

Design a volunteer registration flow for Blaze Foundation Animal Shelter

Roy Joseph

Project overview



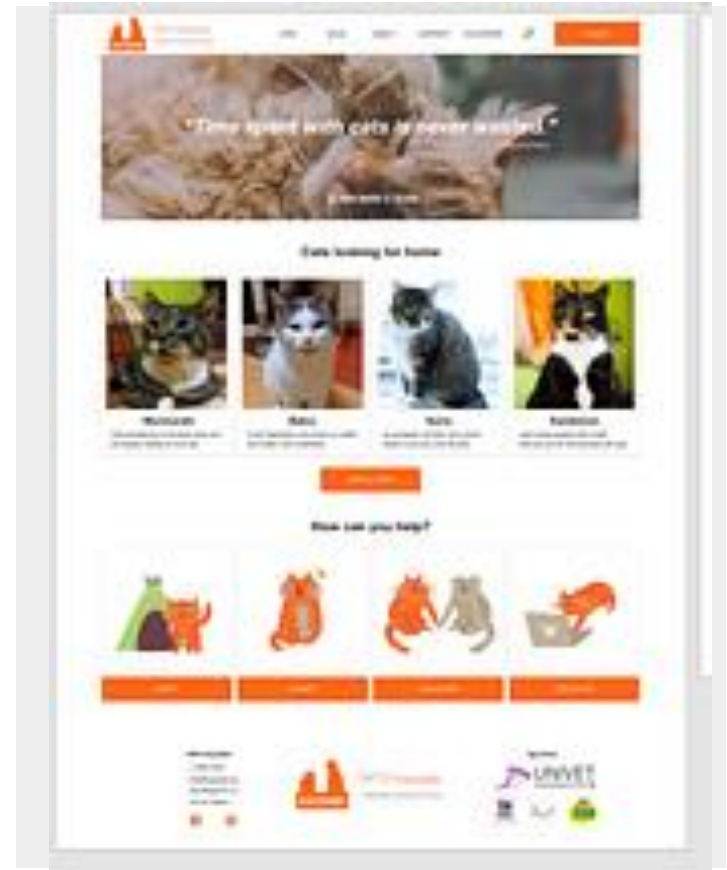
The product:

A responsive website that allows people interested in volunteering to get quick information about the positions available and what it requires, followed by an application form straight to the point and instant information when a reply should be expected.



Project duration:

July 2023 – August 2023



Project overview



The problem:

People who wish to volunteer are facing a confusing and long application process where they don't get instant information about the recruiting process. It can be discouraging for some, resulting in a loss of interest in volunteering for an organisation..



The goal:

A responsive website that allows people interested in volunteering to get quick information about the positions available and what it requires, followed by an application form straight to the point and instant information when a reply should be expected.

Project overview



My role:

UX designer



Responsibilities:

- Empathise with users and discover users needs
- Conduct competitive audit
- Generate ideas
- Plan information architecture
- Create paper wireframes and plan layout
- Create digital wireframes in Figma and refine them to enhance accessibility
- Create a low-fidelity prototype
- Plan and conduct a usability study
- Iterate on designs based on research findings
- Update low-fidelity prototype based on usability study insights
- Design mock-ups for a desktop version and a mobile version
- Work with design systems
- Create a high-fidelity prototype

Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

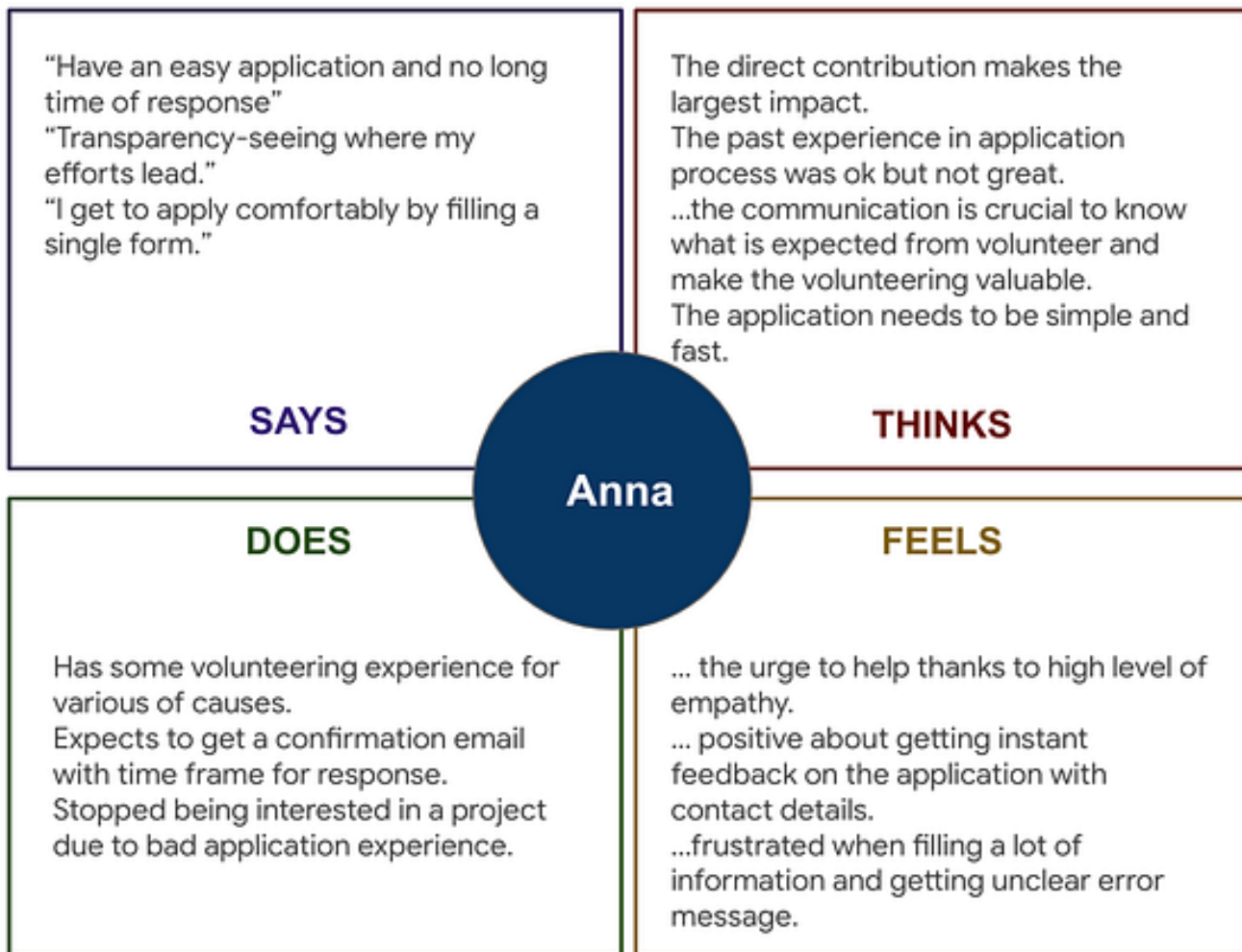
User research: Empathise and define

User research for empathy maps

The user research was focused on two groups: volunteers working in the shelter and the general volunteering. I wanted to find out more about the real situation when applying to the shelter, as my own experience is very old and informal. As the pool of actual users was too small, I reached fellow expats on the Facebook group asking those with previous volunteering experience to fill a survey.

Based on the collected data, I created empathy maps and then merged all the information and patterns into one

Empathy map



User research: summary



The user research was focused on two groups: volunteers working in the shelter and the general volunteering. I wanted to find out more about the real situation when applying to the shelter, as my own experience is very old and informal. As the pool of actual users was too small, I reached fellow expats on the Facebook group asking those with previous volunteering experience to fill a survey.

Based on the collected data, I created empathy maps and then merged all the information and patterns into one.

Persona: **Name**

Problem statement:

Gayathri is an Caring pet
Lover Who needs an easy
and quick way to apply in
a animal shelter as a
volunteer because
creative a positive change
in her free time makes her
happy



Anna Parve

*"Have an easy application and no
long time of response"*

Age range: 25-34 years old
Nationality: Estonian
Location: Tallinn, Estonia
Family: Single, childless
Education: Master's degree
Occupation: Teacher
Disability: None

BIO

Anna works as a teacher and has some spare time after work. She has a caring nature and would like to make some positive impact in the area she lives. Anna grew up surrounded by animals, she misses the connection but cannot have her own pet due to rental agreement. She decides to look for a volunteering position in a local cat shelter. As she will spend her free time volunteering, she wants clear and fast communication from the organisation.

GOALS

- Easy and fast application process
- Time estimation for the response
- Clear understanding about volunteering position

FRUSTRATION

- Not getting an instant reply
- Getting error message after filling a long application
- Poor communication and organisation

User story : Gayathri

The goal of this step was to keep the problem user-centred, actionable and clear based on created personas.

As a/an pet lover who wants to offer my free time

Type of user

I want to apply easy and fast as a volunteer in a local shelter groups

action

So that I can see a positive impact quickly to feel to good about my efforts

Benefit

User journey

In the user journey, I wanted to see the steps of a volunteer application process. For a person interested in volunteering, multiple aspects can ruin the experience:

- difficulty to find the volunteer application
- poor communication of what help is needed
- long and exhausting application form, ending with no information about the next steps and missing opportunity to create an emotional connection

Persona: Anna

Goal: Wants to volunteer in a local cat shelter to make a positive impact

ACTION	Choosing local shelter website	Reads about the volunteering option	Filling the form	Submitting the form	Waiting a reply from the shelter
TASK LIST	Tasks A. Search for websites B. Choose a website that is in your area	Tasks A. Click on volunteering options B. Reads the requirements	Tasks A. Fill the information	Tasks A. Press submit button B. Search for what field is wrongly filled as received error C. Fix the problem	Tasks A. Wait long for a response B. Get information contradicting the one on the website
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Excited to find place to help	Confused where to find info about volunteering Overwhelmed by information	Annoyed by long questionnaire	Frustrated with unclear message what is wrong	Disappointed by waiting Doubtful about the decision
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	The landing page must catch attention	A clear direction to volunteering info with text that is scannable	Straight to the point and only necessary questions	Clear message in case of error	Clear message about the waiting time. A contact info to call in case of need.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Gayathri is a/an caring person and a pet lover
User name User characteristics

Who needs an easy and quick way to apply in a pet shelter as a volunteer
User need

Because creating a positive change in her free time makes her happy
insight

Ideate

- Competitive audit
- How might we framework
- CrazyEight exercise
- Information architecture

Competitive audit

The current application process for Blaze Foundation animal shelter is a simple form including fields for name, email, phone and text. The person applying is facing a long text with information about the organisation and volunteering requirements. It is very difficult to scan through the text to find the most useful information.

As direct competitors, I identified other animal shelters in the near city

As indirect competitors, I identified animal shelters in other Districts

Direct competitors patterns	Indirect competitors patterns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use of bold colours with pleasant visual material evoking a positive feeling ● a long block of text ● difficult to find how to apply ● usage of Google forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● visually appealing ● clear button to apply as a volunteer ● variety of volunteering options ● 50/50 on-site application forms and Google forms ● the application forms were often long and complex

How Might We framework

By asking the below questions addressing the problem statement, I started coming out with ideas for the future design

HMW make a volunteer excited after the application process?

HMW improve the way volunteers fill the application form?

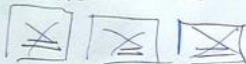
Break the point-of-view into pieces? HMW make the application process easy and fast?

CrazyEight exercise

- The main focus of this exercise was to find a way to increase motivation and keep engagement.
- Frames 1,3,5: the focus is either on success stories of other volunteers or creating connections with cats waiting for a cuddle.
- Frames 2,4,6: the focus is on clear communication of the process and duration of response.
- The time ran out before making the last two frames.

