

**‘Zine-ing’ research otherwise: care, joy, and creative co-design with racially marginalised communities**

WONG, Mark <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5683-8684>>, MISHRA, Ankita <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0061-4884>> and QUYOUM, Aunam <<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3637-543X>>

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/37193/>

---

This document is the Published Version [VoR]

**Citation:**

WONG, Mark, MISHRA, Ankita and QUYOUM, Aunam (2026). ‘Zine-ing’ research otherwise: care, joy, and creative co-design with racially marginalised communities. *Journal of Creative Research Methods*, 1-34. [Article]

---

**Copyright and re-use policy**

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>



This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons

Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International license

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

---

## CREATIVE FORMAT

### ‘Zine-ing’ research otherwise: care, joy, and creative co-design with racially marginalised communities

Mark Wong<sup>id</sup>, [Mark.Wong@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Mark.Wong@glasgow.ac.uk)  
Ankita Mishra<sup>id</sup>, [ankita.mishra@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:ankita.mishra@sheffield.ac.uk)  
Aunam Quyoum<sup>id</sup>, [Aunam.Quyoum@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Aunam.Quyoum@glasgow.ac.uk)  
*University of Glasgow, UK*

This zine emerges from a participatory research project, focused on co-designing equitable digital services in energy, housing, and health sectors, rooted in the lived experience and insights co-produced with racially minoritised communities in England and Scotland. The zine documents not only the output of our creative workshops, such as the code of practice, but also the processes, values, and critical reflections that shaped our participatory and anti-racism work. By sharing the zine, we highlight the generative potential of creative methods to foster ethical, inclusive, and transformative spaces for collaboration and meaningful participatory research. We argue that the zine format embodies a politics of care, inviting reflections on how research can be done and shared differently. We sought to resist institutionalised and extractivist modes of knowledge (co-)creation and dissemination. Instead, centring reciprocity, joy, and accessibility as significant to participatory practices. Our creative co-design choices in the workshops, including: playful metaphors (‘cooking a dish’), collective storytelling, and graphic recording, facilitated spaces to engage participants in ways that felt meaningful and restorative. Beyond reporting the findings, the zine acts as a creative non-traditional means of dissemination that makes knowledge accessible without gatekeeping and academic jargons. Through the zine, we explored the process of participatory research, challenging dominant conceptions of rigour and impact, which are often tied to metrics that undervalue relational and process-oriented work. Thus, the zine offers both a record of our co-design process and a provocation of how might creative research dissemination contribute to reimagining research not as extraction but as repair.

**Keywords** participatory research • zine • creative • ethics of care • anti-racism

To cite this article: Wong, M., Mishra, A. and Quyoum, A. (2026) ‘Zine-ing’ research otherwise: care, joy, and creative co-design with racially marginalised communities, *Journal of Creative Research Methods*, Early View, DOI: 10.1332/30502969Y2025D000000011



**PROTECTING MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITY ONLINE (PRIME)**



# FOREWORD

This Zine presents the why, how and what it means to do participatory research with marginalised communities. It is grounded in the voices and experiences of participants from communities and representatives from across different sectors.

We present key insights, reflections and considerations that are central to carrying out participatory research in more meaningful and equitable ways.

We invite you to reflect on the value of listening to people's lived experiences of racism in digital services, ethics of how one might approach participatory research in practice, and Minoritised Ethnic people's hopes and recommendations on how to make design of digital services fairer and more equitable.

The work presented here is part of the PRIME project. The PRIME project researched people's experiences of using and navigating the increase in digital services in three sectors—health, social housing and energy. The project was in response to the growing evidence which has shown the disparities minoritised ethnic communities face in the outcomes and access to key public and essential services, and the potential for discrimination and racism to be replicated by services going digital.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATORY MEAN TO YOU?

THE ZINE INCLUDES A COLLECTION OF CONTENT CO-CREATED WITH INDIVIDUALS WHO PARTICIPATED IN FOUR WORKSHOPS HELD IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND OVER 6 MONTHS IN 2023-24. THIS CONTENT INCLUDES WRITTEN FEEDBACK, VERBAL REFLECTIONS, AND SMALLER GROUP-WORK RELATED TASKS. WE ALSO DRAW ON MATERIALS FROM GRAPHIC RECORDINGS CREATED IN REAL-TIME BY DIGITAL DESIGNERS AND ILLUSTRATORS PRESENT AT WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS.

This Zine has been created by a team of scholar-activists with a passion for participatory research, ethical practice and advancing anti-racism.

