

DESIGN FOR GOVERNMENT 2015 AALTO UNIVERSITY

Project Piazza | Lähde

Oona Frilander, Petra Leino, Gaspar Mostafá, Anna Várnai



Aalto University

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OUR TEAM

As a team we are a good mix of different academic backgrounds and work experiences, while sharing similar values and goals at the same time: We are deeply interested in how design can be applied to new contexts and in exploring the potential as well as the boundaries of design having a lasting effect on complex systems and individual behavior. We believe that a multidisciplinary perspective combined with methods of design thinking can contribute to solving wicked problems that our society is facing now and in future. That is why we are studying in the international and multidisciplinary Master's Programme Creative Sustainability at Aalto University and appreciate being part of the Design for Government 2015 experience.



OONA FRILANDER (Finland)

Background in business management and economics.



PETRA LEINO (Finland)

Designer with a background in humanistic studies.



GASPAR MOSTAFÁ (Argentina)

Graphic designer with a background in philosophy.



ANNA VÁRNAI (Germany)

Background in psychology and design (thinking).

0.

EXECUTIVE

SUMMARY

GENERAL PROBLEM

Commissioned by the Prime Minister's Office our team tackled the challenge of how to make better use of research and information in Finnish policy and decision-making. There are different approaches on how to make better use of information. In our view the most important one is the cultural change within the government and across all ministries. The government has already realized the need and wants to change, but is lacking the right tools and connections.

SPECIFIC PROBLEM

The way the government and collaboration across ministries is working right now, does not help reaching neither evidence-based decision-making nor the vision of a more open, agile and experimental future government. Within the government there are different silos, collaboration is not dynamic and overreaching enough and initiatives that push towards more evidence-based, opened and collaborative policy-making get lost in the way.

SOLUTION

What is needed to get there? We need to make the already existing innovative initiatives and approaches reach

every corner in every ministry - so they become mainstream. To make that happen, we believe that abstract themes and visions need to connect to specific practices and to the civil servants' everyday working life. Through sharing practices and connecting people, civil servants would be able to learn from processes applied in different ministries and generate a new cooperative and constructive way of working in the government. This would in turn lead to better use of existing resources and information.

FINAL CONCEPT

For that, we created the online platform Lähde. Lähde is a collaborative tool for civil servants from all ministries, where they can share innovative approaches and practices that drive the cultural shift towards a more open, experimental and agile future government. The website is open to the public and makes abstract themes easily understandable, thus providing a big picture for people working in their silos. Moreover, abstract themes are connected to concrete practices in different ministries and civil servants can learn more about those by discussions and generating connections. Lähde provides a common channel for scattered initiatives and already existing resources within the ministries and creates a supportive community for actively pushing the cultural change forward.

1.

INTRODUCTION

We were two teams working on the same case called Project Piazza. The original brief assigned by the Prime Minister's Office was that "the Finnish government is in need of a platform where information about RDI (research, development and innovation) projects can be stored and searched easily by decision-makers, by researchers and funding organisations". In short the brief aimed at making better use of information in policy and decision-making. We worked together with the other team on the whole research part of the project and divided into the smaller teams as we moved on to ideating and creating solutions. Our idea and the one created by the other team complement each other and together they answer a wider scale question.

We started the process by conducting a lot of research to understand the current situation and where potential leverage points may lie. We gathered information from a variety of different sources: we organised and facilitated workshops, did a lot of desktop research and benchmarking and most importantly we talked and met with our stakeholders, who were very collaborative and kind to invite us into their offices and to let us take a peek into their realities. Through the interviews and the insights gained from them we began to outline and better understand the bigger picture and the system in which our stakeholders operate in.

Our research led us to understand that we should not only focus on information but rather on what is behind it, how it is used, the people who are using it and their processes. Another thing that became clear from the research was that challenges of tomorrow cannot be solved with old conventional methods and tools and that a change has to begin from within. A change also requires better, new ways of collaboration that breaks through the different silos, old structures and hierarchies.

These findings led us to reframe the original brief and focus on the larger cultural change that was already

bubbling beneath the surface. Many new and brave ideas and ways of doing have already been implemented within the Finnish government, such as the Muutoksentekijät (the Changemakers Movement) who are doing great pioneer work in challenging and shaking the old structures and conventional ways of working. There is also a clear shift towards a more open and transparent culture within the government as we can see from the recent governmental negotiations that have been communicated in very open and transparent manner by the Prime Minister's Office. Another good example of a shift in culture within the Finnish government is that it has opened its doors to the Design for Government course and us students.

The way we see it, there is a will and need for a cultural change in the Finnish government, and as our client Kaisa Lähteenmäki-Smith said in the Design for Government kick-off seminar: "The government is responding to the cultural change". By cultural change we mean a shift towards a more open and transparent government that is more agile and flexible; communicates, shares and collaborates with other sectors and the public. This future government allows new, more experimental ways of working and a shift in leadership that breaks through the old silos and hierarchies and encourages a culture of givers.

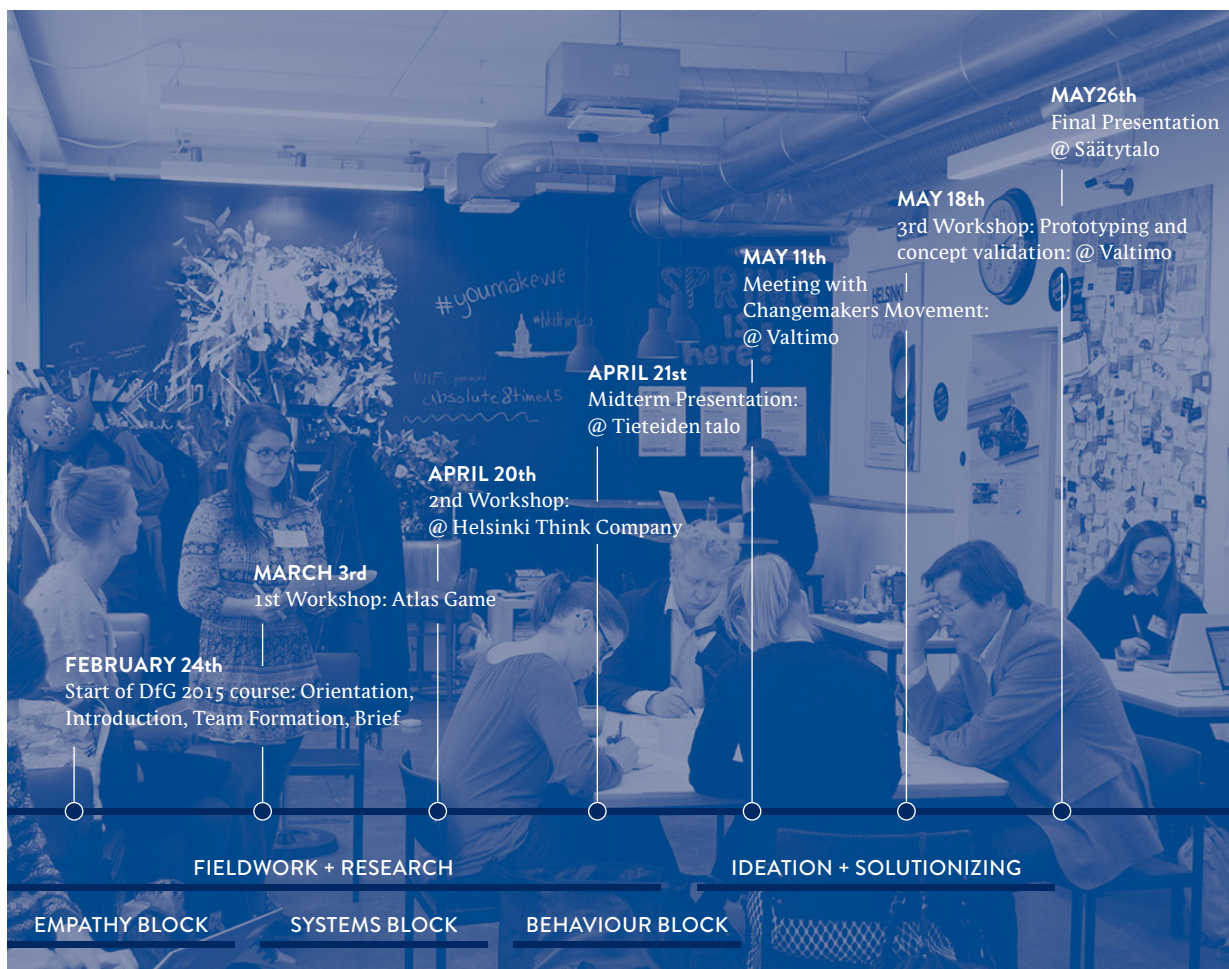
As the change needs to begin from within, we decided to put our focus on the civil servants. We wanted to make the most of the already existing resources and encourage the civil servants by supporting the initiatives they are already working on. We also wanted to make sure we would create something concrete for the civil servants, something that would actually help them and not end up producing just another buzzword or a grand vision. For this we needed to understand what the civil servants need and may be lacking right now and what it is that we could do to help them.

