

RED* Manifesto

Our purpose is to challenge accepted thinking on current social and economic problems by exploring new solutions through innovative design practice.

*RED is our working title, a reference to our corporate colour. This document is all about a project in development. When you have heard what we are up to and read this notebook, we would welcome your ideas on our name and our programme of work.

We will make change happen...
explore, surprise, agitate,
reflect, learn, create, model
and prototype... and make a
tangible difference.

If the world was not changing
design would not be needed



The RED Unit

Many of the most intractable problems we face today could benefit from being looked at from another angle. Familiar economic and social challenges look different through the lens of design thinking. That's where RED comes in.

RED is a new unit at the Design Council that takes a proactive approach to solving problems and developing new concepts and processes for change. Our role is to provoke, stimulate, surprise and deliver, within a context that puts people first and is based in the real world.

Our approach is based on interdisciplinary partnership. A small team of designers works with a range of experts drawn from such fields as economics, science, anthropology and psychoanalysis, in partnership with organisations and individuals from the public and private sector.

We work fast and take risks. Through a series of rapid turnaround projects, seminars and publications in collaboration with relevant partners, we aim to provide ahead-of-the-curve insights in the context of government policy in order to make change happen.

This short document sets out a draft agenda. We would like your input into shaping RED's future. What happens when we visualise alternative ideas and prototype practical solutions that will work in the near term?

The Design Lens



Transformation Design

The design process shapes the relationship between people and the material world they encounter every day. Design bridges the divide between the users of products, services, environments and communications and those who provide them.

The potential of design as a catalyst for innovation has long been recognised. What is now becoming more important is the way in which design can respond to the challenges of organisations and systems in constant flux.

Design is not simply about the object or aesthetics but about a broader creative approach to defining the problem itself and then developing a process to solve it. A design approach is particularly useful in projects where the goal is ill-defined.

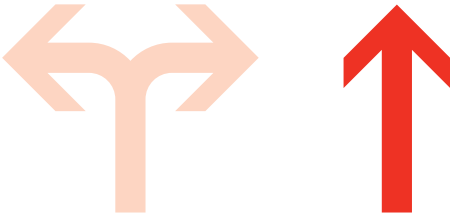
At a practical level, design offers a range of proven tools and techniques for transformation that connect organisations with their users, encourage collective participation and reveal insights in a variety of contexts.

Design then visualises new ideas, thus making them tangible, and reduces risk by prototyping new solutions in real time to ensure continual improvement.

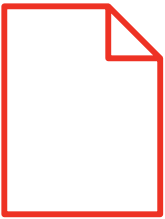
Seen through the lens of RED's design thinking and moulded afresh through innovative practice, economic and social problems high on the policymakers' list begin to look very different.

The RED Programme

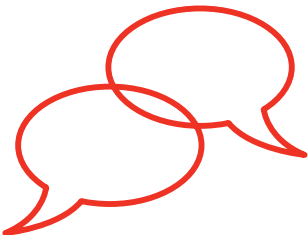
Projects



Papers



Seminars



Projects

Projects are the core activity of the RED unit. Each project will have three imperatives:

- 1 **Look afresh:** re-frame the question and, where appropriate, transfer expertise from one sector to another so that familiar problems are addressed from new angles
- 2 **Make ideas visible:** ensure that potential directions and solutions are made tangible
- 3 **Test things out:** prototype new solutions.

RED projects will vary in scale and flavour. Some might last 24 hours, others six months. Some of our projects will be intended as provocations, others will propose concrete solutions to be implemented.

RED projects will either propose innovative solutions within current frameworks or break out of the box entirely by suggesting ways to reform the system itself.

RED projects will be interdisciplinary and feature collaborations with partner organisations and users of products and services.

The User Focus



The Pink and the Red

Pink



Red



Some early ideas...

Citizenship



Citizenship

We are increasingly being encouraged to think of ourselves as citizens. Yet there is also growing evidence that many are increasingly disengaged from the political process and the state. This project will explore the most important encounters between our state and its citizens, such as the experience of voting and the new citizenship ceremony. We will use design research and human factors techniques to document these experiences, looking at the role of design in mediating and defining these relationships. This rapid project will be undertaken in partnership with the IPPR, culminating in a public debate, pamphlet and small mobile exhibition.



