# Configuring Participatory Research as Give and Take Relationships: Methodological Reflections on Co-Designing Booklets with a Men Shed

Janis Lena Meissner
Crip Collective || HCI Group
TU Wien
Vienna, Austria
janis.meissner@tuwien.ac.at


**Figure 1: This paper shares methodological reflections on a case of participatory HCI research in a men's shed. The collaboration evolved around co-designing booklets. The images are part of the booklet content and show some snapshots from the setting.**

## Abstract

Researchers ask a lot from their study participants: data, time, attention, ideas, and (almost) anything that helps them to pursue their research goals. But what do they give back? This question becomes especially critical in longer-term participatory research with low-resourced communities. This paper offers methodological reflections on a collaboration with a Men's Shed that was tailored around both my research agenda and the interests of my community partner. As part of my research, we designed a booklet that eventually became their promotion brochure. By reviewing both the trouble and the gains of this process for both partners, I argue for re-imagining community-based participatory research as an opportunity for fostering give-and-take relationships with participants. The case demonstrates the method's capacity to critically extend existing HCI work on Men's Sheds while also making participation worthwhile for my partners. The careful documentation of this process contributes methodological nuance to discussions around configuring participation.

## CCS Concepts

• **Human-centered computing** → *HCI design and evaluation methods*; *Empirical studies in HCI*; • **Social and professional topics** → **Men**.

## Keywords

Participation, Co-Design, Men's Shed, gender, activism, feminist research, Men's Rights Activism

**ACM Reference Format:**
Janis Lena Meissner. 2025. Configuring Participatory Research as Give and Take Relationships: Methodological Reflections on Co-Designing Booklets with a Men Shed. In *CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '25), April 26–May 01, 2025, Yokohama, Japan.* ACM, New York, NY, USA, 17 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3706598.3713106

## 1 Introduction

HCI researchers are used to ask a lot from their participants. They need people to share data, call for their time to answer questions, request their attention, ask for ideas, and invite them to perform tasks - all for pursuing their research aims. What do researchers give to participants in turn? Remuneration is not always possible and if it is, it tends to be limited and usually presents a symbolic gesture rather than a fair compensation of efforts. Despite their best intentions, researchers are also highly limited in guaranteeing that the produced knowledge has any immediate positive impact for the wider public. They can (and should) strive for transformational project outcomes, yet actual transformation is not up to them alone. An alternative approach to balance more the interactions between researchers and participants would be to focus on the co-produced


*CHI '25, Yokohama, Japan*

ACM ISBN 979-8-4007-1394-1/25/04
https://doi.org/10.1145/3706598.3713106

materials and the collaboration itself creating positive change. I argue that researchers could account more for their participants by being more creative in designing their research processes. By reflecting more critically on their choice of engagement formats, they could offer a wider range of working materials in their projects. The methodological task is then to ask: How can researchers tailor their projects more around the participants' interests? And how can they turn research into a process that is worthwhile in itself for the participants?

To explore the idea of HCI research as a give-and-take relationship, this paper offers retrospective reflections on how participation was configured in a two-and-a-half-year-long collaboration with the Blaydon Shed[1], a men's shed in the UK. To accommodate both my interests as a researcher and those of my community partners, we co-designed a brochure. This format of a print medium allowed us to collect rich qualitative research data and create a useful tool for the Blaydon Shed's outreach efforts. This paper hence presents a methodological case study of an alternative approach to community-engaged participatory research that places emphasis on give-and-take relationships with community partners and tailoring its method around their interests.

This work draws inspiration from Akama and Light's discussions of the need to deal with contingency in each Participatory Design setting [2, 3] that acknowledge the necessary involvement of the researcher(s) to make these processes productive. Similar to their experiments to write 'oneselves strongly into the story' [2], I also share a personal account on a research process in a feminist, phenomenological tradition (cf. [2, 14, 36]). I do so to review one possible way of crafting a research method. This does not present knowledge that can be directly reproduced. Rather, this paper contributes to HCI in two other ways: The first contribution is a broader methodological approach that seeks to accommodate both research and community agendas. By carefully documenting the collaboration process, the case study demonstrates the method's capacity to produce nuanced insights. This leads to the second contribution in the form of qualitative findings adding to the (so-far limited) HCI literature on men's sheds and illustrating how the activisms of key actors might shape a specific instance of such spaces.

The paper is structured as follows: First, it discusses related work that addresses issues with participatory HCI research balancing the agendas of researchers and participants and situating this problem in research traditions. This also touches on methodological approaches that offer alternative ways for participants to express themselves. After that I introduce the case study and provide details on the collaboration partners and the method that was used to cater for both research and community agendas. Then I present the results of using this method, both in terms of the co-designed booklet and the insights gained through this work. Based on this case, I reflect on benefits and risks of such a participatory research approach. Finally, the paper offers some lessons-learnt for future work that strives to form a give-and-take relationship with non-academic community partners and wishes to tailor its methods around their partners' agendas.

[1]It is the wish of my participants to be named by their real names and attributed for their contributions to this work. The only exception is one individual who stopped participating in the project and hence remains anonymised in this publication and the additional material.

## 2 Related Work: How can Participatory HCI Research be worthwhile for participants?

HCI is an interdisciplinary field accommodating researchers from diverse backgrounds and scientific traditions. This reflects in an eclectic mix of epistemologies and methodological approaches that offers space for many different "flavours" of HCI yet increases the need for epistemological reflections [49]. With that in mind, the presented work sits within **participatory HCI research**, a part of the field that is particularly concerned with the politics and modalities of democratising technology design processes [73]. I use the term to encompass a wide range of participatory approaches used in HCI, interaction design and related fields. Related work hence draws on insights from Participatory Design (in the Scandinavian and other traditions) [11, 14, 63], (participatory) action research [39, 47, 69], and (community-based) co-design [30, 38, 60].

As Bødker notes [10], participatory approaches have a long tradition in HCI and technology design related fields. For over 40 years, researchers and designers have developed approaches to enable non-academic people participating in their processes [11, 34, 64]. From its very beginning (as Scandinavian designers took a position in workplace digitisation projects in alliance with workers and their unions [11, 63]) it has been an openly political move driven by the motivation of democratizing technology design. As such, it has been concerned with shaping design processes that better support potential or actual users (or people more generally) in having a mandate and thereby also the chance to shape technologies more around their own goals and interest [50]. With the historical development of technologies leaving workplaces and entering every aspect of daily life [10], this political dimension of design has become even wider and more complex. It is not surprising that the body of literature on participatory orientations in HCI research is still growing and that the canon of this work is still related to a strong concern for shaping changes democratically [39, 73]. The care for the users regards now the quality of life more generally [13, 14, 60]. While this ideological foundation is out of the question, there are still open methodological questions: How can we turn the theoretical principles of participation into a research practice that also satisfies its ethical aspirations? The methodological repertoire is growing (especially in the rich body of PDC literature - cf. [2, 12, 17, 21, 30, 45, 60]), yet there is a need for more critical work (such as [3, 17, 51, 65]) taking stock of the impacts of participatory HCI research. On the grand level, there is the big question how to make HCI research socially relevant [11, 39, 61]. On a smaller level, we should ask about the ways that research can immediately benefit participants [12, 13, 62]. It is the second question that this paper deals with.

### 2.1 Balancing Agendas

Bossen et al. [12, 13] introduced the notion of "user gains" and noted that (given the democratic concerns) it is surprisingly underconsidered and underresearched what exactly participants gain from their participation [12]. They differentiate between direct gains (on a practical level for an individual or a group) and indirect gains on a systemic level. A key limitation for the latter is that research can never ensure nor enforce the actual implementation of project outcomes. Direct gains, on the other hand, speak to the possibility

that participation can entail benefits in itself. Bossen et al.'s study found that the biggest potential for participants to gain from their participation were skill-building opportunities in new areas of (digital) competence and to increase their social capital by extending their networks in the project teams [12].

Yet, the work leaves it relatively open what exactly gains are [13]. It might be related to the circumstance that benefits are inherently context-depended and relational (cf. [3, 51]). Projects have different goals and stakeholder, every setting is different, every participant has their own interests and wishes. As researchers claim to care for their users, it is then their responsibility to attend to the emergent character of projects [13]. In Akama and Light's words the challenge for the researcher is then to 'prepare for, step into, and become participant in the contingent and uncertain process of designing with others' [3, p.18]. Akama and Light offer the notion of "readying" to encompass more the needed care, attention and flexibility before and while doing participatory research: 'Readying draws on who we are and what we are doing with others in situ. Preparation is not limited to planning tasks before fieldwork, community events, or facilitated workshops. Rather, being ready is a state of dealing with contingency in codesigning as it happens.' [3, p.27] This form of readying is of particular relevance for research that seeks to engage with marginalized community settings (which have been the primary focus of community-based co-design [30, 38, 60]), because it means staying attentive to what participants really want and need - even if this sometimes means that HCI work needs to move away from technological solutions [65].

Hayes' work on Action Research [39, 40] addresses similar questions about the value of HCI research for participants from a different methodological tradition. She argues for taking more responsibility for user involvement and the community partners' agendas. Action Research is about finding 'local solutions to local problems' [40] and thereby necessarily needs to prioritize local knowledges of partners [39]. The primary purpose of Action Research is in Reason and Bradbury's words 'to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives' [59, p.2]. Ideally, the agendas of research and community partners should be negotiated at every stage of research [47].

Hayes states that 'AR explicitly requires writing with engaged partners' [39, p.11]. This statement strikes me as it remains unquestioned if the materiality of written material is the most appropriate way of participation. There is an alarming casualness about the assumption that Action Research needs to orientate itself at traditional formats of research. I dare to challenge the implicit acceptance of this academic tradition when researchers work with communities: People from non-academic backgrounds (and especially members of under-resourced communities) are not likely to have any prior connection to academic ways of working, nor can researchers expect that they are interested in being trained in academic conduct of data collection, analysis and dissemination. Hence, forcing them into the confines of formal research conduct and the traditional text-based formats does not feel appropriate.

## 2.2 Creative and Visual Research Methods

Creative and visual research methods challenge the dominance of text in research and offer an alternative methodological approach that is mindful of participants' different ways of expressing themselves. The social sciences have seen a growing use of visual techniques over the past years [53]. They employ elements from visual ethnography and let participants create visual material as part of the data collection [70]. It was proposed there that such methods can change the power dynamics in traditional methods (such as interviews) and that they can make participation in research more interesting and even fun [53]. Creative research methods [27, 28] even go a step further in that there is more variation in the expressive media. Researchers and participants have worked with creative expressions in films, drawings, Lego, and knitting.

Participants are usually given a task to create representational images or objects in response to a question. Visual and creative research methods thereby acknowledge the expressiveness of creative making and utilise this for situations when participants might find it difficult to express themselves in written or spoken language. They also tend to give participants more time for deeper reflection: 'If participants are invited to spend time in the reflective process of making something, [...] they have the opportunity to consider what is particularly important to them before they are asked to generate speech' [28, pp.182].

