



Research results on policy design in government

English Interview Summaries

Fiscal year 2021-2022

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Research Overview

Time: December 2021 - February 2022

Method: Online (Zoom, Teams)

Interviewee Countries: Denmark, Chile, Taiwan, UK, Sweden and Singapore

Interviewers: Inoue Takuo, Esben Groendal, Masuda Chikako

Sune Knudsen

COO, Danish Design Center

Analysis Comments in Orange

Action Point

- * Consider what is needed and what is possible in terms of political backing, when setting up the policy design initiative
- * Be sure to create an atmosphere of action
- * Think beyond the current team structure, and envision a community of the future.

Trained as historian and has worked as army intelligence officer and political scientist. Has worked in MindLab as a project manager, and then changed jobs to head of innovation and strategy and the ministry of employment. Worked on inducing innovation and design into new and existing policy. Has worked at DDC for 7 years.

The ministries were interested in how to “wrap their minds around” user-centricity and innovation. **It is interesting how this seems to be common, yet hard to do - moving from intellectually understanding the need for something, and translating it into your own action.**

Sune talked about a project where they had a register of Danish businesses, based on an EU data format. But one third of registrations were wrong, and took longer than it was supposed to to register. Together with Mindlab, they went in qualitatively to understand what went wrong, so they could innovate the registration system.

Trust is a big part of why that project went well, even though there were many stakeholders. That trust, Sune reckons, stems from the fact that there were no outsiders. Everyone, including Mindlab, were public servants. That's a huge advantage.

Doing innovation in government necessarily entails kicking up dust in the power hierarchy, because everyone has their own political agenda. However, with Mindlab, they had an advantage in the fact that their board included permanent secretaries in different ministries. From this, Sune made the point about how important it is to consider the level of involvement necessary to achieve the goals of the policy design initiative.

People who worked at Mindlab started changing jobs into the other ministries, and they began acting as translating mechanisms. They also worked deliberately on building a network across government.

Working in projects can be good to create cases, and build a business case for the lab in general. But if the impact should be strategic, the work should reach and be understood by people higher up, fairly early on. The team needed in the start, should be designers who are well-versed in policy, who can effectively work with policy-expert teams.

Professionalism is a work in process.

The DDC inherited the idea and legacy of Mindlab.

At the DDC they work mission-based (see Mariana Mazzucato, Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism)

It is important to stress, that the lab is not the end in itself. Instead focus should be what the lab can enable in terms of outcomes.

You can start out introducing change in a safe environment, and avoid the big flashy, public commitment. Prototyping and testing is crucial here, and even the DDC is only still trying to do it. Prototypes create safe spaces if they are done right.

Christian Bason

CEO, Danish Design Center

Bason mentions two traditional paradigms for how change has happened, Managerial and Technological. A third paradigm, which is human-driven, is focussing on markets in terms of users (consumers, citizens etc) and recognizes a wider set of knowledge and behavior.

It is important to understand that the human-driven approach can not stand alone, and is instead augmenting the two others. This goes for both public and private contexts.

It takes time to embed a human-approach and a lot of work. Concretely it requires different starting points, different teams and different professions ("softer ones" such as design, liberal arts etc).

The DDC works with how Denmark addresses innovation and creation. Fx a national strategy for creative industries. They work with coaching officials in design and help them work better with creative industries. **(enablement)** Coaching and executive training in general, is modular and builds up competency and understanding of design. **Particularly relevant here is the building of tools, which help civil servants work in new ways.** They also provide org. design advice to build teams and labs*.

They work with missions around long-term targets, and then cultivate an eco-system** which can be mobilized. **(working collaboratively outside government)**

For their work within ethical design, they have developed a labeling solution they call the D-Mark to put on solutions. This is a way to make their vision tangible and something that people can gather behind.

Mindlab was inside government (the ministry of economy) and so was closer to decisions. DDC is independent, yet funded by the government.

Action Point

* What can Team D do in terms of building out a unit internally?

** Map ecosystem close to Team D to understand where they can effect change

There is a growth in understanding and scaling - driven by service design and digital solutions in governments around the world. Many teams are directly embedded in government, which is very important. This gives them power, speed and impact.

But this highlights the crucial point of how a team **can** be embedded. He's worked on a 10-year review of how teams negotiate fit and staying power. This is also related to a point about going beyond the lab, and actually redesigning policy.

One of their insights was that innovation teams are vulnerable to structural change.

