



# Gendered Design in STEAM Bulletin

ISSUE THREE | *May, 2021*

“Thank you to everyone who helped in producing Issue Three of the GDS Bulletin. Special thanks to all the research projects who contributed a written submission to our main feature, which focuses on conducting research during a pandemic, and their updates from the research field. Thanks to our Regional Experts, Raquel Noronha and Emmanuel Mutungi, for their content pieces. Thanks also to Maya Chopra for the design and sourcing content assist, and Ona Bantjes-Rafols and Najeeba Ahmed for preparing key information.”

*Kerry Grace, GDS Program Coordinator & Editor of the GDS Bulletin*

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## Upcoming events

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- [Speaking \(with\) maps: A threefold map-talk on cartographic objects, narratives and migrancies](#) | [June 3, 2021](#) - 12:00 to 13:30 (EST)
- [DesignMeets: Design after the Pandemic](#) | [June 16, 2021](#) - 12:00 to 13:00 (EDT)
- [Dis/Entangling Technoscience - vulnerability, responsibility and justice](#) | [June 17-19, 2021](#)
- [Women in Entrepreneurship: A workshop](#) - The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine | [June 21-22, 2021](#) - 11:00 to 16:00 (ET)
- [International Women in Engineering Day](#) | [June 23, 2021](#)
- [GDS LabTwo - Session One](#) | [June 25, 2021](#) - 8:00 to 10:00 (EST)

## MAIN FEATURE

### Doing research during Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19)

Issue Three brings together a collection of contributions from our research projects throughout the global south, on their experiences, challenges, adaptations and learnings of conducting their research during a global pandemic. We asked the research projects to consider these questions:

- *What are the main challenges that you are facing in doing your research during the COVID-19 pandemic? Why?*
- *What creative strategies have been implemented by you and your research team?*
- *What are the main changes that you had to implement in your research and research methodology?*
- *What challenges have you not yet managed to overcome or figure out?*
- *What opportunities have emerged from doing your research during the pandemic?*
- *What are the main learnings?*

ID61

**Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez | Ciudad Juárez, Mexico**

“ The contingency derived from the spread of COVID-19, has presented our team two great challenges. The first one is in relation to the formation of the transdisciplinary team, something we consider central to the project. Remote work modality prevents the members from relating with one another, thus the development of activities geared towards integration is affected negatively. Usually team members connect and work on the project, but there is little emotional approach between work members in this context, something that is essential in a workgroup of this type.

The second challenge has been fieldwork. It has not been possible to study the phenomenon in depth within its natural context (public spaces), or to interact with the social actors involved, either victims of violence, perpetrators, or as individuals responsible for the implementation of solutions.

To try to solve these difficulties, we have developed dynamics among the participants of the transdisciplinary team, in order to achieve greater integration, including play spaces, autobiographical dynamics, and celebrations among others. Regarding the phenomenon of violence in public spaces, we have opted for various strategies, such as the compilation of prior studies related to the subject, consultation and participation of experts in virtual seminars, Rethinking Design, presentation, and discussion of themes and ideas related to the project by the members of the group.

Even so, whether due to governmental or institutional restrictions, we have not yet been able to carry out the field studies in the way that had been planned in the beginning, nor has it been possible to approach all social actors involved, which is of the utmost importance to understand comprehensively the context. However, the contingency has also led us to develop new capabilities in relation to the integration of the work group, the organization of research activities and to find new virtual technologies.

*"Design is divergent and it can always find creative solutions, adapting to the needs of the environment."*

The use of new tools for research, interaction and integration, has included the use of Google Maps, methodologies such as 'netnography' and life history, cultural tests, and cultural surveys on virtual platforms and via telephone. Working with small samples or groups, giving instructions in remote areas and virtual meetings, have allowed contact with people who otherwise would not be able to participate in the project due to their physical location. This also happened with some of our guest speakers. Design is divergent and it can always find creative solutions, adapting to the needs of the environment. ”

*Dra. Erika Rogel Villalba (PI)*

*Dr. Leonardo Moreno & Dr. Lourdes Ampudia (Co-PIs)*

**ID50** Multimedia University | Cyberjaya,  
Malaysia

“ Our research study examines gender and age inequalities in mobile phone usage, specifically among aging women in Malaysia. We had initially intended to conduct face-to-face focus group study research in our second phase to observe the patterns and behaviors of elderly mobile users. However, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the execution of the original plan seemed unfeasible. We are now exploring alternative methods such as digital ethnographic research, online interviews, diary studies (paired with visual material), and online observations.

The digital methods would allow us to observe respondents remotely and study the behavior of our female elderly subjects and their interactions with family members. However, there are some practical and ethical challenges of conducting remote ethnography. Since the assumption is that the elderly population of Malaysia are mainly co-living with, and dependent on, family members to access or use mobile phones, it will be tricky to study the individual behavior of the target group. In addition, as digital ethnographic design involves surveillance mechanisms, and demands the sacrifice of privacy, it can be hard to convince potential subjects to participate in the process.

