

Human-Centered Design Challenge

How Might We Enable
More Young People to
Become Social Entrepreneurs?

IDEO + Acumen

Team Mind.Body.Soul Music

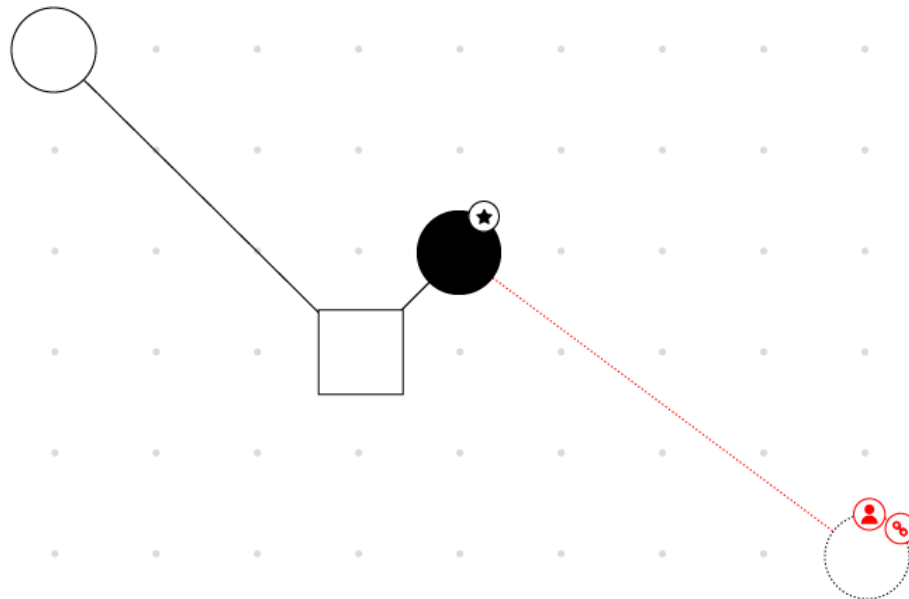
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12/16/2014



Background



Hello! We are Team *Mind.Body.Soul Music*, a group of User Experience Designers living in Los Angeles, California.

Although we all frame what we do as “User Experience,” we come from various backgrounds, experience levels, and perspectives, including: anthropology, creative direction, communication strategy, education reform, and market research.

We believe that User Experience is a powerful tool for social change. Not only does it bring synergy to our skill sets and diverse backgrounds, User Experience provides us with a collaborative framework for exploring innovative solutions to complex problems.





INSPIRATION

FRAMING THE PROBLEM SPACE

We started by deconstructing the prompt, and discussing our initial questions :

01_How Might We Enable More Young People to Become Social Entrepreneurs? (Aspiring Social Entrepreneurs, or ASE's) ?

What infrastructure is there, and in what ways is it lacking?

While more and more youth are interested in social entrepreneurship as a means for tackling some of **the world's toughest challenges**, many aspiring social entrepreneurs fail to move beyond the initial idea phase because the **infrastructure** to support them **is lacking**. Some are unable to gain access to **networks or mentors** that could provide the knowledge and experience to confront major decisions, while others lack the **capital** they need to start their venture. As part of this design challenge, you'll work with your team to design new systems or strengthen existing programs that **cultivate and support** social entrepreneurship as a viable career path.

How do social entrepreneurs define their social spaces for problem solving?

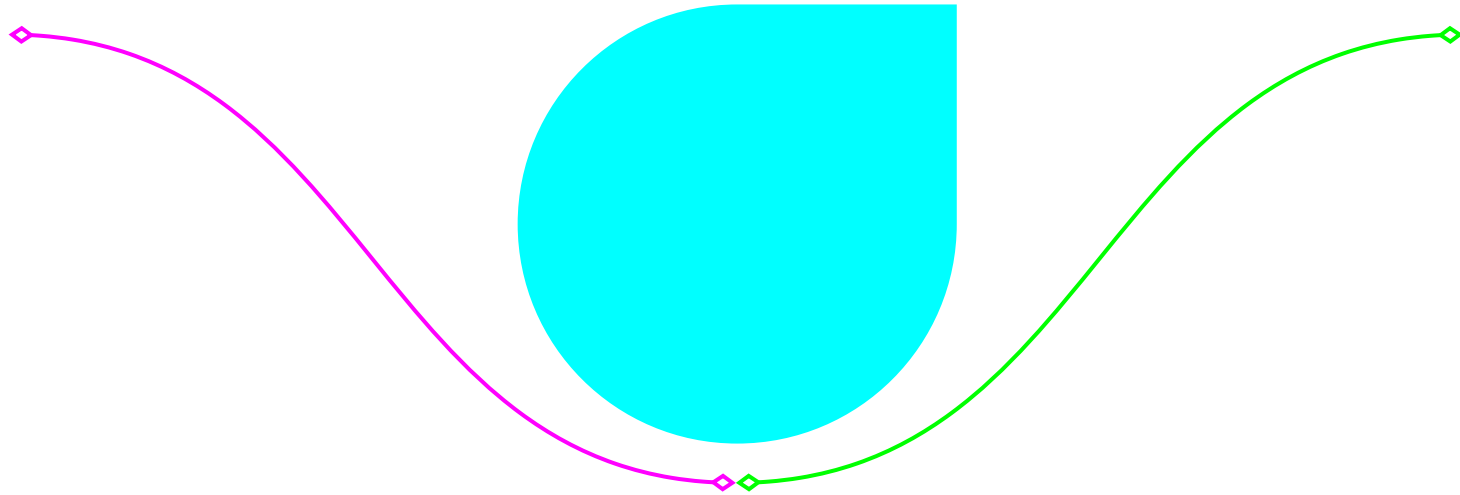
What networks/mentors are there, and in which ways can they be improved?

What are the existing/emerging relationships between social spaces and capital?

What are the biggest areas of need for cultivating and supporting emerging entrepreneurs?

DESIGNING A HYPOTHESIS PAVING NEW CAREER PATHS IS AN EMOTIONAL & LOGISTICAL JOURNEY

Per our discussion in framing Class 2's Research Plan, our assumptions were that although many resources and support networks exist, barriers and challenges for aspiring entrepreneurs revolved around:



1 Drivers

- Motivations/Expectations
- Triggers/Incentives
- Interests/Passions

2 Confidence

- Challenging/Setting Barriers Against ...
- Enabling/Empowering In Support of ...

3 Resources

- Organization
- Guidance/Mentorship

KNOWLEDGE, ASSUMPTIONS & LINGERING QUESTIONS

We discussed our assumptions of what we did know, and our lingering questions of what we didn't:

1 Drivers that help make transparency around expectations and avenues could help ASE's maintain motivation in a difficult space.

- *Are ASE's more motivated to define their social entrepreneurial practices in partnership with existing ventures, or to start their own? Do they feel they are informed about the differences, and/or able to activate their decisions?*

2 Confidence is triggered by awareness of individual skills, perspectives, and opportunities to practice success.

- *What are the opportunities which enable, or barriers which restrict this sense of confidence?*
- *To what extent does intimidation/credibility play a role in getting started?*
- *We know many who seem to have an aversion to the title "entrepreneur".*
- *What would be better? Why is this label important? We think of business as separate from social good, but are young people seeing them as the same or connected (ie. rise of the B-corp gen)?*

3 Resources are increasingly abundant. The problem is de-centralization, as well as diverse (sometimes contradictory) perspectives on how to apply them properly (ethics, etc.) and individually (mentorship).

