Welcome to my Design Portfolio!

Hello! My name is Mala Kumar, and I am a UX Researcher and Designer. I've led the conceptualization and design of 10+ digital products used globally for the private sector, United Nations, INGOs and non-profits. I work with office-based and remote teams in both English and French.

Contained in this file are wireframes and design documents of my past projects. To learn more and to find links to the prototypes, please visit my portfolio online at http://malakumar.com. If you have a project for which you think I would be a good fit, please email me at msk1985@gmail.com.

I'm an experienced speaker and writer; in September 2018, I spoke at Nordic.design in Stockholm, Sweden about designing for the world's most pressing issues. You can find my talk on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o4A8H7I2Ig.

Projects in this Portfolio	Final Project Links
AgResults Website	https://agresults.org
Alliance Française DC Website	https://francedc.org
UNICEF Gender Content Repository	N/A (Internal to UNICEF)
UNICEF Innocenti Evidence Gapmap	https://www.unicef-irc.org/evidence-gap-map/
Mali Governance App	Google Play Store
Superficial/Substantive Tech VR and App	http://malakumar.com/2016/07/12/art-a-hack-summer-2016/

AgResults Wireframes and Design Documents

Following the proposal development I led, AgResults - a $122 million Deloitte-managed project - contracted my employer, Sonjara, Inc. The project uses pull mechanisms to incentivize innovation in agriculture throughout sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. I led the entire redesign and project management of the new website, which was built in Joomla using Bootstrap.

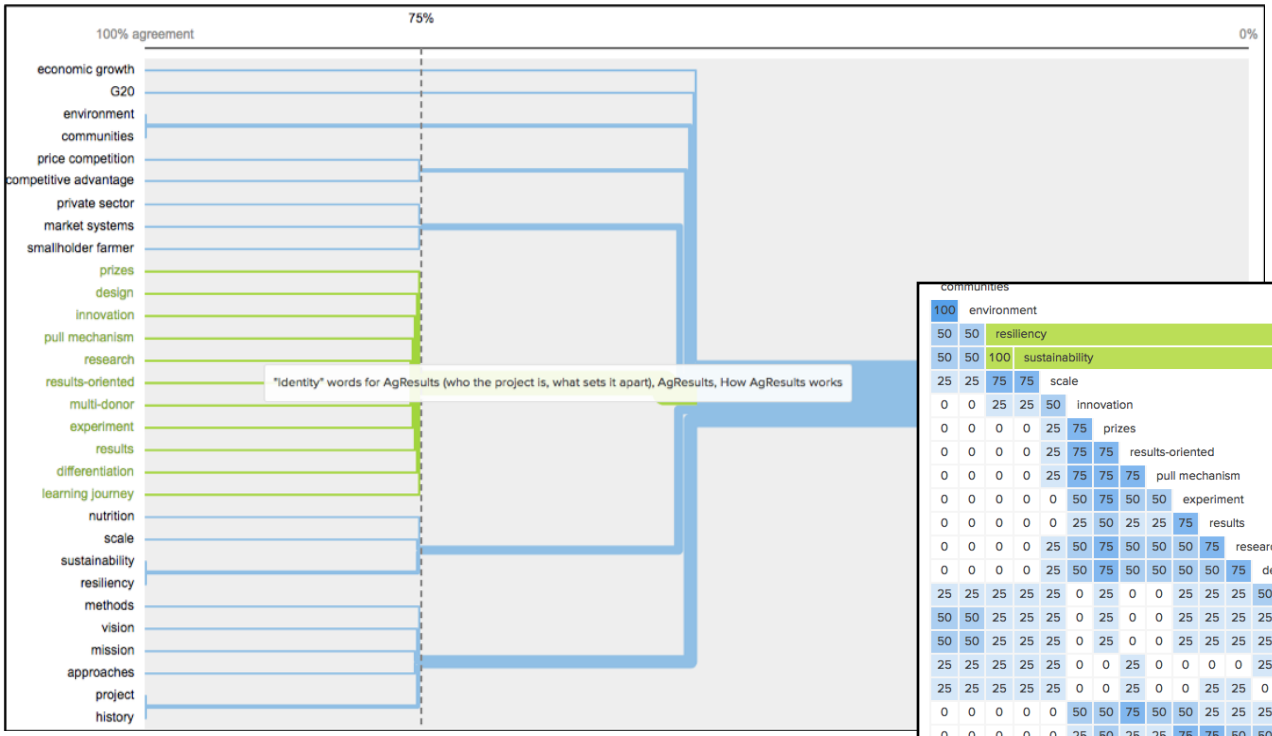
User Personas

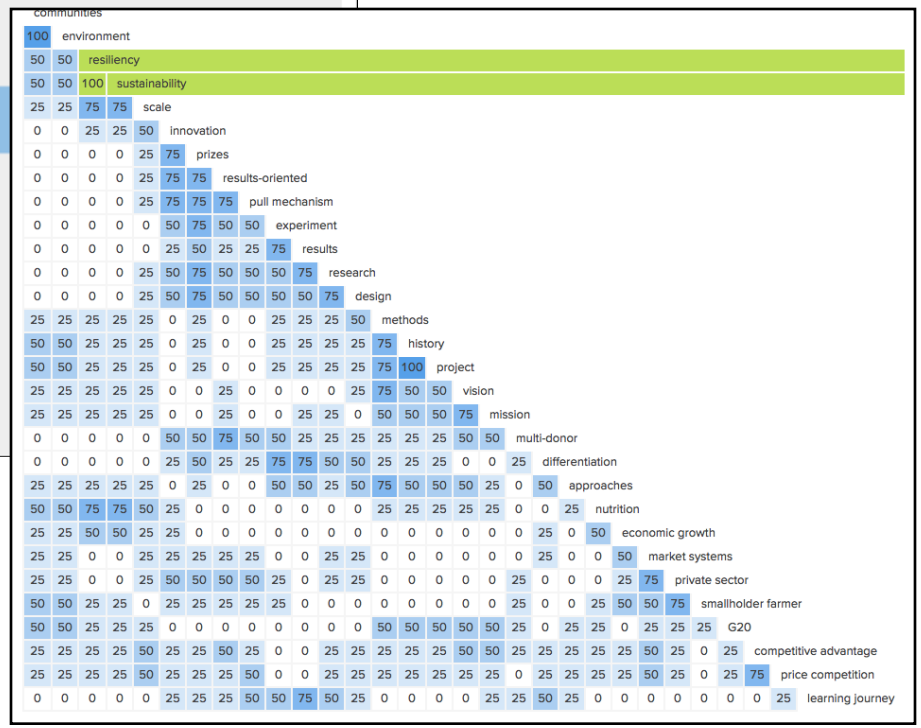
I first had the client pull together a core testing group made up of different types of stakeholders. I conducted a structured interview with each tester, then synthesized the results into user personas, one of which is to the right.

