

RELATIONSHIP STUDY DESIGN AND WELL-BEING

A proposal to favor people in conditions of poverty in Colombia

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Abstract

Since 1980's, the development of projects, products and strategies that act as a link between design and human wellbeing has been on the rise. From 2000, with the Millenium Development Goals establishment, it has been unchained a substantial growth in the number of organizations that use design to work with vulnerable communities by poverty conditions. Within such context it is presented this research project. It is bounded, in a broad sense, by the relationship between design and human wellbeing, but in a particular perspective, in the study of design focused in poverty for Colombian circumstances.

The study of the progression of the relationship between design and human wellbeing has led to identify methodologies, key attention lines, and the main authors, countries, and design schools that are in the forefront in this topic. For design focused in poverty was undertaken Weis' approach (Weis, 2010), which can be broken down in three components, a. "Design for Capacity Development", b. "Design for Social Enterprise", c. "Design for Development Assistance"; being the former the core of this research. Through this approach, it was possible to report new findings on the interaction between designers and population vulnerable by poverty; on the profile of the designers and the design team; processes, products and projects and the benefit to the community. There is convergence between the proposal for Colombia and the Bonsiepe historical approach (Bonsiepe, 2009).

This research is exploratory and descriptive and it counts on quantitative and qualitative methods, in which primary and secondary data have been used. Primary data were collected in a case study exercise, where 5 experiences were analysed. Three of them were located in Spain: Free Design Bank, Diseño para el Desarrollo and Nanimarquina, and the other two in Colombia: Artesanías de Colombia and Jorge Montaña Cuellar. Primary data was also collected through a survey answered by 28 experts from 13 different countries. These scholars, researchers and chief officers are expert in design applied to human wellbeing.

As important findings it was found, firstly, that design is an innovation factor not only for product development, but also for strategies and acting model development. Secondly, it was identified that participative actions lead to better results; provided that they allow people engagement in different stages of project development. Finally, it was noticeable how the interactions between design teams and vulnerable population are determined by the characteristics of a specific territory, which provides particular nuances to a particular community.

It is highlighted as well, that during this intellectual journey were published ten academic papers, in order to contrast and make public the advancements of this research among the academic community.

This work fulfils every goal that was set and provide some insight and reflection for the implementation of design and vulnerable population by poverty.

Key-words:

Design, Wellbeing, Poverty, Social Design.

Research lines:

Social Design, Design for Social Wellbeing and Design Research.