Transcript: Inclusive Spaces: Re-thinking architecture to create social value

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

architecture, spatial, justice, trumpa, ucl, people, london, bartlett, community, research, diversity, FAME, race, gender,

**SPEAKERS**

Kamna Patel, Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows

**Kamna Patel**

Hello everybody. Hi, welcome to the bartlett inclusive spaces seminar series, my name is Kamna Patel. I am the Faculty vice Dean for equality diversity and inclusion.

And in this seminar series we're going to be exploring the contributions of staff, students and alumni of the bartlett to the topic of inclusive spaces. And that's really talking about how do we create, how do you think about spatial equity, I am absolutely delighted to be joined today by an alumna of the bartlett. I'm going to introduce her in just one moment, I want to run through a little bit of housekeeping before we begin.

Can I please remind you that this session is recorded and will be added to the Faculty YouTube channel, the bartlett ED I web page and forwarded to registered attendees.

We encourage you to submit a question for the speaker at any point during this lecture by clicking on the Q amp a function on the bottom of the screen, you can submit your own question and or up-vote the questions of others.

We will hear from our speaker Tumpa, for the first half of the session and begin the Q and A in the second half, before ending promptly by 2pm.

Now, it is my absolute pleasure to welcome Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows who is an award-winning British architect.

She co-founded the interdisciplinary practice Our Building Design, the charity Mannan foundation Trust and two organizations that promote and support architects from ethnic minorities in the UK, fame collective and the Asian architects’ association.

Tumpa is a senior lecturer in architecture at university of Westminster where her teaching draws on her research methodology on interdisciplinary approaches to design.

She's also a PhD researcher and her practice-based research focuses on Community participatory methods and architectural responses to the changing climate, landscape, and social practices in Bangladesh and in the UK.

She was awarded the RIBA J Rising Star award in 2017, a commendation on the RIBA President's Award for research in 2019. And for her architectural work she's received the SEED + Pacific Rim Community Designed Network award in 2018 and the architecture sound frontier award in 2017.

Tumpa has been appointed to be on the design review Panel for the Southern Council Planning Department which is an advisory role over the past two years, and Tumpa, fortunately for us studied architecture at the Bartlett school of architecture for her Part One, to, Part Three, completing her Part Three, in 2011.

It is my real pleasure to welcome such an esteemed alumna back to the bartlett to share her experience and knowledge with us all; and Tumpa, over to you.

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

Thank you Kamna for such a kind introduction. I’ll just like to start by thanking you for inviting me to such an exciting seminar series ‘Inclusive Spaces’. I'm delighted to be back at the bartlett to share some of our projects.

So, I am going to focus on some of our case study projects from various organizations that I’m part of, and I would like to focus and try to address some of these following questions: ‘How can architecture enable the voices of underrepresented communities to enable spatial justice?’, ‘How can architects design for social value creation in places buildings and neighbourhoods?’, and ‘How can designing inclusive spaces, help us respond to the climate injustice?’

And also, I’d like to say that some of the projects belong to these organizations that I’m part of. And most of our projects are from Our Building Design. Our Building Design is a practice, and projects implement architectural practice methods that translate and enable marginalized and local voices to be heard at various levels of design projects.

So, the first part of the presentation will focus on this project, which was situated in Bangladesh, in a remote village called Rajapur and it's a Women's Literacy and Health Care Centre.

So, I’d like to begin by introducing the charity that delivered this project is Mannan Foundation Trust which I co-founded with members of my family, and the name comes from my late father, Professor Mannan, who was born in Rajapur, in the village, and our priorities predominantly engage with disadvantaged communities in rural Bangladesh and we co-founded this charity in 2011.

So, how did it all start? So, the year 2011 is quite a significant one, it’s the year when I completed my part three at the Bartlett.

