

Google UX Design Professional Certificate

“Design a donation flow for a humanitarian cause you support”

Case Study Project: The *Animal Companion Support Fund (ACSF)* Website

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January 2023

Project Overview: “Donation Flow” Focus



The Product:

As part of the Google UX Design Professional Certificate, I designed the *Animal Companions Support Fund's (ACSF)* responsive website. The project focused on the “donation flow” of a fictitious not-for-profit cause. The ACSF is a humanitarian cause, in that it provides financial and non-financial support to *animal companions* (humans) and *veterinarians*. The mission is twofold: 1. to promote animal welfare, and 2. ensure animals and their two-legged companions can stay together (thereby reducing stress on animal shelters due to surrenders and preventing the mental and emotional fallout of having to surrender an animal companion). All of which have social and economic costs for society.



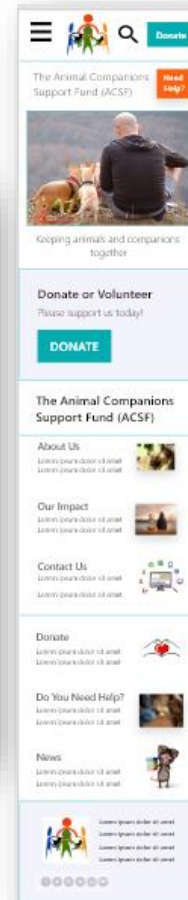
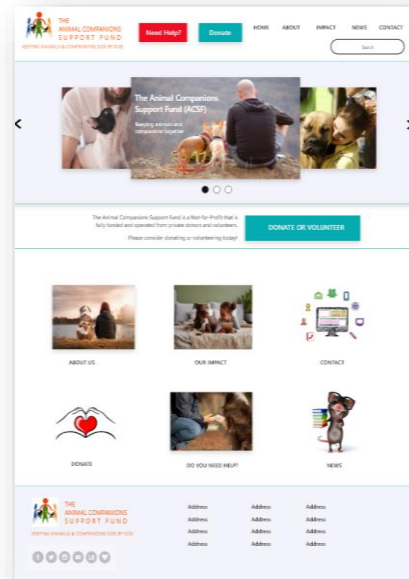
Project Duration:

Dec 2022 – Jan 2023



Tool:

Adobe Xd



“Design a donation flow for a humanitarian cause you support”

Project Overview: “Donation Flow” Focus



The Problem:

As a not-for-profit, the *Animal Companions Support Fund (ACSF)* relies 100% on donations. They also compete with other not-for-profits for donation dollars. There are “known” major barriers that prevent donors from giving (from a complicated user experience to a lack of clear ROI). This project involved designing a responsive website to overcome these “known” barriers / obstacles to donating (i.e. “the problem”).



The Goal:

Develop a responsive website for the *Animal Companions Support Fund* that overcomes “known” and “applicable” barriers to donating online – namely a complicated user experience, financial burden, lack of awareness, lack of perceived value, and lack of a clear ROI on donation dollars given.

Project Overview



My role:

UX researcher, UX designer, Information Architect, UX writer



Responsibilities:

Wireframe development (paper and digital),
Prototype development (low fidelity and high-fidelity), User research, Competitor research, Secondary research and analysis.

Understanding the user

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



User Focus – *The Donor (“Donation Flow”)*

While the *Animal Companion Support Fund (ACSF)* website attracts a diverse range of users (e.g. information seekers, potential partner brands conducting scoping exercises, the donor, and the user in need of support), the Sharpen prompt specifically referred to the “donation flow”. As such, for the purpose of this project, the segment of users focused upon will be *donors* only.

“Design a donation flow for a humanitarian cause you support”

Secondary Research: User Research



Forbes Nonprofit Council

<https://bit.ly/3Qv772s>

"Design a donation flow for a humanitarian cause you support"

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10. Complicated User Experience

We're busy. We're impatient. We expect immediate gratification. So, when a giving link takes more than a second or two to load or is not instantly crystal clear on how to complete the gift transaction, our donor might simply move on to some other shiny new object. Don't underestimate the importance of the user experience for your donor. Make it easy. - Sandi Connors, United Way of Rhode Island

1. Lack Of Vision With Clear ROI

Donors are moved by the change that nonprofits provide to some of the community's most complex challenges. Nonprofit leaders should passionately communicate their vision and enlist donors to help realize the possibilities. Additionally, nonprofit leaders should provide clarity in their business case that demonstrates a clear return on investment (with interim goals) to help differentiate them. - Freddy Williams, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Suncoast

5. Lack Of Value

Donors want to feel connected to the impact of an organization's mission. Supporting a cause broadly can feel positive, but donors are more likely to give when they can see the specific impact of their gift and know the organization knows what the ROI is for the programs they provide. Clearly articulate how each donation level impacts the broader mission of your organization. - Steven Moore, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust

9. Not Enough Awareness

One barrier that keeps a potential donor from giving is their lack of awareness. If a donor isn't invited to give, chances are they won't. Donors like to give to organizations that are passionate about their own mission. Organizations must share their stories and passion with potential donors and invite them to engage in meaningful ways. Chances are they will no longer be a "potential." - Duana Patton, OHIO DISTRICT 5 AREA AGENCY ON AGING INC

4. Economic Concerns

We understand many want to help but are not sure if it will create a financial burden to donate. That's why we encourage smaller or any size donations, emphasizing that any amount helps. We also encourage other types of help like in-kind donations, donations of time and donations of expertise. - Gloria Horsley, Open to Hope

"Design a donation flow for a humanitarian cause you support"

User Research: Secondary

User Research:



- Foundational Research was conducted in order to answer the question “what should we build?”. Due to the heavily researched subject matter, credible secondary research was readily available.
- Rationale behind using secondary research:
 1. Saved client (NFP) significant costs
 2. Saved UX researchers significant time – project was finished in a tight timeline
 3. The research was credible
 4. Access to the research was free – once again saving project costs
- Secondary Research consisted of an article published by the highly credible *Forbes Nonprofit Council* in Forbes (March 2019). Entitled the “10 Major Barriers Keeping Donors From Giving And How To Overcome Them”, the information contained within this article specifically speaks to the user pain points that can be incorporated into the UX design of the ACSF website.

User Research: Pain Points

1

Busy, Busy

Time-poor user, perhaps a professional or caregiver with little spare time. If the transaction can not be performed immediately or the process is confusing, they will leave the website in frustration without giving.

2

Financial Burden

A cash donation will be a burden to this user (e.g. university student, retiree), but in-kind, time and/or expertise donations are options.

3

Lack of Awareness

The user does not know enough about the cause to donate (user involved in other related charities / causes). The user is unaware of the cause's mission. Following exposure, via stories / vignettes and impact, this user is more likely to donate.

