Design

A collection of Design resources and guides

- Design Thinking
- Design Process Checklist
- Figma Content Organization

Design Thinking

Design thinking is an approach to problem-solving and innovation. It’s a way of thinking and acting that allows us to find new solutions to challenges by engaging with them using a combination of intuition, experience, and analysis. Our application of the methodology encourages finding new ways of looking at a problem and creating new solutions. Fundamentally it is a human-centred approach to innovation that draws on the designer’s toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements of business. Design thinking helps us understand people's lives by empathising with them, developing ideas with them, testing those ideas in real world settings and improving them over time through iteration.

Figure 1

Empathy

Empathy is the foundation of our Design Thinking approach. The objective here is to immerse ourselves into the worlds of our end users, setting aside any assumptions about the users and the problem in order to uncover deep needs and insights and thus inform our decision making. It is important in design thinking because it allows us to understand the needs and perspectives of the end users, which helps to create products and services that are more user-centred and effective. Empathy also helps us to identify and address potential pain points or challenges that users may experience, leading to more innovative and inclusive solutions. There are a number of approaches we can apply in order to better empathise with our users we go into more detail in the Process Checklist.

Define

In the Define phase we synthesise the findings from the Empathy phase and develop a problem statement also referred to as the Point of View (POV) statement that is instrumental in reframing the problem and opening new and innovative solution spaces. This phase in the design thinking process is key for creating alignment between key stakeholders. Collectively defining the problem to be solved and the criteria for success helps to align expectations on the final product and sets the scope for the assignment. Creating a joint vision helps those involved to picture a common goal that they are working towards and inspires and motivates people to contribute to the process. During the define phase it is likely that assumptions will surface about the product or the end user. Listing these assumptions allows you to validate them with the end user in the next steps of the process. Effectively defining a problem to be addressed is essentially creating a North Star to guide the solution building, In the Process Checklist we outline some approaches that could be applied for effective problem definition.

Ideate

The Ideate phase entails divergent thinking where a multitude of ideas are generated and sifted based on the problem statement in order to select the most promising solutions for prototyping.

Some of the Key activities undertaken in this phase include.

- Generate as many ideas as possible & sift through the strongest contenders.
- Define a criteria for assessing the strongest ideas.
- Visualise the ideas (storyboard).

The Process checklist provides some templates to facilitate an effective Ideation Phase

Prototype

The objective of the prototyping phase is to answer critical questions quickly; it involves transforming ideas and explorations into a tangible form, whether it be a set of post-it notes, a role-playing activity, a physical space, an object, an interface, or even a storyboard.

The fidelity of the prototype is primarily determined by the questions we are trying to answer. A rule of thumb is to aim for “Goldilocks” quality where it’s not too low fidelity that the intended users are not able to view it as a real product and not too high fidelity that it takes too much time to build.

The fidelity of the prototype increases iteratively as we validate our ideas on the scaled down version of the product or specific features of the product. In early stages, it's crucial to keep prototypes rough and quick to facilitate rapid learning and exploration of various options.

Prototyping is most effective when stakeholders, including the design team and users, can interact with and experience it, allowing for deeper empathy and shaping successful solutions. The insights gained from these interactions can guide further development.

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Figure 2

Test

The testing phase entails validating the solution with real users. The results from this phase are useful in redefining one or more further problems and since the design thinking methodology is iterative we can return to previous stages to make alterations and refinements to find or rule out alternative solutions. As outlined in figure 1 the testing phase should ideally reveal any overlooked issues and lead to defining new problems and going through the cycle again.For complex platforms and applications it is important to invest in testing at this stage as it is significantly less costly than during the development phase to make amendments.

More Resources

https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-design-thinking

https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/design-thinking

Design Process Checklist

What?

This design process checklist is a systematic and organised document or set of steps used to guide designers, program teams, developers, or anyone involved in the creative process through the various stages of a project. The purpose of the design process checklist is to ensure that all necessary steps are followed, important considerations are addressed, and key tasks are completed in a logical and efficient manner.

How to use it?

The design process checklist is a flexible tool that can be customized to suit the specific needs of a project, whether it's graphic design, web design, product design, or any other context. The process checklist helps ensure that the design process is structured, organized, and efficient, ultimately leading to a successful outcome.

To begin using the Process checklist in your project, make a copy of the template Asana Template

Output Examples

The table below provides examples on the outputs that the project teams are expected to produce. Use these as inspiration for your work.