And after completing my Part Three, I wanted to have a break from architecture. I wanted to do something completely different. So, I wanted to travel to the village in Bangladesh called Rajapur where my father was born; and my father had passed away many years ago, when I was a child, and we'd lost touch with the Community there. So, I was to reconnect with my roots in Rajapur, so I travelled there, and I lived there. And I practiced ethnographic practice by observing the Community and how they live.

So, just to give an overview of where the site is; so, Bangladesh as most of you may know, has a boundary with India, and Myanmar and the project Rajapur is basically south east of Dhaka the capital city and Bangladesh is known for its rivers.

Bangladesh is a low line country which is broadly seen as a floodplain and the majority of the landscape shift between water and land with periodic flooding. The riparian areas are most vulnerable to the shifting landscape, as its inhabitants face the changing climate head on.

The floodplains created by shifting of sediments or silt deposited by rivers are the basis for productive ecosystem and agriculture dependent on the rich nutrients present in the silt shifted by the rivers.

So, I wanted to give you just a really quick snapshot of the contrast between the rural landscape and the urban landscape in Bangladesh, so the cities have been experiencing for the last decade or so a rapid urban growth and there's a huge demand for building and the construction industry have grown and is going to continue to grow, and so the demand for bricks which basically has put a lot of pressure on the rural landscape because the main material in the urban context for building is by brick engineer.

So, what is it like when I first arrived? So, when I first arrived in Rajapur in 2011 I wanted to get to know the Community. So, the way I did this was, I volunteered to teach English classes in the local primary school and it's by being in the school with the children with the parents I got to know how the communities are adapting to the changing and extreme climate and also some of the social issues that they face, so, for example, this is the only school in in that's shared between four villages in the area and the secondary school would mean they have to travel outside of the village. So that means that usually what normally happens is the girls do not continue their education beyond the primary level.

So, they're left behind. So the girl on the left, you can see in the building is one of my students, and this is what usually happens, they help out in the fields and face an early marriage. Also, there was a lack of education, and access to education.

Especially amongst the women in the village. Also, the stories that we've heard from the villagers, are the lack of access to healthcare, the nearest hospital is about 50 kilometres away. As the Mannan Foundation Trust, we want to address these issues. And, I also realized the architectural practices, the building practices are very much meshed and embedded in the cultural practices of how people live. So, for example, it's an annual ritual for the women who had an expertise in building to be plastering the floor of their houses or plastering the walls of their houses; and houses were built with the material palette that consisted of woven bamboo walls or earth walls or brick walls - very rarely you’d found brick walls or tin, but the people took very big care of what their front door looks like, for example. And they heavily rely on fish farming and rice.

So, I wanted to know a bit more about the village, and I wanted to understand what it is that consist the landscape and I couldn't find any map, it's very difficult to find maps of remote places in Bangladesh. Some of the maps that exists of this area of go back to the colonial times when the only thing that appeared in the maps where the boundaries, the legal ownership of the land. So, one of the tools that we used was called transect tool, which is a participatory design strategy. So, it's basically a walk together with the local people in the Community to explore the landscape to explore the water resources, the sanitation, the condition of living and so on, and it is through observing and listening and asking questions and producing a series on mapping diagrams. Here you can see the ponds which are the rainwater collection ponds that the people heavily rely on and which are called ‘puku’ and the fish farm in these ponds, and they have access to water during droughts.

I've also noticed, while walking that there's a huge amount of Bamboo that grows in the village and we've mapped where they are - it's up there. And the building that I’m focusing on today, in the first half of the presentation sits here, which is in the Community hub of the village near the primary school and also the mosque.

These maps have basically helped me to understand the context from the lens of the Community and what's important to them, what establishes a boundary between neighbours, and it helped me to develop a relationship with the people that walked around with and understood their context.

