

Simplifying service design

Practical approaches to tackling complex social issues

knight moves

WE'RE A PASSIONATE TEAM OF

Service Designers, Researchers & Strategists



Our projects

Our work is driven by five core values:

- human
- accessible
- value creation
- brave
- down-to-earth



Over the past ten years we have executed service design assignments for governments from local to national level, for social profit and for-profit companies.

SIMPLIFYING SERVICE DESIGN

Who are we?

Team



Liesbeth Van Parys

SERVICE DESIGNER

Research - solution design – facilitation

Project management

PhD in social sciences



Yalenka Mariën

STRATEGY DESIGN LEAD

Research – design – coaching

Program & project management

Product design background



Fien Vanderbeke

SERVICE & UX DESIGNER

Research – design – UX design

Project management

Product design background

Simplifying service design:
practical approaches to tackling complex social issues

Who are you?

Nice to meet you!

knight moves

Agenda

1. Why this talk
2. Accepting complexity in the design process
3. Let’s undercomplicate: **4 tools applied in 4 projects**
4. Potential pitfalls
5. Key take-aways

The booklet

- Try out the tools we present
- Make your notes

[Click here to get your digital copy of the booklet]



Simplifying service design:
practical approaches to tackling complex social issues

Why this talk

knight moves

Strive for **eutopia** rather than utopia

— Rochelle Gold @SDinGov 2023

When you hear **housing crisis** *your first thought won't be* **I can fix this.**

You might say things like…

“I don’t have the power to make a significant change.”

“I have a very limited budget.”

“There are so many influencing factors, where to start?”

“The system itself is broken, I can’t fix this.”

“There is another initiative already up and running…”

“If not perfect from the start, let’s not do it.”

Striving for eutopia



The situation will only deteriorate if we don’t do anything…

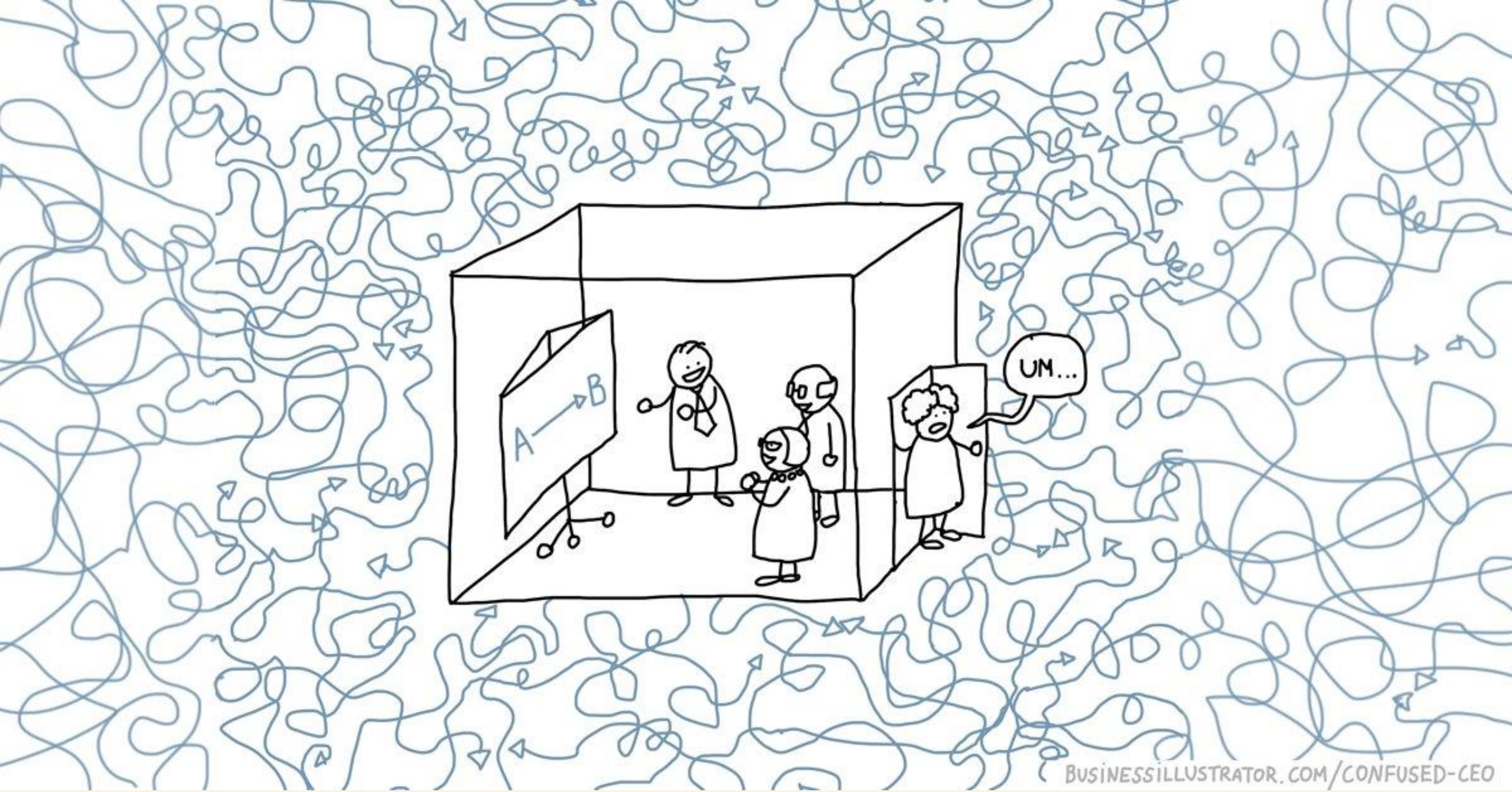


A small positive change, sparks more ambitious ones.



The system itself may be broken, the people are not.

Embracing complexity



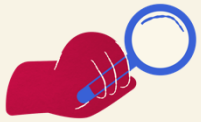
'Complexity', illustrated by Virpi Oinonen.



The more you listen, the more complex the problem will seem…



Complexity is part of the design process



Desk research



Interviews



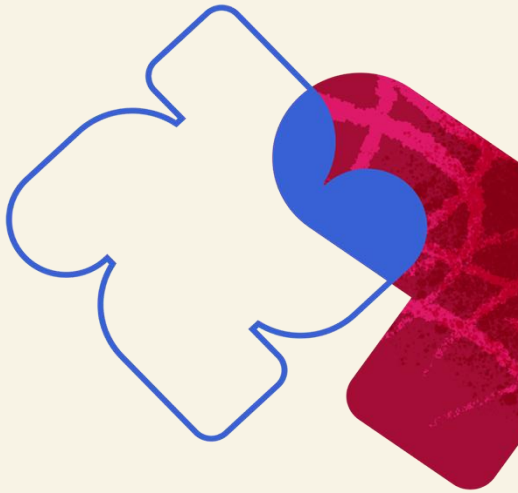
Observations



Discussion

Complexity

Let’s visualise complexity

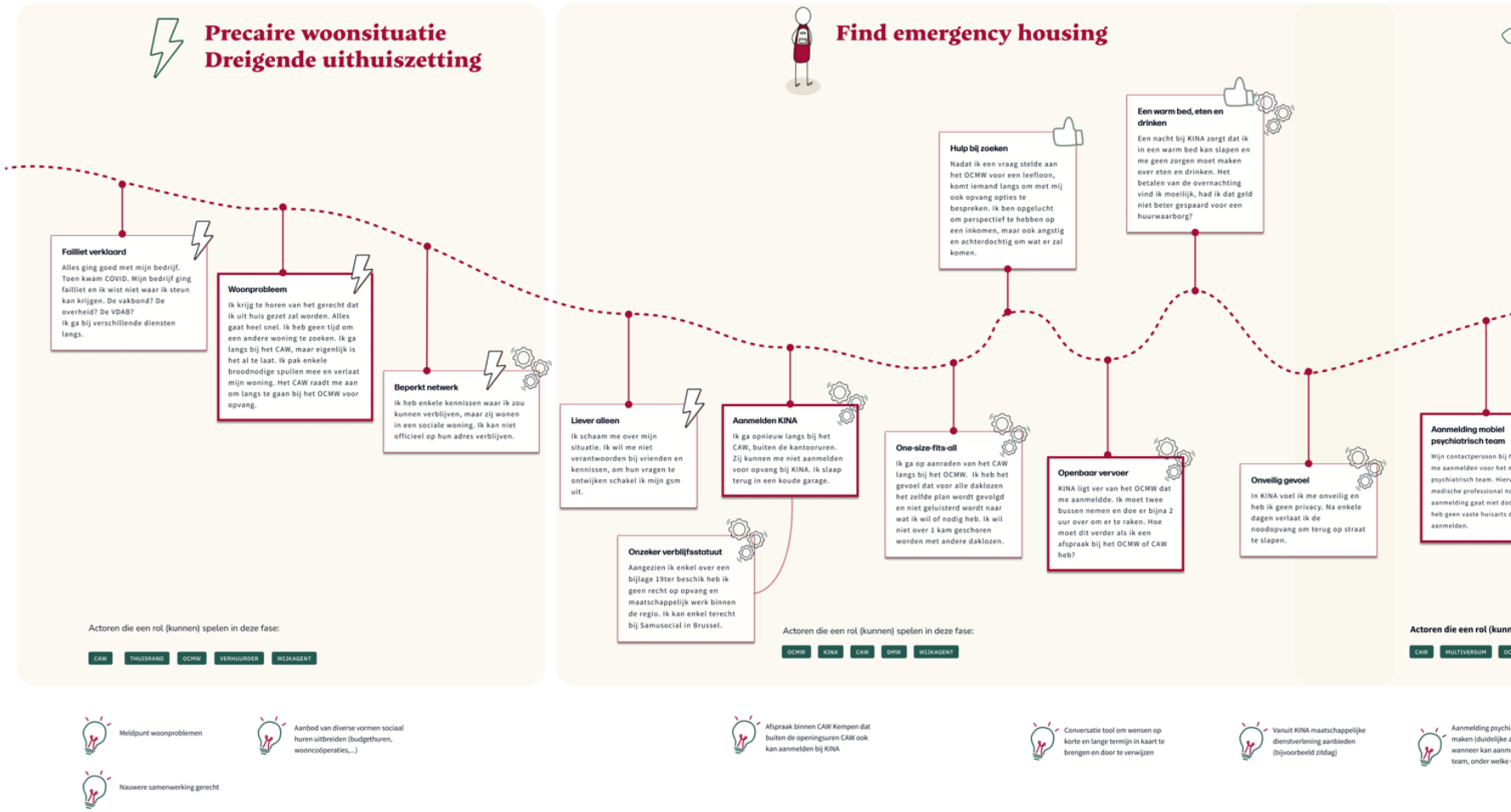


Customer journey

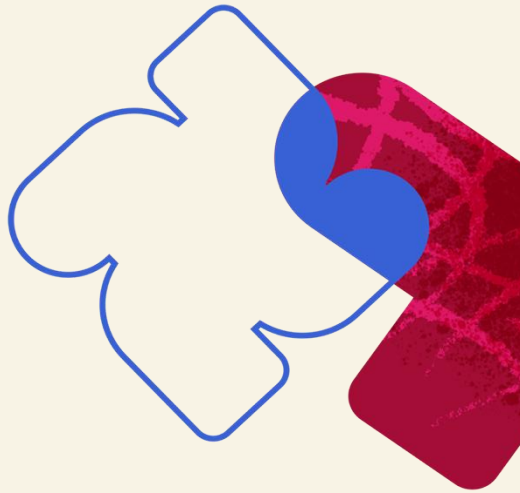
- Chronological steps of a customer in a service delivery process
- All touchpoints involved
- Explicate all actors involved – in particular other services and informal support roles
- **Distinguish ‘individual’ and ‘structural’ painpoints**

