

SYSTEMS DESIGN PORTFOLIO

Utkarsha Malkar

Designing Connected Systems for Public Health & Social Impact

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INDIAN
MOMMY
DEARS

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Statement of Purpose Systems Thinking for Equitable Public Health

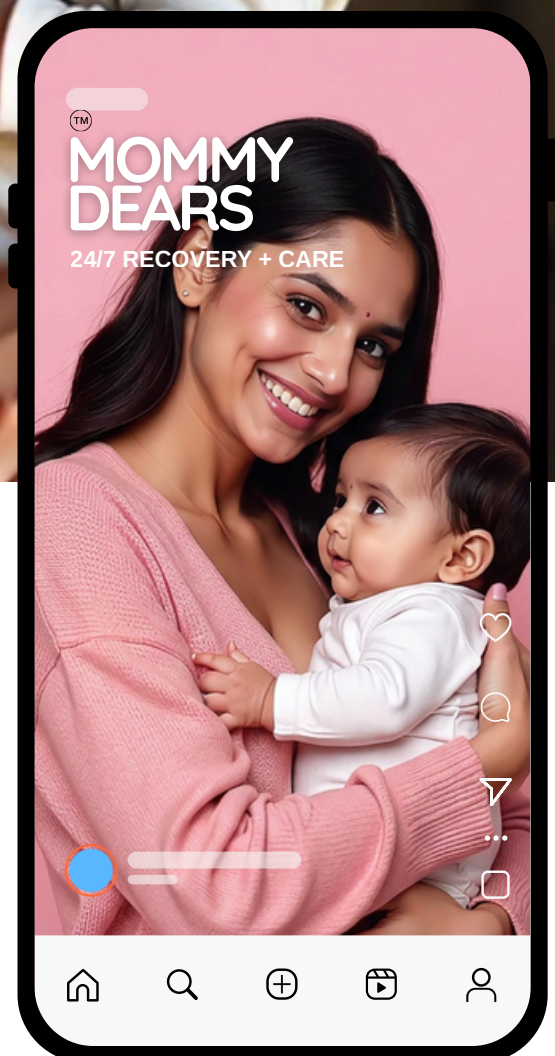
Healthcare challenges are rarely isolated. Maternal mental health, access to care, social support, economic constraints, healthcare infrastructure, cultural practices, and digital inclusion interact continuously to influence outcomes.

My work has therefore focused on understanding these relationships rather than addressing symptoms alone.

As the founder of MommyDears, I have approached maternal wellbeing as a complex adaptive system requiring collaboration between healthcare providers, communities, technology, researchers, governments, and families.

Rather than building a standalone digital product, I have worked towards designing an ecosystem where AI, behavioural science, clinical expertise, and community engagement reinforce one another.

This perspective has strengthened my appreciation for systems thinking, service design, participatory research, and interdisciplinary collaboration. It has also reinforced my belief that sustainable innovation emerges through iterative learning, stakeholder participation, and evidence-informed decision-making.



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Speaker - Media representation for MITID at UX-INDIA Design Business Forum Topic: 2015

Creating and leading projects at MIT Institute of Design as Head of Department M.DES & B.DES - Graphic Design. Mentoring multiple teams of design students on public, social and private sector projects including Women's Right to Protection / Changing Perception. To examine attitudes toward women's rights on protected sex.

<http://2015.ux-india.org/speakers.html>

Contributions for Social Impact in Life Sciences / Health Sector: 2016

Lending design support created & designed Nomenclature and Visual language for packaging sanitary pads to capture and sensitize young girls as they embrace womanhood with low-cost sanitary pads. 'AISHA' launched in 2014.

<https://saraldesigns.in/looking-back-at-the-first-1000-days-of-saral-designs-sanitary-pads/>

Creative Director for Charité University Clinic Berlin & KEM Research centre Pune: 2015-2017

'NO' is an initiative to prevent sexual violence against women by implementing a supportive bystander system and increasing awareness about sexual violence using a smartphone application. It has been developed by the

KEM Hospital Research Center, Pune in cooperation with BAYER India, the Charité University Clinic Berlin, Splendornet Technologies, the Maharashtra Police and Pune University.