So how do we start the building process of the Rajapur Women’s Literacy and health care Centre?  We first started with formal meetings and we realized that these meetings were heavily dominated by the elders, they were heavily dominated by those in power who spoke in meetings, but that the people who would be likely to be using our facilities didn't engage and didn't speak. It's just the etiquette and the culture of formal meeting. So, we had to improvise ways to overcome this issue and encourage as many people to engage as possible. Architectural drawings, are, we found, to be another thing that hindered engagement as well, because people immediately just think they don't really understand, they don't know how to address what's put in front of them. So, we had to scrap using architectural drawings immediately. Instead, we started improvising these workshops, where we encouraged drawings from the Community. So, we started off drawing with children and both children and parents. They translated each other's ideas through drawings, that the children did, and the children also shared what they thought the building could look like. So, as I mentioned, in these formal meetings we were trying to improvise ways to engage them, especially the women who were underrepresented. We use models. Models were a really good way to speak in three dimensions, we like it to communicate. But still, we realized the women were being represented by men and men in their family would represent them. So, another way we tried to overcome these issues were by actually walking around and acting out on site. So, we acted out, we asked questions about the etiquette of the social practices of men and women, and how they use a community space. These methods have really helped us to understand the ground condition, the climate, the extreme conditions of the climate of different times of the year, and how people adapt to those.

The other methods we used, which were absolutely amazing because they're so popular amongst the villages was making workshops and we use local materials to make prototypes and to understand the materials constraints and advantages. And Bamboo is one of them, and we found that bamboo had a stigma and the Community saw the bamboo as a material that is not used for permanent buildings but for temporary structures.

So, how do we overcome this, because there is a question of budget. Bamboo is very cheap and it's readily available, with no cost of delivery. So, we found ways, we found people in the village who knew how to treat the Bamboo to achieve longevity, and this is one way we overcame that problem. This became really popular, people wanted to learn how to treat the Bamboo. Same with earth. Earth also has a stigma in the village, although it is heavily used by majority of the population. But because it's a community building, especially elders and those with a voice in the community felt that earth did not represent a building that should be for community. It's a domestic material, for domestic buildings.

But earth has such beautiful qualities and it's perfect for that climate, the extreme climate; and the women in the village understood that, because they worked with earth and they build with earth. So, we hosted these workshops, with the women and that enabled them to become integral part of the construction. But again, we faced a hurdle, where women were too shy to come to site. They wouldn't want to build in front of the men because that's not how they are there. They build in their own courtyard, within the privacy of their home. So, we came up with a strategy where they would teach us how to mix the earth. So, on site, the round earth element, the lower part of the building would be built on site, but the women will contribute through earth blocks. So, they would build their blocks at home, dry them and bring them to site to be installed. And these are some of our drawings that we used for dissemination of the knowledge of what is the perfect mix for that region, for building with, to achieve optimum structural property and joining. So, we strapped for more plans and sections, but started drawing really you know rough sketches on site with the people that built with us. And these are some of the sketches that we retrieved from the site, and these are our post condition drawings, so you ended up being in the corner of the public Community hub, where there's an existing pond and we didn't want to interfere with it because it has a huge rich ecology that attracts fish during the flooding season and Kingfisher, so we decided to raise it. So that's when we had to use the concrete because it had to be flood proof for the platform and then the rest of the building is made out of earth. So, the way we separated the two processes of the material is, we decided to design it so that they don't interfere with one another, because there are two different teams of people working in this way, so one wouldn't hold the other one up. So that's how we separated where the structure is from the earth. So, these are the drawings that explain some of the conditions of the buildings responding to the site. So, the elevations are very different, as you can see, because they respond to the way the cycling moves through the site, the way the extreme flooding moves across the site.

It is through engagement with the community that we realized how the path of these extreme weathers would be passing throughout the year. And that's how we could respond architecturally with various different types of elevations. The perforation of the earth wall enables evaporated cooling from low below the building to keep the building cool throughout the year. So ,in the summer, when I last visited in 2019, when it was 50 degrees, this was the coolest building in the village and which was, which is exciting really. These show how the evaporated feeling is moving through the perforated rammed earth walls and also the Bamboo walls.