- *To what extent can expert insights be translated back into best practice for ASE's?*
- *Are there some resources (for ethics, finding mentors, etc.) which are found to universally more helpful than others?*

Interviews

Our interviews reached a range of individuals involved in social business spaces: entrepreneurs, designers, business owners, consultants, and community managers. Although not all identified as “social entrepreneurs,” all individuals affiliated themselves with social values , ideas, passion projects and/or professions within the defined space.

This broad spectrum of individuals allowed us to better identify emerging themes and common goals, as well as evolve our own perspectives and approaches where necessary.



Find familiar faces in the Ideation Section, where we begin to test our concept with iterative prototyping!

DISCUSSION GUIDE *

We decided to guide a two-part exercise: open-ended questions, followed by hands-on methods to help guide thinking out loud. As we met with more and more interviewees, we incorporated various methods for guiding and documenting the conversations.



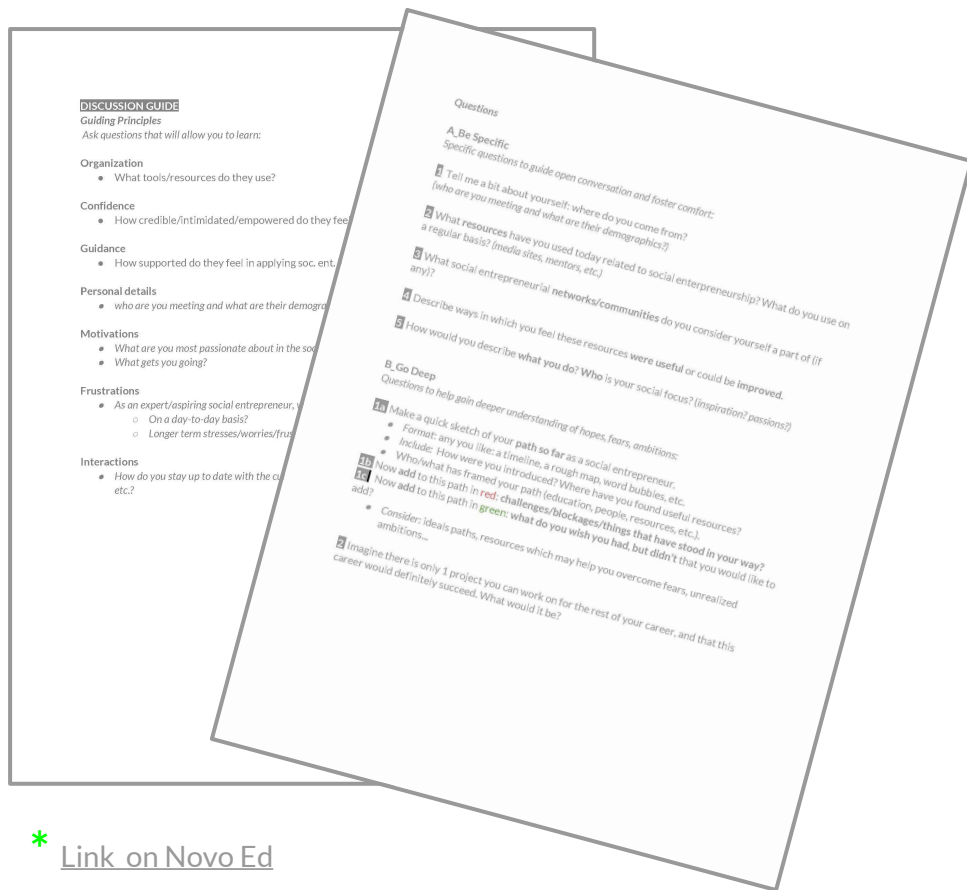
1 Photographic Documentation



2 Diagram Exercises



3 Card Sorts



* [Link on Novo Ed](#)

EXPERTS IN THE FIELD

Self made, social enterprise stars with diverse backgrounds and a willingness to share



A Viktor Venson

- Founder, NRBLB
- Former Advertising Strategist
- Unsatisfied multidisciplinary designer who “got fired from every job he had”



B Matt Manos

- CEO, verynice design studio
- 50/50 profit model
- Young entrepreneur who followed heart, not advice



C Ashley Karr

- UXDI Instructor, General Assembly
- HCI and Anthropology major
- Educator passionate about ethics in design and tech

ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS (ASE's)

Young & zealous entrepreneurs just beginning their journeys



D Hena Rizvi

- Intern at B Lab (B Corps)
- Advocate for socially responsible business
- Currently helps inform and onboard companies interested in the Benefit Corp. movement and certification process



E Alex Zhang

- Head of Lavalab, USC
- Aspiring Social Entrepreneur
- USC Business Student



F Cy Serrano

- Young Entrepreneur
- Works in the Tech industry
- Current project focus is “The Start-up Life”, an editorial site with business case studies (both “how-to”, and human interest piece: why they got started & their passions that keep them involved).

ANALOGOUS ENTREPRENEURS

Community Organizations, Start-ups, and Consultants



G Jelena Woehr

- Community Manager, *GOOD Inc./Project Citizen*
- Past: Social Media and community building for nonprofits



H Sylvia Sewell

- Young Entrepreneur, Freelance Web Designer + Photographer
- Career Nomad



I, J Eytan Elterman & Marco Bollinger

- Co-Founders of *iSeeiTravel*, an early-stage eco-conscious startup
- Use documentary and media strategy to tell conscious stories about destinations



ZOOM IN: EXPERT A

Viktor Venson / Founder, No Right Brain Left Behind (NRBLB)



■ The Workspace

We met with Viktor at an office space in the arts district one evening, where he shares his NRBLB office with A Hundred Years - a progressive agency supporting organizations doing social/environmentally conscious work.

