A photograph of a person climbing a large tree. The person is seen from behind, wearing a blue shirt and dark pants, with their arms extended upwards. The tree has thick, gnarled branches and dense green foliage. The background is a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene conveys a sense of growth, nature, and human effort.

# REINVENTING URBAN SYNERGY

Exploring Post Growth  
Concepts

Gianna González Watterston 2206647

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# ASSIGNMENT 1:

POST GROWTH IMAGINARIES

Visual Systems

# DISCOVER

## THE BRIEF

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# WHAT WAS OUR BRIEF?

Our brief for this assignment challenged us to think critically, conceptually, and speculatively, to create a narrative for a post-growth world and society.

Working with Amy, Gloria, and Mollie on this project was an engaging and insightful experience. Starting this unit, I was uncertain about what to expect, as I had never worked with Amy, Gloria or Mollie, but I approached it intending to improve my teamwork skills while also building connections with other members of the course.

Situating ourselves in a world without fossil fuels, we were tasked with reimagining wood/forests and their relationship with society. In this post-growth world, civilization would have

moved beyond the “current economic growth paradigm” (*Visual Systems, 2024, p. 8*), focusing instead on more sustainable practices and futures.

Through appropriate research, we had to explore how wood and forests could support a post-growth future by prioritising regenerative, community-focused uses and shifting from energy-intensive practices to more sustainable approaches.

By the end of this assignment, we successfully developed an achievable and practical solution for a post-fossil fuel world. Our focus was on creating a community-centered, post-growth future where every living being could thrive in harmony. By addressing the challenges of sustainability and

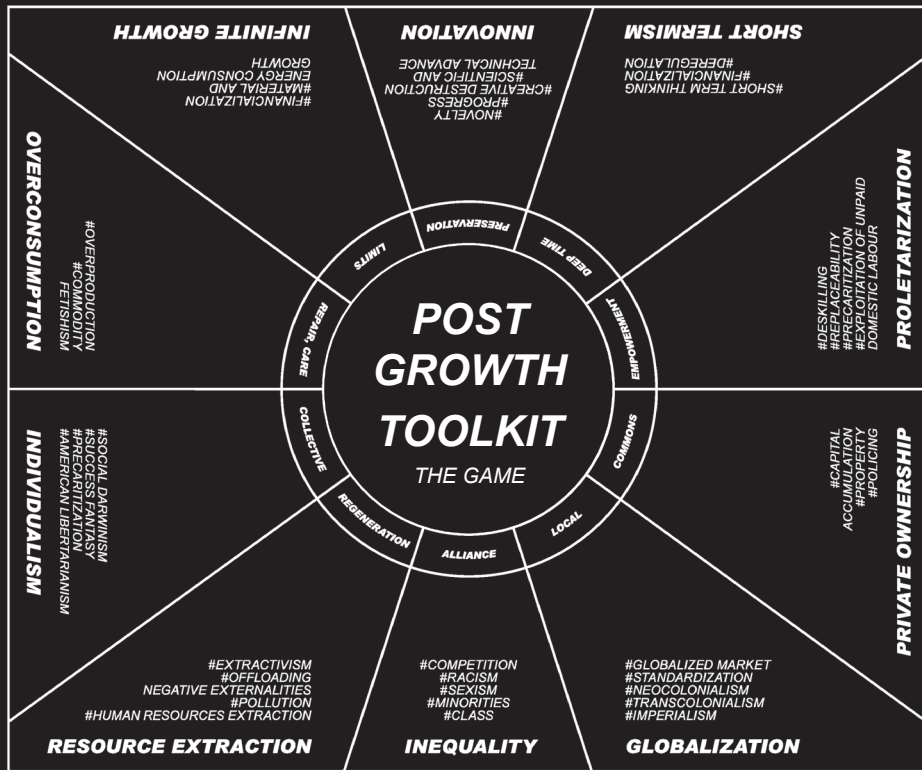


resource management, we laid the foundation for a future that prioritises ecological balance and collective well-being.

> Pictures from *Once Upon a Future*, sourced from *Superflux*.

# WHAT IS THE POST GROWTH TOOLKIT?

And how did we use it as a foundation?



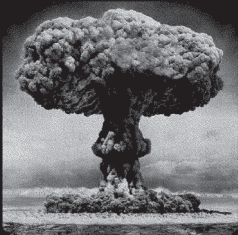
According to Disnovation.org, “The Post Growth Toolkit invites us to challenge the dominant narratives about growth and progress”, and “reshuffle our world-views and to share stories, concepts, and objects to re-examine how we are programmed and to stimulate new modes of understanding” (Disnovation.org, 2020).

The toolkit/game also aims to make us “(rethink) our way of coexisting with our environment” which “requires us to reevaluate the continuous growth of our energy footprints” (Disnovation.org, 2020).

The *Post Growth Toolkit* served as a key starting point for this project, as it opened the doors to speculative thinking and world-building within our group. Together we considered the meaning of our three *Notion Cards*, filled out the questionnaire with our initial conceptions, and then began imagining what role wood and forests would take on in our post-fossil fuel society.

> Pictures of the Post Growth Toolkit Game Board and Cards.

## GLOBAL ARTIFICIALITY



THE ARTIFICIALIZATION THAT RESULTS FROM HUMAN ACTIVITY IS OMNIPRESENT AND GLOBAL (NUCLEAR ISOTOPES, COMPOSITION OF THE ATMOSPHERE, CELL STRUCTURE, PLANTATIONS, ETC.).

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES



ECOSYSTEMS PROVIDE MANY SO-CALLED ECOSYSTEM SERVICES. SOME ARE ESSENTIAL FOR LIFE (SUCH AS POLLINATION) AND ARE THEN CONSIDERED COMMON GOODS.

## INTERSPECIES COMMONS



RESOURCES SHARED AND MAINTAINED COLLECTIVELY BY A HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN COMMUNITY.

# RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

## What did our *Notion Cards* mean?

We began by defining our three *Notion Cards*, which were “Global Artificiality”, “Ecosystem Services” and “Interspecies Commons”. Then, using the *Post Growth Toolkit*, we discussed what *Pillars of Capitalism* they fell under and then explored how we could make them align with the categories in the central *Virtuous Circle*.

E.g: We identified that “Ecosystem Services” fell under the issues of “Resource Extraction” and “Overproduction”, however, we brainstormed possible approaches to make them fall under the more positive categories “Regeneration” and

“Frugality”.

We then began exploring urban expansion after realizing that all of our key issues were connected to it. Additionally, urban expansion contributes to deforestation, habitat loss, species extinction, and agricultural expansion at the expense of nature, all of which are highly relevant to our critical object (wood/forest) and the main issues we are addressing.

“Urban expansion threatens to destroy habitats in key biodiversity hotspots and contributes to carbon emissions associated with tropical deforestation and land use change.”

- World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, 2018

# SLADES FARM VISIT

**“We have already intervened, so we have to continue to intervene but in a different way”** –Martha Searle, 2024.

Our visit to Slades Farm, organised in collaboration with Martha Searle from Talbot Village Trust, provided valuable insights that helped refine our ideas.

Observing features such as birdhouses integrated into trees and learning from Martha about the site's housing initiatives, community events, and efforts to preserve natural spaces inspired our thinking and highlighted the importance of community engagement in maintaining our ecosystems and balance between all living things.

*> Collage of pictures I took during the Slades Farm visit.*



# IDEATION WORKSHOPS

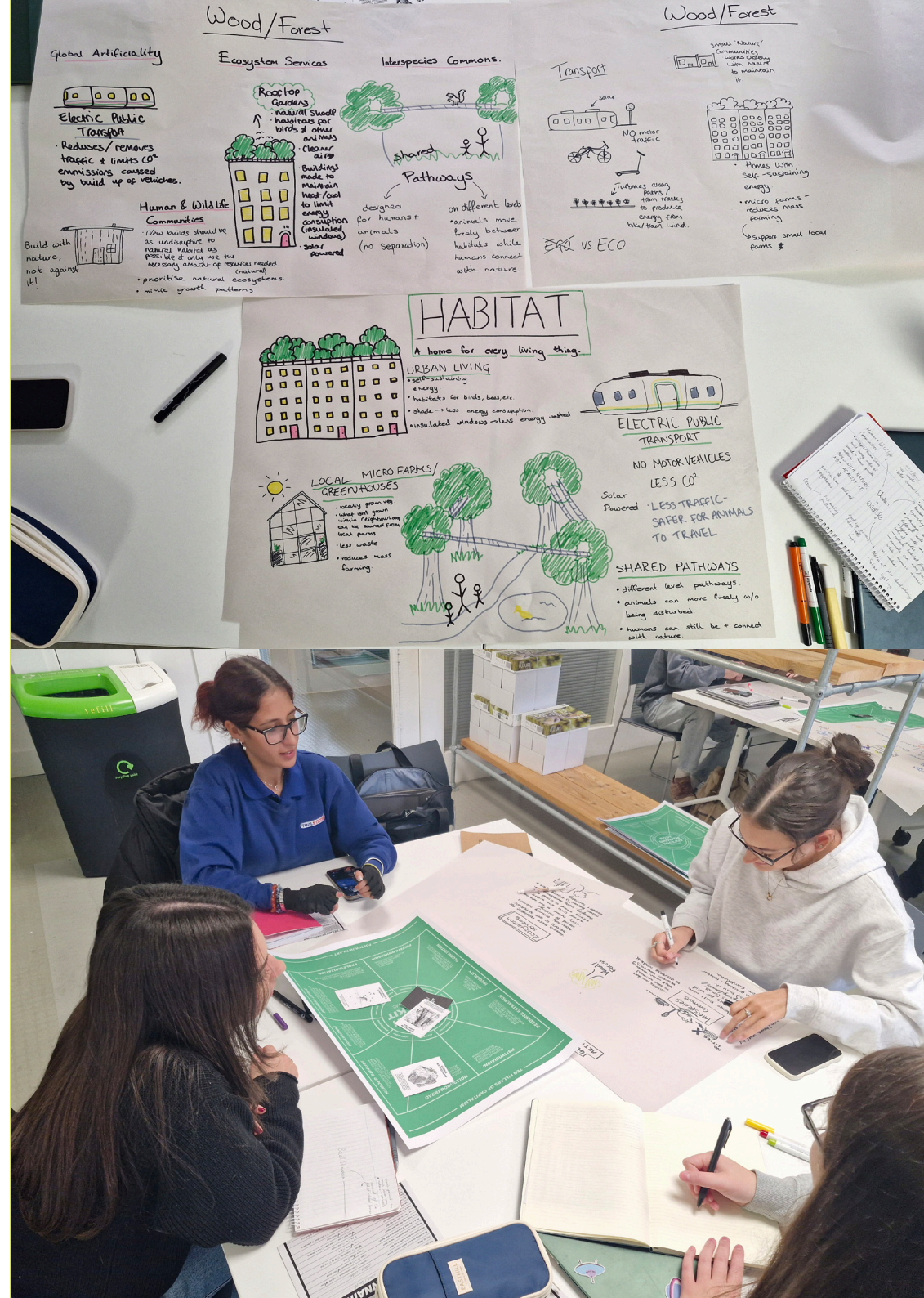
## What were our initial ideas?

