CIRCE

Finland – Creative Impact Fund

Kuulu.io

The problem-solving digital solution that empowers organisations to create tailored DEI plans for overcoming identity-related injustice

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Summary

Kuulu.io operates in the field of enhancing the strategic planning of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) using Software as a Service. We're on a mission to make promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) easy for everyone. Our goal is to offer an all-in-one solution so that anyone, without needing extensive prior knowledge or a deep dive into the subject, can take meaningful steps in fostering DEI or create a strategic plan for their organisation.

We believe in simplicity and accessibility for everyone on the journey toward a more inclusive future. From one organisation's perspective, we aim to provide a digitally facilitated, understandable process to plan and create DEI strategy. From a broader perspective, we aim to create more diversity and inclusion in the work life, take down barriers, and make labour industries more accessible for everyone. On top of that, we are aiming to help organisations create a greater sense of belonging for everyone, not just those who represent the majority.

Kuulu has identified and validated several issues related to DEI planning, recognizing challenges such as lack of participation, difficulty tracking progress, and uncertainty about where to start the strategy planning process. In response to these challenges, Kuulu.io has developed an all-in-one digital tool for strategic planning of DEI.
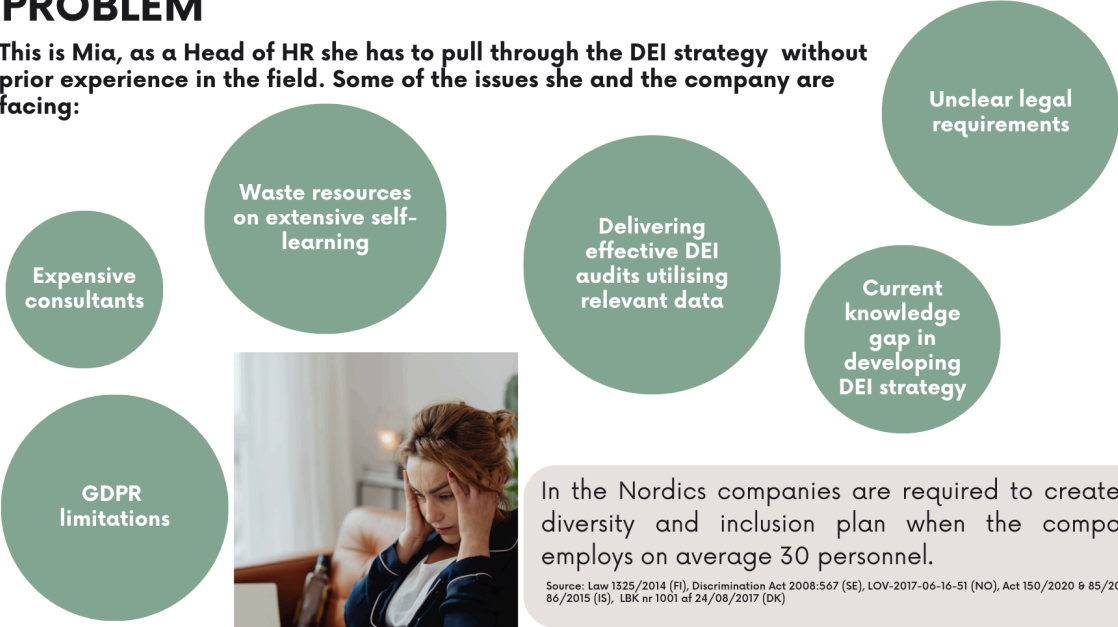
During CIRCE, we have been slowly but steadily growing from the idea stage to the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) stage and have launched our first pilot program. Our pilot program is testing the hypothesis that with a 6-week sprint, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy planning are more efficient and engaging. The average length for DEI planning ranges from 3 to 6 months. For our pilot program, we have created a 6-week sprint where the customer has to actively work for only 4 weeks. The remaining two weeks are for us to analyse the results of the auditing phase and to create suggestions for action and focus points based on their actual needs. The sprint has understandable goals for each week, a bearable length, and all the materials and guidelines are provided by the tool.

Outcomes of the 8-month CIRCE journey include increased clarity on target customers, a functioning MVP, and a pilot program, positioning us for an accelerator program to support scaling. During CIRCE, we secured further funding from Business Finland with a project to test the Swedish market. Participation in CIRCE provided access to funding and mentors that significantly advanced Kuulu's innovation journey.