Creative artefacts often have several layers of meaning, however not all of them are explicit (cf. [29]) and often not easy for researchers to identify. Creative and visual research approaches are therefore often accompanied by strategies to articulate implicit meanings. For example, by interviewing participants after the creation process [27, 29] or by integrating some form of verbal or textual annotation directly in the participants' creative reflections [42, 53]. A strength of such methods is that participants directly produce an outcome. If researchers react to the participants' creations, it can start a dialog [69]. Other work has also demonstrated that participant observations in the ethnographic tradition can help the researcher to gain a sufficiently nuanced understanding of the collaborators to fill gaps [58, 68].

I argue that there is also space for visual and creative research methods in participatory HCI research to embrace a wider diversity in expressions and having researchers and participants creating something together that has value for both sides.

## 2.3 From Form to Format

This work draws on the notion of "configuring participation" [73] to further develop this idea. Vines et al wrote a critical opinion piece about the dissonance between theory, practice and values in how HCI works with participatory elements. They suggest to configure participation proactively by *designing the process* in which participation is intended to happen and be experienced. There are two key elements in their argument that are particularly relevant for this work:

Firstly, they call for more critical reflections on who benefits from participatory projects. By identifying open and implicit agendas, it can be better understood how these influence research design decisions and where these come with limits to participation. This emphasises the political dimension of research design and again requires researchers to take a position. As Akama and Light state, 'designing with and for groups of people cohering around an issue

brings political concerns, which include how researchers themselves configure participation and shape agendas' [3, p.18]. This reflects my concern for shaping fair conditions for participation: Depending on how researchers configure participation, it requires considerable time and effort from participants. In the worst case this might render participatory design exclusive [38]. Hence, it is especially important to consider when working with under-served communities who are limited in their capacities to participate.

Secondly, Vines et al call for understanding participation in more diverse forms within a broarder continuum of activity. They frame *forms* of participation around the question of *who* participates in *what* in *which ways*. They do so to draw more attention to passive and light-weight forms of participation which they see as a potential avenue to making participation more inclusive for people who would otherwise be excluded. This is an interesting approach, yet what if light-weight participation is not possible (as for example in research on making activities which are inherently time-consuming)? I suggest to think more into an alternative direction and revisit the notion of *forms* of participation more in terms of materials, roles, and tasks (as used in visual and creative research) that might make participation worthwhile for the participants. That is, identifying *formats* of participation that offer direct user gains [12] by attending to and possibly prioritizing their agendas (as done in Action Research [39, 69]).

I close this section with the summarizing statement that in order to live up more to its democratizing ideals participatory HCI research needs to continue its critical and reflective work on methodologies to configure participation. As community-engaged researchers and those who seek to conduct socially relevant HCI, we need to take more responsibility for our research design decisions, account more for the commitments that we ask from our participants, and acknowledge related risks of divisiveness and exclusion. What is yet missing, is courage to break with research traditions in terms of its dominant text-based formats and craft new formats of participation. Drawing on the inspiring body of work on creative and visual research methods I hence argue for using more alternative formats in research that address the interests of both research and our community partners.

## 3 Background

This paper provides retrospective critical reflections on a participatory method that I used in my community-embedded research. Before I describe the method and how it sits within a longer collaboration process, I first introduce the main actors. In this case, I collaborated with the Blaydon Shed, a Men's Shed in a former miner's town in the North-East of England. It was founded with the aim to support men of all ages and offered members its facilities to meet up and use a workshop for woodwork and DIY-repair projects. I became aware of it because my research focused on making practices of diverse groups of people, and I was interested in the ways the shed members used the workshop to connect, converse and create things.

### 3.1 Community partner: the Blaydon Shed

The Blaydon Shed identifies as a men's shed and openly relates to the international Men in Shed Movement. The movement originates from Australia where men's sheds have been established since the 1990s [7]. The government's National Male Health Policy has officially supported such community spaces since 2010 [6]. The initiative has been growing globally [1, 8] and has also been taken up in the UK. In 2013, the UK Men Shed Association was founded as an umbrella support body. In 2020 (at the time of my research), this network listed 581 sheds (and another 144 in development) across the UK. In 2023, this number had risen to more than 900 sheds across the UK (and another 150 sheds in the making) [72].

The Blaydon Shed was founded in 2016 and was located in a small town of roughly 10,000 inhabitants in the North East of England. It was started on the private initiative of a local couple, Fiona and Dean. In this text, I refer to them as the *founders* and the *organisers*. When they initiated the Blaydon Shed, they were also active in an online activist network and wished to pursue their ideals in word and deed by creating a "safe space" specifically for men in their local area. The concept of men's sheds gave them a concrete format to do so. They created and maintained a space in which all men over 18 were invited to drop in during opening hours, get a tour of the space and join as a *member* for free. Members would pay a symbolic fee of £1 per session and could make use of the facilities just as they wish. At the time of my study the Blaydon Shed had grown to have more than 100 members. I note that the Blaydon Shed underwent some major changes since our collaboration, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic. It needed to relocate, and sadly, one of the founders passed away. The Blaydon Shed still exists at the time of writing this paper, however it operates now in a pop-up format at a different place.

Men's shed such as the Blaydon Shed have received increasing attention in various academic disciplines over the past years. A key argument for the formation of men's sheds and the growing research interest in them is their potential positive effects on their members' wellbeing. Originally, the Men in Sheds movement emerged in response to the realisation that the average life expectancy of men in Australia has remained significantly lower than women's [41]. Studies have linked this to issues of mental and social wellbeing – especially within certain vulnerable groups such as indigenous people, working-class miners, war veterans and older men experiencing lifestyle changes post retirement or living in isolation [31, 41]. Research conducted in the UK has identified similar issues among British men and highlighted particular health risks for older men [19, 25, 55]. Part of the problem seems to be connected to social stigma around masculinity [32]. As everyday culture does not promote open discussion of wellbeing issues, those affected might fear that this could be interpreted as weakness. Many men find it difficult to talk about their emotional life. Studies have shown that men's sheds can promote health and wellbeing [31] by helping men to socially reconnect and rediscover a sense of purpose [18, 71, 75].

Even though the research interest in men's sheds has also been growing within HCI, there is still a rather small body of published work on them. So far, this emerging work often understands them as nuanced instances of makerspaces that are more framed around a particular target group and less around the equipment (than for example fab labs around digital fabrication technologies). Vyas et al [74] reported a study of an Australian men's shed analysing the members' practices and motivations through the lens of occupational therapy. Taylor et al [71] reflected on the public roles

of makerspaces and included a Scottish men's shed in their pool of participating initiatives. Overall, this work has paid particular attention to the positive effects on the members' wellbeing and the ways in which their practices contribute to the local community. So far, men's sheds have been portrayed rather homogenously and without much critical reflection on the political dimension of the gendered social dynamics within them. As this case study illustrates, the case of Blaydon Shed does tie in with many of the previously studied characteristics of men's shed, yet also shows that men's sheds are more diverse in their political orientations and activist agendas as previously stated.

## 3.2 Researcher Positionality

This case study cannot be discussed detached from the researcher's positionality [2]. Following the principles of action research [39], I was not an objective pair of observing eyes but played an active part in the collaborative exploration. Indeed, some of my personal characteristics are key to understand the standpoint from which my analytical work was performed [14].

I identify as an able-bodied middle-class female researcher. My background as a computing scientist, hobby crafter and self-taught maker influenced my approach in that I already had a variety of skills that allowed me to engage with my participants in creative ways and also be flexible to accommodate the interests of my collaborators. Since this puts me in a relatively privileged position, I am conscious that my own experiences can never be the same as those of participants from different backgrounds. Hence, I decided to focus in my data collection on first-hand accounts of my participants' experiences.

In this case, I was also a foreigner. I had just moved from [another European country] to the UK to start my doctoral training. I did not have any prior connections in the area and my knowledge of the local history, cultural heritage and crafts traditions was limited. This lack of knowledge was however a valuable source for curiosity. When starting my research, I was interested in any creative practice tradition in the region and open for different settings. Furthermore, due to my origin I noted subtle cultural differences in the histories, economies, etc. compared to those that I was familiar with. In this way, being new to a setting can be productive for inquiry (cf. the concept of 'poise' in [3]). It helped me to be a 'friendly outsider' (as the researcher's role has been described in action research [39]) in that I could also ask questions about anything that might seem obvious to my participants.

Finally, I identify myself as a feminist researcher and operate with a critical yet pragmatic take on the research of digital technologies that aligns with feminist HCI and technoscience [23]. The scope of my work is motivated by critical reflections on marginalising sociotechnical dynamics and deliberately placing a research focus on those who tend to be overlooked. Social justice and solidarity in and through design are important concerns (cf. [20]) and in my work I draw on feminist critiques and concepts such as Haraways's situated knowledges [36] and Fraser's notion of social justice in terms of redistribution and recognition [26]. While there are some overlaps between my feminist thinking and the social justice concerns of Fiona and Dean (as well as differences), it certainly was not an uncontroversial decision of me as a woman and feminist to enter the men's space of the Blaydon Shed. Men's sheds are framed as hyper-masculine spaces and much of their value as a community is rooted in being exclusive to men [9, 75].

## 3.3 Project Overview: Recruitment, Ethics, and Collaboration

I contacted the Blaydon Shed at the beginning of my PhD while seeking research participants. New to the region, I reached out to various craft groups with my idea to create a booklet about their making. A university colleague told me about men's sheds which was a new concept to me at that time. As I read more about the international movement and its ethos of social support, I was keen to partner up with a men's shed for my research. The UK Men Shed Association keeps a public list of sheds on their website and I contacted five groups in the region by email. Not all of them replied. However, the Blaydon Shed expressed interest in collaborating on a research booklet.

We arranged a meeting with a tour through the Blaydon Shed and discussed specific research details. The Shed Committee (chaired by the founders) was responsible for ensuring that my research endeavour was in their interest and not disrupting the activities of the members. We thoroughly discussed what participation in the study would entail for the Blaydon Shed organisers and members. I prepared participant information sheets and informed consent forms (in line with the templates approved by my University's ethics screening procedures). These were primarily intended for work on the research booklet but also included the option to continue the collaboration on further projects thereafter. The committee chair signed the forms and the meeting ended with excitement about the new project.

At this time, the shed was nearing its first anniversary and establishing itself in the local community. The booklet opportunity happened to come in a good time for them. The organisers had just identified gaps in their advertising. Their social media channels weren't reaching the intended audience (namely men in the need of support). Most members had discovered the initiative by noticing the door sign or through word of mouth. Many did not use social media. The organisers hoped a paper brochure (the research booklet) would enhance their outreach in the right networks by clearly explaining what the Blaydon Shed was about.

Our collaboration lasted for two and a half years. Co-designing the booklet took five months in which I visited the Blaydon Shed once or twice a week. We pursued our collaboration, mostly focusing on skill-sharing (the members showed me their crafts and I demonstrated digital fabrication tools) and design experiments that mixed maker technologies with woodwork and other craft techniques. We created various artefacts for presenting at a Maker Faire. Another collaborative endeavour was about adding a 3D-printer to the Blaydon Shed's infrastructure. Given the interest expressed by both organisers and members I first hosted some demo sessions with a portable printer before organising the donation of a second-hand 3D-printer. Towards the end of our collaboration, we revisited the booklet to sustain its usefulness for my partners beyond my involvement in the setting. A chronological overview of the collaboration and the main activities are shown in figure 2.