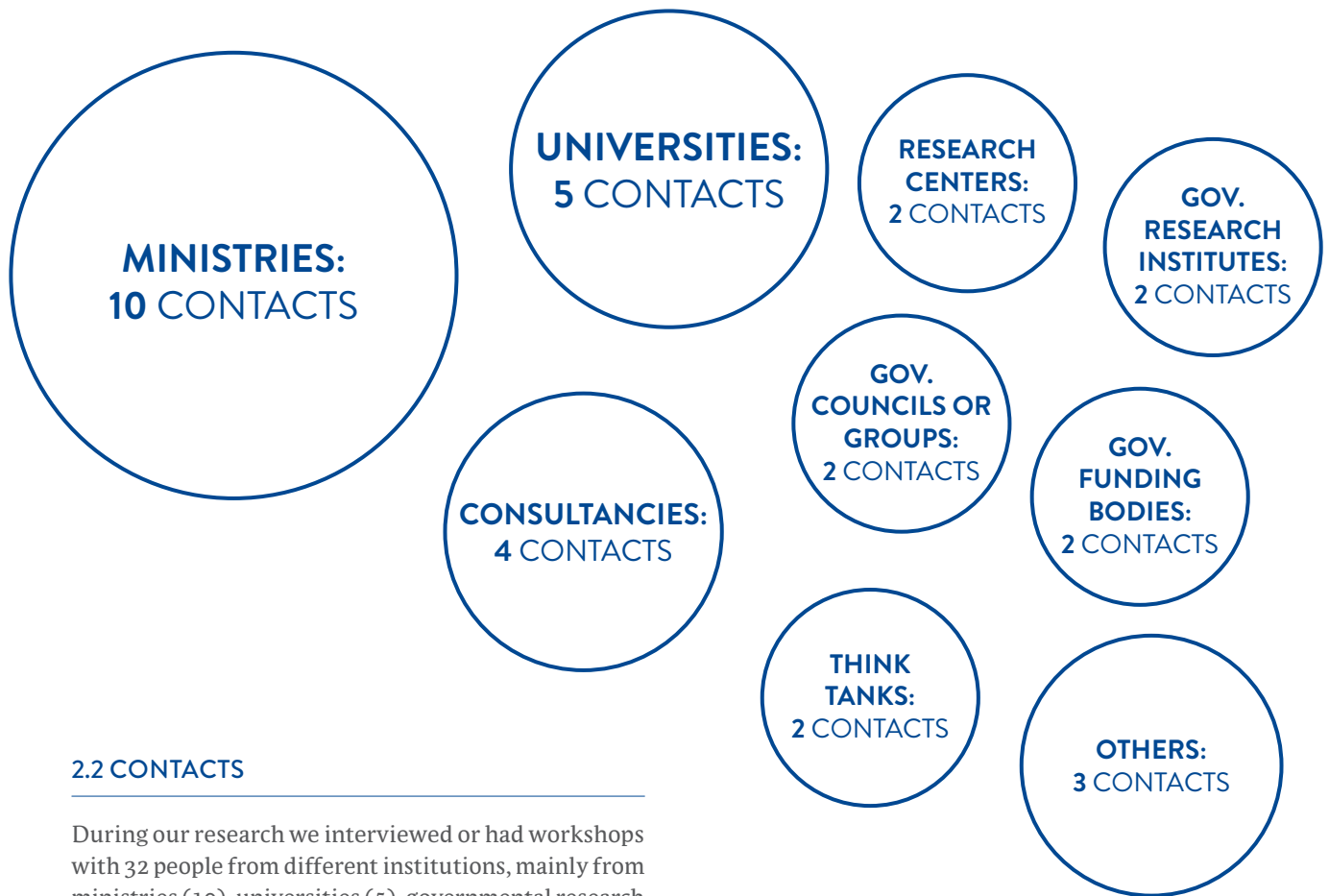
2.

FIELDWORK

Our process followed a **human-centered** and **co-creational** approach: We used qualitative research methods such as conducting interviews or running workshops with different stakeholders and potential users of the service as well as observations while visiting offices and ministries. Additionally to qualitative fieldwork our case required a lot of desktop research, which included reading reports, research papers, articles, blogs as well as posts on social media and benchmarking.

2.1 MILESTONES





2.2 CONTACTS

During our research we interviewed or had workshops with 32 people from different institutions, mainly from ministries (10), universities (5), governmental research institutes (2), governmental councils or groups (2), research centers (2), governmental funding bodies (2), think tanks (2), consultancies (4) and others (3).

List of stakeholders we have been in contact with (alphabetical order):

ALEKSI NEUVONEN

Demos Helsinki, Researcher, Head of Foresight

ANNA-KAISA LÄHTEENMÄKI-SMITH

Valtioneuvoston Kanslia (Prime Minister's Office), Government Policy Analysis Unit, Science Specialist

ANTTI JOENSUU

Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Strategy Director & Muutoksenteekijät (Changemakers Movement)

EEVA RAEVAARA

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Gender Equality Unit, Ministerial Adviser

ELISA LIENTOLA

Member of Lahti City Council (sports, culture and education board)

ERJA HEIKKINEN

Ministry of Education and Culture, Counsellor of Education

ERKKI VARTIAINEN

THL National Institute for Health and Welfare, Director of the Health Department

HANNA HÄMÄLÄINEN

Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministerial Adviser

HELI-MAIJA NEVALA

SYKLI Environmental School of Finland, Trainer Sustainable Development

JOUNI PULLIAINEN

Finnish Meteorological Institute / Dynamicum, Research Professor

JUHA LEPPÄNEN

Demos Helsinki, Researcher, Head of Democracy and Capabilities

JUUSO KOPONEN

@koponenhilden, Data Designer

KIMMO HYRSKY

Valtioneuvoston Kanslia (Prime Minister's Office), Senior Adviser

KIRSI PULKKINEN

Helsinki University, Doctoral Researcher, former civil servant at Ministry of Foreign Affairs

LAURA HÖIJER

Ministry of Environment, Research Official

LIISA MAYOW

Kaskas Media, Founder

MARIA RUUSKA

Kaskas Media, Founder

MIIA SALMINEN

Finnish Meteorological Institute, Researcher

MIKKO MARTIKAINEN

Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministerial Adviser & Muutoksenteijät (Changemakers Movement)

OLAVI UUSITALO

Tampere Technical University, Professor of Industrial Management

PAAVO-PETRI AHONEN

Academy of Finland, Senior Science Adviser / Project Manager of Strategic Research

PEKKA PUSKA

THL National Institute for Health and Welfare, Director General

PIRJO-LEENA FORSSTRÖM

CSC / Finnish Open Science and Research initiative ATT, Secretary General

RIITTA KIRJAVAINEN

Valtioneuvoston Kanslia (Prime Minister's Office), Counsellor

SAARA SUURLA

Ramboll CM Oy, Senior Workplace Advisor

SAMULI SINISALO

Kalevi Sorsa Foundation, Researcher, former Assistant of Parliament Member

SANNA MARTTILA

Aalto University, Researcher & Open Knowledge Finland

SARI LÖYTÖKORPI

Valtioneuvoston Kanslia (Prime Minister's Office), Senior Specialist & TEA Group, Secretary General

SEIJA KOPPINEN

VTT (Technical Research Centre of Finland), Strategic Research

SOILE OLLILA

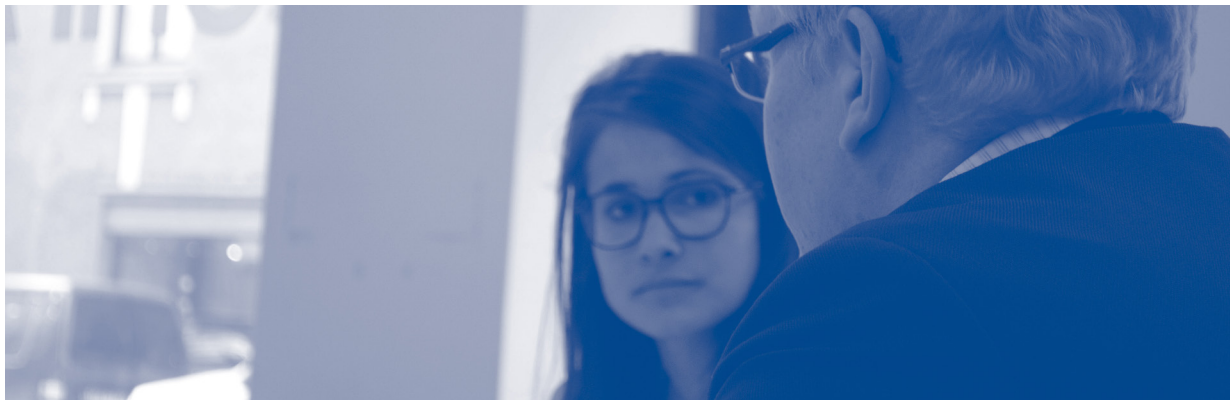
Tekes, Senior Adviser Strategic Intelligence

TUOMAS PARKKARI

Research and Innovation Council, Chief Planning Officer

VIRPI EINOLA-PEKKINEN

Ministry of Finance, Head of Development & Muutoksenteijät (Changemakers Movement)



2.3 METHODS

Throughout the DfG-Course we learned and applied different methods usually applied within **Service Design** or **Design Thinking**. Some of the methods were very useful and helped us better understand and guide our process. Some of the methods were harder to apply for this particular case or at that particular time, but we still

ended up using some of them. We will discuss how we experienced the methods in chapter 5.2. We used the methods either for gathering information (research), making sense of that information (analysis) as well as creating and validating concepts (solutionizing).

Research (Gathering information)

1ST WORKSHOP - ATLAS GAME

METHOD: The Atlas Game is a project planning tool for service co-creation, created at Aalto University. Multidisciplinary teams use the board game to map project objectives, motivations and processes together with different stakeholders. **WHY?** To kick-start the project in a playful and compact way and get a first overview from different stakeholders.

DESKTOP RESEARCH

METHODS: Reading reports, articles, posts, benchmarking. **WHY?** To better understand the bigger context, grasp the problem on a theoretical level and see which solutions already exist.

ETHNOGRAPHY

METHODS: Mostly semi-structured interviews, observations. **WHY?** To understand our users' real needs and the challenges they are facing.

2ND WORKSHOP

METHODS: Probe about daily information usage, workshop tasks **WHY?** To test and further define our opportunity areas with the participants. To get different stakeholders meet each other and find a common ground.

Analysis (Making sense of information)

PERSONAS

METHOD: Personas are fictional characters that are created to represent different user types that might use a product or a service. **WHY?** To build empathy and see the problem as well as potential solutions from the user's perspective as well as to communicate the problem and the concept to others in a more tangible and sticky way.

SYSTEMS MODELLING

METHOD: Systems Model **WHY?** To understand how a certain system works and identify potential leverage points where to tweak the system to become better.

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

METHOD: Stakeholder Maps **WHY?** To understand who the key stakeholders are, where they come from and how they relate to each other.

AFFINITY DIAGRAM

METHOD: Affinity Diagram **WHY?** To structure large amounts of research data and understand connections together in a group.

Solutionizing (Creating and validating concepts)

IDEATION AND CONCEPT CREATION

METHOD: Brainstorming, idea evaluation and concept development **WHY?** To create a large amount of different ideas of which the best idea is selected and further developed.

3RD WORKSHOP: VALIDATION

METHOD: Wireframes **WHY?** To get valuable feedback on our concept and understand what features need to be improved.

3.

FINDINGS

3.1 FIRST FINDINGS

Our clients' brief instances the website Hankegalleria (www.hankegalleria.fi) as a good benchmark for our project. Through reports, interviews and using the online platform by ourselves we analyzed its strength and weaknesses and concluded that Hankegalleria did not really work because of lacking ownership, a proper value proposition for its users (especially researchers), a common will and a good promotion of the platform. We identified these aspects and requirements as crucial for the successful implementation of any concept related to Project Piazza.

A major finding and step within our research was to understand the overall system (Figure 3.1a) we are operating in and to map all the relevant stakeholders (Figure 3.1b).

