

# Doing Zero



Doing Zero has been selected by the British Council as a creative commission for the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference, which is taking place in Glasgow in November 2021.

It was also picked by WWF UK as a winner in its “Just Imagine” competition, which invited creative networks, institutions and individuals throughout the UK to reimagine a new world, inspired by the themes of the “David Attenborough: A Life on our Planet” film.

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# Doing Zero



## Food, the planet, and me

Doing Zero is about what we as individuals can do to help save the planet.

Devised by Design Manchester and developed with Nairobi Design Week, it's a collaboration between two inner-city neighbourhoods: Kawangware in western Nairobi, Kenya, and Harpurhey in Manchester, England.

What we're looking at is how the climate emergency is affected by what we grow and what we eat.

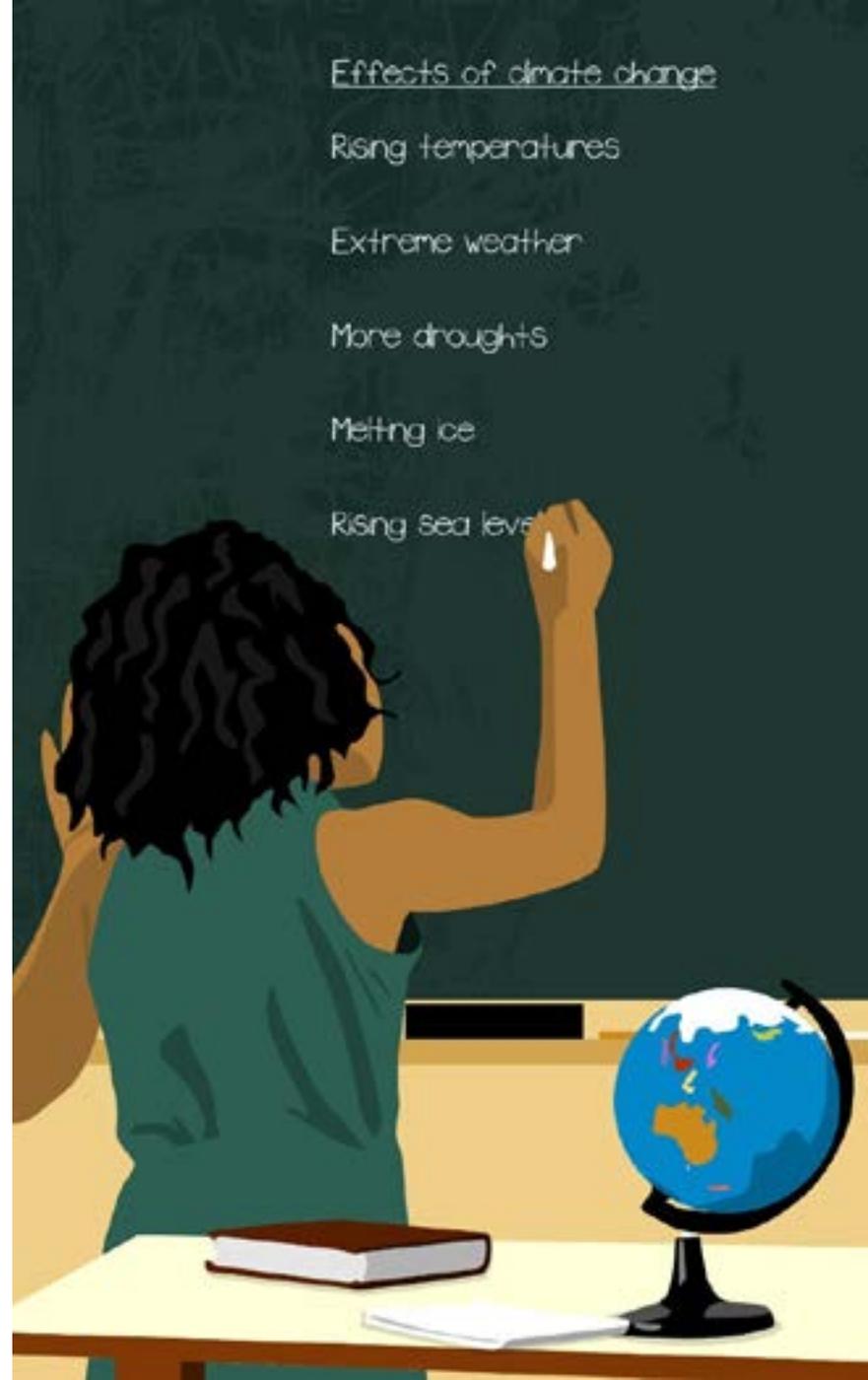
“Food that’s good for the planet, good for my local community, and good for me.”

## People and climate change

People in Kawangware and Harpurhey are affected by climate change in very different ways, yet they also have much in common.

We explore the impact of eating habits, food waste, shopping, packaging, droughts and the use of open spaces, to find common ground and understand differences.

In doing that, we become more directly invested in climate change action, helping to create a culture that's more open to the choices that we are all going to have to make to safeguard our planet.



## What can I do?

Persuading governments and industry to take action is very important. If we don't tackle things like infrastructure, global transport and energy systems, we just won't become sustainable.

