Co-design and Community Building Through Soccer

Paulina Cornejo Moreno- Valle
CENTRO UNIVERSITY, Mexico City, MEXICO
pcornejom@centro.edu.mx

Abstract
In 2015 CENTRO University relocated its campus to the America neighborhood, a complex urban area of Mexico City, with a severe lack of community bonds. As part of its commitment for the professionalization of creativity, the Social Design Hub of CENTRO promotes an experience and place-based education which encourages students to collaborate and build exchanges with neighbors that can add value to the community as a whole. The paper addresses the design, prototyping and implementation of a community soccer project co-designed with neighbors at a Social Design and Innovation Master’s Degree Workshop. It gathers two and a half year of experiences and follow-up through different successful and failed initiatives. The featuring of this social design project and its follow-up seeks to share the lessons learned and contribute to the applied research and reflection on how a specific project can trigger new conversations and opportunities, while building trust and community bonds among participants.

Author keywords
Community soccer; social design; design for social innovation; social innovation.

Introduction
“The real work of social innovation is to fix our broken human systems. The way to do that is by inviting real diversity into our lives; seeing and then removing the boundaries between us” (Heller, 2014).

In 2015 CENTRO, a private university specialized in creativity in Mexico City, relocated its campus to the America neighborhood. This new location inspired the creation of the Social Design Hub, an initiative aimed at promoting collaborative design approaches and raising awareness on the potential of creative professionals to effect positive social change in their local contexts. Colonia America is a neighborhood located in the northwest of the city. Along with its surrounding colonias (16 de Septiembre, Daniel Garza and part of
Ampliación Daniel Garza), it forms a triangle bordered by two main avenues, Constituyentes and Observatorio, and the Periférico beltway. It is an area with a heterogeneous social composition, inhabited mainly by young adults and adults (OVIE, 2017), and characterized by a lack of recreational spaces, a disintegration of community life, criminal behavior among teenagers, and a growing climate of fear and distrust.

Table 1: Local social composition. Social Design Hub. 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>America</th>
<th>Daniel Garza</th>
<th>16 de Septiembre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 14 years</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 24 years</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 44 years</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 – 64 years</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and up</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inhabitants: 6,326 5,827 1,383


Urban mobility is very complex, and the area suffers from chronic traffic congestion (most of our students and staff are car dependent). The poor quality of the built environment is a very important issue particularly for pedestrians. In addition, the absence of traffic lights over the main Constituyentes Avenue (removed over a decade ago), the unsafe and defective sidewalks and the perception of insecurity discourage people from visiting Chapultepec Park (the oldest and largest in Latin America) located just across the Avenue.

Since CENTRO’s re-location to the Colonia America, one of the main challenges of the Social Design Hub has been the debunking of assumptions. On the one hand, among staff members and students regarding the negative stereotypes and prejudices of the neighborhood and its residents; on the other hand, among neighbors regarding the false beliefs about the institution and its negative impacts (i.e. that university swimming pools cause water shortages in the community, a false assumption because CENTRO has no swimming pool and is a LEED Platinum building with a rainwater collection system).

The Social Design Hub team is supported by a cross-disciplinary group of experts in the fields of design, arts, film and media, psychology among others. Strongly driven by collaboration and an experimental and human-centered design approach, the Hub has worked to change the mindsets and prevailing ideas inside and outside the university. For over four years, conversation by conversation, it has been able to approach and eventually bring together a diversity of stakeholders including public, private and religious institutions, neighbors, faculty, staff and students, to build networks and partnerships that have also led to a better understanding of the context. The result is a space
for the co-creation, design and delivery of a wide variety of activities, workshops and even sports events, that has had the participation of more than 350 neighbors (ages 4 - 84) and over 450 students (either taking the compulsory subject of Social Design in the 7th semester of all undergraduate degrees, the compulsory workshop in Social Design and Innovation in the Master in Design Studies, doing social service or volunteering).

Contrary to the prevailing view of other institutions in the area, which remain isolated from the community, the Social Design Hub seeks to promote an active exchange with its surrounding environment. In this regard, Cipolla & Bartholo (2014) have stated that designers have a responsibility towards their own contexts, this is, the places where they are, and they should seek to transform their situations "by establishing dialogical relations with those who live in the same context”.

