CS LAB#3

CO-DESIGN AND DESIGN THINKING: A COLLABORATIVE AND ENVISIONING METHODOLOGY

CIRCOSTRADA
European Network
Circus and Street ArtS

Since 2003, Circostrada Network has been working to develop and structure the fields of circus and street arts in Europe and beyond. With more than 100 members from over 30 countries, it helps building a sustainable future for these sectors by empowering cultural players through activities in observation and research, professional exchanges, advocacy, capacity-building and information.

This publication was edited by Circostrada

ARTCENA

ARTCENA is the French National Centre for Circus Arts, Street Arts and Theatre, funded by the French Ministry of Culture.
It coordinates the Circostrada network and has a permanent seat on its Steering Committee. It works towards its missions in three main areas: sharing knowledge and resources through a digital platform; supporting professionals via mentoring and training; promoting and strengthening the circus, street arts and theatre fields by carrying out international development projects.

Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

INTRODUCTION

After two sessions in Fossano and Rotterdam [1], the process of Co-design and Design Thinking (DT) has been fully explored, analysed and practiced during the third edition of the CS LAB. In the unique location of the Centre International des Arts en Mouvement (CIAM) [2], co-organiser of the event, participants have reflected on and co-created around their own professional challenges. As a group, they had the chance to grasp and experience how the Design Thinking process can help them address their daily issues in a new way.

Although these methods are well developed in the business field and among start-ups, they are still struggling to inspire and reach the cultural field.

To *design* is first and foremost a methodology to think outside the box, to draw schemes in which you can imagine your project differently, to better understand your partners and yourself. It is a collective dialogue based on creativity and the inclusion of multiple perspectives, resulting in innovative solutions around common values and narratives. All stages of the Design process were experienced and constructed collectively in small groups made of 5-6 participants from different organisations and countries.

This report follows that of the CSLAB#2, which consisted in a prime introduction into the concepts of Co-design and Design Thinking, featuring definitions, presentations of practical exercises to apply when seeking to test this methodology. For this reason, we would advise you to first read this hand-on book prior to moving on to this one. Indeed, this report has been conceived as a complementary hands-on tool. It will present the process of this method and its relevance through the description of its tools and its application, and will also highlight examples based on the participants' experiences. It will go through the different stages of the design process and will present you another design and philosophical method – the Socratic Dialogue.

For this edition we called upon an illustrator to capture the atmosphere and the spirit of the content surrounding the Lab. All the drawings presented aim to reflect real life moments of the participants.

---

1 Find publications on the website of Circostrada: CS LAB.

2 Based in France in Aix-en-Provence.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DESIGN THINKING & CO-DESIGN 4

STAGE 1: EMPATHISE 5

- Ice-breakers 6
- Value ladder 6
- Stakeholders mapping 7

STAGE 2: DEFINE 8

- Persona/Day in the life 8

STAGE 3: CREATE AND PROTOTYPE 9

- Future scenario 9

SOCRATIC DIALOGUE 10

RELATED RESOURCES ON DESIGN THINKING AND SOCRATIC DIALOGUE 12

PARTNERS

Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE

ARTCENA

CIAM
CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DES ARTS EN MOUVEMENT
Découverte ▸ Transmission ▸ Création ▸ Diffusion

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors. The Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

