DESIGNING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE.

Social responsibility and the graphic designer.

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Social change, social design, responsibility, social responsibility, corporate social responsibility, graphic design, community-based graphic design, socially conscious graphic design, propaganda.
Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to study social responsibility and find out what responsibilities the graphic designer may have and what they can do using their skill set as a designer to contribute in helping to better their community. Social responsibility needs to be addressed more within the design field. It needs to be introduced and taught to students at an early stage of their education, so as they fully understand the power and influence that their creations will have over society, and the role this plays in materialism, overconsumption and our modern day consumer-culture. Change needs to be made within graphic design and the urgency for this grows more and more for each day that passes. The graphic designer needs to critically reflect over the purpose of their work and answer the question of whom it stands to serve: their audience or consumer-culture. They need to move away from the creation of artificial needs and the promotion of unnecessary products, and move towards the creation of more useful and lasting communication that contributes to society.
Foreword

Thanks to Anders Ljungmark, my supervisor, for support, encouragement and direction through the process of working with this essay. Thanks to my Mum and Dad for being supportive and offering encouragement for the most things I do. Thanks to the people who offered their time for the interviews and the people who helped with reading this essay before it was turned in.

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1. Introduction

The graphic designer has many responsibilities ranging from conducting themselves in a professional and ethical manner in their work to employing well thought through solutions based around sustainable design processes and practices. They also have many social responsibilities; responsibilities of what their profession is actually doing for their community and the worlds they live in. These responsibilities raise many questions: What is the purpose of the designers work? Is it just for the financial gain of some large global corporation? Does the designers work stand to serve the community they live in or does it just exist to prompt the people living there to become better consumers?

The designer’s job is so much more than just making things look nice and appealing to a group of people and selling more products. The designer’s job is to communicate and inform people and prompt them to make educated choices about what they do, how they act and what they consume, not just to push them into consuming for the sake of it. The designer’s job is to communicate to their audience with respect and dignity, avoiding solutions that patronize or prey on their weaknesses. The designer’s job is to try and educate their audiences to understand what is “right” and what is “wrong” in a communication, and to communicate in an accurate manner, offering clear and concise messages.

Not only this, but their job is also to communicate in a way that is true to their profession, working with a level of professionalism that shows respect and dignity towards their fellow designer and the graphic design field in general.

There is much written about the responsibility and social responsibility of the graphic designer but not so much on the responsibility the designer has to their community or, more specifically, what the designer can do in his profession to contribute to making their community a better place. The intention of this essay is to look into the designer’s responsibility and to find out just what they are, and what the designer can do to contribute to a positive social impact within their community.

As David Berman put it: “Don’t just do good design, do good.”

1.1. Background

The idea for this project came about from the reading of First Things First, the manifesto authored by Ken Garland in 1964 and revised for the new millennium by Adbusters in 2000. This manifesto is a reaction to the world of advertising and the skills of graphic designers being wasted on banal design jobs such as toothpaste packaging or cat food packets, which contribute nothing to the prosperity and well being of society. It is a call for graphic designers to move away from advertising and creating of design solutions that promote consumerism and it proposes that designers use their skill set for the benefit of society, on communications that are more lasting and useful. With this in mind, I wanted to take the opportunity to work with a project that was not centred on the generating of profits or financial gain for a company or business, but rather, a project that had a deeper meaning, something that was for all people and something that society or (in this case) the communities of Malmö would benefit from.
In the past 3-4 years, Malmö as a city has seen a rise of gang crime and, in particular, crimes committed with firearms such as shootings and homicides. Due to this rise of criminality (or the fact of these crimes being increasingly committed in broad daylight), the city has received a great deal of bad publicity, and has been referred to as Sweden’s “Chicago” (reuters.com).

With all this bad publicity, a need has risen for people to look to the positive aspects of living in Malmö and to focus on them, pushing them into the limelight. By doing this, the city may possibly bring about a positive change in the attitudes of those in the media who continually wish to portray Malmö as a lawless gangster city. By focusing on these positives they may not only achieve this attitude change but they may also strengthen the bonds of the residents of the city bringing back a sense of pride for the city we live in as well as strengthening the identity of Malmö as a diverse, tolerant and integrated city in the process.

1.2. Purpose & question

The purpose of the design assignment and essay is to study responsibility in graphic design and find out what responsibilities the designer may have and what they can do to contribute in helping to better the community that they live in.

The purpose of the design project is to study and research existing strategies for social design, where possible, put these strategies into use in a campaign that covers a relevant social issue and, from there, evaluate how effective the strategies may have been.

As such, there are a few questions that I want to answer with the design project and assignment, the main question being:

- “What is the social responsibility of the graphic designer and what can they do to contribute in helping to better their community?”

In order to narrow this question, I have asked:

- “What can I do as a graphic designer to improve the community I live in and how, using my skill set as a designer, can I give back to or bring about a positive social impact for said community?”

Follow up questions to be answered and research along the way include looking at what methods exist for designing for social change and how they can be used in a campaign for a social issue, if a poster campaign on social issues can strengthen the identity of a city, what impact a sender may have on a communication and how it is perceived when the sender is not visible, and finally if its possible to set a list of principles that I can adhere to when working as a graphic designer that may have a positive social impact on my community?

1.3. Method

The written report of this exam will be focused on a literature study of responsibility and social responsibility. This will cover social responsibility in graphic design, what social responsibilities the graphic designer may have and how they can use these to better their community. There is also a literature study concerning social design, designing for social change and a look at existing strategies
that can be used when designing for community based graphic design solutions. The literature study also includes an analysis of propaganda, what it is and how it is created.

As a part of the research activity, I also conducted one on one interviews and surveys on how the viewer perceives the design solutions, whether it is a visual language that is appropriate and effective for use in raising awareness to these issues and also to how the viewer perceives the reliability of the communication when no sender is visible or if the sender were different. This research can be found in the design process in chapter 3, as it was a part of the evaluation of the design solution.

For the design project, I have used a design methodology for social design, which has been adopted from Andrew Shea’s strategies for social design or community-based graphic design. More information on this method can be found in the research section (Chapter 2, p. 10-11) and in the design process (Chapter 3, p. 16-17).

1.4. Literature

The literature study began with research conducted using the Internet and one particular resource that was greatly used was the AIGA or American Institute of Graphic Arts website (aiga.org). This website was of great importance to my literature study as it was through using this site that the majority of the literature (both physical books as well as digital articles) was found.

The literature used in the research has been chosen due to its relevance to social responsibility in graphic design. Citizen designer, perspectives on design responsibility by Steven Heller and Veronique Vienne (2003) was used as it covered a wide range of design responsibility and the book was split into categories including social, professional and artistic responsibility. Do good design by David B. Berman (2009) was used as it described the designers role in consumer culture and explained ways in which a designer can work with societies benefit in mind. Designing for social change by Andrew Shea (2012) was used because of its relevance to designing for a community and because it offered a practical methodology that could be used and evaluated in my design process.

1.5. Limitations

The intention of this essay is not to create a list of the problems faced by today’s communities nor is it to fix the world and remedy it of its problems, rather, the intention is to offer concise ideas as to what responsibilities the designer has and how the designer’s work may better their community or bring about a positive social impact.

In the research chapter, an effort has been made to define the term social design. The various parts of this research surrounding this topic have not been referenced and this is due to there being a lack of well-referenced material. What has been given instead is a definition offered from the dictionary followed up with various unreferenced meanings from a social design network. These have been added so as to give the reader a general understanding of what the term entails and they are, however, by no means exact definitions.

In the research section, where Andrew Shea’s strategies for social design are described, I have only covered the strategies used during my design process. They are not described in too much detail due
to space restrictions. Instead, I have written more in the design process (Chapter 3, p.16-17) about how I have used each one and what they meant to my design project.

In terms of design which society benefits from, the issue of sustainability is of great significance. Sustainability is mentioned, due to its importance, however, as it is not the focus of this essay, it is only raised briefly.

1.6. Terminology

**A better community** – A community that is strong and unified that works together to sort its issues and problems and doesn’t exclude or segregate people due to race or cultural background

**Bottom line** – The last line of a financial statement that shows the net profit or loss of a company or organization, the final total of an account or balance sheet

**Community** – The people of a city, district or country considered collectively, especially in the context of social values and responsibilities; society
  
  a. A group of people living in the same locality and under the same government.
  
  b. The district or locality in which such a group lives.

