

COPENHAGEN BUSINESS SCHOOL

MSc in Social Science - Organizational Innovation and Entrepreneurship

# MASTER THESIS

## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DESIGN THINKING RECOMMENDATIONS IN SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF SHORT-TERM DESIGN PROJECTS IN NONPROFITS

### Supervision

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Student number: 115365

Submission Date: September 16, 2019

Number of characters: 173,291

Number of pages: 76 pages

## **I. Acknowledgment**

First and foremost, I would like to the designers and nonprofits managers that gladly agreed to participate in this research study. I highly appreciate the time and effort that they dedicated to our conversations.

Moreover, I would like to thank my supervisor, Sverre Raffnsøe, for supporting me during the process and giving me advice throughout the journey.

Lastly, I would like to thank all my fellow students from the OIE program at CBS, professors, friends, and family who supported me not only during the master thesis period but also all over the two years of my master's degree.

## II. Abstract

The vast majority of nonprofit organizations lack the financial or human resources to leverage the design principles to solve organizational challenges or boost their social impact. Commonly, small nonprofit organizations access the benefits of the design practice through short-term, pro-bono collaborations with designers that, most of the time, finish just after the solution has been prototyped and tested. However, the implementation of those solutions remains as a sole activity of the nonprofit staff. As a result, there are several design collaborations in nonprofits where a solution was designed, but it never came to fruition as it never achieved full implementation.

This study aims to identify factors that designers should consider when participating in short-term design collaborations with nonprofits in order to secure the implementation of the given recommendations. The present research study adopts a qualitative research method in the form of a multiple case study. Based on a review of the literature on the main discourses of design thinking, design in social organizations and organizational design legacies, and the construction of a conceptual framework based on interviews with experts in the field, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants of four short-term design collaborations in Belgium and the United States of America.

Five factors were identified to have a strong influence on the possibilities of implementing the design recommendations produced in short-term collaborations between designers and nonprofits. The analyzed factors were the area of intervention of the design project, the outcome definition process, the level of engagement of key decision-makers, the level of organizational understanding, and the external stakeholders' analysis. Therefore, those factors should be considered by designers before and during the design process. Furthermore, designers could benefit from adopting or adapting techniques and tools from other disciplines to enrich the design process and therefore improve the possibilities of achieving a successful implementation of their recommendations. Lastly, further research is needed to identify additional factors that could influence the implementation of design recommendations in short-term projects.

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## 1. Introduction

Design thinking is a methodology that allows organizations to generate innovative solutions to meet their main challenges and seek a competitive advantage. Hence, when design principles are applied to strategy and innovation, the success rate for innovation dramatically improves. Design thinking has been widely used by a wide variety of organizations and among the types of organizations that have used design practices are private companies, public sector entities, and nonprofit organizations. While design thinking has been used relatively broadly in the for-profit sector, there is still a large area of opportunity to use this methodology in nonprofit organizations.

There are numerous use cases where social nonprofit organizations use design thinking. A few examples found in literature are in product design (Kolko, 2015), organizational design (Anand & Daft, 2007; Worley & Lawler, 2010), social innovation (Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Hillgren, Scravalli & Emilson, 2011), technology development (Orlikowski, 1992; Pinch & Bijker, 1987), information technology (Dorst, 2011), education (Dunne & Martin, 2006; Dym, Agogino, Eris, Frey & Leifer, 2005), among many others.

Most of the cases mentioned above refer to nonprofit organizations of a relevant size that have enough financial resources to afford the cost of design thinking. However, the vast majority of nonprofit organizations lack the financial or human resources to leverage the design practice and principles to solve organizational challenges or boost their social impact.

One way I have identified smaller nonprofit organizations have been able to access the benefits of the design practice is through short-term collaborations with designers (professional or students). The nature of these collaborations has the following elements: (1) short-term: with no more than one month of duration, (2) pro bono: designers do not charge for the service, (3) project-specific: based on one or more design disciplines such as graphic design, service design, interaction design, among others, and (4) one-time collaborations.

These collaborations results to be a win-win situation in which, on the one hand, nonprofits get the professional help otherwise, most likely, they would not be able to afford, and on the other hand, designers have the opportunity to give back to the community by using the skillset they have acquired over years of professional experience. Furthermore, I have also identified that most of the time these collaborations finish just after the solution has been tested by the designer, but the

implementation of that solution remains as a sole activity of the nonprofit staff. Nevertheless, there is a large number of design collaborations in nonprofits where a solution has been designed but never comes to fruition as it never gets implemented. Last year, in fact, I had the opportunity to participate in two of these collaborations taking the role of a designer. Both collaborations fulfilled the four characteristics mentioned above, and they also finished after the solutions have been tested, presented, and accepted by the nonprofits. However, both solutions have not been implemented by the nonprofit organization.

The fact that design recommendations coming from these short-term collaborations fail to be implemented represents a waste of resources that designers and nonprofit organizations could have used more efficiently. There could be several reasons why design recommendations never get implemented, and there are many factors that could influence that. Research in this area would help solve a practical problem from an academic perspective. Hence, this study aims to investigate the following research question:

Which factors influence the implementation of the recommendations given by designers in short-term design projects with nonprofits, and how do they influence?

In order to answer the research question, the following five sub-questions have been developed:

- Sub-question 1: How does the area of intervention influence the likelihood of implementation in a short-term design project in nonprofits?

Short-term design collaborations focus on different design disciplines such as graphic design, service design, among many others. Thus, it is crucial to understand if the area of intervention affects the possibility of implementing the design recommendations.

- Sub-question 2: How does the outcome definition process occur in short term design projects in nonprofits?

This sub-question is essential in order to find out in what manner the first stage of the project develops and what impact it has on the implementation stage after the designer finishes his/her contribution.

- Sub-question 3: What are the elements that most influence the engagement of key decision-makers in short-term design projects in nonprofits?

Design process methodologies usually point out the importance of engaging with relevant decision-makers in order to achieve a successful project outcome. Hence, it is pertinent to identify how can this be achieved in short-term design projects.

- Sub-question 4: How does the organizational understanding process look like in short-term design projects when design is used at the periphery of the organization?
- Sub-question 5: How do designers analyze the external stakeholders of the organization in short-term design projects in nonprofits?

Sub-questions 4 and 5 are essential to comprehend the internal and external stakeholders of the nonprofit organization and the role they play regarding the implementation of the design recommendations.

The research study is structured as follows: First, I provide an overview of previous research on the main discourses of design, design thinking in social organizations, design in the organization, and the concept of organizational design legacies. Additionally, I complement this section by presenting a conceptual framework based on the previously mentioned topics and insights gathered from interviews with design practitioners. Then, I describe the methodology of my thesis project, which also comprises an in-depth explanation of the data collection and analysis. In this research study a multiple case study approach with a social constructivist and exploratory research design has been adopted. The next section presents the result of this study, firstly describing the findings of the individual case collaborations, and secondly, covering the general findings of the cross-case analysis. Finally, the paper continues with a discussion of the findings and terminates with a recognition of the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

## 2. Literature review

In order to develop the conceptual framework that guides this study, a review of contemporary literature and research studies is provided to the reader. The main theoretical focus of this study is the design discipline and its relationship with the organization. Thus, I provide a profound explanation about the central discourses of design as a research field, design thinking in social organizations, design in the organization, and organizational design legacies. The aim to cover this specific literature is to set the stage in which the phenomena analyzed in this study occurs. Furthermore, by reviewing previous research on design theory, it is possible to identify gaps in the literature that could be covered by the present study. Hence, it is possible to detect the investigations needed to be made into the topic of the implementation of design recommendations in short-term design projects. The literature review concludes with the derivation and illustration of the conceptual framework.

### 2.1. Main discourses of Design - Designerly thinking and Design thinking

Regarding design thinking literature, Johansson & Woodilla (2010) recognized two distinct discourses on design thinking: one in the design-based literature and the other in the widely accessible business realm. In this literature review, I briefly describe the main elements of both discourses. Then, I elaborate on their corresponding sub-discourses. Finally, I draw the similarities between the discourses to provide a solid ground for the present research study.

#### The two discourses: Designerly Thinking and Design Thinking

A structured way to discuss the design thinking discourse is through the following two distinct discourses described by Johansson & Woodilla (2010):

On the one hand, the first discourse is called ‘designerly thinking,’ which *“refers to the academic construction of the professional designer’s practice and theoretical reflections around how to interpret and characterize this non-verbal competence of the designers. Designerly thinking links theory and practice from a design perspective and is accordingly rooted in the academic field of design”* (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013, p. 123).

On the other hand, the authors labeled the other discourse as ‘design thinking,’ “*where design practice and competence are used beyond the design context (including art and architecture), for and with people without a scholarly background in design, particularly in management. ‘Design thinking’ then becomes a simplified version of ‘designerly thinking’ or a way of describing a designer’s methods that are integrated into an academic or practical management discourse*” (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013, p. 123).

### The sub-discourses of Designerly Thinking

The business discourse of design thinking developed over the last decade, while designers’ work and practice have been examined for the past 40 years. The designerly part of the design discourse forms an academic stream, with contributions from both professional designers and related disciplines. The aim has been entirely academic, either understanding for its own sake or for communicating such understanding to students.

Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya (2013) propose that theoretical perspectives of designerly thinking could be categorized into the following five sub-discourses:

- *“Design and designerly thinking as the creation of artifacts.*
- *Design and designerly thinking as a reflexive practice.*
- *Design and designerly thinking as a problem-solving.*
- *Design and designerly thinking as a way of reasoning/making sense of things.*
- *Design and designerly thinking as creation of meaning.”* (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013, p. 124)

### Design and designerly thinking as the creation of artifacts

This first sub-discourse comprehends Simon’s (1916–2001) understanding of design that incorporates all planned activities to create artifacts, and thereby differentiated it from natural science, social science, and humanities, but not engineering. Simon’s point of departure was that design is about creation, while other sciences deal with what already exists. Simon (1996) defines design as “*the transformation of existing conditions into preferred ones*” (Simon, 1996, p. 4). Due to Simon’s massive influence in the field, he is recognized as the foundational father of design research in the same way Taylor was for management research.

Regarding Simon's epistemological platform, he was critical of positivistic approaches both in economics and in design. Nevertheless, he created his argument within a neo-positivistic and rationalistic realm in order to have the positivists understand that their arguments were incorrect (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013).

### **Design and designerly thinking as a reflexive practice**

Originally a philosopher, Schön (1930–1997) held pragmatism as his theoretical frame of reference. Schön (1983) challenged design researchers and practitioners to reexamine the role of technical knowledge against artistry in developing professional excellence. From a design thinking perspective, Schön's main argument is a critique of Simon's cognitive perspective in the sense that Schön constructed a representation of the designer through a practice-based focus on the relationship between creation and reflection-upon the creation that allows for continuously enhanced competence and re-creation. Such consideration that Schön found in the work of architects and psychoanalysts became understood as the core of design work (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013).

Schön (1983) also studied management practice. Even though managers deal with decisions under uncertainty through intuition, they develop a fundamentally non-analyzable capacity for problem-solving through extensive and diverse practice rather than through reviewing theory or procedures. Managers reflect-in-action, nonetheless they seldom reflect on their reflection-in-action.

Differences between Schön and Simon's perspective of design have been debated extensively (Bousbaci, 2008; Dorst, 1997). However, in Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya's (2013) view, Simon developed an objective framework for the field of design, whereas Schön added more detail with descriptions of designers in practice.

### **Design and designerly thinking as a problem-solving activity**

Buchanan (1992) took a designerly viewpoint on design thinking, taking Rittel and Webber's (1973) wicked problem approach as an alternative to the widely accepted step-by-step model of the design process. While the traditional model comprehends two separate phases: an analytic step

of problem definition, pursued by a synthetic sequence of problem-solving, Buchanan (1992) proposes the problem formulation and solution go hand in hand instead of a sequence of steps. Additionally, Buchanan (1992) presents designers' professional way of thinking as a matter of dealing with "*wicked problems*" (Rittel & Webber, 1973), a type of social systems problems with a fundamental indeterminacy with no single solution and where considerable creativity is needed to generate solutions.

Finally, Buchanan (1992) offers four broad fields of design thinking as areas of interventions where problems and solutions could be explored: "(1) *symbolic and visual communications (or graphic design)*, (2) *material objects (or industrial design)*, (3) *activities and organizational services (or service design)*, (4) *complex systems or environments for living, working, playing and learning (or interaction design)*" (Buchanan, 1992, p. 9).

### **Design and designerly thinking as a practice-based activity and way of making sense of things**

Cross (1992) and Lawson (2005), both trained architects, described and reflected on practical cases of designers thinking and working. While Cross works from ethnographic research to disclose what designers do during the design process, Lawson relies on the psychology of creative design processes to develop his research knowledge into forms designers can leverage.

Cross and Lawson could be understood as part of the reflexive tradition started by Schön (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya's, 2013). However, their contributions are within a different sub-discourse: they are practice-based through presenting examples instead of taking a philosophical viewpoint. Both Lawson and Cross (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013) adopt abductive processes to make sense of and generalize from observations and hence, finding patterns that are grounded in the practical experience illustrated through practical examples. Lastly, both scholars suggest their models of the design process. On the one side, Cross (2011) illustrates it in a recursive depiction of the design strategy followed by creative designers. On the other side, Lawson (2005) presents it in a series of process-driven steps that try to describe the complex processes of designing.

## Design and designerly thinking as creation of meaning

Krippendorff (2006) defines design and designers' work as a matter of creation. Compared with Simon, Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya (2013) say that Krippendorff inverted the relationship between the design object and its intention. On the one hand, for Simon, the object is at the core, while meaning is an attribute. On the other hand, for Krippendorff, the meaning is the core of the design process, while the object *"becomes a medium for communicating these meanings"* (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013, p. 126).

Krippendorff concerns with the textual and intertextual matter of discourse, *'the artifacts it constructs and leaves behind... (and) the connections created between these artifacts'* (Krippendorff, 2006, p. 23). Design thinking concerns Krippendorff only when it creates knowledge that becomes part of the design community discourse. *"The primary aim of a discourse is to stay viable... to be kept alive within a community of its practitioners... [and] to justify its identity to outsiders"* (Krippendorff, 2006, p. 24).

Krippendorff's uses the term science for design as *"a systematic collection of accounts of successful design practices, design methods, and their lessons, however abstract, codified or theorized, whose continuous rearticulation and evaluation within the design community amounts to a self-reflective reproduction of the design profession"* (Krippendorff, 2006, p. 209). The linguistic roots of Krippendorff's approach to meaning-making differentiate it from the roots of the practice of Lawson and Cross (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013).

Verganti (2009) extended Krippendorff's contribution to innovation processes, arguing that innovation in meaning is as significant as technological innovations which are typically associated with the concept of innovation (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013).

## Comparison of the five discourses of Designerly Thinking

Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya argue that these five discourse streams could be integrated into three: *"creating a single practice-based approach by combining the frameworks of Schön, Buchanan, and Lawson and Cross, and placing 'designerly thinking in practice' in contrast to the rationalized, systematic study of design by Simon, and the meaning-creation of Krippendorff's*

*hermeneutic approach*” (2013, p. 126). However, they also suggest that further theoretical investigation is needed to connect the three approaches in a meaningful and coherent manner.

Founder	Background	Epistemology	Core Concept
<b>Simon</b>	Economics & political science	Rationalism	The science of the artificial
<b>Schön</b>	Philosophy & music	Pragmatism	Reflection in action
<b>Buchanan</b>	Art history	Postmodernism	Wicked problems
<b>Lawson &amp; Cross</b>	Design & architecture	Practice perspective	Designerly ways of knowing
<b>Krippendorff</b>	Philosophy & semantics	Hermeneutics	Creating meaning

**Table 1: Five discourses of designerly thinking**

### Design thinking within the management discourse

Researchers consider design thinking within the management discourse as less robust and thoughtful than contributions to the designerly thinking discourse presented and reflected on by academics over several decades. Even though design thinking is much younger than designerly thinking, it has proliferated. In one manner, design thinking may be a way for managers to comprehend design in a more upfront way than through the design management discourse, developed on managerial terms.

After design management started as a scholar area in the 1970s, designers taught design as an aim to help management practitioners and scholars to comprehend the design concept and its relevance. The designers discussed design in managerial terms, recalling Porter (Olson, Cooper & Slater, 1998), considering design as a metaphor (Leidtko 2000), or through accounts of successful cases (e.g., McCullagh, 2006). Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya (2013) agree that this approach using the management discourse might be comprehensible. However, the result was probably counterproductive as such positivistic descriptions deprived design of its constructionist and contextualized meanings.

Nonetheless, the design-based “designerly thinking” and the management-oriented “design thinking” discourses act in the opposite direction. Both discourses start with the designers’ way of thinking and invite managers to participate in this world rather than the other (Cooper, Junginger & Lockwood, 2009). Additionally, some academics highlight differences between the two

discourses and suggest ways to coordinate (Martin, 2007). As a result, managers became curious about designers' way of thinking on the designers' terms.

Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya (2013) argue that the 'design thinking' concept became a platform for the whole design community to contribute to innovation, and design thinking enabled innovation to surpass strategic management as a way to cope with a complex reality. Design as a strategic tool was introduced in 1984 (Kotler & Rath, 1984). However, it was not until 20 years later when academics started any continued discussion (Fraser, 2007; Junginger, 2007; Martin, 2007) including wicked problems (Camillus, 2008) and design thinking (Brown, 2009; Holloway, 2009).

The arguably novel popularity of the "design thinking" concept has to be understood from an innovation perspective. The concept considers the design practice and the way designers make sense of their craft as a way of thinking that non-designers could also apply (Johansson & Woodilla, 2009), instead of being limited to professional designers as Schön might argue. The latter could be one of the critical reasons for the recently gained popularity of the concept (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013).

Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya (2013) proposed the following three different origins of the design thinking discourse in the management area:

- *"Design thinking as the design company IDEO's way of working with design and innovation.*
- *Design thinking as a way to approach indeterminate organizational problems and a necessary skill for practicing managers.*
- *Design thinking as part of management theory."* (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013, p. 128)

### **Design thinking as the design company IDEO's way of working with design and innovation**

Tim Brown, IDEO's CEO, labeled the concept design thinking, as a way of describing steps in the design process, and providing stories to help everyone apply IDEO's tools and methods, particularly social innovators and business people (Brown & Wyatt, 2010).

Even though Brown's stories about the application of design are persuasive, there is no published theoretical framework/evidence other than his description of the circular and iterative process. Indeed, there are links between the IDEO's discourse of design thinking and the designerly discourses previously described, although Brown does not explicitly reference them. Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya (2013) suggest that perhaps the experience of designers and non-designers working with the design process inspired Brown to affirm that everybody could do it just by following the proposed steps.

Finally, following the same stream of literature, many articles published by the Design Management Institute (DMI) (Lockwood, 2009, 2010) communicate the same general idea, to make the practices of designers more accessible and relevant to managers. Most of the time, DMI's ideas lack the necessary theoretical grounding. Nonetheless, at least they provide insightful narratives and lists of best practices that readers may want to try for themselves.

### **Design thinking as a way to approach indeterminate organizational problems and a necessary skill for practicing managers**

Roger Martin proposes a closely related, but very different discourse to IDEO's discourse. Martin used the concept of design thinking to reconceptualize his earlier models (Martin, 2009), and encourage teaching management students how to do design thinking (Dunne & Martin, 2006). Martin positioned his arguments within the context of management, using examples of company successes, returning to the same companies to exemplify his model of the knowledge funnel, and emphasizing the demand to use the right and left halves of the brain (Martin, 2009). Thus, Martin's contributions gained widespread acceptance among practitioners

Design thinking in this discourse developed into a way to approach unidentified organizational problems, a necessary skill for practicing managers, and therefore a necessary component of management education. At the same time, Martin's argument has been stripped of the "chaotic" designer's approach, and thus detached from connections with IDEO.

Attributable to Martin's broad influence as author and speaker, different disciplines have acknowledged design thinking as a useful process. In the management field, Martin has influenced work in strategy (Fraser, 2007), and organizational change and development (Sato, Lucente, Meyer & Mrazek, 2010). Also, he has inspired the creation of a design thinking toolkit for managers

(Leidtka & Ogilvie, 2011), although the same authors later remarked that designers should lead the process for achieving better results (Leidtka & Ogilvie, 2012).

## Design thinking as part of management theory

Richard Boland and Frank Collopy, academic researchers and professors in management information systems, propose a third use of the term “design thinking.” Boland & Collopy's (2004) design thinking (and attitude) perspective points closer to Martin's, as the authors argue more towards cognitive characteristics rather than towards design as a way of working with distinct characteristics (as stressed in the IDEO discourse). Moreover, Boland (2004) introduces the construct “managing as designing” by arguing that managing is very similar to designing in their more general characteristics: like art, it is all but a rational process.

## Comparison of the three management discourses of design thinking

The following table, proposed by Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya (2013), summarizes the main attributes of the three management discourses of design thinking.

Originator	Audience	Discourse Character	Academic Connections	Relation to Practice
IDEO design company (Tom Kelley & Tim Brown)	Company managers (potential customers)	IDEO success cases (written for managers)	Grounded in experience rather than research Connections to innovation research	Kelley: How ‘we’ (IDEO) do design thinking Brown: how anyone can use design thinking
Roger Martin	Educators (academics & consultants) Company managers	Success cases from production companies used to illustrate theory development (managerial thinking)	Grounded in cognitive science & management science Builds on planning theories (‘wicked problems’)	How successful production companies do design thinking How ‘any’ company (manager/individual) can do design thinking
Richard Boland & Fred Collopy	Academic researchers & educators	Short essays where established (management) scholars apply their theoretical perspective to the design area	Grounded in individual researchers’ own theoretical perspectives Inspired by Gehry’s architectural practice or contact with design	Design thinking as analogy & alternative

**Table 2: Main attributes of three management discourses**

Following a literature review focusing mainly on practice-based research, it is possible to identify additional frameworks that synthesize the field of “design thinking.” For example, Hassi and Laakso (2011) determined that the concept of design thinking in the management discourse entails three

elements: (1) a set of practices, (2) cognitive approaches and (3) mindsets. Furthermore, Rylander (2009) compares design thinking and knowledge work discourses and considers design thinking as practice-based knowledge, open-ended problems, the social identity of celebrating creativity, and visual forms of dominant sensemaking modes.

Moreover, Kimbell's (2011) literature review identified three alternative ways of describing design thinking: first, as a cognitive style of individual designers engaged in problem-solving, second, as a general theory of focused on taming wicked problems, and third, as an organizational resource for any organization in need of innovation. The author proposes studying the behaviors and routines of designers and offers a useful way to reconceptualize design thinking.

### **The relation between “designerly thinking” and “design thinking”**

Designerly thinking and design thinking denote a reality that is not a coherent and discrete practice, which is far from standardized. Nevertheless, it becomes the basis for generalizations, descriptions, and theories developed in both discourses (Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya, 2013).

Based on Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya's analysis (2013), the designerly discourse is a more academic discourse, where authors quote each other, either as supporters or in opposition/as alternatives. However, two of the design thinking discourses are written and targeted for a managerial audience, where convention does not require strict referencing to previous research. Therefore, scholars need to treat much of what is presented in the design thinking discourse as anecdotal, rather than theoretically or empirically based. For some authors, design thinking is interpreted as a translation of designerly thinking into a popularized, management version.

Finally, Johansson, Woodilla & Çetinkaya's conclude that two dimensions are noticeably absent when translating “designerly thinking” into “design thinking”:

1. Design thinking is often related to creativity. However, being creative is only one part of the practice and competence of the designer's work.
2. Design thinking is often related to a toolbox. However, the individual using the tools must have the knowledge and skill to know when to use them.

## 2.2. Design thinking in social organizations

The vast majority of literature in design thinking focuses on for-profit organizations and how they can benefit from the design practice. However, social organizations have also claimed to embrace design thinking as it helps them create social value at large (Kummitha, 2018). Lately, academics have started to focus on how social organizations, such as nonprofits and social enterprises, embrace design thinking to generate inclusive societies (Kummitha, 2018; Seelos & Mair, 2007). Not surprisingly, as I mentioned in a previous section, one of the first references in the literature affirms that design thinking is convenient to address wicked problems (Simon, 1969). Hence, social organizations increasingly find design thinking appealing to achieve their goals.

Simon (1969) argued that design thinking is the most appropriate approach to transform societies that suffer from wicked problems by adopting innovation and mobilizing communities. Therefore, design thinking does not only benefit customers and producers (Veryzer & Mozota, 2005) but also positively impact society and its environment on a grand scale (Papanek, 1971).

Researchers such as Simon (1969) and Jones (1970) emphasized the importance of design thinking in finding solutions for wicked problems. Even though they did not limit the practice of design thinking to any particular organizational type, design thinking researchers presented it as a strategy to foster product and service creation, and improve delivery in for-profit organizations, while there was minor attention on understanding the design characteristics in social organizations (Kummitha, 2018).

Nevertheless, recent literature proves that social organizations have started to implement design thinking as part of their innovative efforts to generate social value (Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Dorst, 2011; Kummitha, 2017). Due to the localized practices and democratic ownership structure of social organizations, they embed design thinking practices and operate to benefit communities (Kummitha, 2018).

There are numerous use cases where social organizations use design thinking. A few examples found in literature are in product design (Kolko, 2015), organizational design (Anand & Daft, 2007; Worley & Lawler, 2010), social innovation (Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Hillgre, Scravalli & Emilson, 2011), technology development (Orlikowski, 1992; Pinch & Bijker, 1987), information technology

(Dorst, 2011), education (Dunne & Martin, 2006; Dym, Agogino, Eris, Frey & Leifer, 2005), among many others.

Regarding the particularities in the way social organizations use design thinking can be recognized on how they identify end-users' problems in their real-life environment and develop innovative solutions to boost social value (Bayazit, 2004; Dorst, 2006; Johnson, 2004). Social organizations, such as nonprofits, often engage in ethnographically inspired approaches that help them understand the different perspectives grounded in the context in which the problems exist (Karpen, Gemser & Calabretta, 2017). Also, Sanders & Stappers (2008) link this process to the co-design and co-creation principles, in which social organizations and communities come together to achieve collective results (Gemser & Perks, 2015; Gugerell & Zuidema, 2017).

Finally, two different streams of literature elaborate on how designers and users come together to engage in design thinking. On the one hand, the first stream emphasizes that design thinking is an activity rooted in the co-creation principle, where users actively engage in the process when designers initiate a design activity (Gugerell & Zuidema, 2017). On the other hand, the second stream claims that designers gather knowledge from potential users in their local context and then develop the desired solution (Zahra & George, 2002).

### 2.3. Design in the organization

Simon (1969) was among the first scholars to establish a connection between designing and the problems of managing and organizing. He identified that designing always involves changing a thing or situation and that *"design like science is a tool for understanding as well as for acting"* (Simon 1996, p. 164). Since then, research has been conducted into managing as designing (Boland & Collopy, 2004); into organization studies as a science for design (Jelinek, Romme & Boland 2008) and into how the principles and methods human-centered interaction design apply to organizations. However, there are still only a few tools and approaches for managers and designers to develop, assess, and appropriate design thinking and design methods to organizational problems (Junginger, 2009).

Furthermore, Junginger (2009) argues that *"the assessment tools available tend to assume that 1) design skills and design activities do not exist or do not take place within organizations in the*

*absence of design professionals; 2) that design in an organization refers to, is linked with or depends on the design of traditional products—i.e., goods for sale to an external market—and 3), each model makes the same assumptions for all organizations, even though organizations differ widely in their size, complexity, and aims.” (Junginger, 2009, p. 2).*

## **Existing tools for assessing the role of design in the organization**

Junginger (2009) presented the Design Ladder and the Design Management staircase as tools for assessing the role of design in the organization. Additionally, she developed a model to achieve a similar function but going a step further.

The Design Ladder by the Danish Design Center (DDC) assigns a company one of four levels of “design maturity” based on their attitude towards design. The four levels are:

- no design: design has little importance in the development process;
- design as part of the process design: design is treated not only as a result but also as an integral part of the beginning of the development process;
- design as style: design is only associated with the form the product takes;
- and design as innovation: designers work closely with the organization and participate in the innovation processes.

Junginger (2009) argues that the Design Ladder is a useful and valuable tool for product designers to discuss the role of design as part of a product design project.

The Design Management Staircase was developed by Design Management Europe (DME) as a self-assessment tool for organizations to rank themselves from one to four along two dimensions: firstly, on the place it assigns design management (no place; project level; functional level or across organization) and secondly, on how the organization utilizes design management. This second dimension allows for a more in-depth organizational analysis of design management: level 1 - is it used as a process?; level 2 - does the organization have design management expertise?; level 3 - are resources made available to design management; and level 4 - is the organization overall aware of the benefits of design management?. The Design Management Staircase is a useful tool in the context of traditional product development, more specifically, product design.

The Design Ladder and the Design Management Staircase assume the role of design in the organization to be that of a problem solver (Junginger, 2009). Also, both models do not contemplate general organizational problems that might be addressed by design thinking and design methods. These organizational problems often fall into the category of wicked problems (Buchanan 1992) and are currently being explored by researchers in management and organizational studies through the lens of designing.

Rather than offering a matrix or a hierarchical grid, Sabine Junginger (2009) proposes a visual tool to explore four locations where design thinking and design methods can take place in organizations (Figure 1). The tool indicates that design thinking can be found in different locations within an organization. Junginger (2009) also argues that only a few organizations know at any given point in time where, when, and how they are making use of design. Consequently, many design efforts remain detached and fragmented, rather than working in harmony towards a common purpose.

Junginger (2009) describes these four places as archetypical since other locations are of course, possible. The tool aims to expand people's notion of design and shift the emphasis away from the traditional realms of design activities towards those that have a more profound impact and superior involvement of the organization. It is evident from the model that each location assigns design a relationship to the organization, either as a portion or as a whole. The four places might be understood sequentially.



Figure 1: Locations where design thinking can take place in organizations

## Design on the organizational periphery: an add on

The most common location for design in organizations is on its periphery. In this case, design thinking and design activities are not central to the organization and take place separately from operational activities (Junginger, 2009). Design thinking is maintained at a distance and treated as an add on: a resource that can be called upon or dismissed. For example, this is the case when an organization decides it needs a new logo and hires an external designer to create one. Hence, the working realm of this designer is defined by the logo. Contrarily, product development occurs in a distinct realm due to the purpose of design is to create a fit with the external markets and target groups (Junginger, 2009).

Design as an external resource also has consequences for the designer's ability to generate change within the organization. The product is the one that changes, but the organizational framework, the frame that allows for inventions, often remains untouched and therefore unchanged. When the design capability is regarded as a resource, the collaboration between design and the organization tends to establish as a contract (Oakley 1984). Moreover, while Oakley finds that *"once a brief has been issued to an outside design group, the scope for amending errors is much reduced,"* (Oakley 1984, p. 61) it also highlights that design does not have a significant role within the organization itself. Research by Perks, Cooper & Jones (2005; p. 119) confirms that *"in this characterization, it was found that design sticks to a functional silo, it is ring-fenced and highly controlled."*

## Design as part of an organizational function

Another commonplace for design is to be part of one or two organizational functions, such as the engineering or marketing department (Junginger, 2009). Frequently, when design embeds as a part of the organization, it exists a significant divide between the in house designers and the rest of the organization. It is not rare to find "the creatives" in a drastically different setting from "the bureaucrats" or "the administrators." The difference being a set of office cubicles for the serious and important day to day business operations and management, while the design team is protected from any normative influence and is encouraged "go wild" maintaining a creative and inspiring environment (with ping pong tables, beach balls, among others). This kind of situation sends the signal that creativity belongs to professional designers and has no relevance to the entire organization (Junginger, 2009).

Once more, the organizational framework remains a given constraint that is out of reach of design thinking and design methods. Design activities generally remain limited to traditional products and services, yet with a greater focus on their specific departmental impact and organizational strategy. Design as a part of an organizational function creates a space for design thinking within the organization and thus introduces possibilities for design to influence and shape the organization (Junginger, 2009).

### **Design at the core of the organization**

A distinct third location for design in the organization is at its very core. In this way, design has access to the organization's leadership team and therefore, can directly influence the organization's overall strategy (Junginger, 2009). From this central position, it can unify products and services and has a substantial impact on the organization. Hence, the vision and purpose, the structures, resources, and procedures of the organization can be openly challenged. The boundaries for design thinking and design methods are specific organization-wide problems, for example relating to customer service or corporate design. Regularly, this role of design implies a system of products and problems of interaction.

Furthermore, in this location, design begins to shape aspects of the organization and has the potential to transform. John Rheinfrank (1993) elaborates on three different aims of design transformations: 1) developing, 2) optimizing or 3) metamizing a product. Lastly, design visually integrates products and services into a coherent whole. Though, it often fails to reach into the organization itself (Junginger, 2009).

### **Design as integral to the organization**

From this location, design thinking and design methods move beyond unifying products and services to reach deep into the organization (Junginger, 2009). The organization is no longer a given framework in which design has to find its place. Instead, the organization is being challenged, formed, and shaped by constant design inquiries.

The role of design is to discover and formulate solutions for all kinds of organizational problems. It involves uncovering and shifting fundamental assumptions, beliefs, norms, and values. Also,

when design is an integral part of all aspects of the organization, it generates the principles, methods, strategies, and products that make an organization valuable, usable, and desirable to the people it is aiming at serving (Junginger, 2009).

Moreover, managing and designing are no longer treated as functions that apply to different organizational realms. Alternatively, organizational problems, ranging from sustainability to the design of human-centered products and services, become a focus of design thinking and design methods (Junginger, 2009). Lastly, an organization that has made designing an integral aspect of its day-to-day detects system disconnects, understand when and where customers get lost, how and why procedures conflict, what structures work and which fail, but more importantly, it works on fixing the situation by reorienting itself around the people it serves (Junginger, 2009).

Junginger (2009) argues that the four places do not assign or represent values of good or bad; low or high. They only let people reflect on why and how design might be best used at organization x or for project y. The illustrated bubbles aim to represent macro-level design issues, for example, exploring the roles and relationships of design in the organization or micro-level design issues, where the model can serve to explore the specific ways in which a particular organization utilizes design thinking and design methods (Junginger, 2009).

## 2.4. Organizational Design Legacies

Junginger (2015) proposes that service designers need to pay particular attention to design legacies that already exist in organizations – those design principles, methods, and practices that are deeply ingrained in organizational life, instead of trying to embed design in it. These design legacies need to be enunciated, visualized, and engaged with to generate real change in the organizations. Junginger (2015) elaborates on why and how design is part of the organizational identity. Also, she introduces the concept of organizational design legacies and discloses its three elements: organizational purpose, organizational design approaches, and organizational design practices. Lastly, she encourages service designers to initiate design conversations to engage organizations in high-level transformational thinking around their design activities.

Organizational design legacies can be defined as *“practices people take on from previous generations”* (Junginger, 2015, p. 213). Such practices are transferred from one employee to

another, from one management team to another, from one CEO to another. As managing is connected to designing, organizational design practices tend to be molded or influenced by specific management approaches. For instance, programs like Total Quality Management (TQM) establishes particular criteria for decision-making and thereby promote different design criteria and design outcomes.

Junginger argues that management approaches reinforce that: *“(a) organizations are concerned with design issues on a regular, if not daily basis; (b) designing is a core organizational activity and (c) rather than finding organizations void of any design thinking and design doing, service designers are bound to encounter many forms of design legacies”* (Junginger, 2015, p. 15). Therefore, an organization’s everyday management and operational practices are reflections of underlying design principles that emulate previous design decisions referred to as design legacies. This phenomenon is more evident in organizations that have been in business for years. Hence, the challenge for service designers is *“not to embed design but to disentangle and to articulate existing design legacies and to enable an organization to establish new relationships among its core organizational activities managing, designing, changing and organizing”* (Junginger, 2015, p. 213). Consequently, Junginger (2015) distinguishes three design elements that form the design legacies: organizational design purpose, organizational design approaches, and organizational practices. First, Organizational purpose refers to the motivation for why an organization exists. Next, organizational design approaches specify the values that drive an organization. Lastly, organizational design practices address how designing takes place within a given organization. In a nutshell, the elements of an organizational design legacy concern what, how, and why designing matters to an organization.

Considering design as a core organizational activity and recognizing organizational design legacies can help service designers in several ways (Junginger, 2015). Instead of entering the organization to fix what is wrong, designers need to find ways to link their design work with the ongoing design activities of an organization. Rather than bringing design into an organization, service designers can assist organizations in advancing their design practices by exploring alternative design approaches and by developing a design attitude (Michlewski, 2008). Doing so can generate new paths for co-designing and co-creation across an organization. Additionally, it can aid design consultants and other external design experts to set realistic expectations about what they can change and what they are prepared to engage with.

Finally, Junginger presents how to work with design legacies. She proposed design conversations and conversation pieces as ways to invite, engage, and enable people to reflect on their own experiences and knowledge to think differently about organizational purpose, organizational design approaches, and organizational design practices.