The next phase for Kuulu involves expanding pilots and user testing to fine-tune the product-market fit. We're also focused on building a partner ecosystem and establishing a DEI Business Community. Additionally, we're in the process of forming a new team, seeking new partners, and actively working on a project to test the Swedish market. We've adopted a methodology of continuous iteration, learning, and refinement that we learned and successfully implemented during our CIRCE journey. This valuable approach remains a cornerstone of our strategy as we continue to strive for success in creating more inclusion and the sense of belonging for everyone.

PROBLEM

This is Mia, as a Head of HR she has to pull through the DEI strategy without prior experience in the field. Some of the issues she and the company are facing:

Unclear legal requirements

Waste resources on extensive self-learning

Delivering effective DEI audits utilising relevant data

Expensive consultants

Current knowledge gap in developing DEI strategy

GDPR limitations

In the Nordics companies are required to create a diversity and inclusion plan when the company employs on average 30 personnel.

Source: Law 1325/2014 (FI), Discrimination Act 2008:567 (SE), LOV-2017-06-16-51 (NO), Act 150/2020 & 85/2015 & 86/2015 (IS), LBK nr 1001 af 24/08/2017 (DK)

Kuulu has identified and validated several issues related to DEI planning

SOLUTION

With a scalable digital DEI strategy management solution Kuulu.io Mia is able to deliver a comprehensive diversity, equality, and inclusion promotion strategy that meets the legal requirements.

Fully facilitated process

- ✓ Step-by-step instructions
- ✓ Company audit
- ✓ Collection of accurate and useful data
- ✓ Engagement of employees
- ✓ Presentations, workshop frameworks, surveys etc
- ✓ E-learning library

Inclusive teams are more productive by over 35%.

Diverse companies earn 2.5 times higher cash flow per employee

Source:Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Global Market Report 2022

Kuulu.io solution is a all-in-one digital tool for strategic planning of DEI

Journey

When Kuulu joined CIRCE, we were a fresh team with new team members at the early stages of developing a concept to address diversity and inclusion challenges in workplaces. We had just started in Kiuas Accelerator when we found out we got accepted as part of the Proof of Concept Lot in CIRCE. We seamlessly integrated both programs, ensuring a synergistic collaboration that proved incredibly fruitful. By participating in both simultaneously, we maximised the benefits of each, strategically extracting the most crucial information. This dual engagement resulted in a mutually enriching experience where both programs flourished, and we gained invaluable insights from this combined approach. Our journey led us through extensive research to validate the problem and solution, raising financing to fund operations, building an MVP, and establishing pilot customers for testing.

TEAM

Senni Moilanen (she/they)
Founder & CEO

Senni is a highly experienced professional in the areas of societal change and DEI. She is a skilled project initiator and builder, having successfully launched and led several initiatives from scratch through bootstrapping.

Terhi Kesela (she/her)
Co-founder & CGO

Terhi's strong background in social sciences, combined with her entrepreneurial experience, has made her a unique professional in the field of equality at work. She has an exceptional ability to combine best practices from both the private and public sectors, to build social sustainability.

Margot de Maulmont (she/her)
CTO

Margot is a full stack developer from Hive Coding School with with a strong interest in inclusive digital development and design. Before moving to Finland Margot studied Business degree in France and worked as Front-end Developer.

KIUAS
Accelerator
Spring 2023

Funded by

CIRCE Creative Impact Research Centre Europe

BUSINESS FINLAND

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Kuulu.io team has a lot of experience from multiple sectors

We started by conducting interviews with HR professionals and DEI leaders to deeply understand their pain points, needs and hopes around workplace inclusion planning efforts. The methodology that was used for the interviews was "the Mom test" (Fitzpatrick, R. 2013) which aims to draw out real user challenges rather than just validating our assumptions.

Simultaneously we were led onwards by mentors from different fields of expertise and were able to clarify our direction and finetune our goals and direction of development. As we were exploring the possibility on how to incorporate ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) Sustainability reports as part of our tool, we were able to secure a leading ESG expert from the insurance industry as an advisor who provided corporate perspectives on sustainability reporting integration. By combining insights from our research with external guidance and mentoring, we refined our goals and product priorities.