(X) — □ □ □ VOLUNTEER

VOLUNTEER STORIES



REQUIREMENTS

• —
• —
• —

APPLY

(X) — □ □ □ □

— 4 —

— 11 —

check stories of other
volunteers →



(X) — □ □ □ □

CATS WAITING FOR PAT



REQUIREMENT

• —
• —
• —

APPLY

(X) — □ □ □ □

WE GOT YOUR
APPLICATION!

You can expect reply within 5 days

For now, check cat friends
waiting for pats →

(X) — □ □ □ □

WE ARE EXCITED FOR YOUR
INTEREST TO SPEND
YOUR FREE TIME WITH
OUR KITTIES!

The application takes 5 min!

APPLY

(X) — □ □ □ □

WELCOME!

IT TAKES 5 MIN TO APPLY
IT — 11 — 5 DAY TO GET REPLY

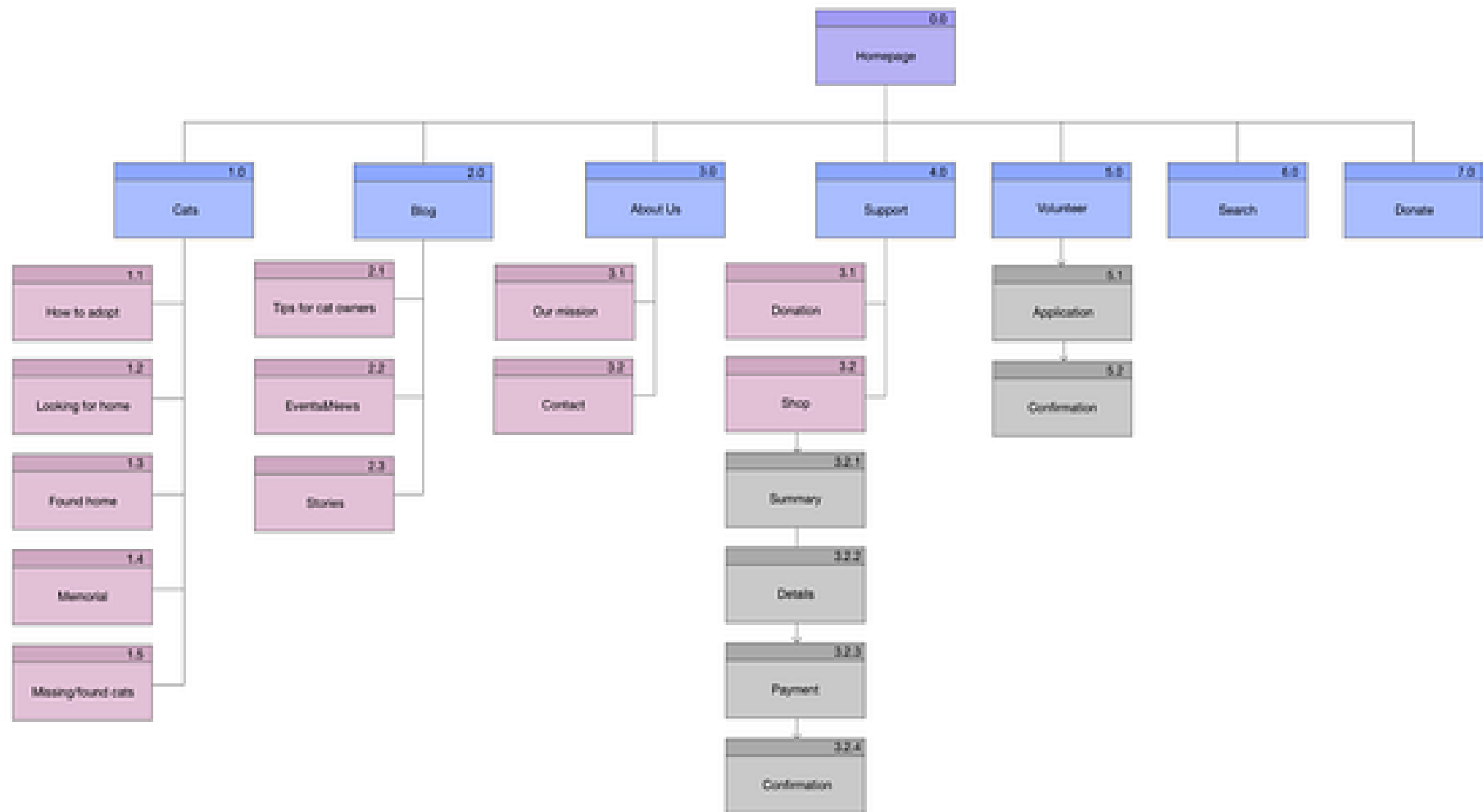
— 4 — 4 H. per WEEK TO

MAKE A CHANGE

APPLY

Information architecture

The shelter website has multiple purposes and users: those wanting to adopt, support the shelter with donation or volunteering and cat owners searching for information. I designed the sitemap so all users are able to quickly find what is in their interest.



