

Encountering design
for development:
An exploration of design value
and ethics in practice.

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Signed declaration

I, Ledia Andrawes, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Ledia Andrawes



Abstract

In recent years, there has been a turn to design practices with the promise of more human-centred outcomes. However, the value of this shift remains understudied in social change settings such as D/development. This thesis explores the distinct value of design for D/development from the standpoints of the actors closely intertwined in its projects. The discussion is grounded in understanding little-d development as ‘human flourishing’ based on the self-determined life that one would like to live. Whereas big-D Development is conceptualised as the Eurocentric post-WWII system to transition Global South countries into modernist, capitalist economies. Following a period of ‘prolonged crisis’ relating to its top-down power, outside-in knowledge flows, rigid working cultures, and questionable impact – some scholars consider Development as a ‘grand design gone sour’. Actors operating within this system are facing a challenge of reinvention. Given this backdrop, there is growing adoption of design practices in the search for, and transition toward alternatives.

The discussion regarding the value of design in this thesis is grounded in understanding the act of ‘designing’ as an ontological, collaborative and social process of cultural exploration. Such acts of designing are deeply in-tune with the struggles and aspirations of human experience; and can drive the transformation of things, beings and Being. Yet, there remains limited empirical evidence regarding how encountering design is of value to actors involved in complex social change processes. Drawing on an ethnography of projects in Ghana and Kenya, as well as interviews with citizens/users, implementers, funders and designers; I argue that acts of designing can build trust, integrate knowledge, sustain ownership, enhance relevance, affirm agency, reduce risks, reorient accountability, strengthen capability, and challenge power dynamics. This makes the value of design relevant in the search for, and transition toward alternatives. However, this contribution is contingent on the navigation of a variety of ethical dilemmas. As such, this thesis elucidates how design is encountered, what kind of value it offers actors, and what is required for this value to be realised in social change settings such as Development projects.

Impact statement

Despite the growing body of research about the abilities and practices of designers working in social change contexts, there is surprisingly little known about the characteristic and intrinsic value of design at the intersection with D/development. The attempt to translate the 'Return-on-Design' (RoD) and demonstrate the value that design brings to society is an important yet understudied pursuit (Amatullo 2013, 2015). The extant literature has primarily focused on the value of design for private sector actors and falls short on the value for actors who deal with complex social change processes. In targeting critical weaknesses in the literature, this thesis focuses less on the traditional understanding of design as an enabler of market-based goals related to the production and consumption of goods, and more on the understanding of design as an enabler of social change goals related to D/development. The contribution of this thesis is novel given the limited articulation about the value of collaborative design practices from the standpoints of diverse actors.

The urgency to understand this comes from a growing sentiment among designers that they are working in contexts where evidence is still developing and debate about their impact is persistent. The absence of systematic evaluation of design at this intersection prompts the need for greater documentation of how design is creating value, what value is being created, and what are the enabling conditions for this value to be realised. This thesis puts forward how the value of design, which has conventionally been defined in commercial terms, needs to be reconceptualised for social change actors. It does this by proposing a series of value propositions, which could be further built upon to determine the specific indicators for a 'Return-on-Design' in complex social change settings. This thesis comes at a critical time when some of the leading practitioners at this intersection are signalling that, along with the promise of design's capacity for imagining alternative futures, is the risk of it not rising to its full potential.

This thesis draws upon integrative approaches that span the domains of design, anthropology, global health, post-development and decolonial thinking. I have interwoven two methodological varieties; one of interdisciplinary scholarship in the academic tradition, and another of assimilating design practice into real-world projects. By combining these, I provide designers working at this intersection with the theoretical constructs to further their practice, as well as provide scholars

with a window into the contradictions some theories surface in practice. Through synthesising human experiences using the combined theoretical scaffolding of standpoint theory and grounded case studies, this thesis contributes a unique set of elementary constructs towards a broader theory on the value of design for social change processes, one that many have argued is missing and required.

This thesis comes at an opportune time as it actively responds to the current high levels of attention, both praise and critique, being directed at design's contribution to D/development by scholars and practitioners alike. The insights generated by this thesis bring benefits both inside and outside of academia. Inside of academia, this thesis further establishes the rationale for more diverse conceptualisations of the value of design, which may deviate from strict economic bounded-rationality assumptions that do not always represent reality in its complexity. It also allows for the study of design as an evolving practice that integrates with historical and contemporary development theories. Outside of academia, this research has already proven to be of high practical relevance for NGOs, philanthropic foundations, and governments, who can directly influence new types of relationships, interactions, and ways of working globally. In 2019, this work fed into discussions on design for development during four events: one in Senegal in April with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and 90 other practitioners; in UK in June at the Academic Design & Innovation Management (ADIM) conference; a session run via video conference in August by John Snow, Inc (JSI) and USAID; and lastly, in Seattle in October with BMGF. This research is also helping with appraisals of new investments, as well as in qualifying (not just quantifying) the influence of design on their investment choices, or more aptly, on the lives of the people they service. The ideas in this thesis have progressively been disseminated through six academic peer-reviewed publications as well as nine industry conferences over the past six years; all of which are listed in the appendix..

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Chapter 1

Introduction



“ And it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things, because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new. This coolness arises partly from fear of the opponents, who have the laws on their side, and partly from the incredulity of men, who do not readily believe in new things until they have had a long experience of them.

The Prince, chapter 6, Niccolò Machiavelli, 1513¹

¹ Niccolò Machiavelli (May 3, 1469 – June 21, 1527) was a Florentine political philosopher, historian, musician, poet, and playwright.

1.1 CHAPTER OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a high-level overview of the thesis context and format. The chapter starts by providing some background and justification for the research, an indication as to where it sits at the intersection of different disciplines, a summary of the research objectives and scope before outlining the structure for the remainder of the thesis.

1.2 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

This thesis is a study of the distinct value of design for D/development² from the standpoint of the actors closely intertwined in its projects. In recent years, there has been a turn to design thinking and practice in improving the delivery of Development projects. However, the value of this shift remains understudied. Many practitioners and scholars have sung the praises of design for Development programmes as effectively responding to the ‘prolonged crisis’ that actors operating in this system have been experiencing (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). In this thesis, I explore what design practices offer Development by examining two case studies in detail, and by interviewing different types of actors involved in projects at this intersection – including funders, implementers and citizens.

Actors operating within the Development system deal with some of the most complex and ill-defined questions facing humanity (Ellerman 2002). Development here is conceptualised as the Eurocentric post-WWII system to transition global south countries into modern, capitalist economies that rationalise progress on technical interventions and economic growth. The system of Development has been criticised for its top-down power dynamics, outside-in knowledge flows, non-adaptive working cultures, quantitative-heavy notions of impact, and structural dependencies. Actors and practices within this system are critiqued for being too controlling, technocratic, not sensitive to people or place, lacking flexibility, and often failing to hit the mark (Andrews 2014; Dennehy, Fitzgibbon & Carton 2013; Ebrahim 2003; Edwards & Hulme 2002; Newcomer, Baradei & Garcia 2013; Unerman & O’Dwyer 2010). Following mounting critique in the last 30 years, some post-Development thinkers have called for the abolition of Development altogether and a transition toward ‘Alternatives to Development’ (Esteva 1992; Sachs 1997; Rahnema 1997). They argue this would enable pluralistic, discursive

2 In Chapter Two of the thesis, I will go on to explain why and how I differentiate between ‘little-d’ development and ‘big-D’ development.

and practice-led spaces to imagine pathways forward with people rather than to them. The transition to alternatives is based on a 'pluralisation of the universal' for an emancipatory politics (Nakano 2007, p.76; Escobar 1995).

Actors operating within this system are facing a challenge of reinvention with limited knowledge on how to do it. To achieve this, shifts are required from practitioners – to transition from being controllers to facilitators, and from planners to co-creators. The act of imagining new pathways and alternatives with people, will not thrive without first addressing questions about the place and practices of actors operating within the existing system of Development. It is implausible that the established institutional structures and the good intentions of practitioners will be abandoned. Post-Development has been criticised for its lack of concrete propositions for alternatives. Spaces for practical transitions from Development to post-Development still need to be explored. This transition is about enabling spaces where people can reclaim the imaginary and practices for little-d development so that their autonomy articulates, shapes and pursues social change that corresponds to their ideas of 'a good life'. Some critics of post-Development have put forward more nuanced perspectives that offer more practice-based and actor-oriented approaches for a new ethnography of development (Long 2001, Mosse 2005). Like many others before me, my position is not to argue for the abolition of development, but rather, to shift power and agency in social change processes from the hands of outside 'experts' to the members of the society itself (Ziai 2004; Kippler 2010), as well as to promote practical alternatives from a 'future positive' position (Edwards 1999, Mosse 2005).

Given this backdrop, there is growing interest in the adoption of design practices, as actors seek to reinvent themselves and the system they are operating within. Design here is conceptualised as an ontological and social process of cultural exploration; one that is deeply in-tune with the struggles and aspirations of human experience; and one that drives the transformation of things, beings and Being. Just as applying design practices has become mainstream for companies wanting to become more 'customer-centred' and for governments wanting to become more 'citizen-centred' (Brown & Katz 2009), the discussion around Development suggests it is on the cusp of a similar transition as actors seek more 'human-centred' alternatives. An ontological and socially oriented interpretation of design is rooted in a human-centred practice that intrinsically aligns to the principles of imagining alternatives through collective action. In contemporary discourse, design presents itself as 'one of the world's most powerful forces'

(Bruce Mau in Suchman 2011, p.5). This is in light of a major shift in the design field as it expands its role from shaping products, to shaping human experience, knowledge and cultural domains more broadly (Buchanan 1995). The contemporary designer now operates as a negotiator of value, facilitator of thinking, visualiser of the intangible, navigator of complexity, mediator of stakeholders and coordinator of exploration (Inns 2010, pp.24–26). This conceptualisation adds to the intrigue of design and perhaps sheds some light on why increasing numbers of social change actors in D/development are turning to design to support the transition to alternative ways of working and being.

The theoretical discussion cited above demonstrates the limited investigation to date on the value of design in supporting actors to ‘transform’ (Collier 2007) or ‘transition’ toward alternatives (Escobar 2018). Some theorists propose that design offers a novel critical praxis and special kind of knowledge system for movements aimed at transitions (Manzini 2009; Tonkinwise 2015; Irwin 2015; Willis 2015). Escobar claims design has a ‘practical’ contribution to make to the transitions needed for Development alternatives (2018, p.x). However, for design’s potential to be realised in this context, it requires a reorientation of design itself – from its ‘functionalist, rationalistic and industrial’ origins toward an integrated rationality and intuition that reconciles with the ‘relational dimension of life’ (Escobar 2018, p.x). Despite such calls, the literature on the value of design, has focused almost entirely on private sector organisations who have products to sell and profits to make (Sato, Lucente, Meyer et al. 2010). The interrogation of value created through design encounters falls short when it comes to social change actors who deal with ill-defined questions and highly complex realities.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In targeting critical limitations in the existing literature, the focus of this thesis is less on the traditional understanding of design as an enabler of market-based goals (Thomas 2006), and more on design as a social change process (Margolin 2007). If design itself can be viewed as a social process of cultural exploration, imagination and transformation (Escobar 2018; Buchanan 1998; Minneman & Leifer 1993), then what else could the value of design be characterised as beyond the production and consumption of goods? There is little evidence that the value of design is understood as a social change process, even by designers. There is a widespread sentiment from designers at the frontlines of social change initiatives, that they are operating in contexts where evidence is still developing, and debate

about design's value is constant in the face of the near-absence of systematic evaluation and measurement (Mulgan 2011; Amatullo 2015). This thesis explores design's potential to contribute to social change processes, while considering the complex political economy of Development's past, present, and future.

1.4 QUESTIONS AND SCOPE

The growing recognition of the value of design for supporting complex social change processes surfaces a new set of questions around how to codify such contributions. The attempt to translate the 'Return on Design' (RoD) and demonstrate the value that design brings to society is an important yet understudied pursuit (Amatullo 2015). Hence, the starting premise of this research was to explore if, how, and to what degree, does design create value for social change actors who are dealing with some of the most complex and ill-defined questions facing humanity?

This starting premise led to the following key research questions:

1. How do different actors perceive the role of design in Development projects?
2. What do different actors find valuable about design for Development based on their encounters?
3. What tensions and challenges emerge when design practices are adopted within Development projects?

The first research question is addressed in Chapters Five and Six, where two in-depth case studies supported by participant interviews depict how different actors perceive the role of design in real world projects. The second research question is addressed in Chapter Eight, where an analysis of what actors find valuable is presented as a conceptual framework, by actor standpoint. The third research question is addressed in Chapters Seven and Eight, where an overview of the ethical dilemmas identified by practitioners working at this intersection is provided.

To answer these questions, I firstly set out to explore different actor perceptions and experiences with design in real-world Development projects. Secondly, I set out to characterise what different actors found most valuable about design,

beyond the contracted output in real-world Development projects. Thirdly, I set out to understand the tensions and challenges that emerge with design encounters in real-world Development projects. Consequently, my methodological choices were not made while shielded from any influencing ontological and epistemological factors. The research methodology chosen is anchored in my impression of the research area as subjective and having 'multiple' interpretations (Creswell 2007, p.17), hence it ought to be explored based on 'real world' phenomena (Guba & Lincoln 1994). The way I make sense of knowledge is through interpretation and social construction, which tends to lean more on qualitative research approaches that adopt inductive research processes. Therein lies the reasoning for methodological choices that encouraged me to 'lessen the distance between the researcher and the focus of research' (Creswell 2007, p.16) and incorporated notions from ethnography, action research, grounded theory, and case studies.

Specifically, I conducted 22 months of ethnographic participant observation in Ghana and then Kenya across two projects, followed by 13 semi-structured participant interviews. I adopted Perren and Ram's (2004) 'multiple stories milieu explorations' case-study method to elucidate the standpoint of different actors in each project. In addition to the case study interviews, 28 other semi-structured interviews were conducted with actors involved in similar projects to explore similarities and differences in actor experiences outside of these two case studies. Based on the total number of 41 interviews, this thesis explores perspectives from many social actors who are deemed crucial in explaining the value of design for Development. The data was systematically analysed using both hand coding and NVivo to generate thematic analyses of the crucial constructs underpinning this research. Lastly, I used an iterative approach to interpret the constructs in a way that delivers on the research aim. In Chapter Four, I provide a more detailed overview of the research methods and considerations. In summary, the scope of this research specifically investigates how design is encountered, what kind of value it offers actors, and what is needed for this value to be realised in the context of Development projects.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION

There are productive practices of design that create inherent social value through its novel ways of looking, listening, sharing and learning (Schwittay 2014). Designers clearly then have a role to play in mediating, facilitating, and supporting other actors in the system during a time of transition and acting as the glue between the parts and the whole.

From the case studies, it becomes evident that design creates value that is intended and unintended, as well as tangible and intangible. The value of design is experienced differently and is dependent on an actor's distinct standpoint. For instance, the key benefits of design from the citizen standpoint are related to dignity, power, and relevance. The key benefits of design from the implementer standpoint are related to knowledge, capability, and trust. The key benefits of design from the funder standpoint are related to risk-reduction, accountability, and ownership. I demonstrate how these different actors get different things out of the application of design in exactly the same setting. The actor's positioning matters, as for certain actors, things of value come into focus first, depending on what is important to them. As such, I put forward how design's value can influence social and cultural factors as much as it influences economic ones. Although design creates value for actors, this value is contingent on the designers knowing their place in relation to others, and how to utilise the power they have in a given situation. If designers continue to fit neatly within and comply with existing project structures, then designers risk becoming complicit in perpetuating the inherently distorted power imbalances within the system they claim to be disrupting. Since designers enact a certain politics while designing, they need to be aware of not assuming the role of 'agents' of change when they are facilitating social processes within Development projects.

Despite the emerging trend for actors to adopt design in Development projects, and some attempts to describe its influences in this context (Amatullo 2015, Miller & Rudnick 2014, Vasdev 2013, Dearden & Rizvi 2008, Oosterlaken 2009), there is limited peer reviewed literature that explicitly identifies the social value created from adopting design practices in Development projects, particularly based on the standpoint of actors involved. This research contributes new knowledge to the emerging intersection of design and a Development system in transition. The findings are anticipated to have real-life impacts through the conceptualisation of a new model for how value created by design can be perceived, interpreted,

and evaluated in projects. This contribution is timely as it provides elementary constructs for discussing the intrinsic value of design in social change settings. In this way, this thesis answers to the growing calls for further discerning how design is creating value, what value is being created, and what are the enabling conditions for this value to be realised in such contexts.

1.6. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of nine chapters. Following this introduction chapter, Chapter Two presents an in-depth review of the literature relating to Development, particularly in regard to its aspirations, its failings, and the transitional spaces opening up for alternatives. Chapter Three examines the literature relating to design and its potential to support relational and ontological processes of imagining alternatives. This sets the stage for the research questions surrounding the potential of design's value for actors operating within a Development system in transition. Chapter Four justifies the research paradigm, specific methods used for this thesis, and the limitations. Chapters Five and Six present the findings from the first body of work in the form of two separate case studies, one situated in a public health context in Ghana, and the other in a public health context in Kenya. These chapters focus on understanding the design encounters of citizens/users, implementers, funders and designers. Chapter Seven presents the findings of the second body of work based on extensive interviews with designers and advocates who share their experiences on the tensions with encountering design in projects. For Chapter Eight, the findings from Chapters Five, Six and Seven are then compared and integrated into a conceptual framework that answers the questions which had surfaced from the literature. Chapter Nine summarises the thesis, reiterates the research conclusion, highlights the implications, and outlines opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature on development



“ We have for over a century been dragged by the preposterous West behind its chariot, choked by dust, deafened by noise, humbled by our own helplessness, and overwhelmed by the speed. If we ever ventured to ask “progress towards what, and progress for whom?”, it was considered oriental to entertain such doubts about the absoluteness of progress

(Tagore 1941, opening quotation in Silitoe 2000, no page)³.

3 Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was a Bengali poet, philosopher, pioneer of rural development in India who placed emphasis on the holistic understanding of the way of life of local communities

2.1 CHAPTER OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the rationale for the emphasis on Development in this thesis. The first section of this chapter explores the origins, definitions, connotations and interpretations of D/development. I investigate the notions of alternatives, through the evolution from economic development, to human development, post-development and participatory development. As I have grounded this exploration in practice, the final section outlines who are the actors shaping and shaped by such alternatives, and what are the domains for transitioning to these alternatives.

2.2 CONTEXTUALISING DEVELOPMENT

The conflation of D/development

'Development' in name, ideology and practice is divisive. The term is: defined in a multiplicity of ways because there are a multitude of 'developers' who are entrusted with the task of development' (Cowen & Shenton 1996, p.4). The notion of development has traditionally been framed in economic terms. From this perspective, development is considered as a measurable growth in material wellbeing as indicated by GDP per capita income (Costanza, Hart, Kubiszewski et al. 2018; Goulet 1997). However, there has been growing division on what the term should mean since the 1970s when many low-income countries had met IMF-imposed GDP growth targets, but still had extremely high levels of poverty (Stiglitz 2002; Todaro 2000). Sen's body of work shifted the conversation and challenged the dominant narrative, inspiring the term 'human development' in reference to a more multi-dimensional and human-centred paradigm that contrasted economic development's emphasis on GDP metrics. Most importantly, human development offered a framework for measuring progress that introduced a plurality of values that included equity, sustainability, capability, and respect for human rights and dignity. Specifically, Sen's (1999) 'capability approach' disputed the focus on GDP by highlighting how equity, human rights and freedom were essential to a person's ability to benefit from economic development.

In line with the turn to human development, many other economists and anthropologists have expanded on the traditional paradigm of economic development. Earlier expansions included Romer (1986) on the role of knowledge and Lucas (1988) on the need to invest in 'human capital' for growth. Another

key advancement was Chambers (1992) work on participatory approaches that highlights the need for people to share and analyse their own knowledge for development action to be meaningful. More recent expansions include Rao and Walton's (2004) ideas that placed development within culture in ways that both shape, and get shaped by, the relational aspects of human interaction. It is evident that this emphasis on human development has promoted the idea that people experiencing poverty are active 'agents of their own wellbeing' (UNDP 2010), and not passive recipients of aid.

It is important to note the common conflation of the term 'development' in the literature. Competing claims to the term have previously been given a differentiating heuristic device as either Big-D or little-d (Lewis 2019; Bebbington, Hickey & Mitlin 2013; Hart 2001). The 'D/d' distinction initially referred to Development as an 'intentional practice' with a clear 'goal of action', and development as an 'immanent process' of unfolding social change (Cowen & Shenton 1996). Another conceptualisation of this distinction was put forward by Hart (2001), where Development referred to the post-second world war conscious efforts of intervention in the Global South in the context of decolonisation and in the name of positive change; while development referred to broader geographic and economic patterns of societal change resulting in an 'uneven, profoundly contradictory' (Hart 2001, p. 650) set of historical processes and struggles linked to power and resources. Both these distinctions were questioned more recently by Lewis (2019), who finds the heuristic as a useful ideal type but suggests it is less useful when applied empirically. This is mainly because the distinction is unclear for actors 'at the interface where this dialectic unfolds' (Lewis 2019, p. 3). His guess was that the utility of the 'D/d' distinction, as it has been applied in the past, is likely to be reduced.

In this thesis, I have borrowed from these concepts and applied them differently to maintain some utility. I have conceptualised Big-D Development as the Eurocentric Post WWII project of modernity to transition the 'Third World' or 'Global South' toward capitalist, industrial economies; and a modernist apparatus that rationalises progress as constructed on technical interventions (Hart 2001; Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1990). I have conceptualised little-d development as the need to transform society and enhance human fulfilment (Escobar 1995; Stiglitz 2002), which is often described through more holistic, human-centred terms such as quality of life and standard of living (Ferguson 1990; Ryff & Singer 2008). Little-d development is also about enabling the self-determined 'good life' that

one would like to live. This conceptualisation connects with the term *eudaimonia*, originally associated with the work of Aristotle, meaning ‘human flourishing’ in Greek (Dodge, Daly, Huyton et al. 2012; Ryan, Huta & Deci 2008). Although the relationship between Big-D and little-d can be ambiguous at times, my use of the terms ‘D/development’ in this thesis are differentiated based on the distinction described here.

Development is a system, ‘machine’ or apparatus (Ferguson 1990), while development is a human imperative for fulfilment (Escobar 1995). The consequences of this distinction make the term a problematic organising concept. The way that Development has been pursued as a top-down, western-centric, and imperialist movement in history has been documented widely and deeply, particularly by anthropologists (Crewe & Harrison 1998; Ferguson 1990; Gardner & Lewis 1996, 2015; Mosse 2005). Whereas the term development implies more of a neutral platform and moral imperative for human flourishing in its plurality (Escobar 1995, 2018). Little-d might be well-meaning, but it does raise the question: what relationship does this well-meaning, human-centred imperative of little-d development have if the actors are integrated into the machine of big-D Development itself? Could this persistently proposed solution to poverty in fact be part of the problem? These questions fuel the evolving discussion about D/development.

The solution of Development

The difference between big-D and little-d shows that on the one hand, Development has been externally imposed, while on the other hand, development is self-determined. The imperative for human flourishing can only rightfully be grasped through a democratic process by the people concerned (Ziai 2004, p. 1056). In contrast, Development as ideology and practice was instead introduced to Africa as a ‘*deus ex machina*’ (Andreasson 2005, p. 973), literally meaning ‘god from the machine’. In this case, it implies a contrived solution to a problem that relies on the imposition of external actors to address the situation and decide the outcome.

Andreasson outlines several well-known writings from the 20th century referring to how African states were depicted as ‘predatory’ (Fatton 1992), ‘vampire state’ (Frimpong-Ansah 1991), ‘criminalised’ (Bayart, Ellis & Hibou 1999), ‘collapsed’ (Zartman 1995), as states which have descended into ‘warlordism’ (Reno 1999) and

'chaos' (Ayittey 1999). The use of the 'reductive repetition' motif (Said 1978, p.297) in early scholarship on Africa repeatedly insisted on diminishing the 'histories, traditions, ideologies, practices, arts and other manifestations of civilisation' down to a 'theory' that is elucidated by its juxtaposed and innate inferiority to the West (Andreasson 2005, p.972). Earlier than that, Comte de Gobineau's concept of an Aryan 'master race' (Gobineau 1853), Sir Richard Burton's preoccupation with 'The Negro's Place in Nature' (Burton 1864) and Winwood Reade's 'Savage Africa' (Reade 1864) were strong contributions to the 19th century European mindset that promoted 'civilising' efforts during the time of African colonialism following the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. This is when the reductive motif began to establish clear linkages between African inferiority (biological and cultural) and the need for the West to act as 'guardians' and impose 'solutions' to inherently African problems. This reductive motif continued and evolved in the post-World War II era of Development (Andreasson 2005, p.973). Since then, material poverty in Africa has been portrayed as a disease to eradicate or an enemy to battle, primed for foreign intervention (Kirk, Hickel & Brewer 2015).

Escobar (1995) claims that the stage for Development was set in 1949 when US President Harry S. Truman laid out its agenda:

“ We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people.

Here, the era of Development is inaugurated as the rationale for the West to shape other societies in its own interest and likeness; rather than the previous basis of colonial-era racial lines, general societal deficiencies were emphasised during this time (Andreasson 2005, p.975). Recently, Escobar claimed that Development has been one of the most arrogant and 'portentous social experiments of the past seventy years' (2018, p.xiii). At the time, the vision for this social experiment was described by a group of UN experts as:

“ There is a sense in which rapid economic progress is impossible without painful adjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed and race have to burst; and large numbers of persons who cannot keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated. Very few communities are willing to pay the full price of economic progress (United Nations, Department of Social and Economic Affairs, 1951, as quoted in Escobar 2018, p.6).

The vision for this experiment was put forward by ‘experts’ and popularised by political elites. Historically, this is how Development was brought into the imaginary as the universal solution to the common problem experienced by the world’s poorest.

However, there are many scholars who reject that the current Development system stems from the moral obligation of the West to alleviate the deprivation of the rest (Bhambra 2007, 2014; Santos 2014; Chakrabarty 2000). Specifically, Bhambra (2016) argues how historical injustices such as slavery, colonialism, dispossession, exploitation and appropriation have all patterned the contemporary inequalities and vulnerabilities that the Development system claims to be addressing. These vulnerabilities were forged by the same countries stepping in as benevolent actors and carrying out their ‘moral obligation’. Bhambra suggests that when the rationale for Development refers to a moral obligation, it is in fact an act of denial or erasure of the historical injustices. She argues that if Development were really about a moral obligation, then the way to acknowledge the past and more appropriately move forward would be through reparations. In one example, following World War II, a precedent was created when Germany, as a result of moral pressure and obligation, paid compensation to the victims of the preceding government. As a ‘persecutor’ and ‘despoiler’ (Coates 2014) Germany was ‘obliged’ to return part of its spoils and made collective reparation as partial compensation for material losses. In another example, reparations were used differently. Haiti in the Caribbean is considered one of the (economically) poorest countries in the world, and yet one of the reasons it is in so much debt is because it was forced to pay reparations to France for having the audacity to remove its colonial master and establish itself as the first Black republic of the ‘new world’ (Bhambra 2016). These contrasting examples are useful

in demonstrating the multi-layered nature (and irony) of what is being challenged. It is evident that the post-WWII notion of Development was layered on top of pre-existing colonial encounters and political hierarchies (Ferguson 1990).

While reparations are increasingly viewed as an alternative to the moral obligation of Development, it is not to suggest that the answer to the Development dilemma is reparations alone. The idea of reparations however is linked to a growing collective desire to undo and heal the breaches, fractures and ‘dismemberings’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018) of a colonial system of governance and the perpetuation of a ‘colonial matrix of power’ (Quijano 2007, 2000).

“ *The colonial world order has never actually had the rupture it is believed to have had in the 1960s. It seems a bit like a zombie wrongly believed to be dead that continues to haunt the living world, including - and perhaps especially so - the world of international development (Otzelberger 2018, para 3).*

Despite the formal ruptures of colonisation in the 1960s, decolonisation has remained very much unfinished. The call to decolonise development has proven itself to be a challenging one. Decolonising is not just about altering the content of the conversation but also the terms guiding the conversation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012).

Despite the promise of Development, it has failed to bring about the proposed results. The alleged main reason for this failure is usually seen as the inability of ‘the poor’ to properly adopt Western ideals of law and order, markets, good governance, and democracy that are considered the ‘prerequisites for development to proceed’ by the World Bank and other key actors⁴ (Andreasson 2005). However, Hickel (2014) claims that the Development system actually seeks to interfere with the intimate realities of human relatedness in a much more sinister way. His reasoning is that when the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment reforms of the 1970s and 1980s failed to generate economic growth for low-income countries, the powers that be did not admit this failure was due to their economic policies, but rather blamed the social structures in the Global

⁴ See, for example, World Bank, *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 1981; World Bank, *Adjustment in Africa: Reforms, Results, and the Road Ahead*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994; World Bank, *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000; and World Bank, *African Poverty at the Millennium: Causes, Complexities, and Challenges*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001.

South as preventing the policies from succeeding. This, he claims, is a ‘twist of logic’ that has enabled the World Bank and IMF to avoid responsibility for the human devastation their economic policies caused. He criticises them for placing the blame of failure onto ‘the shoulders of the poor’ – as they are denounced for the inadequacy of ‘not only their markets, but also their ideas about personhood and relationship’ (Hickel 2014, p.1358).

Deaton (2015) discusses how foreign aid undermines the contract between government and the governed that is critical for development. When the state can meet much of its funding needs from foreign aid organisations, it compromises democracy and negates peoples’ rights as it provides a safe arrangement for governments to ignore the demands of their own citizens. Foreign actors whose rhetoric claims to support those citizens, end up having their own interests, politicians and constituencies elsewhere which get prioritised over the needs and interests of citizens in recipient countries. Such a viewpoint supports Escobar’s (1995) analysis that Development was an ‘ideological export’ that became an apparatus of control equivalent to colonialism or ‘cultural imperialism’ with its imposition of norms and value judgements, which the poor had little means of ‘declining politely’ (Reid-Henry 2012). This led Escobar to conclude that:

“ development planning was not only a problem to the extent that it failed; it was a problem even when it succeeded, because it so strongly set the terms for how people in poor countries could live (Escobar quoted in Reid-Henry 2012).

From this perspective, Development is perceived not as a neutral apparatus for the technical and moral effort of the West to solve the problem of poverty, but rather as a problematic imperialist imposition that continues the colonial mindset of inferiority and superiority.

2.3 TRANSITIONING TO POST-DEVELOPMENT

The rise of post-Development

From a post-Development perspective, the absurdity lies in how Development is predominantly conceptualised and practiced based on a dominantly western-centric narrative. Wolfgang Sachs (1992) argued for the historical obsolescence

of Development, given its role in destroying indigenous cultures, identities and modes of life. In the years since, others have repeatedly called for the abolition of Development (Escobar 1992; Esteva 1992; Sachs 1992). Rahnema (1997, p.331) sees it as not the 'end to the search for new possibilities of change' but rather the end of big-D Development. This would mean an end to the ideas and practices that have become the norm in the post-World War II project of modernity, and an end to engineering particular changes in the so-called 'Third World' based on the governing concept that some people of the world are 'developed' while others are 'underdeveloped'. The rapid propagation of this governing concept had significant repercussions, as:

“ A diverse range of rich and vibrant traditions were reduced to being worth, literally, nothing: nondescript manifestations of an allegedly indubitable fact: 'underdevelopment' (Escobar 2018, p.6).

From this critique, Development is widely challenged for the way it organises 'developing' and 'developed' countries, with an assumption by 'developed' countries that 'developing' countries desire to be more like them (Sachs 1992). Or more critically, that 'developing' countries have not yet reached the desired level of progress of 'developed' countries. This governing concept continues to create both a binary and hierarchical separation between societies. When the development of people is discussed in such relative terms, then the term becomes:

“ A comparative adjective, whose base support is the assumption, very Western but unacceptable and indemonstrable, of the oneness, homogeneity and linear evolution of the world (Esteva 1992, p.11).

The only way to measure development has become modelled on the European experience of progress. Yet, if one society is constituted as the only ideal norm and others as 'deviants' from that norm, then any other notions for human flourishing and the 'good life' are basically abandoned. These notions and measures should not be universal. Ziai (2007) posits that if we were to pay attention to the idea that people have to decide for themselves what they see as development, then the Western-centric measures for progress would disappear and the comparison of societies would stop. He asks, to what extent can a universal scale of measurement for all societies be established? He asks

this rhetorical question to make the point that contemporary post-Development critiques have offered us the linguistic opportunity to question the very basic assumptions of the Development system instead of reproducing and naturalising it (Ziai 2016).

By examining linguistic structure and meaning, Escobar (1995) interpreted Development as ontologically cultural. His analysis was largely informed by the post-structuralist traditions of Michel Foucault and post-colonialist traditions of Edward Said. The paternalistic tone and narrative about 'the poor' as passive, voiceless victims who either cannot, or should not, play an active role in shaping their destiny – as well as the focus on 'charity' as a legitimate response to poverty – tend to draw attention away from the historical, political and structural causes of poverty. Escobar claims that the discourse on Development has 'created a space in which only certain things could be said and even imagined' (1995, p.39). He goes on to point out 'most people in the West (and many parts of the Third World) have great difficulty thinking about Third World situations and people in terms other than those provided by the development discourse' (1995, p.12). Terms such as needy, powerless, vulnerable, illiterate, and malnourished are used in ways that do not leave much space for understanding people – their aspirations, values and cultural identities in a holistic sense. Instead they are just poor. From a discourse analysis perspective, such terms are only a partial representation of a reality based on certain stereotypes, and conveniently exclude the parts which do not fit in with the mainstream narrative (Ziai 2015). It is 'not to claim that these terms are pure fantasy and have no empirical referent in these regions, the point is that other terms which also have empirical referents do not form part of the discourse' (Ziai 2015, p.8). Ferguson (1990) makes reference to the dangers of such narrow depictions:

“ The images of the ragged poor of Asia thus become legible as markers of a stage of development, while the bloated bellies of African children are the signs of social as well as nutritional deficiency. Within this problematic, it appears self-evident that debtor Third-World nation-states and starving peasants share a common 'problem', that both lack a single 'thing': 'development' (Ferguson 1990, p.xiii).

Representations of the neediness and powerlessness of people from 'less developed' countries are still widely accepted markers of the problem of poverty that mandates the solution of Development (Plewes & Stuart 2007). Development

is regularly rejected by post-Development thinkers in response to the machinist problematisation of poverty where the poor are 'specified and intervened upon' in demeaning ways (Escobar 1995, p.45). The inherent belief and depiction throughout much of the discourse that poverty is inevitable not only hides the real causes, but also excludes the spaces to explore the alternatives that could address it properly.

The difference between alternatives

The conceptual turn described earlier in this chapter to human development in the 1980s-90s from that of economic development in the 1970s-80s could be argued to be the early attempts at alternatives. The shifts in thinking by Romer (1986), Lucas (1988), Chambers (1992), Rao and Walton (2004) were not an exhaustive list, but rather an indicator of ways of 'doing development differently'. These ideas were later characterised as 'alternative Development' by critics of such attempts. Although some people may consider such attempts for reform as alternative, others see Development as persisting to function as a system of commonly applicable technical interventions intended to deliver some 'badly needed' goods to a target population (Escobar 1995, p. 44). Such attempts have been denounced as 'exercises in reform but having little effect on the underlying role of development in ordering and governing society' (Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington 2007, p.1701). Latouche goes further to claim 'alternative Development' attempts are 'insidious', the new 'siren songs' and 'friendly exteriors', when in fact they are 'booby-traps' that are the same ends by different means (1993, p. 149). Hence, attempts at alternative Development have been dismissed as technical projects of modernisation based on Western ideas of progress, leading to cultural and social homogenisation, and therefore threatening people's autonomy (Escobar 1995). Many others agree, alternative Development is seen as a way for the West to 'manage the rest', for its own gain, only permitting 'the poor' the kind of future prospects that 'the rich' could conceive for them (Esteva 1992; Ferguson 1990; Sachs 1992). From this perspective, the question arises whether attempts at alternative Development that are prescribed from within the system rather than generated from outside of it, are legitimising the problematisation of poverty that they are trying to dismantle (Latouche 1993)?

I do not wish to dismiss the work of many who have attempted reform through expansions on the concept of Development. However, for the post-Development thinkers mentioned above, the alternative Development emphasis on varying the

pre-existing system is not good enough. To highlight this distinction, Escobar (1995) coined the term 'alternatives to Development' as exercises to transform society and enhance human fulfilment. These begin with creating 'new spaces' that enable 'local agency' to assert itself through the 'defence and promotion of localised, pluralistic grassroots movements' (Escobar 1995, p.215). Rist (1997, p.243) broadened the range of possibilities to 'self-organisation', 'finding new ways of social linkage' and collectively 'securing [one's] existence'. A brief comparison of the two movements suggests alternative development is concerned with alternative practices on the ground driven by participatory and asset-based development approaches. On the other hand, alternatives to development questions dominant discourses, representations and power/knowledge relations in the Development system. Although its critiques of Development are judicious, others find post-Development lacks 'instrumentality' for practice since no clear path forward can be derived from it (Kippler 2010, p.2; Schuurman 2000; Pieterse 2000; Nustad 2007). Carmen (1996) made a point of not advocating for either 'alternative Development' or 'alternatives to Development.' What he advocated for is the 'recapture' and 'reclaim' of both the reality and the term development:

“ the word development should ... be reserved for what it was coined for in the first place: to indicate growth, yes, but also and above all to invoke creation, culture, education, ownership and control, the satisfaction of fundamental human needs and everything involving autonomous human agency (Carmen 1996, p.240).

This motion to 'recapture' and 'reclaim' the term, the theory and the practice for what it was intended has great merit. Even Escobar has more recently nuanced his rhetoric from that of 'alternatives' to 'transitions' (2018). He discusses the need to start engaging in a new imaginary born out of the aspirations and toils of varied groups and peoples that is based on 'collective determination towards transitions' (Escobar 2018, p.7). As such, this thesis is not strictly about alternatives to Development or alternative Development, but more broadly, about the spaces and imaginary opening up for autonomous human agency as the system transitions.

The difference between anti-development and sceptical post-development

The literature on post-Development is divided along ideological lines. Although these divisions may sit outside the remit of this literature review, it is important to distinguish between two opposing positions in the post-Development literature: the 'anti-Development' and the 'sceptical post-Development' positions (Kippler 2010). The 'anti-Development' way of thinking depicts Development as exploitative:

“ ... a tiny minority of local profiteers, supported by their 'patrons,' set out to devastate the foundations of social life in countries. A merciless war wages against the age-old traditions of communal solidarity (Rahnema & Bawtree 1997, p.ix).

This anti-Development standpoint associates Development with a 'colonisation' of minds, hearts and imaginations; rejecting modernity as it romanticises traditional culture; and prioritises a return to vernacular ways of life (Esteva & Prakash 1998; Matthews 2017; Rahnema & Bawtree 1997; Sachs 1992). Such an anti-Development position has been labelled as dangerous and unsophisticated by the likes of Ziai (2004) and Kippler (2010). Pieterse disputes the hyperbolised allegations of post-Development and its disregard for the liberal 'dialectics of modernity', especially democracy and technology (2000, p.187). Post-Development has been critiqued for representing the Development system as homogenous when it is not, for paying too much attention to discourse and not enough to practice, and for over-romanticising indigenous and grassroots movements.

Although Foucault has been heralded as the biggest intellectual influence on post-Development literature, some sceptical post-Development thinkers have criticised the anti-Development thinkers for their 'impoverished' and 'vulgar' (Ziai 2004 p.1048; Kippler 2010) use of Foucault's concepts. Morgan Brigg (2002, p.422) also refers to this inaccurate application more as 'a decrying of Eurocentrism and injustice of development than a Foucauldian or other analysis of the operation of power ... through development'. Kippler argues for a 'sceptical post-development' position rooted in a more sophisticated application of the 'methodological and intellectual basis' of Foucauldian theory (2010, p. 7). She believes this can provide solid foundations for Development's 'sensibilities' to be built upon more constructively. Brigg (2002), Ziai (2004) and Kippler (2010) provide a more complete analysis of Foucault from their 'sceptical' position while calling

for the abandonment of the anti-Development discourse. They see sceptical post-Development as a 'coherent paradigm' that requires a move away from a colonising metaphor of repressive power, to a more nuanced understanding of the operation of power in the processes of D/development.

Without diving too deep into Foucauldian theory, it is important to note how Foucault makes a distinction between power as negative and constrictive; and power as positive and enabling (Kippler 2010). The negative implies power as coercion and domination by another, while the positive implies power as self-subjection and limited by one's identity (Simons 1995). References have been made to the 'colonising of the mind' (Rahnema 1997) and 'colonisation of reality' (Escobar 1995). The challenge with this rhetoric is that it maintains a negative conception of power that functions through a singular coercive and dominating historical force such as the West (Kippler 2010). By assigning agency to the West in a way that accepts Development as a Western imposition, questions are raised about the relative 'agency of actors' within processes of development (Brigg 2002, p.425, Sande Lie 2007, p.55). Agency here refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices (Barker 2005, p.448). Kippler (2010) agrees with Sande Lie (2007) that this propensity to overlook the agency of actors and more relational aspects of power is a significant flaw in post-Development discourse.

As Mosse (2007) and others (Crewe & Axelby 2013) have argued, a relational perspective on D/development does two things: firstly it takes account of how a historical set of political and economic relations develops over time in a place, and secondly, it rejects individualism and rational choice models while reinforcing the importance of social process and relations of power. Therefore, alternative development imaginaries need to be supplemented by 'a greater actor-oriented approach' (Sande Lie 2007, p.59) that radically reclaims the relational and political aspects of collective life (Santos 1995, p.51).

The politics of a relational and actor-oriented approach

Alternative visions for development often start with people in control of defining their needs and aspirations; the 'emancipation of people from the imperatives of the development apparatus, to pursue their own objectives' (Kippler 2010, p. 30). Such alternative visions can 'open up spaces' for more autonomous local action and a politics of emancipation (Blaney 1996, p.478). The critical theme here is

an opening up of actor-oriented spaces that allow for ‘plural possibilities of the political beyond the grammar of development’ (Nakano 2007, p. 65). The use of the term political here is not to be limited to state politics, but rather the potentiality of a political autonomy that goes beyond the state system. This emancipatory politics implies a ‘reclaiming’ of development – both its imaginary and its practice – and firmly relocating them within situated realities and democratic processes. Much more work needs to be done to reinvent democratic processes that do not ‘require a foundation in a universality that undermines the project of emancipation, which is in essence plural’ (Kippler 2010, p.29-30). This means democratic processes that are actor-oriented and participatory, and do not necessarily involve the politics of the State.

This raises the practical question of who gets to determine what is imagined and valued in future action (Crewe & Harrison 1998; Kippler 2010)? This question was put slightly more provocatively during reflections by Crewe and Axelby (2013, p.78): ‘What gives you the cheek to take money from rich people in the name of poor people, decide how it should be spent, travel around the world, and keep some for yourself?’ These kinds of realities and questions that characterise D/development are intrinsically political, and hence any transition from the governing system will be inherently political too (Kippler 2010).

The implications for practice to perform an alternative Development that leads to an emancipatory and autonomous politics should not be taken lightly. Just as some practitioners operating in the current Development system aim to transform the situated realities for others, practitioners ‘must be transformed’ themselves in a way that requires a ‘transfer of power – the power to define the problems and goals of a society – from the hands of outside “experts” to the members of the society itself’ (Kippler 2010, p.31). With this kind of implication, Andreasson (2010, p.10) also highlighted that the transformation needed involves not just shifts in power, but also a change in roles and relationships between actors. These changes first demand an answer to the questions of what roles and relationships to/by/for/with which people? This was Ferguson’s classic answer to similar questions:

“ Often, the question was put to me in the form ‘What should they do?’ ... The ‘they’ here is an imaginary collective subject... Such a ‘they’ clearly needs to be broken up. The inhabitants of Lesotho do not share the same interests or the same circumstances,

and they do not act as a single unit. ... the interests represented by governmental elites ... are not congruent with those of the governed... There is not one question – ‘what is to be done’ – but hundreds: what should the mineworkers do, what should the abandoned old women do, what should the unemployed do, and so on. It seems, at the least, presumptuous to offer prescriptions here. The toiling miners and the abandoned old women know the tactics proper to their own situation far better than any expert does. Indeed, the only general answer to the question, ‘What should they do?’ is: ‘They are doing it!’ ... A second, and apparently less arrogant, form of the question is to ask ... ‘what should we do?’ (Ferguson 1990, p.280)

The ‘we’ Ferguson refers to is the foreign scholars and practitioners who advise people they’ve labelled as ‘poor’ on what they should be doing and how they should be living their lives. Instead, he directs actors to look inward at their own political processes. By doing this he extends Escobar’s emphasis on development as political, not only for the endogenous actors, but for the exogenous ones too. ‘Changing the order of discourse is a political question that entails the collective practice of social actors and the restructuring of existing political economies of truth’ (Escobar 1995, p.216). The act of imagining spaces for transitions will not thrive without addressing questions about the roles of and relationships between existing actors.

As Kippler (2010) puts it, it is unlikely that the institutional structures and good intentions of today’s Development practitioners will be abandoned. The literature suggests that Development practitioners will need to reinvent themselves (Stiglitz 1999; Crush 2005a, 2005b; Kippler 2010). Arguments about actor roles may be changing at the rhetorical level, but there is a significant gap between the rhetoric and practical experiences of real people situated in real places (Bornstein 2004; Roth 2015). In reality, for actor roles and relationships to transition to new ‘political economies of truth’ (Escobar 1995, p.216), it will require broader shifts that go beyond just rhetoric. Based on the participatory development efforts of the last 30 years that will be discussed in the next section, it is clear that the process of reinvention from current to future roles and relationships does not involve neatly categorised phases. Rather, such a journey of transition is difficult, contrary and at times chaotic.

2.4 ANCHORING IN A NEW ETHNOGRAPHY OF DEVELOPMENT

Plurality and appropriation in situated realities

According to Crush (1995), much of the practice of Development over the decades resulted in a public appropriation of societal transformations in the name of development. For example, the discourse around Development helped the formation of independence movements that led to decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s. Similar appropriations of social change processes have taken place in many ways and places. As described by Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal (2003, p.4), instead of anchoring in a 'globalized, homogenous vision of modernity that development is supposed to inscribe', this thesis recognises the complex nature of D/development. This supports a more plural, practice-based and actor-oriented comprehension of these complexities. One term being used to describe these complexities is that of 'regional modernities'. Instead of viewing regional forms of development as variations on a global theme, they are presented as 'layered acts that contribute to an effect of development glossed as universal' (Sivaramakrishnan & Agrawal 2003, p.5). The emphasis is on how Development projects are enacted within a 'regional modernity', rather than extending the historical emphasis on local/global dichotomies. Localism and globalisation are limited terms as they do not adequately describe the 'coalition-building and differentiation' processes and complex layers at work that characterise regional modernities (p.19). The term regional is not restricted to sub-national geographic areas, but rather encompasses multiple terrains and patterns generated by socio-political and cultural forces as they act to produce localities.

This organising concept contrasts the anti-Development writings discussed in the previous sections. Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal (2003, p.29) suggest that the idea that Development is a Western/Northern imposition ignores the 'polyvocal, polylocal nature of development performances and appropriations'. From this angle, the term development does not need to be reclaimed as such, since there are already multiple sources of developmental ideas. The authors also point to the example of how the design, implementation and outcomes of rural development projects play out differently in the various political contexts of say single-party socialist, multi-party democratic, and authoritarian regimes. They

all traced different paths because of the variations in the culture and politics at the local/regional level. This suggests that an understanding of Development that sees it as a homogenous, Western concept does not fully recognise the actions and agency of people from outside the West who constantly shape and produce development every day. As the previous sections of this chapter outlined, anti-Development scholars such as Rahnema, Esteva and Escobar expressed deep suspicions about the Euro-centric and depoliticising tendencies of the Development system (and any attempts at reform) by focusing on its discourse and ideas. From another perspective, there is the form of critique that is in the 'reformist or pragmatist' tradition that begins with a specific question and works outwards from it (Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava & Veron 2005).

According to Ajay Skaria (2003), one way this argument is built upon is by pointing to how development and colonial knowledge are appropriated and reworked by endogenous communities and how they inflect it with their own agendas. Since such reworking is constitutive of Development, this challenges the argument that a so-called universal Development based on a global modernity can radically remake the local in its image. This body of work demonstrates how the appropriation of 'big-D' Development has the potential to produce novel forms of 'little-d' development through a plurality of modernities based on a more empirical grounding. As such, this thesis directly engages with Development practice as a site for inquiry, rather than rejecting Development as a dominant discourse that may prevent endogenous people in their regional modernities to assert their agency. Instead of aligning with anti-Development scholars in homogenising a range of ideas and actions under one heading of 'the Development discourse', this thesis engages with different forms of critique that speak to the politics of power and participation in practice, each deserving to be considered with a combination of caution and respect.

Power and participation in situated realities

This body of work around regional modernities prompts a rethink of how power is discussed. In much post-Development writing, Development is an expression of 'placeless power' from the 'global' level that is met with 'resistance' at the 'local' level. However, power is not placeless. A more nuanced line of reasoning grounded in Foucault (1983) argues that local cultures, social structures and environments mediate placeless power and more greatly influence the actual consequences of Development projects, policies and practices as they are

performed in situated realities. Patterns of situated power flows are diverse and largely influenced by historical, cultural, socio-political, and ecological-geographic conceptions within a region. Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal (2003, p.20) further argue that power relations among social actors can be understood as both capillary and nodal, social and institutional.

The importance of how power operates in participatory endeavours is not to be minimised either. Within participatory discourse lies a number of oppositional binaries, such as the haves and the have-nots, the North and South, or professional knowledge and local knowledge (Chambers 1997). According to Uma Kothari, these dichotomies pit the micro against the macro, the 'margins against the centre', the 'local against the elite', and the 'powerless against the powerful' (2001, p. 140). As a result, assumptions that people who wield power are located in international centres, while those who are subjected to power are found at the local and marginal levels are strengthened. However, Kothari draws on Foucault's argument to challenge that notion:

“ Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there ... Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization (Foucault 1980, p.98).

Foucault's analysis of how power operates nuances the dominant conceptions of power as linear and binary – to an understanding of power as existing everywhere, through social norms, and at all levels. This disrupts the dichotomies of macro/micro, central/local, powerful/powerless. Instead, all individuals are vehicles of power. As individuals, people adopt discursive and embodied articulations of power that are readily accepted as cultural norms (Kothari 2001, p.146). An understanding of the ways in which power extends and transforms in different 'everyday' contexts allows practitioners to more readily identify different modes of social control and domination. Cooke and Kothari (2001, p. 14) critique practitioners of participatory development for being 'naïve about the complexities of power and power relations'.

Although participation has been labelled as a 'new tyranny' by Cooke and Kothari (2001), others challenge the discussion 'against participation' as if it were a singularity (Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava & Veron 2005, p.122):

“ People participate in public life in more varied and less predictable ways than either proponents or critics of participatory development seem prepared to admit. At times, indeed, their participation is expressed in forms of resistance to government... In some cases, too, these acts of resistance force a reassessment of the merits of ‘participation’ in the broader development community (ibid, p.122).

Although participation has been acknowledged as no panacea for development, Chambers’ suggestion that systematic and repeated efforts to involve people in the execution of development initiatives are likely to be empowering in some way. This argument is based on the idea that participatory development forms part of a broader process of social capital formation that works slowly but surely to undermine, and perhaps even to overturn, existing hierarchies of power and rule. In other words, participation is a process of development that in some ways brings governments or other such structures more clearly into the sightlines of citizens – even if this can take several years to mature (Corbridge, et al. 2005, p.126).

In critiquing Ferguson’s book, Corbridge, et al. (2005, p.259) see his account as providing a controversial reading of the relationships that prevail between development and directed social change. Based on an in-depth account of participation and governance initiatives in India, they accept that development institutions and actors are less homogenous than is usually made out by anti-development scholars, and also accept that naturally, most of them have ‘blind spots’. Furthermore, their work puts forward the case for participatory development as instrumental in providing people on the receiving end of initiatives with a greater sense of self-worth, dignity and sometimes even a degree of power to change the contours and effects of political society in their community (ibid, p.262; Chambers 1997).

In practice, participation has actually deepened and extended its role in development in recent years. Hickey and Mohan (2004) agree with Cooke and Kothari’s critique (2001) that participatory development often fails to engage with issues of power and politics, and through its technical or instrument-based manifestations, it depoliticises what should be an explicitly political

process. However, they go on to critically review contemporary approaches to participation and put forward a more optimistic platform for how participation might be (re)established as a transformative approach to development. For Corbridge et al. (2005), the idea of transformation here is not necessarily about a reversal of power relations but rather a 'strengthening of the bargaining power' of those with less resources, status and influence within these relations. For example, endogenous actors are continually devising new strategies for expressing their agency in participatory development spaces (Hickey & Mohan 2004). Some Foucauldians have debated that Marxist and other structuralist accounts of power, which see it concentrated in certain spheres (such as the state), actually overlook the capillary nature of power and its potential to be used constructively. Structuralists have countered that changes in individual attitudes do not necessarily result in an overhaul of deeper institutional divisions. Combining structural and post-structural accounts of power enables an inquiry into how individuals (re)make rules and (re)constitute institutions and inversely how institutions shape individual actions (Masaki 2004). Therefore, the social embeddedness of agency and decision-making suggests that genuine transformation needs to involve multi-directional strategies that are operationalised and scaled across individual, structural and institutional spaces (Hickey & Mohan 2004, p.15).

The relationship between participation and power is therefore a complex phenomenon. This is in contrast to Arnstein's (1969) more popularised conceptualisation, which focuses on a single and linear dimension of power, as visualised by a 'ladder'. This hierarchical notion sees participants seizing control as the pinnacle outcome of all participation. Cornwall (2008) adapts a less linear typology put forward by White (1996) which characterises participation as either nominal, instrumental, representative or transformative, taking into account the different interests at stake:

Table 2.1 typology of participation forms and interests (Source: Cornwall 2008, adapted from White 1996, pp.7-9)

Form	WHAT 'PARTICIPATION' MEANS TO THE IMPLEMENTERS	WHAT 'PARTICIPATION' MEANS FOR CITIZENS/END-USERS	WHAT 'PARTICIPATION' IS FOR
Nominal	Legitimation – to show they are doing something	Inclusion – to retain some access to potential benefits	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency – to limit funders' input, draw on community contributions and make projects more cost-effective	Cost – of time spent on project-related labour and other activities	As a means to achieving cost-effectiveness and local facilities
Representative	Sustainability – to avoid creating dependency	Leverage – to influence the shape the project takes and its management	To give people a voice in determining their own development
Transformative	Empowerment – to enable people to make their own decisions, work out what to do and take action	Empowerment – to be able to decide and act for themselves	Both as a means and an end, a continuing dynamic

These distinctions are often blurred in practice, as all forms and interests of participation may exist in a single project or process, at different stages. Cornwall (2008) cautions that people participating in a Development initiative is not equal to said people 'having a voice', since translating voice into influence requires more than just capturing what people want to say; it involves efforts 'from above' and 'from below' (Gaventa & Robinson 1998). From above, meaningful change is dependent on wider institutional responsiveness and the political will to convert rhetorical commitment around participation into tangible action. From below, meaningful change is dependent on building and supporting collective approaches that can continue to apply pressure for change (Houtzager & Pattenden 1999). In both regards, these actions take time, investment and commitment: 'they cannot be achieved by waving a magic participation wand, convening a participatory workshop or applying a few PRA tools and hey presto, there is empowerment!' (Cornwall 2008, p.278).

Transformative participation is viewed as both a means and an end, by opening up spaces where people are empowered to make their own decisions and take their own actions. The term 'spaces' is used often in discussions about participation, seen as a rich metaphor that characterises arenas where social actors gather and are bounded in time as well as dimension. A space can be emptied or filled, permeable or sealed; it can be an opening, an invitation to speak or act; or it can be clamped shut, voided of meaning, or emptied as actors turn their attention away (Cornwall 2002; 2004). As such, even initiatives with the most transformative potential can fail if the people intended to benefit choose not to participate, or if influential interest groups or community gatekeepers 'turn well-meaning efforts' on the part of Development practitioners 'to their own ends' (Cornwall 2008, p.274). Even though opening up spaces for dialogue through invitation is important, it is not enough to ensure effective participation outcomes, as this depends on who and how people take up and make use of such spaces (Rigon 2015). Cornwall (2000) distinguishes between spaces created through invitations to participate by outsiders, and those that people create for themselves. Additionally, that no matter how participatory they aim to be, 'invited spaces' are often structured and owned by those who provide them (Cornwall 2008, p.275). Participation in practice is not a straightforward process, it rather involves spaces of negotiation and unpredictability, where 'relations of power between different actors, each with their own interests, shape and reshape the boundaries of action'. So even though a frame or boundary may be set by outsiders in an 'invited space', there is limited control over what may happen as a consequence, since a lot still depends on who is participating, and where their agency and interests may (re)direct things (Cornwall 2008, p.276).

Invited spaces are required to be understood in context, as embedded in particular cultural and political configurations. It becomes important to situate them within dynamic institutional landscapes where actors 'move, carrying with them relationships, knowledge, connections, resources, identities and identifications' (Cornwall 2004). Spaces for participation are not neutral as they are shaped by power relations that surround and enter them (Cornwall 2002):

“ Space is a social product... it is not simply “there”, a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control, and hence of domination, of power (Lefebvre 1991, p.24).

Hayward (1998, p.2) uses Foucault's imagery of 'boundary' to suggest that power is 'the network of social boundaries that delimit fields of possible action'. In contrast, freedom is 'the capacity to participate effectively in shaping the social limits that define what is possible'. A transformative and emancipatory participation then is not just about the right to participate in an invited space, but the right to define and shape that space (Gaventa 2003).

This understanding of power and space suggests that participation needs to be well situated across three differing continuums for the transformative potential of participation to be fully realised. These involve a) how spaces are created; b) the places and levels of engagement; and c) the degree of visibility of power within them (Gaventa 2004). The first continuum examines with whose interests and reasons they were created. The second continuum examines the nature of engagement, specifically if spaces were 'closed' to only include authorities, or 'invited' spaces where users or citizens are invited in by authorities, or organically 'claimed' spaces that emerge and are created by social actors themselves. These types of spaces are not static, as they exist in a dynamic relationship to each other, 'constantly opening and closing through struggles for legitimacy and resistance, co-optation and transformation' (Gaventa 2003, p.9). The third continuum is that regarding the visibility of power relationships that shape the degree of transformative participation within reach, namely a distinction between the visible, hidden and invisible forms of power (VeneKlasen, Miller & Clark 2002). An examination of visible power looks at who participated, who benefited and who lost. An examination of hidden power looks at where the boundaries were set, who was excluded, and which views were prevented from entering the arenas for participation. An examination of invisible power looks at how it may be internalised through a person's values, self-esteem, and identity – such that voices in visible arenas are echoing what the power holders and space shapers want to hear (Gaventa 2003). This relationship between the visible, hidden and invisible forms of power is evidently highly complex and variable against the factors mentioned here.

Agency and actor-orientation in situated realities

Another counter perspective to some of the limited discourse analysis in the anti-development tradition lies in the concept of an 'actor-oriented approach' (Long 2001). Long (1984, 1992, 2001) and others have adopted a more pragmatic perspective that insists on the significance of ethnographic methods and

critical participatory processes as connected to the important role that human agency and action has on social change processes (Pottier 1993, Nelson & Wright 1995). Accompanying this perspective were a series of actor-oriented and social constructionist works of analysis (Schoorman 1993, Booth 1994, Preston 1996) that reoriented social research in development away from the 'excesses of structuralist and culturalist types of explanation' (Long 2001, p.2). While still acknowledging that structural changes in society may happen as a result of external forces (such as the market, the state or international organisations), an actor-oriented position deems it insufficient to ground one's analysis on external determination alone:

“ All forms of external intervention necessarily enter the existing lifeworlds of the individuals and social groups affected, and in this way they are mediated and transformed by these same actors and structures. Also, to the extent that large-scale and 'remote' social forces do alter the life-chances and behaviour of individuals, they can only do so through shaping, directly or indirectly, the everyday life experiences and perceptions of the individuals and groups concerned (Long 2001, p.13).

Therefore, understanding social change in development involves understanding the interplay and relationships between both internal and external determinants, while acknowledging the fundamental function of human agency and action. However, the precise paths of change cannot be imposed externally through some singular structural logic, since situations and outcomes are shaped by the different patterns of social organisation that emerge as a result of the interactions, negotiations and social struggles that take place between different types of actors in a setting (Long 2001, p.13).

Mosse (2004) argues that a new ethnography of development has started to blur the boundaries set by both rational planning and resistance frameworks. The latter is considered as 'too restrictive to grasp the nature of agency from below' (p.644). A new ethnography of development challenges the uniform notions of dominance, resistance and hegemonic relations that anti-Development scholars refer to. Instead, it prompts a focus on actor-oriented lifeworlds at the frontline of project interfaces (Mosse 2004). Analysing situated social action benefits from Schutz's (1962) phenomenological notion of 'lifeworlds', which is a term used to describe the 'lived-in' and 'taken-for-granted' world of the social actor. This world encompasses both the expressed action as well as the underlying intentions and

values, and so is consequently actor-defined (Long 2001; Schutz and Luckmann 1974). A systematic ethnographic understanding of the 'lifeworlds' or 'social life' and lived experiences of actors involved in development initiatives is hailed as a way to document the ways in which people steer or muddle through difficult scenarios, turning 'bad' into 'less bad' circumstances. An actor-oriented approach aims to understand the particulars of people's "lived-in worlds" by centring on internally-generated strategies and processes of change, the links between the 'small' worlds of local actors and the larger-scale 'global' phenomena and actors, as well as the different roles performed by diverse and sometimes opposing forms of human action and social consciousness in a development project (Long 2001, p.15). This is congruent with Lockie's (1996, p.45) discussion on how rationality, power and knowledge are 'culturally variable' and cannot be divorced from actors' social practices. As such, an actor-oriented approach seeks a multiplicity of rationalities, preferences, and practices for bringing about change based on the context-specific and interrelated determinants mentioned earlier.

With this foundation, the notion of agency attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, through their 'knowledgeability' and 'capability', they find ways to solve problems, intervene in the flow of social events around them, and adapt based on observations of how others react to their own actions (Giddens 1984). The agency of actors is what shapes variability in norms, intentions and meanings – since actors can 'engage with, distance themselves from, or adopt an ambiguous stance towards certain codified rules and interpretations' (Long 2001, p.17; Crespi 1992).

Therefore, agency to change a situation materialises effectively through social relations. According to Long (2001), referencing Latour (1986, p.264), the opportunity to influence a situation depends on 'the actions of a chain of agents each of whom "translates" it in accordance with his/her own projects' – and 'power is composed here and now by enrolling many actors in a given political and social scheme'. This enrolment of a chain of actors into someone else's project is how agency (and power) lead to the development of networks of social relations and the channelling of goods, means and information through nodal points of interpretation and interaction. Based on this analysis, Development projects can become 'strategic weapons in the hands of those charged with promoting them' (Long 2001, p.17), since all involved actors will exercise some degree of 'power' by leveraging or manoeuvring the situation in their own way. As such, actors actively construct their own social worlds, even if the circumstances they encounter are not purely of their own making (Marx (1962 [1852], p.252; Long 2001).

The types of strategies that actors devise and the types of interactions that evolve between actors is what gives shape to the ongoing nature and outcomes of a Development project. Therein lies the value of an ethnographic appreciation of the ways that foreign Development projects enter the lifeworlds of the endogenous actors involved, and then become part of the resources and constraints in the interpretive frames they develop. In this way, so-called 'external' factors become 'internalised' and often come to signify quite different things to different actors. The notion of a Development project needs some deconstructing – Long (2001, p.28) refers to interventions as 'ongoing, socially-constructed, negotiated, experiential and meaning-creating' processes – not simply the execution of already-specified plans of action with expected behavioural outcomes. Long (2001, p.30-32) also proposes that a developmental intervention is a 'multiple reality' constituting of varying cultural interpretations based on the ongoing social and political struggles that take place between the various social actors involved. This is in contrast to the dominant paradigm of a development intervention as a 'project' – with a discrete set of activities that takes place within a defined time-space setting involving the interaction between 'intervening' parties and 'target' or 'recipient' groups. Yet, this dominant view ignores the theoretically critical issue that interventions are not bounded in time and space by the notion of 'project' as defined by some implementing or funding institution, but rather as part of a flow of events within the broader framework of actions by the state, international organisations or other interest groups operating in civil society. In summary, the emphasis on detailed analysis of the lifeworlds, struggles and exchanges between actors means that an actor-oriented approach enables both the discursive and practical space for 'the central role played by diverse forms of human action and social consciousness in the making of development' (Long 2001, p.28) as an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process (Rigon 2015).

2.5. GROUNDING IN ACTORS AND DOMAINS FOR CHANGE

The actors for change

In practice, Development is often thought of as a 'sector' or 'industry', but it operates more like a networked 'system' of different actors, elements and relationships (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). Who exactly are the actors entrusted with the task of Development (Cowen & Shenton 1996)? Are they obstructers or facilitators of a post-Development agenda? To answer these questions requires us to outline the actors more specifically. There is little agreement on how to define

and classify the actors who currently 'do' Development (Doh & Teegeen 2002; Martens 2002; Stiglitz 2002; Vakil 1997); especially organisationally, since they are varied in their structure, capacity, culture, values, goals, power and the issues they address (Balboa 2015; Banerjee 2006). Despite this complexity, the conceptual map below represents the typical actors who exist in the Development system and their relationships. Using the model created by Gibson (2005) to analyse actions and situations, I adapted it and mapped the roles to demonstrate the classic flows of resources and power between actors:

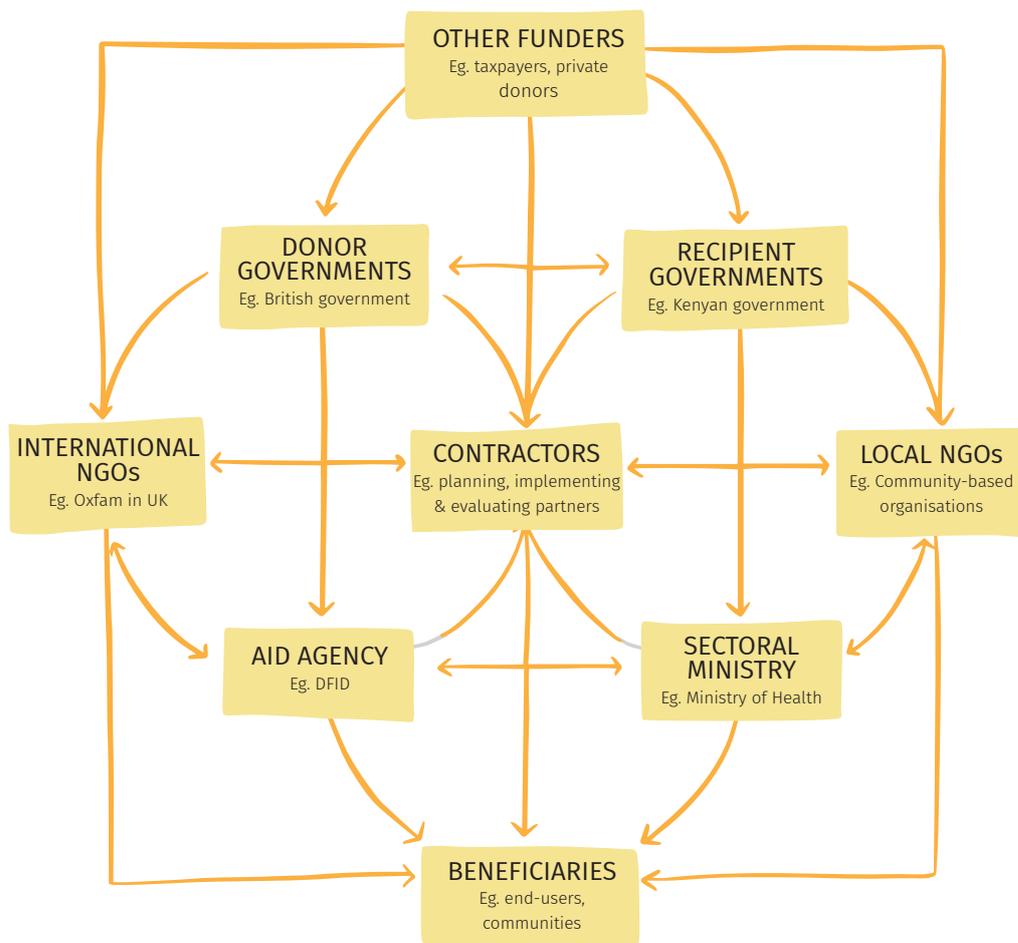


Figure 2.2 Map of typical actors in the Development system
(Author, inspired by Gibson's development cooperation octangle, 2005)

The attachment of labels to the actors that make up the Development system is a controversial activity. It can sometimes be used to serve particular agendas and define relational boundaries between actors (Crewe & Axelby 2013). Through a host of organisational ethnographies, anthropologists have demonstrated how actors in this context can use labels to make sense of themselves and others. More portentously, labels have been used by actors themselves to bolster their

experience, enforce their claims, justify their particular ways of working, and effectively, ensure their own survival (Crewe & Axelby 2013).

The focus of this thesis is on the actors who are both shaped by and shapers of the Development system. The actors who are shaped by the system are often endogenous and 'insiders' within a societal context. They are often considered 'beneficiaries' of Development's goodwill and on the receiving end of its projects. The actors who are shapers of the system are often exogenous and 'outsiders' to a societal context. They are considered 'practitioners' of Development and deliver its projects. In the following paragraphs I will describe the distinction further.

Endogenous Actors

Endogenous actors are local people who possess their own criteria for change and a vision for the 'good life' according to the social, material and spiritual aspects of their livelihoods, while maintaining a dynamic interface with external actors and the world around them (ETC Foundation 2007). There are four ways endogenous actors are usually viewed by exogenous actors, as described by McLeroy, Norton, Kegler, Burdine and Sumaya (2003), as well as Merzel and D'Afflitti (2003):

- **A target group of an intervention:** actors who are marked for interventions, policies, products and services that aim to change behavioural indicators (or other types, such as clinical) at population levels.
- **A designated setting or physical place for action:** actors are defined as the geographic area and contextual parameters in which interventions are implemented.
- **A resource being paid to work:** actors are viewed as essential assets to strategically focus community attention toward a set of priorities.
- **An agent by which planning and decisions are made:** actors are viewed as naturally occurring 'units of solution' with capable networks of relationships and political structures.