Some of the photos of when building was first open and it's very much loved by the Community, especially the women. They feel safe here, and this is a safe space for them, this is a safe Community space for them, which was lacking in the village, because the men had a lot of tea stores in every corner of the of the village, but women didn't have any public space to congregate. This is also hosting income generating skills classes, so we have hundred and five (105) women graduating since 2018 from this building and with core skills of how to start their business in tailoring and other crafts, and, we have health and hygiene classes as well. We also host free health classes which are extremely popular amongst everyone in the in the community, especially the women and the children. And we've also attracted some visits from the architectural schools in Bangladesh. So, these are some of the students and professors who visited.

So, I’m going to conclude this project with an animation that I produced for the post occupancy evaluation. So, this animation documents the collective consciousness of the village atmosphere. As you can see, the site goes through a hybrid of water, extreme flooding, and also dry weather; and it also attracts the Kingfisher and the fish. It’s a collective consciousness of the village atmosphere, of the changing climate and the ecology of the village. The process of engaging and collaborating with the community members in Rajapur had enabled us to acquire that knowledge of the site in that way. Through this collaboration we understood that the soil had increased in solubility and it had lost its moisture and then we could respond to it in our building process through this understanding with the community.

The building went through three phases, so the first phase was to build this platform. And after that year we went back and did more fundraising to do the rest of the building. We came back and we heard that the Kingfisher came back to the site, which was excellent. That meant that the topology was maintained how it was. This remains a building that is used by the Community and much loved.

I’m going to move on to the adaptation strategies that are practiced in rural Bangladesh. I’m going to first highlight these projects by the Char community. The Char communities have managed to convert Chars into islands. They are periodic islands, they hear every five years and then disappear, and they managed to grow vegetation, to make them permanent. They've learned to live in on these islands to understand exactly what kind of roots would stabilize the structure of the soil to provide structural support to the riverbanks and prevent erosion.

These are some of the floating gardens where they grow food. So, we've translated that information in drawings to communicate and disseminate this information to other remote communities who are also facing similar problems, challenges of growing food during flooding and also, how to fish farm during the flooding season without losing their fish.

After we went back for post occupancy evaluation, we wanted to understand what the other needs of the Community are and how they're adapting to the extreme climate. We did this through drawing. So, these are some of the drawings by the children of their response to the post occupancy evaluation workshops and some of the drawings of the calendar of adaptation of extreme climate and social practices drawn by the community.

We realized that it's not enough to just host generic workshops with everyone in the village. It doesn't work because their etiquette the social practices are such that different groups of the Community behave differently, and so we have to have to have separate workshops with various groups which were excellent because groups responded, they felt more confident when they were within their own groups. This enabled us to share the local skills to making and drawings; and on the left, you can see, where we are recording the communities’ interpretations of adaptations of the extreme weather through drawings and making. It helped us communicate the design processes that already existed in the community. So, we're learning from the Community, disseminating with others. And also, it gives a voice to the children as well, these workshops, because they feel that they can voice their opinion about how their Community buildings or the projects in the Community could be run, and you can tell, this was an important part of our work. From these workshops there was an issue, - because we went through the drought in the summer -, of losing moisture in the soil. So, together we made this prototype tool, if you like, to collect high level of moister that's present in the dew point at some levels. And it was really easy to make and was made by people in the workshop and then replicated in other people’s farm gardens for growing foods.

COVID-19 response

So how do you how do you work remotely with communities? Because all our travel plans were cancelled, we couldn't travel to Bangladesh. And so, we had to quickly identify local champions, who we worked with and spoke to speak to them on the phone because the internet's not available. We were told the three key things that needed to happen quickly:

* communicating with the Community
* understanding their needs and
* participatory design, to disseminate maybe or creating relationships.