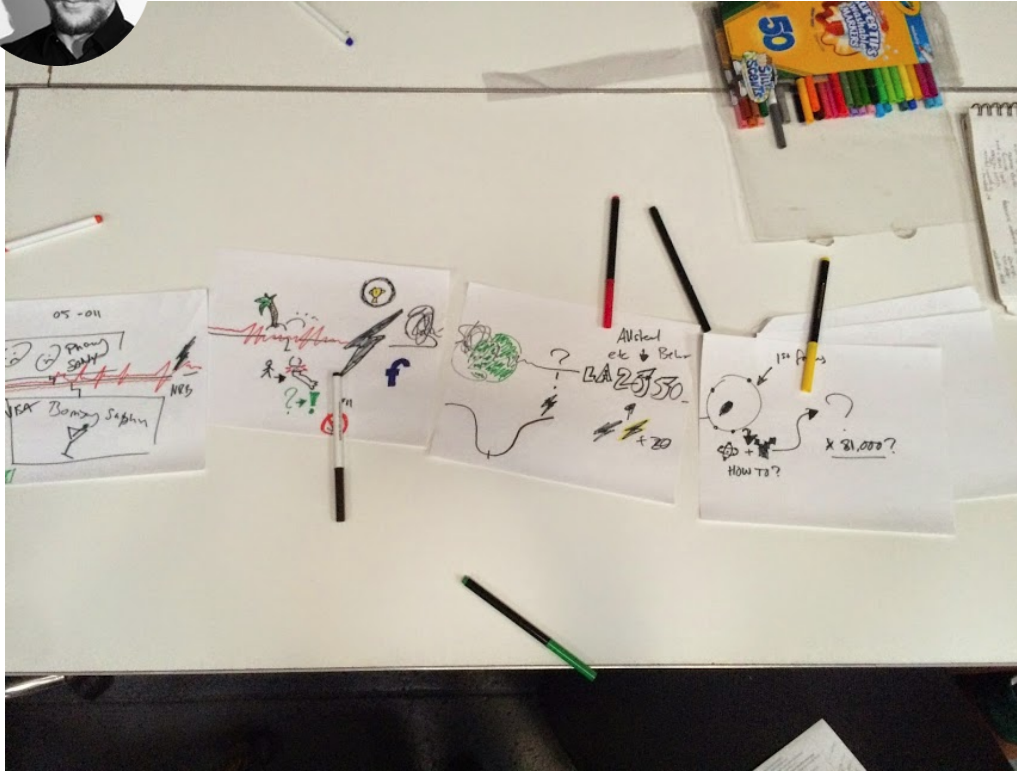
Highlighted Findings

- Used to work as a strategist/designer in advertising and was very unhappy, until an AHA moment.
- Changed paths when he realized design has a responsibility, for him to fix broken systems.
- Wanted to find the biggest problem he could solve.
- It's hard to do alone, often wishes he had partner.



ZOOM IN: EXPERT A

Viktor Venson / Founder, No Right Brain Left Behind (NRBLB)



“ I could no longer stand making up stories where none existed. **The risk of NOT doing something** was too big. ”



“ It’s still about money-finding a way to make social ideas **marketable.** ”

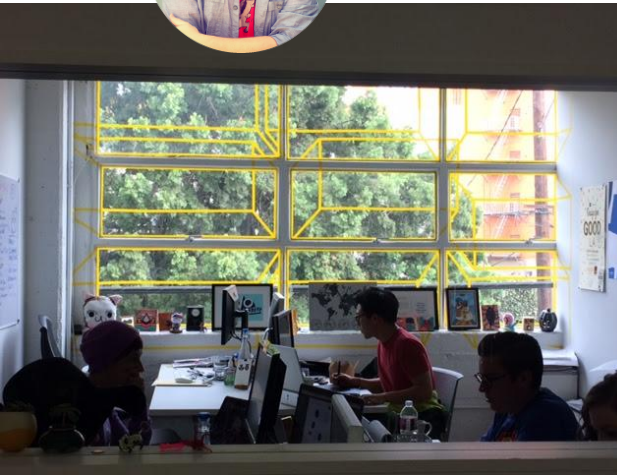


“ **Trust the process.** It’ll always be there. ”



ZOOM IN: EXPERT B

Matthew Manos / CEO / [verynice.co](https://www.verynice.co)



■ The Workspace

We met with Matt at the HUB LA - a co working space DTLA - outside of the verynice office. verynice's mission is to frame social business as "giving (at least) half away for nothing".

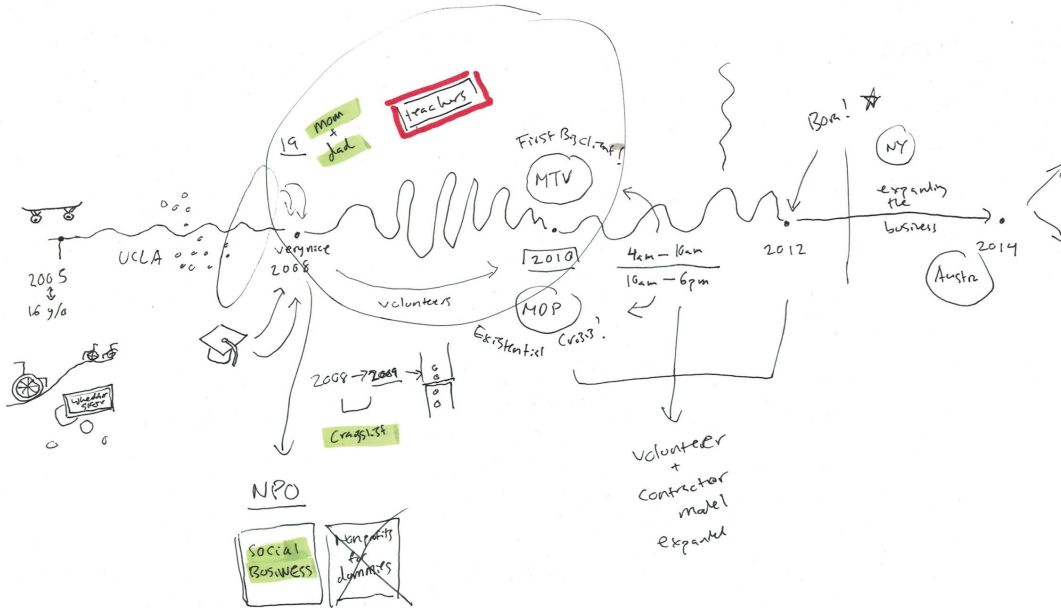
Highlighted Findings

- Admitted he was unsupported, told he "was too young," without experience.
- Feels his "naivety" is his strength, although feels he could have used business advice.
- Doesn't identify with S.E. because he feels "it's too big of a bucket." He identifies instead as an "innovation consultant" or "socially savvy."



ZOOM IN: EXPERT B

Matthew Manos / CEO / verynice.co



“ When everyone is telling you your idea isn’t good, it’s really hard to measure your potential for success.”

“ Everyone on earth is a business person. Artists sell their work, others negotiate their salaries...”

“ Success is about developing the skill of juggling schedules and projects.”



ZOOM IN: EXPERT C

Ashley Karr / Instructor / General Assembly

● The Workspace

We met with Ashley at General Assembly - a modern, bustling, open space for tech ed & startups. We discussed her projects and interest in ethics and education in the design industry.

