CHILD-CENTERED DESIGN

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Save the Children

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD:

Welcome to develop better services for children!

Understanding the thoughts, experiences and actions of service users enables us to create better services. Despite this being a known fact, children are rarely invited to take part in actual development efforts. Grasping the needs and perspectives of children requires the willingness and skill to stop and engage with their thinking and behaviour with an open mind, which leads to entirely new insights.

The idea for this guide was born in the context of Save the Children Finland's development operations in 2018 when one of our service designers sat down with experts in child participation and co-design. We noticed that we share many similar thoughts but we also have a lot to learn from each other. This led to us wanting to collate the insights in the form of this guide. Hopefully it will encourage you to involve children in your development activities!

Child-centered design provides developers of services or organisations with an operating model and an array of tips and tools. This is by no means comprehensive service design guide, but it can be used to work together with children to develop services that meet their needs. The child's perspective and rights are incorporated into every phase of the guide's development process, and they will also be an essential element of the eventual services.

Our guide consists of three main chapters. In the first one, we shed light on the three components of child-centered design, which are the service design itself, children's rights and child-orientation. In the second chapter, we provide tips on working with children. The third chapter, in turn, involves a review of the seven phases of the service design process. We provide concrete tools and methods along the way, as well as examples of successful child-centered processes.

We encourage you to consult the guide whenever you need to develop services with a direct or indirect impact on children and young

people. Child-centered design is a suitable development tool for all operating environments in the private, public and third sector alike. In talking about 'children' in the guide, we refer to all persons under the age of 18 and have paid special attention to ensuring that the guide is also applicable to working with children under 12. Our starting point is that each child should have the opportunity to get involved without any expectations on specific skills or abilities.

Child-centered design is both inspiring and creative. By involving children, we can learn to develop better services than ever before. Most importantly, this will also demonstrate to children that their opinions matter, and that they too can make a difference.

We hope you enjoy the creative moments
with the children you work with!

Reetta, **Katja**, **Anna-Maija**, **Sonja** and **Hanna**

WHAT CONSTITUTES CHILD-CENTERED DESIGN?

Child-centered design combines service design, children's rights and a child-centered approach. One of the contributing factors to child-centered design is the perspective of positive recognition. The process and design tools are based on service design. Allowing children's rights to steer our activities ensures the ethically sound basis of the development process and the service being developed. In this context, child orientation is an attitude and operating method: we see the child as a valuable actor in the development process.

This combination can be used to develop ethically sustainable services that meet cuctomer needs while simultaneously ensuring that the development is pleasant and meaningful for all parties involved.
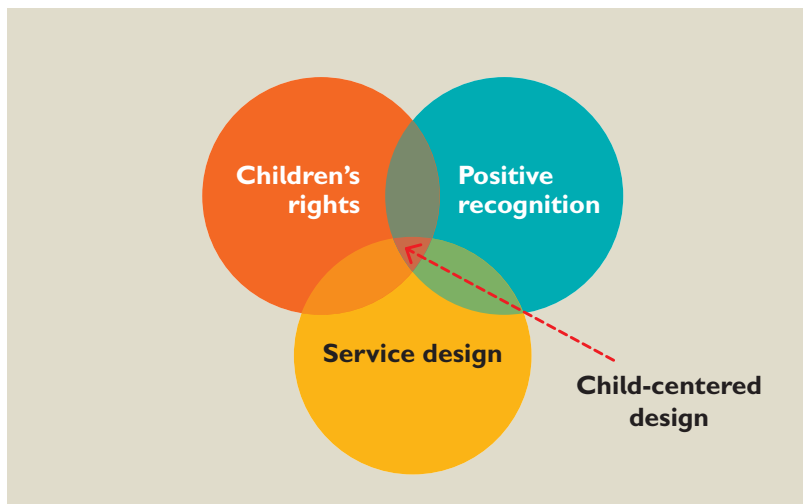
Positive recognition and child orientation

Positive recognition

Attitude and operating method
Bolsters the experience of
engagement and self-esteem

Familiarisation
Open-mindedness and
genuine interest

Support
Supporting success
and agency!

Recognition
Insight on what is important
to the child and why
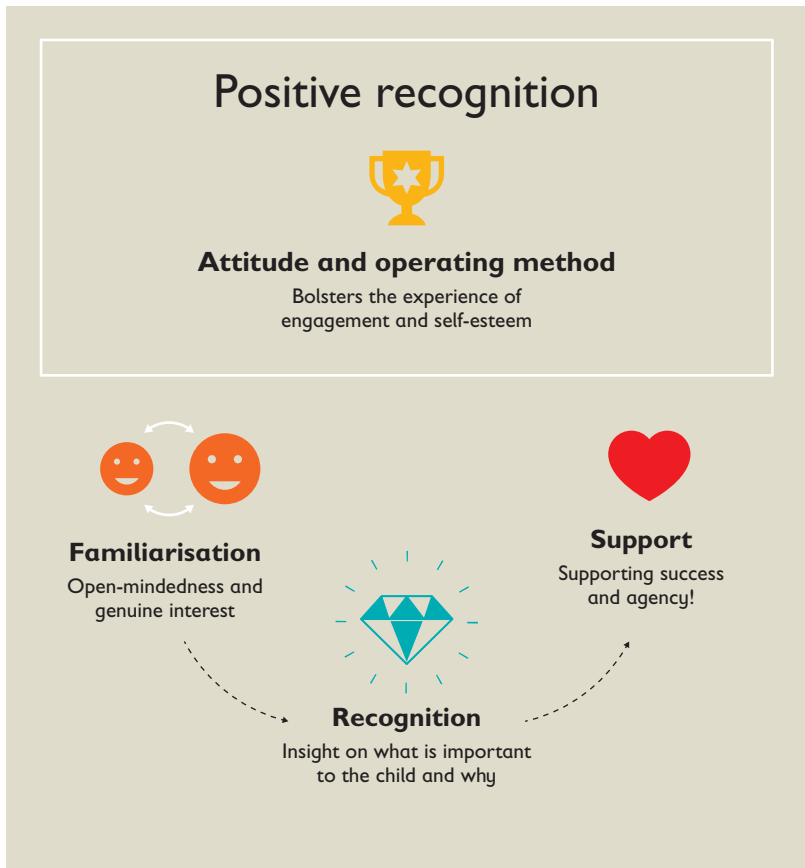
One of the underlying factors affecting child-centered design is the perspective of positive recognition, which focuses on engaging with children here and now as active, influencing and developing actors in their day-to-day communities. (https://research.tuni.fi/mytu/in-english/). Conscious attention is paid to the children's various strengths and successes. The perspective is always steered from the scrutiny of personal challenges towards supporting communal well-being and agency. Positive recognition reinforces the children's experience of being important

and appreciated exactly as they are. This helps them find their place among peers, be understood in matters important to them, and influence things in a meaningful way in peer communities and with adults.

Getting to know each child in question is at the core of positive recognition. Only through open and unprejudiced engagement can adults identify matters that are important to children and provide support in a way that takes their views into account.

Child-centered design sees the child as an equal and active actor. Child orientation means that children and their perspectives are considered in all phases of the process. The experiences of children and any insights gained from them are just as valuable as any views provided by adults or specialists. It is the adults' responsibility to ensure that children are seen as individuals and that the process seeks to understand their thoughts and experiences. Adults can get to know children through empathy by stepping into the shoes of children and seeing the world through their eyes.

Participation in service design should always be voluntary for children.

Children's rights

Child-centered design is guided by the general principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which are set out in four articles. These articles form the foundation on which all other rights secured by the UNCRC are built and through which they are interpreted. The numbers refer to the number of the UNCRC article in question.

- **6** Every child has the right to life, survival and development. Development refers to physical, psychological, spiritual, moral and social development.
- **12** Every child has the right to freely express their views in all matters affecting them. These views must be taken into account according to the age and development level of the children expressing them.
- **2** The rights of the child apply to all children. Children may not be discriminated against based on their own appearance, origin, opinions or other characteristic or that of their parents.

3 The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions, actions and plans that affect children.

In child-centered design, children participate in the process by producing information, developing ideas for solutions and providing feedback. Adults must consider children's rights in all phases of the process. The adults must also ensure that children are not discriminated against and that they receive sufficient information to understand the context. Page 30 of this guide features a tool to help select the children's rights essential to the work efforts.

In assessing the interests of children, their own views must always be considered. The working methods selected must enable children to express themselves in ways that they feel comfortable with and to affect the flow of the process. Participation in the development process must never be harmful to the child. It is the duty of the adults involved to ensure that the children feel safe throughout the work efforts and that their privacy is protected.

The design process can offer children with fun and interesting things to do. Through participation, they can ideally gain experiences of success and making a difference.

Service design process

Service design process

Discover — Define — Develop — Deliver

General design challenge
What do we want to change?

Specific design challenge
Which target group needs we want to tackle?

