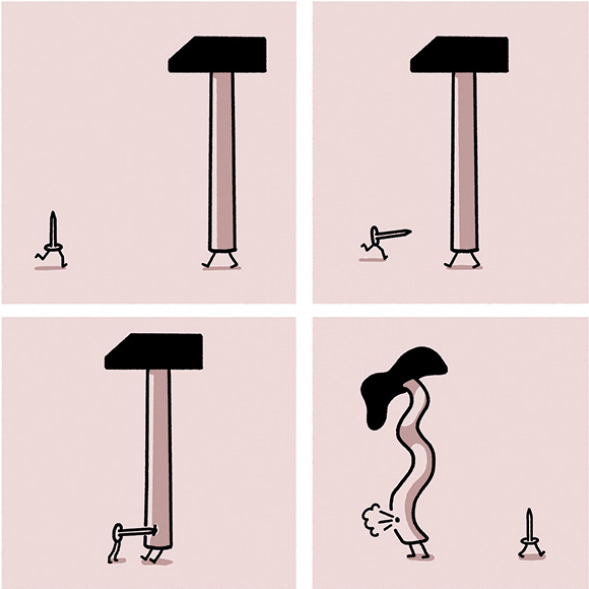
Stanford SOCIAL INNOVATION Review
Informing and inspiring leaders of social change

Design Thinking

Design Thinking Misses the Mark

Design thinking has failed to deliver on its promise to solve the world's thorniest social challenges. Adopting a critical design stance can help designers serve communities, rather than their own methodology.

By Anne-Laure Fayard & Sarah Fathallah | Winter 2024



(Illustration by Christoph Niemann)

Nonprofits, governments, and international agencies often turn to design thinking to tackle complex social challenges and develop innovative solutions *with*—rather than *for*—people. Design thinking was conceptualized by designer Nigel Cross more than four decades ago, notably in the 1982 *Design Studies* article "Designerly Ways of Knowing." The approach was later packaged for popular consumption by global design and innovation consultancy IDEO. Design thinking quickly became the go-to innovation tool kit in the for-profit world—and, soon after, in the international development and social sectors—because of its commitment to center communities in the collaborative design process.

IDEO's then-CEO Tim Brown and Jocelyn Wyatt, who was then lead of the IDEO social innovation group that became IDEO.org, championed design thinking for the social sector in their 2010 *Stanford Social Innovation Review* article, "Design Thinking for Social Innovation," which has become an important reference for design thinking in the social sector. Embraced by high-profile philanthropists like Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation cofounder Melinda Gates and Acumen founder and CEO Jacqueline Novogratz, design thinking soared in popularity because it promised to deliver profound societal change. Brown even claimed, in a 2014 *Harvard Business Review* article, that design thinking could improve democratic capitalism.

However, design thinking has not lived up to such promises. In a 2023 *MIT Technology Review* article, writer and designer Rebecca Ackerman argued that while "design thinking was supposed to fix the world," organizations rarely implement the ideas generated during the design-thinking process. The failure to implement these ideas resulted from either an inadequate understanding of the problem and/or of the complexities of the institutional and cultural contexts. One of Ackerman's examples is the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), which hired IDEO in 2013 to redesign the school district's cafeterias. The five-month design-thinking process resulted in 10 recommendations, including creating a communal kitchen and using technology to reduce cafeteria lines. However, Angela McKee Brown, the consultant SFUSD hired to implement the recommendations, told Ackerman that IDEO failed to account for the operational and regulatory arrangements required for their implementation.

We reject design thinking as a singular tool kit prescribed to solve social problems. In what follows, we explain why design thinking as typically practiced has not been able to create impactful and sustainable solutions to complex social issues. Instead, we call for a critical stance on design, where *critical* means both *discerning* and *important*. We invite designers to adopt a continuously reflexive and questioning stance akin to what scholar and activist Angela Davis called "a way of thinking, a way of inhabiting the world, that asks us to be constantly critical, constantly conscious."

A critical design stance is grounded in a set of values and commitments: to be relational, reflexive, and politically committed. Such a stance provides principles to guide the use of design-thinking methods while allowing for flexibility in terms of why, how, when, and by whom they should be used. To illustrate how such a stance is practiced, we examine social-sector projects that show different ways to use design thinking while staying committed to the stance.