Endogenous actors can be one of these things or all these things simultaneously in a Development project. The usefulness of these distinctions is they reflect different conceptions of the roles and relative relevance of endogenous actors in Development projects. In some cases, endogenous actors are positioned as a 'setting' or 'target' rather than as resourceful agents of change by which

planning and decisions are made. While acknowledging that positioning them as a setting is 'limited in its vision', some critics regard positioning them as agents as 'romanticised, especially in light of the severe structural economic, social and political deficits plaguing some communities' (McLeroy, Norton, Kegler et. al 2003, p. 530). From an actor-oriented perspective, endogenous actors are mostly referred to as 'agents' of change in their own right.

Exogenous Actors

The exogenous actors are often either employed, contracted or serviced by the tens of thousands of organisations operating within the international Development system. They tend to include employees of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), social enterprises, academic institutions, government ministries, policy think tanks, and other civil society groups who compete for the same funding from a host of public and private funding organisations. The actors who are employed within these organisations can vary in their roles: from being funders, implementers, evaluators, knowledge producers or political activists in recognised Development technical areas such as health, human rights, financial inclusion, agriculture, water and sanitation. Regardless of their role, capacity and area of expertise, such exogenous actors make the bulk of day-to-day decisions in the design and planning of projects administered by the system:

“ ... they are part of the little-d development at the same time as they try, through big-D Development, to intervene in and modify the nature and/or effects of the broader processes of this little d development (Pieterse 1996).

Since the concept of D/development is so conflated, the roles of the exogenous actors become intertwined with the societies and political economies in which they operate. They are simultaneously part of little-d development and big-D – essentially creating little-d through big-D. By its very nature this practice complicates the distinction while still upholding it. According to Banks, Hulme and Edwards (2015), exogenous actors are experiencing a 'prolonged crisis' due to critical questions about their performance and their role in D/development). However, I would argue this 'prolonged crisis' is exasperated by the dichotomy in the relationships between endogenous and exogenous actors that can only be resolved through an honest and open exploration of the domains for change.

The domains for change

The following section outlines the thematic areas where the exogenous Development practitioners have come under intense scrutiny. From my review of the literature, I would like to propose that there are six domains for change: 1) Accountability; 2) Power; 3) Knowledge; 4) Mindset/Culture; 5) Impact; and 6) Ownership. These thematic areas offer a grounded platform for exploring practice-based pathways toward new possibilities for actors in D/development.

Domain 1: Accountability

Required shift in space: From functional to social

Required shift in exogenous role: From auditor to custodian

Actors who plan, design and deliver projects have gradually been moving further away from the 'poor' people they claim to represent – and in whose name they raise large amounts of money (Banks, Edwards & Hulme 2015). A competitive funding landscape compromised by self-interest has created mistrust between actors as organisational strategies must first align with funder priorities (Ebrahim 2003; Elbers & Arts 2011; Tvedt 2006). Given their dependence on funds, many practitioners prioritise 'functional accountability' to funders in terms of reporting on resources, resource use, and their demands for immediate impacts over their 'social accountability' to the people they claim to represent (Ebrahim 2003; Edwards & Hulme 2002; Bebbington 1997). The emphasis on 'functional accountability' is problematic as it curbs participation and reinforces established relationships of power and control (Chambers & Pettit 2013).

There are many instances in the literature that call for greater social accountability toward endogenous constituencies (Cronin & O'Regan 2002; Dillon 2004; Ebrahim 2005). In practice, however, accountability to stakeholder groups other than funders seems quite weak (Edwards & Hulme 2002). The inflexible and risk-averse requirements from funders have been criticised for not allowing the space for, nor rewarding experimentation, action learning or participatory ways of working (Tacchi, Lennie & Wilmore 2010; Angus 2008). For example, in response to funder requirements, practitioners tend to use linear accountability frameworks (such as project logframes) which are not conducive to community processes. The imperative to build systems and procedures that begin from the community's needs and capabilities is not always incentivised. Given funder-based definitions of success have predominantly fixated on speed, scale, costs,

and other quantifiable indicators – the current accountability paradigm does not offer a realistic platform for addressing the increasingly complex and politicised challenges that some practitioners oversee in the name of endogenous actors (Edwards 2011). To understand this better, we need to consider power.

Domain 2: Power

Required shift in space: From binary to networked

Required shift in exogenous role: From controller to enabler

Development has been termed an ‘act of power’ over endogenous populations that have had little to no ability to call exogenous actors to account (Cowen & Shenton 1996, p.454; Parfitt 2002, p.42). Critics claim that powerful exogenous actors have continued to send the corrective message that you-poor-people-must-change rather than conducting an honest analysis of the construction of poverty and reimagining a system-wide overhaul for its transformation (Slim 2002). Yet, various analyses have shown that a consciousness about power imbalances does not necessarily lead to social transformation (Schöneberg 2016), nor does it prevent the co-option of development processes by the elite class of a place (Rigon 2014). This corresponds with calls for a return to ‘movements’ and politics in the broadest sense, and a departure from the idea that social transformation is possible through the accumulation of technical innovations (Carothers & de Gramont 2013). Chambers and Pettit (2013) discuss the changing nature of Development rhetoric to include words like ‘partnership’, ‘participation’, ‘empowerment’ and ‘transparency’, which imply changes in power relations. However, this rhetoric seems not to have been matched in practice.

Despite ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ being buzz-words in Development, Tritter and McCallum (2006) have critiqued claims that citizen participation is a categorical proxy for power relationships. As argued earlier in this chapter, empowerment is a complex phenomenon through which individuals formulate meanings and actions that reflect their desired degree of participation in the decision-making process. More continuous participatory methods can distinguish a diversity of participants, at different points in their lives; and understand how power flows in non-linear ways through the evolving nature of dynamic networks and interactions. Ideally, participants can influence the methods being used so they can trust in the process and the outcomes, as well as engage in evaluating the nature of their involvement (Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Whether ‘claimed’ organically by communities or ‘invited’ by Development’s bureaucracies, some

practitioners continue to explore the potential of spaces for participation to empower and emancipate (Rigon 2015; Cornwall & Coelho 2007). Rather than oversimplifying or misconstruing power as a linear binary between those who have it and those who don't, it is clear that there are multiple and diverse ways in which power is expressed and utilised in participatory development practice.

Domain 3: Knowledge

Required shift in space: From outside-in to inside-out
Required shift in exogenous role: From expert to learner

Like power, knowledge is also complicated in how it is sometimes misunderstood as single directional in practice. Mosse (2001, p.7) presents how participatory approaches 'construct' people's knowledge as a 'commodity' for use in established planning systems, while ignoring the relational notion of knowledge as a 'product of social relationships'. Rather than seeing knowledge as a fixed commodity that people intrinsically have and own, what is argued here is that knowledge is culturally, socially and politically produced, reformulated, and embedded within power as a normative construct. Therefore, participatory approaches often succeed in surfacing knowledge about how power manifests in material realities such as who-what-where, but not necessarily the social and political processes by which this happens.

According to DuBois there is a 'hierarchisation' of different types of knowledge, cultures and values; with the revered one being the universally applicable expert knowledge and the vilified one being the local and unscientific knowledge (DuBois 1991, p.7; Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). In many documented instances, the person deciding what development is and how it can be achieved in a given scenario is usually some kind of technical 'expert'. Regardless of how plural the empirical settings or diverse the actors, many project facets appear to be standardised from place to place. This homogeneity is related to an issue of who's doing the doing? Oftentimes, it is the same interlocked network of experts who design and implement projects all over the world, and who tend to have similar training in Development schools of thought (Ferguson 1990; Crewe & Axelby, 2013). As Ferguson demonstrates in his seminal work, it is not uncommon for exogenous actors to know little about the specific history, politics, sociology and culture of a particular place at a particular time. Being a Development 'expert' on child nutrition in rural communities or livestock development in Africa captures how easily a free-floating expert that is untied to any specific context can be

inserted into another given situation. Experts should not be entrusted with the management of other people's 'good life' just because they have classified others as 'underdeveloped' and that their expert knowledge allegedly 'qualified them for this task' (Escobar 1995, p.52). Berger's (1974, p.45) classic statement keeps this idea in check: 'Development is not something to be decided by experts, simply because there are no experts on the desirable goals of human life.' The dichotomy of valuing Western expertise in such a way is that at the same time it devalues indigenous knowledge. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there are counter scenarios where endogenous agency appropriates what an expert may be bringing in and overseeing. In which case, such actors can manoeuvre situations in their interests to the point of transforming what was considered as exported outside knowledge and moulding that into an inside process of change (Mosse 2001). The opportunity then is for exogenous actors to shift from experts to co-learners – which would require a comprehensive shift in mindset and culture within the practitioner community.

Domain 4: Mindset/Culture

Required shift in space: From rigid to adaptive

Required shift in exogenous role: From planner to searcher

The disjunction between the intention and practice of Development has also been attributed to the plan that doesn't go to plan. But even the most vigilant endeavour at mapping social reality will rarely result in a plan that can be 'executed with Fordist precision' (Essers & Jacobs 2014). Yet in complex settings, plans continue to prescribe and predetermine action. The routine practices of exogenous actors meticulously forecasting, targeting, calculating and evaluating activities, outputs, indicators and outcomes has been criticised at length. Ramalingam (2013) argues that Development is suffering from an epidemic of 'best-practicitis'. He goes on to describe the 'symptoms' of such a condition as actors looking for the single right answer rather than diverse solutions; spending more time trying to do things right than do the right things; focusing more on knowledge transfer than on knowledge creation; searching for efficiency and cost-based value measures that assume what is known is what is needed (and should be cheap); and creating "how-to" guidelines and off-the-shelf toolkits that take precedence over and undermine any attempts to change existing culture or incentives through interaction and dialogue.

This epidemic of best-practicitis further reiterates how existing mindsets and organisational cultures discourage adaptive learning, mainly because projects are seen as ‘closed, controllable and unchanging systems’ (Mosse 1998, p.5). Proponents for adaptive management contend that Development practice needs to improve at: being problem-driven, locally led, flexible and adaptive, and politically smart (Andrews 2013; Andrews, Pritchett & Woolcock 2016; Booth 2015; Booth & Unsworth 2014; Fritz, Levy, & Ort 2014; Menocal 2014; Wild, Booth, Cummings, Foresti & Wales 2015). These contemporary perspectives agree with Easterly’s (2006) analysis on the salient failure of the planner’s approach to Development. Easterly’s framing of the difference between the mindset of ‘Planners’ as contrasted by that of ‘Searchers’ is helpful in articulating one of the most critical spaces for change to take hold. Planners rely more on technical knowledge, linear frameworks, and global blueprints, whereas Searchers are more likely to adapt to local conditions and rely more on iterative and community-based processes:

Table 2.2 Distinguishing between Planner and Searcher mindsets (Adapted from Easterly 2006, pp. 5-6)

PLANNERS	SEARCHERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what to supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out what’s in demand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply global blueprints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt to local conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack knowledge about reality on the ground. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out what the reality is on the ground.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think they already know the answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admit they don’t know the answers in advance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe poverty as a technical engineering problem that has clear-cut, simple answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe poverty is a complicated tangle of political, social, historical, institutional, and technological factors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rely on linear frameworks and modalities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ a trial and error experimentation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes outsiders know enough to impose solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe only insiders have enough knowledge to find solutions, and that most solutions should be homegrown.

Ramalingam (2013) argues that such long-standing failures and the increasing magnitude of intractable challenges requires essential and radical reforms in mindset. Due to its rather unsuccessful track record, the Development system is now on the 'edge of chaos' (Ramalingam 2013) – a state of criticality, or tipping point – which in turn allows it to learn and adapt in new ways, and with small ripples potentially having a strong impact on its future directions.

Domain 5: Impact

Required shift in space: From quantitative to qualitative

Required shift in exogenous role: From counters to co-designers

In today's Development projects, the stories of those who are most affected are not always heard; the actions of those administering it are rarely evaluated; and the quality measures of impact are almost totally unknown (Uvin 2002). The impact of Development projects is usually measured by inputs and outputs, not necessarily by the lived experiences and narratives of the people impacted. Many practitioners have been forced to adopt quantitative-heavy practices which has brought with it a top-down audit culture of procedural numbers and obligatory reporting (Angus 2008). Indicators for success are aligned to linear frameworks set out during the project's planning phases and are largely limited to quantitative values (such as money spent, or number of vaccinations rendered). As Harley (2005) notes, this more traditional approach has reduced the focus on insights of real value:

 *In cases where donors have a distaste for reporting beyond the terse numbers neatly set out in the LFA's [Logical Framework Approach] rows and columns, insights of real value are highly vulnerable (Harley 2005, p.32).*

The result is a model of impact that is based on homogeneity and is further removed from the actual lived experiences of those involved. Variable contextual factors are important in nuancing what to measure and what constitutes evidence during a project process. Resisting the tendencies to homogenise the evaluation of impact may require rethinking standard statistical methods of producing evidence, and a shift toward greater hybridity with experiential and relational methods (Unnithan 2015).

Experiential methods such as ethnography, are conducted in everyday settings, and focus on the contextual factors influencing interactions and related meaning-making. The premise is on assemblages of various forms of evidence, based on relational interactions and the co-construction of knowledge rather than the production of a singular form of evidence, based on standardisation and randomisation (Unnithan 2015). However, many actors generally prefer short-term, standardised outcomes which require high levels of control in decision-making during project implementation (Ebrahim 2003). This is contrary to longer, iterative, and qualitative projects that may not provide quick tangible results (measurable with quantitative data). Additionally, results may not be agreeable if they do not correspond with the outcome designed in the initial plan, even if they better address the needs of people concerned (Dennehy, Fitzgibbon & Carton 2013). There are many examples of projects meeting their targets but completely missing the point. Rather than bureaucratic box-checking and adherence to externally predetermined visions of success, there are early indications of impact being defined by people and their experiences. This requires a proactive shift away from imposing impact measurement criteria and methods, to supporting people's ownership of their self-determined development narratives.

Domain 6: Ownership

Required shift in space: From dependency to self-sustainability

Required shift in exogenous role: From sceptic to advocate

In order to demonstrate quick and accurate results to funders, exogenous actors feel the need to dominate and control decision-making in projects – which in turn weakens the position of endogenous actors and reduces likelihood of ownership and lasting change. The term 'inclusion', despite sounding positive or at least neutral, is not without controversy. It begs the questions: 'Who is including whom? Who does this space belong to?' It becomes more like an exogenous gesture of hosting endogenous inclusion in their space, rather than the other way around.

In response to a largely Western discourse in the 1980s, a group of leaders from the Global South, calling themselves The South Commission, called for expanded South-to-South cooperation (South Commission 1990). They believed that responsibility for development rested with the mobilisation of their own people and resources, and that primarily Western money and expertise was not going to enable a flourishing society. They seemed to be asking a very critical question of the economic development push: Who really benefits? Sceptics have long

claimed that the real beneficiaries are the exogenous actors who administer and deliver the aid and not those who are the stated recipients (Easterly 2007; Moyo 2009; Sachs 1992). This begs another question, whether 'outsider' projects cause endogenous populations to give up vital self-dependence? Self-driven societal transformations come from the critical role people themselves play, and the resources they contribute. More cynically, there is also the issue of reconciling outsider projects with the high-profile political commitments to respecting national sovereignty and country ownership through rubrics of partnership or so-called capacity building (Mosse 2005, van Gastel 2011). Unless exogenous actors begin to change their position in such relational dynamics, they may continue to be challenged by those who do not doubt people's capacity for self-determination and self-sustainability.

The shifts for change

As discussed in the previous section, there are a number of limitations that negatively influence change in the current system and practices of Development. These limitations of functional accountability, binary power expressions, outside-in knowledge flows, rigid working mindsets/cultures, quantitative understandings of impact, and structural dependency remain unaddressed in practice, yet strongly influence the future of the field. The domains for new possibilities exist for actors who are prepared to accept that the landscape of Development is evolving in ways that require shifts in praxis. Since development is the 'messy' outcome of agency, struggle and negotiations, this thesis focuses on the social actors involved in such processes (Li 2005; Rigon 2015). A key challenge for exogenous actors is to reflect on their roles within this system in addition to how their actions affect social, political, economic, and cultural dynamics (Makuwira 2014). By re-positioning themselves more consciously as 'bridges' along these various dimensions, exogenous actors will be able to carry information, ideas, skills, and funding across the system in new ways and new directions (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2016). The below table summarises the key concepts from the literature reviewed in this section:

Table 2.3 Summary of key domains for change in Development

DOMAINS FOR CHANGE	SPECIFIC CHALLENGES IN EACH DOMAIN	SHIFTS FOR EACH DOMAIN
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● risk-averse and resource-use based (Edwards & Hulme 2002) ● emphasis on speed and cost (Ebrahim 2011) ● competitive and mistrusting environment (Fowler 2000) 	<p>From functional to social</p> <p>From auditor to custodian</p>
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● tokenistic participation (Cooke & Kothari 2001) ● placing blame on ‘the poor’ with one-directional corrective messages: you must change (Hickel 2014; Slim 2002) 	<p>From binary to networked</p> <p>From controller to enabler</p>
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● hierarchisation of knowledge: reveres western and vilifies indigenous forms (DuBois 1991) ● technical experts entrusted to develop others (Cowen & Shenton 1996) ● standardisation from place to place understates contextual factors (Crewe & Axelby 2013; Ferguson 1990) 	<p>From outside-in to inside-out</p> <p>From expert to learner</p>
Mindset / Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● system dominated by fixed mindsets, linear protocols and inflexible plans (Essers & Jacobs 2014; Easterly 2006) ● obsession with doing things right, but not doing the right things (Ramalingam 2013) ● toolkits preside over interaction and dialogue (Ramalingam 2013) ● audit cultures of procedural numbers and obligatory reporting (Angus 2008) 	<p>From rigid to adaptive</p> <p>From planner to searcher</p>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● defined by short-term, standardised, quantitative measures (Unnithan 2015) ● quality, experiential and relational approaches lacking (Unnithan 2015; Uvin 2002) ● predetermined questions and answers miss insights of real value (Harley 2005) 	<p>From quantitative to qualitative</p> <p>From counters to ethnographers</p>

DOMAINS FOR CHANGE	SPECIFIC CHALLENGES IN EACH DOMAIN	SHIFTS FOR EACH DOMAIN
Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exogenous control of decision-making; late stage endogenous engagement (Mosse 2005) • who is including who in who's space: exogenous actors hosting endogenous actors in their own space (Crewe & Harrison 1998) • reduces vital self-dependence (Moyo 2009) 	<p>From dependency to self-sustainability</p> <p>From sceptic to advocate</p>

In order for development to be meaningful, actors are confronted with having to navigate the inherent contradictions within the system. Working towards a more holistic understanding of development requires actors to engage in actor-oriented approaches for endogenous voices to lead deliberations over alternative visions and programmatic implementations. This offers an opportunity to explore design as a vehicle for transitions toward alternative ways of working.

2.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The literature analysed in this chapter highlights the significant design failure of Development. Although post-Development offers a useful way to examine the macro-level and structural concerns with Development, it still leaves many unanswered questions for practice – particularly regarding the agency of individual actors in relation to the bigger system. Embracing a deeper engagement with Foucault’s conception of power and more recent work on actor-oriented approaches for social change therefore allows more space for the agency of actors to be affirmed in shaping new possibilities. Despite critiques that post-Development does not provide solutions, it has certainly planted seeds for change. While the premise is true, equating Development with the colonisation, westernisation and modernisation of the rest of the world is not a useful starting premise from which to imagine new possibilities; it has helped me understand the discrepancies in the big picture while still holding optimism toward the potential for autonomous action, the transformation of practice, and the transitions toward new possibilities. With such ideas put forward, we must question – what is next?

Chapter 3

Literature on design



“ Design in the activist tradition... means articulating issues in order to let agency form around emerging publics. In those cases, design does not perform the agency, but rather prepares for a public to form and for some sort of civic engagement to be enacted... On the one hand, a reinvigoration of participatory design as laboratories of democratic design experiments must nurture and expand the diverse practices of making design representation particular to and entangled with the design encounter – a hallmark of the participatory design heritage. On the other hand, it must embrace both the controversial ambiguity and contingency of the design objects of speculative design and the programmatic willingness to perform democratic agency through design mediations in the design activist tradition. Such laboratories are less interested in impact and more concerned with an open unfolding of the experiments (Binder, Brandt, Ehn & Halse 2015, p. 161)

3.1 CHAPTER OBJECTIVE

This chapter will explore the extant discourse on design, and its relevance to a Development system in transition. This will be achieved by first positioning the concept of design in the contemporary landscape while acknowledging the changing nature of Development. The chapter will then explore the ways that design can be conceptualised and the influence this has on the new possibilities at this intersection. At the conclusion of the chapter I will explore the critiques of design for Development in terms of design as object, agency, process and value. In doing so I set the context for this research at the nexus of design and Development.

3.2 PROPOSITIONING DESIGN

Designing is the antidote to breaking with the past

Escobar (2018, p.6) has referred to Development's shortcoming as a 'design failure'. He claims that Development was brought into the imaginary as an 'utterly arrogant design vision' and a 'design vision gone sour'. It has also been referred to as a 'tragedy' (Easterly 2006, p.4) based on the amount of money that has been spent in its name. It is estimated that the West has spent USD \$2.3 trillion on development assistance globally since WWII (Easterly 2006, p.4). Africa's experience points to limited outcomes for the more than US\$1 trillion of aid the continent has received. The notion of failure persists across the continent as there are pieces of expensive medical equipment lying around with no one trained to use them (Perry & Malkin 2011); pump wells lying idle due to a breakdown and no part available locally (Skinner 2009); and training programmes that fail to leverage the local cultural context (Schweisfurth 2011). Although there is no official count, the field of Development employs hundreds of thousands of professionals, spends tens of billions of dollars (Hjertholm & White 2000), and oversees over 15,000 projects in over 50 'recipient' countries every year (Ramalingam 2013). Despite such colossal effort and cost, this design vision has continued to fall short on its promise.

In addition to a design failure and tragedy, Development has also been referred to as a violent form of 'elimination design' (Fry 2009) of vernacular languages and indigenous practices that have existed for centuries and millennia. Fry (2017, p.49) talks about the political dimension of this since the Global South has essentially

been an ontological design product of the Global North. Nevertheless, this design vision was embraced and has been the dominant frame for discourse and practice worldwide ever since WWII – such is the power of design imagination (Escobar 2018). Accordingly, there is a need to ‘liberate design from this imagination’ and reorient it within the ‘pluriverse’ in order to reframe design questions, problems and practices in more fitting ways to suit Global South contexts (Escobar 2018, p.6).

Fry distinguishes between the use of the terms pluralism and plurality. Plurality invites diverse points of view, whereas pluralism prefers ‘hyper-conformity that reduces difference to equivalence’ (2017, p.151). My understanding is that Escobar’s use of the term ‘pluriverse’ is a nod to plurality, not pluralism. Specifically, it involves moving from the ‘One-World’-view based on Euro-American metaphysics (Law 2011) to the ‘world as pluriverse’ – that is, without pre-existing universals or dualisms (Escobar 2015, p.460). Ontologically speaking, design practice is considered a key political technology of Euro-American patriarchal capitalist modernity (Escobar 2018). One word that is often combined with design is innovation. Light’s (2019) critique on the use of the term ‘innovation’ is that it assumes that a single label is appropriate for a wide array of heterogeneous creativity. Light (2018) discusses the occupation with naming and defining as part of the neoliberal project. She states that it can sometimes reduce the ingenuity and imagination of diverse people, from different places, and across many situations with a universal framing that implies clearly bounded challenges, and a formula for addressing them. Hence, untangling design from its modernist traditions and labels may also help create the space for other ways of knowing, doing, and being (Escobar 2015). To move forward, actors need to engage in a new design imaginary that broadens the space for other ontologies in Development transitions.

The term ‘transition’ can be defined in various ways. The dictionary definition refers to the term as ‘the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another’ (Oxford Dictionary 2019). However, the contemporary thinking and formalised practice around ‘transition’ models for change refer to ‘unleashing’ powerful ‘expressions of imagination’ (Sharp 2009). There is reference to ‘weaving’ together imagination, visioning, and storytelling with the ‘practical’ manifestation of alternative narratives (Hopkins 2011, p.146). Hopkins (2011, pp.72-76) refers to ‘transitioning’ as both an inner and outer process. Outwardly, change is needed in the structures and institutions that provide foundations for societies.

Inwardly, change is needed within people's worldviews, norms, attitudes and values. This formalised practice around transitions encourages new visions that offer 'situated' and 'whole of system' approaches to challenges through localised action. Such visions are about people and an 'untheorised sense of the goodness of humanity' (Sharp 2009, p.35), a sense of community, and social solidarity. From this contemporary angle, the term 'transitions' is about the 'possibility of change' (Scott-Cato & Hillier 2010) while radically shifting the narratives that societies tell themselves about where they are and where they want to go. There are many explicit and practical transition movements surfacing. For example, in the Global North there is the transition town initiative (UK), the Great Transition Initiative (Tellus Institute, US), the Great Turning (Macy 2007, 2012), and the degrowth movement (Latouche 2009). In the Global South, transitions movements have included post-Development and alternatives to Development, communal logics (relational, feminist, and autonomous), post-extractivism and post-capitalist movements such as Buen Vivir and Ecological Swaraj (also referred to as RED). These are all visions for society that respect the limits of the earth and the rights of other species, while pursuing the core values of social justice and equity (Kothari, Demaria & Acosta 2014).

Many theorists agree and propose that design offers a novel critical praxis and special kind of knowledge system for movements aimed at transitions (Manzini 2009; Tonkinwise 2015; Irwin 2015; Willis 2015). Escobar has reiterated that design has unique value and a 'practical' contribution to make for post-Development (Escobar 2018, p.x). Some have made the case for design's inherent ability to support Development transitions by challenging the deep and systemic bias in the profiles of who makes seminal decisions in Development interventions (Kirk, Hickel & Brewer 2015). By supporting action which starts from people's own agency and situated realities, design practices can offer a 'humbler' kind of practice (Latour 2007). Latour argues that 'designing is the antidote to founding, colonising, establishing or breaking with the past' (2008, p.5). Escobar caveats that, for the potential of design to be realised in this context, it requires a reorientation of design itself – from its 'functionalist, rationalistic and industrial' origins toward an integrated rationality and intuition that reconciles with the 'relational dimension of life' (Escobar 2018, p.x). Over the decades there have been many others who have called for change within the field of design for it to better fulfil its potential in this regard: Jones' Redesigning Design (1992), Mau's Massive Change (2004), Thackara's Xskools (2005), Fry's Redirective Practice (2004,

2007, 2009), Fuad-Luke's (2013) and Thorpe's (2008) Design Activism, Manzini's Changing the Change (2009), and more recently, Transition Design (Irwin, Kossoff & Tonkinwise 2015). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all the attempts to reorient design and how they differ, however, what is clear is the need for a type of designing that is rooted in collaborative and relational contexts for transitions. Therefore, the opportunity for a new design imaginary in the context of D/development transitions requires that design itself be remade as a political tool (Fry 2017; Escobar 2017).

Designing activates a different way of being in the world

Some scholars have proposed the potential for design to activate a wholly 'different way of being in the world' through the notion of ontological design (Fry 2012; Winograd & Flores 1986; Escobar 2015, p.21). Ontological design is a way of characterising the relationship between humans and their lifeworlds (Willis 2005). As a concept, it suggests that (1) design is something more deeply profound than what is usually realised; (2) that designing is fundamental to being human – that is – we design to anticipate our actions and makings; and therefore (3) we are designed by our designing (Willis 2005, p.80). This double notion of us designing our worlds, while our worlds design us is significant when propositioning design for fostering new ways of being and imagining while in transition. For this double notion to be explored in the context of this thesis, design practices and design agency need to be thought of in ways that do not reproduce universalistic design visions, but rather interrogate them. New design visions would be less about solving technical problems and more about opening up to a variety of world-making practices, rediscovering collective creative capacities, and reimagining how we might transform toward the goals of 'the good life' (Escobar 2015; Gibson-Graham, Cameron & Healy 2013). Design therefore supports the cultural and political activation of relational ontologies that refer to 'a different way of imagining life' (Quijano 2010). This points to the pluriverse as 'a world where many worlds fit' (Escobar 2011, p.139) and a space for bringing about 'worlds and knowledges otherwise' based on differing ontological dispositions, epistemological configurations, and general practices of being-knowing-doing (Escobar 2007, p.198).

To further explore these ideas, a call for new types of relational engagements between designers and the people seeking new visions for change is needed. Escobar (2018, p.x) asks whether designers can contribute as ‘enablers’ of transition visions through this notion of ontological design. He also asks how the cultural and political autonomy of ‘communities in struggle’ can be put at the centre for those designers working in transitions contexts. The remainder of this chapter explores the various ways design has been conceptualised over time and how design practices might contribute to changing ingrained ways of knowing-being-doing in the context of Development transitions.

3.3 CONCEPTUALISING DESIGN

What is meant by ‘design’ ‘designing’ and ‘designer’

Design is such a common word that most people think they know what it is and what it means. However, it is not easily characterised. The intellectual field of design has been a contested one and historically, has seen some major shifts in its conceptualisation.

 *The etymology of design goes back to the Latin de + signare and means making something, distinguishing it by a sign, giving it significance, designating its relation to other things... Based on this original meaning, one could say: design is making sense (of things) (Krippendorff 1989, p.9).*

According to Fry (1998), design is a meta-category with three elements – all of which get referred to as design – sometimes at the exclusion of the others. These elements are the **design object**, the **design process** and the **design agency**. The ‘object’ is the material or immaterial outcome of designing, while the ‘process’ is the organisation, conduct and activity of designing. The ‘agency’ is the designer, the design instruction in any medium of expression and the designed object itself as it continues to act in its world. Most conceptualisations of design will focus only on one of these three elements, despite all three being quite ‘interconnected’ and of ‘equal value’ (Fry 1998). Both Willis (2006) and Fry (1998) draw on Heidegger to explain how design creates a world, but how it is also a way of inhabiting or being in a world. Understanding design through a lens that encapsulates this broader characterisation is fundamental to exploring new design imaginaries.

Historically, the designer's role was conceived to be about providing decoration for, or giving form to, artefacts. In the early days, design discourse was about aesthetic form, and then subsequently, about mechanical function (Margolin 2015). Nowadays, the act of designing is no longer understood in the narrow sense of a 'specific methodology for creating artefacts' (Winograd & Flores 1986, p.163), nor is it bounded by its professional disciplines such as graphic, industrial, and architecture (Fry 1998). As the notion of design shifts, so too does the role of the designer. Designers are increasingly moving their work away from images and physical objects, and to a space where design is seen in the less tangible context of thought, culture and systems (Buchanan 2001). In the last few decades design has shifted from the concept of *shaping a product for a human* to the concept of *shaping relationships between humans in a system* (Buchanan 1992; Colussi 2010) and as a field of interdisciplinary inquiry that tackles complex socio-cultural challenges (Inns 2010). Fry (2012, 2009) positions design as an anthro-directive and ontological driver that powers the transformation of things, beings, and Being.

This more ontological design lens repositions designers as central to the agency of being human in contemporary culture. This is not an abandonment of earlier roles of designers, but rather broadening their role as collaborative agents in 'designing' conditions of 'worldhood' (Fry 1998; Willis 2006) through public and private plans for action (Buchanan 1998). According to Light and Miskelly (2009, p.2), not all actors involved in designing would call themselves designers, despite engaging in activities which 'bear the hallmarks and carry the responsibility of design practices'. Manzini (2014) introduced the distinction between *diffuse design* (design as natural human capability) and *expert design* (design as specific professionalised skill and culture). This distinction generates a continuum to answer the question of who are designers? Manzini (2014, p.96) suggests that professionally trained designers who have honed their skills are on one end, and at the other end, anybody who possesses and acts on the

“ mixture of critical sense, creativity and practical sense that allows us to recognize what in an existing situation we don't like, how instead things should be and how, practically, to transform them (to move towards the preferred direction).

Design, 'when everybody designs' (Manzini 2015), positions the 'act of designing' into a relational and 'transcultural universal human activity' (Willis 2006, p.83).

This repositioning reveals changes in the roles of expert/trained designers that are particularly relevant to Development projects as implementers and citizen co-designers negotiate positions as collaborative agents in the ‘act of designing’ conditions of ‘worldhood’ together – and perhaps for one another. Given the messiness, ‘ad-hoc flavour’ and ‘quality of wildness’ in this scenario (Light & Miskelly 2009, p.2), contemporary trained designers are also expected to function as negotiators of value, facilitators of thinking, visualisers of the intangible, navigators of complexity, coordinators of exploration, and mediators between stakeholders (Inns 2010, pp.24–26). With this backdrop, a major shift is underway in the field as trained designers continue to expand their role, shape human experience and to influence culture at a broader scope than previously envisioned (Buchanan 1995).

Given that this broad notion of design continues to be reconfigured and reconceptualised, it can be challenging to arrive at a single definition for it. There exists a growing number of terms being used to describe design activity and its application in practical settings. Throughout this thesis, I refer to the application of design in practical settings as combinations of ‘design practices’ and/or ‘design processes’ – which are essentially the design traditions that guide the *act of designing*. The meanings behind the many various terms that refer to the *act of designing* have yet to be ‘distinctly understood or collectively accepted’ (Kimbell 2011, p.286). It is not an area that can be easily reconciled and resolved:

“ Despite efforts to discover the foundations of [design] in the fine arts, the natural sciences, or most recently, the social sciences, design eludes reduction and remains a surprisingly flexible activity. No single definition of design, or branches of professionalized practice such as industrial or graphic design, adequately covers the diversity of ideas and methods gathered together under the label (Buchanan 1992, p.5).

Despite this discussion, some of the common terms used to refer to design practices and processes by trained designers applying them in social change circles include human-centred design, design thinking, participatory design, co-design, social design, design for social innovation, design activism, and speculative design – to name just a few. The following table outlines definitions for these common terms.

Table 3.1 Summary of key design terms

TERM	EXPLANATION
HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘based on the use of techniques which communicate, interact, empathize and stimulate the people involved, obtaining an understanding of their needs, desires and experiences which often transcends that which the people themselves actually realized’ (Giacomin 2014, p.610).
DESIGN THINKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Design thinking and the designers who say they practice it are associated with having a human-centered approach to problem solving, in contrast to being technology- or organization-centered. They are seen as using an iterative process that moves from generating insights about end-users, to idea generation and testing, to implementation. Their visual artifacts and prototypes help multidisciplinary teams work together. They ask “what if?” questions to imagine future scenarios rather than accepting the way things are done now’ (Kimbell 2011, p.287). • ‘approaching managerial problems as designers approach design problems’ (Dunne & Martin 2006, p.512).
PARTICIPATORY DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘attempts to steer a course “between tradition and transcendence” — that is, between participants’ tacit knowledge and researchers’ more abstract, analytical knowledge’ (Ehn 1988, p.28).
CO-DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘collective creativity as it is applied across the whole span of a design process’ (Sanders & Stappers, 2014 p.5). • ‘the process in which actors from different disciplines share their knowledge about both the design process and the design content. They do that in order to create shared understanding on both aspects, to be able to integrate and explore their knowledge and to achieve the larger common objective: the new product to be designed (Kleinsmann 2006, p.30)

TERM	EXPLANATION
SOCIAL DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘a design activity that deals with problems that are not dealt with by the market or by the state, and in which the people involved do not normally have a voice (for the simple reason that they do not have the economic or political means to generate a formal demand)’ (Manzini 2015, p.65).
DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘everything that expert design can do to activate, sustain, and orient processes of social change toward sustainability’ (Manzini 2015, p.62).
DESIGN ACTIVISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘design thinking, imagination and practice applied knowingly or unknowingly to create a counter-narrative aimed at generating and balancing positive social, institutional, environmental and/or economic change’ (Fuad-Luke 2013).
SPECULATIVE DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘not in trying to predict the future, but in using design to open up all sorts of possibilities that can be discussed, debated, and used to collectively define a preferable future for a given group of people: from companies, to cities, to societies’ (Dunne & Raby 2013, p.6)

The main point of this summary of terms is not so much whether the definition of design and the derivatives that refer to its traditions have been agreed, but more that these hold relevance in the context of social change processes. What is common among the permutations of terms is the shared belief that the act of designing contributes significantly to people’s experiences of themselves and the world around them. The following sections will take a closer look at some of the field’s own conceptualisations of different design practices and processes.

Designing as problem solving

One historical theme relating to the act of designing is the idea that it is a unique form of knowing and reasoning for problem solving. Jones (1963, 1970) set forward a strategy of rhetorical inquiry that integrated both rationality and intuition in a unified system of design. He also pointed out that the act of ‘designing should not be confused with art, with science, or with mathematics’. Others have pointed to similar explanations:

“ ... the scientific method is a pattern of problem-solving behaviour employed in finding out the nature of what exists, whereas the design method is a pattern of behaviour employed in inventing things of value which do not yet exist. Science is analytic; design is constructive (Gregory 1966 in Cross 2006, p.7).

“ To base design theory on inappropriate paradigms of logic and science is to make a bad mistake. Logic has interests in abstract forms. Science investigates extant forms. Design initiates novel forms. (March 1976 in Cross 2006, p.8).

The emphasis in these comparisons is on the constructive, futuristic, and novel nature of designing. Simon (1967) claimed that designing was a ‘technical rationality’ for problem solving. He proposed the idea of a science of design different from other disciplines because he saw design’s role as to solve ‘inherently ill-defined’ problems. He makes a further distinction by stating that natural sciences are concerned with how things are, while ‘design is concerned with how things ought to be’ (Simon 1967). He also believed all people practice designing fundamentally, as they change ‘existing situations into preferred ones’. Cross (1982) continued this argument that design practices are based on a ‘third culture’ of knowing that is distinct from the humanities and sciences. This argument stemmed from a claim made by the Royal College of Art’s study (1979) that ‘there are things to know, ways of knowing them, and ways of finding out about them’ that are specific to design practices. This distinction is summarised below:

Table 3.2 Cross' distinguishing of design from science and humanities (Summarised from Cross 1982, pp.221-225)

	SCIENCE	HUMANITIES	DESIGN
The <i>phenomena</i> of study in the culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The natural world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The human-made world
The <i>methods</i> of enquiry in the culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled experiments • Classification • Analysis • Deductive thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analogy • Metaphor • Criticism • Evaluation • Inductive thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling • Pattern-formation • Synthesis • Abductive thinking
The <i>values</i> and belief systems of the culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectivity • Rationality • Neutrality • A concern for 'truth' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjectivity • Imagination • Commitment • A concern for 'justice' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicality • Ingenuity • Empathy • A concern for 'appropriateness'

Cross (1982, p.223) has suggested that design scholars need to pinpoint what was 'intrinsically valuable' in the practices and processes of designers. Since then, many have attempted to identify the distinct qualities of design as going beyond problem solving.

Designing as reflection-in-action

Rittel (1987) continued to build theory about a science of design and the characteristics that define its practitioners. Key to his argument was that designers have a unique reflective logic that starts from a place of imagination that then leads to planning and intervention through experimental prototyping. Rittel (1987, p.2) is also known for conceptualising design as a process of argumentation: 'learning what the problem is IS the problem'. In this discussion he points to the internalised debate and iterative process that designers go through in order to arrive at problem solving: 'the image of its resolution develops from blurry to sharp and back again, frequently being revised, altered, detailed

and modified'. He emphasised how deeply affected designers are by their own worldviews, which are always enacted in a social context where they have 'epistemic freedom' – that is, certain choices that the designer makes tend to be disorderly and beyond logical reasoning. The reflexivity in this mental process is informed by the individual and social context.

Another of Rittel's contributions was his and Webber's famous notion of 'wicked' problems (1973). They characterised wicked problems as:

“ A class of social system problems which are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decision makers with conflicting values, and where the ramifications of the whole system are thoroughly confusing (Rittel as quoted in Churchman 1967, p.B142),

Wicked problems are almost impossible to define and so rely more on human judgment for their resolution (Rittel & Webber 1973). Since they are never fully defined, they are never fully 'solved' either, but undergo continuous cycles of resolutions as required by the problem context. Poverty and the Development system have previously been characterised as 'wicked' problems (Ramalingam 2013). This is a concept that has been borrowed from design traditions to typify complex social challenges.

Schön (1983) had one of the most elaborate depictions of design practice as reflective, which directly challenged Simon's 'technical rationality' approach to problem solving. Schön believed that Simon's conceptualisation ignored design problems or situations that displayed uncertainty, ambiguity, complexity and conflict. Schön believed problem solving occupies a secondary place while the primary place is the 'problem setting'. This was a process he called 'reflection-in-action' – whereby designers construct new categories of understanding through experimentation and failure. He makes the case that designers are better off plunging into a problem space and 'begin designing before they know what it means to do so' (Schön 1988). His pragmatist views assert that experimental design practice takes precedence over doctrines. Jones (1970) had also commented that reframing the problem to ensure the right solution is the most difficult part of designing. A design problem or situation can be an assemblage of subject, context, socio-cultural constructs and technologies (Dalsgaard 2014). Since design problems are almost always wicked and ill-defined, and as the

properties of the design situation emerge and evolve, designers are better off adopting a reflective approach in order to explore, experiment and fail forward towards a satisfying result. Schön's idea of design is a process where doing and thinking weave together, stating that 'doing extends thinking in the tests, moves, and probes of experimental action, and reflection feeds on doing it and its results. Each feeds the other, and each sets boundaries for the other' (1987, p. 280). Schön constructs the character of Quist, a master architect, to describe this practice of 'reflection-in-action':

“ Quist spins out a web of moves, subjecting each cluster of moves to multiple evaluations drawn from his repertoire of design domains... he shifts from embracing freedom of choice to acceptance of implications, from involvement in local units to a distanced consideration of the resulting whole, and from a stance of tentative exploration to one of commitment. He discovers in the situation's back-talk a whole new idea which generates a system of implications for further moves. His global experiment is also a reflective conversation with the situation (Schön 1982, pp.102-103).

Schön recognised the inherent tension between the design orientation of practicing designers and the rules of the bureaucracies in which they are often asked to operate (Liedtka & Parmar 2012):

“ In contrast to the normal bureaucratic emphasis on uniform procedures, objective measures of performance and center/periphery systems of control, a reflective institution must place a high priority on flexible procedures, differentiated responses, qualitative appreciation of complex processes, and decentralized responsibility for judgment and action (Schön 1982, p.338).

Organisations and systems, after all, are just particular kinds of design spaces (Buchanan 1992). Traditional decision-making processes involve a linear method of thinking in which the problem is defined (and that definition is accepted as 'true'), a range of alternative solutions is generated and evaluated, and the optimal one is selected. While such processes can be efficient, they have proven less effective in complex situations, where problem definition is an open and critical reflection with the situation. In contrast to a linear thinking approach, a reflective design approach is iterative in nature, sceptical as to the definition of the problem itself,

opportunistic in its generation of solutions, and almost obsessed with optionality and experimentation, rather than a single-solution approach borne of analysis. The idea of reflection-in-action is indicative of why answering the wrong question, or answering the right question poorly, is increasingly costly in such environments (Liedtka & Parmar 2012). Such an approach allows movement beyond simplistic notions of cause and effect to continuous learning and is central to creating ambidextrous organisations (Tushman & O'Reilly 1996). However, it seems that for people who seek the certainty of externally structured, well-defined problems, the unfamiliarity of a reflective approach may be resisted.

That high tolerance for ambiguity also speaks to the designer's ability to fail often and early in order to pivot, reframe and redefine the problem-space (Schön 1983). In design practices, the idea of pivoting is representative of the designer moving back and forth between an imagined world and the real world, with the process and outcome affected by these shifts (Blank 2013; Urnes, Weltzien, Zanussi, Engbakk, & Rafn 2002). The designer takes creative leaps and generates multiple perspectives to understand people and societies. They consider issues holistically rather than reductively (Burns 2006), then articulate and deliver courses of action for alternative futures of being (Simon 1969).

Designing as negotiating participation

Design traditions go beyond reflecting on and solving problems. They also offer facilitative and collaborative practices that navigate problems relationally through 'correspondence' between people (Gunn 2019; Ingold 2017).

“ Forms emerge out of the continuous reconfiguration of boundaries, out of relations between people, and out of the interests of the various actors involved in a process of inquiry (Gunn 2019).

Gunn's recent reflection explores how more participatory strands of design practices afford a broader understanding of the future by revealing different versions of the present. Participatory design, sometimes also referred to as co-design (collaborative-design) in practice settings, has its origins in the Scandinavian social democratic model of the late 1970s. It has now evolved into a set of established practices where designers situate and facilitate participatory processes with end-users of products and services (Steen 2011; Sanders 2006; Byrne & Sands 2002).

Facilitated co-design processes also draw upon the tacit knowledge of end-users to identify issues and solutions that may otherwise be elusive (Press & Cooper 2003). Knowledge is often seen as an explicit form: things that are written down, defined, categorised, systematised, or quantified. But to understand knowledge-making in co-design, we need to understand that knowledge is often tacit; which is implicit rather than explicit, holistic rather than bounded and systematised. Tacit is what people know without being able to articulate. Ehn argues that co-design takes a Heideggerian approach to knowledge in which 'the fundamental difference between involved, practical understanding and detached theoretical reflection is stressed' (1988, p.28). This approach involves alternating between the two by discovering tacit knowledge, then critically reflecting on it (Spinuzzi 2005). With co-design, questions are raised about the role of the designer's detached theoretical knowledge in relation to the tacit knowledge of other people involved. This requires designers to embrace what they do not know in ways that include multiple perspectives and a plurality of social realities into their designing.

Participatory and collaborative design traditions tap into the long-standing practices of participatory development. As discussed in the previous chapter, there are many scholarly critiques of the limits and risks of participatory approaches (Cooke & Kothari 2001). This analysis can equally be applied to co-design, where designers interpret the information gleaned from their research, thereby constituting end-users as subjects spoken for by experts (Sanders 2002). Through a co-design project in Namibia, Kapuire, Winschiers-Theophilus, and Blake (2015) explore the role of endogenous epistemologies in negotiated cross-cultural participatory design settings. They reference Suchman's (1987) prompt to interpret people's actions and knowledge from within the contexts and frameworks in which they think and act throughout a co-design process. This has been argued as only possible through continuous dialogue and re-interpretations of actions by the community of co-designers themselves. One way to refine co-design approaches is to distinguish between 'dialogue' from 'discussion' (Bohm 2007). Bohm suggests that dialogue absorbs multiple and diverse aspects of settings beyond the spoken. Dialogue does not have an agenda or aim to convince others, assert that an idea is the truth, or attempt to sum up prior ideas – instead it is a way to co-create new concepts and shared meaning by respecting all contributions (Bidwell 2009). A shift in participants' status to co-designers means recognising them and their contributions in a more empowering way than as research subjects.

There are many challenges to implementing genuine co-design practices in D/development projects which have been documented at length through the work of interaction design teams (Puri, Byrne, Nhampossa & Quraishi 2004; Dearden & Rizvi 2008; Oyugi, Nocera, Dunckley & Dray 2008). These challenges relating to uneven power relationships prompted Winschiers-Theophilus, Chivuno-Kuria, Koch Kapuire, Bidwell and Blake (2010) to introduce the notion of 'being participated' as the design researcher. In this regard, designers are not the leaders of the process and establishing the participation dynamics becomes an emergent process that is negotiated in situ. This process of 'being participated' involves a sharing of power and roles that are traditionally reserved for the designer. However, without a democratic setup, in which the power balance is as equally divided as possible, there is no genuine co-design (Winschiers-Theophilus et al. 2010). Even though Reitsma, Light, Zaman and Rodgers (2019) agree that the process and roles should be negotiated in situ, they believe it is important to at least have an ambition towards equal participation prior, so that a 'third' space can be created for this negotiation to take place.

In Figure 3.1, Light & Seravalli (2019) illustrate the varying degrees of engagement and commitment that can emerge in such negotiated spaces. For instance, with human-centred design practices, participants may inform the outcome, but the issue, process and outcome are determined by the initiating stakeholders. With co-design practices, some elements of the design process and/or outcome are 'at stake' and under negotiation. With community-driven participatory practices, much more is 'at stake' as the issue, process and outcome are all designed from the community perspective, while the initiating stakeholders are there to support the outcome:

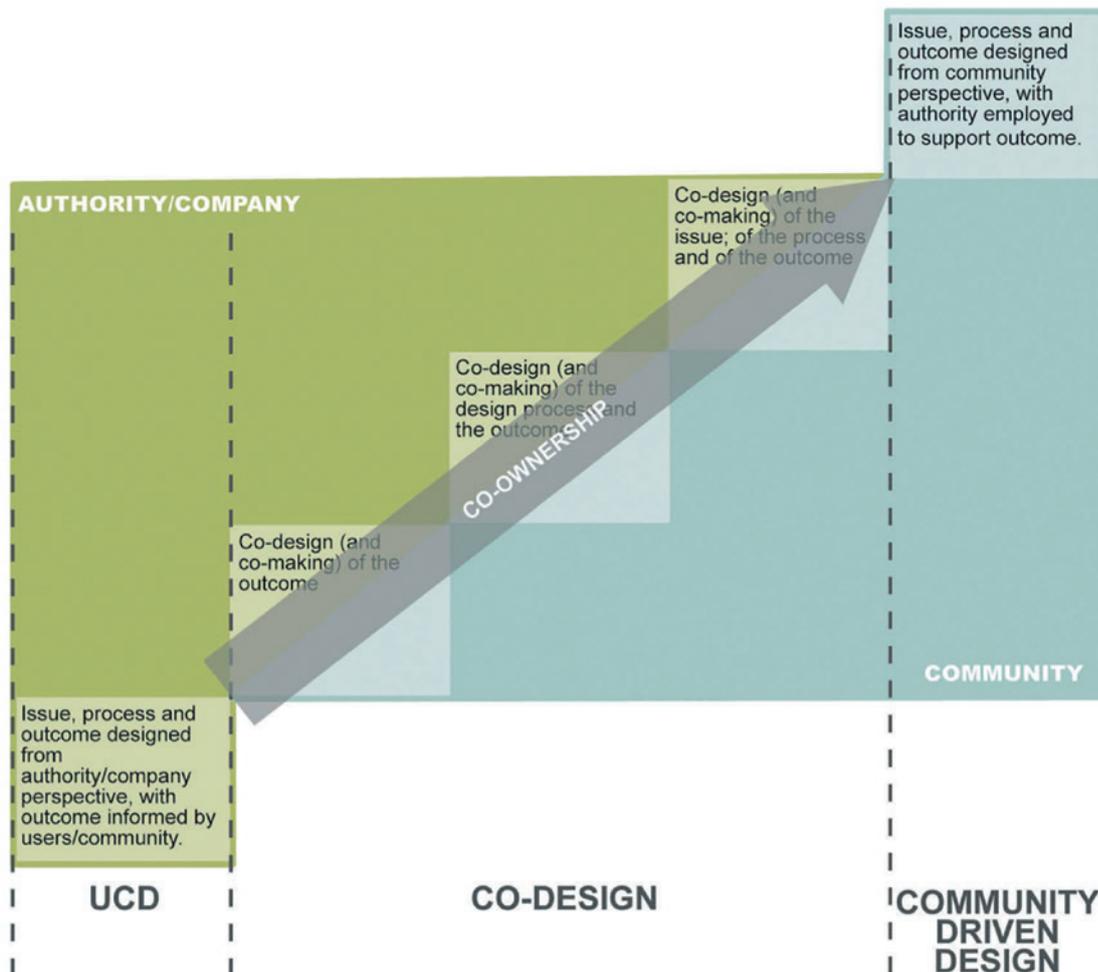


Figure 3.1 Degrees of participation from informing outcomes to conceiving of the issues (Light & Seravalli 2019)

Light, Hill, Hansen, Hackney, Halskov and Dalsgaard (2013) go on to suggest that a degree of engagement where people are genuine co-designers leads to a greater sense of shared ownership of the process and outcomes. This kind of ownership is associated with ‘matters of meaningfulness, identity, responsibility and control, and extending to immaterial entities such as ideas, words and artistic creations’ (Light et al. 2013). In the respectful design framework put forward by Reitsma, Light, Zaman and Rodgers (2019, pp.1566-1567), designers are in a position to prompt a third space by 1) bringing in dialogue-based design methods; 2) stimulating the creativity and ideas of collaborators; 3) enabling collaborators to bring in their material culture; and 4) critically discerning the designers’ own personal attachment to the design process. This body of work reinforces how co-design can be more complex to practice as designers need to hone skills in balancing multiple participant ideas (Visser 2009; Margolin 1997); addressing

'changing roles of power' in groups (Sanders 2006, pp. 29-30); as well as developing contextually meaningful methods for other participants to contribute through the design process (Brandt, Messeter & Binder 2008; Binder 1999).

Designing as managing organisations

The emergence of managing by designing within organisations has been branded 'provocative', 'puzzling' and a new phenomenon in recent times (Liedtka 2004; Dunne & Martin 2006; Dorst 2011). Design thinking is increasingly viewed as a vehicle for the design discipline to contribute to strategic management circles as an approach to dealing with complex realities (Johansson-Sköldberg, Woodilla & Çetinkaya 2013; Buchanan 2001). However, design thinking is different from traditional management thinking by being abductive rather than inductive or deductive – as well as human-centred rather than product- or organisation-centred. Boland & Collopy (2004, p.xi) discussed the need for design thinking and practices in the management of organisations. They argued that 'Management is in crisis... managers operate under a cloud of suspicion that self-interest, short-sightedness, and failed morals are their hallmark.'

Boland and Collopy joined an increasing cohort of scholars and practitioners calling for new emphasis in management on a 'design attitude' or 'design thinking'. They defined *design attitude* as 'expectations and orientations one brings to a design project' (2004, p.9). The constructs which make up a design attitude have been further advanced through the work of Michlewski (2008) and then revised and validated by Amatullo (2015) as being 1) ambiguity tolerance; 2) engagement with aesthetics; 3) connecting multiple perspectives; 4) creativity; and 5) empathy. All of these highlight the distinct heuristics of designers that deviate from traditional management tendencies. As Junginger (2008, p.30) explains, managing by designing invites managers to:

“ ...introduce the perspectives and experiences of 'other' people – people who are not familiar with acronyms, processes, hierarchies, or standards created by internal experts. These people include customers, suppliers, and employees alike. To make the organisation and its products work for them, organisations need to change around the experience – from outside-in.

Design thinking helps shift the focus of managers within organisations to be outward-looking rather than inward-looking by taking deliberate steps to systemically uncover human needs, build empathy among decision-makers, and co-design solutions. Buchanan's take on looking outward means '*we shift our perspective from the massive totality of the system to the pathways of individual human experience*' (Buchanan 2004a, pp.61-62). Despite the risky moral dimensions of empathy as 'emotional contagion', empathy as 'imaginative perspective-taking' is relevant to acts of designing as it makes salient a user group's particular emotions, concerns, and experiences in such a way that motivates other actors to more accurately appreciate and respond to such considerations (Oxley 2011). Design practices render visible (Manzini 1994) otherwise 'intangible' concepts (Inns 2010, p.24) through visual processes and artefacts. Such an engagement with aesthetics takes advantage of the highest bandwidth for human sense-making (Usselton & Lasinski 1995) and human perceptual abilities (Johnson-Laird 1993).

Design thinking offers organisations a human-centred knowledge system rooted in iteration and experimentation; one that is more widely visual and participatory, that is intended at learning rather than control. Such processes inspire managers to focus first on possibilities before moving on to constraints (Liedtka 2000). Much of the literature on design thinking is for managing problems faced by profit-making businesses operating in fast changing consumer contexts (Dunne & Martin 2006; Boland & Collopy 2004; Castellion 2010). However, what is relevant for Development practitioners is the emphasis on the transformation of managers, disciplinary narratives and organisational cultures. New design imaginaries require new types of institutional attitudes and practices. As business embraced new metaphors and inspirations, design thinking can be used by Development practitioners in creating a set of possibilities that do not yet exist.

Designing as shaping culture

In contrast to designing as a purely professional activity, the conceptualisation of designing as a form of cultural inquiry has been influenced by a lineage of thinking traceable to the philosophies of Dewey and McKeon. Dewey (1934, 1938 reprinted in 2008) has influenced the design methods literature, rooting it in the dynamic aspects of experience, as well as the foundations of methodological inquiry. McKeon's contribution was through his deeply humanistic tradition of treating culture as a pluralistic interplay of ideas and methods, of facts and

values, of commitments and inquiries (Buchanan 2000; McKeon 1998). McKeon's framework positions cultural manifestations as continuous and evolutionary processes of inquiry and experience – rather than fixed or permanent – which echo the characterisation of culture by Dewey (1966). McKeon (2005, p.281) asserts that: 'the frame of reference for mankind must preserve the pluralism of frames that made possible advances in knowledge, in culture and in community'. While the methods and materials of most design practices give form to such a multiplicity of frames, the real 'goal of manipulating type, colour, imagery, space, and time is to tell stories – to engage "teller" and "listener" in a dialogue that builds comprehension, commitment, participation, loyalty, and trust' (Sametz & Maydoney 2003, p.18). Designing is increasingly a distributed collaborative activity, which means that stories play a vital role as design tools for cultural inquiry and experience (Quesenbery & Brooks 2010). This is significant to this thesis as I investigate situations where designers act as bridges between knowledge and action through processes of storytelling and world-making.

McKeon's work has been built upon by Buchanan who conceptualised culture as a relational and pluralistic system that designers must engage with in the act of designing (Buchanan 1998, p.19). Perhaps then, designing is not just an act of cultural inquiry, but also a manifestation of cultural experience. Within this frame, designing is considered as a compelling cultural activity that can navigate multiple perspectives as it takes place amidst diverse groups of people; and one that can enable new worlds of being-knowing-doing to emerge in complex contexts. So, based on this understanding, designers then have a unique role as skilful 'cultural explorers' which are deeply in tune with the struggles and aspirations of human experience (Buchanan & Margolin 1995). By conceptualising designing as a mode of inquiry within the framework of culture, I hold the view that anthro-directed design practices offer value in complex and interdisciplinary contexts of use (Ingold 2015; Gunn & Donovan 2012; Jégou & Manzini 2008). In such contexts lies an increasing appreciation of the capacity for design to act as integrative force that contribute to collective processes of world-making through stewardship (Boyer, Cook & Steinberg 2013) and the act of making (Kimbell 2009).

The continuing expansion of design practices into domains such as culture and thought begs the question: what are the types of problems now being framed as design problems? In reflecting on the changing nature of design, Buchanan suggests a typology: the Four Orders of Design being Symbols, Things, Action and Thought (Buchanan 2001, 2007). This typology provides spaces for 'rethinking

and re-conceiving the nature of design' as it continues to evolve (Buchanan 2001, p.10). It also provides a way to appreciate the highly diverse problem spaces where design practices are being applied. Buchanan describes the first order called 'symbols' as 'the communication and use of words and images' (2001, p.10); this is associated with graphic and communication design disciplines. The second order is called 'things' which is about the creation of physical and tangible objects for the consumption of various human needs; this is associated with product and industrial design disciplines. The third order, called 'action', is about the interaction between humans and products and the extent to which products enable action; this is associated with service and interaction design disciplines. Finally, the fourth order called 'thought' is 'focused on environments and systems' (2001, p.11). The use of 'system', Buchanan points out, is more about 'human systems, the integration of information, physical artifacts, and interactions in environments of living, working, playing and learning' (2001, p.12). It is fourth order design spaces that are concerned with 'wicked problems'. Though design practices for fourth order problems are still evolving, they are potentially the most relevant to this thesis as 'places in the sense of topics for discovery' (2001, p.10). The spaces for transitioning from the current Development system and into its alternatives clearly fall in the fourth order of 'thought' as they are about human and relational qualities within the framework of culture.

Designing as bettering society

While the primary intent of designing for the business market is creating products for sale that may satisfy artificially created or manipulated desires, the primary focus of design for social change is the moral responsibility toward the satisfaction of fundamental human needs and protection of human rights (Margolin & Margolin 2002; Fuad-Luke 2013; Buchanan 2001). By referring to the act of designing as an unfolding process that can lead to 'human betterment', the role of designers is then about shaping organisations, products, services and processes that can bring 'lasting value' to society (Manzini 2012). Buchanan suggests the ultimate function of design for society is to conceive of things which 'express and, necessarily reconcile human values concerning what is good, useful, just, and pleasurable' (1998, p.11). He also refers to designing as 'fundamentally an affirmation of human dignity' (2001, p.37). The objective of design practices and processes applied within the social realm has been to improve 'social quality' (Manzini 1994). De Leonardis (1999) looks at social quality as a measurement of a peoples' capability to participate in the social and economic life of their

community to improve their situation (as quoted in Morelli 2007). Since there is a call to evolve the role of design to better reflect the myriad dreams and aspirations of different peoples and their social quality, designers may need to reflect on whether they are ready to take on more activist and political roles within society (Fuad-Luke 2013).

There is an increasing scholarly interest in the value of design for social good or community dividend (Amatullo 2015; Brown & Wyatt 2010; Margolin & Margolin 2002). In the 1960s a group of designers issued a manifesto which framed the discussion about the role of design in society. This was then updated and reissued in 2000 where designers declared that their talents should be used for pursuits that were more worthy of their problem-solving skills; such as environmental, social and cultural crises (Garland 2000). In the 1970s, Papanek believed that 'design has become the most powerful tool with which man shapes his tools and environments (and, by extension, society and himself).' Papanek asserted that designing demands high social and 'moral responsibility' from the designer and 'must become an innovative, highly creative, cross-disciplinary tool responsive to the true needs of men' (Papanek & Fuller 1972, pp.1-2).

Papanek's notion of design was unique given most other designers were concerned with serving profit-oriented businesses and a mass consumption society (Margolin 2007). Three years later, the 'Ahmedabad Declaration' stated that designers must work toward 'a new value system which dissolves the divisions between the worlds of waste and want, preserves the identity of peoples, and attends to the priority areas of need for [hu]mankind.' This highlights the growing awareness of design's moral responsibility in society by examining the value of design at both the philosophical and practical levels (Morelli 2007). While Papanek's challenge for design was based on the materiality of the design object (ie. *appropriate* product development), Bonsiepe challenged the role of design for society from the structural, political and economic relations between the Global North and Global South. Now, over 50 years since Papanek and Bonsiepe first expressed their ideas on design for the betterment of society, the paradigm did not take a strong hold, possibly because it lacked the political dimensions in implementation (Amir 2004). In borrowing words from Papanek (1972), the social context of design still remained 'damned by omission' up until recently.

Margolin suggested that 'design must disengage itself from consumer culture as the primary shaper of its identity and find a terrain where it can begin to rethink its role in the world' (1998, p.89). The role of design practices in envisioning better social futures is problematic, given the discord in competing and polarised visions that designate how the world could or should be (Margolin 2007). Designers have found themselves confronted by a world that is increasingly polarised: wealth versus poverty; fundamentalist religion versus secular humanism; environmental sustainability versus ecological destruction; and technological utopianism versus technological resistance. To choose to position one's self amongst such countering forces requires an intensive personal reflection (Margolin 2007). Design may be concerned as a universal human activity, but there is little that prepares trained designers to apply their practices to reimagining social futures ethically. The designers applying design practices to produce 'new solutions for the world' (IDEO 2009, p.4) are not always working in close collaboration with the actors within the areas they desire to change (Kimbell 2011, p.286).

Commercial interpretations of design into popularised renditions such as 'design thinking' and 'human-centred design' may be helpful to increase the design literacy of more people, and thus making design a more 'universal' activity. Some of these popularised renditions of design are more suited for use in business settings where power operates differently than in social change settings. A social change process 'is a multidimensional, complex, and delicate space, whose expansive and nuanced nature is no longer adequately covered by "human-centred"' (Janzer & Weinstein 2014, p.230). The issue with applying simplified notions of human-centred design practices to complex social change, is that 'the social' can be an immaterial space consisting of intangibles, such as Foucault's (1980) 'always-already' pervasive power structures. While the traditions of HCD and design thinking do help with democratising design practices, they have often been adopted in diluted ways which has, in some cases, rendered them unfit for the complexity inherent in social change processes. Therein lies the dangers of not integrating design practices within other social science realms: that contextual research is 'deemphasized, devalued, and simplified'; that there is little emphasis on ensuring that solutions are 'appropriate' and 'informed by context' with enough testing iterations prior to their implementation (Janzer & Weinstein 2014, p.231).

Latour argues that designing offers society spaces where ‘materiality and morality [are] finally coalescing’ (2008, p.5). Through being an antidote to ‘breaking with the past’, designing may have the potential to establish a counter-narrative by placing people and communities at the centre and carving out spaces for social dialogue and constructive ideas (Fuad-Luke 2013; Kennedy 2014). I embrace this belief, also illustrated by Manzini, that meaningful design practices should ‘give form to a changing world’, ‘offer opportunities for new types of behaviour’ and ‘render visible the weak signs expressed by society’ (1994, p.40). This conceptualisation does not only imply a rational, reflective, and relational stance on design, but also adds to an important strand of research about the moral and ethical responsibility of design for bettering society (Latour 2008; Margolin & Buchanan 1995).

What can be concluded about designing

All of these seminal thinkers and their theories have had profound implications for how to consider design practices and processes and their place within the social and cultural systems of today. My conceptualisation of designing is hence shaped by Rittel’s (1971, 1988) and Simon’s (1969) emphasis on the special reasoning of designers to be able to devise ‘alternative futures’; by Schön’s (1983) pragmatist perspective about design as an iterative process of ‘reflection-in-action’; and Boland and Collopy’s design attitude as critical to ‘create lasting value’ in organisational and societal contexts (2004, p.xi). I combine this with Bonsiepe’s fight for indigenous practices and fairer value exchanges; and Manzini’s (1994) promise for design practices to enable ‘new types of behaviour’. I am also guided by Buchanan’s (2004b, p.37) humanistic notion of the responsibility of design practices to ‘advance human dignity’ and explore the relationships between human and material systems; as well as by Fry’s (2014, p. 21) notion of designing as an anthro-directive, political and ontological driver that ‘powers the transformation of things, beings, and Being’. The following table summarises the key concepts from the design literature reviewed so far in this chapter:

Table 3.3 Summary of design practices and their characteristics from the literature

DESIGNING AS...	CHARACTERISTICS OF DESIGN PRACTICES
problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● practical, constructive foresight (Gregory 1966; Cross 1982, 2006) ● technical rationality for problem solving and determining alternative futures (Simon 1969) ● novel forms (March 1976 in Cross 2006) ● concern with appropriateness (Papanek 1972) ● third culture of knowing, distinct from the humanities and sciences (Cross 1982)
reflection -in-action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Iterative and argumentative processes (Rittel 1987) ● experimental for problem setting in situations that displayed uncertainty, ambiguity, complexity and conflict (Schön 1983) ● maintaining double vision, parallel lines of thoughts (Schön 1983) ● pivoting based on learnings from failure (Blank 2013)
negotiating participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● navigates problems relationally through correspondence between people (Ingold 2017; Gunn 2019) ● draws on situated and tacit knowledge of users (Press & Cooper 2003, Spinuzzi 2005) ● notion of 'being participated' involves sharing of power and roles by the designer; establishing participation dynamics is emergent and negotiated in-situ (Winschiers-Theophilus et al. 2010) ● requires ambition for equal participation prior, so that a 'third' space can be created for this negotiation to take place (Reitsma et al. 2019).
managing organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● strategic management approach to dealing with complex realities (Liedtka 2004; Dunne & Martin 2006) ● abductive thinking, human centred, visual processes (Boland & Collopy 2004; Buchanan 2000) ● design attitude: ambiguity tolerance, engagement with aesthetics, connecting multiple perspectives, creativity and empathy (Michlewski 2008; Amatullo 2015)

DESIGN ROLES

CHARACTERISTICS OF DESIGN PRACTICE

shaping culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● anthro-directive and contributes to collective processes of worldmaking (Fry 2014)● experience as continuous, needing a pluralism of frames (McKeon 2005)● cultural exploration for complex and interdisciplinary contexts (Buchanan & Margolin 1995; Jégou & Manzini 2008)● fourth order: shaping interaction between human and material systems (Buchanan 2001)
bettering society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● ethical and moral responsibility toward satisfaction of human needs (Margolin & Margolin 2002; Fuad-Luke 2013)● affirmation of human dignity and human rights, support human fulfilment (Buchanan 2004b)● improves social quality, gives form to a changing world and for new types of behaviour (Manzini 1994)● needs to be integrated with social science practices that contextually ground the work (Janzer & Weinstein 2014)

In practical terms, I have consolidated the key theoretical concepts above into the following seven characteristics of contemporary design practices:

4. **Human-centred:** Contextually situated understanding of people's needs and preferences.
5. **Integrative:** Balances multidisciplinary perspectives and connects the dots.
6. **Divergent:** Exploratory and abductive thinking that maintains a pluralism of frames.
7. **Experimental:** Iterative cycles of framing, testing, reflecting and renaming.
8. **Visual:** Engaging with aesthetics through visualising and/or prototyping.
9. **Collaborative:** Negotiated, dialogue-based conversations and/or participatory action.
10. **Disciplined:** Methodical, structured and facilitated processes – yet still flexible.

Some combination of these seven characteristics are what actors are likely to experience when encountering collaborative design practices or 'acts of designing' for D/development purposes. This has been visualised into the below image, which provides a reference point for that I will use in the following chapters.

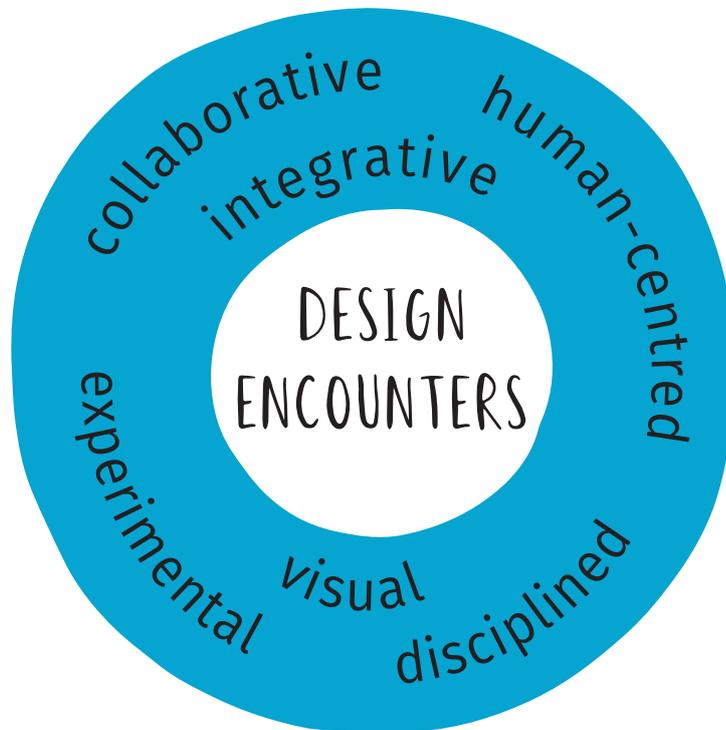


Figure 3.2 Characteristics of contemporary design practice

For me, the act of designing involves a series of practices that recognise the need for integration of rationality and intuition in explaining the world around us; the messiness of pluralist knowledge and expertise; and the prioritisation of people as authorities on their own knowing-doing-being. In conclusion, I view designing as a universal human activity that can make valuable contributions to processes of beneficial social change. As such, I will look inward, to reflect, and consider my position and what it means to be an ethical social broker, facilitator and co-creator. I will also need to acknowledge the difficulty and complexity of any project of change, and as Schwittay and Braund (2017) recommend: *proceed with caution*.