*“The challenges lie in how to access and conduct online ethnography without the presence of researchers observing...”*

Apart from the proposed digital ethnography, we also consider using case studies with online interviews, and diary studies involving female elderly. The benefits of using online methods are reaching out to elderly and their family amidst COVID-19 pandemic using multiple online research methods such as interview, digital ethnography and possibly diary study. The challenges lie in how to access and conduct online ethnography without the presence of researchers observing the social relation of ageing female in the intergenerational or nuclear family context. The research data may need input from family members in terms of support and insights. Despite the challenges, we are traversing adaptive research methodology during this unprecedented pandemic. ”

*Dr. Chui Yin Wong (PI)*

*Associate Prof. Dr. Koo Ah Choo; Dr. Yvonne Lee;  
Dr. Lai Wan Teng & Hazwan Mat Din (Co-PIs)*

**ID73** University of Rwanda | Kigali City,  
Rwanda

“ We had originally planned for the team to meet often and discuss the project face to face, but this was not possible due to the pandemic. We managed to switch to online to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We have conducted a number of online events and have done some activities differently. However, some discussions were difficult to manage online and to create a collective dialogue, which would have been easier with a physical meeting. We also created a project ‘WhatsApp’ group to use in emergency or when decisions needed to be made quickly as it was not always possible to schedule an online meeting. That was one of the solutions to adapt to COVID-19 challenges.

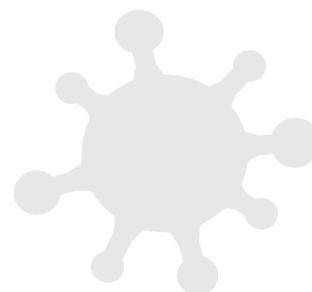
*“... some discussions were difficult to manage online and to create a collective dialogue, which would have been easier with a physical meeting.”*

For the data collection, the nature of our project should be done in the field, but this was very difficult with ongoing restrictions. An alternative way to conduct the interviews for the qualitative data collection is via Skype or Zoom that we are considering. For the quantitative survey, we have spoken with advisors on using online tools, such as the Qualtrics online survey software or a Google Form, which is free of charge.

We are also developing our negotiation skills with our stakeholders as we adapt are methods, timetable and approach. ”

*Dr. Marie Chantal Cyulinyana (PI)*

*Mrs. Roselyne Ishimwe (Co-PI)*



ID91

## Fundação de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco | Pernambuco, Brazil

“ In Brazil, social isolation is extending over a longer period than in many countries. We live with the lack of access to the vaccine and the constant increase in contamination and deaths by COVID-19.

Since it is essentially qualitative, the research foresaw from the beginning a dense fieldwork to collect information. With a participatory approach, in-person workshops would be semi-structured, in a more empirical format, following the demands revealed during the dynamic process. Due to social isolation, all fieldwork had to be adapted to the virtual format. Most of the actions needed to be systematized more precisely, since each participant will be in a physical environment with different resources.

Among the challenges, we highlight:

- Participants restricted access to digital tools and stable network (in Brazil, internet access is not a reality for many people).
- Limited personal skills of many participants to handle digital tools.
- Time limit for exposing participants to the screen.
- Difficulty of guiding at a distance the execution of requested tasks.
- Proposition of activities that are attractive enough to keep women motivated and participative until the end of the workshops, despite their domestic and professional duties that mix together at this point in their lives.

Given the impossibility of collecting data in person, the workshops were redesigned to be carried out virtually. Among the strategies we have adopted, we can highlight:

- Creation of a digital form to attract participants to interviews and workshops, initially sent through the contact networks of partner institutions of research.
- Production of a booklet to be sent to workshop participants as supplementary didactic material.
- Restructuring of the workshops to include a smaller group of participants at a time. With that, we will have a greater number of sessions with shorter duration. To reach the same sample of participants, the number of classes will also be increased.

*"We understand that access to women from different groups and social realities would make it possible to compare different representations about the female body... This has been made impossible by the difficulty of accessing the internet."*

As learnings so far, we highlight:

- Need to approach online platforms underused by us before the pandemic (MIRO, Google Meet, Google Classroom, etc.).
- Expand the focus on the field of assistive artifacts, incorporating solutions originated in contexts marked by solidarity around the common difficulties of women facing breast cancer.
- Need to consider gender issues in an academic field usually centered on the conception of artifacts as a result of practical productivist rationality and a limited aesthetic perspective, often based on the idealization of a white, slim and heterosexual woman with a young body.
- The criticism of the logic of the female bodies' standardization, for the construction of a differentiated thinking, which admits the real body, with its single characteristics and personal transformations throughout life. Such criticism contributes to facing breast cancer, as well as to women empowerment.

For us, it is still a challenge to diversify the sample of participants, especially in relation to age and social class. We understand that access to women from different groups and social realities would make it possible to compare different representations about the female body and narratives facing breast cancer from different points of view. This has been made impossible by the difficulty of accessing the internet. As a result, we have insisted on diversifying the research sample, articulating access to low-income patients through the mediation of health professionals and associations. ”

*Prof. Débora Ferro (PI)  
Dr. Kátia Medeiros de Araújo &  
Dr. Rosiane Pereira Alves (Co-PIs)*



## ID40 University of Energy and Natural Resources | Volta Region, Ghana

“ Our project aims at assessing the impact of access to energy for productive use on women empowerment and socio-economic development of island/lakeside communities in Ghana. The communities in the research area are characterized by scattered human settlements, isolated from the mainland areas by the Volta Lake. Dr. Samuel Gyamfi at the University of Energy and Natural Resources in Sunyani, Ghana leads the project team of researchers. The challenges we have encountered since the inception of the project have been due to the restrictions imposed by the government of Ghana to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The changes we made to our research methodology followed the advice of the sector and regional experts of the GDS Program – to use a survey method instead of a case study and to include men as respondents. However, our research team had to deploy a robust data collection strategy to ensure the quality of data and to protect the field officers and participants from the spread of the virus.

