

Mobilizing Progressive Efforts
in Reducing Gun Violence in America
Through Design Intervention

SUMMARY

The objective of this project was to explore the context of gun violence in America using the Vision in Product (ViP) design process to identify and design an intervention that would help reduce gun violence in the United States. As an American citizen and native Texan, this topic is of great importance to me. It pains me to see the human suffering brought about by the never-ending gun violence in this country and to live under the constant threat that I, or someone I care about, could become a victim of gun violence.

I began by investigating the vast nature of this domain to gain a bird's-eye view and deeper understanding of this complex problem. Through my secondary research, I collected many relevant political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological factors that make up and influence my domain.

Through the formation of my worldview, I identified that the root cause of government inaction on gun control is the financial influence of corporations and special interests groups, primarily the NRA, on politicians (Open Secrets, 2021). I then identified the Progressive Movement, as a vehicle to counteract government inaction on gun reform, both directly and indirectly, and an opportunity for my design intervention to mobilize citizen participation supporting this cause. The Progressive Movement is a segment of the Democratic party that aims to make the US government more responsive to the needs of the American people through widespread political reform.

I formulated my vision statement for my design intervention and chose a metaphor to inspire the ideation process. After brainstorming possible solutions, I designed and developed my selected concept, a web-based platform that connects Americans to Progressive volunteer opportunities, as a way to support the Progressive Movement's efforts in reducing gun violence.

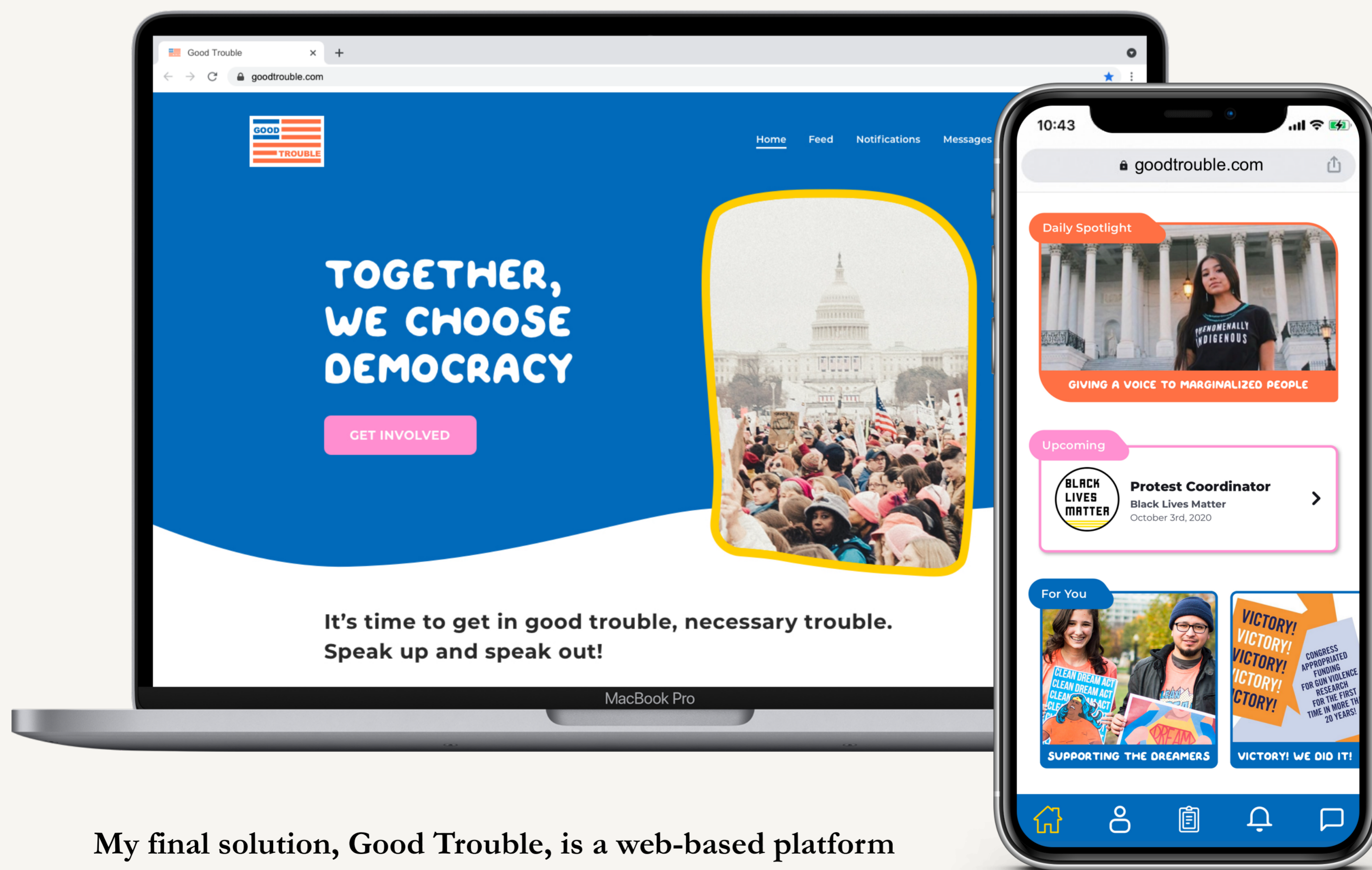
I interviewed five potential users to learn about any personal barriers that prevent them from volunteering for political and societal causes. The resulting insights helped inform my design decisions when developing and prototyping my solution.

SUMMARY

My concept was then validated with five additional users through prototype testing and a simulated volunteer activity. The feedback I received confirmed my design intervention's ability to reduce personal barriers. For example, participants expressed that they:

- Felt this platform was very helpful in easily identifying volunteer opportunities that interest them
- Thought the platform was safe to use, given the ability for users to protect their identity with an avatar and display name
- Appreciated that they could filter opportunities for their individual preferences, especially regarding time commitment
- Liked that they could find volunteer opportunities that are suitable for them based on their personality type

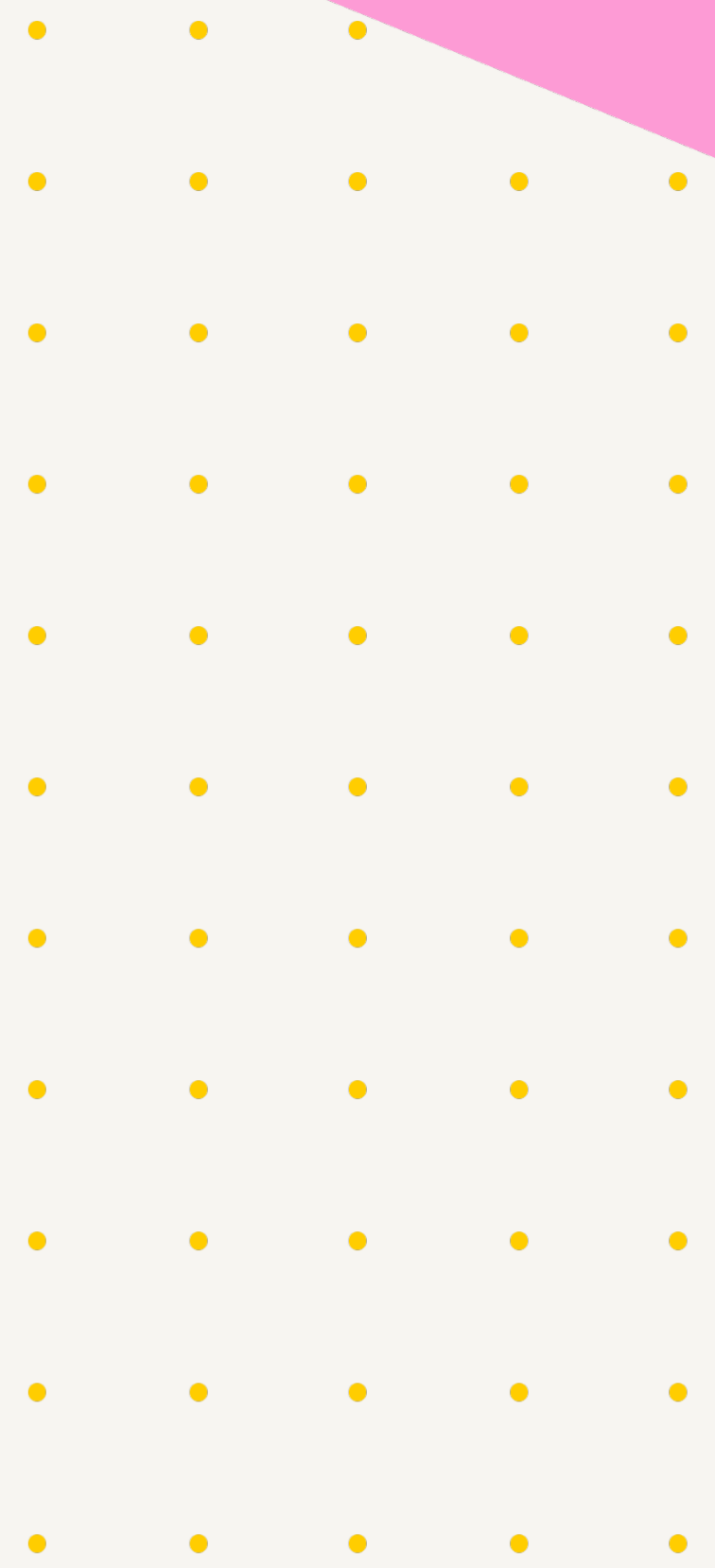
Through a simulated volunteer activity, I concluded that my design solution was able to successfully activate citizen participation which supports the Progressive Movement's efforts to reduce gun violence in America, as communicated in my vision statement.



My final solution, Good Trouble, is a web-based platform that connects Americans to Progressive volunteer opportunities, which supports the Movement's efforts of reducing gun violence in America.

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PURPOSE

The objective of this project was to explore the context of gun violence in America using the Vision in Product (ViP) design process to identify and design an intervention that would help reduce gun violence in the United States. As an American citizen and native Texan, this topic is of great importance to me. It pains me to see the human suffering brought about by the never-ending gun violence in this country and to live under the constant threat that I, or someone I care about, could become a victim of gun violence.

THE CHALLENGE

Guns in America

The Second Amendment of the US Constitution, granting Americans their right to own firearms, was instated over 200 years ago to meet the needs of the people of that era, but does not fit within the context of our modern society. In the past, every man was expected to be ready to defend themselves, their family, and the community at a moment's notice. Today, we have law enforcement agencies for this purpose. Rather than protecting lives, guns in modern society are causing immense suffering, loss of life, and a shocking economic burden.

Today, guns claim 37,000 lives and injure over 115,000 people in the US each year (Everytown Research, 2021; Washington Post, 2018). No one and nowhere is safe from gun violence in America. Schools, worksites, concerts, shopping malls, supermarkets, and even one's own home are common sites for these terrible tragedies. Mass shootings are frequent and horrific, with 611 mass shootings in 2020 alone, yet this is only 1% of the gun violence in America (Gun Violence Archive, 2021). An average of 57 women per month are killed with guns by an intimate partner, with over 4.5 million women having been threatened at some point in their lives (Everytown Research, 2021). In 2018, gun suicides killed 24,400 people in the US, with white men accounting for about 80% of all gun suicides (Brookings Institute, 2015). Close to 5,000 children were shot or killed from guns in 2020, mostly from accidents in the home (Gun Violence Archive, 2021). Approximately 4.6 million children in America live in a home with an unlocked and loaded gun (National Institute of Health, 2018).

Guns in America Continued

Gun violence not only has a tragic human toll, it also has an enormous price tag of \$280 billion each year in direct and indirect costs (police response, medical care, criminal-justice expenses, etc.). Gun violence costs more than \$700 per American each year, with each gun fatality costing the public \$270,400 (Follman et al., 2015; Everytown Research, 2018). It's unfathomable to think that America chooses to spend so much money on something that causes so much suffering, when it could be better allocated to meet the basic social needs of its people, such as affordable education, a living wage, and free healthcare for all.

For decades, millions of citizens have been passionately calling for gun control reform, yet the government does the complete opposite. In fact, all 50 states have recently introduced gun legislation that loosens restrictions. For example, Texas is proposing a law to allow concealed or open carry of guns without a background check, license, or completing any safety training, all in the wake of 147 mass shootings in the previous three months (The Guardian, 2021; New York Times, 2021).

Why won't government pass new gun control legislation when these horrific tragedies continue to cost us so much in human suffering and money? This is where my investigation began. After much research and contemplation on the matter, it became clear to me gun violence in America is an enormous, multifaceted problem which is part of a larger, systemic issue. There is no single, direct answer to solving the problem. My mission was to find a unique opportunity to intervene using the design process.

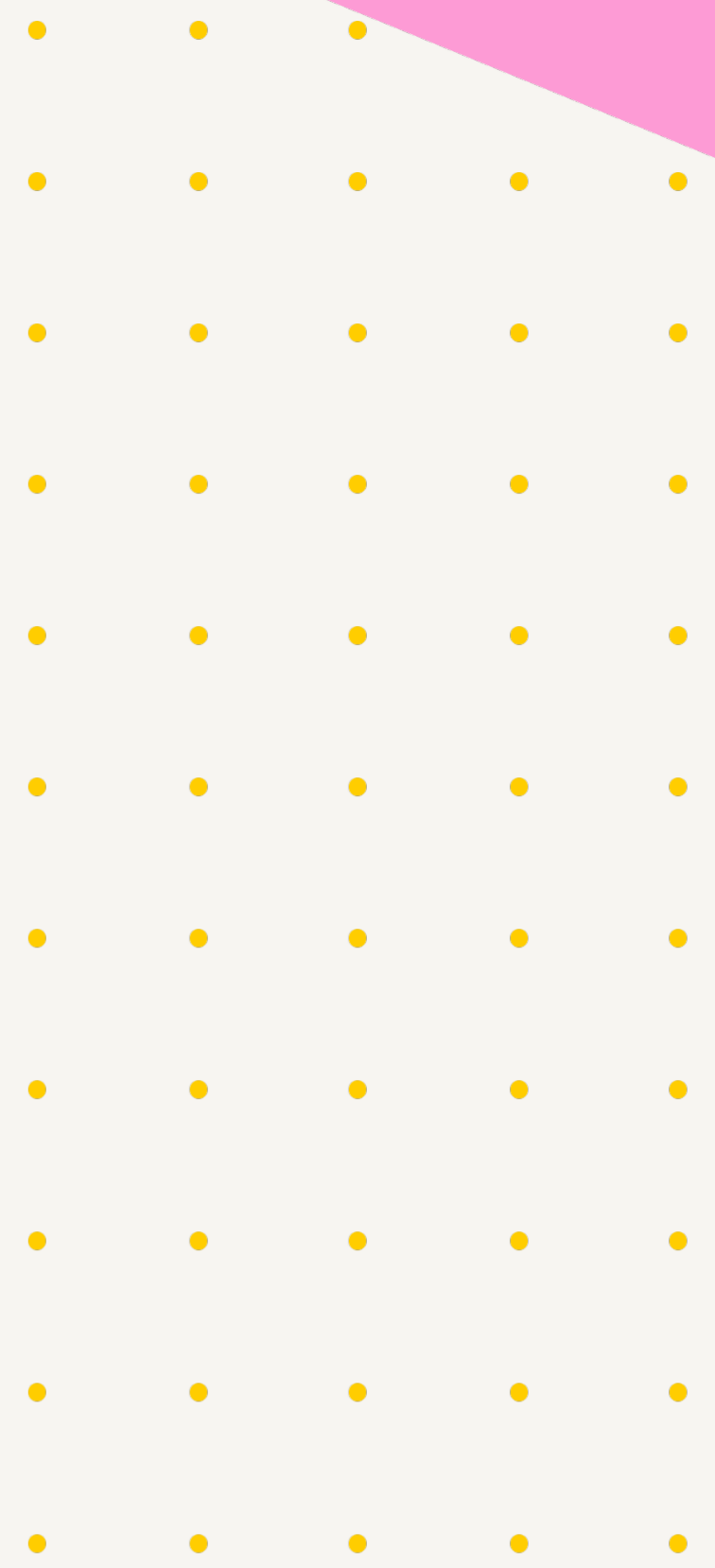
APPROACH

I used the ViP process to explore and better understand the broader context of my selected domain, gun violence in America, and the many influencing factors it is made of. This project began with exploratory research using secondary sources (news articles, interviews, journals, etc.) to understand the broader context of America's gun crisis. Through this research, I collected many relevant political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological factors that make up and influence my domain. It quickly became clear how vast and complex this domain is. The factors I collected were combined to tell a coherent, cause and effect story about my domain.

After careful consideration, weighing the many possibilities identified in my worldview, I decided where and how I wanted to intervene in this domain. I used my thorough understanding of the context to develop a vision statement, which was formulated to describe the goal for my design intervention.

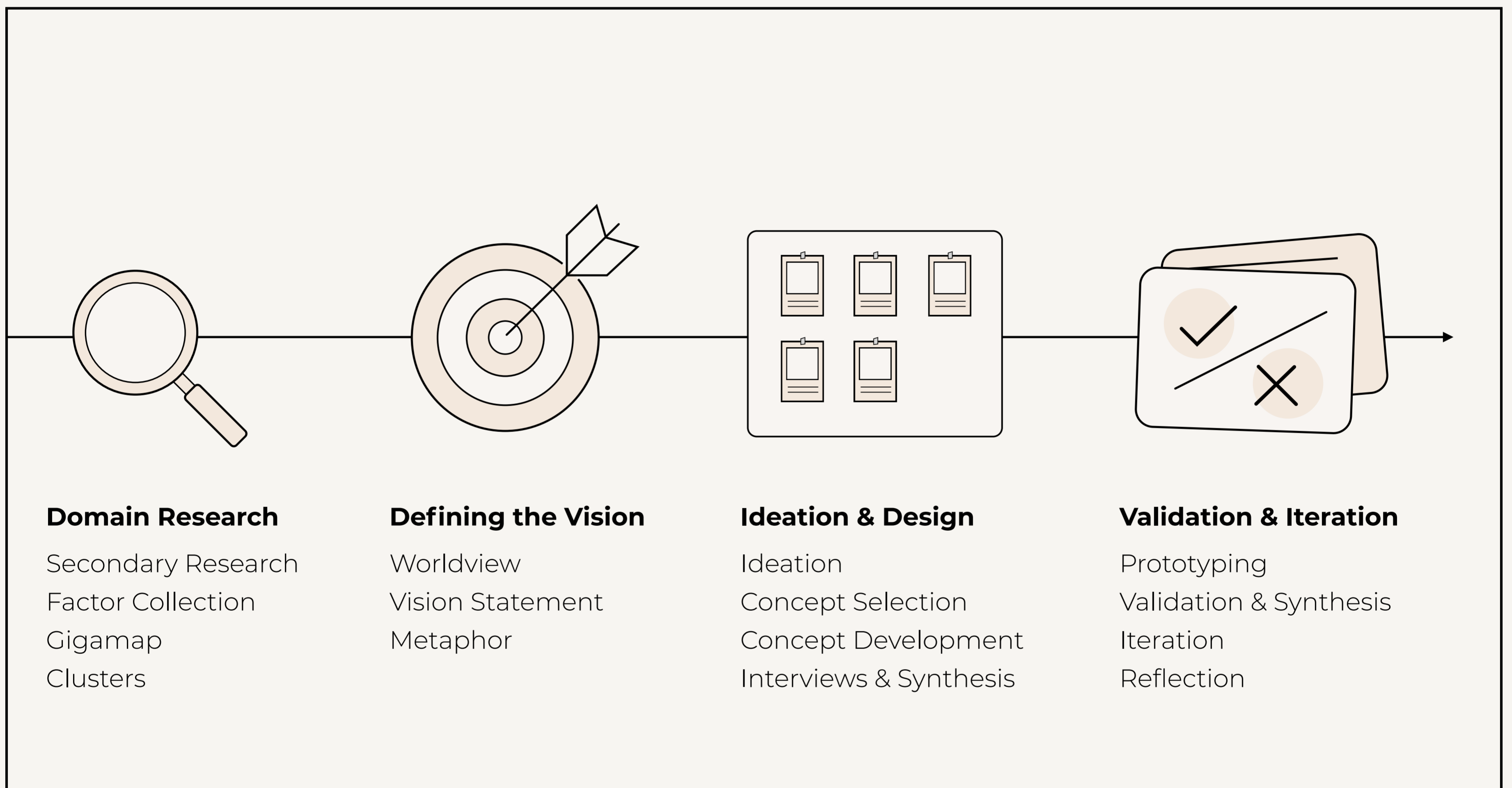
Before exploring possible solutions and manifestation for my design intervention, I used a metaphor to inspire the ideation process. This serves as a tool to envision the type of interaction the user will have with the end-concept (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2016).

During the ideation process, I came up with a number of possible solutions. I then developed and continuously iterated my selected concept. I interviewed five people, to gain insight into the opinions and experiences of Americans about volunteering for a political or societal cause. The results of this research were used to inform my design decisions. The final concept was then validated with five potential users with an interactive prototype and group activity.



APPROACH

Process Overview



APPROACH

I chose the ViP process because it gives the designer permission to take a moral stance by incorporating their beliefs, values, and desires into the design process (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2016). Understandably, designers are often encouraged to remain neutral and withhold their biases as much as possible so they can tap into the experience and desires of the users (UX Booth, 2017).

However, through ViP, I am responding to the world as I see it, my worldview. Guns in America is one of the most controversial topics in the country. Simply by selecting this domain with the intention to reduce gun violence, I'm already taking a personal position on the issue.

At times it was challenging to manage the openness and uncertainty of the problem. It was important for me to trust the process and my instincts. My point of view shapes the direction I have taken, adding authenticity. However, my thinking is guided by research insights, using factual evidence to inform my decision-making process (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2016).

APPROACH

Gigamap

In addition to the ViP methods, I chose to use a gigamap, which is a systems diagram used to map and understand relationships between data (Sevaldson, 2011). As I began researching my selected domain, it quickly became challenging to manage its vast breadth and depth, along with its interconnected relationships. As a result, I felt it was necessary to create a gigamap, which helped me collect, analyze, and synthesize large amounts of data and begin to identify connections (see Figure 1).

A gigamap is all encompassing. This gives the creator the freedom to select the most suitable way to communicate the different forms of data. Unlike a mind map, a gigamap does not limit the types of data and its visual representation. Mind maps are also diagrams that visually organize information, and can be flexible, but only to a degree, as they all radiate from a single point (Figure 4).

Gigamaps can contain collages, information visualizations, mind mapping, etc., all in one document (see Figure 2 for an example of a low fidelity gigamap and Figure 3 for high fidelity) (Sevaldson, 2011). Due to its flexible structure, I could more easily incorporate diagrams and sequential events. This document encapsulates the many context factors that influence my domain. Organizing and grouping the information helped to reduce my cognitive load when processing the collected data while simultaneously taking in new information as I researched.

GIGAMAP

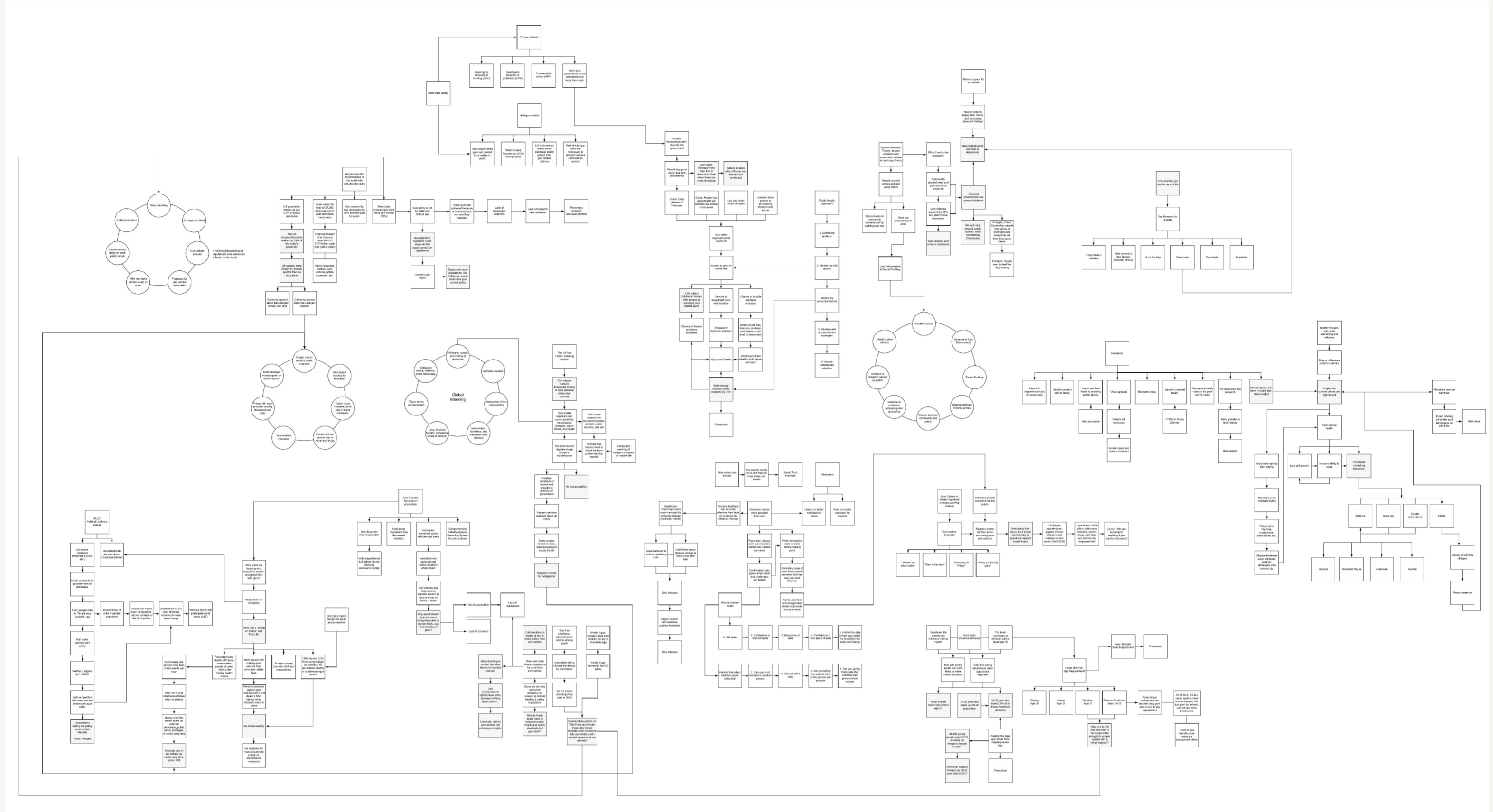


Figure 1: My created gigamap. This large canvas was my way of managing the vast breadth and depth of my domain, along with its interconnected relationships.

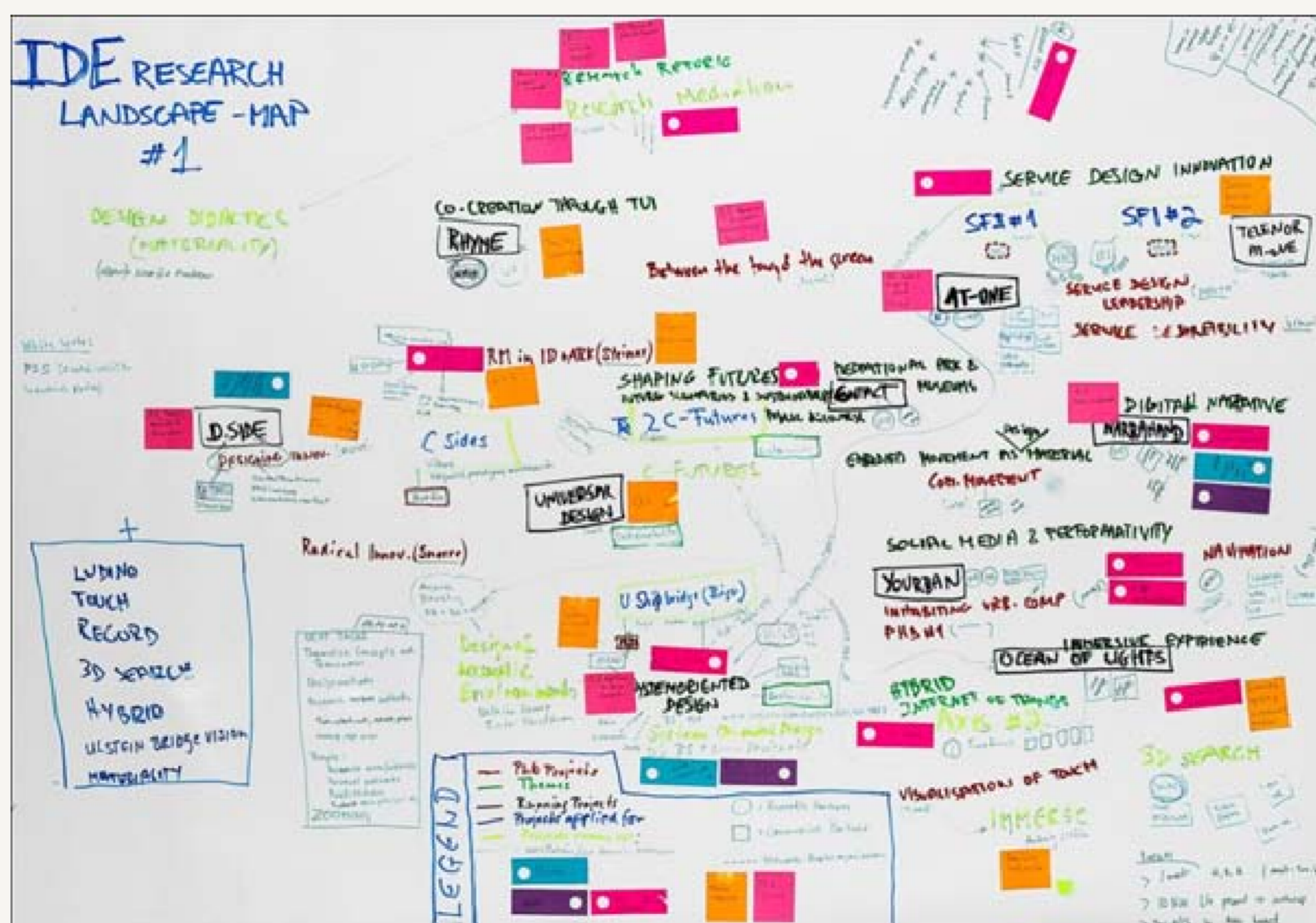


Figure 2: Example of a low fidelity gigamap. Useful for quickly capturing data, unfolding the complexity of research, and collaborative workshops (Sevaldson, 2011).