3.4 CRITIQUING DESIGN

Design as 'object' for D/development

The conceptualisations of design practices thus far seem attuned to the goals of people acting within a Development system in transition. So then, what value can design practices offer in this context? There is a growing collection of design case studies to answer this question. However, not too long ago, the contribution of design practices in D/development project settings was determined as either one of two things, (1) the production of products and (2) the consumption of products (Thomas 2006). The scholarly analysis on the contribution of design for D/development has also largely focused on design 'objects'. Whether material or immaterial, objects such as cooking stoves, water pumps, solar lights, compostable utensils, sanitation equipment, financial products and health care services; which is sometimes referred to as humanitarian design (Schwittay 2014; Redfield 2012; Johnson 2011). This analysis has largely followed the market's focus on design objects, and as a result, has understated aspects of design agency and design process as useful contributions in practice. A focus on design objects as the primary contribution for D/development project settings falls short. The social and economic problems of human development cannot be addressed merely through the materiality of design in creating low-cost products or prescribed behaviour change initiatives (Amir 2004). What underlies the problem is a combination of structural and relational conditions that require a different starting point.

Schwittay raises questions relating to the translation of design practices from the language of 'market opportunities' and 'commercial gain' to one for social change (2014, p.33). For example, let's take the issue of people who are unable to pay for basic services such as clean water. Schwittay (2014) and Redfield (2012) refer to the LifeStraw, which is a thin blue plastic tube containing a filter that removes contaminants from polluted water. Although individuals can use the LifeStraw product to turn stagnant pools of water into drinkable water, the consequences touch on a complex and shifting 'ecosystem of ethics and enterprise' (Redfield 2012, p.12). This may be considered as a successful and noble design 'object' in designer circles. However, what is being ignored are the larger political and ethical questions to do with the lack of drinkable water in the first place, or the unintended consequences of product dependency on the lives of its intended end-users in the longer term (Schwittay 2014).

Redfield (2008) discusses the metaphor of 'band-aid' design solutions in Development projects as a 'bandage placed over a poorly cleaned wound risks infection, ultimately concealing a festering sore.' He poses questions regarding whether a band-aid is always the right solution for every problem? Is it enough? Is it deceptive? Does it risk masking a deeper problem while providing false security? Another metaphor he refers to is the phrase 'magic bullet' which appears often in discussions on solutions for development problems (e.g. Cueto 2013). The use of this term indicates a misguided faith in technical solutions to socially complex problems (Redfield 2008). It suggests that such faith in technology often misunderstands the nature of the problem and ignores 'larger truths' when seeking superficial solutions. This hope that 'band-aids' and 'magic bullets' could provide the desired effects have proven to be illusory, inflating expectations beyond what is possible. A holistic systems approach would aim to address the structural drivers of this issue by navigating the complexity of the cultural, political and economic influences. However, as seen in this example, the role of design is more often based on the needs of 'the poor reimagined as clients', which individualises and capitalises on the political and economic problems that could be better addressed through collective action and resource redistribution (Schwittay 2014, p.34).

For design practices to have a genuine chance at enabling meaningful change for people, they would benefit from coming at the outset of imagining rather than as a 'late-stage add-on' (Sato 2009). The starting point with designing should not be a technology, product or service that needs to be refined, but the discovery of a local context and culture with the goal to uncover the latent needs and aspirations of people (Imoberdorf 2012). This analysis makes clear why some applications of design lend themselves to neoliberal critique in practice, given the associations with market-based models of D/development and the growing marketisation of the poor (Schwittay 2011, 2014; Nussbaum 2010). By conceptualising the problems of poverty and D/development as demanding of 'innovative' solutions, designers are dangerously positioning themselves as the 'experts' who are best equipped to deliver them (Schwittay 2014, p.33).

Design as 'agency' for D/development

So-called design experts in D/development projects have been critiqued for the distortion of the agency of endogenous actors by warping participation into a sequence of steps 'applied mechanically to reach pre-set objectives' by (Leal 2007,

Schwittay 2014, p.36). As such, it risks designers ignoring the political aspects of their roles while still designating their 'clients as subjects spoken for by experts' as they continue to interpret information gathered from shallow participatory design activities (Schwittay 2014, p.37). Johnson (2011) critiques designers' application of Northern/Western expertise and technology to solve problems as privileging outsiders, often with commercial solutions, over political action or indigenous practice. He claims that problem-solving which can (and should) be a deeply social and public process is lifted out of the realm of political struggle and State planning and restricted to the drafting table, conference room, and design charrette. Although Pilloton (2009) and others who claim that all problems are design problems are essentially correct, their technocratic manifestoes imply that these are problems to be solved by professional designers, and not by unions, social movements, neighbourhood assemblies, worker cooperatives, and political organisations through the process of public debate and collective action (Johnson 2011; Nussbaum 2010). So, if outsiders and experts now calling themselves designers are controlling the act of reimagining, then the issues with agency in Development project settings remain.

In failing to address the dynamics of structural drivers of poverty, 'do-good design' construes the global poor as objects of 'elite benevolence and non-profit largesse', rather than as political actors who possess their own unique worldviews, interests, and ideas of progress (Johnson 2011). Johnson continues to suggest that designers at this intersection have chosen to pursue technocratic remedies and behavioural modification as central strategies rather than emphasising structural change and political, citizen-centred solutions (2011, p.452). Donaldson (2008) has also critiqued the notion of 'parachute design' where Northern/Western designers come to bring their expertise to solve endogenous problems in her writings on 'Why to be wary of "Design for Developing Countries."' With these perspectives considered, some applications of design show continuities with the existing Development system in that the import of Northern/Western expertise and technology is still presumed to hold the key. However, other applications of design are showing ruptures through fresh conceptualisations of the problem of Development, being 'flaws in the overall design of the system' (Brown & Wyatt 2010, p.31). This corroborates with earlier claims that the original vision for the Development system is in need of redesigning.

In this regard, we can go back to Buchanan's suggestion of design's function as bringing 'things' into being that 'express and, necessarily reconcile human values concerning what is good, useful, just, and pleasurable' (1998, p.11). But whose human values exactly? Here, we are presented with a politically-charged challenge for imagining Development transitions. Who is determining what is to be asked, to be learned, to be designed, by what means, and why (Fry 2017, p.29)? From whose perspective do new design visions or imaginaries start? Rittel is an advocate of designing together because people have to dialogue, agree on how to frame the problem, and agree on goals and actions. This argumentative process is inherently political, in fact, designing is political – a view supported by Fry (2009, 2017) and Bonsiepe (2006), who both also define political in the sense of a societal way of living rather than narrow party politics. Fry makes the point that for there to be an advancement in thinking about design as politics in this context, what is first required is an 'acute awareness' of Eurocentrism as a:

'directive mode of consciousness that determines a worldview and a myriad of practices informing not just how the world is seen, but, more particularly, the nature of the actions that prefigure visions and forms to be realized by and as design' (Fry 2017, p.25).

Fry states that without comprehending the gravity of this, an 'intellectual armory' is missing to be able to understand the actual issues needing to be addressed when applying design practices in D/development settings (2017, p.25). Escobar's (2017) response agrees with Fry, that design practices need to be liberated from the 'Eurocentric project of the epistemological colonisation of the minds and cultural practices of the South'. This is where the notion of ontological design is most relevant as a process of changing relations between the world, things (material and immaterial), and human beings (Fry 2017).

Design as 'process' for D/development

Miller and Rudnick from the UNIDR examined design applications in their work on international public policy from 2008 to 2014. They looked at how *design junctures* are poorly recognised and leveraged as moments of opportunity for change in D/development processes. Their reference to the term *design juncture* is the procedural moment where a problem has been identified and decision-makers can either choose to: (A) Reach for a known solution, such as standard operating procedures, best practices and other known practices; or (B) Enter into a divergent

and creative design phase that allocates appropriate resources for addressing the problem premised on the notion that they don't know yet how to best navigate it. One of the key reasons they denote for why Development practitioners tend to choose A over B is the absence of 'design space' in institutional processes. This aligns with what has been established in this literature review through the work of Easterly, Ramalingam, Boland and Liedtka, all of whom have made it clear that designing is not the same as planning within bureaucratic settings.

Miller and Rudnick (2011) believe in both the conceptual and procedural value of design space at the nexus between defining problems and taking action. They then went on to contextualise this institutionally, and strongly advocate for design as 'a tool' for change in the Development system. Their 9-step process for working through a design problem setting activity with a facilitation toolkit suggests they may have succumbed to their peers' demands for a 'how-to' guide. Despite their conviction, their reduction of design to a 'tool' and referring to it as a 'phase' followed in project cycles with planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – disregarding the design practices that offer a mode of inquiry throughout a project cycle – does suggest that they may have missed the mark on its real potential value: creating the space to imagine worlds of possibility, worlds of transitions, worlds of alternatives, and bringing them into being. They are not alone; there has been an influx of how-to guides and toolkits produced by practitioners to codify the designer's ways of knowing into a replicable and scalable process. In general, the contribution of design being limited to mainly small-scale, technical solutions as a result of the dilution and reduction of its practices, prevents more transformative possibilities to materialise (Schwittay 2019).

Based on the above critiques, the application of design as a 9-step process or 'tool' seems like an inadequate means for transitions or systemic change. Despite the critiques, there remains optimism regarding the potential for design to contribute to more fundamentally structural changes (Schwittay 2019). For me, the real opportunity is to move from analysing cases of product outputs, technocratic manifestos, and step-by-step processes and to analyse how design practices could be constructively contributing to the structural issues of accountability, power, knowledge, impact, and ownership identified in the last chapter.

Design as 'situated interaction' for development

Various critiques have prompted the reconsideration of how design activities interact with the social situation in a project setting. Harrison, Tatar and Sengers (2007) used the term “situated paradigm” to refer to the social interaction factors that affect design and use. Situated paradigms – which include value-sensitive, critical, and participatory design treat all kinds of interactions as opportunities for meaning-making where activities, artifacts, and the surrounding context are ‘mutually defining’ (Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell & Blake 2012). Situated paradigms encourage multiple interpretations of ‘cultural logics’ instead of single, objective descriptions. However, identifying and applying methods that support local interpretations of the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts that shape human behaviour often poses challenges. Winschiers’ work in Namibia has demonstrated that participatory design methods common in Western communication structures did not translate. More appropriate methods involved integrating with the implicit and explicit rules that govern local practices of participation, however, designers from outside are not often aware or supportive of such rules (Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell & Blake 2012). In order for exogenous designers to develop new meanings about participation together with their co-designers, they must enter a lengthy process of social grounding. Not doing so risks substantial design failures due to the disregard of the complexity and importance of these encounters.

There is growing interest in how information communications technologies for development (ICT4D) might be appropriately designed for conditions in low-resource settings. A subfield within the ICT4D literature is human-computer interaction for development (HCI4D), which is concerned with addressing the needs and aspirations of people, as well as their specific social, cultural, political and/or infrastructural challenges through technology (Ho, Smyth, Kam, and Dearden 2009). There is a growing body of literature within HCI4D that positions design decisions as taking place in situated paradigms and on endogenous people’s terms. The critical review of the HCI4D field conducted by Ho et al. (2009) identified the challenges as: the need to problematize the field, reframing of knowledge, enabling affordable computing systems, focusing on semi-literate and illiterate users, and capacity strengthening.

Much research in HCI4D has been concerned with the issues that arise in transferring, translating and appropriating technology and methods. Irani,

Vertesi, Dourish, Philip and Frinter (2010, p.1312) discuss post-colonial computing and present a shift in perspective motivated by the challenges of transferring technological knowledge. The technologies that HCI4D investigates, designs and redesigns are artefacts laden with cultural encounters. There are uneven symmetries with this, specifically, the technologies designed in colonising countries often marginalise or subjugate the pedagogies, languages and literacies of colonised countries (Merritt & Bardzell 2011; Bidwell 2016). A re-negotiating of disciplinary boundaries and relationships is prompted to avoid the post-colonial issues arising from the disconnect between endogenous cultures and the priorities and values embedded within HCI approaches. Reconfiguring the subject and object of the design interaction has consequences on the ontological and epistemological assumptions related to usefulness, usability and user experience (Abdelnour-Nocera & Densmore 2017). As an example, a community that places value on respecting the views of their elders may not share the democratic value of equal participation. To address an issue like this requires new conceptualisations of the relationships between participants, designers and other stakeholders.

The criticality of citizen/end-user involvement in design practices and processes has been widely acknowledged for the purpose of designing more usable and appropriate systems. Value-based approaches have heightened awareness of the need to explicitly redefine who is making the design decisions and to explicate what design processes say about people – yet design discourse has only unpacked participation meanings and consequences in limited ways. Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwill and Blake (2012, p.89) suggest there could be more emphasis and discussion of the assumptions inherent in concepts related to being human, whether as an individual or a community member, or articulating how participation and design activities together define the identity of the citizen/end-user as the ‘designer from within’ and the ‘researcher/technologist’ as the ‘designer from outside’ not originating from the community in which the designing takes place.

Many attempts have been made to adapt participatory design methods to specific regions by localising usability measures or incorporating cultural models of people’s interpersonal interactions and communication habits into analytic tools. Yet many computing technologies aim to standardise practices across different cultures, promoting particular ways of interacting at the expense of erasing other ways. This engenders a challenging task for designers at this intersection –

namely, how can designers preserve local cultures in the technologies or objects or experiences being created? And how should predominantly Western/Northern design traditions, practices and processes be adapted when designing with people from other cultures? Designers should recognise that values are inherently built into systems, and adopting a 'situated paradigm' can support design practices that embrace existing values instead of countering them (Sambasivan, Ho, Kam, Kodagoda, Dray, Thomas, Light & Toyama 2009).

Design as 'value' for D/development

The attempt to demonstrate the added value design practices may bring to society is an important yet understudied pursuit (Amatullo 2013, 2015). Based on the above conceptualisations and critiques, the expanding role of design practices within D/development project settings raises specific questions for the potential added value that design can contribute at this intersection. I agree with Bonsiepe, that 'Design is not added value, design IS value' (2011, p.4). If design now functions as negotiator, facilitator, navigator, mediator and coordinator (Inns 2010, pp.24–26), then what kind of value is design? What kind of value is it from the standpoints of D/development actors? Since the purpose of this thesis is to explore answers to this question, I need to first clarify what I mean by the term 'value' in this context? I will briefly look to value theory to do this: 'Existence is perceived; truth is thought; value is felt' (Urban 2014, p. 21). Wilbur Marshall Urban's use of the term 'felt' as it relates to thought and perception suggests that although these three modes of human experience (feeling, thinking, and perception) can be separated conceptually, they cannot be separated in actual experience (Urban 2014). Further, Alain Locke's work describes why value is an emotionally laden form of experience. He defines value as: 'a personal attitude, of welcome or the reverse, towards an object of interest' (Locke 1989, p. 34). He believes value differs from consciousness of fact – since it is something added to a factual object by the emotions of the person doing the valuing. As such, there seems an intuitive relationship between value and perception. In summary, if design is value, and value is felt, then the value of design for D/development must be 'felt' and understood through a plurality of actor experiences.

Exploring the value of design for D/development actors is complicated by the pluralism of design practices and the many diverse stakeholders that can influence processes of social change (Bund, Hubrich, Schmitz et al. 2013). I do not wish to position design as some magic bullet, but I do have conviction in

the potential of its practices to be valuable in times of transition, in times of imagining new futures, and in times that call for pluralistic pursuits of a 'good life'. So this begs the question, exactly how might it be valuable, and for whom? As designers are beginning to create ruptures within the existing Development system, the strategic value of design practices continue to be debated. Here, the blended traditions and hybrid forms of design practices open up relational (Cipolla & Manzini 2009) and deliberative situations (Buchanan 1995) where design activity is typically conducted amidst cross-sectorial agendas and where the role of designers is often repositioned as mediators or re-framers (Boyer, Cook & Steinberg 2013). Designers could be reframing problems, changing the way social needs are conceptualised, facilitating new methods and spaces for imagination and creating socially-oriented solutions (Murray, Caulier-Grice & Mulgan 2010). The contribution of design practices could be to establish a counter-narrative by placing communities and people at the centre of the activities; or crafting creative and safe spaces for social dialogue and change from the bottom-up (Kennedy 2014). It could be through novel ways of looking, listening, sharing and learning (Schwittay 2014); or mediating, facilitating, and supporting the other actors in the system during times of transition. All these ideas suggest much richer design value propositions than the examples noted earlier that interpreted the contribution of design practices as useful for the production and consumption of products and services.

Critics often ignore the lasting role of design value in beneficial processes of social change. In business settings on the other hand, design has proved to create value through improvements in hard, measurable outcomes, such as revenue and profitability. For example, the value of design for business was understood through studies that demonstrated how design-led companies like Apple, Coca Cola, and Nike, etc. outperformed the S&P 500 over a 10 year period by 219% (DMI Design Value Index Study 2013; Rae 2016). The design historian Heskett (2008) discusses how communicating the whole value of design processes to any organisation is an ongoing challenge. He examines the influence of major economic theories in shaping the views of what constitutes value. For example, in the 'free-market' neoliberal system, the focus is on market forces as the answer to solve all problems. However, the dominance of this system and its emphasis on unrestricted individualism poses a crisis for designers (Heskett 2008). Although he believes other economic systems would enable designers to communicate the value of their work in various and more holistic ways, his analysis specifically

addresses what the economic contribution of design can be in terms that business can appreciate. Despite this kind of evidence and analysis of design's economic value, many D/development actors remain sceptical of the potential for design to provide value in their work, where problems are much more complex, and where profitability is not the primary measure of success. The value of design, conventionally defined in such commercial terms, needs to be reconceptualised for D/development actors. Current measures of success in Development range from tangible factors like 'number of people reached' to more intangible factors like 'perceptions and behaviours changed' and 'degree of participation', for example. Since there is a lack of articulation about the value of design practices in social change processes that may lend themselves to less economically-oriented indicators, serious questions are raised about the measures for conceptualising the Return-on-Design (RoD) in complex D/development settings.

Design processes mediate the flows of natural, financial, social, symbolic and cultural value (Fuad-Luke 2013). If so, then what exactly is the social, symbolic and cultural value that design is mediating for D/development actors? There is little evidence that the value of design is understood in this way. There is a widespread sentiment from practitioners of design that they are working in, and responding to, a context where evidence is still developing, information is incomplete and debate about impact is constant in the face of the near-absence of systematic evaluation and measurement (Mulgan 2011; Amatullo 2015). There are growing calls for further documentation of how design is creating value, what value is being created, and what are the enabling conditions for this value to be realised for D/development actors? To answer these questions, design for social change first needs to break out beyond the value frameworks of design for business.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND LITERATURE CONCLUSION

Design practitioners are still struggling with its contribution to society, more than five decades after questions began to be raised about the human and social role of design. There remains a lack of articulation about the value of design in contributing to processes of social change, particularly projects within the constructs of the Development system. The literature so far on the value of design mainly refers to market share or profit increases for private sector organisations and falls short for D/development actors who deal with highly complex subject matter. In targeting gaps in the current literature, the focus of this thesis is not based on the traditional understanding of design as an enabler of commercial goals such as the production and consumption of goods. The focus of this thesis is based on how design practices are perceived as valuable by actors in the Development system. Since design is viewed as ‘a social process’ of ‘cultural exploration’, then what kind of value is created from such design encounters? Despite a growing body of research about the fundamental abilities, methods and practices of designers working in this emergent space, there is less known about the characteristic value of design for people involved in projects of D/development.

With this growing recognition of the potential for design practices to contribute to D/development discourse and practice, a new set of questions is emerging around how to explain and codify the value of design. The pursuit to understand how design may support social change actors is fraught with difficulty since the field is more complex than traditional business and government organisations, mainly because it happens at the intersection of multiple cultural and disciplinary boundaries. While design ‘objects’ produced so far within Development project frames lend themselves to neoliberal critique, given the associations with capitalist-based models and ‘marketisation’ of the poor, there still remains the question of the non-economic value design practices may be creating as a mode of cultural inquiry for social transformation in times of transition. It is clear, there are growing calls for further discourse on how design practices are creating value (beyond the production and consumption of goods), what kinds of value are being created, and what are the enabling conditions for such value to be realised in the context of the current Development system. These are the questions that have guided my research.

Chapter 4

Research methodology



“ ... inquiry is always selective. We look **here** rather than **there**; we have the predator’s fovea (versus the indiscriminate watchfulness of prey), and the decision to focus on **this** is therefore invariably a choice to ignore **that**. Ignorance is a product of inattention, and since we cannot study all things, some by necessity-almost all, in fact-must be left out... A key question, then, is: how should we regard the “missing matter,” knowledge not yet known? Is science more like the progressive illumination of a well-defined box, or does darkness grow as fast as the light?

(Proctor & Schiebinger 2008, p. 7)

4.1 CHAPTER OBJECTIVE

This chapter outlines the research methodology and rationale employed to understand the experience with design from different actor standpoints in the Development system. This chapter begins with an explanation of the research paradigm and positioning before moving to a detailed overview of the research design. This incorporates the choice of methods, participant selection, data collection techniques, and analysis procedures used to explore the line of inquiry.. In conclusion, the limitations of the research design are discussed, and a summary of the chapter is provided.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Setting the scene: A design anthropology

In this thesis, I engage with the idea of an imaginative and design-oriented anthropology. I would like to propose that engaging at the practical and theoretical intersection of design and D/development relies on a grounding in, and inspiration from the emerging field of 'design anthropology' (Halse 2008; Ingold 2008; Clarke 2010; Gunn, Otto & Smith 2013; Smith, Vangkilde, Kjærsgaard et al. 2016). Interdisciplinary working with design has offered anthropology a route to engage with hopeful futures:

 *Let us allow then that designing is about imagining the future. But far from seeking finality and closure, it is an imagining that is open-ended. It is about hopes and dreams rather than plans and predictions. Designers, in short, are dream-catchers. Travelling light, unencumbered by materials, their lines give chase to the visions of a fugitive imagination and rein them in before they can get away, setting them down as signposts in the field of practice that makers and builders can track at their own, more laboured and ponderous pace (Ingold 2012, p. 29).*

Design's orientation towards the future offers anthropology a generative way of imagining for social change (Light 2015). Grounding my work in design anthropology has enabled a mode of discovery that shifts ethnography into the realm of what is 'applied' through close immersion with others whose perspectives and intellectual ambitions are similar to my own (Holmes & Marcus 2008; Deeb & Marcus 2011). In order to understand the emerging knowledge practices at the intersection of

design and D/development, I chose to actively participate in social practices with others while they were enacting new ways of thinking in real world settings. At the same time, I accompanied this ethnographic fieldwork with hermeneutic circles to support the imaginative potential that sits within the experiences of others in relation to design and its value to them. As a result, I approached my fieldwork as 'a practice of observation grounded in participatory dialogue' (Ingold 2008, p.87). My practice has been inspired by Ingold's work, particularly in reference to inter-relational knowledge practices. He describes practice as embedded in the current social reality

“ ... because people, in the performance of their tasks, also attend to one another... by watching, listening, perhaps even touching, we continually feel each other's presence in the social environment, at every moment adjusting our movements in response to this ongoing perceptual monitoring... For the orchestral musician, playing an instrument, watching the conductor and listening to one's fellow players are all inseparable aspects of the same process of action: for this reason, the gestures of the performers may be said to resonate with each other... or what Schutz (1951: 78) called a "mutual tuning-in relationship" – is an absolute precondition for successful performance (Ingold 2000, p.195).

Simply put, since people in their various environments continually influence one another, then conducting research should consider such place-based, relational and assembling processes and how knowing through these processes arises (Ingold 2011). Ingold (2000) draws upon Deleuze and Heidegger to further describe how people and place are relationally entangled in emergent assemblages of real-time unfolding interactions, activities and processes. He also suggests that agency is not located 'in' a person or other entity, but afforded through the connections between the assembled things. From this perspective, knowing and becoming, epistemology and ontology, are intertwined. I draw on this as my research process was less about describing social reality from an empirically obvious standpoint and more an 'act of correspondence' where my observations corresponded with a complex field of people, cultures, histories, projects and organisations.

According to Ingold (2008), taking this approach also benefits from collective processes of discovery that allow researchers to make sense of social practices

with collaborative co-creators of knowledge practices themselves. In different ways and settings, I preferred to engage with fellow participants as reflexive co-creators of knowledge practices, which helped evolve my own conceptual and analytical understanding of the phenomena. This preference transformed participants into intellectual collaborators in an epistemic partnership that was unlike a traditional research-informant relationship. Such intellectual partnership has strengthened the originality of my ethnographic fieldwork (Rabinow & Marcus 2008), as well as strengthened the practical relevance and legitimacy of this work as viewed from the situated perspectives of practitioners responsible for shaping future initiatives at the intersection of design and D/development.

My ethnographic field consisted of many types of sites with different combinations of social roles and institutional processes that, combined together, created an interrelated social reality that I was able to participate in and study. Establishing a broad sense of field sites and epistemic partnerships enhanced my ability to directly access the practices and imaginations of people encountering and shaping the value of design for D/development. Given that inter-relational ways of knowing can be treated as inferior in some academic contexts, I attempted to remain sensitive to the differences between hegemonic theories of knowledge and indigenous epistemologies, as well as between the representational and relational ways of knowing, while still complying with the necessary academic conventions for this thesis. As a consequence, I argue that the legitimacy of this research is dependent on having taken an applied approach grounded in 'design anthropology' in order to provide the necessary access, perspective and justification needed. Anthropology and ethnography are certainly different endeavours in this regard, since a 'faithful correspondence or fidelity between representation and actuality is not only impossible but also unwanted' (Willerslev 2011, p. 510). The anthropological mandate here then, is less about accurately representing the ethnographic reality of actors operating at this intersection, and more about 'overcoming it' by developing scholarly imaginative description where ethnographic description leaves off (Willerslev 2011, p.509). Based on this, I have attempted to understand the relationship between what is actual and what is imagined throughout my interactions in this research.

When anthropologists join already active communities of knowledge, people, rather than being subjects of the anthropological pursuit of creating knowledge about the social world, become partners in the anthropological endeavour to understand particular perceptions of the world. In Ingold's words:

“ What truly distinguishes anthropology ... is that it is not a study of at all, but a study with. Anthropologists work and study with people. Immersed with them in an environment of joint activity, they learn to see things (or hear them, or touch them) in the ways their teachers and companions do (2008, p.82).

As such, I have actively participated in joint immersive and imaginative practices in order to make sense with people, not necessarily of people. This thesis is a product of my participation in the persuasive fictions of other people (Strathern 1987), my own speculative imagination (Dunne & Raby 2013) and fuelled by the overcoming of ethnographic reality (Willerslev 2011). This is all in order to co-create a hopeful promise about the value of design for D/development that challenges a current reality filled with technocratic rules and historically ingrained power injustices.

Situating my applied position: A social designer

My design training began in 2003 at University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). As a practitioner, I worked in business consulting before joining the design firm *ThinkPlace* from 2012-2018. I was based in Ghana then Kenya while I held the position of *Programs Director, Africa* during the initial period of this research (2013-2016). I have since moved to London and co-founded the *Sonder Collective*, a networked co-operative of independent designers, anthropologists and system thinkers who work on social change initiatives. In the past seven years I have led 15 projects that sit at the intersection of design and Development. I chose two projects to investigate and document thoroughly as case studies for this thesis.

Alongside actively participating in each of the projects as a designer practitioner for clients, I simultaneously conducted parallel scholarly research processes for the purpose of this thesis. In holding the dual roles of scholarly researcher and design practitioner, I trusted in the action research principle that the social world around me is constantly changing, and that I, as well as the actors and phenomena I am investigating, are all part of that constant change (Chandler & Torbert 2003). I believe it is through practice that genuine understanding is achievable since ‘theory without practice is not theory but speculation’ (Bradbury-Huang 2010, p.93). Through the making of this thesis, my dual roles reiterated for me how deep understanding cannot be divorced from action, since they are

intrinsically joined together in real world settings (Reason & Torbert 2001). This position supports why I remained working as a designer throughout the entire period that I was also a part-time doctoral student (2013-2019).

My roles during the fieldwork can be characterised on a continuum between a participant observer role at one end, and a design practitioner role at the other end. My scholarly research journey has been interrupted by periods of practice, as much as my practice has been interrupted by my scholarly research journey. Over time I learned how to become more of a hybrid, holding both roles simultaneously and harmoniously. My practice-based experience has allowed me to experience the real-world possibilities and ethical dilemmas first-hand, as well as qualify the ideas coming out of my research in various practical settings. Some of the dilemmas experienced were external factors relating to the social and institutional settings. However, some of the dilemmas I experienced surfaced as a result of my own positionality and politics in relation to the phenomena being studied. I was confronted with a distinct disconnect between the idea of 'Design as Politics' (Fry 2010) and what was happening in practice. Design by its very nature is political since each time a design decision is made, 'we are making a statement about the direction the world will move in' (Marzano cited in Cooper & Press 1995, p.1). So, if the act of designing is a political one, then the politics of a design process, design outcome, and design agency, ought to matter. Despite this sentiment, I have observed time after time how the politics weaved into design practices and decisions seemed to be ignored or considered unimportant in the projects I was involved with. After speaking to other design practitioners, many have agreed that there is too little space for the consideration of design as politics at this intersection, despite that we are asked to intervene in issues that are political in nature.

Additionally, my desire to be disruptive could be compromised if my role complies with the existing Development system and project structures. In doing so I risk becoming complicit in perpetuating the inherently distorted power imbalances that occur within the system. In my role as a designer I want to be influenced and enact my politics but concurrently I fear the contradictions. Within this context I need to be weary of not assuming the role of 'agent' of change but rather see my role as one to affirm, defend and elevate that agency of other actors, particularly endogenous people of a place. If the agency for change truly sits with others, then my role in this picture cannot be one of hero(ine) or agent of change. Personally, this issue has demanded a gruellingly reflective questioning of my own power,

privilege and ego in many project situations. I have been concerned about how these personal characteristics as a designer may interfere with my personal ability – and design’s broader potential – to uphold the dignity and catalyse the agency of the people I claim to design with. As both a scholar and designer working in Development at a time of transition, I have been forced to turn inward and reflect on how to integrate my personal transition in this picture. In doing so I can be honest about the value and tensions I have created for people I interacted with along the way. The following section will address the result of this reflection and the position I now occupy.

Situating my researcher position: A Feminist Decolonial Social Constructionist

In recent times, there has been growing discussion in the social sciences regarding methodological choices (Creswell 2009; Datta 1994; Gage 1989), as scholars continue to argue about the ‘superiority of one or other of the two major social science paradigms’ (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, p.3). Some argue for a continued ‘superiority’ of quantitative and positivist approaches over qualitative and interpretivist approaches (Ryan, Scapens & Theobald 2002). A positivist approach may be the most appropriate starting point for other researchers; however, it does not work for the nature of this research. The particular point of disconnect is that it does not consider how the ideological beliefs of the researcher in relation to the research question can directly influence methodological choices. My inclination towards inter-relational knowledge practices has led me to try and understand different actors’ positions and relationships at an intrinsically subjective level through the use of standpoint theory, which will be discussed further in the next section.

The methodological choices I made were strongly influenced by my beliefs and deductions regarding what is ‘real’ (ontology), and how I make sense of knowledge and ‘truth’ (epistemology), which then influence my process of research execution (methodology). Morgan and Smircich (1980) refer to the ontological positions of researchers as sitting along a continuum. On one side, there is ‘realism’ – where reality is objective and independent of individual interpretation. On the other side, there is ‘idealism’ – where reality is considered more subjective and socially constructed.

This continuum is depicted in Figure 4.1 below:



Figure 4.1 Range of ontological starting points (Adapted from Morgan & Smircich 1980)

Consequently, my methodological choices were not made while shielded from any influencing ontological and epistemological factors. I wish to acknowledge my preference to see issues surrounding me as subjective or having ‘multiple’ explanations (Creswell 2007, p.17). Therefore, the way I make sense of reality leans toward social construction and viewing reality as a projection of human imagination. The social constructionist perspective assumes reality is value-laden and constructed based on beliefs, maps, and premises about the world (Bateson 1972). Such a process of constructing reality leads to the existence of multiple ways of understanding a shared experience (Tévoédjre 1979). Acknowledging this as my research position, the approach chosen is anchored in my impression of the research questions as subjective. As a result, I sought to observe and formulate explanations from multiple actor standpoints, grounded in ‘real world’ phenomena (Guba & Lincoln 1994). This has allowed for depth of understanding, while honouring the plurality and diversity of perspectives involved.

Epistemologically, I consider that throughout the research I have also taken the position of what others have termed, ‘feminist decolonial’ (Dengler & Seebacher 2019, p.246). A feminist decolonial approach is sensitive to place-based histories and social power differences, as it also comprehends knowledge about social reality as intrinsically value-laden and shaped by socio-cultural presuppositions (Dengler & Seebacher 2019). For me, decoloniality is defined by the Argentinean feminist scholar Maria Lugones (2010, p.747) as the potential to go beyond post-colonial analysis of structural injustices and to foster decoloniality in theory and practice. A feminist decolonial approach ought to challenge institutionalised epistemic frontiers (Dengler & Seebacher 2019). It is also about asserting what Catherine Walsh (2012, p.17) calls ‘epistemic interculturality’ which demands a better ‘articulation of knowledges that takes the intercultural co-construction

of diverse epistemologies' into account and links to ongoing discussions on 'the pluriverse' by Escobar and others.

To allow for epistemic interculturality, Dengler and Seebacher (2019) encourage the use of methodologies that disrupt the fact/value, theory/practice and science/activism dichotomies. An intersectional power-sensitive perspective is required to not pre-impose assumptions and solutions on different contexts, but rather to include the communities concerned in participatory ways as equals (Seebacher 2016, p.29). In line with this, a feminist decolonial position means I consider non-academic platforms of collective knowledge exchange and, more generally, support the de-professionalisation and re-politicisation of issues that affect the people and the work. For example, when working in countries with different cultures and histories unfamiliar to me, it became important to build trusting relationships and exchange knowledge with local colleagues. I have done this in a way where I put aside what I know, and make space to become their student to learn their worldviews. I use this as my starting position when designing with others. By embracing non-academic platforms and first-hand experiences of the application of design for D/development, then the gap between academia and activism can begin to be bridged (Acosta 2013; Escobar 2015; Walsh 2012). This position, supported by the notion of inter-relational knowledge, form the basis for choosing standpoint theory to guide the development of this thesis.

Situating standpoint theory

There are various standpoint epistemologies, however, it was Harstock's (1983), Haraway's (1988), and Harding's (1986) development of feminist standpoint theory that provided a strong foundation for other standpoint theory developments in the past thirty years. Some of these include critical disability theory (Devlin & Pothier 2005), queer theory (Sullivan 2003) and black feminist standpoint theory (Collins 1986). Harstock demonstrated the differences and contradictions between male-female role development, construction of self, and societal expectations. By drawing on the male-constructed views that had been integrated in society, she highlighted how this produced partial social understandings regarding the knowledge and experiences of non-male individuals. At the time, feminist standpoint theory provided a paradigm shift that depicted the social and power-related construction of knowledge based on gender.

According to Moore (1994), feminist standpoint theory invites researchers to take women's experiences as the starting point of analysis, whereas the use of actor

'standpoint theory' more generally assumes that even different groups of women will differ in their standpoints. The advantage of this is standpoint theory can better support the analysis of groups over individuals. Meaning that people have different cultural experiences and understandings, and that gender is not the only specific differentiator. Standpoint theory has been termed a heuristic device that broadens horizons to view 'issues from a multiplicity of perspectives, including the perspectives of those who are the least advantaged' (Adler & Jermier 2005, p.941). A standpoint therein encompasses viewpoints in relation to a particular issue and is assumed to be influenced by an actor's experiences and social position, which shape how they construct the world around them. It also implies that knowledge is always situated, since people's materially-grounded and socio-culturally influenced standpoint shapes what a group can know about their world (epistemology). Alongside this thinking, a decolonial reading of standpoint theory proposes a highly sensitive consideration of historical and colonial contexts that formed different hierarchically structured living realities (Anderson 2002, p.11).

From a research perspective, standpoint theory challenges the idea of neutrality, instead claiming that it is not possible for scholars to speak authoritatively and without bias (Adler & Jermier 2005). According to Harding (1991, p.124), people in less powerful social positions could have unique perspectives 'that are less partial and less distorted' compared to people in more powerful and privileged social positions. While 'all standpoints have limitations', and 'all knowledge is partial' (Adler & Jermier 2005, p.943), examining the views of actors in relation to their power differential and social position could produce valuable knowledge. The way I have conducted my research is inherently framed by my own standpoint of being female, born in Egypt, raised in Australia, university educated, and having travelled to over 40 countries. In trying to understand and navigate this research, I have realised that I can only acknowledge and reflect on my own situatedness. I can do this by ensuring significant space in the work for including heterogeneous perspectives from other lived realities. The aim for me was critical as I try to work toward a more decolonial understanding from within a distorted and changing system.

I wanted to avoid the use of dichotomies as depictions of reality, since social worlds are not structured in the form of unambiguous bipolar opposites and linearities (DuBois 1983, p.110). From a feminist decolonial position, I understand that I should be de-ontologising predominant dichotomies, such as men/women, culture/nature, Global North/Global South, fact/value and science/activism.

I acknowledge the conceptual limits of 'Global South' and 'Global North', the distinction falls short in capturing heterogeneity within countries and regions and reproduces otherness, subjectivities and hierarchies (Escobar 2012 [1995], p.9). To understand and analyse structures of injustices, I have not found an alternative way to address asymmetric power structures arising from the uneven integration of societies into the global capitalist world system. As Dengler and Seebacher (2019) have done before me, I have chosen the concepts of 'Global North' ('Western' is used as congruent adjective) and 'Global South', despite my feminist decolonial reluctance to reproduce dichotomies. Rather than exact depictions of reality, I ask readers to see my conceptualisation of these terms as analytical categories and references to places of marginalisation and privilege not strictly tied to geography.

For my research, I have used the theoretical lens of standpoint theory within a case study framework. I examine the standpoints of different actors encountering design to develop a rich understanding of how design creates value for Development in transition. Standpoint theory has helped guide me and keep my analysis accountable to the idea that different social groups have different epistemological standpoints. To create a more robust and plural account of a phenomenon, I have combined knowledge from these different epistemological standpoints (Tévoédjre 1979). To stay true to divergent standpoints and multiple views/experiences of reality on the same project setting, I also used a case study framework to draw out differences between these standpoints while focusing on socially constructed realities. With this combination, I provide a deeper and richer understanding of the role of design in creating value for different actors in social change processes. The next section offers an outline of the research questions and considerations, as well as detailing the research methods.

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

Research questions and considerations

Based on the rationale in the previous sections, I opted to 'lessen the distance' between myself and the focus of research (Creswell 2007, p. 16) and chose methods that incorporate qualitative notions from phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and case studies. Upon reflecting on the research objectives and paradigm already discussed, my selection of research methods was based on the following questions and considerations:

Table 4.1 Research methods considerations

OBJECTIVES	QUESTIONS	METHODS CONSIDERATIONS
To explore different actor perceptions of design's role when utilised in 'real world' Development projects.	How do different actors perceive the role of design in Development projects?	This called for ethnographic participant observation, along with semi-structured interviews to inquire about actor perceptions. The data analysis called for grounded theory and actor standpoint theory, anchored in project-based case studies.
To characterise from 'real world' experiences, what different actors find valuable about design when utilised in 'real world' Development projects.	What do different actors find valuable about design for Development?	This included ethnographic participant observation, along with semi-structured interviews. A dual role as practitioner and researcher ensured a degree of integrity in the way design was applied, as well as proximity/intimacy for witnessing first-hand how it was experienced by others. This combination made it easier to triangulate data during analysis between themes from the case studies and themes from other interviews.
To elucidate from 'real world' experiences, what actors find challenging or limiting when design is utilised in 'real world' Development projects.	What tensions and challenges emerge when design is utilised?	Ethnographic participant observation, along with semi-structured interviews were used in this section. This combination made it easier to triangulate data during analysis between themes from the case studies and themes from other interviews.

Based on these considerations, ethnographic participant observation in combination with semi-structured interviews were the main data collection methods. For the data analysis methods, a combination of standpoint theory, grounded theory, and case study analysis were used in the thesis development. The case for combining the above methods is linked to my desire to understand different actors at an intrinsically subjective level. Hence, I did not want to eliminate subjectivity, but navigate it (Peshkin 1991). This demanded that I put sufficient provisions in place, so that the research process could change my preconceptions and challenge my biases instead of reinforcing them (Fine 2008). These provisions are elaborated in section 4.5 which outlines the limitations and associated mitigations for this research.

Qualitative research methods

In answering the line of inquiry, there were four main qualitative methods used to conduct the data gathering, data analysis and thesis development. Below, some brief information is provided on each of these key methods.

Ethnographic Participant Observation

Clinical observations are generally objective and realistic, usually employed to determine frequency or quantity of activities. On the other hand, ethnographic participant observations are more subjective, occur in real-world settings and are usually illustrative of the qualitative aspects of activities (Pace & Faules 1994). For this thesis, I conducted this ethnographic study while living first in Accra, Ghana, then in Nairobi, Kenya while embedded in organisational project teams. Since I was an active participant, observations were not limited to specific hours during the ethnographic study, but rather involved me being vigilant and attentive to detail, particularly relating to non-verbal behaviour of other actors in day-to-day activities (Ticehurst & Veal 2000; Baily 1978).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Operating from within a social constructionist paradigm and looking to understand the experiences of actors pointed to semi-structured interviews to document their narratives and feelings in their words (Engel & Schutt 2009). Employing semi-structured interviews facilitated my learning about the language used by actors in their situated paradigms, which is imperative to understanding their beliefs, perceptions, and relational interactions that are consequential to their experiences. Using semi-structured interviews has also produced rich data that can be examined in a number of ways (Blaikie 2009).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory specified the governance and structure for data gathering and analysing while applying inductive strategies (Bryant & Charmaz 2007). My line of inquiry started from a divergent set of assumptions and remained exploratory in order to follow clues acquired from the data as I went along. This is in contrast to more traditional research design that produce data (not theory) to test already established theories by deducing hypotheses from them (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Instead, using grounded theory established the systematic procedures that enabled the space to investigate novel concepts in a robust way. These novel concepts now have the potential to be validated through traditional logico-deductive methods by other researchers in the future (Bryant & Charmaz 2007). This meant data analysis depended on concepts emerging rather than forcing them into preconceived categories.

Case Study

The idea of the 'case' is indicative of a bounded system that is determined by the researcher (Smith 1974); whether it be an institution, a project, or population. For this thesis, each case study refers to a project bounded by geography, timeframe, organisation and actors. Case studies are considered a strong method for adding to experience and improving understanding (Stake 1978, 1994). However, case study research has also been criticised for not being able to produce scientifically generalisable findings (Gomm, Hammersley & Foster 2000). For Guba and Lincoln (1994), the necessity of strict generalisations in social research is questionable, so they argue that the purpose of case studies can also be to provide 'working hypotheses' for strengthening understanding. The case studies in this thesis provide a bounded focus and real-world inspiration toward new ideas for better understanding the phenomena.

4.4 RESEARCH CONDUCT

About the research process

For this thesis, the combination of qualitative research methods took place in three main stages of work. The ethnographic participant observation traversed two 'real world' projects in two countries over a 22 month period. Following the ethnographic fieldwork, I conducted 41 semi-structured interviews with actors (six for case study one, seven for case study two, and then a further 28 with others working at this intersection of design and D/development). Following the interviews, I turned to standpoint theory and grounded theory to govern the analysis process.

The below steps provide a more detailed outline of what I did in the data gathering, data analysis and thesis development process:

1. **Literature review:** An in-depth literature review identified significant gaps and limitations in knowledge regarding how design was perceived as valuable to different actors in a Development system in transition.
2. **Research design and ethics approval:** The literature review process informed the research design and interview questions for the ethics application at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University, in Melbourne.
3. **Ethnography and observation:** My ethnographic field work began in Ghana in September 2013 as I was co-located with the first case study's project team in-situ for three months. The ethnography continued in 2014 in Kenya as I was embedded within various projects. The second case study project began in January 2015 and the ethnographic fieldwork continued as I was co-located in-situ with the project team in Kenya for six months. In both cases, I held the responsibility of guiding the design process and methods applied. The two cases offer different contexts, for example, by geographic region, with one in Ghana, the other in Kenya. The case contexts also differed by global health technical area, with one focusing on improving the motivation of community health nurses and the other focusing on a citizen-centred social health insurance strategy. These differences across the two cases allowed for comparisons across the data to identify insights and establish integrity based on recurring patterns that emerged across both cases, despite their differences.

4. **Case and participant selection:** In the course of my ethnographic field work, these two projects qualified for inclusion in this thesis based on reasons that will be further discussed below. The interviewees were identified through the course of each project. The qualifying inclusion criteria for interviewees required they had decision-making responsibilities as well as direct experience with design in the project.
5. **Pre-test interviews and tool refinement:** Before commencing post-project participant interviews, I conducted three pre-test interviews to enhance the validity of the questions and to refine the tools
6. **Participant semi-structured interviews:** For the Ghana project, six participants were invited, briefed and interviewed. For the Kenya project, seven participants were invited, briefed and interviewed. Given the two cases offer different contexts, this allowed for rich comparisons between the interview data.
7. **Data recording, coding and analysis:** I transcribed and coded the interview data using Creswell's (2009) framework. I manually category theme analysed, then supplemented this using NVivo 10 software as a tool for further analysis. Although the predominant mode of analysis involved manual and iterative cycles, the combination with NVivo 10 allowed me to concurrently zoom in and out between codes/themes, from one project case to another, and across many literature concepts. This enhanced the integrity of the thesis findings (Yin 2010).
8. **Conceptual framework development:** The data analysis and emergent themes have informed a conceptual framework and discussion chapter. This process involved returning to participants to test the emerging ideas in several informal conversations, as well as being a co-facilitator of three industry workshops with 20-40 participants to explore practitioner ideas about the value of design at this intersection. One took place in November 2017 in Berlin Germany, the next in March 2018 in New York USA, and one in June 2018 in Washington, DC USA.
9. **Confirming, merging, and refining:** Finally, I returned to the literature review material and merged this with my primary data findings to confirm, and where appropriate modify, the conceptual framework and discussion.

Research ethics

This study received ethics clearance through the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and has Ethics approval No.19022. The Guba and Lincoln (1989) framework for ethical practice of qualitative research has been used to ensure healthy researcher-researched relationship. Drawing on this framework, there has been researcher self-disclosure and sharing to ensure truthfulness and authenticity from interviewees and motivate participants to talk about and share their experiences freely. This is outlined further in the following sections.

Case selection

The focus of this thesis is on the actors working in projects at the intersection of design and D/development. The projects in this thesis came from demonstrable 'real world' demand rather than the usual process of a researcher engineering the parameter of a study in advance, and then simulating the process. I chose two projects to investigate and document as detailed case studies for this thesis. Both cases are related to global health projects. One was based in Ghana looking at community health worker effectiveness. The other was based in Kenya investigating expanding national health insurance for the informally employed. I decided to choose these two projects for inclusion in this thesis for three reasons; firstly, based on relevance to the research aims and questions; secondly based on the more comprehensive nature of the design process employed for these projects compared to other projects; and finally, based on the high levels of enthusiasm from project participants to explore and discuss the phenomena in a collaborative epistemic partnership.

Participant selection

The participants who were selected for the 41 semi-structured interviews were identified through the course of projects or through my involvement in other industry events. I was curious to speak with actors from four main categories being 1) Funders, 2) Implementers, 3) Citizens/Users, and 4) Designers. They came from being affiliated with the following:

Table 4.2 Participant affiliations

ACTOR CATEGORY	ACTOR TYPE	INTERVIEWS
FUNDERS	Private Foundations	3
	Bilateral Government Agencies	2
	Multilateral Agencies	4
IMPLEMENTERS	Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	8
	Private Companies	6
	National Government Agencies	2
USERS	Citizens utilising services	4
	Citizens providing services as frontline staff	N/A (analysis based on external evaluation)
DESIGNERS	Endogenous consultants	3
	Exogenous consultants	9
Total number of interviews		41

To qualify for inclusion in the semi-structured interviews, participants had to meet the following selection criteria:

- Direct immersive experiences with design processes
- Direct immersive experiences with Development processes

Once a participant was determined to meet the selection criteria, they were formally recruited. They were personally contacted by email, skype audio call, or in-person to introduce the thesis, then permission for their involvement was sought before being provided with the ‘plain language statement’ which outlines all the ethical considerations for them to verify their consent prior to participation. In all cases, participants have remained anonymous (through the use of pseudonyms) when discussing their views in this thesis. This was important to do for two reasons. Firstly, it was a tactical factor for gaining access to an intellectual space with participants that enabled an honest and open exchange. Secondly, it supported the standpoint argument of the actor and emphasised the inter-subjective relationships and differences between standpoints, over relationships and between individuals. In this respect, it makes this less about

the particular contribution of a specific organisation or person and more about characterising the value of design as perceived through inter-relational knowledge practices.

From the 41 interviews, there emerged distinctions between and within the actor standpoint categories. As such, following the analysis of my data, I developed actor profiles during the write-up of the encounters between standpoints in the practitioner reflections chapter and case study chapters. An actor profile goes beyond assigning a name and involves the development of more detailed, defined and memorable characterisations of a person or group of persons (Pruitt & Adlin 2010). The varying standpoints that emerged were analysed, consolidated and characterised into the following 10 actor profiles that will be used throughout the remainder of the thesis:

Figure 4.1 The actor profiles (over page)

FUNDERS

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS



RICHARD

BILATERAL GOVERNMENTS AGENCIES



DEBBIE

MULTILATERAL AGENCIES



KABIRU

RELATIONSHIP WITH DEVELOPMENT

I oversee a portfolio of investments in development projects. The way we are working is not working. I can see we need to change the dynamics in the system.

RELATIONSHIP WITH DESIGN

Design is a powerful approach that is underutilised in my circles. I use it and advocate for it wherever I can.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

Others see dollar signs when they talk to me, this can compromise and complicate my relationships.

I have over 20 years of experience working for a (Western) donor government in the aid space. We do good work; we really try our best.

I am sceptical of design. It sounds like a fad. Some say it can be useful but I have found designers arrogant and superficial.

I question if our contractors actually do what they say with taxpayer money, so we have to monitor them very closely.

I have two PhDs, one in health economics and the other in pharmacology. As a Kenyan working for a multilateral, I find the way development is done as disheartening.

Design opened my eyes to what it truly means to be citizen-centred in our policies – it is not just talk for me anymore.

I find myself in the midst of a lot of tensions with Kenyan government priorities on one end and then global strategies on the other end.

IMPLEMENTERS

NON-
GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATIONS
(NGOS)



ERICA

PRIVATE
COMPANIES



RAJ

NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES



AKINYI

RELATIONSHIP WITH
DEVELOPMENT

I grew up with so much privilege. As a public health professional, I have chosen to dedicate my career to help the poor. Plus working for an NGO has a lot of travel perks.

RELATIONSHIP
WITH DESIGN

Design has given me a toolkit for how to do my job better. When we used it, we put local communities first in a way that was unlike in other projects.

RELATIONSHIP
WITH OTHERS

There are lots of new players and fads in the development space. It is hard to know which ones to imitate and which ones to ignore.

There are untapped consumer markets throughout the continent of Africa waiting to be discovered and leveraged.

Design taught us the importance of failing early and failing fast in such new markets. It has also helped us build our internal R&D capabilities.

It is difficult to be profitable quickly in these markets, it takes time, so we often rely on development funding to de-risk our work.

As a Kenyan public servant, I can't stand how these foreigners still come and tell us how to run our health system.

Design helped us understand others better – whether colleagues within the organisation or even the people we are serving.

I try to improve things but people around me are comfortable with keeping things the way they are. They don't want me to rock the boat.

CITIZENS

CITIZENS UTILISING SERVICES



CHEGE

RELATIONSHIP WITH DEVELOPMENT

I am a farmer from Makueni in Kenya, I keep getting asked questions about my life by strangers, but I don't see much change here.

RELATIONSHIP WITH DESIGN

Some people asked me to share my ideas with others at a workshop in Nairobi, everyone in the room was very interested in what I said.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

I don't trust the government liars. I don't trust these NGOs that come and go. I just trust God and the church.

CITIZENS PROVIDING SERVICES



GRACE

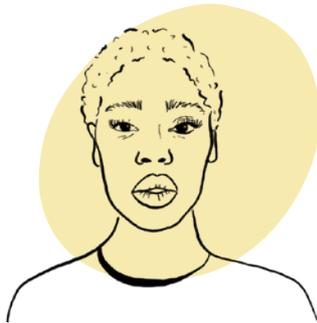
We get so many programmes coming in to my district, I can't keep up with what they all want from me as a nurse.

Design helped my voice count and developed helpful mobile tools that we need to feel confident and credible in our work.

Our supervisors can be tough with us, so I need to be careful. The people in the villages I work in speak a different language to me, that also makes it hard.

DESIGNERS

ENDOGENOUS CONSULTANTS



FARASHUU

EXOGENOUS CONSULTANTS



ANTONIA

RELATIONSHIP WITH DEVELOPMENT

As a Kenyan, I get so much satisfaction out of using my skills to solve problems for people in my community and region.

RELATIONSHIP WITH DESIGN

Design needs to be part of the curriculum of every student and professional in this country.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

I find it challenging to see all these consultants flying in from all over the world to do what we should be able to do ourselves here.

I used to work with fortune 500 companies before shifting to development work. I have worked in different parts of Africa.

I am an expert in design for complex problems. I spent five years at university and then 15 years of work honing my expertise to be able to do what I do well.

I find it challenging when others in development attend one of my two day workshops and then go around thinking they are now experts in design.

Funder actor profiles composition by interviewee

For the funder actor group, there were nine interviews conducted in total with people from private foundations, bilateral government agencies, and multilateral agencies. Interviewees came from different roles, institutions, and disciplinary backgrounds. Such differences prompt a more detailed breakdown of how the funder actor profiles were composed based on the interviewees.

The actor profile named 'Richard' who characterises the 'funder – private foundation' standpoint was developed based on the following three interviewee characteristics:

- Richard 1 – Interviewee 1
 - Post-graduate doctoral degree training in a social science discipline
 - Has more than 20+ years of international work experience
 - Based in US, working for a tax-exempt private foundation in the US structured as a charitable trust
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's global systems change perspective, and their pioneering use of design at their organisation
- Richard 2 – Interviewee 2
 - Post-graduate master degree training in community health
 - Has more than 25 years working on global health projects
 - Based in US, contracted as an Evaluator on behalf of a tax-exempt private foundation in the US structured as a charitable trust
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's oversight of the evaluation team and processes for the project featured in case study in Ghana (chapter 5)
- Richard 3 – Interviewee 3
 - Post-graduate master degree in public health and sociology
 - Has less than 10 years working on data analytics in relation to global health and development projects
 - Based in US, contracted as an Evaluator on behalf of a tax-exempt private foundation in the US structured as a charitable trust
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's involvement in the evaluation processes for the project featured in case study in Ghana (chapter 5)

The actor profile named 'Debbie' who characterises the 'funder – bilateral government agencies' standpoint was developed based on the following two interviewee characteristics:

- Debbie 1 – Interviewee 1
 - Post-graduate master degree training in international public health and health management
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in US for a public sector government agency
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's scepticism regarding the use of design in the programs they fund.
- Debbie 2 – Interviewee 2
 - Post-graduate master degree training in humanities and international development administration
 - Has under 10 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as an expat), for a US public sector government agency
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's curiosity and conviction regarding the use of design in the health programs they fund and advise on.

The actor profile named 'Kabiru' who characterises the 'funder – multilateral agency' standpoint was developed based on the following four interviewee characteristics:

- Kabiru 1 – Interviewee 1
 - Post-graduate master degree training in science and international development
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya and Ethiopia (as an expat), for a European-based multilateral agency
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's desire to use design approaches in the resilience programs they administer.
- Kabiru 2 – Interviewee 2
 - Post-graduate master degree in pharmacy and doctoral degree in population-level health economics
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience

- Based in Kenya (as a Kenyan), for a US-based multilateral agency
- Rationale for inclusion was this person's technical oversight of the project featured in the case study in Kenya (chapter 6)
- Kabiru 3 – Interviewee 3
 - Post-graduate master degree in public health as well as medical doctor qualifications
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as a Kenyan), for a US-based multilateral agency
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's managerial oversight of the project featured in the case study in Kenya (chapter 6)
- Kabiru 4 – Interviewee 4
 - Post-graduate master degree in business administration
 - Has between 10 - 19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in the US for a multilateral agency
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with design while overseeing health-related projects in India and Africa.

Implementer actor profiles composition by interviewee

For the implementer actor group, there were sixteen interviews conducted in total with people from NGOs, national government agencies, and private companies. A detailed breakdown of how the implementer actor profiles were composed based on the interviewees is provided next.

The actor profile named 'Erica' who characterises the 'implementer – NGOs' standpoint was developed based on the following eight interviewee characteristics:

- Erica 1 – Interviewee 1
 - Post-graduate doctoral degree in public health (infectious diseases)
 - Has under 10 years of professional work experience as a health advisor
 - Based in Ghana (as an expat) for three years while working for an international NGO
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with design during the project featured in the Ghana case study (chapter 5).

- Erica 2 – Interviewee 2
 - Post-graduate master degree in human computer interaction
 - Has under 10 years of professional work experience as a technology advisor
 - Based in Ghana long-term while working for an international NGO
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person’s experience with design during the project featured in the Ghana case study (chapter 5).
- Erica 3 – Interviewee 3
 - Post-graduate master degree in public health
 - Has under 10 years of professional work experience as a programme officer
 - Based in US while working for an international NGO, travelling a lot to projects in different locations
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person’s experience with design during the project featured in the Ghana case study (chapter 5).
- Erica 4 – Interviewee 4
 - Post-graduate master degree in business administration
 - Has over 20 years of professional work experience as a marketer
 - Based in US while working for an international NGO, travelling a lot to projects in different locations
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person’s experience with three different design firms across different projects related to HIV prevention
- Erica 5 – Interviewee 5
 - Post-graduate master degree in public health
 - Has under 10 years of professional work experience as a technical advisor
 - Based in US while working for an international NGO, travelling a lot to projects in different locations
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person’s experience with two different design teams across different projects related to community health
- Erica 6 – Interviewee 6
 - Post-graduate medical degree in paediatrics and doctoral degree in anthropology

- Has over 25 years of professional work experience as a medical doctor and hospital director
- Based in Kenya for about five years (as an expat), working for a private hospital and primary health care network
- Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with two different design workshops related to community health.
- Erica 7 – Interviewee 7
 - Post-graduate master degree in public health
 - Has under 10 years of professional work experience as a technical advisor
 - Based in Kenya long-term (as an expat) while working for an international NGO
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with two different design teams across different projects related to health care financing
- Erica 8 – Interviewee 8
 - Post-graduate master degree in international development
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as an expat) for an international NGO
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with two different design teams across different projects related to agricultural and health financing

The actor profile named 'Raj' who characterises the 'implementer – private companies' standpoint was developed based on the following six interviewee characteristics:

- Raj 1 – Interviewee 1
 - Post-graduate master degrees in business administration, as well as global management
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as an expat) for a financial services provider
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with different design teams across different projects related to financing products
- Raj 2 – Interviewee 2
 - Post-graduate master degrees in business administration, as well as science

- Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
- Based in Kenya (as an expat) for a digital services provider
- Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with different design teams across different projects related to health financing products
- Raj 3 – Interviewee 3
 - Post-graduate master degrees in business administration
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as an expat) for an international insurance provider
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with different design teams across different projects related to health financing products
- Raj 4 – Interviewee 4
 - Bachelor degree in international developmet
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as an expat) for over 10 years running a private health care provider network
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with different design teams across different projects related to health care services
- Raj 5 – Interviewee 5
 - Bachelor degree in business, finance and economics
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as a Kenyan), for a mid-sized Kenyan bank
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's managerial oversight of a design project and innovation capability building delivered with the bank
- Raj 6 – Interviewee 6
 - Post-graduate master degree in business, finance and economics
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as a Kenyan), for a mid-sized Kenyan bank
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's project oversight of design and innovation capability building delivered with the bank

The actor profile named 'Akinyi' who characterises the 'implementer – national government agencies' standpoint was developed based on the following two interviewee characteristics:

- Akinyi 1 – Interviewee 1
 - Post-graduate master degree in business administration
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as a Kenyan), for a government institution
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's oversight of design during the project featured in the Kenya case study (chapter 6).
- Akinyi 2 – Interviewee 2
 - Diploma certificate in project management and marketing
 - Has over 20 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya (as a Kenyan), for a government institution
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with design during the project featured in the Kenya case study (chapter 6).

Citizen actor profiles composition by interviewee

For the citizen co-designer actor group, there were four primary interviews conducted by the author for the second case study which focuses on citizens utilising services. For the first case study, there were a series of secondary interviews conducted by a monitoring and evaluation team from JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc. (JSI), which focuses on citizens providing services as frontline staff. A detailed breakdown of how the citizen actor profiles were composed based on the interviewees is provided next.

The actor profile named 'Chege' who characterises the 'citizens utilising services' standpoint was developed based on the following four interviewee characteristics:

- Chege 1 – Interviewee 1
 - Single mother of three children, living in semi-urban area
 - Former member of public health insurance provider
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person's experience with design during the co-design workshop featured in the Kenya case study (chapter 6).

- Chege 2 – Interviewee 2
 - Young single man, living in highly urban area
 - Potential future member of public health insurance provider
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person’s experience with design during the co-design workshop featured in the Kenya case study (chapter 6).

- Chege 3 – Interviewee 3
 - Married woman with no children, living in rural area
 - Former member of public health insurance provider (negative experience)
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person’s experience with design during the co-design workshop featured in the Kenya case study (chapter 6).

- Chege 4 – Interviewee 4
 - Father of two children, with a household of seven, including parents and adopted nephew, living in semi-urban area
 - Current member of public health insurance provider
 - Rationale for inclusion was this person’s experience with design during the co-design workshop featured in the Kenya case study (chapter 6).

The actor profile named ‘Grace’ characterises the ‘citizens providing services’ standpoint. Since I only conducted interviews during the early phase co-design research activities, and the JSI team conducted other interviews during the project’s monitoring and evaluation activities, this profile was composed slightly differently, and based on the following two distinctions:

- Grace 1 – nurses interviewed as part of co-design research
 - Frontline community health nurses from Volta and Greater Accra regions
 - Actively involved in initial design research activities and multi-day co-design workshops with author

- Grace 2 – nurses interviewed by JSI as part of evaluation research
 - Frontline community health nurses from Volta and Greater Accra regions
 - Participated in qualitative interviews with JSI’s evaluation team

Designer actor profiles composition by interviewee

For the designer actor group, there were twelve interviews conducted in total with designers from various locations, training backgrounds and consulting organisations. A detailed breakdown of how the designer actor profiles were composed based on the interviewees is provided next.

The actor profile named 'Farashuu' who characterises the 'designer – endogenous consultants' standpoint was developed based on the following three interviewee characteristics:

- Farashuu 1 – Interviewee 1
 - Diploma in web design and branding
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya, working for an international design firm
- Farashuu 2 – Interviewee 2
 - Post-graduate master degree in design and health informatics
 - Has less than 10 years of professional work experience
 - Travels a lot for various project locations, self-employed
- Farashuu 3 – Interviewee 3
 - Post-graduate master degree in sociology and diploma in design
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Nigeria, working for an international design firm

The actor profile named 'Antonia' who characterises the 'designer – exogenous consultants' standpoint was developed based on the following nine interviewee characteristics:

- Antonia 1 – Interviewee 1
 - Post-graduate master degree in behavioural and interaction design
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in US, travels a lot for various project locations, self-employed
- Antonia 2 – Interviewee 2
 - Post-graduate master degree in social design
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in US, working for an international design firm

- Antonia 3 – Interviewee 3
 - Bachelor degree in political science
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Kenya, travels a lot for various project locations, working for an Australian design firm
- Antonia 4 – Interviewee 4
 - Post-graduate master degree in international affairs and economic development
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in US, travels a lot for various project locations, working for US design firm
- Antonia 5 – Interviewee 5
 - Doctoral degree in engineering and design
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in US, travels a lot for various project locations, working for US design firm
- Antonia 6 – Interviewee 6
 - Multiple degrees in design and systems thinking
 - Has over 20 years of professional work experience
 - Based in Australia, travels a lot for various project locations, working for an Australian design firm
- Antonia 7 – Interviewee 7
 - Doctoral degree in design management (for NGOs)
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in US, working for US university design department
- Antonia 8 – Interviewee 8
 - Post-graduate master degree in communication, culture and technology
 - Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
 - Based in US, working internally as innovation and design specialist for multilateral agency
- Antonia 9 – Interviewee 9
 - Post-graduate master degree in peace and conflict studies

- Has between 10-19 years of professional work experience
- Based in US, travels a lot for various project locations, working internally as Director of Innovation and Design at international NGO

The detailed background on the identities of the interviewees which make up an actor profile provides an explicit link between them. Such linkages ensure data sources are not obscured in any way that makes it difficult to determine if or when the same or different people are speaking throughout the remainder of the thesis.

Data gathering techniques

The type of observation I conducted was a combination of focused observation where observation was supported by interviews with participants; and selective observation where I focused on different types of activities to identify the variations in those activities (Angrosino & DePerez 2000, p.677). Other key steps undertaken during the observation process involved:

1. To establish trustworthiness and facilitate prolonged engagement (Guba & Lincoln 1994), I selected projects that allowed me to be considered a participant with the ability to observe the full membership in the groups (Dewalt & Dewalt 1998).
2. At the commencement of each project, I would advise and obtain consent from participants that I was conducting this research and would be observing throughout the process.
3. For each project, I mapped out the 'who's who' in each environment without forming too many assumptions and preconceptions (Kutsche 1998).
4. Merriam (1988) recommended that several elements be observed and documented in the form of hand-written field notes. These elements included the physical environment, the participants, the activities, interactions and my own reflections.

For the interviews, I provided participants with a 'plain language statement' in English delivered via email or printed hardcopy. The document was then discussed and confirmed verbally immediately prior to commencement of an interview to ensure participant consent was informed regarding the following:

1. Participation in the research was completely voluntary. When a participant accepted the invitation, they were asked to share their views in a one-on-one semi-structured interview of approximately 60 minutes in duration.

2. Depending on the participant's location, the interviews were mostly conducted face-to-face in a quiet and private place. However, due to the varied locations participants were based, some interviews were conducted over online call/ video technologies.
3. There were no known or anticipated risks associated with participating. Should a participant become concerned about their responses or find participation in the interview distressing, they were advised to inform the researcher as soon as possible.
4. The perspective, expertise and experiences of the participants were more important than having a 'right' or 'wrong' answer to any of the questions. This thesis is intended to benefit those organisations directly involved, the broader international development and design communities, and indirectly, the beneficiaries of future aid projects.
5. There were no costs or reimbursements associated with participation in the research.
6. Participants could decline to answer any of the interview questions. Further, they would not be treated any differently if they decided not to participate or if they withdrew once they had started.
7. With the permission of each participant, the interviews were audio recorded to facilitate the timely and accurate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis.
8. All information provided was considered confidential, including the identity of the participants. Their names do not appear in the thesis, however, anonymous quotations were used.
9. Participants were informed that the researcher wanted to ensure they were treated in a fair and respectful manner. If they had any comments or concerns resulting from their participation, they were provided with the contact for the University's Research Office.

For this thesis, data gathering, analysis and interpretation has been a demanding process where the ideas and materials generated were continuously evolving. This has provided the flexibility to evolve the line of inquiry and move in new

directions as further information was obtained (Glaser & Strauss 1967). In order to become theoretically sensitive to the data, and given the nature of the projects being some time apart, the data gathered was consistently compared based on a grounded theory approach as modelled on the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) and Charmaz (2000, 2002, 2011).

Data analysis and interpretation techniques

The following activities guided the interpretation of the data based upon narrative qualitative research approaches, as described by Creswell (2013) and Engel and Schutt (2009):

1. I began by conducting a small pilot test of three interviews to verify the tool and enhance the trustworthiness of the interview questions in relation to the thesis objectives. Some minor refinements were made to the interview tool.
2. During each interview, multiple recording devices were activated as a precaution to any technology failures. I also took notes throughout.
3. Following each interview, I transferred the recorded audio files from the audio recording devices into a password-secured storage drive and backed up.
4. Following each interview, I wrote down self-reflections in a reflexivity journal. This allowed a record of any biases, judgements and orientations that could influence my interpretations of the data (Creswell 2013). Going back to these notes and reflections during analysis reduced the probability of forcing data into any pre-existing, deducted framework.
5. I subsequently transcribed verbatim each audio recording into digital formats within 24-48 hours of the interview being conducted to avoid difficulties with recall. These were organised in computer files that were stored on a password-secured storage drive.
6. I then reviewed and verified each transcript by re-listening to each audio file while reading the completed transcription and ensuring all identifiers were thematically coded appropriately.
7. Transcripts were then printed and read in their entirety at least two or three times each to achieve sensitivity with the raw data. During this step, I

highlighted key quotations and wrote notes in the margins of the transcripts. At this stage, these notes were brief ideas that seemed relevant.

8. I then wrote up the highlighted quotations onto post-it notes which allowed the freedom to cluster and group similar quotations on a wall in different ways, to visually see patterns emerge from the data. Photographs were taken of the patterns to record different cycles of analysis.
9. After the manual theme analysis and familiarisation with the data, I used an inductive approach to develop a list of codes that matched text segments.
10. The transcripts were then imported into the NVivo 10 software program and data was coded in a systematic manner. This was done by grouping the small categories of information, whether phrases, sentences or full paragraphs using category theme analysis (Creswell 2013). Drawing from the work of Yin (2010), the codes I used included manifest codes (recurring terms), latent codes (themes occurring beneath the surface) and in vivo codes (terms in the language of those being interviewed). A label was attached to each code and evidence of the codes was sought across the interviews.
11. I regularly wrote notes about the codes and their definitions throughout analysis. Throughout the cycle I compared and rechecked the data with the codes to ensure there was no 'drift' in the meaning of codes. This also helped to confirm their consistency (Creswell 2009).
12. I continued to deconstruct the data through the process of grouping and classification. Comparisons between data, contexts and concepts helped me maintain rigour when looking at (a) different people's beliefs, actions, and accounts; and (b) categories in the data with other categories (Charmaz 1983; Glaser 1978). Several general themes were identified that served as broad units of information comprised of several other codes grouped together to form a mutual or related idea. Each overall theme contained sub-themes/ categories.
13. I then made comparisons between the themes identified in the interviews and the themes from the observation notes to determine similarities, differences and relationships to see what patterns emerged. In aiming to 'discover' rather than pre-define meaning and processes, I looked for patterns both when focusing on a single project case or across the two project cases (Strauss & Glaser 1970).

