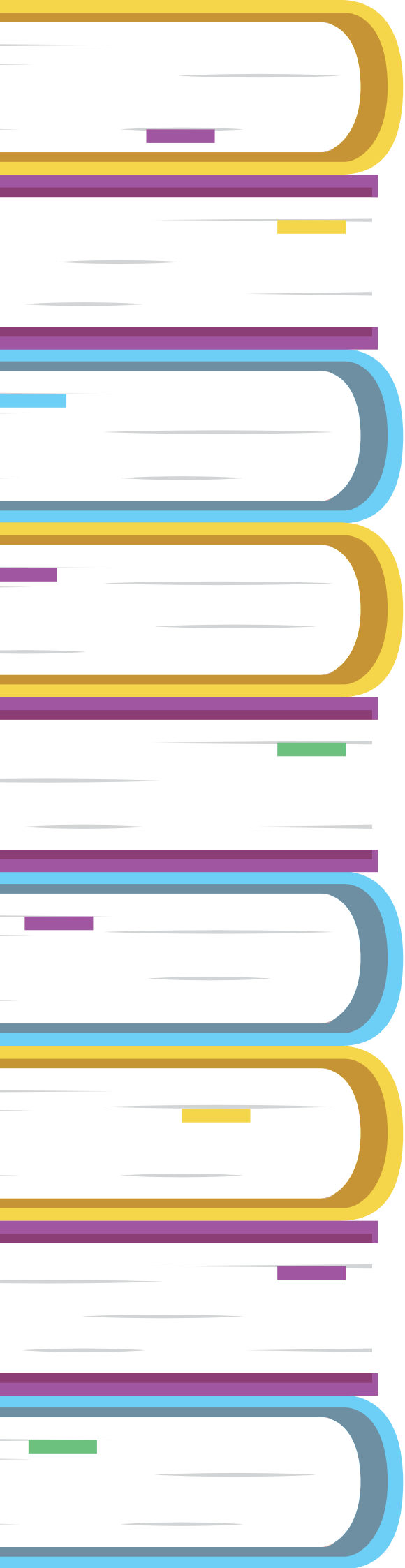
smartup

Innovation in education

A HOW-TO GUIDE TO INITIATE INNOVATIVE PRACTICES



Published by: Association of citizens SmartUp - Social Innovation Lab Skopje
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Year: 2021

SmartUp - Social Innovation Lab acts as an ecosystem builder connecting different stakeholders to promote and develop social innovation, thus building a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable society.
SmartUp is the flagship institution for developing social innovations and supporting social innovators and entrepreneurs that generate impact.

This guide is developed within the project "Setting up an enabling environment for improving quality teaching and learning through co-creation and innovation" funded by the United Kingdom Government through the British Embassy in Skopje, with the support of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Bureau for the Development of Education and UNICEF.

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OUR STORY

Since 2017, SmartUp Social Innovation Lab has been on a mission to improve education in North Macedonia by promoting a more participatory and human-centred approach to designing solutions that address pressing education challenges. So far, these have ranged from improving the socio-emotional skills of students and play-based learning in preschool to improving the professional development of teachers and educators.

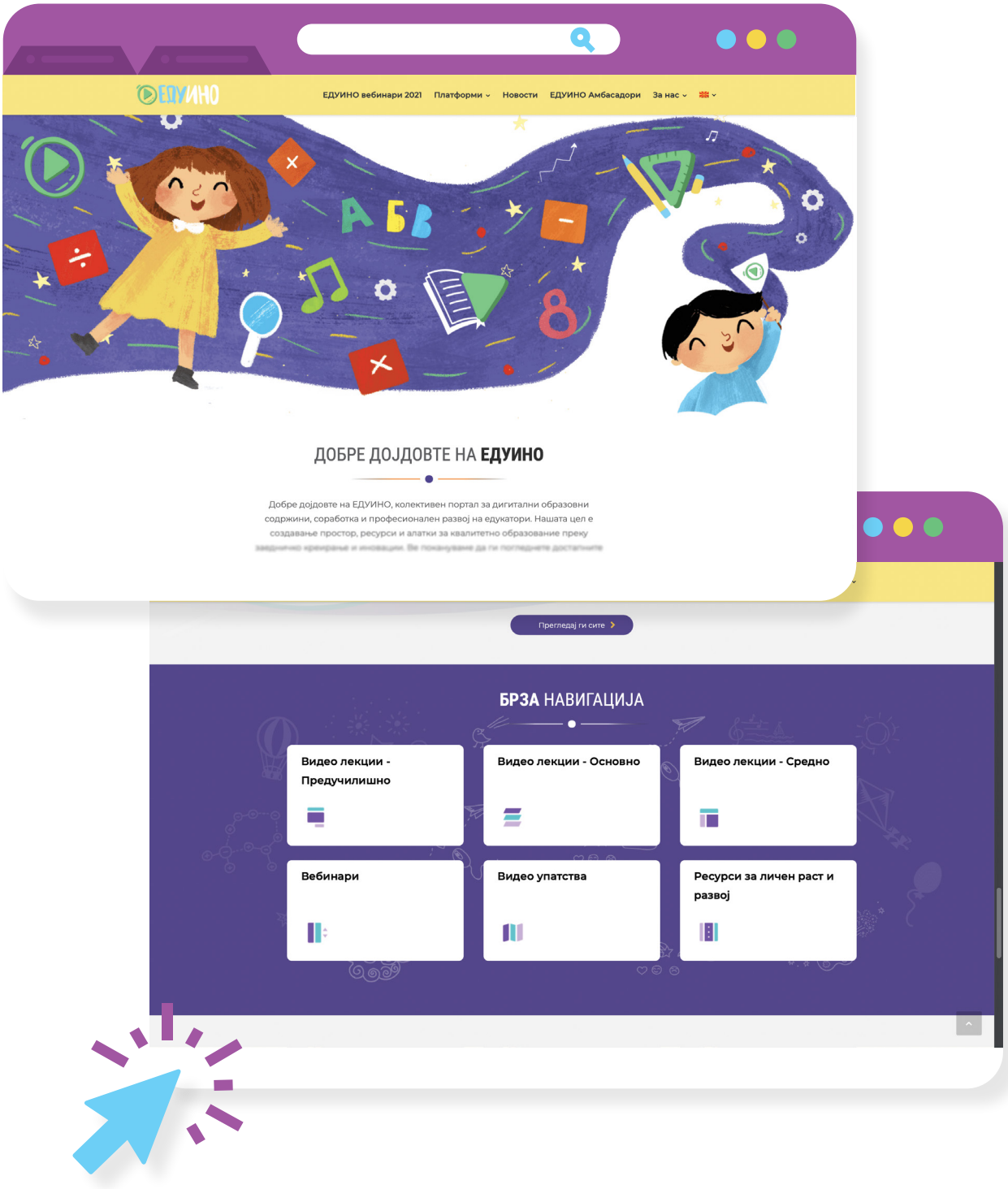
This is where the story of EDUINO starts, the first project in North Macedonia that is a testament to the power of teachers and communities to collectively tackle systemic educational challenges.

> ***A community of educators built the fastest-growing collective educational portal in N. Macedonia with around 5000 video lessons developed in 12 months. Their video lessons have been viewed more than 4 million times and used by students across the country. The methodology used for this feat has the potential to empower teachers and to be scaled and replicated in educational systems across the world.***

Starting from a small multidisciplinary hackathon to gather ideas for solutions that address pressing education challenges, today, EDUINO is the first collective portal for digital educational content, collaboration and professional development, where educational materials are crowdsourced voluntarily through the EDUINO community of educators, programmers, activists and parents who openly collaborate, co-create and support the effort to improve educational outcomes.

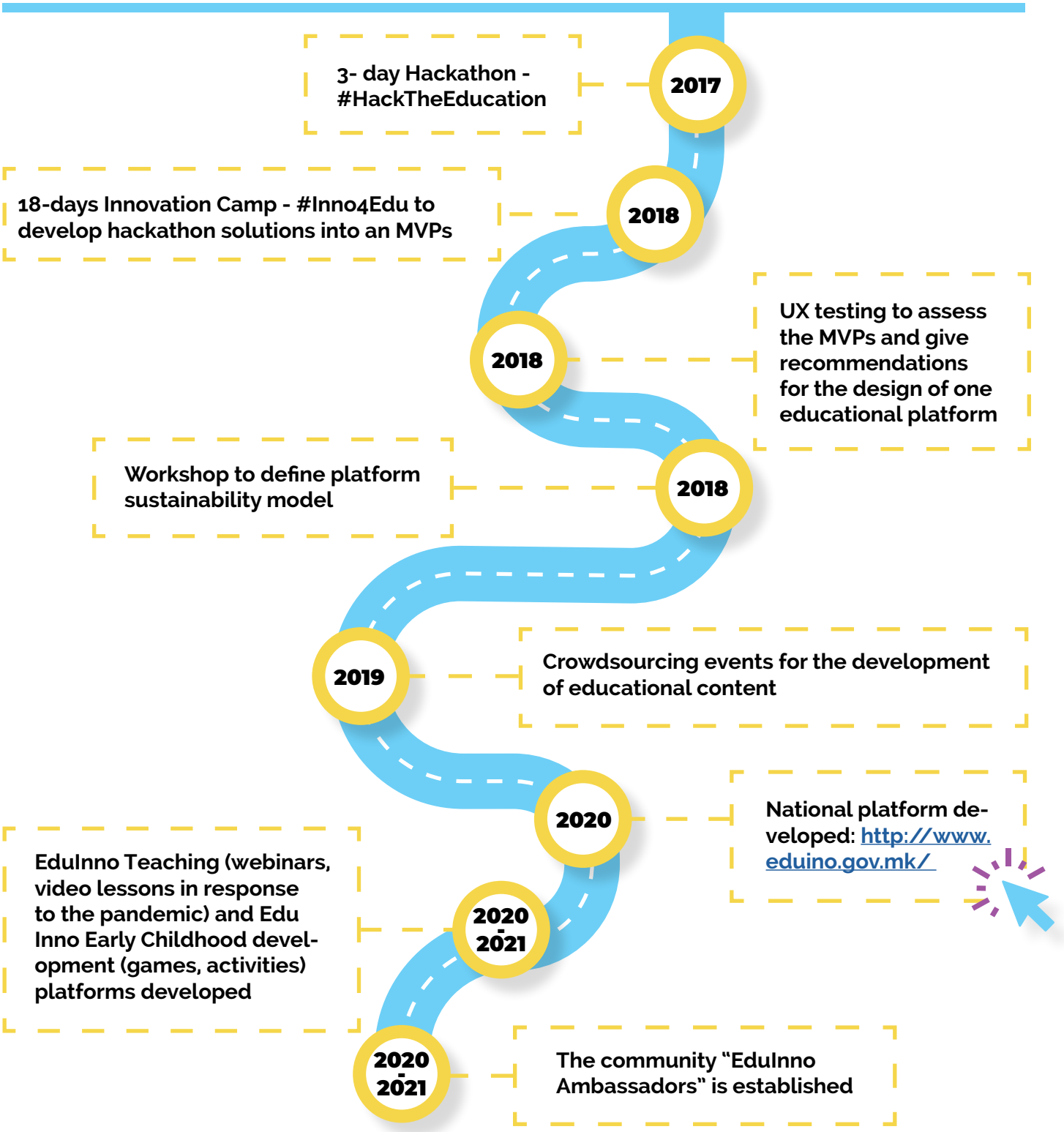
WHAT DOES EDUINO DO?

The portal connects users to various EDUINO educational platforms, for example, "EDUINO Schooling" which offers around 5000 open and free verified video lessons for pre-primary, elementary and high school. These lessons are prepared by over 1000 teachers, in multiple languages and subjects based on the curricula. The platform offers professional development with video courses on methods and tools, as well as increasingly popular webinars on topics relevant to the teacher of the 21st century. It also hosts a library of experiential play-based materials for students aged 3-10.



HOW DID EDUINO BECOME WHAT IT IS TODAY?

The EDUINO timeline



At SmartUp we believe in the power of sharing experiences and knowledge. To support anyone looking to create positive change in education, we created this guide outlining the process we followed and the lessons we learned along the way.

We hope it inspires and equips you to embark on your own innovation journey!

THE GUIDE

There are two types of content presented in this guide; one is theoretical and one is practical. The first will equip you with the necessary knowledge so you can understand the process of co-creation, while the second will help you immerse yourself into the process by presenting different tools and methods you can independently apply.

Who is this guide meant for?

Most anyone can use this guide and we wholeheartedly encourage you to. However, when creating this guide, who we had in mind were educators and anyone else, individual or organization, working in the field of education. As most of what we learned along the way was part of projects related to education and supported by many amazing educators, we only felt it right to focus this guide on the people who want to push the boundaries of what education is and can be.

To use this guide, you don't need to have prior experience, only the curiosity to explore new ways of doing and the drive to implement them. While the guide doesn't cover every tool or all the tips and tricks, it does give you a solid roadmap of how to initiate and embark on an innovation journey as part of your work. We hope you find it as useful and enjoyable as we did!

If you're ready, let's get started!

INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN THINKING

What is design thinking and why is it important?

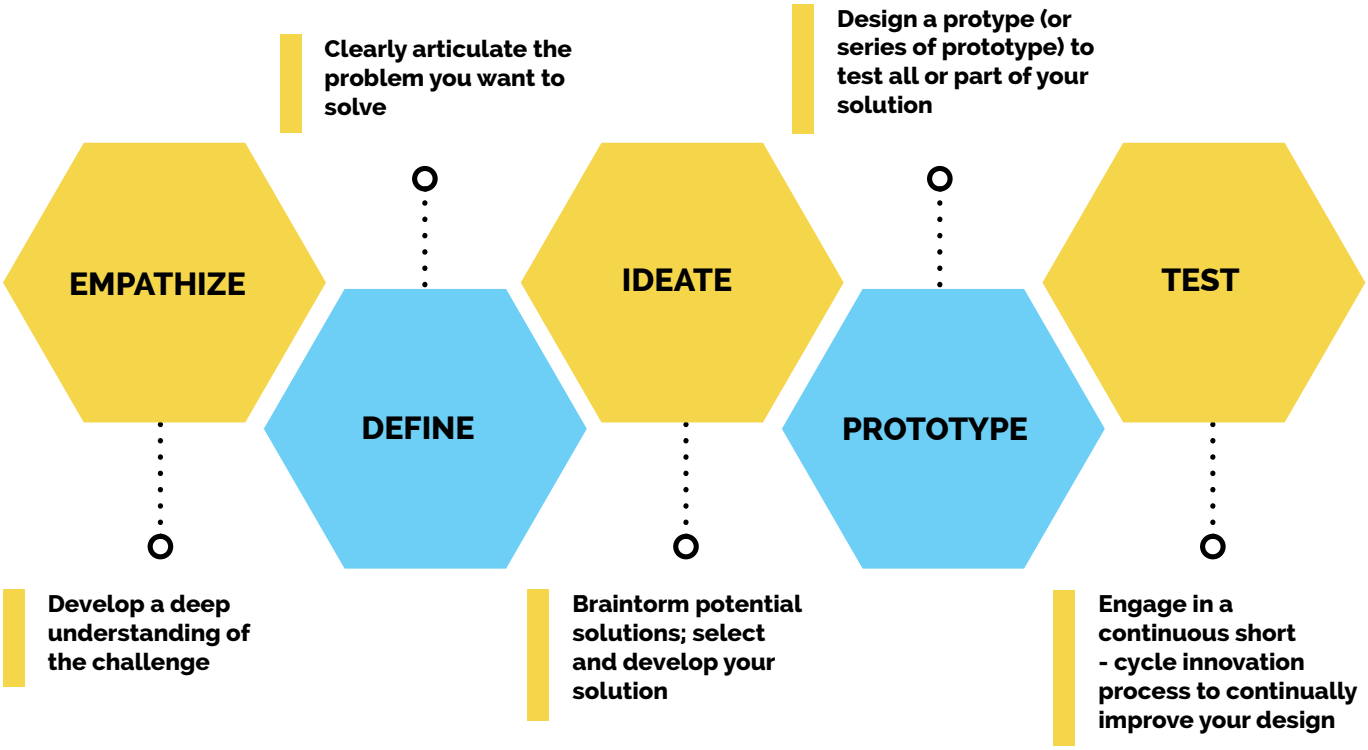
Design Thinking is a creative problem-solving approach seeking to understand people's needs and develop solutions that can address them. It is an approach to innovation or, as many say, a framework for thinking in a new way, or tackling problems from a new direction.

It is especially valuable when it comes to solving complex problems, ones that are characterized by many unknown factors, and which rarely have only one definitive solution, like climate change issues, poverty, etc. When trying to solve one aspect of these problems it is more likely that you will give rise to many other future challenges.