## **2.5. Conceptual framework**

To structure the research project, I have used a conceptual framework based on the insights gathered from interviews conducted to three experts in the field and personal experiences from short-term design projects. The three experts in the field of design which I have interviewed for this research study are:

Matthew Schwartz. Nonprofit Brand Strategist and Experience Design Expert. For over 20 years he has helped nonprofits, foundations, and educational organizations achieve greater impact by partnering with them to better articulate their brand's mission, values, and strategies. He is the Executive Director of the design firm Constructive, a social impact design agency that helps large nonprofits & foundations advance their missions through brand experience.

Sarah Obenauer. She is the founder and Director of Make a Mark a nonprofit organization, headquartered in Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA, that gathers designers and developers to work on visual communication and graphic design projects for nonprofits in 14 cities around the world. Sarah and the Make a Mark team have developed a three-step process in which the organization selects and forms teams, plans meetings, and organizes a 12-hour design and development marathon. Then, designers are able to produce what the nonprofits ask need.

Frederik Vincx. Experienced service designer with more than 15 years of relevant experience in the field. In the first six years of his career, he worked for big brands at communication agencies in Belgium. Then, Frederik started his own software service company called Prezly, which makes tools for communication teams (AB Inbev, IKEA, KBC, Samsung, Toyota). After exiting Prezly in 2016, Frederik took a sabbatical year in which he collaborated on a pro bono basis with four nonprofits in Belgium through design projects.

A conceptual framework is a structure that researchers believe can best explain the nature of the phenomenon to be studied (Camp, 2001). It is the researchers' clarification of how to explore the research problem. The conceptual framework demonstrates an integrated way of seeing an issue under investigation (Liehr & Smith, 1999) and makes it easier to specify and define the concepts within the problem of the study (Luse, Mennecke & Townsend, 2012). Miles and Huberman argue that conceptual frameworks can be *"graphical or in a narrative form showing the key variables or constructs to be studied and the presumed relationships between them"* (1994, p.18).

The conceptual framework offers many benefits to researchers. For instance, it assists researchers in constructing their worldview on the phenomenon to be explored (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Moreover, it is the simplest way for researchers to present their solutions to the defined problem (Liehr & Smith, 1999). It also emphasizes the reasons why a research topic is worth studying, the assumptions of the researchers, the scholars they agree or disagree with, and how they conceptually ground their approach (Evans, 2007). Furthermore, Akintoye (2015) postulates that conceptual frameworks are frequently used by researchers when existing theories are not sufficient or applicable in building a firm structure for the study.

Conceptual frameworks can be constructed in different ways. Generally, the framework not only should assist in providing orientation towards the various components of the phenomenon but also to establish a shared vision of the area of interest. In this study, the conceptual framework has the role of creating order and showing different aspects that could have an impact on the implementation stage of a design project. Likewise, it investigates the anticipated relationship between the design process and the potential success or failure in its implementation. This approach explicitly supports the empirical part of this study and very generally takes into consideration the reviewed theories and the practical experiences of experts in the field.

## Derivation of the conceptual framework

Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework suggested in this study. The model attempts to fulfill the following two criteria: firstly, it covers the most recurrent topics mentioned by the interviewed experts. Secondly, it should be flexible enough to allow for additional insights. Hence, the proposed conceptual framework examines the relations between (1) the area of intervention of the design project, (2) the goals definition process, (3) the level of engagement of key decision-makers, (4) the level of organizational understanding that designers achieve, and (5) the external stakeholders' analysis that designers conduct, aimed to identify factors that could explain and improve the likelihood of implementation of the design recommendations.

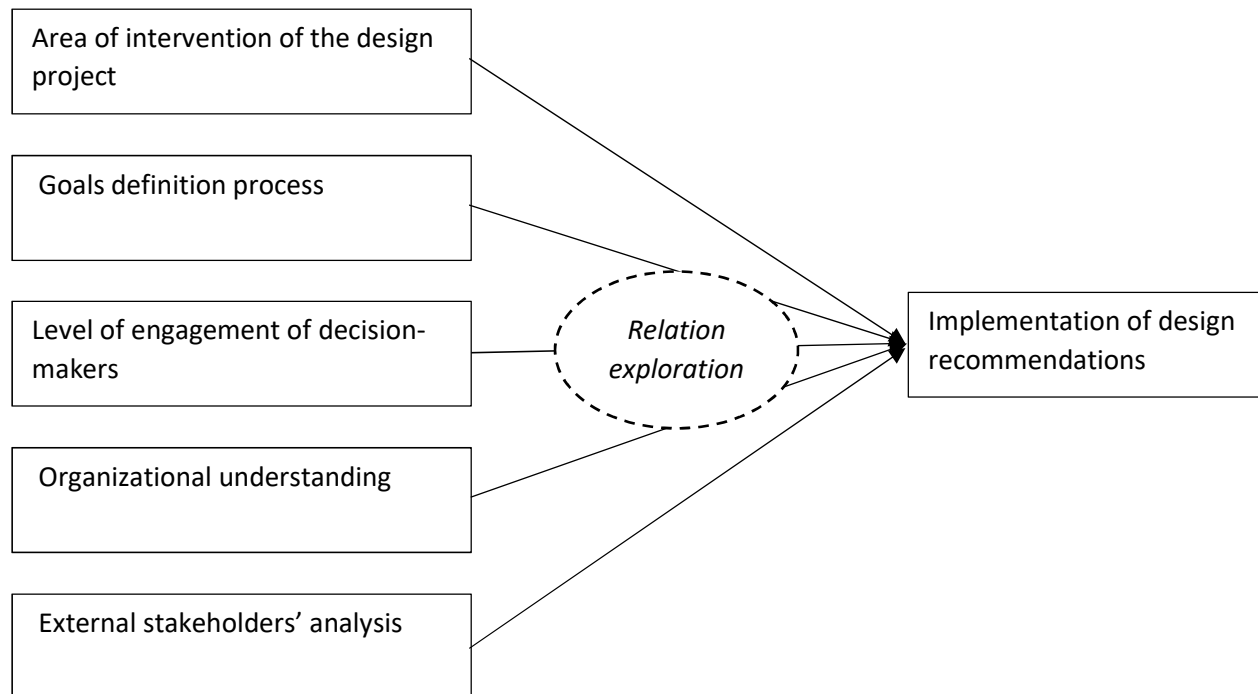


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

Firstly, the area of intervention of the design project refers to the four broad areas proposed by Buchanan (1992) in which design is explored throughout the world by professional designers and by many others that may not necessarily regard themselves as designers. Furthermore, the concept of design as an external resource (Junginger, 2015) plays a significant role in understanding how relevant the design discipline is in the development and completion of the design project in short-term collaborations when design is seen as an add-on.

Secondly, the goals definition process considers not only how designers and nonprofit managers have agreed on goals and deliverables for the design project, but also the scope and scale of these goals. Based on interviews with experts, this resulted to be an interesting area of study as there is no one size fits all process for this activity.

*“So we might have scope and scale out where we might just realize, maybe not this time, we can't do this. So it really starts there, the site leaders getting a really good understanding of what the nonprofits actually want. And then from there, when we do the planning meetings, then we can get into the weeds of what that looks execution wise for the makers. So we do like walking away with what are your ideal deliverables”* (S. Obenauer, personal communication, June 17, 2019)

*“Similarly, initial KPIs and then for impact measurement would be ideal that goes hand in hand with having a specific thing that you have come to solve, making it an important thing, but then also asking of the organization to have these clear metrics, so you have this baseline. And that is your challenge”* (F. Vincx, personal communication, May 6, 2019)

Thirdly, the level of engagement of crucial decision-makers refers to the degree to which key decision-makers participate in all relevant phases of the design process. The interviewed experts acknowledged the importance of key engaging decision-makers in the design process in order to secure its implementation.

*“Clients can be very protective of this type of relationships. I think it's foolish. Like, if you trust us to do all this work and come up with something, you should probably trust us to work directly with your board to explain it, discuss it. Otherwise, you're going to be charged with translating what we say and very well may not be as good as we are at not only*

*describing it, but responding to questions that people might have and to convince people that's a good idea"* (M. Schwartz, personal communication, July 12, 2019).

*"When we're interviewing them, we want to make sure that the person that we're interacting with is prepared with the project, that they have the final say, that they are decision-makers, they can make the call. And I think that's also a key to implementation because if they're not the person, then they really don't have any control over saying you can do this or this is what I like. And then making sure that they're the person or will be directly working with the person that will be implementing it"* (S. Obenauer, personal communication, June 17, 2019).

Fourthly, the level of organizational understanding that designers achieve considers how knowledgeable the designer is about the internal dynamics of the organization, their design legacies, and the capabilities and resources that the organization counts on. The concept of organizational design legacies (Junginger, 2015) contributes to the comprehension of how designers analyzed the internal structures of the organization in order to deliver a solution that would match the organizational culture, capabilities, and practices.

Finally, the external stakeholders' analysis that designers conduct considers how designers evaluate the potential contribution and impact of participants outside the core activities of the organization. Usually, the analysis that designers conduct over external systems focuses on seeking for potential solutions. However, one expert elaborated on a more holistic approach to analyzing external actors to the organization.

*"Well, the partners would happen to be somebody who has the authority to approve or decline the project, right, because very often partners will be like, an organization has partners they work with, but the work is about connecting better with those partners or supporting those partners that are being they don't see them authority from them to do the work. So you know, very often you're engaging some of those external systems, the network of partners, and such as a sort of a discovery process, you might actually interview them, talk to them about their relationship to the organization you're working with, right?"* (M. Schwartz, personal communication, July 12, 2019).

### 3. Methodology

After reviewing the relevant literature and analyzing their main aspects, I noticed that the research field of short-term design projects in nonprofits had not explicitly been investigated. However, I was able to develop a conceptual framework aimed to guide the research process.

The selection of the right methodology is critical. Therefore, this chapter states the methodological approach chosen to guide the research process. According to Yin (2003), this plan of action is scientifically known as the research design. The research design of the present thesis bases on the “research onion,” introduced by Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis (2012) displayed in Figure 3. By uncovering one layer at a time, it is feasible to develop a clear-cut research design.

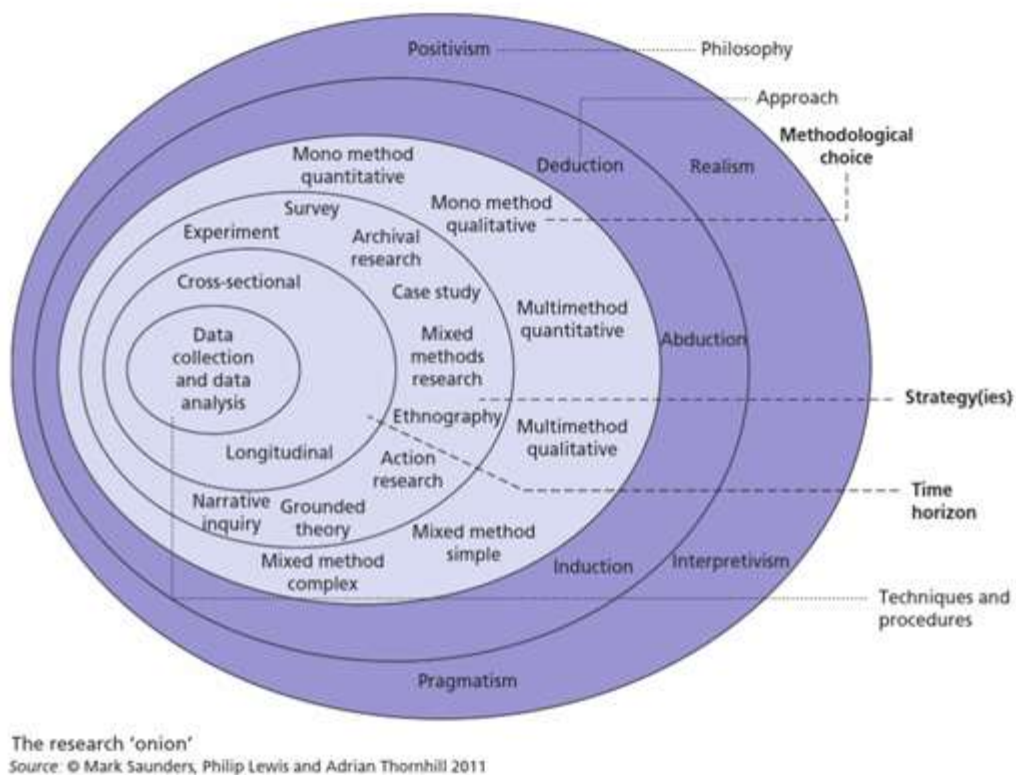


Figure 3

### **3.1. Research philosophy**

The research philosophy, the outer layer of the research onion, refers to the creation of knowledge and consists of important assumptions about the way the researcher views the world (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2012). The most common research philosophies are positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Although, it is outside the scope of this chapter to review all research philosophies and their rhetorical impact on the present study, each of these research philosophies is legitimate and cannot be objectively claimed as one better than the others. Each research philosophy is appropriate, to a varying extent, in answering different research questions in distinct situations. This master's thesis follows the epistemological approach of social constructivism, linked to the theoretical perspective of interpretivism (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2012).

Researchers who support the theoretical perspective of social constructivism believe that truth and meaning do not exist in the external world but are created by the individuals that interconnect within the world (Gray, 2013). Accordingly, individuals build their meaning in distinct ways, even about the same phenomenon. Additionally, proponents of social constructivism argue that reducing social phenomena to a series of law-like generalizations, like the research philosophy of positivism does, leads to a considerable loss of insights within our complex world (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Consequently, social constructivism is widely held to be more appropriate for the investigation of complex business phenomena, such as short-term design projects in nonprofits are, because those events have complex nature and depend on various factors.

Nonetheless, the greatest challenge for researchers that follow the idea of social constructivism is to access the social world of the research subject to understand it from his/her point of view (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2012). Regarding short-term design projects in nonprofits, my role as a researcher is to understand the subjective reality of the people engaged in such projects and building trust and rapport with the interviewees was essential.

### **3.2. Research approach**

Based on the social constructivist approach chosen and the fact that I have developed a conceptual framework, abduction seems to be the most suitable research method in that it seeks not only to

assess a conceptual framework but also to discover patterns and associations based on a socially constructed world.

Firstly, I considered both deduction and induction as the first options as those are the most common research approaches. On the one side, deduction is a top-down approach that aims to test a theory by having an assumed outcome in the form of a specific hypothesis or proposition. The studies using deductive inference move from general theory to data, which allows for high researcher-researched independence, while increasing the generalizability of the study. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). On the other side, induction is a bottom-up reasoning approach, which aims to gain a rich understanding of the context and the set of meanings that humans associate with it. The inductive approach has an exploratory nature and revolves around the researchers making sense of the patterns in the data, free from pre-study assumptions. The goal is to formulate a theory based on an analysis of the collected data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Nevertheless, it exists a third research approach, abduction, which integrates elements of both deduction and induction.

Instead of moving from theory to data (deductive) or from data to theory (inductive), the abductive approach moves back and forth, combining deduction and induction (Suddaby 2006). The abductive approach matches what many business and management researchers actually do. Abduction begins with the observation of a surprising fact (in this case the high number of short-term design projects in nonprofits that never get implemented); then, it works out a plausible theory of how this could have occurred (the proposed conceptual framework). Van Maanen (2011) notes that some reasonable theories can explain what is observed better than others and these theories will help uncover more surprising facts. These surprises, they argue, can occur at any stage in the research process. They also highlight that deduction and induction complement abduction as the corresponding approaches for testing plausible theories.

The fact that abduction incorporates elements of deduction and induction provides great flexibility during the data collection process. By using abduction, I was able to manage the research process in the direction that was needed. As a result, I could not only test the conceptual framework but also discover new ideas and expand the knowledge of concepts by moving from a particular experience to a more general set of propositions.

### 3.3 Methodological choice

Choosing the right research method is essential for investigating and responding to the research questions. At first, every researcher must decide between quantitative and qualitative methods. Then, the selected research method determines how the data is collected, analyzed, and presented.

On the one hand, quantitative methods use numerical data, such as numbers, graphs, and statistics to gather or analyze data. On the other hand, qualitative methods generate or use non-numerical data such as words, pictures, and observations to comprehend the meaning. However, quantitative and qualitative methods are not mutually exclusive and should be considered as two ends of a continuum. According to Teddlie & Tashakkori (2003), researchers can apply a single data collection technique (mono-method) or quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (multi-method) at the same time. Each of the data collection methods has its strengths and weaknesses, which must be evaluated and assessed within the context of the study (Smith, 1975).

For this research project, I have chosen a qualitative research method for investigating the topic of short-term design projects in nonprofits. Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis (2012) argue that qualitative methods examine participants' meanings and the relationships between them, using different data collection techniques and analytical procedures to develop a conceptual framework. Data collection is non-standardized, so that questions and procedures may adapt and emerge during a research process. Nevertheless, the success of the researcher's role is dependent not only on gaining physical access to participants but also by building rapport and demonstrating sensitivity to gain cognitive access to their data.

Furthermore, Maxwell (1998) states that qualitative methods are especially useful to enrich the meaning that participants give to specific situations, events, and actions in which they are embedded. By using a qualitative research method, I was able to investigate the context in which the analyzed design projects happened, the elements involved in these interactions, and the obstacles faced by its participants. The investigation was possible due to using data collection methods in the form of video-conference interviews and reports analysis.

Finally, qualitative methods are particularly suitable for complex phenomena. While complex problems/situations are still quantifiable, they need to be analyzed in its entirety to be meaningful.

By applying qualitative research methods, it is possible to divide complex phenomena into more digestible pieces that would facilitate the analysis process (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2012). Because of the complexity of the studied phenomenon, in which behaviors, meaning-making, and context are essential, a qualitative method is the most appropriate to use.

### 3.4. Research strategy

Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis (2012) define research strategy as *“the general plan of how the research will go about answering the research question”* (p. 136). An effective research strategy must be chosen based on the research question(s), the purpose of the study, the extent of available literature in the field of interest, the resource constraints (e.g. time, location, and money), and the consistency of the research philosophy (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2012).

Alternatively, Yin (2003) suggests a slightly different approach. From his point of view, the selection of a successful research strategy depends on three critical conditions: *“(1) the type of research question, (2) the extent of control an investigator has, and (3) the degree of focus on contemporary, as opposed to historical, events”* (p.12).

In general, the most common research strategies used in business and management studies are experiment, survey, action research, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative inquiry (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2012). As each research strategy has individual characteristics with their strengths and weaknesses (Yin, 2003), the criteria mentioned above serve as a guideline for choosing the most appropriate strategy for a particular research study. After reviewing the previously mentioned research strategies, I have selected the case study as the most effective strategy for guiding this specific research process. The following sections briefly outline this approach and justify its selection.

#### 3.4.1. Case study research

Yin (2003) defines a case study as *“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”* (p.13). In other words, case studies are utilized to comprehend a real-life phenomenon, especially when the phenomenon is not distinguishable from its context (Yin & Davis, 2007). Thus, a case study is particularly appropriate when

researchers wish to gain a rich understanding of context and process (Morris & Wood, 1991). A case study differs from an experimental research strategy in that experiments occur within a highly controlled context. Due to their characteristics, case studies are most often used in an explanatory or exploratory manner.

Furthermore, according to Dul and Hak (2008), a case study is *“a study in which one case (single case study) or a small number of cases (comparative case study) in their real-life contexts are selected, and the scores obtained from these cases are analyzed in a qualitative manner”* (p.4). Single case studies are widely used where there is an undeniably unique case. However, Yin (2003) argues that a small number of cases might be more beneficial to identify if findings of the first case also occur in other cases. Moreover, Yin (2003) claims that single case studies need to have a strong justification for their selection. For the present research, a multiple-case study was chosen as the most suitable research strategy because it enables the investigation of several cases to extract similarities and differences. As a result, I was able to identify factors that could improve or undermine the likelihood of implementation of short-term design projects in nonprofits.

Although case study research is a widely used empirical research approach, many researchers still question its legitimacy and still prefer research methods such as experiments and surveys (Yin, 2003). Yin has identified the lack of rigor, little basis for scientific generalization, prolonged duration, and production of too many documents as some of the most common prejudices and criticisms against case study research. However, the case study research strategy has become widely accepted in the social sciences (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003) and is proven to be a suitable tool when analyzing complex and challenging to study issues (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Furthermore, case study research creates thorough and holistic knowledge, which is rich in context. It also leaves room for complexity and diversity and thus exceeds in those terms overly simplistic research designs (Tellis, 1997). Lastly, it is possible to guarantee the quality of a case study by introducing construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability tests (Yin 2003). In section 3.8, I elaborate on how I have applied these logical tests in the present research project.

### 3.4.2. Multiple Case Study and Case Selection

One of the primary goals for case study research is theory building, which should be done by using a comparative research design for multiple cases (Eisenhardt, 1989). By adopting a multiple case study research approach, and thus focusing on extensive case study research, shared patterns and properties for the implementation of the recommendation given in short-term design projects in nonprofits has been developed.

An essential step after the conceptual framework development is the selection of individual cases for multiple case study research (Yin, 2003). In this research project, I have selected four cases according to theoretical and snowball sampling, as suggested by Patton (2002), in order to extend emergent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). All four cases represent partnerships between designers and nonprofit managers in short-term design projects. This unit of analysis sets the frame for the case selection for this research project. Purposeful sampling allows researchers to generalize the findings of the sample for a large population (Patton, 2002). The virtue of purposeful sampling strategies lies in *“the selection of information-rich cases aimed to gain in-depth insights for the findings of the research project”* (Patton, 2002, p. 169).

Aiming to have clearly defined units of analysis, I established the following criteria as required elements for each design project that I have analyzed. The partnership: I have selected partnerships in which: (1) design was introduced as an external resource, (2) pro bono collaboration, meaning no financial commitment, (3) short-term design project (less than one month). The nonprofit: I have focused on selecting nonprofits with the following three elements: (1) a successful track record, local recognition, and financial stability, (2) a lack of in-house design capabilities, and (3) no previous experience participating in a design process. The designers: Two elements were necessary: (1) professional designers had to be in charge of running the design process, and (2) they were not actively responsible for the implementation phase of the design project.

### 3.4.3. Justification of choice

The following section presents the main aspects that influenced the choice of case study research over other forms of research strategies. The present research strategy satisfies Yin's three criteria

(2003) for selecting the case study as the most appropriate strategy. In this section, I go through each criterion:

(1) The type of research question,

Following Yin (2003), a case study is preferred when the research questions take the form of “how” and “why” inquiries. This study attempts to answer the questions: (1) Which factors influence the implementation of the recommendations given by designers in short-term design projects with nonprofits, and how do they influence? (2) How does the area of intervention influence the likelihood of implementation in a short-term design project in nonprofits? (3) How does the outcome definition process occur in short term design projects in nonprofits? (4) What are the elements that most influence the engagement of key decision-makers in short-term design projects in nonprofits? (5) How does the organizational understanding process look like in short-term design projects when design is used at the periphery of the organization? (6) How do designers analyze the external stakeholders of the organization in short-term design projects in nonprofits? Therefore, as the majority of the questions start with the interrogative “how,” a case study strategy should be favored (Yin, 2003).

(2) The extent of control the researcher exerts over the actual behavioral event,

To fulfill this criterion, the research(er) should not influence the investigated behavioral event (Yin 2003). In the present research project, I could not control or affect the behavior of participants within the design teams or nonprofit organizations. Instead, I became an external observer of the case, and I appreciated the situation and its context. Lastly, I was not able to influence or manipulate any variable that could affect the data gathered.

(3) The degree of focus on contemporary issues.

Yin’s (2003) last condition for choosing a case study strategy is focusing on a contemporary event. Since short-term design projects in nonprofits are frequent events nowadays, and the selected cases are recent or even still in the implementation process, this condition for choosing a case study strategy is also satisfied.

Moreover, Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis (2012) argue that a research strategy must be chosen to fit coherently with the philosophical viewpoint of the study. As mentioned earlier, the philosophical position of this master's thesis is within the field of social constructivism which is compatible with qualitative case study research as it supports a method of inquiry where the researcher has a personal interaction with the case. The case study progresses through a relationship between the researcher and the interviewee/participant, and it enables the discovery and understanding of the context where the phenomenon exists.

### **3.5. Time horizon**

Regarding the timeframe of research studies, Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis (2012) distinguish between cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. A longitudinal study investigates the unit(s) of analysis over a period of time, while a cross-sectional study analyzes a particular phenomenon, across sectors or industries, at one specific point in time. Due to time and financial constraints, and the nature of the research questions, a cross-sectional study was conducted for the present research study.

### **3.6. Data Collection**

The data collection process is the primary source of input for developing and subsequently refining the conceptual framework. Thus, it determines the quality of the research to the most significant extent. In case study research, it is vital to structure data collection systematically to ensure validity in all respects (Yin, 2003). The next section elaborates on the transparency and consistency of the data collection process aimed to support the research.

Qualitative data were used in this research study to answer the research question and all five sub-questions. Firstly, I gathered primary data in the form of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with participants from each short-term design project. Additionally, participants (both designers and nonprofit staff members) provided secondary data, which was often useful as a supplement to primary research, in the form of organization websites, online articles, YouTube videos and design artifacts (Goodwin, 2012). Hence, I used both primary and secondary data for the analysis of this case study.

Qualitative interviews are widely used and accepted tools for gathering primary empirical data since they provide researchers with the possibility to discover new information about the topic of interest (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). For a research project based on a social constructivist approach, it is crucial to observe how human beings use the language to construct their reality. Therefore, qualitative interviews are the perfect match for this kind of study. As recommended by Yin (2003), I followed a case study protocol structure and prepared interview questions in advance in the form of interview guides. Two separate interview guides were used (Appendix 1): one to gather insights from designers and the other for nonprofit managers involved in the design process. The two interview guides allowed me to obtain a complete understanding of the different perspectives the participants gave to the same phenomenon (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The interview guides considered all the elements of the conceptual framework previously mentioned.

During the interviews, I have applied a social constructivist approach, which mostly focused on the interviewees' perceptions of the design process and its outcomes. A social constructive interview approach means that the interviews focused on how the designers and nonprofits managers understood and experienced the design process, perceived obstacles, and interpreted the success/failure in the implementation of the project. Thus, the interviewees were confronted with questions regarding their perception of their role in the design process, their level of participation, the analysis of internal and external stakeholders, how disruptive the proposed design idea was, and the assessment of organizational design legacies. The interviews were conducted and semi-structured with "what," "how," and "why" questions. Those were prepared in advance but allowed me to modify the wording and facilitate a more informal conversation (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Also, when some answers were not completely clear, it was possible to ask for further clarification. Hence, I was able to gather more in-depth and specific information. The questions ranged from open to closed and from simple to complex. All the interviews were recorded, which allowed me to take notes and write down observations during the meetings. Finally, I have conducted a total of 2 follow-up phone calls to clarify specific aspects of the conversations that needed further explanation, and I asked key participants in the research process to review a draft of the case study report.

### 3.7. Data analysis

#### 3.7.1. Individual Case Analysis

Data alone does not lead to theory building. Instead, it is through the creativity and intuition of the researchers that the data makes sense and, ultimately, knowledge is derived (Mintzberg, 1979). In a multiple case study, each case should be considered as an individual “whole” study, and each case conclusion requires replication by the other individual cases (Yin, 2003).

A detailed description is made in each case analysis in order to fully understand each particular case entity (Eisenhardt, 1989). By adopting a two-step process of analyzing the multiple case study, *“the unique pattern of each case can emerge before investigators push to generalize patterns across cases”* (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 549). Thus, in this research project, I have described each case individually, allowing an in-depth understanding of all case studies (design projects) as well as the behaviors and actions of their participants. Additionally, by having a rich knowledge of all individual cases, I could prepare the analysis across cases that was be the second step in the interpretation of this research project.

Moreover, Yin (2003) differentiates between 5 techniques for processing the raw data from case studies: *“pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis”* (p. 38). The approach best suited for this thesis is, in fact, a combination of two techniques. Firstly, based on the conceptual framework built from the literature review and interviews with experts, the pattern matching technique is appropriate as it allows comparing data with the elements of the model. By doing this, it is possible to extract patterns within each case study. Lastly, the analysis continues across the cases through comparative lenses, and thus, the second technique I used was cross-case synthesis.

#### 3.7.2. Cross-Case Analysis





One commonly used technique is to select specific categories or dimensions to look for similarities and differences between the cases. By analyzing multiple cases, the interpretation is likely to be more accessible, and the findings expected to be stronger than investigating a single case study. To contrast the findings of all case studies, I used the cross-case synthesis technique described by Yin (2003). The method is especially relevant if a research project consists of at least two cases as

it increases the probability of generating new findings and new theories. This technique treats each individual case study as a separate unit of analysis, which allows findings aggregation across a series of different studies.

When there is a large number of individual case studies available, case synthesis can incorporate quantitative techniques commonly used in other research syntheses (Cooper & Hedges, 1994). However, as the number of cases in this study is modest, alternative methods are needed. As suggested by Yin (2003), I have created word tables that display the data from the individual cases according to some uniform framework, in this case, the conceptual framework. By doing this, I could probe whether different groups of cases share some resemblance and deserve to be considered examples of the same “type” of general case, increasing the possibility of a typology of individual cases that can be profoundly insightful. Nevertheless, an essential consideration while *“conducting this kind of cross-case synthesis is that the examination of word tables for cross-case patterns will rely strongly on argumentative interpretation”* (Yin, 2003, p. 42), instead of numeric analysis. This is a challenge that I have considered while developing robust and fair arguments that are supported by the data.

### 3.7.3. Data list

The following table is a simplified list of the four case studies analyzed in this research project as well as of the various semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted. The table shows the nonprofit name, the founder’s name, the type of design project (area of intervention), the name of the interview and his/her position in the nonprofit/project, and the duration and type of the interviews. A transcript of each interview can be found in Appendix 2.

Nonprofit		Type of project	Interviewee	Position / Role	Duration	Interview type
	PIN supports Flemish municipalities with the integration of residents of foreign origin. They help newcomers find their way in local society.	Service design	Pepijn Hellebuyck	Nonprofit Project Manager	27 min.	Skype
			Frederik Vincx	Designer	32 min.	Skype
	Maks vzw has been encouraging residents from Brussels - with a focus on Kuregem and Oud-Molenbeek - to look for their talents and competences.	Service design	Veerle van Kets	Nonprofit General coordinator	38 min.	Skype
			Frederik Vincx	Designer	31 min.	Skype
	Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee is a nonprofit that works with parents, professionals and communities to provide education, resources and services that strengthen families.	Graphic design	Miranda Arstikaitis	Nonprofit Community Engagement Coordinator	37 min.	Skype
			Ian Taylor	Designer	28 min.	Skype
	Welcome Home of Chattanooga's mission is to provide shelter, healing and compassionate end of life care for those in need. They are a home for those with a terminal illness and have nowhere to go for end of life care.	Graphic design	Sherry Campbell	Nonprofit CEO	22 min.	Skype
			Sabie Crowder	Designer	24 min.	Skype
			Raffe Lazarian	Designer	35 min.	Skype

**Table 3: List of cases**

### 3.8. Quality of research

As the research design is supposed to represent a coherent set of statements, it is possible to assess the quality of any research design according to specific logical tests. To provide a framework for evaluation of the research process, the concepts of reliability, validity, and generalizability are essential in social science and business research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In empirical research, such as the case study approach, Yin (2003) suggests the following four tests to establish an appropriate quality for research studies: construction of validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. These four tests guarantee that qualitative research has been conducted scientifically and solidly.

#### 3.8.1. Construct Validity

Construct validity refers to the establishment of correct operations measures for the concepts being studied. According to Yin (2003) to construct validity, multiple sources of qualitative data need to be in empirical case studies. Therefore, in the present study, I have relied on the

triangulation of information as a means to gather multiple sources of data from the same phenomenon. I have achieved triangulation by interviewing both the designer and the nonprofit manager in charge of each short-term design project. Additionally, I have compared their interpretations of the event to written reports, websites, and design artifacts produced after the completion of the design projects. Furthermore, as suggested by Yin (2003), to construct validity, I had asked vital participants in the research process to review a draft of the case study report.

### **3.8.2. Internal Validity**

This logical test is only necessary for explanatory or causal studies and is relevant during the data analysis process. It refers to the establishment of causal relationships by which certain conditions are shown to guide others. As this case study includes elements of explanatory research, I have used pattern matching and cross-case synthesis, suggested by Yin (2003), during the data analysis phase. The literature review and hence the conceptual framework shows that the data collection and the interview guide were based on the theoretical construct of current research, which also provided the categories and code words for the individual and cross-case analysis

### **3.8.3. External Validity**

This logical test refers to establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized. To achieve external validity, the findings of a study should be generalizable beyond the scope of the individual case study to other industries, countries or cultural settings (Yin, 2003) and this tactic should be included during the research design process. The construction of external validity has been a significant problem when conducting case study research since critics state that this research strategy only provides a weak basis for generalizability. Notably, this kind of criticism focuses on single case studies. Therefore, this research study adopted a multiple case study design, that enables comparing the various design projects with each other and hence increases external validity.

Furthermore, a replication logic was fundamental when selecting cases and collecting data for each case study. This logic is analogous to the one used in multiple experiments (Hersen & Barlow, 1976). However, in multiple case study research, each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication).

#### **3.8.4. Reliability**

Reliability refers to demonstrating that the operations of a study, such as the data collection procedures, can be repeated, with the same results. Reliability aims to ensure repeatability and consistency in the research study (Yin, 2003), which means that if a later investigator conducts the same case study and follows the same procedures, he/she should derive the same findings and conclusions as I did.

Therefore, I explained each step of the data collection and analysis in the methodology part of this thesis to provide a reliable path to mimic this study. Additionally, during data collection, I used a case study protocol structure. In this way, a later investigator who would like to follow the analysis steps and replicate the findings of this research paper will be equipped with the necessary tools and procedures to do so.

#### **3.9. Limitations of methodology and data set**

The research study presents a few methodological limitations as well as a delimited data set due to the constrained time frame of this research study:

- (1) The analyzed case studies occurred at least 12 months before the interviews were conducted. The participants mentioned a few times in the interviews that they could not clearly remember all aspects of the collaboration. Hence, I was expecting a certain degree of loss of information of the researched phenomena. However, the possibility to interview at least 2 participants in each design collaborations contributed to gathering sufficient data to build a rich illustration of the cases.
- (2) The dataset of this study is delimited. The research context is the partnerships among designers and nonprofit managers for short-term projects. However, due to the tight time frame, only collaborations in two countries (Belgium and the United States of America) are in the sample. Thus, this study might be subject to a size bias. Consequently, it is for future research to confirm the findings in different countries and geographical regions. Likewise, a larger sample should be included to prove the research findings.

- (3) The interviews for this research study have been conducted in English as it was the shared language for both the interviewer and the interviewees. However, in the case of the interviewer and the participants of two case studies, English is not their native language. Therefore, a small loss of precision in the information provided by the participants might be expected.

## **4. Findings**

In the following section, I firstly introduce an in-depth individual analysis for each case study. Then, I present a cross-case analysis where I compare the four cases in terms of the area of intervention, the outcome definition process, the engagement of decision-makers, the level of understanding of the organizations, and the analysis of external stakeholders. Finally, I summarize the most relevant research findings of this research study.

### **4.1. Individual case analysis**

#### **4.1.1. Case study 1: PIN**

Every year there is a growing number of newcomers of foreign origin trying to establish in the Belgian region of Flanders. However, Flemish municipalities have a hard time helping newcomers to establish and integrate into Flanders, mostly due to language and cultural barriers between local municipalities employees and newcomers. Nonprofit integration hub, PIN bridges this gap providing support to Flemish municipalities with the integration of newcomers of foreign origin.

PIN's main project is called *toeleiders*. The *toeleiders* are committed people who have been living in Flanders for a few years and who help newcomers of foreign origin familiarize themselves with local society. *Toeleiders* speak both Flemish and the newcomer's language.

Due to the success of the initiative, many Flemish municipalities want to have *toeleiders* to assist in the integration process of newcomers. Thus, the team at PIN has been expanding quickly in order to satisfy the growing demand.

In order to manage growth, the PIN management team decided to partner with a professional designer in order to develop and adopt better internal and external communication tools that would help the organization to achieve its goals more efficiently.

Frederik Vincx was the designer in charge of leading this collaboration. He is an experienced designer with more than 15 years of relevant experience in the field. In the first six years of his career, he worked for big brands at communication agencies in Belgium. After that, Frederik started his own software service company called Prezly, which makes tools for communication teams (AB Inbev, IKEA, KBC, Samsung, Toyota). After exiting Prezly in 2016, Frederik took a sabbatical year in which he collaborated on a pro bono basis with four nonprofits in Belgium through design projects. The collaboration with PIN was the third project he worked on during this period.

