Design as Common Good / Framing Design through Pluralism and Social Values

Swiss Design Network
Symposium 2021
Conference Proceedings

Edited by
Massimo Botta
Sabine Junginger

University of Applied Sciences and Arts
of Southern Switzerland

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Design as Common Good / Framing Design through Pluralism and Social Values

Swiss Design Network Symposium 2021 Conference Proceedings

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Editorial Introduction

Massimo Botta
and Sabine Junginger

"Give design back to society and it will be an ability sought after in the soon to be realised post-mining economy with numerous regulations that will make the everyday task complex and challenging. From material to dematerial [sic] is a direction that design will increasingly focus on as business models and regulatory principles will determine what we may be permitted to do rather than what we can do with technology at hand. Design is about what you can and would do with technology and materials as well as about the spirit that drives such use. People matter and designing with people and for people is the way forward which we will need to once again integrate into our everyday lives." (MP Ranjan, 2006).

The 2021 Swiss Design Network Conference was held under the constraints and challenges of a global human crisis. Today, design is an ability sought after in private business and industry, though increasingly in the public sector. In both sectors, design has the potential to contribute to the common good: by way of making services accessible, business models social and sustainable, by way of opening new paths for outcomes that benefit individual people, producers, the public and the planet. Waheed Hussein (2018) defined the 'Common Good' to be that which “benefits society as a whole – in contrast to the private good of individuals and sections of society.” This definition, published in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (ed. Zalta et al., 2018) can be interpreted as a call to design for the many, not for the one. Does this call for a shift from, say, user-centered design which concerns itself with one-to-one relationships to human-centered design, which understands the one to be part of a wider community or society (Winnograd and Wood, 1997; Buchanan, 2001; Krippendorff, 2006)? What does it mean then for design to act, intervene and engage with often highly fragmented and politicized communities – be that at a local, national or global level? How, in what way and for what purpose do we find design to make valuable contributions to policies, the economies, and societies? And how might design be part of a public strategy to mobilize power and knowledge for the common good (Mulgan, 2009)? More puzzling, if we do think of design itself as a common good, is this a call for caring about design in different ways than we do currently?

The late MP Ranjan prepared his remarks for the 2006 conference of the Industrial Design Society of America (IDSA) but we find many elements that are part of our contemporary debates about 'design as common good'. In fact, the concern for consequences and impact of our design thinking and design doing is a theme throughout design" history. Long before the virus disrupted every part and corner of our lives, in communities around the globe, design researchers and design practitioners concerned themselves with questions of the social and the common good. This includes Päivi Tahkokallio's and Susan Vihma's edited book *Design – Pleasure or Responsibility?* (1995) as well as Bruce Mau's and J. Leonard's 2004 compilation on *Massive Change that was* based on the exhibit with the same title in the same year.

The focus has moved though, from scrutinizing design products and things for their value to the real world (Papanek, 1972) to closing the chasm between designing for the (consumer) market and the nonprofit, public sector (Margolin and Margolin, 2002). Margolin and Margolin's proposed 'Social Model' outlines the shared interests in the social and the market that resonate with contemporary concepts of social business and social entrepreneurship, or as Csikszentmihalyi (2004) writes, with ”good business." New design professions have emerged that are explicit in their concern for societal and social impact. These include Service Design and Social De-

sign with new specializations now forming around Design in Government, Legal Design and even Policy Design. The uproar caused by the UK Design Council just fifteen years ago when it awarded its own in-house designer Hilary Codham, a designer who 'explored new solutions to social and economic problems through design' but was "no shaper of 'things'", is unthinkable today[1].

Instead, we find design central to a number of governmental frameworks. Among them, for example, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by the UN and the Quadruple Helix by the OECD (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009)[2]. The SDG calls for new approaches of design to address 17 areas identified by the UN as elements of a sustainable world concerned with human well-being. In this framework, design refers and is understood as transcending the verb to design meaning creation of products, services, buildings or communication and so on, rather looking at design as “diverse forms of life, and often, contrasting notions of sociability and the world” (Escobar, 2018). Each of the 17 boxes point to the need of a new approach to an old lingering problem. It is not for lack of experts that each of these boxes have struggled to arrive at satisfying solutions, it is for lack of getting people motivated and encouraged enough to work together in new ways and to experiment together, co-developing and co-designing new possibilities. The second example, the Quadruple Helix, emphasizes the need for co-creation and co-design among governments, industries, academia and civil society in order to achieve socially desirable innovations. It is here where design as common good encounters pluralism and social values. A recently published report part of the EU initiative "We against the Virus" (WirvsVirus) underlines the fundamental need for co-creation, and codesign to achieve viable social innovation. Does this point to design being a common good?

In light of these promising but also fundamental shifts in business, society and government, the contributions of design to the common good remain under explored. This conference aims to reflect[3] critically on the implications, approaches, practices and challenges involved for design researchers, design professionals and other design practitioners participating when they engage in the creation of 'a' or 'the' common good. When everybody designs (Manzini, 2015) and design is recognized for its ubiquitousness, does this make design a common good? And if so, what are the consequences?

[1] Source: Jinman, Richard, 'Design Award Winner no shaper of 'things'", The Guardian Online, June 10th 2005. Last accessed March 2021: www.theguardian.com/society/2005/jun/10/urbandesign.architecture.

[2] Source: www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org.

