Faculty of Design

2020

Hearth, Home and Well-being

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Hearth, home and wellbeing

Interrelating belief systems, built environments and well-being

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Humans have always subconsciously known that wellbeing is connected to where we live. Dwellings have deliberately been designed to protect from the elements as well as other lifeforms. Spaces define behaviours and wellbeing. Today, there is a greater understanding of home as a sustainable environment and its connection with wellness. (Janahi, 2018). Therefore it is important to design homes well. However in designing and making a built space a lot of factors come into play, economics, social structure, affordability, physicality of resources available. These may be called the visible factors, simultaneously, there are invisible social structures that can markedly determine behaviour (Vink, 2019) and decision-making. These invisible social structures include belief systems, identity constructs are often responsible for how spaces are constructed. All these together form complex structures, often difficult to capture and visualise. A systems mapping helps recognize the often elusive problematic nodes and their interconnections; as well as develop a holistic understanding of the often hard to grasp and define root causes (Seveldson, 2019). Most importantly, a systemic design visualisation and analysis empowers one to determine the most opportune leverage point to make potential interventions (Meadows, 2008).

The workshop facilitators hypothesize that these invisible structures shape decisions for the built environment and the activities that take place in those spaces. Through mapping personal identity and our dwelling spaces in a workshop mode these invisible structures and their deterministic outcome can be visualised. It can be seen that if the home "a safe haven" in uncertain times is it truly safe for all of its occupants? Therefore making the participants more aware of their critical positionality and decisions. The authors argue that while the home and domestic is often understood as private however the behaviours enacted in these spaces are shaped by larger contexts. Aligning to the current 'black lives matter' movement, one sees that systemic violence is embedded into our social structures and is normalised in behaviours, and therefore translated continually into our designs, designed spaces, and environments. Through the use of "emergent tools" participants will be encouraged to reveal these invisible social structures and their multi-layered connectedness to pave the way for intervention models (Seveldson, 2019). Awareness of the often unspoken hierarchy and unwritten rules can be a powerful enabler to bring about a conscious change in the system.

This workshop aims to tangibilize for a heterogeneous group of participants from varied locations an opportunity to discover - How our belief systems and identity shape our spaces? How these spaces in turn affect our behaviour and construct our wellbeing? If these spaces are not conducive to the wellbeing of all the occupants, how then should we be designing our spaces? What and where should be the change - Spaces? - Behaviour responses? - Belief systems? It is hoped the participants will engage in dialogue on how can such change be brought about?

The workshop outcomes will hinge on collaborative synergy and virtual group work, while the heterogeneity of the participants and their individual identities and varied experiences will add multi-dimensionality to the collective understanding.

Workshop span: 3 hours
Maximum Participants: 25
A/V equipment: internet enabled computers/tablets/ with camera, headphones, Microphone, Downloaded zoom/googlemeet, mapping software (like miroboard, concept board, x-mind etc.)
Paper A3 sheets, markers and 2inch post-its one pack

Participants may be expected to prepare some things before the workshop, e.g. collect some images from personal archives or news.

Workshop Structure
- Personal Mapping, Invisible-Visible Identity discovery
- Interconnections and break out into groups
- Spatial mapping
- Giga map + Systemic mapping methods
- Analysis
- Intervention model

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