Reductive Thinking

The social sector is inherently complex because it consists of a multitude of actors across different contexts, timelines, and political realities. Any approach that purports to easily solve for such complexity is more likely than not to be reductive and therefore ineffective. Design thinking tends toward oversimplification in at least three ways.

Design thinking is formulaic. | Design thinking is generally presented as a singular tool kit that provides a set of steps, standardized templates, and processes that can be followed, replicated, and turned into consulting models. The number and names of the steps in each approach vary, but the goal remains the same: to provide designers and nondesigners alike with an easy-to-follow, step-by-step formula to solve a problem. The process typically includes a set of activities for researching and defining the problem, followed by generation of ideas, which are then turned into prototypes and

tested iteratively before their implementation. Design thinking recommends cultivating attitudes such as curiosity, positivity, and a beginner's mindset for these activities.

The formulaic nature of design thinking suggests that its application is simple. In our experience as researchers, designers, and educators working in the social sector for the past 12 years, we have seen that organizations tend to welcome the apparent simplicity of design thinking in the hope that it can lead to quick fixes to their complex problems. For example, some organizations engage in design-thinking projects to tackle multigenerational challenges like health access or gender discrimination and presume that they can develop solutions in the span of a few months. Packaging design thinking as a formula also minimizes the importance of having the right organizational culture and capabilities to practice design thinking. Organizations whose cultures avoid risk-taking, maintain strong hierarchies, and/or assign responsibility for new ideas to consultants tend to have a hard time with experimentation, collaboration, and a human-centered approach that puts beneficiaries at the core of the idea-generation process—all essential components of a design-thinking approach.

Design thinking is decontextualized. | Despite their claim to be sensitive to context, proponents of design thinking do not always develop a systemic and structural understanding of how the issues they seek to address are grounded in larger communities and their histories. This decontextualized approach to problem-solving can unintentionally harm communities and the environment by interpreting problems as individual failures, rather than systemic ones.

Such decontextualization also perpetuates the myth that design thinking is an objective and apolitical approach. Within this fiction, designers perceive themselves as impartial agents in design projects. However, designers are not neutral, and their biases and beliefs inform their perceptions and interpretations of the world—and thus their work. In an article for *Design Museum Magazine*'s special edition on policing,[1] Sarah Fathallah (this article's coauthor) illustrates the limits of such a decontextualized approach through an analysis of several recent design-thinking projects where designers collaborated with law-enforcement agencies. These projects aimed to increase community trust in police by calling for community meetings, "ride-along" opportunities, and/or the use of virtual-reality tools to demystify the police officers' work. All the proposed solutions, Fathallah argues, assumed that the communities' distrust of the police resulted from a lack of empathy or ignorance about their line of work. Instead, a more comprehensive analysis would have included the systemic failures of policing, as Fathallah explains, that show how the depths of community distrust lay in "the current and historical realities of policing, including routine violence, discrimination, criminalization of poverty, and sexual harassment and assault."

The Makeright Initiative, a research project that ran between 2015 and 2017 in the United Kingdom and India, demonstrates the limitations of design thinking without consideration of context. In this initiative, 85 UK and 25 Indian prison inmates participated in workshops where they learned how to

make antitheft bags as a part of a design-thinking project. According to Lorraine Gamman and Adam Thorpe, both professors of design at Central Saint Martins in London and the project's principal investigators, the course aimed to give prisoners an opportunity to develop empathy, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. In a 2018 article from *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation* about the Makeright Initiative, Gamman and Thorpe assert that learning these skills "might support [the prisoners'] ambitions for future self-employment" and can improve their "social engagement and ease their re-entry into society."[2] In framing "social integration" and "abstinence from crime" as matters of personal development, Gamman and Thorpe overlook the root causes that contributed to the imprisonment of individuals in the first place and fail to acknowledge the structural barriers to their reintegration, including how their criminal records hinder access to employment, housing, and other basic needs. They also portray criminality as a matter of individual bad choices, rather than as a set of political choices to target and punish certain subsets of the population.