Specific solution
Which solution will we implement and how?
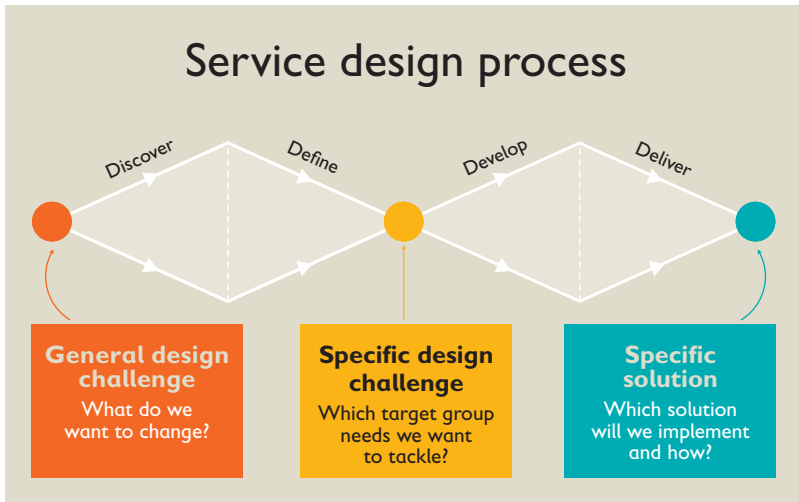
The service design process consists of three nodes that steer the work and two that take turns expanding and specifying the work phases. The work does not begin in a vacuum as the need to develop something new or change old ways is usually sparked by customer feedback, professional insight or other information.

Initially, it is important to define the general design challenge: What do we want to change? The specification is followed by more detailed scrutiny of the challenge and its background. Customer understanding is expanded until there is sufficient information, after which a transition is made to the analysis phase. At this stage, the question is specified further: Which target group's needs do we need to meet to achieve the desired change? Once the design challenge has been specified and delineated, it is time to come up with ideas for solutions. The brainstorming phase can be somewhat meandering. The solution proposals created in the ideation phase are tested before decision which proposal will be implemented and how.

The work process is never quite this straightforward and, at times, it is necessary to go back to rethink and redo things. This is why the nodes are so important. They ensure project success but also provide

the opportunity to stop and make sure that the correct focus has been maintained. These intermittent stops are necessary to drive the process forward. The duration of the service design process varies and depends on whether or not development is conducted as a component of the work process or through project arrangements.

In child-centered design, the child-centric approach is the common thread that keeps the objective and target group in sharp focus. The parties involved must commit to child orientation, but otherwise the service design process or work methods cannot be pre-planned from start to finish – they must be permitted to evolve along the way. Changes in course are never failures and instead provide opportunities for learning and gaining experience. The right path can only be found by trying different things.

It is also acceptable to take a lighter approach to the work methods in that plenty of options are available for all phases. For example, information can be collected and itemised through workshops, interviews, observations or web surveys, for example. Service design can and should be conducted as part of day-to-day work activities through organic encounters. It is perfectly all right to be creative and playful every once in a while!

WORKING
WITH CHILDREN

There are many ways to **work with children.** You can connect with children in their own environments, or you can incorporate customer work with children in your activities. You can also organise separate children's groups and workshops, street interviews or web surveys. Whenever children are involved in a service design process, their needs must be considered and their rights respected.

Below we have compiled a list of things that should be considered in the various phases of a child-centered design process.

1 Preparation

As a general rule, children should have the right to participate in development work but not be forced to do so. Always make sure the children know that participation is voluntary and ask for their consent (verbal or written). Be wary of meaningless superficial engagement: make sure that the children take part in a meaningful way. If possible, plan the development process together with the children. **12**

Make the situation child-friendly

When planning a meeting, ensure that the premises and methods are child-friendly and in line with their capabilities and interests. Also consider possible sensory stimuli, such as echoing rooms, passers-by and noise. Make the space child-friendly by removing items that are not intended or allowed for children.

Always prepare for a meeting with children thoroughly. Consider and decide in advance how to react to unexpected initiatives made by children or situations where a child tells you something that requires personal attention.

Remember safety

Ensure that the situation and process are always safe to the children. Safety stems from the presence of an adult and the child's ability to choose what to talk about, how and how quickly. Safety and security warrant special attention when the matter at hand is sensitive to the child. **19**

When working with a group of children, make sure that everyone feels safe and can talk about what they are thinking. Pay attention

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Articles of the UNCRC

12 The child has the right to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting the child. The view of the child shall be taken into account in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

19 The child shall be protected from all forms of violence, negligent treatment and abuse.

to the risks of bullying and each child's individual needs within the group. **13**

Consider the children's needs

In your planning activities, consider the basic needs of each child, such as coping with separation from their parents and the ability to focus. You should also account for toilet breaks, snacks and sufficient activities for the children. It is not always possible to prepare for everything, so it is a good idea to have a backup plan and be able to deviate from the original plan.

Ensure equal opportunity

Ensure that all the children involved have the opportunity to participate and express themselves. For some children, this may require more encouragement and preparation such as using various communication tools that support or substitute for speaking. **2**

How to document

Consider beforehand how you will document the situation. How many adults will be needed to work with the children and record notes? You should also consider the method of taking notes.

2 Working with children

Make sure that the child understands what is going on

In a way that is understandable to a child, tell the children what you would like to hear their views on and what is happening at any given time. You can draw or use pictures for illustration, for example. Children find it easier to understand explanations that are supported with pic-

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Articles of the UNCRC

13 In order to express his or her views the child has the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas freely, provided that it does not violate the rights of others.

2 Every child is entitled to the rights of the child. No child shall be discriminated against due to his or her parents' traits, opinions or origin.

tures. When you leave a picture up on a wall, for example, the children can easily go back to it to ask for more details.

Create a confidential interactive situation

Strive to forge a trusting and confidential connection with the child or group of children. Physically position yourself at the level of the child on the floor, at a table or on the roof of a playhouse, for example. Show that you are interested in the children's thoughts and the children themselves exactly as they are. Get to know the children and tell them something about yourself.

In the process of getting to know one another, it is important to start with what the children talk about and do. Play with the children or talk about something that interests them for a while. Let the children talk about and describe things that are important to them freely and in their own characteristic ways.

Support the children's own methods of participation

Trust in the children's ability to talk about and express themselves. Children can tell you things in a variety of ways. See their imagination as a resource through which you can delve deeper into their way of perceiving and experiencing things. Use your imagination in the exercises.

Never pressure or force a child to participate. Give the children the opportunity to deviate from your plans – this can often encourage them to engage. If the communication does not go as expected, find a suitable method of communication together with the children. Ask the

children for help, offer options and observe how the children express themselves.

Observe and talk openly about your observations
In addition to what the children tell you, observe what they do. Facial expressions and gestures can tell you a lot. You should also take note of how specific children behave alone and with others.

When taking notes, ensure that the children can see them. Talk about what you are writing down and why, and what the notes will be used for. This builds trust and give the children the opportunity to comment and make suggestions.

3 After working together

Consult the children or individual child to ensure that you have under-stood the key points correctly. Tell the children what will happen next, what you will do with what they have told you and which points made by them will impact the development of the matter at hand. If possible, tell the children about the end results of the development.

Ask the children for feedback on the work you did together.

Working with children:
MEANINGFUL FREE TIME AS EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN

" I was tasked with finding out why children spent time at a wellness centre, what motivated them to go there and what sort of leisure activity they found meaningful. We sent out an open invitation to attend the afternoon workshop, which was circulated by schools. When a certain 7-year-old boy arrived, I went over to greet him, told him why we wanted to hear from children and presented the exercise we wanted their thoughts on. The exercise was an illustration of a child's path through a single day, involving the child travelling from school to the wellness centre and then going home. There were newspaper

clippings, pens, glue and scissors on the table for the task. The boy seemed uncomfortable and I noticed him staring at the table football game off to the side. I asked him if he would like to play it and he immediately said 'yes'. I then asked if he could teach me too, to which he agreed. After one game, the boy came back to take on the exercise and used it to convey to me many of his thoughts about his own free time and its significance to him.

Working with children:
CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF SERVICES

I met with children from a specific residential area with the goal of hearing about their experiences of the education, social and health services in the area. I wanted all children from the area to have the opportunity to participate. I
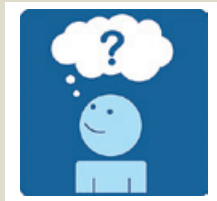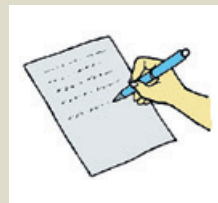

Your experience?

You can add stickers

Talk

Draw

Write

photographed a variety of services and printed out pictures of the rest from the municipality's website: indoor swimming pool, library, health centre, afternoon day care, day care, school and so on. I glued the photos individually on paper sheets that I then spread out in a large classroom. I also set out some pens and emoji stickers. When the children arrived, I told them that I would like to hear their thoughts and experiences with regard to the places and people in the pictures. I indicated that they could draw or write on the photos, attach various emoji stickers to them or talk to me about their thoughts. I had printed out pictures to support my verbal instructions using the "Papunet" image bank.

Suggestions for introduction games and final games

When you meet a group of children, pay attention to getting everyone introduced to one another and ending the session in the appropriate manner. Here are some methods.

Introduction game 1:
Present 5–10 statements and ask the children or young people to position themselves on a drawn or imaginary line based on them. This promotes interaction between the group members, and being active can be an easy way to get everyone started with talking about themselves.

Introduction game 2:
Introductions through pictures or small items. Place newspaper or magazine clippings, postcards, picture cards or small items on the floor. Ask everyone present to pick one and tell something about themselves or how they feel by using the picture or item.

Introduction game 3:
Take out an item such as a ball, ball of yarn, button or die. Ask the children to sit in a circle, hand the item to one of them and ask that child

to hand the item to the next child. When you say "stop", the child who has the item can tell the rest of the group his or her name and some personal detail. You can also ask each child a single question, such as "If you were an animal, what animal would you be?" or "What is your favourite season?"

