
Towards an experimental culture

Enabling better development practice for public impact

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Take-aways from this session

When to use what kind of experimental approach?

Experimentation as a continuum (of approaches)

Experimentation as a method → experimentation as mindset and culture

Let's start with a challenge

Barcelona is planning to move away from a city that is dominated by cars, that comes with excessive pollution and noise levels.

How might we turn the streets into "citizen spaces" for culture, leisure and the community, to make the city more liveable ("fill our city with life")

to the rescue: Barcelona's streets back to residents

The Catalan capital's radical new strategy will restrict traffic to a number of big roads, drastically reducing pollution and turning secondary streets into 'citizen spaces' for culture, leisure and the community



Advertisement

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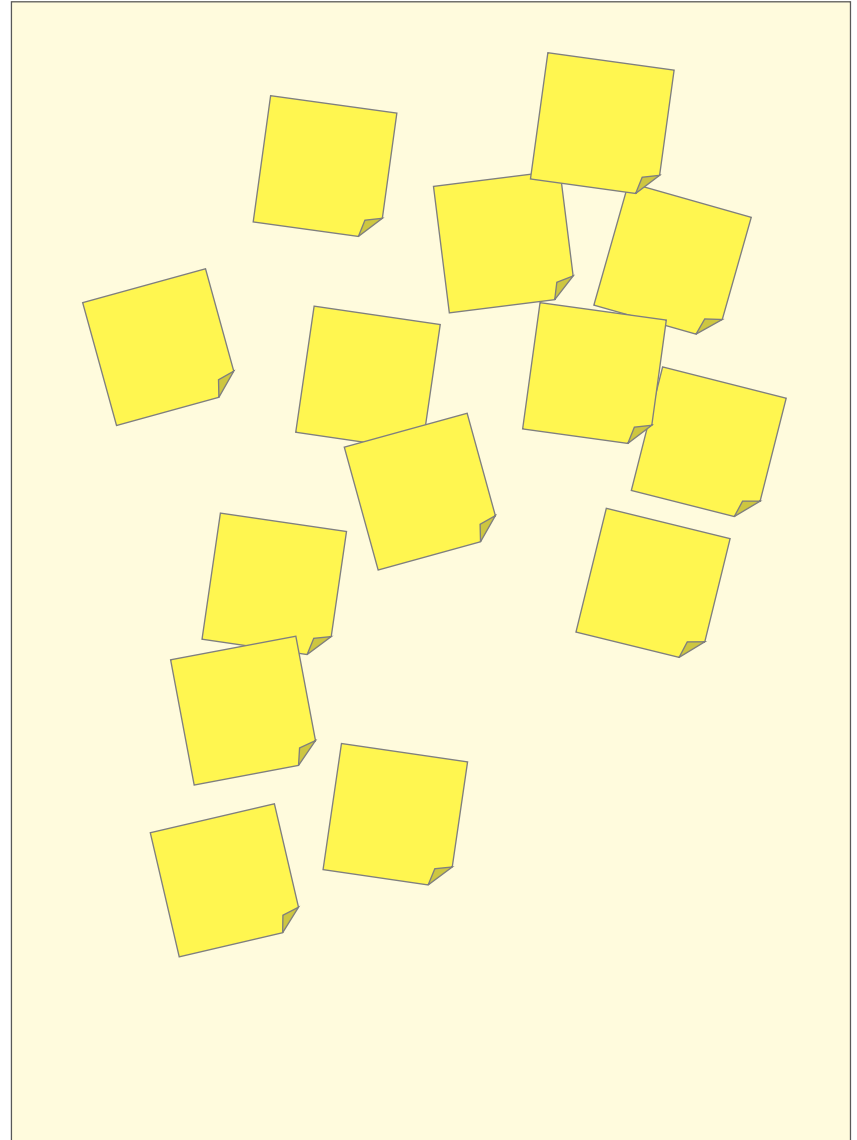
RESILIENCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

JOIN THE GLOBE

IDEA GENERATION

You have 5 minutes to generate as many ideas as possible with your group.

Write each idea on a post it, and stick it on a flip chart.

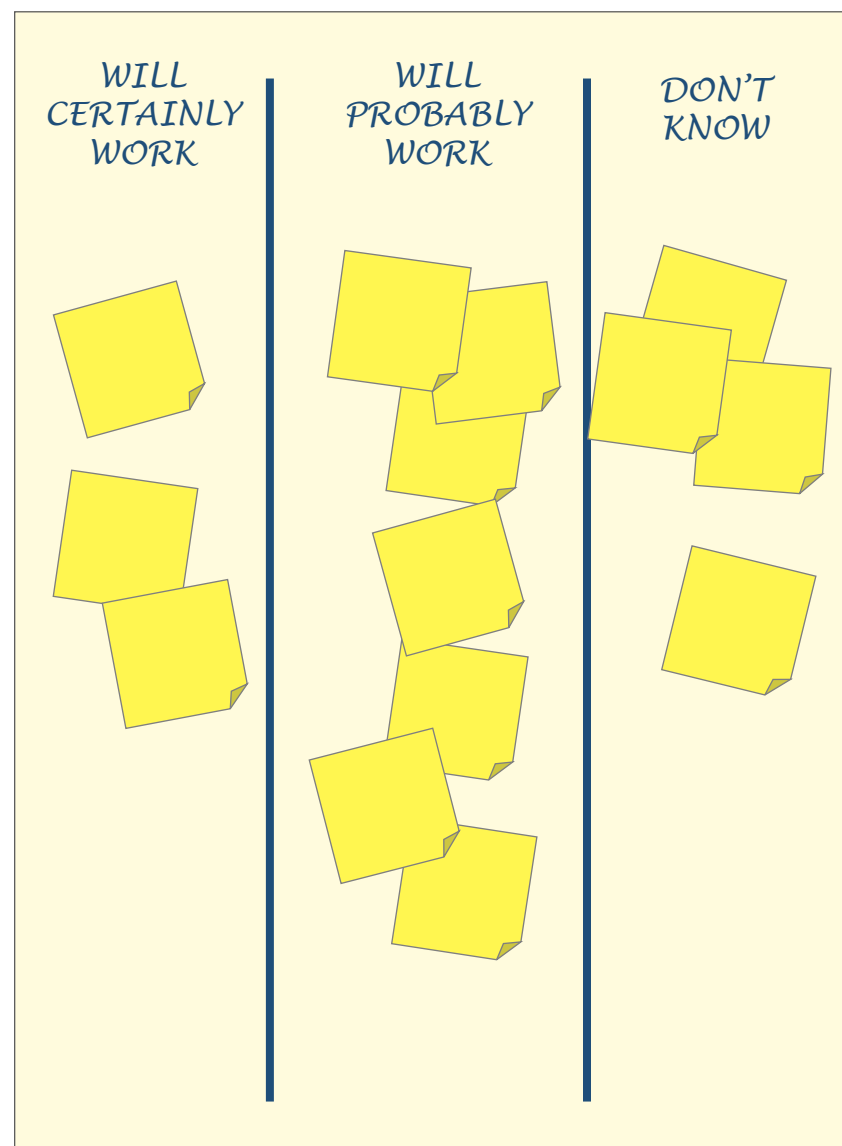


Welcome in the room of the
unobvious...