Empathy

Activity	Output Examples
User Research	Outputs: Target Audience, Behaviours, Needs Methodology: This can include online surveys, user interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic research. Template

Activity	Output Examples
User Personas:	Outputs: User personas Methodology: Personas are fictional characters that represent the behaviours, motivations, and goals of your target audience. This helps you empathise with your users and design solutions that meet their needs. Template Example
Map out user journeys:	Outputs: User Journey Methodology: Identify the key touchpoints in the user journey and map out the user flow. This helps you understand the user's experience and identify pain points and areas for improvement. Template Example
Identify user pain points:	Outputs: Pain Points Methodology: Use the insights gathered from your user research and user journey mapping to identify the pain points your users experience. This could include frustrations, obstacles, or unmet needs. Template
Define the problem statement:	Outputs: Problem Statement V1 Methodology: Use the pain points identified to define a clear problem statement that focuses on the user's needs. This helps you stay focused on solving a real user problem and ensures that your design solution is relevant. Template

Define

Activity	Output Examples
Refine the problem statement	Outputs: Problem Statement V2 Methodology: Review the problem statement developed in the empathise phase and refine it based on the insights gathered. Ensure that it is specific, actionable, and focused on the user's needs. Template
Identify design goals	Outputs: Design Objectives Methodology: Define the design goals for the digital product. These should be aligned with the client objectives and the needs of the target audience. Example
Create design principles	Outputs: Design Principles Methodology: Create design principles that guide the development of the digital product. These principles should be grounded in the user's needs and ensure that the design solutions are consistent, usable, and effective. Additional Resources Example Example 2
Conduct a competitive analysis	Outputs: Competitor Analysis Methodology: A competitive analysis to understand the strengths and weaknesses of competitors / existing solutions. This can help identify opportunities for differentiation and innovation. Example Template

Activity	Output Examples
Create a feature roadmap	Outputs: Feature Roadmap Methodology: Outline the key features and functionality that the product should include. Example
Define success metrics	Outputs: Success Metrics Methodology: Define the success metrics of the digital product. These should be measurable and aligned with the users objectives. Additional Resource

Ideate

Activity	Output Examples
Generate ideas	Outputs: Sketches Methodology: Use brainstorming techniques like mind mapping, sketching, and collaborative brainstorming to generate a wide range of ideas for solving the problem statement defined in the define phase. Example
Prioritise ideas	Outputs: Evaluation Criteria Methodology: Evaluate the ideas generated and prioritise them based on their potential impact, feasibility, and alignment with the design goals and principles defined in the define phase. Example

Activity	Output Examples
Create User Journeys	Outputs: Information Architecture, User Journeys Methodology: Outline how the target audience would interact with the potential solutions. Example Example 2
Sketch initial designs	Outputs: Low-fidelity prototype Methodology: Create low-fidelity sketches of the potential solutions. This helps visualise ideas and iterate quickly. Example

Prototype

Activity	Output Examples
Determine prototype type	Outputs: Low Fi Prototype / Paper prototype / wireframe Methodology: Identify the type of prototype that best suits your needs. This could be a low-fidelity prototype, such as a paper prototype or wireframe, or a high-fidelity prototype, such as a clickable prototype or a functional prototype. Example
Develop the prototype	Outputs: Figma prototype Methodology: Use the appropriate tools to create the prototype i.e design software, prototyping software, or even physical materials. Example Example 2

Activity	Output Examples
Test the prototype	Outputs: Usability Tests Methodology: Test the prototype with users to gather feedback. This could involve conducting user testing sessions, surveys, or usability tests. Example Additional Resources
Analyse the results	Outputs: Areas of Improvement, Pain points Methodology: Analyse the feedback gathered during the testing phase to identify areas for improvement. If some of the pain points require more structured discussion to achieve solutioning, probably best to go back to the Ideate phase Template

More Resources

Methodology Slide Deck

Methodology Longform Document

Figma Content Organization

Figma is our primary prototyping tool and as such an understanding of how the file structure is set up will be important.