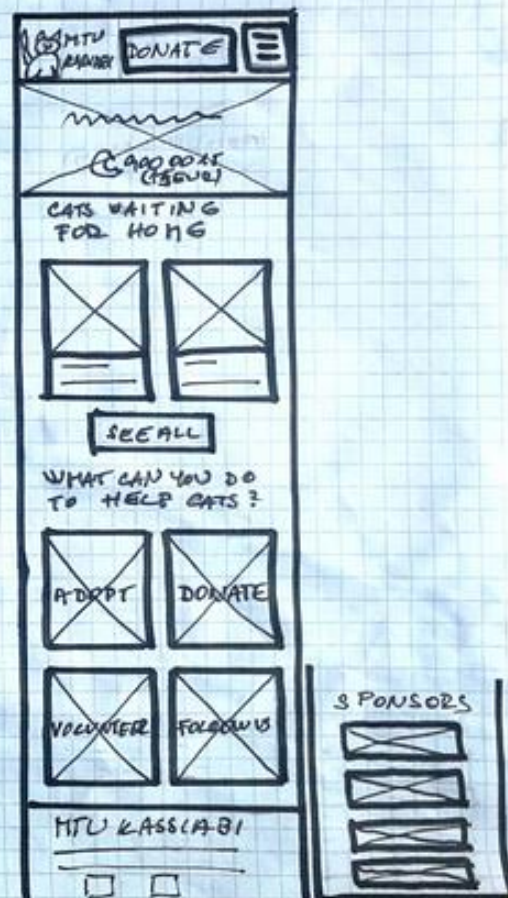
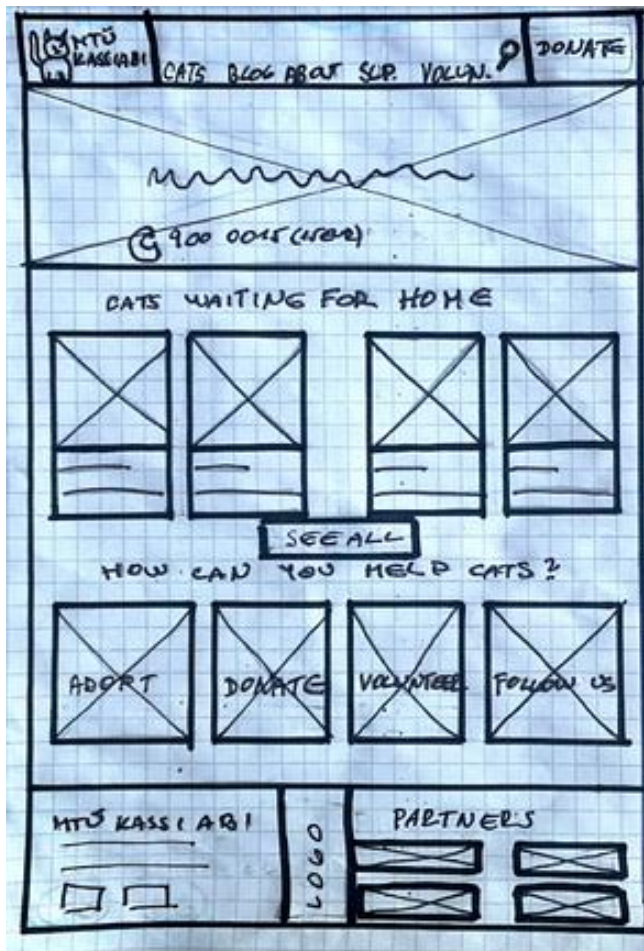
Refining the design

- Wireframes
- Usability testing
- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype

Wireframes

Paper wireframes

I sketched out paper wireframes for each screen in my website, keeping the user pain points about communication, clarity and ease of application flow in mind



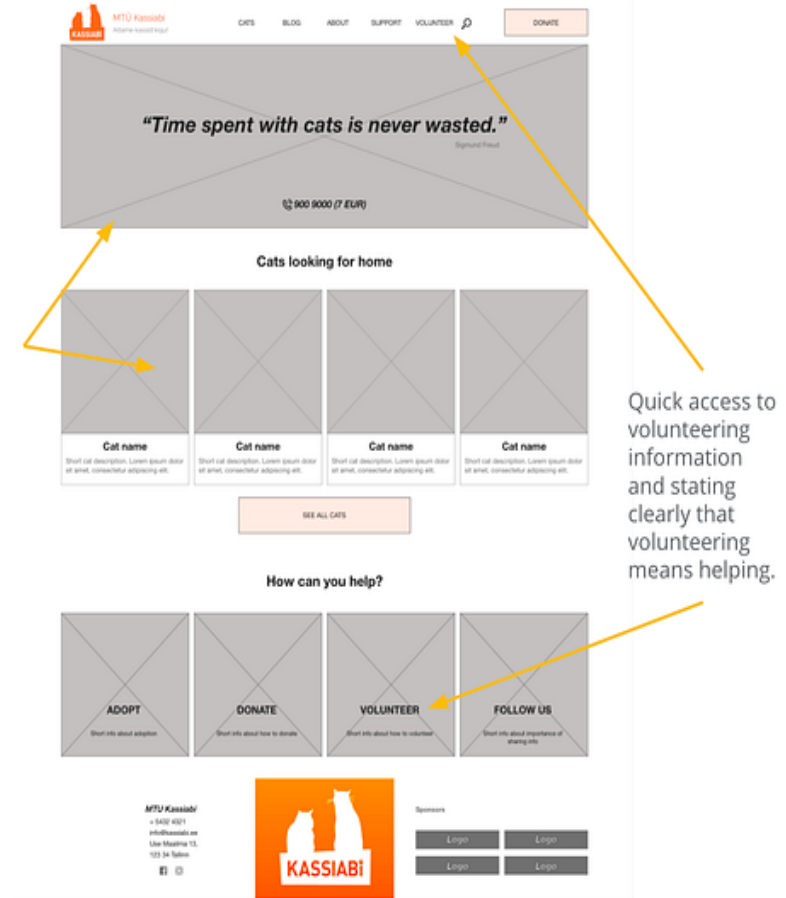
Digital Wireframes

Then I moved the wireframes to Figma. Digital wireframes made it easier to understand whenever I am addressing user pain points and how the design improves the user experience

