



Internship at Centre for Living Labs UU

How was it?

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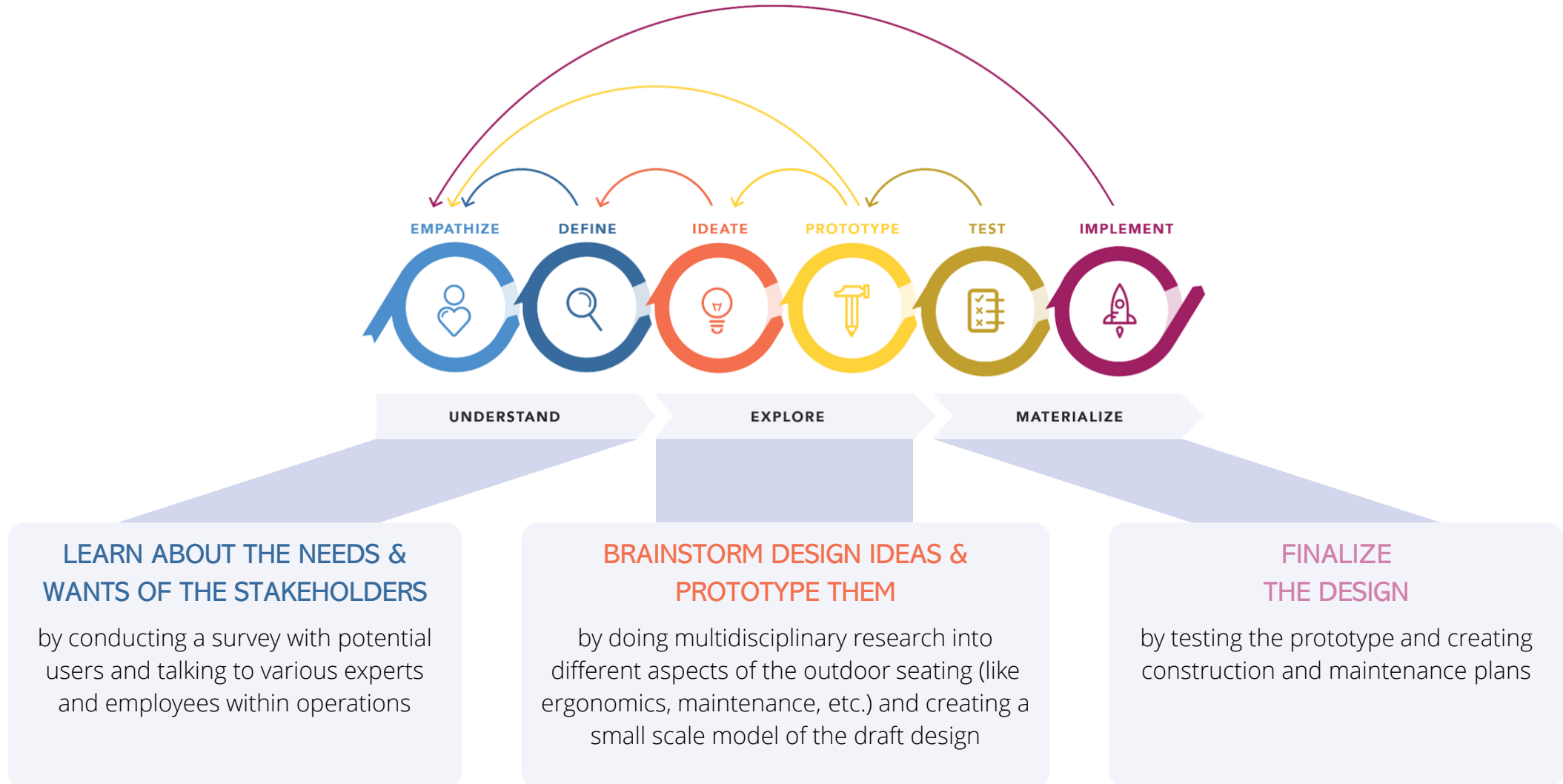
How did it start?



My journey began during my minor at HU when I participated in the Sustainable City Challenge 2023. There, as a part of a team of students, I came up with an idea of outdoor seating covered in greenery and providing space for outdoor studying and relaxing, an “escape” from the busyness of the USP. Our concept won the contest, which gave us a chance to present it to the Area development team of the UU. They expressed willingness to implement the seating. Seizing the opportunity, I proposed to help implement the idea as my internship for the next semester. And that’s how I found myself as an intern at CLU!



What was my internship plan?



What were my personal goals?

Enhance my project management skills

I wanted to apply my knowledge about project management into practice. This internship was a great opportunity for that since I was responsible for planning and carrying out the development of the concept and involving the right people.



Gain experience in design & prototyping

During my study, I gained basic technical knowledge about prototyping and testing. My goal for this internship was to have a hands-on experience in designing a solution, prototyping it, and testing to improve the design.

