Design for Social Innovation
Case Studies from Around the World

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Measuring Impact

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How is society's capacity to innovate furthered by design? This substantive question is at the core of this roundtable discussion and, in many ways, underpins one of the chief motivations for this publication. Measuring the impact of design in driving social innovation forward is an endeavor that remains fraught with difficulty. We can point to a number of reasons that account for the elusive nature of the task.

First of all, the social innovation field is more complex than traditional industrial and technological innovation, partly because it happens at the crossroads of multiple sectors and disciplinary boundaries. The necessity for collaboration across a coalition of funders and stakeholders is part and parcel of addressing interrelated social challenges successfully, whether in financial literacy, the well-being of refugees, or the redesign of public services, all exemplified in the cases we profile in this section. As Chris Larkin from IDEO.org points out, the collective nature of this work can make it difficult to establish theory of change models and account for their impact. Furthermore, a significant portion of knowledge flows from practitioners working in contexts of high complexity and often doing so frugally with scant resources. Given that many of them are "laying a path down while walking it," it can be challenging to codify common patterns of success or failure. Besides, the context of where social innovations are being implemented is, by definition, diverse, and as a result, understanding parameters of success can vary depending on the stakeholders engaged.

Second, while there is a growing body of research in design for social innovation, we still suffer from a lack of cumulative learning. We seem to relish celebrating pilots and novel projects without necessarily always taking a systematic view to capture replicable insights and the many nuanced considerations that characterize this work. In this sense, as Joyce Yee offers in light of her ongoing work with the DESIAP network and her research with the Young Foundation, embedding a learning-centered evaluative practice and a trust-based approach to working with communities might represent effective ways forward. In addition, the temporality dimension that underpins social innovation work contributes to the difficulty related to evaluation. From his vantage point as a futurist, Stuart Candy highlights this challenge of zeroing in on what is "knowable" and subject to assessment and measurement. In this regard, because the issues that social innovation tackles do not have finite starting and ending points, the processes of uncovering culturally appropriate opportunities and finding solutions do not always square with the bounded timelines of a design consulting engagement. We know that the implementation

phase of social innovation initiatives represents a critical juncture to account for impact and iterate on processes that drive long-term adoption in a given community.

What complicates matters further is that this is also the phase where design's presence is typically at a deficit. Social change takes time and leaves behind transformed social relationships that are hard to quantify. Design project commissions are rarely funded to enable designers to bear witness to these phenomena. Once a project's deliverables have been completed, design teams typically hand off the project to partners; the funding is seldom there for them to revisit outcomes downstream. This constitutes a double loss: with designers out of the equation, they lose the opportunity to learn from and iterate on the inevitable complications that arise in this phase, and they seldom have access to spot insights that might inform new protocols for assessing impact. Fortunately, and as we can surmise from the discussion, we are starting to see an increased recognition by funders that optimization of social outcomes often does require a critical and ongoing design presence, especially in system and organizational change initiatives.

Third, and lastly, evaluation methods for these design practices are in their infancy. As a consequence, the philanthropy and social sectors that fund and commission this work turn to measurement frameworks that do not always align with "designerly approaches of knowing." As all three roundtable discussants highlight, this makes for evaluation results that can exacerbate power asymme-tries between Global North and Global South considerations and miss the relational dimension of the design contributions that emerge. Ultimately, they may fail to translate the value of the design methodologies, techniques, and problem-solving approaches in play. In this regard, it is not entirely surprising that new approaches to social challenges might require that we pay attention to new metrics and re-imagined indicators. Only then will we be in a position to answer with creative confidence this question: what does success look like?

This roundtable discussion took place in July 2020 and was condensed and edited for clarity

Joyce Yee

I am a professor of Design and Social Innovation in the School of Design at Northumbria University. We're based in Newcastle upon Tyne, up in the northeast of England, and my research looks at the role of design in supporting organizations and communities to be more creative and innovative. Part of that work is around the use of design in social innovation practices, particularly in an Asia Pacific context. Along with a colleague at RMIT, Yoko Akama, I co-founded a network called Designing Social Innovation in Asia-Pacific (DESIAP). It is a virtual learning platform, bringing together researchers and practitioners who are using design to support social innovation.