From PIN's side, Pepijn Hellebuyck was appointed as the representative of the organization in charge of securing the success of the collaboration. Pepijn was the Project Manager of several initiatives at PIN, and he had been working in the organization for two years before the design collaboration took place. Pepijn has a background as a social worker and project manager in a couple of nonprofit organizations and has six years of experience in the field.

As mentioned by both Frederik and Pepijn, the first step of the collaboration was aligning expectations and agreeing on specific outcomes for the project. In addition to working on the communication tools project, at this stage, both parties decided to develop a solution aimed to improve how toeleiders share information with newcomers about practical things in their city. Due to the different nature of the projects, the first project was developed for four weeks in February 2017, and the second project for four weeks in November 2017. The Google Design Sprint methodology was used to guide both processes.

*"The aim of the project was to add general communication tools to improve communication and efficiency in the organization. And the other idea was to design a welcome conversation for newcomers in Belgium" (P. Hellebuyck, personal communication, June 19, 2019).*

*"Initially, I came to Pepijn and I said, Let's make something new. And he said, No, no, I also think it's very important that we work on workflow productivity and communication. That was a piece of the mismatch [...]. 50% of internal tooling and 50% on innovation. The*

*innovation project was to create a website for local communities, as a website for foreigners, for newcomers. Newcomers can find info about everything in their own language, all tailored towards their needs” (F. Vincx, personal communication, June 28, 2019).*

After successfully agreeing on the scope of the collaboration, Frederik began the design process for the first project by trying to understand the organizational dynamics and motivations at PIN. As mentioned by Pepijn, workshops, and feedback sessions were conducted to engage PIN collaborators in the design process.

*“We used this designing schedule from Google, I think. it was like steps and then we let everybody think what was possible. So, we put post its on the wall. I think everybody that was involved, me, the other board member, the director, the clients, and even also some workers. Then, we put some signs and then we had to vote for the ones we liked the most [...]. Yes, we have to have a small group from the staff organization and Frederik was coming to present his ideas or what we discussed with our team, and then he also had to work on teambuilding exercises every month, where he presented sometimes to the 50 people so they can give feedback” (P. Hellebuyck, personal communication, June 19, 2019).*

However, due to the constant changes and growth at PIN, Frederik reported that it was not possible to achieve a high degree of organizational understanding nor a high engagement level from all critical decision-makers in the organization.

*“There were two (one of them was Pepijn) main ones (decision-makers). They were at the same level. They (PIN) were still very small, but then they grew. And then these people came, and everything changed [...]. Few of the people that were new that came into more senior positions. They were not informed about the innovative trajectory that we had done.” (F. Vincx, personal communication, June 28, 2019).*

Regarding the analysis of external stakeholders during the design process, it is possible to confirm that no activities were performed in that respect. Nonetheless, the designer recognizes the potential value of including that analysis in the design process.

*“At PIN we used the Google sprint. And it starts with this map of the stakeholders, but it was more from a perspective of looking for solutions to build. It isn't for stakeholders mapping [...]. I've never made real a stakeholders' map to better understand the influence everyone had in there. Maybe just in my mind [...]. It makes sense to think about it in a structured way quickly. This is something you can just do at the beginning” (F. Vincx, personal communication, June 28, 2019).*

*“I don't think so (we did not analyze external stakeholders), not. Because this whole integration sector was completely new [...]. No, we were working independently” (P. Hellebuyck, personal communication, June 19, 2019).*

Finally, when it comes to project implementation, both participants agreed that the internal communication tools project was successfully implemented while the welcome conversation project (innovation) was not. Moreover, the respondents attributed organizational changes and growth, other priorities, and lack of a working prototype as the factors that most influenced the failure of the second project.

*“The first part, we (PIN) just started the new process, and he (Frederik) just showed the new tools, and then it was on to implementation [...]. The welcome conversation we didn't continue with that because it was not the right time and we were growing from 5 to 50 people so, everything had to change. So, there were other priorities, financial management, how to tackle the market. Then creating another tool that also need to be updated on a lot of content, it was extra work for us. And we didn't have either the competences or the time at that moment for it. So just had to slowly stop the project [...]. After this one month, we could not show them (potential customers) that the prototype was working” (P. Hellebuyck, personal communication, June 19, 2019).*

*“The first project was very useful, but the other one didn't work and it costs us a lot of money because we paid the programmer for one month and all these investments from our side, and there was no outcome” (P. Hellebuyck, personal communication, June 19, 2019).*

*“But I got them to hire someone for a month to help me with that money that they were going to give me. So we were two people, which was really handy to have a programmer. And he built this website for newcomers, the first version, a more mature version than the*

*prototype. They didn't do anything with it"* (F. Vincx, personal communication, June 28, 2019).

#### 4.1.2. Case study 2: MAKS

The nonprofit MAKS, founded in 1999, helps underprivileged people in Brussels improve their prospects for finding employment. MAKS designs innovative approaches to encourage young and older people to enhance their digital skills. Thus, the organization focuses on teaching pupils to become producers of ICT (Information and communications technology) rather than only consumers. Furthermore, MAKS provides specific services such as Coding school, Job counseling, Digital inclusion, and Graphic agency. Every year, MAKS reaches around 2500 users, most of them from disadvantaged groups, including around 500 job seekers.

MAKS acknowledges the power of storytelling and recognizes that allowing people to express their story helps them make more conscious choices in life. That is why they encourage job seekers and other vulnerable groups to create their digital stories.

One of MAKS's projects is the video CV, a multimedia introduction of jobseekers that they send along with their traditional CV, aiming to increase their chances of getting a job interview. During 2015 and 2016, MAKS had already experimented with many different formats of the video CV. Nevertheless, they were not satisfied with the results. Therefore, MAKS directors decided to partner up with a designer to review, rework, and test the video CV format to make sure that the organization could offer the jobseekers a truly valuable tool. The collaboration took place for four weeks in April 2017.

On the one side, the designer in this collaboration was Frederik Vincx. However, this was the last collaboration he worked on during his sabbatical and pro-bono year. On the other side, Veerle van Kets was the person in charge of MAKS to work on this collaboration. Veerle had been working for three years as the General Coordinator of MAKS at the time the design collaboration took place. Veerle has a background as a consultant, trainer, and coach in nonprofit and for-profit organizations, with experience of more than 35 years.

The project started with a specific and established goal, which was reviewing, reworking, and testing the video CV format MAKS had previously developed. However, in order to secure the

success of the project, the designer requested a meeting with Veerle to clarify some aspects of the scope of the project and ask for specific resources to MAKS. Hence, Frederik and Veerle agreed to assign a person responsible for MAKS to help Frederik in the process, and they also created a detailed agenda of workshops and feedback sessions for the whole process.

*“When I (Veerle) arrived back from holidays, Frederik was there sitting there and actually, we told that he would do something different [...]. We found out that what was intentionally asked wasn't working at all. So, we renegotiated that. And he (Frederik) said, Okay, no problem. And then, because you need very clear a project owner within the organization and that was me. So, we changed it for someone else from the team” (V. van Kets, personal communication, June 17, 2019).*

*“With MAKS, the main focus was on the project of the video CV. The whole project was about how to do a good video CV. How do we do it? Is it valuable? They (MAKS) came with the solution already. They wanted to try CVs [...]. We had a clear goal [...]. I got agreements from Veerle and all the team. Like okay, this is how you work. And then we did some workshops together figuring out the way they work. In this way, I got buy-in” (F. Vincx, personal communication, June 28, 2019).*

Due to the various workshop sessions, the devoted person from MAKS, and the fact that the designer spent 70% of his time in the same office as the rest of the staff, it was possible to achieve a high degree of participation from the internal stakeholders of the project. However, when it comes to the level of engagement of all relevant decision-makers in the organization, the results were not optimal. Frederik identified two internal champions in MAKS. Veerle being one of them. Veerle was totally engaged in the process. Nevertheless, Frederick acknowledged that the CEO of the organization, Veronique de Leener, was not engaged in the most relevant parts of the design process. Therefore, the designer could not obtain the buy-in from the most relevant internal decision-maker.

*“An important point is having internal champions to make sure that people can support your work. I had two internal champions, it was the CEO and there was Veerle. And I worked there all the time. We were sitting in different buildings. The CEO was the end responsible” (F. Vincx, personal communication, June 28, 2019).*

*"I couldn't ask much more time from her (MAKS CEO). She might have been abroad also. This worked fine. But maybe in hindsight, I would have tried to structure this feedback sessions to have her buy-in. Maybe having a kickoff meeting, having a meeting plan, a wrap-up meeting. Maybe beforehand, having a structure. Then, she would know that we would have this meeting and then we will do a review. Maybe that's something I would change"* (F. Vincx, personal communication, June 28, 2019).

Nevertheless, the designer was able to understand the internal dynamics in the organization through an immersion process that took one-third of the process. He also went through all the previous versions of the Video CV and tried to incorporate the learnings into the new product.

*"A large part in my process is immersion. Just sitting there, seeing people working there, talking with them. And I see people working and I have a tendency to listen what's going on and looking at what's going on on the screens. And I realized that what they were doing there was really inefficient [...]. Previously, they had already made a little video series at MAKS. And we looked into their big archive of video CVs"* (F. Vincx, personal communication, June 28, 2019).

*"He (Frederik) asked me a place to sit in the office, so he could hear and see what's happening also, you know, and he was really approachable for everyone. He didn't make any distinction, any hierarchical distinction. So, all that made everyone was confident with him, could talk openly with him. And he could pick up and see things, and he was there just available. He was there. I'm here for you, whatever you ask me. I will try to help you out"* (V. van Kets, personal communication, June 17, 2019).

Next, Frederik prototyped and tested an updated version of the video CV format. He gathered user validation not only from jobseekers but also from companies that could potentially employ job seekers that use the video CV format. In addition to that, the designer did not conduct additional analysis of external stakeholders that could potentially affect the implementation of the project.

*"The sprint approach kind of guides you to do a lot of user validation. These players are taking into account, although all of the stakeholders are not taken into account. Mostly internal stakeholders are included. So, one really big thing that we did early on is that we*

*went to visit maybe six possible employers and clients to test out video CV formats” (F. Vincx, personal communication, June 28, 2019).*

The result from that iteration was that the video CV became a video demo where jobseekers could show the skills that they list in their printed CV. Hence, this tool helps people with weak CV show their skills and motivation. Also, making the video demo prepares job seekers for an actual job interview. Furthermore, Frederik prepared a guide for the MAKS team to create new video demos. Subsequently, the MAKS team was applying for grants to continue developing the format further.

In the end, both Frederik and Veerle agreed that the implementation of the design recommendations was not successful. Veerle mostly attributes the failure in the implementation of the project to factors outside the designer’s control. For example, Veerle mentioned that the government suddenly changed its policies and that negatively affected her chances to obtain the necessary funding. However, she also admits that there was no follow-up from crucial players in MAKS after she left the organization.

*“The government changed its policies again. And now we had to see almost triple the number of persons for the same money. So, we depended on the budget and there was no time allowed anymore to the videos. We did it in a new program where we could find funds [...]. That (the implementation of the project) didn't work out very well. But that was just nothing to do with his (Frederik’s) intervention. It's not because we didn't understand it, or it wasn't accurate, that he didn't have any follow up. It was because of changes of government policies. The funding I couldn't find on the European level and when I left the team, I did put it in a new program, but the person who followed myself had some problems on that” (V. van Kets, personal communication, June 17, 2019).*

#### **4.1.3. Case study 3: PCAT**

Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee (PCAT) is a nonprofit that works with parents, professionals, and communities to offer education, resources, and services that strengthen families. PCAT community-based programs educate the public, in all 95 counties in Tennessee, USA, about the prevalence of child abuse.

PCAT's main programs are Support for parents, Crisis support & counseling, and Advocacy & education. The goal of each program is to reduce traumatic experiences resulting from unsafe adult behavior and environments that can weaken any child's foundation. The organization was founded 35 years ago and currently employs 60 people.

Within the Crisis support & counseling program, the Parent Helpline, a 24/7 toll-free helpline, answers parenting questions and supports parents seeking guidance on various subjects. PCAT counselors offer empathetic listening and encouraging words to stressed parents and caregivers. Moreover, PCAT counselors help explore solutions to the stresses of parenting and connect families with supportive resources in their community.

PCAT was looking to rebrand the Parent Helpline to make it more accessible to parents across Tennessee. As a result, PCAT partnered with Make a Mark to design numerous printed materials including magnets and posters, on top of social media pieces that would communicate the appropriate message and encourage parents in Tennessee to call the helpline when needed. A design collaboration was possible thanks to the Make a Mark program.

Make a Mark is an organization, headquartered in Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA, that gathers designers and developers to work on visual communication and graphic design projects for nonprofits in 14 cities around the world. Make a Mark has a three-step process in which the organization selects and forms teams, plans meetings, and organizes a 12-hour design and development marathon. Then, designers are able to produce what the nonprofits ask need.

In PCAT & Make a Mark project, Miranda Arstikaitis was appointed as the person responsible for PCAT to coordinate the design collaboration. Miranda works as Community Engagement Coordinator at PCAT, and she has been working in the organization for three years. Moreover, she has a background in Social Work with five years of experience in the nonprofits field. Miranda was responsible for applying to the Make a Mark program on behalf of PCAT and then overlook the design collaboration. From the designers' side, Ian Taylor was one of the team members that worked in the PCAT project. Ian has a background in Marketing with three years of working experience in the field, and he oversaw the creation of content for the social media campaign. Additionally, he developed an implementation and branding guide for PCAT.

The design collaboration started at the beginning of September 2018. Make a Mark representatives coordinated a meeting where both nonprofit staff, in this case, Miranda, and the designers' team, Ian and two other teammates, discussed not only the specifics of the deliverables for the project but also the background of PCAT. Both Miranda and Ian reported that they felt comfortable with the level of understanding they achieved after the meeting. The expectations were clear, the deliverables were specified, and the designers obtained a high understanding of the reality of PCAT.

*"I think the process was really smooth [...]. We (PCAT) also talked a lot about them creating just like things that we could edit. So, creating basic how everything was going to look, and then creating blank templates for us to fill in, to create more content [...]. They (designers' team) were pretty clear about what they thought they could get done" (M. Arstikaitis, personal communication, July 9, 2019).*

*"We (designers' team) met with a director (Miranda). And she told us all about the business, you know, the demographics. And basically, she explained to us what she wanted us making. The deliverables were very clear. Also, we had a few phone calls and kind of got organized to coordinate what we were aiming at in the actual make-a-thon [...]. They were wanting some social media stuff and some custom graphic design that they could include in the website and in a magnet, with some good design, you know, a well-designed magnet. They wanted some social media posts, and I believe they wanted some posters" (I. Taylor, personal communication, June 25, 2019).*

In between the preparatory meeting and the actual make-a-thon event (three weeks period), the designers' team maintained communication via email with Miranda in order to gather visual inputs and additional information of PCAT for the social media campaign. Therefore, the level of participation from PCAT staff in the process was rather low. However, the designers' team gained a high level of organizational understanding thanks to the preparatory meeting, follow-up questions, and information that the Make a Mark team handed into them.

*"I went and did the formal interview where they (Make a Mark team) asked questions, got a feel for us, what our needs were, what our mission was, and kind of build that one on one relationship just with Sarah (Make a Mark CEO) [...]. And so we brought kind of what we got to show them (designers' team) where we're coming from, what we wanted to change.*

*And then we also went through a list of things that we tried and didn't work, which I think was really important explaining that. We were lucky enough as we were coming with trial and errors. And so they were able to identify that we worked on this basic thing, this basic thing, this basic thing. So we're going to bypass all that, and we're going to go straight to this more creative idea, we're going to try these colors, this language, and we're going to really focus in our images. We talked a lot about what programs we have access to. So thankfully, PCAT provides the Adobe Suite, so we were able to use InDesign, Photoshop programs, which a lot of nonprofits don't use [...]. It was nice to have that back and forth about Okay, what are our strengths? Or weaknesses? What have we tried before? It was really great strategic conversation” (M. Arstikaitis, personal communication, July 9, 2019).*

Afterward, in the make-a-thon event, the designers’ team had the opportunity to work on the development of the social media campaign and the implementation and brand guide for PCAT. Miranda attended the event and had three 30-minutes “check-ins” with the designer’s team where she provided feedback about the first versions of the visual proposals. Miranda was the main responsible for approving or rejecting the ideas that were presented by the designers’ team. Miranda was the so-called champion in the process, and she was actively engaged in the process.

*“Yes, I was there to receive that, in addition to lots of other things. So, you know, it was me and one other person who wasn't able to be there who would really be making these decisions about what would be used, how it would be used, what the implementation process would be. So, I think that was good” (M. Arstikaitis, personal communication, July 9, 2019).*

*“I believe they would be the decision-makers, those ladies (Miranda and one more person from PCAT)” (I. Taylor, personal communication, June 25, 2019).*

Another recurrent aspect in the conversations with Miranda and Ian was that the designers had minimum interaction with internal stakeholders and no interaction with external stakeholders. All the information that the designers’ team required from those groups was gathered from emails or conversations with Miranda and her role as expert from PCAT.

*“So it's us so-called experts who would know how people would use it (the visual aids). And ours was so focused on parents, I think they (designers’ team) relied a lot on our*

*assumptions. [...]. We didn't talk about donors [...]. We talked a little bit about our grants and what our brand requirements are getting funding for this program. So that was probably one of the largest stakeholders that we talked about and, of course, parents being the big one” (M. Arstikaitis, personal communication, July 9, 2019).*

*“Pretty much, only the two ladies that were there. Any questions we had we directed through them [...]. I don't know if we asked about beneficiaries specifically, because the idea was to spread awareness. But we did ask about the caretakers, and actually they were able to come in, and share some fantastic stories of helping single mothers and helping people” (I. Taylor, personal communication, June 25, 2019).*

Finally, after the make-a-thon event happened, and PCAT had to come back and implement the social media campaign and the brand identity guide, it was evident that the implementation did not occur as expected. Ten months after the designers handed in the social media campaign plan, PCAT has not rolled it out yet. Miranda mentioned that the PCAT was not ready to operate the program (Parents Helpline) that they wanted to promote through the social media campaign. PCAT lacked the necessary funding to run the program.

*“We haven't fully rolled it out yet. Because like I said it, it fully identified a lot of gaps in the program, on our side, the communication side. So we definitely had to go back and rethink we just got a big question and actually being able to use these pieces to say, We need something new, look at all the work we've done, help us get the staff and the training, that we need to provide this at the highest level [...]. And we have stopped the circulation of all our old pieces. So, we're in that in-between where we are starting the implementation, so we're really excited that hopefully, by October, those pieces will be fully in circulation. So, we're really excited to use them. And all of them can be translated with our new services that we're going to be offering. So, I'm really excited. We just didn't want to blast that out knowing that we would get an influx of calls that we weren't prepared to handle. So now that we have such money people are really looking forward to getting calls. So I'm really excited” (M. Arstikaitis, personal communication, July 9, 2019).*

Although Miranda was satisfied with the social media plan she received, she also admitted that the Parents Helpline was not the right program, and that point in time, to promote through a social

media campaign. Definitively that was one of the critical factors in the non-implementation of the proposed solution.

*“I think that looking back knowing what we know now, we (PCAT) probably would have changed the project in the proposal. And I think that as we're thinking to next year, it's at the forefront of our mind of what do we have, that has a capability that has not been met its potential. Instead of something that was like, Oh, this has kind of fallen to the wayside”* (Miranda Arstikaitis, 2019).

#### **4.1.4. Case study 4: WHC**

Welcome Home of Chattanooga (WHC) is a nonprofit based in Chattanooga, Tennessee, whose mission is to provide shelter, healing, and compassionate end-of-life care for those in need. WHC operates as a five-bedroom home with trained staff and volunteers for people terminally ill who have nowhere to go for end of life care.

The organization was founded in 2013 when a group of six individuals of diverse backgrounds recognized a need to serve those who are terminally ill. WHC collaborates with local hospices that come in and provide professional hospice care. The organization has served over 25 individuals.

WHC identified the need to tell the real story behind death and dying, and to demystify the traditional myths about those topics through photos and a well-designed and strategized social media campaign. However, the organization lacked the in-house competences and the necessary financial resources to tackle this challenge. Fortunately, WHC was able to partner with Make a Mark to work on a visual communication and social media project in September 2018.

The person in charge of coordinating this project from WHC side was Sherry Campbell, founder and executive director of WHC. Sherry has a background in Social work with more than 25 years of experience in the field. Meanwhile, the designers' team was integrated by three members, two of them interviewed for this master's thesis. Firstly, Sabie Crowder is a Marketing Strategist and Graphic Designer. She has more than six years of experience working with for-profit small and medium-sized businesses to design materials, launch new companies, and tweak established brands. Due to her expertise, Sabie became the project manager of the Make a Mark team that collaborated with WHC. Also, she oversaw the development of the social media campaign for

WHC. Secondly, Raffe Lazarian has a background in visual communication and photography with 15 years of experience in the field. He has experience working in nonprofit organizations but mostly as a freelance photographer/videographer. Due to his expertise, Raffe focused mostly on generating visual pieces to be used in the design project.

It was the second time in which WHC and Make a Mark worked together in a design collaboration. Furthermore, this second collaboration aimed to build on the output of the previous one. Consequently, after the initial meeting, both WHC staff and designers initiated with a clear idea of what already existed and what should be done to complete the project.

*“We had two rounds with Make a Mark. Both projects were focused on increasing awareness about our mission, on developing visuals for people to see the work that we're doing. Okay. And then, you know, when people hear to talk about death and dying, they automatically think depressing ideas. So, we were trying to make our marketing work. We worked with the designers to help us create visual communication pieces [...]. Things were almost already decided at that time because they had a basis to start with. I think that when the designers came, they just saw what was already there and then did what was needed. And they were able to kind of take it to the next phase. They showed me their plan” (S. Campbell, personal communication, July 18, 2019).*

*“With this project, we were tasked with demystifying death. And helping Welcome Home be a place where people are comfortable talking about death and making it comfortable and easy and less of a scary topic [...]. The way I remember it is that Welcome Home was asking for social media content. So, what we landed on after meeting with Sherry for the first time was creating content in a calendar format for her and scheduling it out all” (S. Crowder, personal communication, July 31, 2019).*

Furthermore, having the opportunity to partner for the second time helped increase the level of organizational understanding. Sherry, who had been wholly engaged in both collaborations, reported that the Make a Mark staff had already met multiples times with them before the analyzed collaboration. Thus, both parties understood each other profoundly. Additionally, the new team of designers spent significant amount of time in the organization to gather visual content and learn how things work at WHC.

*“(The initial meeting took) probably an hour. But you know, Alex and Sarah (Make a Mark staff) had come for four meetings. And with the designers we also had that same conversation, what our challenges were and what we needed help with [...]. After our conversation, before the big reveal, they (the designers’ team) came to Welcome Home and took photos and interviewed people. And just kind of got a good feel for the place” (S. Campbell, personal communication, July 18, 2019).*

*“I went back and forth to their (WHC) house three times to stay a few hours at a time to shoot pictures and kind of talked to them a little bit. And then Christina, and Sabie, the graphic designer, they came out and interviewed a couple of people there just to get some background information and stuff. We interviewed people that started the house, employees and things like that. And then they just kind of after that, they just work on the text” (R. Lazarian, personal communication, July 30, 2019).*

One critical insight that the designers quickly gathered about WHC, it was the fact that the organization was low on resources and therefore, the path to implementing the social media campaign should be as less resource-intensive as possible.

*“One of the things that Sherry couldn't do with her budget and time and all of that was actually post it (the social media campaign). Like, sit down, take a picture, think about what to say, and then post it on social media [...]. Sherry relies heavily on volunteers, and there were not than many in Welcome Home” (S. Crowder, personal communication, July 31, 2019).*

*“We were looking at all the content. And we were just thinking, we didn't want to bring extra work to her plate [...]. I was there for three days or more. They're working very hard for no money. The environment is not healthy. Mentally is very hard. But I guess the goal was always just to create something to drive traffic. But the secondary goal was to have all of that happen seamlessly” (R. Lazarian, personal communication, July 30, 2019).*

Following the analysis of internal and external stakeholders in the project, as mentioned for both designers, it was mainly focused on gathering information from beneficiaries, board members, volunteers, and staff. The designers did not consider or find useful to engage with external stakeholders.

*"We did an interview and photos with founding donors. But no, we didn't speak to anybody that was not really in the organization. We didn't even think to ask [...]. I mean, probably not to the extent that you're asking, but like, the day of the make-a-thon, we pretty much pitched our thing to every other group. We were working on it and told them about it, explain it to them and asking for feedback" (R. Lazarian, personal communication, July 30, 2019).*

*"So I would have been open to other people being a part of it, but it didn't really cross our mind, we knew like since we got to meet with the people before make a mark at the house we had a good idea about what we were doing, who we were serving, then what they were saying about it. And maybe if we didn't meet with those people, we wouldn't have had a full view of that" (S. Crowder, personal communication, July 31, 2019).*

During the make-a-thon, the team of designers realized that they would be able, in addition to generating content and guidelines for the social media campaign, to schedule the posts for the social media campaign. Then, the designers proposed that idea to Sherry and she agreed to it. As a result, the designers had access to WHC's social media accounts and were able to schedule all the posts for the campaign. Lastly, the designers revamped WHC's website.

*"They did the social campaign for me. Like 60 days after I can't remember. Maybe for three months, they pushed out the social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram. So just went out naturally, I didn't have to do anything there [...]. then the last part, the brand-new website that they created for us, they cleaned it up and made it much brighter and lighter. That was implemented from day one, immediately after the event" (S. Campbell, personal communication, July 18, 2019).*

*"As far as knowing what we should do, I think she came to us, as most nonprofit directors are, she was very tired. Everyone had a great a lot of great ideas but can't implement them. And so that was our way of giving back and helping her get her time back. By going ahead and scheduling them. I think it was, you know, our plan was to give her calendar and the images and the copy and then ready to go. But we had more time and we could reschedule everything and take her days' worth of work. For us that was not a difficult thing. It just took time to sit down and do" (S. Crowder, personal communication, July 31, 2019).*

*“When we were looking at all the content. And we were just thinking, we didn't want to bring extra work to her plate, we just said, you know, we have the content and my part was done. We just said, why don't we just have me working on the posting and all that. We started drafting quotes and things like that. We had time left. And say why don't we schedule everything on Facebook. And then we still had time. So, what we ended up doing was, it's been a while, we updated the website. And then we created some graphic PDFs for her forms, like, you know, our clients fill out forms, they have like wills and stuff like that”* (R. Lazarian, personal communication, July 30, 2019).

In a nutshell, the implementation stage of this design collaboration was conducted successfully.

## 4.2. Cross-case analysis

After analyzing each case separately, a cross-case analysis has been conducted. The cross-case analysis is vital to identify similarities and differences between the cases, in order to draw conclusions and subsequently to extract general findings.

The cross-case analysis focuses on the five areas corresponding to the research sub-questions of this research study. First, I compare the area of intervention of each design project. Second, I elaborate on the outcome definition process in each collaboration. Third, I analyze the engagement of decision-makers. Fourth, I compare the level of organizational understanding that the designer achieved in the project. Fifth, I present similarities in terms of external stakeholders' analysis.

	PIN	MAKS	PCAT	WHC
Type of project	Service design	Service design	Graphic design	Graphic design
Clearly defined goals	✓	✓	✓	✓
Engagement of key decision-makers	✗	✗	✓	✓
Level of organizational understanding	Low	High	Medium	High
Analysis of external stakeholders	✗	✗	✗	✗
Implementation achieved	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 4: Summary of cross-case analysis

#### 4.2.1. Type of project – Area of intervention of the design project

Case	Type of project
PIN	<p>Activities and organizational services.</p> <p>Project 1. Development and adoption of general communication tools aimed to improve organizational efficiency.</p> <p>Project 2. Creation of a solution aimed to improve how toeleiders share information with newcomers about practical things in their city.</p>
MAKS	<p>Activities and organizational services.</p> <p>Creation of an updated version of the video CV format that the nonprofit had previously developed.</p>
PCAT	<p>Symbolic and visual communications.</p> <p>Rebranding of the Parent Helpline service to make it more accessible to parents. Creation of various print materials including magnets and posters, as well as social media pieces.</p>
WHC	<p>Symbolic and visual communications.</p> <p>Creation of a social media campaign aimed to promote the work of the nonprofit and to debunk the traditional myths about death and dying through photos and well-designed visual pieces.</p>

**Table 5: Word table – Type of project**

PIN and MAKS projects fall into the area of intervention of Activities and Organizational Services, proposed by Buchanan (1992), as they include elements of Service Design. Therefore, Frederik Vicx's background as a service designer was the right fit. Meanwhile, PCAT and WHC design projects fall into the Symbolic and Visual Communication area of intervention since they mostly focus on graphic design elements. Hence, Make a Mark designers expertise in graphic design and visual communications was aligned to each project.

Make a Mark only accepts to partner with nonprofits whose projects have to do with graphic design or visual communications, such as PCAT and WHC projects. Make a Mark consciously

decided to focus on those areas of expertise due to the founders' backgrounds and network. However, in the case of Frederik Vincx, he did not have a pre-established procedure to engage in design projects with a nonprofit. Nevertheless, he ended up partnering with nonprofits that had projects in which he could contribute based on his background and interests.

The background and expertise of the designers in all the projects were directly aligned to the nature of their corresponding design collaboration.

#### 4.2.2 Definition of goals and deliverables

Case	Definition of goals and deliverables
PIN	The collaboration started with a clear set of goals and deliverables for one project. Moreover, new goals and deliverables were established for a second project.
MAKS	Clear goals and deliverables were defined at the beginning of the collaboration.
PCAT	Clear goals and deliverables were defined at the beginning of the collaboration.
WHC	Clear goals and deliverables were defined at the beginning of the collaboration.

**Table 6: Word table - Definition of goals and deliverables**

All cases presented clear goals and deliverables since the beginning of the collaborations. In all four analyzed cases, designers emphasized the importance of starting the design processes with clear goals and deliverables to narrow down the scope and timeframe of the project.

On the one side, in the cases of PIN and MAKS, designer Frederik Vincx relied on his experience from two previous pro bono design collaborations where he missed to establish specific goals from the beginning of the project. He identified that when a project lacks a clear initial objective is natural that the designer ends up working on routinely activities that add minimum value to the organization.

*“You just get distracted. The first project I did in the school, in the first weeks I was just fixing printers. I had no idea what was happening. I just went in there and see what let's see what happens” (Frederik Vincx, 2009) 2*

The importance of establishing clear project goals is especially noticeable in PIN's project, where after identifying a second project within the collaboration, both the designer and the nonprofit staff quickly agreed on specific goals, deliverables, and timeframe. On the other side, for PCAT and WHC project, Make a Mark team had already developed a precise onboarding process which included the formulation of clear goals and deliverables before the beginning of the design projects. This onboarding process has been refined after 60+ design collaborations with different nonprofits around the world.

Finally, a common trait among all projects was that the goals and deliverables focused on the creation and testing of the design solution. However, no goal or deliverable was established concerning the implementation of the solution. Hence, it was implied that the implementation of the given solution was responsibility of the nonprofit staff.

#### 4.2.3. Decision-makers engagement

Case	Decision-makers engaged in the design process
PIN	Not all relevant decision-makers were engaged in the design process. One decision-maker was fully engaged in the project. However, due to constant organizational changes, it was not possible to engage additional board members in the relevant stages of the project.
MAKS	Not all relevant decision-makers were engaged in the design process. While one decision-maker was fully engaged in the project, the most critical decision-maker did not participate in the most relevant stages of the project.
PCAT	All relevant decision-makers were fully engaged in all relevant stages of the project.
WHC	The primary decision-maker was fully engaged in all relevant stages of the project.

Table 7: Word table - Decision-makers engagement

After comparing the level of engagement of key decision-makers in all the cases, it is possible to identify two main distinctions.

Whereas in PCAT and WHC projects, respondents stated that all relevant decision-makers were engaged in all relevant stages of the design process, in PIN and MAKs projects, decision-makers were not fully engaged in all relevant stages of the design process.

The factor that most influenced these results was the amount of time that the designer required to adequately engage all critical decision-makers in all stages of the process. In PIN and MAKs projects, the design processes included several workshops, feedback, and presentation sessions to which key decision-makers would need to attend in order to understand, participate in, and engage with the project. Due to, in part, the nature of both projects (organizational services) that require a high level of participation from the organization.

*“I couldn't ask much more time from her (MAKS CEO). She might have been abroad also. This worked fine. But maybe in hindsight, I would have tried to structure the feedback sessions to have her buy-in. Maybe having a kickoff meeting, having a meeting plan, a wrap-up meeting. Maybe beforehand, having a structure. Then, she would know that we would have this meeting, and then we will do a review. Maybe that's something I would change” (Frederik Vincx, 2019).*

Meanwhile, in PCAT and WHC projects, the amount of time that was required from decision-makers was limited to a couple of 60-minutes introductory meetings, requests of information from the designers' team, and attendance to the make-a-thon event. Therefore, it was easier for decision-makers to participate in all stages of the design process.

#### 4.2.4. Level of organizational understanding from the designer

Case	Level of organizational understanding
PIN	Low level of organizational understanding. Mostly due to constant organizational changes in the nonprofit.
MAKS	High level of organizational understanding.
PCAT	Medium level of organizational understanding. In general terms, designers gathered all relevant information for the project. However, the designers were not aware of the nonprofit's lack of resources to run the Parent Helpline program. Therefore, a social media campaign pointing to that direction would not be implemented.
WHC	High level of organizational understanding.

**Table 8: Word table – Level of organizational understanding from the designer.**

As mentioned earlier, in PIN and MAKS design projects included not only immersion as a way to understand the internal logic of the organization, but also a relevant number of workshops, feedback, and presentation session. Considering that, it would be expected that the designer achieved a higher level of organizational understanding in both projects. Nevertheless, in the PIN's design project, the level of understanding was low due to numerous organizational changes alongside the design process. Additionally, the fact that the second design project at PIN was conducted a few months after the first one made more evident the different reality of the organization since several new decision-makers had joined the organization and internal processes had also changed.

Meanwhile, PCAT and WHC respondents stated that a high level of organizational understanding was achieved in the design processes. On the one side, WHC proves to be a case of a high level of organizational understanding as it was the second time Make a Mark and this nonprofit partnered. Both organizations had already met several times and reported to feel comfortable working together. On the other side, however, in the PCAT project, the fact that the designers could not

figure out that WHC lacked the necessary resources to run the program they were asked to promote was a factor that negatively affected the likelihood of implementation.

### External stakeholders' analysis

Case	Analysis of external stakeholders
PIN	External stakeholders' analysis was not conducted in the design process.
MAKS	External stakeholders' analysis was not conducted in the design process.
PCAT	External stakeholders' analysis was not conducted in the design process.
WHC	External stakeholders' analysis was not conducted in the design process.

**Table 9: Word table – External stakeholders' analysis**

No designer conducted an extensive analysis of the nonprofits' external stakeholders. No designer found this element crucial to the completion of their respective projects. However, in at least one of the cases (MAKS), changes in external factors determined the non-implementation of the design process.

When the designers responded about how relevant they think it would be to analyze external stakeholders in a design project, they agreed that it would definitively improve the outcome of the project. However, they also agree that the short timeframe of these interventions makes it difficult to actually include it.

### 4.3. Development of research findings

To summarize, the findings from the individual and cross-case analysis function as the basis for the following research findings, which summarize the overall propensity identified from the individual case company and cross-case analysis data:

**Finding 1:** The area of intervention of a design project is decisive to its development and completion. More specific and operational design projects, such as graphic design, are easier to work with and implement in short-term design collaboration as they frame a clear set of boundaries in which designers can build a solution. Therefore, the outcome of graphic design projects results to be easier to implement, at least when compared to service design projects. Furthermore, designers tend to engage in design collaborations aligned to their realm of expertise. Nonetheless, they could also rely on their design training to participate in design projects outside their primary discipline.

**Finding 2:** Designers consider that establishing clear goals and deliverables since the beginning of a short-term design collaboration in nonprofits is essential for the success of the project. Designers and nonprofit managers develop goals based on the aim of the collaboration, the area of intervention (Buchanan, 1992), and the timeframe they have assigned for its completion. Thereby, designers have enough elements to plan the design process in order to finish the project promptly. Moreover, establishing clear goals helps designers to focus their resources and avoid significant project drift. However, the goals and deliverables developed in the analyzed cases lacked a strong focus on the implementation of the design project.

**Finding 3:** The level of engagement that designers can obtain from decision-makers corresponds to the time and effort that designers require decision-makers to devote to the design process. Hence, the shorter the design project is, or the fewer elements it has (workshops, feedback sessions, presentations), the easier it is to fully engage key decision-makers in all relevant stages of the design process. Designers consider it vital to engage key decision-makers in the design process. However, designers tend to interact only with the person(s) that the organization has assigned to the project and not necessarily with the most influential people for securing the implementation of the project.