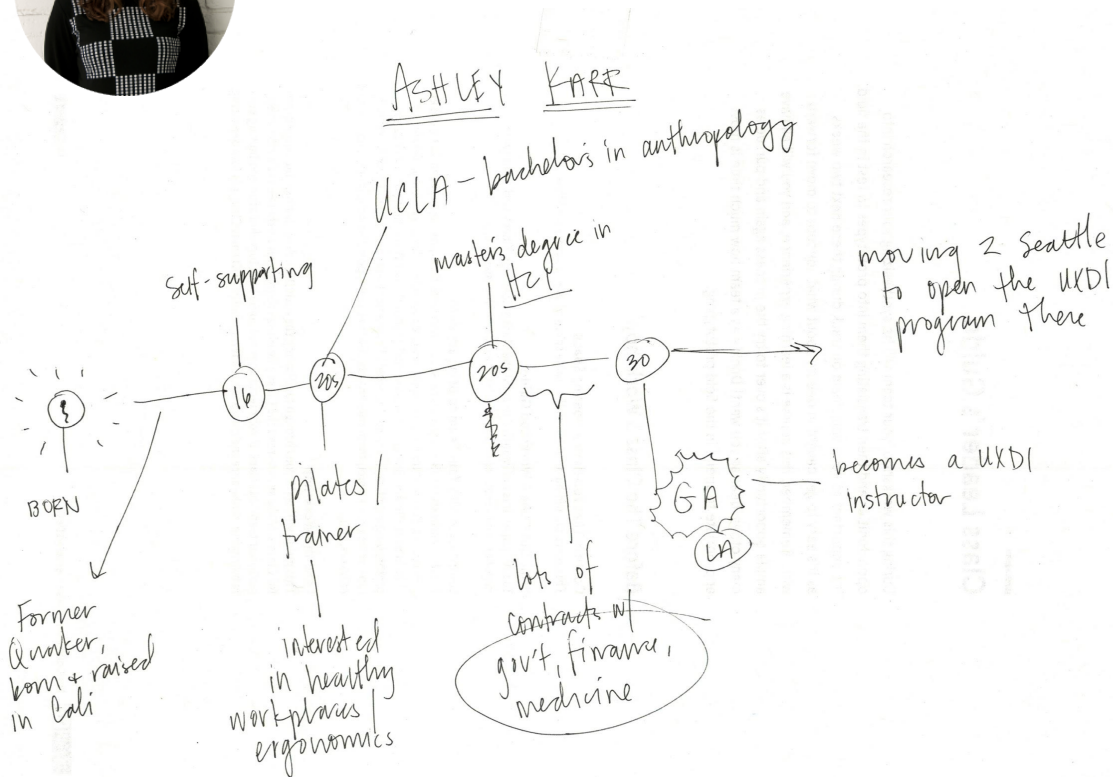
Highlighted Findings

- Considers role as educator
 - Uses “older” resources: libraries, gov’t websites.
 - Wants to build holistic systems and tools for our brains & our bodies.
- Doesn’t identify with S. E. because it’s “attached to a bad connotation,” i.e. implies taking advantage.



ZOOM IN: EXPERT C

Ashley Karr / Instructor / General Assembly



“ Just because you have an idea, doesn't mean you **deserve** profit. ”



“ I didn't know the cause I wanted to champion. What values do I align with? How do they connect to **larger problems in the world?** ”



“ Most miss a sense of agency to help in a way **particular to their skillsets.** ”



ZOOM IN: ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR D

Hena Rizvi / Company Onboard (Intern) / B Lab (B Corps.)

● The Workspace

We spoke on the phone with Hena on a quiet Friday afternoon. She was working out of her office space at B Lab (a B Corps) in Pennsylvania, where she works as an intern.

Highlighted Findings

- Her path so far has been a lot about self discovery, figuring out where she wanted to be and where she could apply her skills.
- Describes herself as an “advocate of being more conscious of the impact our actions have on the community.”
- Mixed Career path: Writer, Communications, CSR, Nonprofit studies, Corporate Apple, Sustainability movement, and now B-Labs



ZOOM IN: ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR D

Hena Rizvi / Company Onboard (Intern) / B Lab (B Corps.)

“You can either work for a non-profit cause and make 20k a year... or work in a for-profit business and donate 20k a year to the **causes you care about.**”

- *Matra from business mentor/ father*

“The social good movement is highly business focused. I would love to see the movement create ways to **market/empower the individual.**”



ZOOM IN: ANALGOUS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR G

Jelena Woehr / Community Manager / Good Inc + Project Citizen

● The Workspace

We met with Jelena at Bru Coffee - in the mid-gentrification renovation of Los Feliz. We discussed how her background (psychology, communications, community organization) influenced her professional trajectory as a S.E., as well as her experience building coalitions.

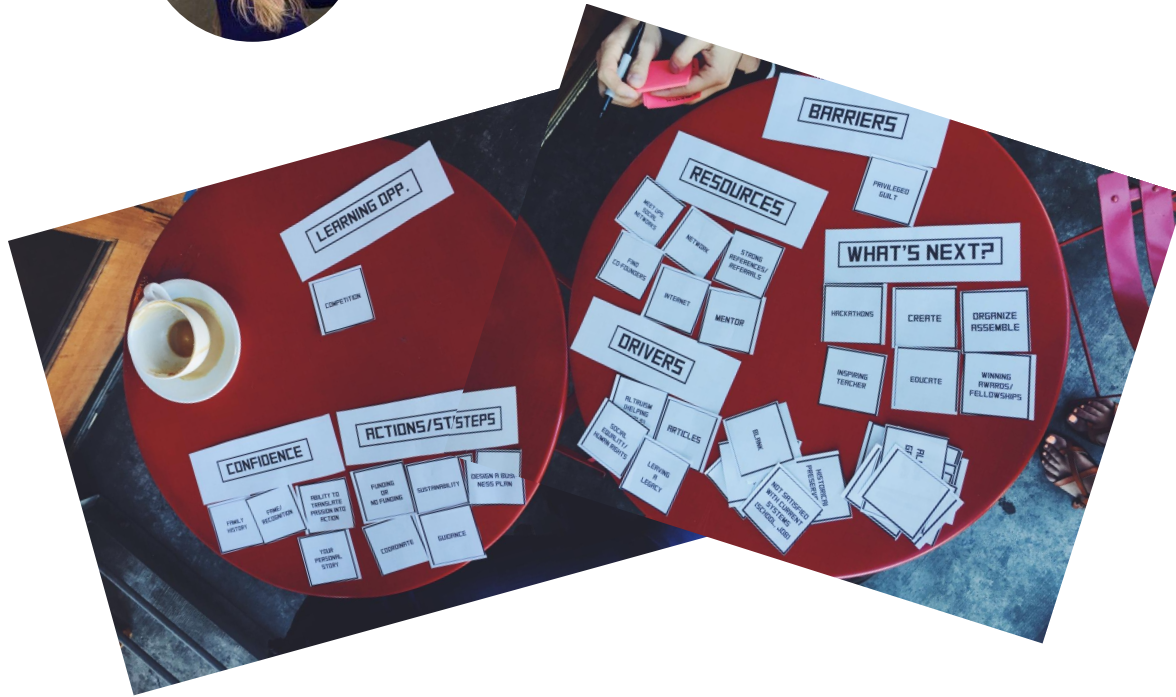
Highlighted Findings

- Reverse engineered her success effectively
- Remained flexible in respect to her career, been able to organically find roles appropriate for her skills set and focus
- Self-directed
- Always been interested in social good projects indirectly
- Interested in mentoring, but not into the self serving idea of “giving to charity”
- Advocates equal representation of diverse voices: “Talent/creativity isn’t limited to economic level”



ZOOM IN: ANALGOUS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR G

Jelena Woehr / Community Manager / Good Inc + Project Citizen



“ I don’t think one year ahead, I think 20 years ahead ...”



“ I’m not a philanthropist- I see it as investing in smart people and good causes ...”



“ I identify important systems, and see individuals as output ...”