[3] Source: Open Social Innovation: Gemeinsam Lernen aus #WirvsVirus, A Learning Report DOI: https://doi.org/10.48462/OPUS4-3782. The Hertie School

Temporality presents a key aspect for designers today (Anceschi and Botta, 2019) with a focus on processes over time. We witness this in the contemporary design language that now shapes the field of design. New terminological compounds around design topics, approaches, and processes have emerged, such as strategic design, transition design, transformative design, experience design; and co-design participatory design, Human-Centered Design; and again, collaborative thinking, iterative processes, and product life cycle. These terminological compounds identify theories, methods, and practices formulated and established in other contexts of knowledge, and are now part of the design discipline. With an openness to change and the adoption of theories, methods, and practices from other sciences, defining one's intellectual, cultural, social, and political dimension became increasingly relevant for the discipline of design and the designer role.

This last viewpoint is of fundamental importance when considered with the topic of the common good. Aristotle refers to "politics" as the administration of the "polis" for the good of all, as the determination of a public space in which all citizens participate. And politics implies the term téchnë, which is the art and technique of the government of society. In other words, today's design should present itself as the technical-scientific discipline which, increasingly, contributes to defining the rules and principles that designate the directions that public life should take.

1 A Working Conference: About the Pre-Conference Working Groups

Critique about design conferences has been lingering for years, if not decades. Too expensive, too stoic, too weak in terms of papers, too colonized in terms of those driving the program and the conference structure. The analogue world witnessed a rise in "unconferences". These seem to have potential but so far they have shown to have at least two issues: one concern is that they seem to work for small groups only – and here, too the question of who is in and who is out remains. Another concern is their integration into the field and discipline, that is to ensure the knowledge and insights produced are accessible to the field. For now at least, unconferences have not proven to be a sufficient answer. The shift to the digital realm has challenged us to rethink the purpose of a design research conference. It also raises the specific question of how we might mobilize power and knowledge for the common good through a conference. We have approached this question with an experimental working conference we hoped would provide opportunities for real - human - exchange and engagement while encouraging critical reviews of ideas and concepts that have the potential to lead to new collaborations and new networks within the research community that can be pursued after the conference.

1.1 A Working Conference

The moment we began to discuss if we wanted to accept the invitation to co-chair the Swiss Design Network Conference 2021, we wondered what a design research conference could add in

times of upheaval, anxiety and for most of us, double and triple workloads. We discussed expectations, minimum requirements (conference proceedings!) and before we knew it we were asking ourselves what is the greater good here? What is the added value? Why should we or anyone else invest time in this? It was at that point when we realized that the conference itself needed to take the form of a work in progress following a co-design process. Figure 1 shows the concept drawn on the back of an envelope: following a double blind abstract review, authors worked on their paper. They then were assigned into working groups by the conference chairs according to areas of interests we saw emerging. The pre-conference began in the middle of December but work really picked up in mid-January. What happened in this working conference is that the actual conference taking place on March 25th and 26th turned out to be the byproduct of a much longer and more intense process.

1.2 Co-Developing the Conference Program

Following the acceptance of abstracts, authors were asked to finish their papers. Next we opened slack working groups around the themes and topics we saw emerging and brought together authors who looked at a similar or related topic from different perspectives. In a next step, we asked each group to envision and develop their conference session. By that time most authors had their paper close to being final and were ready to present and discuss this within their group. We gave each group the task to find out what was common about their papers and to build a panel session of 90 minutes around this. We encouraged groups to go beyond classic paper presentations. In the end, we asked every panel (and workshop) group to come up with a title and description for their panel. The conference program for both days is the result of this work. Sadly, the incredible amount of work accomplished on Slack will not be visible to attendees of the culmination of this conference that is open to the public. At the height of the activity, 168 people were working together on slack, crossing all time zones from Australia to Austria, Brazil to Bath, India to Istanbul. They started on December 15th and worked together through the end of March.

What we found is that many co-authors were engaging fully in these working groups. For us as conference chairs, for the conference coordinators for the Swiss Design Network Mayar el Hawayan and for SUPSI, Vanessa De Luca, this meant a much more direct engagement with individual conference contributors. Together with our authors and workshop hosts, we embraced different kinds of human experiences and different kinds of human interactions with the design research community.

1.3 Pushing the Envelope or Succumbing to Norms?

As designers, one would think that we are eager to push boundaries and experiment with new ways to engage with each other to advance knowledge and insights. Alas, we find that we are human, too. The reality is that when it comes to conferences, we

prefer the convenience of unwritten scripts and formulae. Tell me what the topic is I shall write about, tell me when to show up for my paper presentation, and please provide the ISBN of the proceedings so I can add this to my CV is an understandable position given the workload most of us face. A workload that has come under additional strains during the Corona pandemic. It is all but impressive therefore what every author for this conference and every single person involved in any of the conference workshops has accomplished.

1.4 Digital Tools for Ongoing Communication

To make matters worse for many involved, a digital conference requires working with digital tools not everyone likes or is familiar with. We found that a good number of our authors and hosts were fairly new to slack and encountered a first learning curve. Most managed marvelously, others simply turned to email as their preferred means of communication. Zoom and other video conferencing tools were also heavily relied on throughout the pre-conference work. What we learned was that people want to work together and that the digital realm offers many different paths and avenues to locate a usable and useful workspace. Figure 1 shows a screenshot of the *Slack* channels shortly before the start of the conference.