AgResults Wireframes and Design Documents

Design Direction

Through the interviews, it was clear the most critical design change should be centering new website around project pages. I had my core testers do an open card sort on Optimal Workshop to understand what the project pages needed to contain. The dendogram view helped me understand groups of words (sections) to include in a project page. Based on the responses, I called the composition of sections a “Learning Journey”.





The similarity matrix on the right helped me understand how the client should frame concepts for their new project page content, such as associating sustainability and resiliency.

AgResults Wireframes and Design Documents

Taking the design research findings and the strict color palette of AgResults, I then designed a high-fidelity prototype to which I had the client react. Simultaneously, I suggested Joomla templates on which to build the new site. We refined the prototype several times to comply with the elements of the template the client liked the most, which was Mushi.

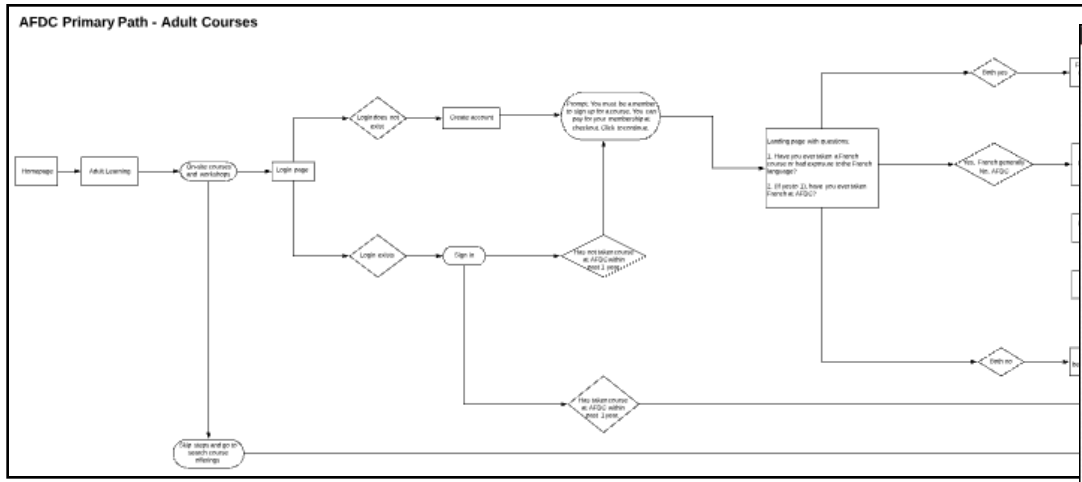
Concurrent to the website, I led visualization development for 12 infographics. Below is one I conceptualized and designed on the process of elimination AgResults uses to choose project concepts to validate. **The new design has doubled engagement time on the site.**

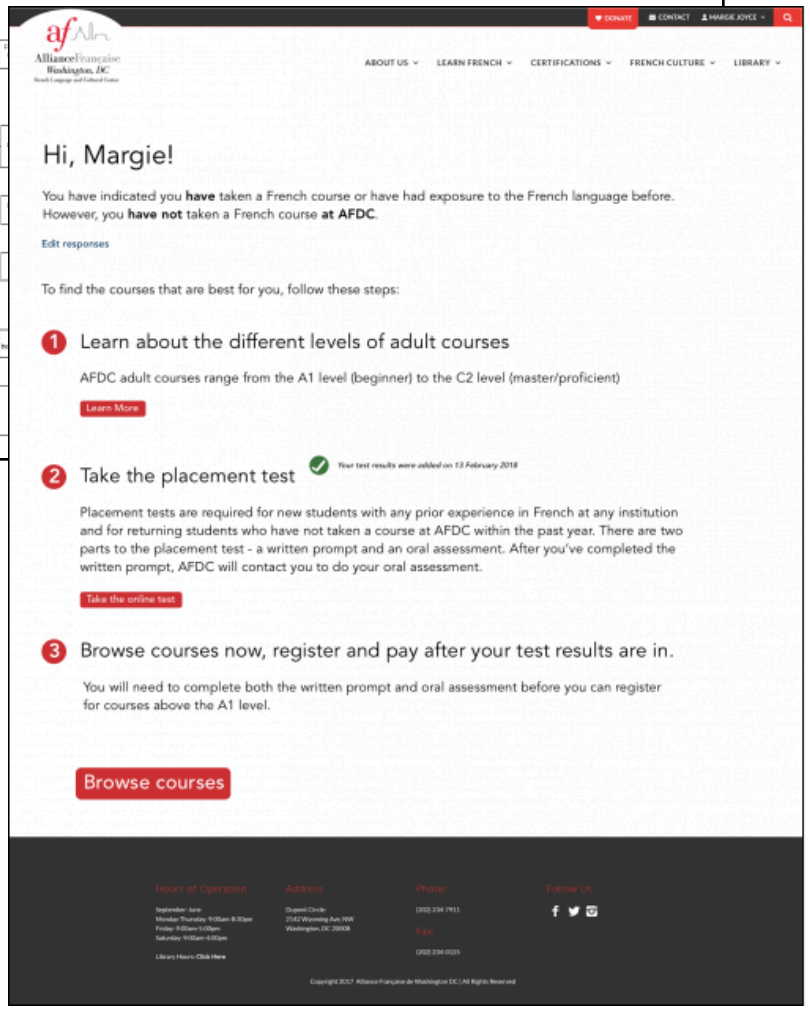
Feasibility Framework	Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3	Concept 4
1. Does the poverty challenge support the AgResults mission and impact?	✗	✓	✓	✗
2. Is the challenge caused by a market breakdown that a pull mechanism can fix?	✓	—	✓	—
3. Are the context and enabling conditions neutral to supportive?	—	—	✓	✗
4. Is the pull mechanism design feasible and measurable?	✓	✓	✓	✗
Concept Validation Outcome	*Neutral* — *Mixed evidence on the four steps*	*Neutral* — *Mixed evidence on the four steps*	*Positive* — *Most or all answers lean yes*	*Negative* — *Most or all answers lean no*

Alliance Française DC Wireframes and Design Documents

Of the 20+ centers in North America, the Alliance Française of Washington DC (AFDC) is the second largest. Through my job with Sonjara, I was the lead designer and project manager of the complete redesign of their website, including eCommerce, course registration, and placement tests, among other components.

The majority (80%) of AFDC revenue comes from courses. Thus, the bulk of my user research centered around optimizing all workflows around course registration.