As part of the projects and actions (including educational activities, health campaigns and recruitment) the Hub has contributed to change the perception of both students and neighbors, and in the case of the former, to connect them to local services and resources they did not know existed. Likewise, it promotes the local consumption at the university by buying goods and services from the community and by inviting students and staff to do the same.

As already mentioned, since its founding the Social Design Hub has been able to organize and to take part in existing conversations. Despite the progress it remains a challenge to build a framework for stakeholder engagement and to raise awareness on the need of a holistic understanding of the local context and its underlying unattended problems.

Social Innovation, Design for Social Innovation and Social Design

In the past ten years, studies on social innovation, social design and design for social innovation have attracted increasing interest in various fields and from different theoretical perspectives. The following section contains a brief description of these concepts.

Social Innovation

According Phills et al. (2008) social innovation it is “a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals”. Despite the general agreement on the novelty of the solutions and opportunities for solving a social problem in a more effective way (Mulgan, 2007; Manzini 2015), some authors place special emphasis on the diversity of features related to the positive impact on the quality of life (Pol & Ville, 2009) the promotion of societal goals (Young Foundation, 2006); the underlying idea of the empowerment of specific groups (Murray et al, 2010), the transformation and reconfiguration of social relations, power structures and system change (TEPSIE, 2014). Likewise, there is a wide range of possibilities when speaking about the many forms of social innovation, from processes, technology, ideas, interventions (Phills et al.), to new products, models, services (Murray et. al.), social
entrepreneurships, societal transformation (TEPSIE) and even ecosystems (SIX, 2019).

**Design for Social Innovation**

There seems to be an agreement about the value that designers bring to social innovation. According to different authors, design for social innovation is “the expert design contribution to a co-design process aiming at social change” (Manzini, 2015); the set of design skills that can be used as a tool for social innovation (Sherwin, 2012); “the methodology of design applied to the creation of new models, products and services that address the complex social and environmental challenges facing businesses, governments, society and humanity” (SVA, 2019); or as defined by Heller (2015) “it’s interaction between people that takes responsibility for positive, systemic impact. It can take any and every physical or visible form, but it inevitably begins with the invisible dynamics and forces that drive human behavior. It takes place within the communities and systems it’s working with, not outside them”. Definitions on skills and contributions range from “working closely with participants to explore everyday activities and outlooks, and to develop design responses through prototyping, implementation and evaluation” (Armstrong et al., 2014); to design culture and creativity (Manzini, 2015); to design attitude as a “recognition of the integrative and generative quality of design and an increasing validation of design’s capacity to act as a mediating discipline that is fundamentally about facilitating creative processes that contribute new meaning and break with traditional thinking in decision-making through deliberation, stewardship and action” (Amatullo, 2017).

**Social Design**

Social Design is a term that has been in use since around 2006 (Heller, 2018) and that has gained currency in recent years. As mentioned by Chen, et al. (2015) the concept has expanded beyond its traditional core and scope making it difficult to narrow. While it usually connotes a discussion on the necessary social condition of design, its definitions place emphasis on participation towards the solution of a shared, collective problem that prioritizes social ends over market demands. Armstrong, et. al (2014) argue that “the term ‘social design’ highlights the concepts and activities enacted within participatory approaches to researching, generating and realizing new ways to make change happen towards collective and social ends, rather than predominantly commercial objectives”. In a similar way, authors Deserti, et. al (2018) define Social Design as a “movement that is characterized by a socially-oriented objective instead of predominantly commercial or consumer-oriented ends”. Likewise, Cheryl Heller (2018) describes Social Design as a collective co-creation based on the ownership of the problem and the process by all participants and more precisely as “the design of relationships and the creation of new social conditions” that include “the physical and the intangible, the human relationships that create communities and form societies”. Heller points out that “social design begins with a higher purpose that transcends commerce” and makes a clear statement on why it is not charity or corporate social responsibility. Following this idea of a more systemic approach, Cameron Tonkinwise (Lamadrid & Tonkinwise, 2016) emphasizes that “social design interventions should always be multilevel, dealing with some existing problems but also creating platforms for longer-term structural change” in
order to stop being “acupunctural” and become multistage and from within the system that is being transitioned, hence coined as Transition Design.

