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Service design tools for stakeholder dialogue and youth empowerment in Africa

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to present a service model and methods that enable empowerment and action in the context of the San youth. Their stakeholders have an extremely important role in both providing services as well as lobbying for their cause to improve the situation in the local context. When the public service production does not have vast resources available the role of civil society and non-governmental organisations become more and more important in the service production as well as in the service delivery. Further, it is fundamental to develop means for local dialogue that enables communication between different stakeholders and the San youth. This paper focuses on service design and creative methodologies that can be utilized for creating wellbeing at the local level in South Africa and Namibia. Service design has become an important tool for creating insights and understanding over complex societal challenges and finding new solutions for underserved and marginalized communities. It is looking at service design as a platform to create both foresight and solution-oriented process to create dynamic capabilities through local dialogue in response to the needs of underserved communities.

Theme: Innovation.
Keywords: service design, participatory design, dialogue, youth empowerment, grassroots innovation

1. Introduction

Participatory Development with Youth (PARTY) project and service design methodology have helped in "giving a voice" to the marginalized youth in Africa. PARTY project is a research and researcher mobility project funded by MCSA RISE Horizon 2020 program focusing on participatory development with indigenous San youth. Research collaboration includes stakeholders from both the academia University of Lapland, University of Leeds, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Namibia

University of Science and Technology and the third sector. Especially the third sector organisations have been active in the project. These organisations include South African San Institute (SASI), !Khwat tu in South Africa and PACO Design Collaborative in Italy.

Empowerment has been recognised by World Bank (2000) as one of the three pillars of poverty reduction and the subject of debate within the development community. This research investigates how participatory service design process works as an innovation catalyst for youth empowerment in Africa. Through case studies, we illustrate how participatory service design enables and creates the local dialogue between the youth and their stakeholders. Through service design workshops PARTY project helped youth in Namibia and South Africa to identify the problems such as low self-esteem, poor literacy skills and lack of water, develop new solutions to address these problems and present the final outcomes to local stakeholders. Service design process enabled the youth to develop a dialogue with the local stakeholders. These stakeholders often leave the youth aside from the decision-making process. At the same time, the process helped the youth to increase their self-esteem. The youth felt helpful to their communities and proud to be listened by the local stakeholders.

Service design is a tool to develop public-private partnerships and create new service offerings to both accommodate citizen's needs and create competitive social capital for the communities. The value of service design in creating local dialogue is in its ability to concretise abstract contexts and support the ideation and conceptualisation processes, as well as in its support for the innovation process. One of the focuses in PARTY project is to offer practical frameworks and tools that enable designers, researchers and practitioners to understand and manage complex societal development processes where the dialogue between different stakeholders and the youth is needed. In PARTY project, a range of visual, performative and storytelling tools have been adapted, developed and tested through design practice. These are developed further as a tool for creating local dialogue. Being concerned for the society is not a new phenomenon among local developers and designers, but there is an evident need to shift the focus from the single issue of designers' or developers' responsibilities and tasks towards taking a more holistic approach to socially responsible design, creating local dialogue and discussing how this can contribute to the capabilities of communities. How is it possible through local dialogue to deconstruct preconceived ideas about how things should be done and to generate new solutions that could eventually transform and change society?

2. Research methodology

The development of the PARTY model and methods for local dialogue is based on constructive design research which is defined as: "design research in which construction – be it product, system, space, or media – takes center place and becomes the key means in constructing knowledge" (Koskinen et al., 2011, p5). Koskinen et al. (2011) argue that design researchers need methodological and theoretical flexibility and discuss that design can be studied in three contexts: the lab, the field and the showroom. Each of these contexts is characterised by their own research culture adapted from other research traditions: the natural sciences, social sciences and art. Constructive design research is many ways connected to research through design (e.g. Zimmerman et al., 2010, Frayling, 1993), where research and design processes are simultaneous/overlapping and research projects emerge from and with design practice. Design researchers as constructivists conducting research through design practice seek to explain the meaning of the subject by artistically and/or creatively making objects, interventions, processes etc.