In 2015 the Program for Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence (PPPSV) has been launched in India by the KEM Hospital Research Centre, Pune. In February 2018 the Smartphone Application 'NO' has been launched and is now available for download. An overview of all Public activities and communication efforts for the 'NO' App while synchronizing visual language across platforms, to increase public awareness about the 'NO' App strategically from a short, medium and long-term perspective.

<https://www.notosexualviolence.org/>

Leading the design team for BMC School Identity Government of Maharashtra launched: Dec 2019-March 2020

Leading and mentoring multiple teams of design students on public, social and private sector projects including the rebranding of BMC- MPS (Mumbai Public School), Mumbai's Municipal Corporations' MPS the first CBSE school by the government).

<https://mumbaipublicschools.in/web/schools/cbse>

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Packaging Strategy for Affordable Sanitary Pads (Lower-Income Segment)

MY ROLE:

I designed the packaging with a clear focus on accessibility, trust, and dignity for lower-income consumers. The goal was to make the product feel reliable yet approachable, without increasing cost.

High Visibility & Recall: Used bold, contrasting colors (blue + pink) and a clear brand name ("Aisha") to ensure easy recognition in crowded retail and low-literacy environments.

Clear Communication: Highlighted key benefits like "Ultra XL," "Soft & Dry," and pad count prominently for quick decision-making without needing detailed reading. **Trust-Building Design:** Clean, medical-style visual cues (cross shape) subtly signal hygiene and safety, reinforcing product credibility.

Affordability Perception: Simple, no-frills material and structure kept costs low while maintaining a neat, non-intimidating look.

Discreet & Dignified: Compact, non-transparent packaging allows women to carry and purchase comfortably without stigma.

Overall, the strategy balanced cost efficiency with aspirational trust, enabling stronger adoption and repeat purchase within price-sensitive communities.

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Context of the Project

From December 2019 to March 2020, I led the design team for the BMC School Identity project, initiated by the Government of Maharashtra. The project involved rebranding Mumbai Public Schools (BMC-MPS) as a part of the launch of Mumbai's first government-run CBSE school. This initiative aimed to uplift the image of public schools, enhance their appeal, and create an identity reflecting quality education and inclusivity.

Challenges Encountered

The project was ambitious and multidimensional, bringing forth several challenges:

Coordinating a Diverse Team:

I was responsible for mentoring multiple teams of design students from varied academic and cultural backgrounds. Guiding them to align their creative ideas with the project's vision required effective communication and coordination.

Establishing a Unique Brand Identity:

Creating a cohesive identity for Mumbai Public Schools that resonated with diverse stakeholders—parents, students, and government bodies—was complex. The design needed to embody modernity while maintaining cultural and social inclusivity.

Time Constraints:

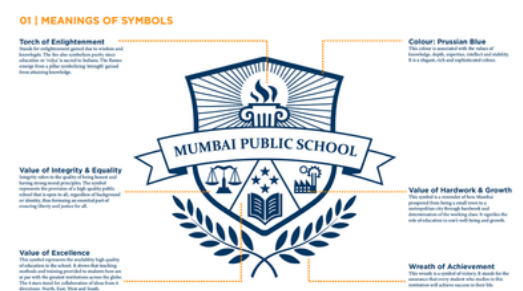
With a timeline of just four months, balancing ideation, execution, and stakeholder feedback cycles demanded meticulous planning and efficient workflows.

Stakeholder Expectations:

The project involved constant interaction with government officials, school authorities, and community leaders, each having distinct priorities. Harmonizing these perspectives while adhering to design principles added another layer of complexity.

Leading the BMC School Identity Design Project

Actions Taken to Deliver the Project



Leadership and Team Management:

I facilitated regular brainstorming sessions and workshops to unify the team's creative direction. I encouraged cross-team collaboration, ensuring that each member felt involved and motivated.

Strategic Design Process:

We conducted extensive research on successful school branding initiatives, both locally and internationally, to benchmark our efforts. Surveys and focus groups with parents, teachers, and students helped us understand their aspirations and incorporate their feedback into the designs.