4

No Clear ROI

This user does not know the impact that their donation will make. They want to be shown the direct link between their donation and the impact that it will make and how it helps achieve the cause's mission.

Persona: Paul

Personas were developed based on patterns of common pain points

Problem statement:

Paul is a time-poor professional with two young children who needs to easily find information online about causes and how to donate because he wants to make a financial donation to the “right” cause with a high ROI.



Paul Giacomo

Age: 45

Education: Masters

Hometown: Sydney, AU

Family: Married, 2 children

Occupation: Chemical Engineer

“I” can’t seem to find enough hours in the day. For me, it’s either work or time with the kids. This means the rest of life has to be streamlined”

Goals

- Donate to worthwhile causes that I see are making a real difference in people’s lives
- Donate a certain amount to animal-related causes

Frustrations

- When donating online, if the process takes too long, Paul ends up not donating.
- Pet peeve when in the act of donating and the process is confusing or clumsy. You just wonder how the cause is run if they can’t even organise the donation process effectively.
- Before Paul donates, he wants to know what type of impact his donation will make – an ROI. It’s frustrating to Paul, because even if a great cause, he is less likely to donate if the impacts (ROI) of his donation are unclear.

Paul is an chemical engineer who is married with two children. When Paul is not working, he is usually doing activities with his children and leads a very busy life. As he is on a good salary, he donates a certain percentage of his salary to charitable causes. He need the donation process to be quick and seamless as he is always busy.

Persona: Jennifer

Problem statement:

Jennifer is a full-time student studying animal welfare who wants to raise her own awareness about causes because she wants to make a non-financial donation to a “right-fit” cause.



Jennifer Cullen

Age: 27
Education: Currently – College student (Animal welfare)
Hometown: Brisbane, AU
Family: Single, lives with parents on a hobby farm
Occupation: Full-time student

“I’m a typical college student at the moment – no spare cash, living with my parents, and thinking about where I want to work after college”

Goals

- Make non-financial donations to a cause (i.e. time)
- Potentially pursue a career in the Not-for-Profit sector after college – possibly animal welfare as she loves animals

Frustrations

- Jennifer is repeatedly asked for financial donations, but cannot afford it at the moment.
- Jennifer wants to donate her time to a charity close to her heart but doesn't know how.
- Jennifer is frustrated because she knows there are some great-fit causes out there she can donate to, but, because they don't raise awareness, she is in the dark about them.

Jennifer is a full-time student who does not have the budget to donate to her favourite charities at this time. She, however, has time to spare on weekends and would like to work with a charity, helping with whatever they need. After college, Jennifer might pursue a career in a Not-for-Profit.

User Journey Map - Paul

Mapping Paul's user journey revealed the need for:

- A. A streamlined process (e.g. SEO so Paul can quickly locate ACSF; user action elements in prominent positions on each page), and,
- B. Information that communicates ROI on donor dollars (e.g. case studies, vignettes, outcome stats, news, etc.).

Persona: Paul

Goal: Paul wants to be able to donate quickly and easily to a cause that clearly shows the impact (ROI) his donation will make.

ACTION	Search for the ACSF & Arrive on the homepage	Click the "Donate Now" button	Select financial from a list of donation types	Selects a payment method and donates	Chooses to "find out more about the ACSF" option
TASK LIST	A. Search for human – animal causes B. Explores website C. Reads about the cause and the impact (ROI) that a donation will make	A. Click "donate now" button	A. Selects the type of donation that is to be made from a list. B. Write in the "other" box that he is willing to do more if available	A. Selects the payment method to use	A. Chooses "find out more" from a list of options.
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Excited Optimistic	Anxious	Eager Hopeful	Anxious	Optimistic, Eager Inquisitive
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	-SEO opportunities -Homepage content development to showcase cause and ROI / Impacts / results	-Add a donate button to every page so user doesn't have to look -Add info/cues that signal credibility / trust	-Add a list of different types of donations for users who want to donate non-financial -Add a text box where users can put further information / instructions / messages	-Provide a wide range of payment methods -Credibility cues to assure trust and reputation	-Add a thank you page -Provide further options for the user to remain on the website (e.g. find out more about the cause, showcase stories/case studies, etc.)

User Journey Map - Jennifer

Mapping Jennifer's user journey revealed the need for:

- A. Communication / messaging that non-financial donations are accepted (e.g. SEO descriptions, non-financial donation option on donation page)
- B. ACSF Awareness raising (e.g. website SEO for top of mind; website content heavily focuses on what ACSF does, newstories, ways donors can help, and its impacts/how it helps animals and their companions).

Persona: Jennifer

Goal: Jennifer wants to make a non-financial donation to a cause once she finds the right-fit for her (currently lacks awareness of causes)

ACTION	Uses Google to search for causes	Lands at ACSF website	Browses ACSF website	Clicks on Donate button & selects non-financial option	Thank you and Next Steps information
TASK LIST	A. Jennifer searches Google for causes (animal welfare related)	A. Clicks on ACSF listing	A. Jennifer conducts an information gathering exercise to become more aware of ACSF	A. Clicks on the donate button B. Checks from a list the donation types she is interested in providing	A. Thank you message B. Provided with instructions on what will happen next
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Excited Inquisitive	Excited Inquisitive	Hopeful Optimistic Eager	Anxious Excited	Happiness Excited Eager
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	-SEO program for core keywords to ensure outranking competitors	-Ensure ACSF is in Top 3 results -Ensure meta descriptions mention non-financial donations	-Easy flow for those seeking information about the cause -Real life stories / vignettes / case studies about what the cause does	-Include all types of donations relevant to the cause (research and list in order of most likely to donate) for usability	-Thank you message signals to user the process was successful -Instructions on what happens / what to do next

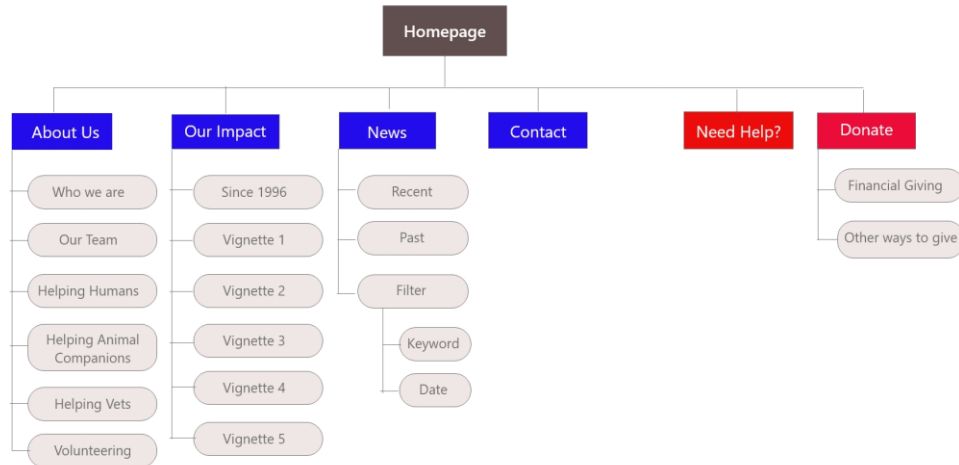
Sitemap: ACSF's Website & IA

The primary focus of the website's information architecture (IA) was ease of use through a basic / simple design. The architecture was built around four of the "known" obstacles to donation, as identified in the secondary research. Included in the IA design are:

1. Uncomplicated and Streamlined IA
2. A Non-financial Donation Option – "Other Ways to Give" branch on the IA tree
3. Awareness Raising and a Clear Communication of ROI of donation dollars – through the "About Us", "Our Impact" and the "News" branches

The two main users of the website – *animal companions in need of help* and *donors* have their own dedicated branches.

