

# PREPARING FOR. THE PLURIVERSE

An explorative project catalysing  
dialogue on cultural humility in design

TITLE

Preparing for the Pluriverse - An explorative project  
catalysing dialogue on cultural humility in design

PROJECT BY

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FIELD

Design

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TYPOGRAPHY

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The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norway

# PERSONAL MOTIVATION

The topic of this project is a result of both of us questioning our own practices, and the potential impact of what we are doing. Being from different countries, we have been curious about each other's viewpoints and cultural backgrounds.

## Oda

As a teenager I lived with my family for a year in England, and after highschool I volunteered for half a year in Honduras. Getting to know the language and some of the culture of both an industrial country and a developing country, popped my 'Norwegian bubble' and gave me a first hand experience of different ways of life.

After my return from Honduras, I took sociology courses at the university. Studying the subjects of 'Global Dynamics' and 'Black History', gave me a peek into the mechanisms that are at play in our societies, and the courses systemized what I had experienced in Latin America.

This systemized lens increased my interest in the topic.

Finally, talking with friends with multicultural backgrounds, has helped me to see that there are different ways of experiencing the Norwegian society. Although it took me some time to understand.

These learnings influenced my interest in the perspectives of our multicultural society, and it felt natural to bring this into the field of design.

## Shivani

When I started studying design in 2012, as a part of an ethnography course, I wrote, *"While we were eating, I got to learn some 'rules' that are followed in the south of India. As a north Indian, I seem to have offended the cook. I should be more sensitive towards people's feelings when it's about their culture."*

Crudely articulated by a 17 year version of me, I have grown up in a society where cultural differences are a deeply integrated part of society. My parents come from two different religions and regions from India, which allowed me to experience 'cultural differences' as a matter of fact.

In my conversations with Oda, I was introduced to a much more nuanced Norway than what I had gathered it to be. A Norway which is dealing with the integration of people different from them, a Norway which talks about 'racism without racists' and navigates the changing fabric of society with Janteloven in their backbone.

Given my background, I was drawn to the idea of understanding what cultural differences could mean in a Norwegian context; and how it can be consciously connected with my design practice.

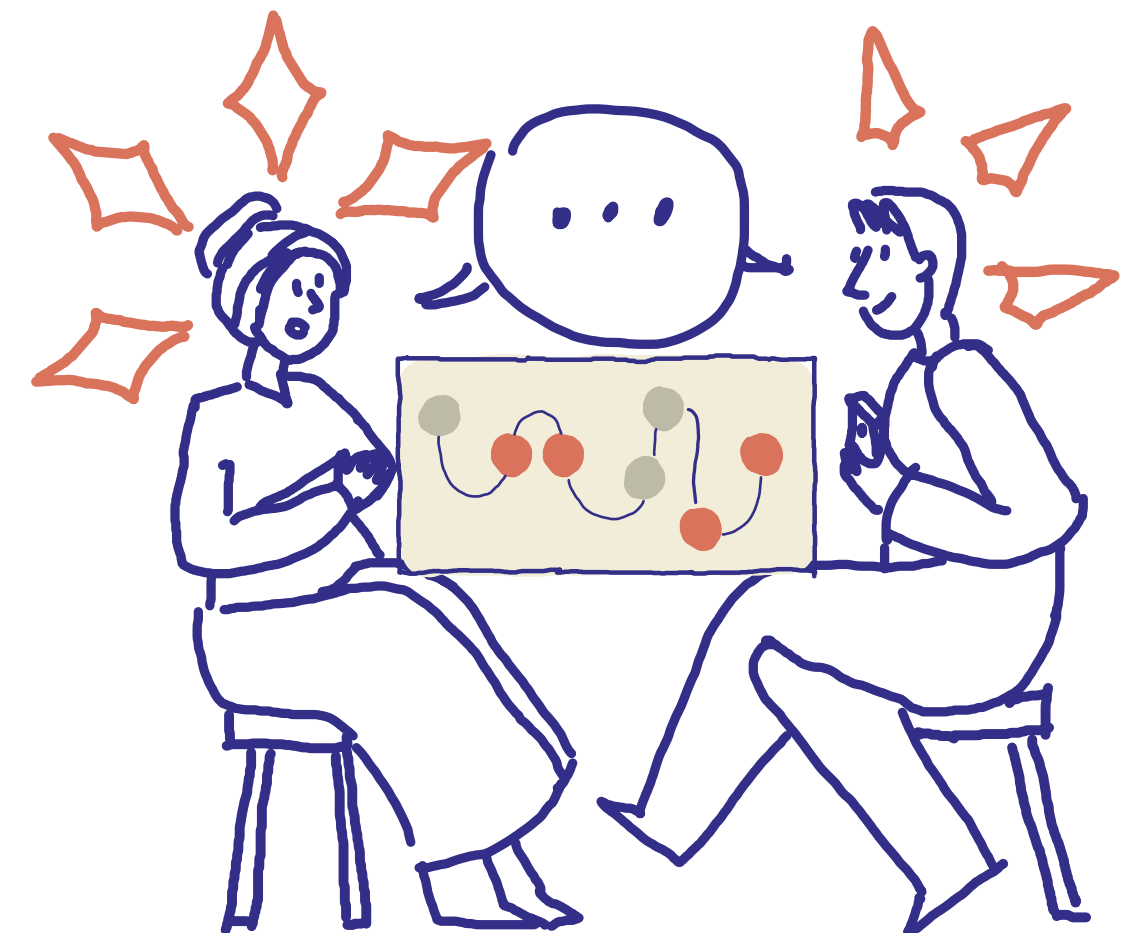
# ABSTRACT

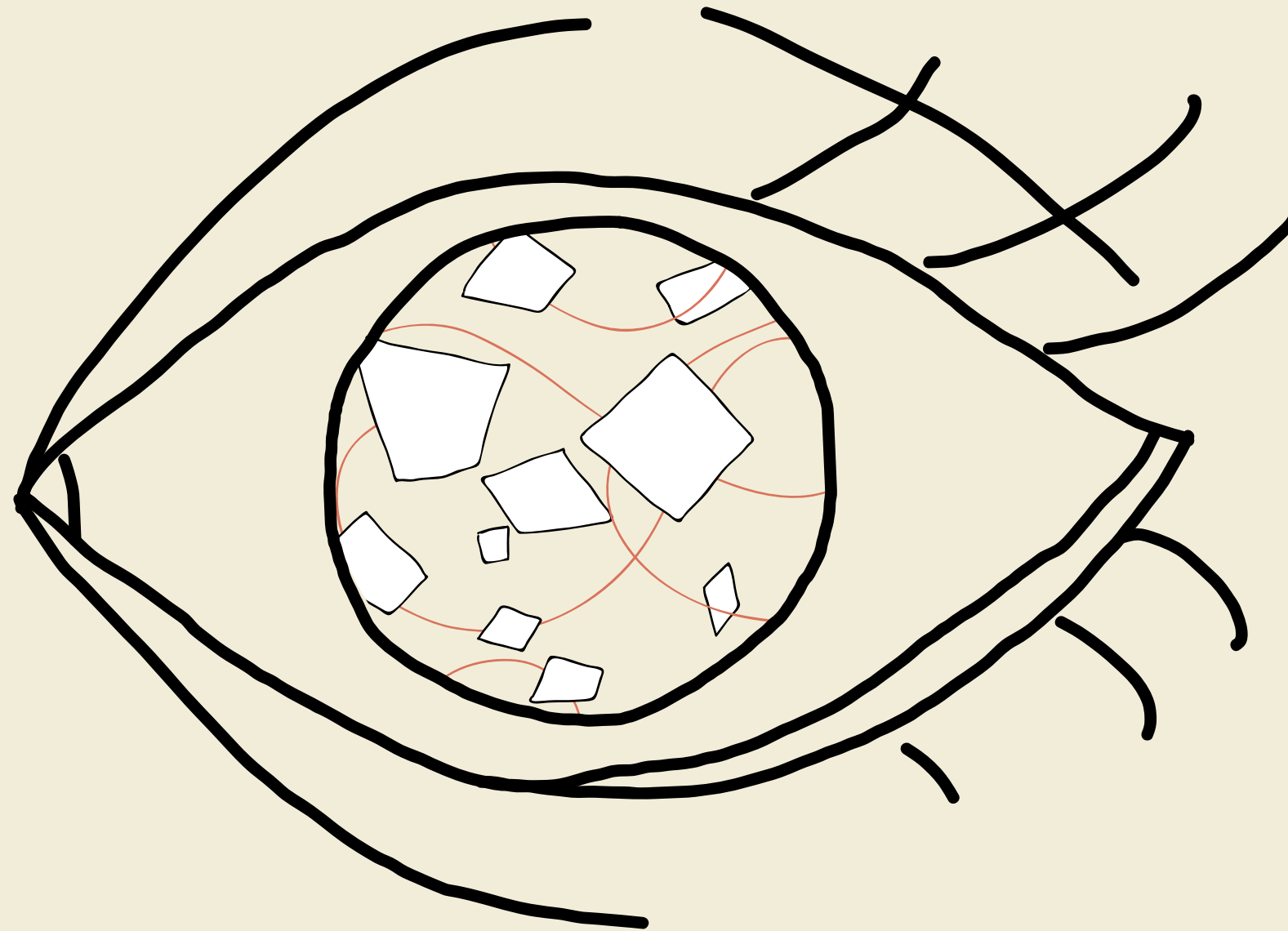
Service design is increasingly accepted as an approach to innovation in public service, with an especially high rate of adoption in Norway. Service designers navigate within complex societal systems, ultimately crafting the experience of Norwegian values through public service touchpoints (Filho & Clatworthy, 2017). When designing public services in a drastically changing socio-cultural landscape (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2019; Thorud, 2019), an intersection of evolving cultural values and state policies exists. A gap between the cultural assumptions of the designer and diverse users are likely to emerge. Such a gap illuminates a clear need for cultural humility in public sector workers (Sugaipova, 2020) and designers as shapers of public services, should be no exception.

Within this landscape, we ask the question: How might we embrace a culturally humble design practice in Norway? By conducting research into, through and for design, we

were able to understand existing practices and challenges designers face when it comes to designing more inclusively. Our key observations indicate that talking about the need for sensitivity around cultural differences within design in Norway, is taboo. Although designers have a general awareness and sensitivity about cultural differences, it is not often integrated in practice. We created Project Kaleidoscope, a design intervention aiming to spark a dialogue around cultural humility in the Norwegian service design context.

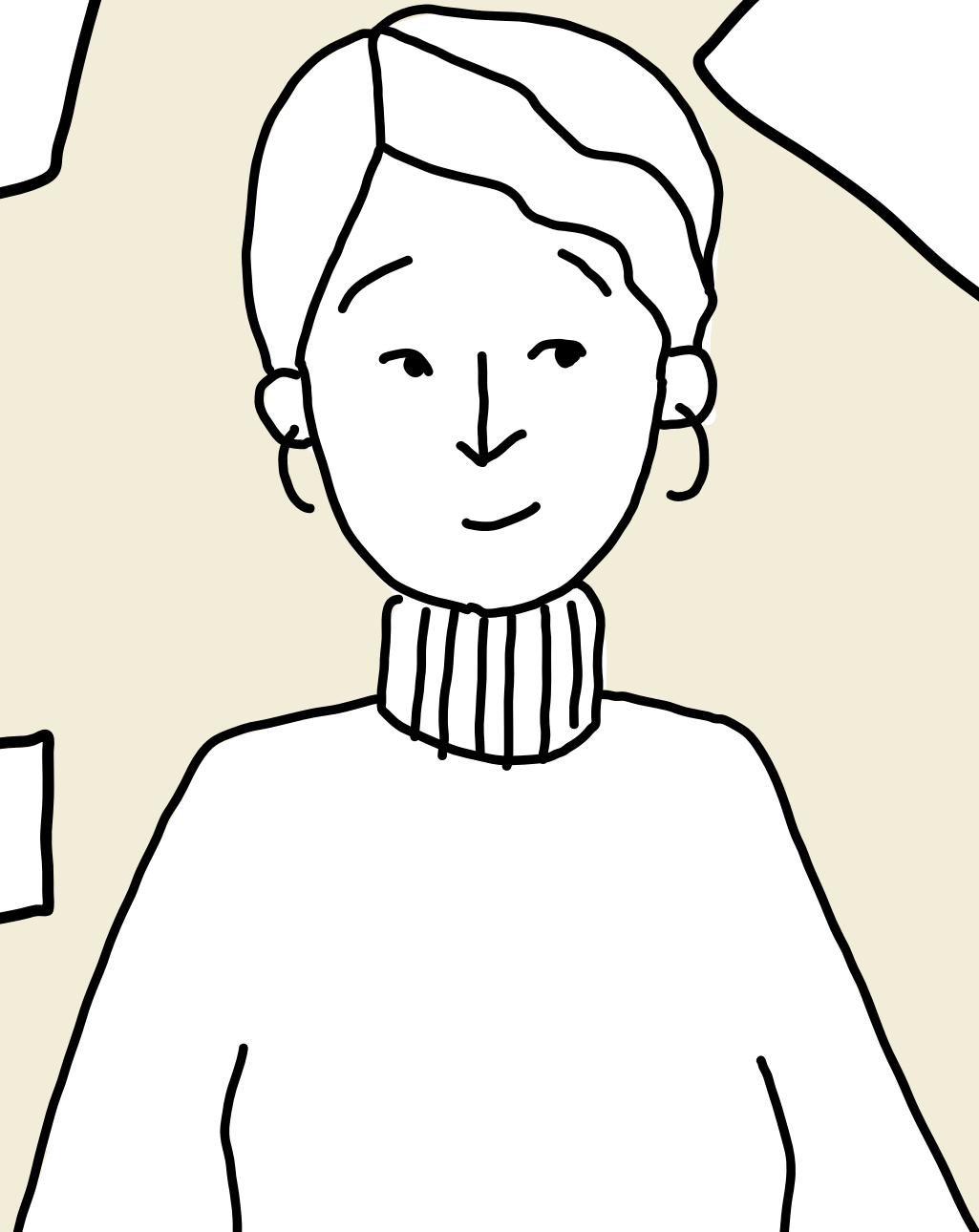
Project Kaleidoscope introduces designers to the notion of cultural humility by walking them through a framework for a reflective conversation. The framework offers an opportunity for service designers to build their critical self reflective muscles (Fook, 2008) through reaction-based exercises, supported by artefacts that externalize related tensions.






Open your eyes and soak in this  
beautiful, messy, imperfect world

In our society people carry strains of history, politics, economy.



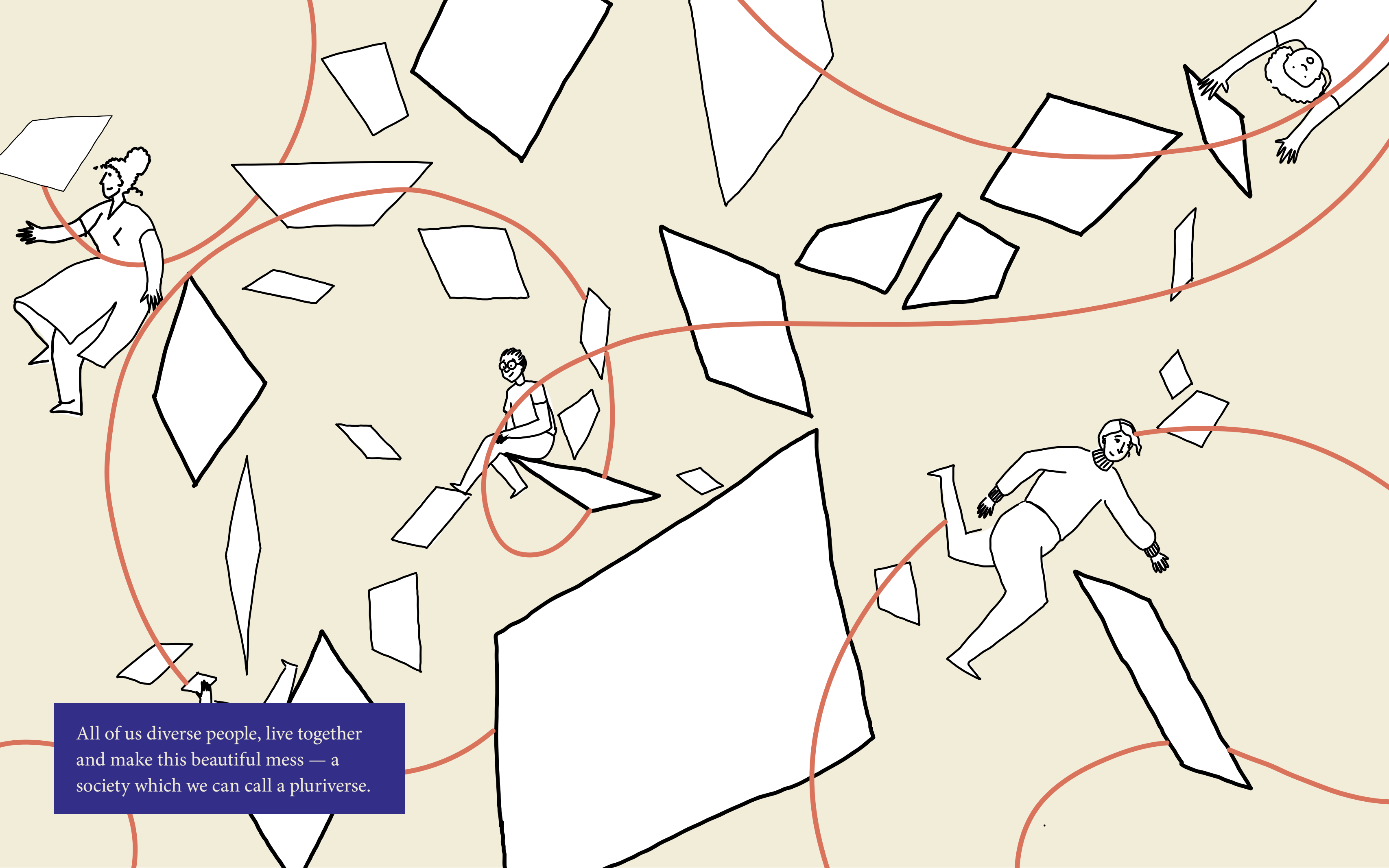


And we live within structures that shape our ideas of the world.

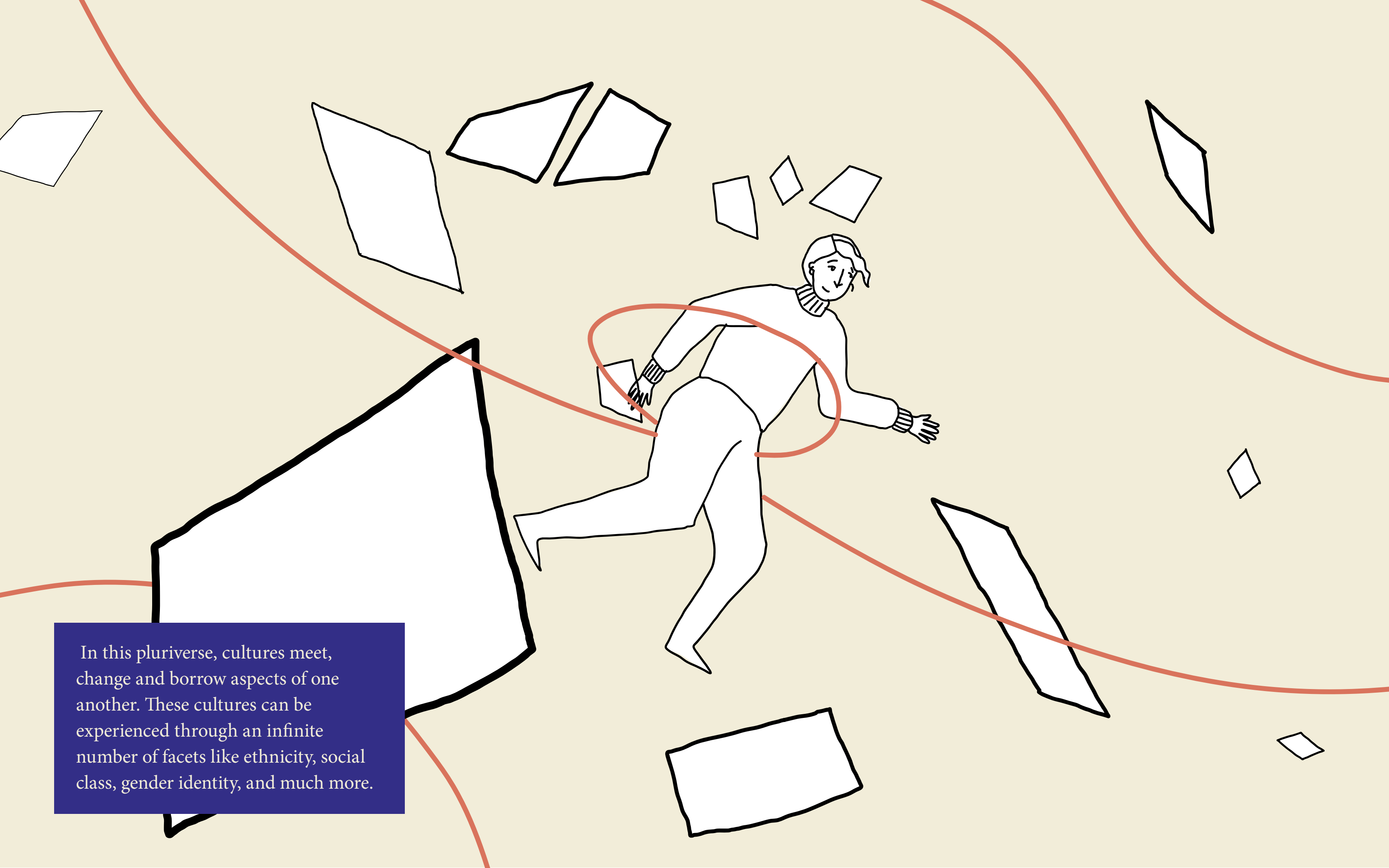


We are emotional, interpret situations differently, and each of us has our own impression of reality.

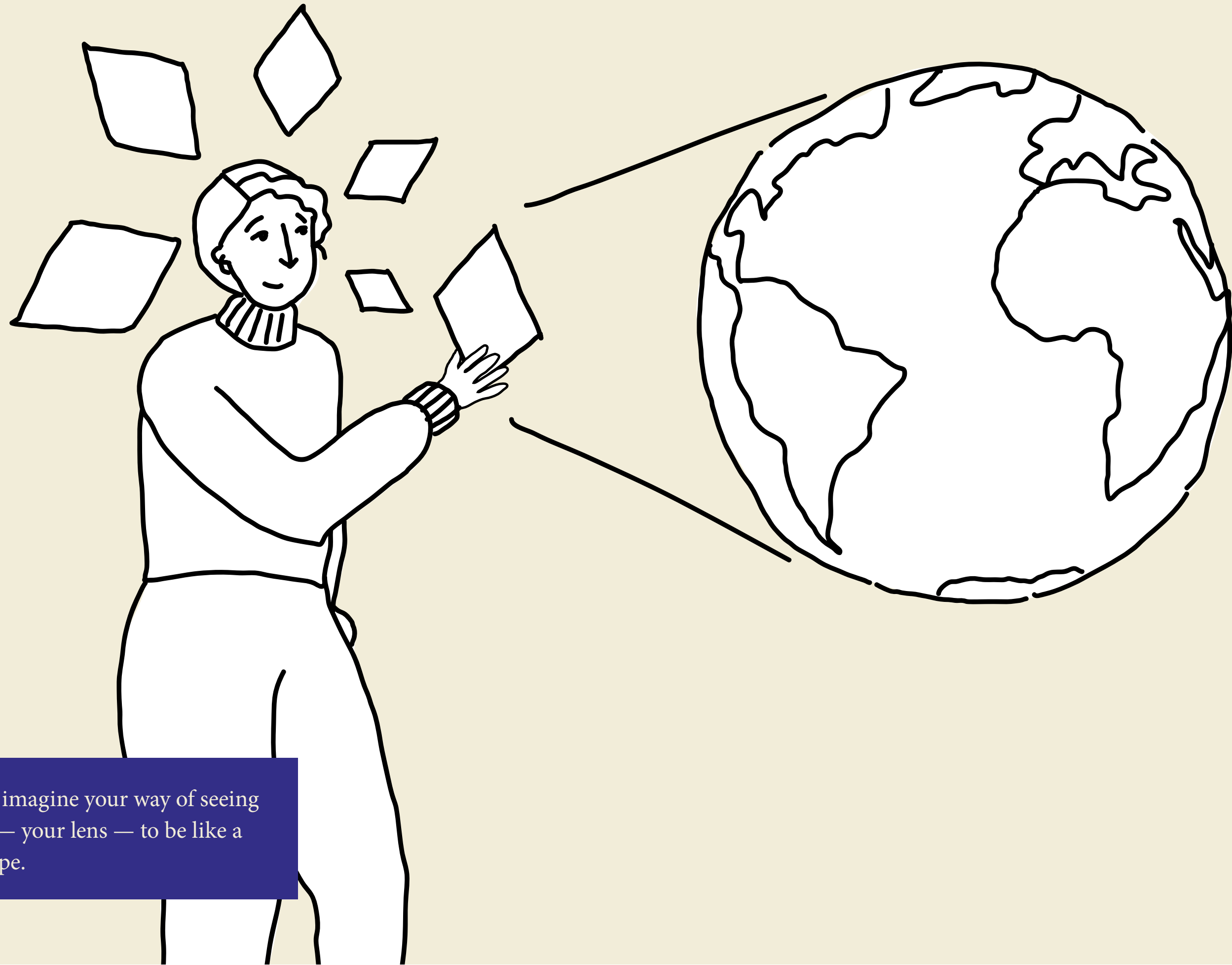




All of us diverse people, live together  
and make this beautiful mess — a  
society which we can call a pluriverse.