Social Design or Design for Social Innovation?

Some authors highlight important differences between social design and design for social innovation. In this regard, Ezio Manzini (2015) makes a distinction stating that social design has a charitable approach where design experts must work for free for marginalized groups that cannot afford the costs of design, an idea that has been rejected by other authors (Tonkinwise, 2015; Heller, 2018), while design for social innovation produces meaningful, sustainable solutions based on new social forms and economic models, not only meant for the poor and marginalized. Despite this, Manzini recognizes that the differentiation between concepts tends to overlap and have blurred boundaries, while other authors seem to use both interchangeably. An example of this can be seen in the description of the Social Design Pathways (2013) a matrix conceived “to enable designers to make more honest assessments of their social innovation efforts”.

Social Labs

Lastly, within the context of social innovation and the design attitude or the design tools and skills that are applied to it (design for social innovation and social design), it is worth mentioning the emerging global phenomenon of social labs or like-lab structures, which are seen as a new direction different from business-as-usual responses to the most pressing challenges of our time (Hassan, 2014) and as tools for systemic change (Lab Matters, 2014). Developing under a variety of names and labels, these labs are fostered by a wide range of organizations and settings (public, private sector, autonomous, HEIs). Despite their heterogeneous approaches and understandings, some authors have pointed out common characteristics such as its social (collective), experimental (based on ongoing iterative approach) and systemic nature (its solutions aspire to address the root cause of the problem instead of the symptoms) (Hassan, 2014); or its strong tendency to be driven by human-centered design tools, rapid prototyping principles, co-production approaches, and its high strong interest in engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders (Papageorgiu, 2017).

A New Conversation

The Design of the Centro-America Initiative

“Social design forms a collective sense of self that requires people to look more deeply into their own community and place (...) it allows us to see what is unique about every instance and place, as well as the common needs that make us the same. It is a way to hear our own voices in context with the voices of others who are never heard. This is the transformative power of social design to change us, so that we can apply these mutualistic principles everywhere throughout our lives”. (Heller, 2018)
“The starting point for innovation is the awareness of a need that is not being met” (Mulgan, 2007).

In August 2016, the Master of Design Studies (MDS) at CENTRO and the Social Design Hub launched the assignment of Social Design and Innovation, a compulsory workshop aimed at students in their 2nd semester. The course was designed to be an intensive one-week, 30-hour workshop delivered in collaboration with an international guest professor and based on a theoretical and practical approach. Students would explore the concept of social design and innovation from a critical perspective, while acquiring tools and first-hand experiences with users and communities that lead to the exchange of ideas and the co-design of proposals for shared social challenges.

The first workshop took place under the guidance of guest professor Scott Brown, Coordinator of Academic Collaborations at The Parsons DESIS Lab at the time. As expressed by him (Brown, 2016), the whole process revolved around exploring the possibilities of the future relationships between CENTRO and its surrounding communities and inviting participants to think in speculative ways driven by design for social innovation. The participants were twelve students from the MDS (mostly faculty members at CENTRO) and three undergraduate invited students with backgrounds in Industrial Design, Visual Communication, Marketing, Public Policy and Administration.

The workshop was structured as follows:

1. Delivery and discussion of a theoretical framework for exploring the social aspect of social design (days 1-2);
2. Exploration of the neighborhood, its challenges, and the interaction with some residents (days 2-3)
3. Brainstorm, ideation and prototyping of solutions with the collaboration and feedback from neighbors (days 4, 5 and 6).
4. Design of devices (homework - 2 weeks)

A key component of the workshop was the close collaboration with five neighbors who were invited by the Hub. The participants represented diverse community backgrounds between the ages of 18 and 51. These included
“Miguel”\(^1\), a 51-year-old former gang member and current street-vendor who was very committed to sports; “Javier”, a 21-year-old man completing high-school; “Luisa”, a 20-year-old university female student at the National Public University UNAM; “Marco”, a 48-year-old librarian of the community’s cultural center (Faro del Saber); “Raul”, a 37-year-old neighbor and employee of CENTRO; and “Laura”, a 46-year-old mother of three, grandmother and street-vendor.