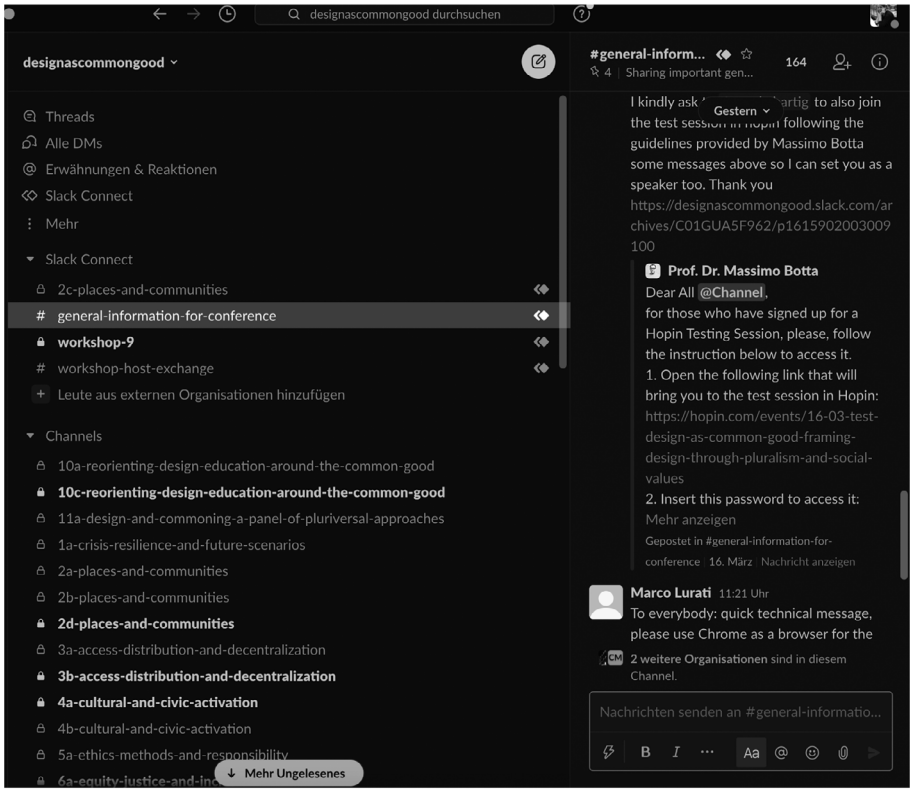

Fig. 1: *Screenshot Slack Communication March 18th 2021 (Junginger).*

1.5 Technical Support Sessions

Much thought was given to the conference platform. We eventually decided on *HopIn*, knowing full well that this would impose yet another learning curve on our contributors. Many had requested we stay on Zoom, a tool they were by now veerey familiar with and knew their way around. For the conference, we needed a place in cyberspace where everyone could check in at any point in time and move around freely between sessions. After much exploration, we zoomed in (pun intended!) on Hopin. We organized tech support sessions for all interested contributors to familiarize them and to enable them to run their own *Hopin* event. We are fully conscious that a platform like Hopin has its limitations and will disappoint some while delighting others. A judgement on the appropriateness of the platform for our conference will be possible only after the event has run its course, which will be only after the finalization of these proceedings.

1.6 Time Zones & Cultural Diversity

An analogue conference brings together people, many of whom show signs of jetlag as they have traveled through different time zones to meet in the assigned location. For a digital working conference, time differences pose new challenges over a prolonged period of time. In our case, contributors dealt with these complications from mid-December through the end of March. Fewer than five contributors 'were lost' in this process, which is an encouraging sign. Being aware of this added complication, each panel and workshop group was asked to identify a time window that would work for them. The resulting three time slots reflect these wishes but there are still individual contributors for whom the conference means a 5 am start in the day or a 9 pm session.

There was a notable rise in awareness of power dynamics ranging from concepts of decolionalization, queer literature and gender perspectives. As we have been able to witness in other conferences, there is a broader concern about eurocentricity and western cultural norms[4]. This inspired us to think of the digital conference hang out places in terms of different cultures. We invite you to meet in a middle-eastern Shisha lounge, or relax in an Asian tea house, perhaps move to the beer garden or visit the juice bar before settling down in the wine cellar.

[4] A conversation and debate reignited also by the current developments around a New European Bauhaus.

