

PLAYGROUND

THE CENTRE FOR TRANSDISCIPLINARITY, DESIGN & INNOVATION



Creating a Culture of Pedagogical Innovation & Awareness of Different Research Methods & Tools

The playground at Habib University is set as the most cutting edge design research facility in the country. Leveraging the spectrum of expertise available at Habib University and using Human Centered Design approach as its central pillar, The playground provides an unparalleled ecosystem for creative, collaborative and transdisciplinary approach to problem solving. Since its official launch in August 2017, playground has organically grown into the institution's preferred space, physical and intellectual, for pedagogical innovation and complex problem solving. It has established itself as the venue of choice for projects involving design, making, transdisciplinarity and innovation for students, faculty and our industry and community partners. The complex challenges that we face today require us to think beyond disciplinary boundaries. It is also essential that these problems are both understood and addressed from the lens of the user. Keeping these ideas central to problem solving approach, All courses, workshops and pop-ups routed through the playground feature the use of a range of design research methods including but not limited to systems thinking, speculative design, service design, interaction design and communication design.

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The intuitiveness of design thinking and human-centered design methods make them a great resource both for our faculty and students belonging to all programs, at any level. They also help create a shared language and vocabulary around problem investigation and solution that will help our students in the world outside of academia, their disciplines and Habib. At the heart of the playground is the commitment to being playful – to experimenting, getting our hands dirty, creating new rules for engagement, embracing failure and learning from it, and thoughtfully de/re-constructing the way we teach and learn.

Retrospect: A Look Back at the Last Two Years

Over the past two years, the playground has played a critical role in making design thinking a key component of the Habib experience. A range of design research methodologies including Human Centred Design, Service Design, Speculative Design, Engineering Design, Systems Thinking and UI/UX have been introduced to our community. A broad range of maker tools both hardware and software have been taught through this space to our students from all disciplines. We have hosted some of the most cutting edge courses in design and innovation ever offered at Habib. We are also home to some of the most engaging and impactful pedagogical workshops that were delivered by experts from Stanford, Harvey Mudd, Carnegie Melon, UC-Berkeley, QUEST University, Parsons School of Design and HU Faculty trained at different facilities of educational excellence. We have used the breadth of skills available at Habib University to address multiple external challenges ranging from problems sets given by the government sector to the private industry.



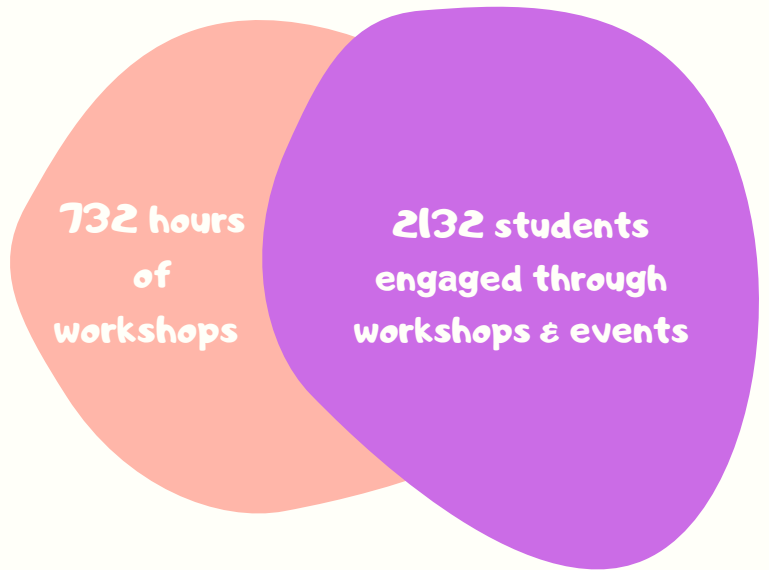
GET INVOLVED WITH US!

You can get involved with us through workshops, popups, Bring Your Own Challenge (BYOC – collaboration with industry members), classes and internships.

Follow us on facebook at www.facebook.com/playground or on instagram at [play.hu](https://www.instagram.com/play.hu) for upcoming workshops and events.

Two Years at a Glance

We have organised 48 hour hackathons and have hosted multiple startups. Over the past two years we have engaged 2132 students, offered 732 hours of workshops, and seminars, solved 5 industry challenges, hosted 18 pedagogical workshops and engaged with 40 scholars.



