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## **Generating human-centered social innovation in SFD with design thinking**

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### **Introduction**

Since 2006, a concept known as *design thinking* has gained popularity in the field of management as a means of using design practices and techniques to pursue human-centered innovation (Joachim et al., 2020). Though early design thinking success stories were anecdotal (Kimbell, 2011), the concept has since evolved within management practice to the point that it can now be empirically studied in natural settings (Carlgren, Rauth, & Elmquist, 2016). In parallel to this evolution within management, design thinking has been adopted and studied in a diverse range of fields including (but not limited to) education, health care, retail, and even food service (Joachim et al., 2021b). Considering the flexibility and human-centered focus of the concept, Schulenkorf (2017) highlighted design thinking as a promising avenue of future sport for development (SFD) research. Joachim and colleagues (2020) followed through on Schulenkorf's suggestion with a scoping study of extant research that revealed SFD research and practice is a receptive setting in which to adopt design thinking approaches.

Design thinking is especially useful in pursuing social innovation – a pursuit which is becoming ever more prominent in SFD practice (Svensson et al., 2019; Svensson & Mahoney, 2020). Brown and Wyatt (2010) share many stories of the successful use of design thinking to achieve social innovation in other fields, including Save the Children's successful efforts to combat malnutrition among youth in rural Vietnam (an example further detailed in this chapter). Design thinking has also been usefully employed in educational settings to empower students to generate positive social justice outcomes, such as working to prevent forced marriage. Issues of widespread malnutrition and the ongoing battle to prevent forced marriage represent what

managers call ‘wicked problems’ – problems which are not thought to be solvable using traditional approaches. That design thinking has enabled progress in overcoming wicked problems in other fields suggests that it might do the same for SFD organizations. Indeed, many of the problems which SFD initiatives aim to overcome are also wicked problems, for example: concentrations of non-communicable disease in certain populations (Siefken, Schofield, & Malcata, 2014), crime prevention (Ekholt, 2013), homelessness (Inoue, Funk, & Jordan, 2013), and attitudes toward gender roles (Zipp & Nauright, 2018) and gender equality (Meyer & Roche, 2017) within communities. As a human-centred approach to innovation, design thinking is well suited to tackle any of these social wicked problems.

While design thinking is not without critical issues that must be overcome (Kimbell, 2011), the concept has been shown to hold much promise for sport organizations in general (Joachim, 2021) and for SFD organizations, in particular (Joachim et al., 2020). Further, design thinking is increasingly being incorporated into undergraduate sport management courses which seek to prepare the sport managers – indeed, the potential SFD practitioners – of the future (Pierce, Davies, & Kryder, 2019; Warren, 2021). This chapter captures the promise of this nascent work on design thinking in sport in a manner which empowers SFD researchers and practitioners alike to adopt design thinking techniques in the field. First, design thinking is introduced as a managerial concept. Thereafter, examples of employing design thinking toward achieving social innovation are outlined ahead of an exploration of the promise design thinking holds for SFD organizations. Finally, resources – including books, websites, digital platforms, and video tutorials – are suggested as starting points for would-be design thinking practitioners.

### **The evolution of design thinking**

Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation which enables non-design

practitioners to access the *ostensive* component (the idea) and the *performative* component (the enactment) of expert design practice in order to generate value for users (Carlgren et al., 2016). Although the phrase ‘design thinking’ has been used for decades by design researchers to refer to the literal cognition of design practitioners, the management concept of design thinking appeared much more recently (Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2013). In a 2006 interview with David Dunne, Roger Martin discussed a need to move away from traditional problem-solving approaches in management and instead adopt the approaches used by expert designers (Dunne & Martin, 2006). Specifically, Martin explained that traditional management approaches rely on inductive and/or deductive reasoning and are thus typically informed by past results, while design thinking enables the use of abductive reasoning: “the logic of what might be” (Dunne & Martin, 2006, p. 513). This recognition that the field of design had something to offer the field of management aligns with Dorst’s (2011) later claim that practitioners in any field – including sport management and the burgeoning SFD space – can benefit from understanding how design practitioners work, and it laid the groundwork for the development of design thinking as we know it today.