ZOOM IN: ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Alex Zhang / Business Student & Head of Lava Lab / USC



● The Workspace

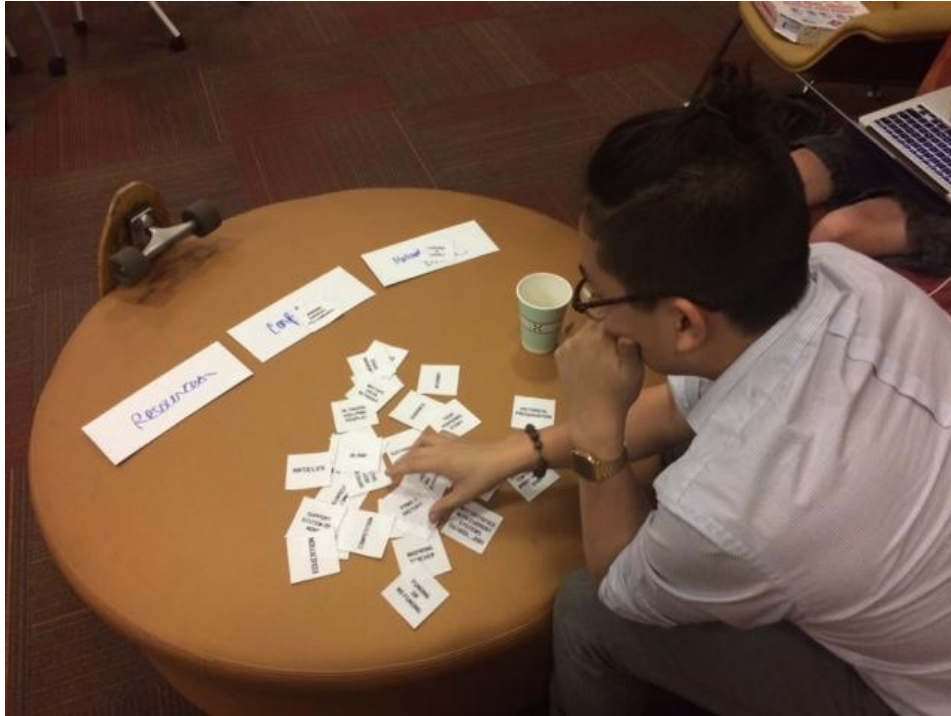
We met with Alex at USC's Annenberg building for Communications, where LavaLab (a student run organization for entrepreneurship and product management) is held.

Highlighted Findings

- Identified incentives for participation as a value exchange
- Doesn't like meetups, feels inauthentic, prefers cold contacting
- Doesn't identify with S. E. because he feels it's about passion for facilitating enjoyable experiences for people, not about money.

ZOOM IN: ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR E

Alex Zhang / Business Student & Head of Lava Lab / USC



“ Ideas are nothing until action is involved. ”



“ Everyone comes to their own unique, unreplicable path to success. ”

IDEATION

Synthesis

Synthesis workshops were invigorating - allowing us a chance to reconnect and share what we had learned in the previous week's breakout sessions.

We took turns extracting learnings, grouping ideas into emerging themes, and of course made sure to have a lot of fun in the process - tracking Post Its around LA as we met over coffee, snacks, and even Bibimbap.

SHARING STORIES

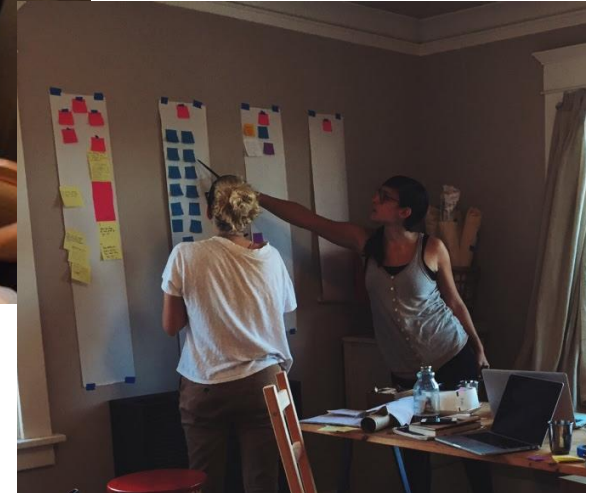
Ashley Karr / GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Alex zheng / UCLA lava lab

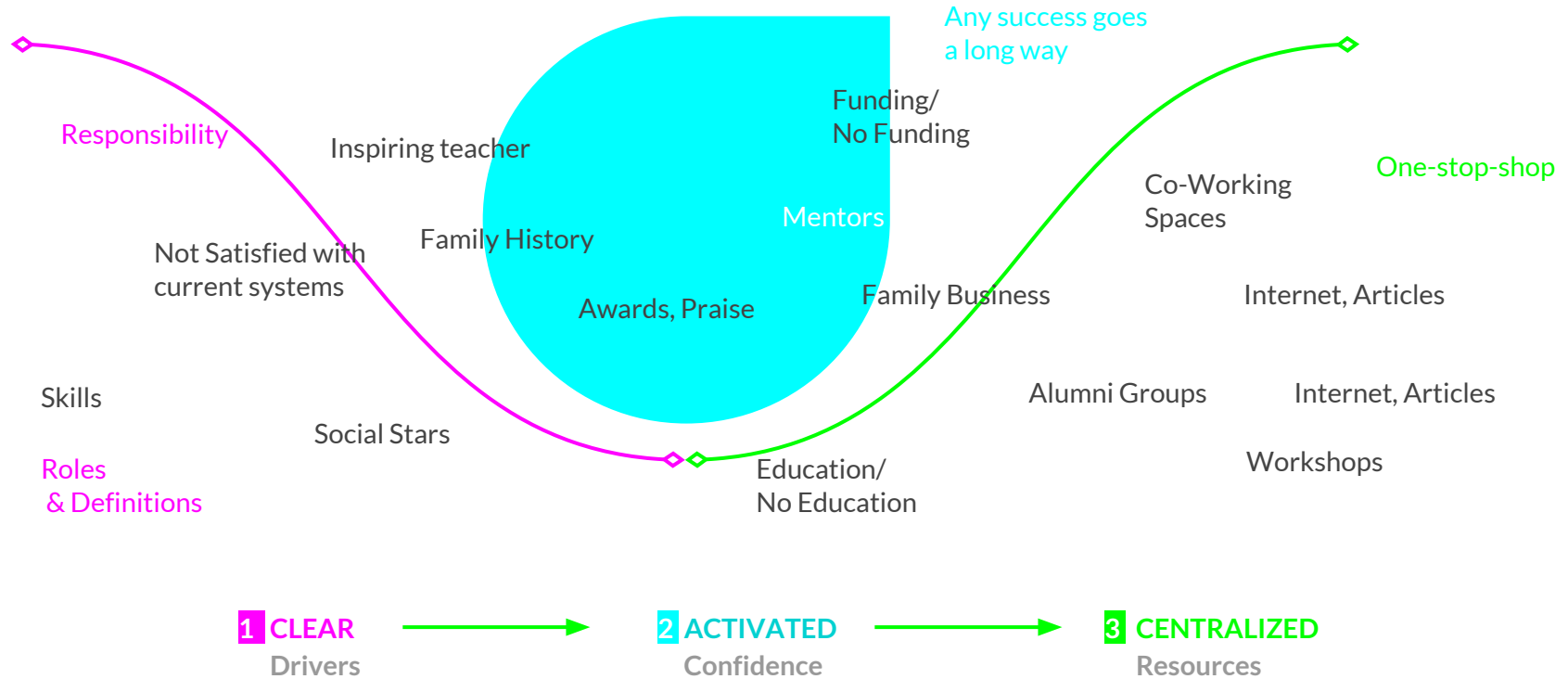


- **Process & Post Its**
 Every meeting included LOTS of Post Its. We used the Post It app to capture and organize our findings along the way.