And we found that best way to do that public announcement of really important information of public health for coronavirus, how to keep the city was through the Imam. Imam was our key contact, the priest of the mosque. He announced it to the mic and also posters that we designed, those are great way to communicate information, some videos online and also social media. But we realized that the smartphones were owned by men, so, you're excluding the women from that information. So, we have to think of other ways to reach out to the women, so door to door visits, standing in the courtyard, standing the veranda to speak to the women to understand what they need, and also text messages worked really well, as well. And then we moved on to hosting a number of workshops to disseminate public health information, and to hear back from the Community what was in need, and one of them was hand washing. And then, these local champions moved on to these Design workshops, with the children to raise awareness about social distancing, and so through making and drawing that they learn how to keep a distance and what is the distance required that’s needed for COVID-19. And so, these are great projects that we did remotely with the community; mask making, a quiz for disseminating public health information and other design projects.

These are my projects in London, with my students in my university and we're exploring criminality 19 response in Peckham.

The students went out to the community, we went to the people on the street, to find out what issues that you're facing and for example in here, the closure of Riley and some of the Community Members who work in the in the market and own businesses have expressed that it is really having an impact on their businesses because there's no access, the customers are not coming on the bus or being able to drive and park to do their shopping. So, our way of responding to that, or rather, one of my students have responded to this through rental moving back from the bus stop for example, and then there are other ways that they thought about how to help the local traders to give confidence to the customers when they come in and shop during the time of the lockdown when you have the ease of the lockdown.

And the other thing we have found in Peckham valley is that there's a correlation between the air quality and the income of people and house prices. So, for example, in this corner of Riley where the air quality is at toxic level, you have low-income families living there, kind of shielding the affluent areas of Peckham where the air quality is much better and house prices are amazingly high and people’s income are amazingly high. So, there’s a correlation between the income gap, house prices and air quality. Previously we looked at other areas of London, these are examples of students creating tools to engage with the Community to talk about issues that they have expressed or voiced of concern. For example, the River noise by the rich residential area and, again, we found that the cost of living is cheaper closer to areas where there are environmental challenges.

So, these are some of the examples of that project. So, now I’m coming towards the end of my time.

Really quickly, I’d like to talk about the organization FAME, which stands for Female Architects of Minority Ethnic, and basically it all started during the pandemic. And this is a research-based network founded to support women of diverse background and ethnicity in architecture and the built environment and FAME’s responding to an urgent need for understanding how race and gender affects established and young practitioners, and practitioners from diverse background knowledge and practices by engaging in conversations about the barriers in architecture and the built environment.

And the aim is to raise awareness of the barriers, the inequality and lack of diversity in architecture and built environment and on demand change that response to our collective challenges. So, these are some of the quotations that I have put here on the slide from our participatory event that we hosted. It was hosted by architecture foundation in December last year, so some of the things that I would like to read out.

“Through these conversations with many like ourselves, we realized that there are systematic issues that hold us back, whether in education or in practice of architecture.”

And someone else, put “My view about the barriers and what we can do is inspire confidence and have role models, people who look like us, and then they'll believe that there is a seat at the table for them when they finish” and “Some of the barriers are hidden for a long time until somebody raises them”. So, we’re creating a platform where we can openly discuss these barriers, because I myself have faced some huge challenges in practice. So, visibility is one of the key things that we found that people will talk about, that you can't be what you can't see. So, if you see nobody at the top who represents you, you won't want to be there. This is really true for me as well. When I worked in all the practices and one of the really appalling things that we found - actually our keynote speakers meter had presented - was that from Part one two part three, and you see that all of the minority groups are dropping out except the white students who increase from 59.8% at part one to 89.7% at part three.

Black students at part one 6.4% and at part three 2.7%, and Asian students at part one from 6.8% to part three 1.5%. So yes, these are quite shocking statistics. It starts out really well with people from all backgrounds joining up part one, and then the statistics are showing that they don't get to the part three. They drop out, for whatever reason, and we want to explore these reeasons, through our future platforms as well, and so our next event is going to be hosted by new London architecture on 10th of March, which will be looking at the keynote speaker looking at pathways to success through a FAME perspective, architects in minority ethnic perspective. So please, do join us and also please join us in FAME or Mannan Foundation Trust, because we're always looking for volunteers and these are great projects that we have lined up, some great works that you could get involved in. So, please do get in touch, we’d love to have you join the team. I think I’ll end here, I have two minutes to spare, so I think I did well.