While Martin initially highlighted the potential of adopting design thinking in the field of management, Tim Brown – current executive chair of design firm IDEO – is perhaps to thank for the introduction of design thinking into the broader management discourse. Brown’s (2008, 2009) design thinking process involves three repeating steps of *inspiration* (identifying a problem or opportunity worth exploring), *ideation* (generating and iteratively testing ideas which might solve the problem and/or exploit the opportunity), and *implementation* (making the design available to users and studying their engagement with it). Meanwhile, Martin (2010) conceptualized the design thinking process as moving through three levels of a ‘knowledge

funnel’: first, a *mystery* is identified; next, a *heuristic* – or “rule of thumb” – is formulated; finally, an *algorithm* is developed that codifies practice in a manner that addresses the mystery and heuristic.

While Martin and Brown’s foundational models of design thinking introduced the concept to management researchers and practitioners, it is the model of design thinking developed at the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford University (also known as the Stanford d.school) which has enjoyed sustained popularity and durability among practitioners and educators (Carlgren et al., 2016; Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2013). The Stanford d.school (2021) model of design thinking unfolds in five non-linear steps which prompt practitioners to *empathize* with end users (through ethnographic techniques such as interviews with and observation of users, and immersion of the researcher into the user’s experience), *define* the problem (using techniques such as ‘how might we’ questions), *ideate* solutions (through any number of creativity exercises—ideally with the involvement of end users), *prototype* designs (rapidly developing viable versions of ideas with which users can be observed engaging), and *test* those prototypes with end users.

In the process of scaffolding a framework for discussing and researching design thinking in management practice, Carlgren and colleagues (2016) sought to correct the lingering disconnect between thought and action present within prevailing design thinking models. Ultimately they identified five themes which characterize design thinking practice in management: *user focus* (maintaining the unmet needs of the user as the focus of design efforts), *problem framing* (engaging with and interpreting the problem and/or opportunity at hand), *visualization* (the manner in which design thinking practitioners conceive of their path toward meeting unmet user needs), *experimentation* (iterative testing of solutions and/or ideas), and

*diversity* (seeking and drawing upon differing perspectives within the team). As it provides a means by which to conceptualize both the thought and action of design thinking practitioners, Carlgren et al.'s (2016) thematic design thinking framework has underpinned the initial empirical studies of design thinking in sport management.

What each of these extant design thinking models has in common is a focus on the human users at the center of the design thinking concept. As discussed in the next section, it is this human-centeredness which makes design thinking a valuable concept for social innovators and entrepreneurs.

### **Design thinking for social innovation and entrepreneurship**

When one considers that design thinking is human-centered by definition, the potential utility of the concept for social innovators and entrepreneurs becomes clear. Indeed, Brown & Wyatt (2010) recognized this potential and demonstrated it using case studies where design thinking either had – or *could* have – generated more value for users of social enterprises. A powerful example of the former is a case from Vietnam involving an effort to use *positive deviance* – looking for solutions among those who are doing well – to combat malnutrition among children. While traditional approaches would see practitioners attempting to uncover what is going *wrong* – i.e., what failures might be causing widespread malnutrition – members of the Save the Children organization instead surveyed members of the community with healthy families to uncover what those families were doing *right*. Ultimately the cause of malnutrition was found to be misinformation about which foods were healthy for children, and so Save the Children began to offer cooking classes to correct such misinformation and empower parents to cook healthy meals with readily available foods (Brown & Wyatt, 2010).

Health care practice offers many similar examples of design thinking being employed to

create or enhance user experiences. A particularly compelling case is that of the Rotterdam Eye Hospital – a non-profit organization, like many SFD organizations – where managers were aiming to improve patient care. In one instance, their design thinking efforts prompted them to expand their thinking beyond the walls of the hospital itself and consider the feelings and anxieties patients were experiencing in the days leading up to admission to the hospital. For their youngest patients, this resulted in an elegantly simple initiative through which incoming patients are sent a T-shirt with an animal design ahead of their admission. When the patient arrives at the hospital wearing the shirt, they find their doctor wearing a button with a matching design and a meaningful connection is thus instantly and effortlessly made (Deichmann & van der Heijde, 2016).

