

From Humanist Design Perspectives to Human-Centered Design:
A Canadian Public Service Organisation Co-Design Strategy

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A Thesis
in the Department of
Fine Arts

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Design

at Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

May, 2025

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

From Humanistic Design Perspectives to Human-Centered Design: A Canadian Public Service Organisation Co-Design Strategy

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This Master's Degree Research-Creation project explores the development of a co-design strategy informed by humanist design principles and human-centered design approaches. Through its research-creation process and outcomes, this study aimed to humanise and democratise bureaucracy by integrating a broader range of approaches and drawing on Julien Hébert's philosophy as a foundation for socially engaged design practice that fosters trust. In doing so, this research aims to investigate how such a co-design strategy can identify opportunities and challenges for embedding design in public organisations for the socio-cultural benefit of Canadian citizens and public servants alike. Utilising Metro North Health's Co-Design Process, the project established a structured co-design lookbook for federal partners, stakeholders, and the Canadian public, ensuring adaptability for broader applications.

A literature review examined mid-century humanist design perspectives through the work of Richard Buckminster Fuller, Victor Papanek, Jane Jacobs, Gui Bonsiepe, and Julien Hébert. These designers advocated for the socio-cultural significance of design and the integration of participatory methodologies. Case study research on contemporary human-centered design initiatives further demonstrated how co-design fosters systemic change and sustainable practices. Insights from this analysis guided the development of a strategy emphasising accessibility, empathy, and participation as core principles for integrating human-centered design into public service functions and multidisciplinary teams.

The strategy was developed through a months-long co-design process, including three collaborative sessions with public servants. This iterative approach identified key challenges such as siloed operations and the need for design-driven methodologies in public service. The final design outputs—a logomark, landing page, lookbook, and systems map—were evaluated and refined based on participant feedback. Drawing from Julien Hébert's humanist design philosophy, the proposed strategy offers an adaptable model applicable across various public service functions, reinforcing design's role as a driver of positive social change.

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by thanking my supervisor, Dr. Martin Racine. I first encountered his work before I had even considered pursuing graduate studies, and from that moment, I knew I wanted to work with him. Being able to do so has been one of the most rewarding aspects of this entire process. I am especially grateful for his research on Julien Hébert, which helped provide the philosophical foundation and inspiration for my own work.

I would also like to thank Kevin Yuen-Kit Lo and Christopher Moore for their feedback, generous engagement, and expertise. Though they joined the project in its later stages, their contributions had a meaningful impact—not only on the development of this thesis, but also on how I think about design and its role in education and practice.

Finally, I owe a heartfelt thank you to the participants in this study, who have chosen to remain anonymous. They are at the core of this project. It was a privilege to collaborate with them over the past few months, and I will always value the time we spent working together. Despite the unexpected conclusion to our collaboration, the conversations we shared and the experiences we built together remain deeply important to me. This thesis would not exist without their voices, and I hope it reflects their contributions with care.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Initial Motivation	1
1.1 Introduction to the Research Creation Project	1
1.2 Research Topics	1
1.3 Research Paradigm	1
1.4 Motivations	2
1.5 Overall Project and Strategy	2
Chapter 2: Understanding the Humanist Thinkers in Design History	4
2.1 A Brief Investigation on Historically Globalising Visions of Change	4
2.2 Richard Buckminster Fuller	4
2.3 Victor Papanek	5
2.4 Jane Jacobs	6
2.5 Gui Bonsiepe	7
2.6 Julien Hébert	9
2.7 Where Will the World be in 2075?	10
Chapter 3: Understanding Human-Centred Co-Design Initiatives as Agents of Social Change	12
3.1 An Investigation on Contemporary Cases of Localised Visions of Change	12
3.2 A Brief History of Participatory Design	12
3.3 From Participatory Design to Co-Design	13
3.4 Challenges in Public Service Design	14
3.5 Case A: Co-Designing with Artists	16
3.6 Case B: Co-Designing with Childcare Providers	16
3.7 Case C: Co-Designing with Colleagues	17
3.8 Benefits and Opportunities of Co-Design in Public Service	17
3.9 Conclusion	18
Chapter 4: Rationale for a Co-Design Strategy	19
4.1 Briefing the Context and Measures of a Public Service Organisation Co-Design Strategy	19
4.2 About Impact Canada	19
4.3 Positioning and Problem Statement	20
4.4 Drivers	20
4.5 Core Principles	20
4.6 Vision and Desired Outcome	21
4.7 Project Objectives	21
4.8 Methodology	22
4.9 Implementation	23
4.10 Evaluation	23
4.11 Contributions and Conclusion	23
Chapter 5: Co-Design Exercise	24
5.1 Research findings on co-designing within a public service organisation	24
5.2 Step 1: Engage and Align	24
5.3 Step 2: Explore and Connect & Step 3: Imagine and Decide	24
5.3.1 Co-Design Session 1	24
5.3.2 Co-Design Session 2	26

5.4 Step 4: Create and Test	27
5.4.1 Precedents	28
5.4.2 Sketching, Illustrating, Wireframing, Typesetting, and Systems Mapping	29
5.5 Step 5: Co-implement and co-evaluate	29
5.5.1 Co-Design Session 3	29
5.5.2 Logomark Evaluations	30
5.5.3 Landing Page Wireframe Evaluations	30
5.5.4 Lookbook Evaluations	31
5.6 Concept Refinements	31
Chapter 6: Final Design of a Co-Design Deliverables	42
6.1 Final Design Outputs	42
6.2 Impact Canada Studio Mark	42
6.3 Impact Canada Studio Landing Page	42
6.4 Impact Canada Studio Lookbook	43
6.5 Impact Canada Studio Systems Map	44
6.6 Practical Qualities	45
6.7 Formal Qualities	45
Chapter 7: Step 6: Share and Connect (and Reflect)	52
7.1 Research analysis and reflection on co-designing within a public service organisation	52
7.2 Strengths	52
7.3 Limitations	53
7.4 Opportunities	54
7.5 Threats	55
Chapter 8: Conclusion	57
8.1 Future Design Developments	58
8.1.1 Bilingualism	58
8.1.2 Expansion to other Public Service Organisations	58
8.1.3 Capacity Building	59
8.1. Policy and Organisational Change	59
Bibliography	60
Appendices	64
Appendix A: Co-Design Sessions Summary Briefs	64
Appendix B: Co-Design Session 1 Introductory Presentation	67
Appendix C: Co-Design Sessions Transcriptions	68
Co-Design Session 1	68
Co-Design Session 2	89
Co-Design Session 3	97
Appendix D: Logomark Evaluations	103

List of Figures

Figure 1 Experience Bank	25
Figure 2 Mind-Mapping and Re-Mapping	26
Figure 3 Miro Board	27
Figure 4 Logomark Sketches	34
Figure 5 Logomark Comprehensives Round 1	35
Figure 6 Logomark Comprehensives Round 2	35
Figure 7 Logomark Comprehensives Round 3	35
Figure 8 Landing Page Wireframes Round 1	36
Figure 9 Landing Page Wireframes Round 2	36
Figure 10 Landing Page Wireframes Round 3	37
Figure 11 Landing Page Wireframes Round 4	37
Figure 12 Lookbook Round 1	38
Figure 13 Lookbook Round 2	39
Figure 14 System Map Round 1	40
Figure 15 System Map Round 2	40
Figure 16 System Map Round 3	41
Figure 17 System Map Round 4	41
Figure 18 Studio Mark	46
Figure 19 Landing Page	47
Figure 20 Lookbook Print	48
Figure 21 Lookbook Digital	49
Figure 22 Lookbook Digital	49
Figure 23 Systems Map	50

Chapter 1: Initial Motivation

1.1 Introduction to the Research Creation Project

My research interests are framed by design humanism and history, with an emphasis on Julien Hébert's design philosophy. This research aims to cultivate the Canadian humanist design discourse and promote human-centred design approaches as a tool for positive social action in public service communications. Through the specific socio-political lens of Julien Hébert (1917-1994), a mid-century Québécois industrial designer, I frame design as a humanistic practice. The humanistic research lens enables design as a creative tool for change to have a significant socio-cultural role in enabling meaningful and positive social action in Canadian public service. As a design output to my research, I propose a co-design strategy in the form of a cohesive branded website, lookbook, and systems map addressing the potential of human-centred approaches in public service organisations. The human-centred design approach aims to engage Canadian public service organisations to recognize their values, practices, and conditions for supporting (or impeding) change and positive social action.

The main objective of this research is to propose and validate a co-design strategy for Canadian public organisational structures. Co-design is a human-centred design approach that actively engages all stakeholders in the design process to produce products, services, or policies that meet their needs (Digital Victoria, 2020). In the context of this research, the co-design model would be exercised to a participant group of individuals interested in contributing to social action in federal public service. Ultimately, the co-design exercise will establish a co-design lookbook to be utilised by Canadian public servants and their partners. Through the research-creation design output of a lookbook, the co-design strategy aims to implement human-centred design approaches for future strategic planning. In doing so, this research aims to investigate how such a co-design strategy can identify opportunities and challenges for embedding design in public organisations for the socio-cultural benefit of Canadian citizens and public servants alike.

1.2 Research Topics

The focus of my research is the study of design as an agent of social change. Previous research conducted by Martin Racine in his monograph *Julien Hébert, fondateur du design moderne au Québec* (2016) acts as a foundation to the historical and practical analysis of my research (Racine, 2016). Through the lens of this design history, specifically in the context of Québec mid-century social movements and ideologies, I frame design as a humanistic practice.

Julien Hébert's (1917-1994) design and pedagogical philosophy leads me to ask: How can humanistic design practices, through the mid-century philosophy of Julien Hébert, act as a model to outline co-design methods in Canadian public service organisations? Drawing from my experience as a designer in public service, I aim to explore the possibilities of Julien Hébert's design philosophy in the framework of contemporary Canadian public service communications.

1.3 Research Paradigm

The worldview of humanistic design determines the main topic of my research inquiry, its overall research design and methodology. This paradigm is influenced by Julien Hébert's humanist philosophy, which is grounded in the notions that (1) design is not a profession but an attitude, (2) the designer's responsibility lies not only at the product level but at the social, economic and cultural context of current society, (3) and that design represents a merger of art and philosophy

acting as a means for social change toward products and services that enable a higher standard of living for citizens, thus enhancing their cultural environment. (Racine, 2016).

Within the humanistic design paradigm, designers should not work uniquely on the private profits of industry. According to Martin Racine and Alain Findeli in their article *Julien Hébert and the Emergence of Industrial Design in Canada*, designers should actively participate in social non-profits and community groups to expand their disposition in the social economy (Racine & Findeli, 2003). Hébert was aware and critical of the way industry dehumanised the spirit of initiative. Hébert's notion of creativity within the industry, the management of local needs and design emergence fuel this study.

1.4 Motivations

The grounding for this research is based on my practice as a designer in public service at Impact Canada, a unit within the Privy Council Office of Canada. Impact Canada aims to help federal government departments accelerate the adoption of innovative funding approaches to deliver meaningful results to Canadians (Impact Canada, 2017). This study will propose a new approach to tackling complex societal challenges, going beyond prescribed top-down solutions. The multifaceted and complex nature of societal issues demands a sophisticated approach that extends beyond analytical modalities and conventional problem-solving methods. However, public service conventions on prescriptive solutions seldom include end users in the process, despite their lived experiences and insights being crucial to developing effective and sustainable solutions. Too often, policies and programs are designed without meaningful engagement from those who will be most affected, leading to solutions that may not fully address their needs or realities. This research aims to highlight the importance of integrating diverse perspectives to create more impactful public services.

An alternative approach to the traditional top-down approach, toward more collaborative ventures, and positive social action in public service, is human-centred design (HCD). Championed by Herbert Simon (1916-2001) and leveraged by design firm IDEO, human-centred design is a methodology to creative problem-solving rooted in social change and action by placing people at the centre of the design process (IDEO, 2008). An initiative led in Australia's Queensland, Metro North Health's Co-Design Process, inspired by collaborative design principles, developed a new approach to public health service improvement through a structured human-centered methodology (Metro North Health, 2022). The process serves as a framework for staff, consumers, community members, researchers, and designers, bringing together best practices and strategies for integrating co-design into service development. Its aim is to cultivate meaningful partnerships to develop services that are more responsive and inclusive in addressing the diverse needs of those they serve.

Drawing inspiration from Metro North Health's Co-Design approach—which serves as a foundation and major influence for this research—I propose a co-design strategy aimed at better equipping Canadian public servants to address social challenges in their service work. As a commitment to humanising bureaucracy, the proposed strategy will break down the steps and procedures in enacting co-design within Impact Canada. Illustrating humanistic perspectives through a human-centred approach, the strategy will act as a tool to inform public servants, enabling them to refine and advance future operations to better serve citizen needs.

1.5 Overall Project and Strategy

To successfully complete this project and answer its research question, a deep understanding of the context is crucial. Therefore, initial effort consisted of research activities such as a literature review,

case study research, and a co-design exercise process, in order to have a clear understanding of humanist design thinking, co-design initiatives as agents of social change, and designing within public service organisations.

Based upon the outcome of the research activities, a design rationale detailing the design criteria for the project was drafted. A human-centered design methodology was implemented based on the literature review and case study research. The co-design process followed Metro North Health's six-step Co-Design Process. Step 1: Engage and Align involved an informal introduction to human-centered design methodologies within the public service unit, setting the stage for the co-design exercise over several months. Step 2: Explore and Connect and Step 3: Imagine and Decide focused on identifying co-design opportunities and generating concepts. In Step 4: Create and Test, a series of prototypes were developed for key design deliverables, including a logomark, a landing page, a lookbook, and a systems map. Step 5: Co-Implement and Co-Evaluate involved evaluating these concepts against the strategy's core goals of accessibility, empathy, and participation. Feedback from the co-design team was collected, analyzed, and applied to refine the design deliverables. The final step ensured that the refined concepts met the needs of the co-design team and enhanced the accessibility of services within the Studio team. The final design deliverables, shaped by iterative feedback and aligned with the co-design strategy's objectives, were confirmed by the co-design team as effectively addressing their needs at the time.

This research aims to represent co-design in public service through adaptable methods that support collaborative design wherever it takes place. Rather than being confined to a fixed space or a rigid set of methods, co-design thrives in dynamic, real-world environments where participants can engage directly with the challenges they seek to address. These methods should be flexible enough to accommodate diverse perspectives, evolving needs, and varying levels of expertise, ensuring that all participants can actively contribute to the design process. Furthermore, adaptable co-design methods empower participants to take ownership of the process, enabling them to shape solutions that are contextually relevant and sustainable. By moving beyond traditional, top-down operational models, co-design embraces a collaborative ethos that prioritizes accessibility, participation, and empathy—essential elements for driving positive change in public service.

Chapter 2: Understanding the Humanist Thinkers in Design History

2.1 A Brief Investigation on Historically Globalising Visions of Change

In our current polarized socio-political environment, the theme of public trust in government becomes crucial as societies navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by a world that is constantly in flux. The public's trust in government intertwines with how effectively civic organizations address the impacts of external stressors on socio-cultural unity and enhancement. Design thinking and strategy can play a pivotal role in developing new solutions and frameworks that resonate with Canada's diverse cultures and communities—synthesizing the past with the present for a more socio-culturally conscious future.

This evolving environment of external stressors and information consumption influence our social exchanges, offering new opportunities for change and innovation. Thoughtful design practices, reflecting and representing the respective peoples and places in which it operates, can contribute to building trust among communities and complex systems. This involves moving away from perpetuating a predominantly top-down approach to problem-solving and dispersing itself, acknowledging and valuing diverse perspectives.

Where identities, norms, values, and traditions are continuously questioned, the public sector has a key role in improving its own trustworthiness by developing sustainable approaches toward innovation and change. Design practices of social consciousness and awareness can offer confident and resilient culturally enhancing solutions to public trust, capable of withstanding the challenges posed by social polarity while preserving the rich tapestry of history, tradition, and identity. In this way, design becomes an anchor in fostering a future that reflects and represents our respective citizens.

In the effort to modernize and humanize my public service agency, Impact Canada (IIU) within the Canadian Privy Council Office (PCO), I draw from the work of five mid-century humanist designers and thinkers. Addressing contemporary issues in a modest but meaningful way, this research endeavor seeks to revive and circulate key texts in design thinking, offering them as provocations and aids to critical thought. These designers present counterviews that challenge the status-quo systems, exploring new possibilities and anticipating necessary paradigm shifts in design thinking and practice. They provide points of view, ideas, and models of practice that not only help rethink and reposition design but also highlight its essential role in shaping our actions and organizational structures. By demonstrating the irreplaceable critical and affirmative ways of thinking inherent in humanist design, these radical thinkers and their philosophies guide us toward socially conscious and positive design practices.

2.2 Richard Buckminster Fuller

Richard Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983) had always concerned himself with the future. Being one of the most prolific design polymaths of the 20th century, Fuller's many writings, works, and designs have served as reference points and influence on many others particularly in sustainable design of the 1960s and 70s (Wahl, 2006). Addressing sustainability in design for Fuller meant meeting present needs without compromising the future (Fuller, 1957). Fuller's ideas, practices, and designs address the industrialization and modernization of the time through an environmental consciousness and awareness that remains relevant today.

Active from the 1920s to 1980s, Fuller engaged in disciplines including art, poetry, technology, manufacturing, government, and education (Massey, 2012). He aimed to bridge science and humanities through universal sustainable designs. His concept of "comprehensive anticipatory design

science” reflected his systems-thinking approach, emphasizing empirical verification, innovation, and planning (Fuller, 1957). This methodology integrates architecture, engineering, and industrial design, offering a coherent framework that merges ethics, aesthetics, and performance.

Fuller saw design as an active process shaping reality (Fuller, 1981). He believed design must incorporate subjective experiences and problem-solving, helping predict past behaviors to inform the future. His philosophy emphasized reorganizing the world sustainably, rooted in values and ethics. Fuller identified fundamental pillars: acknowledging mystery and a higher order, defining the Universe, and understanding humanity’s cosmic role (Fuller, 1967). He argued that universal principles guide design, enabling optimized solutions to complex societal issues (Edmondson, 1987).

Fuller viewed the Universe as in constant flux, requiring design to embrace purposeful ordering of components (Fuller, 1967). Design, for Fuller, was both conceptual and action-driven, forming a critical part of human experience (Edmondson, 1987). He saw design as extending beyond objects to entire systems, emphasizing that all human activity manifests design processes. Experience, at various levels—personal, evolutionary, psycho-cultural, and cosmic—links individual cases to the broader whole (Fuller, 1963).

A key realization of Fuller’s vision was the Geodesic Dome. Seeking to improve human shelter, he utilized modern technology to create lightweight, efficient, and affordable housing (Buckminster Fuller Institute, 2022). By prioritizing tension over compression, his domes required fewer materials while maximizing strength and energy efficiency. Amidst the 1940s U.S. housing crisis, Fuller leveraged wartime technology to develop mobile, cost-effective structures (Dalvesco, 2017). His domes became iconic, notably the 1967 Montreal World’s Fair dome, designed with Shoji Sadao (McAttee et al., 2017).

Fuller’s “loyalty to humanity” shaped his belief that human survival depended on new societal frameworks (Fuller, 1981). He argued that political, religious, and economic structures were inadequate, instead championing individual wisdom, intuition, and integrity. This design philosophy extends to organizational structures, emphasizing the integration of individual integrity into holistic systems and environments. By balancing rationality and creativity through trust and autonomy, Fuller’s approach provides a foundational framework for developing innovative solutions (Fuller, 1962).

In closing, Fuller’s philosophy on design and his design science approach offers a framework for addressing design issues at various scales. Incorporating its humanist purpose with a system thinking perspective acts as a guideline for effective problem-solving. It goes without saying that this approach is not a universal prescription. This would be contrary to its fundamental premises of continuous questioning, exploration, independent thinking, and individual initiative (Fuller, 1981). Each unique application of the approach makes the difference in ultimately resolving specific design initiatives left to the integrity and creativity of the individual, group, or community involved.

2.3 Victor Papanek

Victor Papanek (1927-1998) was one of the most influential design theorists of the 20th century. His seminal work, *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change* (1971), critiqued design’s societal role, advocating for it as a tool to shape environments responsibly. Among his works, including *The Green Imperative* published in 1995, Papanek emphasized ethical, ecological, and human-centered design, challenging the conventional focus on aesthetics and form. Papanek defined design as a “future-oriented, trial-and-error process for making meaningful order” (Papanek, 1995, p. VIII) and stressed that functionality must be considered within broader social, industrial, economic, ecological, and cultural contexts.

His design ethics throughout his career as an industrial designer and educator focused on societal, human, and environmental interests, advocating for ecological and sustainable design. Papanek highlighted the negative impacts of industrialization and consumer culture, emphasizing design's role in supporting marginalized communities (Wahl, 2006). He believed design should promote self-reliance and economic development, bridging inequalities between developed and developing nations. He viewed design as a means to improve everyday life, incorporating ecological balance and local material use to meet real human needs (Jianing & Zhiguo, 2023).

Papanek argued that everyone, in structuring their environments, is inherently a designer. However, professional designers hold a unique responsibility to influence social attitudes and create meaningful, functional solutions. He outlined evaluative criteria for design—method, use, need, telenesis, association, and aesthetics—stressing that locally sourced, affordable materials enhance the functionality and meaning of design solutions (Papanek, 1971). A key example of his participatory design approach was his tetrakaidecahedral playground structure (1973-1975). This humanist project engaged children, parents, and teachers in the design process, fostering creativity, collaboration, and accessibility (Papanek, 1995). The structure was designed to be vandal-proof, inexpensive, movable, and easy to assemble, allowing children to interact with it intuitively. The project exemplified his philosophy of inclusivity, user involvement, and real-world functionality.

Papanek redefined the industrial designer's role as a transdisciplinary integrator bridging science, art, and technology. He criticized the notion of the lone creative genius, advocating instead for co-creation and the diverse contributions of different individuals and communities (Wahl, 2006). Through integration and community, rather than segregation and individualism, the designer can create spaces for continued exploration and innovation.

He insisted that designers are responsible for their work's societal and ethical impacts (Papanek, 1995, p.38). Successful design should enhance people's well-being, ensuring safety, comfort, and inclusivity (Papanek, 1995). He called for an integrated approach where design connects people and their environments holistically, recognizing the interdependence of human needs and surroundings. While aesthetics have social value, designing purely for aesthetics is, in Papanek's words, a "crime against humanity" if it disregards real human needs (Papanek, 1971, p. 324).

Papanek's influence extended to design education, where he emphasized the unity of theory and practice, social good, ecological awareness, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and local solutions (Savina, 2016). His human-centered approach remains relevant today, encouraging designers to engage ethically with social and environmental challenges. As designers shape the future, they must confront reality authentically, ensuring their work serves humanity beyond consumerist motives.

2.4 Jane Jacobs

Jane Jacobs (1916-2006), city spokesperson, activist, and writer, profoundly reasserted the value of urban life through her activism and groundbreaking work, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) (Lewis, 2019). Her writing and grassroots activism revolutionized urban planning by challenging traditional urban renewal, which often led to the loss of community in favor of high-rise developments (Hammond et al., 2017). As a pivotal figure in the New Urbanist movement, Jacobs advocated for reducing car dependency and enhancing walkability in densely populated neighborhoods with a mix of jobs, housing, and commercial spaces (Lewis, 2019).

Jacobs viewed cities as ecosystems, emphasizing systemic thinking and the interconnected nature of urban environments (Lewis, 2019). She championed bottom-up community planning, relying on local knowledge and advocating for the preservation or transformation of old buildings

(Lewis, 2019). Her support for mixed-use neighborhoods, where commercial and residential functions coexisted, contrasted with the high-density building practices of her time (Hammond et al., 2017). Her humanist approach to urban planning prioritized the well-being of city dwellers.

Her personal experiences shaped her philosophy. After moving from Scranton, Pennsylvania, to New York City, she was captivated by the vibrant community of Greenwich Village (Lewis, 2019). Initially working as a secretary and writer, Jacobs took a keen interest in urban issues, writing extensively about city life (Hammond et al., 2017). Her investigative reporting on urban development in Philadelphia and East Harlem exposed how urban planning often prioritized revitalization over the needs of local communities (Lewis, 2019).

Jacobs famously opposed Parks Commissioner Robert Moses' redevelopment plans for New York City (Hammond et al., 2017). Moses proposed a 10-lane highway cutting through SoHo and Little Italy, leading to the destruction of Washington Square Park and the displacement of numerous families and businesses (Walser, 2016). Jacobs, a West Village resident, led protests, organized rallies, and chaired the Joint Committee to Stop the Lower Manhattan Expressway (Walser, 2016). In 1968, she was arrested for inciting a riot at a public hearing (Hammond et al., 2017). Ultimately, the plan was rejected, marking a significant shift in New York City's urban planning (Hammond et al., 2017). Jacobs later moved to Toronto, where she continued her advocacy, opposing expressways and promoting community-friendly urban planning (Lewis, 2019).

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs made her opposition to traditional city planning clear (Jacobs, 1961). Unlike her modernist contemporaries, she focused on everyday urban life, examining what made sidewalks safe, why some slums resisted transformation, and how downtown areas defined themselves (Jacobs, 1961). She critiqued post-WWII urban renewal, arguing that city planning often disregarded residents' experiences and intuition (Jacobs, 1961). Many urban renewal projects disrupted natural ecosystems and led to unsafe environments (Hammond et al., 2017). Jacobs compelled urban planners to shift their focus from idealized visions of cities to understanding how cities function in reality (Wendt, 2009).

Jacobs identified four conditions necessary for urban diversity: (1) a mixture of uses in neighborhoods, integrating commercial, residential, industrial, and cultural spaces; (2) short blocks to promote walking and interaction; (3) a mixture of older and newer buildings to preserve neighborhood character; and (4) sufficient population density to foster safety and creativity (Jacobs, 1961). She argued that all four must be present, forming an interdependent system (Jacobs, 1961).

Her systemic thinking extended beyond urban design. Jacobs saw cities as problems of organized complexity, with underlying structures amidst apparent chaos (Jacobs, 1961). She used biological metaphors to describe urban order, illustrating that cities are living, evolving entities dependent on public engagement (Jacobs, 1961). Her work remains foundational in urban planning, emphasizing the importance of diversity, local knowledge, and community-centered design.

2.5 Gui Bonsiepe

Gui Bonsiepe's remarkable career is difficult to classify due to its multifaceted nature. Despite various descriptions, his contributions to design theory and practice influence the future of design and provide a model for new generations of designers. This model demonstrates how designers may expand their discipline to adapt to a world in constant flux. Bridging boundaries between the 20th and 21st centuries, the old and new world, the global north and global south, and the center and periphery, Bonsiepe's writings offer an optimistic view on the potential of modernist ideals in socially conscious design (Dubberly, 2021). Bonsiepe was among the European designers and

architects who migrated to Latin America in the twentieth century (Penin in Bonsiepe, 2021). Despite his German design training, he worked extensively in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile while also spending time in Italy and the United States (Dubberly, 2021). His experiences across diverse socio-cultural contexts led him to envision decoloniality in a way that acknowledges complexity rather than through a purist aspirational lens (Penin in Bonsiepe, 2021). He advocated for emancipation in design and education, emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration and local industrial economies (Penin in Bonsiepe, 2021). Immersed in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil's industrial spheres, Bonsiepe viewed local industry as key to self-sufficiency and autonomy (Penin in Bonsiepe, 2021).

Two of his projects focused on local industry were an air compressor (1984) and a piping machine (1986) in Brazil (Bonsiepe, 2021). The air compressor, an unusual industrial design project, resulted in large-scale manufacturing by a local factory, with innovations to reduce noise and vibrations while simplifying production (Bonsiepe, 2021). Traditionally an engineering task, Bonsiepe's involvement led to unexpected and innovative results. The piping machine project, a collaboration with local shoe machinery producers, demonstrated how design could improve product quality. Bonsiepe introduced ergonomic standards, reducing operator injury and enhancing workflow (Bonsiepe, 2021).

A central theme in Bonsiepe's work is his frustration with insufficient industrial bases and dependence on imports from central countries (Bonsiepe, 2021). He strongly opposed economic dependency, arguing that wealth flows from peripheral to central countries in an unbalanced system, perpetuating extractivism and colonial patterns (Bonsiepe, 2021, p.169). Advocating for independence and development, he emphasized industrial capacity over cultural identity within his center-periphery framework, now understood as Global South-Global North (Penin in Bonsiepe, 2021). His commitment to breaking dependency was exemplified in the Cybersyn project, a networked computer system for managing Chile's economy under Salvador Allende's socialist government (1970-1973) (Dubberly, 2021). The system aimed to provide real-time insights into national economic conditions, facilitating worker and citizen participation in decision-making (Dubberly, 2021).

Bonsiepe's work invites speculation on alternative futures and models for social, environmental, political, and economic systems. He challenged conventional notions of peripheral dependence, emphasizing alternative perspectives (Duarte in Bonsiepe, 2021). His dedication to human dignity and social responsibility underscores an inclusive design approach prioritizing well-being. Rejecting design as an elitist, luxury-driven practice, he viewed it as a tool for social emancipation (Bonsiepe, 2021). His writings engage with debates on government policy, arguing for integrating design into economic and social development rather than leaving decisions solely to market-driven forces (Bonsiepe, 2021).

A key aspect of the Cybersyn project was its ontological interface design, examining how design affects human cognition and interaction (Secomandi & Snelders, 2013). Bonsiepe viewed interface design as crucial to fostering autonomy and understanding technology's role in human experience. His concept of design as an interface significantly contributed to design theory, distinguishing design from art, science, and engineering while emphasizing theory's role in practice (Dubberly, 2021). His work highlights language as fundamental in linking verbal and visual elements, influencing modern user interface design.

Fostering critical reflection, Bonsiepe encouraged designers to question established norms and explore alternative perspectives, inspiring a new generation of designers to think creatively and innovatively. His legacy underscores the necessity of a reflective approach to design that considers broader social, economic, and cultural contexts.