Team

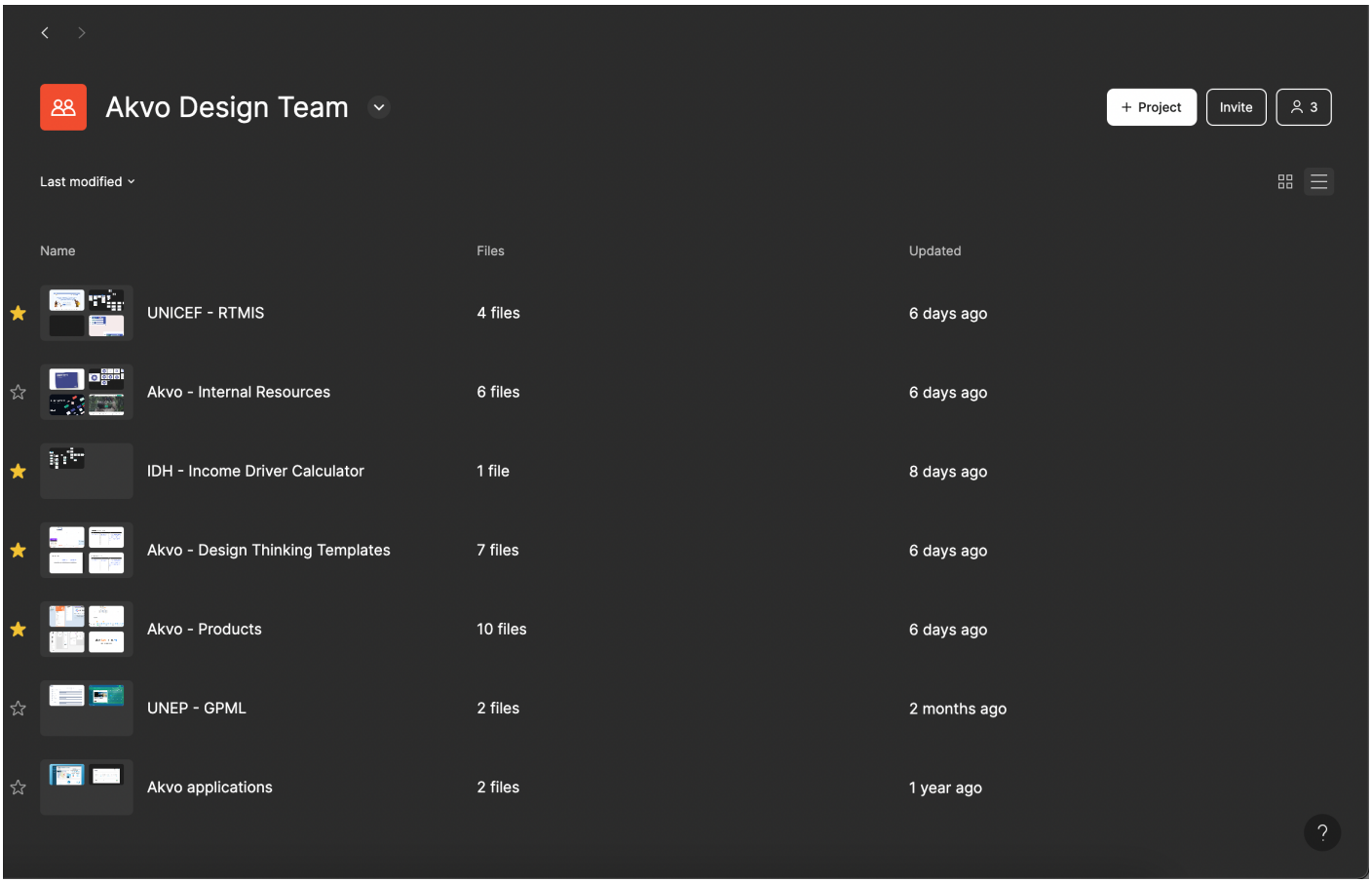
The Akvo Design Team is the main folder from where you'll be able to access all items and resources developed by the Design Team - This encompasses both the Figjam. (Currently we are working from the one team)

Naming Conventions

The naming convention will follow the following format i.e
ClientName - Project Name e.g UNICEF - RTMIS
The objective is to allow for quick identification and location of items

Projects

The Projects are organised following the above convention with the Client Name as well as the specific project.



File Structure

The file structure for each project will generally follow the following structure

- Designs - The actual designs (prototype)
- Assets - (Any graphic assets/ resources used in the Design)
- Documentation - Figjam files (the brainstorming files)

Pages

The pages are contained within the project files and will follow outlined structure

- Sandbox
- Final Designs