

How to sum up a decade of impact?

As we reflect on the ways in which Here East, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and, more widely, East London have developed over the past 10 years, we want to share 10 stories from people who have been a part of the Here East journey and represent the impact we look to create.

Photography by Gary Morrisroe



TEN — YEARS TEN — STORIES



MIGUEL RODRIGUES

Front of House Team Leader, Here East

Miguel is the face of Here East, welcoming people through the campus doors since he first started in 2017 as a receptionist, and becoming a front-of-house team leader in 2021. In his role, he looks after the welfare of the front-of-house team by creating an environment of wellness, creativity and communication.

He leads by finding pleasure in going the extra mile, and Here East has supported and rewarded his efforts through his work ethic. With his passion for integrity and honesty, Miguel won the Here East Hero Award in 2021 in recognition of his remarkable determination.

Miguel and his team continuously find ways to enhance their experience and involvement with the local community. They are currently developing a VR training programme for the entire front-of-house team, which is an exemplary way of making work innovative and inclusive for all. Miguel has enjoyed seeing smaller companies start at the Here East campus and grow into pioneers in their industry. There is always something happening on the campus, and being so close to the impact that Here East has on the East London community and its stakeholder businesses has been hugely gratifying for Miguel.



JIM BOULTON

Digital Archaeologist and Naming Consultant

Jim had his eye on joining Here East when it was still called iCity, shortly after winning its bid for the International Press and Broadcast Centre on the Olympic Park. Jim's intention was to host a digital archaeology exhibition, celebrating the early days of the internet and showing how the World Wide Web was created. He was especially keen on portraying the generosity and the collaborative spirit that led to its construction. With that in mind, he wanted to get the local community involved in the project. And appropriately, the positive spirit of the early web, portrayed through his 64 Bits exhibition, was the very spirit he was met with at Here East.

Further to this work, Jim's naming agency Inqdrop has built an AI-naming platform that deconstructs historically successful brand names, breaking them down to their phonetic and semantic properties, to give new brands the best chance of emulating their success. Being part of the network of businesses based at The Trampery on the Gantry and the wider Here East campus has enabled Jim to connect with the various stakeholders and numerous start-ups who needed his brand-naming consultancy. This exposure also provided his project with the training data for the AI brand-naming platform to enhance its scope and service.



DIMPLE PRYCE

Scheduler, BT Sport

Dimple joined BT Sport as a Presentation Scheduler in 2015. In her role sitting on the company's Diversity & Inclusion board, she pitched an idea based on a previous student project she had taken part in, which would give young people from the local area the opportunity to develop their own TV show, produced at BT Sport. With the buy-in of the channel's head, Jamie Hindhaugh, BT Sport Takeover was born.

The idea was simple but has proven incredibly effective. Each year, 12 students are selected to produce a lifestyle magazine show based on key events in the sporting world. Their exposure to the media world and the hands-on experience they get from the

three-month process have proven to be popular and incredibly valuable to the participants' career prospects, helping to drive them into media careers. Putting work experience at BT Sport on students' CVs is something Dimple is proud to have been able to provide, particularly as a lifelong local resident who has seen the continued development of opportunities for young people in the area over the past decade.

Dimple's idea expanded the horizons for students from diverse backgrounds in East London, and BT Sport Takeover is now a well-established cornerstone of the channel's yearly activity, supported by the well-equipped campus at Here East and its state-of-the-art studios, made accessible to the local community.



TINA KEECH & NATALIE DONOHUE

Sports Interactive

Sports Interactive has been collaborating with researchers to build a women's football database, which considers the external factors of league levels, competition rules and skills abilities. Tina Keech and Natalie Donohue's work also focuses on the inclusion of women in the industry and how levels of diversity can be accommodated for organisations working in tech and sports, like Sports Interactive.

Their aim is to increase the visibility of women in sports, particularly football, both through the game and gaming platforms. Creating a new audience and user profiles on technological platforms that drive esports development is where they want to transform the field. Here East also has the talent pipeline

to break the barrier of including women in STEM, so the impact of being located at the heart of innovation in Here East has been a catalyst for their growth over the years.

Sports Interactive has also developed a paid art and animation internship programme to scale up the next generation of animators. By collaborating with the academic institutions at Here East, Sports Interactive has been engaging with various local community groups at the intersections of sport, art and technology. The Here East campus also has the infrastructure to show the real-world dynamics of integrating the future of sport and gaming, offering the perfect platform for young innovators just stepping into the industry.



CLAYTON THOMAS

Development and Planning Assistant, LLDC

Looking to take on a master's degree, Clayton Thomas was contacted by Ben Cole, Head of Strategic Projects at one of Here East's first tenants, Loughborough University London. Ben introduced Clayton to Loughborough University's scholarship scheme, which allowed Clayton to take up a master's degree at no cost.

