wellbeing by design

Creativity and Collaboration in Practice-based Inquiry

7th, 8th and 9th September 2015

Report
In September 2015, The Institute of Design Innovation (InDI), The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) held the inaugural Wellbeing by Design conference in Horizon Scotland, Forres. This booklet provides an overview of the conference format, activities, and common themes and insights emerging from the presentations and discussions.

Wellbeing by Design brought together 21 practitioners and researchers from Masters, Doctoral and Post-doctoral communities who are united by their interest in using design approaches to support communities to live well. The conference encouraged delegates to collaboratively explore and expand evolving definitions of wellbeing to consider their individual and collective experiences of how individuals and communities can support their wellbeing.

Areas of wellbeing central to the conference included:

• the democratization of care
• asset-based approaches and social prescribing
• marginalized, fragile, or rural communities
• health inequalities
• social isolation and loneliness
• identity: culture, gender, race, sexuality, age

The conference programme consisted of two keynote presentations from Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam, Head of the School of Design at GSA and Director of the Creative Futures Partnership, and Professor Ken Neil, Head of Research at GSA and Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam, Head of the School of Design at GSA. The conference programme also included seven lightning talks from InDI researchers, 21 presentations from delegates, and an exhibition of delegates' creative practice, as well as a reflective group workshop, a film screening, a drinks reception, and an exhibition of delegates' creative practice.
We received national and international applications from all over the world, including Egypt, Istanbul, Italy, Singapore and Australia. For many of the delegates, Wellbeing by Design marked their first visit to Scotland. As part of the application process, we asked delegates to provide a synopsis of their research and practice and a list of keywords. We then stratified the delegate cohort into three groups for presentations. The three sessions aimed to reflect distinct elements and phases of practice-based research in the broad field of design:

- Exploration, Fieldwork and methods in practice
- Designing with People; Communication, Engagement and Co-creation
- The Role of Design and the Artefact in Analysis and Dissemination

During the sessions delegates presented ten minute overviews of their research. As session chairs and critical listeners, two members of the InDI team then identified reflections, commonalities, distinctions, questions, or concerns across each of the presentations before opening up to further discussion from the audience.

Examples of the work presented included:
- Investigating the impacts of personal light exposure on human health.
- Gender inequity and identity construction through materiality.
- Mental health and wellbeing of women engaged in knit and crochet in online groups and physical spaces.
- Tourist development in rural Egypt.
- The role of digital jewellery in exploring identity and adjustability of the Self during a period of transition.
- Textile artefacts as multi-sensory triggers for people with early stage dementia.
- Exploring eco-communities in Taiwan through dialogical film artworks.
- The role of indoor and outdoor environmental factors in older adults' physical and sedentary behaviours.
- Positioning practice-based research with government: designing policy for practice through digital and material culture and artefacts.
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The broad field of design:

- The role of design and the artefact in analysis and dissemination
- Designing with People: Communication, Engagement and Co-creation
- Exploration; Fieldwork and methods in practice

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Delegate Presentations
Higher activity Took longer to fall asleep Fewer awakenings at night Sleep longer at night Those with normal cognition
Learning Lifewide

Distinct Approaches
To Design Education

- Innovative
- Creative
- Visualization
- Intellectual
- Social Skills
- Centred
- Expanded
- Applied
- Practiced
- Design
Tourism development
cultural landscape - human heritage
tourism development
innovation - guest house
village on the river Nile
people
- native reserve
THROUGH MINKING back, THINKING does not play
Self Reflection?
FLUID EMOTIONAL PIECE.
TRANSITIONAL SPACE.

Journey + Technology + Craft

INTERSECTION DESIGN

Personal expression

THE SELF IN TRANSITION
Key Note Presentations
Ethical Imagination

Seeing, Seeing, Seeing

Phem, Creative Punishment

Analyzing that everywhere - Poetic Marriages.

-- Ward, The Making of the World
Lightning Talks
For Designing Education
Designing Research
DHI
EXPERIENCE LAPS

MAKING THE COMPLEX VISIBLE

VOLUNTEERING
Emerging themes

visualling empathy

how do people perceive their own well-being

prescribed environments

complexities of experiences understood

managing stakeholder expectations

making intangible tangible - but not too precious

the hidden communities in research

liier and nonlinear documentation

authorship and ownership

future casting for desirable worlds

design things not just to be used and forgotten about but something beautiful and poetic

how do people perceive their own wellbeing

aim to raise community’s awareness or self

prescribed environments

complexities of experiences understood

stakeholder expectations with behaviour

conflicts existing of desired ambition with behaviour

tools for taboo conversations

how do we talk to people about co-creation

managing and non-linear documentation
Throughout the application process we invited delegates to present examples of their practice in an informal exhibition in the breakout space. These designed artefacts offered delegates a material point of reference to ground their discussions in during coffee and networking breaks. Often having key roles in their PhD research, posters were displayed. An eclectic mixture of photography, digitally printed textiles, interactive 3D models, maps, illustrations, film installations, and a collection of PhD research posters were displayed.
For the final session of the conference, Gemma Teal, Research Fellow at InDI, facilitated a workshop, Drawing on Our Reflections, as an opportunity for delegates to share their thoughts on the presentations and in turn, to receive feedback on their own. Delegates formed small groups and took turns to discuss their key insights from each presentation before collectively completing a paper template to capture their reflections, connections to other presentations, and suggestions for potential areas of interest to follow up. The workshop stimulated productive conversation as delegates shared and compared their individual learnings gleaned from the presentations, whilst updating their notes and reflecting on the presentations they may have not attended. The session culminated in each delegate receiving their own paper template completed by the cohort, which they used to inform future research and development.
Feedback

To capture feedback we gave delegates small cards and asked them to
tell us about their key moments from the conference through writing and
drawing. As can be seen in the following quotes and photographs, delegates’
drawing and sharing experiences of the PhD,

and reflections on our roles as designers and researchers working
with communities, and the relaxed atmosphere of the conference format

and the relationships between the creative processes and
understandings of making images and artefacts at different stages in practice-based
the context of wellbeing. Developing methodological understandings
feedback encouraged an appreciation of the breadth of delegates’ work
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drawing and sharing experiences of the PhD,
In your surroundings, in your
noses, your fingers, your
heads, your ears, your
knees, your arms, your
feet, your

Objects, not just
everything.

Beauty should be

Beautiful!

Beauty is abundant in nature

In the presence of beauty, sense
energy.
Reflecting upon the entire conference and particularly the feedback we received from the delegates, it was clear that, as one delegate described, this newly created forum had 'soul'. Its intimate scale allowed for rich and comfortable conversation, where meaningful connections were fostered between the delegates through sharing, learning, and inspiring one another. A breadth of experience and insight into the many different facets and contexts of wellbeing were shared, as well as innovative design approaches. Beauty was a recurring theme in many of the presentations and conversations, mirroring, as several of the delegates suggested, the location of conference in the Highlands of Scotland. The rural setting greatly enhanced the essence of community, fulfilling our aspiration of attracting national and international attention to Forres.

Building links between Postgraduate taught degrees, Doctoral degrees and beyond, our aim for this creative research and knowledge exchange conference was to establish a blueprint that could be iterative and scalable, leaving a legacy for future students at The Institute of Design Innovation to develop and expand upon. Wellbeing through design requires partnerships and interdisciplinary links, and international institutional partnerships and interdisciplinary links were established new national and international partnerships and interdisciplinary links. Building links between Postgraduate taught degrees, Doctoral degrees and beyond, our aim for this creative research and knowledge exchange conference was to establish a blueprint that could be iterative and scalable.

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