



Shaping the Design Revolution

The public health crisis of COVID-19 and the injustice against black communities has exposed the capacity for professions to impact and act on systemic issues. Many individuals have stepped up to the task of purposing their skillsets to overcome obstacles keeping us from a better future. As designers, we recognize that the built environment faces the paradox of being both the cause and the solution. We began to realize while we could create design interventions, we had no idea if they would actually solve the issues we sought. We could create innovative designs, but how would we know if they would be successful. This sparked a critical question: why could we not determine if a design would be successful before its creation? **There are inherent flaws in the framework which hinder the capacity for societal impact.** If the traditional framework did not give us tools to enact change, how could design improve agency, accuracy, and impact?

We found the key defect with the current design ecosystem: responsibility. In the current paradigm, designers end their duties once the idea is handed over; designers have been absolved from the consequences their creations cause. How can we, as designers, support our claims when we end our responsibility before they can be tested? **If we are not willing to take responsibility for the consequences, why should we be given the privilege to design in the first place?** It is discouraging to understand that designers do not have the capacity to cause a change in the current system. But this is the opportunity to reimagine the expectations of our profession.

We started investigating what a more impactful and inclusive design ecosystem would look like. If design thinking requires innovation and the built environment impacts us all, then why do designers come from only a few academic disciplines? Building diverse design teams not only improves the variety and scope of design ideas but also provides greater insight to understand what impact the design leaves behind.



I M P A C T D E S I G N C O L L A B O R A T I V E

The most important aspect is addressing responsibility. Designers need to be retrained to understand that the design process does not end at the delivery of the drawings; this is when it begins. If the built environment is a designer's medium and the built environment exists for human occupancy, have designers not ignored the subject of their profession? We believe each project stands as a unique research opportunity to understand what makes a design successful to inform future outcomes. We strive to reshape the relationship between project proposals and post-construction research, which drives the conversation towards what it means to be a designer.

Our organization originated through a mutual understanding that the current design ecosystem is broken and demands change. With our new framework for a design ecosystem, we set out to redesign design itself. Impact Design Collaborative is so much more than the research and projects it performs. We are calling on practicing designers to reconsider *how* they practice and *why* they practice. Through redefining the role of the designer, we want to empower the capacity for design intervention and activism. We are uniting a new generation of creators, activists, inventors, organizers, and those who want to leverage design to tackle the world's most engrained problems. **Whether you are an experienced architect, a student, a community organizer, or someone who sees design issues, we invite you to join us in the design revolution.**