Research

During the first part of the workshop (days 1-3) students were exposed to information and different perspectives on Social Design and Innovation and carried out ethnographic fieldwork, which allowed them to observe and experience first-hand the dynamics of the neighborhood, unknown to most—if not all—of them. The meetings and interactions between students and neighbors opened up the conversation on what was important for all of the participants (neighbors, students and staff) as a community. The exchange of ideas and new insights of the context was crucial for identifying challenges and opportunities.

Topics discussed included:

- The emptiness of the sidewalks and streets
- The lack of community engagement
- The high-speed of cars in the neighborhood (attributed by some students to fear of crime) and the dangers to pedestrians
- The recreational activities in the Faro del Saber community center (and the small number of participants)
- The pervasive sense of fear and distrust
- The perceived insecurity
- How to foster a sense of belonging and wellbeing

Brainstorming, Ideation and Prototyping

From days 4 - 6, students worked in four teams in scenario-building to develop what Scott Brown called as the “provo types” or prototypes carried with large speculative ideas that could spark conversations about possible future directions. Teams were supplied with materials (post-its, adhesive tape, paper and felt-tip markers) to brainstorm, capture their ideas and narrow them down to the best solution.

The selected ideas consisting of sports and artistic activities and walking tours to explore the street “altars”, were presented to participating neighbors for feedback. The most popular proposal, on which this paper will focus from now on, was to create soccer matches between CENTRO and the neighbors. Nevertheless, the lack of sports facilities in the university was seen as a major obstacle; the collaborating group proposed closing the street as the solution.

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\(^1\) Names have been changed throughout this text to protect the privacy of private individuals.
The student team refined the proposal based on the comments and feedback and on the last day delivered the CENTRO-AMERICA project, which consisted in public activations to promote the exchange and bring people and life to the streets by co-organizing street soccer matches between CENTRO and the America neighborhood.

**Figure 2** Brainstorming and ideation. Social Design Hub, 2016.

**Figure 3.** Workshop participants: students and neighbors. Social Design Hub, 2016.

**Final Assignment: Designing Devices**

As a final assignment, Brown instructed students to take the feedback of the last session with neighbors to refine their proposals and deliver a visual product in the following weeks. This could be either a short film or a poster, where design would serve as a tool to communicate and support the creation of new forms of interactions and community. This is “devices to inspire imagination, conversation and possibility” (Brown, 2016).

The final delivery of the CENTRO-AMERICA project consisted of two posters proposing the creation of a meeting point between the university and the neighbors (seen by participants as two different cultures) through the temporary closing of streets for sports, culture, food and music. According to the plan, the organization of soccer matches and activities in the public space would help to bridge the gap and build a common ground for mingling and exchange between groups, by reclaiming the street as a neutral shared space, that would help deal with the cultural, racial and economic differences.
As reported by neighbors and students, the workshop was an overall good experience which created a space for a new conversation, exchange and collaboration and helped in the change of prejudices. As far as the students were concerned, the inclusion of this new subject gave them the possibility to theorize and work collaboratively from a designer’s perspective, using their skills (mediation, empathy, design thinking) in defining a common challenge with the neighbors and exploring possible solutions. As expressed by Amatullo (2016), is applying the design capacity to mediate and facilitate creative processes.

For the Social Design Hub, it was an opportunity to strengthen relationships, deepen its understanding of the community and identify tools that could help to create new spaces and conversations between groups. Nevertheless, despite the popularity of the proposal, the task of organizing soccer matches in the street did not seem feasible in the short term. We did not have enough partners in the community, and even though we had conversations with many stakeholders, they were not sufficiently engaged with the community to do something different.

**Future Directions**

By the end of 2016 and the beginning of 2017, the Social Design Hub took part of a research project with the emblematic Palo Alto Housing Cooperative in Mexico City, 4.5 miles (7 km) away from the university. Founded more than 40 years ago and inhabited by 2000 people, the cooperative is located in what has become a very wealthy area of the city and surrounded by luxury office buildings. Please note that the figures are not provided in the text.
and residential developments. Over the years Palo Alto has managed to overcome external threats, including the increasing real estate pressure, remaining as a small town with a church, safe streets, community center and schools. Nevertheless, the older members of the community are worried that the new generations might lose Palo Alto’s sense of solidarity. (Malkin, 2017).