Systems thinking helps in tackling complex issues that require understanding relations and connections - especially in cases with a great number of stakeholders. The aim of building a model is also to understand how a certain system works and we decided to map the flows of money and information within the system of governmentally funded research. We kept updating our stakeholder and systems models throughout the process.

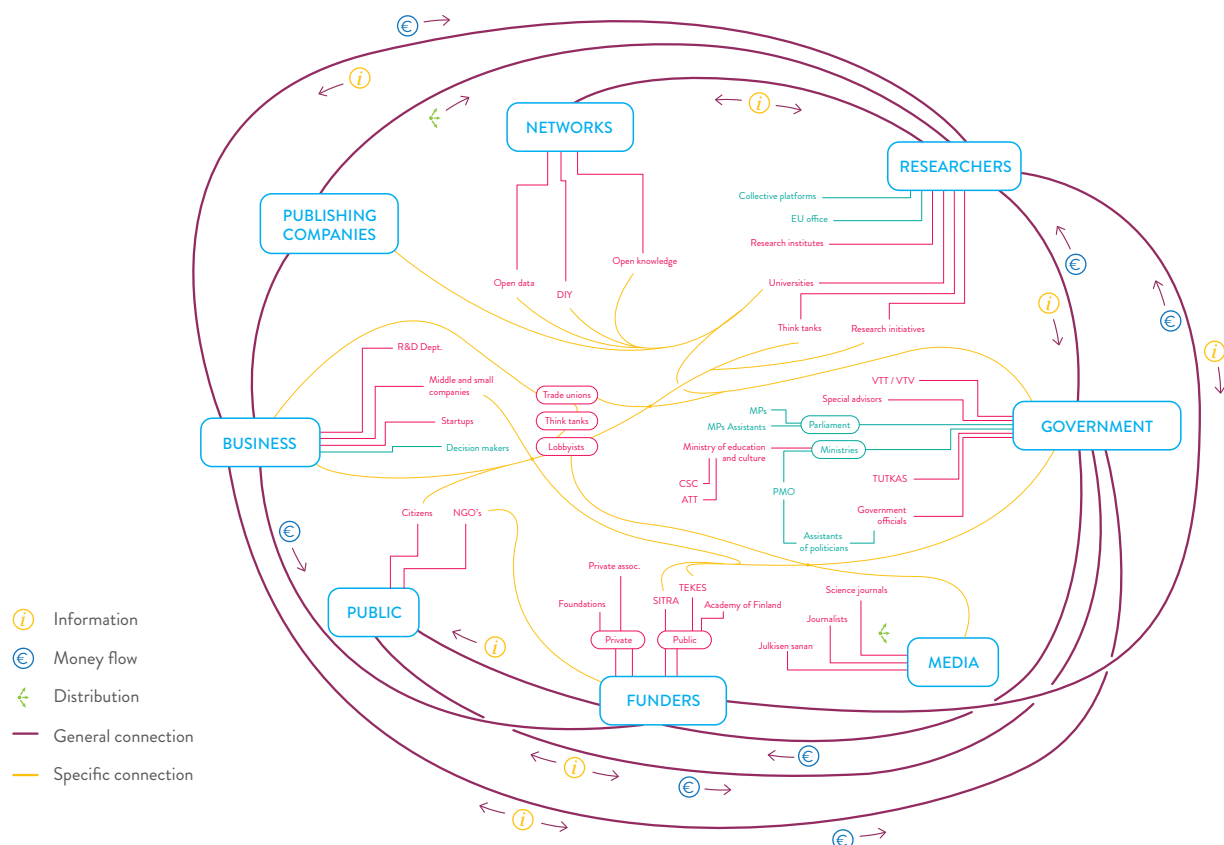


Figure 3.1a: Systems Model

Stakeholder Maps help to understand who the key stakeholders are, where they come from and how they relate to each other. The mapping starts usually by identifying who the stakeholders are and listing them. They can be people, groups, organisations etc. Second thing to do is to analyse the stakeholder perspectives and

interests. Third is to map out and visualise the relationships and objectives of the stakeholders and fourth is to rank their relevance and identify issues within the case. After identifying who the stakeholders of Project Piazza are, we started to analyse how they connect to each other and to the case we were working on.

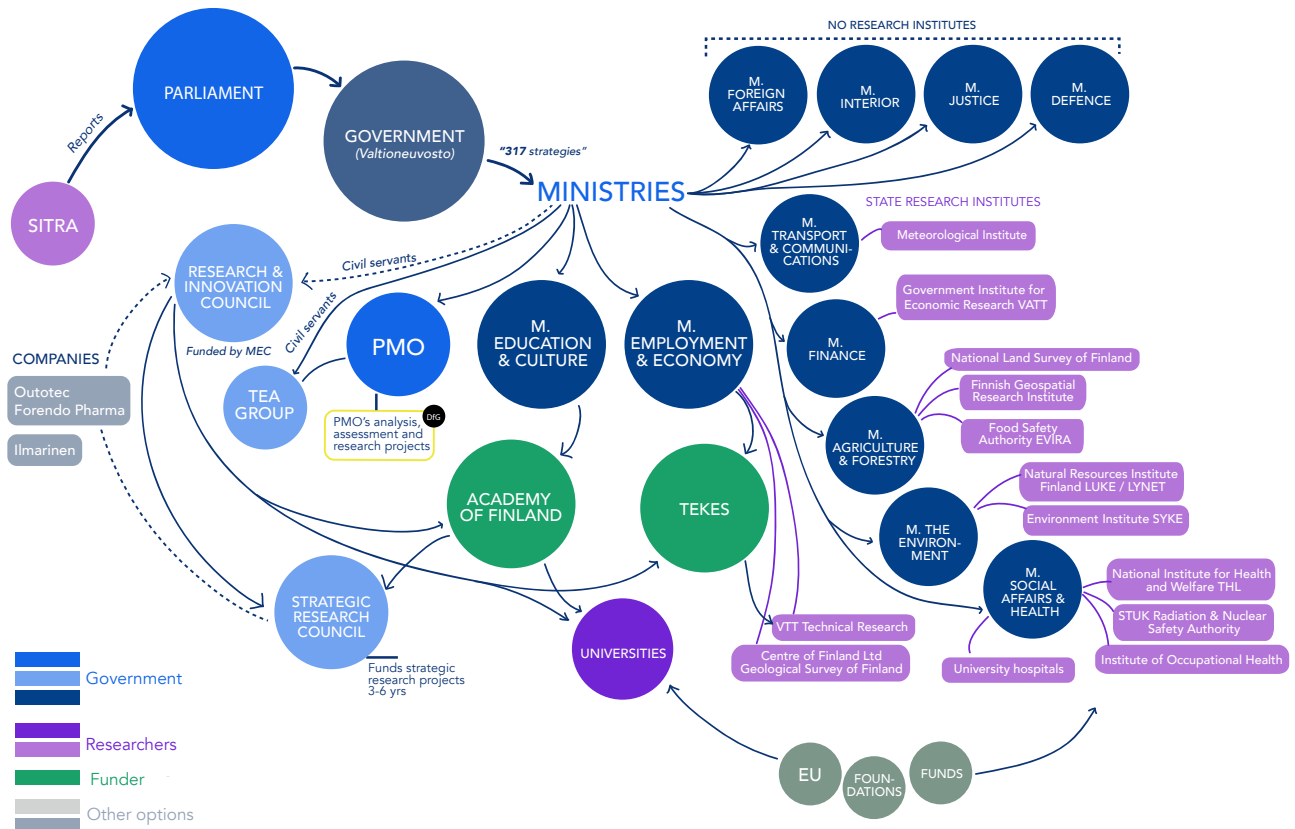


Figure 3.1b: Stakeholder Map

Based on our research we found out that research and decision-making work in very different time frames and with their very specific requirements and languages, which makes it challenging to match them.

“THE POINTS THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR POLITICAL DECISION-MAKERS ARE NOT THE SAME ONES THAT ARE RELEVANT FOR SCIENCE.”

(Civil Servant)

The worlds of research and policy-making are very separated from each other.

“MOST OF RESEARCH FUNDING IS FOR FREE ACADEMIC RESEARCH, SO OBVIOUSLY A LOT OF IT [RESEARCH] HAS NOT BEEN MADE HAVING DECISION-MAKING IN MIND. SO IT IS NOT SO EASY TO USE OR APPLY IN PRACTICE.”

(Civil Servant)

There is a gap between those worlds: But good communication is not only lacking between these different worlds, but also within them.

“BUT MOST PROBABLY NO OTHER MINISTRY WILL FIND OUT ABOUT THIS, AND WON’T KNOW ABOUT THIS SURVEY.”

(Civil Servant)

Through our interviews we found out, that the government itself is working in silos and that there is a lack of horizontal communication and information sharing between the ministries.

“THERE IS NO SHARING MECHANISM WITH OTHER MINISTRIES. JUST PAPERS HERE AND THERE, USUALLY WHEN IT IS OVER. PEOPLE FROM EACH DEPARTMENT DO NOT KNOW WHAT OTHER DEPARTMENTS ARE DOING.”

(Civil Servant)

Better communication across the ministry silos could not only give an overview of the research done by the government itself, but could also help in understanding how it is done or could be done better.

“IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR OTHER MINISTRIES NOT ONLY TO SEE WHAT WE DID, BUT ALSO HOW WE DID IT - THE METHODS AND PROCESS.”

(Civil Servant)

Not only formal communication across the silos is missing, but - as we experienced in our workshops - there is also a need for more informal encounters and interaction within the ministries and between different stakeholders.

“WE MEET AND DISCUSS IN THE CAFETERIA WHILE EATING LUNCH. THIS CAMPUS IS A GREAT PLACE TO POP INTO NEW PEOPLE.”

(Researcher)

“IT’S WEIRD BUT THE IDEAS FLOW MORE FREELY IF WE ARE NOT IN A MINISTRY, BUT IF WE HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER OR ARE IN A CAFÉ.”

(Civil Servant)

Furthermore using and applying research knowledge or information in a decision-making process is always political and therefore not neutral. Political decisions are based on different and sometimes interfering influences, where evidence is only a little part of it (Figure 3.1c). The politicized utilization of information can dissent with the general scientific rationale, which is why some researchers from academia we met were sceptical about cooperating with policy or decision-makers.

“I HAVE BEEN FORCED SOMETIMES TO GO TO THE MINISTRY TO GIVE AN EXPERT STATEMENT.”