Design thinking is short-termist. | Design-thinking projects are usually consulting gigs devised on short timelines, with proposals, rather than implementations, as outcomes. The use of a consulting model, coupled with the fixed-term cycles of project-based funding in the social and international-development sectors, reward efficiency and brevity. In *Design for Social Innovation*, designers and educators Mariana Amatullo, Bryan Boyer, Jennifer May, and Andrew Shea surveyed 45 design projects in multiple sectors across six continents to determine what cultural, economic, and organizational dimensions are needed to successfully implement design for social innovation. They found that the long-term impact of design thinking is informed by multiple factors, including a focus on speed and a limited understanding of the complex systems. For example, IDEO.org's Diva Centres project, where teenagers learned about reproductive health and contraception access at nail salons in Zambia, failed to scale because of the complexities of public health funding and delivery channels. IDEO and IDEO.org leaders Jocelyn Wyatt, Tim Brown, and Shauna Carey reflected on this project in a 2021 *Stanford Social Innovation Review* article to speculate about the evolution of design thinking for social innovation.[3] They admitted that the Diva Centres project failed to account for the multiple public- and private-service providers and the complex layers of public-health funding that rendered scaling the project "prohibitively expensive and complicated."

The desire to accelerate innovation has led to the proliferation of time-bound events like hackathons and open-innovation challenges that often employ design thinking. These short-term events concentrate on idea generation but often do not consider what happens to those ideas afterward. Recent studies, including a 2023 *Organization Science* by this article's coauthor Anne-Laure Fayard, have shown that hackathons and open-innovation challenges are successful at generating new ideas but not at prototyping and implementing them.[4] Organizers and sponsors should consider how they can support the individuals or teams after the official end of a challenge or hackathon to encourage

the prototyping and implementation of the ideas generated to yield long-term impact. Similarly, designers and practitioners in the social sector should base their timelines on the values they want to guide their work. For instance, this could mean dedicating time for relationship and trust building with communities, or allowing community members to determine how and when the project can align with community priorities and milestones.

Embracing a Critical Stance

Just as social innovation challenges are complex, so too should be the ways in which they are tackled. We propose that designers abandon the idea of grounding design thinking in a singular tool kit and instead cultivate, along with other stakeholders, a critical design stance that guides their use of design in more nuanced and enduring ways.

> For designers to move beyond good intentions, they must also be accountable to them. We invite readers to consider relationality, reflexivity, and political commitment when developing their critical design stance.

A critical design stance builds upon the rich lineage of design traditions and thinkers that call for embeddedness and dialogue with communities and systems. In *Design, When Everybody Designs*, design scholar Ezio Manzini argues for opening design to nondesigners and inviting designers to become facilitators of conversations and connectors of resources for communities. For instance, Manzini suggests that designers working on the issue of the growing elderly population should invite the elderly to become agents of change by recognizing their needs and abilities and involving them in the cocreation of services that address their needs. Including seniors in the design process, Manzini explains, resulted in the creation of intergenerational home-sharing programs such as the Milan-based nonprofit Meglio Milano's Take Me Home program, which matches seniors who own homes with students searching for rooms to rent, thereby reducing living costs and social isolation for both seniors and students.

The capacity of communities to develop their own solutions with the support of designers, who can provide the resources and conditions needed to implement these solutions, is what anthropologist Arturo Escobar calls the "re-orientation of design."[5] For designers to be in service to communities and social movements and move beyond good intentions, as designer Sasha Costanza-Chock argues,

they must also be accountable to them.[6] As these thinkers invite us to reorient the practice of design, we in turn invite readers to consider three values when developing their critical design stance: relationality, reflexivity, and political commitment.

Relationality: According to Indigenous wisdom, all living things—humans, animals, and the natural environment—exist and are defined in relation to each other. Researchers and designers working in Indigenous and decolonial design methodologies have shown that such a relational view challenges Western distinctions between those who know (the "experts") and those who don't know, between subject and object, and between humans and nonhumans. In the context of design, a relational perspective acknowledges that the fundamental activities behind design—the acts of inquiring, imagining, and creating—are not the exclusive domain of the professional designer. Embracing a relational stance means asking whose expertise, skills, and knowledge are included or excluded, distorted or misrepresented, silenced, undervalued, or distrusted. More important, it demands that a designer assume the role of listener and facilitator and operate from a place of mutuality with community members and respect for each other's knowledge and expertise in the design-thinking process.

Reflexivity: Designers bring themselves—their assumptions and positionalities—to their work, which affects how they engage with communities and how they are invested in the design process. Reflexivity—the capacity to be aware of and examine one's own identity, perspective, and assumptions—can help challenge designers' myth of neutrality and push them to ask questions, recognize their positionality, and hold themselves accountable for their work. To build this critical consciousness, reflexivity should be understood as a continuous and evolving practice that goes beyond a handful of events or check-ins to examine a wide range of questions. For instance, in *Power and Participation: A Guidebook to Shift Unequal Power Dynamics in Participatory Design Practice*, design researcher Hajira Qazi invites designers to consider how their positionality operates in different power dynamics and potentially creates conflicts of interest in their work.