Final game 1:
Play children's music so that you can exercise or dance to it.

Final game 2:
Engage in active play, such as tag, for a while.

Final game 3:
Every child can take turns showing a trick or move that the others must then repeat.

PROCESS PHASES AND METHODS
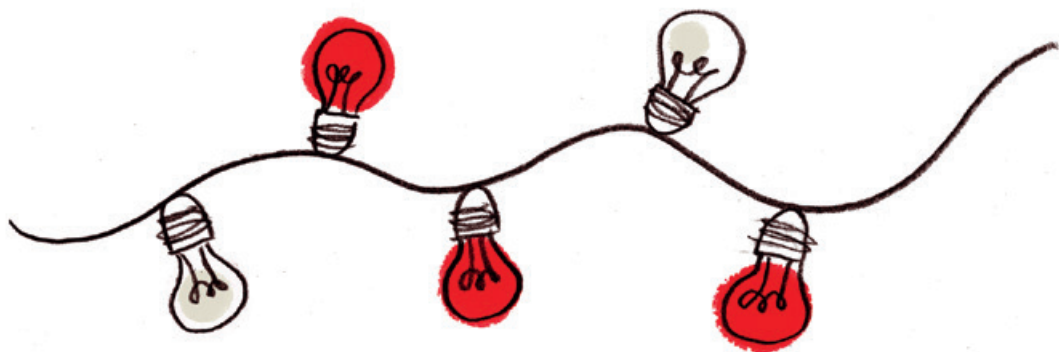
1 General design challenge: What do we want to change?

All development begins with the question 'why'? Why are we about to develop an existing or a new service? In the event that either one of or the primary target group of a service is children or the service will indirectly affect children, it is important to consider the arrangement from a child's perspective. The development must hinge on children's needs and any possible issues children may have with the service.

The children's views must be reconciled with the organisation's values and objectives as well as the opinions of the adults involved in the service design process. This can be a challenge. This is why it is important to begin the development process by exploring all perspectives. Understanding the children's perspective requires taking the time to delve into the children's activities, thinking and environment with an open mind. This also ensures a better grasp of what needs to be developed to better meet the children's needs. The development can also be initiated by the children themselves. At times, there can also be a conflict between the views of the organisation, the adults and the children. In these cases, it is important to bring all perspectives together and define an issue or need that everyone can relate to.

Service design process

Discover → Define → Develop → Deliver

General design challenge
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Which target group needs we want to tackle?

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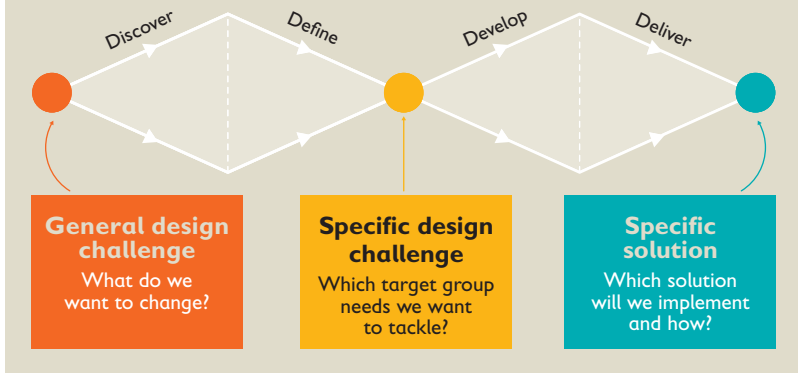
In defining the design challenge, you must specify the children's rights that require special attention and how the chosen rights should manifest themselves in the context of the service in question. This creates the qualitative framework within which the development solutions must remain. Essential children's rights may not come up in what the children themselves says, which is why it is the responsibility of the adults to ensure that the rights are observed.

All those involved in the development should participate in the specification of the design challenge. When the design challenge is determined at the outset and everyone commits to it properly, the work has a clear focus that facilitates decision-making during the development efforts. In the specification phase, it is also important to familiarise yourself with everything that has been and is being done around the subject.

When the service being developed concerns children, the child's perspective must be considered at every stage. The fulfilment of this objective is measured. If the service strives to improve children's experience of being heard, one of the indicators of success must be how children actually experience their voice being heard. Success is also measured from the perspective of the adults involved in the project and the organisation's objectives. The latter can be measured based on increased amount of participants or reaching a new target group, for example.

Defining the design challenge:
DEVELOPING DIGITAL FAMILY WORK

99 **The Finnish Red Cross' youth shelter** decided to develop the digital aspects of its family work services. The shelter had been conducting traditional family work (i.e. meeting with young people and families) for a long time. A decision was made to develop digital family work alongside these efforts. The efforts were initiated by defining the design challenge. A variety of reasons were known for the shelter's traditional family work meetings not always being successful or fitting everyone's schedule, but we wanted to specify, in the customers' words, why the new service was necessary. The following was defined as the design challenge: "It is not possible for me to access services related to my situation when it is most convenient for me." The challenge was also specified with three subordinate challenges: "I cannot attend because I do not want to come to the premises", "I cannot attend because I cannot come to the premises" and "Due to my shift work, I cannot meet with the worker I would like until much later on". At this stage, we could not be sure whether or not digital family work would be the right solution for these problems. In order to make sure that the developed service would meet the relevant needs, it was important to consider why the new service was necessary.

A variety of indicators were also defined for the first test phase to evaluate success. Information was collected by the shelter workers asking the young people and their parents to provide a small amount of feedback after each instance of contact and slightly more after the family work process. The aim was to collect information on customer experiences related to the usability of the digital tool, the quality of the contact and the experience of involvement. The process of assessing success began with the following questions:

- Did you feel like you received help?
- What did you think about the method of participation?
- Did you get to participate in the way you wanted?
- Did you know what was being discussed even though you were not physically meeting with a worker?
- Did you get the opportunity to talk about what you wanted even though you were not physically meeting with a worker?
- Would you have attended without the option for remote connection or online exercises?
- Was it problematic for you to go through your affairs online with a variety of workers?
- Did you feel that your desired worker was available when needed?
- Was the system easy to use?
- Did you leave any task incomplete due to problems with the system or its functionality?

From the organisation's standpoint, the following indicators were specified for success:

- Length of the customer relationships
- Can the responsibility for a single customer relationship now be divided between workers better than before?
- Does the new working method result in customer relationships that would otherwise not have been formed?
- Does this ensure the involvement of people from the local community who would otherwise not have participated?
- How many of those who get involved in the process stop before completion?

Defining the design challenge and indicators:
DEVELOPING AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

🔴🔴 **A sports club** was organising afternoon activities in Nokia, and we wanted to know what was important to children in these activities and what was a good time for the children to participate in them. We organised a workshop named "The afternoon of my dreams" for the children so that they could express their wishes regarding afternoon activities. This was done by gluing newspaper clippings on a large shared piece of paperboard and talking about them. We also held small group discussions where the children could talk about when they feel most comfortable in club activities.

On this basis, we defined the following experiences of the children as indicators of success for the activities:

- I get to do things I enjoy. I can influence the nature of my play, for example.
- I have friends to spend time with.
- I get to be myself at the club: I do not need to pretend or be afraid of bullying.
- If I am tired and the commotion is too much, I can find a quieter place for myself.
- The adults have time to listen to the children. If necessary, the adults will step in and help.
- The children listen to the adults, and the rules agreed upon together are followed. Children get to make decisions on play, but any kind of violence is disallowed.
- I feel safe. I am not bullied.
- I can make requests and sometimes they are implemented.

Three workshops were also organised for the workers to consider what they found most important about the afternoon activities. The following were defined as indicators of success from the perspective of the workers:

- The children have a good time.
- Everyone takes care of one another.
- The atmosphere is positive.
- The activities are safe for everyone.
- Communication between the children and adults is open.
- There is mutual trust between the children and adults.
- The adults have the ultimate responsibility and decision-making power.

Based on these efforts, we chose the most essential UNCRC articles for the indicators to measure:

13 In order to express his or her views the child has the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas freely, provided that it does not violate the rights of others

19 The child shall be protected from all forms of violence, negligent treatment and abuse.

31 The child has the right to rest, play and leisure as well as to participate in the arts and cultural life.

We created a mobile survey to systematically monitor our success. We tested the questions of the survey form with the children participating in the afternoon activities and made some changes to the survey.

Tool to support the definition of the design challenge

1. **Answer the following questions:** What do you want to achieve? What is the issue to be resolved? What is the issue to be resolved as phrased by a child? In this context, it is important to start from the viewpoint of the child – what kinds of changes do the children hope for? How does this fit together with the organisation's goals and values? Try to phrase the issue from a child's perspective, in words a child would use.

2. **Indicators to assess development success:**
   A. Indicators of success from the child's perspective. What is the children's experience of how things are or how they have changed?
   B. Indicators of success from the organisation's perspective. Have the organisation's goals been reached and do the changes made serve the organisation's goals?
   C. Indicators of success from the perspective of children's rights. Choose the children's rights that warrant particular attention in the context of the service you are developing. Consider how the realisation of the children's rights will be assessed.

3. **What is the target group of the changes?** Where can these children be reached?

4. **Consider research questions that would help you to develop the service.** What would you like to learn about how children currently use the service? What would you like to learn about the customer's needs, feelings and behaviour?

