



DESIGNING WITH HUMANS: HOW HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN WINS HEARTS (AND FUNDING) FOR DEMOCRACY

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WHAT IS HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN?

Design philosophy: focus on human needs, behaviors, pain points.

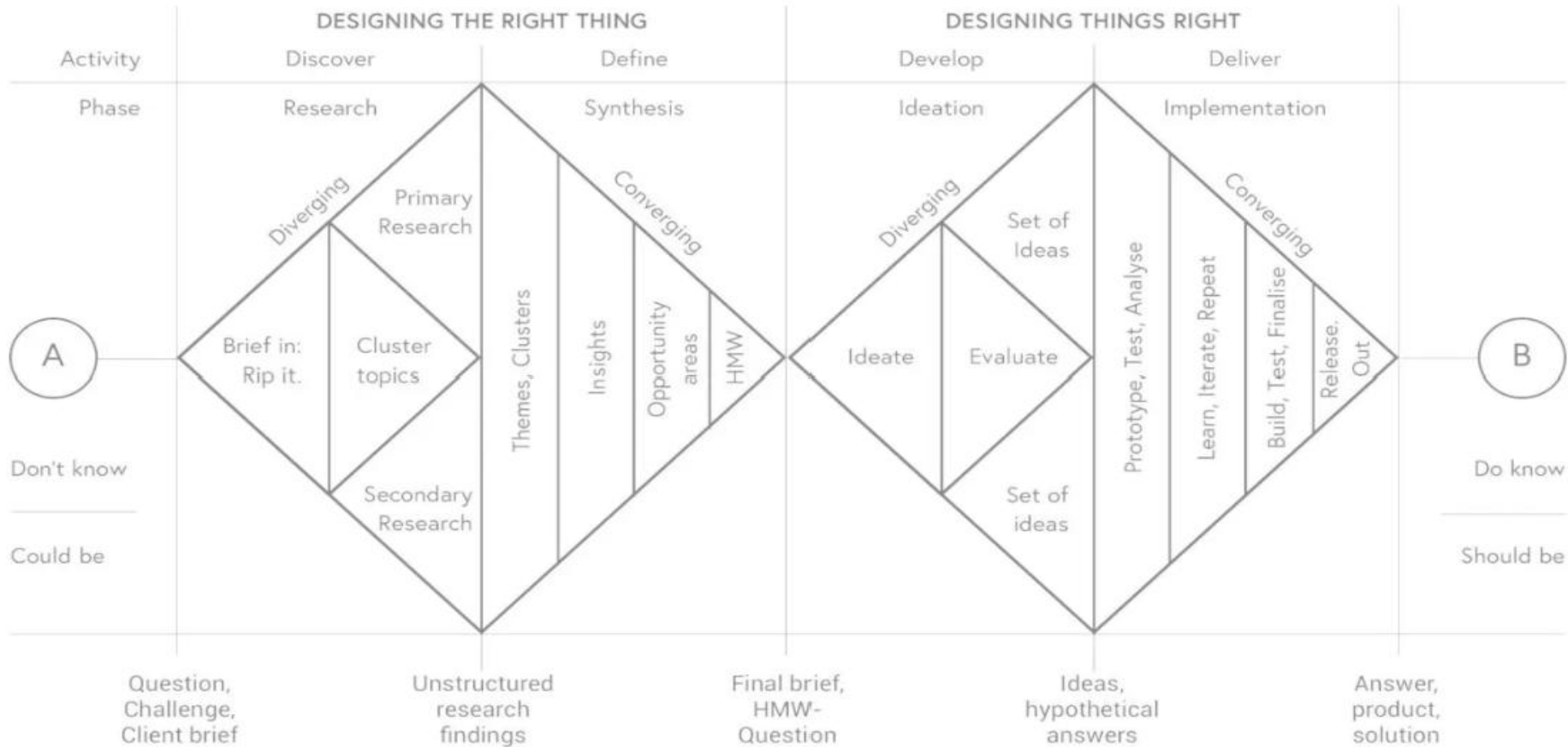
Collaborative: users and stakeholders co-create solutions.