GIGAMAP

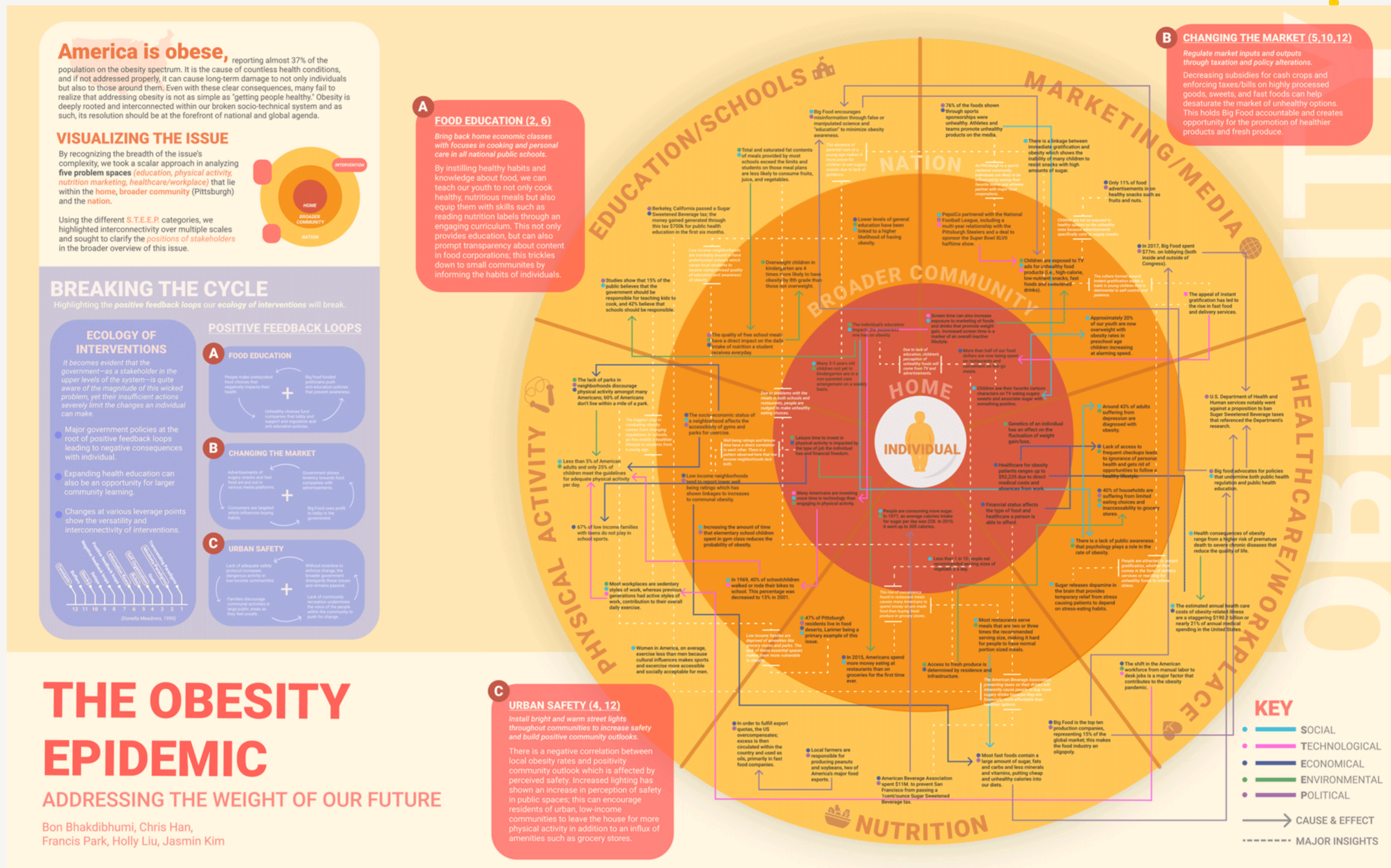


Figure 3: Example of a high fidelity gigamap. Refined and easy to read, useful when creating a polished artifact to be shared with others (Carnegie Mellon University & Systemic Design Association, 2020).

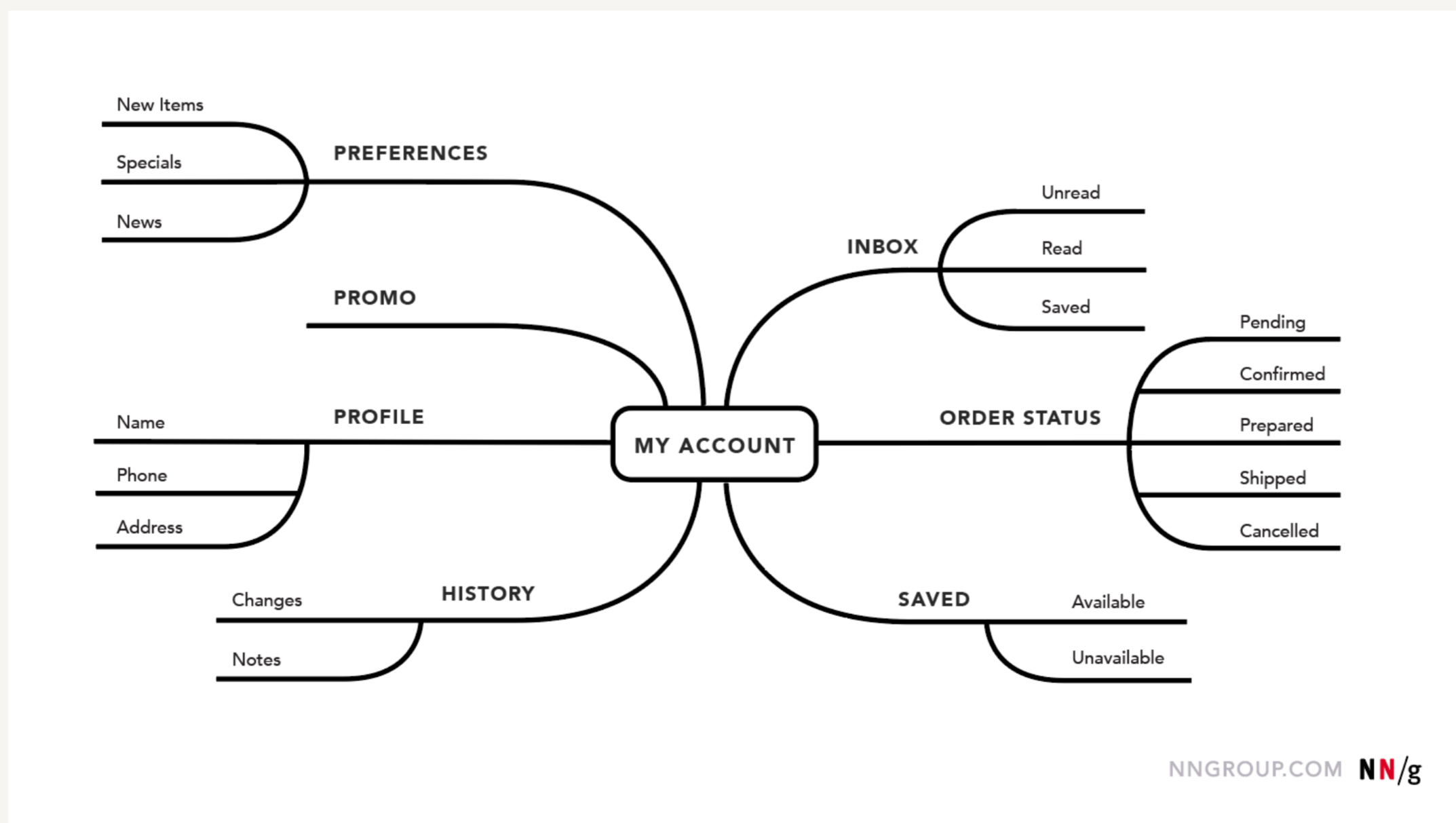


Figure 4: Example of a mind map (Nielsen Norman Group, 2019).

CLUSTERS

I began this project with a blank slate, which meant there was a lot to uncover and learn about my selected topic before I could determine what impact I wanted to have. By exploring the broader context of gun violence in America using secondary sources (news articles, interviews, journals, etc.), I began to piece together the many influencing factors that make up my domain.

I used the cluster method to I organized my many individual insights from the gigamap into groups (Figure 5). These clusters are assembled by combining the individual factors based on their common theme or conclusion. This process was challenging due to the number of insights I started out with. I had to narrow down the number of factors in my clusters, in order to manage the complexity more easily. I reduced the number of factors by focusing on what was most interesting and relevant to my domain. Each individual cluster is broken down on the following pages.

Upon completing this process, connections were drawn between these clusters to understand their cause and effect relationships. Together, these clusters tell a story by how they influence one another (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2016). The story, known as my worldview, is later described on page 18.

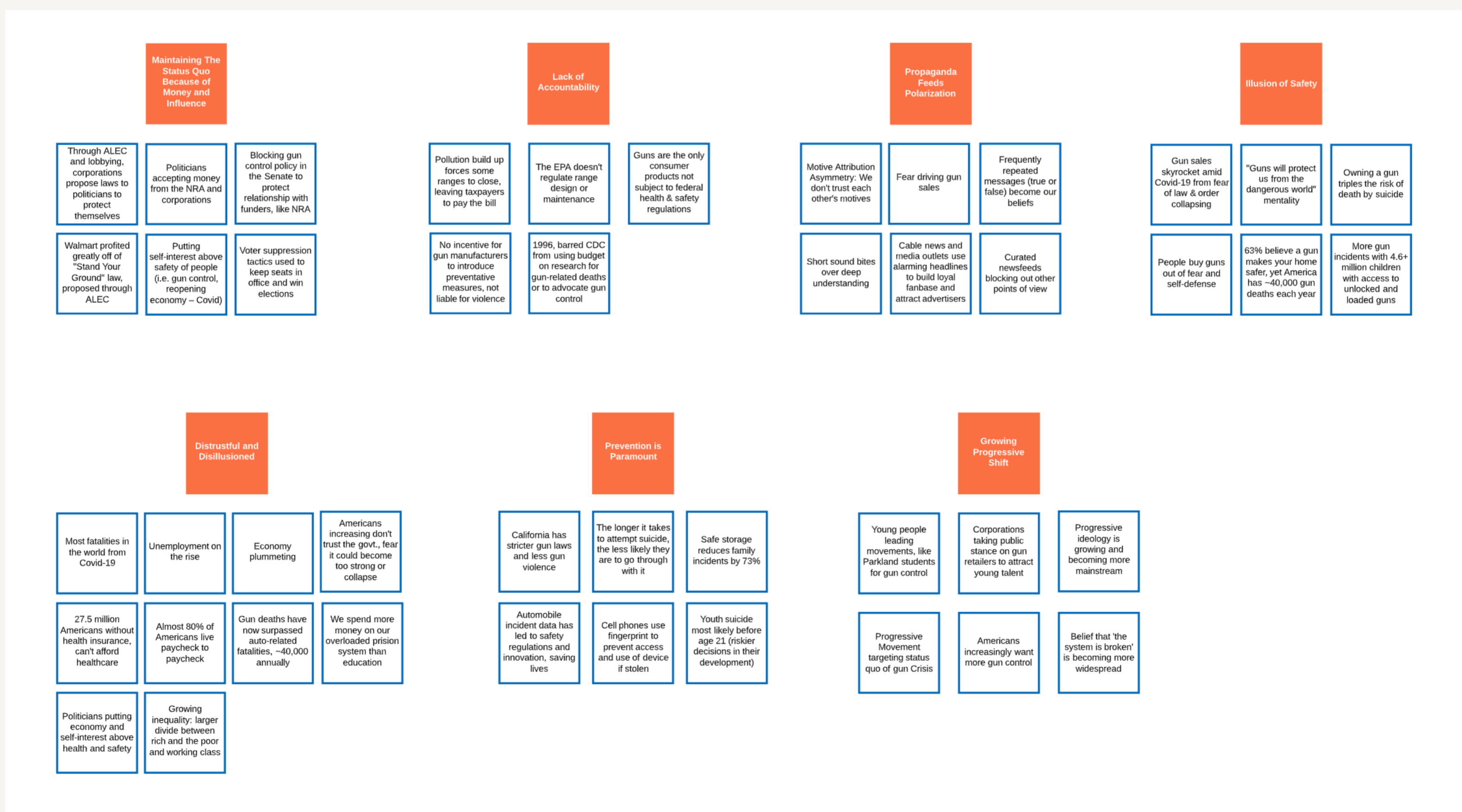


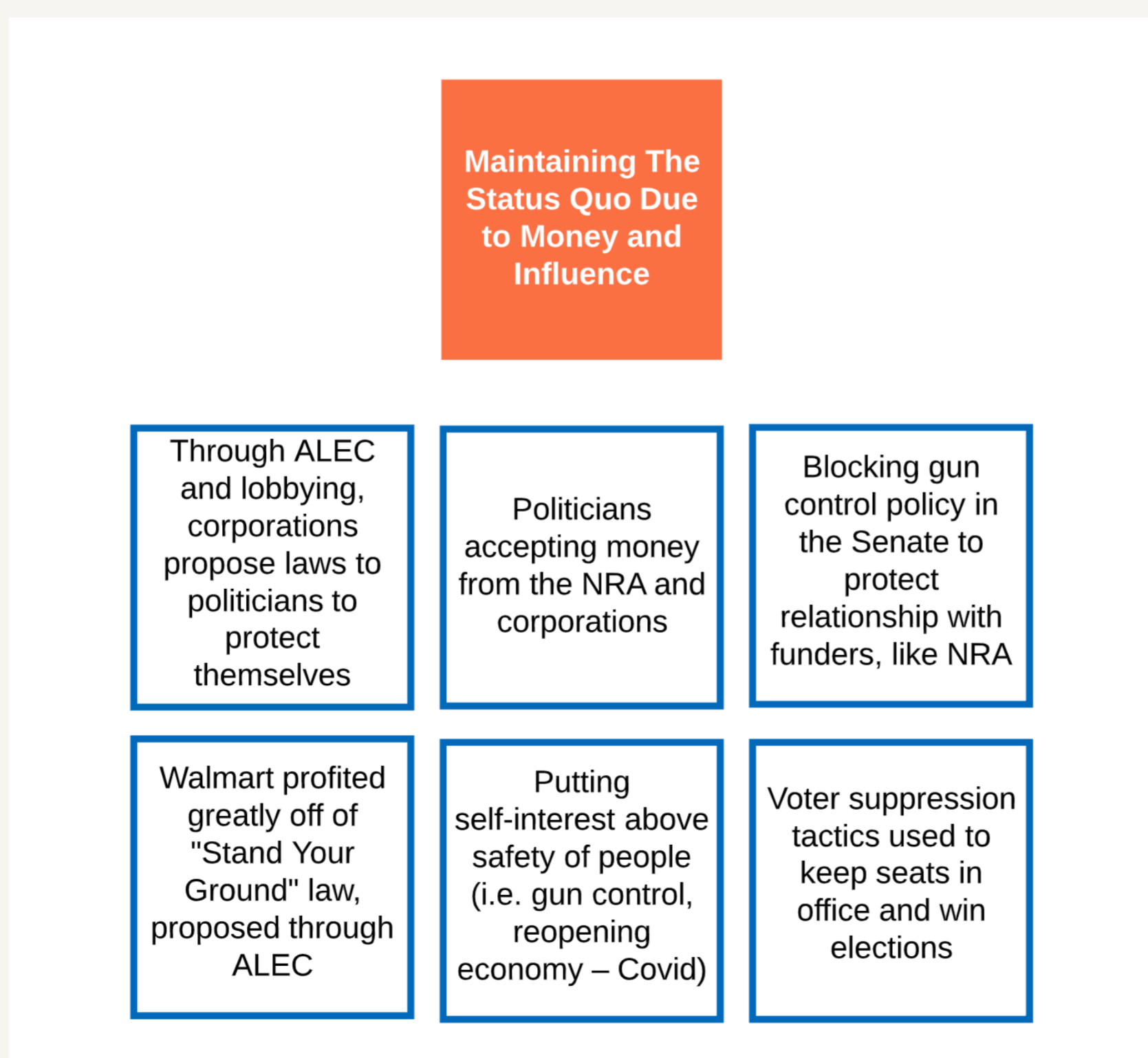
Figure 5: Clusters

CLUSTER #1

Maintaining the Status Quo Due to Money and Influence

It is not by accident that gun violence continues in the United States. Other developed nations with stricter gun laws have significantly lower rates of gun violence. England's gun-related death rate is 0.23 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to 12.21 deaths in America (PBS, 2018). There is a logical explanation for the US government's inaction regarding gun control laws. Politicians are incentivized with campaign donations and political support by the National Rifle Association (NRA) to keep the barrier to gun ownership low. As a result, Congress uses their political power to block new policy, sometimes at the expense of the people they represent (BBC, 2020). The influence of campaign donors goes beyond the issue of gun policy. For example, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell received over \$50,000 from pharmaceutical companies for blocking a bill that would lower the cost of prescription drugs for Americans (American Independent, 2020).

Some of the largest corporations in the US are members of The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Corporations in this lobbying group propose legislation to politicians. Walmart and ALEC were instrumental in the passing of the "Stand Your Ground" law (2005), which permits Americans to use deadly force when they have reason to believe it is necessary. Gun sales in America skyrocketed following this policy, leading to a significant profit for Walmart, the largest gun and ammunition retailers at the time (NPR, 2012).

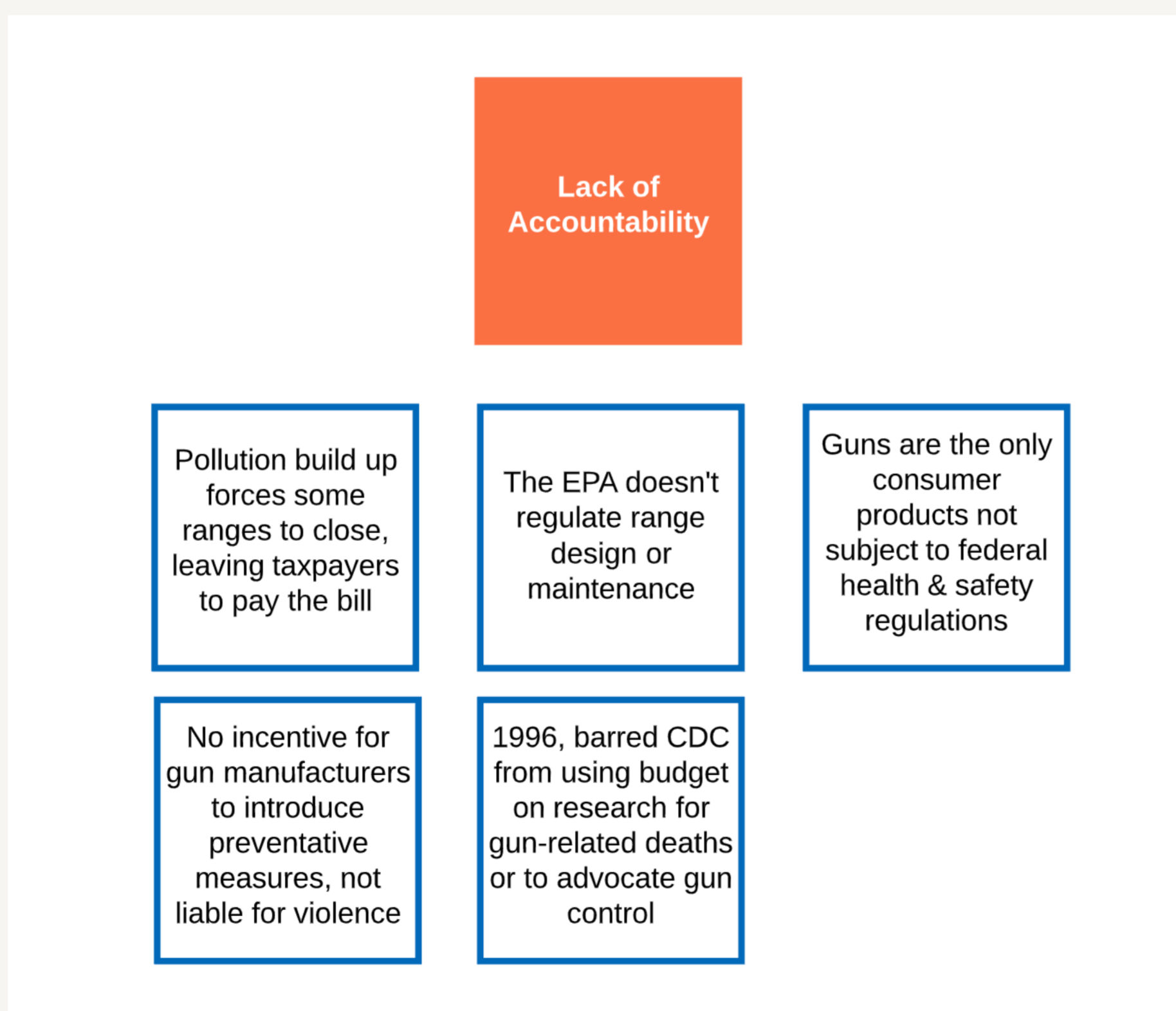


CLUSTER #2

Lack of Accountability

Means of accountability for the repercussions of firearms is not only lacking, it is actively being denied. Congress stripped the Center for Disease Control (CDC) of their \$2.6 million budget designated for research related to the effects of gun use (Washington Post, 2015). Additionally, legislation was introduced in 2005, that excludes firearms from federal consumer safety laws. Therefore, gun manufacturers cannot be held accountable for public endangerment. It is alarming that guns are the only consumer products not subject to these safety regulations. Teddy bears are held to higher standards of safety than guns (Violence Policy Center, N.D.). In the absence of liability, gun manufacturers have little to no incentive to introduce preventative measures.

The environment also remains unprotected. The EPA doesn't regulate the design or maintenance of America's 7,000+ gun ranges, despite the thousands of tons of toxic pollution they produce each year from ammunition waste (Yablon, 2020).



CLUSTER #3

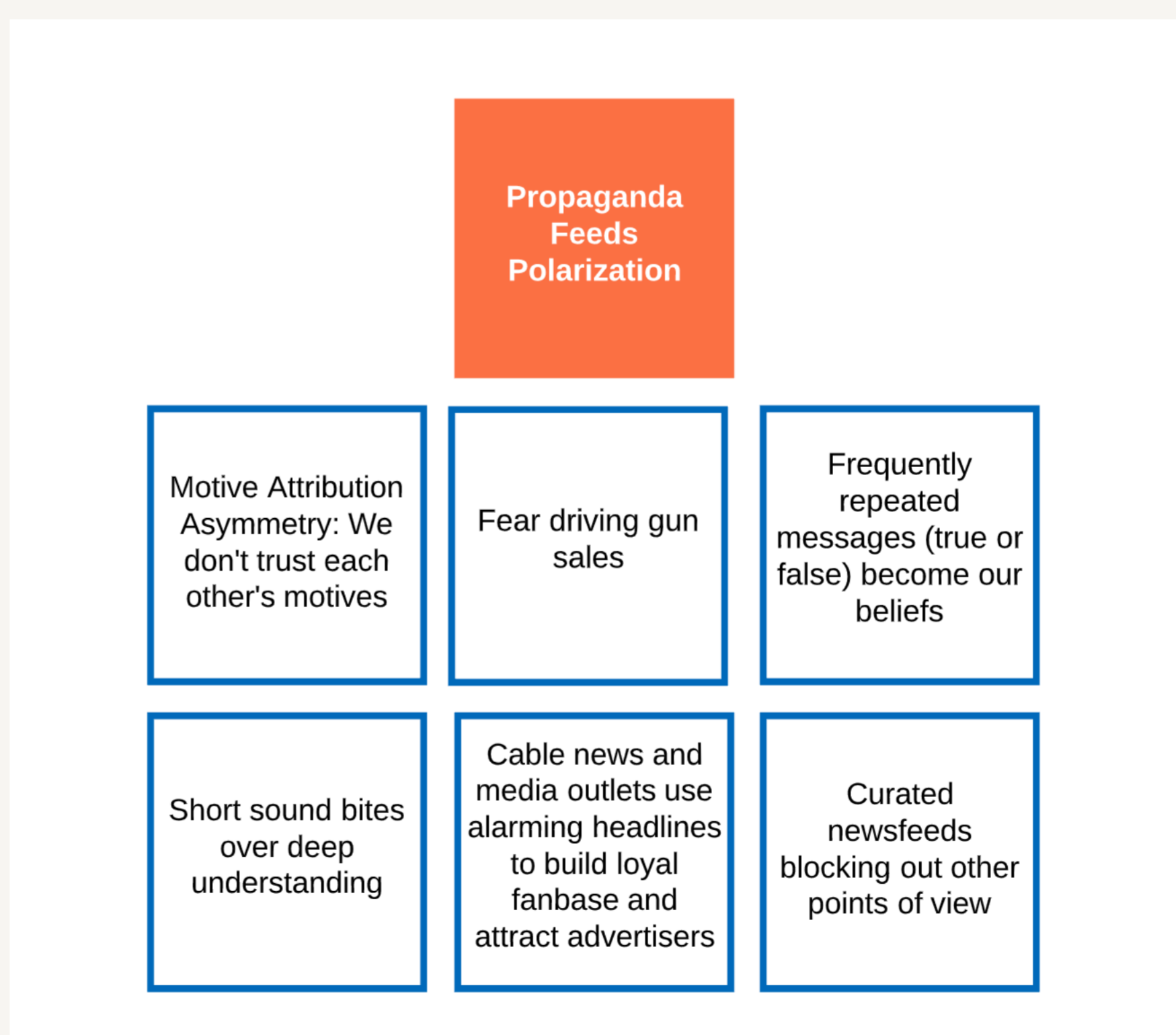
Propaganda Feeds Polarization

Research shows that the rift between Republicans and Democrats has widened over the past 30 years (Iyengar et al., 2012). Propaganda is a prominent force for driving polarization between parties and is known for spreading false and incomplete information. These messages, whether true or false, are repeated so frequently that they become our beliefs (Fazio et al., 2015). Cable news and media outlets thrive on money from big advertisers and use alarming headlines to captivate and build their loyal fanbase, adding fuel to the fire.

According to Lawrence Lessig, we often consume our political news in short sound bites, without attempting to understand the issues in a deep and thoughtful way (Equal Citizen, 2018). Americans seek out content that matches their political views. Our curated newsfeeds further reinforce our existing beliefs and often vilify the opposition, essentially creating separate realities. This results in frustration and intolerance, making existing ideologies even more difficult to change. As described by the principle of Motive Attribution Asymmetry, we believe we're fighting for our beliefs out of love, and the enemy is fighting out of hatred. We don't trust each other's motives. For example, Republicans feel their party represents their "love of country" and don't understand why the Democrats despise them (Waytz et al., 2014).



(NY Times, 2013)



CLUSTER #4

Illusion of Safety

Since the beginning of the COVID-19, Americans have been stockpiling firearms at a record high of 17 million guns (as of September 2020) in preparation for an uncertain future (Beckett, 2020). Firearms are a means of security, but deceptively so. More than 4.6 million children live in homes with access to unlocked and loaded guns, making them more susceptible to accidental injury and death.

Women purchase firearms for protection, but they are more likely to be shot by a partner with their own gun (Everytown Research, 2021). Sixty-seven percent of American gun owners say protection is one of their primary reasons for owning a firearm (Pew Research, 2017). However, Harvard researchers found that only .9% of people used their gun in self-defense in crimes from 2007-2011 based on data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (Hemenway et al., 2015). According to the National Institute of Health, “Guns kept in homes are more likely to be involved in a fatal or nonfatal accidental shooting, criminal assault, or suicide attempt than to be used to injure or kill in self-defense” (Kellermann et al., 1998).

The NRA has a vested interest in convincing the public that gun ownership will keep them safe from the “bad guy with a gun.” However, people are putting themselves in danger just by owning a gun. Approximately 60% of all gun-related deaths in America are suicides. Simply having access to a gun in your home triples the risk of suicide (Everytown Research, 2021).