Political commitment: Design is always situated within political agendas. Without recognizing the political role of design, designers can play into the status quo. Being politically committed means naming the political standpoints of the work and of those engaged in it, rather than concealing them behind a mirage of "objectivity" or "neutrality." Being politically committed can also mean adopting a set of political objectives that align with the goals of communities and social movements.

Design, in fact, has a long, politically engaged history. The Scandinavian school of design in the 1960s was founded on the political mission of involving people in the improvement of their work environment and in a commitment to workplace democracy. This political orientation continued with the work of designers who focused on sustainability and justice and who spoke to the

intersections of design and specific liberatory political projects, including decolonization, anticapitalism, and abolition.[7]

Thinking Critically

A critical design stance is not prescriptive. Rather than restricting the approach and outcomes of a specific design project, the stance can help illuminate and inform which approach to deploy. The following examples attempt to approach design decisions—such as participation, compensation, scale, impact, and funding—more critically. To note, they should not be interpreted as a "gold standard" or prescriptive, since a critical design stance can lead designers to make choices according to their specific contexts and circumstances.

(Illustration by Christoph Niemann)

Thinking critically about participation. | It's tempting for designers who want to adopt a relational stance to want to invite community members to participate in the design process. However, a recurring pitfall of this strategy is involving community members as design participants without analyzing and undoing the potential harms of that participation. When communities feel as if they're being repeatedly asked to recount their experiences without witnessing the changes promised by the organizations that ask for their stories, participation becomes tokenizing, extractive, and triggering. Participation for participation's sake, without any action, devalues people's wisdom and causes engagement fatigue and trauma.

Community members shoulder several costs of participating in a design engagement. In terms of material resources, they can incur expenses and opportunity costs, such as time not spent caring for children or working, and/or not be reimbursed for those expenses or provided any compensation. When it comes to knowledge extraction, community members may share their stories and ideas yet not be informed about what is done with that information. They may interact with designers and professionals yet never be taught any of their skills. In terms of potential harm, community members may find their engagement emotionally taxing. To ensure that community members are involved in meaningful and responsible ways, designers must balance these costs with benefits like compensating participants for their time and expertise, giving participants resources and opportunities they otherwise couldn't access, and deploying trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices to protect community members.[8]

Design projects may also adopt a participatory approach that fails to engage community members in ways that afford them meaningful agency and decision-making power in the design process. Designer Victor Udoewa was invited by a nonprofit working with the Washington, DC, public school district to redesign the curriculum for the district's international summer service-learning program for high school students. The project used a radical participatory design approach, wherein community members participated in all phases of the design process. The project team included two designers and four students from the program. However, the project failed, as Udoewa explained in a 2022 *Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change* article, when the nonprofit rejected the students' decisions. The project created space for students to participate but did not cede to them decision-making power over which solutions were going to be implemented, leaving students disillusioned with the process.

Power imbalances also hinder the potential of participation. A critical design stance invites designers to approach relationality not just by inviting contributions from community members but by reflexively interrogating the roles that they play in the project and the ways in which each actor relates with the others. Such a commitment is essential to becoming aware of and countering the potential negative consequences of participation. To examine who holds meaningful power and who does not, impact investor Chicago Beyond encourages community organizations, researchers, and funders to reflect on several factors, including who determines the process, who has access to people and information, who has the ability to assign validity and value to findings and ideas, who receives authorship credit and recognition, and who is accountable to communities.[9]

Thinking critically about the problem. | In the design-thinking process, the organization initiating the project and/or the professional designers working on it typically frame the problem at the beginning. However, external actors who do not experience the problem firsthand rely on assumptions to determine the accuracy, validity, and/or relative importance of the problem. If no one challenges the assumptions at the beginning of the design process, the rest of the process can end up being insignificant to communities at best and harmful to them at worst.