Project: Responsive Website Sitemap - "Donation flow for a humanitarian cause"



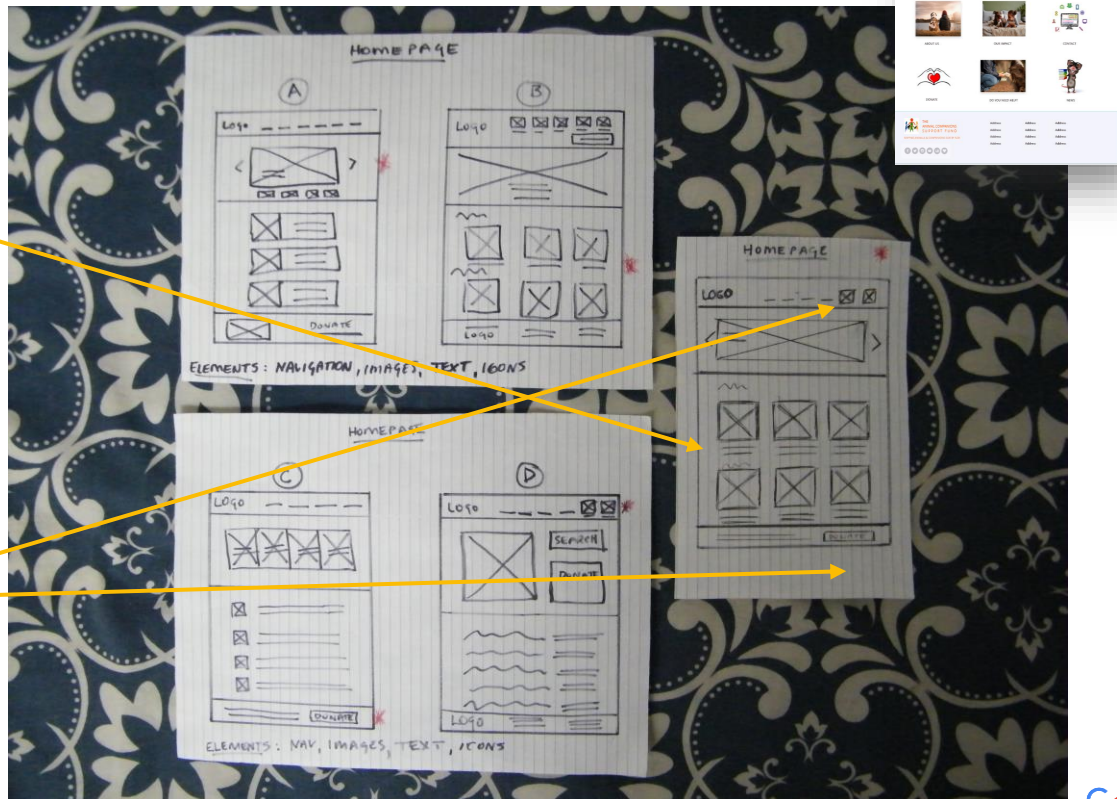
Paper Wireframes - Homepage

The ACSF Home Screen was designed with simplicity in mind and to immediately direct the user to their area of interest.

Only six categories feature on the homepage, which mimics the sitemap, and speaks to two of the obstacles of donating – a lack of awareness and no clear ROI on donor dollar.

Simple tap gestures, large images and minimal text allow for an easy and intuitive user flow.

Cues, in the form of highly contrasted buttons, have been added to assist the two main users – animal companions in need of help and donors - through the flow. Placement of the main “donate button” was moved above the fold as a result of user study findings.

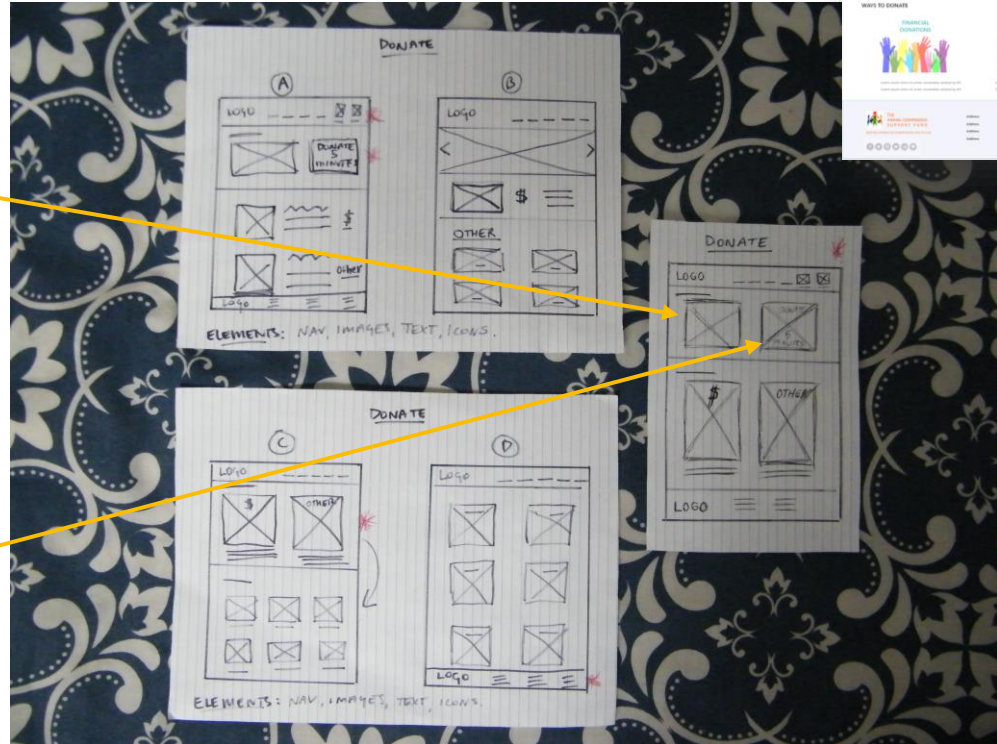


Paper Wireframes – Donation Flow

The goal was to make the donation flow as uncomplicated as possible and to ensure that users immediately knew that non-financial donations (“Other Ways to Donate”) were welcome.