Landing page

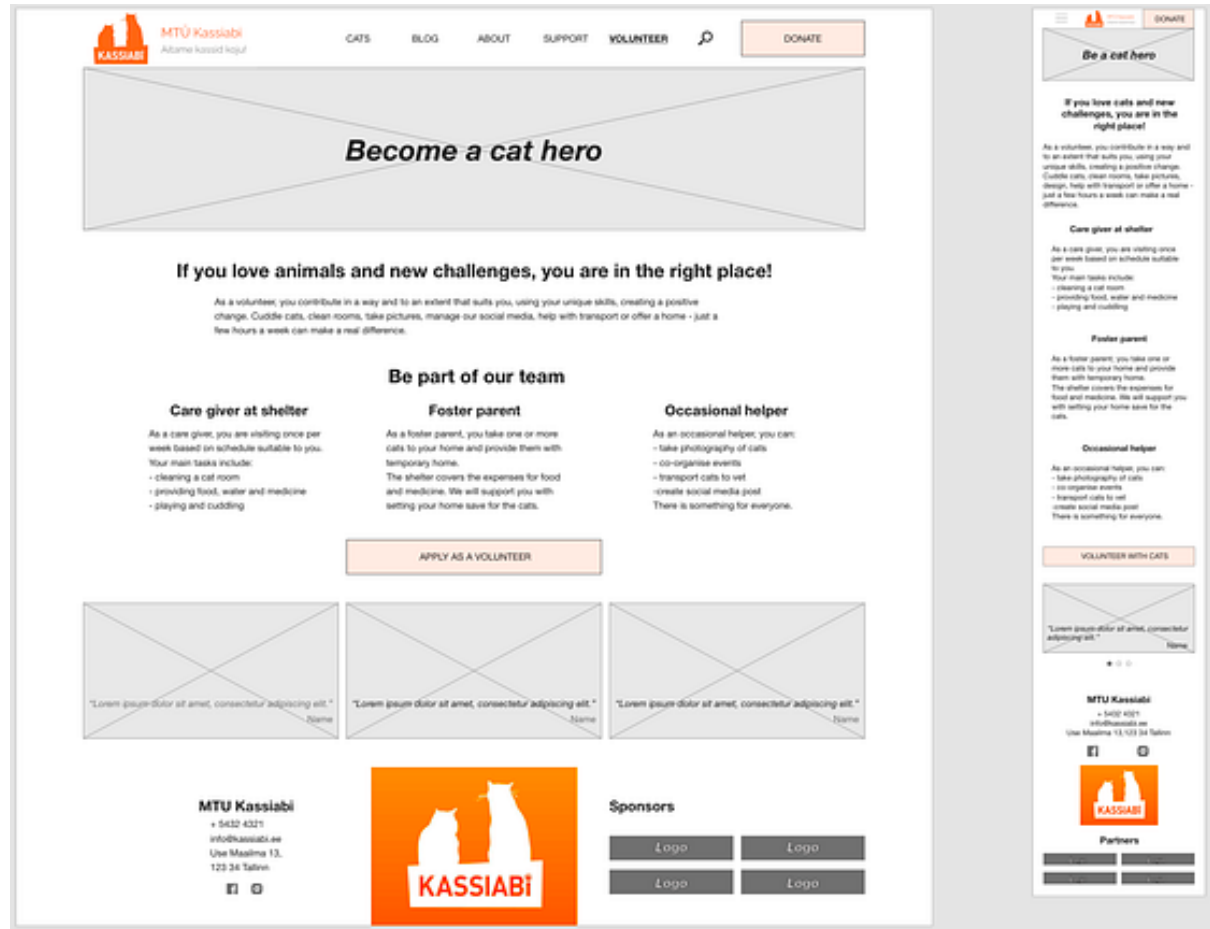
To make my design more accessible, I used different sizes of headings, an initial focus on important buttons and various landmarks as a navigation bar, a search button, and a footer

Visual elements to increase empathy and connection to the shelter.

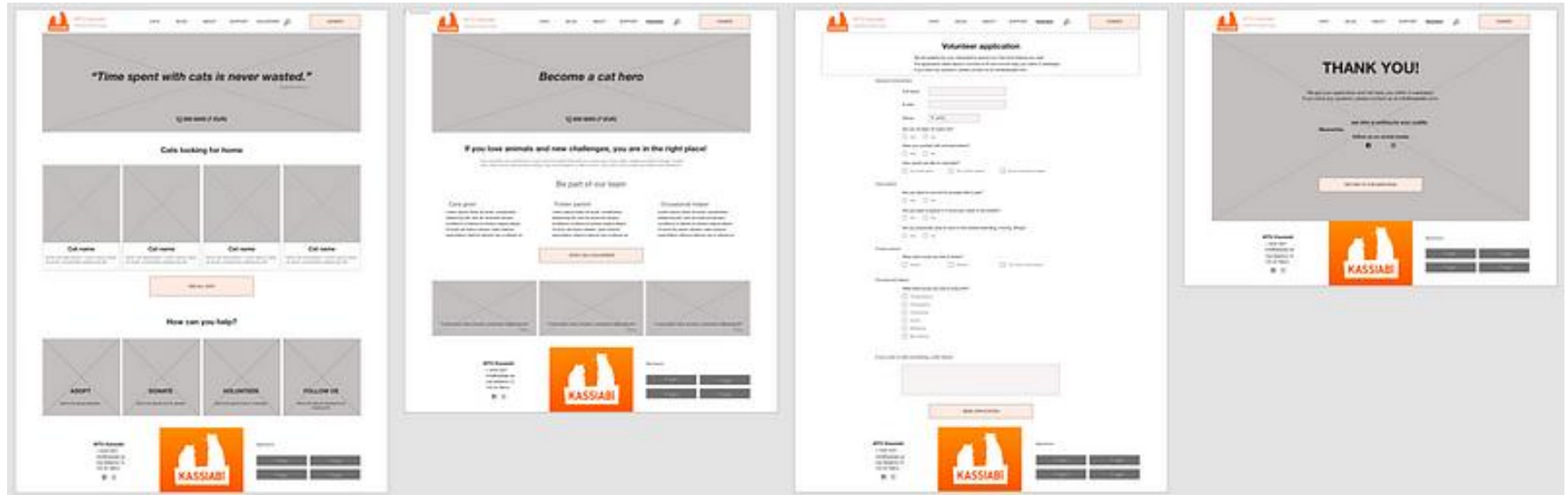


Volunteer page

As I was designing
a responsive web
design, desktop and
mobile versions
were created for
each screen



Low-fidelity prototype



The first screen a potential volunteer sees is the landing page of a shelter. Blaze shelter has a nicely visible button to apply as a volunteer. I added one more option in the lower page section of “How to help”.