IDENTIFYING KNOWLEDGE GAPS

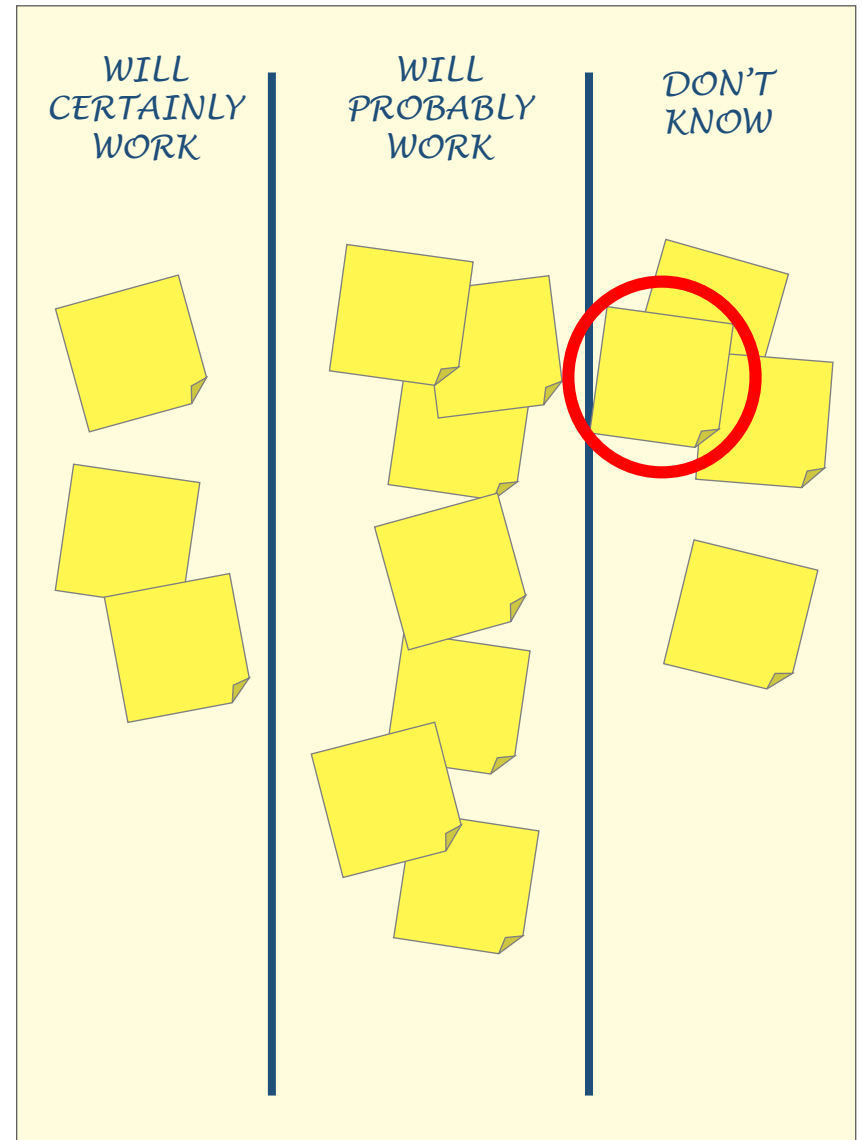
Cluster your ideas into three categories

- **Ideas that will certainly work** (based on what we know)
- **Ideas that will probably work** (based on what we assume)
- **Ideas we don't know if they will work**



IDENTIFYING KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Take one idea (post it)... from the category “don’t know”, or “will probably work”



“Innovation amateurs
talk good ideas;
innovation experts talk
testable hypothesis.”

Michael Schrage (Strategyzer)

~~IDEAS → SOLUTION~~

IDEAS → HYPOTHESIS

“A hypothesis is a testable belief about future value creation”

Michael Schrage (2014)

If ... then ...

If [we do this] then [this will happen]

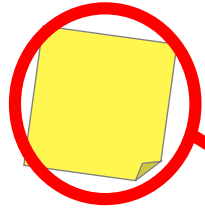
action/intervention



observable/measurable effect



Now take your post-it with your one idea,
and translate it into a testable hypothesis



if

.....

[we do this]

then

.....

[this will happen]

Embrace uncertainty

Manage risk



SOLUTIONS ARE UNKNOWN Understanding of the problem is unclear. Risk cannot be managed.		SOLUTIONS ARE KNOWN Understanding of the problem is clear. Risk can be managed.
EXPLORE GENERATING HYPOTHESES What might be Shaping direction Action is taken to open up new possibilities	TRIAL-AND-ERROR ESTABLISHING A HYPOTHESIS What could be Creating basis for redesign Action is taken to find out what works	VALIDATE VALIDATING A HYPOTHESIS What should be Legitimising initiative Action is taken to justify decision-making
METHODS		
Speculative Design, Horizon scanning, Foresight, Ethnographic Research, Citizen Science, Crowdsourcing, Positive Deviance, etc	Prototyping, Human-Centred Design, Behavioural Economics, Data-led approaches, Open Innovation, etc	Randomised Control Trials, Pilots, A/B testing, Multiple Parallel Experiments, Quasi-Experimental Designs, Development Evaluation, etc

Experimentation as a continuum

CASE: DANISH EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM # 1

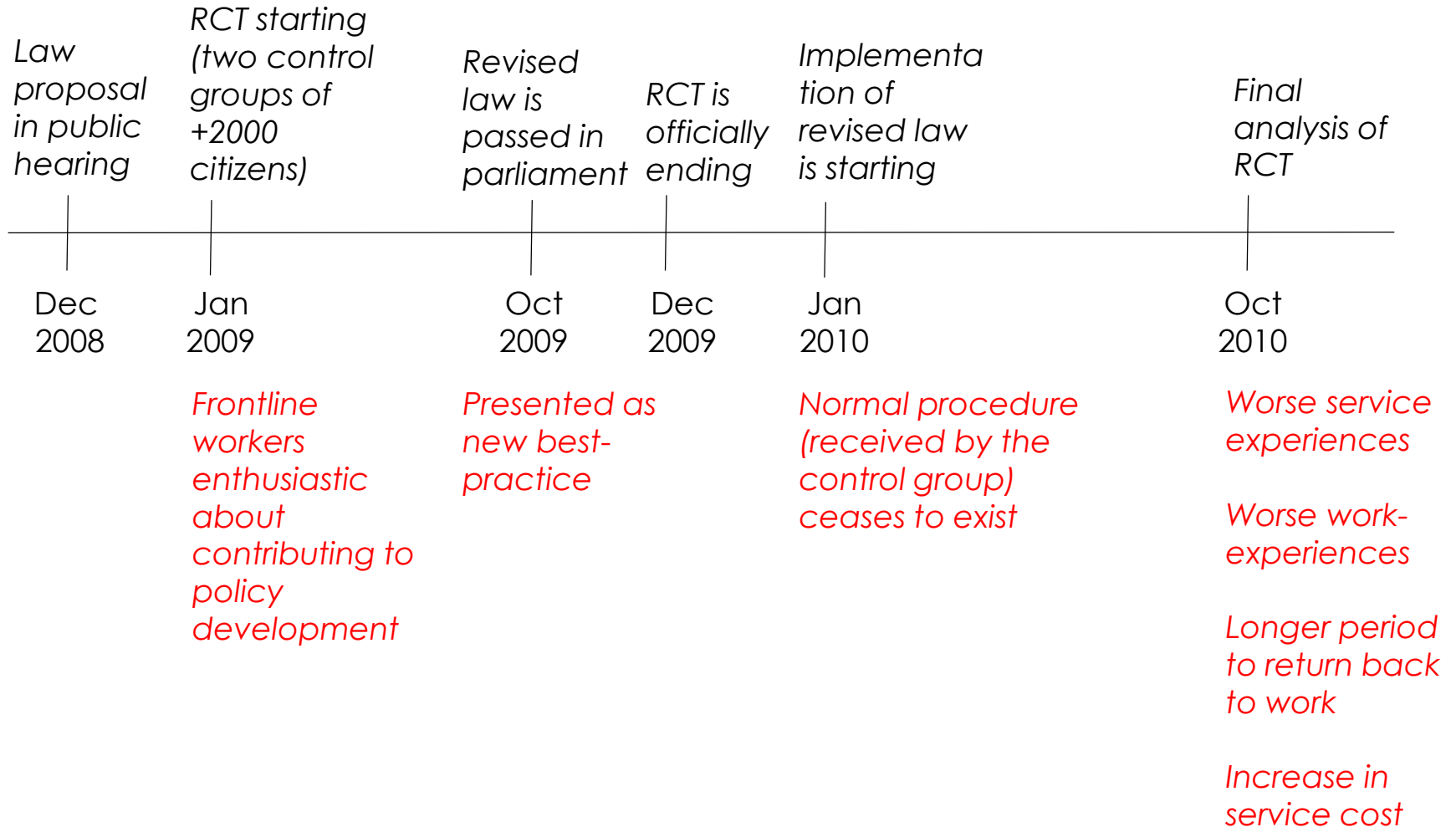


**A failed
experiment in
the Danish
employment
system:**

The case of
'Active back
sooner'