Playground offerings are divided into categories of pedagogical innovation, design research workshops, industrial challenges, innovative courses, student led pop ups and events. In the last two years, we were able to offer multiple sessions in each category.



23 Innovative Courses



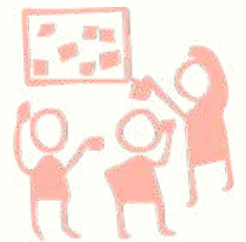
7 industrial challenges



23 student led Popups



15 Seminars & Events



70 workshops

BYKEA RECOMMENDS PLAYGROUND!

In 2018, we worked with bykea to test new app features and ideate and prototype new avenues for growth as the company expanded it's footprint in transport, delivery and payment services. Muneeb Maayr, founder and CEO of BYKEA while sharing his experience said, "a session with Habib University students was extremely valuable in soliciting feedback on platform design journey for new product development at Bykea. We'll be incorporating multiple suggestions in the C2C platform roll out, a blessing before we actually release verticals and spend marketing dollars on them."

Fall 2019 In Focus - New Workshops, New Courses, New Lessons



This year, we invited researchers, practitioners and trainers to host various workshops and events for our faculty and students to share different design research methods and pedagogical practices. We also collaborated with Karachi Neighborhood Improvement Project, The Citizens Foundation, Shehri Citizens for a Better Environment and Friedrich Naumann Foundation on some critical design challenges that required a fresh and creative perspective. We also welcomed new and returning faculty in August to share some of the latest and improved teaching practices and problem solving tools.

This magazine also includes details of a few classes that took place this year and events such as Invent for the Planet 2019, a 48 hour Intensive Design Experience organized in collaboration with Texas A & M, United States, and Code Blue, a conference on water shortage, in partnership with Data Communication & Control. We also worked on a communication challenge with an industry client to help them expand their outreach and attract customers through a DVC, the details of which is shared in this issue.

A lot of interesting and new courses are also being taught throughout the fall semester at the playground to address different challenges and to train our students with new skills and tools. These courses range from Speculative and Critical Design to Trans Design, Food and Nutrition to Fiction and Philosophy, Illustration as Narration to Artist's book and more.

This fall we also launched our first ever design research programme for the students of Habib University. Through this programme, the students look at real world problems and propose solutions and design interventions using different design research methods and tools.

OUR WORKSHOPS

Curious to see Design Thinking in action? Want to tackle real world challenges using design and making? Come join us for workshops that offer the opportunity to examine, and tackle, curated and real world challenges.

Workshops are organised through courses at Habib, with external design practitioners, or through challenges brought under the BYOC program. They can last from a few days to a few months, depending on the nature of the workshop.



Pedagogical Innovation & Prototyping

One of the goals of playground is pedagogical innovation. To help our faculty learn and practice some of the most cutting edge pedagogical tools, we liaise with some of the global leaders in education to design and implement some of the most cutting edge pedagogical tools. In Spring 2019, the playground hosted Dr. Darryl Yong (a mathematics professor from Harvey Mudd College and founding director of Claremont College Center for teaching and learning) to

help our faculty learn the philosophy of transparent assessment and syllabi and create prototypes of their future offerings based on this method of pedagogical approach. This work has influenced multiple pedagogical offerings at Habib where the language of transparent syllabus design is becoming common across many courses. Dr. Yong also worked with the Office of the President to help design a white paper for the development of CPE at Habib University.

Invent for the Planet 2019

A 48-hour intensive design experience was held from in February 2019 at the playground in collaboration with Texas A & M United States. The aim of this event was to engage students in multiple universities around the world on a single weekend to solve complex global problems. During the weekend, the students worked in teams with faculty and industry mentors and engaged in a structured design process, to solve some of the most challenging problems of the world. The end goal of this 48-hour event was to provide students the opportunity to acquire skills essential to become successful and innovative leaders.

This year around 26 universities from around the globe registered for the event, and Habib was the only university that participated from Pakistan. Some of challenges that Habib University students worked on included: improving the quality of life, advance personalized learning, providing access to clean water, preventing loneliness, enhance virtual reality, smart elderly care, equipping rural medical workers, connecting the world and fake news. The local winner of this event was Team Zindagi that represented solution for improving the quality of life by insulating households in a cost and environmental-friendly manner.

INVENT FOR THE PLANET 2020 IS ON ITS WAY!