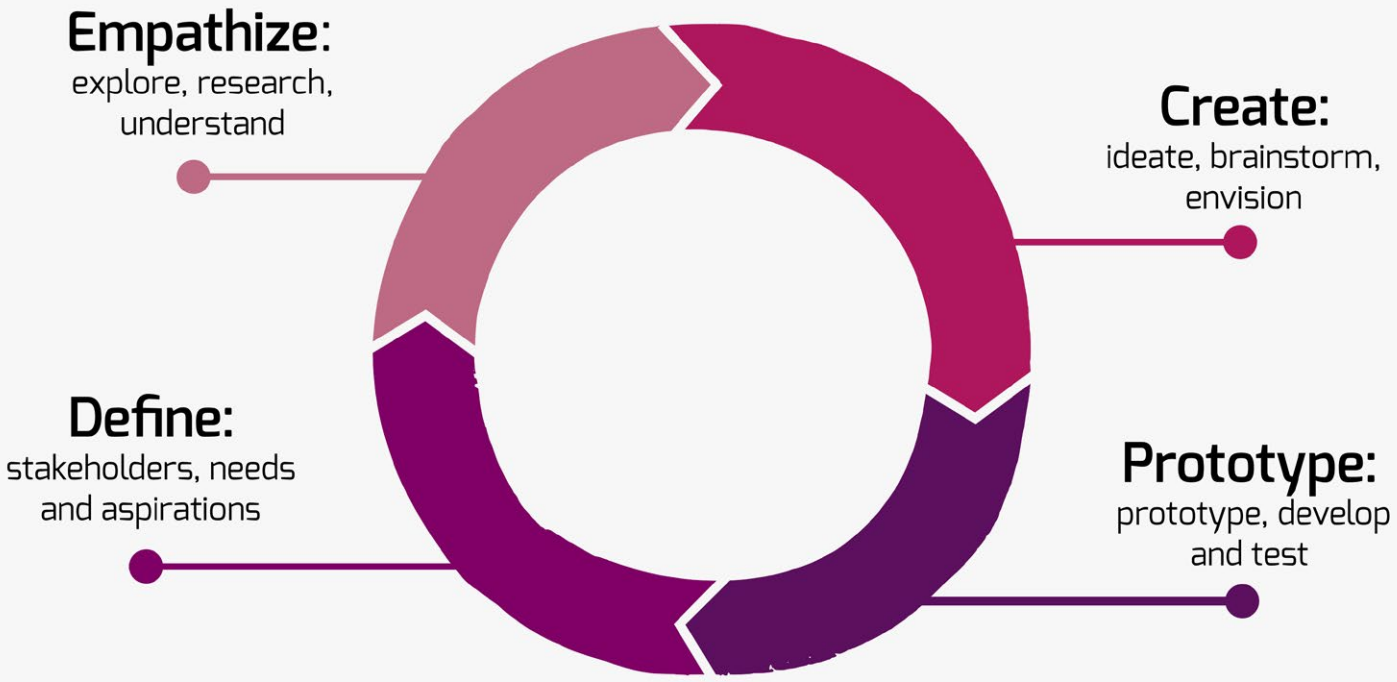
Cover picture and illustrations
Livio Fania
Graphic design
Frédéric Schaffar

August 2018

Find all the publications by Circostrada as well as many other online resources and news from the network and its members on:
www. circostrada.org

DESIGN THINKING & CO-DESIGN

Design thinking provides a targeted and structured process for strategic, creative thinking and problem solving.