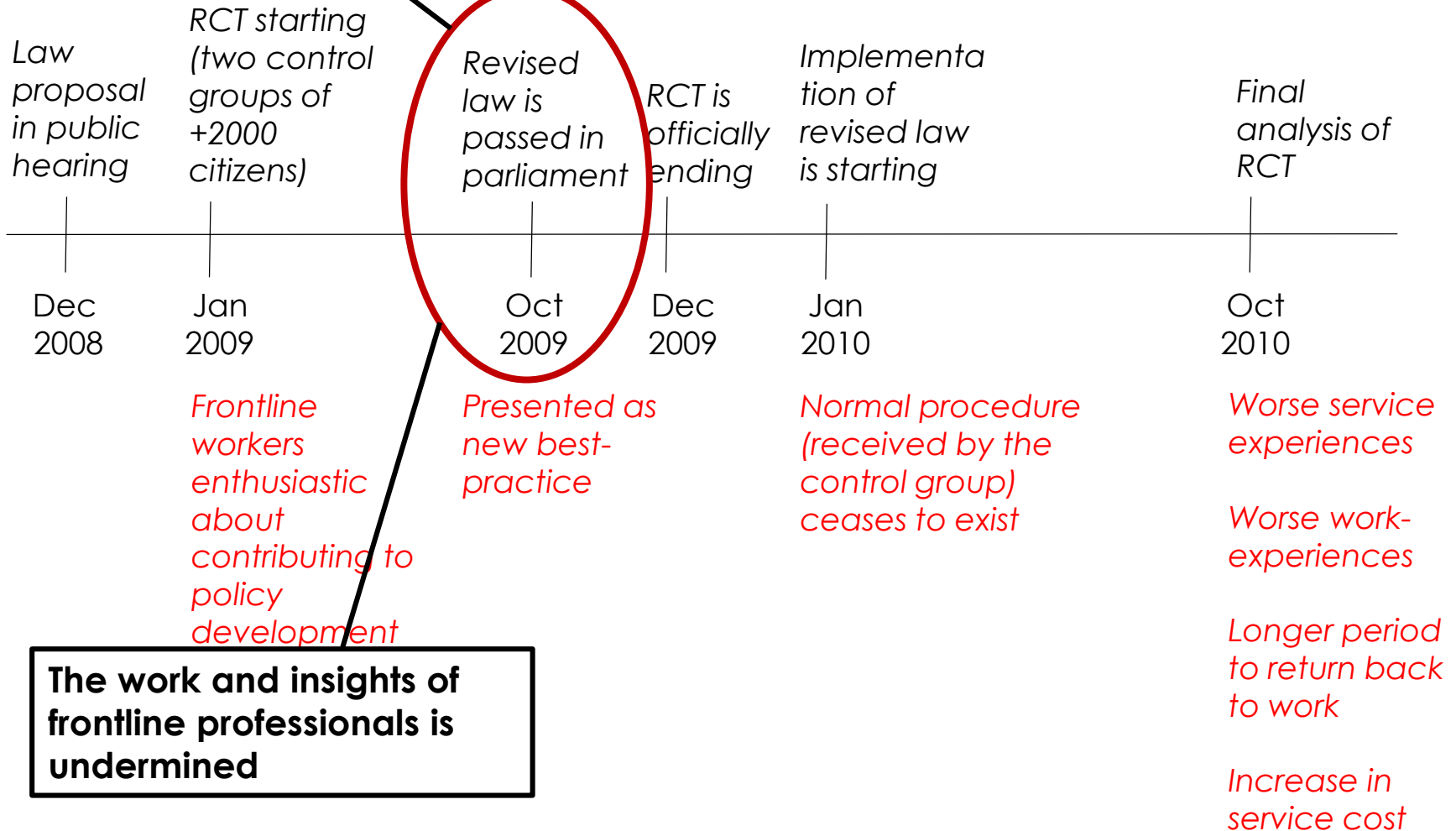


The case of 'Active back sooner'



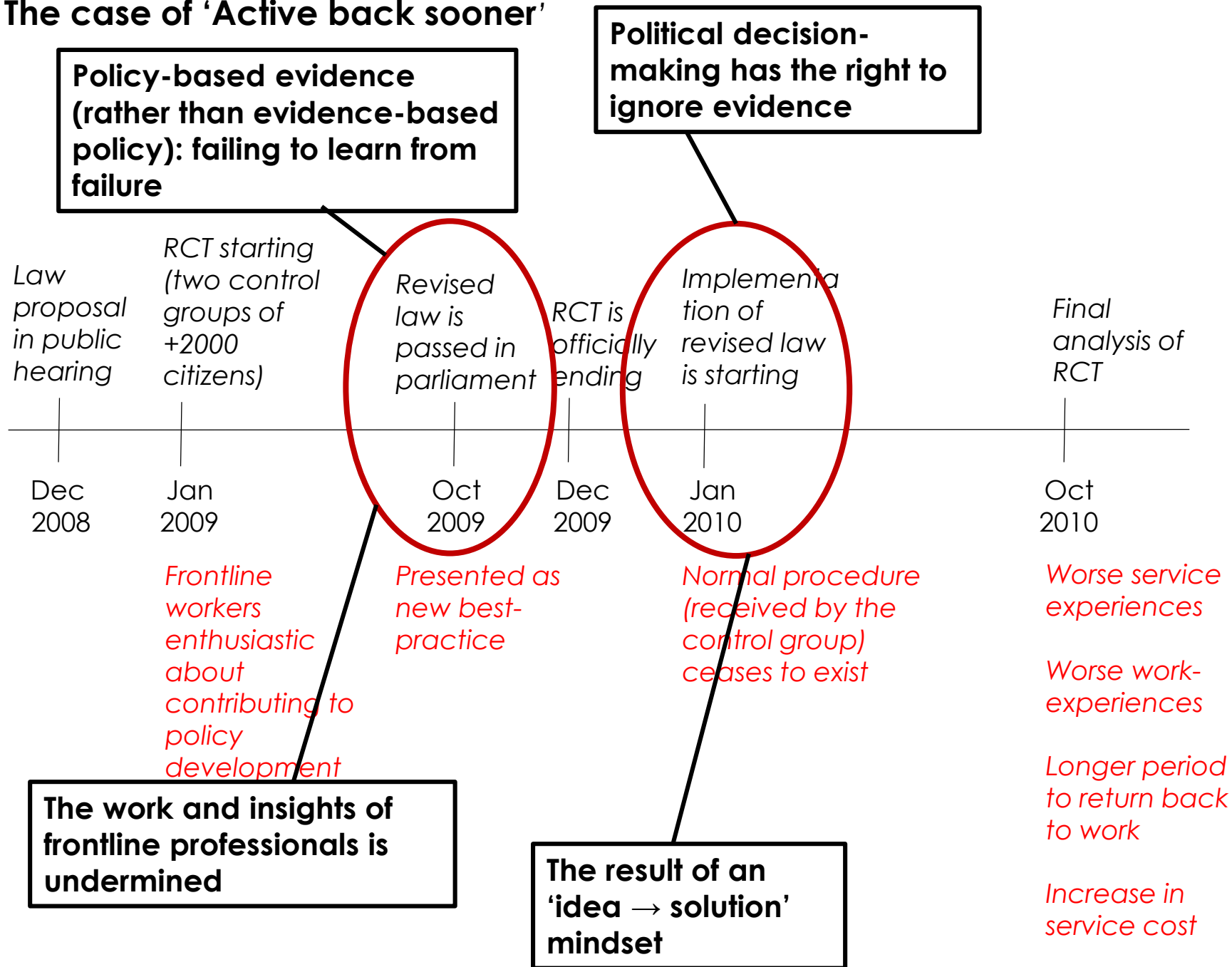
The case of 'Active back sooner'