The Danish journey has been characterized by a good starting point, and the understanding of design has gone hand in hand with deployment of digital solutions. There has been a boom in awareness, but it has sort of plateaued right now. It was more action-oriented in Mindlab, and DDC has less access to on-going policy making. He mentions 3rd places as places of collaboration, which can bridge the gap.

In terms of skills, the need for digital literacy is huge across government. This should be combined with skills in policy making which are boundary spanning and can look across

government (just like the user does). It is few people who can span from innovation to government mindset, but that is exactly the hybrid governments need. He also highlighted again the softer skills such as strategy, professionalism, social skills and communication skills, as being crucial to actual implementing change on the ground.

Another critical “skill” for civil servants, is the ability or courage to reach outside of government for help, and work with new perspectives. This rests on strong governance. In Mindlab, they had a strong mandate from their board, which was populated by different ministries who could then easily ask for help. **This requires social intelligence, and basic likability and ease of collaboration on the part of the innovation team***.**

They make sure to have 40% of their time throughout the year free to be flexible and agile.

In order to bridge the divide between what the innovation team can contribute with, and what the politicians need, it is important to make the common ground clear. Common ground is often that

Action Point

*** Be aware of how design is introduced, by whom and in what setting. Design as a way of working needs to take into consideration how people approach their work to begin with.

people want to see the same kind of change. This can then be followed up with work that connects the senior manager or politicians’ work with the lives of citizens. In Mindlab they had good experience with this, as it really opened the eyes of stakeholders.

He later made a point about how, when they approach companies and fx train CEOs, they talk to them as humans, and **keep in mind that government offices and private companies are fundamentally run by humans.**

This insight requires a lot of professionalism to execute on probably.

Japan has the ambition to improve, is very professional and dedicated, there is humility around problems and an open-mindedness to new ideas. There is also a great history of design and aesthetics.

But all of this has not come into play in the digitization of government, and this is where the challenge and opportunity lies for Japan.

DK has so far been better or faster at bridging the divide between design and improvement in traditional fields, with the new opportunities of digital.

In Japan, top level backing is needed to provide focus, legitimacy and urgency. This can then be combined with perspectives outside of government. And then it should be made easy to change.

Countries that could be good to look at is Norway and UAE too.

Dr. Camilla Buchanan

Co-Head of Lab, Policy Lab UK

Analysis Comments in Orange

Policy Lab was established in 2014 as a result of the UK Government's Civil Service Reform Plan, and more broadly the growing use of design in the public sector led by organisations such as the UK Design Council. Policy Lab is now 8 years old and has done well over 150 innovation projects inside the UK government as well as occasionally beyond. Usually Policy Lab projects last between 4-6 months. Initially the team did a lot of training and thought leadership to build awareness in government, whilst this is still an important part of activities the Policy Lab is now a more established part of policy innovation in the UK government.

The skills within the team are varied and hybrid. Furthermore some of the younger people coming with varied design related backgrounds not wanting to be defined by one title and are able to do both technical and systemic design work.

A major motivation for policy teams to commission the Policy Lab is because of the team's capability in working with people outside of government - through methods such as film-ethnography. This is a core tenet of design. But in addition it has been a starting place for civil servants to engage with designers.

The Lab also undertakes 'strategic design' activities - meaning they work on questions of policy and of organizational change. Less with concrete services. This creates a need for them to be clear about hand-off of projects back into the policy system.

They work as a quasi-commercial unit, covering all of their own costs through commissioned work by policy teams across government.

In terms of running an innovation team in government there are considerations of not only the methods and tools used but also the enabling environment such as effective resourcing strategies and clear project processes.

Overall demand isn't drying up for policy innovation work, and more broadly there have been shifts towards user-centered design and innovation, driven in part by very visible initiatives like GDS.

They work in a designy manner on bits of policy. Because of the location of the team at the policy end of the system it can be difficult to know how far it reaches down into delivery in every project. Although one of the key contributions of design is to connect strategy and delivery.

Camilla reminds us of the important distance between policy and citizens, and how many steps have to be taken in between. On this continuum, Policy Lab sits, with projects reaching more or less into delivery.

Skills: design is something that is more and more accessible with simple digital tools. However it is also a highly expert craft and the mode of working in design, which is radically different to policy, is not always well understood in government. There is a job for the design community to do to really express and put to use the design method as a whole in policy - for example prototyping, which is central to design is still hard to pull off in government.

This is a communications-skills problem on the part of design teams in general, which perhaps can only be relegated through confidence and humility in how real work and results are presented.