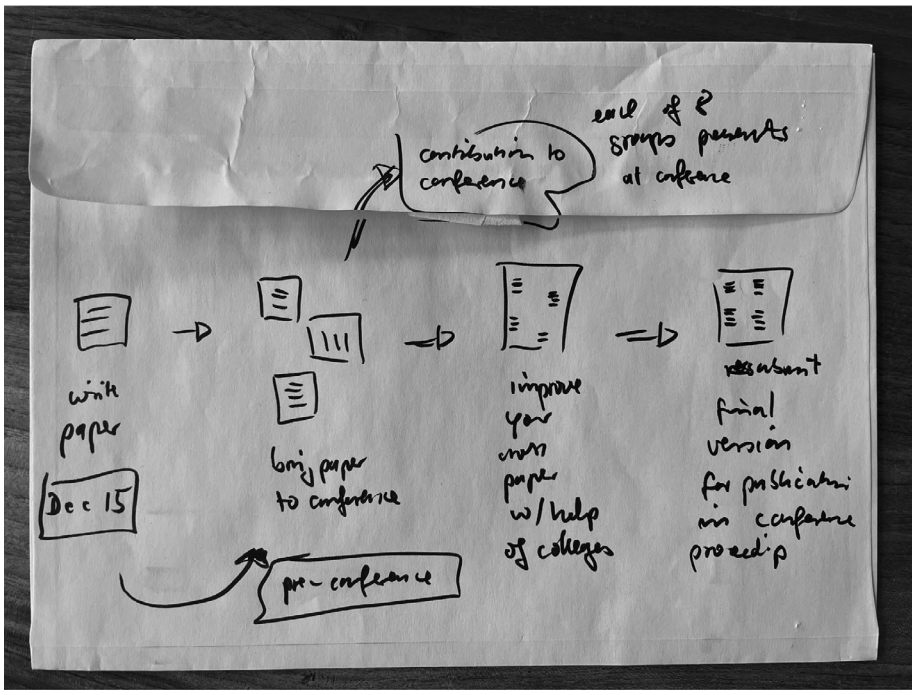

Fig. 2: *Conference Sketch November 2020 (Junginger).*

2 About the Structure of the Proceedings

For the conference proceedings, we identified yet another set of themes that emerged from the panels and workshops. Though one might argue that there are alternative ways to go about this, we found four themes of particular salience. These include papers that offer 1) reflections on the Common Good, 2) papers that focus on how we get to the common good (Striving for the Common Good), 3) papers for how to advance design education about and for the common good (Educating for the Common Good) and finally, 4) the workshops provide examples of Designing for the Common Good.

2.1 Reflections on the Common Good

There are a wide range of efforts underway to engage with the questions this conference has pointedly asked but few look outside of design, perhaps missing opportunities to understand the role of (human-centered?) design in a pluralistic democratic society. This has already led to a number of publications by scholars in public management (McGann et al, 2018; Lewis et al, 2020) where authors often give short shrift to design literature and design research, conveniently reducing design to either a method (design thinking) or a profession (service design). We rarely find fundamental discussions of what it is that constitutes a specific design approach relevant to their field. This gap is significant as it is difficult to change the way one is going about designing when one is either not prepared or not willing to reflect on practices in play. Little to no systemic impact can be anticipated here.

2.2 Striving for the Common Good

The conference participants represent a self selection of actors who were attracted by the conference theme. This makes any comment on the theme "striving for the common good' a biased undertaking. Nonetheless the papers part of this section of the conference proceedings illustrate the breadth and the depths these efforts are now covering. The challenge for design has always been to retain a critical distance and not simply to be proud of its accomplishments - or to complain about others when things do not turn out the way we like it. What this section shows is that there is plenty of material for design researchers to develop new theoretical constructs that could inform the work going on in other disciplines and other domains.

2.3 Educating for the Common Good

The theme of Educating for the Common Good demonstrates that a reorientation of design education is underway. This includes the revision of the curricula structure towards more systemic thinking, the adoption of participatory methodologies and more holistic approaches to support specific interest groups and communities. At the same time, we are witnessing the introduction of educational models, theories, and practices that place design in the context of social, gender, and race inequalities that still exist in society and institutions with a broader discussion challenging the contribution and the role of the designer according to the topic of the common good.

2.4 Designing for the Common Good

Finally, the conference workshops have provided some inspiring examples but also have shown us the limits of organizing a conference online with a bare minimum of staff. One particularly interesting workshop we would have liked to see required us to be able to provide access to participants weeks in advance. In this case, our ambition met with the reality of how people sign up for a conference (last minute) and that despite our very personal engagement with all contributors throughout the planning, there were some things we just could not deliver on.

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Any conference is a team effort but often the team is reduced to the conference chairs, the conference organizers and the tech team in the background. In our case, our team included Conference Coordinator for the Swiss Design Network, Mayar el Hawayan and Vanessa De Luca and Silvia Converso, Marco Lurati, Daniele Murgia, Giovanni Profeta, Francesca Somaini and Claudia Tambella from SUPSI. Without either one of them, this conference would not have been unthinkable to lift off the ground. The demands on the team from setting up Slack channels and maintaining ongoing communication with authors and workshop hosts over several months to setting up the website, building the program bottom up and finally, seeing through the concept and realization of these conference proceedings were a load all on their own. Identifying a proper conference platform, tailoring it to our needs and then providing technical onboarding sessions for all panel and workshop hosts, too, added to the hours. A very big thank you indeed to the internal team. There is the Swiss Design Network Board which has trusted us with running this conference in an unconventional way, the great support we have received from SUPSI and HSLU, especially from Vice Dean of Research, Martin Wiedmer.

This conference stands out for the demands it has put on those selected to present their papers and run their workshops. We have asked you to make this your conference, to participate actively in the development of individual panels and the overall conference program. We are so grateful to all of you, across the globe who have supported this exploratory and experimental approach to how an online conference could bring together people, lead to new connections and new insights not only about how we think of a conference but also of designing together. Even now we find the slack channels still being used actively. This indicates that we all have created something of value together. We hope you can cherish this accomplishment with us and extend a big and heartfelt

Thank you!

Expanding the Common Good

Keywords: Networks, Community Design, Public Interest Design, Academic Designbuild, Live Project Education.