**Policy-based evidence
(rather than evidence-based
policy): failing to learn from
failure**

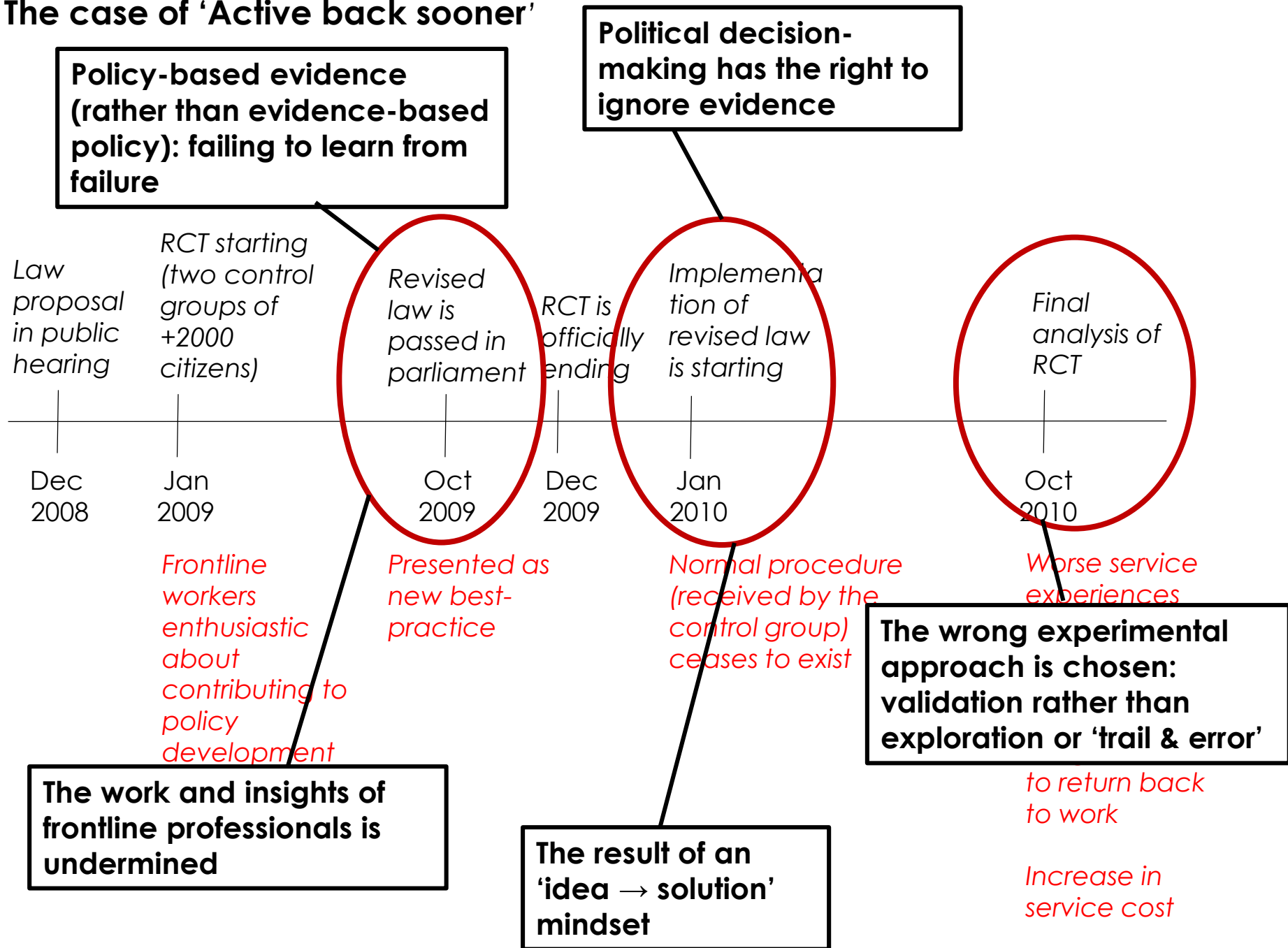


**The work and insights of
frontline professionals is
undermined**

The case of 'Active back sooner'



The case of 'Active back sooner'



~~IDEAS SOLUTION~~

IDEAS → HYPOTHESIS

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<p>EXPLORE</p> <p>GENERATING HYPOTHESES What might be</p> <p>Shaping direction Action is taken to open up new possibilities</p>	<p>TRIAL-AND-ERROR</p> <p>ESTABLISHING A HYPOTHESIS What could be</p> <p>Creating basis for redesign Action is taken to find out what works</p>	<p>VALIDATE</p> <p>VALIDATING A HYPOTHESIS What should be</p> <p>Legitimising initiative Action is taken to justify decision-making</p>
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The less recognized value of experimentation...

Experimentation as a way of accelerating learning

Experimentation as a way of exploring the “non-obvious” (with new forms of data)

Experimentation as a way of turning uncertainty into risk

Experimentation as a way to reframe failure



Experimentation as a mindset and culture

CASE: DANISH EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM #2



Decades of “failures” ...?

- 1978: ATB law: reform focusing long-term unemployment
 - 1994: Labour market reform
 - 1995-1998: Finance agreements: reform of social benefits, new efforts for young unemployed, adult education reform
 - 1998: Finance agreement: new demands of unemployed in terms of activation; shorter period for unemployment benefits
 - 1999: Finance agreement: more targetted and flexible activation effort
 - 2002: Activation service reform
 - 2003: Reform: "More people in employment": system simplification, coordnation and effectiveness
 - 2004: Reforming efforts for supporting people with higher education
 - 2007: "Quality reform"
 - 2009: Municipality reform
-
- 2012: Reform of early pensions and flexjobs
 - 2013: reform of sickness leave benefits
 - 2013: Reform of social benefits system
 - 2014: Reform of unemployment benefits system
 - 2014: Structural reform of employment system
 - 2015: Job reform – phase 1

Still a very ineffective service system...

- Bad service experiences
- A system that does not make sense to people
- A significant lack of coordination in the wider public service system
- A failed effort to deal with long-term unemployed and vulnerable citizens

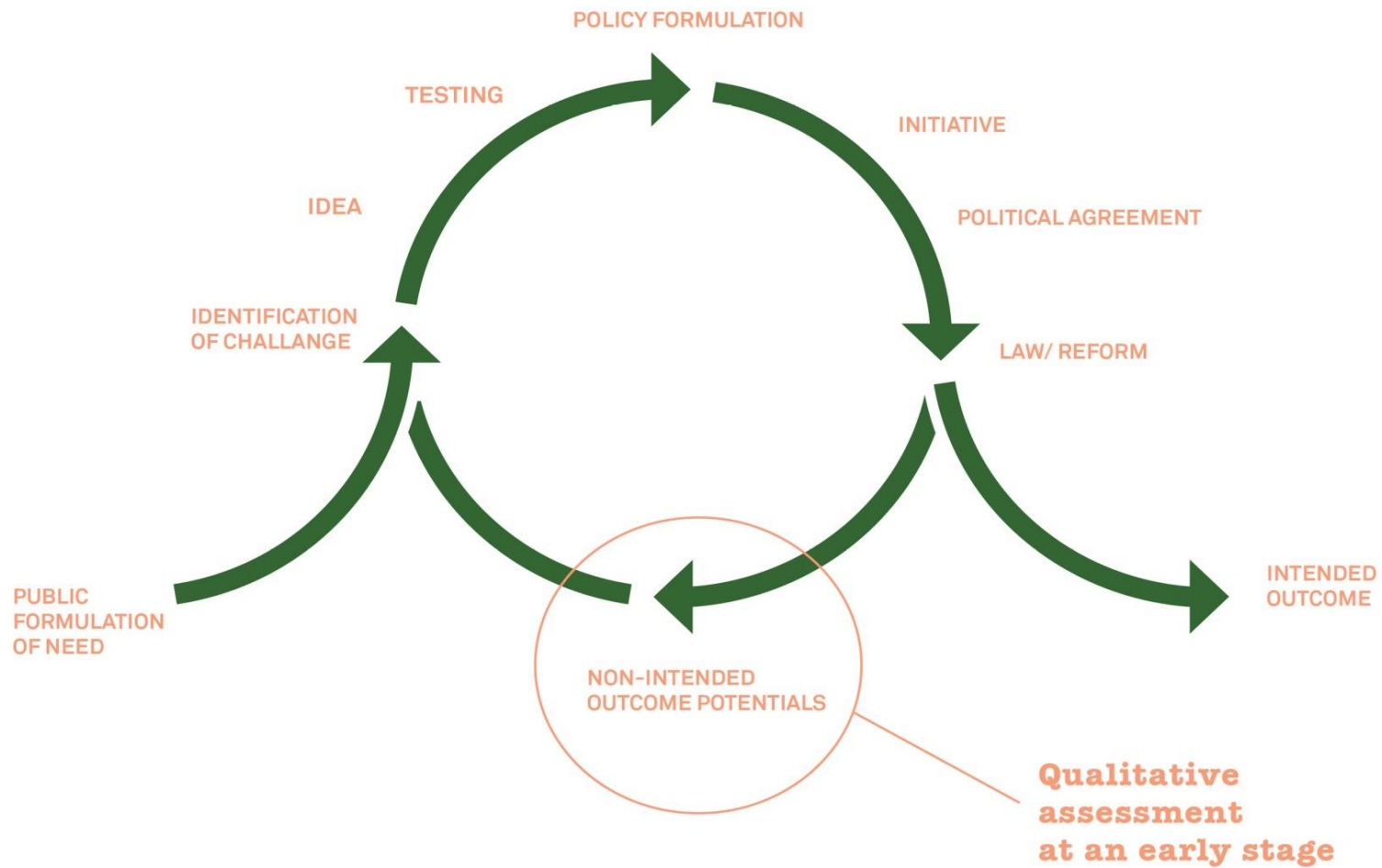
THE CHALLENGES OF POLICY-MAKING...