Yes, that's right! We have registered for Invent for the Planet 2020! The event will take place next year from Feb 14 - 16. We are extremely excited and can't wait to see what's in-store for next year's challenge. Our team has

already started planning for the next global challenge. Once again, for 48 hours, the sun will never set on innovation as we again tackle some of the biggest challenges facing our planet.



Mapping the City

playground hosted a public workshop this year in April 2019 on mapping the city with Fiza Khatri. This workshop was designed to generate a subjective mapping of Karachi, based on the experiences of the participants. The participants through a series of drawing exercises mapped their city, neighborhood, and streets, and explored their own subjective limits of the city. Through collective knowledge, the participants, explored narratives of safety, mobility, access, respectability, and infrastructure.

Service Design Basics

A three day workshop on Introduction to Service Design was held on July 11, 12 & 13. The workshop was conducted by Hamad Muhammad Salim, the Principal at rocket man studio and Service Designer at Designist. The workshop aimed at providing the participants basic skill set and tools to conduct service design research and conceptualize blueprints. The participants recreated and redesigned user journey maps and service blueprints for different service experiences, such as for a hospital patient, shopper at a mall and a grocery store.



FRIENDS OF THE PLAYGROUND

Friends of the playground is our local and global advisory board of design enthusiasts and practitioners. They support the playground in a variety of ways, helping us grow and

connect to conversations on transdisciplinarity, design and innovation. If you'd like to become a friend of the playground, wave!

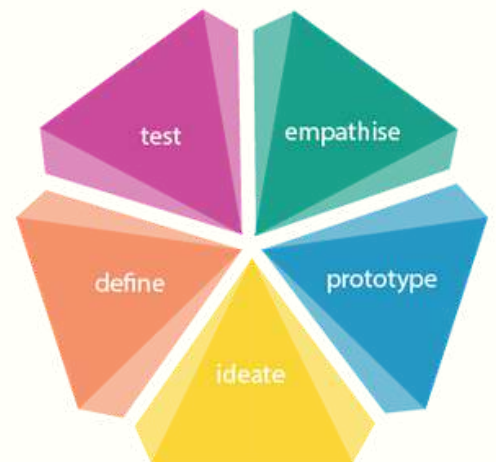


Code Blue

playground in collaboration with Data Communication & Control and Citizens for Change organized CodeBlue, a conference on water security, on March 9 to resolve the water crisis in Pakistan through science, technology and engineering. The conference was an attempt to start a dialogue among the stakeholders including policy and decision makers, communities, businesses, academics and the general public.

Design Thinking with Prospective Students

On June 28, we invited students from different schools and colleges, who visited Habib University to explore the campus and the programs we offer. We introduced the playground through a hands on workshop on Design Thinking that took the participants through all the stages. Inspired by the Stanford d.school model, the participants were tasked to create the ideal wallet for their partner. The workshop also highlighted the significance of Design Thinking in solving some of the most challenging and wicked problems of this era, and shared simple tools that could help them become more efficient in problem solving.



DESIGN THINKING GUIDEBOOK NOW AVAILABLE AT THE PLAYGROUND!

The guide contains resources, worksheets, tools and methods that can help anyone who wants to apply design thinking to their projects. Whether they are a beginner at using this methodology or a pro, the guide can equip them with process and methods of design to approach the

challenges in a new light and create innovative, people centric and desirable solutions. The guide was created drawing inspiration from Stanford's design thinking bootleg and IDEO's The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design. Do give it a READ and let us know what you think!



Faculty Flexing their Skills

playground and the office of Dean collaborated on a few workshops to share new teaching practices and tools with the faculty in the first two weeks of August this year. Through these workshop series, new and returning faculty shared innovative pedagogical practices, designed interactive classrooms and developed courses that reflect the true essence of a liberal arts education model.

How Might We Design Engaging Classrooms



The workshop started with the new faculty members learning to practice and gain empathy in the classroom. The faculty members were asked to imagine students they may encounter in the classroom and generate student profiles. These profiles covered a wide range of demographics, interests and learning styles. Faculty members then had to ideate an engaging classroom experience based on these varied student profiles. To make the profiles more realistic, efficient and inclusive, current Habib University students served as key participants in the workshop and gave feedback on the student profiles, framed problems and proposed solutions.