**Community-based graphic design** – Graphic design created by, and with the intention to serve, a particular community (see Social design)

**Consumer culture** – Advocacy of a high rate of consumption and spending as a basis for a sound economy

**Consumerism** – The preoccupation of society with the acquisition of consumer goods

**Ethics** – Moral principles that govern a person’s behaviour or the conducting of an activity

**Responsibility** – A moral obligation to behave correctly towards or in respect of something

**Socially conscious graphic design** – Graphic design with a sense of responsibility or concern for the problems and injustices of society

**Social design** – Design or a process of design that relates to society or its organization”, “design or a process of design that contributes to improving human well-being or society

Also known as “design for social impact”, “human-centred design”, “community-based graphic design” or “design for social change”
2. Research

The research is split into three different literature studies covering three different topics. The first topic is about responsibility and covers the responsibilities and social responsibilities of the graphic designer. The second topic is about social design and designing for social change and discusses pre-existing strategies developed for use in social design. The final topic covers political and social poster design and is a study of propaganda and the techniques used in creating it. This final section has been included as, although not directly related to the discussion on social responsibility, it is a topic of interest when looking at strong forms of visual communication that can be used in graphic design solutions for social issues or concerns.

2.1. Responsibility

2.1.1. The graphic designer’s responsibility

As a species the human being has many responsibilities that extend over the entirety of our lives. They cover everything about our being, what we do, how we behave and how we treat our fellow person. These responsibilities not only cover our personal and private lives but also extend to our professional or working lives. As with many other professions, the responsibilities of the graphic designer are many and varied and may differ in size and importance. Although the task of prioritizing may rest with the individual designer, for the benefit of society the graphic designer needs to start implementing them in the course of their work and professional practice.

Shel Perkins believes there to be three categories to be considered when discussing responsibility and ethics in design: professional behaviour, professional expertise and professional values. The first involves the designer’s behaviour in the daily business of their work. The second covers the expertise needed in areas such as accessibility, usability and sustainability, and the third that deals with the values, beliefs or moral principles the designer has towards society, the economy or politics (aiga.org 1). One of the main responsibilities the graphic designer has is conducting themselves in a professional and ethical manner in the practice of their work. A seemingly obvious responsibility if the designer is planning on having a successful design career. This responsibility involves many aspects including: how the designer interacts or deals with their clients, their audiences or towards society, as well as the ethical issues related to these points.

In their series Design Business + Ethics, the AIGA have compiled a set of standards that can be used in the design field and apply to all the various participants who may partake in the field, designers, clients and the public. One benefit of having this series directed to all of these people is that, in turn, it passes the responsibility to everyone and it becomes a collective effort to better the field of design. The purpose of this series is to educate about the ethical standards and practices that govern the design field and it has been created to “establish consistent professional standards and define the relationship among designers, clients and content”. In the chapter directed towards the designer, a set of standards for professional practice (which is to be expected from all AIGA members) has been developed. These standards cover the designer’s responsibility to their clients, to other designers, to the public and to society and the environment (aiga.org 2).
The *AIGA* are by no means alone in the defining and publishing of standards or ethical codes to be adhered to in professional practice. Other design organisations that have adopted their own standards for their members include: the *Graphic Artists Guild* (graphicartistsguild.org), the *Society of Graphic Designers of Canada* (gdc.net) and the *Australian Graphic Design Association* (agda.com.au). Although many of the issues raised in these documents are similar, they are all of equal importance and all make for interesting reading.

Another example of responsibility that the graphic designer has is related to sustainability in their profession and the environmental effects and consequences that may occur from their work. These responsibilities are also covered in the series from the *AIGA* and the various other design organisations. This responsibility may cover such points as selecting recycled paper or choosing ecological and non-toxic inks etc for printed material. This can also include the designing of solutions that may be seen as having a longer life, be non-disposable or recyclable or solutions that can lead to sustainable development, a term that has been defined by Ann Thorpe (2007, p.6-7)) as: “development that cultivates environmental and social conditions that will support human well-being indefinitely” Businesses and companies are more than ever aware of the need for sustainable solutions that can lead to this development, solutions that don’t put a strain on the environment and that promote human well being. Indeed, if the designer is looking to have a successful career, one could argue that they have to take sustainability into account and incorporate it into their design solutions as many deem it to be the way forward (Thorpe, 2007, p.4-22). In terms of social change, one of the biggest ways in which a designer can bring about change with their work is through the use of sustainable practices in the design process and way of thinking.

**2.1.2. The graphic designer’s social responsibility**

As one can see from the above mentioned, the graphic designer has many responsibilities, many of which can be seen as social due to their dealing with the public or society. However, what about the other social responsibilities that the designer may face?

David Berman in his book *Do Good Design* (2009) believes designers to have an essential social responsibility due to design being at the core of the world’s largest challenges and solutions. Designers create so much of the world we live in, the things we consume and they are responsible for the expectations we have of our world. The graphic designer has an immense power over their surrounding, due to the nature of their work; work that can be very powerful and persuasive and can influence how we engage our world. (Berman, 2009, p.1)

The power that the designer has over their surrounding is an important thing to consider when addressing social responsibility within graphic design as it is the designer’s creativity which fuels the most efficient (and most destructive) tools of deception in human history. Not only that, but the same design that fuels the mass overconsumption that threatens the world and mankind also holds the power to repair it. (Berman, 2009, p.2)

This view of the designer’s power over their surrounding and their role in materialism and overconsumption is shared by Shel Perkins (aiga.org 1). Due to the large amount of work the designer performs having the purpose of promoting corporate commercialism, the designer is helping to shape
consumer culture. He states that the designer needs to be aware of the influence and impact of their work, an impact that can lead to the creation of artificial needs and the promotion of unnecessary products. In *First Things First Revisited* (emigre.com), Rick Poyner also agrees with the current state of design and the role it has in the creation of false needs and the promotion of unnecessary products. He believes that designers are engaged in nothing less than the manufacture of contemporary reality and that our skills and creativity should not be wasted on such things as commercial advertising but rather be focused on producing useful or lasting artefacts that contribute to society.

One particular social responsibility that the designer has is that of what their profession is actually doing for their community and the world they live in. This particular aspect spans further than the obvious contribution that sustainability may have to one’s community (mentioned above), and covers the aspect of what the designer is doing to help in their community on a direct level. This raises questions such as: what is the purpose of the designers work, is it just for the financial gain of some large global corporation and who actually benefits from the design solutions we create?

These questions are also raised by Perkins who feels the designer needs to step back and reflect on what they are doing in the first place and what impact it will have on the world (aiga.org 1).

These points have been raised many times in the discussion of social responsibility and many articles and essays have been written concerning the purpose of the designer’s work and whom it benefits. Most noteworthy here is Ken Garland’s *First Things First* (kengarland.co.uk) from 1964 which acted as a call to designers to change the way they looked at their work and was signed by a group of his peers. Garland (along with the other signatories) proposed a reversal of priorities away from consumer advertising in favour of a more useful and lasting communication, one that may contribute to society. *First Things First 2000* (emigre.com 1), an updated and revised version of Garland’s manifesto, was reissued for the new millennium in 1999. This again was signed by a group of his peers, many of the days most well respected and well-known designers.

An interesting comparison can be drawn between these manifests in terms of the urgency of the issue. When Garland penned his manifesto he stated that the intention was not to abolish advertising but rather, propose a reversal of priorities. In the new and revised version there is no such statement about this, it instead just puts forth the idea of a change in priority. This can be attributed to the further growth of consumerism and commercial culture, which has exploded since Garland’s first text was published in 1964.

Taken one step further, one can compare these two manifests with Kalle Lasn’s *Design Anarchy* (2009), which expresses disgust and loathing for consumerism and further emphasizes the urgency to change the way that the designer works. One distinction with this manifesto is that rather than propose change; Lasn states that change is necessary. He also states that, although the graphic designer has created this dilemma, they also hold the power with which to solve this dilemma.

