



The Social in Design

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Ssonder collective



Conceptual

**Thoughts about
social design**



Practical

**Lessons on
social design**

A large, textured red circular brushstroke is centered on the page. The text "What is design?" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font across the middle of the red circle, tilted slightly upwards from left to right.

What is design?

My journey with design

Micro
Abstract
world

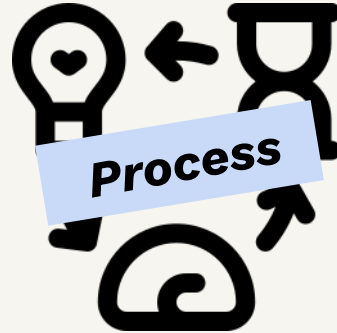
Macro
Real
world



Design for human
computer interaction



A shift in emphasis



What is design

As a third culture, design sits between the two poles of science and the humanities.

SCIENCE

Observes

the facts of the material world.
Emphasis on **quantities**.

DESIGN

Synthesizes

the best of human intention, realized within the constraints of reality.
Emphasis on **appropriateness**.

HUMANITIES

Interprets

the complexities of human experience.
Emphasis on **qualities**.

What is design

SCIENCE

Feasibility
Is it possible?

DESIGN

Desirability
**Will they
want this?**

HUMANITIES

Viability
**Should we do
this?**

**Social design is
the creation of new social conditions
in cities, corporate cultures, communities, or teams with the
intended outcomes of
deeper civic or cultural engagement and
increased creativity, resilience, equity, social justice, and
human health**

