



INSANITY IS DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER AGAIN, AND EXPECTING DIFFERENT RESULTS



# CAN POLICY-MAKERS THINK LIKE DESIGNERS?

Since 2012, UNICEF has been supporting two autonomous governments in Nicaragua to develop empathy-driven policies for children.

While policies are the final product, the goal of the **Designing for Children Initiative** is to make government officials think like designers. A good policy or service is *nothing* without active and engaged frontline workers.

From the onset, our objective was to transform public employees into 'public entrepreneurs.'

In doing so, we have disrupted the traditional assumptions about participatory governance, where it normally suffices to hold a meeting

and have people talk about their needs and aspirations.

For participation to work, government officials have to re-learn how to listen. They have to let go of pre-determined assumptions and their expert status, and put themselves in the shoes of the people they are trying to reach. This is the process of empathy-driven policy-making.

For the past two years, we have used a Human Centered Design (HCD) approach to make this happen.

While HCD is often seen as an innovation in itself, for us, it's just a means to an end: common-sense development.