All though these texts (in varying degrees), are against consumerism and the creating of consumer culture, not all design solutions that generate profit for multinationals may be viewed as being bad. Many multinationals are now working with *Corporate Social Responsibility* or CSR, a form of social responsibility that pertains to a business, organisation or other enterprise. Many of the companies that use this business strategy are not only producing great design solutions and generating a profit, but also
giving back to communities. An example of this can be seen in the English cosmetics manufacturer \textit{The Body Shop} and their work against human trafficking, prostitution and child prostitution and animal testing amongst other causes.

Another business strategy that many companies and multinationals are now using is \textit{Cause Related Marketing} or \textit{CRM}, which is a strategy that ties a company and its products to a social issue or cause with the goal of boosting sales, while providing benefits to charities (Schwartz, 2003, p.9). Many people, however, are against this form of marketing as they believe, it ultimately to be about the bottom line and not trying to raise consciousness to an issue or to benefit society. No matter how emotionally involved a company may appear to be, in the end the bottom line is profit and self-interest. (Schwartz, 2003, p.18)

When discussing who benefits from the work of the designer, one specific field of interest is the field of social design or the designing of material that society may benefit from. This design work can include so-called \textit{cultural objects} or \textit{artefacts} such as books, magazines, exhibitions, educational tools, television programs or films and the advertising or promotion of music or concerts. This design work can also include printed materials, brochures or posters for campaigns to raise awareness to health problems like cancer or diabetes or for social issues like cultural diversity, anti-racism, or campaigns that tackle political issues, and, these particular projects are an example of what Ken Garland and the various authors of \textit{First Things First 2000} deem worthy of the graphic designers problem solving skills (kengarland.co.uk & emigre.com 1). A prime example of this design work can be seen in the visual communication adopted by \textit{Amnesty International} in their various campaigns for equality and human rights amongst other issues.
Another way of referring to this kind of work may be socially conscious graphic design, or design with a sense of responsibility or concern for the problems and injustices of society. This field of graphic design has become popular of late and many networks and organizations like Design Can Change, The Designers Accord and Design 21 have now been formed to help designers understand their role within this kind of work (more information on these networks can be found in the bibliography p.32). Many design studios have also followed this trend and are now specializing in only performing work of this nature, fully implementing the proposals put forth in both versions of First Things First (kengarland.co.uk & emigre.com 1).

One particular way in which a designer can work for the benefit of society or their community is through working within the public sector. This kind of work can lead to many opportunities to better the designer’s community or that society may benefit from, due to the public sector being responsible for such things like environmental quality or democratic equality, things that fall outside the boundaries of the private sector (Thorpe, 2007, p.98).

Another way for the designer to give back or better their community is through designing for a cause or through the designer joining or working along side a non-profit or charitable organization (Thorpe, 2007, p.100). This work may be for causes such as health issues, social problems or injustices or political concerns. This kind of design work may often be taken on pro-bono but does not always have to be. It can still take on the form of a commercial design solution with the purpose of generating a profit.

Having said all this, Paul Nini, in his article In search of ethics in graphic design (aiga.org 3), believes that although all these things are worthwhile initiatives, the ultimate responsibility the designer has, is that towards their audience. He believes that the designers single most significant contribution to society would be to make sure the communications the designer creates are actually useful to those for whom they’re intended.

The social responsibility of the graphic designer may not rest entirely on the designers themselves. Due to the popularity of graphic design as a profession and the increase in schools offering graphic design educations such as bachelor’s and master’s degrees, a certain amount of responsibility can fall onto the educators who are teaching the designers of the future. It is after all, these designers who are going to be communicating and selling the ideals and beliefs that our children and their children are going to live by. In her essay Good Citizenship – Design as a Social and Political Force, Katherine McCoy explains the need for graphic design educators to alter their curricula and bring back a level of personal opinion to their student’s work rather than training their students to ignore their convictions and be passive economic servants. She urges graphic design educators to give designers their voices so they may participate and contribute more fully in the world around them (McCoy, 2003, p.2-8).

These views are also shared by Perkins (aiga.org 1) who states that designers need to bring their personal beliefs and professional activities into alignment and believes that designers, through their work, have an opportunity and responsibility to put their systems of basic values and beliefs into action and thereby, model the behaviour that they wish to see in the world.
2.2. Social Design

2.2.1. What is social design?

Offering a definition for social design can be problematic, as many in the design field have adopted their own definitions. Much effort has been placed on finding a precise definition of the term to no avail. However, to gain an understanding of the term, one way to define it is to look at the words separately. The Oxford Dictionary (oxforddictionaries.com) has defined social as: “relating to society or its organization”, and using this we can offer the definition as being: “design or the process of design that relates to society or its organization” or in other words “design or a process of design that contributes to improving human well-being or society”. This stands as a definition of the term, but what does it actually mean?

In order to offer an understanding of the term social design, the social design network Design 21 in cooperation with the magazine GOOD, created an online contest to see just how people defined their ideas of social design. Many contributions were uploaded and there were many different ideas of just what the term meant (design21sdn.com). Three good examples that cover the various aspects of what social design means are as follows:

“Design, which promotes the betterment of society as a whole – its people, its environment, its culture”

“Design that’s shaped by society and its collective consciousness, rather than design with the intention of shaping society (and that collective consciousness) to its mould”.

“Social design is those things we create that consider issues beyond the bottom line. It is design with attention paid to environmental impact, labour practices, and the common good. Social design isn’t extravagant, it is just enough, it is witty, fun, and practical. It encourages a response through how it looks or how it is used. It promotes community rather than further detachment from the world around us”.

2.2.2. Working with social design

When working with design solutions of a social nature, directed at a particular community, certain factors may need to be taken into account. By allowing for these factors and focusing on them, the resulting design solution can become more accessible to the audience and can lead to a better and more effective communication.

Andrew Shea, in his book Designing for social change (2012), has developed a set of strategies that can be used for community based graphic design or design solutions directed towards a particular community and of a social nature. These strategies can be used in combination with each other, and can be moved around or even reconstructed, in order to best suit one’s own project or design needs. These strategies are: 1. Immerse yourself, 2. Build trust, 3. Promise only what you can deliver, 4. Prioritize process, 5. Confront controversy, 6. Identify the community’s strengths, 7. Utilize local resources, 8. Design with the community’s voice, 9. Give communities ownership and 10. Sustained engagement.
Below is a list of the various strategies I used in my design process and a brief description of what each strategy entails. For an explanation of how I used each of the strategies in my design project, refer to the design process (Chapter 3, p.16-17). Over and above the descriptions of each strategy, Shea’s book also follows up with two case studies relevant to each strategy and is a very beneficial read for a more thorough understanding of each strategy at work.

5. **Confront controversy**

This strategy explains how one should not shy away from controversial topics that a community may not want to talk about or are ashamed of but rather tackle them head-on. By doing this, one can possibly bring about an open discussion on the topic at hand. However, at the same time as confronting controversy, the designer also needs to remember the purpose of the message and any eventual outcome and ensure that any controversial topics are designed for using both taste and tact (Shea, 2012, p.68).

6. **Identify the community’s strengths**

This strategy involves the identification and addressing of the community’s challenges or problems as well as their strengths and not just focusing on their shortcomings or challenges. This entails avoiding the shocking details of a community’s problems and rather focusing on their strengths (Shea, 2012, p.82).

8. **Design with the community’s voice**

This strategy involves the designer connecting with and incorporating the style of the community into their solution rather than the solution reflecting their own preference of design aesthetics. This can involve researching the community to see what colours, typefaces or other graphic styles or elements are prevalent there and, if possible, incorporating these into the solution. This can also include local languages or cultural norms that exist in the community, and may also entail the gathering of feedback from members of the community (Shea, 2012, p.110).

9. **Give communities ownership**

This strategy involves the inclusion of community members throughout the design process which can lead to empowering them, resulting in them taking ownership of the design process and solution. This may be achieved by involving them throughout the design process and by implementing and incorporating their experiences and insights into the design solution. By showing them how to work through a process and deal with an issue may help them be more self-sufficient in the future (Shea, 2012, p.124).