What is social design

SCIENCE



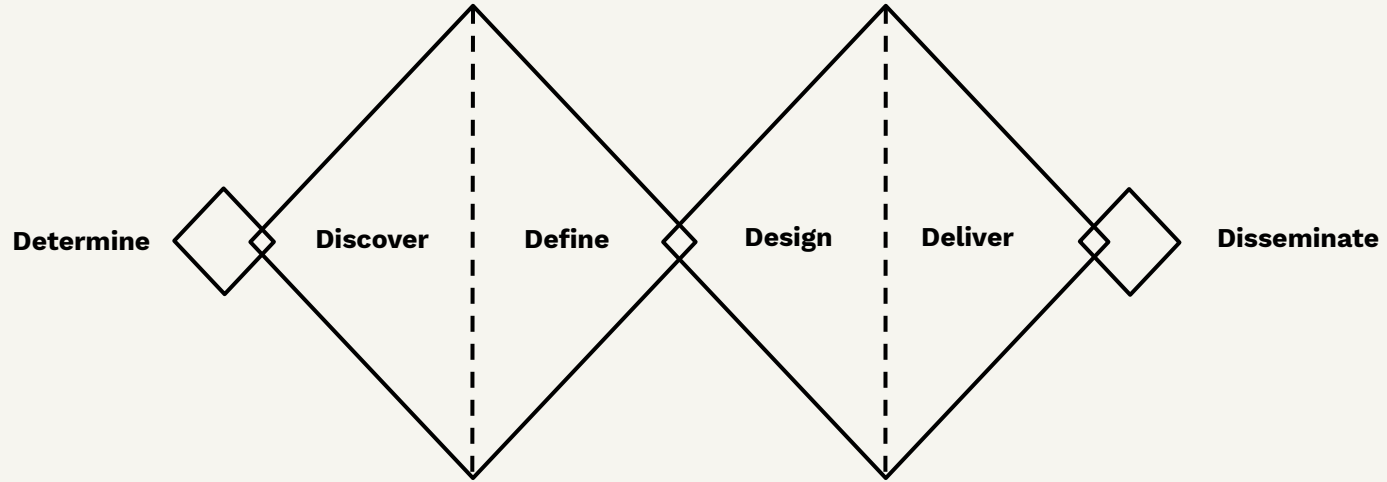
DESIGN



HUMANITIES



The social design process



Service design

Affirmative

Problem solving

Design for production

In the service of industry

Consumer

User-friendliness

Social design

Critical

Problem framing

Design for debate

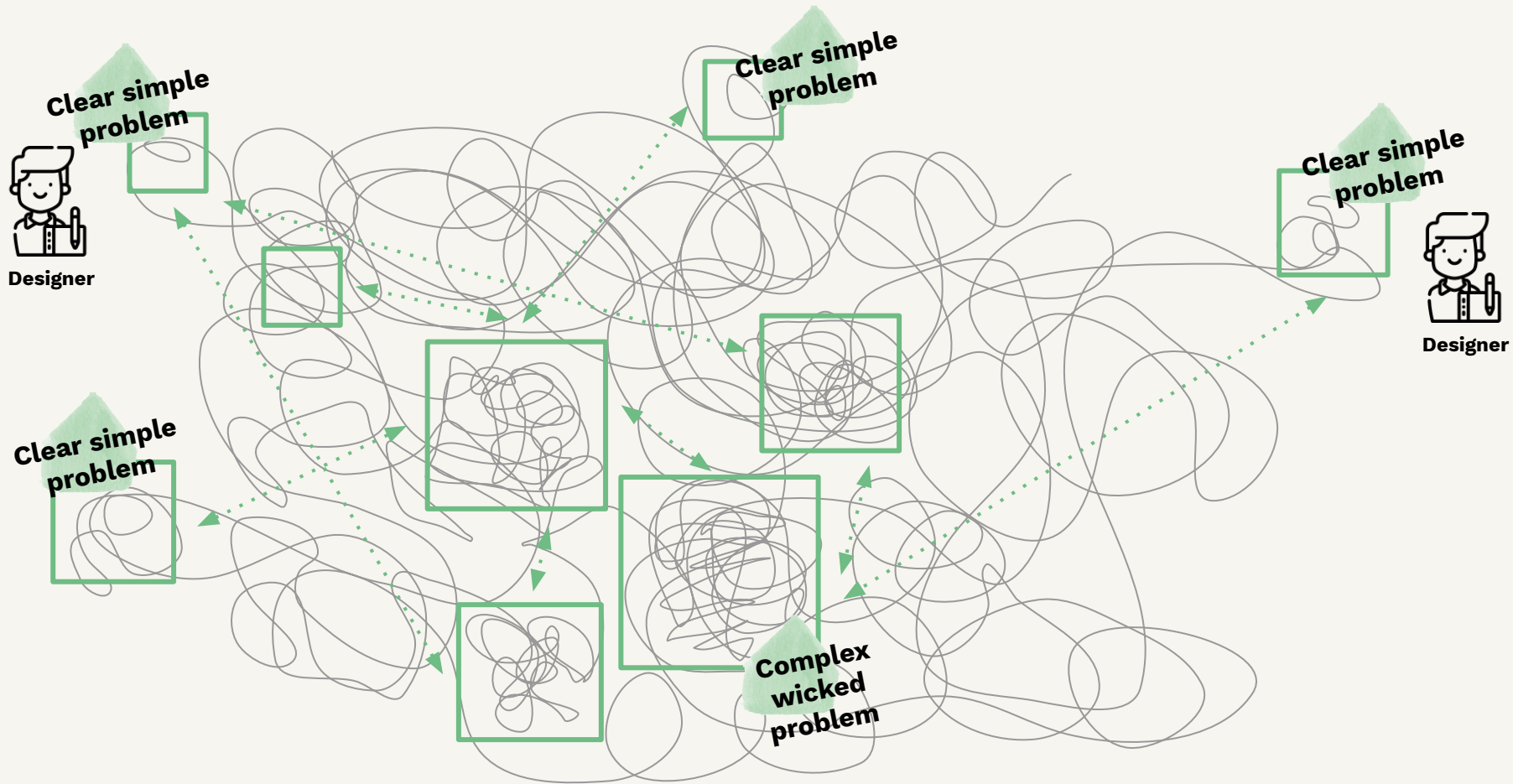
In the service of society

Citizen

Ethics

A large, vibrant red circle with a textured, brushstroke-like appearance. The edges are slightly irregular and feathered, giving it a hand-painted feel. It is centered on a plain white background.

What is designed?