Complex problems are at the very heart of Design Thinking because it is precisely these complex and multi-dimensional problems that require a collaborative methodology that is based on deep understanding of people.

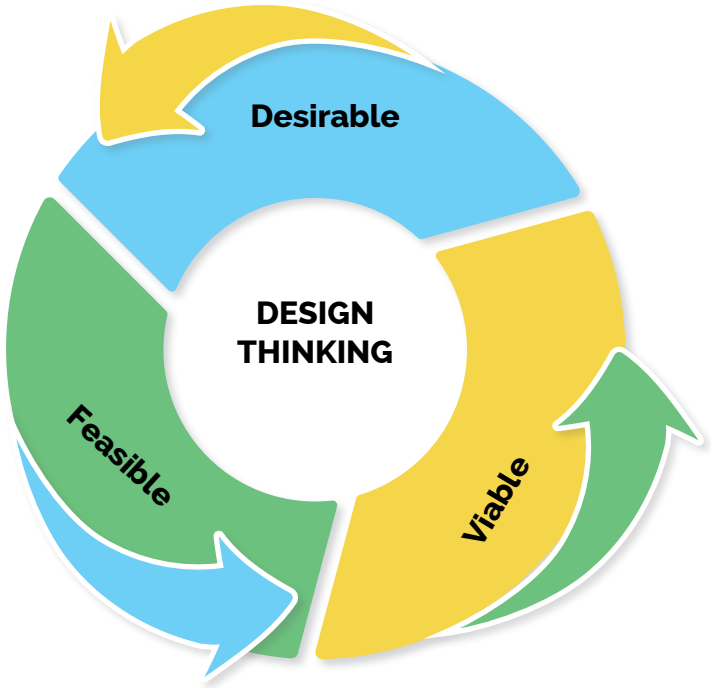
Because of its power to bring radical change, today, design thinking is witnessing an explosion of interest, nationally and internationally, throughout all sectors.

In practice, the design process is a structured framework that enables you to identify problems by gaining a deep understanding of the users, generate potential solutions to address the problems, and prototype and test to continuously improve your solution design.



Pic. 2 Design thinking process as defined by Stanford school

Design thinking is a nonlinear process, meaning you can move back and forth in the process until you are satisfied with the outcome. Based on empathy, design thinking works in the interplay between what is desirable, feasible and viable, involving those most affected by a given problem, using methods that combine analysis and intuition to come to the most relevant and effective solutions (pic. 3).



Pic. 3 Design thinking at the interplay between its three main aspects

That being said, let's move forward to discover the potential of design thinking in education and dive deep into understanding the process.

Potential of design thinking in education

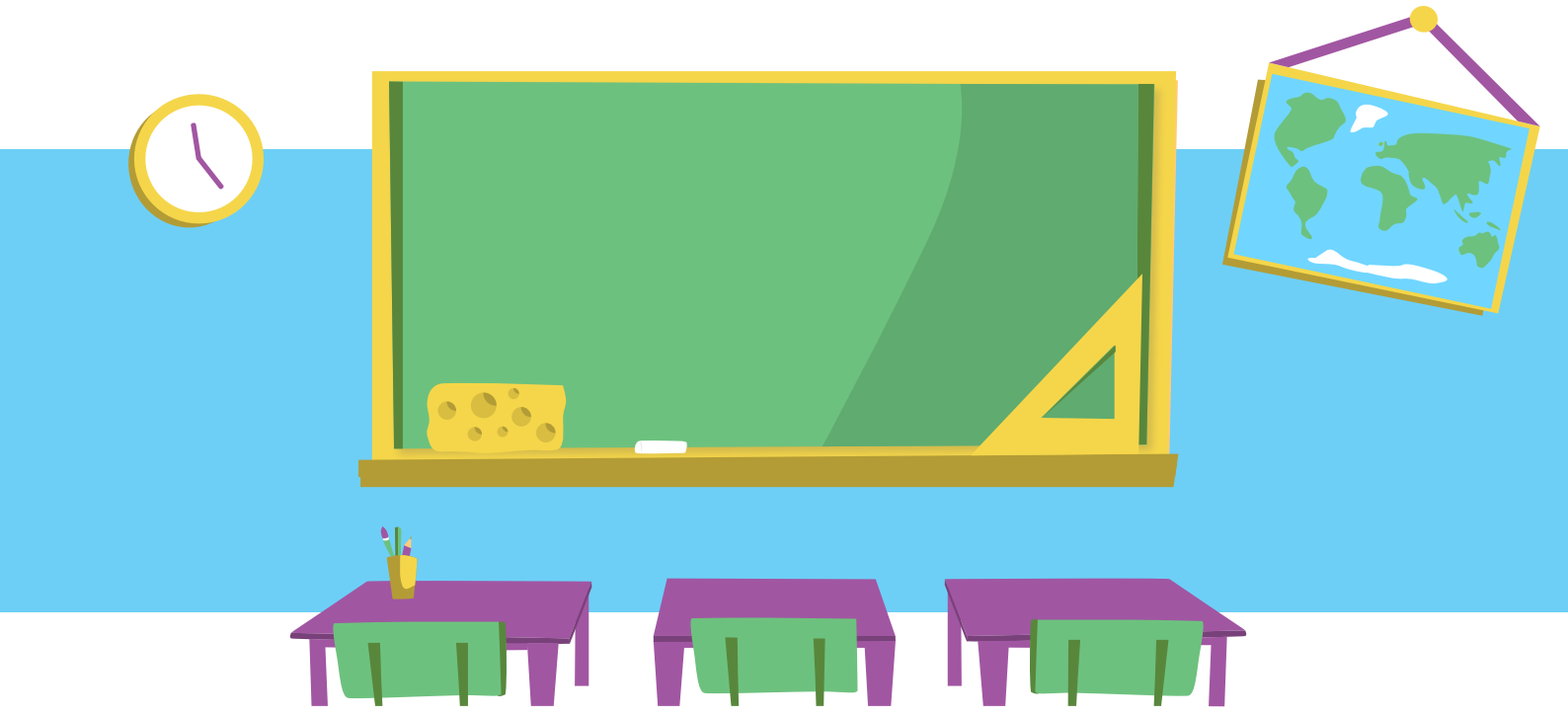
Imagine a classroom where students collaboratively discuss and shape challenges, exchange knowledge and create meaningful solutions (like tangible product prototypes).

It is exactly design thinking that has the power to transform traditional teacher-guided instruction into a student-led learning experience, one that is engaging and motivating.

According to the literature, the primary implication of design thinking to a classroom practice is that it moves beyond progressive project-based learning to a system of exploring complex real-world problems. Teachers and students are required to look not only at the problem as presented but at the wider context and its position within various ecosystems. The focus on the human aspect of the challenges and the emphasis on collaboration promotes democratization, making design thinking ideal for any school and classroom. It can also help policymakers and practitioners to reimagine the whole system and all the aspects of the educational experience to advance a more inclusive school culture, student achievement, address equity, access, and opportunity gaps by engaging a wide variety of stakeholders. [1]

Its hands-on learning approach can help students develop empathy, improve metacognitive awareness, problem-solving, communication and teamwork skills, and improve their creative confidence.

That said, let's dive deeper into the design thinking process!

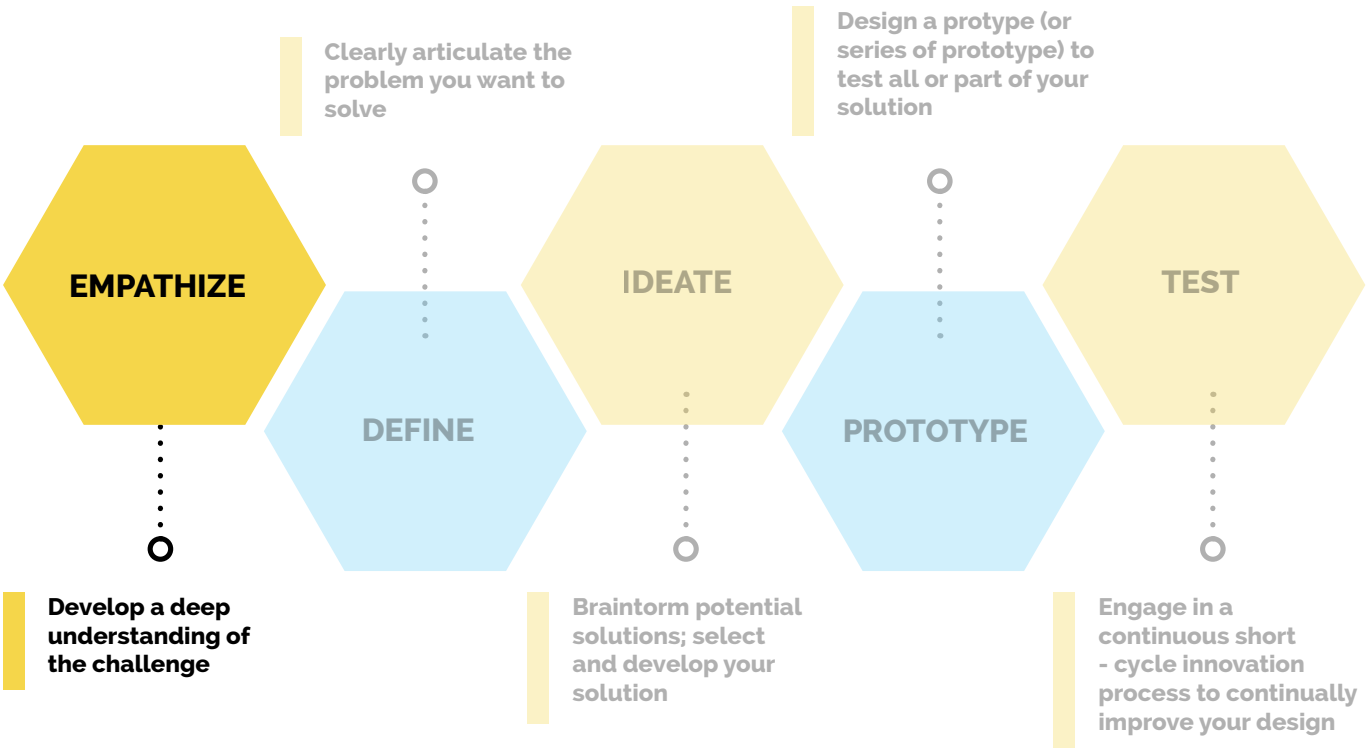


Immersing into the Design thinking process

As discussed before, there are 5 stages in the design thinking process, each having a specific role to play in enabling practitioners to come to effective and systemic solutions.

[1] Loescher, Shawn. (2019). Policy to practice: Design thinking in K-12 education

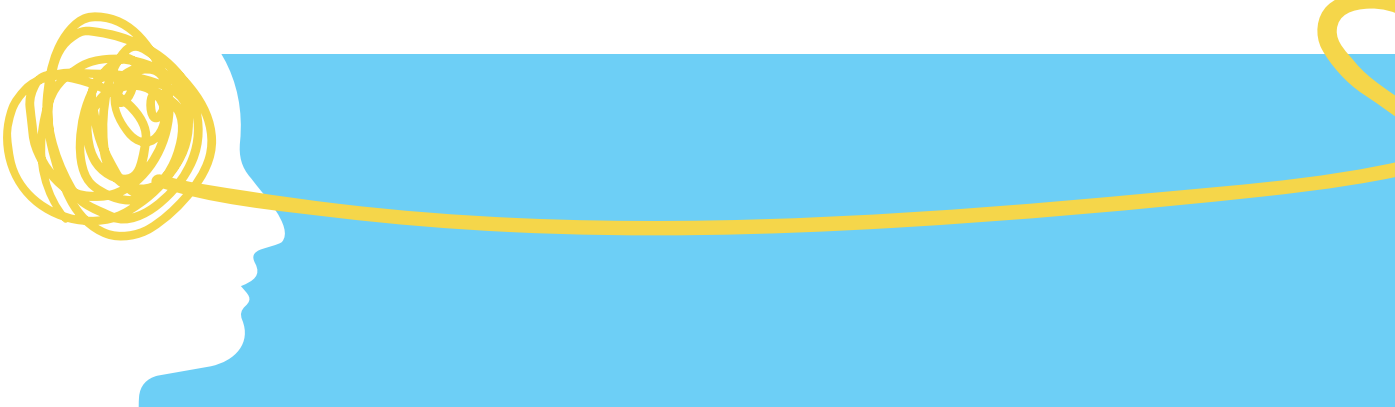
STAGE 1: EMPATHIZE



Building empathy is the first stage in the process and it enables practitioners to get to know the users and gain an empathic understanding of the problem they are trying to solve. It is the most crucial and longest stage as the information that is gathered here will define the direction of the innovation journey.

To discover more about people's experiences, challenges, motivations and objectives, practitioners observe, conduct interviews or immerse themselves in the physical environment. This way helps them to set aside their own assumptions about the world, question the problem and the implications and gain insight into the users and their needs.

Unlike traditional research, empathic research is not concerned with facts about people but more about their motivations and thoughts. Many tools have been developed to help with conducting this kind of research, from **"Empathy interview" and "5 Whys" to photo journals, user journeys, etc.**



Insights from an empathy interview:

> ***I'm really passionate about climate change and I want to help my students learn more and become more proactive about it. However, it takes a lot of time (that I and teachers, in general, don't really have) to find relevant educational materials that are checked by experts. Usually, I just go with the same exercises again and again, which are, to be quite honest, limited and somewhat outdated. What makes this more frustrating is that because I don't speak English and because there is so little material in Macedonian, finding new material to use in my lessons is very challenging" said a third-grade teacher from Skopje.***

> ***As a parent sometimes I find challenges working with my daughter so we can learn the material through games. Not many game-based activities are available in the books and searching online is a bit of a difficulty for me as I find it hard to decide which activity is appropriate ", Parent of a 3rd-grade student from Skopje.***

Before starting any type of research, however, make sure you complete an **"Activity Plan"**. It is a document that outlines the key elements of the activity and helps you stay within the initially defined activity scope and keep track of the progress as you and the students go through the process.

We have prepared templates that can help you get started with some of the tools mentioned above. Check Annex 1 to find out more.

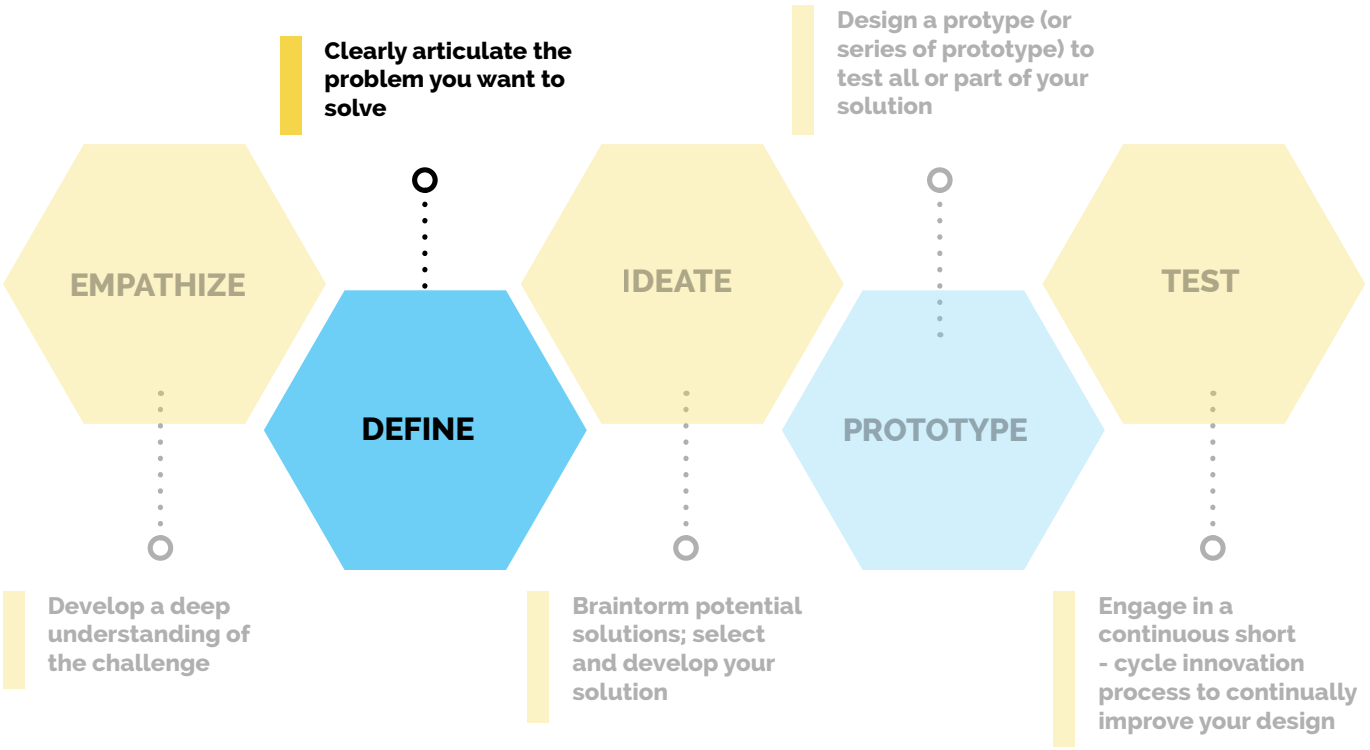
Bonus tips

To get the most out of your research

- Have an open mind and flexible approach and give enough time to identify opportunities and challenges, and if necessary, change the focus or direction following the research findings
- Conduct consultations with a large number of people (from colleagues to experts, users, stakeholders) and review available literature (publications, analyzes, research, books, etc.) or use new sources of information like crowdsourcing, open data, media stories, etc.
- Undertake mapping activities to get a clear visual presentation of the opportunities and the challenges
- Try to build strong connections and relations between the various actors and areas impacted by the problem you want to solve.