2.6 Julien Hébert

Julien Hébert (1917-1994) holds a significant place in Quebec's cultural history as a pioneer of modernism. As a foundational industrial designer, Hébert was trained in fine arts, sculpture, and philosophy, refusing to limit himself to one discipline. He developed the skills of a multidisciplinary designer and artist (St-Hilaire, 2017). The transformation of Quebec society in the mid-20th century birthed industrial design, and Hébert embraced this challenge through furniture designs, sculptural murals, graphic design, interiors, and more. Above all, his career is marked by his engagement in the development and emergence of design. As a passionate educator, Hébert trained a new generation of designers and fervently advocated for the creation of a Design Institute, which was established at the University of Montreal in 1969 (St-Hilaire, 2017).

The historical context of industrial design in Quebec is essential to understanding Hébert's influence. The École du Meuble was created in 1935 under the liberal government of Alexandre Tachereau to foster local production and promote Quebec's artisanal heritage (Racine, 2007, p. 78). In the 1940s, the provincial government showed little interest in design, and even less in its promotion (Racine, 2007, p. 77). By the 1960s, opportunities for designers increased as the number of design companies grew (Sharman, 2005). This decade marked a pivotal point in Quebec's social structure, with reforms in education and health that had previously been dominated by religious organizations (Leroux, 2001, p. 352). With a growing sense of Quebec nationalism, there was a demand for political reform (Fournier, 2001, p. 341).

Quebec's shift toward political independence during this period aligned with global decolonization movements, which also impacted its design scene (Fournier, 2001, p. 341). Hébert was part of this renewal and social change, emphasizing the integration of basic design principles into the teaching of the arts. He noted the delay and neglect in Quebec regarding design education and advocated for it to become a recognized discipline at the university level (Racine, 2016, p. 112). Inspired by Scandinavian designs, Hébert admired how design was rooted in a cultural context and reflected in a particular aesthetic language, which he hoped to see emerge in Quebec (St-Hilaire, 2007, p. 15; Sharman, 2005, p. 45).

In the 1960s, the French-Canadian collectivity was increasingly seen as a distinct society (Fournier, 2001, p. 340), and its language, Catholicism, and traditions played an essential role in shaping national identity (Leroux, 2001, p. 352). Hébert wished to see these aspects of Quebec's culture reflected in design. He was concerned by the decline of traditional craft practices and emphasized their importance (Racine & Findeli, 2003, p. 42). However, Hébert believed that the craft could not meet the demand of industrial production, and he aimed to bridge the gap between the two sectors (Leroux, 2001, p. 356). Hébert worked to promote modern design as an extension of these artisanal traditions, believing that design was a creative process that could be applied across various fields (Racine, 2016, p. 63).

Hébert argued that design should serve social and cultural development beyond just aesthetic purposes (Racine & Findeli, 2003, p. 41). He saw design as an attitude that contributed to the cultural and economic growth of society. His initiatives, such as *Le projet de L'institut de design* in Montreal, proposed in 1961, and *Le projet de récupération de travail chez les déshérités*, proposed in 1971, reflected his belief in design's potential to effect social change (Racine, 2016). In the Design Institute proposal, an initiative that led to the creation of the school of industrial design at l'Université de Montréal, Hébert sought to improve Quebec's industrial production quality and foster collaboration between industrialists and artists, aiming to create a modern aesthetic aligned with Quebec's cultural identity (Racine, 2015, p. 75).

In 1971, Hébert proposed *Le projet de récupération de travail chez les déshérités* to the federal Minister of Industry, aiming to use industrial design to create work for the underprivileged and isolated communities (Racine, 2007, p. 154). This initiative sought to enable marginalized individuals to regain their dignity through work, producing simple, quality objects with minimal resources (Racine, 2016, p. 125). Hébert's vision for design extended beyond mere production; he saw it as a means to empower workers and revitalize regional economies, advocating for small-scale industries that would create meaningful work (Racine, 2007, p. 156).

Despite his focus on industrial design, Hébert remained dedicated to sculpture and the arts, engaging with public design and environmental quality (Racine & Findeli, 2003, p. 42). He believed that design should be integral to everyday life and should raise public awareness about its cultural role (Racine, 2016, p. 117). Hébert's social vision called for designers to not only focus on industry but also contribute to community-based, nonprofit initiatives (Racine & Findeli, 2003, p. 41).

Hébert's ideas about design, its relationship to industry, and its potential for social change established him as a key figure in Quebec's modern design movement. His influence on the younger generation of designers, his focus on cultural identity, and his efforts to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity continue to resonate today.

2.7 Conclusion

In his 1975 essay, Buckminster Fuller posed a question: "Where will the world be in 2025?" He explored the role of technology in decision-making and the potential for humanity to return to collective intelligence. Fuller emphasized the need for cooperation over power dominance, urging humanity to pass a cosmic test as problem solvers (Fuller, 1975). Contemporary challenges reinforce this urgency, demanding proactive engagement rather than passive surrender (Baldwin, 1991). Despite frustration over systemic issues, thinkers like Fuller, Papanek, Jacobs, Bonsiepe, and Hébert advocate collaborative approaches to systemic change, critiquing power structures that stifle progress. Fear-driven scarcity perpetuates narrow perspectives, limiting imagination (Baldwin, 1991). Humanist discourse promotes philosopher-scientist-artists engaged in transdisciplinary collaboration to tackle global issues (Fuller, 1962).

Victor Papanek championed a transdisciplinary design approach, integrating science, philosophy, and ethics (Papanek, 1995). Jane Jacobs, focusing on urban planning, emphasized holistic and community-driven development (Jacobs, 1961). Their insights remain relevant for fostering sustainability and social equity. Hébert's future-driven design philosophy further underscores design's transformative role in shaping better societies. A shift in mindset towards socio-environmental awareness, rejecting flawed status quos, is essential.

Designers today bear responsibilities beyond aesthetics, shaping human experiences and societal outcomes. A paradigm shift in design education and practice must emphasize collaboration, empathy, and ethics to drive positive change. By integrating historical insights with contemporary strategies, designers can co-create culturally resonant, socially impactful solutions (Papanek, 1995). This strengthens public trust and promotes sustainable development.

Bonsiepe's philosophy advocates for integrating design into civic structures to shape economic and social policies. Challenging norms and envisioning alternatives remains crucial. Revisiting mid-century thinkers provides a blueprint for fostering innovation and inclusivity within complex systems. In Canada, applying humanist design principles can modernize public service, enhance transparency, and empower citizens. With an emphasis on participatory approaches, strategies such as policy influence, stakeholder engagement, usability testing,

and EDI integration can improve public services. For instance, intuitive government websites enhance accessibility and efficiency. Design thinking fosters creativity and adaptability in governance, driving meaningful change.

In conclusion, the relevance of humanist design philosophies in the 21st century lies in their capacity to inspire and guide transformative change. By reexamining these principles through a contemporary lens, we can chart a course towards a future that honours human dignity, fosters innovation, and sustains planetary health. Current and future challenges are daunting, but with creativity and commitment to a shared future, we can realize the vision articulated by history's visionary design thinkers—a world where design serves as a catalyst for positive social impact.

Chapter 3: Understanding Human-Centred Co-Design Initiatives as Agents of Social Change

3.1 An Investigation on Contemporary Cases of Localised Visions of Change

Enacting meaningful positive social change is challenging, especially within complex public service organizations. Shifting these societal and operational systems toward healthier, more resilient behaviours and dynamics, along with greater equity, necessitates not only a comprehensive set of creative tools but also a committed openness to change. Fortunately, the field of social innovation in design is thriving with activity at all levels of participation. In recent years, organisations, individuals, and businesses have begun to recognize what many designers have always believed: design can serve as a powerful agent for positive social change.

As a contemporary method to social change, engagement, and action, reflecting the perspectives of the humanist design thinkers discussed in the previous chapter, I have integrated the human-centered participatory approach of co-design into my public service design practice. In many service design projects, co-design is considered essential to success and has gained increasing popularity among businesses and organizations (Binder, Brandt, & Gregory, 2008). This chapter makes the case that co-design is critical to service design and should be further considered and applied in Canadian public service for various perspectives are needed to understand both the demand of services and the needs of citizens to develop successful services. Co-design, done well, can have a wide range of benefits including improving user loyalty, reducing costs, increasing people's well-being, and organising innovation processes more effectively (Steen, 2011).

The cases highlighted in this chapter's investigation on human-centered co-design initiatives provide guideposts for what successful system interventions and a more sustainable society might look like in action. Drawing from the spheres of non-for-profits, community engagement, to operational system interventions, these co-design partnerships illustrate how social innovation relates to the potential of design and its greater aspirations—and how it leads to meaningful action.

3.2 A Brief History of Participatory Design

Participatory design refers to a human-centered collaborative approach to design, characterized by the active participation of users in the design process (Bødker et al., 2022). However, its commitment to collaborative design extends beyond engagement to democracy, individual initiative, diversity, and emancipation. This overview explores the history of participatory design, its emergence into practice, and its role in social change.

From the mid-20th century, increasing demand for community inclusion in decision-making spurred participatory design. Mid-century thinkers, notably Julien Hébert, drew inspiration from Scandinavian participatory models (Racine, 2016). In 1970s Scandinavia, research on user participation in workplace technology and systems development emerged (Bødker et al., 1996). Participatory design aimed to empower workers in influencing workplace technologies, addressing power imbalances between management and employees. Unions, such as the Norwegian Iron and Metal Workers Union (NJMF), played a pivotal role in shifting research toward active participation, enhancing collective bargaining and social welfare (Bødker et al., 2022).

Scandinavian projects adopted action research, fostering collaboration between researchers and workers to assess the impact of new technologies (Bødker et al., 2022). This approach replaced expert-driven models with participatory workshops, ensuring workers

had access to information, independent decision-making, and inclusion in design processes. Researchers evolved into collaborators advocating for mutual learning, addressing power imbalances and resource negotiations.

An early example of participatory design was the UTOPIA project in the early 1980s, a collaboration between researchers and the Nordic Graphic Workers' Union (Ehn, 1988). It sought to integrate user participation into workplace computerization, emphasizing quality work, workplace democracy, and professional education. This project validated the participatory design approach, reinforcing hands-on experiences and the need for technological and organizational alternatives (Bødker et al., 1987).

By the late 1980s, participatory design expanded beyond Scandinavia to North America, where it influenced software development and user-centered design. This transition, however, diluted some of its original democratic and emancipatory commitments. While North American approaches focused on usability, skill, and resources, the principles of mutual learning received less emphasis (Bødker et al., 2022). Nevertheless, participatory methods gained traction in public administration, fostering civic engagement through participatory cultures, co-design, and social innovation (Namioka & Schuler, 1990).

Over time, participatory design diversified in motivations, research paradigms, and applications, prompting reflections on its democratic foundations. The rise of large transnational corporations raised concerns about user rights, emphasizing the need to scale participatory design beyond localized interventions (Bødker et al., 2022). This led to renewed calls for integrating politics into participatory design and exploring new democratic frameworks.

Recent initiatives, such as Commonfare, funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 program, highlight evolving participatory design applications. Commonfare supports vulnerable groups through a digital platform for knowledge-sharing and collaboration (Bassetti et al., 2018). This initiative exemplifies participatory design's role in promoting social cooperation and technological alternatives beyond commercial interests (Bødker et al., 2022).

The historical trajectory of participatory design demonstrates its broad impact, from trade union activism in Scandinavia to contemporary global challenges like postcolonialism and cross-cultural knowledge production (Bødker et al., 2022). Despite variations in scale and context, participatory design continues to affirm that user involvement in decision-making leads to more effective and sustainable solutions to societal challenges.

In parallel with the evolution of participatory design, broader social movements in design have emerged, challenging traditional notions of expertise and authorship. Design justice, influenced by grassroots activism and critical race theory, emphasizes the redistribution of design power to historically marginalized communities (Costanza-Chock, 2020). In Latin America, the pedagogical philosophy of Paulo Freire has deeply informed these movements, advocating for dialogic practices, critical consciousness, and the co-creation of knowledge between designers and communities (Campos & Anderso, 2021). These contemporary perspectives question not just how design is done, but who it serves, and who gets to design. While not the central focus of this thesis, such movements are essential to acknowledge, as they reframe the designer's role from problem-solver to facilitator, reinforcing the need for design practices rooted in empathy and participatory practices in pursuing systemic change.

3.3 From Participatory Design to Co-Design

Co-design is a participatory approach to design that actively involves a diverse range of

people—those directly connected to an issue, place, or process—in both the design and, at times, implementation phases (Burkett, 2012). This approach leverages collective experiences to develop effective services, products, and outcomes (McKercher, 2020). Unlike traditional methods that seek end-user feedback, co-design fosters shared understanding across service systems (Burkett, 2012). Addressing complex social challenges requires integrating the skills and knowledge of all involved parties. Co-design collaborates with, rather than for, those who will use, deliver, or interact with a service, product, or initiative.

In Canada, there is a strong push toward collaborative efforts, making co-design particularly relevant. Cross-disciplinary and cross-sector collaboration is increasingly emphasized, driven by the recognition that top-down strategies are often ineffective. Additionally, technology has empowered citizens to provide input and participate in shaping services that impact their lives (Burkett, 2012). Co-design facilitates the involvement of citizens, consumers, professionals, and stakeholders not only in exploring issues but also in designing and implementing programs (Digital Victoria, 2020). This collaborative effort ensures services fully support those they aim to help (McKercher, 2020). For public servants, co-design can lead to more effective and efficient outcomes by allowing options to be tested before committing to costly pilots or programs.

Though not a new concept, co-design is often misunderstood as a mere skill rather than a transformational approach. If poorly executed, it can exacerbate social exclusion and erode trust, but when implemented effectively, it stabilizes lives, improves opportunities, and builds systems of trust (Evans, 2015). True co-design shifts the focus from what we design to how we design, involving participants as equal partners in creating, testing, and refining services (McKercher, 2020). It challenges traditional assumptions about the roles of professionals and service users, fostering relationships based on trust, communication, and mutual learning (Burkett, 2012).

Design processes, increasingly applied to service improvement rather than just material goods, are being used in social services to enhance impact. Co-designing public services for social impact involves more than gathering user input; it requires generating and testing ideas, making decisions, and shaping projects and services through collaboration. Canada is at a turning point in designing and delivering social services, making it crucial to view design as a catalyst for change rather than a superficial addition to existing models.

Co-design can take different forms, from simply incorporating user voices to radically shifting roles and relationships, leading to transformative changes in service delivery. Some see it as part of a broader movement toward open welfare, where providers and clients form self-acting networks supported by professionals (Murray et al., 2006). This approach is not about offloading responsibility but about creating genuine partnerships that yield meaningful impact. While ideals matter, they must be supported by practical methods and real action.

Co-design is not just a set of tools; it represents a cultural shift in service delivery, redefining the roles of both providers and users (Burkett, 2012). Rooted in the belief that positive change is possible and that people can guide it, co-design embraces openness to diverse possibilities. Despite the challenges posed by system norms and attitudes, the current public service environment presents significant potential for co-design.

3.4 Challenges in Public Service Design

As trust in government reaches historic lows in Canada, frustration with the performance of government and civil service is nearing record highs (OECD, 2024). Despite the key role public sector organisations play in developing solutions to complex societal issues, many of them

struggle to listen to their constituents or to empower them to participate in designing, delivering, and evaluating change. This failure leads to decisions being made on behalf of the public by those who assume they understand the public's wants and needs (McKercher, 2020). In doing so, public service overlooks the knowledge and skills of the people it serves, perpetuating a system where power imbalances are entrenched and enduring (McKercher, 2020).

In such a context, where these imbalances are weighty and historic, employing human-centered co-design approaches in the creation and improvement of public services emerges as a critical opportunity (McKercher, 2020). However, the capacity to develop and nurture design as a capability is not common among most public service organizations or their employees. Public service organizations, typically the sole providers of mandated services, often lack the strong incentives for reinvention or change that competition might provide. Despite the necessity of considering the public's needs, the pressure to maintain high performance and efficiency often constrains these organizations, leading them to focus more on optimizing productivity than on fostering innovation. Focusing on establishing new services and programs isn't enough as resources are not scarce—public service rather needs a change in mindset and approach (McKercher, 2020).

The public sector urgently needs an alternative approach to address global political, social, economic, and environmental challenges. While design may not solve all problems, it offers tools to navigate the complexities of public service, empowering public servants to uncover the root causes of issues. Through the case study research presented in this chapter, it becomes clear that co-design is a practical and appropriate solution with the potential to connect human-centered methodologies to organizational and systemic change.

Applying a human-centered co-design approach within the public service, both internally and externally, can disrupt existing governance models (Borins, 2006). Design challenges the well-established, top-down hierarchical operations and policy-making processes. The public sector's analytical culture, with minimal user engagement and siloed business operations, offers limited opportunities for innovation (Van der Bijl-Brouwe, 2016). When solutions from innovation project teams challenge core organizational norms and assumptions, they often face resistance (Borins, 2006). Moreover, innovation efforts lose momentum when organizational objectives shift over time.

The public service sector tends to remain stagnant, as familiarity with the status quo is strong which often leads to missed opportunities for meaningful change. Few public organizations have established processes for driving innovation or building design capabilities. When design is introduced as a creative innovative approach, there is often a misalignment of expectations, which does not always result in successful outcomes. Public servants, when engaging in design thinking and human-centred approaches, may have varying interpretations of design's role and potential for enhancing policies, services, and user experiences. This uncertainty, coupled with the challenge of embracing new roles within the system structure as co-creators, can lead to skepticism and resistance (Borins, 2006). Additionally, principles and terminology of design may also be difficult for public servants without training to fully grasp or adopt into their practices. As discussed in the previous chapter, corporate and individual competitiveness, coupled with a lack of motivation, and a strong status quo hinders innovation. An organization's systemic reinforcements significantly influence people's willingness to learn, generate, and share new knowledge beyond their core work functions. Without a continually encouraged design mindset, public servants tend to revert to their standard, system-led practices.

While public organizations face significant challenges to innovation from bureaucracy to the political environment, there is also considerable potential for transformation in the way

we operate and share our collective mindset. As public servants, we must be aware of and conscious of the current innovation landscape. Embedding innovation involves building and sharing a common design language—a language grounded in human-centered principles that “prioritize relationships, share power, employ participatory methods, and build capability” (McKercher, 2020). By focusing on increasing opportunities to generate and execute ideas, while continually designing and learning, human-centered design thinking can lead to the creative co-creation of more efficient, effective, and innovative outcomes. This approach does not disregard professional expertise but instead calls for a greater diversity of perspectives and partners (McKercher, 2020). Professionals must not only share their knowledge but also listen, learn, and recognize when it is best to step aside.

In this case study research, I explore three examples that demonstrate how social innovation, driven by human-centered co-design, can lead to meaningful action. From non-for-profit work, community engagement, to operational system interventions, these examples of co-design offer significant insight and opportunity for profound shifts in Canadian service design and delivery, both internally within organizations and externally in their interactions with the public.

3.5 Case A: Co-Designing with Artists

The BEING Futures project, based in Toronto, Canada, a collaboration between the Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC) and BEING Studio, ran from April to November 2021. BEING Studio, a community of artists with developmental disabilities, sought to conceptualize a hybrid model integrating digital and in-person components (Ayotte & Watkins, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the need for online programming, prompting the studio to introduce virtual workshops and art supply deliveries. The project aimed to explore hybrid integration by collaborating with BEING artists to design tools and activities for greater accessibility and connection. IDRC facilitated co-design sessions, ensuring artist participation in mapping the hybrid space (Ayotte & Watkins, 2021).

The co-design process began with a “Think Tank” event, engaging artists in structured workshops. IDRC facilitators participated in BEING’s Artist Connect sessions to familiarize themselves with the community. Co-design activities were developed collaboratively, with regular feedback sessions ensuring adjustments based on artist input. Despite its success, the project faced challenges, including a limited timeframe and remote collaboration difficulties. Asynchronous communication methods posed engagement barriers, and building trust within the condensed period proved challenging.

Despite these hurdles, the project highlighted opportunities for artist empowerment, hybrid programming, and digital platform expansion (Ayotte & Watkins, 2021). The Creative Design Map synthesized co-design results, serving as a blueprint for future initiatives. Artists expressed interest in teaching workshops and using online platforms for visibility. Managing engagement in remote settings remains a challenge, but the project laid the groundwork for an inclusive and adaptable future at BEING Studio.

3.6 Case B: Co-Designing with Childcare Providers

The Platform Co-op Development Kit project, a collaboration between the Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC) and the Platform Cooperative Consortium, aimed to develop digital tools to help individuals and organisations establish and manage cooperatives (Li & Ayotte, 2020). Focused on childcare providers, the project sought to alleviate administrative burdens through co-

designed tools. Two workshops, involving approximately fifteen participants each, prioritized a digital hub for centralizing tools and an expensing tool. CoRise and its steering committee helped tailor activities, ensuring alignment with childcare providers' needs (Li & Ayotte, 2020).

A key strength of the project was its community-led approach, fostering participant ownership and ensuring tools met real needs. The collaboration leveraged diverse expertise, producing clear deliverables such as sketches, user flows, and a collection of existing tools. However, limited scope, resource constraints, and hesitancy in feedback hindered progress (Li & Ayotte, 2020). Despite challenges, the project highlighted opportunities for refining engagement strategies, focusing scope, and emphasizing lived experience in co-design. Time constraints and participation barriers remain considerations for future initiatives. Ultimately, the project provided valuable insights into community-driven co-design and its potential for long-term impact (Li & Ayotte, 2020).

3.7 Case C: Co-Designing with Colleagues

In 2019, Wellcome Trust launched a co-design project to improve internal communication, engaging early-career staff to develop a new intranet feature (Luxford, 2019). Over one fiscal quarter, the internal product team collaborated with diverse colleagues, ensuring broad organisational input while fostering investment in the outcome. The project aimed to enhance visibility into ongoing work through project timelines, strategic links, and staff role tagging. Rather than financial incentives, the team emphasized purpose and participation value, motivating and empowering staff through shared ownership (Luxford, 2019).

The initiative broke down silos by involving colleagues from different functions and included developers early to address technical feasibility. A key challenge was the absence of a skills taxonomy, complicating role-tagging features and requiring extensive collaboration. Despite these hurdles, the team translated co-design insights into a live beta prototype for organizational testing, culminating in a planned all-staff presentation (Luxford, 2019).

Strengths of the project included its user-centered approach, cross-team collaboration, and iterative design process, ensuring solutions met real needs. It also benefited early-career staff by providing professional development opportunities. Challenges included maintaining engagement without financial incentives, resource demands for documentation, and technical complexities in implementation. However, the project created long-term opportunities for improved internal networking, increased collaboration, and a more informed workforce, demonstrating the value of co-design in organisational development (Luxford, 2019).

3.8 Benefits and Opportunities of Co-Design in Public Service

Drawing from the previous chapter's literature review and three case studies, I have identified several key benefits of co-design in public service design, organized according to Steen et al.'s three categories: (1) benefits for the service design project; (2) benefits for service users and the public; and (3) benefits for the public service organization (Steen et al., 2011). I also propose following Steen's classification of benefits into four categories: (1) enhancing the creative process (idea generation); (2) improving service quality (project outcomes); (3) optimizing project management (business rationale); and (4) fostering long-term effects (on the market and society) (Steen et al., 2011).

Co-design offers a range of benefits, such as enhancing creativity, refining service concepts, improving project organization, and increasing user loyalty. For example, Case A illustrates how co-design workshops with artists generated innovative ideas. Case B demonstrates that

collaboration with childcare providers deepened the understanding of their needs, leading to the co-creation of new service concepts. Similarly, in Case C, the co-design process with the Wellcome Trust product team resulted in valuable recommendations for improving an existing service. Overall, co-design benefits include generating original ideas, gaining better insights into user needs, improving service quality, and delivering successful innovations with reduced risk of failure. Moreover, co-design contributes to better decision-making, lower development costs, and shorter timelines in project management

In public service design, the actual service may not be immediately available unless an existing service is being redesigned. Therefore, users and the public might not directly experience the benefits of co-design during the project. However, they are likely to feel the impact once the service is fully developed. For instance, in Case B, childcare providers involved in the co-design process will benefit from a service that better addresses their professional needs. In Case C, customers and users experience more immediate benefits, such as improved service quality. The benefits to users include (1) a better fit between services and their needs, (2) enhanced service quality, and (3) a more differentiated service offering. Over time, co-design can increase user satisfaction, loyalty, and awareness.

Co-design also delivers significant organizational benefits, regardless of the project's immediate outcomes. For example, it fosters creativity and strengthens innovation capabilities. In Case A, co-design aimed to promote out-of-the-box thinking within BEING Studio. In Case C, involving employees from various departments led to improved communication and collaboration, with staff gaining valuable experience that can be applied to future projects. Organizational benefits from the creative process include (1) enhanced creativity, (2) a stronger user focus, and (3) improved collaboration across disciplines. Long-term benefits include (1) more successful innovations, (2) improved innovation practices, (3) greater support for change, (4) better relationships between providers and users, and (5) enhanced public relations.

Overall, a human-centered co-design approach effectively aligns public services with the needs and aspirations of the people they serve (Digital Victoria, 2020). By involving a diverse range of stakeholders, organizations can achieve greater buy-in, increased adoption of services, and a more positive social impact. Co-design is thus not just a method for improving individual projects, but a powerful strategy for driving meaningful organizational and societal change.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented three cases where the application of human-centered co-design resulted in positive social change and impact. Within the context of participatory design history and the challenges of public service design, these cases demonstrate that co-design in public services should be viewed not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity—an opportunity to engage diverse individuals and stakeholders to deepen the understanding of complex societal issues (Van der Bijl-Brouwe, 2016). Co-design offers a way to more effectively design and coordinate solutions for these systems by examining why and how people use, adopt, and contribute to services intended to make public services more accessible and human centered.

Chapter 4: Rationale for a Co-Design Strategy

4.1 Briefing the Context and Measures of a Public Service Organisation Co-Design Strategy

As explored in the previous chapter, the investigation of co-design initiatives as agents of social change demonstrates the benefits and opportunities for co-design in public service. In response to this study's literature review and case study research, this chapter communicates the rationale for a co-design strategy within Canadian public service organisations. Before establishing the rationale, let's explore the public service organisation in question, Impact Canada.

4.2 About Impact Canada

Established in 2017, Impact Canada (Impact and Innovation Unit, Privy Council Office) is a federal public service organisation dedicated to improving the effectiveness of policy implementation in Canada (Impact Canada, 2017). By employing innovative methods, Impact Canada addresses gaps in translating policy goals into measurable, impactful results for Canadians. Its funding model shifts the focus from simply covering expenses to rewarding outcomes, specifically through grants and contributions—a crucial yet under-optimized resource in public funding (Impact Canada, 2017). The organisation's challenge initiatives use both financial and non-financial incentives to engage participants in solving complex issues where traditional approaches have fallen short.

Impact Canada's structure includes several key business areas: Behavioural Science, Challenges, the Fellowship program, and the recently added Measurement and Data Integration team. These divisions bring together experts from various backgrounds to drive outcomes-driven approaches to public policy challenges. This team of technical and subject matter experts supports federal agencies by providing access to resources like the Impact Canada Terms and Conditions, the Fellowship program, and a centralized digital platform enhanced by a multidisciplinary in-house design studio (Impact Canada, 2017).

The Impact Canada Behavioural Science team leads data-driven research to inform policy development and improve program effectiveness through evidence-based strategies. Impact Canada's Challenges are designed to crowd-in solutions from diverse sources to enhance the Government's problem-solving capabilities (Impact Canada, 2017). Unlike traditional government funding, these Challenges are outcomes-based, rewarding innovators based on the results they achieve. Meanwhile, the Fellowship program brings in external specialists to boost internal expertise across critical areas, expanding the skill set and capacity of the public sector workforce (Impact Canada, 2017). Impact Canada's digital platform serves as a transparent, accessible space for government partners, clients, and innovators, facilitating communication, program implementation, and data collection that promotes broad public engagement (Impact Canada, 2017).

By focusing on measurable outcomes, Impact Canada uses evidence-based, data-driven methods, adapting its approach to fit evolving priorities and available resources. The team integrates diverse forms of evidence—including social science insights, tax data, and quasi-experimental research—to guide policy decisions (Impact Canada, 2017). To foster public trust and transparency, Impact Canada openly shares its findings and lessons learned through its website and social media channels. This transparency, combined with a collaborative approach to measurement with federal partners, strengthens evidence-based decision-making across government. Partnerships with academic institutions further support research into the impacts of government programs, ultimately helping to build public confidence in the effectiveness of Canada's public sector (Impact Canada, 2017).

4.3 Positioning and Problem Statement

Public trust is essential for a healthy and effective public service. Now more than ever, sustained effort is crucial to ensure that our Canadian public service organisations remain strong, resilient and trusted. Building and maintaining this trust requires public services to operate in an accessible, empathetic and participatory manner.

This rationale outlines the drivers, core principles, vision, desired outcome, project objectives, and methodology to support Impact Canada and other public service organisations strengthen public trust. Specifically, this trust will be fostered by nurturing a culture of empathy within Impact Canada, humanizing policies and practices to improve accessibility, and enabling public participation where feasible and appropriate.

Accessible, empathetic and participatory public services bring numerous benefits for the public. As discussed in this study's previous chapter concerning the benefits and opportunities of co-design, accessible public services enable communication of decisions, policies, and processes, allowing citizens to feel informed and valued while empathetic public services that listen to and understand the needs of citizens leads to policies and initiatives that more accurately reflect citizens' needs and priorities. Finally, public services that are participatory results in better policies, programs and initiatives that are designed with input from those who are most impacted by them.

By adopting these core principles and achieving the project objectives outlined in this rationale, Impact Canada will help build public trust and strengthen its growth. In other words, this involves setting objectives for more accessible public service platforms, creating responsive systems that promote citizen engagement, and measuring progress to learn and improve.

4.4 Drivers

While international assessments indicate that the Government of Canada is recognised as a global leader in promoting more accessible and participatory governance and services, there remains a clear opportunity to strengthen public trust in public service and its institutions by implementing a Co-Design Strategy (OECD, 2023; Open Government Partnership Secretariat, 2019). Although these evaluations focus on open government, they offer value in the opportunity to better integrate and align related policy areas under a broader vision and strategic approach that supports accessible, empathetic and participatory public service.