The opportunities that came about as a result led Clayton to various roles working at Here East and for organisations in East London in research departments, recruitment, customer service and innovation management.

Now at the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), Clayton has a leading role

in managing its Neighbourhood Priorities Fund, which takes 15% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and makes it available to grassroots and community projects.

He has partnered with organisations, such as BADU Sports and Social Ark, which work with local young people to harness their talents and skills.

Clayton's experience, starting as an early student at Loughborough University London to being an employee at Here East to now working at the LLDC, is an exemplar of the positive impact Here East has aimed to make over the past 10 years – supporting local people into better education, careers and beyond.



MARYAM HUSSAIN, LEON MADURO & JENNY HOANG

Here East Scholarship Recipients

The first three recipients of the Here East scholarship, Maryam, Leon and Jenny, were scouted by Here East team members, who introduced them to the opportunity when it first opened in 2021.

These scholarships offer students financial relief throughout their education and ensure that the scholars are equipped with the infrastructure to build an excellent skillset.

The scholarship programme welcomes students from the local area who are the first in their families to go to university and those who may be deterred by the costs of pursuing a degree.

The scholarship has given Maryam, Leon

and Jenny, a range of opportunities to engage with businesses in the area, putting them on the radar of many for future employment prospects. The scholars have been positively impacted by the proactive community of Here East members keen on tailoring their focus towards exposing students to the best opportunities for their futures.

The commitment from community members and other stakeholders at Here East and how they lead by developing projects and enhancing the experience for the future workforce have helped develop the scholars' degree experiences and career opportunities during their time on campus.



PROF. CATHERINE HOLLOWAY

Academic Director, GDI Hub

Catherine Holloway is a creative leader who pioneers the disability interaction framework to accelerate the innovation and accessibility of assistive technology globally. The GDI Hub was born out of a collaboration with two other academics, Vicki Austin and Iain McKinnon. Vicki and Iain had worked for the Paralympic legacy programme and wanted to foster a lasting legacy for the Paralympics. The Hub was formed when the three came together to share their vision of a research and practice centre with the overarching purpose of improving the lives of disabled people globally.

Over the past few years, GDI Hub has created homegrown technologies and supported research programmes that have now reached millions of people. It launched a master's course in disability, design and innovation and is now

the WHO Collaborating Centre on Assistive Technology – the only one in the world. It also founded GDI Accelerate, a co-innovation ecosystem where creatives can come together and scale up their projects.

The biggest local impact of the GDI Hub is its tried-and-tested innovation curriculum that is going to be scaled on the Olympic Park and infused into the MSc programme. GDI Hub develops technologies by collaborating with local people in East London and global partners, connecting ventures to the right partnerships at the right time while simultaneously developing novel finance and business models to enable scale. All innovation activities are backed up by rigorous research, ensuring that the team continues learning and growing the disability innovation movement.



FIONA MEEKS

Doctoral Researcher, Loughborough University London

While working for the London Borough of Hackney to engage children and young people with opportunities at the Olympic Park during 2012, Fiona's role shifted post Games to focus on the Olympic legacy. While working for Hackney Council, Fiona witnessed first-hand the power of social and organisational networks, and experienced how collaboration and knowledge exchange was key to successful innovation.

These experiences piqued her interest in studying innovation networks, and she went on to pursue a PhD that would involve measuring innovation networks at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, understanding what mechanisms enable innovation ecosystems and networks to evolve, and what the economic and social outcomes are.

Here East was the perfect place for this study to take place and for Fiona to have access to the resources she needed to facilitate her research. She found that people in the local community of East London are driven by a desire to connect and collaborate to exchange knowledge and ideas. Here East has cultivated this through many networking activities that bring diverse actors together in a unique space steeped in Olympic legacy.

For Fiona, the Olympic legacy is not just about sports participation, regeneration and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park as a new destination: in addition, there is a wealth of 'hidden legacy benefits' of collaborative and innovative activity that has led to an improved quality of life for Hackney residents and the wider community in East London.