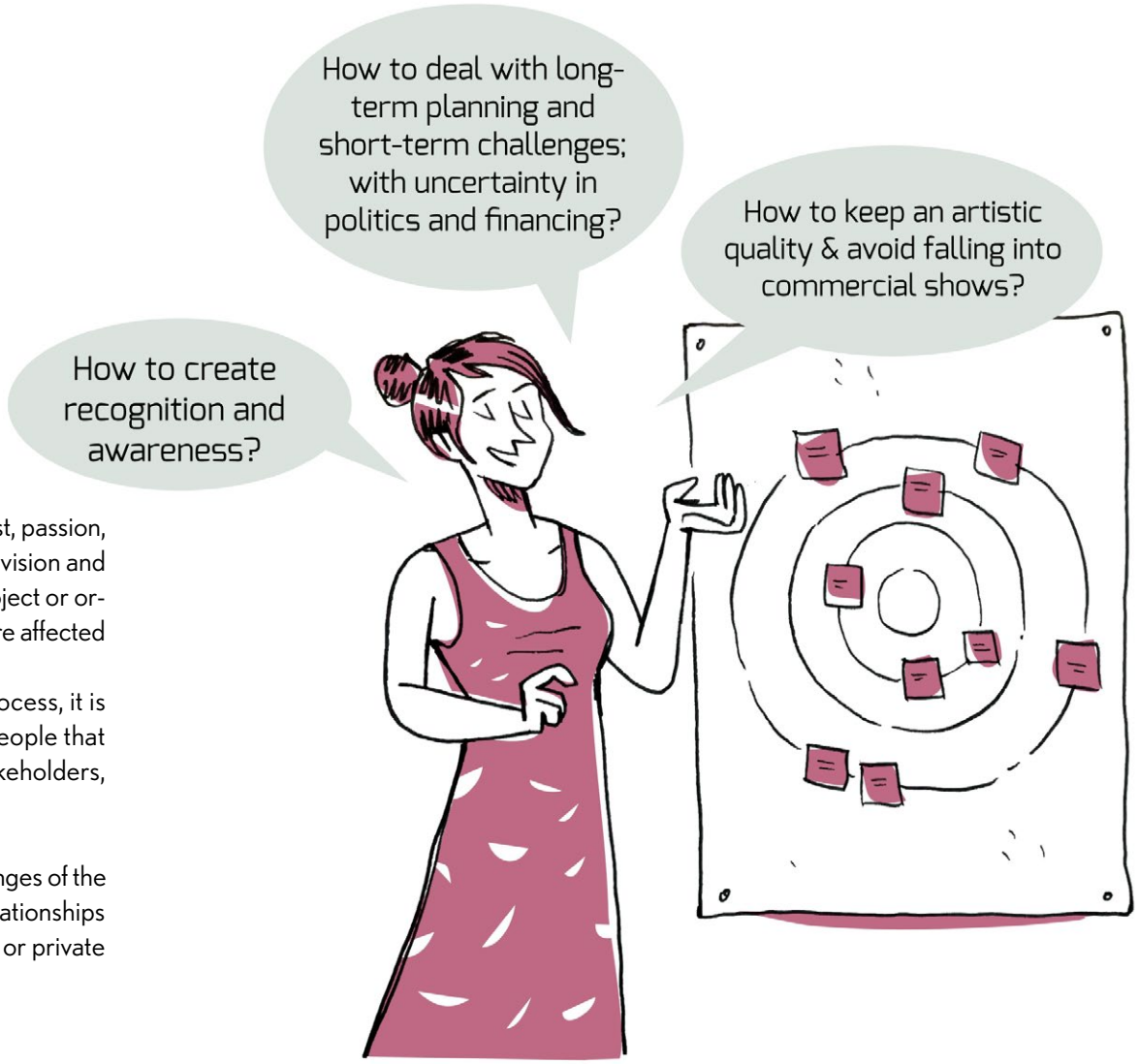


Co-design ensures that this creative process is both collaborative and inclusive. It's a mindset, a methodology and tools, a formal method of creative collaboration to create innovative solution.

STAGE 1: EMPATHISE

Strong shared values within any project or organisation create a shared belief, trust, passion, and commitment. They form the basis and touchstone for the creation of a shared vision and fruitful collaboration in a team with diverse perspectives and experiences. Any project or organisation generally deals with multiple stakeholders, who either contribute to or are affected by the work of that organisation.
As the title suggests, the first stage of designing is called "empathise". In the process, it is the time dedicated to exploring, researching and understanding the group of people that you want to analyse within the design process, along with their context (your stakeholders, partner(s), team members etc.).

The session starts with some **ice-breakers** which allow to identify the main challenges of the group; their values are then prioritised in the **value ladder** exercise, and their relationships with other organisations, groups or individuals - who will impact their professional or private lives - are later on explored and detailed in the **stakeholder mapping** exercise.



One participant presenting her main work-related challenges

Ice-breakers [1]

Definition
They are games to break the ice, to start a conversation, to prevent awkward moments. Two of them were experimented during the workshop:

- *Design your wallet*: you draw and imagine your ideal wallet, then show and explain to your partner why. Afterwards, you show your real wallet to the person next to you and explain what you have in it and why.

- *Fabulous beast*: the participants are asked to draw on a post-it a picture of him/herself as a fabulous beast. The picture should highlight supernatural and magical powers that the participants would possess. All participants then present their individual "beast" to the group and explain what they would do with the powers they gave themselves.

What for?
> To become aware of your creativity and imagination.
> To know more about a person without asking direct questions regarding his/her personal life. It gives an insight into the ideals, creativity or imagination of the person. It also helps to lighten things up!