	Problem	Consequence	We need to enable...	New approach...
Policy and implementation	Separating the development of policy and implementation as two different tasks	Policies are developed by few people that are not involved in their implementation		
Theory of change	Assuming that change is a product of a specific planned process	Policies fail to create the intended outcomes / get caught on the wrong path		
Focus in support system	Prioritising pre-planned support and evaluation activities	When policies fail, they are often likely to be failed by wider networks of support.		

REFORMING THE DANISH EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

- Citizen-centred
- Rehabilitation
- Focus on citizens assets and resources
- Relational – working *with* citizens
- ‘Employability’
- Cross-professional collaboration



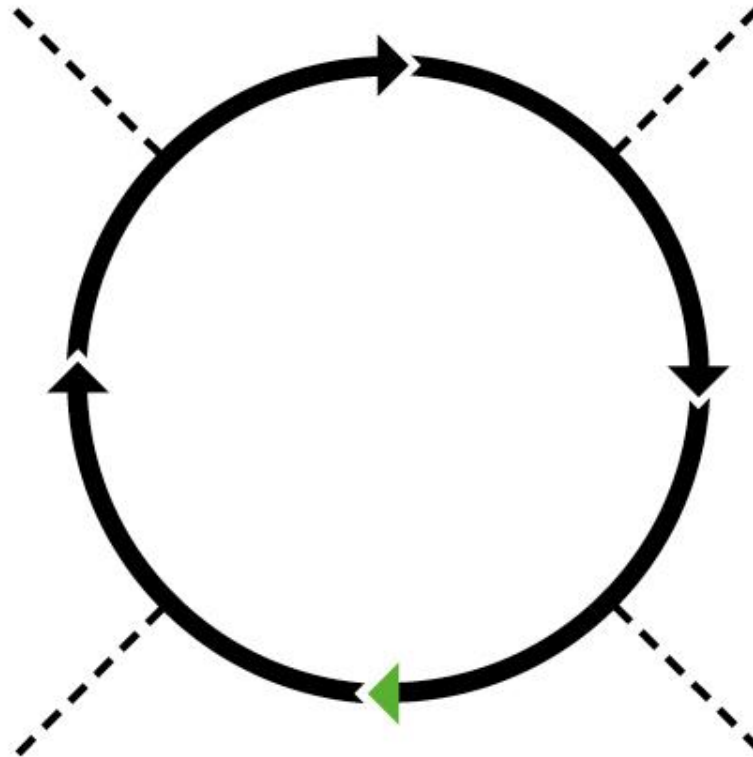


ANALYSIS

Identifying insights
Visualisation
Pattern recognition

SYNTHESIS

Ideation
Concept development
Selection




KNOWING

Project scoping
Challenging the problem
Citizen-centred research

CREATING

Prototyping
Testing
Implementing




NEW KIND OF INTELLIGENCE AND PROCESS –
NOT JUST STATISTICAL DATA COLLECTION
AND ANALYSIS...

Purpose: to highlight and validate

Scope: generalizable

Focus: Societal problems at scale

Time: point-in-time



NEW KIND OF INTELLIGENCE AND PROCESS:
ETHNOGRAPHY AND EXPERIMENTAL CO-
DESIGN...

Purpose: to understand and to generate

Scope: contextual, complexity, causes

Focus: concrete everyday life and human-
experience

Time: real-time, over time

CO-CREATING PUBLIC POLICY

Implementation as an experimental process

Strategic focus on unintended outcomes and potentialities in order to learn, adapt and create intended outcomes

Collaboration and shared ownership

New relationships and conversations across silos and different levels of government.

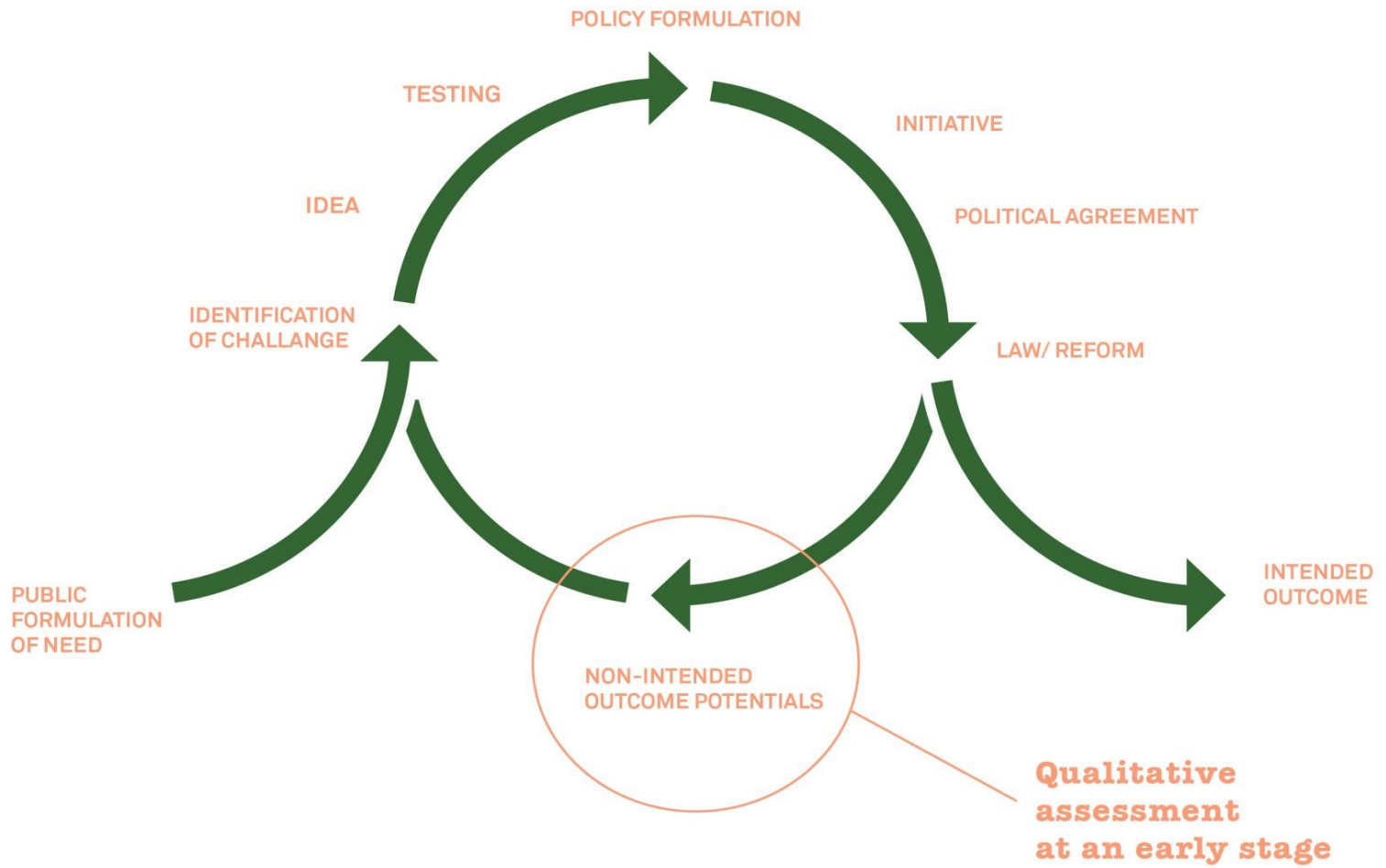
Better dynamic between policy and practice