One way to challenge such assumptions is to invite the very people who are most affected by a problem to define it on their own terms. For example, the Mahali Lab, a program by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and with whom Fathallah has worked, invited Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians to develop solutions to their community challenges. The premise of the lab was simple: Each decision was driven by the community at each step in the process. Over 18 months between 2017 and 2018, the lab gave community participants a coworking space; financial support; and access to mentors and experts to help strengthen their ideas through structured research, prototyping, and implementation planning. The IRC then provided funding and support to scale the ideas deemed most promising by community members and experts. Most important, the lab began its work with a three-month series of explorations to allow community

members to define their community's most pressing problems. This process began with outreach that identified liaisons who were leaders in their own communities and had access to networks in the three localities with high concentrations of urban refugees in Jordan: Amman, Irbid, and Mafraq. It later held a series of open-ended, semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions with community members. Initial interviews were conducted one-on-one by the liaisons in community members' homes, before larger focus groups involving the rest of the Mahali Lab team were convened. The problems community members identified were then synthesized by the team and presented to them for validation and prioritization, both in person and online via WhatsApp and Facebook groups with Syrians based in Jordan. The problems that felt the most pressing to the community—income generation, support services, and childhood learning—were the ones that ultimately became Mahali Lab's scope of work.

Thinking critically about innovation. | When it comes time for ideas to be selected to be prototyped and piloted in design-thinking projects, priority is usually given to their "novelty" or "originality." But interpreting "innovation" as "novelty" risks giving credence to ideas that appear to be new at the expense of those that may not be new but are proven to work.

A critical design stance questions whether prioritizing novelty serves organizational priorities and designers' freedom of creativity above community needs and desires. Impact does not necessarily require developing novel services or products but can result from leveraging resources to support communities' initiatives—as the local government organization Southwark Council in London realized after working with the consultancy Engine Service Design in 2009. Engine collaborated with the council and citizens on solutions on issues related to health and the domestic environment. To the surprise of the Southwark team, who thought that residents would request new services or technology, several of the residents' ideas relied on already-available community experts and resources. For instance, one idea proposed to use many of Southwark's spaces and buildings for community-building activities like dinners and sports activities. Another recognized the presence of local food and health experts and recommended that these experts coach families on how to make healthy meals. In both examples, community members wanted not novelty but access to existing resources to attain their community goals.[10]

A critical design stance questions whether prioritizing novelty serves community needs and desires. Impact does not necessarily require

developing novel services but can result from leveraging services.

Thinking critically about community accountability. | Designers who commit to community accountability may need to align with political objectives that are not popular with industry stakeholders. In 2021, child-welfare nonprofit Think of Us conducted a design research project analyzing the experiences of young people in foster care who were placed in institutions like group homes and congregate facilities. It uncovered troubling concerns about institutional placements and their punitive, traumatic, and harmful practices, such as youth being physically restrained and abused, coerced into taking psychotropic medication, or forbidden to contact friends and family. Consequently, the Think of Us team refused to recommend solutions like better beds and more outings to improve youth experiences in these institutional placements. As the team noted in the report summarizing research findings, "while some of these improvements would make the environment more livable, few of these changes would have meaningfully improved the material conditions and life outcomes of youth upon leaving those institutional placements."[11] Instead, the team called for the elimination of institutional placements. This outcome aligned with a growing movement of community actors—including mothers and families impacted by the foster-care system, foster-youth organizations, and advocates in the disability-justice community—calling for a reduction or termination of foster-care institutionalization. Despite some media backlash, the project resulted in several states' committing to reducing or eliminating institutional placements—the processes for which are currently being designed, tested, and implemented.

Thinking critically about scale and impact. | Nonprofits and social entrepreneurs need to be able to show potential funders that they can scale their impact to secure funding. This view of scaling is rooted in a capitalist logic that seeks to continuously grow the numbers of beneficiaries in the same way in which tech platforms pursue user growth. However, a critical design stance might ask whether scaling should be equated with increasing the number of beneficiaries. Could it instead be about solidifying or improving what an organization does in service to the same group of people? In our conversations with nonprofits and social entrepreneurs, the perceived need for scaling has created significant pressure to "show impact" through numbers, rather than "do impact" by creating change in beneficiaries' lives.

