

A PROUD Masterclass

Co-design and Empathy

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CvdBremen

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Fancoise Vos
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Fabienne van Leiden
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Goals Masterclass

From my 15 years of experience in empathic design & cultural diversity I want to share my knowledge, experience and insights with others. I also want to inspire with examples of others. The goal of this masterclass is an exciting and inspiring afternoon that appeals in many ways, addressing the Proud co-design principles 2-6 mostly (see page 22). Starting with small introductions from my own projects from practice, using inspiring short movies of others, interspersed by interactive sessions in duo's or smaller sized groups.

We are going to focus on empathy and the necessity of the added value of empathy in your co-design process.

Empathy has been the starting point of all my projects, actually it is the starting point of me as a person, my lifestyle and how I interact with others. In order to co-design you need to empathize with others. That is why I want to discuss this topic by doing small exercises, evaluating and reflecting on this. How does empathy help you in co-design projects? How can you apply it? and how can it be an inspiration in your concept development?

Introduction Speaker



Cindy van den Bremen works independent from her studio CvdBremen in Eindhoven as an Empathic Designer with an expertise in Cultural Diversity and teaches at the Technical University in her hometown at the Faculty of Industrial Design. In 2008 she established the Capsters Ltd. with business partner Karin Mastenbroek. Capsters develops, distributes and sells fashion & sports hijabs worldwide. Capsters won a Good Design Award in Japan and is part of the permanent collection of MoMA in NYC.

www.cvdbremen.nl
www.capsters.com



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Projects and experiences

Cindy highlights 3 of her projects to discuss empathy and co-design:

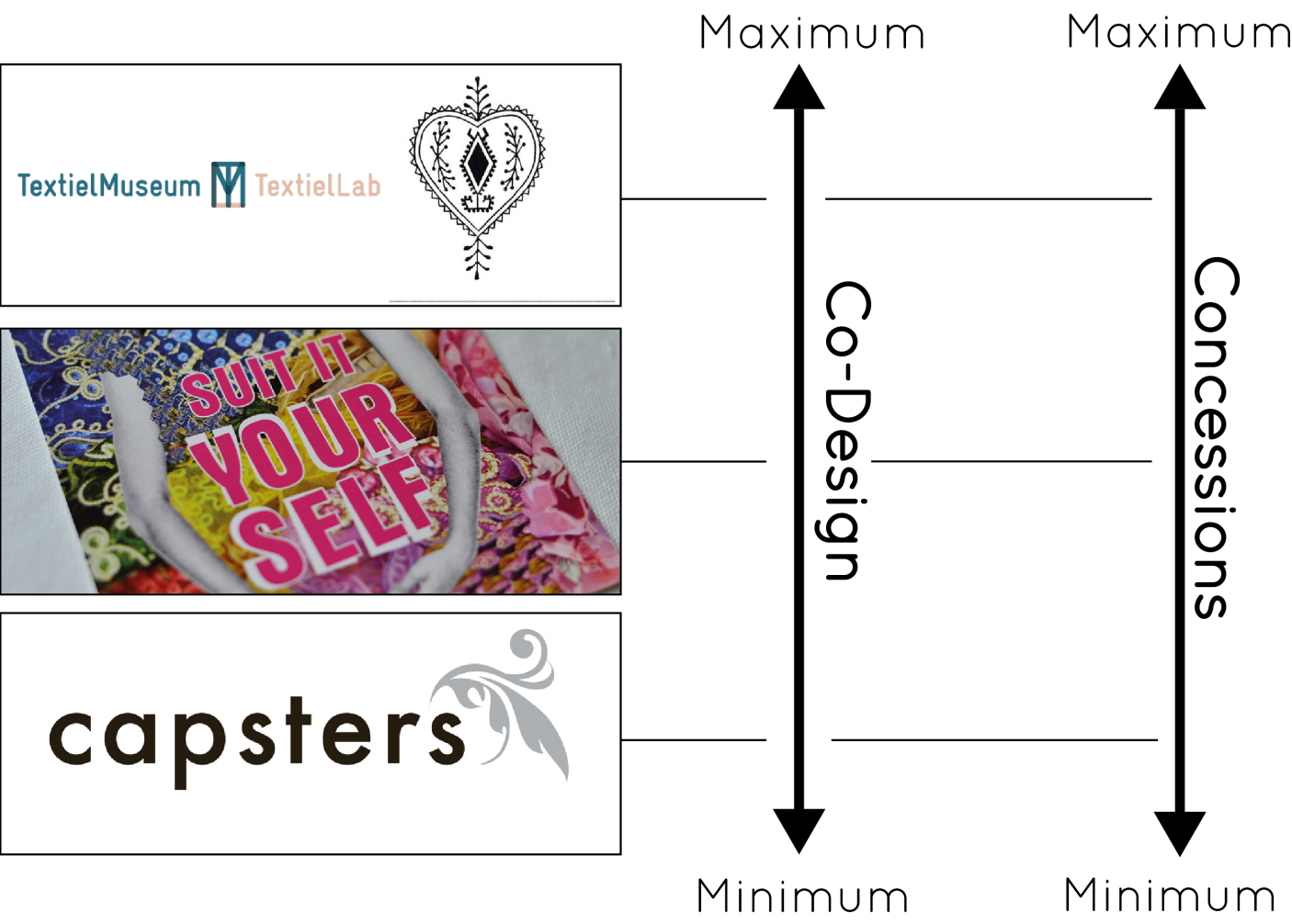
Capsters - Capsters is a range of head-accessories that can be used for different purposes. It can be worn for different sports activities. The concept is based on the idea to give Muslim girls and their gym teachers in the Netherlands a safe alternative for the traditional hijab to wear during gym-class.