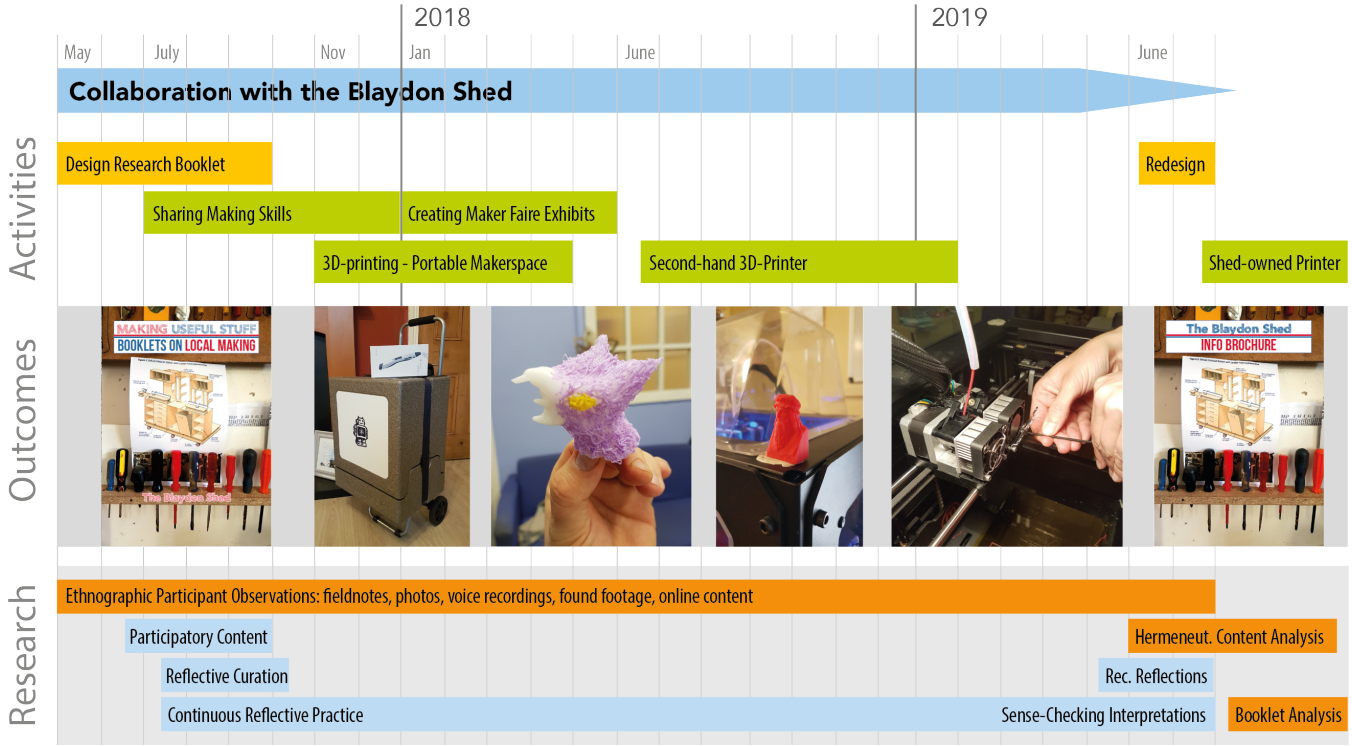


**Figure 2: A timeline with a chronological overview of our collaboration. Our main activities happened in the period between May 2017 and July 2019. The booklet co-design marked the beginning and its redesign the end.**

## 4 Methodology

This paper focuses on the booklet co-design method that was used in the exploratory first phase of the collaboration (and taken up again in the final period). My intention at the outset was to use collaborative making to get to know my community partner and document their making practices at the same time. The booklet was designed in a style that was similar to a brochure: It combined text and photos to present the Blaydon Shed. The content was about the initiative, its ethos and ongoing activities.

### 4.1 Data Collection

In the first months of our collaboration, I conducted ethnographic participant observations, talked to the members and took part in their various activities. Research data was collected in form of ethnographic field notes (written in hindsight after each visit and collected in a digital journal), photos, and voice recordings. There was also an element of found footage collection [46] in that my partners occasionally gave me samples of materials, crafted objects or self-produced information materials. I also followed the online content posted by the organisers on the official social media channels of the Blaydon Shed. All this was used as research data as well as potential content material for the booklet.

### 4.2 Booklet Co-Design

The booklet was designed then through a combination of my ethnographic understanding of the space, participatory content creation together with members and reflective curation with the shed organisers. The ethnographic approach and multimedia documentation helped to gather "raw" content for the booklet. This content was then curated in a **collaborative layouting process** together with the organisers and selected members:

First, I created a rough concept for the overall layout and a suggested table of content. I sketched this on copy paper, so that I had a material to discuss it with my partners but also gave the sense that everything can still be changed.

In an editorial group (consisting of the shed organisers, me and every member who happened to be present and interested) we refined the sketched booklet structure and selected 20 photos from all the material that I had collected during my visits. We also produced approximately 2000 words of text. Most of the text stemmed from transcriptions of ad-hoc interviews with portrayed members which the organisers had chosen. I suggested the quotes to include in the booklet. Other texts were written by Fiona, such as for example the included shed flyer.

Finally, I used professional desktop design software to create the layout as bespoken with the participants. All pages mixed photos with text and some key sentences were highlighted in colour. On my suggestion, we used a consistent font and colour style throughout the booklet that created a relatively professional look yet with a playful touch to it. I used magenta, blue and black as the colour scheme since I had used these also in my other PhD work. Once the design was ready and approved by my community partner, the booklet was printed.

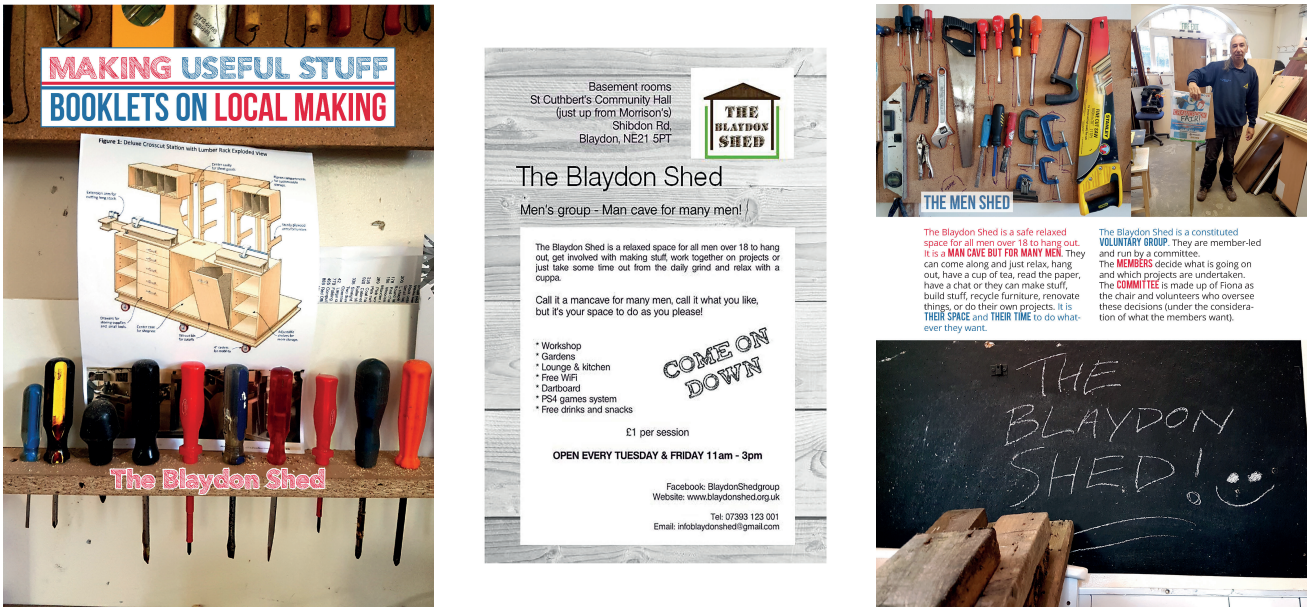


**Figure 3: Three selected pages of the resulting booklet design.**

### 4.3 Analysis

Analysis was performed in several rounds. The first part rested on the continuous reflective practice together with my partners. This is typical for action research (cf. [33]) and could be organically framed around the booklet co-design. In a similar way as described by Iivari [43], the partners became co-inquirers in the interpretive part of the research by confirming, refining and occasionally correcting the drafted representations of the Blaydon Shed. Moreover, I recorded reflective conversations with the organisers at milestone moments of our collaboration - such as before redesigning the booklet. These recordings were revisited at a later time and partly transcribed pulling out all quotes that related to the booklet.

After the collaboration I performed individually a hermeneutical content analysis on the whole collaboration process. This analysis embodied Klein and Myer's interpretive principles [48] and again, I drew on my ethnographic understanding to critically revisit all collected data (including the produced designs, my notes and other relevant parts of the found footage material [46]). I sorted and processed this data by creating a timeline document in which I categorized the activities, tagged key incidents and added annotations where I identified overlaps with the literature. The outcomes of this analysis were primarily used for producing my PhD thesis but also present the basis for the work on this paper.

For producing this paper, another round of content analysis was performed which focussed on the editorial changes in the booklet redesign. That is, I compared each page of the two booklet versions and described every detail that had changed. Again based on my ethnographic understanding and cross-checking with other parts of the data, I grouped and interpreted the different kind of changes. This generated the key themes which are described in this paper with chosen booklet quotes as vignettes.

## 5 Findings

Using the booklet co-design method as part of the collaboration resulted in rich qualitative findings. This section now offers a careful documentation of those insights that add nuance to previous HCI work on men's sheds [9, 71, 74, 75]. It uses excerpts from the data such as quotes from the booklet content and my field notes to tell "our story". In this way, the case study also illustrates how a participatory research approach might be embedded in a collaboration with a non-academic partner.

The following subsections describe how the booklet co-design shaped my understanding of the Blaydon Shed's use of space and its social dynamics that embody aspects of gender, age and activims.

### 5.1 Research Booklet: Exploring a Space through Co-Design

The resulting co-created booklet was of a DIN-A5 format and comprised twelve pages in total (ten pages of content as well as a front and a back cover). The process outlined above ensured that all the content was bespoken and double-checked with my partners (cf. [43]). Figure 3 shows the front cover and two selected pages to give a quick impression of the design. The whole booklet can be found in the additional material.

An overview of the content is given in Table 1. The booklet was structured to first introduce the Blaydon Shed, describe what it is about and how it came to be before presenting its different facilities and spotlighting some of the members. The last pages of the booklet were more framed around my research interests. These include a needle felting tutorial (a craft technique that Fiona had shown me during my visits) and some reflections on what the members might think of a portable makerspace visiting their space.