Stuart Candy

I am an associate professor in the School of Design at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I'm a professional futurist, and I help many types of organizations think and feel their way through events that haven't happened yet, in order to try and make wiser decisions. On the curricular side, part of what I do at CMU is weave foresight through the Design curriculum so that it can become a normal part of what designers do; to think about design decisions they're making in the present in the light of alternative possible future states. On the practice front, I was initially drawn to working in a design context while a grad student in the futures program at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Although the field had been around for decades, my colleagues and I were always explaining to people what it was, which suggested that maybe it wasn't quite living up to its potential. And so, both in an effort to make what we do more clearly understood to the public, and to help make an alternative futures orientation more legible and influential as organizational practice, we started designing and staging experiences intended to feel like they were actually happening within various alternative futures, as opposed to having people merely read written accounts of what those worlds might look like. That turned out to work extremely well for galvanizing conversation in a different and deeper way. It led to what we came to call Experiential Futures, a transdisciplinary and transmedia canvas for manifesting ideas about possible futures using all sorts of media and environments—a video, a set of postcards, an immersion, a game; whatever fits the challenge at hand. And that's the angle from which I'm approaching the question of social impact in design.

Chris Larkin

I am the Senior Director of Impact at IDEO.org. My role is to support our three studios—in Nairobi, New York, and San Francisco—with Impact theory, thinking, and measurement, and how to bring that meaningfully into the design process, as well as trying to establish evidence around the value of design to make a case for what it is that design can do in the social sector and international development space. My background is in social and organizational psychology. I worked in social and behavior change research and programming for many years before joining IDEO.org—which is actually the first place that I'd really worked with design in an intentional way. Before that, I was working more in the media and communications space, and applying that type of creative practice to challenges of social and behavior change.

Mariana: Welcome to you all. It's fair to say that this field of design for social innovation, design for social change, design for social impact—the nomenclature can vary—has been evolving and maturing in the last decade. And the issue of quantifying impact and value is a key question that we are always wrestling with. I would like to start the conversation by asking you each to reflect on how you're approaching this big question of value and measurement? How does it manifest for your research and your teaching, for your practice?

Joyce: As a designer, proving the value of design is a constant pursuit: you present your portfolio and say, "Look at my previous work, how it brought value to these organizations." Yet it's often really hard to quantify. My sense is that hasn't changed, to a certain extent. My first engagement with trying to assess the value of design came when I was working on a service

design project about ten years ago. We attempted to use social return on investment (SROI) to evaluate the outcomes of a new, digitally mediated training service introduced to support the existing on-site training offered by the company. SROI is basically an accounting version of ROI, but is aimed at quantifying a social and environmental value by placing financial proxy values on impacts identified by stakeholders. In principle, it sounded perfect, enabling us to capture impact recognized by stakeholders to be important, in an accounting model that businesses understand. In reality, it was far more challenging than we thought. Apart from being very time-consuming and requiring quite in-depth knowledge of the approach, it was extremely challenging trying to assign financial proxies to social impact. For example, we found an improved sense of well-being and motivation in staff but these outcomes proved difficult to assign a convincing financial measure. So my first experience of using a cost-benefit model to evaluate the impact of design signposted many of the future challenges that I would encounter ahead.

Within the social innovation space, evaluating impact has been a continuing topic of concern. Discussions with practitioners through the DESIAP network often highlight the incongruities in applying a Global North model to different cultural contexts in Asia-Pacific. We encounter the same narrative when discussing the challenges of impact evaluation, where the issue of power asymmetries of aid means that evaluation is often top-down and driven by the funder's agenda. This leads to a gap between how outcomes are reported against predefined criteria versus the impact that practitioners are seeing on the ground.