The initial phase of Software development involved the creation of our website, serving as the front page for our business. Decisions regarding the website's content, branding, graphical layout, and elements, such as colour palette and logo, were crucial. Subsequently, we proceeded to code the website, deploying it to the Internet shortly before the Vienna Impact Days.

In parallel, for our digital tool—a dashboard with various features to aid clients in their DEI journey—we embraced agile methodology and practices from the outset. The next step involved identifying the essential features for our MVP, as well as those that, while desirable, were not strictly necessary for the initial pilot phase. This process was informed by preliminary client

research and insights gleaned from our mentors.This strategic approach allows us to focus on testing the basic concept with pilot customers and iterate based on their feedback.

Key Milestones:

May 2023:
- Conducted interviews with HR professionals and other managers to identify core workplace issues considering DEI planning
- First CIRCE symposium

June 2023:
- Began designing preliminary product features
- Onboarded an ESG advisor
- Vienna Impact Days
- Applied for critical Tempo funding to enable product development
- CIRCE gathering in San Sebastian
- Deployed the current version of our website online

July 2023:
- Started developing components of MVP survey tool and whistleblower channel
- AEE class collaboration

August 2023:
- Continued refining MVP product scope and content framework
- Brought on a Nonviolent communication (NVC) expert to improve internal team cohesion
- Framework designs
- AI and GDPR insights

September 2023:
- Confirmation of Tempo funding
- Got accepted into Escaltech scale-up program
- CIRCE Fellow and Fund Convention

October 2023:
- First MVP testing day
- Developed Pilot program framework
- Closed first pilot customer and began testing MVP
- Started marketing outreach and content campaigns

November 2023:
- Refining our Ideal target customer
- Participated in the final CIRCE community event for reflections and closing
- Finding a new team member to join
- Iterated the Pilot program framework

CIRCE experience took our concept from initial research to functional prototype, while connecting us with mentors and a creative community that broadened our perspective and approach. We gained a crucial understanding of bringing social innovations to market through an iterative, user-centred process.

Innovation

Build Stage:

In the initial phase, we concentrated on research to inform our product design. Expert interviews revealed key insights, highlighting challenges such as survey fatigue, isolation of marginalized groups, and difficulty tracking DEI progress. Armed with these research insights, we crafted core product features, including customized surveys, analytics dashboards, e-learning portals, and whistleblower reporting channels. This synthesis of our expertise and research findings led to the identification of 8 key phases in the DEI planning process that our tool would support.

How we developed and refined the MVP:

For the initial version of our product, identified during the summer, the key features included:

1. Allowing clients to log in, log out, and invite colleagues to the platform.
2. Providing access to a DEI roadmap outlining the planned steps.
3. Offering a content library for browsing DEI-related articles.
4. Presenting an audit tab displaying the company's assessment.
5. Including a tab with a link to the "whistleblower channel" for anonymous employee reporting.

Despite establishing a timeline for MVP features, we underestimated the development time, leading to adjustments in the initial project plan. Estimating software development time posed a challenge, especially with only one junior developer on the team. The original MVP plans were more extensive, but due to time constraints and resource limitations, modifications were made.

To expedite development, we purchased two pre-made tech solutions: a full stack solution providing a basic web application structure connected to a database, and a set of ready-made UI elements for a visually appealing dashboard. A key lesson learned was the value of external testing to gain a client's perspective on layout, information presentation, and overall usability. This highlighted the need for continuous feedback, particularly in the absence of a pilot customer during this development phase.

Measure Stage:

We encountered challenges in securing pilot customers, prompting us to adapt and explore alternative methods for testing and validation. We quickly realised organic unpaid reach would be very limited initially as first-time start-up founders. Building brand awareness and content assets from scratch requires a multi-year commitment. Paid promotions help, but growing an audience that actively engages still takes persistence over time. Our email campaigns aimed to capture pilot leads, however, conversion rates were lower than expected despite sizable reach. With no brand recognition yet, most cold outreach gets ignored in crowded inboxes. Warm

introductions convert better. As we actively seek new avenues to promote and sell our product, this experience has fueled our iterative approach and creative problem-solving.