(Researcher)

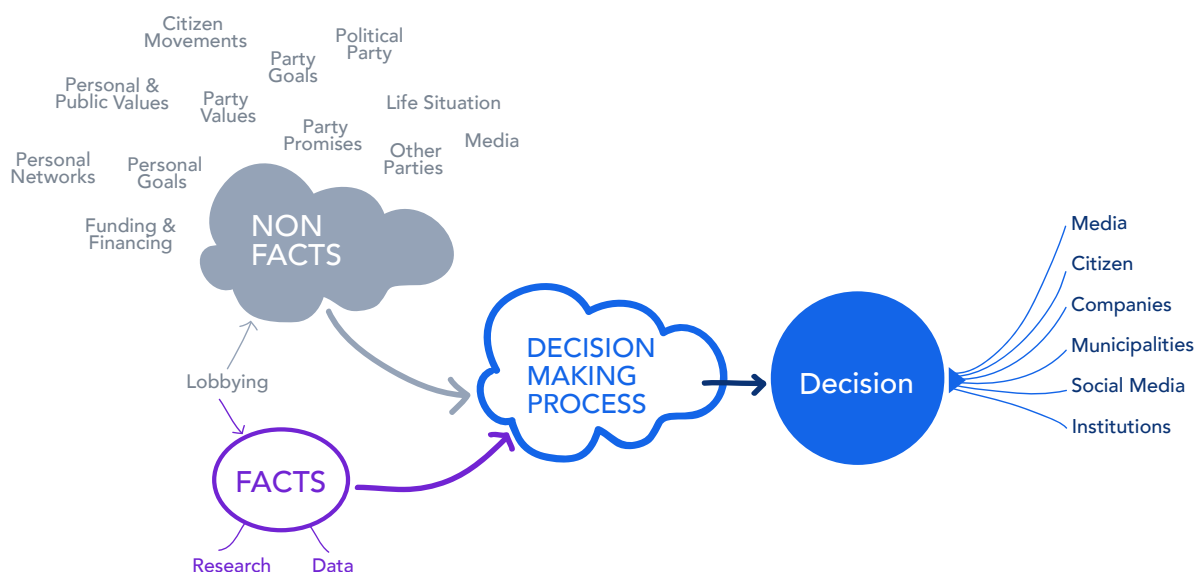


Figure 3.1c: Decision Making Process

In contrast researchers working in the - we called it - “Middle Layer” such as in governmental research institutes or within ministries are more acquainted to policy and decision-making processes (Figure 3.1d).

“POLITICIANS NEED EXPERTS, WHO CAN EXPLAIN THEM THE BIGGER PICTURE AND THE WHOLE CONTEXT. AND THIS IS WHERE THE FINNISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE STRUCTURE IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR OUR SOCIETY.”

(Researcher)

The “Middle Layer” emerged as a very relevant bridge between research and practice, especially because we found out that decision-makers lack time and sufficient knowledge to read and understand complex scientific research papers. Translating research findings to concrete insights relevant for political actions emerged as a very important role of the middle layer.

“SOMETIMES THERE’S JUST ENOUGH RESEARCH. THE KEY IS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.”

(Civil Servant)

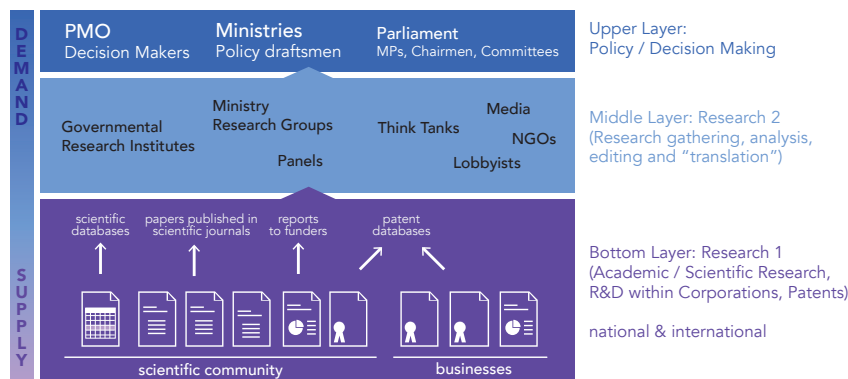


Figure 3.1d: Layers of Research and Decision-Making

It turned out that information used in policy or decision-making is mostly not academic or scientific research, but rather statistics or reports done by ministries, working groups and panels.

IT’S STATISTICS, REPORTS AND SCIENTIFIC DIPLOMACY - THERE ARE MANY DIVERSE SOURCES.”

(Civil Servant)

“OUR ROLE AS CIVIL SERVANTS IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION THAT IS ACTUAL AND THAT IS RIGHT. WE KNOW WHERE TO GET THE INFO, BUT IT IS NOT ALWAYS RESEARCH.”

Figure 3.1e shows exemplarily how research is done in the middle layer by visualizing the process behind a ministry report:

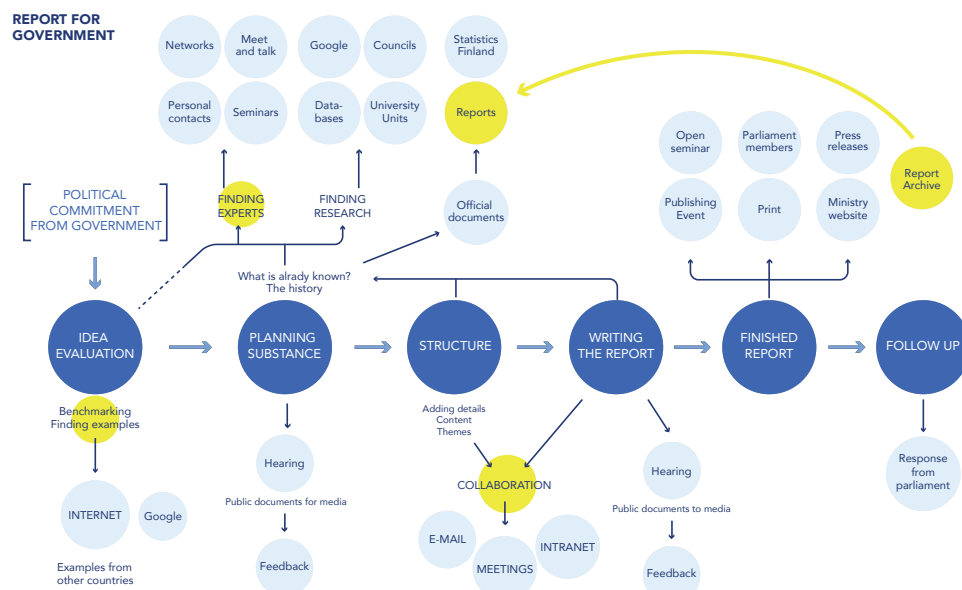


Figure 3.1e: Process behind ministerial report

3.2 REBRIEF

By gathering all our research findings and creating an affinity diagram we got an overview of the most relevant and frequently emerging aspects.

The **Affinity Diagram** method is used for sorting large amounts of research data and helps in understanding connections as well as the bigger picture, when data is complex or chaotic. The tool is especially useful when making sense of data is done in a group and a group consensus is necessary. We used the affinity diagram in

the beginning in order to create the research plan and to identify key stakeholders and questions. The next time we used it was when we were about to move on to the ideation part and had gathered a massive amount of data through all our interviews, workshops and other research. We went through all the data together with the second Piazza team and had a whole day of affinity diagramming and rebriefing. It helped us to reframe the original question and focus on what seemed essential after our research and analysis.



To begin with, in order to make better use of information in policy and decision-making, civil servants have an important role as translators of research information. Hereof one problem is, that research done by civil servants is scattered and not accessible at once. Furthermore there is a need for improved collaboration between the ministries.

I “MEETING FACE TO FACE IS THE BEST THING.”
(Civil Servant)

The importance of informal meetings and networking as well as questions related to opening up the processes to the public proved to be crucial. One of the core targets in

the Finnish Open Government Action Plan is to enhance openness within the government, as they put it:

“IN ORDER TO BE OPEN TO THE CITIZENS THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO BE INTERNALLY OPEN. SHARING INFORMATION AND WORKING TOGETHER WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE HORIZONTAL WICKED PROBLEMS”

(Open Government Partnership, 2015).

Media and social media emerged to play a key role in spreading research results, enabling informal discussions as well as getting public attention and feedback.

These insights led us to redefine the brief and shift the focus on the civil servants, interministerial collabora-

tion and the research that is done within the ministries (Figure 3.2a).

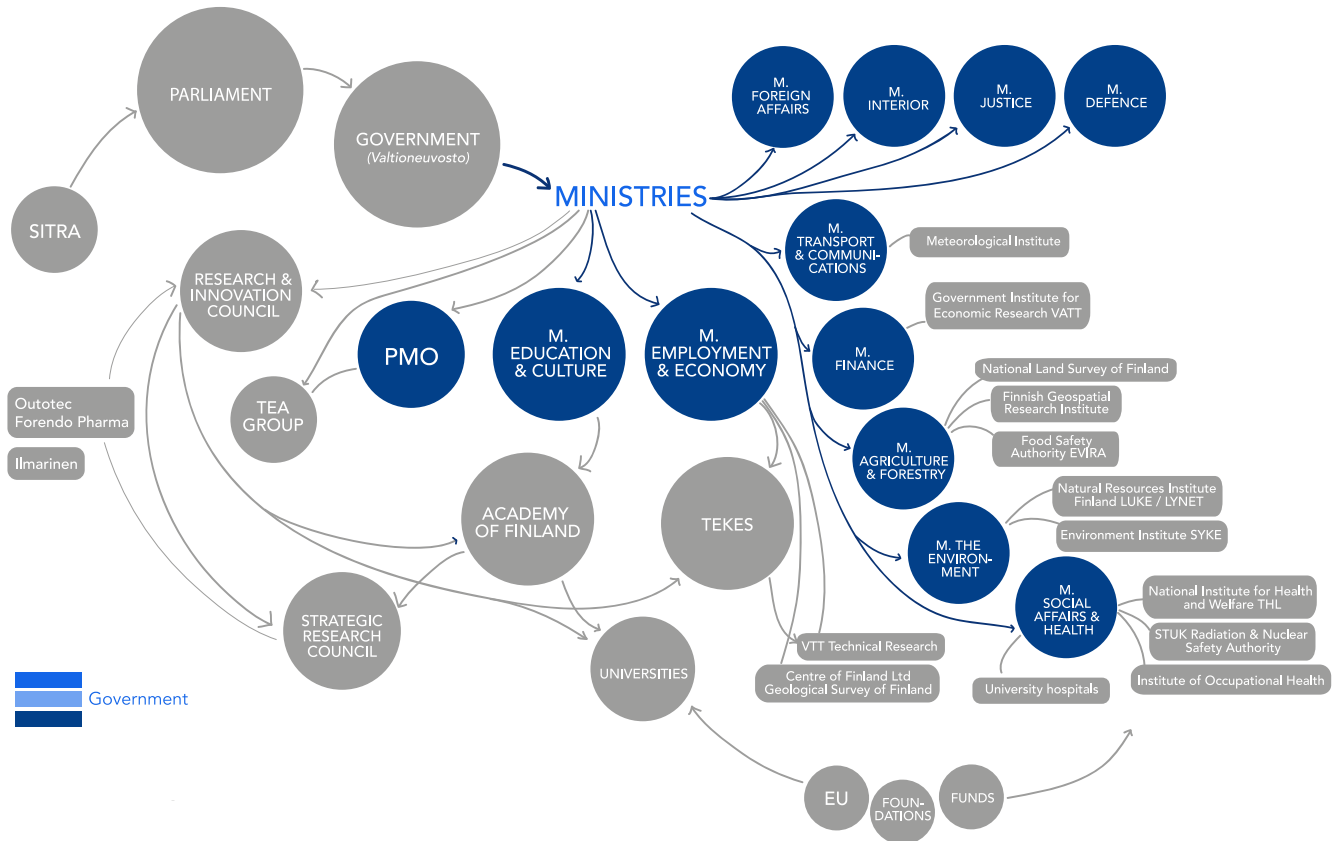


Figure 3.2a: Focus of re-brief

By focusing on this re-brief we formulated the following opportunity questions to help us ideate first solutions:

HOW COULD WE SUPPORT HORIZONTAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN MINISTRIES?

- How could we support the ministries in sharing their process / practices?
- How could we foster informal networking?

HOW COULD WE HELP CONNECT THE SCATTERED INFORMATION?

HOW COULD WE OPEN UP THE GOVERNMENT AND MAKE IT MORE TRANSPARENT?

- How could government strategies be made more transparent to the public?
- How could “externals” be involved at early stages?
- How can we foster openness and active feedback throughout the process?

3.3 IDEATION

The previous questions were the basis for ideating solutions. During the ideation we created all together 37 ideas, but chose to develop four a bit further and test them to get some feedback from civil servants.

1 Process Monitoring Tool:

A tool to easily monitor, document and backtrack reports, decision-making and research processes within ministries. The tool would streamline the way reports are made in ministries and make it possible to backtrack what evidence has been used in a report or to make a decision. It would make processes more transparent and show who has been involved. The tool also includes a “bias alert” that would show if only the same experts are being heard.

2 Information Hub:

An open online platform that collects all ministry reports and projects in one place. Currently the reports are scattered to each ministry’s own webpage. The Information Hub would collect those scattered reports to one place and make them more easily accessible. The site would also show ongoing projects and open calls and include a Q&A section where civil servants can ask the public for example what experts they should hear in a law-making process related to a specific theme. The idea of a Q&A section came up in many of our solutions, also as a way that civil servants could post questions related to a specific topic they need information on and researchers could answer them based on their expertise. If the government opened up their need for information it would make it easier for researchers to participate and provide them with information and a wider array of opinions would be heard in the preparatory work.

3 Open Hearing:

Open Hearing aims to make the law-making process more transparent and open for people who are normally not involved. In addition to the normal hearing an open hearing would be organized as a more informal event, where experts who are normally not heard in hearings would be invited to discuss and give their opinion on the topic. The event would

have a live stream and active social media channel, so that online participation is possible and encouraged. The aim is to tackle the problem that only the same experts are often heard in official hearings. The discussions of the Open Hearing would be documented and given to the committee members, who are encouraged to participate in the Open Hearing as well. This Open Hearing event could easily be tested out a few times as a pop-up event to see how it works and what kind of impact it has on the decisions made.

4 Connecting Gatekeepers:

A tool for connecting gate keepers in different institutions and across different sectors. In particular connecting the government and academia. The idea included both an online tool and various ideas for informal meetings to spur networking. As our research had shown the gap between the government and academia was large and they both work in their own silos and might even have prejudices about each other. Therefore we wanted to create a solution that would get the gatekeepers of both institutions to know each other, show them how the other works so that they could understand each other’s needs better and start to bridge the gap between them.

But ...

We did not feel that these ideas really hit the nail on the head. Something was missing. We felt that the solutions we had been creating were strengthening the already old ways of working and reporting - they did not really break the old structures and create something new for the future. We had a meeting with civil servants from the Changemakers Movement, learned about their movement and showed them some of our ideas. The meeting strengthened our hunch that we need to rethink. We went back to our interviews and started seeing all the comments from the civil servants about the need to change the current ways of working and we also realized that we had met many civil servants who had already tried to shake the old structures. This led us to another iteration, which we call the Re-Re-Brief.

3.4 RE-RE-BRIEF

We understood that we should not only focus on information but rather on what is behind it, how it is used, the people who are using it and their processes. We had heard from a civil servant that

“NOT ONLY SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION IS RELEVANT FOR OUR MINISTRY, BUT ALSO STATISTICS, REPORTS, BEST PRACTICES OR QUALITATIVE INFORMATION FROM PEOPLE.”

(Civil servant)

Preparatory work as well as decisions are not only based on scientific evidence and a lot of other aspects play an important part. Kari Raivio says it well in the report of Evidence-based policy-making (Valtioneuvoston kanslia, 2014:15, translated) that

“KNOWLEDGE THAT HAS BEEN GAINED THROUGH EXPERIENCE HAS AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING AND PREPARATORY WORK. THIS KIND OF KNOWLEDGE EXISTS IN THE STRUCTURES OF THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS ACTORS”.

So we wanted to focus on how we could help the civil servants improve their processes and practices. Another thing that became clear was that the challenges of tomorrow cannot be solved with old conventional methods of working. This aspect was highlighted in the interview we had with the Changemakers, but it also came up in the opening seminar of the Design for Government course and in Sitra's future vision for Finland:

“BIG SYSTEMIC CHANGES REQUIRED FOR SUSTAINABLE WELFARE WILL NOT BE CARRIED OUT WITH OLD RECIPES.”

(Sitra, 2014a:9, translation)

The world is also becoming more interdependent, which requires the ability to understand how to connect different fields, ideas and people that traditionally have been seen as separate (Sitra, 2014b). The growing interdependency requires ministries to find new ways of collaboration that breaks through the different silos and old structures and hierarchies. One civil servant for example told us that

“IT IS ABOUT BEING ABLE TO DO THINGS IN COMPLETELY NEW WAYS AND FORGET THE OLD WAYS. IF WE CAN COLLABORATE WITH OTHER MINISTRIES, THAT MEANS WE HAVE DONE OUR JOB.”

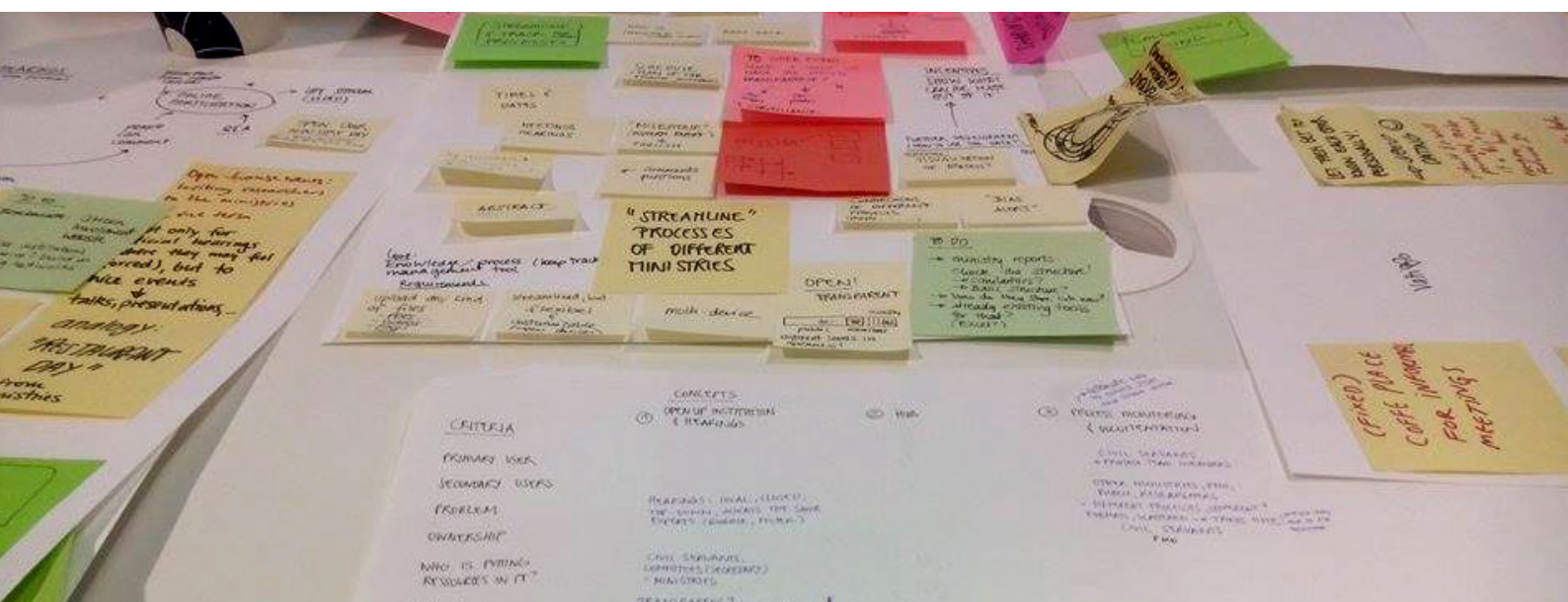
(Civil servant)

Last but not least we understood that the change has to start from within.

“WE HAVE TO START THIS BY OURSELVES AND THEN CONTINUE WITH OTHERS.”

(Civil servant)

These insights led us to rebrief once more and focus on the larger cultural change that was already bubbling beneath the surface - new brave ideas and ways of doing. By cultural change we mean a shift towards a more open and transparent government that is more agile and flexible that communicates, shares and collaborates with other sectors and the public and allows for new more experimental ways of working and a shift in leadership that breaks through the old silos and hierarchies and encourages a culture of givers.



3.4.1 KEY INSIGHTS

When we revisited our material from interviews and workshops with civil servants we identified 3 key areas that we focus on after reframing the re-brief.

1) Abstract Themes vs. Concrete Practices:

“THE IDEAS ARE ALREADY THERE ... WE CAN TALK ABOUT THEM ON THEORY LEVEL QUITE EASILY, BUT HOW TO START WORKING IN THIS WAY IS VERY DIFFICULT.”