The emergent nature of social innovation means that the primary purpose of conducting evaluation is to understand what has been done, what has been achieved to date, and how best to progress the work. What we realized is that our practitioners are already embedding evaluative practices in their approach to design, through multiple iterations and prototyping. As a consequence, what we found helpful was to develop a propositional framework to represent the range of evaluative practices already being practiced. The framework, which we call Designing Social Innovation Evaluation, reinforces the core principles of building trust, participatory collaboration, and being grounded in place, culture, and locality. I'm currently working with the Communities Driving Change team at the Young Foundation in the UK to embed a learning-centered evaluative practice. Our aim is to encourage the use of evaluative practices as a way to iteratively learn and improve project outcomes.

Encouragingly, we are starting to see funders responding to this need. There is an increasing move towards a more trust-based approach, where outcomes and impact are co-created. It is built on a trusting relationship with the fundee, which then manifests in multi-year non-restricted funding with streamlined paperwork and reporting, enabling agility, and quicker response to changing context. So there is a definite perspective shift in how impact and value are being considered in social innovation.

Mariana: That's a great issue to think about, the relationship and the institutional models of funders, and how that impacts practice and evaluation. Chris, what's your experience and perspective on this question?

Chris: The international development sector and social sector are, as Joyce said, extremely evidence-driven and there's pressure for data and evidence for what design is doing—the value of it. A lot of that is driven by the need for cost-effectiveness in terms of where the investment goes. But there's also increasing buzz around different innovation approaches. So, there's a dual evidence burden that I've been trying to work on with IDEO.org, and it's one that separates the design process from solution effectiveness. I've found it necessary for our organization to try and push for that clarity and separation and not see design as an intervention but rather as a methodology. And, actually, I've pushed back against the ways in which evaluative approaches have been applied, because design never takes any one shape or form. From one project to the next, it looks different every time. Yes, there's a set of design thinking processes and certain practices we will always do around insights or synthesis processes, and, obviously, the craft side of design. But I would argue that the investment in different stages, and the processes that we pull from, always looks different. So that's been one kind of framework. In terms of what we've been doing, the most activity around measurement has definitely been in the adolescent reproductive health space, which is part of a larger portfolio in the global health sector, and where there is strong interest for a data, and evidence-driven based approach.

It's an interesting position to be in as a design firm because we don't implement the solutions that we help to design. We tend to hand things off, and we'll come back in maybe to help optimize or do light stewardship supporting a client partner that we've worked with. But, essentially, the measurement sits with that partner. But we have been working with teams to make sure that any solutions we design are measurable, taking more accountability for that and making sure that we're developing theories of change and logic models that describe a change pathway, trying to guide the metrics and methods that our partners can use to track progress, and handing that off with anything that we do. And then we also liaise with independent evaluators that are increasingly working in this space.

I do a lot of work to help translate for independent evaluators, who are trying to look at design and what value it has brought or how it has played out in an organization, around what the design intent was or how designers may have talked about what they were doing. It's about navigating those perspectives, and I guess one of the pieces of work that I'm doing now is to try and dive more deeply into the design process and the experience of design at an organizational level. The challenge is to look beyond the solution itself that we've been brought in to work on and to see what else has an organization gained. How have their ways of working changed? How have they started to look at problems differently as a result? And that's where the difficulty lies in the evaluation space where those frameworks don't really exist yet. As an evaluator, there are very few clear frameworks to say, "These are the things you should be seeing if this has been done well." So that's something that I'm trying to pivot to a little bit more now in my work. What can we contribute to this space as a design firm with a responsibility to actually create that learning, offer some of those frameworks for others to use?

Mariana: Stuart, you're coming in with a very different trajectory and position and in a field where you're also engaging with a lot of design artifacts, design research processes, and working also at an organizational level where people come to you, navigating uncertainty. Can you talk a little bit about how this question of measurement is entering into our field and reflect on the perspectives we've heard so far? I'm hearing questions of translation and gaps in both of these first very rich statements.

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Stuart: A key question that comes up for me is this: when is it appropriate to measure, as opposed to engaging in some other kind of evaluation? This reflects Chris's point about design being methodology rather than intervention. That resonates for me partly because the essential thrust of futures work—as a perspective, as a mindset, as an array of conceptual resources—has to do with how people approach time, which is not necessarily an easy thing to measure. It's also a kind of perspectival or cultural shift that might unfold over a much longer period than individual projects or interventions typically do.