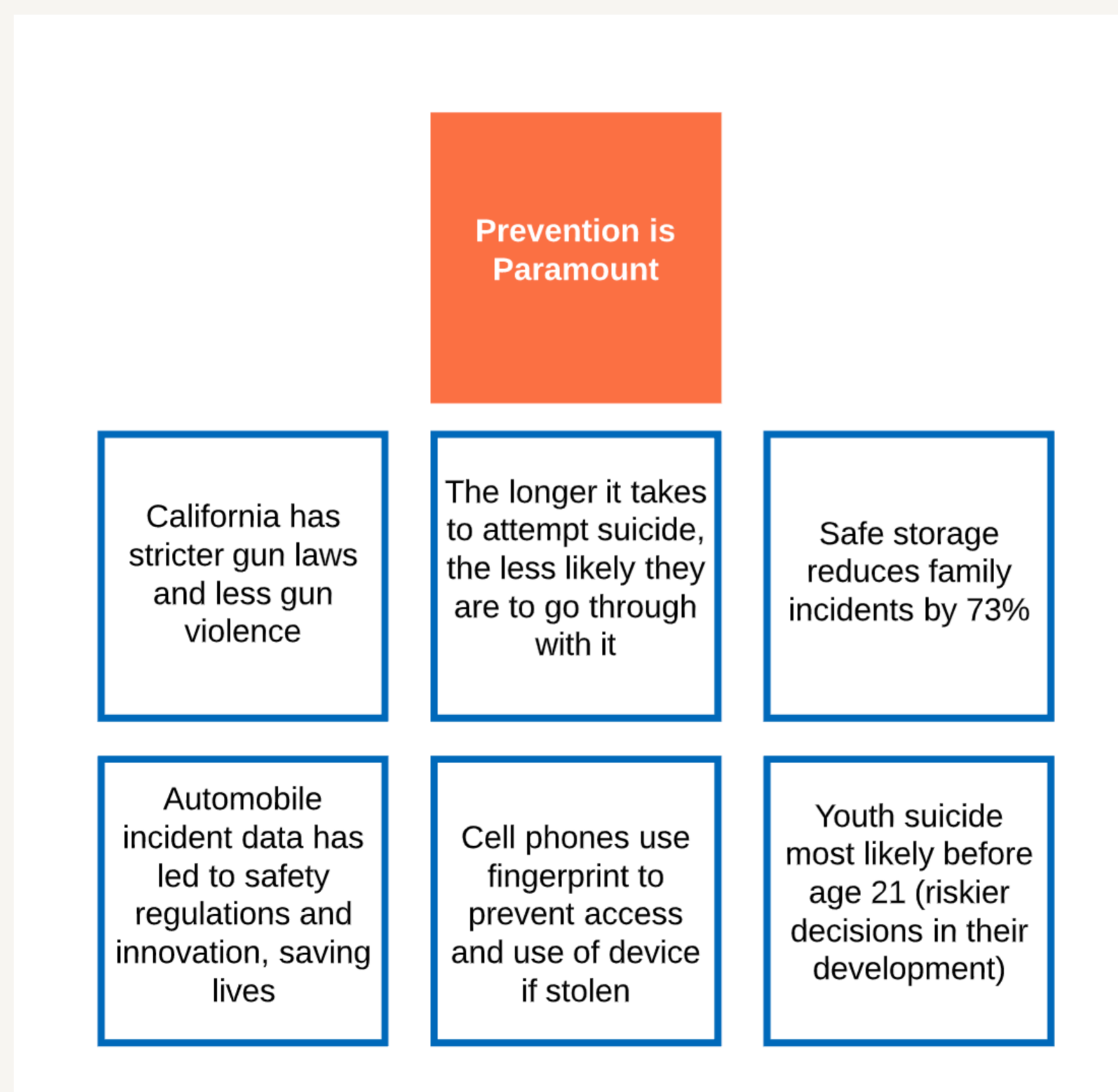


CLUSTER #5

Prevention is Paramount

The US needlessly loses 37,000 American lives to gun violence by neglecting to implement appropriate prevention measures. For example, enforcing safe and secure storage of firearms would reduce family incidents by 73% (Everytown Research, 2021). The state of California is known for its stricter gun control measures. However, it is not enough for some states to have strict gun legislation, while others do not. Due to the open borders between states, guns can easily be carried across state lines from elsewhere (Giffords, 2020).

In the early days of the automotive industry, automobile incident data was once scarce. Manufacturers feared that this information would damage their reputation, so they blamed accidents on the drivers and dodged responsibility. When accident reports were eventually enforced, new safety regulations and innovations saved lives. Car manufacturers now use safety data as a competitive advantage. Unfortunately, gun manufacturers do not take the same approach (99% Invisible, 2019).

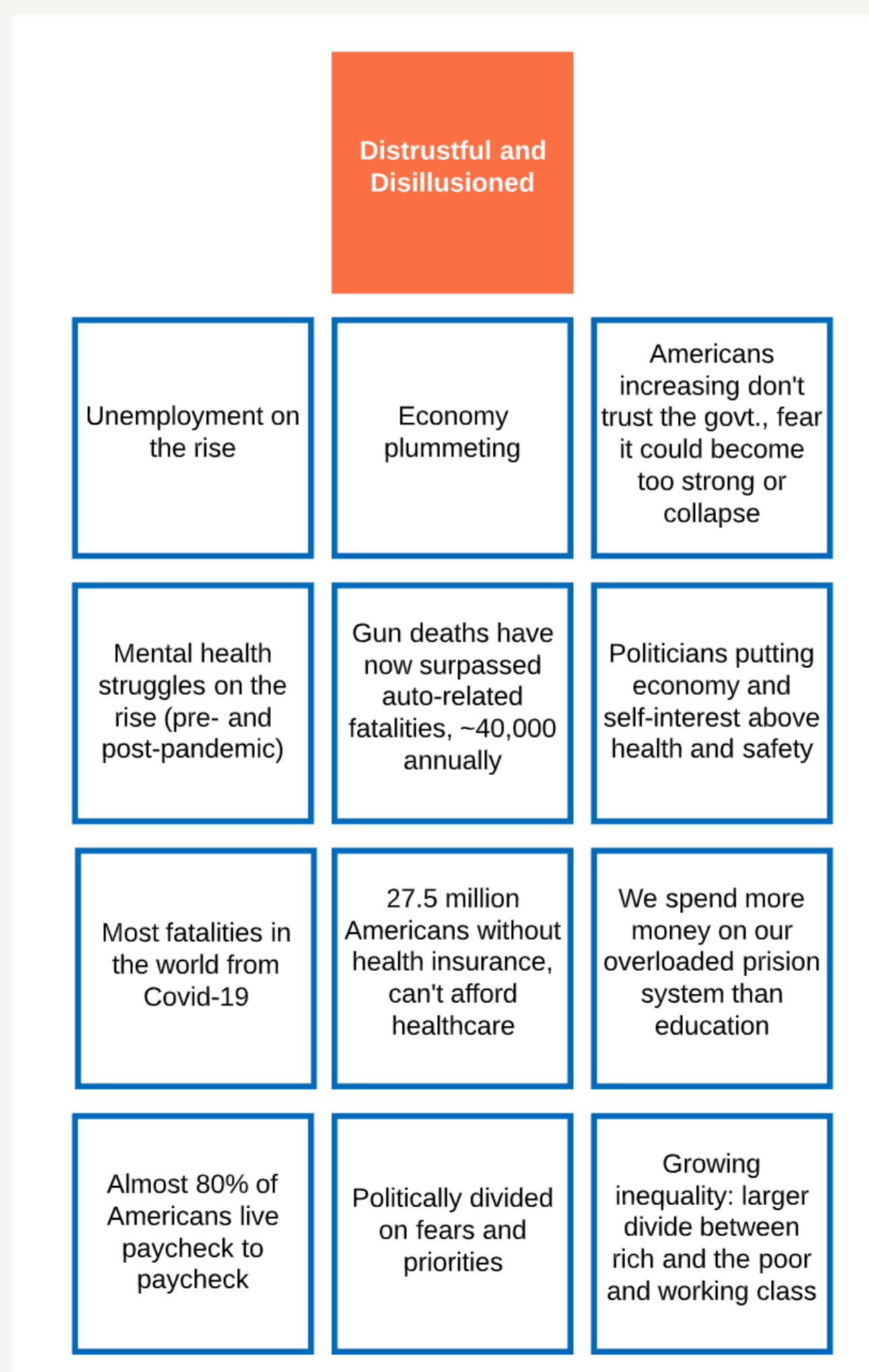


CLUSTER #6

Distrustful and Disillusioned

Americans are experiencing unprecedented levels of uncertainty. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy has plummeted and inequality is on the rise. Almost 80% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck, pre-pandemic (The Guardian, 2018). As of June 2020, 17.8 million Americans are unemployed, or 11% of the population (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).

The political and economic stress has left the country feeling dissatisfied and concerned about their future. According to a Pew Research Center 2018 survey, 87% of Americans are worried about whether or not their political leaders can solve their country's biggest problems. Republicans and Democrats alike distrust the government, over the fear that it could become too strong or too weak and collapse (Pew Research, 2017).



CLUSTER #7

Growing Progressive Shift

As the public continues to be let down by their government in the wake of mass shootings, the belief that the political system is broken is becoming more widespread (The Atlantic, 2017). This frustration with government inaction has led to the formation of Progressive and bi-partisan organizations advocating for accountability, gun control policies, and gun violence prevention.

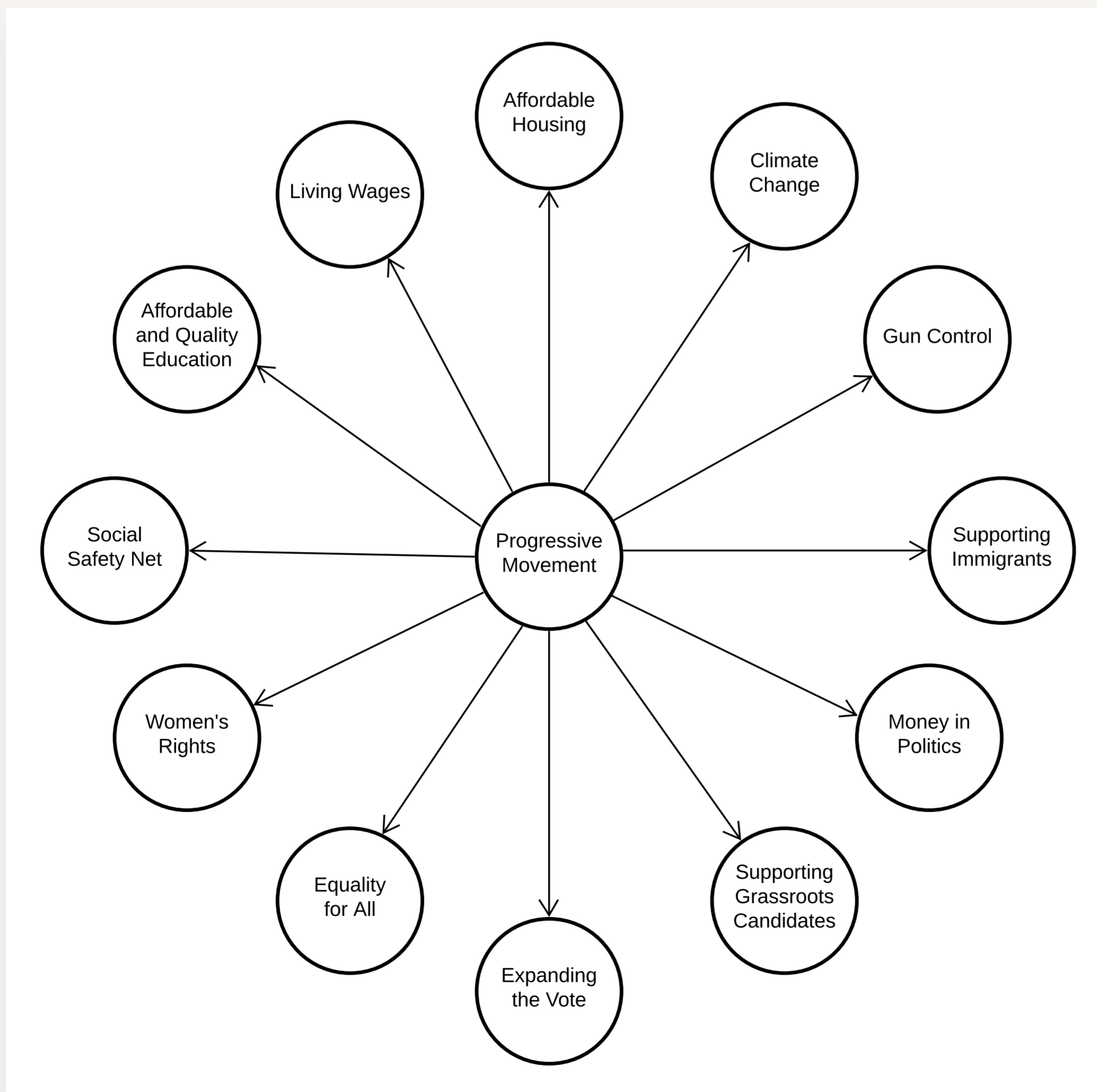
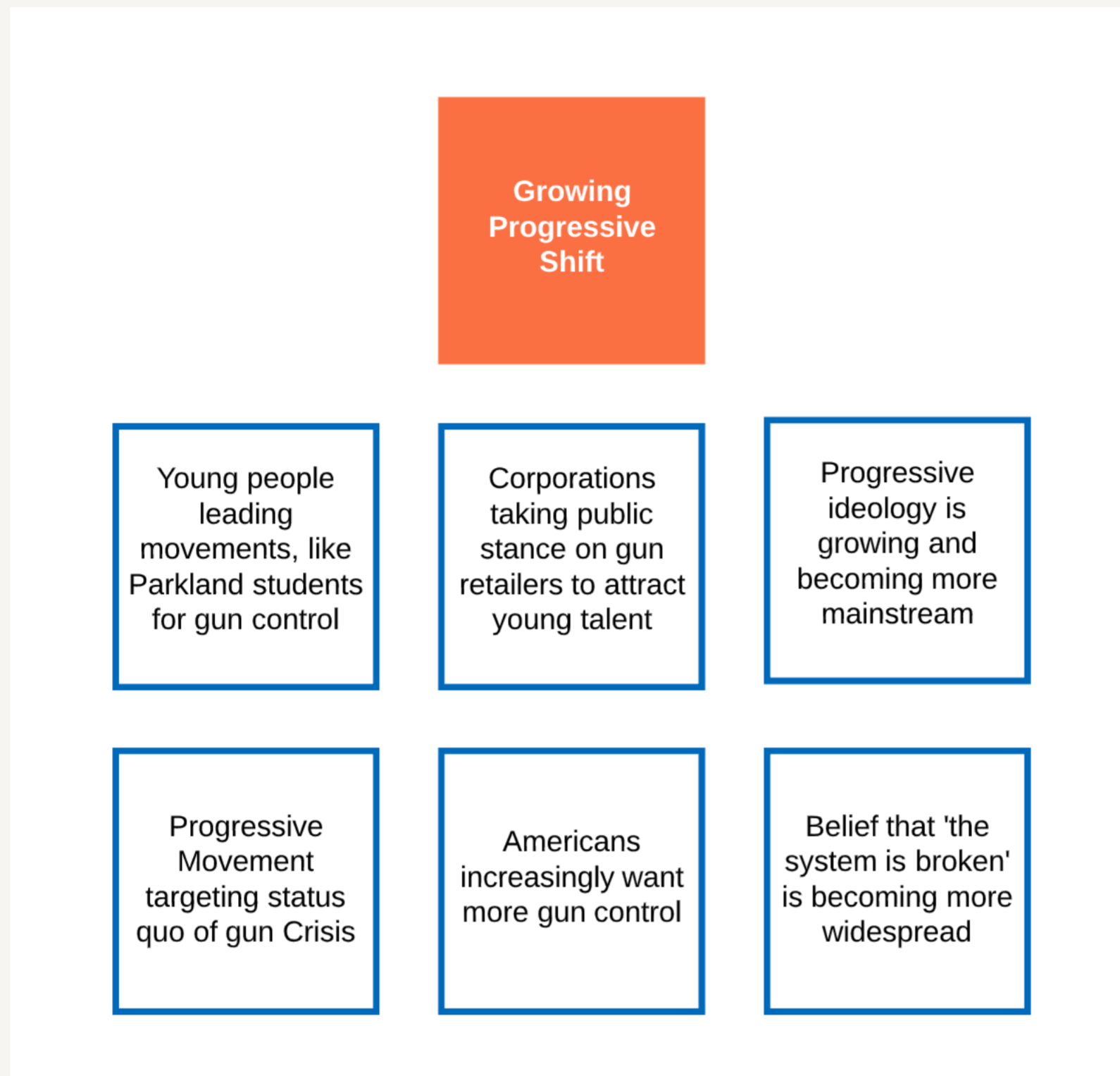
The Progressive Movement is a segment of the Democratic party that aims to make the US government more responsive to the needs of the American people through widespread political reform. For example, they believe human rights in America should be extended to guarantee the fulfillment of basic needs, such as the right to affordable and quality education, affordable housing, a living wage, affordable healthcare, etc (Brand New Congress, 2021; Progressive Democrats of America; 2021.). research from the National Institute of Health and John Hopkins School of Public Health suggests that communities who lack these basic needs, have a higher incidence of gun violence (Bray et al., 2020; John Hopkins, N.D.).

Young people are especially active in the Progressive Movement against gun violence. For instance, Parkland High School students have gained national attention for pushing for more gun control policy after experiencing a horrific school shooting resulting in 17 deaths of their fellow peers and teachers. The Movement is even influencing the attitudes of corporations, with some banks changing their policies around gun retailers, in order to attract young talent that expects a socially responsible employer (Kline, 2018).

In recent years, the Progressive Movement has been gaining widespread popularity. In the words of Progressive Senator Bernie Sanders, “We are seeing Progressive ideas that a few years ago were considered to be radical and extreme and fringe, suddenly becoming mainstream, because working people from coast to coast are standing up and fighting for them” (Sanders, 2018)

CLUSTER #7

Growing Progressive Shift



Causes of the Progressive Movement

Figure 6: Diagram I made about the many causes that make up the Progressive platform (Progressive Democrats of America, 2021)

WORLDVIEW

About the Method

In order to make sense of the factors I collected, I arranged the clusters in a way that tells a story, one that communicates the world as I see it. This story shows how the clusters impact one another. By zooming out to see the big picture and analyze the cause and effect of these relationships, I was able to more easily identify where the opportunities are within this domain and where I could have the biggest possible impact on disrupting the status quo of gun violence in America. This was a crucial step in determining where and how I planned to respond through my design intervention. The breakdown of this worldview and my response to it is covered in more detail on the following pages.

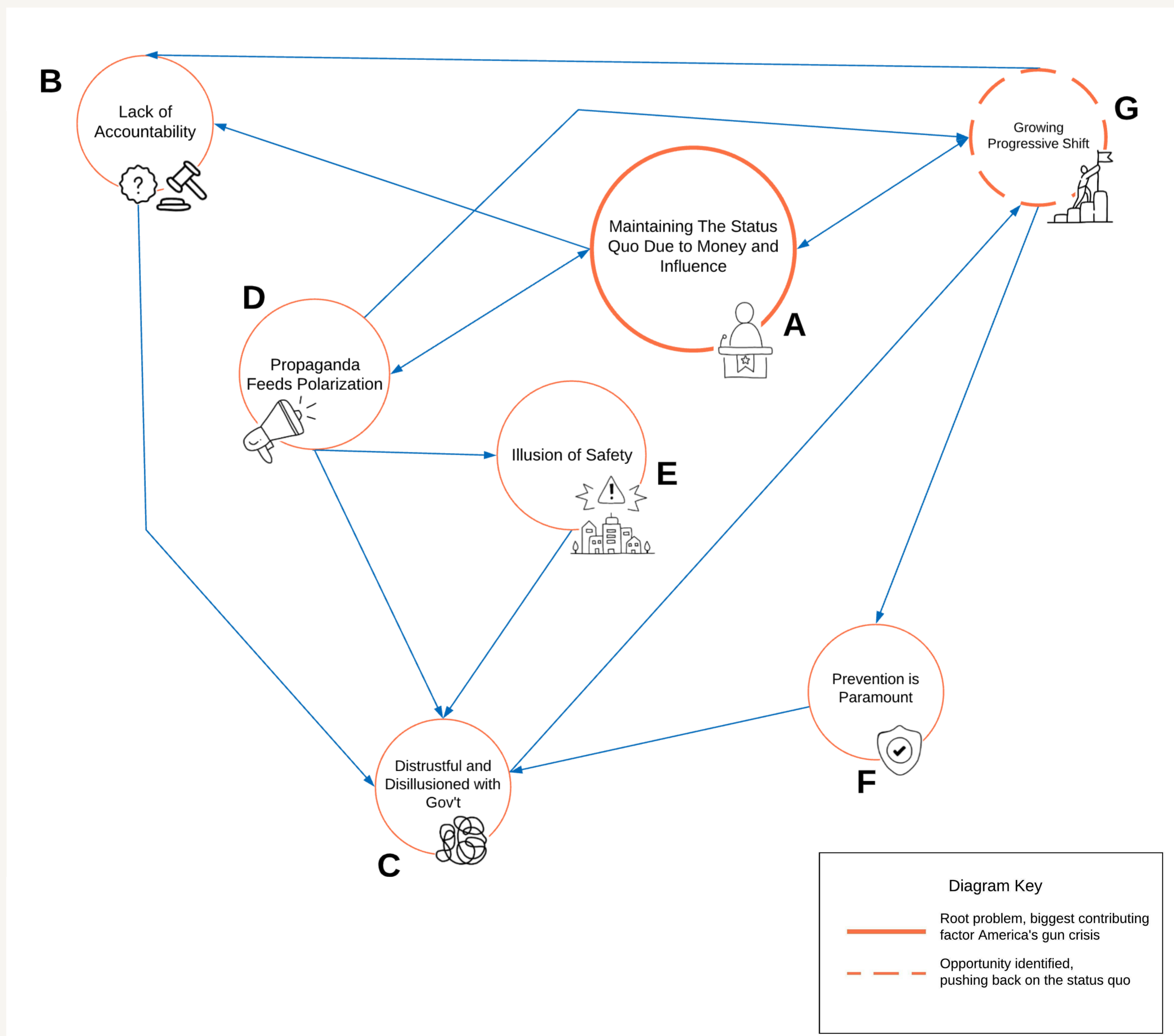


Figure 7: Worldview diagram, visualizing the cause and effect relationships between the individual clusters.

WORLDVIEW

Diagram Breakdown

This narrative below follows the alphabetical labeling of the worldview diagram on the previous page (Figure 7).

Due to the seemingly never ending election cycle, candidates need to raise large sums of money to fund a viable election campaign. For example, Senator Lindsey Graham spent a whopping \$97.6 million to keep his seat (Open Secrets, 2020). To foot the bill, many politicians of both parties rely on donations from special interest groups to fund their election campaigns and stay in office. These politicians feel obligated to keep their donors happy, which means they are likely to block or pass a policy in their favor. For example, former Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, has received over \$1.2 million in campaign contributions from the NRA thus far, and has a long-standing record of opposing gun control legislation (Caldwell & Tsirkin, 2019).

Due to these strong relationships with special interest groups, Congress has suppressed means of accountability that would hurt their gun lobbyist donors. The US lacks sufficient gun research due to lack of funding from the government. Congress has even prevented the Center for Disease Control from advocating for gun control (Washington Post, 2015). With the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act in 2005, Congress passed policy that allows the gun industry to skirt responsibility of public endangerment by granting them immunity from nearly all lawsuits. This lack of sufficient research and accountability has contributed to the endless injuries and deaths Americans faces daily, along with all of the costs and consequences that follow, which could otherwise be mitigated (Giffords, 2020).

Curated newsfeeds and partisan media channels reinforce existing political beliefs and often vilify the opposition (Pew Research, 2020). These deeply partisan narratives result in frustration and intolerance, making existing ideologies even more difficult to change (Brown & Murthy, 2020). This uncompromising conflict and toxic animosity makes it that much more challenging to pass legislation, which further strengthens the persisting status quo. Pro-gun politicians (primarily Republicans), the NRA and its partners benefit from this divide, as it strengthens the support they receive from their base. They are active contributors to the pro-gun debate narrative (Center for American Progress, 2019).

WORLDVIEW

Diagram Breakdown

It is not uncommon for incomplete, misleading, or false information surrounding the gun debate to circulate throughout the media. When messages are repeated so frequently they become our beliefs (Rice University, 2018). This propaganda often provokes fear with the aim of convincing Americans that purchasing a firearm will keep them safe. This gives gun owners, especially women, a false sense of security. Harvard researchers found that .9% of people used their gun in self-defense in crimes from 2007-2011 based on data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (Hemenway et al., 2015). According to the National Institute of Health, “Guns kept in homes are more likely to be involved in a fatal or nonfatal accidental shooting, criminal assault, or suicide attempt than to be used to injure or kill in self-defense” (Kellerman et al., 1998). Americans are deceptively convinced that guns will keep them safe, yet injuries and fatalities follow.

As time passes and the gun crisis continues, many Americans have become distrustful and disillusioned from the government’s inaction following the endless cycle of needless suffering. This has led to public outcry, demanding change, while others give up hope (Galston & Hendrickson, 2019). This frustration with government inaction has led to the formation of Progressive and bi-partisan organizations advocating for accountability, gun control policies, and gun violence prevention. They are actively pushing against the status quo of the gun crisis.

RESPONSE TO THE WORLDVIEW

After reflecting on my worldview, my next step was to identify where I wanted to intervene. With a domain as complex as this one, there are countless possibilities. Gun violence is a multi-faceted problem that can be addressed from many different angles. For example, one could tackle the challenge of misinformation surrounding the gun debate or bring public awareness to the alarming rate of gun-related suicides. Clearly, there is no single, direct path to solving this problem.

From my insights, it became clear to me that as long as politicians accept large donations from the NRA and its partners, the government will continue to block new gun control legislation. This is a vicious cycle and it goes beyond gun lobbyists, which is why I believe it is crucial that it is addressed in some form through my design intervention. As stated by Ann Ravel, former Commissioner of the Federal Election Commission (FEC), “Campaign finance is like the gateway issue to every other issue you might care about. Whether it be about education or tax reform or foreign policy, campaign finance is at the heart of all of the policy decisions that are being made” (Reed, 2018).

Special interest groups and corporations, from pharmaceuticals to big banks, are funneling billions of dollars each year into the US election system to influence the outcome with a high return on their investment. Two hundred of the most politically active companies in America have spent \$5.8 billion from 2007-2012. Over that period, they gained \$4.4 trillion in federal business and support, or a \$760 return on every \$1 spent (Allison & Harkins, 2014).

These mega donations reach record highs year after year, and they show no signs of slowing down (Public Citizen, 2020). As long as this is the case, elected officials will continue to vote in the interest of their major corporate and lobbyist donors.

RESPONSE TO THE WORLDVIEW

Researchers at Princeton and Northwestern universities conducted a study investigating the impact of special interest groups and the elite on policy decisions compared to “average” citizens. Gilens and Page found that “When the preferences of economic elites and the stands of organized interest groups are controlled for, the preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy” (Gilens & Page, 2014). This insight shook me to my core. Americans have every reason to be frustrated and wary of their government. This, to me, doesn’t sound like a representative government “for the people, by the people.”

For far too long, politicians, particularly Republicans, have demonstrated that they are willing to sacrifice American lives, even children, in order to hold onto their political power by accepting campaign contributions from the NRA and its partners (Open Secrets, 2021). Too many innocent lives have been lost and there seems to be no end in sight. Therefore, the public cannot wait on the president, Congress, or judicial system to change course. Sometimes change has to come from the outside, from the people.

As US history has shown, grassroots movements play an essential role in American democracy. From these movements, American activists gave women the right to vote, passed the Civil Rights Act and marriage equality, won the fight against the tobacco industry, among many others. Grassroots movements depend on high levels of participation, where a group of people organize to promote social change in order to put pressure on those in power (Northeastern University, 2016). Fortunately, the Progressive Movement is pushing back on the status quo of gun violence through both direct and indirect means.

RESPONSE TO THE WORLDVIEW

The Progressive Movement is actively advocating for gun reform policy, raising funding for gun-related research, and increasing public awareness of the lesser known consequences of gun ownership (Giffords, 2020). They are also approaching the problem indirectly by tackling a wide variety of issues that profoundly affect the majority of Americans, such as access to affordable education and a living minimum wage, which play a role in reducing gun violence. How are these issues connected to the gun crisis? As previously mentioned, research from the National Institute of Health and Johns Hopkins School of Public Health suggests that communities who lack basic needs, have a higher incidence of gun violence (Bray et al., 2020; Johns Hopkins, N.D.).

Over the past few years, Progressive ideology has moved from being perceived as radical and fringe to suddenly becoming mainstream (Sanders, 2018). The Progressive Movement is growing in size and influence in the US, tackling not only gun violence, but also, many of the social issues influencing it. This is why I decided that my chosen path forward was to support the growing Progressive Movement in America through my design intervention.

RESPONSE TO THE WORLDVIEW

Other Directions I Considered

Polarization: Given the heavily divided gun debate and the overall tension between political parties, I considered the goal of reducing the polarization between pro- and anti-gun control Americans for my design intervention. However, existing attitudes and political beliefs are not easily changed (Stanford University, 2017). Even amidst the turbulent Trump administration, presidential impeachment, and ongoing protests against racial injustice, political affiliations remain stable after the last two years, 2018-2020 (Pew Research, 2020). Researchers at Stanford found that Americans' most important aspect of their identity is their political party affiliation, more so than race and religion (Stanford University, 2017). Therefore, it seems unlikely that significant and measurable progress can be made within the duration of this project.

Prevention, Mental Health: I considered this topic because to my surprise, mental health is largely absent from the gun debate, despite the 23,000 American lives lost by gun-related suicide each year, approximately two-thirds of all gun related deaths (Everytown for Gun Safety, 2021). Suicide rates continue to escalate in nearly every state. Saving lives through suicide prevention is a non-partisan issue, which leads me to believe it would be a less polarizing approach to the gun debate, compared to the proposal of stricter gun laws. Unfortunately, politics in government has limited the CDC's budget and ability to thoroughly research the consequences of gun use and ownership (Washington Post, 2015). Due to insufficient and unreliable data, it is not possible to design an appropriate solution in this space at this time.

VISION STATEMENT

Once I decided where to intervene, I formulated my vision statement. This statement addresses a particular opportunity identified from my worldview, where I take a position that illustrates what impact I intend to create through my design intervention. In this case, I want to support the Progressive Movement's efforts in reducing gun violence in America, as previously described. The vision statement also contains a mechanism that will help me accomplish this goal.

This step will later help with idea generation for the end-concept. The vision statement should be open enough to facilitate the creation of many ideas, but specific enough to provide sufficient direction. Additionally, this statement serves the purpose of evaluating the end-solution to determine whether or not my design achieved the stated goal (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2016).

The Vision Statement

I want to support the Progressive Movement's efforts in reducing gun violence in America by activating citizen participation.

Despite the never-ending cycle of gun violence in America, widespread calls for gun reform have fallen on deaf ears, leaving the public frustrated and dissatisfied with their government's inaction. As stated by Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, "When we're disappointed by our government, we opt-out, but we hold onto that darkness. We hold onto that anger, onto that resentment. You just keep it inside, and that's what's happened in our political process. That's what has happened to our sense of power" (Favreau, 2019).

To make matters worse, this darkness and helplessness is further reinforced by nearly every web browser we open or channel on TV, which bombards viewers with the latest gun crisis and government failure, a constant feed of negativity clouding our minds. The ongoing pandemic has only magnified the problems of this nation, but also gives Americans the opportunity to define a new normal.

VISION STATEMENT

While gun safety legislation has been denied for decades, Americans do not have to accept government inaction, but have the power to challenge it with grassroots participation.

As former President Obama once pointed out, “the United States is a constant work in progress. Its founders laid out instructions, ‘to form a more perfect union.’ Explicit in those words is the idea that we are imperfect; that what gives each new generation purpose is to take up the unfinished work of the last and carry it further than anyone might have thought possible” (Obama, 2020).