I printed the final draft version of the booklet on regular copy paper to show it to Fiona and Dean for a final check. We first printed

**Table 1: Overview of Content in the Original Booklet**

| Page | Topic | Notes on Design |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | Front Cover | photo suggested by researcher |
| 1 | Blaydon Shed Flyer | original design by participant |
| 2 | shed founder | photo taken by researcher and chosen by participant, interview transcribed by researcher |
| 3 | Men Shed | information provided by participants and compiled by researcher |
| 4 | Swap Station | interview with participant transcribed by researcher |
| 5 | Women's DIY classes | information compiled by researcher, interview quote of participant |
| 6 | Garden | interview with participant transcribed by researcher |
| 7 | Oldest Member | interview with participant transcribed by researcher |
| 8 | Youngest Member | interview with participant transcribed by researcher |
| 9 | Support | introduction to Men's Issues Liaison Officer written by participant, the explicit statement on women's role in the Blaydon Shed was part of an interview with a participant and added on the suggestion of the researcher |
| 10 | Needle Felting Tutorial | photos taken as researcher was taught by a participant |
| 11 | Back Cover | researcher (photo), participant (text from interview, transcribed by researcher) |

50 copies of the booklet. I had funding to cover the printing costs and chose to send them of to a professional service and have them printed on good quality, medium-weight paper with a glossy finish. This made the booklets look more precious than if printed on copy paper. Roughly half a year later, we ordered another 150 copies when the Blaydon Shed was running out of copies.

## 5.2 Understanding the Space

The design work on the booklet allowed me to learn about the Blaydon Shed in terms of its physical space, its social configuration as well as the underlying values that shaped the initiative.

The Blaydon Shed occupied the basement of a building shared with a church community hall and local politician offices. It provided ample space for activities with several rooms and a garden. The larger rooms were set up as the shed's main facilities including a workshop, a library with a computer workspace, and a lounge (see figure 4). Several smaller rooms served as storage space. There were plans to re-organise these over time. For example, one room was intended to become an electronics workshop with a soldering station.

The rooms bore many traces of being used and repurposed over time. Most furniture and equipment were second-hand or donated. The library bookcases were filled with donated books and boardgames, a discarded desktop computer with internet access and a large-screen TV with a PlayStation for games and DVDs (mostly "Doctor Who" episodes from the organisers' personal collection).

The workshop was mainly for woodworking but could also be used for other DIY crafts. Apart from basic health and safety standards, there were no strict rules for facility use or housekeeping. Overall, the Blaydon Shed was characterised by a functional space use: Nobody minded a bit of sawdust on the floor as long as people left the facilities in a condition that was respectful to others.

What might seem improvised and slightly messy on first sight provided a functional space. It invited members to make use of it without being overcautious and to *"do as much or as little as they please"*. The organisers readily suggested activities:

*"[Men] can come along and just relax, hang out, have a cup of tea, read the paper, have a chat or they can make stuff, build stuff, recycle furniture, renovate things, or do their own projects. It is their space and their time to do whatever they want."*

I note here my observation that most shed members simply came to the Blaydon Shed to enjoy some hours in good company, chatting away, and only sometimes to also use the workshop for a little woodworking project.

Men's sheds share the aim to create dedicated safe spaces for men. The design work on the booklet let me observe that they do so in a particular way: Besides providing physical locations for men to go to, this also involves cultivating a friendly culture. In the booklet, the Blaydon Shed was described as *"a safe relaxed space for all men over 18 to hang out. It is a man cave but for many men."* I noticed that the Blaydon Shed fosters an overtly informal atmosphere that tries to engage men in casual ways they feel comfortable with. Couches and a water boiler for tea and coffee in the lounge invited members to sit down, chat and enjoy a "cuppa"[2] in friendly company. Some members used the social room only during breaks from their DIY-projects while others spent their entire visit socialising in the lounge.

Studying the Blaydon Shed space was an "easy" starting point for my research. During my ethnographic visits, I explored the materiality of the space, taking photos of the facilities while asking questions about objects to collect the organisers' and members' explanations as material for the booklet. This material focus helped me to approach the people present in the space. This also marked the beginning of our give-and-take-relationship, albeit in a basic form: I asked questions about what I saw, and they gave me answers as potential booklet content. This low-threshold approach aligned with the ethos of members doing "as much or as little as they pleased". There was no formal setting pressuring them to respond; rather, I offered them opportunities for participation that fit their activities. My curiosity as an outsider presented yet another opportunity for members to chat over a "cuppa" or showcase their

[2]The expression for "cup of tea" in local Geordie dialect.

projects. Understanding what made the space "functional" and useful for them informed first design decisions regarding the booklets' layout, aiming to make it similarly informal-functional as the space.

**Figure 4: Different rooms of the Blaydon Shed**

## 5.3 Understanding the Social Configuration

The work on the booklet helped to gain a better understanding of the social structure within the Blaydon Shed initiative. On a first look, there was a flat structure of shed members and a committee consisting of volunteering members. On a closer look however, there was more nuance to the roles and levels of individual engagement and commitment. People had highly personal ways of participating in the Blaydon Shed. Taking a closer look at the four individuals presented in the booklet (see figure 5) helps to understand how members contributed differently to "making the Blaydon Shed" through their participation.

*5.3.1 The Youngest and the Oldest Member.* Both the oldest and the youngest member received their own page in the booklet (see figure 3). Both are pictured standing and smiling in the workshop, placing their hands on a tool on the workbench. In the text below, they talk about their involvement. They tell different stories about finding "a sense of purpose" at the Blaydon Shed and which role commitment plays in this.

Thom, the youngest member, took on an official role as the Blaydon Shed's 'young person's liaison'. He was an undergraduate student who volunteered at the Shed during holidays. He stated:

*"I agree with the ethos of the place. This is something I want to help grow. I am personally invested as well, coming at it from a men's rights and mental health side of things. I think it is a great place for men to come together, to combat isolation, and to have a bit of fun hanging out. It is a nice feeling to be here. There are no requirements or commitment if you don't want any, but you can get involved as much as you like - and I think this is very appealing."*

Thom foregrounds the activist dimension of the men's shed and that he wants to support this. However, for him the involvement was on a purely voluntarily basis without much commitment despite his official role.

The example of Colin, the oldest member, provides another nuanced form of participating:

*"My daughter said I should meet more people and be more active, creative and do things. She found a pamphlet about different things that are going on in the area. There was something about the Shed and I thought let's have a go with that. I joined and so far, it has been very good. I have been involved since the beginning (...). But when we came down here, we started organising things and get small tools, big tools, and old ones too. We get all the tools together for the making. I am here to organise the workshop and keep it nice. I always say filling up a space is easy, but the cleaning up is hard. All the pieces of wood and the tools lying around..."*

In Colin's case getting involved did not seem to be related to any activism. Rather, it was about gaining a sense of 'making himself useful' through organising the workshop (cf. [24, 52]). He was a quiet man who spent most of his visits in the workshop. Still, he was one of the most respected members at the Blaydon Shed and the other men often came to him with their questions. Their respect was largely rooted in Colin's doing – both in terms of his extensive practical craft expertise and his (silent) organising work. He always knew exactly which tools were available at the Blaydon Shed and what these were good for. As the organisers had only limited crafting knowledge themselves, it was him who was making sure that the workshop was a well-equipped attractive asset of the Blaydon Shed.

Both Thom's and Colin's ways of participating in and contributing to the Blaydon Shed were part of an organically evolving net of give-and-take-relationships. The space was a joint venture that every member was able to contribute to in their own personal ways. Both Thom and Colin contributed to producing the booklet content by allowing me to record an open-ended conversation with them while standing in the workshop. Nonetheless, the booklet managed to capture the nuances in their respective participation in the Blaydon Shed.

*5.3.2 The Founders.* The freedom of the members to participate in the Blaydon Shed as much or as little was contrasted by the dependability of Fiona and Dean. They were the backbone that kept the Shed running so that members could come as regularly or sporadically as they wished. The page presenting Fiona as the founder is noteworthy in several ways since it points at the particular ways in which the Blaydon Shed embodied not only gendered care work but also controversial aspects from gendered activism.

I observed that Fiona and Dean were practicing their organiser roles differently. Fiona mainly stayed in the cosy room working on some shed-related paperwork, creating social media content or socialising with members. Listening and talking to members were important parts of Fiona's role at the Blaydon Shed. Dean on the other hand moved through the whole space, took care of equipment and spent time with other men in the workshop. He also worked on his personal craft projects – yet only if there were no other urgent tasks and if he would not occupy any workshop space that a member might have wanted to use. He usually presented himself as a deskilled person who was eager to learn from the members. Through his hands-on participation he acted as the living example of how much men can learn and thrive at the Blaydon Shed.

Dean's and Fiona's different organiser roles were partly due to Fiona being limited in her mobility. However, even if she had been able to move around more, I doubt that she would have behaved much differently. There was a clear gendered aspect to their different practices as organisers: As a woman, Fiona kept herself out of the workshop, the symbolic heart of the men's space. She kept herself deliberately in the background which also reflects visually in her booklet page: Instead of a portray she preferred a close-up

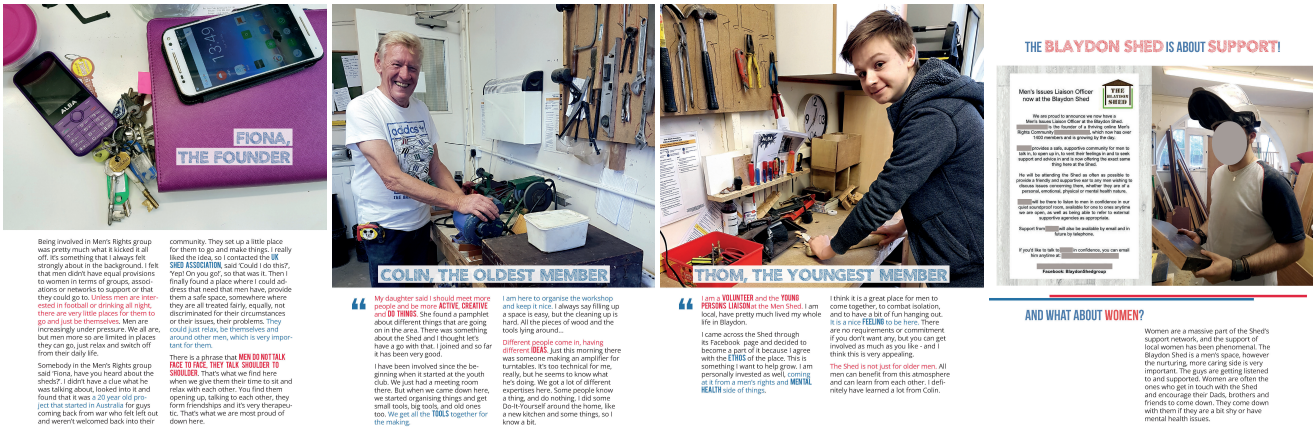


**Figure 5: The four booklet pages presenting individuals in the respective roles of (1) the founder, (2) the oldest member, (3) the youngest member, and (4) the (anonymised) men's issues liaison officer.**

photo of her organiser equipment (phones, key, planner). However, while staying in the background, Fiona exercised an overtly auxiliary role with her reliable presence in the other room where the men could always come in and talk to her.