So I want to tease apart the question of measurement versus assessment. I don't see those as interchangeable terms. Assessing or evaluating or gauging impact can take many different forms, and measurement is just one kind of approach, which carries with it a particular set of assumptions about how to try to know what change has occurred, and even what is knowable.

The question of impact became a focus for me in a previous life working full-time as a consulting futurist, part of an in-house foresight and innovation team within a global design and engineering firm, Arup. Our role faced in two directions at once. Part of it was externally oriented; proposing and delivering work to external partner organizations. And it was also partly internally oriented; encouraging and enabling our colleagues to think longer-term about the kinds of projects we were doing. What might be the future needs for a cultural institution like an opera house, or a hospital, or a university campus—all of these categories of buildings and infrastructure that the company was involved in bringing to life—a decade or a generation from now? In both of those modes, internally and externally facing, the center of the work had to do with relationships. What's the quality of the relationship between yourself and your team, and the people you're serving and traveling alongside? This is something you have to think about a lot, but that is not necessarily easy to measure. In futures work, the quality of the relationship is particularly important because it's a situation where you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. You can't force people to think long term. All you can do is try to create conditions that engender a different perspective. This means it's not just relational practice, it's also invitational. Evaluating how you're doing requires attending to the quality of the relationships that you're having, whether you get invited back after a first engagement. It's one of the most important questions for a consultant who makes their living by helping people, and I guess I say this because I want to make space in our conversation for the question of how

we can evaluate, gauge impact, and arrive at judgments about the quality of things we do, without assuming that that necessarily means putting a ruler next to them.

Mariana: And you're touching on this question of time and temporality that is core to your field. Joyce, how does the factor of time play out when it comes to social innovation and design and working with communities and trying to demonstrate value? What are some of the opportunities and barriers there?

"Impact will also occur beyond the program duration. I'm personally interested in the transformative nature of these initiatives and how social innovators are fundamentally changed because of their involvement in the program."

Joyce: Stuart has brought up a really important point. Temporality is a key aspect of designing that we don't often acknowledge as problematic. Typically, a design project has a start and an end point. However, we found that this consultancy model doesn't really work in a social innovation context. Problems encountered by the community persist prior to and extend beyond the project duration. When you leave or when you extract yourself many of the issues will still remain. It then becomes really important to consider how your interventions play out over a period of time beyond your contribution. Additionally, when you are working with a community, you're continually having to build new relationships and maintain existing ones. Relationships don't end just because the project has ended. We often hear of practitioners still keeping in touch with the community long after the project has been completed.

Within the issue of evaluation, that's even more problematic. A lot can happen over the course of a program which may be years long, so the initial criteria of measurement may no longer make sense. Impact will also occur beyond the program duration. I'm personally interested in the transformative nature of these initiatives and how social innovators are fundamentally changed because of their involvement in the program. However, it is hard to know when this kind of transformation will occur; often it emerges after the program ends. So, in relation to impact measurement, that's a real challenge to capture impact beyond the program duration.

Mariana: Chris, would you build on that, from the perspective of IDEO.org and the work you're doing?

Chris: The concepts of "relationship" and "invitation" are important elements. We've found that some of the most effective work and solutions come from design engagements where we've gone back time and time again over a period of one to three years to help a partner optimize, to re-examine what we've done with them, and determine if, maybe, a service or a product innovation has become redundant, or to ask what we might have missed, or what the new present or future requires. I don't believe you can do that—a six-month design engagement and handoff—unless you have embedded some design skills or capacities within an organization. It's really hard to step away. There's something valuable in being able to come back. It takes a while to learn about the solutions that are going out into the community.