14. I then took those comparisons between the two project cases and developed them in order to make more sense of the data and interpret the larger meanings from contextualised, project-specific perspectives. This final phase known as 'representing the data' involved putting the findings of the analysis into words and several iterations of a conceptual model (Blaikie 2009). Some of these iterations are included in the appendix.
15. As the conceptual analysis of the data developed, I returned to the literature and compared how the findings fit within those constructs (Charmaz & Belgrave 2002). Without losing the human story and verbatim material to demonstrate the connection between the data and the analysis, the literature also needed to be addressed explicitly and thoroughly (Charmaz & Belgrave 2002; Glaser 1978; Strauss 1987).

The findings and discussion focus on the key emerging themes identified from the analysis and interpretation processes described above. Despite the above documentation of activities as linear steps, the process of analysis and interpretation was iterative. Combining multiple modes of analysis such as manual category theme analysis and NVivo-based analysis, has meant that key themes and patterns were picked up by one mode that the other may have overlooked. As a result, the combined use of the different data analysis techniques enhanced the integrity of the research findings.

4.5 LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATIONS

Taking a qualitative research approach meant I had meaningful interactions with, and rich descriptions by, participants that enabled me to better understand our shared/constructed realities. As a result of using the methods and processes noted above, I would like to acknowledge the limitations. These are explored next.

Questions of reliability and validity are sometimes raised with qualitative methods, particularly when the researcher is considered an 'insider'. Since I was a full member and participant in the projects selected and continue to be employed in the field, this has proven to be an advantage in offering unique insights. However, it could also introduce bias in other ways, such as limiting curiosities, so that I am only able to discover pre-anticipated themes (Chenail 2011; Johnson 1997). In order to minimise this bias, I subscribed to the ideas of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Creswell (2009, 2013), and followed their systematic procedures to assist in studying the subjective.

Creswell (2009, 2013) discussed the concepts of reliability and validity in inductive qualitative research as requiring a different approach than in deductive research. He defines qualitative validity as occurring when the researcher has assessed the accuracy and trustworthiness of the findings through a strict and robust set of procedures (Creswell 2009). Validating the research process is of particular importance in the social constructionist perspective as a co-constructor of knowledge, I needed to intentionally engage with proven strategies to reduce my own bias. On the whole, I used five strategies to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of this research:

1. Recording self-reflections in a reflexivity journal for transparency about past experiences, biases, and orientations that could shape the interpretations of the results (Creswell 2013). This was helpful in ensuring awareness of my biases both as the research began and throughout the process so that those biases could be tracked and moderated (Creswell 2009).
2. Systematically checking transcripts against handwritten notes to verify no mistakes or omissions were made in the conversion of data into an electronic document (Creswell 2009).
3. Regularly writing notes about the codes and their definitions throughout the analysis, and then comparing and rechecking the data with the codes to ensure there was no 'drift' in the meaning of codes and to confirm their consistency (Creswell 2009).
4. Reviewing progress with my thesis supervisors, and given that I am employed in the field, I was also able to engage in peer consultation. This enabled the emerging themes to be audited by external sources for truthfulness (Creswell 2013).
5. Conducting small pilot test of three interviews to verify the credibility and enhancing the trustworthiness of the interview questions.

One of the practices I used to 'tame' the bias was to identify and articulate any prior assumptions I had before and during the research process. By making my assumptions visible I was able to acknowledge them and revise my thinking as needed (Peshkin 1991).

It is important to acknowledge that there may be selection bias as convenience sampling was used from project-related networks known to me as the researcher. Although studying a random sample provides the best opportunity to generalise the thesis findings, it is not the most effective way of developing an understanding of complex issues relating to human experience and behaviour (Marshall 1996). Convenience sampling is understood to be the least rigorous sampling technique, involving the selection of the most accessible subjects (Marshall 1996). However, given the emerging nature of this research area, convenience sampling was deliberately chosen to ensure familiarity with the research phenomena and for participants to draw on their personal experiences of the project case to subsequently arrive at richer insights. Choosing people at random to answer questions about design in a particular project setting would be analogous to randomly asking a passer-by how to repair a broken-down car, rather than asking a car mechanic (Marshall 1996). Although there are limitations with a convenience sample like this, as the findings may not be indicative of the actual trends within the population group, this is not worrisome as this thesis is designed to illustrate the experiences of a few early adopters. The benefits have outweighed the limitations as having participants with relevant experiences has produced significantly rich data. To manage the limitations associated with this selection bias, recording field notes in a reflexivity journal ensured a deliberate effort to identify community bias given participants were from similar backgrounds and networks.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

As outlined, this chapter demonstrated how the research paradigm was determined by the thesis aims, research topic, and the ontological and epistemological assumptions inherent in my own perspectives. Also illustrated were the influences in the selection of appropriate research methods combining standpoint theory in a case study framework with observation, interviews and grounded theory. The rationale for different methods was followed by detailing the set of rigorous steps that ensured ethical, trustworthy and truthful qualitative research practices. The iterative nature of analysis using a combination of techniques in the context of extant literature has shown an enhancement in the integrity of the research findings.

Chapter 5

Case study on design encounters in Ghana



We grew... let's have cake!

“ We were called into a whole of country office team meeting today for [this NGO]. [One of the senior managers] had an important announcement: We grew our revenue by 22% in the last 12 months, well done team, let's celebrate! He also shared news about his promotion and succession into a new role. There was cake. What world had I just stumbled into? He presented a whole bunch of numbers to everyone, how under his leadership they had secured X many new projects, partners, staff, offices, and of course, increased revenue. Growth was being celebrated and framed as what constituted success, like there is this assumption that of course what we are doing is good and causing no harm, doesn't matter whether we actually know that or not. No-one else around me seemed to be puzzled by the emphasis on success being so organisation-centric. I felt deeply disturbed by what was driving strategy, decision-making and the notion of 'success' in this NGO context were much the same numbers as businesses elsewhere. He shared that the new organisational target for the coming year was to reach 30 million beneficiaries. The other thing was the incessant depiction of the low-income people we were 'helping' as poor, needy, voiceless and desperate victims. More so, it was up to us and our projects to save them from such despair. What, without us, they have no hope?

(Author journal excerpt, May 2014)

5.1 CHAPTER OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this chapter is to start building an understanding on how the value of design is experienced by social actors in D/development. Specifically, this chapter reflects on a project for designing a digital suite of tools to improve the motivation and effectiveness of community health nurses (CHNs) in Ghana – where design was chosen as a set of practices to co-design the solutions with nurses. This case study offers an example of how design can support the efforts of predominantly exogenous actors seeking alternatives to established ways of working. This chapter provides a breakdown of the project parameters as well as the different types of value experienced, as reported by Ghanaian nurses (citizens/users), the staff from both NGOs (implementers), as well as members of the evaluation and funding teams (funders).

5.2 THE CASE BACKGROUND

Country health system background

Ghana, like many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, has made significant changes to improve its population health outcomes in recent years. Notwithstanding, the predominant causes of early childhood mortality and maternal deaths are premature births and complications during delivery. The government of Ghana has demonstrated a strong commitment to reducing these preventable deaths, including establishing health clinics in rural areas, known as Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) facilities. These bring basic maternal, new-born and child healthcare (MNCH) closer to families living in rural areas. Health centres are a higher-level health facility where deliveries and slightly more specialised services are provided. Community health nurses (CHNs) are posted to CHPS facilities and health centres throughout the country. However, Ghana's health system has been faced with the simultaneous challenges of having insufficient trained health workforce, limited incentives to work in remote areas of the country, and poor resource allocation and health infrastructure. All of these factors contribute to difficult working conditions, poor supervisory support and limited professional development opportunities; especially for frontline community health nurses in rural settings (Kwansah, Dzodzomenyo, Mutumba et al. 2012).

Project background

For this project, there was a strong desire by stakeholders to design and deliver a set of digital tools that address specific challenges of CHNs. The project initially targeted 270 CHNs and their supervisors located in rural and semi-urban health centres and CHPS facilities across five districts. The resulting CHN on the Go mobile phone application was requested to be scaled-up beyond the initial target numbers by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) when they saw value in improved job performance and satisfaction of community health nurses. This project also considered women utilising maternal, new-born and child health (MNCH) services who rely on the nurses as their first point of contact with the health system.

The focusing question for this project was: How might a mobile technology innovation enable a more motivated cadre of community health nurses? This project was delivered through a web of actors in various partnerships. The implementation was led by a team from the two NGOs, Grameen Foundation and Concern Worldwide. The independent monitoring and evaluation was led by JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc (JSI) with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). Senior stakeholders from the Ghana Health Service were consulted throughout the project. Design expertise was provided by ThinkPlace.

As the Design Lead on the project, I was engaged for the first three months of the project's 32-month-funded timeframe. I was living in Ghana and worked with different stakeholders on facilitating focus groups, interviews, experience-mapping and co-design workshops to immerse stakeholders in stories, generate ideas, prototype and test them. In this case, I was leading a core group comprised of nine people; four American global health NGO staff (two living in country, two doing fly-in-fly-out), two Ghanaian researchers/sociologists and one Ghanaian technology expert. Other than my presence in-country, there was another designer from ThinkPlace who was supporting the project remotely. This case study demonstrates how design was used to co-create and implement a suite of human-centred digital solutions with adaptive iteration built into the process. It also describes actor perceptions on what was valuable about, and what was difficult with, the inclusion of design practices from different standpoints.

During the first three months of the project, over 110 people were involved in the design research, co-design and testing phases. This number included

60 community health nurses, 12 nurse supervisors, 18 pregnant women and nursing mothers, as well as more than 20 stakeholders from the various partner organisations. A breakdown of the design process, including key activities, purpose, tools/methods utilised, and participants involved are summarised below:

Table 5.1 Summary of design process for case study one (Adapted from external evaluation documentation, LaFond & Davis 2016, pp. 20-21)

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	TOOLS/METHODS
Intent workshop (month 1)	Determine the current state, define the desired future state and reach a shared understanding of the project’s intent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-country implementers • Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intent statement tool
Design research (month 1)	Gain an understanding of the nurses as “end-users” and their experiences of the system through a series of different narrative-based conversations and observations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurses and supervisors • Pregnant women and nursing mothers • In-country implementers • Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews and focus groups • Experience mapping (with CHNs) • Health worker profiles and stories
Analysis and synthesis (month 2)	Synthesise field research and summarise key themes from the research. Bring up to speed all parties that didn’t participate in field research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-country implementers • Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-it note synthesis • Clustering • Harvesting

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	TOOLS/METHODS
Understanding the system workshop (month 2)	Utilise the process and experience maps to understand the system from different perspectives of the generated personas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-country implementers • FIFO implementers • Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Process map review • Persona development
Understanding the nurses workshop (month 2)	Work with nurses to see if they identified with the personas and challenges identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurses • In-country implementers • FIFO implementers • Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy building • Brainstorming • Storyboards • Persona validation • Mapping
Ideation workshop (month 2)	<p>Utilise challenge questions to generate solutions to challenges identified in formative research.</p> <p>Review and discuss potential mHealth solutions that exist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-country implementers • FIFO implementers • Designer • UN mobile-Health (mHealth) experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idea sheets and ideation • Iteration • Clustering • Harvesting • Score cards (for ranking)
Co-design workshops (month 2)	Utilise the nurses and supervisors to help further develop, refine, and identify opportunity spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurses and supervisors • In-country implementers • Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roleplaying • Scoring • Voting • Process mapping
Concept development workshop (month 3)	Further develop the six opportunity spaces by utilising the various perspectives brought to the table in order to assess the viability of the options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-country implementers • FIFO implementers • Designer • Other NGOs in Ghana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytelling • Concept development templates

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	TOOLS/METHODS
Prototyping workshops (month 3)	List out detailed activities for the six app modules and document what will be possible to build, technically and organisationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-country implementers • FIFO implementers • Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interface-level user stories
User pathways and interaction models (month 3)	Detail specific user interaction stories and use cases to inform interface design. Synthesise information and outcomes from all of the workshops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-country implementers • Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visualisation
Validation workshops (month 3)	Validate proposed intervention with GHS district and regional representatives. Ensure they feel the intervention will work as proposed and they support the use of the mobile application among CHNs and their supervisors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana Health Service District and Regional Directors • In-country implementers • Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storyboards • Low fidelity prototypes
Iterative rounds of solution testing and building (months 4-12)	Flesh out application content such as localised languages, health standards, and other details through a series of five user testing rounds while building the solution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurses and supervisors • In-country implementers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roleplays • Medium and high-fidelity prototypes

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	TOOLS/METHODS
Rollout, implementation and monitoring (months 10-32)	Develop training material and guide teams on rollout of solution, as well as detailed monitoring and evaluation data capturing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurses and supervisors In-country implementers External evaluators 	

In summary, all seven characteristics of contemporary and professional design practices from Chapter Three (Figure 3.2) were present in the design process for this project. There was little professional design capability involved during the implementation that continued beyond the initial three-month design research and co-design period. The solution building and implementation was led by the in-country team at the Grameen Foundation at the time. Although professional design capability was not formally involved in those phases, there appears to be several ways the initial design practices influenced how the stakeholders approached the implementation of this work, as will be discussed further in the next sections.

5.3 THE ACTOR STANDPOINTS

Based on the interviews I conducted, there are four key standpoints explored in this case study: the citizen, implementer, funder and designer. The standpoints that feature in this chapter include the following profiles:

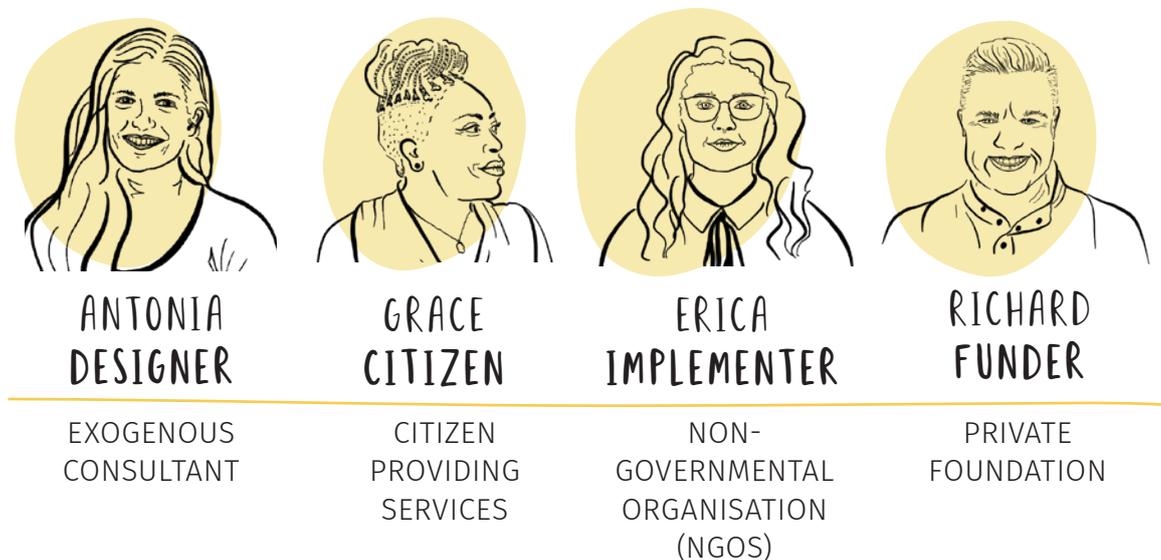


Figure 5.1 Actor profiles featuring in case study one

There were some methodological considerations I would like to highlight regarding the citizen and designer standpoints in this case study. Due to budgetary and time constraints, I was not able to return to Ghana and conduct first-hand interviews with the Ghana Health Service and document the experience of design from the nurses' point of view. Additionally, since JSI was contracted to look at this exact question as part of their evaluation activities, I did not want to risk research fatigue among the nurses if I were to conduct such interviews remotely (as I have done in other instances for this thesis). After developing a trusting working relationship with JSI, I chose to rely on their research outputs and my own conversations with different members of the evaluation team. There are two publications from JSI's evaluation that I will be referencing in this chapter. The first publication is based on a study of the nurses' satisfaction with the design 'object', namely the digital tools, which was conducted by Alva and Magalona (2016). The second publication is based on a study of the nurses' experience with the design 'process', which was conducted by LaFond and Davis (2016). Relying on secondary data from JSI's studies rather than my own primary data alone provided a more objective view of the nurses' satisfaction than if I had conducted interviews directly. The funder standpoint expressed in this case study has been derived from a combination of interviews from the funder organisation and the evaluation team (contracted by the funder) to determine whether the project was successful or not. Additionally, there was a high turnover of staff within the funder organisation while overseeing this grant. As a result, the funders were largely absent from the day-to-day of the design process. On behalf of the funder, JSI conducted the learning, monitoring and evaluation of the project through a baseline, endline and two rounds of intensive qualitative process documentation. For this case study, I consider the JSI evaluation team as a type of proxy for funder perspective, as the funder was not as involved in the design activities and therefore unable to comment comprehensively.

As the Design Lead on this project, I explored three ways to bring my own standpoint to life for this case study. Firstly, I kept a reflexivity journal to capture reflections throughout the process, as detailed in Chapter Four on methods. Secondly, I was interviewed by a fellow doctoral student who is exploring a similar topic area and so I used self-quotes from the transcript of that interview. Thirdly, I interviewed a senior Partner at ThinkPlace to reflect on the role of design in this project. Due to my personal position as the Design Lead I will own these reflections in the first person and not anonymise the standpoint of designers

presented below. Regardless of these methodological considerations, all views expressed on the design process, object and agency were done so in relation to this single project. The next section of this chapter outlines actor experiences with design, presented by standpoint.

The designer standpoint

From the designer standpoint, the design challenge inspired an intensive determination to create meaningful solutions with the nurses. When it was verified by the nurses to be useful and necessary for their work, I experienced a personal sense of fulfilment and reward. The inclusion of co-design practices and my involvement as a designer was a pure accident. This project was one of nine in a portfolio of innovation projects for the NGO, Concern Worldwide, to deliver. Despite being labelled an ‘innovation’ portfolio, the implementation team overseeing this work did not have any professional design or innovation qualifications; nor was there budget structured in for professional design and innovation expertise to be contracted as consultants. This US-based NGO partnered with other NGOs located in different countries to plan and implement the various projects. I was embedded at Grameen Foundation in Ghana, which was chosen as a partner for this project. My original purpose for being in Ghana was to help build the design capability of the team in-country. It was not necessarily to lead the co-design of a digital technology solution.

‘What is my purpose here?’

On my first day in the NGO office in Ghana, I was welcomed with a warm curiosity:

“ Our senior management at headquarters have been going on and on about taking you in to try this design thing...But when I think of design, I think of furniture and fashion, so I am not sure what to expect here ... in any case, what we are doing as a public health and development community has not been working for decades, so we might as well try this thing, we have nothing to lose really (Director, NGO Ghana, from my reflective journal notes).

Once there was agreement on which practical project and team members I would be working with, an optimistic caution ensued:

“ So whatever you need for this project, you let us know, and we will try our best to make it happen. If we are going to say we tried this design thing and then it doesn't work, we will need to be able to say we tried it properly (Director, NGO Ghana, from my reflective journal notes).

I believe the honesty and openness from the Director turned out to be one of the greatest assets to this project (and my sanity). It provided an enabling environment for others to dive in and for the initially non-existent resources to be re-diverted from other line items to this project's cause.

Despite all the good intentions, there were two fundamental disconnects that surfaced in this project from my 'designer' perspective. The first is related to how the initial problem framing was predetermined from an outdated literature review on West African nurses in general. There was limited space and permission to reframe it based on the challenges from the Ghanaian nurses' perspective during the design research. The second is related to the fixation on a technology solution, even when the core team agreed that it was not the most effective way to solve the problems expressed by the nurses.

'How well can I stay true to the words and meanings that people use?'

The initial project intent agreed by decision-makers situated in the USA – was to improve frontline health worker 'motivation' through a mobile technology innovation in Ghana. The in-country implementation team inherited this framing and intent. When I arrived and led the core team through the design research phase, we used that problem framing in early conversations with nurses and supervisors, but it did not quite translate. It quickly emerged that the use of the word 'motivation' in the Ghanaian context meant something completely different than what the word meant to us as exogenous designers, implementers and funders. In Ghana, associations with the word motivation are linked to money and financial incentives, where in fact the project was specifically exploring non-financial motivational opportunities. When the people overseeing this work in the funder position (at the time) were made aware of this, they did not permit the team to change the official framing of the problem despite what had been gleaned from the design research. There is significant public health research on health worker motivation and its influence on performance in the health system (Aduo-

Adjei, Emmanuel & Forster 2016; Willis-Shattuck, Bidwell, Thomas et al. 2008; Mathauer & Imhoff 2006). It is a specialist area of study and targeted intervention where implementers, funders and evaluators tend to build on the existing body of knowledge. From the designer standpoint, the need to continue to add to this body of knowledge from expert perspectives does not mean that the problems cannot be framed from the nurses' standpoint as well. However, the space for holding open multiple frames of the problem was limited in this case. Key decision-makers preferred the core team to continue to use the academic, expert framing over and above how the nurses perceived their own issues.

Despite the lack of formal space to do this, the in-country design and implementation team still made a conscious effort to use different language with the nurses than they did with others in order to stay true to the problem and make the problem framing user-defined. For example, instead of motivation, the team talked to nurses about what they found satisfying and what they found frustrating in their work to get to a deeper understanding of the non-financial factors that may be affecting their motivation – based on their own words. From that, the team developed a nuanced understanding, as one implementer put it, 'being able to slip into the nurses' shoes was easy for us in the process, but not so much for others.' Maintaining the integrity of the words the nurses used in the day-to-day work had a significant effect on team members in the field. It helped them reframe the project's problem statement and notion of what success meant, as seen from the nurses' standpoint rather than from an academic standpoint. Experiencing the limitation of not being able to reframe the problem at the strategic level, and then observing how, as a team, we were able to still persevere and find a work-around to stay true to the nurses' problems, was a powerful personal experience for me. Design inspired me with the intrinsic motivation to honour people's needs and provided a sense of fulfilment when this was done collectively.

'Why can't we design solutions for the actual root causes of the problems?'

The second issue was related to the fixation on a technology solution by actors far removed from the context. This fixation persisted even when the in-country team shared the reasons why a digital mobile application was unlikely to resolve the underlying problems expressed by the nurses. Actually, a mobile application was unlikely to resolve the problem regardless of whether the problem was understood as stated by the nurses, or as stated by other actors. The power sitting with the funder to determine the medium of the solution in advance,

with limited ethnographic and situated understanding of the place, people or context was deeply discouraging. Other voices, particularly those experiencing or with closer proximity to the issues at stake, had limited influence regarding the medium of the solution and the fixation with it being a technology innovation. Organisational priorities and individual preferences sitting at the funder level overpowered the expressed needs of the nurses. It also compromised the potential of the design process to seek out alternative solutions that may have begun to address the more underlying issues. As part of the team who spent days and weeks with the nurses, the decisions being made by actors furthest away from the issues did not always make sense to me.

In addition to speaking to and hearing from nurses of their challenges, I had also been speaking to their supervisors, who had been midwives or nurses themselves for 25-30 years before being promoted to a management capacity. Learning that promotions occurred without any real training, coaching of behavioural competencies to supervise or manage others was raised as a critical issue by them and the nurses. The stories of physical and verbal abuse directed at nurses by their supervisors and community members had a devastating effect on the nurses. They shared many stories about neglect or mistreatment by their supervisors, disrespect and taunting from their clients, as well as the lack of medical supplies and equipment to do their jobs to the standards expected of them. Hearing their stories first-hand and being allowed into their worlds so intimately influenced my personal determination and obsessiveness with the idea of co-designing something meaningful for them, despite the limitations placed on the design process.

After understanding a bit more about the relational dynamics at play between the nurses and others, I asked the core team to flip the question to be about 'How can the nurses be better supported by their supervisors and the health system?' This way, the onus was not on the nurse to change his/herself to do better in a broken system, but more on the system to change itself to do better for the nurses. This shift in thinking led the team to want to develop something related to the leadership capability of the frontline supervisors, to change how targets were set so they were more bottom-up, and to look at remuneration systems that would ensure their salaries would get paid every month, with the view to influence change for the nurses that was more meaningful for them. If we really wanted to solve the issue of motivation, then investment in the systemic root causes was needed. However, when the team informed other key decision-

makers with: 'This mobile phone app will likely be a surface-level solution to a surface-level understanding of the problem. It won't get to the real issues here.' The response was: 'No way, it's got to be tech, it's got to be mobile, and it's got to be about motivation'. Since there was no original intention for professional design capability on this project, the conceptual space that existed for the design team to pivot and manoeuvre the project framing and boundaries was confined to what we could do under the radar without creating undesired additional work for implementers with already limited capacity. I experienced what felt like an inertia, with one implementer saying to me:

“ we just have to do this thing now, and it's too late to change it [... There's all these people involved, and we've already told people this is what we are doing, it's too complicated to change it, so let's just execute this one thing (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

If at an earlier stage there had been the space and intention for a more genuine co-design process that allowed for a reframing of the problem from the nurses' standpoint, the whole project may have benefited. If different questions, ideas, and outcomes could have been explored upstream, the design solution would have likely changed downstream. But because of the accidental and late-stage addition of my design capability, because it was not budgeted for in cost or time, and because decision-makers were less aware of the potential value of co-designing with the nurses, the project was held hostage to objectives that were locked in by interests fixated on those objectives. The constraints for co-designing in this instance were especially challenging as they created questions around the roles, agency and decision-making power of different actors in the design process. My experience made me question how the Development system could avoid superficial design objects and processes by creating space upfront for problem setting with users through co-design techniques.

Design as a process was initially understood by the implementers and funders as a formula to produce a digital product solution rather than as a facilitative and collaborative practice that could navigate the technical, cultural and human complexity involved in solving the underlying issues. From my designer standpoint, the mobile phone application seemed like a surface level solution that ignored the root causes. Short-term, narrowly defined, and technically-oriented 'band-aid' solutions such as these limit the space for addressing systemic challenges. I personally found this a challenge. In this project, it was

not something I had control over, since a complex set of relationships and institutional constraints shaped what the core team was able to do. Hence, the relational and power dynamics in the setup of the project’s governance affected the design and what kind of value is created as a result. It matters what’s the agreement, who’s doing the designing, how they’re doing it, where they’re doing it, why they’re doing it and what permissions and resources have been provided to complete the project. An exogenous design team flying in from ‘outside’ is likely to deliver something quite different from an endogenous design team that is resident in the country and has a different kind of stake in the issues. A design team that is funder-initiated is going to deliver results that vary from those of a design team that was accidentally or voluntarily initiated. I learned that all of these relationships and setups matter.

A summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and what was challenging from the designer standpoint is provided below:

Table 5.2 Summary of designer standpoint in case study one

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inspired an obsessive determination ● Provided a sense of fulfilment and reward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distance and power of actors making big decisions ● Predetermination and superficiality of solution

The citizen standpoint

For nurses, the value of design was linked to shifting power dynamics (albeit limited and temporary), affirming agency and ensuring relevance in the solutions. According to one of the early architects of this project, a deliberate attempt was made to seek input from ‘unconventional voices’ who are usually excluded from decision-making in this context (Dandonoli 2013). The term unconventional voices was used to specifically refer to the community health nurses, who were considered at the bottom of the health system hierarchy in Ghana, and often excluded from the deliberations that directly affect them. In this case, their voices were intentionally prioritised from the beginning and were placed at the centre of design decisions as they would be the primary ‘end-users’ of this solution.

They were involved in several of the design process activities mentioned earlier, notably the design research, the co-design workshops, and then user-testing during the five iterations of user testing and building of the digital solution. Secondary users of this solution include their supervisors and community members, who were also involved to a lesser extent in the design research and user testing activities.

Following the design research, a strategic health system layers map and reporting lines map were produced to help articulate how the primary and secondary users interacted in relation to the rest of the health system layers:

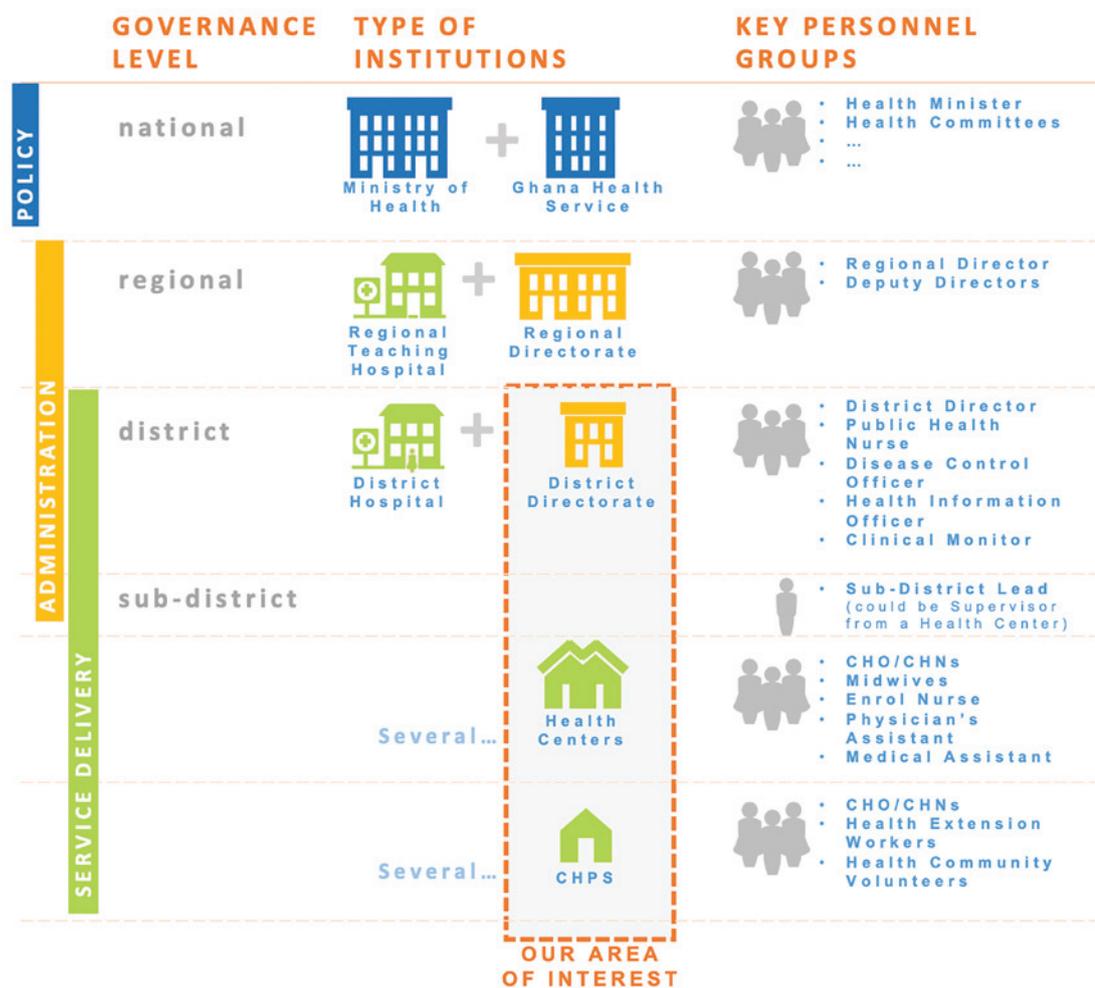


Figure 5.2 Map of health system layers (CCH Service Design Blueprint 2014)

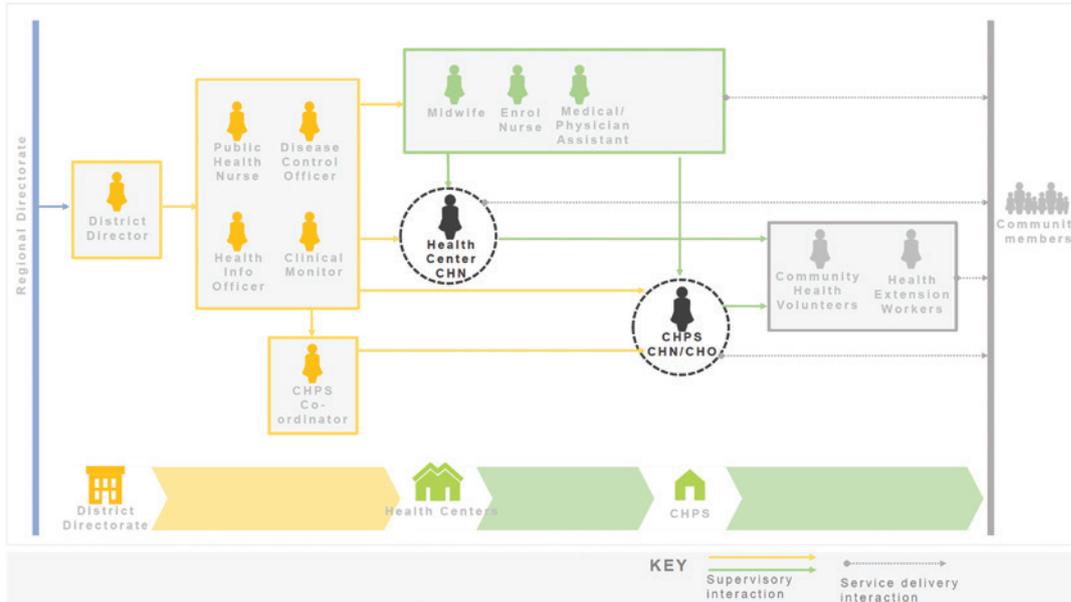


Figure 5.3 Map of nurses supervisory reporting lines (CCH Service Design Blueprint 2014)

‘My voice is sought and respectfully heard’

The design research activities took place over a two-week period and involved seven 2-hour focus group discussions (with nurses), seven 4-hour experience mapping workshops (with nurses), and twelve 60-minute semi-structured interviews (with nurse supervisors). To facilitate these conversations in ways where the nurses felt as though they could speak openly, the research team ensured the supervisors and nurses were separated. This helped create a safe space for the nurses to share their stories, motivations and challenges freely. Some nurses shared that the storytelling template, used during focus group discussions, was what helped them open up about what was troubling them. They would walk in to the room, sit down, and the first thing they would be asked to do was to draw (or write) two stories: one story of ‘one time I felt frustrated in my work...’ and another story of ‘one time I felt satisfied in my work ...’ (see examples in below images).



Figure 5.4 Examples of the 'my story' activity templates used with nurses

The nurses would then be asked to share their stories with the group by narrating it aloud. My reflective journal kept a record of the numerous comments from the nurses on how helpful it was for them to air their feelings and talk freely about the issues together. As well as soliciting over 120 stories from the nurses, this storytelling technique set the tone of the project's engagement by creating an alternative, supportive space from which they were able to sense, reflect and act together.

Other nurses pointed to the experience-mapping activities as a deeply reflective and important step for feeling that they were heard. The nurses were the ones who actively recorded the detail in these mapping sessions to comprehensively document what was working and what was not working in their critical workflows. These four workflows covered (1) routine home visits; (2) community outreach; (3) supervisory visits; and (4) monthly data reporting. For each of these workflows, there were six layers to the mapping: the steps, the purpose behind each step, the things which needed to be amplified, the things which needed to be fixed, ideas on how to fix them generally, and then specific ideas that could be delivered through mobile technology. One nurse, in the post-session reflection, described experience mapping as a challenging process and, at the same time, she shared how rewarding it was to see her own thinking develop and the workflow to progressively be built-up through the rounds of questions and peer discussion

that were used to facilitate the session. Together, we were able to identify acute areas for improvements based on the frustrations the nurses had pointed to in their experience maps. Some indicative quotes from the design research conducted in 2013 are provided for context.

““ *Before you get to my community, there is a big bush, then there is sexual harassment, and then there is snake bite (Grace 1, nurse).*

““ *When they are here they are here for only one hour, all they do is ask for this register and that register. After that is done, they are out, they don't even have time to tell you what you can do better. I would want my supervisors to stay for a day or two to see how I actually go about things (Grace 1, nurse).*

““ *As a [nurse] you are everything, from doctor to accountant, from labourer to statistician – but we do not have the things we need to do our jobs (Grace 1, nurse).*

““ *I want to be recognised for my hard work and devotion to my work (Grace 1, nurse).*

““ *I feel frustrated when clients think I don't know my job (Grace 1, nurse).*

During the design research, nurses openly shared the challenges they faced with the lack of access to training and skills development, opportunities for professional career advancement, limited performance feedback, not being respected by supervisors/peers and clients, social isolation from being away from family/friends, and the stress of managing their workload to meet what they felt were unrealistic targets. Generally, the nurses expressed a strong sense of purpose and desire to provide quality care to their clients. The design team distilled the nurses' words into a series of 'value statements' that were used as the basis for the project's purpose.

1. Respect me	Outcome 1.1 Nurses feel respected by their peers, supervisors and in their communities.	Outcome 1.2 A well-engaged and self-motivated frontline health workforce both in and out of work.
2. Reward me	Outcome 2.1 A valued and appreciated cadre of nurses who are incentivised to always give their best.	Outcome 2.2 Performance is measured holistically, the emphasis is on quality of care as much as quantity of care.
3. Teach me	Outcome 3.1 Nurse capacity and confidence is developed on the job while client care is enhanced.	Outcome 3.2 Gaps in individual nurse capability are addressed through helpful feedback mechanisms for nurses from supervisors.
4. Inspire me	Outcome 4.1 An emotionally and psychologically resilient frontline health workforce that is able to cope in the face of challenges.	
5. Inform me	Outcome 5.1 A well-informed and knowledgeable frontline health workforce with easy access to relevant information and clinical support.	Outcome 5.2 Nurses are well-informed about how they are performing in relation to their activity targets.
6. Connect me	Outcome 6.1 A strong sense of comradeship, peer to peer sharing and close-knit fellowship among the nurses.	Outcome 6.2 More collaborative relationships and open communication channels between nurses and supervisors.
7. Equip me	Outcome 7.1 Nurses maximise what they can achieve out of everyday by streamlining their workflow.	
8. Believe in me	Outcome 8.1 Greater empathy and understanding among supervisors towards nurses and their challenges	

Figure 5.5 Nurse value statements defining project outcomes (CCH Service Design Blueprint 2014)

Many of the nurses expressed both surprise and excitement because they were being asked to influence and shape tools that could assist them in their work. They expressed feeling dignified by being asked to contribute their stories and ideas:

“ Participating in this has been educative and supportive (Grace 1, nurse).

“ I feel heard more through this process (Grace 1, nurse).

A few of the nurses who were enthusiastic about participating beyond the initial design research activities were invited to be co-designers as the process moved into sense-making, ideation, prototyping and user testing.

For sense-making, two nurses joined the core team to validate and iterate on the synthesis from the design research. The use of design tools such as ‘personas’ and ‘journey maps’ were developed from the 120 stories and 60 persona profiles shared by the nurses during the design research. The personas highlighted differentiating characteristics, especially intrinsic ones, between different user groups through the creation of fictitious and memorable characters.

The personas, journeys and early ideas that were developed by the core team were reflected back to the nurses through the use of participatory role-playing

and other interactive activities. Initially, the project team attempted doing this through paper and pen visualisations with the nurses, however, the nurses took the initiative to start acting out and role-playing scenarios. The core team adapted and leaned more on role-playing to enrich the experience of the nurses and align with their preferences when co-designing the ideas. This meant that the nurses maintained a high level of engagement. It also provided them with the space to point out gaps in the design team’s understanding, correct our misunderstandings, and generate ideas with a combined sense of groundedness and fun.

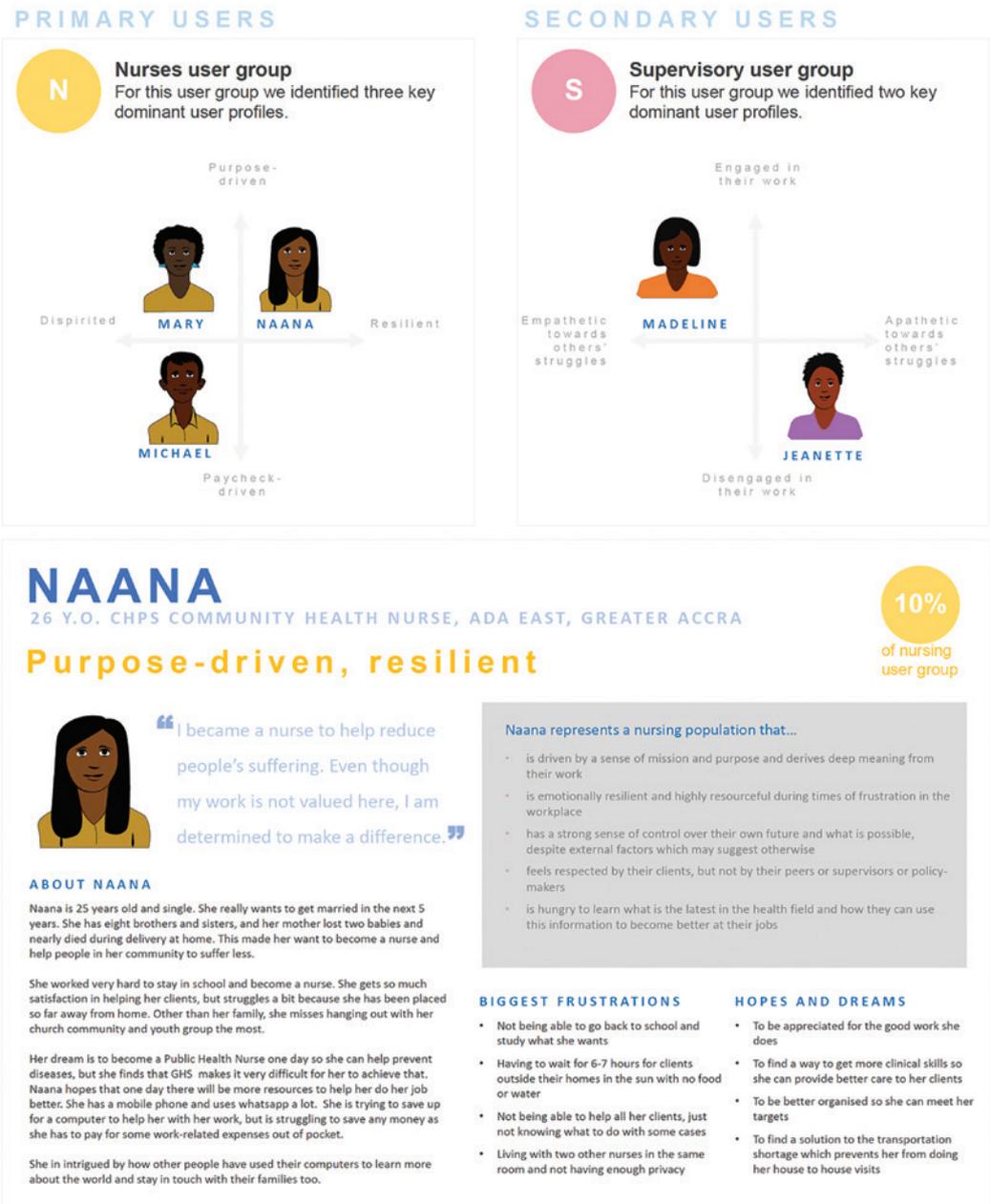


Figure 5.6 Example of the personas created collaboratively by the core team (CCH Service Design Blueprint 2014)

'I can see that my contribution made a difference'

For the prototyping and user testing, the core team engaged with a wider group of nurses in a series of co-design workshops to iterate on the formulation of the concepts and prototypes in various geographic districts. This stage took over nine months and involved more than 15 workshops and meetings with nurses and supervisors to develop the six modules on the mobile application. The nurses in particular shared their specific content needs for the Point-of-Care and Learning modules, as well as cultural appropriateness and nurses' lifestyle factors to ensure nuanced wellness information in the Staying Well module, detailed maps and flow of work activities for the Planning module and information that both nurses and supervisors valued and were to be displayed in the Achievement module and Supervisory dashboard. Five meetings with relevant leaders at the national and regional level of the Ghana Health Service were also conducted to ensure decision-support algorithms within the Point-of-Care module in line with national-level policy directives and technical standards. In addition to addressing content needs, nurses were invited to test out and feed into the user interface and aesthetic qualities of the application (see below).



Figure 6.7 Evolution of 'CHN on the Go' mobile application (Grameen Foundation project files 2014)

During the prototyping and user testing activities, the nurses continued to entrust the core team with personal stories as to why certain features would work or not. Nurses shared how they felt isolated from friends, family and peers as they can be posted in remote areas of the country. In the Ghana Health Service hierarchy, the CHN cadre is the lowest level and therefore, they are not used to being involved in the decisions that affect their work. By creating a different kind of space where the nurses could negotiate their position, the co-design activities challenged this narrative about their place in the hierarchy and changed the relational power dynamics they were used to:

I was so happy to be called upon as one of the CHNs to be a stakeholder in this programme ... I feel that my points that I brought out were respected and were taken (Grace 1, nurse).

The nurses reported they were satisfied with the co-design activities as they enabled them to express and discuss their needs. They felt as though they were thoroughly listened to and understood in relation to what the solution should focus on and how. The nurses shared how rare it was to feel that their views mattered in decisions; whereas, in this project, they felt listened to and understood. They also felt empowered as they saw their ideas shape real and useful solutions through the evolution of the prototypes.



Photograph 5.1 Collaborative design workshops with nurses in South Dayi, Ghana, 2013 (Author)



Photograph 5.2 Collaborative design workshops with implementers in Accra, Ghana, 2013 (Author)

Through the co-design process, the role of the nurses as active agents of change was recognised and respected by some of the other actors. Initially, the nurses were considered as ‘beneficiaries’ by the implementing and funding organisations. For the designers, they were initially considered as ‘end-users’. Instead, as the project progressed, their position and power shifted to being ‘co-designers’ of their solutions. The space created by the co-design process challenged the way others perceive the position and contribution of the nurses in this project.

‘The outcome is what we needed’

In addition to sharing their experience of the design process, the nurses also reflected on the subsequent design object. Despite the earlier concerns about the design process that I shared from my designer standpoint, nurses stated that the digital solution addressed some of the needs that they expressed during the design process. The evaluation team from JSI concluded that design contributed positively to the realisation of pilot outcomes related to job satisfaction and health worker motivation (LaFond & Davis 2016). Findings from the evaluation of the effectiveness of the project indicate high levels of adoption, sustained use, and satisfaction relating to the CHN on the Go application among the nurses

(Alva & Magalona 2016). Among those surveyed, 94 percent of nurses reported that the CHN on the Go application met their needs, 49 percent reported using the application more than five times per week by the end of the pilot, while the majority claimed that they would continue to use it once the pilot ended.

Through rounds of qualitative interviews conducted by the evaluation team, the nurses shared in detail how the design object met their needs. It enabled continued learning and improved clinical knowledge during service delivery, provided greater self-confidence which enabled better supervisory recognition and connected them to a peer network for support. The nurses shared how the mobile application broadened their clinical knowledge, and guided them to provide the right information to clients (note: all the nurse quotes in the remainder of this section are from the standpoint of Grace, nurse, as quoted in LaFond & Davis 2016).

“ If am finding it difficult to counsel a client on a particular issue, I just go through [the App] and then find some steps and [advise the client] how to make an informed choice (Grace 2, nurse).

“ Because family planning pictures are there, Ebola pictures are there, even STI's, they are there, you can read about [and understand] it, show [clients] the pictures... it tells them clearer (Grace 2, nurse).

“ Sometimes even if you are not holding the phone but because you have gone through it, you are [confident in your knowledge] and maybe you meet a mother that says the children are too much and I want family planning. You will know the [information] that will suit them (Grace 2, nurse).

The design output was relevant to the nurses in that it now allowed them to handle clinical work tasks more easily than previously. This was particularly useful in cases where no reference materials or treatment protocols were available, or where such items were damaged. It was also particularly useful in cases where nurses would previously not have had answers for a client situation, or were not always able to call their supervisors in real-time to ask them what to do. In addition to clinical knowledge, the nurses also shared how the mobile application increased their self-confidence to advise clients since they trusted in its accuracy:

“ It improves on our confidence level and also increases our knowledge (Grace 2, nurse).

“ The application is a good thing that is helping us here... it is helping us to be sure of what we are doing exactly (Grace 2, nurse).

“ You feel good... you feel that whatever you are telling the [client] is not a lie. What you are saying is the truth, so you yourself will not have any doubt (Grace 2, nurse).

The design output was relevant to the nurses in that it increased their belief in themselves which in turn had positive effects on their sense of purpose and motivation. In addition to self-confidence, some nurses also shared how they felt they were receiving greater recognition from their supervisors:

“ They [the supervisors] now see that this is what you have planned for the day and you have carried it out. So they really see that in fact we are doing our work. But at first, they thought we weren't doing anything (Grace 2, nurse).

“ [When] we're able to exceed that target that we set, they applaud us for the good work that we did and it was ok, it was fun. And also recently we went for some interview on the learner's app and they gave us a certificate. So it shows that someone is looking at what you are doing and they will applaud you for that (Grace 2, nurse).

This sense of recognition and appreciation developed from the visibility of the nurses' weekly plans and accomplishments through the supervisors' dashboard, which also formed part of the final outputs. The supervisors were able to support the nurses more easily, more promptly and comprehensively than previously. When the nurses stated what their plans are through the app, the supervisors felt they could follow up to make sure the work was being done. They could also arrange their own daily plans to support their teams, by being more present or following up afterwards with greater targeted focus. In addition to recognition from supervisors, nurses reported feeling more connected and respected by their peers and clients than before.

“ It has given us much respect because it creates communication and assurance between us and the clients (Grace 2, nurse).

“ Hmm, it [CHN on the Go] has changed my life in a way, things that I don't know before, my eyes are opened to [them]... it has given [me] the opportunity to get in contact with colleagues (Grace 2, nurse).

The views of supervisors and regional management from the Ghana Health Service agreed with the nurses regarding the benefits, calling on ways to expand the application beyond the pilot districts:

“ If we have the resources to expand it so that all CHNs in the region could have access to it, that would be great (Ghana Health Service Regional Director).

The evaluation team's qualitative interviews with the nurses and supervisors confirmed that the resulting design solution, being the CHN on the Go mobile application, helped address many factors pertaining to nurse motivation and effectiveness identified during the design research. These included feelings in relation to clinical knowledge, self-confidence, recognition from supervisors, connection with peers and perceived respect from the community (LaFond & Davis 2016). The quantitative survey results pointed to the solution making the work life of the nurses easier, their personal life happier, and relationships with peers and supervisors better:

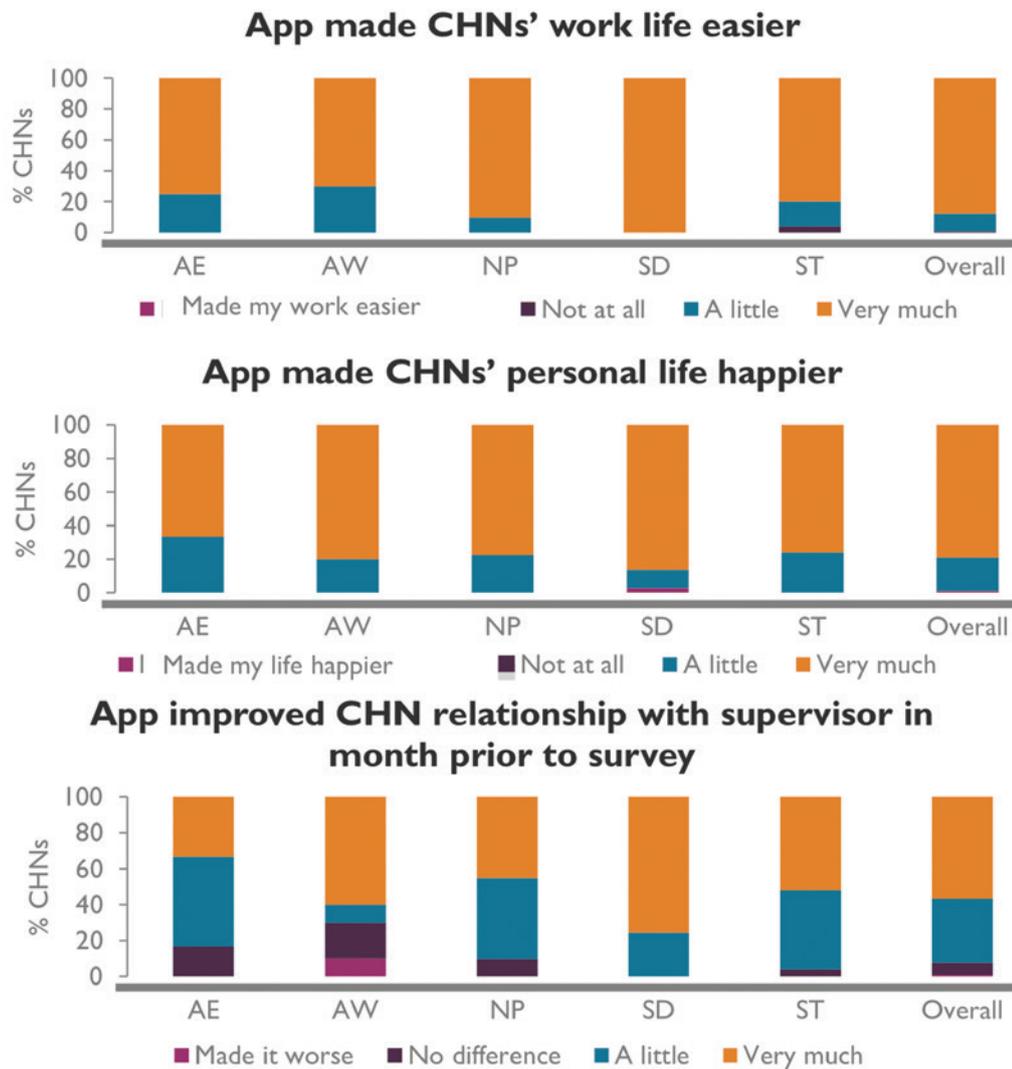
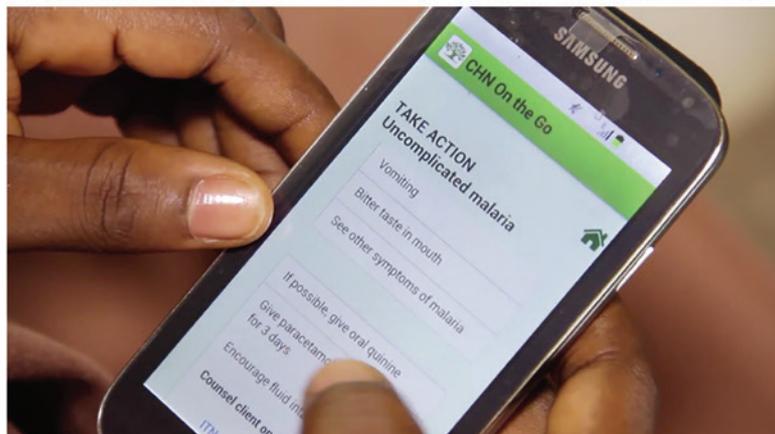


Figure 5.8 Quantitative survey findings from JSI evaluation (Alva & Magalona 2016, p.26)

The evaluation team observed that the high levels of uptake, appreciation, and use of the mobile application found in the endline survey and reported in interviews were linked to the learning and empathy that emerged from the co-design activities. This is what was then translated and actioned into a solution that was relevant to the nurses' needs. It was the continued commitment to user-defined criteria and user testing to inform the iterations that helped the solution gain a tight fit with the nurses' preferences (LaFond & Davis 2016). According to the quantitative survey, the general job satisfaction among the community health nurses (not specifically linked to the mobile application or project) increased by an average of 11.5% between baseline and endline (Alva & Magalona 2016). The reasons as to why this number may have remained low despite enthusiasm about the solution's other consequences are speculative. One evaluation team member

who had not been directly involved in the design activities in-country viewed the project as a failure based on the endline survey, in that it did not show a significant improvement in 'motivation'. This view could have been influenced by measurement metrics that were narrow and/or did not reflect nurses' concepts of motivation. This view could have been based on the premise that there was such a small quantifiable impact on the one thing that the project was originally set out to achieve. In contrast, other actors have described the project as a resounding success given the shift in other unintended indicators such as confidence, knowledge, recognition, and supportive supervision – which were all things that were expressed as priorities by the nurses in their words. This contrast between what was expressed as the experiential problem by the nurses and what was more narrowly defined as the problem by technical experts points to the criticality of solving a problem that is framed meaningfully and from multiple standpoints.

Photographs 5.3
Nurses with mobile
app on the job
(Grameen Foundation
project files 2015)



Challenges of designing within the project's predefined boundaries

I have reflected at times on whether the design solution in this case was fairly superficial relative to the extent of the challenges experienced by the nurses. Due to the project's predefined scope, budget limitations, time constraints, and perhaps other factors pertaining to the design process and design agency involved, the design object did not address the majority of issues raised by the nurses during the design research. Also, it did not go deeper than the surface in proposing structural changes to address the interconnected root causes of the issues raised by the nurses. Despite all the positive improvements the design solution was able to achieve, there still remained a range of systemic challenges identified in the design research that could not be addressed through a mobile phone application. Some of these challenges included financial remuneration, formal career advancement, logistics and transport gaps, and the availability of medical infrastructure, equipment, or medicines needed for nurses to do their jobs effectively (LaFond & Davis 2016). These systemic issues that negatively influence motivation were documented by the design team as priority areas for future focus. Interestingly, although the project did not intend to provide solutions linked to these more systemic issues, the survey data from JSI's evaluation pointed to an overall decline in the feeling of not having enough resources and an increase in the percentage of nurses who did not feel their pay was a concern. The availability of the phone for use by nurses could have been a contributing factor to such changes (Alva & Magalona 2016).

Despite the high levels of collaboration with nurses throughout the design process, I considered the nature of participation as somewhat tokenistic since the nurses' influence on agenda-setting and problem framing was limited. The parameters and terms for the nurses' input had been set by others. This begs the questions, was this project actually solving the issues that mattered most to the nurses? Or were the decisions made by the nurses and core team limited by boundaries set by exogenous others? Who was really making the final design decisions at the end of the day? Despite the significant emphasis on the nurses' voices to guide decision-making throughout the project's lifecycle, the power to shape and change the solution remained in the hands of exogenous others. Essentially, the nurses and other health system officials were invited into a vision and process of change set up for them by a foreign group of actors. This mirrors the debate on power and participatory development raised in the literature review chapters and will be problematised further in Chapter Eight.

A summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and what was challenging from the nurses’ standpoint is provided below:

Table 5.3 Summary of citizen standpoint in case study one

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered a solution with a high degree of relevance and fit to needs and preferences. • Challenged the dominant narrative by creating space to be heard, understood, and respected • Empowered them as co-designers with influence on day-to-day decision-making 	(not identified)

The implementer standpoint

For implementers, design was valuable as it offered ways to humanise technical knowledge, strengthened capability for creative problem solving, and improved alignment and trust among partners. The implementers of this solution were the technical and programme staff from the NGOs overseeing this project. They were involved, to varying degrees, in the design activities mentioned in the earlier summary (Table 5.1). Whether they were dedicated full-time in-country or flying in at specific points, the implementers were unanimous in finding design to be valuable. They felt that the co-design process supported them to check their assumptions by contextualising their expertise in grounded and human-centred terms. They found the design activities supported their work by translating otherwise theoretical or complex material through visualisation. They also found that the design artefacts helped change the nature of conversations within their organisations as they were looking more outward toward the nurses as the experts, moreso than inward toward themselves as the experts.

'I don't have to have the answers before starting'

The knowledge gleaned from the design process was not necessarily new knowledge. It had already been documented to varying extents in the formal public health literature. Instead, design research contrasted with traditional formative research that would traditionally produce new knowledge for publication through theoretically oriented formats. The value of design in this project was not in what new knowledge was uncovered for addition to the literature per se. It was more how it translated existing knowledge into action by integrating it with other types of knowledge, particularly, the lived experiences of citizens delivering services. In turn, this experiential knowledge of the nurses became more valued by the implementers. Implementers with qualifications and expertise in public health shared their views on how this design process offered something different:

“ [Usually] we start by understanding the landscape of what people have done before ... So already it is somewhat bias[ed], we are starting to look at it from a particular lens. To what degree then do we listen to the needs of the users? Are we as open minded? I don't know. I mean, I don't think so, because we are starting to listen to them from that lens as well, right? So this is where design thinking does a good job of saying: I know nothing, so let me then really understand the needs of the user (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).

“ This process has people stop and think at that early stage, instead of using a retrospective [approach such as evaluation] (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

Here, a reflective design approach early on helped actors who are used to being invited into problem spaces as specialists and 'experts' to instead start by saying 'I know nothing'. This demonstrates the value of design in helping people reflect on the relationship with their form of knowledge, the problem in a situated context, and the tacit knowledge of people experiencing said problem. Deep involvement in a reflective design process offered implementers a grounded reframing of the problematics based on the lived experiences of the nurses who stood to gain or lose from their decisions. According to several implementer accounts, usually in other projects, they find themselves having to jump straight into carrying out the activities in the project plans they inherit based on a host of assumptions. In this case, a reflective design process helped reorient

implementers to operate in a more evolving, negotiated and non-linear process that is uniquely situated. This reflective co-design process forced implementers to question the reasons behind their assumptions as well as the appropriate place for their kind of knowledge in this particular context.

“ ... going through this design process helped me be very humble, or try to be at least... taking a fresh page, sitting down, asking people, listening, truly listening... then layering that on to my own experience and other best practices and see where those meet (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).

This implementer reflected on how the design process helped start her inquiry and shape her understanding of the problem from the nurses' angle. This starting point was rooted in the behavioural preferences of the nurses, their cultural values and social networks, before layering any technical knowledge. Other implementers also reported a strong emotional affinity for the nurses' situation:

I think having users in the room with us as we were trying to make decisions around the design helped gain a deeper sense of empathy and understanding. Then I think, some of the roleplays that we did with the nurses and the storyboarding we did with them all helped. All of the design tools help with empathy. Unless you are doing them just to tick a box, you have to be a robot not to gain a deeper sense of empathy and understanding. I think it just automatically happens to you (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

I would say the way [design thinking] has changed us is that it has helped us to understand how we will put the person first or what the person says first in what we are doing (Software programmer, as cited in LaFond & Davis 2016, p. 30).

Through contextualising understanding and placing the nurses' needs at the centre of the implementers' actions, the design process influenced the way hundreds of decisions were made about the direction and substance of the solution. In contrast to the critiques about design practices presented in Chapter Three, and in the last (citizen standpoint) section of this chapter about design practices being superficial, one implementer believed the opposite to be true. The reflective co-design approach taken was compared to other approaches that may have come in with a more fixed idea on what the problem and solution combination were:

“ doing it another way we would have probably gotten only one or two of those insights... if we had not done it with design thinking... we might have come up with a transportation app, like pick-ups and making sure buses get there for the nurses (Erica IV2, NGO implementer).

This reflection suggests that anchoring in a reflective co-design approach supported the team with seeing the world from the nurses' angle and helped them incorporate a wider range of perspectives in their acts of designing than they are used to. This, in turn, produced deeper and broader insights that would not have been possible with traditional, linear or narrower approaches.

'I can understand in human terms what was complex'

Specific design practices were also described as bringing clarity to otherwise complex concepts through the use of visualisation. For this project, the design team translated complex material into something accessible through sketches, models and interactive role plays. Such artefacts embodied knowledge that is not easily communicated using tables, words and numbers. For example, through the use of visual and annotated experience maps, the implementers gained a more situated understanding of the otherwise abstract workflows and challenges experienced by the nurses. These maps were enlarged on walls and used to facilitate interactive walk-throughs (based on guided meditation techniques) during workshops. They provided stakeholders with a novel way to easily digest the information. Implementers contrasted these methods with the usual reliance on text heavy and statistical formats used to shape understanding and inform decisions. Some reflections on the visual tendencies of design practices included:

“ We [implementers] tend to function in things that are complicated, so much, that we complicate things, and we focus on bringing all these details together, that we are all about the information rather than how it is presented sometimes (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).

“ Design approaches things, very simply, in a more visual way, which let’s be honest, I think much of the world actually thinks visually, that’s how people digest information... It is when things are visually appealing and presented in such a way that it actually sticks in someone’s brain (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

As such, replacing the usual PowerPoint presentations, full of graphs and statistical averages, with visual narratives on the walls had the effect of humanising and taming the inherent complexity. The visualisations fashioned a more human character to the otherwise abstract and unrelatable characteristics of a known problem – or more aptly, a problem known – in a particular format. In this project, the visualisations created by the design team were not intended to be accurate representations of absolute realities. Instead, the system maps, personas and experience maps provided the broader implementation team with new ways of seeing old issues. They offered different and multiple angles from which to understand complex concepts:

“ It sounds like a small thing, but it’s not at all... this is how people digest complicated information, see patterns, make the decisions they need to make to find the solutions they need to. That’s number one that a [design] approach really brings in (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

“ I made sure that those personas were something that we printed and put on the wall. At some point, whether you wanted to or not, your eyes go to that wall and you are like: yes, these are the people we are building these solutions for (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).

This multi-angle perspective-taking was noted as particularly valuable for elucidating the nuance in the actual lived experiences of the nurses. These nuances can otherwise feel more abstract and distant when implementers are expected to rely on technical, quantitative or theoretical material to inform their understanding and guide their decisions. Other articles on frontline health-worker motivation had less emphasis on direct stories and accounts by nurses, and more on academic style publications. The designers on this project were not constrained to certain protocols imposed by academic standards. The design visualisations were deliberately used to evoke emotion and constructive

empathy among implementers. The intentional use of visualisation techniques to humanise complexity created a sense of relatedness and connectedness between the implementers and the nurses experiencing the problem. In this way, design had a valuable translation function. It supported people in translating known information, layering that with their own expertise, and integrating all of this with the nurses' experiences. There is a balance to be struck when trying to build on what relevant work has been done in the past, while still being sensitive to and grounded in user-defined challenges and opportunities.

The translation of complex concepts into relatable information also disrupted the nature of conversations being had by implementers, and particularly how they viewed their own roles in relation to the nurses. The conversations among the project team became about the outside-in perspectives of the nurses rather than the traditional inside-out default of an organisation. This change was also evident in the way people, who had been involved in the design activities, talked about the project from the perspective of the nurses with other stakeholders:

“ [The Country Director] who has been involved in the [design] process from the beginning, you could tell from... the way she spoke completely from the view of the users, talking about the users as guiding everything we do, helping them along their user journey, even the terms she was using, terms she picked up from the design process... you could tell that she really understood what it meant to put the user first and to design from a place where you really understood the problem, and to move from that to develop something. Now, I compare that with [someone at headquarters], when they talk about what we do, they say: we have this HCD approach to really attack the problem... so they mention it, and acknowledge it... more like 'I know, we do HCD' but not what that actually means. They are not speaking from user stories, their language hasn't changed, it is more a reference to what we do (Erica IV2, NGO implementer).

This demonstrates how those not involved in the design activities directly talked about it as another element in the organisational toolkit for solving problems. However, it did not change the way they understood the problem or their relationship to the nurses in the same vein as those who experienced the design activities first-hand. So, this change in the way people talk about the issues did not really extend beyond the core team who had been actively involved in the

design process. For people not actively involved, the project was ‘business as usual’ for them, and although they referenced the design process, they continued to articulate the issues from their removed perspective, rather than the lived experiences of the nurses’. For those implementers who were actively involved, the visual and participatory design activities provided them with a new space to listen and reframe assumptions, new language to articulate a more human-centred translation of complex issues, and new methods to ground decisions in the lived experiences of people rather than their institutions.

‘I adapt and pivot based on the realities, not the plan’

From the standpoint of the implementers, engaging within a reflective design process was valuable because it helped improve their creative capacity through the emphasis on continuous iteration and referring back to the nurses (LaFond & Davis 2016). Some implementers shared that they were more emotionally invested and passionate about this project than others because of their design experience. One implementer shared how they are not a stranger to using participatory methods, as there is often an occasion to talk to a community representative in a typical project – however, their experience with a reflective co-design process was different because of the relentless iteration with nurses throughout:

“ There is always points at which I am going to talk to a community member or have a quick focus group, but [using design] is like a “we can’t do our work without them” mentality. It’s the intention of “their voice matters”, “their voice counts” ... that’s the main difference, it’s the reasoning behind the behaviour, not necessarily the behaviour (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

“ [Design] helps to ground you in why you do the work that you do... I really like the intentionality of it... it’s purposeful. I am not being constantly bogged down by the details of my day, it’s a helpful reminder to bring me back from that (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

Beyond developing a greater intentionality and groundedness in their work, implementers believed that the co-design activities helped ‘open hearts’ and motivated people to do the best they could do to alleviate the challenges expressed by the nurses. They felt a renewed sense of motivation and thoughtfulness through the deep intentionality on user-defined priorities. One implementer shared how there are elements of working in Development that can

be demotivating over time. Their experience of co-designing with nurses on this project brought inspiration, optimism and momentum in what can sometimes be a disheartening environment.

““ *They were talking about the nurses and supervisors on a first-name basis and it seemed like their hearts had opened from the experience ... They felt that some of these people were really special and in a really tough environment. And there was a sense that they wanted to do the best job they could to help those people (NGO implementer as cited in LaFond & Davis 2016, p.30).*

““ *It has completely changed my approach to doing public health, and I have been doing public health for 15 years ... I do think it's a mind-set change, whether it's technique, or it's just this commitment to putting the end-users' ideas and needs first, and holding yourself accountable to that (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).*

They found design to be inspiring on a much deeper, personal level. They were brought so much closer to the nurses and that influenced their approach to doing development work.