Maybe you already have some thoughts on how to approach this first stage?
Write down your questions or ideas here...

STAGE 2: DEFINE (THE CHALLENGE)



This is the stage where all the information gathered during the Empathize stage should be put together. The focus at the stage is on analyzing insights and synthesizing them to define the core problem(s) identified up to this point and those impacted by and connected to it.

Analysis is all about breaking down complex concepts and problems into smaller, easier-to-understand pieces while synthesis involves creatively matching the pieces together to form whole ideas. Analysing and synthesizing can happen consecutively throughout all stages of the design thinking process.

There are several tools and methods that can help here, from **stakeholder maps and empathy maps to problem tree and persona profiles.** Some of them, in the form of a template with guidance, are presented in Annex 1.

A **problem statement** is important to a Design Thinking project because it will guide the team and provide a focus on the specific needs that have been uncovered. It derives from the insights you have uncovered in the Empathize stage. A good problem statement is very human-centred, focused on the people we are trying to help. To be able to define a clear problem statement try to write down all the visible challenges your users face and identify any similarities between them. Depending on the problems identified and their complexity, you might need to narrow down or broaden your challenge. However, keep in mind that the problem statement should be broad enough to ensure creative freedom but also narrow enough to ensure the problem is manageable.

Example of a problem statement: Climate change is an important topic that should be included within regular school classes in North Macedonia. However, teachers are struggling because they cannot find relevant, updated educational and interesting educational material in the Macedonian language that they can adjust to different subject matter classes.

To spark the potential of the ideation process, transforming a problem statement into a design question using **"How might we...?"** can not only put people in the mindset of arriving at impactful solutions, but it also helps them generate as many ideas as possible along the way.

HOW MIGHT WE ..... (ACTION WHAT) ..... FOR ..... (WHOM).....IN ORDER ..... (TO CHANGE SOMETHING).

Example of a design challenge: How might we help teachers in North Macedonia to introduce climate change issues through regular subject matter classes while ensuring it's relevant, updated and interesting to keep students engaged?

Things to remember

- With a too broad challenge (I.E. How might we end poverty? or How might we improve education?), there is a risk you would not know where to start and you won't get to an actionable solution.
- Defining a challenge too narrowly (I.E. How might we design a new plough that costs $25, is solar-powered, and can be repaired by someone with no skills?), poses a risk of limiting creativity and reducing the possibility of getting more solutions.

Bonus tips

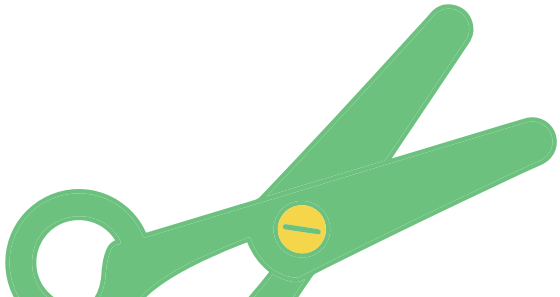
To ensure that the challenge question is well-defined try answering the following question:

- Is the question leading us to a solution with the best outcome? Does the question align with the needs expressed by the Personas?
- Will the question enable us to solve the problem with different solutions?
- Is the question taking into consideration the context and the limitations (geographical, technological, social, etc.)?

If the question(s) needs improvement try to repeat the process until you come to the one you are happy with!

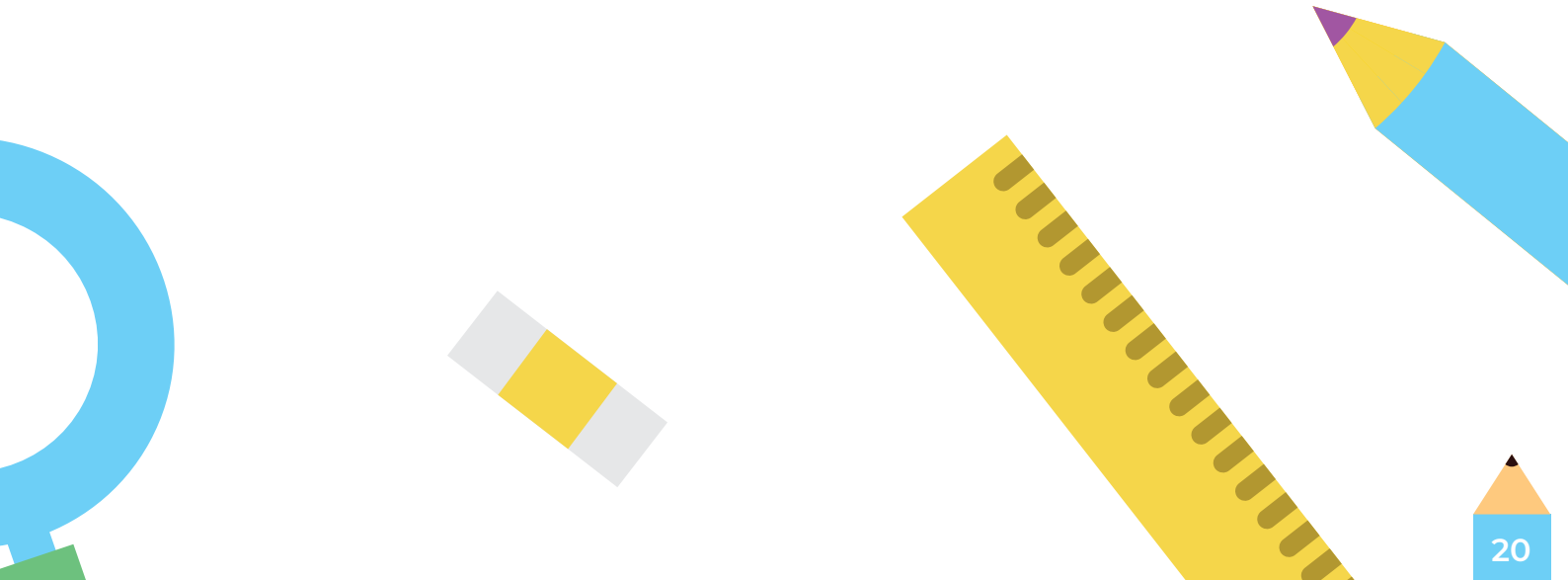
Any ideas on how to draft your potential problem /challenge?
Use the space below to write your thoughts

Problem statement

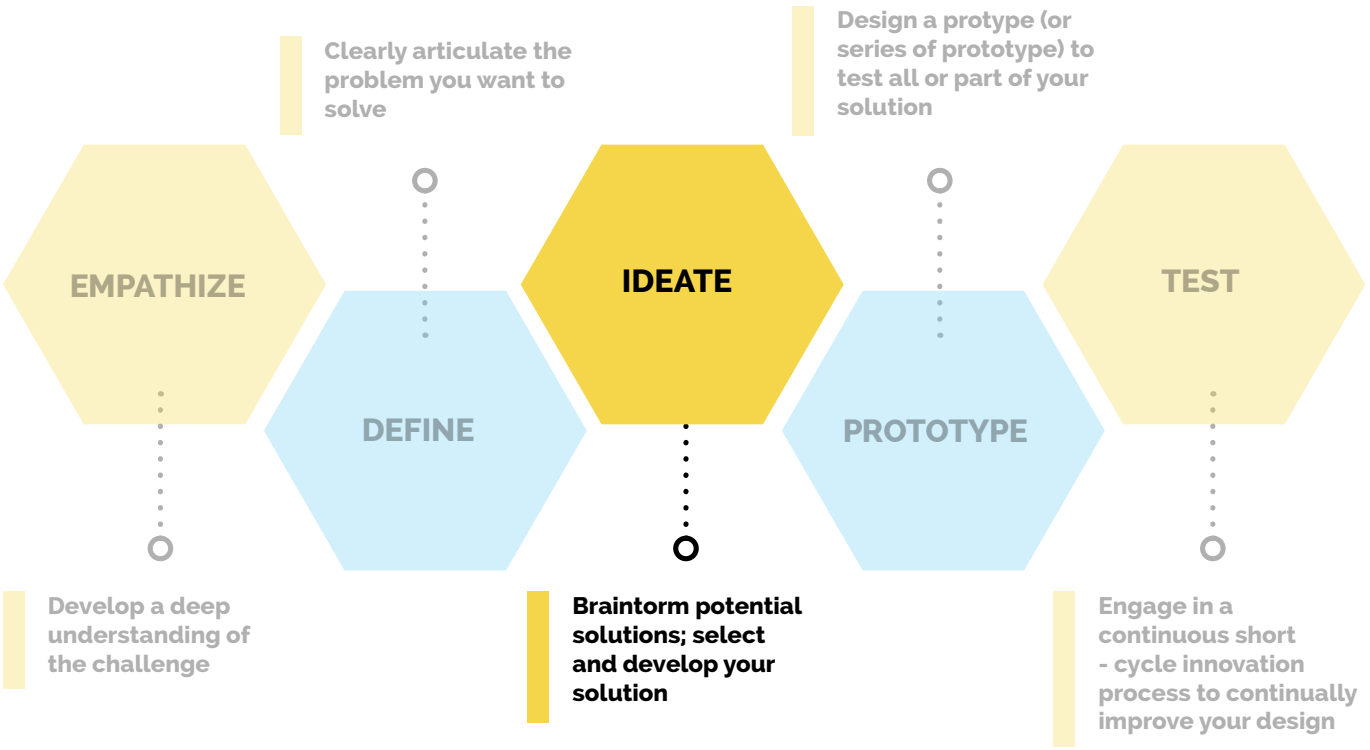


Challenge statement

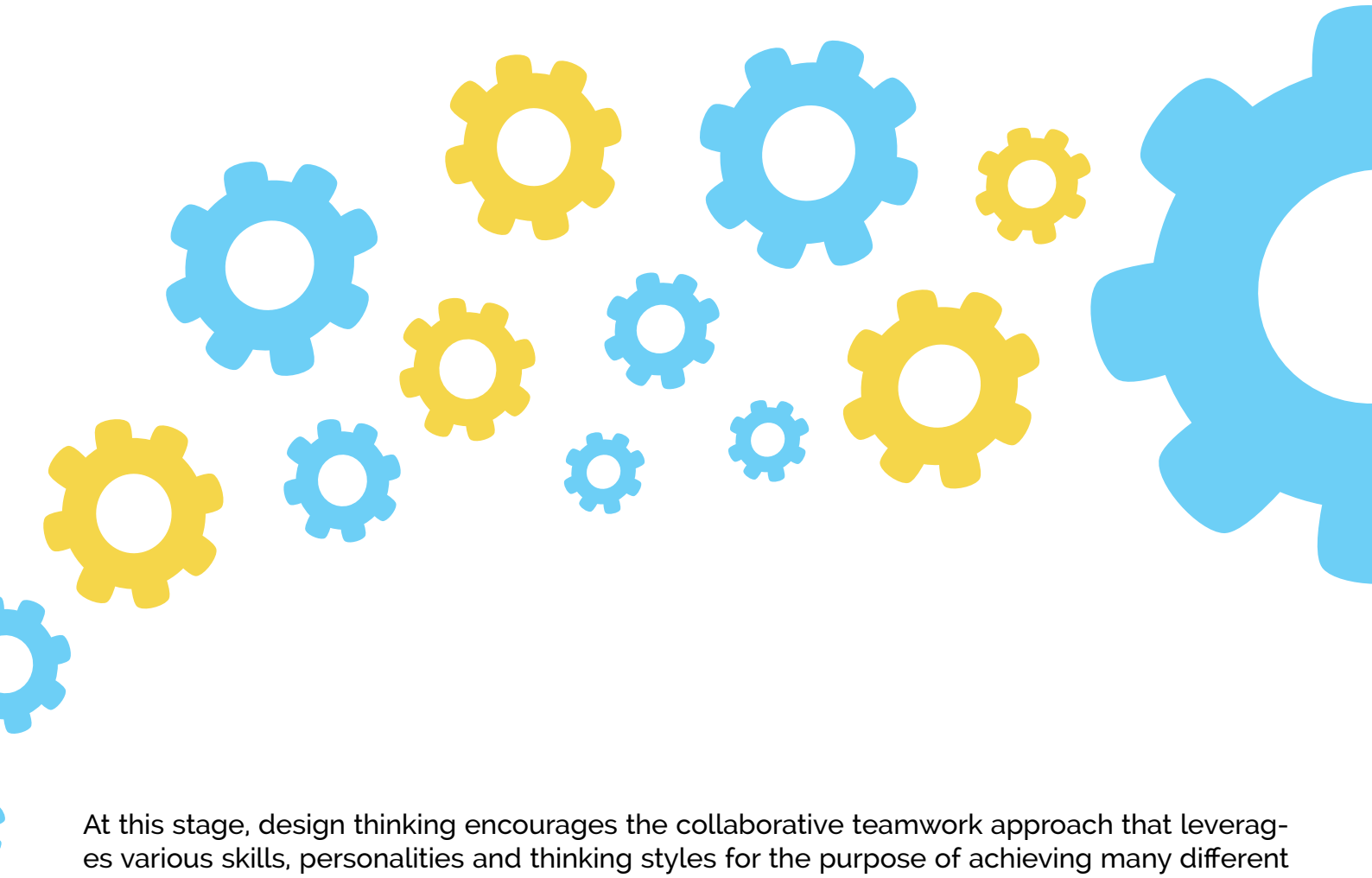
HOW MIGHT WE ..... (ACTION WHAT) ..... FOR ..... (WHOM).....IN ORDER ..... (TO CHANGE SOMETHING).



STAGE 3: IDEATE



During the stage of ideation, the focus is on exploring, filtering and transforming a lot of information into several promising ideas. The challenge here is to get to as many ideas as possible and to discover the ones with the greatest potential to be transformed into real projects.



At this stage, design thinking encourages the collaborative teamwork approach that leverages various skills, personalities and thinking styles for the purpose of achieving many different ideas/possibilities. The brainstorming process is of high importance here.
Today there are many ways and tools that can help you generate ideas. The approach used to generate ideas depends a lot on the complexity of the issue at hand.

When working with a group of students, try to divide them into groups that consist of different personalities and skills so as to be able to tackle the issue at hand from various perspectives and get different ideas.

When working on complex challenges where many different actors should be or are involved, getting a team of people with diverse skill sets that know what you are trying to do and have a valuable perspective on the process will be of great benefit (ex. students, teachers, policy-makers, business representatives, etc.). Try to work with a bigger group as most of the time, the best ideas come from outside of the familiar networks or contacts. Being open in the process of the generation of ideas can help you gather many ideas, from different people and in different ways.

Approaches such as **open days, competitions, challenges, hackathons and innovation labs** can attract many new types of innovators from where new ideas can be born.

Hence, regardless of the approach to ideation, there are two key steps to follow:

01 Brainstorming

Brainstorming is the process of generating as many ideas as possible, big and small.
In order for a brainstorming session to be successful, there are several notions that need to be followed.

1. Always defer judgement during the brainstorming session. The goal is to generate ideas, not evaluate them.
2. Make everyone feel comfortable in sharing their ideas.
3. Use a "yes and" approach to build on each other's ideas. Often, the most promising ideas start out small and evolve through this approach.
4. Encourage wild, out-of-the-box ideas.

How to brainstorm?

When conducting a brainstorming session, first make sure you plan for enough time. Depending on the size of the team, an effective brainstorming can take anywhere from 20 minutes to a couple of hours.

