nature of top-down policymaking and governance structures means that people can often be – or perceive themselves to be – a secondary consideration, or passive players in strategies and decision-making processes orchestrated at a distance.<sup>2</sup>

Increasingly, local governments around the world are seeking to move beyond the notions of consultation and engagement to explore deeper levels of civic participation. In this research we have sought to uncover innovative methods for citizen participation (including collaboration tools, deliberative fora and online methods) and understand the conditions that make for effective participation, and those that prevent it.

Our research set out to explore whether inclusive growth strategies require an equilibrium where strategic leaders, innovators and citizens participate in the process of change together. Here, citizens are not only the beneficiaries of change, but are understood to be fundamental to the success and sustainability of change strategies.

## Whole system thinking

This research builds on the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission's argument that creating an inclusive economy requires a 'whole-systems' approach that addresses social and economic policymaking silos through integrated governance.<sup>3</sup> The Commission emphasises not only the objective rate, distribution and structure of growth, but also the way that it is experienced by individuals and communities.

It follows that **inclusive growth goals (combining social and economic objectives) are likely to only be achieved when those who benefit from the strategies are included in their design. Our research therefore builds on the principle that an inclusive economy is predicated on citizen participation.** Citizens should both benefit from the economic opportunities provided by growth, but also participate in influencing the policies, strategies and programmes associated with economic growth.

Under this framing, citizen participation serves both instrumental and normative purposes.

- **Instrumental purpose:** Citizen participation can be considered a means to an end, supporting the realisation of an economy that works for all (we describe this as an economy where citizens who

2. Bifulco (2013); Lawton and Macaulay (2014); Amnå and Ekman (2013)

3. The Commission argues that silos exist within different tiers of government, and are apparent between social and economic policies. For example, skills and labour market strategies sit in isolation to, or are separated from, health and social care policies although there is a relationship between low levels of skills and poor health. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority's model of co-commissioning shows how different services and policies, such as health and social care, adult skills and employment, and transport and infrastructure, can be better aligned and integrated in order to tackle key economic challenges.

have traditionally lost out from growth now directly benefit). It can improve the quality and legitimacy of policymaking, ensuring that decisions reflect the interests of all of society, especially underserved and under-represented communities, while ensuring that policy influence isn't only wielded by certain groups. It also harnesses the knowledge and capacity of citizens to help address the complex challenges (or inclusive growth problems) that policymakers and mainstream institutions cannot confront alone.

- **Normative purpose:** Citizen participation has intrinsic value. It can be argued that building citizenship is important in its own right, and central to ideas of a fair and flourishing democracy.

This argument presents inclusive growth as a systemic social and economic model, with citizen participation embedded as part of an ongoing, cyclical process rather than a linear strategy owned and determined by public managers. By building on this argument, our fieldwork and literature review, we have identified three factors that must be present to enable and sustain citizen-led approaches to inclusive growth:

- **Inclusion** – equity in participation and alignment of values can foster equal partnership between citizens and public managers.
- **Innovation** – creative approaches improve the quality and effectiveness of participation, and unlock new ways to collaborate and solve problems.
- **Impact** – citizen participation can achieve positive social and economic outcomes, as part of shared and open governance that affords citizens greater agency.

## Approach

The research for this project involved an open call for evidence, a literature review, action research and fieldwork, and a global practice review in four UK cities and six international cities. Our case studies in the Inclusion, Innovation and Impact chapters were developed through drawing on a series of interviews.

Stakeholders and the wider public were engaged in the project from its inception, through an open blogging forum on the project's interactive Medium platform at <https://medium.com/citizens-and-inclusive-growth>, as well as in the case study development and through engagement in action-oriented events.

In addition to deploying traditional methods, the project used a live and dynamic participatory research process, designed to grow iteratively and deliberatively, working throughout with people – citizens – as collaborators and co-designers in the research, its analysis, synthesis and dissemination.

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# How citizenship participation enables inclusive growth

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A review of relevant literature sought to find evidence of citizen participation in inclusive growth or local economic development strategies, as well as learning from the broader literature on citizen participation in established areas such as public service design, regeneration and urban planning. The review explored how three key factors (inclusion, innovation and impact) can support effective citizen participation; what types of tools, methods and sets of conditions are needed to enable citizen participation, and what outcomes might be achieved as a result.

There is a paucity of strong evidence to demonstrate where and how citizen participation approaches have directly shaped economic strategies. This is partly linked to expert-led cultures of policymaking, which assume a trade-off between citizen involvement and the efficient running of a market economy. In a study by Anttiroiko, the head of city competitiveness for Helsinki describes the idea of “integrating democratic citizen involvement with the promotion of economic development [as] conceptually fuzzy.”<sup>4</sup> It is instructive that much of the evidence we identified involves cities and towns – typically small or post-industrial – where economic problems have spilled over into social crises. It is at this juncture – when traditional economic solutions no longer work and the need for re-invention grows – that an opening for citizens tends to be created.

## Citizens as economic policy makers

The RSA Citizens’ Economic Council (CEC) makes the case for an understanding of economics, not as an objective science, but as a moral and a political discipline, engaging with values, trade-offs and choices. Recognising that economics is a question of public policy and entails choices creates the space, the mandate and the need for citizen participation.<sup>5</sup> While there is a lack of robust evidence, the reviewed literature suggests citizen participation and the nurturing of participatory cultures in economic development and decision-making can deliver a range of benefits. For example:

- Strengthening community attachment (people’s sense of belonging to a place), which is associated with higher rates of employment and growth in a place.<sup>6</sup>

4. Anttiroiko (2016)

5. Earle et al. (2016)

6. Knight Foundation (2010)

- Helping to re-shape an economy, making it fairer and more inclusive, including supporting broad-based economic recovery and re-structuring for places such as post-industrial towns.<sup>7</sup>
- Growing the skills, networks and confidence of participants, enabling them to better connect to and take advantage of labour market opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

### **Inclusion: Putting values at the heart of participation**

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spent two years developing a set of core values for public participation processes, supported by extensive global input (see Box 1). These values underscore the importance of engaging as broad a set of citizens as possible, and in particular making efforts to reach vulnerable groups, such as those in poverty, to involve them meaningfully in decisions and ensure their participation has an impact. The literature suggests such values are important in supporting a shift from a paternalistic relationship between the state and citizens, to an ‘adult to adult’ relationship that is built on trustworthiness and confers respect, recognition and responsibility to citizens as equal partners.<sup>9</sup> For inclusive growth, the values and norms that guide economic development also matter: there should be alignment between the values that guide local democracy and governance and those that shape economic strategy. Without this, there is a danger that citizen participation initiatives merely serve to legitimise or reinforce unequal models of growth.

#### **Box 1 – Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation**

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

7. Benner and Pastor (2012); Flint (2010); Anttiroiko (2016)

8. Squazzoni (2009)

9. Kies (2010) cited in Coelho and Waisbich (2016); Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015)



## Innovation: Unlocking new and better ways to engage citizens

Increasingly, creative and empowering forms of citizen engagement are emerging and spreading, supported by developments in digital technology, systems and design thinking and new models of governance. A growing number of places are combining a sophisticated mix of tools and approaches – from the ‘thin’ engagement of crowdsourcing to the ‘thick’ engagement of citizens’ juries and participatory budgeting; and encompassing both the high-tech online and open source platforms, alongside the ‘high touch’, face-to-face spaces for grassroots deliberation. In some places, the emphasis is not just on engaging citizens, but on embedding them into shared systems of open innovation, experimentation and prototyping that put citizens at the heart of defining and solving complex challenges.<sup>10</sup> For example, there is extensive use of crowdsourcing in Helsinki’s innovation processes to foster economic dynamism and resilience; encourage global competitiveness; nurture opportunities for startups and smaller businesses; and develop new products and services.<sup>11</sup>

In some places old forms of engagement are being eschewed for more bottom-up, deliberative approaches that systematically share power with citizens and draw on their insights. A spectrum of methods are used. Table 1 uses IAP2’s spectrum of participation to show a selection of the different types of methods being used in practice, and the degree to which they empower citizens.

**Table 1: IAP2’s spectrum of participation**

<b>Inform</b> to provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner	<b>Consult</b> to obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions	<b>Involve</b> to work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood	<b>Collaborate</b> to partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making	<b>Empower</b> to place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Booths at fairs and events (eg Roadshows)	Crowdsourcing	Community forums	Citizen juries	Community-led commissioning

Recent trends have shifted to a new type of open, networked community participation, where government acts as a convenor rather than manager, and where citizens are seen as active co-creators rather than ‘customers’.<sup>12</sup> This is achieved through approaches such as human centred design<sup>13</sup> or asset-based community development,<sup>14</sup> which put citizens at the heart of the governance cycle. Denmark’s MindLab, which is described as a

10. Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015); Terry (2017)

11. Anttiroiko (2016); Bollier (2016)

12. Bryson et al. (2014); Stoker (2011); Nabatchi (2010)

13. Human centred design is an approach to developing solutions by involving people, or the ‘human perspective’, in all steps of the problem-solving process.

14. Asset-based community development is an approach to sustainably developing communities by identifying their strengths and potential rather than fixating on their problems or deficiencies. Focusing on deficiencies can leave communities feeling disempowered and dependent, whereas by focusing on their strengths communities feel like they can be active agents in changing their lives and community.

cross-governmental innovation unit involving citizens and businesses in ‘creating solutions for society’, is an example of such an approach.<sup>15</sup> In this model, public managers still maintain a key role, but participation is more sophisticated. Such approaches require:

- Sharing power and creating equal partnerships with citizens, seeing civic participation as a strategic priority rather than a consultation tool. They build civic capacity instead of merely shifting responsibility to unprepared citizens.<sup>16</sup>
- Supporting the development of ‘civic infrastructure’ in order to mobilise grassroots networks and work with the grain of communities. The success of programmes such as Participatory Budgeting (PB)<sup>17</sup> in Brazil is partly down to this ability to combine formal platforms and informal community-based networks.<sup>18</sup>
- Deploying the public leadership and convening power of organisations, such as local authorities, to embed cultures of participation into the fabric of places, replacing the ad hoc nature of citizen participation schemes with systemic approaches linked to wider policies and programmes. This can, over time, support a transition from one-off engagement projects to initiatives that are integrated into a place’s economic and policy development processes.<sup>19</sup>

### **Impact: Outcomes of citizen participation**

Assessing the impact of civic participation based on quantifiable outcomes has proven challenging. Most studies have been qualitative in nature, and empirical research establishing direct causal links between intervention and outcome is scarce.<sup>20</sup> Again, we reiterate our argument that there are normative, as well as instrumental, reasons to embed citizen engagement and participation activities at the heart of economic and social policy making.