Creative & iterative: discovery → design → prototype → test → implement.

Evidence-based: combines ethnographic research with measurable outcomes.



HUMAN CENTERED DIAGRAM



WHY HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN IS NEEDED

- 90% of projects fail when user needs are ignored (global innovation stats).
- **OECD:** deliberative processes → better decisions + more trust.
- **EU Better Regulation:** consultation and evidence = mandatory.
- **UK Service Standard:** “Start with user needs” → continuous research, iteration.



CASE STUDY: LIQUIDFRIESLAND (GERMANY, 2012–2015)

- Ambition: e-democracy platform for citizen proposals and online voting.
- Reality: 706 access codes → 473 active users → only 22–28 participants per vote; target of 100–200 never reached.
- Problems: top-down design without real citizen input, low motivation, no feedback loop, weak retention.
- Lesson for HCD: start with user needs, co-design with citizens, decision log + public response, continuous testing & iteration.

The screenshot shows the 'Sandkasten / Spielwiese' (Sandbox / Playground) section of the LiquidFriesland platform, specifically 'Issue #18' titled 'BGE'. The interface includes a navigation bar with links like 'Themenbereich', 'Antrag stellen', 'Kontakt', 'FAQ', 'Entwurf bearbeiten', and 'Alternative Initiative hinzufügen'. A sidebar on the right shows the status 'Diskussion', 'RESTZEIT 19 days 13', and 'NÄCHSTER Eingefroren'. The main content area has tabs for 'Anregungen', 'Unterstützer', 'Initiatoren', 'Alte Entwürfe', and 'Details'. Below these tabs is a table of proposals with columns for 'Meinungsbild', 'Meine Meinung', 'Anregung zur Zeit nicht umgesetzt', and 'Anregung zur Zeit umgesetzt'. The table lists several proposals, including 'cksichtigen', 'hließen', 'steuer', 'nder', 'vom Staat', and 'iven vom Orion', each with a progress bar and a status indicator (green checkmark or red X).

	Meinungsbild	Meine Meinung	Anregung zur Zeit nicht umgesetzt	Anregung zur Zeit umgesetzt	
cksichtigen		darf nicht soll nicht neutral soll muss			Anregung als nicht umgesetzt markieren und Unzufriedenheit ausdrücken
hließen		darf nicht soll nicht neutral soll muss			Anregung als umgesetzt markieren und Unzufriedenheit ausdrücken
steuer		darf nicht soll nicht neutral soll muss			Anregung als nicht umgesetzt markieren und Unzufriedenheit ausdrücken
nder		darf nicht soll nicht neutral soll muss			Anregung als umgesetzt markieren und Unzufriedenheit ausdrücken
vom Staat		darf nicht soll nicht neutral soll muss			
iven vom Orion		darf nicht soll nicht neutral soll muss			

[Anregung hinzufügen](#)

EVIDENCE FROM EU PROGRAMMES

CERV/EfC/REC evaluations (2021–2023):

✓ innovation testing, ✓ networks, ✓ visibility.

Funding simplified: lump-sum, unit costs, higher pre-financing.

Re-granting enables grassroots access.

Crises (COVID, cost-of-living) → forced adaptation, digitalisation = long-term benefits.

HOW IT WORKS (5 STEPS)