The intention of my design intervention is to activate citizen participation in the battle against government inaction on gun violence through the efforts of the Progressive Movement. How will this movement lead the US toward gun control reform? As previously discussed, the Progressive Movement is tackling a variety of societal issues in America, many of which have the potential to impact gun violence. The diagram below illustrates how the Progressive Movement could achieve gun control reform through the many causes they are fighting for.

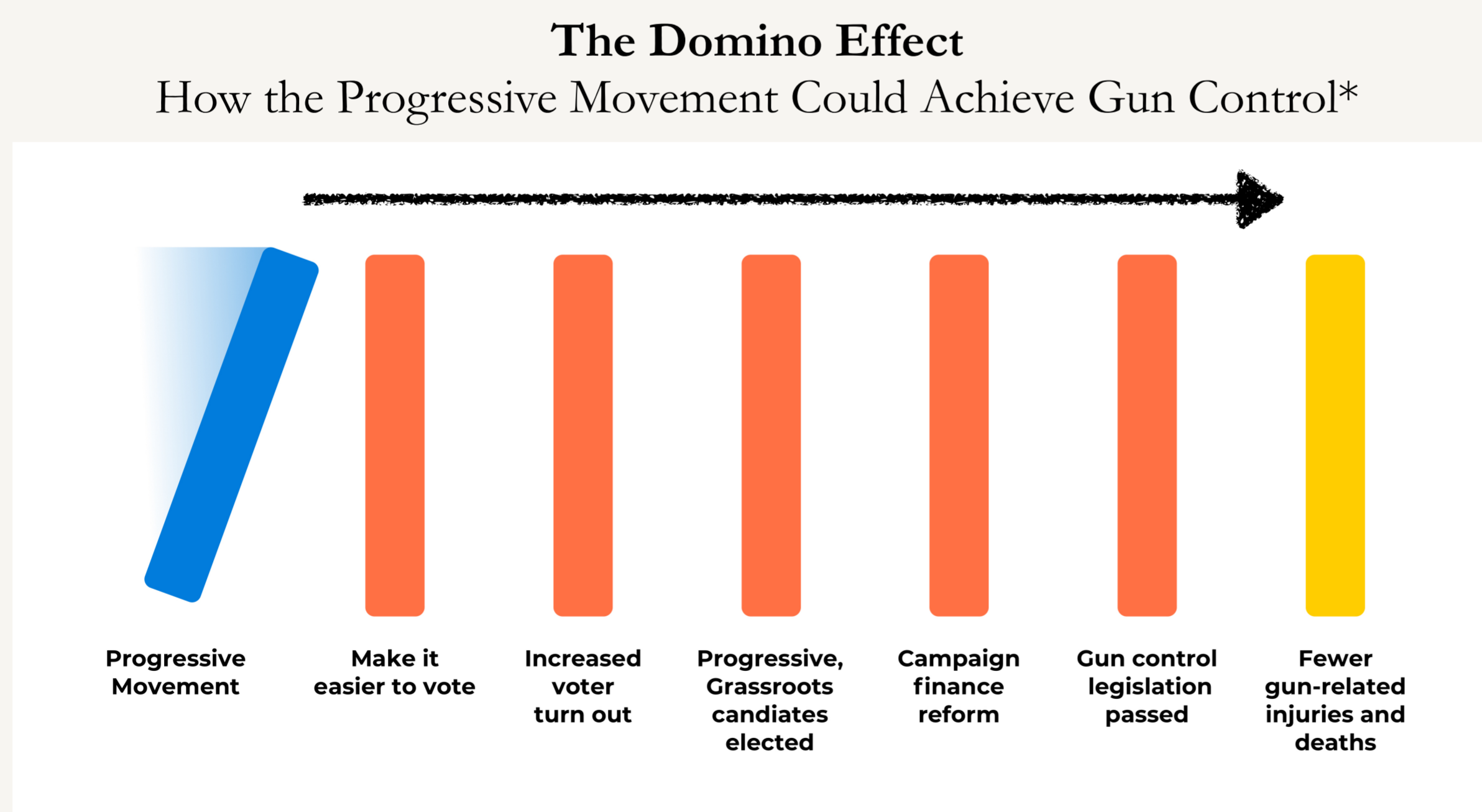


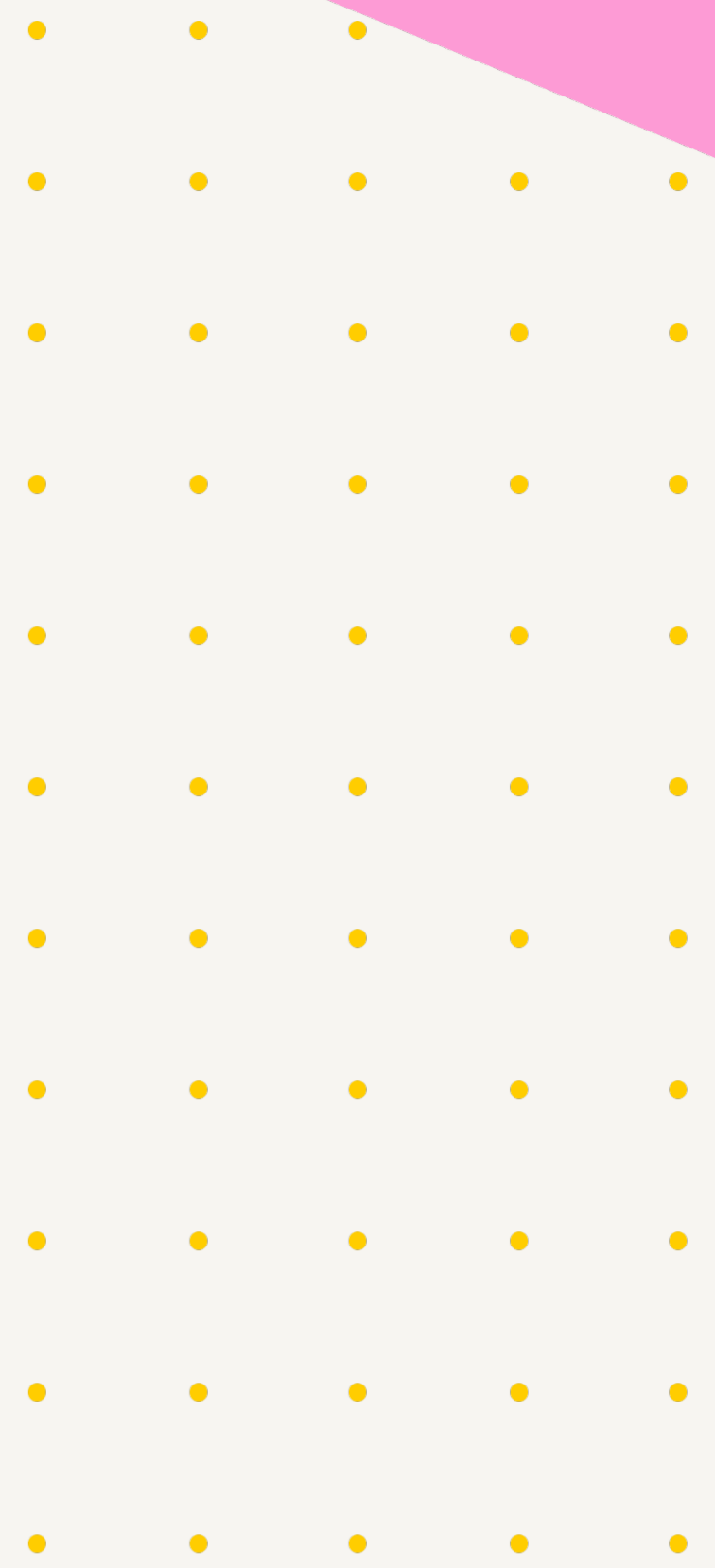
Figure 8

*I cannot definitively say that this is exactly how progress will take place in regards to gun control as a result of the Progressive Movement. This is my own thought process and conclusion based on the research I have gathered throughout my project.

VISION STATEMENT

Domino Effect Diagram Breakdown

One of the Progressive Movement's initiatives is to make it easier for Americans to vote. This could help increase voter turnout and lead to more grassroots-funded Progressive candidates (Brennan Center, 2018). The more Progressive candidates are elected, the more voting power and influence they will have in Congress. This power can bring about campaign finance reform, another target of the Progressive Movement, which will cause politicians to rely on donations from their constituents, as opposed to corporations and special interests groups. Without the pressure of these corporations and special interests groups, such as the NRA, more gun control legislation can be passed, leading to fewer gun-related injuries and deaths.



INTERACTION METAPHOR

Before exploring possible solutions and their manifestation, I used a metaphor to inspire the ideation process. This served as a tool to envision the type of interaction the user will have with my design intervention. This allowed me to focus on the experience my intervention will provide, rather than its functionality (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2016).

After a few iterations, I landed on the metaphor of a halftime speech. This is something very stereotypical American, often found in movies about American football. It is the part of the game where the scoreboard isn't looking good and the team is feeling defeated. The head coach huddles up the players in the locker room and gives them a moving speech, convincing the team that they can do better and failure is not an option. If they believe in themselves, focus, and work together, they can turn the game around. The team leaves the locker room feeling energized and invincible, ready to take on their opponent.

With all of the negative headlines in the media and the ongoing struggle to put an end to gun violence, I feel this is the perfect metaphor. Below, I break down a few qualities that I used as inspiration for my end-concept. During the validation phase (page 50), I will revisit these qualities to see if potential users referenced them in their feedback of my solution.

Action-Driven

Football, like activism, is not a spectator sport. It's about seizing the moment and taking action. The clock is ticking away and there is no time to waste being idle. It takes hard work and dedication to pull ahead and change the outcome of the game.

Unity

One team with a common goal. The team celebrates their success and encourages one another during difficult times. Like any successful sports team, they must work together, or they will surely fall apart.

Hopeful

This is about believing one is capable of achieving victory, despite the odds. With the right mindset, you can turn defeat into optimism. This isn't a strategy of denial, of convincing each other that everything is fine. This is about believing in one's own power. Despite the odds, they can prevail.

INTERACTION METAPHOR



Figure 9: Half-time Speech Metaphor, University of Alabama Football (Kausler, 2011).

IDEATION

In this phase of the design process, I concentrated on generating ideas for my design intervention by using the problems and opportunities identified in my worldview, proposed interaction qualities, and my vision statement as inspiration.

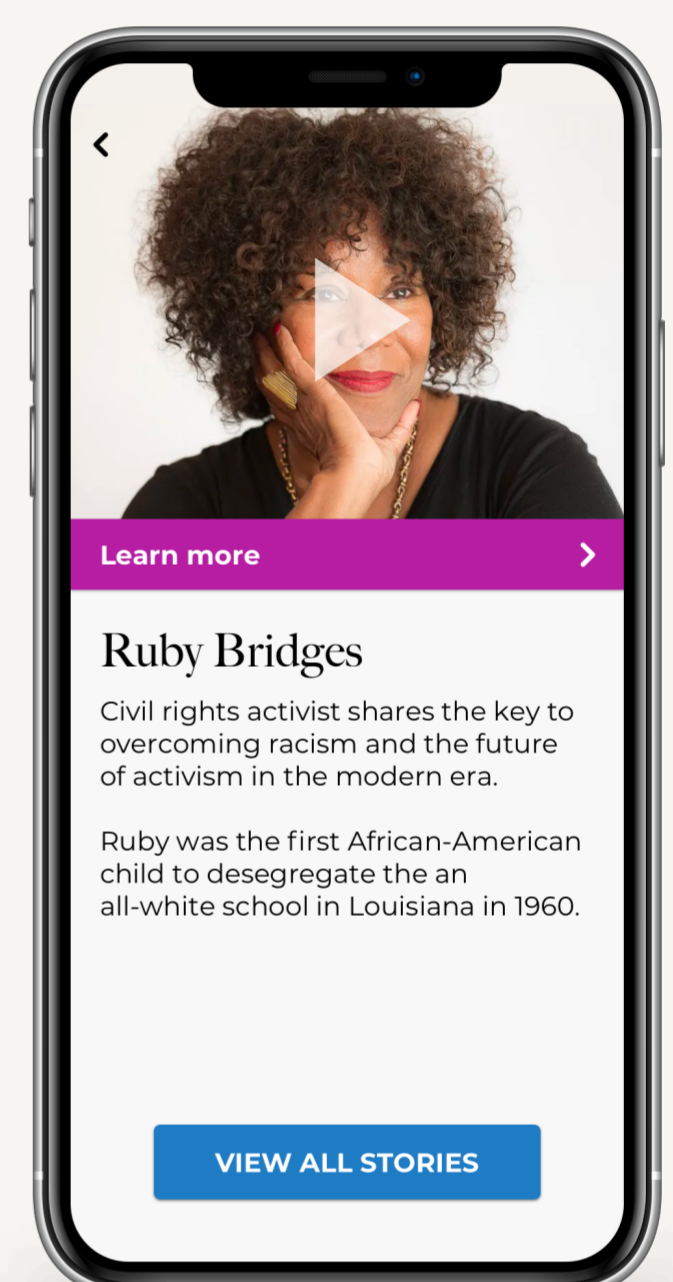
I narrowed down the possibilities to three concepts that I felt had potential. When determining which one would be the selected concept, I assessed whether the design solution aligned with the criteria presented in the vision statement, or fell short of that goal. Below are two of the concepts I considered, but ultimately did not select for my design intervention.

Concept 1: This first concept is a collection of stories and lessons, from past and present, that give hope and empower change. These stories come from well-known activists, such as Ruby Bridges, a Civil Rights icon. History has a way of repeating itself and Americas can benefit by learning from the wisdom and contributions of those who have moved the nation closer to its ideals.

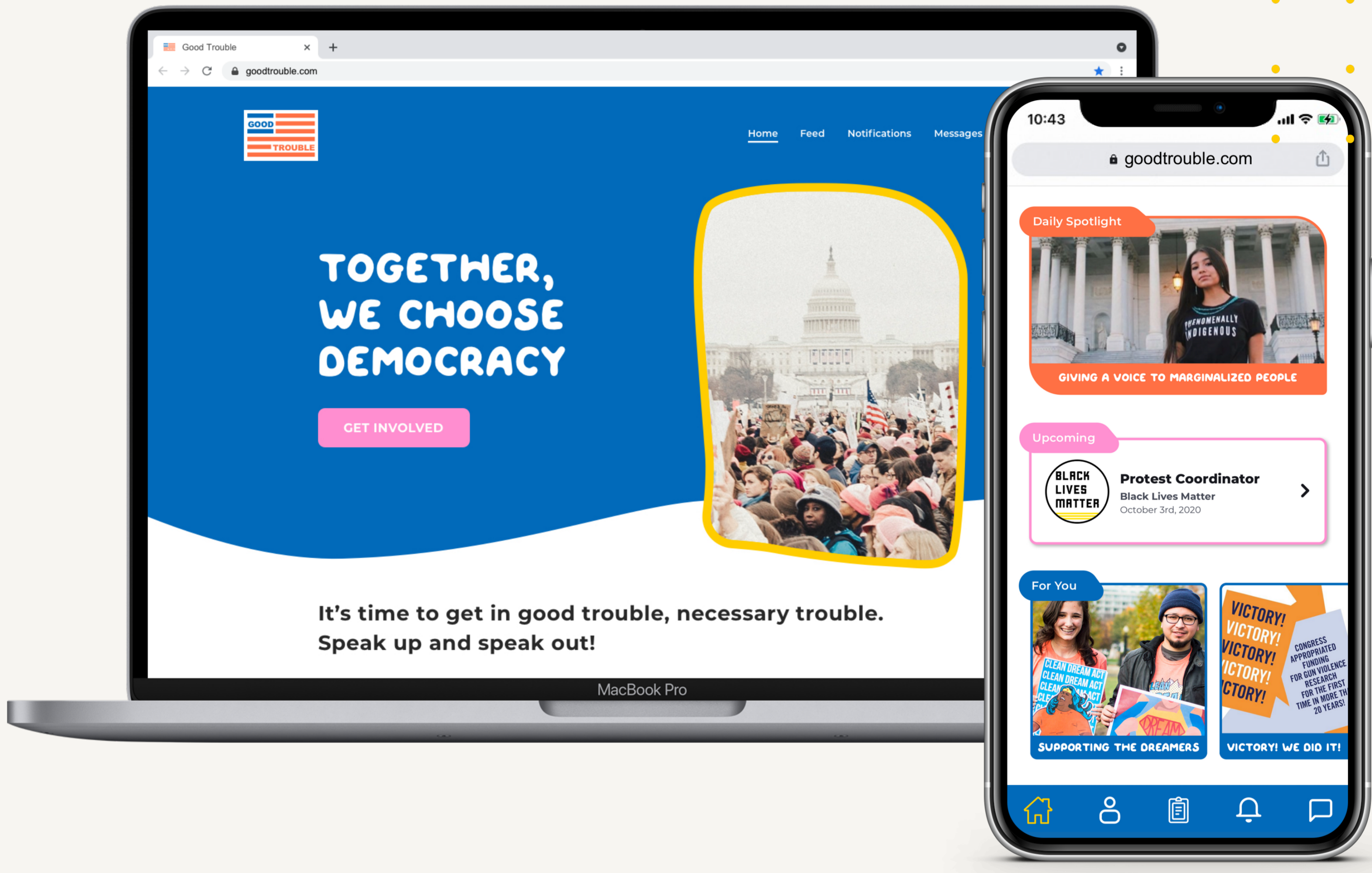
The Drawback: While I believe there is value in storytelling, I felt that this concept was lacking the opportunity for the public to respond, to act (seizing the moment). The concept could inspire change (hopeful, unity), but doesn't provide a means to create it.

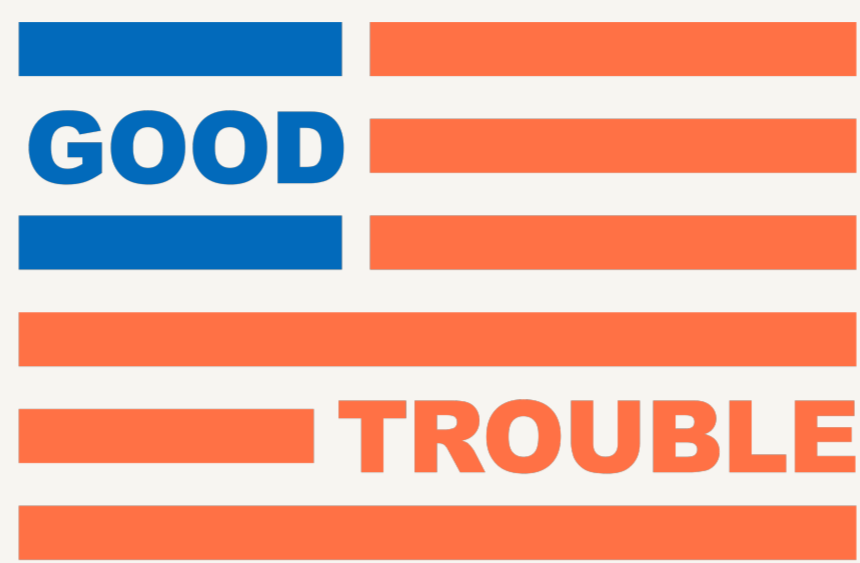
Concept 2: The second concept was inspired by the number of young people speaking out against injustices in the United States. For example, six teenagers organized a protest of 10,000 people after excessive police force led to the death of George Floyd. This concept is about encouraging America's youth to participate in Progressive volunteer opportunities, and to be inspired by and learn from their peers.

The Drawback: This concept matched the interaction qualities (seizing the moment, unity, and hopeful) and I can imagine this concept existing in the world, but it may be unnecessary to limit this type of platform to only young people, which brings me to my third and final concept on the following page.



FINAL CONCEPT: GOOD TROUBLE





FINAL CONCEPT

The majority of American people feel that government ignores their interests in favor of corporations and the wealthy, and are frustrated with the US government's inaction on important societal issues, such as gun violence (Pew Research, 2017; Public Citizen, 2014). Feeling ignored by the government is nothing new, and as history shows, has sparked grassroots action by committed citizens, which brought about important societal change previously denied to the people, from the passing the Civil Rights Act to marriage equality.

The final concept, Good Trouble, is a web-based platform that enables any American to become an active participant in the Progressive Movement by connecting them to volunteer opportunities. With my platform, users can contribute to gun control reform and the other Progressive causes that influence it.

What does “good trouble” mean? To create good trouble is to use non-violent means of activism, such as peaceful protests, to highlight injustice, create public awareness, and make those in power uncomfortable so that they will act.

This platform was inspired by the life of the late Congressman and Civil Rights icon, John Lewis. In his own words, he believed that “Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help (Lewis, 2020).”

John Lewis considered himself to be an “ordinary” man who made the decision to fight against the injustices facing the African-American community. At the young age of 23, he spoke with Martin Luther King Jr. at the March on Washington. He continued to fight unwaveringly every day of his life for the country that he loved, despite the fact that it once oppressed him. Lewis represents the best of America. He is proof that no matter your age, race, or status, everyone should believe in their own power.

FINAL CONCEPT

Who is This Platform For?

While my design intervention is focused on Progressive issues, I want to include all Americans who have a desire to participate, no matter their political affiliation.

As divided as the country appears to be, political views are more nuanced than strictly Republican or Democrat. America's Founding Fathers, George Washington and John Adams, prophesied the collapse of a divided political system. As Adams stated, "A division of the republic into two great parties...is to be dreaded as the great political evil." In the early days of America's two-party political system, there was more collaboration, compromise, and overlapping ideologies (Drutman, 2020). It's easy to get wrapped up in partisan politics, but when it comes down to some key issues, Americans agree on more than the media portrays.

For example:

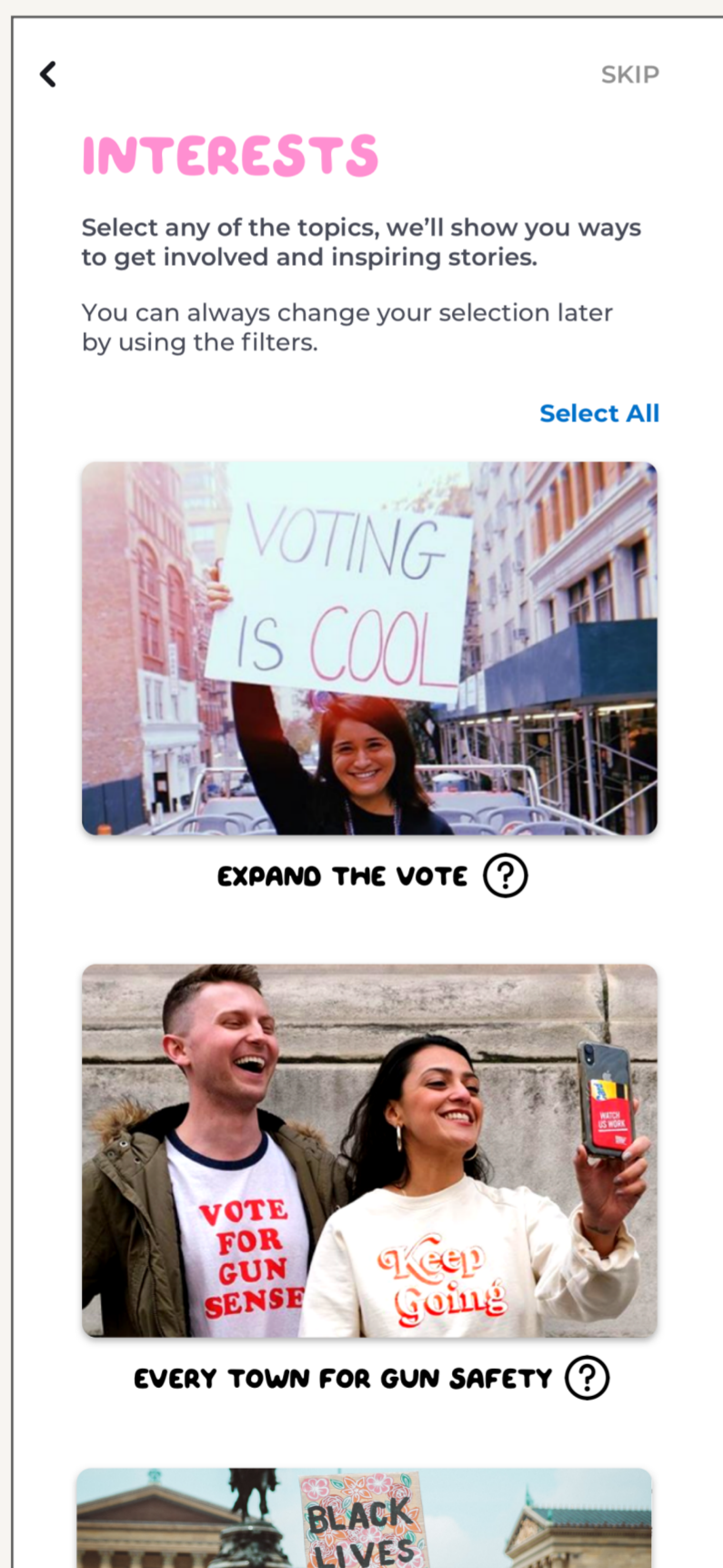
- 60% of citizens want "Common Sense Gun Laws" (Pew Research, 2019)
- 76% of Democrats and 79% of Republicans had an unfavorable opinion on special interest lobbying and election finance and its impact on American politics (Pew Research, 2019)
- 67% of Americans feel the government should do everything in their power to make it easy for every citizen to vote in elections (Pew Research, 2019)

FINAL CONCEPT

How it Works

Users can browse and register for volunteer opportunities with activist organizations based on their individual preferences, which includes their interests, availability, and location.

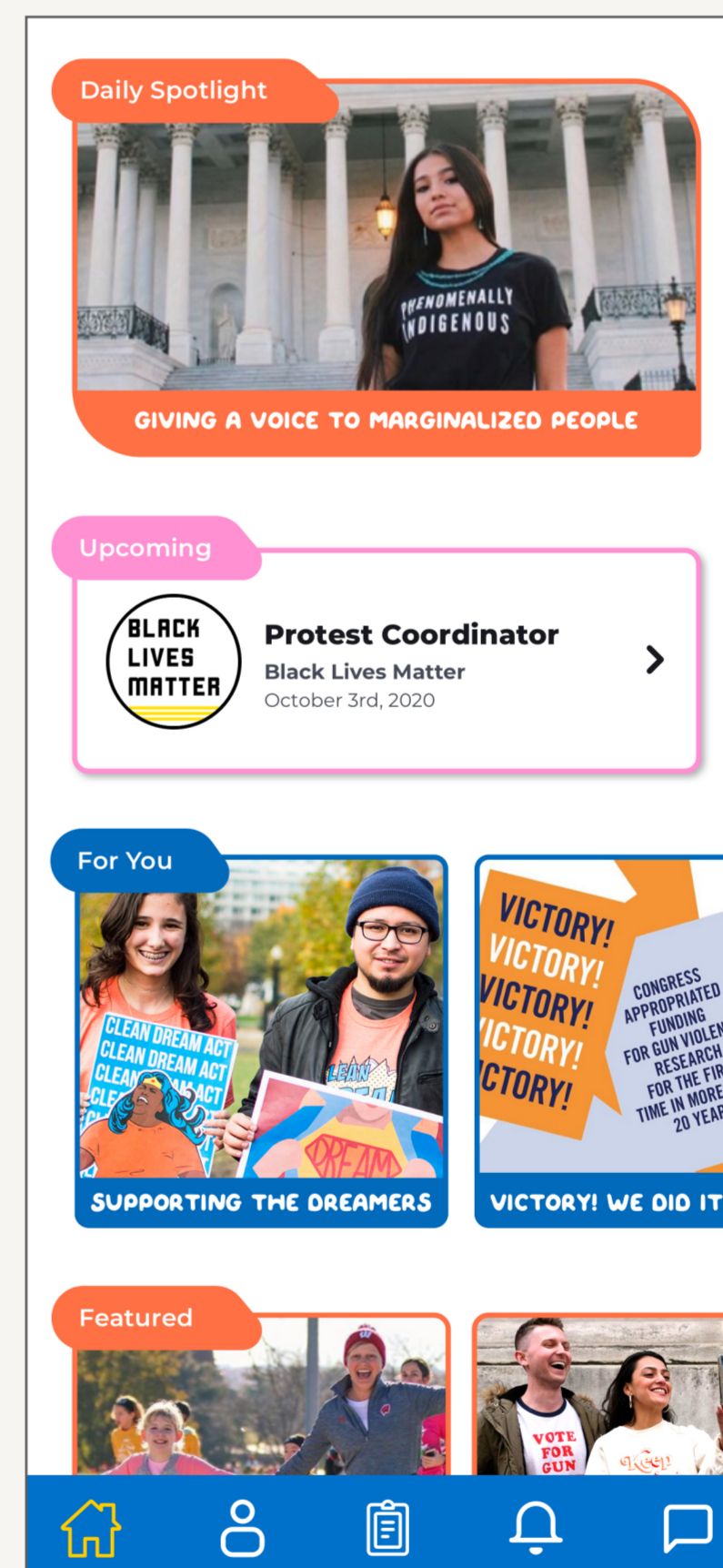
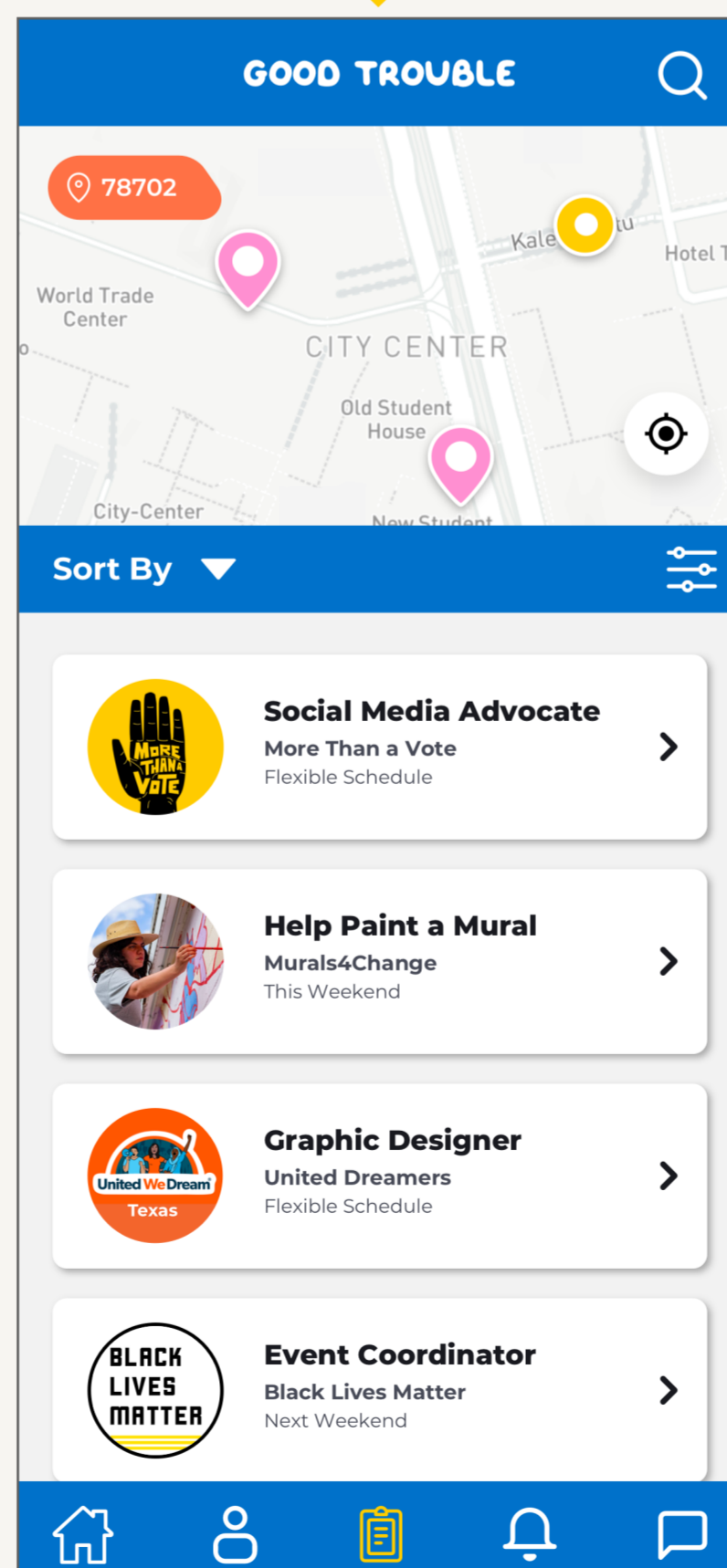
The home feed showcases the contributions of others on the platform. This is about embracing the spirit of unity, as grassroots movements rely on many people to make an impact, and these accomplishments should be celebrated. Here, users can also find featured challenges from the Good Trouble user base. These challenges are meant to encourage people to replicate or create a volunteer project of their own that is inspired by some of the featured projects posted by other users (as illustrated in the user scenario on the next page). The content presented on the home feed is based on the interests selected by the user.



