

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Greenwich		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 32 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Diversity and Inclusivity by Design: Transforming co-design methods to shape diversity and inclusion policy for humanitarian and cultural organisations in Europe and Africa, and increase inclusion, skills and confidence for vulnerable young people		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> January 2016 – December 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Anastasios Maragiannis	Associate Professor, Inclusive Design	24/10/2007 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> January 2016 to December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Diversity and Inclusivity by Design (d+iD) is a collaborative research project, which embeds diversity and inclusivity research in the creative spaces of art and design through co-design methods. Conceived and led by <b>Dr Anastasios Maragiannis</b>, the research has reached over half a million people through a program of events (2016-2020) that include research outputs showcased international exhibitions including the London Design Festival (LDF) and the Cyprus High Commission (CHC). The research has informed and shaped diversity and inclusion policy in governmental and non-governmental refugee and cultural organisations in Cyprus, Greece, Africa and the UK, transforming creative practice for young refugees and socio-economic migrants. Within North-West Europe, the research has supported vulnerable young people to increase skills and confidence.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Established in 2016 by <b>Dr Anastasios Maragiannis</b>, University of Greenwich (UoG), the <i>Diversity and Inclusivity by Design</i> (d+iD) project [3.1] explores the question: “What is enabled when designers design with and for others?”. Findings from d+iD show that co-design with users - specifically within the design development process - ensures that results meet these end users’ needs. Co-design ensures better understanding and knowledge of user or stakeholder requirements; improved solutions; and cross-disciplinary collaboration.</p> <p><b>Maragiannis’</b> research project challenged conventional approaches, which often view design as a process and product of an individual expert. He recognised early on, the need to identify and address the concerns of design practitioners regarding the efficacy of co-design methods. The perspectives he encountered have included: the view that co-design could be disruptive to the designer’s progress; could potentially create disorder in planning and execution and is therefore time-consuming; and the view that co-design is limited in its scope and what it can achieve. <b>Maragiannis</b> demonstrated that the merits of co-design outweigh any perceived disadvantages.</p> <p>His novel research established that co-design positively engages marginalised groups to amplify, mobilise and diversify design practices and discourse. The d+iD research [3.1] has shown that by using a co-design approach, design can act inclusively regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, language or age, and can therefore, be used as a powerful tool to create positive social impact and change. The project has made it its aim to re-imagine and alter the way that design is approached, and to make diversity and inclusivity a central aspect of co-design methods. The</p>		

research innovation of the d+iD project has been to successfully use co-design methodologies to co-create with marginalised groups in order to give them a voice and empower them [3.1].

**Maragiannis'** is the co-design lead for a €4.28M majority EU funded (alongside other funders) project to lead a team to develop a co-design methodology to tackle labour market exclusion, engaging those not in education, employment or training (NEET). To make a real difference, they transferred knowledge across regions in Europe to generate an innovative, inclusive, transnational model. This model provided NEETs with the necessary essential support (in North West Europe) while responding to the specificities of local/regional contexts and NEETs' individual needs and goals [3.2].

Inspired by the limited understanding and choices around aesthetics and personalisation in wearables, **Maragiannis** explored how technology could be used to empower individuals in a variety of contexts; to improve our way of living in the world, through a number of contextual resources and practice-research, which were devised and conducted to address women's concerns and preferences on wearable technologies. He evidenced that a very important factor in the development of wearables was the social and cultural connotations of these devices and how they then portray women [3.3].

The d+iD research team is comprised of scholars, designers and artists; and collaborates with FABRICA Research Centre (Italy), AIGA (USA), Greek Forum of Refugees (GFR), the Cyprus High Commission (CHC) and the Greenwich Autistic Society (UK). This cross-disciplinary research culminated in co-design discourse and practice, public exhibitions, workshops and panel discussions. The project has focused on developing a dialogue amongst industry experts, scholars, artists, designers and the public for the opportunity to create a multicultural and multidisciplinary exchange of ideas [3.1].

The d+iD research project has recently achieved global recognition by a UNESCO partner organisation, the prestigious International Institute of Information Design Award [3.a], and also won the Interreg North West Europe "IMPACT AWARD" in Lille (Dec 2019) with over 90 EU funded projects entries [3.b].

### 3. References to the research

1. **Maragiannis, A.** (2016 – 2020). Multi-component research portfolio output, Diversity and inclusivity by design. <http://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/31940/>
2. **Maragiannis, A,** Kennedy, Stephen, Rehal, Kamalveer and Maffioletti, Catherine (2019) Co-Design Methods towards Inclusive design in Diverse Communities: Empowering Youth through Entrepreneurial Skills. In: Design Research for Change 2019. Lancaster University, pp. 118-119. ISBN 978-1862203631 <https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/28062/> [PDF copy available from the university on request]
3. **Maragiannis, A.** and Ashford, R. (2019). "Diversity and Inclusivity in the Age of Wearables: A Buzzword, a Myth, an Uncertain Reality". *Body, Space & Technology*, 18(1), p.198. <http://doi.org/10.16995/bst.320>

#### Indicator of research quality:

- a. **Recognition:** International Institute of Information Design (IIID) Award 2020: <https://tinyurl.com/IIID-research-Award>
- b. **Grant:** Interreg NWE, NWE 695, Project title: EYES, Lead: Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen, Institut für Kirche und Gesellschaft, Partner: UoG, PI: Kennedy, S; Co-I (co design lead) **Maragiannis, A**, May 18 – Mar 21, €925,760.49

### 4. Details of the impact

Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole.