**Finding 4:** Designers consider that understanding the institutional logic and the current situation of the organization for whom they are creating the design solution is extremely important. Designers use methods such as immersion, observation, workshops, and feedback sessions to obtain a high degree of organizational understanding that would allow them to generate a suitable solution for the organization. Nevertheless, the knowledge that designers acquire by applying these methods, in short-term projects when design is used as an add-on, tends to remain within the functional silo in which the project is embedded. Thus, organizational changes or influences

coming from the outside of the functional silo of the project are challenging to identify in short-term design collaborations.

**Finding 5:** Designers do not usually conduct external stakeholders' analysis in short-term design collaborations with nonprofits. Designers believe that analyzing the external stakeholders of the client organization would not add significant value to the design process. On the contrary, they think that analyzing external stakeholders would demand them considerable time and effort that would not necessarily transfer to more value for the project. Finally, when designers analyze the external stakeholders of the organization, they do it only to identify potential solutions for the design challenge. However, they do not focus the analysis on identifying opportunities or threats to implement the solution.

## 5. Discussion

In the first chapter of this thesis project, I asked about the factors that influence the implementation of the recommendations given by designers in short-term design projects with nonprofits, and how do they influence. Then, in this section, I discuss this question, and its five subjacent sub-questions, based on the individual and cross-case analysis of the previous section. The discussion aims to contrast each finding with the current literature. Moreover, I present factors that have not been explicitly studied regarding the implementation of design recommendations in short-term collaborations with nonprofits.

### 5.1. Discussion of research findings

*Finding 1: The area of intervention of a design project is decisive to its development and completion. More specific and operational design projects, such as graphic design, are easier to work with and implement in short-term design collaboration as they frame a clear set of boundaries in which designers can build a solution. Therefore, the outcome of graphic design projects results to be easier to implement, at least when compared to service design projects. Furthermore, designers tend to engage in design collaborations aligned to their realm of expertise. Nonetheless, they could also rely on their design training to participate in design projects outside their primary discipline.*

The results validate the claims of Junginger (2015) in which she states that graphic design projects are more common and better suited for design projects in organizations where design thinking and design activities are not central. Project in which design is used as an add on tend to stay within the same area of the organization in which the project began, representing a set of boundaries to which design thinking and design methods apply. Also, these projects do not require relevant organizational change to be implemented. As mentioned by Junginger (2015), design in the organizational periphery has consequences for the designer's ability to generate change within the organization. This capacity to effect change is limited to the communication activities or, if it were the case, the product, but then the organizational framework remains untouched and unchanged. Hence, since graphic design projects do not usually require organizational change to be implemented, it could be argued that this design discipline is appropriate for short-term collaborations. Additionally, it could be argued that this type of project is easier to implement in a shorter period as it requires less interaction with other areas in the organization.

These results should be considered when selecting the type of projects to develop in short-term design collaborations. Based on Junginger research (2015) and the analyzed cases in this master thesis, it would not be advisable to conduct design projects that demand organizational change management elements and cross-department collaboration as they would demand additional time and commitment for which the designer has not agreed to in the project brief and perhaps has not been trained to conduct. Thus, the symbolic and visual communications area of invention in which design is explored (Buchanan, 1992) could adjust to these characteristics.

*Finding 2: Designers consider that establishing clear goals and deliverables since the beginning of a short-term design collaboration in nonprofits is essential for the success of the project. Designers and nonprofit managers develop goals based on the aim of the collaboration, the area of intervention (Buchanan, 1992), and the timeframe they have assigned for its completion. Thereby, designers have enough elements to plan the design process in order to finish the project promptly. Moreover, establishing clear goals helps designers to focus their resources and avoid significant project drift. However, the goals and deliverables developed in the analyzed cases lacked a strong focus on the implementation of the design project.*

In line with the insights gathered from interviews with experts, the process of defining the goals and deliverables for the project is fundamental to designers. As noted in the analyzed cases, designers pay significant attention to establishing a common ground and clear endpoint for the

collaboration. Designers and nonprofits set the goals based on what the designer could deliver in the timeframe that has been assigned for the project. In short-term design projects, particularly, the outcome definition process tends to be concluded fairly soon and fairly fast. By doing so, designers can dedicate the major part of the collaboration to work in the right direction by focusing on the elements that both parties found to be significant. Nevertheless, the evident lack of implementation criteria or impact measurements within the outcome definition process reflects the strong focus that the design discipline has traditionally had in the “problem formulation” and “problem solution” areas (Buchanan, 1992), leaving the implementation of the design projects to other academic disciplines, such as implementation science (Kelly and Perkins, 2012; Fixsen et al., 2009), change management (Todnem, 2005), among many others.

These results should be taken into account when considering how to foster the possibilities of implementation of a short-term design project. Impact or implementation measures should be established since the beginning of the design project as they would clarify that the aim of the collaboration is not only to formulate and solve a problem or challenge for a nonprofit but also to implement and measure the impact of the designed and tested solution. By doing so, designers would expand the scope of the project and, even though they leave the project before its implementation, they would partly be accountable for setting the stage for the implementation to happen.

*Finding 3: The level of engagement that designers can obtain from decision-makers corresponds to the time and effort that designers require decision-makers to devote to the design process. Hence, the shorter the design project is, or the fewer elements it has (workshops, feedback sessions, presentations), the easier it is to fully engage key decision-makers in all relevant stages of the design process. Designers consider it vital to engage key decision-makers in the design process. However, designers tend to interact only with the person(s) that the organization has assigned to the project and not necessarily with the most influential people for securing the implementation of the project.*

In line with the interviewed experts’ insights, the level of engagement that designers can achieve from decision-makers is an area of high importance for designers. Most design process methodologies emphasize the importance of engaging key participants from the client organization in the different stages of the design process (Stanford d.school, Google Design Sprint, etc). Moreover, those methodologies consistently advice for the inclusion of crucial decision-

makers as a means of conducting a successful design process. As presented in the “Parts without a whole: The current state of Design Thinking Practice in organizations” study, published by the Hasso Platter institute (Schmiedgen, et al, 2015), the lack of management support is one of the top three reasons for “discontinuation” of design efforts in an organization, in this case, the non-implementation of the design recommendations. Hence, the importance of achieving the necessary buy-in of decision-makers is undeniable. Nevertheless, as the interviewed experts mentioned and the analyzed case studies have confirmed, if designers began the design process without the full commitment from key decision-makers to participate in the design process, it becomes considerably challenging to revert the situation.

The findings of the present research project should be considered when designers need to plan the design process steps and define who the participants should be. Furthermore, the designer should be aware of who the decision-makers are from the beginning of the project and then request the level of participation and engagement that he/she considers necessary for the development of the design process and its future implementation. Based on the information of the analyzed cases, time commitment was difficult to obtain from decision-makers. Finally, it was surprising to notice that sometimes board level (decision-makers) did not value this type of collaborations. As an expert suggested, the low importance and perceived value of the design collaboration might relate to the fact that the nonprofits were not paying for the design service and therefore they did not perceive it as valuable.

*Finding 4: Designers consider that understanding the institutional logic and the current situation of the organization for whom they are creating the design solution is extremely important. Designers use methods such as immersion, observation, workshops, and feedback sessions to obtain a high degree of organizational understanding that would allow them to generate a suitable solution for the organization. Nevertheless, the knowledge that designers acquire by applying these methods, in short-term projects when design is used as an add-on, tends to remain within the functional silo in which the project is embedded. Thus, organizational changes or influences coming from the outside of the functional silo of the project are challenging to identify in short-term design collaborations.*

In line with the hypothesis of Junginger (2015), when the design discipline is introduced in the organizational periphery, it tends to remain in the same functional silo where the project originated. As a result, designers find it challenging to gather information from other functional

areas or silos and consequently they can hardly influence other areas or even the organization as a whole. This topic is essential to consider especially for design projects that aim to produce a certain degree of change in the organization, such as service design projects. Moreover, it has been interesting to notice that designers only realized how important it could have been to gather information for other areas of the organization to secure the implementation of the project after the conclusion of the project (delivery of tested solution). An additional remark to this finding refers to the fact that designers typically aim to understand the organizational culture to create a solution that suits their current institutional logic. However, there is still room for improvement in the way designers analyze the internal capabilities of the organization. Even though the designers that participated in the analyzed case studies obtain extensive knowledge of the tools and resources that the organization possessed (software, financial means, number of volunteers, etc.), none of them correctly assessed the competences of the staff in the organization to conduct the implementation of the project. Knowledge from other disciplines, such as management theory, consulting, among many others, could help to void this gap.

These results should be taken into account even if the short-term design projects aim to impact only one functional organizational area, like in graphic design projects. As examined in one of the case studies (PCAT) even though it was a graphic design project, it could have been useful for the designer to understand the potential impact of the visual communication campaign into other areas in the organization. By doing so, the team of designers could have spotted the problem and consequently changed the direction of the project.

*Finding 5: Designers do not usually conduct external stakeholders' analysis in short-term design collaborations with nonprofits. Designers believe that analyzing the external stakeholders of the client organization would not add significant value to the design process. On the contrary, they think that analyzing external stakeholders would demand them considerable time and effort that would not necessarily transfer to more value for the project. Finally, when designers analyze the external stakeholders of the organization, they do it only to identify potential solutions for the design challenge. However, they do not focus the analysis on identifying opportunities or threats to implement the solution.*

The results of this finding neither contradict nor support previous theoretical propositions or the insights gathered from the interviews with experts. This particular area was researched in order to explore an additional aspect of the design process that practitioners tend to overlook and that

could potentially enrich the outcome of the collaboration. The results met my expectations as a researcher since I have previously assumed that in these short-term projects, it would be challenging to conduct this type of analysis. However, it was interesting and unexpected to observe that one of the case studies had failed to be implemented due to the lack of external stakeholders' analysis.

The present research provides new insight into the possibilities of analyzing the external stakeholder environment of the organization not only to look for solutions to the design challenge but also to identify potential opportunities and threats related to the implementation of the project once the designer finishes the project. As mentioned in the previous finding, this kind of analysis could be enriched by applying methods and tools from other academic or professional disciplines.

## **6. Limitations and future research**

After discussing the relevant findings of the present research study, in this section, I present some limitations around what can and cannot be concluded from each finding of this study. Then, I suggest directions for future research focusing on reducing the effect of these limitations.

- (1) Only two design disciplines were analyzed in this research study. Graphic design and service design were the only disciplines examined in this research project. It was beyond the scope of this study to identify all design disciplines that could be suitable or advisable for short-term design collaborations in order to secure the implementation of the resulted recommendations. Contrarily, the study aimed to detect the possible difference in the likelihood of implementation based on the variable of type of design discipline. Future research should engage in analyzing additional design disciplines, such as UX design, industrial design, interaction design, among others) in order to assess how recommendable they are for short-term design projects.
- (2) The results of this study cannot confirm or reject the possibility that including goals and deliverables related to implementation would automatically relate to a higher rate of execution of the recommendations in short-term design projects. As mentioned earlier, any of the case studies included impact or implementation measurements along the design process. This kind of goal could have had potentially improved the outcome of the project.

However, at this point, it is not possible to assert that. Thus, I would suggest future research that explores how the inclusion of impact measurements or implementation goals could affect the implementation of short-term design projects.

- (3) One common element in all case studies was that the short-term collaborations were pro-bono. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to examine how this variable influenced or not, the design process. Hence, I would suggest conducting future research examining how pro-bono collaborations influence the perception of value of the project from the nonprofit perspective. One specific area of analysis could be the level of engagement of decision-makers in pro-bono design collaborations compared to paid-based design collaborations.
- (4) This study contributes to confirming that design in the organizational periphery has limitations in terms of obtaining information from areas other than the one where the design project started and generating change in the organization. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to identify which methodologies would be useful for the designer to improve his/her level of organizational understanding when design is considered as an add-on for the organization. Future research is needed to establish which methods or tools could be used by designers to gain a holistic understanding of the organization in short-term design collaborations.
- (5) The results cannot confirm or reject whether conducting a more in-depth analysis of the external stakeholders could positively impact the implementation stage of short-term design collaborations. This research findings only raise awareness in an area that designers have overlooked in the analyzed case studies. Further research is needed to establish to which degree conducting a thorough analysis of the external stakeholders would facilitate the implementation of design projects.
- (6) The abilities, experience, and individual characteristics of the designer have not been considered in this study. Nevertheless, I believe that those might be variables that impact the outcome of the design project. Thus, I would suggest future research to engage more deeply into the individual characteristics of the designer, or design team, in order to define which abilities or characteristics of a designer are critical to successfully conduct a short-term design project that naturally leads to implementation.

## 7. Conclusion

The present research study has adopted a qualitative research method in the form of a multiple case study to identify elements in the design process that should be considered in order to achieve a successful implementation of the design recommendations produced in short-term collaborations between designers and nonprofits.

Prior research has mainly engaged in studying the role design thinking has played in for-profit and large nonprofit organizations with long-term design projects. However, there has been a shortage of research and knowledge about the role of the design practice in smaller nonprofits through short-term, pro-bono collaborations with professional designers, specifically within the sub-topic of the implementation of the design recommendations that come out when designers finish their contribution.

The unit of analysis for this research study has been established as the short-term design collaborations between designers and nonprofits. Hence, four case studies were selected, two of them from collaborations that took place in Brussels, Belgium, and the other two from collaborations that occurred in Chattanooga, TN, United States of America. By adopting a social constructivist research perspective and by basing this study on the social nature of reality for analyzing the perceptions of designers and nonprofit managers regarding the factors that determined the implementation of design recommendation of the collaborations, this research study contributes to the literature in the following ways:

Firstly, this research study confirms the existing models and theories that affirm that graphic design projects are more suitable than others for organizations where design thinking and design principles are not central. Secondly, it also confirms previous research that identified the limitations to produce organizational change when the design discipline is introduced in the organizational periphery, instead of as in the core of the organization or as integral to all aspects of the organizations. Both theoretical contributions could have direct implications for practitioners who decide to engage in short-term design collaborations with nonprofits.

Furthermore, practical implications have been proposed based on the findings of the research study. Practitioners should consider including the elements covered in the research sub-questions mentioned earlier, especially those aspects that relate to the planning phase of the design project,

area of intervention of the design project and outcomes definition process, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the potential implementation of the design solutions they would eventually create. Thus, it would be beneficial for both the designers and the nonprofits to approach these collaborations more holistically by considering the implementation stage of the design project as an integral part of the collaboration, even though the designer or team of designers would only participate in the problem definition and problem solution stages.

There could be more factors that may influence the likelihood of implementation of design recommendations, such as the talent of the designer or the innovation capabilities of the nonprofits, among many others. However, this research study aimed to identify and raise awareness on some additional elements that designers should consider when participating in short-term design collaborations with nonprofits in order to secure the implementation of their recommendations and not to provide an extensive list of factors. Thus, further research devoted to identifying and testing additional factors that could influence the likelihood of implementation of design recommendations in short-term projects may be highly desirable.

In summary, this research study has been able to answer the research question by enunciating a set of factors that may have a strong influence on the possibilities of implementing the design recommendations produced in short-term collaborations between designers and nonprofits. The analyzed factors are the following (1) area of intervention of the design project, (2) outcome definition process, (3) level of engagement of key decision-makers, (4) level of organizational understanding, and (5) external stakeholders' analysis. Those factors should be considered by designers before and during the design process. Moreover, designers could benefit from adopting or adapting techniques and tools from other disciplines to enrich the design process and therefore improve the possibilities of achieving a successful implementation of their recommendations.

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## Appendix 1: Interview guides

### Interview guide for Nonprofit managers

#### The aim, area of intervention, goals, and deliverables of the project

- What was the aim of the project?
- What was the motivation to partner with a designer for this project?
- Did you approach the designer, or did the designer approach your organization?
- What were your expectations about the collaboration?
- How was the process of agreeing on goals and deliverables for the project?
- Did you agree on specific goals or outcomes about the project? Elaborate.
- Was the implementation considered as a part of the project? Why?

#### General questions about the design process

- How was the design process? Elaborate
- What was your role in the design project?
- Was someone else in your organization involved in the design process? How?
- Can you identify any challenges faced during the process?
- How resource-intensive was the project for you and your organization?

#### Decision-makers engagement

- Who was responsible for approving the outcome of the project in your organization?
- Was that person engaged in the project? Why? How?

#### Organizational understanding and external stakeholders' analysis

- How did the designer “get a feel” of your organization’s culture?
- Did the designer assess the capabilities, resources, and competences of your organization? How?
- Mention the external stakeholders that were involved in the process.
- How did they participate in the process?

#### Implementation

- Was the solution or suggestion too disruptive for your organizational culture? Why?
- Was the solution implemented? Why? How does the project look now?
- Mention any challenges in the implementation phase after the designer left.
- What did the organization get out of participating in the design project?
- What do you think could be done differently to improve the outcome (implementation) of the project?

## **Interview guide for Designers**

### The aim, area of intervention, goals, and deliverables of the project

- What was the aim of the project?
- What was your motivation to collaborate with a nonprofit?
- What did you expect to get out of the collaboration?
- How was the process of agreeing on goals and deliverables for the project? Were the goals already decided or you develop them together with the nonprofit?
- What were the specific goals or outcomes of the project? Elaborate.
- Was the implementation considered as a part of the project? Why?

### General questions about the design process

- Elaborate on how you conducted the design process.
- Did you get all the participation that you requested from the staff in the nonprofit?
- Can you identify any challenges faced during the process?

### Decision-makers engagement

- Who was responsible for approving the outcome of the project in your organization?
- Was that person engaged in all relevant stages of the project? Why? How?
- Was that person involved in the process of goals definition?

### Organizational understanding and external stakeholders' analysis

- How did you try to understand the organizational culture, design legacies, etc?
- Did you assess the capabilities, resources, and competences of your organization? How?
- Mention the external stakeholders that were involved in the process.
- How did they participate in the process?

### Implementation

- How did you manage to keep your recommendations aligned to the organizational culture?
- Was the solution implemented? Why? How does the project look now?
- What did you get out of participating in the design project?
- What do you think could be done differently to improve the outcome (implementation) of the project?

## Appendix 2: Interview Transcripts

- Matthew Schwartz
- Sarah Obenauer
- Frederik Vincx – First interview
- Pepijn Hellebuyck
- Veerle van Kets
- Frederik Vincx – Second interview
- Miranda Arstikaitis
- Ian Taylor
- Sherry Campbell
- Sabie Crowder
- Raffe Lazarian

# Interview Matthew Schwartz


 Tue, 07/16 11:54PM  29:53


## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

client, design, nonprofits, recommendations, project, people, hire, partners, designers, organization, work, agency, strategy, situations, research, thinking, mindset, scope, short term, build


## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Matthew Schwartz

 **Matthew Schwartz** 00:05  
How are you?

 **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:06  
I'm fine. Thank you very much.

 **Matthew Schwartz** 00:12  
Thanks for your patience and understanding as my schedule has shifted many times.

 **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:17  
No, no, thank you for your time. I totally understand it. Well, first of all, let me introduce myself. My name is Alejandro Tellez, I'm a student at the Copenhagen Business School, I'm studying my master's degree in innovation and entrepreneurship. I come from Mexico. During the masters I learned a little bit about design thinking, mostly applied to for profit organizations. But I have always had this interest in the nonprofit sector. The, when I decided to choose my master thesis topic, I tried to research this specific thing of design collaborations between designers and nonprofits. And then I started reading some articles on the internet, and that's when I found yours. After the first time I reached out to you I have actually narrowed down the scope of my project. What I am particularly interested

in are the short term collaborations between designers and nonprofits, but particularly in the implementation part of it, because actually, just a little bit more me on, my main motivation was born last semester, when I took a course on service design, where we as students partnered up with a couple of NGOs in service design projects. But then, after six months conducting the design process, I asked myself, is this really going to be implemented? And that's actually the topic that I'm researching.

M

Matthew Schwartz 03:08

Yes, I think that can happen, when you do recommendation for action that may or may not get executed. What questions do you have? Or what things can I answer that can help you through this?

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 03:35

Yes, exactly. when I was looking into your website, I realized that most of all your projects are medium or long term. I went through one of your articles, the one that talks about design vendors and that you prefer the term design partners. I realized that you have that kind of way of thinking, I assume that the projects you deal with are a little longer than three or four months.

M

Matthew Schwartz 04:08

Yes, we could take projects that last longer, for example large digital projects, or whether the people who hire you have a vendor mindset versus a partner mindset or not, yes, a large digital project is going to take no less than six months and normally longer. The real question is whether we have a longer ongoing partnership or relationship with the organization. We tend to work on slightly larger projects, probably than the average agency in our space. We also work in more robust discovery and strategy, it's like that being a big part of how we make good work is part of it. So that can make the process, you could spend a month alone, just on, you know, research and strategy and some workshops and stuff like that, before you even got to what are we going to make?

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 05:18

Yes. Okay. And based on that, how do you work to ensure the implementation of the recommendations you come up with? How is this process in the agency? Actually, I'm reaching out to you because I want to have the practical knowledge, not only academic one.

M

Matthew Schwartz 05:42

There are two types of client. So, I think the first thing is to say that the majority of times, clients are coming to us and we are being hired to do a project that has a very specific outcome that includes some deliverables. For example a website, a design system. So we're gonna do and make something no matter what, right? Plus, We say, you know, it's always your job to see opportunities that will add value, to make recommendations and potential other things. And I think you have earned that trust and ability by being a really good focused partner. And, So that sometimes happens when there's some recommendations beyond the scope of what you were originally asked to do. I think in those situations we start with an established conclusion, and we know that the job it's going to get done, but don't know exactly how. But the client gave us \$40,000, to revamp their logo and identity design system. And, at the end of the project, we will deliver that, maybe we'll add some other ideas that they hadn't thought of in the process, as we get to know. The other situations are ones where clients come to us with a problem, a challenge they know they have. What should be done is it clearly known, or even if it is known what it would be done, like, we need to redo our website, but we can't even tell them what it would cost to redo it because it's too complicated a problem to do without some paid discovery. We have projects where we do that kind of work where it's paid discovery. And we will work with that in a project and the project is to do the kind of stuff that maybe you're talking about where it's, you know, discovery, strategy, workshops, or workshops, and then strategy and, you know, developing then a report with a set of recommendations and proposed budget. And then you would talk with them through, you know, they've gotten a sense, they've gotten the opportunity to know you through the discovery process, hopefully, build trust and rapport as part of that process. And then your recommendations, if they are good are going to resonate in their perceived value and then, I think it's going to be pretty clear for them. You can't make our clients spend money. So the best I can do to ensure that that stuff gets done is presented in a way that demonstrates what the value would be, and have demonstrated your credibility to make those recommendations in the process of working together. It's really no more complicated than that. And we have a project right now where we were hired for a certain amount of money, 35 grand to do a whole bunch of strategy and research and some things related to a project. And the outcome of that was a recommendation for \$75,000 worth of work, that's fancy website and logo, among many other things. And these are all things they planned. But they needed to hear from us before they were able to move forward. And so they're reviewing that report now with and is being presented and discussed with the head of the Foundation. And the head of the foundation is a member of the board, but there are other board members to present it to, what you know, that they'll present, discuss that. So, so that is the best you can do when you make those kinds of recommendations you haven't move forward yet. You have to build rapport, credibility and develop something that's thoughtful and appropriate and relevant. And then

demonstrate the value that doing the things you recommend is going to deliver, and make it pretty clear, which can be challenging, if something if there isn't a quantifiable thing like will increase sales by 10%. If you do this, like nonprofit work isn't often like that. And we're not often doing work with about increasing donations. Those are the types of nonprofits we tend to work with. You have to talk about different things.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 10:48

Okay, perfect. Actually, let's continue with this. In the last one you provided a recommendation, and then the person that hires the agency is going to come with a head of the of the foundation, and he's going to present the recommendation to secure some funding to continue the project. In that sense? How does the agency try to look into the the other stakeholders? I'm thinking about systems thinking, as they call it, looking in the internal stakeholders and external stakeholders that participate or could impacted by the scope of the project. How do you try to engage them?

M

Matthew Schwartz 11:42

Oh, so you mean, how do we engage perhaps these other members of the board or something if we haven't engaged them.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 11:48

Yes, them, or maybe also other internal and external stakeholders.

M

Matthew Schwartz 12:01

Well, the partners would happen to be somebody who has the authority to approve or decline the project, right, because very often partners will be like, an organization has partners they work with, but the work is about connecting better with those partners or supporting those partners that are being they don't see them authority from them to do the work. So you know, very often you're engaging some of those external systems, the network of partners, and such as a sort of a discovery process, you might actually interview them, talk to them about their relationship to the organization you're working with, right? So we're doing brand strategy work, as opposed to just design. We're coming up with positioning and messaging to use to inform all of our design. You very well might be interviewing some of those partners to understand what they think of the organization and use those people's insights to decide what you would put into how you develop the brand. But, you know, the the other part is probably more common thing is like, how do you get in front of the board, if they're in charge of the decision, but they weren't involved

in the work and to be honest, they're just times where you don't have access to them. Clients can be very protective of this types of relationships. I think it's foolish. Like, if you trust us to do all this work and come up with something, you should probably trust us to work directly with your board to explain it, discuss it. Otherwise, you're going to be charged with translating what we say and very well may not be as good as we are at not only describing it, but responding to questions that people might have and to convince people that's a good idea.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:05

Okay, one follow up question. Regarding the level of involvement that you can ask or expect from the customer, is something that you think about? do you ask for some kind of minimum level of engagement, or is more like, they tend to leave you all the freedom?

M

Matthew Schwartz 14:34

No, it's usually very clearly defined. We do not get in these situations where we're just on retainer and get to sort of work at whatever pace we want to build a sort of thing. It's, I mean, there's those happened in retainers where we're already working with the client. So we do have a lot of those relationships, where there's just a budget that we draw against to do different things, but even then we don't do anything without them asking us to do it for us suggesting in them agreeing to it. No organization is going to be able from a financial stewardship perspective that would be responsible with that. And when it comes to new clients, it's almost always very clear whether we said we're going to design a website, and that we think will cost this, price may change a bit based on what we discover as we start working. Or if we're saying we're going to do discovery to figure out what the whole engagement looks like, you know, we say what we're going to deliver at the end of the scope of the work may change a little or the budget may change a little. But ultimately, you're doing something specific and getting paid to do that. At least in our case.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 15:53

Okay, perfect. How do you as an agency deal with this divide between the organizational culture in the way that the nonprofit do things and the kind of disruptive or new ideas that you can come up with? How do you balance out those two?

M

Matthew Schwartz 16:14

That's a really tough one, I have to say, this is something, you know, I gather that you're sort of getting a culture change and issues of organizational change and change management that relate to brand or strategic design initiatives. We have one very large client that is so clear how much they need that kind of help. Over two and a half years now. And, you know, it's a big brand strategy project, a logo, identity brand positioning, fairly, very complicated. They have a lot of people, 2000 people, and then their website. And a huge part of what they need so badly is to influence on issues around the culture of how it's designed into the organization, so that people feel more connected to this sort of things, but I'll just say that, like, in this case, we're unable to get that across that. The level of cultural change for what they might need for such a big organization maybe is damn near impossible. And maybe it's just above our pay grade as an agency. So we seek to get increasingly engaged with when we're helping build culture or improve in design in the way the brand can actually help them be more cohesive as an entity. But that is still difficult for us to get organizations to bring us in and be seen to do and so we probably have to earn the credibility to do that, and find the right organizations that will do that. So that we can build up a body of work demonstrating that as is very hard. That's like organizational change management stuff. And if unless the top most members of leadership, have decided they want you to do that, it's unlikely to happen, right? I mean, the person at the very top has to say, we need to make a change, right? We need to change who we are, who we are isn't working. We can be doing this better, whatever it is we do, I can think of a million ways around that around my own company. If I had the money, I hire a couple of people to do that, but I don't necessarily have that money. On top of other things. I think the same holds true for nonprofits, right?

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 19:10

Yes, yes, of course. And I'm also curious about, do you only work as an external resource, providing design capabilities? Or do you also go and help them build their own design capabilities?

M

Matthew Schwartz 19:29

Yeah, we do some of that. So we're happy to. That organization I just mentioned to you, we actually helped them hire a webmaster they really needed. So assessing sort of staff expertise, and how we might be able to take what's been done, and what should they do externally, and what should be done internally, that is certainly something that comes up to some degree. And the more we work at the scale we do, the more reasonable it is to say to people, look, we want you to keep working with us. But we want you to figure out internally how to do the things that are better done there so that you can hire us to do things that are higher about. So yeah, it happens occasionally. For sure.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 20:17

Okay, coming to these short term design projects, like the ones that I'm specifically researching. What would you say is relevant for any designer to have in mind? what are the elements that you think should be key or fundamental to include in these design process? Besides that purely design activities? Is there something else that you have realized that is important?

M

Matthew Schwartz 20:52

We don't do so many of those who I may not have the most insight into it. I mean, I'm thinking, I guess if the idea is like, it's more a mindset, if it has to be short term, and quick, and someone's hiring you to essentially do tactical, one off execution of some strategy and recommendations. I mean, I just think about how to be lean in that process. All that I mean, you know, my thing is, when I hear a suggestion of doing the work that way, it speaks of a client who very well may not see the value in a partner. And that's, that's not for malicious reasons, that just may not be where they're at. In that case, I think the best thing to do is to figure out how you can work, I think going into it with the mindset that they're looking for is probably one of the biggest hurdles, right? I think that as designers, we care a lot about what we produce. And we know what we produce is created in combination with other people and for other people. And because of that, it can be hard to say, you know what, I'm just going to get this one thing done, bang it out and move on. And the client, that's what they want, and they'll get value out of that. And I'm not going to worry about it. They are more after this ready in that or, you know, we'll see what happens next. I don't know if that answers your question. I think that kind of stuff into the mindset of, and that becomes, you know, I think most designers don't want to do work like that. But if you see opportunities to do it, and they make sense for you, then I think it's about approaching them in a practical way that recognizes not over investing of yourself in something that very well may not turn into anything more than just this one thing you have done or that the client needs done.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 22:57

Yes, exactly. Especially the nonprofits that I'm looking into are those that cannot afford hiring some kind of a agency like yours, for example. So they've kind of realized that they could use some help in the design area and then they get that help from pro bono designers. And that's the one of the ways in which they can access the same capabilities. So yes, of course, if they had all the resources, they will try to go as a little bit more in depth and with more resources to to get those capabilities. But in this case, what I've seen is that it's kind of common for some designers to show up maybe one or two weeks with a nonprofit, and trying to do some kind of short term thing, and then leave, but then if the

project is never implemented it could become a waste of time for both parties.

M

Matthew Schwartz 23:55

I think the other thing is, you're just like, if the idea is what are you trying to advise is people who find themselves in a situation and they're trying to maximize, you know, like, I don't know, what the goal of your research, you know, My take is that someone, you know, you have to have your own business goals as a professional, obviously in mind, right? what triggered this, if you say, you know, getting buy off of goodwill, and that's a phrase I've used in the past. There are a lot of nonprofits that unfortunately, and I think they suffer for it, whether it's for, like, they literally have to do it, or they don't practically think about prioritizing, doing things differently. When you rely on these, sort of like flurry and different folks or whatever, you know, the client winds up with stuff that's inconsistent and lacks singularity, nonprofit word into this idea that always putting out an ERP and always, you know, hearing from different people is good, that's not the case, you don't hire a different lawyer every time you have a contract, you don't hire a new financial advisor every time you want to make an investment decision. There's no difference in design. Surely doesn't mean you should just write a blank check to somebody. But the consistency of a partnership and someone getting to know you, which is a bit of what my article is about is one of the big important things. it's like any team that gets to know each other. And they played better together as they know each other, they read between the lines, all this kind of stuff. And so I think clients suffer, if they don't embrace that as an idea. And they get to this idea that I want lots of different people to give me a proposal because I want options, then I'm trying to get the lowest price, which is usually what is driving their thinking. So if you find yourself in a position where that kind of the scenario as a professional, my take is you acknowledge it for what it is. But secondly, identify one you can get out of it, that will be a benefit to you beyond this deliverable thing, right? There has to be ideally something. And it can be deciding to only do that kind of work for things that are in areas you want to grow into, like a sector of vertical. Or you say the client, look, I'll do this, and we'll do it this way. And it's gonna be really cheap. And what I'd really like is, you know, I'm going to pitch this as a presentation at conferences and if I get that people could be able to, you know, if it's a good case study, and we both get visibility, or make sure you get a testimonial. And there are other things, but I feel like you know, you've got to get something as beyond just the tactical thing that you're doing. Otherwise, everything will be a tactical thing that you're doing.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 26:52

I think those are really, really valuable points. And actually, you already mentioned the aim of my research project, which is trying to to provide some kind of guidance for

someone that is in in that situation. So yeah, and what you actually mentioned, it totally makes sense. And it's a really nice incentive to establish partnerships, instead of just one off kind of things.

M

Matthew Schwartz 27:18

Yeah, I, you know, figuring out how you build out your own practice or profession, you're obviously always trying to push up at a higher level of value, or the nature of the relationship and the nature of what you do for the people you work with. If projects don't inherently look like they're going to deliver, back to you. And I think, you know, we have to find ways to make the most out of it, so that you do get some of that so that you can use that to sell in the future to somebody else, like look, this is what we're trying to do with our clients and they are more receptive to it.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 28:00

Okay, okay, Matt, we've been talking for 28 minutes, I'm just keeping track of the time. So I don't want to take more of your valuable time. And I would like to thank you very much. Thank you, thank you very much for your for your time

# Interview Sarah Obenauer 1/2




 Tue, 07/16 11:55PM  04:30

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

study, designers, design, alejandro, exploratory, short term basis, master thesis, banking industry, research, nonprofits, project, part, service, ngo, mexico, innovation entrepreneurship, conclusions, moment, interested, learning

## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Sarah Obenauer

-  **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:05  
Sarah, thank you very much for your time. So yeah, as I mentioned, I want to introduce myself, my name is Alejandro Tellez. And I'm a student here at Copenhagen Business School, I'm studying a master's degree in innovation entrepreneurship. And as a part of my studies, I need to, to write a master thesis. And the topic that I chose, is that of design thinking applied to nonprofits, but specifically, in these collaborations between designers and nonprofits in a short term basis. The part that I'm interested is in the implementation part, what happens after the designers come to the project, and then they leave the organization? So it's pretty much an exploratory kind of research at the moment. And if possible, maybe to try to draw some conclusions based on that.
-  **Sarah Obenauer** 01:11  
Yeah, nice that you are interested in that topic in particular.
-  **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 01:16  
Yeah, the thing is that, before coming here to study, I was working in the banking industry, in the commercial side, so nothing related to design. But then at some point, I decided that I wanted to study something new, different. And that's why I decided to come to well, originally, I'm from Mexico, and, and I decided to come to a country that is so different to

Mexico. And then I thought of Scandinavia, as one of the most different options. And then while I was studying here, I learned about design, because I didn't know it from my background, not from my studies or my profession. But actually, last semester, I took one course in service design where we partnered up with one NGO, to be service designers, it was like learning by doing. But while doing that project, I realized that, okay, obviously we are not professional designers, we were learning. But at the end of the project I realized that we didn't stay for the implementation of the project. And then it became something that for me was interesting to see what happened from a research perspective. So how can we, if possible, improve that kind of outcome to be actually implemented?

# Interview Sarah Obenauer 2-2





 Tue, 07/16 11:54PM  36:51

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

nonprofit, project, makers, implemented, meeting, designers, people, design, organization, check, planning, hackathon, feedback, research, ngo, interview, implementation, idea, event, questions

## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Sarah Obenauer

-  **Sarah Obenauer** 00:06  
There's often that gap between completing a wonderful project that's very fun. But then actually having that implemented and come to fruition and utilize. So it's super interesting. I'm curious to see how would you explore it and what you learn from that too.
-  **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:26  
Yes, exactly. So far, I've had the chance to interview participants of two service design projects, both the designer and the staff from the nonprofits involved. So if you're interested, I can share with you the findings of all the research when I finished, hopefully, will be on September.
-  **Sarah Obenauer** 00:49  
Yeah, I would love to hear what you learned. That would be amazing.
-  **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:54  
Yes. Great. So okay, if you if you're okay, we're going to start with a few questions that I have here to cover some aspects, hopefully will be like around half an hour.

**S** Sarah Obenauer 01:04  
Yeah, absolutely.

**A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 01:04  
Great. And first of all like warm up questions, how did you come up with this idea of bringing together these resources? Visual communication designers and to nonprofits? How was the process?

