



# CULTURAL PROBES



Government  
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# What are Cultural Probes?

Tools for gathering data about people's lives, values and thoughts

Typically takes the form of packages or handouts that include tools to help people express themselves (e.g. map, postcard, camera, diary, stickers...)





# Why use Cultural Probes?



**Interviews** uncover what people say and think

**Cultural probes** are a toolkit

- that allow the participant to explore an issue through abstraction
- that allow self-reflection as the participant interacts with the toolkit

Useful for:

- idea generation and inspiration
- surfacing values, hopes and dreams



# How to use a Cultural Probe?

1. Provide the toolkit with instructions to participants
2. Alone, the participant interacts with the toolkit, following instructions and completing the task at their own pace
3. Once completed, participants explain their results either through a written or recorded statement





# When to use Cultural Probes?

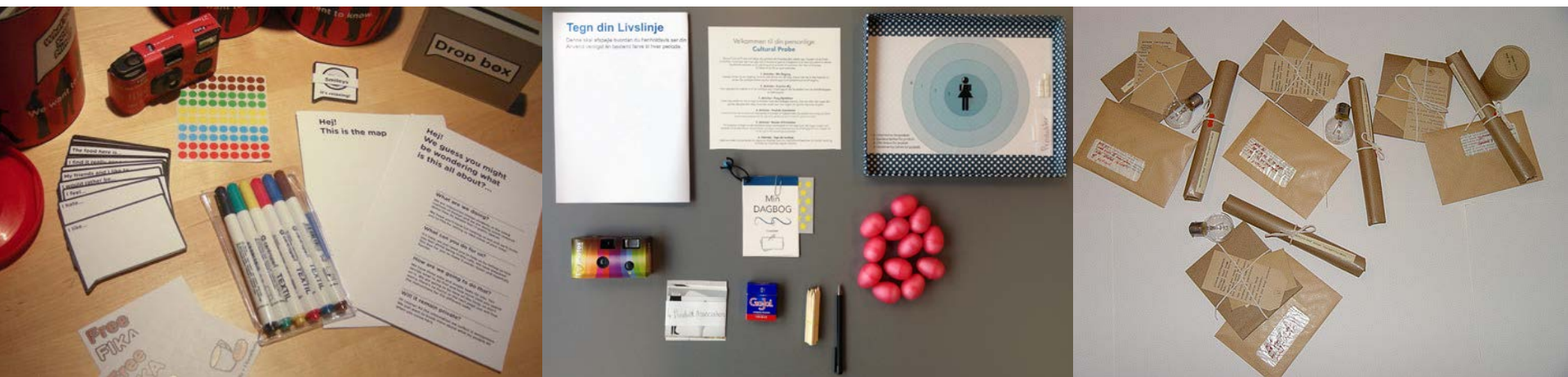


You could use Cultural Probes:

1. **Early** to uncover values, hopes and fears to inform your project direction.
2. **After interviews**, digging deeper on a discovered insight to enrich your understanding.
3. **For the Futures Fair**, you could gather visions and dreams to co-create your experience for the November event.



# What might this look like?



Source: Meng Meng, [interactiondesign.se/meng/hobb.htm](http://interactiondesign.se/meng/hobb.htm)  
Interaction Design, [sproid.wordpress.com/tag/cultural-probes](http://sproid.wordpress.com/tag/cultural-probes)  
Flickr - Lauren Currie, Cultural Probes



# Example 1 - Getting to know people



**Step 1:** Write a research question.

**Step 2:** Identify a group to participate.

**Step 3:** Design activities to help participants explore the research question.

**Step 4:** Create toolkits and write instructions.

**Step 5:** Send toolkits to participants, allowing them to interact at their own pace.

**Step 6:** Collect completed Cultural Probes and analyze results.





# Example 2- Getting to know people's future visions



**Step 1:** Ask people to describe their ideas about the future using Cultural Probes.

**Step 2:** Translate these ideas about the future into experiential futures: tangible, immersive, visual or interactive representations.