It is usually easier to separate the brainstorming session into several chunks, with short breaks in between.

Before starting a brainstorming session, it's a good idea to prepare at least one warm-up activity. This can range from asking the participants to draw as many uses for an everyday object as they can in a minute, to solving some brain teasers. The idea is to get the participants to loosen up and get the creative energy flowing.

There isn't a foolproof way of doing brainstorming. To start out, you can try putting your "How might we" question in the middle of the table. Ask all participants to start writing down (even better, drawing) ideas on how the challenge might be addressed. After the designated time is over, each participant should briefly share their ideas with the others.

You can then proceed in one of several ways. If no ideas seem interesting or promising, feel free to repeat a free-form brainstorming session. In this case, it might be helpful to put into place some limits (e.g. How would we approach our "How might we" if we could not use any electricity). These limits aim to stimulate thinking outside the box by forcing the participants to shift their perspective or abandon certain certainties or aspects they take for granted.

Another way to continue is to start grouping ideas by similarities. This helps identify some common themes or patterns that emerge from the generated ideas. Having identified several groups, try merging the ideas within a group into a more complex idea. You could also try to combine groups to come to a more holistic idea.

It is very likely that you will need to go through this process several times before you come up with an idea or several ideas that you are happy with. Make sure that you follow the guidelines mentioned before and good luck!

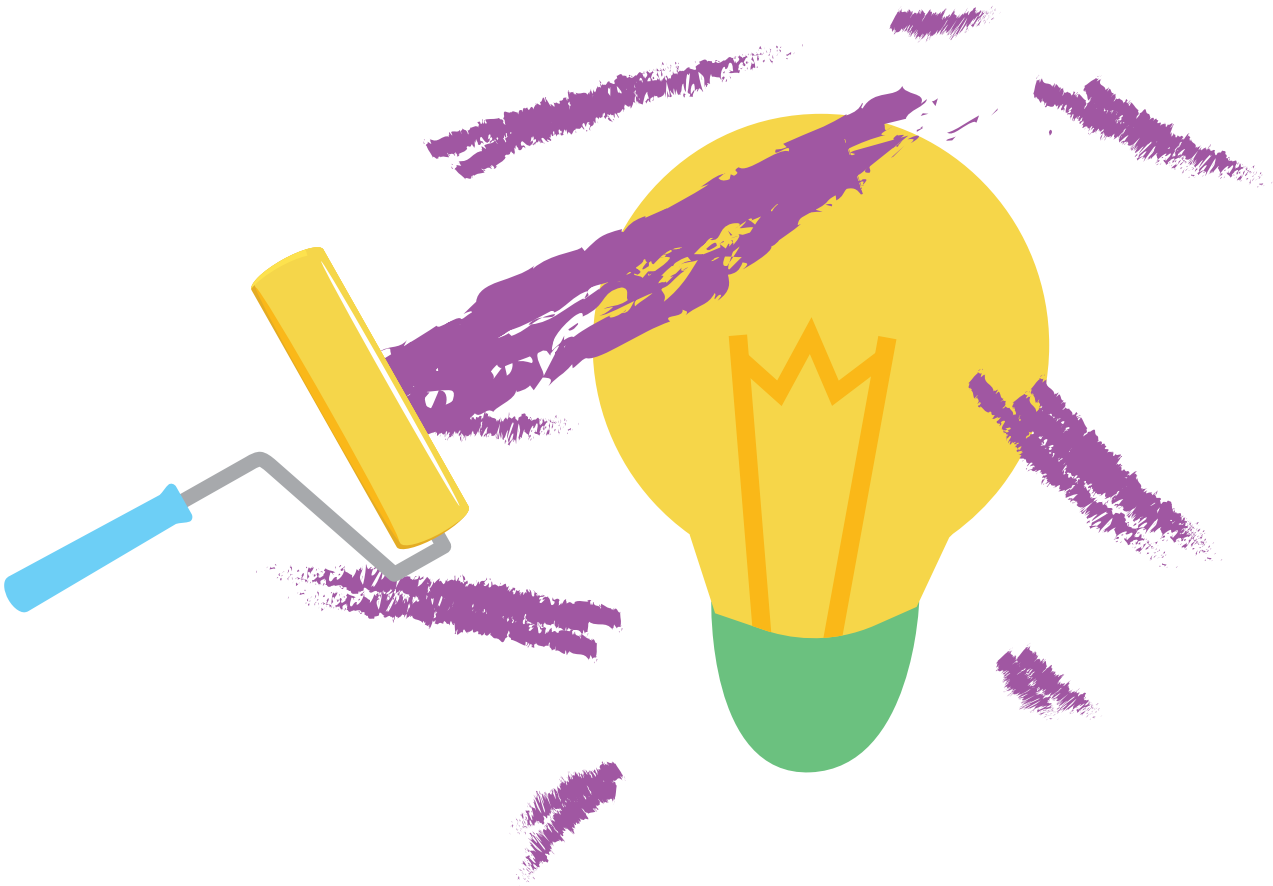
02 Idea Design

This step focuses on (re)shaping ideas and constructing more complex ones – moving from quantity to quality. Here you assess the ideas and estimate their eventual impact.

Start by taking the ideas generated during the brainstorming session(s). As mentioned above, you might have already tried combining some ideas to arrive at a better one. Now is the time to develop these ideas further and try to flesh them out. This step should result in a detailed description of the idea, answering the questions below.

- **Who is it for?** Who are we solving the problem for? Who will be the user? Who gets the most value out of it?
- **What is it?** Describe the idea in detail. Main elements?
- **How would it work?** Think in a process, how will people find out about it, start using it and interact with it? What value would they see and how would this show up?
- **Who are the stakeholders?** Who is involved in the delivery or could be affected by the idea? Who you might need to work with and who might indirectly benefit from the idea?
- **What is the benefit of this solution?** What difference will users see in their lives and in what area of their lives? If that happens, will people see a difference in their community?
- **What is the rating of this idea?** Rank ideas from 1-5 (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest) in regard to a) how new the idea is, b) how beneficial it will be, c) how easy it is to make it real.

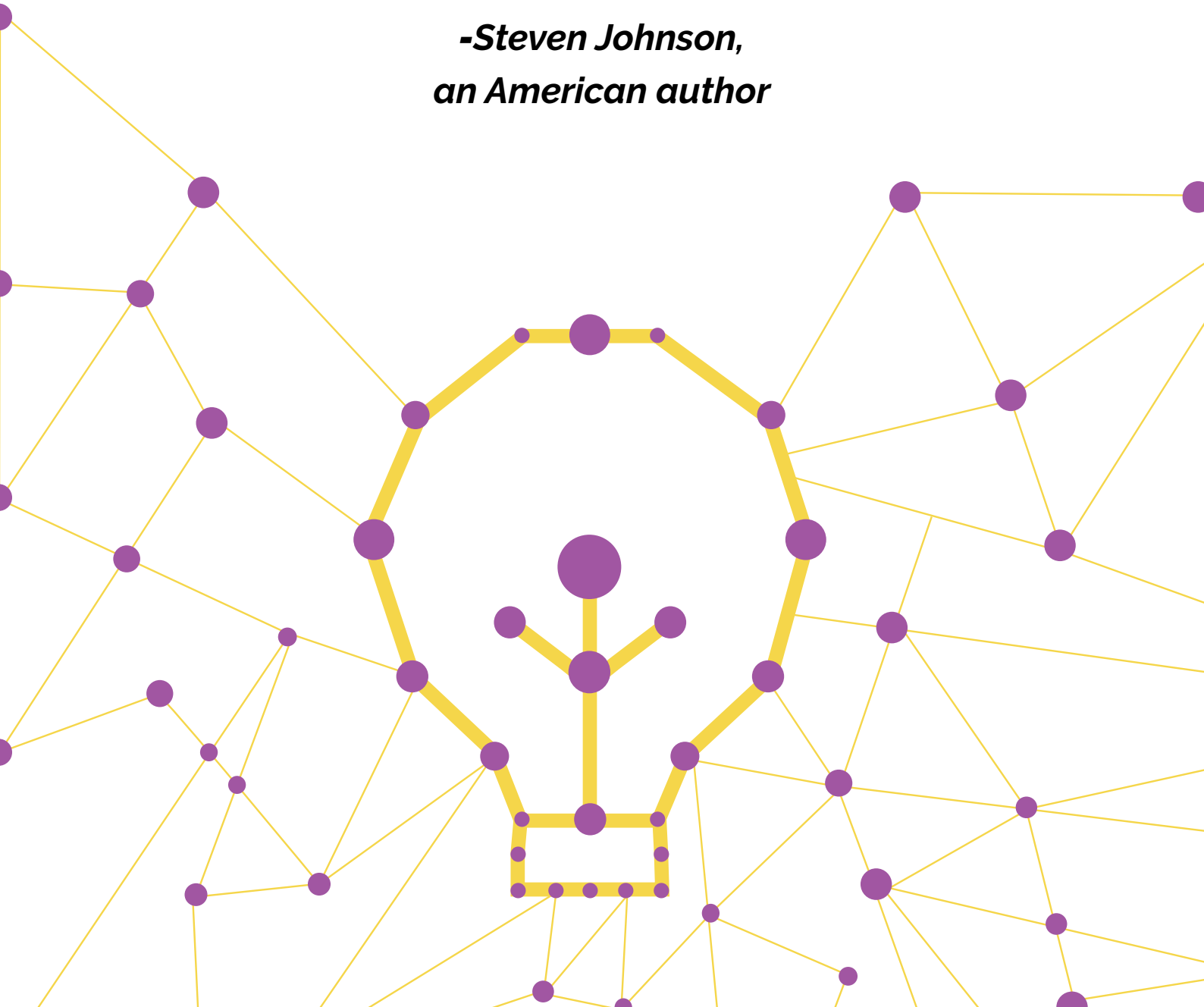
This is just an example, you can define your own criteria based on the defined challenge and expected impact.



Have some ideas on how to do ideation?
Put them down

If you look at history, innovation does not come just from giving people incentives; it comes from creating environments where their ideas can connect

-Steven Johnson,
an American author



Creating environments to enable ideas to connect is at the core of the ideation stage. This is why, before moving to the prototyping stage, we will take a look at one of the most popular ideation methods used to drive sustained innovation and crowdsource solutions to address pressing real-life challenges.

Hackathon - a purpose-created environment to enable innovation and ideation!

A Hackathon is a time-bound competitive event where participants collaborate to develop a proof of concept, prototypes, minimum viable products, etc., for a specific predefined challenge.

Hackathons are inclusive, agile, promote multidisciplinary collaboration, and have a shorter innovation cycle that is better suited to addressing fast-changing demands. It is a voluntary activity that usually takes place over a weekend. Along with generating new ideas and future-proofing, hackathons can help de-risk product/service development, improve stakeholder engagement, accelerate the speed of innovation and problem solving, enhance collaboration between teams, bring about cost savings and build community and leadership.

Why should you consider organizing a Hackathon around an educational challenge?

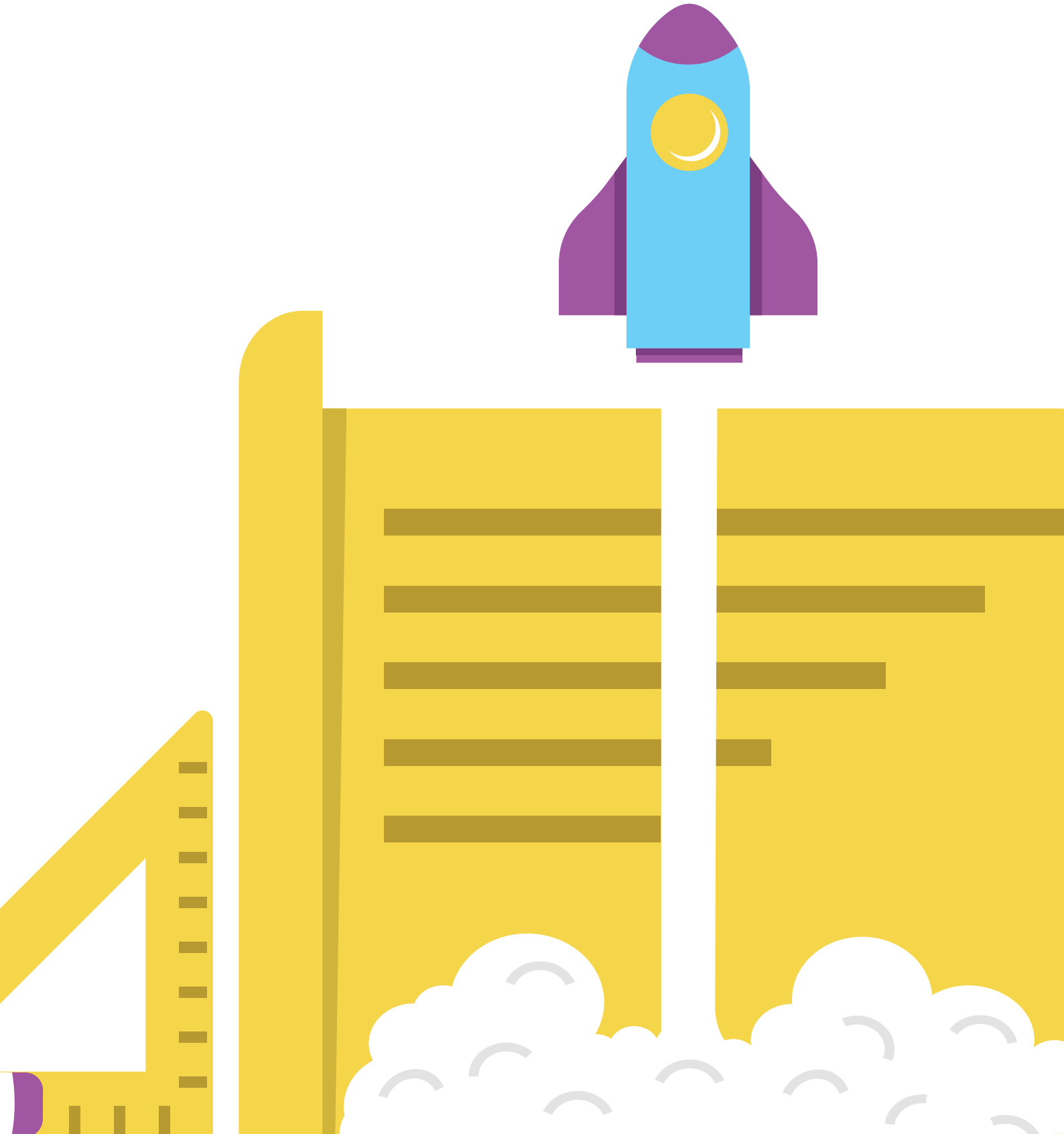
In the educational context, hackathons can be used as mechanisms to drive innovation and thus become the new pedagogy if we look at the aspect of teaching and learning.

Project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and STEM all wrapped up into one activity! It's about design thinking and a truly 21st-century learning opportunity. Students are working collaboratively in teams to examine problems and come up with solutions.