Our ideation process began with extensive mind mapping and brainstorming, as we initially lacked a clear direction for the project. We documented all potential ideas and then refined and narrowed them down through iterative discussions with our team and later during a feedback session with the rest of our quarter group.

During the Iterative Pitching and Ideation Workshop, we received feedback from other groups which helped us tweak our initial ideas, making them more sustainable and increasing their overall impact, to achieve the results we wanted.



E.g: for one idea, we had to think of how to create a more sustainable source of energy to power it.



# Wood/Forest

## Global Artificiality



### Electric Public Transport

- Reduces/removes traffic & limits CO<sub>2</sub> emissions caused by build up of vehicles.



with  
re,  
against

### Human & Wildlife Communities

- New builds should be as undistruptive to natural habitat as possible & only use the necessary amount of resources needed. (natural)
- prioritise natural ecosystems.
- mimic growth patterns

## Ecosystem Services

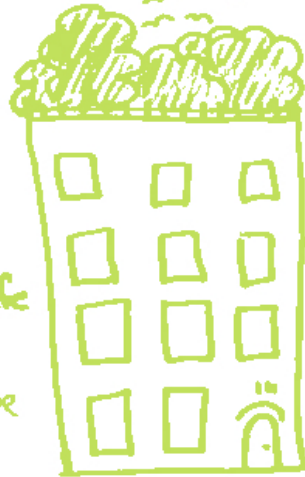
### Rooftop Gardens

- natural shade
- habitats for birds & other animals

- cleaner air

- Buildings made to maintain heat/cool to limit energy consumption (insulated windows)

- solar powered



## Interspecies Commons.



### Pathways

designed for humans + animals  
(no separation)

on different levels  
• animals move freely between habitats while humans connect with nature.

# HABITAT

A home for every living thing.



## URBAN LIVING

- self-sustaining energy.
- habitats for birds, bees, etc.
- shade → less energy consumption.
- insulated windows → less energy wasted



## ELECTRIC PUBLIC TRANSPORT

NO MOTOR VEHICLES

LESS CO<sup>2</sup>

Solar

Powered

• LESS TRAFFIC

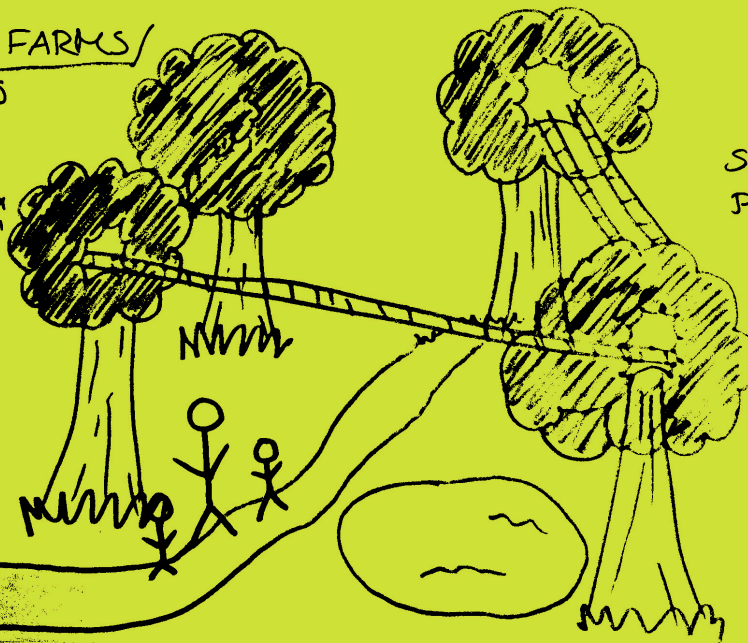
• SAFER FOR ANIMALS TO TRAVEL



## LOCAL MICRO FARMS / GREENHOUSES



- locally grown veg.
- what isn't grown within neighbourhood can be sourced from local farms.
- less waste
- reduces mass farming.



## SHARED PATHWAYS

- different level pathways.
- animals can move freely w/out  $\sim$  being disturbed.
- humans can still be connect with nature.

# DEFINE

## INITIAL IDEAS

21 - 22

## RESEARCH

23 - 26

## IMAGINARY & AUDIENCE

27 - 28

## FINAL IDEAS

29 - 32

# WHAT WERE OUR INITIAL IDEAS?

## What real-life references inspired us?

Real-life examples of wildlife crossings and tunnels, such as the “green bridges” (*National Geographic, 2023*) in the UK, served as a foundation to guide our concepts. These examples inspired us to explore how similar ideas could be reimaged within urban environments, with a focus on prioritising the safety and well-being of animals.

We also got some input from Alice to help push these ideas further and as well as the wildlife corridors, we talked about integrating humans into nature more. We looked at a recent phenomenon in Japan, where doctors’

offices have been built in forests with the aim of “promoting mental and physical health and improving disease prevention while at the same time being able to enjoy and appreciate the forest” (*Forest Therapy, n.d.*).

We aimed to come up with a concept which would allow for balanced coexistence between humans, animals, and other living species, with a particular focus on prioritising the needs of vulnerable and at-risk species. This idea involved integrating humans more deeply into natural ecosystems to create greater respect for nature while simultaneously



creating spaces within urban environments that accommodate and support biodiversity.

> Pictures showing Forest Therapy in Japan and Green Bridges in Europe, sourced from Google

# WHAT ELSE INSPIRED US?

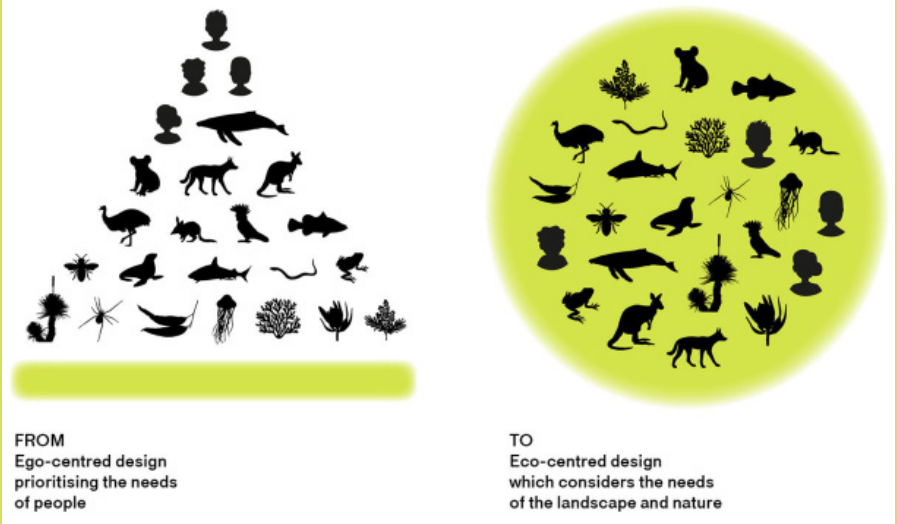
## How did we start looking at this project more speculatively?

We drew inspiration from *My NatureWatch Camera*, which we learned about during our workshop with Chris Courage. Although it wasn't completely similar to our brief, we liked the concept of being in and admiring nature, without disturbing it and wanted to incorporate that into our ideas.

*More-than-human* design "recognises the mutual interdependence between human needs and those of other organisms in our environment" (*More-Than-Human Design Manifesto, 2024*), which we thought would be interesting to explore further within

our post-growth world, and possibly use in our ideation with a more positive and structured approach.

Furthermore, we investigated *Earth 4 All's* "5 Extraordinary Turnarounds," focusing on transforming food systems within the economic system. Their "farm to fork" (*Earth4All, n.d.*) proposition aligned with one of our initial ideas: creating micro-farms within communities to reduce overconsumption and "put an end to agricultural expansion against nature (and) embrace more sustainable and regenerative practices" (*Earth4All, n.d.*).





Moreover, I decided to read “Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction and Social Dreaming” by Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby, to encourage me to rethink traditional approaches and adopt a more imaginative and speculative perspective.

Dunne and Raby discuss how “critical design uses speculative design proposals to challenge narrow assumptions preconceptions, and gives about the role products play in everyday life” (Dunne, A. and Raby, F., 2013, p. 34). The idea of building wildlife corridors and shared pathways

as communal spaces between humans and animals challenges conventional thinking about urban design, and instead of separating humans from wildlife, we unite them in one shared ecosystem.

By questioning the preconception that we should prioritise cities and human activity over wildlife and natural spaces, this speculative proposal creates a deeper relationship between human and non-human species.

> *Pictures of Speculative Designs, sourced from Google*

# WHAT DOES OUR POST-GROWTH WORLD LOOK LIKE?

## And who are we designing for?

What do we want our “world” to look like? less pollution, reduced damage to the climate, reliable habitats for wildlife, cohabitation between humans and the rest of the ecosystem, and green areas becoming a priority in cities.

How do we want to approach the problem? By using the structures we already have and improving them to consider the health of the environment.