Fiona and Dean also contributed in different ways to the booklet. As the shed committee chair, Fiona was used to presenting the Blaydon Shed and talking about the ethos of this initiative. Her page hence became the quasi-introduction in the booklet. Dean on the other hand, was more of a doer. He participated actively in the co-design sessions, adding his opinions to any of the arising practical questions. However, he did not want to have his own page and was happy that his contribution thereby remained "backstage".

There was another important aspect shaping their engagement: When initiating the Blaydon Shed, they identified as Men's Rights Activists (MRAs)[3]. It was through her online MRA network that Fiona had first heard about the concept of men's sheds. In the booklet she described how the idea of creating a safe space specifically for men resonated with her:

*"I felt that men didn't have equal provisions to women in terms of groups, associations or networks to support or that they could go to. Unless men are interested in football or drinking all night, there are very little places for them to go and just be themselves. Men are increasingly under pressure. We all are, but men more so are limited in places they can go, just relax and switch off from their daily life."*

This statement reflects the central motivation of the Men in Sheds Movement to create safe spaces specifically for men [16] where they can meet and work on their own chosen projects in casual company of other men [5]. However, there is more to the phrasing: Fiona's critique around inequal access to safe gendered spaces expresses a MRA standpoint which was interwoven with the men's shed concept. She argues that not only there is a need for safe spaces specifically for men (as embodied in the men's shed concept), but not only because men might find it difficult to open up but also because she critizises a systemic lack of support services and spaces targeting men. This combination of influences is key to understand the Blaydon Shed and needs some careful unpacking. There are many problematic aspects to the ideologies and practices of the MRA movement and the manosphere more generally [35, 57] – especially from a feminist standpoint as my own. Hence, I try here to trace hints to MRA aspects within the data and weave these together with insights from academic literature.

I note that there is a rather small body of academic literature about MRA networks. Overall, Men's Rights Activism (MRA) has been described as a political movement that places deliberate focus on men's issues and largely emerged in response to feminist activisms and their achievements [66]. Its historical roots lie in the so-called 'men's liberation movement' in the 1970s [54]. This was an initiative by several (male) political veterans of the new left, anti-war and student movements in the USA to promote the potential gains of feminism for men. Over the decades, the initiative has developed into a wider men's movement and fragmented into a multitude of organisations with very disparate agendas ranging from solidarity with feminism to resistance against it [44, 54]. Within this political spectrum of the wider men's movment, MRA networks occupy one of the most radical section and take a clear backlash position against feminism [44, 66].

*5.3.3 The Men's Issues Liaison Officer.* To dive deeper in the activist dimension of the Blaydon Shed, I draw attention to the fourth individual. He was presented in the dedicated role of the Blaydon Shed's "Men's Issues Liaison Officer"[4]. I note here that this person kept his active contribution to the booklet to a minimum. He agreed to a photo being taken of him in the workshop but it was Fiona who wrote a text introducing him and his role for the booklet. In this presentation, she announced that he would attend the shed *"as often as possible to provide a friendly and supportive ear to any men wishing to discuss issues concerning them"*. She also explained that he was *"the founder of a thriving online Men's Rights Community"* and that the Blaydon Shed hoped that he would bring in his experience

[3]According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a Men's Rights Activist is "someone who believes that men do not have the same rights as women and who protests publicly that they should" [15]

[4]This person remains anonymised in this publication and the additional material.

in providing *"a safe, supportive community for men to talk in, to open up, to vent their feelings and to seek support"*.

The presentation of the Men's Issues Liaison Officer points at another influence from MRA, a particular way of framing "safe spaces" for men and their emotions. Both men's sheds and MRAs share the assumption that men have problems expressing difficult emotions and they need gendered safe spaces to be able to articulate them. However, while men's sheds create dedicated physical spaces, MRA spaces are often created online. Eddington's study [22] gives an example of such an online safe space on the social media website Reddit, quoting a former moderator: "[Before TRP] there wasn't really a way for guys to express these feelings. Let's say there's a guy who just says 'I hate women'– I think that's textbook misogyny. We let them say that. Because there's nowhere else for a man to blow off steam. But they stay, they learn, they vent, they get advice, they get back on the horse" [22, p.115].

This illustrates the particular role of "venting" difficult emotions in MRA networks, which are framed around feelings of anxiety and rage. In the literature, Allan argues that "[these feelings] are expressed in the form of anger and violence and what they are about, I believe, is loss, a loss of control, a threat not caused by feminism, but by the apparent loss of entitled masculinity, a masculinity that affords power for no apparent reason other than 'biology as destiny'" [4, p.36]. These perceptions of insecurity have been discussed in relation to the implications of economic shifts for young working class men and 'the crumbling structural foundation for the male breadwinner role' [54, p.12]. The collective sense of loss could well be relevant to the Blaydon Shed's local area which was hardly hit by the British mining decline (cf. [56, 67]) and where young men need to "[rethink] what it is to be a 'man' beyond the world of industrial paid employment" [56, p.813]. This reflects also in Fiona's wish to provide men with an alternative.

Men's sheds tend to deal differently with difficult emotions. Wellbeing is a an omnipresent topic, yet men's sheds take an approach which is nonconfrontational [71] and embodies elements of occupational therapy [75]. This was also the case at the Blaydon Shed as members engage in activities that are not directly associated with any mental health agenda. Rather, they benefit from the company of other men, the spirit of mateship [7] and informal peer support. In this spirit of shoulder-to-shoulder support, men have the opportunity to open up yet without feeling any pressure to do so.

On the same booklet page there was also a short paragraph about the role of women in the Blaydon Shed. This was added on my suggestion to clarify the gendered dynamics of the space. I had observed that the ideological focus on Men's Right Activism was often contrasted by the presence of Fiona and other women regularly visiting the Blaydon Shed (and its obvious reliance on their support). In response to the question "What about women?" it was stated:

*"The Blaydon Shed is a men's space, however the nurturing, more caring side is very important. The guys are getting listened to and supported. Women are often the ones who get in touch with the Shed and encourage their Dads, brothers and friends to come down."*

## 5.4 Participation shaped by Gender and Age

Altogether, the booklet is a presentation of the shed's ethos which embodied activist values and which was enacted in gendered care. The gendered framing of the Blaydon Shed clearly defined its target group. However, not being an older man in the need of support did not categorically exclude people from being involved or even becoming a regular at the shed. Rather, there was a particular way how the space was organised around aspects of gender and age.

For example, due to his gender, age and widower-status, Colin was a prime example of the Blaydon Shed's target group. His role in the shed was different from Thom's as a young male student. Besides their different interests and personalities, age certainly also contributed to shaping their respective roles. As Thom's age obviously differed him from the expectations for the typical target group he was designated "Young Person's Liaison". This expressed a particular respect for his volunteering efforts as much as an intention of the organisers to invite more young people to the Blaydon Shed. His role title also distinguished him from "typical" members. In practice, he enjoyed much of the same liberties to make use of the Blaydon Shed facilities as Colin. However, this would have been slightly different if he had not been male. The workshop of the Blaydon Shed was primarily reserved for men and hence women (such as for example some members of the women's crafts classes) were expected to only use the room when the men were not present. Their role in the shed was to be semi-external supporters - which was also reflected in the slightly higher cost to participate in the women's crafts classes (£3 per session instead of £1 for men).

This hierarchical social structure was based on social characteristics and the primary system for organising the space. However, people could also change their roles within this structure through actions contributing to the collective. For example, by bringing in new interesting skills and resources – like I did. As a female researcher in her 30s, I was starting off as an external in the social hierarchy who should have never gotten any further than being a semi-external supporter. However, by making my design skills useful for the Blaydon Shed in form of the booklet, we established a give-and-take relationship and I slowly became "a part of the shed" (as Fiona repeatedly referred to me in conversations and social media posts). As a woman (and in particular as a feminist), I got as much an "internal" as I probably could without taking on an official role in the committee. However, my conduct in the space still needed to accept the overall rules of the gendered member hierarchy. For example, I could take as much space as I wanted in the lobby for 3D-printing and skill-sharing, however it would still have been "wrong" to take away workbench space from the men in the workshop.

## 5.5 Potential of Conflict

There was significant potential for conflict between the organisers' MRA involvement and my feminist views. The following situation is an example that was not documented in the booklet but in my notes. Four months into our collaboration, the new actor cast for the BBC TV-series "Doctor Who" was announced. Fiona and Dean were fans of the show and upset about the news that the traditionally male main character was re-cast with a female actor. They feared that this change would "rob" an important positive male role model from a

whole generation of boys. They interpreted the casting decision as proof of an excessive and dangerous influence of feminism on public service broadcasting - reflecting the MRA opinion that feminism harms men on a systemic level [54, 57]. They saw an evidence for the MRA claim that 'society has failed boys, and men are lacking' [4, p.26]. They "vented" their anger by posting several emotional comments on their personal social media accounts using highly aggressive language. Although these postings were not shared on the official Blaydon Shed channels, the tone was so alarming that I felt compelled to approach Fiona and Dean about them. Their outrage was of course unrelated to my own feminist identity or my presence at the Blaydon Shed, yet their expressed contempt of feminism worried me. I feared that they would suddenly mind a feminist researcher conducting a study of their space.

Seeking an open conversation with them about our respective activist values and potentially conflicting world-views was the right ethical decision, however it also entailed the risk of an abrupt end to the research collaboration. The conversation was uncomfortable for everyone involved and lead temporarily to keeping a bit more distance. Eventually, being clear about this conflicting potential helped strengthening our collaboration in the long run. The incident helped us to articulate our respective values and reassess where our interests were intersecting. In this way we managed to strike a balance between our agendas for our co-design project. The finished booklet rewarded us then for our perseverance as it served all the purposes we had hoped for: Fiona got a well-designed promotion material which communicated Blaydon Shed's ethos and I gathered rich qualitative data while sensitizing my understanding.

## 5.6 Shed Brochure: Turning a Research Tool into a Community Resource

We revised the research booklet roughly one and a half years after the first version. Fiona believed it would *"still get across what the shed is and why"*, but recognized some outdated sections. To sustain the usefulness of the booklet, we agreed to re-design it in summer 2019, just before my PhD field work ended and my regular visits to the space stopped.

To prepare the redesign, Fiona and I discussed the practical impact of the booklet for the Blaydon Shed and reflected critically on the strengths and weaknesses of the first version. She shared in an evaluative conversation:

*"We're now in a situation where we have members who have been victims of domestic violence and assault, men who tried to commit suicide. They all have come to us from referrals from mental health teams and professionals. So reaching them, you have to have something that's impacting and professional-looking and the brochure absolutely ticked those boxes. They needed to see our professionalism and commitment.[…] They see that our hearts and souls are in it – and that would not have happened without the brochure."*

The organisers had access to the design files but lacked the skills to update the content and layout. Neither the organisers nor the members had experience with the professional design software I used and given the high licence-costs, it was also unlikely that they would invest in it. They depended on me to update the booklet. We could have looked into software alternatives and trained someone at the shed to use such a tool. However, none of the members and organisers seemed to have capacities at that time to be trained. Instead, we decided for a different strategy and tried to revise the booklet in a way that should present the Blaydon Shed in a more timeless manner.