**BUILDING THE BRIDGE**



**Objectives of our workshops** ... p.1<sup>o</sup>

**Our guiding principles and values in practice**

- Sharing power ... p.2<sup>o</sup>
- Ethics of care ... p.3<sup>o</sup>
- Non-extractive co-production bingo ... p.4<sup>o</sup>



**Workshop 1 (What we did on the day and how)**

- Agenda ... p.5<sup>o</sup>
- Activities (principles of engagement, river of life, interact with data, cooking a dish) ... p.6-10<sup>o</sup>
- Photos ... p.11<sup>o</sup>
- Feedback ... p.12<sup>o</sup>



**Workshop 2 (What we did on the day and how)**

- Agenda ... p.13<sup>o</sup>
- Activities (generating and ranking values, recipe with instructions, must/could/should haves) ... p.14-16<sup>o</sup>
- Photos ... p.17
- Feedback ... p.18

**Our co-created output: Code of Practice** ... p.19

**Our reflections**

- Some Frequently Asked Questions ... p.20
- Provocations ... p.21

**Concluding thoughts** ... p.22

**About the project** ... p.23



**Thank you** ... p.24



**Epilogue (Back cover)** p.25





## HOW WE DID IT IN PRACTICE...

...Is underpinned by our desire to acknowledge and share **Power**

### PRE-BRIEFING

1. Having two different ones for Stakeholders and community - addressing the **power!**
2. Create & build a sense of familiarity before workshop. (do not assume people will come)

**After workshop**

- ♥ respond to feedback from individuals and tweak next workshop

**SHARE POWER** → **BUILD Trust**

**Space for authentic Co-production**

**Be a Nice Human**

### Involving community organisations from the start

- ↳ Setting research questions together
- ↳ Designing activities
- ↳ Paying for their support (e.g. recruitment, workshop design)
- ↳ Making sense of the data together
- ↳ Sharing findings + outputs

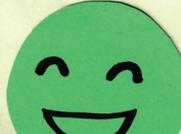
**It's all about COMMUNITY**

- Tune into organisations' priorities
- Value local knowledge and **expertise**
- Adapt workshop activities - what matters to communities
- Communities are not homogenous

②



## (NON-EXTRACTIVE) CO-PRODUCTION BINGO

<p>Foster space for people to be themselves</p> <p>(e.g. create a relaxed environment, diverse activities)</p> <p>No undue pressure for people to "perform," give you the answers, find the solutions!</p>	 <p>NO HELICOPTER APPROACH!</p>	<p>ENSURE TO COME BACK</p> <p>Share findings, share good practice, dissemination events - (ask if participants would like to present!)</p> <p>offer pay, expenses!</p>
<p>The END of a project IS NOT the END of the relationship...</p> 	 <p>SPACE FOR JOY &amp; PLAYFULNESS</p> <p>... and humour, and laughter!</p> <p>Especially when discussing emotive or difficult topics</p>	<p>Mutual benefits, Capacity building,</p> <p><b>Reciprocity</b></p> <p>Payment + expenses (incl. travel, food, childcare, accessibility)</p> <p>Co-authorship</p>
<p>Ensuring SAFETY in participation</p> <p>(e.g. pre-arranged seating, not feeling 'watched' by too many researchers, paying attention to dynamics in the space)</p>	<p>'BALANCE'</p>  <p>Make the activities feel grounded, relevant yet informative &amp; thought provoking</p>	<p>Joint-decision making throughout the work, Collaborative</p> <p>Going beyond "Do no harm"</p> <p>(e.g. design research questions and work activities with community partners)</p>

# W O R S H O P

AGENDA 1

Time	Activity
<del>11:00-11:40</del> 11:40	Welcome and arrival teas/coffee + pastries (M. Birmingham)
11:10-11:30	Opening activity and project introduction
11:30-12:00	Activity ("river of life")
12:00-12:25	Activity (interact with data)
<del>12:25-13:00</del> 13:30	Lunch
13:00-13:30	Activity (impact on people and what better looks like)
13:30-14:00	Activity ("cooking a dish" ingredients for the ideal)
<del>14:00-14:05</del> 14:15	Break
14:05-14:30	Wrap up (reflections from participants, next workshop) + Feedback

IT'S ALL A PART OF THE PROCESS



5







ACTIVITY: **COOKING A DISH!**

**Reflections** What would be the **STEPS** for developers to design digital services?

PLEASE FOLLOW... our recipe!