In PARTY project, the models and methods have been developed, experimented, tested and discussed through design sessions, workshops and engagements with the San youth and their stakeholders. A series of service design workshops and stakeholder mapping sessions have been developed and conducted with the support from the research collaboration which includes stakeholders from both the academia (University of Lapland, University of Leeds, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Namibia University of Science and Technology) and the third sector. Especially the third sector organisations have been active in the project, which include South African San Institute (SASI) and !Khwat tu in South Africa, and PACO Design Collaborative in Italy. PARTY researchers create and adapt artistic and creative tools and methods based on the skills and capacities of the design field. Then they work as facilitators in the field where the San youth could recognise their own capabilities and skills and utilize tools and methods to create a dialogue with the stakeholders and community. The outcomes "dialogues" co-created by participants e.g. in the form of performance, pitch, exhibitions, etc. give associations to the showroom. In the PARTY case, the field and the showroom are influenced by artistic and creative movements in the participatory design activities, which help researchers to understand design research as an intentional by product of what designers do naturally in prototype design. Prototypes here include both "dialogues" - as a form of tangible outcomes from participatory design activities to be used to connect with the stakeholders, and abductive reasoning (Peirce, 1958), e.g. empirical findings, ideas, knowledge - as a form of abstract prototypes to be tested and debated according to their relevance and importance to practice, academia and practicability or feasibility of design and research activities. The process of making, designing (Zimmerman et al., 2010) and prototyping in this case enables more clearly articulated research questions as well as a more detailed description of the planning and execution of the research project.

3. Empowerment ladder

The San youth is not a homogenous group in all aspects but depending on the context (South Africa, Namibia) the youth have different local challenges. Whereas some San youth groups are working with youth who are already in the vocational training or university education, some groups located in more rural context struggle with completing the primary education (Tsumkwe)(Hays, 2011). For developing empowerment ladder that would enable stakeholder dialogue, the base of the ladder needs to be well established (Saugestad, 2006). PARTY empowerment ladder addresses both the challenges in the development of the base of the ladder that focuses on the needs for developing interventions to reduce dropouts in the primary education, as well as the steps that would enable stakeholder dialogue at the local level (Brown & Haihambo, 2015). In the base of the PARTY empowerment ladder there the needs of the San youth who are engaged in the primary education.

Drawing from Rocha's (1997) ladder of empowerment, the PARTY project has developed an empowerment process that addresses the San youth's needs and uses service design approach to enabling the local dialogue. Based on the work conducted with San youth groups and a series of service design workshops that have enabled local dialogues, the journey taken by the San youth creating the local dialogue is summarised below:

1. Participating in a service design workshop to define and concretise the local challenges;
2. Participating in a stakeholder mapping session to identify the right channels for the dialogue and contact relevant stakeholders that should be involved;
3. Participating in service design workshops to develop the content of the dialogue through:

a) learning to present the local challenge in a concrete form, for example, in visual or concept format; and b) learning to ideate, conceptualise and create a strategy to implement the proposed solution

4. Participating in the pitching event, exhibition or performance to discuss and gain comments/feedback from the stakeholders

Table1. PARTY empowerment ladder

PARTY empowerment ladder	Service design case	Service design tools	Power experience and locus of empowerment (based on 1997)
1. Discover: Identifying and verbalizing local challenge, discover your ability and courage to collaborative action	Creating a social sculpture/ NUU language school Upington	GRACE model, Poster, design activism (artivism), photography, collaborative and participatory workshops	Daily living skills Self-help Personal satisfaction Support Individual
2. Communicate: Create a message and a storyline, communicate through expanded networks and social media	Message to the Future/ Nuu language school Upington	GRACE model Video, storytelling	Self-help Personal satisfaction Support Individual
3. Impact: Developing an informed decision, developing a voice and shared message with the community, making an impact on the community	· Training the trainers,!Khwat tu · Radio program *XKfm,* Platfontein · Developing ethical protocol	Co-design, experimenting, video, broadcasting	Knowledge and information for proper decision making Individual development Moralized action Individual/community

4. Stakeholder dialogue - Case Radio X-K FM, a local radio station in Platfontein

Many of the PARTY activities are based on youth and stakeholder engagement and generating dialogue and thus learning about each others' situations and learning. PARTY project is focusing on methods that enable empathy, understanding of the real-life situation and ability to contextualise the challenges that the participants have. In the stakeholder engagements and dialogue, there has to be enough diversity to enable multi-vocality and heterogeneity to include variety and diversity of voices.