Relating to digital, it depends on the kind of project they do. Digital is a big part of their tool box, especially during the pandemic. Whether the policy questions they tackle end up requiring a digital answer, depends on a lot of different factors.

1. What is the difference between policy approached through design, and more traditional policy development?

They are radically different, traditional policy processes tend to be deductive and work

down to solutions, that said there is a lot that can be learnt from the creativity and use of data in many more conventional policy process. Design is more messy, it opens up a lot of different types of data, such as granular information about people's lives, and does not pretend to know the answer before work has started. That said, good design should be quick at getting to solutions, testing them and chucking them out if they are not the right ones. This messiness and solution focus can feel very different to conventional policy.

Action Point

- * Identifying the continuum/system in which the lab will be running, is crucial to aim at the right projects.

2. What are the current points of contention, challenge or breakthrough in the policy design community globally?

A lot of development around design in government and strategic design, with a whole global ecosystem (courses feeding people into every sector) emerging.

Looking ahead, Camilla recognizes ethics as a challenge, because they are existing within a government system, and has to adhere to that. But it's a dilemma to declare one's ethics, and then speak up with the risk of then not being asked again in the future. But in the case of Policy Lab, she believes design is "in" and can start to make bolder statements around some of the bigger issues in the world like climate. It's less about proving oneself now, since they've already done a lot of great and impactful work, and more about finding out how to move from smaller team doing high impact narrow focussed work, to high impact broad focus work.

Similar to Roman in Chile, Camilla aims for a spot closer to fundamental decisions processes like spending review processes.

Roman Yosif

Executive Director, Laboratorio del Gobierno

Roman worked in finance at a Swiss Bank in Mexico, after finishing a degree in business administration. He then co-founded two companies, before applying on a whim to join the GovLab. His main motivation was that capitalism is opposed to democracy, because big finance in particular is governed by a lot of dark processes. Democracy, on the other hand, requires transparency.

When he read about the government wanting to do innovation in 2014, he thought it sounded amazing, because government is usually associated with stability and the status quo, whereas innovation is all about flexibility and agility.

Action Point

- * Look critically at what doesn't work and apply first principles-thinking to create a new path
- * Take a radical action-oriented approach.

He is politically uninvolved, so that's maybe why he has been able to stay on.

He finds that government improvises a lot, which can be a good thing, but mostly it's part of the problem around why things don't evolve. Instead, to better evolve you need methodologies and processes. They spent the first four months designing their first methodology.

He has been executive director since 2019. At that point, he saw that they didn't have very much importance internally, so they analyzed their past work critical during a one week internal workshop and look at why they hadn't had any results.

They arrived at 5 points

1. Public innovation needs to be at the center - they were under the ministry of economics at that time. (since then they have moved to be under the president's office, and are currently in the process of moving to the ministry of finance, in order to have a bigger influence over how money is spent)
2. Public labs must be at center of important public challenges - so they changed their methodology. (He noted that many gov labs and initiatives fail after 3 years because they don't provide any concrete results, it's mostly a PR stunt in many cases)
3. You need a clear business model(s) - they implemented a strategy of decentralisation, in order to maximise how their own limited resources were used. They have three main services: agile consulting, innovation network and an index. It's holistic and complete, because with agile you create change, with the network you systematize learning open it up to decentralize. The index then measure institutional capacity in the state every year to innovate. (Roman mentions how they are running on half the budget of what they had available 4 years ago. They achieved this by figuring out that they require less, and focus more on making a good team)
4. You don't need to transfer more money to incentivize innovation - use existing budgets to innovate, by showing how this can be done. Roman underlined how they have a powerful argument when making their case, in that they are not an external consultancy, they are public servants working for a common cause, and can leave again once the problem is fixed. This contrasts with the role of private consultancies, who need to come back again and again to make a new sale. Roman mused that they don't charge money, they charge political commitment in a way private consultancies can't. They ask the ministries they are helping, to allocate time of their civil servants to be part of the team. That's why Roman sees his role as being very politically dependent.

- Need a team and a strategy that are close to administration, but need to be fundamentally apolitical in their work. This helps them with continuity.

The team is grounded in diversity. Diversity in background, culture, gender and political beliefs. Roman referenced this as good practice from successful companies like Google, Apple etc. (This hints at their ability to identify what works, and implementing it in the name of their cause, without overthinking or embellishment.)

They work through iteration, clear governance and maintain a strong focus on implementation. Roman points out (similarly to Christian Bason's Mindlab experience) the importance of having spare hours to be swift and reactive instead of over committing. They want to be a do-tank, not a think-tank.