5. **What challenges and obstacles are currently preventing progress?**

6. **What do you already know with regard to the target group and the issue to be resolved?**

Tool for selecting the appropriate children's rights

The choice of children's rights is facilitated by the following questions, which can be used to consider which rights are essential for each development target. The numbers refer to UNCRC articles.

1. D**oes the service promote the children's right to express their views in all matters affecting them?**

12 The child has the right to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting the child. The view of the child shall be taken into account in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

13 In order to express his or her views the child has the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas freely, provided that it does not violate the rights of others.

3 When making decisions concerning a child the child's best interests shall always be a primary consideration.

2. Does the service respect the children's right to play and be taken care of and protected?

16 The child has the right to privacy, domestic peace and secrecy of correspondence. No child shall be subjected to attacks on his or her honour or reputation.

18 The parents have the primary and joint responsibility for the upbringing of the child. They are entitled to obtain support for managing this task. The parents shall act in the best interests of the child. The State shall ensure day care and child welfare services.

9 As a rule, the child has the right to live with his or her parents if the child feels happy and safe living with them. A child who is separated from his or her parents has the right to meet and maintain regular contacts with both parents. Such a meeting can be prevented if it is contrary to the child's best interests.

31 The child has the right to rest, play and leisure as well as to participate in the arts and cultural life.

23 A child with disabilities must obtain the best possible care and assistance that promotes the child's self-reliance and participation.

19 The child shall be protected from all forms of violence, negligent treatment and abuse.

34 The child shall be protected from all forms sexual abuse.

20 A child who cannot live with his or her family is entitled to special protection and support. In that case attention shall be paid to continuity in the child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious and linguistic background.

3. Does the service secure each child's right to full development? Do the activities ensure that each child has sufficient tangible and intangible resources for development?

6 The child has the right to life. The State shall guarantee to the maximum extent the survival and development of the child at his or her individual pace

24 The child has the right to live as healthy a life as possible and to have access to the health and medical care needed by him or her. Appropriate health care shall be guaranteed for expectant mothers.

27 The child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her development.

29 Education shall develop the child's individual skills, respect for the human rights and the child's own language and culture, responsible citizenship, tolerance and environmental protection.

26 The child has the right to social security.

17 The child has the right to obtain such information through the mass media that is important for his or her development and well-being. Children shall be protected from information and material injurious to their well-being.

2 **Discover**

Service design process

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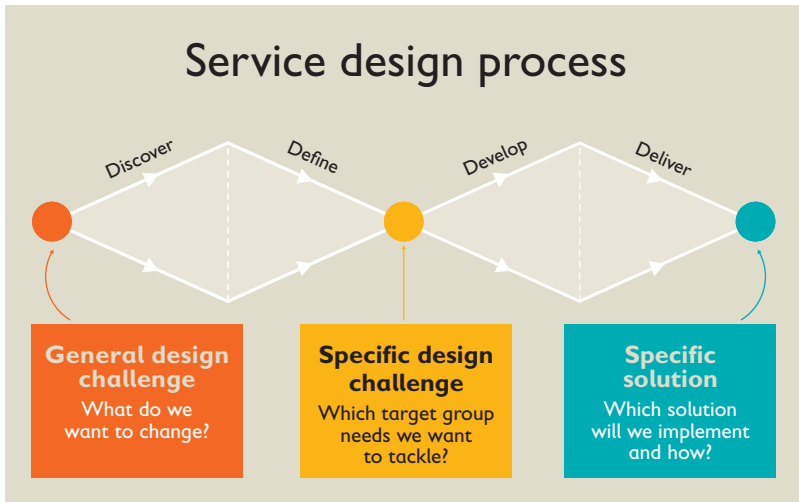
When the aim is to discover and understand the needs of children and young people, remember to maintain an open-minded attitude! Collect information from children and young people by getting to know them and working with them. Children's needs can be explored by listening to their experiences and observing their day-to-day lives and behaviour. In other words, determining the children's perspective is not limited to asking them what they want.

Plan any meetings with children thoroughly beforehand, but be prepared to go with the flow and change your plans. Pay attention to how you begin and end the sessions. For example, you can arrange meetings in environments in which the children spend time anyway. You can also organise separate meetings for children in the target group.

In meetings with children, it is important to create an atmosphere that is considerate, encouraging and respectful of the children's privacy. It is important to tell the children what the purpose of each meeting is and why they are arranged. This can be done with the help of an illustrated programme framework, for example. Remember to thank and possibly reward the children, and ask for feedback. Proportion the reward to each child's age and the requirements of participation.

You can use a variety of methods in meeting children and forming an understanding of their needs in relation to the issue to be resolved. Consider how children of different ages and characteristics can get involved. You should also always have a backup plan so that you can change the script as you go along according to the children's feedback.

Suggestions for methods:

A situational view on the perspective of the children or young people

The method is suitable for children of all ages!

- **Draw** a "sun of joys", "ghost of concerns" and "tree of wishes" on a large sheet of paperboard.
- **Talk to the children** about the matter on which you would like to hear their thoughts (the product or service being developed, for example). Consider the question and its wording in advance. If necessary, use pictures in presenting the question.
- **Ensure** that the children have understood the assignment.
- **Ask the children to draw** or write about their thoughts: happy things in the sun, unpleasant things in the ghost and hopes in the tree. You can also be the one to write the thoughts down, but please use the children's own words. Instead of writing or drawing, the children can also use pre-set pictures to describe the three areas.
- **Make observations** as the children are completing the task. What do the children tell you during the activity? What do you observe and see? Write down the observations.
- **Make the time to establish contact with each child** and ask them to tell you what they have drawn, written or glued to the sheet. Use the question 'why' to gain more details and a better understanding of their perspective.

⚙ Picture collage

The method is suitable for children of all ages!

You can use a picture collage to learn about the children's impressions, wishes or expectations with regard to various things such as premises, work processes and workers.

- **Set out** a large sheet of paperboard, pens, glue, newspapers or magazines for cutting, pre-cut clippings or printed images.
- **Ask the child to make a collage** on the topic on which you would like their perspective: e.g. "afternoon of my dreams", "meeting of my dreams", "impression of child welfare services" and so on. The words must be understandable to the children. Before beginning, you can discuss and think about what the words mean to ensure that the children now what is being talked about.
- **View the collage together** while the child is making it or once it is done. Ask specifying questions to deepen your understanding and ensure that you do no interpret anything incorrectly: "What did you choose this picture?", "What is happening in this picture?", "What is particularly important in this picture?" Write the answers down in the child's own words.

If you use the method with a group of children, you can hang the collages on the wall to form an exhibition that the children can view and discuss.

! **Tip:** You can also make a collage of matters related to the service or activities and ask the children to mark things particularly important to them with emoji stickers, for example.

Interview

Acknowledge the challenges of the interview! The interview is a very popular method but it generally does not work especially with younger children since the specific form of interaction is not natural to them. Children tend to respond according to what they think the adult expects of them. Young children in particular can provide single-word responses or find the whole situation uncomfortable, in which case it is difficult for the adult to avoid leading the discussion. If you want to try interviewing a small child, it is a good idea to involve playful elements. For example, you can send the questions to the child in a paper plane or use a hand puppet to present them.

1. You can interview individual children or groups. The younger the children involved are, the more adults are needed to ensure an understanding and provide every child with the opportunity participate. The method of implementation also affects how many adults should be present. As a general rule, the appropriate size for a group interview is no more than six children per two adults.
2. Use clear and practical language and short sentences: adjust your speech and use words familiar to children.
3. Make sure that the children understand the core concepts in the same way as you do. You can test this beforehand on children you are familiar with. Bear in mind that children may also answer questions that they do not fully understand.
4. Avoid leading the child. Do not bring up your own assumptions or any information that is not mentioned by the child.
5. Use open questions. Ask one question at a time.
6. If you do not understand what the child is saying, ponder the matter out loud. Ask what the child means or ask for an elaboration.
7. You should also allow the child to take initiative through discussion or activity. Children's actions can also speak to what is important to them.

Mobile surveys

Mobile surveys are particularly well-suited to young people and are fast to conduct and summarise. However, the surveys rarely provide deep insight or an understanding of why a child thinks or feels a certain way. As such, a survey is often a good supplementary method for gathering information or starting the collection process. Mobile surveys can be responded to anonymously, which may be important in the context of certain themes.

1. Determine the essential questions.
2. Prepare the mobile survey and write down the link. Many free tools are available for this purpose.
3. Go to the children and ask them if they would like to respond to a short survey on their phones. Remember to reward those that do.
4. If you want, you can use the survey as a basis for a discussion to deepen your understanding or use the survey materials to create a children's workshop, for example.

Photography

Photography is a suitable method for developing child-friendly spaces and illustrating children's day-to-day activities and things that are important to them.

1. Bring a camera with you or ask the children to use their phones, if they feature cameras.
2. Start by instructing the children on how to use the cameras. If you are working with small children, it is advisable to take one round of photos together and remind the children of each photography task at hand. Older children can take photos independently or in small groups. You can also task a specific group of children with taking photos before the workshop.

3. Present the photography tasks, such as "Photograph places you like here", "Photograph a place you do not like", "Photograph something that brings you joy", "Photograph something you do not like", "Photograph a thing you would like to see or do again."
4. Collect the pictures on the floor or on a computer, for example, so that you can view them together. If you have the children do the photography assignment in advance, you can also set up personal meetings with the children to review the photos together.
5. Discuss the photos and listen to what the children have to say about them. Make sure you ask why the children have taken or chosen the picture in question (a small thing, such as a favourite colour, can impact the choice and is therefore an important piece of information to prevent misunderstandings). Consider what surprises you and address it.