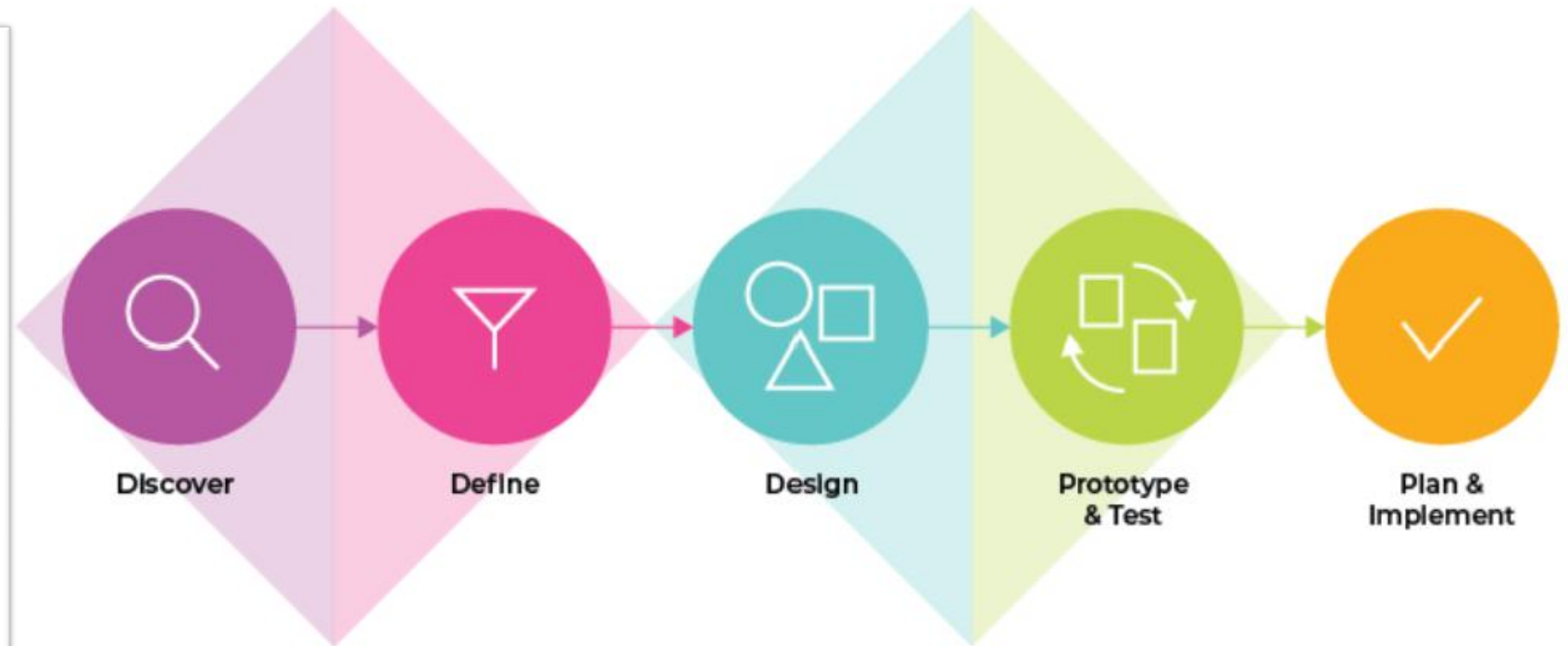
Discover – interviews, observations, surveys (build empathy).

Define – analyze & synthesize findings → problem statement.

Design – ideate broadly, co-create concepts.

Prototype & Test – low-fi → high-fi, iterative feedback.

Plan & Implement – roadmap, evaluation, scaling



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PRACTICAL MANUAL (6–8 WEEKS)

Week 1-2

- **Discovery** → 15 interviews, survey, personas, evidence log.

Week 3

- **Co-design workshop** → 3 draft concepts.

Week 4-5

- **Prototypes & tests** → 2–3 iterations, A/B fundraising test.

