

# NOT-EQUAL

## EPSRC NetworkPlus: Social Justice through the Digital Economy

### Project Review Form - Mid-Term Review Pilot Project

Please submit this form before the deadline of 5pm on the 13<sup>th</sup> December to [notequal@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:notequal@ncl.ac.uk).

GENERAL INFORMATION	
<b>Lead Applicant (PI):</b> Sara Heitlinger	<b>Co-Investigators (names and organisations):</b>
<b>Email address:</b> Sara.heitlinger@city.ac.uk	Alex Taylor, City, University of London
<b>Job Title:</b> Lecturer in Computer Science	Lara Houston, City, University of London
<b>Department:</b> Computer Science	<b>Supporting Partner(s):</b>
<b>Organisation:</b> City, University of London	Furtherfield
	Spitalfields City Farm
	Gaia Foundation
	<b>Project Title:</b>
	<b>Project Reference Number:</b>
	NE20

#### 1. SUMMARY

*Please provide a summary of the activities and/or initial findings of your research project to date. This also includes events, engagement activities with non-academic partners and any other activities. Please include any images or website links that could be used for dissemination purposes (at least 500 words).*

We have thus far held 4 workshops on the project (as planned). All workshops took place at Spitalfields City Farm in east London, with the research team and Ruth Catlow from project partner, Furtherfield.

The following info is pasted from our website: [algorithmicfoodjustice.net](http://algorithmicfoodjustice.net)

**Workshop 1:** The first workshop took place on 30<sup>th</sup> september from 10-13:30, and was titled “what does this city farm need to thrive into the future?” We had about 15 participants from a range of community gardens and organisations including the [London Freedom Seed Bank](#), [Cordwainers Grow](#), [Phytology/Bethnal Green Nature Reserve](#), [John Evelyn Community Garden](#), the [Permaculture Association](#), the [Nightingale Community Garden](#), the Selby Estate community garden, and the Zimbabwean Association growers as well as staff from [Spitalfields Farm](#). After introductions and delicious cronuts from Rinkoffs bakery, we began our first activity: brainstorming all the human and non-human stakeholders of the city farm/community garden both now and in 2030. People moved



around 4 tables, each with a different stakeholder category: Human, Creature, Natural Environment, and Infrastructure & Organisation, writing down examples of stakeholder members from each category. After that, they chose one stakeholder from each category, and wrote down on a little form: its name; What it does now/in the future; What it costs now/in the future; What it gives now/in the future. The last part of this activity involved sticking the forms onto large A0 pieces of paper, and then mapping the relations between different stakeholders.

The next activity focused on mapping the different resources of the future community farm/garden. Participants had a choice of 2 ways to do this.

The first was a collage. Participants chose 3 different stakeholders from 3 of the different categories (human, non-human species, and institutional) and then used craft materials to show for each what they need, and what they provide to the community farm in the future. The other group worked to collectively map the resources of the future farm in the year 2030. Each person chose 3 stakeholders from the 3 categories. For each they answered, what is my most valuable resource? What is my scarcest resource? The materials generated in the workshop will inform the development of the next workshop, which will take place on the 28th October 2019 at the farm.

The rain held out, and we enjoyed the lovely farm, and a fresh salad made from farm grown produce.

For images please visit: <http://algorithmicfoodjustice.net/first-workshop-mapping-the-future-farm>

**Workshop 2:** ‘Now London is a City Farm’ was the second of workshop, and it took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at the farm.

In this workshop we played a game with various characters to imagine a more sustainable, inclusive and just future food system in the city. The format of the game is called Live Action Role Play (LARP). The game was created based on what we learned in the first workshop, and drawing on facts about current facts about food and environmental injustices.

The LARP was set after a fictional event in 2020 known as “The Great Food Emergency” after which all of London is reformed as a city farm.