As part of the activities leading to the data collection, the research team embarked on a community entry to seek support for the project and cooperation from leaders of identified islands/lakeside communities. We noticed during the community entry exercise that most of the community members were not well informed about the mode of transmission of COVID-19 and its preventive protocols. We took a unanimous decision to include a brief sensitization exercise on the spread of COVID-19 to respondents before administering the questionnaires. This action was intended to facilitate the adherence of respondents to the COVID-19 protocols to protect both parties.

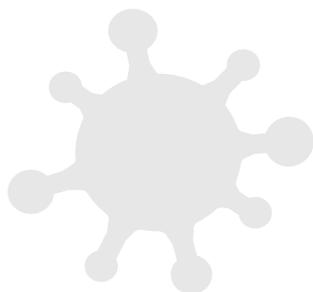
Arrangements were made with a health facility to take up any emergencies that may arise. Thermometers, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, face masks, liquid soap, Veronica Buckets, and tissues were acquired in substantial quantities for use by both the research team and respondents. The interviews were conducted using the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technique. The data collected was monitored in real-time, and re-interviews were conducted to ensure data quality. The measures taken led to an expansion of the budget allocated for data collection. Despite all the planning preceding the fieldwork, the research team run out of personal protective equipment and other essentials because some households demanded more than was expected. This led to the delay of focus group discussions.

*"Despite all the planning preceding the fieldwork, the research team run out of personal protective equipment and other essentials because some households demanded more than was expected."*

The official inception meeting of the project designed to introduce key stakeholders to one another has not taken place because of the restrictions on social gatherings due to the pandemic. Ideally, this meeting could be held virtually, but this is challenging as it is unlikely to find a member of the community owns a smart device. This meeting, however, is critical for the engagement of all stakeholders in the research.

The communication between the team has been primarily through virtual platforms. The team members have improved upon their ICT competencies resulting from the consistent use of interactive software for meetings, learning, and collaboration. The budget allocation for the training of field officers was reduced due to the use of interactive platforms. The sensitization exercise on the spread of the corona virus made the research team famous in the communities visited and the smooth running of the fieldwork. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the research team to the relevance of technology in research work. ”

Dr. Samuel Gyamfi (PI)  
Dr. Danielle Sedegah & Dr. Eric Oforu Antwi (Co-PIs)



ID41

## Universidad de Buenos Aires | Buenos Aires, Argentina

“ In 2003, Lars von Trier directed “The Five Obstructions”. In this film, conceived as a documentary, the Danish filmmaker has created a challenge for his friend and mentor, Jørgen Leth, to remake his favorite film five times, each time with a different “obstruction” or obstacle. When the pandemic was declared in March 2020, we felt we were in this movie – trying to find the way to move on, with the same research but in a very different position. Suddenly, we felt the need to reformulate some modes of production and data collection as they had been originally proposed in the research project.

### Inhabiting the (virtual) space

One of von Trier's obstructions was that the film should be shot exactly the same but in another country, with no set, and with no shot lasting longer than twelve frames. Given the social, preventive, and compulsory isolation (ASPO) dictated in Argentina, and the consequent suspension of face-to-face classes (at all educational levels), it was no longer possible to carry out the participant and non-participant observation that we had promised to carry out in order to investigate the ways of inhabiting various spaces in the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) campus. We were then forced to move to the country called “virtuality”, with no set (campus), and with no narratives lasting longer than 140 characters.

Therefore, we decided to replace the objective that was left vacant in the fieldwork by digital ethnography or netnography. Furthermore, the change in circumstances led us to think about the new ways that this relationship assumed with those familiar or everyday life spaces that were not being inhabited. If in recent times, events that take place on social networks had become very important, this seems to have been enhanced even more during the pandemic since the vast majority of activities (work, educational, social, recreational, etc.) started to be carried out – and in many cases continues to be carried out – remotely.



In pursuit of this new objective – registering and analyzing the ways of inhabiting the spaces of the UBA campus through digital ethnography – we began by conducting a bibliographic survey that included both theoretical and methodological materials and the results of other investigations that use this approach. In addition, we carried out an exploratory survey of various accounts or users linked to the University campus on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). The information obtained was organized in a grid that allowed us to identify more clearly the profiles and record basic data, such as number of followers, descriptions, and profile biographies.

*“When the pandemic was declared in March 2020, we felt we were in this movie – trying to find the way to move on, with the same research but in a very different position.”*

One of the problems presented to us was how to define the clipping to make the analysis possible. What criteria should we use to define types of profiles to analyze? How to achieve the presence of all actors, for example students, teachers, and staff? How to make a temporary cut that manages to account for the project's study interval? Based on the exploratory survey, and in light of the contributions of the training, we outlined a research strategy to respond to the objective that will be carried out in the coming months.

Wasn't design always about getting away with obstructions? ”

*Dr. Carolina Spataro (PI)  
Prof. Griselda Flesler (Co-PI)*

**ID38** Lahore University of Management Sciences | Lahore, Pakistan

“ The field work in Pakistan was halted due to the second COVID-19 wave in December 2020 and January 2021. The country has actively opted to not impose a lockdown since April 2020 because of the severe economic fallout on the lower income and food insecure sub-populations. Additionally, Pakistan has had a difficult time convincing its population of the existence of COVID due to specific religious beliefs and rampant misinformation. This, compounded by the government’s low vaccine procurement, has also impacted vaccination take-up. We also find that there is poor adherence to cautionary protocols like masking and avoiding crowded spaces and places. This means we have had to be extremely careful in when and where to conduct our field work to ensure the safety of our team and participants.