Most of the design remained the same. Only selected parts were reworded or redesigned. All changes are listed in table 2. The edits reflected changes in shed activities, facilities and roles of members. For example, we removed the mention of the men's issues liaison who had stopped being involved. This section was replaced by a more general description of support work at the Blaydon Shed. This part of the redesign reflected a re-framing of activist agendas at the Blaydon Shed. Overall, there were less references to Men's Rights Activism and no direct links to specific associated networks compared to the first version. Instead, the revised version now emphasised a wider collaborative approach to local community engagement:

*"At the Shed while our focus and main purpose has always been and always will be about providing a place for men to relax and do their own thing in, we also feel very strongly about being a valuable and reliable part of the community. (...) We are stronger together and we have many plans for a very exciting future for us all."*

At the time of the redesign, the organisers had withdrawn from the national MRA network. Fiona reflected on this decision as documented in my notes:

*"Her activism is now completely removed from the [MRA network] and she cut every tie to them. She said that the structures were corrupted and that she had realised that all the 'important/academic' members of that group were more concerned about making money than to actually change anything. On the contrary, they would even benefit from maintaining the status-quo as this would mean they could do more angry rants on how poor other men are while selling more books and making money of them. She also said that they would be stuck in seeing it as a fundamental war between men and women. In this respect the MRAs would be just as bad as radical feminists. They would be different extremes on the same scale and just continue to fight against each other. She on the other hand had realised that we all need each other and that the Shed is just a puzzle piece within the bigger picture."*

Fiona saw a critical gap between words and deeds in the MRA network. The MRA approach with its provocative rhetoric and focus on giving space to anger was at odds with the Blaydon Shed's ethos of taking constructive action to bring positive practical change for men in the local community.

I close this section with the remark that even though the Blaydon Shed was not any longer actively connected to any MRA network, it still was a key aspect for the organisers to initiate the Blaydon Shed. Yet, their practical experiences of running such a space was an opportunity for the organisers to reflect more deeply on their activist values and goals – and eventually distinguish their initiative from MRA ideology. Still, some values and practices from the organisers' MRA engagement remained. For example, the use of social media channels for communicating values of care to a wider external audience. Fiona and Dean took the useful bits from their MRA engagement and combined them with the concept of men's shed in order to create the Blaydon Shed.

**Table 2: Overview of Content in the Revised Booklet**

| Page | Topic | Notes on Design |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | Front Cover | minor edits (title changed to "Info Brochure") |
| 1 | Blaydon Shed Flyer | minor edits (contact details) |
| 2 | shed founder | minor edits (no MRA involvement anymore) |
| 3 | Men Shed | unchanged |
| 4 | Swap Station | unchanged |
| 5 | Women's Craft Classes | new content replacing "Women's DIY classes" |
| 6 | Garden | revised, included a more prominent call for participation |
| 7 | Oldest Member | unchanged |
| 8 | Youngest Member | unchanged |
| 9 | 3D-Printing and Support | new content replacing Men's Issues Liaison Officer |
| 10 | Needle Felting Tutorial | unchanged |
| 11 | Back Cover | revised focus on shed contacts and opening hours |

## 5.7 Summary

Overall, the work on the booklet helped to develop a nuanced understanding of the Blaydon Shed that extends what has been written so far in the HCI literature on men's sheds. As described, this case highlights the particular ways in which the ethos of the Blaydon Shed embodied key values of shoulder-to-shoulder support and skill-sharing. These were not so much rooted in a solely wellbeing-centred agenda (as has been emphasised in previous HCI on men's sheds [74, 75]) but rather in two underlying strands of activism that were actively pursued and negotiated by the initiators. The booklet redesign captured a change in their activism and described the ways in which the initial influences from MRA transitioned into a more constructive and community-minded form of hands-on activism. Moreover, the co-design let me explore the particular gender dynamics in which the shed's core values were enacted: There has always been women in the space, and it was even led by one, yet these needed to stay in caring relational roles that kept men in the centre of attention. The involvement of women was hence an integral if not foundational part of the shed but needed to remain implicit. In this way, this paper also offers first insights into the configuration of male and female actors in a men's shed.

# 6 Discussion and Methodological Reflections

Above, I have demonstrated that crafting a research method in the spirit of give-and-take relationships enabled my research to arrive at nuanced qualitative findings. Drawing on the experiences from this case, I use the opportunity to take stock of this participatory approach, critically review the implications of its *format* and speculate which methodological insights might inform other research endeavours in other settings. This involves reflecting on the different forms of value of such an approach for those involved, identifying limitations and revisiting the motivation to live up more to the democratizing ideals of participatory HCI research.

## 6.1 The Values of Configuring Research as a Give-and-Take Relationship

The methodological choice to engage in a give-and-take relationship with my partners created potential for several positive effects. However, it needs to be noted that the particular gains for my research and my participants were not necessarily the same. Overall, it might be helpful to think about the collaboration partners' endeavours as a non-academic participatory project in itself which you might connect your participatory research with. In this case there were clearly two distinct participatory processes at work. On the one hand, there was my research endeavour to co-design booklets as a bespoke visual research material. On the other hand, there was the founders' community agenda to create a men's shed which was a participatory project in itself (albeit not in the sense of HCI research). The key challenge for establishing a give-and-take relationship then is to make the participatory processes overlap at points and create productive synergies. This part of the discussion focusses on how my participatory research approach happened to fit well into the participatory community project of the Blaydon Shedand discusses the distinct ways in which such an approach can create value for research and community partners.

*6.1.1 Value for the Participants.* The main value for my collaboration partners (or direct 'user gain'[12]) was access to a new customised means of advertisement. Prior to my involvement they did not have the skills nor the financial resources to create a material to reach out to new members and potential allies in the community. In reference to Hayes' description of action research [39, 40] it created 'a local solution to a local problem'. The novel aspect here however is the creative twist on the *format* of configuring participation [73] becoming itself part of the 'solution'. The booklet co-design was a solidary gesture in support of the Blaydon Shed's support work through donating time, design work and production costs. As such, my research design took a political stand (cf. [3]) which reflected my concern for shaping fair conditions for participation.

On a closer look, there were also parts of the process that produced value for the men's shed on a micro-level. My ethnographic visits organically tapped into skill sharing practices and with my knowledge of digital fabrication I set new impulses. Thinking of the documented change in the organisers' activist orientation, it can also be speculated that our continuous reflections on the Blaydon Shed's ethos and value for members and the local community also contributed to rethinking their activist identities on a more personal level. Their research participation was certainly not the

only or even the main impulse for this development. However, I suspect that taking on the task to articulate activist values (may it be for a booklet or any other design) has the capacity to initiate critical thoughts taking stock of activist ideals that fit or do not fit the given initiative (cf. [28]). This aspect could be key to consider when thinking about a participatory research *formats* (cf. [73]) in other settings.

*6.1.2 Value for the Researcher.* The main value for me as a researcher was closely connected to overcoming limitations related to my positionality. As a foreigner I did not have any prior contacts and with my age and gender I clearly did not fit the target group of the Blaydon Shed. From an MRA perspective, my open alignment with feminist values might have even represented a threat. As a woman (and arguably even more so as a feminist), it was hence not a trivial decision to conduct research in a men's space. There was clearly a political dimension in this setting and my research needed to navigate carefully within related tensions (cf. [3, 73]). However, the booklet co-design method enabled me to enter the space and legitimate my participation to a certain degree. I could follow my approach to collect data, grow an ethnographic understanding of their space and practices and lead a co-design process. Yet, this was only possible because I learned the space's rules and engaged with great sensitivity.

I draw here a tentative link to Brulé's and Spiel's reflections on standpoint theory in participatory design [14] by acknowledging that my researcher role and feminist identity in this work are inseparable and a productive part of knowledge production. I did not use their proposed reflection process on identity in this project, however my work implicitly embodied similar kinds of reflection in order to reach the state of a give-and-take relationship with my partners. In this way, I developed a feeling for the different roles and avenues for participation within the relational gender dynamics. Yes, I participated in the men's shed for more than two and a half years and I certainly had a special role being a researcher, but I also always remained in the semi-external role of a woman in support of the men in the Blaydon Shed. It is important to note that configuring a participatory method in this setting required mindfulness of the gendered and activist nuances described above. This attuning process incorporates both Bossen's concern for the responsibility of researchers to attend to the emergent character of projects [13] as well the the more generative aspects of what Akama and Light describe as 'readying' [2, 3].

Gaining access to the setting was supported by my choice to use a creative research method. The methodological orientation hence became an important part of my practice of "readying". Co-designing a booklet was a sufficiently flexible format to attune to my participants' agendas and 'deal with contingency in participatory design as it happens' [2, p.10]. The medium we collaborated on was open enough in its content yet concrete enough to see its potential for direct user gains [12]. Prior to my research, my participants had only limited contact to academia. The suggestion to work on a booklet together made the idea to collaborate more graspable for them. It was a relatable format and they could assess what participation on such a project would involve for them. Furthermore, due to the activist roots of the Blaydon Shed it was key to emphasise that the participants were "editors-in-chief" and hence in control over how the Blaydon Shed should be represented. This *format* of participation signalled that I was not only collecting to their contributions but open to prioritizing their agendas (as also advocated for in Action Research [39, 69] and community-based co-design [30, 60]).

Attuning to the social dynamics in the setting and adapting my ways of contributing to my partners' project was productive for fostering long-term collaboration. The co-design process was the first step to earn my collaborator's trust. Through my regular presence and participation, my role evolved increasingly from an outsider (external researcher) to a quasi-insider (an ally and supporter of the Blaydon Shed). The process was not always easy with the tensions between my feminism and the MRA viewpoints of the organisers. It involved dealing with conflict and having uncomfortable discussions in order to better understand my partners' experiences. In reference to Haraway's feminist work [37], it presented a form of trouble that lingered on throughout the collaboration, forming fundamental potential of conflict yet also contributing to our collaboration being productive.

Last but not least, it needs to be stated that I clearly benefited in my academic career. This work was part of my doctoral research and was eventually awarded with the PhD title.

## 6.2 Methodological Limitations

Several important methodological limitations to the approach need to be addressed. Here, I discuss those that are related to the exploratory, skill-dependent and implicit character of creative and participatory research methods.

*6.2.1 The Risk of Failing.* Firstly, this approach was an experiment for the sake of exploration. There was never any guarantee that the method would lead to a successful outcome or even a longer-term collaboration. Finding out about the differences between the activist ideas of the researcher and the participants bore a big risk of failing and ending our collaboration early. A strategy to reduce such a risk in future work would be to disclose respective agendas at the outset - similar to Vines et al.'s call to identify open and implicit agendas [73]. Yet, this leads again to critical questions: How clear are such agendas? Are we always mindful of them ourselves? And can a researcher identify them right from the beginning of a collaboration? My honest opinion would be: no. It would certainly be desirable for pursuing our research agendas to mitigate such risk of failure in collaboration. Yet we need to recognize that agendas are often part of implicit knowledge that requires much (self-)reflection and time to put your finger on and articulate (cf. [28]).