In this pluriverse, cultures meet, change and borrow aspects of one another. These cultures can be experienced through an infinite number of facets like ethnicity, social class, gender identity, and much more.



Now, Let's imagine your way of seeing the world — your lens — to be like a kaleidoscope.



Each facet carries traces of your rich background and experience,



Which influences the way you understand life, reality and people.

*As a designer in this pluriverse, how  
does your lens influence the way you  
design for culturally diverse humans?*

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01 Approach & methodology

# AN EXPLORATIVE JOURNEY

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1.1 Approach   1.2 Methodology   1.3 Searching for the right lens



# APPROACH

## LEARNERS WANTING TO EXPLORE

We started from scratch, not knowing much about the topic of culture and design. It was our curiosity around the intersection of designers' position of power and the multicultural society that drove us to jump into it. In order to find a good focus point, we decided to talk to service designers in different design agencies.

## BEING IN THE SAME BOAT

Since this topic is sensitive, our strategy was to share from our own experiences during our conversations with designers in order to communicate that we are in the same boat - that we wanted to learn through talking, not pointing fingers.

## WHY THE LENS OF ETHNICITY?

We chose to look through the lens of ethnicity since it is a taboo and polarizing topic that we see daily in the media and public discourse. Tensions manifested through racism, microaggressions and harsh debates, can cause the feeling of outsidership among people with minority backgrounds in Norway. This was a strategic choice to help scope the project.

## WHY SERVICE DESIGN?

As an entry point into this project, we use service design as a starting point to exemplify our hypothesis. We imagine public services to be elongated touchpoints that ultimately communicate the values of the Norwegian state (Filho and Clatworthy, 2017). We wonder whether interactions with institutions such as kindergartens, schools and hospitals could reinforce, or reduce a feeling of outsidership among humans with minority backgrounds. We see great potential that this framework can also be adapted to meet the needs in other design fields as well.



# METHODOLOGY

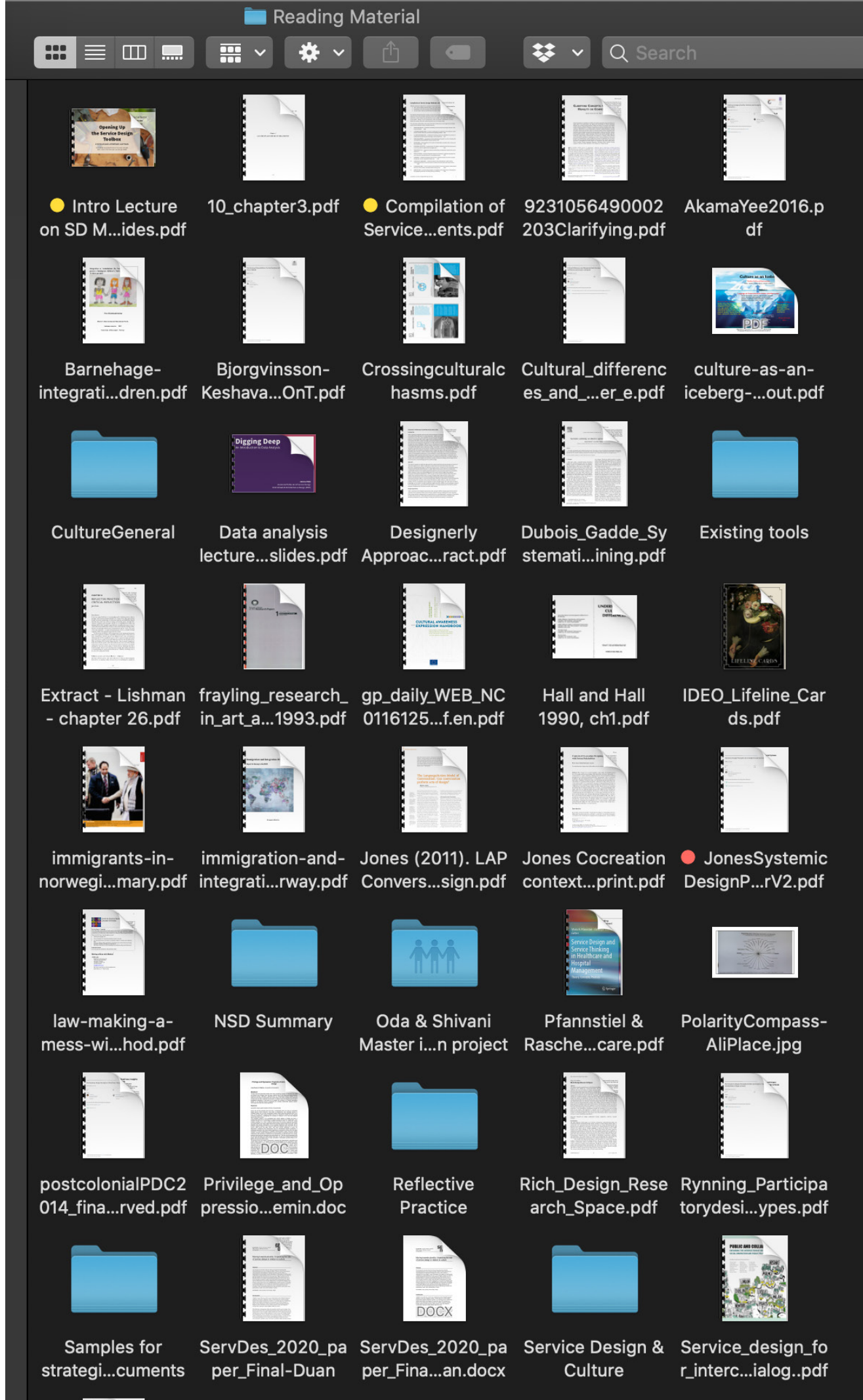
## RESEARCH INTO, THROUGH & FOR DESIGN

As an explorative project asking questions relevant to the design field, we have conducted research into, through and for design (Frayling, 1993). Our delivery, Project Kaleidoscope, is in this regard not an end product in itself but an iteration on a probe that serves the cause of exploring how the notion of cultural humility is received by designers, as well as serving as a catalyst for creating dialogue on cultural humility within design. By merely asking the question, awareness about the question is raised.



# METHODOLOGY

We have looked at 20-30 articles, analysed design theory and literature to get an understanding of the landscape we are working in. We spoke to design academics Ahmed Ansari and Alison Place after reading their published articles around decolonising design and feminist design.



## Politics & Method

Design Thinking Arrives in Pakistan



Ahmed Ansari  
Jan 19, 2016 · 26 min read

### A Method in Politics

1. Within the current landscape of toolkits (from IDEO's *Design For Social Impact Toolkit* (2008), to Nesta's *Design, Impact and You Toolkit* (2014)), literature (like Andrew Shea's *Designing for Social Change* (2012) and most recently, Ezio Manzini's *Design When Everybody Designs* (2015)), and conferences (like *Big Think, A Better World B*

# METHODOLOGY

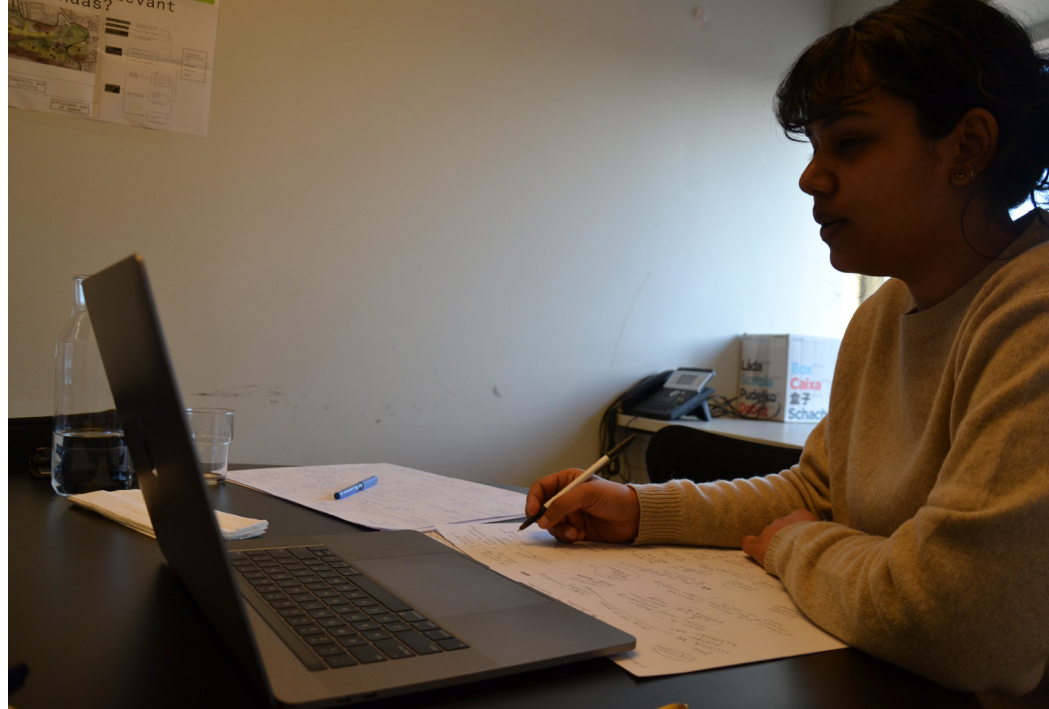
In parallel, we held generative conversations with 14 practising service designers to gain an understanding of the challenges, constraints and efforts being put towards a culturally humble design practice in the industry.

## We spoke to:

8 Designers from Norway, some with international experience.

5 Designers based in Norway, coming from countries in the Americas, Middle East and Europe.

1 Designer from America, based in their own country.





# METHODOLOGY

For research for design, we created a design intervention in the form of a website, which shares a conversation framework to enable designers to critically self-reflect around a culturally humble design practice. The design intervention as an artefact embeds our thinking and is designed to have a life of its own.

## PROJECT KALEIDOSCOPE

Welcome

Why you should care

How does it work?

Get in touch

Ground rules

1A. Enter a fictional project

1B. Your lens (10 min)

1C. Your biases (10 min)

2. Subjectivity & interviews (20 min)

3. Interpretation & analysis (15 min)

4. Assumptions & concepts (15 min)

5. Wrap up

Taking it forward

Feedback

Project Kaleidoscope is the outcome of an explorative diploma project in design, crafted by Shivani Prakash and Oda Heier at The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norway

Supervised by the amazing Josina Vink and Henry Mainsah

or wrap up

Taking it forward

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Project Kaleidoscope is the outcome of an explorative diploma project in design, crafted by Shivani Prakash and Oda Heier at The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norway

Supervised by the amazing Josina Vink and Henry Mainsah

## PREPARE FOR THE PLURIVERSE

Explore a critical self reflective practice to build cultural humility into your design practice



TELL ME MORE

## DEFINE YOUR LENS

Before your team jumps deep into the design project, your studio education lead requests you to shed a light on yourself to prepare.

Since the facets of your kaleidoscopic *lens* are shaped by your *identity and background*, start by shedding a light on these aspects which form your lens.



### Instructions

Individual exercise. Individual exercise. Might be uncomfortable. You don't have to share what you write, if you don't want to.

Dig deeper by looking at the card below, and ask yourself — How does your identity influence your experience of life? These aspects contribute to form your kaleidoscope.

Intention: Get a greater understanding of your personal lens through which you interact with other human

# SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT LENS

With a vision of retaining complexity and contextual details, we hung onto the large amount of data we had generated and collected. In an explorative journey we were dependent on the observations we were making, the conversations we were having, and the way we looked at our own data. We tried several methods to analyse.

It took us some time to see that we had kept a skewed focus. We realised that our initial interviews were “prototypes” of having a conversation about this topic, and we understood that we had to move from looking at the *responses* to our research questions to getting a meta perspective on the *situations we created* with the questions.

Rather than analysing what was being said, we started to systematically look at which prompts, artefacts and questions had enabled us to reach the quality of the conversation that was relevant to our project. This shift enabled us to create a framework of data that helped us move forward, what we call our conversation tracker.

Through this process, we systematically mapped out the conversations we had conducted through the lens of artefacts, our intention, reactions from the designers and our observations.



# SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT LENS

We went through a trial and error process of analysing the data we generated.

## Gigamapping

Through gigamapping we were able to embrace complexity and examine tensions and interconnections. We mapped out literature we read, insights from design experts, and our data from the conversations with designers.

## Monster wall of post-its to synthesise

A method we had practiced using in service design courses, this monster wall allowed us to see the thematics of what designers shared back in our conversations with them.

## Digitised learning bank

We looked at the themes created through the monster wall and saw that they were connected to some of the design theory we had been reading. We combed

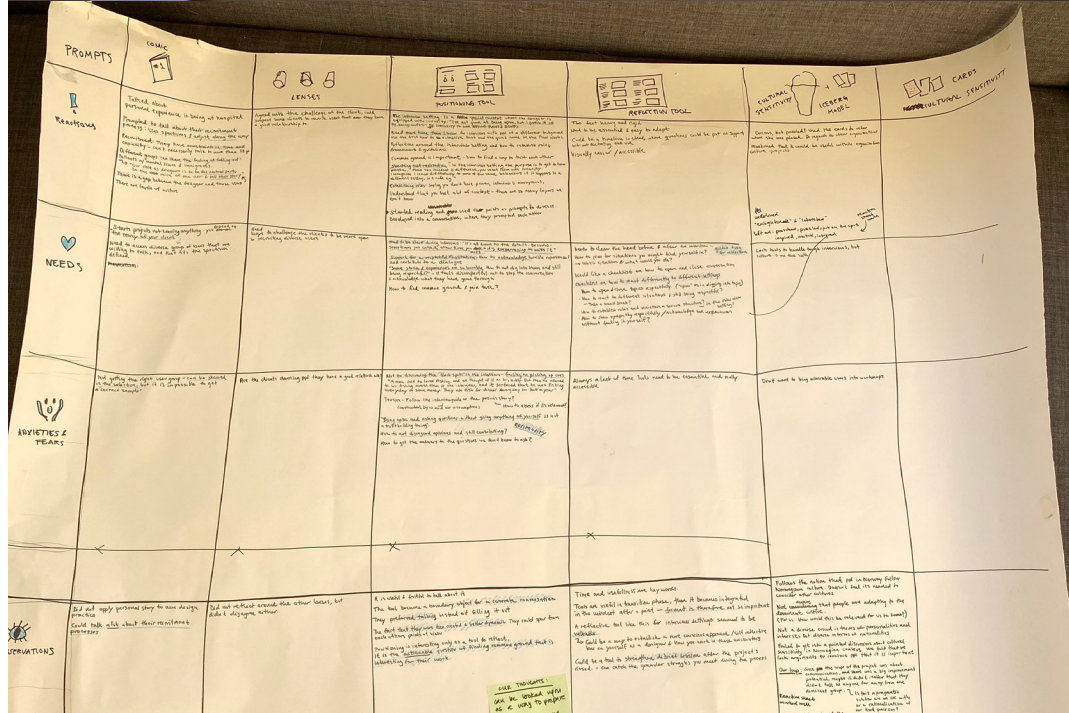
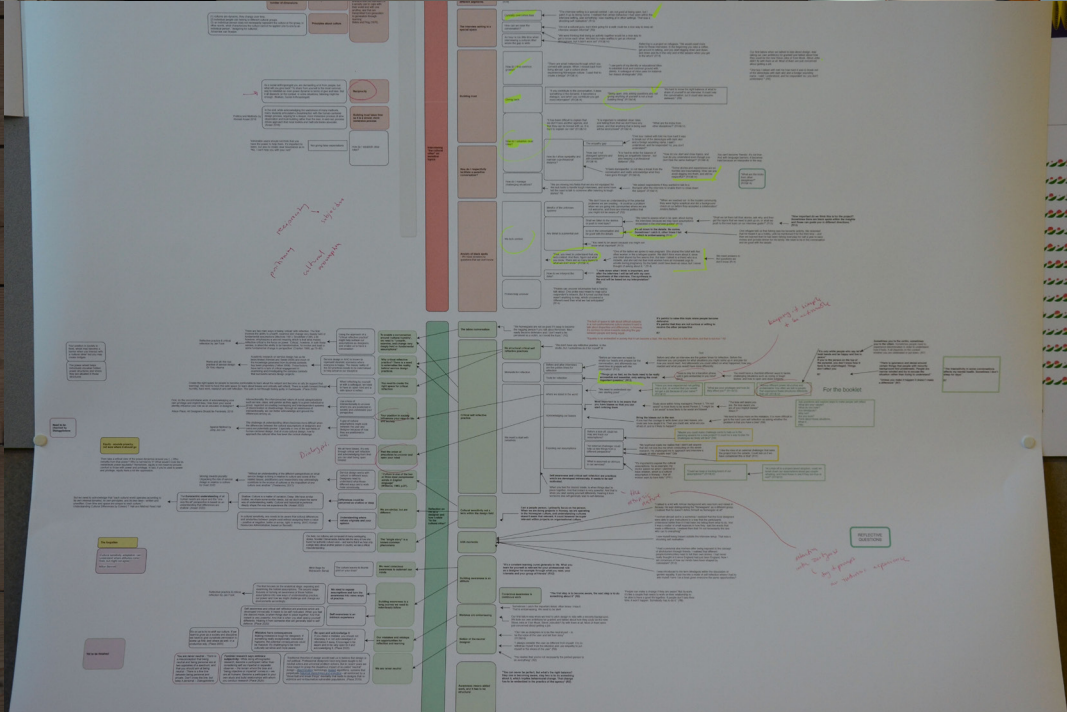
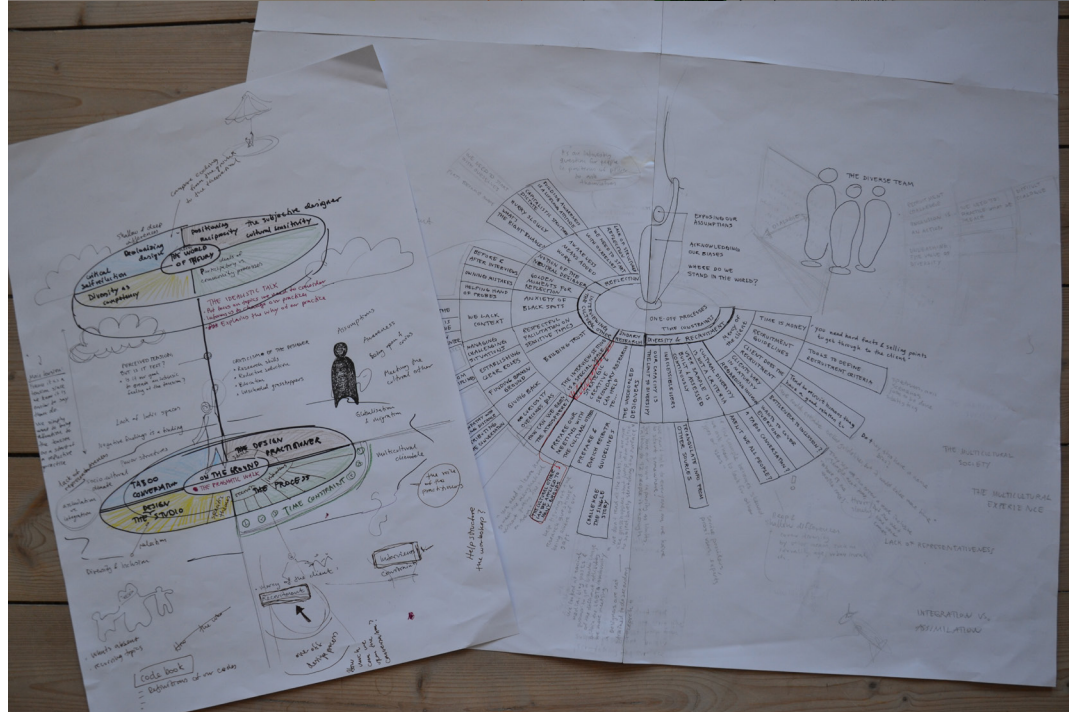
back the themes from the field and linearly connected them to the theory we read. This helped us navigate our learnings with ease.

## Structuring our findings sketches

We needed a lens in order to filter what to keep and what to let go of. We explored a way to frame the insights within a main tension between the pragmatic approach of designers and the idealism of academia, but it did not provide us with a direction.

## Conversation tracker

Shifting the focus to the framework of the conversation. We systematically mapped out the conversations we had conducted through the lens of artefacts, our intention, reactions from the designers and our observations which enabled us to iterate the framework of the conversation. This enabled us to compare and assess how to move forward.



Session stages	Prompt	Intention	Sources/Theoretical input	Reactions	Observations
Introduction: Why this topic, what it means, and how the session is structured	Introductory text	To argue for the importance of the topic, and how we angle our conversation as a response to this issue.	Nationale monitorer, Manifesting ending, (National Digital Learning)	The text evoked feelings such as feeling ashamed, being excited but also nervous. "I feel ashamed. Our services are supposed to be designed for the user and supposed to be complex. It hurts to notice that I am not as aware as I should be." "It hurts to find out these things about yourself, but it is important in order to do something about it."	
Warm-up: Define your lens	Exercise prompted by illustration and questions to answer	Get a greater understanding of our own lens which will help us navigate our relation to the cultural other	Articles on cultural humility	Unclear of how to answer the questions since the terms identify and the events are wide. Got	As a facilitator sharing, it was easier to do the exercise after seeing an example of how we had done the exercise. It's ok to share aspects of their identity
Acknowledging our biases	Exercise prompted by design brief	Our intention is to normalise that we have biases by challenging them through a metaphor	Outwarring Human Minds Project at Harvard University, Professor Mahzarin Banaji	Thought that the brief was itself was challenging. Surfaced anxieties in design setting. "It would require a bit of testing to ensure that your bias is not within the design solution"	Taboo: There were a lot of self censoring, stammering, hesitations and reactions. The facilitator that we are in a taboo area, and can also imply that the space is not perceived as fully open to talking about the gritty biases, or that it is a new topic to talk openly about. (Which might not be the goal either, which is to enhance the awareness of them). Acknowledged biases are too personal to share (at least for beginners, and an even more safe space and informal facilitation is needed)



# SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT LENS

## REFLECTIONS

Our planning of interviews and management could have been more mindful. We scheduled too many interviews which caused us to have less time to analyse data. After the 7th interview we cancelled interviews to find time to analyse and design.

We had used our well tuned muscle in noting down what is being said, and trusting that we would be able to find patterns in our findings. But since we were exploring a topic that stemmed from a hunch and not from an articulated problem, we could not boil down our findings to clusters of needs that gave us a clear design direction right away.



02 Project background

# A WORLD IN TRANSITION

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2.1 Multicultural makeup

2.2 Socio-cultural climate

2.3 Response by design

02 Project background

# MULTICULTURAL MAKEUP



The Norwegian society has always been multicultural.

# MULTICULTURAL MAKEUP



The majority of the Norwegian population has lived alongside the indigenous Samis and national minorities such as the Romani, Forest Finns and the Jews for centuries (Rudi, 2018). Also cultural diversity among social classes, geographical areas, et cetera, have always existed.

# MULTICULTURAL MAKEUP

The Sami and the national minorities have been oppressed by the dominant culture through forced assimilation politics which phased out in the 70s (Rudi, 2018). The effects of the assimilation politics, has led to a misconception of Norway as once a homogenous society.

*“...until the 1970s in Norway we can talk of something approaching a homogeneous culture in which people had roughly the same education, religion, ideals and norms.” (Aambø, 2008, p. 16)*

SVANVIKEN ARBEIDSKOLONI  
Besök: henvendelse til styreeren

# MULTICULTURAL MAKEUP

However, since Norway got its first wave of workers from Pakistan in the 1970s, the multicultural aspect of Norway has become more apparent. The multicultural dimensions are expected to increase (Statistics Norway, 2018), as globalisation has opened

the possibilities to migration and factors such as social security motivate humans to move. *“In 2007 we [could] find more than 200 nationalities and even more cultures and languages within Norway’s borders.”* (Aambø, 2008, p. 16)

# SOCIO-CULTURAL CLIMATE



We also see changes in the socio-cultural climate, which have gained momentum the last several years. Movements such as Black Lives Matter, and #MeToo, have influenced local movements across

the world, with people speaking up on injustice and marginalisation. Discriminating practices that once were accepted, are today seen as completely unacceptable.

# SOCIO-CULTURAL CLIMATE

Changes in attitudes and mindsets are also visible in Norway. Language that targets people based on their identities is reprimanded, and companies are reconsidering their use of indigenous culture in their branding.

*In 2019, Erna Solberg commented on her own use of the n-word back in 2002, stating: “That is a word we don’t use anymore, since it is experienced as offensive.” (Kalajdzic, 2019)*

*This spring, NRK screened the Eid celebration, as the first broadcaster in Western Europe.*

*Brands such as Joika-kaker and Diplom-is state that they will phase out their use of respectively sami and inuit people in their branding (Ballovara, 2020; Holmestrand, 2020).*





# SOCIO-CULTURAL CLIMATE

There is also a call for action to embrace plurality of cultures within the Norwegian public services (Rødal, 2012; Sugaipova, 2020). The child protective service is especially criticised for lacking a nuanced approach when intervening in families with minority backgrounds. Maryam Sugaipova, a researcher from NUPI, argues that there is a need for a greater cultural competence:

*“When one of four kids in Child Protective Services has a minority background, there is a need for cultural competence in order to avoid faulty generalizations and prejudices.”*  
*The State of Norway has been held in court for breaking universal human rights for 5 families by the European Court of Human Rights (Sugaipova, 2020).*

Sugaipova stresses that there is a need for cultural competence among public sector workers, and designers as shapers of public services, should be no exception. With the high rate of acceptance of service design in public services like child raising, healthcare and early childhood education — there is a need for culturally sensitive practice.



# RESPONSE BY DESIGN

Globally we see an emerging response towards the need of an increased cultural understanding — in and beyond design.

## ACADEMIC PRACTICES

Existing design academic practices like participatory design and critical design have stressed on the need for self-reflective practices and increasing self-awareness (Mainsah & Morrison, 2014).