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Design for the Common Good is a network of networks formed in accordance with the principles of design for the common good. Also, the design work that the platform disseminates and promotes uses methods, processes and practices that are consistent with design for the common good. Structural and systemic barriers are identified that must be overcome in order to make *Design for the Common Good* sufficiently inclusive, global and accessible. Global opportunities and threats relating to the environment, economy, technology and social progress contain both the problem and solution. Digital advances have the potential to overcome previously insurmountable economic, environmental, social and technological challenges, both to the creation of the platform and the activities of the actors in its networks. However, this must be balanced by a recognition that collaborative community design stems from potent local group actions and that ethical physical and inter-personal experience is fundamental to these endeavours.

1 Introduction

Design for the Common Good (DCG) is a global network of networks that work together to pool resources and expertise relating to the practice of design for the common good. Each network was established independently but has been providing mutual support internally for several years. DCG was established in 2017 as an externally focused international resource to connect and reach beyond the individual networks.

There are two aspects to this paper. Firstly, DCG has been formed as an entity using principles consistent with designing for the common good. This paper reflects on this ongoing process and analyses the challenges that this presents and the structural systems that need to be negotiated when working in this manner.

Secondly, the design work that is represented and promoted by the *Design for the Common Good* network has been undertaken using methods, processes and practices that are consistent with designing for the common good such as public Interest design, participatory design, co-design, community design, service learning, design-build education, live project education etc. This paper reflects on these approaches, both professional and pedagogical, and considers how the DCG aims to be a resource that supports them and promotes best practice in these methods, processes and practices.

2 Expanding the Common Good

2.1 Design for the Common Good as a Network of Networks

Launched in 2017 at the Architecture Connects conference at Oxford Brookes University, UK, the *Design for the Common Good* (2017) network is currently composed of four independent networks: *Social Economic Environmental Design Network* (2005), *Design-BuildXchange Network* (2013), *Live Projects Network* (2012), and *Pacific Rim Community Design Network* (1998). The following is a summary of the aims, constituency, methodology and activity of each network in relation to design as a common good.

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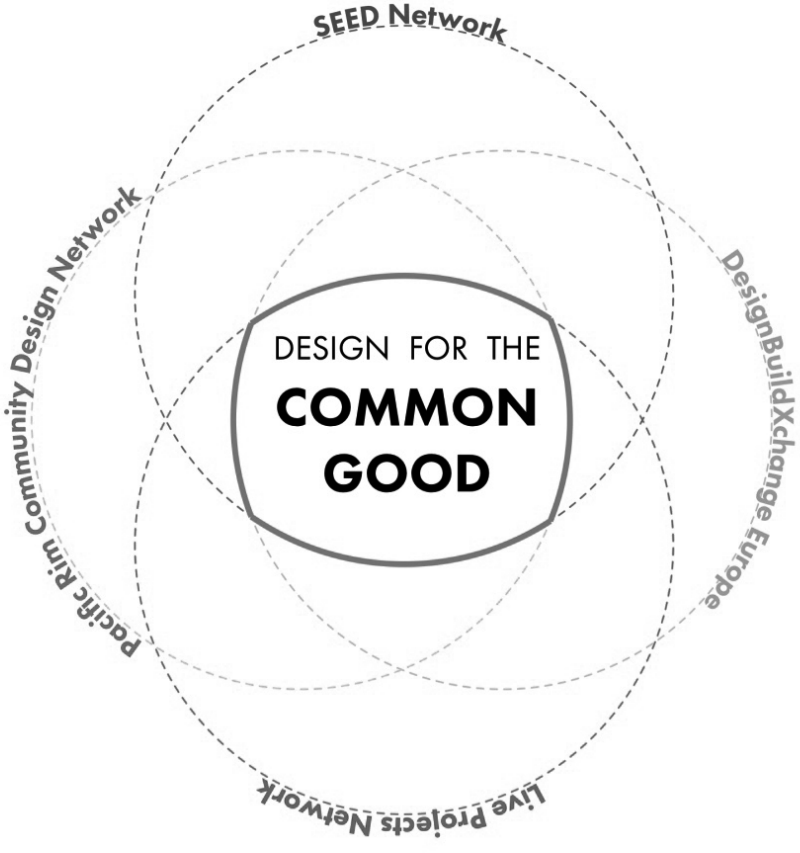

Fig. 1: . *Diagram showing Design for the Common Good as a network of networks. Image credit: Bryan Bell, North Carolina State University and Todd Ferry, Portland State University.*

The *Social Economic Environmental Design Network* (SEED) was established in 2005. It is an organisation dedicated to building and supporting a culture of civic responsibility and engagement in the built environment and the public realm. By sharing best practices and ideas, network member organisations and individuals create a community of knowledge for professionals and the public based on a shared mission and principles:

SEED Mission:

"To advance the right of every person to live in a socially, economically, and environmentally healthy community.

SEED Principles:

Advocate with those who have a limited voice in public life.

Build structures for inclusion that engage stakeholders and allow communities to make decisions.

Promote social equality through discourse that reflects a range of values and social identities.

Generate ideas that grow from place and build local capacity.

Design to help conserve resources and minimize waste" (Cox, Goldsmith, Bell, and Dorgan, et al., 2005; Feldman, Palleroni, Perkes and Bell, 2013, p.3; Bell, 2015, pp.13-14).

SEED connects similarly minded members of the public with designers from the fields of architecture, industrial design, graphic design, landscape architecture and urban planning. SEED members are part of a global movement that believes design can support a community from the ground up. SEED facilitates action by providing tools such as the *SEED Evaluator*, which provides guidelines for pursuing a design process informed by inclusivity and participation.