Illustrated service path

The service path is a service design tool that is used to describe the service experience from the customer's perspective. Rough structure of the service path:

1. How did the child become aware of the service?
2. What made the child choose the service?
3. What happens in the service and how does it feel?
4. What happens after using the service?

Plenty of examples of the service path tool are available online. Children's experiences of the services or activities and their effects can be explored by means of an illustrated service path.

1. Consider what kinds of moments make up the service or activity from the child's viewpoint and printout, draw or take photos of the various phases of the path. It may be anything from an expansive collection of services to brief service situations. Select photos that are understandable to the children, fit their day-to-

day experiences and link the situations to the context in which information is needed.

2. Take a large roll of paper and glue the selected pictures to it in the correct order.
3. Take pens of different colours, photos, newspaper clippings, emoji stickers and other supplies with you.
4. Go through the content of the path pictures with the children. Ask the children to supplement the line with photos, drawings, emoji stickers and writings. Support the process with questions, such as

   • What happens or happened at this point?
   • What stayed in your mind?
   • What kinds of feelings did it spark?
   • What helped?

You can stop at various points together. Deepen the discussion by asking what things, events, words or actions have been important and what meanings the children assign to activities, things or places. You can take part in supplementing the path by writing down things told by the children during the work.

! **Tip:** Let the children add exactly the things, people and places they themselves want for the path. The pictures you select bring context and focus to the work, but are not intended to limit the children's experiences.

Discovering the needs of children and families:
DEVELOPING A NEW FORM OF SUPPORT

99 **Our design challenge was** that support families were not available to all families and children who needed them. This often forced families to wait an unreasonably long time to get help. What other support could be offered to families, and what should it be like from the perspective of the

children and families? We learned about the wishes and viewpoints of the children and families applying for a support family by examining documents and statistics and arranging meetings with the families. What wishes did the children and families express in applying for a support family? Why were they applying for a support family? What was fun about visiting the support family? What caused possible failures in support family relationships? What could be done differently?
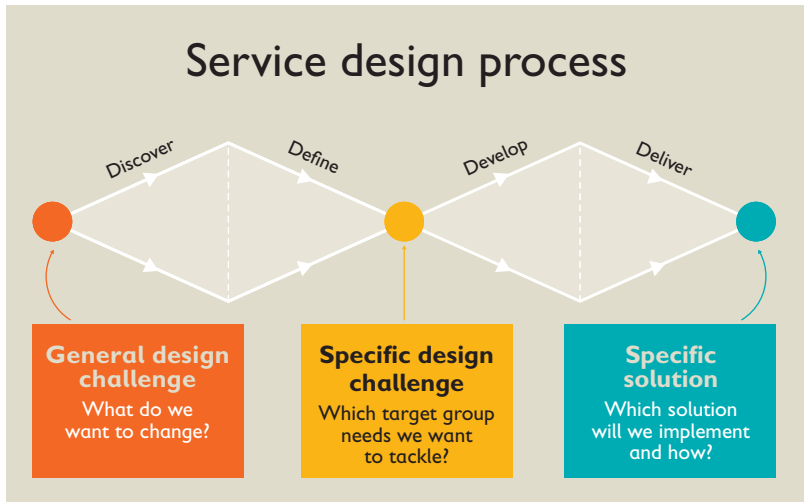
Certain matters came up from the children's perspective: friends or lack thereof, activities or lack thereof, pets or lack thereof, the support family living in the country and so on. In addition to this, the parents brought up the support family's abilities to consider and support the needs of different children. The statistics supported the findings: support family relationships where the wishes and needs met lasted the longest.

Learning about the children's thoughts
CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE OF PEER ACTIVITIES

" **We wanted to ask the children,** what good support after their parents' divorce should be like. We invited children between the ages of 7 and 10 to a day camp. The children had all experienced divorce and the subsequent peer group support. We asked what things had stayed with them about support after their parents' divorce and what they would tell another child about it. Some of the children completed the task by drawing, some wanted to build a fort and share experiences at the same time, having an adult write the points down. The children also indicated that building the fort had been especially fun in the group activities. We provided the children with space to share their thoughts in different ways.

3 Define

Service design process

Discover | Define | Develop | Deliver

General design challenge
What do we want to change?

Specific design challenge
Which target group needs we want to tackle?

Specific solution
Which solution will we implement and how?

This phase involves compiling and analysing the collected information in order to define the exact needs that need to be answered. Take special care to ensure that the documentation retains the children's perspective! The analyser's own expectations and assumptions can easily impact the interpretation. Be wary of not leaning on them too heavily in selecting and interpreting the materials and end up losing the child's perspective. Avoid the above-mentioned pitfall as follows:

1. Recognise your own assumptions and those of your organisation. You can increase awareness of the assumptions by writing them down or asking a colleague to interview about them.
2. Conduct the analysis with others who examine the issue from different standpoints.
3. Go through the information multiple times: it can sometimes present itself differently after a short break.
4. Take the time to consciously stop and consider aspects of the materials that surprise you, evoke feelings and go against your assumptions.

5. Ask the children to get involved in the work phase or keep the children's output and phrasings visible through the process.

Adults may sometimes feel that the thoughts expressed by children are too simple and concrete. This can lead to them being dismissed or overanalysed to an extent that divorces them from the original needs of the child. An adult may also belittle the importance of information provided by a child. Pay special attention to these kinds of thoughts.

Show interest in the meanings that the children assign to things. Make sure to refrain from interpreting what the children say too much. Things children say are often pertain to the immediate situation and cannot be generalised.

You can use a variety of ways to process the information, such as visualisation, themes and categorisation. In assigning categories and themes, it is a good idea to use words and expressions used by the children themselves. Make sure that the structuring process does not take the matters to an excessively general level and lead to something important being lost.

Insights based on information collected from young people:
IMPRESSIONS OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

We had chosen as our design challenge the fact that, too often, children neglect getting help for fear of child welfare services. We decided to begin forming customer understanding by collecting children's thoughts on child welfare. We collected information from a variety of sources using a range of methods. It was important to us to keep the information in the exact spoken or written form in which the children had provided it to us. We first compiled everything the children told us into a list in a single file and assigned themes based on the things the children talked about. The themes included children who are customers of child welfare services, their parents, the social workers and the child welfare facilities. However, we no-

ticed quickly that the theme division failed to provide us with new perspectives. We redid the theme assignment process in the form of a mind map, arriving at the following themes: "what is done at child welfare services", "why do people become customers of child welfare services" and "what is the purpose of child welfare services". Thanks to this, we noticed that children talked about the reasons for being a child welfare customer differently when the reasons were connected to the children and when they were linked to the parents. The child-related reasons expressed action, something the child in question had done. The parent-related reasons described what the parents are like. This enabled us to realise that one of the fears children have with regard to child welfare services is that they will label their parents as certain kinds of people.

4 Specific design challenge:
Which target group needs will we tackle?

Service design process

Discover ・ Define ・ Develop ・ Deliver

General design challenge
What do we want to change?

Specific design challenge
Which target group needs we want to tackle?

Specific solution
Which solution will we implement and how?
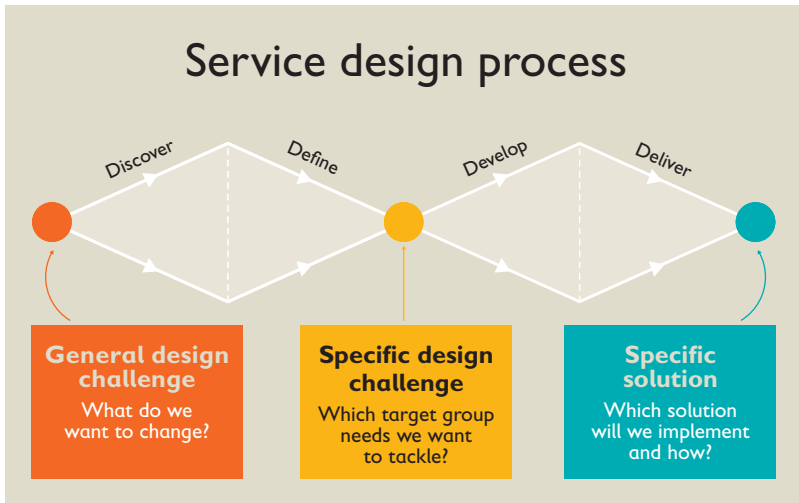
Now it is time to stop. Return to the general design challenge – what did you want to change? After this, you got to know the target group and analysed the information received. What are the insights you gained? Which target group needs should be met to achieve the desired change?

Stop and consider the insights. They can be anything at all from something that recurs in the materials or an individual perspective that attracts your attention. Collect 3–5 of what you think are the most important insights in the table below and convert them into questions: "How might we..." and "What is stopping us..." In thinking up solutions, you will try to answer these questions.

Tool for analysing collected information

What is the issue we are trying to resolve:

Insight 1:

_____

How might we...

_____

What is stopping us:

_____

Insight 2:

_____

How might we...

_____

What is stopping us:

_____

Insight 3:

_____

How might we...

_____

What is stopping us:

_____

Insight 4:

_____

How might we...