4.5 Core Principles

This Co-Design Strategy is built upon the following core principles, which are essential for delivering effective public services that meets the expectations of Canadians:

Accessibility: Services are designed around the needs and experiences of the people they serve. This means making interactions easy, inclusive, and responsive, so that all individuals—regardless of background, ability, or resources—can access support, contribute feedback, and fully participate in programs that impact their lives.

Empathy: Understanding and valuing the lived experiences, challenges, and perspectives of the people served. This drives the creation of compassionate, responsive programs that prioritize the needs, emotions, and aspirations of individuals, fostering trust and stronger connections between the public and public service organisations.

Participation: The public can shape their public services, programs, and initiatives through meaningful engagement and participation. In other words, people should find it easy to get involved and take part in public service decisions and initiatives.

A sustained and coordinated effort to promote the broad adoption of these core principles will enhance Impact Canada’s approach by: (1) ensuring government services are truly accessible and inclusive; (2) understanding and appreciating the lived experiences, challenges, and perspectives of those served; and (3) enabling citizens to engage and participate meaningfully with public services.

4.6 Vision and Desired Outcome

Combining different methodologies is critical in enhancing public service work and fostering public trust. By advocating for a broader integration of approaches, it suggests moving beyond traditional methods to adopt a more holistic perspective. This integration allows public institutions to address complex societal issues more effectively through collaboration across sectors, disciplines, and communities, thereby enriching the understanding of public needs and priorities.

Impact Canada’s traditional data-driven approach relies on systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data to inform decision-making (Impact Canada, 2017). This methodology can lead to more transparent, accountable, and evidence-based public policies and services. By utilizing data, public institutions can identify trends, measure performance, and make informed decisions that reflect the needs and preferences of the community. The insights gained from data can help to pinpoint areas for improvement and ensure that resources are allocated effectively.

On the other hand, the human-centered design approach of this strategy and study prioritizes user experience and creativity in developing public services. This method involves understanding the needs and contexts of citizens, employing design thinking principles to create solutions that are not only functional but also engaging and accessible. By focusing on the end-user, these approaches enhance the relevance and effectiveness of public services, ensuring that they resonate with the experiences of Canada’s diverse communities. The integration of data-driven and design-driven approaches allows for a more comprehensive understanding of public needs. While data provides insights into what is happening, design adds a human touch, ensuring that services are tailored to user experiences. This balance can lead to innovative solutions that are grounded yet aspire to improve the quality of life for citizens. Ultimately, this synergy fosters a culture of continuous improvement within public institutions.

Strengthened public trust is a key outcome of this balanced integration. When public institutions are seen as accessible, empathetic, and participative, citizens are more likely to engage with them positively. By employing a balanced integration of approaches, institutions can demonstrate their commitment to understanding and addressing the needs of the public, fostering a sense of collaboration and shared purpose between citizens and their public service institutions.

4.7 Project Objectives

Three strategic objectives are intended to guide Impact Canada in strengthening their application of the core principles of this strategy and reinforcing public trust in Canadian public services:

To ensure government services are truly accessible and inclusive, they must be designed with a deep understanding of the diverse needs and experiences of individuals. This involves creating interactions that are user-friendly and responsive, enabling every person—regardless of background, ability, or resources—to access essential support, provide meaningful feedback, and

participate in programs that shape their lives. By prioritizing inclusivity and responsiveness in service design, we can create systems that empower individuals to engage fully and equitably with the resources and opportunities that impact their communities.

To build compassionate, responsive programs, it is essential to deeply understand and appreciate the lived experiences and perspectives of those served. This human-centered approach prioritizes the needs, emotions, and aspirations of individuals, ensuring that services are not only effective but also resonate on a human level. By fostering trust and strengthening connections between the public and government through the Impact Canada platform, this commitment to empathy enables more meaningful interactions, empowering individuals and communities alike.

To enhance public participation in Impact Canada programs and initiatives, it is essential to explore and improve existing practices while identifying new opportunities for engagement. This process began with this research's literary review and case study research where past and current participatory practices were assessed, evaluated for what works well, and pinpointed a co-design strategy for improvement to ensure more meaningful public involvement. Optimizing a human-centered co-design strategy can create a more streamlined and accessible process for citizens and public servants alike.

4.8 Methodology

This strategy applies multiple research methodologies, including human-centred design, case study research, and co-design. Human-centred design is the foundational methodology of this study. Its approach to bridging human needs and perspectives with technological and economic sustainability informs the methods deployed. The multiplicity in methods allows to represent the diversity in perspective and potential outcome. Multiple case studies have been examined as to how co-design has been applied in various organisations to tackle current societal issues. This process investigated the different contexts of applied co-design solutions and evaluated how a co-design strategy could be effective in the context of Canadian public service. As a found balance between Impact Canada's data-driven approach and the humanist perspectives of mid-century design thinkers, a co-design practice of collaborative involvement with this study's participant group will foster an active ideation and creation phase of the design process.

The co-design process will involve working through the following six steps outlined by the Metro North Co-design Framework of the Queensland Government: (1) engage and align; (2) explore and connect; (3) imagine and decide; (4) create and test; (5) co-implement and co-evaluate; (6) share and celebrate (2022). A selected participant group within Impact Canada and the designer-researcher will engage in the co-design process all while knowing that it may not be as linear as it appears in the step-by-step framework. The designer-researcher will be responsible for leading the process and make decisions while informing, consulting, and involving the participant group at each step of the process (Metro North Health, 2022). The co-design exercise will span 3 sessions of one-hour to one-hour-thirty minutes over the span of the fall 2024 season. Each session will be recorded and transcribed with the additional journal notes from the designer-researcher.

Once the co-design exercise is completed, the research findings from the sessions will shape into a co-design guidebook. The guidebook will outline the outcomes of the co-design process to be used by public servants in Canadian government organisations.

4.9 Implementation

The Co-Design Strategy aims to promote a shift toward a human-centered approach to public service, embedding the core principles of this strategy in the planning, design and delivery of government policies, programs and services, as well as performance reporting and results evaluation.

4.10 Evaluation

Evaluation of the co-design process will be conducted to determine whether the project objectives were reached. For this strategy, the objective of co-design is to generate ideas, validate concepts, and empower participants related to a specific opportunity or issue. The evaluation process will consist of: (1) considering evaluation from the beginning of the co-design process; (2) aligning expectations based on selected and defined evaluation criteria; (3) evaluating based on journal notes, recordings, and transcriptions; (4) interpreting results based on designer's reflection; (5) communicating the evaluation results to participant group (Wang et al., 2022).

As an evaluative approach, designer's reflection will be conducted. This assessment is most frequently used and is based on the designer-researcher's opinions of the co-design process which makes the evaluation subjective and biased (Wang et al., 2022). Data collection for this assessment will be based on journal entries written by the designer-researcher when learning and conducting the co-design exercise. Comparing journal data with quotes from the recordings will add to the claimed findings. Reading back key findings to participants to ensure trustworthiness and legitimacy of the recordings will also apply.

4.11 Contributions and Conclusion

This strategy will generate both academic insights and practical applications. For academic contributions, this research will add to the ongoing study of humanist design in public service structures and practice in Canada, emphasising its potential as a transformative force for positive societal change. Through the examination and synthesis of cross-case insights paired with theoretical literature, this research and strategy seeks to enrich the understanding of how humanistic design perspectives can be integrated, assessed, and established through the human-centred design approach of co-design within a Canadian public service organisation.

The practical contributions of this research will extend through the development of a co-design lookbook. The lookbook offers a structured approach to a co-design strategy within a Canadian public service organisation, empowering teams, and individuals to set targeted learning objectives and envision the necessary knowledge and skills for development. This approach, examining organisations, programs, initiatives, and policies engaged in co-design as a human-centred practice, can influence Canadian public service organisations by making co-design notions, processes, and thinking recognisable and digestible. This research, in return, will inform Canadian public service organisations, enabling them to refine and advance future operations to better serve citizen needs. Ultimately, this co-design strategy and guidebook, shaped by design humanism and human-centred approaches of research, creation, and analysis aims to create tangible value that drives innovation and positive social change.

Chapter 5: Co-Design Exercise

5.1 Research findings on co-designing within a public service organisation

This chapter represents the process and collection of findings to the co-design exercise introduced in the previous chapter's co-design strategy. According to Metro North Health's Co-Design Process Steps, step 1 debuted in June 2024 with the three co-design sessions (steps 2 and 3) starting in late September and ended in early November. Steps 4 through 6 went from November 2024 till January 2025. The process centered primarily on three co-design sessions; however, all members of the co-design team remained in contact throughout, collaborating both within and outside of the formal sessions.

5.2 Step 1: Engage and Align

The co-design process starts before the exercise sessions, with many months of preparation before any activities can take place. Designing with colleagues meant that co-design, its core principles, definition, process, and methods were introduced casually through work events and meetings prior to participatory sessions.

The co-design process began during an all-staff meeting at Impact Canada in June, where 64 team members gathered for a three-day bonding retreat. Prior to initiating the co-design planning, I had informal conversations with colleagues across various business lines, including behavioral scientists, policy advisors, managers, student interns, public administrators, and fellow designers. Participating in the retreat provided valuable insights into the members of Impact Canada, allowing me to better understand the community, work culture, social dynamics, and the broader context of my work unit when we were all together in person. From these discussions, I gathered that many members were eager to break down the siloed nature of government work, fostering greater collaboration and communication. This made me realize the importance of first engaging in internal co-design before extending the process to the public. Promoting human-centered design and its associated humanistic perspectives within the public service will ultimately lead to more accessible, empathetic, and participatory solutions for the public.

As I began to map out the co-design process, it became clear that the scale and complexity of the organisation (with its wide diversity of roles, experiences, and perspectives within it) posed significant challenges. Attempting to engage the entire unit in a participatory process would not only be unrealistic but risk superficial engagement. More importantly, involving the public at this early stage would have been premature and inappropriate. Co-design is not simply about inviting people to the table; it requires the right conditions, tools, and relationships to ensure that participation is meaningful and constructive. If done carelessly (with the wrong methods, expectations, or without trust) it can have unintended consequences of exclusion and frustration, despite the best of intentions (McKercher, 2020). With this in mind, I deliberately narrowed the scope of the project and chose to start with a smaller, internal group. This more focused approach created the space for meaningful engagement, trust-building, and experimentation—critical elements for laying the groundwork for a participatory culture within the organisation. Through a series of initial meetings, I introduced human-centered principles and co-design to a group of interested colleagues—colleagues who felt underrepresented in the mass of public service and wished to express themselves outside of their day-to-day responsibilities. By using consistent language over the course of a few months, I was able to spark curiosity and provide participants with a clear understanding of what to expect. Ultimately, I assembled a team of four co-designers,

representing a variety of hierarchical positions within the unit, including a senior illustrator/visual designer, senior multimedia communications officer, senior advisor, senior lead, and myself as the designer/researcher.

5.3 Step 2: Explore and Connect & Step 3: Imagine and Decide

Postponing judgment on ideas, designers use brainstorming sessions to vigorously generate possibilities for solving the design problem. Based on the criteria listed on the design rationale and the insights gathered from the research, several concepts were generated through the first two co-design sessions.

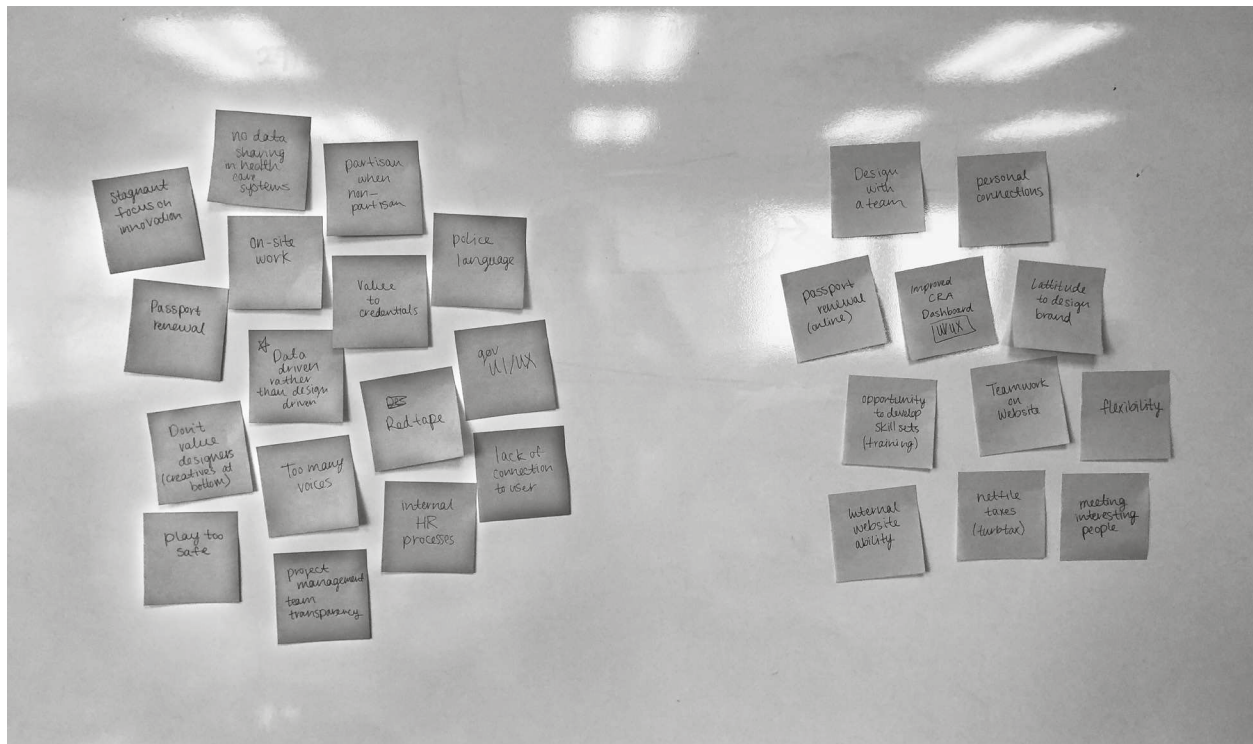
5.3.1 Co-Design Session 1

Before the first session, I sent a preparatory email with reminders and creative tools to inspire participants, following Kelly Ann McKercher's Model of Care for Co-Design (2020).

The initial session set the stage for collaboration within the Impact Canada team to develop a practical design output with social impact. By bringing together individuals from various backgrounds and functions, the project aimed to break down operational conventions and incorporate diverse perspectives.

We began with an informative presentation that outlined the context and challenges we face as public servants, the key principles of co-design, and its significance for the public service (Annex B). Following the introduction, I explained the co-design process using the Metro North Health Co-Design Framework. We started by conducting an experience bank activity to break the ice. Participants, equipped with paper and pens, were asked to fold a piece of paper into six sections and write down three positive and three negative experiences they have had with public service organization products or services, whether personal or general. Afterward, they shared their experiences aloud as I transcribed them onto post-it notes and categorized them on a whiteboard,

Figure 1 Experience Bank

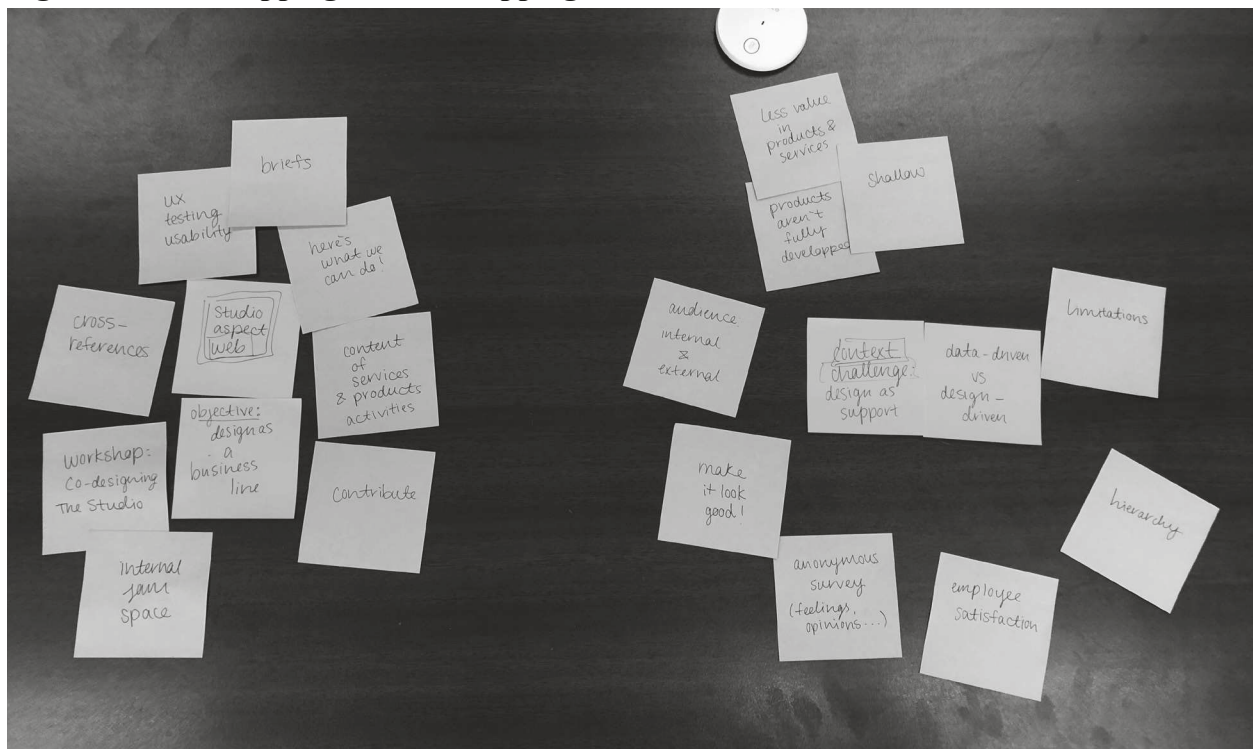


separating the positive from the negative. This exercise stimulated a dynamic group discussion.

After completing this activity, we chose an opportunity for co-design based on the experience bank answers: the data-driven vs. design-driven dilemma. We connected other related post-it notes to this central challenge, particularly focusing on the idea of design as a support function rather than a creative strategic tool for innovation. This naturally led us into the next step of the process where we mind-mapped different audiences, contexts, outcomes, and opportunities to explore. The session concluded on this point.

I recorded the conversation and took notes throughout the session. Following the session, I drafted a briefing note summarizing the first session to prepare for the second, where we delved further into steps 2 and 3 of the co-design process (Annex A).

Figure 2 Mind-Mapping and Re-Mapping



5.3.2 Co-Design Session 2

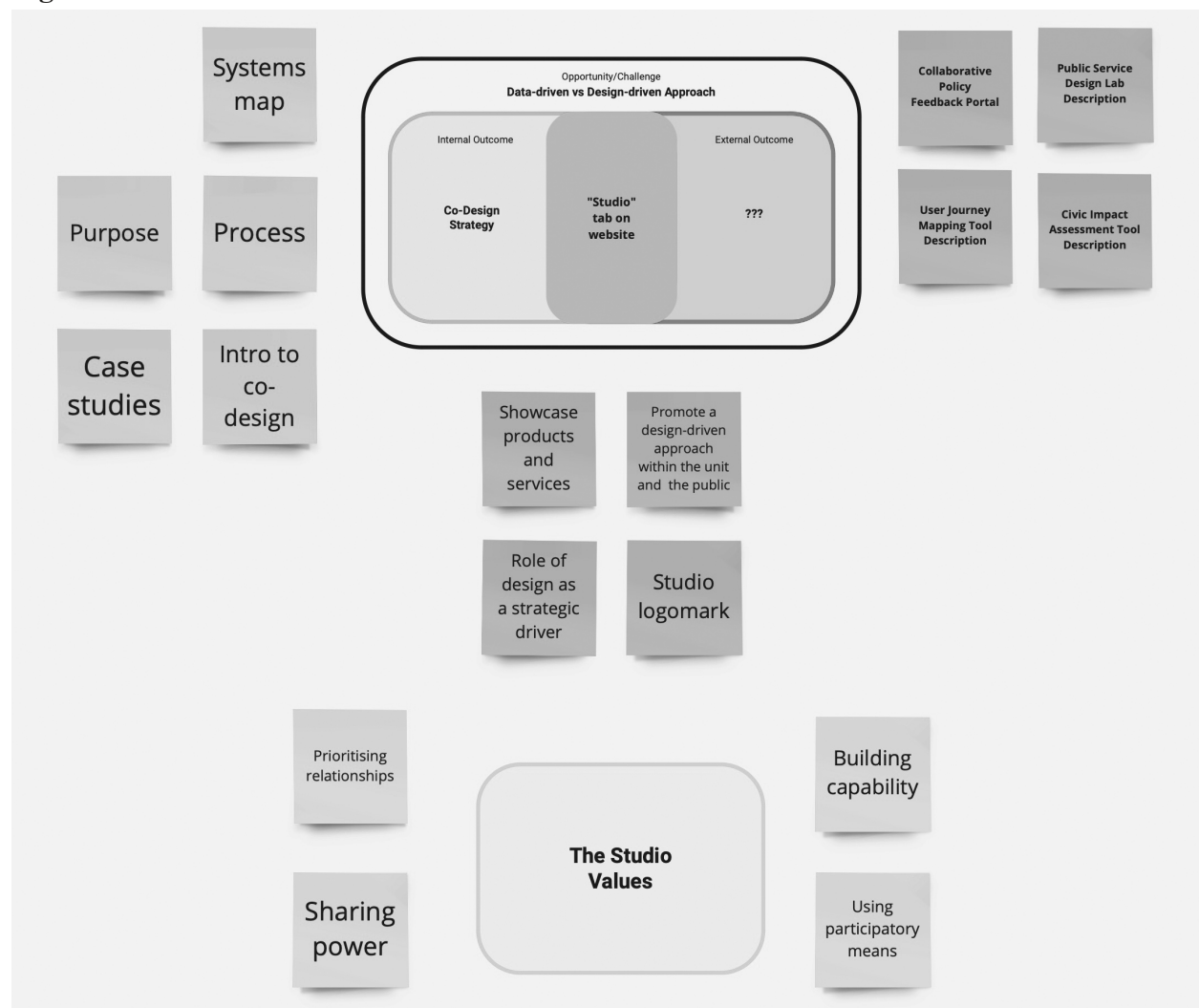
The second co-design session took place online, which required a different approach. Since I live and work in Montreal, while my co-designers are based in Ottawa, remote participation was necessary. The advantage of this format was that it allowed everyone to participate, regardless of whether they were in the office or working remotely. Although the session was brief—lasting only 40 minutes—it was highly effective.

To engage participants, I prepared a Miro board that built on ideas from our previous session, facilitating real-time collaboration and idea-sharing. I posed several questions about the desired outcomes for our project and the target audiences we aimed to communicate with, following Steps 2 and 3 of the Metro North Health Guideline. The session sparked a productive discussion and opened new possibilities for our work. The final outcome of the session was an outline of design deliverables: (A) the Impact Canada Studio Logomark to pair with the other Impact Canada business line logomarks; (B) an Impact Canada Studio Landing Page communicating our services, team, business line branding, approach, principles,

process, and portfolio; (C) an Impact Canada Studio Lookbook reflecting the landing page paired with more in depth information; and (D) an Impact Canada Studio Systems Map reflecting our impact as a multidisciplinary design team on the internal and external level through our design-driven approach.

In the end, I prepared a summary of the session (Annex A) and proceed to Step 4 by creating low-fidelity wireframes. These were presented at the next co-design session to ensure everyone is aligned on our direction moving forward.

Figure 3 Miro Board



5.4 Step 4: Create and Test

I started systems mapping after the second co-design session to visualise all elements of the project. Who is involved, why do we do what we do, what are our services and beliefs, and how does it all comes together? The goal was to determine how these components should visually communicate and how we could best represent ourselves in the mapping. Such a map is to be used as a communications tool to continue the implementation and deep understanding of human-centered values for strategic planning and public service operations within Impact Canada, but also for others to get a better understanding of the Studio team and our design-driven approach.

After systems mapping the basics, I went on to sketching and brainstorming potential iconography for this project's logomark. Impact Canada operates as a house of brands, with each business line having its own distinct branding while maintaining visual coherence with the overall brand. Our goal is to create a unique business line branding for the Studio, starting with a logomark. I'm drawing inspiration from the humanist symbol of the circle (like Julien Hébert's use of circles in his graphic practice). We also wish to highlight the Studio's multidisciplinary and creative strengths as a co-design group. With the co-design team, I prototyped multiple rounds and gained feedback specifically from the illustrator in the group that specialises in visual identity, continuously refining and iterating before session three.

5.4.1 Precedents

To test and validate the feasibility of the concepts generated from step 4, a brief research on current, socially-conscious design studio websites was conducted. The features and experiences of the following precedents are proven to be relevant in their marketing approaches to the co-design deliverables. Some of the precedents and related specifications that support the concept direction are described below.

Meilleur Monde: Meilleur Monde is a Montreal-based cooperative specialising in human-centered service design. They help organisations enhance user experiences by aligning services with user needs, values, and organisational goals. Their approach involves in-depth user research, service diagnostics, and iterative prototyping to create or refine services. The cooperative emphasises collaboration with clients, ensuring solutions are both innovative and practical, and aims to empower organisations—particularly those in public and social sectors—to deliver impactful services. Meilleur Monde's projects range from improving healthcare services to designing community spaces and government services (Meilleur Monde, 2024). Not only does Meilleur Monde's socially-conscious design approach and practice influenced the following prototypes, but their user-friendly website did as well. The overall user interface is minimal and straightforward paired with an approachable visual aesthetic of rounded corners, a jovial colour scheme, and a geometric sans serif typeface. The user experience of Meilleur Monde's website will inspire the design of the Impact Canada Studio landing page.

Superdot: Superdot Studio, based in Basel, specialises in modular information design, offering creative solutions to visualise complex data. Their services integrate design, communication, and data science, producing innovative, visually striking materials for both analog and digital media. A highlight of their offerings is the "Visualizing Complexity" handbook, which outlines a modular design system to transform complex data into clear and engaging visuals. The studio also provides online courses, workshops, and products like posters and design books aimed at enhancing data storytelling and creativity (Superdot, 2024). Superdot's user-friendly interface and user-experience, for its visually grided approach, smiley face logomark, and interactive videos, make their work stand-out. A large take-away of their web experience was their system map communicating the impact of their work. This will be of inspiration to the the Impact Canada Studio systems map.

Portable: Portable is a design strategy and digital innovation studio based in Australia, specializing in human-centered approaches to tackle complex societal challenges. They work across sectors like justice, mental health, education, and public policy, blending design thinking with data science to create impactful solutions. Portable fosters innovation through collaboration, using co-design

and research to improve systems, services, and experiences for organisations and communities. Their projects often focus on empowering government and business leaders to navigate change and address pressing issues with creative, evidence-based strategies (Portable, 2024).

Portable's commitment to positive change is evident in their web interface, particularly through their language and tone. Like Meilleur Monde and Superdot, they emphasise a service-oriented approach, prioritising the act of serving others. This serves as a reminder for the Impact Canada Studio assets to maintain a consistent tone and language across all touchpoints. The focus should shift from superficial language to showcasing tangible projects and actionable initiatives that demonstrate the work being done.

5.4.2 Sketching, Illustrating, Wireframing, Typesetting, and Systems Mapping

The following four design deliverables (A, B, C, & D) are the outcome of the first and second co-design sessions. The following are descriptions of said design deliverables:

A Impact Canada Studio Logomark: The Impact Canada Studio logomark aims to reflect creativity, collaboration, and innovation. Its clean, modern design uses geometric shapes to convey progress and transformation. Aligned with the Impact Canada brand, it incorporates the same colour palette and style, ensuring consistency across business lines. The logomark symbolises the Studio's role as a hub for creativity and impactful solutions, standing out while complementing the broader Impact Canada identity.

B Impact Canada Studio Landing Page: The Impact Canada Studio landing page is a vibrant, user-friendly platform that showcases who we are, what we do, and how we work. It provides an overview of our services (highlighting the Studio's offerings, from campaign branding and internal communications to website platform development and user experience testing), our team (a dedicated section introducing our team of experts, complete with profiles and insights into their roles), our approach and principles (users can explore our core philosophy, emphasising collaboration, accessibility, and positive impact), our process (a step-by-step breakdown of our innovation process demonstrates how we turn ideas into action), and our portfolio (showcasing the impact of our work, including case studies and success stories that highlight the Studio's role in driving meaningful change).

C Impact Canada Studio Lookbook: The Impact Canada Studio lookbook is an in-depth resource designed to complement the Studio's landing page, offering a deeper dive into our services, philosophy, and projects. Addressed to our partners, this lookbook acts as an invitation to our Studio, acting as a menu for our partners to better understand us and what they want out of our collaboration together.

D Impact Canada Studio Systems Map: The Impact Canada Studio systems map visually captures the Studio's approach as a multidisciplinary design team, highlighting its interconnected methods and values. This user-friendly, easy-to-navigate map positions the Studio as a vital connector and innovator, bridging disciplines and sectors to create sustainable positive change.

5.5 Step 5: Co-Implement and Co-Evaluate

This section documents the third session in which the co-design team evaluated concepts for the

co-design strategy's assets based on their professional backgrounds. The feedback and comments from these evaluations was used for modifying and refining the concepts to better meet user needs.

5.5.1 Co-Design Session 3

The month of October proved to be hectic and busy for my co-designers, so we weren't able to get a third session in until early November. The third session, like the second session, took place online. Lasting a short but productive and exciting 30 minutes, we reviewed creative output prototypes for our Studio website, systems map, lookbook, and visual identity. The goal was to gather feedback to refine each element, ensuring they align with the Studio's strategy and effectively convey its brand and operations. We created a shared document where everyone can contribute to the landing page content, aiming to have a preliminary version ready by late November.