The *DesignBuildXchange Network* was established in 2013 to encourage international exchange of knowledge in academic designbuild. Academic designbuild takes students from their studio desks into the physical world of human interactions and allows them to be physically involved in the materialisation of their designs. The projects connect professional education with practice, scientific research and social engagement (DesignBuildXchange Network, 2013). The network includes the open access platform, designbuildXchange web, providing tools for communication, collaboration and the exchange of scientific, practice related, sustainable and interdisciplinary knowledge. It is open to individuals and organisations involved in academic designbuild as students, teachers, researchers, planners as well as clients and users, politicians, donors, craftspeople and other supporters. Currently it features 250 projects, 85 organisations and 160 expert users. The web platform was developed from 2013-2016 within the framework of the research project 'European DesignBuild Knowledge Network' (EDBKN) by an international consortium of academic partners. Today, DesignBuildXchange Network is managed by dbXchange.e.V., a non-profit association that promotes the implementation, distribution, and sustainability of the designbuild methodology.

Live Projects Network (LPN) was established in 2012 as an international online resource for students, teachers, researchers, practitioners and local communities engaged in live projects. LPN defines live projects as follows:

"A live project comprises the negotiation of a brief, timescale, budget and product between an educational organisation and an external collaborator for their mutual benefit. The project must be structured to ensure that students gain learning that is relevant to their educational development." (Anderson & Priest, 2014).

The purpose of the network is to disseminate the work of those engaged in live projects and to share best practice. LPN currently comprises 243 case studies from 85 different educational organisations in 35 different countries. All of the case studies are projects that have been undertaken by students, normally with the support of educators or practitioners and in collaboration with local communities or community organisations. Most of the contributors stem from design disciplines, particularly those in the built environment, but many of the projects involve collaboration with other disciplines such as science, art and sociology. The principle of mutual benefit through collaboration is central to live projects and is equivalent in intent to the concept of design for common good.

The *Pacific Rim Community Design Network* is a network of community design educators and practitioners in the Pacific Rim region. It began with a working conference organised at the University of California, Berkeley in 1998, joined by members from Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. The network has grown over the years to include those from Australia, Canada, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Without a formal organisational structure, the main vehicle of the network is a series of working conferences that occur every two to three years hosted by members and partners in different countries in the region. The purpose of the conferences is to provide the practitioners and scholars across the Pacific Rim region with an opportunity to share and compare experience and advance practice, research, and teaching in the field of community design. Through conferences and joint projects, the network has served as a platform for collaboration and mutual support, as well as a forum for a comparative understanding of community design in the fast-changing political and social context of the Pacific Rim.

2.2 Design for the Common Good: Current and Planned Actions

The current composition that comprises these four networks is not seen as finite, simply a starting point: a group working together for mutual support and to establish an international and open source online resource for others working in the field of design for the common good.

In choosing to create a combined network of networks these four international networks acknowledge the growing global need for systemic change in the practices and processes of design and an intent to build on the common ground they share. While each network has a unique focus, their mutuality supports the advancement of best practice in design for the common good, here understood to be practices such as public interest design that are characterised by inclusive practices, ethical approaches, and sustainable methods.

Fig. 2: *Interactive online map of case study projects on the Design for the Common Good website. Image credit: Eric Field, University of Virginia.*

Currently the *Design for the Common Good* website includes an interactive online map of case study projects that demonstrate best practice in the field. These case studies have been compiled through the activity of each individual network and are hosted on their own websites. The longer term intention is to become a shared platform for resource sharing and to enable dialogue between networks, network members and others in the field. Vehicles for this dialogue will be:

- Visual global network map: projects, organisations, members.
- Journal: peer review for academics.
- News and Events: conference calls, awards, exhibitions, new publications etc.
- Resources: library / bibliography, methods, tools, teaching materials.
- Exhibitions: online / offline .
- Exchange: communication channels between members of networks.

2.3 Methods of Design as Common Good

The Networks within *Design for the Common Good* each have their own particular expertise. Below is a summary of the methods and theoretical basis for design as common good that are employed by, or have been developed by each network.

In 2008, SEED developed the *SEED Evaluator*, an online tool that provides guidelines for a public interest design process that directs democratic decision-making through community engagement, uses a triple bottom line issue-based approach to problem identification, and incorporates evaluation of design results (Abendroth and Bell, 2015, p.308). Using a guided approach broken down into understandable and manageable steps, the *SEED Evaluator* creates a platform for collaboration and consensus building. The SEED *Evaluator* can assist individuals, groups, designers, communities, project planners and participants achieve like-minded goals that are focused on the triple-bottom line of social justice, economic development and environmental conservation. SEED also initiated the SEED Awards, an international juried competition to showcase the best projects and practices of public interest design. The SEED Network and SEED Awards are administered by Design Corps.

The open access *designbuildXchange* web platform provides tools for communication, collaboration and the exchange of knowledge offered by its members. The overall mission of the platform is the education of highly aware decision-makers who are conscious about the urgent need to construct balanced social, cultural and ecological living environments. Requirements for projects to be presented on the *DesignBuildXchange Network* platform are that they:

- are based in higher education;
- have a client, a brief, budget and timeframe;
- are built;
- have students involved in the design AND construction of the project;
- are of architectural, social, cultural, scientific, technical or artistic relevance.