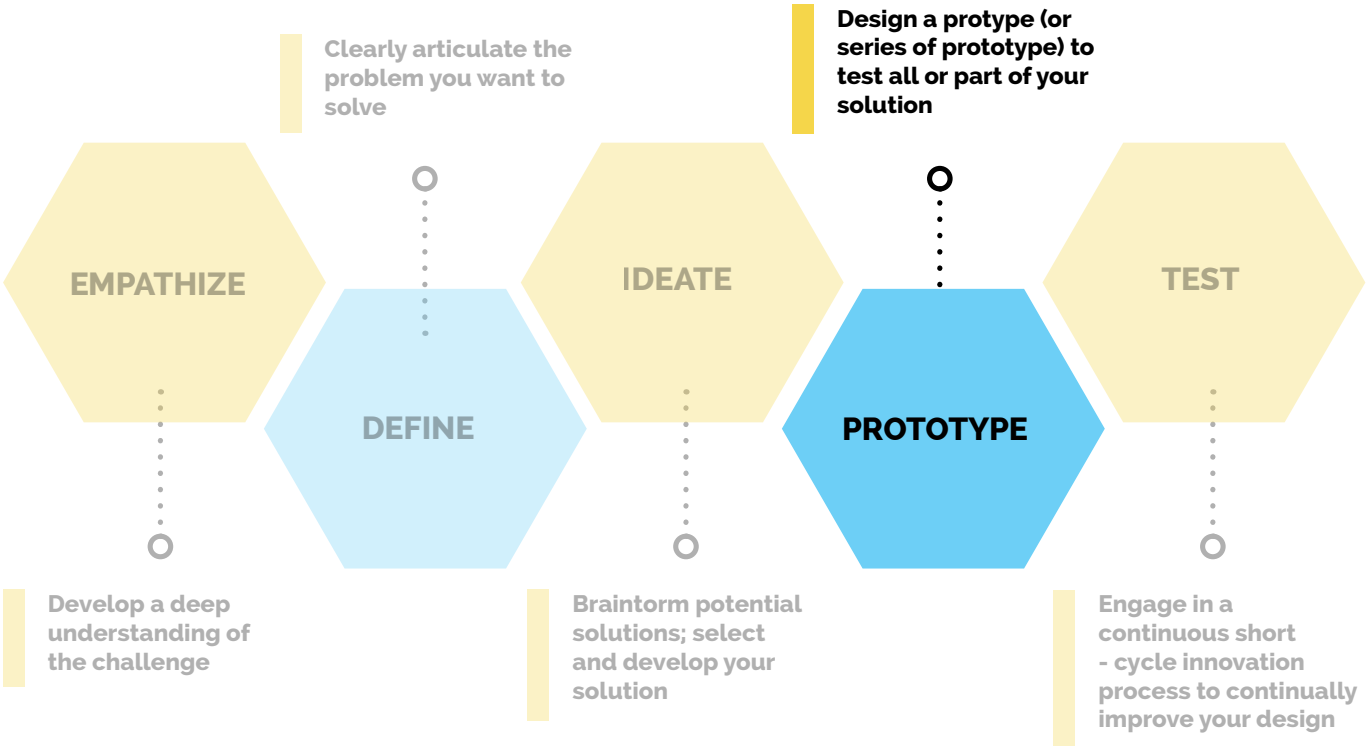
All the creativity, teamwork and problem solving unleashed through collaborative projects at hackathons can stimulate students to engage more in the learning process and help them build skills that will be beneficial not only for the classroom but also for their future academic and professional life.

Hackathons can also be used to enable students, teachers and other experts, as well as, decision-makers to work together, and through this joint process come to radical solutions that can improve education. This process enables the exchange of knowledge and experience, while participants gain a better understanding of each other's needs, motivations and challenges.

So, if you feel that this is the right approach for you, then have a look at Tool 10 in Annex 1 where a full process of how to organize a hackathon is described in detail.

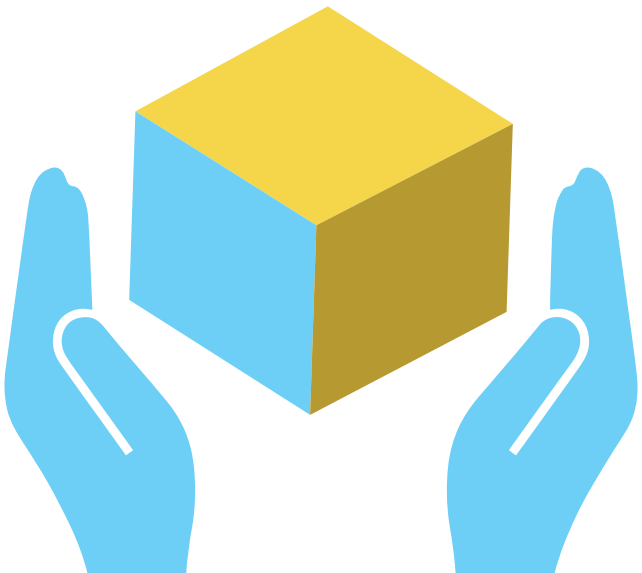


STAGE 4: PROTOTYPE



The faster we make our ideas tangible, the sooner we will be able to evaluate them, refine them, and zero in on the best solution.

- Tim Brown, Change by Design:
How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations
and Inspires Innovation



Prototyping brings ideas to life. And prototyping is not a straight line, but rather a loop.
The goal of prototyping is to keep learning and understanding the concept better throughout its development. It is a matter of building a model that best reflects your concept and allows you to get feedback to either improve or abandon your idea.

Tips before you start prototyping

Make it simple and ready to start all over again

Do not get too attached to your idea

Opt for quantity

Be fast, don't invest too much time in details

What can be prototyped?

A PRODUCT:
to test the form (is it aesthetically pleasing, is it ergonomic, how do the users respond to it) and the function (is it easy to use, can the users interact with it easily, does it perform the necessary functions)

A SPACE:
to test the layout of the space, the wayfinding, the interaction between users and the space or between the users themselves. For example, a classroom can be tested in terms of how the students access the tools and spaces they need most, how the students interact with the teacher, how they interact between themselves, what kind of behaviour the classroom promotes etc.

A SERVICE:
similarly to a product, a service prototype can test how the user interacts with the entire service or a certain touchpoint (website, app, physical space) if the user can easily use the service and achieve their goals etc.

How do we prototype?

Be creative in order to make a successful prototype. Prototyping methods are numerous and here we present the four main ones:

Role Plays for Interactions

Storyboard for Services

Paper/Digital Prototypes for digital tools, awareness-raising materials, or data collection instruments

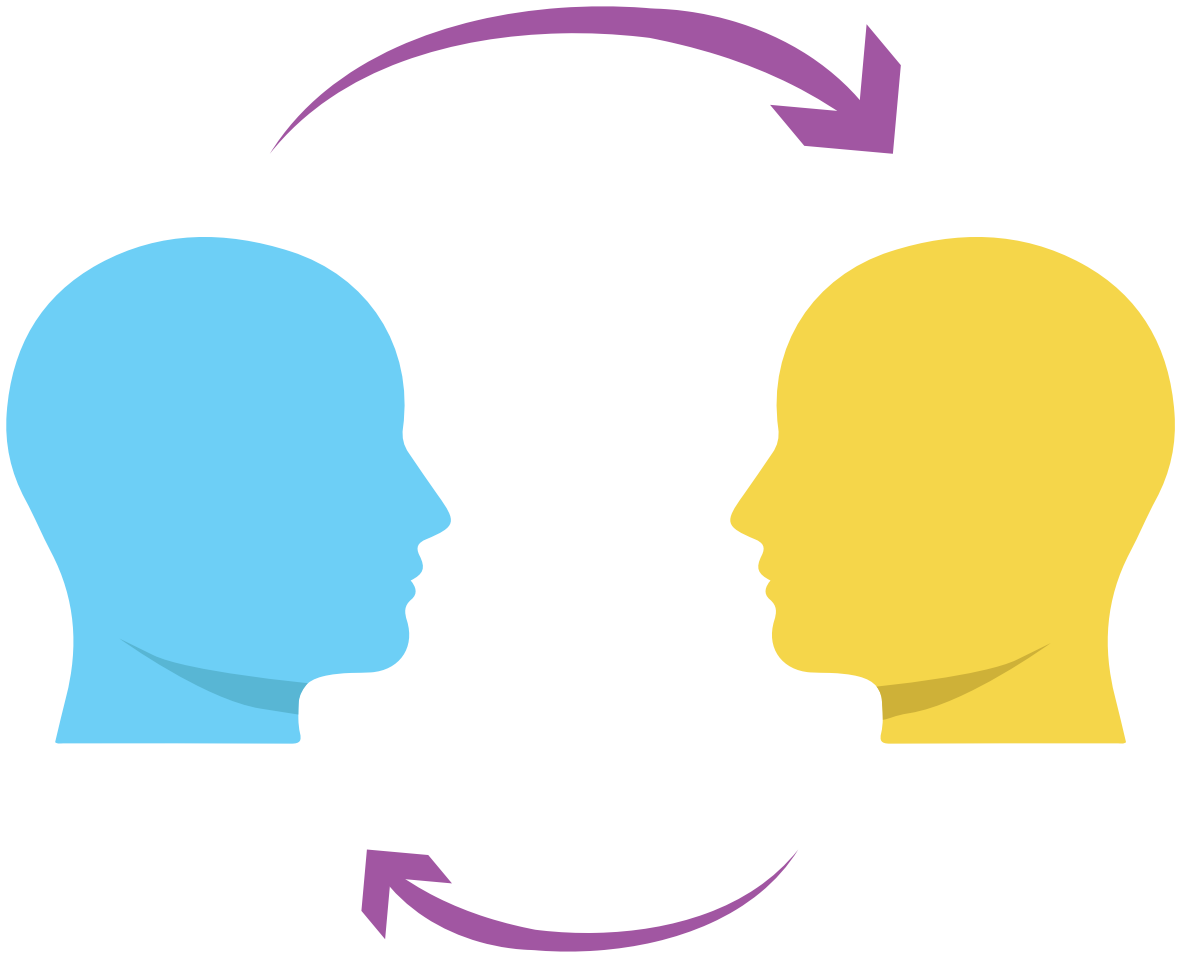
Physical Models for physical, tangible products.

Roleplay

This method allows you to go through the experience before the user goes through it. It helps you to relate to the users and build empathy for them, as well as, identify difficulties or constraints that the users might face. It is ideal for testing human or environmental interaction.

For example, if you need to conduct interviews and want to prototype the process before starting, you'll need to think of your role and how you will execute it, including introducing yourself and the issue you're researching, asking questions and gathering information etc. Roleplaying usually involves at least two, and often more people, so someone will play the role of the interviewee and react in real-time to your interviewing process. Here, roleplaying will help you test out the process and see if there are any oversights, before starting the actual interviews.

Remember: you can only prototype one side of the interaction; users (or whoever is playing the role of the user) will respond to your prompting based on their own motivations, behaviours, and capacities.

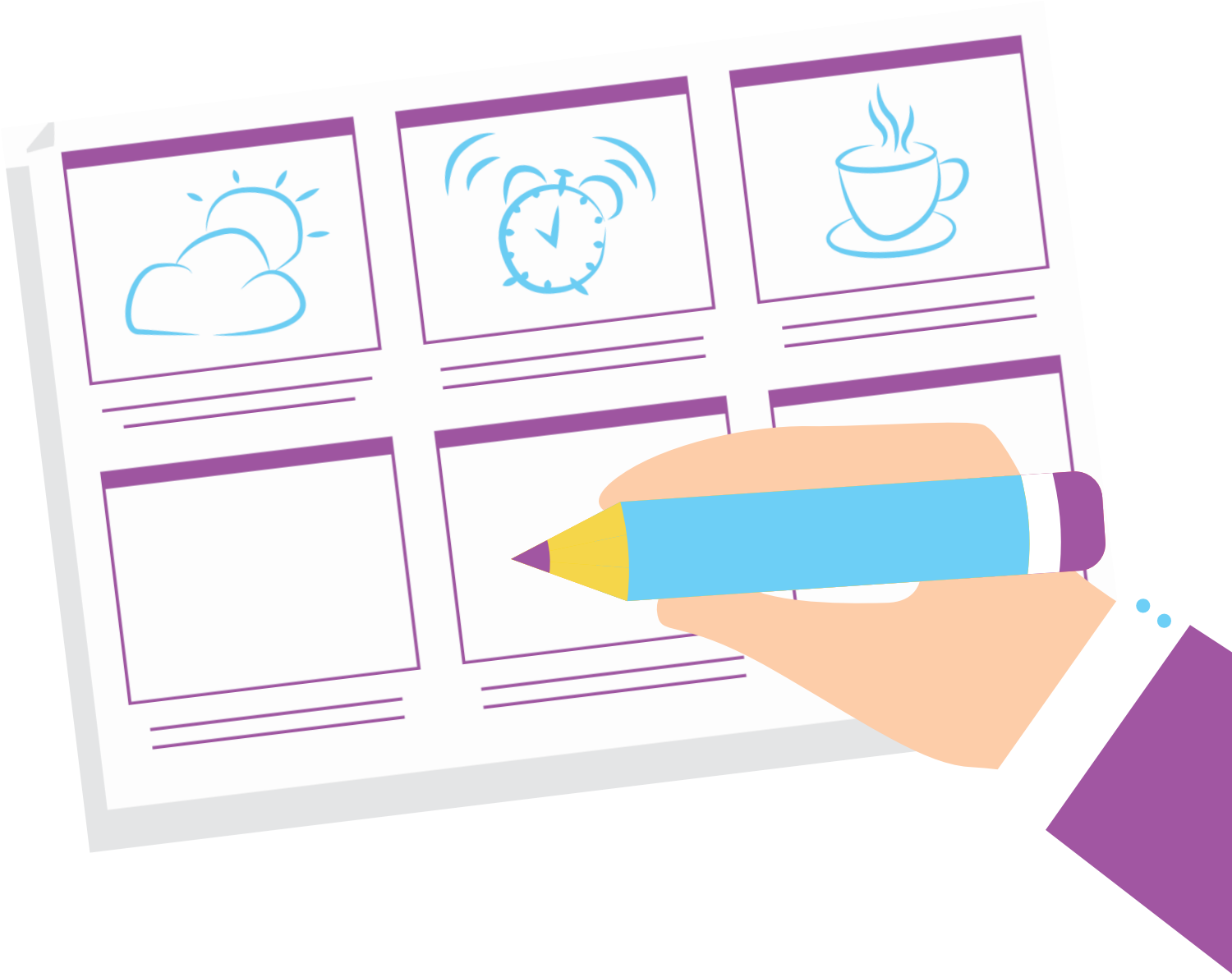


Storyboard

In general, a storyboard is a set of sequential drawings that tell a story.

This method consists of illustrating in detail the user and the context in which they use your product/service. This allows collection of more detail on who the users are, who is with them, where they are, the expressions on their face, how they handle the product. Storyboards are used to map a small, specific part of your model and should be more specific around every step of that component.

Example: If we're modelling a training, you may want to storyboard users discovering the training (to highlight how they find out, and how they decide to join), or how they are introduced to the material (to highlight who is leading the training, and what resources they'll require).
It is also good to write some short text to accompany and explain the action in each frame.