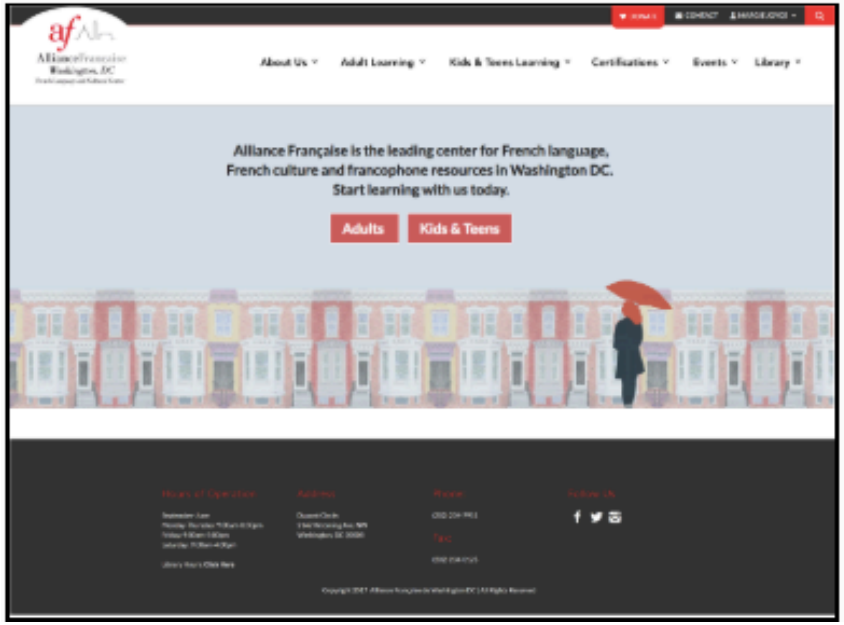
I interviewed several current and potential AFDC clients, and determined two main pain points with course registration:

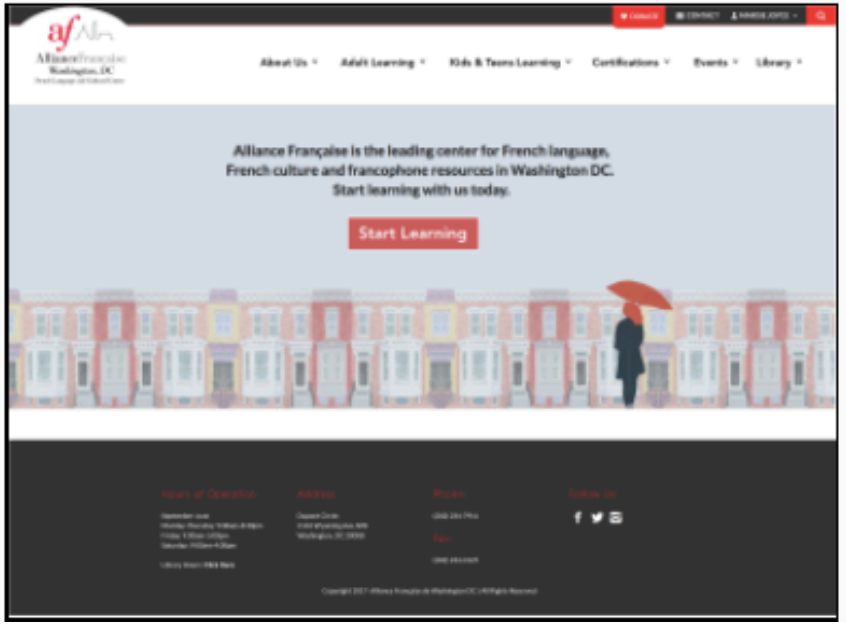
1. Needing to use multiple outdated platforms to sign up
2. Not understanding the proces start to finish

The first was addressed with our redesign. For the second, I introduced a new workflow with a landing page (right) to guide users on the steps to sign up. I iterated this workflow following feedback from guided remote evaluations on UserTesting.com. Above is the primary path.

Alliance Française Wireframes Design Documents

I led evaluative research on our primary path and our coded prototype. One test was an A/B split evaluating if it was better to have one or two buttons directing users to the correct workflow. The test showed two buttons was better - one for those who want to browse and one for those who know for which course they want to register.





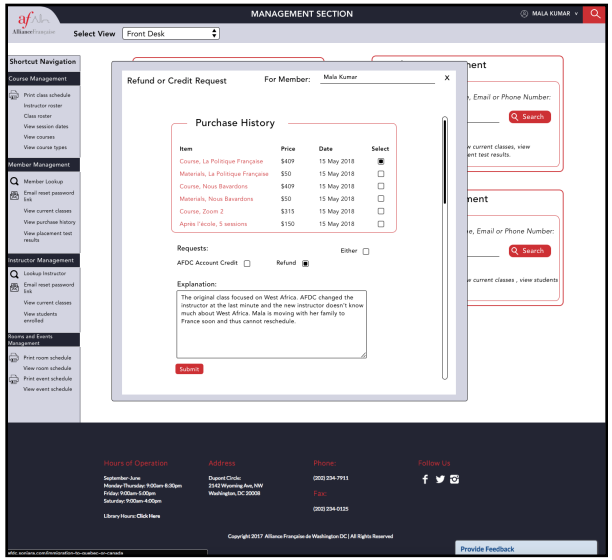
A/B Split Test Results - Course Types View 1

A/B Split Test Results - Course Types View 2

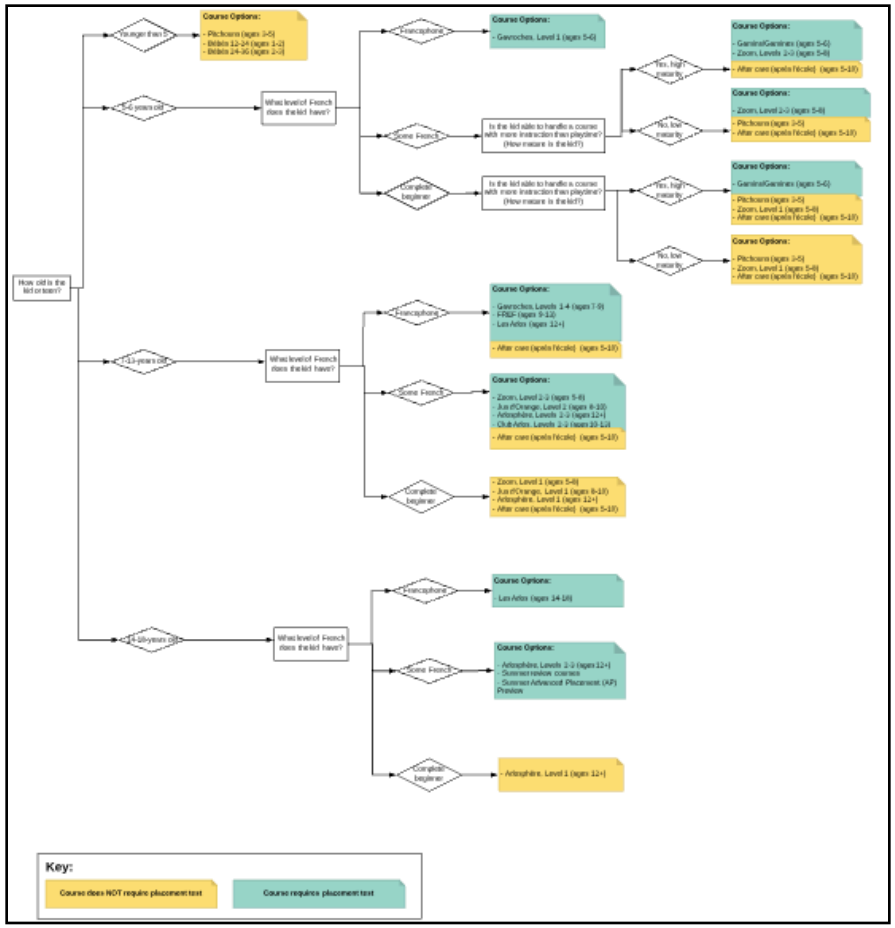
Alliance Française DC Wireframes and Prototypes