These preconditions result in the majority of the projects engaging in public interest design, seeking to serve communities and users who are not able to access design services and implement infrastructure such as buildings, outdoor facilities or interiors. Most projects are not carried out in the context of a conventional relationship between client (who defines the task) and designer/builder (who provides a service), but are projects that are co-designed and co-funded by many parties, including clients and academic organisations (Pawlicki, 2020).

LPN is a searchable online database, classifying educational live projects by factors found to be common to all live projects (Anderson & Priest, 2014). It seeks to provide accessible information in order to disseminate knowledge and encourage best practice. An important part of that mission is to encourage excellence in live project education. Live projects involve collaborations between students, teachers, practitioners, local communities and organisations in a process of mutual exchange and learning (Dodd, Harrisson & Charlesworth, 2012). Design methods and processes that are frequently cited by contributors to LPN include participatory design, community design and co-design. The intention is that students with experience of live projects while in education can employ these methods in professional practice (Delport, 2016), diversifying and evolving professional practice towards the benefit of the common good.

The main methodological focus of the *Pacific Rim Community Design Network* is democratic design, which aims at the democratisation of planning and design processes that shape communities and the built environment. In countries and regions across the Pacific Rim, citizen and community participation has become an increasingly important component of the local planning and design process. From advocacy planning and models of citizen participation developed in the United States, practices of participatory community design have been steadily expanding across the region, specifically through the Machizukuri Movement in Japan, the Community Building Movement in Taiwan, and ongoing challenges to the top-down urban planning and redevelopment process in Hong Kong (Hou, et al, 2005). Network members have focused on these challenges plus issues such as post-disaster rebuilding and recovery; heritage conservation and urban regeneration; neighbourhood and community planning; and advocacy and activism. These have served as topics of collaboration among self-organized groups within the network. Over the years, in addition to conference proceedings, members have produced several notable, collaborative publications including Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities (Hou, 2010), Messy Urbanism: Understanding the "Other" Cities of Asia (Chalana and Hou, 2016), and Design as Democracy: Techniques for Collective Creativity (de la Peña, et al. 2017).

2.4 Using Principles of Design as a Common Good to Form the Design for the Common Good Network

In keeping with the principles of collaborative and public interest design methods practiced by its constituent networks and network members, *Design for the Common Good* aims to create a platform that promotes and perpetuates these principles. Accordingly, the development of the platform, as an entity in itself, requires the creation of structures and systems to enable this.

These include the use of open source and creative commons approaches to publication and dissemination of information; ethical consideration of what and how information will be published; acknowledgement of the importance of peer review as a means to test and reward quality and best practice; collaborative and inclusive approaches to the development of material and ideas, as well as decision-making; acknowledgement of the diversity of interest of different user groups and how they might seek to engage with the platform.

Although it is relatively straightforward to identify areas where methods of design for the common good are most pertinent to the development of the *Design for the Common Good* platform, establishing the means to do so is more complex. Our efforts to date have revealed some structural and systemic challenges that need creative thinking to overcome if they are to be addressed via methods that remain true to the principles of design for common good.

2.5 Structural Challenges in Implementing a Network for Design for the Common Good

The *Design for the Common Good platform*, like design for the common good activity generally, is in itself a response to the key global opportunities and threats relating to environmental crisis, economic shocks, social progress and rapid technological development. All of this is to be considered in the context of the design of the built environment, the location of the vast majority of the work relevant to the DCG platform.

Using a digital platform to share information about the design of the built environment offers excellent opportunities, including the ability to create an open access global resource due to the non-linguistic and visual nature of much of the work and also the engaging nature of the subject matter: how we live across the world and positive solutions for how this can be enhanced through good design. However, potential pitfalls exist for designers such as those relevant to the DCG platform. This method of design involves a deep collaborative engagement with the communities where they work. As Bell (2010, p.76.) puts it, community designers "come early and leave late. They assume pre-form and post-form-making roles as well." In this expanded view of the potential and value of design, the newly-completed designed object or product matters only as much as, or even less than the process of design and its subsequent occupation or use. This poses a dilemma for communicating via visual digital media, particularly in the discipline of architecture which

"tends to prioritise aspects associated with the static properties of objects [...] and with this the suppression of the more volatile aspects of buildings: the processes of their production, their occupation, their temporality, and their relations to society and nature." (Awan, Schneider, Till, 2011, p.27).

Once the collaborative nature of design has been acknowledged, there is a much wider story to be told beyond the idealised image of a "completed" building and this also challenges conventional notions of the designer as sole author. Perhaps the inclusion of narrative forms of media such as film will become important tools to tell this expanded story of collaborative design projects. In the field at present, there is a lack of skill, resources and accepted peer-approved methods to do this.

Community designers working in areas such as public interest design and live project / designbuild education are expert collaborators. They excel in methods of co-design, working collaboratively on site and establish inter-personal working relationships within complex communities. Advances in digital technology have enabled additional forms of collaboration via remote and digital means. The adoption and accessibility of remote collaboration methods has accelerated due to the need for social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This can enable less costly, more sustainable and global ways of working and has certainly been of benefit to DCG as it moves from a planning and strategic phase towards implementation.

