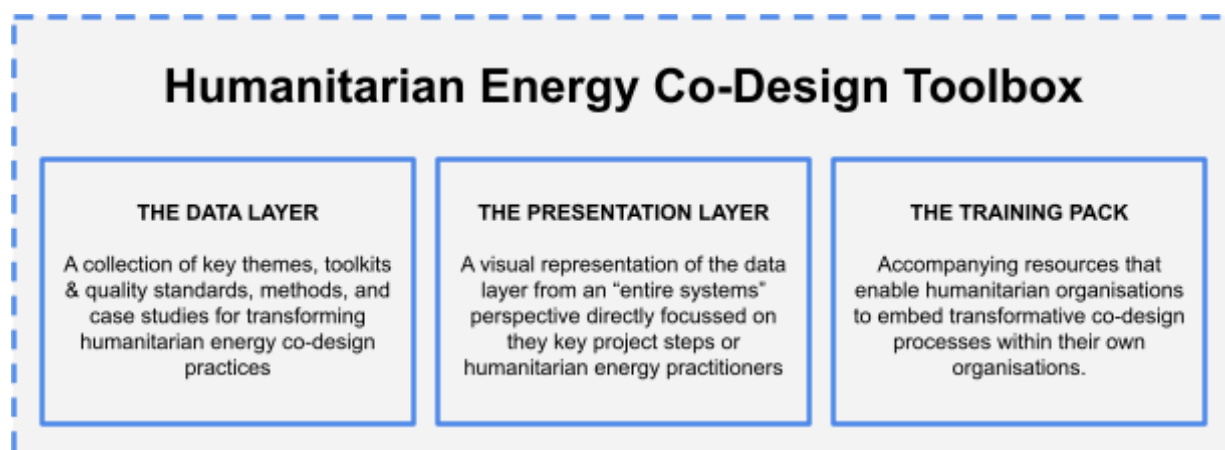# Meaningful Evolutions and Transformations - Whats Next for Co-Design

Co-Design is a term that has drifted in and out of the mainstream since its inception in the 1970s, its various evolutions have come with new definitions, transformations, and applications. This has resulted in a multitude of approaches and sub-approaches that make up a diverse, complex, and often misunderstood term. Now introduce the complex, often confusing, and fast changing humanitarian sector and you have a "wicked" problem - oh and the energy access space, which is also a complex web of energy needs, wants, and aspirations.

Co-Design for Humanitarian Energy Systems and Services - what's that?

This jumble of sectors, definitions, terminology, and complex systems makes it challenging for humanitarian practitioners to first, engage with co-design practices, second, to ensure that this engagement is meaningful, and third, to benchmark their own practices against others to ensure a complete understanding of where practices can be improved - this is an issue.
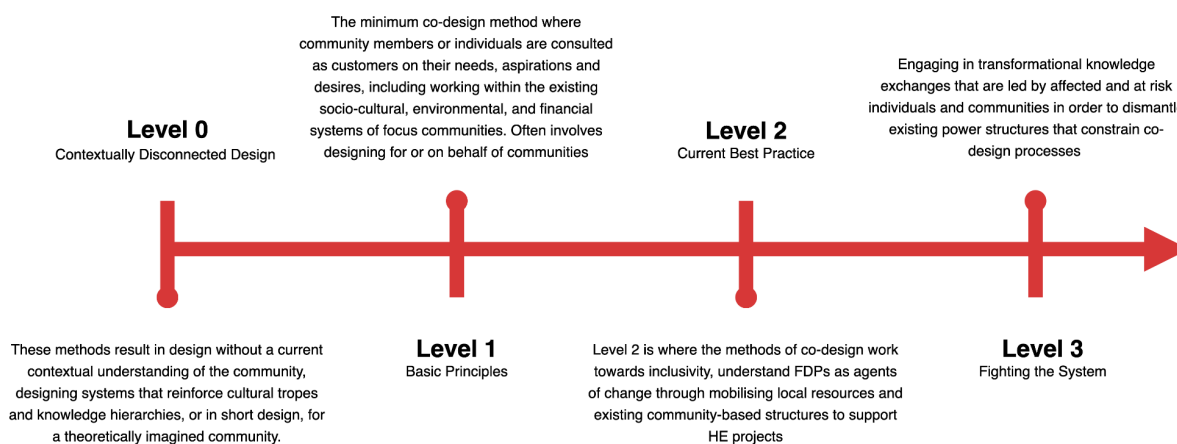
Outsight International, funded by EnAccess Foundation, has developed the Humanitarian Energy Co-Design Toolbox to support humanitarian (energy) practitioners with these three core challenges. This toolbox collects, collates, and categorizes co-design theory and practice across the humanitarian project cycle (the Data Layer) - making it accessible to practitioners through a highly curated database with graphic format (the Presentation Layer) including case studies, workshop agenda, slides, and guidelines (the Training Pack). From decolonisation and localisation to data collection and analysis methods to many more, this toolbox represents the state of the art in Transformative Humanitarian Practice.

Humanitarian Energy Co-Design Toolbox

THE DATA LAYER	THE PRESENTATION LAYER	THE TRAINING PACK
A collection of key themes, toolkits & quality standards, methods, and case studies for transforming humanitarian energy co-design practices	A visual representation of the data layer from an "entire systems" perspective directly focussed on they key project steps or humanitarian energy practitioners	Accompanying resources that enable humanitarian organisations to embed transformative co-design processes within their own organisations.

But what about Benchmarking Practice?

Our Co-Design Toolbox is built with an understanding that co-design practices evolve across a spectrum of approaches - see the co-design spectrum below - where the complexity, challenge of implementation, and ultimate meaningfulness increases from one side to the other. We have detailed what each level entails and a range of self reflective questions in our toolbox

documentation so that organizations can understand where their current projects sit within this spectrum. This means that when engaging with the training materials organizations can identify their own specific north star of practice to head towards.

The minimum co-design method where community members or individuals are consulted as customers on their needs, aspirations and desires, including working within the existing socio-cultural, environmental, and financial systems of focus communities. Often involves designing for or on behalf of communities

Engaging in transformational knowledge exchanges that are led by affected and at risk individuals and communities in order to dismantle existing power structures that constrain co-design processes

Level 0
Contextually Disconnected Design

Level 2
Current Best Practice

These methods result in design without a current contextual understanding of the community, designing systems that reinforce cultural tropes and knowledge hierarchies, or in short design, for a theoretically imagined community.

Level 1
Basic Principles

Level 2 is where the methods of co-design work towards inclusivity, understand FDPs as agents of change through mobilising local resources and existing community-based structures to support HE projects

Level 3
Fighting the System

The Co-Design Spectrum (Adapted from Robinson et. al (2022))

So, what does this mean for humanitarian practitioners?

Simply, all the resources you need to both understand co-design practices and embed them within your organization are at your fingertips. Starting with our Training Pack How-To-Guide explore all the resources available, from the theory of co-design to workshop activities that can be implemented to increase understanding of these critical processes. This open source resource is free for all to use and modify to your own needs.

One last thing before we go. We are committed to improving this toolbox every time it's implemented within an organization. This means that we are actively looking for organizations to reach out to us so that we can work together to improve this toolbox - we believe in the power of transformative co-design practices for the humanitarian energy sector - mainstreaming these practices is critical to ensuring that the forcibly displaced can become the protagonists of their own stories.

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