Example

GBO:
current
customer journey
unhoused people



Let’s visualise complexity



Customer journey

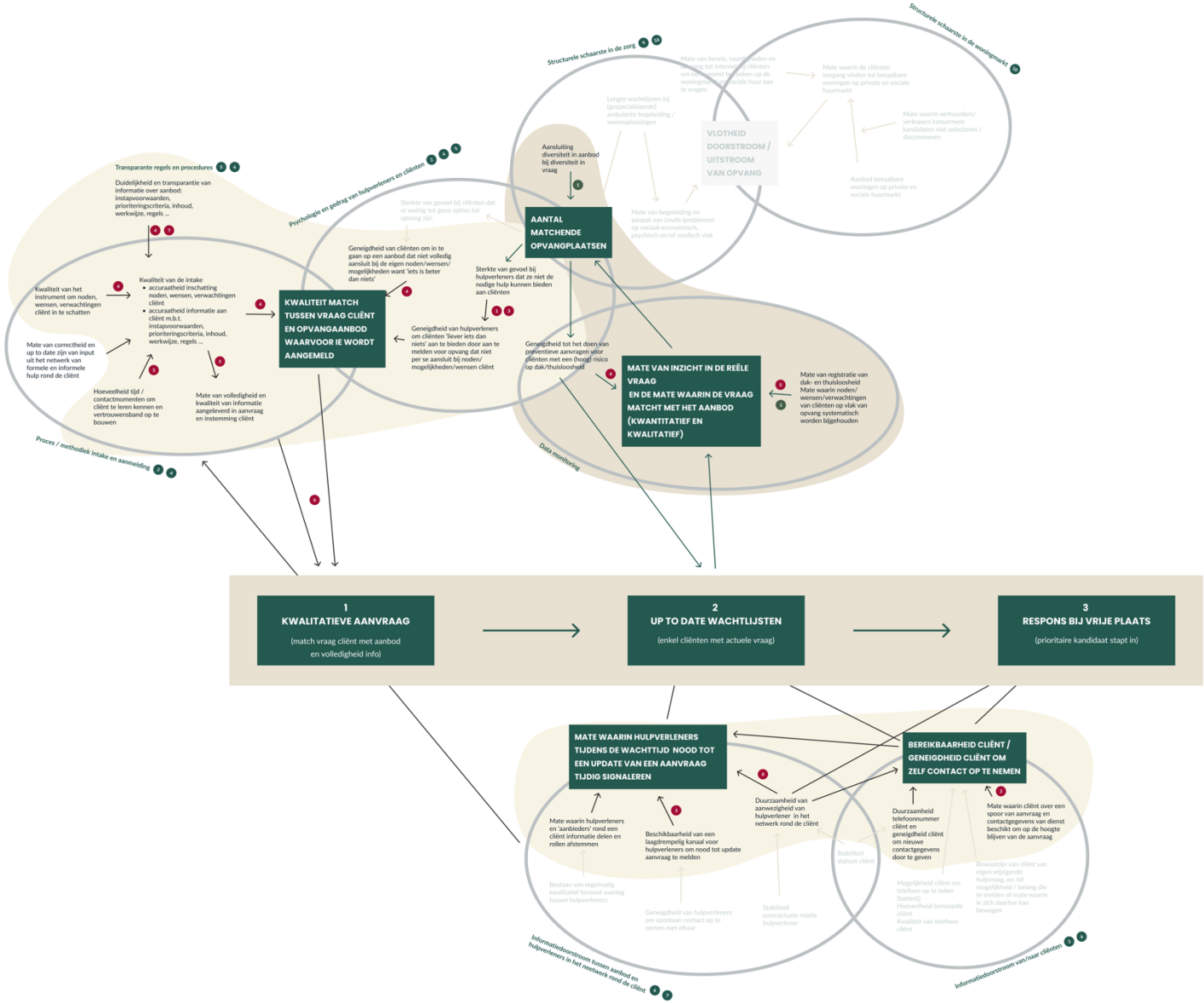
- Chronological steps of a customer in a service delivery process
- All touchpoints involved
- Explicate all actors involved – in particular other services and informal support roles
- Distinguish ‘individual’ and ‘structural’ painpoints

System map

- Comprehensive overview of the elements (actors, rules, norms, infrastructure …) within a system, as well as its boundaries
- Gives insight in the relationships and dynamics among the elements in a system that cause / affect a societal problem
- **Distinguish core paths from secondary paths** and individual from structural painponts

Example

System map
homelessness



Let’s under complicate

SIMPLIFYING SERVICE DESIGN

Examples we will share

4 projects / 4 different clients

1. **Homelessness** / Consortium of welfare partners
2. **Non-inclusive digital services** / 14 cities
3. **Isolated farmers** / Consortium of welfare partners
4. **Non-take-up of social rights** / 3 small towns



The double diamond in only a few months time

START

1 Reading

2 Kick-off

3 User research

4 Reframing challenge

5 Ideation

6 Prototyping

7 Testing

8 Implementation

FINISH

We present 4 tools that help you look for…



the aspects you can actually influence.



the smallest change you can make rather than overthrowing the system.



a first, tested prototype of that change.



the change you can make today rather than tomorrow.



1. The circles of influence

Helps you to identify factors within your sphere of influence which offer a starting point for change.

THE TOOL

The circles of influence

START

1 — Reading

Look for the aspects you can influence

2 — Kick-off

Validate them with the project team

3 — User research

4 — Reframing challenge

5 — Ideation

6 — Prototyping

7 — Testing

8 — Implementation

FINISH

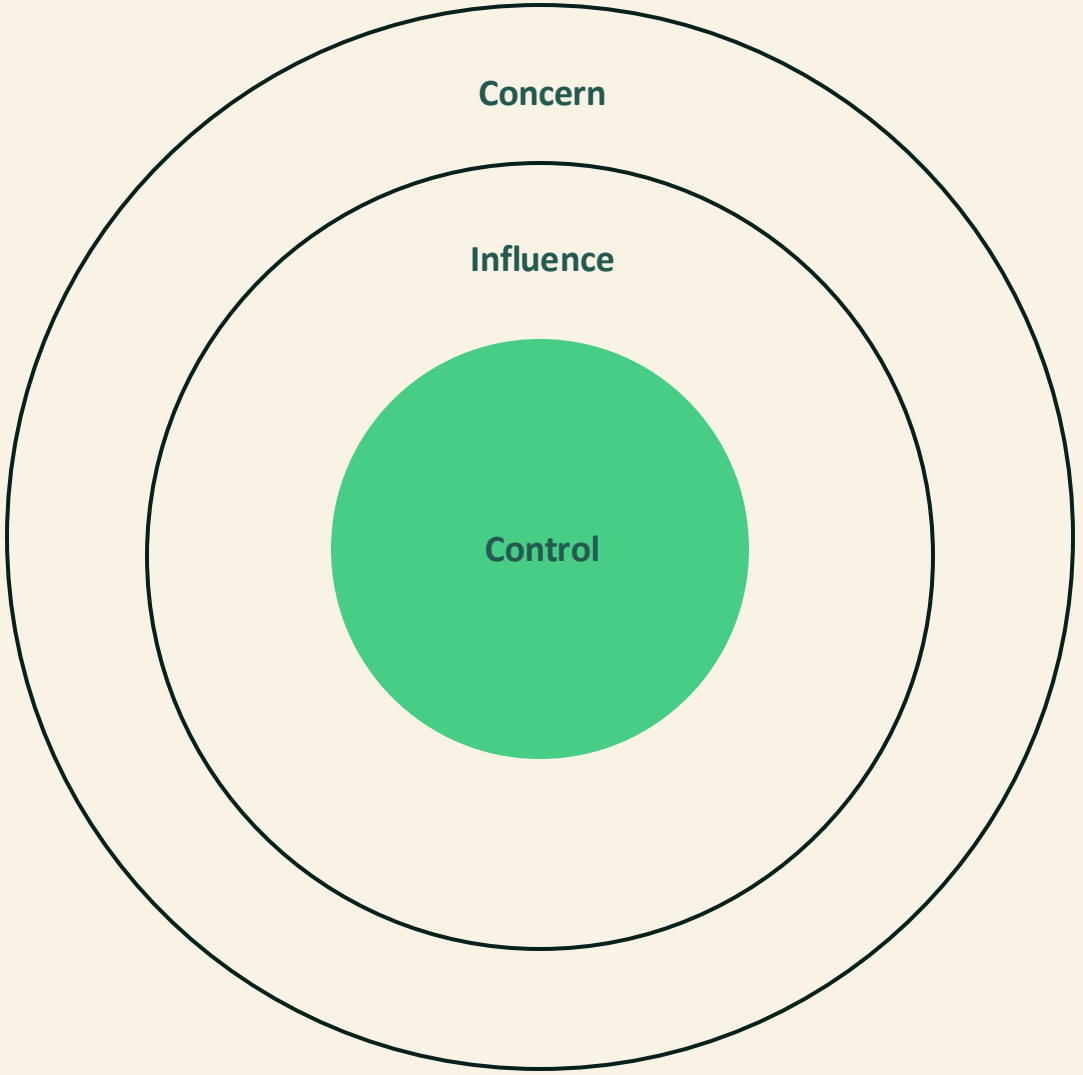
THE TOOL

Your sphere of influence

Circles of influence is a tool consisting of three circles which represent the amount of control you have over the reality you wish to change.

- **Circle of control:** What you can directly control or impact
- **Circle of influence**: Concerns you can do something about because we can influence it with what we are able to control
- **Circle of concern**: Wide range of concerns on which we don't have an impact

The circles of influence was originally developed by Stephen Covey in his book '7 Habits of highly effective people'



THE TOOL

Step by step

1

Prepare

- Take your system map / AS IS customer journey at hand.
- Take additional insights from your research at hand.

2

Inventarise

- Look for ‘concerns’ related to the challenge you tackle.

3

Categorise

- Place each concern in the right circle.
- Don’t do this alone: set up a workshop to discuss the categorization with key stakeholders. If this would be too time consuming, organise a workshop to validate your classification with stakeholders.