**REPRESENTATION**

- TRYING TO ADAPT DIVERSITY
- "SOUNDING LIKE TO DIVERSE MAN...!"
- "THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF BLACK PEOPLE BUT NO BLACK TECHNICAL OFFICERS...?"
- REDUCING STIGMA + PERCEPTION
- "ETHNIC MARKETS STAFF REPRESENTATION"
- "EASY MANAGEMENT TO ACCEPT EXPERIENCE"
- UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

**TRUST**

- CREATING TRANSPARENT UNDERSTANDING OF SERVICES + DATA
- "CAN WE TRUST SERVICE PROVIDERS TO SUPPORT US?"

**SUPPORT**

- IT MATTERS HOW WE ACCESS THE SERVICES
- "YOU'RE EXPECTING US TO ADAPT BUT YOU DON'T SUPPORT US IN THE TRANSITION..."
- DESIGNING our Recipe

**COOKING A DISH! RANKING PRIORITIES**

**CONFIDENCE**

- SYSTEMS + PROCESSES CENTRED AROUND HUMANS
- "EMPOWERMENT TO NOT BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF DUE TO THE SERVICE BALANCE"

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

- ADDRESSING EXISTING BIASES
- "ACTUALLY SERVING THE COMMUNITY..."
- "INVESTIGATIONS OF DISCRIMINATORY REPORT..."
- "KEEP CREATING POLICIES BUT NO MONITORING OR ADAPTING"

**EMPOWERMENT**

- LEADERSHIP + BEING CLEAR
- "INCONSISTENT + ADDING A BIT OF SALT"

**ADAPTABILITY**

- EXPLICITATION SHOULD ADAPT TO COMMUNITY NEEDS...

**CO-DESIGN Solutions**

9







**W** **O**<sub>1</sub> **R**<sub>1</sub> **K**<sub>5</sub> **S**<sub>1</sub> **H**<sub>4</sub> **O**<sub>1</sub> **P**<sub>3</sub>

**2** **A G E N D A**

Time	Activity
10:00-10:15	Welcome and arrival teas/coffee
10:15-10:20	Short introduction
10:20-10:25	<b>Activity</b> (Generating values – values you want reflected in digital services)
10:25-10:40	<b>Activity</b> (Prioritising values – what are the 5 must-have ingredients / spices in "cooking the dish"? What is the top 1?)—discuss in groups
10:40-10:55	Feedback to groups on <b>top 5</b> and <b>top 1</b>
10:55-11:00	<b>Self-reflection</b> (which value / ingredient is most important to you – post on wall)
11:00-11:10	<b>Break</b>
11:00-11:50	<b>Activity</b> (Instruction for "cooking the dish" - Defining the values, Write down Do's and Don't's, example of the value working – real or imagined in future)
11:50-12:00	<b>Break</b>
12:00-12:50	<b>Activity</b> (What the value looks and feels like in practice in each sector, 3 tables to walk round / "must-have, should have, could have" in these services)
12:50-13:00	<b>Wrap up</b> (reflections from participants, next workshop)
13:00-14:00	<b>Lunch</b>