Roman pointed out that you can define important projects across many different parameters, but he highlighted a project around violence against women, and one about unemployment subsidies as being particularly impactful.

Social Protection Network: An Unprecedented Co-Creation Process in the State

Institutions Involved
Ministry of Social Development and Family, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of the Interior and Public Security, National Service for the Elderly (Sesma), National Training and Employment Service (Senec), Superintendence of Health, Independencia and Peñalolen Town Halls, National Board of School Aid and Scholarships (JUNAEB), Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency and 21 civil society organisations.

Year of Implementation
2018 - 2019



Results

- Over 11 million users have accessed the platform.
- 157 programmes and benefits available for user access.
- Over 680 thousand in site attentions at ChileAtiende using this platform.
- Winner of the 2019 Avonni award for public innovation.

During 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Family set an objective to address the families' feeling of lack of protection against the multiple adverse events that might harm them and how to improve their experience with the related state services. In light of this, the Social Protection Network (RPS) rises as a comprehensive support system with the various services, in a close, timely and transparent manner.

Types of Innovation Developed in this Project

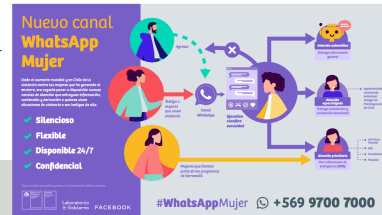
STRATEGY	PERSONALIZATION	COLLABORATION	REGULATIONS
SERVICE	VALUE PROPOSITION	ATTENTION MODEL	COMMUNICATIONS
OPERATION	DATA MANAGEMENT AND USE	TECHNOLOGY	PROCESSES
ORGANIZATION	ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN	SKILLS AND ABILITIES	

Different Angle: The Experience of Agile (p 54)

WhatsApp Woman: Silent Channel to Guide Women under or Witnesses of Domestic Violence during Confinement

Institutions Involved
Ministry of Women and Gender Equity, National Women and Gender Equity Service (SernamEG)

Year of Implementation
2020



Results

- 32.417 attentions generated in the first year of the launch of the service channel (April 2020 to April 2021).
- 13% of attentions (performed between January to April 2021) were delivered through the WhatsApp channel.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting confinement measures have led to an increase on the levels of domestic violence worldwide. In this context, the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity, along with the National Women and Gender Equity Service (SernamEG) addressed the challenge of creating a silent channel to provide emotional support and information to women living with their perpetrator.

Types of Innovation Developed in this Project

STRATEGY	PERSONALIZATION	COLLABORATION	REGULATIONS
SERVICE	VALUE PROPOSITION	ATTENTION MODEL	COMMUNICATIONS
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Different Angle: The Experience of Agile (p 70)

The biggest one is the public innovators network - the client is the network itself. The one with the biggest impact is the agile service, and in terms of long-term capacities, the index is the most important, because it helps organizations get better at their own innovation capacities.

Public-public Collaboration is difficult because of the siloes (public issues are not in silos, but public response is in silos!). They work by clearly defining governance and maintain Project Managers on both sides, so projects can be followed through and grown into the organization. They try to get many people involved in the process for deeper integration too. They try to create an atmosphere of innovation.

They are also increasingly aware of the culture they are working into. Fx by being more empathic around the clothing they wear and their attitude. In the beginning they were more hipster-designers, but lately have consciously shifted to suits and ties to match the people they are trying to help.

They work hard to show that change can happen, and take ideas into action. And also show intermediary results.

They try to push people to active change from the first workshop, instead of presenting all the theory of design and innovation. Lack of implementation is in Roman's opinion part of the problem.

Q: How to get public servants to adopt design mindsets in their work?

A: Making people feel that they can effect change, not simply do design tools and stop. It has to be practical and feel real.

They have been looking to GDS for digitalisation. Singapore, South Korea for AI... and then Latin America for social innovation, Mexico, Chile and Colombia for example. But public innovation is only at 10% of what it could be, and Chile is making a good case for how it should be.

Their plans for the future include moving into the ministry of finance. They passed two laws in congress to have that change realized.