While these examples of design thinking applied to social innovation in practice are impressive, it is also interesting to consider the value design thinking offers to the social innovators and entrepreneurs of the future – specifically: university students with a (typically passionate) interest in matters of social justice. Since 2017, the lead author of this chapter has been involved in the delivery of the undergraduate subject Design Thinking for Social Innovation (DTSI), a final-year elective offered to students in the School of Communication at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). The subject sees student-practitioners form teams and take up a challenge presented by a chosen client – typically a real-world organization facing a wicked problem. Though these clients vary in regard to the scope and scale of their operation, all of them seek to make positive strides for social justice within their field. Past clients and their associated wicked problems have included: the Australian Federal Police and their efforts to prevent forced marriage, a not-for-profit restaurant which exclusively hires and trains recent migrants, a mental health support service for UTS students, and a film studio seeking to support

LGBTQI+ filmmakers and amplify their stories<sup>1</sup>.

The delivery of DTSI is structured in step with the Stanford d.school (2021) model of design thinking. Each highly interactive session of DTSI is dedicated to one step of the design thinking process and students are guided through practical activities and techniques to achieve, in order: empathizing with their client's users, better defining their client's problem, ideating solutions to their client's challenge, prototyping those solutions, and testing their prototypes with their client's users. The potential of the process to generate creative outputs is evident in the fact that two groups undertaking the same challenge can generate meaningfully different solutions to said challenge. Indeed, two teams recently accepted a challenge from the lead author (who was acting in a non-teaching capacity as a client) to design a single sport program which achieves both a sport development goal (specifically: maximized athlete skill development) and an SFD goal (specifically: maximized social capital generation). Though both teams ultimately developed a mobile software application (app) as a component of their solution, each team employed their app differently. Indeed, one team's app was designed to bring users together for impromptu Ultimate [frisbee] matches while the other team's app was only one component of a broader program which sought to use sports of culturally diverse origins to help community members and recent migrants come together. That two groups generated such distinct solutions to the same challenge reflects the infinite variance in the basic humanity of the users which each group sought to serve while highlighting the usefulness of design thinking in serving such

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<sup>1</sup> The full subject outline for DTSI – including an overview of assessments, learning objectives, and weekly topics – is available at <https://handbook.uts.edu.au/subjects/details/54096.html>



diverse users. Considering SFD organizations likewise aim to serve infinitely diverse populations (Schulenkorf et al., 2016; Svensson & Woods, 2016), the value design thinking might hold for such organizations becomes clear.

### **Design thinking in SFD**

Brown and Wyatt (2010) note that “many social enterprises already intuitively use some aspects of design thinking, but most stop short of embracing the approach as a way to move beyond today’s conventional problem solving” (p. 35). Early work on design thinking in sport has found the same is true of sport organizations in all sectors, including the non-profit/volunteer and public sectors in which many SFD organizations operate. Joachim et al. (2020) conducted a scoping study of recent SFD articles in key journals (n=80) in search of indicators that SFD organizations are capable of the *performative* dimension of design thinking practice. It was thought that where organizations are capable of the performative dimension of design thinking, they would need only to engage with the *ostensive* dimension – i.e., adopt the human-centered focus of design thinking – in order to develop a ‘complete’ design thinking practice and thus generate enhanced value for their users (Joachim et al., 2020).

The scoping study of Joachim et al. (2020) ultimately discovered alignment with all five of Carlgren et al.’s (2016) themes of design thinking practice in 14 of the 80 reviewed articles.

Table 1 summarizes key indicators of alignment presented by these 14 articles.

**Table 1**  
Indicators of design thinking alignment among SFD articles aligned with all five themes.

Indicator of alignment	Corresponding design thinking theme	Selected examples of indicators among <i>totally aligned</i> articles
Deep user understanding	User focus	A study of servant leadership within Street Soccer USA which sought the perspectives of followers (i.e., the ‘users’ of servant leadership) in order to understand the leaders (Wells & Welty Peachey, 2016).

Diversity of perspectives	Diversity	Seeking a diversity of perspectives as a function of time, such as in a study of past and present players within a school-based sport program (Olushola et al., 2013)
Test to obtain user feedback	Experimentation	A study of Marist Institute graduates which considered the manner in which current practice could inform future practice, thus creating a constant feedback loop of testing and improvement (Walters et al., 2018).
Futuristic thinking	Problem framing	Connecting empirical observations to theoretical perspectives in order to inform future practice <i>and</i> future development of that practice within the Leadership and Empowerment through Sport organisation (Meir, 2017).
Bias toward action	Visualisation	Using existing infrastructure as a means of taking immediate action – such as the use of existing physical education programs (Mandigo et al., 2016) – rather than taking the usual academic approach of reviewing the literature and articulating a proper methodology before taking action.