As mentioned in the previous section, Paul Nini, in his article *In Search of Ethics in Graphic Design* (aiga.org 3), believes that the most important responsibility the designer has is that towards their audience and that the most significant contribution the designer can make towards society, is to make communications that are useful to those whom they’re intended. Furthermore, in this article, he lists the responsibilities the designer has towards their audience.
These responsibilities (some of which are listed below) are very much of interest when compared with Andrew Shea’s strategies for social design, as there are many similarities between them, such as the importance of including the audience in the design process and treating their concerns with respect and dignity.

- Designers must recognize the need to include audience members and users whenever possible in the process of developing effective communications and to act as an advocate for their concerns to the client.

- The Designer’s main concern must be to create communications that are helpful to audiences and users and that meet their needs with dignity and respect. Any communication created by a designer that intentionally misleads or confuses must be viewed as a negative reflection on the profession as a whole.

- Designers must not knowingly use information obtained from audience members or users in an unethical manner so as to produce communications that are unduly manipulative or harmful in their effect.

- Designers must advocate and thoughtfully consider the needs of all potential audiences and users, particularly those with limited abilities such as the elderly and physically challenged.

(aiga.org 3)
2.3. Propaganda
2.3.1. Looking at political and social poster design

One particular aspect of graphic design that has had an immense impact on social change throughout the last century has been the political and social poster. This form of visual communication has been given many names and, is often referred to as Public Relations, Public Service Announcements or simply as, Propaganda. It has been used to educate, agitate and inspire many different social change movements and has been used in practically every revolution over the last century, being a vital force during the Russian (Fig, 3), Chinese (Fig, 4) and Cuban revolutions (Moore, 2011, p.123-129, p.168-173, p.174-179).

It has not only proven it’s worth concerning matters of revolution, but has also been a vital force in the raising of awareness to the brutalities and atrocities of wars and other conflicts and has been used extensively during practically every conflict the world has seen this century. Not only this but it has also been used as a tool to raise awareness to and fight against (or for) many other issues faced by societies throughout the world, such as racism, equality, and human rights issues amongst many others. The messages being communicated in this particular form of graphic design may have many followers, however those who don’t believe in it or who may perceive it as dishonest or untrustworthy, may view these messages as propaganda.

Examples of political and social poster design or propaganda. Left (Fig, 3): Russian revolution poster (scoop.it). Right (Fig, 4): Chinese revolution poster (25.media.tumblr.com).
2.3.2. What is propaganda?

The word propaganda has come from the word “propagare” which is Latin and means, “to sow or propagate” (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2012, p.2). The term propagate is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (oxforddictionaries.com) as to “spread and promote (an idea, theory etc) widely. The Oxford English Dictionary’s (oxforddictionaries.com) current definition of the word propaganda is “information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view”. This is a definition that dates back to the early 20th century. However, up until the early 20th century another definition could be found in the dictionary, “any association, systematic scheme, or concerted movement for the propagation of a particular doctrine or practice” (Moore, 2011, p.7).

At the core, propaganda is basically just a form of communication. A message delivered to the masses through various media forms such as television, radio or the Internet. The purpose of these messages is to influence the behaviour, opinions and decisions of the people it is directed at (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2012, p.1).

2.3.3. Different types of propaganda

Propaganda can be categorized in to three groups in relation to its source and the accuracy of it’s information. Propaganda can therefore be differentiated as white, grey or black propaganda. In white propaganda, the sender of the message or source can be correctly identified and the message generally is quite accurate. In black propaganda, the sender of the message or source is concealed or hidden or attributed to a false authority or organization. This form of propaganda spreads lies and fabrications and is generally deceitful. Grey propaganda, as the name implies, lies between white- and black propaganda. It comes from a source that may or may not be identified correctly and the accuracy of the information it puts forth is uncertain (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2012, p.17-18).

2.3.4. What techniques are used in the creation of propaganda?

In the 1930’s the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) devised a set of techniques that were used in the creation of propaganda. These techniques are known as the “seven propaganda devices” and are an analysis tool for the recognizing of propaganda. These particular propaganda techniques have since been picked up and adopted by many advertising agencies throughout the world and have become well known advertising techniques (McClintock, 2005, p.158-165).

The seven propaganda devices are listed below with a brief description:

**Name-calling**
Giving an idea a bad label, and therefore, rejecting and condemning it without examining the evidence.

**Glittering generalities**
Associating something with a “virtue word” and creating acceptance and approval without examination of the evidence.
Transfer
Carries the respect and authority of something respected to something else to make the latter accepted. Also works with something that is disrespected to make the latter rejected.

Testimonial
Consists in having some respected or hated person say that a given idea or program, product or person is good or bad.

Plain folks
The method by which a speaker attempts to convince the audience that he or she and his or her ideas are good because they are “of the people”, the “plain folks”.

Card stacking
Involves the selection and use of facts or falsehoods, illustrations or distractions, and logical or illogical statements to give the best or the worst possible case for an idea, program, product or person.

Bandwagon
Has as its theme “everybody (at least all of us), is doing it!” and thereby tries to convince the members of a group that their peers are accepting the program and that we should all jump on the bandwagon rather than be left out. (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2012, p.237)

In terms of other techniques of propaganda, Qualter mentioned the four basic criteria of successful propaganda: it must be seen, understood, remembered, and acted on. The implications of these four criteria span much further than propaganda and these criteria could be used to basically sum up any good example of visual communication (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2012, p.299).

2.3.5. How can propaganda be applied to graphic design?

Propaganda can be applied to graphic design in many different ways and it can be seen in many examples of graphic design such as book covers, album art, gig and movie posters, magazine layouts, websites as well as magazine and newspaper advertising and billboards. The knowledge gained through a study of propaganda can be of great value to a graphic designer or anyone that works within the field of visual communication. The connection between propaganda and advertising is so great that it could almost be seen as a topic that should be focused on more within a visual communication or graphic design education, such is the effectiveness of a well thought through and constructed piece of visual propaganda. Many who work within the advertising branch are aware of this connection and have adopted the techniques stated here due to the powerful and persuasive communication that can be gained by using them (Pratkanis & Aronson, 2001, p.71-79).
3. Design process

The purpose of the design project is to study and research existing strategies for community based graphic design, and where possible put these strategies into use in an advertising campaign that covers a relevant social issue. From there, the intention is to evaluate how effective the strategies may have been, and what the designer can gain from using them. It is also to gain an understanding (through interviews of the target group) how the meaning of a design solution of this nature may change depending on who the sender is and whether this sender is visible or not.

3.1. Using the research and literature study

The design process began with a literature study on social design, social responsibility and a study of existing strategies developed for community based graphic design and designing for social change. I have worked from and developed my own strategy for social design which have been taken from the strategies described by Andrew Shea in his book *Designing for social change* (2012). In his book he specifies that the strategies can be cut down and altered in order to best fulfil the design problem or the individual designers needs. The strategies used were; “confront controversy”, “identify the community’s strengths”, “design with the community’s voice” and “give communities ownership”. Below is a brief description of what each strategy meant to my project and how I used them during my design process.

**Confront controversy**

In terms of my project, this strategy was about confronting the issues of integration and unity and not shying away from them. The idea of using the terms (which some may not believe exist or are worth fighting for) “integration”, “fellowship” etc and the idea of printing the posters in various languages that would be spread throughout the city was a way of confronting controversy in a tactful and not too distasteful way.

**Identify the community’s strengths**

This strategy relied on the identification of the community’s strengths and, in this instance; was the different languages used throughout the city. By using the different languages in corporation with the city’s logo the result would hopefully be one of trust and respect towards the council for understanding that the city is made up of many different cultures, they realise the importance of this and make use of it. This was proven during the interviews where 80% of the people interviewed felt that the posters strengthened the identity of Malmö as a diverse, tolerant and united city, and 70% answered that it increased their confidence for the council.

**Design with the community’s voice**

This particular strategy was made up of two parts, firstly the use of the various languages and the designing of the posters for certain cultural backgrounds was a way of expressing the message with the community’s voice, appealing to the viewer in their mother tongue. Secondly, it relied on the gathering of feedback through the conducting of interviews and a focus group to determine what the target group felt about the message and the way in which it was being conveyed. It was the result of this feedback that determined the final design solution.
Give communities ownership
This strategy involved the inclusion of community members for the final evaluation and decision-making concerning the final design solution. This strategy was altered for use in my project and only involved community members for the final decision-making rather than have them be a part of the whole process (something that had its downfalls and is discussed further in the Discussion chapter).