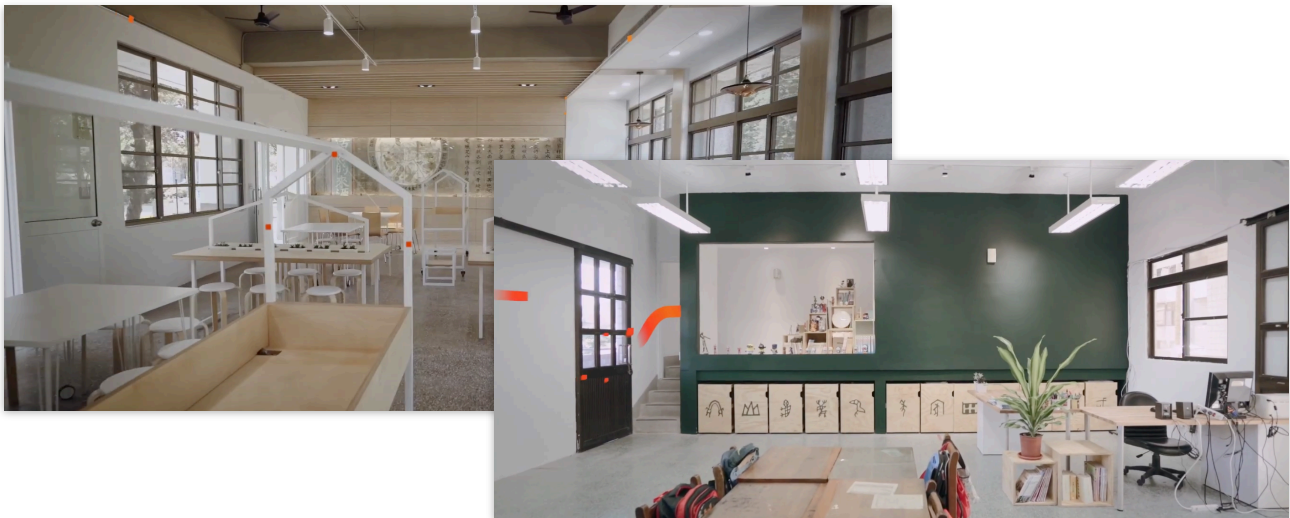
Shao-Hung Cheng

Project Manager at Taiwan Design Research Institute

Analysis Comments in Orange

Hung identifies as project manager, and works to improve project management processes.

Worked on a project to let designers redesign a college campus. Very visual and comprehensive overhaul.



Screenshots from YouTube video showing the “Design Movement on Campus” project.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dST2G7-tCPU> (2019)

They did a shared process with the media, had an editor of education news as their partner. He saw a dilemma in design within democracy, where democracy needs quick and visible results. The politicians need the public to quickly recognize value. **Comment: This hidden mechanism of design procurement could play a big role in why it is hard to put design in play in less visual contexts like services.** Related to this point, it was highlighted later, that it is important to make people see an outcome in a short time - quick wins, if you will. In order to for decision makers to understand that design matters. Otherwise it gets bogged down in proces. Being able to show that design matters, influences how resources are spent in the future too.

Hung finds that designers have a hard time in government because of all the rules and regulation. They got an approval to work around the rules.

Comment: This is an approach often seen in policy innovation, where rules are bent for a specific region or a period of time, to test if new ways of doing things might work better. In Denmark for example, a lot of progress has been made with “pilot municipalities”, where municipalities can apply for waivers of particular policies so they can work in new ways.

Design allowed them to move from a traditional waterfall approach, to more incremental change. Working on basic requirements. **Comment: There is a case in the Netherlands, where a design agency was brought in to help the government write project scope and requirements, to ensure that there was a citizen-focus at the core.**

Hung found that civil servants were open to the new approach, but people on the ground who had to change their way of working were more negative. He also highlighted the point of managing stakeholders. Designers bring empathy and an end-user perspective through fx user stories. **Comment: Remembering that policy affects many different kind of people in different ways, and managing that through understanding and visualization, might be said to be a key role that design can play.**

There aren't many designers in government in Taiwan in Hung's view, because change has to come from the top down. **Comment: It felt more or less implied here, that designers work more bottom-up in their approach to gathering facts and stories from the ground.**

But on the other hand, he said that design thinking could be complementary to more traditional expert judgement in policy making. Not necessarily a question of either or.

Dan Hill

Director of Strategic Design, Vinnova

Analysis Comments in Orange

Action Point

- * Maintain a clear separation between high level, and low level discussion, in order to move forward in a structured manner
- * Visualize the relevant system, and work at it methodically

Dan has a background in digital, but has moved between many roles within strategic design and government including in one of the first such labs in Helsinki. He sees a common thread in his work as being about crossing boundaries (which in his words are mostly legacies and assumptions - this implies are deep systems understanding).

To approach issues through a systems lens, requires that people realize how different areas of life affects others (buildings influence health etc.)