(Civil Servant)

From talking to civil servants we learned that they are often confronted with abstract themes like transparency or evidence-based policy making. But it is difficult to implement them in everyday work and busy schedules. They often lack the concrete practices: One civil servant for example told us, that in her department they want to make better use of social media, but they do not do it, because they do not know where to start. Knowing how to do things differently is essential for a change in culture.

Even though each ministry has their own way of working and focus on different topics the processes and practices have similarities. So sharing well-functioning practices and ways of working would help civil servants in different ministries to improve their work. One civil servant told us that it would be helpful to see the processes of other ministries as it might be easy to find similarities in the processes, although the subject area is different. Another civil servant also told us that collaboration saves time in the long run.

2) Conventional Structures vs. Innovative Individuals

“SOMETIMES NEW IDEAS COME UP, THAT DO NOT FIT AT ALL IN THE ORIGINAL ORGANIGRAM.”

(Civil Servant)

“JUST TO CHANGE THE WHOLE WAY OF THINKING AND HOW WE DO OUR JOB, THAT’S THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR ME.”

(Civil Servant)

In our interviews we met with innovative civil servants who try to change the conventional ways of working. But we found out that these individuals often struggle to establish new approaches, because the new ideas do not fit in the hierarchical and official structures of the

ministries. One civil servant actually told us, that the most challenging and time demanding part of her new job position is to change the way they work. It is even more challenging, because she tries to do it on her own. It would help her if she could get feedback and support from others who face the same challenges.

These innovative individuals are important role models for others. They start the change from inside and lead by example. The Changemakers Movement is one example of this. The way they work is that they do not force the change, but act as role models and show alternative ways of working. That is why their bottom-up approach has made their efforts highly appreciated by their peers.

3) Scattered Initiatives vs. Common Channel

“THERE SHOULD BE A LINK FROM OUR UN-OFFICIAL MOVEMENT TO THE OFFICIALS.”

(Civil Servant, Changemakers Movement)

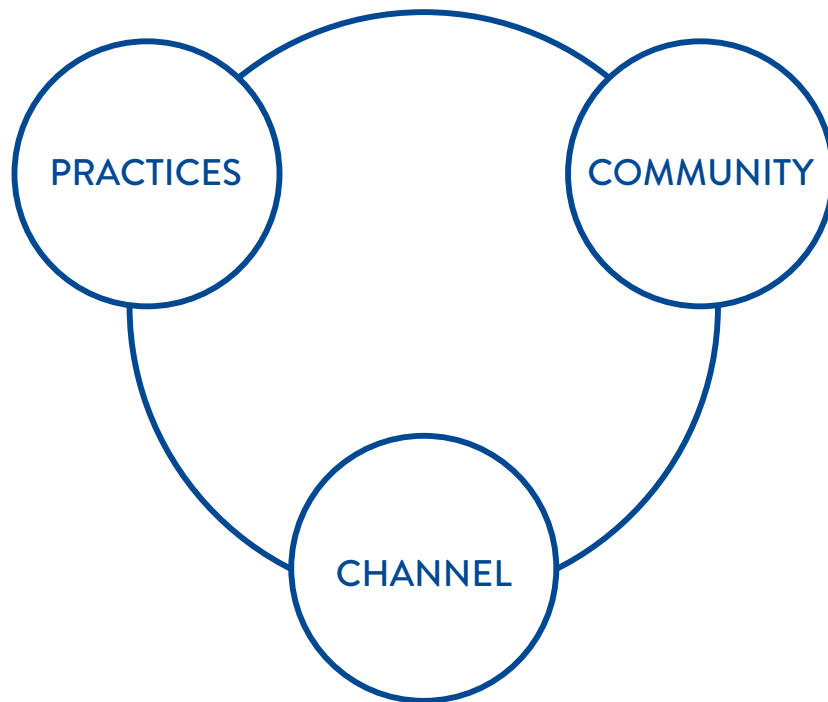
“IT’S MISSING TO SEE WHAT OTHER MINISTRIES DO.”

(Civil Servant)

During our interviews we found many civil servants who have already tried new and experimental practices. So a lot of new approaches and initiatives already exist across the ministries, but they are scattered and most of the civil servants do not know what is happening in other ministries. It is not easy to know whether other civil servants face similar challenges. A first approach to bridge across the ministry silos is the already mentioned Changemakers Movement. We met some of the Changemakers and what actually surprised us, is that they have difficulties in communicating the added value of their informal network. They do not reach the state secretaries and directors of different departments and lack a good channel.

It became clear, that civil servants lack the tools and connections in order to make the cultural change happen. Based on the 3 key areas we identified three aspects, that are currently lacking and where we should focus our ideation and solutionizing on. These are the lack of:

**CONCRETE PRACTICES
SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY
COMMON CHANNEL**



So we went on to ideate on how we could provide civil servants with **concrete practices**, a **supportive community** and a **common channel** to better promote their already existing initiatives and innovative approaches.

3rd Workshop: Prototyping and concept validation

Once we had the final idea sketched out, we arranged a meeting with some of our stakeholders at the open working space Valtimo. Our goal was to get feedback from the potential future users and check how our concept could be improved. In order to make grasping the

concept easy we built wireframes for the workshop to demonstrate the basic functions of the web page. Meeting with our client and getting their feedback helped us to validate core functions and to see whether the concept is clear enough. The meeting was successful, given that our client and potential users liked the concept and gave us good insights on page details, we should take into consideration. We ended up rethinking some of the terminology we had used and simplifying some aspects of the page to make it more user-friendly.



4.

PROPOSAL

4.1 GENERAL CONCEPT

Our solution is called Lähde. Lähde in Finnish means two things: First it means source or origin of an information. Second Lähde means spring or fountain. Water as the source of life is where people gather around, meet and get new energy. Our tool Lähde gathers the scattered initiatives and civil servants around it and creates a new ecosystem. We want Lähde to be a source of new energy and rejuvenation for the government.

Lähde is collaborative tool. It is a website where civil servants can share and discuss their innovative approaches and practices. They can learn about processes applied by other civil servants and see what is happening across the ministries.

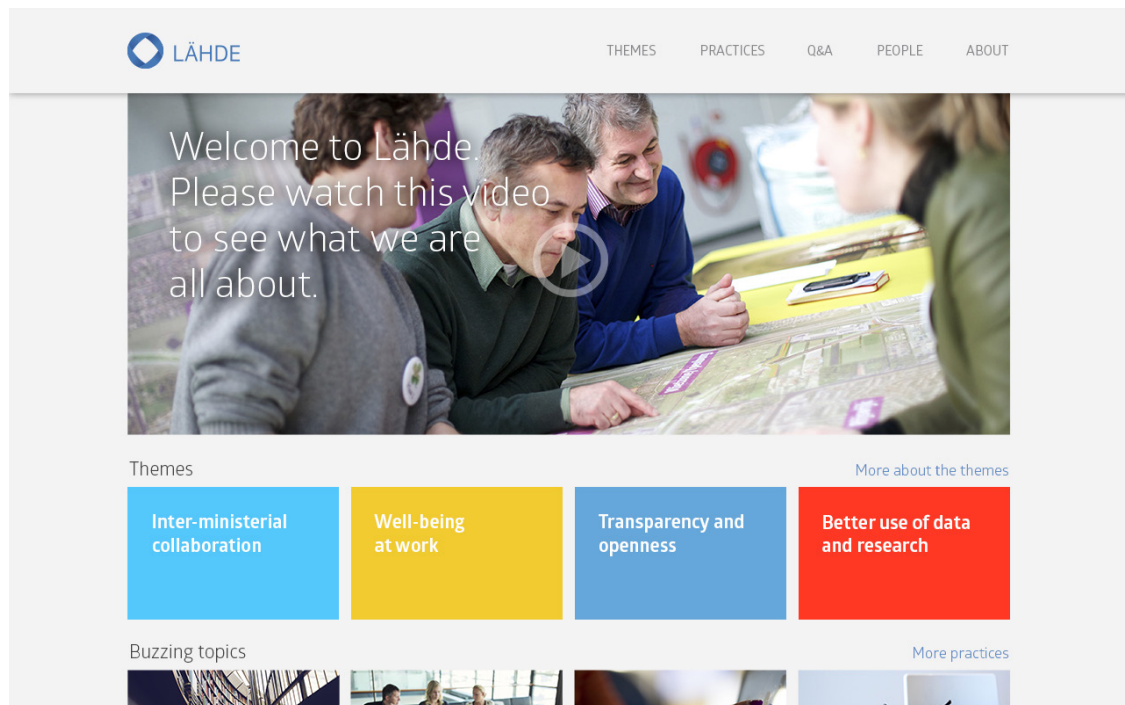
Lähde provides a common channel for the already existing initiatives so civil servants can better promote

their actions. Lähde shows and shares practices across all the ministries, so civil servants can learn from each other's experiences. Lähde help civil servants to build a supportive community that empowers and encourages individuals challenging the conventional structures.

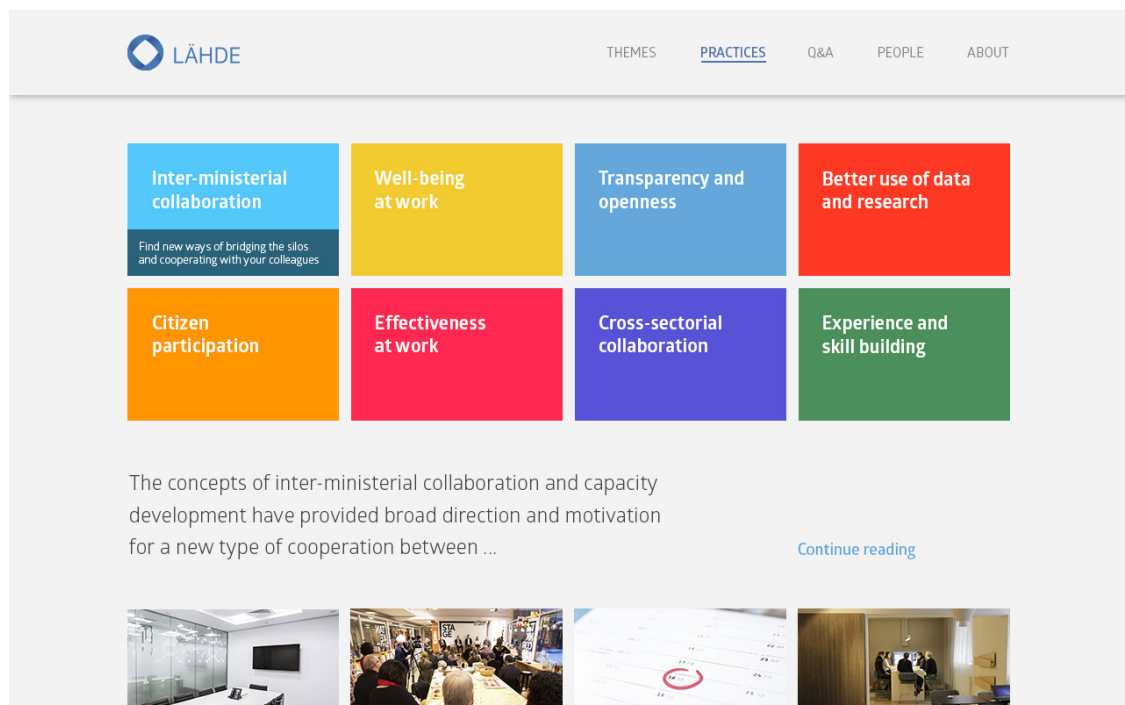
The website is open to the public, so citizens and institutions outside the government can follow how the civil servants drive the cultural change. By opening up their practices the government could lead by example and invite other institutions and people to open up and join the change. In our final solution we want to make the most of the already existing resources in the government and encourage them by supporting the initiatives they are already working on.