_____

What is stopping us:

_____

5 Develop

Service design process

| Discover | Define | Develop | Deliver |

| General design challenge | Specific design challenge | Specific solution |
| What do we want to change? | Which target group needs we want to tackle? | Which solution will we implement and how? |
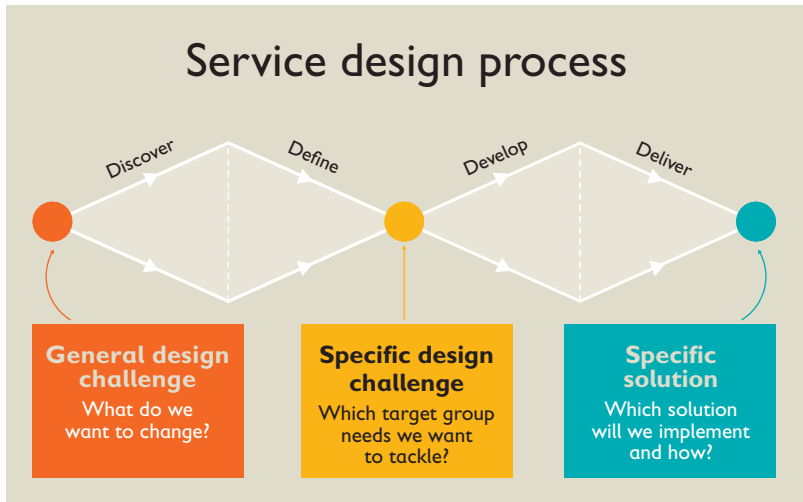
In this phase, it is time to think creatively and develop ideas together! Its intention is to produce solutions to the questions specified in the previous phase. If solution suggestions have already come up, you should of course involve them in the efforts.

Invite children to get involved in the creation of ideas. You can invite the children who participated in the previous phases of the process or an entirely new group of children. If you exclude children from the idea creation process, the meaning of the information gained from them can be lost or, at the very least, coloured by adult-centric interpretations. Here are some tips for organising and planning a brainstorming session.

1. Introduce yourselves to one another! It is important to get to know one another as creativity blossoms in a safe environment. Tell the children your name and something about yourself. Consider how the children and young people can easily get to know each other, and organise a game to facilitate the introduction process, if necessary.

2. Recap the agenda of the session with an illustrated framework, for example. You can later return to it to review why you are there. Tell the children why you have gathered together and the purposes that
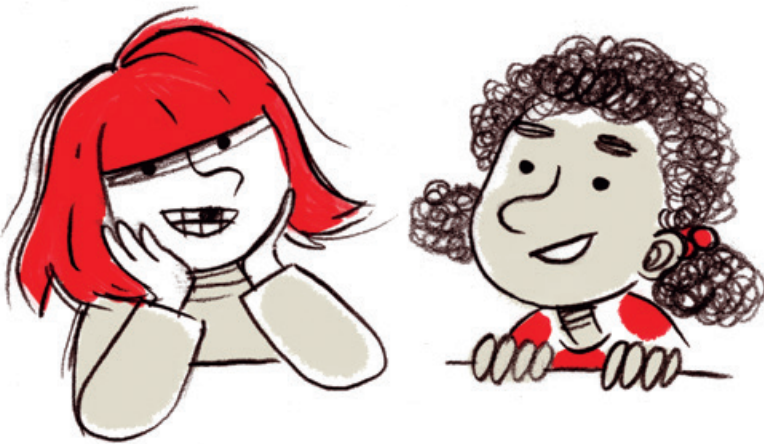
the information provided by them will be used. Use language that is understandable to children.

Describe the basics of brainstorming to the children:

- there are no wrong answers
- all ideas are equal
- the ideas can be funny, wild and impossible
- everyone should have the opportunity to present their ideas

3. Work with the children to draw up shared rules for the workshop. The intention is to create a comfortable and safe atmosphere for

everyone in the workshop. Drafting the rules together will help the children commit to following them.

4. Recap what the issue to be resolved is and illustrate it using pictures, for example. A combination of speech and illustration will help children understand you better. This point is particularly important if the children are different than in the 'Discover' phase. Work together to familiarise yourselves with the information that has come up before: define the issue(s) to be resolved. Use clear language and concepts that are understandable to children. Avoid things such as proverbs as most children will not be familiar with them. You should also present the information already received from the children by means of the language and conceptual framework used by the children. Illustrate the information provided by the children.

5. If there are multiple issues to be resolved, the children can vote to pick the most important one where to start brainstorming.

6. You must plan the end of the session so that the children are not left feeling uncertain about what took place. Finish by photographing the children's suggestions and return them to the children if they wish to keep them. Organise a final game for letting off steam and getting everyone's mind off the brainstorming process. Thank the children for their participation and give them a possible reward.

Suggestions for methods:

 Drawing and/or using pictures

1. Ask the child to draw solution ideas in the form of individual pictures or comic strips, for example. You can also use pictures cut out of newspapers or magazines or printed out from an image bank.

2. Ask the child to tell you what is in the picture and write the answer down in the child's own language.

⚙ Building

1. Ask the child to create a solution by building it from Lego bricks, modelling clay or similar materials.
2. Ask the child to tell you what the piece represents and write the answer down in the child's own language.

⚙ Gaining suggestions from children and young people by staging a play

The method is suitable for children of all ages! The intention is to get children to invest themselves in the play so that they can produce solutions.

1. Prepare a premise based on what you are interested in. **Example:** The school playground is being renovated and two children are talking about how it should be changed to make it better. **Example:** To find out how a family is doing, child welfare workers usually ask the mother or father. This time, the worker turns to the child to ask about situation of the family and the child.
2. Prepare a story to which the children can easily relate to based on their day-to-day experiences. The story can be about coming in to use a service or a fictional experience of a specific situation, for example.
3. The story can be played out with hand puppets, Lego figures or small items. You can tell who the characters are, but let the children name them. **Example:** Two children are either playing children who begin talking about changes to the school playground or a child welfare worker and a child in discussion. **Example:** Perform your own example play related to the school playground changes with Lego figures. Stop at some point and ask the children what the figures would say next. Continue the play according to the children's suggestions until stopping again later.

4. Once you or the children have performed the play, ask the children the following questions: "What happens next?", "How does the child feel?", "What should the play area in the yard be like?", "What should the adult ask the child next?", "What should happen for the child to feel good?", and so on.
5. Continue the play according to the solutions suggested by the children. You can present specifying questions at the same time: "What does that mean?", "Why does the person do that?"
6. End the play when you and the children think that the solution suggestion is complete. Finish by going over the solution.

It is important to take the children's various suggestions exactly as they are without undermining them. The children drive the story, and you can stop to think about it from a variety of perspectives with the children.

The children can also participate in the play with emoji notes. For example, you can enquire how the child in the play felt when asked about how things are going. With the emojis, the children can express their emotions regarding various aspects of the play.

> **!** **Tip:** Let the children drive the story and ask questions to find out more. Ask things that will help you better understand the children's experience and the topic in which you are interested. If something that surprises you comes up, stop and ask the children to tell you more!

⚙ Thematic story crafting

1. Hold the session in a calm environment. Set out empty sheets of paper and a pen.
2. Ask the child or group of children the following: "Tell me a story about topic X. I will write it down exactly as you tell it to me. I will read it out loud so you can make corrections if you want. In a group of children, each child can take turns continuing the story.

3. Write down the story and read it out loud. Ask if the child/children would like to correct or add anything to the story.

4. Story crafting can serve as an excellent basis for addressing a theme – what things come up in the child's story and what kinds of words does the child use.

! **Tip:** Children often get excited about story crafting when you combine it with something experiential: for example, holding the story crafting session in a story tent can be more fun than in an office.

Brainstorming with children:
RESOLVING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS
AT A DAY CARE CENTRE

" **We presented groups of children** with challenges observed in the day-to-day activities of the day care centre using hand puppets. One of these situations was coming to the day care centre, which children can often be unhappy about. We started the exercise by letting the children decide the names of the puppets. We also had emojis that the children could use to vote how the hand puppets felt about the situation after the story. We took a variety of suggested solutions from the children.

Initially, the children suggested offering enticement in the form of a lollipop. We began the performance and asked the children where the lollipops come from – do their parents or the adults at day care centre have lollipops? The children said 'no' and suggested taking the children to day care against their will. Since this made the children feel bad, they finally suggested a hug, consolation or an adult suggesting a game that the child in question enjoys.

Please remember the following things if you end up brainstorming without children:

If you end up thinking up solutions without children, justify the decision to yourself. Also find out if the children could be involved in the process through a video call, for example. If this is not possible either, ensure that the workshop is child-centered by doing the following:

• Keep the collected and themed information available and in the words used by the children. Do not translate what the children say into 'adult speak'.
• Agree with the participants that all discussion will use child-friendly and respectful language. (**Tip:** You can set up a "swear jar" for limiting the use of more adult language.)
• Keep the children's output visible.
• Keep the children's photos visible. If the photos are of the actual target group, remember to ensure the children's privacy and ask their parents/guardians for permission to take the photos.
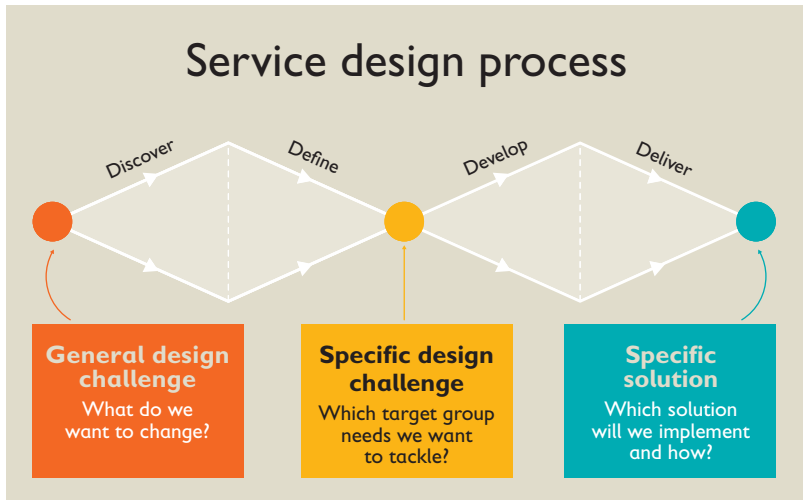• Use the same methods as you would use with children.