How do we expect to fix it? Make cities

as safe and liveable to animals, insects, and plant life as possible. We want to create a cycle of benefit, where what we give to the nature surrounding the city is returned to us in the form of cleaner air, better crops thanks to improved pollination, and improved mental health thanks to our closer connection to nature.

As for our target audience, we aimed to benefit people who are separated from nature, animals pushed out of their habitats by urbanisation. Also, people with health conditions, such as



with their breathing, who will benefit from cleaner air.

The community we have in mind is made up of people who commute to work, live in dense urban areas, people who are likely to get stressed, and whose mental health would benefit from being more integrated with nature.

> Pictures of our Imaginary and Target Audience, sourced from Unsplash

# WHAT WERE OUR FINAL IDEAS?

For our interim presentation, we developed four different concepts, which we then combined into a single cohesive outcome that we would move forward with and develop further.

between habitats while humans also get to engage with and appreciate nature.

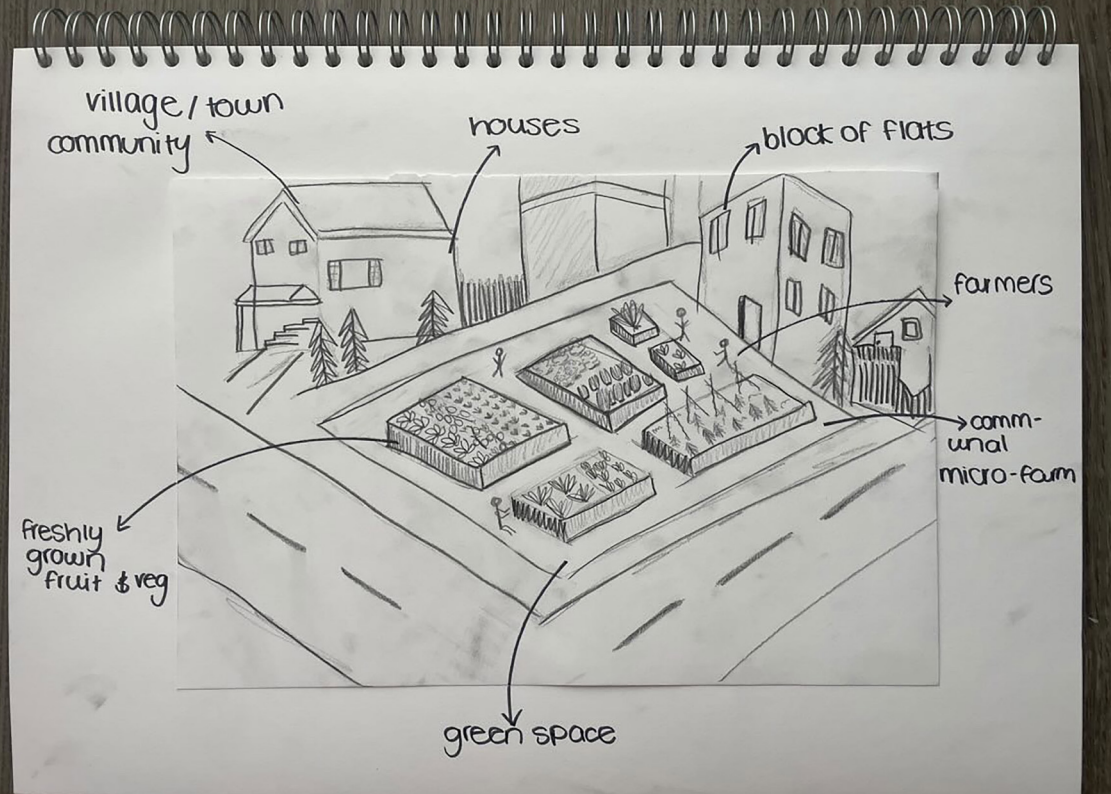
Building **community micro-farms** to promote self-sufficiency, and reduce overconsumption and waste, while addressing urban expansion by utilizing underused urban spaces for local food production.

## Our 4 main ideas were:

Creating **rooftop gardens** on existing buildings enhances urban biodiversity by creating habitats for local and endangered species. These gardens also improve sustainability by regulating indoor temperatures, reducing energy use, and promoting eco-friendly urban living.

Introducing **electric public transport** to reduce CO2 emissions, deforestation, and habitat loss while improving urban safety for wildlife by lowering traffic. To further enhance sustainability, we thought of using wind turbines along train tracks and solar panels on trains to generate renewable energy for the system.

Installing **shared pathways** in natural spaces and creating wildlife corridors for animals to move freely and safely

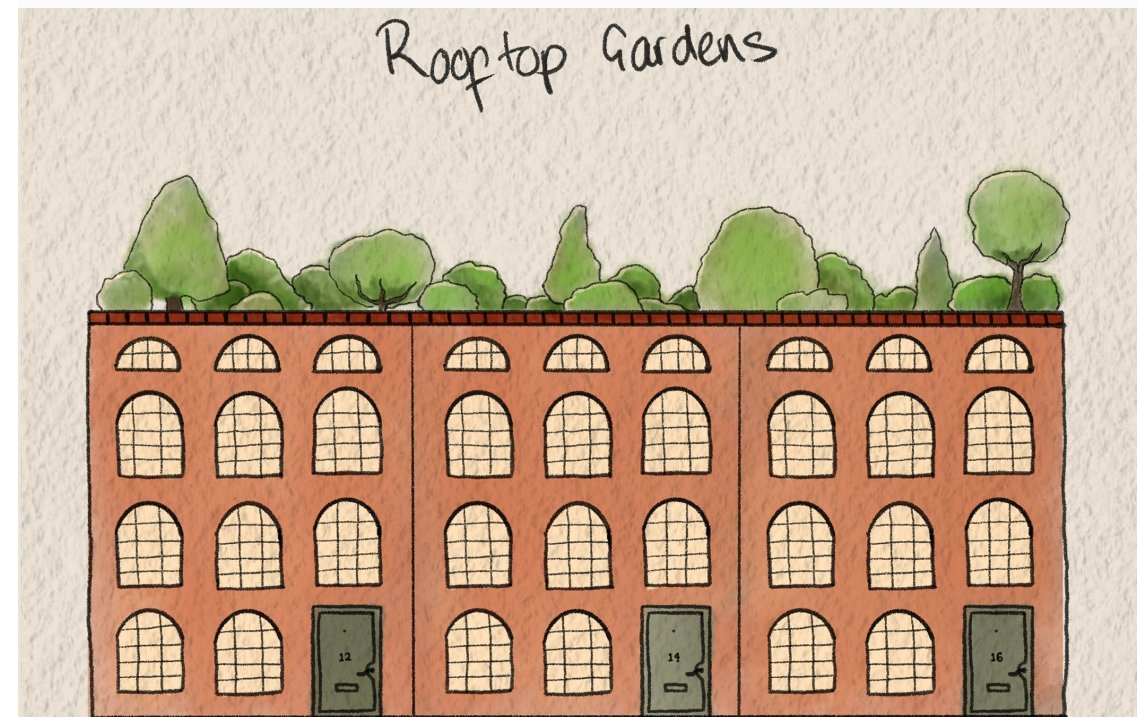
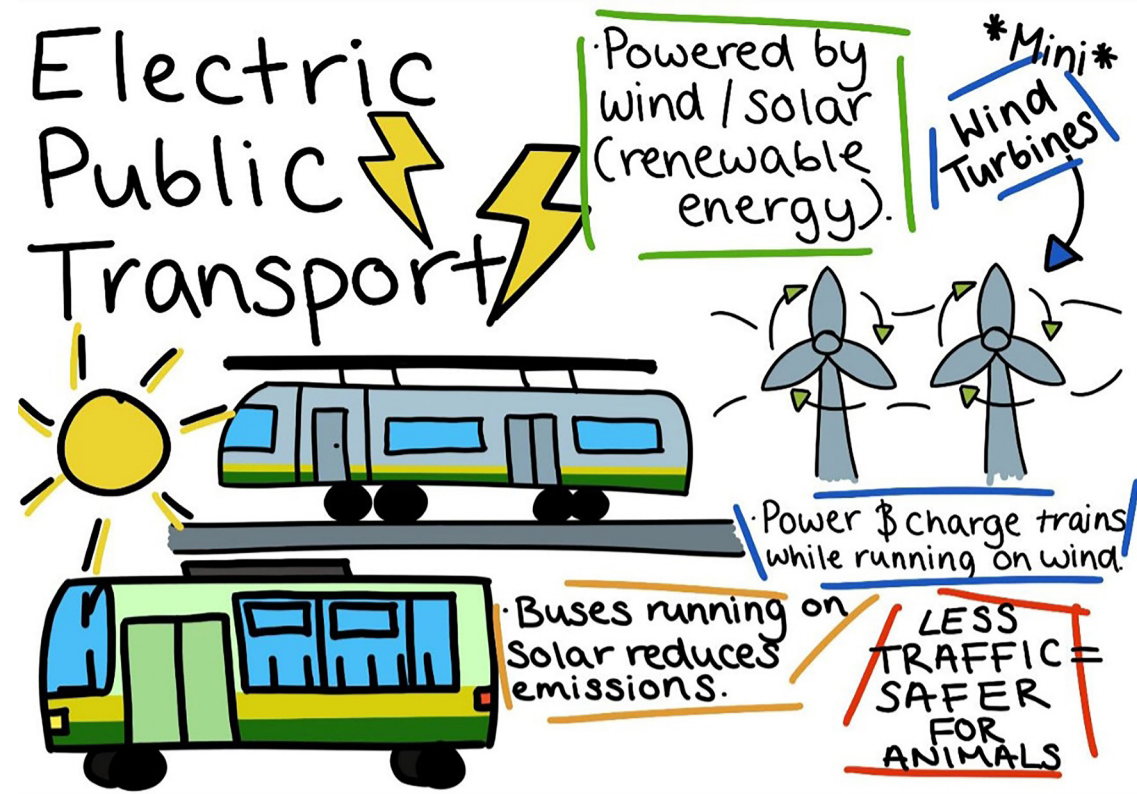


## 31 REINVENTING URBAN SYNERGY

Our final concept, an eco-city named "Habitat," combined all four of our initial ideas to reinvent urban spaces in a way that prioritises the needs of other living species, particularly those at risk.