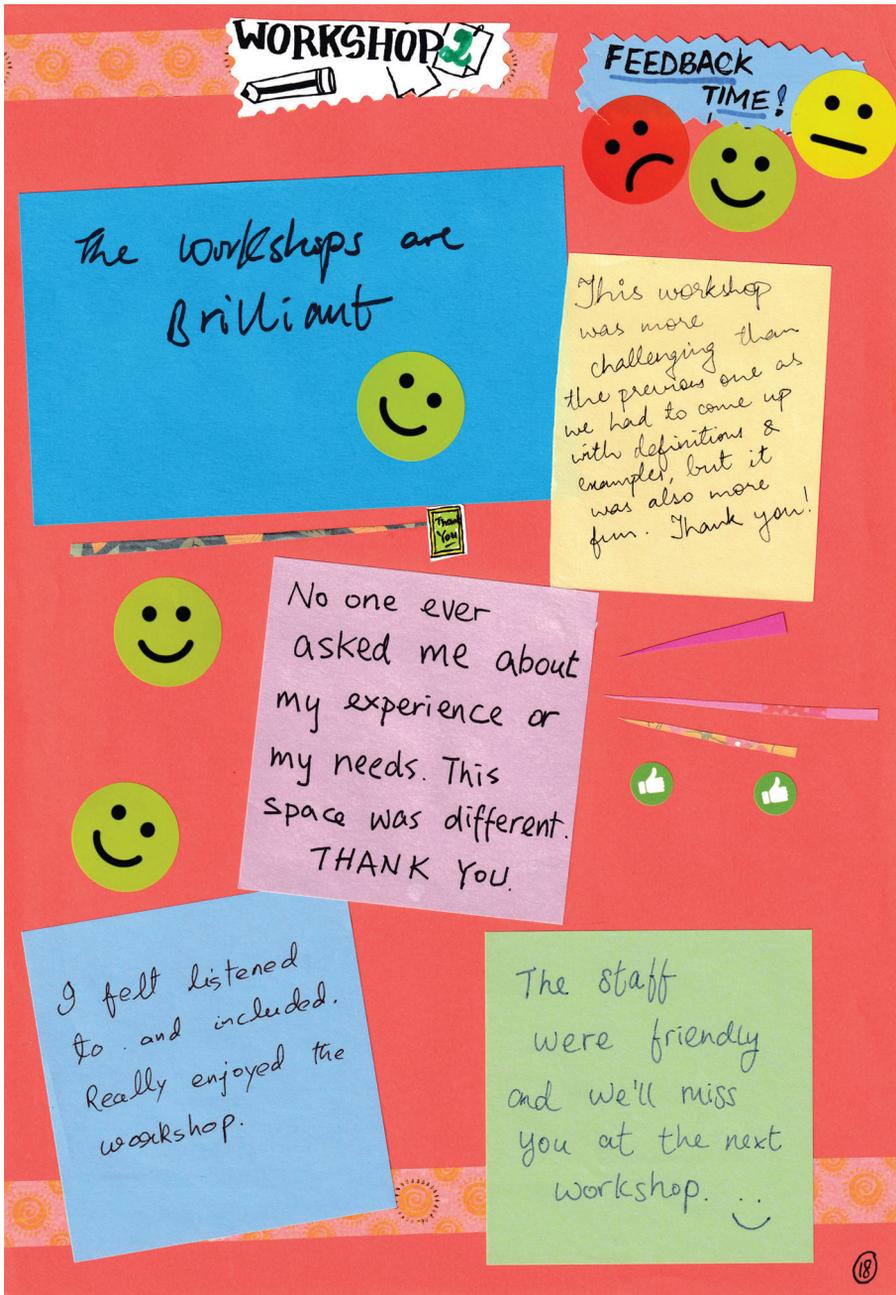
13

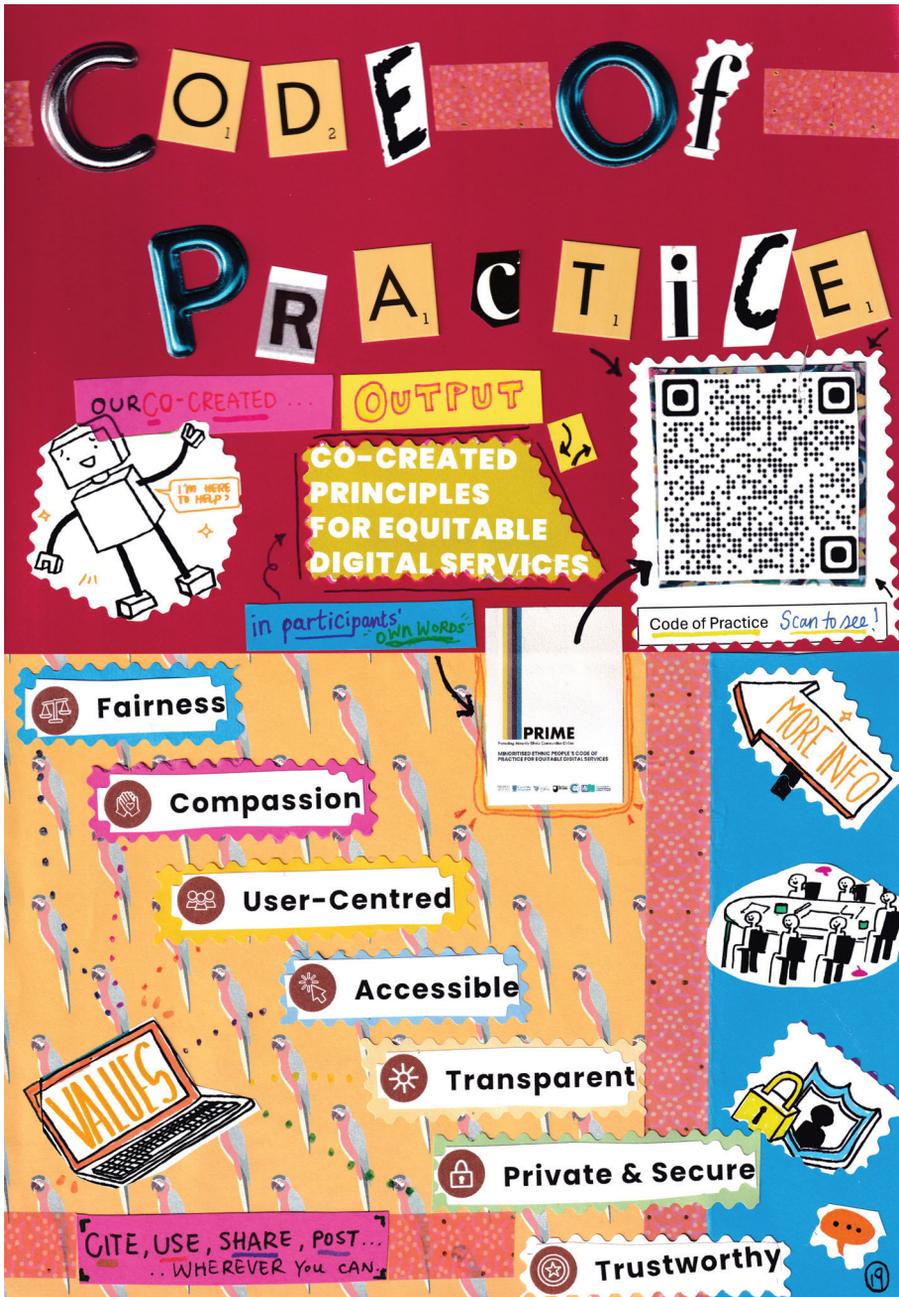












## OUR Reflections

**Our ingredients for a nourishing workshop:**

- Spoonfuls of joy
- Sprinkles of laughter
- Cups of care
- Dash of playfulness
- handful of accessible language and catering to access needs
- pinch of collective rage
- Served warm with room for rest, pause, comfort

Won't talking about people's difficult experiences just **retraumatise** them?

**It could but it doesn't have to.** Our approach focused on joy, fun, respect and connection. We used playful analogies like "cooking a dish" instead of "what went wrong?". It's about care-full facilitation.

How did you make sure people really **wanted** to be part of it—not just saying yes because they felt they had to?

By treating consent like a **conversation**, not a contract.

Let's rethink consent like tending a plant. It needs light, water, care—**over time**. Not a one-off checkbox.

We had a **pre-briefing** before the workshop as an attempt to mitigate power asymmetry on the day, familiarise with each other and us, and checking in with everyone about their participation.

Consent is a form of **ongoing respect**, not a formality. We invited people to offer as much as they wished to and reciprocated their generosity of time and contributions.