INTERESTS

Users start by selecting their preferences: interests, availability, and location. They are then matched with volunteer opportunities that have this criteria.

OPPORTUNITIES
Users who create a profile will have their searches saved automatically. The results will continue to update based on their selected preferences, eliminating their need to search

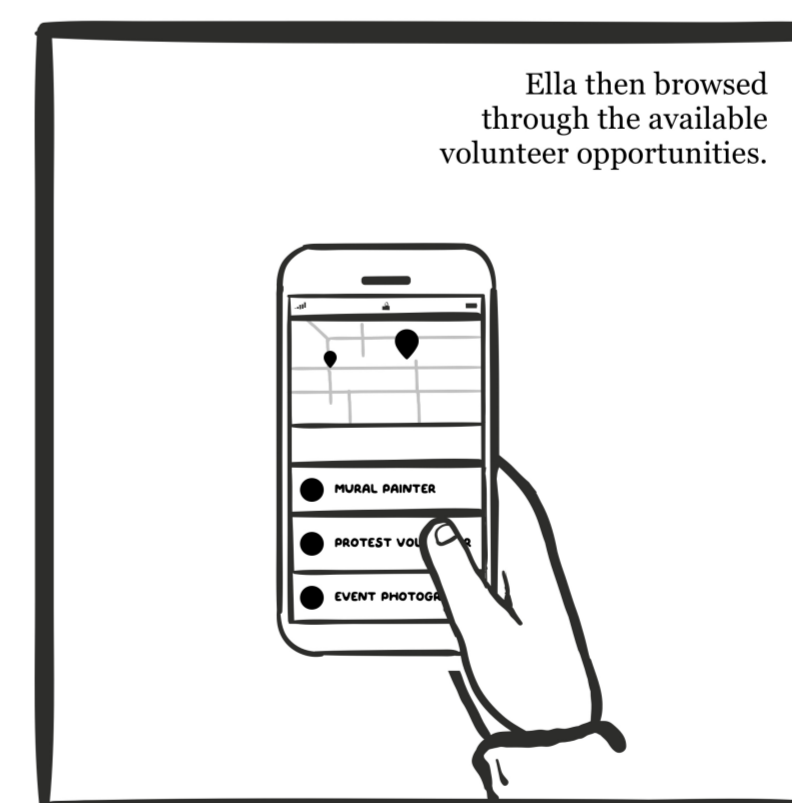
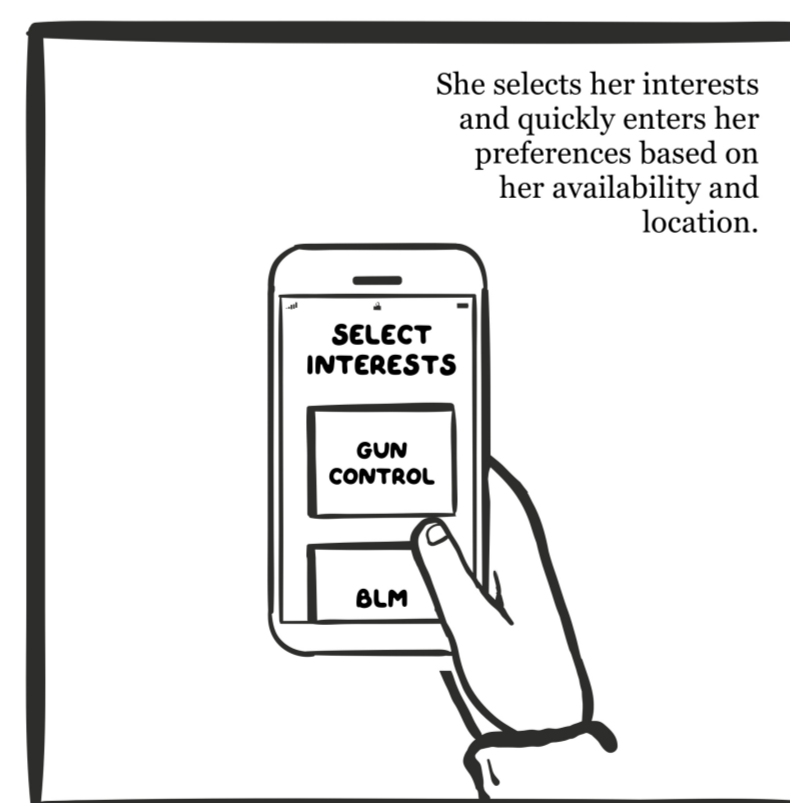
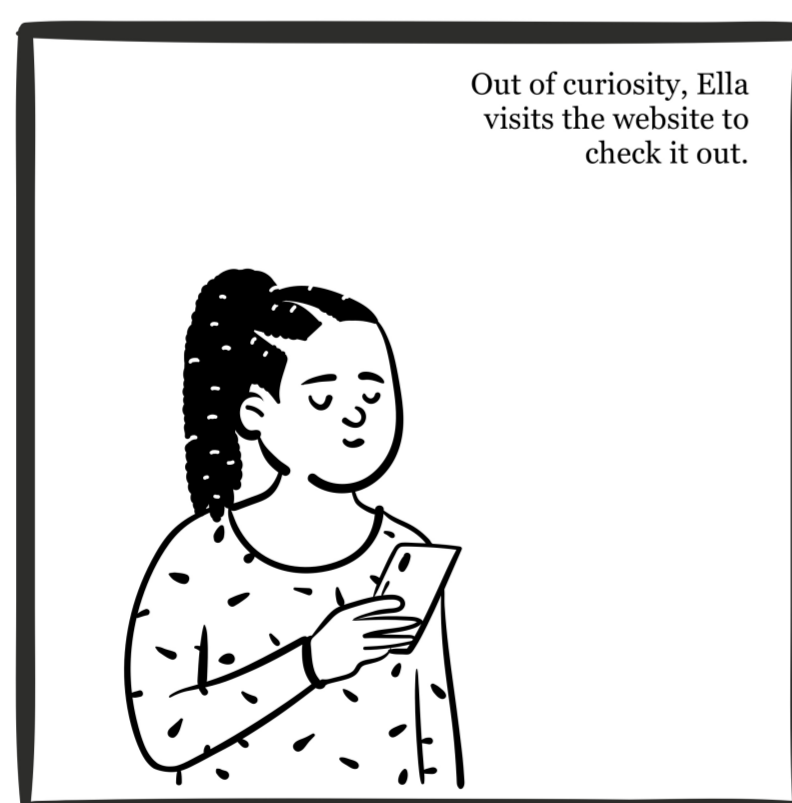
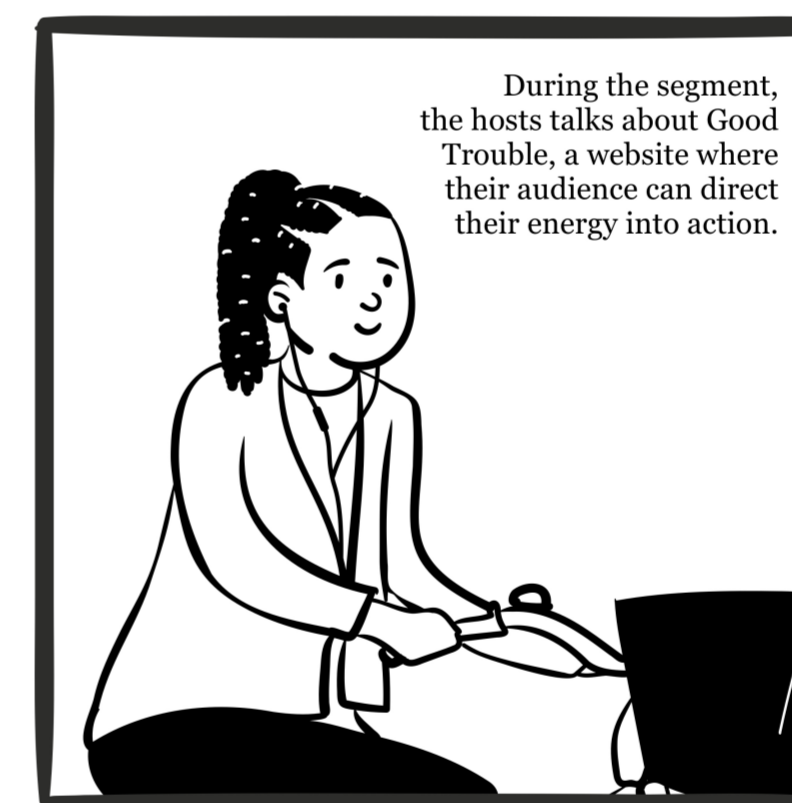
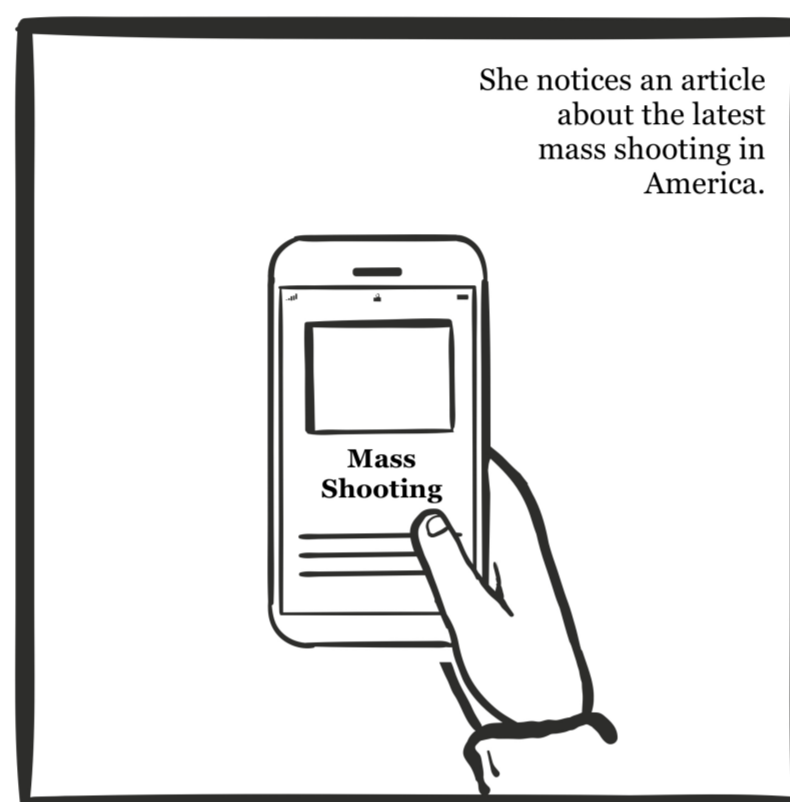


FEED

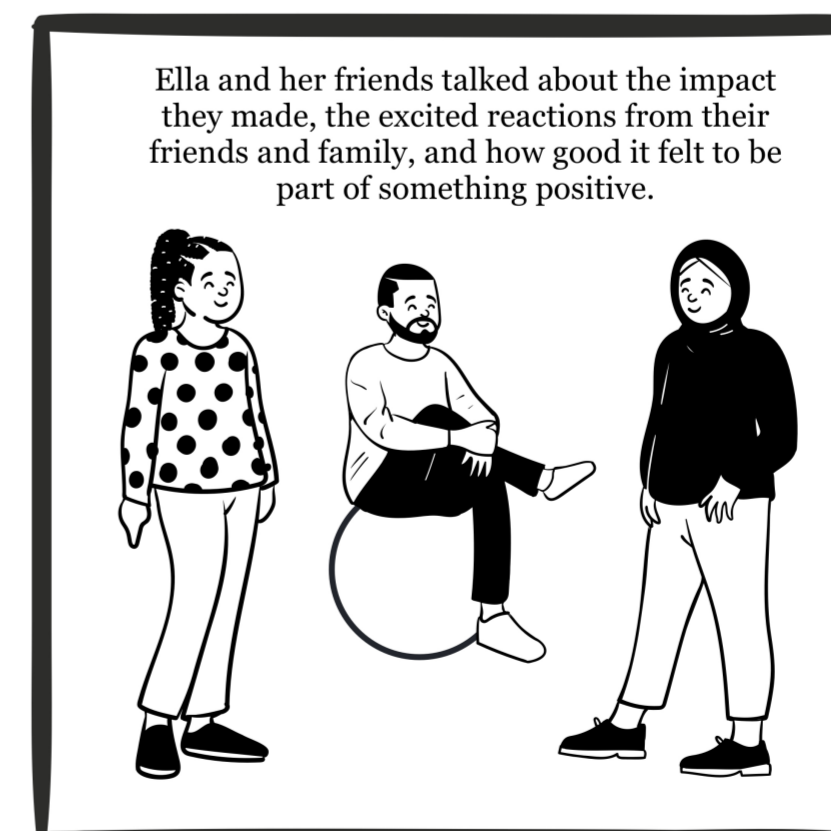
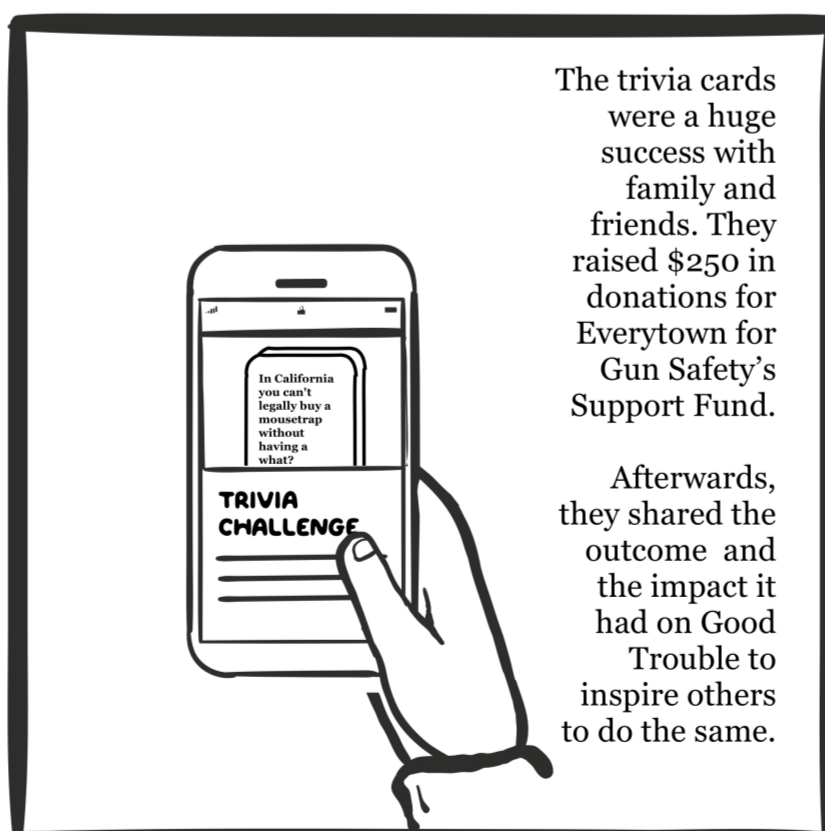
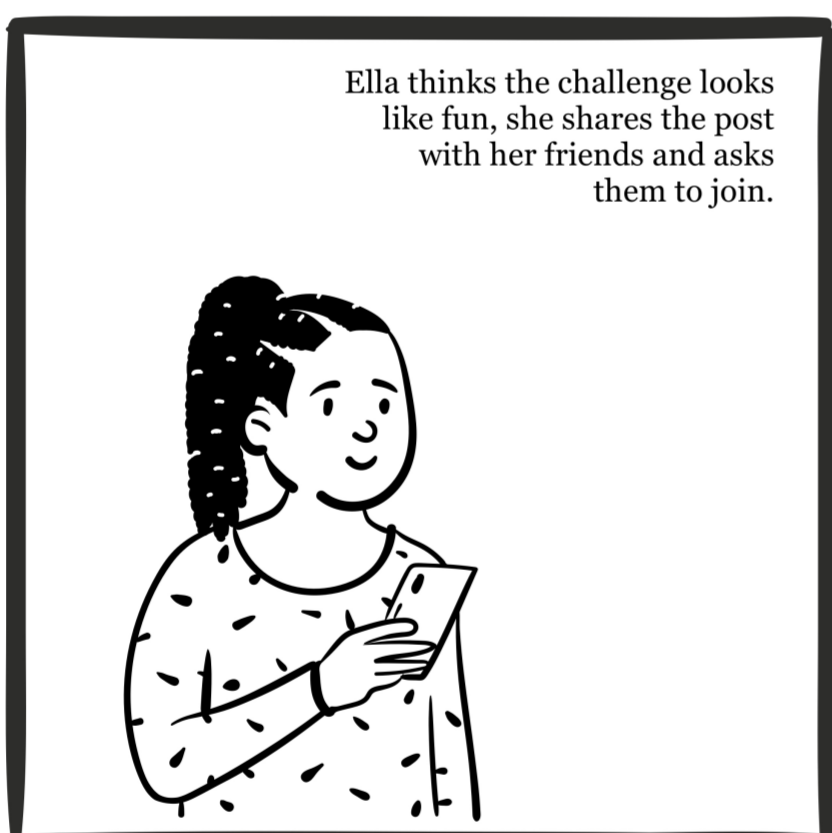
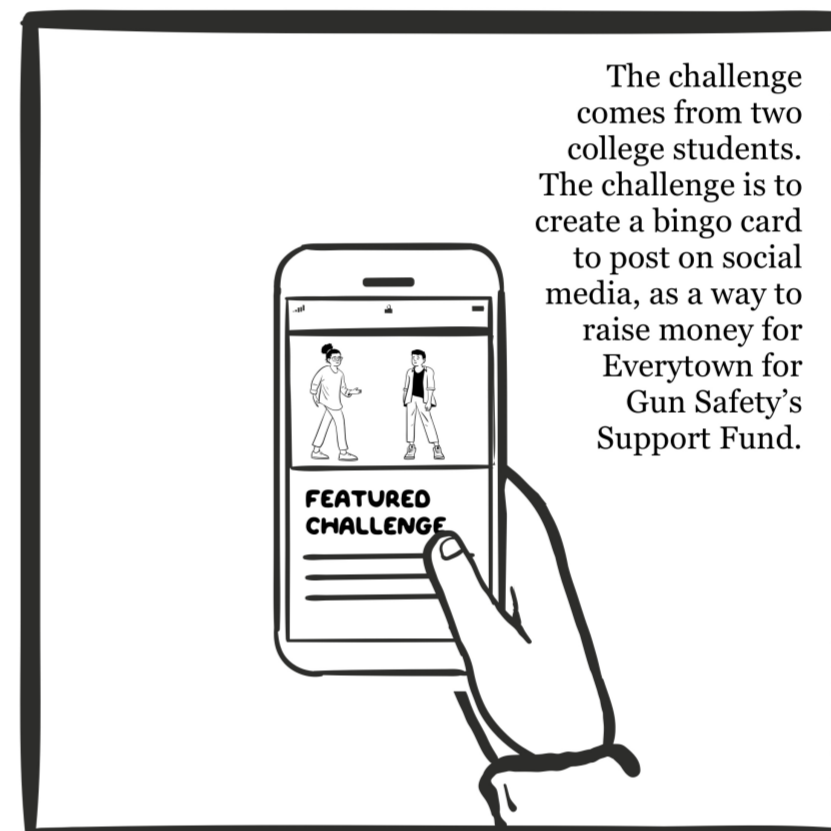
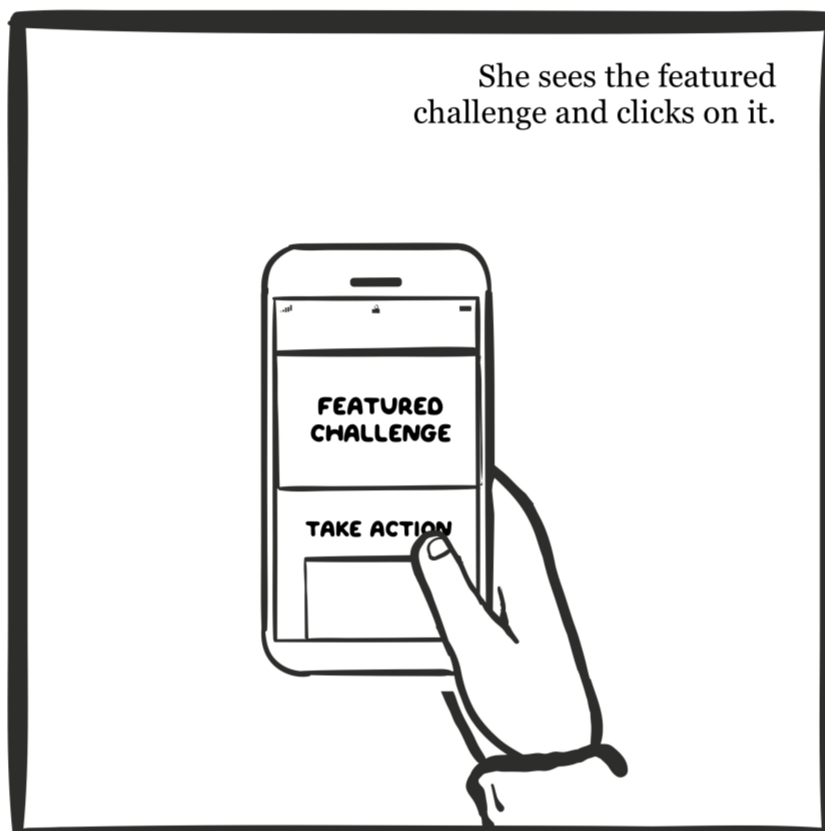
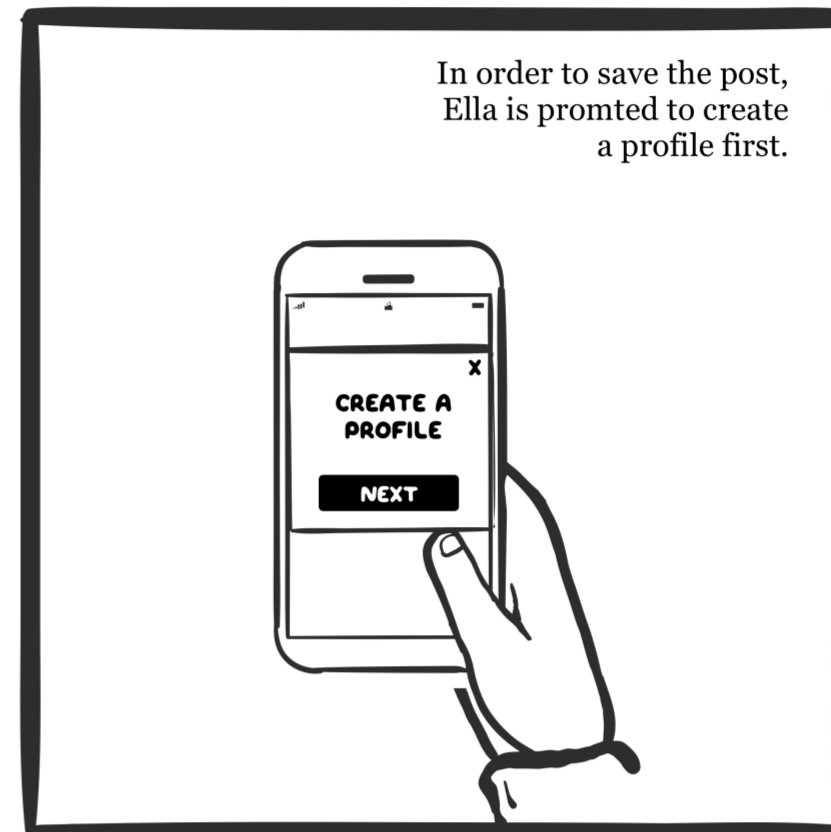
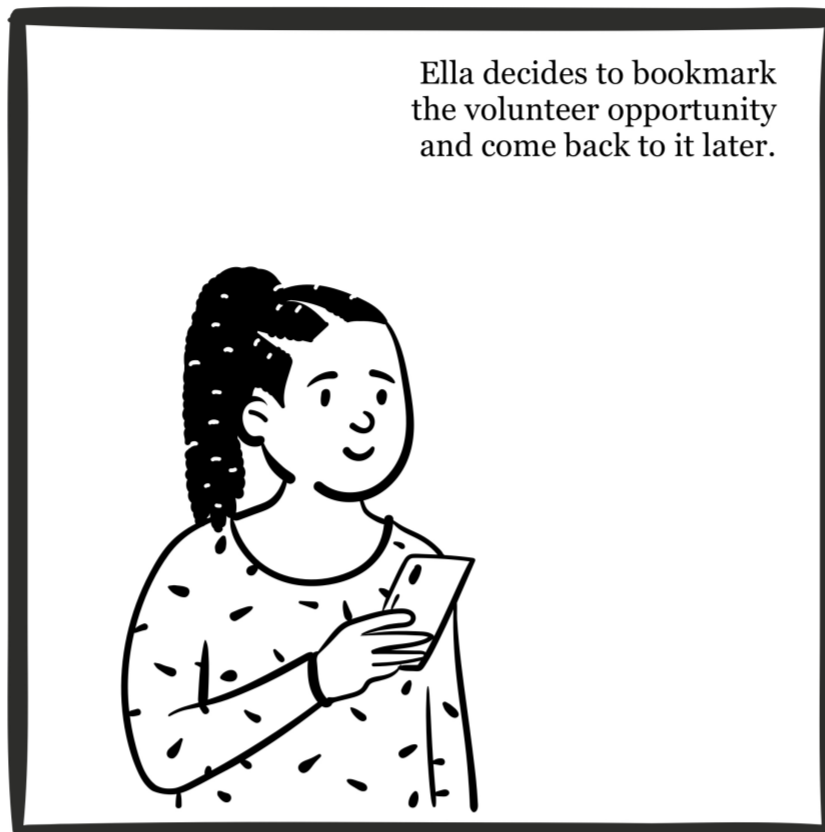
The home feed features content based on the causes the user selected. Here they will see what's upcoming, as well as the ideas and contributions of others to inspire them.

USER SCENARIO

I created this narrative below to paint a clearer picture of how a user might experience the platform, from discovery to completing a volunteer activity. In this scenario, Ella, the user, hears about Good Trouble from listening to a podcast. She explores the platform and decides to participate in a challenge with her friends to support Everytown for Gun Safety's Support Fund, which funds evidence-based solutions for America's gun crisis (Everytown Research, 2020).



USER SCENARIO CONTINUED



WHY NOT FACEBOOK?

One might argue, why create a new platform when you could just create a community or group with events on Facebook? While social media is frequently used for sharing political information—including misinformation—Facebook is not compatible with my initiative due to their questionable ethics and lack of user privacy. The company is known for their privacy scandals. The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC, consumer protection) issued a \$5 billion penalty to Facebook, the largest in the FTC’s history, for violating consumer privacy (FTC, 2019).

Using an existing service means no control over privacy standards, given that this is determined by that company’s private policy. This also means no control over how data will be used by that organization. According to a national poll, 60% of Americans don’t trust Facebook with their personal information (Hart Research, 2019). Given the nature of politics is highly sensitive, it is imperative that users feel their privacy is protected.

NATIONAL

“Outright Lies”: Voting Misinformation Flourishes on Facebook

While the social media giant says it opposes voter suppression, the data shows a stark picture: Nearly half of all top-performing posts that mentioned voting by mail were false or misleading.

by Ryan McCarthy, July 16, 2020, 5 a.m. EDT



USER INTERVIEWS

Purpose

This phase of my research focuses on understanding the experience, needs, and opinions of my potential users through individual interviews. I spoke with five participants with the main goal of uncovering what barriers, if any, prevent them from volunteering for political and societal causes.