Reinventing the practice of policy making from principles of experimentation

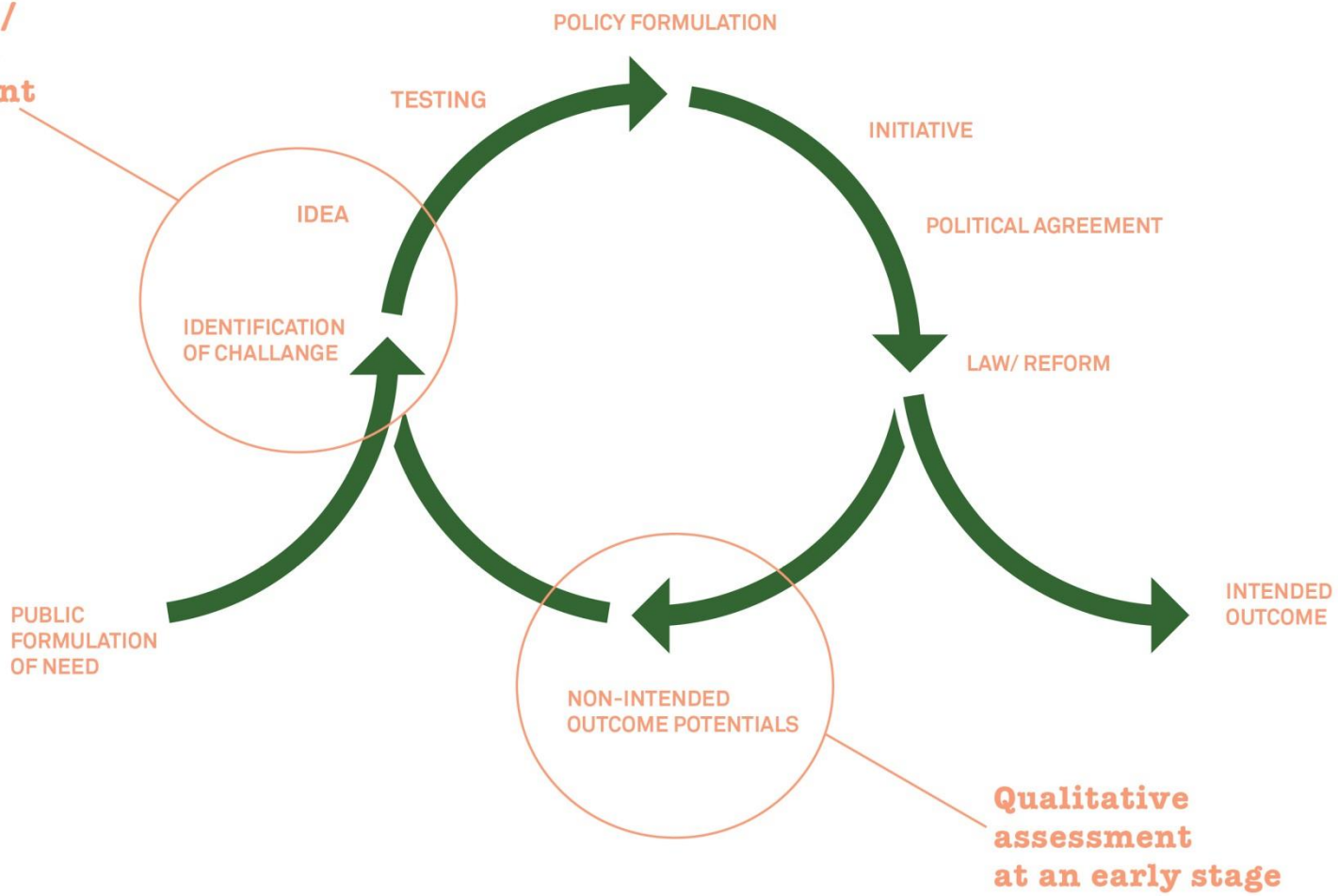
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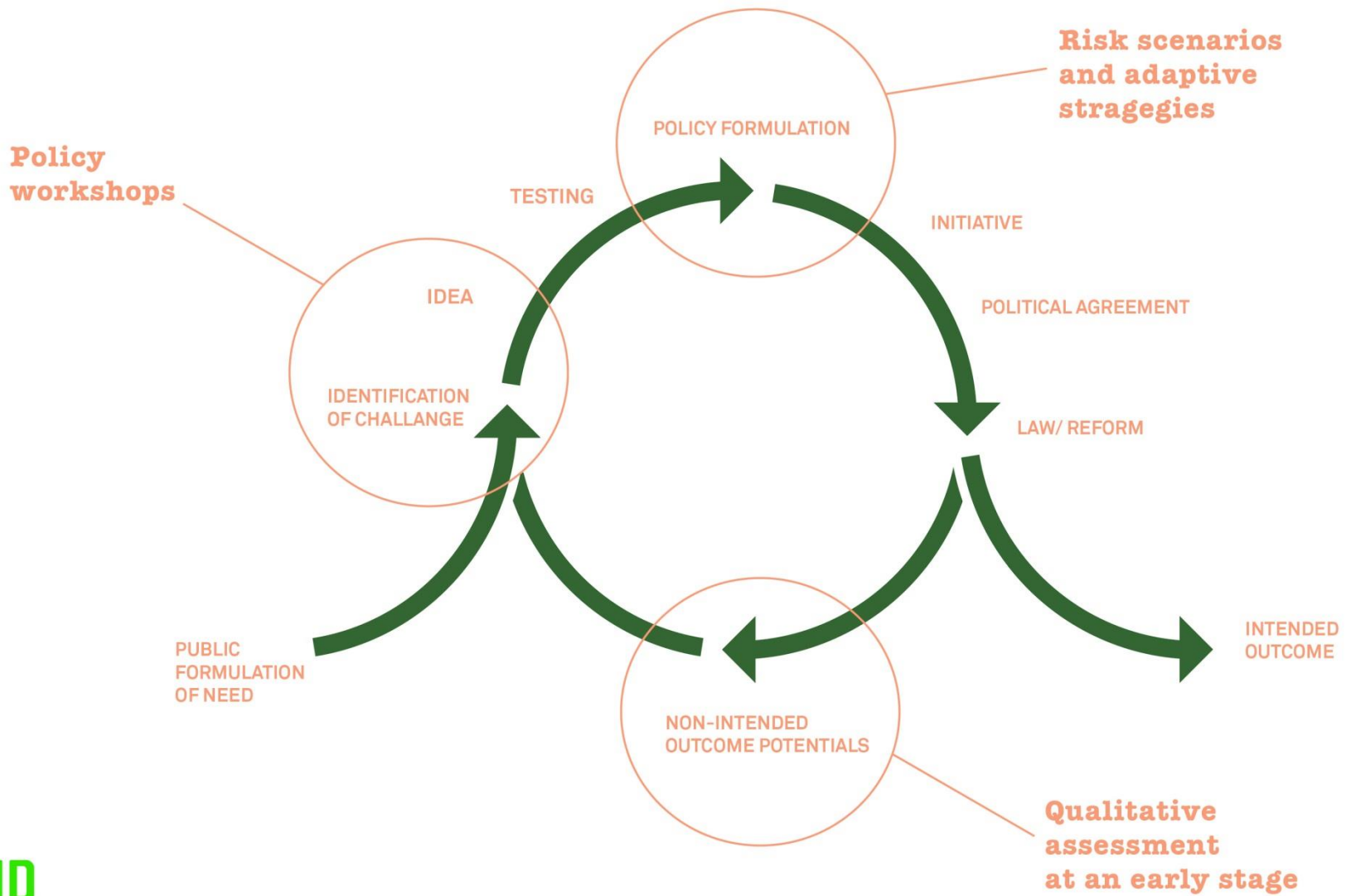
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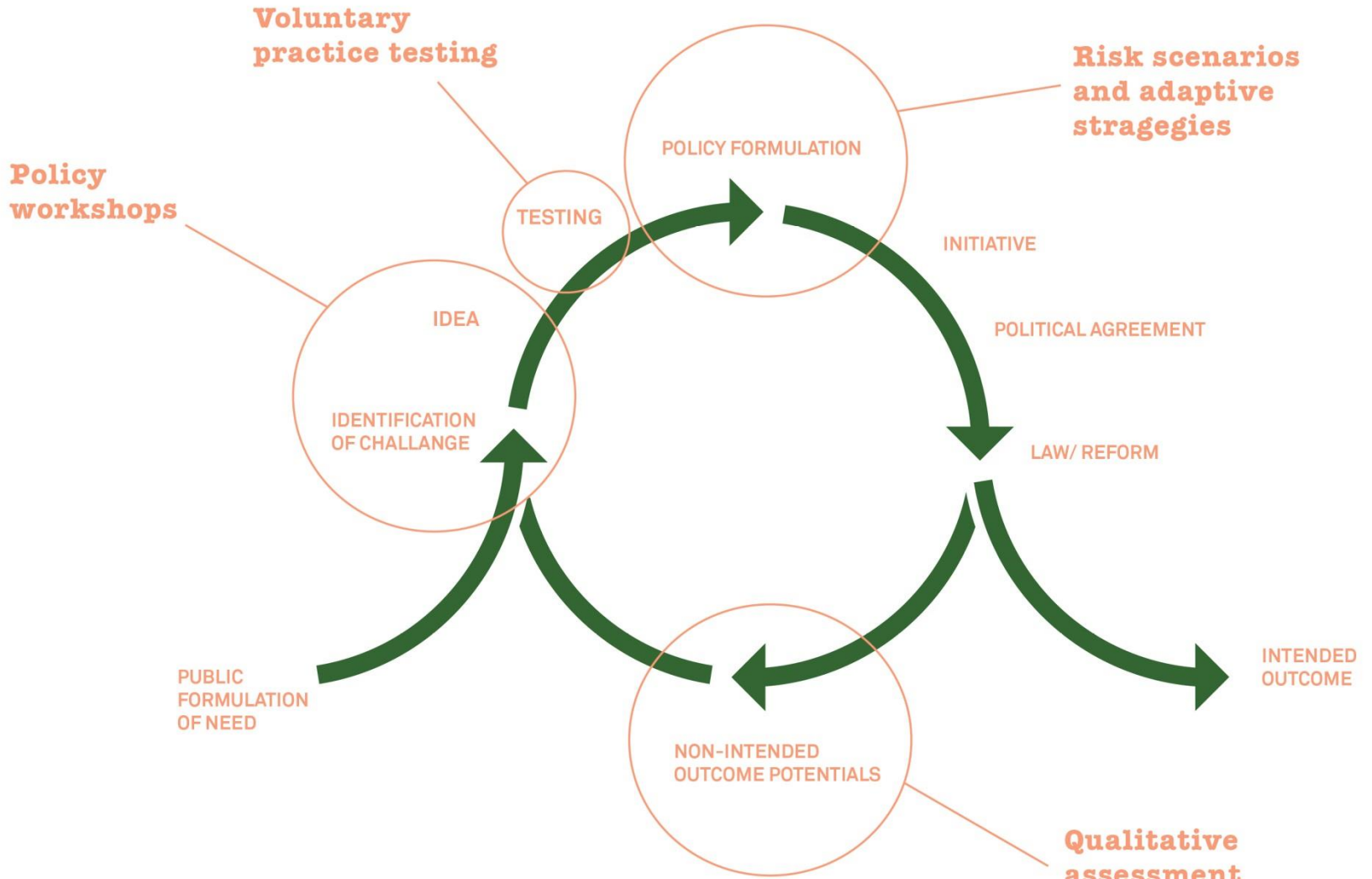
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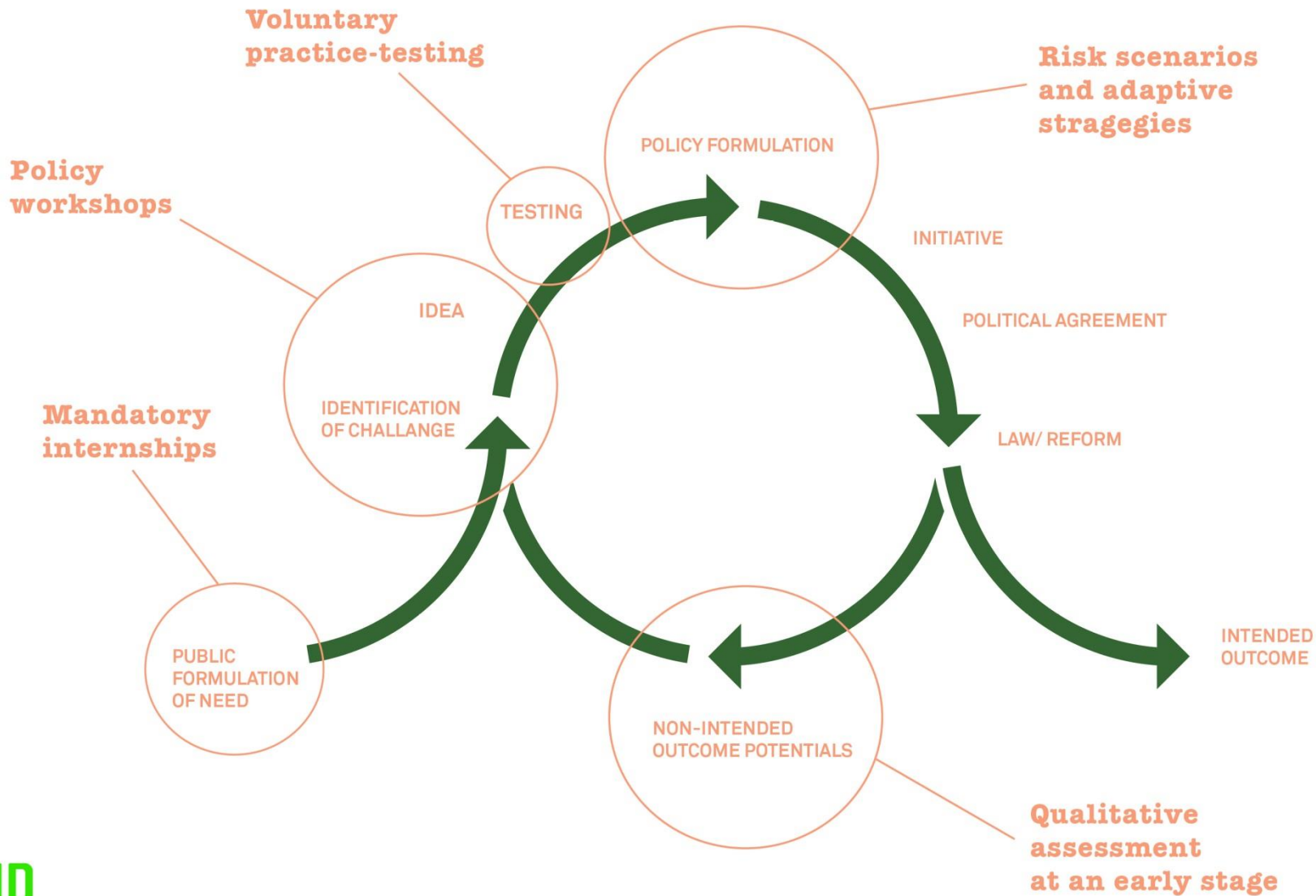