The project also relied on the literature study and research into propaganda. Decisions were made during the design process that came about from this research, such as the use of the charged words and the graphic elements such as the burst and the drop shadow, elements that give the effect of the message jumping out of the page.

3.2. Design process stages
The design process used to carry out the work on the design project was made up of four different stages: Definition, Exploration, Conceptualization and Evaluation.

Definition
This stage is made up of three parts: define the design problem and an eventual cause of the problem, define the target group whom it’s directed at, and finally, define the physical context that the communication will be set in.

Exploration
This stage is made up of researching and exploring the target and the physical context. This includes visual research and a look at existing visual language that appeals to the target or is used in the physical context.

Conceptualization
This is the designing stage of the process and where we interpret the research, put together sketches and conceptualize the ideas that may be used for the design.

Evaluation
This is the final stage and where we find out if the communication successfully and effectively puts forth our message. If the target group does not consider the communication to be a success (determined by whether the communication effectively puts forth the message), we must then return to the conceptualization stage and come up with another idea.

3.2.1. Definition
Define the design problem.
The design project is an outdoor advertising campaign to spread positive messages and to raise the spirit of the people who live in Malmö. This is to be achieved by focusing on the good points of what it means to live in Malmö, in this instance, the cultural diversity in our city, and to raise awareness to the need of tolerance, togetherness and integration within the city.
Define the target group.
The message in the posters is directed to the entire population of the city, as it affects everyone who lives here, and therefore the entire city is in a way the target group. However, due to the population being over 300,000 it may be seen as practically impossible to design for such a broad group that ranges over all age groups, over the sexes and the classes as well as over 174 different nationalities of people. I therefore picked to target, in particular, people between the age group of 13-44 both male and female, regardless of social status or cultural background. This group has been chosen in particular as these people make up a large portion of the city’s population, nearly 48%. The younger generations have been chosen as they are the future of the city and if we want to influence a change and build a more tolerant and integrated community it is here we should begin. The older generations in the group have also been chosen for this reason but in respect that they may have small children who the positive attitude of togetherness, tolerance and integration may be passed on to.

Define the physical context
The series of posters are intended for display outdoors in the public space, using the rolling JCDecaux outdoor advertising systems. They will be placed throughout the city, in all suburbs, and will thereby cover all the different “communities” that exist in the city. The choice to use this context was based upon the widespread coverage that JCDecaux has through the city and the fact that it offers an advertising alternative that allows for a large advertising surface that is visible in both day and night and is also relatively safe from vandalism.

3.2.2. Exploration
Explore the target
Researching the target proved to be rather problematic due to it being such a wide group of people. After much deliberation, the decision was made to work with the target definition and conduct a short analysis of the group to see if anything drew them together, what similarities did they have or if they had anything in common which could be used to best communicate to them as a group. One point that was observed was that the city is made up of many small communities of people from different cultural backgrounds. One similarity that these people had in their respective communities was the use of a particular language that belonged to their cultural background. From there, the idea come about to use these various languages in an effort to emphasize the cultural diversity of the city.

Explore the physical context
In order to gain an understanding of the context, I looked into the various types of communication that already exist on the street and in particular, the communications on display in JCDecaux’s advertising systems and other communications from Malmö Stad. The result of this study pointed towards a communication that would be big and bold and would jump out at the viewer. This was so that the message could be seen and was legible at a distance. This was also so as not to be confused with the rest of the corporate advertising that can be seen in JCDecaux’s advertising systems. This corporate advertising also often relies on big and bold graphic elements that jump out and attract the viewer but they often have more information included in them. It also pointed towards bright and clear colours that would not be associated with any brand or product and would set itself apart from the grey city landscape.
3.2.3. Conceptualization

Having completed the research of the target and context (see above) a pattern seemed to emerge as to what path the design solution would take and how it would possibly look. The results of the target group research led to the conclusion that the best and most effective communication would be a typographic poster with a straightforward and direct message delivered in a neutral style, hopefully carrying an element of urgency. The main reason for a typographic poster was that a visual representation of the ideals being expressed might not bridge the cultural gap within the target group, which spans over many cultures. Furthermore the design should not be referenced by any particular style that may not be understood by the target and, therefore, a typographic design with out any images or visual representation was to be preferred.

Another important reason for this type of design was that I felt the word, as an object, would be the best way of communicating the idea. I felt that the actual words of the message (diversity, fellowship, tolerance and integration) were the strongest elements to be communicated (this can be seen in propaganda in the use of “charged” words etc) and that using the words by themselves could lead to a communication that was more open to individual interpretation and could also lead to a more open discussion on the issue (something that was later proven in the evaluation with the target group and interviews).

Typography

In selecting a typeface to be used a few points were taken into account from the research. The typography needed to be relatively neutral, accessible to all people in the target and had to be one that would not interfere with the message. It also had to be relatively bold and clear and legible at a distance due to it being intended for display outside in the public space (pointed out in the context research).

Initially, the typography to be used was a bold sans serif as it worked in with all the above points. However, using this style of typeface possibly resulted in a communication that was characterless and maybe too neutral.

In the end, the typeface used was Lubalin Graph Bold, a slab serif designed by Herb Lubalin in 1974 (Fig, 5). This decision was reached for a number of reasons. Firstly the slab serif is, at present, a rather popular style of typeface due to its strong and confident personality. It is currently being used by a number of companies and organisations (Skånetrafiken and TV4 to name two) in the design of their printed material and works well for informational purposes. It also works well with poster and billboard advertising and has been used extensively by IBM in their typographic print campaigns (Fig, 6).

Another reason for the use of this typeface in particular, was the need of a typeface that could be used in different languages. In order to further emphasize the sense of diversity in the city and strengthen the sense of community the series of posters were created in the most widely used languages of the city. This was a factor that had to be addressed in the choice of the typeface used and greatly reduced the number of faces to pick between due to the extra characters used in the various languages.
Choice of text

The use of the text “long live” was used as it can be seen as a charged phrase, which has been used many times in the context of protest or demonstration. The use of charged words or phrases is a technique that has been adopted from propaganda and is used often in visual communication. It also gives the implication that these values already exist and all we have to do is upkeep them.

The decision to split the words (diversity, fellowship etc) in two was made for two reasons. Firstly, in an effort to hold the attention of the viewer, as it may not be directly recognised what is written, and therefore holds the viewers attention a little longer and secondly as it offered a better use of space.

The decision to use these words in particular was based upon the fact that they are important values for people to consider when living in Malmö. We need these values to prosper for the good of our city and the communities we live in within this city.

Colour selection

The idea for using various colours for the designs came initially from the fact that the posters belong in a series. Due to them being typographic and not using any visual imagery that could set them apart, the idea was to use the same layout and typeface etc, and separate them by using different background colours. Another reason is the fact that we are advertising cultural diversity and this is expressed through the use of diverse colours through the spectrum.

The colours used have to be noticed when placed outdoors and set aside from the general colours that are found in the urban landscape. Therefore, they are fairly bright and clear, and give an overall positive feeling, as that was the attitude we wanted people to get from seeing them. Initially blue and red were used but after further thought, were taken out due to their obvious political connections and this was not something I wanted to bring into the conveying of the message.
The colours used for the final posters were orange, green, pink, purple and a turquoise blue. The border and text were all set in the same dirty tan brown colour with a dark grey 3D effect to give a sense of continuity to the series. The burst was coloured in various transparent colours that stood out from the main background in order to give a dynamic appearance that bought an association to propaganda.

**Document format**

The document format has been set using the A-format, and it is the intention for the posters to be displayed in JCDecaux’s standard rolling billboard, “Premium Euro size” which is 118,5cm X 175cm. All the posters have been created in vector graphics so any eventual resizing will not be a problem.

**Prototypes**

The result of the conceptualization stage was two separate posters, one with a directed message and the other with a slightly vague communication. Each poster had three alternate versions in order to thoroughly evaluate the concept with the target group (Fig, 7).

The idea with having a variety of sketches was to conduct an evaluation on the posters to see what solution (if any) best suited the message and if the message was successfully and effectively communicated. The result of the evaluation would determine what the final solution would look like.