TESTING A HYPOTHESIS 3 COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESSFULLY PAVING NEW CAREER PATHS

Testing our original assumptions from Class 2's Research plan, we organized emerging *themes* along the following categories, and got more specific:



INSIGHTS

After identifying our most prominent themes, we shared relevant insights as a group:

THEME 1 Roles & Definitions

- Challenge defining “self” and “social entrepreneurship” as a whole
- *Found there’s a universal aversion to the title “entrepreneur” (due largely to the connotation of making money or inauthenticity) . Many expressed redefinition as important for defining roles & aligning perspectives.*

THEME 2 Activation of Ideas

- intimidation when it comes to moving from ideas to action.
- Found that without support, challenges were often perceived as roadblocks.
- Lack of understanding potential relationships between “ideas” and “a market”

THEME 3 Mentorship

- The lack of support in identifying social design strengths and skills
- Mentees seek symbiotic relationships & authentically interested mentors
- There are new emerging needs for mentorship (more individualized, more symbiotic, access to, connecting with, etc.)

THEME 4 Responsibility & Accountability

- Ethical practices, standards and definitions are constantly evolving and not a priority for all practitioners.
- There are many contradictory perspectives.

THEME 5 Centralized Resources

- So “entrepreneurial” that resources are individually hosted, and hard to find.
- Decentralized resources can be overwhelming, leading from confusion to inactivity

HOW MIGHT WE's (v1.0)

Initially we had 6 HMW statements^{*}. After refining into a new set of 5 HMW's, and leading quick ideation sessions for each, we observed *many overlaps*:

1 How might we help A.S.E.s build clarity around **emerging roles** within an evolving social ent. field?

- *Ideas*: Multiple framings, Skillset Roleplaying, Meta Tagging for Skill Certification

2 How might we help A.S.E.s **activate their ideas**?

- *Ideas*: Make Your Own Way marketing campaign, battle scars story exchange, trigger instigator

3 How might we facilitate a process of discovering and maintaining **mutually-beneficial mentorship/partnership**?

- *Ideas*: communication networks, buddy systems, Mentor Matchmaker

4 How might we **incentivize**, or hold **accountable** businesses who are socially-responsible?

- *Ideas*: Socially Responsible Rating System

5 How might we harness a **centralized resource for ongoing support**?

^{*} [Link on Novo Ed](#)

PROTOTYPE PLAN

These overlapping HMW questions led us to spot an opportunity for merging our ideas into a more comprehensive HMW question:

The HMW Statement (v.2.0)

How might we empower aspiring social entrepreneurs to *discover, define and activate* their unique path/participation within the evolving field?

The Idea

An *ecosystem* for documenting diverse social entrepreneurial profiles and complex practices *as they emerge over time* (this system could exist in physical, or digital space).

The Impact

We learned that social entrepreneurship is a space whose ongoing evolution and redefinition can be decentralized, overwhelming, and ambiguous.

This solution helps to:

1. Allow reflection and definition of unique roles & skills
2. Broaden exposure to emerging definitions & overlapping interests.
3. Facilitate existing connections (mentors/mentees, collaborators)
4. Showcase roadblocks, problem spaces and opportunities.

TARGET USER

The biggest challenges facing our target user revolve around:

- navigating the overwhelming amount of information available online
- carving out a niche in social / entrepreneurial spaces that reflects individual passions and perspectives.



Name:

Joseph

Demographics:

- 24 y/o
- 1st generation American (parents from El Salvador)

Profession:

- Soon to be grad student (Business) from USC
- aspiring social entrepreneur.

Motivations:

- Wants to find clarity of how his skills best apply in the social design space
- Is overwhelmed with all the information he can find (lots of contradictory opinions of what is social, ethical, etc.)
- Wants to get started on the right path for him

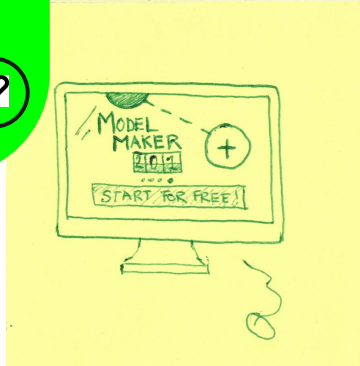
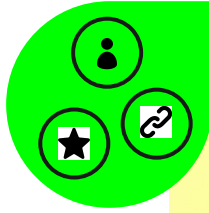
STORYBOARDING_PROTOTYPE: MODEL MAKER

6 Steps through a User Journey



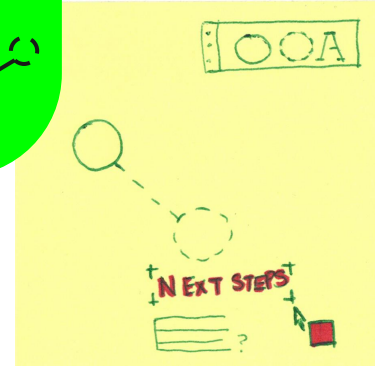
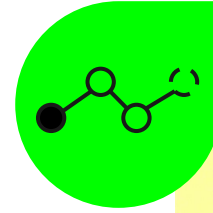
1 Awareness

Joseph sees his friend share an update on Facebook of his new social project model, thanks to "Modelmaker" (MM). The program sounds unique because it allows aspiring social entrepreneurs to share projects and get feedback on specific challenges.



2 Onboarding

Since Joseph is currently overwhelmed looking at social design jobs, he decides to go to the site to see if there are any valuable resources. He sees that it's free to participate if you add a profile, so he decides to go ahead.

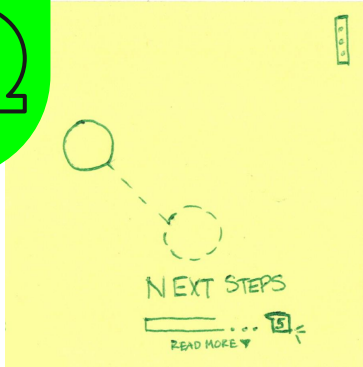


3 First Use

Once he's added some basic information, Joseph is surprised to see how easy and helpful it is to use. He makes a "model" of his current project path by dragging and dropping nodes onto a simple grid, and defining them with titles. Joseph feels productive, having mapped out what he's completed so far, what he's working on now, and what steps he'll take going forward.

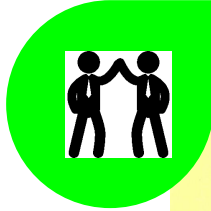
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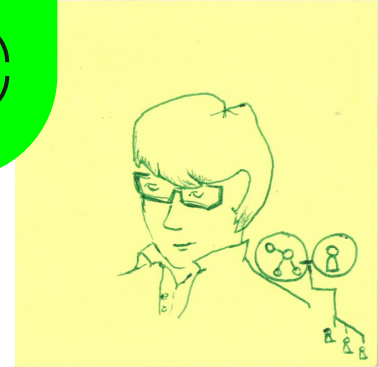
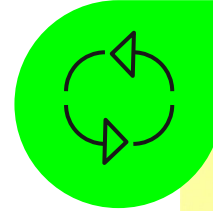
4 Full Adoption

A couple days later, Joseph is notified that fellow MM users have offered feedback and collaboration on his project model. He follows up with conversations and finds that there are several useful suggestions and even mentorship opportunities.