Suit it yourself - The Suit it Yourself collection is based on the idea of DIY (do it yourself). It ranges from buying a simple pattern, to a SIY (suit it yourself) package with all the ingredients included (patern + material) and a ready-made SIY product that is produced by local women in het Wijkatelier. The active local women are now selfsupportive and started their own foundation as a result of this initiative.

Henna - For the Textile Museum in Tilburg Cindy organized a workshop together with Moraccan mi-grant women where henna patterns(that are normally applied onto the skin) were drawn and trans-ferred into a pattern for a tablecloth and napkins. This pattern was woven in the Textile Lab of the museum

In her social design projects the end-user is always the focus and starting point. The degree of co-design is different though. As well as the degree of making concessions. The more the process is co-design, the more concessions Cindy van den Bremen has to make as a designer.

In all of her projects empathy is a must. In social design projects you have to get to know your user or target group. As a coach at the TU/e she often sees her students involving the user at the end of the design process: for testing their prototype. Cindy believes the users should be the starting point and involved throughout the whole design process. In order to do so you have to submerge yourself in the topic. By meeting people, getting acquainted, keeping contact you gain trust and credibility, with this you can ask them to co-operate and co-design.



Assignment 1

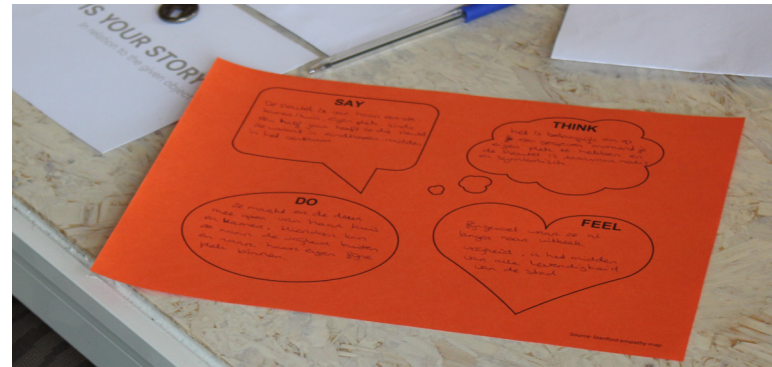
Task:

The participants are asked to do an assignment with the Stanford Empathy map in groups of 2 people. Each group are given an object. By sharing personal stories in relation to the given object the participants have to find a common ground:

1. Share personal stories in relation to the given object (hopefully deriving very personal stories).
2. Fill in the Stanford Empathy map individually based on the story you heard.
3. Find together the common ground (what is the overlap in your stories) & insights and write them down on the insight sheet.