Once things started to settle down a little in March, the research team visited implementation partner branches prior to commencing the fieldwork to arrange a safe interview space with proper ventilation and enough room to ensure social distancing. The team made sure that masks were available for all participants, the space was sanitized and seating was such that there was a safe distance between researchers and participants.

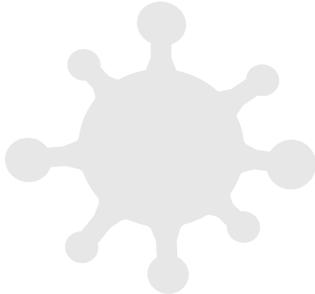
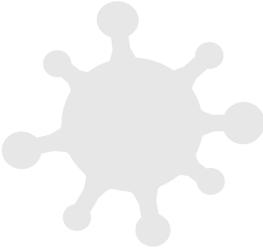
We had a short time to conduct interviews before Pakistan found itself in the middle of the third COVID-19 wave. In light of the short periods of time we had where COVID infections were subsiding we bought on an experienced Project Manager and researcher who was able to mobilize the team quickly and in a short period of time manage 28 qualitative interviews from different parts of the city.

*"Given the nature of our project and the sensitive conversations that it entails, phone and remote interviews for data gathering is not an option for our team."*

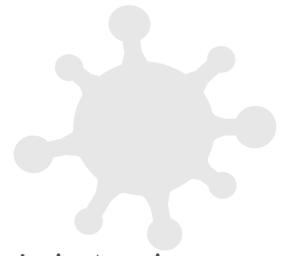
Pakistan is currently in the middle of the third COVID-19 wave. This wave is particularly virulent and given the situation unfolding in neighboring India we have pulled all staff from the field and are treading very cautiously. Given the nature of our project and the sensitive conversations that it entails, phone and remote interviews for data gathering is not an option for our team.

Moving forward, we expect that there will be delays in being able to go back into the field and in particular conduct interviews outside of Lahore. In addition, some delays are expected in co-design workshops that inherently rely on groups of people being in the same space. However, we are committed to continuing these important conversations and unpacking further the data that we have already uncovered. And expect to do so once vaccination roll-out picks up. ”

*Dr. Maryam Mustafa (PI)  
Dr. Hadia Majid (Co-PI)*



## A CLOSER LOOK



In this issue, we talk to **Raquel Noronha and Emmanuel Mutungi**, our Regional Experts from Latin America and Africa respectively, on their experiences working on the GDS Program and with the projects in their region during a global pandemic.

### Body absence in qualitative research and implications for Gender Design, by Raquel Noronha

One of the main questions in gender studies is the subject of the presence of the body (and its absence) regarding the constitution of practices and discourse. Aiming to map out multiple concepts of what is proposed as gender design in a program such as GDS, it is fundamental that we think about the issue of corporeity as a basic element to be embraced and analyzed in studies that make up the aforementioned program.

In much of the research carried out within the GDS scope, the natures of which are often related to the universe of exact and technological sciences, gender issues might often appear as a theme, or only as an analytical result axis obtained by means and methods that do not include diversity, dissent and the imponderable. Covering this complexity is a challenge, which can be understood as an opportunity to build more inclusive and attentive science, defying the positivist paradigm.



**Raquel Noronha** | Adjunct Professor and Director of Design and Technology Department at Federal University of Maranhão, and current Head of the Graduate Program in Design. Regional Expert for Latin America, GDS Program

Body and corporal practices, according to anthropologist Marcel Mauss, are the basis for constructing knowledge and practices. Learning is always the result of bodily engagement that, through practice and repetition, shapes the bodies that, in turn, imprint some peculiarity to the apprehended movement. The anthropologist Tim Ingold conceptualizes this phenomenon by correspondence, as a learning experience that comes from practice.

*'...engagement involves not only the body, but also its relationship with the environment, materials, and human and more-than-human beings, also including feelings, ancestral and spiritual presences.'*

In correspondence practices, engagement involves not only the body, but also its relationship with the environment, materials, and human and more-than-human beings, also including feelings, ancestral and spiritual presences. Learning is a process of caring that takes place through practice, according to Ingold.

The absence of bodies in the research process reinforces the discursive perception about what is meant by design directed to gender issues, and favor the sedimentation of preconceived ideas and heteronormative patterns, as the philosopher Judith Butler points out to us. Performativity, according to the author, is how what is said is constituted in action, and then, through the body, discourse can be confirmed, or not.

In order to bring the body issue to gender design, we deal with the epistemological limitations that power relations impose on us all the time. By classifying, naming, assuming imperative points of view concerning the rigidity of quantitative methods, we are closing the multiple meanings arising from bodies-in-environments-and-in-relationships to a description of discursive space.

Here are some of the element clues that allow us to expand, even at times when we need to stay away, due to the need for social distance caused by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- To privilege different temporalities, using technology to our advantage, observing peoples' relationship with natural times and cycles.
- Building relationships between research subjects as co-participants in the research, if we are willing to relate in a less hierarchical way and assuming their knowledge as another form of knowledge, we are focusing on building a relationship, and not on their product, that which we would call 'the collected data'.
- Constructing effective maps and timelines that show research acquisitions from constructing a relational and reflective process, always seeking to question our role as researchers and our relationship with others.
- And finally, let's do things together, even from a distance, seek materialization, the collective cultivation of an idea looking for the materials that make them tangible, in processes that make the body vibrate, as the architect lazana Guizzo proposes to us.