*6.2.2 Requirement of Skills.* Choosing a creative medium for co-design is not trivial and free of issues. The choice ultimately depends on the researcher's creative skills. In this case desktop publishing and print design skills were needed for producing the booklet. I had the skills but my partners not. It is hence important to note that the configuration of the method around a creative format can automatically lead to a dependence which might not be intended or desired. Moreover, the choice of producing a print design was limited in that a brochure can only be a snapshot at a certain moment in time. The format is time-dependent and the brochure needed to be redesigned after some time.

I do not argue that booklets are always the best format to configure participation in community-embedded HCI research. It did work in this case and might also work in some other situations, but ultimately this depends on the setting and timing. Hence, I would argue that the first task in such a research endeavour is to find which format is appropriate and best fits the current agendas of the collaboration partner.

*6.2.3 A Need to Rethink Data.* Creative methods require to think about data differently than in classic text- and language-based approaches. Visual or creative media might make it easier for participants to express themselves, however some parts of the meaning might remain implicit and difficult for the researcher to access [27]. This might be less the case if the researcher and participant co-produce a representation of the community agenda and they get to spend more time together and talk. Articulation might be easier when participants produce something and it is the researcher's task to translate the insights into a design. Such a format might then establish a form of communication that organically incorporates regular sense-checks of interpretations (cf. [43]).

It also needs to be understood that this paper can only offer a crafted narrative based on hind-sight reflection and interpretation of the data (cf. Akama and Light's experiments to write oneselves strongly into the story [2]). This limitation however, comes hand in hand with the capacity to break out of the academic "bubble". Co-design can constitute a means to bring research down-to-earth and engage with non-academic people, as we can also learn from the work on community-engaged co-design such as [45, 60, 69]. This needs to be remembered especially when the people in questions represent groups we would usually not meet in private life and that are also not likely included in knowledge-production through research and design. Vines et al. [73] warn researchers of limiting design potential by predetermining who gets to participate in their research. In my experience, it can be indeed challenging to be open to "other" mindsets and not shying away from the trouble of navigating through conflicts. However, there is astonishing transformative potential on a small scale if the risks are overcome. In a give-and-take relationship, both researchers and participants can become a "fresh pair of eyes" to figure out unanticipated and sometimes surprising answers to questions.

## 6.3 Advice for Future Practice

I close my methodological reflections with a list of suggestions for other researchers. How should they go about configuring participatory research as give-and-take relationship? Considering the contingency of participatory projects [2, 3], it is impossible to present full-fledged guidelines that work in every setting with every partner. However, this case study offers some lessons-learned that I speculate to be potentially relevant for other community-based settings. I encourage other researchers to use them as an open-ended set of customizable prompts to think creatively about their participatory research methods - and also to trust their own assessments of the respective collaboration if (and for which parts of the participatory process) the suggestions fit their interactions with their partners.

- Start out with **open curiosity** and get to know your potential partners. Try not to judge them immediately but get a sense of their agenda!
- Ask yourself which **skills you can offer** to your (potential) partners. Ask your (potential) partners what would be useful for them. Try to combine your skill-set with the **wishes of your partner**.
- Start the collaboration with a **concrete mini-project**. Think of it as a trial before parties decide on fully partnering up. Frame the first mini-project around exploring 'a local problem' [40] but be open to the possibility that this first mini-project might not involve creating any technological solution for it [65]. For trust to grow, it is more important to find a first achievable and feasible goal that makes next steps graspable and does not require long-term commitment. As you start to work together, be transparent and discuss practicalities with your partners in terms of next steps, required resources and ethical details.
- Accompany the co-design with **your own reflective work**. Journaling is highly recommended. Notes can serve as a back-up in case the collaboration needs to end early. The work by [29, 58, 69] might offer further inspiration.
- It is okay to have **fun** while co-designing! The professional role of a designer and researcher can benefit from the social competence to understand the partner's "vibe" and engage with their sense of humour. Finding a respectful balance between fun and professionalism can create rich opportunities for generating ideas and co-design.

My hope is that these prompts offer inspiration for other researchers as they craft their own formats of (participatory) HCI research. I argue that methodological creativity is needed to provide more space for the participants' agendas in our conduct and increase the capacities of our research to offer direct gains. I acknowledge that my methodological reflections are rooted in a research tradition that is specifically concerned with democratizing capacities and might contrast other HCI research approaches following different paradigms. Still, I suggest that the idea of give-and-take might be worth to consider whenever HCI researchers strive for conducting socially relevant research and invite people to participate. Regardless of their paradigmatic orientation, in the best case, it can assist them in fine-tuning their methodological tools to their specific settings and making participation in their research worthwhile.

# 7 Conclusion

This paper presented a case study of a participatory research method embedded in a give-and-take relationship with a non-academic initiative. It described booklet co-design as a method which sought to produce both research findings and also something of value for my community partner. Particular focus was placed on the ways in which participation was configured around a compromise of agendas and materially tailored to the agenda of my community partner. While there was conflict due to differences in our activist mindsets, the co-design of booklets served as a productive means for establishing and maintaining a give-and-take relationship between researcher and the community partner. This paper demonstrates the method's capacity of producing knowledge by presenting nuanced insights that add to the existing HCI work on men's sheds and gendered makerspaces. The following methodological reflections

discuss the values and risks of the presented method and share advice for future research.

I stress that give-and-take relationships require a willingness to compromise. Acknowledging different agendas means to balance them in daily conduct - and for the researcher it also means to let go of the control to some extent. Configuring participatory approaches around give-and-take is certainly a risky move when aiming for research impact. However, it can be a fruitful move in the direction of creating social impact with research. Drawing on Vines et al.'s discussion of 'configuring participation' [73], I hence argue for further nuancing participatory research approaches by scrutinizing its forms and agendas.

## Acknowledgments

This paper is dedicated to Fiona, the founder of the Blaydon Shed. She was so full of excitement, burning for making the world a tiny bit better - and most of all, she was fun and just wonderful to spend time with. Much of my gratitude also goes to Dean for his continued support on this work.

The paper is based on my PhD research funded through the EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Digital Civics (EP/L016176/1).

The work on this publication has been co-funded by the European Union (ERC, ACCESSTECH, 101117519). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.


## References

[1] Helene Ahl, Joel Hedegaard, and Barry Golding. 2017. How the Men's Shed Idea Travels to Scandinavia. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 57, 3 (2017), 316–333.

[2] Yoko Akama and Ann Light. 2018. Practices of Readiness: Punctuation, Poise and the Contingencies of Participatory Design. In *Proceedings of the 15th Participatory Design Conference: Full Papers - Volume 1*. ACM, Hasselt and Genk Belgium, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1145/3210586.3210594

[3] Yoko Akama and Ann Light. 2020. Readiness for Contingency: Punctuation, Poise, and Co-Design. *CoDesign* 16, 1 (2020), 17–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2020.1722177

[4] Jonathan A. Allan. 2016. Phallic Affect, or Why Men's Rights Activists Have Feelings. *Men and Masculinities* 19, 1 (April 2016), 22–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X15574338

[5] Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. 2022. About Men's Sheds. https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/mens-sheds/about-mens-sheds.

[6] Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. 2010. National-Mens-Health-Policy-2010.Pdf.

[7] Australian Men's Shed Association. 2024. Men's Sheds around the World. https://mensshed.org/about-mens-sheds/mens-sheds-around-the-world/.

[8] Doris Bardehle. 2023. Men's Sheds (Männerschuppen) - Treffpunkte für ältere Männer. *Public Health Forum* 31, 3 (Sept. 2023), 215–218. https://doi.org/10.1515/pubhef-2023-0074

[9] Genevieve Bell and Paul Dourish. 2007. Back to the Shed: Gendered Visions of Technology and Domesticity. *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing* 11, 5 (June 2007), 373–381. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00779-006-0073-8

[10] Susanne Bødker. 2015. Third-Wave HCI, 10 Years Later—Participation and Sharing. *interactions* 22, 5 (Aug. 2015), 24–31. https://doi.org/10.1145/2804405

[11] Susanne Bødker and Morten Kyng. 2018. Participatory Design That Matters—Facing the Big Issues. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction* 25, 1 (2018), 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1145/3152421

[12] Claus Bossen, Christian Dindler, and Ole Sejer Iversen. 2010. User Gains and PD Aims. In *Proceedings of the 11th Biennial Participatory Design Conference on - PDC '10*. ACM Press, New York, New York, USA, 141. https://doi.org/10.1145/1900441.1900461

[13] Claus Bossen, Christian Dindler, and Ole Sejer Iversen. 2012. Impediments to User Gains. In *Proceedings of the 12th Participatory Design Conference on Research Papers: Volume 1 - PDC '12*. ACM Press, New York, New York, USA, 31. https://doi.org/10.1145/2347635.2347641

[14] Emeline Brulé and Katta Spiel. 2019. Negotiating Gender and Disability Identities in Participatory Design. In *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Communities & Technologies - Transforming Communities*. ACM, Vienna Austria, 218–227. https://doi.org/10.1145/3328320.3328369

[15] Cambridge University Press. 2024. MRA - Definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/mra.

[16] Jillian Cavanagh, Nicola McNeil, and Timothy Bartram. 2013. The Australian Men's Sheds Movement: Human Resource Management in a Voluntary Organisation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources* 51, 3 (July 2013), 292–306. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-7941.2012.00051.x

[17] Lars Rune Christensen and Hasib Ahsan. 2024. The Researcher's Plight: Guilt and Shame in Participatory Design and Action Research. In *Participatory Design Conference 2024*. ACM, Sibu Malaysia, 19–23. https://doi.org/10.1145/3661455.3669865

[18] Jennifer S. Culph, Nathan J. Wilson, Reinie Cordier, and Roger J. Stancliffe. 2015. Men's Sheds and the Experience of Depression in Older Australian Men. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal* 62, 5 (Oct. 2015), 306–315. https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12190

[19] Kate Davidson, Tom Daly, and Sara Arber. 2003. Older Men, Social Integration and Organisational Activities. *Social Policy and Society* 2, 2 (April 2003), 81–89. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746403001118

[20] Lynn Dombrowski, Ellie Harmon, and Sarah Fox. 2016. Social Justice-Oriented Interaction Design. In *Proceedings of the 2016 ACM Conference on Designing Interactive Systems*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 656–671. https://doi.org/10.1145/2901790.2901861

[21] Katrien Dreessen, Niels Hendriks, Selina Schepers, and Andrea Wilkinson. 2020. Towards Reciprocity in Participatory Design Processes. In *Proceedings of the 16th Participatory Design Conference 2020 - Participation(s) Otherwise - Volume 2*. ACM, Manizales Colombia, 154–158. https://doi.org/10.1145/3384772.3385129

[22] Sean M. Eddington. 2020. Alt-Resilience: A Semantic Network Analysis of Identity (Re)Construction in an Online Men's Rights Community. *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 48, 1 (2020), 114–135. https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2019.1706099

[23] Wendy Faulkner. 2001. The Technology Question in Feminism: A View from Feminist Technology Studies. *Women's Studies International Forum* 24, 1 (2001), 79–95. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(00)00166-7

[24] Annette Foley, Barry Golding, and Helen Weadon. 2023. Respite, Renewal, Retirement and Tensions: Australian Men's Sheds and the Impact on Significant Others. *Ageing and Society* 43, 6 (June 2023), 1367–1388. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X21001185

[25] Emma J. Foster, Sarah-Anne Munoz, and Stephen J. Leslie. 2018. The Personal and Community Impact of a Scottish Men's Shed. *Health & Social Care in the Community* 26, 4 (July 2018), 527–537. https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12560

[26] Nancy Fraser. 1996. Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation. *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* Stanford University (1996). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2011.05856.x pubmed:21710429

[27] David Gauntlett. 2005. Using Creative Visual Research Methods to Understand Media Audiences. *Medienpädagogik* 4, 1, special issue on visual methods in research (2005), 1–32.

