Wellbeing through participation: Creativity and co-design as processes of "welldoing"

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Co-design is a robust collaborative approach to design practices and processes that invites participation from multiple stakeholders in shaping and responding to collectively identified problems or issues. It should be remembered that co-design is not a new "flavor of the month" concept, it has its roots in the participatory design movement in northern Europe in the 1960s (Björgvinsson, 2007; Sanders & Stappers 2008;), and has been widely applied, particularly in service design contexts (Sangiorgi & Prendiville 2017). Co-design can be described as a mindset, a method, and a tool or technique (Sanders & Stappers 2008; 2012), and can be applied in both extractive (project setting) and generative (ideation) processes (Björgvinsson, 2017).

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In generative research, co-design is a process of involvement where designers, professionals, and the broader public become project partners, each contributing their unique perspectives and particular skills to the design process and its outcomes. To explore co-design's potential within the health and wellbeing sectors in South Australia, a transdisciplinary group of researchers from the Australian Research Centre for Interactive and Virtual Environments at the University of South Australia (UniSA) devised the concept of *The Design Clinic*. It is a pioneering research space where medical, clinical, and organisational health and wellbeing professionals can come together alongside academic researchers and people with lived experience to co-create innovative applications for the next generation of Australian healthcare systems, services and products. In *The Design Clinic,* co-design is applied to complex challenges in healthcare contexts, connecting providers and receivers of health services and/or interventions. Cross-sector relationships are nurtured to provide benefits both through the development of outcomes that better suit all stakeholders' needs, and through participation in the co-design processes. The first form of value (better outcomes) is well documented (Steen, Manschot & De Koning, 2011) however, the second form of value –where participants benefit from their engagement in co-design processes – is less understood. Social learning and other frameworks have been developed to try to capture the value of participation (Rodela, 2011; Sanders & Stappers, 2008), yet the intangible and 'soft' nature of partaking in a co-design process can be difficult to give weight to, particularly in the empirically dominated healthcare space.

From a wellbeing perspective, the idea that participating in a co-design process has the potential to address human needs as outlined in Max-Neef's Theory of Needs is of interest here. Max-Neef (1991) outlines nine axiological needs and four existential needs, that are cross-referenced through a range of potential satisfiers. Figure 1 below, maps where co-design processes relate directly to these satisfiers, and where there may be opportunities to consider co-design processes as a form of wellbeing building through a process of "welldoing".

NEEDS (EXISTENTIAL)

	BEING	HAVING	DOING	INTERACTING
SUBSISTENCE	physical health, mental health, equilibrium, sense of humor, adaptability	food, shelter, work	feed, procreate, rest, work	living environment, social setting
PROTECTION	care, adaptability, autonomy, equilibrium, solidarity	insurance systems, savings, social security, health systems, rights, family, work	cooperate, prevent, plan, take care of, cure, help	living space, social environment, dwelling
AFFECTION	self-esteem, solidarity, respect, tolerance, generosity, receptiveness, passion, determination, sensuality, sense of humor	friendships, family, partnerships, relationships with nature	make love, caress, express emotions, share, take care of, cultivate, appreciate	privacy, intimacy, home, space of togetherness
UNDERSTANDING	critical conscience, receptiveness, curiosity, astonishment, discipline, intuition, rationality	literature, teachers, method, educational policies, communication policies	investigate, study, experiment, educate, analyse, meditate	settings of formative interaction, schools, universities, academies, groups, communities, family
PARTICIPATION	adaptability, receptiveness, solidarity, willingness, determination, dedication, respect, passion, sense of humor	rights, responsibilities, duties, privileges, work	become affiliated, cooperate, propose, share, dissent, obey, interact, agree on, express opinions	settings of participative interaction, parties, associations, churches, communities, neighborhoods, family
IDLENESS	curiosity, receptiveness, imagination, recklessness, sense of humor, tranquillity, sensuality	games, spectacles, clubs, parties, peace of mind	daydream, brood, dream, recall old times, give way to fantasies, remember, relax, have fun, play	privacy, intimacy, spaces of closeness, free time, surroundings, landscapes.
CREATION	passion, determination, intuition, imagination, boldness, rationality, autonomy,	abilities, skills, method, work	work, invent, build, design, compose, interpret	productive and feedback settings, workshops, cultural groups, audiences, spaces for expression, temporal freedom
IDENTITY	sense of belonging, consistency, different-iation, self-esteem, assertiveness	symbiosis, language, religion, habits, customs, reference groups, sexuality, values, norms, historical memory, work	commit oneself, integrate oneself, confront, decide on, get to know oneself, recognize oneself, actualize oneself, grow	social rhythms, everyday settings, settings which one belongs to, maturation stages
FREEDOM	autonomy, self-esteem, determination, passion, assertiveness, open mindedness, boldness, rebellious-ness, tolerance	equal rights	dissent, choose, be different from, run risks, develop awareness, commit oneself, disobey	temporal/spatial plasticity

NEEDS (AXIOLOGICAL)

FIGURE 1. MATRIX OF NEEDS AND SATISFIERS (MAX-NEEF 2017) WITH POSSIBLE SATISFIERS AS PROVIDED THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN A CO-DESIGN PROCESS HIGHLIGHTED IN PINK.

As a creative and participatory process, it is unsurprising that co-design processes provide opportunities to satisfy the needs of creation, and participation, however co-

design processes can also contribute to the satisfaction of a number of other needs. Designing with the intent to satisfy multiple needs is highlighted in Transition Design (Kossoff et al, 2015) and as part of the enablement of participatory skills (Manzini & Walker, 2008) needed for sustainable futures. Co-design's potential to contribute here is also significant. Exploring co-design in this way positions it as what Max-Neef describes as a "synergic satisfier", a satisfier that is capable of satisfying one need while simultaneously contributing to the satisfaction of other needs (1991 p. 34). As seen in Figure 1, co-design processes can have broad coverage across the human needs for affection, idleness, identity, understanding and freedom, and could, in some circumstances, play a role in aspects of subsistence and protection.

What emerges from this analysis is an opportunity to frame the value of co-design (research) as the act of participation rather than the outcomes from participation. This engagement with the process of co-design, or indeed the processes associated with any research that is seeking to have a positive impact on the wellbeing of participants, has been touched on in participation evaluation frameworks by Arnstein (1969), Ackoff (1974), the IAP2 (2018), and others. But, this analysis, and the use of Max-Neef's (1991) framework, provides a way for co-design research to consider how it is contributing to wellbeing, as well as how it achieves its other outcomes.

The complexity in the matrix offers insights into the relationships between acts of doing and ways of being satisfied. Such acts of participation – as synergic satisfiers – also "constitute a reversal of predominant values, such as competition and coerciveness" (Max-Neef, 1991 p. 34). In a wellbeing-focused process, as in co-design, collaboration is valued over competition, thereby framing co-design as an act of 'welldoing' that contributes to wellbeing. This begins to suggest a winding back the focus of participatory evaluations on outcomes, which often highlight the control individual participants are given over decision outcomes (IAP2, 2018), and instead explores the inherent value of participation in co-design.

Co-design activities can create value for participants in multiple ways. Co-design's value as a tool, process, mindset or method for generating outcomes has long been evident, and when considering its processes in relation to Max-Neef's theory of needs, we see the multiple ways in which co-design can also contribute to participants' wellbeing. However, to formally recognise the contribution of process as well as outcomes, we need to continue to develop better ways to understand, measure and value (good) co-design processes.

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