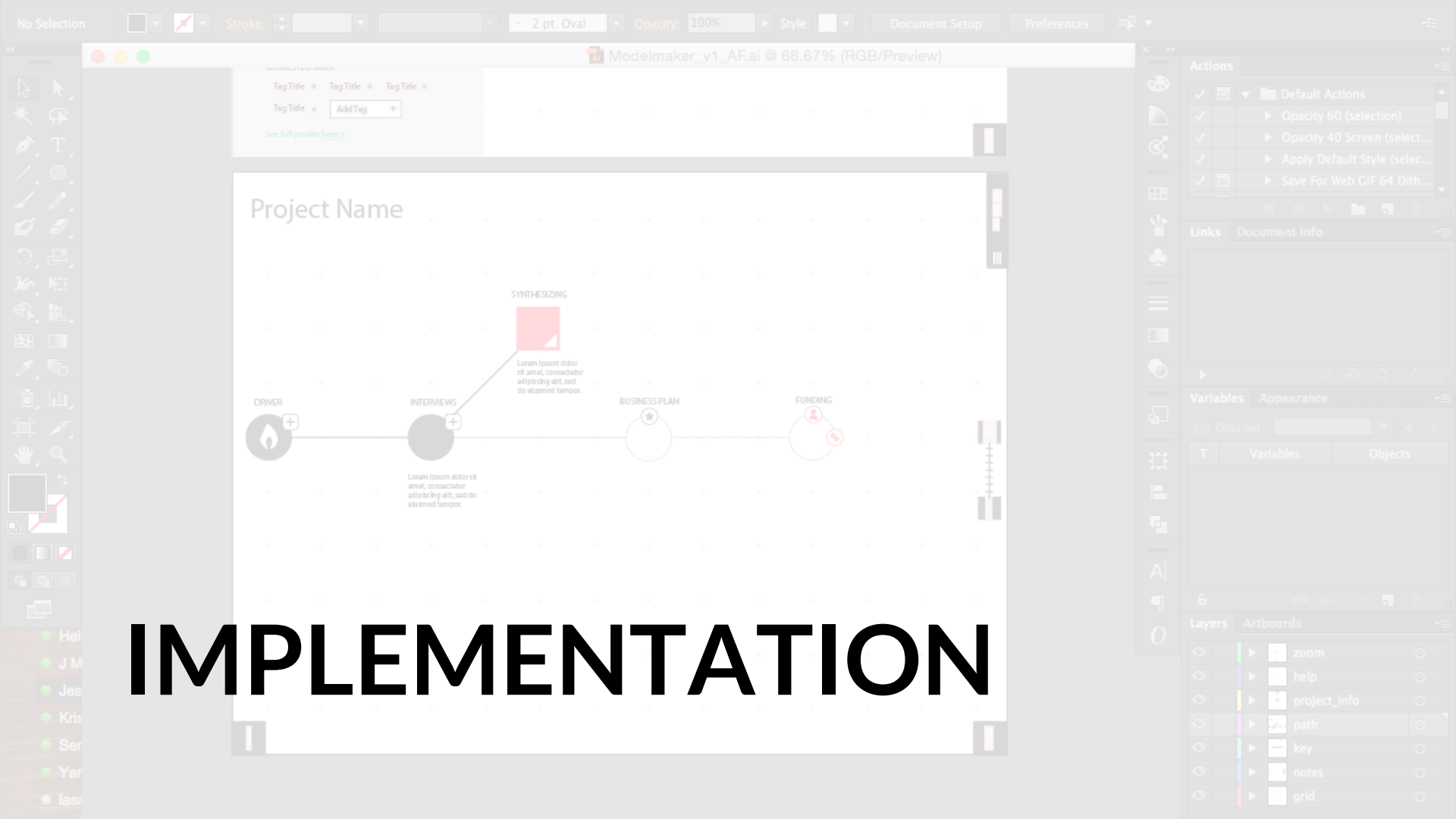
5 Return

Two months later, Joseph has graduated, followed through with two opportunities he found through MM, and has since integrated his project model into a larger career model. He has gained confidence in his role and skills within the S.E. field, and has decided to partner up with some of his new connections. He can't wait to see where the projects go, and who is doing similar work.



6 Loyalty

6 months later, Joseph has extended his career model and has added many project models as well. He trusts MM as a useful tool for shaping his evolving practice, as well as seeking feedback, collaborators and mentors. He now considers himself an expert, and so has begun to give advice and mentor A.S.E.s who overlap his sphere of interest.



Prototyping & Testing

We took a few different approaches to prototyping our concept, as informed by our ongoing HCD process. We learned a lot from our initial interviews where we asked experts to draw maps of their social entrepreneurial trajectories. After synthesizing our feedback, we identified top opportunities and began a series of iterative prototypes. With each iteration, we set out to allow our own questions as well as user feedback/findings to inform subsequent prototypes. Intentionally starting with what we felt was the lowest common denominator for open-ended testing, we began by extracting our big idea into the first of two phases:

Phase One:

How might we design an ecosystem which enables individual users to define/document their diverse A.S.E. profiles and complex practices?

Phase Two:

How might we allow a collective ecosystem to evolve over time?
How might we allow users to most effectively access knowledge?



Find more on **Phase Two** in the Next Steps Section, where we hone in on the role of feedback, mentors, and cross-system partnerships ...

v1.0_CARD SORTS

- Extracted themes and emerging topics into a low fidelity paper prototype
- Explored users' understandings of information architectures and hierarchies therein.



Findings:

- Though this initial structure was intentionally loose to explore individual expression, User E felt uncertain about where to start and where to end
- User G was specifically drawn to the “Action Steps” and “What’s Next?” categories, but felt there was too little structure to expect a “road map” visualization



Questions

- *What might drive greater clarity around structure?*



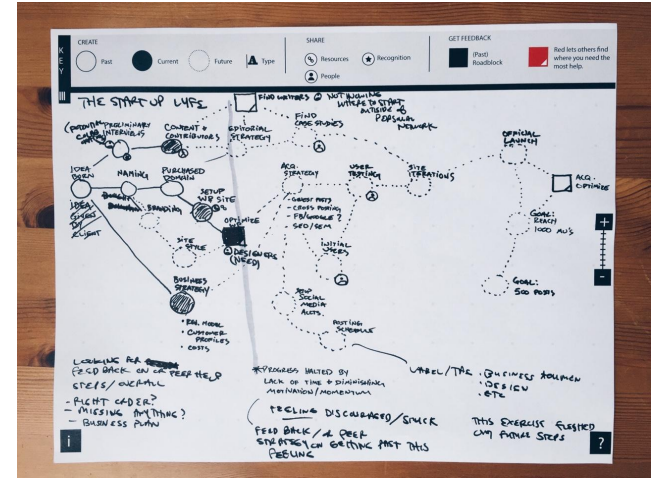
v2.0_PAPER PROTOTYPING

- Starting with a task list, we identified essential tasks for meeting our main aim.
- Grouped tasks into as limited constraints as possible, prototyping select components, creation, and features for gathering feedback.
- Built a printed mockup to help guide role play, and open-ended storytelling.