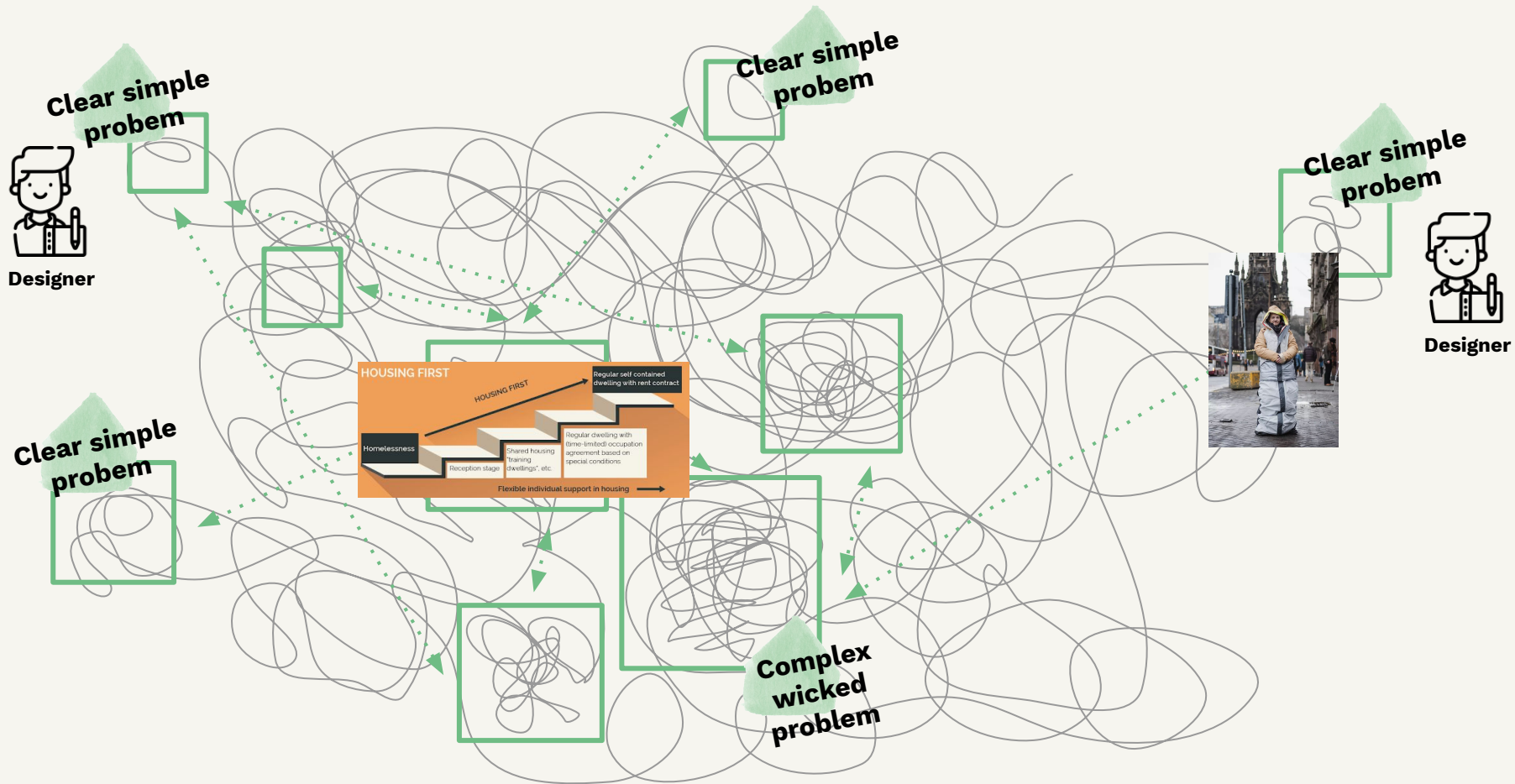


What systems, what beliefs are we as designers challenging, critiquing, validating, supporting?