However, the literature does suggest that meaningful and effective citizen participation is associated with a number of positive benefits and outcomes. In their analysis and synthesis of 100 studies between 2003 and 2010 (including three from the UK), Gaventa and Barrett identify almost 830 examples of outcomes, which fall into four broad categories (see Table 1).<sup>21</sup> The study highlights the important impact that grassroots civic spaces and social movements have on outcomes, with over half of the outcomes in most categories linked to such platforms as opposed to formal governance spaces.

15. Longo (2014)

16. Hastings et al. (2015)

17. Participatory budgeting is a way for local people to have a direct say in how, and where, public funds can be used to address local needs.

18. Leighninger (2016); Nabatchi (2014)

19. Lipscomb (2015). Also Tuttle (2016)

20. Voorberg et al. (2015); Gaventa and Barrett (2010).

21. Gaventa and Barrett (2010).

**Table 2: Outcomes of citizen participation**

Positive	Negative
<b>Construction of citizenship</b>	
Increased civic and political knowledge Greater sense of empowerment and agency	Increased knowledge dependencies Disempowerment and reduced sense of agency
<b>Practices of citizen participation</b>	
Increased capacities for collective action New forms of participation Deepening of networks and solidarities	New capacities used for 'negative' purposes Tokenistic or 'captured' forms of participation Lack of accountability and representation in networks
<b>Responsive and accountable states</b>	
Greater access to state services and resources Greater realisation of rights Enhanced state responsiveness and accountability	Denial of state services and resources Social, economic and political reprisals Violent or coercive state response
<b>Inclusive and cohesive societies</b>	
Inclusion of new actors and issues in public spaces Greater social cohesion across groups	Reinforcement of social hierarchies and exclusion Increased horizontal conflict and violence

The context, culture, and characteristics of those involved in participation initiatives can also influence the impact and outcomes achieved. In a systematic review of co-production and co-creation (practices in which citizens are deemed equal partners with professionals, usually in service design and delivery), Voorberg and colleagues find that the following characteristics of organisations leading participation initiatives can support effective co-production:

- Compatibility of the organisation with citizen participation;
- Open attitudes towards citizen participation;
- A less risk-averse administrative culture, and
- The presence of clear incentives for co-creation.

The final bullet point is reinforced by a multi-country, survey-based study of citizens in the UK, France, Germany, Denmark and Czech Republic by Parrado, which suggests that it is **citizens' sense of efficacy (their ability to influence decisions and make a difference) that is the strongest predictor of civic participation**, even more so than demographic factors.<sup>22</sup>

O'Hare identifies a set of conditions that are crucial in enabling citizen or community participation to have any substantial impact in achieving successful outcomes. He argues that a "triad of qualities" is needed:

"...namely: **resources to enable empowerment**, such as political and legal rights, funding, and the social capacity required to create mobilisation networks; **opportunities**, such as those provided by institutional arrangements, for example, decentralisation; and finally, the **motivations for people to exert their rights**."<sup>23</sup>

In the UK, evaluations of citizen participation programmes in economic regeneration, planning and public services, such as health, generally find

22. Parrado et al. (2013)

23. O'Hare (2010)



little evidence for strong end outcomes, but some of this can be attributed to tokenistic or exclusionary designs.<sup>24</sup> The New Deal for Communities (NDC) and other area-based or neighbourhood initiatives with citizen participation at their heart did show some evidence of a range of positive impacts including:

- Better skilled and more informed citizens, with a greater sense of efficacy;
- Better quality decision making, with increased legitimacy;
- Higher quality of and more innovative service delivery, with greater responsiveness to local needs;
- Reduction in social exclusion and increased social capital.<sup>25</sup>

However, the NDC (in spite of designating vast amounts of resource to enable successful community-led regeneration) failed to nurture a culture of participation across the demographic spectrum within communities. Significant resources were committed to building local skills and capacity, and almost a fifth of residents in NDC areas participated in NDC activities. But, the majority of involvement was in social activities and community events, accounting for 87 percent of participation rates; there was much lower participation in NDC elections and volunteering.

In contrast to this, the strongest international examples of citizen engagement achieving good outcomes also show clear evidence of many of the conditions identified in this chapter. This is especially so of participatory budgeting initiatives in Brazil which have been successful in:

- Cultivating participatory cultures;
- Achieving equity in participation;
- Increasing spending on, and improving outcomes in, education, sanitation and health, especially in low income neighbourhoods;
- Reducing extreme poverty; and
- Improving the efficiency of government funded projects.<sup>26</sup>

There are important features of these schemes that help to explain this. Using O'Hare's 'triad of qualities' framework, these are outlined below.

- Resources to enable empowerment. PB programmes, especially in Brazil (but also increasingly in France and parts of the US) have significant budgets that are subject to citizen control. They are a core part of local democratic politics and governance. Importantly, rather than just creating formal participation structures, PB in these places is constructed around a civic infrastructure that helps build community and unlocks the social capacity of citizens, creating mobilisation networks. This

24. For example, the literature suggests that the majority of citizen or patient involvement activity in health care has been restricted to feedback and information giving, while shared decision-making, despite evidence that it can produce health benefits, is rare. Programmes such as NHS Citizen are seeking to address this but they are still in the early stages. See Ocloo and Matthews (2016)

25. Batty et al. (2010); Burton et al. (2004); SQW Consulting (2005)

26. Leighninger (2016)

includes dense networks of: civic assets; grassroots movements, social justice networks and community groups; neighbourhood organisers, convenors and facilitators; and viable and creative public spaces for participation, combining social events with more formal political platforms, as well as face-to-face and online channels.<sup>27</sup>

- Opportunities. There are significant opportunities for citizens to get involved as part of PB initiatives, with supporting institutional arrangements including decentralised local governance. Brazil has an especially holistic and citizen-centred approach to participation, ranging from large-scale national participatory policymaking programmes to local health councils.
- Motivation. There appears to be a far greater sense of civic efficacy in large-scale PB programmes, with people more likely to participate and make their voices heard. This is linked to the substantial power, recognition and respect that such schemes confer to citizens, in contrast to the tokenism of traditional forms of citizen participation. Lerner argues that it is the promise of empowerment and inclusion – of ‘real money, real power’ – that has created energy and motivated citizens to participate in PB.<sup>28</sup>

The literature review demonstrates that, when implemented in an environment that has considered and addressed the necessary principles for purposeful engagement processes, public participation can be a key strategy in designing, implementing and scrutinising effective economic and social policy decision-making. Building on Kies’ suggested requirements for participatory mechanisms to address inequality,<sup>29</sup> we make the case that for citizen participation in inclusive growth to be purposeful the process needs to be inclusive, both in a democratic and participative sense; be innovative in deliberately creating the space to embed citizens’ participation into decision-making structures; and be able to demonstrate clearly that the process will have an impact.

27. Leighninger (2016); Nabatchi (2014)

28. Lerner (2016)

29. Kies (2010) cited in Coelho and Waisbich (2016)

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# Examining participatory models in practice

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Building on learning from the literature review, our fieldwork maintains a focus on our key research themes of inclusion, innovation and impact, seeking out examples of practice in the UK (specifically in Greater Manchester, Leeds City Region, Nottingham and Birmingham), and drawing on six international case studies.

While recognising that the US is a very different political and socio-economic landscape to the UK, and that its state governance systems and sheer scale add further layers of complexity and differentiation, there is nevertheless inspiration that can be drawn from US practice, particularly at a project level, but also in the emergence of place-driven approaches and new economic models. Our US fieldwork starts in Boston, which is widely acknowledged as a global centre of innovation although there is arguably a particular (predominantly corporate and academically led) understanding of innovation and how it is manifest. As a cultural counter-point, our next selected city is Seattle, known, in US terms, as a ‘radical’ city which prioritises inclusion and social justice. Detroit, our third US case study, is a famously post-industrial city which has endured a sustained period of economic (and population) decline, but which in more recent years has seen marked, and continuing, resurgence.

It is important to keep the scale factor in mind when considering US approaches to inclusion and citizen participation. Essentially, its cities have seen similar outcomes in terms of the effects and limitations of the dominant trickle-down growth model which has sparked the inclusive growth agenda in the UK, but at a macro scale. The Boston city-region for example consistently features in the top five cities in the world in terms of GDP per capita, ranking fourth in The Brookings Institute’s 2016 index with a per capita income of \$77,651.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, research from the Center for Economic Democracy (one of the organisations driving the Ujima Project, featured in our case study), has found that in Boston’s neighbourhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, two out of five children live in poverty. According to The Ujima Project, white families in Boston own over 350 times the assets of black families on average, while black business owners are underrepresented by over 30 percent.<sup>31</sup> Our purpose is not, therefore, to approach the US model as a blueprint for ‘best practice’, but instead to draw out and understand responses to those

30. Trujillo and Parilla (2016), see Table 7, p. 30

31. See: [Ujima Project Public Fact Sheet \(2016\)](#)



stark economic and social inequalities, further complicated by matters such as race relations.

On the whole, this is a relatively new space for the US and initiatives are young, and as such untested in terms of long-term impact, or project-based, or both, offering only isolated examples of best practice.<sup>32</sup> In recognition of this, our practice review has also sought out international examples of cities where innovative and inclusive methods have been either employed for some time, or where there is evidence of a more mature strategic approach towards coordinating multiple projects within an overarching system, drawing on examples from Porto Alegre, Helsinki and Barcelona.

32. Flint (2010), Using the community capitals model combined with the spiralling assets model Flint shows how Dauphin Island (a non-metro area) transformed its approach to economic development; Weinberg (1999), the university as an anchor institution represents a cost-efficient way of bringing 'expert' consultancy to low-income/deindustrialised communities and acts to supplement the efforts of existing organisations rather than replace or compete with them.

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# Inclusion

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Too often in discussions of inclusive growth, inclusion is presented or perceived as an ‘add-on’ to the serious business of economic growth strategy; a concession to growth, considered in retrospect. This research has sought out practice in which inclusion is acknowledged as a key economic driver in its own right; embedded from the outset as a critical component in resulting approaches and strategies.

In this chapter, we start by exploring citizen participation in Greater Manchester (GM) following devolution, setting out the challenges and opportunities for GM in becoming more inclusive as it pursues local growth. In GM the focus is on drawing on grassroots and citizen-led initiatives to better inform the city-region’s growth strategy, whereas in Leeds City Region there is greater emphasis on embedding inclusion through community enterprise. We contrast these two different approaches to inclusion in the UK before turning to cities in the US and Brazil, highlighting particularly inspiring examples of citizen-led initiatives achieving inclusive growth.