Goals:

In a real co-design project a context is given by the project/assignment. In order to practice the use of empathy in your conversations objects are given. This creates a surrogate context, by talking about this context you derive personal stories. With the Stanford Empathy Map you are able to arrange the input and reflect on these stories.

A large, black-and-white template of the Stanford Empathy Map. It consists of four main shapes: a speech bubble labeled 'SAY', a thought bubble labeled 'THINK', an oval labeled 'DO', and a heart labeled 'FEEL'. There are also three small, empty thought bubbles between the 'SAY' and 'THINK' shapes.

Insights:

Object	Insights
Syringe	The participants had different feelings about this product. Happy versus sceptic. But also concluded that the syringe was connected to gratitude.
Scotch	Instead of a personal story, the participants shared their thoughts about this object. Both having the view of an old man drinking scotch.
Funeral Card	The participants connected together sharing their stories, giving a positive look back on the deceased.
Drip (infuus)	The participants were both listeners, though they still found a common ground by sharing stories.
Sanitary napkin	By talking about the object and using empathy map a deeper layer in the conversation was found and they were able to fill in the gaps for each other.
Condom	The product was a starting point for inspiring stories and helped them to found a common ground.
Tampon	Though not both female, the common ground the participants found was mood change as a cause of the woman's period.
Credit Card	For both participants this object stands for independency and safety.
Key	The common ground is that the key symbolizes safety and control
Pregnancy test	The common ground was that the two participants didn't have any experience with the object. Though they shared opinions about scenarios.
Sigarettes	Both persons found out they have aversion to the product. Certainly the smell of smoke.



Inspirational movies

1) Take a seat – make a friend:

By creating or forcing a setting, in this case a ball pit with balls with questions on them, people are willing to share stories and find a common ground.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfHV4-N2LxQ>

2) The power of outrospective:

Calling up empathy as a collective force, the moviemaker would like to start a revolution of human relationships. One of the most striking examples of applying empathy as a creative, is the well illustrated story of the author George Orwell. He tramped himself on the streets of London and derived stories and new perspectives. This gave him inspiration for the rest of his life.

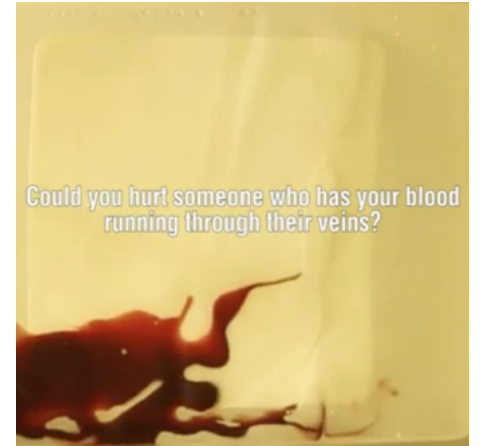
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG46lwVfSu8>

3) The Israeli – Palestinian Blood Donation Project

Empathy on a local specific level as an example of an empathy project/experience in practice.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GZxLcGSCow>

Cindy van den Bremen concludes that she maybe is an idealist, but also a realist. It all starts with connecting with someone. How terrifying, exciting, etc. it might be, there is always a common ground.



Assignment 2

Task:

In groups of 4 a 5 people, the participants were asked to create (a part of) their own Empathy Museum as was proposed in the second movie that was shown. They had to consider the following aspects:

1. What would you like to experience in an empathy museum?
2. What subjects does this address?
3. How would you create or design that experience?
4. What is needed to realize that?
5. Who do you need for that?
6. Why does it matter?