"Habitat" looks to create communities that connect humans with nature and wildlife and prompt more human involvement in maintaining and caring for our ecosystems, while using sustainable methods to do so.

> Illustrations drawn by Amy, Gloria and Mollie



# DEVELOP

## INTERIM CRITIQUE

35 - 36

## FEEDBACK

37 - 38

## FURTHER RESEARCH

39 - 42

## REFINING IDEAS

43 - 46

# FIRST INTERIM CRITIQUE

## How did the presentation go?

I found the interim presentation very helpful when it came to developing our ideas further, as we were able to receive feedback from the rest of our quarter group as well as the tutors, which made us consider what prototypes we could create for animals within our eco-city, as well as developing the cycle of benefit system that Mollie came up with.

As for the presentation, I was responsible for putting the deck together, ensuring it maintained visual consistency throughout. Along with the drawings from our team members, this effectively conveyed the concept and helped the audience

grasp the core ideas. We delivered a clear and well-researched concept.

> *Pictures from our interim presentation*



## BA/MA tutorial record

Student/Group name(s) Gianna, Mollie, Gloria, Amy

Course: Year 2

Tutor(s)

Agenda (tick box)  Progress of project work  Progress of course  Pastoral Issues  Other

Unit Ref: Project title

Date	Tutorial Discussion	Action agreed	By when
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark likes the community profile and cycle of benefit</li> <li>• add a systems chart to show cycle of benefit</li> <li>• look at things that already exist that you can reference e.g. integrated public transport in Europe</li> <li>• could design specific things for different species for prototype that don't already exist</li> <li>• look at changing of behaviour with education to have people more accepting to live with animals like bees.</li> <li>• Prosthetic tree arms of lamp posts for birds</li> <li>• Show relationships of people in your imaginary</li> <li>• Cats load?</li> <li>• pet ownership is unsustainable</li> <li>• implement wildlife houses into the architecture of the house</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add a systems diagram to slides showing cycle of benefit.</li> <li>• look at existing things you can reference</li> <li>• look at Dorset wildlife trust</li> </ul>	

Student Signature

Tutors Signature

# WHAT WAS OUR FEEDBACK?

## Some main points from the feedback:

- Look at real-life case studies we could reference, such as integrated public transport in Europe or "green bridges" in Germany.
- Think about what prototypes we could make, using our ideas for the urban habitats.
- How could we implement the urban habitats into the architecture of houses and what would they look like?
- Develop the "Cycle of Benefit" and create a systems diagram to explain how it works.

• somewhere in Germany they

# DIGGING DEEPER

## Are there any other pre-existing structures we could reference?

We looked into the *Pollinator Pathmaker Project* by artist Alexandra Daisy Ginsburg because it links to an idea that we mentioned for the Shared Pathways, where we could plant native species, to re-populate natural spaces. For this project, Ginsburg created a digital AI tool named *Pollinator Pathmaker* to design the best possible gardens for and other insects to enjoy. This takes place in private gardens around London's Serpentine Galleries, and people are also invited into the gardens by using the online tool to create a planting plan tailored to their plot in the garden.

This project aims to raise awareness about the decline in pollinators, (bees, butterflies, moths, wasps, beetles, and other species) as they are essential

for plant reproduction and ecosystem survival. Ginsburg also aims for the project to build empathy with other species. She wanted to “make art for the pollinators, not about them” (Aouf, R., 2022).

We also looked into an Argentine artist called Tomás Saraceno, who created sculptures inside and outside the Serpentine South Building (also in the London Serpentine Galleries), to accommodate nearby species, specifically spiders. And this links to our idea of creating urban habitats for animals. He created web-like structures and had them installed on the sides of the gallery buildings and this aimed to make his exhibition “more porous and responsive to its setting” (Aouf, R., 2023) in the gardens,





and challenge “perspectives that only consider the interests of humans and not any other beings” (Aouf, R., 2023).

as they will follow what looks like their natural paths, resulting in less accidents and animal deaths.

We looked into the *Green bridges* in Germany, which allow animals to safely cross the motorway. This was a suggestion from Claudia, and we thought it was good to look into as it addressed and connected two of our ideas (shared pathways and public transport).

Since 2005, Germany has built over 80 green bridges to help native animals cross roads safely. These bridges are strictly off-limits to humans and they are covered in vegetation that makes them look like an extension of the land on either side of the road, stopping them from trying to cross busy roads

> Pictures showing Green bridges in Germany, Tomás Saracenos sculptures and My NatureWatch Camera

# REFINING OUR IDEAS

## How could we highlight the Cycle of Benefit?

Using the feedback and further research, we developed the cycle of benefit, highlighting the roles of education and the workforce within this post-growth society.

Mollie outlined the core focus and function of each part of the cycle. We then assigned a section to each team member to research and develop. I focused on the workforce, and for this, I decided to come up with different eco-focused careers that would help maintain our eco-city and support the needs of other species.

I also created a visual diagram to

show how each job affects the other and how they all exist to make the others possible; one cannot work without the other, for example, “urban agriculturists” and “micro-farmers” would not be able to farm and supply crops if the “environmental health monitors” didn’t make sure that the ecocity’s soil and water were maintained properly.

Furthermore, based on Alice’s feedback, I explored the Dorset Wildlife Trust and discovered a declared “nature emergency” (The Blackmore Vale, 2024) in Dorset. Pollinators and dormice are declining



rapidly, posing significant ecological concerns. Pollinators are vital for plant reproduction and food supply, while dormice serve as “flagship species” (Dedham Vale, n.d.), indicating the presence of other species and habitats.

Using this research and taking inspiration from Tomás Saraceno’s sculptures, I conceptualised urban habitats designed for bees and dormice. I sketched some designs, carefully incorporating features to ensure these animal homes were both safe and functional. I then passed these detailed sketches to Mollie,

who utilised her skills in Blender to create digital prototypes, bringing the designs to life with greater detail.

> *Diagram I made to show the connection between all of our eco-vocations*

> *Next Page: Diagram Mollie made to explain the Cycle of Benefit*



# DELIVER

## FINAL PRESENTATION

49 - 50

## FEEDBACK

51 - 52

## FINAL OUTCOMES

53 - 54

## CRITICAL REFLECTION

55 - 56

# FINAL PRESENTATION

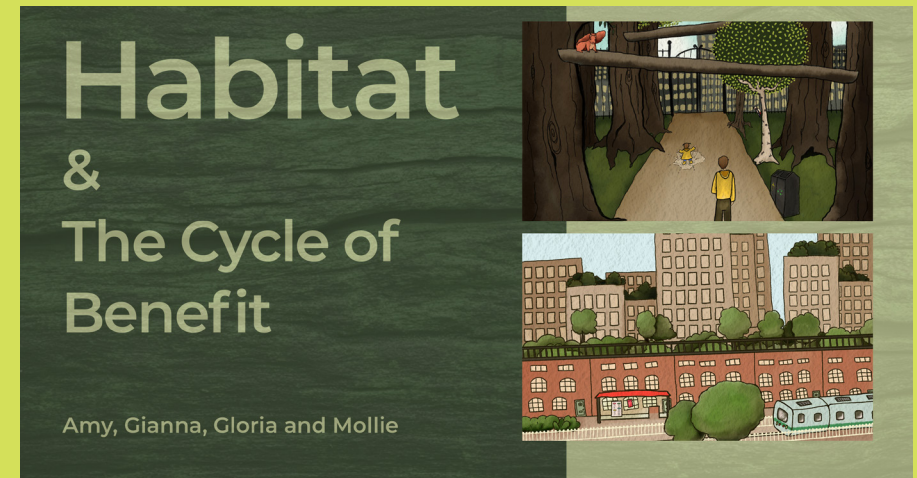
## How did it go?

Although I was disappointed that we were unable to present our final Assignment 1 deck to the rest of our group, we received valuable feedback from Alice, Mark, and Eden during our private presentation.

I was also responsible for putting together this deck and I ensured it maintained the cohesive design I established in our first presentation for this assignment. This intentional continuity created a visual link between the two decks, reinforcing their connection while effectively communicating our ideas and research.

One key takeaway was that our presentation exceeded the allotted time, making me grateful that we presented privately but also emphasising the need to manage timing better in future presentations.

Overall, the feedback was positive, particularly highlighting the strength of our research and the development of the “Cycle of Benefit,” which Mollie and I worked on extensively, including its various interconnected components.



very thorough presentation - but too long + some bits a bit repetitive - find way to condense 😊



# HOW COULD WE DEVELOP THIS IDEA FURTHER?

## Some main points from the feedback:

- The presentation was too long and some bits were a bit repetitive. Find a way to condense it.
- Use more images in the presentation. Sometimes you are speaking a lot and using images can help us make sense of this.
- Consider the language of your workforce and careers (Be more positive, e.g.: eco-vocations).
- For the next stage of the project, consider a more than-human bee experience, such as whether there is an activity for children from the perspective of bees.

### BA/MA tutorial record

Student/Group name(s) Mollie, Gianna, Amy + Gloria  
 Course: Year Artisic  
 Tutor(s) AS, MA, EF  
 Agenda (tick box)  Progress of project work  Progress of course  Pastoral Issues  Other

Unit Ref: Project title  
 Date 29 Oct Tutorial Discussion Action agreed By when

Cycle of Benefit, Habitat.

\* great to design for more-than-human.  
 - great to reference post-growth cards + Chris Courage + Slades form visit.

nice! 'for' pollinators not 'about' them.  
 - green bridge - California underpass example.  
 'habitat workforce' - nice! 'habitat caretakers.'

\* Coherent + intelligent research journey, well done. \* well thought through.

### PRESENTATION

- Use more images in presentation -  
 Sometimes you are speaking a lot and using images can help us make more sense of this.

- put more images of people/kids using + engaging with concept - such as 'busy bees' club.