## **DevoManc: Devolution as an opportunity for inclusion in Greater Manchester**

The Greater Manchester city-region elected its first city-regional Mayor in May 2017, an event which coincided with the first change of Chief Executive at Manchester City Council in 20 years. While the process of devolution has been criticised for a perceived lack of democratic engagement, its promise and potential have been broadly welcomed and it is widely acknowledged as an opportunity to exert more local power in key policy areas and to ‘take back control’. Broadly speaking, there is a sense in GM of a citizenship in the ascendancy, and a number of citizen-led initiatives have been formed in response to both the opportunity of devolution and the perceived (and real) lack of diversity and inclusion in the devolution process. These include The People’s Plan, DivaManc, Jam & Justice, and the Democratic Devolution: Young Citizens’ Assembly (all of which are profiled on our Medium site).

Other projects have formed in response to the city’s keenly felt challenges, and are pioneering innovative approaches to participation and citizenship in meeting those needs. The Homelessness Charter has brought together a range of stakeholders including people with lived experience and contributors from across political, business and third sectors in a shared commitment to ending homelessness in the city, whilst the Not Just Soup project has been founded by a small collective of local business leaders to engage businesses and restaurants in providing food and support services for citizens experiencing homelessness.

Addressing the city’s spatial inequality, promoting citizen interaction with place, and going beyond statutory consultation (which currently

dominates civic participation in the city's physical development) is the focus of a number of citizenship platforms and civic movements, including community fora such as the Castlefield Forum and Northern Quarter Forum and movements which have grown online and via social media, notably Manchester Shield, and its Mayfield Imaginarium project, which is initiating a new approach to community participation in spatial development.

At an RSA workshop in Manchester hosted in February 2017 by M4, an independent and citizen-led space for civic participation, we gathered a range of perspectives from citizens on the key research themes for this project (inclusion, innovation and impact), and specifically on how these themes apply to and are manifest in Manchester. Participants discussed both the challenges and opportunities of democratic engagement in the devolution process. The number of civic groups and social movements emerging across the city-region was noted, and in particular the perceived disparity between the scale of activism and citizen participation as opposed to the limited opportunities offered by formal consultation procedures ("Consultation is just not keeping pace with the people"). Participants questioned the quality of formal consultation in strategic development and decision-making, specifically citing the case of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (with only one percent of GM adults engaged in the formal consultation process), expressing some cynicism around emerging initiatives ("Our 'Manchester Strategy' – but whose?") and underlining the need for better structures for engagement beyond the early stages of co-creation and co-production ("Institutions might agree to the principle of collaboration, but in practice collaborative delivery is difficult").

Despite criticism of current consultation processes, participants universally expressed pride in GM, its heritage, identity and achievements, and one-word responses to 'GM's future' included 'hope', 'belief', 'collaboration' and 'resilience'. Progress has been made, but there is still scope for GM to improve the way in which it includes and reflects citizens' voices as part of its strategy for growth.

### **Inclusive growth through community entrepreneurialism in Leeds City Region**

West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) has identified inclusive growth as a strategic priority. It is working in partnership with Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), the five councils that make up the combined authority, Leeds City Region LEP and a number of anchor institutions to trail blaze inclusive growth across Leeds City Region (LCR). Among the priorities for LCR, which has a population of roughly three million, supporting small and private sector business growth tops the list. In particular, there is an emerging focus on promoting community entrepreneurialism as a means of achieving inclusive growth.

Although it is still at a very early stage in its development, the concept of community entrepreneurialism is increasingly central to the city region's thinking about the practical models needed to promote inclusive growth. It is characterised by efforts to create a stronger infrastructure and culture of entrepreneurialism and community enterprise in deprived places, deepening the combined authority's (CA) engagement with



small-scale businesses in these areas and ensuring that they and their communities have the voice needed to shape social and economic priorities. Community entrepreneurialism integrates two key strands of the city region's emergent thinking: boosting community enterprise, and refashioning the relationship between citizens and the state.

The city region's approach to community entrepreneurialism seeks to learn from past initiatives in developing programmes that are both impactful and sustainable.<sup>33</sup> A key opportunity is combining the scale and geographic and resource coordination function of the CA and LEP, with a neighbourhood-based delivery model. Rather than individual local authorities developing one-size-fits-all models for all of their communities, this would see a 'sire' approach develop, whereby organisations and community economic development projects in one part of the city region support, mentor or co-produce similar successful, sustainable activity in other parts of the city region. The CA would provide the scale and coordination capacities for similar communities from different districts to develop effective and sustainable programmes together. Emerging platforms such as those in the sharing economy can help create the collaborative infrastructure for this. Comoodle in Kirklees is an example of this: it is a sharing platform that allows organisations working to address poverty to exchange skills, resources and capacity, more effectively coordinating the work they do.

As well as the more effective design, delivery and coordination of community enterprise activity, **community entrepreneurialism also seeks to deepen the engagement with citizens and businesses in deprived communities, and to build both their social and economic capacity, and their capacity to influence or shape policy.**

A key challenge is that, similarly to third sector, strong and growing enterprises tend to be concentrated in middle class communities. Local authorities have also tended to very rarely engage with small scale businesses, and have historically had an over-reliance on large employers. This is despite such businesses – from the local corner shop to the window cleaner – being critically important micro, neighbourhood-level community anchors that offer both economic and social benefits to local communities. Community entrepreneurialism seeks to address these gaps, engaging more deeply in deprived communities to support the development of small scale enterprises with the capacity to employ people from within their communities and achieve significant social impact.

But the aim is not just business and employment growth: it is also to

33. While community entrepreneurialism is a new term, it is not a new idea. In the 1980s, the Enterprise Allowance Scheme – which provided people that set up their own businesses with a small guaranteed income – sought to boost entrepreneurship within communities affected by de-industrialisation and mass unemployment. Subsequent regeneration programmes including the City Challenge, the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and the New Deal for Communities (NDC) also sought to build economic and community capacity in deprived places. However, these programmes often fell short or did not achieve sustainable impact for reasons ranging from short-termism and inadequate funding through to a tendency to prescribe 'one-size-fits-all' models to communities with very different needs and characteristics, and a failure to distinguish between social entrepreneurship and the more business-focussed community enterprise. In some places this led to a proliferation of social enterprises that came to rely on public sector grants and services to keep afloat.

use community entrepreneurialism as a way of building the capacity and confidence of citizens within deprived communities to get involved in directly shaping the direction of local economic development as well as the wider strategic priorities of the city region. The view from city region leaders is that citizens too often do not have the voice to shape growth policies and strategies because of a lack of community capacity, or the ability to effect change within their neighbourhoods and cities. This is a problem connected to the paternalistic relationship that local authorities and the public sector have tended to have with their residents, which over the long term has created a degree of dependency, especially within deprived and working class communities. As a result, as one senior stakeholder put it, in the context of cuts and state withdrawal from some services “a lot of communities feel orphaned.” A key objective of the city region is to learn from new models of public services – as explored in its Future of Local Government Commission and subsequent programmes – in order to help build the capacity of citizens to be more actively involved.

In order to achieve this in the context of community entrepreneurialism, there is a strong focus on identifying, nurturing and supporting the ‘economic role models’ or ‘economic activists’ (a complement to social activists) within deprived neighbourhoods who, if engaged in sufficient numbers, can catalyse local entrepreneurship and also act as a powerful voice back to policymakers. Those leading the community entrepreneurialism programme in the city region are adamant that these businesses and civic networks should shape key economic strategies and LEP priorities, which some argue are sometimes too narrow in their approach to growth, focusing narrowly on city centres, business units and large-scale industrial parks.

By restoring voice to citizens and creating policy and governance cultures in which institutions listen to people’s needs and priorities, there is a sense that an entirely different model of growth could take shape in Leeds City Region. For example, it could be one where economic development and infrastructure strategies are not just premised on city centres and high tech sectors, but also on community-led economic development and the foundational economy.

“We want to explore the idea of authentic voice in shaping inclusive growth. Take the example of where people want to work. Traditionally what we do is take people from districts and bring them into cities through transport links, and assume that this is beneficial because of agglomeration effects. But not all jobs are in cities, and not everyone wants to work there – and we need to listen to people about where they want to work and invest their time. For many, it may not be in cities. If we ensured that inclusive growth policies were informed by the authentic voice of citizens, it might even lead to a complete re-think of the city-based growth model.”

**Ruth Redfern, Project Director of Inclusive Growth, West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

## Inspiring citizen-led initiatives in the US and Brazil

### Boston

In Boston, well-established as a global centre for academic and corporate innovation, there are a number of noteworthy developments heralding the emergence of a more organic and open innovation ecosystem in the city, including the opening of the Roxbury Innovation Centre, Boston's first 'community innovation hub' in a planned series of hubs in suburban neighbourhoods,<sup>34</sup> and initiatives such as the Ujima Project. Launched in the spring of 2015, the project was initiated in response to a year-long cross sector study group involving over 40 community leaders from across the city. Hosted by the Center for Economic Democracy, Boston Impact Initiative and City Life / Vida Urbana, the group studied strategies for Boston's communities to control capital; grow co-ops, establish land trusts, and to protect and foster locally owned companies.

Taking its name from the Swahili word for "collective work and responsibility", the Ujima Project unites residents and workers, small businesses, grassroots organisations and other local economy stakeholders to create a new 'community controlled economy' in Greater Boston. Piloting activity in the Boston neighbourhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, the project's multi-stakeholder membership is the foundation for new, local economic infrastructure and investment systems designed to meet local needs, create jobs, distribute wealth, and model economic democracy.

The project's programmes include 'Good Business and Real Estate' certification (recognising businesses for living wages, inclusive hiring, local purchasing, environmental impact and affordability), a community controlled investment fund (drawn from pooled contributions, credit unions, capital and procurement subsidy from local anchor institutions, union pension funds and foundation endowments), a worker empowerment network (including services such as group health insurance buying and workplace mediation services), and an alternative local currency, incorporating a time-banking scheme.

Ujima's community capital fund, which brings together investment from a wide range of stakeholders, and which will employ a cooperative PB model in its investment-making decisions, is currently in development and due to launch in summer 2017.

Boston's Ujima Project is a working example of embedding inclusion as a driver for systemic change.

### Seattle

In Seattle, a city celebrated for its rich heritage in the arts, culture, and creativity, the civic leadership is working with citizens' groups and the city's emerging network of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), start-ups and social enterprises to harness and apply that creativity to addressing some of its challenges. Most notably, Seattle is trying to tackle its significant and rising homelessness levels, which has been declared as a state of emergency.