For example, we've had some partners on health projects where, in the immediate term, the solutions were more expensive to implement up front, but over time these costs came down. So that point of asking, "Where do you optimize? Where do you come back in?" and allowing space for that innovation to find its feet, is important. But, in terms of designers being at the table to help that process, that's based so much on the relationships and on having been able to quickly show value and be there with a partner to understand where is it that we can come back in and help and that they're able to identify where they do and don't need us back in. There's a timing piece around relationship and implementation, but also to what Joyce was saying about the change in outcomes over time. Increasingly, when we work on bigger social change challenges or look ahead to applying design to more systems change, that change doesn't happen quickly. We're designing solutions to shift things like social norms, which we know could take ten years or generations to really change. We're often designing something that just can't be measured in a three-year grant cycle. The question is how to preempt that limitation, and come to the table and ask, "What's the way around this, and how do we maintain a commitment to something that could be really effective?"

Stuart: To Chris's excellent point about the really big changes being slow to happen, it's important to add that they don't move at an even pace either. It's very often a nonlinear process. They don't happen steadily such that this increment of effort corresponds neatly to that increment of observable change.

This reminds me of a wonderful recent article by Rebecca Solnit about the racial justice uprisings happening across the United States and around the world, called "The Slow Road to Sudden Change." She says: "You can think of it as a bonfire. Or a waterfall. The metaphor of the river of time is often used to suggest that history flows at a steady pace, but real rivers have rapids and shallows, eddies, and droughts. They freeze over and get dammed and their water gets diverted, and sometimes the river comes to the precipice and we're all in the waterfall. Time accelerates, things change faster than anyone expected. Water clear as glass becomes churning whitewater. What was thought to be impossible or the work of years is accomplished in a flash." Not only is that a beautiful expression of the concept, but it's also incredibly important for the conversation we're having. If we're interested in trying to evaluate the impact our efforts are making, we need to realize that, in many cases, for the things that matter most, it's going to take an enormous amount of really slow, long, patient effort in order to create the conditions for a "sudden change."

And I realize that this is kind of what has happened with the recognition of futures or foresight as a field, as well. You've probably all heard about it quite a bit in the last five years. It wasn't on many people's radars a decade ago, although it dates back to the 1960s at least. Likewise, the slow, patient work of civil rights activists and the Black Lives Matter movement, over years and years, laid the groundwork for this change in social attitudes that pollsters are saying represents one of the fastest shifts in values ever seen in the American population. Similarly, with other things we care about and want to change. There are slow periods where the effort put in doesn't necessarily produce an observable corresponding outcome that, say, funders might be eager to hear about. As my former Arup colleague, Dan Hill, said about the strategic

design work that he, Bryan Boyer, and others did at the Helsinki Design Lab at Sitra, it's more of a squiggly line than a straight line between intervention and outcomes.

Mariana: Connected to this question of temporality and change, there is also the question of scale. We've talked about the resource constraints and the institutional logics that many of these funders and partners are following in terms of accountability. If we propose a design process or project that fails, depending on the sector we're in, that could cost lives. How are you each seeing the pressures around questions of scale in your work, and how does that connect to this question of expectations around evaluation, of what success looks like? I wonder, Joyce, if you can start reflecting on that through the work of the network and your research?

oyce: We tend not to focus on scale because we just don't believe it's always beneficial. Many of the practitioners that we speak to focus less on scale, and instead on sustainability, on how the impact can be sustained. Initiatives are mainly community-led and community-centered, and you often can't scale the idea; what worked for one community doesn't necessarily work for another. For them it's much more about how to make it locally specific, adapting what they have learned into a different context.

Chris: We see a lot of similarities with what Joyce is saying. We practice human-centered design, and there's an inherent tension between human-centered design and scale. Because when you're digging deep to look at a group or a segment and design bespoke ways of connecting, and designing something that fits with their desires, is that the right entry point for someone to try and scale that? If it's urban women that you've designed for in a context, to try and scale that to a rural context is likely not going to work. There's an immediate problem with scale within that. Generally, where we've seen solutions successfully scale, it's really more about adaptation; it's never replication. It's always about redesigning—sometimes it is about redesigning for that end-user, but often it's about redesigning for a new implementer. When there's pressure from the outset for scale, or there is a need and a desire for it, I think that has to be recognized right at the beginning. Unfortunately, very often, the space given for research or understanding the context that we're designing for isn't big enough to do that kind of learning, to process across all the potential different contexts from the beginning.