Iterative Prototyping and Feedback:

To streamline stakeholder approval, we adopted an iterative design approach. Regular updates and presentations allowed us to refine the branding elements progressively while staying aligned with stakeholder expectations.

Efficient Time Management:

I created a detailed project timeline with clear milestones for each phase—research, concept development, prototyping, and final execution. This ensured that the team adhered to deadlines without compromising creativity.

Collaborative Problem-Solving:

When faced with roadblocks, such as differing opinions among stakeholders, I facilitated open dialogues to find common ground. This approach not only resolved conflicts but also fostered trust and mutual respect.



Join the Community today!

www.notosexualviolence.org

*Available in Pune | In association with Maharashtra Police



Context of the Project

The goal of the 'NO' App is to prevent sexual violence against women. It has been developed over the past two years in collaboration with BAYER India, KEM Hospital Research Center, Pune, the Charité Universitätsmedizin (university clinic), Berlin, Germany, University of Pune, Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Splendornet Technologies, Unique Guard and the Maharashtra Police Department. Results from over 30 years of clinical research at the Charité Berlin gave insight in the readiness of potential offenders to commit an actual offense, revealing that a large part (95%) of them are strongly influenced through an increase of risk factors when committing an offense.

MY ROLE:

Rebranding communication strategy henceforth with a positive tone both visually and verbatim. Ensuring all platforms have a uniform visual language.

Action taken: Strategise people/student coordinators to send in 5 seconds or upload their 'I say NO' to Sexual Violence video on social media (making it proactive)

Outcome expected: Raise general public awareness on the topic raised. Action taken: Approached Television Celebrity - 'SAI SHAKTI', a resident of Pune, popular Small screen actress known for her roles in women empowerment series.

Workshop conducted at IB School MIT GURUKUL on 26th March. Outcome expected: Reaching out indirectly to parents / teachers and families at large.

Action Taken: Creating a Badge of Honor- to be presented to relevant institutes on participating and downloading app and becoming part of the community.

Outcome expected: Uploading on our website / FB / Twitter and asking them. To follow us. Ensuring more traffic to our pages.

Action Taken: NO' Tutorial Animation for Youtube and whats app circulation created.

Outcome expected: Video should go viral / have maximum reach to enable viewers to become users. (Social media handling agency to ensure circulation)

Concluding with creative work started from Jan 12- 2018

The Entire Logo unit was redesigned and artworks provided for usage across all collaterals Including Print / App related and social media platforms. (Before launch on 12th Feb)

The website landing page / Twitter and FB landing pages all redesigned to ensure a uniformity and positive presence (A disturbing butcher image had to be removed from all communication and HB design has been given guidelines on further usage and applications)

(On daily basis ensuring Posts on Social media are relevant and coordinating with Sepia media - Grammatical / Content have to be closely monitored and creative directions have to be given regularly.)





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SOCILA IMPACT / DESIGN LED ACTIVISM

Context of the Project

Are we facing a Public Health System failure?

Prof. Parth Shah guided us through a critical evaluation of various policy implementations which involves assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, equity and sustainability of how a policy is put into practice.

We looked at the current Public Health System in India - The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and NHA have speculated an informative campaign to align with the current 100 Microsites – Project for ABDM Adoption – Complete Digitization – Complete Utilization: Onboarding Private sector health facilities onto the ABDM Ecosystem.

MY ROLE:

Influence and Persuasion: Understanding human behaviour allows individuals and organizations to influence and persuade others more effectively. By knowing what drives people's actions and decision-making processes, individuals can tailor their messages and appeals to resonate with their target audience.

Will the UCS approach work in curbing rampant OTC antibiotic sales? The answer lies at The Indian School of Public Policy (ISPP), where we proposed an awareness campaign that must be tackled at the grassroots level through multiple interventions.

There is a lack of a centralised form of data that covers people/the general public's behaviours, specifically, people's views and attitudes on self-medication. **A multi-faceted and multi-skilled team of experts is required to design a non-biased approach to any policy-based solution.** Different cultures and different geographical regions in India have different issues which hamper policy-making at a broader level.

