Using Human-Centred Service Design and Partnerships as a Model to Promote Cross-Sector Social Responsibility in Disaster Resilience: An Australian Case Study

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Abstract : The increased frequency and intensity of disaster events in the Asia-Pacific region is likely to require organisations to better understand how their initiatives, and the support they provide to their customers, intersect with other organisations aiming to support communities in achieving disaster resilience. While there is a growing awareness that disaster response and recovery rebuild programmes need to adapt to more integrated, community-led approaches, there is often a discrepancy between how programmes intend to work and how they are collectively experienced in the community, creating undesired effects on community resilience. Following Australia's North Queensland Monsoon Disaster of 2019, this research set out to understand and evaluate how the service and support ecosystem impacted on the local community's experience and influenced their ability to respond and recover. The purpose of this initiative was to identify actionable, cross-sector, people-centered improvements that support communities to recover and thrive when faced with disaster. The challenge arose as a group of organisations, including utility providers, banks, insurers, and community organisations, acknowledged that improving their own services would have limited impact on community wellbeing unless the other services people need are also improved and aligned. The research applied human-centred service design methods, typically applied to single products or services, to design a new way to understand a whole-of-community journey. Phase 1 of the research conducted deep contextual interviews with residents and small business owners impacted by the North Queensland Monsoon and qualitative data was analysed to produce community journey maps that detailed how individuals navigated essential services, such as accommodation, finance, health, and community. Phase 2 conducted interviews and focus groups with frontline workers who represented industries that provided essential services to assist the community. Data from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the research was analysed and combined to generate a systems map that visualised the positive and negative impacts that occurred across the disaster response and recovery service ecosystem. Insights gained from the research has catalysed collective action to address future Australian disaster events. The case study outlines a transformative way for sectors and industries to rethink their corporate social responsibility activities towards a cross-sector partnership model that shares responsibility and approaches disaster response and recovery as a single service that can be designed to meet the needs of communities.
Keywords : corporate social responsibility, cross sector partnerships, disaster resilience, human-centred design, service design, systems change

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