Findings:

- User F was able to break free from a creative/motivation block with his project by acknowledging what's been finished, and with more clarity of action items going forward.
- Interest in adding tags/area's of interest to the symbols: ie. business acumen, marketing, etc



v2.0_PAPER PROTOTYPING CON'T

Findings:

- New User K (Helen: Founder, *Align*, mobile App) used project map as more of a product management tool
- Sees it as a “brain dump” or creating a unique constellation of and for your product
- Users I & J (Eytan & Marco: Social Entrepreneurs/Documentary Makers) both shared nodes representing significant events throughout projects
- Both wanted guidance or templates before making the map

Questions

- *Is this map helpful and easy to interpret by those outside the ecosystem?*
- *Do users understand the core interactions we've defined?*



v2.0_PAPER PROTOTYPING CON'T

More Findings:

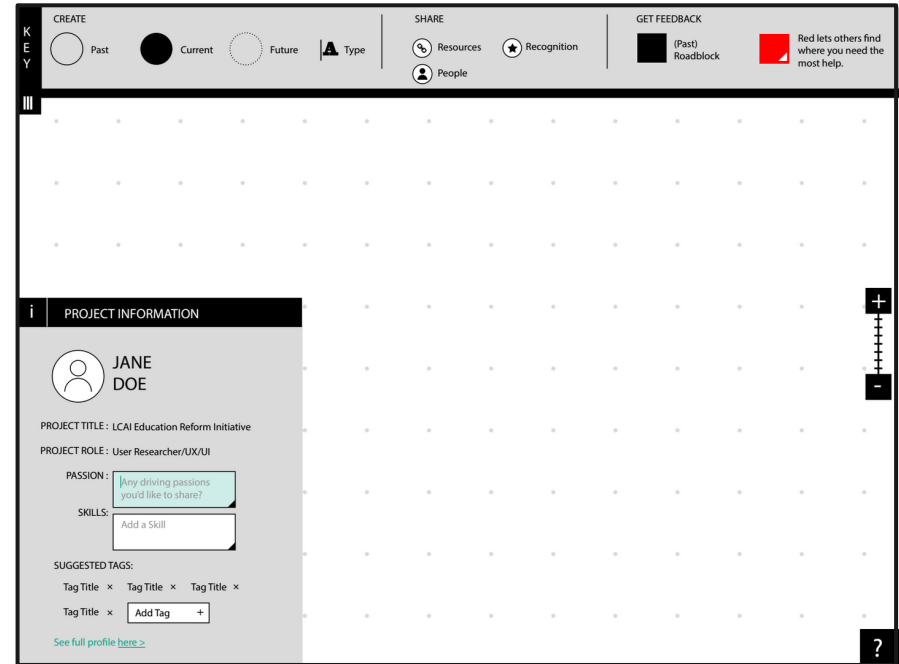
- Users thought that asset collection might increase the value when mapping their project
- Users benefitted from guidance or visual examples to help guide their explorations of the model maker
- Users struggled to conceptualize the usefulness of the tool outside of the envisioned platform ecosystem
- Users conceptualized their maps differently depending on which stage they were currently active
- Users found it helpful to visualize items inside project nodes, i.e. “buckets.”
- Users found the exercise of thinking through their current challenges helpful

v3.0_LIVE LINKS : INDIVIDUAL TESTING

- MM Digital Prototype was built based on our paper prototype in order to maintain the opportunity for testing an open canvas.
- New iterations included collapsible toolbar, profile and help widgets, drag and drop mobility, zoom flexibility, 1 highlight color, and a simple prompt guiding users to build a current project roadmap using the provided shapes and text.
- A developer helped us build out a functional prototype of highest priority features using Meteor, a real-time Javascript framework

Findings:

- Certain features are required in order for interface to be fully functional for users
- UI and taxonomy / description differed among users
- Users wanted to know more about key interactions and how information would be shared among community mentors



v4.0 LIVE LINKS : INDIVIDUAL TESTING

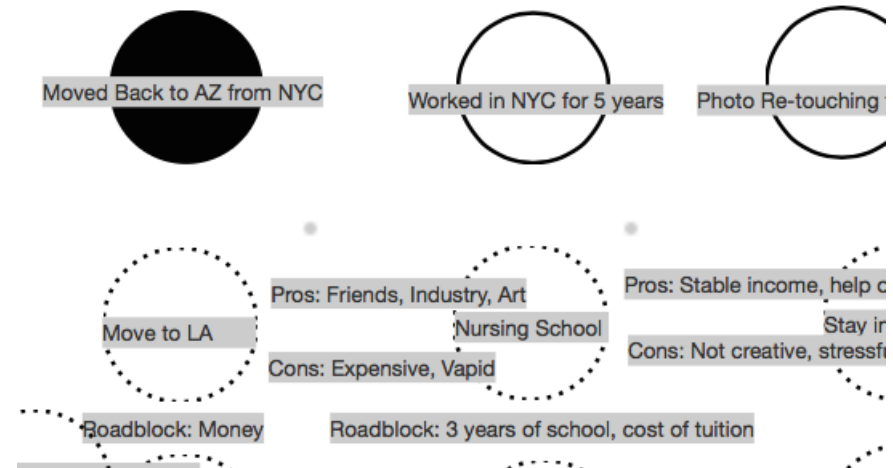
- User H's current challenge/project was broad, but relevant: "My Next Career Move".

Findings:

- Felt that the roadmapping exercise helped her to visualize her problem, and path, but felt stuck after-unclear of where to go (Next steps...)
- Successfully identified key parts like "people" and "resources", though was looking for specific componentry to help contextualize what the map is about. Suggested using a template OR seeing a clear example.
- **Other remarks:** As a post grad, H felt it's not as easy to find mentors. Typically internships and/or on the job are more easily accessible means for finding experienced professionals to learn from; But the working force lacks an industry-wide formalized system to establish and maintain mentor relationships. Even though it's primed: it's specific areas/skill sets to the parties involved. Companies benefit by enhancing employee ed.



My Next Career Move



Next Steps

We're excited about the journey HCD has taken us on so far. Our initial concept (an ecosystem for *enabling individual users to define/document their diverse A.S.E. profiles*) has evolved across a series of iterative prototypes supported by user testing and corresponding feedback. Next steps will focus on extracting findings from our testing link into a higher fidelity interface, as well as continuing on to our project Phase Two.

Phase Two will:

- Take the roadmaps our test users' modeled to experienced industry professionals (perhaps our industry experts), and test to see if the visualization is an effective way to identify and communicate opportunities for collaboration or mentorship.
- Host a group workshop to inform a next iteration integrating features and flows for seeking feedback, and connecting to partners, mentors, and overlapping interests.

Future aspirations include:

- Continuing to build out a robust mentor/mentee platform or centralized resource infrastructure
- Exploring the automation of matching/proactively connecting people to mutually-beneficial relationships
- Hosting a supportive space for lifelong learning, constructive feedback, and first time social entrepreneurs

THANKS TO

Facilitators



+ACUMEN

Locations



Partners

verynice.

Keisha Perry
Sebastian Fite
Kristen Wakamoto



Tools