The key takeaway has been that product-market fit must come first before scaling the pipeline through marketing. Once we have a solid customer base validating our solution, expanding through channels and partnerships will gain more traction. However establishing engagement as an unknown startup has proven to be a gradual, timely process.

Implementation:
The initial research indicated our initial target customer segment to be small/medium businesses, looking for more efficient ways to conduct their DEI planning process.
Based on these parameters we established a six-week pilot program to answer to our target audience's needs and test the product.

Kuulu.io 6 week Pilot Programme
For our pilot programme we have created a 6-week sprint where the customer has to actively work for only 4 weeks. Two weeks in between the sprint are for us to analyse the results of the auditing phase and then create suggestions for action and focus points based on their actual needs.

The pilot programme is divided into different weekly themes.

GET GO - Week 1
The initial week, known as the "Get-Go" phase, focuses on assembling the individuals who will lead the DEI strategy planning process. During this stage, we assist clients in identifying key stakeholders and apprising them of the upcoming journey. Another primary objective for the first week is to establish organisational structure and conduct a meeting with the working group to define a shared perspective and goals for the forthcoming sprint. The "Get-Go" week also involves disseminating information to all participants regarding the process, schedule, and objectives. It's crucial to communicate everyone's responsibilities for their involvement in this collaborative venture. This ensures that participants allocate the necessary time in their calendars for engaging in the planning process. Throughout this week, we provide clients with communication materials and support in sending calendar invites to facilitate their active participation.

AUDIT - Week 2
During Week 2, referred to as the "Audit" phase, we delve into the crucial auditing process. This phase marks the initiation of a significant auditing endeavour. We have curated a variety of surveys for our clients, including an employee survey and self-reflective/self-auditing surveys tailored to different functions and specific work tasks within those functions. Acting as a third party, we have the capability to pose detailed questions to employees, allowing us to uncover genuine pain points and identify areas for development. The auditing phase plays a pivotal role in gaining insights into the actual needs and challenges within the organisation.

ANALYSING - Weeks 3 & 4

During the third and fourth weeks, clients shift their focus back to their primary responsibilities, allowing us to initiate the analysis process. Leveraging our proprietary solutions, we meticulously analyse the gathered data. Employing various demographics, we cross-examine the information to discern whether specific groups experience discrimination or harassment. Additionally, we identify staff members' perspectives on needs for development and highlight areas where the organisation has excelled. It's important to note that all results are anonymized to ensure confidentiality, protecting the identity of individuals contributing to the data.
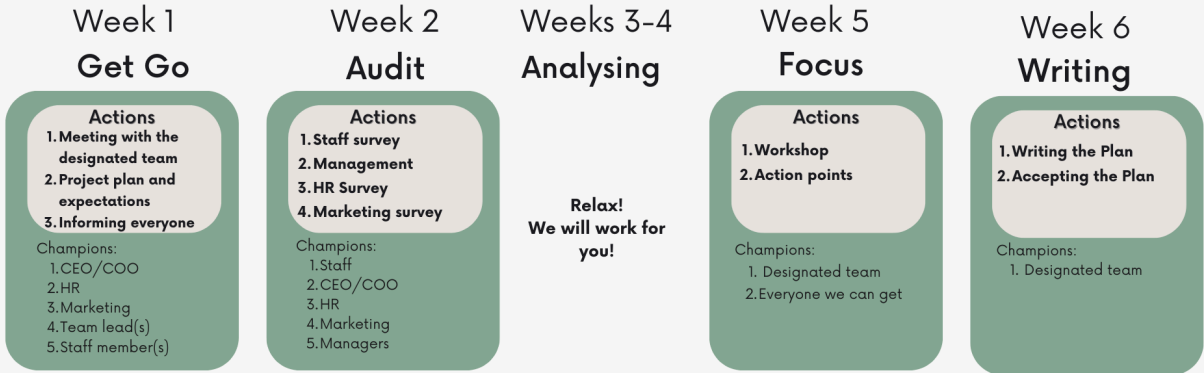
FOCUS - Week 5

In the fifth week, we re-engage with the client, directing our attention to the future. Together, we explore where they envision change and collaboratively identify focus points and action items for the next one or two years. Recognizing the importance of prioritisation, we advise the client to select two to three significant development areas to concentrate on. To facilitate this decision-making process, we offer our support through workshops involving all interested stakeholders. The objective is to encourage widespread involvement, fostering better commitment and ensuring more effective implementation of the chosen focus areas in the upcoming years. During this week, the focus is on jointly determining where the client desires transformative change and defining actionable goals to achieve those desired changes. This involves collaborative discussions and decision-making to pinpoint specific areas for development, establishing clear objectives that will drive the intended transformation. The aim is to align on strategic goals that will guide the organisation toward a more inclusive and impactful future.