**S** Sarah Obenauer 01:18  
Yeah, absolutely. So I'm not sure how much you you saw or read. But I was actually working at a nonprofit organization, in Virginia, here in the United States, was a statewide organization. But there were only a couple of us that were working full time. So three full time employees for an organization that covered the whole state. And, really, we were just wearing a lot of different hats, I was hired to do to covering all the programs and the statewide campaign. So it was a team traffic safety organization. And we would do different campaigns throughout the year that focus on different components of safe driving, you know, impaired driving, wearing your seatbelt, drunk driving, distracted driving kind of campaigns, there was a story project that I was really hired for that piece of it. There's also this visual story that we were telling, and we weren't telling it well. At the time it was our design was outdated, and it wasn't effective for the young audience. And so really, just over time, I started implementing design and technology. So updating our website moving from, we're still using faxes, ticket all of our forms and campaigns. So moving to an online system for that, and just really saw the impact for that in small nonprofits, how many more people would be able to pull in and engage with. Therefore, to get more funding or were winning awards for programs. So it was just a huge difference over the course of a couple of years. And it's a difference that continued to kind of implement. So I left there, back in 2014, and started moving into a design and marketing role at a technology company, kind of closer to home at the time, and was really sad to me leaving that nonprofit space. So I started talking to my husband, I talked to one of my peers in design and also in technology. So I started talking to a lot of developers, and they wanted a way to use their skills to benefit and nonprofit versus just volunteering their time or donating money. They wanted to volunteer these skills that would be highly expensive for a nonprofit, but really, really valuable. And so we started looking at how do we do that and really looked into this whole like hackathon format. How do you put together people for a limited time so that they're giving their all but the commitment is it from now until eternity? To do it in a very controlled environment where we're watching, taking their time, and also facilitating the conversation between the nonprofits and the makers is what we call them, the you know, the designers and the developers. So we just kicked off with that

idea, had our first event in 2015. And from there just really have grown, as we personally have moved within also as a community. So I wanted to bring you that area. So that's how I got started just kind of scratching your own itch situation.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 04:26

Okay, fantastic. And then you came up with this, well, do you use this idea of hackathon, and then you build your own make-a-thon, which I think is the name. How do you choose their organizations for these projects?

S

Sarah Obenauer 04:43

So it's actually a pretty competitive process. Now, in each community, when we're planning an event, we recruit nonprofits. So we host an information session, they might have questions, we might just make ourselves available, the email or the phone. And we really do invite all nonprofits and humanitarian organizations in an area. So here, nonprofits designated 501(c)(3). It doesn't have to be a for-profit, it could be a really a young organization trying to find a different business models. So we just want to make sure that they have a humanitarian focus. And we invite them to apply with a particular project in mind, which I think is kind of key to that implementation piece that you're missing. So they're not just applying as the nonprofit they're applying as the nonprofit with their cause and their impact. But they're also applying as a very particular project that they have in mind that they think can be beneficial for their organization that we can kind of tackle. And so that's the first step. And then from there, we whittle that down pretty significantly to do interviews with the nonprofits, where we sit down with them and get to know them a little bit better and talk through the project. So we get a better sense of scope, and what we think we might be able to tackle within that 12 hours.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 06:01

Do these organizations know in advance that make a mark is specialized in design and brand communication?, or do they also come with, okay, I want to improve the service of my organization or something?

S

Sarah Obenauer 06:19

We really focus on a few key components. So we focus on the design within an organization. So design projects, like branding, campaigns, you know, Social Media Design, we focus on development, so mostly, projects with that, we focused video projects, so we work with videographers or incorporate photography into some of the projects. And

then also an emphasis on marketing and copywriting too, which kind of evolved over time. So we had a lot of interest from marketers. And if there's a project where that applies, which there's been a lot of those will bring those folks into. So kind of covers that, we try not to focus too much on operational things. So we wouldn't be building databases for people, we really focus on like, what is that communication outward? That's either to promote their organization or to do something that the activities you're already doing.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 07:41

Okay, amazing. And it was, obviously, a conscious decision. But can you think about why did you come in that way? is it because of your background? Or because you saw that maybe those kind of projects are more likely to be implemented properly? or What was your reasoning behind that?

S

Sarah Obenauer 07:57

I think, you know, I was first thinking about it, it was certainly my background and the background of the people that I was working with. I think we had an intimate knowledge of that. And I saw that need directly. And so I think that's really where the emphasis has been for us and why it's been there. And then I think from there, really, a big piece of that is that as you know, nonprofits are really not able to afford design. And I hope that we can kind of help with that change as well. But there's just not a lot of funding out there. I also work with nonprofits before, besides just my job, I would do some consulting with them, either pro bono for just a little bit. And there just wasn't much money out there for design projects. And I think a lot of times too, when they wouldn't get funding for that, the nonprofit wouldn't totally understand the language of that. And so I think people would try to swindle them, you know, trying to get a little extra money out of that. They don't have to worry about that we try to act as translators and teach them a little bit along the way, too. So that way, once they're done, they should have a better understanding of the landscape of design.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:20

Okay, great. And then coming to the process, the organizations are accepted and the projects decided. Then, also designers are assigned to each project. And then you have these planning meeting. What do you, what do you talk about in those meetings? What is likely the aim of that part?

S

Sarah Obenauer 09:50

Yeah, so it's a lot, it's certainly a lot of fit into on 60 minute meeting, I think, you know, in an ideal world, where people have endless time, we would meet a few times, to just get a good feel. So what we do, we look at our makers, and we build teams around those folks. So and those are often random people partnered together, sometimes people met each other. And then from there, once we've done that, we build out, it's basically a creative brief, but it's a packet of information about the event itself, because it's your first year participating, I think there's a lot of confusion around what it's going to look like. A lot of hackathons, I think just kind of come in and throw you in. But we do a lot of preparation in advance. So that can be a surprise for people. And we try to communicate that make sure they understand that. And then we also provide just a little bit about the project, and about the nonprofit space and our interviews so that way, the makers have an idea and an understanding of what the landscape is to start. And then when we come into that meeting, really the goal is to get an understanding of the nonprofit, kind of briefly, a lot of people already have a bit of an understanding from research that they've done as a result of the brief. But we do definitely talk about the project. And the goal, walking away from this planning meeting, is to feel like we know what we're going to be working on that day for the nonprofit, that we know it's something that can happen in the 12 hours. And it's something that the nonprofit feels good about, and comfortable implementing. So sometimes we'll talk technologies so back in for our website, we'll see what the nonprofit feels most comfortable with, as well as one of the makers feel comfortable building on. So we'll kind of come to a decision like we feel good about, okay, we're going to use square space and build off of that. Or a lot of nonprofits would come in saying they need some kind of a template for something, and they don't have access to InDesign, but they might have access to another software. We would encourage the makers and work with the makers to build it out in that platform so that the nonprofits can make changes as they go later.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 12:09

That's great. And then, what is the like? Do you provide some kind of training for the makers? For example, how to handle this situation, the communication with the NGO. Because maybe the makers are used to talk with for profit organizations. But maybe some of the makers are not in contact with the nonprofit environment. Do you provide some kind of training for them or some information, at least?

S

Sarah Obenauer 12:43

We we don't do anything in advance of the planning meetings. We are always present in a planning meeting. So whoever's leading that site, or that chapter. There's always somebody actively in the meeting. So we kind of act as facilitator of the meeting,

conversation keeps going, as well as a translator. So there's a lot of stuff that nonprofits might reference when they're talking about their grants. And they're talking about their board and applications of that. And so we have a good understanding of what that looks like on there, and from our personal experiences, and then I work with them over time. And then same on the other side, because we've been on that side of it as creatives or technologists. We understand the language and sometimes will be a question that they're asking and the nonprofit doesn't quite understand. It's kind of like, connect that. Yeah. So being there as part of it, it certainly helps them get comfortable talking to one another, and it won't be able to solve all the communication gaps. But hopefully, they walk away comfortable enough with one another that they can say, I don't understand what you're asking. And they can kind of resolve that pretty quickly.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 13:52

Yes, exactly. Because in ideal world, they could bridge that gap in a matter of two to four hours. But you need to rush that process in some way.

S

Sarah Obenauer 14:05

Yeah, definitely.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:07

Okay, great, Then after that meeting there is the day of the make-a-thon. One thing that I noticed while I was reading the whole story, I couldn't see any interaction between the users from the nonprofit side with the designers, that I can assume is because maybe there is no so much need of kind of user centricity in that way. Can it be the other way that maybe the designers go to the actual user to ask for some feedback, or how does it look like?.

S

Sarah Obenauer 14:47

So between that, another thing that can happen is that the makers start doing things in between the planning meeting and the even. Sometimes they get very excited about it. So they want to research things. And that's totally up to them, But we do ask the nonprofits to prepare what's needed for the event. So as part of that, the makers might say, in the planning meeting, we would need testimonials from x y and z, or we're going to need photos or login. That's another piece of it, they do a lot pulling together. They might also say, okay, during the meeting, let's talk about it. It's a branding project, what brands are kind of inspiring to you? Well, it's I can't think of brands on the spot, you know, then they'll

walk away kind of research this and come back. So there's a long work that nonprofits do in between the meeting and the event itself to kind of provide some more information for the makers. But on the day of the event itself, we actually have a check in with the teams. So the teams are working during the morning, but then at one point in time where all the nonprofit's come in, and they meet with their teams, and they divide up and kind of chat with them. The way that I like to do it when I'm planning it is we have different checkpoints throughout the day, where a nonprofit comes in, meets with their team and the team shows them typically a couple variations of things to get their feedback. So it's like a good 30 minute session, sometimes a little bit longer, like let's get feedback, let's get them first impressions. Also gives the nonprofit a chance to say if they need anything else to give that to the maker team in between the check in and later in the day. But there is there is definitely that one in person time for feedback. And there's also opportunities throughout the day where the nonprofit's are available via the phone, or they can come in and meet briefly if they need to. So there's certainly opportunity to communicate during the day. And there's one kind of designated time when we do a big check in.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 17:00

Okay, great. This is like the the collaboration between the designers and the nonprofit staff. But for example, if you have a branding project and then want the feedback from the actual audience, maybe a donor, or maybe the actual the user, or the beneficiaries,. Have you considered that into these kind of projects? or maybe the NGO is the one that has the final saying of these kind of branding projects.

S

Sarah Obenauer 17:34

So what we do, whenever we asked them to apply with the project, there's a certain expectation that they thought through the project, that there's been a certain amount of or will be a certain amount of like research and preparation for it. So I think with like a website is a really good example of that. So there's a certain level of expertise that the makers can and should provide, guiding them on, Okay, well, you don't need 20 different tabs at the top. And here are things that work and don't work for websites. And here's what we've seen from our research and our expertise. But then, on the nonprofit end, there should be a level of like we've talked to our audience and they know what they struggle with. We took on a project for very affordable veterinary services. And they were just having a lot of complaints. Will have a lot of issues with the website in general, but a lot of complaints over scheduling and like preparations for surgeries and that sort of thing. And so they really collected that information from their existing audience, of followers that were really struggling with. And really passed that on to the makers team. And, I think the same thing exists, when we're interviewing them, we want to make sure that the person

that we're interacting with is prepared with the project, that they have final say, that they are decision makers, they can make the call. And I think that's also a key to implementation because if they're not the person, then they really don't have any control over saying you can do this or this is what I like. And then making sure that they're the person or will be directly working with the person that will be implementing it. So we do print materials for somebody, that individual should be the person that's getting that stuff printed, and, delivering it and dispersing it or you know, an immediate supervisor. So there's definitely an expectation to do some research on both sides before we get to the day.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 19:57

Yeah, amazing. Great. Nice to hear that. How is the process of defining the outcomes or the goals of the project? I can imagine nonprofits come with a particular project in mind. How does it work?

S

Sarah Obenauer 20:21

We really start that at the interview phase. Something that we see a lot is that somebody will come in, like a branding project and they'll say, our brand is horrible. We need x, y, z. And there's not a lot like they come in very broadly with that. Then, so we really try to dig in asking very specific questions. We have sets of questions that we ask to just understand, like, okay, where does it really stand? Like, what are your issues with the brand? What would you ideally want to see come out of the day, that's like a really big thing we ask in that interview, like if it's something and the only thing that they can see coming out of the day is a project, this would take a good week to complete, we know we can't do that project. So we might have scope and scale out where we might just realize, maybe not this time, we can't do this. So it really starts there, the site leaders getting a really good understanding of what the nonprofits actually want. And then from there, when we do the planning meetings, then we can get into the weeds of what that looks execution wise for the makers. So we do like walking away with what are your ideal deliverables. And then for some of them, because you never know when inspiration will strike. So you might be able to do something very quickly in the day, and have extra time. And so you want to provide something of value. Several projects that we know that could potentially wrap up early, we asked, Okay, what else can we do as part of that as an extension of this project? And so there's sometimes a wish list. Things that are guaranteed.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 22:13

That's a really good idea, actually. And then, have you experienced the fact that maybe

the NGOs could say that the ideas were too disruptive or too crazy for them? Have you had that kind of feedback? Is it common? Or not that much?

S

Sarah Obenauer 22:36

Not really, I think the reason why is because over time we've definitely learned that to be a good collaboration, the nonprofit needs to be a really good partner. So there's so many great causes. So we pick organizations that have such a great impact, they are doing wonderful work in their community. And we get a lot of applications. So we are able to find people that are really, really good partners. And so we try to ask them, how crazy or not crazy can we go? Like, what can we do this? can we play with these color? Is there any kind of language that we can or cannot use? What are the things that we should be thinking about? We really try to get an understanding, because sometimes we'll have groups that are a little more conservative. And so we try to address that meeting and make sure everybody feels good about that. And then we'll have some nonprofits that say you can go crazy, do whatever you want. You know, we're really a brand new thing. And so we haven't had a lot of complaints like this doesn't work for us. And I think the check ins help with that too. Because sometimes you'll still be a couple of iterations to have a final version.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 24:01

Okay, that's great. Coming to the the implementation part. You have this final hour during the make-a-thon when designer present their ideas, and everybody's happy, excited, and then they go home. But, are you tracking the implementation part of it? like at least sending an email one week later to see how the NGO is doing with implementation, or if they actually implemented? Do you have something like that?

S

Sarah Obenauer 24:43

Personally I'm checking in with them, often not right after. I always send an email to all the locations immediately after trying to get feedback from them. And then, I tend to check in about a month out. So that's, it gives people some time to actually have it implemented. And some people can have it implemented super fast, like they're ready on Monday to make it happen. And then some other people may need time because they have to get things printed, or they're waiting for, you know, if it's a thing that's timely, they don't want to launch it too soon, they have a plan for that. So I'll check it a month out. And then typically, between now with one month mark, and three months mark, most things are completely implemented. And so things aren't implemented by then I check in and just see if there are problems that we need to resolve. And so that can be tricky,

because we don't keep all the makers, they are volunteers. And so we have no expectation that they continue on the project. There are some makers that want to continue on the projects, because they really get to know and love their nonprofit, and that's great. But, if there's a project that hasn't been implemented, and there's a way that we can, helping get it implemented, that's something that we strive to do. And a lot of times, it's something really simple. A small little tweak, or maybe they need access to a software. So we try to get, a trial or a free subscription to that software. But we do like to check in and just see how we can support on this project.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 26:25

Okay, great. And do you have like a kind of a percentage? Or number? How many or actually been implemented? Or how many are not? Do you have kind of that data and in your mind to have an idea?

S

Sarah Obenauer 26:49

I would say 80%. Maybe one reason I could potentially say lower than that is because of the first year that we were doing it. We were just still trying to figure out how to do it. I can probably give you a better idea if I take a closer look at it. But I would say somewhere between 80 and 90% mark.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 27:22

Okay. Because of the way you frame the whole program. It looks like is really likely that the suggestions are going to be implemented. So it's it's really well thought in that sense. But what do you think changed from the first year compared with the following years?

S

Sarah Obenauer 27:58

I think a lot of it has to do with experience. Because I would say, every first year event, there's like hiccups, right? Because you're trying to get your flow. Every time we bring in there's a new person working on it, they're trying to figure out who is a good partner, even if we kind of talked to them through it, we try to mentor them and say, Okay, here's the things that we look for in a good project partner, there's just a learning curve to that. It's natural. But I would say our first year, very first year, I was working full time, And most of our volunteers are working full time and doing this on aside. It is just experienced over time, because ultimately, you can't force the implementation factor. Or force somebody to do it. So I think it's just finding the right people and learning over time, what are really good project? What can you actually do in 12 hours. Were the kinds of nonprofits you want

to work with?

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 29:45

Can I have a second? I'm gonna check what else I have here. Because you have already talked about a lot of the questions that I had. While I was reading about your process, it looks like you don't expect the NGOs to be very involved in the process, because they are very busy. So just ask them to come for specific times of the event or being on the phone. Have you had the case with some NGOs want to have a higher level of participation during the process?

S

Sarah Obenauer 30:38

Yeah, I think, they do a lot of the pre work. So you know, they're very present at the planning meeting, and they're very engaged. They definitely work really, really hard. So it's amazing to see. A nonprofits do a lot of that pre work, also doing that application, figuring out what products didn't work, meeting with us for the interview, and then prepping the materials. So personally, it's not that I don't want them there at all. I just know, from being a designer, and also working with developers, it gets very overwhelming to have somebody there. It's just pressure to have somebody that you're doing something for right there. And not seeing that final version of the thing you're doing. So, I haven't had anybody that really want to be there the whole day and I want to be sitting at the table, But we've definitely had people that have stayed longer. I think it's usually like when check in with the team to make sure that they can be helpful, answering questions. I don't want to say you have to go, the team is getting a lot out of it. But we've definitely had times where teams like wanting to get back to work, and we just have to ask them to trust the process.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 32:32

Ok, from the research I've been reading, I've seen researchers suggest that designers ideally should engage their client or the user in the process. For me, it was interesting to ask you how do you bridge that gap between engaging people but also delivering the project on time?

S

Sarah Obenauer 33:09

Yeah, I think that's definitely a thing. I think that some locations really want to have the nonprofit's there longer. I couldn't ever in good conscience say like, yeah, let's have them there. Because I know how I would feel as a designer with such a small time frame. You

realize that you need to dedicate to work.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 33:48

Yes, exactly. Well, I think I have pretty much covered all the areas that I need. Thank you, thank you very much for your time. And then, I was wondering if it would be possible at some point to have some kind of contact with one NGO or one designer to have a better feel about the whole project. I'm trying to have a few case studies from different short term design collaborations. So, if someone would be interested, I will be happy to talking to them.

S

Sarah Obenauer 35:30

Yes, I can definitely do that. There are a few returners. I'm happy to connect you with with one on each party.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 35:52

Great. Thanks, that would be amazing.

S

Sarah Obenauer 35:55

Yeah. Absolutely.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 36:00

Thank you very much, Sarah, for your time. I totally appreciate it. And it was like a perfect research conversation with you.

S

Sarah Obenauer 36:15

Sure, hopefully I help you with your research. So if you have any further question please feel free to reach out.

# Interview Frederik Vincx 1




 Tue, 07/16 11:54PM  49:25

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

work, nonprofits, designer, people, organization, project, design, research, solution, implementation, approach, clear, spent, part, real, tool, specific, plan, volunteer, metrics

## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Frederik Vincx

-  **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:05  
I am in Copenhagen, I am in my student job, but I took a few moments to receive your call. It's really flexible what I'm doing here. Since we are established in a co working space, I was able to book this study room. But thank you. Thank you very much for taking the time.
-  **Frederik Vincx** 00:33  
Of course, my pleasure.
-  **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:38  
Well, as I mentioned in my email when I was reaching out to you, I'm interested in researching on design thinking applied in nonprofits. Specifically, these short term collaborations between designers and nonprofits. I want to research all the things that can happen, the challenges, what are the benefits? What are the experience of designers? What are the aspects that NGOs need to work on in order to get the most benefit out of this? So actually, in this specific part of my journey, as a thesis student, is trying to understand what the situation looks like, and where can I find something to contribute in some way to the existing research on the topic. Actually, I have found reserach mentioning that design thinking is not as developed for nonprofit organizations, because of less focus. Therefore, there is a gap or opportunity into the implementation part of these design projects. There is plenty of research regarding ideation, prototyping, etc, but

when it comes to implementation, there is not that much research there. So that's what I found interesting, especially in the situations like yours, when a designer comes as an external resource. So this one kind of the things that I would like to explore, and then see if its potential correlations that I could research, by interviewing staff from NGOs and designers to try to expand this kind of research. So, generally, this is what I wanted to present to you. About me, I'm a master's student here in Copenhagen Business School, I am studying innovation, entrepreneurship. But I have a background in financial industry, I was working in a bank in the commercial area. I didn't enjoy what I was doing in the bank, So I started looking for something different, something more meaningful. So that's why I decided to come here to Europe, to learn about new things. And here I learned about design. And since I have always been interested in the nonprofits world, I started to think on how can these two things come together? And that's why I am basically here. And yeah, that's pretty much me. And I wanted to mention it before starting our conversation.

F

Frederik Vincx 03:48

Okay, that's good to know. And then why did you decide on the combination of design and nonprofits? was there something specific that led you to make this decision?.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 03:59

Yeah. While I have been studying, I have learned that design is such an excellent tool to generate innovative solutions. Then, I asked myself how design would look like applied into nonprofits. Because I have always been involved with nonprofits. My parents founded a nonprofit back in Mexico, and I also I've been involved in many nonprofits, even though I was working in bank, which is the total opposite. The topic has always been interesting to me. Also, as I mentioned, in my email, I was involved in one design thinking project last semester, it was a service design project in one NGO here in Denmark, and I got curious about the implementation part of the project, because I was not involved there. And let's see what can come up from talking with people with experience in the field.

F

Frederik Vincx 05:15

Good. Now, in this interview order, do you have specific topics you want to go into? what are you trying to get out of this interview?

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 05:27

Yeah, exactly. What I want to get out of this is understanding a little bit about your motivations. And also, I want to talk a little bit about the challenges you face during the

process, specially regarding the implementation phase. So how did you handle that part. I could assume many things, but it will be better to listen from you. We can start with your motivations, I already read your background, but if you want to mention it.

F

**Frederik Vincx** 06:14

It should be clear. Main thing for me is how I found those nonprofits is by just looking around in my own network, and just asking people that I knew that had a job that I thought was meaningful and seeing if I could help them. And that's that, for me as a designer was important enough just to see and look at regular people, if I could call them that way with a job that makes a big difference, and then seeing how my skills can support them. Then, I did this in for organizations, you probably saw that. Each time it went a bit differently, I learned each time how to approach this. And that's why I wrote this lengthy article, I'm trying to understand for myself, like, Okay, so how did this go? What did I do? What was the real workflow? What would I do differently if I would do it again?. So for me, my motivation was to do something useful. And that maybe brings us back to results and implementation. Because I wanted to do something useful, but in the sense of not just temporarily helping out people. But making sure that they could have a solution that works. And in some of the cases, they still don't have a solution. We just brainstormed together and came up with really cool things to do. But then it was up to them to do it. And that is a shame for me that spent so much time with my time, but also their time and come up with things. And then people don't do anything with it. I am very used to it because I spend years in advertising. And that's how it usually works. You come up with concepts, you come up with 20 ideas you present to your team, and the creative director chooses two, and then maybe you need to complete 10 more just throwing away ideas. But as a designer, you need to throw away your ideas a bit, I want to see them come to fruition. That was part of my drive to make real change, make real solutions. Because as a designer what you really want to do is to go like, Look, look, this is what I made. Look how cool it is. In the first ones, I just really had the plan and we think it was more, look what it could be, look, look. They love loved what it could be but not enough to actually do it. So that was a shame. So that was the motivating for me. Maybe to do it again, if you want to make this into a real behavior that more designers do this, you need to get the right feedback, you need to think like okay, it was worth my time. So that last part of getting to be implemented is essential there.

A

**Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 09:51

When you were working in project with fo profit organizations, previosly in your career, How did you face some of the challenges in the process, like the way you interacted with the customers or the users in that case, or how the ideas were developed and

implementation? How were those challenges different compared with the challenges that you face working with nonprofits?

F

Frederik Vincx 10:48

A big aspect aspect was that mostly my previous experience, I worked for companies, which is a big difference. I used to have a software company before that. We made one specific tool for a lot of customers. And it was usually us working, coming up with stuff. And then sometimes talking with clients. Before in advertising, it's usually much more away from the customer, because there's also the client in between. You your client is the client, not the user. And then in advertising the day to day, I don't wanna let you talk to real users. Often, it's just like the clients, Chief of marketing, they are the people that decide. The big difference on the nonprofit is, at least how I did it, I spent time working there. My office was in the nonprofit. It wasn't that design studio and just sitting there coming up with ideas, it was really doing the work with the people and trying to come up with very simple solutions. I think initially, my challenge was to be able to get enough time from the organization. Because if you are, let's say that you're doing it for free, how I did, you are a volunteer. Maybe because they don't pay you they think that your work isn't valuable. It took me a while to realize that my time was very valuable to have a contract with them. Initially, they thought this is serious. We're going to spend this amount of time this many workshops, we need to get the people involved. I made these drawings, the schematics of our structures, the projects, and in the the first two project, I was just messing around a bit. And the first one, I was just sitting there and looking around without a real plan. I was learning along the way. But afterwards, we really had structured approaches, we said, like, Okay, I'm not just a volunteer, no, I'm here as a kick ass designer to help you improve your workflow. And let's really do this. And before, not sure if I can compare it to before. I never did it before when I had my software company, sometimes we just asked clients to come in and we asked him a few questions. Sometimes we went to them. But this link was never so deep. It was a communications agency that we made software for money. I never spend a month working with them getting many, many hours from them. And I'm not sure that this has anything to do with profit versus nonprofit.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:27

Okay, excellent. Yeah. And how how did you feel that that difference? Since it was not something that you were doing usually. How was been there with the organization that is more purpose driven?. They have different incentives while doing things. So how was for you seen that way of doing things?

F

Frederik Vincx 14:54

On a personal level, that it's fun to see that people really appreciate you being there to help them out. That was very open to learning to seeing how they did things, I asked a ton of questions. And I sincerely tried to help them. And in turn, they were just very nice to me, which is also very important. Which seems to be an aspect of this kind of organization that they are very social, very about the soft skills. I think I wrote a part about it. And I had two articles. One is like, why I did this and what I learned. You need both, the soft approach of nonprofits and just being kind to each other listening. People are feeling trying to be nice. You also need to be more like, for profits that are like, okay, what's the ROI? Okay, guys, this meeting is costing us 2,000 euros, let's speed up. But what I have experienced in nonprofits, doesn't matter. If a meeting starts an hour late. Did that answer your question?

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 16:32

It makes sense completely. And I wanted to ask you about your process. You mentioned that you were through your network asking who will be interested in participating in these projects, but in the end, the NGOs or the nonprofits approached to you, or do you approach to them? Because in my case, when I participated in the design project I talked to you about, I approached them. And I think that, since it's for free, they don't feel the need to recover their investment or their money. And they are not that interested in getting the best out of the partnership. So how was for you?

F

Frederik Vincx 17:23

I think it was a mix of both. What really worked for me is that I wrote an initial article that I was gonna stop working in for profits for after 10 years. And then I was going to work for nonprofits. And another was looking for internships. And then a lot of people in my network also introduced me to people. People came to me. Or maybe I just talked to people and then told them to read the article. And I think I was in the local newspaper, they wrote an article about it. And then a lot of people contacted me, a ton of people contacted me even with silly proposals. It seems that didn't make sense at all. That part helped a lot that I had written this down, and I expect that explains that I had a good career already and it was obvious that I knew what I was doing. It might be different if you are student. Now I can come into an organization and they think like, wow, this is a senior designer. He is going to come and help us. He knows what he's doing. And I have this whole set of tools I can use, not just physical tools, but like workshops, other formats that I know. It had credibility, which made it easier for them to trust me. And then it was for me easier to say, this is how we'll do it. Usually, if I do this for a month, it would cost you 15,000 euros. I'm gonna come to this for free today. But we need to do it seriously.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 20:01

How did they react when you came with your scope of work? What do you perceive they felt?

F

Frederik Vincx 20:12

I think they appreciated that I was looking for clarity. For a clear approach. Because something like this is new for them too. So if you don't know what you're doing, it doesn't make it easier. Because they need to help you figure it out. If you're doing an internship that you need to be in the lead. And usually it's different when you do an internship, they are in the lead, and they have to come up with stuff. No, I was in the lead. And I was telling them, okay, this is what the agenda is, then we'll do this, then we do that and we'll need these people. So what was essential, I guess, is having a clear roadmap, so they trust me to lead this. They should just say Okay, this is the plan. Good. And we'll do this and we'll do that. It doesn't require them extra efforts to plan it. It did require some effort from them to do workshops with me. But they were just along for the ride. I think there was an essential part. And that is something that could help. People that want to do this, too, is that they have a certain plan, they have an approach. Maybe that is why I wrote this article. Because I want that when people go that they don't make these mistakes that I made, like the first month, I just spent a month there fixing computers and stuff. I think it is essential that as a designer, you can come in and say my time is valuable. I know yours is too. So let's work on something specific. And this is how we'll do it.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 22:04

And then both parties agreed on how far the design process was going to be, for example, until the beginning of implementation.

F

Frederik Vincx 22:30

I think we used this comparison, or this metaphor of the skateboard and the car a few times. I have a friend, it was a friend of mine. And he was just having a lot of issues with CRM, customer relationship management, too. And he really needed really practical advice on this. It was the project that helps newcomers to Flanders, one of the first projects. There, we did both. We did short term work to solve smaller things. And then we did longer term broad thinking to come up with a new concept. We prototyped the first versions of it. It was two years ago. And they still haven't built it. So it's painful. I spent a month there coming up with it, making a first version. And then I went back few months after to continue building it. And we built the second version of their website with

information about local communities for newcomers. And then were going to continue with it. It was almost ready to roll out. And then there were some more anal people there that said, like, Oh, wait, it needs to be perfect. Okay. No, no, it's not perfect yet. No, no, wait, oh, but we need to take care of this. And all you need to take into account this. And then they started planning too much. So now it still isn't done. Because they just lost all their momentum.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 24:47

And why do you think that happened? Were the people that opposed the implementation of the project involved in the design process?

F

Frederik Vincx 24:59

I think they were initially involved. I think it's just because I left. Because I was there, they needed to work on it. To show me that they were doing the work to it needed to progress on one side left, even though they wanted to do it, just the day to day work got in the way. And maybe this planning was just an excuse for executing. It's safer to say like, Well, wait, let's think about it first. It's much safer to do that than to say like, okay, let's just do it already. And then you need to follow up and keep doing it. Since they get scared. So there needs to be this more follow up from the designer. I'm not sure if it would be a way.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 26:06

Ok, I was also reading in some of the articles of other people that they were mentioning the key part of the leader of the organization has in embracing these kinds of projects, and also not only embracing while the designer is there, but also taking the design recommendation further in order to develop them. How was that kind of interaction between you and the leader or decision makers?

F

Frederik Vincx 26:44

One of the organization's there wasn't a clear leader. Often a very horizontal structure. So there wasn't clear ownership, they were looking at each other a little bit. There was another organization, and then I was working in a departments and the head of the departments, we wanted it. But her boss, wasn't that involved. It's usually about leadership, and just getting them spreading the vision them, setting the agenda, telling everyone that is important. So that actually is the main thing that the thing you're going to make, that it's something that they think really needs to be solved. So they really want to do it and keep doing it. But the hard part is that if it's something so important, can you

get a volunteer to do it in a short amount of time? Can a volunteer can come in to help you a little bit and show you methods of doing it?. And maybe teach design thinking steps and design doing to the team. So they can keep doing it themselves. When I did the internship, I wanted to speak with the head and not just with someone. Because else they would just just drop it. Does that make sense?

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 28:36

Yeah, completely. And I also wanted to ask you about something that you mentioned in your article about the change management, So was that something that you learn in those experiences, or do you already have that concept in mind?, and how to use it to secure the implementation of other projects?

F

Frederik Vincx 29:12

Right now, I continued working on two of the projects. For example, let's have a sheet here, I'll just make it very practical. I'm making a tool now. Let's call it a solution for care homes. So they can collect the stories of the people living there. So they know who they really are. Even if your tool is fantastic. It doesn't matter is the people there don't want to do it or they forget about doing it. So it's all about new habits, new behavior, is all about change management And that is about spending enough time with the organization to understand how they work, why they work in that way. And then trying to see these existing patterns of behavior. And try to change them with your tool or with ways to guide people to your tools. It's all about people doing things in a different way that is better for them. So it's all about trying to understand them. And it just takes time. When we did the thing we built now, is a very logical results from a 10 step service design project. So we built the basic version of it and doesn't work. Even though they said like, yeah, this is super important. This is super important. But in the end it didn't work because their habits don't change. Not because the solution is there means that you're going to do something with it. For example, Imagine I'm gonna get a cardio machine, and I'm going to put it in my basement. And if you ever go to your basements, you're going to stay fat. So you need to get a coach to tell you, Come on, go to the basement. That's why this follow up is super important. Yes. As a designer you can say to the organization. Here you have the plan and go with it. And then it's really shitty if they don't do anything with it. Second thing can be like, Hey, I built a solution. Here's my solution, you can have it. Then if they don't use it, that's also shitty. So it continues. It's like, Look, here's the solution. Let's see what happens. And then you're like, oh, but why don't you use it? And oh, maybe we can change it. I think this follow up process. it probably takes longer than all the other phases of the design thinking process. As a designer you cannot just stop with this is the solution. Maybe it's about redesigning. redesigning how they currently work. And then redesigning how

they're working with what you've made. And again and again and again and again. You can't expect someone to solve something in a month. Or in two months.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 33:56

You are one kind of example of collaboration, you come and you immerse in the organization, one month. But there's also similar approach, which is like this regular design studio, that works for profit, but they also do pro bono work. And they come for maybe two, three weeks in it, and when they finished and since they come to the regular things, they never go into the follow up, Unless they come again and work in that specific part.

F

Frederik Vincx 34:44

For these designers, they are happy just to show beautiful screenshots on their website. And that look how beautiful our solution is. And wow how smart we are, look at the process we followed. But the real case study or the real screenshot should be about the usage numbers. And about better behavior, new behavior, about business goals being met.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 35:19

Have you included in one of your design projects, some kind of these business goals? For example, now that I think about it, when I was working in these projects about how to improve the experience of the volunteers in one organization, because they were facing this dropout rate that was super high. So if you translate that into one business goal, you should be like, the dropout rate was 50%, after three months, so maybe after the project and a considerable time, the drop out rate decreased to 20%. Did you have that thing in mind at some point?

F

Frederik Vincx 36:00

Only now, since a few months, I started on this impact metrics. And we haven't implemented it yet with clients, or potential users. But is the plan now to have a really simple impact framework, where we just asked the users on a scale of one to five, how much happier are you now? You said, it might be useful that in the initial meetings with the clients, that you define these metrics, and that you try to improve them. And then you can see like, Oh, we didn't do it yet, we need to continue. Because now the goal is to show something cool at the end to hand in a That could be key, For protis get a design agency or Development Agency. And they want to increase the conversion rates of their

homepage, a clear goal, like look, you want to get a better Facebook ads, and you want to sell so many of your design shoes or whatever. Similarly, initial KPIs and then for impact measurement would be ideal that goes hand in hand with having a specific thing that you've come to solve, making it an important thing, but then also asking of the organization to have this clear metrics so you have this baseline. And that is your challenge. The example you gave of the studio, you said maybe just an example they they, they spend three weeks on it. Maybe it doesn't need to be three weeks, but it can be a week. And then measure measure measure another week. Just trying to go for real change. And not just for producing pretty stuff. That could be instrumental. Upfront impact metrics.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 38:38

Okay. And about your impact metrics, Have you develop them yourself? Are you looking into some research from some other studios doing your this kind of approach?

F

Frederik Vincx 38:52

I took a course on this, which is called [impactwidars.eu](https://impactwidars.eu). I'll put it in the chat here. There's a chat box in hangout. There is an English version available. You can make the project social impact visible. So that might be important to really define that.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 39:56

You mentioned like you were, you're working in two projects. What about the second one? What are you doing in that now? It doesn't have anything to do with the initial customer anymore. Exactly. The second one was also the same?.

F

Frederik Vincx 40:39

it's not a spinoff, it's something related to it. It's also in primary schools, that it deals with slightly different research question. But just because my interest was on this area of primary school, and my network grew there, this just this opportunity came because it was a hackathon. At the end of last year. In Belgium, we have this huge hackathon called Hack Belgium. And there were maybe 1000 people. And the team in the education track, they won the education track. And they presented on stage and I really loved their ideas. I was in another team, we had a shitty idea. Two days wasted almost three days of wasted. But then I saw their idea in this area that I got fund of. And I wanted to help them. So I volunteered to help them. And the two people that were running it or that came up with it, they had full time jobs there. Now I'm mostly doing two, three days per week. And they are

just doing their job. So I kind of took over their idea. But it's a bit of a different one. We don't have clear impact metrics yet. But that should be something we will explore.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 42:24

We're coming to the end of their time that you allocated for the conversation. So I don't want to take more of your your time. And yeah, before closing in, I would like to thank you for your valuable time, I will go a little bit more in depth in reading again all of your posts and cases storys that you mentioned. So you don't mind, I can maybe at some point, after my initial research come up with a few more questions, more specific and tailored to the implementation part. Because I will say that there is something that could be researched in that part, and I can contribute in some way. So I will start interviewing a few more people, from designers to also nonprofits, but also to academics and practitioners. And then maybe I could come with some additional questions.

