

ISIRC2016

Glasgow

Abstract Book

ID: 235

*Xue Pei, Politecnico di Milano, Italy

Francesco Zurlo, Politecnico di Milano, Italy

Design-led Approaches as Catalyst for New Paradigm: Social engagement for empowering vulnerable communities and organisations

The value of design thinking is highly recognised in business world and public sector thanks to increasingly growing numbers of design actions and researches on various topics. More and more companies and public institutions have included design thinking in their processes of solving problems and realising innovation. Design thinking and design-led approach are taking an important role in transforming the mind-sets of organisations. Involving design thinking and design culture in organisations has been discussed as an essential issue in design management realm. Best (2015) has claimed in his book that design is activate at three levels in any organisations: strategic level, tactical level and operational level.

Social sector is normally not considered as a design-intensive field, the mind-set of using design professionals mainly maintains in operational level, which limits most design practices in visual communication and product order (Buchanan, 1992; Golsby-Smith, 1996). Therefore, it's crucial for design teams to enlarge design scope and to transcend the conventional role, making use of design-led approach in navigating collaborative innovation for better system, structures and paradigm. When design teams are asked to contribute in these complicated transformations, they are required to support other participants with easy-to-use and effective tools and to manage the processes with dynamic design strategies. So how does design thinking lead social sector organisations to cater to vulnerable groups? What are the contributions that design-led approach has created when conducted at three different levels in social sector organisations? And how to motivate organisations with social vision to adopt design thinking at strategic level in order to make more meaningful impacts?

For answering the questions, this paper recounts literatures in developing the concepts of different orders and placements of design professionals and how these design capabilities are related in design management realm for organisations. As design expanding its impacts on social issues and vulnerable groups, literatures on social design, design for social innovation are studies as well. Afterwards, through case studies, the paper presents and analyses how design-led approach can change the way that social sector organisations create situated solutions for and with vulnerable groups. In an incremental model, design-led approach empowers social sector organisations to manage their process themselves for catering to target vulnerable communities; on the other hand, in a radical paradigm, design-led approach is presenting an alternative vision: enabling vulnerable communities to actively take part in understanding their living contexts, their own values and capabilities and possible opportunities for development. Through co-design/collaboration, vulnerable communities are capable to take certain roles in generating new systems and organisations, which are supported and maintained by social sector organisations. And in this way, design culture is set in the DNA of organisational culture. More important, all these transforming steps can't be easily fulfilled without specific well-designed tools. At the end, suggestions will be given for conducting design-led approach in social engagement with vulnerable communities and organisations.

International Social Innovation Research Conference 2016

EMAIL ADDRESS

isirc2016@gcu.ac.uk

TELEPHONE NUMBER

44 (0)141 331 3234 / 3361

CONTACT ADDRESS

Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health
Glasgow Caledonian University
Level 2, M201, Office 2
Cowcaddens Road
Glasgow, G4 0BA



@isirc2016