WRITING - Week 6

During the concluding week of the sprint, we focus on finalising the plan through collaborative writing and refinement. Our role involves not only facilitating the writing process but also providing essential support such as written content, templates, and graphical elements from our solution. As we navigate this phase, our aim is to assist the client in crafting a comprehensive and impactful plan. Once the plan takes shape, the final step involves collective acceptance by the entire organisation, marking the culmination of our collaborative efforts.
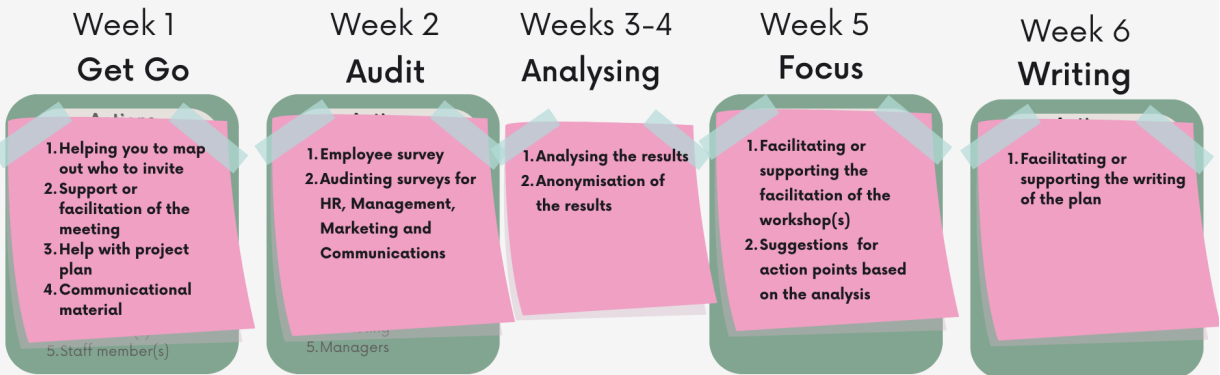
6 WEEK PILOT WITH KUULU

Week 1 **Get Go**	Week 2 **Audit**	Weeks 3-4 **Analysing**	Week 5 **Focus**	Week 6 **Writing**
Actions 1. Meeting with the designated team 2. Project plan and expectations 3. Informing everyone Champions: 1. CEO/COO 2. HR 3. Marketing 4. Team lead(s) 5. Staff member(s)	**Actions** 1. Staff survey 2. Management 3. HR Survey 4. Marketing survey Champions: 1. Staff 2. CEO/COO 3. HR 4. Marketing 5. Managers	**Relax! We will work for you!**	**Actions** 1. Workshop 2. Action points Champions: 1. Designated team 2. Everyone we can get	**Actions** 1. Writing the Plan 2. Accepting the Plan Champions: 1. Designated team

Our 6-week pilot programme, actions and champions

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM US

| Week 1 **Get Go**	Week 2 **Audit**	Weeks 3-4 **Analysing**	Week 5 **Focus**	Week 6 **Writing**
1. Helping you to map out who to invite 2. Support or facilitation of the meeting 3. Help with project plan 4. Communicational material	1. Employee survey 2. Auditing surveys for HR, Management, Marketing and Communications	1. Analysing the results 2. Anonymisation of the results	1. Facilitating or supporting the facilitation of the workshop(s) 2. Suggestions for action points based on the analysis	1. Facilitating or supporting the writing of the plan