34. Kelly and McKinley (2015); detail how John Barros, the Chief of Economic Development in Boston, grew up in the Roxbury area and has deep roots in the expansion of opportunities for Roxbury and similar neighbourhoods in the city, overseeing the investment the city is making in these areas.

Pioneer Square, ‘the original heart of the city’, is an important, iconic area in terms of the city’s culture, heritage and arts scene, and is rapidly becoming acknowledged as the city’s focal point for grassroots innovation. The area also includes a marked concentration of homelessness shelters and missions. The Alliance for Pioneer Square, which formed initially as a campaign to support development of the square at the centre of the district (and which has since led development of the square as a successful multi-use civic space), is now acting as a platform through which public, private, third sector and civic stakeholders are collaborating to generate and action innovative solutions to the city’s challenges.<sup>35</sup>

“Our work with the square as a physical space scans straight across to our current development work,” says Liz Stenning, Public Realm Director, “at the core of it is connecting people”. Chief Operating Officer Lisa Dixon concurs: “Whether you’re talking physical space, community space or economic space, the most important things are: firstly that everyone is welcome – whether you want to sit in the sun with your lunch, catch a concert or find a safe place to sleep; secondly, that there’s equality of access, based on empathy with other people’s needs – to which point, when we co-developed the square, we took city planners on a tour in wheelchairs; and thirdly, that everyone is equally valued in the space. Everyone is welcome here, but don’t devalue other people”.

### **Detroit**

Detroit’s Future City programme was launched in 2010 as an interactive, strategic spatial planning process. Focussed initially on land use, and funded largely through philanthropic grant, the programme brought together a core team of planners and architects with a broad spectrum of community leaders and citizens in co-creating a collective response to the large-scale blight and vacancy across the city. The resulting strategic framework has since become the action-oriented blueprint for the city’s economic revitalisation, building on its innovative land use approaches (underpinned by the co-produced publication ‘Field Guide to Working with Lots’, a collection of 34 multi-functional blue/green designs and tactics for community reanimation of vacant lots) as the basis for a 50-year vision and an ‘acre by acre’ economic transformation strategy.

The programme also utilised a combination of more than 30 interconnected engagement tactics including a ‘roaming table’<sup>36</sup> convening more than 6,000 one-on-one conversations and an online game (Detroit 24/7 Community PlanIt),<sup>37</sup> which alone generated 8000 responses.<sup>38</sup> This

35. See: [Pioneer Square 2020: Neighbourhood Plan Update](#) (2015); details the goals of the community over the coming five years, and the actions that will help them achieve these goals.

36. A ‘roaming table’ is a kitchen table that travels, built by Committee members overseeing the Detroit Works Long-Term Plan. In recognition that the Committee couldn’t sit down with all 700,000 Detroit residents at their kitchen tables, the roaming table enabled Committee members to recreate the experience in a more efficient way as they embarked on the task of finding out more about residents’ quality of life.

37. This online game involved Detroit’s communities in local planning efforts. The game turned community planning into a story, structured through simple interactions and game mechanics; players – members of the public – were then given the opportunity to shape the narrative.

38. Detroit Works Project Long Term Planning: Civic Engagement Strategic Framework (2012); highlights the deep thought behind the civic engagement element in the Future City process.

initial engagement programme around Future City (2010-13) heralded a new approach to civic inclusion in Detroit, which it has since become synonymous with. Maurice D Cox, Detroit's Director of Planning and Development explains how the approach is based not on "...promises of population growth and folks who might be coming back, but instead to regenerate neighbourhoods just for the people who are there. When we go into neighbourhoods, we plan not for planning's sake, but to plan for that neighbourhood's priorities, and to plan together what we can deliver."

Under the Future City banner, Cox and his team have piloted unprecedented levels of civic participation in both the strategic planning process, introducing, for example, 'neighbourhood interviews' with local residents before granting property development purchases, and in delivery, engaging a local volunteer force of thousands in painting bike lanes, installing community gardens and bringing vacant homes back to life.

### **Porto Alegre**

Porto Alegre, in Brazil, is widely regarded as the global pioneer of city-wide participatory budgeting.<sup>39</sup> In 1989, the newly formed left-wing PT party was elected to power and the new mayor's administration invited all citizens above the age of 16 to take part in a series of open meetings, with the goal of creating a people's investment budget for the municipality. Thirty years later, after particular successes in transforming the city's water and sewer systems, transport infrastructure, public realm and street paving, and undertaking large-scale capital programmes targeted at building schools and health care facilities, the practice of PB has become embedded as an informal Porto Alegre constitution, to the extent that when the PT lost power in 2004, the incoming right-wing administration continued with the practice. Following on from Porto Alegre's success, since 1990, 120 of Brazil's 250 municipalities have built PB into their city governance structures.

These different stages of adoption of PB, and at scale, allow us to consider and compare potential longer term impacts of deep citizen engagement.<sup>40</sup> Brazilian cities employing PB, for example, perform consistently better against key mean indicators such as infant mortality. Those employing PB for eight years or more have seen an average 19 percent drop in infant mortality figures.<sup>41</sup> However, PB is not without its challenges. Managing expectations; susceptibility to personal and political agendas; short-termism in response to citizen demands; prioritising local focus at the expense of regional and national policy, and – critically for this project – engaging marginalised groups in the process - have all been recorded as difficulties by Brazil's PB municipalities.

39. Shah (2007), analyses the merits and demerits of participatory budgeting practices around the world with a view to guiding policy makers and practitioners on improving such practices in the interest of inclusive governance; Cabannes (2004), provides a systematic analysis of the range of experience that can be included in participatory budgeting drawing on the experience of 25 municipalities in Latin America and Europe.

40. Wampler (2007), demonstrates that participatory institutions, in conjunction with participation in a civil society organization, can alter citizens' attitudes and behaviour.

41. Touchton and Wampler (2014), pp. 1457-1458



## **Inclusion: Key findings**

In Manchester, both the city and the wider city-region are embracing the opportunities presented by devolution and the potential for the new metro mayor to drive change in the face of persistent social and economic challenges. In our Manchester workshop, citizens expressed pride in their city and its achievements, but a frustration with formal engagement and consultation processes. They expressed a desire for citizen agency to be integral to the process of change, noting the potential to catalyse an emerging groundswell of independent and citizen-led participatory platforms and initiatives. Each area within Greater Manchester is unique, and the city-region's spatial framework drew particular criticism for failing to engage local people. There are lessons which might be drawn here from Detroit's approach to co-created spatial planning.

In the Leeds City Region, efforts to encourage community entrepreneurialism are still in their early days, but signify a promising alternative to fostering economic growth in an inclusive way. However, it will take time to shift the 'paternalistic' mindset that local authorities and the public sector have had, so that capacity in communities (especially those that considered to be deprived or working class) can be built up.

**The challenge for Greater Manchester and Leeds City Region, as with our US examples, is supporting and scaling these initiatives (whether citizen-led projects or community enterprise) successfully to drive the required systemic inclusion – and change.**

While evidence from our American and Brazilian case studies is largely project specific, scaling and replication of participatory approaches appears limited by a number of factors including a reliance on project-limited public grant and charitable funding; a prevailing characterisation of projects as social investment, community development and outreach to be delivered in suburbs and neighbourhoods, and a continued reliance on fiscal evaluation and 'cost benefit' to demonstrate impact. Attempts to replicate the successful participatory budgeting exercise in Porto Alegre at a state level came at the cost of opening it up to political and corporate agendas. The adoption of district councils as mediators in the process also collectively and quickly resulted in the failure and cessation of the state-level programme.<sup>42</sup>

Success appears to be better served by a 'hyperlocal' approach – working with a specific focus on singular, localised projects, which can then be replicated to create scale (rather than 'starting big' with a blanket approach), as demonstrated by the Ujima Project's focus on a selection of specific local communities in Boston and Detroit's 'acre by acre' co-created spatial strategy. The key principle behind this hyperlocal approach is securing a depth of engagement, adoption, and ownership within a particular community, which can then be adapted with and for other local communities to achieve the necessary breadth.

Seattle's approach to tackling homelessness, a challenge recognised as a state of emergency by the King County administration, is employing just such hyperlocal approaches in downtown districts across the city,

42. Goldfrank (2007), highlights that a study of 103 Brazilian cities with participatory budgeting during the 1997–2000 period showing that in 28 percent of the cases, participatory budgeting was discontinued by the initiating or the subsequent administration, p. 103.

an approach which utilises the familiarity and security of a recognised space – such as Pioneer Square – to support people with lived experience to participate in efforts to generate collaborative solutions. Evidence from local leaders involved with The Alliance for Pioneer Square highlights the importance of equal value as a basis for inclusion (“Everyone is equally valued in the space. Everyone is welcome here, but don’t devalue other people”).

The experience of our case study cities in regards to inclusion closely reflects the findings of the literature review. As Solitare puts it, in order to participate “citizens must feel as though the effectors are sincere about sharing the decision-making authority and that effectors will truly listen to citizens’ concerns.”<sup>43</sup> The importance of agency is clearly articulated across the examples here. In Manchester, citizens have found that agency by assuming the role of effectors and initiating their own participatory projects and platforms; in Leeds City Region, the same can be true of those who are progressing community enterprise.

The examples of Detroit and Porto Alegre demonstrate a strong participatory culture embedded in the fabric of governance. Anttiroiko stresses that in the absence of strong cultural and macrostructural forces that embed values of solidarity, there is a danger that citizen participation initiatives can merely serve to legitimise or reinforce unequal models of growth that advance narrow interests and reproduce inequalities.<sup>44</sup> Particularly in Manchester, citizens have felt this is a real possibility, and have responded proactively. In order to support these emerging initiatives to continue, flourish and scale, there is a clear imperative to create space for inclusion across the whole spectrum of governance, strategic processes and practice.

43. Solitare (2005)

44. Anttiroiko (2016)

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# Innovation

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When we speak of innovation, we are not focussed on product or service design. Rather, we are looking at innovative ways of engaging citizens, and seeking to understand cities' ability to tap into their citizens' capacity to innovate. Therefore, innovation in citizen participation is most visible in the methods of engagement – the creative ways of tapping into the ideas of the citizens through digital or open engagement tools, for example.

A common theme in this chapter is the role of anchor institutions,<sup>45</sup> and in particular universities, as facilitators of innovative methods. In Nottingham, one of the local universities is trialling new ways of engaging with the city's citizens and their concerns, while anchor institutions in Boston and Detroit serve as hubs for citizen participation and engagement, inspiring activity around them. As a contrast, we present Helsinki as a case study of city government innovating independently of its anchor institutions, leading experimentation in the digital engagement of its citizens.