![Fig, 7: Prototypes used for the evaluation. The variations of the posters included one without the city's logo, one with the city's logo, and one with the city's logo and a 3D effect on the main message.](image-url)
3.2.4. Evaluation

The final stage in the design process was the evaluation stage where the design proposal was tested and discussed with the target group. Two tasks were carried out in this stage; firstly, individual interviews were conducted and secondly, a focus group was put together and the design proposals discussed and analysed.

Individual interviews
The interviews were conducted on twenty people who fell into the target group. They covered the full range of ages (13-44), were about half and half men and women, covered all different cultures and also different social standings in terms of class and political standing. The interviews consisted of a set of questions that were asked in conjunction with them looking at the various design proposals that had been created. The answers of these interviews were gathered and later summarized. Using this summary, the final design solution was chosen. This was to fit in with the strategies “design with the communities voice” and “giving the community ownership”.

Focus group
The focus group was made up of ten kids between the ages of 15-17, half boys and half girls, all from different suburbs throughout the city and all from different cultural backgrounds. The group were shown the same proposals as the individual interviews and the same questions were used in an open and informal discussion. This discussion was recorded and later summarized along with the individual interviews.

Summary of individual interviews and focus group
In summarizing the evaluation, 75% of the people asked thought the message was a positive and relevant one and very fitting for the present state in the city. 79% thought the message was communicated in an effective and relevant way due to its context and it being placed on street level (a message for the people and placed amongst the people). It was thought evoking and gave people a positive reaction when viewed. The communication was viewed by 70% as being reliable and trustworthy when the sender was visible as it reassured people as to the intentions of the message, with the sender adding meaning to it and if this sender were different it would result in a different meaning.

The conclusion drawn from the evaluation was that the communication was considered to be a success, in as much as it effectively put forth the message to the target group. It was relevant and effective, resulted in a positive reaction and 95% answered that it gave them a positive reaction towards the municipality. 70% thought it increased their confidence of the municipality and 80% said it strengthened the identity of Malmö as a diverse, tolerant and united city. The full summary of the individual interviews and focus group and the questions put forth can be found in Appendix 1 (p.34).

3.3. Result

With the communication being considered a success, the evaluation pointed in the direction of a combination of the proposals and the decision was made to combine the messages to include the four various ideals to be conveyed as well as the final “long live” message.
The result of the design project was a series of 5 typographic posters using the words; “diversity”, “tolerance”, “integration”, “fellowship”, and “long live our city” (Fig. 8). These words were then translated into the languages most widely used in the city (with the exception of Arabic, which, due to language difficulties and time constraints was not completed for the final solution but would have to be translated and hand drawn if the idea was to be taken further). The result was a series of posters in Swedish, English, Danish, Polish and Croatian with the final Arabic version being completed at a later date. The other variations of the posters can be seen in Appendix 2 & 3 (p.37 & p.38).

The conclusions drawn from the evaluation of the design project and the work during the design process are raised in the discussion (Chapter four p.27).
4. Discussion

This section chapter has been divided into the various research topics to make it easier to read. It covers social responsibility, corporate social responsibility, what social responsibilities the designer may have and how this may affect how we design. It also includes a discussion about the design project in relation to the research and the conclusions drawn.

4.1. The graphic designer’s responsibility

As one can see from the research, there are many different ideas of what responsibilities the graphic designer faces in the conducting of their work. Much has been written on these concerns and depending on where in the world you are, an organisation can be found (that designers can align themselves with) which have developed standards to follow concerning responsibility and ethics in graphic design, such as the AIGA, the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada or the Australian Graphic Design Association. These standards for responsibility and ethics range throughout the entirety of the designers work including; how they work, what they work with, how they treat their audience, how they treat their fellow designer and how they treat their clients. Shel Perkins categorized these responsibilities into three groups: professional behaviour, professional expertise and professional values. This is a good way to group them as it is short and concise but still covers all the aspects of responsibility and ethics faced by the designer.

One particular point that becomes apparent from researching this topic is that the graphic designer has an enormous responsibility due to the nature of what they produce and the power and persuasion it has over so many people. More importantly, through the designers connection with the world of advertising and branding, they are responsible for how society acts or behaves, what food they eat, what clothes they wear or how they look, what products they buy and through all of these things, what beliefs and values they place on the world around them and the people who reside in it. The design student or novice designer intent on designing hip, fashionable and ultra-cool design solutions may often not consider this immense power over society. Instead, they often place more emphasis on the aesthetic side of graphic design rather than the purpose of it; they forget that form follows function. This in turn, may be a reflection on the educators of graphic design and their not placing enough emphasize on the influence and power that the designers work may ultimately have. Shel Perkins and Katherine McCoy are both of the opinion that the designer should use this influence and power to promote and spread their basic values and beliefs in an effort to contribute more fully in the world around them or to instil in the audience the type of behaviour they would like to see in the world.

This rises an interesting point; that of the designer at the beginning of their design career, or who has recently graduated and started work as a designer. The problem is one of, what work to take onboard and whether they should turn down work if it goes against their particular beliefs or values. This can be a common dilemma and one that goes back to the individual designer’s view of the purpose of design and whether it exists to serve its audience or whether it exists to generate profits. Furthermore, many of these important writings and manifestos that urge the design community to change, and stand up to clients, have been published by designers, who have established themselves
and have created well-known names for themselves within the design field. They therefore, may be in a better position to stand up to a client or to state their beliefs and opinions, as a demand for their work already exists.

It may be argued that the prioritizing of the responsibilities covered in the research depends on the individual designer and, as with most things in life, you will have people who value certain ideals or beliefs higher than others, and therefore, will prioritize these ideals more than others. As such, what is worthwhile for one may not be so important to another. However, through the reading of the First Things First manifestos and a quick glance around at the state of the modern world in terms of consumption and materialism, one cannot deny the need for change in the designer’s work and the urgency in which this change must come. One cannot help but agree with the authors, and in turn, see exactly where the blame lies for the current state of our consumer culture. Many may believe this blame to be double-sided; that the advertisers along with the designers are responsible for this increased consumption, but at the end of the day, it is the designer or the design agencies who have accepted the work and built these corporations into what they are through elaborate branding and marketing strategies and, therefore, are in fact more to blame.

4.2. The graphic designers social responsibility

Something problematic when discussing the responsibility of the graphic designer is what is classed as a responsibility and what is classed as a social responsibility. The term social pertains to society and, design, and the mere nature of it, or its function, is to serve the people who are intended to use it; the audience. If one looks at it this way, then, by its nature, design is always something that relates to society or which belongs in the social field. Therefore, any responsibility that relates to design can be seen as a social responsibility, and many people are of the opinion that due to the nature of what we produce, all the responsibilities of the graphic designer are in fact social responsibilities.

This belief of the basic function of design being to serve its audience, is also an interesting point for discussion, as many people are now of the opinion that graphic design has lost its direction and that in many senses it does not stand to serve its audience any more. Rather, they feel it exists only to fuel the overconsumption of our modern day consumer culture and to generate profits for corporations who think of nothing more than lining their pockets.

This view of graphic design having lost its direction is based upon the explosion of advertising and the fact that many of today’s designers have set themselves up to work within this field; the field of advertising (and indeed, many in general public often confuse graphic design and advertising because of this cross-pollination). It is this very explosion in advertising and the constant need of corporations to sell and promote unnecessary products that has sparked the changing ideas that have led to the writings of Ken Garland, Kalle Lasn, Rick Poynor as well as the various authors of First Things First 2000.

In the research section the power the graphic designer holds over their surrounding and the role in which they play in materialism and consumer culture was discussed in relation to social responsibility. Although the research didn’t delve to far into consumer culture or the state of modern day advertising at present, one has a reasonably good idea of how it looks as we all live amongst this constant daily
barrage of advertising. From this, and from looking into the various manifestos (both versions of *First Things First*, *Design Anarchy*, etc) this need to change the way in which the designer works, or mores the point, what they work on, becomes even more apparent.