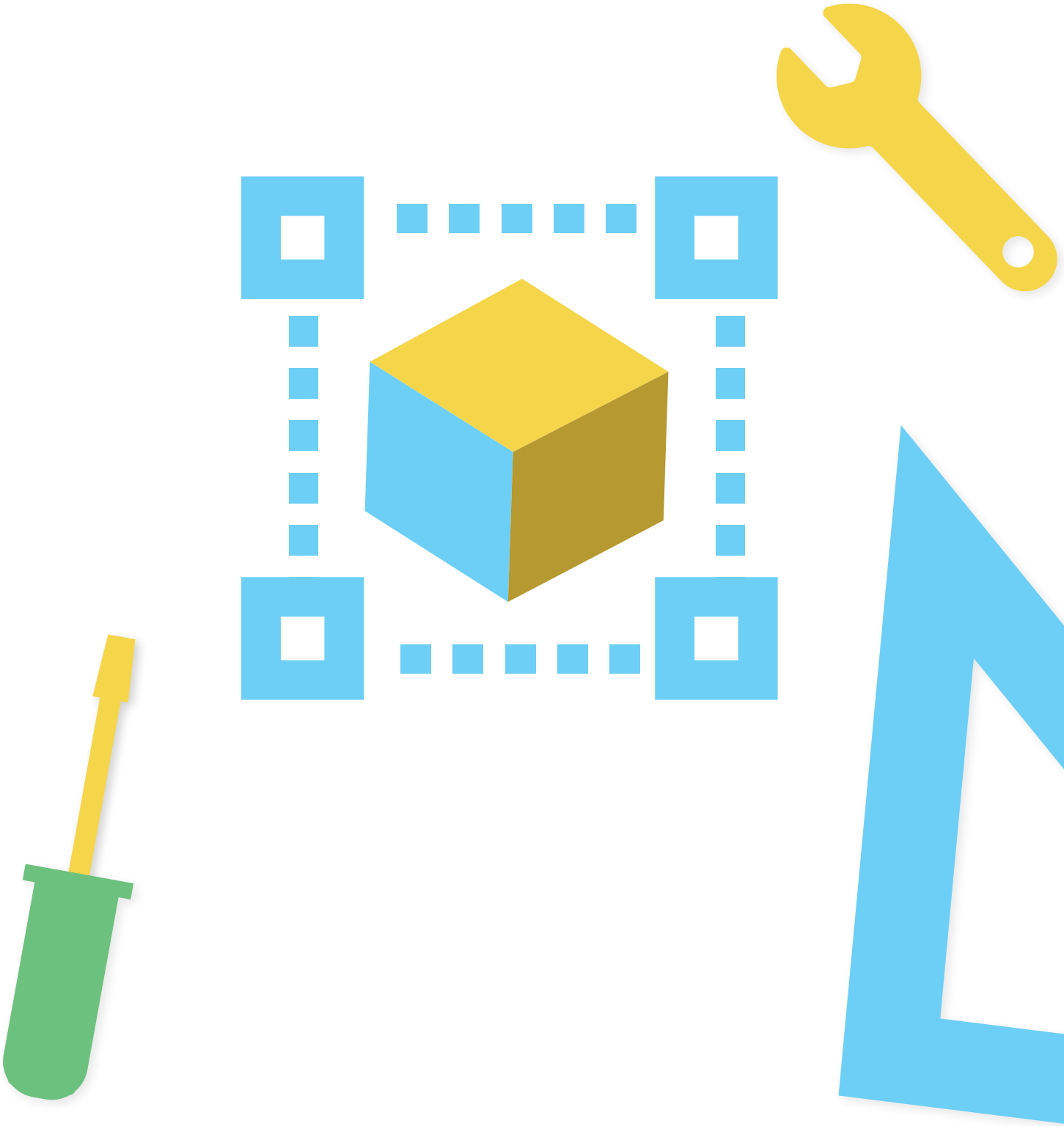


Paper / Digital Prototype

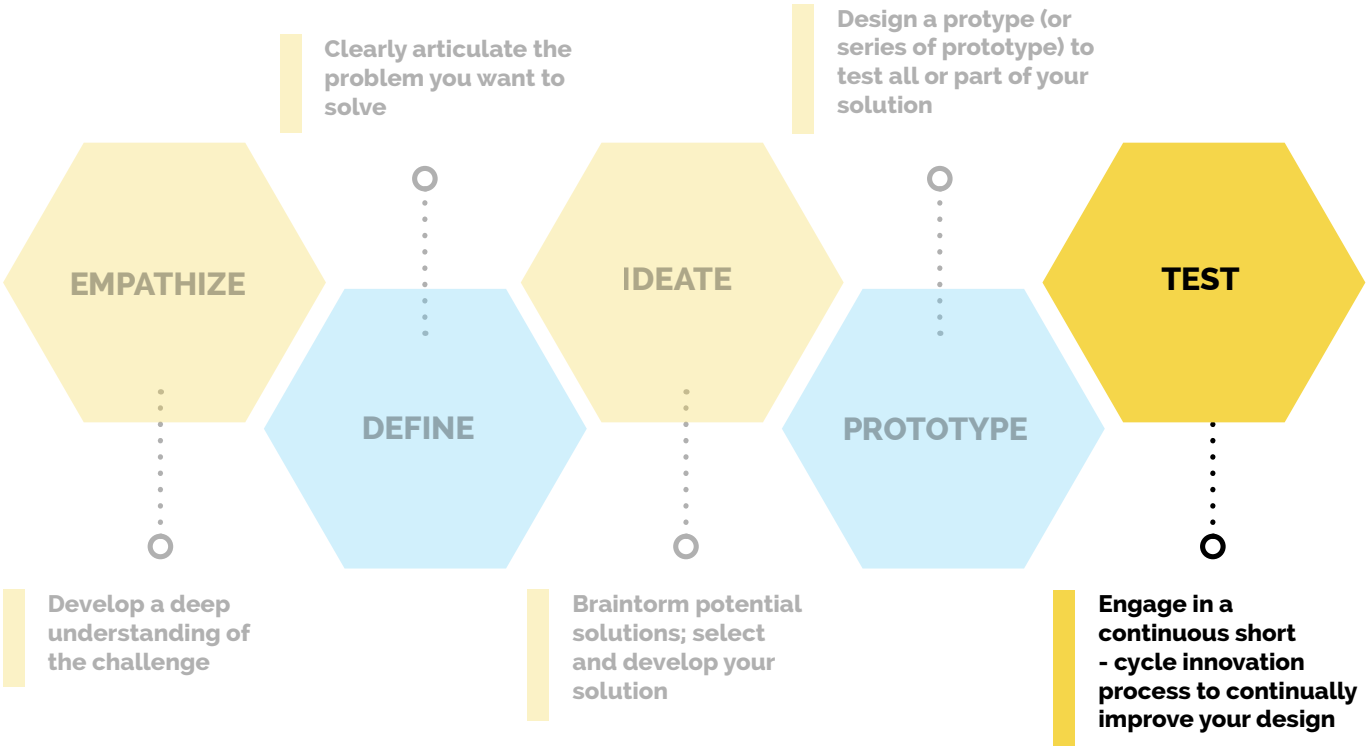
Paper prototyping and mockups are used to test designs that would otherwise require technical expertise and time to build. They are particularly appropriate for digital tools such as websites and apps or games, and can also be used to model data collection instruments (like surveys and forms), or even informational tools (like brochures or lesson materials). They're particularly useful to convey ideas without wasting time on designing and building actual working digital products and to test usability. Nowadays there are also many digital tools that can help you build a prototype, however, they still require some basic knowledge. Examples include Figma, Invision, Marvel, Adobe Xd.

Physical prototype

A physical prototype means building a product or a part of it from some material and to a certain level of fidelity. A number of materials can be used, with paper, modelling foam, clay being some examples. This method gives the opportunity to handle the product and understand its challenges, features, and specifications. The physical prototype allows you to test the form, the use and determine the functionality of the product - what is the purpose and what- is the most essential thing the product must do.



STAGE 5: TEST



The last stage of the design thinking process is testing. Everything can be tested! The feature of a product or service, the way in which the user interacts with the solution and understand what may disturb them but also what kind of unexpected benefits the solution can provide to them. You can test everything that you believe can be a threat to your idea and could increase the risks of its failure.

Moreover, test to:

- Understand whether the idea is worth implementing or not
- Further develop the idea
- Make sure the idea is the right solution and above all, it is well-implemented
- Assess whether it will be used and appreciated by users

Gathering feedback on the prototype can be done in different ways, and here we present some of the most commonly used tools.

Interview

Interviews are the most common way to gather feedback.
Defining questions that you will be asking the user and then identifying users with whom you will test the prototype is the first thing that needs to be done.

Bonus tips

- When defining questions, think about the ones that users may ask in regard to the way they use the prototype. Is there anything you worry might not work or users won't understand?
- In an ideal situation, the people with whom you will do interviews should represent your target group and share characteristics with the target user.
- Always try to observe and record the user's experience when conducting an interview.
- Try to test with as many users as possible

When you complete the interview process, spend some time to reflect, synthesize and utilize the feedback to develop new and/or refine the user requirements, and incorporate them into an improved prototype.

Observation

Observation is the best way to test your prototype as it provides the most accurate information about people, their behaviours, and their needs. If we take the definitions from the Oxford English Dictionary on observation and observe, we can say observation is a careful, conscious and purposeful effort through which the observer actively directs the attention to certain things, notices particular elements, processes the information, and determines the significance of those learnings in answering specific questions.

Interviewing is important, but sometimes the information people provide isn't always accurate or reliable. Most of the time, people don't know why they do things, what they really need, what they might do in the future. To really understand the users you have to observe them – how they see and use the prototype, and what uses they may find that haven't been perceived.

Usability Testing

Usability testing is a method for testing the functionality of a prototype that can be in the form of a website, app, or other digital product by observing the users as they attempt to complete tasks on it. It is one of the most thorough and in-depth methods for gaining user insights. It is a process in which a trained person observes the participants' behaviours and interacts with them. This method is also one of the most complex ones because of the many variables that can affect the process like the location, the observer's ability to give valuable answers, etc.

Why Usability testing?

Unicover problems
in the design

Discover Opportunities
to improve the design

Learn about users
behavior and preferences

Remember **User testing** ≠ **Usability testing**

User testing is the process of validating the demand for a product, whereas usability testing determines if end-users can or cannot do what they need to do on an existing prototype. This means user testing comes before product creation, while usability testing comes later.

To help you run usability testing we have developed a short 5 step guide that you can find in Annex 1.

With that said, we come to the end of this short guide. What we shared here is just a brief overview of the design thinking process; we encourage you to explore further. However, we believe with this knowledge you are ready to design and implement your very first innovation journey. Just keep in mind that innovating means experimenting, learning - both from our failures and successes, but most of all, daring to try something new!

If you need further support with the innovation process or have any doubts do not hesitate to contact us.

We can offer you advisory services, consultations and implementation support.

We are open to new challenges and continuously looking for new partners to deliver great results!

Check out the SmartUp website:

www.innovationlab.mk

Write an email:

info@innovationlab.mk

Check out the EduIno Platform:

eduino.gov.mk

ANNEX 1: DESIGN THINKING TOOLS AND METHODS

TOOL 1 - ACTIVITY PLAN/PROJECT TEMPLATE

ACTIVITY / PROJECT PLAN

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	**What is the problem or the opportunity you want to explore?** Describe the project in a few sentences.
PROJECT SCOPE	**What is within the scope of the project and what is outside it?** For ex: geographic area, age group, etc.
PROJECT CONSTRAINTS	**What constraints do you face?** Ex. Limited resources, timeframe, limited access to technology/internet, etc.
EXPLORATION QUESTIONS	**What key questions will you need to answer through your research?** Ex: understanding user needs, emerging technical possibilities, new product features, user, behaviour, etc.
TARGET USERS	**Who are you designing for? Characteristics, attitudes? How do they learn?** Try to be as specific as possible. Who do you need to understand? Why are they important?
RESEARCH PLAN	**How will you explore your opportunity space?** You will need a plan, including a timetable and milestones, for both primary and secondary research.
EXPECTED OUTCOMES	**What are the expected outcomes you would like to see?**
MEASURES FOR SUCCESS	**What are the expected outcomes you would like to see?**

ACTIVITY/PROJECT PLAN

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT SCOPE

PROJECT CONSTRAINTS

EXPLORATION QUESTIONS

TARGET USERS

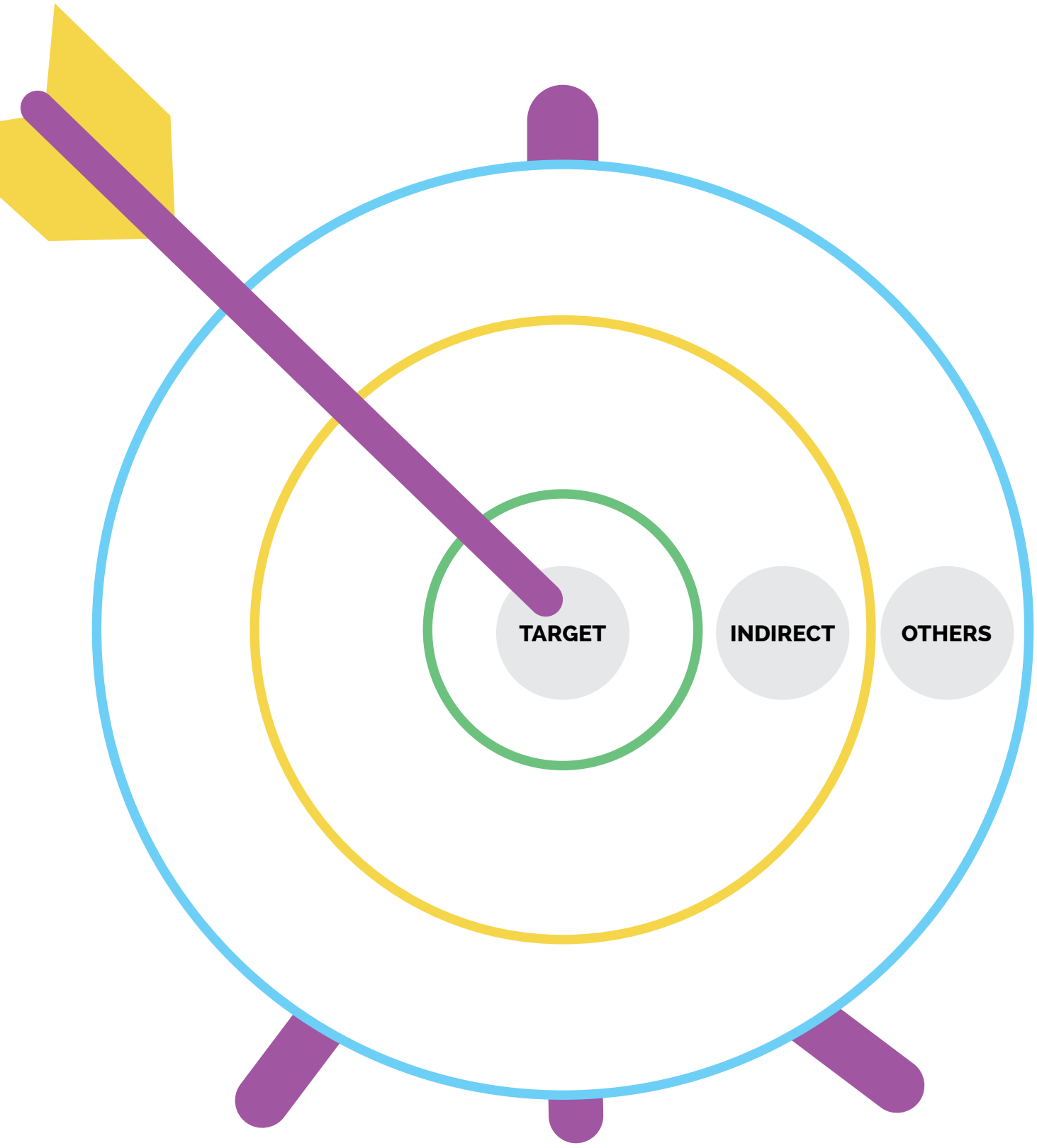
RESEARCH PLAN

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS

TOOL 2 - STAKEHOLDER MAP

The stakeholder map is a tool for visual representation of the various groups of stakeholders that have a role in the challenge you are trying to solve, and it helps you understand them. You can identify who is impacted by, associated with, or contributes to the problem.



How to use the stakeholder map?

Start by asking **who directly experiences the problem you have identified.** Try to be as specific as possible. People of a specific age? People who live in a specific area? People who belong to a specific group (like high school students, or members of a specific community)? This is your target group and you will prioritize their needs when designing the solution. Use sticky notes and lay them out in the circle.

Then think about who is **indirectly impacted by the problem.** This might include family members, peers, and other people or groups associated with your target group, that indirectly experience the effects of the problem. These are people who may be motivated to support or otherwise participate in the solution. Use sticky notes and lay them out in the circle.

And last, think about **other people, groups or institutions who are connected to the problem.** Do they contribute to the problem or maybe work to solve the problem? Be specific as there's a difference between for example "the Government" and "the Director of the School". Use sticky notes and lay them out in the circle.

When you place the stakeholders on the map, try to group them by the things they have in common. For example, you might make a group of NGOs working in your community to solve the problem, or companies in a certain area delivering a similar service. There's no right way; make groups that make sense and feel useful. You might use different colours or icons for supporters and allies, sceptics, service providers, responsible parties, or impacted groups.
In a similar vein, groups can be categorized according to their importance and influence with previously neglected groups perhaps being reconsidered once the influence they exert on others is revealed.

Once you have completed your Stakeholder Map, you are ready to move on to building a more deep understanding of your stakeholders and learning more about their needs, behaviours, and motivations.

TOOL 3 - EMPATHETIC INTERVIEW

The interview is a qualitative research method that will help you to dig deeper in understanding your stakeholders by allowing you to both observe and probe their behaviour.

The interview method naturally follows the stakeholder map analysis from which you choose the target group for interviews.
Based on the key characteristics that define each stakeholder group (like age, gender, geographic location, occupation, educational status, ethnicity, relationship with the problem), identify and recruit specific people that represent these groups and that you believe can give you a better overview of the problem you are trying to solve.

Bonus tips

Conduct at least 10 interviews; six with target group members, and four with other stakeholder groups. The more interviews you conduct the better.

Conducting a successful interview is dependent a lot on making people feel comfortable sharing insights which is why the place you chose to conduct the interview is of high importance.

The types of questions you ask also determine the success of the interview.

Tips to help you design interview questions

- Do not ask questions that will be answered YES / NO.
- Do not ask leading questions (questions that push the interviewee towards a certain answer)
- Do not ask standard and expected questions.

Make sure you only speak 20% of the time.

Try to use questions that will help you explore your assumptions like:

- Tell me about the last time you _____.
- Can you guide me through the _____ process?
- What I hear you say is _____. Is that true?

To go deeper use types of questions like:

- Tell me more about it...
- Why is that?
- How do you feel about that?

To explore new ideas with the person you are interviewing, use questions of this type:

- What would you think / how would you feel if _____?
- If you had a magic wand, what would you most like to change _____?
- What would be the realization of your dream _____?