This speaks to the need of working out further how these programs are structured and come together. I do see some positive signals. Like some of the programs that we've worked with—A360, for example, is a program dealing with adolescent and reproductive health run by PSI—and they have focused a program on young, married, rural girls, a very specific population. As they look to try and scale this across Ethiopia, they're adapting that model as they go, but still for that population, rooted in the needs of that group. My perspective is that there's something quite Western in the idea of scale: the concept that you can just take a project, roll it out, and, if it's successful, replicate it.

Mariana: Earlier, Joyce touched on the influence and impact of a Global North, or Western perspective that so often dominates the conversation around so many of these issues. Both in

the team we've assembled here and the case studies we're examining, we're attempting to take a deliberately pluralistic approach to this discussion. Recognizing the tension that this dominant perspective often creates, I wonder what ideas or insights you have about what might move the needle in terms of shifting this Global North-Global South dichotomy? Stuart, from some of the work you're doing with large organizations such as the United Nations, how aware are they about those tensions when they bring you in?

Stuart: This actually ties to what I was just thinking about scale because to me scale can't be divorced from the ethical orientation and commitments of the organization that you're working with. As a practitioner, this is a question I'm very interested in. What are, to use Donella Meadows' language, the places to intervene in the system that stand a chance of having a bigger or more meaningful impact? These are not necessarily just the largest partner organizations. One has to make a judgment about how much good they're going to be able to do in partnership. The kinds of organizations we've preferred to partner with over the last few years include, as you say, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United States Conference of Mayors, which comprises mayors from all over the country, or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC; that's the experiential futures case study that we contributed to this book). We need to ask: how do these organizations think about and support their highly diverse constituencies?

To me, the core premise of futures practice, in the tradition I'm operating out of, is to serve as a container for pluralism. It's futures with an "s" for good reason: both that the future hasn't happened yet, so it could be many different things, and that the space of alternative futures is itself a commons that belongs to literally everyone. It should be cultivated to make space for everyone, speak to everyone, and recognize that the future is co-created by us all. In the case of the IFRC, which has national societies in basically every country on the planet, this ultimately means having to address the futures of humanitarian aid through the lens of every geography and society. It's radically plural in its very composition, and that requires a commensurate pluralism of perspectives in the processes that are used to arrive at decisions, I think that's part of why our efforts to introduce foresight there were able to move so far as such high speed.

Mariana: Joyce, do you want to bring your lens into this? You've already touched upon it a little bit.

Joyce: I always see myself first and foremost as a designer. On one hand, I am interested, motivated, and completely obsessed with design, because I believe it has tremendous power to do good. But at the same time, as a researcher, I'm also very critical of the way in which design is used. That criticality is important because I see my role as surfacing and challenging a number of assumptions: how design is used, how we learn about design, how we teach, how we apply it. And that's particularly important in a non-European context. Because, certainly in Southeast Asia, there's a widespread, implicit assumption that "The West is the best"; that anything that comes from the West is good, better in terms of quality and substance than something that might arise or be created locally. And that applies to how design models and "design thinking" and design processes have been adopted. It's very much, "Let's just use this model." Of course,

there's some local adaptation, but some of the adaptations are quite superficial. What we're trying to do in our work is to recognize culturally specific practices, indigenous ways of knowing and values, and seeing how that transpires to what we can recognize as designing. We don't immediately label what we see as designing but instead take out time to understand how their practices manifest. Although some elements are quite similar to what we feel designing is, we are always looking out for the cultural nuances in how it is being used and applied. Similarly, we bring that criticality to our criticism of current evaluation methods, because it has all these implicit assumptions tied up with it.

We touched on this earlier—the idea that, if we can measure things, they become knowable. But this assumes that there is only one way of knowing. It's important to acknowledge there are other ways of knowing and being. I'm Malaysian, but I have now spent more of my life in the UK than in my place of birth. I'm trained in the Western design tradition, so I'm susceptible to describing and defining design in its most dominant industrialized model. This is why I'm trying to step back and be much more critical in my conceptions of design. As an educator and a researcher, my role is trying to ask different questions that concern other world views and offer frameworks that help us embrace difference and accommodate heterogeneity as its central condition.