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For SFD organizations – and social innovators and entrepreneurs, specifically – the techniques outlined in Table 1 are a promising starting point for engaging with design thinking to better serve users. Importantly, the findings of Joachim et al.’s (2020) scoping study highlight that the users of SFD organizations are not always only the participants in SFD programs. Indeed, a user might be thought of as any stakeholder who stands to have unmet needs satisfied through their involvement with a given SFD initiative. Consequently, design thinking approaches can (but certainly don’t have to) aim to serve volunteers, sponsors, coaches, administrators, and even the guardians or significant others of participants. This is an essential consideration for any SFD organization that chooses to pursue design thinking, as the involvement of users in the design thinking process is an integral part of the process (Brown, 2009, 2010). The diversity of perspectives that such user involvement creates could also be usefully expanded to include disconnected or subjugated local voices – a move which might help close the gap between those who deliver SFD programs and the participants who stand to benefit from the programs (Nicholls et al., 2011). Recall the example of Save the Children and their efforts to combat malnutrition among rural Vietnam youth. While the problem was ultimately found to be misinformation, the

solution of offering cooking courses was generated only after considering local cultures as described by local voices. A design team less engaged with the local community might have attempted to correct misinformation with a less imaginative response – by distributing an informational pamphlet, perhaps – but such a straightforward initiative might not have had nearly the positive impact that cooking courses did. Considering SFD work has been accused of generating outcomes that are often short-lived (Schulenkorf, 2013) or modest in scope (Sugden, 2010), SFD practitioners would do well to follow the example of Save the Children by considering the broader societal and cultural contexts into which their programs are being integrated or within which their interventions are being deployed. Such consideration can be easily achieved by including community members in the design thinking process.

If SFD organizations successfully expand their concept of which stakeholders constitute users, they might also expand in kind their concept of where the ‘journey’ of those users begins and ends. Managers at Rotterdam Eye Hospital engaged in such expanded thinking about their patients’ journeys. Recall the example of the hospital’s program through which incoming patients are sent a T-shirt in advance of their admission. As one component of the hospital’s design thinking efforts, the T-shirt program (and the expansion of the user journey that it represents) generated a 47% increase in admissions (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). Joachim et al.’s (2020) scoping study reveals that SFD studies are already capable of expanding their thought in this manner. For example, in a study of the Youth Development through Football (YDF) program in Africa, Burnett (2013) considered the perspectives of not only managers and participants but also the perspectives of the significant others of participants, effectively expanding the scope of the study to include participants’ life outside of YDF. Burnett’s (2013) study also highlights the necessity for social innovators and entrepreneurs to expand their

consideration of participants' lives. Indeed, the study revealed that while social benefits were generated, they fell short of participant expectations (Burnett, 2013). As a means of achieving empathy with users, design thinking might allow SFD researchers and practitioners to better align program goals with user expectations.

Overall, SFD organizations are often concerned with overcoming persistent – and thus wicked – social problems. To increase physical activity as a means of reducing the risk of non-communicable disease in Vanuatu, Siefken and colleagues (2014) focused a 10,000 step walking challenge on female civil servants. Such a specifically-focused population allowed the researchers to better 'fit' the experiment into the rhythms of the participants' life – a clear 'user focus' that increased the likelihood of success. Elsewhere, researcher attempts to make sense of broader social issues such as attitudes toward gender roles and gender equality have pursued a 'diversity of perspectives' to better understand any extant problems. Specifically, Zipp and Nauright (2018) sought the perspectives of both boy and girl participants in an SFD initiative, while Meyer and Roche (2017) captured the perspectives of both the youth participants and their adult coaches in examining how participation in an SFD program is associated with the gender equality attitudes of those groups. While these studies outline promising progress in tackling known social wicked problems, the centrality of the participants in each study (to say nothing of the incidental alignment with indicated design thinking themes) foregrounds the usefulness of focusing on human users in SFD initiatives – a focus which design thinking enables and enhances.