'I connect more deeply with our shared purpose now'

As observed by JSI's evaluation team, one of the unique benefits of design for the implementers is that it did not just introduce yet another toolkit or step-by-step process, but facilitated a shift in individual mindset as well as collective working culture:

““ *[Design] involves a personal cultural shift ... like how to train ourselves in humility and understanding what role experience can play (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).*

““ *Design thinking helps us let go of the idea that our way is the only way, or our way is the right way. We need to step into the unknown and really embrace what we can discover through new methodologies and be willing to take that risk (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).*

Implementers reflected on design practices as offering new ways of thinking through problems and solutions. One implementer shared how tools such as personas and journey maps set them up to ask 'the right questions' from the perspective of someone else, while understanding that this exercise is not quite

static at the beginning of the project, but rather a dynamic and evolving process that is ongoing. They also shared how reflective design practices ‘open’ them and give them ‘freedom’ to be more creative. This point was highlighted as especially pertinent by implementers as they contrasted their design encounters to the rigid and risk-averse cultures of the organisations they worked for. They reflected on how design’s principle of holding multiple possibilities open was useful for guiding defensible decisions in ambiguous and iterative processes without getting lost:

“ It is okay to be unsure and uncertain, and that fog of ambiguity is actually a very powerful place to be in. But knowing when it’s okay to be in it and knowing when it’s absolutely time to get out of it. I think the capacity to open, and then explore, then close, is really important. It is something that designers do in a very disciplined way, they know which piece of the process they are in, whereas other people often open and then try to close very quickly, they don’t give enough time to really stay open and be in that fog of ambiguity (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

“ We gained a huge level of learning that could be shared across the organisation ... internally we learnt new methodologies and approaches to designing and implementing and evaluating projects... that’s an extremely powerful thing (Erica IV2, NGO implementer).

Interviewees shared how their encounters with design shifted how they would engage with citizens as co-designers and approach their work on other projects.

How decisions were made in the co-design process influenced a reorientation of individual-level accountability toward the user-defined criteria as a kind of informal and personal governance mechanism. For example, one implementer shared that their design encounters changed how the nurses became ‘your number one, that is who you are accountable to, it’s that person, that human.’ This reorientation in accountability meant implementers going beyond the usual single consultation with ‘beneficiaries’ at the beginning and then developing the project separately, and instead, it meant working with the nurses iteratively and flexibly throughout the project lifecycle:

“ So this question of are you just gathering a lot of insights, designing and implementing, and then you are done? Which is more of the traditional participatory action type model...? Or the

idea that you really gather insights and then work with at least some beneficiaries to design the solutions, and have the flexibility of making changes over time, but continuing to ask some of those same questions? (Erica IV3, NGO implementer)

“ A lot of projects involve the end-user but they ask questions and then do the analysis away from the end-user, and then tell the end-user what they need. In design thinking [the designer] sets up the framework and the template for data collection and analysis for you so you are collecting it and analysing it with the nurses, you are designing [the program] already [with them] (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).

The implementers shared how the co-design process was structured flexibly, which allowed them the space for more continuous feedback loops and course-correction than in traditional action-research or other comparable approaches.

According to the implementers, with other comparable approaches, the end-user emphasis may exist upfront to understand the needs, and then the project team proceeds with making planning and implementation decisions separately. The reflections of implementers distinguish design processes as more intrinsically embodying iterative cycles of failure and continuous learning from start to finish:

“ [We] were influenced by design's idea of pivots. And so creating space at periodic intervals... for a strong feedback loop with the nurses... just being intentional about asking those people who are most influenced by our programming what they think of it (Erica IV2, NGO implementer).

“ Failure is okay for us... We are like “we're just testing” to see if these things work... we are doing our best to not fail, but I think failure is okay... (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

The ways of working in design processes include failing early and pivoting, which require a more adaptive way of working than implementers may be used to. Although challenging to achieve within organisational settings that are unprepared for such shifts in mindset and culture, this orientation benefited implementers on this project. It created some safe space to reshape, or change direction, based on ongoing nurse input and dynamic nature of situated realities.

The comparison to other participatory approaches by the implementers also distinguished the value of design as building adaptive and creative capability that went beyond the project's parameters. Some of the learned capability seemed to transfer from expert designers to non-designers during the design process:

“ It requires some skill. I know that I could not have done what [the designers did]. Now I can kind of see it, I can see it better... but unless I had gone through it and seen it done. I don't think I would be able to do it (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

“ Ultimately, designers need to build the hell out of capacity, and then get the hell out of the way... to change the game... we actually need thousands of people who just wake up every morning thinking like this (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

Some implementers shared how they will independently integrate elements of design practices into their future work, and that the real value lies in having more and more people utilising such practices. In this project, the design process did not remain as something that is owned by the professionally trained designers. This more distributed ownership of the design process had longer term impacts on the attitudes and practices of implementers beyond this project's timeframe.

Going beyond the design team's contracted remit for this project, the design process inspired more thoughtful decisions and behaviours from implementers in their day-to-day work. Intimate and ongoing exposure to design practices also changed the capability of implementers to pivot and adapt in response to their evolving understandings of situated realities. They pushed the limits of their own comfort zones, defined success from the standpoint of the nurses, and iterated with the nurses in a new kind of adaptive working arrangement.

'Our relationships are more open and reciprocal'

This design process brought the implementers closer to the nurses and other health system actors. This closeness was noted by the implementers as one of the key differences to other approaches they tend to use instead. The closeness created a different kind of working relationship where nurses and other actors were meaningfully engaged as co-designers throughout various stages of the project. The nature of such a co-design engagement opened up new – as well as uncertain and ambiguous – spaces for reframing the issues that mattered most to the nurses and the strengthening of relationships in trusted partnerships:

““ *The things that linger are that empathy and understanding, and the communication you have with the different actors is now better as a result of having gone through the design process (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).*

““ *In the design workshops, we were all equals... We trusted each other's intentions, we were all doing what we were doing for the nurses, not for ourselves (Erica IV2, NGO implementer).*

In addition to closer relationships with the nurses, the co-design nature of the process prompted greater investment in trusted partnership relationships with the district, regional and national levels of the GHS. Implementers felt strongly about sharing decision-making responsibility with government partners, whose role as active co-designers weighed in on process decisions to ensure that the solution was compatible with the government's community health care protocols. It also ensured the linking of the Learning module on the mobile application to be accredited through the formal education system, which then holds potential to enhance the nurses' opportunities for professional development in the longer term. Despite career progression being one of the structural issues that was initially thought as not easily addressed by a mobile phone application, it seems there were still some small opportunities identified to support this indirectly. Sharing decision-making responsibility created a relationship dynamic where implementers and other actors built on each other's work through mutually respectful and reciprocal exchanges:

““ *The work that we have done with the Ghana Health Service has been really good, just like being intentional about that partnership with them and how we have involved them in the design process has been really valuable (Erica IV2, NGO implementer).*

““ *Going through that whole [design] process basically created a whole new world with a whole new language for those of us who were in the process; it created a worldview in which we were working, and a language that we could use to communicate with one another (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).*

The co-design process created a shared sense of purpose as well as a common language among the different actors. Careful facilitation that oriented

conversations towards the needs of the nurses acted as a kind of informal governance mechanism that helped build alignment in the relationship with GHS officials. As a result, the sustained interest and commitment to extend and support the CHN on the Go application beyond the initial life of the project pilot was also connected to the co-design nature of activities (LaFond & Davis 2016, p.47). More broadly, the relationships that implementers had with one another grew in strength as they felt united in achieving what they had defined together. It can be concluded that for implementers, this design process nurtured alignment and trust in relationships between actors through visual and participatory processes that make ideas tangible, while facilitating spaces for openness and non-judgement.

Implementers' tensions when encountering design

In contrast to many other projects and their over-reliance on numerical indicators, this project's intensive qualitative emphasis, from the initial design research, to JSI's evaluative process documentation, and my thesis-related interviews, all honed a nuanced understanding of people's encounters with design from different angles. However, documenting the positive changes for the nurses in qualitative terms such as confidence developed, relationships strengthened, and stress managed for example, did not lend itself to traditional quantitative measures of project success to do with health outcomes, or resources utilised:

“ This project is a typical example where your classic quantitative measures may not show a huge improvement, but qualitatively and experientially you might actually see a big difference (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).

“ The funder says here is what success looks like, and the grantee is looking at these very narrow constraints and going okay, well we can do that, but ultimately, we know it is maybe going to have an impact, but probably not (Erica IV2, NGO implementer).

One implementer raised this as a tension by referencing the Learning module in CHN on the Go application. There are in-built knowledge assessments that provide numerical measures to demonstrate improvements in the nurses' knowledge of certain health topics over time. However, if a nurse already knows the answer, or gets the answer from a colleague, then the numerical measures for knowledge improvement would not tell the whole story. One implementer shared how utilising more shadowing and role-playing techniques picked up from the design

process helped produce a more qualitative appreciation of reality that could work in conjunction with other numerical data. This type of qualitative appreciation engendered by the design process was in stark contrast to the way the rest of the organisation continued to define what success looked like. Implementers shared this disconnect with their own organisation:

“ So [management at HQ] came up with this idea of a unifying goal... to reach 30 million poor people by 2030... In some ways, it is kind of inspiring to try and reach that number, but at the same time, for me, it's the quality of the reach as well. It could be that we reach that number because we sent SMS messages to 30 million people, but has that really changed their lives at all? (Erica IV2, NGO implementer)

“ You may reach a million people or even a hundred million people, but how you reach them or how the impact you had on them isn't necessarily looked at or addressed, then what's the point? Right? (Erica IV1, NGO implementer)

Implementers questioned the absence of defining success more qualitatively and in user-defined terms within their organisation. One implementer linked this absence to the fact that decision-makers with the greatest power are often removed from the lived experiences of people and hence when defining success from their own position there is greater susceptibility to lack a human dimension:

“ [Success on projects] is usually defined by the funder, which is a problem, because I don't think the funders have a deep sense of empathy (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

Although the design process helped implementers in-country gain depth and proximity to the human dimension by nurturing a greater qualitative appreciation for what the real-lived experiences of nurses felt like, the arbitrary defining of success by non-present decision-makers based on numbers reached remained. Grounded reality can be a source of disorientation and tension for implementers. This is exacerbated by design research insights that uncover unanticipated opportunities for meaningful human-centred change, but that do not neatly fall into existing institutional definitions of success.

According to almost all the implementers interviewed, taking a design-led process takes a lot more time upfront. For the implementers based in-country, there were

hundreds of unaccounted hours put in over late nights and weekends since the budget and time was not factored in to deliver on the project's ambition while using a design-led approach from the beginning:

“ One challenge in trying to practice it, is the time that is required. It needs to be built in to the way in which we implement, without giving it the time it needs, you find it easy to be pulled away from what design teaches us IV1.

“ As amazing as design thinking is, it takes a bit of time, for all the right reasons, but we are not always afforded that time ... essentially we are going to need X % more time to actually develop this in order for us to do well (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

More time tends to require more money. Hiring in design capability was considered expensive by implementers on this project, particularly because the design process' less-defined, more ambiguous front-end made it harder to convince others, like internal stakeholders and funders, how and why it was worthwhile to invest more time and money in it:

“ For me it's been hard to sell it, people have to go through it to understand how it's different, which means it can be hard to sell to donors, it's hard for people to see outside of the box of product when you talk about human centred design (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

“ There is a big marketing and influencing piece that needs to happen, for designers to help other people understand it (Erica IV2, NGO implementer).

Implementers found that not being able to communicate to their stakeholders upfront where exactly the design process may lead was particularly challenging. There was clearly a tension around having to personally experience the design process in order to grow an appreciation of its potential value.

Engagement with a co-design process may hold real potential to shift the way people think and work in Development projects, but it is evident that it is not always comfortable for all, and can be challenging and taxing for some. According to LaFond and Davis (2016), one implementer reported frustration with the apparent lack of structure in the design process:

““ *This is a very different way to do programming; for things to be constantly changing for the first six months of the project. You really don't know where to go because your starting point always changes (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).*

This tension of not knowing upfront where the process may lead was corroborated in my own interviews with implementers:

““ *It was interesting to see how people were resistant along the way and it gave me certain insight into what it would take to use this approach for different actors (Erica IV2, NGO implementer).*

““ *There is the difficulty by which you start this way, you don't know where it can take you. It becomes very difficult for some people to be comfortable with that approach, one that doesn't define things too much upfront, with design it takes longer to get to the specifics, that's the whole point. You need a way to bring them along this process and use this approach comfortably (Erica IV1, NGO implementer).*

If more and more implementers are to engage in design processes, there will need to be more thought about how to help them be comfortable with non-linear practices that can be in direct opposition to the way they have been trained to frame problems, design solutions, and then implement them. Their comfort zone could be more inclined to greater certainty and control rather than the fluidity engendered in typical design processes.

A summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and challenging from the implementer standpoint is provided below:

Table 5.4 Summary of implementer standpoint in case study one

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Implementer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grounded a reframing of the problem based on lived experience ● Distilled and humanised complex information through visualization ● Facilitated a shift in individual behaviour and collective working culture. ● Strengthened capability to adapt through iterative prototyping and testing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time and cost involved in doing design properly (especially when not factored in upfront). ● Classic quantitative measures did not show the qualitative and experiential impact. ● Coping with having to let go of control of the process and the ambiguity of not having predefined answers.

The funder standpoint

For funders and those who evaluate projects on behalf of funders, the inclusion of design practices were considered valuable in offering greater efficiencies and risk reduction, increasing likelihood of sustained ownership locally, and re-orienting accountability toward citizens. The funders of this project were largely absent from the day-to-day of the design process. On behalf of the funder, JSI conducted the learning, monitoring and evaluation of the project through a baseline, an endline and two rounds of intensive qualitative process documentation. This section of the chapter is based on interviews with evaluation team members reflecting on the contribution of design and any challenges in the project. Although this was a first-time experience with a design-led project for the evaluation team, they reflected on their own journey of scepticism, curiosity and then advocacy toward design practices throughout their intimate three-year involvement with the project.

‘I like the emphasis on fail fast, fail cheap’

Specifically, they shared that although design processes have been criticised by others for being ambiguous and time consuming upfront, they believed that the

'pain' was an investment in greater efficiencies and reduced risk of investment failure over the long run:

“ The selling point for design is: instead of investing 100 million dollars over five years to do a specific scope of work and then realising a lot of it wasn't as successful as you thought, design gives you a set of tool box for thinking... at least the first year, to figure out exactly what that intervention should look like and get it right (Richard IV3, private funder).

“ That is the selling point for design, it gives you a structured approach to designing a better programme, at the end of the day, that is where the value add is (Richard IV2, private funder).

The value here was described as a different kind of practical rigour by anticipating the nurses' experiences early enough to identify, adapt to, and therefore mitigate unanticipated risks that may otherwise lead to an investment failure. Involving the nurses and GHS from the outset increased ownership and buy-in as they defined their own problems and co-designed their own solutions. This also mitigated the possibility of having no 'home' or real ownership of the solution once the project funding expired.

“ You will have a more net positive impact and better outcomes because you got the intervention package right, and you got good buy-in, and you went back and talked to your users routinely... than you would have if you just dove in and started implementing your package starting day one (Richard IV3, private funder).

While all these additional activities upfront may have come across as slowing down the process to others, it was the contrary from the funder standpoint. Incorporating design practices was later seen to save time and money by identifying the most appropriate ideas faster and giving the project focus. The design process offered a shift toward iteration and experimentation, unrestricted by linear and predestined thinking frameworks. For funders, this then reduced the risks related to project failure, costs, and reputation, while increasing the potential for long-term sustainability of the project. From this perspective, the iterative nature of the design process offered efficiency savings in costs and risk over time.

'I see momentum and strong buy-in from the beginning'

In this project, the co-design nature of the process influenced a greater ownership of the solution proposed, which was more likely to be sustained 'locally' and have a life beyond the initially proposed funding parameters. This was greatly influenced by the considerable effort of the core team to navigate the politics of multiple government divisions in family health, policy planning, monitoring and evaluation, human resources, and information and communications technology. The link between co-design and sustained ownership is related to the nurses and government stakeholders being involved as co-designers with reciprocal exchanges throughout the project lifecycle:

“ Through the process, they were able to get a greater sense of ownership and emotional buy-in from the end-users so I think that was successful (Richard IV3, private funder).

“ [Design] is how we can truly think about what's going to sustain in the long run. So, if we are really, really bringing people along to design their own solutions, their own programmes, this is what it's going to take to get that buy-in from them, whether they are actually the end-users or... higher levels of people in government or whatever that is. To get that buy-in, I think this is where that critical link is going to be (Richard IV2, private funder).

Stakeholders who were engaged from the national, regional, and district levels of government were very supportive of the CHN on the Go application and its use in the future after the project funding ended. They especially valued the data it provided them and its function as a job aid for CHNs (Alva & Magalona 2016). This approval of the solution was linked to their roles in the co-design process that ensured they were shaping elements of the solution early enough to have ownership of it. The co-design activities placed considerable emphasis on contextualising the solution and ensured the space and effort to link with existing government systems. For example, linking the application's Learning module with schools such as the University of Health and Allied Sciences for distance learning and the Nursing and Midwifery Council to provide accreditation for courses and PIN renewal by CHNs. This linkage was valuable to the nurses and the GHS, and ensured the solution was aligned and accountable to the priorities of both groups.

“ Design gives you a way to be more accountable to your beneficiaries and stakeholders in a way that you can engage them and involve them in the process of designing a new approach or solution to a problem. In doing that, they feel greater ownership, and more than that, what you created would be sustained beyond the funding of the project, which I think is a big challenge for all other development programmes (Richard IV3, private funder).

Overall, the government saw a lot of value in the CHN on the Go application, so much so, it committed to absorb future server costs to ensure sustainability of the application in all pilot districts (Alva & Magalona 2016). One director in particular had encouraged its expansion and regional scale-up for all districts in Volta region. This was highlighted as valuable from the funder standpoint as it demonstrated how the design process resulted in greater local ownership beyond the initial funding period when compared to some other projects.

‘We achieved better solution fit and satisfaction, in addition to numbers reached’

Interviewees from the funder standpoint shared how design improved accountability to the nurses by basing decisions on user-defined metrics. There are established metrics for determining the success of a public health project that focus more on quantitative measures like coverage and expenditure. The distinction was made that focusing on user desirability as a metric often gets deprioritised, despite it seeming logical. Hence, it was a greater emphasis on user desirability that was believed to improve accountability toward the nurses through the design process:

“ We have so many other metrics that we use to see how a public health program is working, because we have standards of healthcare that we have to meet, and then we have cost things we have to meet, and part of what we measure always is how many people are being reached... by starting with the design lens from the start and using that approach, you develop a better programme to implement and you have more impact over the total term of your project (Richard IV2, private funder).

“ Design changed the team’s accountability to be directed towards the nurses more than any other stakeholder, this is not like in other projects we see (Richard IV3, private funder).

Other than the emphasis on desirability, the other important distinction made about the value of design was that it put the human face of care on equal terms with the technical side of care. For most healthcare services provided in this context, people are rarely asked about their experience when they leave a health facility. As described by one evaluator, this potential value of the design process is particularly pertinent in contexts where the focus on the technical quality of healthcare has ‘robbed users’ of the human quality of healthcare:

“ ... this behaviour of midwives and nurses who are trying to convince women to deliver their babies in health facilities because it’s safer for them, but treating them very badly... berating them, being impatient with them, criticising them for being stupid and ignorant and not educated... we have been trying to do the technical quality, but we haven’t done the human quality, and that whole healthworker-client relationship is something we tend not to concentrate on... are you actually tuning in to this person as a human being, and understanding them and empathising with them so that they feel like you care about them. Design can help public health people do this better (Richard IV2, private funder).

In this case, the value of design lies less in a gadget, or technical output and is more inherent in the process, independent of the outcome. In the process of getting to the desired outcome, there are a lot of other influences from design activities that can have positive effects on participants. When reflecting on these influences, one evaluator shared: it definitely ‘had an effect’ but cautions what can be gleaned quantitatively.

“ It’s going to be really hard to tease out where design played a role and where it didn’t, but I am convinced it did (Richard IV2, private funder)

“ I am convinced from... seeing how they [people engaged on this project], their own behaviour changed, has been totally stimulated by that human centred design lens (Richard IV2, private funder).

““ *In addition to my own interviews, the evaluation team from JSI also conducted 155 interviews with implementation staff and nurses. From these they determined that the design process positively influenced the quality of the programme implementation and outcomes, improved the experience of programme staff and nurses, and re-oriented the accountability of implementers toward nurse-defined versions of change (LaFond & Davis 2016).*

One of the biggest challenges faced in this project was the difficulty of fitting the design process and the time and space needed into the pre-existing project funding structures. One evaluator reflected on how design processes contrast traditional requirements, as funders are used to having a structured work plan, monitoring and evaluation plan, and a set of outputs that get allotted into a strict budgeting plan – all upfront. The upfront ambiguity with design processes requires a change in how funders operate and contract this kind of work. Otherwise, it can be difficult to appropriately budget for a detailed work plan if the design process is likely to shift the understanding of the initial problem.

““ *The biggest challenge is that it doesn't sit cleanly within the constructs and the programme management structures of current development programming, especially donor funded ones (Richard IV3, private funder)*

““ *...how did they fit it into their project plan? Maybe more covertly. But it shouldn't have to be something that gets buried, I mean, it should be something that is perceived as a value add (Richard IV2, private funder).*

The funder and evaluators reflected on how the implementation team of the project initially had to incorporate design more covertly and with hidden budgetary work-arounds to be able to fit it into their programmatic parameters. This poses a question about how structures can evolve to allow for more time and investment in design activities? The need for greater understanding, resources, and flexibility by funders is critical for the value of design to be realised:

““ *There needs to be longer funding cycles. I think there needs to be specific investment in the design phase and not just in the all investment is in implementation and evaluation, and none in design.*

I think there needs to be investment by funders in capacity building for organisations so that they can design effectively, design and implement, design and implement, design and implement. Funders need to be specifically asking organisations to design, and use design thinking in their approach and in their proposals (Richard IV1, private funder).

“ ... we know what the constructs are for doing a good public health program, but rarely do we get the chance to say: well, how do we get there? And how can we involve end-users in getting to that end point? Our planning structures are very, at least for big programmes, they are the antithesis to human centred design (Richard IV2, private funder).

Funders know they need to open up their investments to have much more flexibility within them, they know they need to be incentivising a working culture that embraces failing, allowing implementers to try, test and iterate. However, many funders have contradictory and competing incentives when it comes to this issue, especially from public/government funders. These funds are beholden to taxpayers who tend to fixate on quick and simplistic numbers to report back as a return on (taxpayer) investment. This is counter to enabling the kinds of behaviours for adaptive and situated learning that is needed in complex settings.

“ ... At the end of the day, I don't know that just saying: our project averted so many unintended pregnancies, is a great number to report to congress, or a great number for us to say our project was a net success to our donor. But it doesn't tell us anything about the quality of the implementation, how sustainable it was, whether it is something that will be carried out with the local organisation, what the local ownership and buy-in was, what the level of capacity development was... is what we did something that is going to linger on and be strengthened and grow, grow in ways we didn't expect or grow after we leave (Richard IV3, private funder).

One suggestion from the evaluators is for funders to be more open to a design-led discovery period upfront in projects. This could be coupled with the permission, space and incentive to share the learnings and unintended consequences – the outliers, the positive deviants – and things that didn't work with other implementers operating in the same space.

A summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and what was challenging from the funder standpoint is provided below:

Table 5.5 Summary of funder standpoint in case study one

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Funder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced risks related to investment failure / costs. ● Increased the likelihood of local and lasting ownership of the solution. ● Re-oriented accountability toward citizen-defined versions of change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investing in building capacity and incentive to test, fail, and iterate. ● Changes to contractual structures to allow space for upfront ambiguity and flexibility.

5.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Design was valuable in different ways for the different actors involved in this project. For the nurses, design enabled changes in their sense of personal power (albeit limited and temporary), dignity, and relevance in the final solution. For implementers, design offered a way to humanise technical knowledge, strengthened capability for creative problem solving, and improved alignment and trust among partners. For funders, design offered greater efficiencies and risk reduction, greater ownership, and improved accountability to the nurses. In this project, design was reported to facilitate a different kind of development through its fundamentally different ways of working. These differences tend to create ruptures with the status quo that are experienced differently by the different actors. A combined summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and what was challenging from all the standpoints is provided over page:

Table 5.6 Combined summary of all the standpoints' perspectives in case study one

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspired an obsessive determination Provided a sense of fulfilment and reward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance and power of actors making big decisions Predetermination and superficiality of solution
Citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered a solution with a high degree of relevance and fit to needs and preferences. Challenged the dominant narrative by creating space to be heard, understood, and respected Empowered them as co-designers with influence on day-to-day decision-making 	(not identified)
Implementer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grounded a reframing of the problem based on lived experience Distilled and humanised complex information through visualization Facilitated a shift in individual behaviour and collective working culture. Strengthened capability to adapt through iterative prototyping and testing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and cost involved in doing design properly (especially when not factored in upfront). Classic quantitative measures did not show the qualitative and experiential impact. Coping with having to let go of control of the process and the ambiguity of not having predefined answers.

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Funder	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reduced risks related to investment failure / costs.● Increased the likelihood of local and lasting ownership of the solution.● Re-oriented accountability toward citizen-defined versions of change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Investing in building capacity and incentive to test, fail, and iterate.● Changes to contractual structures to allow space for upfront ambiguity and flexibility.

Chapter 6

Case study on design encounters in Kenya



Will you be like the others?

“ A 4am start. I made the 5am pick-up at the meeting point with the rest of the research team. We had a 3 hour drive to the ‘interior’ (ie. deep country side and farming areas) and the driver said we need to leave early if we are not to get stuck in 5 hour traffic. We arrived and split up, two by two. I’m paired up with Elsie, a Kenyan Sociologist. We reach Jenny’s farm and sit down on a mat in her home to talk about health care... For the first 45 minutes, Jenny barely gives out any more than one-word responses to our questions and attempts at getting to know her. How long have you lived here? A long time. How many children? Three. What do you grow/rear on your farm? Different things. Where is the nearest health centre? Not far. What do you usually do if one of your children is unwell? It depends. We sat in silence. Silence is good. I have to restrain myself from being the one to break it this time. It worked. She asked us: Why do mzungus (Swahili term for ‘white foreigner’) come here again and again, and ask all these questions, like you are today, and then they leave, and nothing around here changes? What is the point? Will you be just like the others? Or are you here to actually change something? – Jenny seems to have me and this whole system I am now complicit in all figured out. I wanted to crawl up into a ball and hide. Not because I felt threatened or attacked, no, but because I felt awful that I too couldn’t guarantee anything would be different for her this time either. I felt ashamed and upset with how I have become a symbol for the ‘false promise’ of the ‘mzungu’. The reality of the matter is we are conducting research to inform a new national strategy on public health insurance for low-income Kenyans. I am not in a position to know what recommendations we would make, let alone whether they would be ‘taken-up’ by the Kenyan government, and then who knows if the implemented changes would actually reach Jenny, in all her geographic remoteness, as well as being several political and social layers removed from where the changes would be taking place. Despite all my good intentions, I think I need to confront my place and role in this picture with a bit more of an honest and critical lens.

(Author journal excerpt, March 2015)

6.1 CHAPTER OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this chapter is to continue building the understanding from the previous chapter on how the value of design is experienced differently by actors – this time during a project in Kenya. This project was about redesigning the organisational strategy for national public health insurance in Kenya. A design-led approach was chosen by the World Bank Group (WBG) and Kenyan government's National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) to frame the problem and possible solutions from Kenyan citizen perspectives. This case study offers an example of how design practices can support the efforts of endogenous development actors seeking alternatives to established ways of working. This chapter provides a detailed breakdown of the value of design from the perspectives of Kenyan citizens, the NHIF staff (implementers), and the WBG staff (funder).

6.2 THE CASE BACKGROUND

Many countries in the Global South considered by economic development classifications as low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) continue to adopt strategies toward universal health coverage (UHC) as a health system priority. The Kenyan government has made its commitment to achieve UHC by 2022. A decision was made to anchor the aspirations of the country on the NHIF, a state corporation established in 1966, with the mandate of providing accessible, affordable, sustainable and quality social health insurance to Kenyans. Without health insurance, households suffer significantly high out of pocket health costs, which often means delays in seeking care and considerable cascading effects for families and the health system overall (Chuma & Okungu 2011).

Country-wide population coverage of national health insurance in the NHIF was at 10% in Kenya when talk of this project began (NHIF 2018). Once broken down, coverage was high for the formally employed (98% covered) who had compulsory insurance contributions. However, coverage was significantly lower for the informally employed (16% covered) who had voluntary insurance contributions (NHIF management reports 2013-2016).

Comprising of 80% of Kenya's working population, the informally employed are an amorphous group with no form of organisation, making it difficult to collect premiums (Barasa, Mwaura, Rogo & Andrawes 2017). They have irregular and often undeclared incomes, making it difficult to set fair premium rates in line with their

ability to pay. They also have varying socio-economic characteristics making it difficult to design pre-payment schemes that suit the needs of everyone (McIntyre, Obse, Barasa & Ataguba 2018). The combination of these factors has resulted in NHIF coverage of the informal sector remaining considerably low.

In reference to the informal sector's health financing and health care needs, there was a strong desire by stakeholders from NHIF and WBG to gain a deeper understanding of the stated and unstated needs, behaviours, and decision-motivators of citizens, particularly through their experiences with, and perceptions of, NHIF's services. The NHIF and WBG partnered with the design firm ThinkPlace on a five-month project to conduct design research and co-design a citizen-centred strategy. The focusing question for this project was: How can NHIF better meet the needs and preferences of the informally employed to achieve greater membership uptake and retention? This project designed and delivered a new strategy detailing a set of change initiatives that address the challenges identified with citizens. The design activities focused on three counties in Kenya, however, the new strategy and specific initiatives were implemented nationally.

As the Design Lead on the project, I was engaged for the full five months officially (and beyond that unofficially) working with different stakeholders on leading the research activities and facilitating a series of collaborative design workshops to generate ideas, prototype solutions and test them. In this case, I was leading a core team comprised of five people in total, three Kenyan researchers and another Australian designer other than myself. This case study demonstrates how a design-led process was used to co-create a citizen-centred government strategy underwritten with Development project funding. It also describes actor perceptions on what was valuable and difficult about their encounters with design practices from the different standpoints involved.

During the five months of the design process, over 124 people were involved. This number included 84 citizens, 22 NHIF managers and staff, as well as 18 stakeholders from partner organisations. A summary of the design process, including key activities, purpose, tools/methods utilised, and participants involved is below:

Table 6.1 Summary of design process for case study two

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	TOOLS/METHODS
Intent workshop (month 1)	Determine the current state and define the desired future state and reach a shared understanding of the project's intent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funders • Implementers (senior level) • Designers • Other technical assistance organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intent statement tool
Design research (month 2)	Gain an understanding of the citizens and their experiences of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens – former, current and potential NHIF members • Implementers (branch and senior levels) • Designers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups • Interviews • Process mapping • Role plays and storytelling
Analysis and synthesis (month 3)	Synthesise field research and summarise key themes that emerged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funders • Designers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcriptions • Detailed analysis and synthesis • Clustering
Develop visual artefacts (month 3)	Consolidate findings into a clear framework to evoke a human-centred understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personas • Experience maps
Co-design workshop sessions (month 4)	Utilise the visual material to align stakeholders and generate solutions to challenges identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens – former, current and potential NHIF members • Implementers (branch and senior levels) • Funders • Designers • Other technical assistance organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role plays • Brainstorming • Idea sheets • Iteration • Clustering • Harvesting • Concept templates

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	TOOLS/METHODS
Blueprint development (month 5)	Synthesise information and outcomes from the workshop and develop concepts further into strategic blueprint document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funders • Designers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy blueprint
Integration into operational work plans (months 6+)	Develop training material and guide departmental and branch teams on operationalisation of strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementers (branch and senior levels) • Funders • Designers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination and planning sessions

6.3 THE ACTOR STANDPOINTS

There were four key standpoints interviewed and explored in this case study, being the citizen, designer, implementer, and funder. The standpoints featuring in this chapter include the following profiles:



Figure 6.1 Actor profiles featuring in case study two

There were some methodological considerations I would like to highlight for the citizen and designer standpoints. Due to logistical and time constraints, I

conducted short interviews with four citizen co-designers immediately after one of the workshops to capture their encounters with the co-design activities, which were shorter in length than the other interviews for this case study. Due to my personal position as the Design Lead for this project, I will own these reflections in the first person and not anonymise the standpoint of the designers. I also interviewed another designer who was involved in this project and reflected on the value and tensions that surfaced while on this project. Regardless of these methodological considerations, all views expressed in this case study were shared in relation to this single project. The following sections of this chapter outlines experiences with the design process by actor standpoint.

The designer standpoint

From the designer standpoint, the design process for this project cultivated a sincere humility and resilience through the need to navigate a myriad of complex relational situations.

'Am I up to the politics of this assignment?'

From the 'designer' perspective, there were two fundamental disconnects between design practices and the Development system that surfaced. The first is related to the role of exogenous designers with limited 'stake' in the problem, and then complying with and benefiting from the Development system's structural power imbalances. The second is the missed opportunity related to health equity and how co-design practices are not being utilised to their full potential in focusing on the people who are most vulnerable.

The question of exogenous designers was raised directly to me by several Kenyan nationals working in the NHIF on more than one occasion during the design process. The questions often asked were: Why are we bringing in 'mzungus'⁵ to do this work? And are there not capable Kenyans who can be employed to do this instead? This tension started from day one during the Intent workshop. There were about 20 attendees at the meeting, half of them were senior NHIF government employees, and the remainder were comprised of WBG and other funding or technical assistance partners. Together they made up the technical working group. I shared with them details of the design process and activities for the project. I warned them that 'although we may have a spreadsheet with

5 Translated from the Kiswahili term used to refer to 'someone with white skin', but can be used to refer to all foreigners more generally.

activities, deliverables and milestones on a week-by-week basis – a true co-design process is generally adaptive in its approach and will not stick to what's in the plan as we will change course based on what we learn as we go. As designers, we do not honour a plan just because it is the plan.' They laughed. Then, as the laughter subdued, one NHIF manager spoke up to challenge the idea of having foreigners lead this process. They asked me the question in front of the whole room: 'What can you do for us that one of our own cannot do?'

For me, the aim of this Intent workshop was to reach a shared understanding of the current drivers for change and what success looks like from the perspective of different stakeholders. Kicking off the dialogue with the stakeholders in this context meant responding to this question by saying 'I don't know ... but you know!' I was the one standing at the front of the room, I was the one with the whiteboard marker in hand, and I was the one who had been granted command of that time and space during this meeting. Yet, in that moment, I decided to step aside and tell them I did not come with any predetermined answers to their questions, but instead wanted them to shape the project's intent based on their own questions. My task became to facilitate the process in a more participatory and visual way from what they might be used to. So, I wrote on the whiteboard, posing some questions that would invite them to shape the project into something that was meaningful to them rather than from my perspective. The list was:

- What do you believe are the reasons for this project?
- Who are the people who will be affected by your decisions in this project?
- What are their views and experiences of the service you are offering them?
- What are the changes you think are needed for this project to succeed?
- How will you know if this project was a success or not?
- What are the questions still unanswered in your mind?

Every person in the room was equipped with paper and markers, quiet time to think and write, followed by an open and honest space to explore the answers from different stakeholders together. A rich conversation surfaced where key clues and real issues emerged for us as the design team. These issues were all documented in the words of NHIF managers, and clustered in themes that they labelled. I recall after this first meeting with the technical working group, the most senior person pulled me aside and said:

“ Whatever you need to make this project a success, you just let me know ... I appreciate that you didn't come here with a polished presentation about what you are going to do, but instead, you gave us paper and pens to tell you what we know, what we don't know, and what we need from you (Senior NHIF Executive).

She apologised for the remark made by her colleague earlier and shared how other 'mzungus' who came to work with them prior had never cared to ask what their view of the problem was and what questions ought to be prioritised. By others not asking for their input to shape the projects from the onset suggested to her that they were either not curious enough to be doing the work or did not see value in her team's views as both cultural and technical subject matter experts. Regardless, she said 'it is unacceptable'. The way we, as a design team, approached their expertise with humility and mutual respect, rather than coming in trying to look like we had it all already figured out, created a personal motivation for the people in that room to want to see the project succeed. This change of perception opened an enabling environment for the project to be prioritised among a myriad of other demands on the time and attention of the managers.

I didn't realise it at the time, but by exposing my own uncertainty, my doubts, my questions, and putting my own vulnerabilities front and centre in this first meeting didn't discredit me but rather gained me their trust and respect. Forging this trust resulted in some stakeholders going above and beyond their usual remit to see to it that the project got the resources and attention of others in the organisation it needed. My observation notes from that exchange indicated that practicing humility during a designer's initial entry points into a project, especially in places which may be sensitive to situations where exogenous actors are calling the shots, is critical to creating the enabling environment for an exogenous design process to be embraced. Instead of feeling threatened, this senior leader walked away feeling heard and optimistic about the project. Despite this small win, there were several other occasions during the project where this issue of exogenous designers was still a point of contention with others. This raises the need for exogenous designers to be aware of and sensitive to the colonial histories of the places where they work and be more intentional about building the design capabilities of nationals in the countries they work. For designers to consider intentionally designing themselves out of this work.

'Am I perpetuating the same old inequities?'

Design practices are increasingly being incorporated by Development actors with some intention for greater equity in health care access and greater accountability to groups in society who need or want things to change. The funder of this project goes on to reflect that if there is one thing he thinks design practices could help change is to get Development actors to design more equitably, starting with people who are more vulnerable. Designers need to be getting decision-makers to ask themselves: who is this policy/product/service going to benefit first? Is it going to benefit the strong or vulnerable person first? But from my experience in this project and other projects, there are a myriad of factors that influence why even a design team cannot reach those who are labelled as most vulnerable.

The latest country economic update shows that the proportion of Kenyans living on less than the international poverty line (US\$1.90 per day in 2011 PPP) has declined from 43.6% in 2005/06 to 35.6% in 2015/16 (World Bank 2018). For Kenyans in this situation, they are more likely to be living in a rural area, more likely to be less literate, and more likely situated far from a hospital. Often the nearest facility for most Kenyan citizens is a health centre which is likely not an accredited provider under NHIF. Additionally, they are less likely to be able to pay the NHIF membership fee of KSH 500 (USD \$5) per month. These structural factors exclude people who are informally employed and living below the poverty line. They also make it difficult for design teams to locate and identify such people, have the vernacular language abilities to work meaningfully and reciprocally with them, and because of distance and challenging terrain they are sometimes deprioritised from selection for design research activities that are constrained by time and budget limitations. In this project, there was one instance where a NHIF manager asked if we would include one of the poorer and more vulnerable counties of Kenya in the design research work. Initially, we said yes. Then upon going through the approval processes, the design firm's insurance policies prohibited the design team from going there due to security concerns. This was not received well by the NHIF Manager as we had initially agreed to go. He said: 'if this county is safe enough for our people to go, then it is safe enough for your people to go.' With those words, I was once again confronted by my own contradictions as an exogenous designer in this project.

Through the instances shared above, practicing design has been valuable in helping me cultivate humility and openly sharing my vulnerabilities in these situations. It was valuable for my own professional growth to get things wrong enough times on the journey to getting it right. I also gained a sense of fulfilment from seeing how my role was valued by the other actors in this project as custodian of meaningful change for citizens, facilitator of collaborative learning experiences, and mediator between competing interests.

A summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and what was challenging from the designer standpoint is provided below:

Table 6.2 Summary of designer standpoint in case study two

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultivated humility and resilience through shared vulnerability. ● Provided a sense of fulfilment and reward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness of and sensitivity to the colonial histories of a place. ● Ill-equipped to design in ways that penetrate structural inequity. ● Contradictions in a consulting model that does not always invest in local capacity.

The citizen standpoint

For citizen codesigners in this case study, the design process was considered valuable for enabling a personal sense of power in decision-making moments, affirmation of dignity in some of the activities, and relevance in the outcome. The citizen standpoint is derived from the Kenyan citizens – all current, former or potential NHIF members – who were involved in the design research and co-design activities. The project team undertook exploratory design research which received ethics approval from the Africa Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) ethics and scientific review committee (approval number ESRC P168/2015). The design research aimed to discover the needs, preferences, motivations and behaviours that affect a person’s willingness and capacity to register as, and remain, a contributing NHIF member. There were 124 people involved during the

design research activities. Six locations were visited across three counties being Makueni, Kiambu and Nairobi counties. There were 22 semi-structured interviews with NHIF branch staff and health care workers at NHIF accredited facilities, as well as 24 x semi-structured interviews and 9 x 9 focus group discussions with potential, current and former NHIF members (who were considered the citizen end-users).

‘What I have to say matters’

Initially, the citizens were labelled differently by the various actors involved. For example, to the project’s funder, they were labelled as ‘beneficiaries’ and for the project implementer, they were labelled as ‘customers’ and for the designers they were understood as end-users. However, as the project progressed, the design team challenged the role of the citizen as passive recipients or research informants. Some of the citizens were invited to join design deliberations as co-designers of possible future scenarios and solutions. Through a more participatory emphasis in the design process, the way others perceived the value and criticality of the citizen co-designers’ role was challenged. The citizens’ stories and contributions to the design activities highlighted that enrolment and retention in NHIF was influenced by a range of household and health system factors. Some selected quotes from the design research are provided below for context:

“ My husband went to the [NHIF] branch and was given an application form but it had very difficult questions, he looked at it and threw it away and asked me to forget about it (Potential NHIF member).

“ At times, you pay and then when you go to check you find that the money does not reflect (Chege IV3, citizen).

“ When they see you using the card, the patient is not given good care. I was abandoned there in [a public hospital] from morning to evening because we had brought an NHIF card. So when we gave them the card they neglected us (Chege IV1, citizen).

“ Civil servants get special attention like doctor’s visits and clean sheets. The NHIF is really only for this special class (Chege IV2, citizen).

Citizens shared how NHIF was not seen as relevant to them; they considered it as a tax, or a scheme that benefits civil servants and the formally employed. One of the deterrents was the long, complicated and inconvenient administrative hurdles associated with the registration procedures. Other barriers included the cost of premiums, the inflexibility of monthly payment plans, and the exorbitant penalties when the monthly contribution was missed. Getting individuals to register and continue to pay for the health insurance is one aspect, another is ensuring that individuals who are registered and paying have access to health care and that their care seeking experience is appropriate. In this regard, the experiences of NHIF members were not aligning with NHIF's promise to them. Citizens shared stories of how health facilities demanded money from them, but then discriminated against them as NHIF cardholders due to the cumbersome claims process and untimely claim reimbursements. This was a major factor for attrition of members. It also generated a negative perception about joining NHIF's health insurance scheme, which in turn deterred new member registrations (Agyepong, Abankwah, Abroso et al. 2016; Alhassan, Nketiah-Amponsah & Arhinful 2016; Jehu-Appiah, Aryeetey, Agyepong et al. 2012).

In the focus group discussions (see Figure 6.1), citizens were invited to imagine they were in charge of the NHIF and asked what changes they would make. They were provided with paper and pens and asked to answer 'If I was CEO of NHIF, I would...'. This was seen as an unusual request and tended to be met with laughter by some citizens in the focus group discussions. Some others took this very seriously and put forward suggestions for reforms. It also spurred interesting discussions with stories and ideas being shared that would otherwise not have surfaced. Some selected quotes from citizens engaging in this activity are provided for context:

“ I would reduce the price of the monthly premium to something affordable (Chege IV2, citizen).

“ I would make sure that public servants do not get any extra special treatment – I would make it so they get the same treatment as the rest of us (Chege IV2, citizen).

“ I would make the NHIF staff go out into the rural communities to speak to people instead of sitting in their offices waiting for US to come and find them (Potential NHIF member)!

I would abolish the penalty rates for when people are late in their payments (Chege IV4, citizen).



Photograph 6.1 Group discussion with storytelling over tea in Makeni, Kenya, 2015 (Author)



Photograph 6.2 Individual interview with card prompts near Nairobi, Kenya, 2015 (Author)

Citizens were asked to reflect on a 'fair price' for NHIF services and to provide their rationale. Citizens were also asked to draw and prototype what they would like to see on future NHIF posters. These posters and 'fair price' scenarios were later displayed during the co-design workshops for NHIF and WBG stakeholders to engage directly with the suggestions from citizens. This allowed project implementers and funders the space to make sense of citizen ideas directly rather than have the design team own the interpretation process. The design team avoided polishing up the material by wordsmithing it, to ensure the integrity and power of the citizen voices were speaking directly to decision-makers.



Photograph 6.3 Citizens' stories used to generate ideas at Nairobi co-design workshops, 2015 (Author)

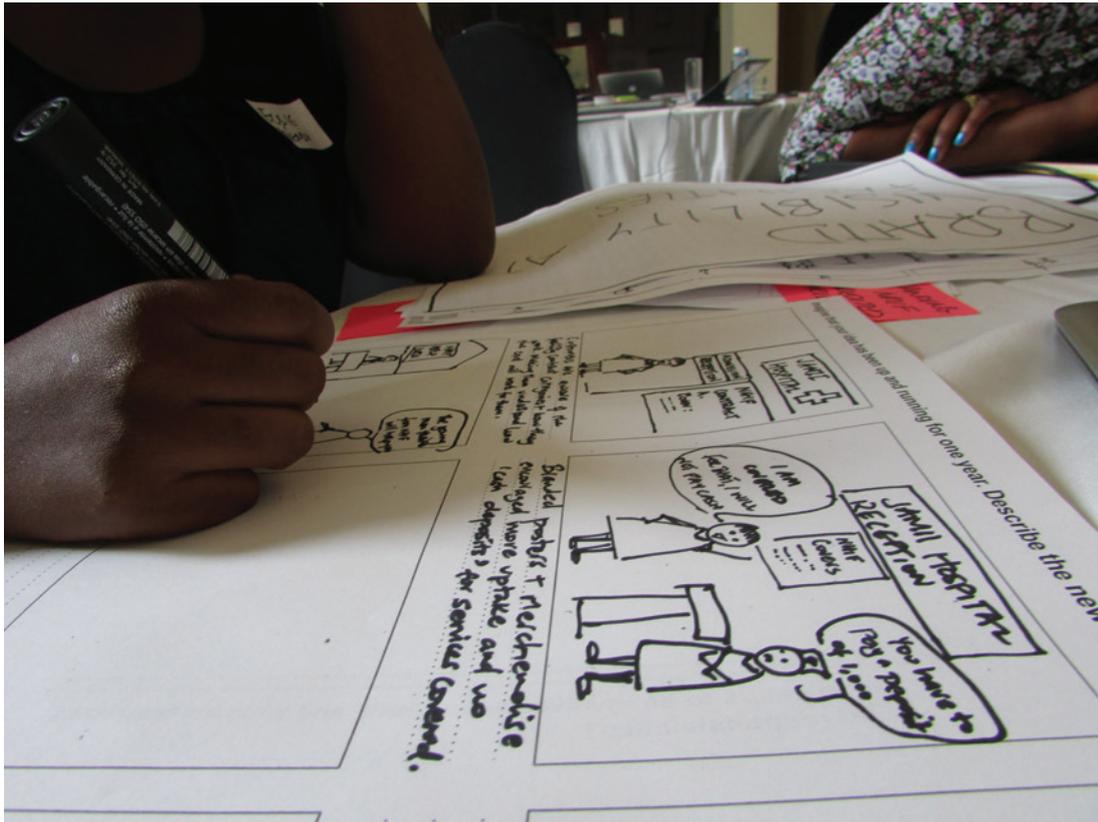


Photograph 6.4 NHIF’s CEO (at the time) considering citizen suggestions directed to him in Nairobi co-design workshops, 2015 (Author)

During the co-design workshops, the CEO himself spent a lot of his time taking in the suggestions and then referencing them multiple times after (see photo 6.4). The final strategic blueprint which guided implementation efforts incorporated many of the citizen ideas and suggestions.

‘My ideas were useful since they were made visual and built upon’

Six Kenyan citizen co-designers were involved in the project beyond the design research phase and joined the co-design workshops in Nairobi. Initially, the emphasis was on immersing NHIF staff and other stakeholders in the research insights and citizen stories.



Photographs 6.5 Civil servants and citizens generating and prioritising ideas together in Nairobi co-design workshops, 2015 (Author)

Then the emphasis was on prototyping, testing and iterating the ideas in hybrid teams made up of NHIF staff, health care providers and citizens. For one of the sessions, there was a carefully facilitated activity where the role of the six citizen co-designers was flipped from that of 'story sharers' to 'idea judges'. NHIF staff and others usually higher up the social hierarchy were invited to take the more vulnerable⁶ position of presenting their ideas to the six citizen co-designers to judge and critique. For this session, the setup of the room was changed to simulate a shift in relational dynamics between the citizens and implementers. The citizens were given 'judge' badges to wear, they were given special tables placed front and centre of the stage where the ideas were being presented. Each citizen was given two minutes to 'judge' and respond with feedback for each of the ideas presented. This setup used status symbols and a clear platform to ensure that the citizens would feel safe and free to speak knowing that their voices mattered most in those moments. The citizens shared what they thought of this at the end of the workshop:

“ I am not afraid to tell these officials what I really think. What happened to me and my family should not be repeated, that kind of suffering should not be for anyone (Chege IV3, citizen).

“ They maybe will do something. They maybe will not do something. The important thing is we said our piece (Chege IV4, citizen).

“ It is something exciting today. I believe the NHIF actually cared what I had to say (Chege IV2, citizen).

Based on the reflections from the citizens above, these moments where their voices mattered more than those of the civil servants was significantly meaningful to them. A space was created where people felt comfortable enough, and their opinions mattered enough, to be heard and then for their ideas to be acted upon. This supports the idea that co-design has the potential to assert the dignity of people during critical decision moments that affect them but would normally not involve them.

Many citizens expressed surprise and interest in being able to influence the future national strategy of NHIF in a way that might reflect their needs. Some openly shared how rare it was to feel like their views counted in decision-making. The

⁶ The use of the term 'vulnerable' in this instance is based on Brown's (2015) definition as personal 'uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure'.

higher than usual levels of citizen influence on public sector decision-making is critical, given that many of the recommendations and ideas from the project were taken up into actual policies and spin-off projects. These were implemented, as will be detailed later in this chapter from the standpoint of the project implementer (Akinyi). For the citizens, it can be argued that the design activities that created space for their voices to influence ideas and decisions changed the nature of power relations between them and others in the room. Albeit temporarily, power was described as redistributed with favour toward citizen voices in that room:

“ [The workshop] inverted the power dynamics when the people got to judge our ideas (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

As a result, a space was created that enabled new types of conversations and exchanges between citizens and implementers. This space did not overhaul deeply structural power dynamics; however, it supported the possibility for power to manifest positively in diverse and multi-directional ways.

‘We are satisfied with the results’

In addition to challenging the traditional power dynamics during key decision-making moments, the user testing of the ideas ensured a greater relevance to citizens’ expressed needs. The conversations and ideas that were being explored by civil servants shifted from being focused on educative ‘marketing’ campaigns before the design process, to essential changes that would transform citizen experiences. The citizens asked the NHIF to deliver on their promise by improving the service delivery; they asked for NHIF to reconsider the fairness of their pricing structure for lower-income earners; and they asked to be treated with dignity by placing value on their perspectives and experiences. These human-centred rather than organisation-centred suggestions for change went beyond the initial framing of the problem by implementers as just a ‘marketing’ problem. By iterating on the ideas together in hybrid teams of citizens and civil servants, the feedback was integrated into the evolution of the ideas. This guided the prioritisation of implementation efforts to be based on citizen needs:

“ Some of the ideas the government shared with us today were good, if they can make them happen then this would help us, it would help Kenyans (Chege IV1, citizen).

“ When we have elections, they don't listen to us ... what we – the hustlers⁷ – need from the government, the government employees are not better than the rest of us, they can also benefit from the ideas of a hustler ... like we saw today (Chege IV2, citizen).

One citizen compared his experience with the design process to elections⁸ and how that process does not allow the voices of Kenyan citizens to shape decision-making in the same way. What was expressed as valuable for citizens was also observed by the implementers. One reflected on the role a co-design process could have on how the public sector would provide more meaningful and relevant solutions for its citizens:

“ If our Government really wants to provide good services to its citizens, then you really need to understand what the citizens want as good services, so I think that is something that design thinking really brings to the population (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

“ If a Government understands what the citizenry wants then the Government would be working towards ensuring they deliver towards the promises they made to the people, and this means being accountable to them (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

Not only did the participatory nature of the design process create a space for dialogue and iteration on ideas to support more relevant solutions for citizens, it inspired citizens to see it as a way for shaping other areas of importance to them, such as revamping election processes to be fairer as well.

A summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and what was challenging from the citizen standpoint is provided below:

7 The term 'hustler' may ordinarily have connotations with dishonesty, unscrupulous profiteering, and drug peddling. However, in Kenya, the word has been appropriated to have positive semantic associations with being enterprising (Ogone 2014).

8 In recent history elections have been widely contested in Kenya, in particular, a violent conflict emerged based on land rights and ethnic lines after a disputed presidential election result in December 2007. There remain questions around whether elections are free and fair in the country (Kanyinga 2009).

Table 6.3 Summary of citizen standpoint in case study two

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenged the dominant narrative by creating space to be heard, understood, and respected. Redistributed power when evaluating others' ideas and co-designing alternatives that were taken up. 	(not identified)

The implementer standpoint

For implementers, the design process was valuable in that it humanised technical knowledge, developed capability that lingered beyond the project, and built greater alignment among diverse departmental teams within the organisation.

'My understanding is rooted in the lived experiences of people'

One key shift the design process helped implementers make was to no longer see the 'informal sector' as a single amorphous group, but to rather see them as individual people with nuanced preferences and expectations of the NHIF. The design process did this by highlighting the differentiating characteristics between them through fictitious profiles using 'personas' and 'journey maps' which were developed from data taken during the design research. These tools aggregated the health insurance beliefs, preferences and experiences that characterised different types of people:



Teresa's persona – able to pay, but no longer willing to pay



Gender: Female
Occupation: Farmer / Retiree
Income: 4,000 – 6,000 Ksh every harvest
Family status: Married, four children, two grandchildren
NHIF status: Potential

"It was lucky my friend was there to help me otherwise if I were critically ill and expecting to use NHIF I would have died waiting for them to help me"

Teresa represents a population that:

- Have been let down by the health system through poor service and care
- Influenced by others' in her community sharing their positive or negative experiences
- Will most likely discontinue membership after a bad experience trying to use her NHIF card

A bit about me....

- I earn my money through jobs like laundry work, farming and as a caretaker for my landlord. I don't choose jobs, I do any work that can give me money because I don't expect a salary at the end of the month.
- When I am not at work I go looking for other casual jobs. I don't like being idle. And whenever I am around I take care of my poultry. When I don't have money I sell them.

My thoughts on healthcare...

- I have had a few health problems and some big expenses, so I know that it's really important to be prepared.
- When I have needed help at the local hospital, the care I have got has been really poor. It's lucky that I wasn't critically ill because I think I would have died waiting for help.

My thoughts on NHIF...

- I first heard about NHIF a long time ago from a friend that seen the good that NHIF can do when he was caring for his father who was a member.
- It seemed like a really good but from the start, when I went to join, they didn't really treat me very well or have very good processes
- I have had more than one bad experience when trying to use my NHIF card over the 10 years I have been a member, but I kept on paying because I felt that it was worth it
- My most recent experience trying to use my card has really made me re-think whether I want to continue. If this is what I pay for, then I don't think it's worth the money.

Teresa at a glance

Skeptical of public health system	●	Trusting of public health system
Reactive when shocks occur	●	Plans ahead to mitigate shocks
Unable to comprehend insurance model	●	Able to comprehend insurance model
Low awareness about NHIF	●	High awareness about NHIF
Not value NHIF package, sees as irrelevant	●	Values NHIF package, sees as relevant
Cannot afford to pay for NHIF	●	Can afford to pay for NHIF
Not willing to pay for NHIF	●	Willing to pay for NHIF

Figure 6.2 Persona matrix overview, and example of persona deep dive (NHIF Informal Sector Strategic Blueprint 2015)

Each persona along these dimensions was developed into a character who expressed a user group's intrinsic and experiential characteristics. The above example is of 'Teresa' who had a poor experience at a health facility and although was able to, was no longer willing to pay a NHIF contribution.

The barriers that could affect willingness to participate in the scheme were also visually mapped out along user experience phases that outlined when/where certain barriers were taking place along different journeys. For example, whether it was when they ‘heard about NHIF,’ ‘investigate NHIF options,’ ‘decide about NHIF,’ ‘register with NHIF,’ ‘pay for NHIF cover,’ ‘utilise NHIF cover’. The various barriers identified were aggregated under these user experience phases and demonstrated how different people experienced different barriers, as seen below:

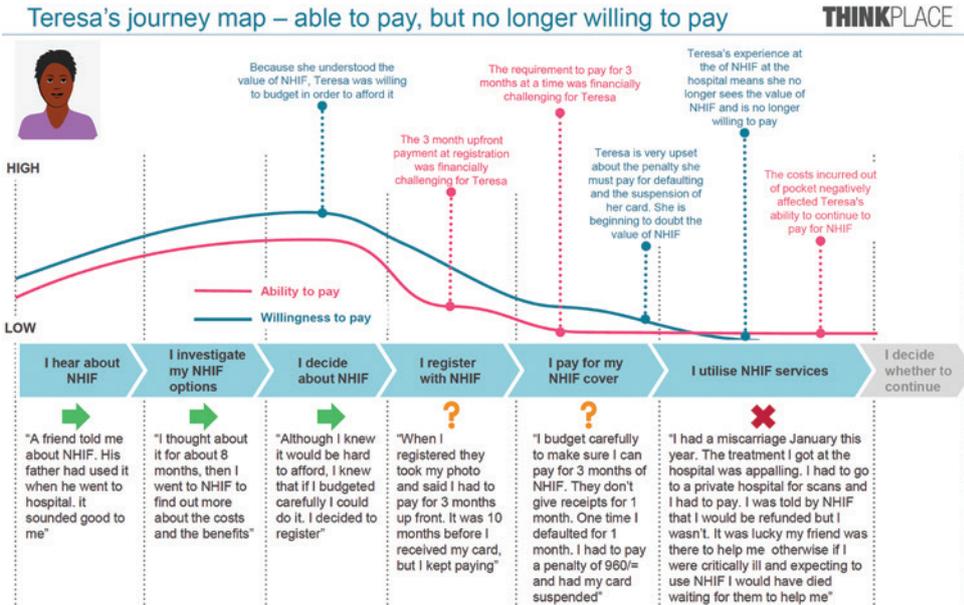
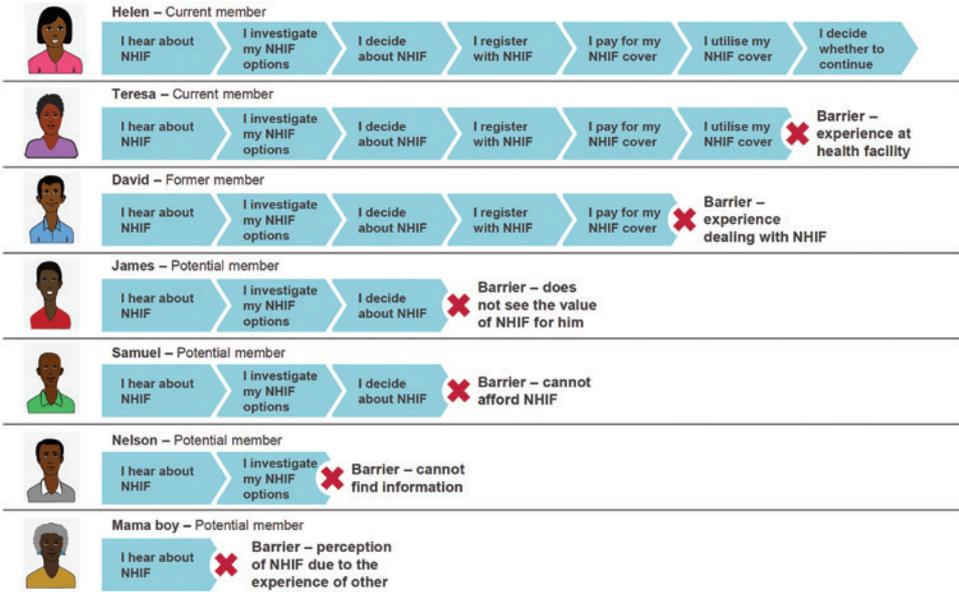


Figure 6.3 Journey barriers overview, and example of a journey map (NHIF Informal Sector Strategic Blueprint 2015)

For the implementers, they shared how these visual artefacts translated often complex information relating to how people behave, what they believe, and how cultural determinants and social networks can have subtle but critical effects on things like health seeking behaviour or payment compliance. These visualised artefacts succeeded in getting NHIF managers out of their day-to-day routines and putting them in the shoes of their citizens:

“ It helped me see the 24 million we were targeting as real people, with different needs and preferences (Akinyi IV2, government implementer).

This implementer shared how previous decision-making was based on statistical averages to understand what was ‘typical’. After understanding the issues through the visual design tools, the implementation team wanted to make more of an effort to consider different preferential and behavioural variances. Instead of blocks of text, these more visual artefacts offered something novel and relatable for the implementers to engage with in a way that integrates different perspectives and situates their existing knowledge in the lived experiences of citizens.

As demonstrated in the journey maps above (Figure 6.3), rather than experiencing the whole NHIF system, people experienced specific pathways through NHIF’s offering – those pathways are shaped by the numerous touchpoints that form an experience. The journey maps were critical in prioritising a broader strategic conversation with NHIF management about the problems as experienced as touchpoints along a pathway. One implementer shared upfront from the very first meeting that the real problem and solution were already known:

“ It is the public who needs to be educated better on the NHIF ... The only problem we need to fix at NHIF is the marketing department (Akinyi IV2, government implementer).

However, during the co-design workshops these visualised stories from citizens presented a very different picture. These artefacts prompted critical dialogue that shifted the perspective of some NHIF managers from seeing it as a marketing issue to a broader programme of change from within. In addition to the visual artefacts, a series of interactive skits to cater for diverse engagement preferences in a room full of 50 participants from 10+ organisations. The facilitated activities with these artefacts and skits led to greater alignment among NHIF management

around the broader myriad of barriers for why people were not signing-up or staying-on. What needed attention was more than a marketing issue alone, it was a set of whole-of-organisation strategic change initiatives that would require cross-departmental collaboration to work through. Following difficult dialogue during the workshops, the understanding of the problem space expanded and deepened among the stakeholders.

From an early stage, the design team focused on building trust and confidence with NHIF stakeholders. Reflecting on her many years as a Kenyan government employee working with international development partners, one implementer shared how the relationships in this project felt different to other projects:

““ *When I joined NHIF, at that time, development partners were more like pushing their agendas to the Government and to other bodies to implement, and there was really no room for negotiations (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).*

““ *Whatever initiatives they were pushing were not really working for us... because if you push something to a country, it will be done just because you have said it should be done, but the results of it might not come out as good as you want it to be (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).*

She shared how although international development agendas may have had the best of intentions, they were often set up to fail from the onset due to the imposing nature of the interactions. The barrier getting in the way of a needed change was that such change had been desired and directed by exogenous actors. She believed that for any project of change to be recognised as legitimate, it needed to be wanted and directed by Kenyans. She also shared how every couple of years, exogenous actors would come forward with a new agenda they wanted to push, and how this slowly eroded the trust the NHIF had toward exogenous development actors and the prescriptive nature of their projects. She contrasted this more common experience with her experience in this design process:

““ *As we saw with this project, there is a lesson here, in that you really must involve the implementing partner from the beginning, from when you design the concept, to how it's going to be implemented, you must involve the partners, because they are actually the ones going to do the work, and if you don't involve them and you want to force it down their throats, it will not work right (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).*

[Through this design process] the development partners came and sat with us to develop the initiatives that we want to come up with, now they can plug in to our agenda as an organisation, instead of us as an organisation having to plug into the development partners' agenda. So that is a major shift I have seen (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

Contributions by actors to shape the design process early on evoked co-ownership and vested interest in the project for the long-term. For the design team to build trust and credibility with the implementers, we began with carefully facilitated listening sessions. This took two formats, first being the initial Intent Workshop with the technical working group discussed earlier in this chapter, and second being a series of stakeholder interviews with NHIF at headquarters. These listening sessions took place early on to ensure key NHIF stakeholders from different departments (including marketing, operations, finance, strategy, and customer service) could offer insight into the research design and the problem space. The nature of these conversations was founded on principles of reciprocity and multi-directional knowledge exchanges:

“ From my experience with design thinking, I found that in this way you are able to involve all the stakeholders, and you look at the situation from all the angles (Akinyi IV2, government implementer).

“ With the design work, we were able to look at the problem that NHIF was having in enrolling the informal sector from all perspectives -- that is from the contributor themselves, from the branch office, from the hospital ... for me, that was the key thing (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

To build a shared understanding and alignment, these conversations were facilitated using co-design methods that carved out spaces for open dialogue between diverse stakeholders. Even though the design team was warned that some of the stakeholders were known to be in conflict with one another, the design team tried to navigate the tension and facilitated the teams to take a whole-of-systems view of the situation and to see it from the various viewpoints. The design process facilitated a shift in dynamics between some internal teams during key moments; the shift being from opposition to collaboration. This implementer contrasted the design process to the usual approaches taken as being outward-looking, rather than the usual inward-looking:

“ From the beginning, when we started the whole process and [the designer] showed me how the design thinking works, I think it was like magic for me, and I trusted the process... seeing [the] whole process just evolving through that short period really gave me the trust compared to previous methodologies that have been used... no one really sits you down and tells you this is how we are going to do it. They just come in with a proposal and you try to look at the methodology in the proposal and it's just... not as convincing as how design thinking really brings out the issues that are really in the community and from all perspectives in the whole process (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

“ Initially, as an organisation, we were really looking inwards, we were developing solutions for ourselves, or what we thought the market wants, and we were not going to the market and really finding out what is it that they want, working that out, and developing that product for the market (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

The implementer shared how the design process helped her look at things more holistically. The knowledge and expertise of each stakeholder group was translated into visual and interactive formats that were accessible for all others.

'We put aside our differences and aligned around actionable plans for change'

What was noted as particularly beneficial from this standpoint was the translation and integration of citizens' lived experiences directly into the future strategic planning and decision making of the organisation. The co-design workshops were also helpful in assisting NHIF teams to work collaboratively:

“ With NHIF you really had to push people to actually do what they are supposed to do. One of the key challenges that we suffer is lack of collaboration, where you have everyone working towards their departmental mission or something like that, and by the time they come together, probably, they have already gone too far and there is no team work so I think design thinking changed that in this project (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

“ ... as we developed solutions, we were able to really look at the solutions very specifically for each of these different stakeholders... (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

The design process was not limited to shaping a shared understanding of the problem space or generating ideas only, it was also used to ensure alignment around actionable plans, with clear accountability and ownership for the next steps. The implementer also reflected on the usability of the design output being actionable and tangible – despite having different stakeholders weigh in on the prioritisation process:

“ As you go through the process, you actually don't know what is going to come out of it... but I think the best part was where everyone prioritises and at the end of the day what comes out is a very clear picture of the things that need to be done... you see the work plan and its very clear steps that are very realistic, very tangible in implementation (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

“ Whatever we had put in to be done in the first year, it is now in our work plan, so that it is being implemented, and the strategy team is monitoring to see how well that is being implemented. We picked up the workplan from the prioritisation matrix in the design report, and that is what is actually being done in our workplan for this year (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

Instead of creating confusion and contradiction, the design process provided a clear way forward with alignment from the different stakeholders. The ideas that were generated became increasingly tangible as they were tested with citizens, further developed and refined, and then prioritised collaboratively. They were prioritised according to the level of desirability and impact for current and potential members on one axis, as well as the level of difficulty to implement on the other axis. Difficulty was based on factors such as cost, technology requirements, legislation or policy changes required and timeframe to implement. The prioritisation matrix was developed in the co-design workshops, and later included in the blueprint:

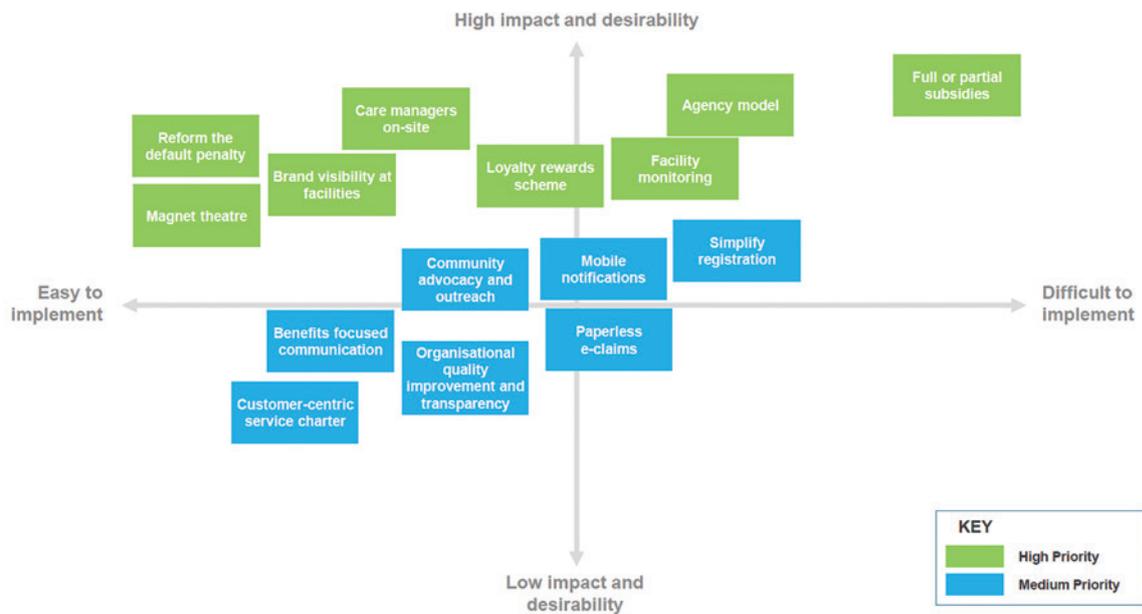


Figure 6.4 Concept prioritisation matrix (NHIF Informal Sector Strategic Blueprint 2015)

The implementer shared how the tangibility of the matrix assisted with making the ideas more actionable and easily translated into a workplan. The co-design workshops helped with organisational acceptance and adoption of the ideas, which was key for the implementation to be considered successful.