Part of the project’s aim was to learn from other communities, share our experiences, encourage exchange and help build capacities by supporting each other. During a conversation that involved the Social Design Hub, a neighbor from the Colonia America, and a family from Palo Alto, we agreed to take the collaboration further by inviting our communities to participate in specific activities. The Social Design Hub would open its Film-City and Urban Gardening workshops to Palo Alto members, while Palo Alto would organize a friendly soccer match on their pitch against CENTRO and its neighbors.

The invitation was an opportunity to rethink the CENTRO-AMERICA project. However, it posed a new challenge and required a different plan to form and coordinate only one team instead of two. After contacting the participating neighbors and the students involved in the project, we agreed to use the name CENTRO-AMERICA to build one team with the collaboration of neighbors (4), students (4) and staff members (4). A former participant in the workshop, who was also a teacher at CENTRO, joined this new initiative with his undergraduate visual communication students by designing a poster for the match, while the Palo Alto Community designed white and blue t-shirts for each team.

The soccer match took place in February as a Saturday activity on the Palo Alto soccer pitch and the CENTRO-AMERICA team drove in a bus/minivan owned by one of the players. The event gathered friends and families and was followed by a small celebration where participants shared drinks and food.

All of the neighbors and two of the students that participated in the Social Design workshop took part in the activity.

Figure 4. Team Picture. Social Design Hub. 2017
Findings:

- Most of the members of the CENTRO AMERICA team had a very positive attitude, were curious and interested in the collaboration.
- The integration of one team opened the possibility to reaching out for more participants interested in playing soccer (either at CENTRO or in the community).
- Despite the overall good attitude, one of the neighbors playing in the team abandoned the game, complaining that he was not going to get money and that he was not competing for anything, thus it did not make any sense for him to risk injury. The comment pointed to a lack of engagement and interest among some participants.
- The lack of sports facilities at CENTRO and in the America neighborhood was not a barrier to organizing a friendly soccer match.


Another important aspect of this match was the creation of a short video produced by professor Angelica Carrillo in collaboration with CENTRO’s film students and staff. The aim was to share the experience of the soccer match and the gathering. The video was used for social media and featured in the exhibition *In Solidarity: Living and Making, Together* (March - June 2017) held at the MUCA Roma, a venue for contemporary art, design and architecture attached to the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Residents from the America and Palo Alto neighborhoods as well as students attended the inauguration.

**Being Comfortable with Uncertainty**

In January 2018, the Social Design Hub faced a new challenge that became an opportunity: a neighbor contacted the university with requests that were beyond our remit. Nevertheless, this triggered a new conversation. As a result, the Social Design Hub planned a pilot soccer tournament that would be sponsored by CENTRO and included four teams. The team “Shuna” organized by the neighbor in question, CENTRO-AMERICA, and two more teams from private institutions in the area. The location would be the indoor soccer field located at the Deportivo Constituyentes, a public sports facility in the nearby neighborhood of Daniel Garza, less than a mile away from the university.

According to our pilot plan if we managed to get more staff and students from other institutions into the field, as well as more neighbors, we could lay the foundations for a larger network, create bonds and bring a more real-life holistic picture of the community to institutions that expressed interest but remained isolated. This seemed like a great opportunity to bring together stakeholders in a neutral space.

But the tournament did not go as planned. The teams from the invited institutions did not show up, arguing that Saturday was not a business day and that made it difficult for their staff. Therefore, the three games were played by CENTRO-AMERICA and “Shuna”, who defeated our team. The activity had a final get-together at the community sports center where participants shared food and drinks prepared by some of our other neighbors and catering providers. Despite the effort, the interaction between participants was minimal, if not nonexistent. Many unanswered questions remained.