Minimal text and a tap gesture were used to promote usability and a streamlined experience.

A large, highly contrasted button / image / CTA was placed above the fold to let users know they could donate within 5 minutes, given that a complicated user experience has been found to be a major barrier to donation.

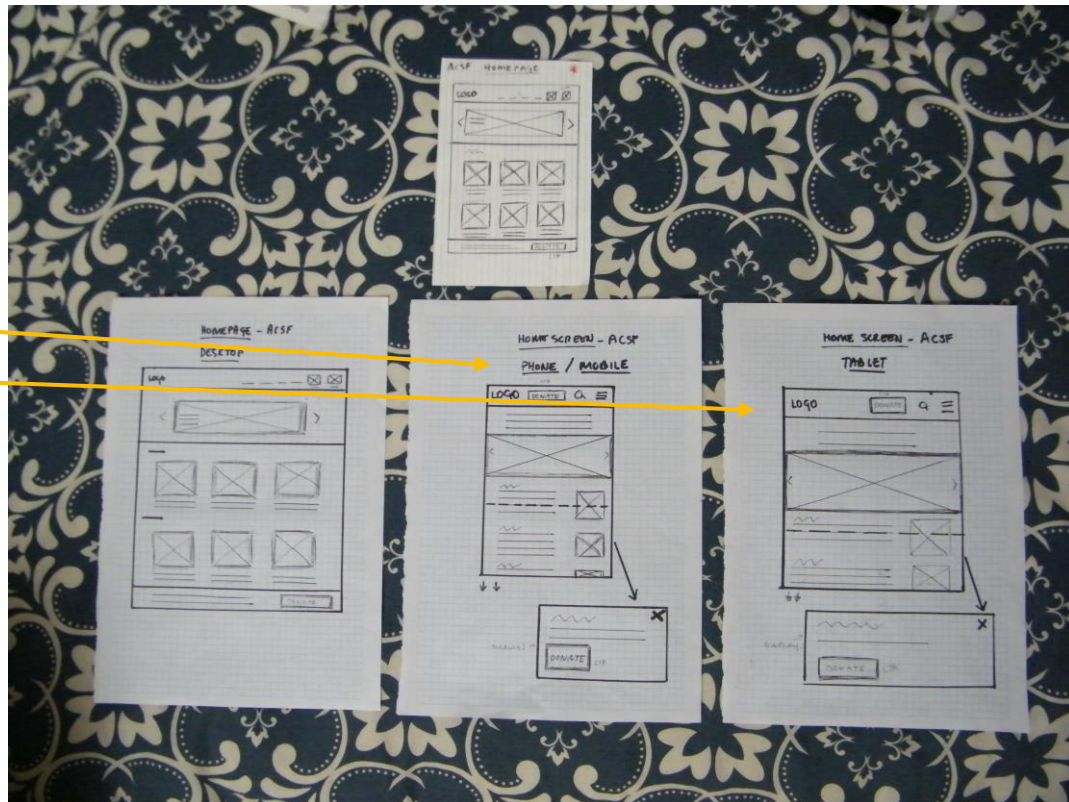


Paper wireframe screen size variations - Homescreen

Additional screen sizes were designed for a responsive website.

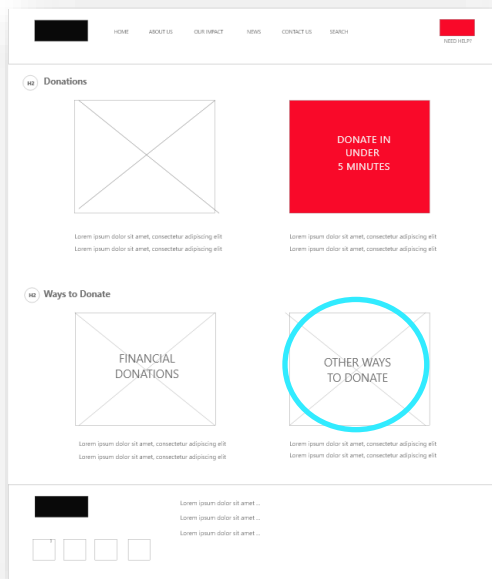
The main users – animal companions in need of help and donors – were top of mind when designing paper wireframes for a mobile screen size and a tablet.

In the initial iteration, the main donation CTA was to be an overlay at the bottom of the page in the smaller screens. During the design process, however, this was revised to a static component to ensure it was directly in front of the user's view and to remain as basic and uncomplicated as possible.

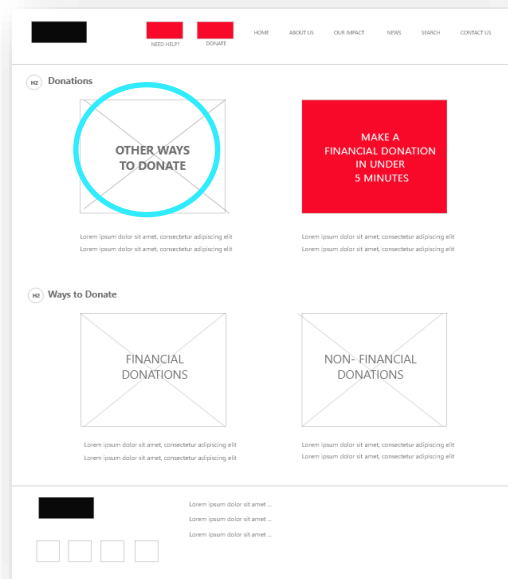


Digital Wireframes (Pre- and Post- Usability Study)

Digital Wireframes – *Pre* - First Usability Study



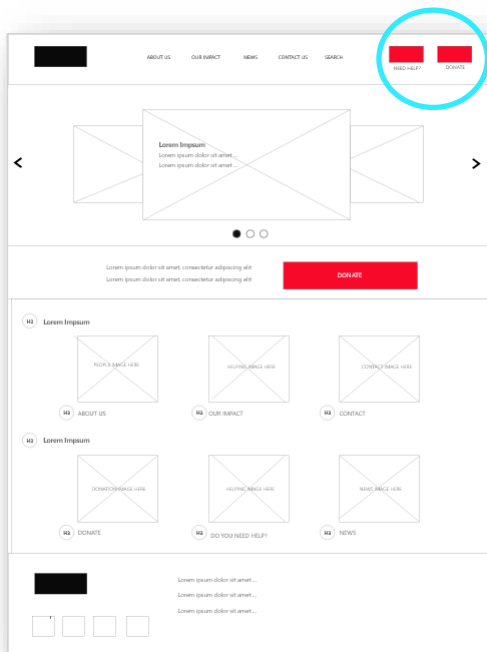
Digital Wireframes – *Post* - First Usability Study