## DESIGN CURRICULUM

The Delft University of Technology has responded to the changing landscape of cultural diversity by offering an extensive course called 'Culture Sensitive Design'.

## DESIGN CONFERENCES

Today, design conferences address 'design and culture'. The Service Design and Innovation conference 2020 aims to bring focus on the tensions and paradoxes of undertaking service design in contexts of plurality. The next Cumulus conference has the theme of "Design Culture(s)", seeking to map research and education in design, by reflecting on the idea of design as a form of culture.



Home / Find courses / Culture Sensitive Design

## About this online course



# RESPONSE BY DESIGN

## OUTSIDE OF DESIGN

Initiatives outside of design span across multiple sectors. The concept of cultural humility was developed within healthcare. In USA, healthcare providers offer workshops in cultural sensitivity (“Cultural Sensitivity”, n.d.). In Norway, ‘The Dialogue Pilot Study’ is offered by the University of Oslo, aiming to educate young adults to become facilitators of tough dialogues about topics like racism and extremism. These initiatives can help provide inspiration to design as a pathway into the pluriverse.



**CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING WITH GLEN GUYTON**

Saturday, October 5,  
9:00 am to 12:30 pm  
Neffsville Mennonite Church

[atlanticcoastconference.net/cultural-competency](http://atlanticcoastconference.net/cultural-competency)

Atlantic Coast Conference  
A Conference of Mennonite Church USA

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Black Patient Bad	White Patient Good	Black Patient Bad	White Patient Good
a		b	
White Patient Bad	Black Patient Good	White Patient Bad	Black Patient Good
c		d	

Pleasure

Become a Certified **DiVeRsity** FACILITATOR

So, how are designers in  
Norway responding to this  
changing landscape?

03 Initial research

# CHECKING THE TEMPERATURE

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3.1 Picking up facets of theory

3.2 Design doing

3.3 Key observations

3.4 Supporting observations

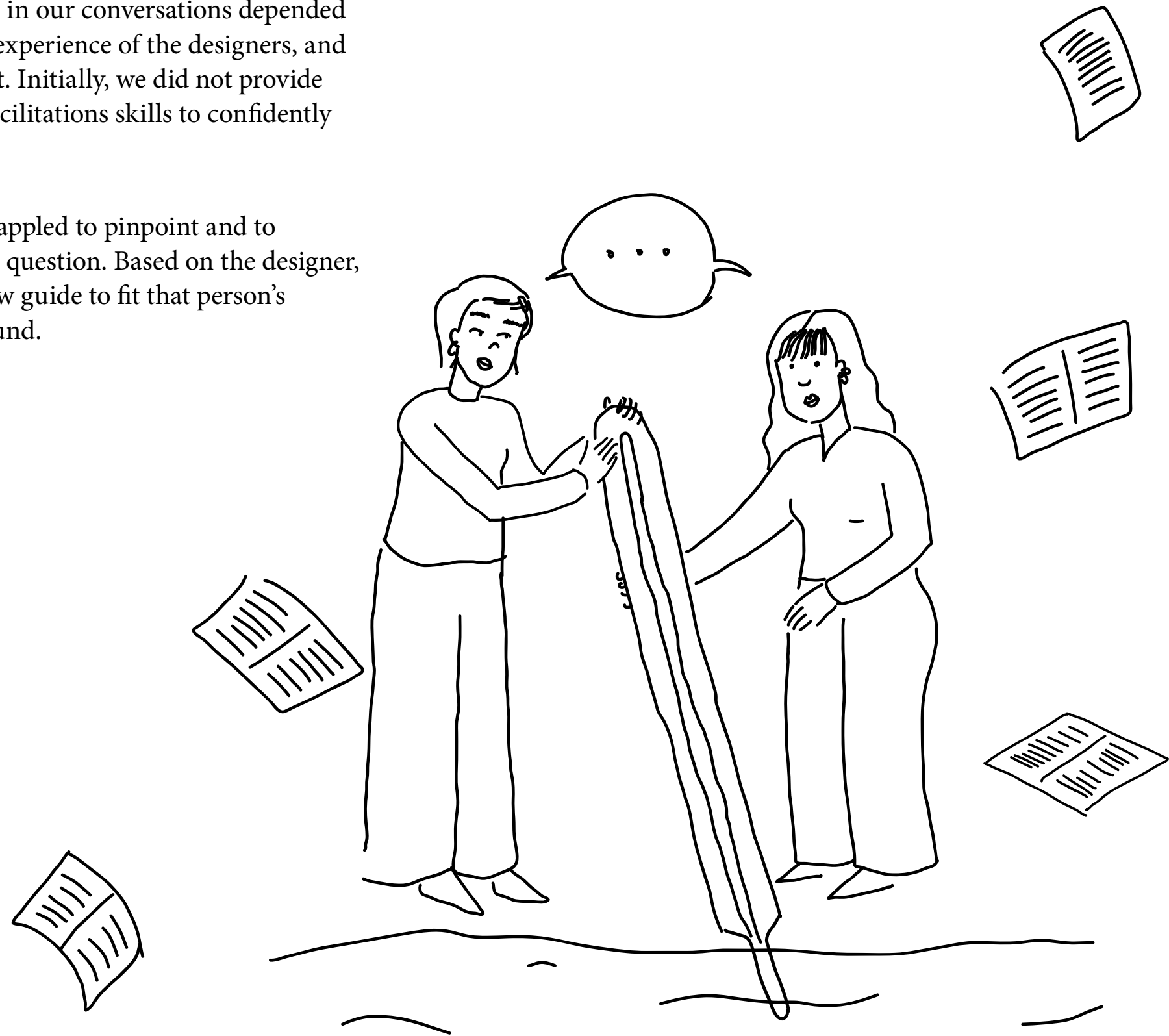
# CHECKING THE TEMPERATURE

To start checking the temperature on what is happening in this subject, we read design articles relating to design and culture, talked to service designers and design academics to hear their perspectives, as well as looking into what was being done and written elsewhere within the perspectives on the multicultural landscape.

Through our conversations with several designers, we got a peek into the constraints of time and money that heavily influence how design is practiced. Through reading design literature on the matter, we discovered a tension between what was being practiced and what was being preached. There was a tension between the cloudy idealism in academia and the pragmatism in practicing design. Sensing this tension inhibited us when we conducted interviews.

The level of concreteness in our conversations depended on the background and experience of the designers, and their level of engagement. Initially, we did not provide a clear framework nor facilitations skills to confidently move into that space.

It was a lofty topic we grappled to pinpoint and to condense into a research question. Based on the designer, we changed our interview guide to fit that person's experience and background.



# PICKING UP FACETS OF THEORY

We sifted through and picked up exciting facets of theory. Some of them are —

## Attitude of reciprocity

The attitude of giving back when doing research.

(Duyssburgh & Slegers, 2015)

## Notion of equity

Acknowledging that humans in our society have different starting points in life.

(Sowden, 2019)

## Positioning

Your position in society in terms of identity, agency and power.

(Eilersten, 2020)

## Cultural assumptions

Beliefs about gender, religion, youth, age, disability, sexuality, social class and work that are taken for granted as being part of the fabric of the social practices of a particular culture.

(Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, n.d.)

## Decolonising design

Shedding light on how colonial thinking influences the way we design and the ways in which one culture is being imposed on another culture.

(Khandwala, 2019).

## Implicit bias

Having biases is a part of being human.

(Banaji, 2017)

## Cultural sensitivity

Acknowledging that “cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value.”

(Bennett cited in “Cultural Sensitivity”, n.d.)

## Intersectionality & Wheel of power and oppression

Your opportunities in life are shaped by social structures in society.

(Morgan, 1996 contextualised by Place, 2019)

## Designers are never neutral

We all see the world through our own lens.

(Place, 2019)

## Critical self reflective practice

A framework that focuses on unpacking critical moments within a professional practice.

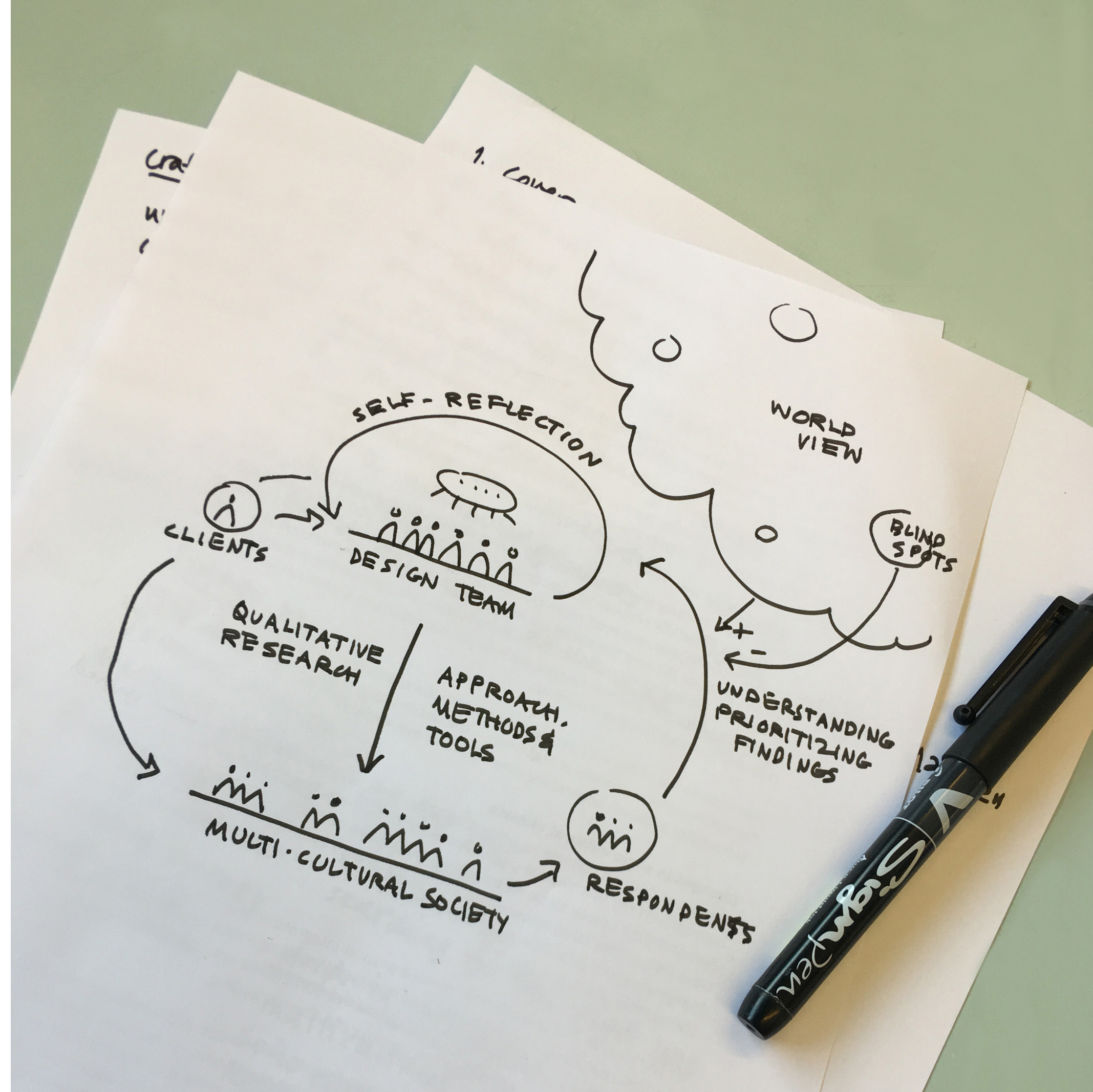
(Fook, 2008)

# DESIGN DOING

We went out broadly in our first search to understand how service designers are relating to the multicultural society. Our aim was to find ways to unpack a meeting of the designer with a user from a different cultural background than theirs; and the challenges designers might face in these interactions.

We drafted a schematic that illustrated that landscape. We used the schematic to illustrate the area we wanted to explore, and our logic behind it. Our intention was to use it to frame our conversation, but let the designers talk about their take on it based on their professional experience.

*The landscape we wanted to understand: 1; Self reflective practices within design teams on this topic. 2; How service designers are approaching different users, adapting tools and methods and navigating challenges for having a culturally sensitive lens to their projects. 3; How service designers are understanding insights, prioritizing findings and defining needs with a culturally sensitive lens.*





# KEY OBSERVATIONS

We didn't land these key observations early on in the project. It was hard to understand what was happening as our conversations with designers didn't surface any direct needs which we could respond to. From the overall tone of the conversations, with incubation and conversations with our supervisors, we were able to pull out these three key observations.



# KEY OBSERVATIONS

## 1. NOT INTEGRATED INTO PRACTICE

The conversations with designers revealed a general awareness of the need for placing focus on understanding users who come from a culture different from theirs. Some designers recognised the issue while working abroad. But what happens when similar dynamics play out in the Norwegian context? Our hunch is that designers feel the need of shifting their design tools and working more inclusively, but it is not an integrated part of practice.

*“I’m not saying that designers “haphazardly neglect” to work more inclusively, but surely this is a situation all of us could easily find ourselves in.”*  
— Designer 10

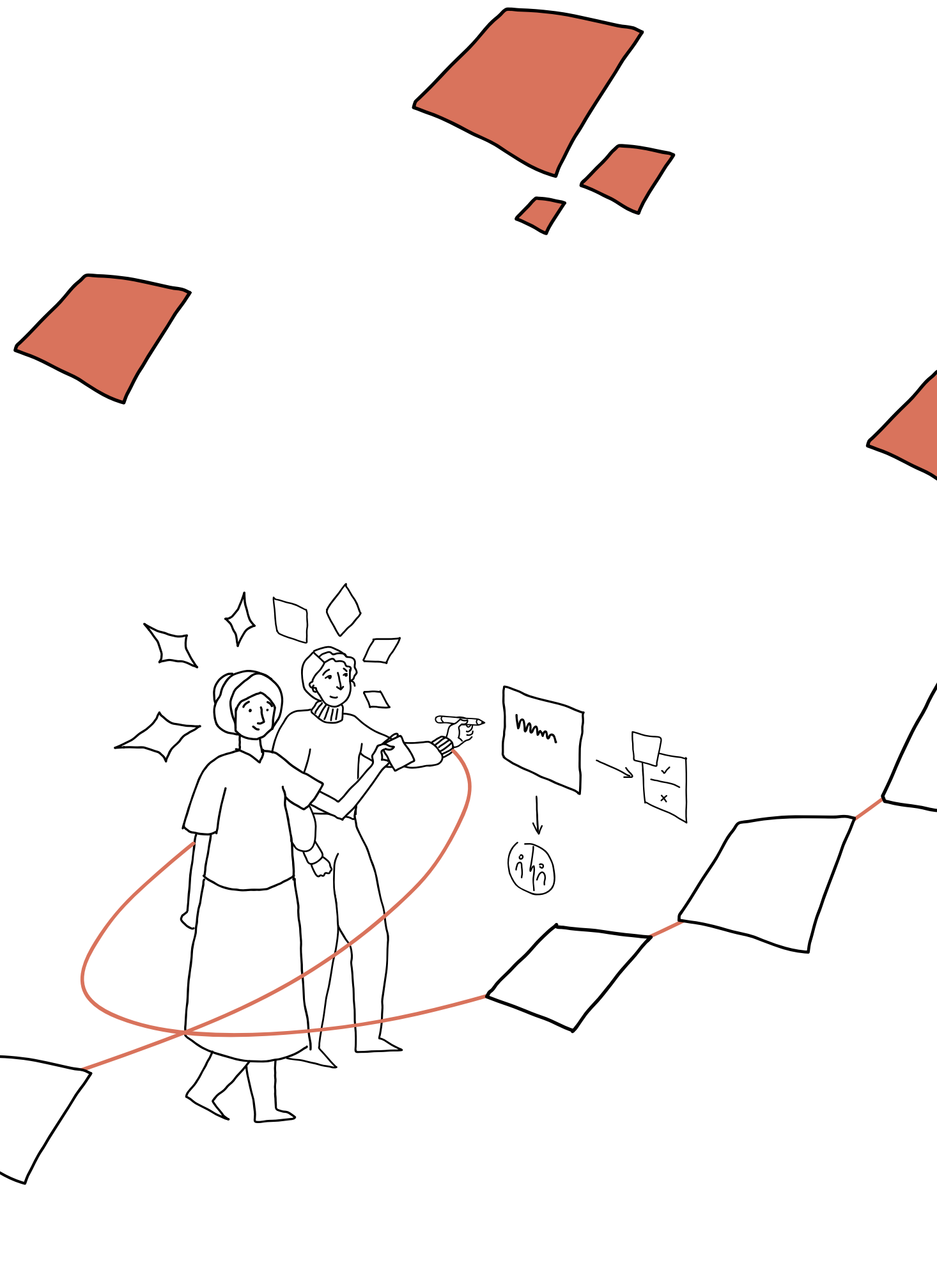
*“You come with the interview and you go. That is the constraint of the one off design process”*  
— Designer 13

*“You can never be perfect, but what is the right balance?”*  
— Designer 2

*“Our first failure when we told the kids about design, was taking our own ambitions for granted and talked about how they could be the new Steve Jobs or Elon Musk. Steve Jobs didn’t fly with them at all. Some kids come from circles where no one has a job. Most of them are just concerned about getting a job and being included in society.”*  
— Designer 6

*“I worked abroad and in a workshop I realised that the local designers were able to give instructions in*

*a way that the participants understood better than if it had been me telling them what to do. And it was a matter of small nuances in how they said the words that made a difference. I realised then that I’m not necessarily the one who can to everything”*  
— Designer 2



# KEY OBSERVATIONS

## 2. A TABOO CONVERSATION

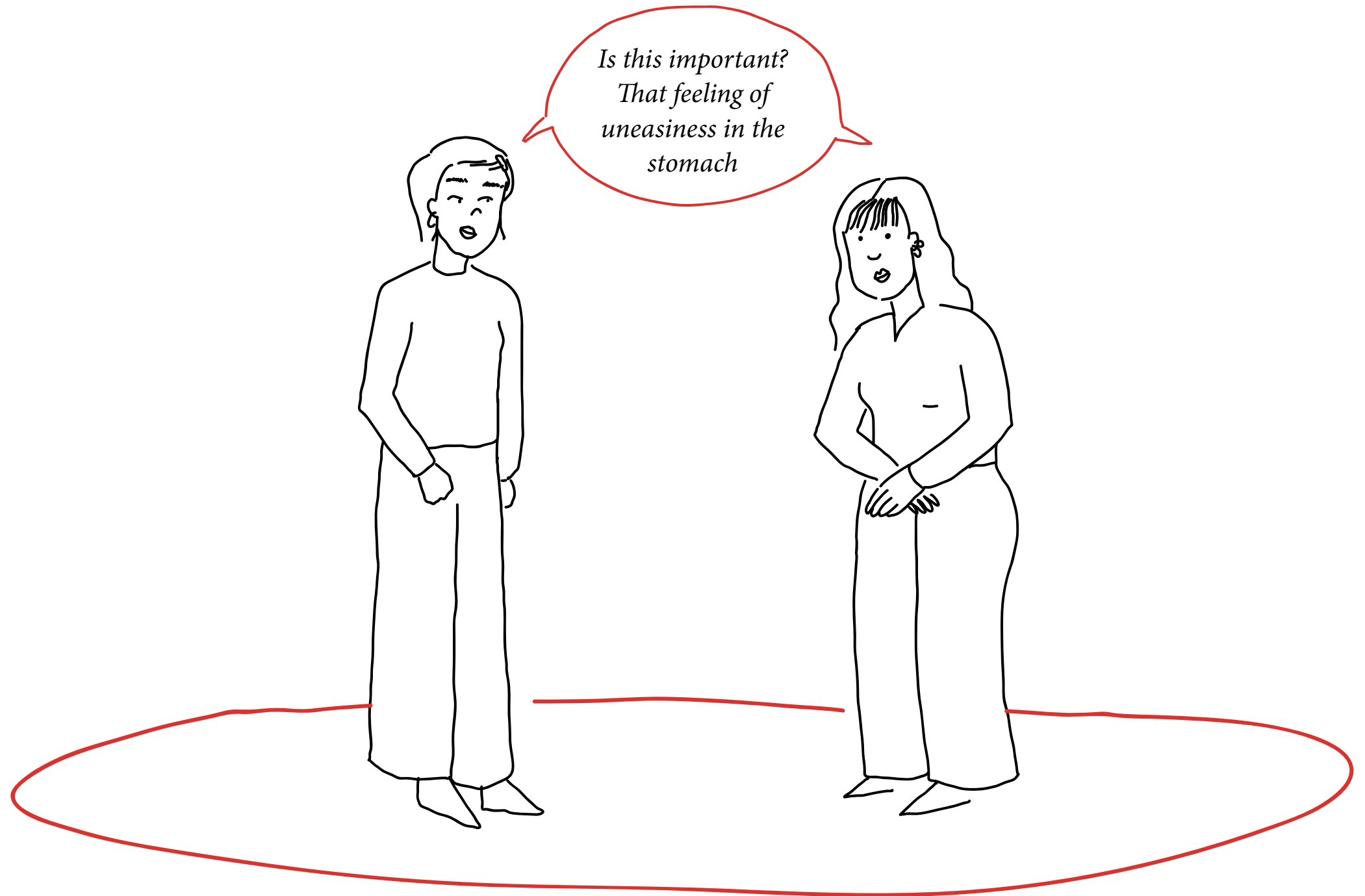
During our conversations with designers, we found ourselves lacking the courage and vocabulary to ask open questions because we were afraid of stepping on toes. Designers also highlighted the feeling of being restricted from talking about cultural differences openly. This finding indicates the grounds of a taboo conversation.

*“Is this important? That feeling of uneasiness in the stomach” — Shivani & Oda, Self reflective diary*

*“If you want to criticise how designers work, then you need to be aware that you will be criticised on how you work” — Designer 4*

*“It’s painful to raise this topic since people become defensive. It’s painful that they are not curious or willing to receive the other perspective” — Designer 7*

*“Designers are a well intentioned lot, no one designs to exclude” — Designer 5*



# KEY OBSERVATIONS

## 3. THE NOTION OF CULTURAL HUMILITY

The next observation is the notion of cultural humility, which we found in our secondary research. This aligns well with how some designers articulated it in our conversations, that we need to understand our own starting point before we can understand our culturally diverse user group. The idea of starting with yourself connects well with the notion of cultural humility.

*Cultural humility is a process of critical self-reflection that takes into consideration your personal and systemic biases, experiences, how you live the world, and how you view the world through your identity. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.*

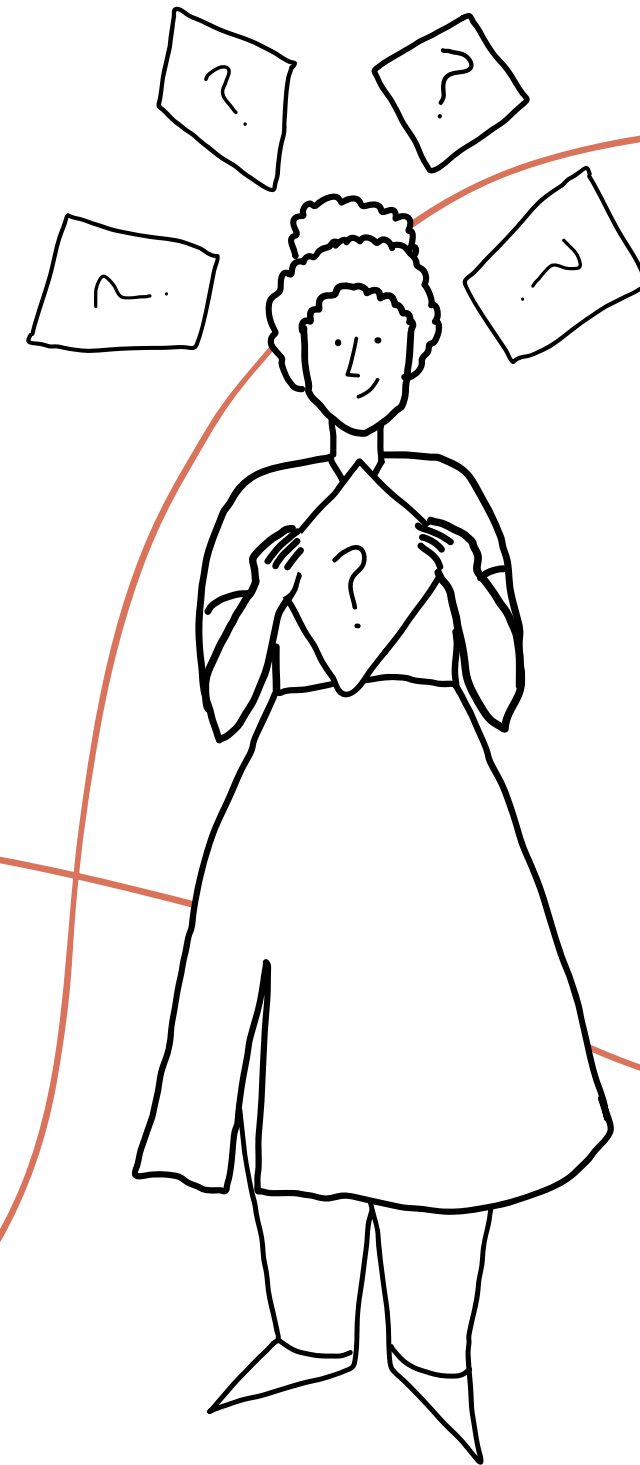
*(Juliana Mosley, 2017 & British Columbia, Ministry of Health, 2015)*

*“Step one is to become aware, step two is to do something about it”*  
— Designer 2

*“We need understand our own starting point [before we try to understand the other]”*  
— Designer 14

*“First, do the uncomfortable work of acknowledging your own privilege and implicit bias.” (Place, 2019)*

*“...we must be aware of our own limits, biases and challenges, and conduct ourselves with a bit of caution and a lot of respect.” (Pastor, 2018)*



# SUPPORTING OBSERVATIONS

In our research process, we picked up a few more observations which in various ways support our key observations —

## 1. DISCORD BETWEEN SOCIETY & OUR DESIGN CURRICULUM

With a rapid transition in the socio-cultural climate, our design education needs to change and respond to changes. We are yet to uncover how to engage with people with a different cultural background who are living in Norway. This is not covered in our design curriculum.

