

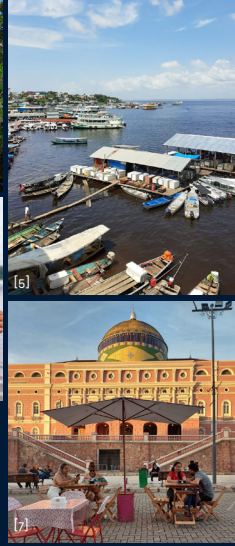
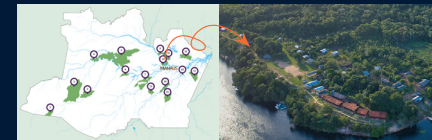
# virtual Designer's journey through the Brazilian Amazon



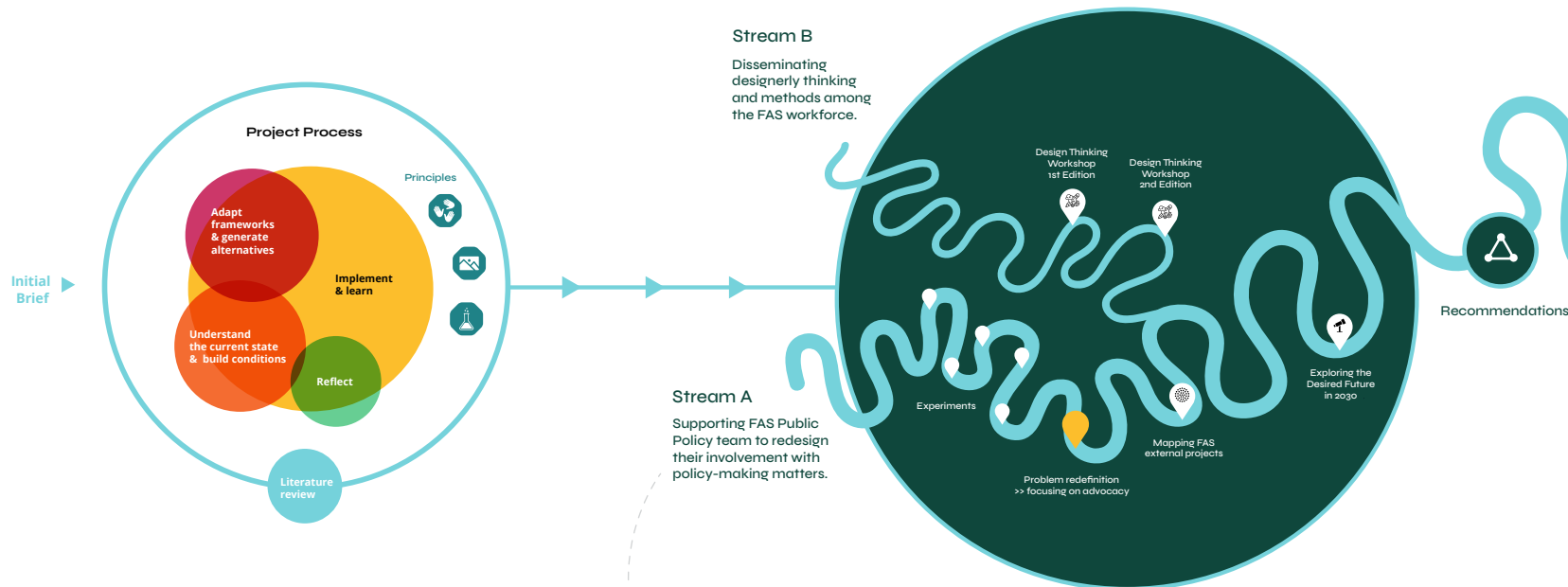
This project presents the journey of embedding design practices in the Foundation for Amazon Sustainability (FAS), a non-profit organisation that works in 16 Protected Areas for Sustainable Use and Manaus city, in the northern region of Brazil. FAS improves people's quality of life by enhancing the socio-economic benefits of the forest and its biodiversity by disseminating sustainable practices and empowering local communities. The project briefing came from the Public Policy team responsible for influencing and supporting the formulation of policies at the state, municipal and federal level. The project unfolds in two streams, the first supporting FAS Public Policy team and the second disseminating designerly thinking and methods among the organisation.