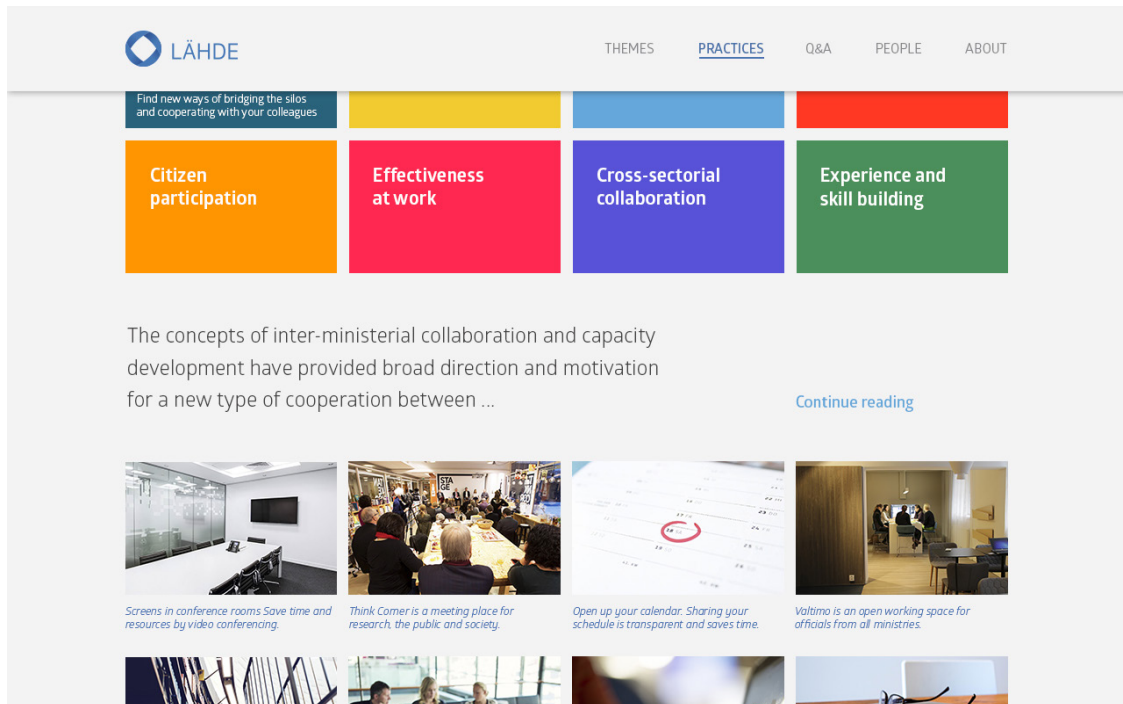
4.2 WEBSITE



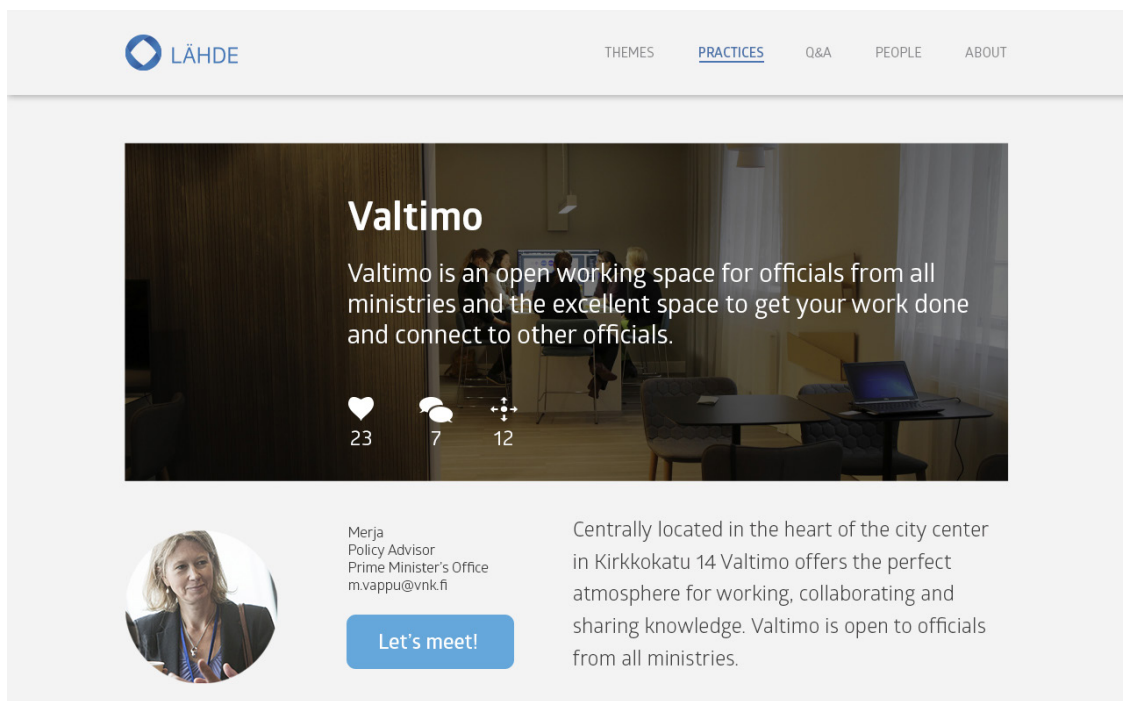
Landing page: this is what the users see first when they open the website. Lähde helps civil servants turn big themes such as inter-ministerial collaboration or transparency into practice. So they can share those practices, discuss them and innovate their working routines.




Practices page: the eight themes displayed on the Practice overview are based on our research and interviews. They are a first suggestion which has been already validated, however they should be developed further with the civil servants. It used to be very hard for civil servants to connect those big themes to concrete practices, that is why we are connecting them and displaying them all in one single page.




Practices display: once we select one of the themes, in this case inter-ministerial collaboration, the practices related to this theme are displayed. To name a few examples, the use of screens for video conferences in order to save time and resources; or the recent practice of opening up the calendar and sharing the schedule with other civil servants.



Practice detail: once the chosen practice is selected, more details about it are shown. In this example civil servants can read about Valtimo, a new coworking space for officials from every ministry. A meeting point in the heart of Helsinki city center, where horizontal collaboration is welcomed and encouraged.



[THEMES](#)
[PRACTICES](#)
[Q&A](#)
[PEOPLE](#)
[ABOUT](#)



Let's meet!

Sharing knowledge. Valtimo is open to officials from all ministries.

FACTS




Involved People / Team
Paula Kekkonen
Reetta Jussila
Juha Punavuori

Involved institutions
Prime Minister's Office
Change Makers

Timeframe
March 2015 - Ongoing

Implementation
Long term


You can come here for working - on your own or together with other colleagues - as well as for having meetings or workshops. Or you just pass by in a break and you may pop into an interesting event or a surprising conversation with a colleague from another ministry. Valtimo offers an open and creative atmosphere and everything you need for working (Wifi, Screens, Kitchen, Coffee). The space is run by the Prime Minister's Office and the Changemakers Movement.

32 Comments


Order by Newest ▾

1 2 3 4 ... 7


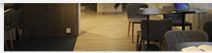



Ville Tolvanen
(about 5 hours ago)

Practice facts: if we scroll down, we can find further information about the practice, for example who was involved in it (people or institutions), when did it happen, and instructions on how to implement it.




[THEMES](#)
[PRACTICES](#)
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32 Comments

Order by Newest ▾

1 2 3 4 ... 7




Ville Tolvanen
(about 5 hours ago)

When I want to get out of my silo and meet people from other ministries, Valtimo is my first choice. I really like the place and can recommend it to everyone who needs a good and open atmosphere to work. And you can also get new ideas and support! Last week at Valtimo I happened to meet a colleague from another ministry who was working on quite a similar project, so she shared some good benchmarks on the topic with me. Serendipity :)

> Reply

♥ 25 + 11




Lauri Jussila
(about 2 hours ago)

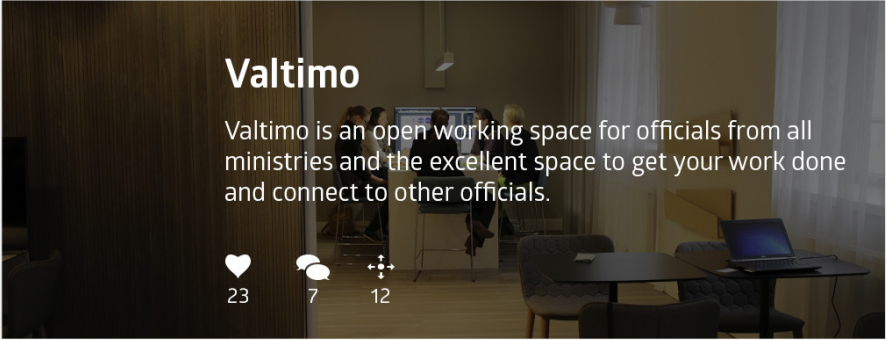
I agree, Valtimo is a good place for serendipity! And Valtimo is good for meetings, too: I met with my stakeholders and had a workshop with a bigger group of people. And the location is perfect, just around the corner.

> Reply

Practice discussion: at the bottom of the page, civil servants can join the discussion related to a practice. They can easily follow and meet people who have been actively talking about it.