Thank you very much.

**Kamna Patel**

You did wonderfully well, thank you very much Tumpa, and thank you everyone for the questions that you've submitted. Tumpa could I ask you to stop sharing your screen.

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

Yes, sure.

**Kamna Patel**

You can have a bit more of a discussion, what looks like a little bit more of a discussion.

We've had quite a few questions, so I want to maybe group, a few of them together and frame them in and sort of the overarching themes.

One that keeps coming up or a recurring theme is really speaking to your work in Bangladesh and around gender and gender power relations which is quite implied, it's heavily implied, in a lot of the work that you were doing around traditional society structures, feminist theory in practice, you don't use that term, but I think that's what it was.

So, let me skip to Adrian’s question here and ask a little bit about some of the suspicion or perhaps hostility that you might have encountered from males in the village, particularly elders who might have felt a little bit uncomfortable with the newfound positions of space and power that women, particularly were finding themselves in. Could you speak a little bit more about how you negotiated this terrain of gender and power relations and, particularly, how you engaged encountered worked with the men in the village?

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

Thank you, that's a really good question. I’d love to share some of my conversations that I had, which was really interesting. So, definitely it is different because, - I forgot to mention that to you, that three of the co-founders are all women -, and so my two sisters who are doctors who are also running all the health outcomes and my mother she's running the education programs. So, when we go there and we run these projects, I can see that people might wonder, ‘hang on these are not like the women in the village’. However, the people were open about how they felt. And they had expectations because we're not from the village. So, for example, one of the things that we hear ‘you studied in the Uk, architecture in the Uk and you came to the village and you're asking us to build your earth, why not glass, why not concrete? Why are you imposing this old, ancient way of building?’ What I couldn't say was it was actually coming from the women of the village that they wanted to build this way because that's a way of engaging, you know, making it an inclusive team. I didn't want to get into the politics. One good way of addressing that was to have capacity at different households with different materials. So, what we decided to do, because I wanted to understand what it feels like because I said ‘look I don't understand what it feels like to be in these buildings with different materials why don't we go and visit these buildings in the Community and build capacity teams and see what it feels like in extreme hot weather condition’.

And it worked remarkably well because we sat down with no fan, sweat pouring down, drinking hot tea in some of the houses, and that's not what we do in the middle if the day. Then we went to the houses built by the women and they’re usually used for utility purposes, so the kitchen, for example. And in those earth building we didn't sweat and that was one of the ways of negotiating that this material we should give it a go. It actually would be good for keeping cool inside the building, for saving costs for people who are inside the building and can't afford a fan, don't want to pay for electricity, to start with there's no electricity at the moment in the building because it is used during the day. So, that's one example of the expectations, because you're from abroad or from the outside of the community and because we were women.

I don’t know if that answers your question.

**Kamna Patel**

It does it absolutely does, I think it does. So, I want to ask you a little bit building on that, clearly, you are central, you are instrumental to these kinds of methodologies working, but I’d like to ask you to reflect a little bit about your position in questions of positionality when it comes to enacting these kinds of methodological approaches. And then we're going to move on to the question about translating these participatory approaches to other content and cultures, as I think your central to some of that.

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

Thank you for that. So, when I first started, it was very important for me to build that relationship, that's why architecture didn't come into any of the questions or any of the conversations. It was more about getting to know the people, reconnecting with my roots and telling people that actually my father went to the school, this is why I’m teaching at the school and getting to know the parents. I think it's those relationships that you build with people that become central to practicing this way. It's not about having some kind of design agenda, it comes later because you can find this design agenda within the Community, but initially it's about people and the relationship that you build with the Community that becomes central.