4

Prioritise

- Let key stakeholders indicate which concerns should be tackled in the current project.
- Try to find concerns which are feasible to tackle and will have considerable positive impact

EXAMPLE

Serving unhoused people

- **Client**: Partnership of social services, welfare organisations and health insurance funds joining forces to deliver a no-wrong-door offer
- **Overall challenge**: Ensuring continuity of care and smooth communication between services for unhoused people
- **Lead time**: 4 months
- **Result**: (this is an ongoing project)



EXAMPLE

Serving unhoused people

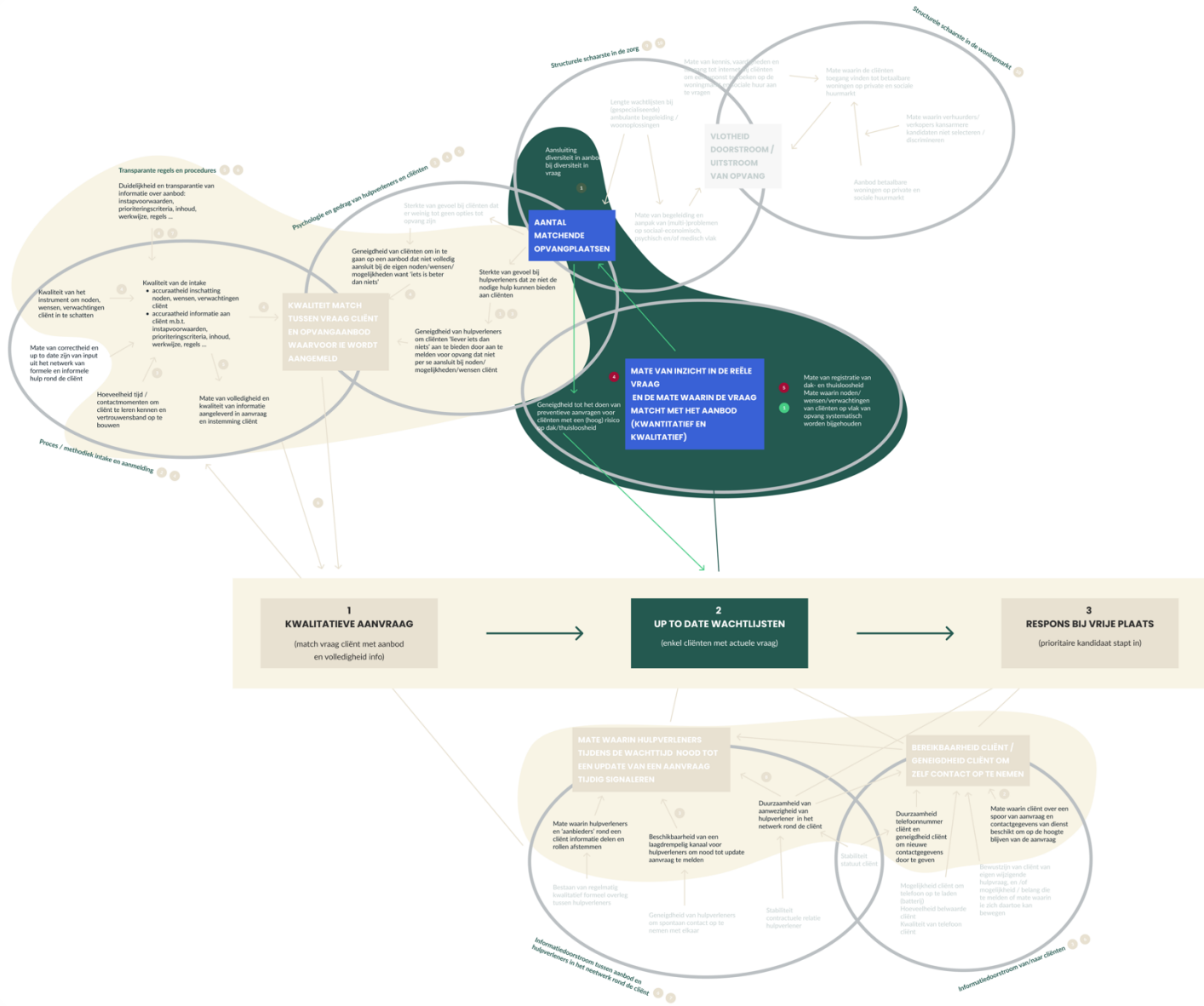
Some factors that added to complexity:

- Scarsity on the housing market and emergency housing
- High ratio of people with mental health issues
- Fragmentation: organisations have different target areas