I also led the mapping and design of organizational workflows and and components, including the three shown here. **My work has contributed to AFDC becoming #1 in course registrations for North America and their highest enrollment in seven years.**

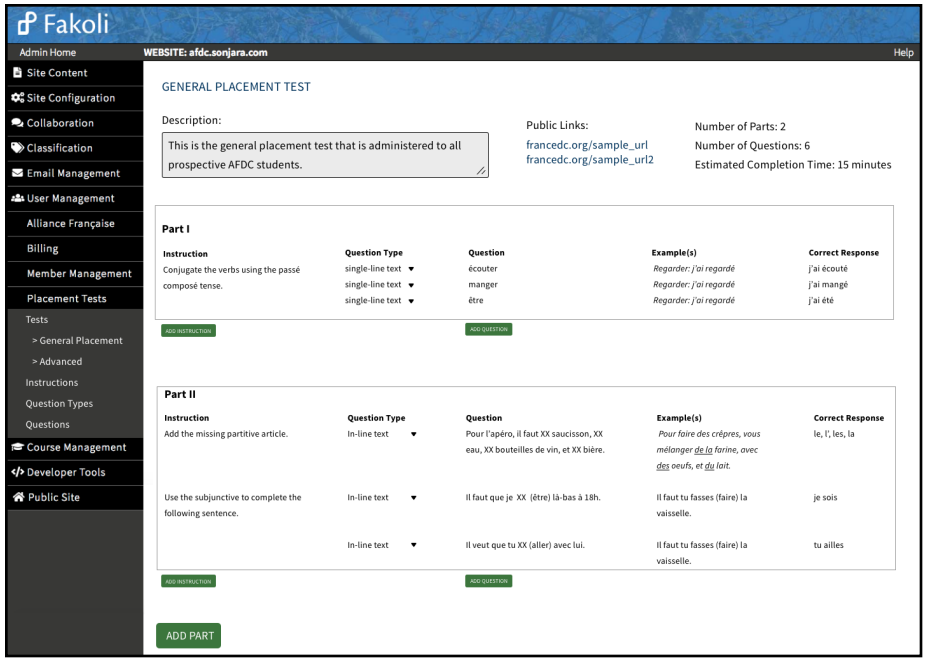
Management Section



Decision Tree, Children's Placement Test



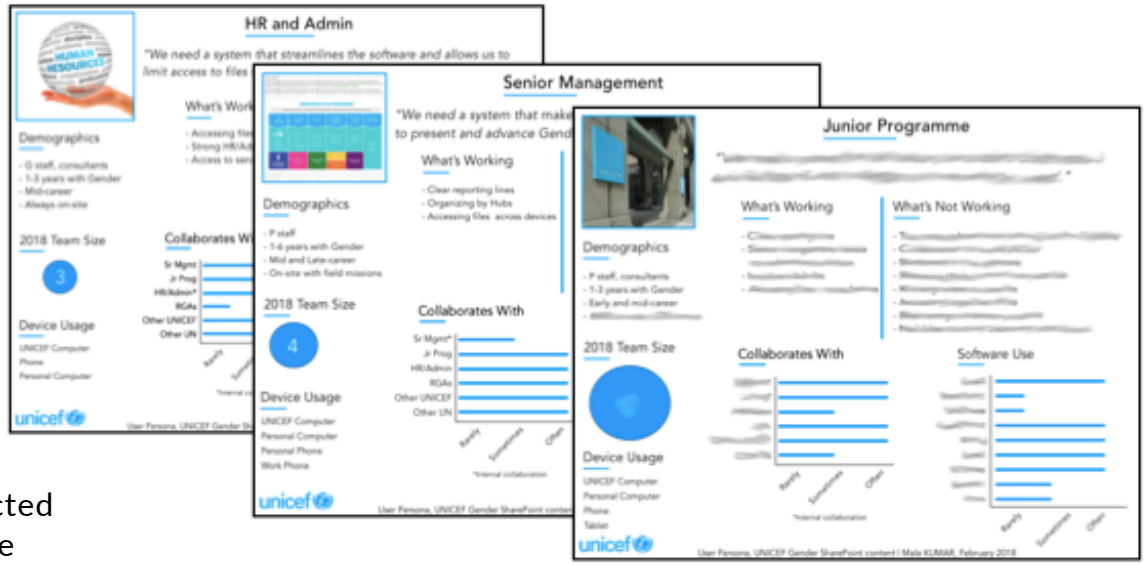
Placement Test



UNICEF Gender Design Documents

The UNICEF Gender section hired me to design a new content repository, including the information architecture, taxonomy, flows (points of automation) and the overall process workflow to keep content updated.

I started by conducting a structured interview with 12 members of the team and synthesizing the results into user personas.



With the majority of the team, I conducted three open card sorts, which formed the basis of the new IA.

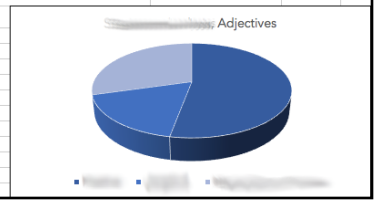
Open card sorts

In-Person Results that informed IA and taxonomy

Question: What words come to mind when I say Gender content?		
What this helps determine	Possible second level sub-folders	Possible tags
Middle level of sub-folders, tags	Analysis, Technical Areas, Products, Guidance and SOPs, HR/admin**	cross-cutting, GAP, [product types], [SOP types]

Categories that Emerged	Number of Words (Absolute)	Number of Words (Unique)	Most Frequent Word (MFW)	Frequency, MFW
Adjectives	17	16	cross-cutting	3
Analysis	8	8	0	0
Technology Platforms	10	7	team site	3
Technical Areas	14	11	child marriage	2
Target Demographics	2	2	0	0
Products	23	13	GAP	9
Guidance SOPs	7	4	GPR	2
Other	6	5	Folders	2