While design thinking has yet to be empirically studied in SFD practice, the scoping study of Joachim et al. (2020) reveals that some SFD organizations are already capable of the *performative* dimension of design thinking practice and need only to engage with the *ostensive*

dimension to generate the user value which design thinking is uniquely capable of generating. This early work validates Schulenkorf's (2017) suggestion that design thinking is a promising avenue for SFD research. Further, design thinking traits have been found to characterize the culture of innovative SFD organizations (Svensson & Mahoney, 2020). Clearly there is promise in pursuing the study of design thinking in SFD practice. The next section outlines the road forward for such work.

### **Design thinking resources for SFD research and practice**

A vast number of resources exist for the researcher and/or practitioner who would like to adopt and employ design thinking approaches in their pursuit of social innovation and entrepreneurship. Better still for SFD organizations with limited resources: many of these resources are free and available online. In this section we highlight and discuss the most useful books and articles, websites, digital platforms, and video tutorials with which we have directly engaged in our work as design thinking educators and researchers. All of these resources represent excellent starting points for adopting design thinking into SFD practice.

#### ***Books and articles***

Some of the most useful design thinking books and articles continue to be those which introduced the concept to the broader management discourse. Specifically, the work of Tim Brown and Roger Martin continues to influence design thinking practice and research. Brown's (2009) book *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation* defines design thinking as an approach to innovation and uses stories of real-world examples to detail his three-step process for undertaking design thinking in practice. This process is more succinctly outlined – along with the psychological profile of design thinking practitioners – in a Harvard Business Review article titled *Design Thinking* (Brown, 2008). Of

particular interest to social innovators and entrepreneurs, Brown and Wyatt's (2010) article *Design Thinking for Social Innovation* illustrates how design thinking has enabled organizations with limited resources to tackle complex social problems around the globe (including the example Save the Children discussed previously in this chapter). Meanwhile, Martin's (2009) book *The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage* assumes a predominately psychological approach in explaining the 'intuitive thinking' used by design thinkers, the role of organizational leaders in undertaking the design thinking process, and how all of the above contributes to the development of design knowledge within the organization.

### ***Websites***

IDEO and the Stanford d.school have created continually-updated websites which outline the design thinking process and point to other design thinking resources. IDEO's (2021) online design thinking hub evolved from Tim Brown's design thinking blog, which was discontinued in 2018, but is still available and linked to from the current hub. The hub is a useful introduction to the concept of design thinking and links to many case studies of successful engagement with design thinking. Courses for techniques are available, though these carry a financial cost. However, the Stanford d.school (2021) offers a 'design thinking bootleg' which outlines their own five step design thinking process, complete with practical techniques for undertaking each step.

### ***Digital platforms***

Even when the design thinking process and its attendant techniques are clear, the logistics of organizing such a process can be challenging for SFD organizations, many of which feature geographically dispersed members. In such instances, digital platforms such as Sprintbase (sprintbase.io) can help facilitate the design thinking process. Sprintbase is a digital 'engine'

which guides practitioners through the design thinking process as individuals and as a team. For example, members of an organization might meet (either virtually or in person) for instruction on how to empathize with users, but those members will then be sent away to do the necessary fieldwork (to interview or observe participants, perhaps). Each individual member of the organization then asynchronously records their findings on the platform ahead of a synchronous team meeting to interpret the findings of the whole team. Each step of the process unfolds in this way, allowing teams to make steady and guided progress.

While platforms like Sprintbase are purpose-built to facilitate design thinking, other planning and collaboration platforms (e.g., Monday or Trello) can also be modified to organize design thinking efforts in much the same way that Sprintbase does. The benefit of this approach is that many SFD organizations will already be utilizing a planning platform or tool of this type.

### ***Video tutorials***

Perhaps the biggest stumbling block that would-be design thinking practitioners encounter is: how can an abstract instruction such as ‘empathize with users’ be translated into practical activities and techniques? Similarly: how does one begin to ‘ideate’ in a human-centered manner? While the resources discussed so far in this section do a fine job of illustrating such practices, there is nothing quite like ‘seeing’ such practices unfold. Many such videos can be found for free on YouTube and other video-sharing platforms.

