



IDEO.ORG HAS DESIGNS ON SAFETY

How a Human-Centred, Creative Approach can Improve Safety

Hanna Pincus, Business Operations Lead, at IDEO.org, winner of the 2019 Award for Duty of Care Ambassador, adopted a human-centred, empathetic approach to traveller safety.

IDEO.org design products and services that aim to contribute to a more just and inclusive world. In order to achieve this mission, that often means working in and travelling to challenging environments—the places that are hardest to reach are often those with the greatest need. When Hanna took on the task of being responsible for Safety and Security at IDEO.org, caring for her frequently travelling colleagues became her commitment.

IDEO.org practices human-centred design, a creative approach to problem-solving that starts with people and arrives at new solutions tailored to fit their lives. Hanna quickly decided that her approach to security would follow the same path. As she explains:

“In general, the way I work is to look at systems and processes and think about how IDEO.org can be more efficient, in a sustainable and holistic way. More importantly, I choose to lead with empathy and always design around the individual. I apply the lens of Human Centred Design which emphasises and focuses on the human experience.”

Research and Test Options

A key initial task was to fully understand what travelling for IDEO.org meant. This involved many hours of research, with both internal and external people, to understand travellers' experiences as they prepare, travel, and work in new, often volatile, environments.

To this knowledge Hanna would add, ‘Quick prototyping, always striving to test out ideas and constantly iterating, throwing out what does not work and improving.’

Improved Briefings

Hanna focused on improving the security briefings received by travellers. After conducting multiple interviews with frequent travellers to fully understand what they wanted to

get from a briefing, it became clear that they preferred to be informed by experts, however, also wanted the briefing to feel personal.

Hanna attended to the practical details too. All travellers received a booklet that fits their wallet with important phone numbers and emergency instructions - vital information at their fingertips.

Supporting Expats

Hanna's next step was to address IDEO.org's expats, whose security needs had largely been neglected. Again, this involved in-depth research. She spent time with different NGOs and held numerous interviews with many of her colleagues as well as external security and medical experts. This was followed by another prototyping phase, looking at different options and solutions. These included exploring various methods of briefing new expats and developing a Welcome presentation to test different messaging.

Positive Results

Preparing for a standard security briefing has been reduced from several hours work of researching, synthesizing intel and creating a power point presentation, to 30 min of looping an external expert into the project scope so they can provide the expert testimony. Also, what used to be a two person team, was with Hanna, effectively reduced to a one person job.

Creating a Culture

Another essential outcome is that this approach has led to an underlying change in organisational culture. Sharing work-in-progress openly at all stages has resulted in increased transparency and interest in security. Security is now actively considered as part of all new projects. IDEO.org's leadership is also actively involved in discussing security with employees and partners. Plus, people now feel they have easy access to information and advice on security issues. This has led to a much more confident, informed and safe organisation. Security has become a core value, not an afterthought, at IDEO.org.