### 4.3. Corporate social responsibility

One of the main arguments against CSR is that the main intention of any business is to make money and generate a profit for the owners or stakeholders. Indeed, if a company or business fails to run at a profit it will eventually collapse and go into bankruptcy. Therefore, business by nature is predominantly about money and anything else will always come in second place. An example may be a company who advertise the fact that they practice fair trade etc, however they actually have their products manufactured in Asia where they can get away with paying their workers considerably less than in the western countries. This particular argument can lead to a heated discussion, as everyone seems to have a different opinion on how a business should be run, what their key intention is or just how “into” a particular social issue they may be. Furthermore, due to the explosion of companies using CSR and CRM, many opponents or critics have become more sceptical over these companies intentions with using these strategies and many, like Schwartz, believe it only to be about the *bottom-line* or the increase of sales or profit that a CSR or CRM strategy can bring about.

Having said this however, there are many textbook examples of CSR. One of these in particular (as mentioned in the research) is the English cosmetic company The Body Shop. The main reason that they are such a good example is that the company’s whole business plan and their vision and mission have been based around CSR and the helping of those in the world who are in need.

### 4.4. Responsibility towards the community

From the research a pattern emerges as to the designer’s responsibility towards their community and what they can do in their line of work to bring about a positive social impact. In many ways, it is grounded in the basic respect of one’s fellow man and treating others as you wish to be treated yourself. It’s about treating them as equals and showing them dignity and respect, not only to them as people, but also towards the issues that they face, and to design for them accordingly in an informative and tasteful manner. It is about communicating and informing people, prompting them to make educated choices about what they do, how they act and what they consume, not just pushing them into consuming just for the sake of it. It’s about avoiding solutions that patronize or assume the target group is of a lower intelligence than we are, or solutions that prey on or take advantage of certain groups in the audience. It is about educating the audience so as they understand what is “right” and what is “wrong” in a communication, and to communicate in an accurate manner, offering clear and concise messages. It is about getting in tune with the audience and getting to know them on a personal level, forming relationships with them and building trust along the way.

Not only this, but it is also about communicating in a way that is true to our profession, working with a level of professionalism that shows respect and dignity towards our fellow designer and the graphic design field in general.
All of these responsibilities are going to affect the way the designer works on a design process or how they approach a certain solution. One particular way that it will affect the working process of a designer is if they are conducting work for a business or organisation that has core values or a mission statement that is grounded and based in the practises of corporate social responsibility. If this were the case, then the designer’s work will normally be governed by the rules and guidelines that the company has set.

These responsibilities not only affect the working process, but they can also affect what the designer works with and the type of work they choose to take on or prioritize. As a graphic designer, we are often employed to create solutions that we are not so passionate about, jobs we have to work through in order to feed our families and ourselves. We are enlisted to create designs and solutions with the sole intention of generating more profit for a company. This may not entirely be a bad thing, but at the same time these solutions may not be something that represent us as individuals. This is where designing for social change or designing with the interests of your community plays a major role as it is here where we can get behind relevant social issues or ideals or beliefs that we strongly stand by, something that represents who we are as a person, and where we get to create something that our society can benefit from. These are the jobs that can lead to a proper sense of job satisfaction and a sense of helping our fellow citizen.

4.6. Evaluation of design project

The use of Andrew Shea’s strategies was an interesting part of the design process and much was learnt from using them. One thing that was learnt was that, at first, it might not be apparent what strategies to use in a project as certain things can arise and a certain amount of research may have to be conducted first. The designer may need an understanding of the design project and what the client wants first before making this decision. The fact that these strategies can be altered to fit a certain design project is also of interest as it can result in a set of strategies that can be tailor made for a design project. Having said that, it also may mean that the strategies have to be completed a few times in order to have a comparison to see what works and how it works. By using these strategies as guidelines it can make it easier for graphic designers to design for a certain community or for a particular social issue.

The evaluation of the design project led to the final finished solution that was used for the campaign. As such, the people who made up the community in which the communication was to be placed in decided on the final solution. In hindsight, if the project were to be done over, there would be changes made and one main conclusion from the design project was the importance of giving the community ownership or having them take part in the forming of the design solution. For the intent and purposes of this project, certain decisions were made during the design process, which the community had no say in and were rather called in for the final decision making that would result in the final solution. If the project was to be done over and more time was available one could give the community more of a voice and have them a part of the process during its whole course. This may result in an even better communication as it may appeal even more to the people it is directed towards and at the same time,
give them a sense of ownership and pride that they had helped create the solution.

During the conceptualization stage many sketches were created, some of which had no sender on them (Appendix 4 & 5). The idea here was to try to create a communication that would build hype, be free to individual interpretation and lead to an open discussion. The idea was that the posters might be thought evoking due to them not being influenced by any association that a sender might bring. When evaluating the prototypes with the target, certain posters didn’t have a sender in order to gather feedback as to how the viewer perceived these communications and if they viewed them as being reliable. This feedback was interesting as 70% of the people asked felt the communication was reliable with a visible sender. This did not mean that they felt it was unreliable without a sender, but rather, they felt reassured when they knew where and who it had come from. This feedback was also interesting in terms of the actually sender, Malmö Stad, and 70% of the people answered that the meaning of the message was defined by having this particular sender on the posters. This was due to many people already associating the ideals expressed on the posters with the city’s logo.

Another aspect of the design project that was interesting was the gathering of the statistics for the evaluation. The information gathered was of great use to the project (determined what solution would be used) but was also interesting as it gave a real indication as to the effectiveness of the communication. Having said this, however, if the project were to be carried out again, more time would be allocated to the gathering of information and more people would be interviewed to get a more substantial feedback. If the extra interviews here gave the same result then this feedback would be even more reliable and accurate and in turn usable.

From looking at the statistics, the communication was a success in the fact that the communication gave 95% of the people who viewed it a positive reaction towards the municipality. 70% said it increased their confidence in the municipality and 80% said it strengthened the identity of the city as a diverse, tolerant and united city. All of these are very important starting points when discussing the bettering of our community and important points for this campaign because (as mentioned above) many already associate the ideals on the posters with the city.

Although the communication was deemed a success, the communication and the issues it tackles are not something that can be resolved through a single poster campaign and I want to highlight that I am under no illusion that this particular design solution would completely solve the problem. Rather, I propose that the campaign be a start in a new initiative by the municipality towards the issues of diversity, integration and tolerance. These issues and the mere nature of our ever changing and growing city require that they be continually in focus, so as to improve the social conditions of all who reside in Malmö.

**4.7. Discussing propaganda**

Through the study of propaganda one can establish an understanding as to how it works and how a communicator can effectively put forth their message. Although the knowledge here can be used for creating deception and spreading deceitful messages, it can also be used to gain an understanding of how the viewer perceives a certain message and it can be used to successfully communicate for the good of a society.
A thorough study of propaganda and an analysis of the visual language used can help the graphic
designer to create strong and powerful communications, the type of communication that may be
required when raising awareness to a particular social or political issue. This is something that many
charitable organizations, Amnesty International as an example, have employed in many of their
printed communications and advertising campaigns.

The knowledge gained from a study of propaganda can be used to express messages that instil in the
viewer a feeling of reliability and trustworthiness, which ultimately leads to a more effective visual
communication. It can also lead to a better understanding for the communicator on what they do and
how they do it. It may bring about new knowledge concerning techniques that can be used to bring
about a more effective visual communication. Not only this, but also what techniques should be
avoided in order to lead to a more reliable and trustworthy message.

These last points have been included as they led to an interesting conclusion that new knowledge
can be gained from the most unlikely of places, such as a form of communication that many in the
design world (and the world in general) have ruled out as being deceitful, deceptive and dangerous
to society as a whole.
5. Conclusion

The purpose of this essay was to research social responsibility and social design and to answer the question: "What is the social responsibility of the graphic designer and what can they do to contribute in helping to better their community?"

Due to this question comprising two questions, the conclusion is made up of two parts, firstly: what the social responsibility of the graphic designer is, and secondly: what they can do to contribute in helping to better their community.

**What is the social responsibility?**

The graphic designer has a vast amount of responsibility, responsibilities that relate to how they conduct themselves in the daily business of their work, the knowledge or proficiency needed to deal with areas like accessibility, usability and sustainability, and responsibilities that relate to their values, beliefs or moral principles towards society, the economy or politics.

The graphic designer has an enormous responsibility. They have a responsibility over what their profession is doing for their community and for society. They have a responsibility over how they tell their audience to behave, what they should consume or what principles they should have. They have a responsibility towards how our culture is created. They have a responsibility towards graphic design in general and towards how the field of design will develop and progress; how it will look in the future.