PLAYGROUND FACULTY AT KARACHI CITIZEN LAB

During the month of October, playground faculty, Hira Zuberi, spent two weekends at the Karachi Citizen Lab (KCL).

She was invited at Karachi Citizen Lab to help social entrepreneurs use design thinking as a tool for problem solving.



Introduction to Adobe Premiere Pro

Hannan Umrani, a third year student of Communication & Design at Habib University, conducted a workshop at the playground on Adobe Premiere Pro. The workshop aimed at teaching participants basic editing and documentary skills. The participants also learned some amazing tips and tricks to elevate their videography skills and strategies to retain viewer attention and focus.

Research Through Making

This student led workshop was based around a course taught by Ahmed Ansari* in summer 2018 at the playground. In this workshop, the students of Habib University observed different spaces at Habib and prototyped different models to enhance usability through emotional mapping and field observations. This branch of design deals with empathizing with the user as well as the service/product design through role playing and theatre. This workshop was conducted by Mehak Irshad, Communication & Design student.

*Ahmed Ansari is an industry assistant professor at New York University. He offered a series of courses, workshops and public events in Summer 2018 at the playground.



Using Design Thinking as a Tool for Problem Solving

This workshop introduced the participants to Design Thinking and different design thinking tools that can be used for problem solving. The workshop was led by final year students at Habib University: Areej Al Medinah, Mehak Irshad, Narjis Zehra & Mursalin Larik.

POPUPS ARE FOR & BY EVERYONE!

PopUps are workshops for those constrained with time and commitment. They are the quickest way to immerse yourself into the playground, and explore the various design and making activities we offer.

PopUps are for and by everyone. Students, faculty, staff (and sometimes external practitioners) offer and take part in these quick skill and knowledge exchanges. PopUps can vary from 2 hours to a couple of days.

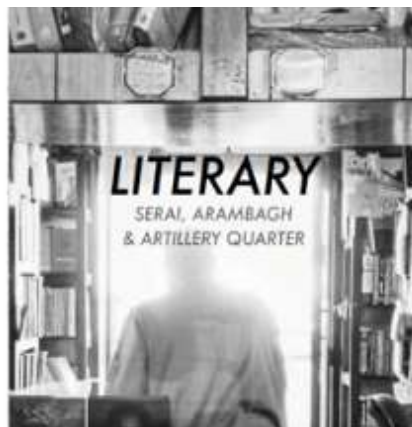
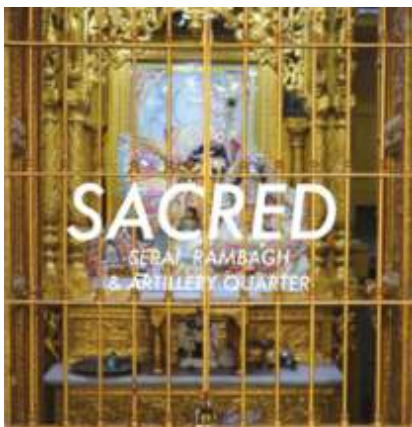
Industry Projects: Design Collaborations



Getting our Hands Dirty with The Citizens Foundation

The Baghbaan Internship Program team at TCF approached us to help them redesign the internship experience for their interns and industry mentors. Our industry and community partners reach out to us whenever they have a pestering problem that needs some creative input. We frame the challenge into a Design Thinking problem and try to get to the root cause of it. We aim to propose solutions that are financially viable, technically feasible and most importantly desirable. If you have any challenge that needs some creative tinkering then shoot an email to us at playground@habib.edu.pk

Bring Your Own Challenge with Karachi Neighborhood Improvement Project



In January 2019, Karachi Neighborhood Improvement Project brought a cultural preservation challenge to the playground. They wanted help in forming a clear direction for intervention in old town Saddar in order to preserve its heritage. Students were employed for 4 weeks, in which they conducted multiple field visits, interviews, and identified physical and non-physical elements that “make up” Saddar. They used cultural mapping skills and identified market quarter, Serai, Ram Bagh & Artillery Maidan for investigation. By the end of the fourth week, the students produced three booklets: aroma, sacred and literary that capture the results of the research and can be an informative resource for anyone curious to understand the cultural heritage of Karachi.

WE ALSO OFFER DESIGN THINKING BOOTCAMPS!

Empathize. Define. Ideate. Prototype. Experiment. This five stage process is at the heart of our design thinking training boot camp. If you have a challenge that requires a creative insight and human centered approach, then playground is just the place for you!