## 2. NON-CONFRONTING ENVIRONMENT & A NOTION OF EQUALITY

Norwegian culture could get non-confronting as the value of equality is held high. The notion of equality is manifested through flat hierarchies in work places which makes differences in status invisible or through equal access to public services such as education and healthcare.

*“Equality is so embedded in society that it can become a bias. We say that there is a flat structure, but that is not true.” — Designer 3*

*“We Norwegians are not so good at talking about these things. It’s easy to become a nagging person if you talk about feminism. Men easily become defensive and I don’t want to be perceived as a victim, so I avoid the topic.” — Designer 2*

# SUPPORTING OBSERVATIONS

## 3. THE FEELING OF EXCLUSION

Some designers know the feeling of being a minority themselves. The feeling of outsidership could relate to colleagues' lack of curiosity of different perspectives, discomfort when difficult issues are raised, or general observations of how the majority can reduce complex issues in other countries. They pointed out that there needs to be more effort to be inclusive.

*“The insensitivity in some conversation [at the workplace] affects my mental health. Sometimes I don't sleep for days” — Designer 7*

*“On the ladder of diversity understanding, Norway is at the bottom level, only referring to statistical diversity.” — Designer 3*

*“For a place to be inclusive, it has to be diverse. But a diverse place isn't necessarily inclusive. The inclusivity needs to be an action” — Designer 7*

## 4. TENSION BETWEEN ACADEMIA & MENTALITY OF GOOD ENOUGH

Designers work within several constraints that can hamper the ideal of designing more inclusively, the biggest being lack of time and money, and the attitude of the client. This is however not meant as an excuse for not designing more inclusively.

*“Sometimes the barrier is the client. They say ‘to be honest, we can do it later’. Later never happens.” Designer 1*

*“It seemed like the client recruited users they had a good relationship with” - Designer 8*

*“We need to hurry slowly. We can't be the drunk driver who don't have time to wait out the alcohol before driving home” — Designer 9*

On the basis of the three key observations, we rationalise that we first need to have a conversation before we can do anything about our practice. Therefore, our redefined brief is,

**How might we pop the taboo bubble and create a space to build cultural humility into service design practices?**

04 Design intervention

# PROJECT KALEIDOSCOPE

---

- 4.1 How does it work?
- 4.2 Conversation framework overview
- 4.3 A concrete design dialogue
- 4.4 Popping the taboo bubble
- 4.5 An iterative journey
- 4.6 Taking a step back



# PROJECT KALEIDOSCOPE

Welcome

Why you should care

How does it work?

Get in touch

Ground rules

1A. Enter a fictional project

1B. Your lens (10 min)

1C. Your biases (10 min)

2. Subjectivity & interviews (20 min)

3. Interpretation & analysis (15 min)

4. Assumptions & concepts (15 min)

5. Wrap up

Taking it forward

Feedback

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## PREPARE FOR THE PLURIVERSE

Explore a critical self reflective practice to  
build cultural humility into your design  
practice



[TELL ME MORE](#)

# PROJECT KALEIDOSCOPE

**What:** Project Kaleidoscope is a small design intervention in the web of initiatives happening globally. The vision of the project is to change the conversation in Norway amongst service designers to incorporate the notion of cultural humility in design practice. Parallely, it functions as a probe to help us understand if we were able to hold a difficult conversation in the discovered taboo grounds.

**Who:** Project Kaleidoscope aims to prepare designers for the rapidly changing pluriverse.

**Why:** Several designers work within challenging dynamics at a high speed. When designers move into projects, they meet a diverse spectrum of people, and navigate different power dynamics. When cultural differences between users and designers are high, a culturally humble approach can help designers interact with stakeholders more sensitively. Having self-awareness will help designers uplift their existing practices, which could lead them to shaping more inclusive design outcomes.

**How:** Many designers are intuitively sensitive when they interact with users. Project Kaleidoscope allows designers to build on what they already have by providing a vocabulary and a space for sharing perspectives on the topic. The conversation is guided through the frames of a fictional design project where each design stage is framed by artefacts and reflective questions. The reflections are reaction-based, prompted by provocation cards and self mapping tools. The session wraps up by encouraging the participants to bring their newly built muscle of critical thinking into their own design practice.

**Where:** We imagine a developed version of Project Kaleidoscope to be used in a classroom setting as a workshop, or by professional designers looking to improve their practice.

*Decisions around form:* The decision to host the conversation framework on a Squarespace website was taken as we had to test the prototype remotely. Using an easy website building software enabled us to co-build a prototype which could immediately be hosted and shared. We were also toying with the idea of self-facilitation, as everyone may not be comfortable having a conversation with two strangers (us).



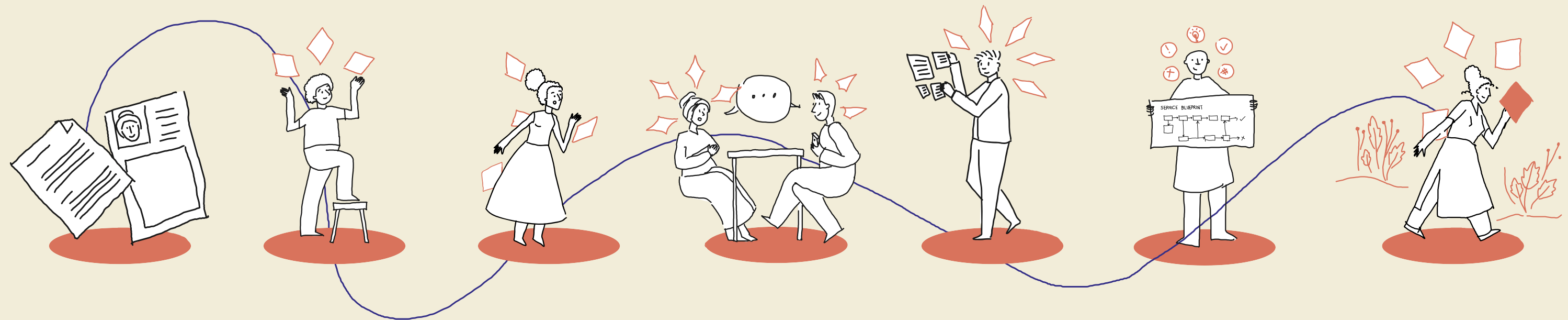
# HOW DOES IT WORK?



Project Kaleidoscope is a space for self reflection. Your identity and background influence the many facets through which you see the world.

Come and explore what this faceted lens of yours is — and reflect about how it might impact the way you approach your design practice.

# HOW DOES IT WORK?



To help you explore this lofty space, we have created a framework to have a reflective conversation. A heads up, this reflection gets

uncomfortable for some. It's important to create a safe space with the frames of confidentiality, respect and non-judgementalism.

# HOW DOES IT WORK?



You will start this reflective journey by jumping into a design project, and exploring your lens and biases.

Then you will go through 3 exercises grounded in concrete design activities. You will reflect around —

1. What happens when you move into an interview setting with your personal lens.

2. Then reflect around how your biases might come into play when you analyse your qualitative data.

3. And finally, reflect around the notion of assumptions and how they play out in the design process.

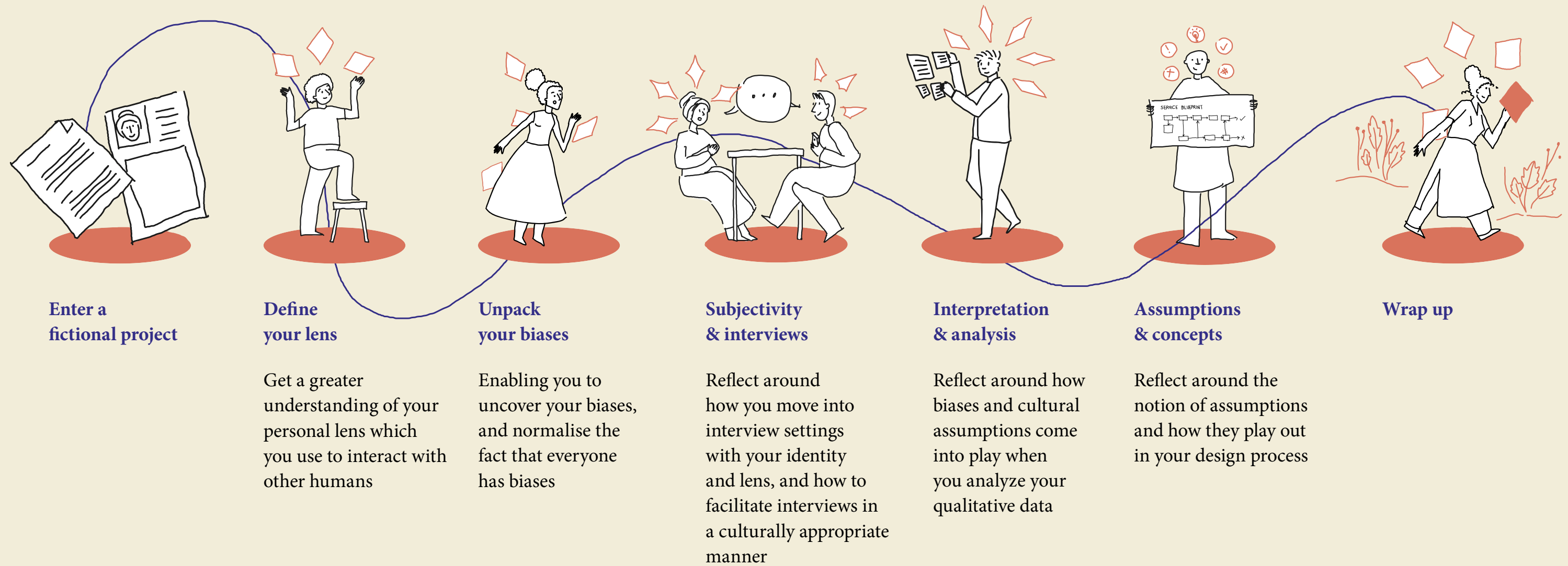
# HOW DOES IT WORK?



While reflecting you might feel the need to have an answer, but remember, the point is to explore the tough questions, not find an answer. So, find an hour's time, grab a close

colleague or friend, to reflect. You will find the instructions and resources along the way. All you need is some paper and a pen to get started. Link: [projectkaleidoscope.squarespace.com](https://projectkaleidoscope.squarespace.com)

# CONVERSATION FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW



**Enter a fictional project**

**Define your lens**

Get a greater understanding of your personal lens which you use to interact with other humans

**Unpack your biases**

Enabling you to uncover your biases, and normalise the fact that everyone has biases

**Subjectivity & interviews**

Reflect around how you move into interview settings with your identity and lens, and how to facilitate interviews in a culturally appropriate manner

**Interpretation & analysis**

Reflect around how biases and cultural assumptions come into play when you analyze your qualitative data

**Assumptions & concepts**

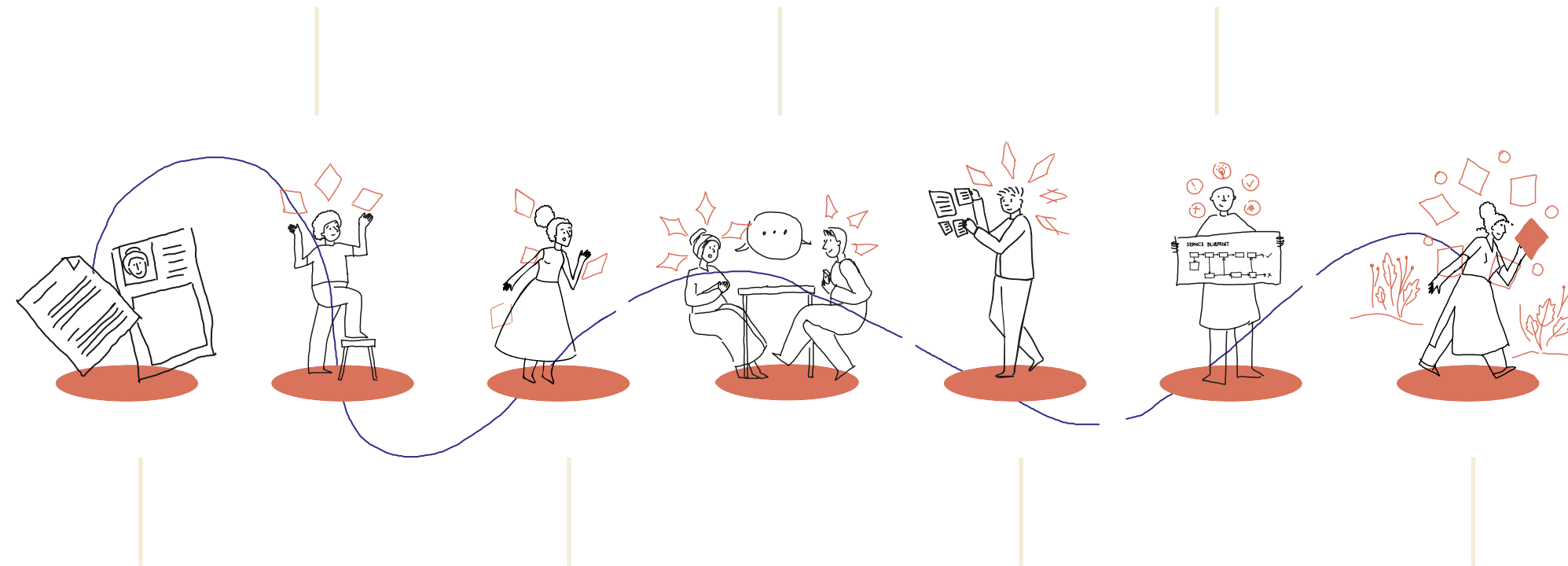
Reflect around the notion of assumptions and how they play out in your design process

**Wrap up**

# POPPING THE TABOO BUBBLE

Through our testing sessions, we managed to create a space where we were able to talk without feeling restricted. The topic was addressed head-on while giving space for expressing discomfort. Based on these observations, we see that we have managed to pop the taboo bubble to some extent. Here is an overview of how a dialogue could evolve through the conversation framework.

On the next pages, we will unpack some of our strategies which help enable a concrete dialogue.



*“I haven’t thought about myself like this before.”*  
— Design student 3

*“I don’t think it is necessary to try to ‘solve’ our lack of neutrality but to acknowledge it exists, so that we can see our own point of view in relation to others, understand where they are coming from and identifying when we are trying to fit things into our own narrative.”*  
— Designer 3

*“The key challenge is the bias beyond the obvious.”*  
— Designer 16

*“I can’t decide what I think of the brief. Is it too real, or unreal?”*  
— Design student 2

*“It hurts to find out these things about yourself, but it is important in order to do something about it.”*  
— Design student 1

*“The flaw with qualitative research is that it’s very easy to manipulate things by putting a good quote here, and a good quote there. We need to be aware of our biases so that we don’t tailor it towards our own agenda”*  
— Designer 15

*“I get very curious when I get such a task. I really want to get an answer. Maybe I need to accept that in some situations I am an outsider and won’t have an answer”*  
— Designer 17



## 1. CREATING FRAMES FOR REFLECTION

### Fictional design brief

The fictional project is the entry point. It gives designers a pragmatic approach to reflection. Based on the article about child protective services, the brief represents a sensitive case where cultural values intersect with a public service. This allows the discussion to be pointed, leaving no space for doubt of what cultural differences might mean within the frames of design.

### Comic strip

In this framework, participants meet Dounia Abdullah.

Through a comic strip, she communicates her perspective on the project's topic. Dounia's opinion is based on the author of the opinion piece in Morgenbladet, and is validated by two women who could relate to the narrative. The intention is to prompt the reflection around several perspectives.

*"It is good that it [the comic] communicates that people with multicultural backgrounds are happy that Barnevernet exists, because there are families where children suffer. But as the system is built today, people are afraid. Because of culture and cultural clashes." – Mother with a multicultural background.*

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# SUBJECTIVITY & INTERVIEWS

The caseworkers in Child Protective Services have recruited some people to talk with.

You will meet Dounia Abdulla. She was recruited through a facebook group connected to Kaleido primary school. Since this is a delicate topic, it is hard to know how open your conversation will be. Therefore, you will get glimpse of Dounia's perspective on this subject before you move into the interview space.



## Instructions

Discuss within your group  
No material needed

Read through the snippets from Dounia's perspective, and use the reflection points to discuss together

Intention: Reflect around how you move into the interview setting with your identity and lens, and how to facilitate the interview in a culturally appropriate manner

Dounia's snippet

As a mom, I'm happy that a public service exists to prevent violence and abuse against children

When 1/4 kid Child Protective services has a minority back

But, sometimes, I feel Child Protective services might have a distorted image of 'western upbringing values' contra 'non-western values'

There is a need for more cultural competence to avoid misinterpretations of situations

Dig deeper

**DESIGNERS ARE NEVER NEUTRAL**

Scholars of intersectional feminism claim that no one is ever neutral. We all see the world through our own lens. Designers being qualitative interpreters, we need to acknowledge that our biases can inform the way we ask questions in an interview setting.

When interviewing, what can you do to acknowledge your lack of neutrality?

Project brief

Interview guide

1. Establish trust and ground  
Let's start by making selfies and coffee with our respondent to warm up
2. Tap into their experience  
Conversations often had with different parents who have interacted with Child Protective Services
3. Draw out a rich description and zoom in where necessary. Possible zoom points could be:
  - Murder/suicide

PREVIOUS

2

Dig deeper by looking at the card above. When interviewing, what can you do to acknowledge your lack of neutrality? ( 5 minutes )

NEXT

## 2. GENTLY POPPING THE TABOO BUBBLE AND ESTABLISHING TRUST

### Tone of voice

We intend to use a 'warm and understanding' tone of voice to create a space that shows understanding of the challenge of confronting one's own biases and subjectivity. This tone of voice is used in the initial video that introduces the topic and builds the argument for bringing the notion of cultural humility into design. We intend to use a 'clear and descriptive' tone of voice to keep the language at a level that doesn't evoke feelings of being provoked, or over explained to.

### Ground rules

A safer space is established by taking support from Jan Fooks' ground rules for a critical self reflective session.

### Transparency

By writing the intention with each exercise, we try to build more trust through the value of transparency. Being transparent brings our 'agenda' to the forefront helping ease the difficult conversation space.

## PROJECT KALEIDOSCOPE

Welcome

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Ground rules

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Taking it forward

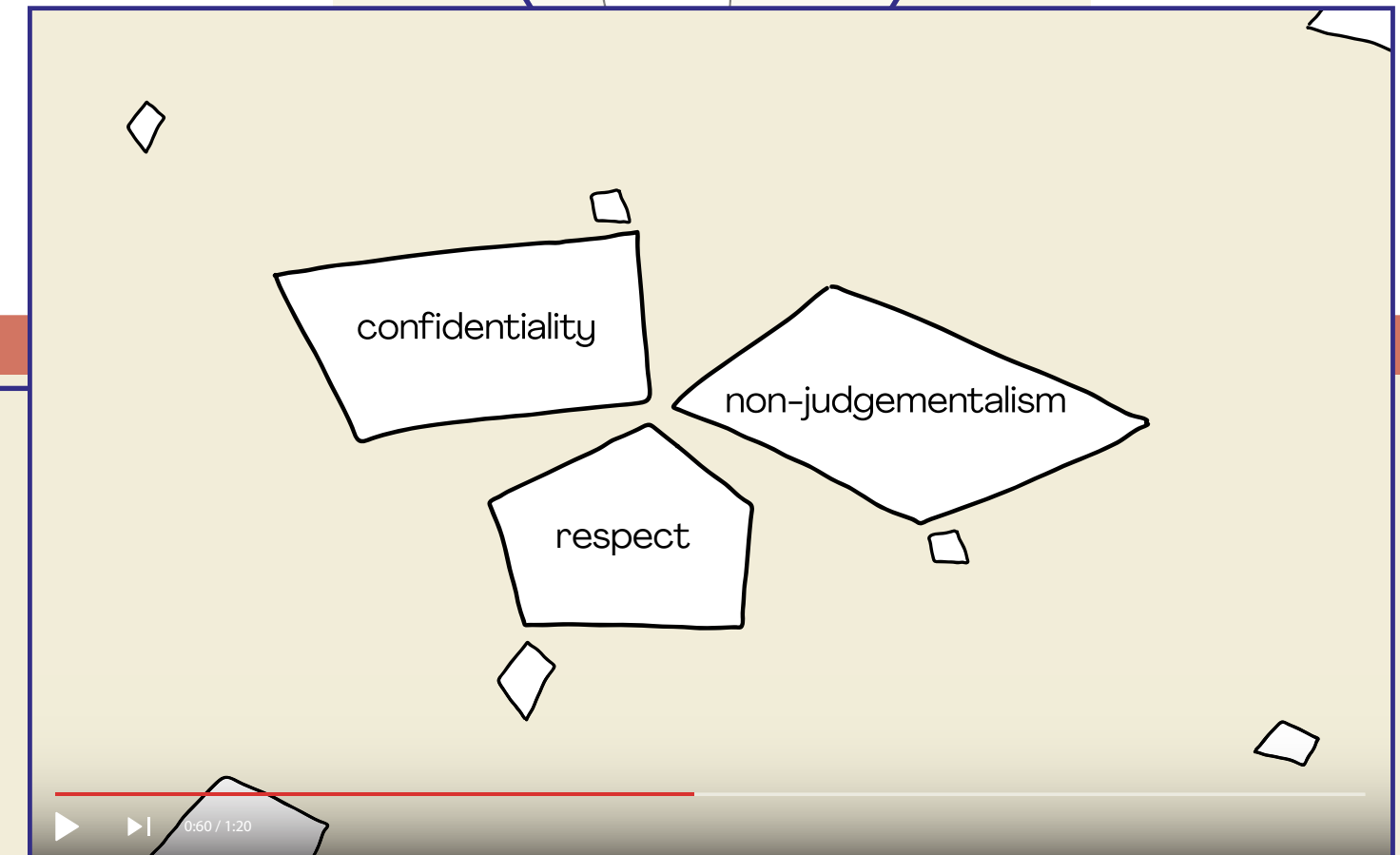
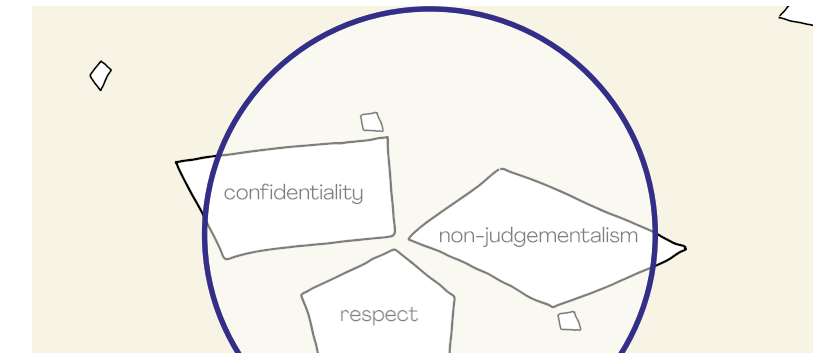
Feedback

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## PREPARE FOR THE PLURIVERSE

Explore a critical self reflective practice to build cultural humility into your design practice



04 Design intervention: Design strategies

## 2. GENTLY POPPING THE TABOO BUBBLE AND ESTABLISHING TRUST

### Facilitator

If this is facilitated, the facilitator will strengthen all of the points above by being reassuring, sharing from oneself and elaborating on the points.

### Sources

Showing where the exercises are inspired from helps us gain some credibility and trust with the participants.

### Annotations

By showing an example of a bias to write down, we intend to establish a sense of control and understanding of what is expected from the participants.

pursuit of cultural humility, you asked an experienced external designer to give you feedback on your design concepts. The designer got back to you and pointed out a few assumptions embedded in the Service guidelines.

We need to have working assumptions in order to move forward as designers. But what happens if an assumption is embedded in the design intervention? Could we assess whether an assumption is problematic or not?

### Instructions

Discuss within your group  
No material needed

Read through the 'service guidelines' your team has created. When you have read through, look at the notes from the external designer and discuss around the reflection points (5 minutes)

Intention

Reflect around the notion of assumptions and how they play out in our design process

Service guidelines

Notes by external designer

Reflection

PREVIOUS

### 3. METAPHORS TO MAKE CONCEPTS TANGIBLE

#### Kaleidoscopic lens

Kaleidoscope means “observer of beautiful forms”. Since a kaleidoscope creates ever changing multifaceted patterns, it can serve as a metaphor of our own lens that is shaped by facets of our identity and background. Our lens is also ever changing as we learn new perspectives. The metaphor also reflects the nature of the pluriverse, and provides a positive connotation to the exercise.

#### Zeitgeist ghost

The zeitgeist ghost is an attempt to create a metaphor that embodies the omnipotent micro communication that we are exposed to, and which “feeds us with” biases. The intention is to normalize the fact that we all have biases, and that we need to be aware in order to override them.