5.5.2 Logomark Evaluations

Our senior visual designer and illustrator reviewed the initial concepts for the Studio logomark, drawing on his experience designing the other logomarks for Impact Canada. His expertise in illustration and visual identity makes him a valuable collaborator in the early development of the Studio logomark. Complete documentation of these evaluations can be found in Appendix D. Below is a summary:

Round 1

- Appropriate use of Impact Canada branding (maintaining colours and single icon approach);
- Humanist symbol is too abstract (maybe we should pivot to a design tool);
- Focus on thicker lines to mirror other business line symbols.

Round 2

- Extrapolate the idea of design and show a process—mixing process and concept together;
- Try other options showcasing design tools, information accessibility, or the Studio's place in the heart of Impact Canada.

Round 3

- Concept of a pencil works best as a final option (visually align it to the other business line symbols).

5.5.3 Landing Page Wireframe Evaluations

During our third co-design session, three of the four participating co-designers came together to critique the early prototypes of the Studio's landing page. The open discussion generated valuable feedback and sparked ideas for refinement. Key suggestions included transforming the "Our Services" section into a toggle feature to accommodate a broader range of services and descriptions, making it more interactive and informative. The co-designers also proposed expanding the role of case studies, reimagining them as blog-style features to showcase the Studio's approach and emphasise the underlying purpose of our work. Additionally, they recommended simplifying the "Our Approach" section to make it more accessible and user-friendly, and exploring new visual opportunities beyond the traditional Impact Canada branding to create a fresh, creative identity for the Studio.

A month later, a fourth informal discussion was held with two co-designers to review the progress of these prototypes. This session marked a significant shift in direction for the project. After evaluating all the assets, one co-designer raised the need to step back from aligning closely

with the broader Impact Canada branding and instead focus more intentionally on the Studio's service-oriented approach to its partners. This led to several transformative decisions, including modifying the lookbook's spreads and content to better reflect this partner-focused perspective.

The landing page concept was also reimagined, with the decision to replace it with the Impact Canada Spotlight Page. This page would be part of the overall Impact Canada website as a showcase to the Studio's niche and creative content in a targeted, impactful way. Another idea that emerged was introducing Studio-branded swag as a physical representation of the Studio's internal culture, reinforcing its identity and fostering a sense of community.

Finally, the Studio shifted its audience focus. Rather than aiming to attract a broad, external audience, the team decided to narrow its scope to government departments and partners already interested in collaborating. This strategic move ensures deeper engagement with stakeholders who align with the Studio's mission and values. These iterative discussions and decisions reflect the Studio's commitment to co-design and adaptability, ensuring the final outputs authentically represent both the team's identity and the needs of its audience.

5.5.4 Lookbook Evaluations

The lookbook was generally well-received by the co-designers, with positive feedback on its overall structure and intent. However, an important critique came from one of the co-designers, who raised concerns about the tone of the lookbook. They observed that the language used to describe innovation in the public sector felt overdone, a common pitfall in similar materials. They recommended moving away from this generic tone and instead focusing on the needs and interests of our primary audience: federal departments and partners. This feedback signaled a significant shift in the writing approach for the lookbook's content, aligning it more closely with the expectations of a professional and informed audience.

In addition to the language critique, the co-designers suggested adding case studies to the guidebook and reimagining it as a menu. This new format would not only showcase the Studio's work visually but also provide practical insights and examples of the variety and impact of our projects. By including case studies, the lookbook could serve as a hybrid between a creative portfolio and a functional resource, effectively promoting the Studio's expertise and approach.

Given the decision to forgo a standalone landing page, incorporating practical elements like case studies into the lookbook offers an opportunity to highlight our methods and outcomes in a visually engaging and tangible way. This strategic change allows the lookbook to evolve into a compelling tool that supports the Studio's mission of fostering collaboration and innovation while emphasising its unique value proposition to federal departments and partners.

The next steps involve refining the prototypes by incorporating feedback, addressing any identified issues, and making iterative improvements to ensure the designs align closely with our needs and project goals.

5.6 Concept Refinements

After the evaluations, the co-designers' feedback and comments were rigorously considered and applied. As a result, three major changes were made to the design deliverables, and new refined concepts were generated. The three major changes were:

1. Tone: The tone of the design was carefully refined to align more closely with the feedback gathered during evaluations and input from the co-designers. This process involved a comprehensive revision of the language, visuals, and overall messaging to create designs that better resonated with the intended audience. These changes were aimed at enhancing clarity, professionalism, and engagement, ensuring a more cohesive and impactful presentation.

One major area of focus was the language. Based on the feedback, the tone was shifted away from overly general or clichéd descriptions of innovation in the public sector, which were seen as overdone and ineffective. In their place, concise, targeted messaging was introduced to address the unique needs and interests of federal departments and partners. The revised content now communicates directly with this audience, emphasising relevance and professionalism while avoiding generic or broad language that lacked specificity.

Visual elements in the lookbook also underwent significant enhancement to better reflect the Studio's work and identity as both creative and practical. The redesign introduced updated graphics and layouts to achieve a balance between the two. These adjustments ensure that the visual presentation feels cohesive and inviting, aligning with the expectations of the target audience.

In addition, the overall messaging was streamlined to deliver a unified and engaging narrative. Every element of the design, whether textual or visual, was carefully considered to convey the Studio's values, expertise, and unique approach authentically. This effort addressed previous inconsistencies in the designs. The revised tone integrates the co-designers' feedback, positioning the Studio as a trusted, innovative partner for federal departments and stakeholders. These refinements highlight the Studio's commitment to iterative design practices and collaborative solutions while maintaining a high design standard.

2. No More Landing Page: The decision to remove the landing page was driven by concerns and feedback from the co-design team, which highlighted that the landing page was unnecessary for our position within Impact Canada. In its original form, the landing page acted as an additional layer to the Impact Canada website, requiring users to navigate through extra clicks to reach our key content. This extra step was seen as an obstacle, particularly for users who sought quick and straightforward access to the information or services they needed.

By eliminating the landing page, the design became more streamlined, allowing users to access critical features and content directly from the Spotlight page of the Impact Canada website where all our other design deliverables could be found. This approach significantly improved the efficiency of navigation, as users could bypass unnecessary layers and get to the relevant material with fewer steps. The removal also reduced cognitive load, as the navigation became clearer and more intuitive. This change simplified the overall structure of the user experience, focusing on the most important content and making it immediately accessible. Without the additional click-through, users could engage with the content they needed faster, leading to a more seamless and effective interaction. Ultimately, the decision to forgo the landing page resulted in a design that was not only more efficient but also more user-friendly, enhancing the overall usability of the site and ensuring that it met the needs of its audience in a more direct and engaging way.

3. Focus on Services: A greater emphasis was placed on showcasing the core services offered in our lookbook, responding directly to feedback that the earlier design did not effectively highlight these essential elements. In the previous iterations, the co-design team found it difficult to quickly identify and understand the full range of services available, which diminished the overall clarity of

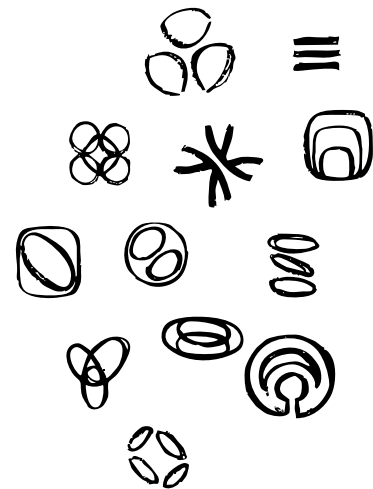
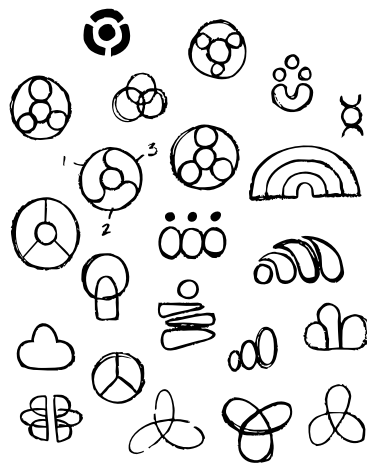
the deliverable. Recognising this issue, the updated design made it a priority to ensure that the core services were not only visible but also clearly highlighted. This was necessary, especially with our target audience being revised as stakeholders and federal partners.

The revised design focused on providing accessible descriptions of each service, ensuring that users could quickly grasp what was offered without navigating through lengthy or unclear content. Service descriptions were placed prominently, with concise, engaging language that highlights the key benefits and outcomes of each offering. To further enhance usability, additional features like hand-drawn icons, illustrations, and visual examples of each service were introduced to provide a human-touch to the lookbook, without overwhelming the user.

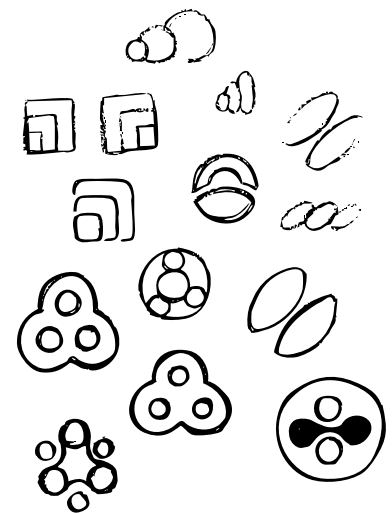
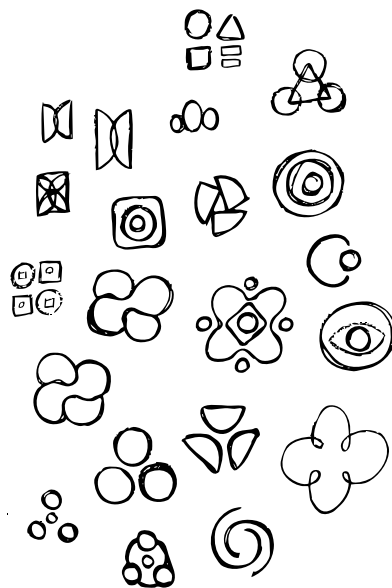
This shift in design aimed to make our co-design strategy more user-friendly by improving the overall organisation and presentation of said design deliverables. With these updates, our target audience could now easily evaluate the options available to them, gaining a clear understanding of the value we provide. This focus on clarity and accessibility was intended to make our work more relevant and useful to our audience, allowing them to make informed decisions and navigate with greater ease. Ultimately, these changes were made to enhance both the usability of the design deliverables and their ability to meet the needs of people more effectively.

Figure 4
A Logomark Sketches

Round 1
 Visual Exploration
 of our Humanist
 Design Philosophy



Round 2
 Visual Exploration
 of Layers of
 Public Service



Round 3
 Visual Exploration
 of Design Tools

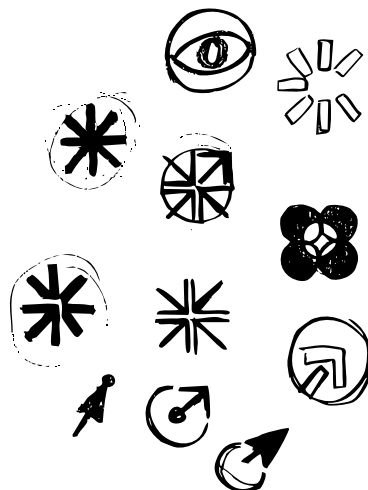
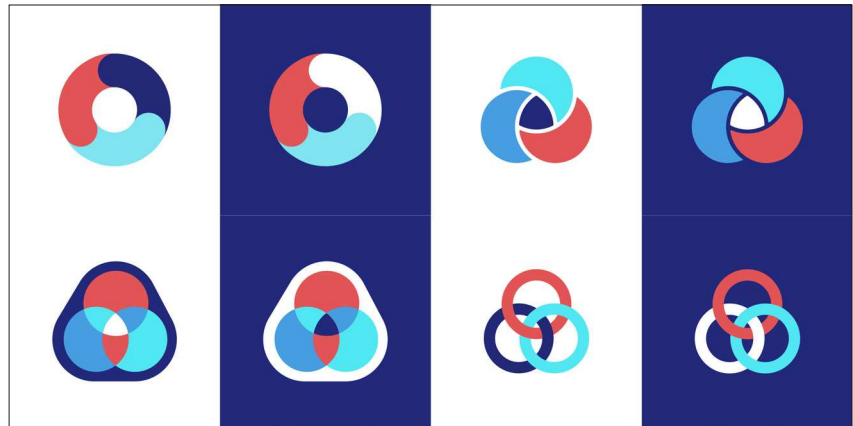
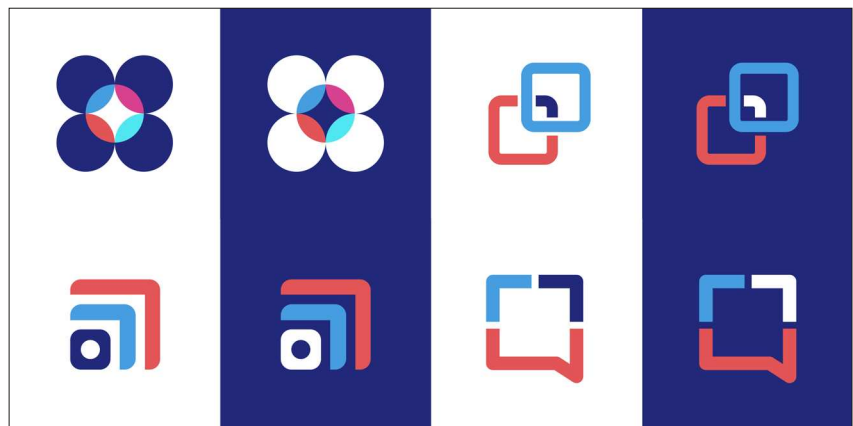


Figure 5, 6, 7
A Logomarks
Comprehensives

Round 1
 Visual Exploration
 of our Humanist
 Design Philosophy



Round 2
 Visual Exploration
 of Layers of
 Public Service



Round 3
 Visual Exploration
 of Design Tools

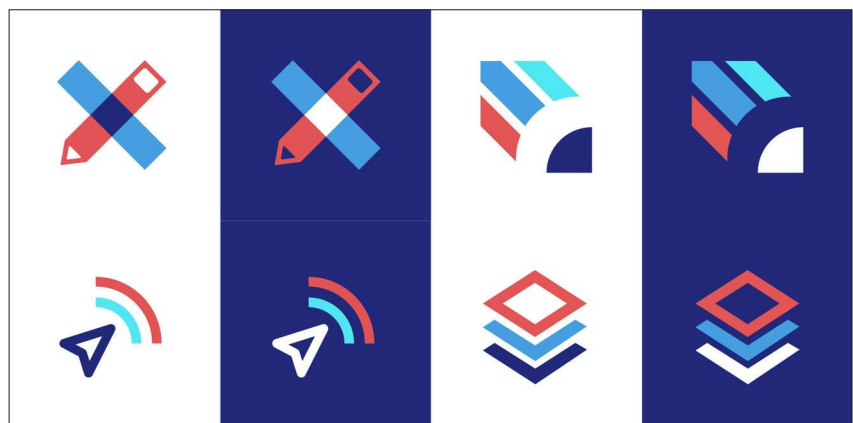


Figure 8, 9 B Landing Page Wireframes

Round 1, 2

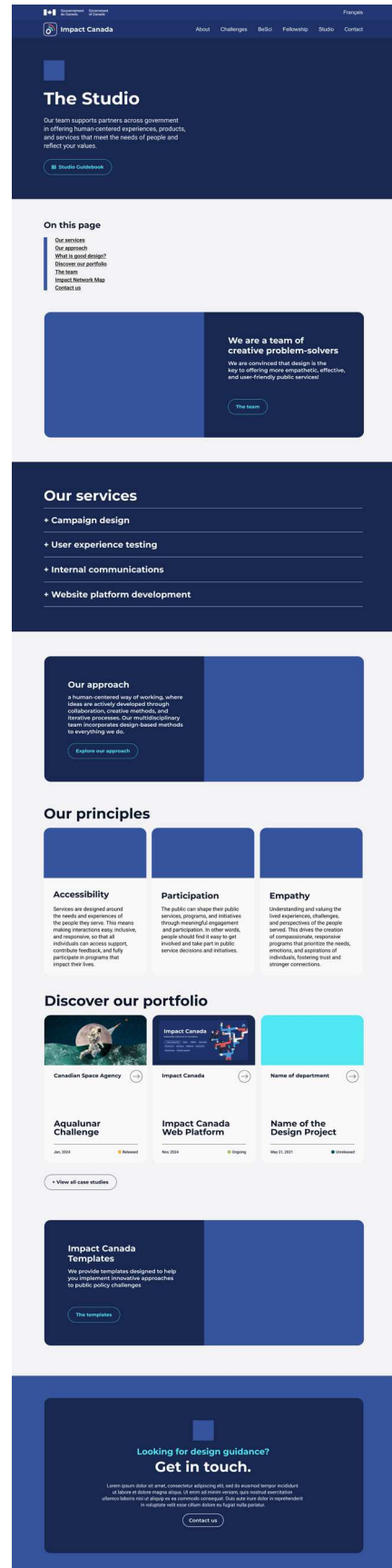
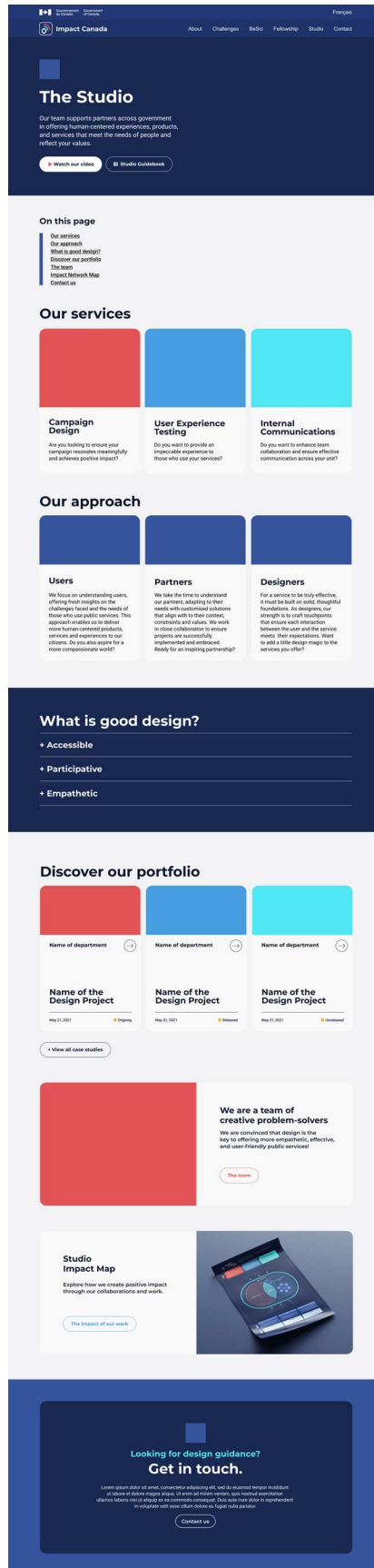


Figure 10, 11
B Landing Page
Wireframes

Round 3, 4

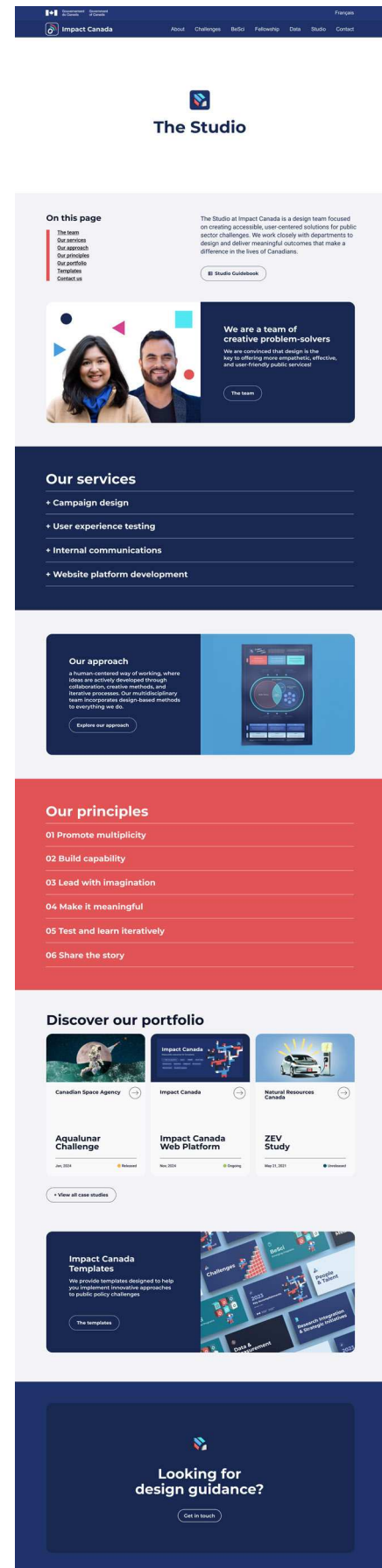
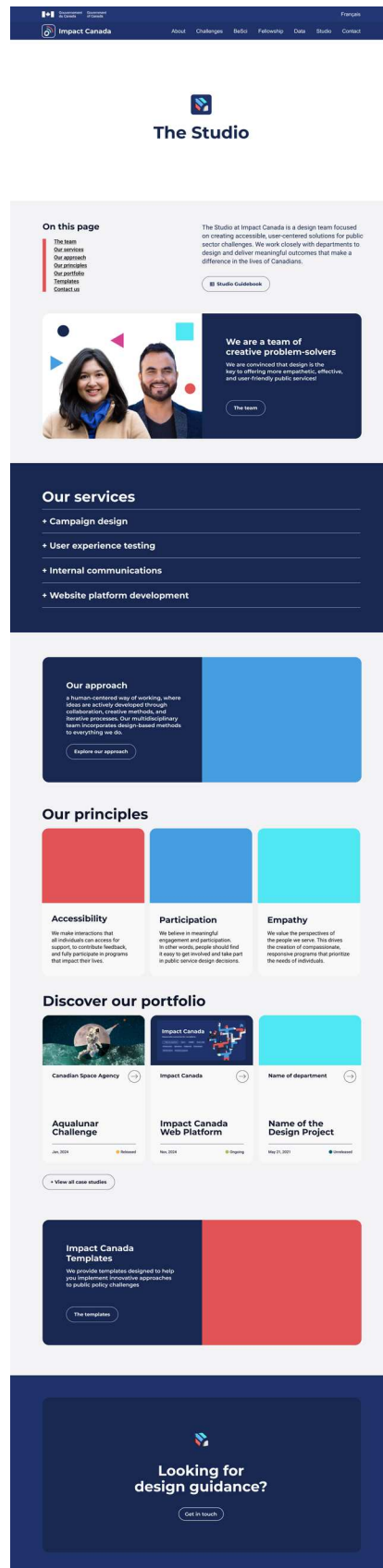


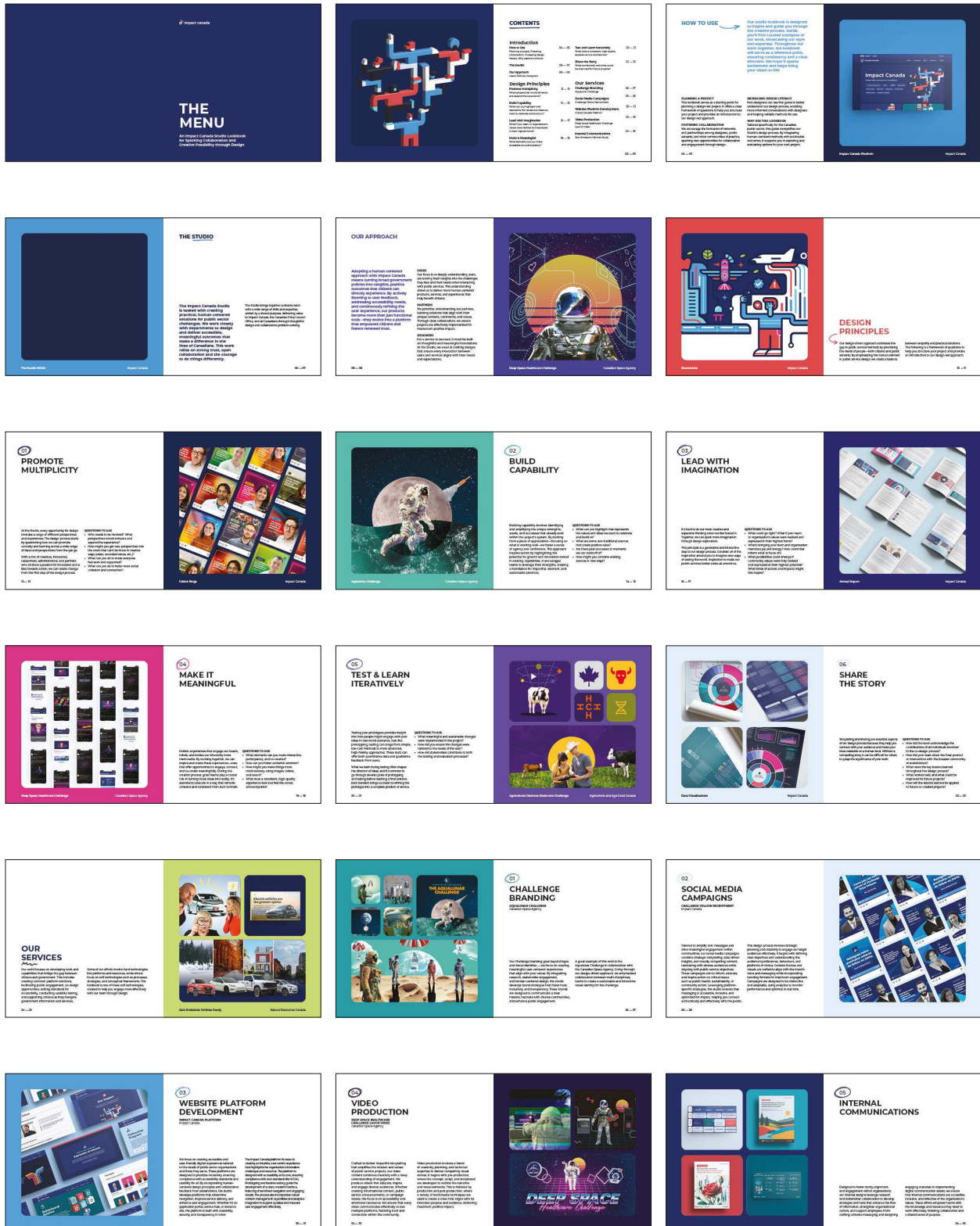
Figure 12 C Lookbook

Round 1



Figure 13 C Guidebook

Round 2



Round 1
Services
Process Timeline
System Map
Values
Approach

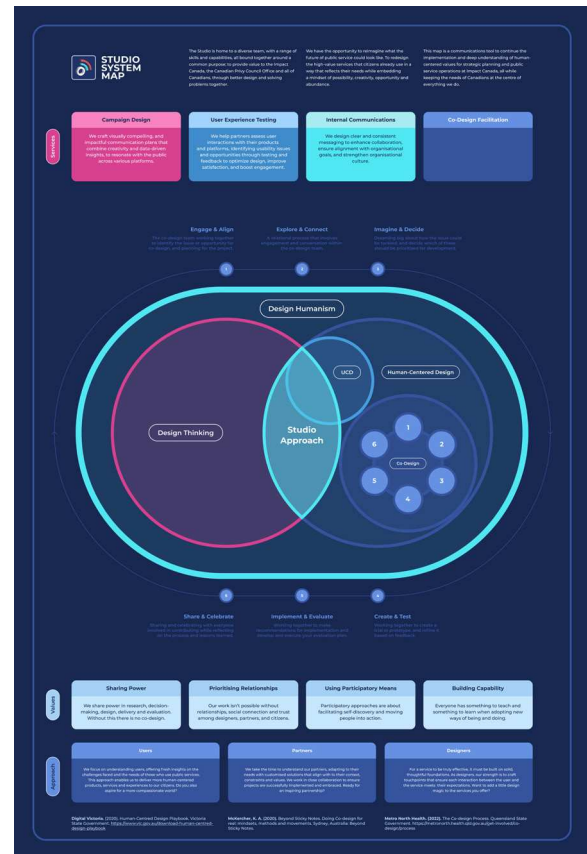


Figure 15
Round 2
 *Changed Colour Scheme
 Process Timeline
 System Map
 Services
 Approach
 Principles

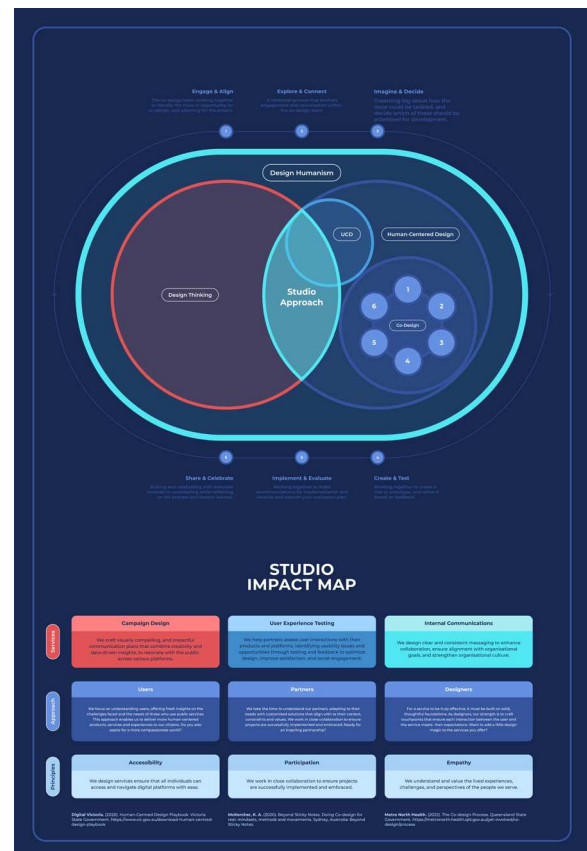


Figure 16
Round 3
 * Added Hand-written
 headings
 Services
 Process Timeline
 System Map
 Approach
 Principles

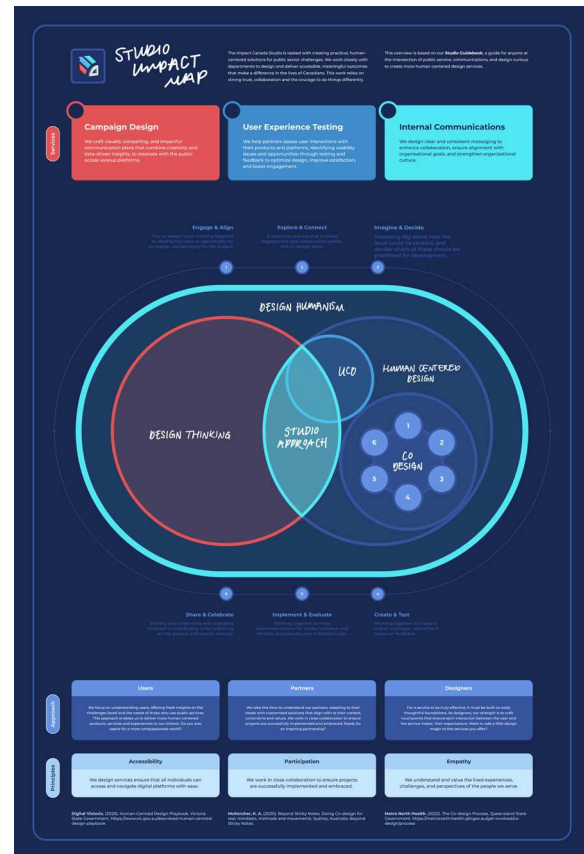
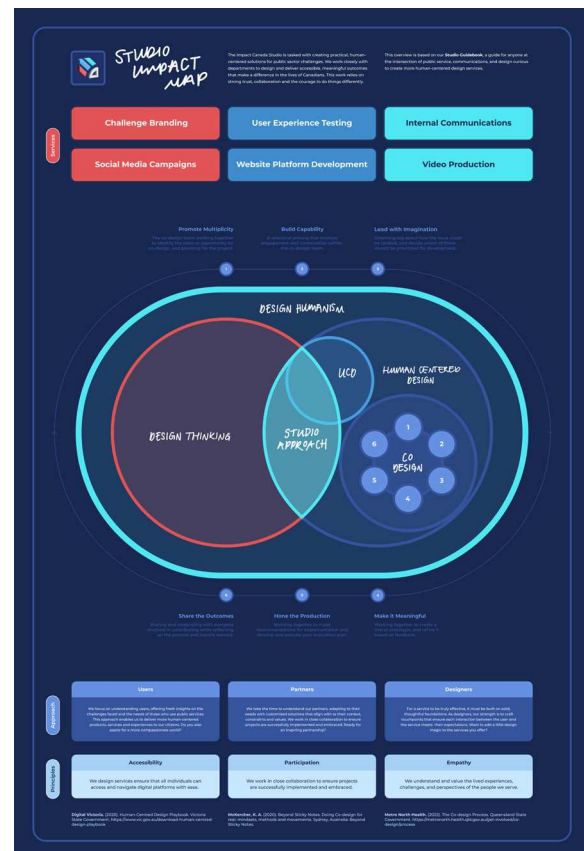


Figure 17
Round 4
 * Added Services
 Process Timeline
 System Map
 Approach
 Principles



Chapter 6: Final Design of a Co-Design Strategy

6.1 Final Design Outputs

After a brief literature review, case study research, co-design exercise, and user evaluations, final designs based on the co-design strategy were generated. By deeply understanding and defining the design problem, the imbalance between the traditional public service data-driven approach with a more human-centered design-driven approach, we created designs that truly capture the Studio culture and enhance the value of our work. This co-design process demonstrated the usefulness of a human-centered approach in generating meaningful designs.