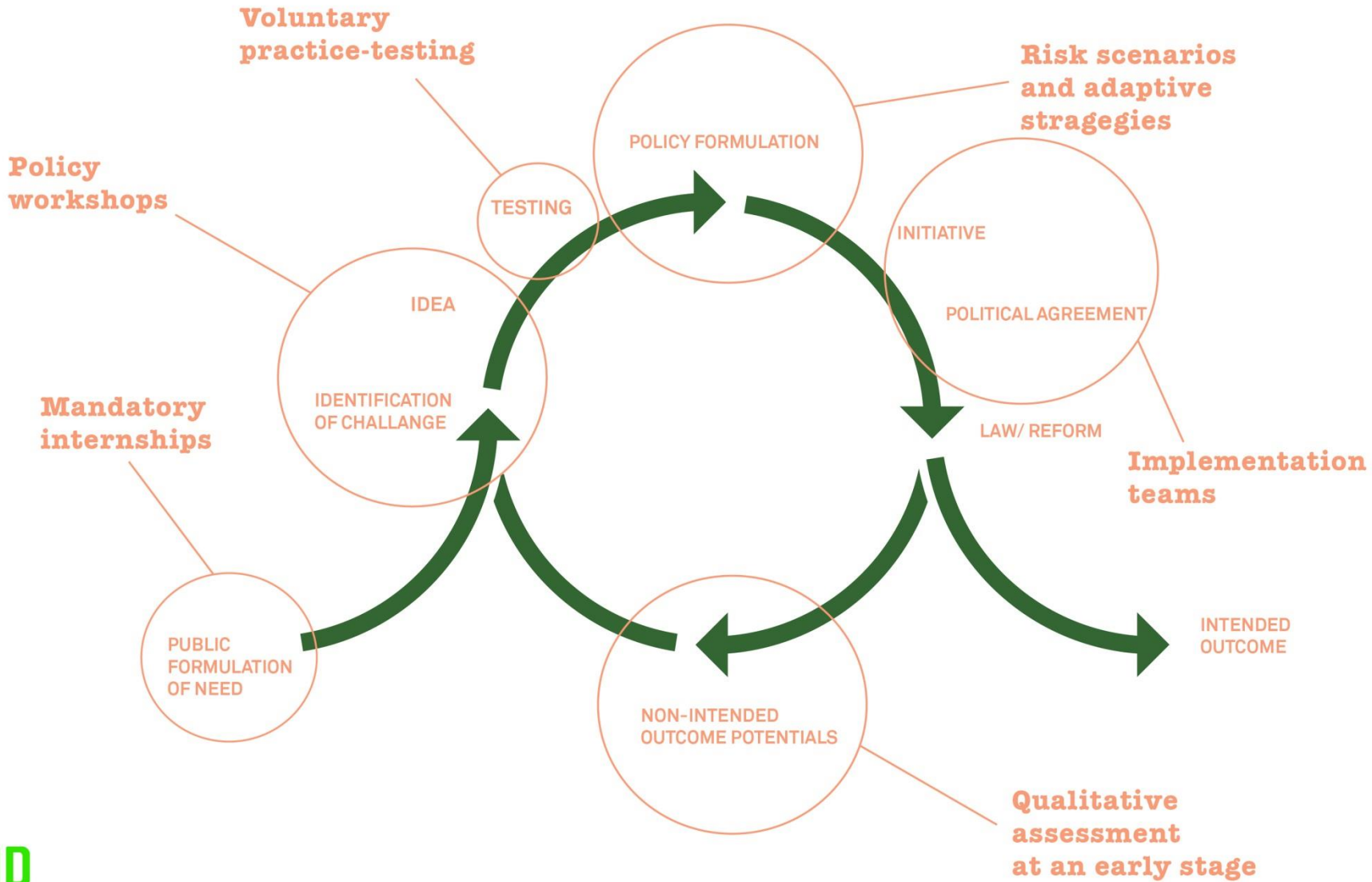
**Policy workshops/
networked
development**