- Consider more than human bee experience - such as 'is there an activity for children from perspective of bees.'

- select + edit presentation.

Student Signature

Tutors Signature

- lots of strong ideas - task to society

# WHAT WAS THE FINAL OUTCOME?

## How did we conclude Assignment 1?

In response to feedback, we refined our concept by clarifying the structure and operation of our eco-city, ensuring a cohesive understanding of its components and systems.

To address concerns about language, I adjusted terminology, opting for “eco-vocations” or “eco-occupations” to convey a more positive and aspirational tone.

Additionally, I revisited and edited the deck, reducing text and repetition, as this was a main point that Alice brought up during the feedback session. Also, I was not

completely happy with the deck we presented as the lack of planning and communication within the team left insufficient time for thorough refinement before the presentation.

The collage consists of several presentation slides with a dark green background and white text. The slides are arranged in a grid-like fashion, overlapping slightly. The main title 'Habitat' is prominently displayed in the center of the top row. Other slides include 'Community Profile', 'Education', 'Workforce', 'Prototypes', and 'Imaginary'. Each slide features a mix of text, small images, and diagrams. The 'Prototypes' slide includes a diagram of 'URBAN HABITATS' with various icons and labels like 'Fox Pools', 'Dot Buildings', 'BEE BLOSSOMS', 'Energy tanks', 'Parks/Nature reserves', 'Greenhouse', 'Waste hubs', 'Conservationists', 'Housing', and 'Micro-farms'. The 'Imaginary' slide features a photo of a person planting a tree. The 'Workforce' slide shows a person in a field. The 'Community Profile' slide shows a group of people. The 'Education' slide shows a person reading to a child. The 'Prototypes' slide shows a hand holding a small object. The 'Habitat' slide shows a building with a garden. The 'Shared Pathways' slide shows a path through a building. The 'Electric Public Transport' slide shows a train. The 'Micro-farming & Greenhouses' slide shows a greenhouse. The 'Imaginary' slide shows a person planting a tree. The 'Community Profile' slide shows a group of people. The 'Education' slide shows a person reading to a child. The 'Workforce' slide shows a person in a field. The 'Prototypes' slide shows a hand holding a small object. The 'Habitat' slide shows a building with a garden. The 'Shared Pathways' slide shows a path through a building. The 'Electric Public Transport' slide shows a train. The 'Micro-farming & Greenhouses' slide shows a greenhouse. The 'Imaginary' slide shows a person planting a tree. The 'Community Profile' slide shows a group of people. The 'Education' slide shows a person reading to a child. The 'Workforce' slide shows a person in a field. The 'Prototypes' slide shows a hand holding a small object.

# CRITICAL REFLECTION

As a whole, this project challenged us to explore speculative and conceptual design within the context of a post-growth world, specifically imagining societal systems in a world without fossil fuels. Working alongside Amy, Gloria, and Mollie was an insightful collaborative experience, which provided me with an opportunity to develop my teamwork skills and build stronger connections within our course, which was a personal goal I set myself this academic year.

Our brief required us to reimagine wood and forests, emphasising their role in establishing a sustainable, community-centered society. Using the Post Growth Toolkit as a starting point, we embraced speculative thinking to address critical issues of

sustainability, resource management, and ecosystem preservation. The toolkit prompts encouraged us to come up with innovative solutions to reimagine urban areas to accommodate the needs of other species.

Our research began by defining our *Notion Cards* (Global Artificiality, Ecosystem Services, and Interspecies Commons). These became the basis for exploring how urban expansion leads to deforestation, biodiversity loss, and habitat destruction, aligning directly with our critical object of wood/forest. Real-world examples, such as Germany's "green bridges" and urban animal habitat structures, inspired us to consider how human

coexistence with nature could be integrated into urban settings.

Our visit to Slades Farm gave us insights into community-centered approaches to balancing human needs and ecological preservation. We observed features like birdhouses and natural habitats, which inspired our regenerative designs for urban spaces.

Initially, our concepts ranged from wildlife corridors to rooftop gardens and community micro-farms. These were combined into our final concept: Habitat, an eco-city that prioritises biodiversity maintenance, urban sustainability, and community well-being. Our ideas of features such as shared pathways and renewable-energy-powered public transport further reinforced our vision for our post-growth world.

To refine our ideas, we embraced *More-Than-Human Design*, which recognises the co-dependence between humans and ecosystems. This approach inspired urban habitats for pollinators and vulnerable species, integrating practical structures within urban architecture. We

envision a target audience that thrives through this positive synergy, where individuals, families, and local communities are actively engaged in creating and maintaining a harmonious relationship with their environment.

Teamwork proved to be both engaging and challenging. However, we were able to overcome difficulties to deliver a well-researched and clear concept. I contributed to key aspects, including the development of eco-vocations and the ideation of prototypes for our urban animal habitats.

Our final presentation, although too long, received positive feedback, especially for its research depth and conceptual thinking. Addressing feedback, I refined our presentation deck for better visual balance and the overall communication of ideas. Despite setbacks, this project allowed me to think more speculatively, as well as develop a deeper understanding of sustainable design principles and learn to work as part of a team.

# ASSIGNMENT 2:

IDENTITY, COMMUNICATION &  
EXPERIENCE

Visual Systems

# DISCOVER

## THE BRIEF

61 - 62

## IMAGINATION VISIT

63 - 64

## IDEATION WORKSHOP

65 - 66

## DEFINING OUR BRAND

67 - 68

# WHAT WAS OUR BRIEF?

## How will we brand our concept?

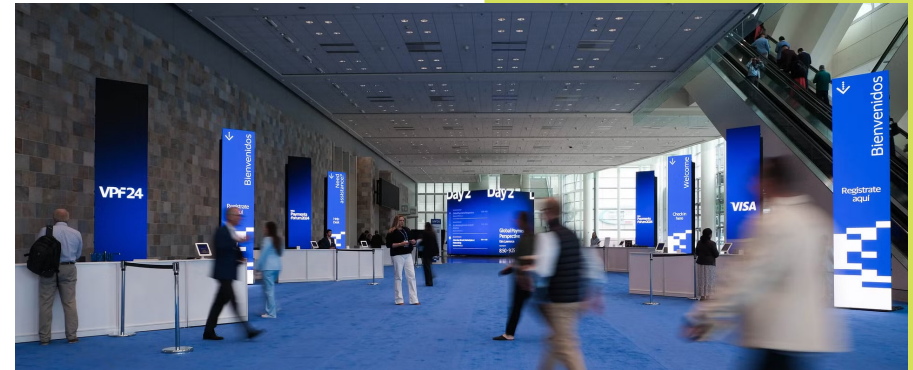
This project, which was in collaboration with *Imagination*, tasked us with developing an identity to convey the essence of our concept from Assignment 1: Post-Growth Imaginaries. Our goal was to design a community-focused identity that reflects the values, principles, and aspirations of our post-growth concept and world.

At the core of this task, we were challenged to effectively communicate the environmental benefits and sustainable practices of our concept while ensuring they align with the values and principles of the

community. The goal was to design an identity that not only conveyed these principles but also created a sense of belonging and purpose in our community.

Through intentional and meaningful design and messaging, we aimed to create an identity that highlighted the community's shared values while also "providing a relevant and engaging experience" (*Visual Systems, 2024, p. 18*).

Our goal was to inspire active participation and effectively communicate the environmental



benefits of our concept, encouraging a collective commitment to building a more sustainable and balanced future.

> *Pictures from Imagination*

# GAINING INSIGHTS & IMAGINATION

## Learning about the importance of Brand Experience

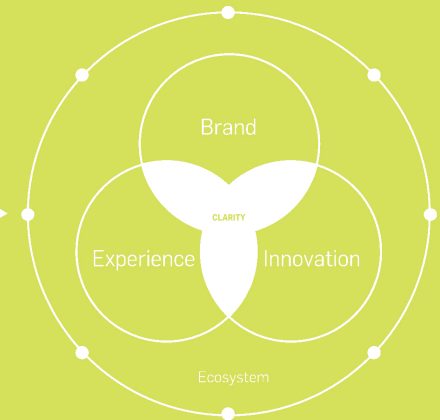
Imagination's visit to AUB and their presentation gave us valuable insights into their work and creative approach. It offered a clearer understanding of their priorities, which informed how we refined our project. This allowed us to adjust our concept to better align with their interests, making it more appealing and engaging to them.

Their main focus is creating brand experiences that "move people" (*Imagination, n.d.*) and change "the way people think, feel and act" (*Imagination, n.d.*).

During Wes and Adam's presentation,

their discussion about "creating a broader perception and emotional relationship a customer has with a brand" (*Wes Richardson, 2024*) resonated strongly with insights I had gained earlier in the M&C Saatchi Open House program. Specifically, in week three of the program, Alison Zelby noted that "brand experience is when a customer really gets to meet the brand" (*Zelby, A., 2024*). These insights highlighted the significance of establishing emotional bonds between a brand and its audience, transforming simple interactions into impactful and meaningful experiences.