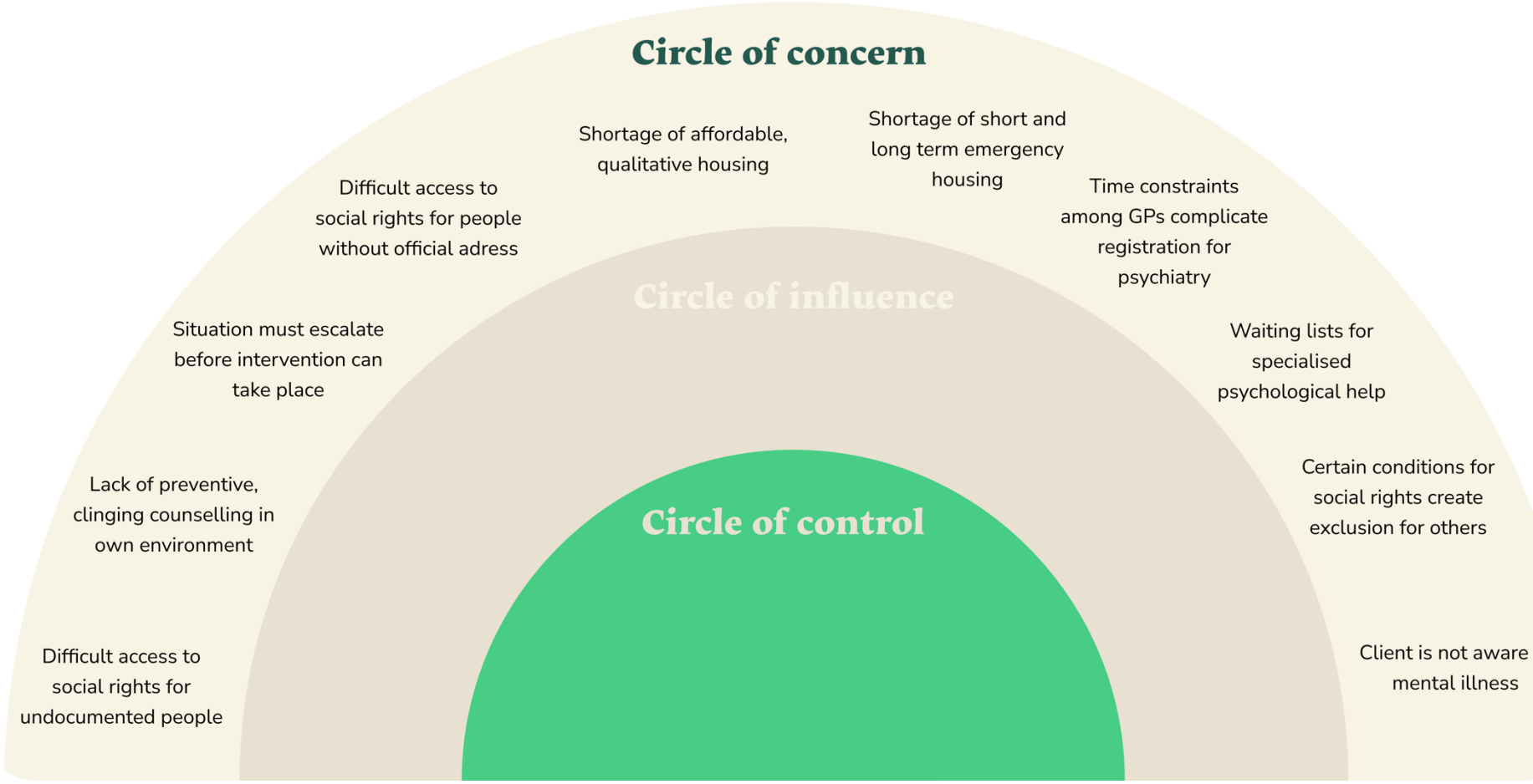
Example

System map
homelessness



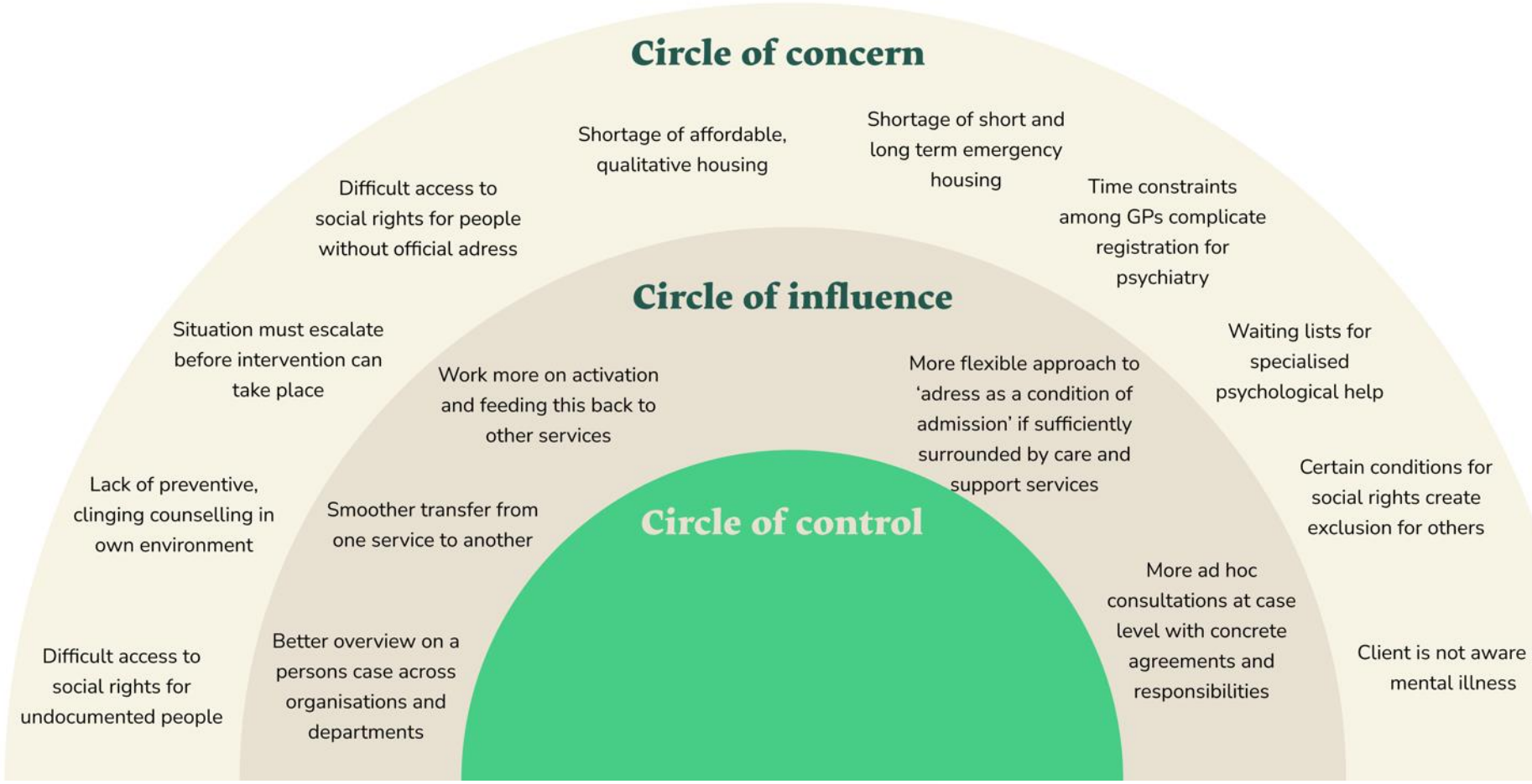
Example

Circle of influence for local partners to tackle homelessness



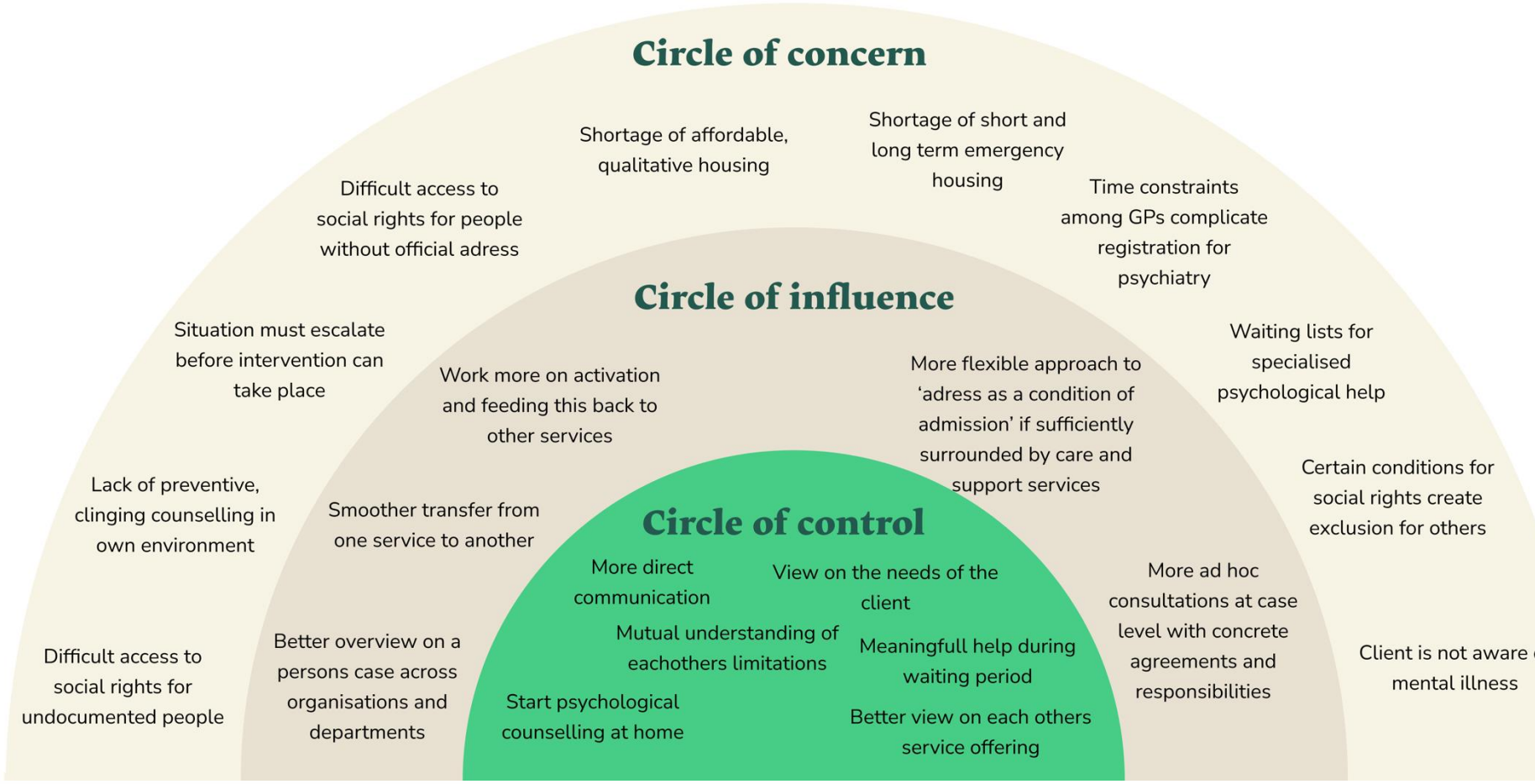
Example

Circle of influence for local partners to tackle homelessness

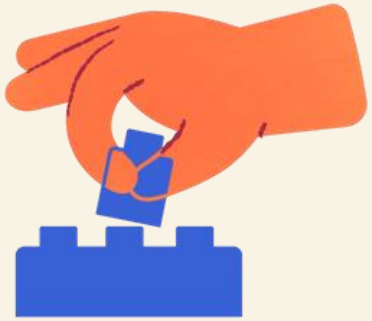


Example

Circle of influence for local partners to tackle homelessness



Let’s try this!



Choose a complex issue 2’

Think of a complex issue you are confronted with right now.

Reflect on your concerns 2’

What are your concerns: which behaviours, beliefs, habits, rules, infrastructures … affect the situation ?

Reflect on your impact 2’

Look for

- 1 example of a concern you cannot change = circle of concern
- 1 example of a concern you can influence somehow = circle of influence
- 1 example of a concern which you can change = circle of control

2. The smallest change

Helps to align everybody involved on scope and

on the scale of the ambition.

THE TOOL

The smallest change

START

1 Reading

2 Kick-off

3 User research

4 Reframing challenge

Look for the smallest change

5 Ideation

6 Prototyping

7 Testing

8 Implementation

FINISH

Tool

Resize your experiment

Inspired by 'The Ideas Book' van Kevin Duncan

Your current experiment

Factors that can influence the scale of your experiment:

A part of the service	**The target group**	**Expectations about the result**
The activities within the experiment	**The involved stakeholders**	**Other factors...**

Step by step

1

Your current project

Describe your current project along 6 dimensions:

- Part of service involved
- Target group
- Expectations about results
- Activities involved
- Stakeholders involved
- Other factors...

2

Make it smaller

Look critically at each dimension: how can the project get a smaller scale?

3

Make it bigger

Look critically at each dimension: how can the project get a bigger scale?

4

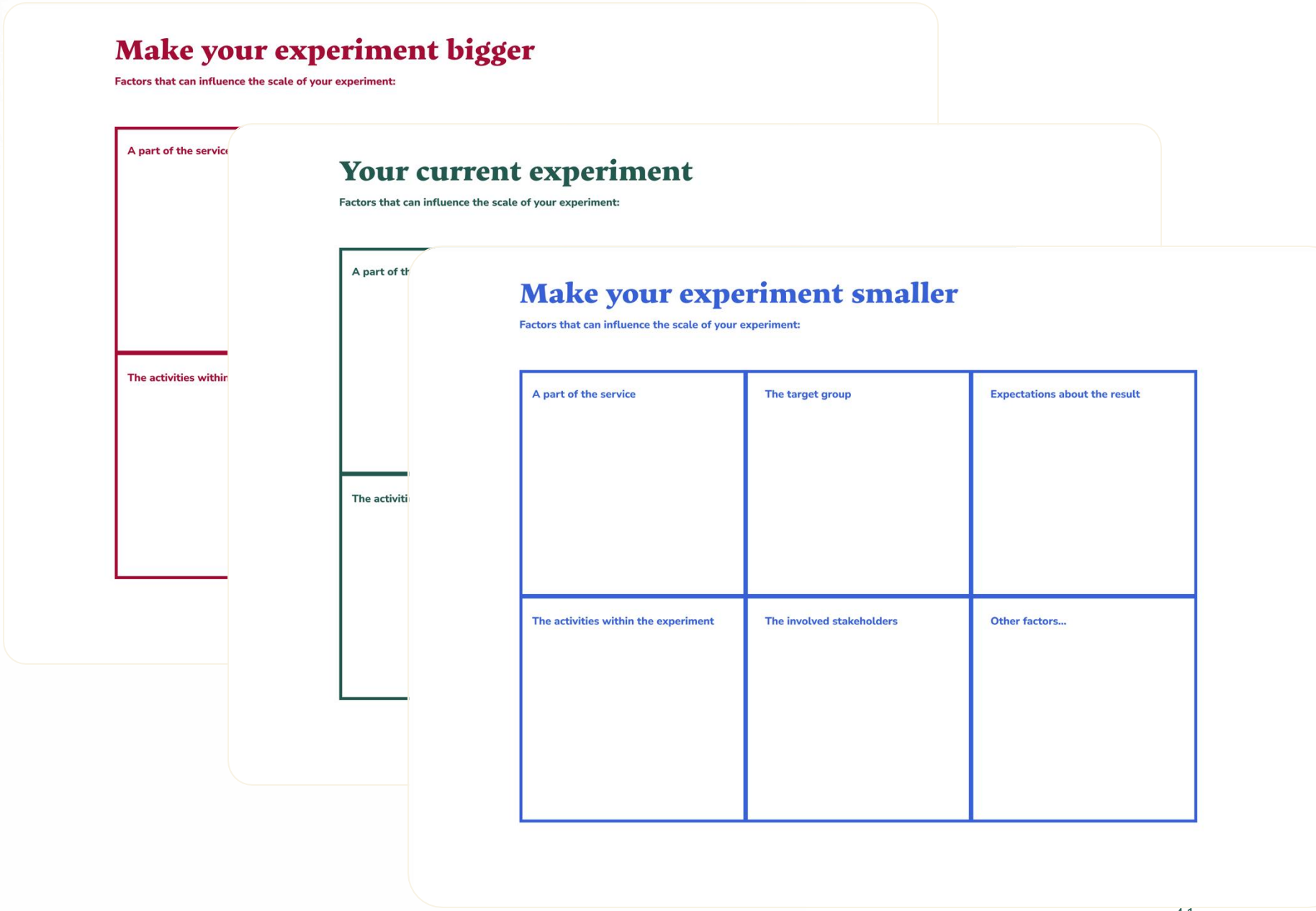
Rescale to ideal size

Look at the three scaling exercises and choose the final, optimal size of your project along each of the dimensions