## Creating civic exchange in Nottingham

Nottingham is one of the UK's eight Core Cities, which is a political grouping of large and economically important cities in England vying for devolved powers. Although Nottingham did not reach a devolution deal in 2016, it has since created a new Metro Strategy with the neighbouring city of Derby, committing to working collaboratively to improve business, employment, transport and leisure links by 2030. Most recently, it was announced that the Strategy would enable the 1.6 million residents of the Metro area to share services, such as transport, leisure facilities, and libraries.

While Nottingham has great economic potential, the city also struggles with high levels of deprivation. In the last Index of Deprivation, published in 2015, Nottingham ranked eighth (out of 326 districts in England), meaning that more than a third of neighbourhoods in the city are in the top 10 per cent of most deprived areas.<sup>46</sup> The Strategy may begin to improve conditions for those living in deprived areas, but one of the local universities – Nottingham Trent University (NTU) – is also committing itself to engaging directly with these citizens in a bid to change their circumstances.

NTU recently launched a new place-based thinktank, Nottingham Civic Exchange, to maximise its positive impact on the city and expand its contribution. The initiative was conceived in recognition that thinktanks are rarely premised on responding to the policy or practical concerns of a

45. Anchor institutions, such as universities and hospitals rooted in local communities, contribute strategically to local economies in addition to serving their main purpose as providers of education or healthcare for example.

46. See: <http://www.nottinghamshireinsight.org.uk/research-areas/deprivation/>

single locality, so there is a real opportunity to produce locally-informed research that translates into locally-applicable policy and practice. The thinktank was designed to help NTU and the city of Nottingham get the most from one another, but in particular as a way for NTU to engage with local citizens and their concerns. In a joint RSA and NTU workshop, one participant noted, “Success [of the thinktank] in five years’ time would be to have produced actionable research that will have had a positive impact and made new connections. It would be easy for the usual suspects to pile in, but actual benefits will accrue if groups and communities ‘out there’ were engaged – those who had no idea that university research could improve their lives at all.”

In its first major undertaking, the thinktank will pursue participatory action research to better understand the lived experiences of the ‘Just About Managing’ (JAMs) in Nottingham. One of the outcomes will be a clearer definition of JAMs, which is a woolly term that can be interpreted in a range of ways; for example, JAMs could be those who are managing to stay out of poverty, but feel left behind by globalisation, or conversely, it could signify the ‘squeezed middle-class’. By engaging local citizens as part of its research, NTU hopes to find out whether they identify with the term being used to refer to them by government; the sources of their struggle, how they continue to persevere; and what would help them. The thinktank will then work with the city and the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership to influence policy pertaining to JAMs within the metro as well as at a national level, reflecting the voice of citizens. This research will be the first attempt of NTU to support citizen-led understandings of social geography (the study of people and their environment with particular emphasis on social factors) to inspire social change in the city.

NTU’s initiative can be contextualised as part of a wider trend of anchor institutions, such as universities and hospitals, making an effort to go beyond their main functions as education or healthcare providers, for example, to make strategic contributions to their local economies. In recent years, as the UK government has accelerated the devolution of certain powers to the city-region level, higher education institutions in particular have renewed their commitment to supporting local economic growth, changing how they interact with local communities. There is still more anchor institutions can do to facilitate citizen engagement and participation in politics and policymaking, but these early efforts of universities to act as conduits between citizens, particularly some of the most vulnerable, and policymakers are promising.

“We know from our early engagement that what we are establishing as an offer to our region will be relevant to a wealth of organisations – from community groups looking to improve lives for their neighbours, through to your local Citizens Advice Bureau, all the way to the different government agencies with a presence in the region.”

**Edward Peck, Vice-Chancellor, Nottingham Trent University**

## Anchor institutions as catalysts for civic innovation

### Boston

Boston is widely recognised as a global leader in innovation, thanks largely to the presence of Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and the clustering effect of large corporate tech and biotech firms around those anchor points.<sup>47</sup> Increasingly, there is a sense of need to connect its anchor institutions and citizens, and to apply the city's vast knowledge capital to its 'wicked problems'. While the city's anchor institutions are still developing their approach to directly connecting with citizens, the general culture of innovation has inspired attempts to include citizens in addressing Boston's multi-faceted issues. For example, climate change and rising water levels are of particular concern given Boston's position on the Atlantic coast and the precariousness of its developments built on landfill along this coastline. In 2016, the inaugural Hub Week, a 'festival of innovation', included a series of open-sourced, place-based challenges inviting innovative responses to issues around the city's bodies of water, generating a range of actionable and multiple bottom line ideas, such as water cleansing bio-pellets made from the city's significant food waste.

Although Boston may be secure in its status as a leader of global innovation, there is acknowledgement from its civic leadership that the city is a relative newcomer to civic innovation. Participatory programmes and approaches to inclusion have been seeded in its municipal arts and cultural offer, such as the recent six-month public co-production process to develop its 'Boston Creates' cultural strategy.<sup>48</sup> The process included artist-led 'community conversation' events, focus groups, public meetings and online surveys, and evidenced engagement of over 5,000 Boston residents. At a cost of \$1.4m, funded through foundation grants, both the nature and extent of participation, and the resulting strategy have proven contentious<sup>49</sup> (with one critique referring to the process as 'a series of kumbaya sessions and generic platitudes'). However, Julie Burros, Chief of Arts and Culture for the City of Boston, credits the initiative with democratising the city's cultural identity, previously "...dominated by the Freedom Trail and a colonial vision; very much the Boston of yesterday...", and moving its municipal artistic profile away from "overly dominant institutions" to a "...21st century, millennial mind-set, which is not about who has got the most money, but who has got the most innovative ideas."

Building on the strategy, the Mayor's Office now supports a programme of micro-grants for initiatives, voted for via the Boston Creates network. "Innovation happens when culture and the economy clash together", says Burros, "We have innovation here because we have artists here and we have strong cultural identities here; that's the creativity, that's the spark. By supporting the arts and artists through our new programme of micro-grants, we're investing in an organic innovation infrastructure. We're watering the seedlings."

47. Katz and Bradley (2014), the various stakeholders and institutional structures that contributed to the creation of Boston's innovation ecosystem are explored and analysed here.

48. See [Boston Creates Cultural Plan Strategy \(2016\)](#)

49. Hartigan (2016)



The city's 2016 Hub Week also saw the Rose Kennedy Greenway (a 15 acre central greenspace created by landfill, covering a former highway running through the downtown core), transformed as an 'outdoor innovation hub', bringing citizens together with academic and corporate partners, community innovation and enterprise platforms and introducing them to a range of new prototypes and test-projects to interact and collaborate with in a public space.

### **Detroit**

Detroit is at the forefront of pioneering work with the US-wide 'Reimagining the Civic Commons' initiative, developing parks, open spaces and public realm as ad hoc innovation spaces. The initiative is tackling the notion of 'hard-to-reach' by creating a physical fabric which 'opens up' anchor institutions to connect with citizens.<sup>50</sup> Cox describes how "... through the Civic Commons initiative, we hope to rekindle the sense of pride current residents should have living in a neighbourhood adjacent to our wonderful institutions of higher learning. Vacant lots turned into a park and greenway connecting Marygrove College and University of Detroit Mercy complement our effort to rehab and reoccupy 100 vacant homes in the neighbourhood, and to help strengthen the entire fabric of the community."

### **Helsinki's digital approach to civic innovation**

Helsinki is widely acknowledged as a pioneer in both engaged citizenship and inclusive growth strategy. Its 2013-16 Strategy Programme sets out its mission to create a world-class city while ensuring the benefits of growth support the welfare of its citizens. That mission is underpinned by open data. In its role at the forefront of Finland's Innovative Cities programme, the city has more than 1,000 public data sets open for unrestricted use, and hosts open innovation platforms such as the business-led Forum Virium Helsinki, which draws the public sector, business and citizens together in developing digital products in response to the city's social needs<sup>51</sup>; these products are also internationally tradeable and competitive. Helsinki has recently recruited its first Chief Design Officer, Anne Stenros, who will lead the Helsinki Lab project, a city-wide initiative designed to develop the built environment of the city as a 'living lab' for digitalism, augmented reality and virtual interaction.

The digital and virtual space is potentially transformative in terms of citizen participation<sup>52</sup>, but also has clear implications for inclusion.<sup>53</sup> Cities are recognising the potency of online platforms. Throughout our case studies we find evidence of how digital initiatives can augment every aspect of citizenship, from open data, increased democratic participation

50. See: [Reimagining the Civic Commons, Detroit \(2016\)](#)

51. Anttiroiko (2016) looks at the forms and implications of citizen involvement in publicly-supported participatory innovation platforms in Finland that facilitate urban economic development.

52. World Bank (2016), the World Development Report demonstrates that it is vital to consider the enabling conditions around digital citizen engagement platforms to give them the highest chance of success, pp. 176-77.

53. Martin et al. (2016) find that those who are socially excluded are less likely to use the internet and benefit from the internet applications that may help them tackle their exclusion.

and live-streamed policy making, to digitised built environments, open-sourced tech-based innovation challenges, and online real-time evaluation. The digital space offers an open and independent space which sits beyond the limitations of ‘place’ and its anchor institutions and, as such, arguably lends itself more readily to scaling and replication than other modes of engagement meet.

### **Innovation: Key findings**

Nottingham demonstrates the potential of anchor institutions, and universities in particular, to progress civic innovation in cities. NTU’s approach to engaging with citizens offers them a new vehicle to channel their voice and potentially impact local policy and decision-making of relevance to their lives. When contrasted with anchor institutions in Boston, it becomes clear that universities need to make a concerted effort to engage citizens to foster inclusive growth. As acutely demonstrated in Boston, the presence of anchor institutions does not inherently benefit local residents. Here, we see evidence of what is sometimes referred to as the ‘unintentional social impacts’ of investment in ‘innovation hot-spots’, particularly universities, corporate campuses and suburban science parks.<sup>54</sup> These innovation districts are very often neighboured by significantly poorer areas, with a notable correlation between negative impact and proximity. In its role at the forefront of Finland’s Innovative Cities programme, Helsinki demonstrates a clear alternative, avoiding this phenomenon by supporting open, dynamic, non-territorial innovation platforms and open data sharing.

Overall, the importance of **open, independent space to support innovation**, and in particular public spaces as places to meet, interact, debate and share ideas is a marked feature in a number of our case study cities: in Boston, with its 2016 transformation of the 15 acre Rose Kennedy Greenway as an outdoor innovation hub during the inaugural Hub Week; in Detroit, through its Civic Commons initiative, and in Helsinki, the Helsinki Lab project<sup>55</sup> and its focus on digitalised ‘slow spaces’ (designed to facilitate slow movement through public spaces and to increase real and virtual interaction).