**Kamna Patel**

Do you think that these techniques, these participatory approaches can translate in other context and what would be one or two things that you think are particularly important when looking at translating participatory approaches, like the ones you've tried.

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

I’m quite reluctant to use the same method in different contexts because I think every context is unique and so, for example, our exploration in Peckham, it becomes quite personal to me because I grew up in Southwark. And I grew up knowing how the communities are struggling in that part of London.

So, I could say I know that high street, and I know that school because I used to go there. And you can start having conversations with people. But I haven't worked anywhere like this, where I didn't have a connection, so I don't know how, I haven't tried it. But I do strongly believe that it isn't something that you could just pick from one context and put it in another. It's very much site specific, very much embedded in the way the social practices and the way people live and the relationships that you create with them. Maybe it is possible to use similar approaches, but you’d need time and to build that relationship with people and understand what would be right for that specific Community.

**Kamna Patel**

From that, I want to move to a question, this post here by Saran which is, do you think that the UK Government or in this case the Southern Council, has been open to taking on board the ideas that would allow this kind of cultivation of an inclusive space.

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

I’m being a bit unfair to just focus on southern because I think they're not abnormal in the way that they do things, majority of the councils work that way. But in the whole of the UK, I think, especially with the Black Lives Matter movement, especially with what we've gone through with the pandemic, these kinds of methods are so needed because of the healing process, because of an understanding, how we move on from the pandemic and we cannot turn our back on what happened and, especially how it highlighted for example, the healthy equalities in London.

Sorry, especially in London, I'm very London centric, I’m very mindful of that, because I grew up in London, and other parts of the UK. Going forward, all those contributions from the front-line workers and they're paid not reflecting what they're contributing; all those things, I think we, they need to be heard or voices need to be heard moving forward. And I honestly do believe that implementing some of these methods could work. It does take a lot of time, it does take a lot of effort to build trust and relationship with communities, but there are people like me who would be really willing to get involved. It's just finding that opportunity that comes into my whole thing about the next FAME event where we'll be exploring basically the whole framework and local authority framework and how difficult it is to navigate through that for someone like me who's a sole practitioner.

How could I get involved, how could I get it; these are questions that I would like to pose to local authorities. How could I help local authorities to engage with the local community, to hear the voices, the unheard voices, which is so needed at this time. So, that's something I think needs to be addressed by the framework and especially the professions of the in the built environment or BAME communities; how they're not represented, how they are underrepresented.

Sorry I answered the question with questions.

**Kamna Patel**

It’s fine in an academic seminar. It’s always the norm I’d say. I want to skip from that to a question raised here by Mike, which is to what extent does your work act as a critique of conventional architectural practice. Using the term architects here that represent the power structure in the profession and I guess what you're describing a little bit more bottom up with diffused power.

Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows: Well, someone once told me that we are trained at architecture school to be actually giving service to something like 1% of the whole world's population, because we have this dream of doing this amazing trophy like building. But what about the rest of the population of the of the world? And I have a feeling that in this way of practicing, the bottom up way of practicing, there is a lot of room for us to be practicing this way because there are a lot of people who would want to get engaged in practicing this way I don't mean architects, I mean non architects because it's about managing expectations, the budget expectation, of how people live, expectation of social practices and so on. And some of those things I don't think we consider a start, you know, being in a big practice, for example, and because we always have this big client in mind. And I mean it's just another way of doing architecture and there is nothing wrong with doing it this way, and we don't learn it we don't learn this way of practicing or how to practice this way at architecture school currently, and I mean, I myself don't with my students. I mean we were beginning to introduce community engagement, but with the rigid structure of the academia maybe we need far more time than just a semester or two to develop these skills, but starting to do that, that way. So, hopefully next generations of students from, especially my studio they always have in the back of their mind, ‘I need to engage with the Community that I’m building for not just tell them at the end, this is the building and here's the public consultation come and see it, what do you think’, that doesn't work for most of the people who live in solar, for example.