I define political and societal volunteerism as active involvement in community, regional, statewide, and national affairs, such as knocking on doors to promote a political campaign or attending a local school board meeting.

From my research analysis, I determined how my concept will address and reduce these perceived barriers, in order for more Americans to become active participants in the Progressive Movement. The main insights of this research, which support the chosen design direction, are described on the following pages.

User Interviews Goals

- Understand potential users' experience with political/societal volunteering, if any
- Determine what barriers prevent them from volunteering, if any
- Assess how satisfied are they with the US and what political societal causes they care about
- Determine their level of political engagement (party affiliation, news consumption, political social media engagement, active or recent volunteering, etc.)

About the Interviews

I recruited participants for my research by posting on Facebook about the purpose of my research and a request for interview participants. I also contacted friends directly to see if they knew of anyone who would be interested. In order to prevent bias, the participants were not close contacts of mine.

Each interview lasted about an hour and a half. Due to COVID-19 guidelines, all interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom video conferencing software. The session started with a brief introduction about the research and covered three main topics: volunteerism, satisfaction with the US, and political engagement. The discussion guide can be found in Appendix A.

USER INTERVIEWS

Analysis

I analyzed the outcome of my interviews through affinitization. I chose this method because the affinity process makes large sets of data more manageable by organizing that data into groups based on the apparent relationships or themes (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020). I began this method with separate pieces of data from my interviews on sticky notes (direct quotes from each participant). Each participant was represented by a different colored sticky note, that way I could refer back to a participant's transcript, if necessary, for more context. Patterns began to emerge by comparing the separate pieces of data to each other, grouping related data, and labeling each group by the relationship or theme. The themes I identified are described below.

Key Insights

Candidate Before Party

Four out of five participants identified as an Independent, and one as a Democrat. From the Independents' point of view, it's not "one size fits all." According to one Independent, "I don't identify with a particular party, but as Independent. I tend to vote Democratic lately, but my beliefs could be cherry-picked on either side. I tend to go with person over party." Another participant mentioned she votes Democratic for social issues, but felt more conservative when it came to her finances.

Desire for Change

All five participants expressed strong dissatisfaction with the political climate in the past year due to the Trump Administration. However, participants also felt more hopeful about the future of the country with the newly elected President Biden.

Participants not only shared their desire for change in the US, but also the desire to personally be part of political reform in America. They each felt strongly about numerous issues facing the country, from gun control legislation to campaign finance reform to equality. As one participant stated, "I've known about the NAACP (a civil rights organization) for many years, but after George Floyd, I saw a story online about them and it prompted me to donate [to their organization]. I wanted to do something, but didn't feel it was safe for me to protest, so I gave money instead. I was just happy I could do a small part to help. That made me feel good."

USER INTERVIEWS

Key Insights

Unsure of How to Get Involved

Only one out of five participants had previous volunteer experience that related to a political or societal issue. Overall, participants were not entirely sure how or where to get involved in creating political change, outside of signing petitions and donating to an organization that they were already familiar with.

Three participants mentioned how time consuming and confusing it can be to navigate political organizations' websites. For example, one participant specifically mentioned that oftentimes an organization will have you fill out a long form with your personal details and contact information without knowing exactly what you're signing up for (see image below). I can imagine how frustrating it would be to repeatedly fill out a sign-up form for every organization.



The image shows a screenshot of a volunteer sign-up form for Georgia Equality. At the top is the organization's logo, which features a blue dome with a white equals sign inside, set against an orange and blue circular background. Below the logo is the text "GEORGIA EQUALITY". The form title is "Volunteer Sign-Up Form". The introductory text reads: "Thanks for your interest in volunteering with Georgia Equality. Fill out the form to get involved. Volunteers are critical to our success--you can make a real difference for Georgia's LGBTQ community. Please sign up below to join the Volunteer Team. You will then begin receiving announcements from our Volunteer Center with specific volunteer opportunities and ways you can get engaged." The form fields are organized under the heading "Contact Information" and include: "First Name" and "Last Name" (two separate text boxes), "Street Address (Optional)" (a single text box), "Postal Code", "City", and "State/Province" (three text boxes, with the State/Province box being a dropdown menu showing "- State -"), "Email" (a text box with the placeholder "email@email.com"), and "Mobile Phone" (a text box with a country code dropdown menu showing a flag icon).

Example of a volunteer sign-up form on GeorgiaEquality.com (Georgia Equality, 2021).

USER INTERVIEWS

Key Insights

Uncertainty of Privacy and Safety

The biggest barrier that prevents the participants from volunteering was their concern for their own safety, especially regarding protests. As one participant said, “I wanted to go to a Black Lives Matter protest. I really did in my heart, but thought no way, it’s too dangerous. I’m afraid of getting shot and going to jail, but I’m mostly afraid of getting hurt and thought I can’t do that.”

One of the most interesting insights was from a teacher I interviewed. He shared his concerns, “I mean it is detrimental for me to be openly and extremely active with political views for my profession. I could lose my job or it could affect my relationships with my colleagues and other educators. Would [volunteering] be helpful to the cause? Probably, but a lot of professions don’t make it beneficial for you to be openly political.”

His answer was something I hadn’t really considered, at least not to that extent. As a designer, we’re often encouraged to combine our passion for design and problem solving with a project that addresses a societal challenge, such as this one. The unfortunately reality is that many Americans have to be incredible careful about how they approach politics, even outside of the office.

USER INTERVIEWS

Key Insights

One Size Doesn't Fit All

All participants were looking for something different when it came to how they wanted to volunteer. For example, one participant is a busy mom of two young children with limited time. Another participant has plenty of time to give but is very particular about how she wants to get involved because she's shy and introverted. These individual needs, especially the factor of limited free time, are another major barrier.

Research also confirms that there, indeed, is a relationship between personality and the likelihood of political participation. By using the Big Five personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experiences), researchers at Yale discovered that those with low extraversion are less likely to volunteer for local or national campaigns compared to those rated with high extraversion. Those who are more anxious (low emotional stability) are also less likely to participate (Gerber et al., 2011). How I plan to address this with my design is discussed on page 48.

When reflecting on my interviews, I came to the conclusion that all participants:

- Acknowledged the US government is failing the majority of Americans
- Understood what those failures are, at least in part (i.e. gun violence, money in politics, voter suppression, etc.)
- Believe that change is possible and that, in some circumstances, it has to come from the people versus the government
- Have the desire and care enough about these issues to want to devote time and energy to bring about change, but don't yet know where to start

Knowing this, I feel reassured that I am on the right track with my design intervention. There is a definite need and desire to create political change through grassroots efforts in America.

PERSONAS

The personas were created from the needs and barriers that I identified from my five user interviews. They serve as a tool in my design process by helping me keep the different types of users in mind. For example, personas can provide inspiration during the ideation process and act as a guide when making design decisions, by putting yourself in the users' shoes (Nielsen Norman Group, 2015). I referenced these personas when making iterations to my designs, found on page 46.


These personas are designed to be a concise and actionable document that focuses on the users' needs, not demographics. Since I had a limited number of interviews, each persona is based on one participant. While the Nielsen Norman Group, a leading firm in the field of user research, recommends conducting a minimum of five interviews, it is still possible that, due to my small sample size, I inadvertently missed some user groups with different characteristics. One way to solve for this would be to conduct more interviews until I only receive a few new findings from each additional interview.

Without a large sample size, I'm also not able to discern what percentage of my users would be one persona versus another (Nielsen Norman Group, 2020). For example, I don't know whether or not 50% of my users are Hesitant Explorers or Motivated Trailblazers.

Limitation: Given that the personas were based on five participants, further research is needed to better define the user groups and to identify any additional user groups, if any.

PERSONAS

Rather than assigning first and last names and a corresponding headshot to each persona, I chose to use descriptive names and illustrations so the type of user was immediately apparent. I used travel-related words as a metaphor to communicate what kind of users they are, and as a way to make them more memorable.



THE HESITANT EXPLORER

CAUTIOUS IN-THE-KNOW APPREHENSIVE

ABOUT

I'm passionate about many causes and stay informed by listening to the news daily, but don't feel I'm in the position to contribute, especially publicly. There are serious consequences of putting myself out there, from losing my job to damaging relationships.

LIKES AND GAINS


- **Privacy**, politics is a very sensitive issue, especially considering how divided the US is.

BARRIERS AND PAINS

- **Publicly engaging in politics** puts everything I care about on the line.
- **I'm worried about losing my job** for standing up for what I believe in, even though it's off the clock.
- **Putting my relationships at risk** by being public about my political beliefs.
- **My personal safety feels threatened** by attending protests, for instance.
- **I don't like saying no** because of my fears.

WAYS TO SUPPORT

- **Engage anonymously**, I need to keep a low profile so I feel safe participating.
- **Participate remotely**, avoid being in public to minimize risk to career and relationships.



THE MOTIVATED TRAILBLAZER

GO-GETTER FREE-SPIRITED INSIGHTFUL

ABOUT

I enjoy giving my time to a worthy cause, as well as educating myself on what's happening in politics, even abroad. I frequently encourage others to vote or get involved in some way, but it's quite frustrating when people think everything will just "work out."

LIKES AND GAINS

- **That lightbulb moment** that people get after I convince them of how important their vote and actions are. Feels very rewarding.
- **Providing mentorship**. I enjoy helping people grow by teaching from my own experiences and seeing their progress unfold.

BARRIERS AND PAINS

- **I get burned out** from politics after a while, as it can sometimes be emotionally taxing.
- **Many Americans still don't vote**. It bothers me that the most fundamental aspect of our democracy is taken for granted.

WAYS TO SUPPORT

- **Seeing the fruits of our labor**. I get joy out of my involvement, even if it's just a small reaction from someone I spoke with.
- **I want to inspire or teach others** by sharing my knowledge and experience.

PERSONAS



THE CURIOUS WANDERER

INTRIGUED

IN THE MOMENT

LESS INFORMED

ABOUT

I'm not entirely sure what I'm looking for, as I'm new to the political scene after stumbling on some content posted by people I follow on social media or from speaking with family members. I'm just interested in seeing what's out there.

LIKES AND GAINS

- **Feeling part of the crowd.** There's a lot of buzz surrounding politics and I don't want to feel left out.

BARRIERS AND PAINS

- **I don't know where to start,** politics and activism are pretty new to me, I only know the bare minimum.
- **I'm skeptical** about whether or not volunteering is right for me.
- **Politics is overwhelming.** It's so complex and there's so much that I don't know.

WAYS TO SUPPORT

- **Surface opportunities.** I'm interested in getting involved, but don't know where to look.
- **Clarify** what I don't understand.
- **Keep it simple.** This is a new domain for me and it can easily become overwhelming.
- **Lower barrier to entry** so I can try to get involved without making a big commitment.



THE PURPOSEFUL NAVIGATOR

DELIBERATE

PLANNER

COMMITTED

ABOUT

I care deeply about the issues facing America, but I'm very particular about how I want to engage. I find that locating volunteer opportunities that I might be interested in is a time consuming process, which usually ends with me giving up.

LIKES AND GAINS

- **When I can be my true self.** I most enjoy volunteering when it feels natural and comfortable, as opposed to feeling forced or scripted.

BARRIERS AND PAINS

- **I don't know how to get involved** with the causes I care about.
- **Navigating websites** of political organizations is **time-consuming and confusing.**
- Feeling **frustrated and limited by the known ways to volunteer.**
 - **I don't feel comfortable** cold calling voters on the phone.
 - **I don't feel safe** participating in a protest or knocking on doors for a campaign.
 - **I don't feel effective** writing letters to my Congressman.

WAYS TO SUPPORT

- **Make it easy** for me to get involved.
- **I need options** so I can contribute in a way that feels comfortable for me.

PERSONAS



THE PREOCCUPIED ENTHUSIAST

DISTRACTED KNOWLEDGEABLE BUSY BEE

ABOUT

I'm passionate about political change and stay informed when I can, but work and family life are top of mind. Volunteering needs to fit into my busy schedule.

LIKES AND GAINS

- **Flexibility** so I can maintain my work-life balance.

BARRIERS AND PAINS

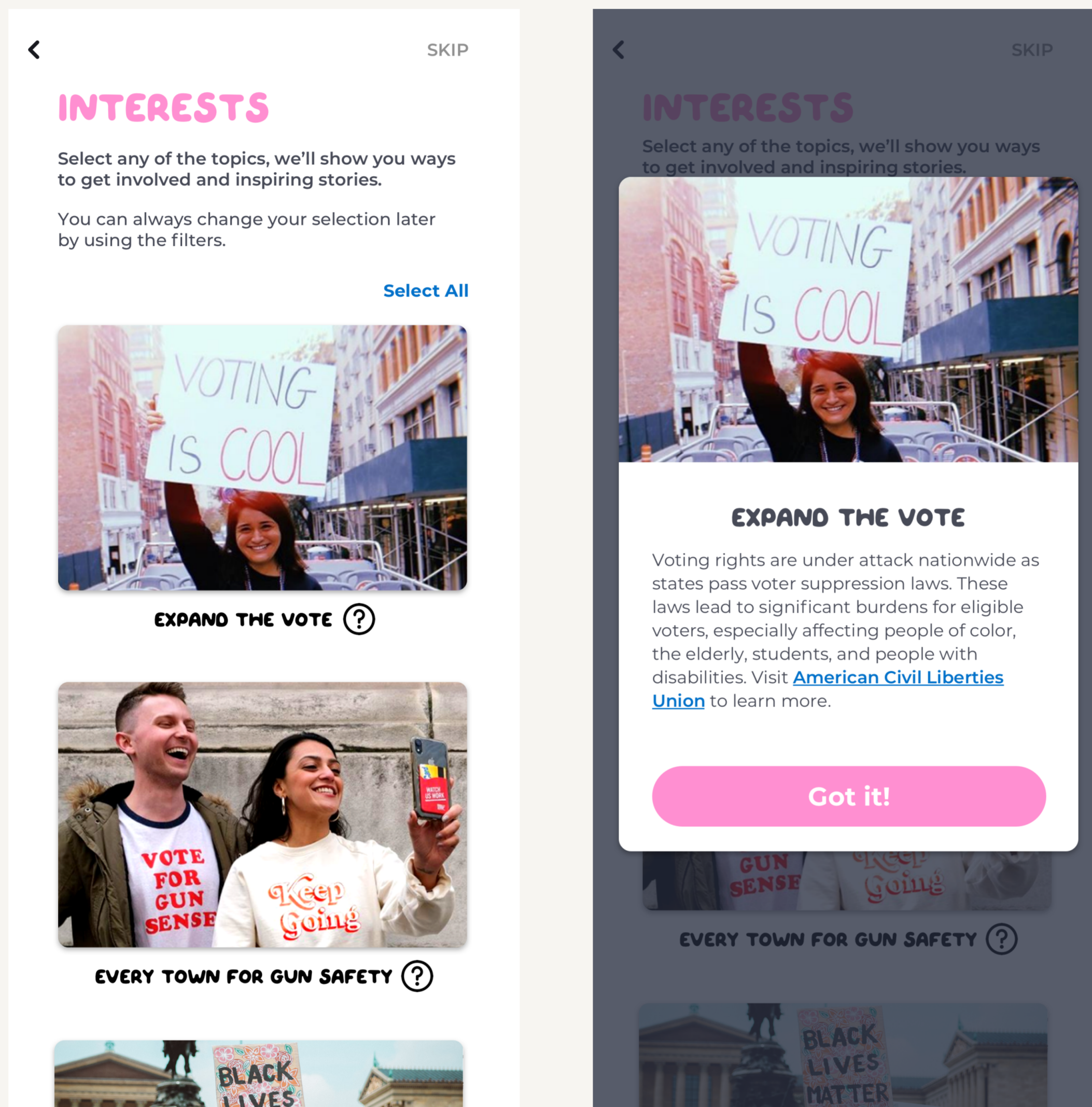
- **It's hard to keep up with what's going on**, it's hard to find the time when I have enough on my plate already.
- **I can't make a big commitment** because I'm busy with work and caring for my family.
- **I don't like saying no**. I want to give back in some way, but my job takes so much time and energy.

WAYS TO SUPPORT

- **Save me time and energy**. Lower the barrier to entry so I don't have to make excuses.
- **Surface opportunities**. Volunteering is an interest of mine, but it's not top of mind.

DESIGN IMPACT & ITERATION

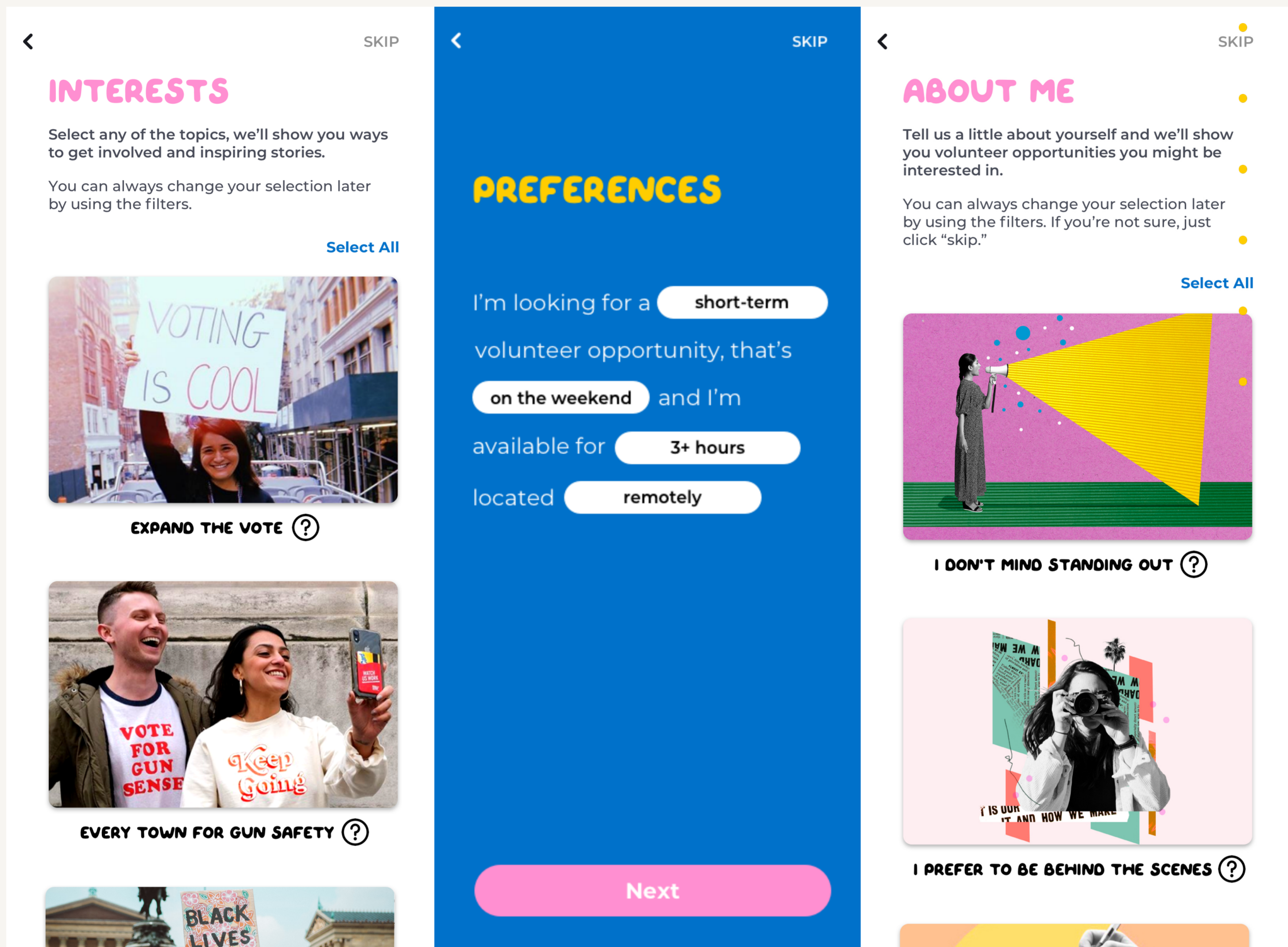
The following pages highlight examples of how my interview insights and the resulting personas influenced my design choices when creating my concept.



“Clarify what I don’t understand.”

Based on the Curious Wanderer persona, I added a way for users to learn more about the causes on the platform through this design iteration. Users, especially those who aren’t as politically engaged, may have less exposure to these issues. When selecting topics of interest, users can click the question mark icon to learn more about each cause, that way their experience doesn’t have to suffer.

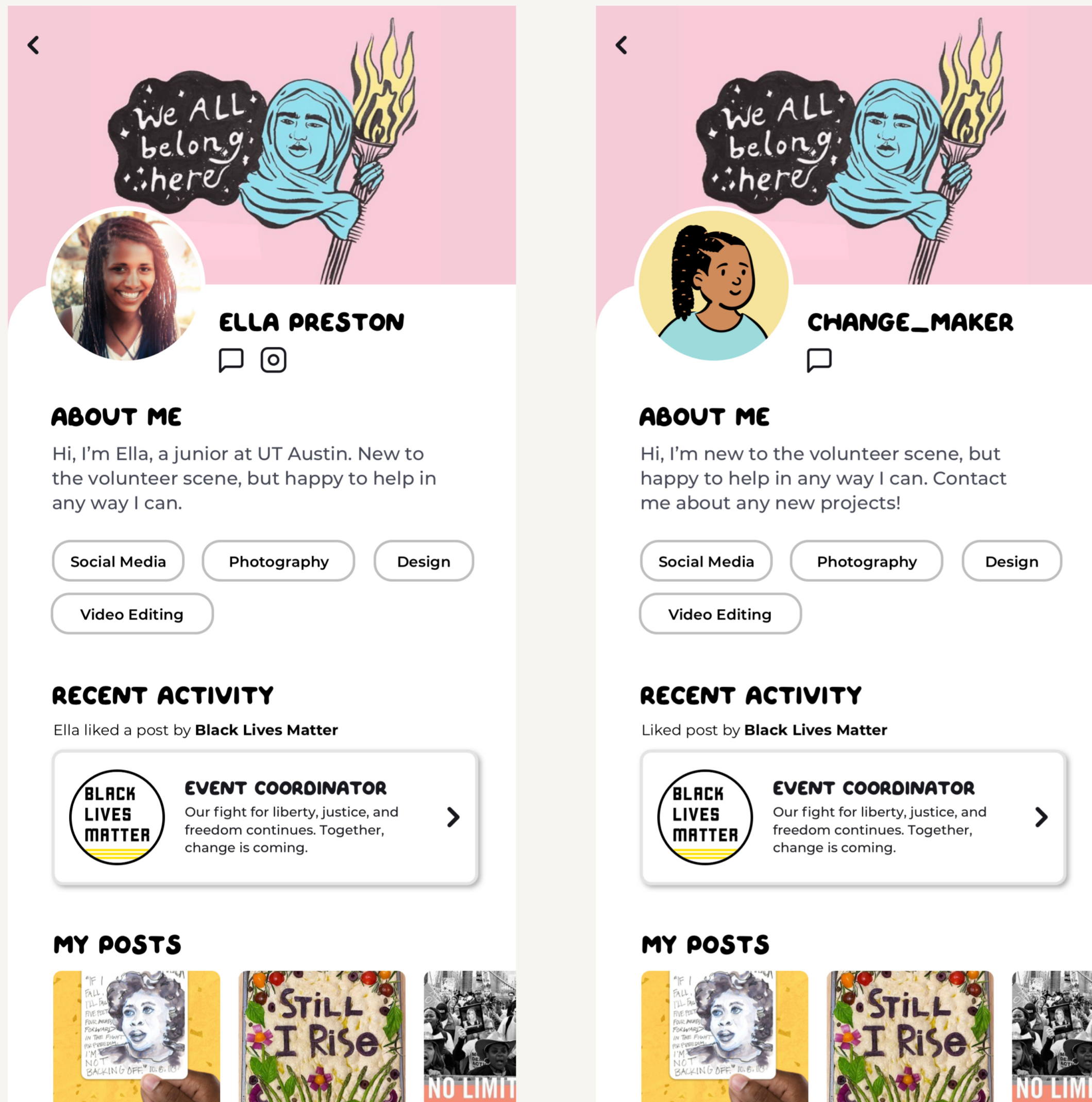
DESIGN IMPACT & ITERATION



“I want to contribute in a way that works for me.”

I redesigned the onboarding process to better accommodate the individual preferences of the user. This iteration was largely based on the Purposeful Navigator persona, but can be useful to all types of users. On these screens, the user can indicate their unique needs and preferences. With this criteria, they are matched with relevant volunteer opportunities. The “About Me” page aims to find opportunities that the user will enjoy and be comfortable with, by learning more about what kind of person they are. In the validation phase, I will see how users respond to this design update and whether or not it is successful.

DESIGN IMPACT & ITERATION



“Let me engage anonymously, so I can keep a low profile and feel safe participating.”

Given that privacy and safety were major concerns for participants, I wanted to ensure that my design addressed those needs. Users can select an avatar in place of a personal photo, as well as use a display name instead of their name. I will test the effectiveness of this design in the validation phase to see if participants feel safe interacting with the platform.

If a user abuses their anonymity through inappropriate behavior, such as foul language or threats, that profile would be flagged and banned by the team managing the platform (discussed further in Appendix D).

VALIDATION

Following multiple rounds of iteration, I validated my concept through individual usability tests and a group volunteer activity with five participants. The purpose of this research is to understand how participants react and interact with my concept through a usability test (page 54) and whether or not my solution can achieve the goal of the vision statement by converting Americans from passive to active participants in the Progressive Movement with a simulated volunteer opportunity (page 61). Detailed research plans and how I achieved this are described on the following pages.

Participant Recruitment

Five participants were involved in both the usability testing and a volunteer activity. There were three female and two male participants. Two Southeast Asian, two Caucasian, and one Persian. Participants were recruited through a post on social media. Since the Good Trouble website does not yet exist, I used Facebook to simulate how users would volunteer on the Good Trouble platform. It was challenging to find an appropriate Facebook group that would allow me to post this type of request due to strict community guidelines on what type of content is allowed. I shared the post on the "Dallas Corona Connection," a Facebook group that is focused on fostering a sense of community amidst the ongoing pandemic. Before posting, I contacted the group's moderator for their permission.

In the post, I gave a description about the volunteer activity I was initiating, a request for participants and their role, a timeline of when and where this would occur, and instructions to contact me directly, if interested. I also included a photo to give people a better idea of what to expect and in hopes of gaining their interest.

I did not specify in the post about my graduation project, only the planned volunteer opportunity so that participants would approach me solely based on their interest in the activity (as described on pages 61-63). This was my way of gauging whether, or not, people would be interested in, and possibly use, my platform in real life.

VALIDATION

Participant Recruitment

I received 27 direct messages on Facebook in response to the post. After they confirmed their interest in participating, I disclosed more information about the initiative and asked if they would also take part in a separate session for usability testing. I also inquired about any history of volunteering for a political cause, since my intention was to convert passive Americans into active participants.

I used the same participants for the usability testing and volunteer activity so I could validate the entire experience users would have with the Good Trouble platform, interacting with the website (usability test/prototype) to find a volunteer opportunity, and then participating in the (simulated) volunteer activity.

Usability Test Purpose

Usability testing is a design research activity where users interact with a draft version of a product or service. The researcher(s) facilitating the session ask participants to complete tasks, give probing questions, document what is being said, and observe the participants' actions and reactions.

I chose to use this method so that I could collect valuable feedback from potential users to help me assess their level of satisfaction, uncover any problems, and identify opportunities to improve my design (Nielsen Norman Group, 2019).

My goal was to understand:

- How participants reacted to the overall concept of the platform
- If users grasped what the platform was for and how to use it (by completing tasks)
- What revisions needed to be made to improve the concept
- If the concept was desirable to these participants

VALIDATION

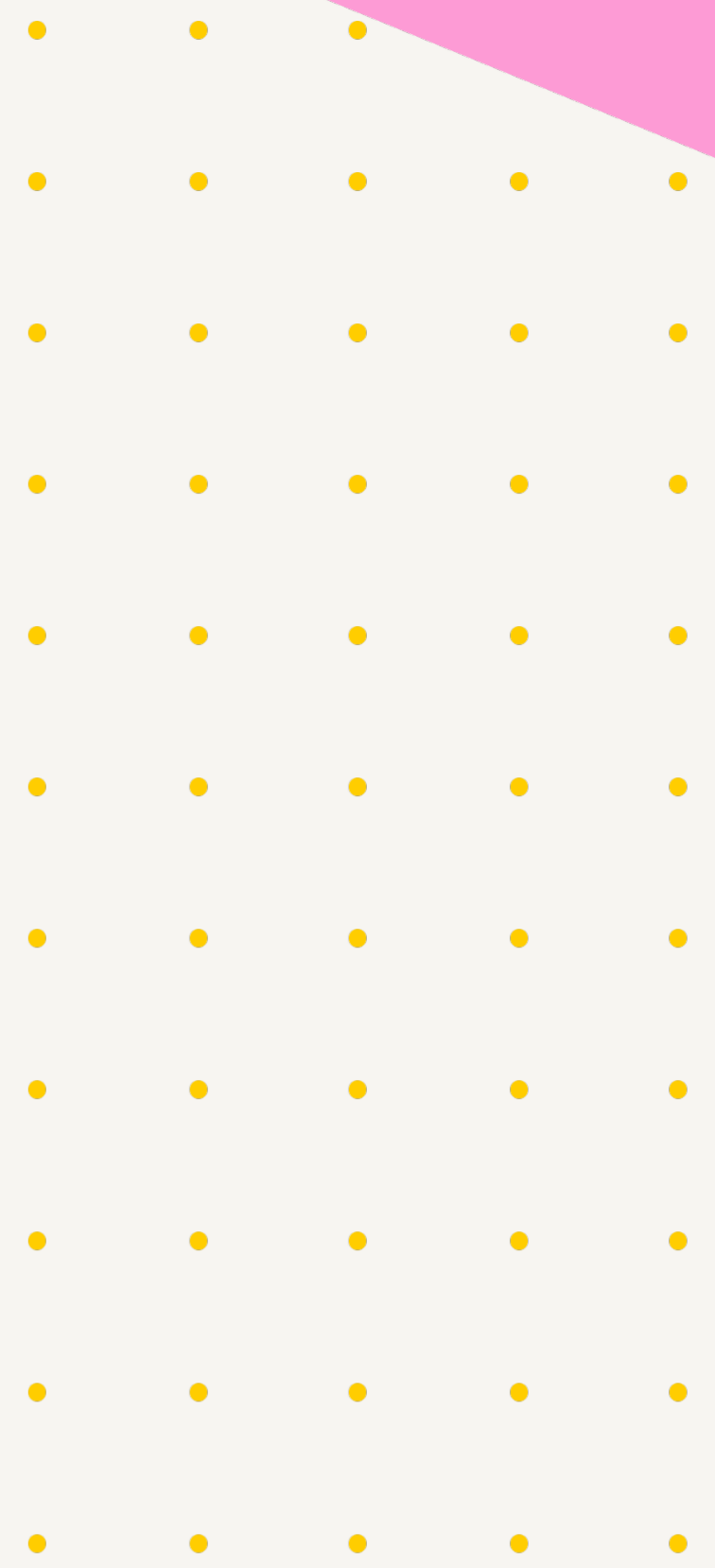
Prototype

Prototyping is a way to simulate a preliminary version of a product or service to understand how it will look and function. This can be done at different stages of design maturity, from rough sketches to realistic mockups, or even a coded website with only the necessary functionality (Nielsen Norman Group, 2016).