Using Human Centered Design Approach to Communicate Effectively with your Target Market - Bring Your Own Challenge with Oraati

We are working with Oraati, an abaya line designed to empower women through its chic yet modest style, to expand its outreach and target market. Using Design Thinking and Empathy as our praxis, we are developing a digital ad that captures the true spirit and identity of the brand. Through the ad we want to show the stories of real women and their experiences. The ad will be launched early next year.

Space, Place & The City - Bring Your Own Challenge with Shehri Citizens for a Better Environment & Friedrich Naumann Foundation



The workshop aimed at exploring different public spaces in Karachi to introduce participants to successful methods and models of placemaking and concepts of foresight. In the workshop, the participants worked on Empress Market, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Park and Burns Road to address on some critical accessibility and functional challenges. They proposed different design concepts, management frameworks and policies to make these public spaces more accessible, safe and inclusive.

MORE ENGAGING SESSIONS TO COME!

The Dhanani School of Science & Engineering and the playground team will be working together to work on a number of projects. These projects include designing

student centered platforms to improve their soft and vocational skills, and to strengthen their connections with the global and local community and industry..

Faculty Brewing Design Solutions at the playground



Engineering, Design & Innovation

Class taught by Basit Memon & Muhammad Farhan

Engineering, Design & Innovation is one of the flagships courses that demonstrates the true essence of an interdisciplinary liberal arts education at Habib University. In this course, faculty members from different disciplines, mostly people from design and STEM, come together in order to understand and address issues which are normally invisible to us. For that, students and faculty engage in a 3 week long design thinking process, in which they use empathy as a basic tool to understand some of the problems that are critical to our everyday lives, but are not being solved through any other channel.

Understanding these challenges is supremely important through empathy, and using this narrative the students and faculty zero down on a problem statement that they think will benefit the local community and society at large. Under the problem statement, the students arrive at multiple sustainable solutions. The whole process is done to ensure the design interventions and proposed solutions are desirable, viable and functional. The students also engage in speculative and critical design to investigate and understand the consequences of these interventions. All the products that are created at the end of this course are market ready products, some of which have the potential to be converted into startups or final year projects. The first iteration of this course looked at mobility issues of Karachi and the second was a collaborative project with Aga Khan University Hospital to work on the challenges pertaining to public health sector. Some of the future areas of exploration and interventions for this course include: deeper dive into mobility and health issues, looking at water and agricultural issues of the country and related engineering problems.

Design for Sustainable Development

Class taught by Amber Ajani

This course provided an introduction to the principles of design thinking and allowed an opportunity to deploy these principles for solving sustainability challenges. The students applied methodologies of design to solve challenges pertaining to the environment and society. The course involved a human-centered design process where the students worked in teams to solve three challenges: reducing plastic use and waste in order to promote zero waste in Habib University, promoting kitchen gardening in schools in Gulshan to encourage sustainable living and creating awareness regarding energy conservation in Karachi in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through social media. Students spent a significant amount of time observing, listening, analyzing, discussing, reflecting and engaging with their classmates as they designed, developed and implemented meaningful and innovative projects on sustainability at the playground.

PLAYGROUND CORE

The playground core courses are taught by the associates of the playground. These courses use different Design Research Methods & Tools to tackle real world problems that operate between the fields of industrial, urban, education, mobility and health.

SCHOOL OFFERINGS

These courses are offered by the two schools at Habib University: School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences and Dhanani School of Science & Engineering. Professors from different disciplines and backgrounds incorporate various design methodologies in their teaching style.



Drawing - I

Class taught by Zahra Malkani

This course introduced students to the fundamentals of drawing, employing a variety of methods and materials. Students expanded upon visual and observational skills and explored drawing as a way of seeing, investigating and representing form and space. Using primarily black and white media on a variety of surfaces, students learnt fundamental drawing techniques, concepts and vocabulary such as mark-making, line variation, contouring, positive/negative space, linear perspective, and more.

Urban Planning

Class taught by Farhan Anwar

The Course Urban Planning aimed to create an understanding of how cities are designed and the identification of the factors that play a huge role in shaping up the infrastructure and development of communities. This semester the students were tasked to design solutions for Hussain Hazara Goth. They went out in the fields and mapped the community to collect data, identify needs and highlight problem areas. The students designed concepts that aim to create a difference in the quality of life of the residents and hoped to bring change in the community through: self-help, establishing outreach with relevant civil society groups and government interventions. The processes and an engagement plan was developed to work with relevant government officials/agencies.