Our offering for the pilot customer through the pilot sprint

By continually iterating through building, measuring, and learning, we made significant progress in evolving both our product and internal capabilities over the course of CIRCE. Staying

persistent, open to input and collecting insights from potential users and partners enabled us to validate and enhance our solution.
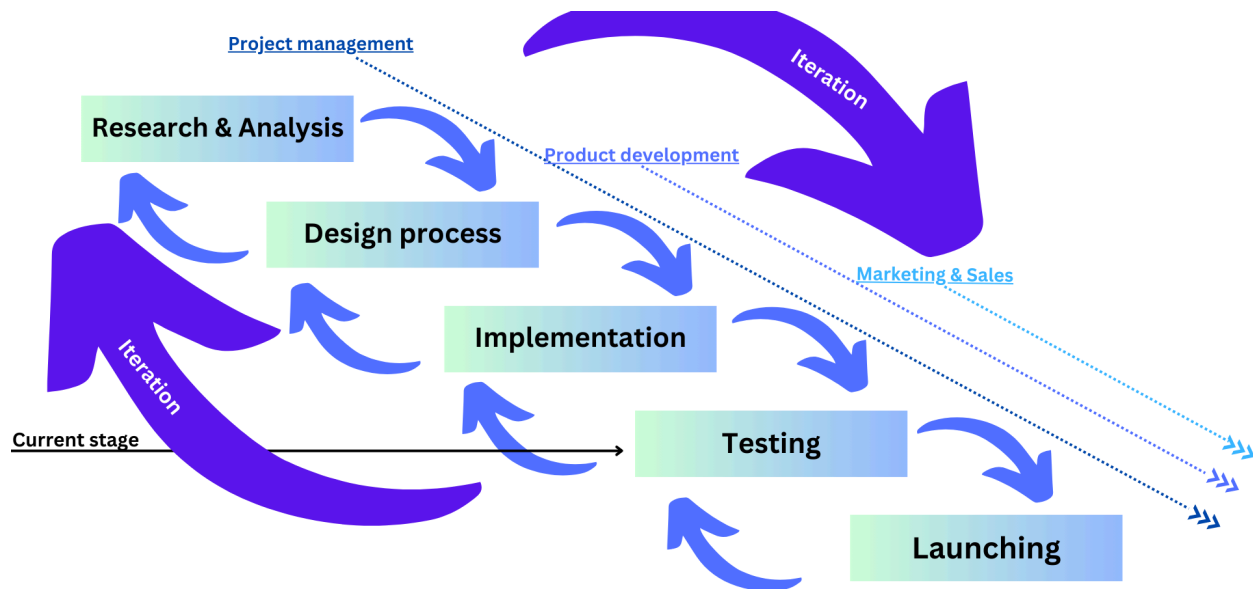
An overview of our iterative innovation process

Impact

As discussed several times with the whole community of CIRCE, impact can be challenging to measure. Unfortunately due to some setbacks, we didn't get as far as we anticipated over the course of CIRCE hence still lack quantitative data from our product and its impact. However we were able to identify several areas of impact.

External Impact:

Our solution's external impact is multifaceted and extends to various stakeholders. Initially, our project directly engaged with HR/DEI professionals and team members representing a wide spectrum of companies, ranging from small startups to large enterprises. While the quantitative impact is still emerging, the qualitative feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. In fact, over 90% of interviewees and potential pilot users expressed keen interest in utilising our tool. Their valuable input has not only guided our development process but also served as a strong indicator of the demand for a tool that promotes more inclusive workplaces. This early feedback underscores the potential for our solution to bring about significant change.

Furthermore, our project has fostered collaborations and synergies within the diversity and inclusion ecosystem in Finland. We consciously aimed to create a partner ecosystem around our product, emphasising cooperation over indirect competition. This approach has opened up

several avenues for collaboration with other stakeholders, reinforcing our commitment to collective efforts in addressing labour market challenges.

Moreover, our insights into providing valuable data for ESG reporting, particularly in the social aspect, have garnered substantial interest from parties involved in financial reporting. The new regulations have left many companies perplexed, especially in the realm of social reporting, where experiential data is harder to quantify. Our solution's potential to provide valuable data in this context has been met with enthusiasm and presents an opportunity for meaningful contributions to ESG reporting practices.

It's worth highlighting that Business Finland's funding is a strong validation of our project's value proposition. As an organisation dedicated to fostering innovation and economic growth, Business Finland rigorously evaluates and selects projects that demonstrate significant potential and impact. The fact that our project secured funding from Business Finland underscores the intrinsic value and potential for positive change that our solution embodies.