[28] David Gauntlett. 2007. *Creative Explorations: New Approaches to Identities and Audiences*. Routledge, London, New York.

[29] David Gauntlett and Peter Holzwarth. 2006. Creative and Visual Methods for Exploring Identities. *Visual Studies* 21, 1 (2006), 82–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725860600613261

[30] Aakash Gautam, Chandani Shrestha, Andrew Kulak, Steve Harrison, and Deborah Tatar. 2018. Participatory Tensions in Working with a Vulnerable Population. In *Proceedings of the 15th Participatory Design Conference: Short Papers, Situated Actions, Workshops and Tutorial - Volume 2*. ACM, Hasselt and Genk Belgium, 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1145/3210604.3210629

[31] Barry Golding. 2011. Older Men's Wellbeing Through Community Participation in Australia. *International Journal of Men's Health* 10, 1 (2011), 26–44. https://doi.org/10.3149/jmh.1001.26

[32] Barry Golding. 2015. Men Learning Through Life (and Men's Sheds). *Adult Learning* 26, 4 (2015), 170–172. https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159515594152

[33] Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin. 1998. *Introduction to Action Research. Social Research for Social Change*. SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks,

New Delhi.
[34] Judith Gregory. 2003. Scandinavian Approaches to Participatory Design. *International Journal of Engaging Education* 19, 1 (2003), 62–74.
[35] Hussam Habib, Padmini Srinivasan, and Rishab Nithyanand. 2022. Making a Radical Misogynist: How Online Social Engagement with the Manosphere Influences Traits of Radicalization. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 6, CSCW2 (Nov. 2022), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1145/3555551
[36] Donna Haraway. 1988. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14, 3 (1988), 575. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066 jstor:3178066
[37] Donna Jeanne Haraway. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene.* Duke University Press, Durham.
[38] Christina Harrington, Sheena Erete, and Anne Marie Piper. 2019. Deconstructing Community-Based Collaborative Design: Towards More Equitable Participatory Design Engagements. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 3, CSCW (Nov. 2019), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1145/3359318
[39] Gillian R. Hayes. 2011. The Relationship of Action Research to Human-Computer Interaction. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction* 18, 3 (2011), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1145/1993060.1993065
[40] Gillian R. Hayes. 2012. Taking Action in Your Research. *Interactions* 19 (2012), 50. https://doi.org/10.1145/2212877.2212890
[41] Maree Henwood, Amie Shaw, Jillian Cavanagh, Timothy Bartram, Timothy Marjoribanks, and Madeleine Kendrick. 2017. Men's Health and Communities of Practice in Australia. *Journal of Health Organization and Management* 31, 2 (April 2017), 207–222. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHOM-12-2016-0234
[42] AT Holroyd. [n. d.]. Identity Construction and the Multiple Meanings of Home-made Clothes in Contemporary British Culture. *inter-disciplinary.net* ([n. d.]).
[43] Netta Iivari. 2018. Using Member Checking in Interpretive Research Practice: A Hermeneutic Analysis of Informants' Interpretation of Their Organizational Realities. *Information Technology & People* 31, 1 (Feb. 2018), 111–133. https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-07-2016-0168
[44] Ana Jordan. 2016. Conceptualizing Backlash: (UK) Men's Rights Groups, Anti-Feminism, and Postfeminism. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 28, 1 (2016), 18–44. https://doi.org/10.3138/cjwl.28.1.18
[45] Linus Kendall and Andy Dearden. 2018. Disentangling Participatory ICT Design in Socioeconomic Development. In *Proceedings of the 15th Participatory Design Conference: Full Papers - Volume 1*. ACM, Hasselt and Genk Belgium, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1145/3210586.3210596
[46] Kay Kender and Katta Spiel. 2023. Banal Autistic Social Media: A Found Footage Autoethnography. In *The 25th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility*. ACM, New York NY USA, 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1145/3597638.3614552
[47] Sara Kindon, Rachel Pain, and Mike Kesby (Eds.). 2007. *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation, and Place.* Routledge, London.
[48] Heinz K. Klein and Michael D. Myers. 1999. A Set of Principles for Conducting and Evaluating Interpretive Field Studies in Information Systems. *MIS Quarterly* 23, 1 (March 1999), 67. https://doi.org/10.2307/249410 jstor:249410
[49] Kari Kuutti and Liam J. Bannon. 2014. The Turn to Practice in HCI. In *Proceedings of the 32nd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - CHI '14*. ACM Press, New York, New York, USA, 3543–3552. https://doi.org/10.1145/2556288.2557111
[50] Morten Kyng. 2010. Bridging the Gap Between Politics and Techniques. On the next Practices of Participatory Design. *Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems* 22, 1 (2010), 49–68.
[51] Ann Light and Yoko Akama. 2014. Structuring Future Social Relations: The Politics of Care in Participatory Practice. *Proceedings of the 13th Participatory Design Conference: Research Papers - Volume 1 (PDC '14)* 2014, October (2014), 151–160. https://doi.org/DOI=10.1145/2661435.2661438http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2661435.2661438
[52] Peter M McEvoy, Kirsten Holmes, Brendan J Smith, Jonathan Bullen, Vivian W Chiu, James Wild, Jaxon Ashley, and Rebecca Talbot. 2023. Pathways from Men's Shed Engagement to Wellbeing, Health-Related Quality of Life, and Lower Loneliness. *Health Promotion International* 38, 4 (Aug. 2023), daad084. https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daad084
[53] Janice McLaughlin and Edmund Coleman-Fountain. 2019. Visual Methods and Voice in Disabled Childhoods Research: Troubling Narrative Authenticity. *Qualitative Research* 19, 4 (Aug. 2019), 363–381. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794118760705
[54] Michael A. Messner. 2016. Forks in the Road of Men's Gender Politics: Men's Rights Vs Feminist Allies. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 5, 2 (2016), 6–20. https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v5i2.301
[55] Christine Milligan, David Neary, Sheila Payne, Barbara Hanratty, Pamela Irwin, and Christopher Dowrick. 2016. Older Men and Social Activity: A Scoping Review of Men's Sheds and Other Gendered Interventions. *Ageing and Society* 36, 5 (May 2016), 895–923. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X14001524
[56] Anoop Nayak. 2006. Displaced Masculinities: Chavs, Youth and Class in the Post-Industrial City. *Sociology* 40, 5 (2006), 813–831. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038506067508
[57] Kostantinos Papadamou, Savvas Zannettou, Jeremy Blackburn, Emiliano De Cristofaro, Gianluca Stringhini, and Michael Sirivianos. 2021. "How over Is It?" Understanding the Incel Community on YouTube. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 5, CSCW2 (Oct. 2021), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1145/3479556
[58] Sarah Pink. 2009. *Doing Sensory Ethnography.* SAGE Publications, London.
[59] Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (Eds.). 2001. *Handbook of Action Research. Participative Inquiry and Practice.* Sage Publications.
[60] Kasper Rodil, Shorty Kandjengo, Donovan Maasz, Hasib Ahsan, and Lars Rune Christensen. 2024. Comparative Insights for Community-Based Co-design: Bi-directional Inclusive Strategies Between Marginalised Communities and Researchers in Participatory Design. In *Participatory Design Conference 2024*. ACM, Sibu Malaysia, 207–210. https://doi.org/10.1145/3661455.3669894
[61] Chiara Rossitto. 2021. Political Ecologies of Participation: Reflecting on the Long-term Impact of Civic Projects. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 5, CSCW1 (April 2021), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1145/3449286
[62] Laura Scheepmaker, Kay Kender, Christopher Frauenberger, and Geraldine Fitzpatrick. 2021. Leaving the Field: Designing a Socio-Material Toolkit for Teachers to Continue to Design Technology with Children. In *Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. ACM, Yokohama Japan, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1145/3411764.3445462
[63] Douglas Schuler. 1993. Participatory Design : Principles and Practices. In *Participatory Design : Principles and Practices*. Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ [u.a.].
[64] Jesper W Simonsen. 2013. *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design.* Routledge, New York, NY [u.a.].
[65] Katta Spiel. 2023. Practicing Humility: Design as Response, Not as Solution. *Postdigital Science and Education* (Oct. 2023). https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-023-00436-2
[66] Leo G. Stewart and Emma S. Spiro. 2021. Nobody Puts Redditor in a Binary: Digital Demography, Collective Identities, and Gender in a Subreddit Network. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 5, CSCW1 (April 2021), 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1145/3449082
[67] Tim Strangleman. 2001. Networks, Place and Identities in Post-Industrial Mining Communities. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25, 2 (2001), 253–267. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.00310
[68] Angelika Strohmayer and Janis Meissner. 2020. The Partnership Quilt: An Interactive Living Archive of Sex Worker Voices. *Curator: The Museum Journal* 63, 2 (April 2020), 275–279. https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12360
[69] Angelika Strohmayer, Janis Lena Meissner, Alexander Wilson, Sarah Charlton, and Laura McIntyre. 2020. "We Come Together as One...and Hope for Solidarity to Live on". In *Proceedings of the 2020 ACM Designing Interactive Systems Conference*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 87–100. https://doi.org/10.1145/3357236.3395452
[70] Shanti Sumartojo and Sarah Pink. 2017. *Refiguring Techniques in Digital Visual Research.* Springer International Publishing, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-61222-5
[71] Nick Taylor, Ursula Hurley, and Philip Connolly. 2016. Making Community: The Wider Role of Makerspaces in Public Life. In *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - CHI '16*. ACM Press, New York, New York, USA, 1415–1425. https://doi.org/10.1145/2858036.2858073
[72] UK Men's Sheds Association. 2024. About UKMSA. https://menssheds.org.uk/about-ukmsa/.
[73] John Vines, Rachel Clarke, Peter Wright, John McCarthy, and Patrick Olivier. 2013. Configuring Participation. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, Vol. 20. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 429–438. https://doi.org/10.1145/2470654.2470716
[74] Dhaval Vyas and Raunaq Bahl. 2023. ShedBox: Enabling Digital Storytelling in Men's Sheds. *Behaviour & Information Technology* (Aug. 2023), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2023.2242510
[75] Dhaval Vyas and Diogo Quental. 2023. "It's Just Like Doing Meditation": Making at a Community Men's Shed. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 7, GROUP (Jan. 2023), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1145/3567564