'I can apply what I've learned to how I problem solve elsewhere'

To transfer the insights and ideas generated during the co-design workshops from a few participants to thousands of employees was the job of NHIF's Strategy team. This team opted to use some of the newly learned co-design methods to disseminate and create a shared sense of purpose and alignment with the new work plans. They adapted certain tools and techniques, then scaled them for use with the rest of the organisation. For example, instead of using the visual experience maps to tell the citizens' stories, they took the static maps and consolidated them into a series of interactive skits that they then acted out for large groups of NHIF employees. The Strategy team nominated themselves to enact the stories in order to engage fellow colleagues in the lived experiences of their members:

“ ... the idea was to show the branches the journey, the experience actually, that our members go through: you know when you go to the branch office and you are told, sorry, your photo is not

there, and they had to go get a photo and come back, and then they are told sorry, your ID is not there, so they go back again. Then they go to the facility, when they go there, the facility tells them: sorry, your membership data is not updated so you need to go back to NHIF (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

“ So by making it engaging like it was done in the [co-design] workshop, most of them [NHIF staff] understood that our members actually do not get a very good experience when they go to the branch or when they go to seek services at the [health care] providers (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

The skits were based on an interactive exchange with the audience, in the same style that was originally delivered during the co-design workshops. This implementer shared that an interactive approach to disseminate the new strategy was very different to their usual approach, and it succeeded in getting the message across in a more meaningful way to staff. She believed this given the higher number of questions and livelier degree of debate between staff about the issues presented when compared to the usual PowerPoint presentations at previous strategy dissemination events. She admitted to utilising different tools she had picked up during the co-design workshops and co-opting them to increase engagement and take-up of the strategy internally:

“ Even later, when we are developing the strategies on how to improve our customer experience, then they kept still going back again and referring to the short skit that we had done explaining the journey (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

“ For our annual retreat we used the [prioritisation] model that was used in the design workshop so that the issues that came from the meeting, the team there was able to prioritise and agree on what will be done when with no resources, and then come later to us with a little budget and then move on as swiftly as possible (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

The facilitative co-design methods used in the workshops were adopted by some of the implementers and used to align organisation-wide understanding of the issues and implementation of the changes. This aspect of creative capacity strengthening was not intentionally part of the original plan for the five-month engagement. This implementer reported that she will continue to experiment

with more co-design methods in her work to try and make future decisions more human-centred. She gained new competencies and awareness of alternative ways of working through the design process. Beyond tools and techniques, the implementer clarified that what was even more key for her in the end was hearing things from citizens using the service directly, and that understanding the world from their angle was the impetus for her to want to fundamentally change the organisational culture and adopt new ways of working across the board:

“ In every forum I went to, even in the strategic retreat, my focus was really to stop the thinking that: we the staff at NHIF, we know exactly what our members want, and go out there right now and find what is it that our members want? How do they want to be serviced? For the hospitals, how can we enhance our partnership with them so that they are able to offer their services for our members? (Akinyi IV1, government implementer)

“ I won't say that it changed things in a way that if you come back now, the organisation is totally different, because change is a process and it won't happen at once, but I can tell you for sure, it changed how the management looks at situations, including how the headquarters looks at the branches which was also another dynamic we were also struggling with as an organisation, at that time. So I am sure, step-wise, because we are already we are implementing issues that we put together in the report, so with time, a year or two from now, we will be able to see that this process actually changed the organisation (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

The design process emboldened and equipped her to push for change regarding how the organisation saw itself in relation to its members, branch staff and providers – as well as how they conducted themselves. Twelve months following the completion of the design process, she was thrilled with the extent to which ideas from that process were being implemented, as well as the influence the design process has had on organisational culture and ways of working.

This particular implementer was open and embracing of design practices. She admits that her optimism and desire for change in society more generally makes her an outlier who is not representative of others in similar positions to her in the hierarchy. Her role in the story of this project is critical as a positive deviant who champions change, and hence gravitates towards the facilitative, integrative and participatory characteristics of co-designing change.

The challenges with co-design and bureaucracies

Although exposure to the design process strengthened some creative capabilities of immediate NHIF participants, the bigger ideology behind public sector culture in the organisation was not necessarily aligned. This resulted in a tension and frustration as the NHIF implementation team found themselves unable to put their new capabilities and awareness into practice. The implementer shared that the culture towards change and improvement in public sector organisations is something she has ‘really had to struggle with’:

“ You could see people are really struggling to develop innovative ideas that can improve services, even between department to department (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

“ The culture is to stay in ‘business as usual’ and people don’t want to shift from what is really comfortable to getting to an uncomfortable zone, they want to stay in the comfort zone and go on with the routine activities, so I think innovation takes a lot of time in the public sector because the adoption is slow and sometimes a lot of rejection from some quarters (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

In addition to this preference to maintain the status quo, she also shared that being seen to be too active to make things happen was frowned upon by colleagues:

“ When you are seen that you are putting too much to make sure that things work, the comment you will get is: the [NHIF] has been around for a long time, so it’s not going to come down if you don’t implement that one. So attitude is what you get (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

Given the challenging institutional culture, the implementer took on significant risk to trust in an unfamiliar design process for this project. Embracing unknown design practices upfront requires actors and the organisations they find themselves in to undergo a shift in norms regarding how they see, act, and make decisions. For example, going from solutions first to questions first, and forcing public sector staff out of their offices and into the homes of the citizens they serve were big steps in the process. For organisations with a tendency to avoid risk, the idea of deliberately failing early and upfront can seem perverse and

wasteful. However, the experience shared by the implementer show that there is much to be gained by identifying what does not work at a small scale before things that do work are scaled and spread.

The second tension noted from the implementer standpoint was the reduced credibility of the design process because it was led by an exogenous actor:

“ I think the main challenge I got, I think you actually saw it, it was at the retreat, of course no-one wants to be told that you are not working properly, so there were different people actually trying to discredit the report, even after you had left and they still wanted to discredit the report saying that an outsider can't come and tell us that we're not treating the customers properly. But I think the CEO was very clear that if they are not ready to be told when they have a problem then they are the ones with the problem, so I think the main challenge was really acceptance that these were issues that were actually found in the field or the branch level or at the providers and it's really up to us to pull up our socks (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

“ Actually, the people you worked with, like the branches you went to were quite happy, and they were like: we should do this more often (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

As noted in the second quote above, this was not an overwhelming majority that felt this was an issue, but enough to raise the question of how being perceived as an 'outsider' can sometimes discredit quality design processes and outcomes. No-one would want an outsider to tell them they are doing a poor job, so blaming the outsider is a good way to detract from the issues needing attention. Such issues will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

A summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and challenging from the implementer standpoint is provided over page:

Table 6.4 Summary of implementer standpoint in case study two

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Implementer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Translated complex information into actionable plans. ● Built a shared understanding of the problem and aligned diverse teams toward common objectives centred on citizen needs. ● Facilitated reciprocal and multi-directional knowledge exchanges between actors. ● Developed creative capacity of teams and equipped them with new ways of working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established institutional culture limited practices geared at change and improvement. ● Having to defend why the project had exogenous actors to colleagues, given their negative past experiences.

The funder standpoint

For this funder, the design process was valuable in that it reduced risks by focusing on the ‘right’ problems from the onset, ensured sustained ownership beyond the project funding, and also supported the reorientation of accountability toward citizens.

‘I see what impact means from different vantage points’

As established earlier in this chapter and the previous chapter, design can serve as an approach to humanise complexity for decision-makers. The use of co-design practices in this project was not to replace traditional research, but to complement what was existing and extend it into an actionable space. The funder shared how they knew coverage of the NHIF among the informally employed was low, and he had theories on why, but he had some extra budget and wanted to ‘try out’ these human-centred and co-design approaches he had heard other funders were using. From his standpoint, it surprised him in a number of ways, some personal and some more systemic:

For this project, going through it using human centred design, brought out a number of issues that would never have come out if we had gone through it the way I would have wanted to go through it (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

The funder found it 'fascinating' that the data collected from the design research came from 'lay people' and frontline NHIF branch staff rather than from 'qualified' health economists and health systems experts:

“ I was struck by the fact that you could actually get those rich insights from lay people (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

“ ... what [design] taught me is that look: this hubris about technical experts knowing it all is perhaps not the right way to look at things. If you really want to get rich and meaningful processes going, then you have to co-produce, you have to think beyond your sphere, you have to involve people, and you have to involve lay people. However hard it is, you have to do that because you get much much more return on your investment than you would get if you're stuck to the old paradigm of the technical expert knows it all (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

He said he was also affected by the fact that the project was led by a design team not comprised of people from the health sector. Furthermore, the fact that the design team heralded from different fields ensured new vantage points from which to appreciate the issues and see new ones that the usual 'experts' may be inclined to miss.

“ The design team was not made up of health system experts, yet they still did very meaningful work. So, which means that these design processes are not really sector specific. They are really, just for a lack of a better word, universal truths, or something like that (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

The design process was valued by the funder as it delivered beyond his original expectations for the project. He reflected on the importance of investing resources into initiatives that defined problems with citizen voices as the starting and end points:

“ Using [design] in this way saved us from spending a whole lot of time and money trying to solve for all the wrong problems...

The risk of not using [design] would be continuing to fund initiatives that mean nothing to people. It would be wasting money essentially (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

““ *This more human-centred way of understanding the issues meant we could invest more resources in the things that could actually make a difference for people (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).*

He shared how the ‘human face’ of the problem as expressed through design artefacts (such as personas and journey maps) and the real voices of citizens in the co-design workshops supported his shift in understanding the problem space from a plurality of lived experiences. Seeing old problems in new ways provided more value for money in the long term as it changed his funding priorities when choosing future project investments that could be more meaningful for citizens.

The funder reflections on the value of the design process in building alignment and ownership corroborated with the reflections of the implementer on the same. For him, the reason this was so critical was linked to the negative influence of foreign development actors on the health system of Kenya:

““ *When I think donors and the international community, I think misguided priorities... (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder)*

““ *... because they have resources and they promise to put resources in the system... but really, all they do is pull the sector in many different directions, and these directions are aligned to their individual priorities which are not necessarily the local priorities (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).*

He compared Kenya’s approach to health system strategy setting with the approach taken by countries like Ethiopia and Rwanda, where he highlighted how ‘stronger leadership tends to whip the international donors into shape’ in order to align better with local realities. He shared how his sensitivity to this issue played a role in envisioning this project to potentially challenge the status quo in Kenya.

‘I see project impacts and partnerships sustaining beyond the funding period’

Given his views, the funder was drawn to how human-centred and co-design approaches promised to anchor change processes in local realities, enacted by

local actors. He valued the participatory nature of the process and its ability to facilitate stakeholders in non-threatening spaces, in order to reach a sense of shared ownership:

“ The one consistent response that we had from the NHIF was, well, the NHIF was very happy. They were pretty used to not being involved in research projects. They were used to technical experts coming in and telling them what to do, but this time... All the managers that I interacted with, all the way to the CEO, were very happy about the fact that NHIF’s staff were involved in the process, and they were involved in a space that was non-threatening, in a space that allowed them to genuinely voice their opinions and their thoughts about some of these issues, and they were very happy about that (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

“ They felt they actually had gotten involved in a process where they’re considered a part of it, they are considered as part of the solution, as opposed to being the problem. And because of that, I think the report of that project generated more ownership within NHIF as opposed to the other projects that are more like: this is what they said to me (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

Many of the recommendations and ideas from the project were subsequently taken up and integrated into NHIF organisational work plans, cascading down to all levels, from senior management at headquarters to frontline managers in branches nationwide. The blueprint was disseminated as is typically done for similar projects. Yet, this project was different than others:

“ But this was the first and only project where the CEO himself requested that [the report] be disseminated in the NHIF Managers’ Annual Retreat. That has never happened before, and I doubt that will happen again... for the CEO himself to take an interest in the project and request that it be disseminated further in that retreat, I think that is a testament to how the process generated a lot of interest and ownership (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

The design process helped create a shared sense of ownership among stakeholders that ensured the blueprint was not shelved like other reports, but lived on beyond the life of the five-month design process. A structured and facilitated approach to co-design, one that prioritised dialogue-based

collaboration and the alignment of diverse stakeholders early on provided a shift in not only how the agenda for change was being set, but who got to own and direct it. The funder reflected on how many projects were directed by non-Kenyans and then as their project funding was winding down, the projects were shopped around asking the government to take them over and sustain them financially. He found it offensive that endogenous actors are usually asked very late in the piece to take ownership of something that they had no influence in shaping. What ends up happening is that projects often finish, and nothing gets taken forward past the end of the funding period. In this case, however, he appreciated how the design process aligned diverse stakeholders early so they shaped and owned things from the onset.

The funder shared his experience on how the design process anchored the dialogue between stakeholders on what was meaningful for the citizens:

“ I remember we had a session during the workshop where we had people from the informal sector, being the women and men talking about their experiences, I think that really made me realise: wow, man, these are actual people we are talking about, these are actual challenges, so they are not just some negative reports that we are getting from a consultant... So that helped us identify more with the people we are trying to serve and makes us appreciate the challenges they face more (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

“ I realised that the process is so much better and so much easier and so much more useful when you actually provide space for the other actors in the system or the process to voice their concerns and share their experiences (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

Creating the space to listen and relate to what citizens were saying meant re-orienting his sense of accountability. He shared in quite some depth how it was a very personal and inward process for him, as before this project he believed that the kind of work he was funding was one-directional with ‘an expert who knows it all and everyone else who doesn’t know anything, so you tell them what they don’t know.’ His initial thoughts:

“ To be honest, my idea of doing this informal sector research would be like: look, I know the questions I need to ask... and I am also very clear about the answers I am expecting from users. So, I was probably not so much interested in what the users were going

to say, because I sort of wanted to them to say certain things. [This project] could've been a going-through-the-motions kind of thing. Because that is how technical assistance works. We design studies, and really, it's to justify our own biases... But then, interacting with this concept of human centred design made me take a step back (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

““ The default way of designing assumes knowledge and power lies with the technocrat... we say: we know best, so you just sit back, and we will get you the best product ever. While human centred design turns the tables around and says look: the people who know best what they want are the end-users, and so if you want to design something that will be useful, then you need to work very closely with the end-users... So human centred design to me is about co-production, it's about putting the designer together with the end-user to come up with a solution that is very much informed by the perspectives of the end-user (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

He shared how he found technical experts are usually in positions of power and can tend to think they 'know it all.' He felt that experts can tend to disregard the language/terms used and knowledge that resides with other actors in the system who are actually living what the experts are only reading, writing and talking about. The funder reflected on the value of the design process in shifting accountability toward citizens as it highlighted the issues from a lived experience perspective and codified the project in the language and terms used by real people:

““ [They] also need to appreciate that the people they are trying to serve are not foolish. They have knowledge, even though they don't always communicate that knowledge in the technical terms that we use, you know, our disciplinary biases, but they have very useful knowledge and information, and you should give them space to voice their views and perceptions about things (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

““ Citizens should be part of solving the problem, as opposed to being recipients of problems that have sort of been constructed by either the public sector or the development people (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

The funder shared that shift in accountability he felt and witnessed is something that needs to be part of a wider-scale change.

'I am reminded of who I should be accountable to'

He acknowledged that patient-centred care is already a movement within the health system as an approach to be more accountable to citizens, but that his experience with it had been limited to reading about it in the literature as opposed to any practical work. He valued working with designers who came from outside the sector, and actually made the theory practical for him.

“ ... going through it, for me, what I felt is that this is what we've always been talking about when we say we want 'people-centred health systems' you know. We are going through a process where we are actually acknowledging the system is about people, and the system is about serving the people, so we need to involve the people if the system is going to work for them (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

This idea of the design process influencing someone's sense of accountability was also linked to the distinction that is often made between the two paradigms of clinical medicine and public or population health – that distinction is one of individual problems versus aggregate problems. The funder's reflections on this distinction demonstrates how difficult it is to make decisions that are accountable to citizens' lived experiences as a public health professional given the emphasis on de-individualising the process:

“ When you're a pharmacist or medical doctor, you are dealing with the problem of an individual... so and so walks into your office, he is feeling unwell, so you are dealing with just him. Ok? But when you get into public health, you are not dealing with individuals anymore, you are dealing with populations and their health issues. So, you sort of de-individualise the process. So we think about aggregated problems as opposed to individual problems. The challenge with that sometimes is that it makes us fail to appreciate the fact that you have real people with real experiences within the system. And so the human centred design work we did allowed me to challenge that within myself... (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

The design process provided the space and opportunity for the funder to reorient his accountability toward people and their varied experiences. This is in contrast to looking at the project as a problem of aggregated statistics and thinking about

the informal sector as a large amorphous population group. Previously they have been categorised by how citizens who are informally employed do not have regular incomes, how they do not organise themselves in an official way, and how they have low ability to pay. The design research activities reframed the problem for the funder and reoriented what a good quality outcome looks like from the perspective of the citizens' lived experience:

“ So, going through this process allowed me to actually think about the individual human beings... and get to appreciate that their challenges are not homogenous, you know, they are very heterogeneous challenges (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

“ The other insight that I remember vividly, was essentially portraying the different personas, I mean that really helped you to understand: who is this person, when you talk about the informal sector, who is this person, what's their typical day like, what's their typical experience of the NHIF like... The process gives a human face to the problems you are trying to resolve, that is number one (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

The funder reflected that the 'human face' provided by the design process added to his understanding of the problem space by making it more grounded. The design research had not uncovered a suite of unknown facts, but rather that reading articles about health financing and thinking of the issues in terms of percentages is very different than imagining a typical end-user and how they would experience the issues in real life. The funder acknowledged how this personal shift was triggered by the human-centred emphasis of design, and subsequently influenced how he perceived his own position and relative power in the system:

“ People in the public sector and people in the development space need to realise that their role is as servants, your role is to serve the masses, to serve the citizens ... the truth is, it is the public that has employed you, so your role is actually to figure out how best to serve them. So that is one mindset that design can help us change (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

“ I don't know about other countries, but in Kenya, the public sector feels that it does the public a favour by serving them... So it was interesting to get [NHIF staff] to realise that, you know, actually, it is the other way round, it is up to you to serve the public, it is up to you to come up with something that the public will be okay with (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

As mentioned above, the funder reflected on how the process went beyond his own personal shift as he witnessed similar shifts in others around him. There seemed to be a space that the co-design process opened up for those who were prepared to look inward and reflect on the changes needed.

The co-design process supported the funder in redefining success and reorienting his notion of accountability to be increasingly centred on lived experiences of citizens. This accompanied the funder through a personal reflection process where he saw greater value in the co-creation of meaning and solutions with others as anchor points for accountability, not as solely the domain of the expert. The design process helped the funder start with people within the health system, rather than the hardware of the system, such as technologies, finances, medicines, equipment and so on. The process also supported a reorientation that thinking in systems and being accountable to populations does not necessarily mean that data and evidence needs to be de-humanised. From the funder standpoint, if the system is all about people, and his own role in this system is about serving people, then people's lived experiences need to be central to his decision-making.

Challenges with co-design and weak relationships

The design process presented the funder with two main points of tension. The first of them was the amount of time and patience required from the process.

“ That was one of the concerns I have about human centred design... it actually requires time and patience. So that is one challenge (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

The second point of tension was the participatory nature of the co-design process that brings competing or contradicting interests and groups of people together. This can pose risks to a beneficial outcome if egos are not appropriately facilitated or managed during negotiated co-design processes.

“ I can see how it is vulnerable to it. And actually, I could say I experienced it to some point, if you remember, on the first day of that co-design workshop, we almost lost the whole project ... because you were trying to involve everyone, we put two people in one room who didn't agree with each other and who both wanted to take the centre stage, and that would have threatened the entire

project ... because of the nature of the process, because it involves all these other actors, then it becomes vulnerable to obstacles. Different actors have different interests, and depending on the nature of that interest, and depending on how powerful they are, then sometimes, the more people you involve, the more likely that they are going to torpedo your initiative. That is always a risk (Kabiru IV2, multilateral funder).

The design process prioritised dialogue-based collaboration to align diverse stakeholders early so they shaped the agenda and owned it from the onset. This meant the design team needed to embrace some messiness in workshop settings in order to be able to delicately facilitate alignment between stakeholders from different organisational departments who had a history of conflict with one another.

A summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and challenging from the funder standpoint is provided below:

Table 6.5 Summary of the funder standpoint in case study two

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
Funder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Created a shared sense of ownership and ensured sustained take-up of the solutions. ● Re-oriented accountability toward citizen-defined versions of change. ● Reframed a purely statistical understanding of the problem space to include experiential and relational evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balancing competing interests and egos in participatory design processes can risk project success if not managed well. ● The amount of time design takes to do it well is not factored into existing programmatic processes.

6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The design process again created different types of value for the actors involved in this project. For citizens, the design process affirmed dignity, ensured relevance, and changed power relations in decision-making moments. For implementers, the design process humanised technical knowledge, developed capability that lingered beyond the project, and built greater alignment among organisational teams. For the funder, the design process offered reduced risks by focusing on the 'right' problems, ensured sustained ownership beyond the project funding, and reoriented accountability to citizens. Although interrogated more in this case study as a Western export, design was still valued as custodian of human-centred decision-making, facilitator of valuable collaboration, and mediator between competing interests.

A combined summary of the key points regarding what was valuable and what was challenging from all the standpoints is provided over page:

Table 6.6 Combined summary of all the standpoints' perspectives in case study two

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
DESIGNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivated humility and resilience through shared vulnerability. • Provided a sense of fulfilment and reward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and sensitivity to the colonial histories. • Ill-equipped to design in ways that penetrate structural inequity. • Contradictions in a consulting model that does not always invest in local capacity.
CITIZENS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenged the dominant narrative by creating space to be heard, understood, and respected. • Redistributed power when evaluating others' ideas and co-designing alternatives that were taken up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (not identified)
IMPLEMENTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translated complex information into actionable plans. • Built a shared understanding of the problem and aligned diverse teams toward common objectives centred on citizens. • Facilitated reciprocal and multi-directional knowledge exchanges between actors. • Developed creative capacity of teams and equipped them with new ways of working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established institutional culture limited practices geared at change and improvement. • Having to defend why the project had exogenous actors to colleagues, given their negative past experiences.

ACTOR	WHAT WAS VALUABLE?	WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?
FUNDER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created a shared sense of ownership and ensured sustained take-up of the solutions. Re-oriented accountability toward citizen-defined versions of change. Reframed a purely statistical understanding of the problem space to include experiential and relational evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing competing interests and egos in participatory design processes can risk project success if not managed well. The time design takes to do it well is not factored into existing programmatic processes.

Chapter 7

Practitioner dialogues



Design can't save us

“ I had an interesting meeting with the global head of innovation at an NGO that will remain nameless. She was frustrated with the design firm she had been working with. She worked hard to convince funders to provide the grant money for something so intangible. Then she hired some of the best-known designers in the industry to come out and design a new service for low-income Ugandans. After two long years, she had spent a tonne of money with them, and questioned whether the outcome was ‘worth it’? It made me wonder whether people know what to expect when they are buying design? And if they know what to expect, do they know how to select the right designer for the nature of the task at hand – given we are all so different? She said she was disappointed with this design firm being too ‘product-centred’ which had resulted in a ‘gadgety’ solution that is really ‘cool’ but fails to consider the national technological and organisational limitations within that project’s context – which would in effect make implementation impossible. She said design had failed her and failed the people it had promised a meaningful solution with/for. Her experience is not alone as I’ve begun to hear of similar grievances from others. I find myself in a bit of a predicament. As a design community we need to get ourselves sorted out.

(Author journal excerpt, January 2014)

7.1 CHAPTER OBJECTIVE

As detailed in the previous chapters, the transition toward a more holistic, human-centred development cannot be thought of in the abstract. Such ideas need to be inspired by and tailored to the concrete contexts where design and Development practices meet. While Chapters Two and Three examined the critiques at the intersection of design and Development from a scholarly perspective, and Chapters Five and Six followed reflections from actors on specific project encounters, this chapter broadens the picture by highlighting reflections of other practitioners who were not involved in the previous project cases. The practitioners interviewed have drawn from their own project experiences, and so this chapter aims to expand the discussion beyond just projects I have been involved in. I invite my reader to 'stand' in their position and use the grounded experiences of others as the lenses to understand some of the barriers and frustrations which can hinder the potential value of design encounters from being actualised.

7.2 FRUSTRATIONS WHEN ENCOUNTERING DESIGN

Although the previous chapters propositioned the value of design practices for actors in Development projects, they also demonstrated that the realisation of this value does not come easily in real world settings. The practical frustrations that arise at this intersection and how they are navigated can significantly influence how the 'Return on Design' (RoD) is perceived and realised. With the critical analysis of design in Development projects mounting, the question of whether design practices have any value in such settings continues to be asked. I do not wish to discuss the challenges at this intersection based only on my own project experiences. So I set out to understand the experiences other people had in similar projects within the same system. From the analysis of the remaining interviews conducted with funders, implementers, and designers for this thesis, the practices of design were often reported as misunderstood and/or misused. These issues were manifested in a variety of ways.

As discussed in Chapter Three, an authentic co-design process is not something that happens separately, in isolation. But rather, through deep partnership with the people who will own and implement the intended change. It is at this intersection that frustrations surface, as people who have established ways of working are confronted with designerly ways of working. Some design practices can accentuate already known problems within the Development system. At the same time, some can create new problems of their own. Despite the criticisms,

spending on the inclusion of design consulting on Development projects has grown more than 10-fold in the last six years (personal communications with two funders). So, if some are feeling that design practices keep failing on their promise in this space, then why has the demand for them continued to grow?

While the previous chapters emphasise what and how the value of collaborative and social design practices are perceived by different actors, this chapter will emphasise the common issues and frustrations with similar design practices at this intersection with Development. The analysis of the interviews identified that many people found encountering design practices as 1) **threatening**; 2) **demanding**; 3) **over-promising**; 4) **unpredictable**; and 5) **contradictory**. These five frustrations are discussed below from the perspectives of eight actor standpoints reflecting on their encounters with design practices in Development projects:

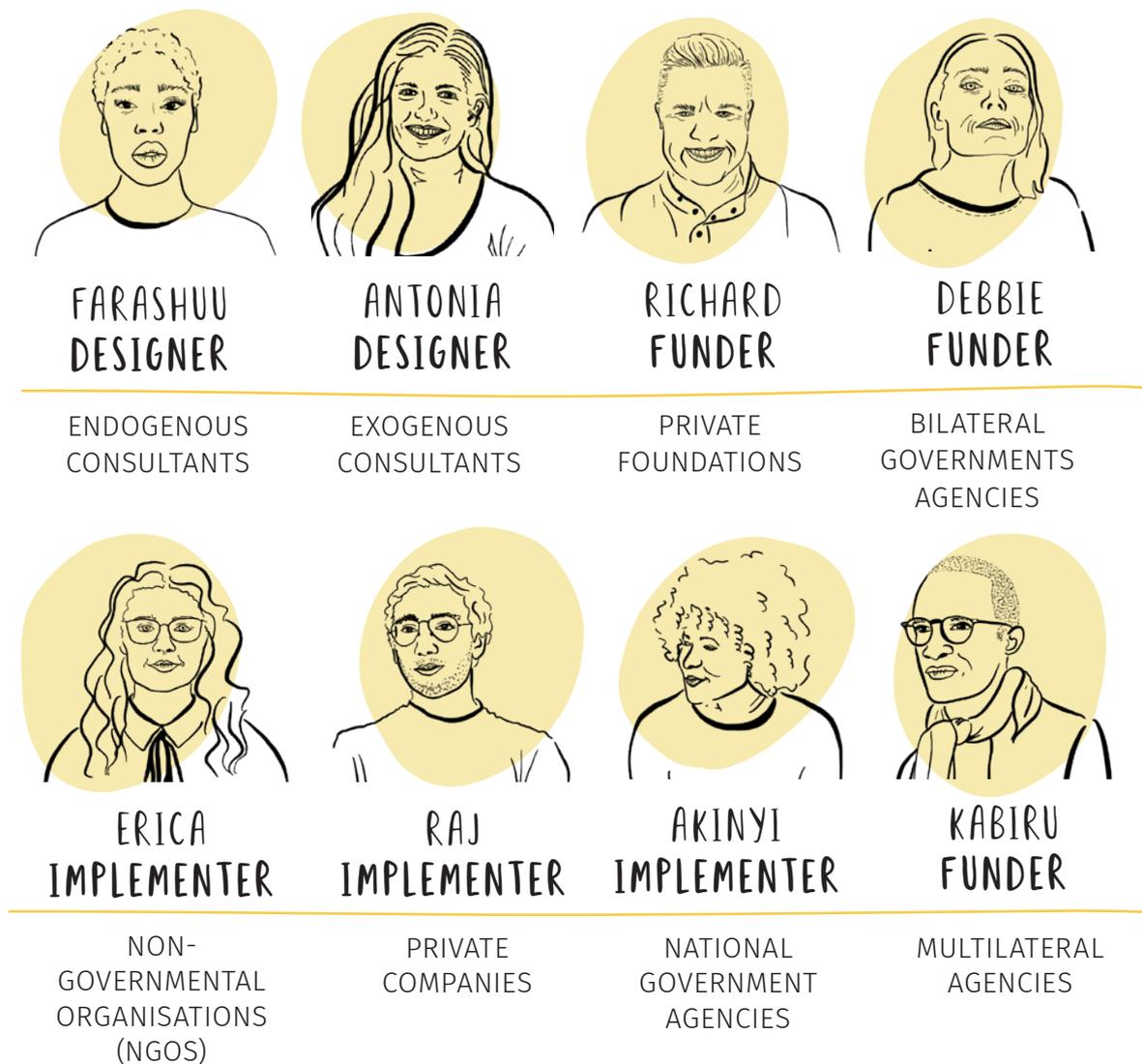


Figure 7.1 Actor standpoints featuring in practitioner reflections

7.3. DESIGN ENCOUNTERS AS THREATENING

The unfamiliarity of the language and techniques used by designers can challenge and threaten other people's sense of place in, contribution to, and control of the system they know. Design practices are perceived as threatening in three ways at this intersection. Firstly, they can create discomfort relating to the role of expertise and knowledge and where the practitioner fits. Secondly, design practices can create discomfort for people when they are forced to engage with more ambiguity and complexity than they are used to. Thirdly, design practices tend to surface disconnects between centralised control in Global North headquarters, and the realities on the ground.

To maintain the integrity of the voice of the people in the problem setting, there is a widely popular premise to start any design challenge with a 'beginner's mindset'. The common argument made by designers is that a good design process requires a willingness to reframe one's understanding of a problem in ways that are rooted in how people speak to their own lived experience of said problem. This starting premise creates tensions with implementers and funders regarding the role of existing knowledge, expertise and best practices in a design-led initiative. For example, when designers tell others to 'put aside what you know', this sometimes prompts an adverse reaction among technical experts who have been working in their specialist space for many years. Non-designers describe how they feel that their expertise is valued less than that of the creative designers who know nothing about the particular issue, and yet are the ones brought in to 'solve' the issue in which they are not specialists.

“ I worked with a woman who has worked in global development for her entire life, and this woman had just a wealth of experience... and when I first started working with her she said: well, how are [designers] going to tell me anything about HPV that I don't already know (Richard, IV1 private funder).

“ Designers always tell others to be flexible and put aside their expertise, when they [designers] are the least flexible of all with their process (Richard, IV1 private funder).

It is clear that some design practices create discomfort for technical experts who are used to traditional project approaches; their expertise is shifted from the centre of the experience to the periphery. In a design-led project, they are

increasingly being invited to contribute their expertise after immersion and framing has commenced with other primary stakeholders, such as citizens. This shift in the role and place of the technical expert prompts a critical question: Where does traditional expertise and knowledge fit when taking a design-led approach? Designers are also critiqued for claiming to be ‘experts’ in things like the voice of the user, creative methods, and collaborative facilitation. Hence, this tension occurs and intensifies in both directions. So then, what is the role of different types of expertise – design included – in the change process? Each group of actors has a role to play, for instance, designers might be the creative experts, implementers the technical experts, and citizens/users are the context experts. There are opportunities for all actors involved to better collaborate with and respect the expertise of each other actor.

There are some design tools and techniques have evolved from designers working in and drawing from different social science contexts over recent decades. Some practitioners who are trained in sociology, anthropology, behavioural economics, marketing, and participatory methods sometimes see things designers do, and they say, ‘Okay, but we already do that.’ They hear designers talk, and they say, ‘That sounds like what we’re already saying.’ It seems designers have not always been able to clearly articulate their unique value, nor been able to step back and recognise where design fits in the bigger picture.

“ HCD needs to have a certain humility in terms of recognising that there are many of these other specialised disciplines and capabilities that have been working in this space for years, [laughs] and they really have some proven ways to think about, measure, or act around impact. Finding a way to bring design into those conversations, have a seat at the same table, but realise where it fits in (Antonia IV5, exogenous designer).

In general, the position designers could consider taking is not one where design is any better, or where design is a replacement, or where design is the only way to do it. The opportunity is for design practices to integrate and weave into the expertise of other disciplines already in operation. For the value of design to be optimised, navigating this issue of design practices as threatening others requires a degree of humility between actors. Designers can do more to establish upfront that they are not there to replace but rather to ‘accompany’ other disciplines through collaborative change processes. At the same time, some actors claimed

that design has its own unique value through the introduction of some different approaches – like those discussed in Chapter Three – to the table as well.

Design practices can create discomfort for some people when they are forced to engage with the ambiguity, disorder and messiness of the unknown. Another common principle among designers is to employ a mental model with phases of divergence and convergence, and to remain exploratory during times of divergence so as not to converge too quickly. The divergence parts can trigger people who are not used to being forced to engage in ambiguity without converging quickly.

“ Messiness really triggers people in different ways. The design process is really messy (Farashuu IV3, endogenous designer).

“ The approach is the approach, I still can't cope with the chaos part of it, but the approach is the approach (Erica IV4, NGO implementer).

“ It is a really uncomfortable process... it really challenges people, and it brings them down to their base. It's funny because they're trying to understand other humans, but it also tests their own humanity and their own human characteristics. If they're really uncomfortable with uncertainty, it comes out, and I think it's one of those things that at the end of it they're like, 'Oh God, I was really scared during that part, and I saw what you were doing, I saw it coming together and then I got it, and then I was comfortable.' I think with that kind of experience, it's not just what they see happening for users, it's what they see happening for themselves. That's really powerful (Antonia IV3, exogenous designer).

Trust is required to let go of the usual control, parameters, or assumptions in order to move forward in a design process. But trust takes time to establish in a meaningful way, and it is not often granted upfront in new relationships, particularly ones that can come across as threatening. There is irony in that some people are comfortable designing and implementing 'interventions' for change in other people's lives (ie. the citizens or other implementing partners), but feel discomfort when the design process forces them to look inward at the changes they need to make for themselves. There were a number of people who felt that their initial experiences with design practices were uncomfortable; this feeling came about due to the lack of order and predictability in the process. This

discomfort breeds resistance. However, in the words of one designer, those points of resistance are where designers ought to dig in even deeper and push through, as that is where the breakthroughs happen.

“ Resistance during the process is good. We don't want everyone to say, 'This is great.' And like, 'This is the exact way we need to be doing things.' It would tell us that we're not going deep enough and we're not pushing people far enough. The discomfort comes from a lack of previous experience (Antonia IV1, exogenous designer).

Some non-designers who collaborate with designers want to codify design into predictable tools and processes in order to feel more comfortable with it. However, this comfort and predictability is exactly what some designers want to avoid.

It can be difficult to maintain the integrity of the user experience during problem setting and solving if previous assumptions are held to be true. When decisions are made prematurely to keep the situation comfortable rather than face the challenges the integrity is compromised.

“ What I've been trying to push is how do we understand users even before we get into defining what the problem is... [this organisation] is no different to other places in this regard, we've made a decision ahead of time, what are the problems (Richard IV1, private funder).

The potential value of design supporting more human-centred action is compromised, or not fully realised, when assumptions about the problem/ context and decisions about what the solutions should be, are made ahead of time. Some practitioners reflected with 'I don't know if we are always asking the right question in the right way.' In contrast to designers starting with the end-user, other practitioners shared 'we start with the disease or the device or the technology' and rarely start with framing the question from the perspective of the people that will use the device or technology. Rather than starting with the technical solution to satisfy the need for predictability, design practices support greater emphasis on setting project parameters based on the lived experiences of the people who are experiencing the problem.

It has been purported that design practices highlight the disconnect between centralised control in Global North aid capitals, and realities on the ground. One issue raised predominantly by designers as a point of tension is the significant imbalance between the people making decisions in the Global North and the realities of the people interacting with the work in a given context elsewhere.

““ *That imbalance creates a lot of design by committee and boardroom type decisions where people make decisions based on ‘I passed through it one day three years ago. I know what people need [laughs] (Antonia IV2, exogenous designer).*

““ *It’s really frustrating sometimes to talk to people like that because you can tell that they honestly have a genuine desire to help, but if they’re sitting in their office in DC, they know that they can’t really accurately do a lot... That is the frustrating piece, where you’re trying to explain to someone, ‘This is what it’s like and you need to do it this way because of this,’ and that doesn’t get to their heads (Farashuu IV1, endogenous designer).*

Decision-makers are used to making judgements based on minimal first-hand exposure with people who are doing the work on the ground. This disconnect was described by one designer as ‘the root cause’ for why the end-user is ‘overlooked’ in some development projects. That is how the more immersive, human-centred approach of design can expose and threaten people’s sense of place in, contribution to, and control of the system they know.

On one hand, many practitioners feel that design practices are threatening to the status quo in Development. On the other hand, many designers feel that the status quo is threatening to quality design practice and outputs. For example, designers can sometimes get tangled up in the politics of stakeholder expectations:

““ *When that happens, as designers, you get caught up in the middle of this space that is unnecessary for us, that we’re trying to design something and there are issues around like, do we implement this like this? Whatnots and whatnots. It’s this whole place of managing stakeholders and blah, blah, blah (Farashuu IV3, endogenous designer).*

““ *Designers need to better appreciate our internal politics... we are a political organisation and we all know politics is about the art of the possible (Debbie IV1, Government funder).*

The perceived threat of design by some practitioners, and the perceived threat of the status quo by other practitioners is a two-way tension which can undermine the value of design for Development.

7.4. DESIGN ENCOUNTERS AS DEMANDING

The design process can have a lack of linearity and predictability that actors found demanding when compared to other established ways of working. Processes of design were perceived as demanding by practitioners in three ways. Firstly, design processes demand open and flexible mind-sets as they challenge short-term, siloed, myopic and non-integrative practices. Secondly, design processes demand more time, a different pace, and arguably more money upfront than established ways of working. Thirdly, design processes demand flexible contracting and project permissions not usually available with traditional funding structures.

Design processes disrupt the technically siloed, organisational-centred, non-integrative ways of seeing problems and solutions. Taking a design-led approach was reported as ‘opening up everyone and everything in a way’ that is juxtaposed to the traditional siloed approaches in Development. The focus on experience, feelings, and preferences at a fundamental human level means that a lot of unpredicted pieces of the puzzle come together when it was originally not anticipated as being related to the pre-determined ‘scope’ or boundary of a project.

““ *At its core, [design] is so empathy-based, you start to learn things about things that aren’t even related to your project that are very useful ... It’s a process and a methodology that actually allows for a lot more than what it sets out to solve (Antonia IV9, exogenous designer).*

““ *[Design] helped me see the 24 million we were targeting as real people, with different needs and preferences (Akinyi IV2, government implementer).*

The tension that arises here is that designers can sometimes dive into a project with a view to identifying the nodes or levers for change that could have the greatest impact on the problem as experienced by end-users. However, this re-orienting of the problem understanding from a more systemic and human centred lens can often be interpreted by other actors as out of scope or more difficult to trace back to the pre-set project objectives. Ironically, designers have also been accused of not being systems-oriented enough by others. Implementers shared how this tension is felt from the other side when there has been an over-emphasis on a product solution in isolation:

““ *While the technical experts are on some level at fault because they tend to focus only on technical and not really see the human, I would say in the opposite way, the empathy-based designers aren't necessarily looking at the technical issues nor are they looking at the epidemiological issues or the system-wide systemic issues (Erica IV8, NGO implementer).*

““ *A lot of these designers can't think like that. They're pro-product biased, especially the US ones. Yes, some of them know about service design but they tend to lean on the product side, at least, that has been my experience (Richard IV3, private funder).*

The over-emphasis on the technical product solution without designing for the system has 'turned off' technical experts according to several practitioner accounts. Where it may be breaking down is that some designers are brought in to develop technical products for what are ultimately systemic challenges. Or they may largely focus on telling that individual story, incorporate beautiful pictures, and heart-tugging anecdotes, which then triggers the technical people who are trying to make large scale systemic changes to react with, 'Yes, but how do we fix the supply chain so that this person gets what she needs?' This illustrates the disconnect. The system needs to be deeply understood and intricately designed for in parallel to designing for the end-users.

It appears that both designers and non-designers may not be showing signs of readiness to change their way of seeing or approaching things. Given the adaptive nature of designers, perhaps then the responsibility here lies with designers to more intentionally meet other practitioners where they are and integrate with existing schools of thought. One designer put it this way:

“ I don't think that in a space like international development, you can just come in and turn everything on its head, and expect things to work well... I think you will have to work within the constraints that you already have, work within the mental models people have, and shift those gradually into understanding it from the perspective that you are looking at it (Farashuu IV2, endogenous designer).

The tension was highlighted as particularly difficult when designers interface with 'fixed mindset' or 'planner' types (and not 'searcher' types, see Easterly 2006). Another actor reflected on this issue from within their organisation:

“ What I'm really struggling with here is that everyone around me seems to believe that 'rational actor theory' is a way of explaining the world. We've pretty much let everybody know that in fact, that's not a good way to explain the world... They are trained in the hard sciences, they are more likely going to be fixed mind-set, rational thinkers...I can't tell these people that rational actor theory doesn't explain life, because rational actor theory actually does explain their lives. So I'm fighting a losing battle (Richard IV1, private funder).

Navigating the tension around how to more respectfully integrate within environments where more siloed, scientific thinking modes are dominant is amplified when designers, perhaps with less humble inclinations, say 'No, you need to start from scratch and completely use my way of doing things.' Some implementers and funders reflected on their interactions with designers who took this stance as highly arrogant. There is no easy formula on how designers can strike a balance between disrupting siloed thinking, and at the same time, meet people where they are in terms of existing mental models. For complex realities, the opportunity lies in how these different modes of thinking can come together in constructive ways to reframe problem understandings collectively.

A number of actors identified the issue that quality design processes cost too much money, which in turn can make it exclusionary and inaccessible to the partners who need it most. In an environment where money is scarce and resources are few, designers are finding it difficult to make the case for the costs of their efforts.

“ When I say ‘I need three months of time to be able to do some exploratory creative research,’ and people are just like, ‘Zip it, I’m not going to pay for that.’ (Farashuu IV2, endogenous designer).

“ People don’t place value on it. They think that you can do it in half the time that you say you want to do it in (Antonia IV6, exogenous designer).

Even though design processes are being priced into more proposals, the understanding of how much time and costs is allocated influences the potential return on investment seems limited. Designers shared how hard it is to get other actors on board with the time and costs associated to go through the process with integrity, properly diverge and converge, and rigorously and iteratively test a solution so that it is refined and validated with citizens/users.

“ They are like, ‘No, but I don’t have budget for that, I don’t have time for you to do all that, but I want to incorporate it because I want to seem innovative.’ So you try to compress it and you’ll get a solution, but is it going to be lasting in the end? No. You can only get them to a point (Antonia IV3, exogenous designer).

“ ‘I need results and I need you to do it in one week.’ I think that tends to be really frustrating because it’s almost as though you’ve hit a roadblock before you even get a chance to prove yourself, and it’s kind of a chicken and egg problem because how can I prove to you that this is worthwhile, when you won’t give me the opportunity to prove myself? (Farashuu IV2, endogenous designer).

To actors who have not worked with designers before, it seems excessive. If designers want to be taken seriously when working in cross-disciplinary Development projects, then they need to be practical and financially responsible. Some designers shared their concern about the design community’s billing practices and questioned the drivers of billing excessively, particularly when designers might get paid significantly more than the cost to implement the proposed changes.

““ *This work is expensive... but we as designers have to change. We cannot be billing too high in ways that people get paid much more than what it actually costs to build a solution. I don't know how we get there. Maybe it's by having more people doing design, so then it's just a normal way of life (Farashuu IV1, endogenous designer).*

““ *Design, as it stands right now, could very easily become something that's out of control expensive and has no limits to the amount of money that you can throw at something in order to answer a small question. Because, really, what design is doing, it's like arming you with a little teaspoon and you're trying to dig a gigantic hole (Farashuu IV3, endogenous designer).*

A number of the interviewees were concerned that opportunities for engaging with design processes would become exclusionary and inaccessible. The design community needs to continue experimenting with different business models and contracting engagements in order to alleviate some of this tension related to cost and accessibility.

Collaborative and social design practices often demand more time and a different pace than the mainstream ways of working. These take time due to the complexity of enabling genuine spaces for negotiated collaboration or participation among actor groups from diverse cultural and interdisciplinary backgrounds, sometimes with competing interests and politics to consider. As such, co-design activities need to be attuned to the pace and tempo of the different collaborators in a given project context. Funder strategies and priorities change regularly. For some, this translates into reactive, short-term orientations that can lead to 'fickle' decision making and 'detrimental' consequences.

““ *Another frustration, certainly, is the donor community and how reactive they are in one sense, but also how they make funding decisions based on... a lot of social norming and status quo bias. Funders are easily influenced by one another. If one funder goes down a certain path, you see this ripple effect happen. Even though that path has not necessarily been proven or validated as a useful, impactful path (Antonia IV1, exogenous designer).*

“ I think that’s shameful, quite honestly. It’s shameful... The [donors] can do a lot of harm. They can do a lot of good also, but they have the potential to do a lot of harm because of these fickle decision-making processes (Antonia IV8, exogenous designer).

This has a follow-on effect of NGOs chasing resources and switching programme priorities based on what funders are funding rather than what is sensible for the communities they work with. Oftentimes, design practices can disrupt this dynamic as they surface tension between funder-defined priorities and user-defined needs.

Once again, just as implementers and funders felt design demands a lot from them, the designers felt the Development system’s status quo demands a lot from them. The arbitrary funding cycles that govern projects were cited by several practitioners as being particularly limiting and demanding. Such behaviours that put organisational priorities at the centre of decision-making are not conducive to community centred processes of change that may require a completely different timeframe, pace and tempo.

“ Who says that we always have to solve a problem in three or five years? Who made up that time period? That’s an arbitrary number that’s based on internal funding cycles, but impact might take a lot longer. Certain behaviour could take a lot longer. It might take three years to even figure out what the potential solution is. It might take a year to design that solution. We’re supposed to see results in a year? It doesn’t make sense (Antonia IV1, exogenous designer).

The time issue is sensitive given that a project that demands a high integrity and truly participatory design process would benefit from being respectful of the pace of the users and other endogenous actors.

“ There’s also the issue that everyone in Development, they just always come to you with such tight deadlines: ‘We need this thing tomorrow.’ But designing with others, this takes time (Farashuu IV2, endogenous designer).

There are risks associated with the short-term nature of many design engagements. There are also risks associated with design engagements that are

seen as an outsourced design 'phase' with a 'handover' at the end, rather than a space where all stakeholders are co-designers who lean-in and take ownership of longer-term change processes:

“*What's frustrating for me is that with our projects, we generally get through the design stage, and then we get to the part where we handover all this wealth of information, the voice of the user, and a solution that we developed based on everything that we had heard and learned. Then they take it, whoever they are, an implementing partner or whatever, and they just pick it apart (Antonia IV3, exogenous designer).*

“*But there are times when the timeframe is longer: We also had a longer engagement with this partner than the other design firm did... they would work with a client for four weeks, it's like 'How on earth can you learn what a client needs in four weeks?' I don't understand that model. We like 6-month, 8-month, 12-month engagements where we can really be a partner of the organisation that we're consulting for. I think that's the difference (Farashuu IV3, endogenous designer).*

True co-design takes time and needs to be attuned to varied contextual drivers, which can influence the pace of change in a given context. Strategies to navigate these issues would be longer term, embedded partnerships focused on skills transfer and a tempered pace for implementing change. However, such strategies require very different funding, procurement and contracting structures to occur:

“*The process of developing that [design consulting] contract took two years. A big part of it was because design is hard to define ... When we are dealing with our procurement folks who are used to writing contracts for companies that sell pens – then you can be very specific – to say we will spend 25 cents on a pen that will have this much ink etc – but when you start talking about listening to users and synthesis – these procurement folks are like what the hell is this? That was extremely painful... despite all that, demand for design in the organisation was higher than we anticipated (Debbie IV1, Government funder).*

“*...design firms come into a room and tell everyone else 'you've gotta be more flexible' but the only ones not willing to be flexible are the design firms... especially when they are always like, 'just follow our process, trust our process...'* (Richard IV1, private funder).

Given there is flexibility being demanded of all actors, designers included, there is a need to discuss how to achieve this change. The rigidity also likely compromises the potential for the application of design approaches to be done well and for the value of design to be fully realised. There are different, emerging funding models for design activity that offer ways to give the best value. Ideally, there would be greater investment from funders in longer-term capacity building models; funding that allows for work and ownership by endogenous design actors, support of design education, and building local design talent. These models could be a way to support the natural market dynamics that exist rather than fly-in-fly-out consulting arrangements that create disruptive parallel market dynamics. One private sector implementer reflected on the need for a fundamental shift:

“ It’s not enough to just train everyone and have these organisations take up human-centred design, and they’re slotted into their project design or programme design cycle. There has to be a complete shift in the way that the system works (Raj IV4, private company).

“ A big complaint that comes up, that [government funders] don’t really have a good answer to yet is, how are we expected to do design work or even work that incorporates any level of design, to some degree in it, when the funding structures are so limiting and don’t allow us to do it? (Antonia IV9, exogenous designer).

If design continues to be promoted, then there will need to be more flexible contracting and funding models in place for the design integrity to be maintained, and its potential value to be realised. There have been some early ideas and experimentation on how to ease this tension. One idea is for funders to build uncertainty intentionally into contracts by funding the process of exploration and innovation rather than a predetermined solution based on ‘best-practice’ assumptions. The idea of ‘adaptive contracting’, particularly for longer change processes, would allow teams to make changes that the complex realities demand. Designers and implementers are often bound to static contracts and find themselves without the space or permission to adapt their approach or solution(s) as new understandings arise, or as the needs of people evolve in a given context. While scholars and practitioners agree there is a need for change, the reality of shifting mindsets and funding models is a large issue to overcome.

7.5. ENCOUNTERING DESIGN AS OVER-PROMISING

It seems like the promise of design is falling short for some. In the words of one designer working in this space ‘we’re facing ocean-sized problems armed with teaspoons’ (Lee 2015). The notion of design is perceived as hype in three different ways. Firstly, there seems a significant degree of overselling and overpromising on what outcomes designers can actually deliver. Secondly, designers have been criticised for being ‘fluffy’ or ‘fuzzy’ or ‘loosey-goosey’, both in the ways they articulate and apply design. Thirdly, designers are not substantiating claims of their value for social change processes with any hard, statistical evidence.

The potential impact of design practices are usually overpromised and oversold. Several designers made the statement that ‘design is not a magic bullet’ and yet, there was also a common feeling among designers that somehow, there remained unrealistic expectations placed on them and what they can do.

“ Because HCD and design thinking more broadly is trendy right now, everyone is like, ‘Yes, let’s--’ it almost gets oversold. As if this is the cool thing that everyone needs to be thinking about, not recognising that it needs to be more closely integrated, and at times, it has to take a backseat. It’s not something we should be putting on a pedestal in any way (Antonia IV2, exogenous designer).

“ It’s quite risky because if you start putting all your eggs in the HCD basket, you won’t get the results you’re looking for if you don’t have those other pieces in place (Farashuu IV3, endogenous designer).

Perhaps designers are guilty of overpromising and overselling what their actions are capable of doing on their own. The role of design practices in the context of other disciplinary methods has been misunderstood and not well integrated. Even designers are suggesting that the return on design is greater potential when it is integrated with other disciplines and perspectives.

The notion of design has had a significant amount of hype surrounding it which can tend to further fuel the scepticism around it. The messaging that comes with all the hype can sometimes be interpreted as scam-like in nature by designers themselves:

“ I see all of these people going out and selling design essentially, and it sounds almost like a scam because it's something that to me, is so obvious (Farashuu IV1, endogenous designer).

“ To me, at first, I was like, 'The fact that you're making money off of telling people this, is ingenuine, and I don't really like that' (Farashuu IV2, endogenous designer).

Some designers reflected on the absurdity of the hype created by other designers around their practice. If the intention is to design a better product, service or system for a community somewhere, then it goes without saying that we need to know who the people are, what they will use it for, and their circumstances. The sense of ingenuity that is created through the hype surrounding design can have an adverse effect on some designers:

“ The jargony hype of it was actually something that really turned me off initially... Even now when I go out, there are certain crowds where I feel uncomfortable almost saying, 'I work as a designer.' (Antonia IV5, exogenous designer).

Some designers working in this space themselves want to distance themselves from the hype. Given the role of design and the application is expanding to less tangible spheres, designers are constantly being challenged to better communicate their unique value without seeming to be 'fluffy':

“ [This organisation] is wedded to numbers, it is wedded to quantitative data... People often say to me is: How are you going to convince so and so, when what you talk about is so much more fuzzy? So for some reason, 'fuzzy' has become the descriptive word for human centred design (Richard IV1, private funder).

“ When you make it too fluffy, people stop being able to relate to it, and I think that's damaged design in a lot of ways. I find myself having to work to overcome that (Antonia IV4, exogenous designer).

For some designers, this kind of characterisation of the way they work has become an issue. When there are limited resources to deliver on a deep and thorough design process, the risk is non-designers saying things like, 'These designers don't have any context to what they're doing.' Or 'They throw up post-

its everywhere and they sketch a lot, but what actually came out of it?' One implementer shared how others she works with have real scepticism after only seeing the superficial elements of it: 'the pretty slides, the nice anecdotes, and the cute pictures' and not the deep insights or user-validated solutions. This is one reason why some implementers and funders are yet to embrace it fully.

“ He basically mocked us for the first three or four weeks of the project. I stopped using post-it notes around him because every time I pulled them out, he would just be like, 'Look, it's designer time. Do you need some crayons?' (Farashuu IV2, endogenous designer).

“ The snarky first comment is, 'Wow, they do some really great slide decks.' [laughs] The visuals are awesome; the storytelling is awesome. But we know as epidemiologists and statisticians and public health professionals, we're not going to make decisions based on an anecdote of one person (Erica IV7, NGO implementer).

Many technical experts perceive design as too lightweight when compared to what constitutes rigour in their own training. Understandably, they gawk at the idea of making decisions on the story of a single 'so and so' which is what they perceive designers are doing. In these instances, the designer's aptitude for translating complex information into tangible action through visualised narrative and stories can end up feeling more like marketing/PR as opposed to real insights. Although the methodology and the definitional standard of design has been propositioned as valuable to D/development actors in Chapter Three, what has been contentious is that design firms do not often have deep development expertise on staff. This creates a disservice to 'Design for Development' as a concept because the designers can tend to 'come in and paintbrush things with a superficial high gloss'. In the interviews, some design firms were accused of using a very light-touch, superficial design approach in order to 'sell more' consulting services. This does not allow for adequate deep dives to navigate or resolve the complexity within a problem. One designer shared a particular example of how she was approached following another design firm's attempt at solving the same issue:

“ They came to us and said, 'This design firm did some research and some prototype concepting for us. All of their ideas were really novel and unique, but we can't implement any of it.' Their solution generation was off-the-wall super creative, but they didn't take into consideration the actual business of this organisation (Antonia IV2, exogenous designer).

What was feasible, and made sense from an implementation perspective, was not worked through by the first design firm. This designer's reflections surfaced an irony here, that despite design practices having iteration and experimentation as one of the core characteristics, yet some designers are finding they are not granted the time, space, or permission to put that principle into action. This designer shared how there are greater risks involved for the design community if this lack of rigour is not addressed:

“ So all of us, as the [design] community, if we don't tighten up what we're doing and make it a lot more rigorous very quickly, this kind of loosey-goosey design approach that some organisations are employing is actually going to be very detrimental for everyone else (Antonia IV1, exogenous designer).

“ There needs to be a public service announcement for the [design] community, everyone needs to step up their game because... Maybe it's good enough for other industries, but it's not good enough for the international development space (Antonia IV5, exogenous designer).

If designers only deliver surface level (albeit novel) work, and do not exercise rigorous testing in their design processes, then the integrity of their design outputs and outcomes will be compromised. This in turn creates a lot of frustration about how design practices are not delivering on their promise. As one designer put it, what may end up happening is the funders will 'do what they do, just be fickle and switch to the next shiny thing'. According to one implementer, it is too early to know whether design practices can really make a difference. She felt that the backlash is not because design practices lack merit, but rather because designers have over-simplified it to the point that it is now difficult to prove the value.

“ Let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater and everything with it – it's only really been on the scene for a few years and already, there's a bit of a backlash against it because I think some of the people that have been involved in promoting it have really dumbed it down. Simplified it so much that they haven't really been able to demonstrate its value (Richard IV2, private funder).

“ when [that design firm] put their value impact report out, it didn't say anything. Very little, actually. I was really excited about it, I was like, 'Oh yes, impact report, da da da.' But, it's hard, it's not really that tangible, but we have to figure out how to make it more tangible (Erica IV5, NGO implementer).

For this tension to be resolved, designers may want to consider speaking more about design using the language of results. The emphasis on the softer-side intangibles such as empathy and human-centredness is still important, but to alleviate this tension with other actors, it would be helpful if design schools taught designers measurement, and designers adopted new methods to trace the actual tangible value of their approach. This might involve a longer-term change process for designers working at this intersection, but a necessary one.

At present, designers are not substantiating claims of their value with any hard evidence. There is agreement between designers and non-designers that more resources are needed to demonstrate the impact of design practices in a measurable way.

“ The challenging piece is proving its value. This is something that I have been asked many times and something that I don't have a good answer to yet (Farashuu IV3, endogenous designer).

The challenge is two-fold. Firstly, there is often not enough funding to address the questions surrounding what value design practices are contributing. Secondly, there are no metrics that are specific to measuring the value of design practices for D/development. This gap is exacerbated by the over-reliance on the traditional quantitative methods that are used within public health projects.

“ Measurement and evaluation in the context of public health and financial inclusion is not the number of products sold, which is easy to measure in the private sector. There's a whole science of health economics and how you determine whether a life is improving ... It's not something that design really does well (Antonia IV5, exogenous designer).

For designers to comply with this expectation and standard of evidence building means putting greater emphasis on evaluation and measurement as a field.

The desire to have a tangible understanding of the value of design is a deeply personal issue for designers.

“ I want to know what actual value it's providing because that, to me, is like this huge question mark. You put your blood sweat and tears into these projects and if it's not providing value, I want to know it now... I want to address it, but I need to identify what it is (Antonia IV3, exogenous designer).

True to their reflection-in-action tendencies, designers may want to adapt the way they are working if indeed their practices are not providing value in this context. This issue is not necessarily a defensiveness around 'of course it is providing value' but rather an earnest desire to change course should current applications of design are not valuable for actors at this intersection with Development.

7.6. DESIGN ENCOUNTERS AS UNPREDICTABLE

Design practices have been criticised as inconsistent and erratic in three different ways. They are perceived as mystifying in the ways they are communicated; they are perceived as volatile and unreliable in the way they are applied; and finally, they are perceived as compromised by the lack of credentials of those involved. Design practices are only valuable if and when 'done well', otherwise they can be detrimental.

The mystifying and variable nature of how design processes are communicated adds to the confusion around their worth. The variation in how design processes are discussed is constrained by irregularity in the language and practices used by designers. This has resulted in some implementers and funders perceiving design processes as unreliable and untrustworthy.

“ There are some people who think that that's what co-design is. It's just having a bunch of people in a room doing a workshop. We try to challenge that by suggesting that it's actually doing the work with people who are outside of that room (Antonia IV2, exogenous designer).

Many designers expressed fulfilment when working with other actors who want to work with positive deviance, who want community voices at every stage of the process, and who want to use iterative prototyping methods. Designers have

an ethical responsibility to do design well, because otherwise, there is the risk of diluting what it is, and that is not good for the sector nor is it good for other actors involved, especially citizens/users.

In some instances, the application of design for complex social change has been oversimplified and misused by people who are not professionally qualified in design. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the disciplines of design are considered part of a third culture of knowing that is uniquely different to science or art. As with any unique discipline, it can be tricky to do it well without appropriate levels of training and practice. Part of the issue is that some designers have worked hard to package design as something that can be simple to understand and linear, in an attempt to democratise design and make it easily accessible to everyone:

“ ...it usually involves someone being exposed to design as a one-off workshop for like two hours where they're told like, 'You're going to come out and be a designer.' Let's be real, you're not. We all know that it takes a lot of time. It's taken me all these years to be able to even really articulate a lot of different aspects of design (Antonia IV7, exogenous designer).

“ All of us as a design community really have to take some time to figure out how to fight it. I don't know what the answer is. Maybe we need to stop. We've been really pushing the idea that anyone can do design, and it's true, but maybe we need to put some qualifiers on that like, 'Anyone can do design but that doesn't mean you need to take some post-its and write some stuff on it and you're doing design.' You need to actually know how to do it (Antonia IV1, exogenous designer).

This can be dangerous for the field since there are people trained in various other disciplines who are exposed to design in some way, see the similarities in what they do and decide to claim they can also call themselves a 'designer'. Implementers who had encountered design with people claiming different degrees of design training reflected on this issue:

“ I think the limitation is not in design thinking itself, I think the limitation is the people's understanding of how to use design thinking (Kabiru IV4, multilateral funder).

“ You read a bit of the articles that criticise design thinking, and there’s not many, but they are out there because, Jesus, people have to publish something. I just think it’s a misunderstanding, it’s like when people say, this is weird: Communism doesn’t work, but they never actually tried it. And people say that democracy doesn’t work, and, well, you know what, you never actually tried it either. Because what we have are not actually the true forms of either of those things, and it’s the same way with the way design thinking is done a lot of the time (Erica IV3, NGO implementer).

Therein lies the tension between the idea that ‘everyone can be a designer’. It opens the professionally trained design community up for criticism about how design approaches may have overpromised or under delivered. Issues have arisen when a design process was delivered by someone who was not appropriately trained or experienced in the craft. The same applies when designers are asked to apply their expertise to areas that are not one of their strengths. For example, there may be a Design Researcher who is being asked to design the interface for a digital mobile application. That designer can say, ‘Sure, I can try to do that’ or they can say, ‘Let me connect you with the right kind of designer for your needs.’ Designers are being criticised for sometimes trying to be all things to all people. Designers need to become clearer as individuals and in the contexts about their respective strengths or weaknesses. This will help the people approaching designers, who don’t yet understand differences in design capabilities, to better trust in how designers practice in a plurality of ways.

“ They would just fly in and fly out or do one or two interviews. I think we heard some critiques of the very game-oriented interviews or very game-oriented solutions that were way too radical or just not relevant. I think that was a problem. That was a critique that we’ve heard a lot. Some of the really design-oriented firms weren’t understanding the political context well enough (Richard IV3, private funder).

“ ...these really creative ideas that didn’t work for the people who were inside the system. Maybe they seemed like a good idea for a community but didn’t really fit within a context of government or things like that (Kabiru IV1, multilateral funder).

This highlights the importance of ensuring the most appropriate type of design capability is suitable for the challenge. This is further complicated when there is a mismatch between the design capability required and the type of design challenge at hand – particularly when dealing with more complex political realities.

“ *Being honest about what design, or more specifically, what that particular designer in a particular setting with a particular challenge, is capable to do, given their skillset and the resources available (Erica IV6, NGO implementer).*

One of the issues that surfaced with the uptake of design by funders and implementers was that they sometimes brought in design firms that were not best suited to the challenge at hand. This problem occurred because of a lack of experience with design and a lack of knowledge about who to hire. A lack of clarity on when to bring what design capability into a change process can result in instances where what was needed was a ‘what’s the problem that we’re trying to solve’ type of strategic design partner while the skills brought in were in end-stage product design instead:

“ *People might need service design, but they brought in more of the straightforward product design folks, or vice versa, and they hadn’t had always the best luck with design thinking as a result (Richard IV1, private funder).*

Designers reflected on the need to be clearer about what it is they do exactly and what they are good at and identify their limitations. This links to how design is most valuable ‘when done well’. It could be argued that, given the plethora of perspectives and schools of thought on design, agreeing on what constitutes ‘done well’ would be a complicated task. However, some of the factors that emerged for design ‘done well’ in Development projects included: the amount of field time in relation to studio time; the proximity to and degree of involvement of hard-to-reach people; the length of ethnographic time spent with people; the depth and richness of exchange; and the degree of rigour in testing and adaptation throughout the process.

The positionality of the citizen/user in the problem definition and solution influences the depth of richness and exchange. Although the when ‘done well’ aspect looks like it may be open to debate, there are some basic principles and behaviours that the design community can do better at communicating as

the baseline on what ‘when done well’ looks like. Doing good design is not just about the right design capability match, cultural understanding, and technical knowledge at an individual level, but also about the humility of the designer in placing their role as secondary to the position of authority held by the citizen/user and system context. It has been said before, if people think good design is expensive, they might want to consider looking at the cost of bad design (Speth in Jennifer & Costa 2017).

7.7. DESIGN ENCOUNTERS AS CONTRADICTIONARY

Contradiction occurs when there is contrast between what might work for the designer, for the implementer, and for the citizen/user. There lies a very delicate balance between what is prioritised and who decides on the prioritising. There are three ways design practices can be perceived as hypocritical or contradictory. Firstly, the fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) consulting model of some designers who may not understand contextual nuances can risk thwarting the actions of other designers in a setting. Secondly, the heavy reliance on the FIFO consulting model also risks enabling the existing Development emphasis on foreign technical solutions (for the poor reimagined as consumers), rather than activating citizens/users as agents of change in their own social and political change processes. Thirdly, design can sometimes contradict itself as it needs to balance between impact at scale and an emphasis on the individual experience.

The exogenous mode of designers from other countries risks undermining more local design action. Design outcomes are strengthened when designers have deep cultural knowledge and contextual lived experiences. This challenges the FIFO consultancy model that sends out less experienced, lower-cost designers from the Global North.

““ *These design firms, if you look at the talent pool they’re drawing from, it’s from design firms in the US mostly, sometimes in Europe ... These are not people who have ever lived abroad, they’ve never worked for extended period of times in these communities (Antonia IV1, exogenous designer).*

““ *You need to be cognizant to the fact that you can only do so much as an outsider (Antonia IV6, exogenous designer).*

Exogenous designers are finding themselves at risk of perpetuating the same issues with existing Development models through their heavy reliance on fly-in-fly-out consultants to carry out the work. However, not all exogenous designers are FIFO designers. It is important to note the difference that was revealed in the data between exogenous designers who FIFO and exogenous designers who spent many months or years in a place. With the latter, exogenous designers are more inclined to invest in social linkages and develop a repertoire of contextual experiences in a place. This range of experiences helps form deep cultural appreciation, understanding and networks. In contrast, FIFO designers who spend days or weeks in a place are more inclined to focus their time on a much more limited scope of activities. In reference to the FIFO model, one endogenous designer had significant ambitions for how to turn this consulting model around:

“ I would want to stop this fly-in fly-out kind of model that because [such and such design firm] are super well known that they will always fly-in people to come and build a solution (Farashuu IV3, endogenous designer).

“ I want to be able to build capacity so that when clients come to Kenya or to rural whatever, and they come [to us], then we just don't hire fixers. We hire a local designer who's been trained and understands this methodology and can work to build a sustainable solution that's long term in that community (Farashuu IV1, endogenous designer).

The role of the designer as 'exogenous' or outsider without a personal stake in the work is increasingly questioned. One designer shared how important it was for her to have a personal stake in her work. She considers herself fortunate as a woman to not have had the same fate as other women in her family:

“ In my family, it's what a woman does. She stays at home; she takes care of the family and she has kids, and that's it. I went to an Ivy League school to get my masters; I am the first woman to go to graduate school -- and I live by myself. I'm like the freak of my family, people are like, 'She's a woman, what is she doing?' For me, it's personal in that way. That's why I care a lot about women's rights, and women's issues because that's something that my mum had to work a lot for me, and I have to work a lot for myself. That is my personal stake (Farashuu IV2, endogenous designer).

“ I've lived in the community that we're working in for a long period of time, because there's so much more that you can understand by becoming a part of a community than just doing a three-week long research project then jumping out. There's just so many more assumptions that you're able to test and you're able to have that quick turnaround with rapid prototyping and getting people's feedback (Antonia IV2, exogenous designer).

If designers are working on issues that mean something significant to them, it suggests they would engage differently than if they were flying into an unfamiliar context for a few weeks. It is difficult to understand an issue in depth where there is little connection or stake. One exogenous designer reflected on what can set a project apart in terms of success is a combination of being 'responsive' and 'flexible' to the context, but also 'holding those intentions for the project like obsessions'. If the designer 'obsessing' can increase the likelihood of making the traction desired, this also raises the question of whether design outcomes benefit when designers have a personal stake in the work.

Several designers made the argument that it is not the best way to practice design if they are just going to stay living in the US or Europe and regularly travelling to various locations to work on disparate projects. One designer suggested that in-situ designers living in a country are more likely to get better results as they are immersed in the context.

“ That excludes people who live in the US and have great incomes and great lives and have never really experienced anything else in their life. There are people like that at our firm... I would say in maybe 10 years; I don't know that anyone from here is going to be going over to India to help solve problems anymore (Antonia IV4, exogenous designer).

“ [Kenyan colleagues] still wanted to discredit the report saying that an outsider can't come and tell us that we're not treating the customers properly (Akinyi IV1, government implementer).

In any case, this is an emerging shift given that places like Nairobi, Lagos, and Dakar, and other cities across the Global South, are starting their own human-centred design institutes to grow creative capacities in-country. In-country

designers are likely better positioned to solve problems in their own situated ways. Otherwise, the current models lend themselves to criticisms for being an imperialistic extension of the way the Development system has been operating for decades. As the Development system transitions, the challenge is to ensure that design consulting models do not continue those imperialistic tendencies. One designer proposed:

“ We could become obsolete like, ‘Okay, I’m going to share something with you, and then once I’m gone, you can now do that. You don’t need me.’ (Antonia IV6, exogenous designer).

There is a need to change the narrative so that a designers’ objective is to design themselves out of work. The idea of designing for designer obsolescence is likely more popular among certain designers than others.

Design processes can be contradictory when needing to balance between impact at scale and the individual experience. Funders and implementers can tend to place significant expectations on the design outcome to have measurable impact ‘at scale’. This has been noted as creating tension in balancing out the scale notion with the micro-contextual emphasis of design.

“ It’s a very difficult balance that sometimes, the most pressing needs lead into opportunities that don’t represent business worthy investment or scalable solutions or sustainable solutions. It takes longer to get there (Farashuu IV3, endogenous designer).

“ When there are so many considerations to balance like that, I do feel that oftentimes that the person that you’re trying to help, at the end of the day, does get pushed to the bottom (Farashuu IV1, endogenous designer).

Some designers reflected on how the citizen/user is deprioritised in some projects. When this happens, design practices then become part of the problem rather than contributing to the fundamental politics of social change. The dominant model also risks encouraging the Development emphasis on technical product or service solutions, rather than supporting citizens when creating their own change.