F

Frederik Vincx 43:14

I would be happy to answer more questions. And even if you want to speak with some of the nonprofit's I'd also be happy to give you their contact info.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 43:27

Amanzing, that would be great. I will let you know once I have something solid to research on.

F

Frederik Vincx 43:40

You're welcome, you seem seem to be on track here. Very valuable and very specific already. I know, it took me ages to come up with a research idea.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 43:56

I've been thinking on this for a while. And it also came to my mind because of the project I talked to you about. I'm pretty sure they're not going to use anything of what I did, even though they loved it. I made a lot of mistakes and everything. But now, those mistakes and also with the mistakes of professional people I can make something valuable for someone else.

F

Frederik Vincx 43:57

I think that could be useful. Maybe one more thing I can show you. You might know this already, but there is an organization called make a mark. Two months ago, I spent a whole day during the weekend with a lot of designers, to make solutions for local nonprofits. And they do this very different approach with a similar idea. And they do it mostly in New York, and Brussels. That organization has similar questions, we spend a day designing stuff for an organization. But will they do something with it? During this day, will you come up with a plan? Or will you really make something useful? is it possible in a day? So that might be an interesting one to approach?

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 45:41

Yeah, amazing. I will reach out to them, of course.

F

Frederik Vincx 45:49

I think I saw the results of at the end, we had 12 teams or something. And it really, really helped to nonprofits a lot. And for us designers, it was not a lot of work. We had initial meeting, and then we had spent a day there. And that was it. We didn't do something really big. It is a great idea to work together and make an event out of it. Because in this way, all the organizations have created a clear briefing, so structured.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 46:55

I imagine that the organizations apply to participate in these things. So basically, they feel that they add something for they want to get the most profit out of it. So they invest a lot of their energy and time.

F

Frederik Vincx 47:08

That's it. So the solution was more like a sneaker logo, let's redesign the homepage, things like that. And there are more organizations that do things like this. One thing you might come across already is IDEO, of course. There's another one.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 48:54

Okay, great. All right. Thank you very much for your time.



Frederik Vincx 49:13

It was a pleasure. Bye. See you.

# Interview Pepijn Hellebuyck

Tue, 07/16 11:55PM 27:23

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

organization, collaborations, project, people, designer, programmer, design, tools, implement, newcomers, developing, communication, competencies, month, idea, continue, frederick, updated, interview, process

## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Pepijn Hellebuyck

**A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 00:02  
Thank you. Thank you very much. We should get going, Hey, you just came home, right? So are you available? Okay, okay. Great. Thank you. Thank you very much for your for your time. I can start the conversation by letting you know what my project is about. It's my master thesis project. And then we can start with a few questions about what what was your collaboration about with Frederik. And then we start from that if your agree

**P** Pepijn Hellebuyck 00:44  
Okay, great.

**A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 00:45  
Well, my name is Alejandro Tellez. I come from Mexico, but I'm a student here at Copenhagen Business School in Copenhagen, Denmark. I'm in my last semester of my master's in innovation and entrepreneurship. In the final part of the master is writing a thesis. In the in this case, I decided to write my thesis about these short term design collaborations between designers and nonprofits. Particularly, I'm interested in the implementation side of these collaborations. Because what I've seen is that most of the times, the implementation is developed by the NGO alone. Obviously, because of the time of the designer is limited. So my idea is to research that topic, in order to try to propose

something, how these collaborations can be improved in general. Even though maybe Frederik's collaboration worked really well, many other design collaborations are not that worth it or successful, because in the end those are not implemented. There are many beautiful things produced by designers but never implemented. So there's a topic that triggered my interest to start researching on. So that's pretty much it. So far, I've interviewed another organization like yours, but I understand you don't work anymore there, right?

**P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 02:30  
Yes.

**A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:33  
Okay, so yeah, My idea is to continue researching these these collaborations in different countries, the duration of the collaboration, the topic, and everything else.

**P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 02:50  
Okay. Nice.

**A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:51  
Thank you. Okay. And we can start by, it's probably good to remember and for me to understand better. What was the aim of the project that Frederik was working with you in the rotation?

**P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 03:08  
I think we had different things. And we did them both. So my aim was a bit no actually... Okay. Sorry, long time ago, it's two years ago. So the aim of the project was to add general communication tools to improve communication and efficiency in the organization. And the other idea was to design a welcome conversation for newcomers in Belgium. Did Frederik mention you something?

**A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 03:39  
Yes, actually I read one of the articles that he published about the outcomes of the project. It was like these cards to make the process easier for the local leaders to do to develop this process of engaging with the newcomers.

- P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 03:59  
Ok, actually it was the beginning of this year of Frederik's volunteering. So he just came with us for one month, I think, or a little longer. The first time he did mainly worked around the communication, and then we already start developing this idea of like a welcoming conversation. And then he came back, I think, six months later with a programmer.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 04:19  
Okay, nice,
- P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 04:20  
There were two parts. The first, because we were a growing organization and everything had to change, it was more about improving our communication, our tools, because we were still using old tools. And then we wanted to work on this welcome design prototype. But before the communication part needed to be done. This first step took like one month or something. That's why we had a second part.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 04:46  
Oh, excellent. And then how did you come up with the idea of partnering up with Frederick? Because he was in the sabbatical year. So as I read from his article, he just kind of look for organizations to partner up with, but I don't know how was it specifically in your case?
- P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 05:02  
I already knew Frederik and I talked to him, like, okay, we need some experts, and then I just propose it to the board of my organization. And they said, Okay, let's go for it. We tried it out. The first time was for free and the second time, we actually also paid the programmer
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 05:25  
okay, and what was your role in the organization, in the moment when you were working together,
- P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 05:33

We were doing a bit of everything because I was coaching. but maybe I will explain you the situation to understand what we were doing. So we are an NGO, and we work with newcomers in general students, job seekers or migrants. And the first thing we want to give migrants is a first job, and the idea is refugees help refugees. So I have a team of five people from different countries in the middle east, and you can go and they help people that are just arriving here in their mother tongue. So they explain how it works, how going to the doctor, going to the dentist, whatever, going to get your papers, going to the school, for tickets, that kind of stuff. And we were growing, like when we started, we were like 5 in the team and two staff. And now we have 50 people and 10 staff or something. So our communication needed to go different and he helped us mainly with installing gmail, all this kind of stuff, and also with, what was the name, this platform that communicates,,,

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 06:47  
Slack, something like that.

P

Pepijin Hellebuyck 06:51  
Yes, Slack, Gmail, and then also we didn't have smartphone. So we bought the smartphones, we installed all the apps, we did an internal website with all the information for the new people that are working iwht us. And then the other thing most important was like the registration, because every time somebody does something with a client, we need to register that. So we lost a lot of time but we improved it with Airtable. It was like from back in the 80s. with smartphones or computers in one month we updated all this kind of stuff. And at the same time, we were looking to renew on of our projects. And that's the welcome conversation. And then we had the idea, okay, actually, it's always the same information to give. So maybe we can make a website or digital website that we can use. And that you can go and use it in your own language to check all the information.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 07:49  
And then when you started like the project, how did you agree on the goals of the project? Okay, we need to focus on communication. And then in the second part in the other part, how was that process? did you agree on specific deliverables or something like that?

P

Pepijin Hellebuyck 08:04  
It was first necessary to work on the communication, otherwise, we could not even make the platform work if there are no tools in house doesn't make sense to make a website to produce without tools. We used this designing schedule from Google, I think. it was like

steps and then we let everybody think what was possible. So we put post its on the wall. I think everybody that was involved, me, the other board member, the director, the clients, and even also some workers. Then, we put some signs and then we had to vote for the ones we liked the most.

**A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 08:55  
Perfect, and then talking about the beginning of the design process, how was it?, was Frederik there the whole month, at the same time the office was opened?, How were the dynamics on that?

**P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 09:11  
The first time he was in the office three days a week during the first two or three weeks because he was also working in another project. He met everybody there and then we started with all the administrative process. And Frederik was already proposing some fantastic stuff.

**A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:40  
Okay, was someone directly responsible or working together with Frederik full time, did you assign someone to work with him? Or it was more like an independent task, how was it?

**P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 09:56  
It was an independent task and he was with different people, but no one completely dedicated to work with Frederik

**A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 10:07  
Okay. When he was trying to design these new ideas and everything, how was the engagement or the involvement from the people of the organization, and also from the newcomers, did he interact directly with them? Or it was more through the organization that he got that input?

**P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 10:37  
In the beginning it was most from us than from them, but then he got input from them also.

- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 10:42  
Okay, to have their their feedback, what do you think about these these? Are these? Okay, perfect. And do you know if he besides talking with staff of the organization and talking with newcomers, did he also talk or was engaged with some other stakeholders, external to the organization? I don't know, maybe some authority.
- P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 11:04  
I don't think so, not. Because this whole integration sector was completely new.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 11:08  
So there was no one you could talk from the context, the environment, if you want to say,
- P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 11:15  
I don't understand your question. You mean organization or you mean...
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 11:19  
No, for example, imagine that you as an organization are regulated by some government body, that maybe the designer can go to these stakeholders, maybe that authority wouldn't agree with one project or proposal.
- P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 11:36  
No, we were working independently.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 11:40  
Okay. there are some some where you need not only to ask people in the organization or the beneficiaries, but also from the outside of the organization to get a proper understanding of the whole situation. During the design process that he conducted, did you see any challenges in the way that he was working? for example, the kind of mindset the organization had, at that moment when he comes with a different kind of way of doing things?
- P** Pepijin Hellebuyck 12:19

Challenges. No, I actually see only opportunities, and I think this is the future. Knowing how to work using design, but you need to stick to it, it's like a program, it's an integration, or it's a social problem, and we see it only from the social work. But there are other, there are other ways to look to it, the technology can help also, communicating better can help. I think this is the future. And the organization also believed it, that's why we involved also a programmer next time. It was not a lot of success at all, but we tried to continue.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 12:55

Okay, yeah, it's a transition to go in these kind of design approach, it could take many iterations to do it, and then you can develop competencies in that area.

P

Pepijin Hellebuyck 13:12

Actually now we work a lot with consultants. Before we didn't do it, but because of this positive experience we now work with consultants from different levels. It was a good start for the NGO to work this way.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 13:28

Okay, can you think about some of the differences of working with financial consultants and a designer, because of their different approaches to solve problems? Can you think about some of the similarities and differences that you perceived? So can you see some differences or similarities in the way they work? And also like the outcome of the projects, which one was quite easier to implement?

P

Pepijin Hellebuyck 14:21

Yes, they were completely different, Because it's a social sector. Similarities, there is nothing coming to my mind now.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:47

Getting back to this idea of a financial consultant, maybe they have their own way of thinking more in terms of the for profit sector. But then when that person comes to work for a nonprofit project is a different mindset. Then they need to prioritize the social work, and the impact over other aspects. So did you see some kind of issue or some kind of challenge to integrate the recommendations in those kind of projects or in Frederik's project?

P Pepijin Hellebuyck 15:32  
That was really not our goal to make money. We're nonprofit organization.

A Alejandro Tellez Becerra 15:51  
Okay. Perfect. Thank you. At the point that Frederick left the project, or finished the project, what was needed to be done afterwards? there were some parts of the implementation that needed to be carried out by the organization? How was that part?

P Pepijin Hellebuyck 16:08  
The first part of the second part?

A Alejandro Tellez Becerra 16:11  
if you cannot explain both, please.

P Pepijin Hellebuyck 16:14  
Ok, the first part, we just started the new process, and he just showed the new tools, and then it was on to implement them. And for us, there were the basics of our communication. So we begin our trainings. I added somebody to take this task over from Frederick, and we get the necessary trainings for our staff but also for newcomers. Now we give workshops about digital competencies. So this is something else and that, for example, the value of registration, we follow it up, and it completely changed the way we talked with clients. Because before we printed everything, we send it in an envelope, and now they just have a link and they can see what is done.

A Alejandro Tellez Becerra 17:02  
Was that difficult to implement? Was a learning curve easy to overcome? How was it?

P Pepijin Hellebuyck 17:12  
It was kind of difficult, because of the complex system of airtable. I mean, it's easy, but you need to build early, it's a tool, but you still need to build your own registration system. Yes. So we had to think about later. We still had to think about how we gonna build this but without Frederik we had never known about these tools.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 17:37

But in the end, was it properly implemented after learning how to do it? or was there any issue?

P

Pepijin Hellebuyck 17:44

Sometimes we had to ask him some questions. But he helped us with this. But the other thing that he was aiming at, the welcome conversation we didn't continue with that because it was not the right time and we were growing from 5 to 50 people so, everything had to change. So there were other priorities, financial management, how to tackle the market. Then creating another tool that also need to be updated on a lot of content, it was extra work for us. and we don't have either the competences nor the time at that moment for it. So just had to slowly stop the project.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 18:31

Then, at the time that Frederik kept developing the welcome conversation project, it was something that made it look interesting. But then at which point, did you realize that you cannot continue, because there were many other things, changes in priorities?. How that happened? How did you come up with that realization?.

P

Pepijin Hellebuyck 18:58

We realized that before, but also when this programmer came, it's was also like being available. I mean, when an expert such as Frederick says, Okay, I'm coming for one month, you want to be available because you know their services cost a lot of money. So it was more about being available. And then it's okay, let's go for it. But unfortunately, it was not the right time because we realized that it would be difficult to update this oldest project. But it was still a prototype. I mean, we had an idea, but we didn't know for sure how it would look like. We were talking with our clients to see, Are you interested in this and people who are interested in this, but after this one month, we could not show them that the prototype was working. So we could not ask them like, okay, you can invest in this, and we're going search somebody else who can do this for us, because this was next our opening of the front desk.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 20:01

Coming to the decision makers in your organization, where they always involved during the process or at least consulted?



Pepijin Hellebuyck 20:12

Yes, we have to have a small group from the staff organization and Frederik was coming to present his ideas or what we discussed with our team, and then he also had to work on teambuilding exercises every month, where he presented sometimes to the 50 people so they can give feedback.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 20:37

Okay, great. Okay, let me just check here a few questions that I am missing maybe. Before engaging with this collaboration with Frederick, Were you already knowledgeable about design as a tool as a technique?



Pepijin Hellebuyck 20:59

Not really.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 21:00

Okay, and how do you think the organization perceived this kind of new mindset or way of doing things? Was it possible, negative?



Pepijin Hellebuyck 21:12

It was very positive, because this is the way we're continuing now. I think this is also the way forward, which will be in the future, like short term investment of a lot of people coming together and that they go their own way again. But the sustainability that's another question, of course, This is like what we know, this is like, what we really wanted is now in still there, but the designer has also other ideas or other interests for himself. And if this is not fully supported, or it's not the right time, then it will not work. Like what happened to the welcome conversation. He really wanted to push it. And we also really wanted to push it but it was not the right time. And we didn't have the resources ready.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 22:03

Afterwards, did you as an organization invest in developing these competencies inside the organization? Maybe, I don't know, training people in the organization to learn to do design thinking or hire someone that was trained?



Pepijin Hellebuyck 22:22

Not really in design think. It was more in communication competencies.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 22:26

That's interesting. My last question was, in general terms, what did you get out of this experience, but you already mentioned that it was positive, and then it became the way forward in many aspects, these collaborations, but also the way to approach problems. I think I covered pretty much everything you do help me a lot with the way that you were answering the question. So it was super clear. I think I have really, really good information for continuing my project. So far, I've only interviewed you, as an organization and other organization called Maks. And from what I perceive both experience has been wonderful, right?. But I'm still missing these kinds of collaborations where the outcome or the process it was not that impactful in a positive way. So I'm still missing that part. I'm still conducting interviews, I'm looking for people to interview. but I am in that process at the beginning of the project.



Pepijin Hellebuyck 23:49

The first project was very useful, but the other one didn't work and it costs us a lot of money because we paid the programmer for one month and all these investments from our side, and there is no outcome.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 24:05

Exactly, you have both in that sense. The way that Frederick approached this kind of project, where he invested a lot of time for a short-term collaboration, because the normal timeframe is, for example, in one week or in one weekend to do these kind of projects, and then even the results are way way less, because you cannot understand the organization you cannot engage with the right people because of lack of time, you cannot understand them. There are many aspects, right. So that is what I what I'm also trying to cover. I found one organization, which is called Make a Mark, that they do this kind of hackathon thing where they bring together 10 organizations and 50 designers and then they form teams, but they only work during 12 hours. And that's it. So and then I will also interview them to try to find the differences. I can assume that it makes more sense to work for longer periods. But for NGOs that cannot afford paying a designer to come for one month, then it will make sense to have these short term collaborations and then my ideas is to provide some guidance. Okay, if you are going for this short term you need to include these things to have the most positive outcome.



Pepijin Hellebuyck 25:37

Ok, keep me updated.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 25:40

That's my goal to to share my learnings after I hand in the thesis in September. So yes, of course I will give you the full description not only of this interview but all also from the outcome of the other interviews.



Pepijin Hellebuyck 25:55

Hack Belgium is exactly that think you are talking about.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 26:08

Amazing. Yes, I will google them. Open innovation festival. Great

# Interview Veerle van Kets

 Tue, 07/16 11:55PM  37:56


## SUMMARY KEYWORDS


project, organization, designer, visual, working, changed, interviews, collaborations, intervention, needed, ngo, clients, problem, left, happening, government, implement, person, video, team


## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Veerle van Kets

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 **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:03  
Hi, how you doing? I'm fine. Thank you. Yes, this is way easier, actually. Thank you. Thank you very much for your time.

 **Veerle van Kets** 00:20  
No problem. So what are the questions?

 **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:23  
Yes. Well, let me just introduce myself. And let's try to make it as smooth as possible. So as you know, my name is Alejandro Tellez, I come from Mexico, and I am currently studying a master's degree in Copenhagen, Denmark. It's a master in innovation and entrepreneurship. And as a part of my master's thesis, I want to research on these kind of projects as the one that you participated with Frederik, this kind of design collaborations between a non profit and a designer. Actually, the topic that I am specifically interested is what happens when they decided to leave the project. So what's the thing that happens afterwards? And that's because actually, in one of the courses that I took last semester, I did kind of a similar thing. I approached an NGO, I work with them, but I felt curious about what's happening after those collaborations ended. So does the NGO implemented know why?. So all of this is what I want to do research. And actually you are my first interviewee as a non profit. So thank you, thank you very much for your time.



Veerle van Kets 01:38

No problem. Okay. I've been working myself long years as a consultant. So normally what I did I want to explain you today, because it's different with intervention of Frederik. Normally you take different points in the year when you work with the organization. So then you have another type of implementation. Because you have a normal process. It's more intense. And now you have evaluations and similar things. That didn't happen with Frederik because we didn't pay him. Frederik took a sabbatical and he came to us, and he said on month for you. That was during the holidays. When I arrived back from holidays, Frederik was there sitting there and actually, we told that he would do something different. So we have to renegotiate focus. Once that was done, I was really amazed, that's also why I said no problem for an interview, because he is really, really good. I've been working myself in the field for years. And what Frederik did at that moment, I was really amazed because, no friction. He came in, in a bad timing. Nevertheless, he was able to bring the team and myself to make the time to work on the issue. What is this about? And we also had like, three different levels. Because we're hearing a lot of things. I was a teenager, and I think I was doing a good job and Frederik he has a lot of skills in IT. So he also saw things that we needed just because of his background. For example, maybe I should describe you a little the settings. I was leading a team of social workers helping out people looking for work. We get money from the government for that. But they you need to read a register every paper every client you have. The government workstation system is very slow and inaccurate. We couldn't work with that for a good following up system. And he saw that and I said to him, Do you know something? And then he came up with the software package we introduced it. it's really successful and still in use. So that's the first intervention he did. We didn't talk about that in advance. That was just an extra because he was there and he was looking and really listening what we needed but the focus, the main focus was digital video interviews but it wasn't working very well. And we were wondering why it was not working. So we needed more people in the NGO with a holistic mindset to see what all the possible entries of the problem were. I said to him, that he could closely work together with one of the team members in a duo to go on it so that one of my members would be implicated 100%. Which is also very important for the process afterwards. And actually, there were three things. First of all, we needed to interview the employers to see if they would like to receive those kind of videos and the ones who we were making if they were adequate or not. So he went with existing types of videos we made through the different employers. That was Frederik and the team member take I assigned him. They did more things. And then finally, they came up with the format that was adapted for the employers and...



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 06:09

Right. Right. Sorry, I couldn't hear you. Do you still hear me?.

V

Veerle van Kets 07:14

Yeah, I couldn't hear the last 20 seconds. So he tried to make one example, himself. And then he found out the tools we developed weren't finished yet. It was much harder than he thought. So then he left. He only had like three weeks in a block, And then one appointment afterwards, because it was free time. He had a lot of projects running. But nevertheless, it was really useful. And it also was very useful, because he could. The way he left it was in a PowerPoint presentation, which was really clear. So I could easily explain the whole process afterwards to the other staff of the NGO. So something else he did, which was really, really good. And he's still working is. that we explained him that we needed some visuals, because in my head was very clear what we were doing. But it was very hard to explain that to clients who were illiterate and low indicated. They don't have much skills on the languages. And he drew a visual, and we still use every day that. The digital video, I don't know, but it doesn't have anything to do with his intervention, but with the fact that the government changed his politics again, And now we had to see almost triple the number of persons for the same money. So we depended on the budget and there was no time allowed anymore to the videos. We did it in a new program where we could find funds. Also I was looking for funds on European level, which I couldn't find. So that didn't work out very well. But that was just nothing to do with his intervention. It's not because we didn't understand it, or it wasn't accurate, that he didn't have any follow up. It was because of changes of government policies, we leaving the team, the new project, the funding I couldn't find on the European level. and when I left the team, I did put it in a new program, but the person who followed myself had some problems on that. And most of our team members are leaving. So the person, for example, was doing together with Frederik, she also left organization already. So didn't work out but that was not because of his intervention.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 10:46

Yeah. So yeah, I'm particularly curious in what you mentioned, and regarding the. Because you are direct consultant, you know that this kind of transformation of change management issues take time. So it's difficult to expect a lot about these short term interventions, even though one month is a lot of time compared with other kinds of interventions. There are some organizations that just gather like three or four designers for one weekend and help one NGO. So imagine this is this is really short. But in the case of Frederik and the organization, it was like way longer. So that's why I'm particularly interested in these kind of projects, like the short term ones, because for NGOs, as they cannot pay for the service, it's difficult that they can expect for long term commitment from professional designers.

- V** Veerle van Kets 11:42  
the biggest advantage for me and that's why I said he came in for the video. But what is still use today is the visual he made of process just by interviewing us. Because he interviewed us as a team, we got a very clear picture. What are we doing exactly when the client arrives and knocks on the door and when he leaves after one year, what happens? Okay. And although he was very, even by doing this exercise, it wasn't very intense on time, it was really useful. And he made that visual and that's something, a capacity we don't have in the house.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 12:36  
Yes, of course.
- V** Veerle van Kets 12:39  
Because I've been working as a consultant myself, I do know how to work with different methods but I don't know anything about these visuals. So that visual was so good and it was so clear because then you know it. You understand each other before you talk, but then by making the visual, it became much clearer and we had another discussion afterwards and then he got it finally right and everyone spoke the same language, almost in the same. So that was really, really good because he's smiling knowledge of IT, he said, Do you know the name again, of the software?
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 13:27  
Airtable or something?
- V** Veerle van Kets 13:28  
Yes and we said, No, and he just in one day, not even, and that changed the everything because we have the capacity, that's also important. It was really easy in finding out new software's, and, you know, finding your way in how it works. And if we had a question, maybe once or twice, we called Frederik for something stupid in the beginning, and that was it.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:08  
Okay.



Veerle van Kets 14:09

And I'm working on airtable, we are paying our monthly fee. Because at the beginning, you get it for free, of course. And that changed the whole quality of our teamwork. So it's really to know, what is there that is missing, the missing link, and the capacities of Frederik without knowing in advance and he saw what we needed. And I wouldn't thought about asking that or even know where to go with that question.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:51

Yes, and actually is super interesting what you mention because a good designer as Frederik is, they are like, their mindset is that a problem finding. So they are looking for problems everywhere they go. So even though he had already a problem to solve, which was the video demo thing, he was listening to all of your comments. And he said, Oh, here the is a problem that I can help solving. So it is already in their mind. This is amazing. This kind of designers that even though it's not their task, they find their way because it's natural for them.



Veerle van Kets 15:25

And that's what I really like because I work as solution focus consultant, which is always looking what's happening already good, what's not working, and what could be saved from the past, really working and look to the successes and things like that. And he did a lot of that as well. But what's different with my approach, and I really appreciate that's why I said to him I want to follow courses like this. But working as a consultant. I don't have the time. But it's my next step, is following design courses, because it's by drawing out something and making a visual that's such a clear language for team someone. And he did that on different levels. He did that on the the handouts we giving now every day to the clients to explain how the service work. It's just one a one paper. But he also did that in the final video, PDF we he explained the whole process. So I can go in turn, within the structure. So that made it that it could stay?



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 16:51

Yes, of course.



Veerle van Kets 16:52

And that didn't pause the project. He didn't made us at all dependent of him. He gave us tools. Really tactical tools. Like the visual.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 17:13

Yeah, that's fantastic. Because what I've seen in other projects is like sometimes designers come up with so fancy or so difficult to implement solutions. But maybe, obviously, because he interviewed you and the organization, he knew what you can actually handle to implement. So that's why he made it graspable for everyone in the organization to use it. So that's, that's a plus in that sense, which is, it can sound normal and that everyone should do it. But it's not as normal as we can imagine.

V

Veerle van Kets 17:43

Yeah, It's like you go to the therapist, 50% of the success in the context. Frederick was there. He looked and he was not a I know it all and I will tell you. it just really goes into it. It looks even. He asked me a place to sit in the office, so he could hear and see what's happening also, you know, and he was really approachable for everyone. He didn't make any distinction, any jerarquical distinction. So all that made everyone was confident with him, could talk openly with him. And he could pick up and see things, and he was there just available. He was there. I'm here for you, whatever you ask me. I will try to help you out.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 18:52

Okay. Great. particular questions regarding some assumptions that I have not not specifically about this project, but the general, for example, at the at the beginning of your collaboration? Did you agree on a specific outcomes or or goals for the project, specifically, of the video demo? Did you agree? Okay. Like at the end of this month, we're going to cover these handout and these visual aids or everything?

V

Veerle van Kets 19:20

Yes, in the beginning, but then we found what was intentionally asked wasn't working at all. So werenegotiated that. And he said, Okay, no problem. And then, because you need very clear a project owner within the organization and that was me. So we changed it for someone which was only according to my team today, Because at the beginning the it was something for general for the NGO, but then I was not allowed to speak and handle for the general. So if you really keep the right person in the right project. So that we negotiated in the beginning. Because it's not an official and paid collaboration, we didn't make a written agreement.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 20:27

Great. Then coming to the the engagement with people within the organization and the project. So I say heard, Frederik inteeracted with the users in this case that people looking for a job. He engaged with you and the staff in the organization to understand how the dynamics and everything. Also he engaged with the possible clients, the companies, as you mentioned, they went to twice to ask for their feedback. Who else did he engaged with, in some way, like interviews outside these three players?.

V

Veerle van Kets 21:07

So that was it. External stakeholders and internal persons. Yeah, that was it.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 21:19

Okay. Do you think like in the approval or implementation of this specific project, did you need any kind of authorization from someone else outside the key players that I mentioned? I don't know. It just it's a general question about your specific view. But imagine, you needed approval from a government body for this thing to be implemented.

V

Veerle van Kets 21:43

No, but we developed a kind of business sheet but that was then the next step to do good, to see how could It be founded and so that's what I'm trying to look on European level, which was rejected, because the project wasn't enough developed because it wasn't transnational. I didn't have my transnational partners yet, and so they said, I'm sorry, we only go with those that have partnerships. So, what he did, at the end, he wasn't going to those stakeholders, but he also made the visual of a business plan, to see what are the steps next to take.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 22:40

Okay, right. Yes. And as you mentioned, also, there was this change in the regulation where you had the same funds, but you needed to attend more people. So it's difficult to manage that.

V

Veerle van Kets 22:52

Yeah. We didn't know that in advance because we were negotiating with the government about that and the people were talking to us saying that it would be okay but then the

directors decided differently. So we were really surprised. That was like, more less six or seven months after Frederik left. Situations were changing and that is not exclusive to NGOs, It's like a market also changing.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 23:26

Yes. Okay. Great. I mean, also other thing that I've read in literature is about the importance of having the directors, or the C level of the organization involved to be like the champions of the of these kind of projects. So in this case is super clear that you were heavily involved. But you told me that you left the organization, but when he left, how long did it take you to leave the organization?

V

Veerle van Kets 23:57

That was like 14 months later. So I had the time to implement the airtable, and all the consequences of it because it was a lot of consequence for the following of your personal files, of the clients, the colleagues working in between, because they were sharing cds to airtable. It changed everything because we wanted to work in a certain way and we couldn't make it easily and that you know, why mailing CDs to each other. That didn't work and that software changed so much and so that's still there because it's sustainable. The thing to explaining the process also. But the video, as I said, that doesn't even have not much to do with that the markets changed. But of course, if you're an entrepreneur, you're always start looking again, for new opportunities. And that's not happening at the moment.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 25:19

Yes, of course. Okay, let me just check if I have something more here. Okay. I'm also curious about the four your as an organization collaborating in this kind of partnerships I can imagine that it could represent some kind of challenge or obstacles because maybe you have different mindsets. Did you perceive something as a challenge? Not in a negative way by something that you can learn out of it?

V

Veerle van Kets 25:50

I could learn a lot out of it. He didn't have any status and it was easy to talk to him. I don't know. No. It wasn't any difficulty. It was the smoothest collaborations ever.

A Alejandro Tellez Becerra 26:28  
Okay.

V Veerle van Kets 26:34  
With me with the members of my team, he was lovable for everyone. There were no difficulties. Because I can imagine working now is also having a consultant with really strong in analyzing things, but I think is really key in accompanying the persons and our team had a lot of. Frederik had a 10 out of 10 because of his knowledge, of his attitude, of his approach, of the tools he used. For example, he said, Look, this is the book I read and he shared everything.

A Alejandro Tellez Becerra 27:32  
Yeah, that's, yeah, that's the beauty of working like in these kind of projects that you don't, you don't need to hide any information or be secretive. So that's also a nice thing to have for these projects.

V Veerle van Kets 27:46  
Yeah, that's his attitude, because I've been working long time. He is not only thinking in monetary terms all the time.

A Alejandro Tellez Becerra 28:08  
That's amazing. We're coming to the final the final things. I'm curious about the newness of the idea. So, because what I read in literature is that sometimes there is misalignment. The organization is expecting or is using normally some kind of ideas or solutions. But then the designer comes and proposes something that can be dialiged from the organization culture. Did you see that happening? Or maybe finally just changed afterwards or something?

V Veerle van Kets 28:51  
No, because we were in contact all the time. I was saying something, he was writing up, going back home, developing something and coming back. He was just sitting in our workplace and we discussed everything. Then he realized that at some point something needed to change and he had to start all over again. And that was it.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 29:15

Okay. So that misalignment was revised every single day. So you didn't perceive it as something too different? Because it was a work in process. All the time and with a lot of respects, so you don't feel harmed. Yeah, of course.



Veerle van Kets 29:37

Yeah, that was because that's also different. Because normally of the of the cost of interventions is very limited in time. And then you make much more possibilities to have those misunderstandings.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 29:55

Yes.



Veerle van Kets 29:56

I see that in the strategy guy who was helping us out in the other NGOs working now. He's really color. And he's doing nice things. But then he's not aligned enough with the organization, although he has interviews, but I don't know. He doesn't have the same feeling like Frederik had. And then he comes with proposals, I think, Oh, this is not realistic. This is not possible. Although, there are lot of good things in his work as well. I can say that. Yeah, it's a gift also to be able to listen, to communicate,...

# Interview Frederik Vincx 2


 Tue, 07/16 11:54PM  63:53


## SUMMARY KEYWORDS


project, work, people, veronique, organization, pin, innovation, important, internal, improve, create, specific, month, website, crm, visual, solution, ceo, started, designers


## SPEAKERS


Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Frederik Vincx

 Alejandro Tellez Becerra 00:15  
Hi Frederik. So how's it going?

 Frederik Vincx 00:59  
Good. Busy. We are in the house now, and we're editing a video together. He is editing the video and I'm just looking over his shoulder and pointing at things, telling him what to do.

 Alejandro Tellez Becerra 01:35  
Thank you very much for your time.

 Frederik Vincx 01:37  
You're welcome. It's nice to see that someone is doing something with the work I did. It was an interesting periods in my life. I spent some time writing about it. Hopefully it's useful.

 Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:05  
And the thing is that, once it's out there, you don't know who will be using it. I approached to you, but maybe a lot of people got inspired by your work but they didn't have the need

to reach out to you. Well, thank you. Actually, today I'm in Brugge, Belgium. My mom came to visit and I took her to Copenhagen for a few days. But we are visiting a few more cities in Europe. So actually, we just had lunch here. But yeah, it was a perfect time for me actually to talk to you. Nice. Cool. I know that you are busy. And thank you for your time. I just have a few follow up questions, but more specific about the projects, Maks and PIN. Because I already had the chance, as you know, to interview Veerle and Pepijn. But let's start with Veerle. I talked to her. And as you may know, she was actually super inspired by your collaboration. Because as I understood she has a background as a consultant. But she learned a lot from from you. In a overall basis, she super satisfied about the project. But when I came with a specific questions or implementation, it looked like she was satisfied. But it was difficult to put it like in a specific actions and activities. So that's why I want to ask you specific questions about Maks project. Okay, I already read the aim of the project. But can you remember what was the the aim of the project that you had in mind? Because I think it was kind of twofold, something about the implementation of tools to improve their management system and also something different.

F

Frederik Vincx 05:32

Ok, with Maks the main focus was on project of the video CV. The whole project was about how to do a good video CV. How do we do it? Is it valuable?. They came with the solution already. They wanted to try CVs. How can we do it? Research first was really valuable.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 06:07

Okay, as I understood, you stayed there for over a month. And during that one month, you first started with the implementation of air table as a tool for them to use because you realized something that was missing there or that could be improved in the way they manage things.

F

Frederik Vincx 06:35

When a nonprofit gets someone that know a little bit about computers, they will ask for help with everything. That was really dangerous for me. I tried not to show them too much about what I knew in that regard. I just show them a few productivity tools to improve their efficiency. But for some reason, I spoke too much about air table. And then we started to improve their CRM, customer relationship management tool. We redid it in air table. A lot of clients, a lot of people with a difficult background, people that have a hard time finding a job. These people have different sessions with them to guide them. to track what is the background story of these people and what they do. And they did in Excel sheets before. And we just modernize it a little bit. But I tried to spend as little time as

possible there.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 07:57

It was not the goal of the project. As I understood, it was something that you realized by spending time with them, how did you come up with that?

F

Frederik Vincx 08:14

A large part in my process is immersion. Just sitting there, seeing people working there, talking with them. And I see people working and I have a tendency to listen what's going on and looking at what's going on on the screens. And I realized that what they were doing there was really inefficient. They have another solution. And that's dangerous, you can be redesigning their website, creating new business cards. Where does it stop if you don't have a specific briefing, you can work with everything. This just gets in the way of helping in something very specific.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:04

Okay, can you please tell me how you came up with a specific briefing that you were willing to work with at the beginning? How was that process? Because as you told me, they already had an idea of what they were looking for. How did you both agree on that?

F

Frederik Vincx 09:20

This was kind of an internship to work on a specific project. A friend of mine introduced me to Maks and I went to chat with the CEO, who is not Veerle. And she had many different ideas. And I pushed her to choose one. And then it was around the video CV. Whether they wanted to do more with what they have or that they wanted to find a business model for it. That's how it happened and then Veerle came into the picture. And Veronique (CEO) spoke with her. An important point is having internal champions to make sure that people can support your work. I had two internal champions, it was the CEO and there was Veerle. And I worked there all the time. We were sitting in different buildings. The CEO was the end responsible. She could do anything, change any decision that I made, which made it hard because I can't do as much as we want with Veerle. Because Veronique had the final saying. So I tried to give enough feedback to Veronique to make sure that the project wouldn't die. Veerle doesn't work anymore. I think her relationship with Veronique was already difficult. It was difficult, me reporting to both the CEO and to the middle manager.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 11:51

Okay, perfect. Actually some of my questions were related to how to involve these champions. But how did you manage to make them participate in the process? With Veerle was clear because you were working with her, but how did you try to involve Veronique?, it was more like presenting together the ideas or it was more like getting input or how was that process?