Tool

Resize your experiment

Inspired by ‘The Ideas Book' van Kevin Duncan



Tool

Resize your experiment

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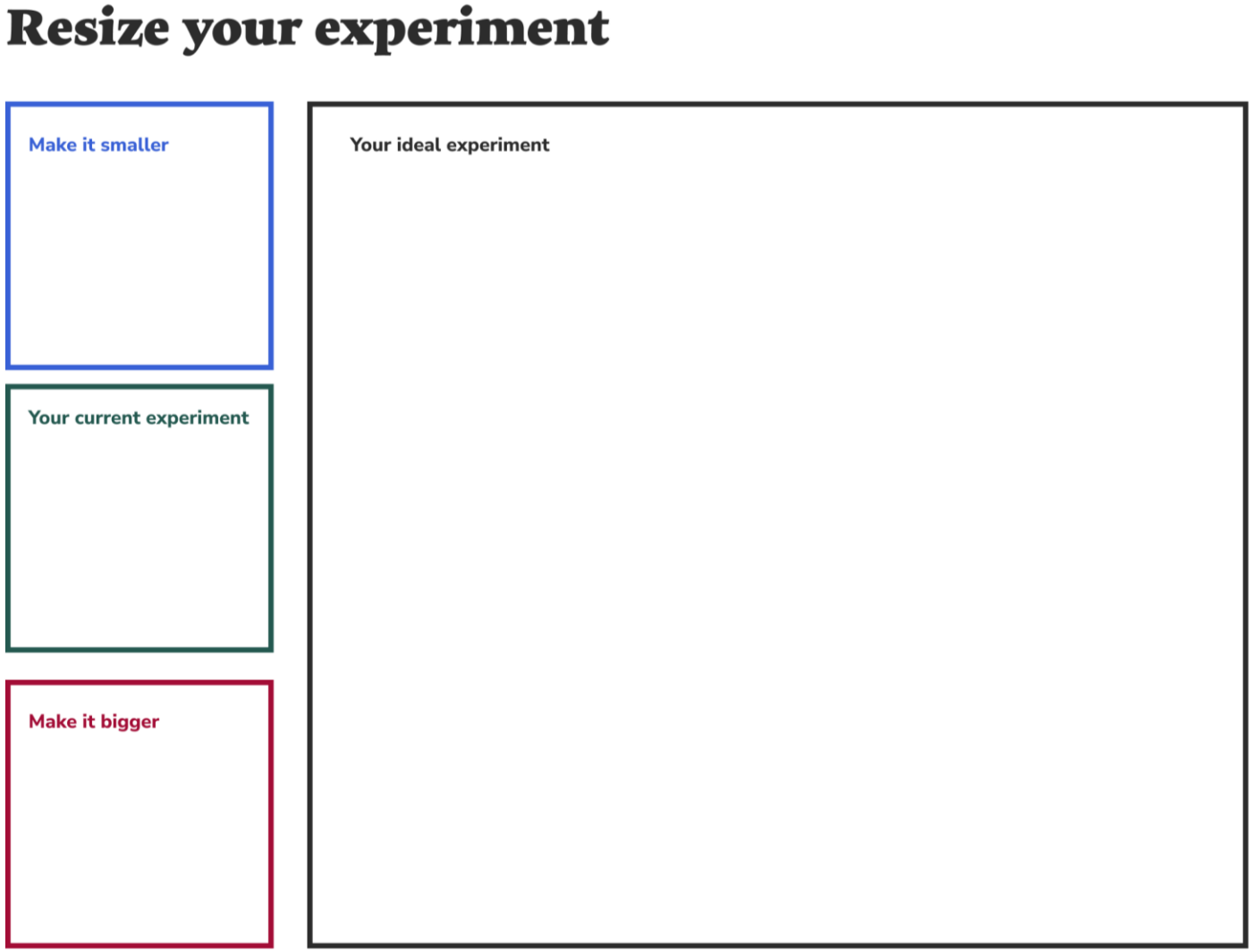


EXAMPLE

City Deal e-inclusion by design

- **Client**: 14 biggest cities of Flanders
- **Challenge**: Making their digital services more user friendly and inclusive
- **Lead time:** Experiments take a few weeks to months



EXAMPLE

City Deal e-inclusion by design

Some factors that added to complexity:

- Making digital services more inclusive is not just a matter of improving the UI and UX of a website. It often goes along with making the whole service delivery process across touchpoints more userfriendly.
- Local governments are dependent on private software providers.

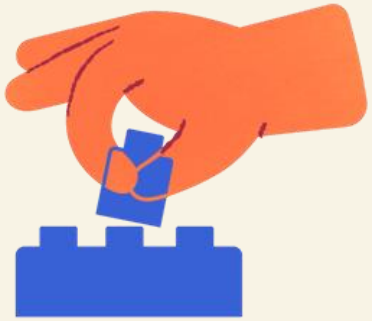


Example

Resize your project



Let’s try this!



Choose a dimension 30”

Look at the 6 dimensions. Choose 1 dimension regarding which you can rescale your project.

Reflect on the current scope 1’

What is the current scope of your project regarding the chosen dimension?

Rescale your project 2’

- Make your project smaller: what is a more realistic scope?
- Make your project bigger: what is more ambitious scope?



3. Prototype

Helps to make solutions tangible and ready to test with users and partners.

THE TOOL

Prototype

START

1 Reading

2 Kick-off

3 User research

4 Reframing challenge

5 Ideation

6 Prototyping

... a first, simplified version of that change

7 Testing

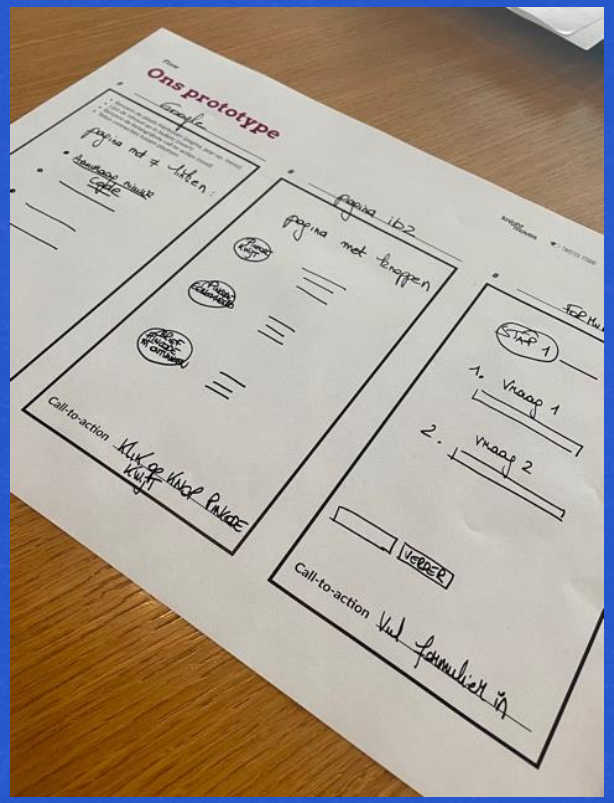
and test it.

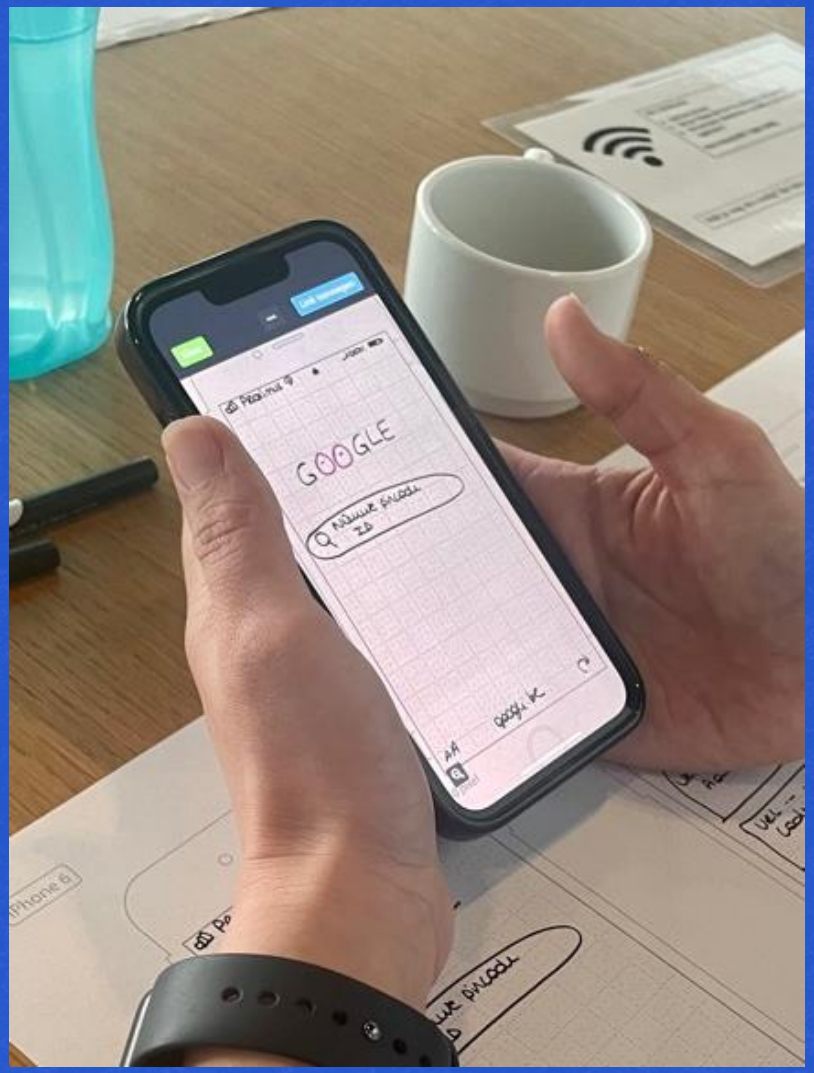
8 Implementation

FINISH

Tool

From low to high fidelity digital prototyping







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Tool

From low to high fidelity digital prototyping







knight moves

THE TOOL

Step by step

1

List critical assumptions

List the elements of your service that you need more insight in because:

- It’s a ciritical moment in the journey
- You haven’t been able to gather insights with the target group
- ...

2

Build a prototype

Make these elements of your service tangible and testable by making mock-up artifacts:

- Letter
- Webpage
- Script for a phone conversation
- ....

3

Test it with the target group

Instead of posing your questions directly, let your target group interact with your prototype and listen to their feedback

4

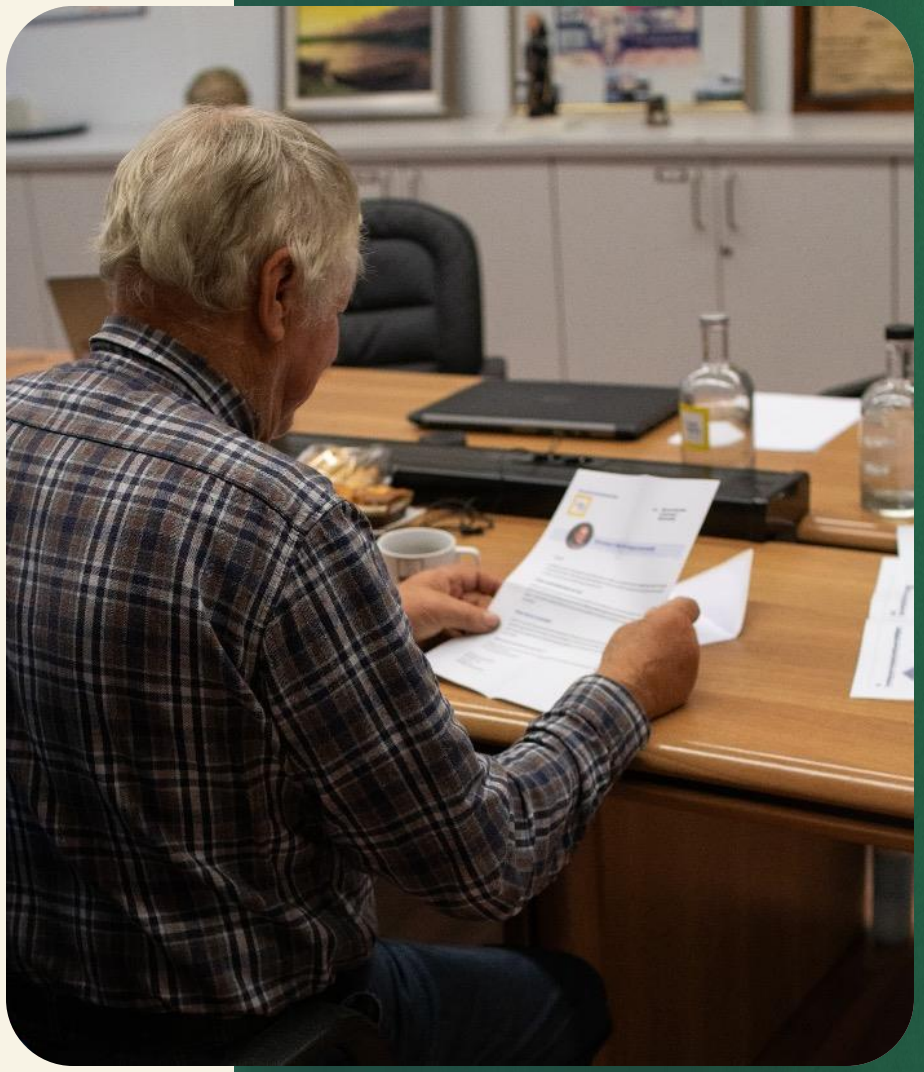
Lear and adapt

Apply the learings from the conversation with the target group to the next iteration of a prototype or a small scale MVP