Brainstorming with young people:
PARENTS' DIVORCE AS EXPERIENCED
BY YOUNG PEOPLE

" **With young people,** our design challenge was the parents not always thinking about or understanding the children well enough in the midst of a divorce. We decided to find solutions for parents to gain more information on things that young people find helpful or burdensome in the context of a divorce and consider them better than before. The young people brainstormed a divorce guide for adults and we sat down together to think about how to make it happen. The young people suggested that it should contain actual quotes and photographs depicting difficult post-divorce situations and things that help to

cope with divorce. We got a photographer to instruct the young people on photography and composition, and asked youths from a local theatre academy to appear in the photos. We collected some quotes. The process resulted in a suggestion for a divorce guide from young people to parents.

6 **Deliver**

Service design process

Discover   Define   Develop   Deliver

General design challenge
What do we want to change?

Specific design challenge
Which target group needs we want to tackle?

Specific solution
Which solution will we implement and how?

The suggested solution must always be tested with children belonging to the target group. It is advisable to test ideas early on to ensure that the solution actually meets the target group's needs and solves the original problem. The purpose of the testing is to refine the solution, but it can also lead to the realisation that the idea does not work. After testing, the solution is developed further and then tested again. This is continued until the idea is feasible for implementation. You should bear in mind that products and services are never fully finished, and it must be possible to change them with time and changing needs.

The first testing round can be carried out with a fairly undeveloped idea. The testing is intended to be fast, easy and cheap. A trial version of the solution is put together for testing purposes. This can be anything from a website drawn on paper or an acted service situation. The purpose of the trial version is to present the idea or part of it – it cannot be regarded as a finished product.

Tests and trials require imagination and full engagement. The process is similar to play, which is why children can be better targets and partners than adults in these work phases.

You can also build the trial version together with children. In this case, the building phase can often organically serve as the first test because you can observe how the children feel about the idea and what they find most important. If you do not build the trial version together with children, you should still always test it with the target group.

Suggestions for methods:

⚙ Comic strip

This is a good method if ideas have been created through storification, story crafting or comic strips. Solution suggestions in this form can be clarified by redrawing them as comic strips.

If necessary, you can use the service path structure for support:

1. How did the child became aware of the service?
2. What made the child choose the service?
3. What happens during the service and how does it feel?
4. What happens after using the service?

A separate comic panel can be drawn of each section.

⚙ Drawing

If the thing to be developed is something concrete, it can also be drawn. A rough drawing can be just fine for the initial testing of a solution regarding an item, space or website, for example. Remember that it is not important how good at drawing each of the participants is.

⚙️ Construction

A concrete item or space can also be built with modelling clay, Lego bricks or crafts supplies. Various puppets and figures can be used to illustrate the process.

⚙️ Performance or story

When you wish to test the progress of a situation or the functionality of a space for a specific purpose, you can imagine the situation and act it out.

1. Write a script of the situation and name the play. The play can be a couple of minutes in length.

2. Distribute the roles and use your imagination to obtain the requisite props. You can also use shadow and hand puppets for the play.

3. Rehearse the play once or twice, after which you can perform it to others.

Picture collage

Particularly in the context of designing spaces, a picture collage can serve as the first trial version. The collage should include pictures of items, spaces and colour schemes, and the children can provide feedback on it with emoji stickers, for example.

Testing the trial version with children

You can test the trial version with a group of children or an individual child. In group situations, remember to ensure that all children feel safe enough to express their opinions and have the opportunity to do so. The testing can be conducted in vastly different environments, such as online, with your own customers or with people on the street. The best way depends on the target group and the idea being tested. Remember to ensure that the methods are appropriate for the purpose.

Take the following into account in a test situation.

- Tell the participants clearly what the test is about. Remind them that the point is to test the idea, not the capabilities of the participants. The aim is to create a space in which feedback can be provided freely. Children are of course used to taking various tests but usually ones that test their skills. As such, the issue is important to note.
- Make an effort to motivate those involved. What do the participants get out of taking part in the test? The participants are doing you a huge favour, so providing thanks and a reward is in order.
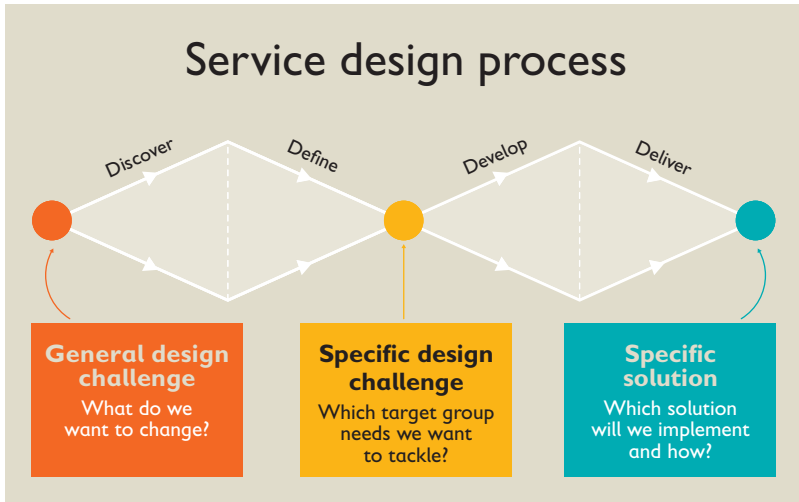
- In the test situation, you take the role of the observer and interviewer. Do not guide or instruct the children. Instead, let them proceed at their own pace, try different things and talk about their thoughts. As the observer, it is important for you to pay attention to the children's actions and reactions. You can also conduct a brief interview at the end of the test.

Testing suggestions with young people:
IMPRESSIONS OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

We were in the process of developing an Instagram account through which young people could send us questions about child welfare services. We made a few initial posts on the account and proceeded to commence the marketing of the channel thereafter. We wanted to ensure that the marketing would appeal to young people so we met with three adolescents living with foster families. We sat down with some coffee to talk about how they use social media and asked them for feedback on the service idea, the ads we had planned, and the appearance and content of the Instagram account. The young people provided us with a lot of feedback and development ideas, and it was important to hear what drew their attention. For example, they tend to first check an account's number of followers – from their perspective, the account already having some followers provided credibility. We had thought it inconsequential that so many social welfare professionals had already followed the account.

7 Specific solution:
Which solution will we implement and how?

Service design process

Discover · Define · Develop · Deliver

General design challenge
What do we want to change?

Specific design challenge
Which target group needs we want to tackle?

Specific solution
Which solution will we implement and how?

When an idea for a solution has been discovered and found feasible through testing with children, it is time to proceed to implementation! In planning the implementation, please ensure that the children's perspective is not lost as the process progresses. You should return to the design challenge defined in the first phase and assess which of the solution suggestions that have been found feasible solve the original problem within the limits established at the outset.

In addition to the necessary resources, the implementation plan must indicate how the need or problem of the child in question will be responded to. It is also important to record the children's rights that warrant special attention in the service to be implemented.

The children in the target group must not be forgotten even after the implementation. The planning should also include arrangements for collecting regular feedback from the children. In collecting the feedback, you can use the same indicators that were specified at the beginning of the process. These indicators should centre on the children: how they feel about using the service and what kinds of effects they find that the service creates.

Collecting feedback from children:
CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE OF PARTIPATION
AS SERVICE USERS

🗨🗨 **Increasing participation among children** is one of the strategic goals of Save the Children. Steps are taken to promote participation and involvement in the context of day-to-day activities and the services organised by Save the Children. Our aim is to be even more systematic in collecting customer feedback from children and measuring participation in our services. The first step was to learn about the children's thoughts and experiences on what constitutes a good user experience and what participation means to them in this context. We talked to children and young people who use a variety of the welfare services and examined studies in which children and young people talk about their experiences as service users. This enabled us to create an overview of the aspects that ensure that children and young people feel included when using the services. It was also important for us to find out that children find participation as one of the most essential factors measuring service quality.

Based on this understanding, we defined the indicators and converted them into a concrete feedback survey:

1. What have you done in activity X?
2. What was fun?
3. What was unpleasant?
4. What would you like to do in activity X?
5. Were you able to speak freely and express your opinion in activity X?
6. Do you feel safe in activity X?
7. Would you like to participate in activity X again?
8. Would you recommend activity X to your friends?
9. What else would you like to tell?