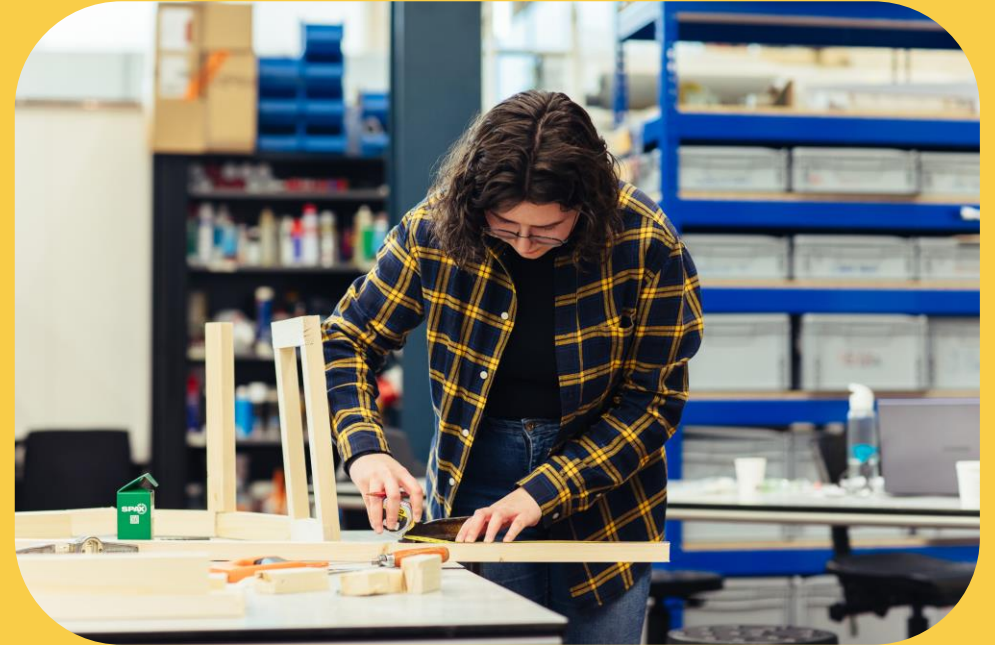


Improve my networking skills

This project required reaching out to experts in various fields to gather useful information, and I was responsible for making necessary connections. I wanted to practice my networking skills and gain more confidence in approaching people.



One of the most enjoyable aspects of my internship was the opportunity to prototype my idea. I built two prototypes on my own with an invaluable support from Lili's Proto Lab. Crafting things with my hands has always been a passion of mine, and this project allowed me to channel that enthusiasm into a tangible product.



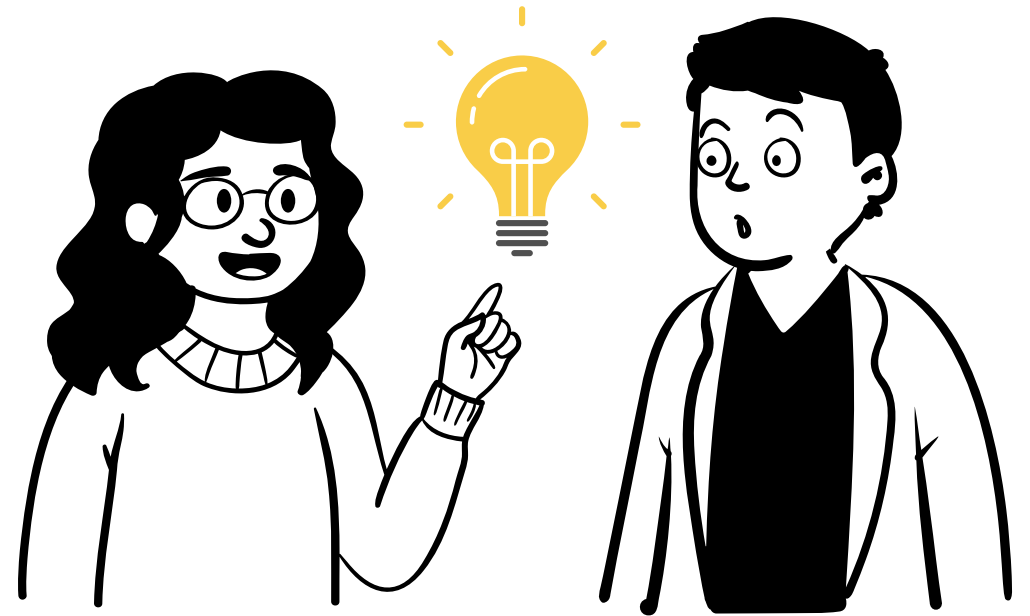
Seeing my concept come to life and experimenting with different structural choices was incredibly rewarding. This iterative process not only enhanced my technical skills but also deepened my understanding of the relationship between design and functionality.



Successes & hurdles

Successes

I think the biggest success in this project came from taking a risk and prototyping my concept with materials that some experts had disapproved of. I saw potential in the innovative application of cork in furniture design and decided to pursue it, despite the scepticism. This decision paid off, as the materials proved to be highly suitable for my concept. Taking this bold step not only validated my intuition but also highlighted the importance of thinking outside the box. I am grateful that my internship supervisors provided me with freedom and trust to be able to make such decisions.



Successes & hurdles



Hurdles

One considerable hurdle for me during this internship was effective communication with stakeholders. I often find it difficult to make new connections and sustain interactions after the initial meeting. During this project, it was also the case. With several experts I reached out to, I struggled to maintain the connection, which resulted in missing out on valuable information that could have been useful for my research. However, this experience taught me a valuable lesson. By reflecting on these challenges, I improved my communication skills, and my later interactions during the internship were quite successful.



What did I learn?

One of the main things I learned during the internship was about myself. Previously, I focused only on the downsides of teamwork and believed that I preferred to work alone. However, this internship at CLU helped me understand the value of working in a team. I realized how collaborating with others brings in new perspectives, enriches my ideas, and enhances the overall quality of a project.



Conclusion

What did CLU give me?

Centre for Living Labs provided me with an invaluable opportunity to bring my concept to life. They supported me throughout the project with advice, network, and various resources. Additionally, they gave me the experience of working in a diverse and open-minded team, which not only enhanced my teamwork skills for the future but also provided me with a safe and pleasant place to work.



What did I bring to CLU?

Although my project was not directly related to the operations of CLU, I believe it still brought benefits to the organization. My project serves as an example to students that their sustainable initiatives are valued at the campus and that there is room for their realization, thereby enhancing the reputation and mission of CLU.