THEY ALL GO HAND  
IN HAND



## HOW BRANDS CHOREOGRAPH THEIR EXPERIENCES

**Look** + **Speak** + **Act**  
 The visual appearance of the brand + The brand's written and spoken language + The way the brand, or people representing the brand, behave

= a distinct and memorable experience

**M&CSAATCHI**

> Pictures from M&C Saatchi Open House 2024, Week 3 about Brand Experience & Innovation

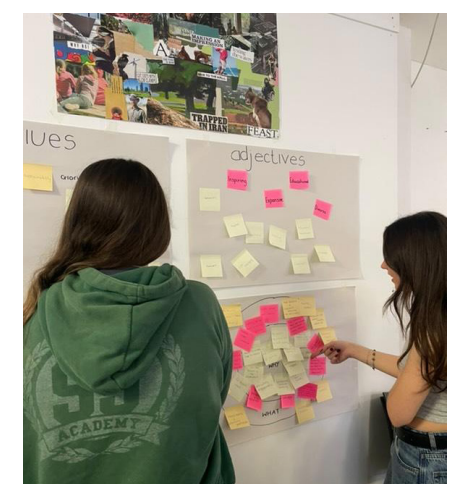


# IDEATION WORKSHOP

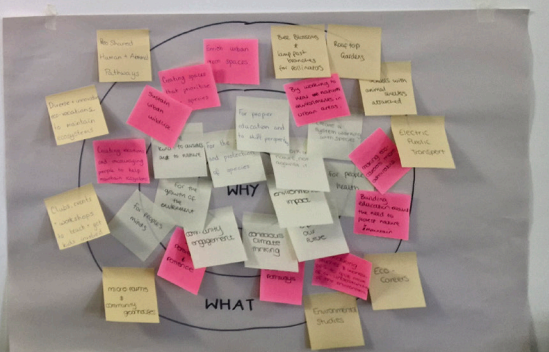
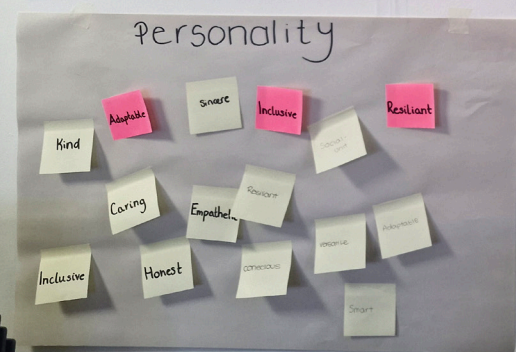
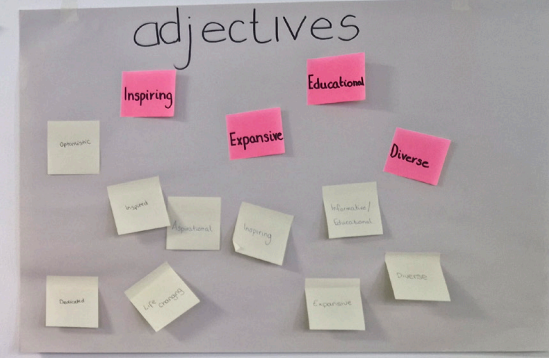
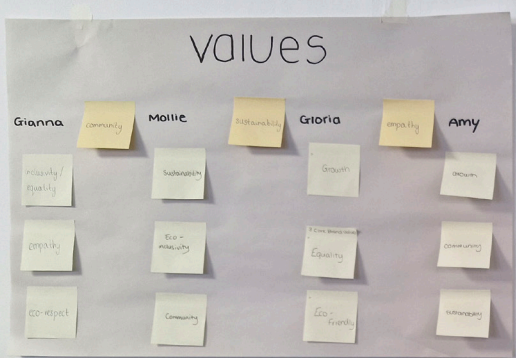
How would we describe our brands personality?

The Brand Purpose workshop with Mark and Alice was a great starting point for defining our brand and clarifying what we wanted it to convey. The fast-paced nature of the session encouraged us to step away from overthinking and instead focus on capturing our initial thoughts and what truly resonated with us and reflected the meaning of our brand.

This approach allowed us to articulate meaningful ideas regarding our brand's personality, values, and purpose, which we carried into the next phase of developing our brand's



> Pictures from our Brand Purpose and Ideation workshop



# HOW WOULD WE DEFINE OUR BRAND?

What is our brand's purpose?

**Why?** To allow the ecosystem to grow, better people's mental and physical health, and to protect urban wildlife so that we can thrive in our environment.

**How?** By persistently working to implement organisations and systems to uphold the stability of the city habitat.

**What?** Conduct environmental studies, introduce eco-vocations & community micro-farms, as well as educational clubs & workshops for students.

*"Tagoro is a city adapted to support all the living organisms that call it home, and which dedicates education and vocations to maintaining the health of the city's ecosystem."*

- Tagoro's Brand Purpose

# DEFINE

## INITIAL IDEAS

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## FINAL IDEAS

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# WHERE DO WE START?

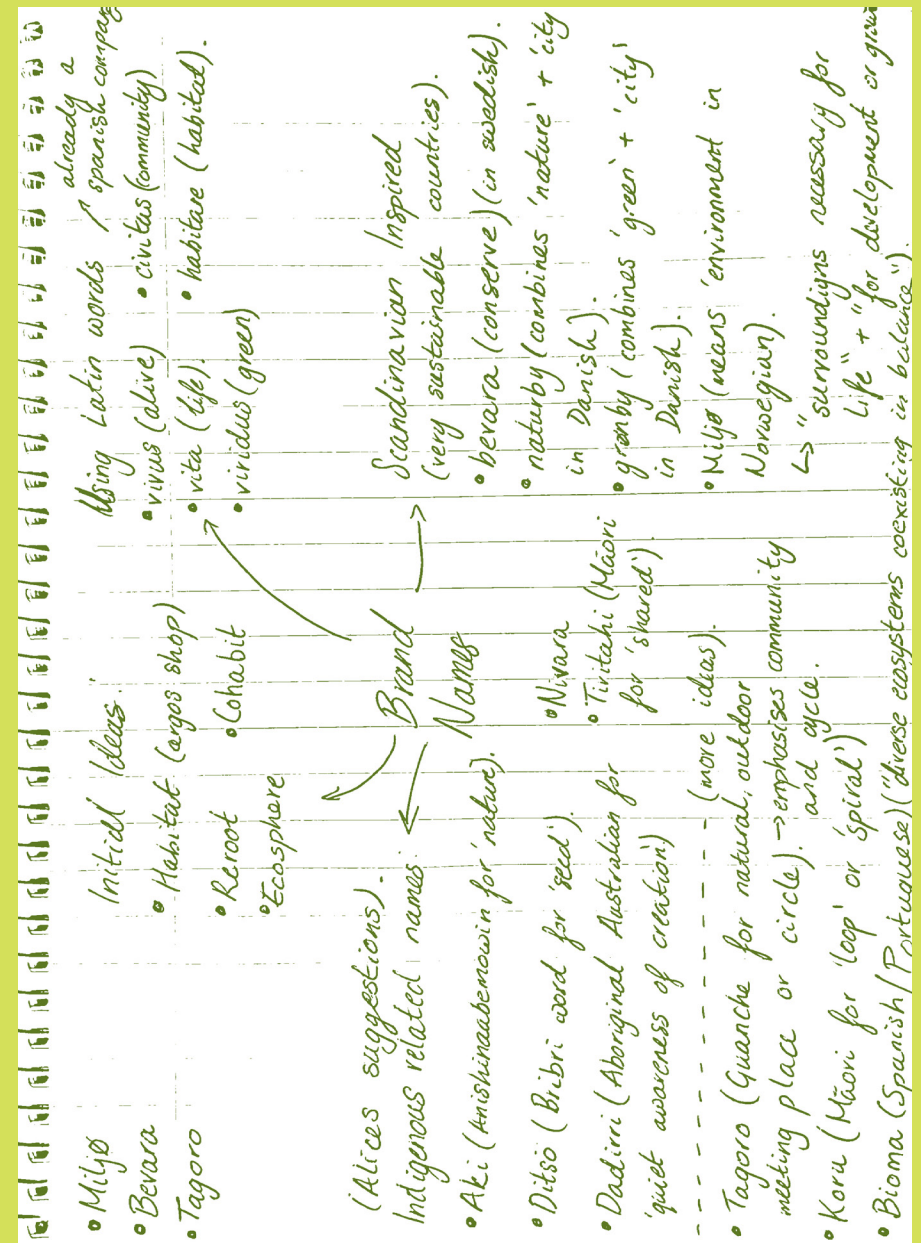
## How do we start creating an image for our brand?

After defining our brand's purpose and values, our next task was to create a new name. Up until this point, we had been referring to our eco-city concept as Habitat. However, this name no longer seemed suitable for several reasons.

First, it did not effectively convey the unique aspects of our brand and more importantly, Habitat is already the name of an established, well-known brand, which made it unfit for our project. As a result, we needed to choose a name that better aligned with our brand's identity and stood out.

Initially, we struggled to come up with names we felt fit, drawing a lot of inspiration from Latin, as it is the root of most modern-day languages, and also Scandinavian/Nordic languages, as they are known to be some of "the most sustainable countries in the world" (Sustainability For All, n.d.).

> Mind map of potential brand names





> Images of Guanche symbols, sourced from Google.

After emailing Alice for guidance, she suggested we look into indigenous and aboriginal words, and even gave us several examples. This prompted me to turn to my own culture and aboriginal heritage, Guanche. The Guanches were the Indigenous people of the Canary Islands before Spanish settlers arrived in the archipelago, and they were very well known for their deep connection to nature, especially in terms of their spiritual and cultural practices.

The Guanches' lifestyle and practices reflected a profound respect for the natural world, as they lived in caves within volcanic landscapes and developed agricultural techniques suited to their island environment. Their social structure was built on small, self-governing communities led by chiefs or elders, emphasizing cooperation and the "common good" (Justo, 2024).

They also practiced "communal land ownership, with each community sharing the resources of their surrounding territory" (Justo, 2024), reinforcing a collective approach to managing the natural resources they deeply respected.

They also believed in the presence of spirits in nature, including in animals, plants, and rocks, which further reinforced their relationship with the land and its ecosystems.

Using this research, I found the word "tagoro", which originally meant "circular stone houses", but over time, took on the meaning of "community" and "meeting place". As a group, we felt this name best reflected our brand.

# HOW DID I DESIGN MY ROUTE?

## What was my inspiration for my designs?

When it came to designing my route, I decided to continue incorporating aspects from the Guanche culture, to give the brand image cohesiveness overall, and throughout all aspects from the purpose to the name, to the visual identity.

I drew inspiration from the Guanches' symbols, specifically the ones they would carve into clay and pain in caves. In Guanche culture, the spiral symbolised unity, renewal, and the natural cycles of life. To incorporate these meanings into my design, I subtly integrated the shape of a house's roof within the spiral,

conveying that within this community there is a home for everyone.

This design element reflects the Guanches' profound connection to both their environment and their communal way of life. By embedding such symbolic meaning, I aimed to honor their values of unity and belonging while reinforcing the theme of harmony within nature and community.