Ongoing relationships and support

Acknowledgements, credit, co-authorship

Showing up and sharing the 'mic'

Payments

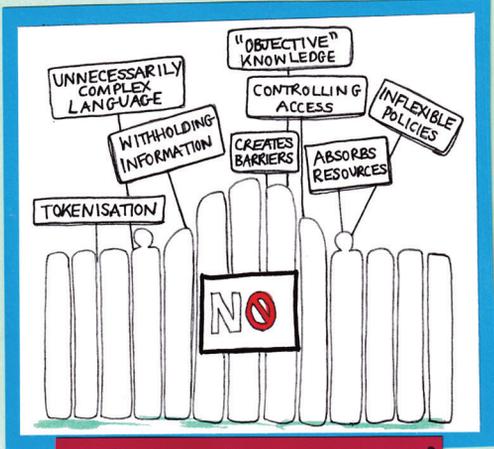
Our toolbox of reciprocity

**PROVOCATIONS**



NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY  
**COOPTING**  
CO-PRODUCTION

We do not want to gatekeep the knowledge, process and practice of participatory research.



UNNECESSARILY COMPLEX LANGUAGE  
WITHHOLDING INFORMATION  
TOKENISATION  
UNNECESSARILY COMPLEX LANGUAGE  
CONTROLLING ACCESS  
CREATES BARRIERS  
ABSORBS RESOURCES  
INFLIBLE POLICIES  
"OBJECTIVE" KNOWLEDGE

**NO**

**NO GATEKEEPING!**

**BUILD TRUST** 827830

**VALUE JUSTICE** 827830

Slow and steady is good!  
Taking time and care is more important than doing too much too soon!  
Meaningful engagement takes time  
Not about metrics or tick-boxes.

**NEW** METRICS OF EVALUATION

Journal articles  
Outputs  
Income for Unis  
Self-promotion

**OUR EVALUATION CRITERIA NEEDS CHANGING**

Did people enjoy the process?

Pain Joy! Feeling heard



Slow and steady

21

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We have tried to be honest and transparent, and not gatekeep or hide our work behind academic jargon, journals or paywalls. We hope this zine reflects our intention to make our work accessible and widely available.