Mariana: And for you, Chris, you have been investing in this question a lot in terms of taking a reflexive approach. How are you addressing these tensions and how is it changing with a studio in Nairobi, for example?

Chris: One of the biggest shifts in how we're thinking about our work is around this idea of moving from empathy to actual lived experience, and to making the design lead someone who's much more closely embedded in the context, or at least the region within which we're designing. Building up the Nairobi studio has been an effort to have an East Africa hub within which we can bring in design talent, from Kenya and then other countries within that region, to do the work. At the same time, sometimes people conflate human-centered design with participatory design, and I don't think IDEO.org's approach has ever been a community design or participatory design model. But we are definitely looking much more toward seeing what a really meaningful co-design model looks like with people in their communities.

That's been true even in the work we're doing in the US, recognizing that the designers working on challenges of poverty and inequity here often do not have the educational or class backgrounds, or experiences, of those things. We've pushed to actually bring people who are affected by these issues into the process. Also, on this topic, is a recognition of the need for more discipline integration, the need for a plurality of perspectives. That's less of a Global North, Global South question, but related in that it addresses design being open to other areas of expertise and being able to break established patterns and allow other voices to be heard. There's an appetite for capacity to be built off the back of a design engagement so that, when the design team moves away, there is a team that's able to continue the design work and actually adapt some foundations that we've put in place for the solution and take it forward. The challenge there is finding the right way to build that capacity. What can you do in tandem

with a design engagement versus intentional capacity building? That's just one of the tensions that we play with right now, and look out to where's the right place to try and invest and support and grow to make that a reality.

Mariana: Turning back to the question of measuring impact, we talked about frameworks, but what do you see that excites you in terms of possible indicators that might make the field in this area stronger? What are the steps you're taking in your own practices, in your research, or changes that you're observing that you have hope for that will help move that needle?

Chris: One of the steps that I am taking internally is to push us to be much clearer around the way design has been leveraged, and be really clear that one design project is not the same as the other. You can't bundle them all together and then ask, "What is the value of design?" I see the external evaluators who are doing that work are becoming much more versed in design. The same sets of people and consulting evaluation firms are doing repeat projects, measuring and evaluating design within unique contexts, and that massively increases the frameworks that they've got. We have projects where we're still working on very incremental innovation—where we are working to improve, say, user experience or how to increase the reach or engagement with something—and others where we're coming in to actually find new ways, new framings or tackle behavior change that's really deeply rooted in social norms or other kinds of structural inequities. Being clearer about how to separate those two distinct modes, and look at them as different types of design projects, a different set of cases is crucial. My hope is that we can start to perceptively separate that work and look at these as different ways of applying design. If we can see them through that lens, I think we can extract greater insights about when design has value and how.

Joyce: What gives us hope is that there is a subset of organizations and communities of practice that are open to change. Our framework aligns well with funders looking to be more community-driven and responsive to change. The work that we're doing with organizations like the Young Foundation—indicates to me that there is an appetite and that organizations are open to finding different ways to better understand the impact of their work. Our next step is to advocate its use alongside a pre-existing program of evaluation that has to happen to fulfill other institutional requirements. While the advocacy aspect is still challenging, my sense is that you can only do it by showing examples. It's an aspect that we are working on going forward.

Mariana: This question of "demonstration" is coming up a lot. Stuart, what do you see that gives you hope?

Stuart: Well, let me give a broader answer, because what's interesting about design is that it is such a broad umbrella for many different kinds of activities. Without reducing it to a binary, I see a tension or a spectrum of activities that offer cause for both hope and alarm depending on how those tensions are managed.

The spectrum includes very empiricist engineering subcultures, like human-computer interaction, and A/B testing, and this very numbers-driven "show me the data" discourse. At

the other end, we might say there's more arts- and discursive-driven work, perhaps seen most prominently in what we come across in speculative and discursive design; designers giving themselves permission to speak about the world, not just to solve problems that their companies or clients present. And those different activities are grounded in different epistemologies—to echo what Joyce was saying—different types of knowledge, different assumptions about what is knowable, what's valid or important, what's solid enough to base decisions on.