> "Diversity in stakeholder dialogue is strongly linked to the concept of 'learning'. Learning is a frequently used concept in studies on participation in relation to innovation processes and sustainability. In a stakeholder dialogue, learning takes place through the interaction with other actors. This has been referred to as 'social learning' in social psychology, the idea that interaction between people with different perspectives can lead to the emergence of new insights." (Cuppen 2012)

In PARTY project dialogue between stakeholders is needed to enable learning, empathy and empowerment. The project focuses on studying how service design and creative means can be used to enable this dialogue. How visualisation and storytelling methods can enable learning, empathy and communication between stakeholders? Through dialogue it is possible to understand agency and capacity for initiating and maintaining collaboration and technological or social change, thus identify the opportunities to develop service design methods and design services that support the dialogue.

In March 2017 a series of meetings and workshops were planned by PACO Design Collaborative, South African San Institute (SASI) and the University of Leeds to identify participants from the Radio staff and from the San Youth community to participate in the project. These activities were directed to understand the potential of the project and the intention of the San Youth to participate. Moreover, a series of information was collected about the actual programming at X-K FM radio, the listeners and the role of the radio in everyday life of the community. The workshops revealed that "the youths and the audience demonstrate pride in having a local community radio, but also felt not very much involved and were actually quite afraid of telling us what they thought of it, fearing to upset somebody from the community" (participating San youth). The goal of these workshops was to enable the Youth from the community to produce and broadcast a program on X-K FM Radio.

In April 2017 a series of workshops helped the youth to design and develop the prototype of a radio program to be run by the youth of the community with the help of the radio staff. The aim of the workshops was to provide participants with basic knowledge on how to structure a program and generate programme content, starting from topics that came out from previous workshops in March 2017. At the end of the first workshop, the participants simulated the broadcast of the radio program according to the topics they explored. The idea behind this activity, even if the contents were not deeply explored, was to end the workshop with a practical outcome, an audio file of the program recorded on a mobile phone. In the second workshop, participants were divided into three groups and generated three proposals for the radio program starting from the given topics: Lifestyle, Culture and Education, and Employment. The participants formalised the program in 10-15 minutes, they defined the format they wanted to apply, they wrote down the script, and by the end of the day they recorded the programme. The main results of the workshop are the recording of three radio programs that lasts 10 or 15 minutes. The youths had the opportunity to work together with and gain feedback from the Community radio staff and record the programme generated with professional equipment.

Figure 1. Workshop session - San youth designing new radio programs. Platfontein, April 2017.

In November 2017, the radio staff suggested to integrate topics and related contents generated from the workshops so far into their existing programs, rather than co-creating a brand new program with the youths. This was the best possible solution, because a new independent program must be approved by South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) who own and manage X-K FM radio. At the same time integrating the work of the youth into existing radio programs was more feasible in terms of commitment and economic finances. X-K FM radio is always looking for the content and topics that would raise more interest within the community and this opportunity matches with their goal and vision: to uplift and empower the SAN community. Therefore, the project focus shifted from creating an independent programme to co-designing a platform/service/initiative that would facilitate the youth involvement and participation in the collaboration with the Radio station. The aim of this integrated youth radio initiative was to strengthen the dialogue between the youths and the community, giving voice to the youths through X-K FM community radio. A further aim is also to create opportunities for the youth to get both exposure and training so that to learn new skills and knowledge useful for their future employment.

To investigate the interests of the youths in collaborating with the radio, questionnaires was distributed to the youth in the community through workshop participants who came back after a few days with the results. Four questions asked were: 1. Age; 2. Would you like to have a say in the X-K FM Radio program? Yes/no? Why? 3. If yes-How would you let X-K FM know your ideas? 4. Which role would you like to have when working with X-K FM?

Among 65 questionnaire participants s, nearly two third of the ones below 18 years old said that they would like to collaborate with the radio, and 32 of 37 participants ages between 18 and 27 said that they would also be interested in collaboration. The answers were put in three concentric circles inspired by the Golden Circle methodology of Sinek (2011): Why, How, What. They came up with eight ideas of collaboration: 1. Event 2. Content contribution 3. Internship/ Training program 4. Open mics for youth 5. Youths playlist on demand (Music and topics) 6. Quiz & Competitions for youths 7. Shout outs 8. Management of the Facebook page.

The radio staff was also asked to complete a questionnaire that aims to investigate their interests in involving the youths in the radio program activities, and identify the most appropriate modality. Main questions asked were: 1. Role in the radio; 2. Would you like that the X-K FM Radio collaborate with the San youth? Yes/no? Why? 3. If yes - What do you think San youth can bring to the radio? 4. How would you think this collaboration between X-K FM and youth could be done (E.g. Communication channels)?