Parks & Recreation

Class taught by Gulraiz Khan

What comprises a public space? Why are they particularly important in the urban context? What are Karachi's public spaces? How are they being encroached upon, and by whom? How, and, should they be (re)claimed? This course looked at the history and theory of public spaces, while investigating issues of provision, access, quality and sustainability of public spaces in present-day Karachi. The course included field visits to public spaces throughout the semester, with a view to understand on-ground realities.

NEED TO RESERVE THE PLAYGROUND FOR A FEW SESSIONS? WE GOT YOU!

If you need to conduct short sessions for collaborative and trans disciplinary design work that allows you to quickly immerse yourself into the creative ecosystem and jump start the ideation process, then we know how to help you! Book our zones through this link: <https://bit.ly/2Zk5kkq>



Speculative & Critical Design

Class taught by Hira Zuberi

Structured around understanding the field of Speculative & Critical Design (SCD), this studio based course will cover its history, scope, core concepts, criticism and application to conduct future-facing design research, using design projects as the main vehicle for exploration. SCD will be explored from multiple perspectives using different mediums such as films, design projects, essays and published papers which will be complimented by exercises and workshops.

Trans Design Practicum

Class taught by Hira Zuberi

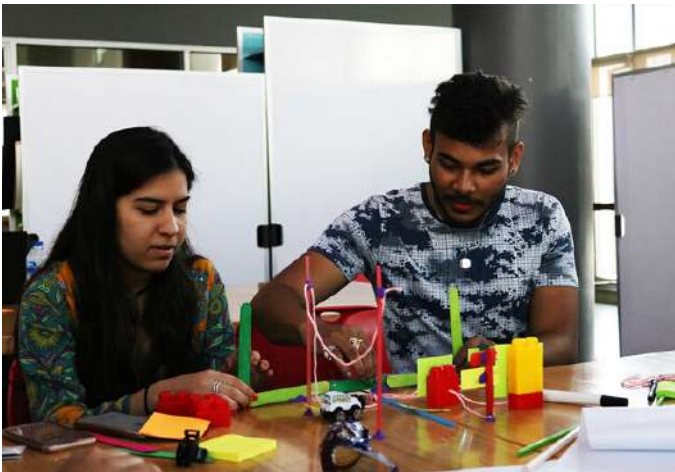
Trans Design places design and its practices under the spotlight to critically examine the role of design over the last century, as it contributed to the intractable problems we find ourselves in today. It raises questions about the contextual relevance of design, particularly in the global south, and its relationship to global design conversations. The course will immerse students in a classic wicked problem, as they develop their own understanding of this new practice.



The Artist's Book

Class taught by Momin Zafar

The Artist's Book is an intensive and hands-on course that is partly an initiation into the vast field of book arts, and partly an exploration of the rich interfaces between image and text. By the end of the course, students will be developing their own hand-bound books with new and original content.



PLAYGROUND VISITING SCHOOL - SKARDU

Playground Visiting School is an experimental teaching, research and development programme as part of playground at Habib University. The programme is intended for students and professionals in Pakistan, who wish to further their knowledge, practice and skills in design through a short and intensive format of a

visiting school that engages with a particular local environment and its relevant social issues. Next year, the playground Visiting School will investigate the development of infrastructure in Skardu and its impact on the culture and landscape. We will do this by collectively mapping and exploring potential sustainable models.

Researching Design // Designing Research

Researching Design // Designing Research.

playground is currently engaged in a host of activities to address the community problems, and expand the current skill set of the student body. We have started a student research programme under which the students sign up to participate in multiple projects that playground has received from the industry. The programme is led by the faculty at the playground, and depending upon the nature of the project, the students are given training to research and solve challenges in real time. The students engage in systems thinking, UX/UI, critical design, speculative design, human - centered design, urban design and transition design.

We are currently involved in projects that are focused on addressing and creating awareness regarding different challenges that are concerning various groups of individuals in our country :

Investigating Tharparkar.

We are looking at the impact of coal power plants installments in Thar in terms of how it has affected the climate, urban space and the city dwellers.

Inclusivity and Mobility Issues, in collaboration with Friedrich Naumann Foundation

Women's voices recorded to highlight the challenges they face on a daily basis while taking commute in Karachi.