But the agency of citizens (what *we* can do, as individuals and communities) is just as important.

Our lifestyle, and the choices we make, do have an effect on carbon emissions. And not just that. If we don't feel personally invested in the battle – if we only talk about what *they* do or don't do – then it will be harder still for governments and industry to make tough but necessary decisions that have an impact on our lives.

With Doing Zero, we want to anchor that awareness about our own agency in the battle to protect the planet. We want to increase our personal investment in the climate emergency.



## The informed community

Where we start is with the informed community.

To make sure we have (and share) information that's globally and locally relevant, we work with climate scientists, nutritionists, city neighbourhood teams, architects, landscape and interior designers, digital and communication designers, psychologists, artists, event and exhibition organisers.

We're working with experts in both countries to develop resources for the local groups.



## The science

Working with the Manchester Climate Change Agency and the Kenya Climate Change Working Group, we are creating a baseline of knowledge about our current lifestyles, and establish what we should aim for in each of the two communities if we're to pull our weight in the global battle.

We're putting this alongside other information about the plans and policies of local and national governments, so that everyone can work for themselves the priorities and choices that are relevant to them, as well as to households, small businesses and organisations in their community.



## Co-design with the community

We're inviting local people to take part in the project. And in addition to "registered participants", we also offer open access throughout the project, so that everyone who wants to can get involved.

We're planning a programme of workshops to co-design public information campaigns with the community. We will work with local artists and designers to help drive that process.

Informed by the science, we'll research locally relevant content and come up with ideas to take to a wider audience.

We are co-designing everything, from the questions to the dissemination, with our local groups.



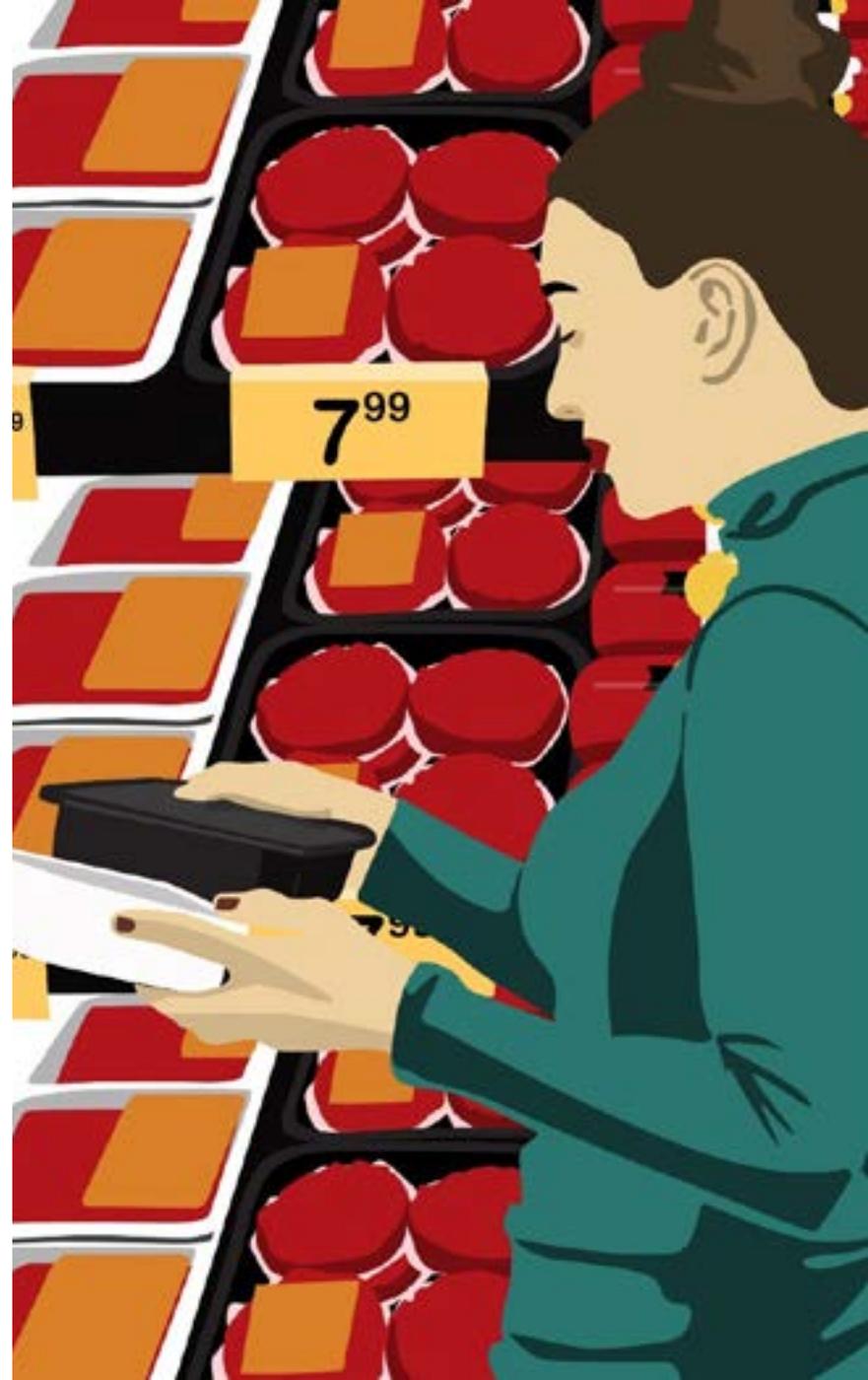
## The same, but different

With two such climate-diverse communities working together, we want to learn about what we have in common and what's different in how we should tackle the global climate challenge.