EXAMPLE

Reaching out to isolated farmers

- **Client**: Partnership of social services, welfare organisations and health insurance funds joining forces to deliver a no-wrong-door offer
- **Overall challenge**: Reaching out to farmers in need who live isolated
- **Lead time of project**: +- 3 months
- **Result**: Multiple low budget solutions to reach out to farmers in a structural way

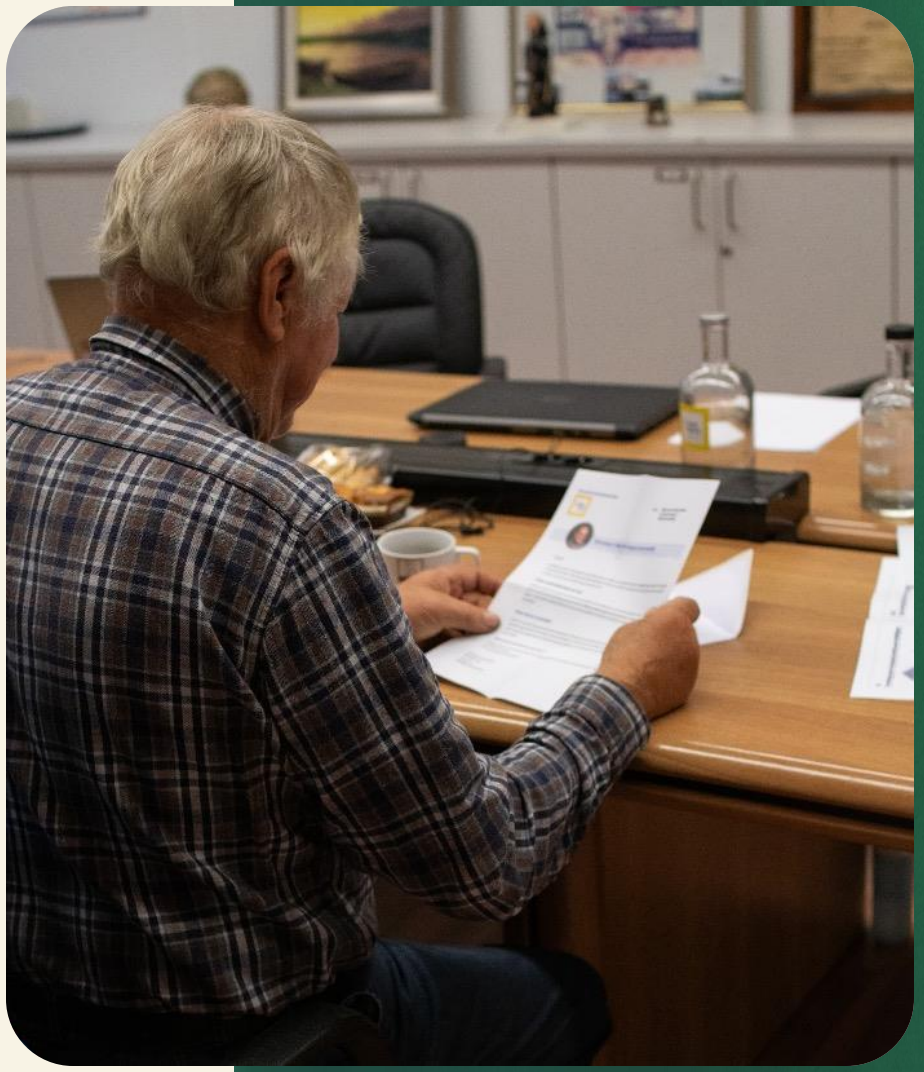


EXAMPLE

Reaching out to isolated farmers

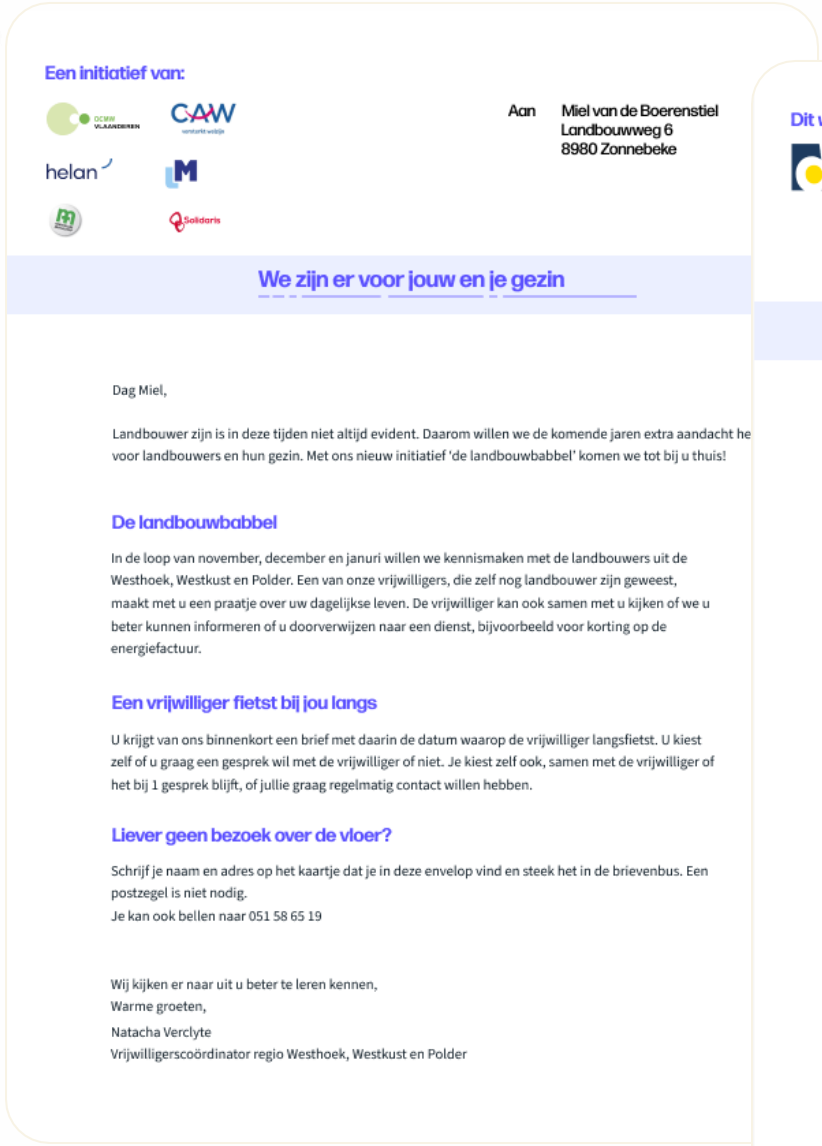
Some factors that added complexity:

- Physical distance of farmers to services
- Shame among farmers; fear to be open about problems
- 17 different towns involved
- Limited budget



Example

2 versions of letters as a starter to talk about the desirability of visits by a volunteer (ex farmers) at the farm



Een initiatief van:

Aan Miel van de Boerenstiel
Landbouwweg 6
8980 Zonnebeke

We zijn er voor jouw en je gezin

Dag Miel,

Landbouwer zijn is in deze tijden niet altijd evident. Daarom willen we de komende jaren extra aandacht he voor landbouwers en hun gezin. Met ons nieuw initiatief 'de landbouwbabbel' komen we tot bij u thuis!

De landbouwbabbel

In de loop van november, december en januri willen we kennismaken met de landbouwers uit de Westhoek, Westkust en Polder. Een van onze vrijwilligers, die zelf nog landbouwer zijn geweest, maakt met u een praatje over uw dagelijkse leven. De vrijwilliger kan ook samen met u kijken of we u beter kunnen informeren of u doorverwijzen naar een dienst, bijvoorbeeld voor korting op de energiefactuur.

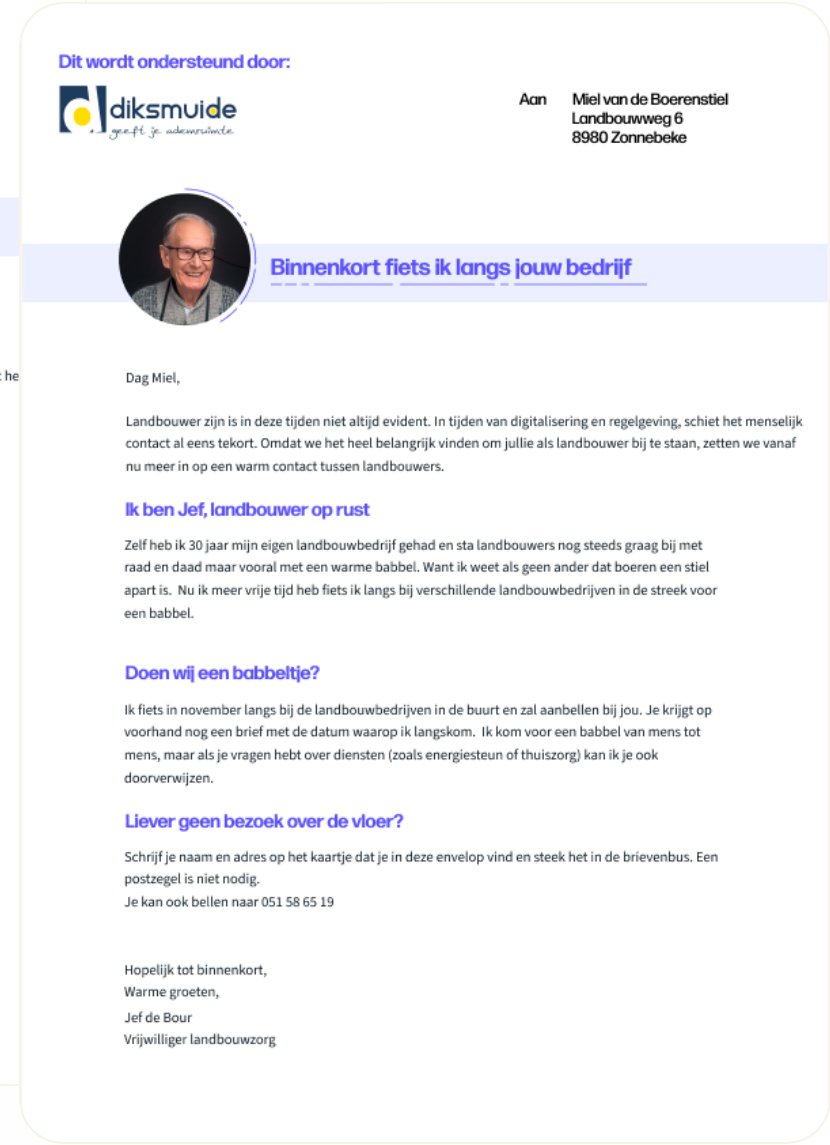
Een vrijwilliger fietst bij jou langs

U krijgt van ons binnenkort een brief met daarin de datum waarop de vrijwilliger langsfietst. U kiest zelf of u graag een gesprek wil met de vrijwilliger of niet. Je kiest zelf ook, samen met de vrijwilliger of het bij 1 gesprek blijft, of jullie graag regelmatig contact willen hebben.