I chose to give my logo more straight sides and rougher edges to make them resemble the way Guanches would carve them out but also to



match the typeface I used, which I felt imitates natural forms and maintains a very organic feel to it.

> Variations of the logo I designed for my route

# WHO AM I DESIGNING FOR?

## Narrowing down the target audience

Although our target audience was “everything that lives”, I felt I had to narrow it down to be able to effectively design a visual identity. So I created my designs primarily focusing on and comprising families, which can be a diverse group that spans various ages.

I designed a route that is both visually engaging and meaningful. The design prioritises an aesthetic appeal that resonates across generations while ensuring that its underlying message is effectively conveyed.

I also did this as I aimed to create specific designs tailored for children, recognising the importance of their role within our target audience. By focusing on this demographic, we aim to educate younger generations about sustainability and hope to instill Tagoros values and practices in children from a young age.

> *Images of our Target Audience, sourced from Unsplash*

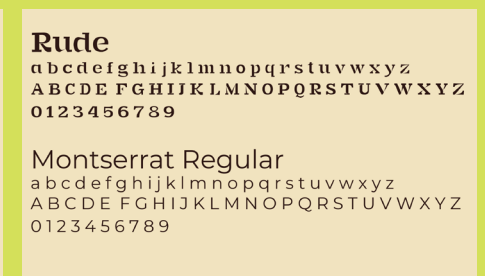
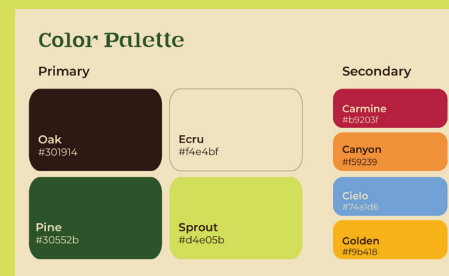
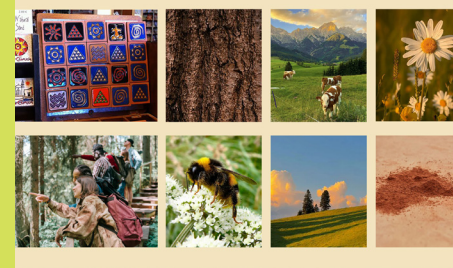


# FINAL ROUTE

My final designs not only embody the essence of Tagoro but also aim to create a balance between cultural authenticity, aesthetic appeal, and functionality. Each element was carefully chosen to ensure that the designs communicated our brand's values while remaining accessible and engaging to our target audience. By combining a meaningful name, thoughtful symbolism, and a tailored focus on families and children, the final identity creates a sense of unity and sustainability.

These designs conclude the journey of bringing our eco-city concept to life, seamlessly integrating the brand's purpose, cultural inspiration, and audience engagement into a cohesive whole. Through this process, we aimed to create an identity that not only reflects the values of Tagoro but also inspires participation in a community committed to living in harmony with nature.

## On the deck



# DEVELOP

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# INTERIM CRITIQUE

## How did the presentation go?

We were very fortunate to present our interim deck to Wes from Imagination, as it provided us with constructive feedback and suggestions to refine our branding ideas and concept in preparation for the final pitch. His insights encouraged us to think more critically about how to enhance the narrative and visual identity of Tagoro, ensuring that it resonated more deeply with our intended audience.

During the discussion, Wes introduced the concept of Hygge, a Danish lifestyle/philosophy of comfort, warmth, and well-being. Having recently encountered this idea and taken an interest in its principles, I found it exciting to explore how elements of Hygge could be integrated into Tagoro to improve its

sense of community and connection. This conversation not only broadened my perspective on cultural influences but also highlighted new routes for developing the brand's philosophy.

Overall, the presentation was insightful and encouraging. Meeting Wes in this setting allowed us to become more comfortable sharing our ideas, which boosted my confidence for the final pitch.



### Key Research

- Slades Farm
- My Naturewatch Camera & More Than Human
- Green bridges in Germany
- "Nature emergency"
- Pollinator Pathmaker Project
- 5 Extraordinary Turnarounds

### Imaginary

- Education will play a vital role in the community's care for their environment.
- This will lead to a cycle of benefit in which the improvements we make to the environment are returned to us through improvements to our well being.
- Habitat focuses on species particularly at risk, e.g. bees and dormice.
- The infrastructure of the city is designed to accommodate all animals.
- The workforce's primary focus is maintaining the conditions of the city's habitat.

### Brand Purpose

Tagoro is a city adapted to support all the living organisms that call it home, and which dedicates education and vocations to maintaining the health of the city's ecosystem.

To allow the ecosystem to grow, better people's mental and physical health, and to protect urban wildlife so that we can thrive in our environment.

By persistently working to implement organisations & systems to uphold the stability of the city habitat.

Conduct environmental studies, introduce eco-vocations & community micro-farms, as well as educational clubs & workshops for students.

### Brand Values

- Community
- Sustainability
- Empathy
- Aspirational

### Target Audience

- Families
- Children still have developing minds
- Home/family is where good habits and values start
- Passed down to new generations
- "Nearly 55% of 16- to 24-year-olds felt they belonged to their neighbourhood in 2017 to 2018"

# Interim Critique w/ Wes

## Deck:

- Get to the point quicker
- Less text on slides
- More visuals  
- (what does 'Tagoro' look like?)

## Concept / designs:

- Push it further
- Likes Giannas designs + likes meaning & symbolism
- Got a good story to it.
- Liked bright / colourful palette.
- Look at Hygge  
↳ could you apply it to 'Tagoro'.
- What could you brand as part of this?

# WHAT FEEDBACK DID WE GET?

## Some main points from the feedback:

### Presentation/deck:

- Get to the point quicker
- Less text on slides
- More visuals (what does "Tagoro" look like?)

### Concept:

- Wes really liked my route, as he liked the incorporation of the cultural symbolism, consideration of type, diverse colour palette, and different icons I created.
- Could we modernise the designs?
- Could we market "Tagoro" as something else? As a lifestyle? (Like Hygge)
- What would we brand as a part of this? (Books, Podcasts, Events, Workshops, etc.).

# A CASE STUDY ON HYGGE

## How could we apply the Hygge method to Tagoro?

After our online interim critique with Wes, I decided to do some deeper research into the concept of Hygge. I specifically wanted to know how it came about and how it was marketed to make it so popular. So I decided to do a case study on the Hygge lifestyle and philosophy.

Hygge is a term that stems from Danish and Norwegian culture and has evolved from a cultural concept into a global lifestyle brand. Hygge came at a time when people were searching for comfort and became a method of enjoying “life’s simple pleasures” (*Wiking, 2016*) at a time of

social and political uncertainty.

Furthermore, Hygge coincided with the rise of Scandinavian design and minimalism, which was already gaining attention worldwide. As this lifestyle gained popularity, it became increasingly commercialised, with brands promoting Hygge candles, books, etc, so people could “recreate the comforting atmosphere it represents” (*Lee, 2019*).

## My key findings

**Origins:** Hygge refers to coziness, comfort, and enjoying simple pleasures, originating in Denmark and Norway.

**Good Timing:** It gained attention in the mid-2010s, aligning with global unrest and digital overstimulation, offering a sense of calm and comfort.

**Scandinavian Influence:** Hygge complemented the global popularity of Scandinavian minimalist design.

**Media Impact:** Books like *The Little Book of Hygge* and other media coverage introduced it as a lifestyle trend.

**Commercialisation:** Hygge became a marketable aesthetic, inspiring products in home goods, fashion, and wellness.

**Social Media:** Platforms like Instagram helped spread its aspirational visuals to a wider audience.

# How can I use the Hygee method?

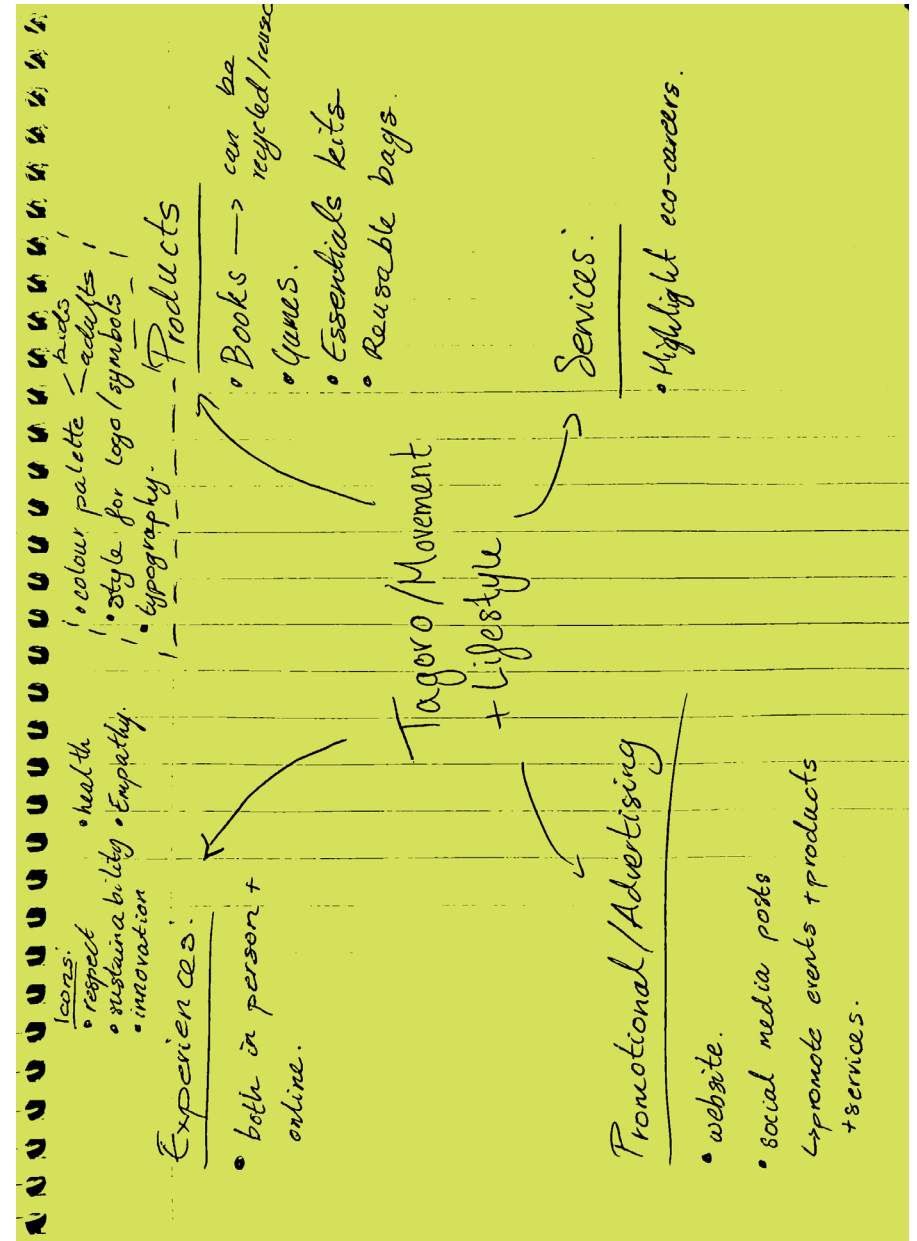
1. Outline Tagoro's philosophy and brand purpose
2. Make Tagoro a lifestyle and present it as a solution to ongoing issues and worries (climate change and uncertainty about the future).
3. Create an image/ brand/ aesthetic for Tagoro
4. Make people aware of Tagoro (publications, social media, educational guides)
5. Highlight eco-careers
6. Create experiences for people
7. Make it easily achievable
8. Create a community
9. Create an eco-friendly product line
10. Create a need for Tagoro