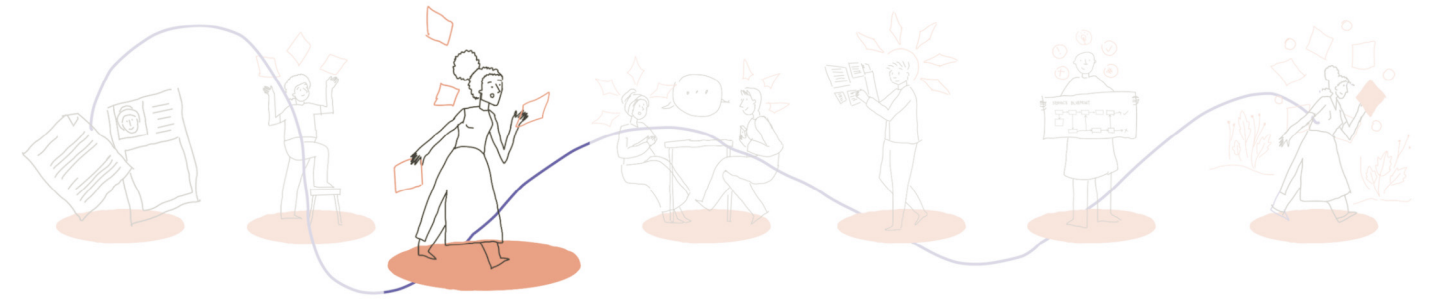
## PROJECT KALEIDOSCOPE

- Welcome
- Why you should care
- How does it work?
- Get in touch

- Ground rules
- 1A. Enter a fictional project
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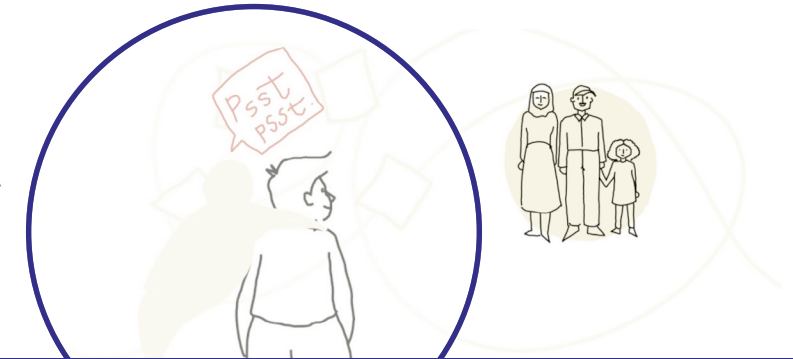
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## YOUR. BIASES

Now look deeper into your unconscious thoughts about your user group. This can be uncomfortable. You don't need to share your thoughts, but share the experience of writing it down.

The zeitgeist (soul of the time we live in) of our society influences your thoughts. Think of your biases as the whispers of the zeitgeist soul.



## Instructions

Individual exercise. Might be uncomfortable, but don't have to share what you write, if you want to.

Equipment: Pen and a piece of paper



Over the years, there have been some cases where Barnevernet (Child Protective Services) has separated children from their families. Stories within the community have led parents with a multicultural background to feel afraid of Barnevernet. The borough has noticed a growing skepticism amongst the inhabitants. The Kaleido borough council and Child Protective Services want to together address this skepticism through design.

Kaleido population, and a relatively large portion of the citizens live below the poverty line, and the local school experiences a higher drop out rate compared to the national average. You will find families with minority backgrounds from Albania, Turkey, Pakistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Chile, Algeria, India, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Poland, Morocco, Iran and many more.

## Reflection point

How was the experience of externalising your biases in relation to this user group?



## 4. FROM THE REFLECTION CLOUD TO ACTION GROUND

### Reflections prompting action

Each section of the conversation is reaction based to keep the reflection at a lighter note as an initial introduction. The reflective questions intend to prompt a first reaction, which can potentially inspire further reflection outside the space of the framework.

## 5. CREATING SPACE FOR ADDRESSING TENSIONS

### Dig deeper card

By bringing 'points of contestation' to the forefront in the form of 'dig deeper' cards, points of view that might cause tensions in a conversation, are externalised into artefacts. This also opens up a space to freely address the content in the cards

### Encouragement

The conversation is wrapped up by leaving the fictional space with an encouragement to take it forward into your own design practice.

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Dounia's snippet

Dig deeper

Project brief



Reflection point

### DESIGNERS ARE NEVER NEUTRAL

Scholars of intersectional feminism claim that no one is ever neutral. We all see the world through our own lens. Designers being qualitative interpreters, we need to acknowledge that our biases can inform the way we ask questions in an interview setting.

When interviewing, what can you do to acknowledge your lack of neutrality?



PREVIOUS

dig deeper

NEXT

## 6. AESTHETIC CHOICES

### Typography

The display font is a reverse-contrast letterform. As the process of cultural humility forces you to view reality differently than your “norm”, the reverse stress on the latin font represents that the world isn't the way we always see it. As a comment to the male-dominated type design industry, we have chosen an open source display font designed by an Ukranian female type designer.

### Drawing style

The drawing style is kept imperfect to represent the messiness of the world. Recurring elements like the 'connecting line' are meant to represent the interconnected nature of themes we work within. The visual affordance of allowing the line to move over the drawing represents that these structures can often be invisible.

# DISCOVER YOUR LENS



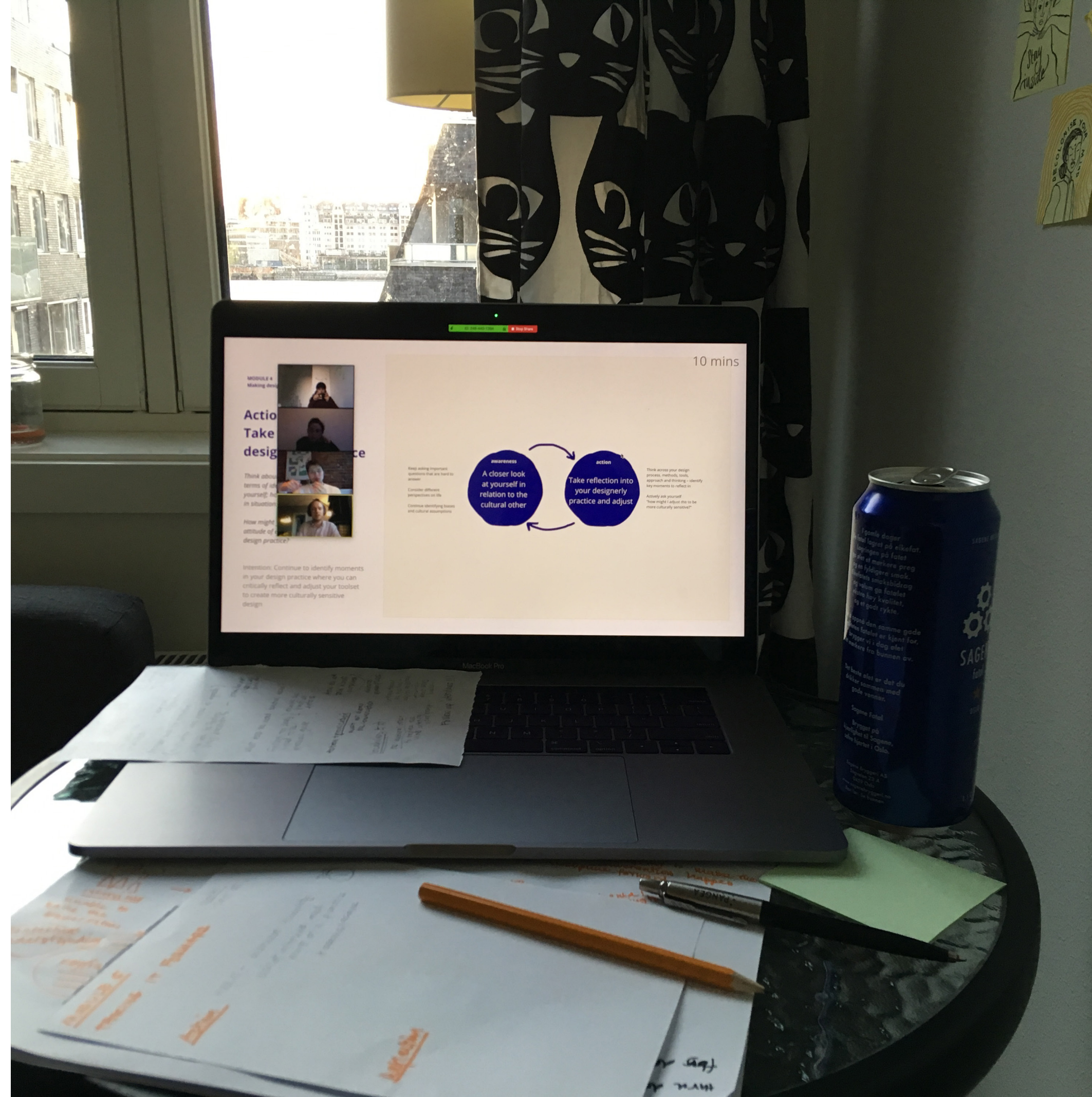
# AN ITERATIVE JOURNEY

We have tested the latest prototype with 5 pairs of designers and conducted ‘talk out loud’ sessions with 2 designers. Two testing sessions were facilitated by us, and three were self facilitated. The tests were conducted over a video call where one of the testers shared their screen. We requested the testers to record their session for us to assess the usability of the prototype.

Project Kaleidoscope needs to be unpacked with two lenses — first, as a ‘research for design’ probe which helps us understand if we were able to enter the grounds of taboo conversation and start having the difficult conversation. Second, as a catalyst which suggests the notion of cultural humility to be embraced by designers. The indicators we set to measure success were —

1. Designers should be able to hold a design related discussion keeping themselves and the cultural other in mind.
2. Designers should be able to share new thoughts, ask more questions and be curious towards the subject.

Apart from these indicators, we also needed to see how the form functions in enabling designers to have a smooth conversation experience.



# AN ITERATIVE JOURNEY

From our testing sessions, we see that our probe responds well to the indicators we describe. But when it comes to usability and experience, the form of a website is a red flag. We will unpack these two key takeaways from our testing sessions below —

## HOLDING A CONCRETE DESIGN RELATED CONVERSATION & SHARING NEW THOUGHTS

Overall, we have managed to bring the conversation from an abstract, personal level to a concrete and self-reflective discussion around design. As the quotes on the right illustrate, we moved from designers feeling protective of their practice, to them opening to the idea of taking a step back and starting with themselves.

*“Designers are a well  
intentioned lot, no one  
designs to exclude”*

— Designer 5

*“I guess I could force  
myself to look for some  
cultural hooks”*

— Designer 9

*“I feel some resistance  
towards it. It exposes how  
I should be thinking at all  
times when I think. It's  
contradictory to the image  
of myself, but it's okay.”*

— Designer 18



# AN ITERATIVE JOURNEY

## USABILITY AND EXPERIENCE

While we were able to move into the taboo grounds and start a dialogue, the form and experience of the conversation framework can be improved.

### 1. Need of a warm up exercise

It was not easy to jump into the reflection by defining one's way of seeing the world. Testers would have found the threshold lower if there was a fun warm up exercise to get them to start talking about themselves.

### 2. Need of a facilitator

Testers felt the need of better prompts for the first two exercises. Testers felt the need of having all the answers, while the intention is to start asking the tough questions, and not answering them.

In the test sessions we facilitated, we were able encourage the testers to write down whatever comes to their mind and not worry about having answers. In the self-facilitated session, we weren't able to truly build in the support participants would need.



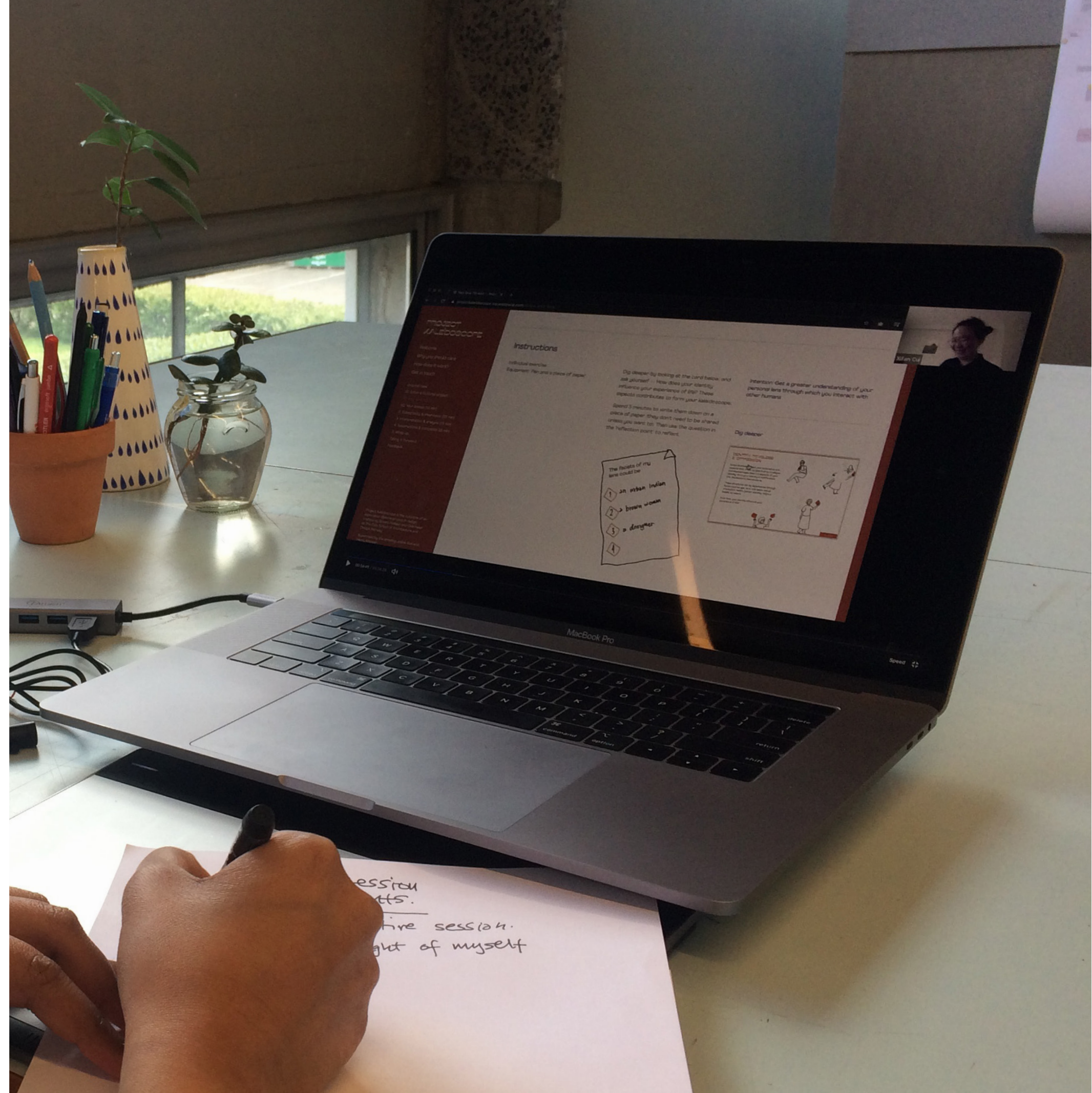
# AN ITERATIVE JOURNEY

## 3. Need of an overview of journey and prompts

Testers expressed the need of having a better overview of where they are in the journey of reflection. The way the exercises are designed need participants to cross reference prompts which is not possible on the last prototype. Testers would have preferred a more 'journey style approach' to the website to hand hold them along their reflective journey.

While building in Squarespace allowed us to jump into the testing phase quickly, it has limited interaction features which constrained us from building a custom interface. This point didn't seem to hamper with the quality of the reflection, but it did bug testers and influence their experience of reflection.

Other usability issues revolved around the need for simpler use of language and a set of principles or learnings overview as a takeaway.

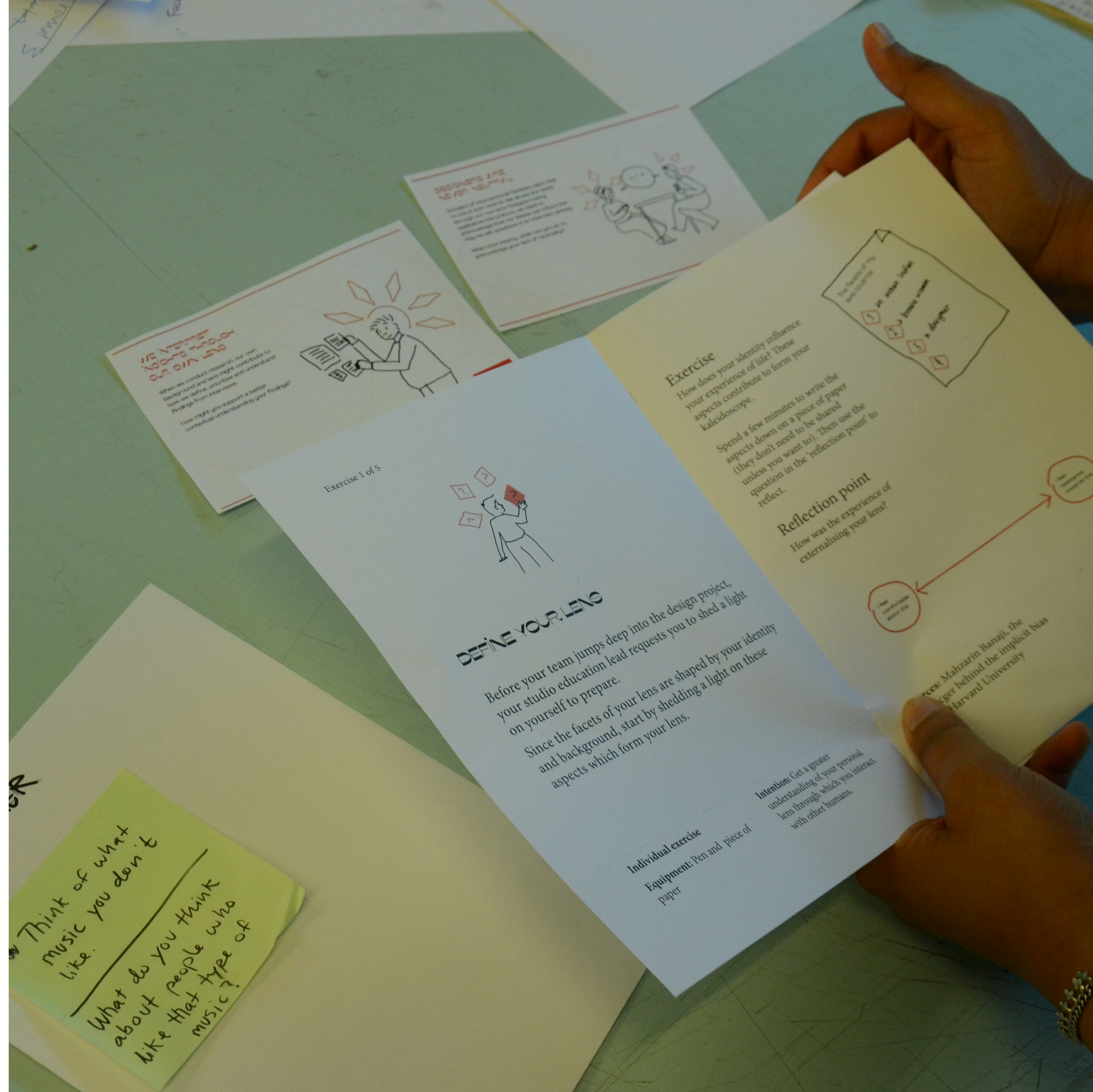


# TAKING A STEP BACK.

After reviewing the feedback, we use the classic ‘value-feasibility’ scale to assess our next move. If we continue iterating on the website, we would need to hire a developer to adjust the structure of the website. The cost of digital development would be much higher compared to a designer developing this into a physical workshop supported with material created with paper. Developing a physical workshop will also introduce the role of a facilitator which can help improve the experience of the reflection, by being reassuring and sharing their own experiences to create a space of trust. This process might make the project accessible to larger groups, increase portability to varied settings and enable the conversation to not be centered around a computer.

Therefore, our next step would be to develop this conversation framework into a physical workshop. The material of the workshop can be uploaded on the website as a downloadable kit. By retaining the online presence, we can continue to share the project and increase engagement outside our immediate network.

It’s important to highlight that our project excludes people who don’t speak fluent English, and who don’t have digital access. If this project is taken further, it would also benefit from being developed in multiple languages.



05 Design exploration

# CR.AFTING A CONVER.SATION

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5.1 Unpacking a critical incident

5.2 Crossing three worlds

5.3 A fictional land

# CRAFTING A CONVERSATION

Jumping into the project, we didn't know much about the landscape of culture and design. Our lack of understanding inhibited us when talking with designers. We saw ourselves doubting the relevance of this topic when we got questions that we weren't able to answer. The feeling of being uninformed influenced our confidence which again influenced the quality of the conversations we had with designers. We felt an uneasiness that indicated that we were on the grounds of a taboo conversation.

Within this process, we realised that our design brief was to find a way to keep this conversation going. Given the context we found ourselves in, we asked ourselves, how can we check the temperature in a better way? How might we pop the taboo bubble and have an open and concrete design discussion?

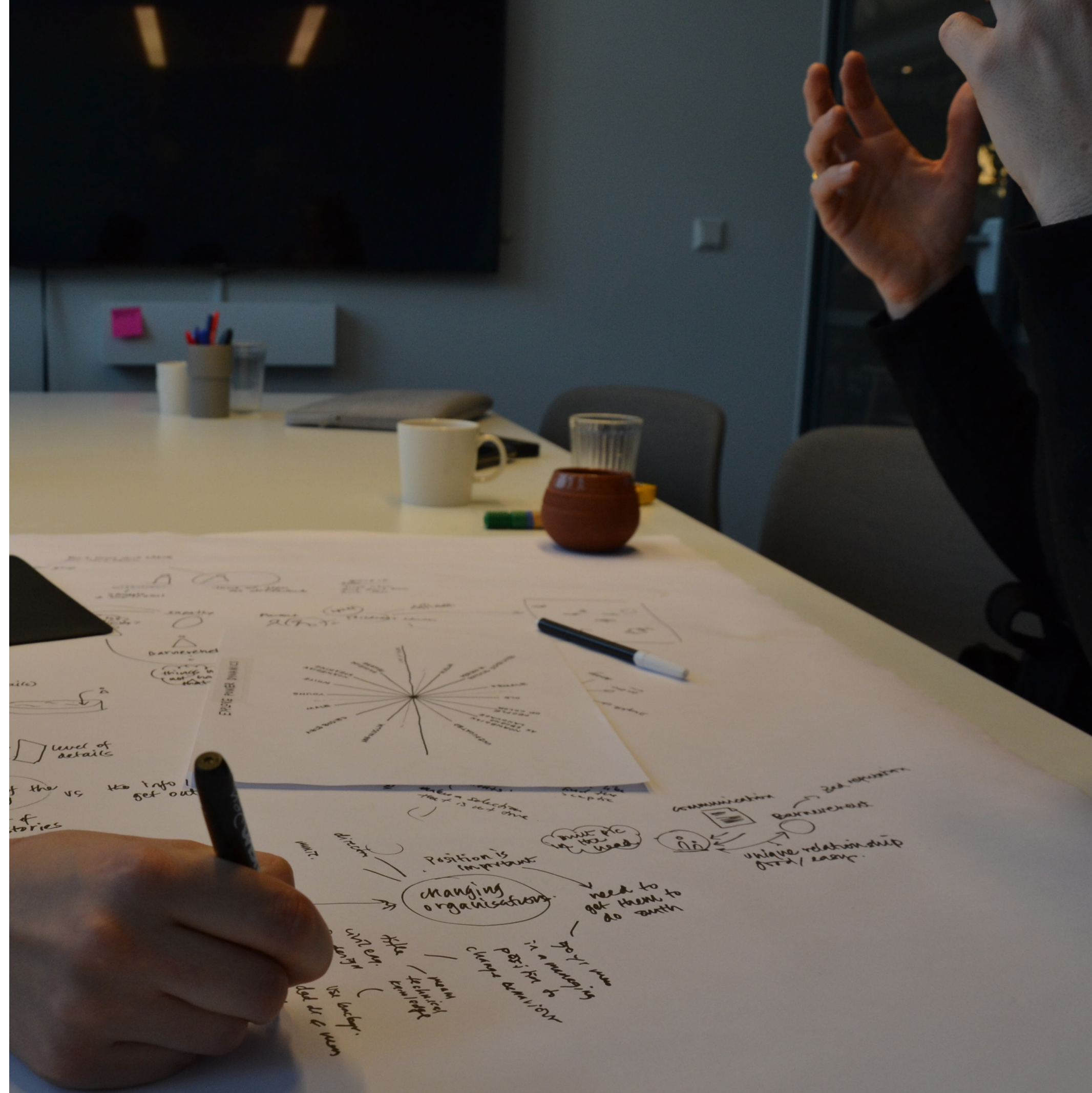
We can roughly divide our explorations of framing a reflective conversation into three rounds. The development improved as we got a better understanding of the topic we wanted to discuss. In this chapter we will briefly go through the early artefacts we made in prototyping round one and two, and what we learned from it. In round three we will briefly show the process we went through to reach the concept of project Kaleidoscope.



# 1. UNPACKING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

Our first approach was to use the framework of critical self reflective practice. We wanted to ask a designer to find a concrete incident from a project of sensitive nature where they had met with a “cultural other”. The plan was to unpack this meeting together; mapping realisation moments, existing practices, fears and anxieties.

During the conversation, we wanted to bring in artefacts to introduce new terms we had learned from our research. The intention was to learn if those terms were familiar and used in design practice today. We were meeting a service designer working in a design agency.



# 1. UNPACKING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

## 01 INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE



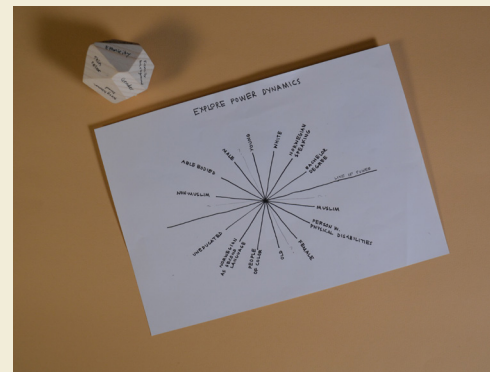
We introduced the context of our project focus, and informed about ground rules of confidentiality for the session.