**Step 3:** Present these ideas to the original respondents and their peers.

**Step 4:** Record responses to the presented experience.







# Practice

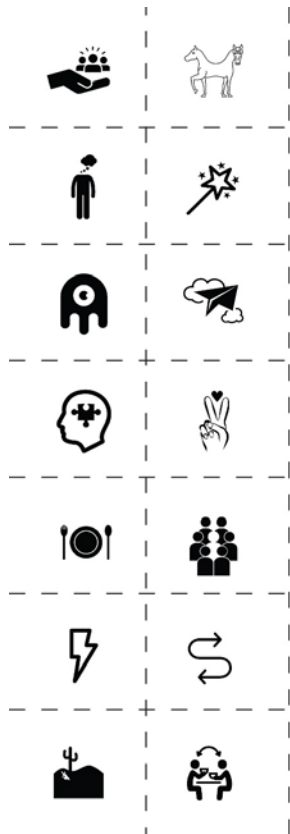
1. Fill out the Cultural Probe we've designed to explore diversity and inclusion.
2. Share your completed Cultural Probe with your group.
3. Analyse the results in a group conversation.
4. Try to design your own Cultural Probe for one of your stakeholders.



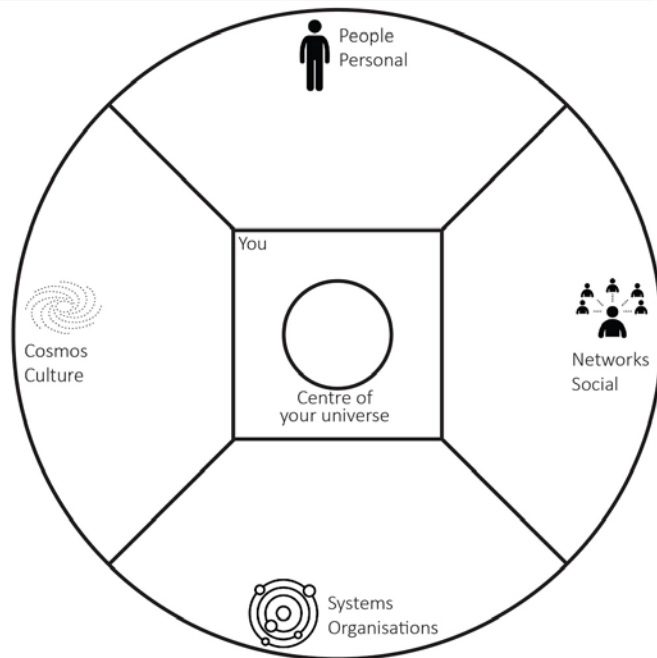


# Example

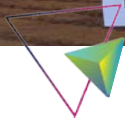
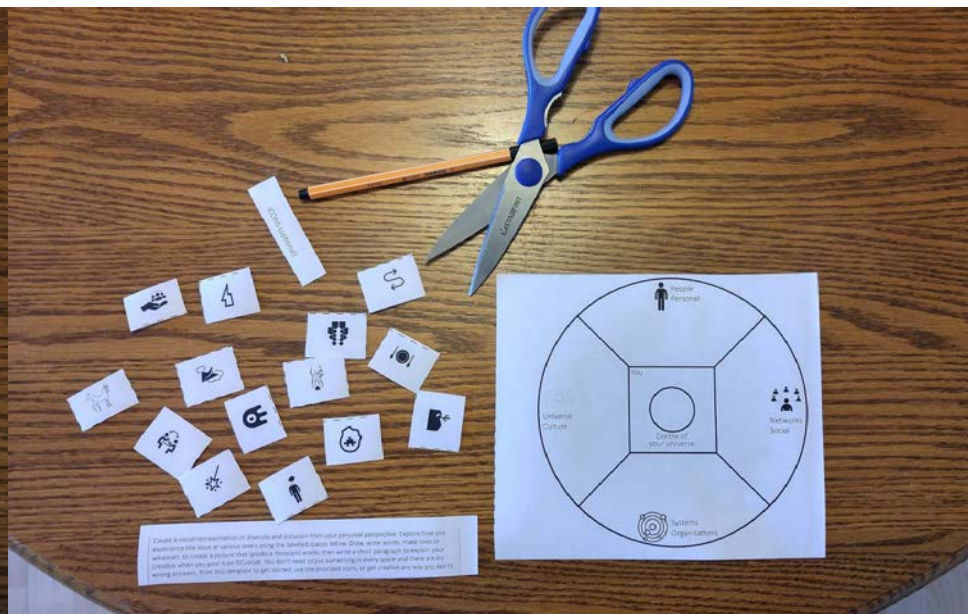
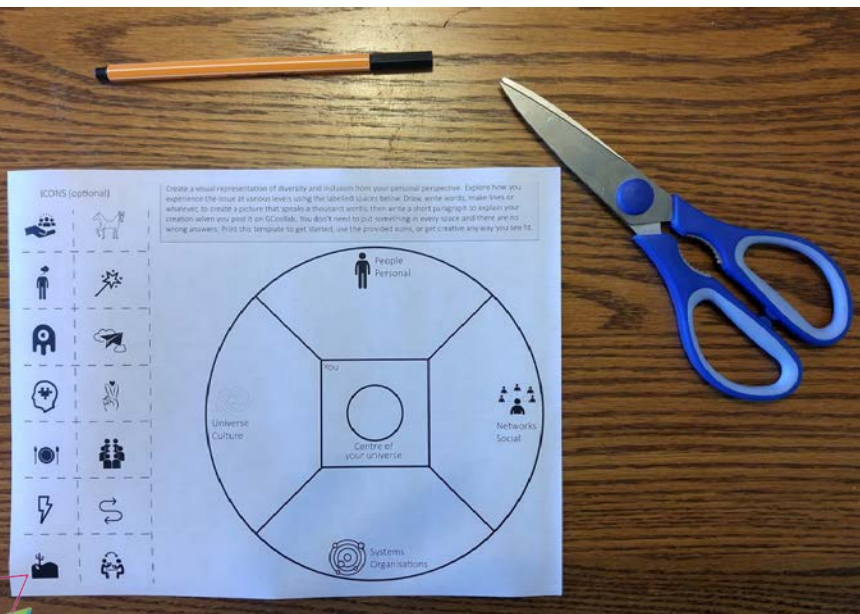
Create a visual representation of diversity and inclusion from your personal perspective.