Interviewer	Interviewee - Name/Surname/Demographic/etc.	
Date	Time	Place

QUESTION 1

QUESTION 2

QUESTION 3

QUESTION 4

QUESTION 5

QUESTION 6

TOOL 4 - PROBLEM TREE

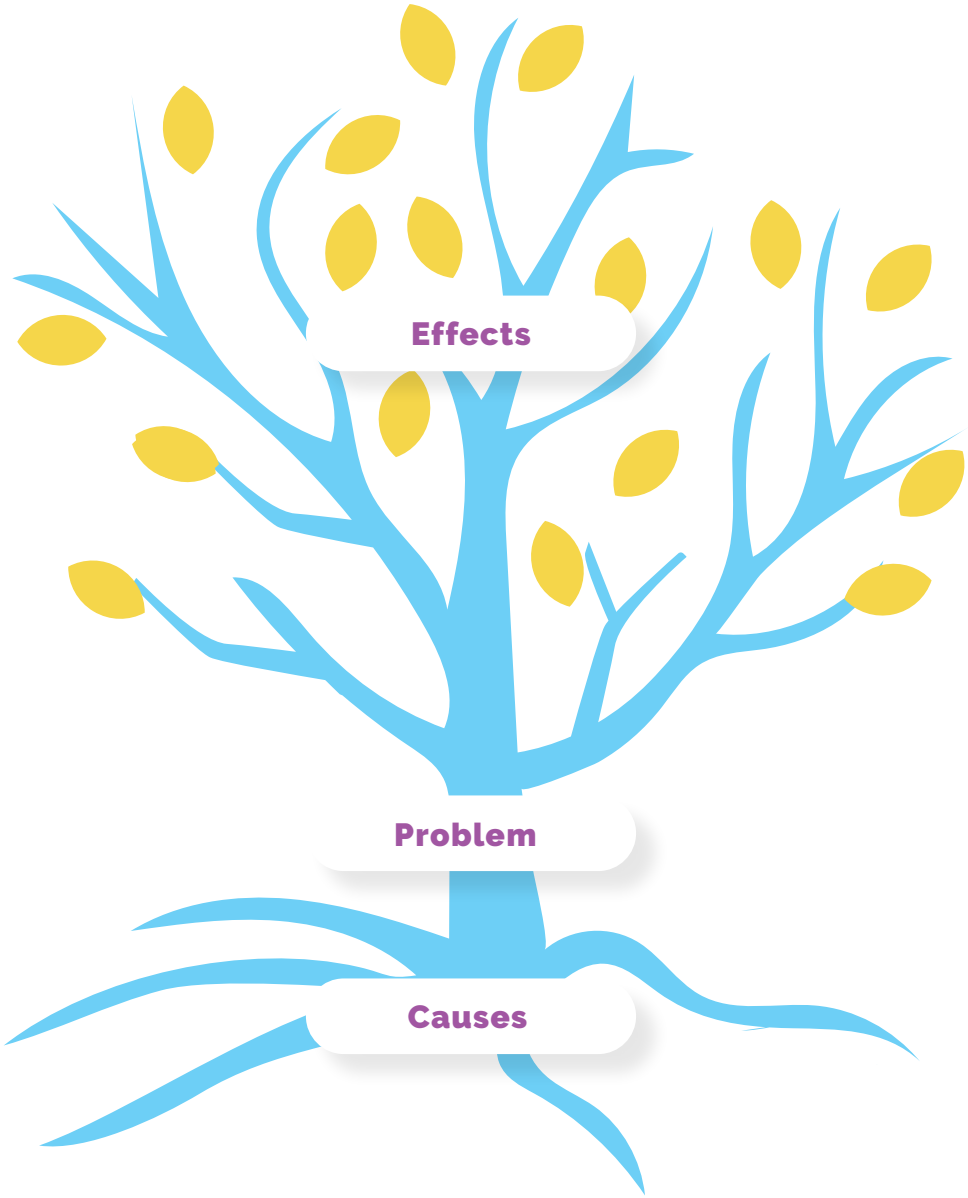
The problem tree is a method that enables the team to assess the causes and symptoms of the problem they are trying to solve. It is especially helpful to understand whether further information, evidence or resources are needed to make a strong case. A problem tree analysis is best carried out in a small focus group using flip chart paper.

How is it done?

Start with discussing the problem and reach an agreement on it. Even if you start with a broad topic, as you move through the process of discussion and get to new insights, the problem tree will help you break down the problem to a more specific one. The problem is represented by the 'trunk' of the tree and should be written there. Make sure the problem you choose describes an actual issue that everyone feels passionate about.

Next is to move on to the identification of the causes of the problem, represented by the roots, and the consequences, which become the branches. The causes and consequences should be written on post-it notes so that they can be arranged in a cause-and-effect logic on the tree.

One consequence, one branch.



Example: If the problem is Insufficient representation of the educational component in teaching, consequences might be that children won't develop character values and skills that will help them thrive and flourish, or results in domestic violence, economic disempowerment, etc.

After conducting the research, you should be able to better understand the causes and clearly explain the relationship between the cause and the problem.

This exercise or method is great to validate your assumptions about the causes of the problem, and consequently to identify new consequences.

Remember

The design process is iterative meaning you can always come back and add more causes and consequences as your project progresses, and new insights are gathered.

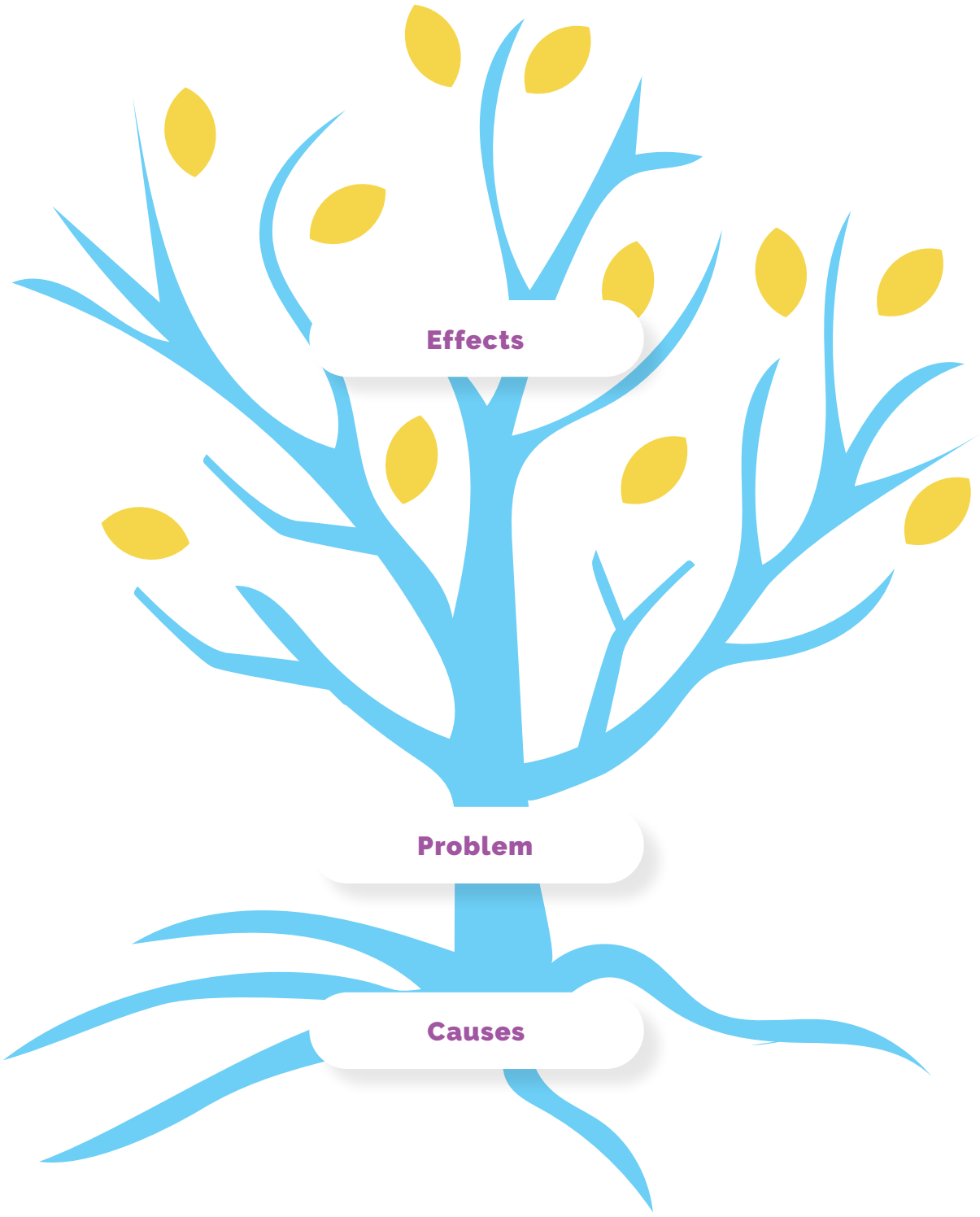
The heart of the exercise is the discussion, the debate and the dialogue that is generated. Take time to allow people to explain their feelings and reasoning and record-related ideas and points that come up on separate flip chart paper

Bonus tips

Spark the discussion by asking:

- Does this represent reality? Are the economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions to the problem considered?
- Which causes and consequences are getting better, which are getting worse and which are staying the same?
- What are the most serious consequences? Which are of most concern? What criteria are important to us in thinking about a way forward?
- Which causes are easiest / most difficult to address? What possible solutions or options might there be? Where could a policy change help address a cause or consequence, or create a solution?
- What decisions have we made, and what actions have we agreed on?

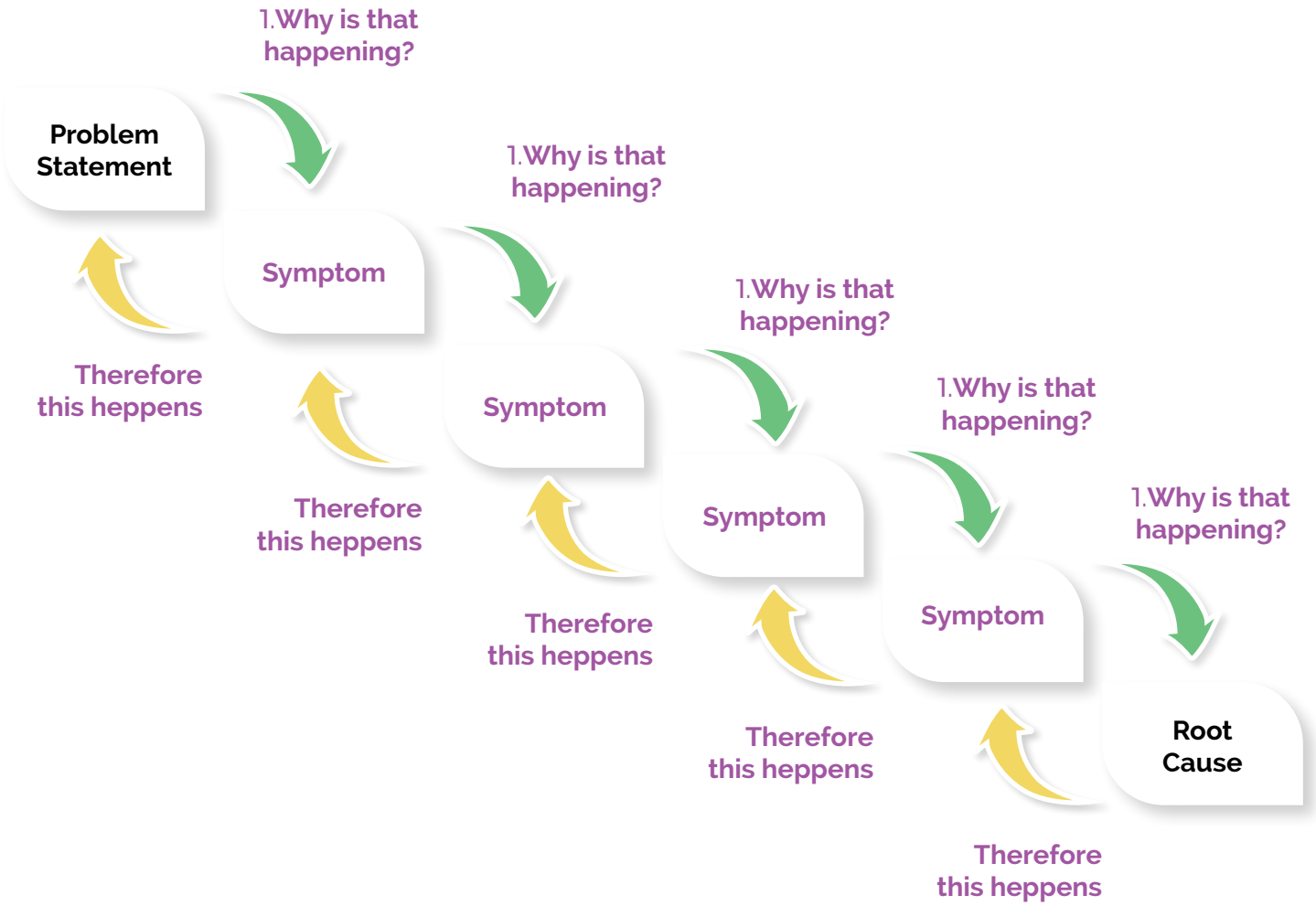
Problem Tree



TOOL 5 - THE 5 WHYS

The 5 whys are just that – a chain of questions used to dig below the visible symptoms of a user experience in order to uncover the root cause of the problem. By asking "Why?" 5 times in a row, you will get an understanding of the deeper interests/motivations of the person in regard to the issue at hand.

How is it done? The person or the team answering the questions has to produce a convincing explanation for each stage of the causal pathway.



Example:
A new teaching methodology works well in some environments and fails in others.

? Why does it fail?
Teachers encounter problems implementing it.

? Why do they encounter problems?
They do not understand the purpose and the process.

? Why don't they understand?
They lack critical knowledge about how the method helps students learn

? Why do they lack knowledge?
Teachers ignore all or most of the professional development materials made available.

? Why do they ignore the materials?
Teachers aren't provided with the necessary information on why this method is useful and the implementation doesn't work well with the programme they have to follow, making them unenthusiastic about this particular method

TOOL 6 - PERSONA

The persona profile is a method that will help you better understand your target group by building a (semi)-fictional character based on the group's shared interests. The persona may include "typical" characteristics, trends, and other patterns or present needs, motivations and frustrations of the real people in your target group. Most personas are developed from research insights gathered from interviews, stakeholders maps, observations and the like. Personas can provide a range of different perspectives on the solution and they will help you ensure that stakeholders' needs, motivations, and behaviours are reflected in the design of the solution.

To complete the persona profile, you can use your stakeholder map developed before, and determine which stakeholders should be prioritized and contribute the most in the development of a solution. Then, based on your collected insights from the research, you synthesize those findings and add them to your Personas. Depending on the complexity of the problem it is generally recommended to have at least two persona profiles targeting different stakeholders groups.

While personas can be an incredibly effective tool to keep your design process user-centred, badly constructed personas may do just the opposite. To ensure you create a quality persona profile, make sure to ask yourself the following questions:

- Who does the persona need to represent? What is the scale of the representation?
- Is the persona based on real-life data or is it based on assumptions?
- Is the persona specific enough? Is it too specific?
- Does the persona provide actionable insights for the challenge being solved?

The template provided below gives a general overview of the information a persona profile contains. Over time, you will likely find yourself in a situation where you need to add sections of information or find some irrelevant. Feel free to customize the persona profiles you create, always keeping in mind that a persona serves to guide your design process and should provide useful insights, based on real-life data.

Olivia

About

- 10 years old
- Primary Six
- Kinesthetic learner
- Loves being creative

Personality

Olivia is 10 year old girl who is always happy and bouncing about. She is confident for her age, loves being creative and performing,

Goals

Olivia has a deaf cousin, and wants to be able to communicate with her thouth always needing an adult.

Frustrations

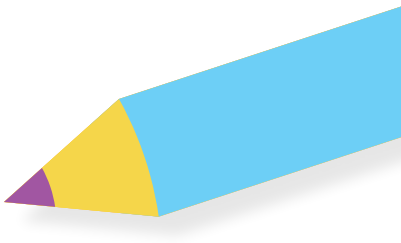
- Complicated language in apps
- BSL courses are epensive
- BSL courses aren't targeted to children

Devices

- Ipad
- Laptop
- Desktop Computer (at school)

UX needs

- Fun and engaging
- Simple language
- Colourful
- Memorable



Persona template

About

Personality

Goals

Frustrations

Devices

UX needs

TOOL 7 - USABILITY TESTING

The usability testing process starts by you answering the following question:

- Your research goals (what you want to achieve)
- Your resources (how much time and money you can invest) to decide on the method
- The audience you want to test

01 Plan the session

Planning the details of the usability testing session is the most crucial part of the entire process as the decisions you make will dictate the way you proceed and the results you get.