THEMES PRACTICES Q&A PEOPLE ABOUT



Valtimo

Valtimo is an open working space for officials from all ministries and the excellent space to get your work done and connect to other officials.

 23
  7
  12



Merja
Policy Advisor
Prime Minister's Office
m.vappu@vnk.fi

Let's meet!

Centrally located in the heart of the city center in Kirkkokatu 14 Valtimo offers the perfect atmosphere for working, collaborating and sharing knowledge. Valtimo is open to officials from all ministries.

Let's meet button: back on the top of the page, we can find the "let's meet button", that allows users to send a message to the people involved in this project. This answers directly to the need for a more informal and direct communication across silos.

To sum up, in Lähde, civil servants can easily find what they want: concrete practices (no matter if they are success or failed stories), to learn from and adopt in their daily routines; they can also find a common channel to get their voices heard and the possibility to meet innovative civil servants across every ministry to keep the community growing.

4.3 IMPLEMENTATION & NEXT STEPS

As we already mentioned before we identified ownership, value proposition for the users, a common will and a good promotion of the platform to be crucial for the successful implementation of any concept related to Project Piazza. Let's see how Lähde answers these aspects.

Ownership

We suggest that the Prime Minister's Office should be the owner of Lähde as they have already shown great willingness to learn how new ways of working can be implemented in a Finnish governmental context. Engaging in Lähde would be an important next step for the Prime Minister's Office as it would bring the big visions down to everyday reality and unleash the innovative potential that already exists in the civil servants working for the government.

We suggest that the Changemaker Movement should run Lähde as they are already pioneers of governmental change. For them Lähde offers the possibility to promote their movement and efforts to a wider audience and reach every corner in each ministry. Through Lähde their movement gets a stronger voice, which also helps them to reach the top level.

Next Steps (Figure 4.3)

1) As it is challenging to get people to start using a new site, it is important to create the "critical mass of content" before the site is launched. We suggest therefore that a service designer is hired to interview civil servants about their practices and help them create the

first, for example 20 posts, on Lähde. Simultaneously the website is set up. It is extremely important to engage the civil servants in Lähde right from the beginning. The civil servants should be involved in defining the themes and other relevant features of Lähde so that it best answers their wishes and needs. We suggest that this is done by organizing co-creational workshop and crowdsourcing of ideas.

2) In connection to the launch of Lähde a promotion campaign is started, which emphasizes the common will and goal across all ministries. The campaign includes marketing on social media and informal events; such as informal breakfast events in Valtimo around buzzing themes. Part of the promotion is also a competition where you can nominate a civil servant or challenge a ministry to upload a practice on Lähde.

3) When the website is up and running and the civil servants generate more content, they share and discuss practices, get inspired and try new approaches. The previously scattered initiatives find a common channel and create a community of civil servants who actively push, practice by practice, the cultural change towards a more open, experimental and collaborative government.

We believe that Lähde functions as a starting point for a snowball effect. As the voice of the pioneers gets stronger and the innovative practices become common practices for all civil servants, we believe that Lähde has fulfilled its purpose and is no longer needed. At least not in the form it was set up.

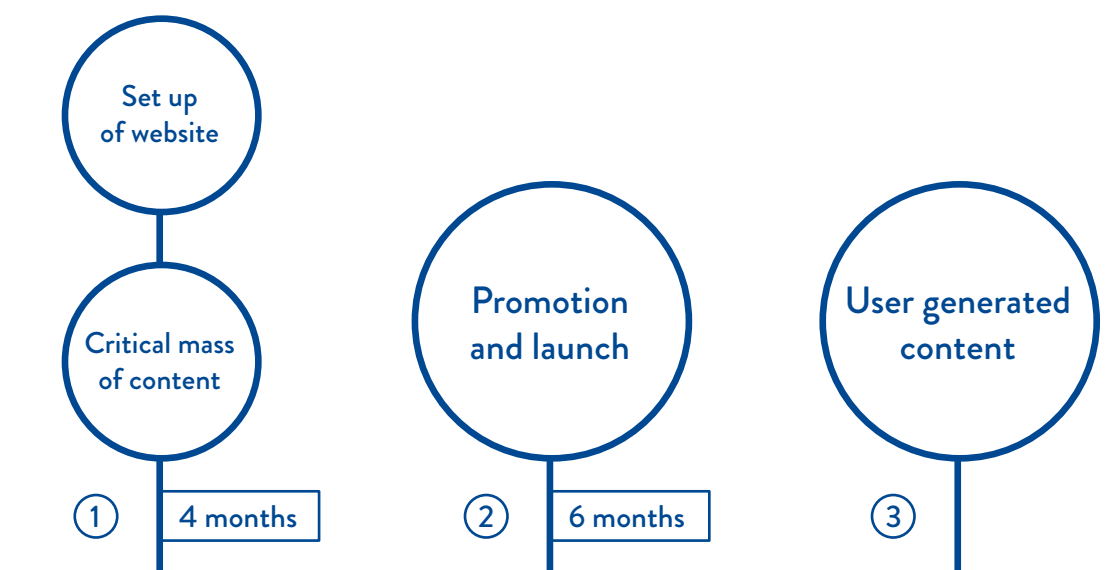


Figure 4.3: Next steps

5.

DISCUSSION

5.1 LEARNINGS

We learned a lot by working on Project Piazza. The whole process has been very interesting and rewarding for us, but at the same time also quite challenging on many different levels. After many twists and turns we ended up not doing the obvious — what we were asked in the original brief —, but we took one step further. We spent a lot of time analysing and understanding the bigger picture - what are the issues and leverage points in it? We feel confident with our choice to take another direction.

We want to thank all the stakeholders who have participated in our project. It has been a great opportunity for us to work with the Finnish government on this case. Not only have we learned how civil servants work and decision-making in the government is done, but we also learned a lot about different design and research methods and how to apply them to a very complex design task. One thing that positively surprised us was, how easy it was to get in contact with the stakeholders. In the beginning of the course we thought that it would be a challenge to get in contact with our busy stakeholders, but our preconceptions turned out to be false. The people we contacted and interviewed and the ones who participated in our workshops were very helpful and communication with them was effortless and informal. Many really took a lot of time out of their busy schedules to help and talk to us. It became clear that people are interested in changing their current ways of working and willing to help in the process.

The biggest challenge for us throughout the project has been to choose a focus and actually sticking to it. As our case was such a complex one, we could have chosen to concentrate on so many different stakeholders, aspects and levels of the case. Also when we were ideating solutions it was challenging to choose which solution to focus on and develop further. We could have easily

continued to come up with more solutions, start questioning and shooting them down for many more weeks. It is a challenge to balance between focusing on things that seem relevant and not “waste” time on irrelevant things, especially as small things may turn out to be of unexpected value in the end. But on the other hand we learned that it is also good to keep an open and flexible mind during the process in order to be able to respond to new insights that come up in interviews and workshops. For us the meeting with the Changemakers Movement was an important turning point.

Another learning concerns our teamwork and the allocation of tasks. All in all working together in a team was great and we had a good, trustful and enriching working atmosphere. We supported each other throughout the process and mutually learned to tackle such a complex issue. However, we could improve on efficiency and time management: We did not have previous experience from this kind of cases and did not have very clear roles, so we ended up doing basically almost everything together. Although on one hand this was a good opportunity for each of us to learn new methods and skills, on the other hand it was not the most efficient way of working. In hindsight some kind of roles may have helped in dividing tasks and allowing for more flexibility in time management and working methods. Then again determining what the roles could have been is very difficult even after the process.

Although our process was characterized by iterating over and over again and we tackled such an abstract topic, we feel that the course structure and trusting the design process helped us to stay motivated and not get overwhelmed by the amount of information and fuzziness.

5.2 DISCUSSING THE METHODS

Many of the methods presented earlier (see 2.3) were helpful in our process. But we also felt that some methods were challenging to apply to our specific case. Throughout the process we modified some methods to better suit our needs and case.

In the kick-off workshop we for example modified the rules of the Atlas Game. We left out some cards that we felt that were not that relevant at such an early stage. We also decided to allow the players to spend more time on each card to enable the discussion to flow more freely and allow for a more deeper level of discussion. We did the changes because of the tight schedule and the fact that we were in the very beginning of the process and first needed to understand the very basics.

We mainly used interviews to collect information from our stakeholders. We felt that interviews allowed us to get deeper into the subject. We also felt that it was hard to apply other empathic research methods, for example observations or self immersion, to our case. It is quite challenging to observe how people think about research or how they use and share information in general. To get there we created a design probe prior to the second workshop, but in hindsight we realized that we had not been able to ask the right questions in order to get deeper insights on that. The fact that it took us quite a while to focus down to who our primary users really are probably made it challenging to know who to observe and what questions to seek to answer with the probe.

It was also quite challenging to create a clear and inclusive systems map. The system we mapped turned out to be very complex and the problem quite abstract, so we had difficulties to find specific and concrete leverage points where to tweak the system. Maybe for solutionizing it would have helped to frame the problem more narrowly - which on the other hand would have led us to leave out important issues and the general picture. As mentioned before it is crucial how to define the frame. We learned that it is our task to weigh up where to focus and that every decision we made along the process very much influenced the rest of the process and the outcome.

We created and tried to use personas throughout our process, but somehow we always felt like we failed to really make good use of them. Maybe it was because the case in the beginning was so complex and involved such a huge variety of stakeholders that we had to do a lot of reframing before we could really see who is our target group. Once we had decided to focus on the civil servants we created personas based on the interviews we had done in the ministries. The tool of personas and its benefits became clearer and helped us in determining and defining the solution and its features. However we never really managed to communicate the issues in our case and the solution through the personas, so we decided not to use them in our presentation, but rather to revise our final concept through them.

5.2 FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

As we are talking about a cultural change towards openness, agility and new more experimental ways of working, we feel that these are also qualities required from designers working with challenges similar to the ones we faced during the project.

We now leave our solution Lähde in the hands of the Prime Minister's Office and hope it will be implemented. But in the end, whether or not it is implemented it is not the only factor that defines if we succeeded. The fact that we managed to create more discussion and urgency around the issue of cultural change is undoubtedly valuable.

We are curious to know what happens next. Will Lähde be implemented in some way? Did we manage to provide a good basis and give detailed enough information about our idea, so that the Prime Minister's Office can take ownership of Lähde and get it started? If yes, building the critical mass of content by gathering best practices across the ministries and supporting the civil servants in creating their posts on Lähde is the way to start, so: Lähde mukaan!



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* All graphics, diagrams and photographs used in the present report are created by the two student teams working on Project Piazza.