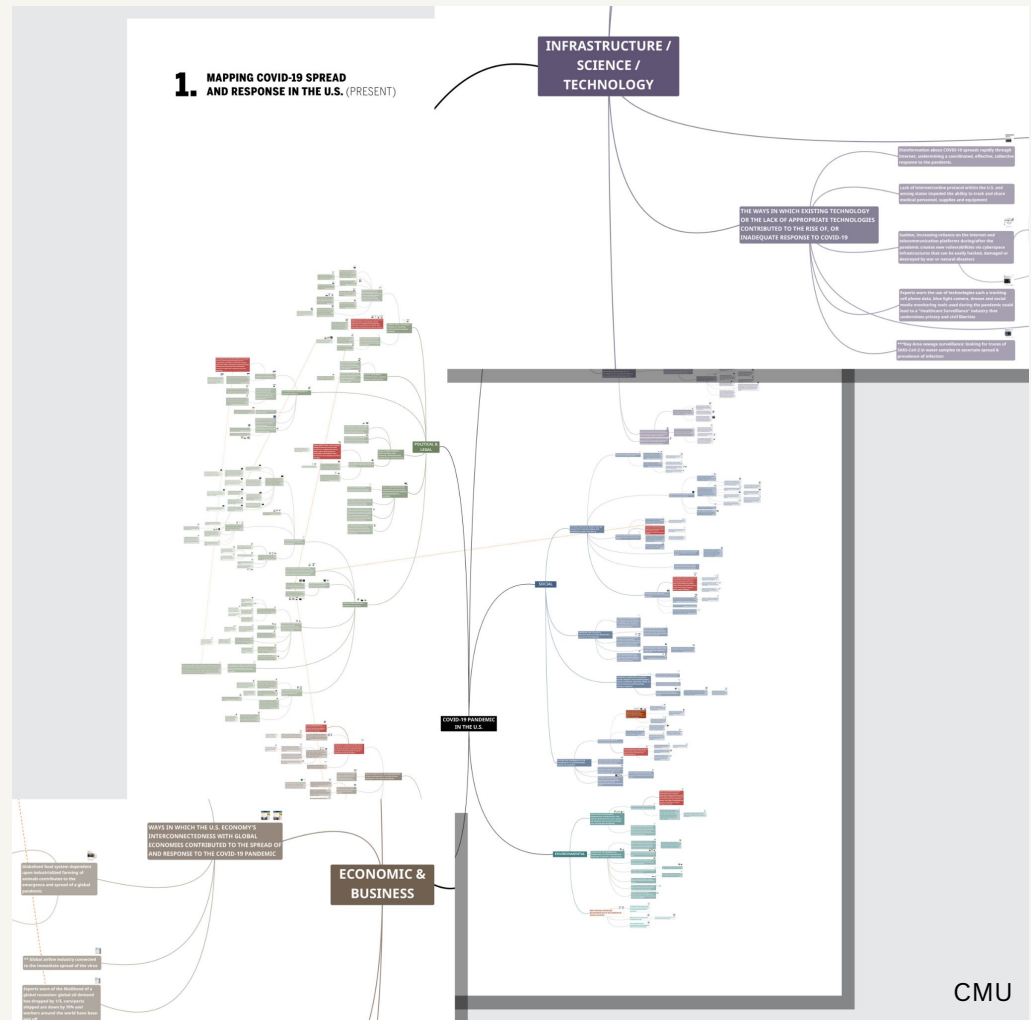
Clear simple problem



<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/11/sleepsuits-homeless-people-refugees/>



**Always design a thing by
considering it in its next larger
context – a chair in a room, a room
in a house, a house in an
environment, an environment in a
city plan**
(Eliel Saarinen)