The final design deliverables are parts of a whole co-design strategy. Together the Studio mark, landing page, lookbook, and systems map reflect the goals of accessibility, empathy, and participation stipulated in the co-design strategy (Chapter 4). These designs work together to foster a human-centered culture within Impact Canada, humanizing policies and practices to improve accessibility, and enabling public participation where feasible and appropriate, with the ultimate goal to enable public trust. These designs ensure Studio services are accessible and inclusive; understanding and appreciating the lived experiences, challenges, and perspectives of those served; and enabling citizens to engage meaningfully with public services. The following descriptions explain the final co-design outputs.

6.2 Impact Canada Studio Mark

The Impact Canada Studio mark aims to reflect the co-design team's values. Its clean, modern design uses rounded geometric shapes to convey progress all while being easy to distinguish from various applications, increasing accessibility. Aligned with the Impact Canada brand, it incorporates the same colour palette and style, ensuring consistency across business lines. The mark symbolises the Studio's role as a hub for creativity and impactful solutions, standing out while complementing the broader Impact Canada identity. The Studio mark is used across assets and is versatile to all platforms and encompasses all aspects of the Studio philosophy with the notion that less is more when it comes to our designs. The mark is an invitation for the public and our federal partners to work with us.

A Studio-specific mark was essential to meeting the needs of the co-design team. Throughout the co-design process and sessions, my co-designers consistently emphasized the importance of establishing a distinct visual identity for our Studio. They believed that while data-driven approaches are commonly used in public service organizations, there was a need to counterbalance this with a strong, recognizable Studio presence. This distinction would allow the Studio to stand out as an entity in its own right while still maintaining a clear connection to the broader Impact Canada unit. By creating a unique mark, we aimed to reinforce the Studio's identity, ensuring that it remains both an integrated part of the organization and a symbol of its innovative and collaborative approach.

6.3 Impact Canada Studio Landing Page

The Impact Canada Studio landing page is a vibrant, user-friendly platform that showcases who we are, what we do, and how we work. It provides an overview of our services (highlighting the Studio's offerings, from campaign branding and internal communications to website platform development and user experience testing), our team (a dedicated section introducing our team of experts, complete with profiles and insights into their roles), our approach and principles (users can explore our core philosophy, emphasising collaboration, accessibility, and positive impact),

our process (a step-by-step breakdown of our innovation process demonstrates how we turn ideas into action), and our portfolio (showcasing the impact of our work, including case studies and success stories that highlight the Studio's role in driving meaningful change).

The landing page was originally considered a crucial component of the overall co-design strategy, as it was envisioned to serve as a central hub for communicating the Studio's purpose, approach, and offerings. However, as the co-design process evolved, the team ultimately decided to scrap the landing page in favor of a more tangible and accessible alternative. After careful consideration and discussion, the team concluded that the lookbook would be a more practical and effective tool for conveying the Studio's offerings. Unlike a landing page, which requires ongoing maintenance and digital engagement, the lookbook provides a structured, visually compelling, and easily shareable format that better aligns with the needs of both internal and external stakeholders. This shift in strategy reflects the co-design team's commitment to prioritizing clarity, usability, and impact in how the Studio presents itself.

6.4 Impact Canada Studio Lookbook

The Impact Canada Studio lookbook is a thoughtfully curated, in-depth resource designed to complement the Studio's landing page by offering a deeper exploration of our services, philosophy, and projects. While the landing page serves as a quick introduction to the Studio's work, the lookbook provides a more immersive experience, offering insights into our approach, methodologies, and the value we bring to our collaborations. It is intentionally crafted to serve as both an informative guide and an invitation, welcoming our partners into the Studio's way of working and helping them navigate the opportunities available for collaboration.

At its core, the lookbook functions as a menu of sorts, allowing partners to gain a clearer understanding of what the Studio offers and how our expertise can be leveraged to support their goals. By outlining our capabilities in detail—ranging from co-design processes and behavioral insights to experimentation and innovation strategies—the lookbook empowers partners to make informed decisions about their engagement with the Studio. It fosters a shared understanding of expectations and possibilities, ultimately strengthening the foundation for meaningful and effective partnerships.

The lookbook features a front and back cover adorned with the Studio's mark, serving as a recognizable visual identifier, and contains 34 inside pages. The reader is first introduced to the foundational sections, which include a table of contents, a "how to use" guide, an introduction to the Studio, and an overview of our human-centered design approach within Canadian public services. These introductory spreads provide essential context, preparing the reader for the deeper exploration of the Studio's work that follows. Next, the lookbook presents an introduction to our design principles, which are rooted in humanist perspectives. This section consists of six spreads, each dedicated to one of the Studio's core design principles. These principles also serve as sequential steps in our co-design process, drawing inspiration from Metro North Health's Co-Design Process (2022). Each principle/step is accompanied by a brief description, key questions to consider during the co-design process, and a visual representation of our work, helping readers connect theory to practice. The final section of the lookbook introduces the Studio's range of services. This segment outlines our five primary areas of focus, including branding, social media campaigns, website platform development, and video production. Each spread showcases a visual example of a specific service alongside a written explanation, encouraging readers to reflect on their own needs and consider how they might translate them into compelling visual narratives.

Through this structured flow, the lookbook serves as both a guide and an inspiration, equipping readers with the knowledge and insights to engage with the Studio in meaningful ways.

To ensure accessibility and ease of use, the lookbook has been developed in both print and digital formats. The print version provides a high-quality, tangible resource that can be used in meetings, workshops, and presentations, allowing for direct engagement and discussion. Meanwhile, the digital version offers an interactive and easily shareable format, ensuring broader accessibility and the ability to update content as needed. This dual-format approach ensures that partners can engage with the lookbook in a way that best suits their needs, whether they prefer a physical document for reference or a digital version for quick navigation and on-the-go access.

Beyond being a simple informational tool, the lookbook plays a crucial role in shaping the narrative of the Impact Canada Studio. It conveys our commitment to innovation, collaboration, and human-centered design, reinforcing the idea that our work is not just about delivering services but about co-creating meaningful solutions with our partners. By bridging the gap between information and engagement, the lookbook serves as a vital touchpoint, fostering alignment, inspiring collaboration, and ensuring that every partnership with the Studio is built on a strong and shared understanding of purpose and potential.

6.5 Impact Canada Studio Systems Map

The Impact Canada Studio systems map is a visually representation of the Studio's multidisciplinary design approach, illustrating the interconnected methods, values, and strategies that define our work. Designed as a user-friendly guide, the map highlights the Studio's role as a vital connector—bridging disciplines and expertise to foster sustainable, positive change. By making complex systems more accessible and visually engaging, the map serves as a key tool for understanding the Studio's contributions to innovation and collaboration within the public sector.

Presented in a large-format poster, the piece invites viewers in office and online from our website to engage with the Studio's work in a way that is both informative and memorable. Its size and scale are intentional, enhancing its visibility and impact. Whether viewed up close for detailed exploration or from across a boardroom during meetings, the map remains legible and serves as a valuable reference point. This adaptability ensures that the piece functions not just as a passive display but as an active tool that can be incorporated into discussions, brainstorming sessions, and strategy meetings.

More than just an informational graphic, the poster plays a role in shaping the aesthetic and cultural environment in which it is displayed. Corporate and institutional settings are often characterized by minimal design presence, making the introduction of a visually rich piece a deliberate act of positive change. By integrating design elements into these traditionally sterile spaces, the poster fosters engagement, sparks curiosity, and enhances the sense of connection among the office culture. This infusion of design creates a more immersive in-office experience, reinforcing the human-centered values that drive the Studio's approach.

Beyond its practical function, the poster embodies the principles of humanist design, using visual storytelling to inspire thought and conversation. It introduces new theoretical frameworks and methodologies in an accessible format, encouraging deeper reflection on the role of design in problem-solving and innovation. By elevating both the aesthetic and day-to-day of its environment, the poster not only enhances workplace culture but also contributes to the well-being of those who interact with it. Through this lens, design becomes more than a tool for creativity—it becomes a means of fostering human connection, inspiring action, and making a lasting impact on both individuals and organisations.

6.6 Practical Qualities

A critical aspect of these designs lies in their chosen formats, which encompass both digital and print mediums. Accessibility plays a vital role in this context, as it ensures that the designs can be utilised by a diverse audience regardless of their preferred or required medium. By considering both digital and print formats, designers can account for various ways these materials might be accessed, whether through a screen or a printed document. This dual-format approach not only broadens usability but also enhances inclusivity, allowing the content to effectively meet the needs of different users and situations.

As designs of the Studio's internal culture, they entice audiences to read about the work and understand/remember presented information. The systems map, for example, is intended to be printed and displayed in the work environment. Fostering a material culture embellished by design pieces related to the corporate identity emphasises its human-centred values. Printed designs as visual communication tools are commonly used in the material culture of organisations as assistive tools in the engagement of its members. The designs become shared pieces of organisational information, a conversation starter, and a form of promotion and summarisation of collective work.

These designs aim to define meaning and organisational identity to bridge the construct between the internal layers of Impact Canada, ultimately inspiring future strategic and innovation planning. In this co-design strategy, all of the Studio's services, products, and initiatives result from the adoption of a human-centred-based strategy from the internal process. In other words, promoted external and internal products and services support the Impact Canada identity.

6.7 Formal Qualities

As for the formal characteristics of the designs, we based the colours, type, and graphic elements off the current Impact Canada style guidelines (Impact Canada Style Guide, 2022). The style elements are organised in a clear and intentional manner, illuminating insights with precision and ease to ensure the audience can effortlessly understand and read the information presented. Components like title, text, graphic elements, negative space, and colour were all considered to enrich the reading experience. The amount of copy on the designs isn't excessive and is labelled in section headings so that readers can easily navigate the content on the systems map, lookbook, and website. The graphic elements encompass the use of rounded boxes and symbols. Rounded boxes are a common element of Impact Canada products and visual assets. Colour and contrast are used to attract the gaze of the reader while also aiding in the linking of similar elements.

These designs are crafted with a human-centered approach to visual communication, ensuring that every element serves a purpose in fostering clear and meaningful engagement. By prioritizing authenticity, they establish a genuine connection with the audience, making the message more relatable and trustworthy. Consistency in design choices—such as typography, colours, contrast, and layout—further reinforces recognition, allowing for seamless understanding. Ultimately, the goal is to create visuals that not only capture attention but also enhance comprehension of human-centered principles, ensuring that the intended message is conveyed effectively. In conclusion, my research-creation isn't just about imagining a better future for Canadian public service; it's about laying the groundwork for it. By embracing human-centred design principles, we can create a future where empathy, accessibility, and participation are driving forces for change.

Figure 18
A Studio Mark

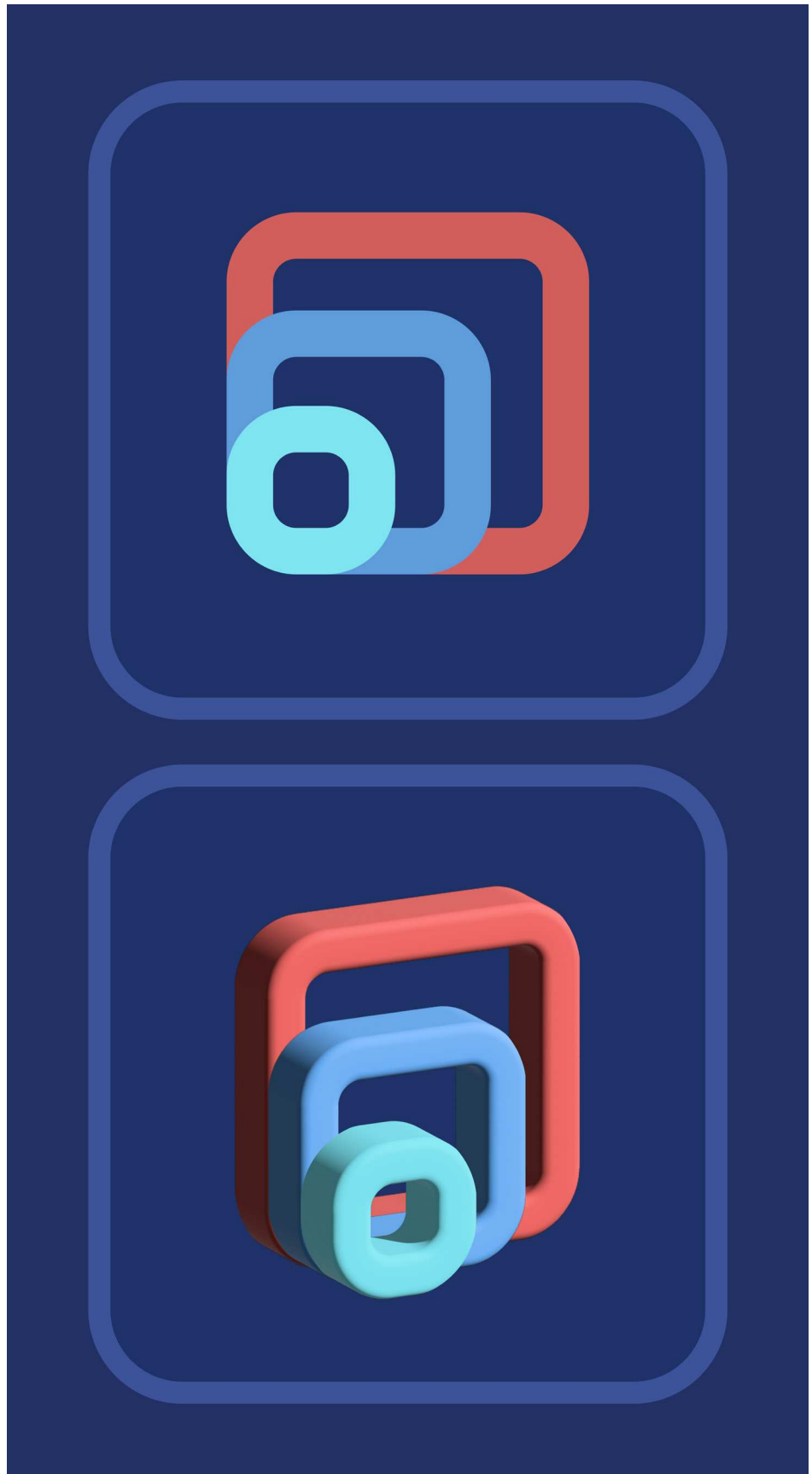


Figure 19
B Landing Page



Figure 20 C Lookbook Print



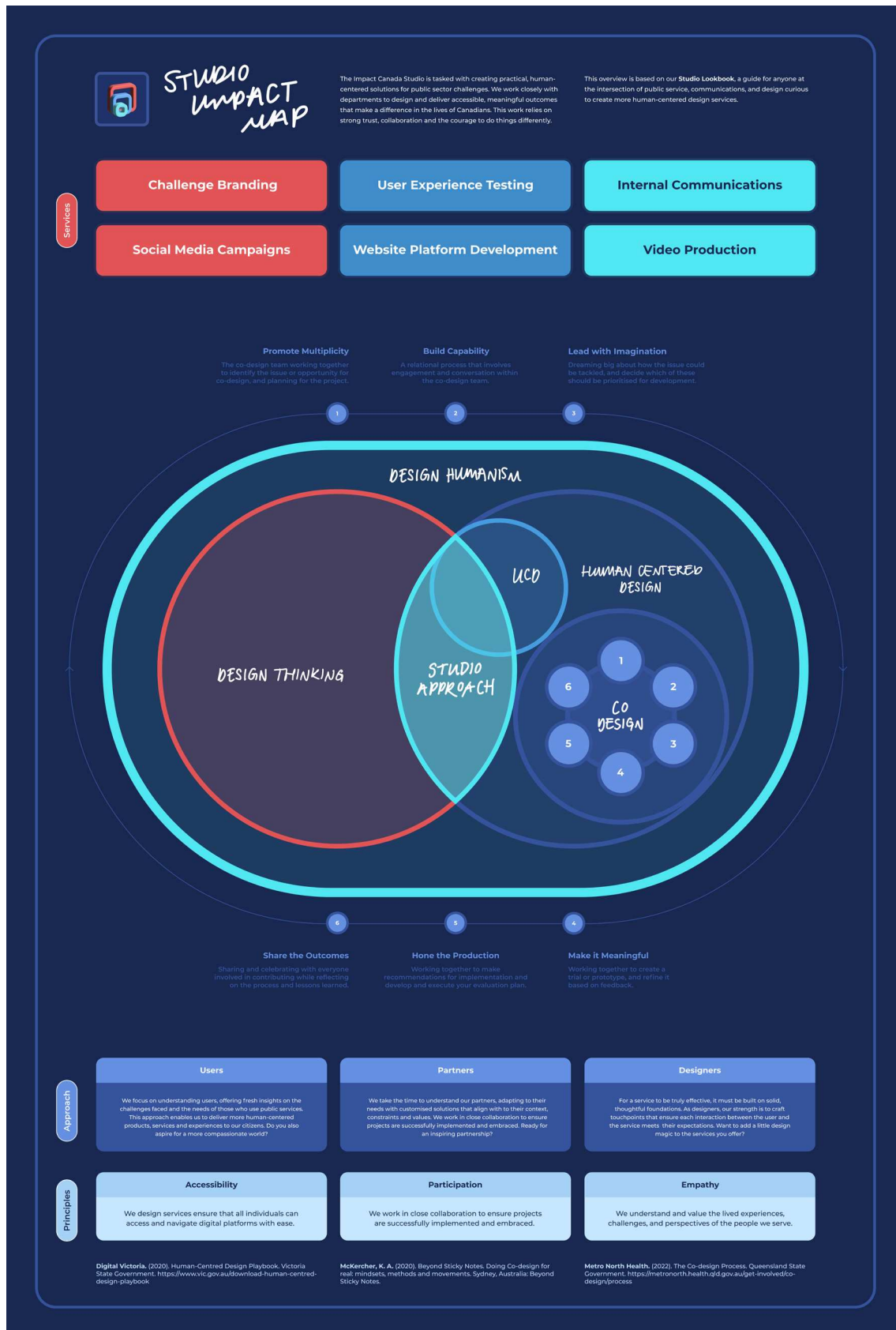
Figure 21
C Lookbook Digital



Figure 22
C Lookbook Digital



Figure 23 D Systems Map



Chapter 7: Step 6: Share and Celebrate (and Reflect)

7.1 Research analysis and reflection on co-designing within a public service organisation

Step 6 of the Metro North Health Co-Design Process is a crucial phase that focuses on sharing the results of the co-design process and celebrating the collective achievements of the team, while also acknowledging the contributions of everyone involved in the process (2022). This step is designed to not only highlight the outcomes of the collaboration but also to foster a sense of accomplishment and solidarity within the team. It serves as an opportunity to reflect on the journey, recognize individual and collective efforts, and create a space for learning and growth. An additional, yet equally important, aspect of Step 6 is the reflective component, which encourages participants to critically evaluate the process itself. This reflection involves taking stock of the lessons learned, examining what worked well, and identifying areas that could be improved for future projects. By doing so, our team can enhance our capacity for future collaboration and refine our approach to human-centered design in public service.

As part of this reflective exercise, this chapter offers a brief SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of conducting a co-design exercise within a public service organisation, drawing from my own research-creation experience. A SWOT analysis is a valuable tool for gaining deeper insight into the internal and external factors that influence the success of a co-design project. By considering the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, this analysis helps to illuminate the complexities of implementing co-design within the unique constraints and dynamics of public service organisations. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive reflection on the overall process and its potential for driving meaningful change in public service organisations.

7.2 Strengths

One of the key strengths of conducting this co-design exercise was the opportunity for bonding among team members. The process fostered stronger relationships and has built a sense of community within my co-designers and I, which has led to many positive changes in our group dynamic, like our shared sense of pride and motivation. Another major strength lied in the empowerment that participants felt by taking the initiative and actively contributing to the project. This sense of ownership and creativity allowed co-designers to move beyond simply following directives of their day-to-day work lives, creating an environment that encourages innovation and engagement.

An example of one of these strengths was getting to know my manager on a deeper level. Through the process, he opened up about his personal stories and family dynamics which has profoundly informed how I view his approach to his role and his management style. Understanding the values and experiences that shape his decisions and leadership methods allowed me to empathize with him more effectively and align my work and communication style to complement his. For instance, during a team lunch—an informal yet effective setting for brainstorming and bonding—I found that such interactions foster an environment of trust and openness which is what prompted my co-designers to open up. These moments outside the work environment not only enhanced our personal connections but also helped us understand one another's perspectives, ultimately contributing to positive growth within the team.

This aligns with the benefits of co-design exercises, where team members, including management, bond through shared goals and experiences, building a stronger sense of community. By celebrating small and big achievements together, we reinforce positive group dynamics,

fostering that shared sense of pride and motivation. These interactions go beyond surface-level collaboration, enabling team members to feel empowered, take initiative, and contribute in the ways they find most meaningful.

An additional strength of the process was the multidisciplinary approach. Our visual designer's influence on the project was significant in shaping its overall aesthetic, as he was the original creator of the Impact Canada identity. His deep understanding of the brand's visual direction allowed him to guide the design choices, ensuring consistency and alignment with the established identity. His most notable contribution was to the logo, where he provided extensive feedback that refined and strengthened its final form. His expertise ensured that the branding remained cohesive and visually impactful. Our manager played a crucial role in defining and maintaining the overall objectives of the deliverables. His influence ensured that all aspects of the project aligned with the intended goals, timelines, and overall expectations. By overseeing the workflow and coordinating efforts across different disciplines, he helped keep the project on track, ensuring that the final outcome was both effective and aligned with the strategic vision. Our analyst with her background in public administration, had a strong impact on the project's content. Her expertise in policy shaped the messaging, ensuring that the information was clear, accurate, and accessible to the intended audience. With this influence, we worked together to refine the language and structure of the content, ensuring that it met government standards and effectively communicated the project's objectives. Our multimedia designer had impact on the project's web design. Her background in visual and interactive design helped to make sure the landing page was engaging and user-friendly. She ensured that the website not only reflected the brand identity but also provided an intuitive and visually appealing interface for users. Her contributions helped enhance the accessibility, and functionality of the online presence.

Every member's practice, background, and experiences were beneficial and valuable, contributing to a final product that reflects its mission. The diverse expertise of the team ensured that all aspects of the project—branding, management, content, and design—were thoughtfully developed and aligned with the project's goals. Each played a critical role in shaping the outcome. Their collective efforts not only strengthened the project but also highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in achieving a successful and cohesive result.

7.3 Weaknesses

Despite its strengths, co-design initiatives are not without challenges. Recruitment can be a significant obstacle, as attracting the right participants or securing their commitment to the process can be difficult. In my case, recruitment wasn't the toughest of challenges as I had gone through a preliminary process of introducing co-design to my unit members spanning several months. Which means that when it came time to start the sessions, I already had accumulated interested participants.

On the other hand, team member attrition limited our member count to the team. We we're initially intended to have two public administrators to the team, however, one of them left the public service organisation in the summer months. Similarly, decisions to abandon certain outputs, like the website, limited the project's perceived value or failed to meet management expectations. Finally, resource constraints, including limited time and organisational support posed significant challenges to achieving the desired outcomes and sustaining the process. Moving forward, it became clear that strategies to mitigate these risks, such as proactive engagement are essential for sustaining participation and achieving the desired outcomes.

The most significant challenge was coordinating schedules. In a public service setting, where team members often juggle many responsibilities, finding mutually convenient times can be incredibly difficult. We weren't able to schedule the third co-design session until an entire month later. This delay underscored the need to respect work-life balance and accommodate individual needs while maintaining the momentum of the project. The gap between sessions also made it clear how crucial clear communication and trust-building are in the co-design process. With such a long break, we had to revisit and reiterate the project's goals, ensuring everyone was still aligned and felt included. While this repetition took extra time, it was vital for fostering a collaborative and supportive environment where all participants felt valued. This experience reinforced the importance of flexibility and proactive communication in overcoming the logistical and interpersonal challenges that come with co-design.

7.4 Opportunities

The co-design process offers valuable opportunities for relational development, emphasising the importance of relational dynamics and awareness in participatory design. Co-design is inherently relational, shaped by the needs and interactions of those involved. Designers and non-designers alike have the opportunity to adapt and reconstruct both themselves and the project in response to diverse interests. In many ways, this process has demonstrated that being attuned to relationships and remaining adaptable is more critical than adhering to a rigid action plan. Designers must cultivate a sense of readiness, much like their background, personality, and commitment shape their participatory design practice.

As described by Laura Gottlieb in “Relational Sensitivity in Participatory Design,” this readiness is known as relational sensitivity—an attunement to complex, intangible relational dynamics that are shaped by socio-cultural conditions (Gottlieb, 2024). It is an embodied shifting awareness that responds to the nuances of the co-design group. This sensitivity plays a crucial role in facilitating design activities, enhancing practitioners' ability to navigate interactions effectively. By remaining responsive, practitioners can make informed, responsible decisions, contributing to sustainable co-design practices (Akama & Light, 2018).

Practitioners must begin with an embodied awareness of self, which involves recognising their emotions, thoughts, and values. Acknowledging personal tensions during participatory design can help discern diverse perspectives and values within the group (Gottlieb, 2022). This awareness fosters genuine participation by enabling practitioners to express authentic needs and interests while promoting reflexivity and self-awareness (Gottlieb, 2024). Instead of focusing solely on methods or tools, this perspective emphasises “how to be” rather than “how to do,” a realisation I have observed throughout my research. This shift in focus highlights the attitudes and personal characteristics that enable designers and researchers to build trust and lasting relationships in participatory processes.

Power dynamics and positionality were significant considerations in the co-design process. Power imbalances among participants, and between researchers and participants, can even be found in the case of this co-design project. Our team included members with varying levels of seniority, making it essential to be mindful of these dynamics to foster participation rather than unintentionally hinder it. To counter this, I engaged my team in exploring alternative design approaches that embrace their diverse ways of being, doing, and knowing. In our co-design sessions, for instance, we incorporated anecdotal storytelling to encourage listening and subjective perspectives.

Beyond individual awareness, group dynamics require adaptability, as they influence participation levels. In this research's co-design exercise, flexibility was necessary to adjust design activities throughout sessions, ensuring alignment with group energy levels and making sure everyone's needs were met. This approach challenges the notion that co-design processes and outcomes are strictly controlled through facilitation or structured workshop methods. Key factors in adapting to group dynamics include negotiating shared values, performing emotional labour to create a sense of belonging, and fostering sustained participation (Gottlieb, 2024). Trust-building and responsiveness become integral to navigating real-time interactions within the group.