The work by starting out with a statement of the issue - climate change, for example. From there they draw out everyone and everything connected around this. They then do what they call “the system in a room”, where stakeholders work together. In doing this, they “pull in the system” from the beginning, and so scalability is baked in as a consequence of this.

“My role as a designer is recognizing that policy and practice have to fit together, that the best policies are refined by ideas drawn from practice.” - Dan Hill

They know the reasons to act, and they have targets to go towards. They also have tools and methods, so all they need is to take action. This creates the environment that they have to act within, and also have discussions within. **They work mission-oriented innovation, just like the Danish Design Center is trying to.** And they do this not in a technical way, but in a social innovation focussed way.

Dan points out the same distance between high level decisions and low level decisions, as Camilla did. He points out that the directions are set at the high level, so it's down on a lower level that experiments can be undertaken with multiple stakeholders working together. They are very clear in separating the two levels, so they don't end up with a highly abstract idea into a detailed conversations. **This might be a big issue for Japan in general, where abstract conversations can tend to derail focus from hands-on problem solving.**

In talking about leading the process around change, Dan talks about having confidence in setting the direction based on the reasons and the targets mentioned above, and then going into it with humility. This means for example, that they take care to “flatten hierarchies” and use simple language and tools to drive conversation. They serve good food and coffee, they go for walks.

He highlights different qualities of design. One is the ability **to hold ambiguity**, and work towards synthesis of information through sketching and prototyping. Another is **integrative thinking**, where sense can be made of different connections in a system. A third one is **stewardship**, where the designer sees the process through to the end, like an architect visiting the building site many times.

Dan sees **adaption** as a keyword for government going forward. He highlights Japanese building codes, and how they have sped up the “metabolism” of the city. Technological advancements change how people live, and cities and governments should be able to respond to that.

“So my job again, usually in government is to look very carefully at the changing things. And then we figure out as we through our projects, how do we use our systems to explore that change.”

By working systematically, systemically and strategically, they can leverage the existing scale of systems like roads.

Working systemically is all about creating an overview of the system, and keeping the overview. Initiating change and experiments where it makes sense, and then being prepared to scale working solutions. **Pulling government closer to the change** is a way he summarizes what a new way of working implies.

Just like Roman and the team in Chile, they insist on workshops being very focussed and action-oriented. This means specifically that workshop goals and participants are very carefully vetted. A workshop takes a lot of preparation, because it has a huge role to play. When workshops are done right, they contribute richly to the success of a project, and they are the antithesis to shared Word-docs and PowerPoints where policy tend to happen. After workshops, they put a lot of work into testing and reframing, looking at case studies etc.

To identify what to work with, they look for for example “pulls from society”, which are small signals that something is interesting or happening. Then they examine the context in which it is happening, and for this they talk about **typologies**. For example, no school is the same, but all have school-like qualities. Often times, foundational layers are common like “skills and capabilities, financing, policy, law, data and code”. They can the break out a change over the different layers, and invite relevant parties to contribute their perspective. They did this with a road intervention, where a government agency was invited who otherwise never participate in such projects. But because they were there, the ability to scale the idea become so much more realistic from the beginning.

Teo Linyou

Principal Design Lead, Innovation Lab
Public Service Division, Prime Minister's Office

Analysis Comments in Orange

Main Points

- * Focus on building network capacity, not a single team
- * The key to success is not to get more designers, but to embed an understanding of, and curiosity towards users.

They are 7 people in the Innolab. The way they work is by starting with the why of transformation when explaining what they do to the people affected. The world is changing, and there will appear new and better ways to serve citizens. This is the clear, common goal that drives them. **Dan Hill at Vinnova for example also talked about having a common understanding of what the purpose is.**

A big driver of the need for change are the new technology and new business models in the private sector, and this creates new expectations of the public sector as well. Singapore has manpower and budget constraints like other developed countries, as well as an aging population. All this comes together to press the government to figure out how to do things more efficiently and effectively.

The value of design is to understand multiple perspectives in an increasingly complex world. This means understanding the problems that policies are supposed to solve and improve quality of decisions. The real issue is about understanding the problem and the user.

They emphasize with new project teams, that they have to be on the ground. **This point is a lot like the focus of other labs, which encourages a physical “getting closer to” users.**

InnoLab tries to understand staff concerns, instead of just telling them what they should do.