7.8. CHAPTER SUMMARY

As conceptualised in the literature, designers and their practices show both continuities and ruptures at the practical intersection with D/development today. Continuities are evident in the fact that the import of Western design expertise and technology is still presumed to hold the key for solving problems. In building on design's characteristics in Chapter Three, the image on the following page adds a layer around those characteristics suggestive of the frustrations outlined in this chapter.

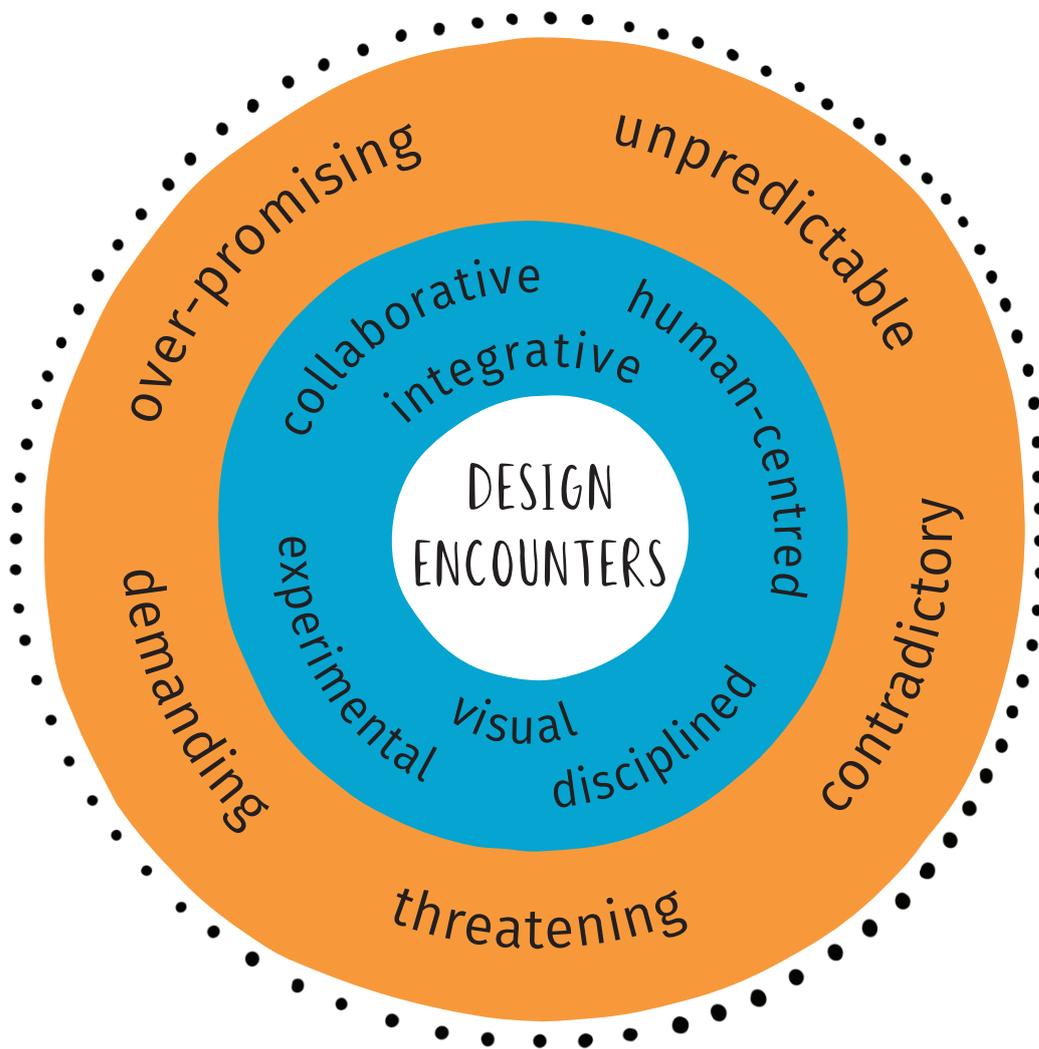


Figure 7.2 Frustrations with design encounters in Development

In order to navigate the frustrations identified, there will be a need for compromises. Designers may want to consider tempering their egos with humility as they extend a sincere acknowledgement that designing is not just the domain of designers. Based on conversations among practitioners, there is a growing sentiment that the design community needs to undergo some deprogramming on this front. For design practices to be better understood and integrated – rather than misunderstood and misused – designers may need to be careful not to position design practices as ‘better than’ the good work that already exists. Design’s contribution would be strengthened if it is perceived more as a complementary force in this context.

The dominant feeling among practitioners is that designers bring in approaches that have been codified in unique ways and that augment what other actors are doing. This kind of positioning of design practices as complementary continue to be debated among practitioners through various industry workshops and meetings⁹. Despite the frustrations discussed in this chapter, there remains the question of whether new design imaginaries are still able to emerge for actors? If so, how do the design value propositions and ethical dilemmas experienced by different actors correspond with the relevant literature? The following chapter explores answers to these questions.

⁹ I have personally been invited to input into four sessions on the topic in 2019, one in Senegal in April run by BMGF and USAID, one in UK in June run by the ADIM conference, one run via video conference in August by JSI and USAID, and one in Seattle in October with BMGF.

Chapter 8

Discussion on design value and ethics



What can I do for the few?

“ Today I got to meet Mr Martin and Mama Eva. After spending some hours with them, I wanted to be angry at someone. I didn't know who to be angry with though, so I began rationing my anger out, first to the government agricultural extension worker who doesn't do his job, second to the middle men and greedy businessmen who take advantage of the farmers inaccessibility to information and markets, and I mostly wanted to be angry at the NGOs who are so attached to their own survival that they rarely manage to succeed when it comes to impact at scale and sustainability. Heaven forbid they not be needed again. But hold on, I am now one of them ... This realisation was unsettling. I guess words like 'transformative' and 'impactful' traditionally suggest large scale change ... Maybe we have ignorantly defined impactful or transformative as numbers-driven: How many people can I reach? Rather, the question playing out in my mind now is – What will be different in this person's life? How will their world change? Even if it is just the one person, or one household, or at the one community level – maybe impact is about the depth of difference in the lives of a few rather than how many people design work can 'touch' superficially speaking.

(Author journal excerpt, March 2014)

8.1 CHAPTER OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how design's value was experienced by actors in the case studies by contextualising these accounts with the literature. There is currently no peer reviewed literature that explicitly reflects on the value of design in Development projects, particularly based on the standpoint of actors involved. This chapter prompts a shift in the dialogue regarding design's value as conceptualised and understood based on actor encounters. The previous chapters provided rich ethnographic detail regarding how disparate actors experienced the value of design and tension involved in the process. This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the different types of design value and the dilemmas at the intersection of design and Development.

8.2 THE VALUE OF DESIGN, BY STANDPOINT

This discussion about the value of design is grounded in an understanding of 'designing' as an ontological, collaborative and social process of cultural exploration; one that is deeply in-tune with the struggles and aspirations of human experience; and one that can drive the transformation of things, beings and Being. Drawing on an ethnography of projects in Ghana and Kenya, as well as interviews with citizens/users, implementers, funders and designers, I argue that encounters with such design practices can create distinct value for actors depending on their standpoint. The characteristics of the value propositions uncovered from the analysis of the case studies is particularly relevant given the complex political economy of Development's past, present, and future outlined in Chapter Two. The findings from this thesis point to how design practices can build trust, integrate knowledge, sustain ownership, enhance relevance, affirm agency, reduce risks, reorient accountability, strengthen capability, and challenge power relationships. This makes the contribution of design relevant for the transitions toward alternatives being demanded of, and by, other actors. The analysis has also surfaced paradoxes regarding the ethics of design practices and designers' positionality in Development projects.

Therefore, the realisation of the value of design practices in real-world settings is contingent on the navigation of a variety of ethical dilemmas by designers and others. As such, the remainder of this chapter will explore the value of design as well as the dilemmas that stand in the way of actualising such value.

From the case studies, it is evident that design practices created value that were intended and unintended, as well as tangible and intangible. In both cases, the

officially contracted design process and outputs were deemed successful by project stakeholders. Interestingly, actors referenced what was valuable about their design encounters as distinct from the formally contracted process and outputs. Other than the tangible value identifiable through the contracted outputs, the design process also created intangible value that was less straightforward for actors to point to or measure using traditional metrics. For example, these included things like shifts in social power dynamics during decision-making, changes in practitioner attitudes and behaviour toward one another, and inward critical reflections on one's own professional role and practice.

The value of design was experienced differently, depending on an actor's distinct standpoint. In the case studies, different actors identified and prioritised different benefits, even when they were exposed to the exact same design process in the exact same project setting. The actor's positioning mattered as it influenced what came into focus for them first, and is naturally related to the needs and goals they prioritise. As previously noted, actors from within the Development system are experiencing a 'prolonged crisis' due to constraints from all directions (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). In Chapter Two, I summarised the domains for change that have been under intense examination in the literature, which at the same time could offer spaces for new possibilities as the Development system transitions. These domains for change include funder-centred accountability mechanisms, impact rarely defined by the people intended to benefit most, top-down power and control structures, prioritisation of technical knowledge over indigenous types of knowledge, fixed mindsets and rigid working cultures, and limited sustained ownership of projects by endogenous groups. In this context of overwhelming scrutiny, practitioners in the Development system are facing a challenge of reinvention with little knowledge of how to go about it. The different types of design value propositions identified might be directly influenced by this predicament. The priorities and positionality that actors bring to a design process influences what comes into focus for them and what they perceive as valuable to them. Furthermore, who is applying design and how they are choosing to do so may influence what kind of value or tensions other actors experience in the process.

Previously, I established four key actor groups to be the focus of this thesis: citizens/users, implementers, funders, and designers. The analysis of the data presented some further distinctions between actors within these categories to produce the ten consolidated profiles in Chapter Four. Some citizen/user profiles were receptive to design research and co-design activities, while others less so. Some implementer profiles distinguished themselves as nationals with greater

rights to influence change in their country, as compared to implementers who were coming as exogenous ‘outsiders’. Some funder profiles presented different positions too, depending on whether they were from private entrepreneurial foundations with greater flexibility, or more bureaucratic government institutions and answerable to taxpayers. Lastly, some designer profiles were more protectionist of their craft, whereas others presented with the belief that ‘everyone is a designer’ in the spirit of trying to demystify and democratise acts of designing. The participants in this thesis covered all these variations across the actor groups and profiles. Despite their differences, the analysis conceivably provides some inspiration for all the actors in this picture. There were eleven value propositions identified from actors’ encounters with the co-design processes and practices described in Chapters 5-7. The value propositions are visualised by standpoint in Figure 8.1.

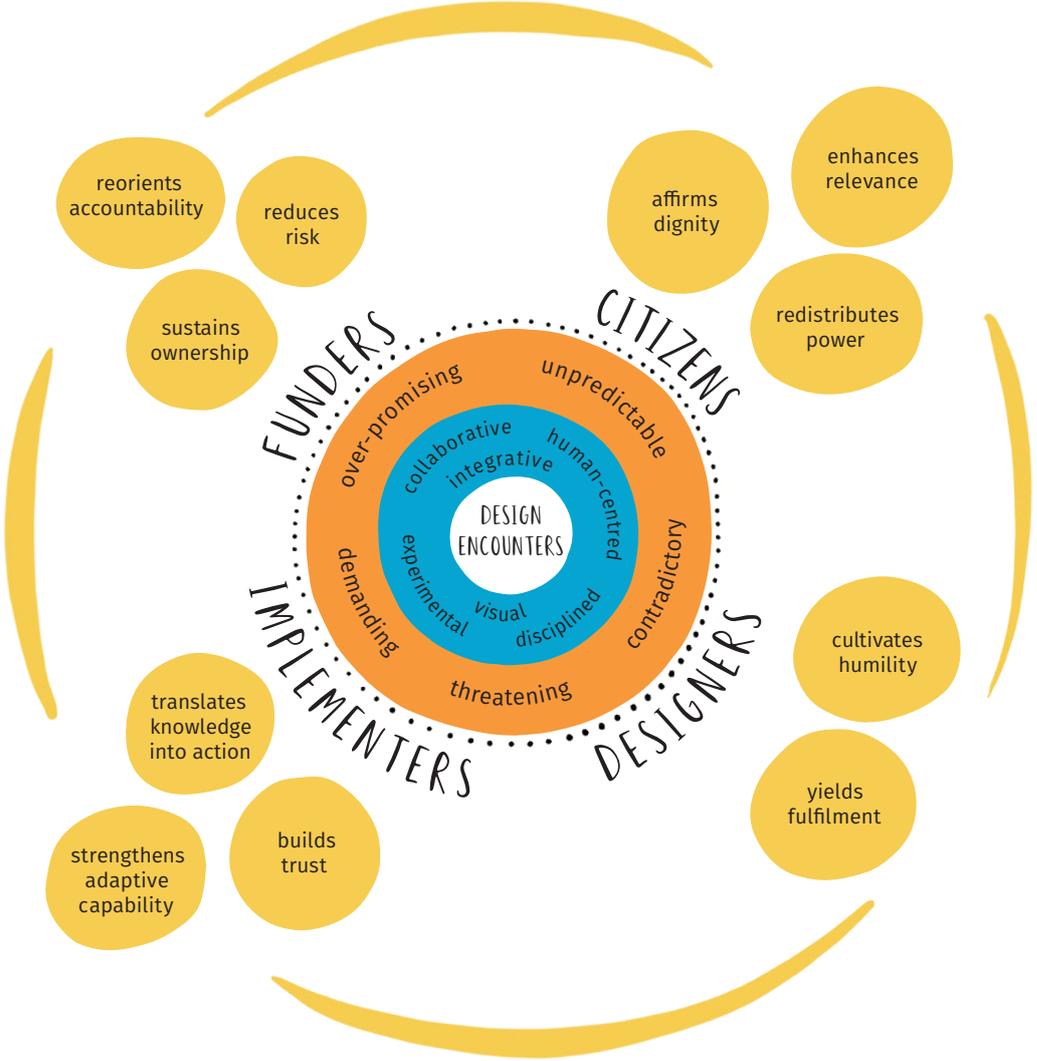


Figure 8.1 Framework for the value propositions of design by standpoint

8.3 CITIZEN STANDPOINT

The value propositions of design as expressed from the citizen standpoint are related to dignity, power, and relevance. Citizens valued being seen and respected by others as experts and agents of change in their own lives. They valued how co-design practices created the space and opportunity to influence decision-making on matters that would affect them. More than just being heard and understood, they valued seeing how design translated that understanding into relevant change for them. Although the interviews with citizens did not surface any major dilemmas from their standpoint, my ethnographic observations did. For me as the designer, it raised questions about the risks linked to designing superficial and irrelevant solutions, as well as the risks of tokenistic participation. I have included these dilemmas in this section given they have the potential to reduce the value of design experienced from the citizen standpoint. The three value propositions and related ethical dilemmas are discussed below.

Value Proposition 1: Design practices can affirm human dignity and agency

Design practices can affirm human dignity and agency through meeting people as active co-designers in the changes that affect their lives, rather than as passive recipients. Just as Buchanan (2001, p.37) pointed out that design was an 'affirmation of human dignity', so too did both case studies. However, for Buchanan it was in reference to supporting the dignity of humans 'by the moral and intellectual purpose toward which technical and artistic skill is directed'. The moral purposes towards which design was directed in both case studies would most likely pass Buchanan's criteria. Moreover, what indicated an affirmation of dignity, beyond each project's moral purpose, was that the participating citizens walked away from interactions feeling that their contributions were taken seriously and that they had the unusual opportunity to influence other actors' decisions that will affect them.

For both case studies, the design processes outlined in Tables 5.1 and 6.1 hinged on a series of collaborative interactions. On this theme, one nurse said, 'I feel heard more in this process' while another nurse shared, 'I feel that my points that I brought were respected and were taken'. The citizens participating in the NHIF co-design workshops shared similar reflections of affirmation, 'It is exciting today, I believe the NHIF actually cared what I had to say', and 'They maybe will do

something, they maybe will not do something, the important thing is we said our piece'. It was more participatory or co-design models of practice which supported the citizens' voices to be heard, amplified and actioned by decision-makers, in turn enabling the agency of citizens to be affirmed. It is important to note the distinction between co-designing and other design practices at this juncture. According to Buchanan, an act of designing can affirm human dignity inherently through the moral purpose of the act, however, my analysis points to how co-design practices can also affirm human dignity by widening the scope of the 'design agency' so that citizens can contribute as co-designers. This observation adds to the strand of research about design's moral responsibility in the world (Latour 2008; Buchanan 1992, 1998; Margolin & Buchanan 1995).

The ethics of a co-design process can be questioned when the language being used for people and places points to an unawareness of the power imbalances at play. The paternalistic narrative about 'the poor' as passive, voiceless victims who either cannot, or should not, play an active role in shaping their destiny has historically limited the spaces for understanding people – their aspirations, values and cultural identities in a holistic sense (Ferguson 1990; Ziai 2015). In both case studies, the citizens were initially denoted as de-individualised beneficiaries, and had their needs pre-defined by other actors – as is often the case with 'invited spaces' (Cornwall 2008). For the affirmation of agency in both case studies, it required the co-design processes to support the rights of citizen co-designers to (re)define and (re)shape that space based on where their interests may (re)direct things (Gaventa 2003). The findings suggest that acts of co-designing changed the nature of relationships as other actors shifted from the traditional informing 'beneficiaries' on what was already prescribed for them, to more ambiguous and multi-directional exchanges. These relationships between actors became about co-producing narratives and co-designing solutions to respond to challenges that the citizens self-determined. It also required the design teams to have agility in developing new methods on the go and in-situ for all actors to be in a position to contribute meaningfully during the design process, irrespective of their politics and capabilities (Binder 1999; Gunn 2019). This was the case when role plays were introduced by the nurses in Ghana and when interactive skits were created by the NHIF staff in Kenya. In both cases, citizens were no longer just receivers of action to them – their agency was affirmed as their status changed from recipient beneficiaries to active co-shapers of the services and strategies being decided with other actors.

The idea of co-design affirming the agency of citizens is particularly valuable when practitioners are working with people they don't know, in contexts they are unfamiliar with, and with subject matter they may know little about. This is how I felt during both case studies. However, the Kenya case study in Chapter Six demonstrated how co-designing was also valuable for other actors too – the funder shared how they felt they already knew the answers, was working in a context they were already familiar with, and with subject matter they had two post-graduate degrees in. Here, the co-design process opened up a 'third space' for dialogical interactions that affirmed citizens as important contributors in a web of relationships that was continuously being renegotiated (Light & Seravalli 2019; Rigon 2015; Winschiers-Theophilus et al. 2010). This has prompted me to reflect on what I can do (or not) in my practice of design, to consciously support spaces for people to (re)negotiate and (re)claim the relational and political aspects of their 'collective life' (Santos 1995, p.51).

Ethical dilemma 1: Design practices risk overwriting human agency

The co-design activities that led to citizens feeling that their agency was affirmed intersect deeply with the tradition of participatory development. Hence it is important to interrogate the role of designers in the political activation of relational logics (Willis 2006; Ingold 2017; Gunn 2019). There lies a risk in cases where designers do not uphold the agency of citizens, but rather see the agency of other stakeholders or even themselves, as holding greater authority over decisions which shape citizen narratives and experiences. In the process of doing so, designers who are increasingly entrusted with facilitating social change processes may risk overwriting the agency that rightfully belongs to others in such processes. In the Ghana case study, where there was a fixation on a technology solution by decision-makers, regardless of the problem. This pre-determination of the solution medium by decision-makers pointed to the grave possibility of a cursory solution that does not meet the nurses' actual needs or result in meaningful changes in their lives.

The potential value of co-design in affirming human dignity can only be realised if such practices are not reduced to tokenistic and ritualistic exchanges, as has been criticised of other attempts to bring participation into the mainstream fold (Cooke & Kothari 2001). Just as 'nominal' and 'instrumental' forms of participation (Cornwall 2008) have been at fault for creating unequal and illegitimate exercises

of power, there lies the danger that contemporary co-design practices may also be at risk of ingenuine forms of participation that overwrite the agency of others. If so, what is the responsibility of the designer in such settings to ensure the right voices are being amplified? Whose voices have greater or lesser influence over the outcome? These questions are critical for every designer to consider.

Accompanying this potentially compromised notion of participation is the possibility for designers to 'shift responsibility for the consequences of these projects' away from practitioners and on to the participating people (Williams 2004, p.563). By dis-owning the process they initiate, designers and other practitioners risk setting themselves up as only 'facilitating' (Henkel & Stirrat 2001, p.183). Yet, the denial of designers' agency in shaping design activities risks removing important aspects of their process from public scrutiny – since there are no safeguards that would prevent designers from placing responsibility for any consequential failures on the participating people. The potential denial of designers' agency stimulates an important discussion on the notion of neutrality. My role as a designer on projects is often presented as neutral by those who contract me. Yet, I still often find myself entangled in situations where I am expected to mask rather than reveal the particular power performances at play. Rather than refusing to become entangled in such projects, the notion of 'being participated' (Winschiers-Theophilus et al. 2010) also suggests that it is up to the designer to make conscious choices on how to forge more ethical and socio-politically aware relationships in practice despite the prevailing positioning of designers as neutral.

So, although collaborative design practices can affirm people's agency, this is contingent on the designers knowing their place in relation to other people's agency throughout a design process. Furthermore, in the respectful design framework put forward by Reitsma et al. (2019), designers can enable third spaces through dialogical methods, inviting the ideas and material culture of others, and critically discerning the designers' own personal attachment to the design process. For me, practicing within a respectful design frame has also meant not being afraid to surface questions, talk about contradictory elements, and craft creative spaces for negotiation with an explicit bias toward affirming the agency of endogenous actors. Practicing collaborative and participatory design respectfully helps to carve out new spaces for endogenous actors to go from being 'invited' into the design process of a foreign group (Cornwall 2008), to a dynamic experience where they set the terms for what problems to prioritise, and how to go about creating solutions collectively.

Value proposition 2: Design practices redistribute power in decision-making

Design practices can redistribute power during decision-making moments through facilitation of collaborative activities, with explicit favour toward citizen voices; although it could be argued that the challenging of power structures is weak in its temporality. Different power relations were prompted in both case studies through facilitated activities that 'decentralised responsibility for judgment and action' (Schön 1982, p.338) and integrated a plurality of perspectives for collective action (Fry 2017; Light 2019) that placed people at the centre of decisions.

In the Kenya case study, those actors holding the decision-making power to shape change found it 'fascinating' that citizen co-designers have such valuable insight. Two of the actors acknowledged that they had a responsibility to step back to allow spaces for citizens' contributions to be integrated. After noticing that two of the decision-makers were okay with some more disruptive activities, I devised an exercise where ideas developed by decision-makers were critiqued by the participating citizens at a co-design workshop. Some of the citizens were invited to be 'idea judges' to score and comment on the ideas of the implementers and funders. In the words of one funder who participated in the exercise, it 'inverted the power dynamics when people got to judge our ideas' (Kabiru IV1). Through this exercise, a different space emerged and the citizens assumed higher levels of status and influence through this exercise.

The co-design activities helped elevate more of the citizen perspectives and leveraged their tacit knowledge (Sanders 2006; Spinuzzi 2005). They helped shift the positionality of citizens from passive recipients, or participants being 'included' in an exogenous group's design process, to a relational dynamic where they set more of the terms as co-designers. From this angle, co-design practices can challenge some of the usual top-down power relationships when responsibility for idea generation and decisions become shared. For some actors, this means rethinking their roles as cultural explorers in the process of imagining what's possible (Buchanan 1992); rather than as planners and controllers of other people's lives (Easterly 2006).

Ethical dilemma 2: Design practices risk expanding existing power structures

As observed in both case studies, in order for endogenous actors to have the space to influence the decisions affecting them, exogenous actors need to be willing to step back and rethink their own positions.

In a related sense, co-design practices can be in danger of de-politicising development if designers fall into the trap of 'homogenising differences within communities and uncritically privileging the local as the site for action'. The concern is that this ignores other oppressive power structures of gender, class, and ethnicity that may operate at a micro-scale but are reproduced beyond it (Mohan & Stokke 2000). In a more positive sense, Foucault pointed to systems of power as grounded and evolving rather than abstract, and so therefore creating spaces for alternative norms and knowledges to emerge. By examining the ways in which design practices at the intersection with Development projects play out, so too could spaces for re-politicisation emerge. This means understanding how to co-design respectfully for the transformative potential of participation to be fully realised. For designers, considerations cover questions around how spaces are created, the places and levels of engagement, as well as the degree of visibility of power within them (Gaventa 2004). There is also a further distinction between the visible, hidden and invisible forms of power (VeneKlasen, Miller & CLark 2002). Relationships between these forms of power are highly complex in social project settings.

According to Long (2001), actors negotiate the attribution of social meanings to ideas and actions in a social setting. In the Ghana case study, this was observed when what the nurses said about the issues that affect them was seen by decision-makers as individual experience or preference, and not necessarily as an articulation of wider cultural and social norms. Whereas what health system 'experts' said about 'motivation' when characterising the problem was assumed as the governing truth and norm for the project. Furthermore, this example also shows how invisible power may be internalised through a person's values, self-esteem, and identity – such that voices in visible arenas are echoing what the power holders and space shapers want to hear (Gaventa 2003). Some of the decision-makers on the project seemed accustomed to being in control of project narratives and rules as a feature of their roles. Other actors' compliance to, or negotiation of the rules set by the decision-makers can strengthen or weaken

such power dynamics. Hence, the opportunity to influence this situation depended on 'the actions of a chain of agents' each of whom 'translates' the situation in their own way (Long 2001).

For designers, the notion of hidden power can manifest more explicitly in their roles as it is about where the project boundaries were set, who was excluded, and which views were prevented from entering the arenas for participation. For instance, a combination of the seven characteristics of contemporary design practices outlined in Figure 3.2 (ie. human-centred, divergent, experimental, visual, integrative, collaborative and disciplined) are what actors experienced when 'encountering design' during both case study projects in this thesis. However, my design abilities and preferences as a designer likely influenced the selection and sequencing of the activities, as well as how wide or deep the activities ventured for each of the case study projects. This is one of the ways power manifested in my position. For example, the characteristic of being human-centred and having a 'contextually situated understanding of people's needs and preferences' (Figure 3.2) can be applied by one designer who decides to interview six people for example. Or being human-centred can be interpreted by another designer as the need to immerse in the stories of 100 people using a diverse range of tools and activities. Different designers can approach the same design problem differently and still believe to have the 'human-centred' characteristic covered. As such, designers exercise what might be considered hidden power through their practices (VeneKlasen et al. 2002). Given the potential for such wide-ranging interpretations, actor encounters with design practices will greatly depend on the designers' choices and how they use their power during the process. So, although collaborative design practices can support the redistribution of power during decision moments, this is also contingent on the designer being aware of their hidden power and the difference that their decisions can make in social spaces (Long 2001; Lefebvre 1991). Given this risky entanglement, design and power are inseparable themes for designers working at this intersection with Development.

From these examples, it is evident how power still manifests in far more subtle ways despite the rhetoric of participation (Cooke & Kothari 2001). Given the complex nature of how power manifests in project settings, this requires designers to evolve their practices in ways that better grasp 'the processes by which knowledge is jointly created and negotiated through the production of social norms and various types of social encounters' (Kothari 2001, p. 146)

Value proposition 3: Design practices enhance relevance, fit and take-up

Design practices can enhance relevance, fit and take-up through emphasis on human-centred and contextually appropriate solutions. From close analysis of the case studies, relevance from the perspective of the citizens was understood in various ways. Some citizens felt relevance related to how the design outputs met or exceeded their functional needs and was suitable for them. Other citizens felt that relevance occurred when the design process was tailored to their preferences and values.

As seen in the Ghana case study, the design output (being the mobile smartphone application) helped address many factors that were important to the nurses, though this depth of understanding developed over many iterative cycles of design activities. This entailed defending the integrity of the nurses' words and using such to reframe the project's problem space – or design situation as Schön puts it. For the core team working on the project day to day, the visual and story-based design artefacts changed the notion of what success looked like when re-oriented from the nurses' standpoint rather than that of other stakeholders. Although the space to manoeuvre was constrained based on the pre-determination of the problem definition and solution medium, there was still some level of freedom within those constraints to base other decisions that were of high relevance to the nurses' preferences, as was captured in those design artefacts. In the Kenya case study, the ideas being explored by civil servants shifted from being focused on 'marketing' campaigns prior to the design process, to more fundamental service and policy ones. This happened when they had to make sense of the visual personas and journey maps, as well as hear stories first hand that made it clear that citizens wanted the NHIF to deliver on its promise, to treat them with dignity and respect, and to charge them fairly. By using hybrid co-design teams to develop the ideas and bring these more structural changes to life, the citizens' stories helped evolve the ideas into an implementation roadmap. This emphasis on hybrid co-design teams further honed the ideas that became increasingly fitting and relevant to the expressed priorities of the citizens.

Both case studies offer examples that counter universal one-size-fits-all approaches that can reduce the likelihood of fit and relevance for the majority of citizens. In many typical Development projects, actors have borrowed from traditional marketing principles to target a static 'beneficiary' archetype and

guide decisions based on averages. However, in reality, there is no such single, archetype. The needs of different citizens vary depending on time, place and other cultural or social determinants. However, the funder in the Kenya case study pointed to the distinction that is often made between the two paradigms of clinical medicine and public health as individual problems versus aggregate problems. The funder reflects that thinking about differences was harder for public health practitioners like him because ‘you sort of de-individualise’ populations. However, the design process helped him ‘think about the individual human beings... and get to appreciate that their challenges are not homogenous’ (Kabiru IV2). The tools he believed helped him see things differently on this point were the personas and journey maps which he said, ‘helped me to understand: who is this person, when you talk about the informal sector, who is this person, what’s their typical day like, what’s their typical experience of the NHIF like... The process gives a human face to the problems you are trying to resolve’. One of the implementers also shared that the tools helped her ‘see the 24 million we were targeting as real people with different needs.’ The personas and other visual tools were used to counter the usual reliance on a static set of average characteristics to design for among technical ‘experts’ in this context. The tools helped decision-makers to see and act based on the variations between diverse citizen characteristics. As a result, the NHIF initiatives developed were deemed relevant to the needs of a wider range of Kenyan citizens, and not just relevant for a narrowly typified average. Although it is unlikely that replicating the process and tools will always achieve relevance as this will depend on selecting the right tools for the situation. However, this example suggests the visual orientation of some design practices help people ‘see’ things differently can lead to greater solution relevance for people as a result.

Ethical dilemma 3: Design practices risk submitting to entrenched ideas about impact

It has been well documented that the quality measures of D/development impact remain almost totally unknown, sought out, or valued – even when they are identified as unintended positive consequences (Unnithan 2015; Uvin 2002). Although in the Ghana case study, the reported increase in the nurses’ motivation was an average of 11.5% between baseline and endline survey results (Alva & Magalona 2016), this statistic does not tell the whole picture. The qualitative complexity of the challenges experienced by the nurses – such as verbal abuse from supervisors, snake bites, sexual harassment, going unpaid for months to

list a few – could not be reduced to statistical soundbites – let alone all solved through the introduction of a mobile smartphone application. Fortunately, JSI's evaluation of the project used a mixed methods approach, and did have qualitative elements to explain and sometimes contradict the survey results. The qualitative elements gave a more nuanced understanding of the impact from the nurses' perspective, and 'showed the actual impact of the project better than the survey' (personal communication with JSI team). This example demonstrates the value of integrating qualitative approaches to capture emergent nuances and better frame impact from different perspectives. Nevertheless, other actors in the project were perhaps more attached to meeting the targets in the initial plan, making it difficult for them to reframe the problem and what constituted success from the nurses' standpoint. The desire of some actors to measure success by narrow interpretations of statistical results, without including citizen-defined qualitative factors, risks undermining the potential for some design practices to maximise relevance for citizens.

As was raised in the literature discussion in Chapter Two, there have been many previous projects that have met their targets, but have completely missed the point. One implementer in the Ghana case study noted how that project was at risk of missing the point due to the lack of space to reframe the problem from the nurses' perspective. This missed opportunity was especially poignant when another implementer with more seniority in this discussion said 'it is too late, we just have to do this thing now'. Ebrahim (2003) warned of this preference for short-term inclinations. Yet the other implementer was determined otherwise, later 'I made sure that those personas were something that we printed and put on the wall. At some point, whether you wanted to or not, your eyes go to that wall and you are like: yes, these are the people we are building these solutions for' (Erica IV1). This action helped with maintaining some degree of reframing and experimentation on the project that was grounded in the lived experiences of the nurses. This project experience aligned with what the literature suggested, that such human-centred and iterative practices do not always provide results measurable with quantitative data, or results that correspond to the outcome designed in the initial plan – even if it better addresses the needs of the people involved (Dennehy, Fitzgibbon & Carton 2013). Given this situation was not that uncommon, what is the responsibility of the designer in such settings to ensure problems and solutions are defined on the citizens' terms?

I agree with the case Unnithan (2015) has put forward for why ethnographic data and stories constitute meaningful evidence in global health and D/development projects. However, although the visual and story-based design artefacts in both case studies provided greater qualitative emphasis on issues declared most relevant by the people experiencing them, they did not overhaul deeply entrenched notions of impact by some decision-makers. The value of design to enhance relevance and fit for the nurses was contingent on having carved some space to develop and use such artefacts in meaningful ways by others.

Furthermore, applying a decolonial lens to my co-design practices has challenged me with the call for greater attention to the language of the design artefacts produced; specifically, 'the metaphors, images, allusion, fantasy and rhetoric and what types they produce about peoples and places' (Mainsah & Morrison 2014, p.84). A reflection on my own practices has led me to ask: how can I as the designer ensure that the design artefacts produced through collaborative acts of designing comply with such standards? This is particularly challenging when designing within entrenched audit cultures of procedural numbers and reporting to initial plans (Angus 2008). This dilemma could limit the degree of relevance design practices could achieve for citizens if the artefacts produced do not fit within pre-existing notions about peoples, places, problems and what project success may look like for decision-makers.

8.4 IMPLEMENTER STANDPOINT

The value of design from the standpoint of the implementer is related to knowledge, capability, and trust. Implementers valued the integration of their 'expert' knowledge with situated behavioural and cultural framings for a deeper understanding. They valued how design strengthened their creative and adaptive capabilities that they can take with them beyond the life of that single project. They also valued how design helped build relationships founded on a shared purpose, alignment and trust through visual artefacts and participatory processes. In terms of dilemmas for the implementers, design practices raised questions about the insecurity of not having all the answers upfront, as well as what is demanded of them to engage in an ambiguous design process. Design practices also created new risks, particularly with competing interests of implementers working together in real-time collaboration, exacerbated by big egos. The three types of value and associated dilemmas are discussed in more detail below.

Value proposition 4: Design practices can translate knowledge from abstraction to action

Design practices can translate knowledge from abstraction to action through relational and visual processes that make ideas tangible and integrate otherwise siloed knowledge. Regardless of how plural the empirical settings or diverse the endogenous actors were, technical expertise in the Development system was criticised in Chapter Two for the absoluteness and standardisation from place to place (Ferguson 1990). Although design tools and techniques have been contributing to the paradigm of doing development differently, over and above being a set of tools to adopt, the case studies point to the value of design as providing space for a different way of knowing – or not knowing – as well as a practice that integrates different ways of knowing. With the safe space to un-know and un-assume, implementers in both projects were more freely able to explore, reframe, re-plan and implement their activities from deeply situated and citizen-defined frames of reference. This is not to say that more technical, programmatic or academic frames of reference were ignored, but rather, they were integrated with a place-based and human-centred starting point.

Based on the analysis of implementer perspectives in the case studies, design facilitated grounded dialogues and constructive levels of empathic interaction between actors (Cross 1982; Giacomini 2014). Implementers shared that this increased emphasis on human-to-human exchanges deepened their understanding and appreciation for the complexity of situational experience. It allowed implementers to go beyond traditional knowledge verticals and silos, as the co-design processes supported them to constructively ‘relate’ and ‘adapt’ their understanding to place-based meanings and indigenous knowledge systems. This came through when an actor with two postgraduate medical qualifications from the Kenya case study shared that he was ‘struck by the fact that you could actually get those rich insights from lay people’ and that ‘what design taught me is that look: this hubris about technical experts knowing it all is perhaps not the right way to look at things.’ Based on such reflections, the co-design practices seemed to have challenged the ‘hierarchisation’ of knowledge so that Western expertise was not the only revered one, and that local knowledge was not delegitimised (DuBois 1991, p.7; Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015).

In the Kenya case study example, the issue of decolonising knowledge was highlighted in the relational interactions between different actors. By ensuring Kenyan citizens were shaping the strategic priorities, the co-design practices

did not just alter the content of the conversation, but also changed ‘the terms’ guiding the conversation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012). The integrative nature of the co-design process had not only challenged the argument that knowledge only counts when it is objective, scientific, statistically valid, and ‘best-practice’ – but also broadened the umbrella of knowledge that can be drawn from so that action could be shaped ‘around the experience’ of citizens – ‘from the outside in’ (Junginger 2008, p.30). The relational and experiential nature of the co-design activities situated the knowledge of citizens as valuable for the other actors in new and unexpected ways. In this way, design practices brought to life decolonial debates about valuing subjugated knowledge systems in Chapter Two (Quijano 2000, 2007).

Some of the more visual design practices were also described as bringing clarity to otherwise complex concepts. By turning complex information into sketches, models and interactive role plays, such design artefacts embodied knowledge that is not easily communicated using tables, words and numbers. One implementer from the Ghana case study shared how this was a big factor for her, ‘let’s be honest, I think much of the world actually thinks visually, that’s how people digest information... it actually sticks in someone’s brain.’ The artefacts fashioned a more human character to the otherwise abstract statistics. They provided the implementation team with new ways of seeing old issues. They offered different and multiple angles from which to ‘see patterns’ and understand complex concepts (Erica IV3, NGO implementer). Since people do not experience ‘the massive totality’ of a whole system, but ‘pathways of individual human experience’ through a system (Buchanan 2004a, p.62), the visualisation of human experience in this case elucidated the key levers for action needed from a citizen starting point. By shifting perspective from the ‘massive totality’ of the system and zooming in to (and out of) different citizen experiences through visual aids, such design practices ‘rendered visible’ (Manzini 1994) otherwise ‘intangible’ (Inns 2010) priorities in a way that made experiential knowledge both relatable and actionable for implementers.

These examples highlight the value of design practices for implementers in acknowledging where their knowledge sits in relation to citizen codesigners’ situated knowledge, as well as expanding the umbrella of knowledge to collectively move beyond their established biases (Björgvinsson & Ehn 2012; di Salvo 2012).

Ethical dilemma 4: Design practices can demand vulnerability from esteemed experts

Although not supported by their organisations, some implementers from the Ghana case study shared how they wished they could be honest and vulnerable in other projects to be able to say 'I don't know', in the same way that their design experience offered a space where this was safe to do so. They shared desires to be guided more by contextually situated and more personal understandings of the invariably 'multidimensional' aspects (Sen 1997) of people's lives that would be affected by their decisions. Although Simon (1967) distinguished design from other forms of knowledge by stating that natural sciences are concerned with how things are, while 'design is concerned with how things ought to be' (Simon 1967). The notion of the term 'ought' poses a normative and ethical dilemma regarding the definition of 'ought', and who gets to say what it should be in design situations? Berger's (1974) point about how development should not be decided by experts, holds true in design processes too as designers are not experts on the desirable goals of the self-determined 'good life'. Despite this, designers are still being 'entrusted' (Cowen & Shenton 1996) with decisions regarding other peoples' development.

Designers are increasingly being granted high degrees of influence on projects, and they do not seem to be actively engaging with the ethical debates and questions posed to other development practitioners about what ought to be and who gets to say what ought to be. There are established theories, frameworks and tools for ethical practice for those who are entrusted with other peoples' futures. Are designers equipped with the knowledge and tools to reflect on the ethical consequences of their work and engage meaningfully with these questions? Working in interdisciplinary teams and placing intentionality on rigorous practice from the established fields of anthropology and sociology can strengthen designers' abilities to navigate such ethical questions and debates. For designers to more deeply engage with the historical and ethical sensitivities of Development requires an admission of their own vulnerabilities and the risks their practice could bring to sometimes already fragile situations and relationships. It also requires a greater intentional emphasis on ethics in design schools and training activities.

Design practices that invite implementers and funders to put down their guard and co-create with others can be experienced by some as more demanding than the usual rhetoric expected of them. This links back to arguments in Chapter Two

about how the attitudes of practitioners were changing at the rhetorical level, yet were remaining stagnant at the conceptual and practice levels (Andreasson 2005). Such journeys of transition are difficult, contrary and at times chaotic – it seems for designers as well. The realisation of this value of situating, aligning, and integrating knowledge systems is contingent on all actors, and particularly designers as their influence is on the rise, to look inward and reflect on their own experience (Margolin 2007). Otherwise, the risk with this ethical dilemma is that designers continue the tradition of going through the motions, but lack the spirit and belief, not just that they could do better, but that they could be better too (Fry 1998, 2012; Willis 2006).

Value proposition 5: Design practices can strengthen adaptive and creative capability

Design practices can strengthen the adaptive and creative capability of people to be more oriented to discovery-practice (not only best-practice) through exercising iteration and experimentation when navigating wicked problems. The complexity of wicked problems contradicts the traditional linearity of problem definition, solution identification, implementation and evaluation in typical Development projects (Ramalingam 2013; Easterly 2006; Mosse 1998). The problems explored in the case studies, such as how to increase universal health coverage through voluntary contributions from the informal sector in Kenya or how to motivate frontline community health nurses through mobile technologies in Ghana, are characterised by their wicked nature. They do not have obvious answers, and they cut across several technical domains, organisations, and political jurisdictions. Wicked problems require that designers adapt their practices to the world's social complexity (Camillus 2008) where decision-making for the collective good demands more than dealing with technicalities in their siloes, fashioned in their linearities. Easterly's (2006) distinction between 'searchers' and 'planners' is hence relevant here. This was particularly observed in the Ghana case study when the character of the problem evolved continuously and came into focus over time in the design process; thereby carving out space for implementers to bring their inner 'searchers' rather than 'planners' for dealing with the inherent complexity.

My choices about design practices rooted in experimental processes that maintain parallel lines of thought (Lawson 1993) also helped shift the understanding of the problems beyond what was initially perceived as pre-defined and static for implementers in both case studies. The design practices employed some 'double

vision' (Schön 1983, p. 281) tactics through divergent ideation and exploration of concepts. This helped to stimulate the imagination and reflection needed to reframe problems and offer a change in perspective to arrive at compelling answers to wicked problems. Implementers in both case studies reflected on how their experience with design changed how they 'think and work' in ways that departed from the epidemic of 'best-practicitis' (Ramalingam 2013) that was problematised in Chapter Two. The value of design for the implementers pointed to changes in how they approached their projects beyond the set boundaries.

The official design process for the Ghana project went for three months, yet the design characteristic of experimental, 'iterative cycles of framing, testing, reflecting and renaming' (Figure 3.2) did not stop after the designer left the team. It remained. This was likely due to a couple of factors. Firstly, the implementation team in Ghana was extremely curious, determined and even obsessive about doing this work well with and for the nurses. There were many debates that ventured into the early morning hours trying to experiment with ideas and concepts. The second likely factor why experimentation didn't stop with me is that at the implementation team's request, we had deliberately long and detailed activity planning and 'how-to-keep-doing-this-design-thing' sessions prior to me leaving. I did not hold back on sharing in detail what I would do next in the design process had there been budget to keep me on. I shared every thought, question and idea I had for what could happen next from a design perspective. We also agreed on follow-up calls to support remotely where needed. Had there been another designer with different preferences on the next activities or a designer who would have shared less as they saw iterative experimentation as the role of professional designers only, then the results may have looked different once again. Whether due to the implementation team's natural inclinations towards being 'searchers', my preferences as the designer, or likely this combined relational dynamic, the understanding of the problem and solution possibilities continued to be explored iteratively by the implementation team beyond the initial design phase where I was present. They conducted five iterations of prototyping and testing to build the mobile application. Their confidence with experimentation continued long after the official design phase had concluded.

In both case studies, the design practices helped implementers navigate complexity, and 'open up' relational spaces (Cipolla & Manzini 2009) and deliberative situations (Buchanan 1995) for new possibilities to emerge. Design practices were therefore not necessarily offering implementers an end, or

answer, to problems; rather, they were also offering a way of navigating and coping with problems that have no obvious solutions. Such design practices can therefore support the calls in the literature for greater flexibility through helping implementers to be more problem-driven, locally led, creative and adaptive (Andrews 2013; Booth 2015). This makes design practices valuable for implementers who desire to imagine the world in its possibility and to push current perceptions of what can be done in their own roles.

Ethical dilemma 5: Design practices risk breaking the rules of the bureaucracies that host it

Although exploration is a known characteristic of design activity, some implementers found the uncertainty and lack of clearly defined answers upfront problematic given their usual institutional rules. It was the same iterative nature of an open-ended design situation rather than a fixed problem space that Schön (1979) had reflected on decades earlier that provoked discomfort for some actors in the case studies. Schön recognised the inherent tension between the orientation of professional designers and the rules of the bureaucracies they are asked to operate in (Liedtka & Parmar 2012). The practitioner reflections in Chapter Seven revealed how designers can create discomfort when forcing others to engage with the ambiguity, disorder and messiness of some design practices. Divergent design processes in particular have been known to trigger people who are not used to such, as one implementer shared, 'the approach is the approach, I still can't cope with the chaos part of it, but the approach is the approach' (Erica IV4, NGO implementer). There lies an interesting predicament, how some people are comfortable implementing 'interventions' for change in other people's lives (ie. the citizens) but feel less comfortable when exploratory design processes require that they look inward at the changes they might need to make themselves. These uncomfortable moments of resistance are actually beneficial for the process, as people feeling too comfortable would 'tell us that we're not going deep enough and we're not pushing people far enough' (Antonia IV1, exogenous designer). The idea that breakthroughs often require discomfort or tensions initially is why codifying design into predictable toolkits for people within bureaucracies to feel more comfortable is not the answer. For some designers, keeping other people in the messiness and discomfort is part of the way their designing works.

The potential value of design in supporting adaptive capability can be compromised, or not fully realised, when assumptions about the problem/context

and decisions about what the solutions should be, are made ahead of time. One practitioner shared how her organisation 'is no different to other places in this regard, we've made a decision ahead of time, what are the problems' (Richard IV1, private funder). This contrasts with how designers often start with the human need, not the disease or the device or the technology, like is often the case in the bureaucracies they work with. Schön's reflection-in-action discussed in Chapter Three demonstrated why answering the wrong question, or answering the right question poorly, is increasingly costly in complex situations (Liedtka & Parmar 2012). For the value of design regarding creative capability to be maximised, there is a balance that designers need to negotiate between practices that are human-centred and messy, and practices that are permissible within the institutional environments of those who are contracting the work.

Value proposition 6: Design practices can build alignment and trust in relationships

Design practices can build alignment and trust in relationships through processes that facilitate safe and vibrant spaces for openness, non-judgement, and collaborative decision-making. Since some takes on D/development highlight poverty as caused by 'relations between people and resources', rather than through the actions or inactions of individuals (Crewe & Axelby 2013, p.99), it is critical to explore design's contribution to relationships between actors. As Mosse (2007) and others (Crewe & Axelby 2013) have argued, a relational perspective here reinforces the importance of social process and trust-building in relations of unequal power. In both case studies, relational design spaces were established where people's commitments and perspectives were opened up for reconfiguration and realignment.

In the Ghana case study, a different kind of closeness and reciprocity in relationships was noted by the implementers. One implementer shared how one of the lingering effects was that 'the communication you have with the different actors is now better as a result of having gone through the design process' (Erica IV1). Another implementer talked about how in the spaces created during the co-design workshops it felt like 'we were all equals... we trusted each other's intentions, we were all doing what we were doing for the nurses, not for ourselves' (Erica IV2). Careful facilitation of the co-design activities helped to build a shared sense of purpose among diverse groups upfront, and supported the negotiation of a set of working principles and behavioural norms for all involved (Rigon 2015).

Continuity and commitment to those principles throughout the project nurtured a sense of belonging and trust between actors who felt as though they were united in what they were there to achieve together. This can be contrasted against what was highlighted in the Development literature as a competitive landscape with partnerships compromised by mistrust and self-interests (Ebrahim 2003; Fowler 2000a, 2000b; Tvedt 2006). Based on the examples shared, the co-design activities helped to create momentum and focus, while building alignment across domains of practice for common aims. Design practices can therefore contribute to trust-building among actors through alignment on common purposes and collective acts of making.

Ethical dilemma 6: Design practices risk activating big egos and relational rifts

Undertaking a complex multi-stakeholder co-design process can also involve frictions between collaborators and can pose risks to a beneficial outcome. This is a risk factor given the nature of co-design processes which invite different groups of people together, with potentially competing agendas and levels of ego-centricity. This is linked to Manzini's mention of traditional 'big-ego design' – although he mentions it in relation to the egos of professionally trained designers not being so dominant when 'everybody designs' (Manzini 2015, p.66). In the NHIF case study, there was a particular situation during the co-design process where the egos of other collaborators risked getting in the way of a beneficial outcome. In the co-design workshops with NHIF managers from different departments present, there was friction due to competing agendas between two of the managers. This tension certainly made others uncomfortable. The funder shared how designing with different implementing teams in this way was risky since it felt like 'we almost lost the whole project' when competing egos and interests nearly 'torpedoed' the initiative.

To explore this further, I will first return to the characteristics of contemporary design practices in Chapter Three (Figure 3.2) and the reference to design practices being integrative, that is 'balancing multidisciplinary perspectives and connecting dots;' as well as being collaborative, that is 'negotiating dialogue-based conversations and/or participatory action.' For me, part of being integrative as a designer is about creating spaces where this kind of tension is able to surface and be negotiated in safe and carefully facilitated ways. Although the tension I witnessed was still uncomfortable for me, I still saw it as a natural and healthy

part of the process. I also saw it as my responsibility as the co-design facilitator to actively work with those participants who were disagreeing. Because of the fragility of the human dynamics at play, intervening at this juncture actually required me to have honed the ability to 'sense' and identify the tension before it got too bad, rapidly 'reflect' on possible ideas to approach the situation, and be equipped with the facilitation skills (and courage) to 'act' or implement those ideas in the moment it is needed. Perhaps another designer may have preferred to be integrative by printing out a lot of multidisciplinary material, putting it up on a wall, and integrating different types of knowledge through a solo immersion of the material. Or perhaps another designer may have preferred to invite a community of kindred spirits and like minds so as to reach alignment faster and minimise the chances of tension.

This example demonstrates how integrative co- design activities can get messy and may require designers to hone the skills to facilitate multi-stakeholder, multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary dialogue, and to navigate conflict and competing interests. My experience has raised questions about how designers can be equipped to navigate conflicts that may surface when different domain expertise and perspectives are intentionally integrated? What is the role of designers in navigating difficult interactions and conflicts between collaborators when they do surface? Honing the skills to navigate the complexity of human relationships during design facilitation does not lend itself to 'diffuse design' through toolkits and 'post-it notes' (Manzini 2014, 2015). This is particularly challenging given the obsession of the Development field with fads, toolkits and how-to guides (Ramalingam 2013). Hence, distinguishing between design activity facilitated by professionally trained designers, and design activity when everybody designs, is critical at this intersection. Whether or how design value is realised actually hinges on the nuance in application of the widely-accepted characteristics of contemporary and professional design practice (Figure 3.2).

8.5 FUNDER STANDPOINT

The three types of value of design from the funder standpoint are related to risk-reduction, accountability, and ownership. Funders valued the reduction of risks related to investment failure through small and early experimental prototyping cycles. They valued how design practices helped reframe impact and accountability beyond the numbers reported, and more holistically on qualitative improvements

in people's lives. They valued how design practices created momentum and sustained ownership by country government actors beyond initial funding periods by co-designing from the start and throughout. In terms of dilemmas for the funders, design practices raised questions about the rigidity of programmatic structures and the dis-incentives for iterative learning and pivoting. The dominant design consulting model also risks perpetuating the current Development emphasis on foreign technical solutions, as well as delivering 'projects' rather than supporting social movements. The three types of value and associated ethical dilemmas are discussed next.

Value proposition 7: Design practices can reduce risks of investment failure

Design practices can reduce the risks related to investment failure through earlier and smaller experimental cycles of 'quick and dirty' prototyping, user testing, and refining. This is in contrast to bureaucratic enslavements to the 'plan' and conservative funding mechanisms (Easterly 2006; Essers & Jacobs 2014). The funder standpoint from the Ghana case study in particular discussed the selling point of design as figuring out exactly how to get the initiative right with the people involved from the beginning and then followed all the way through. One interviewee said this is in contrast to first 'investing 100 million dollars over five years' to do a predetermined scope of work and then realise at the end it was not as successful as it could have been. Both case studies demonstrated how pushing for smaller experiments through testing ideas early, repeated iterative cycles of learning that reframe understanding can reduce the risks of bigger failures down the track (Liedtka & Parmar 2012; Schön 1982). This means identifying real problem areas for resources to be re-allocated earlier than if they were tied into something else for the long term with no flexibility for change. Creating spaces for integrative collaboration and negotiated dialogue around the emerging issues that matter meant that initiatives were not going into launch day without a clear understanding of what might go wrong.

Prototyping is not just something designers do for fun, although it can be fun, rather there is a case to be made for its return on investment (Suchman 2013; Dow, Heddleston, & Klemmer 2009). What was observed from the case studies was that by putting a tangible prototype on a table, on a screen, or bringing it to life through real-time role-plays – meant that implementer or funder-oriented questions were repackaged in more fitting ways for their respective citizen co-

designers. Reorienting actors around tangible ideas for action also meant less energy was directed toward discrediting one another, as was shared by one of the implementers in the Kenya case study. It was noted how the co-design workshops enabled internal teams at the NHIF teams to work more collaboratively than they usually do by centring dialogue on citizen needs and ideas: ‘we put aside our differences and aligned around actionable plans for change’. Although it can feel as though early, iterative cycles of design research or testing might slow down the process, funders from both case studies still believed the long-term benefits outweighed the time needed earlier on because it meant getting to the right ideas sooner. Based on what they witnessed with their investments, funders pointed to how design practices can save time and money in the longer run.

Ethical dilemma 7: Design practices risk misunderstood ties to failure

Some implementers expressed concerns that the design emphasis on experimentation and early failure is unethical when working with people in vulnerable life situations. In the early stages of both case studies, I observed particular sensitivity to the notion of failure from implementers, even as part of an adaptive learning agenda. This is understandable due to the narrative of Development’s shortcomings to date as a design failure (Hickel 2014; Escobar 2018). Notions of fast, early and intentional micro-failures with ideas and prototypes may risk being misunderstood as having unethical associations equivalent to major failures in implementation.

Given the discussion on ethics in this chapter, how designers can incorporate intentional failure ethically when working with disadvantaged groups may need some reconsideration. This issue may also be about semantics, in the sense that designers tend to use the word ‘failure’ too casually to refer to the many early-stage micro-failures in their experimental processes of learning what will work and not work. Whereas others may see the word as an absolute, final judgment in reference to a big and severely damaging failure that is discovered in the later stages of an initiative. As with learning experiments conducted in other disciplines, designers create experimental parameters that allow for micro-failures to be built in gradually along the process, so that the learning and adapting from experiments does not stop abruptly. Some might argue that when working with people in vulnerable situations, staging several intended micro-failures are more ethical than one unintended major failure. In a sense, design

practices could support many moments of deliberation that precede major failure and allow the incorporation of diverse knowledge and values, as well as the explicit alignment of ends and goals (Buchanan 1998). However, wicked problems are ‘not problems of action but of reaching a new understanding of purposes and ends.’ Therefore, the path to success in such settings can be long. It is also highly dependent on what is defined as success, and who gets to define it.

Value proposition 8: Design practices can reorient accountability and reframes impact

Design practices can reorient accountability and reframe impact more holistically beyond numbers reached, through emphasis on ‘real’ qualitative improvements in peoples’ experiences. As was discussed in the literature, actors have gradually been moving further away from the people they claim to represent (Wallace & Porter 2013; Banks, Edwards & Hulme 2015). In the Kenya case study, the funder reflected on how design practices gave a ‘human face’ to the statistics on a given problem or project, and how this created a closer kind of accountability relationship between him and the people experiencing that problem. He shared, in quite some depth, how it was a very personal and inward process for him, as before this project, he believed that this kind of technical assistance work was often one-directional with ‘an expert who knows it all and everyone else who doesn’t know anything.’ He shared how the design process helped him reframe his understanding from vantage points other than his own. Allowing the space for actors to listen and relate to what citizens were saying meant re-orienting toward more ‘social accountability’ from ‘functional accountability’ (Ebrahim 2003; Edwards & Hulme 2002).

In the Ghana case, the core team developed a nuanced understanding of the nurses’ issues and changed their behaviours and decisions to make the nurses their key stakeholders. This indicated to others in the project that a re-orientation of accountability had occurred, with one evaluator stating that ‘design changed the team’s accountability to be directed towards the nurses more than any other stakeholder, this is not like in other projects we see.’ Maintaining the integrity of the words the nurses used and involving them as co-designers helped to change the notion of what success looked like when oriented from the nurses’ standpoint, not only the standpoint of health system ‘experts.’ The complexity of these issues underlines the difference between understanding what outcomes matter from a human ‘demand’ perspective, rather than from the system ‘supply’ perspective.

The evaluators claimed that the design practices helped the project achieve a better solution based on nurse-defined criteria which led to higher adoption and satisfaction rates. They contrasted this with other projects where success is not based on user-defined criteria, and where there is an over-emphasis on what can be counted (such as the number of people reached). Ramalingam's (2013) argument contrasting how actors are trying to do things right, more so than do the right things is challenged by the case studies. The value of design based on the case studies is providing a reorientation of accountability toward people in ways that complement (not replace) statistics and functional accountability. In summary, design supported the redefining of success to be around people's lived experiences and on their terms.

Ethical dilemma 8: Design practices risk upholding the dominant accountability paradigm

In both case studies, the intended project outcomes were not based on the standard metrics of success in global health and D/development projects. For example, in other projects, success is usually defined based on uptake of services, quality of care, and adoption of health promoting behaviours. These are considered critical metrics of effectiveness (personal communication with JSI team). Ideally, there should be a way for design's emphasis on human experience to complement those metrics and help guide the path to them. But rarely do funding mechanisms allow space or reward for risk-taking, experimentation, action learning and participatory ways of working (Tacchi, Lennie & Wilmore 2010; Angus 2008), which would in turn lead to more human-centred accountability (Edwards & Hulme 2002).

This was experienced in the Ghana case study when it emerged that the use of the word 'motivation' in the Ghanaian context was linked to financial incentives, where in fact the project was specifically exploring non-financial motivators. When decision-makers were made aware of this, they did not permit the team to change the official framing of the problem and the space for holding open multiple frames of the problem was limited. Key decision-makers preferred the team continues to use the academic framing instead of how the nurses perceived their issues. Despite the lack of formal space to do this, the in-country design and implementation team used different language with the nurses than they did with other stakeholders in order to stay true to the problem as nurse-defined. From that, a reorientation of accountability toward the nurses happened, though only

for members of the team in-country. Despite the project's stated desire to seek input from 'unconventional voices' (ie. the nurses) as well as the in-country team persevering to find work-arounds to stay true to the nurses' words, I observed how accountability based on the funder's definition of success was still dominant (Edwards & Hulme 2002). Notwithstanding the influence of design practices on reorienting accountability for some implementers at the field level, design practices can still be restricted by, and sometimes even maintain the dominant accountability paradigm.

Value proposition 9: Design practices can sustain collective ownership and momentum

Design practices can sustain ownership and momentum of initiatives by local communities, governments or providers beyond initial funding periods, through emphasis on co-designing with actors from the start and throughout a project. For both case studies, highly facilitated design processes that prioritised dialogue were negotiated through collaboration and alignment between diverse stakeholders. The funder in the Kenya case study in particular reflected on how the value is in the untold story: of how many projects are directed by exogenous actors and, as the project funding is winding down, the projects are then shopped around to national governments at the very end asking them to take over. Endogenous actors are often asked very late in the piece to take ownership of another group's vision for them based on processes in which they were not involved. Then the projects end and not much is carried forward past the funding period. In contrast, the funder of the Kenya project shared how he witnessed from an early stage the buy-in and genuine sense of ownership from NHIF stakeholders. This kind of ownership was associated with 'matters of meaningfulness, identity, responsibility and control, and extending to immaterial entities such as ideas, words and artistic creations' (Light et al. 2013). This ownership was enabled through spaces for the NHIF stakeholders to set the terms of the engagement as active co-designers who held ultimate responsibility for decision-making during the process.

In the Ghana case study, the evaluation team reflected on the momentum, energy and strong buy-in of district, regional and national government stakeholders since there was the space for them to contribute as active co-designers during the process. Ensuring that the solution was compatible with the government's primary health care protocols during the design process likely influenced its relevance

to senior government stakeholders. Also, given the nurses' priority to have opportunities to learn and grow professionally, the design process necessitated the Learning Centre module on the mobile application to be linked to the formal education system, which enhanced the nurses' opportunities for professional development. The integration of the solution with existing systems in-country from the onset increased the likelihood of ownership beyond the funding period. The collaborative elements of the design process aligned diverse stakeholders early, so they shaped the agenda, owned it from the onset to well past the project's frame.

Both examples outlined here correspond with the suggestion that engagements where people are genuine co-designers lead to a greater sense of shared ownership of the process and outcomes (Light et al. 2013). This provided a shift in not only how the agenda for change was being set, but who got to own and direct it from the onset (Sanders 2002, 2006; Margolin 1997).

Ethical dilemma 9: Design practices risk serving business-as-usual projects over movements

According to Ehn (quoted in Julier, Kimbell, Briggs et al. 2016, p. 37), the concept of a project as a frame is outdated for designing today, as it assumes that 'you know who the stakeholders are and, maybe also, what the stakes are' from the onset. The notion of the project is too short-sighted since there is generally something that needs to continue after the formal design process and contractual arrangement ends. Such a continuation may be even more critical than what goes on within the frame of the project. If the only considerations for the value of design were based on each project's contractual terms: deliverables, budget and timeframe; then this would be an overly narrow interpretation of how design creates value. Based on the experiences within the case studies, this would not include types of value that go beyond the business-as-usual frame of the project.

Schöneberg's (2016) analysis of interactions within the realm of D/development projects presents evidence that a consciousness about imbalances in power and accountability dynamics by some actors from 'within' the system does not necessarily offer possibilities for meaningful transformation if it is conducted within business-as-usual project frames. The challenge with shifting D/development work from 'projects' to 'movements' is exacerbated by the reliance on entrenched contractual and consulting models that do not have the governance structures that would support this shift. In Chapter Seven, one

practitioner reflected on the difficulty of being a ‘consultant’ working within a ‘project’ governance structure, as sometimes ‘the most pressing needs lead into opportunities that don’t represent business worthy investment or scalable solutions’. The priorities of citizens can tend to be pushed to the bottom when typical project governance formulations treat complex social change processes as strictly bounded frames consisting of predetermined objectives, plans and targets. When this happens with design processes, design then becomes part of the problem rather than meaningfully contributing to the politics of social change. This raises questions about the contribution of exogenous designers when delivering ‘projects’ instead of supporting social movements. The dominant design consulting model also risks encouraging the existing Development emphasis on foreign technical solutions for the poor ‘reimagined as clients’, rather than supporting endogenous agency in their own processes of social change (Schwittay 2014, p.34).

8.6 DESIGNER STANDPOINT

Although the point of this thesis is to outline the value of design from other actor standpoints, it seems incomplete and insincere to do so without also covering what designers get out of their encounters. The value of design from the standpoint of the designer emerged as being related to cultivating humility and resilience, as well as yielding a sense of personal fulfilment and reward. From the designer standpoint, the dilemmas are linked to risks of weakening outcomes and relationships and perpetuating dependency and inequity that they claim to be working against.

Value proposition 10: Design practices can cultivate humility and resilience

Design practices can cultivate humility and resilience through reflection-in-action, and the relentless obsession needed to get things so wrong enough times before getting it right. In Chapter Seven, designers shared how they have been ridiculed for encouraging people to admit they don’t know the answers in advance, as Easterly suggests ‘searchers’ often do (2006, p.6). Yet, by shaping action from lived experiences and situated realities as the starting point, design practices could offer humbler and more honest approaches (Latour 2007). Latour claims that design as a concept ‘implies a humility that seems absent from the word “construction” or “building”’. When someone says they are going to ‘build

something' it seems to carry a greater 'risk of hubris' than when someone says they are going to 'design something' – hence making design less 'heroic' and more 'modest' than some other professional activities (2008, pp.2-3). With this grows an 'obsessive attention to detail' that supports a 'deep shift in our emotional make up' through what can seem like an ongoing trial and error experimentation. Like other designers who have shared their experiences with me, I have felt this deep shift in my emotional make-up based on the degree of risk taking, deliberately seeking out to be wrong, and exposing my own vulnerabilities in collaborative settings.

From another perspective, one designer cited in Chapter Seven suggested that with D/development, 'we're facing ocean-sized problems armed with teaspoons' (Lee 2015). This is the reason why each designer needs to be humbler and more honest about what they are and are not capable of. Despite Lee's (2015) reflections, Latour's depiction of the act of designing as inherently humble (when compared to say, the act of building) was corroborated by implementers. One implementer with a Masters in Epidemiology and a PhD in infectious diseases from the Ghana case study was very involved in the daily design activities. She shared that 'design humbled us' as the process prompted 'a personal cultural shift... like how to train ourselves in humility, and understanding what role experience can play' (Erica IV1). She pointed to how the design practices helped her 'let go' of the idea that her way 'is the only way' or 'the right way' as co-design spaces allowed her to 'step into the unknown and really embrace what we can discover.' At the same time, she had to be willing to take that risk, or perhaps had previous experiences which honed her humility prior to her design encounter. Even though JSI's evaluation also pointed to design practices facilitating a shift in individual mindset and behaviour among the implementation team, it is debatable whether it is in fact design that cultivates humility. What if it is humility in someone's character that contributes to good design? Which one is the prerequisite of the other?

On the flipside, one funder in Chapter Seven pointed out the contradictions with designers, as they 'always tell others to be flexible and put aside their expertise, when they are the least flexible of all'. Such requests from designers can come across as arrogant when exceptions are made for designers to their own principles. According to another designer in Chapter Seven, designers 'need to have a certain humility in terms of recognising that there are many other specialised disciplines and capabilities that have been working in this space for years... and have some proven ways.' From this angle, designers are being asked

to thoughtfully reflect on how their practices can weave in with other disciplines in non-threatening ways. For the value of design to be optimised with actors who may find it threatening, it requires a degree of humility from designers. In trying to weave in with others, what can I do to establish upfront that I am not there to replace, but rather to ‘accompany’ others through a change process? For me, answering this question has also proven humbling in its inherent paradoxes.

Ethical dilemma 10: Design practices risk weakening relationships and outcomes

Without practicing design with the humility and obsessiveness just mentioned when designing for complex ‘fourth order’ problems (Buchanan 2001), then outcomes and relationships can become vulnerable or weaker. This risk was mainly discussed when design practices were delivered by someone who was not professionally trained in design. The same is true when professionally trained designers are asked to apply their expertise to areas that are not one of their strengths. Like the example mentioned in Chapter Seven, when a Design Researcher is being asked to be a User Interface (UI) Designer for a digital product, they can say, ‘Sure, I can do that’ or they may have honed the humility to say, ‘That is not my strength, so let me connect you with the right person’. Designers are being criticised for trying to be all things to all people. Designers will need to be honest when communicating what their respective strengths or weaknesses are. This will help reduce the weakening of design outcomes and increase the trust that other actors have in design practices – perhaps even growing an appreciation for how designers specialise and work in a plurality of ways.

Some designers have worked hard to package design as something that can be simple to understand, in the effort of making it easily accessible for everyone. Increasing competency in design, so that everybody designs (Manzini 2015), is a worthwhile endeavour. Over the centuries the general population’s literacy in mathematics and other disciplines became democratised, and so should design literacy be democratised now. Nevertheless, even though ‘everybody’ can do mathematics in contemporary society, not everyone is a mathematician. Being proficient at design takes practice and a honing of the humility and obsession needed to arrive at a satisfying result. The positioning of design as a universal activity opens professional designers up to criticism about how they, and their practices, may have overpromised or under-delivered – as was discussed in Chapter Seven.

Value proposition 11: Design practices can yield personal fulfilment and reward

Design practices can yield personal fulfilment and reward when seeing genuine change in people's lives, and getting recognition for good work from co-designers. In the process of trying to transform society and enhance human fulfilment more broadly (Escobar 1995), designers themselves have shared how they have yielded fulfilment on very personal levels. Easterly's summary on the 'searcher' contained this sense of fulfilment and search for 'recognition and reward' that is contingent on finding things that work (2006, p.5). This was corroborated by accounts from the designers who were interviewed and by my own experiences. As discussed in the Ghana case study, I experienced several barriers to applying a high-integrity design process that were not within my control. However, seeing how as a team, we were able to still persevere, reframe the constraints as opportunities, and find work-arounds to stay true to design's core principles was a powerful personal experience for me as a designer. The collective design agency inspired an intrinsic motivation to persevere through work-arounds to do right by the nurses. This also created a sense of fulfilment when there was external evaluation and confirmation that I had practiced my craft with integrity, despite the limitations. Based on JSI's analysis in their reports, I understood how the nurses found the design outcome as relevant and meaningful for them. This understanding provided me with a greater sense of reward than for projects where there was no project evaluation material to confirm that the work was meaningful for those involved. It also clarified for me that despite my initial hesitations about the limitations, a quality design outcome was still able to emerge.

Dilemma 11: Design practices risk perpetuating dependency and inequity

Some aspects of practicing design can accentuate colonial-era narratives and inequities. For example, the dominant labour model is based on highly skilled people from the Global North flying in to places in the Global South on short-term arrangements before flying back home. The reliance on this model has been criticised for perpetuating inequity, claiming that the real beneficiaries of Development are the exogenous actors who administer and deliver the assistance and not those who are the stated recipients (Easterly 2007; Moyo 2009). The preservation of this labour model has prompted some designers to ask themselves this critical question: Who really benefits? I know I do. By conducting

business-as-usual under a dominant fly-in-fly-out labour model, designers risk perpetuating the inequities they claim to be working against. As discussed in Chapter Seven, this mode of operating also risks weakening design outcomes, since having deeply situated lived experiences in a context can strengthen relationships. To forge alternative paths forward, designers could invest more in the design capacity of people with whom they work in some contexts. This could simultaneously strengthen design outcomes as well as support a plurality of national design markets to flourish.

