The Future of Cancer and Collective Intelligence in the Post-Covid World project was jointly conceived by the Innovation School at Glasgow School of Art and the Institute of Cancer Sciences at the University of Glasgow.

Graduating year Product Design students from the Innovation School were presented with a challenge-based project to produce a vision of the future based on current trends that relate to the Future of Cancer and Collective Intelligence in the Post-Covid World.

If collective intelligence holds the potential to truly connect people to people, and people to data, across diverse communities, linking peoples’ lived experiences locally and globally, what kinds of new health and care services might emerge to improve cancer control across the continuum from prevention, detection, treatment and survivorship, and what types of new roles might emerge for citizens, patients and community groups to collaboratively drive these forward with health professionals?

In order to address this challenge, the GSA Innovation School’s final year Product Design students and faculty formed a dynamic community of practice with cancer practitioners and researchers from the Institute of Cancer Sciences at The University of Glasgow and beyond to envisage a 2030 cancer blueprint as a series of future world exhibits, and create the designed products, services and experiences for the people who might live and work within this ecosystem.

This project asks the students to embark on a speculative design exploration into future experiences of working and living with cancer ten years from now, where advances in collective intelligence have evolved to the extent that new forms and ecosystems of medical practice, cancer care and experiences of living with, through and beyond cancer transform how we interact with each other, with health professionals and the communities around us.

The first was a collaborative stage based on Future Worlds. The worlds are groups of students working together on specific topics, to establish the context for their project and collaborate on research and development. These were clustered together around ‘Future Working’ and ‘Future Living’ but also joined up across these groups to create pairs of worlds, and in the process generate collective intelligence between the groups. The worlds clustered around ‘Future Working’ are Education, Care and Treatment, Prevention and Detection. Future Worlds clustered around ‘Future Living’ are Personal Wellbeing, Communicating Cancer, Beyond Cancer.

FUTURE WORKING WORLD CLUSTER

Education: Aidan O’Friel, Ruka Kameda, Stella Stewart, Taylor Moffat-Kyle.

In 2030 with the rapid development of technology and the power of collective intelligence, cancer and its treatment has become manageable. Most procedures can be done at home and new roles called Citizen Supports emerged to enhance the humane empathetic approach in sharing knowledge and supporting each other. Citizen Supports are a general term to describe the Citizen Aid, Citizen Representative, Citizen Nurse and Citizen Administrator, which every person in 2030 will be assigned as one of the roles in their community. Citizen Supports are the group of people who themselves have experienced cancer treatment or have closely witnessed the process. They will help the ongoing cancer patients in an empathetic way as well as giving them credible information to live a healthy lifestyle with cancer.

Prevention and Detection: Andrew Smith, Eilidh Young, Sophie Young, Ugne Cerniauskaite.

We imagine a world in which government cuts have continued to dwindle Health Sector funds. The NHS has had to further increase it’s reliance on other avenues to relieve some of the strain of the

healthcare system. Healthcare organisations have formed new partnerships with commercial organisations and influential bodies, while it’s partnerships with charity organisations have expanded and become even stronger. There is a better public understanding of the benefits of strong communities and a greater effort from all to make sure that the most vulnerable people within our societies don’t slip through the cracks. In the future, funding cuts will lead to the reduction of the NHS. From a once universally reliable and dedicated service the NHS will now primarily be responsible for supplementary help, aiding communities in their health and wellbeing endeavours in an auxiliary way.

Care and Treatment: Arwen Borris, Ibrahim Afzal, Mingyi Lu, Sian Mackay.

Our future world of cancer care and treatment is one of transparency and empathy, technology will become more humanised due to collective knowledge and communication across medical disciplines. Staff will have the shared responsibility of supporting each other for their own mental health in order to protect the patient. Individuals working within departments will be connected both locally and globally, sharing knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the patients.

In light of COVID-19, treatment at home will be supported by remote tracking of patient data and humanised technology, allowing the patient to have more control over their treatment. The future of care and treatment is built upon the foundations of a patient network, all stakeholders involved with the patient from diagnosis to beyond cancer will share responsibility for them with a recognition that no matter how small of role, every cancer worker must all take part otherwise the eco-system fails. This system will allow for new conversations not previously being had and stronger staff communications along the patient journey.

This holistic care approach is represented as a metaphor of the patient riding a bike that is powered by staff communication.

FUTURE LIVING WORLD CLUSTER

Communicating Cancer: Axelle Julien, Calum Ferguson, Maria Marinescu-Duca, Zichun Wang.

Collective Intelligence is the new DNA of our society, based on sharing, human contact, openness, and empathy. People have a new approach in dealing with death and cancer, using new systems of immersion and expression to communicate through their emotions. We have chosen to represent this world in an abstract way to convey identities of communication that evolve beyond words and speech.

Our speculative future consists of a sensory-rich emotion database, sourced and framed or demonstrated through created artefacts for the context. Its fundamental purpose is communicating cancer through empathetic experiences of family, in all its senses. We portrayed three distinct scenarios and their respective implications; family of strangers dealing with the same condition, a family of blood trying to understand one another and a family of love dealing with the grief that comes with one’s loss.

Personal Wellbeing: Holly Thompson, Lucas Cheskin, Mateusz Boruc, Zuzanna Konieczna.

After the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic the world changed. The UK decided to never let something of this severity happen again and to take more precautions in the future. By 2030 the UK became a health focused society. In order to track health risks, the Ministry of Health started calculating health risk factors for every citizen, with the H.R.F (Health Risk Factor). News broadcasts regularly have alerts issued by the ministry of health. This is all so people with high HRF can take necessary precautions whenever they might be exposed to danger to their health, for example rising cases of flu in their area or pollution cloud.

Beyond Cancer: Cameron Hogg, Haili Wu, Megan Maxwell.

Dinaci – a brand of 2030 – offers intelligent healthcare in the home. Using a set of smart tools – essentially intelligent crockery and cutlery – Dinaci looks at biological and behavioural trends to build an image of the users’ normality. Negative trends in this data point towards health problems; in the beyond cancer context this is an image of risk of readmission. The data gathered acts as part of a collective intelligence; informing the users healthcare on a local scale; in a wider context it informs the medical and cancer communities.