The following screen is fully about volunteering options and requirements. I also added testimonials of current volunteers to increase the motivation.

The third screen is about the application form. The potential volunteer can choose one or all three options, based on their time and abilities. I kept it short and straight to the point.

As this is the most important part of the application process, I wanted to test how it feels to fill the form and it is one of the proudest parts of my design work. I created an animation of a box-ticking to make it feel real

Would you like to be an **occasional helper** (various areas of help matching your skills and interests)?



Yes



No

If yes, What area would you like to help with? *(Multiple choice)*

☐

Transportation

☐

Photography

☐

Fundraising

☐

Events

☐

Marketing

☐

Big cleanup

The last page is about thanking them for filling the form, letting the user know it will take up to 5 weekdays to reply and an option to follow the shelter on social media.

You can find a link to an already refined low-fidelity prototype

Usability testing

I find usability testing thrilling. Will the design speak the way I intended and will it be as the users wish? Will the design meet the user's needs? How many errors will the user make during the flow?

UX Research study

Introduction

I find usability testing thrilling. Will the design speak the way I intended and will it be as the users wish? Will the design meet the user's needs? How many errors will the user make during the flow?

- Title: Usability study of volunteer application flow for Blaze Animal shelter
- Author: Roy Joseph, UX Designer, rawy1993@gmail.com
- Stakeholders: Blaze management board
- Date: 09.09.2023
- Project background: I am creating a cat shelter website to help potential volunteers to apply. I have to find out if the proposed flow is easy and quick to keep people interested in helping. I want to understand the way people approach the volunteer application process.
- Research goals: Determine whenever users complete the application form. Find out how the flow felt and whenever it was difficult to complete.

Research questions

- Can the user find the application form?
- Do users understand different ways on how to volunteer?
- Are there any parts of the application process that users struggle with?
- Do users feel engaged with the organisation?
- Do users think the website is easy or difficult to use?

KPIs

- Time on task: How long does it take to complete the questionnaire? + How long does it take to complete the whole application process?
- Drop-off rate: How many drop the task?
- User error rate: How many errors do users make through the flow?
- System usability scale (SUS): How do users evaluate the flow?

Methodology

- Moderated (tasks) + unmoderated (SUS) usability study
- Location: Tallinn, Estonia and Remote (video calls)
- Date: 09–10 September
- 5 participants will have to complete the volunteer application process. Each participant will complete a questionnaire on their experience privately
- Each session will last 20 minutes and will include an introduction, a list of tasks and a questionnaire.

Participants

- 3 females, 2 males, all age 20–65 years old
- Animal lovers with previous experience of a volunteer application
- A diverse mix of education and profession
- No compensation

Script Intro

- Welcome, thanks and the introduction of the project.
- Before we begin, do I have your consent to take video recordings of this interview? The data will be used and seen only by me and deleted after completing this project.
- I want you to know that this isn't a test. There is no "right" answer, and none of your responses will be considered wrong. If you cannot complete a task, it is the design usability problem, not a reflection of your ability. Please be honest and provide me with critical feedback, it is the best help.

- First, I'll ask you a few basic questions, then I will give you a couple of tasks. Please think aloud through the process, let me know if something confuses you. After we finish the call, there is a short questionnaire to be filled. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask any time.
- This is an early prototype, the focus is purely on functionality, not beauty. Not all buttons are currently working.

Basic questions

- Open the website and find a place to apply as a volunteer.
- Complete a volunteer application.
- Please talk through the process.
- How do you feel overall about the application process?
- Do you miss some information on the final page?
- Why was XXX confusing for you?

After the moderated usability study:

Participants complete the System Usability Scale on their own

Participants score the following ten statements by selecting one of five responses that range from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”

- I think the website is easy to use.
- I find the website easy to navigate.
- There is inconsistency within the website.
- I find the volunteer application process unnecessarily complex

- I find some parts of the volunteering application confusing.
- I feel confident completing the volunteer application.
- I get all the information I need after completing the volunteer application process

Gather and organize data

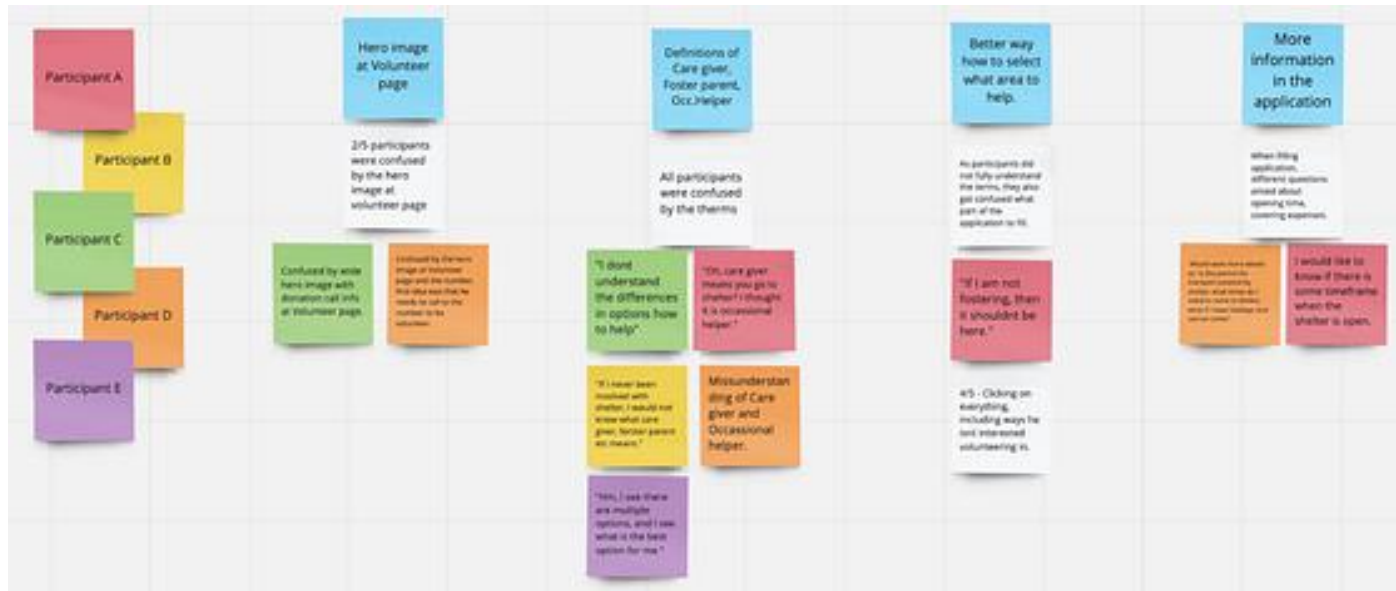
Yet again, I chose to not make notes during usability testing to be fully present and observe how the user reacts and completes the tasks. I re-watched the recording to make notes for each participant.