Value ladder

Definition
After writing down your 5 main values, you gather with a pair, compare your values and negotiate until you agree on 5 which you both share. The team then prioritises these values from 1 to 5 in order of importance and share with other participants explaining the reasons for their choice and the significance of each value.

What for?
> To negotiate and define shared values within a team.
> To help you better understand your stakeholders by sharing your values with them, by trying to grasp what triggers their motivations or by putting yourself in their shoes.

1 You can find some ideas of ice-breakers here.

Stakeholders mapping

Definition

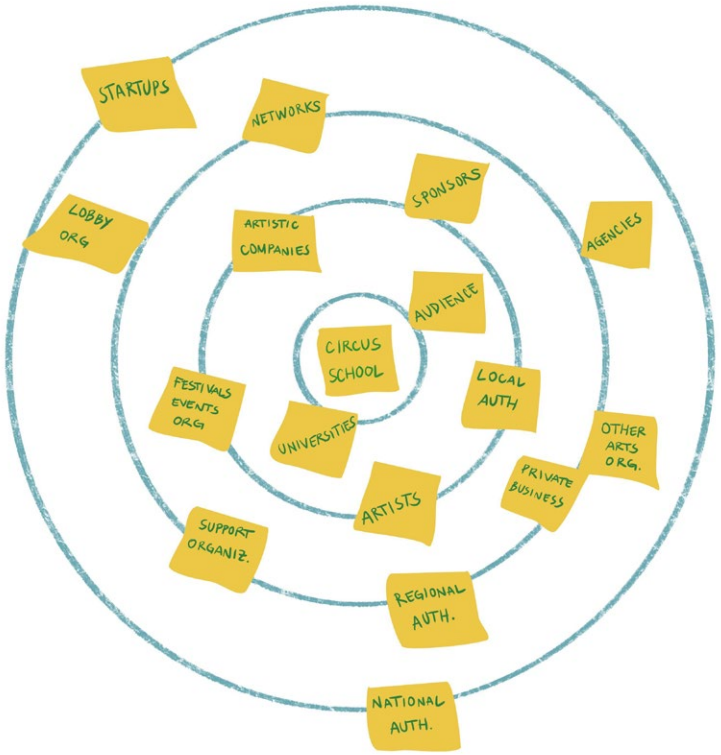
In this exercise, the teams create a visual representation of the stakeholders involved, their distance from the central group and their interrelationships. Ultimate success and sustainability of any development venture therefore means understanding all stakeholders, their identity, roles, needs and significance for any project in progress.

In the process of mapping stakeholders, you should proceed as such:

- Your organisation is the heart of the target
- The inner circles are intended for your main stakeholders, those who are the most important & strategic for your project's development
- Once all stakeholders have been identified and placed on the target, you should reflect on their mutual interactions and inter-relations regarding your project

What for?

> To identify all your stakeholders and the relationship you have with them.
> To better understand your stakeholders (audience, artists, financers, networks).
> To aknowledge and adapt yourself to your stakeholders' own environment, interests and challenges.



Mapping inspired by one participant's experience

STAGE 2: DEFINE

In the "definition phase", the salient characteristics, needs and aspirations of the target group are defined in the **'persona'** description tool/exercise, while a typical '**day in the life'** of the persona, more particularly in relation to her/his challenges, allows you to **pinpoint and define challenges**, difficulties or frustrations in the daily life of your organisation or target group so that you can subsequently **create design possibilities and interventions to address these issues.**

Persona/Day in the life[1]

Definition

A persona is a fictional character based on observations, research and interviews with an existing person or several persons who represent the specific target group that you want to reach (artist, audience, stakeholders, etc.). It includes behavior patterns, goals, skills, attitudes and environment, with a few fictional personal details to bring the persona to life. The "persona exercice" is followed by the "day in the life" one.

What for?

> To analyse and understand the needs, the behaviors/characters of your target group in order to create the most suitable product for them.
> To help you create a project based on the needs and aspirations of your target group (e.g. audience, artists, funders, networks, etc.).
> To understand the project and the context within which your partner evolves.