F

Frederik Vincx 12:24

We followed a version of the Google Sprint's approach. They have a pretty good advice on how to get people like Veronique involved in the work. So I tried to involve them as much as possible in the crucial phases of this collaborative brainstorm. I think in day one, we just decided on the main goals to achieve during the month. And we did it with a lot of people through a workshop, very creation like, sprints. A way to create a map of the problem space and all the extras in it. And then you choose which part you want to solve. So she could say like, Okay, this is what we'll do. Very visual, everybody votes. Veronique had extra votes, she had a bigger vote number, she can say, this is what we're going to do. Everybody hears it. We had a clear goal. Another crucial element was, two weeks or three weeks into the project, there was coincidentally a session with the whole team of Maks where everyone has to create a visual story themselves. Because one of their things that they do with people is to build a digital storytelling. Everyone makes a little video about something. And I decided to join and I made a video about what I have learned so far. And presented that video, showed it to everyone to get buy in for what we were doing. The video is posted in this page about Maks. So I made a presentation. And then I just explained it, I made a video out of it. And I shared this with the team and Veronique. And then we also made the visuals and like this video where we see all the steps. So I made this whole overview with all the reasoning behind it. Why are we doing this? What are the things that are important? What is the research that we did? How do you need to structure the video?, and all the steps, explained all these things, all the steps. We also made this visual here. The process that they use at MAKs. The process that they use to guide people to learn the job. And I also presented this and I got agreements from Veerle and all the team. Like okay, this is how you work. And then we did some workshops together figuring out the way they work. In this way we got buy in. We created visual specific labels. And we came up with these images and labels to try to capture the whole process of how they do their job. And this way, we got a lot of buy in from everyone. It was very visual. They see like, this is how we work. And now we got to see like, Okay, how can we create a tool to improve this? So to give you a shorter answer, visualization is a big part. Visualization and storytelling. Showing them how the service design process works, telling them what we are going to do, doing this collaborative workshop with them. And with the visual you see here is a road map, we decided what other steps we need to take.

Making sure they understand the process, they see all the steps. It's a collaborative road that you're taking. You're all on this journey, you know what those steps are, and they can all see it from far away.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 18:53

Perfect. I'm gonna take a look closely. Okay, it was clear that they were really involved. But, were you satisfied with the level of involvement of Veronique? would you change something? What do you think about that part?

F

Frederik Vincx 19:31

I couldn't ask much more time from her. She might have been abroad also. This worked fine. But maybe in hindsight, I would have tried to structure this feedback sessions to have her buy in. Maybe having a kickoff meeting, having a meeting plan, a wrap up meeting. Maybe beforehand, having a structure. Then, she would know that we would have this meeting and then we will do a review. Maybe that's something I would change.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 20:31

That's perfect. You mentioned that you when you started your work, you mapped out all the stakeholders, and then you decided to focus on a small part in the project. I read about systems thinking in order to try to approach these kind of projects. Did you consider all the stakeholders internal and external? So do you think that the fact that you focused on one small part of the whole environment would make some difference in the way that you approach and implement the solution?

F

Frederik Vincx 21:29

The sprint approach kind of guide you to do a lot of user validation. These players are taking into account, although all of the stakeholder are not taken into account. Mostly internal stakeholders are included. So one really big thing that we did early on, is that we went to visit maybe six possible employers and clients to test out video CV formats. Previously, they have already made a little video series at Maks, And we looked into their big archive of video CVs. And we identified seven different types of employers and we interview them about all the different versions. So this way, we got this extra stakeholder in home. We just asked the question, does it make sense to have a video CV. It doesn't make sense for this woman here to show she is cleaning. Then we came up with this visualization, the green things are all good things, the yellow ones are just things improve, and the red things that were really bad. We tried, in an organic way, to also check it with

clients.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 24:49

Okay, perfect. Then, Veerle mentioned that at the end part of your collaboration with them she had to go to find some funding to make the business model work. So when I was thinking about systems thinking, I also thought about reaching out to the potential funders. Did you consider that aspect or it was totally out of the of the span of the of the project?

F

Frederik Vincx 25:51

It wasn't included. We did indeed this business model canvas, figure out how we could turn into business. And early on in the project. We did some desk research to look at other organizations, and what their business model were. A few other organizations that made a lot video CVS and we found where they got their money from. And from that we created the business model canvas.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 26:34

Okay, that that totally makes sense..

F

Frederik Vincx 26:39

Maybe the larger question is, do you start looking for a good solution for problems Or do you start looking for a business? But in the case of Maks, the first one was to find just a good solution for the team because they were making video CVs already. And only afterwards, we looked into ways or it was a secondary goal, to make sure that it could become a spinoff company and then become a money maker. We did similarly in the school, also, because of time frame of a month is ridiculously short. Probably also my background is mostly design, more than business. Then, I guide the project in that direction.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 28:16

When you work on the set on these kinds of web design projects. Do you look at the capabilities of the organization?

F

Frederik Vincx 28:46

So I didn't really initially assess companies that that much. What I did was in three, four months into the project, I wrote a quite lengthy checklist of what I required from the companies. Also what they would get from me, and this checklist was that the organization needs to be mature enough and large enough to really invest in this project. This became a criteria. When I made my first invitation to organizations, two or three people came to me as a side project, they were working on their own startup. And they asked me if I could build their startup for them. Why am I gonna do this for free, and then I'm not going to see you. I wanted to work for an organization to learn about the organization, to learn about people skills, learn about the issues they're trying to solve. So I just I formulated that afterwards that I needed organizations I could see other people working, and I could really work with those people. I developed these workshops with them, but I didn't assess what they doing with it afterwards. That might be a conversation to have early on, what do they want to do afterwards. That would be useful actually, very useful.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 31:05

Okay. I think I have one last question. Let me just look into here. Okay, and another aspect that I found in literature. It was about this kind of possible mismatch between the organizational culture that exists in this example in Maks, but then you come as an outsider, and then you could see things in a different way. And then you can propose something that could be too disruptive, too edgy, or too different. Was that the case?

F

Frederik Vincx 32:09

No. There might be different reasons. I knew the people that were there. And also they chose me because they knew me. So they kind of have a similar level of expectations. Companies already select a designer because they want someone to challenge them. They want designers to come up with new things. We haven't talked about PIN yet.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 33:11

I was about to tell you, if you are busy right now, We can postpone the convesation.

F

Frederik Vincx 33:27

PIN was quite different. Initially, I came to Pepijn and I said, Let's make something new. And he said, No, no, I also think it's very important that we work on workflow productivity

things. That was a piece of the mismatch. That was 50% was on their CRM and stuff like that. Transfer their domain to other platform. for their domain.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 34:01

I am interested in the PIN project because, when I talked to Pepijn, he mentioned that your intervention was in two steps, not two project but in two phases. In general terms, he told me that the first intervention was completely successful. But the second one, when the developer came in, that project was not implemented. Can you please talk a little bit about these two projects?

F

Frederik Vincx 35:40

50% of internal tooling and 50% on innovation. The innovation project was to create a website for local communities, as a website for foreigners, for newcomers. Newcomers can find info about everything in their own language, all tailored towards their needs. I think this was the innovation project. And we made a really small proof of concept the first month. And then the plan was to come back three, four or five months later, and to build into a working website. And we did that. And then they hired us. That was pretty cool. They said they wanted to pay me to continue on. But I refused the money. Because that wasn't part of the sabbatical. But I got them to hire someone for a month to help me with that money that they were going to give me. So we were two people, which was really handy to have a programmer. And he built this website for newcomers, the first version, a more mature version than the prototype. They didn't do anything with it.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 37:20

Do you know what happened there?

F

Frederik Vincx 37:28

No.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 37:29

Pepijn told me that the first round you went there, the project made sense. But by the second round he couldn't see the potential after identifying a few changes in the organization.

F

Frederik Vincx 38:14

What I also think was an issue there. Similar to the initial 50% of operational tools 50% of innovation. When I got back there, the team was growing even harder than the first time I was there. And, there were a lot of new people coming in key positions. And they had to invest so much time in organizational structure. Just making sure they did the basic strikes, that they didn't have the time to look far ahead in the future. And to come up with something really new. Few of the people that were new that came in to more senior positions. They were not informed about the innovative trajectory that we had done. They started overthinking things. And they started going like oh wait, we need to get better, right? And we need to put this project in the fridge for a few months, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 39:33

Yes, that's what Pepjin mentioned, that the organization was growing so fast. And it was difficult to get buy in from that many new people in the organization. When you left for the first time, it totally made sense. But by the time you came back with a developer, a lot of things had changed. So that's why when he reflected on that, he thought, oh, maybe that's something that happened.

F

Frederik Vincx 39:56

They were still looking so much generally and operational change that still in this month, let me come back to work from the north location project. They also spend a lot of time to make a website for them. I redid their logo, their whole branding, design the new website, launching the initial boring CRM project that we did. The first month we mostly focused on practical things and not the innovation part. Simplify their time tracking system, that was a boring job. We made their internal made their intranet. I made it look pretty. It was the first version that we made after the first month. I stopped the whole text after the first month. I didn't complete it. There's a chance to update that. At some point. This is the video we made in the second round. I found it, here you can see the internal communication tools, new branding. There was all the time is duality between innovation and operation. Everywhere you go it will be this divide. But maybe that is also something to consider, if the organization has the capacity to innovate.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 42:40

Maybe It's also about maybe a mindset, maybe they have the mindset of being more efficient instead of being more innovative, solving new problems in different ways. That

also needs to be worked in some way by maybe designers, consultants, or a champion within the organization. Then, coming to the champions. Was Pepjin the only champion to be involved, or someone else needed to be involved in the process?

F

Frederik Vincx 43:25

There were 2 main ones. They were at the same level. They were still very small, but then they grew. And then these people came and everything changed. Comparing the two projects, with Maks, if I could say, it was very authoritative by Veronique, every decision needed to be made by Veronique. Whereas in PIN was much more free, much more horizontal.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 44:20

About this balance between efficiency and innovation. Did you work in some way on how to tackle that barrier? Because in Maks, it was clear that you have more chance to involve everyone in the organization and they were more participative. But how was in PIN?

F

Frederik Vincx 45:02

So, Maks was the last project I worked on. I learned this much better. We can see it on this graph here that in PIN we spent a shitload of amounts on infrastructure, shitload of time. In Maks I knew really well, no, I'm just here to work on innovation. And, here, this two small parts, this was the air table. But I told them very specific. Like, no, I'm not gonna do much here. I can just show you something but you need to do it yourself. I made it very clear at that point. Here we go. Bouncing short term and long term innovation. I wrote about it already. So the short term, yeah, it's boring. We want to do the real cool stuff. And I think I made this one, a matrix with urgent, important stuff. They want to get their CRM fixed. But I really wanted to work on this on the innovation project. And that's been added way too much of this year. Maksinnovation hub, I really told them like, Look, I'm gonna work on this one. That's the deal.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 46:54

Okay, that's perfect. Can you think about the process of mapping out internal and external stakeholders in the PIN project? Or what's something that you only did in the Maks project? which was the last the last one.

F

Frederik Vincx 47:16

At PIN and Maks we used the Google sprint. And it starts with this map of the stakeholders, but it was more from a perspective of looking for solutions to build. It isn't for stakeholders mapping, where you want to look into why certain stakeholders make certain decisions. With Maks was about getting agreements with the whole team on what was important to build, what was important to solve. I've never made real a stakeholders map to better understand the influence everyone had in there. Maybe just in my mind.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 48:36

Two questions about it. Do you think that doing that would make sense?

F

Frederik Vincx 48:47

It makes sense to think about it in a structured way quickly. Do I have an internal champion? Is the main decision maker involved? Could this person be involved in crucial moments of the project doesn't die. There's no need to start passing this out. It should be simple. This is something you can just do at the beginning.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 49:17

That's what I want to get, your perspective as the one doing it, because I can see something. But it's important for me to understand your point of view of this kind of approach.

F

Frederik Vincx 49:28

I'm looking at the Maks, I knew that I needed to get Veerle to get the team to make time to have the workshops with the team, I need enough feedback moments with Veerle. And then at kickoff, at the middle, at the end. I need to check with Veronique.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 49:48

Okay, perfect. Yeah, it was way clearer in that sense.

F

Frederik Vincx 49:54

Maybe another project I did. designers that were doing intervention there with other designers. I only met the director the very last day, show him the solution. It was very silly

if I wanted to create something really for the team there. It should be a dialogue with them, but it wasn't. I was just hanging along with the designers that were there and figuring this out.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 50:55

Maybe I just already covered all the points, because you already mentioned a lot. Well, in general terms about PIN project, was something that you think could be done differently in any kind of aspect?

F

Frederik Vincx 51:15

I would have tried to avoid all the extra work. I would have only worked on the innovative project. You just get distracted. So I would say like ok let's just choose one project. I'm not just here to solve everything for you.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 52:39

Yes. it was something that you learned from the different projects that you were involved.

F

Frederik Vincx 52:47

Definitely. The first project I did in the school, in the first weeks I was just fixing printers. I had no idea what was happening. I just went in there and see what let's see what happens.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 53:10

Yeah, urgent but not really impactful things to do.

F

Frederik Vincx 53:17

Silly waste of time. There wasn't enough buy in there. It wasn't decided well. What would I do differently? Let's see, I think I would do differently. Let's see. Okay. So here we did a Google sprint, which was really good. Short immersion time. Google sprint, quickly get started, a lot of building. It was very good. It did a lot of small maintenance work. I shouldn't have done that. This is how I would do it now. It looks very much like an approach where we just did exactly this. I spent some time immersing myself. I did a lot of just walk around with people. And then I tried to understand how they did their job. I shadowed a few people per week. Then we did an intense Google sprint for a week. And

then we started making and then we made it increasingly my fidelity. And then we went back and made an initial version. It was exactly that, but I spent a lot of my time doing stupid things also.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 55:30

And what do you think was the effect of doing those things that didn't add value, just the fact that you didn't have enough time for the other important stuff? Yeah, maybe I don't know. It has to do with the project brief. And being super clear about it. It is something important in order not to be pushed by their everyday needs that seem to be important. But actually, they're adding that much value. Amazing. Yeah. And I think I covered all the points that I was missing. And I think, yeah, it's everything here. Thank you. Thank you very much for you for your time again.

F

Frederik Vincx 59:24

Thank's to you. Good luck with your research project.

# Interview Miranda Arstikaitis







 Tue, 07/16 11:55PM  37:45

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

project, people, pieces, questions, ready, program, talking, helpline, nonprofits, process, nice, makers, involved, provide, amazing, receive, thon, suggestions, parents, interventions

## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Miranda Arstikaitis

-  **Miranda Arstikaitis** 00:51  
Moving really slow Hold on one sec. Yeah,
-  **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:53  
no worries. Thank you.
-  **Miranda Arstikaitis** 01:00  
Opening
-  **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 01:04  
It is working right now. I can see you. Yes, I can see you perfectly.
-  **Miranda Arstikaitis** 01:12  
Okay, great.
-  **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 01:13  
Hi. Nice to meet you. Nice to meet you. Nice meeting you.



Miranda Arstikaitis 01:22

Technology is amazing.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 01:23

Yeah. I'm in Copenhagen, Denmark. Oh, yeah, I'm Mexican, but I'm studying a master's degree here. I'm about to finish actually.



Miranda Arstikaitis 01:35

That's really cool. I wish I could have done that. I studied three hours away from my home town.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 01:45

In my case it was actually the same. My university was also half an hour from the place that I was born. But I decided to come here to study the Masters because I want to do this international experience. And it's been a wonderful experience. Such a nice Country, University. Everything's been super cool.



Miranda Arstikaitis 02:06

I know. I have planned my second Europe trip. That's happening in December. So we're hopefully going to do Italy and Switzerland.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:15

Oh, nice. Great.



Miranda Arstikaitis 02:17

definitely excited. It's been a while. I've been anywhere in Europe.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:22

Great. Yeah. I'd been Italy 10 years ago or something. And I never been Switzerland but I heard that is amazing place.

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 02:31

Yeah, I just have been looking at pictures trying to figure out what we're gonna do, where we are gonna stay. We're gonna be there in December. So like all the Christmas markets. So we're really excited about that.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:42

Great. Amazing. I actually have a friend who is going to Italy in the summer. So if I you want me I can ask her some kind of suggestions or something, I will let you know.

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 02:53

Thanks, I am taking all suggestions, because I just I want it to be perfect.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:59

Exactly, The more suggestions the better. Then you have plenty of options to choose from. Well, Miranda, thank you. Thank you very much for your time. I would like to start these conversation by introducing myself and the project that I'm working on so you can have a clearer idea of what I'm trying to research. Well, as I mentioned, I'm Alejandro Tellez, I come from Mexico, but I'm studying here at Copenhagen Business School. I'm studying a master's degree in innovation and entrepreneurship. One of the core concepts of the Masters is design thinking. And I'm personally interested in how the same methodology can be applied into nonprofits. That's the general topic of my master's thesis. I want to research these short term design interventions, exactly the kind of interventions like the one you participated in with Make a Mark. These short term design interventions, when designers come to an organization, and provide their suggestions after a short period of time, but then it's up to the organization to implement the solutions, or the tools or whatever. My motivation is because one semester ago, I enrolled in this kind of project of going with an NGO and providing some suggestion, but I was curious about what happened afterwards, if the project was really implemented or not. And then how can the process be improved, in order to to achieve implementation afterwards. So far, I have interviewed two other projects like this in Belgium, and you are the first person I interview in the US. So I'm really happy because of that. The main area that I'm interested in is the implementation part, I'm going to ask you a few questions about the whole process. So, if you have any question, or you want to interrupt me while I'm talking, please feel free to do it. I want to make this more like a conversation, not like a kind of a formal interview.

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 05:21

Yeah, okay.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 05:24

I would like to ask you like to introduce yourself and the purpose of your organization. And also also about the project that you enroll with Make a Mark.

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 05:37

Absolutely. So my name is Miranda Arstikaitis and I have lived in Tennessee my whole life. I grew up in Memphis, I went to college nearby and I got my first job out of college about three years ago. So the organization is called Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee, most often we like to call it PCAT. A lot of what we try to do with Make a Mark was introducing our project to the community. Kind of what we felt like our barrier was, is really having to do with our name. So a lot of times when you say prevent child abuse, people only hear the child abuse part. But we work 100% in prevention. So a lot of what we're talking about in the design process is how do we use design, and use the assets that we have to tell a different story and tell the story of Strengthening Families, building bonds between children, positive discipline, connecting them to resources, providing safety items. Those are the things that we do day in and day out. The project that we picked was just one of our programs, we actually submitted multiple projects and the one that they so whenever they were interviewing me, I can talk a little bit about all of us in Our three buckets are in home visiting, where we go build a relationship with a parent, either just about to give birth, or just given birth, and were able to start that connection so that the child never experiences adversity of any kind and they have an amazing childhood. Then, we do advocacy at the local level, statewide level and national level, we're able to really engage with people who are making decisions about policy and grants and funding. And so we can, you know, help with anything that has to do with, you know, policy related to child abuse, child sexual abuse, or general advocacy dollars for nonprofits. We do early childhood education or intervention. And then the last is we do crisis intervention, this was the one that really felt like the project that us and make a mark, we're really going to get married on. We have a 24/7 domestic violence helpline and we also have 24/7 parents helpline. And so our parent helpline was really in need of a revamp. And really, when you are talking about design thinking, all the things that we had, and the calls that we were getting are related to reporting. People have seen something, they understand something or they wanted somebody to understand what they see. And that is not necessarily what our intended purpose with the helpline was. The marketing materials, were really leading people down that road, and our name was leading people down that road. And so we wanted to kind of turn the machine around, say, okay, we want people who have a

question about, oh, my child is doing this, or my child is growing up, Or my No, I really need to take a break, and I don't know how to do that, does that make me a bad parent?, or, you know, I'm having these feelings of postpartum depression, I don't know where to turn, to refer. So we wanted to be that first step of really like, parents needing help and having a safe place where they can ask questions. And so me, we're in this process of, you know, talking about what we wanted it to look like what we wanted to purpose for it to be. And it really worked since after receiving these digital pieces, about revamping even from the program side about how we want this program to look and what the mission of it is. So it really touched a lot of things. And it's got us thinking a lot. So I can explain that more. But I'll let you get to your other questions.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:54

Amazing, thank you very much. I'm curious about the process of agreeing, because you mentioned that you had different options of projects, but then at some point, Make a Mark chose this one, because they try to match your project with the skills they have from the designers. So how was this process of not only agreeing in that, agreeing on the deliverables? Because as far as I know, you had a previous meeting before the hackathon. How was the process? How was this for you?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 10:33

I think the process was really smooth. So the first was written application, and you could submit based on different projects. So we did submit two projects. And then I went and did the formal interview where they asked questions, got a feel for us, what our needs were, what our mission was, and kind of build that one on one relationship just with Sarah. So that was really us to get to meet them and why they're doing this and then getting to us. And then we had our meeting with our makers. So they've selected our project based on the interest of our makers and their skills. And so we were really focused on posters, social media, kind of a marketing plan in language. And so we brought kind of what we got to show them where we're coming from, what we wanted to change. And then we also went through a list of things that we tried and didn't work, which I think was really important explaining that. We were lucky enough as we were coming with trial and errors. And so they were able to identify that we worked on this basic thing, this basic thing, this basic thing. So we're going to bypass all that, and we're going to go straight to this more creative idea, we're going to try these colors, this language, and we're going to really focus in our images. On these types of things. And we also talked a lot about them creating just like things that we could edit. So creating basic how everything was going to look, and then creating blank templates for us fill in, to create more content. Which I mean, that's been so helpful. They gave us all those shots of stock photos, all the presets

for how they were editing things. So we can take that and translate into our programs. We talked a lot about what programs we have access to. So thankfully, PCAT provides the Adobe Suite, so we were able to use InDesign, Photoshop programs, which a lot of nonprofits don't use. So they were like, oh, for other places, yo have to put things in a certain way but then you know they would not have a way to edit. So we had to make sure it was ready. So it was nice to have that back and forth about Okay, what are our strengths? Or weaknesses? What have we tried before? It was really great strategic conversation.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 13:36

It was like a one hour conversation or how was it?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 13:40

I think it was a little bit longer than an hour talking about it. Also we did communicate via email wit the Makers. So if they have questions, for content, or those kinds of things, and we were able to communicate and share those pieces, before the actual day. So the day they can just hit the ground running.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:12

Okay, great. And then at that point, how did you feel about it in the sense that you had a good idea of what you're gonna get out of that?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 14:26

Yes. And they were pretty clear about what they thought they could get done. And then we were on site that day to do different check ins. How they were going, if the direction was right for our agency. And also, they got to the point where they can say, we think we're going to finish. So what else? Do you want us to take this one step further? so what do we do? which was really cool. It was really well executed on the front end, that they had that extra time to add extra assets or to type out like a branding program and put together a presentation. Extras that were just nice bonuses.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 15:19

Exactly. what what was your level of participation? Because you provided some inputs, you said we would like to have this, you interact with them. But then, did you have any more involvement during the process besides providing some kind of feedback? How was

that loop of communication?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 15:42

Anytime they had a question during the actual Make day, they would email or text me. Then, I was able to shoot back answers really fast to kind of keep them moving. It's good to have that conversation. You know, we talked a lot about the vision for the pieces so that we were all on the same page, like, we knew that we wanted the colors to be bright, but we didn't necessarily know what colors they were going to use. So if there is a certain level of trust, and they want this sense of reveal at the end which could have gone bad, but it didn't. I think that you really had to trust that these people knew what they were doing. And that they were really passionate. And you know, even after that reveal, and everything looked phenomenal for all the organizations. They were willing, there's anything that needs to be changed we to get something right. We'd be willing to come back and kind of tweak a few things to make it perfect. But it was always perfect. So amazing. Yeah, it was great. I mean, it really was great. It was a fun experience.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 17:05

Okay. And then I'm also curious about, this design thinking methodology is user-centered, in the sense that all the solutions that are built are based on the inputs from the users because they are the ones who are going to use the tool, right? But I'm also curious about how did they engage with people in the organization, but also, if they get involved with the beneficiaries of the project? For Example, maybe they built some material, but they don't know how they people, actually, the beneficiaries are going to react to that material.

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 17:46

Yeah, I think that definitely was a gamble, because we didn't have the opportunity to put it in front of people that would be using it. So it's us so called experts who would know how people would use it. And ours was so focused on parents, I think they relied a lot on their assumptions. Or as long as it was user friendly period, people would use it. I think for our pieces, it was just about catching the attention, and conveying the message we wanted people to understand our program. So I think that the response has gone really well to the pieces. We haven't fully rolled out yet. Because like I said it, it fully identified a lot of gaps in the program, on our side, the communication side. So we definitely had to go back and rethink we just got a big question and actually being able to use these pieces to say, We need something new, look at all the work we've done, help us get the staff and the training, that we need to provide this at the highest level. So it definitely propelled us to

take it more seriously and to take it to the next level. Because we've looked at these pieces. And we're like, we can't send these out. Unless we know that the program is just as good as this was. So I think that knowing that now, as we choose our next projects, I think will think more about what's ready to go to the next level. Does that answer your question?

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 19:51

Completely. Actually, you already mentioned a few point I was going to ask you later So yeah, it was perfect. Thanks very much. Let me check here. Can you identify or mention some of the challenges? So far from the beginning of the first meeting and also your contribution during the Make-a-thon day? What do you think could be improved?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 20:24

We made the mistake of taking turns with internal staff about who's going to be the touch point. So I think on our end, we could have improved and had one person who was consistently involved in every conversation. I definitely think having a component of a focus group, or something like that would have been nice, just because the only person who was looking at it was me on behalf of my agency, I think that is the area where it could been a little bit stronger. I also think that aside from being available for that 15 minute meetings. I was traveling from Nashville to Chattanooga. And so during the day, I was just like sitting around waiting. So I think it would have been cool to offer a way for the nonprofit to were involved too also act, or to be more involved.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 21:47

Actually, I can share with you that through my interviews with people from other projects, sometimes designers in this short time interventions, need time to actually do the things because it takes them time. So maybe that's why they want to keep a balance in that sense. Like, okay, we want to get input from the nonprofits, but we also need time to deliver. So it's, it's tricky. So if the intervention will take one week, they could have more space for communicating. This looks like the best way to do it right now.

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 22:32

And I think that I totally get it and everything worked out great. And, you know, every conversation that we were having was really intentional, and the product was perfect. But it was weird to feel disconnected from the process. But I mean, trusting them was well worth it. So. But yeah, I mean, we are definitely planning on doing it again, we can't wait

to reapply. It was definitively valuable.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 23:04

Okay, great. One follow up questions. And when they handed in the final proposal or suggestion, was someone in PCAT the responsible to approve it or reject it?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 23:27

Yes, I was there to receive that, in addition to lots of other things. So, you know, it was me and one other person who wasn't able to be there who would really be making this decisions about what would be used, how it would be used, what the implementation process would be. So I think that was good. We definitely there were a couple other groups there who had like their CEO, but that person normally isn't involved with marketing thing. We had our vision for it, we were there and giving them the same feedback and talking about implementing, as well. So I think that that we were deeply involved.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 24:32

That's amazing. And, as you mentioned, these important to have the key the person in charge of taking the decision of actually doing it or not being there in the process, because sometimes that person is not able, because of time constraints or something. So it's important. And one other aspect, I was also researching about the systems thinking when you are solving a problem. Looking at all the internal and external stakeholders, while analyzing the situation, besides talking to you, and indirectly talking with the beneficiaries through your experience. Did they also ask you questions about what about your donors will say about it? Or what about I don't know, the alternatives or something like that they consider aspect?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 25:20

Um, I think in regards to this project, we didn't talk about donors. We talked a little bit about our grants and what our brand requirements are getting funding for this program. So that was probably one of the largest stakeholders that we talked about and, of course, parents being the big one. So when they use this, does this look inviting, those kinds of pieces? And, you know, one of the makers and I worked on creating a person's profile. So like, who is our ideal person that we're trying to reach? What are they interested in? What are they already following? Because we know people who follow us on twitter have a different profile, and people who follow us on Facebook, so we're really trying to target that this would be used on Facebook, and Instagram. So we were trying to target those

user profiles based on content that had done well and on our page, so we had some of that, that we can use this feedback, but nothing that was directly involved in the process. Only assumptions with this short period of time.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 26:41

it's nice that you have a really good understanding of the whole situation, based on the time of the intervention. Okay, great. And what about the implementation? Okay, do you receive the final output of the project, you receive like the templates. Ian also mentioned that they provide you with some kind of a implementation guide, or something like that. How was the process after you receive that?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 27:12

The process after we received it was Oh, crap, we have all these things we cannot wait to use. But the program was not ready. So we participated with Make a Mark last September. So we're just coming up on a year of having these deliverables. And we just got the grant to really provide the training and the technology needed to really run this program. So when it started, it was just a call helpline. And when we got these pieces, we realized that people weren't calling, okay. They weren't calling about the things we wanted to call, though, kind of like what I talked about. We sent out a survey to people who would be using this program, and they identified that they would use a Facebook group to ask questions, or they would text chat versus calling a helpline and talking to somebody on the phone. So we've put together this brand. And we're going to be implementing chat prizes, text. Yeah, chatting, to ask questions, Facebook groups that would be monitored by paid staff, and trained volunteers. And so I think now that we have that, we aren't using these pieces, or we definitely use the pieces what we're asking for people to respond to the survey. And we have stopped the circulation of all our old pieces. So we're in that in between where we are starting the implementation, so we're really excited that hopefully, by October, those pieces will be fully in circulation. So we're really excited to use them. And all of them can be translated with our new services that we're going to be offering. So I'm really excited. We just didn't want to blast that out knowing that we would get an influx of calls that we weren't prepared to handle. So now that we have such money people are really looking forward to getting calls. So I'm really excited.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 29:34

Yeah, that's nice of you, that you thought about success. Okay, what's happened is this goes really well. Actually, that was a really good thinking.

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 29:46

And we talked about it a lot, because like I said, we were so excited. It would have taken our credibility way out. But we know that every piece has a shelf life, and we didn't want to waste it. We wanted to be able to use them and use them to their fullest value. We knew we would have to wait to do that. So it was sad. We've been like hoarding all these pieces that we're really excited about. But that just means that we're all ready for this program to be a true success.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 30:23

Exactly. I'm going to ask you a question about what it's like for you to think in like in retrospective, because, okay, they came up with some sort of suggestion, but then you realized that you needed to improve your capabilities to be ready to launch it right. In hindsight, would you have changed the project that you presented it to Make a Mark?, maybe a different one that maybe you were ready to actually run? Through these kind of posters or something?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 30:54

Yes, I think that looking back knowing what we know now, we probably would have changed the project in the proposal. And I think that as we're thinking to next year, it's at the forefront of our mind of what do we have, that has capability that has not been met its potential. Instead of something that was like, Oh, this has kind of fallen to the wayside. So we really need to pour, you know, just some extra time in this and then realized how many holes are really there. So, which was great. We had these pieces where we can go to funders and say we're ready, we just need this and this. So I think that, ultimately, it was great. It was a way to propel that program to be successful to have these pieces that were ready to go. But I think you know, when we were talking about what we will present next year, we would propose something that is ready to do and ready to exploit in some way now, not to be as capabilities to start later. So the big thing, you know, that I really want to do is our domestic violence helpline, we realized that these pieces that we had were really easy to use. So our proposal next year would probably be, we would want social media assets, posters and short videos that really highlight our domestic violence helpline as a place to receive help. And that's like the videos and posters we have now, like our poster one doesn't really describe what we we're actually wanting people to call about. And the videos are so scary and terrifying. that people don't want to call because it's not that bad. It's not that bad. And I don't mean this. So we've been receiving a lot of feedback about that, that program we have the bandwidth, ready to receive. It's it's primed, it's ready for the next step. So I think that that would be a big one that we'd kind of fit as well as possibly some advocacy things that we talked about. So I think definitely

being more thoughtful about which programs were submitting for, and what their bandwidth is.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 33:54

I think I covered pretty much everything that I had in mind. But I'm curious about. One year ago, and now what was like the motivation for you to partner up with Make a Mark?

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 34:14

So we're always trying to plug into different communities across Tennessee. We had been involved with a similar make a THON here in Nashville, that was regard to tech, where they would take on a small tech project, see it into the end, and then give it to us. And what we saw during that process was that tech wasn't the right way to do that. Tech as a make-a-thon doesn't really work. So we had heard from other agencies in Chattanooga, that there was this process of a make-a-thon, but it was specific to design, which is always a gap in what nonprofits are able to afford to provide. It definitely can be a hole for a lot of nonprofits. And so we realized, well, it doesn't hurt to apply. We were hesitant, because we had been involved in making songs that were a waste of time, that were more work for us. And so I think that we were hesitant at first. And so we submitted smaller projects that we could use or maybe couldn't use just to see, it wasn't something that would be to make or break, which I think is why we chose a project that wasn't ready. It was like that whole history of things. And so after being in this process, and how amazing it was, and how committed everyone was to making a product really worked. Then, as soon as it was over, it was like, Okay, what can we do next year, how can we keep doing this? And we bought a product that was valuable. And so I think that's kind of the history of why we picked a product that wasn't really ready or a program it wasn't really ready. And why now that we have this trust in this process, and these makers, we're ready to do it again.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 36:33

Amazing. I'm glad I'm glad to hear that you enjoyed experience and you are willing to participate again. That's amazing.

M

Miranda Arstikaitis 36:41

Can you guys, come on to Nashville. We will just apply all over the place. So yeah, it was really great,



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 36:49

Amazing. well, Miranda. I think I covered everything. We had already been talking for 36 minutes. So I don't want to take more of your time, valuable time. So I would like to thank for your time and information to provide me with. It's amazing. I think you covered pretty much everything that I was looking for. When I was looking at your website, I saw a great job that you're doing. So congratulations for that. It's amazing work that they're doing.



Miranda Arstikaitis 37:17

Yeah. We think so. I'm so glad we were able to connect. Thank you for taking interest in our project.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 37:33

Thank you very much. Bye

# Interview Ian Taylor


 Tue, 07/16 11:54PM  28:05


## SUMMARY KEYWORDS


work, organization, project, design, question, thon, process, nonprofits, designers, beneficiaries, mark, wanted, deliverables, caretakers, needed, give, challenge, resources, social media, graphic design

## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Ian Taylor

 **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:09  
Hi, this is Alejandro, how are you doing?.

 **Ian Taylor** 00:16  
Good, good. Nice. Are you available right now? Yeah.

 **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:34  
As you read in my email, I'm conducting some research for my master's thesis. My topic of interest is regarding the partnerships between designers and nonprofits. So totally similar to the work you were doing in the project with Make a Mark. These short term design projects that bring together designers and nonprofits, especially the ones that cannot afford those services. So that's when designers can come in and provide some new ways of doing things. And devlier some new solutions to solve problems or challenges in the nonprofits. My motivation comes from the fact that last semester, I participated as a student in a design project with one NGO. But after the project ended, I realized that I wasn't sure if the NGO was going to implemter our reccomendations. We didn't know what what was going to happen afterwards. So that's when I decided to research this topic, because it was interesting for me to understand how these processes work, and how can unsuccessful partner be improved. So I would like to learn from your experience in the

Make a Mark project.

I Ian Taylor 01:26  
Yeah. Fantastic

A Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:05  
Okay, so first of all, I would like to ask you some general questions, and then we can start with specific questions about the project. So can you please tell me a little bit about your background and your interest on why did you decided to join and make a mark?.

I Ian Taylor 02:23  
Sure. At that time, I had just graduated from University of Chattanooga with a marketing degree and I was working my first job doing social media management, kind of paid advertising management in one company in Chattanooga. And my girlfriend actually had experience Make a Mark. She spoke so highly of them. So of course, I wanted to take my skills that I've learned in that first job, and I put it to use to changing something, which is awesome. So that really was being able to make a change as well as a secondary notion, I wanted to be able to network and meet more people my age that were doing things I was interested in. And even perhaps getting some job experience.

A Alejandro Tellez Becerra 03:46  
Well, you got interested in participating in the Make a Mark project. Then, how was that process afterwards? Did you apply by sending an email? Or how did it work? How did that part look like?

I Ian Taylor 03:56  
Sure, yeah. So how does the application work? So I met some people that had already participated with Make a Mark and I met the organizers. So, I just emailed Sarah, and then kind of just went from there. However, a lot of people go through like a very short kind of application process. What do you do? What skills do you have? And what is your motivation to join Make a Mark?

A Alejandro Tellez Becerra 04:46  
Okay, fantastic. And then you know, that they have the hackathon. How did you know

about the organization that you were going to work with? It was like, one month in advance, or how was it?

I

Ian Taylor 05:01

Yeah, yeah. So I ended up working with PCAT. So I really liked how they set it up. About a month. I can't remember the specific. About a month. We met with a director. And she told us all about the business, you know, the demographics. And basically she explained us what she wanted us making. The deliverables were very clear. Also, we had a few phone calls and kind of got organized to coordinate what we were aiming at in the actual make-a-thon.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 06:07

And then and when you hear about those specific deliverables, did you completely agree with those? Or did you and your team suggested a few different ones? How was that process of aligning with their expectations? with the things that you just you think that you could have delivered in that specific time?