A particularly useful resource is the YouTube channel of German design firm AJ&Smart (2021). This channel features a number of tutorials for discrete design activities. One such activity – the Lightning Decision Jam (LDJ) – has been employed and studied in sport management practice (as discussed in the next section) and is illustrated by AJ&Smart (2018) in a very accessible 22-minute video that walks practitioners through every step of the activity. As

they are easily digestible and asynchronously accessible, these videos – and others like them – do an excellent job of bridging the gap between (often abstract) descriptions of design thinking and undertaking the work in practice.

### **Current research, critical issues, and future directions**

To date there has been only one empirical study of design thinking in the practice of a sport organization: a case study of the front office of the Sydney Sixers, one of eight clubs in the [Women's and Men's] Big Bash League, Australia's professional T20 cricket competition (Joachim, 2021). Despite being a professional sport organization, the Sixers pursue hybrid for- and non-profit goals (Joachim et al., 2021b). Considering that SFD organizations are increasingly adopting innovative hybrid practices (Raw et al., 2019), the case study of the Sixers and their use of design thinking holds much value for those who would pursue social innovation and entrepreneurship within any sport organizations, including those within the field of SFD.

The existing practice of the Sixers was found to align with all five of Carlgren et al.'s (2016) themes of design thinking, suggesting that the Sixers' staff were already capable of the *performative* component of design thinking and needed only to engage with the *ostensive* component – i.e., the human-centered idea of design thinking (Joachim et al., 2021a). An intervention was then undertaken to identify a design activity which would establish this human-centeredness. A structured brainstorming activity – the previously mentioned LDJ – was found to both suit the Sixers' preferred way of working and maintain their existing links to design thinking themes (Joachim et al., 2021b). Ultimately, the Sixers adopted the LDJ into their ongoing annual strategic planning cycle, establishing a human-centered approach within their preferred approach to planning (Joachim, 2021).

The Sixers case study, along with the scoping study of design thinking themes in extant



SFD research that was outlined earlier in this chapter (Joachim et al., 2020), highlight design thinking as a useful derivative theory in the sport management field that is worthy of future study. Indeed, the overall three-phase design of the Sixers case study – exploration, intervention, and evaluation (Joachim, 2021) – provides a roadmap for future research of design thinking in SFD and other sport settings. However, Doherty (2013) warns that theories borrowed from other fields carry with them conceptual questions from the parent field. As a concept borrowed from the broader field of management, design thinking is not free of such conceptual questions and critical issues. Some of these issues – such as the absence of reflexivity in design thinking practice (Kimbell, 2011) – have been addressed in early work on design thinking in sport (Joachim, 2021) but other issues remain and thus represent avenues for future research in SFD contexts. One such issue is the potentially problematic separation of the *thinking* and the *doing* of expert designers (Kimbell, 2011). Future work in SFD and other sport settings might usefully draw upon design education research and theory to correct this lingering issue. The broad problem of designer centrality in the design thinking process (Kimbell, 2011) can be solved by involving participants (i.e., users) in the design thinking process. As previously discussed in this chapter, such an approach would also help restore local voices to the strategy and practice of SFD initiatives.

It is worth noting that when one deals with wicked problems, devised solutions can sometimes create new problems. Brown and Wyatt (2010) illustrate this with an example of an initiative in Africa to make mosquito nets freely available to pregnant women. The program successfully achieved this goal but, in doing so, created an unintended inefficiency within the local marketplace. As the free nets resulted in a drop in retail sales of mosquito nets, stocking the nets became unprofitable for local retailers and the nets eventually disappeared from store

shelves. As a result, pregnant women received free nets but no other member of the community could obtain a net at any price. While design thinking can enable SFD and other organizations to generate truly novel innovations for their users, it is not merely a toolkit to be used situationally (Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2013). Indeed, using design thinking only situationally can, for example, leave members of a community unable to purchase mosquito nets – a life-threatening situation. Rather, design thinking should be considered as a human-centered mindset, the potential of which can be unlocked through specific techniques and approaches. Considered as such, the design thinking process is an approach to practice rather than a process with any kind of ‘end’. In the above example, this means nobody is ever left staring at an empty shelf, unable to buy a mosquito net. For social innovators and entrepreneurs in SFD, using design thinking in practice means creating an organizational way of ‘being’ that evolves along with the users the organization serves. In this way, design thinking has the potential to render concerns about the legacies and impacts of SFD initiatives irrelevant. Future work in this space can show us the way.

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