1 Concrete examples of the use of "Persona" and "day in the life" tools can be found here.

STAGE 3: CREATE AND PROTOTYPE

In the "Ideation" phase or "Create and Prototype" phase, the participants, through collective brainstorming, move to a future scenario which:

- Asks "how might we" address and solve the particular challenges or pain points faced on a daily basis, and identified in the 'day in the life' exercise.
- Integrates the needs, aspirations and trends around the target group and stakeholders.
- Shows the positive impact of proposed improvements in the future.

To *prototype* allows us to make abstract new ideas tangible to potential partners and stakeholders. These include storyboarding, user scenarios, experience journeys – all of which encourage deep involvement from stakeholders to provide feedback and results.

Future scenario

Definition

After the "day in the life", the participants, through collective brainstorming and "how might we" question particular issues. For this exercise, a six-panel storyboard is generally created (although more panels can be used), describing in narrative sequences the future scenario with your proposed improvements or solutions.

What for?

> To step aside and analyse how you can address problems or offer the best solutions to your stakeholders, audience, etc.

> It might help you suggest the best and most suitable solutions, adapted to the real needs of your target.

SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

Definition

Socratic Dialogue [1] is another design process method built on the idea that: we have a life full of habits and assumptions that guide our way of thinking, acting, and feeling. If we want to think differently, we need to step aside of them. Besides, we usually pretend to listen, while we only capture those words that fit in our sequence of thoughts. Socratic Dialogue can be a way of building collaborative and reflective awareness space in which we practice **active listening** and **the art of collective attention leading to a collaborative mind.** This method uses different steps and through each of these, the complexity of the challenges increases. "The final objective is to design a new narrative that is future proof with a steady moral compass, a new narrative that incorporates our values, our purposes and a way to create meaning" [2].

---

1 See the nine stages of the Socratic Design here.

2 Source: Socratic Design Website.

Process:
A neutral moderator leads the session and distributes speaking and listening roles equally. The dialogue starts with a question, after a round, the moderator choses one. We then go deeper into this question to analyse it through sub-question enhanced by examples, definitions and ideas from all participants.

Some common rules are decided:
- Participants have to listen to each other and be able to repeat or summarize what the others have said. If unable to do so, someone else is asked to do it.
- Participants will "come up with something and something will happen".
- There are no such things as stupid questions.
- There is enough intelligence here.
- No need to go fast.
- No discussion - because to discuss is to argue.

What for?
> To order your meetings and help your team listen to each other.
> To interact differently with one another, not fall into comfortable repetitive reasoning, and to assess our assumptions critically.
> To move forward on an issue and to go deeper inside each difficulty you are facing.

What came out of the session

Main question: Why is there so much competition and so few real collaborations in our field?

Sub-questions and comments:
- Do we have the same goals?
- What is competition?
- Share examples of real collaborations and not "real ones".
- How to build trust?

Solutions:
- To accept to let it go
- To accept conflict
- To understand one another
- To show we gain more from collaboration than competition leading to recognition
- To know the weaknesses and strength of your collaborator
- To take time to build trust
- To get a broader picture leading to empathy

RELATED RESOURCES ON DESIGN THINKING AND SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

About Design Thinking

Report

› CSLAB#2 publication: *An insight into Co-design & Design Thinking methodology*

Online Material

You will be able to find many resources on the internet about Design Thinking, however, not all of them are quality-based. Here are some recommendations:

› Ideo, Stanford University, and David Kelley of Creative Confidence, who is also the Director of Stanford d.school have been very influential over the last few years on Design process research. They feature interesting materials and videos online: https://dschool.stanford.edu/

Book

› *The field guide to human centered design* is a very interesting and hands-on Human Design Kit really close to the Design Thinking methods made by Ideo, with examples and advices *(accessible online for free, you need to create an account on their website).*

Design toolkit websites

› Designkit.org
› Ideo.org
› https://www.detoolbox.com/

About Socratic Design

› Socratic Design Academy Website

Other sources

› Online course for cultural manager, by Culture and Creativity programme
› http://www.fantasticstudios.com, creative consultancy firm