Many civil servants understand that they need to talk to users, and are motivated to do so. But other are ‘scared of users’ in the sense that if they engage and ask users’ opinion on the public sector, they get a lot of negativity. InnoLab facilitates these encounters, and they find that citizens who complain turn out to be happy that there is an outlet and to feel that government listens.

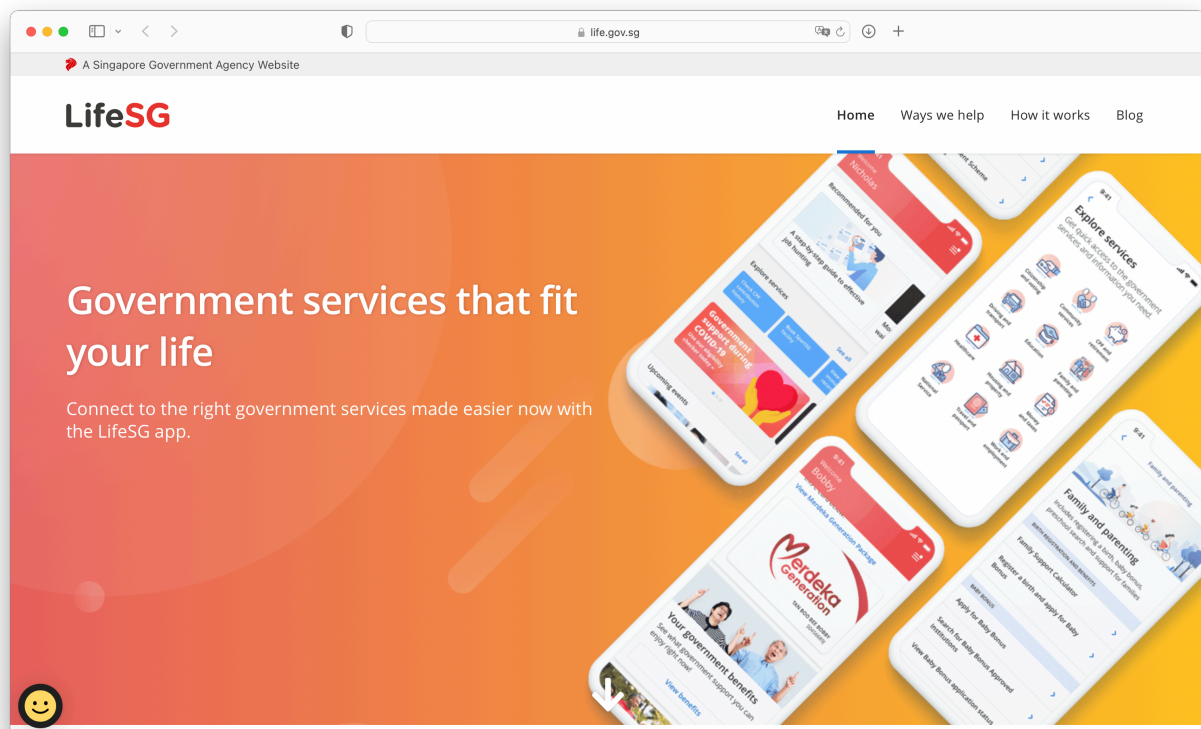
They work as a connection hub between vendors and agencies, if they can’t directly help with a project themselves. Knowledge sharing is a big part of what they do.

They work with whole of government projects, being a bridge between policy and users. The projects tend to be top down and involve a lot of agencies. There are at least 73 innovation labs in government, all of them have very few designers. **Feeds into his point about design being learned as a mindset.** They build a network (capacity) instead of building a single team. **This point is also similar to Chile’s attention to network-building.** They also work with bringing these labs together, so they can learn from each other. As part of their capacity building, they have monthly one-day workshops. They also run ‘make-a-thons’ with upwards of 1000 people, to encourage innovation across government.

LifeSG (formerly Moments of Life) is one of the Strategic National Projects under Singapore’s Smart Nation initiative. Aimed at providing a suite of services to support citizens’ needs at key junctures by integrating and bundling services across government agencies. It was first made available as a mobile application in June 2018 to support families with young children below six years old.

In relation to LifeSG for example, they are experts of method, not of subject. Playing the role of *player coach*. They start out projects by doing research and ethnographic studies. **This is again**

the human centrality being translated into concrete action. They realize that their work is not just design thinking anymore, they do a lot more organizational development recently. So the vehicle of change becomes the organization, and aligning everyone with a common image of success.