An organization that chose to show impact differently is Amartha, a peer-to-peer lending platform for women-led micro-, small, and medium enterprises in rural Indonesia. Amartha launched in a small village in Bogor, West Java, in 2010 and was envisioned as a traditional microfinance company. For the first five years, Amartha chose to focus on deepening its relationship with existing clients because it wanted to create a high-quality portfolio with its limited resources. During this time,

Amartha's founder, Andi Taufan Garuda Putra, realized that he could provide more services to female borrowers, as well as to their families, but that the young organization had limited funding and was struggling to meet the loan demand—Amartha had a 90 percent retention rate and most of its borrowers asking for a bigger loan. Putra instead decided to develop more wraparound services, including education, for the women whom Amartha was already serving, before moving to other regions in Indonesia. He then explored marketplace models that would attract more retail investors and banks, eventually transforming Amartha into a peer-to-peer lending platform in 2016. After successfully deepening its services to several villages in West Java, Amartha eventually expanded to other parts of the country. Rather than focusing on demonstrating impact by increasing its numbers of beneficiaries, Amartha chose to focus on deep impact by doing more for the same communities in one region.

Thinking critically about funding and timelines. | When evaluating projects to be funded, including pilots and interventions resulting from design-thinking projects, funders typically use criteria that define success as linear growth, while design projects in international development and the social sector evaluate success in terms of people's developmental and behavioral changes, as well as long-term societal changes. In her work with practitioners using design for social innovation, Northumbria University professor of design and social innovation Joyce Yee found that practitioners encounter a disconnect between the evaluation criteria predefined by the funders (based on cost-based models and efficiency and numbers) and the work they do with communities.[12] She advocated for framing evaluations not as strict measures of success but as learning opportunities where the project outcomes could be continuously redefined and cocreated with communities. In practice, this means providing more flexible funding not tied to predetermined outcomes, which would make evaluation reporting less burdensome and allow for more agility and responsiveness to changing circumstances.

The structures of funding in the social sector and international development are not conducive to sustained community engagement. A critical design stance acknowledges the need for trust and relationship building in work with communities. For example, Dalberg Design and Project Concern International India collaborated on two programs to increase men's participation in family planning and nutrition. The projects began in January 2020 and lasted for more than two years. The pilot program, composed of 2,000 households in Bihar, a state in East India, showed potential impact from children's dietary diversity, use of modern contraceptives, and increased involvement of men in usually gendered labor like feeding children. While Dalberg Design's cofounder Robert Fabricant observed that "establishing long-term partnerships with community-based organization is essential," he also noted that "sustaining those partnerships with a small team and limited resources is not easy." Sustained community engagement and trust require extensive resources, which not all nonprofits have.

Practicing Your Stance

Critiques of design thinking are not new, and several alternatives, such as systems-design thinking, have been proposed—including in this publication.[13] These alternatives build on critiques similar to ours but contend that what is needed is a new or augmented methodological tool kit.

Instead, we urge those who practice design thinking to ground their practice in a critical design stance and to be reflexive and deliberate about the intentions, actions, and effects of their work. To begin this work, we invite you to consider the following questions and recommendations:

Who is involved in the project, and in what capacity?

- Make sure to define what participation looks like in your work and how communities are involved and engaged in the process.
- Challenge the myth that designers are neutral agents. Acknowledge and address unequal power dynamics and reflect on your positionalities, assumptions, and biases and how they may affect your work and your relationships with communities.
- Be mindful of the toll it takes for communities to participate in the work and deploy trauma-responsive practices to minimize potential harm.
- Seek to improve the material conditions of the communities you work with. Ensure that everyone is fairly compensated for participating in the work by including appropriate compensation in your project budget.

Who should frame and scope the project?

- Make sure that all stakeholders—especially community members—are involved in determining the frame and scope of the project, and plan for the time needed to ensure their participation.

What outcomes should be prioritized?

- Ensure that you are not embarking on a project that seeks innovation for innovation's sake. Be open to outcomes that may not be novel but are nonetheless effective for communities.

To whom is the project accountable?

- Research the parties and stakeholders you are working with to understand what motivations they have and how they will benefit from the project. Determine whether the project may legitimize systems that harm the most marginalized.

- Be prepared for the possibility that your project may point in a direction that should not be pursued if it is not aligned with the community's goals. Build accountability measures to prevent outcomes that are not aligned with the community's goals from being considered or implemented.

How should the project's impact be measured?

- Consider what success looks like for your project, balancing deep impact with market-based conceptions of scale. Revisit your definitions of impact and scale accordingly, and align your decisions with those definitions when determining where to invest your resources.

What funding mechanisms and timelines could support sustained impact?

- Consider structuring funding and timelines with more flexible end dates to account for the shifting realities of implementation and allow for agility and responsiveness accordingly.
- Invest in building relationships with communities. Identify and work in solidarity with community-based organizations, and build time for relationship and trust building into your project timeline. Prioritize spending energy and efforts in building longer-term partnerships that outlast the project's life cycle.