The answers gathered from the staff questionnaire were also mapped onto the Golden Circle. The staff's Golden Circle was compared with the youth's Circle developed previously. The comparison leads to a range of ideas for possible collaborations. Then a workshop was run, where the San youth and Radio staff voted for their favourite idea and worked together to design a collaboration system. To define the details of the system, a resource blueprint tool was used to generate a list of actions, stakeholders and resources needed. Through PARTY project, a collaboration has been initiated and set up between the Radio and the San youth in Platfontein, if approved by SABC, the implementation will start in February 2018.
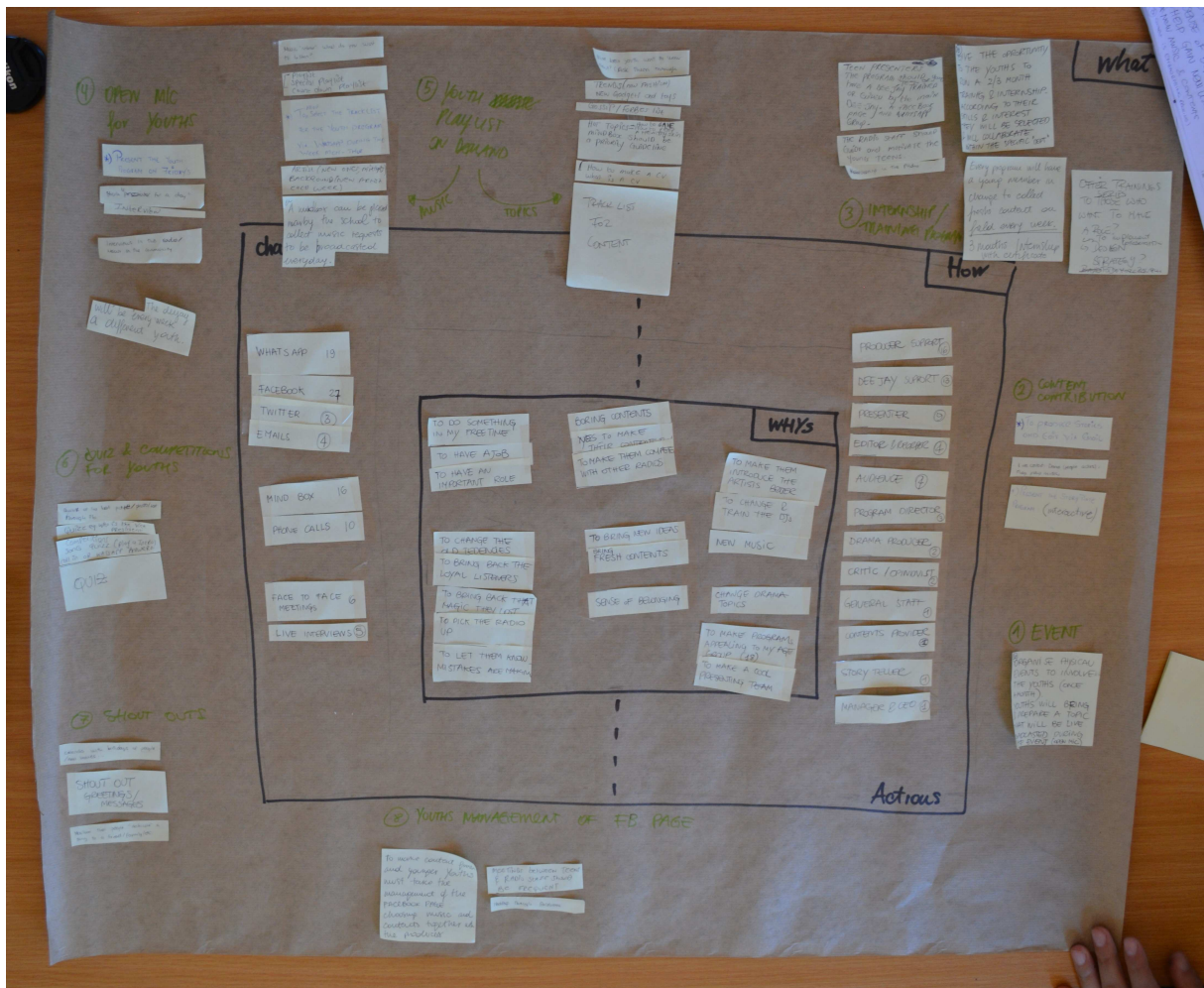

Figure 2. Workshop session – Golden Circle developed by the youth. Platfontein, November 2017.