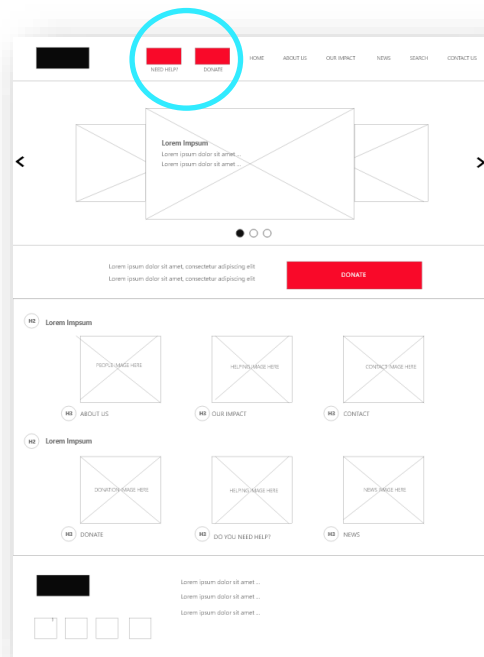
In the Usability Study conducted, users were unable to identify the “Non-financial donation” flow, which was located below the fold. The Usability Study revealed that it was a case of “out of sight, out of mind” and the redesign placed it above the fold.

Digital Wireframes (Pre- and Post- Usability Study)

Digital Wireframes – *Pre* - First Usability Study



Digital Wireframes – *Post* - First Usability Study



In the Usability Study, it was revealed that, although the “Need Help” and “Donate” buttons were made to stand out in the Low-fi wireframes, users required these to be placed in a more prominent position. Users suggested these appear in the middle of the page.

Digital Wireframes (Pre- and Post- Usability Study)

Digital Wireframes – Pre - First Usability Study

The wireframe shows a navigation bar with links: HOME, ABOUT US, OUR IMPACT, NEWS, CONTACT US, and SEARCH. A 'NEED HELP?' link is in the top right. The main heading is '3-STEP DONATION'. Below it, a progress indicator shows 'STEP 1' (highlighted in red), 'STEP 2', and 'STEP 3', all enclosed in a light blue oval. The section is titled 'STEP 1 - CONTRIBUTION'. It contains two input fields for 'FREQUENCY' and five input fields for 'AMOUNT'. A 'Next Step' button is at the bottom right. The footer includes a logo, three social media icons, and three lines of placeholder text.

Digital Wireframes – Post - First Usability Study

The wireframe shows a navigation bar with links: HOME, ABOUT US, OUR IMPACT, NEWS, SEARCH, and CONTACT US. 'NEED HELP?' and 'DONATE' links are in the top left. The main heading is '3-STEP DONATION'. Below it, a progress indicator shows 'STEP 1' (highlighted in red), 'STEP 2', and 'STEP 3', all enclosed in a light blue oval. Under each step, there is descriptive text: 'Contribution' for STEP 1, 'Your Details' for STEP 2, and 'Payment' for STEP 3. The section is titled 'STEP 1 - CONTRIBUTION'. It contains two input fields for 'FREQUENCY' and five input fields for 'AMOUNT'. A 'Next Step' button is at the bottom right. The footer includes a logo, three social media icons, and three lines of placeholder text.

The Usability Study revealed that users found the steps sequence on the financial “Donation” pages confusing. That is, users perceived these to be buttons instead of a tool to show progression / sequence. Redesign included moving them to the far right and labelling them with text so they would not be viewed as a CTA / button.

Digital Wireframes (Pre- and Post- Usability Study)

Digital Wireframes – *Pre* - First Usability Study

The wireframe shows a top navigation bar with a logo, links for HOME, ABOUT US, OUR IMPACT, NEWS, CONTACT US, and SEARCH, and a red 'NEED HELP?' button. Below the navigation bar is a '3-STEP DONATION' section with a progress indicator showing 'STEP 1' as the active step, followed by 'STEP 2' and 'STEP 3'. The 'STEP 1 - CONTRIBUTION' section contains two input fields for 'FREQUENCY' and five input fields for 'AMOUNT'. A 'Next Step' button is located at the bottom right of the form. The footer includes a logo, three lines of placeholder text, and four social media icons.

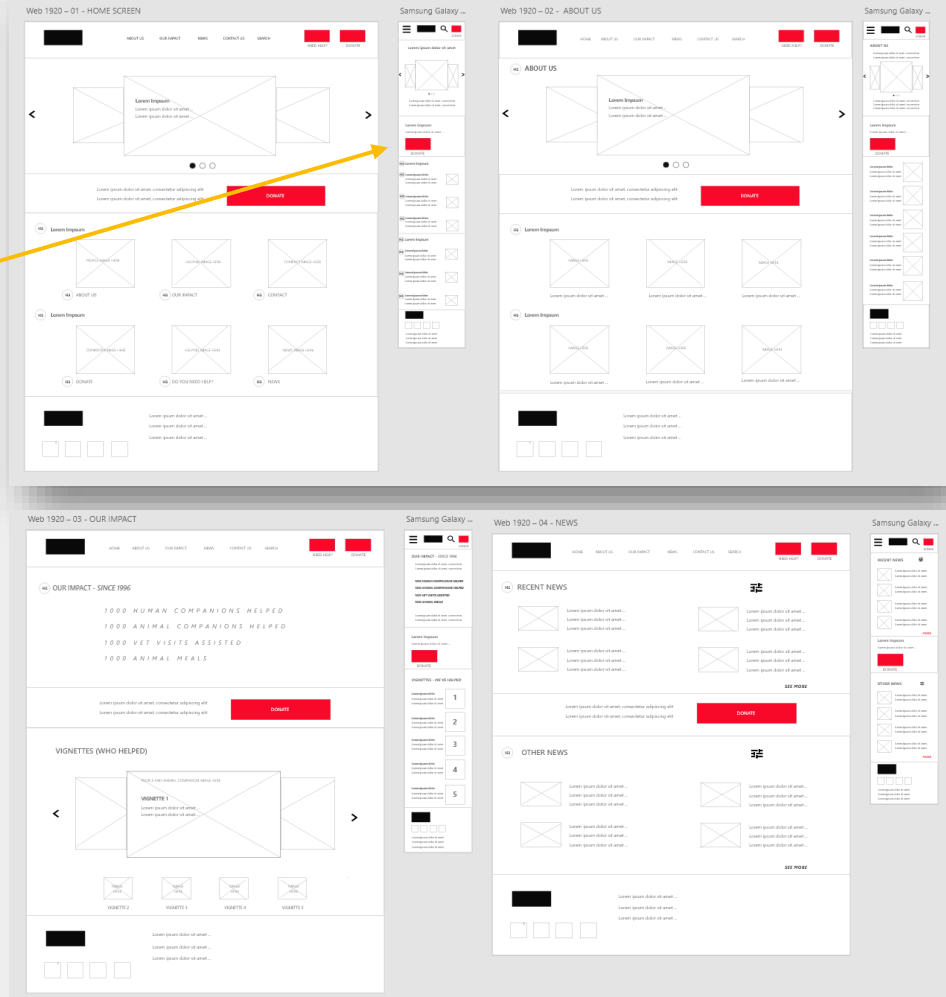
Digital Wireframes – *Post* - First Usability Study