Since its 2016 inception, the d+iD project has influenced designers, changed international cultural policies and perceptions, improved the lives of marginalised communities and the social welfare, employment and education of vulnerable young people. The d+iD research has shown that by using a co-design approach, design can act inclusively regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, language or age, and can therefore, be used as a powerful tool to create positive social impact and change.

### **Influencing creative practice and reaching new audiences**

**Maragiannis'** research, in collaboration with refugees and people living with visible and non-visible disabilities in the UK and abroad, influenced diversity in the arts and improved the understanding of co-design approaches for two international cultural departments and four NGOs and research centres from four countries (Italy, Greece, USA, Cyprus). From 2016 onwards, the d+iD team have been incorporating their research findings into commissioned public exhibitions and collaborations, as well as international forums, workshops and lectures. In September 2017, the team curated an exhibition that took part in the London Design Festival (LDF); an event with an estimated audience of 420,000, with 24% being overseas [5.1]. The exhibition worked in collaboration with FABRICA Research Centre (IT), AIGA (USA), the Greek Forum of Refugees (GFR), the Greenwich Autistic Society (UK) and was partially funded in kind by Exonera and Ecoluxe London. The LDF 2017 *"Diversity and inclusivity by design"* exhibition offered 15 diverse and inclusive inter-disciplinary projects. A series of public events accompanied the exhibition, including talks and public workshops. This exhibition brought communities together, raised awareness within organisations about the importance of considering diversity and inclusivity and inspired new creative practice.

For example, the exhibition led Graphics and Digital Designer, Alexandros Kosmidis from *'forpeople'* to develop a design project named "UNbuffer", to explore the buffer zone that has divided Cyprus's island for more than five decades. The Green Line is essentially a ceasefire line, patrolled by the UN peacekeeping force and constituting constant reminder and remainder of the conflict. The project raised awareness, introduced new artistic expression forms, and led to several high-profile international awards in 2019/20 [5.2]. Alexandros Kosmidis said: *"My participation in the d+iD research project empowered me to collaborate with public arts venues, artists and programming professionals to produce new forms of artistic expression. The d+iD research generated new ways of thinking that influence my creative practice, artistic quality, and audience reach."* [5.2].

Furthermore, in December 2018, as a result of the exhibition, Maragiannis was invited to contribute to Econsultancy's best practice guide on Neurodiversity and Digital Inclusivity [5.3]. **Maragiannis** co-developed these inclusivity guidelines to help businesses start addressing the needs of neurodivergent individuals. At least 10% of potential customers may be won and lost over the issue of accessibility and inclusion. The guide, using **Maragiannis'** research, supported organisations with good practice in employment, product design and marketing and is available to over 600,000 professionals every month [5.3].

### **Policy changes to support economic migrants and refugees**

The d+iD project influenced and initiated policy change in two organisations involving economic migrants and refugees. The research collaboration with the GFR and the High Commission of the Republic of Cyprus (CHC) were significant in serving communities who often feel disenfranchised and forgotten.

In Jan 2019, the CHC and the Cultural Section commissioned the team to devise and co-design themes of diversity and inclusivity with a group of London-based Cypriot designers, and to explore

how these ideas could be used as vehicles of design within the context of immigration and economic expatriation. The ensuing d+iD “*Empower Individuals*” exhibition at the LDF 2019 highlighted social and political issues, consumerism, gender issues and conflict. The Festival welcomed a record-breaking 600,000 individual visitors from over 75 countries [5.4].

Subsequently, in June 2019, the CHC Cultural Section (CS) commissioned the d+iD team to co-develop their first ever cultural and arts policy. **Maragiannis’** research was instrumental in the development of the CHC’s CS “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion” policy in the Creative Arts, Design and Education”. The focus of this policy was the empowerment of individuals and the engagement of diverse participants. The collaboration led to valuable outcomes, as the new policy is now mandatory in their creative projects/participation and application processes. The policy has been influential in their decision to create new projects which will focus on more inclusive outcomes. Dr Marios Psaras, Cultural Counsellor, CHC said: “*The project has enabled us to support diverse collectives and individuals, including youth groups, LGBTQ+ artists and projects, female leaders in the arts and culture, and ethnic minorities... [the] diversity and inclusivity by design research project has made an invaluable contribution to our evidence-based approach and has been instrumental in our work.*” [5.5].