Prototyping was a great way to bring my concept to life and see how it performed with potential users. It is impossible to get everything right with the first design, so getting feedback early can save a lot of time, and for business, that means money.

I chose to use a design tool called InVision because it is intuitive and efficient compared to other tools, such as Axure and Framer. From my personal experience, Axure and Framer have more complexity to their software. This can be beneficial in certain cases where you need highly customizable interactions, sophisticated functionality, or animations, but this wasn't essential for my project.

A lot of time and attention to detail went into this phase. By taking the static screens of my platform and making them clickable using the design software (InVision), it became clear where many interaction hiccups took place. After iterating my designs and running through the prototype a few times in my web browser, it was ready to test.



VALIDATION

Prototype

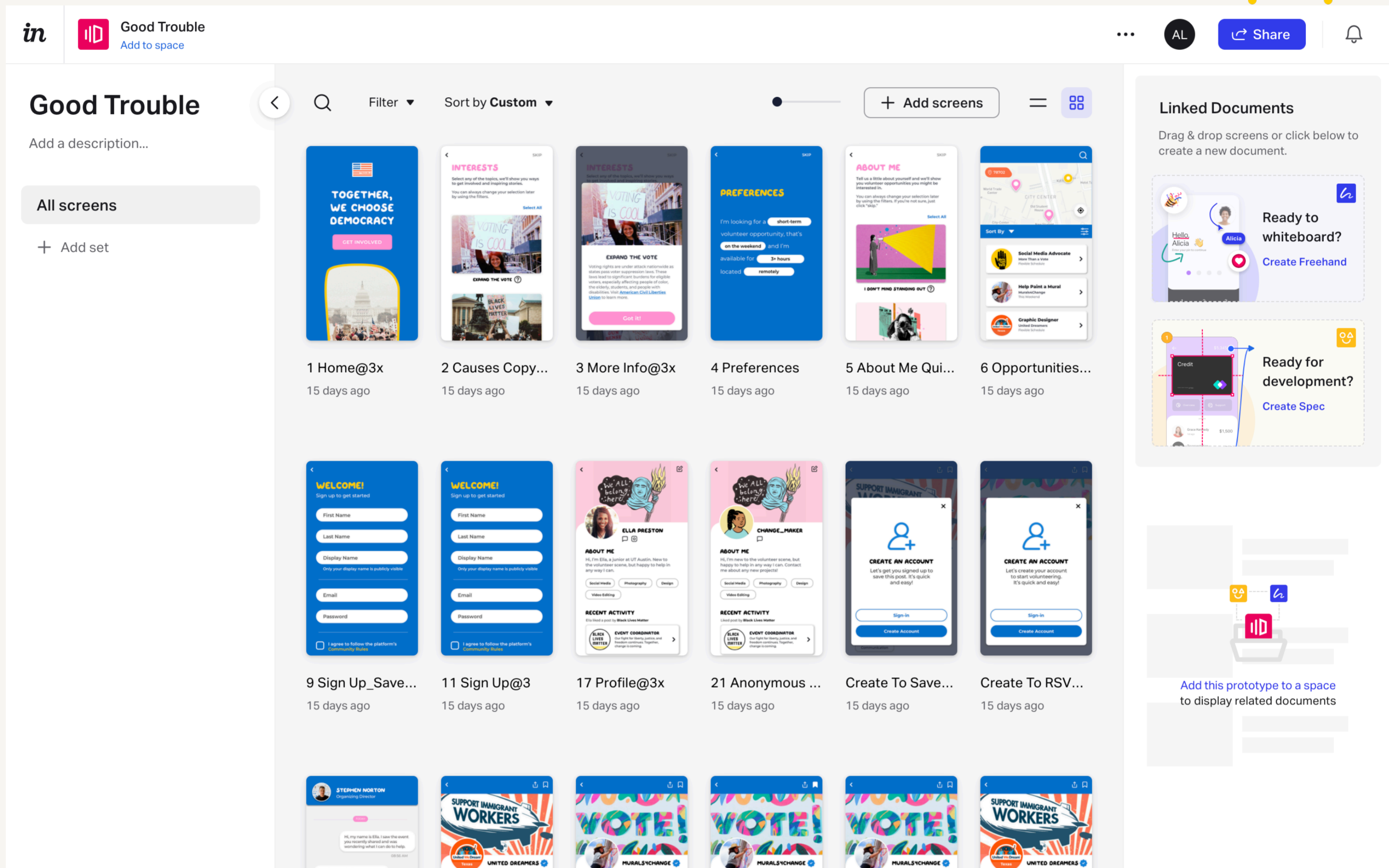


Figure 11: Screenshot of InVision's prototyping tool.

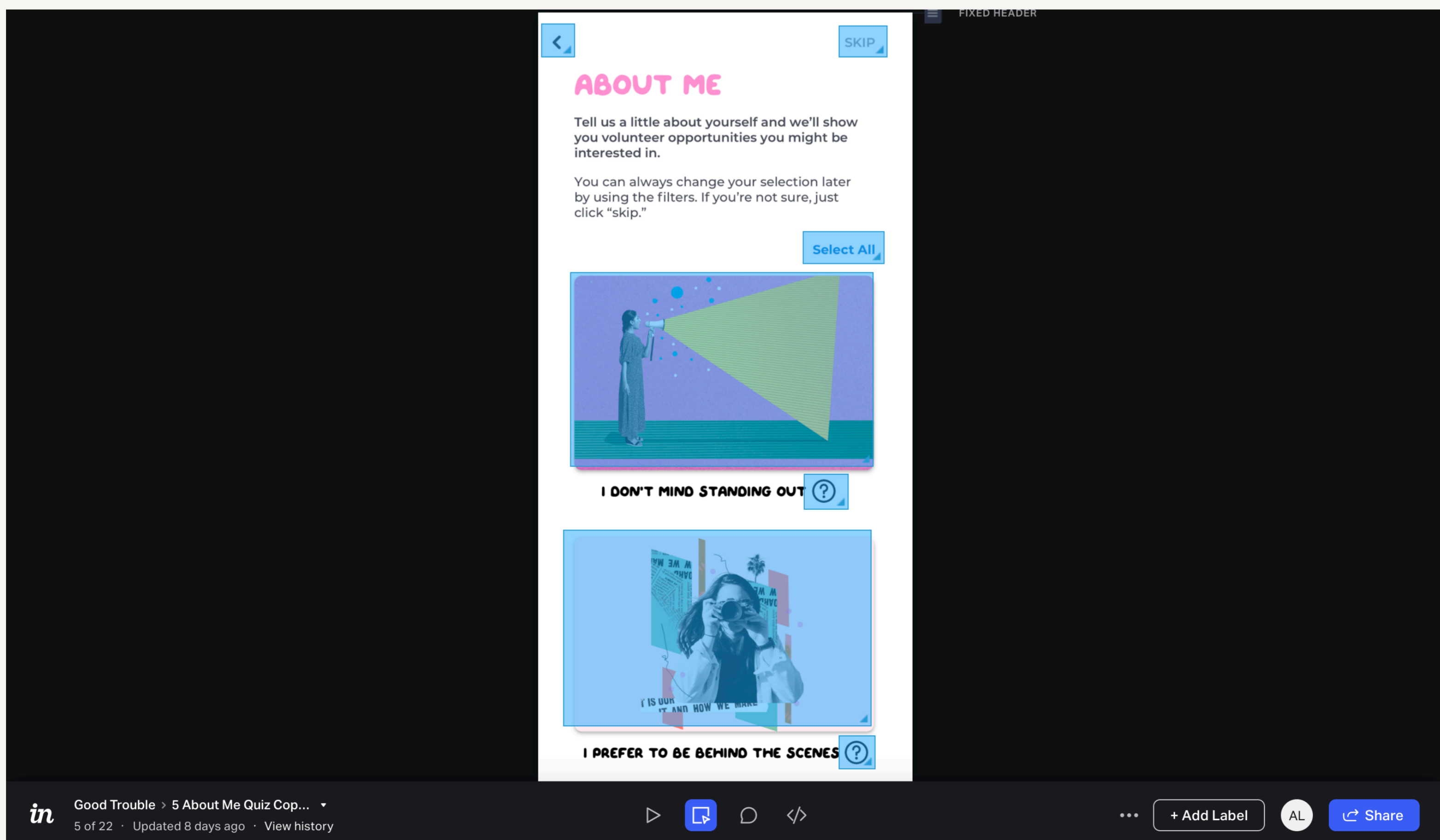


Figure 12: Example of one of my prototype screens. “Hotspots” were created to link the prototype screens together by drawing a box around the content, as seen above in blue, and then assigning a destination for when the content is clicked by the user.

VALIDATION

Usability Testing Set Up

Each usability testing session lasted about an hour. The testing was held remotely via Zoom, using my interactive InVision prototype. I began each session by asking the participant about themselves to help them feel more at ease. I thanked them for offering to participate in my research and elaborated on the purpose of the session. I then shared the link to my prototype in the Zoom chat. Participants opened the link in their web browser and shared their screen with me so I could see their facial expressions and how they were interacting with the prototype on Zoom. I didn't describe the purpose of my platform, Good Trouble, to the participants until the end of the test so I wouldn't influence their answers.

Participants were given a minute to look over the homepage of the website before they were asked to give their first impression and describe what they think the platform is about, what it does, who they think it's for, and what type of content they expect to find on this site. After gauging their expectations, participants were asked to perform a series of tasks that covered the essential functions of the platform, such as complete onboarding, find a volunteer activity, and sign up using the prototype. The discussion guide of the usability testing can be found in Appendix B.











VALIDATION

Usability Testing Results

Overall, the outcomes of the usability tests were very positive, more so than I had anticipated. Below is a snapshot of how the concept and prototype were received.

Due to the limited time I had with each participant for the usability tests, I had to narrow the focus of my testing, as it was not possible for me to evaluate all aspects of my concept. This criteria was based on several different factors: the usability of the prototype (navigation), users' perception of the experience (safety and desirability), objective of the platform (barrier-reducing and action-driven), metaphor product qualities (action-driven, unity, hopeful) and visual communication (clarity, look and feel, iconography). The green boxes indicate what tested well and the yellow marks what needs improvement.

Snapshot of Usability Test Results

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Barrier-Reducing |  Clarity |
|  Action-Driven |  Unity |
|  Look & Feel |  Hopeful |
|  Safety |  Desirability |
|  Iconography |  Navigation |

VALIDATION

Usability Testing Results

Clarity

All participants were able to clearly and successfully describe what the platform is about, what it does, and the type of content they could find on the platform, just by looking at the homepage of the prototype. Overall, they found the concept to be self-explanatory and not overwhelming.

Look & Feel

Participants described the look and feel of the platform as natural, “grassrootsy,” uplifting, and positive. Three of the users were satisfied with the color palette, but two were a little on the fence. As one participant said, “At first I wasn’t sure about the colors, since the website is politics-related and I don’t necessarily think of these colors, but given the interactiveness, I’m enjoying the colors now. The colors are making it more fun and go with the positive vibe of the [platform].”

Navigation

Overall, participants were able to perform their tasks using the prototype with ease, such as completing the onboarding process and finding a volunteer opportunity. However, there were a few places in the flow that caused some confusion. For example, four out of five participants didn’t realize that when viewing a volunteer opportunity, they could click on the organization’s name to view more information. This is a good example of how a signifier can be useful by providing a visual cue to the user, letting them know that they can interact with a particular element on the page (Olson, 2017). In this case, the signifier could be a different font color, that makes the organization’s name stand out from the rest of the content and appear clickable.

VALIDATION

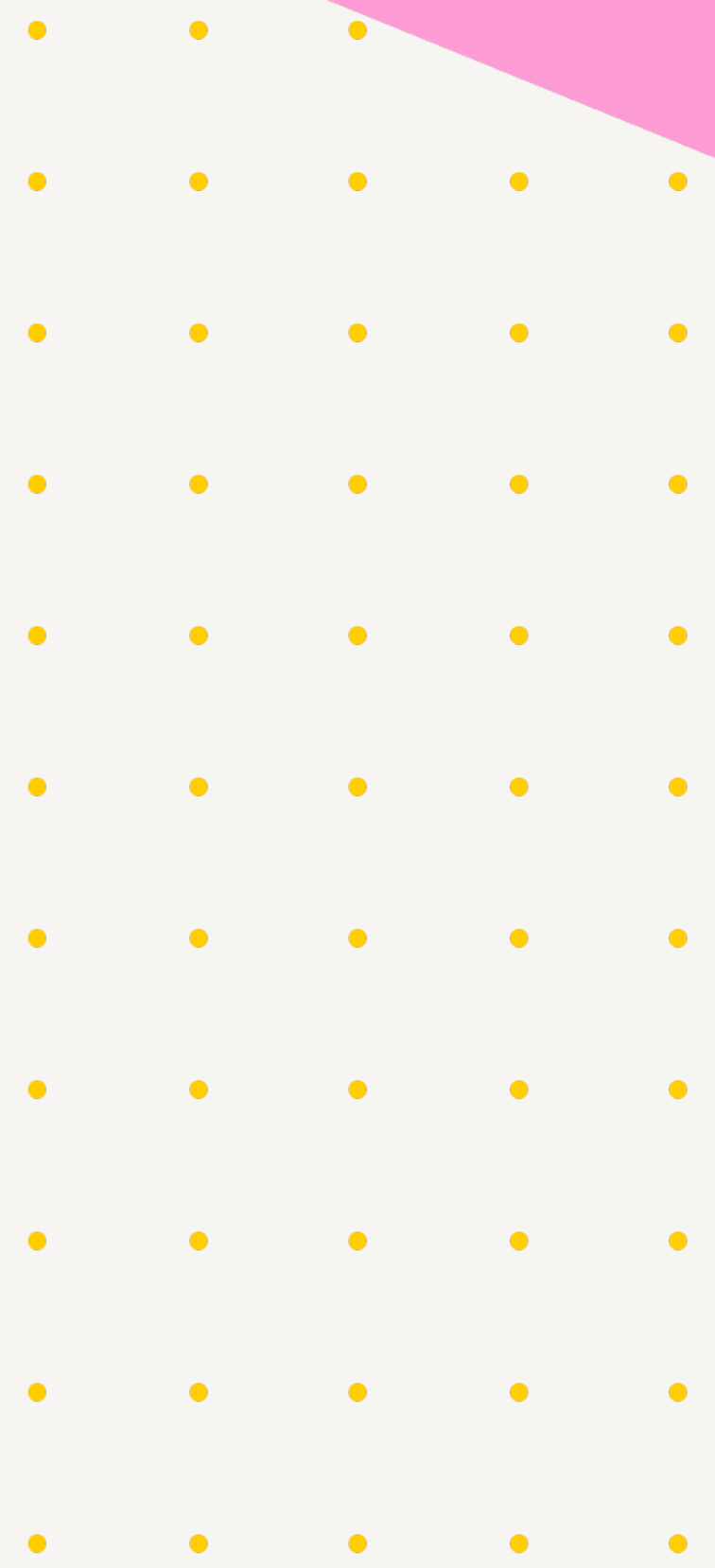
Usability Testing Results

Safety

After conducting my initial interviews, it was clear that safety was a major concern and barrier that prevented people from having any political involvement. This was something I addressed in my design by allowing users to create an anonymous profile and match them with volunteer opportunities that suit their preferences. Following the usability testing, I was relieved to discover that my design updates, following my initial interviews, created a comfortable and trustworthy experience for my users.

Without prompting the participants, they all expressed that the platform felt trustworthy and that they would feel comfortable using it. They appreciated the fact that they could filter the volunteer opportunities according to their level of comfort.

Three of the users felt comfortable with using their name on the public user profile page, but two preferred to use a display name. One participant expressed why, “I like that you can make a display name. A lot of times these days, people are really big on their privacy. My Twitter handle isn’t my whole name. I don’t usually display my whole name, and none of my teacher friends have their full names on social media. That way students and parents won’t find them.”



VALIDATION

Usability Testing Results

Unity

As indicated in the interaction metaphor (page 28), this product quality represents the idea of “one team with a common goal.” Without prompting the participants, three of them expressed elements of this were conveyed in the overall concept of Good Trouble. For example, one participant said “The look and feel gives a vibe of we’re in this together.” Another participant said, “This has a cool community aspect. I know that if I signed up it would be like-minded people and that I’d have a good time,” in regards to the imagery and the posts that users and organizations can share on the site.

Action-Driven

Participants were able to quickly and easily identify volunteer opportunities they could participate in using the prototype. Overall, they felt this platform was a helpful way to overcome the challenge of not knowing how to get involved. One participant shared, “My favorite thing about this concept is knowing that you have the opportunity to do something. This is really important. I know a lot of people who want to create change and just don’t know how. This [platform] gives them the opportunity to do that. It holds them accountable – you say you want change now it’s up to you to do it. It puts the responsibility on yourself if you want that change.”

VALIDATION

Usability Testing Results

Hopeful

As indicated in the interaction metaphor (page 28), this product quality represents the idea of turning defeat into optimism by believing in your own power to change the outcome. Without prompting the participants, three of them expressed that elements of this were conveyed in the overall concept of Good Trouble. As one participant stated, “The visuals, mission, and just the overall idea is uplifting and helpful. It feels positive. Nothing feels negative.”

Desirability

Do people want to use it? One participant, who doesn't follow politics, was a little more on the fence but said, “If I was wanting to actively seek opportunities, then I would definitely use this. And to find things I like, it seems like [Good Trouble] would make it very easy. Another participant was a little hesitant, “I don't know if I would necessarily [attend volunteer activities]. I think I would need some time to explore and see what opportunities are out there. I'm more of a behind the scenes person, so I'd rather give money than go out...but I think this website could be useful to find organizations to support – a much easier and concise way than Google.”

However, three out of five participants were very excited about the concept. As another participant shared, “I don't think I've heard of anything like this. It would be really cool if this was real. I think it would receive a lot of funding. I would use this platform. I like helping and being involved in things. I feel like my [immigrant] parents went through a lot for me to have freedoms. I want to be worth something in my life and give back when I can. I don't always have money to give back, but want to give my time if I can.”

VALIDATION

Usability Testing Results

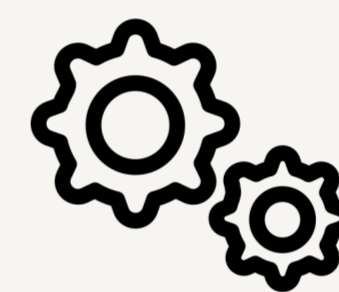
Iconography

Iconography is a form of visual communication that uses symbols in place of words, which can save users time if they are easy to recognize. However, symbols are open to interpretation, which can result in confusion or errors made by the user (Nielsen Norman Group, 2014).

The results of my usability test indicated that some of the icons in my design were perceived differently than what was intended. For example, all participants interpreted the edit profile icon as “create a post.” Following the usability tests, I resolved this issue by taking a closer look at commonly used icons on other websites and updated the design (shown on the right).



Old Edit Icon



Updated Icon

Barrier-Reducing

The barriers that prevented people from volunteering, as identified from my initial interviews, include: the need to protect their privacy; finding opportunities they care about and feel comfortable participating in; and meeting their time constraints.

Through this usability test, I was able to confirm my platform's ability to reduce barriers to participation. When testing the interactive prototype, users expressed that they:

- Felt this platform was very helpful in easily identifying volunteer opportunities that interest them
- Thought the platform was safe to use, given the ability for users to protect their identity with an avatar and display name
- Appreciated that they could filter opportunities for their individual preferences, especially regarding time commitment
- Liked that they could find volunteer opportunities that are suitable for them based on their personality type

VALIDATION

Volunteer Activity

The intention of this session was to understand the experience and opinions of potential users when participating in a volunteer opportunity, similar to one they could find on the Good Trouble website.

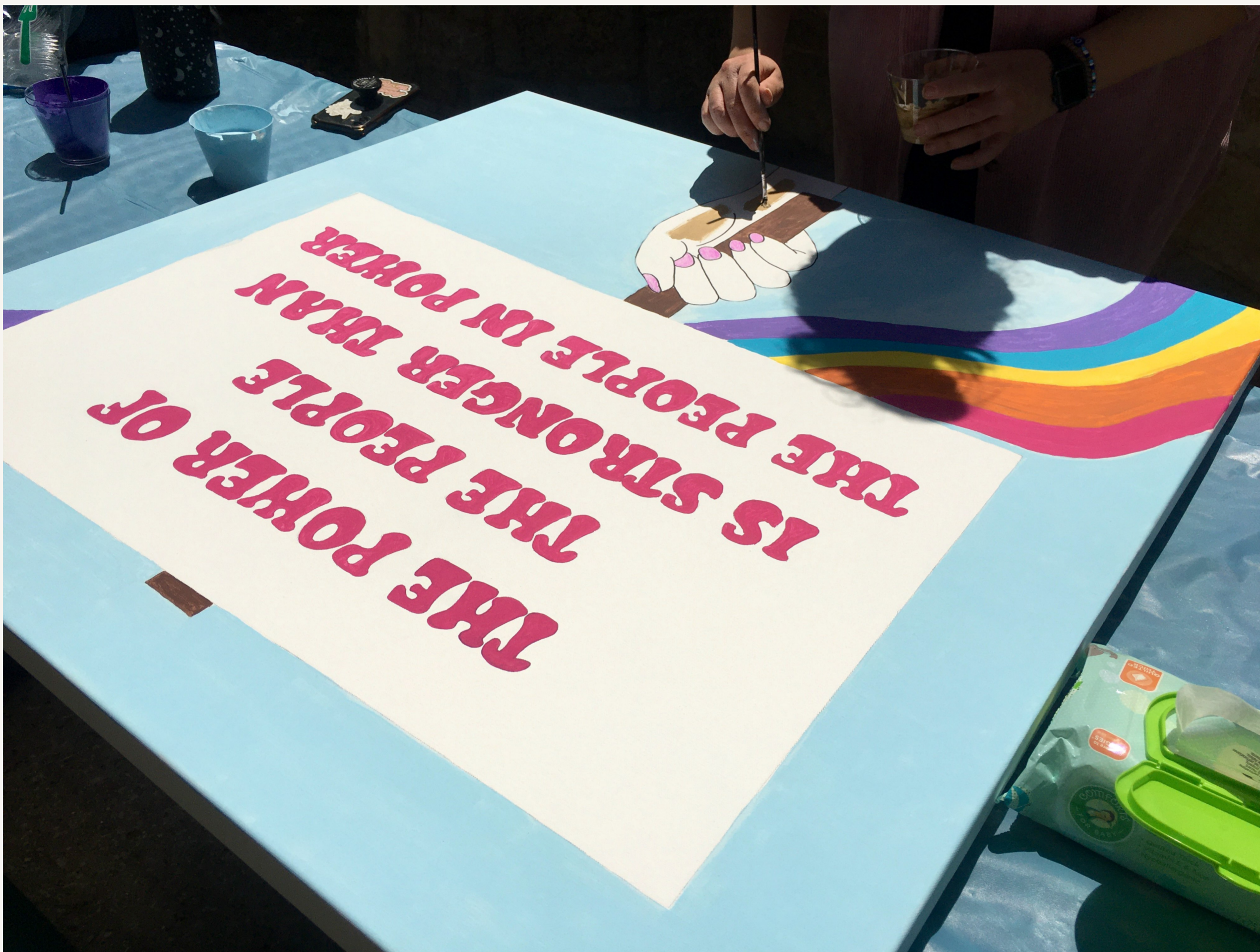


Figure 13: Photo from my simulated volunteer activity.

VALIDATION

About the Volunteer Activity

For my planned activity, volunteers helped to paint a large canvas with a positive message meant to empower people to take action and create change. My plan is to sell the artwork online and donate the money to a Progressive cause.

I am personally inspired by some of the good deeds I've stumbled upon online. For example, a woman in Texas created a small crochet figurine of US Senator Bernie Sanders, which she auctioned off on eBay. The item went viral and sold for \$20,300. She donated the money to the Meals on Wheels charity organization. The Texas creative made her crochet pattern available online so others could replicate her idea, which has received more than 30,000 downloads so far (Corbett, 2021).

Individuals who take it upon themselves to make an impact in their own way can be a powerful and inspiring example to the rest of the nation. Good Trouble gives Americans a platform to share their own volunteer initiatives and ideas so that other users can replicate them or be inspired to do something unique in their community. In the context of this simulated volunteer activity, I would be the user who came up with the idea for a volunteer opportunity and am looking for other users on Good Trouble to join me in my initiative.

VALIDATION

Volunteer Activity Set Up

This session was held in-person, at a public park in the Dallas, Texas area, following COVID-19 precautions. I chose to hold this simulated volunteer activity in-person because I wanted to validate my concept in a way that was as close to reality as possible. The five participants and myself remained six feet apart and wore face masks. I supplied all of the materials for the activity. In preparation, I created a digital illustration with a progressive message, and then replicated the outline of the design on a large canvas for participants to later fill in with paint.

As the participants arrived at 10 am, we got started by having breakfast tacos, fresh strawberries, and sparkling water. I choose to use this opportunity as an ice breaker so participants could get to know each other a little and feel less like strangers. Providing food and drinks was also my way of thanking participants for their time and contributions.

Once everyone was finished eating, I gave a short introduction about the objective of the activity and answered any questions. I distributed the materials (paint and paintbrushes) and the participants took turns painting the design.

The session ended with a group reflection on the volunteer activity, as well as their impression of the concept and their experience interacting with the platform during the usability testing.

Main takeaways from this volunteer activity:

- Participants felt this activity made them more likely to consider taking part in future volunteer opportunities.
- They would feel more comfortable participating if they knew at least one person attending.
- The experience was enjoyable and made them feel good about doing something positive for a worthwhile cause.

VALIDATION

Concept and Statement

My project began from a blank slate, with only the idea of addressing America's ongoing gun crisis as a starting point. I was immediately excited to take on this ambitious and worthwhile project but wondered how could I, as a designer, possibly challenge this decades-long battle between politicians denying gun control legislation and the American people.

I began by investigating the vast nature of this domain and spent countless hours exploring political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological factors to gain a bird's-eye view and deeper understanding of this complex problem. Through my worldview analysis, I identified that the root cause of government inaction on gun control is the financial influence of corporations and special interests groups, primarily the NRA, on politicians. Tackling this issue directly did not seem to be a viable option. However, learning more about the Progressive Movement and their efforts in reducing gun violence in America, both directly and indirectly, revealed my opportunity to intervene (pages 17, 18, and 26).

I crafted a vision statement expressing my intent to support the Progressive Movement's efforts to reduce gun violence by activating citizen participation. This statement inspired the creation of my Good Trouble platform, which enables Americans to find volunteer opportunities from Progressive activist organizations and the platform's user base to contribute to causes of the Progressive Movement.

From my user interviews and concept validation research, I confirmed that Americans feel that the US government is failing the people on gun reform and other Progressive issues, such as voter suppression and money in politics. They believe that change is possible, but are frustrated with waiting on politicians to act. They believe that grassroots efforts to bring about change on important social issues is possible, if given the opportunity.

Participants in my research voiced a desire to devote time and energy to help bring about Progressive change, but encounter a number of personal barriers that prevent them from taking action. The barriers I identified through my interviews include: the need to protect their privacy; finding opportunities they care about and feel comfortable participating in; and meeting their time constraints.

VALIDATION

Concept and Statement

Results from my concept validation research confirmed my platform's ability to reduce barriers to participation. When testing the interactive prototype, users expressed that they:

- Felt this platform was very helpful in easily identifying volunteer opportunities that interest them
- Thought the platform was safe to use, given the ability for users to protect their identity with an avatar and display name
- Appreciated that they could filter opportunities for their individual preferences, especially regarding time commitment
- Liked that they could find volunteer opportunities that are suitable for them based on their personality type

Subsequently, as part of my validation research, my volunteer activity confirmed that my design solution was able to successfully activate citizen participation which supports the Progressive Movement, as communicated in my vision statement. This was accomplished by recruiting five volunteers to participate in a Progressive volunteer opportunity through the simulation of my platform, as previously described on pages 50 and 62.

In conclusion, I'm confident that my design solution has the capacity to reduce gun violence in America by activating citizen participation in the Progressive Movement.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

With a project as ambitious as this one, at first, I didn't know where to start or where this topic would lead me. While all design challenges deal with a certain level of ambiguity, this domain was somewhat daunting in the early stages, given its vast breath and depth. However, I'm incredibly grateful to my chair and mentor for allowing me the opportunity to tackle the perplexing challenge of America's gun crisis.

Launching this project at the start of a global pandemic brought some unique challenges. As COVID-19 cases grew rampant across Europe, I became confined to my small studio apartment, where I found it difficult to work in the same space where I slept and relaxed. Before the pandemic, I frequently visited the library to study and complete my assignments. Now, without the ability to separate my work environment from my small living space, I found myself carrying the weight of my project with me at all times, contributing to the feeling of burnout. Over time, this took a mental toll on me, as I felt that even in my downtime, I couldn't fully relax and recharge, resulting in a loss of productivity.

My productivity was also impaired as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Due to the closing of the university, I was unable to collaborate with my peers, many of whom returned to their home countries. This took away the opportunity for a shared experience with my classmates, where we could support and motivate each other to stay on track.