Liever geen bezoek over de vloer?

Schrijf je naam en adres op het kaartje dat je in deze envelop vind en steek het in de brievenbus. Een postzegel is niet nodig.
Je kan ook bellen naar 051 58 65 19

Wij kijken er naar uit u beter te leren kennen,
Warme groeten,
Natacha Verclyte
Vrijwilligerscoördinator regio Westhoek, Westkust en Polder



Dit wordt ondersteund door:

Aan Miel van de Boerenstiel
Landbouwweg 6
8980 Zonnebeke

Binnenkort fiets ik langs jouw bedrijf

Dag Miel,

Landbouwer zijn is in deze tijden niet altijd evident. In tijden van digitalisering en regelgeving, schiet het menselijk contact al eens tekort. Omdat we het heel belangrijk vinden om jullie als landbouwer bij te staan, zetten we vanaf nu meer in op een warm contact tussen landbouwers.

Ik ben Jef, landbouwer op rust

Zelf heb ik 30 jaar mijn eigen landbouwbedrijf gehad en sta landbouwers nog steeds graag bij met raad en daad maar vooral met een warme babbel. Want ik weet als geen ander dat boeren een stiel apart is. Nu ik meer vrije tijd heb fiets ik langs bij verschillende landbouwbedrijven in de streek voor een babbel.

Doen wij een babbeltje?

Ik fiets in november langs bij de landbouwbedrijven in de buurt en zal aanbellen bij jou. Je krijgt op voorhand nog een brief met de datum waarop ik langskom. Ik kom voor een babbel van mens tot mens, maar als je vragen hebt over diensten (zoals energiesteun of thuiszorg) kan ik je ook doorverwijzen.

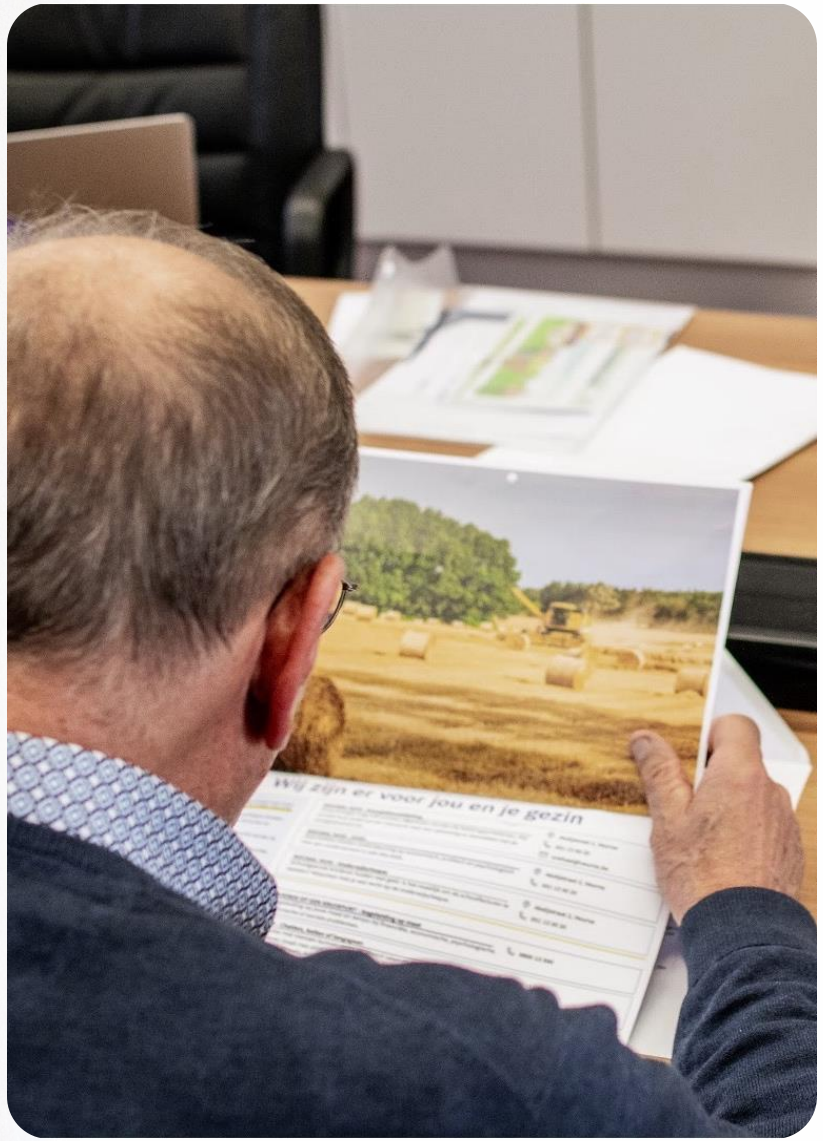
Liever geen bezoek over de vloer?

Schrijf je naam en adres op het kaartje dat je in deze envelop vind en steek het in de brievenbus. Een postzegel is niet nodig.
Je kan ook bellen naar 051 58 65 19

Hopelijk tot binnenkort,
Warme groeten,
Jef de Bour
Vrijwilliger landbouwzorg

Example

A calendar as an artifact to do research on ‘quick win social benefits’ for farmers and how to communicate about them





Maandag	Dinsdag	Woensdag	Donderdag	Vrijdag	Zaterdag	Zondag
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

Datums om te onthouden

- ☐ 10/01 - Nieuwjaarsreceptie
- ☐ 19/01/2024 - Uiterste datum aanvraag vrijwillige stopzettingsregeling voor varkensstallen

Jouw recht van de maand:
vrijstelling energie accijns landbouwers

Bespaar tot 10% op je energiefactuur via de vrijstelling op energie accijnzen. Vul het formulier in en verstuur het naar: Minister Beernaertstraat 3, 8380 Brugge

Bezorg het antwoord aan jouw energie-leverancier(s).

Is het door de gestegen prijzen moeilijk om je energie te betalen? Het OCMW gaat samen met jou op zoek naar een oplossing. De contactgegevens vind je achteraan.

Key take aways

- Make it tangible: it’s easier to spark a meaningful conversation with users by interacting with a prototype than by posing hypothetical questions
- Prototype and test as soon as possible in the process: low fidelity > high fidelity prototypes
- Focus on the elements that require deeper insight and build your prototype accordingly





4. Roadmap the change

Helps to realise a step-by-step implementation

increasing the impact as we go.

THE TOOL

Roadmapping change

START

1 Reading

2 Kick-off

3 User research

4 Reframing challenge

5 Ideation

6 Prototyping

7 Testing

8 FINISH

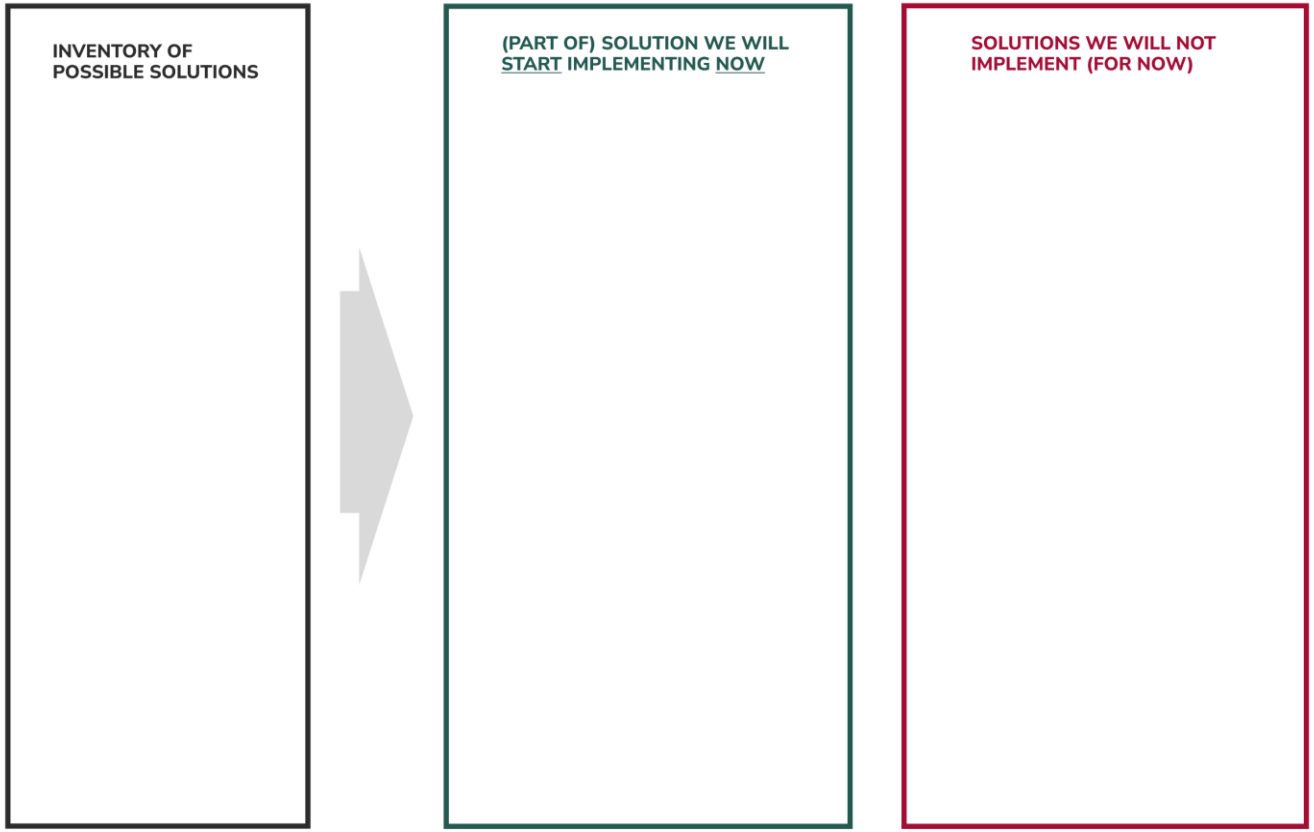
Implementation

Look for the change you can make today rather than tomorrow.

Tool

Roadmap the change

Roadmap the change



THE TOOL

Step by step

1

Inventorise

- List all possible solutions for the challenge at hand.

2

Discuss

- Gather the team of decision-makers.
- Discuss each of the solutions from two perspectives: *feasibility* and *impact* on the user (positive change)

3

Decide

- Decide for each solution whether it will be implemented now or postponed/rejected.