As highlighted in the Kenya case study, there are a myriad of barriers for designing with this objective of greater equity in health care access. For example, Kenyan citizens who are considered vulnerable, are more likely to be living in a rural area, more likely to be less literate, and more likely situated far from a hospital. Such factors make it difficult for design teams to locate and identify such people, and then have the vernacular language abilities to work meaningfully. Because of security risks and challenging terrain, they are sometimes deprioritised from selection for design research activities that have strict time and budget limitations. During this project, when we were asked to include one of the more vulnerable counties of Kenya in the design research work. Initially, we said yes. Then upon going through the approval processes, insurance policies prohibited the design team from going there due to security concerns. This was not received well by the NHIF Manager, who said to me 'if this county is safe enough for our people to go, then it is safe enough for your people to go.' With those words, I was confronted by my contradictions once again. Based on this experience, I have questioned whether designers are sufficiently trained and equipped to penetrate the existing structural factors that prevent change and equity within the system? I have been challenged by my complicit subscription to the dominant consulting models – both by the way such models were perceived by others, as well as how these models presented contradictions I needed to navigate. Before I can challenge implementing partners to ask themselves: who is this policy/product/service going to benefit first? Is it going to benefit the strong or vulnerable person first? I need to first ask myself; how can I take more responsibility for greater equity and make sure those with the greatest needs are not left behind?

8.7 A SHARED PICTURE

The types of value and ethical dilemmas created by design practices from different actor standpoints provide the building blocks to broaden the mainstream conception of what value design practices create, and how this differs for different actors in on the D/development scene. For all the actors, encountering design translated into something more than a phase or product or report. Separately, their design encounters created value in distinct ways that were relevant to the transitions toward alternatives that are being demanded of D/development actors.

These are tabled below summarises why each type of value is important, as it links back to the literature review.

Table 8.1 The value propositions and ethical dilemmas of design, by actor standpoint

STANDPOINTS	TYPES OF VALUE	THE VALUE PROPOSITIONS (BASED ON ANALYSIS)	EXPRESSIONS OF THAT VALUE (BASED ON INTERVIEWS)	RELEVANCE TO DEVELOPMENT (BASED ON LITERATURE)	ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN PRACTICE (BASED ON ANALYSIS)
CITIZENS	DIGNITY	Design practices <i>affirm human dignity</i> and agency through meeting people as active co-designers and agents of change, rather than as passive recipients.	My voice is sought and respectfully heard. My ideas were useful since they were made visual and built upon.	Practitioner identity is linked to control in decisions and moral hero. Citizens identity as a passive and vulnerable beneficiary.	Design practices risk overwriting human agency.
	POWER	Design practices <i>redistribute (some) power during decision-making moments</i> through facilitation of dialogue-based collaboration, with explicit favour toward citizen voices.	What I have to say matters. I can see that my contribution made a difference.	Top-down decision making. Tokenistic participatory processes and one-time consultations.	Design practices risk expanding existing power structures.
	RELEVANCE	Design practices <i>enhance relevance, fit and take-up</i> through emphasis on human-centred and contextually appropriate solutions.	The outcome is what we needed. People are satisfied with the result.	Universal solutions and one-size-fits-all approaches. Contextually insensitive solutions from elsewhere.	Design practices risk submitting to entrenched ideas about impact.

IMPLEMENTERS

STANDPOINTS

TYPES OF VALUE

THE VALUE PROPOSITIONS (BASED ON ANALYSIS)

EXPRESSIONS OF THAT VALUE (BASED ON INTERVIEWS)

RELEVANCE TO DEVELOPMENT (BASED ON LITERATURE)

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN PRACTICE (BASED ON ANALYSIS)

KNOWLEDGE

Design practices *translate knowledge from abstraction to action* through relational and **visual** processes that make ideas tangible and **integrate** otherwise siloed knowledge.

I don't have to have the answers before starting.

My understanding is rooted in lived experiences of people.

I can understand in human terms what was complex.

Knowledge counts more when it is 'expert', rational, scientific, technical, statistically valid and 'best-practice'.

Verticals and silos that tend not to integrate with ease.

Design practices can demand vulnerability from esteemed experts.

CAPABILITY

Design practices strengthen *adaptive and creative capability* of people through **divergent** thinking and **experimentation** when navigating complex problems.

I adapt and pivot based on the realities, not the plan.

I can apply what I've learned to how I problem solve elsewhere.

Machinist, linear and 'fixed' approaches based on known-unknowns and 'best practice'.

Retrospective evaluation and reflection.

Design practices risk breaking the rules of the bureaucracies that host it.

TRUST

Design practices *build alignment and trust* in relationships through **integrative** processes that facilitate safe and vibrant spaces for openness, non-judgement, and collaboration.

We learn from each other; it is a two-way exchange.

I connect more deeply with our shared purpose now.

Our relationships are more open, understanding and reciprocal.

Partner collaborations compromised by 'stakes', scepticism, mistrust, know-it-all attitudes, and competing interests.

Deep-rooted biases and assumptions about others.

Design practices risk activating big egos and relational rifts.

STANDPOINTS	TYPES OF VALUE	THE VALUE PROPOSITIONS (BASED ON ANALYSIS)	EXPRESSIONS OF THAT VALUE (BASED ON INTERVIEWS)	RELEVANCE TO DEVELOPMENT (BASED ON LITERATURE)	ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN PRACTICE (BASED ON ANALYSIS)
FUNDERS	RISK-REDUCTION	Design practices <i>reduce risks</i> related to investment failure through earlier and smaller experimental cycles of ‘quick and dirty’ prototyping, testing, and refining.	I like the emphasis on fail fast, fail cheap. We save time and money in the long run.	Enslavement to the ‘plan’. Reluctance to adapt and change. Fear of failure.	Design practices risk misunderstood ties to failure.
	ACCOUNTABILITY	Design practices <i>reorient accountability</i> and <i>reframe impact</i> more holistically (beyond numbers reached), through emphasis on qualitative improvements in peoples’ experiences.	I see what impact means from different vantage points now. We achieve a better solution fit and citizen satisfaction, in addition to numbers reached.	Success not defined holistically with citizen-defined criteria. Accountability based on reporting on resource use, inputs/outputs. Over-emphasis on what can be counted (ie. No. of people reached).	Design practices risk upholding the dominant accountability paradigm.
	OWNERSHIP	Design practices <i>sustain ownership and momentum</i> of initiatives by local communities, governments or providers beyond initial funding periods, through emphasis on co-designing with actors from the start and throughout.	I see momentum and strong buy-in from the beginning. I see project impacts and partnerships sustaining beyond the funding period.	Imposing or transferring or handing over a (foreign) ‘intervention’. Projects packing up and shutting shop upon funding end date.	Design practices risk serving business-as-usual projects over movements.

STANDPOINTS	TYPES OF VALUE	THE VALUE PROPOSITIONS (BASED ON ANALYSIS)	EXPRESSIONS OF THAT VALUE (BASED ON INTERVIEWS)	RELEVANCE TO DEVELOPMENT (BASED ON LITERATURE)	ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN PRACTICE (BASED ON ANALYSIS)
DESIGNERS	HUMILITY	Design practices cultivate <i>humility and resilience</i> through reflection-in-action, and the relentless obsession needed with getting things so wrong enough times on the journey to getting it right.	I am humbled by my own limitations. I am developing my tenacity with every setback.	Design firms subscribing to exogenous models, then sending less experienced or not the most appropriate designers for the challenge at hand.	Design practices risk weakening outcomes and relationships.
	FULFILMENT	Design <i>yields personal fulfilment</i> and reward when seeing genuine change in people's lives, and recognition for good work from fellow co-designers.	I feel satisfaction knowing I practiced my craft with integrity. I feel rewarded through the recognition of my work by those who will be impacted by it.	Design practices carried out tokenistically and without integrity. Design is perpetuating the same old power structures and unfair market forces.	Design practices risk perpetuating dependency and inequity.

The elements tabled above and conceptualised earlier form a heuristic model, one that is more practical than theoretically precise.

There are complicated relationship dynamics at play between the different actors that can influence their experience of design practices, as well as the value they take away from it. Often the people who fund design processes are not the same people who are intended to benefit from them. Often the people who are intended to benefit from design processes are not the same people making the on-the-ground implementation decisions. Despite the universality of design as an activity, different actors 'make sense' (Krippendorf 1989) and get different types of value out of exactly the same design encounters (Manzini 2012). An actor, when viewing from a particular standpoint, will focus first on what is most important to them.

The role of design in the activation of relational logics produces a series of potential ethical dilemmas for practice. These involve risks of designers overwriting the agency of citizens, expanding existing power structures, submitting to entrenched ideas, and perpetuating inequity. As such, designers who are increasingly entrusted with other people’s development may risk undermining the potential value of their own practices. Although design practices hold potential for D/development, their value is contingent on designers’ abilities to sense and navigate the dilemmas that may emerge in practice. In Figure 8.2 below, I build on the conceptual framework presented earlier to integrate the ethical dilemmas by standpoint:

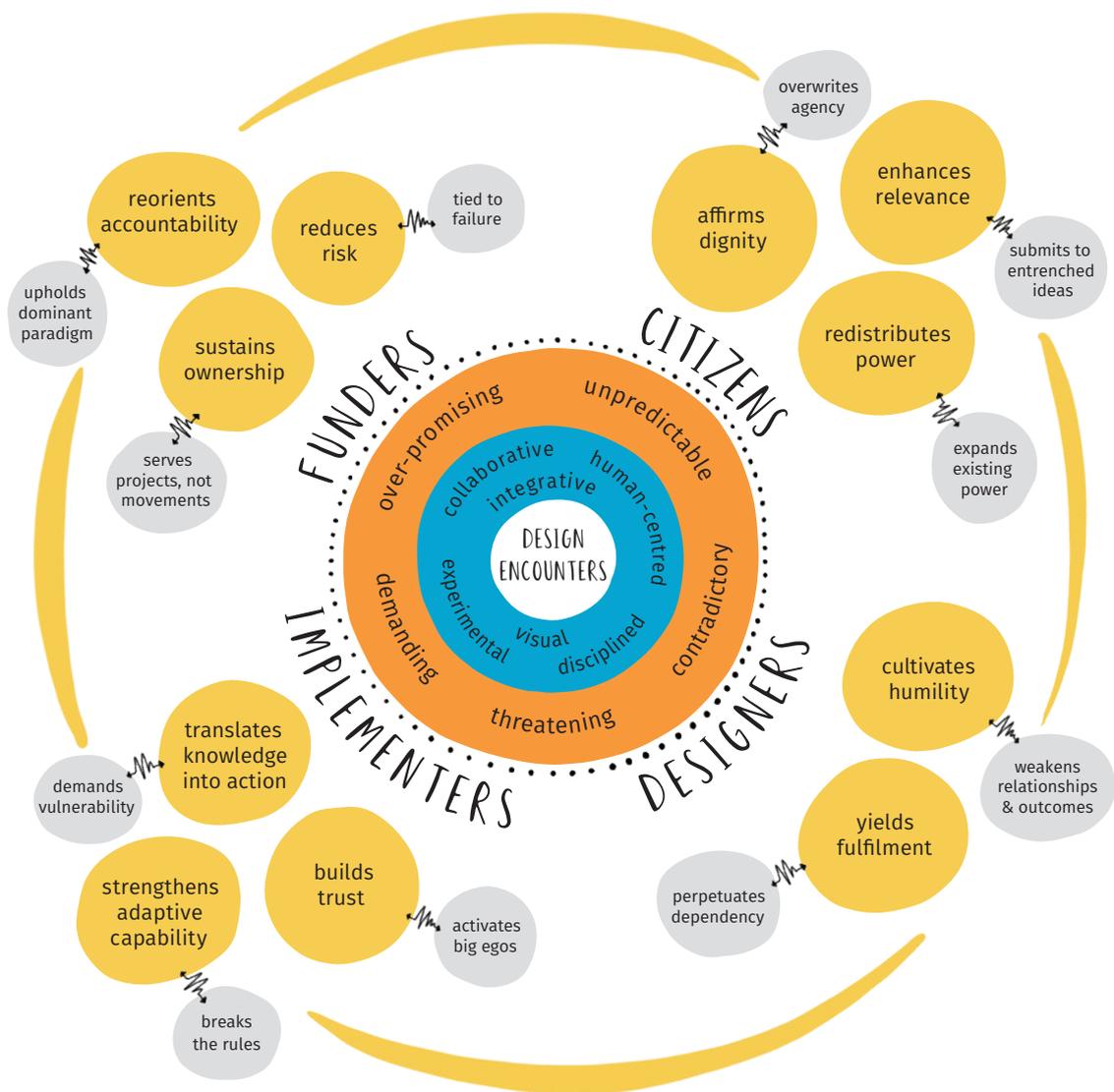


Figure 8.2 Conceptual framework for the value of design by standpoint, with ethical dilemmas

Given the dilemmas outlined in this chapter, the realisation of the value of design depends on actors' ability to hone a deeper and more pluralistic appreciation of human dignity, needs, aspirations, and well-being (Escobar 2018; Buchanan 2001). The realisation of the value of design also depends on designers developing nuanced understandings of the 'operation of power' (Kippler 2010) and the relative 'agency of actors' within processes of development (Brigg 2002, p.425; Sande Lie 2007, p.55). Ironically, this propensity to overlook the agency of actors and more relational aspects of power can be both mediated by and further reinforced by design.

8.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss how the value of design practices was experienced by actors in the case studies by contextualising these accounts with the literature. In addition to analysing the different types of value propositions of design, this chapter also confronted the ethical dilemmas pertaining to designers' practices and positionality in the Development scene. From the case studies, it is evident that design practices can create value that is intended and unintended, as well as tangible and intangible. The value of design was experienced differently, depending on an actor's distinct standpoint. The actors came to the design processes with priorities and positionality that influenced what came into focus for them and what they perceived as valuable to them. Furthermore, who is applying the design practices and how they are choosing to do so may influence the kind and extent of value that actors experience from a design process.

Chapter 9

Conclusion



“ Design takes the best of public health, the best of participatory development, the best of behavioural science, but uses all this in a way that is immediately actionable – instead of waiting months for something to be written up, months for peer review, months to get published in the Lancet, and then not much really changes ... Design also gives us the opportunity to listen better, not to words, but to true semantic meaning – listening for understanding – and when we listen better, we will miss less.

(NGO implementer based in Kenya, interviewed in June 2015)

9.1. THE OPPORTUNITY WITH DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Design and Development have much in common. They are both considered politically charged acts and attempt to address some of the world's most complex challenges. They are both considered as (naïvely) good intentioned in their own right. And they are both experiencing challenges to their legitimacy and identity in this time of global transitions. Such shared themes make the integration of the two compelling and dangerous. Studying different actors' experiences at the intersection between the two has produced mixed feelings about the value propositions and ethical dilemmas that design practices can create for the Development system. There is an opportunity for adapting design practices in ways that sensitively respect the socio-political nature of Development projects – especially when considering the historical record of design in the commercial sphere. There is also an opportunity for dismantling some of the outdated ideologies and infrastructure of Development in ways that would allow for the value propositions of design identified in this thesis to be maximised in practice.

The historical roots of Development discussed in Chapter Two made reference to how material poverty in the Global South has been long portrayed as a disease to eradicate or an enemy to battle; well primed for foreign intervention. This starting logic has played into the practices of exogenous actors who desire to make a difference in the lives of endogenous others. Perhaps this historical premise has resulted in practitioners being less focused on identifying and addressing the root causes and more focused on their plans. In a sense, the starting logic for Development may have inadvertently created the cognitive and institutional barriers to understanding the problems in the ways that reflective design processes can: at the cause level.

Escobar referred to Development as a design failure. However, this assertion is not an invitation to simply add some designing into Development projects to address this system failure. In the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, I discussed how the shift from economic development to human development signalled the discursive move toward 'alternative Development'. The more recent emphasis on post-Development was considered as signalling another shift toward a discourse on 'alternatives to Development'. Following on from that, Escobar propositioned design as holding potential power in the transition to 'alternatives to Development'. Design practices could maybe contribute to this transition through

imagining a whole of system overhaul that would demand energy be directed at the structural root causes of poverty (like global economic policy), and not just at the outwardly apparent symptoms of siloed verticals (such as improving community health nurse motivation, or getting citizens to voluntarily pay for health insurance). A complete re-design of the Development system could maybe challenge the entrenched global power structures, as well as the institutional incentives that sustain such. A system re-design could perhaps even reclaim development, shifting its central premise and promise – from the problem of poverty – to a set of new and diverse collective narratives on the self-determined good life. It could transform the nature of relationships and connection between exogenous and endogenous actors. It could also reinvent how we understand and measure progress in development terms to be more pluralistic.

Instead of wiping the slate clean and redesigning the Development system from the ground up, the findings of this thesis demonstrate how design practices can support this transformation quite differently. Based on the small scale of the case studies and practitioner reflections explored, it is not possible to ascertain what influence design practices might possibly have on the Development system and the broader transition it may be experiencing. However, it is possible to ascertain the influence design practices are having on the individual actors within this system. The overlooked value of design practices is in accompanying actors on their individual journeys of introspection and reinvention. When combined, the set of value propositions for actors holds potential for a compounded value or diffused impact on the broader Development system over time. Multiplying the number of actors who are encountering collaborative design practices could be a way to accompany the transition of the Development system, in lieu of its overhaul.

Design has shown it holds the paradoxical power to both integrate with, and at the same time, disrupt the ways of working within the Development system. In an ideal world, design would be integrated from the beginning of social change processes, by shaping visions with the people from a place, who stand to be most affected by a change. Such people would hold the power to own and pattern a plurality of development pathways toward ‘human flourishing’ and the self-determined good life – with exogenous actors either absent in this picture, or in supportive roles rather than prescriptive ones. This picture depends on whether actors at this intersection, including designers, will begin to understand the value that design practices can offer on such terms.

9.2 THE VALUE OF DESIGN FOR D/DEVELOPMENT

The words of Bonsiepe (2011), ‘design is not added value, design IS value’ prompted my questioning of exactly what kind of value is design creating for D/development? Since design is value, and value is felt (according to Urban 2014 on value theory), then the value of design was explored and understood in this thesis through the ‘felt’ experiences of diverse actors. This conceptual basis helped inform the rationale for using standpoint theory as one of the underlying frameworks for analysis. By elucidating the value of design practices as expressed by four different actor standpoints, this thesis prompts a discursive and practical turn in how the Return-on-Design (RoD) can be discussed, interpreted, and measured for D/development purposes. For citizens, encountering design practices enabled new spaces where they yielded greater power, dignity and relevance in the solutions. For implementers, encountering design practices offered ways to humanise technical or abstract knowledge, strengthen adaptive and creative capability, as well as build alignment and trust among partners. For funders, encountering design practices offered greater efficiencies and risk reduction, greater likelihood of local ownership, and reoriented accountability toward citizens. The findings of this thesis suggest that the value propositions of design lie in facilitating a different kind of D/development through fundamentally different ways of knowing, doing, and being.

The value propositions emerging from this thesis were sometimes based on intangible shifts in actors’ thoughts and behaviours. Through a deeper understanding of what different actors prioritise, this thesis has demonstrated how collaborative design practices can create a web of intangible value for those involved. The value of design practices cannot be predetermined or controlled by others outside of the picture, since people derive meaning based on the goals and priorities they bring into the picture. In a similar vein, the combination of different designers and practices can produce different design encounters. There is a plurality of labels that designers use to describe their practices (eg. co-design, social design, human-centred design, design thinking, etc), as well as a promoted diversity of interpretations of their practices. This means different applications of the exact same design principle can greatly influence the nature of design encounters for other actors. For instance, all seven characteristics of contemporary and professional design practices

from Chapter Three (ie. human-centred, divergent, experimental, visual, integrative, collaborative and disciplined) were present in the design processes for both case study projects in Chapters Five and Six. Some combination of these seven characteristics is what actors are likely to experience when ‘encountering design’ on a social change project. However, my design abilities and preferences as a designer likely influenced the selection and sequencing of the activities, as well as how wide or deep the activities ventured for each of the case study projects. Given the potential for such wide-ranging interpretations, actor encounters with design practices will greatly depend on the designers’ choices when applying them.

Therefore, I do not claim that a replication of the design practices I employed would necessarily generate the same value propositions if applied with another designer and group of actors. It is likely that different applications of design would produce different value propositions since the abilities and preferences of the designer(s) will influence the value felt by others. The setup of the project and the space carved up for design practices within the project frame will also have an impact on the types and extent of value felt by others. The selection, combination and sequencing of the design activities, situations, tools and methods will also have an impact on how the theoretical process materialises, whose agency is contributing and how, as well as how ideas are developed or abandoned. Just because these value propositions emerged for me as a designer who practices with certain tendencies, does not mean that these value propositions will hold true for others. So not only do project setups matter, but so does the design setup within the frame of the project. The value propositions of design presented in this thesis therefore offer a starting point for changing the words we use about the return-on-design for social change processes. Further research is needed to explore these elementary constructs in a wider range of contexts of use.

Even though design practices were propositioned as holding value for little-d development through the imagining of ‘alternatives to Development’, the way actors are encountering design in real-world projects is through practices that are more closely aligned to ‘alternative Development’ and not ‘alternatives to Development’. This thesis demonstrates how design

practices can be applied at the project level without disrupting dominant discourses and power relations at a system level. This does not mean that all design practices at this intersection would be characterised as ‘alternative Development’, even though that may be the prevailing characterisation in this thesis. As such, this does not mean design practices hold no hope for ‘alternatives to Development’ in different times and places. I am optimistic about the potential for design practices to offer value in a plurality of ways toward the little-d development promise of human flourishing and the self-determined good life for all. In the meantime, the contribution of design practices to little-d development is in opening up spaces for further reflection and critique in the search for new possibilities; and not only in precision problem solving in the short-term. The findings of this thesis are still congruent with Escobar’s proposition for design practices to create novel conceptual and practical spaces where local agency can assert itself. The findings of this thesis also demonstrate how design practices, along with other participatory practices, form part of a bigger wave over the last three decades attempting to change the practice of Development. The value propositions of design outlined in this thesis are consistent with the direction of the critique of Development and may actually further it by opening up new reflections on the critique itself. This thesis does not attempt to address whether or how design practices address all the failures of Development, it instead has opened a whole terrain for new research in the future.

9.3 THE CHALLENGES WITH REALISING THE VALUE

The dilemmas that thread throughout this thesis present design practices as needing to be ‘perfectly situated’ for design value to be optimised and realised in D/development projects. The intersection created ruptures with the status quo that were experienced differently by actors. For the implementers, it raised questions about the ambiguity and insecurity of not having all the answers upfront, or the costs for extra time and resources to engage in sometimes-uncomfortable design processes, and how to integrate design capabilities in rigid organisational cultures. For the funders, it raised questions about the rigidity of programmatic structures, or the dis-incentives for iterative learning and pivoting from original plans, as well as the risks with competing interests working together in real-time facilitated activities. For designers, it raised questions about how superficial the solutions were, or how tokenistic the participatory processes were.

I do not believe that design practices offer any magic bullets for D/development. The value of design practices is not something guaranteed or formulaic as a result of sequenced discrete steps. The increasingly diverse and collaborative modes of applying design as well as the increasingly 'wicked' nature of design problems discussed in Chapter Three, makes it difficult to ascertain whether A action + B action = C result. The value propositions of design discussed in this thesis fare as less measurable and quantifiable than what is usually expected by, and from, actors in the Development system. Some earlier discussions about the nature of design and its value for the processes involved in social change deemed it beyond quantification. Previously, Emerson went as far as saying we have been intellectually lazy and that is why we lack the constructs to adequately describe and track what we ultimately value; in his words, 'we really do know the worth of all things and the value of nothing' (2003, p.41). Nonetheless, based on the analysis in the previous chapters, this thesis has identified eleven different value propositions of design from the standpoint of different actors. I would like to follow Emerson's inspiration and argue that the value created is beyond existing metrics. This is because we simply have not committed ourselves to the creation of new words to express what we seek to explain. This thesis puts forward elementary constructs for new words that express the ideas that the four actor groups sought to explain. In addition to the eleven value propositions identified, the analysis uncovered factors which provided an enabling environment for this value to be optimised, or equally, a disabling environment. This highlights how design practices interact uncomfortably with the existing infrastructure of Development. Design practices may hold potential; however, the actualisation of their value is contingent on the willingness of designers and other actors to navigate the ethical dilemmas that may emerge in practice.

9.4 THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Navigating the dilemmas will require some compromises from the different actors. Practitioners stressed that there is only so much that design practices can do, if institutional structures and cultures are not conducive for them. Generally, practitioners expressed how having the right funding mechanism, the right decision-makers in positions of authority, and the right [design and other] capability, can be enabling or disabling for quality design outcomes. To optimise the value of design in future encounters, one enabling factor is having courageous, yet humble leadership that is willing to take risks and attempt the

un-proven. Another critical factor is the opportunity to contractually build in enough time and resources to do deeply situated and contextually sensitive work. A further enabling factor is the flexible permissions, as well as the safe professional and intellectual space to test, 'fail', and pivot, iteratively toward success. Although these things are not the domains of design, the potential for the value of design to be realised is deeply influenced by these other factors.

There are limitations to the simplified applications of human-centred design and design thinking to complex social change, since 'the social' is often an immaterial space consisting of intangibles, such as Foucault's (1980) 'always-already' pervasive power structures. Therein lies the risk for the agenda of the designer, or whomever is contracting the designer, to be prioritised over the agency of citizens or other endogenous groups. For design practices to genuinely support the citizen-defined and citizen-desired effects in collaborative social change processes, then such practices cannot be contingent on the designer's agency; rather, they need to be rooted in the self-determination of the endogenous actors involved. Therefore, designers working for social change have a greater ethical responsibility to root themselves deeply in cultural contexts, as well as weave in with existing social science practices, such as ethnography for example, to enhance their grounding where possible. For design to be integrated into existing practices, designers may consider positioning their craft as complementary to – not in replacement of – the good work and wisdom that already exists.

Exogenous designers in particular are increasingly making big decisions on behalf of endogenous actors in the Development system. As a result, they are becoming 'part of the little d development at the same time as they try, through big D Development, to intervene in and modify the nature and/or effects of the broader processes of this little d development' (Pieterse 1996). At times, this distinction between little-d and big-D remains conflated for me, when my role blurs and becomes intertwined into the societies and political economies in which I practice design. At other times, I have found the distinction useful when reflecting on my practice and the frustrations that come with attempting to create little-d through big-D. Perhaps through growing this awareness, I can better practice design in ways that do not perpetuate dependency and inequality at the intersection with D/development.

Some of the designers interviewed for this thesis were already looking inward and thinking hard about how to do more holistic work at this delicate intersection. What would enable designers to practice design ethically given what is at stake? What would prevent designers from falling into the trap of setting other people's rightful agendas and reproducing the longstanding asymmetries? These questions require further research to answer. The immediate challenge for designers is to reflect on their growing influence in the big-D Development system. A raised consciousness by designers about the ethical dilemmas and risks discussed in Chapter Eight holds potential to optimise the value of design for other actors. If designers modestly position themselves as enablers of collaborative processes of social change that are genuinely driven by the agency of endogenous actors, then this will reinforce the spaces needed for little-d development and the flourishing of all people.

Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to confront the ethical dilemmas of my own design practices and positionality at the intersection with the D/development system. So, how should I continue designing given the entangled ethics at play? It is clear that as a designer, I need to question the words being used to shape the stories I tell and receive. I need to question the rituals and boundaries being established in the spaces I participate in and have influence over. Furthermore, I need to question the gains being made, how success is being determined, and by whom.

What does decolonising design practice actually involve? For me, there are three areas:

1. The words we use, or don't
2. The spaces we enable, or disable
3. The value we (co)create, or destruct

To help me navigate these three areas, I have developed a set of questions to form part of my reflective practice for future projects. The hope is they will support my personal transition toward the standards of the decolonial social designer I aspire to reach.

1. *The words we use, or don't*

- Are there words I am using dishonestly or inaccurately to describe the process and its intention? (eg. empowerment)
- Are the words I am using to refer to the people and places involved aligned with how people self-identify?
- How well am I staying true to the words people actually use and the meanings they actually ascribe to things?

2. *The spaces we enable, or disable*

- What kind of flexibility is there to renegotiate how the project frames/ boundaries are defined after starting?
- Is the space carved out for ideas limited to 'low hanging fruit' and 'band-aid' solutions or also supports solving for deeper 'root causes'?
- Is the space setup in a way that is conducive for others to challenge my approach, decisions, and the 'power' I hold in my position?

3. *The value we (co)create, or destruct*

- Who will determine what success means and how it will be 'measured'?
- Are there 'publishable' stories or datasets that are being pursued more than genuine change? If yes, what am I to do or not do about it?
- Who will benefit or profit most from what is being co-created together?
- Who is paid while participating and who is not?
- What am I giving up and what am I gaining from working on this?

Through such questions, I hope to confront the complex power relationships and entangled ethics through critical reflection in my practice. This set of questions are likely relevant to other designers involved in social change who find themselves entangled in their own contradictions, while still determined to bridge the gap between their aspirations and their practices.

For the value of design to be actualised and realised, it is not just designers who need to reflect and change. Based on the findings of this thesis, there are some key recommendations for other actors at the practical intersection of design and D/development. These recommendations are linked to the potential for designerly ways of working to become more diffused in the thoughts and behaviours of

every actor. In particular, for the participatory nature of design practices to support more reciprocal and multidirectional exchanges between exogenous and endogenous actors. This means being more emotionally vulnerable to un-assume and un-know in professional settings, as well as enabling thriving spaces for different types of conversations, views and approaches to emerge and flourish over pre-existing assumptions, boundaries and plans. This requires significant personal and professional changes from all actors. For organisations, it also means providing the permission for individuals to think differently, investing in deliberative situations early on to invite the subjective in. It also means changing funding and reporting structures to allow for more adaptive management approaches. This requires significant structural, cultural and leadership changes. These individual and institutional implications are critical for enabling the value of design practices to be actualised.

9.5 CONTRIBUTION

The extant literature has primarily focused on the value propositions of design for private sector actors and falls short for actors who deal with complex social change. In targeting critical weaknesses in the literature, this thesis focuses less on the traditional understanding of design as an enabler of market-based goals for commercial actors, and more on the understanding of design as an enabler of social change goals for D/development actors. Despite the growing body of research about the abilities, processes and practices of designers working at the intersection with D/development, there was surprisingly very little published about the characteristic value of design in this emergent space prior to this thesis. The professional design community is still struggling with its identity, more than five decades after questions were initially raised about the contribution of designers to beneficial processes of social change. In this thesis, a new set of questions have begun to be asked and answered around how to explain, codify and question the value of design for D/development and social change.

The urgency to understand this comes from a growing sentiment among designers that they are working in contexts where evidence is still developing and debate about their impact is persistent. The absence of systematic evaluation of design practices at this intersection prompts the need for greater documentation of how design practices are creating value, what value is being created, and what are the enabling conditions for this value to be realised. In Chapter Three, I proposed that design for social change first needs to break out beyond the value frameworks of

business. This thesis puts forward how the value propositions of design, which have conventionally been defined in commercial terms, can be reconceptualised for D/development. It does this by proposing a series of value propositions, which could be further built upon to determine the specific indicators for a 'Return-on-Design' in complex social change processes. This thesis comes at a critical time when some of the leading practitioners at this intersection are signalling that, along with the promise of design for imagining alternative futures, is the risk of it not rising to its full potential.

The contribution of this thesis is novel given the limited examination into the different types of value that design practices can create for different actors in a social change process. I provide designers working at this intersection with the theoretical constructs to further their practice, as well as provide scholars with a window into the contradictions of some theories – revealed through practice. Through synthesising human experiences using the combined theoretical scaffolding of standpoint theory and grounded case studies, this thesis contributes a unique set of elementary constructs towards a broader theory on the value of design at this intersection with D/development; one that some have argued is missing and required. There remains many unanswered questions and opportunities for future research regarding how to use these elementary constructs in practical settings. For future practice, practitioners could benefit from taking the above aforementioned recommendations to support the integration of design practices in their work. For future research, scholars interested in design for D/development could benefit from taking these findings into account as a starting point for considering how design can go beyond the production of goods and services and more as a way of knowing, doing, and being toward more ethical, equitable, and actor-oriented social change. This thesis contributes to both scholarly and practice-based debates, as the presented value propositions and ethical dilemmas depict how design practices might accompany or abandon the long-desired changes in Development.

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Appendix

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1. *List of publications and presentations*

Some of the ideas in this thesis have progressively been disseminated in academic peer-reviewed publications as well as industry conferences over the past six years; all of which are listed here:

Publications

- Bazzano, A.N., Yan, S.D., Martin, J., Mulhern, E., Brown, E., LaFond, A., Andrawes, L., Johnson, T.P. and Das, S. (2020). Improving the reporting of health research involving design: a proposed guideline. *BMJ Global Health*, 5(2).
- Andrawes, L. (2019). Exploring the influence of Design Thinking tools on the accountability of decision makers in aid projects. RMIT University.
- Barasa, E. W., Mwaura, N., Rogo, K., & Andrawes, L. (2017). Extending voluntary health insurance to the informal sector: experiences and expectations of the informal sector in Kenya. *Wellcome Open Research*, 2:94.
- Andrawes, L., Moorthy, A., & McMurray, A. (2016). 'Disrupting conventions in development: from beneficiaries to co-designers' in Alison Rieple, Patrik Wikstrom, and Robert DeFillippi (Eds), *Business Innovation and Disruption by Design Book Series*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Andrawes, L., & McMurray, A. (2015). 'A spiritual corporate awakening: Transcending corporate philanthropy with design' in Dima Jamali, Charlotte Karam and Michael Blowfield (Eds), *Development-Oriented Corporate Social Responsibility*. Greenleaf Publishing.
- Andrawes, L., & McMurray, A. (2014). Design for development management. in Erik Bohemia, Rachel Cooper, Jeanne Liedtka and Alison Rieple (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 19th DMI: Academic design management conference*, Boston, United States, 2-4 September 2014. p1675-1692

Presentations

- June 2019: 'Power and Politics in Design for Transition' track, Academic Design & Innovation Management (ADIM) Conference, Loughborough University, London
- June 2018: 'Design Thinking: A New Strategy for Shaping Global Health', Spotlight Health at Aspen Ideas Festival, Colorado

- April 2017: 'Co-designing in Unfamiliar Project Situations', Making The Mould, Annual Conference, Association for Project Management (APM), The Barbican, London
- November 2016: 'Think Differently: Fresh Evidence on Innovations for Healthy Women, Newborns and Children', JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. and Concern Worldwide, Washington DC
- October 2016: 'Human Centred Design: For Users, By Users,' Driving Impact in Health, UNICEF NYC
- May 2015: 'Design Thinking for Public Value', The Future of Design Thinking Conference, Paris Est d.school at École des Ponts Paris Tech.
- September 2014: 'Design for Development Management'. Design Management in an Era of Disruption, 19th DMI Academic Design Management Conference, London.
- August 2014: 'Human-Centred Development'. Art of Management and Organisation Conference – Design Thinking for Social Justice track, Copenhagen Business School.
- May 2014: 'What Does it Mean to be User-Centred?' Designing for Adoption and Scale Conference, Citibank and Grameen Foundation, Mumbai.

2. Research Ethics Notice of Approval Letter



**Business College Human
Ethics Advisory Network
(BCHEAN)**

Building 108, Level 11
239 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

GPO Box 2476V
Melbourne VIC 3001
Australia

Tel. +61 3 9925 5555
Fax +61 3 9925 5624

Notice of Approval

Date: 17 November 2014
Project number: 19022
Project title: *Design thinking for international development management*
Risk classification: Low risk
Principal Investigator: Professor Adela McMurray
Student Investigator: Ms Ledia Andrawes
Project Approved: From: 17 November 2014 To: 1 December 2015

Terms of approval:

Responsibilities of the principal investigator

It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that all other investigators and staff on a project are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure that the project is conducted as approved by BCHEAN. Approval is only valid while the investigator holds a position at RMIT University.

1. *Amendments*

Approval must be sought from BCHEAN to amend any aspect of a project including approved documents. To apply for an amendment submit a request for amendment form to the BCHEAN secretary. This form is available on the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) website. Amendments must not be implemented without first gaining approval from BCHEAN.

2. *Adverse events*

You should notify BCHEAN immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

3. *Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF)*

The PICF must be distributed to all research participants, where relevant, and the consent form is to be retained and stored by the investigator. The PICF must contain the RMIT University logo and a complaints clause including the above project number.

4. *Annual reports*

Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an annual report.

5. *Final report*

A final report must be provided at the conclusion of the project. BCHEAN must be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

6. *Monitoring*

Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by BCHEAN at any time.

7. *Retention and storage of data*

The investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Regards,



A/Professor Cathy Brigden
Acting Chairperson RMIT BCHEAN

3. *Briefing and consent – plain language document*

Project title and background

You are invited to participate in a study entitled The value of design for International Development. This study forms part of the PhD research of ... at ..., under the supervision of

There are growing criticisms of the international development sector's approaches to addressing complex challenges in developing country contexts. An over-reliance on quantitative-heavy and linear frameworks has ensured accountability is primarily directed to donors more so than beneficiaries, and that success indicators are generally defined by technocratic subject matter experts with little and/or late input from beneficiaries. The discipline of Design offers a set of principles that could support a long needed paradigm shift across the international development landscape – its strategy, working culture and overall effectiveness – especially in better representing the voice of the beneficiary at the management decision making table, throughout the project lifecycle.

Purpose and goals:

The purpose of this study is explore how Design has, or can play a role beyond the design of products/services in development, but more so, in facilitating new ways of working between development organisations, their beneficiaries, and their donors, for greater accountability towards beneficiaries and more effective outcomes in the sector.

Description of Participation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you accept this invitation, you will be asked to share your views in a one-off, one-on-one semi-structured interview that will take approximately 60 minutes. Depending on your location, this interview will either be conducted face-to-face in your place of work where feasible. However, due to the varied and far locations participants are based out of, some interviews will be conducted over online video conference or Skype facilities.

In any case, you are asked to ensure the interview takes place in a private meeting room to make sure no one can hear your responses. If you decide to participate, you will be one of 10-15 subjects in this study.

Risks and Benefits of Participation:

There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. Should you become concerned about your responses or find participation in the interview distressing, please inform the researcher as soon as possible.

There are no costs or reimbursements associated with participation in this study. Your perspective, expertise and experience are important. The results of this study are intended to benefit those organisations directly involved, the broader international development and design communities, and most of all, the end-users (i.e. beneficiaries) of the thousands of development projects that take place around the world every year. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

Volunteer Statement:

The decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you will not be treated any differently if you decide not to participate or if you withdraw once you have started.

Confidentiality:

With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate the timely and accurate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. All information you provide is considered completely confidential, including your identity. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. The following steps will be taken to ensure this confidentiality:

- Notes from the interview will be written with an alias for the quotes or information used.
- Your name will not be recorded in a way which could connect back to any data collected.
- Any personal information linking your organisation and job title, etc. which could also potentially be used to identify you, will be deliberately disguised in any publications.
- Hard copy project documentation will be stored in a safe with a lock

while running the interviews (ensuring all data is de-identified anyway).

- Electronic transcripts and notes taken will be stored on a computer which requires a password, as well as ensuring the files containing the data are also password protected.

Fair Treatment and Respect:

RMIT University wants to make sure that you are treated in a fair and respectful manner. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact the University's Research Office. If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Supervisor Principal Investigator:

Student Principal Investigator:

Participant Consent

I have read the information in this consent form. I have had the chance to ask questions about this study, and those questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I am at least 18 years of age, and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form after it has been signed by me and the Investigator.

Participant Name (PRINT) DATE

Participant Signature DATE

Investigator Signature DATE

4. *Interviewer semi-structured question guide*

Introduction

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me today. Before we start, there are a couple of things about the purpose and process of the session that I would like to cover.

As you know, I am interested in the role of design for social change processes in development projects, what value it brings, what challenges it brings. That is essentially what we will focus on today. Everything you share in this interview will be kept in strictest confidence, and your comments will be transcribed anonymously —omitting your name, anyone else you refer to in this interview, as well as the name of your current institution and/or past institutions. Your interview responses will be included with all the other interviews I conduct.

To help me capture your responses accurately and without being overly distracting by taking notes, I would like to record our conversation with your permission. Again, your responses will be kept confidential. If at any time, you are uncomfortable with this interview, please let me know and I will turn the recorder off.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Identity and motivation

1. How long have you been in your role?
2. How long have you been with your organisation?
3. How long have you been in the sector?
4. Why did you choose to do the work you do?
5. What do you find most satisfying about your work?
6. What do you find most frustrating about your work?

Views on development

1. What are the key challenges with how development operates?
2. What are the priorities for change?
3. How have you traditionally involved your 'beneficiary/user' in what you do?

4. How do project / strategic decisions get made in your work?
5. Who do you feel your organisation is (most) accountable to? Why?

Experience with design

1. Having experienced design in your work, how would you define Design?
2. What has your personal experience with design been?
3. How have you / your organisation applied Design to your projects?
4. How has design been valuable to you?
5. How else has design influenced your work?
6. Which methods/tools were most influential and why?
7. What were the challenges and limitations with design?
8. What were the disabling / enabling factors influencing the design outcome?
9. What needs to change for design's value to be maximised?

Thank you for your time today. It was a pleasure to have this conversation together and I really appreciate your insight.

Do you have any questions for me?

If you are open to my contacting you again, I will use the contact information you provided to do so..

5. Screenshot of (anonymised) participant characteristics register

C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Interview participants														
Job Title	No established industry classification	Organisation name	Experience level with (heard about it, attended training about it)	Region working	Qualifications	Age group	Years of international development	Mainly field or desk based?	Both field and desk exp?	Foreigner or National	Organisation headquarters	Number of offices	What is the corporate governance structure? (advisory boards, ownership, who are stakeholders)	What are the funding sources? (customers, investors, aid grants, governments, etc)
Program Analyst	United Nations Development Program	East Africa / SE Asia	Heard about it in conversation	East Africa / SE Asia	Master of Science, Political Economy of Africa, Conflict and Development Studies	30 to 40	5 to 10 years	Desk	No	Foreigner	United States	170	The status of UNDP is that of an executive board within the United Nations General Assembly. The UNDP Administrator is the third highest-ranking official of the United Nations after the United Nations Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General.	The UNDP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from member states.
Project Lead	Grameen Foundation	East / West Africa	Experienced it through project work	East / West Africa	Master of Health Sciences, International Health Systems	30 to 40	10 to 15 years	Field	Yes	Foreigner	United States	7	A global 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a Board of Directors and separate Executive Committee.	400+ private and public funders
Associate Director, Programs	Concern Worldwide	East Africa / India	Experienced it through project work	East Africa / India	Bachelor of Commerce, Accounting and Business Management	30 to 40	5 to 10 years	Desk	Yes	Foreigner	Ireland	32	A membership-based organisation, limited by guarantee with a governing Council elected from membership base. Concern Worldwide UK is governed and regulated by its trustees. They are elected on a rotational basis at the annual general meeting.	Concern raises money from individuals, communities, sponsors receiving financial support from the Irish government, European Commission and other government agencies, private donors.
Medical Doctor / Head of Maternal Health Program	Independent	East Africa	Experienced it through training	East Africa	Medical Doctor, Paediatrician, Doctor of Philosophy, Anthropology	50 to 60	10 to 15 years	Field	Yes	Foreigner	Kenya	4	A non-profit, 340-bed hospital owned and operated by AIC of Kenya as part of a network of five hospitals and 45 dispensaries. AIC Kigali Hospital has been internally organized as six Divisions. The heads of these Divisions (comprising 9 people) come together to form a senior management team (SMT) that meets fortnightly under the leadership of the Executive Director. Each Division is organized into units that are referred to as Departments -- of which there are 30. The Constitution that are commonly referred to as 'Operating 57-Laws', help in guiding its top level governance.	The hospital's sources of revenue for day-to-day running consist of: - 68% from patients' fees, - 27% from externally funded programmes (like HIV / AIDS RCT Services) and donated services (mainly from missionary doctors) - the remaining 5% from various other sources.
Chief Operating Officer	Panda Health	East Africa	Experienced it through project work	East Africa	BA, International Development Studies	30 to 40	5 to 10 years	Field	Yes	Foreigner	Kenya	4	A private company registered in Kenya with 2 key shareholders and a board of directors made up of investors from the United States.	Customers and investors
Technical Health Advisor	Independent	West Africa	Experienced it through project work	West Africa	Doctor of Philosophy, Infectious Diseases	30 to 40	5 to 10 years	Field	Yes	Foreigner	United States	7	A global 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a Board of Directors and separate Executive Committee.	400+ private and public funders
Director, Technology Innovations	Grameen Foundation	West Africa	Experienced it through project work	West Africa	Master of Science, Health, Public Health, Policy and Management - Infectious Diseases	30 to 40	5 to 10 years	Field	No	National	United States	7	A global 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a Board of Directors and separate Executive Committee.	400+ private and public funders
Senior Program Officer	Concern Worldwide	West Africa	Experienced it through project work	West Africa	Master in Public Health, Health, Policy and Management - Infectious Diseases	30 to 40	10 to 15 years	Desk	No	Foreigner	Ireland	32	A membership-based organisation, limited by guarantee with a governing Council elected from membership base. Concern Worldwide UK is governed and regulated by its trustees. They are elected on a rotational basis at the annual general meeting.	Concern raises money from individuals, communities, sponsors receiving financial support from the Irish government, European Commission and other government agencies, private donors.
Program Manager	John Snow Inc	East / West Africa	Experienced it through project work	East / West Africa	Policy Track Master in Public Health, International Health	30 to 40	5 to 10 years	Desk	No	Foreigner	United States	88	Private company registered in United States	Primarily US government funding
Country Director, Kenya	Grameen Foundation	East Africa / SE Asia	Experienced it through project work	East Africa / SE Asia	Master in International Development	30 to 40	10 to 15 years	Field	Yes	Foreigner	United States	7	A global 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a Board of Directors and separate Executive Committee.	400+ private and public funders
Director, Financial Services	Grameen Foundation	East Africa	Experienced it through project work	East Africa	Bachelor of Business, Finance, Economics and Accounting	50 to 60	5 to 10 years	Desk	No	Foreigner	United States	7	A global 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a Board of Directors and separate Executive Committee.	400+ private and public funders
Regional Director, Africa	MicroEnsure	East Africa	Experienced it through project work	East Africa	Master of Business Administration	30 to 40	5 to 10 years	Field	Yes	Foreigner	United Kingdom	16	Private limited company registered in the United Kingdom in 2012. Formerly known as Micro Insurance Agency.	Customers and investors

6. Coding schedule from nVivo analysis

	A	B	C
1	Broad theme	Specific theme	Sub-theme
2	A - Design thinking role / value in international development		
3		Contribution and benefits of design thinking for development actors	
4			Design as changing behaviour to listen, deeply understand and empathise
5			Design as distilling, visually translating and curating user voice
6			Design as humanising and personifying the language being used
7			Design as humbling organisations - more servant-oriented
8			Design as increasing staff engagement and motivation
9			Design as increasing sustainability through local ownership and codesign
10			Design as navigator of complexity
11			Design as offering organisations a leadership status and position
12			Design as redefining success - qual and qant stuff too
13			Design as risk mitigator through iteration
14			Design for organisational strategy and operational running
15		Defining human centred design and design thinking	
16		Differentiating design from participatory research	
17		Evidence and impact of taking a design approach	
18		Funding design proposals, projects and design capacity	
19		Limitations and challenges of taking a design approach	
20		Risk of design thinking being misused or misunderstood	
21		Stories and specific project cases	
22			GHANA - Care Community Hub (CCH)
23			KENYA - Jamii Bora Bank and financial inclusion for smallholders
24			KENYA - NHIF and World Bank Social Health Insurance Scheme
25			KENYA - Uzima Outpatient health care in urban areas
26			ZIMBABWE - PSI and Ministry of Health VMMC
27		Tools techniques and principles of design and perceived value of such	
28			Cross-disciplinary codesign
29			Divergent and exploratory thinking
30			Facilitation
31			In-situ observation, listening and ethnography
32			Persona development
33			Prototyping and user testing
34			Stories and experience mapping
35			Un-assuming and un-knowing - going in with beginners eyes
36			Visualisation tools are needed for working in complexity
37		Conditions required for design thinking to be (perceived) of value	
38			
39			

	A	B	C
39			
40		B - Barriers to effectively applying design in development	
41		Accountability to donors is prioritised over beneficiaries	
42		Ulterior motives - serving taxpayers, politicians and corporations	
43		Established economic paradigms and donor funding structures	
44		Fear of failure, avoiding risk and experimentation to not look bad	
45		Identity, self-preservation and false claims about what is working	
46		Lack of an eco-system view and coordinated approach to projects	
47		Lack of beneficiary engagement	
48		Lack of humility and interest from leadership	
49		Lack of knowledge sharing and collaboration across orgs	
50		Competitive environment for funding and recognition	
51		Language conformity, fads and buzz words	
52		The term - beneficiary - loses human connection and goes against 'HCD'	
53		Not allowing spaces for uncertainty and iterative approaches to learning	
54		Not appreciating that contextual differences matter	
55		Perverse incentives for NGOs and their managers	
56		Reliance on linear thinking to deal with complexity doesn't work	
57		Silos and hierarchies	
58		Training and leadership experience of development practitioners	
59		White elephants - stories of projects not working in aid	
60			disenfranchised women digging pond
61			Malawi online booking system not used
62			mother with sick baby from turkana
63			PEPFAR
64			pit toilets
65			retrofitting MOTECH
66			sanergy
67			wealthy lady offers free healthcare
68			WFP's school construction
69			
70		C - Defining success and measuring impact (of design) in development	
71		Corruption and injustice	
72		Leadership and agency	
73		Donor strategies, shifts and moving goalposts	
74		MDGs and SDGs	
75		Monitoring and evaluation for ourselves	
76		hitting the target but missing the point	
77		Over-emphasis on numbers when measuring performance	
78		Short term wins and low hanging fruit	
79		Spinning success stories and unintended consequences	
80		Trust as a currency and outcome	
81		Expert-defined success and centralised planning	
82		need to prioritise listening better	
83		User-defined success and localised planning	
84			
85		D - Intrinsic motivations of development actors (and how aligns with design)	
86		what is frustrating in their work	
87		what is satisfying in their work	

7. Screenshot from nVivo coding report

Nodes\A - Design\Tools techniques and principles of design\Persona development

Document

Internals\Interviews\IM1

No	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
	0.0392	3	1	LA	12/07/2015 2:33 PM

it was very conscious on our part to not forget the lessons learned and key take always from the human centred design phase and to make sure that those were incorporated along the way.

R: So what sort of mechanisms did you put in place to not forget?

P8: So for example, we had developed user personas in that phase, I made sure that those personas were something that we printed and we put on the wall. And at some point whether you wanted or not your eyes go to that wall and you are like yes these are the kinds of people we are building these solutions for. Even more tangible than that was using some of the approaches that we learned along the way and in the design approach, things like role playing, some of the actual delivery methods, and how to make things more experiential, rather than a question-answer kind of thing as we are doing user feedback along the way as we are bringing in nurses. So some of these methodological processes were put in place so that we get a better perspective on what the users actually want, what's actually working for them, and what's not working for them.

Reports\Coding Summary By Node Report Page 22 of 94

12/07/2015 8:16 PM

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				2	LA	12/07/2015 3:32 PM

One of the ways that we are experimenting with in that one project is that for content that we developed for wellness for example, we did have the content provider develop content based on the user persona profile. So though the user personas were developed to understand the user better so we know the solutions we are creating addresses different needs, this was a way to see if there was a way we could continue to segment the real users into this persona types and see if we can provide specific content for each of those persona types and these are actually the real users. So I have no idea what's going to happen. It's kind of an experiment to see, because that was a very interesting process that we learnt during the design phase to see what it can actually give us or provide us in terms of how we're implementing the program, not just that, its actually how users are using the program, what works, what doesn't, and even more than that did we get the persona types correctly in the first place?

				3	LA	12/07/2015 3:32 PM
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we just got some actual data and this is data on usage. So we now know which of the nurses belong to which persona types and we can look at amongst these persona types, what aspects of that wellness content are people using, so it is quantitative but at least it gives patterns of use among those user persona types. But even kind of before that, what questions had how we used to segment people in those persona types already revealed a few interesting things.

Internals\Interviews\IM3

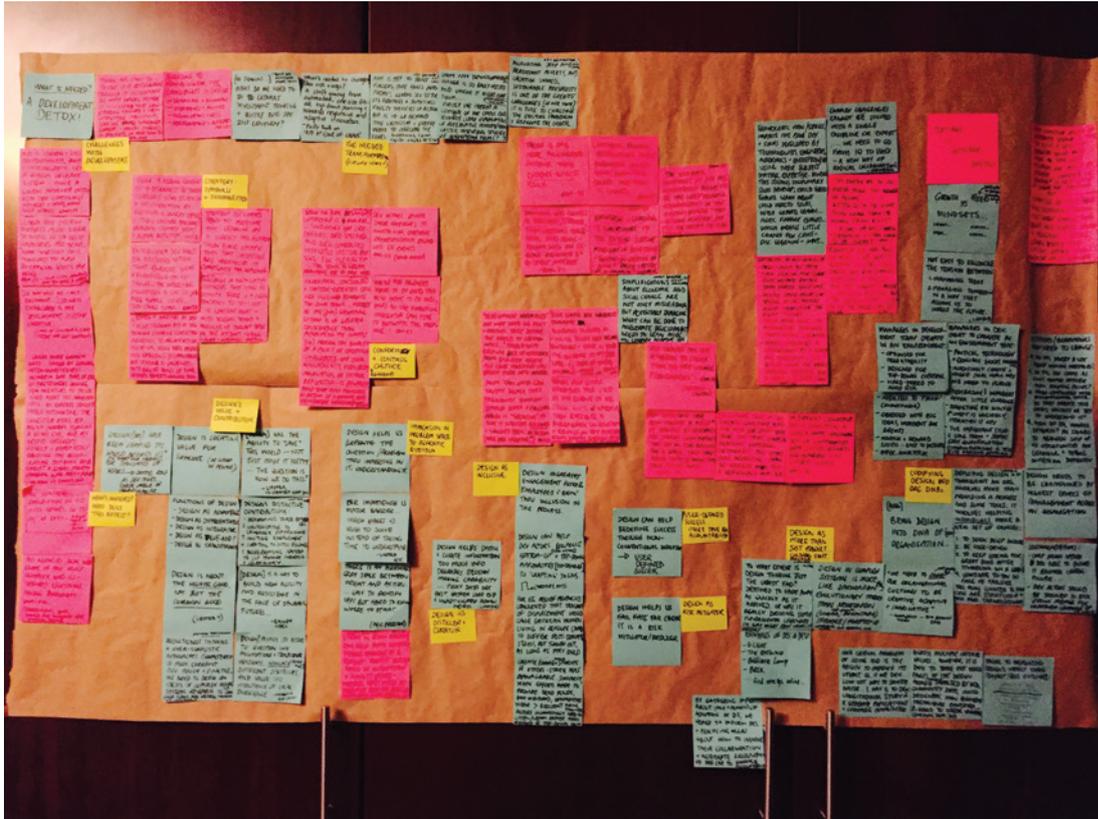
No	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
	0.0243	3	1	LA	12/07/2015 4:35 PM

The things that I value the most and I like the most are doing the process maps and the personas.

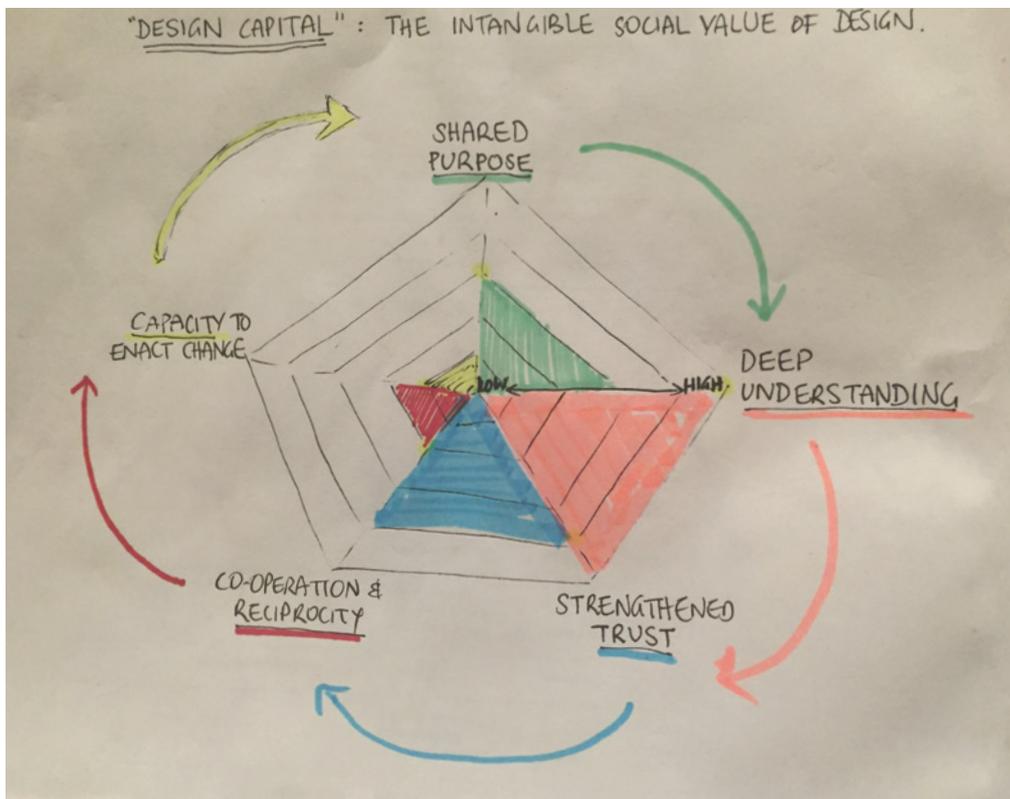
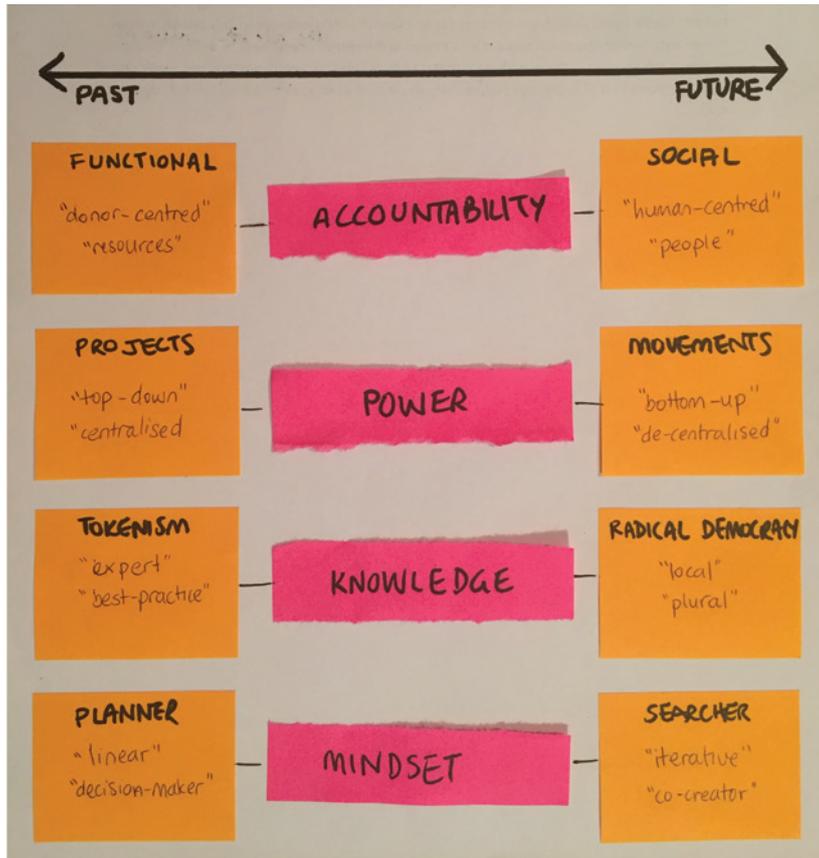
				2	LA	12/07/2015 4:36 PM
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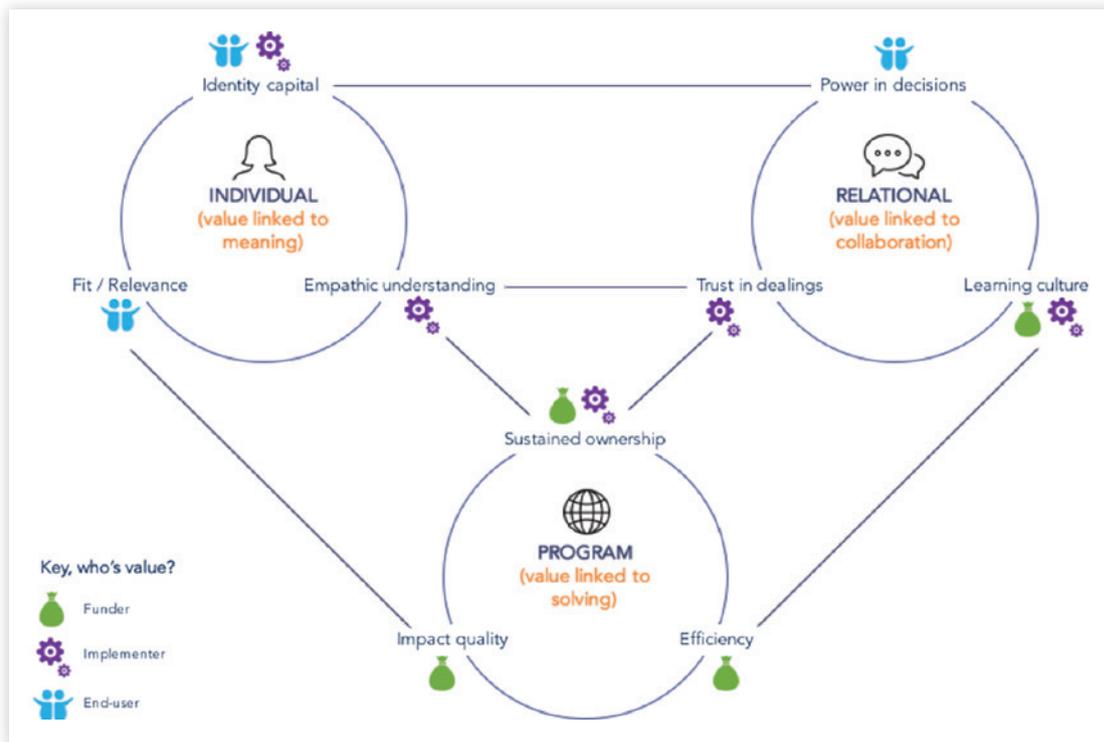
I have found the personas are the most effective way of promoting empathy and accountability in the design process is using personas, and making the team develop them themselves. When [redacted] and I, we ran our workshop on our program, there was the one thing that we didn't do correctly, we created the personas ourselves and I think that that was a flaw in the overall process because it didn't necessarily allow the teams to build enough empathy as they were starting to develop the ideas.

9. Photo of manual analysis with post-its



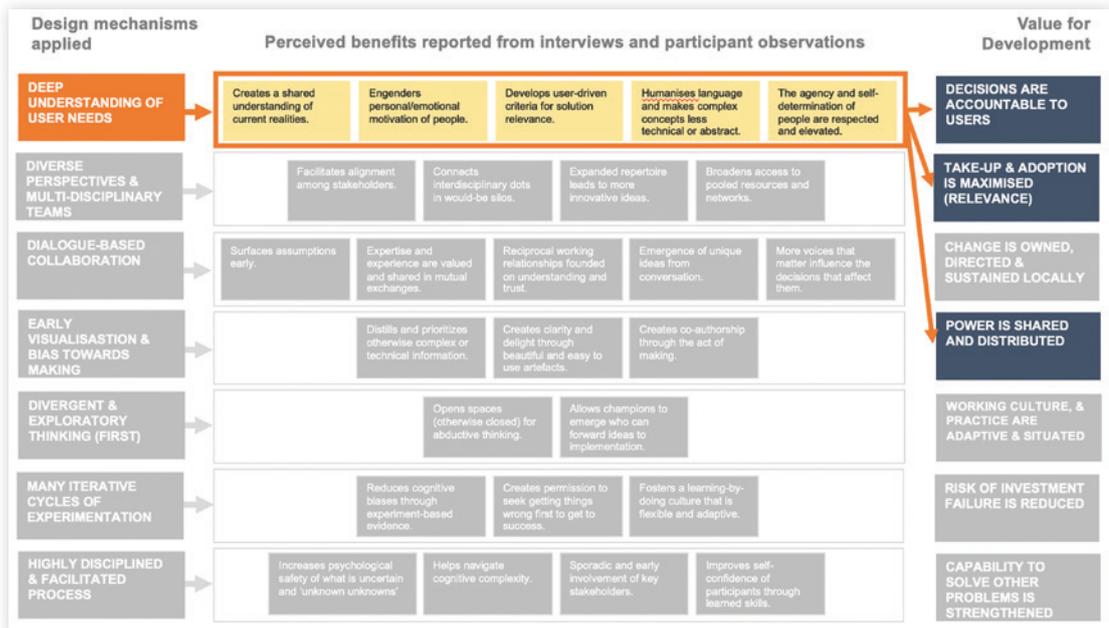
10. Evolution of conceptual framework thinking





FUNDER	IMPLEMENTER	END-USER
<i>We achieve better solution fit and uptake/adoption</i>	<i>We have permission to adapt and pivot based on local realities, not just stick to a rigid plan</i>	<i>We are seen as active agents of change in our own lives, not just as needy and poor</i>
<i>We save time and money in the long run</i>	<i>We are partners with a shared sense of purpose and goals from the onset</i>	<i>We are heard and understood respectfully</i>
<i>We see projects sustaining beyond our initial funding period</i>	<i>We report more holistically on what we see and hear, not just on numbers</i>	<i>We guide the decisions regarding things that affect us</i>
<i>We see the situation from different vantage points now, not just our own</i>	<i>We are free from pretending we know what the answers are before starting</i>	<i>We influence decisions throughout, not just once.</i>
<i>We have catalysing human stories, not just quantitative data for evidence</i>	<i>It is reciprocal and we learn more from the people we work with/for</i>	<i>We have continuity and reliability in the offering</i>
	<i>We connect more deeply with our users and have a greater sense of purpose in our day-to-day</i>	

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK defining the elements



11. Positionality and back story about the author

“ Experiences are both the quicksand on which we cannot build and the material with which we do build ... A method has to be found that makes it possible to work on experiences, and to learn from them. (Haug 2000, p. 146)

My practical experience is in co-designing alternative futures with communities and partners in global health and humanitarian contexts. My ‘quicksand’ allows me to both zoom in to deeply understand human experiences and then zoom out from such to design action for systemic change. This PhD research is enveloped in the quicksand mentioned above; an ever-shifting, and dynamic environment where the process has been iterative and experience lead. The academic framework creates an anchor for this research while at the same time I am using a questioning lens. Despite my initial attempt at delivering a flawless and objective scholarly text, this process prompted broader questions for the continued unfolding of my personal sense of purpose and place in the world. As a result, throughout the thesis, I have chosen to write and share imagery in a way that is congruent to my lived experience. I have intentionally given primacy to ground-truthed content that emerges from experiences – mine and others – rather than from the abstractions and concepts of pure intellect. Throughout the thesis, I included excerpts from my reflective journal written during my ethnographic field work in Ghana and Kenya. These reflections are personal and are shared here with the intention of allowing the reader to more closely situate themselves along my journey while completing this research. Since I have not embarked on this research project as an abstract intellectual process, I thought sharing a bit about my journey to this point may provide readers with some insight on why they find themselves at this juncture.

It all started on a cool autumn evening in Cairo in 1983, when my father asked for my mother’s hand in marriage from my grandfather. My grandfather told his future son-in-law that he was welcome to marry my mother, on one condition. That condition being that they must leave Egypt. I am told that my family had witnessed some difficult times, and my grandfather believed the situation was continuing to deteriorate rapidly for minorities in Egypt. Although he was terminally ill at the time, he longed for a brighter future for his daughters. In July of 1984, my parents married, and soon after, they sent applications for immigration to both the governments of Australia and Canada. They heard back

from Australia first, which happened to be their first preference since two of my mother's sisters and their families had already been accepted there. By April 1988, they had resigned from their jobs, my mother being an Accountant and my father being a Food Hygiene Inspector, and prepared for the big move. I was three years old when we first stepped off the plane and onto the grounds of the Eora people, grounds also known as Sydney, Australia.

When I was 14 years old, my parents took my brother and I on a family holiday to Egypt for two months. I hated it. Worst of all, I felt an intense guilt. It didn't feel fair to me, that I somehow won some kind of postcode lottery in the game of life, and got to have my life in Sydney. Growing up in Sydney as a brown-skinned immigrant girl with coil-like curly hair was not always a walk in the park. However, I had privilege. I had free schooling that taught me to think critically and ask questions. I was allowed to speak my mind, express my desires, and even challenge authority. I was entitled to wear what I wanted without being harassed and threatened in public, like had happened to me in Cairo. I could go to university and study (almost) whatever I wanted. I could be whoever I wanted to be, do whatever I wanted to do, and go wherever I wanted to go. None of that was the case for the relatives, neighbours, family friends and others I met in Egypt during those two months. I witnessed a lot of misery and fear and missed opportunities. This experience left a mark on me that I am forever grateful for. To this day, my privilege humbles me, my dreams energise me, and my choices outwit me.

By the time I was 17 years old, I had to make some big decisions. I didn't want to waste my privileges and dreams. I wanted to do something meaningful that would allow for others to enjoy the privileges I somehow got to have. In addition to doing something meaningful, I wanted to do something creative. I ended up in an architectural design school. I loved it. I love creating things, imagining things, bringing ideas to life by way of models and sketches. I learnt how to think differently, and more vividly, I learnt how to see differently. After a brief time in architectural practice, I also learnt how difficult it would be to 'make it' as a woman in the world of construction. I was disheartened by the way my female colleagues and I were treated by male counterparts, and most of all, I was appalled by the significant gender pay gap that was consistent across the hierarchy. I decided that I did not particularly enjoy drafting toilet details in the corner of the office for 50 hours a week at minimum wage. So I quit.

I entered the world of business consulting for a few years, working with large corporate clients on organisational change projects. Something felt lacking. I felt that by not applying myself to more social good oriented work, I was denying my privilege. After thousands of google searches and hundreds of job applications later, I discovered the intersection of design and social good. I first moved to Canberra to join the design consultancy ThinkPlace, before moving to Nairobi, Kenya and developing their portfolio of clients and project work in Africa from scratch. Today, I am co-founder and director at Sonder Collective, a cooperative of designers, anthropologists and system thinkers, working together for a more vibrant and sustainable future. I get to do what I didn't know how to put words around at the age of 14: zooming in to understand human experiences and zooming out from an in-depth understanding of those experiences to design action for systemic change. This PhD process will continue to help me look inward and evolve what my 14-year-old self-struggled to make sense of all those years ago.