Locations of Protected Areas where FAS undertakes activities

Tumbira community



[3] by J. Adalberto  
[4] by H. Bismarck  
[5] by J. Adalberto  
[6] by O. Ramos  
[7] by J. Adalberto  
[7] by J. Adalberto



## key takeaways

### Design for Policy

- The government does not understand the citizen's experience; Design brings comprehension of what citizens genuinely experience in their daily lives.
- Uncovering people's needs, visualising, ideating and prototyping can support innovation in policy-making.

### Design Value for Organisations

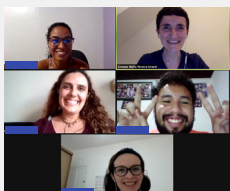
- Adopting design practices influences the organisational culture.
- Non-profit organisation benefit from integrating design not only by generating economic results but also meeting the societal needs intended.

### Design Process & Principles

- Four overlapping spaces define the project process approach and navigation between these spaces changes in each stream of the project.
- Collaboration, visual communication and experimentation are the design principles emphasised along the project journey.

### FAS core team

Besides myself, the team was formed by three members from the Public Policy Agenda and three from other projects under the Innovative Solutions Department. (The project had two mentors).



#### FAS Core Team's Reflection

At the end of the project journey, team members reflected on the learnings, which were clustered in four themes:

- Embracing non-linearity;
- Introducing design as process at FAS;
- Expanding FAS human-centredness approach;
- Fostering collaboration between departments.

## Stream A

### First Experiments

The experiments supported the understanding of organisational culture, the demands and challenges of the FAS Public Policy team. Interaction with the FAS core team revealed the opportunity to organise workshops to introduce design thinking to the FAS workforce.

### Problem redefinition

FAS Public Policy team prioritises the focus on finding common ground on advocacy among all issues discussed.

### Co-creating an Advocacy Vision

Mapping FAS project revealed strong connections with Education & Citizenship themes;

### Exploring the Desired Future in 2030

A canvas was tested and help to raise discussions about the prevalence of some fields over the others and whether or not the organisation should act upon it those "imbalances".

Questions were raised concerning present vs future thematic areas and FAS role.

Involving FAS workforce and C-level Managers contributed to integrate the Public Policy Agenda with other departments.

## Stream B

### Design Thinking Workshops

A three-hour design thinking workshop with three parts: presentation of basic ideas; practical exercise; and reflection was the model to introduce design as a process.

Participants reflections pointed out the methods and the process as beneficial for the challenges the organisation faces;

#### Workshop Participants' Reflection

The last part of the workshop invited participants to reflect on the learning, which were clustered in five themes:

The value of design thinking: a touch of scepticism;

Mindset 1: human-centredness - a consensus that adds value;

Mindset 2: framing - less noticeable;

Mindset 3: experimentation - limited resources, tangible outcomes;

Making room for design practice at FAS: time constraints and workflow.



Participants

## Recommendations for FAS

The project introduced design methods, tools and mindsets to the organisation, but for FAS employees being able to continue incorporating those in their workflow, there are three fundamental enablers:

Managers need to understand integrating design practices as a shared goal and provide opportunities for learning and experimenting in their teams.

### Management Level Support

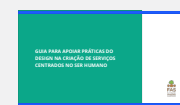
### Environment & Resources

Examples of resources are: time, incentives, physical spaces or digital platforms that enable collaboration and creativity to flow.

### Permeable boundaries between departments

Having the mechanisms to support, encourage and enable collaboration between people from different departments.

### Deliverable



#### Guidebook

Instructional videos + workbook for applying design methods in low complexity projects

## Conclusion

- The project supported FAS by giving hands-on experience on design practices and contributed to the Public Policy team to view their work from a more integrated perspective with other departments.
- Creating artefacts and interactive meetings contributed to collaboration and a positive work experience; a non-linear project approach revealed to be more adaptable than traditional FAS project planning; experimentation was the most effective way to invite constructive feedback; human-centredness nature of the design was the most relatable aspect for the organisation.
- Design practice is not only about methods, tools and processes, but also about finding ways to engage, motivate, and propose meetings action-oriented and to stimulate critical questioning;
- Designers do not hold the solutions for complex problems such as sustainable development in the Amazon but rather can be enablers of bringing diverse experts and people with lived experience to envision and build a more inclusive future.

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Embedding Design Practices in a Non-profit Foundation for the Brazilian Amazon Rainforest  
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MSc Strategic Product Design

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