I

Ian Taylor 06:28

Okay. So, what you are asking is how did our team align our ideas with what they wanted as deliverables? Let me think about this. So, okay, sure. So, they were wanting, I can't remember everything, they were wanting some social media stuff and some custom graphic design that they could include in the website and in a magnet, with some good design, you know, a well-designed magnet. They wanted some social media posts, and I believe they want some posters. She pretty much painted out what we will but we were also aiming to presenting a social media plan. So she's not just posting stuff randomly. And then I believe we were able to make some extra stuff. So they got what they asked and a little bit more.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 08:10

Okay, perfect. And did you notice some difference in the interaction between this nonprofit and maybe any previous project that you worked with for profit organizations?

I

Ian Taylor 08:23

That's an excellent question. You know, the only difference I would really say is, I don't think PCAT was expecting much. We only did have one day and I get that. But they were

expecting kind of two hours worth of graphic design, and we were able to invest way more than that. And we were able to give them a little bit more.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:07

It totally makes sense. And I don't know, maybe it's throwing an assumption could be like, since they're not paying or spending some money or resourcesthey don't feel with the authority to ask for some much more.



Ian Taylor 09:27

Yeah, yeah, I'd agree with that. I think that their resources are so limited, that they weren't used to demand so much.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:44

Yeah. That could be a thing. Well, about your your teammates? Did you know them in advance? or How was the the communication with them?



Ian Taylor 09:55

No, I didn't know any of them. The first time I ever met them was when we met with the director of PCAT. It was fantastic, everybody was so much willing to help. And we just wanted to kind of get on the same page and figure out what everyone's strengths were. So we wouldn't have to wait on the actual thing on determining what what we can do.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 10:37

Did you notice any challenge or anything in particular of getting to know someone in such a short time? And then to start delivering something, Did you see any challenge there?



Ian Taylor 10:53

No, not really. As I told you, they were so willing to work. So willing to be selfless for that day that we were able to get the job done whatever needed doing. Honestly, my team was not there for them. They were there for PCAT.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 11:22

Okay, perfect. Then, you finished the pre meeting, and then you start working during the Make-a-thon event. So I'm curious about how did you engage with organization or it was only in the moment of the of the pre meeting? How was the communication? Because I can assume that you are working on a project that is going to be for them? So how much you can engage or involve them in the process or ask for their feedback?



Ian Taylor 11:53

Sure, so are you talking about in regards to pre meeting, how did that go?



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 12:02

That could be. But also during the marathon? Did you have any communication with the organization? How was it?



Ian Taylor 12:11

Okay, I see. Yeah, so. Okay, so during the actual Saturday's one of the ladies came and checked in and basically she checked up on us. And, you know, we were able to show her a little bit of what we had and where we were going. And then she was also able to put us in contact with people from the organization that we needed to talk to. I was able to get those most frequently asked questions that people have to PCAT. So I was able to make, you know, we were able to design a little FAQ for PCAT. That's the way they engaged in the process.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 13:30

Okay, great. And did you have any kind of feedback during the day? this is what we have now. And then you get any kind of response from the realization while you were doing the design, or it was only one iteration? And that's it?



Ian Taylor 13:50

Sure, yeah. Durin the check in we presented a few things to them, but mostly during the final presetation when every single nonprofit was there. PCAT could not believe that we give them their deliverables and then give them you know, twice and give them way more. It was an overwhelming thankfulness from them.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:27

Okay, perfect. And then, the part that I'm more curious about is the implementation part. Because yes, you showed something I can assume beautiful and well done. But did you know what happened afterwards? Did they actually use your material in the end? or How was that part?

I

Ian Taylor 14:57

Yeah. To be completely honest, I'm not really sure. I'm honestly not sure. I mean she said that she was going to use all the posters and everything, but I'm not sure.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 15:27

Okay, no, no worries, it's perfect. Actually most of the time that's how that happens, because you as a designer in this kind of collaborations, you assign your free time to work on this, and then you get back to your day to day life. So you don't have that much time to take a look into the implementation of the project And coming back again, to the to the Make-a-thon, when you needed something from the organization you just asked, and they were providing information. But did you have any kind of a communication or interaction with the actual beneficiaries or some other external stakeholders of the organization that could be relevant for the project?

I

Ian Taylor 16:19

I'm gonna have to say not. Pretty much, only the two ladies that were there. Any questions we had we directed through them.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 16:38

But do you remember asking about what beneficiaries or external stakeholders would think about your materials? I'm curious about this part of doing these systems thinking kind of thing. Looking not only to organization, but maybe all the network of interactions that they're involved in?

I

Ian Taylor 17:02

Ok, I don't know if we asked about beneficiaries specifically, because the idea was to spread awareness. But we do asked about the caretakers, and actually they were able to come in, and share some fantastic stories of helping single mothers and helping people

with a little bit less fortunate. I've definitely learned a lot about what PCAT has been able to accomplish. And, you know, not only helping women that may have been abused or whatever, but you know, helping kids make toys, little stuff like that. So, yeah, absolutely. I learned a lot of stories from one of those caretakers. I think that was really important, because not only we did get the big picture but also we understood how their work impact real lives.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 18:59

Oh, that's great. Actually, my assumption before was that you didn't have so much time to do that. But it actually is quite remarkable that you got a chance. Okay, great. And, well, you told me that two people from the organization were involved during the event and the final presentation. Were they the people to convince to actually implement your suggestions or it was someone else that needed to take the decision to actually use the suggestions?.

I

Ian Taylor 20:00

I believe they would be the decision makers, those ladies, But I'm not really sure.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 20:14

OK. And then also what I was reading here, the small article that Sarah wrote on medium, it says that you also worked on a brand guide and an implementation guide for them to know how to use your suggested materials. Did you generated this kind of a limitation tool?

I

Ian Taylor 20:47

Yes, yeah. As I said, not only help them do the magnet, posted social media stuff, but also created kind of a brand guide, copyrighting, So not only did we give them the content that they needed, but we wanted to give them a guide, and a strategy.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 21:14

Okay, perfect. Another question, at some point, did you consider the fact that maybe your ideas were a little too edgy or too I don't know, artistic? How did you align your mindset and the organization's mindset, because maybe you can come up with something in your mind, but maybe they're going to say that's not the way they do things. How did you handle that?



Ian Taylor 21:49

Another person in my team, Cassidy, I think she may be better to talk about that. I was doing more of the marketing kits. I got to know about what nonprofits and what resources they have. So I kind of made my strategy based on that. And I thought about what a strategy should look like and as well as I helped in some of the design. Although, Cassidy was more in charge of the Design.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 22:33

Okay, yeah, that's perfect. Okay, let me take a look here in my notes. If there is something else I need to ask you. Give me a second please. Well, can you mention some challenges of these kinds of collaborations, short term design interventions. Any challenge that you can mention?



Ian Taylor 23:19

Well, getting those resources was a bit difficult. For instance, we had to think of every question we had or resource we needed from PCAT way in advance because we didn't have so much time and access to them. We needed to quickly take out as much as possible and then figure out everything else. It's just kind of hard to know exactly what they want. Okay, I came out kind of lucky, and then we were able to give them what they want. That's true, but there was a level of uncertainty in it.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 24:27

I also was curious about, did you consider engaging the staff of PCAT more during the design process, kind of that one person from organization joined your team in some way? How would you feel about that kind of thing?



Ian Taylor 24:58

I think that would be fantastic. I think each team is different. And I don't know if having someone from PCAT there the entire time would have been great.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 25:41

Well, it's also a general question? What do you think can be done to improve the whole way the process works in Make a Mark?



Ian Taylor 25:54

Oh, gosh, Actually that's a really hard question. Maybe making the people from PCAT more available, because at some point we wanted generate content and having someone from PCAT could have been helpful.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 27:25

Okay, and I think I covered all the part that I was looking for. If you have any questions, feel free to to ask me.



Ian Taylor 27:37

Okay.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 27:48

Yes, thank you. Thank you very much. I'll keep you updated about the process and if I have any question, I will reach out to you. Thank you.

# Interview Sherry Campbell

📅 Wed, 07/24 07:35AM ⌚ 21:45

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

designers, social media campaign, campaign, nonprofits, organization, project, work, thon, conversation, idea, website, engagement, meeting, talking, mark, alex, collaboration, helped, interviewed, beneficiaries

## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Sherry Campbell

- A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 00:15  
Fine, fine. Thank you very much.
- S

Sherry Campbell 00:21  
How can I help? I'm glad to be here.
- A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 00:24  
Thank you. I received your email. So are you completing a grant application? Do you have time today or do you prefer to have the conversation another time?
- S

Sherry Campbell 00:38  
It's ok now. Sorry for being late.
- A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 00:44  
Okay, perfect. No, no worries. Thank you very much for your time. So as I mentioned in my email, I will try to keep it around 30 minutes. If you have any question or if you want to keep the conversation shorter, please feel free to tell me. Just let me give you a quick

overview of my project. And then we can start with a few questions. So first of all, my name is Alejandro Tellez, I actually come from Mexico, but I'm studying here in Copenhagen, Denmark, a master's degree in innovation entrepreneurship. And as a part of the program, I need to write a master's thesis. The topic that I chose is design thinking in nonprofits, any kind of design application within nonprofits. So that's the reason why I approached to Sarah, from Make a Mark. And then she referred me to and also another organization. I want to conduct research on these kinds of collaborations between designers and nonprofits in order to understand how their.



Sherry Campbell 02:14

The topic of your research is collaboration among nonprofits?



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:19

Between designers and nonprofits.



Sherry Campbell 02:26

Oh, between designers and nonprofits. Ok



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:26

Specifically short term design collaborations. What I'm researching the point of view of both parties, both the organization and the designers. So actually, I'm interviewing you because you are a representative from a nonprofit. But I'm also reaching out to the makers that helped you out during the project. So, that's a general overview of the project and then we can start with a few questions that I have in mind. Can we can we please get started with a few a small introduction from yourself



Sherry Campbell 03:33

We are a nonprofits that provide shelter, healing and compassionate end of life care for those in need. We started a home for people that have nowhere to go for end of life to make sure that people don't die alone. We started a little over four years ago. We are a non-medical institution, so not like a nursing institution or a nursing home. We are pretty much a home. And we're like family. So we become the person's family. And then we work with the hospices, and they come in and provide the hospice care.

- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 04:38  
Okay, great. Talking specifically about the collaboration that you had with Make a Mark. How did you come up with the idea to work with them? Did you approach to them? Did they approach to you? How was that process?
- S** Sherry Campbell 04:54  
They approached us. I think they had a call out for nonprofits and they interviewed many nonprofits, and we were one of the ones that was chosen. I think that's how it happened.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 05:15  
Great. And, talking about this specific project? Do you remember what was the aim of the project? What were you intending to get from the collaboration?
- S** Sherry Campbell 05:33  
We had two rounds with Make a Mark. Both projects were focused on increase awareness about our mission, to develop visual for people to see about the work that we're doing. Okay. And then, you know, when people here talk about death and dying, they automatically think depressing ideas, so we were trying to make our marketing work. We worked with the designers to help us create visual communication pieces.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 06:27  
Okay, was it kind of a campaign that they worked on? Did they design the visuals of that campaign?
- S** Sherry Campbell 06:40  
The first group that we worked with developed a video and then the second year, we had a group that did a social media campaign for us, and helped redesigning our website.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 06:58  
Okay, for the sake of this interview, can we please focus on the second project. So the project was about a social media campaign and also about the redesign of the website. As I understand, organizations need to apply to participate in the program with Make a Mark. You sent the application, and then you were selected. And then you had a first

meeting with the makers, right? Before they make-a-thon.



Sherry Campbell 07:37

Firstly, I meet with Sarah and Alex. So they invited us to apply with them. And then once we were selected, we were introduced to our designers.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 08:05

Okay, can you please talk a little bit about that meeting with the designers? The first meeting. How was it? What did you talk about?



Sherry Campbell 08:16

Well, the first meeting was with everybody, like all the nonprofits and all the designers. That was the first meeting. The second meeting were just me and the designers, and we talked about the challenges that might be faced, and what our needs are related to design.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 08:47

Okay. And how long was that conversation?



Sherry Campbell 08:55

Probably an hour. But you know, Alex and Sarah had come for 4 meetings. And with the designers we also had that same conversation, what our challenges there and what we needed help with.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:18

Okay, excellent.



Sherry Campbell 09:21

So before I met the designers, Sarah and Alex had a pretty good idea of what we needed.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:26

Okay, perfect, and then talking about that meeting? After talking with the designer, did you feel comfortable with what you agreed to work on?. You were going to receive some some visuals specific for the campaign, how to launch the campaign, how to do the whole thing? Did you have a clear idea in your mind at that moment?

S

Sherry Campbell 09:55

Kind of. You know, things were almost already decided at that time because they had a basis to start with. I think that when the designers came they just saw what was already there and then do what was needed. And they were able to kind of take it to the next phase. They showed me their plan. But they made it way better than what I ever could have imagined.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 10:37

Okay, perfect. And then you had this conversation with the designers. And also they got the input from Sarah and Alex. But did the designers have any kind of interaction, or engagement with some of your beneficiaries, or some of your donors or someone else besides you in the organization?

S

Sherry Campbell 11:03

Yes, they have interacted with volunteers, and our beneficiaries.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 11:10

When did they have that interaction? It was before the the make-a-thon or right after meeting with them? How was it?

S

Sherry Campbell 11:20

Yeah. After our conversation, before the big reveal, they came to Welcome Home and took photos and interviewed people. And just kind of got a good feel for the place.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 11:50

And then from the day of the event, what was your level of engagement there? Did you have any participation? did they present some ideas to you before the final presentation? How was that process for you?

- S** Sherry Campbell 12:08  
Yes, they presented their ideas, and kind of gave me a draft of what they were going to do during the day.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 12:29  
Okay. When they worked in this social media campaign. Were you the only person responsible of taking the decision of launching the campaign or not? Or it was or it was someone else in the organization involved in that decision process?
- S** Sherry Campbell 12:49  
No, it was just me and the designers.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 12:52  
Okay. And then, and how was the presentation of their proposal? What did you think about it?
- S** Sherry Campbell 13:01  
Oh, I was elated. It was excellent. It was incredible. And what they did exceeded my expectations.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 13:14  
Okay, perfect. And then did you actually implemented the campaign the way they propose it? How was for you to carry out the implementation of the whole thing?
- S** Sherry Campbell 13:31  
They did the social campaign for me. Like 60 days after I can't remember. Maybe for three months, they pushed out the social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram. So just went out naturally, I didn't have to do anything there. They also did some discussion cards for us that I haven't printed out, I haven't used that part yet. Mostly because I haven't had time. They did the social media campaign, and then the last part, the brand new website that they created for use, they cleaned it up and made it much brighter and lighter. That was implemeted from day one, immediately after the event.

- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:28  
Oh, nice. what I've seen in other collaborations in Make a Mark, the role of the designers ends up just after the make-a-thon. So the nonprofits are the ones implementing the ideas. So this is not the case. Right?
- S** Sherry Campbell 14:48  
They were very helpful. And then I actually have contracted one of the designers to do some marketing material for us.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 15:09  
Okay. when they were implementing the campaign, did they have access to your social media accounts and everything, right?. So they became volunteers in the organization? Was that something that you agreed from the beginning? Or it was something that came up during the make-a-thon?
- S** Sherry Campbell 15:35  
I don't remember. But I wouldn't disagree. I'm open to everything.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 15:51  
Did you have someone in the organization with similar capabilities like designer, or is something that you are not considering in the organization at the moment?
- S** Sherry Campbell 16:04  
I have a volunteer that sometimes does that for us. But I don't have someone in the organization with those skills in a full-time basis.
- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 16:27  
What was your motivation to to participate in this kind of project? Was something related with communication? what was the idea behind?
- S** Sherry Campbell 17:05  
Well, we need all the help we can get to get the word out and we embrace collaborating

with others. We're not an island. So we know that we need help. And we embrace that we know that I don't have a lot of resources to pay for the work that they do. So having that help was invaluable and helping us get the word out.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 17:50

Great. Can you think of any challenge that you faced during the process?

S

Sherry Campbell 18:03

No, I can't. Maybe time. But, they made that fairly easy, that wasn't really a challenge.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 18:14

Okay, what about the communication with them? To make them understand what you were looking for.

S

Sherry Campbell 18:19

Oh no, that was also fine. Oh, they got it. They got it right away.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 18:27

Okay, wonderful. Was that the same feeling with the previous team that you worked with?

S

Sherry Campbell 18:37

Oh, yeah.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 18:42

Let me just check here if I have more follow up questions. Okay. When when they presented you the the idea for the social media campaign? Did you think that the idea was something kind of too different from from the organizational culture of your nonprofit?

S

Sherry Campbell 19:16

I thought it was well aligned. I thought it was they understand what we're doing. And

they're message was right on target.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 19:31

Perfect. Did you have any comments from your audience? What did they think about the campaign? How was it?



Sherry Campbell 20:02

Our website is cleaner and brighter. We receive positive feedback about our website, The initial campaign, they watch out messages over Facebook and Instagram daily, and so we got a lot more engagement and comments during that time. I think we grew our audience,



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 20:39

I think we've pretty much covered everything. Thank you very much for your time. And good luck with the with the application that you are working on.

# Interview Sabie Crowder

📅 Thu, 08/01 03:31AM ⌚ 23:46

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

sherry, meeting, christina, mark, designers, project, create, talk, work, content, nonprofit, images, organization, conversation, scheduling, donors, home, give, social media, felt

## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Sabie Crowder

- A** Alejandro Tellez Becerra 00:24  
Okay, great. Thank you. Well, thank you for your time. As I mentioned in my email, I'm conducting some research regarding these partnerships between designers and nonprofits. Firstly, I reached out to Sarah, and she contact me with you to talk about your experience in the project. Yes, so I would like to ask you a few questions. First of all, I would like to ask you to please introduce yourself and also talk about your motivation to participate in the project with Welcome Home.
- S** Sabie Crowder 01:18  
I graduated from college with a bachelor's in marketing and graphic design in 2012. So I've been doing marketing and graphic design for about five and a half years, and I have my own company doing marketing and graphic design and I got involved with Make a mMark, because I wanted to meet other designers and give my time and I thought that if only one day I can give up a day in my life to help someone else. So that's kind of a short answer about why I got involved in this. It was my second year helping with Make a Mark. And it's always been a really fun and gratifying experience. I think it's a really special event that they put on every year in Chattanooga. With this project we were tasked with demystifying death. And helping welcome home be a place where people are comfortable talking about death and making it comfortable and easy and less of a scary topic. Also Sherry wanted to have social media content for their Instagram and Facebook. And then we ended up producing a lot more than that on the actual project. Just because

we were able to create more with the time we were given. Raffe and Christina and I met at the house before the actual make a mark day, which doesn't always happen with make a mark. When make a mark actually came around, we had a lot more time than the other teams to do more than just the content that they asked for.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 03:45

How did you come with the agreement to work in this specific things? Because when I talked with Raffe, he mentioned something like it was not like clear deliverables at the very beginning. So it was quite open. So how was that process for you to figure out what to do?

S

Sabie Crowder 04:12

The way I remember it is that Welcome Home was asking for social media content. Raffe and Christina do that and help people to take pictures and create content for social media. And so what we landed on after meeting with Sherry for the first time was creating content in a calendar format for her and scheduling it out all for her because one of the things that Sherry couldn't do with her budget and time and all of that was actually post it. Like, sit down, take a picture, think about what to say, and then post it on social media. So we work three months in advance to create that for her and then go ahead and schedule it. So that was how I felt that Raffe and Christina really took the lead on what to create for her because they've done it for their day job. And they do what Sherry needed. That was awesome. For that part of the project, I felt like my role was more of a project management and helping deliver on what we said we were going to deliver. So the way that I remember the project going is that Raffe did a lot of work ahead of time. And all the imagery, Christina did all the copy and scheduling for the social media post, which took a lot of time. And then that left me with having free time to project manage them. But also have time to create some things myself that weren't part of that scope. Because we like I said had more time, the actual day of like a make a mark to create some other takeaways for them.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 06:18

Okay, excellent. And can you please talk a little bit about your first interactions with Sherry? How was it? Because as I understand in make a mark, you usually have the introductory meeting. So how was that conversation? What did you talk about? How long was it?

S

Sabie Crowder 06:45

S it was probably about 45 minutes to an hour. And we met, I would say a few months in advance of make a mark. So we knew what to be thinking. No one expected us to do anything prior to the make a mark day, which I appreciate. But we knew that we had to go to the house and get pictures. And so that was just kind of what had to happen for this particular assignment. But as far as the meeting goes, I felt like it went really well. And Sarah left the meeting and kind of laid out expectations and the goals and why make a mark was chosen. And then why each of the designers was chosen and kind of what role she saw each of us playing in that. So they kind of lead the discussion and lead us to help make some decisions on what we were going to actually deliver. And so we all felt like we had a good idea of what the goal was and what the deliverable would be by the end of the meeting.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 08:00

Excellent. And then, okay, you had the meeting, and then you realize that you needed to go and take some pictures before the actual event. And then how was the interaction that you had before the event, and during the event with Sherry and the people from welcome home? Meaning, did you try to engage them in the creation process? Or was more like just asking for information? How was that part?

S

Sabie Crowder 08:26

So we went to the house. And it was a Saturday, and so she had some had residents from Welcome Home, she had volunteers and board members there. And so that we can interview them, and help tell their story through social media content. So Raffie will take their picture, and take some portraits. And then Christina, and I would casually talk with them, ask some questions and get their thoughts, opinions, ideas about welcome home and what it means to them and what the organization is done. It was very casual, but it was a very comfortable conversation. We were there for probably two or three hours.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:18

Okay, perfect. And then and I'm curious about the feedback loop when you presented something to Sherry before the end of the event so she can give you some some kind of comments about what she thought.

S

Sabie Crowder 09:42

So yes, we were able to do that. And since we had done a lot of work on the front end, we had a lot to show her. So we were able to show her the calendar, and all the images, the content calendar and all the images we took, and get her feedback. And really she didn't have any feedback. She was so happy. That part of the reward for doing like a month is just for, you know, to give back and to donate our time and our energies into giving something that will last longer than a day. It was a great meeting, it was probably 15 minutes of what we're working on.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 10:53

Okay, Usually in make a mark and its projects is not like all designers can take similar steps as you did to secure the implementation of their recommendations. So how did you come up with that idea? Or what was the motivation to do that? How did you figure out that in the organization that was going to be the only way to be implemented?.

S

Sabie Crowder 11:29

We created a folder with all of the image's name, the copies for the post, and then the day that it was scheduled. And then Sherry gave us access to her social media accounts. So we could go in and handle it that way. And as far as knowing what we should do, I think she came to us, as most nonprofit directors are, she was very tired. Everyone had a great a lot of great ideas, but can't implement them. And so that was our way of giving back and helping her get her time back. By going ahead and scheduling them. I think it was, you know, our plan was to give her calendar and the images and the copy and then ready to go. But we had more time and we could reschedule everything and take her days worth of work. For us that was not a difficult thing. It just took time to sit down and do.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 12:41

I can imagine that if you were working with a different NGO, maybe you wouldn't do that. Because maybe you could assume that the staff of the nonprofit will have the resources to do it, right?

S

Sabie Crowder 12:55

Yeah, yes, absolutely. Sherry relies heavily on volunteers, and there were not than many in Welcome home. And so no, we would not have done that if she had a marketing director or if she had a social media coordinator. But that's what she asked for, content to create conversations. So that's what we came up with. Then halfway through the day, when we were pretty much wrapping up, I created some conversation cards, some design

takeaways, collaterals. And then I redid her website, and it took me four hours. So since we had all the images from Raffae, I thought, well, let me just dump them into her website and swapping out and update those and refresh them. And ended up pretty much being a brand new site and I also did business cards for her. And I think one of the things that I love about Make a Mark other than working with a non profit and working with other designers is the realization that if you turn off all of your other distractions, you get a lot done in twelve hours. It was pretty eye opening as far as me being an business owner myself and if I really want to, I can build any website in four hours or I can create three months and social media content in a day. So that was really beneficial for me as a person.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 14:56

That's amazing. And any point did you consider analyzing the external stakeholders of the organization? Maybe I don't know, the donors, What will they think about your ideas, your communication tools. Or maybe the community or someone outside the organization.

S

Sabie Crowder 15:48

When we went to the house and took the images and interview the people that Sherry had invited, they were donors, board members and volunteers and residents. They knew what was going on to a certain extent. But, I trusted in the make a mark process that if Sherry wanted more people there, she would bring them. So I worked on a project last year, it was an executive director, and then I think she might have one member with her too. In Sherry's case it was just her. So I would have been open to other people being a part of it, but it didn't really cross our mind, we knew like since we got to meet with the people before make a mark at the house we had a good idea about what we were doing, who we were serving, then what they were say about it. And maybe if we didn't meet with those people we wouldn't have had a full view of that. So

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 17:07

completely Yeah, totally. And that's actually what I was trying to get. I think I have all the information that I was looking for. So I would like to thank you very much for your time. It was a really nice conversation.



S

Sabie Crowder 23:35

Yeah, I think it was great. I appreciate you doing all this work. Thank you very much. All right. Bye.



# Interview Raffe Lazarian


 Tue, 07/30 07:40AM  35:57

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS


sherry, organization, work, photos, interviewed, topic, goal, content, christina, presented, agreed, project, social media, designers, scheduled, process, case, donations, conversation, partnerships

## SPEAKERS

Alejandro Tellez Becerra, Raffe Lazarian

 **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 00:08  
Thank you very much for for your time. And sorry for for last week. I totally made a mistake. I actually came home very confident that I had scheduled the call at the right time. But then when I received your message, it was like, oh my god. So I don't know if you perceived from my email, what is the aim of this conversation? So I can explain to you if you want. I am writing my master's thesis in Copenhagen Business School. I'm studying innovation and entrepreneurship. And then the topic that I chose for my thesis is specifically related to these design projects, these partnerships between designers and nonprofits. And how can these partnerships be improved, based on the experience of organizations, such as Make a Mark. So I already interviewed, in this case, Sherry, from the project that you worked on, but I also interviewed people from other projects in another organizations. I also interviewed people in Belgium, in other two projects to have a broader understanding of the topic. Actually, what I'm doing is interviewing both the organization and also the designers. So that's how I came to you.

 **Raffe Lazarian** 01:50  
Yes.

 **Alejandro Tellez Becerra** 01:50  
And then, as I mentioned, I would like to have this conversation, just to understand a little

bit more of your experience. I have a list of questions that I will be asking you. Hopefully, this conversation will last less than 30 minutes. If you have any questions during the conversation, please feel free to ask and I can try to clarify.

R

Raffe Lazarian 02:18

Right.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 02:18

Thank you. So first of all, I would like to ask you to introduce yourself, like your background. And also kind of your motivation to join this project of Make a Mark.

R

Raffe Lazarian 02:30

Well, my background, I went to college for photojournalism at University of Tennessee. And then I've been traveling and working. I moved to Chattanooga about a year and a half ago. My wife, she was here before me and she had done Make a Mark previously, And whenever I moved here, we did it together again. I've always liked helping small businesses, nonprofits. Whenever I found out about it, and the fact that doesn't take so much time, it's fun to help people out. A lot of these organizations don't have money. They are donation based. They don't have a marketing budget, creative budget. So we gave Sherry about four months of creative content, and scheduled out everything on Facebook so she didn't even have to look at it. It happen automatically. And since she's basically running the place by herself, I think she was very appreciative that she didn't have extra work.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 04:19

Okay, great. I would like to start with the whole process, from the very beginning that you applied to Make a Mark? And then how was the process of you being assigned to that project? So can you please elaborate a little bit about that?

R

Raffe Lazarian 04:35

Yeah, Make a Mark reached out, I guess. Christina was on their newsletter. So yes, they reached out and said, we're doing it again. And we immediately signed up, and then they sent over like a Google doc or something. It was like things you like, things you don't like, what you want to do, and all that stuff and build it out. And honestly, I'm a photographer, so most photo based, and she works in advertising, marketing and social media. And, you

know, I told her about my background, photojournalism, She emailed us back, we have the perfect one for you. And we set up a time and we went over there and met them. And it was a little tricky, because they work with people that are terminally ill, and they also have no family, so they're by themselves. Most of them don't want to be on camera. All of them, but one didn't want to be on camera. They're very private. And, you know, within one week I was there working and a couple of people passed away. So it was it was tricky, but we tried to highlight the work they are trying to do at Welcome Home.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 06:26

Okay, so then you apply, you were assigned, you had this introductory meeting with Sherry. So how was that meeting?

R

Raffe Lazarian 06:52

It was a simple conversation, they talked about who they are, you know, this is what we need and things like that. Very simple and brief. And then I don't remember how long it was, it might have been, I guess a couple weeks after we first talked. Our group kind of got together and tried to figure out if we could do all the work in one day? That doesn't really work for photos. So I went back and forth to their house three times to stay a few hours at a time to shoot pictures and kind of talked to them a little bit. And then Christina, and Sabie, the graphic designer, they came out and interviewed a couple of people there just to get some background information and stuff. We interviewed people that started the house, employees and things like that. And then they just kind of after that, they just work on the text. And I went there a few times and shot photos, edited them along the way. And then that was the last contact we had with anybody at Welcome Home. We started putting everything together. And Sherry showed up and showed her what we were doing. She was really happy. At the end Sabie and Christina presented and you know, it was great. We got nominated for creativity something award.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 09:04

I'm interested in the topic of the deliverables that you agreed on in some way. Because I can imagine that during that first meeting, you spoke about what Sherry would like to get out of this. And then you agreed on something?

R

Raffe Lazarian 09:24

No, I think with other people maybe that was the case. Sherry never wanted anything from us, other than something for social media that can help drive some donations. They didn't

want anything in particular. Once we sat down with all the content, we were like, We have a lot of content. So why don't we just do this for her? And that's how we planed all social media and all that, but that was never, like, agreed upon.. So

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 10:07

And how was that for you? Because if you have something in mind, like okay, the client or the organization is asking this specific things. So you know what the end goal is. But in this case, it was totally free. So how was that for you?

R

Raffe Lazarian 10:24

In this case, I think it was easier for us. Because the topic is not friendly. It's just not fun. So we didn't have to do anything in particular, I remember the only thing she said she didn't want, she said she didn't want sad black and white photos. Once we got there and started shooting after the first time I shot, I saw how much content I had. Once I started editing, you know, ended up with probably 100 images. And on top of that we did 50 or 60, like graphic cards with quotes on them and stuff like that. So it was cool, because since there was no pressure on this one, and because of the topic, we sort of didn't feel like we had to hit something we just kind of did what felt right, sort of what we thought was to fill out her end goal, even though she didn't really have an end goal. "e just want more people to see this.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 11:59

Sherry only phrased the problem, and then you tried to solve it with your own skills. And then in which moment or How did you come up with the idea to actually go and implement your suggestion? Because actually, something that I didn't mention is that I'm particularly interested in these partnerships in the process of implementation. Because as you might imagine, in other partnerships, designers only come say, you need to do this. And then they leave. And most of the times, those suggestion don't get implemented. But in your case, since you were involved, you kind of secured the implementation. But how that happened? I'm super curious about it.

R

Raffe Lazarian 12:55

When we sat down that morning, and my was done, because I'd already edited everything. When we were looking at all the content. And we were just thinking, we didn't want to bring extra work to her plate, we just said, you know, we have the content and my part was done, So I'm basically doing nothing there all day. We just said, why don't we just

have me working on the posting and all that. We started drafting quotes and things like that. We had time left. And say why don't we schedule everything on Facebook. And then we still had time, So what we ended up doing was, it's been a while, we updated the website. And then we created some graphic PDFs for her forms, like, you know, our clients fill out forms, they have like wills and stuff like that. And we redid all of those. In my mind it was just to do the most impact without them having to do anything. Because, I was there for three days or more. They're working very hard for no money. The environment is not healthy. Mentally is very hard. But I guess the goal was always to just create something to drive traffic. But the secondary goal was to have all of that happen seamlessly. If it was a company with interns and stuff like that, you know, we probably wouldn't have done that. But it basically her, two or three volunteers that are there for two hours a day. So that was the thinking behind it.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 16:04

That makes sense. Because in other places that I've interviewed, they have a larger structure in the organization. So maybe the designers expect some kind of involvement from the people in the organization. But in your case, you said, okay, we don't have any resources to rely on. So we need to make this work even without so much involvement from the people in the organization. So other other question is, you mentioned that you were in the organization to take pictures and just spend a few days there. Mostly with their beneficiaries. Did you have any communication with the staff in the organization? How was that process?

R

Raffe Lazarian 16:58

It was casual, the staff were all volunteer, as far as I'm aware of. And they all have jobs and stuff. So they're there for a couple hours, so they're in and out. So anytime someone was there, we just, shoot photos casually while they were working, we sat him down as I sat everybody down for photos at one point. But that was, you know, 15-20 minutes just to kind of chat and take some notes. And then we have, on the first day, whenever everybody else was there with me and Sabie, we did a sort of a more group kind of interview. Everybody was happy about it. Because I think everybody there because it's volunteer, they all have the same goals. So all of them, their goal was to bring more money into their organization. It was a very easy process.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 18:30

Perfect. You interacted with a staff from the organization and with the beneficiaries. But also, did you have an interaction with some donors, maybe someone outside the

organization?

R

Raffe Lazarian 18:52

We did an interview and photos with founding donors. But no, we didn't speak to anybody that was not really in the organization. We didn't even think to ask.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 19:07

Yes. For example, I can imagine you produced some content. And then in your mind, you said, Okay, this looks fantastic. It totally makes sense. You can ask Sherry what does she think about it? And then she can say, yeah, it's fantastic. But you could also go in and ask someone outside, what do they think about this? Or it's not something that you usually do?

R

Raffe Lazarian 19:52

I mean, probably not to the extent that you're asking, but like, the day of the make-a-thon, we pretty much pitched our thing to every other group. We were working on it and told them about it, explain it to them and asking for feedback. And, you know, that was that was about it.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 20:16

Yeah. Because maybe in that case, it totally makes sense to ask to that kind that audience because you are targeting everyone, not a specific group. So it makes sense to ask a regular person, what do you think about this? And they can give you a really good feedback. And I'm also interested, Is there someone else besides Sherry in charge of taking the decision of approving or rejecting your suggestion?

R

Raffe Lazarian 20:58

No, Sherry was the only responsible.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 21:02

Okay, did you have a close interaction with her and everything that you presented was to her, and she agreed or not?



Raffe Lazarian 21:10

Right. She was awesome. Really helpful. And in the end she was really happy.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 21:26

Okay, great. Let me just check here if I have some more topics to cover. Okay, an additional topic that I found here, when you talked with Sherry, you got a feeling about the organization and you realized they don't have many people to rely on or many resources yet. So how did you come up with that conclusion? It was only by talking with Sherry? or was something you got from Sarah to understand better organization?



Raffe Lazarian 22:38

I'm not sure if anybody ever mentioned that. I feel like I got that impression the minute I got there. I don't remember the exact conversation, I think they told us they were a small nonprofit. Not much more than that. As far as I remember. Sherry made it very clear very quickly. And it's really easy to see once you are there. The way she does everything.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 23:24

During the make-a-thon, as I understand, you've had some checking time when you could present or ask for some more information to Sherry. How was that feedback loop? How was the process in the sense of if you presented something that was a little too disruptive for her? or How was that alignment?



Raffe Lazarian 24:04

That never happened. She was there every day while I was shooting photos. So she knew what I was covering. She knew I shoot photos from the staff, major donors, signs, the building inside little detail stuff. So she was aware of what we were covering and what our end goal was, I'm not sure that we ever said this is how we're going to give it to you. She really just kind of trusted us to just do their best judgment. That's what we tried to do. But she wasn't trying to micromanage. Like I said, she just said she doesn't want photos sad black and white photos. That was the only indication she gave us.



Alejandro Tellez Becerra 25:14

Okay, perfect.

R

Raffe Lazarian 25:16

For other groups this process was probably a little more different than ours. More structured, you know, ours was not a very structured. Our organization itself is very unstructured and small. You know, some people were working with giant foundations for diseases and stuff. This was all more casual and just a little more, you know, do what you want, I guess. We kept her in the loop, everything we wanted to try and she was always like awesome, great. Sounds great.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 25:59

Amazing. What I've been researching not only in practice, but also in literature is this so called tension of disruption, which is like the fact that if someone from the outside comes, they have their own way of thinking, and then the organization has their own. So how can you align both, but in your case, since welcome home was super open to newness, there was no tension.

R

Raffe Lazarian 26:31

Not even close. The goal was very clear, We don't want sad, and we want more donations., that was it. Very simple goals. And, you know, she knew we're all on the same page. They do things their way, but they don't have a way. They don't have like a brand identity on social media, like she's so busy, she works probaly 80 hours a week, 100 hours a week. It was the first time they ever posted on social media regularly. Always it was once in a while, and then we scheduled I want to say it was like, five times a week for four months. It was the first time they've ever had like a presence. I think bigger places probably have issues with that, but here was not the case.

A

Alejandro Tellez Becerra 28:19

Excellent. I think I covered pretty much everything and I would like to thank very much for your time.