Problem defined

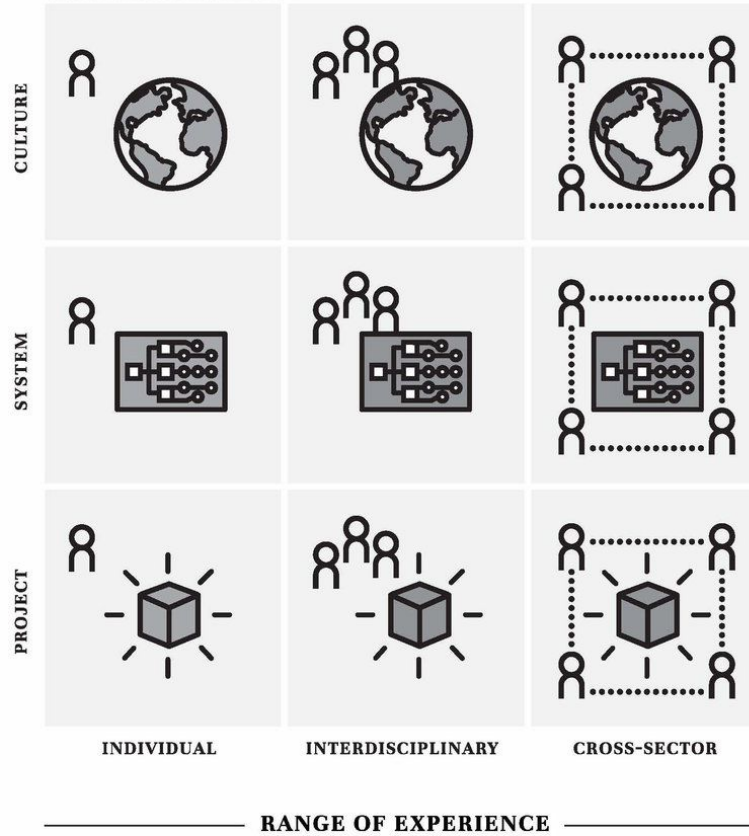
Solution clear

Designer as the expert

Designer as the producer

SCALE OF ENGAGEMENT

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Problem undefined

Solution unclear


Designer as one ingredient

Designer as the translator






***“The success of an intervention
depends on the interior condition of
the intervener.”***

A purple watercolor circle with a soft, textured edge. Inside the circle, the text "I pay attention therefore it emerges that way." is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font, centered and arranged in four lines.

I pay attention
therefore
it emerges that
way.


The four voices in a social design process



**The voice of
experience**



**The voice
of intent**

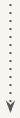


**The voice
of expertise**



**The voice
of design**

Doing to or doing with?



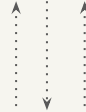
Inform

"We will keep you informed"



Consult

"We will listen and acknowledge"



Collaborate

"We will look to you for ideas and advice then incorporate it"



Empower

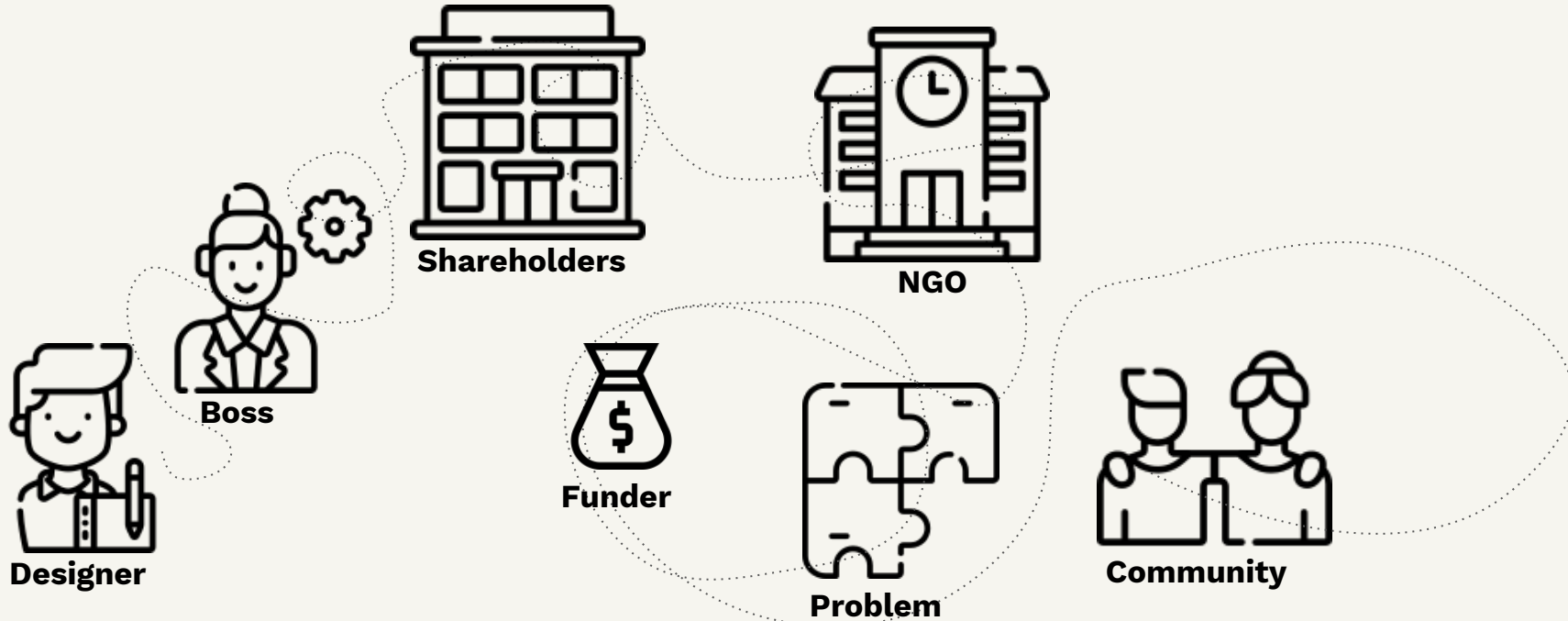
"We will implement what you decide"

Designing to

Designing for

Designing with

Who are you accountable to?



