

2 PIONEERS

THE YOUNG DESIGNERS FOUNDATION

To explore how design-based practices can provide an alternative to conventional problem-solving and can drive innovation, we will now investigate projects carried out by two pioneering organizations that use design practices to develop radically different approaches to problems. Together they have more than thirty years of experience in this area.

The Young Designers foundation (YD/) was founded in Holland in 1990 as Young Designers and Industry. Initially, it did just what its name says: create projects that helped young designers and artists get valuable experience by working on projects for major industrial partners. Since the late 1990s, the emphasis of the organization has shifted, and YD/ has become a cultural institution that initiates and develops design projects within the context of cultural and societal change—under the banner “Design for Society.” Three case studies will give a first idea of what they do and how they do it. In the last section of this chapter, we will begin to extract lessons that can be applied across a wide range of organizations.

CASE 5

Turning around a business:

On new approaches to service delivery

At the end of the 1990s, the Young Designers and Industry foundation was approached by one of the world’s biggest international employment services