The GFR found that the research outputs of the exhibition d+iD “*Empower Individuals*” exhibition covered issues relevant to their own cultural program. As a result, in March 2019, the GFR invited the team to devise the “*Creative Citizens of Europe*” exhibition in Athens, which investigated ways to engage refugees through design and the arts. The exhibition motivated the GFR to reflect on current processes and develop a new framework and organisational policy that considered inclusion and integration of refugees in society through the arts. This led to **Maragiannis** developing an “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion” policy for them to empower people through Creative Arts, Design, Education and Sports”. This policy has been used to raise awareness of GFR’s creative activities and has positively impacted and increased participation in their activities. Furthermore, their engagement with **Maragiannis’** research has also enhanced GFR’s policy and practice for securing diverse project proposals, for example the MATCH social inclusion opportunities project which is a Collaborative Partnerships project co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme. This project has enhanced social inclusion and equal opportunities for 800 refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and disadvantaged young local people by fostering and increasing participation in sport activities [5.6]. Jean Didier Totow, President, GFR stated: “*Since 2018, [the policy] has been a key part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strand where we have reached out to underrepresented and marginalised groups to sell the benefits of participation. The project has enabled us to support community groups.*” [5.6].

**Maragiannis’** research has also led to a collaboration with Africa Risk Consulting (ARC), a pan-African consulting company which provides information and advice that enables its clients to take informed investment decisions and to safeguard their reputations. ARC’s client base includes several development financial institutes which place a huge emphasis on diversity and inclusion in the supply chain of the work they commission. Consequently, ARC consulted **Maragiannis** and his team to seek to embed d+iD in their outward presentation and processes to meet this specific requirement. This collaboration has been instrumental in their approach to recruitment and their focus on the diversity and inclusion aspects of participation. They also use it as a core means to raise awareness of how ARC aspires to work in Francophone countries where they are gaining in prominence notably in the West African currency zone of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Togo and Senegal and the Central African zone of Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Tara O’Connor, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) Ltd said “*d+iD research has influenced our decision-making and has helped us to ‘sell the benefits’ to ARC’s database [of] 3,000 political, academic and business contacts across the continent and in the Africa-linked world.*” [5.7].

#### **Empowering marginalised groups**

Since 2016, the weekly Design Roast Open Lecture Series, an annual event, with 40 sessions, has made diversity and inclusivity by design its focal point [5.8]. Approximately 2,500 people have



attended in person and online and it has established itself as an important platform that engages the design community and diverse communities.

Ecoluxe London, an organisation promoting eco-sustainable fashion and, in particular, supporting diverse and marginalised communities adopted the Design Roast lectures as part of their training and broader reach to diverse communities' networks. The lectures challenged and inspired the entire Ecoluxe community and beyond. Stamo Ampatielou, Director, Ecoluxe said; *“we work with young women from Northern Africa, and as part of our process, we used the lecture series to empower them...an economic refugee young woman from Africa with no access to education, mentioned that the series helped her build confidence and consider options that she never thought she could do before. [She] has now left an abusive marriage and is able to provide for her young family in Greece.”* [5.9].

#### **Improving the social welfare, employment and education of vulnerable young people**

In North West Europe (NWE), 14% of young people aged 15-34 years are not in employment, education, or training (NEET). Vulnerable young people can be irresponsive to classic top-down approaches and often do not connect to existing support schemes which bears the risk of long-term labour market exclusion. The d+iD project collaborated with EYES (Empowering Youth through Entrepreneurial Skills) who are a European partnership of municipalities, regional governments, social services and universities. They encourage young people who are in a vulnerable position to (re)gain control of their own life. **Maragiannis'** is the co-design lead for the EYES project and his d+iD research methodology is used to develop the project outputs. This included the co-development of an App that that can be jointly used by vulnerable young people and their coaches which puts them in touch with local organisations and training providers. In addition, **Maragiannis** and his team co-developed training materials for professional and volunteer coaches and guidance for the local implementation of the EYES approach. The project outputs also included training labs which prepare coaches to run the pilots in the Ruhr area, Greater London, Flemish triangle, European Metropolis of Lille, and Tilburg. Dr Jürgen Born, Chair of EYES said *“The project has enabled us to involve and support different communities professionals, and diverse young people from North-West European cities to develop engaging ways to increase skills and confidence. The project generates new ways of thinking that influence creative practice or its audience reach. Through its co-design methodologies and diversity and inclusivity by design research methods the University of Greenwich has contributed to inspiring, co-creating and supporting new forms of social expression.”* [5.10].

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

1. London Design Festival 2017 audience figures <https://www.dezeen.com/2017/12/21/london-design-festival-record-breaking-visitor-figures-people-walked-past-installations/>
2. Testimonial Alexandros Kosmidis, Graphics and Digital Designer, *forpeople*
3. *Neurodiversity-and-Digital-Inclusion Best Practice Guide*—Econsultancy
4. London Design Festival 2019 audience figures <https://www.londondesignfestival.com/what-london-design-festival>
5. Testimonial Dr Marios Psaras, Cultural Counsellor, Cyprus High Commission
6. Testimonial Jean Didier Totow, President, Greek Forum of Refugees
7. Testimonial Tara O'Connor, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) Ltd
8. Design Roast Open Lecture Series <https://blogs.gre.ac.uk/designroast/>
9. Testimonial: Stamo Ampatielou, Director, ECOLUXE, London.
10. Testimonial Dr Jürgen Born, Chair of EYES North West Europe, Institut für Kirche und Gesellschaft der Evangelischen Kirche von Westfalen