Internal Impact:

Internally, within the Kuulu team, the impact of our project has been profound. As a team of three core members with diverse backgrounds and working cultures, we encountered challenges that led to occasional conflicts. However, these challenges became opportunities for growth and learning. By implementing structured feedback processes, including resources such as Nonviolent Communication, we were able to enhance team cohesion and maintain professionalism throughout the project. This internal growth and development have not only enriched our team dynamics but also equipped us with valuable skills for future endeavours.

Additionally, our visibility and audibility in the startup ecosystem have made a notable impact. As a company founded entirely by women and with Queer and a majority of BIPOC representation, we have navigated higher hurdles and made deliberate decisions to lead by example. For instance, despite advice from prestigious business mentors, we chose not to hire a male spokesperson, standing firmly by our principles of equality and sustainability. Every decision we make is a step toward creating a more equitable society and serves as a testament to the importance of doing what is right, even when it's not the easiest path. One testimonial of being actively present in the male dominant tech start-up ecosystem was receiving an invitation to take part in the Nordic Fe:male Invest Summit to share one of our founders' DEI story. Female founders still receive around 1% of all VC funding in the Nordics.

On an individual level, each team member has experienced significant personal and professional growth within the entrepreneurial environment of CIRCE. The program has provided us with access to a creative and caring community, expert coaching and mentoring. This community extends beyond the program and continues to enrich our capabilities and networks. We are immensely grateful for the chance to transform an idea into a working prototype and recognize the invaluable guidance, financing, and networks that the Creative

Impact Fund has provided. This experience has accelerated our personal and professional development in immeasurable ways, leaving a lasting impact on each team member.

Learnings

Our journey in developing the new product provided invaluable insights, with one of the most profound lessons centering around the significance of validating the pain points and needs of our target audience. Throughout the product development process, we recognized the critical importance of testing hypotheses by conducting interviews, deploying surveys, and thoroughly examining existing research in the field. Employing the "Mom test" (Fitzpatrick, R. 2013) during our interviews proved instrumental in avoiding biases and eliciting authentic feedback.

The essence of the Mom test lies in diverting the focus from discussing one's own idea or product and, instead, delving into the everyday life and experiences of the interviewee. By employing open-ended questions without providing background information, we aimed to allow individuals to candidly express their genuine pains and needs. This approach was pivotal in ensuring that responses were not influenced by a desire to please the interviewer. It is a recognition that, in an attempt to be agreeable, individuals might express interest in a service during an interview but might not translate that interest into actual product adoption in real-life scenarios.

In our initial interviews back in the fall of 2022, the founding team took a different approach by introducing the product idea and seeking feedback. While we gathered valuable insights, we realised that some of the information, especially regarding pricing, might not accurately reflect what people are truly willing to pay. The Mom test proved to be eye-opening, highlighting the importance of not just conducting interviews but genuinely validating the idea during the process.

A significant revelation has been the transformative impact of ecosystems. Our involvement in both Kiuas and CIRCE has granted us access to a wealth of knowledge, mentors, advisors, and a supportive community. Beyond the documented information, we've discovered the immense value of what we refer to as "silent information." This unspoken wisdom is often accumulated by individuals with extensive experience—those who have navigated the intricate processes of trying, testing, failing, iterating, and learning.

This tacit knowledge, often unrecorded or shared in formal settings, is transmitted through mentorship and coaching relationships. It encompasses the nuanced insights and practical wisdom gained through hands-on experiences, creating an invaluable reservoir of guidance that has significantly shaped our entrepreneurial journey.

With initial market insights and data collected, we evaluated areas for product refinement and business model validation. However, a key realisation was that our MVP scope was too broad for early testing phases. In our eagerness to showcase our vision, we had attempted to build out

too many features upfront rather than releasing the bare essentials first. Our initial MVP, we spent far too long, nearly 8 months, before having a viable product to put in users' hands. Our key takeaway was that releasing an ultra-lean prototype in less than 3 months would have allowed us to start garnering real-world feedback much earlier.

We learned that the MVP should provide the core functionality to clearly demonstrate value, without all the bells and whistles. Additional capabilities can then be built based on which features customers find most useful in those early testing rounds. Prioritising speed in getting a basic MVP out and iterated on is critical. Our advice would be to start as lean as possible, agree together with your team what functionality to test first.