**Kamna Patel**

I guess there's a bit of a solution offered by Stephen framed as a question, we could train up generations of architects to be better ethnographers to be better community activists, we could also include ethnography in master planning, we could include a wider range of disciplinary professions, including anthropologists and some of these conversations around what the built environment looks like and should we?

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

Definitely. Because, I won't mention any names, I was in a meeting and I asked about Community engagement and I asked about community engagement, and I was told that was too political and I don't agree with that. I don't think it's political I think it's being empathetic and that's what we need at this time, especially, and if that comes to being an ethnographer, yes, definitely we should introduce this kind of practice with all those professions that are mentioned by the person who questioned.

**Kamna Patel**

There are a few specific questions here about some of the projects that you've mentioned, given that we've got a little bit of time I’m going to try and ask you some of those.

So, Paul asks here, you mentioned that there's a social stigma around using somethings, like materials, like Bamboo; did applying them in the project helped change attitudes?

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

First of all I’m very much against telling people how to build, it was an example. And some people just said to me things like ‘Oh, we could never build like this’, it's only because they haven't tried. But has it changed their attitude? Well, I think in terms of the Bamboo in this instance it has changed, because more and more people are learning to treat the Bamboo because they realize the benefit of having and creating that longevity of that material and earth, I would say it's still very much an architectural practice that's done by women and that social stigma about ‘If you want an earth building, you should speak to a woman’, that's the kind of attitude that the men would have in in the village. So, no, I haven't, I never advocate that I’m changing the way people practice or the way people behave that wasn't the aim of this building. And the aim of the building was to have an inclusive team and to have as many people involved as possible in many different ways. And, it worked out that the women were excellent at building with us and we wanted to use that in this case and that made them feel ownership of the building, because they can recognize the blocks and they build when they come into the building. So, in this case, it was, but I don't think I’ve changed anything in terms of how people build, you know, that wasn't the aim anyway.

**Kamna Patel**

But a quick question here from Darryl ‘What was your experience of disabled people being involved in the engagement processes in Bangladesh and also here in London. And how does disability in a business help to inform design process and the end results and the projects that you've done?’

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

Yes, a really good question. So, when we had the walk around we had a few elderly people who use this stick to walk around because they had problems with their legs and they insisted that there would be no stairs in the building, so the building was raised. It was easy an easy fix, it just needed around from the access road which is fine, so things like that, for example, and then also the balustrade as well, they have told us that we will need some edge to walk around the verandas, for example, so that's what we implemented so it was it kind of a feedback from the earlier conversations that we had with the Community members. In terms of inclusive team, we have built a building in London and it's to be honest, our projects that we've done are basically in the in the public, being in the high street talking to people. And then most of the work is done by my students. So yes, if we speak to everyone, we speak to what I say, my students go to partially impaired Community members, and within their project they built a proposal for having an inflammation stand with Braille. And then there was the question of actually, that is going to be quite risky for coronavirus, during coronavirus because you know people will be touching it. Then, they had someone, another student then had a proposal of a dispenser for cleaning up their hands afterwards and before. So we speak to whoever's on the street, and we have come across people who have faced a disability of some kind and we try to embed their responses in our design and our response to continue.

**Kamna Patel**

Wonderful Thank you, I think we should stop the Q&A here, I know that there are questions that have been asked that we have not yet gotten around to be able to answer we will try to do so after this seminar. In the meantime, do check out the events of FAME collective, they have a very interesting Twitter account so if you're on Twitter do follow FAME collective and find it somewhere as largely. And you can find out more about their events that are coming up, especially those of you who posted, who are current architecture students or thinking of becoming architecture students, and are from BAME communities, especially. This is a really supportive community in a supportive group to be surrounded by as you explore the profession.

Thank you very much to Tumpa for this fantastic talk. Thank you to all of you for joining us and a recording of this will be made available, so you can review it all again at your leisure. See you next month, for our next inclusive space events.

**Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows**

Thank you, thanks for having me, thanks everyone.