

Humans of Here East

Meet just a few of the inspiring people on our campus working to make an impact, with the support of Plexal and The Trampery on the Gantry





Nana Badu
Founder, Badu Sports

Badu Sports focuses on educational and community development, using sports as our initial tool of engagement to achieve our aims. We aim to offer positive role models, advice and guidance, so that from an early age our young people form the positive habit of goal setting.

While we provide a high standard in physical education to develop a healthier body, we also provide mentoring to develop a healthier mind. In addition to this, we maintain high of expectations for all our members staff to ensure that all children we engage develop to the best of their abilities.

We knew as soon as the pandemic began that the families and schools we work with were going to be hit the hardest. There is a poverty of knowledge that means many in our community do not know where to go to access the support they need. We aimed to bridge that gap, by being a place that supported them through all their needs – from food distribution, to mental health support, to a space to work.

Here East and Plexal were pivotal in providing us with the space and resources we needed to deliver for our community. All of the organisations here get it and want to help. It is a campus full of genuinely good people.



Cllr Mete Coban MBE
CEO, My Life My Say

I am the founder of My Life My Say - a youth-led, non-partisan charity on a mission to empower young people to participate in democracy. Young people have been disproportionately impacted by the effects of the pandemic, so it's incredibly important that this generation has a voice in shaping their future.

As we have not been able to travel around the country or bring people together face-to-face, the past year forced us to rethink our digital strategy and increase our online presence. This led to a huge increase in digital engagement and a social media reach of over three million people, which has been hugely beneficial for our growth and impact.

We published a report including the experiences of young people throughout the pandemic, which we are using as an advocacy tool to challenge the government to do more for young people. It is so important that we make sure the lessons of the pandemic are not forgotten, because there is so much good that can be taken from this challenge.

At Here East, you are surrounded by so many inspiring organisations. Being part of such a diverse community has meant we have formed some amazing partnerships that would have been much harder to access otherwise. This has massively contributed to the scale of our growth.



Andrew Vargerson
Founder, DesignEast

We are a design consultancy that specialises in surface design, large format print and signage production. We are bridging the gap between design agency and sign-maker to tackle what I see as an understanding gap between design and production. Thinking this way helps us to create well-thought-out designs that not only work, but look good.

Being part of the Trampery on the Gantry has been fantastic for collaboration, giving us an opportunity to work with most of the studios based here on the branding of their own studio spaces, as well as with the wider Here East and Plexal community.

We have been lucky enough to have had a sufficient workload throughout the pandemic – in large part due to increased demand for social distancing signage. I would like to think that we have made a difference in keeping people aware of the risks.

The sheer scale of some of the projects we produced at a time when many companies were struggling has given me the confidence to take on the next stage of our business growth. We are in the process of moving to a bigger space on-site and are looking at growing the team further.



Lydia Thornley
Founder, Studio Lydia Thornley

I'm a designer, creative director, reportage sketcher and workshop presenter. I work with clients as a design partner, with collaborators and on my own projects. My work is done to shape brands, tell stories, help people to see the world differently and build connections.

At the Trampery on the Gantry I'm in a community of fellow creators. This has enormous value as an inspiring working environment and a "hive mind" to ask questions of. It's also exciting to be a part of the innovative spirit of the wider Here East community, and the cultural and creative communities of Hackney Wick and East Bank.

During the pandemic I have broadened my creative practice. I have begun to present online workshops and adapted the design work I do on communications, as clients have pivoted their own activities online.

As a Trampery member in a co-working space who could work from home, I elected to do so to make more, safer space for my studio-mates, staying connected virtually. It has been isolating at times, but we have a Slack channel and WhatsApp group, the Trampery has provided online resources and workshops for members and I'm making a phased return to co-working.



Teoman Ayas and Gerhild Ayas
Founders, MIMStudios

We are a multidisciplinary design studio specialising in architecture. We are a young practice, passionate about developing designed projects. Our backgrounds are in advanced 3D design using various digital tools. These tools enable us to approach design at various scales, from jewellery to furniture, interiors to stand-alone buildings.

We have been living in East London for a long time. As internationals ourselves, we've always identified with its creative and diverse community. So, when we moved our practice into the Trampery on the Gantry it only made sense for us. The creative community within Here East captures the essence of East London. Our collaborations have been

an exchange of ideas and experiences with other creatives.

The pandemic led us to embrace the digital tools we use more than ever. We were able to develop design ideas regardless of time and place, and adapted stricter organisation of the information within our digital files. Doing so enabled more efficient communication with our collaborators.

However, during the pandemic our natural means of networking and community activities stalled for obvious reasons. So, we looked for alternative local organisations which offered scheduled meetings online, increasing our exposure. This gave us the opportunity to mingle again, albeit from behind a screen.



Dami Hastrup
Founder and CEO, MOONHUB

MOONHUB takes the existing Learning and Development (L&D) in corporate companies and converts them into virtual reality interactive training scenarios to allow for higher return on investment and engagement from L&D spend.

Our patent-pending spot and jot scoring technology helps companies capture vital data from their L&D content that they're not fully utilising. Our platform is easy to scale and is geared towards enterprise companies with many users.

We joined Plexal in 2018 and since then our growth has been exponential. We received investment from Sports Interactive studio director Miles Jacobson, we were featured in the Evening Standard's Progress 1000,

were interviewed on BBC Breakfast and 5Live, and were winners of the East London Innovators award. None of this would have been possible had we not been a part of Plexal and Here East. Having a community around us to support us has been priceless.

As you can imagine, being a start-up in the midst of a global pandemic that is toppling the biggest of companies isn't a walk in the park. However, owing to the nature of work and as an innovative team, we were not only able to survive but thrive, with more clients, an investment round that's kicked off strongly and a larger team.