Design's umbrella has expanded in recent years, with more and more people identifying what they do as design, spanning that whole spectrum. There are decisions to be made about how we position the work that we're doing at any given time, and therefore what the appropriate measures of impact and kinds of conversation to have about that work are. A couple of years ago I had a terrific conversation with Jeff Bardzell, now at Penn State University, where we were talking about this tension in relation to the human-computer interaction cluster on the one hand, and the speculative design cluster on the other. And he said something that stayed with me, that there's a temptation in the latter context to apply justifying or grounding strategies that are actually appropriate to software, but not appropriate to try to change how a community sees itself.

We need to make decisions, not just on the basis of what is pragmatic or expedient from a credibility standpoint because it's clear that the data-driven paradigm currently has more prestige in academic culture, but rather on the basis of what is "epistemically appropriate," as he put it. And so, to answer the question of where I see hope, it's in that very awareness seeping into the design conversation. Maybe we are learning to differentiate between cases where trying to establish something empirically is appropriate, versus cases where it's more appropriate to engage in what our design futures colleague Anab Jain calls "slow critical activism"; that kind of Solnit mentality of the slow road to sudden change. You can't expect ambitious change efforts to yield results that you can measure overnight, or even at the end of a two- or three-year-long project. You're planting seeds that take longer than that to grow. But I see hope in the increasing literacy of, and self-examination of, design as a field.

"We have an even bigger challenge coming that touches on systems change and how we apply design within that larger complexity. The more that design starts to integrate other disciplines really intensively, the shape of it changes. This is quite promising."

Mariana: Thank you. I think this has been an insightful conversation, and I just wanted to offer you each a round of final reflection. Any parting words?

Chris: In response to the question about what's coming next for our field, I feel we're seeing progress in how we measure design as we're practicing it right now. It's true that design is expanding, that the system is changing as we're in it. We have an even bigger challenge coming that touches on systems change and how we apply design within that larger complexity. The more that design starts to integrate other disciplines really intensively, the shape of it changes.

This is quite promising. But the two, the shape of design and the kind of outcomes that we're trying to look at, are shifting.

Joyce: I think it's a question of confidence. We have done enough to show that design is worth using. We believe in our process, which often entails many rounds of iterations, prototyping, and learning. Of course, we need to stay grounded and humble, but should be more confident in advocating that a design approach is inherently evaluative.

Stuart: Although I've voiced some concern here about defaulting to scientific or social-science-envy-driven forms of design evaluation, it's really a matter of deciding what's appropriate for the case in question. I'm very excited about a project I've been working on around bringing possible climate-disrupted futures to life immersively, using extended reality (AR and VR), with a colleague who's an ethicist and another who's a behavioral scientist. The project entails not just creating those experiences, but also figuring out what difference they make to the people who have them. This is where a behavioral scientist's mode of evaluation comes in. I'm excited because we very rarely get to do that in experiential futures work; it's more often a matter of planting seeds and hoping some of them grow.

But, in our urgency to legitimize ourselves, we should be careful not to lose sight of the truth of our experience. For example, when people ask me, "How do you know that an experiential scenario is any good?" I would ask them if they've ever been to a party, and they say yes, and then I ask them if it was a good party. And they can tell you if it was or wasn't. I mean, we have experiences, and we can usually evaluate them without the benefit of an exit survey. This might be a very mundane example, but a party is a gathering of people held to accomplish something in terms of relationship and community, and we tend to know when it's working or not. So there is space here for different degrees of formality and procedure in how we evaluate what we're doing, and they shouldn't all default to the most rigid or buttoned-up end of the spectrum. There needs to be pluralism in our strategies for reflecting on and evaluating what we're doing.

Mariana: Well, thank you all for sharing your perspectives here today. And I enjoyed that party metaphor because I think, in this age of COVID-19 and quarantines, we probably have all missed the positive impacts of that kind of experience!