The significance of sales cannot be overstated. With limited sales experience within our team, we faced challenges in synchronisation. Unfortunately, we struggled to establish a systematic approach that would have led us to success in working together effectively. Emphasising the significance of a robust sales strategy is crucial. It's important to not only develop a solid plan but also be prepared to iterate on it as a team. Transparency is key, and sharing the learnings within the team ensures that everyone is on the same page, fostering collaboration and adaptability. As advice we could say that building a successful team and sales strategy is an ongoing process. Stay adaptable, learn from experiences, and foster a collaborative environment where each team member's strengths contribute to overall success.

A valid learning was growing through funding delays, testing our team's internal agility and resilience. This eye-opening experience taught that anticipated timelines are often thrice as long in reality. Such pressure points deeply examine team dynamics – either bonding groups closer or tearing them apart. We learned the value of early stage conversations around desires, expectations and work cultures from CIRCE mentoring. Understanding individual reasons for involvement and engagement levels is very important to take in discussion and consideration early on.

However, the team also faced internal challenges in aligning diverse working styles which hindered progress. Valuable lessons were gained regarding the importance of communication, transparency, and structured goal-setting. In our case, these internal challenges led to the founders separating. However, it served as a valuable learning experience. By undergoing the challenges we didn't anticipate, we gained a deeper understanding of the importance of aligning values within the team. This reinforced the difficulty and significance of assembling the right team for the journey. Aligning working styles and communication methods can be challenging, but gaining an understanding of each individual's motivations ("whys") significantly aids in navigating the journey.

In the upcoming phases of Kuulu, we're in the process of refining our team structure. This involves exploring new approaches, welcoming a new team member while bidding farewell to another, defining clear roles, aligning on our individual motivations ('whys'), and actively cultivating a stronger team dynamic. We've initiated the journey to build not just a group of individuals but a cohesive team with a shared vision and goals. In the spirit of teamwork, we

draw inspiration from football, understanding that success is not just about individual performance but about winning together as a unified team.

Linking back to CIRCE

CIRCE has been an unforgettable and invaluable experience for our team and startup. It showed a possibility that was not present in our realities before, that there is an organisation fostering space for collaboration, growth and sustainable impact. As many other participants also identified, CIRCE has been a crucial enabler of ideas that would have otherwise not had the chance to leave their positive mark and impact in the world. We can all acknowledge that some things in our world are not working considering economic and demographic disparities, and nothing will change if we keep repeating the same patterns. Hence seeing potential on impact driven projects which usually would struggle to receive funding was now given a chance to change the world in ways that mainstream funding models may overlook.

Additionally, as mentioned before, also founders are humans, meaning that we require social interactions and strive in communities where we can find understanding and inspiration. Through the community provided through CIRCE, we were able to reflect our ideas and vacate our opinions on topics that were usually left undiscussed in other spaces oriented for startups. It was a remarkable experience to share synergies in a safe space, while navigating through the collision of creative and business economies together with those who appreciate the human side of entrepreneurship. This facilitated energetic exchanges on both business and personal levels.

Overall CIRCE served as a platform for thinking differently and developing business in a more human centred and sustainable way. Currently, we live in a world that glorifies unhealthy working conditions, with 72% of founders reporting mental health suffering (The Toll 2013:4). This reflects the cultures companies enable from the start. The notion of running on empty to build an empire is tragically glamorised, often harming health, community and purpose. Overworking also hinders productivity and creativity. In the CIRCE community we were encouraged to discuss sustainable engagement options and support structures for collective wellbeing. Progress does not need to come at the cost of work-life balance and cost more than it gives.

Moreover, it was remarkable to experience a funding instrument that operated humanely while rooting for unity and collaboration through creative solutions. This manifested in trust towards all of the projects and individuals who took part and in notable consideration in the whole organisation process. We felt seen and valued as more than just startup founders, but as people with creative ideas that deserve a chance to impact communities. CIRCE has left a nonremovable mark in each one of us as an example on how projects can be built on sustainable grounds and achieve impact through compassion and faith in collaborative potential. The care put into curating an inclusive environment encouraged risk-taking in sharing

unconventional concepts. Overall, CIRCE fueled inspiration on how funding can uplift passion projects to drive change.

Sources

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