Mapping Festivity, in collaboration with ARCHITECTEM.

This project will focus on highlighting the history, complexity, diversity and evolution of wedding halls in Karachi. The work will be exhibited at the La Biennale di Venezia - 17th International Architecture Exhibition.

OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS

The playground team is also engaged in compiling information on different users to understand and observe payment behavior patterns for utility bills and related services. We are working on a solution that will maximize the payment recovery efforts of different services.

DESIGN, MAGAR PYAR SAY

by Gulraiz Khan, Head of UBL Digital Design Lab

Human-Centered Design begins from the premise that you cannot solve a problem unless you truly understand the pain it causes. Therefore, the design process begins by a deep, empathetic understanding what people need, or want — in other words, what is desirable. From the range of desirable solutions, then, you figure out if, as a business or social proposition, which ones are financially viable and then which ones are technologically feasible. The best solution, theoretically, lies at the sweet intersection of desirability, viability and feasibility.

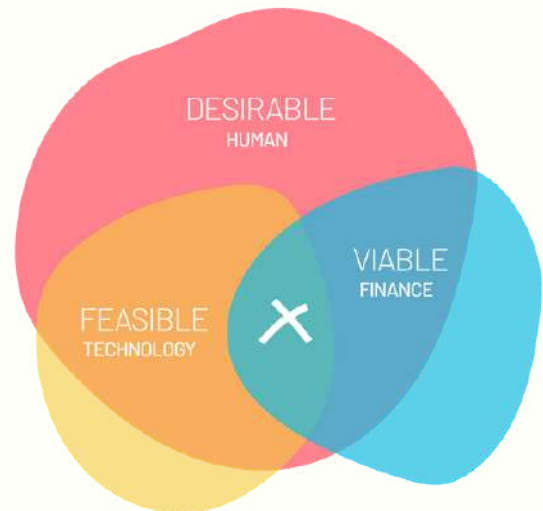
This practice is coming-of-age in Pakistan, and is increasingly being employed across industries. It's pretty commonsensical, and it's exciting. But the real draw of this methodology lies in what it delivers: business value from capitalizing on new behaviors. According to McKinsey's Business Value of Design study released earlier this year, companies that diligently focus on this design-centeredness, had almost twice the growth in revenue and return to shareholders compared to the industry average. As a practice, it has begun to have real impact on people's lives. Now, therefore, is the time for us to

take stock of its tools and methods. Design needs to be practiced more thoughtfully and more ethically. As designers, we need to sharpen our tools to be sensitive to possible repercussions of our work. How? We bake these three questions into our practice:

Whom are we designing for? Yes, the customer, or the end-user, is at the heart of the process, but there are other humans involved in the delivery of almost every product and service. These service providers, unfortunately, don't get the same level of attention. The desire to provide a seamless customer experience comes at the cost of working-class service providers. Lara Penin, the program director of the MFA in Transdisciplinary Design at Parsons, talks about the emotional cost of labor for customer-facing staff in her book *Designing the Invisible*. Front stage employees have very different experiences than back office workers. As designers, we must ensure that we consider all people involved in creation and delivery of the product, service or experience equally.

Who is designing? Design research borrows heavily from anthropology — not just the methods, also the baggage. When we go into the field as design researchers, we are not just innocuously observing and learning, but influencing the field, and the subjects, by our presence. As designers, we have to be acutely conscious of our privilege, and unpack how it affects our learning, and eventually the products and services we design. Simultaneously, we have to ensure that our research teams are diverse, on the basis of gender, class, ethnicity and so on. Otherwise, our designs will only ever work for privileged people like ourselves.

Design operates in the same flawed world that all other disciplines and methodologies do. It is prone to its failures. At the same time, it provides something really valuable. We are designing better solutions, and improving accessibility. As practitioners and educators, we have a vested interest in maturing this discipline; and sanding off its rough edges. If we practice Human-Centered Design, let's do it thoughtfully, and ethically.



THE EXPERT'S CORNER

This corner focuses on the comments and opinions of design experts and friends of the playground on different design issues and challenges. Each issue will include one expert opinion on their research interest.

This issue covers Gulraiz Khan, a Design Researcher and Strategist, who is currently heading the Digital Design Lab at United Bank Limited and practicing enterprise-level Design Thinking and Innovation.