Week 6

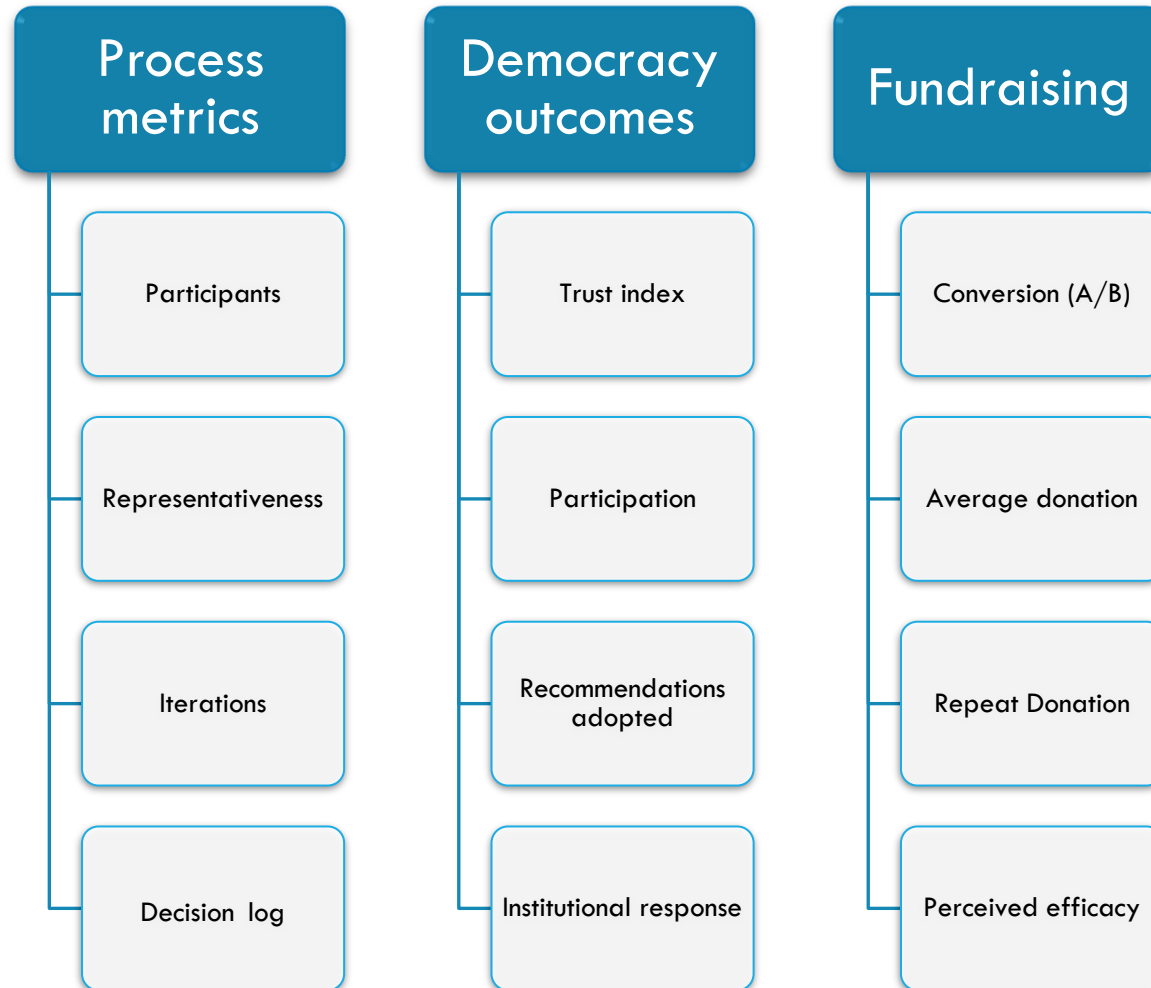
- **Co-design 2** → MVP, Theory of Change, KPIs.

Week 7-8

- **Final pack** → evaluation plan, institutionalisation of participation.



WHAT TO MEASURE (M&E FRAMEWORK)



COMMON PITFALLS & SOLUTIONS

- ✗ Tokenism → ✓ publish recommendations + institutional response.
- ✗ HCD as PR → ✓ decision log with before/after changes.
- ✗ Excluding small actors → ✓ re-granting, templates, unit costs.
- ✗ Ethical risks in storytelling → ✓ informed consent, dignity, facts.



DESIGN WITH PEOPLE, MEASURE WHAT MATTERS, RESPOND TRANSPARENTLY.

👉 Try this week:

- Do 5 interviews
- Run a 2h co-design • Test 2 fundraising messages





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believe in the power of big ideas and meaningful connections. Driven by curiosity.



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