In addition to the questions themselves, it was important for us to consider how to collect the feedback and select a tool that suits the way children and young people do things. We chose a digital data collection tool which we could use to create highly visual and interactive surveys. We established a separate data collection process for each service and their target groups. Preliminary trials had indicated that we had begun accumulating more feedback than before, which had led to some issues being brought up that had not surfaced in face-to-face meetings. Naturally, the most important thing has been that we now measure the attainment of the strategic goal concerning participation through the children's own experiences!

⚒ Tool for planning implementation

Consider and plan the following:

1. Meeting the children's needs
- Which problem experienced by children is to be resolved and how?
- Which needs experienced by children will be met and how?

2. Children's rights
- Which children's rights require particular attention in the implementation?
- How will the rights be implemented and how will the implementation be assessed?

3. Target group
- What are the key target groups of the service? Are the children the primary target group or an indirect target group?
- Where can the target group be reached?

4. Functions
- What kinds of functions or task roles does implementing the developed service require?

5. Key partners
- Which functions require partners?

6. Resources
- What resources does implementing the developed service require?

7. Cost structure
- What costs are generated by the implementation of the service?
- What is the cost structure?

8. Monitoring effects
- How will feedback from children and any other target groups be collected going forward?
- How will the fulfilment of the organisation's goals be monitored?

SUCCESSES

Results of child-centered design:
JOY OF CREATION AND SUCCESS AT AN ART EXHIBITION
PUT TOGETHER BY CHILDREN

”” Cultural Centre PiiPoo has been hosting meetings of an children's expert group on children's art activities, since 2017. In 2018, the theme for the group was imagination and its significance. The work resulted in the activity-oriented exhibition, which told the children's own story about the significance of imagination to themselves. The child experts in the group described imagination as follows: "A place where you can get lost safely, where dead ends are important and where things can be separate but still close together."

The activities fulfil UNCRC articles 12 (every child has the right to freely express their views in all matters affecting them, and the views must be taken into account according to each child's age and level of development) and 31 (every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities). The role of the adults in the child expert group was to enable and listen. The idea is to hear things as they are told or presented by the children and document ideas without the filter of "adulthood and realism". Time is taken to work, delve into things and explore ideas, and the themes are examined using the methods of various art forms over the course of several months. Participation in the group is free of charge.

Feedback was collected from the children in the group through discussions and activity-oriented methods at the end of each meeting. The "Marking the moment" exercise involved the children going to a specific place or taking a specific pose when they experienced something important to them. If they

wanted, the children could then tell why they chose the place or pose that they did. In the "Touch something" exercise, the idea was for the children to touch something that made them excited, contemplative or calm, for example. Through these exercises, the instructors could observe the individual experience of each child in the context of each session. The children often found the participation fun and pleasant. They got particularly excited when their own interests were included and highlighted in the work. The most significant experiences of surprise and excitement took place at the openings of the exhibitions. The children's pride in the things they had made and the use of their ideas was tangible. At the opening of the exhibition, one group provided the following summary to the instructors: "You were lucky to have us." The joy of creation and success is immediately evident in the context of the group and the exhibitions that we as adults could never have thought up.

The process of assessing and further developing the activities with art educators, the need to constantly redefine participation was brought up. The individual needs, capabilities, desires and methods of participation vary greatly between children of different ages. Respecting these aspects requires the instructors to be skilled, sensitive and able to react quickly. The challenges were found to include expressing new things and concepts in the children's language and ensuring that everyone understands the matters involved similarly enough to provide all children with the opportunity to participate as themselves.

In a feedback video, members of the group provided following assessments of the significance of the activities:

- **Adult:** What does it mean to be in the group?
- **Child:** It means, like, planning an exhibition.
- **Adult:** What kind of exhibition have you planned this time?
- **Child:** Imagination.
- **Adult:** What does imagination mean to you?

- **Child:** Well, a bit of superhero stuff and such. A bit wild. I like wild things. I'm also known as Batgirl.
- **Adult:** What do you think about children getting to plan things themselves?
- **Child:** What does it mean? I dunno.
- **Adult:** Hmmm... Have you planned an exhibition before?
- **Child:** No, this was the first time.
- **Adult:** Did you think it was fun?
- **Child:** Yeah.
- **Adult:** What does imagination mean to you?
- **Child:** Basically everything?
- **Adult:** What for example? Would you like to tell me?
- **Child:** That my gerbil Nipsu could fly away on its own wings.
- **Adult:** Yes. That's a really imaginative idea.

Results of child-centered design:
COMMUNAL GROUP ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED TOGETHER WITH CHILDREN

"" Our design challenge was that it is often not possible to provide children with support families that meet their needs within a reasonable time frame. In developing a new service alongside the support family activities, we collected information from the children and parents in a variety of ways in the 'Discover' phase. We found that certain matters came up from the children's perspective: friends or lack thereof, activities or lack thereof, pets or lack thereof, the support family living in the country, and so on. In addition to this, the parents brought up the support family's abilities to consider and support the needs of different children. The statistics supported the findings: support family relationships where the wishes and needs met lasted the longest.

We organised idea workshops for the children and parents to develop new services and forms of support together. This generated the idea of professional group support for children in the countryside. Through the Association for Rural Culture and Education, we contacted social welfare, health care and education professionals who had moved to set up businesses in the country. This began the journey towards communal group activities for children.

Together with children, parents and professionals, we brainstormed ideas on how to implement the group activities. Initially, we piloted an eight-week group activity model, which we tested with three groups of children and three entrepreneurs. We collected feedback constantly from all parties involved and organised development sessions for the children. This generated a new method, the model for the "sun of joys, ghost of concerns and tree of wishes" which children could use to convey their thoughts about the group activities. Eventually, the service became a ten-week group activity model, which is currently being implemented throughout Finland. We are still maintaining the development idea and shaping the service based on the needs and feedback of children.

AFTERWORD:

Why should we get excited about this?

For us, the development of child-centered design has been an especially inspiring time. We found a new space at the intersection of two competence areas – service design and child participation – and were able to describe it in words in this guide. We made many new discoveries, had many new insights and were able to expand our own expertise. Is there anything better than that?

This is also what child-centered design is about. When you have the courage to engage fully and let someone else challenge your expertise, you are sure to find something new. Taking the child's perspective creates entirely new opportunities for discovering things you could not even imagine on your own.

During the writing of this guide, we have all worked with children in the context of development projects in our respective areas. This means that the process and methods proposed in this guide have been in constant practical testing. Creating the process and tools has been an educational experience, but the most important lesson has been that gaining insights is amazing. It just feels so very good! The energy boosts from discovering insights and solutions and receiving positive customer feedback are strong enough to leave the work well-being scale wanting. We can recommend this work method for the simple reason that it is extremely fun.

The children also enjoy themselves when you involve them in the development process. Children of different ages are excited to get involved in service development when we show genuine interest in their experiences and provide space for various forms of expression. Child-centered design brings children joy and makes them feel that their thoughts are appreciated. The feedback provided by the participating children often highlight friendships, fun play sessions and gratitude for the opportunity to get involved.

"The best thing was the stickers. I got a new friend and we played hide-and-seek."

"Young people are actually being listened to. It's great that young people can influence the activities. You can always tell if someone is actually listening or just going for assumptions."

"Playing, doing things and laughing, and that it's fun that the adults play too."

"Because children have opinions too."

"Taking photos was fun, oh yeah, it was fun to chill."

"I remember the biscuits. And that the adults smiled at me."

However, the greatest strength of the child-centered design is that it enables the development of services that better meet the customers' needs. Whether the service being developed involves social work, early education, youth services, library services, a chat helpline or a hair salon, the goals can only be reached by understanding the customers and their daily lives. In most services, the children are customers either directly or indirectly, so it is a good idea to learn about their world.

"That adults stop and think about things that are important to children. They're not just adult things, they are parts of the children's lives."

"Children need to be listened to and seen so that they know their importance."

"You were lucky to have us!"

AUTHORS

Reetta Kalliomeri is a social worker (M.Pol.Sc.) who has worked as a school counsellor and for various development projects in the non-profit sector in order to strengthen the participation and positive recognition of children and families. She has always operated around children's day-to-day communities, family services and especially divorce assistance and domestic violence work from the perspective of child inclusion. The best things about the work are encounters that bolster inclusion and collaboration, development trials that start from the child's perspective, and discovering things together.

Katja Mettinen is a specialising social worker (M.Soc.Sc.) who has been working with children, young people and families for 20 years. She has worked in customer and development tasks in the non-profit and municipal sectors. Katja is passionate about collaboration and discussions about participation, inclusion and structures.

Anna-Maija Ohlsson is a social psychologist (M.Soc.Sc.) and a passionate proponent of human-centered design and development. She has 20 years of experience in researching customer experience as well as human-centered design. Anna-Maija believes understanding people's thoughts, values and behaviour is a critical element in creating solutions with an impact. It is also an endless font of inspiration and work motivation to which she hopes to steer all organisational actors.

Sonja Soini is a specialising social worker (M.Soc. Sc.) who began her career as a child welfare social worker. Sonja herself was an active child and adolescent, which is why it is important to her to see children as actors instead of simply the targets of various measures. In her work, she seeks to highlight children and their views in all contexts from official work and development to decision-making.

Hanna Tulensalo is a youth worker and special social worker in the field of social services for children and young people (L.Soc.Sc.). She works as a development manager at Save the Children Finland, before which she held a variety of positions in the development of child and family services over the course of 20 years. Hanna is motivated by promoting the inclusion and rights of children, dialogue between the parties involved, and learning things together.