The wireframe shows a top navigation bar with a logo, a red 'NEED HELP?' button, a red 'DONATE' button (highlighted with a blue circle), and links for HOME, ABOUT US, OUR IMPACT, NEWS, SEARCH, and CONTACT US. Below the navigation bar is a '3-STEP DONATION' section with a progress indicator showing 'STEP 1' as the active step, followed by 'STEP 2' and 'STEP 3'. The 'STEP 1 - CONTRIBUTION' section contains two input fields for 'FREQUENCY' and five input fields for 'AMOUNT'. A 'Next Step' button is located at the bottom right of the form. The footer includes a logo, three lines of placeholder text, and four social media icons.

The Usability Study revealed that users needed a way to go straight back to the main “Donation” page from the donation sub-category pages in case they became “stuck” in the sequence after taking the wrong path – this is additional to “back” buttons in the browser and “previous” buttons placed in the “donation user flow”.

Digital wireframe screen size variations

In both the website and mobile digital wireframes, the main donation button was placed above the fold and colour contrasted to assist the user through navigation. Both the website and mobile are as basic as possible, with minimal text and imagery.



Low-Fidelity Prototype

The low-fidelity prototype “donation flow” shows the donor tapping on the “donation” button from any page, choosing either the “financial donation” stream or the “non-financial donation” stream from the “Donation” page, proceeding through the donation process up until the “Donation Confirmation” page for both the financial or non-financial donation. The Financial donation stream takes the user through a 3-step process to donation confirmation, while the non-financial stream takes the user through an expression of interest and input of details to a confirmation page.

Low Fidelity Design



View the ACSF's Low-Fidelity Prototype at: <https://xd.adobe.com/view/6b37c2e4-1fe3-4c09-9cc7-d75e6a0252bf-3e64/>

Usability Study: Parameters



Study type:

Unmoderated usability study



Location:

Australia, remote



Participants:

5 participants



Length:

20-30 minutes

Usability Study: Findings

1

Finding

Users needed the “Non-financial donation” button / option placed above the fold instead of below, as they were unable to locate it.

2

Finding

Although made to stand out in the Low-Fidelity wireframes, users still need the “Need Help” and “Donate” buttons placed in a more prominent position on the menu.

3

Finding

The steps sequence on the financial “Donation” pages confused users instead of helping. Users perceived them as buttons / CTA instead of a tool to show progression / sequence in the journey.

4

Finding

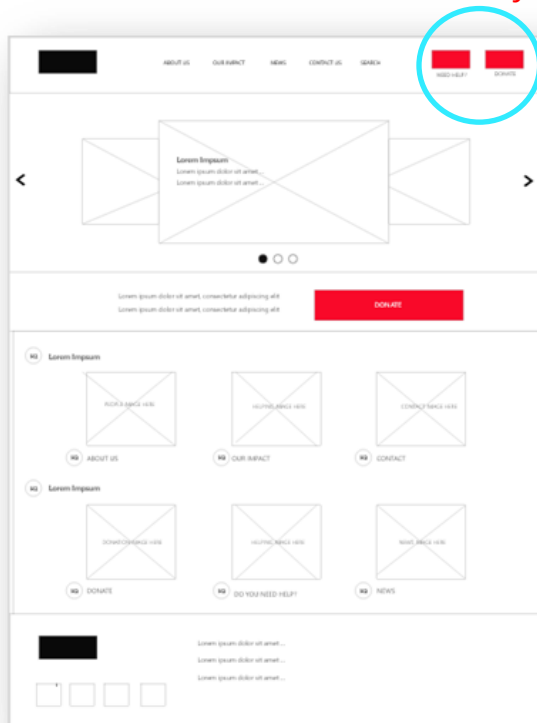
Users need a way to go straight back to the main “Donation” page from the donation sub-category pages in case they became “stuck” in the sequence after taking the wrong path.

Refining the design

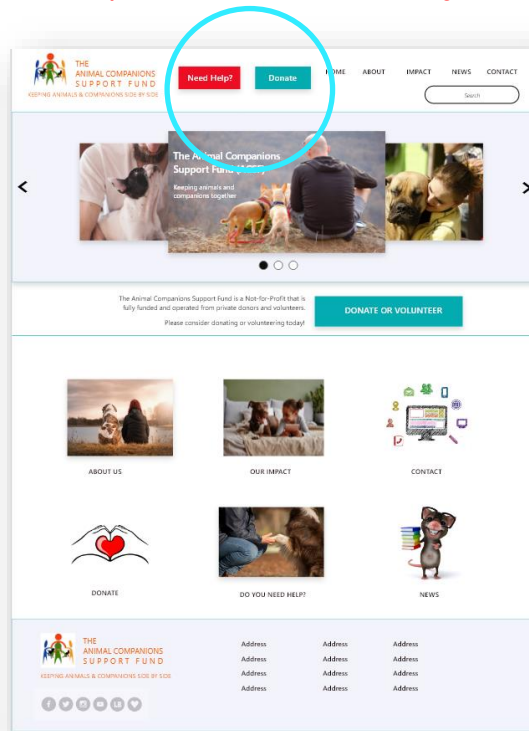
- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

Mockups: Redesign (post-Usability Study)

Digital Wireframes – *Pre- First Usability Study*



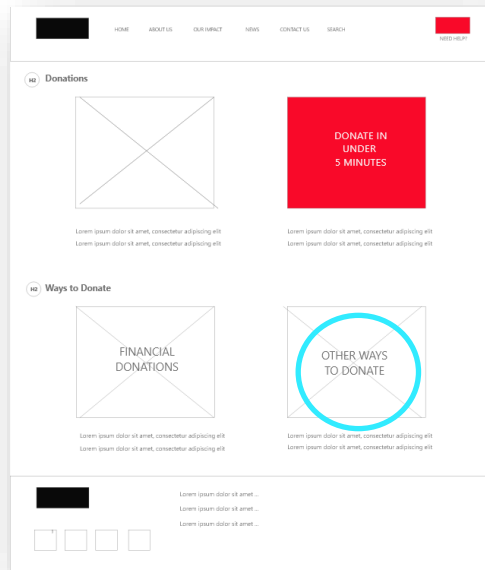
Mockups – *Post- First Usability Study*



“Need Help?”
and “Donate”
buttons moved
to a central
location

Mockups: Redesign (post-Usability Study)