# FINALISING IDEAS

## Using feedback to prepare for the final presentation

Using this case study and the rest of Wes' feedback I brought the idea of branding Tagoro as a lifestyle (within our post-growth world where we already live in eco-cities) to the rest of my group.

Furthermore, I suggested as part of our branding we could create kits for children and parents, that would enable them to begin sustainable practices at home, such as a gardening kit, which is both fun and educational. I also thought we could create essential kits tailored to each eco-occupation to inspire people to embrace these roles, begin their Tagoro lifestyle journey, and ensure they're fully equipped with everything they need to succeed.



# DELIVER

**FINAL PRESENTATION**

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**FINAL OUTCOME**

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**CRITICAL REFLECTION**

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# FINAL PRESENTATION

## How did our presentation to Imagination in London go?

Our final presentation at Imagination in London went very well. Wes remembered us from our interim critique and said he really enjoyed seeing how we developed the brand from the initial designs.

We also presented to Hannibal Knowles, a midweight designer at Imagination, who provided a new point of view when critiquing our presentation.

Overall, the feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive. Wes and Hannibal specifically praised our choices, including the deck itself and

its layout and flow. Their feedback was particularly validating for me, as I had put considerable thought and effort into creating the deck. I carefully considered its structure, layout, and design to ensure everything worked cohesively and contributed to a smooth and engaging presentation.

They praised our thoughtful consideration of our target audience, particularly how our brand effectively adapted for children, both in branding and experiences.



# TAGORO

## How did our presentation to Imagination in London go?

As a whole, I believe we developed and presented a realistic, practical, and cohesive brand and I am proud of what we produced as a final outcome.

Using the icons I designed, Amy and Gloria designed vibrant, playful mockups for our children's kits, while Mollie created striking and visually engaging mockups that showcased our branding in real-world settings. These collaborative efforts brought our concept to life, demonstrating its potential to resonate with our intended audience.



# CRITICAL REFLECTION

The development of our Tagoro brand throughout this project has been very reflective. The main objective of the assignment was to create an identity for a post-growth concept that would resonate with a community, emphasising sustainability and environmental consciousness. This project demanded not only an understanding of broader social and environmental issues but also an exploration of how to communicate these issues effectively through design.

One of the first challenges was to define the purpose and values of the brand. This encouraged us to focus on the deeper aspects of community building. As a group, we aimed to create an identity for

Tagoro that would both reflect the brand's post-growth ideals and resonate emotionally with its audience. Drawing inspiration from several sources, including my own heritage, I incorporated symbols from the Guanches, who were deeply connected to the land and valued communal life. The word "tagoro," referring to a communal space, seemed perfect for the brand as it encapsulated the essence of what we wanted to convey: a place where people and nature exist in harmony.

The insights I gained from the Imagination presentation were also crucial in shaping the final identity. Wes and Adam's discussion on creating emotional connections with a brand emphasised the importance

of creating a deeper, emotional bond with the audience. This reminded me of the M&C Saatchi Open House program and what I learned during it, such as the importance of reinforcing the need for a brand to be more than just a visual identity but an experience. I used this principle to enhance my approach to Tagoro, making sure that the brand would feel welcoming, especially for families and children. Designing for younger audiences, I wanted to instill the values of sustainability early on, using engaging visuals and interactive experiences that would make these concepts more meaningful and memorable.

In our ideation phase, the Brand Purpose workshop with Mark and Alice helped clarify what we wanted to communicate as a brand. The fast-paced nature of the session helped define the nature of Tagoro: an eco-city focused on education, community, and eco-responsibility. This clarity was further refined through feedback from Wes, which encouraged us to consider how Tagoro could be marketed not just as a concept but as a lifestyle. Finally, the design of Tagoro's visual identity was rooted in

both cultural symbolism and practical design. The spiral motifs, inspired by Guanche symbols, were used to represent unity and the cycles of nature, reinforcing the sustainable and communal principles of the brand. By incorporating these meaningful elements, the identity of Tagoro was designed to resonate across generations, establishing a collective sense of responsibility toward the environment and maintaining it.

In conclusion, this project was an invaluable opportunity to blend cultural heritage, modern design, and environmental advocacy into a cohesive brand. Through thoughtful ideation, research, and collaboration, we created a concept that not only aligns with post-growth values but also has the potential to inspire lasting change in how communities interact with the natural world. The feedback from both Imagination and our peers validated the significance of our approach and gave us the confidence to continue refining our vision for Tagoro in the future.

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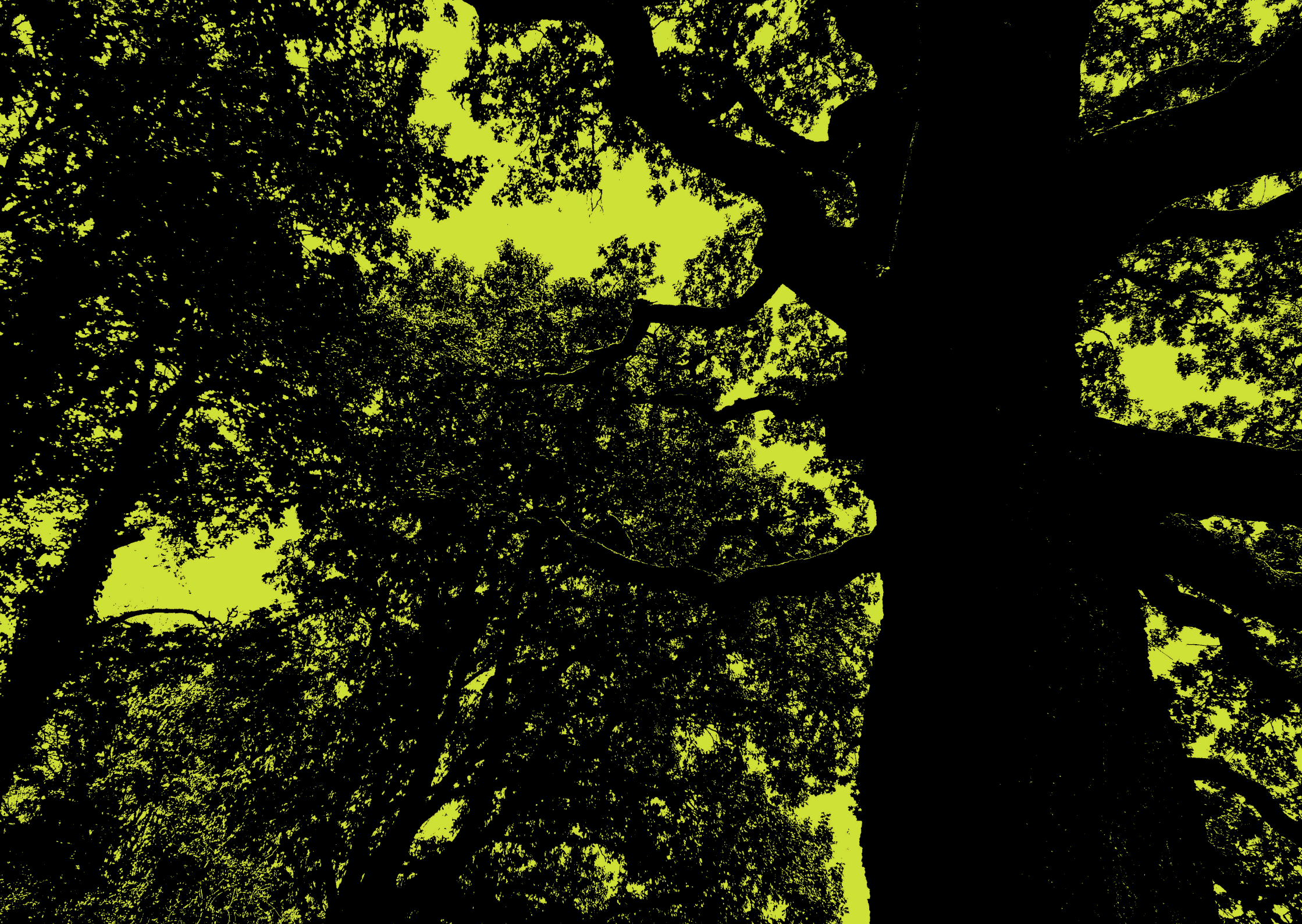
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# REINVENTING URBAN SYNERGY