In Kenya, extreme weather events and droughts present grave threats to food security in the future. In North Manchester, there are communities with some of the worst life expectancy in the UK, and pockets of extreme fuel poverty.

Locally grown food and urban gardens don't just offer benefits in lower emissions, they can also affect wellbeing and the cost of living.

In rich Western countries it's a priority to eat less meat because of how food is produced.





In Kenya, many families keep their own goats and the priorities to achieve sustainability are different.

We'll be looking at the impact of lifestyle in both communities. What are the most easily available and widely used foods — and what are the climate footprints of those foods? We'll have tips for urban farming and planting new foods, local produce and recipes.

There will be a structured programme of activities, co-designed with the communities.

It will include monitoring, reporting back, progress indicators and evaluation, so we can see whether we're starting to make a difference.



## Connected green libraries

We will set up a space at each end as the hub for collaboration within and between the communities.

We're calling these knowledge centres "green libraries".

We are co-creating them with the community in both places, initially for the duration of the project.

We're installing a "fourth wall" collaboration screen at both ends — an always-on display through which the other green library is visible.

That screen is a doorway into another city. We will use it for informal conversations, for sharing information and experiences, for storytelling and for a programme of more structured workshops.

The connected green libraries are the central collaboration mechanism of Doing Zero.

We'll work together to build a programme for engaging, disseminating and communicating what we learn more widely in the communities and beyond. For that we'll use artworks and notices in public places as well as TikTok, WhatsApp, Facebook and SMS – all networks that are widely used by our communities – to gain the widest traction we can.

By telling our story through the design festivals in both cities, combined with the green libraries, public art and social media, we may attract a younger audience to be actively involved.

But our community focus supports intergenerational dialogue and understanding, and we'll reach out to groups that are socially disadvantaged or excluded, making sure the project remains inclusive and open to all.





## Telling the world

Doing Zero will be launched at Nairobi Design Week on 20 March 2021.

The workshops and public campaign will run from April through August.

The project outcomes – art, information, design and data – will then be curated for exhibition at Design Manchester's DM21 festival in November during COP26.

## Scaling up — design in cities

Doing Zero doesn't end with COP26. It's also a prototype for projects with other cities, and for neighbourhood communities to use the framework for their own collaborations.

We're involved in a global dialogue about new approaches to design in cities, which we plan to celebrate at international festival next year, in November 2022.

Projects are being developed for this festival with other cities around the world, as a foundation for ongoing collaboration.

Doing Zero offers a template for community collaboration between all cities in the network – on climate change and on other city challenges, such as housing, wellbeing and inclusive development.

A bilateral global conversation already, it can become a multilateral one.



## A partnership project

Doing Zero is being developed by a growing network of partners in the UK and Kenya.

**Design Manchester** has delivered Manchester's annual festival of design since 2013, promoting skills and talent, and showcasing the best of local and global design across all disciplines.

**Nairobi Design Week** is a community design studio and platform for Afrikan Design, promoting East African talent from all genders and backgrounds.

**SICK! Festival** shines a light on the complexities of mental and physical health with an arts programme that gives voice to the experiences of diverse and marginalised communities.

In 2016, the **Standard Practice** team worked with 600 members of the community to build a pub in Manchester. Last year they created the UK's first B Corp hub for businesses that put people and planet on the same footing as profit. SP is part of Planit-IE.

The **Manchester Climate Change Agency** is responsible for overseeing and championing climate change action in Manchester, one of the first cities in the world to adopt science-based carbon reduction targets.

The partnership between Design Manchester and Nairobi Design Week grew after they met through **Design Connections**, a British Council programme that brings creatives from the UK and all over the world together to foster collaboration.

With nearly 40 design festivals all over the world from Arctic Design Week to Santiago in Chile and from San Francisco to Tokyo, **World Design Weeks** is a network dedicated to elevating the global conversation, understanding, education and connection of people with design. Design Manchester and Nairobi Design Week are both members of World Design Weeks.

The **British Council** is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. Working with individuals, governments and partners, the British Council connects the best of the UK with the world and the best of the world with the UK, building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

**WWF** is the world's leading independent conservation organisation. Our mission is to create a world where people and wildlife can thrive together. To achieve our mission, we're finding ways to help transform the future for the world's wildlife, rivers, forests and seas; pushing for a reduction in carbon emissions that will avoid catastrophic climate change; and pressing for measures to help people live sustainably, within the means of our one planet.

To become involved as a partner or supporter, please get in touch! You can reach us by email at [doingzero@designmcr.com](mailto:doingzero@designmcr.com).



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Creative commission for COP26

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