In conclusion, participants and I have many opportunities to refine their skills in relational sensitivity, both on a personal level and within group interactions. These skills enhance overall teamwork and collaboration in organisational contexts and day-to-day work. By deepening our understanding of ourselves and each other, participants contribute to more empathetic and productive work environments. Additionally, the lessons learned from this exercise offer valuable insights that can inform future co-design initiatives. Through ongoing reflection, individuals and organisations can implement strategies to improve both accessibility and efficiency in participatory processes across public service.

7.5 Threats

Despite my best efforts, the final months of this research-creation process were completely upended by the unexpected resignation of the Canadian prime minister. This event sent shockwaves through the Privy Council Office, plunging it into a state of distress and uncertainty. The ensuing instability ultimately resulted in my layoff, marking an abrupt and disheartening conclusion to my time at Impact Canada. Throughout my time in public service, I had strived to cultivate a sense of humanism within an inherently rigid and bureaucratic workplace. However, these efforts were ultimately in vain. The structural and ideological barriers at play, as outlined by Buckminster Fuller in Chapter 1, proved insurmountable. His observations about the tension between systemic forces and individual agency resonated deeply, as I witnessed firsthand how the entrenched priorities of public servants—driven by concerns for security, stability, and personal comfort—stifled any meaningful change.

This experience reinforced a critical realisation: systemic threats are not always overt or easily identifiable. Often, they manifest subtly, embedded within institutional cultures and reinforced by the very mechanisms that sustain them. In such an environment, the inertia of tradition and the fear of uncertainty prevail, making it exceptionally difficult to challenge the status quo or introduce transformative ideas. Ultimately, this reality dictated my departure, leaving me to reflect on the broader implications of these systemic constraints for public service, innovation, and the human spirit within bureaucratic structures.

The organisational shift within my unit has significantly impacted the ability to effectively complete Step 6 of Metro North Health's Co-Design Process, which is centered on the sharing and celebrating phase. This transition, which took place in January, has contributed to several months of increased tension and frustration among the members of the co-design team. While this disruption has made it challenging to proceed with the original timeline and intent of the project, there remains hope that the final exposition of the project will provide an opportunity to regroup and, ultimately, complete this crucial step.

This situation underscores a broader point: while the philosophical grounding and practical application of humanist design principles in Canadian public services offer a compelling framework

for inclusive, user-centered processes, the reality of implementing such changes is far more complex. The challenges faced by the co-design team demonstrate that bottom-up change, in this context, is extremely difficult to achieve when it is not fully supported by those in leadership positions. For the change to be effective, there must be a robust top-down approach where management is actively and deeply engaged in the co-design process, helping to navigate the inherent challenges and ensuring alignment across all levels of the organisation. In this case, the lack of strong top-down involvement led to the project's volatility, making it difficult to maintain momentum and focus. Without this leadership commitment, even well-meaning, humanist-driven initiatives can struggle to gain the necessary traction and stability to succeed.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This Master's Degree Research-Creation project explored the development of a co-design strategy inspired by humanist design perspectives and human-centered design initiatives. The project was motivated by two key objectives: making Canadian public service communications more accessible to non-designers and defining the identity of a communications studio within a public service organisation (Chapter 1). The final design deliverables for the co-design strategy were created using Metro North Health's Co-Design Process. While designed primarily for federal partners, stakeholders, and the Canadian public, the concept is not limited to these groups.

To understand the design problem and answer my research question, a literature review was conducted on mid-century humanist design perspectives, focusing on five influential designers: Richard Buckminster Fuller, Victor Papanek, Jane Jacobs, Gui Bonsiepe, and most notably, Julien Hébert. This research revealed that humanist design principles are widely recognized by contemporary design practitioners for their significant socio-cultural value. Many advocate for introducing co-design methodologies to non-designers to foster inclusivity and engagement (Chapter 2). Insights from this literature review informed the foundation of the final designs—a proposal for a Canadian public service co-design strategy (Chapter 4). The strategy introduces human-centered design methodologies to public servants, ensuring adaptability to different public service functions and multidisciplinary teams. By emphasising collaboration, public servants can gain hands-on experience in co-design and other human-centered approaches through practical applications.

The literature review also explored the broader socio-cultural potential of applied human-centered design, positioning design as more than just an economic tool, but as a powerful agent of positive social change. This perspective led to case study research on contemporary human-centered design initiatives (Chapter 3). These case studies provided real-world examples of successful systemic interventions and sustainable design practices, drawn from sectors such as non-profits, community engagement, and corporate operational systems. These co-design collaborations demonstrated how social innovation aligns with the transformative potential of design. Building on these insights, the proposed co-design strategy (Chapter 4) emphasizes accessibility, participation, and empathy as fundamental pillars for integrating human-centered design into public service.

Through three co-design sessions and a months-long co-design process, our public service team combined hands-on collaboration with an analysis of existing challenges in driving meaningful change. This approach helped identify key needs for a public service co-design strategy. Participants highlighted concerns such as the siloed nature of public service and the lack of balance in existing methodologies. Many expressed a desire to incorporate a design-driven approach into their daily work. Addressing these needs became the direction for the project, shaping the design rationale, which outlines the design problem (Chapter 4), the processes undertaken, and the resulting strategic approaches.

The co-design process followed Metro North Health's six-step Co-Design Process. Step 1: Engage and Align involved an informal introduction to human-centered design methodologies within the public service unit, setting the stage for the co-design exercise over several months (Chapter 5). This step gathered interested participants who formed the co-design team. Step 2: Explore and Connect and Step 3: Imagine and Decide focused on identifying co-design opportunities and generating concepts, taking into account the challenges of designing for meaningful impact within public service. In Step 4: Create and Test, a series of prototypes were developed for key design elements, including a logomark, a landing page, a lookbook, and a systems map. Step 5: Co-Implement and Co-Evaluate involved evaluating these concepts against the strategy's core

goals of accessibility, empathy, and participation. Feedback from the co-design team was collected, analyzed, and applied to refine the design deliverables, leading to significant improvements. The final step ensured that the refined concepts met the needs of the co-design team and enhanced the accessibility of services within the Studio team. The final design deliverables, shaped by iterative feedback and aligned with the co-design strategy's objectives, were confirmed by the co-design team as effectively addressing their needs at the time (Chapter 6).

The proposed co-design strategy aimed to introduce co-design principles to Canadian public servants while fostering broader public awareness of human-centered design. Drawing inspiration from Julien Hébert's humanist design philosophy, the final designs effectively support these objectives by addressing the needs of the co-design team, its affiliated public service organisation, partners, and the public—delivering accessible, participatory, and empathetic designs.

While rooted in a co-design strategy, these final designs are not limited to educational or operational applications. In human-centered design, an initial source of inspiration can serve as a valuable reference, but the final outcome should not be confined to a specific user group, market sector, or application. Reflecting the broader humanist design principles that inspired them, the co-design approach can be adapted across various departments, communities, organisations, and businesses, expanding its potential impact and applicability.

One of the most meaningful contributions of this project was how it gave voice and agency to participants who are often overlooked or underrepresented in decision-making processes. Through co-design, individuals who typically occupy less visible roles in the public service were able to express themselves, contribute ideas, and feel emboldened to shape the future of their workplace. In an environment that often limits expression through rigid hierarchies and processes, this sense of empowerment was not only personally moving but also a clear signal of co-design's transformative potential.

8.1 Future Design Developments

While final designs of the co-design strategy have been generated for this project, in order to fully develop co-designs into a functional strategy for Canadian public service organisations, a wide range of critical steps would have to be undertaken in the future development.

8.1.1 Bilingualism

To ensure accessibility, integrating bilingualism into the co-design strategy is essential, particularly within the Canadian public service, where both English and French hold official status. Communication in both languages enhances engagement by ensuring that all public servants and citizens can fully participate in the co-design process, regardless of their official language of choice. This involves more than just translation—it requires thoughtful adaptation of content to respect cultural nuances, ensuring that concepts and terminology resonate equally with English and French-speaking audiences. By embedding bilingual considerations from the outset, the strategy can foster a more equitable and participatory design environment. Beyond translation, bilingualism in co-design extends to facilitating collaborative sessions in both languages, developing resources that support linguistic diversity, and ensuring that user interfaces, toolkits, and training materials are equally accessible in English and French. Additionally, incorporating bilingual facilitators in co-design exercises can bridge communication gaps, allowing for a more seamless and inclusive dialogue between participants. By prioritising bilingualism, the co-design strategy can better reflect Canada's linguistic diversity, strengthen public trust, and improve the overall effectiveness of human-centered design initiatives within the public sector.

8.1.2 Expansion to other Public Service Organisations

The co-design strategy has the potential to be adapted across various public service organisations, teams, departments, and agencies. Each level of service has unique operational challenges and public engagement needs, making it essential to customize the strategy accordingly. At a more direct level of public engagement, co-design can facilitate more direct participation in community initiatives, while other levels of engagement in public service can support cross-departmental collaboration through co-design to address infrastructure development and public health initiatives. Federally, the approach can be applied to large-scale policy-making and implementation, ensuring that government programs remain responsive to the diverse needs of Canadians. By refining the strategy for different levels of public service, the project can foster more inclusive and effective public service action.

8.1.3 Capacity Building

To ensure the effective adoption of human-design methodologies within public service organisations, training programs and capacity-building opportunities are essential. Workshops and hands-on training sessions can introduce public servants to human-centered design principles, equipping them with the skills needed to incorporate co-design into their daily work. These learning experiences could focus on techniques on ethnography, prototyping, and iterative design, ensuring that participants develop practical expertise in applying co-design strategies to real-world challenges. In addition to workshops, developing certification programs in human-centered design for public servants could formalise co-design knowledge and encourage widespread adoption. A certification framework would provide recognition for individuals who successfully integrate co-design methodologies into their work, fostering a culture of positive change and user-centered thinking within government agencies and departments. This initiative could also serve as an incentive for professional development, motivating public servants to build competencies that enhance their ability to address complex public sector challenges.

8.1.4 Policy and Organisational Change

As explored in the previous chapter's research analysis, for co-design to become a sustainable practice within public service, it is crucial to advocate for its integration into policies and operations with support from leadership positions. By embedding co-design principles into public administration guidelines with leadership approval, organisations can institutionalise collaborative design approaches, ensuring that human-centered methodologies become a standard part of decision-making processes. Policymakers should be encouraged to recognise the value of participatory design and allocate resources to support its implementation across various departments.

Although the aforementioned future development processes demand a great deal of time and research, with committed multidisciplinary designers, researchers, public administrators, analysts, and developers, such design processes provide the critical steps that would lead to a successful realisation of positive social and systemic change withing public services in Canada, ultimately fostering deeper understanding and trust with its public. Looking ahead, I believe that designers will increasingly need to adopt the role of facilitator—prioritizing empathy, building trust, and creating the conditions for democratic participation. As the public service and other institutions face growing challenges and demands for accountability, accessibility, and transparency, it is this facilitative role that will allow designers to amplify marginalized voices and contribute to socially sustainable futures.

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Appendix A: Co-Design Sessions Summary Briefs



Summary Brief

Co-Design Exercise Session One

20 Sept. 2024

01

Coming together as a small dynamic group, we brainstormed ideas and left the session with a fresh new direction. The process was fast, engaging, and energizing—a great way to break the mold and infuse creativity into our approach. It proved to be a valuable exercise for any team looking to shake things up and explore new possibilities.

What did we want to achieve?

Our objective for this session was to better understand the challenges we face as public servants through a design-driven approach. Rather than limiting participation and subject matter, we were interested to see how a diversity of perspectives and ideas would contribute to improving public service-based experiences and co-create new solutions.

How did we do it?

The intention was to include quick activities, to cover ground, and get results fast. This is done to push boundaries and generate diverse ideas from people with different backgrounds. The 1-hour 30-minute session of idea generation, discussion, and synthesis had the following:

Introductory Presentation

The session started with an informative and descriptive presentation, laying out the context and challenges we face as public servants, the key principles of co-design, its process, and why it is important for public service.

Experience Bank

Participants had to recall three good and three bad experiences they had with federal public services (personal or general). The goal was to quickly unload people's experiences.

Mind-Mapping & Re-Mapping

To map audience, problems, context, and possible outcomes. Ideas we're placed back on the map to situate them in context.

How did it go?

This initial session was focused on selecting an opportunity for co-design, with a focus on establishing a design-driven practice at Impact Canada. Ideas generated during the process included creating a dedicated "Studio" tab on our website to promote design as a tool for positive change and innovation within the unit, raising the profile of design thinking and signalling its role as a strategic driver for the unit's initiatives.

Future Considerations

In future meetings, we will need to explore potential solutions and creative outputs for both internal and public audiences. Possible creative outputs may include: an Impact Canada Studio webpage, an Impact Canada Co-Design Strategy, and a public interface tool.

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Co-Design Facilitator

The Studio
Impact Canada
Privy Council Office

Page 01



Summary Brief

Co-Design Exercise Session Two

02 Oct. 2024

02

The second co-design session took place online. This format allowed everyone to participate, regardless of whether they were in the office or working remotely.

What did we want to achieve?

The aim of this session was to explore potential solutions and creative outputs for both internal and external audiences. Building on our previous discussion, we focused on creating a dedicated "Studio" tab for our website to highlight design as a tool for positive change and innovation within the unit.

How did we do it?

The 40 minute session of idea generation, discussion, and synthesis had the following:

Miro Board

The previous session's ideas were synthesised into a diagram and a larger mind-mapping board.

Open Discussion

Participants engaged in a productive discussion, opening up new possibilities for our co-design.

How did it go?

This second session was focused on finding opportunities to translate our co-design into creative outputs, with a focus on establishing a design-driven practice at Impact Canada through a dedicated "Studio" tab on our website. Ideas generated during the process included:

• Impact Canada Studio Webpage

- Services
 - campaign design
 - user experience testing
 - internal communications
- Personalities (sketches, cameos, etc.)
- Studio branding (logomark)
- Co-design operations
- Blogs, links, figma files

• Impact Canada Co-Design Guide

- Purpose
- Our Co-Design Process
- Portfolio/Case Studies (lifecycle of a project (released, unreleased))

• Systems Map

- Influences, operations, guiding principles, people

Future Steps

Future steps include creating low-fidelity prototypes of the web interface and its related assets as well as pagination for the Impact Canada Co-Design Guide. It would be interesting to find a way to incorporate an interactive element(s) to the user experience of our interface.

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Page 02



Summary Brief

Co-Design Exercise Session Three

08 Nov. 2024

03

The third co-design session took place online. In this case, mostly everyone was able to participate, regardless of whether they were in the office or working remotely.

What did we want to achieve?

The aim of this session was to review creative output prototypes for a Studio website, systems map, guidebook, and visual identity. The goal was to gather feedback to refine each element, ensuring they align with the Studio's strategy and effectively convey its brand and operations.

How did we do it?

The 30 minute session of idea generation, discussion, and synthesis had the following:

Prototypes

Web wireframes, guidebook pagination, visual identity, and systems mapping prototypes were presented.

Open Discussion

Participants engaged in a productive discussion, opening up new possibilities for our co-design.

How did it go?

This third session was focused on evaluating prototypes based on the last session's outline of creative outputs. The feedback and comments from this evaluation will be used for modifying and refining the concepts to better meet the needs of our users, partners and ourselves. Feedback included:

Our services

- Change to a toggle feature to incorporate more offered services and descriptions.

Our Approach

- Simplify (less text, possibly incorporate Impact Map with Our Approach)

Portfolio

- Described as potential blogs showcasing our Studio approach while also highlighting why we do what we do.

Visuals

- To what extent do we want to fit the Impact Canada branding? This might be an opportunity to explore new visuals.

Future Steps

The next steps involve refining prototypes based on feedback. We'll create a shared document where everyone can contribute to the landing page content, aiming to have a preliminary version ready by late November.

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Page 03

Appendix B: Co-Design Session 1 Introductory Presentation

CO-DESIGN EXERCISE

Solving problems through creative collaboration

Co-Design Exercise 01

Introduction

This project aims to build upon **quality** of work and products, **democracy** at work, and **education** for public service development.

Co-Design Exercise 02

Introduction	01
Challenge	03
Small Circles	04
Design Humankind	05
Co-Design	06
Process	07
Step 1	08
Step 2	09
Step 3	10
Examples	11

Challenge

Our organisation faces challenges in building the capability of people to **design, deliver and evaluate change**. This leads to policy gaps, where professionals' understanding of what people want and need is vastly different from their realities.

Co-Design Exercise 03

When we make decisions on behalf of other people, we assume and understand in doing that, we overlook their knowledge and lived reality.

To overcome systems and approaches we need to build community capability. Co-design is a way to do this.

Establishing more services, programs and initiatives isn't enough. It's about how we build our resources to transform our systems, while listening to the voices of people.

The Value of Small Circles

There is a significant need for co-design where power imbalances are reducing voices and silencing.

Encouraging new ways of working, reducing changes in teams and relationships, and encouraging.

Let's show down and potential relationships and what we can do are in relation to people around us.

Small circles are some of the few reliable places where we can care for each other and create change, creating much bigger circles of trust and positive social impact.

Co-Design Exercise 04

Co-Design

A collaborative design approach that actively engages a diverse range of people directly involved in an issue, place, or process in its design and sometimes in its implementation.

Primary Goal

Elevating the voices and contributions of people with lived experience.

Co-design is about...

How we are being (our mindsets), what we are doing (our methods), and how our systems embrace participation (social movements).

Key Principles

Share Power
Prioritize Relationships
Use Participatory Means
Build Capability

Co-Design Exercise 05

Design Humankind

Design Thinking
UCD
HCD
Co-Design

Philosophy
Approach
Strategy

Co-Design Exercise 06

Process

Co-design is a designed process that uses creative participatory methods. Co-designers make decisions, not just suggestions.

Co-Design Process

1 Engage & Align
2 Engage & Connect
3 Engage & Decide
4 Engage & Test
5 Engage & Evaluate
6 Engage & Iterate

Co-Design Exercise 07

Step 1

Develop a collective vision

Collectively identify an issue or opportunity for co-design.

Plan for how you will progress through the co-design process.

What do we value?

Co-Design Process

1 Engage & Align
2 Engage & Connect
3 Engage & Decide
4 Engage & Test
5 Engage & Evaluate
6 Engage & Iterate

Co-Design Exercise 08

Step 2

Create a shared understanding

A shared understanding of the issue or opportunity for co-design.

Explore experiences and perspectives.

Identify gaps of knowledge in context.

Co-Design Process

1 Engage & Align
2 Engage & Connect
3 Engage & Decide
4 Engage & Test
5 Engage & Evaluate
6 Engage & Iterate

Co-Design Exercise 09

Step 3

How might we...?

How could the issue or opportunity be tackled? A potential set of ideas for a solution to the issue or opportunity.

Decide which of these are to be prioritised for development.

Co-Design Process

1 Engage & Align
2 Engage & Connect
3 Engage & Decide
4 Engage & Test
5 Engage & Evaluate
6 Engage & Iterate

Co-Design Exercise 10

Design Humankind

Data-Driven vs Design-Driven Approach

Internal Solution
External Solution

Co-Design Strategy
"Rapid" Use or Website
???

Co-Design Exercise - Session 2 11

Appendix C: Co-Design Sessions Transcriptions

Co-design Session 1

20 Spetembre 2024

00:00:10 [Multimedia Designer]

Okay. Last negative. Despite being a supposed non-partisan thing, I find it very partisan, and people are very open about what team their flags fly, you know?

00:00:34 [Researcher-Designer]

You mean politically? Yeah. Yeah? Okay.

00:00:37 [Multimedia Designer]

Well, PCO is non-partisan, but it is very partisan in my opinion.

00:00:40 [Researcher-Designer]

I haven't heard any political opinions yet.

00:00:43 [Multimedia Designer]

You're in Montreal. You're not here.

00:00:46 [Visual Designer]

Welcome to the hub.

00:00:47 [Multimedia Designer]

I experience it everywhere, and I'm just like, wow, I thought we weren't allowed to talk that way.

00:00:52 [Visual Designer]

Montreal's red anyway, so don't worry about it.

00:00:55 [Multimedia Designer]

So it makes it difficult to be non-partisan when you've got to be, speak a certain way around certain people. So, like, police is language? Yeah.

00:01:30 [Multimedia Designer]

Oh, my God. What's the color difference? Oh, positive and negative? But the positives have to be equal.

00:01:37 [Researcher-Designer]

It's fine. It doesn't have to be equal. If there ends up being more negatives, then that's just how it is. This is [REDACTED] we are talking about [REDACTED] now.

00:01:49 [Multimedia Designer]

Okay. Yeah, I can't wait to hear [REDACTED]'s.

00:01:51 [Manager]

So, my positive was the passport renewal process. For real? For real. That's awesome. Because I was able to make an online appointment for my whole family. I didn't have to wait. I arrived where I got all the information I needed because I read the internet page, you know. And submitted my appointment. I arrived, no lines. I immediately went straight to the teller. Everything was really nice this time. Yeah. Compared to the first time I had to go.

00:02:35 [Manager]

A positive for me is being able to netfile my taxes. And I don't have to fill in my T4s or anything like that anymore. Like, it pulls everything from the CRA automatically, right? I don't know if you guys have filed your taxes.

00:02:57 [Manager]

I use, was it Netfile or whatever? Or what's the name of that thing? TurboTax.

00:03:03 [Researcher-Designer]

TurboTax? Yeah, yeah.

00:03:04 [Manager]

So, it hooks up to CRA. It hooks up to the CRA and pulls all your employment and bank forms automatically.

00:03:16 [Multimedia Designer]

Yeah, exactly. So, why would you have to do your taxes in the first place if they're going to do them for you?

00:03:20 [Manager]

Some countries are already.

00:03:21 [Multimedia Designer]

I don't know why you don't do that here.

00:03:24 [Visual Designer]

I work there too. We end up owing money as well.

00:03:27 [Researcher-Designer]

Okay. TurboTax. I'm going to have to take a look.

00:03:30 [Visual Designer]

But that's salary wise. But if you're doing a corporation, you still have to go through. Yeah, yeah, yeah. For me, it was very positive. That's good. I like it.

00:03:36 [Manager]

I also agree with the whole positive for an internal thing here. Like our ability to design and publish stuff on our website without you know what I was listening to somebody was talking about

Apple in the old days With Steve Jobs And you had like the heads of the different groups And they were like their own company And the other groups didn't really mess with those other groups So if we're the design team the website team like we make those decisions And it doesn't go to the others to say oh I think this should be blue So it's kind of like a silo in a way.

00:04:20 [Researcher-Designer]

But our silo for some reason is not as valuable as other people's silos. It's like a hierarchy of silos.

00:04:26 [Visual Designer]

But I mean, this is what we're talking about. So, I like our silo.

00:04:29 [Manager]

I don't know if people mess with our silo, but we don't want to mess with other people's silo.

00:04:32 [Visual Designer]

Well, you know what the thing is about our silo? Our silo makes everyone else in this gang look good. No, I know, like the work that comes out of it, no matter what, will be more digestible to the eye.

00:04:43 [Multimedia Designer]

I don't think people would give it the time of day, but we get the respect. If we didn't exist to make their shit look good, yeah, I honestly don't think anyone would give it the time of day. It would look like garbage.

00:04:50 [Manager]

But we're respected for that. Like, there is respect in the unit for our teams. If we decide to make something look a certain way, there's a certain respect for that. They don't question it. That's just my impression. So, our silo is on top, right? Okay. But I agree with the data-driven versus, I think, like particularly for when we're designing interventions that have a design component, why isn't the design of that part of the development of the intervention? Not like we've decided we want an image of a tree and, no, we should be part of that process. Yeah, big time.

00:05:30 [Visual Designer]

Right. But we had that. We might have other ideas. Remember during COVID? Yeah. When you were working with Health Canada on like the messaging and they got us involved in, remember that thing about, 'I'm strong, I don't need to put a mask on'? Put a mask on? Yeah, yeah, yeah. That thing? I saw all those files. What was it? Don't Fuck It Up Canada? Yeah, Don't Fuck It Up Canada. Oh, that was good. That was a fashion. That should have been used. The government was going to 'Don't Fuck It Up'. That's how seriously we're asking us to come up with the graphics about it. That's crazy.

00:05:56 [Multimedia Designer]

See, I was in one of my negatives. I'm like, we play it too safe. Like, the government plays it way too safe, that you can hardly be creative.

00:06:02 [Manager]

Did you hear about this?

00:06:02 [Multimedia Designer]

You know what I mean? No, I don't know that one. You're in a little box. You can hardly do your job. That was such a good thing. That was the best. It was so good. It would have worked, too. I think it would have had an early launch.

00:06:12 [Manager]

I felt good. And it was about getting people to mask and stuff. Right. And so we were asked to come up with our own designs. And so we had a lot of fun. We had a lot of different levels of how crazy do you want to go, and a little bit of the most. How crazy do you want to go? The craziest one was the 'Don't Fuck It Up for the rest of us' type of thing. So it would be like a restaurant owner outside wearing a mask. Like, don't fuck it up. Like, we're in this together. Don't fuck it up for all of us. It was good.

00:06:41 [Multimedia Designer]

I think that's one of the best things. That was fun. It wasn't passed.

00:06:44 [Manager]

Oh, of course. We never thought about it. We wanted to show, like, look, here you can have different things. And none of them, I think, were good. We wanted to show that we were eventually used because we were going.

00:06:53 [Multimedia Designer]

But also probably no one even listened to the other ones.

00:06:55 [Manager]

It wasn't the appropriate time.

00:06:56 [Visual Designer]

You know why? Because they ended up hiring another agency. Hiring Gazette. Oh, yeah. To take the brand that we had created. Remember that, like, in between brand? They took the colors. They repurposed them and added some colors. That's so crazy. And sent it to an agency. So they would be like, ah, it's not a government worker's business.

00:07:13 [Researcher-Designer]

Can't you sue for that?

00:07:14 [Visual Designer]

No. No, no. We're invisible. Why would we sue ourselves?

00:07:17 [Researcher-Designer]

No, sue them for taking your designs. No, no.

00:07:20 [Manager]

I don't know. I think we gave them. We gave them our design. The government gave them. Oh. Inspired by. And they just took it and, like. You can't, like, plagiarize yourself, I guess. Yeah. You know? Did you have other ones? Are we on positives or negatives? Oh, yeah. Positive. Okay. The negative ones, I mean, I went from as general as, like, I hate the fact that there's no data sharing in healthcare systems. Mm-hmm. Like, I have to bring paperwork to a doctor because they don't have access. I don't have access to my patient charts and data and all that stuff, you know? I know people working on that stuff, but there's all sorts of political things, again, like people who are against digital IDs. Right.

00:08:03 [Multimedia Designer]

Mm-hmm.

00:08:04 [Manager]

Anyway.

00:08:04 [Multimedia Designer]

But even having access to your own health information. Yeah. I don't have access to my own. Definitely.

00:08:10 [Manager]

Interoperability issues. Hell yeah.

00:08:12 [Visual Designer]

Oh, yeah. So good. This was major. This was the best.

00:08:15 [Visual Designer]

Don't fuck this up. And we had different approaches. Remember this one? Don't be that guy. Can I hear? Really, like, bold. Don't fuck this up. Just normal business owners trying to make it look good to have a mask on. It's so good. Don't be that.

00:08:32 [Multimedia Designer]

Because it would have appealed to, like, a certain kind of age.

00:08:35 [Visual Designer]

This one's my favorite. The eyes. Wear it. Be safe. Stay safe. Mask up. Protect us. Yeah. Do it for you. Do it for. Remember this guy? Even this guy. He went, like, 8-bit, wear it, level up. Yeah. So many tests we did. Anyways, that was the best.

00:08:52 [Manager]

Also, like, internal HR processes. Like, when people move around or even within the same department. It's as if they've never seen you before. Right. And just resubmit every goddamn document. Right. And prove that you've graduated. Right. And actually prove that you meet the requirements that are already in place for your current position. And it's, like, well, how am I still working here if you need me to print my, you know, I don't know. And then, like, the project

management and transparency in this unit I find is very lacking.

00:09:25 [Multimedia Designer]

Can you say that again?

00:09:27 [Manager]

Like, the management of projects and the transparency between teams or what people are doing.

00:09:35 [Multimedia Designer]

Maybe accountability, too. Yeah. You never know where anything's at.

00:09:39 [Manager]

But I like a lot of the ideas that you guys have put forward already.

00:09:48 [Visual Designer]

This was the one. Remember this? Oh, yeah. I made this one, and then they just went with the same fucking shit. But we used some of those in one of the campaigns.

00:10:06 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah, as for mine, a big negative, I wrote just general interfaces and websites, but not just the basic UI, UX, but also the lack of interactivity in websites. In Gov websites? Yeah, how you can easily make digital tools, but we just choose not to. Instead, we do pull-down menus and stuff like that. I wrote as another negative the lack of connection towards the end user, because a lot of the times we'll make whatever initiative we're doing and we'll never really see who it ends up going to.

00:10:49 [Manager]

That's a tough one, because you work on a study, right? You design all these nice images or home labels and things, and then we don't find out if the department even used any of them. No, there's no way to do that. Waste of resources. Well, we don't know. I don't know. Some of those ads and stuff. I don't know if the department's ever used them.

00:11:17 [Multimedia Designer]

That's true. Like, are you talking about those communication studies and stuff?

00:11:26 [Researcher-Designer]

Oh, and another one I wrote is the stagnant focus on innovation. I feel like we get comfortable and then we just kind of stick to it. But that's like the government always being safe.

00:11:35 [Multimedia Designer]

Yeah, I guess it goes into that. Like, if we try anything else. And that was. Like, they always talk about not, like, taking risks. And there's always this, like, yeah, take risks. This is how you get somewhere. But then. Fail fast and social. Social bullshit. Nothing ever happens. No one takes a risk. No one's willing to fail.

00:11:54 [Manager]

No one wants to be the one failing.

00:11:58 [Researcher-Designer]

Well, maybe we need to encourage more of a failure culture.

00:12:18 [Researcher-Designer]

Okay, cool. We're done that step. Now it's. Having to look at these and then pick out which one we want to focus on. Because a lot of them relate to each other.

00:12:38 [Visual Designer]

Let me see.

