

Notes from DRS2020 Conversation on Global Health in light of COVID-19: Reframing the Role of Design

Date: Friday 14th August 2020

Duration: 1 hour

Location: Online via Microsoft Teams

Conveners: Emmanuel Tseklevs, Claudia de Souza Libanio, (Ming Cheung, Fatima Ghani)

Participants: Mariana Fonseca Braga, Leigh-Anne Hepburn, Jenna Mikus, Badziili Nthubu, Cara O'Sullivan, Sally Sutherland,

Notes on the two main questions the Conversation session addressed:

Question 1: How can design research help address and mitigate the health, social, economic impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak in Low/Middle-Income Countries

- LMICs have different contexts, cultures, policies and social practices;
- time is a critical factor in this moment;
- thinks are updated, constantly;
- it's difficult to deal with self-isolation. Sometimes, it's impossible to do this, or people don't want to do this;
- problems (and opportunities) concerning visual communication, wrong messages;
- disconnection among many agents/actors;
- opportunities to work with environmental design (where people are, where people live...);
- we need to eradicate technological divides, promoting accessible communication looking at after COVID-19;
- people don't trust in government and political leadership;
- enhance/promote network with private sector;
- chronic problems (access to education, to healthcare system);
- opportunities for collaboration, promoting connexion;
- how to put forward and to explore mediation and negotiation spaces;
- cities could be recreated;
- explore methods and tools. Mariana talked about participatory design tools;
- people are not prepared to work with creation/creativity (people needed to learn how to be creative);
- to work, engage and integrate all sectors;
- how we operate on communication in accessible way?;
- we need to find ways to share;
- we need to clarify the design concept to people (challenge).
- trying to work better across disciplines (as a school of architecture, design and planning). Health is an area where everyone has a contribution to make

Question 2: Which sectors do design researchers need to work with to address and what are the gaps/challenges are they likely to face in working with these sectors?

We need to work with all sectors not just one. How do we identify who the key stakeholders are and how we bring them together and these are context specific.

If we think of policy makers we need to make it easier for them to engage. Be able to understand the findings - write for other findings. Storytelling seems to be a useful tool for that.

Need to identify key actors/gatekeepers that control these points. I.e. in African countries governments do not know how design can help. It is difficult to engage. They do not take it seriously. Needs to redefine design. This is a challenge and an opportunity.

This is partly our issue/responsibility, because as designers we talk to ourself and are not always outward facing.

Design mindset and the way we operate are key assets in design research. We should make a better job at promoting this to other disciplines.