**What Went Wrong?**

A further analysis of the tournament suggested that the previous Palo Alto experience had been successful due to the design process and the engagement of participants who were also co-organizers of the activity. From the journey in the minivan provided by one neighbor, to bringing food and beverages, designing a poster and a T-shirt and even the making of a video. They had been part of a continuing process and a conversation that, for many of them, began in the Social Design Workshop in 2016. Our previous experiences have shared a process of exchange, interaction and uncertainty. The Social Design Workshop was an initial exercise to flow towards ideas of the future and collaborate in the so-called provo-type of the CENTRO -
AMERICA project. In a similar way, the Palo Alto soccer match, was also an open collaboration that took up the idea of street soccer and turned it into reality by teaming up and flowing with the possibilities. In other words, by observing, listening, communicating, collaborating, visualizing, prototyping, refining, engaging and so on, we had been able to design a successful initiative.

![Diagram](image_url)

Figure 9. The context for social innovation. Social Design Hub. 2019.

In contrast, the pilot soccer tournament had too much of a planning-based linear approach, that did not take into consideration the stakeholders from the initial phases to get feedback and ensure the ideas were relevant and desirable (Papageorgiu, 2017); this was also missing from the design process. In this regard, Zaid Hassan (2014) exposes the paradigm of the planning-based approaches (which tend to fail) and the demand of new visions required by complex challenges based on prototyping-based approach.

Expressed differently, the tournament was a project done in silos, and it was focused on planning for certainty (and success) by pre-selecting (without the stakeholders’ involvement) four teams. Furthermore, the neighbor who had approached CENTRO with requests was not even playing as part of the “Shuna” team. As a Social Design Hub, we had failed to create the conditions for creativity and innovation by lacking a human-centered design and an open-based, experimental approach to the project. We failed, as Heller (2018) would point out, in the collective co-creation and the process, in the design of relationships.
Al CENTRO de la Cancha
Summer edition

“Design for social innovation works from the inside out, which is the only way that real change ever happens.” (Cheryl Heller, 2014)

“The places we share have a lot of potential to help us connect, reflect and make sense of our communities and our lives together.” (Candy Chang, 2016)

In the aftermath of the pilot tournament an informal encounter with “Miguel”, who had been taking part of all the initiatives since the first workshop in 2016, re-ignited the conversation around community soccer. He wanted the university to sponsor his soccer team and pay their registration fees to enter soccer tournaments held around the city. But sponsoring a team to play in locations outside the community would not really advance our objective of building bridges and creating social fabric.

Based on our past experiences and learnings, we recalibrated with a human-center approach and looked for stakeholders in order to organize a meeting to explore the idea of a community tournament. The meetings included new participants from CENTRO (faculty and staff), our neighbor “Miguel” and the priest (also a resident of the Colonia America) of the Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Church, located in the heart of the neighborhood. After a couple of sessions where we reported on the case of CENTRO-AMERICA, Palo Alto and the failed tournament, we agreed to launch a summer tournament sponsored by the university at the Deportivo Constituyentes' indoor soccer pitch. This time, we made an open call for teams in the surrounding area and disseminated with the support of our partners and through posters, parish announcements and visual adaptations for social media and WhatsApp. Many people reached out asking for more information and the first six teams to do so were accepted.

The tournament turned out to be a great success with teams playing two games every Saturday at the community center. The priest registered the Futbol Club Guadalupe team, and played as the captain with teenagers from his pastoral group. “Miguel” did not play anymore under the name of CENTRO-AMERICA and registered his team, Atlético de Madrid, formed by friends and family members, including “Javier” and his 11-year-old son. CENTRO managed to organize one full team that played under the institution’s name and included “Marco”, the librarian and neighbor, and employees (students did not commit to participate due to the summer vacation). The URSS team teenagers from different high-schools in the area who met at the Escandón Sports Center, while Oro were teenagers from the Colonia America and friends from a high-school in the Colonia Escandón. Manchester City was suspended from the tournament after not showing on time for the matches and it was replaced by an external team made up of CENTRO employees.

The teams played each other for six weeks (twelve matches), leading up to a semifinal and final match. The champion was the Atlético de Madrid. The 1st and 2nd places received sports equipment as a prize to encourage them to keep practicing and playing together. A final get-together was organized at the...
university in order to share with the participants and their families some food and beverages prepared by “Patricia” our neighbor and catering provider. Visual devices such as photos, posters and videos of the tournament were exhibited at the event.