Screenshot of LifeSG website

Their role will change going forward, and they see themselves become more of a center of excellence in the future. Their value-add is in the oversight and overview of projects. They can play the role of “convener” - connecting teams together. **Since they might not have the domain expertise required for some projects, they can also play the role of insider-outsider, like MindLab, so they are civil servants working together.**



A public service center in Singapore

They have also worked on Public Service Center, where government services can be accessed through a single physical and digital touchpoint. This kind of initiative requires different agencies to collaborate, and they spent considerable time prototyping, testing and learning.

Their team has few designers, and they believe in getting diverse opinions both within and outside of the team. They believe anyone can be creative, so it's not so much about having more designers in government. It's more about teaching empathy, but the process of design thinking helps people work in the right direction.

He believes the most important thing is to do it and experience the process, that's the main thing a design education offers. So even without one, people just have to try it a couple of times to reap the benefits.

All domains are potential for design approaches, as long as it's not applied to clear and obvious solutions. Works well in bringing together different agencies. **What design does in this regard, is to unite people around the user experience and imagining from there.**

Design approaches are best suited for helping them solve wicked problems, i.e. they recognize that

- They don't have the one true definition of the opportunity/problem.
- Every stakeholder has their own definition, and that the definition itself will change, as they learn more.
- They need to invest time to learn more about the context the problem sits in.
- They need to discover new kinds of data in order to think more creatively.
- Finally, they can never prove that any particular solution will actually work in practice, until they try it.

They want to follow through (**much like the stewardship Dan Hill mentioned**), even though they tend not to be solution owner. They use "jobs to be done" as a guidance for delivery teams afterwards. **This is akin to the hand-off that PolicyLab in UK does.**

Yu-chen Chen, Jiun-yi Wu

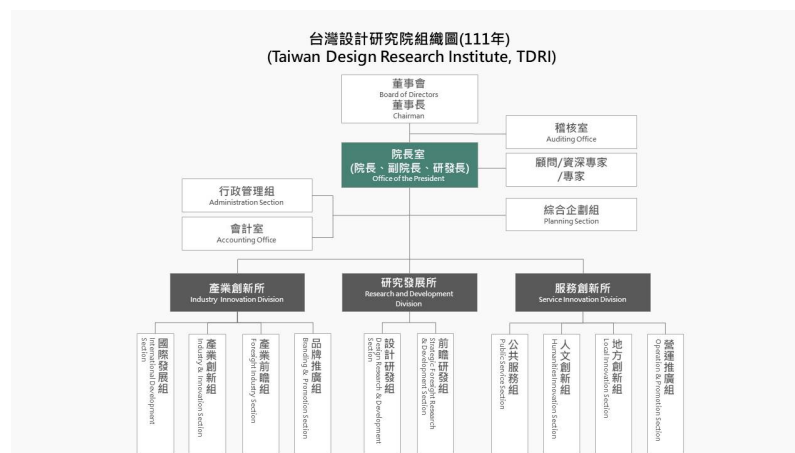
Deputy Group Leader

Analysis Comments in Orange

TDRI is a fairly big organisation with 150 people. Almost half of these are designers and design researchers.

They have been working to promote the role of design. **This is similar to the original mission of the Danish Design Center.** They recognize that this is a trend globally. They want to use design to increase Taiwan's international competitiveness, especially because they have very few natural resources. The president even said in 2019 that they want to move from Made-in-Taiwan, to Designed-in-Taiwan. This is move towards greater "soft power". They began by pushing design's industrial applications, but have since branched out to policy and organization - intangibles.

They have three missions: supporting innovation and promoting cooperation, supporting corporate innovation and becoming a platform for young people to start businesses from.



TDRI organizational chart from their website

They work in a variety of fields, and they engage different teams of theirs, depending on the needs of the project. **This highlights a centralization of expertise, which can be called on as needed.** They work at every stage of the design process, including creating guidelines to organizations so they can increase knowledge of design. **This points to an effort of extending the mindset around design, to enable teams to be self-sufficient.**

TDRI promotes inter-organizational collaboration and understanding. A shared language around needs, which arises from doing projects, also creates a positive cycle outside of TDRI as time goes by.

They have added design to the basic curriculum of new civil servants, so they are prepared to innovate when they start working. They offer both beginner level training as a seminar, and more advanced training as a workshop, where the potential uses of design in the public sphere is discussed. They have a case-library and museum that they can draw on for public sector training. **Capturing and sharing learnings are important activities when promoting and showcasing what design can do over time.**

They are doing work around defining the values that design bring, outside the traditional scope of branding and profits. Values such as user satisfaction and environmental impact are important to take into consideration going forward.