With this increased ability to communicate and work globally, comes the opportunity for networks such as DCG to disseminate knowledge and best practice internationally, with the intention of mitigating global north / south inequality by providing a level playing field for ready access to resources and an open outlet for communication for diverse voices and experiencees. It is vital to redress global imbalances created by traditional models of communication such as academic publication, professional journals and journalism. Digital collaboration and dissemination aids inclusion of design activity in isolated or neglected areas where local solutions are already in progress and local experts are active. An analysis of the *Live Projects Network* revealed that collaborative community design activity is typically found in

"locations not usually associated with conventional development or design activity such as declining cities and rural areas with scarce economic resources [...] contexts in various types of crisis. These ranged from derelict historic fabric to informal settlements [...] contexts with significant levels of need (particularly economic, social justice and wellbeing [...] counter-examples of projects located in thriving places with plentiful resources. Low-cost projects in these locations offered a positive alternative to prevalent commercial activity [...]. Many of these projects responded to issues such as cultural identity, sense of place, equity and engagement, often in response to economic forces." (Anderson, 2017, p.11).

One motivation for bringing four established networks together is to connect different parts of the world via networks who have already established trust within their particular locus of influence. It is notable that word of mouth, proximity and local action are still vitally important factors in the establishment and effectiveness of the networks comprising DCG and the importance of this cannot be ignored. Although DCG represents an already significant global coverage, we are conscious that it is not yet sufficiently representative of places where significant work is being carried out by local actors, such as America, Africa and Australasia.

Not only is design activity for the common good happening in a great diversity of places, but the actors undertaking it are equally diverse in their aspirations and expertise (Anderson, 2017, p.11-12). They include professionals such as architects; students and academics such as those engaged in designbuild / live project education; organisations such as Non-Profit Organisations (NPO); funding bodies such as charities; local actors such as craftspeople and local people, both expert and non-expert. Ideally, all actors engaged in design for the common good would have a voice on DCG and find it to be a useful resource. The reality of creating something that is useful to all of these parties is complex. Issues such as confidentiality must be considered when making decisions about how or even whether information about a project can be disseminated. Some actors, such as a participant in a consultation event may only have an interest in their own immediate project and only for its duration. Others who are immersed in the activity of design for the common good may expect a long-term engagement with DCG. This is why the DCG development strategy includes strategies to maintain currency and engagement, such as news articles and outreach activities such as exhibitions.

For those who engage with DCG for the longer-term, we recognise that this relationship needs to be reciprocal. It is not a profit-driven endeavour so there has to be mutual benefit to justify the effort that it requires to maintain DCG. The platform requires material to stay relevant so those who are active in the field need to contribute material. To achieve this, a system of peer review is needed. This not only promotes best practice and ensures the relevance and quality of the work included, it also provides contributors with recognition in return for their considerable efforts to create the work. This recognition via peer review and open source publication meets the needs of contributors by providing opportunities for information dissemination and continuing professional development as well as evidence of esteem needed by those seeking external promotion and funding. There are considerable challenges in creating a peer review system that is equitable and relevant to the diversity of DCG contributors. Although there is an established process for academic peer review, it struggles to frame design objects and processes as research. It is also rather unfamiliar to professionals who are

not immersed in academia. Additionally, the demands made by different research traditions and national systems of research excellence measurement do have a significant effect on the priorities and activities of academics. Systems of peer review for DCG would need to be sensitive to this, whilst remaining internationally accessible and inclusive to a constituency much broader than research-intensive academics. Students, teachers, practitioners and experts from disciplines beyond design are key contributors and stakeholders.

Precedents such as IDEO (n.d.), a human-centred design company focused on positive and ethical impact, show that although it is complex to achieve, it is possible to serve a broad range of stakeholders. Their web platform divides into three simple sections: work, journal and tools. DCG's strategy includes the provision of resources such as a bibliography, methods, tools and teaching materials; exhibitions both online to maximise global accessibility and offline to provide opportunities for interpersonal engagement; and means of exchange such as direct channels of communication between members and stakeholders from different networks, DCG seeks to provide additional benefits to those who engage with the platform in different ways. This draws on the idea of the common good by answering the needs of a diverse range of stakeholders.

3 Conclusion

Structural and systemic barriers have been identified that need to be overcome in order to make the *Design for the Common Good* platform sufficiently inclusive, global and accessible i.e. designed for the common good. Careful consideration of a diverse group of stakeholders is required to achieve this. Progress in digital communication is making it possible to overcome previously insurmountable economic, environmental, geographical and logistical challenges, both to the creation of the platform and the activities of the actors in its networks. There is also a recognition that collaborative community design stems from potent local group actions in the field and that physical and inter-personal experience is fundamental to these endeavours.

This network of networks is committed to design practice, education, and research that improves social, economic, and environmental outcomes for its users. DCG connects designers, students, researchers, collaborators, and end-users by sharing best practices, stimulating and promoting a global dialogue. These organisations, represent thousands of NPOs, practitioners, and educators on all continents with a common commitment to support and promote global change across the practices of design.

DCG seeks to strengthen the confluence of forces required to create truly healthy, resilient, and sustainable design that will positively impact communities globally. It is built from the best practices found within each individual network. It also underscores the importance of the very acts of exchanges of knowledge, collaboration, and communication inherent in the creation of the broader network, often built from collaboration in the field. Our proposal therefore showcases projects, efforts, and educational outcomes built from the intention and agency of individual practitioners, educators, community and concerned citizens, which offer the possibilities of effective action and reflect the progressive collaboration behind the *Design for the Common Good* platform.

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