00:12:40 [Researcher-Designer]

Yep. But there was this. This digital tool that was pretty cool.

00:12:46 [Manager]

Oh, yeah. That was actually a government tool, wasn't it?

00:12:49 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah, it was a government tool.

00:12:50 [Multimedia Designer]

I didn't explore it really. What was the tool supposed to do? It was a budget tool.

00:13:24 [Researcher-Designer]

It's this interesting design tool. Well, we don't want to come up with solutions yet.

00:13:37 [Manager]

But what kind of solutions are we looking to put together? Are we trying to design an actual thing?

00:13:48 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah. So I'd like on my personal end, I want to create a co-design strategy that we could implement at work. So that people are more enticed to work together or actually inquire the opinions of other people beyond surveys or questionnaires. And have it be a part of our KT strategy somehow. Yeah. And then on the other end, create some sort of design-based solution.

00:14:24 [Visual Designer]

So it's a process that you're kind of working on? Mm-hmm. What if we, well, you want to take a positive or negative? A negative. Okay.

00:14:32 [Researcher-Designer]

Or like a topic area. If we look at these, a big one that came around is the data-driven rather than the design-driven stuff. Yeah. So focusing on that.

00:14:45 [Manager]

I think that's a relevant one. Yeah. Like the solutions that would come from that would be more process as opposed to an actual tool, right? Right. Unless we decided that a tool of some sort would be of use.

00:14:58 [Researcher-Designer]

Well, I thought as a possible solution just based on that strategy, the tool that I showed you guys is what if we had a design tool on our website where people could, kind of like a comment box, but people could come in and pitch their ideas to us? Because technically we are an innovation unit, but we don't act like it, right? So what if we inquired people's innovation and ideas or their complaints? Like a message form?

00:15:30 [Visual Designer]

But how is that innovative in a way? Because it's essentially like a feedback.

00:15:34 [Researcher-Designer]

A feedback loop.

00:15:35 [Visual Designer]

Yeah. So we have a feedback loop for the website, but I don't know about an innovation group at all. No?

00:15:41 [Researcher-Designer]

Okay. I don't think we are. Why is that? Okay, well then we can start with that.

00:15:53 [Visual Designer]

It would have been fun for a challenge back in the day when we were only challenges and like, hey, Canadians, what challenge should we tackle next? But that's more like an engagement with the public, maybe, you know, like a social media campaign. That could be a part of it, actually. That could be a part of it. You know what I mean? Like instead of engaging with the same way. That we're doing, maybe we engage with the public to get some insight, not necessarily strong feedback, but insight.

00:16:19 [Researcher-Designer]

Right, so it's picking a topic area that we can tackle, then finding out what we know about that area, what do we already know, who, what are the questions towards it, and what is the ultimate goal to?

00:16:40 [Multimedia Designer]

What are the topics? How are we narrowing them down?

00:16:46 [Researcher-Designer]

Well, depending on what we think is more important. So we've mentioned the data-driven one. Some are more like general that we can't really like tackle, like on-site work, that kind of thing. Like, okay, so we're not innovation-based anymore. We're not doing that.

00:17:07 [Manager]

Well, I think the innovation aspect of the unit refers to our methodologies, as opposed to like an innovation lab where we kind of, sorry, like our methodological approach, and our, which includes our outcomes-based funding models, and behavioral science. Is that innovative? In government. Okay. Because most government departments don't do like challenge prizes. They do standard procurement of solutions. So, but there are many groups. There are many groups in government that are more like a traditional innovation lab where they run programs of employee-driven innovation, where employees can submit ideas, they pick solutions, they fund them, they train you know innovative teams to do those projects.

00:17:58 [Researcher-Designer]
Right. Okay. We don't do that.

00:17:59 [Manager]
No. And we don't have any money of our own either to develop things, right?

00:18:08 [Researcher-Designer]
Okay, so how would we describe ourselves? We're a science lab? Data lab?

00:18:22 [Manager]
Well, I would. Design lab? One side is like a research program. Like overall, we're not a design lab. But should we have more elements of a design lab?

00:18:43 [Researcher-Designer]
We, I, yeah, I think we, we should. That could be part of, like, our process.

00:18:50 [Manager]
Like, how come we never do, how come we never co-design anything with anyone on our team?

00:18:56 [Visual Designer]
Oh, you mean with the actual stakeholders? Like, not so, like, scientists and stuff.

00:19:00 [Manager]
Yeah, like, instead of sending us a deck and telling us to make it look better. Right. Why, why are we not engaged in the original design? Or in the problem, uh, identification phase, you know, like, if the, if the problem is, you know, we want people to buy more, uh, uh, electric cars, right, and we have a potential partnership with Ford to make advertisements, right? Yeah. Why are we only brought in when those advertisements need to be made as opposed to what about ideas of what we could do?

00:19:36 [Visual Designer]
Yeah, that's a big one. Because you think, you think design is only visual and only a tool. Yeah, rather than a thinking way, a way of thinking. So if you think, if you bring that as, we are strategy rather than design, that's, that's the way we should look at it. Oh, they'll take us more seriously than just a design, uh, studio slash, uh, tool, whatever. So I think that's why they always bring us to the end, because they don't think we're strategy enough. They think we're really just the fluff

on top. Yeah. When in reality, we can bring some strategy.

00:20:02 [Multimedia Designer]

That's; that's always killed me. Yeah. That's one thing that has always bothered me. You know that. That's a good point. I need to be there from the start. Like, why are people telling me what to do? Like, I should have been at these meetings where the ideas were discussed.

00:20:13 [Manager]

Like, this process, to me, like, imagine our problem was, um, getting people to buy electric cars, right? And, um, imagine we had a fellow here and maybe somebody from the department. Yeah. And we're facilitating this exact kind of activity. Would that not be of, of value? Yeah.

00:20:32 [Researcher-Designer]

That's, that's my goal with the developing that strategy in the end, the co-design strategies to entice people to do that. Yeah. So we, and. And we could, we could be facilitators in that. Like, you were saying, if I ever come back to the office, they want to do, like, a full day workshop thing. Well, part of it, we could do, like, a, a workshop with the, the unit. Yeah. And kind of explain the whole process. And sell ourselves more as, like, a strategy. A strategy.

00:20:59 [Visual Designer]

That's what we are in the end.

00:21:01 [Researcher-Designer]

A strategy team. But design is strategy, inherently.

00:21:03 [Visual Designer]

Not everyone sees it that way. Like, if you look at it, there's different levels of design. There's graphic design, which is maybe the lowest form. There's graphic design at the end of the day, if you, unfortunately, that's the most shallow. Versus, like, creative thinkers who, who give you design, strategy, and then they bring in design afterwards, saying, well, this is what you need. This is why we're going to design it this way. You know, like, you look at any rebrand or any kind of, like, design, sometimes you're like, 'why did they design this way?' You think, oh, it's shitty graphic design. No, it's, there's a strategy behind it when they pay this kind of money. So, these guys – potential partnership with Ford or stuff, like, they should bring us or a design team. Mm-hmm. You know, straight off the bat. Same thing with COVID, when they wanted to communicate. They brought us; we were designing things at the beginning, and then they just kind of, like, jerry-rigged us at the end for the campaigns, you know? But at the beginning, we were all designing with them. We were thinking of ideas to make this bolder, more effective, et cetera. And then at some point, it just switched. People got into more bureaucratic mode, and then, oh, no, here's our messaging. Get the designers after.

00:22:08 [Visual Designer]

Oh, yeah. And then the fact stuff, that was a nightmare and all that. So, design became, well, it was a second, an afterthought at the end.

00:22:19 [Researcher-Designer]

When we think about this, that problem we're talking about, like, the co-design strategy is more of an internal thing we'd be putting out. It's like a, we're, our issue is operations, but how would we apply that to the general public?

00:22:55 [Visual Designer]

Well, it's a project management thing, right, in the end? Yeah. I mean, social dynamics is a very abstract way of saying it, but I think at the end of the day, if you look at it, that's just bolts. Project managers have to include designers. They have to include design at the beginning.

00:23:10 [Researcher-Designer]

We have to be a bottleneck into the thinking process. I agree, yeah.

00:23:14 [Visual Designer]

It depends, again, what are we designing? Like, if you're making a survey, like, even surveys, actually, you have an image on top, you have the buttons look better, everything looks more appealing sometimes. You need that. That's different. Sometimes you don't need that level of design. It all depends on the type of scope and project, but that has to be, the thinking, I guess, is design has to be systemically part of it from the beginning.

00:23:38 [Researcher-Designer]

Okay, so that's. That's the overall issue that we're mostly talking about. I think it's a really important one. Yeah, okay. Okay, I'm getting somewhere. So, how would you phrase that? So, design as part of the, like, operation.

00:23:56 [Visual Designer]

Design is not a service. Design, so, you know, I was just about to say, is design a service? Yeah, yeah, no, but the thing is, service makes us a product. We're kind of like, okay, well, let's just get design in there. Design as, I don't know, as a stakeholder or design as a little, how do you say? A business line? Part of the pie or business line for sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Design as a business line.

00:24:17 [Manager]

Because I was thinking, like, it doesn't necessarily have to be that everything we do has to follow that process, but that we can trigger a kind of a design, you know, service or process or whatever.

00:24:30 [Visual Designer]

█ doesn't want to say service in here. F*ck design as a service.

00:24:33 [Manager]

Like, if we, if somebody is going to start a project or whatever. Yeah. There could be a, a thing that, like a service that we provide or an activity that we conduct where, you know, we can bring our, our expertise and our approach, you know, like it's like a, even, even this process of, of co-design is valuable, even if it doesn't involve graphic designing.

00:25:02 [Researcher-Designer]

It's just the design thinking. So, this is the center.

00:25:06 [Visual Designer]

Graphic design can get very high. The level of graphic design we're providing is very superficial here, I would say.

00:25:12 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah. Yeah, to me, design is just, it's so much more than that, right? We can, if we are a business line, then we'd be offering strategy and different mindsets for people to work off of.

00:25:25 [Visual Designer]

Actually, you should know this. Apple puts design at the beginning of everything.

00:25:30 [Multimedia Designer]

Well, design is also research. Exactly. And it's, you know, like a comparison. It's a, it's a lot of things. It's not just like the final product. It's got to be functional. Oh, it's good. It has to, everything needs, because design is functional as well. The audience is mostly, like, we're talking. There's a lot of internally. You've got to put them in front. I don't think people understand what we do, to be honest. I don't think they have any idea.

00:26:06 [Researcher-Designer]

There's a lot of fear-based behavior at work. Yeah. Thinking that a lot of cultural phenomena that are fostered at work are just detriments to social innovation. You think of competition, specialization in general.

00:26:25 [Multimedia Designer]

I would love to design an anonymous survey type stuff within the IAU, like even if it's just writing something and putting it in a box, so nothing's attached digitally, you know? Like, I won't fill out a lot of surveys because I don't trust them. Wait, an anonymous survey?

00:26:46 [Manager]

Well, we'd be able to design our own internal one.

00:26:49 [Multimedia Designer]

Yeah, I know, but I don't think it should be digital.

00:26:51 [Manager]

No, but what I'm saying is that if you and I like design one and we know, like, we design it in such a way that there is no possible way of tracking who submitted it.

00:27:01 [Multimedia Designer]

Yeah. I think you could get a good idea of what everybody's thinking and feeling. Yeah, thinking just about the general unit. Like, whatever, like, I just think there's a lot of yeah, yeah. Or ideas they're afraid to bring up. I wouldn't say most of the things I think out loud.

00:27:16 [Researcher-Designer]

Well, it's like how companies have their little comment cards. Because of the ego, right? Yeah, exactly.

00:27:22 [Manager]

We have to, that triggers an ethical, an ethics review, because you're asking opinion research over, I don't know if it's opinions or just how you're feeling.

00:27:32 [Multimedia Designer]

They don't have to do it. Yeah. It's not like it's an obligation.

00:27:37 [Manager]

But, like, it'd be cool if you had a thing where people just submit, you know, over the course of the, you know, this is actually interesting because Ryan is talking about work for a potential business line where we support departments in extending or doing work that extends the Public Service Employee Satisfaction Survey. Yeah. Where. Where you would, we would help develop surveys that ask people specific targeted questions over the course of the year.

00:28:14 [Multimedia Designer]

I think it could be useful.

00:28:18 [Manager]

But now we're jumping to solutions.

00:28:20 [Researcher-Designer]

Right. Design as a business line. Yeah, what are the general gaps in us just being a support system? What does that constrict us in doing, like we don't get to do what because we're a support system?

00:28:47 [Visual Designer]

It's not about us. It's about the, I guess, the final result of whatever product we're pushing out there. It's not to its full potential, I think. You know what I mean? Well, we don't get to contribute to the initial concept design, right?

00:29:02 [Visual Designer]

So if we don't contribute, then we're not doing anything. I think there's less value in the final product or there's less effectiveness for it. Not that our decks that administer and things go wrong. I'm just saying, like, for the public, maybe. If you look at it idealistically.

00:29:16 [Multimedia Designer]

It's kind of like monkey stuff, though. You know what I mean? In a sense, just like here's what I want. I'll make it look good. Like you have no other qualities. Like nothing else you do has a value in what we're doing.

00:29:31 [Manager]

Like the QR code or the chemical labeling studies. There are good examples of that. It's like, oh,

yeah. It's just like basically I don't want to do it. You can do it. Actually, here's the thing: red, yellow, green. Here's an example.

00:29:41 [Multimedia Designer]

And that's fine. Like, why not?

00:29:43 [Manager]

But like, that's not, you know, the best example we have.

00:29:47 [Multimedia Designer]

What I've studied, you know? Like I didn't study how to do that.

00:29:49 [Manager]

But, like, you can make QR codes, for example, now that look like designs, right? Like you can use it, but they didn't want to even consider something like that. It was like, no, we just want a picture in the middle and it looks silly.

00:29:59 [Multimedia Designer]

We should be able to make some more calls on things, I think, but I don't know.

00:30:09 [Visual Designer]

Do you get paid to make calls?

00:30:11 [Multimedia Designer]

Well, that's it. It's like, do I just shut up and sit back and whatever? Or I mean, I just do what I'm told. Or do I try to convince people that I'm not an idiot?

00:30:27 [Visual Designer]

I think people like the best example is going to say about what they think we do is make them look good. Right example. When someone came to you. And said, hey, can you put me up the totem pole in the website? Remember that?

00:30:37 [Multimedia Designer]

Really? Yeah. Someone asked me.

00:30:48 [Manager]

Like certain things are just oversights, right? Like, like, OK, yes, you are acting in a specific position and therefore you should be in a certain place on the website.

00:31:04 [Multimedia Designer]

That's just ego stuff.

00:31:07 [Manager]

Well, that was a while ago. That was like half a year ago or something. Well, now he's cool because he's in the leaderships.

00:31:44 [Multimedia Designer]

But there's like if we were actually to, like, restructure this for like, oh, then there's project leads. So, like, how many layers do we need to have? What if we and we are right down at the bottom, too, you know? It's like we're kind of the bottom of the table. We're like this kind of support.

00:31:58 [Visual Designer]

We should put the designers to the top. But it's ego at the bottom here. I mean, designers. Designers have egos, too, but it's not going to get us wrong here.

00:32:06 [Manager]

I've seen places where they mix management and everyone all in one thing. Alphabetical order, man.

00:32:12 [Visual Designer]

Alphabetical order would have been the best situation.

00:32:14 [Multimedia Designer]

Like, yes, honest to God.

00:32:22 [Visual Designer]

I'm always going to be at the bottom.

00:32:23 [Multimedia Designer]

Everybody's got their ideas of like the hierarchy.

00:32:26 [Visual Designer]

But I agree, alphabetical.

00:32:27 [Multimedia Designer]

Why don't we do alphabetical? Because we want to be like Apple. And maybe there should be a filter on it, a filter, so you can rearrange it differently if you want. If you want to.

00:32:34 [Visual Designer]

That's good. That's a very good way to open up. Why not?

00:32:39 [Multimedia Designer]

Rather than like. Who's the boss? Because the way it's set up, it's basically saying. Just put a weight. These are the important people.

00:33:05 [Visual Designer]

But see, that's a biased way of looking at it, right?

00:33:10 [Multimedia Designer]

Alphabetical. Behavioral science. Filter by hierarchy. That's it.

00:33:12 [Researcher-Designer]

You could filter it by designers. Well, we should filter it the way we filter the website in general. Like we have. Yeah. The challenge beside. Well, I don't know if we were going to add like a studio aspect to our website. Well, that's good. Have you seen the redesign? Well, I have in general. I don't. Have we changed it?

00:33:31 [Visual Designer]

No, no. It's the same one.

00:33:35 [Manager]

We don't have a studio component.

00:33:37 [Visual Designer]

But that's again. Should we not have. Do we just do alphabetical and everyone's kind of like on the same plane? I know it's such a dumb question for this thing. It's not a big priority. But that's part of the problem we probably have. We're all. We're at the bottom. So it's like. Ah, design team at the bottom. I feel like it's going to stay where it is now.

00:33:55 [Manager]

In terms of approach, but the new design, it still has leadership group. That's fine.

00:34:04 [Manager]

And everyone. Why is everyone on the website anyways? But yeah, you're right though. If we rebrand ourselves as the Impact Canada Studio. Well, we're going to need content. Right. But come up with some idea. Maybe also. How we would want to present ourselves in our work. It's an opportunity to do that.

00:34:24 [Multimedia Designer]

We could also have like. This is what we can do for you. These are our services. I don't think people that join have any idea what we can even do.

00:34:37 [Visual Designer]

I agree. We're still doing a service at the end. Everyone's doing a service to everyone. But at the end. We're talking about the process. We should not just be seen as a service.

00:34:49 [Multimedia Designer]

These are the things we can do. And then there should also be that other element. Where we're there. And can use our brains. And give two cents. And. Maybe five cents. And. Six cents. Like. There's behavioral. It's a beautiful website. Communications, things that they develop.

00:35:07 [Manager]

We can have a whole page. On just the studio. Yeah.

00:35:10 [Visual Designer]

The things we do. What do we do? Same concept. Yeah.

00:35:12 [Researcher-Designer]
How come we don't have a page?

00:35:14 [Visual Designer]
Rodney was talking about it last time. Remember? We need a page. We should.

00:35:17 [Researcher-Designer]
We should have a page. I don't see why we wouldn't have one.

00:35:19 [Visual Designer]
We should have a business line. Remember. Yes. Yes.

00:35:21 [Researcher-Designer]
I was saying. Yeah. We should be. I wrote it. Design as a business line.

00:35:34 [Multimedia Designer]
Yeah. Behavioral scientists. They come up with these communications things. And like, they're just like, we want to test these things. And this is the pictures that I want you to use. I want you to make something that looks like this for this. It's like, like, let's do, like, we could run a mini-test before they even use it. Do you know what I mean? So if you add it to the service, because what they're doing is basically just testing what we could have easily done internally first. Like, it could go through us first as a test and then say, okay, this is what will work. I think this will be good.

00:36:03 [Visual Designer]
If you put it as a service on our thing.

00:36:04 [Manager]
The other thing, too, is I've already been providing services like that where you wanted to test. They're like, we want to test, like, two different versions of information on the Canada website in Qualtrics. And they don't know how to do that. And so I'm coding phony Canada.gov webpages in their surveys. I'm coding a fake Twitter. Yes, exactly, exactly. So all of that is to do kind of like user testing in a randomized control.

00:36:39 [Multimedia Designer]
It's basically making things for them to do their own user testing. But I think we could run it through something smaller first to see, like, okay, this will work. This will be valid.

00:36:48 [Manager]
So [REDACTED]'s writing some sort of document on case studies. On case studies of different. But anyway, but I never. If we have a thing, a page that describes all of these activities, then we can write little mini briefs about approaches. Yeah. You know, like, instead of me having to tell people all the time, like, when you're doing a messaging study, it should probably look as real as possible, instead of saying, like, if you saw a government communication that said this, right? No, show them the exact show them what the communication would look like, so that when you go back

to the department, you've actually tested something that's exactly government watermarks and everything. And yeah, so those types of things, it's like being written out in quality.

00:37:40 [Multimedia Designer]

Like, yeah, it's Qualtrics.

00:37:42 [Visual Designer]

It's a bottleneck, would you say, then? In some ways. No, it's a huge bottleneck. What do you mean? Because we're taking all our data from the same thing, Qualtrics. Oh, okay. Which is a very limited way of getting real-life information about it. It's not even a real web page. It's like a little survey thing. So anyways, yeah, that's why I found it weird.

00:38:11 [Manager]

I think there are limitations. We're in the work we do sometimes, but we have to accept some of those limitations.

00:38:19 [Visual Designer]

But you know, like, we can quickly spin up Canada.ca web pages. We have all the tools and stuff for that and pretend it's a page and give it as a test to someone and time them and do all the UX testing we need for those situations. Create a fake Twitter feed. Fake news. Who uses Twitter anyways?

00:38:40 [Manager]

But we can have a whole thing of our services. Without it being an official business line, we can still have a whole page that's linked to it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know? Maybe it's better. Remember, design is invisible. Because we connect to all the business lines, so it would be just cross-referencing everywhere.

00:38:57 [Multimedia Designer]

It establishes what we do.

00:39:00 [Manager]

Yeah.

00:39:01 [Multimedia Designer]

Which I hardly even know half the time.

00:39:05 [Visual Designer]

What is it we do?

00:39:12 [Multimedia Designer]

It's because we have our context with, like, cool things happening. Custom page.

00:39:19 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah, yeah, yeah, for sure. Yeah, we have our challenge of design. The context is the design

of support, data-driven versus design-driven. That's the issue. Our objective here would be not necessarily design as a business line, but design as, like, a facet of the overall organization. And a partial solution would be that studio page on the web. That makes a lot of sense. Yeah, and then we could promote our own things. Like, we could start writing blogs and uploading those. I like the idea of us having a section.

00:40:05 [Multimedia Designer]

It's more empowering for some reason. Like, it's just, you know, here's my spot in this company. You know, I don't just, you know, make things for other people. I get to make things and contribute as well.

00:40:16 [Manager]

Yeah, we just have to come up with what we would want. How to describe ourselves.

00:40:22 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah. Well, that can be part of this project. Yeah.

00:40:31 [Manager]

And then we would have to reintroduce ourselves to the unit.

00:40:37 [Researcher-Designer]

We could do that. Just reintroduce ourselves. Introduce, like, the general mindsets that we go by. The strategy we want to implement.

00:40:57 [Manager]

I would say at the very least, we should have a workshop that's on the all-staff meeting. Right. So, like, you know, if we hosted a workshop on, let's say it was, like, co-designing. Co-designing solutions for particular issues, right?

00:41:45 [Manager]

But the focus of that was to write a briefing note pitching a project. But, like, if we did something, we can be focused on kind of co-designing solutions and stuff, right?

00:42:02 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah, I agree. The way it went down, the workshop that we had before at the all-staff. It was a good, like, step to get to somewhere, but there's a few things missing in it, like the general why of why you're doing what you're doing. It just felt like a general exercise, and a lot of people weren't sensibilized. What's the word in English?

00:42:30 [Visual Designer]

Sensitized?

00:42:31 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah, to different ways of thinking, and also the groups were small, but then a lot of, I don't know, in my group, it's a lot of the same people talking. All the time? Yeah. Right? So, it's just having

to sensitize people to different ways of working.

00:42:49 [Multimedia Designer]

Well, that's the thing, too, is not everybody's comfortable speaking, like, out loud to, like, a group of 70 people. Well, that's why we do small groups, right? Like, myself, for instance, you know?

00:42:58 [Researcher-Designer]

Like, I just keep things to myself. Well, especially in, like, our work setting, during the all-staff, it's really hard to get anything out.

00:43:10 [Multimedia Designer]

There's got to be more opportunity for people to have a voice, I think.

00:43:18 [Researcher-Designer]

To speak.

00:43:19 [Researcher-Designer]

So, we could definitely do, like, a larger co-design thing where we break out and then we just pick what we want to focus on when the time comes.

00:43:31 [Multimedia Designer]

I don't remember the name of the tool, but during some meetings or conferences or whatever, people can sort of log in from their phone or whatever and put their two cents into something. Do you know what I mean? Do you know what I mean? So, you can sort of see. Is it like a Moodle board? What is it called? Miro? It's sort of like this interactive. Oh, Miro. That's what it is. No. Well, Miro is, I guess, more of them. But just, like, interactive tools. Okay. I'm just thinking of people being able to collaborate.

00:44:00 [Manager]

I mean, this is funny. These in-person meetings. But, like, you talk about tool collaborations, and I'm like, imagine you can have, like, a call-out for ideas, and you just post something. Like a jam. It's just internal.

00:44:14 [Multimedia Designer]

It's kind of like an internal jam space.

00:44:16 [Manager]

You know, if you have time for 20 minutes, and you're like, hey, I wonder if anybody has, like, one of those, like you said, like a jam board. Fig jam.

00:44:25 [Researcher-Designer]

Well, we could even have that on our web page. I don't know. I don't know if you'd want it open to the public. Oh, well, I'll make it not open to the public. If that's possible.

00:44:34 [Multimedia Designer]

Can you imagine the kind of stuff that would come on there?

00:44:38 [Multimedia Designer]

I find that if I have, like, small conversations with people who are one-on-one, I learn so much more about, you know, what they think and feel and whatnot. I'm like, 'Wow.' Like, so that's a really cool idea, but it just doesn't really go anywhere, and I don't think everybody wants to, you know, speak maybe even in front of [REDACTED] their ideas or whatever. They want to just sort of collaborate with their team, but there's not a lot of opportunity to do that.

Co-design Session 2

2 October 2024

00:00:00 [Researcher-Designer]

It's sort of like a feedback portal on our website, but [REDACTED] had mentioned how you guys have done that before and it didn't necessarily work very well. And also it could be a breeding ground for not the most productive kind of conversations. And then splitting it up. So I'm curious to see if people have ideas for an interface tool or a sort of interactive public product we could produce. And if anybody had extra ideas for the co-design strategy or what you want to see on the studio tab for its new design. And also down here on the yellow end, there's more so shaping out our values so that when we map all this out, we can all be consistent on what we want things to look like. If we don't map out everything instantaneously, I know we can always come back to it if that works best, but I'm curious to see if you guys have any ideas on that front.

00:01:49 [Researcher-Designer]

Also, if there's something completely different that could be interesting to work with, that's also fine. These are the ideas that came out for me right away.

00:02:36 [Manager]

So, um, you mentioned like the, uh, like a feedback mechanism. So are we talking to like feedback on our, our own website?

00:02:44 [Researcher-Designer]

Right, right. So I'm interested in having, it would be on the website actually. A sort of public interface tool. Because our last discussion was very much focused on our operations as a group and how to share design approaches with our colleagues and not so much with the public. So if there was a co-design tool that had some type of interactive component on our website or on specifically the studio tab. In fact, that could be interesting if that's even possible at all, like relating to our, our web designs and how that works.

00:03:51 [Manager]

Right. Like we can, people can provide feedback directly on the website through a, like we can create a form. And then that would allow us to track the stuff that's been submitted directly on our website through a backend portal.

00:04:33 [Visual Designer]

Got an idea for that. Like, what if we keep it even leaner, what if we do like a Figma board that people can comment on and like a jam board, obviously not to the public, but something where internally people would have access to that and they could comment on things or I'm not sure what that even looks like, but something even lower friction than form.

00:04:59 [Manager]

I mean, I guess it depends on, on who our audience is like, um, for internal stuff, I agree. For sure. Um, for the external facing part of our site where I think we're supposed to have some means for people to submit feedback, if they have issues with our website, like things like accessibility issues

or things that we need to improve. Um, so I think those are two separate things, right?

00:05:26 [Researcher-Designer]

Right. Internally that'd be interesting too. Keep going.

00:05:34 [Visual Designer]

You guys talked about, uh, the users, like the user centric approach. I think like that, that's a, you know, the feedback form for a lot of the UX website experience. That's fine. Well, like, let's say we do something else, where it's even lower, just practices both, like, you know, like a check part or like, uh, He can just, put it login something, together. Other data could be useful in that sense, but then again, like you say, who's gonna be looking at this and who has access to this is really the main concern right?

00:06:15 [Researcher-Designer]

Right, that's mostly what I was interested in talking about: seeing how possible it can be to have something that's more public-facing, a public-facing tool. How possible that is.

00:06:37 [Manager]

It might just be different ways that we want to collect feedback right? Right, and on different issues like if it's general feedback on like external accessibility and stuff of our website, that's one thing; if it's feedback on the design of our of our projects and things. That's that might be different now. We have some instances where we solicit feedback on the design of our programs, which would be like 'coming soon' challenge prizes where we actually ask for for for ideas so those generally are you know are generally designed by our partner departments rather than using an approach that we at Impact Canada have put together and and generally those are like, 'okay we're gonna create a forum where we ask people about specific elements of design and they can provide feedback.' But it's not always done so sometimes uh challenges are just launched um but when we have the opportunity Sometimes, we do have those 'coming soon' piles that include an opportunity for feedback. I've never seen it done for our other projects, you know, like our behavioral science type of stuff or anything like that right?

00:08:19 [Researcher-Designer]

Right so it's having to uh co-design accessibility which would focus more on our specific work or co-design through like a feedback loop on the like the B-side reports and their data work yeah right. It depends on what we're more interested in, on how to bridge that gap between uh the data-driven work approach and our design-driven approach yeah so I mean yeah it's interesting like what is the problem that we're

00:09:06 [Manager]

Trying to resolve here, right? Like do are we not getting are we missing potential feedback that could be used to improve our our programs and if so, like which which projects and things would be or would would benefit from a more like a stronger feedback portal, mm-hmm. Let's say like we're working on Parka or something, like are we? We get a lot of unsolicited emails to our generic inbox right, and most of the time it's like, 'You know hey, I have this company, how can I get funding or like here's my CV, I'd like to work for you guys.' Right, but I don't know that we

normally would get something like, 'Hey, you should check out my research.'