**ANDREW WATTS, EMMA WHITTAKER
& ANDREW MCHERON**

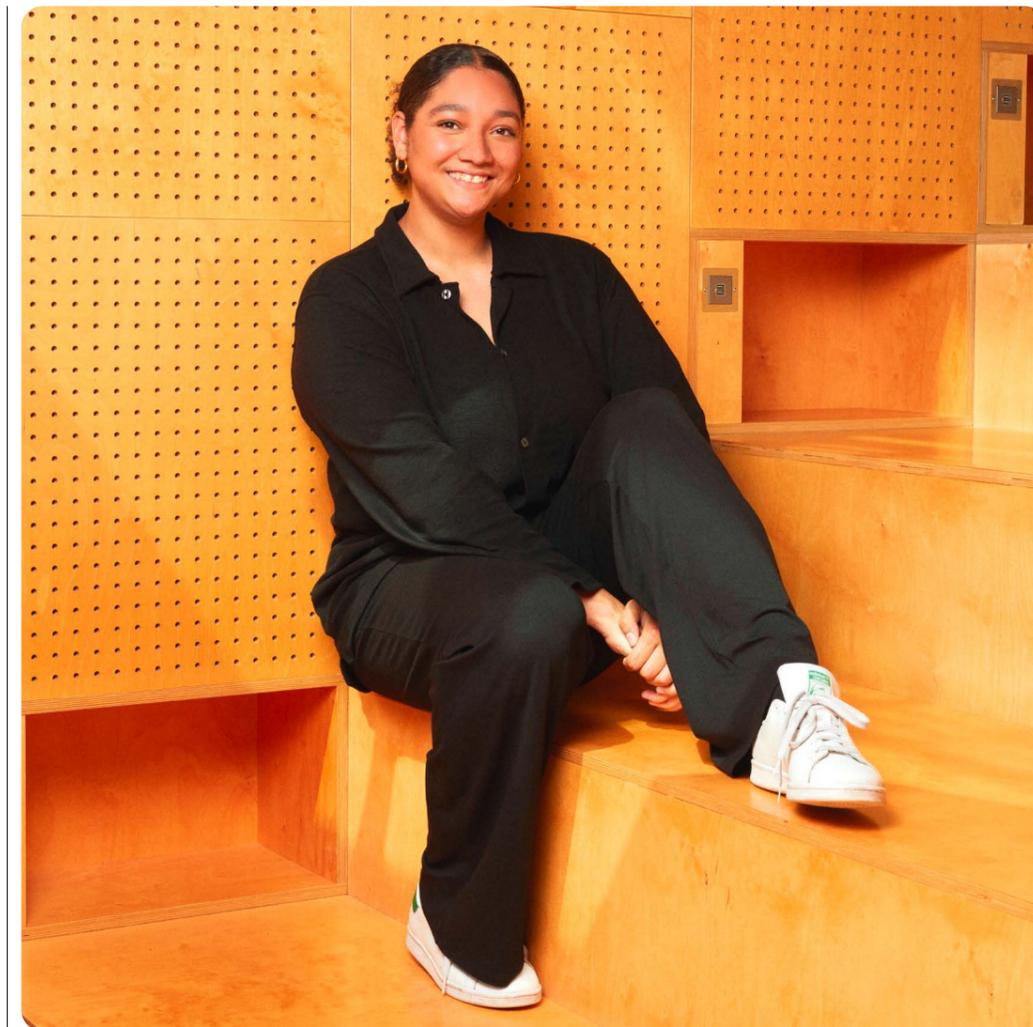
Randy's Wing Bar

Randy's Wing Bar has been based at Here East for the past seven years and has become a staple of the iconic Canalside. Through this time, it has worked with charities to support the local community of Hackney Wick by offering free school meals during school holidays. The team developed the infrastructure to offer discounts to NHS workers, students and Here East employees to highlight their support for the local community during the pandemic.

Being a hospitality business meant that Randy's suffered as much as any through the challenges of the pandemic. But that did not stop it from supporting its people, from staff to the local community.

Its commitment has been recognised by the Mayor of Hackney, Philip Glanville and Hackney Council and has motivated Andy, Emma and Andrew to remain at the heart of their Canalside community. Over the years, it has invested in enhanced infrastructure and kitchen equipment for its Here East location, while investing in a second location, seafood restaurant Claw & Hammer in Tower Hill.

It also began investing in technology and making its production processes more inclusive and sustainable. This allowed the team to diversify its culinary offerings and develop new sauce lines by working with local providers and resources.



**OLIVIA
EASTWOOD-GRAY**

Brand and Project Manager, BADU Sports

Olivia is a lifelong East London resident and has been involved with BADU Sports since she was 11, taking part in its teams and extracurricular activities. This led to participation in larger events such as the London Youth Games, representing the borough of Hackney.

Olivia went away to university, and when she returned, she rekindled her connection with the BADU legacy. When she got in touch with Nana Badu, the Founder of BADU Sports, she was offered a job as a funding administrator. She now manages key projects and partnerships for the company while doing her master's degree at Loughborough University London.

Over the last few years, there has been a domino effect of bringing more young and ambitious people into the Here East space through collaborations BADU Sports has had with universities and academic institutions based on the Here East campus.

This effect has been a catalyst in bridging the gap between work and play, especially among young people, from underserved backgrounds and communities.

The variety of skills that Olivia has gained and developed throughout her experience have built a solid foundation that she says will be with her forever and that she hopes to carry into any opportunity.