The importance of **purposeful engagement with citizens** is mirrored in some of the more systemic innovations identified in the literature review. For example, it is the strong involvement of grassroots movements and community organisers in PB programmes that explains their success in engaging broad sections of the community and shaping local priorities.<sup>56</sup> Importantly, these spaces are not technocratic or depoliticised; they are embedded into local democracy. But they are also not political in the formal sense. In Brazil, for example, it is social activities that drive citizen participation, because they enable people to participate alongside their neighbours and friends, thereby ‘socialising’ the practice of participation.<sup>57</sup>

54. Martin and Vance (2015). The Boston Indicators report highlights the increasing gap between the rich and poor in the city, and the continuing disparities in education and opportunities for those in low-income neighbourhoods.

55. See Bollier (2016) for more on cities as labs.

56. Lerner (2016).

57. Leighninger (2016).

Boston's approach as a city to innovation, historically characterised as predominantly science and tech products, and dominated by powerful academic and corporate stakeholders, is showing signs of this sort of more open, organic and grassroots influence, embracing innovation as a process rather than a product, and acknowledging the importance of creativity in driving that process (as in the case of its co-created Boston Creates strategy and its 'watering the seedlings'). In augmenting its top down innovation infrastructure with these bottom up approaches, and in acknowledging the critical role of creativity - an inherently human skill - in innovation, the city introduces the notion of balance into the innovation space. It is a notion a number of cities are exploring, as per the 'high tech' and 'high touch' participatory approaches explored in our literature review, which embed citizens into shared systems of open innovation built around experimentation, prototyping and design-based methods such as human centred design. An inclusive economy requires building trustworthiness and empathy, using an appropriate mix of digital and face-to-face engagement to do so, and with the support of its anchor institutions if possible.

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# Impact

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In this chapter, we focus on better understanding the systemic conditions and infrastructure which support impact. Our case studies of Birmingham and Seattle spotlight civic institutions Citizens UK West Midlands and Impact Hub, exploring how they create an enabling environment for citizens to exercise agency through capacity building, community organising and action. In Barcelona, we focus on the use of open approaches to co-produce policy and strategy with citizens, ultimately building on inclusion and innovation as a basis for achieving impact.

## **Citizen power in Birmingham**

Birmingham is the UK's second largest city with a population of 1.1 million. In April 2016, Birmingham formed the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) with neighbouring boroughs of Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall, and Wolverhampton in a bid to gain greater devolved powers from the government. As of May 2017, the WMCA elected its first Metro Mayor, Andy Street.

Saidul Haque Saeed, Senior Organiser at Citizens UK in Birmingham, explains how demystifying politics by making it real is widening political engagement in his city. He says “People might say they’re not interested in politics, but they are when they know it’s about family and your pay and feeling safe on the street.”

Citizens UK West Midlands was founded in 2013. It is a non-partisan organisation of member faith, education, trade union and community institutions, and its membership ranges from universities to local community groups, and everything in between. It is not affiliated with any political party, but the group takes voting and democracy very seriously. As citizens from diverse communities acting together for the common good, their mission is to build the capacity of people to act for what matters to them, their families and institutions.

Haque Saeed continues: “We are all about people and their stories. We co-create our priorities around three key considerations – firstly, what issues are people’s stories bringing up, and are these stories from real-life or something taken off Twitter; secondly, do we have enough people who would come out and join an action team to make that priority happen, people who would turn over every stone and use every bit of their being to find capacity, resources and budget; and thirdly, who wouldn’t come out, or who wouldn’t think of themselves as important enough to tell us their story, and how can we build capacity and grow that inner sense of self, and sense of leadership in those people?”

A lot of decisions affecting my neighbourhood in Birmingham seem to be made elsewhere. Where I live you’re likely to die 10 years earlier than (in) other more affluent suburbs. During the 2011 riots, our area was heavily policed, but there wasn’t one incident here. I think it was less about

the policing and more about some of our community leaders going round and having a cup of tea and a custard cream with some of the young gang members. They promised they wouldn't go out and they didn't. We've had a lot of success with community driven responses to problems that regular services just can't cope with, from working with schools to holding monthly housing surgeries and in persuading local shops and businesses to act as safe havens to make neighbourhood streets safer, to bringing council officers and schools together to match local parents to jobs, to one community leader donating a second home as emergency accommodation for sex-workers. This type of contribution recognises that you don't need to join a formal group to express your citizenship. People don't have time to join something and be a secretary or a treasurer, they just want to help."

In 2014, Citizens UK persuaded NHS commissioners to ensure 16 and 17 year-olds won access to specialist mental health services in Birmingham, after those services got caught in a contractual shake-up between the mental health trust and the CCG. In 2015, they launched a national campaign to resettle Syrian refugees from UN camps, securing a pledge from Birmingham City Council to resettle 50 refugees. In 2016, the council pledged to resettle a further 500 refugees.

The Citizens UK Mayoral Assembly event in March 2017 brought together 968 people – citizens – in a hall in central Birmingham, 200 of which were local school children. Haque Saeed says: "Our best citizens are our 10 year-olds. They are fearless talking to politicians and people in positions of power. One of the children wrote to the Police Commissioner for the West Midlands and invited him to come to the school assembly, and of course the Police Commissioner had to come. These are our young leaders, putting the powerful on the spot, but in a respectful way."

Using a co-creation process, the group determined two priorities for the Mayoral Assembly prior to the WMCA election – Families Better Off and Inclusive West Midlands. Candidates were asked to publically commit to a series of propositions within our priority areas. Both mayoral candidates committed to appointing a cabinet member for social inclusion, which is by no means a cure-all, but is a big step in the right direction.

Haque Saeed says:

"We're excited about devolution and what it means, if what it means is local control of budgets and an opportunity for citizens to decide how to shape spending priorities. If it comes with transparency and accountability, and if the decision making happens within touching distance, that would work for us. This is a new type of politics which is about relational – not transactional – power. We are all about stories, and this is the next part of ours."

## **Changing the nature of politics in Barcelona**

In Barcelona, a new type of political discourse has been heralded with the rapid ascension to political power of Barcelona en Comú,<sup>58</sup> a citizen

58. International Committee of Barcelona en Comú (2016), provides a guide to the philosophy on which their structures for governance are based.



platform and grassroots coalition, which was elected in 2015 under the leadership of Ada Colau, the city's first female Mayor. The platform was founded in 2014, growing out of the 15-M civic action movement and the mass-mobilised response to the austerity agenda and economic crisis. Its electoral programme and governance policies were crowdsourced through its network of open neighbourhood councils and online platforms, resulting in a 40-point manifesto. Three hundred people attended an open working weekend to co-produce its code of ethics in October 2014, which was live-streamed to an online audience of thousands. Since its election, en Comú has implemented that code of ethics as its constitution, and has set about a large-scale transformation of the city's civil service, transparency, data, and communications infrastructure in support of its delivery programme.

The principle priority expressed in en Comú's four strategic budget priorities is to "Take care of people, especially the vulnerable", and its spending decisions strongly reflect this focus. Its policies are shaped by cross-council, thematic citizen assemblies; the challenge being the need to reconcile individual and community priorities across the city's 10 districts and 73 neighbourhoods. Given the influence of the city's unstable employment profile in its accession to power, it is perhaps unsurprising that the city's Employment Strategy (2016) is a key tool in this regard.<sup>59</sup> The strategy is heavily focussed on generating equality of outcomes through addressing the employment gap between neighbourhoods and reducing the median income gap. It seeks to rebalance the former focus on tourism, prioritising the use of new tools such as generating social value through procurement, and an emphasis on vocational education and training.

### **Convening citizen-led solutions in Seattle**

Impact Hub Seattle is based in the city's Pioneer Square district, and is one of the key players at the forefront of the district's emerging reputation for creativity and innovative thinking. It is part of the global Impact Hub network of 97 city-based hubs – collaborative workspaces which focus on purpose-driven entrepreneurship and ventures, social impact, and the incubation of ideas. Steve Johnson, the hub's CEO is former Executive Director of Seattle's Office of Economic Development, and the hub is proactively involved in the city's strategy and policy development processes (for example, it co-produced the seminal Creative City report in 2016). "Innovation needs neutral convenors mixing up established systems and accepted perspectives," says Johnson. "We are a neutral and unthreatening third-party space which makes the connections and convenes the conversations that need to happen to create and catalyse shared insight. We are catalytic convenors."

In 2016, the Mayor of Seattle's Regeneration Office controversially disbanded Seattle's neighbourhood councils, after an equality and diversity analysis showed poor diversity in representation. In its place, the recently established Mayor's Office of Policy and Innovation is testing open community co-production forums themed across a selection of its key strategic portfolios, including health and social care (specifically mental health), housing, and skills and education. Alongside this 'human centred'

59. See Barcelona case study in Green et al. (2017).

strategic approach, it is piloting new ways to measure and evaluate impact<sup>60</sup>, focussing on human emotion, wellbeing and applying quantifiable metrics to sentiments such as hope, happiness and self-belief.

“We are not the solutions guys,” explains Joel Farris, Design Lead at the Office of Policy and Innovation. “Citizens already have the solutions. We’re all hacking the system. The role of government is to empower people on the ground so that those solutions, which have been lying dormant, can be brought to life. The same goes for what success looks like, and how you measure it. You have to work with your end user to understand what they value, what life is like for them, how they are hacking the system. Constantly justifying work in a quantitative way doesn’t get to the heart of that work. Data driven measurement leaves tacit knowledge off the table.

In one project, we worked with a group of young black men as part of a mentoring programme, and asked if they could help us to better understand how inequity and racial disparities affect their lives. The main differentiating factor that came up was ‘hope’; specifically a belief from other people in these young men’s ability to vision and realise another future. So one of our evaluation questions for that programme was, and now for our young people’s programmes across the board is: ‘Is there someone who believes in you?’ With that simple question we’re measuring quality of experience, impact on the self and, critically, the relational impact with other people. That’s our measure of success.”

### **Impact: Key findings**

Of the three key research themes, impact has been the most difficult to evidence, both in the literature review and the fieldwork. One reason for this is that our exploration has largely focussed on current and innovative methods, which by nature of their innovation have often yet to demonstrate impact. Another, more pertinent reason in relation to the research is that it is difficult to find a standardised benchmark for impact; each project sets its own objectives and framework for success.