To further deepen your critical design stance, we invite you to learn more about and center your work in community-led, decolonial, and other liberatory and anti-oppressive design practices and movements, such as design justice, decolonizing design, and pluriversal design.[14]

We hope that you will continue seeing beyond the prescriptive nature of tools and methods and into the values that can ground your work and your commitment to the communities you serve.

Read more stories by Anne-Laure Fayard & Sarah Fathallah.

Notes

1 Sarah Fathallah and A.D. Sean Lewis, "Abolish the Cop Inside Your (Designer's) Head: Unraveling the Links Between Design and Policing," *Design Museum Magazine*, vol. 18, 2021.

2 Lorraine Gamman & Adam Thorpe, "Makeright—Bags of Connection: Teaching Design Thinking and Making in Prison to Help Build Empathic and Resilient Communities," *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2018.

3 Jocelyn Wyatt et al., "The Next Chapter in Design for Social Innovation," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, vol. 19, issue 1, 2021.

4 Anne-Laure Fayard, "Making Time for Social Innovation: How Open IDEO Combined Clock-Time and Event-Time to Nurture Idea Generation and Social Impact," *Organization Science*, forthcoming.

5 Arturo Escobar, "Designing as a Futural Praxis for the Healing of the Web of Life," in *Design in Crisis: New Worlds, Philosophies and Practices*, edited by Tony Fry & Adam Nocek, London: Routledge, 2020.

6 Sasha Costanza-Chock, *Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2020.

7 There are several design theorists and practitioners whose work could be named here. For the sake of brevity, we offer three. On sustainability, see Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1971; on decolonization, see Elizabeth Tunstall, *Decolonizing Design: A Cultural Justice Guidebook*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2023; on anticapitalism, see Matthew Wizinsky, *Design After Capitalism: Transforming Design Today for an Equitable* Tomorrow, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2022.

8 Sarah Fathallah, "Why Design Researchers Should Compensate Participants," *Notes Off the Grid*, Medium, April 7, 2020; Sarah Fathallah, "Confronting the Power Designers Wield." *UX Collective*, September 10, 2021; Sarah Fathallah, "Trauma Responsiveness in Participatory Research," Think of Us, September 9, 2022; Sarah Fathallah, "An Ethic of Care for Research Participants as Trauma Survivors," Think of Us, April 3, 2023.

9 Chicago Beyond, *Why Am I Always Being Researched?*, Equity Series, vol. 1, 2018.

10 See Anne-Laure Fayard et al., "Designing Services at Engine (B): Co-designing for Health and the Domestic Environment," Case Reference 411-021-1, the Case Centre, 2011.

11 Sarah Fathallah & Sarah Sullivan, *Away From Home: Youth Experiences of Institutional Placements in Foster Care*, Think of Us, July 21, 2021.

12 Joyce Yee et al., "Measuring Impact," in *Design for Social Innovation: Case Studies from Around the World*, edited by Mariana Amatullo et al., New York: Routledge, 2022.

13 Thomas Both, "Human-Centered, Systems-Minded Design," *Stanford Social Innovation Review, March 9, 2018.*

14 In addition to the references mentioned throughout this article, we offer the following works for exploration: Arturo Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2018; Batya Friedman & David G. Hendry, *Value Sensitive Design: Shaping Technology with Moral Imagination*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2019; Kat Holmes, *Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2020; Claudia Mareis et al., eds., *Design Struggles: Intersecting Histories, Pedagogies, and Perspectives*, Amsterdam: Valiz, 2021; Ron Wakkary, *Things We Could Design for More Than Human-Centered Worlds*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2021; and op. cit. Papanek's *Design for the Real World* and Fry & Nocek's *Design in Crisis*.

Anne-Laure Fayard is the ERA Chair in Social Innovation at NOVA School of Business and Economics and visiting research faculty at New York University (NYU). She is the coordinator of the Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability Lab at NOVA SBE and a founding faculty member of the Design Lab at NYU MakerSpace and Design for America of NYU.

Sarah Fathallah is a social designer, researcher, and educator who writes and speaks about the ethics and trauma responsiveness of research and design. They are a senior research fellow at Think of Us and serve on the faculty of the California College of the Arts, UC Berkeley Extension School, and Pratt Institute.

DOI: 10.48558/g6hq-rz22

If you like this article enough to print it, be sure to subscribe to SSIR!