How does bias influence your choices when designing?

Detecting it helps us to work with it
(and not become an error)



Confirmation bias

We believe what we want to believe by favoring information that confirms preexisting beliefs or preconceptions.



Conformity bias

Choices of mass populations influence how we think, even if against independent personal judgments.



Anchoring bias

Being influenced by information that is already known or that is first shown. This causes pre-loaded and determined tunnel vision and influences final decision making.

Social design is always political



“The designers stance is experimental and proactive. It helps us propel beyond merely addressing existing problems with existing forms into imagining entirely new terrains of possibility.”



“Designers understanding of innovation and creativity are often entangled with the reproduction of the capitalist and colonial status quo.”



“Questions of class, gender, race and coloniality are notoriously absent from most design theory and practice and so it that of design’s dependence on capitalism. “

QUESTION



***What are the biases or invisible
power structures that govern
your way of thinking or
designing***



Practical

**Lessons on
social design**



The diagram features three hand-drawn triangles in purple, green, and yellow, each representing a core design principle. These triangles are interconnected by a series of overlapping dotted lines that form a complex, web-like structure. Below each triangle is a bold, black label: 'Evidence' for the purple triangle, 'Empathy' for the green triangle, and 'Ethics' for the yellow triangle. The text inside the triangles is also in bold black font, with 'Design with data' for the purple triangle, 'Design with heart' for the green triangle, and 'Design with responsibility' for the yellow triangle.

**Design with
data**

Evidence

**Design with
heart**

Empathy

**Design with
responsibility**

Ethics

Design with responsibility

Ethics

- Working with marginalized, vulnerable or underprivileged groups or citizens requires to follow a set of ethical standards
- Adjust design tools and methods culturally to the context
- Always use informed consent and ensure data protection
- Carefully analyse possible unintended consequences
- Take an ethical training
- Involve anthropologists and social scientist

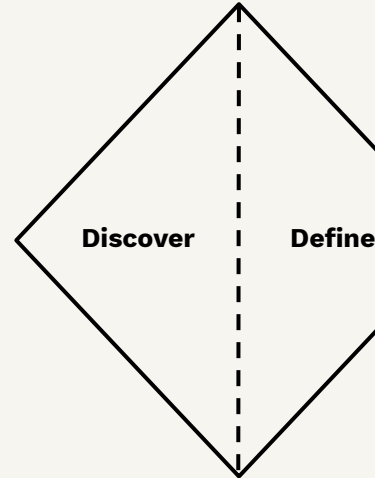


Design with data

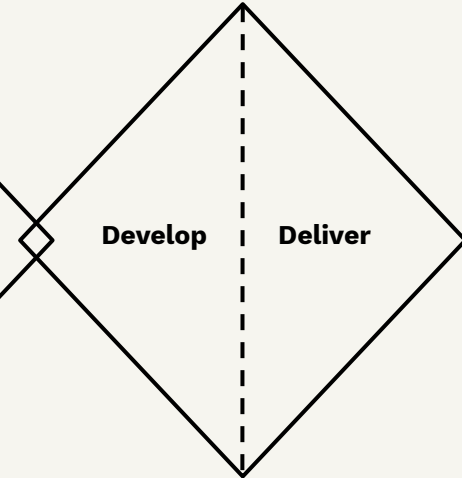
Evidence

- A design process can be creative but rigorous
- What research and evidence has been conducted before that can inform the design process
- How does our design process connect/build on existing evidence?
- What evidence is our design process creating that can inform policies, new knowledge etc?
- What biases can be found in the evidence?
- Document, document, document

Use evidence



Create evidence





Empathy

Our ability to empathize is directly tied to socioeconomic status.

Studies have shown the more economic privilege a person has, the less empathic understanding they show when relating to others (Kraus, Cote & Keltner, 2010).

- Empathy is not sympathy
- Empathy is not a special skills of the designer
- Empathy can lead us do wrong (unethical) things
- Empathy is a “different tool” when we design for vs when we design with
- Empathy gives us the responsibility to act
- Requires commitment to the problem on a long term
- Incorporating the unheard voices can change the dialogue about the problem

QUESTION



***What role has empathy
played during the pandemic?
Where has it worked for the
purpose of design?***