The zine highlights the thought process we undertook to ensure our approach is meaningful to the context and, most importantly, the people we engaged with and sought to learn from through the research.

This is why we wanted to share the journey with you—not just the outcomes, but the 'how' of it—so we can all collectively reflect on the practice and its limits, especially within the constraints of institutions. This journey is also a continuous one. Our work keeps fighting on, and our destination isn't the project end date.

*Dear Participatory research community* (including independent scholars, activists, grassroots/community groups, and anyone interested & involved in participatory research),

We have created this Zine to document how we have developed and used a participatory approach in our research project. We understand and acknowledge that we may not have always got it 'right', but we also pause to reflect if there is a 'meaningful' or 'ideal' participatory research approach. Perhaps one of its key lessons is to stay reflective throughout and to keep striving to do better than how research has 'always been done'. Participatory research can be transformative to varying degrees, so it is important to question from whose perspective we judge this and how we share power.

We deeply believe that the process of participatory research is just as important as its outputs. This is often overlooked by institutions like universities, funders, and policymakers, whose definitions of impact and value are tied to metrics that don't always align with the ethos and practice of collaboration. In today's neoliberal research and funding environments, co-design and participatory research are often used as buzzwords – seen as tools to make research appear more 'impactful' without fully engaging with the complexities of doing it well.

For us, this isn't about following a trend or borrowing from global majority knowledge systems without context. It's about valuing the process as a way of repair – of unlearning the extractive traditions of mainstream research and beginning to mend the harm caused to communities long excluded from conversations that affect them. Our journey of engaging in it is rooted in the *ethics of care and love*.

This Zine is our attempt to share knowledge and practice in creative and joyful forms – forms that institutions may not always see as 'valuable' or 'rigorous'. But as with all things participatory, we are interested in challenging and shifting our frames of thinking what knowledge is, how it is generated and shared, what counts as rigour!

We also acknowledge that our workshops have led to some conventional outputs, such as the Code of Practice, and we appreciate they have been perceived as valuable by some institutions. At the same time, we hope that this Zine shows the importance of intangible impact of participatory research process: meaningful connections, ongoing reflection and emerging possibilities. We are counting on the power of this non-traditional creative output to help in a paradigm shift of 'doing research': towards joy, delightfulness and abundance as our *resistance and repair*.

We invite you to engage with us in our journey: *if you were a participant invited to one of the workshops, how would you feel? What would you have wanted us to do differently?*

Thank you for taking the time to connect with our work.  
With deep gratitude in our hearts,  
Your fellow seekers of participatory research

## About the PROJECT

The research underpins this Zine is part of the **Protecting Minority Ethnic Communities Online (PRIME)** project. This project was led by **five** universities (Heriot-Watt, Cranfield, Glasgow, Open University, and York) in partnership with public and third sector organisations in England and Scotland.

The aim of the research is: create more equitable online services *for* and *with* minoritised ethnic people.

The project focused on three specific sectors: **health**, **social housing** and **energy**. Together with CEMVO Scotland and brap, our team at University of Glasgow designed 4 co-design workshops in Brimingham and Glasgow.

The workshops' **purpose** was: centre the voice of minoritised ethnic people and co-determine the **priorities** and **principles** to guide the design of digital services. This helps ensure services are equitable and counter racism in their access, outcomes and experiences. Our workshops also discussed the concerns and hopes of minoritised ethnic people about how they want data and AI to be used/not used.

We wanted to question: how reliable is this system, what level of bias might it contain, how fair is this outcome and what inequalities could this perpetuate?



Endorsement by the UK Government DSIT Ministerial support office in a letter:

'The Code of Practice offers a clear, values-based guide to designing fairer and more inclusive digital services... The [project's] mix of research, real-world insight, and free-to-use tools and frameworks makes this a really valuable contribution for anyone working to improve digital services'

# Thank you

**brap**

Asif, Hannah, Rakiyah

**cemo**  
SCOTLAND

Aliya, Colin, Wayne



Liam Callobont

"FLOATING DESIGNER"

Sarah Ahmad



**SINCERELY,  
THANK YOU**

All individuals participated in the co-design workshops\* (including community members as experts by lived experience, representatives from sectors: health, third sector, housing, design consultancy/industry, regulators, public sector, local authorities, data/artificial intelligence (AI) community)

Thank you for sharing  
so generously ...

\* Sector representatives include majority of people also with lived experience of racism

Local venues + catering staff:  
• Carlton Heritage and Learning Centre - Hidden Gardens  
• Conference Ashton

PRIME team: Gina, Ayes, Laura, Mohdi, Sara, Sia  
(note-taking at workshops and more)



Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

# PRIME

The spirit of this Zine is to **invite** you, and other organisations and people who want to/have participate(d) in research, to keep reflecting individually and collectively, especially together with people outside of 'traditional' academia and in marginalised communities.