Social responsibility needs to be addressed more within the design field. It needs to be introduced and taught to students at an early stage of their education, so as they fully understand the power and influence that their creations will have over society, and the role this plays in materialism, overconsumption and our modern day consumer-culture. Change needs to be made within graphic design and the urgency for this grows more and more for each day that passes. The graphic designer needs to critically reflect over the purpose of their work and answer the question of whom it stands to serve: their audience or consumer-culture. They need to move away from the creation of artificial needs and the promotion of unnecessary products, and move towards the creation of more useful and lasting communication, communication with meaning, communication that contributes to society.

**What can the designer do to contribute in helping to better their community?**

In answering the question "what can the designer do to contribute in helping to better their community?" one can first look at the responsibilities the designer has towards their community. In many ways, if the designer aligns themselves with the responsibilities they have towards society or their community, they will in turn, be contributing to the betterment of their community. As an example, if the designer places more emphasis on the creating of useful and lasting communications, then they contribute to a society that may be more informed. This in turn, may lead to a community not so caught up on materialism, a community that consumes less and, therefore, a community that is more sustainable and environmentally friendly. As one can see from this example, these two points: responsibility and contributing to one’s community go hand in hand, and by working with one, one effectively works with the other.
Other contributions can be made towards one’s community by focusing on the audience and by becoming more involved within the community and adopting design processes and practices like those developed by Andrew Shea, which place the community or the audience in the centre and include them through the whole design process.

In terms of what responsibility and contributing to one’s community has meant to me personally, I decided to write my own manifesto that can also be used as a conclusion.

**It’s about...**

*It’s about many things*

*It’s about design and it’s purpose to serve its audience*

*It’s about the treating of others as you wish to be treated yourself*

*It’s about equality, dignity and respect, towards the audience’s issues*

*It’s about designing for them accordingly in an informative and tasteful manner*

*It’s about communicating and informing people, prompting them to make educated choices about what they do, how they act and what they consume, not just pushing them into consuming just for the sake of it*

*It’s about communicating in a way that is true to our profession, working with a level of professionalism that shows respect and dignity towards our fellow designer and the graphic design field in general*

*It’s about avoiding solutions that patronize or assume our audiences are of a lower intelligence than we are, or solutions that prey on the vulnerable or take advantage of the audience or their weaknesses*

*It’s about educating the audience so as they understand what is “right” and what is “wrong” in a communication, and to communicate in an accurate manner, offering clear and concise messages*

*It’s about getting in tune with the audience, getting to know them on a personal level, forming relationships with them and building trust along the way*

*It’s about people working together for each other’s benefit*

*It’s about community*

*It’s about change*

*It’s about time.*
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Appendix 1:
Summary of individual interviews and focus group

1. “What does this message say to you”? The general consensus to this question was that the message was a positive and relevant one that was good and one of great importance for our city at present. Everyone asked understood the meaning and idea behind the posters and understood the intention behind them: working together, getting along and being a part of the community.

2. “How would you react to it having seen it on the street”? The general feeling here was a positive one, with about 75% of people answering that they would have a positive reaction to seeing it on the street. Some people answered that they would need to know more about it but their initial reaction was a positive one. In general the feeling was that it was a good initiative for the city to take and a relevant topic for them to be addressing. Due to it being a form of communication they would not expect from the council, this added to the positive reaction they had when seeing it. Many were glad to see a campaign dealing with an issue that is a current topic in the city and not just another advertisement trying to sell them something, as they generally felt suspicious of billboard advertising.

3. “What attitude would it give you towards the municipality”? The majority of people answered here that it would give them a positive attitude towards the council with around 95% of people responding this way. Many responded that seeing a communication like this from the council would pleasantly surprise them as it was not the usual visual language the council would use and this led to a positive reaction.

4. “Would it give you the impression they were trying to help”? 90% responded here that seeing a message like this gave them the impression the council were trying to help. The other 10% answered maybe and that it depended on the context in which they saw it.

5. “Does it increase or decrease your confidence in the municipality”? The majority of people (about 70%) answered that it would increase their confidence in the council. The others answered that although it may not increase their confidence it definitely didn’t decrease it. Their reasoning was that more would have to be known about the results of the campaign before they could commit.

6. “Do you feel it strengthens the identity of Malmö as a diverse, tolerant and united city”? About 80% answered here that the posters strengthened the identity of Malmö as a diverse, tolerant and united city. About 10% answered that it may strengthen the identity but either way it was a step in the right direction and the remaining 10% answered no.

7. “What poster gives you a stronger reaction”? The respondent’s answers were quite divided here. About 50% answered that the single word gave a stronger reaction and about 50% answered the phrase gave a stronger reaction. The general reasoning was that the single word poster required one to think about the meaning and it was open to individual association, where as the others thought the phrase was more direct and obvious, with more explanation.
8. “What poster do you perceive as more thought evoking (if any)?”
69% thought the single word poster was more provoking and 26% thought the phrase was more thought evoking. 5% answered neither poster was thought evoking. The reasoning was that the single word offered a strong direct communication, was more profound, more powerful, and more open to association and more leading toward an open discussion.

9. “What poster do you prefer in terms of visual language”?
63% preferred the poster with the single word and 37% preferred the poster with the phrase.

10. “Do you think this is a relevant way to communicate this message”?
79% of the people asked thought that this was a relevant way to communicate and they felt it was good as it were on street level and it concerned the people who were at street level (amongst the people who it concerned. this message. However, some also answered that there maybe needed to be a follow up campaign or have it leading to something else (some other form of activity or led to more info on what they could do themselves to help with the issue. The remaining 20% answered that it may be or they didn’t know.

11. “Do you view the message as reliable or unreliable, trustworthy or untrustworthy”?
About 70% stated that they felt the communication was more reliable and trustworthy with the logo on it. However most of these people answered that it was better with the logo only as it clearly stated who was behind it and this gave them a kind of reassurance. The clarity they received from knowing who the sender was, they perceived as a trustworthiness and reliability. The remaining 30% believed that it was reliable and trustworthy with or without the logo as they judged it by the content and not the sender but would still wonder whom it was from.

12. “Do you think the meaning of this message would change if the sender was not visible”?
70% of the respondents answered that the meaning would change as without the logo they felt uneasy and suspicions were aroused as to who the sender was and what their intentions were (could be used for a negative). The general reasoning was that the sender defined the meaning, and this was due to many people already associating the ideals being communicated on the posters (diversity, integration etc) with Malmö’s logo. The remaining 30% were either unsure or answered no but still stated a slight uneasiness and questioning of the message, however, it could be seen as coming from the city’s people and not the council.

13. “Do you think the meaning of this message would change if the sender was different (a cultural organization from a different cultural background etc)”?
Around 80% of the respondents answered here that the message could take on a new meaning if the communication had come from some other sender. The main reasons given were that the sender could be an unethical or political group with negative associations and when the sender was the council it basically defined the meaning of the message. 10% of the remaining respondents answered maybe, and the other 10% answered no.

14. 3D versus No 3D and Single versus Multi word + reason why
The question here was whether the viewer preferred the message in the single or phrase layout and also with or without a 3D effect on the text. The message without the 3D was perceived as being simpler and more serious, and the message with the 3D was perceived as being more playful, more
dynamic and also more accessible to more people. They also felt the 3D effect possibly lightened the load of a heavy topic. 15% preferred the phrase in 3D and 35% preferred the phrase without. 35% preferred the single word in 3D and 15% preferred the single word without.

The conclusion here was that the single word was more liked (70%) however 50% liked the 3D. it was decided to therefore work with a mixture of the two, using both the single word and phrase.
Appendix 2: Finished design solutions

Final design solutions used for the campaign, completed after the evaluation and interviews with the target group. Shown here in Swedish (top) and Danish (bottom).
Appendix 3: Finished design solutions

Final design solutions used for the campaign, completed after the evaluation and interviews with the target group. Shown here in Polish (top) and Croatian (bottom).
Appendix 4: Early design sketches

Design solution sketches created early on during the conceptualization stage.
Appendix 5: Early design sketches

Design solution sketches created early on during the conceptualization stage.

![Design Sketches](image-url)