Goals:

Explore with the participants how you can create empathy by an experience.

This exercise is meant as a tool to make the participants aware of the value of empathy within a co-design project.



1) The magical empathy ambulance

In a mobile (ambulance) bus people can experience how it is to be somebody else. This is done by ‘serious playing’, for example putting on a suit that makes you less mobile. The museum is not at one place but can travel throughout the country: creating empathy for other people at different places, where this empathy is required: Social healing through empathy

2) Tunnelvision

The museum ‘Tunnelvision’ has two entrances. Two persons with opposite visions, background, etc. can enter the museum through these entrances. Via a phone they have to answer questions so they will talk about what they experience. After this anonymous conversation the two persons meet in the middle.

3) Museum of ‘customs’

To highlight one example of empathy, this museum focuses on the understanding of US customs: friends vs. enemy. How does it make you feel when people are treating you like an distrustful person? When you enter the museum with your friends. One of them will be picked out and interrogated by the staff. The other friends are free to visit the museum.



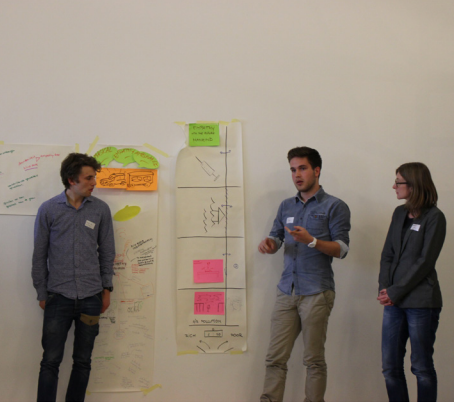
4) Museum of the future of mankind

With emphasizing big global issues, this museum tries to give a look into the future. The museum is divided into a rich and poor zone. When you enter the museum, you are pointed to a zone depending on your income. While walking through the museum you will experience the global effects together with your personal situation. For example the rich group enters a restaurant where there is a lot to eat. The poor group has only the left overs. The group can look at each other through a glass window that divides the zones.

By creating empathy for the future generations it changes your way of acting now for a better future.

5) Discussion

The 5th group had a lot of discussion about why you would go to an empathy museum and what do you need to empathize with. Important for this group was not only to empathize with others but also have self reflection. How can you learn more about yourself while empathizing with others?



Conclusion

Within a design process it is quite easy to make assumptions for your user and test the concept in a finalized stage. Once you test your prototype you might discover your design does not meet the interest of the user. When you are co-designing you involve the users throughout the whole design process: you design together with your users, addressing their needs and verifying this during the whole process. In this masterclass Cindy van den Bremen shows how you can use empathy to derive valuable stories and insights of your users as a starting point of your design process. By using empathy you can constantly relate to your user and develop the best possible design solution.

With dialogues you can derive personal stories and new perspectives of your user group. These insights can help you in the co-design process. In order to derive these personal stories it is helpful to find a common ground. This common ground can be found by using the Stanford Empathy Map. By showing your own vulnerability you will invite others to do the same. Eventually you might not need the Stanford Empathy Map anymore. You will apply it in general by collecting stories, meeting people, getting acquainted and recapturing their stories in writing for documentation. The next step is to make connections in all the individual stories and derive concepts from this.

Within a co-design process you become the translator and the hands of your user group. When you have really empathized with your users, your design will be a logical result of the process. It's like a puzzle coming together over time. This results in a design that the users identify with.



PROUD Co-design Principles

1. Agree how the success of the project will be recognized.
2. Move in, out and beyond your normal design practice.
3. Involve and respect lots of people in ideas generation.
4. Use the expertise of all participants in the process.
5. Let everyone be creative in his or her own way.
6. Explore and challenge assumptions.
7. Expect to go beyond the average.
8. Consider the time and tempo of the project.
9. Bring the process to the best possible conclusion with the best possible design outcome