4

Downscale if needed

- You can choose to start with a ’smaller’ version or a test version of a prefered solution if needed

EXAMPLE

Tackling non-take-up of rights

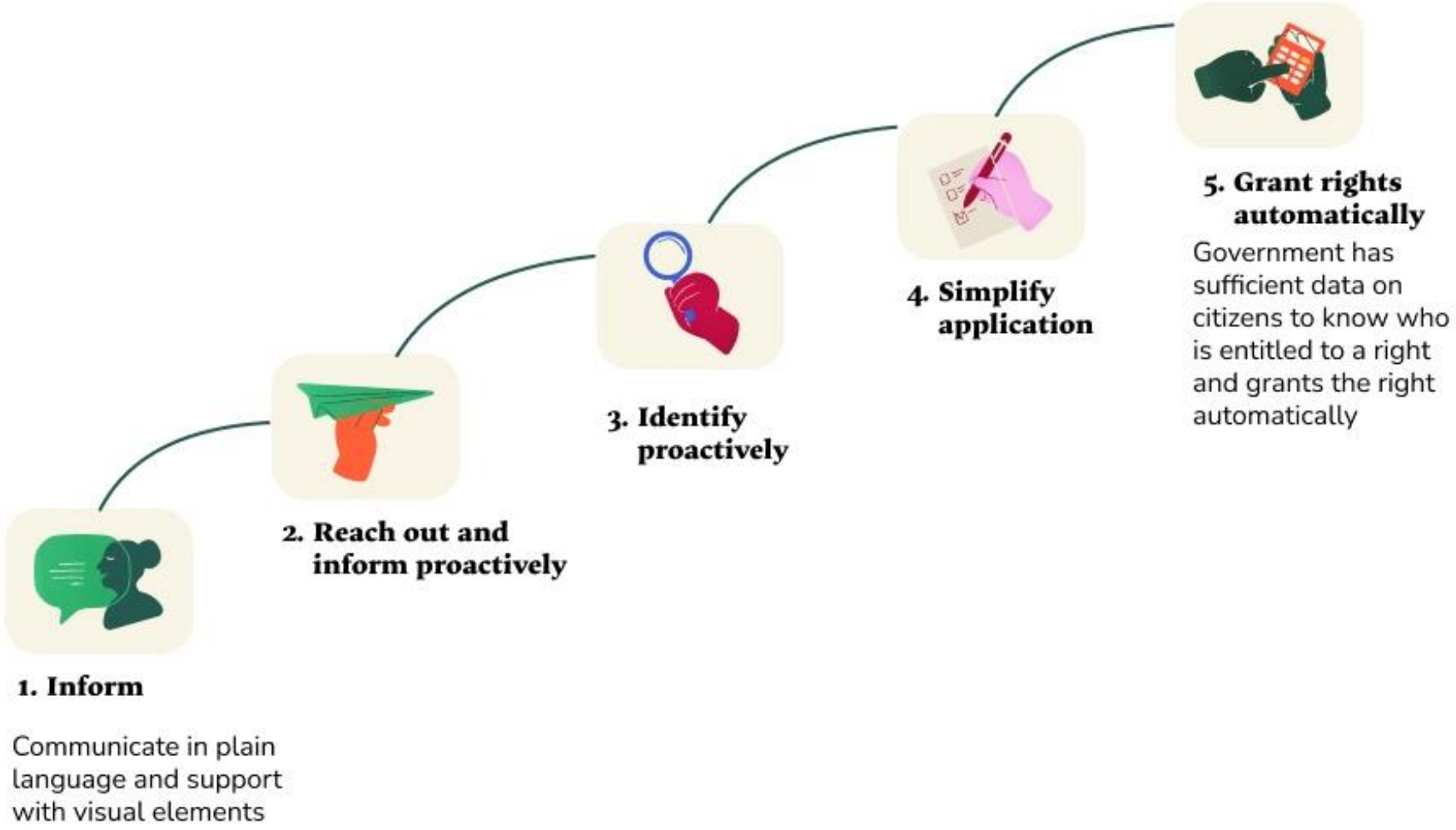
- **Client**: Consortium of small towns who join forces to deliver social policy
- **Overall challenge**: Ensuring that all citizens take up their local social rights such as housing subsidy and school allowance (Non-take-up of >25%)
- **Lead time of project**: +- 3 weeks per town
- **Result**: Multiple concrete solutions to remove barriers for citizens so that they can take up their rights



Example

From quick wins to complex yet more impactfull solutions

to ensure that citizens can take up their social rights



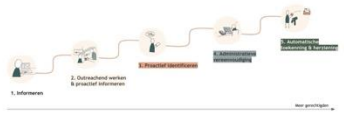
Example

From quick wins to complex yet more impactfull solutions

to ensure that citizens can take up their social rights

Actieplan tot aanpak van de non-take-up van de huurtoelage in Ravels

Alle voorgestelde oplossingen



Outreachen en pro-actief informeren

Partners inschakelen die in contact staan met de doelgroep om de huurtoelage beter bekend te maken

Inzetten op meer **diverse contactkanalen** om de huurtoelage beter bekend te maken

Informatie over de huurtoelage en de brief i.f.v. jaarlijkse hernieuwing aanvraag in **laagdrempelige taal** schrijven

Aanwezig zijn op events rond wonen om de huurtoelage bekend te maken

Pro-actief identificeren

Samenwerken met de Woonmaatschappij Noorderkempen om sociale huurders op de wachtlijst te informeren over (mogelijks) recht op de huurtoelage

Administratief vereenvoudigen

WhatsApp opzetten zodat burgers langs die weg documenten kunnen indienen en herinnerd kunnen worden aan in te leveren bewijsstukken

Interne werkingsprocedures aligneren zodat maatschappelijk assistenten cliënten gelijk behandelen

Technische aanpassingen bij financiële dienst om automatische herinneringen te versturen

Eliminatie goedkeuring Bijzonder Comité mits invoering monitoring

Herbekijken organisatie afspraken zodat er ruimte komt voor uitgebreidere rechtenverkenning

Automatisch toekennen

Met deze oplossingen gaat onze gemeente WEL aan de slag

1

Omschrijving oplossing
Vereenvoudigen aanvraag door inkomsten die in rekening gebracht worden bij aanvraag huurtoelage anders te benaderen.

Daarbijkomend zal er ook een calculator op de website geplaatst worden zodat potentiële rechthebbende een inschatting kunnen maken of ze op basis van hun inkomsten in aanmerking zouden komen voor de huurtoelage

Waarom gaan jullie ermee aan de slag?
Dit zal haalbaar zijn vanaf 1 januari 2024. Op deze manier zullen gerechtigden sneller weten of ze in aanmerking komen of niet.

Met welke uitdagingen/vragen zitten jullie nog?
Anderstaligheid

2

Omschrijving oplossing
Flyer over de huurtoelage en de brief i.f.v. jaarlijkse hernieuwing aanvraag in laagdrempelige taal schrijven

Waarom gaan jullie ermee aan de slag?
Groter bereik en drempelverlagend

Met welke uitdagingen/vragen zitten jullie nog?
/

3

Omschrijving oplossing
Samenwerken met de Woonmaatschappij Noorderkempen om sociale huurders op de wachtlijst te informeren over (mogelijks) recht op de huurtoelage

Waarom gaan jullie ermee aan de slag?
Groter bereik en drempelverlagend

Met welke uitdagingen/vragen zitten jullie nog?
Privacy cliënt

4

Omschrijving oplossing
Interne werkingsprocedure beter afstemmen tussen maatschappelijk assistenten

Waarom gaan jullie ermee aan de slag?
We willen meer uniformiteit in de dienstverlening die we aanbieden aan onze cliënten

Met welke uitdagingen/vragen zitten jullie nog?
/

Met deze oplossingen gaat onze gemeente NIET aan de slag

1

Omschrijving oplossing
Outreachend werken

Waarom gaan jullie er niet mee aan de slag?
Omwille van tijdsgebrek zien we dit niet als een prioriteit

Wat neem je wel mee uit de oplossing?
/

2

Omschrijving oplossing
Maandelijkse bewijslast moeten leveren zal blijven

Waarom gaan jullie er niet mee aan de slag?
Verplicht indienen van maandelijks bewijs betaalde huur heeft tot doel om burgers te motiveren om huur te betalen

Wat neem je wel mee uit de oplossing?
/

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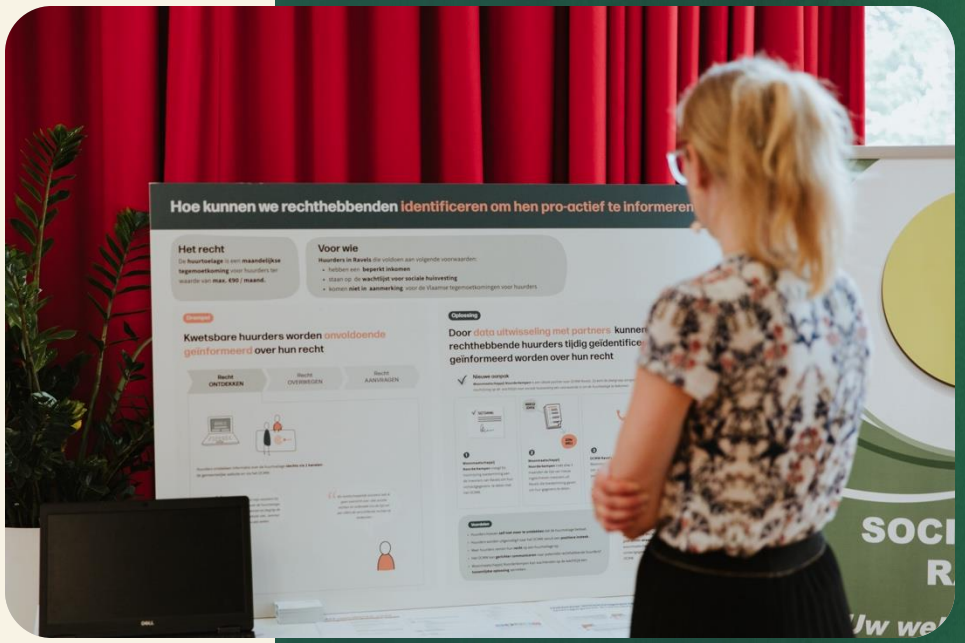
Key take aways

- Consider a stepwise approach to solving an issue: if the ultimate solution will take a long time to be implemented, start with more feasible intermediary solutions which have a smaller impact in the short run
- Push your project team to decide upon the next steps in the last workshop to foster the chances for actual implementation.



Potential pitfalls

Making sure that service design is human-centered design

Potential pitfalls



1

Oversimplification

Be explicit about the scope

Recall that structural measures are needed too

2

Disappointment

Expectation management is key

3

Quick and too dirty

Provide for ‘groaning’ time: calm periods in between steps

Some key take aways

Key take aways

1

Don’t overcomplicate the problem

Break down seemingly insurmountable challenges into manageable components. Focus on what is within our control.

2

Seek pragmatism

With the right tools and a streamlined approach, meaningful outcomes can be achieved in a short timeframe. Small changes can achieve significant progress within existing legal and policy frameworks.

3

User-service provider alignment

Matching the needs of users with those of service providers is crucial for developing sustainable and user-centric solutions.

Key take aways

4

Embrace prototyping and testing

A small set of user tests even with low fidelity prototypes provide valuable insights that can inform policy decisions.

5

Openesss in solution design

Often a (digital) solution is already assumed at the start. Later it can become clear it is not the answer. We therefore advocate for openness to various types of solutions, including unconventional approaches.

Any suggestions from your side to under-complicate?

Happy to hear from you!

Any questions, ideas...?

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Simplifying service design:
practical approaches to tackling complex social issues

Thank you!

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