I got a last-minute cancellation for usability testing therefore I completed only 4 rounds and let the 5th participant test already

Task	Click Path	Observations	Quotes	Task Completion
Write the task number and directions here.	Record what path the participant took to complete the task.	Note down behaviors, opinions, and attitudes along with any errors, issues, or areas of confusion.	Note any significant quotes (positive and negative).	1 - easy to complete 2 - completed but with diff 3 - not completed
Prompt 1: Open a website and find a page about volunteering.	Home page > notice Volunteer button on top bar > scroll down and notice Volunteer button > click on Volunteer button on top bar.	Confused by wide hero image with donation call info at Volunteer page.	"I immediately saw volunteer."	1
Prompt 2: Apply as a volunteer.	Volunteer page > scroll down and up > click on Apply button > In application, starts filling in > click Send > Go back to Home page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The question "Have you worked with animals?" is confusing what to put as user has had animals but do not see it was working with animals - Does not understand three different ways how to volunteer. - Clicking on everything, including ways he isn't interested volunteering in. - Double check if all filled and can easily spot it thanks to the color. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I don't understand the differences in options how to help" "I would want confirmation email." "It's simple, clear and quick, no unnecessary info." 	2
Add 1000 more rows at bottom.				
+ Participant A - Participant B - Participant C - Participant D - Participant E -				

Analyze the data

Already during testing, clear patterns were showing up. I usually use FigJam but in this case, I wanted to try different options and went with Miro to create an affinity diagram



1. It was observed that 4 out of 4 participants were confused by the terminology of volunteering. This means that a clearer explanation must be provided, and a better copy used in the application.
2. It was observed that 2 out of 4 participants got confused by the large hero image on the Volunteer page. This means that the hero image must be smaller and the donation phone info removed.
3. It was observed that 4 out of 4 participants were filling all info for all volunteering options although they wanted to participate only in one area initially. This means that (different layouts and solutions must be introduced to make clear what needs to be selected.
4. It was observed that 2 out of 4 participants got questions about transportation cost coverage or opening hours in the application. This means that more information should be added to the application to make it clearer.

Based on the patterns, I created actionable insights

Priority 0

1. Based on the theme that: all participants were confused by the terminology of volunteering, an insight is: rethink the copy of the volunteering options and add clear information on what is required for each role.
2. Based on the theme that: all participants were filling all info for all volunteering options although they wanted to participate only in one area initially, an insight is: change the layout of the application to better group different roles as volunteers and the questions related to it.
3. Based on the theme that: some participants got confused by the large hero image on the Volunteer page, an insight is: make the hero image narrower and remove the donation phone number.

Priority 1

1. Based on the theme that: some participants got confused by the large hero image on the Volunteer page, an insight is: make the hero image narrower and remove the donation phone number.
2. Based on the theme that: some got questions about transportation cost coverage or opening hours in the application, an insight is: add more information either directly to the question or as clickable info popup next to the question.

Priority 2

1. Based on the theme that: one participant mentioned the wish to get a confirmation email, an insight is: a message should be added to the confirmation screen
“Confirmation email was sent to you”..

Mockups

Design system

As with the first project, the information about design systems isn't at the beginning of the mock-up creation but I find it better to introduce it before adjusting the design. I jumped to the design system first and created the style sheet with two versions — desktop and mobile. It is so much easier and faster for me to have the style sheet ready with components and then create the mock-up like logo, by adding different pieces together.

Typography

Website: **Headline 1**
Headline 2
Headline 3
Text
Quote text
BUTTON

Mobile: **Headline 1**
Headline 2
Headline 3
Text
Quote text
BUTTON
Menu

Color



Orange
#F37033
Call to action



Blak
#1C1C1C
Text



Light orange
#FFA835
Secondary




Gray
#707070
Tertiary




Iconography









Components



MTU Kossabi
Kasari is your dog!





ENABLED



Murmurzik
Calm performance in his best years
will be happily resting on your lap.



ENABLED



Murmurzik
It is amazing to see the behavior from outside of
the owner's house.



Murmurzik
Calm performance in his best years
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ENABLED



Murmurzik
It is amazing to see the behavior from outside of
the owner's house.

☐ Adults

☐ Kittens

☐ Cat mums with kittens

☐ Adults

☐ Kittens

☐ Cat mums with kittens

☐ Transportation

☐ Photography

☐ Fundraising

☐ Events

☐ Marketing

☐ Big cleanup

☐ Transportation

☐ Photography

☐ Fundraising

☐ Events

☐ Marketing

☐ Big cleanup

Full name

E-mail

Phone

Full name

E-mail

Phone

Mockups

Based on the usability testing, I made visual clues to indicate different ways to volunteer and added short descriptions

Before usability study



After usability study

The 'Before' mockup is a form titled 'Volunteer application' with a sub-header 'Special information' containing a paragraph about the application process. The form is divided into sections: 'General information' with fields for full name, email, and phone, followed by three yes/no questions about age, animal experience, and volunteer preference. The 'Care giving' section has three yes/no questions about commitment and physical ability. The 'Foster parent' section has a 'What role would you like to foster?' question with radio buttons for adults, teens, and no role. The 'Occasional helper' section has a 'What area would you like to help with?' question with checkboxes for transportation, photography, fundraising, events, marketing, and dog training.