Figure 10. Front and back image. Summer Tournament Postcard. Origin of participating teams and tournament story. Social Design Hub. 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Al CENTRO de la Cancha - Summer Edition 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quick Facts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry requirements</strong>; teams of 11 players, live or work in the area, age 10 and up, mixed or same-gender teams. No registration fee required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participating teams and age range:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• URSS: 16 - 18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CENTRO: 24 - 45 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Oro: 16 - 18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• FC Guadalupe: 16 - 39 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manchester City: 16 - 19 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Atlético de Madrid: 11 - 55 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total players:</strong> 66 (55 neighbors, 11 CENTRO employees)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhoods:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• América (2 teams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Daniel Garza (2 teams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observatorio (1 team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total matches:</strong> 14</td>
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Table 2. Summer Tournament. Quick Facts.
Testimonials:

After the matches participants from different teams shared stories for testimonials. Such as:

Our team belongs to the parish Our Lady of Guadalupe, located in América neighborhood. (...) Most of us are young, the eldest is 33 years old. Even the priest plays on the team (...) This tournament caught my attention because, during all my life, there had never been a tournament with the participation of local institutions. This lets us get to know each other because at the end of the day our lives are very different (...) In difficult situations, people feel the need to come together. And what better way to do it than through sports? (Team player from, Guadalupe FC)

My team has been playing together for around 6 or 7 years now (...) We’ve had the chance to get to know teams that are from other neighborhoods. (Team player from Atlético de Madrid)

My experience at the tournament has been very good, very exciting, and we really want to win. (Team player from Manchester City)

We come from different neighborhoods, but most are us are from around here: Daniel Garza, Observatorio or Tacubaya neighborhoods. Everyone at the tournament has been very kind and attentive and that’s something that you can't find at other tournaments. This interaction, for example, can't be found at almost any other soccer league. (Team player from URSS)

There are good rivals, honestly, like team URSS and team Manchester City. (Team player from Oro)

This tournament managed to bring together people from neighborhoods close to CENTRO, which generates a sense of community and lets us get to know one another. (Team player from CENTRO)

I enjoy playing soccer very much. Since my first semester, I had wanted to join a soccer team at CENTRO. I wanted to put something together, but I had not had the chance before. (Team player from Capibaras)

The tournament has helped us meet new people from the neighborhoods around CENTRO. We’ve met people from the church and from other teams who have even helped us out during some matches. We’ve also let several people from the area join our team. All of us cheer each other on. (Team player from Capibaras)
Fall Edition

Followed by the success of the soccer tournament and having created a network of stakeholders in the community with a common interest, we consulted participants and decided to open the call for the Fall edition. We made changes based on the feedback including more matches, in order to play every Saturday, and established new rules (to avoid no-shows). We also managed to get a sponsorship from Voit sports brand for the rental of the field, referee fees and prizes. Eight teams entered the tournament, six of which had participated before (five more asked to join but could not because of the capacity of the match scheme). The new participants were Capibaras FC, a mixed-gender team integrated by CENTRO’s undergraduate film students (eventually completed with members of the URSS team) and Franco-Canadiense, another mixed-gender team composed of a group of friends from the surrounding neighborhoods.

The teams played each other on seven occasions from October to December 2018. Even though the tournament was meant to include more than double the number of matches, so that all teams could play against each other, changes in the local administration led to cancellations of rental dates of the facilities with very short notice. As a result, only 28 matches were played.

Despite the difficulties we faced with regards to renting the field, most of the teams kept engaged and committed. Even when the URSS dropped out of the tournament, because some of the players could not attend anymore, the captain and two other players were invited to join Capibaras FC playing alongside CENTRO students for the rest of its matches. The final game was between Capibaras FC and Atlético de Madrid (“Miguel”), from the latter, was the winner for the second time. To celebrate, a get-together was held where participants shared food and drinks served by “Patricia”, our neighbor, and looked at photos and videos of the matches. The winners got backpacks, sports jerseys and soccer balls, sponsored by the Voit sports brand.