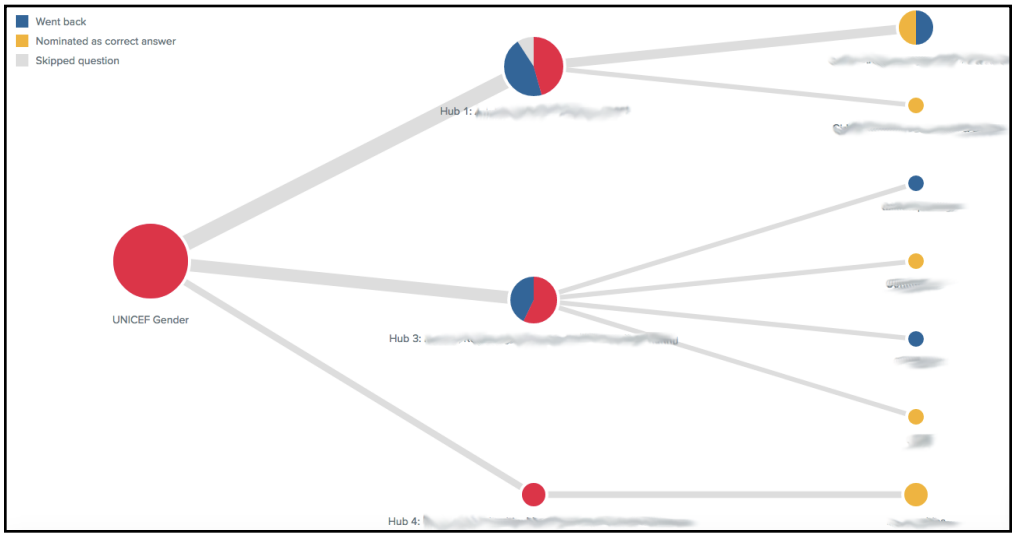
Adjectives*		
[redacted]		
9	3	5



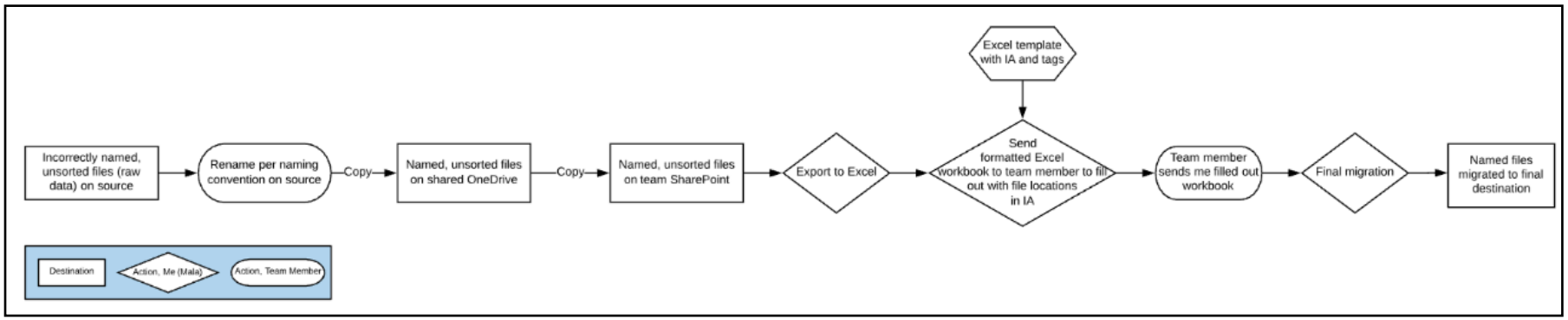
UNICEF Gender Design Documents

After several iterations, I used Optimal Workshop to evaluate the the IA. The below result is of five team members placing key documents in the new IA. Note I did not set correct answers, thus circles in mostly one color represents consensus. The circles with a color split lacked consensus and were areas to refine and/or augment onboarding.

Optimal Workshop Result, Information Architecture Test

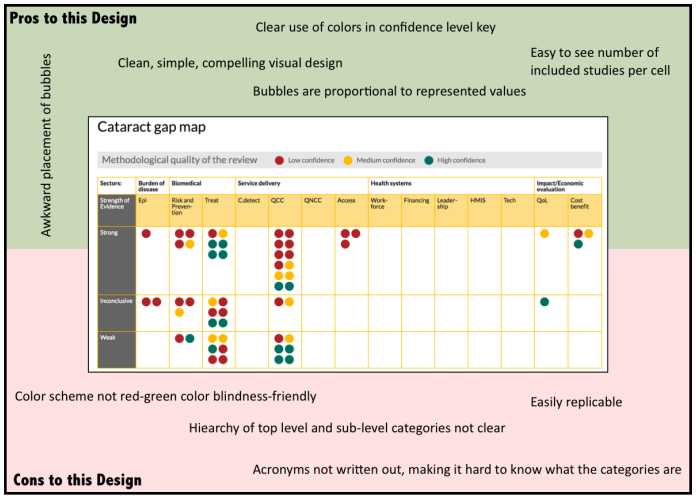


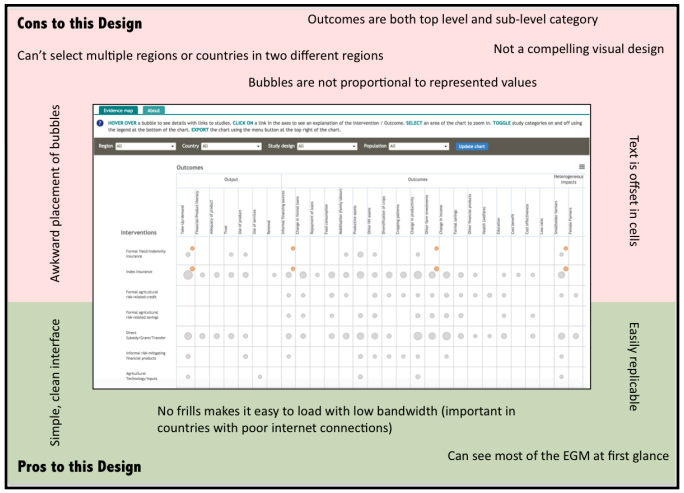
After completing all the research products and through continual and deep engagement with 15+ team members, **the final below workflow has been adopted by the section and will remain in place for years to come. The section is one of the most advanced in this activity at UNICEF.**



UNICEF Innocenti Wireframes and Design Documents

The Bassiouni Group (TBG) in New York hired me as the lead UX Designer and Project Manager on the development of UNICEF Innocenti's first native digital research product - the online version of an evidence gapmap (EGM). I started my analysis with a survey of existing EGMs; two analyses are below.