Digital Wireframes – *Pre- First Usability Study*



Mockups – *Post- First Usability Study*



“Other Ways to Donate” moved above the fold

Mockups: Redesign (post-Usability Study)

Digital Wireframes – *Pre- First Usability Study*

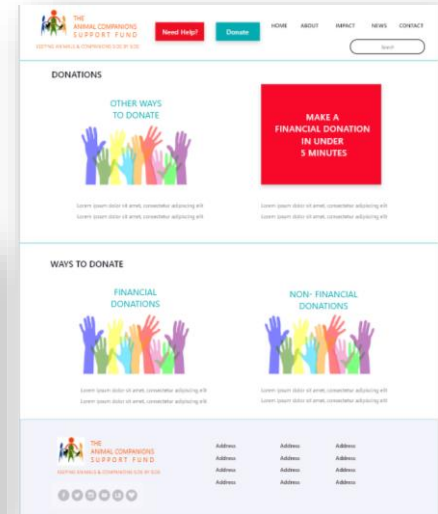
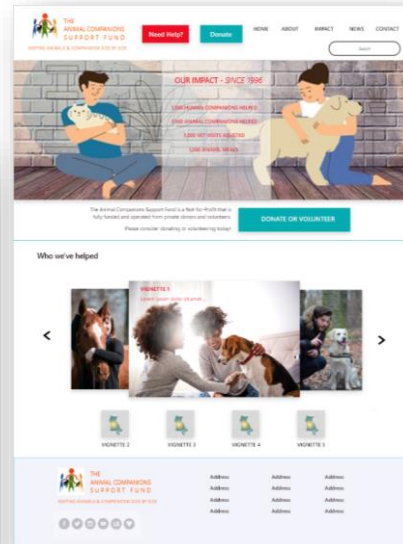
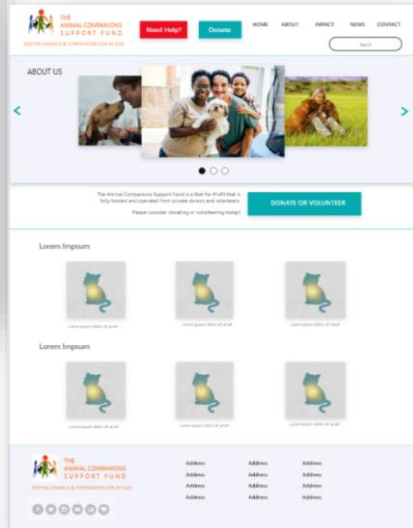
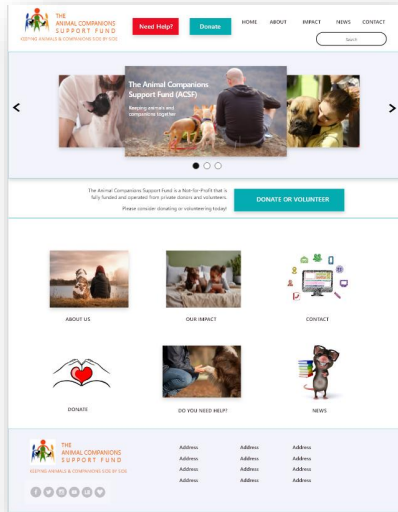
A digital wireframe for a 3-step donation process. The header includes a navigation menu with links: HOME, ABOUT US, OUR IMPACT, NEWS, CONTACT US, and SEARCH. A red button labeled 'NEED HELP?' is in the top right. The main content area is titled '3-STEP DONATION' with a sub-header 'STEP 1 - CONTRIBUTION'. A sequence of three steps is shown: STEP 1 (highlighted in red), STEP 2, and STEP 3, all enclosed in a blue oval. Below the steps, there are input fields for 'FREQUENCY' and 'AMOUNT'. A 'Next Step' button is at the bottom right. The footer contains a logo, social media icons, and placeholder text.

Mockups – *Post- First Usability Study*

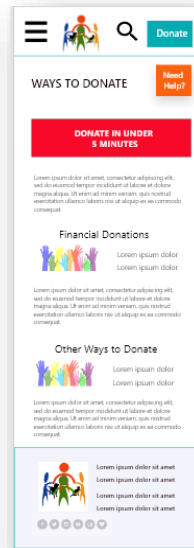
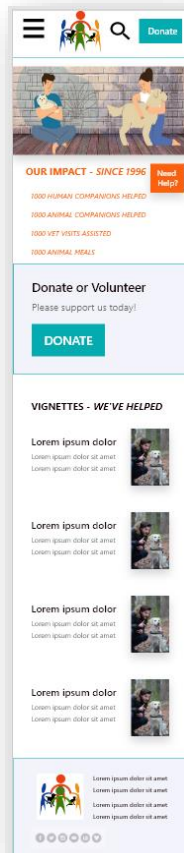
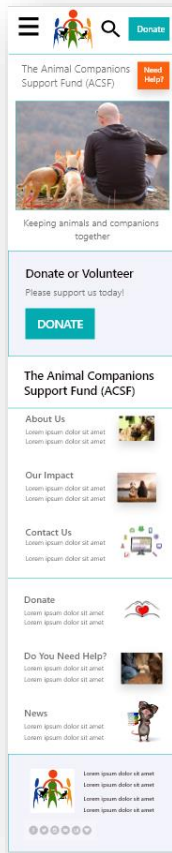
A mockup of a 3-step donation process. The header includes a navigation menu with links: HOME, ABOUT, IMPACT, NEWS, and CONTACT. A red button labeled 'Need Help?' and a teal button labeled 'Donate' are in the top right. The main content area is titled '3-STEP DONATION' with a sub-header 'STEP 1 - CONTRIBUTION'. A sequence of three steps is shown: STEP 1 (highlighted in red), STEP 2, and STEP 3, all enclosed in a blue oval. Below the steps, there are input fields for 'FREQUENCY' and 'AMOUNT'. A 'Next Step' button is at the bottom right. The footer contains a logo, social media icons, and placeholder text.

The Donation steps sequence moved to the far right of the page and labelling placed underneath as users were confusing them as CTA / buttons.