Prototyping, at this moment, with physical presence being impossible due to the pandemic, is the only possibility to keep an active hand.

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### My reflection on the project Gendered Design in STEAM in LMICs, by Emmanuel Mutungi

"We are ready, our team has met, we have applied for ethics approval, we recruited participants, we held our first stakeholder meeting, we are developing the tools, Kerry has given us the clarification...". These were some of the responses from the awardees at the start of the GDS Program. By any standards, the projects are moving on well despite the COVID-19 pandemic challenges.

I have on many occasions during my meetings with the different projects, advocated for the use of telephone and other social media approaches to collect data in this new normal pandemic. We also agreed to use narratives where conducting surveys may not be possible. We also agreed

to use narratives where conducting surveys may not be possible. As the African saying goes 'examine what is said, not him who speaks', I believe we can capture the narratives of our respondents and have successful projects while observing the recommended standard operating procedures by avoiding unnecessary travels to different communities and locations.

*"...examine what is said, not him who speaks."*

From my reading of the projects so far, especially those in African region, is that despite the pandemic, the research teams have managed to navigate through these hard times. Using creative approaches, developing new tools to overcome challenges, collecting data, and some have embarked on developing sketches for the prototypes.

As the Ugandan proverb goes 'when the moon is not full, the stars shine more brightly'. Although the GDS Program started amidst the COVID-19 pandemic where the conventional methods of research were interrupted, the awardees, the core team, the Regional Experts and the Sector Experts all worked together as a team to make sure the overall Program and individual projects were able to adapt and proceed towards successful outcomes.



**Emmanuel Mutungi** | Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology, Head of the Art and Industrial Design Department, Kyambogo University. Regional Expert for Africa, GDS Program



# OPEN LEARNING

Here is a selection of readings that focus on adapting methodologies and conducting research during a global pandemic, drawing on experiences and lessons learned from a variety of fields.

Special issue editorial - Strategic Design Research Journal (2021)

*Guest editors:* Emilio Rossi | Massimo Di Nicolantonio | Fabrizio Ceschin Giuseppe Mincoelli | Aguinaldo dos Santos | Cindy Kohtala | Edu Jacques | Carla Cipolla | Ezio Manzini

[Design Contributions for the COVID-19 Global Emergency \(Part 1\): Empirical Approaches and First Solutions](#). Strategic Design Journal, 13(3).

[Design Contributions for the COVID-19 Global Emergency \(Part 2\): Methodological Reflections and Future Visions](#). Strategic Design Journal, 14(1).

This is a special issue editorial in the Strategic Design Research journal. The special issue presents a peer-reviewed sample of initiatives led by designers across various disciplines engaging in strategic problem solving during a global pandemic. The special issue received 115 submissions.

**Part 1** focuses on papers dedicated to empirical contributions, with direct accounts of the hands-on activities of designers in different contexts.

**Part 2** focuses on the theory underpinning the practical experiences and methodological reflections concerning the role of design during the pandemic.

If there is a particular journal, article, book or chapter that you are interested in, but you are unable to access this through your local library, please contact the [Program Coordinator](#).

If you would like to submit a suggested reading, event, discussion or video, please [complete this form](#).

- Hall, J., Gaved, M., & Sargent, J. (2021). [Participatory Research Approaches in Times of Covid-19: A Narrative Literature Review](#). International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 20: 1-15

This review discusses current literature on the use of participatory research methods during COVID-19 and pandemic contexts. The review provides an overview on how various methods may be used and adapted for distanced contexts and considers the challenges of researching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Strachan, A.L. (2021). [Impact of COVID-19 on research methods and approaches](#). Institute of Development Studies. Brighton, UK

This document provides a brief overview of the challenges and impacts on researching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The document also highlights opportunities and positive aspects of remote data collection.

- University of Technology Sydney (UTS) & Nippon Foundation Ocean Nexus Center at the University of Washington EarthLab (2020). [Adapting Research Methodologies in the Covid-19 Pandemic](#)

This report provides an overview of alternative qualitative and quantitative research methods, insights from researchers gathered through interviews, and a selection of online discussions and resources on how this adaptation is taking place in the near future.

- Lupton, D. (2020). [Doing fieldwork in a pandemic](#) (crowd-sourced document).

This document was initially intended to focus on how to turn fieldwork that used face-to-face methods into a more 'hands-off' mode. However, the document has grown with many additions focused on material about 'born digital' research (content already generated on the internet by online interactions), which provides an alternative source of social research materials.

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

In each issue, Project Spotlight introduces five projects from across the regions. [Find information on all the GDS projects here.](#)

## Improving the design process for housing and public spaces based on women's experiences in Rwanda (ID73)



### Stream 1 - Case study

This case study will identify gender issues in the design of housing, built environments and public spaces in Rwanda. It will consider the impact of the built environment on women that is usually designed without their involvement. Data collection will include surveys and face-to-face interviews. The findings will be used to create guidelines and a framework to use when designing housing and public spaces to support greater equal access regardless of gender.

Dr. Marie Cyulinyana, who is a lecturer and researcher in physics, specializing in solar energy technologies and solar radiation modelling, leads the research team. Mrs. Roselyne Ishimwe, the Co-PI, is a senior geo-spatial analyst at Esri Rwanda Ltd. Three female researchers support the project. All of the team have been involved in gender research in the past, with education in STEM.