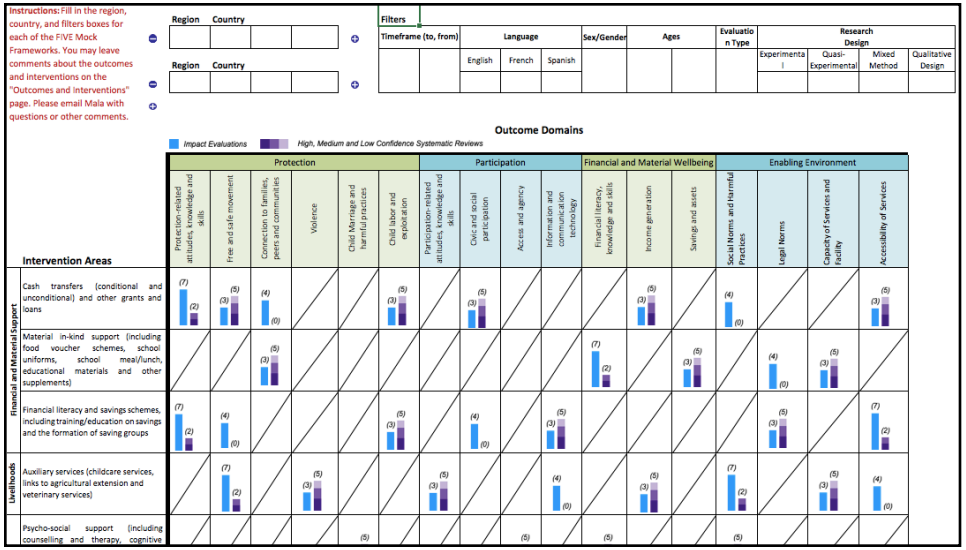
The base of the design had to stay in matrix form and the matrix axes were decided in the offline version. My main design decisions were thus the visualization in the matrix and the filters to include.

One critical finding I made during the generative research process with potential users was that the relative abundance of research was nearly as important as the absence/presence of research. I therefore switched the visualization from bubbles to bars to preserve proportional representation, which was validated in testing the medium-fidelity prototype to the left.

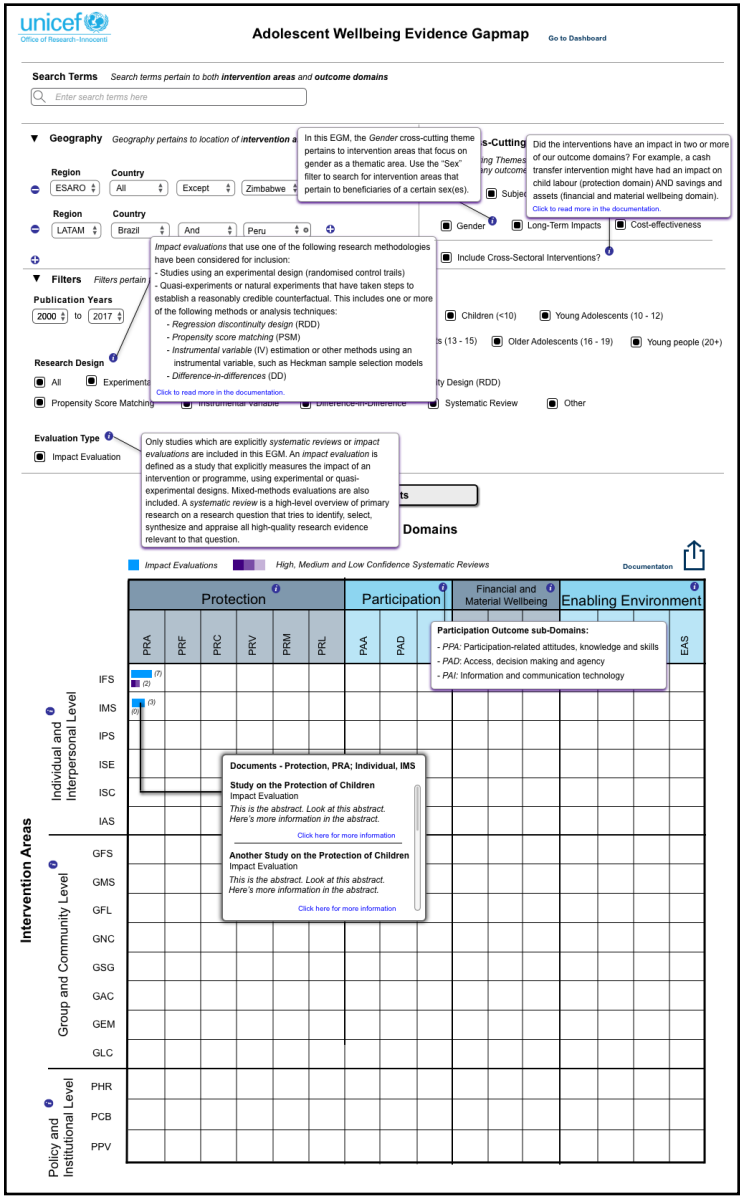
UNICEF Innocenti Wireframes and Design Documents

I then ran a test with five likely users to determine the filter categories and options. In the test, I replicated the then interface in Excel and had users select five instances of filter options they would like. The synthesis led me to the wireframe on the left. The results also gave me great insights into onboarding and information call-outs for different filter sections.