## 02 UNPACKING A CONCRETE INCIDENT



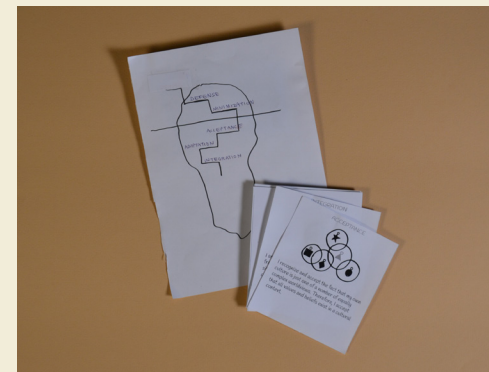
We planned to find a specific project as a starting point, and to prompt the designer to think of a specific incident within that frame.

## 03 POSITIONING & RECIPROCITY



To discuss how our personal identities are positioned in relation to the people we are going to meet.

## 04 CULTURAL SENSITIVITY



To discuss the notion of cultural sensitivity, we used an Iceberg as a metaphor of cultural structures, blended (Hall & Hall, 1990) with the stages of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett cited in "Cultural Sensitivity", n.d.).

# 1. UNPACKING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

## 01 INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE



### Intention

We planned to suggest a specific project as a starting point, and to prompt the designer to think of a specific incident within that frame.

## 02 UNPACKING A CONCRETE INCIDENT

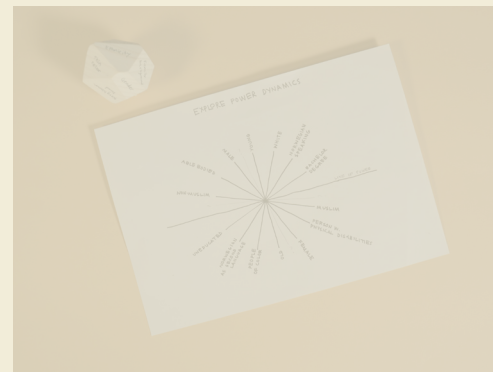


### Reaction

The project brought forward did not have any “cultural other” in the respondent sample, and we decided to go with the flow rather than digging into other experiences of the designer’s practice.

*“Culture can be referred to so many different communities of people. Organizational culture is a very relevant segment for design projects.”*

## 03 POSITIONING & RECIPROCITY



### Observation

The term culture can be applied to many segments.

We needed specific and relevant cases to enable a concrete design discussion around cultural sensitivity through the lens of ethnicity.

## 04 CULTURAL SENSITIVITY





# 1. UNPACKING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

We needed “proof” to make a tangible connection between cultural sensitivity and design.

We needed relevant knowledge to provide the right arguments to build a case and enable a concrete design discussion.



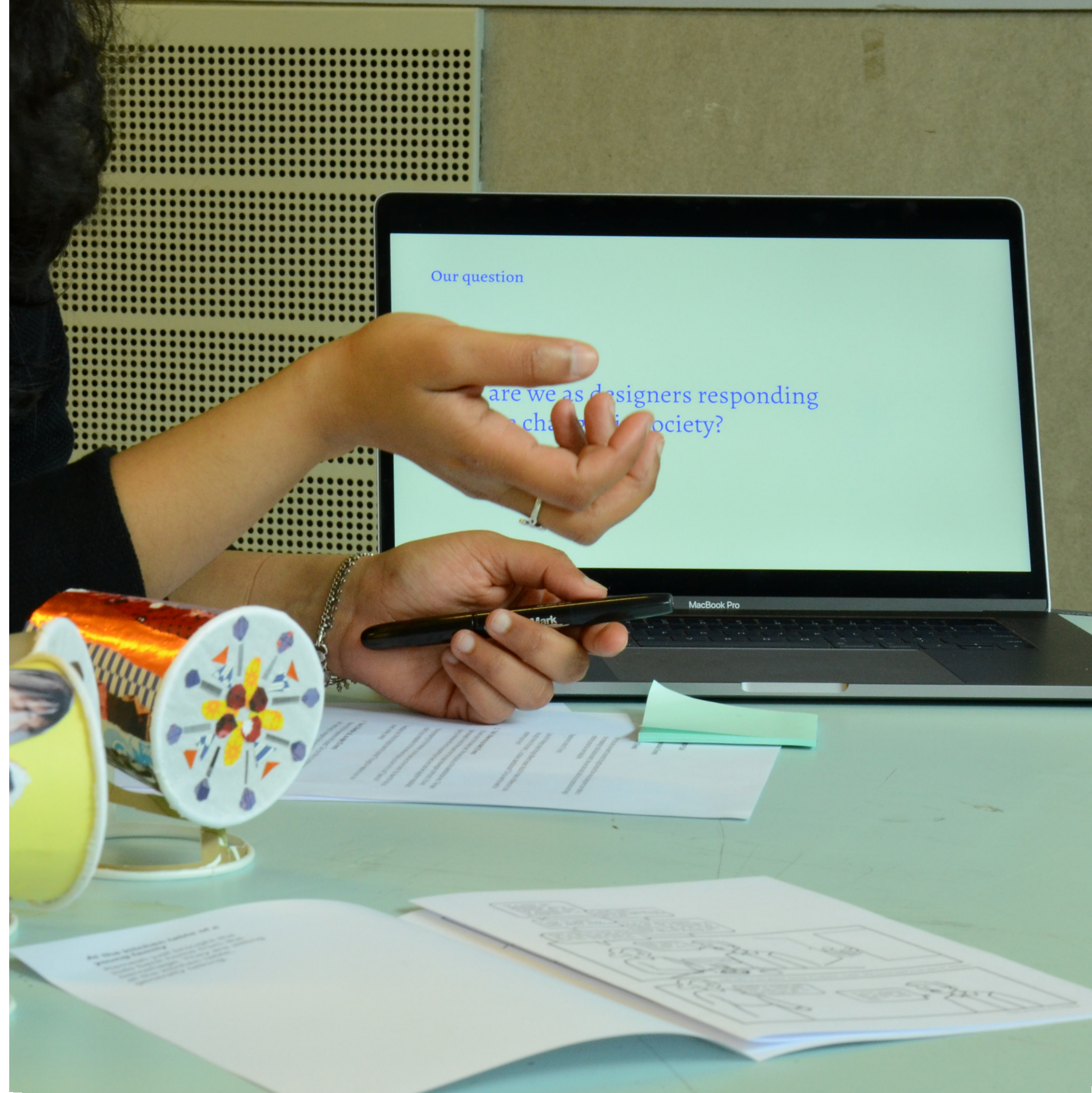
## 2. CROSSING THREE WORLDS

After our experience in prototyping round 1, we searched for stories to draw a connection between culture and design. We looked for stories online, and spoke to friends to hear their experiences, either as a person with a minority background, or as a service provider that meets people of different cultures through their work.

Here we were introduced to the kaleidoscope as metaphor for a multicultural society. It illustrates how cultures continuously change and adapt in relation to each other. (Cultural Sensitivity, N. d.).

We merged stories into a comic that put forward three perspectives on the experience of a multicultural society — which intersected at a hospital. The characters were a Norwegian-Indian family visiting a hospitalized friend, nurses that struggled with setting boundaries in a cross cultural setting, and designers that were a part of the hospital's innovation lab. The intention was to use the fictional space to discuss perspectives on recruitment, and to reflect around an interview setting with Aditi, one of the characters in the comic. We will now go through the artefacts we made for each discussion point, and our learnings from the session.

We were meeting two service designers in a design agency.



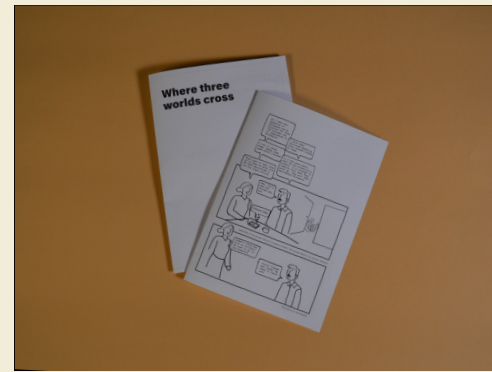
## 2. CROSSING THREE WORLDS

### 01 INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE



We made a short presentation to introduce the our research question and early findings to onboard the designers.

### 02 COMIC



The intention was to prompt thoughts around how we as designers can relate to the increasingly multicultural society, and begin reflecting around our own discipline.

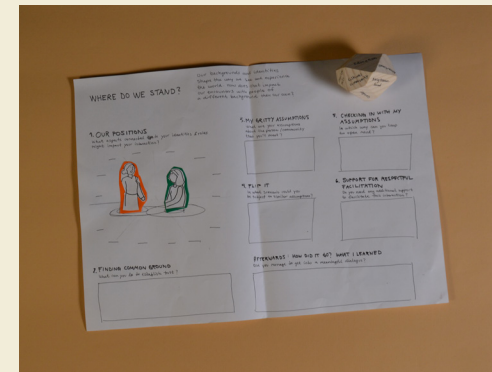
### 03 LENSES



We made mock-ups of lenses that represented different points of view. The lens of the client, inclusive design, multiculturalism.

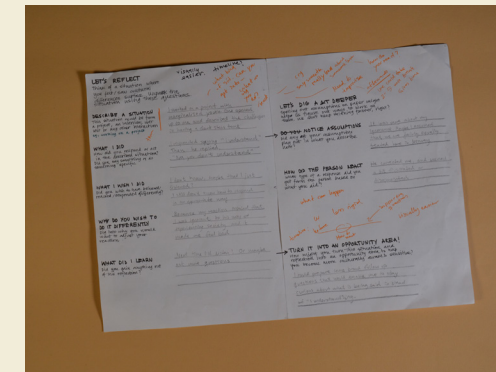
The intention was to use the lenses to look at the design project that was presented in the comic. We wanted to explore if the designers considered the recruitment process differently depending on the lens they looked through.

### 04 TOOL: WHERE DO YOU STAND



To stay in the fictional space, we told the designers that they were going to interview Aditi, the Indian Norwegian character in the comic. We gave them the tool "where do you stand" and asked them to try it out. The tool was intended to prompt reflections around biases, positioning and ways to gain trust.

### 05 TOOL: STUMBLE, FALL, UP AGAIN



As a final reflection, we wanted to move into their experience on a project where they had met a user group with a different cultural background. We did not have time to go through it, but got a short feedback

## 2. CROSSING THREE WORLDS

### 01 INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE



#### Intention

To stay in the fictional space, we told the designers that they were going to interview Aditi, the Indian Norwegian character in the comic. We gave them the tool “where do you stand” and asked them to try it out. The tool was intended to prompt reflections around biases, positioning and ways to gain trust.

### 02 COMIC



#### Reaction

Instead of writing down their thoughts, the tool became a boundary object for a discussion between the designers. They used a project as a reference and went into a concrete discussion, where some of the points in the tool really helped to prompt a conversation.

Anxiety of blind spots in the interview. They mentioned the dilemma that arises when they lack context on how to understand their respondent. Any detail is a potential cue, and the interview guide might help,

### 03 LENSES

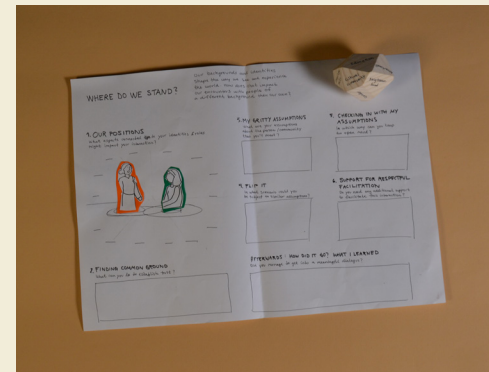


but not always: “*Shall we let them tell their stories, ask why, and then get the topics that we need to pick on, or shall we push to the next topic on our interview guide?*”

Curiosity overcomes bias: “*The interview setting is a special context. I am not good at being open, but I patch it up by being curious.*”

Contributing to the conversation: “*Being open, only asking questions and not giving anything of yourself is not a trust building thing.*”

### 04 TOOL: WHERE DO YOU STAND



How do I establish clear roles in a difficult interview? “*Some experiences are so horrible and traumatising. How can you avoid digging into them, and still be respectful?*”

### 05 TOOL: STUMBLE, FALL, UP AGAIN



#### Observation

The tool worked better as a boundary object for discussion, rather than a reflection sheet for writing things down.

Being two designers talking together created a better dynamic. It enabled a design discussion where they could learn from each other by sharing specific experiences and points of view.

The discussion points worked well. The discussion was finally concrete, although they used their own experiences from a relevant project as a reference.

## 2. CROSSING THREE WORLDS

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Being two designers who worked on the same project created a better dynamic. They could spar on each other's thoughts and had a common reference point to discuss around.

The discussion points worked well to trigger reflection.

We wondered whether we could create a framework that could include any designer regardless of experience to discuss around the same points.



## 3. A FICTIONAL LAND

In this round is the last iteration we did on the design intervention. It is tied with the challenges we navigated during the lockdown. We spent time adjusting to our new working style and were still searching for the right lens to describe our project.

For our last round, three crucial things helped us move forward —

1. We picked up the notion of cultural humility. It is a process of self reflection that encourages an increased awareness of your own lens and position in the world.
2. We got help from Canada - two designers from InWithForward set aside time to talk about our project. We got tips on externalising tensions into cards, and learned the importance of a transparent framework that shows the agenda of the conversation.
3. We found the article “The fear of the Norwegian child protective services” in Morgenbladet. This provided us with the narrative of the fictional brief and arguments from a multicultural perspective.

10 mins

MODULE 3  
Understanding the cultural other

**Action:**  
**How might you ensure that your analysis is closer to reality?**



*Read through the questions and reflect on it together*

Intention: Explore how you can adjust your designerly toolkit to interpret data with a culturally humble lens

*Provocation card* **We interpret insights through our own lens**

When we conduct research, our own background and lens might contribute to how we define, prioritise and understand findings from interviews.

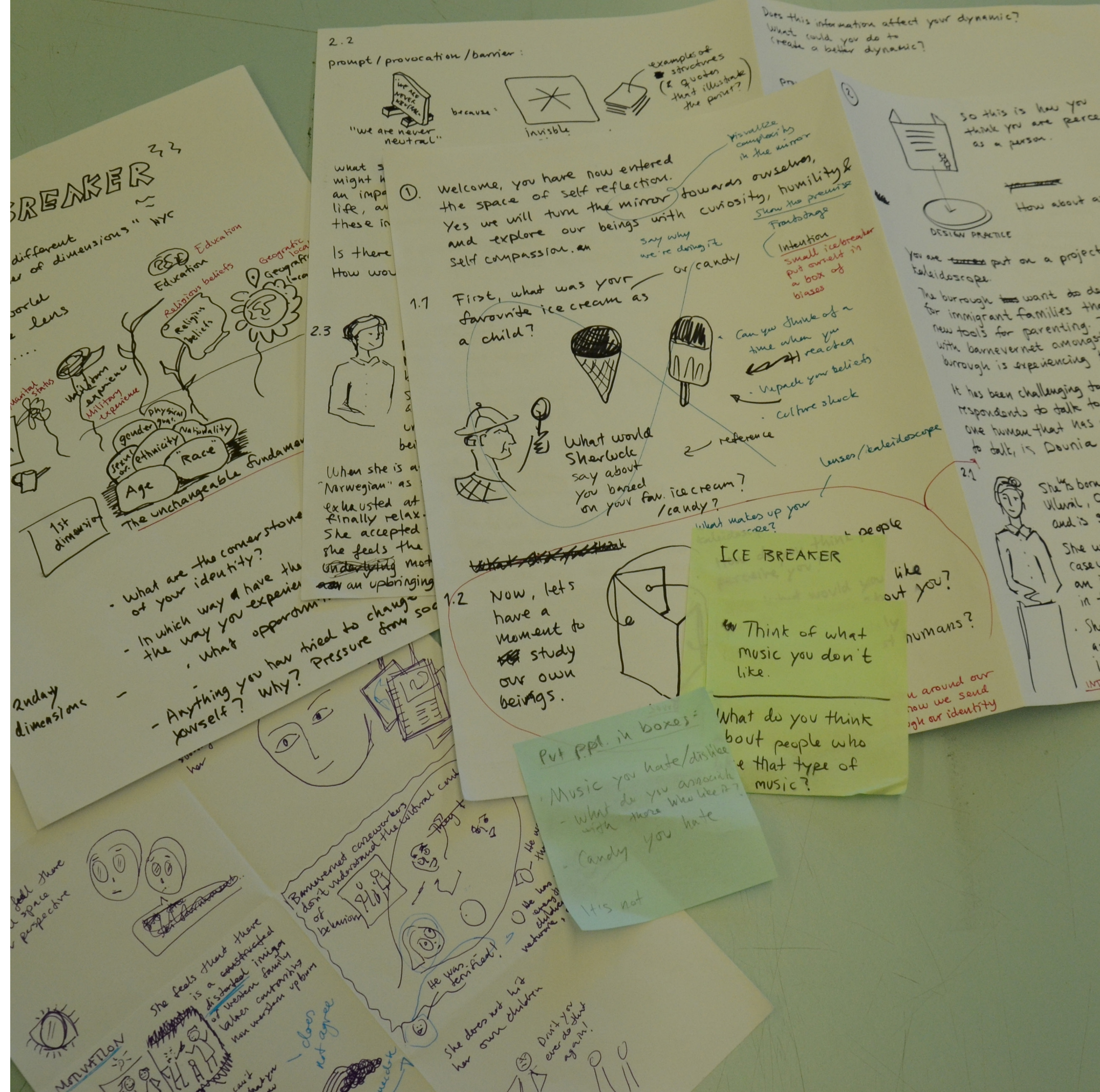
How would you ensure to have a better contextual understanding your findings?



# 3. A FICTIONAL LAND

We ideated on how we could form a conversation structure where one could uncover their biases and assumptions, and see how cultural humility could be introduced into a service design practice. The notion of cultural humility suggests having a critical self reflective lens to one's own way of viewing the world which aligns well with the conversation we were trying to have. It came across as a 'humble' way to talk about how we could design for someone who has a cultural background that is different from the designers.

We further focused on building a concrete design brief as an entry point into the reflective session. For a concrete design discussion we chose three key points of the design process to ground the reflection in. In these points, we surfaced the tensions we experienced between design academia and practice, created design artefacts as boundary objects and framing devices to enable reflection. We went through a detailed process of figuring out which were the right questions to ask and how we should frame the activity to land a concrete design related discussion.



# 3. A FICTIONAL LAND

## ITERATIONS ON PAPER

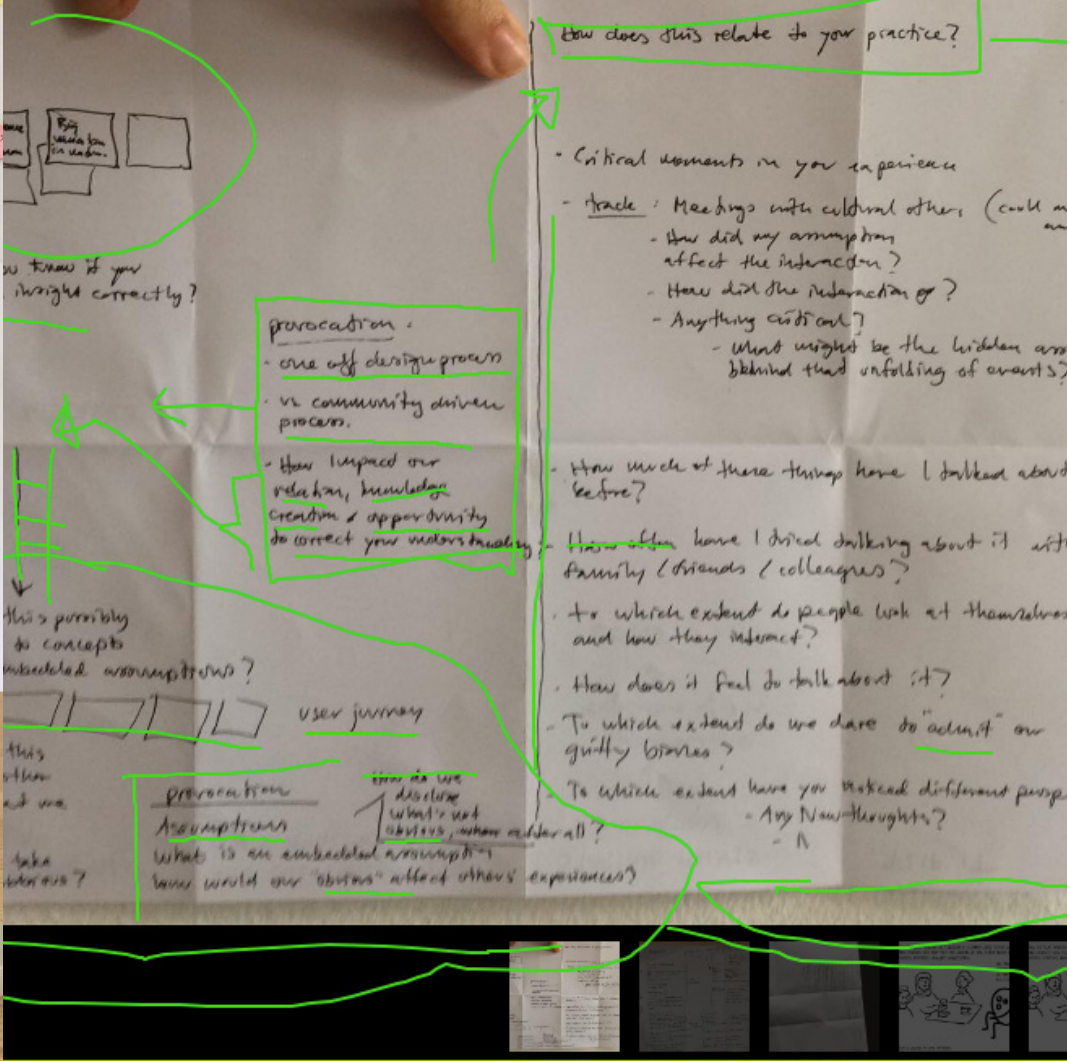
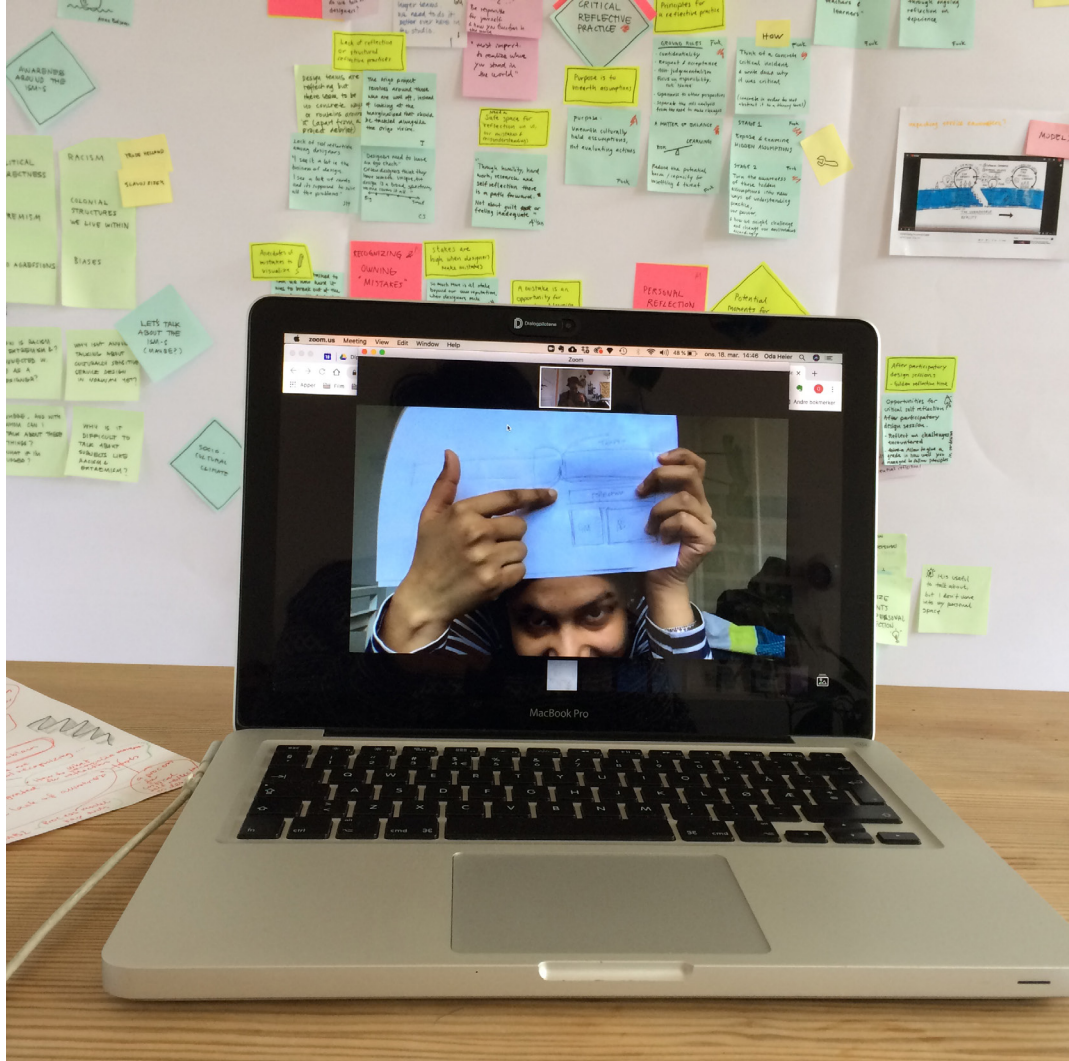
We started with drawing out what the conversation framework could look like.

## TAKING IT DIGITAL

The prototyping on paper made it hard to co-design the conversation framework. So we decided to move to a digital platform.

## ITERATIONS FOR EACH EXERCISE

The content and visual language developed as we tested and moved forward. The iterations were supported by our supervisors' feedback and the two young designers and two design students we tested with.