8 weeks

Agriculture



Agriculture

Agriculture is a sector in crisis: declining productivity and employment levels offset by ever higher subsidies. Important dynamic niches are limited by poor distribution systems and a resulting mismatch in supply and demand. For example, one in three British consumers would pay more for locally produced food. Six million people are unable to buy the organic milk they want through lack of availability on the high street, whilst 50 per cent of the organic milk produced is sold at a loss to the non-organic market. This systems design project will visualise the existing linkages in order to re-frame the problem. An opportunities map will plot a limited number of design-related scenarios for action, to provoke debate and new questions within the sector.



Source:

The Organic Milk Suppliers Co-operative (OMSCo),
Six Million Britons Crying Over Lack of Organic Milk,
30 August 2002

8 weeks

Housing



Housing

The shortfall in the housing stock is estimated to reach 453,000 homes within ten years. Worse still, the wrong types of houses are being built: the focus is still on three and four-bedroom properties when the size of average households is decreasing. This communications design project will interpret future lifestyle developments to inform housing requirements and look at how an entrenched debate might be moved forward through the investigation of a new perspective: designing from the inside out. Streams of enquiry will include the limited parameters of debate and the perspectives emerging from the self-build movement (now providing ten per cent of homes and effectively meeting householder demands).



8 weeks

Sources:

Finance Search, *UK Heading For Massive Housing Shortage*, 10 November 2003

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *The current state of the self-build housing market*, September 2001, Ref 951

Health



Health

Many of our most critical health challenges in the 21st century cannot be addressed within a welfare paradigm based on cure rather than prevention. It is widely recognised that issues such as heart disease and obesity need a new approach involving the public and a wider network of institutions. This project will look at how we might design an appropriate, sustainable health service from the bottom up, creating the platforms, motivators and enablers for a new system and providing a range of activities across institutions, disciplines and organisational boundaries. Outputs will include a prospectus for a future health project to be implemented by the Design Council in partnership with institutional partners from the health sector and beyond.



24 weeks

Services



Services

WORK IN PROGRESS

Papers



Seminars



Delivery



The Associates

Seven Associates – inspirational practitioners and leaders in their diverse fields across science, industry, government and academia – will join RED each year.

These Associates will form part of our project teams for up to a week at a time, immersing themselves in the design process, collaborating across disciplines and applying their sectoral expertise in new areas. They will also host and attend seminars in which emerging themes will be discussed.

RED's project partners will in turn benefit from the calibre and breadth of experience brought to our team by our Associates.

Design Associate

A Design Associate will also be recruited to provide visionary design leadership for our annual programme and portfolio of activities.

Team

International in outlook, rummaging in the margins, networked in multiple worlds... the RED team is driven to make the world a better place.

The RED unit is led by Hilary Cottam who initiated the Design Council's public services work in 2001 and is responsible for the development of an innovative new project approach which links policy initiatives to practical change on the ground through a design process.

Educated at Oxford, Sussex and the Open University, Hilary has a PhD in social sciences and recently completed a visiting fellowship at the London School of Economics. She previously worked with the World Bank in Washington DC and has started two of her own companies, one of which was ranked last year within Britain's top 100 creative companies.

Supporting Hilary Cottam is a core team of eight offering design, business and public sector expertise. Individuals from inside and outside the organisation will join the RED team regularly as part of their personal learning programme.

Workspace



Culture

RED will pursue its projects within an open culture based on collaborative principles developed by the Open Source Software movement.

This approach will allow us to share developing ideas in real time with colleagues internally and collaborators externally.

An open culture will be equally critical to our ability to draw on some of the most innovative experiments around the world where Open Source technology is being used to design new business practice and the delivery of public services.

Impact



Impact

RED projects will be measured for impact in the context of the following outputs:

- New ways to frame old problems
- Concepts that generate feedback, provoke thinking and shape the agenda
- Scenarios for actions that describe potential directions
- Prototypes that can be tested and evaluated
- Practical solutions that can be piloted
- Processes for change that can be implemented.

**We would like your input
into the development of RED.
We want you to help build
the unit.**

**Some questions you might
consider...**

What issue would you most like us to tackle?



And what would be a bridge
too far?

DO NOT AT ANY TIME
EXCEED A MAXIMUM
PROPELLER SPEED OF
550 RPM



What other issues would you like to see on our agenda?



[www.designcouncil.org.uk/
blog/red](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/blog/red)