The 'After' mockup is a form titled 'Volunteer application' with a sub-header 'General information' containing a paragraph about the application process. The form is divided into sections: 'General information' with fields for full name, email, and phone, followed by three yes/no questions about age, animal experience, and volunteer preference. The 'How would you like to volunteer?' section has three radio buttons for different roles, each followed by a 'What role would you like to foster?' question with radio buttons for adults, teens, and no role. The 'Occasional helper' section has a 'What area would you like to help with?' question with checkboxes for transportation, photography, fundraising, events, marketing, and dog training.

Mockups

The hero image size in the Volunteer page was decreased to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the homepage hero image and the donation phone number was removed

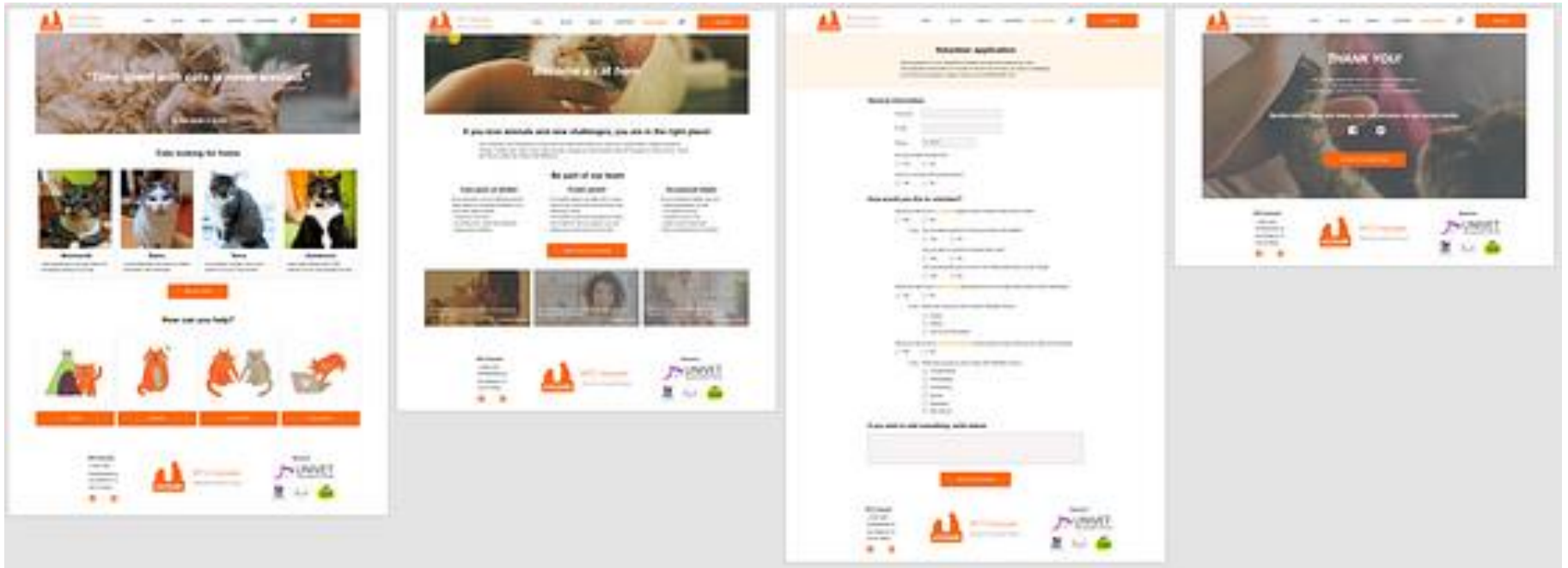
Before usability study



After usability study



Mockups



Mockups

[illegible]

High-fidelity prototype

The last step was to connect all the screens to the prototype. The high-fidelity prototype followed the same user flow as the low-fidelity prototype and included the design changes made after the usability study.

You can access the high-fidelity prototype for the desktop [here](#) and the mobile [here](#).

Screenshot of
prototype with
connections or
prototype GIF

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

The target users described the process as fast and easy. They received the right amount of information and were motivated to start volunteering.

“It was easy to find and the application was clear. I liked that I didn’t have to write too much but just clicked.”



What I learned:

The most important takeaway for me is to always make sure the communication is clear as people come from different backgrounds and do not always understand the terminology of an organisation..

Next steps

1

Conduct follow-up
usability testing on the
application form

2

Ideate how to increase
engagement with people
applying to be volunteers.

Conclusion

Considering that I spent many months on the first project and now it took me only three weeks, I am impressed. It is hard to compare as the previous project was a design of the whole mobile application with many layers. This is only one flow

It was very empowering to find out about the pain points of people interested in volunteering and to ideate on a flow that provides them with the main information they need to know about the tasks and also to look at it from the organisation's side to get the information needed for recruiting.

I have been a volunteer in many organisations or events and have had good and bad experiences but luckily the positive always prevail. When you see the impact your actions create, it is an amazing feeling. For me and also for people I talked to during this project, volunteering always gives more than it takes.

The biggest disappointment of this course was the final design peer grading assignment. I checked 5 different assignments and there was not a single one done with at least minimum effort. Some people just copy-pasted the example design from Google and changed pictures or uploaded only a low-fidelity prototype. Or it was just a screen with random text and pictures with the name of the assignment “*Please let me pass.*” I got angry for wasting my time and did not check more assignments. I genuinely wanted to see

Thank you!