### Table 3. Fall Tournament. Quick facts.

**Al CENTRO de la Cancha - Fall Edition 2018**

**Quick Facts**

**Entry requirements:** teams of 11 players, live or work in the area, age 10 and up, mixed or same-gender teams. No registration fee required.

**Participating teams and age range:**

- URSS: 16 - 18 years
- CENTRO: 24 - 45 years
- Oro: 16 - 18 years
- FC Guadalupe: 16 - 39 years
- Manchester City: 16 - 19 years
- Atlético de Madrid: 11 - 55 years
- Capibaras FC: 19 - 24 years
- Franco-Canadiense: 16 - 24 years

**Total players:** 92

(66 neighbors, 11 CENTRO employees, 15 CENTRO students)

**Neighborhoods:**

- América (2 teams)
- Daniel Garza (3 teams)
- Observatorio (1 team)

**Total matches:** 28

**Current status**

In January 2019 the local public administration published an open call for a soccer community Winter – Spring tournament that is currently being played at the Deportivo Constituyentes. None of the local institutions and organizations in the area that have taken part in the previous tournaments were invited to co-organize or participate. It is worth mentioning that since the beginning of this initiative (previous and current) local governments have been invited to collaborate in order to widen the impact and facilitate the bureaucratic processes for renting the field. But despite having their presence at the closure of our Fall tournament and final match, it has not been possible to create a common ground for collaboration and support.
Conclusions

This paper has focused on giving an overview of the creation and development of a community soccer tournament under a design-based approach. A project emerged as the result of challenging common or “business-as-usual” approaches (Hassan, 2014) and recombining the existing resources through new conversations among community members and stakeholders.

It is important to consider that the emergence of the tournament project and its success was possible through the use of design tools and skills that not only triggered the initiative but have been essential for its continuity.

For over two years, community soccer became itself a dialogic tool for debunking false assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices, as well as for opening or re-starting conversations with neighbors and potential stakeholders. During this time, it managed to bring together many kinds of stakeholders in different stages of the process and increase awareness about community issues. It also became evidence that collaboration with the outside community can result in positive interactions and exchanges that do not represent a threat for participating students or staff (in the case of the institutions that have been in the area for decades with closed-door policies).

Despite not being collaborative in its nature, but rather an adaptation of a previous successful project, the current community tournament is a sign of change with regards of the role local authorities should be playing in the delivery of recreational activities for the community.

In regards to change, the project has also helped in the development of resilient mindsets in some participants, who are better prepared for dealing with change, uncertainty and the unexpected. We are also confident on the power of interactions and the unique contribution that design skills and tools can bring to it.

This and other collaborative experiences of the Social Design Hub strongly suggest that the lack of a human-centered-design approach and design skills in the community groups have resulted in a poor understanding of local issues, isolation from community life, a lack of engagement with neighbors and business owners, and poor institutional responses. In this sense, there are reasons to believe that the continuous conversation over the soccer tournament with a stakeholder (active in joint projects for health services) has led to a slow transformation regarding its community interactions and decisions.

Through the successes and failures of our work, we been able to learn to co-create the conditions (relationships, conversations, build trust, evidence) and use the design skills for the creation and delivery of new projects. As such, recent research on the landscape of social innovation labs suggests that these are strongly experimental and “driven by human-centered design tools and rapid prototyping principles” employing “co-production approaches around workshops to generate ideas, break down silos, and facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration for driving systemic change” (Papageorgiu, 2017).
That said, for the near future, we are planning to take the initiative to a new level by launching a social innovation work group (or a social innovation lab effort) with community stakeholders (many of whom have been part of the soccer initiative). The aim is to establish a common ground to understand the community from a systemic approach, be able to identify its challenges and respond in new and efficient ways. Only thus, it will be possible to think and act collectively, towards a better future.

Finally, regarding the soccer tournament, we are in conversations with stakeholders and the Chapultepec Park (located across Constituyentes Avenue) and exploring possibilities for launching a collaborative sports project in the Fall 2019. A proposal to be considered at the social innovation work group. Likewise, two film students from the Capibaras team have decided to join the Hub as their social service project (Mexico requires all undergraduates to complete 480 hours of social service) and are currently working on a new proposal with separate gender teams to continue with the soccer initiative.

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