

User Research

Project Description

Our project is a website/mobile application that aims to connect volunteers to organizations that help people in need (i.e. food banks, charities, youth volunteer groups, etc.). This is done through postings that allow the organizations to request specific food items and other necessities. The way the posting works is that an organization will list what items they are in need of. The volunteer can sort through the postings based on date, location distance, category of items requested, etc. When they choose a listing they'd like to assist with, the volunteer will input what items they can provide and schedule a delivery of their items according to that request. Our target audience is volunteers that work for any of these organizations, as they will be interacting with the website the most, finding listings and other organizations to help. We hope to connect volunteers with many volunteering opportunities through the means of this project, and allow these organizations to better assist people in need.

Insights

- Travelling distance to these volunteering locations can get long, especially during COVID-19 when types of transport such as bus were not as feasible.
- COVID-19 resulted in a lot of cancellation of volunteering events, so some way to combat/prevent that cancellation would be nice.
- Eye-catching, organized, and aesthetically pleasing social platform management is very important, as information reaches the volunteers in a clear way.
- In-person contact during COVID-19 may make some people wary, so finding alternative methods of allowing volunteers to contribute is critical during times like these.

Interview Questions

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) Where are you from/where do you live?
- 3) When did you start volunteering?
- 4) How often do you volunteer?
- 5) Why do you volunteer?
- 6) Where have you volunteered before?

- 7) What's your favorite part about volunteering?
- 8) How did you find your volunteering gig?
- 9) Do you volunteer independently or do you go through an organization?
- 10) How long does it take you to travel to your volunteering location?
- 11) How do you travel to your volunteering location?
- 12) Has COVID-19 impacted your ability to volunteer?
 - a) If so, how?
- 13) How comfortable did you feel going to your volunteering location during the pandemic?
- 14) Is there anything to make volunteering easier for you during Covid?
- 15) On average, how many individuals do you interact with during each shift?
- 16) What is the distribution process at your location if you work with food or goods? (clarify if needed - how do you assign roles? How do you get food?)
- 17) What are the hardest parts of volunteering for you? (both before and during COVID?)
- 18) Do you have volunteering-related Internet websites you regularly use?
- 19) How do you currently look for volunteering opportunities?
- 20) What features of the websites make it stand out?
- 21) Does the organization you volunteer at have a website?
 - a) If so, what are your thoughts on the website?
- 22) What do you wish to see on the platforms where you find volunteering opportunities?

Transcript of Interview

I interviewed a 19 year old female volunteer who works at a Muslim volunteering organization called MAPS - Muslims Association of Puget Sound.

Me: So, how old are you?

Interviewee: I'm 19.

Me: 19, okay, awesome. Where do you live right now?

Interviewee: I am living in Redmond, Washington.

Me: Sounds good. When did you start volunteering?

Interviewee: I started volunteering in 8th grade, so when I was about 13.

Me: Ah okay, and you are still volunteering?

Interviewee: Yep, yep.

Me: Okay, perfect. How often do you volunteer... say in a week?

Interviewee: I volunteer about once a week, sometimes maybe 2 depending if there's availability at the organization.

Me: Okay, sounds good. And why do you volunteer?

Interviewee: I think it's an integral part of my faith as a Muslim. So helping the community is just like one way of us giving back.

Me: That's really awesome to hear. So, where have you volunteered before?

Interviewee: So, I often volunteer within the organization as a helping hand in whatever task is currently available. But sometimes we would also volunteer outside of MAPS itself within the community, like making Sandwiches for the homeless, so on, and so forth.

Me: Oh, nice, nice! And with that in mind, what's your favorite part about volunteering?

Interviewee: I think it creates a sense of community. So interacting with other people, not just my peers, but also the people. Volunteering really has me feeling involved in like not only the Muslim subcommittee, but just, like, the people in Redmond.

Me: Nice, I see. So how did you find this volunteering gig of yours?

Interviewee: I found it just by going to the Mosque often.

Me: Perfect. So let's see... how long does it take you to travel to your volunteering location?

Interviewee: Well, when the volunteering is at the Mosque itself, it takes about 10 to 15 minutes, but time spent travelling can vary, depending on where the event is taking place.

Me: I see. By what form of transportation do you take to get to that volunteering location?

Interviewee: Either by car or by bus, depending on how many people are there. So if it's a large group of us, we might go by bus, like if it's in Seattle.

Me: Oh ok, I see. Has COVID-19 impacted your ability to volunteer in any way?

Interviewee: It has diminished the amount of availability I have, and due to like, the restrictions that come along COVID-19, fewer events were organized.

Me: I see, that makes sense. So how comfortable did you feel actually doing the limited volunteering events you had during the pandemic?

Interviewee: I personally didn't find a problem with it, but I guess I could see why I would want to like interact less with people who might be at a higher risk of being affected severely by COVID.

Me: I see, alright. So based off that, was there anything that could've made volunteering for you easier during COVID?

Interviewee: I guess a better understanding of how to like, take care of ourselves and the people around us in like, minimizing risks around contracting COVID. So like, planning events around that instead of just cancelling them altogether.

Me: Alright, perfect. So, on average, either during COVID or before COVID, how many individuals would you interact with during each shift.

Interviewee: Before or after COVID?

Me: Yeah, any.

Interviewee: I think there would be- Well, it would depend on the event. But like usually there'd be around like 25 people. So about a classroom's worth of people.

Me: That makes sense, alright. So what is the distribution process like at your location?

Interviewee: If I'm understanding the question right, I guess it would be like, we would assemble the food after certain members would buy items, like food items that were generally like, how do I say this- That people who are prone to allergies with the minimal risk food items - they would like buy that, and then a certain team member and volunteers would assemble the food and then, like, the distribution process would come after.

Me: That's perfect, that's perfect! Alright, and now, on a similar topic, what were the hardest parts of volunteering for you during COVID?

Interviewee: I think there wasn't any hard part per se, but like the most difficult part would be organizing events because of COVID. They just became so like, minimal, that it would be kind of annoying when an event would be cancelled last minute.

Me: Right, right. Do you have any volunteering related Internet websites you regularly use?

Interviewee: No, I don't but I am signed up to the Redmond Green program, or something, which I have used a few times.

Me: Sounds good. So, how do you currently look for volunteering opportunities?

Interviewee: I just, I guess, I just know the people who organize the events.

Me: Sounds good. Does the organization you volunteer at have a website?

Interviewee: They have a social media which we basically used to correspond, if that counts.

Me: Okay yeah, what are your thoughts on the social media?

Interviewee: I think it's well run, and it's like, up to date pretty regularly, so like it's a good way to reach out to the directions of organizers.

Me: Yeah, that makes sense. So like, what features are there, like, specific design features, or like things you notice that make the social media stand out?

Interviewee: I think all the images that are put up, and, like the general, aesthetic of the accounts, are very eye-catching and well put together, so that, like makes it seem official, and like well thought out and well planned out.

Me: Okay, I see. Is there anything else you'd like to see on these social media or websites where you can find volunteering opportunities?

Interviewee: Well, I don't know really, I think I like how it's set up currently, but I would be open to changes as they come.