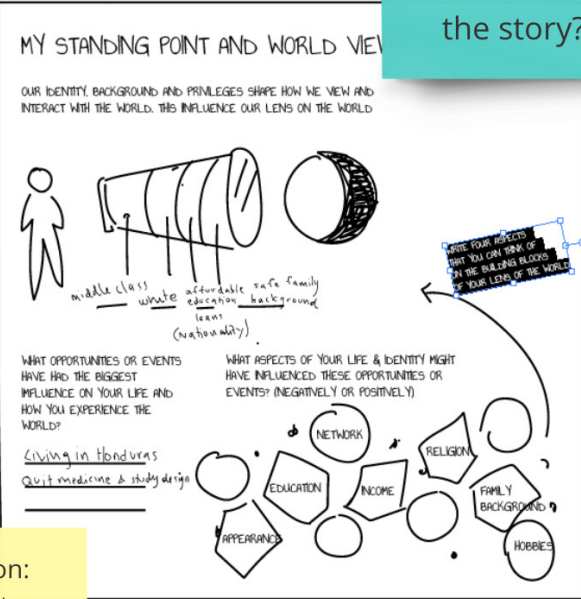
**Activity**

**Create a visual of your world view**  
Our identity, background and privileges shape how we view and interact with the world. This influences our lens on the world.

**Intention**

Get a greater understanding of our own lens which will help us navigate our relation to the cultural other

Suggestion: build the lens and take it forward into the story?



Observation: Remains at a personal level. Need to tailor to move it into the 'designers lens'

maybe a need to move faster through the introduction and

**Can you think of 4 aspects of your identity which build the lens of your world view?**

Write them down on a piece of paper, they're not meant to be shared

**Ask yourself —**

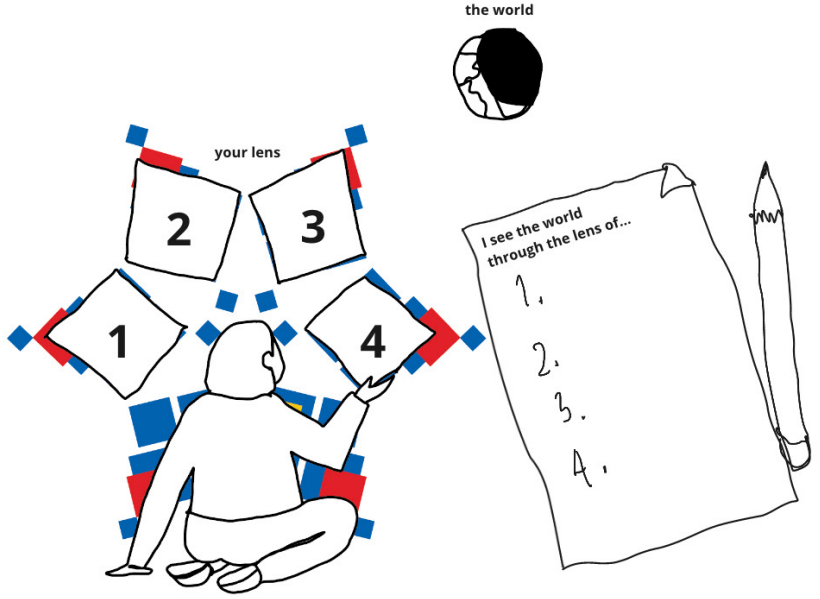
Which events have made a remarkable influence on how you experience the world?

Eg. My volunteer trip to Malaysia, reading The Book, talking to Friend, studying Design

Which aspects of your life might have influenced these events?

Network, education, income, religion, family background, hobbies, appearance, preferences

**Let's share**





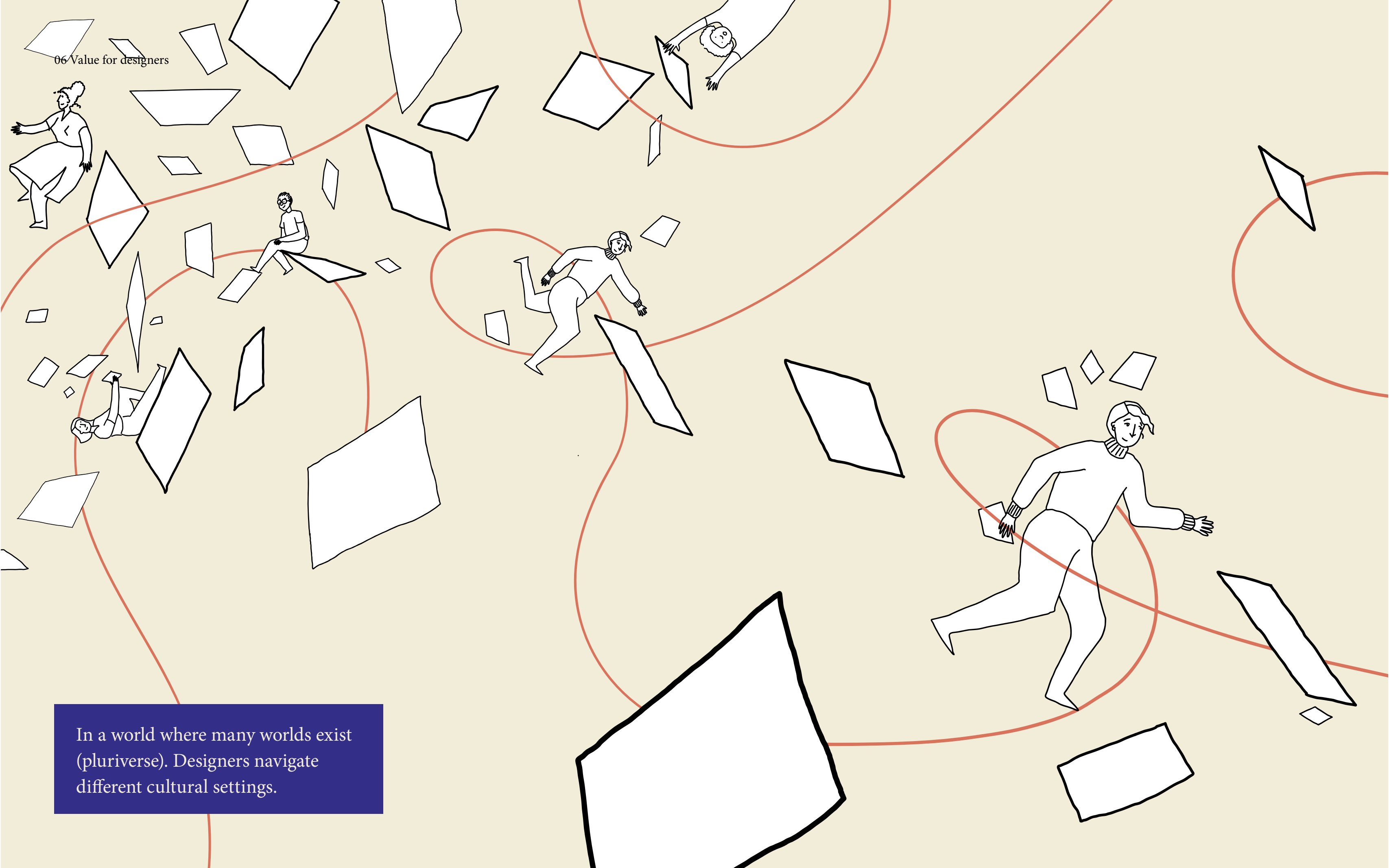
06 Value for designers

# PREPARING FOR THE PLURIVERSE

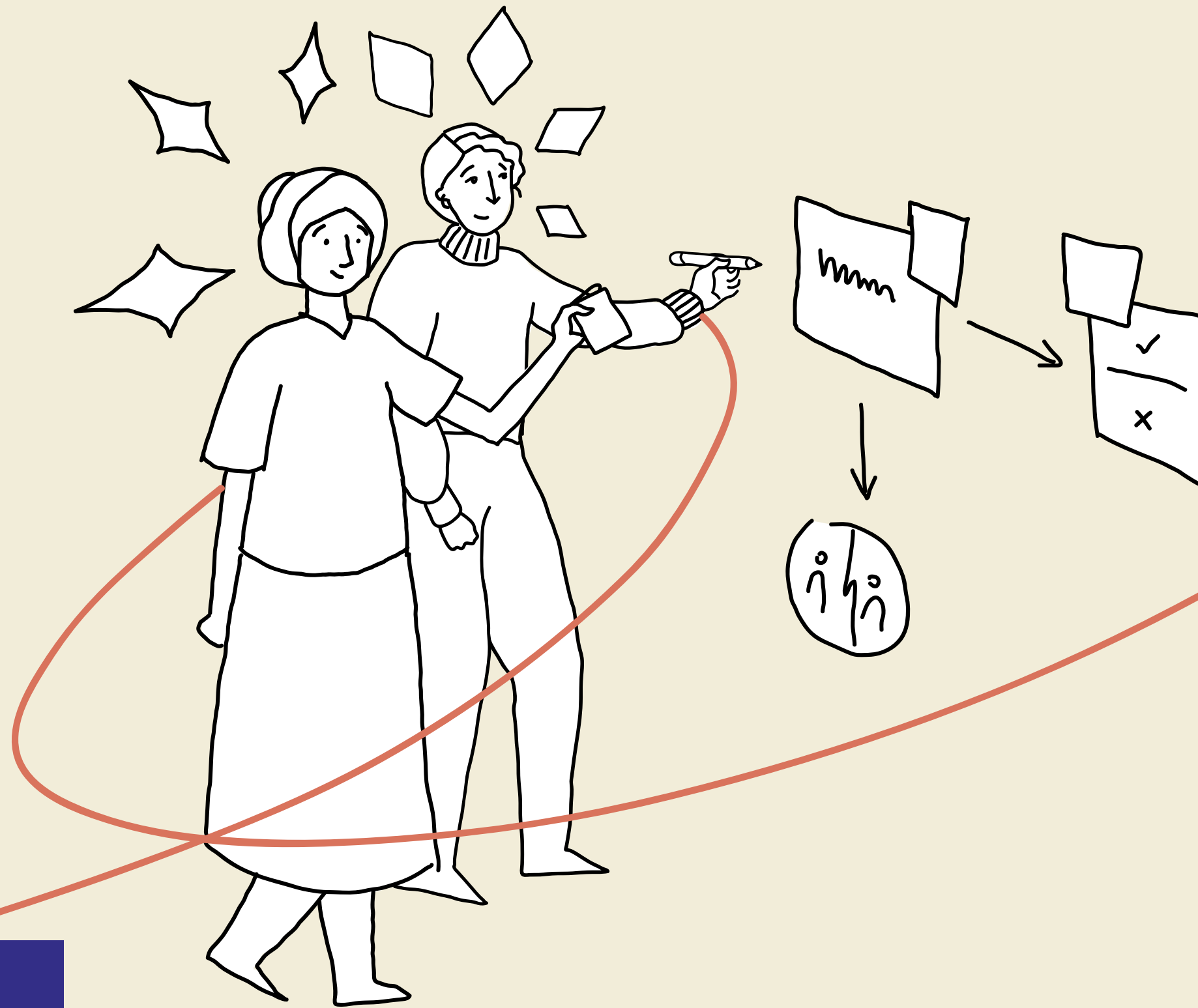
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6.1 Theory of change

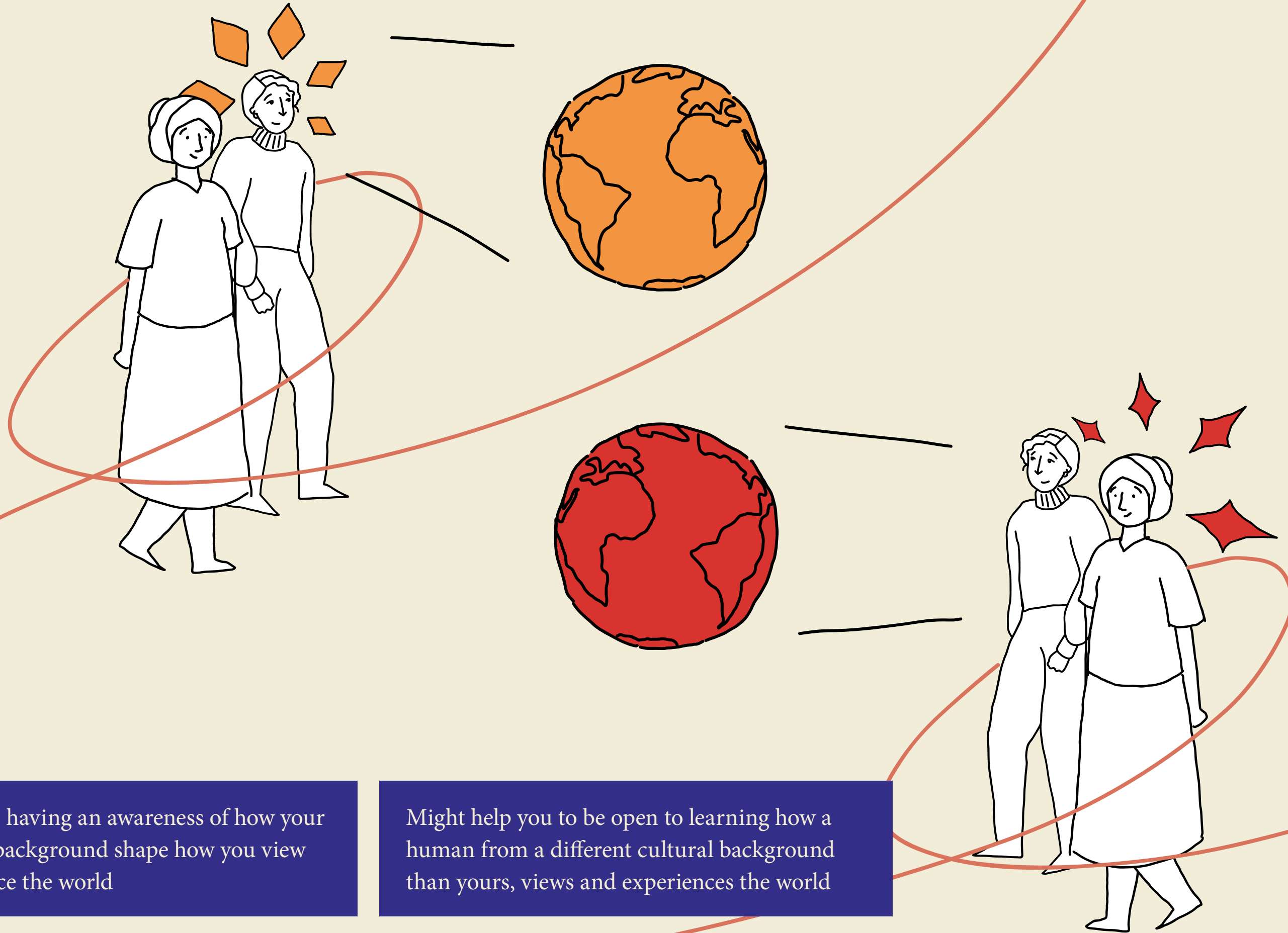
6.2 Spreading the conversation



In a world where many worlds exist (pluriverse). Designers navigate different cultural settings.



And design with  
culturally diverse humans



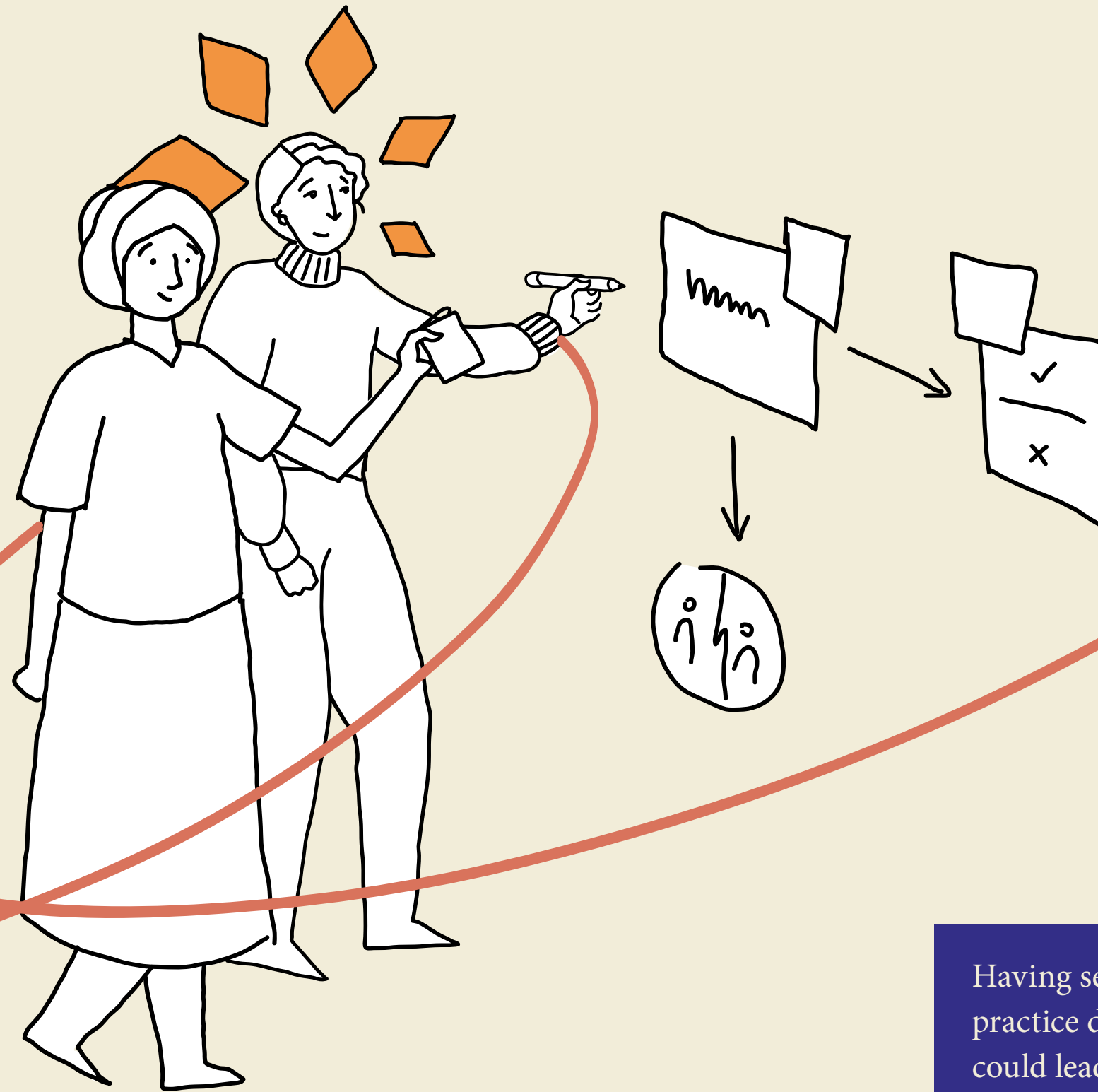
In this world, having an awareness of how your identity and background shape how you view and experience the world

Might help you to be open to learning how a human from a different cultural background than yours, views and experiences the world

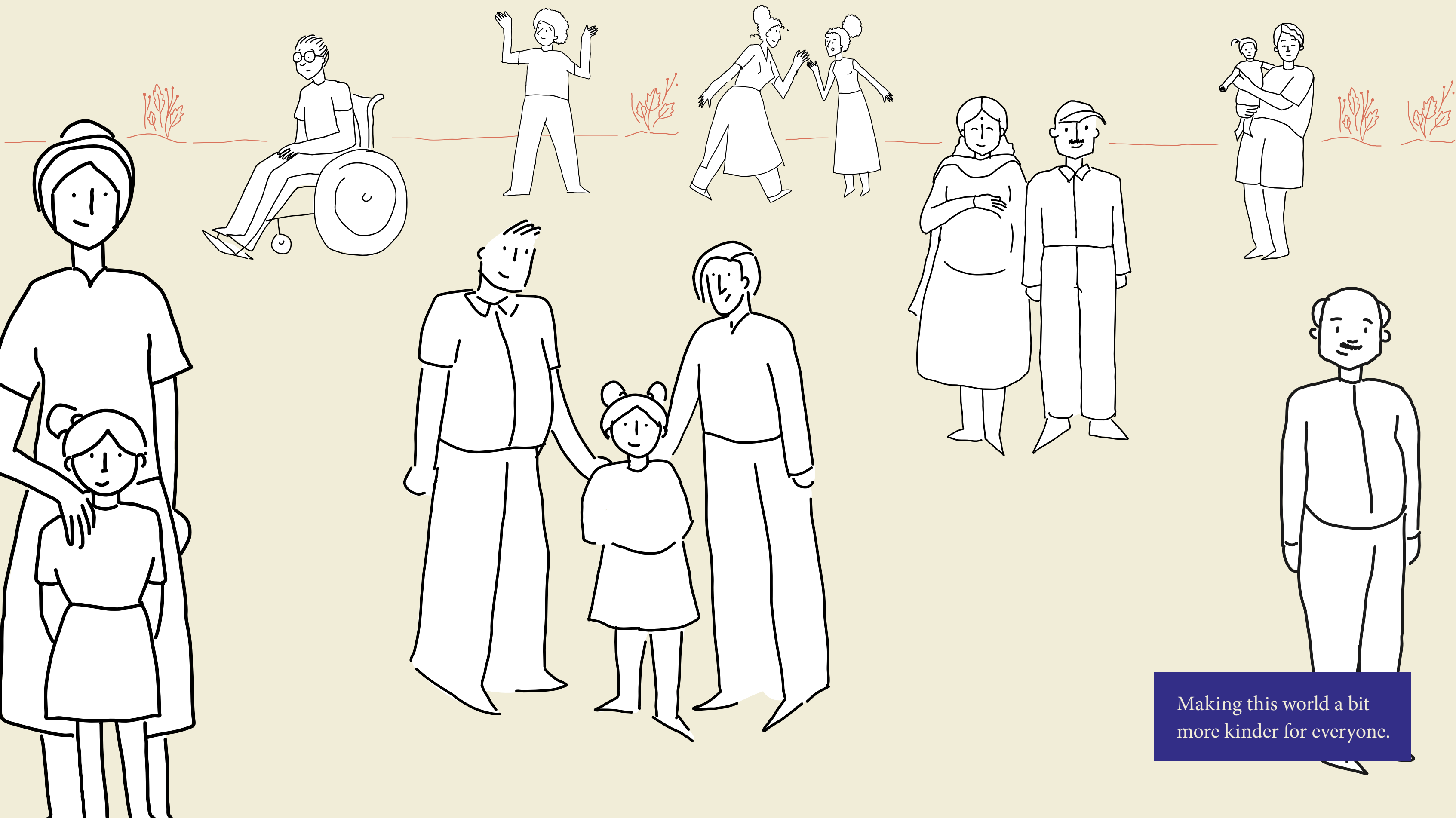


This attitude is being culturally humble. Sometimes, these understandings might make you uncomfortable or defensive, and might

push you to find an answer. But remember, cultural humility is not about finding the right answer, but about being open to learning.



Having self-awareness could enable you to practice design with a higher sensibility, which could lead you to shaping more sensitive and inclusive design outcomes

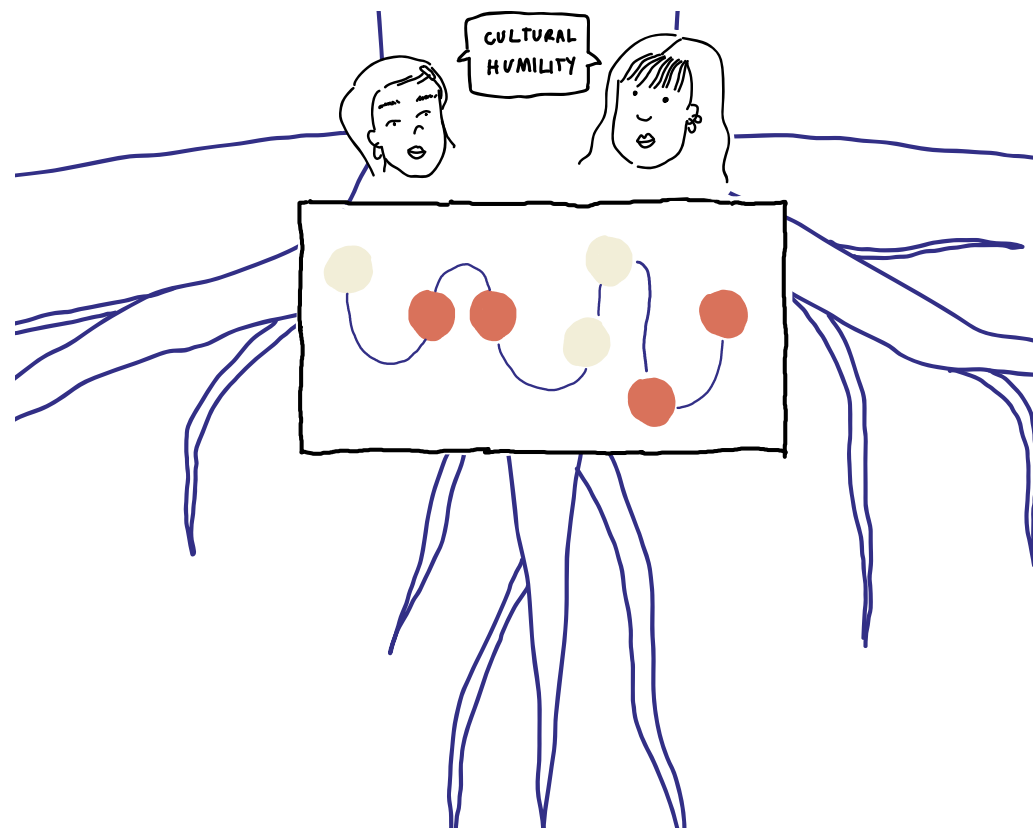


Making this world a bit  
more kinder for everyone.