*Primary investigator:* Dr. Marie Chantal Cyulinyana  
*Co-Primary investigator:* Mrs. Roselyne Ishimwe  
*Institute:* University of Rwanda



Left to right: Roselyne Ishimwe (Co-PI), Dr. Marie Chantal Cyulinyana (PI); other team researchers: Mrs Delphine Mukaneza; Miss Colette Abimana; Mrs Marie Antoinette Uwajambo

## Improving transportation systems for women in Rwanda (ID74)



### Stream 1 - Case study

This case study seeks to develop a framework of guidelines for safer transportation for vulnerable populations in Kigali City, Rwanda. The proposal defines vulnerable as including women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and children. Through structured and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and surveys this project seeks to understand how transit user groups, with a focus on women, utilize the transportation systems. The results will provide a framework to create more responsive systems that take these experiences into consideration. The data collected includes number and length of trips, what participants travel with, and whether participants travel accompanied.

The team is comprised of all women researchers including principal investigator Dr. Didacienne Mukanyiligira and co-principal investigator Eng. Marie Umumararungu who have expertise in telecommunications systems and engineering respectfully. The rest of the team includes Mrs. Colette Nyinawumuntu, Ms. Eva Ujeneza, and Mrs. Agnes Mbonyiriyuze, who have backgrounds in gender studies, data management, and physics.

*Primary investigator:* Dr. Didacienne Mukanyiligira

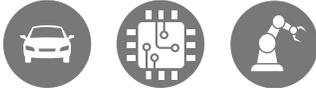
*Co-Primary investigator:* Mrs. Marie Grace Umumararungu

*Institute:* University of Rwanda



*Left to right:* Eng. Marie Grace Umumararungu (Co-PI); Mrs. Agnes Mbonyiriyuze; Dr. Didacienne Mukanyiligira (PI); Ms. Eva Liliane Ujeneza

## Improving the design of public transport based on women’s experiences in Turkey (ID17)



### Stream 1 - Case study

This project seeks to explore the connections between transportation design and gender in Ankara, Turkey by examining women’s experiences. This research project intends to generate more equitable guidelines and inclusive design ideas to improve transportation for women in Ankara. Through semi-structured interviews and a workshop, involving student proposals from METU’s school of design, proposed improvements for transportation systems will be explored with women commuters.

The interdisciplinary research team consists of three members who have completed a PhD and a Master’s. Their

expertise includes: qualitative research, industrial design, gender studies, and gender and politics. In addition to the three experienced researchers, two postgraduate students are research assistants on the team. One research assistant is a postgraduate student pursuing their Masters in Industrial Design and the other has recently received a Bachelor’s degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering.

*Primary investigator:* Dr. Pinar Kaygan

*Co-Primary investigator:* Dr. Asuman Özgür Keysan

*Institute:* Middle East Technical University (METU) with Southern Denmark University



## Reimagining urban territories for women's autonomy in Colombia (ID80)



### Stream 2 - Case study plus prototype

This research project aims to support an ongoing group of women in the neighborhood of Belén Bogotá, by engaging them and other fellow residents in participatory and collaborative strategies. This will occur in four stages: building a community kitchen and expanding an existing community garden; critical mapping of Belén; identifying areas in the neighborhood for interventions like murals; and consolidating the findings to propose a conceptual framework for design as a field, taking into consideration women's empowerment and autonomy. This project builds on ongoing work in the neighborhood that seeks to establish ways of re-appropriating participants' community space and activities in the midst of gentrification and redevelopment efforts, from a gender perspective.

The research team is composed of seven members, with expertise in diverse fields such as participatory design, communication, political science, urbanism, and history. Dr. Adriana Botero Vélez is an expert in human rights and communication, and Co-PI Santiago Forero Lloreda focuses on creation, leisure, and human development.

*Primary investigator:* Dr. Adriana Botero Vélez  
*Co-Primary investigator:* Santiago Forero Lloreda  
*Institute:* Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano (UTADEO)



Team ID80 and community members in the community kitchen they are constructing in the neighbourhood of Bélen in Bogotá, Colombia.

## Re/designing the University of Buenos Aires campus to be gender inclusive in Argentina (ID41)



### Stream 1 - Case study

This case study aims to develop a guideline for designing and redesigning university spaces to be more gender inclusive. The guideline will be based on user-feedback gathered through in-depth interviews, focus groups, field observation and surveys on the University of Buenos Aires campus. This information will be available for other educational institutions interested in implementing the guidelines in order to create university spaces that are more accessible and gender inclusive.

The team is comprised of nine researchers with strong academic credentials and relevant experiences in the social sciences, communications, architecture, urbanism and industrial design. Dr. Spataro's work focuses on gender, sexuality and feminism, and co-principal investigator Griselda Flesler is a graphic designer and experienced researcher of gender and design.

*Primary investigator:* Dr. Carolina Spataro  
*Co-Primary investigator:* Professor Griselda Flesler  
*Institute:* Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA)



1st row: Paloma Carignani; Valeria Durán;  
 2nd row: Florencia Scalice; Griselda Flesler (Co-PI)  
 3rd row: Carolina Spataro (PI); Ana Quaglino;  
 Bottom: Rafael Blanco

### Embracing Cosmologies: Expanding Worlds of Participatory Design The Participatory Design Conference (PDC) 2022 - Call for participation

The 17th edition of the PD conference is being "hosted" by Newcastle University in the United Kingdom. However, the 2022 conference will have a radically different format. COVID-19 permitting, the PDC will run a conference event between 30th August and 1st September 2022. It will interface with a number of smaller events and activities around the world a week before and a week after.

The theme for the 2022 conference is Embracing Cosmologies: Expanding Worlds of Participatory Design.