Filters Exercise Excel Workbook

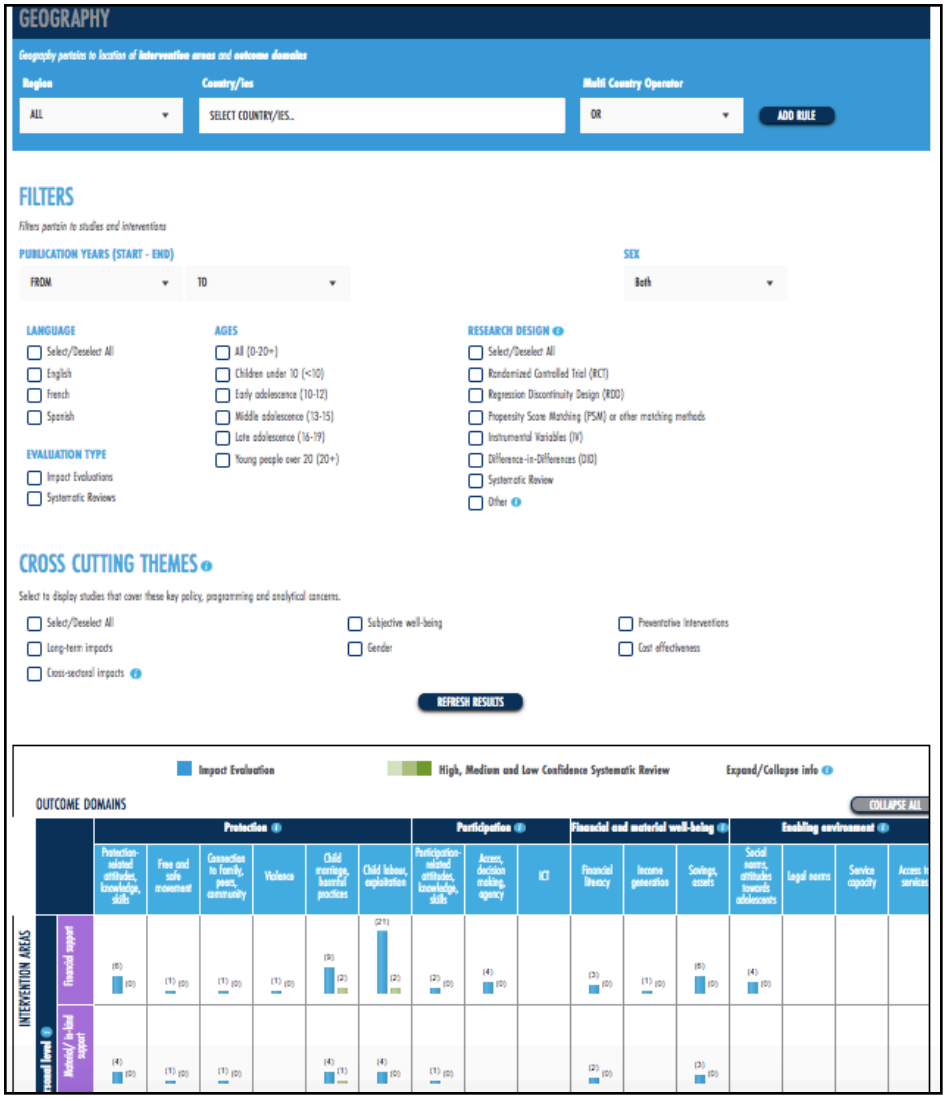


Wireframe



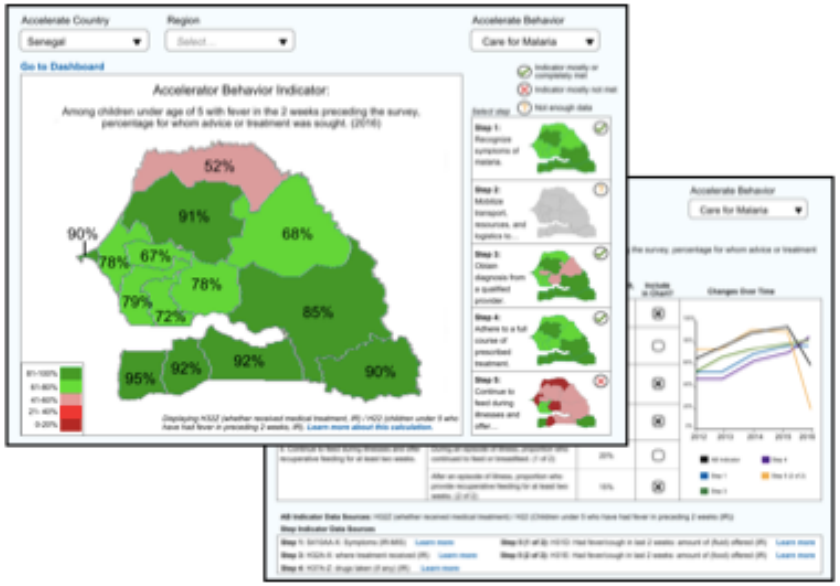
UNICEF Innocenti Wireframes and Design Documents

The final EGM design was covered in an organizational webinar, was received with great reviews, **and at least two other sections in UNICEF are interested in replicating its design.**



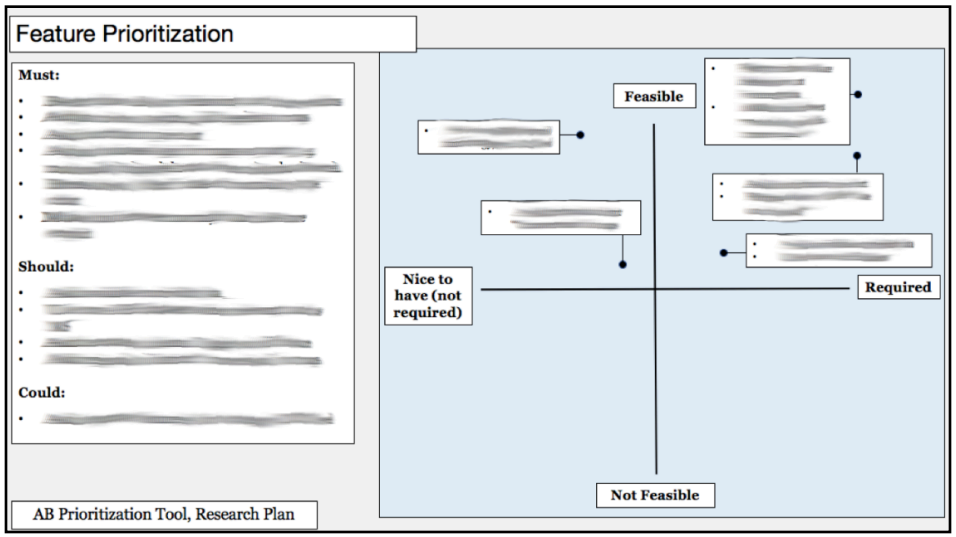
USAID Accelerate Wireframes and Design Documents

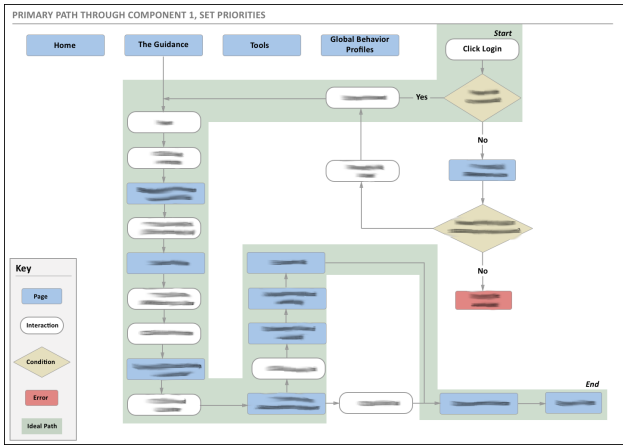
The USAID Accelerate Project helps country offices use behavior change thinking in their public health programs. I led on data visualization and building a better user experience for the online tools of the project.



Accelerate stakeholders mostly had no idea where to start and didn't find low-fi wireframes useful. The research process thus started in an unlikely place - with high-fidelity prototypes to which staff reacted.