- ***Define the problems/area*** you want to focus on: what is the purpose of the test? What areas of your website/app would benefit the most from usability testing?
- ***Type of users you want to test:*** typically, these are representative of your user personas, or a more specific segment
- ***Questions you want to ask:*** what are the specific questions you want to ask users about your website/app? What are you trying to find out?

Next, decide on the logistical details of your usability testing sessions

- ***Location:*** Where will you do the testing? Online, in a lab, in an office?
- ***Timetable:*** when will you run the testing sessions?
- ***Moderators:*** who will run the testing sessions?
- ***Recording setup***

02 Recruiting participants

There is no specific recommendation for the number of participants that you should include in the usability testing. However, if possible, try to get at least 20 participants to get better insights.

03 Designing the task(s)

This step is about defining specific scenarios and tasks your participants will be required to complete, to guarantee clear and actionable results.

Examples

Task 1: Please give me your initial reactions to this page. Feel free to explore this page as you normally would. You can scroll around with your mouse, but please don't click on anything just yet.

Moderator:

- Please give me your initial impressions about the layout of this page and what you think of the colors, graphics, photos, etc.
- Without clicking on anything yet, if you were exploring, what would you click on first?
- What do you think is the purpose of this site?
- Who do you think this site is intended for?
- Whose Website is this?

Task 2: A few of your colleagues are interested in finding out how to be a part of the character education initiative. Using this Web site, determine whether or not opportunities exist to contribute to the initiative.

There are **7 key elements** (aspects of the website or the app) that can help you get a deeper understanding of the user experience with your prototype, and as such should lead the design of your tasks for the usability testing:

01 **Useful** – how beneficial is this to the people?

Usable – will people achieve their end objective effectively and efficiently? 02

03 **Findable** –Is the product/information easy to find? If you cannot find the content you want on a website, you're going to stop browsing it.

Credible –Do users trust your product? Will it last for a reasonable amount of time? 04

05 **Desirable** –Is the product desirable?

Accessible –Are you providing an experience that can be accessed by users with a full range of abilities? 06

07 **Valuable** –Is the product delivering value to the one it creates and to the user who uses it?

04 Running the session

When running the usability testing session, ensure moderators and others included follow a set protocol with each participant for achieving an overall standardized experience.

Bonus tips

- Ensure you conduct proper introductions and warm up to make participants feel comfortable and understand what is going to happen during the session

- Collect pre-testing data to help you understand more. Ex, if you are testing a learning website ask questions like:
  What resources do you use to find material that helps you in class/home? (Probe: Web sites, books, classes)
  How often do you use them?
  What do you like about each of the Web sites?
  What do you dislike about each of the Web sites?

- Use the scenarios you have developed to transition the participant into the first testing task
- In an ideal scenario, you should have a second person taking notes for the moderators to ensure 100% focused on the relationship with your participant
- Reserve some time at the end of the session to ask participants any follow-up questions and collect their final feedback.

05 Analyzing the insights

Finally, after you've collected all your data, analyze the results and make conclusions. Try to do this as soon as possible after testing so that the observations are fresh in your mind. As you go over the data, pull out the most serious or frequent problems that participants encountered for further examination.

At the end compile a report of your results.

A good report should:

- ***Showcase the highest priority issues***
- ***Be specific***
- ***Include evidence***
- ***Present solutions***
- ***Include positive findings***

TOOL 8 - HACKATHONS AS AN IDEATION TOOL

Organizing a hackathon

Generally speaking, the process of organizing a hackathon usually takes up to 4 months. However, the duration of the process mostly depends on the complexity, the challenge itself, the participants you want to engage, the location, and the goals you are looking to achieve.

7 step organization process

1. **Define the challenge and the target audience** (4 months before the event)
2. **Define format, develop a budget, find sponsors and organize the logistics** (3 months before the event)
3. **Identify facilitator, mentors, judges, speakers** (2 months before the event)
4. **Promote the event** (1.5 months before the event)
5. **Get ready for the event** (1 month to 1 week before)
6. **The big day** (the day of the event)
7. **Post-event** (2-3 days after the event)

01 Define the challenge and the target audience
(4 months before the event)

Decide on the challenge

This is the first and the most important step. It is the challenge that will decide the success of the hackathon. A well-defined and interesting challenge will triger interest from the target audience.

Defining the challenge means going deeper into understanding the problem, getting insights from the relevant stakeholders and transforming the problem statement as explained in the define stage from the design thinking process into a challenge question. The defined challenge should be well structured with a bit of information about the context and the problem to enable potential participants to get a better understanding of the issue at hand.

Sometimes you can go with one general challenge and several sub-challenges, it's up to you and the planned outcomes you want to see.

Identify your target audience

Who do you want to see at the event? Are you expecting students, teachers, decision-makers, designers, startups, etc.?

Spend some time to think about the skillsets and the competence of the target audience. Depending on the outcomes you expect from the hackathon you should decide how creative and technically competent your participants should be. What are you expecting to see? Development of an idea, a prototype, an app, an MVP, etc.?

Age of participants is also an important aspect and special attention should be given to cases where it is expected participation of young people aged below 18 years (approval forms from parents).

02 Define format, develop a budget, find sponsors and organize the logistics (3 months before the event)

Decide on the format

Are you doing the event onsite, online or hybrid? Will it be private or public?

Decide on the timing and date

Is your hackathon going to be for **24/36/48** hours or longer? Does your proposed date fall on public holidays or in the holiday season? Are there other events on the same date? For example, students could find weeknights tough. Weekends are most popular. Hackathons are more frequent between January and April and September and November.

Create a budget

Creating a budget is an important step that can help you show your sponsors that you know everything you need to about the revenues, costs, and how much you intend to spend on each attendee for the hackathon.

In that regard ensure your budget estimates include food, drinks, travel, facilities, IT equipment, staff, branding, promotion, the printing of materials, awards, etc.

Awards are an important part of a competition but are not always the key factor that motivates people to join. Hackathons can offer superb opportunities for participants to learn and network with peers, build new skills, meet potential employers, etc.

Depending on the goal and sponsors, you can offer valuable chances of getting into incubator or accelerator programs or internships.

What is important at this step is to ensure you calculate your award costs in the budget estimates if they are in the form of money or gifts.

Remember Always set aside an emergency fund that can cover any unplanned cost.

Identify sponsors

If you don't have sponsors already, then finding ones to support you is maybe the hardest task. Once you have your budget estimates ready, devise a plan for sponsorship.

Whom do you target and how?

- If you are targeting companies, have in mind that these types of sponsors will buy in if they see the possibility to boost the brand's visibility, recruit skilled workers or interns, etc. Companies can help by also giving you judges or mentors, if not money.
- If you are targeting international donor agencies, embassies, etc., then ensure your proposal for a hackathon complies with their priorities. Check their programs and identify opportunities for collaboration. If you have already designed a great proposal for a hackathon try to organize a meeting to pitch your idea, the benefits and the potential impacts you will achieve.

Regardless of the type of sponsor you get, make sure you make them happy so that they are likely to back more events in the future. Regular professional communication is key to long term collaboration with sponsors and partners.

Lock down a venue

If your decision is to go with an onsite hackathon, arranging a venue is a very important aspect of the organization. Depending on the number of participants make sure you have enough space to seat your participants, others, and place the equipment.

If you don't have a big budget, you can always look for places in schools or university campuses that wouldn't mind freeing up space for you.

Tips

- The venue should be easily accessible via public transport and with provisions for people with disabilities.
- Ensure fast, secure, and reliable Wi-Fi. Also, check for ethernet cables, ports, power strips or extension cords for every table, and projector and microphone for presentations.
- Book as early as you can!

Establish the code of conduct

Create a pleasant, safe, and non-discriminatory event for a diverse set of participants. Having a well-defined set of rules helps in case of any issues cropping up during the event.

Develop a checklist

Develop a checklist of all the necessary actions you need to complete! This will help you get everything checked and ensure all will go as planned.

03 Identify facilitators, mentors, judges, speakers
(2 months before the event)

Pick judges, facilitators, speakers, mentors

The facilitator is the process leader and the designer of the programme of the hackathon and all complementary working materials. They are the ones that can help you with the design of the challenge, structure the programme, and communicate between mentors, speakers and judges. They are the design thinking expert and the key person that enables the process to run smoothly and effectively.

The judges are people with the aptitude required to make knowledgeable decisions about the solutions. Leaders or experts in the field, investors, CEOs are some choices you can make. When you have your jury defined, ensure they get the winning criteria beforehand.

Speakers are not always necessary, but it is highly recommended to include speakers that can present certain topics of interest for the teams participating in the hackathon and make the event more interesting.

The mentors are people you engage voluntarily to provide confidence-building support for teams to develop their ideas. The selection of mentors is based on the theme and the challenge. If your theme is about education and technology, ensure you get mentors from both fields.

04

Promote the event
(1.5 months before the event)

One of the key factors to ensure the success of the hackathon are branding and promotion.

Recommended Communication & Branding Assets for the hackathon

- Roll-up banners and stands
- Badge/Stickers
- Certificates for mentors
- Certificates for all participants
- T-shirt designs
- Bracelets

Develop a strategy for promotion and develop an action plan

The strategy and the action plan will ensure you are consistent with and effectively align messaging between channels for promotion. Depending on the challenge and the audience you should decide what is the best way to target your audience.
Consider the different channels for promotion/outreach like:

- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube)
- Local online portals
- TV and radio
- Posters and Flyers
- Information-sharing sessions for potential participants
- Website

05 **Get ready for the event** (1 month to 1 week before)

- Choose participants/teams based on the predefined criteria. A recommendation is to develop 2 lists, one of selected participants/teams and one reserve list. This will ensure you get a backup in case someone cannot attend.
- Send information to all applicants to inform them on the outcome.
- Get the travel itinerary of attendees and arrange for cost-effective and efficient transportation. In case of travel reimbursements, inform the participants how they can claim them and when.
- 7 to 10 days before the event make sure you send reminders.
- If by this stage, you have not made a decision on the speakers, this is the time to finalize the speakers' list.
- Contact and sign on food caterers and miscellaneous vendors such as T-shirt suppliers.
- Prepare your schedule. A day or two before the hackathon go through the event with your organizing team!
- Ensure any last-minute changes in the schedule are communicated to the attendees via social media or in-person.

06 **The big day** (the day of the event)

Setting Up

- Get the venue ready (early or the night before and set up everything you possibly can)
- Check for possible power and IT issues

Kicking off the hackathon

- Get your registration/help desk ready to check participants.
- Give the participants any promotional pamphlets you need to, name tags, login credentials.
- Welcome attendees with a formal/informal presentation going over the hackathon objectives, the schedule, and the rules.
- Introduce the organizers, volunteers, speakers, mentors and teams.
- Remember to update social media to help maintain the exciting atmosphere.
- Be sure to take questions if any.

Keeping things going

- Communicate timelines and rules for every step of the process.
- Make sure mentors are available to all the participants.
- Ensure you get good photos/videos and use them for promotion during and after the event.
- Make sure food is provided to all and drinks are regularly refilled.

Final day

- Prepare teams for the pitch
- Prepare the room for the pitching
- Prepare a place for the jury to get together and make a decision
- Ensure the awards /certificates are ready
- Photography and video shooting is ready
- Close the event by thanking all for making the event a success – participants, mentors, speakers, organizing team, jury, organizing team, sponsors and all others included.
- Open the cocktail for networking if planned

Step 6: Post-event

- Send thank you emails to all participants, sponsors, hosts, speakers, judges, mentors, data providers, press, and volunteers. For the winning teams ensure the email includes information on the next steps in case they continue the process further like incubation programmes, etc.
- Follow-up blogs, tweets, emails, and demo videos or presentations are great after-event tools to maintain the "connect."

TOOL 9 - ASSESSING PARTNERSHIP READINESS

To help you understand your readiness to enter into a partnership we have chosen a tool from the Partnership Building Guide: Practical Tools to Help You Create, Strengthen, Assess and Manage Your Partnership or Alliance More Productively [2] that we believe will be of great value for you and your organization.

How to do it?

Assess each question with a scale from 1 to 4
and when you finish total up your points.

1 = Definitely not able/willing to do this
2 = Possibly, but would seriously stretch our capacities
3 = We could do this sufficiently
4 = Definitely able and willing to do this quite well

The scores reflect the degree of confidence in your readiness.

Lower scores (10 to 20)
indicate a real concern, perhaps the partnership is not right for you now.

Middle scores (20 to 30)
say you have some concerns, but with special attention
devoted to what concerns you most, you think you should proceed.

Higher scores (30 to 40)
indicate that this is a very good partnering opportunity for you.

[2] https://www.who.int/workforcealliance/knowledge/toolkit/35.pdf

Score	Question
	1. Is it clear how joining this partnership will facilitate the achievement of our strategic goal(s)?
	2. Does my organization have the resources—financial, people and technology—needed to contribute our portion of the partnership being considered?
	3. Can we honestly say these resources can be accessed when required? (Meaning they have not already been committed to several efforts and are seriously overloaded.)
	4. Are we willing and able to work in collaboration and mutuality with the other organizations that comprise this partnership?
	5. Have we worked with any of these other organizations before and was that a positive experience?
	6. Are we willing and able to share control and participate in shared decision making with these particular organizations?
	7. Are we willing and able to be flexible about how things get done and not be insistent that it be done our way, and will this meet our expectations of quality work?
	8. Have we in the past and are we now able to work with our less-resourced partners with mutual respect, avoiding any sense of domination and superiority? Would these organizations give us a high rating in this regard?
	9. Is there support for this project within our organization, and would this partnership become a valuable part of our organization's portfolio?
	10. Can we commit to devoting the leadership and management time required of us in this partnership effort?
	11. Is this project something we (the organization) want to work on past the project closure?

TOOL 10 - IDENTIFYING PROMISING PARTNERS

To help you identify promising partners we have chosen a tool from the Partnership Building Guide: Practical Tools to Help You Create, Strengthen, Assess and Manage Your Partnership or Alliance More Productively that we believe will be of great value for you and your organization.

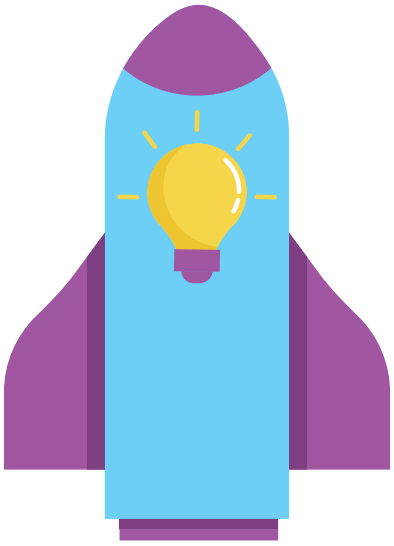
How to do it?

Check where your potential candidates have the necessary criteria for partnering below. If you can't check the criteria below, what data do you still need that could be helpful in your decision-making process?

Question	Candidate 1	Candidate 2	Candidate 3
Partner Motivation Is it clear how joining this partnership will facilitate the achievement of our strategic goal(s)?			
Partner Expertise This partnership member's expertise does not significantly overlap with other members' areas of proficiency, thereby ensuring complementarity rather than competition between partners.			
Willingness to Collaborate This partner congruently articulates the willingness to collaborate and share control while working toward the mutual benefit of all partners. They have demonstrated the behaviours of true collaboration—active listening, open and transparent sharing of information and engaging in genuine respectful dialogue in meetings leading to partnering.			
Partnering Culture This partnership member brings an organizational culture and support system that harmonizes with other partnership members' home cultures. Demonstrating a culture that promotes harmony, patience, collaborative practices and flexible decision-making and transparency will be important. Also, this prospective partnership member or partner has the technical support to enable partnering—IT systems and capabilities, as well as necessary software and hardware to team virtually, will be important.			
Background Check This partner has a good record; after reading annual reports, looking at their website, going on a fact-finding mission and/or checking the public record, you can establish they have the resources to invest that they have claimed, and have historically shown themselves to be fiscally responsible.			
Reference Check This partnership member is in good standing with the rest of the community in regards to standards and practices of integrity and collaboration. You have contacted past partners and queried the candidate's ability to partner as well as verified self-ascribed strengths and weaknesses.			
Senior Management Support This partner has the support of its senior management, and participating in this new partnership will receive the proper attention required.			
Total for Each Candidate			

Candidate A:
‰ Areas of Strength:
‰ Areas of Concern:
‰ Areas for More Data Gathering:

Candidate B:
‰ Areas of Strength:
‰ Areas of Concern:
‰ Areas for More Data Gathering:



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