There are some uncomfortable truths with **no** easy answer. These questions can serve as an anchor for engaging with participatory research meaningfully.

Are we creating genuinely inclusive research spaces, or are we reproducing familiar hierarchies of knowledge?

In what ways can we move beyond co-opted notions of 'co-production' towards genuinely collaborative, intersectional, and ethical research practices that centre the experiences?

**ANTI-RACISM**

"can the master's tool ever dismantle the master's house?"

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Participatory research is also about how we show up before, during and after.

*The end is also the beginning....*

Created by:  
Ankita Mishra, Mark Wang, Annon Sagarson



**PRIME**  
Participatory Research in the 21st Century

## Reflective statement

Zines have long been used as creative tools of resistance, refusal, and collective imagination rooted in deeply political histories of feminist, queer, punk, anti-racist, and anti-imperialist movements (Liu et al, 2025). Zines offer space to counter dominant narratives and resist erasure of marginalised voices (Ghaffar, 2022). We were drawn to this history as it resonates with our own research commitments and ethos of creating spaces of joy, care, collaboration, and resistance with racially minoritised communities. Making a zine about our research process felt like a continuation of that politics of doing research *otherwise*.

The growing academic enthusiasm for zines risks reducing them to *outputs* neatly aligned with impact agendas (Sou and Hall, 2023). Our own zine refuses this narrowing. We treat *zine-ing* as an ongoing, collective process through which creativity, care, and joy become both method and politics.

## What doing the zine helped with

For us, making the zine was a part of the research process itself where it required us to slow down and return to conversations, re-engage with workshop materials, and reflect collectively about what mattered and how it should be represented. In this slowing-down, we practised refusal: a refusal of extractive speed, metrics of productivity, and the hierarchy that privileges polished 'outputs' over relational labour. Our zine became a site of processual knowledge, where the tactile acts of cutting, arranging, colouring, and conversing enacted an ethics of care and anti-racist solidarity.

## How a zine works as an output

Recent studies caution against zines being reduced to token outputs within neoliberal institutions (Brebeneil and de Bruin-Molé, 2020); we echo that warning and present our zine as a deliberate political choice and a small act of joyful resistance and repair. Zine-making helped us challenge institutional power around what legitimate research outputs are and who they are for.

In creating something relational and non-linear, we reversed the hierarchical logic of dissemination. We consciously chose to create a zine before writing a journal article. Not least to practise rest and joy as resistance, but this format allowed us to prioritise community relevance, artistic expression, and accessibility over compliance of metrics, rigour, or what 'counts' as impact. The zine allowed us to hold space for multiple forms of knowing, which would otherwise be flattened or erased in conventional academic writing (Licona, 2013). It also held the tension and emotions of being caught between doing anti-racist participatory research and constrained by a neoliberalised university/funding landscape. Zine-making, for us, became a creative expression and release of these discomforts, contradictions, and refusal of co-option. In this sense, our zine is a site of a 'living' archive, where it carries ethical and relational significance, and invites reflective and restorative work.

The act of crafting the zine together invited care and reflexivity into the process, such as whose words we are amplifying, how might colour, pictures, and design and visual elements communicate warmth and joy. Our workshops ensured people's experiences were joyful and delightful, whereby the zine allowed us to continue to reflect on how to sustain joy and reflexivity after and how to redistribute power.

## How the zine was made

The process was intentionally slow and collected, with no specific deadlines and unencumbered by a funding end date or reporting, trying to centre and sustain connection, delight, and joy in doing the research.

A lot of this work happened in spaces that rarely featured in research write-ups, such as being seated on office floors with coloured pens and papers scattered around, conversations with no meeting agenda, outdoor walks in nature, gatherings in each other's homes, and sharing food from our own cultures (see [Figures 1, 2, 3](#)). We contested the formal and institutional with the informal and relational, prioritising making creative decisions together and time spent with one another enjoyable. This provided a sense of generosity and indulgence, in which we were momentarily freed to be creative, to think, to laugh together, and to reflect on the affects and care ethics in and through our work.

**Figure 1:** Our process of making the Zine on the floor



**Figure 2:** Zine-ing through shared meals and craft when we gathered at each other's spaces (office, home, restaurant/cafe)



**Figure 3:** Our reflective walk in nature while making the zine



## Zine as a creative format

The zine is, therefore, not just an output but also a living, organic, *relational* tool for us as activist scholars. It nourishes our connection with one another, prioritises communities we collaborate with, and opens a rare moment for readers, within and beyond academia, to reflect collectively on the tensions, and joy, of doing participatory, anti-racism work. Making the zine was a continuation of the co-production process.