The literature we have reviewed suggests that citizen participation initiatives often lack a strategic architecture and an embedded presence in the places they seek to serve. They are typically single-issue, ad hoc projects limited by time or budgets. They tend to be used in an episodic, rather than strategic way and rarely offer citizens significant influence over major policy or spending decisions. They can also struggle to tap into the grassroots networks and community infrastructure of neighbourhoods, towns and cities.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, **the relationship between citizen input and public outcome needs to be clear**; tokenistic schemes can undermine this.<sup>62</sup>

There are difficulties in measuring and expressing collective impact, particularly of social interventions. Evaluation could be based on more qualitative human centred principles, which explore personal impact on an individual. The same principles influence design, delivery and governance of projects, which work toward user-centred visions, missions

60. See: Then et al. (2014) chapter 4 for a discussion on international approaches for the measurement of well-being.

61. Nabatchi (2014); Leighninger (2012); Lipscomb (2015); Tuttle (2016); see also Yang (2005).

62. Parrado et al. (2013) and Firmstone and Coleman (2014).

and solutions. “Citizens already have the solutions”, Joel Farris from the Seattle Mayor’s Office of Policy and Innovation tells us. “You have to work with your end user to understand what they value.”

Our focus, therefore, has been on better understanding the systemic conditions and infrastructure which support impact. There is a correlation between impact and agency in governance and strategy, underpinned by equal value of contribution. The more citizens are valued as contributors in governance and strategy, the more agency they exercise, and the greater the personal impact. This is backed by evidence from the literature that **self-efficacy – citizens’ perceptions that they can influence decisions and outcomes – has a greater influence on the strength of participation than demographic factors such as class or age**. Open, networked forms of governance that put citizens at the heart of policymaking have the potential to play a critical role in addressing complex social challenges.

The literature provides a range of examples showing how the development of a strong participatory culture has, over time, supported a transition from isolated, one-off engagement projects to initiatives which are integrated into a city’s economic and policy development processes. An important enabling factor for this is a strong strategic commitment from civic leaders and public organisations to seeing citizens as partners, rather than as consultees, underpinned by a shared mission and purpose.<sup>63</sup>

In Birmingham, Citizens UK West Midlands is supporting citizens to exercise agency through capacity building, community organising and action. Like its sister organisation in Seattle, Impact Hub Birmingham exists as a “neutral and unthreatening third-party space which makes the connections and convenes the conversations”. Both Impact Hub spaces act as ‘catalytic convenors’.

Both Barcelona and Seattle are employing open approaches to co-produced policy and strategy, across key strategic portfolios, including setting budget priorities (in Barcelona). The first priority expressed in en Comú’s four strategic budget priorities is to ‘Take care of people, especially the vulnerable’, and its spending decisions strongly reflect this focus.

Both approaches utilise open and participatory governance structures, which seek to break down the barriers between civic leadership and citizen, and as such go beyond accountability, which presumes a binary power dynamic – one side accountable to the other – to instead favour agency, the ability to effect change.

All three approaches are based on building connections as the basis for inclusion and innovation in citizen participation, generating impact.

63. Lipscomb (2015) and Tuttle (2016).

# Conclusions

In light of the evidence we have examined, we have sought to create a set of principles for purposeful citizen participation (see Table 3). These principles are designed as a guide of sorts that citizens, citizen groups and civic leadership should consider when seeking to create the space in which citizens’ can actively participate in shaping the direction of inclusive growth in their community. We recognise that different principles will be more pertinent to particular forms of participation; however, this set of principles should be viewed as a broad set of considerations to be reflected upon at the outset and throughout engagement between citizens and decision-makers.

**Table 3: Key principles for purposeful citizen participation**

Inclusion	Innovation	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create mechanisms for participation that interact with as broad a range of citizens as possible.</li> <li>▪ Engagement needs to take place in a space that explicitly recognises how power is shared between stakeholders and that creates balanced partnerships.</li> <li>▪ Mobilise grassroots networks and work alongside communities.</li> <li>▪ Focus on the perspectives of citizens as the starting point for policy design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build ‘civic infrastructure’ in order to sustain a culture of public participation in decision-making.</li> <li>▪ Formal governance stakeholders are flexible enough to position themselves as convenors and/or catalysts and/or collaborators.</li> <li>▪ Use a plurality of methods and tools when interacting with participants to develop a richer understanding of the issue(s).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build a clear path between input and outcomes. Citizens’ have to be able to see the results of their participation.</li> <li>▪ Strong strategic commitment from civic leaders to embedding a culture of participation in a place.</li> <li>▪ Clear accountability and scrutiny structures in place through open and transparent governance.</li> </ul>

## Integration to enable system change

Several contributors to our research point to a polarised and tense power dynamic currently at play, described in one response as “an ‘us and them’ mentality”. This theme was also picked up at our Manchester workshop event where contributors referred to ‘having to ask for permission to be a citizen’ and ‘going cap in hand to the authority, like the good old days’.

While a number of approaches to citizen engagement and participation are successful at a project level, this dominant (and, broadly speaking, top-down) dynamic offers limited opportunity for plurality of approach, and in turn limited space and opportunity for participatory

approaches to thrive and scale.

It is a polarity demonstrated, and arguably maintained, by a system which supports the pursuit of ‘economic’ and ‘social’ policy as two separate and distinct drivers; in which ‘economic’ is generally substituted for fiscal, and in which the economic/fiscal is very often prioritised.

**Integrating social and economic policy sits at the heart of what the inclusive growth agenda seeks to achieve at a strategic level.** A number of our case study cities including Boston, Seattle, Helsinki and Barcelona are renegotiating the boundary between social and economic by testing new ways of evaluating impact that look beyond traditional fiscal and productivity-based growth measures, and more toward human centred indicators such as happiness, hope and wellbeing.

### **Common denominators in successful tools and methods**

Those indicators are very often drawn from crowdsourced priorities (such as in the co-creation of Barcelona en Comú’s Code of Ethics). Creating impact at a human and city scale requires generation and articulation of a shared vision of success, at an individual and collective level. This relationship between visioning, success and impact requires moving beyond an understanding of human centred design as a self-contained element of a participation process. Rather, human centred design should be embedded as a model that is collaborative throughout – not only in the early stages of co-creation, as is often the case (as demonstrated by Detroit’s Future City approach), but in delivery, decision making, and evaluation as well.

The presence of open and independent space has emerged as a key factor of both inclusion and effective participation. Whether through the rise of innovation spaces; impact hubs and open access labs; civic commons and the re-appropriation of public space; Barcelona’s super-blocks (car-free areas designed to maximise public space), or the emergence of online and virtual AI platforms, there is a clear demonstration of the importance of creating space for connection, creativity, consensus and dissent. In our literature review, Gaventa and Barrett highlight the important impact that grassroots civic spaces and social movements have on outcomes; over half of the outcomes in most categories were linked to such platforms as opposed to formal governance spaces.<sup>64</sup>

Physical space is also important because the levels of interaction between citizens and their cities can, and often do, manifest in the physical expression of the city. Detroit’s open approach to co-produced spatial strategy and decision making, and initiatives designed to open up public spaces in Boston, Seattle, Detroit and Helsinki, offer interesting points of reference to cities and city-regions, and particularly in cities like Manchester where the city-regional spatial framework has emerged as a hot topic in the Mayoral election campaigns.

Cities are also navigating the space between digital and face-to-face engagement; between high tech and high touch. The evidence suggests that the most successful approaches combine the two, in balance, as in the case studies of Helsinki, in particular its Helsinki Lab initiative, and Barcelona, which augments its deliberative public policy meetings with

64. Gaventa and Barrett (2010).



online streaming. Achieving balance between top down and bottom up interventions is also an important factor, as demonstrated in our literature review by the failure of the New Deal for Communities programme to deliver on its core aim of revitalising struggling places with communities at the heart of change (“...there was difficulty in achieving a balance between the goals and priorities of residents and those of professionals”<sup>65</sup>), and more positively in our practice review by the emerging balance of academic/corporate and grassroots initiatives in Boston.

Scale is a third important factor in success. In both Porto Alegre and Barcelona, we see the challenges with expanding successful programmes. The former experienced difficulties in elevating a successful grassroots, local programme to a regional level without over-orchestration, and the latter had issues around recognising individual input in a heavily subscribed participation platform. In contrast, Boston’s Ujima Project is being piloted at a hyper-local scale, focussing on three of the city’s downtown districts. It will be interesting, should it be successful, to note if the model is adopted more broadly in any of the city’s other, more advantaged, districts.

### **Systemic conditions: Beyond the strategy**

A pivotal consideration for the inclusive growth agenda is that successful strategies and approaches embrace inclusion as inherent in the process, rather than being the end game of the strategy itself. It is not enough to have an inclusive growth strategy.

Where inclusion is sought out rather than fostered, it can result in ‘the tyranny of participation’,<sup>66</sup> a game of participation by numbers where the quantity of inclusion supersedes the quality; where participation is a top-down, forced exercise, not driven from individuals and grassroots.

Self-selection is evident in many projects as a barrier to inclusion and innovation. People often struggle to identify with projects as being ‘for them’ and do not regard themselves as able to contribute, as innovators or even as citizens. This disenfranchisement occurs across the social spectrum. At the other end of the scale, self-selection by people who do readily identify themselves as citizens can contribute to a chronic lack of diversity in well-meaning projects, when so-called middle-class capture can result in platforms becoming barriers to the inclusive participation which they are designed to support.

Language can be as disempowering as it is empowering and democratising the language of strategy and policy, and embracing the power of the vernacular in place-making is key to embedding citizenship and inclusion in growth.

Our understanding of innovation must expand to embrace concepts of culture, place and embeddedness, as demonstrated by Boston’s approach to ‘watering the seedlings’ of innovation through grant investment in the arts. When innovation is understood as a process not a product, the novelty is not necessarily in creating new approaches, but in creating the distinctive. This is a dynamic and fluid innovation which can respond to the changing dynamics of a place over time, as piloted in Boston’s 2016

65. Batty et al (2010).

66. Cooke and Kothari (2001).

Hub Week and its City Challenge competition, Seattle's place-driven approach to homelessness and Manchester's Homelessness Charter, and through which the creative power of people can be applied to innovative, mission-led approaches to a city's key challenges, as in Barcelona's crowdsourced policies and budget decisions, and Seattle's co-produced thematic strategies.

Inclusion is a dynamic process, which goes far beyond the realms of a strategy directed toward completion and an end goal, beyond project funding, beyond election cycles and reactive consultation to instead support co-creation and equal value at all times. To achieve embeddedness, we must look beyond the strategy and instead put citizens at the heart of the co-design, implementation and governance cycle.