For more detail on the conference theme and information on how to submit contributions to PDC 2022, see <https://pdc2022.org/>.

# INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

Despite the challenges that our awarded research projects have faced due to COVID-19, they have still been able to adapt, as we have seen, overcome these hurdles and proceed with some of their research activities. In this issue, we hear from six projects to learn more about what they have been doing in the field.

ID41

## Re/designing the University of Buenos Aires campus to be gender inclusive in Argentina | University of Buenos Aires

*The team of ID41 has been holding bibliography discussion meetings and presentations from different team members to help define their theoretical and methodological framework:* We had Valeria Durán present on interconnections between space and memory, which inspired new ideas for us on how to carry out spatial analysis. Paula Soto Villagrán presented on the literature of humanist and feminist geography. We also had Florencia Scalice present on the online platform Miro, in order for us to have a base knowledge of this software and to think of potential uses of it to enhance collaborative research.

*They have also made technical drawings of the University of Buenos Aires campus, which include descriptions of the spaces and photographs:* There was one positive to come out of the COVID restrictions – the campus was empty. We were able to access easily all the spaces of the university to photograph them. From the survey of the campus, we could show the design strategies taken for these spaces, and the spatial relations between faculties. Back in November 2020, we carried out an exploratory survey, about what feelings were associated with campus spaces, using an online questionnaire informed by the "Affective Turn". We are now analyzing the 2,064 results.

*Due to COVID restrictions, the team has had to change their approach to doing ethnographic research:* Since we can no longer carry out in person observations, we have turned to the field of digital ethnography. To learn how to use this approach properly, we have received training from Alejandra Conconi as well as taken part in a workshop with Dr. Anne Huffschnid from the Freie Universität Berlin.

For our next steps, we hope to conduct ethnographic interviews using the "Grand-Tour Question" methodology (Spradley, 1979), further our digital ethnographic research, and potentially create maps out of our research findings.

Dr. Carolina Spataro (PI)  
Prof. Griselda Flester (Co-PI)

Technical drawings and photos of the University of Buenos Aires campus.



ID65

## Constructing an eco-friendly generator for low-income female artisans in Nigeria | Edo State Polytechnic

*During the first phase of the research, the team held key meetings with local artisan groups:* Our activities involved stakeholder consultation that started with meetings with various artisan associations. This was to create awareness about the project and to disseminate vital information to those who practice their trade in this area. We presented our research project and its objectives, highlighting the concept of 'gender design'.

*The presentations and meetings lead to productive discussions with the artisan associations:* The meetings generated helpful questions and contributions to improve and direct the course of our project. It was exciting to observe the enthusiasm from many of the artisan associations to participate in the project that seeks to address their main needs of generating power that is efficient, reliable, and cheap, to help run their businesses.

*The research team also held a local town hall meeting, bringing together various key stakeholders:* Artisans, Head of Government Parastatals and representatives from the general public came together to discuss the project. We had initially planned to hold this meeting in November 2020, but we were delayed due to a combination of factors until the end of January 2021. The high point of the activity was the technical presentation on the capabilities and limitations of gender centered design and application. The meeting received wide publicity in three national dailies; [Nigerian Observer News](#); [Guardian Nigeria](#); and [All Time Post](#).

*The research team was able to prepare and carry out a pilot study before the end of February 2021:* The pilot was proposed to address any limitations and challenges in scaling-up for the main study. Preparation included development of research instruments such as questionnaires and structured interview scripts. We were able to recruit and train Research Assistants (RAs) to support the project, and recruit research participants from three local government areas; Oredo, Ikpoba Okha and Egor, for the purpose of collecting data. Currently, the research team is analyzing the completed questionnaires and the transcript of the interviews in order to help identify useful lessons that would help us improve the full study.



*Top:* Poster invite to the local interactive meeting with stakeholders.

*Bottom:* The local town hall meeting in action with a presentation from the project team.

Ese Esther Oriarewo (PI)  
Dr. Obokhai Kess Asikhia (Co-PI)

ID61

## Developing innovative urban design strategies to combat gender violence in Mexico | Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juárez

*The team of ID61 is very transdisciplinary. They have been holding research seminars to work through the different approaches and ideas of the project:* Outside experts attended our seminars to give presentations to us about gendered violence in public spaces, interdisciplinarity, and studies of Ciudad Juárez. We also have two study groups: one on public space and the other on social design. Those in the public space group have professional experience in architecture and urban design, regional and urban economy with a gender perspective, urban studies, communication and social sciences for the design of public policies, and those in social design have experience in fields such as industrial design, graphic design, psychology, communication, and public policy. Our objective is to study urban space and its dynamics in order to find solutions to the issue of violence against women.

*Following the seminars, each group was able to present a proposal on how to approach the issue from their respective fields:* We listened to, and commented on, each other's proposals. From this, we were able to develop new understandings, and learned about other disciplinary perspectives on the problem of gendered violence. We are looking to publish an edited volume of the reflections that came out of these seminars.

For our next steps, we wish to explore methods that are not often used in design research, such as reports from national and local authorities for quantitative data on insecurity and gender violence, surveys and electronic interviews. Also, storytelling and life story approaches, since COVID restrictions have complicated the collection of quantitative data.