Creativity, thus, can be a mode of collaboration, care, and refusal to conform. Not just for reporting research – we consciously chose the zine as a creative, accessible format to share our learning and invite others into our research process. This is why our zine’s final page, and throughout, is filled with questions for readers instead of conclusions or instructions.

Our zine invites readers to reflect on what makes it playful and engaging for participants, while we also practised playfulness in the design choices, such as colours, patterns, and collaging. Collaborative decisions about aesthetics (sequence, colour, texture, and layout) also became conscious and political choices. The zine allowed us to return to these questions, grounding the knowledge in care and connection while also attending to how readers feel when reading the zine.

We hoped to invite the readers into the atmosphere of the work, and not just the findings, by resisting an extractivist mode of communication. As a creative format, we intended to offer our zine as a relational form, which can be circulated freely, adapted by others, and communicated in an accessible way without academic jargon or frames of references.

## Sharing what we learned with fellow researchers

The zine enabled us to convey relational processes, affective textures, and reparative practices in ways that conventional outputs rarely permit. It reminds us that collaboration is not just intellectual, but also embodied and emotional – such as through shared meals, collective joy and laughter, and unpacking tensions.

In our process of zine-ing otherwise, *joy* became *our methodology* reasserting delight, play, and care as rigorous modes of enquiry and accountability. Creative dissemination can, therefore, redistribute authorship, make findings accessible, and hold ethical commitments visibly.

For fellow researchers, we hope our experience and process of making the zine is a vital mode of enquiry itself and *not* just a supplementary mode to traditional output or ‘real’ research. It opens possibilities of imagination, joy, and care, which are essential to community collaboration. Zine-ing becomes a way of doing research that honours collectivity and sustains care. As zine-making makes space for care, delight, and collective imagination, it reminded us that research can be playful, rigorous, and restorative. The zine is, therefore, a metaphor of what we did, and itself a method that insists that creativity is central to anti-racist and transformative practice, connecting with and showing care towards people.

The learning we hope to share is that creative formats such as zines are not after-the-fact translations of research but methodological sites in their own right. They allow joy, vulnerability, and imagination to coexist with rigour, opening up possibilities of imagination, dialogue, and solidarity that academic articles would not typically allow.

We invite fellow researchers to embrace the messiness of the zine-making process as it mirrors the messiness and emergent nature of doing participatory research.

In treating the zine as *process over product*, we affirm that creativity is central to anti-racist and participatory praxis: a way of doing research that is as much about how we make together as what we make. In keeping with the spirit of the zine, we would like to end by inviting readers to reflect on some questions to carry forward:

*What if creativity is resistance to the status quo?*

*What if sharing of joy is our metrics of success?*

*What if care, creative, and affective work is the work?*

*What is stopping and oppressing us from reimagining what, and who, our output is created for?*

### **ORCID IDs**

Mark Wong  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5683-8684>

Ankita Mishra  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0061-4884>

Aunam Quayoum  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3637-543X>

### **Funding**

This work was supported by the UKRI Strategic Priorities Fund under Grants EP/W03235X/1.

### **Research ethics statement**

Ethical approval was obtained from the ethics committee at the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences.

### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

### **References**

- Brebenel, M. and de Bruin-Molé, M. (2020) The carrier bag of feminist pedagogy: Zine-making as training in the neoliberal university, *MAI: Feminism & Visual Culture*, 5, <https://www.maifeminism.com/the-carrier-bag-of-feminist-pedagogy-zine-making-as-training-in-the-neoliberal-university>.
- Ghaffar, F. (2022) The zine as mediator in building community within the university, in D.P.Jones and J. Bagelman (eds) *New Frontiers in Zineing: Zines as Process and Modes of Recovery*. RGS-IBG Annual Conference.
- Licona, A.C. (2013) *Zines in Third Space: Radical Cooperation and Borderlands Rhetoric*, State University of New York Press.
- Liu, R.Z., Liu, W.M., Charity, C.J., Le, V.B., Payne, R.L., Escobal, L.D., et al (2025) Our stories of origins: decolonial healing through zines and zine-making, *American Psychologist*, 80(4): 655–69, doi: [10.1037/amp0001453](https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0001453)
- Sou, G. and Hall, S.M. (2023) Comics and zines for creative research impact, *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 817–41, doi: [10.7202/1098037ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/1098037ar)