After running several tests to evaluate concepts and interviews to understand workflows and pain points, I prioritized possible features of the tools, as seen below. I also worked out the primary path. **My work has been adopted as a critical part of the Accelerate suite of tools, and the project is highly recognized in USAID and the UN for behavior change in public health.**

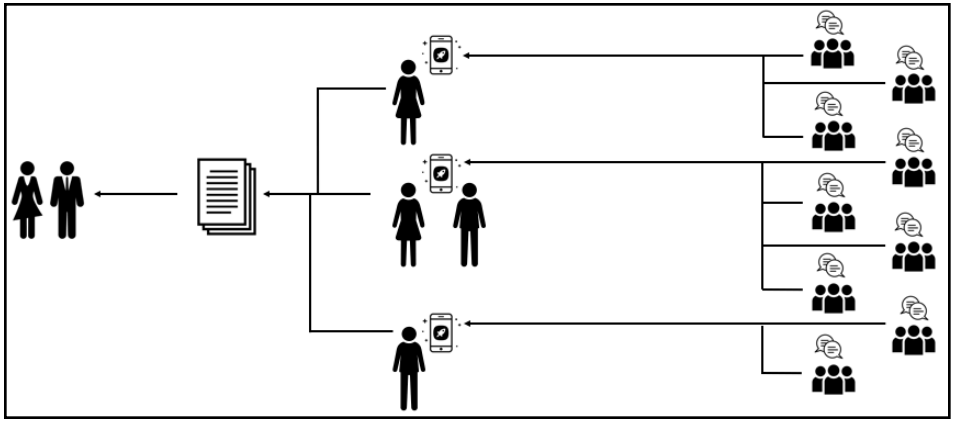




Mali Governance App Wireframes and Design Documents

As part of a project to help local politicians in the West African country of Mali understand their youth constituent needs, I led the design work to create an Android app.

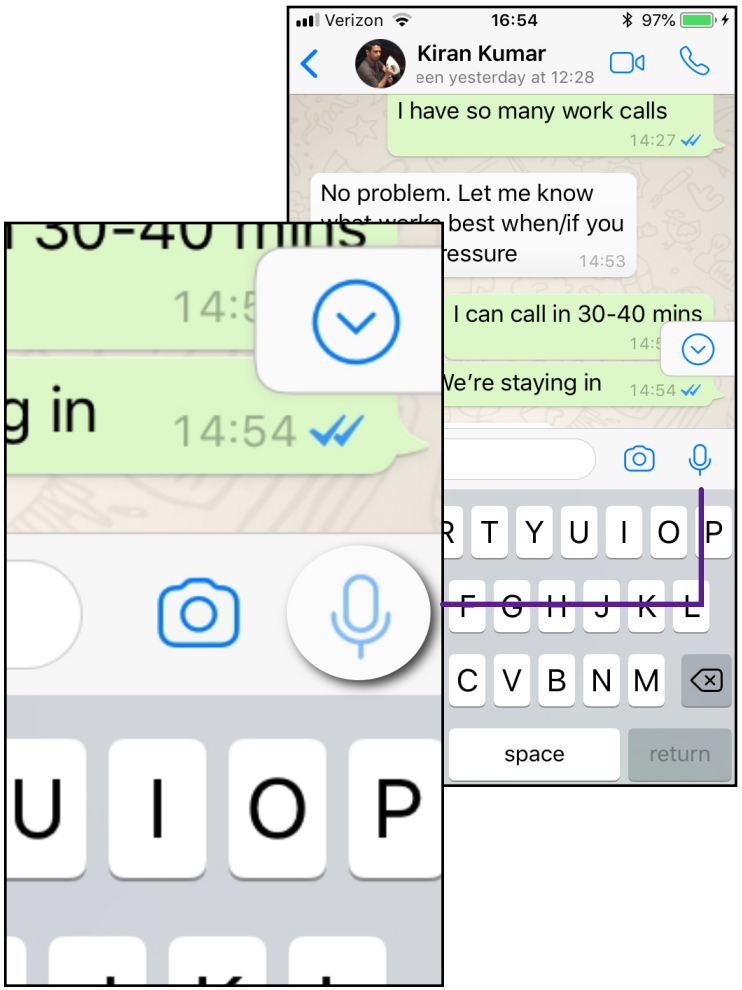
I laid out the overall project below. Villages were grouped in pairs or triplets, then assigned a youth leader, who then asked youth to respond to a survey on an app. These surveys were aggregated and synthesized into a final report, which were sent to local politicans to help inform policy and communication campaigns.



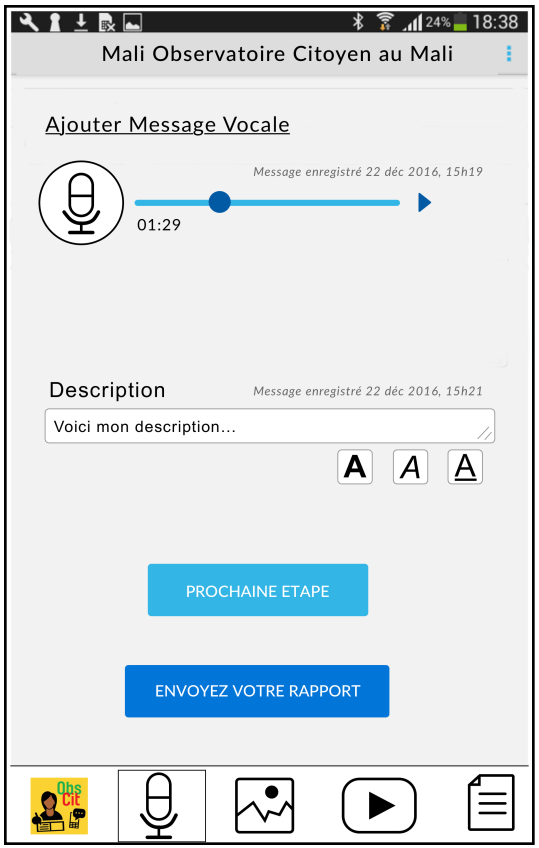
Based on initial field research, I originally structured the app as a list with many feedback loops to help youth leaders fill everything out. Adding voice clips was initially slotted at the end of the workflow.

Mali Governance App Wireframes and Design Documents

I was later able validate the research in the field myself by interviewing youth leaders. When I posed the question, “Which app do you use on your own and why?” one young woman told me WhatsApp, because voice memos are easy and cheap to use. After further interviewing, I confirmed most youth leaders preferred to use voice memos, as participants speak in local languages and transcribing to French keyboards (the default in Mali) creates a lot of errors. Voice is also more culturally appropriate than typing in front of someone.



Based on these findings, I redesigned the app to start with voice and bettered the voice interface. **As a result, adoption went up, errors went down, and overall participation increased.**



Superficial/Substantive Tech Wireframes and VR Experience Design

I led the conceptualization and design of a satire tech project. Our team's artistic statement posited two ideas:

- Deep understanding of a superficial problems overshadows real societal problems being addressed.
- Superficial understanding of a real societal problems overshadows real solutions being addressed.

To demonstrate the second of the two, we created a high-fidelity app prototype and a VR experience. In the app, participants customized parts of a water pump to send and help "solve Africa". In the VR experience we built in Unity, they tried to assemble the pump. To demostrate badly planned huminitarian projects, pump parts appeared at random. The only information participants saw were irrelevant stats, such as the most popular color of the pump.

Our project was well received in the cohort, and was the basis of my talk at Nordic.design in Stockholm, Sweden.

Screenshot of the VR experience