00:10:14 [Researcher-Designer]

In the same area that you're doing this could help inform your your your program design right so is that is that because we're not getting we're not providing a a loop for people to provide information that they've done or was it something else I know yeah that could be it if we're more interested in doing a specific feedback portal for our studio so we'd have our our studio and we'd have studio tab and then have that feedback portal related to all the UCD the human center design the co-design principles I think in that way we could offer this loop of like to inform our program well not the program design the the accessibility Designs in our website and also focus more on, like, user testing like Lori had mentioned before I think I included that in the portal, like a user journey mapping tool for user testing or offering people the chance to write in about whatever they've done in the past.

00:11:50 [Visual Designer]

So, what's the goal? So we want to get some feedback on something specific because the thing is, whatever the ultimate goal is, it can't just be like user-centric; people don't get that right. So let's say we have different user-centric projects. The way we collect the feedback is also as important. As the actual feedback, so otherwise we're kind of like a model of a program that's like a project that's like a opening a Pandora's box where people will just, you know, just send anything that comes to their mind rather than there being specific feedback that we need right yeah like, like we have that feedback form that's pretty much like a catch-all in a way I think that's enough for that for its purpose but if we're looking for something very specific design-related, you'd have to collect that feedback in a design fashion, meaning like is it going to be like three four options that you vote on, is it going to be something? where they can openly comment on a design that we propose like say we get a Figma board and then anyone can go in there because as long as you create a Figma account you can create you can comment and say this is great we'd like that we can get that kind of feedback or is it more like you know click on this and book a time to chat with one of our design studio folks try to talk about your problems so we can break it down I mean there's there's many ways I see this can go it really depends on maybe a goal specific for you know a specific type of project right so right does that make sense yeah it does yeah the booking appointments is interesting just because that would directly be a sort of co-design process of interacting directly with the user that's interesting I think it's if we were to frame it under a specific project or anything I think it could be because we're launching the website soon so it can't be the website launch but if it's it could be like the launch of our our specific studio tab but like imagine imagine like we're launching a new user it's imagine like we're launching a new user interface or a new page we have a Figma board with two artboards and in those two artboards we say vote for the best one vote for the one that resonates more with you that Would be a way we can co-design in an easy fashion, low friction for someone that comes in just come in and be like 'oh cool, I've got two options: Option A, the button is full or Option B, the button is out'... For example, so that's another way we can do it without having to do a full meeting with everyone all the time. Get feedback from it's user experience testing, a way where it's like 'which one would you click on Something like that, not be in line there co-design I think right that would be yeah.

00:15:09 [Researcher-Designer]

Does somebody else have something to add?

00:15:11 [Manager]

Yeah, right now the the management team is is looking at like putting together or has been working on putting together a kind of partner, like I forget what it was called, but it's like a document that outlines the types of services and things. You know who Impact Canada is and what we do and what we can provide right? And previously, the focus was very much on like we can do a challenge prize with you or we have a fellow that we can put in your in your in your department and work on behavioral science. Okay, so like those were like two streams of work. Now, the Rodney sees it more as like well, if you look at our fellows and the stuff that they produce, there's a lot of it is data analytics right? It's collecting data presenting, recommendations-so he wants to focus more on on like the service offerings in terms of like okay it doesn't have to be behavioral science. We have data management, data collection expertise inside the unit and that's a service as well, you know. He wants him to be almost front and center that you know we can help with things like not just surveying for behavioral science and policy, but surveying for anything, like employee well-being in your department, to you know handling large data sets, like real properties, that the government holds are currently holding so we're having meetings. On all sorts of weird, different things that aren't traditional in Canada, work so maybe part of this could be that you know our team, we don't really publicize or have publicly that we can also contribute to design, you know. Work so you know if you're designing some sort of user interface or some tool or anything, we can also you know provide that as a service and create like a formal relationship with partners that are strictly on on design work, maybe right, like maybe that could be like a business line of sorts, or you know instead of consulting with a graphic design firm, maybe we can do quick and easy kind of work on some.

00:18:09 [Researcher-Designer]

projects right so maybe that's the direction where you're going no that's that's interesting then the audience wouldn't be the public necessarily it'd be the I don't know if it's a tab or something federal departments consult with us and then we can integrate a behavioral science lens as well as our graphic design lens to like the development of a campaign or a social media piece or something you know a poster you know I'm talking like a BSI scientist and a graphic designer meeting with like a stakeholder who wants to come up with like a campaign or some kind of flyer related to something they want to promote right so

00:18:59 [Visual Designer]

That would be the biggest, that would be like ultimately the unicorn of co-design because you're using science and designers and someone at the same table doing that so the meeting is actually interesting.

00:19:12 [Manager]

Yeah, because, like, let's say, let's say your department doesn't have a fellow but you want help on a particular campaign, perhaps we can be contracted in some way, you know, and it would be like a low-cost relative to having like a fellow and running a million-dollar study, maybe that's something that we pitched to leadership as a potential piece that or service offering that we can provide like a co-design. Session with the Impact and Innovation Unit where we have you know

experts in graphic design in the process of co-design, as well as including a behavioral scientist that can comment on behavioral science-informed approaches to communications.

00:20:13 [Researcher-Designer]

Oh, this is yeah, no, I love that idea; that's great. Mixing both the data and design, making our contributions as multidisciplinary and as possible, offering people different ways of seeing, different ways of doing. That way... How would that translate like product-wise? If we're offering these services, is this just something that's promoted on our On our studio tab, yeah, I think it's a service.

00:20:56 [Manager]

It would be yeah, no, I agree. Like we would have like, we're trying to develop, like I don't know if it's like a brochure that can be shared with potential clients, like I don't know how else to describe it, a booklet, a fucking deck, yeah, but something that we maybe it should be cold, hard cash, like it would just be cash or Venmo, well you know, like our challenge guide. Maybe it's like our challenge guide right?

00:21:32 [Researcher-Designer]

Well, I was thinking that this project is to create a code design strategy that kind of that has a similar format to the KT, the knowledge translation one, but specifically for our work. In the studio part, that would would that be just showcasing what our services are, not just how we operate.

00:21:57 [Manager]

So, okay yeah, because then we can talk about things like, you know, what we did during COVID where we designed custom we can showcase the stuff we've done for studies and public servant communication campaigns, because like the work that we've done, no one gets to see it, the ones that in our online Qualtric studies so like all of the things you've worked on, Laurie and Chris on, like electric cars or home labeling studies, like those things don't see the light of day but if we had like a guide of some sort that departments could See, like you know we needed to design something for XYZ. This was our approach and here are some like I don't know if it's case studies or examples, and then you know, and then we're actually showing that these things were tested right and compared to one another. Then people could see it's more like showcasing our methodologies right and not just focused on this-the result of this particular study.

00:23:15 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah, showing the whole life cycle yeah of something right, like a portfolio yes, yeah I like that word portfolio, yeah, the studio portfolio that could be part on our um uh, like part of our in the tab sub tabs. Um, I was I was also Wondering if we would be interested in creating specific studio-based graphic design because I know [REDACTED] has worked on, like, a new logo mark for Data Measurement. Would we want our own logo mark, like, our own point of reference?

00:24:05 [Manager]

I don't I don't know um it depends how our profile is gonna be laid out, like... one way to do it would be to, like, create just a like just tag tag our work and then, um, and then you can have one of those like thematic area type of pages and then we put a ton of content at the top and then at the bottom we can have links to all sorts of things like our that are relevant, like our Impact Canada

brand... uh, you know. imagine linking directly to like Figma or or places to download um content that they need or or blogs we've written or or or guides we've written like all of that stuff could be linked in one spot um but also we could create a whole full freestyle page kind of like a business line as well right uh yeah not necessarily breaking away from the the Impact Canada brand but just having like our own yeah like business line type look yeah so even if it doesn't have a link like as as one of the main menu items. A full freestyle page with all, it would be cool and it would be a good way to publicize our our approach and what we we provide our departments great oh how many services are we they're technically offering for because I do like the idea this would be a way of getting us involved rather than the end of the process you know like we're challenging a bunch of like little Things so we could have the same thing, one of them would be like campaign design for example where we we give you this is our package product, we commit to having one designer, one B-side person and you and your team or whatever probably one person. We would also have user experience testing which would be another service, you know we take your your idea or your website we test it out, obviously this would require some more like thought to it maybe it's another one, or that's it I guess and then obviously internal costs so like for challenges and stuff, so does that make sense? Like that's pretty much how I would break it down.

00:27:18 [Manager]

the interactive thing is cool, that would be awesome having a Figma board there but then imagine all the random people jumping in and destroying that board and, yeah, I like it for specific projects.

00:27:32 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah, I was mostly thinking for the public outcome to be more focused towards the public, but if we want our public facing thing to be towards like stakeholders and partners, that's also fine.

00:27:46 [Visual Designer]

Okay, it's kind of like fellowship and all those guys host a fellow and you know be a fellow. It's kind of like going both ways, so we kind of have that duality as far as public facing versus, you know, generally yeah, so maybe you're right.

00:28:02 [Researcher-Designer]

Maybe the studio requires a kind of look and feel or something, I would think so, and then and then we can really showcase ourselves as people too on the website to our personal team and our about page. It's there's just so many people it's hard to have a human touch to our work, so if we could just showcase ourselves like our personalities, our different backgrounds, I think it could add a great human touch to the whole unit in general.

00:28:36 [Visual Designer]

I got an idea like obviously on brand, an idea I got a when you said let's make it our own personal touch imagine it's like all like our little team of five and we make like fun sketches on our faces. and something a little different from everybody else on brands you know what I mean like it's a like it would be all everything would be hand drawn or some shit or it'd be cool 80s textures and we'd have cameos we'd make our site like super like over the top yeah our page compared to the others but on the public face like on the main page it would look like a nice little link but when you get on that page like whoa that's what I was picturing too having some sort of like components that

add a human touch something a bit more compelling right even though like our website is already really compelling for Canadian like government websites but if we can make it really our own it'd be great yeah I like it I like the idea a lot okay great so we'd have our own our own website tab the studio have all showcase our services, showcase um that co-design strategy that has all our like our portfolio, our case studies to the life cycle of our projects um yeah we could also show that just the same way shows their stuff yeah our work you'd have like those portfolios like [REDACTED] was mentioning.

00:30:22 [Visual Designer]

Would it be like, for example? I still think we should present even work that's unreleased, i.e., or some examples, I'll just use i. e. the men's COVID remember the crazy get that crazy campaign, we're supposed to do to show the thought process, yeah, yeah, even unreleased projects like that sometimes have a good thought process or a weird thought process. I'll be a cool way to showcase the breadth of our work and also showcase really like a more our values.

00:30:53 [Researcher-Designer]

Let's say that's why I incorporated like the value section if you guys have anything to add to that because I know, like reading through our strategies and stuff there's the Impact Canada values and they're very systematic, but like they lack a lot of life; they're very like you're just reading policy speak, so if there's any other values that you want to incorporate that can translate through the design, that'd be great too.

00:31:23 [Visual Designer]

What are our values?

00:31:24 [Researcher-Designer]

Design with thought, well you guys can you can think about it too, it doesn't have to come out right away. I'm planning on creating the physical creation within the next three months so it'll be done in like December-ish, so there's there's still like room and time to to like add ideas and move stuff around, uh, but if nobody has any additional ideas or thoughts, I think we can end it here. I don't know if um, we'll see if I need a a third session later because I'll kind of regroup everything and write another summary and then see how it goes, but to recap, so what is it we're doing? We're okay, product, it's a page, we're creating a page that's going to service yep and then have showcase our portfolio, showcase past case studies, those that are released and unreleased, just to really show our process, the life cycle of a project, of what we can offer um, showcase ourselves, our values, but also have a separate product. Like a co-design strategy or a guide or playbook on how to approach us as like the outside audience, stakeholders, partners-how they can read through that and kind of, so it'd be like two products.

00:33:22 [Visual Designer]

And both of them, I think no one's gonna read that book, okay, nobody's gonna read it.

00:33:27 [Researcher-Designer]

But also, I'm thinking it could be a tool for policy, yes, exactly because I started writing it and I'm addressing it as a public service, so but it would be public a public product, but more for

public servants if that makes sense. And I'm changing the way it's written a little bit so it's more approachable and friendly compared to other uh, other tools.

00:34:01 [Visual Designer]

We have that are written, yeah, I think uh, public for public servants that might be a bit of a period anyway, you know maybe we shouldn't put it out there for the public or we should make it very, very minimal like people should not be able to find it easily on the page right away like a small link, oh okay because you have a service and then just maybe a link to our challenge guides or partners and stuff like that, that way it's more than I think so that's the stuff that would be available but I mean just like maybe the way we lay it out, right not make it like a focal access yeah, yeah, okay like a challenge guide where it's meant for the public. Where they're like, 'Yeah, give us the meats and potatoes.'

00:34:53 [Public Administrator]

Yeah, I would say most of it would be on the the web interface that'd be the the main thing. Yeah, okay, great. I think that's it for now. Thanks everyone for ideas; I don't know, Lora Laurie if you had other ideas or thoughts, general thoughts no, okay uh, if there's anything that comes in the generic inbox says that might be useful for you because we get lots of stuff in there um I can just share that with you um I don't know if my answer to that is right now I don't know if my answer to that is okay yeah as like an FYI because you can see kind of like the types of questions that people have.

00:35:43 [Researcher-Designer]

Thanks, yeah, okay. But if we, if that's it, then we can leave it at that and I'll contact you guys to see if uh we need a third session or not, but otherwise it's going to be a bit more uh loosely structured as time goes on.

Co-design Session 3

8 November 2024

00:00:00 [Researcher-Designer]

About the services and stuff and even expand on it um but like the behavioral science studies um i imagine like that study can yield a report or a deck that's you know shared but we can also highlight the um the design approach that we we took to something right right with the portfolio that's kind of what i envision we show the product we've done but focus more on art how we worked on it rather than what the b-side people did because when we promote b-side products it's what the b-side people did and not how we took the challenge on yeah and

00:00:49 [Manager]

Then, I love the idea of some sort of catalog or a way for people to see what we've done, so that when they're thinking about or even internally, like when a fellow is looking at the stuff we've done, having the the elements itself all in one place and not spread out all over different reports is a very cool idea as well.

00:01:12 [Researcher-Designer]

Okay, so you're seeing it as a catalog; I like that word, yeah. Well, that's what I thought I saw like uh, yeah this this part right because I was struggling with guidebook like which word I want to use-a guidebook do I want a strategy do I want a playbook um so do we see this as like a living document that we keep adding To yeah, it can be for sure because I see living digitally so we could always add to it.

00:01:43 [Manager]

It's a it's going to be a PDF so I don't know, yeah, PDF is it's tough because then there's a library of numbers, there's uh publishing, okay um, is is there you know, there's a kind of solution to that to keep like adding to it ...

00:02:00 [Multimedia Designer]

Further on, I'm a little confused by what you mean by like having a catalog on our webpage like a catalog of our like our portfolio or yeah I think these are two different things like maybe a guidebook would be oh maybe a guidebook is something like this is our approach to design, these are the general categories of things and and that's a lot.

00:02:21 [Manager]

On the other page, we would have opportunities for people to see examples of our breakthroughs work but presented in a different way right this is um like our portfolio here view all the case studies and in there you could that could be the yeah the portfolio is the catalog, yeah so maybe the portfolio like I'm trying to imagine okay so let's say you have a study on the QR codes right um would we then have a a a little project card here that says um you know designing a better QR code and or designing a better home label and it's just focused on the elements that we did and then links to the

00:03:09 [Multimedia Designer]

Other reports, but like what would you what would you be talking about exactly? Like, would you talk about the research that you put into uh to make your decisions? Would you talk about like, did you actually test it on anyone to see if it was useful, but what could what what is the value of showing this stuff aside from it being nice okay right you know we would have to we have to think about all of our products and then we'll have we're gonna have to backtrack and then come up with and like start writing basically and that would encourage us to write and publish blogs and have more of a space within Impact Canada rather than just to support because we'd be communicating what we do. So it wouldn't necessarily be a project or it would be in the sense of a project it would be like a studio specific project. It could be a campaign, for example like we could highlight our approach to the design of the challenge prize campaign. If that was an item then we can have either it's a blog or something that talks about how we're adding we're humanizing it or we're adding you know right and then it it pulls elements from Our presumably our guidebook would be like that knowledge translation strategy type of thing, but specific for what, like design um, and then that you can pull from that and reference that in our our little blogs about the things that we're doing right, okay, so use the case studies as blogs I think that's a good way to communicate that because I hadn't really thought of the structure yet, but if we structure them as blogs and have like images spread throughout, that could be whatever we want.

00:05:19 [Researcher-Designer]

Yeah, it could change, whatever fits the content, and then we can highlight all the different types of work that we do, if it's building a better platform for challenges or for fellowships, or um doing like data stuff as well.

00:05:56 [Multimedia Designer]

Do we not just have like a portfolio of our work and then just have like a little blurb to to to go with it that just says you know um we developed the creative I don't know the visuals for this campaign um keep it cut a little bit vague don't dig into it too much and it just kind of highlights all of our services like we can do this, we can do this, we can do this, we can do this and just share it with our friends and family and stuff like that so I think that's a good way to kind of show like oh okay visual of those services.

00:06:24 [Researcher-Designer]

Like, examples of our services, you know I mean it just seems like a lot to have to write about each project and what it's about or yeah, you know but just like to be very here's the services we do, yeah, and hear the little blurb about these things and yeah, I don't know, okay, little summaries, little suffering, yeah, and lots of visuals, yeah, but we should actually like, what are all the things we do, you know, we should almost kind of like write it down, you know, yeah, yeah, like, make a list, like I mean there's so many random bits and bobs, I guess last time we had just rounded down to these three but it could it could be expanded, I think. there's i mean i think that's like broad yeah but there's other little bits in there you know um well maybe um these would be clickable bubbles you could click on them and then it would take you to the next page and then it would expand on that service campaign design back-end web development yeah yeah yeah no there's differently different different different things we can highlight for sure. It's fun to think about. I really wish we had the user experience testing data and and that whole thing to do it'll happen eventually yeah well this is good this is very good.

00:08:32 [Manager]

It might be more exciting for us to do work when we know we can, we can highlight it as well.

00:08:41 [Researcher-Designer]

It feels like we're doing it out of our own initiative rather than just being told what to do, right?

00:08:51 [Multimedia Designer]

Yeah, we should think about what sort of things we're like we could do this, we would like to show off you know like what's some of our pieces that we're like proud of, that's what I wanted to know.

00:09:03 [Researcher-Designer]

I'd like to showcase three, three case studies for now, obviously we'll have more in the future but what's like the three main things that we're proud of that we'd want to showcase. As case studies, sorry are you suggesting that we write our own little case studies uh no no I can I will I will write them um but like we we can write them mutually um I guess I can show you what I mean uh yeah let me see let me see. Stop sharing and then because I'm developing the guide right now and in design, can you see this?

00:09:49 [Public Administrator]

Oh, share Elysabeth! I also feel like this is like a marketing um yeah like there's a marketing perspective to like sell ourselves and like why we're so good like bringing the user center to sign like being mindful about like accessibility right um like all of those things kind of like go into the work. All the visual elements are being done but it doesn't really like get talked about but it's a huge part of every like decks and presentations like the choice of colors right exactly it's like we're we're the behind the scenes and you know we're like we're like we're like we're like the people behind so yeah and and what it looks like so far is that um the work that's coming out of impact canada looks great why does it look great yeah okay you know it's like everybody else's work looks great but who are the designers so it is like a marketing thing right yeah yeah why do we so here are the faces here are the faces behind why impact Canada looks good, you know, like even in the report that you shared and you tagged us all for like feedback, like I mean I think it's that the way Impact Canada looks is that you're there are um like decision points on absolutely everything on that report, like visually, like there's a reason why things looked at the way that they did and I think people are just like oh they're just so great and creative but like there's more to that like there's like actual thought and deliberate decision making and stuff that I think people like almost take it for granted because they're like oh they just produce great stuff, but they don't They don't see the process we know, everybody else is though right?

00:11:26 [Researcher-Designer]

I think that's why it's important to have this portfolio showcase studies so people can understand the way we think because behind these yeah, the design thinking because it doesn't translate to everybody how we work. But I was starting to develop the the guidebook um and there's this section with I have for now three case studies where uh we'd have a summary like you know, like a summary of what we're doing, and then we'd have a summary of what we're doing. You said Laurie uh, our project goals outcomes and results, but we could include um, like a bit more of the

well i guess this isn't um it's in a guide so maybe on the web it can be more detailed as to why things the way the things look the way they do wait is that a sentence why things look the way they do and showcase some images so in the guide it'd be a bit more reduced but on the web we could really allow it to be a little bit more detailed and then we'd have a summary of what we we could really allow it to be a little bit more detailed and then we'd have a summary of what we that's kind of like what i was envisioning a little bit yeah uh i'm playing also with the style of how things look um just because i don't know we have our other guides and They're all made in Word, and I know, like, we love Word, and Word is very accessible. But we don't love it; it's accessible, but um, if we could make something in Design, it could be fun, don't know if anybody would read it, but it's there, I don't know, so there's that.

00:13:04 [Manager]

Yeah, this is gonna make me think of all sorts of things like even putting things like our templates somewhere, yeah, okay, uh, a section in the website for templates? Well, no, I mean, like, if it becomes as much of a resource for internal, like, fellows and people who want to peruse the types of work we've done, if they want to um, if we even talk about somewhere.

00:13:28 [Multimedia Designer]

Like, if we had like something about our templates, let's see, let's see was if it's a PDF or something you're constantly gonna have to update it and then translate it, like that's true, that's like maddening! It should be like a web thing where did you guys go that easy to you know.

00:13:55 [Manager]

Was the general order of things on the last file was the order, okay in the on the web should things be ordered differently hierarchy wise because you mentioned it's good, I mean like um I think I think maybe we might want to align with the approach on some of the other business lines so like not everything has to be cards. you know okay um that maybe our okay um that maybe our social media that maybe our social media that maybe our social services could be like the expandable collapse sections because there's going to be more than just three okay probably yeah um so we might want to mix it up a little bit um and then um collapse but but but i really i really think this is a good um a good thing for us to push forward so that it'll it'll end up um it'll end up becoming uh like a real a real showcase tool for us right yeah um and like but it all depends on whether or not a partner is willing to allow us to share that's what i was selling her yeah you know like

00:15:00 [Researcher-Designer]

So if our partner says, 'I don't want you to share those those designs you made for this thing or the or the what it was about or whatever, yeah then we might get the leadership okay um would things like challenge prizes be included in that like if we showcased Aqua Lunar that's fine okay that's fine because it's already there yeah I think that's already out there it's yeah more so like um the I was thinking because you guys kept reiterating the COVID work that was done and that has never been released, so something like that would be an issue it might be yeah but there's there's COVID work that we can highlight that we did um for

00:15:39 [Manager]

Sure, like that now I think well, yeah, there's there's those challenges, those those uh studies, there's

um other infographics and there's the video that we made, like we can we can include stuff like that um as a showcase of things that we've done um but yeah, I mean yeah, we can showcase like uh our approach to challenge prize uh campaigns right like uh you know that we we can include things like web traffic and and share the success of campaigns right that'd be a cool thing you know like our our we make videos for launching uh we we um we have those meet the jury panel you know we could talk about how popular those pages tend to be. or those campaigns maybe you know we can apply our we can align like if we have a guidebook or or some playbook that describes certain things and we can try to i'm sure we can find examples okay yeah and then and then a client could look at it and say okay i want to see all of the things that we've done all of the work we've done all of the work we do for challenges and then they'll see things like our our websites uh our uh if we had a blog let's say about our approach to the challenge website or web page the or what we put on it um our approach to to social media campaigns or or promotion you know videos uh you know that could be very useful Or, yeah, okay, our approach to each different little asset that we do is how, yeah, you know, and we can describe what the logic is of our challenge web page right and and then make references to our challenge guide and have all these nice and various references everywhere, okay, great. And then we have some blogs about challenge design and things.

00:17:42 [Researcher-Designer]

I think now I'll just work further on the case studies what they could look like, the potential of those, and um, rework the structure here and add templates, I think that's that's a yeah a great thing we could have in here.

00:18:02 [Manager]

What else it's also the project isn't on figment right like on our yeah is it on your own personal one uh good question i'm not sure yeah I had heard rumors about the development of this um and so i was looking for it on our um on our channel oh i couldn't i couldn't find it oh oh rumors through like um oh okay okay chris okay i thought you meant like through a random person yeah no okay okay that'd be crazy okay um but like then we can create like uh or or maybe we can put together a shared uh google doc for the content yes okay that would be great so that um we can instead of having to put it into the figma design like the things like the services like we can we can input into that, and then um, like we can start in stages right if we can have a studio page up um fairly soon with basic stuff and then more time we're going to start sharing our portfolio, then we can start adding to it okay you know yeah.

00:19:13 [Researcher-Designer]

We can do that. I guess for the general um illustrations and stuff, I could discuss it more as we are working on a symbol right now for for the studio.

00:19:29 [Manager]

And I'm not sure whether there'll be a menu option at the very top of the site, but I'm sure we can put something on the landing Page and then find other ways to cross-link to it because we're going to end up with way too many 'menu items'

00:19:41 [Researcher-Designer]

Right, it's a bit, it's getting long.

00:19:43 [Manager]

It is, yeah, yeah, because we're also going to have a data business line.

00:19:52 [Multimedia Designer]

I like that, he's been, did he just put a new one up? Yeah, yeah, it looks really great; that looks a lot, I like that for the dark background.

00:20:01 [Manager]

Different options yesterday were pretty funny, but I like that one, it stood out a lot. So we have web content for that, yeah, that dark dark blue is so awesome, yeah, so it makes everything look good. I find so there's going to be like four chunks for business lines on the main landing page.

00:21:02 [Researcher-Designer]

So data is dark, that's the thing I don't know what colors we should pick to emulate Studio, yeah, I don't know white there was some other option I had thought pink but pink is really intense, there's a lot of blue on that page.

00:21:20 [Manager]

No, these were the other options. He was messing with green, oh whoa! He was messing around with all sorts of things, even like a dark and light.

00:21:42 [Researcher-Designer]

Okay, I guess that comes later once the content is all figured out, yeah.

00:21:48 [Manager]

So we can have like a basic landing page with the content that I think we can probably write up in the next week or so, okay um and then we can think about how we're going to populate and then what we're going to do, yeah, even though our approach to like the all the little elements of our website can be different things, right?

00:22:21 [Researcher-Designer]

Create a Google Doc, sure, do that and put everything on. Okay, great! Thanks for the feedback; it's great, this is good. Hopefully, we can get it done in the next few months.

00:22:43 [Manager]

I mean, it would be nice to have the landing page up before the end of the month.

Appendix D: Logomark Evaluations



12:06 PM



Overall:

- Nice job keeping things on brand and generally in-line with our suite of existing symbols.
- The idea behind the humanist symbol might make our business line seem too abstract. I feel we would need to be a bit more obvious about the concept of design.
- I am not sure about the idea of the Venn diagram as our symbol.
- My preferred visual languages are closer to 2 and 4, which would fit better with the thicker lines of the other symbols. This would facilitate consistency.

Logo 1:

- I like this one the most out of the 4.
- I still think we need to represent the idea of design more explicitly since we are ultimately a design studio.

Logo 2:

- Too much complexity with the overlapping circles.
- Looks like the Toxic symbol. No go for me on this one.

Logo 3:

- It feels too mathematical, too Venn Diagram-ish.
- Maybe we can explore a more complex shape with 5-6 intertwining circles. Think Apple Photos App and beyond.

Logo 4:

- Similar feedback to the Venn diagram symbol, we can maybe explore something a little less mathematical.
- Reminds me of the Olympics or Chanel logo.

Next steps:

- Can we explore more unique marks around the idea of design? Maybe mash up a design tool and a shape? The concept of "design" should take precedence over the idea of "co-design". "Co-design/human centered", those are more of our philosophy.
- We can maybe look at using the letter S as another concept to represent the Studio since we are putting emphasis on our new group's name.

(edited)

Appendix D: Logomark Evaluations

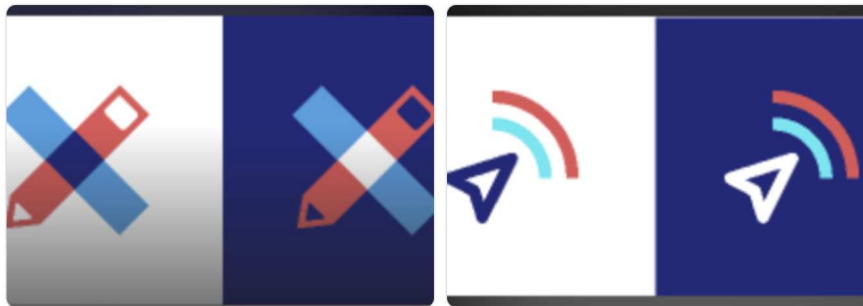
9:05 AM

hey! good work. I think these 2 speak to me the most. First one is too complex (the 4 circles/2 half mickeys) and the 4th one might be too close to apps, layers, stack of cards, etc. Ultimately, we want to simplify to the idea of "Design for You (aka our internal and external clients) - even though we are trying to be a part of the process.

- I like the design visual the most in terms of idea. The execution a little less because it is an "X". Can we explore the same pen idea with a friendlier shape and avoid overlapping lines to keep the collection of icons consistent?
 - Another idea is to extrapolate the idea of design (maybe the pen or pencil) and show a process. Try mixing process and design together - could be an arrow x pen or something like that.
- For the pointer x impact quarter circles, i like this, but feels too close to a GPS/location app. I love the idea of the circular/half circular/quarter circular elements since it would work well within our collection of icons.

I think we are getting closer to a visual that makes sense.

2 files ▾



I am exploring on my end something that showcases information accessibility (via design), our place in the heart of Impact Canada, our impact on knowledge translation.

1:43 PM

hey! logos 10 and 11 (which is close to the one I put together) have potential.

I like the negative space design for the pencil, really have a crush on this visual. I would however find a way to try to reduce the visual emphasis on the white (it feels too bulky compared to the overall design). I think this would be a potential candidate too since it is clearly a design tool!

If you can tweak that logo 10 and find 2-3 ways to keep that negative space pencil concept in, i feel we can soon take both options and tweak and test in 3d which we can then present to mike and management.

2 files ▾