Feeling isolated at home hindered my design process and creative thinking, particularly during the ideation phase. When living and working in the same small space for an extended period of time, it's like putting someone in solitary confinement and saying "give me a good idea." Seeing those same four walls day-in and day-out offered little room to spark inspiration or allow for serendipitous discoveries. I learned how important it is to have a work environment that enables me to have off-the-cuff conversations and collaboration with my peers. I tried my best to overcome this designer's block with long walks through Delft and cycling around Abtswoudse Bos. Spending the pandemic in a beautiful European country does have its advantages.

However, as an international student, it was incredibly taxing to be without my family for over a year, especially not knowing when I would see them again. In fear of catching COVID-19, I had to isolate myself from others as much as possible, especially since I had no one around to help care for me, should I become ill. I frequently debated whether I should move home to the US, but couldn't bear the thought of having to leave The Netherlands so soon, and not being able to return.

I financed my graduate studies on my own, saving enough money to fully support myself for two and a half years. Due to the effects of the pandemic on my ability to be productive, my project took longer to complete than planned. Toward the end of 2020, I was reaching the end of my funds. Therefore, I felt the need to apply for two open positions with my former employer.

Unfortunately, this process took my attention away from my project for an extended period of time. This was compounded by having to move out of my apartment in December, and then move back to the States, all within a short period of time.

PERSONAL REFLECTION CONTINUED

On the positive side, there were many valuable experiences and life lessons I can take from my time studying abroad. I had the wonderful opportunity to get to live in a beautiful country for two and a half years, and to get to know people from a variety of cultures. This was my first time living away from home, which taught me how to be self-sufficient, from managing my finances to learning how to travel internationally on my own.

Another highlight of this experience was the chance to work on a cause that I care so deeply about. This project was more than just an assignment, it was a way for me to test the waters to see where my future career could potentially lead. Over the course of this project, my interest in the challenge of gun violence never diminished, it only grew over time. I can reflect back and see how my energy levels would rise just by talking about my chosen domain with friends and family. My enthusiasm doesn't come from a love of politics, but rather the Progressive Movement's inspiring vision to protect democracy and bring positive social change to lives of all Americans.

This experience has made me open to the possibility of pursuing a user experience design career in government or for a political organization, such as the Democratic National Committee (DNC). In fact, the DNC currently has an open design position on their mobilization team, whose goal is to "provide Americans with encouragement, power, and tools to mobilize in their communities" (DNC, 2021). I believe this would be a fulfilling opportunity where I could work closely with like-minded individuals, while continuing my vision of activating citizen participation.

APPENDIX A

Interview Discussion Guide

Previous Volunteer Experience

- Have you volunteered in the past year or two for a social political/community cause that you cared about?
- (If yes) Could you tell me about your most recent volunteer experience, or one that stood out to you?
- How did you hear about the opportunity?
- What was your reason/motivation for participating?
- How did it feel about participating in that experience?

US Satisfaction and Political Affiliation

- In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States at this time? On a scale from one to five, are you very [satisfied/dissatisfied]? (Gallop, 2020)
 - Follow up: Why's that?
- What political party do you identify with, if any?
 - Tell me more.

Political Engagement (Pew Research, 2009)

- How many days a week do you listen to the news (current events)?
- How many minutes or hours do you consume news on a given day?
- From which sources do you get your news?

Over the last 12 months, have you...

(Answers may be impacted by pandemic)

- Signed a petition
- Contacted a national, state or local government official about an issue
- Worked with fellow citizens to solve a problem in your community
- Attended a political meeting on local, town, or school affairs
- Contribute money to a political candidate or party or any other political organization or cause
- Been an active member of a group that tries to influence public policy or government
- Attended a political rally or speech

APPENDIX A

Interview Discussion Guide Continued

- Influenced public policy or government
- Attended a political rally or speech
- Worked or volunteered for a political party or candidate
- Spoke or wrote publicly about a community, national, or local issue

Political Activity on Social Networking Insights (Pew Research, 2013) Over the last 12 months, on social media, have you...

- “Liked” or promoted material related to political social issues that others have posted
- Encouraged other people to vote
- Posted your own thoughts/comments on political or social issues
- Reposted content related to political/social issues
- Encouraged others to take action on political/social issues that are important to you
- Posted links to political stories or articles for others to read
- Belonged to a group that is involved in political/social issues, or working to advance a cause
- Followed elected officials, candidates for office, or other public figures

APPENDIX B

Usability Test Discussion Guide

Without clicking on anything, what is your initial impression of the website?

- Can you tell me what you think this website is about?
- What do you think you can do on this website?
- Who do you think this website is for?
- What type of content do you think you would find?

Now I'm going to ask you to do some tasks using the prototype.

- **Looking at the homepage and without clicking anything yet, tell me what you would click on first?**
 - Follow up: Why's that?
 - What do you think would happen next?
 - Go ahead and click. Is this what you expected?
 - Why or why not? Tell me more.
- **Navigate to the page with the volunteer opportunities.**
 - Is this what you expected?
 - Why or why not?
- **How would you go about filtering your search results?**
 - What preferences are most important to you?
 - Tell me more.
- **Looking at the volunteer opportunities listed, but without clicking, what do you expect to find after selecting one?**
 - Is this what you expected?
 - Why or why not?
 - What would you do next?

APPENDIX B

Usability Test Discussion Guide Continued

- Can you show me how you would register for a volunteer opportunity?
 - Is this what you expected?
 - Why or why not?
- Where would you go to create an account?
 - Navigate to the homepage, then click on one of the images/posts.
 - Tell me what you see.
 - Take a minute or two to read the post.
 - What is your reaction from impression of this post?
 - Tell me more.

Reflection

- Overall, what did you think about the platform?
 - Tell me more.
- If you could sum up your impression of the concept in five words, what would they be?
 - Why's that?
- What's your favorite thing about this site?
 - Tell me more.
- What's your least favorite thing about this site?
 - Tell me more.
- Do you have any recommendations for changes to the way the this site looks or works?
- Is this something you would use?
 - Why or why not?

APPENDIX C

Examples of relevant activist organizations and existing volunteer opportunities that could be found on the Good Trouble Platform:

Causes	Organizations	Examples of Current Volunteer Opportunities
Gun Control	Everytown for Gun Safety, Guns Down, Moms Demand Action, Giffords	Petitions, donations, purchase merchandise, post on social media, virtual events, 5k marathon, etc.
Campaign Finance	Public Citizen, American Civil Liberties Union, End Citizens United, etc.	Petitions, donations, organize events, purchase merchandise, make calls, send texts, letters to Congress, etc.
Expanding the Vote	More Than a Vote, Let America Vote, American Civil Liberties Union, Election Protection, Rock the Vote	Poll monitoring, social media monitoring, call center assistance, help register people to vote, merchandise, etc.
Equality	NAACP, Human Rights Campaign, Lambda Legal, United Nations	Organize educational and community events, donations and fundraising events, petitions, make calls, etc.

APPENDIX D

Platform Management and Ownership

Ideally, this platform would be managed by a small team. There is the potential for this platform to be acquired by an existing organization with similar goals, such as Crooked Media, an American political media company with Progressive values. Their purpose is to “inform, entertain, and inspire action (Crooked, 2020).” This partnership would advance Crooked Media’s mission of encouraging citizen participation in politics, while attracting a large audience to the Good Trouble platform. The timing of this acquisition would be ideal, as Crooked Media is currently investigating and experimenting with new projects and channels to expand their existing services. With an estimated annual revenue of \$9.2 million, they have the financing and resources needed to make this service a success (Growjo, n.d.).



Founders of Crooked Media (Mediagazer, 2017).

APPENDIX E

Future recommendations – To help maintain and evolve Good Trouble, the following functions are to be performed by the team managing the platform:

- **Moderating:** Reviewing the volunteer opportunities and user-generated content to ensure its compliance with community rules and terms of service (These policies are not included in the scope of this project. This would be determined prior to the launch of the platform, in collaboration with a legal consultant.) Moderation would be extended to the platform's community, allowing them to flag inappropriate content. This would need to be reviewed by an employee working on the platform.
- **Metrics and User Feedback:** Inquiring and acting upon insights regarding users and organizations' usage of the platform and their needs. This information will help the team maintain the website's relevance in the changing political landscape, and continuously improve the service by ensuring it delivers upon its intended purpose.
- **Content Creation:** In addition to the content generated by the users, the team will curate remarkable content created by the community and highlight this on the users' feed. This content will be identified using metrics that show high user engagement (i.e. number of upvotes, comments, shares, and clicks) and selected by an employee, ideally a content strategist.

APPENDIX F

Future recommendations – Scale:

In order for this concept to be feasible, the platform’s functionality would scale over time. A minimum viable product (MVP) with only the most essential features would be developed first. The MVP serves the purpose of releasing the product as early as possible in order to gather feedback from users. The resulting insights will be used to validate the concept’s desirability and improve the usability of the service.

Once the website is functioning well and deemed desirable and useful to the users, additional functionality can be incorporated over time. The added features should serve a necessary purpose that actively contribute to the mission of the platform and provide value to the users. Modifications would then be tested and validated.

Please see the chart below for the high-level stages of development and platform functionality.

1-2 Years (MVP)	3-5 Years
Existing volunteer opportunities – surfacing volunteer needs of activist organizations. Gradually expanding the number of causes featured on the platform over time.	Crowd-sourced challenges – giving users an outlet to share their ideas and contributions with the platform’s community so that others can replicate or be inspired by those ideas.
Match users to the volunteer opportunities that meet their interests and availability.	Local meetups/ambassadors that meet on a regular basis to educate, take collective action, and foster a sense of community through the formation of new relationships.
Users can post content of the outcome of their volunteer experience to share and celebrate the progress being made with the community.	Mobile app – mobilize in real-time with notifications/alerts. For example, send a notification about new voter suppression legislation with a call to action, asking users to sign petitions, contact a representative, etc. to put pressure on politicians.

APPENDIX G

Future recommendations – Revenue Source

Phase 1: Sponsored Content

In order to be viable and cover the costs to build and host the web-platform, Good Trouble will include sponsored posts, volunteer opportunities, and events. The organizations promoting their content must be credible and match the values of Progressive platform. The suitability of these organizations and their content would be reviewed and determined by an employee of Good Trouble. The content should align with the Good Trouble's platform so that the content is relevant and supports the purpose of the platform. The sponsored content would be clearly labeled as such to inform the users that the content they are viewing has been paid for.

Phase 2: Merchandise Marketplace

Over the past few years, political commentary art has becoming increasingly more popular. This art is typically featured on Instagram and blog posts, but it is difficult to locate unless you know where to look. To help increase the artists' visibility, artwork inspired by the Progressive Movement could be showcased on Good Trouble. Users benefit by discovering inspiring products that give them a sense of identity and being part of something greater than themselves. Whether it be a t-shirt or a sticker on their laptop, the merchandise purchased by the user draws more attention to the movement and can act as a conversation starter.

The new marketplace on Good Trouble would act as affiliate marketing by featuring the merchandise on the website, earning a small commission from each sale the artist makes as a result. Meaning, Good Trouble would not be responsible for the production and distribution of the products.

This functionality would be added during phase 2 of the platform development, once there is a sizable user base and the essential features of the website are functioning well.

Examples of merchandise:



(Etsy, n.d.)

IDE Master Graduation

Project team, Procedural checks and personal Project brief

This document contains the agreements made between student and supervisory team about the student's IDE Master Graduation Project. This document can also include the involvement of an external organisation, however, it does not cover any legal employment relationship that the student and the client (might) agree upon. Next to that, this document facilitates the required procedural checks. In this document:

- The student defines the team, what he/she is going to do/deliver and how that will come about.
- SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs) reports on the student's registration and study progress.
- IDE's Board of Examiners confirms if the student is allowed to start the Graduation Project.

! USE ADOBE ACROBAT READER TO OPEN, EDIT AND SAVE THIS DOCUMENT

Download again and reopen in case you tried other software, such as Preview (Mac) or a webbrowser.

STUDENT DATA & MASTER PROGRAMME

Save this form according the format "IDE Master Graduation Project Brief_familyname_firstname_studentnumber_dd-mm-yyyy". Complete all blue parts of the form and include the approved Project Brief in your Graduation Report as Appendix 1 !



family name Sparks 4098

initials A.A. given name Allison

student number [REDACTED]

street & no. [REDACTED]

zipcode & city [REDACTED]

country [REDACTED]

phone [REDACTED]

email [REDACTED]

Your master programme (only select the options that apply to you):

IDE master(s): IPD Dfl SPD

2nd non-IDE master: _____

individual programme: - - (give date of approval)

honours programme: Honours Programme Master

specialisation / annotation: Medesign

Tech. in Sustainable Design

Entrepreneurship

SUPERVISORY TEAM **

Fill in the required data for the supervisory team members. Please check the instructions on the right !

** chair Paul Hekkert dept. / section: DA

** mentor Peter Lloyd dept. / section: MOD

2nd mentor _____

organisation: _____

city: _____ country: _____

comments
(optional)

⋮

Chair should request the IDE Board of Examiners for approval of a non-IDE mentor, including a motivation letter and c.v..



Second mentor only applies in case the assignment is hosted by an external organisation.



Ensure a heterogeneous team. In case you wish to include two team members from the same section, please explain why.

Procedural Checks - IDE Master Graduation

APPROVAL PROJECT BRIEF

To be filled in by the chair of the supervisory team.

chair Paul Hekkert date 15 - 04 - 2020 signature _____

Digitally signed by phekkert
Date: 2020.04.16 11:44:05 +02'00'

CHECK STUDY PROGRESS

To be filled in by the SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs), after approval of the project brief by the Chair. The study progress will be checked for a 2nd time just before the green light meeting.

Master electives no. of EC accumulated in total: 27 EC

Of which, taking the conditional requirements into account, can be part of the exam programme 27 EC

List of electives obtained before the third semester without approval of the BoE

YES all 1st year master courses passed

NO missing 1st year master courses are:

name J. J. de Bruin, SPA-IO date 22 - 04 - 2020 signature _____

Digitally signed by J. J. de Bruin
Date: 2020.04.22 10:09:41 +02'00'

FORMAL APPROVAL GRADUATION PROJECT

To be filled in by the Board of Examiners of IDE TU Delft. Please check the supervisory team and study the parts of the brief marked **. Next, please assess, (dis)approve and sign this Project Brief, by using the criteria below.

- Does the project fit within the (MSc)-programme of the student (taking into account, if described, the activities done next to the obligatory MSc specific courses)?
- Is the level of the project challenging enough for a MSc IDE graduating student?
- Is the project expected to be doable within 100 working days/20 weeks ?
- Does the composition of the supervisory team comply with the regulations and fit the assignment ?

Content: APPROVED NOT APPROVED

Procedure: APPROVED NOT APPROVED

comments

name Monique von Morgen date 28 - 04 - 2020 signature _____

Influencing America's Gun Culture through Design Intervention project title

Please state the title of your graduation project (above) and the start date and end date (below). Keep the title compact and simple. Do not use abbreviations. The remainder of this document allows you to define and clarify your graduation project.

start date 01 - 04 - 2020 18 - 08 - 2020 end date

INTRODUCTION **

Please describe, the context of your project, and address the main stakeholders (interests) within this context in a concise yet complete manner. Who are involved, what do they value and how do they currently operate within the given context? What are the main opportunities and limitations you are currently aware of (cultural- and social norms, resources (time, money,...), technology, ...).

American civilians own the most guns in the world with more than 390,000,000 guns, or 120.5 guns per 100 people (BBC, 2019). Guns claim 37,000 lives in America each year and injure many more (Everytown Research). Gun violence in the US costs the country \$174 billion each year (police response, medical care, criminal-justice expenses, etc.) (Bloomberg, 2012).

Stakeholders:

For the scope of this project I will focus on American civilians that are pro- and anti-gun control.

Gun owners value their individual right to bear arms (2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution), conservative values (44%), protection (67%), and hunting (38%), (Pew Research, 2017). They believe that the only person they can count on to keep themselves safe is themselves. However, owning a gun increases the likelihood of an accidental or intentional gun-related injury or death, as well as suicide (Harvard, 2002).

Those that are pro-gun control feel unsafe when guns are carried by a civilian in public. A third of American adults are so distressed by the possibility of a mass shooting that they avoid particular places and events, such as shopping malls, movie theaters, and even schools. These citizens feel stricter gun laws are necessary to prevent violence and harm to society.

Both sides are influenced by bias, assumptions, unsupported evidence, and false information. For example, many Americans immediately propose banning AR-15s and semiautomatic rifles after a tragedy, but the most commonly used firearm in these shootings are handguns and pistols (Washington Post, 2018).

Opportunities:

- While there is strong disagreement, Americans mourn the loss of innocent victims of gun violence and desperately want change. Americans increasingly want more gun control (70%) following these tragic shootings and there is a rise in gun safety activists. Gun ownership has decreased by 18% over the last 50 years (Pew, 2017), which is a positive sign.

- There is existing data on gun usage, safety, and violence that can be leveraged as factual evidence to deconstruct misinformed opinions. However, facts alone are insufficient, as emotion and trust are important factors in the decision making process. This is where social psychology and persuasion can be utilized.

Limitations:

- Alterations to the 2nd Amendment requires significant support with 2/3 Senate, 2/3 House, and 3/4 state approval. Proposing alterations is simply unrealistic and out of scope for this project.

- Gun ownership is deeply rooted in American history and culture, making it difficult to sway the public's opinion. There is a tension between maintaining the individual right to bear arms and preventing future mass shootings.

- This issue of gun ownership is highly divisive between political parties. The National Rifle Association (NRA) has an overwhelming influence on Republicans and elected officials, which can sway policy in the NRA's favor (pro-guns).

space available for images / figures on next page

Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation

introduction (continued): space for images

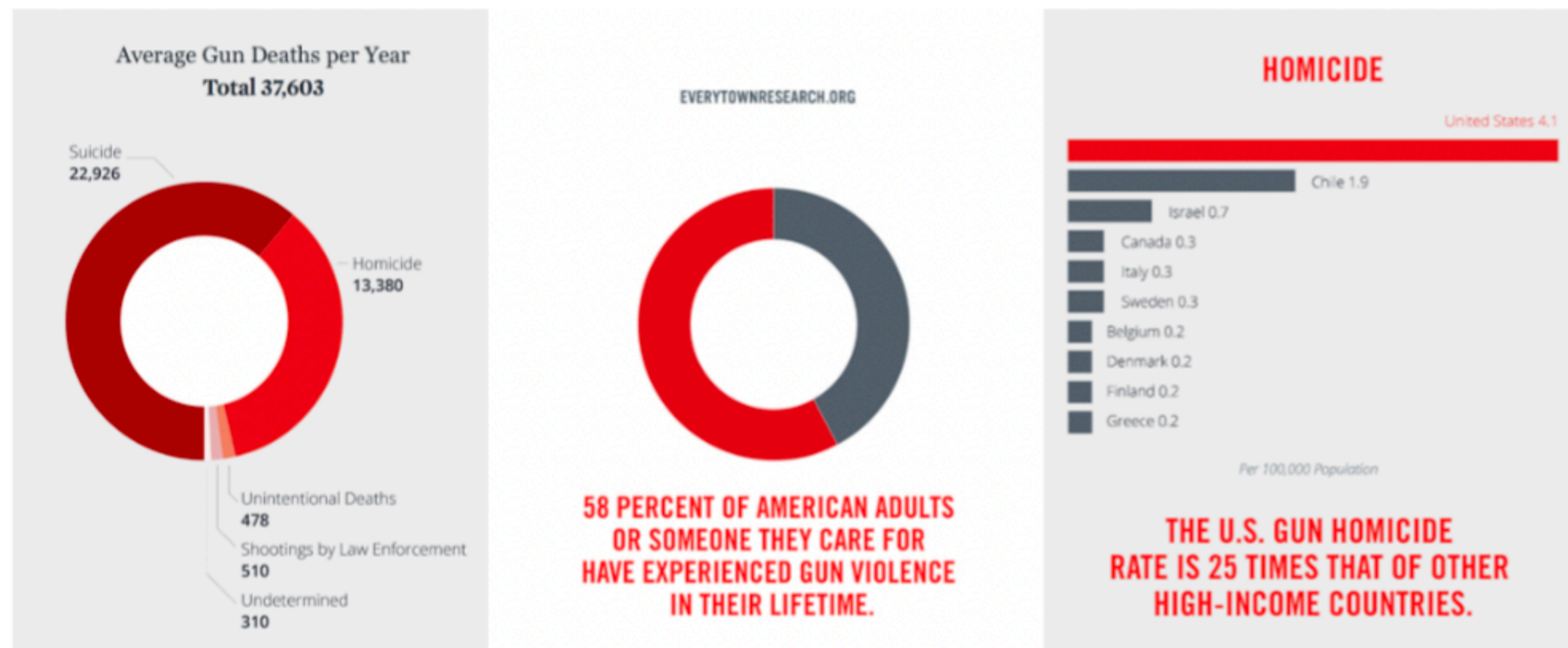


image / figure 1: Statistics on Gun Violence in America



image / figure 2: Statistics on Gun Violence in America

PROBLEM DEFINITION **

Limit and define the scope and solution space of your project to one that is manageable within one Master Graduation Project of 30 EC (= 20 full time weeks or 100 working days) and clearly indicate what issue(s) should be addressed in this project.

The Second Amendment was instated over 200 years ago and does not fit within the context of our modern society. In that era, every male was expected to be ready to defend the community.

People on both sides of the argument, pro- and anti-gun control, are influenced by bias, assumptions, unsupported evidence, and false information. Given the steep requirements to amend the U.S. Constitution, using a design intervention to influence the public's opinion and bridge differences is a more achievable goal. Before real change can take place, Americans need to establish common ground. Changing the public's mindset could lead to future policy change.

I will dig deeper into America's gun culture and statistics (what), how people form and alter their mindset (how), in order to inform the public and bring them together through common ground (why).

This project will address the following research questions:

- Informing: How might we inform the public without causing people to become defensive or ignore factual information (that challenges their point of view)?
- Bridging Differences: How might we establish common ground (common values) to open up a friendly dialogue between the pro- and anti-gun control Americans?

ASSIGNMENT **

State in 2 or 3 sentences what you are going to research, design, create and / or generate, that will solve (part of) the issue(s) pointed out in "problem definition". Then illustrate this assignment by indicating what kind of solution you expect and / or aim to deliver, for instance: a product, a product-service combination, a strategy illustrated through product or product-service combination ideas, In case of a Specialisation and/or Annotation, make sure the assignment reflects this/these.

I will be applying the Vision in Product approach and researching gun safety in America. From my insights, I will form my worldview, statement of intent, and create a design intervention that bridges the different opinions of pro- and anti- gun control Americans and informs the public about gun safety.

I expect to deliver a design intervention that influences America's gun culture, which aims to bridge the gap between pro- and anti- gun control Americans. This intervention will leverage principles of persuasion and ethics to ensure its effectiveness. I must go through the ViP process and explore the context of gun-ownership to determine the appropriate solution and how it will be experienced. My intervention will be validated with both pro- and anti-gun control Americans.

Areas for research and exploration:

- History of the Second Amendment and the context of gun culture in America
- Existing research and data collected on gun-related incidents and effects of gun violence
- How other countries have approached gun safety and ownership
- Investigate other societal issues and strategies used to solve them, i.e. the successful reduction of smoking in America and automobile safety
- Principles and uses of persuasion and social psychology, how to change minds ethically, how values are formed, the psychology of safety
- Examples and best practices of impact-centered design

Please see the following page for more details on the assignment.

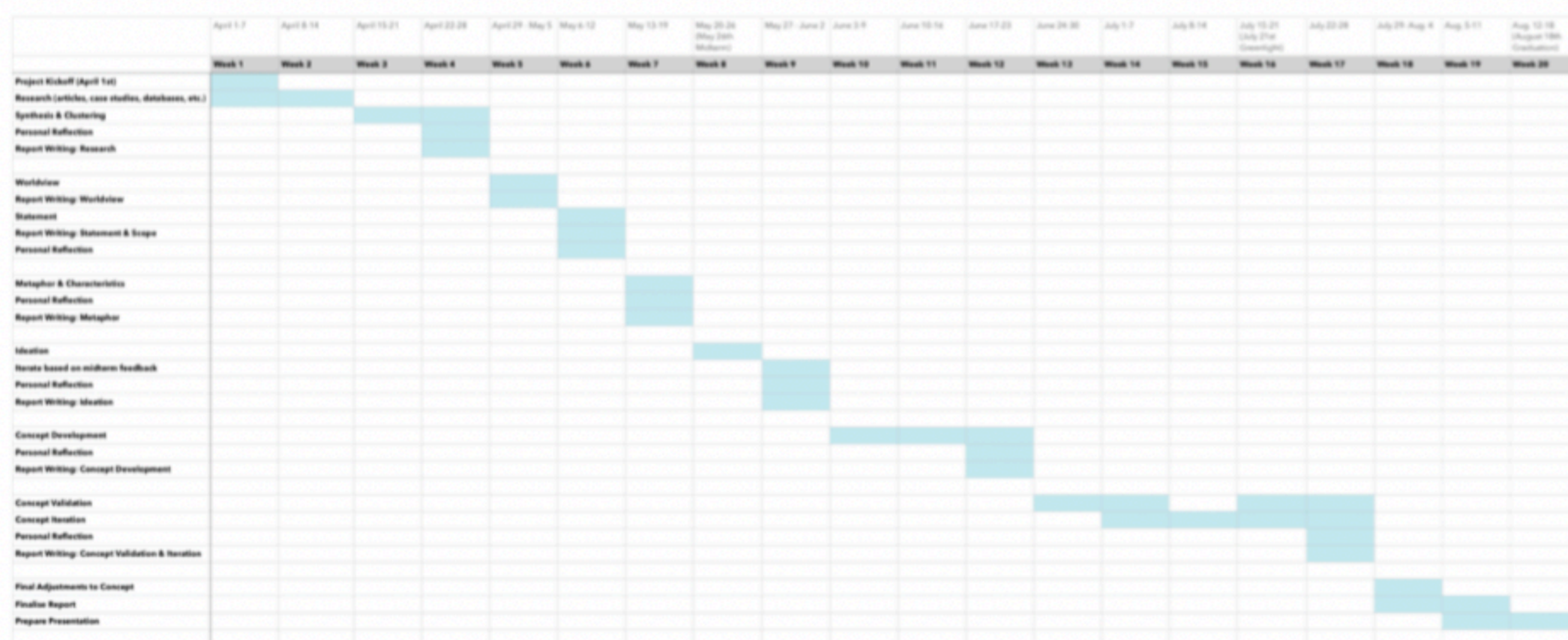
Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation

PLANNING AND APPROACH **

Include a Gantt Chart (replace the example below - more examples can be found in Manual 2) that shows the different phases of your project, deliverables you have in mind, meetings, and how you plan to spend your time. Please note that all activities should fit within the given net time of 30 EC = 20 full time weeks or 100 working days, and your planning should include a kick-off meeting, mid-term meeting, green light meeting and graduation ceremony. Illustrate your Gantt Chart by, for instance, explaining your approach, and please indicate periods of part-time activities and/or periods of not spending time on your graduation project, if any, for instance because of holidays or parallel activities.

start date 1 - 4 - 2020

18 - 8 - 2020 end date



Phase 1: This project begins with research and analysis of the problem and the surrounding context (as described on the previous page). The resulting insights (or factors) will be clustered and labeled based on their meaning. These clusters will inform and shape my worldview and statement of intent, where I will communicate the current problem space and the possible future I intend to create.

Phase 2: Next, I will identify a metaphor that achieves a similar goal as my statement. This metaphor will provide characteristics to help me generate ideas for my design intervention. Before I start designing, I will consider how my audience will interact with my solution, how it will be communicated, understood, and experienced. Everything completed up to this point (including the research insights, worldview, and statement) will guide my design decisions and lead me to the appropriate intervention for its context.

Phase 3: After the midterm meeting, I will begin to develop my design intervention strategy and manifestation, aligning the feasibility, viability, and desirability of my solution. This phase will require feedback and iteration. The concept will be validated with both pro- and anti-gun control Americans. This will help me determine if my goal (to be outlined in the statement during Phase 1) was met successfully through my intervention.

Phase 4: I will focus this time on making the final adjustments to my design based on feedback and finalise the report.

MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL AMBITIONS

Explain why you set up this project, what competences you want to prove and learn. For example: acquired competences from your MSc programme, the elective semester, extra-curricular activities (etc.) and point out the competences you have yet developed. Optionally, describe which personal learning ambitions you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project, such as: in depth knowledge a on specific subject, broadening your competences or experimenting with a specific tool and/or methodology, Stick to no more than five ambitions.

Gun control is one of the most debated issues in the country. It is no question that the United States is experiencing a great deal of turmoil and division. As an American citizen and native Texan, this topic is of a great importance to me. While I have my own opinions on this topic, I want to remain open-minded and respectful to both sides of the discussion. Many are quick to jump to the solution of more policy on gun control, and while this isn't a bad idea, I believe progress on this issue can be made through thorough analysis, experimentation, and an open mindset.

I am excited to be solving for a societal challenge that impacts my community using the skills I've gained from my master's programme. The design intervention will challenge me to think strategically from planning to manifestation, while addressing the needs, goals, and values of the target audience. Through the Vision in Product approach, I will look beyond the domain of guns to the larger context in order to identify interesting patterns, rich insights, and see the problem from a new perspective.

In addition to my design coursework, I developed a foundation in psychology, particularly social psychology and persuasion, during my bachelor's. I've since completed the master course Experience and Persuasion during my electives, which allowed me to merge social science with design application. I would like to expand on my learnings by applying them to a real-world problem. I believe this skill set will be particularly valuable for a social issue as controversial as gun control. There is ample opportunity to implement these principles in order to develop trust, understand motivations, and change behaviors and attitudes as a result. Changing minds will pave the way for social change.

This project serves as an opportunity to:

1. Gain knowledge and experience with impact-centered design, a domain I am interested in pursuing beyond my studies. This will bring new learning opportunities as my prior design experience is within the corporate financial industry.
2. Apply and deepen my knowledge of the Vision in Product approach.
3. Apply my learnings from the Experience and Persuasion course by designing an intervention focused on influencing and bridging the conflicting attitudes of the public.
4. The design intervention will challenge my design strategy skill set, especially in regards to its planning and manifestation.

FINAL COMMENTS

In case your project brief needs final comments, please add any information you think is relevant.

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