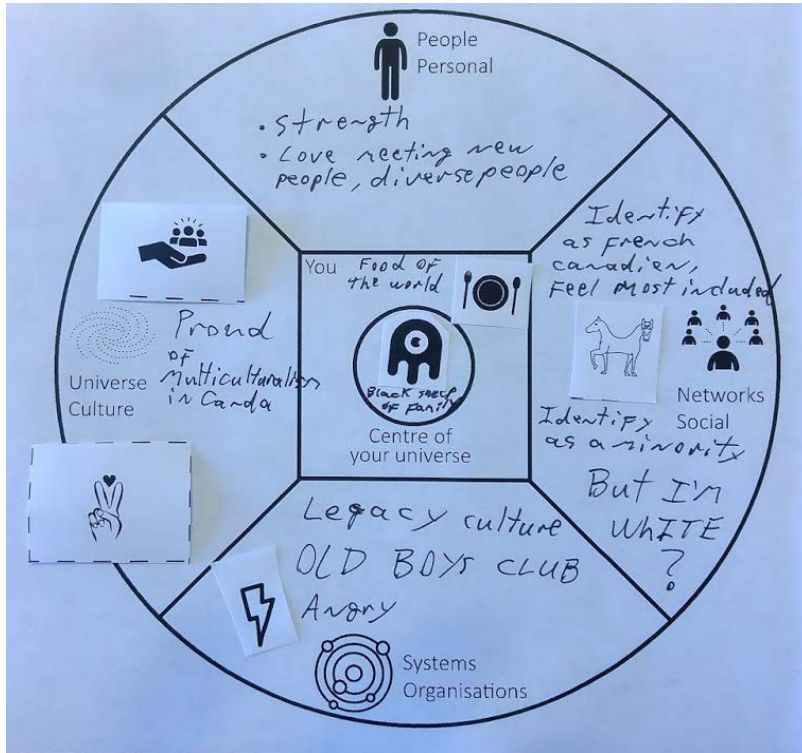
Create a visual representation of diversity and inclusion from your personal perspective. Explore how you experience the issue at various levels using the labelled spaces below. Draw, write words, make lines or whatever, to create a picture that paints a thousand words; then write a short paragraph to explain your creation when you post it on GCcollab. You don't need to put something in every space and there are no wrong answers. Print this template to get started, use the provided icons or get creative any way you see fit.



# Example



# Example: week 2



## Centre of your universe

- Black sheep of family

## You

- Foodie who loves plates from the globe

## People/Personal

- I value meeting all sorts of people

## Networks/Social

- I see myself as both a minority and a majority

## Systems/Organizations

- At times disappointed with legacy organizational culture concerning diversity and inclusion

## Universe/Culture

- Proud of Canadian multiculturalism