The aim of the game was to transform London from an extractive financial centre into a global city farm in which all of London’s available spaces and infrastructures are turned over to creating a thriving food commons for its biodiverse inhabitants. Our actions were informed by real-world events and (social/scientific/technical) possibilities as we tried to establish new decision-making systems and urban infrastructures.

In the game, we each adopted a human character and a companion species. Together we worked to make space for the dreams of both our chosen human and companion species (and some nightmares too). The human characters were drawn from a list on an identity certificate.

The companion species were chosen from the following possibilities: birds, insects, farm animals, honey bees, soil, plants, trees, sensors, water, air, weather.

Participants were split into 2 assemblies: the EC1 farm assembly, and the London-wide farm assembly.



In each assembly, participants took on a board role, representing a different committee. Committees included: Coordination, Health, Agriculture, Security, Culture, Justice, Resources and Waste management, Education, Energy, Infrastructure, and Liaison. (\*A fork of the 2018 LARP ‘What will it be like when we build an island (on the blockchain)?’ by Ed Forniellis as part of the DAOWO series <http://www.daowo.org/#what-will-it-be-like-when-we-buy-an-island-on-the-blockchain>)

Participants were asked to join in a ritual: close your eyes, imagine your human character in one hand, your companion species in the other hand, rub your hands together till you feel the warmth, and clap.

Each assembly then discussed the items on the agenda, which were the same for both the EC1 and the London-wide assemblies. These were based on Nobel prize-winning economist Elinor Ostrom’s design principles for the commons:

1. **Membership – who’s in who’s out?**
2. **Review of current sharing protocols – are the shares fair?**
3. **Equal opportunities review for multiple species**
4. **Infrastructure report**
5. **Monitoring and Sanctions review – the free rider problem**
6. **Preparation for Liaison meeting**

There was then a liaison exchange between the local and city-wide assemblies. No surprises here, the city-wide assemblies were full of excuses, they were so slow-moving, “It’s remarkably like real life. You go over there [to the city-wide assembly] and they make you feel good. They ask you what you think and tell you that they care.” (Security). “They did say that we were way older than them, and we had a lot more time to practice our solutions” (Justice).

There were some great ideas around bacterial festivals, cross-species work placements, holidays for micro-organisms, piloting multispecies communications working groups, and resuing the body-scanners from the now defunct London airports to make sure no-one’s smuggling out pumpkins.

The final part of the LARP was a risk matrix. Each assembly filled in a risk matrix assessing the following:

1. People going hungry
2. Crop species declining
3. Interspecies relations declining
4. Wealth and power are concentrated within one group
5. Depletion of resources by free rider

The discussion around the risk matrix were quite optimistic.

Feedback revolved around difficulties in juggling the voices and needs of the human and the companion species. Also in general, it was still often the humans dominating the conversations, but we did make some headway towards multispecies relations and protecting the food commons.

Basilia and Etracy from the Zimbabwean association made a fabulous lunch for us all.

This info was copied from here: <http://algorithmicfoodjustice.net/second-workshop-now-london-is-a-city-farm>

The third workshop was scheduled to take place during the strike period, so we decided to cancel it and hold a double workshop on the 9<sup>th</sup> December with two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon – we are still in the process of writing these up for the blog, but the info should be up some time next week. The morning session was mostly for people with technical/blockchain and community currency experience (we had 8 participants) to prototype new types of blockchain-based organisations and rules for governance, in response to a series of scenarios that we presented, which had grown out of the previous 2 workshops. In groups of 3, participants prototyped these organisations and their rules. The afternoon session involved a wider group of participants who were growers and community organisers, to stress-test the prototypes from the morning session.

*Please indicate if these details can be shared in a blog post on the Not-Equal website*    YES    NO

## 2. WORK PLAN

*Please explain any deviations from your work plan, the reasons for this and plans to address the issue (up to 250 words)*

No deviations, except for the one workshop that had to be rescheduled because of the strike.



### Further Information

If you have any further questions regarding this form, please contact [notequal@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:notequal@ncl.ac.uk) or 0191 2088268.