This is an initiative to support the collaboration between the San youth and the radio staff. Through this initiative the youth would have a "voice" in the local media, learn new skills and get exposure and experience, all of which are important for their future employment.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the collaboration between the Radio Staff and the youth, PARTY researchers presented a toolbook developed by PARTY project which is a collection of the

tools adapted, created and tested during in the first two years and a half of the project. as a practical manual for planning and organising workshops. Together with the toolbook, a short video was produced to show how the toolbook has been used in practice. These tools helped and will further support the dialogue and collaboration between the youth and radio staff to co-create the contents of the Radio.

5. Discussion and main findings

PARTY project focuses on investigating the use of service design in creating the local dialogue. The role of local organisations is immensely important in this as well as the local contextual understanding and the respect to the San youth, their community and tradition and contemporary culture. Service design methods enable creating holistic understanding of local context as well as to challenges both the local organisations as well as the San youth and their communities encounter. Service design creates understanding about the concepts related to local empowerment. Meaningful encountering with purpose and action are something that all stakeholders are reaching out. Tools and training are the means for creating capacities that enable dialogue. In the case of PARTY project, this focuses on service design and the use of art and creative tools to create both capacities and meaningful action.

The PARTY process and empowerment ladder utilize artistic and service design methods in order to empower the youth and create the local dialogues. The main prerequisite for enabling local dialogue is in discover one's self awareness, worthiness and sense of self pride as well as ability and courage to collaborative action. We develop artistic and creative tools and methods so that the participation becomes more accessible and attractive for all the user groups and participants, irrespective of education level or experience. The feelings of power are gained through self-control and recognition of the importance of resources available in the surrounding environment at the 'individual empowerment' level in Rocha's ladder. We also experiment the conventional design skill, prototyping as the strength of the design approach that helps the youth develop a better knowledge for problem-solving and action plan generation. From the self awareness of the singular person to the collaborative awareness of the San youth; a positive upgrade that push the youth to become agents of change in their communities. A group of people who share the same life challenges/wishes is able to express more complex solutions than a youth alone. At the same time being agent of change in their home community put themselves in a prominent role in front of the rest of the community members but even more important in front of the local stakeholders who recognise the important active role of the youth. In Namibia, for example, we have been able to organize a public pitch where the San youth of Windhoek have presented to local stakeholders the new concepts designed during the service design workshops and the result was really positive: from one side the youth felt proud to have a voice in the development of their community and from the other side the stakeholders gave positive suggestions on how to implement simple concepts into pilot projects. Together with that, both stakeholders and youth recognized the service design method as helpful in leading the creative process of individuals and groups who never did something similar before. The pitch has been also an important event that enabled the dialogue between the San youth and the local stakeholders who defined themselves interested in being updated on the future developments of the concepts.

The main impact of PARTY project is in discovery phase where the main focus is on use of service design and creative methodologies for supporting self-help and individual growth as well as problem-solving skills that support solution orientations. This was demonstrated especially in the service design workshops facilitated by PACO Design Collaborative.

The short term impact would lay in the discussions and engagement activities with the stakeholders raising awareness of the issues and challenges of the San youth. Development of the framework, process and PARTY empowerment are keys to more long term impact and means for creating more structural change. Raising awareness and dialogue are keys to policy change. This would need more time and large scale local and national effort.

During the research it has been noticed that in order to have positive results using service design methods is really important that the researchers use the appropriate approach. Designing and using the proper tools is important but presenting the tools with the suitable approach is essential in order to have a successful workshop. To work with a marginalised community means first of all to create a common ground where different cultures, different sets of behaviours, symbols and beliefs meet, avoiding misunderstanding. A practical toolbook has been created by PARTY researchers with the aim of being used to organize and run workshops with marginalized communities and more in specific with the San community. The book is structured in different chapters and one chapter is fully dedicated to the engaging phase, and it collects a series of behaviors/rules important to know before starting to work with the San youth. The chapter has been developed with a local association working with the San (SASI) and an anthropologist. Having a local partner during the workshop session is also really important because they are cultural translators of the local culture. For future researchers, especially for design researchers who are not used to work with marginalized communities it has recommended to understand in-depth the appropriate approach to use.

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Authorship

SM and TT prepared the manuscript, SR participated in the writing of the radio case and ED, EF, DJ and AS worked on the radio case with the youth and radio staff.

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