### **The RSA's Citizens' Economic Council: Fostering economic inclusion through deliberation**

The RSA Citizens' Economic Council's Economic Inclusion Roadshow in particular emphasised this – throughout the process, the RSA engaged directly with citizens in 12 of the UK's most marginalised groups and communities. It spoke to young people, care workers, older women, those receiving debt advice services and BAME individuals with language barriers. The RSA spoke to citizens in Port Talbot, in Clacton-on-Sea, in Glasgow and in inner and outer city Birmingham as part of its deliberative half-day workshops. Where possible, the RSA partnered with community and voluntary sector groups and organisations to deliver the workshops. Across the very diverse personal experiences of citizens we met on the Roadshow, there were some core themes which emerged, which are set out in a forthcoming CEC report. Being listened to, being given more power, being treated equally and given equal opportunity, were all key themes that came out of the research undertaken and the workshops hosted.

Reflecting on CEC, Programme Manager, Reema Patel, suggested that there may be a case to be made for reforming consultation processes more broadly in policymaking. "The problem with consultations is that they tend to attract entrenched voices, such as established organisations. Moreover, there are conversations to be had with citizens much earlier in the process, before a formal consultation is even launched. For example, when it comes to tax reform, we know that citizens are quite resistant to any kind of tax. A conversation about the point of why we pay our tax and what we get when we contribute needs to be had, but isn't possible via a consultation."

Deliberative processes would be valuable to adopt or integrate in consultations because they help develop informed voice and participation. As Patel noted, "If you want to really understand what the public think about a certain topic, like tax, then you need to bring them into the fold and educate them about the issues and their implications. This creates scope and space to reflect on what's important, and crucially to ask citizens whether certain things are acceptable or unacceptable. Deliberative processes provide a safe space to grapple with the ethical nuances of policymaking."

## **Mutual and equal value**

Equal value has emerged as a key driver across all three themes. Inclusion is underpinned by equal and mutual value between people; innovation by valuing citizens as innovators, and by valuing the innovation process as much as the product; and impact by valuing human centred, social, qualitative outcomes as much as economic, predominantly fiscal, data-driven outputs.

If we are serious about impactful and inclusive citizen participation, we must cultivate a culture of citizenship, and turn to new economic models which wholly integrate and equally value the fiscal and the social in a new inclusive paradigm. Boston's Ujima Project is an innovative and pioneering example of a citizen-led approach to piloting a new system on these terms. Its emergence has been fostered by a collective of locally-based citizens' groups, thinktanks, academics and consultancies, and it has embraced local businesses and institutions in its programme of crowdsourced ideas and crowdfunded investment capital.

This requires a recalibration of the binary power dynamic currently at play in the majority of cities (and beyond), not just in terms of where the current power lies, but in where the optimal conditions are achieved. In all of our case study cities, there is evidence of open collaboration between civic leadership (principally civic halls and Mayor's offices) and citizens, with a shared power dynamic and a reciprocal relationship based on mutual value.

This goes beyond 'citizen control', so often considered optimal, to present instead a space where the power dynamic is genuinely equal and shared. In theoretical terms, this adds an additional, sixth dimension to the widely adopted IAP2 spectrum of participation (Inform – Consult – Involve – Collaborate – Empower)<sup>67</sup>. That dimension is Value, and it moves beyond the instrumental 'means to an end' tools and methods of citizen engagement to instead embrace the intrinsic value of citizen participation as normative.

One example of this approach in practice, highlighted in our literature review, is in the US city of Dubuque, Iowa, which has "moved from one-off engagement and visioning projects to integrating community engagement throughout local government projects."<sup>68</sup> An important factor identified in Dubuque's success has been the mutual value assigned to and between citizens and the civic leadership in policy and strategic decision making, working toward a shared and mutually envisioned mission of sustainability. Assigning equal value to citizens translates in practice to agency, which in turn drives impact.

## **Value and inclusive growth**

Our research supports the assertion that inclusion, innovation and impact are all important and mutually-reliant factors in realising inclusive growth, and that inclusion must be an inherent factor in inclusive growth strategies, in order to realise innovation and impact.

Our key finding is the importance of value in this inter-relationship. Inclusion must be present to realise inclusive growth, but it is the extent to which it is valued, and the agency which that value creates, which is the essential factor in success.

67. See: [IAP2 Spectrum of Participation \(2014\)](#).

68. Lipscomb (2015).

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# Recommendations

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People were the starting point for the Citizens and inclusive growth project, and people are where we conclude. From Manchester's Imaginarium to Detroit's Future City, the common denominator is not just efficacy, but also the value of the contribution that local people made.

## **For city-region mayors and civic leadership**

### **INTEGRATE CITIZEN PRESENCE IN CITY GOVERNANCE**

Combined authorities, LEPs and local authorities should work with residents (especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds), the social sector and businesses to co-design and establish a charter for public engagement for their city, setting out a shared vision for engagement, the principles upon which it will be based, the practical ways in which citizens will be supported to get involved and the influence and impact they can achieve. Citizens need to have a clear sense of what their role is, how they will be supported and the genuine difference they can make.

City regions should commit to the principles of open government, moving beyond the opaqueness that has characterised recent devolution. As part of this they should build capacity and infrastructure for all citizens to take advantage of open data and policymaking.

### **SYSTEMATICALLY BUILD IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Mayors should establish an Office for Public Engagement and Innovation, in order for civic engagement to be built into the fabric of a city, it needs to be applied systematically, combine formal processes with informal community resources, and be regarded as a strategic priority.

A Mayoral Office for Public Engagement and Innovation can:

- Use data and deep engagement methods to develop a finer-grain understanding of how citizens take part in civic life, the conditions needed for more effective participation, and how to engage with particular groups of underserved communities.
- Systematically map and connect the ecosystem of participation in a city, creating stronger links between formal decision-making and engagement structures and the informal, community based networks and spaces in which most people participate.
- Establish public engagement as a strategic priority that cuts across policy and service areas in the city-region, including its economic development functions.
- Develop, prototype and test innovative methods of citizen engagement, and invest strategically to scale them up and accelerate their adoption.

## **CITIZEN-PROOF INCLUSIVE GROWTH STRATEGIES**

Cities should broaden their scope beyond consultation in order to identify and address the challenges of inclusive growth facing their place. They should deploy a range of methods from across the spectrum of engagement, outlined in this report – ‘thick’ as well as ‘thin’, offline as well as digital – in applying the Inclusive Growth Commission’s principles for inclusive growth. Citizens, especially those that tend to be most socially excluded and disadvantaged and could benefit most from inclusive growth, should play a key role in helping to diagnose the challenges facing their place; develop a shared mission for inclusive growth; and co-design the city’s inclusive growth strategies, policies and measurement and performance frameworks.

As part of a road map towards inclusive growth, cities should be willing to invest significantly in engaging underserved communities and supporting them in building their skills and capacity to meaningfully participate in decision-making.

## **DEAL IN THE CITIZENS**

Devolution offers an opportunity to steer economic growth in a place-based and socially inclusive way, with citizens at the heart. But devolution deals have been a highly opaque process, led by small groups of politicians, officers and Whitehall officials with very little public input. This can change by:

Embedding public engagement methods (such as citizens’ juries) across the full sequence of the devolution process, from early discussions and priority setting, through to the formulation of proposals, the negotiation of deals and its implementation and delivery.

In future phases of devolution, city leaders pursuing inclusive growth should seek to negotiate significant devolved funds that are directly controlled by citizens through participatory budgeting.

## **For citizens groups**

### **CURATE THE SPACE**

The key role for citizens groups as leaders in the new dynamic will be to facilitate the space, bringing people together in equal value and creating critical connections as the basis for inclusion, and in particular supporting people with lived experience to participate. All citizens bring local knowledge, understanding and insight to the space, and citizens groups enable people to contribute their stories and lived experience, essential to both ensuring place-resonance and to achieving breadth and depth. Both Barcelona and Seattle are employing citizen-led approaches to policymaking and strategy, utilising both high tech and high touch methods, and lessons can be drawn from the Alliance for Pioneer Square’s approach in utilising familiar places as safe spaces to foster participation.

### **COLLABORATE TO BUILD CAPACITY**

Retention and continuous capacity building is the role of community groups. Through collaboration, citizens groups can be catalytic in building a place’s capacity, strengthening the place and its citizens. Citizens groups are anchor institutions in the new economic narrative. Groups



should be supported in seeking out new and interesting partnerships, working across boundaries and creating new areas of opportunity and growth. Inspiration can be drawn from Detroit's Civic Commons initiative, which elevate public and community spaces, such as libraries and community centres, as anchors, as well as the catalytic convenors of Impact Hub Seattle.

## **For citizens**

### **SEEK OUT THE SPACE**

The space is nothing without people. Citizen-led campaigns are very often started by an individual or group of individuals who see a challenge, an issue or an opportunity and come together to address that particular theme. This can be around an issue such as a planning decision, a community or heritage asset or a political campaign. Several examples of this are presented in our literature review and fieldwork research, and in our work with UK cities. Find what makes you passionate and use the space to find others who share that passion. Barcelona's En Comú movement started through street protest movement, and is now the governing administration for the city.

### **SHAPE YOUR PLACE**

Contributing your point of view to a range of perspectives; exercising your power to support those who might find it more difficult to engage; and finding space in which ideas can be expressed, deliberated and explored is engaged citizenship in action. Exchange created between people in your city makes your place. The Citizens UK model has been explored here, and you can follow our Manchester examples and build your own model. There is no need to wait for government to innovate; recognise that, as citizens, you already have legitimacy to act.

### **Closing remarks**

This is a new vision, not just for citizens and participation, but importantly for growth. In order for citizenship to be prioritised, the city as a conversational space, creating a city for citizens, a city for people, must be at the heart of a shared vision of success. That means a move beyond traditional economic, and even social, growth measures to a holistic understanding of growth, which values people, and in which people are equally valued.

We want to start a conversation in which people are engaged as citizens. It is a conversation in which human skills are valued; innovation, and our understanding of what that means, is democratised, and in which people are acknowledged as innovators. A conversation in which people and communities are not approached only as communities of need, but recognised as valuable resources and assets.

Cities and places are the backdrop to the conversation, but without the conversation – without people - those cities become mere collections of buildings. These are cities for citizens. Citizenship is valued, supported and embedded, in a commitment which goes beyond elections, manifestos

and top-line strategies; underpinned by a balanced power dynamic in which civic leadership is about creating the space for the conversation, where groups, campaigns and collectives facilitate the conversation, and where citizenship is prioritised and celebrated.

Let's start the conversation here.

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