# THEORY OF CHANGE

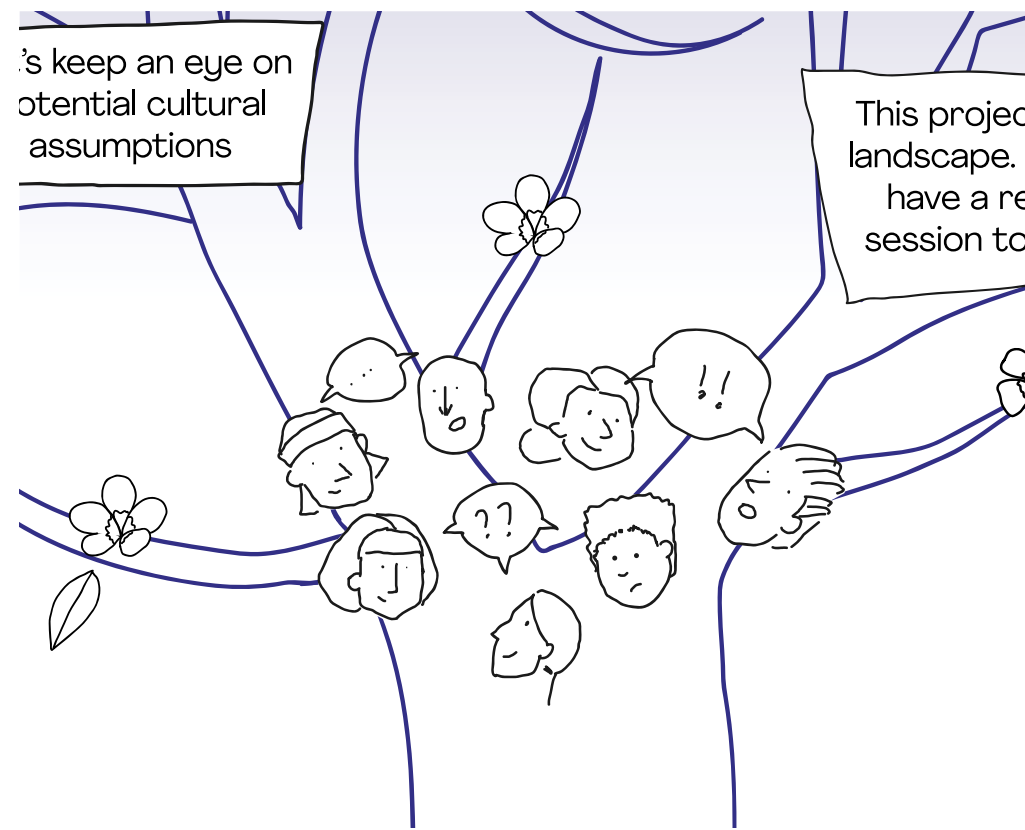
## A SEED

We imagine Project Kaleidoscope to be the seed which starts the conversation about a culturally humble design practice, where designers and students participate in the curated conversation and start forming some roots.



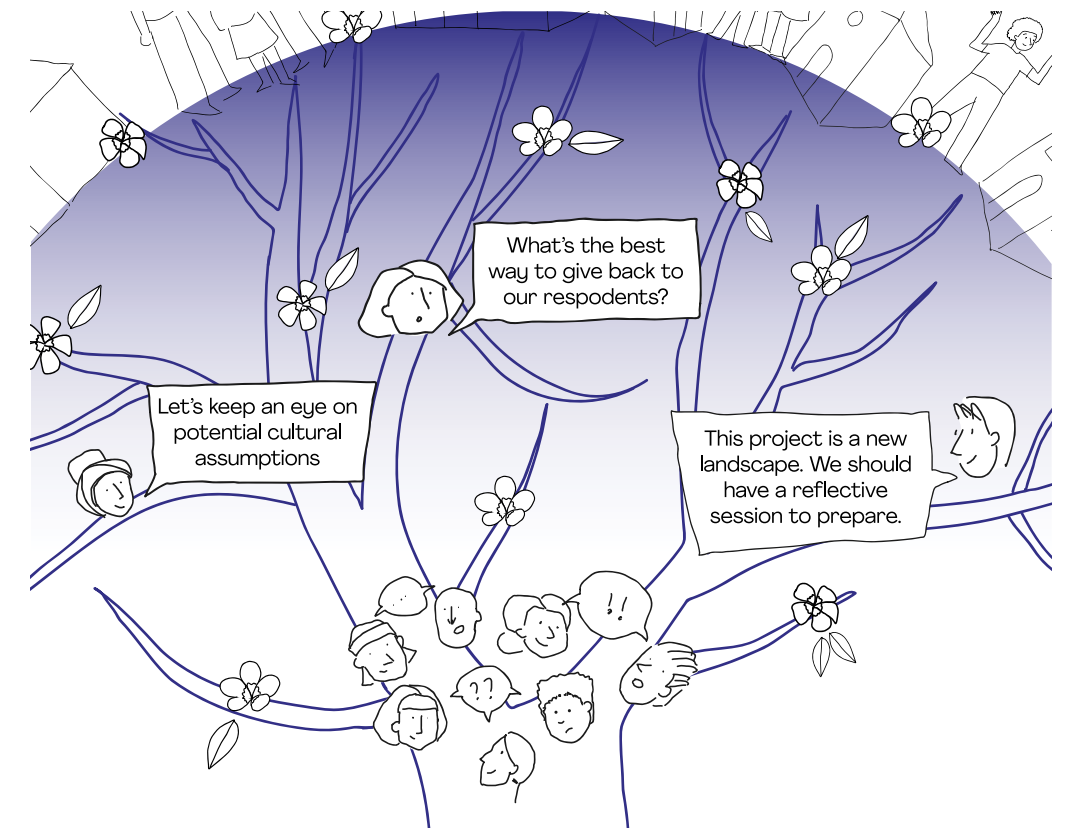
## INCREASED DIALOGUE

We hope the conversation continues outside of our project, contributing to a growing awareness and dialogue in the Norwegian design community.



## STRUCTURAL CHANGES

The aim is that this awareness would catalyze designers to make structural changes in how they approach their practice.



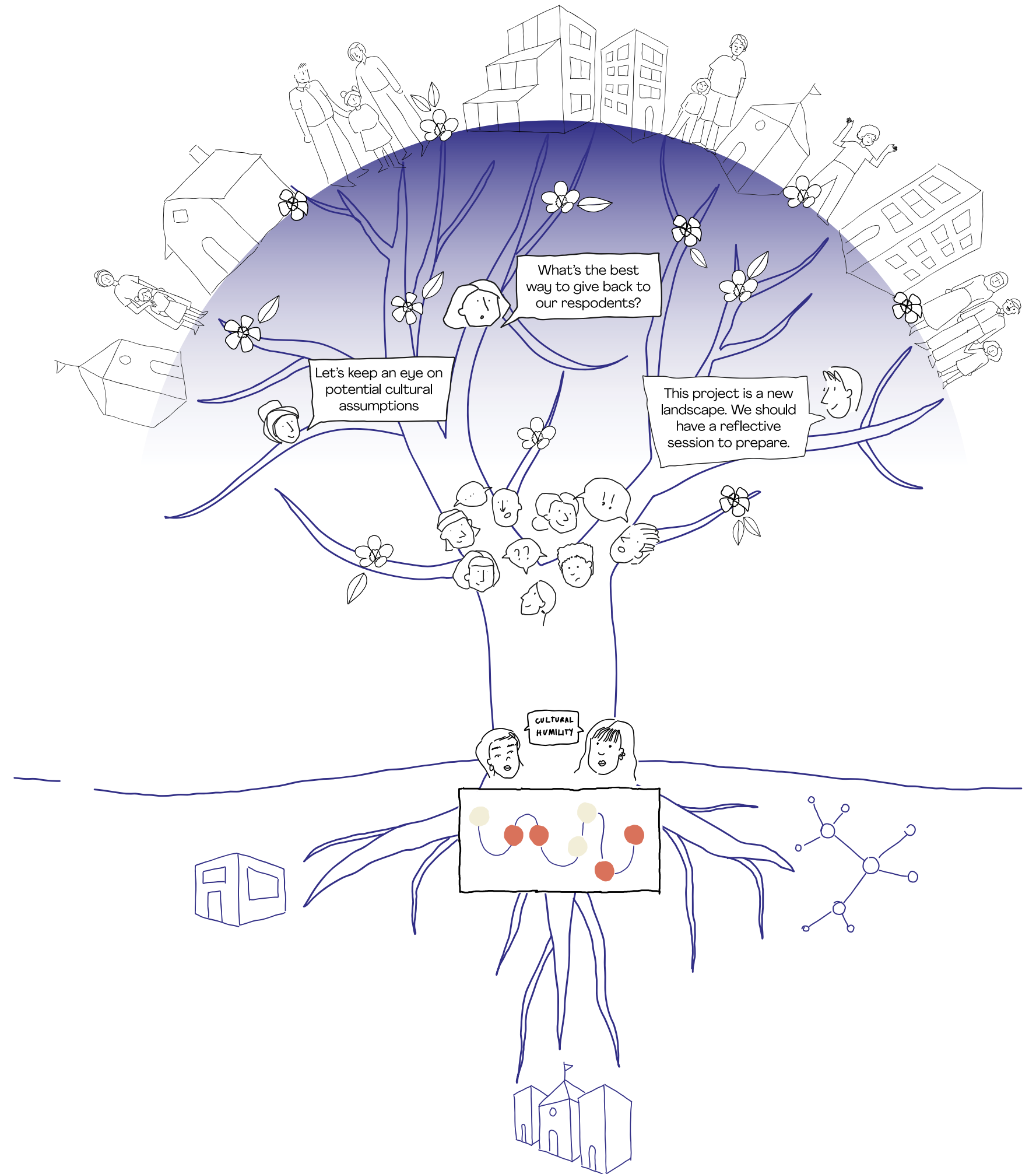


# THEORY OF CHANGE

## THE FINAL RIPPLE

Culture can be experienced through an infinite number of facets. We imagine that designers nurture a conscious self awareness while moving into different cultural settings, benefiting involved actors in any design project. An increased sense of cultural understanding can help one navigate varied social configurations — where there are humans with different types of agencies, humans from different professions, and humans with a minority background.

Project Kaleidoscope is not an end product in itself, but is a prototype from an explorative design project. It is intended to be a catalyst to spark further awareness and a foundation for others to explore, assess, take forward and build on what they find useful.



# SPREADING THE CONVERSATION

To further support our theory of change, we created a strategy to share our project with three key networks — design studios, design networks, and design education.

## DESIGN STUDIOS

Through our project we have reached out to designers from the top design studios in Norway. We hope designers are inspired by our project and would be open to us sharing our project in their lunch meetings or similar. We imagine that this concept can be shared in events hosted by design studios. So far, we have been invited to Designit and Netlife to present our project. Halogen and Comte Bureau have also expressed an interest.

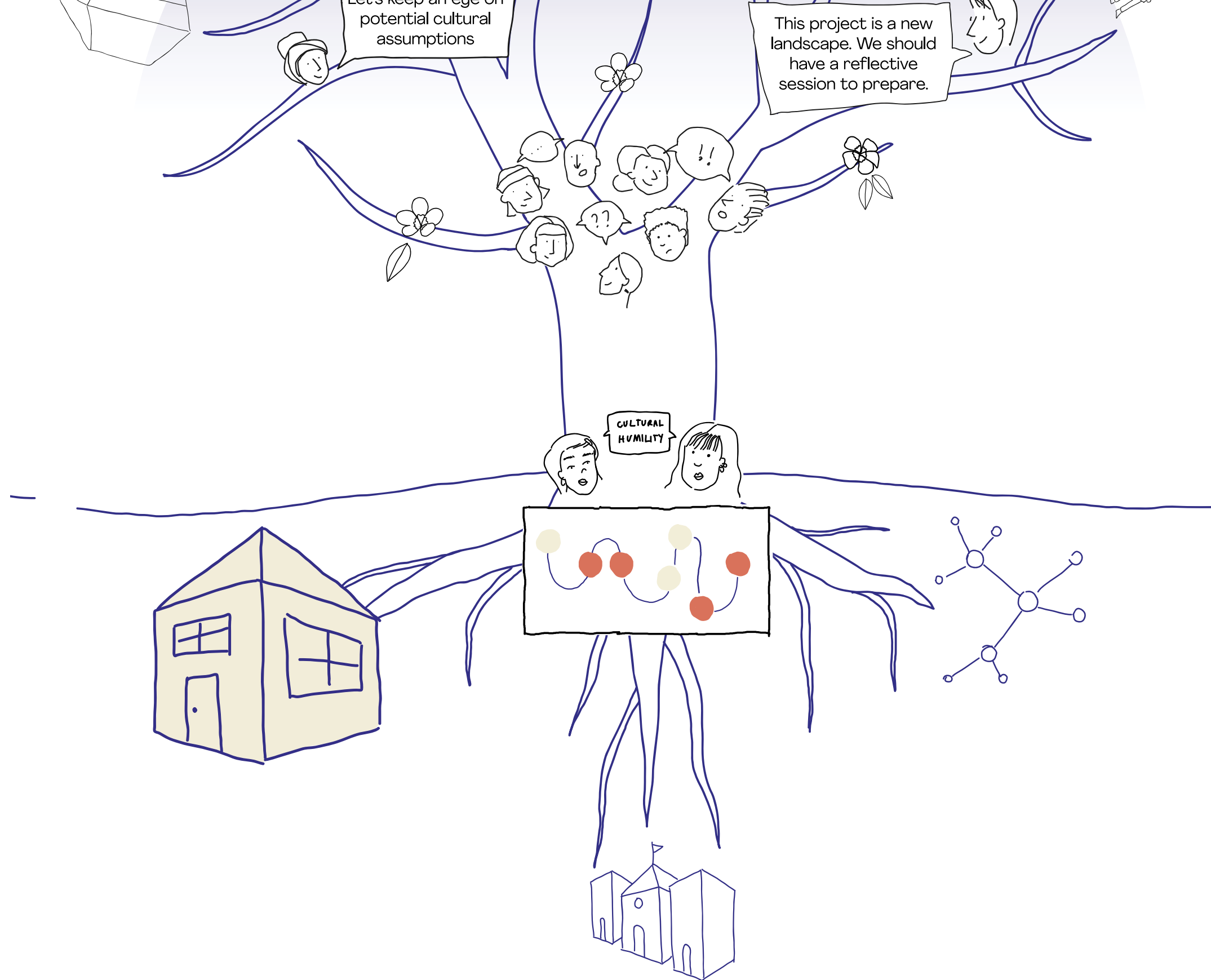
*“I just tried your prototype and loved it — I learned many things about myself that I will certainly incorporate them into my projects.”*

*However, I also think this is very relevant for practitioners and I would really like for you to share it with my colleagues at Designit — perhaps on Friday 19th or 26th of June at 15:00 via Zoom :) It’s such an enriching process, everyone should experience it.”*

— Manuela Aguirre

*“It’s very rare to get a space to reflect around your own identity. I think it’s healthy for me to be pushed out of my comfort zone. I would love you to present this at Netlife where I work!”*

— Frida Støvern

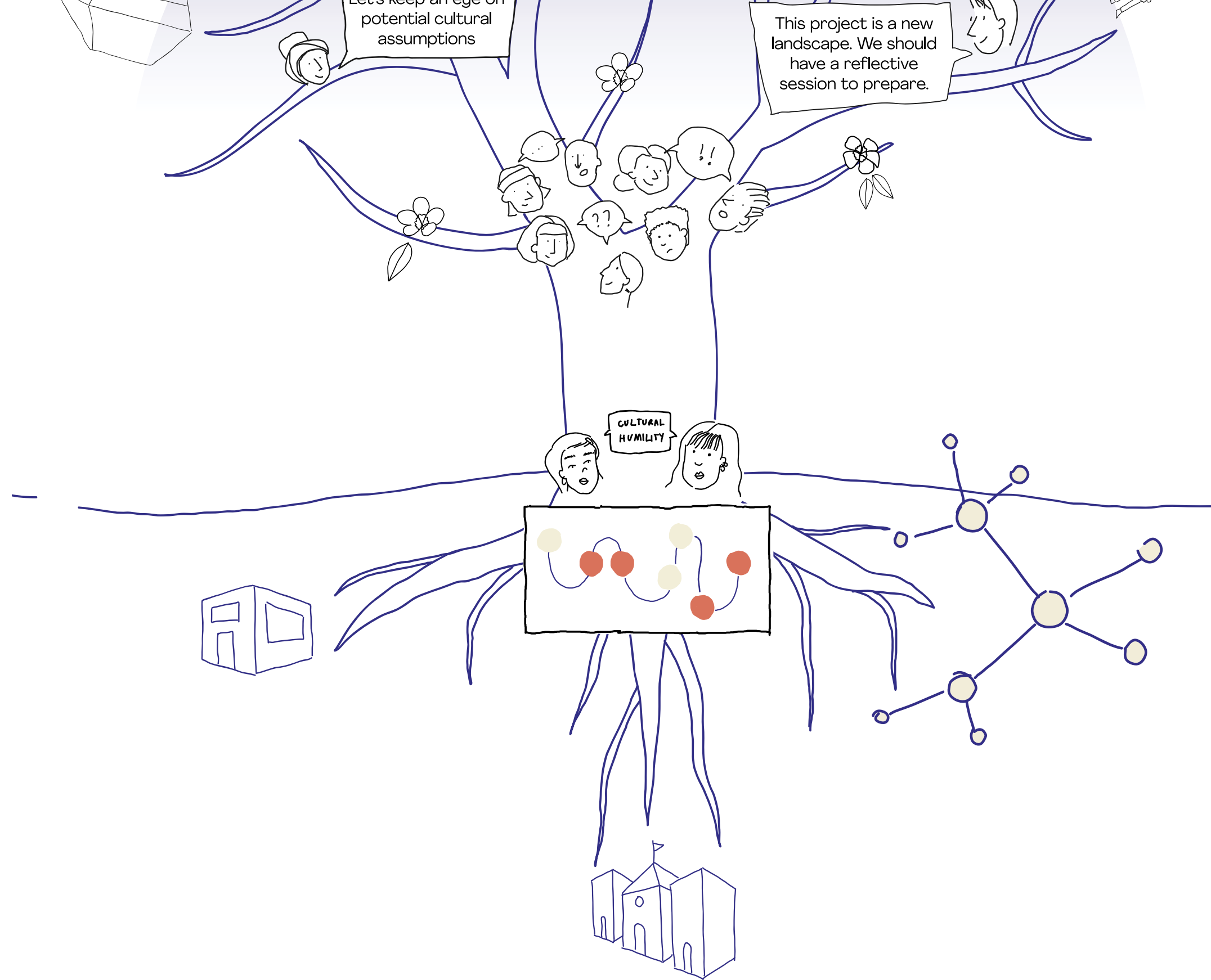


# SPREADING THE CONVERSATION

## DESIGN NETWORKS

To share our work beyond the borders of Norway, we drafted an extended abstract of our study and submitted it to the 'Relating Systems Thinking and Design 9' conference 2020. We hope we get a chance to develop it into an academic paper which can be shared with other design networks and conferences as well.

We have a meeting scheduled with a senior designer leading the inclusive design initiative in Design and Architecture Norway (DOGA). We hope that there is an opportunity for the framework to be developed further and added into DOGA's toolkit. AHO is also open to collaborate with DOGA to further support the development of the framework.



# SPREADING THE CONVERSATION

## DESIGN EDUCATION

Design educators and students whom we have tested and shared the prototype with have responded with a positive note. The notion of cultural humility might help students collaborate better and jump into their courses with a self-reflective lens.

*“It would have been very helpful if we had this workshop before the Service Design course. We were people from 7 different nationalities.”*

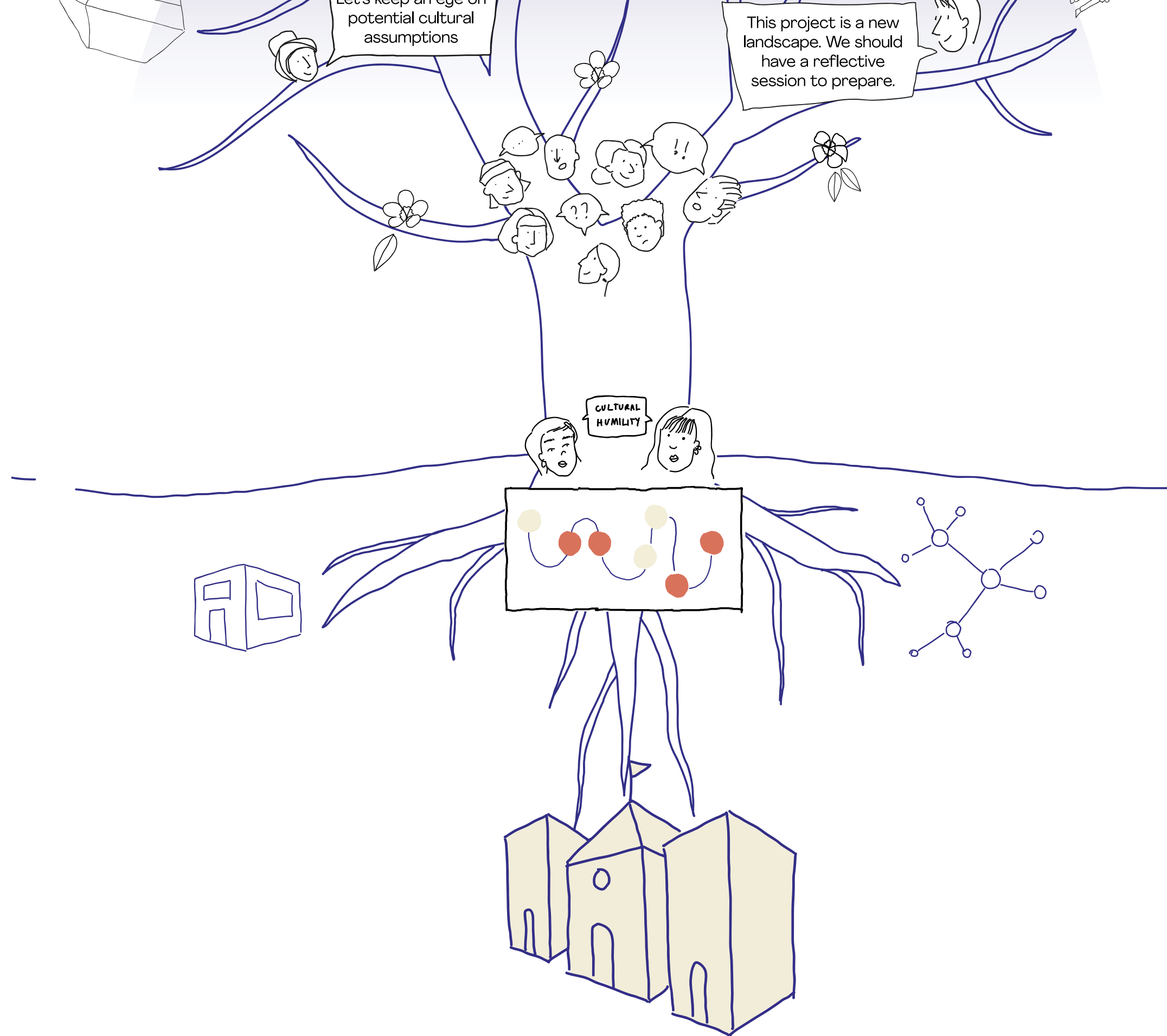
— Design student

*“Regarding your question, introducing this in Service Design 1 in the form of a workshop would be ideal, and if you are up for it, I can already sign you up for testing it with the upcoming SD1 students in the fall.”*

— Manuela Aguirre

*“I really like that you lift this subject and it’s highly relevant for all of us. I definitely think it’s relevant to share this with future students. For me I think it would be relevant to share as material to prepare for before the interviews and also to consider during analysis.”*

— Kaja Misvær





07 Final reflections

ARE WE PREPARED?

# ARE WE PREPARED?

*“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” — James Baldwin*

We raised tough questions throughout this project, and found ourselves grappling in the search of an answer. Learning the value of unanswerable questions was an epiphany, and helped us be more comfortable in this space.

We came together on this project with our Norwegian and Indian identities. It gave us the grounds to bring together both, an insider’s and outsider’s perspective. We experienced the friction which arises when you try to see the other’s point of view. There is an inner tension of trying to understand without becoming defensive.

These reflections are important for who we want to be as designers, and what we want to bring with us as design practitioners in the world.

We know that this is hard work, and it needs to be driven intrinsically. We hope that Project Kaleidoscope supports designers to start exploring their own lens; and inspires them to start asking tough questions within their own practice.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A heartfelt thank you to,

Josina, for your guidance, enthusiasm, encouragement, and reminding us that we are ‘heavy lifting’.

All the designers who gave us their time and effort. All the designers and students who tested our prototype.

Henry, for your clarity, helping us see the broader picture, and encouragement that we are doing hard work.

To our families for their constant support and making sure we are alive.

Ahmed Ansari for painting out the first picture of the landscape. Alison Place for sharing her journey of how she navigates this space.

To Mohamed, Ilham, Johanna, Amanda and Badra for reassuring the need of this project and moral support.

Valentina and Boyd from In With Forward, for sharing their experience of working with this subject.

Madeleine, Ina and Eline for cheering me on, and Maiken for wise words and helping hands.

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# REFERENCES

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# SOURCES

## SECTION: MULTICULTURAL MAKEUP

“Samer med reinsdyr”, Photo by: Helge Amundsen

“Kvenkoner i Neiden”, Photo by: Ellisif Rannveig Wessel

“Sigøynerleir på Vingnes i Lillehammer, 1955” Photo by: Aage Storløkken

“Romanifolk/tatere” Photo by: Birthe Melchiors

“Jødisk ungdomskongress”, Photo by: Wilhelm Råger

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“Black Lives Matter Berlin” Photo by: Montecruz Foto

“Womens March 2018” Photo by: Marc Nozell

“Joika- Fra metall til papp” Photo by: Clare & Ben

“Diplom-is” Photo by: Berit Roald (NTB scanpix)

“Festen etter fasten” Screenshot from nrk.no

“Erna Solberg” Photo by: Kilian Munch

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THANK YOU