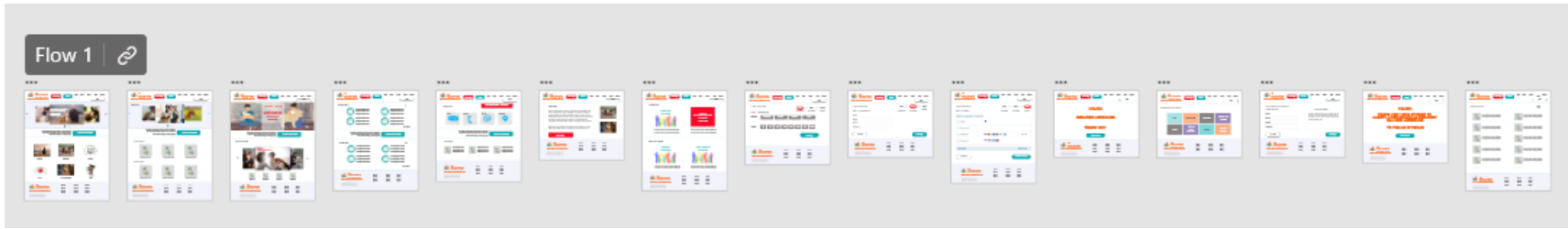
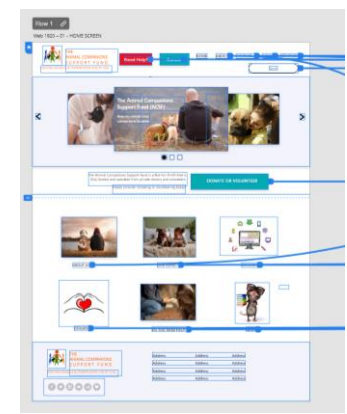
Mockups: Website



Mockups: Mobile Size

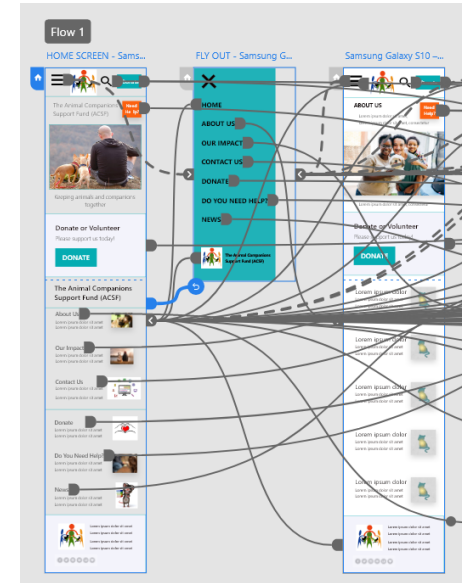
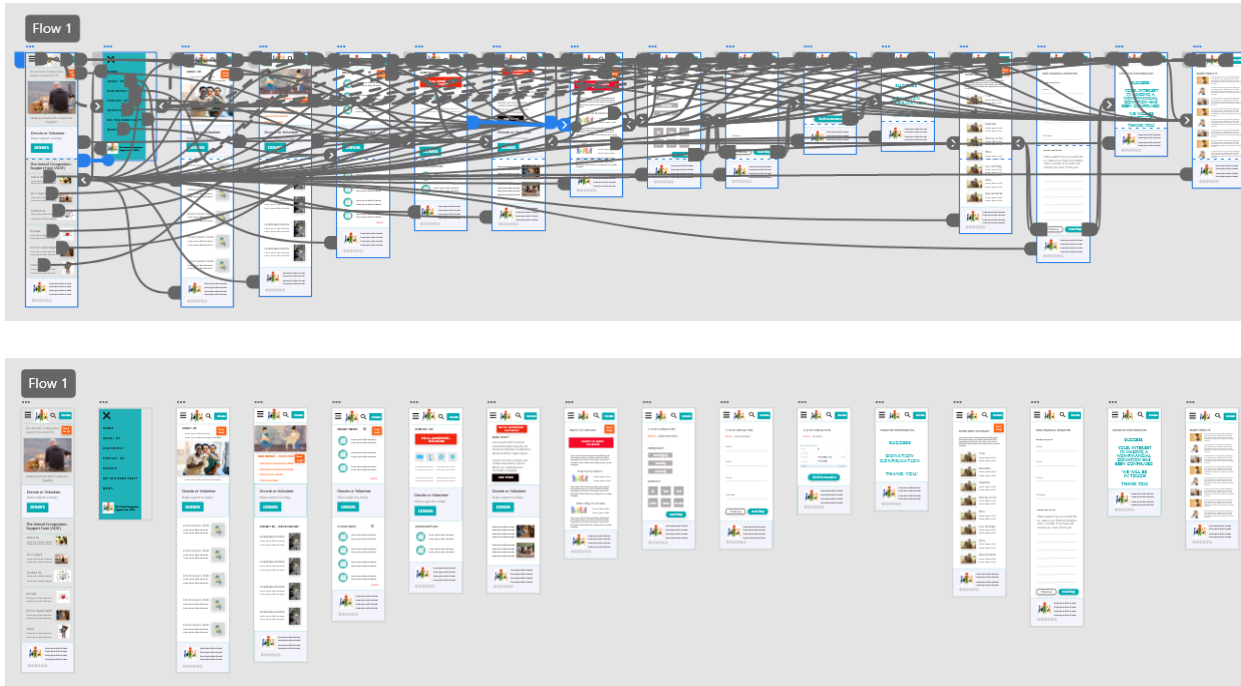


High-Fidelity Prototype: ACSF Website



View the ACSF's High-Fidelity Prototype at: <https://xd.adobe.com/view/4ddd26b1-afbf-4770-8d2c-8136d5fa2422-188e/>

High-Fidelity Prototype: ACSF Mobile



View the ACSF's High-Fidelity Prototype at: <https://xd.adobe.com/view/f3baf25a-945b-47d8-9bfc-622d068dcb56-a6e9/>

Accessibility Considerations

1

I used Hierarchical Headings with different sized text for clear visual hierarchy.

2

Landmarks were used to provide cues for navigation, including navigation bars, search boxes, and footers.

3

Buttons and text contrast was WCAG compliant (>3.1). Consistency was also maintained throughout the website.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

Target users shared that the design was simple and uncomplicated. As the focus of this website design was a “donation flow”, users expressed that whether they were making a financial or non-financial donation, the entire process was easy to accomplish, and navigation was guided by the website’s layout and cues.



What I learned:

I learnt that even though a user flow design might seem completely obvious to me and designed with accessibility in mind (e.g. contrast and cues), users can still have trouble navigating the design. The takeaway is that user research is pivotal to good design.

Next Steps

1

Conduct additional user research in the form of a Usability Study on the High-Fidelity Prototype to refine the design further.

2

Present ideas to stakeholders, obtain feedback, and conduct a redesign to incorporate their feedback.

3

As it is a responsive website project, consider designs for other common devices.

Let's connect!



If you would like to view my designs, or would like to discuss a project,
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

AND

THANK YOU!