*Dra. Erika Rogel Villalba (PI)*

*Dr. Leonardo Moreno & Dr. Lourdes Ampudia (Co-PIs)*



*“Mi vida fronteriza” (My border life), photo by German Aguilera, from a series called “Ciudades Gemelas” (twin cities).*

ID91

## Studying the use of artifacts to rebuild self-image and identity among female breast cancer survivors in Brazil | Fundação de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco

*Team ID91 has been holding group discussions on literature on gender, feminism and gendered design in virtual meetings:* We looked to include in our research both foreign and Brazilian authors who write on gender. We have been careful to integrate these themes with theories of social psychology, bringing critical reflections on the neutrality of design. As part of our exploration of gender design theories, we read, among others, Londa Schiebinger, Teresa de Lauretis, Cristina Buarque, Ana Alice Alcântara Costa and Cecilia Maria Bacellar Sardenberg.

*The team had to redesign their research due COVID restrictions:* Besides the interviews, we had to redesign our workshops so that they could take place virtually. These workshops are especially important for listening to women about their perceptions of themselves, their body image, and how the artifacts they use (such as prostheses, wigs, makeup, tattoos) affect their relationship and perception of their own bodies in the different stages of treatment for breast cancer. We have prepared booklets as supplementary didactic material for workshops in remote mode. For this, we have integrated a new team member, Dr. Daniela Bracchi, who is an expert on visual narratives and who will be a great asset for the photographic approach of the research. We also have started studying blogs, forums, social networks, and commercial websites to understand what strategies, assistive artifacts, and debates around breast cancer are emerging from there.



Examples of websites and social networks where we have been researching assistive artifacts, services and initiatives that help women to deal with the challenges that arise from the diagnosis of breast cancer.

*They will explore material dialogues through photography workshops:* During the workshops, inspired by projective techniques from psychology, we will introduce women to basic concepts of photography, presenting them with techniques for taking pictures using equipment they already have (cellphones and personal cameras). We will also show them photos of different women's bodies, including those that are outside the standards widespread by the media, in an attempt to expand their repertoire and deconstruct crystallized patterns on the female body. The same participants will be invited to take pictures of themselves, within their everyday scenarios and particular contexts. These photos will be shared and appreciated by the team and the women who took place in the workshops.



A sample of the preliminary version of the booklet on photography that will be sent to the volunteers during the virtual workshops.

Prof. Débora Ferro (PI)  
 Dr. Kátia Medeiros de Araújo &  
 Dr. Rosiane Pereira Alves (Co-PIs)

**ID33** Improving access to financial services for women in Ethiopia | Addis Ababa University

*Building on lessons learned from the GDS LabOne event, the research team for ID33 organized a two-day workshop to refine the project plan and to set the foundations for the execution of the core project activities:* We conducted an inception workshop late November 2020 at Adama city, about 90 miles away from the capital city Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The workshop brought together the project team, gender experts and stakeholders. The workshop helped to build a common understanding with the key stakeholders regarding the notion of gendered design, gender analysis frameworks, gender roles, and expectations in Ethiopian culture and financial inclusion issues associated with gender. The workshop also provided insights to help us refine the project proposal and to revisit and update the project action plan we had developed prior to the workshop.

*The project team held a series of weekly project meetings to refine their approach:* Through a series of weekly project meetings, we completed a comprehensive literature review and developed data collection tools and instruments to use when conducting our key stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions.

*The project team selected Enat Bank as a case study for their research and began meeting with them:* We held a briefing session with the management and technical teams at Enat Bank during January 2021. We presented the goals and objectives of the study and highlighted the potential benefits from the project for the bank. We also explained the support we required from them. From the queries, suggestions and discussions at the meeting, we were able to make improvements on the research scope and implementation.

*The team prepared a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that was presented to the bank management for signing:* Following the debriefings, a consensus was reached with the bank officials and we signed an MoU setting out the duties and responsibilities of us, as the project team, and the support needed from the bank's management body. Preliminary data collection was conducted at Microfinance institution, who work with Enat Bank on credit and loan management schemes specifically for women.

*Dr. Getachew Mengesha (PI)*

*Dr. Elefeliou Getachew & Dr. Moges Ayele (Co-PIs)*

**ID38** Designing support services for women experiencing workplace harassment in Pakistan | Lahore University of Management Sciences

*The research team of ID38 developed a protocol to administer detailed and in-depth interviews with low-income, low-literate female factory workers of Lahore, Pakistan:* Maintaining strict precautions, we successfully conducted 26 interviews before the third wave of COVID-19. Eliciting personal narratives of workplace violence and harassment from the participants is one of our main challenges during the interview process. Due to cultural and religious barriers, talking about harassment is a particularly taboo topic in Pakistan. This was a challenge we were aware of and prepared for; with patience and solidarity, we are trying to create a safe space for the participants to share their narratives and experiences with us.

*To reach the target population and gain their confidence, the researchers have collaborated with Akhuwat Foundation – a non-profit microfinance organization:* Akhuwat Foundation provides interest-free loans to help under-served and vulnerable communities and is well recognized among the community of factory workers. By involving Akhuwat in the research and recruitment process, we were able to leverage their trust and respect within the communities to connect with our participants.

The organization is providing support to us by facilitating introductions to female factory workers, establishing communication and scheduling with the women workers. Ensuring the safety and comfort of our participants is of utmost importance. Our research has clearly outlined the critical need to build trust and safe spaces when engaging participants in the design process. In consequence, more women are now comfortable and inspired to share their narratives.

*The research team has also been able to find opportunities to share their research:* Our abstract and research proposal for the GDS Program work has been accepted at the [International Conference on Gender Studies in Africa](#), where we'll have the opportunity to discuss our research with a wider audience.

*Dr. Maryam Mustafa (PI)*

*Dr. Hadia Majid (Co-PI)*

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