“A reform is not a reform until there are people that are experiencing something different”

Mette Frederiksen, Former Danish Minister of Employment





“It is not our job to solve the problem of unemployment. It is our job to continuously tackle or address it”

Peter Moerk, Former
Permanent Secretary,
Danish Minister of
Employment

EMBEDDING NEW PRINCIPLES OF POLICY-MAKING...

Focus	Problem	Consequence	We need to enable...	New approach...
Policy and implementation	Separating policy and implementation as two different tasks	Policies are developed by few people that are not involved in their implementation	A more experimental culture	Outcomes-focused experimentation (test, learn, adapt)
Theory of change	Assuming that change is a product of a specific planned process	Policies fail to create the intended outcomes / get caught on the wrong path	Better dynamic between policy and practice	Policy-platforms: using policy create practical responses to local needs
Focus in support system	Prioritising pre-planned support and evaluation activities	When policies fail, they are often likely to be failed by wider networks of support	Shared ownership and open dialogue	Focus on local sense-making, creativity and collaboration

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TRADITIONAL PLANNING

PRINCIPLES OF EXPERIMENTAL CULTURE

EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE

PREDICTABLE

Outcomes are predictable and result from careful (process) execution

Outcomes

UNPREDICTABLE

Outcomes are not predictable and result from trial-and-error

"WE KNOW"

Using existing knowledge/methods to achieve desired outcomes

Attitude

"WE DON'T KNOW (FOR SURE)"

Testing and seeing what works, or tapping into other sources of knowledge (citizens / partners)

A SPECIFIC FUTURE

Planning is done for creating a specific future

Planning

MULTIPLE FUTURES

Planning is done for multiple possible futures

REARVIEW-MIRROR

Decisions are based on historical facts and past successes

Decision basis

FUTURE-ORIENTED

Decisions are open-ended and based on indications from experiments

PROBLEM

Citizens are seen as a problem to be solved or the cause of the problem

Citizens

POTENTIAL

Citizens are a source of insight and potential for transformative action

HIGHLIGHT AND VALIDATE

Knowledge is used to make generalizable assumptions on societal problems at scale at a point-in-time

Purpose of knowledge

UNDERSTAND AND GENERATE

Knowledge is used to capture human experience/social complexity and test assumptions in real-time over time

PRESCRIPTIVE

Policy documents that describe or prescribe a predefined course of action

Tools

EXPLORATIVE

Innovation tools that enable creative thinking, collaboration and learning

INSIDE THE OFFICE

Try to figure out from behind a desk what course of action to take

Location

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Engage with users and stakeholders to figure out what course of action to take

CAMOUFLAGED

Uncertainty and risks are camouflaged via detailed plans or sometimes even a deal-breaker

Uncertainty and risk

ACKNOWLEDGED

Uncertainty and risks are coped with and minimised via trial-and-error approach

AVOIDED

Failure is seen as something to avoid

Failure

EMBRACED

Failure is accepted as part of iterative learning and improving

What principle of experimental practice are you most comfortable with? And why?

What are you least comfortable with? And why?

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What would be needed to go from traditional planning to experimental practice?

What is the most pressing question in relation to this transition?

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EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE

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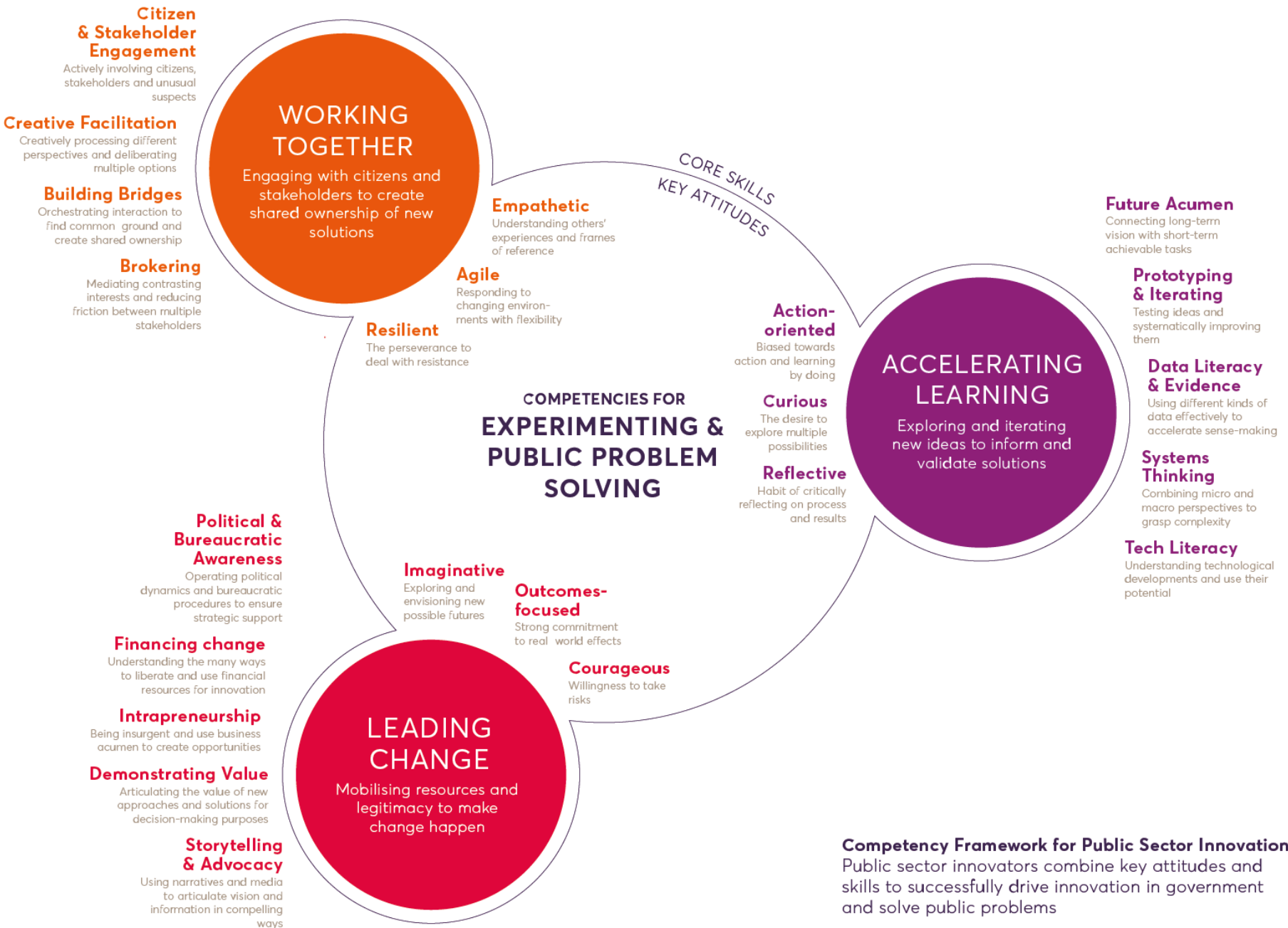
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Wrap up...



Competency Framework for Public Sector Innovation
Public sector innovators combine key attitudes and skills to successfully drive innovation in government and solve public problems