

Ethical Feedback Loop Project

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Assigned by Benjamin Van Dyke for GD 491: Design Ethics

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Approach Statement - Sophia Arnoldi

Our project aims to develop and implement a wayfinding system within refugee camps and pre-established businesses to create a feedback loop that prioritizes raising refugee voices. Our main mission is to provide information and resources to a large number of refugees, focusing on accessibility and ease of understanding through symbols as language. Integration is our additional focus as we merge data from different perspectives to identify gaps within our system. This forms the basis of the feedback loop, as we receive both anonymous and public commentary collected through online forms and face-to-face communications. The loop sustains itself as refugees come and go seeking resources, and as individuals' thoughts and data evolve.

Refugees, by definition, are people displaced from their homes due to violent and forceful reasons, and our system is designed to facilitate a smooth integration into their new communities. As a marginalized group, refugees face numerous challenges. This includes diversity in language and culture from their new placements, struggles with relocation physically and emotionally, as well as facing distrust from their new communities. These struggles have long been underestimated, and the world is no better for it. People's unique perspectives deserve acknowledgment, yet there has been a significant gap in voicing refugee experiences, especially regarding their own lives. We aim for equitable representation within our system and to raise the voices of refugees to even the playing field. We prioritize an inclusive space where information, resources, and data can be exchanged easily and freely between parties. We strive for a positive environment that deters fighting and encourages human connection. All these efforts work toward benefiting the broader community and shaping its future.

Sequential Document: Individual and Group Checklists - Sophia Arnoldi

Creative Director Checklist:

- 1 Page Statement (10/13)
- Sequential Doc (10/13)
- 1 Page Reflection Out of Character (10/17)
- Build Presentation (10/13-10/22)
- Edit Co-Essay + Other Documents (10/17-10/22)
- Build PDF for portfolio (10/17-10/22)

User Advocate Checklist:

- Mind Map (10/13)
- Methodology of Inclusion Doc (10/13)
- Criteria for Diverse Perspectives Doc (10/13)
- 1 Page Reflection Out of Character (10/17)

Project Manager Checklist:

- Client Agreement (10/13)
- Value of Ethical Feedback for Stakeholders and Clients (10/13)
- Benefits of Adopting Ethical Feedback Loops (10/13)
- 1 Page Reflection Out of Character (10/17)

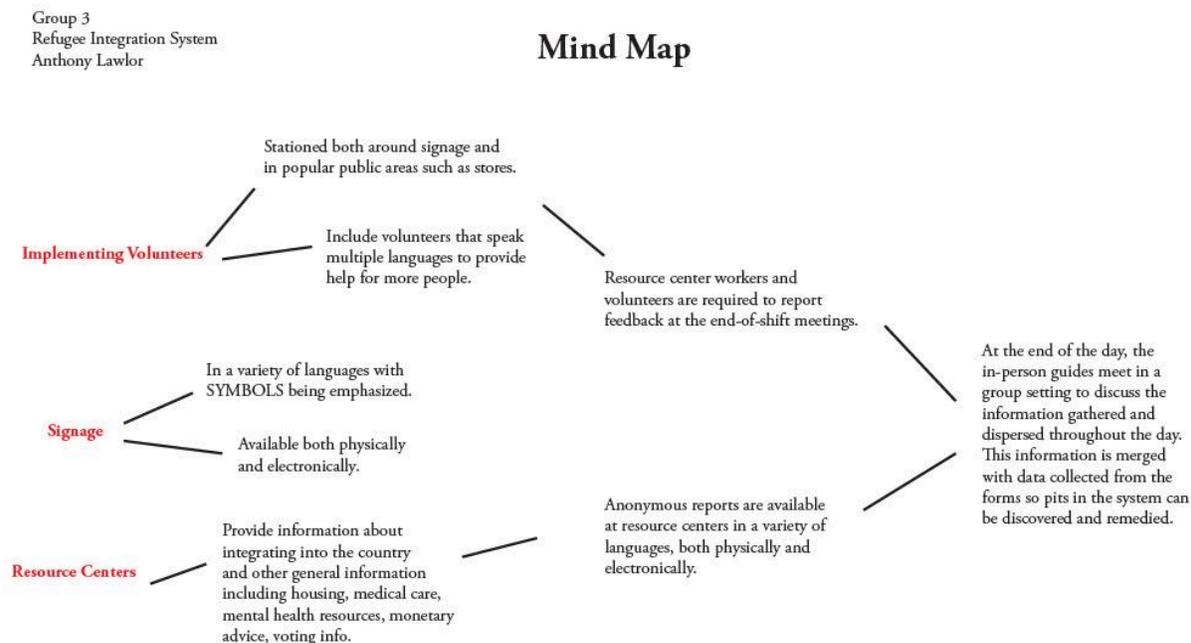
Team Checklist:

- Co-Essay Out of Character (10/17)
- Citations in MLA 9 (Ongoing)
- Final Presentation Slides - minutes In Character (10/22)

Sequential Document: Timeline - Sophia Arnoldi

- **9/29**
 - Project introduced and roles were assigned
- **10/1**
 - Wayfinding system developed within group discussion time
 - Creative Directors met to establish differences between project outcomes
- **10/6**
 - Creative Directors met to finalize discussion from previous meeting
 - Wayfinding system is expanded upon within group discussion time
 - Individual assignments are started in a collaborative document
- **10/8**
 - Confirmed wayfinding system with CEO and established growth areas
 - Individual assignments are developed within group time
- **10/13**
 - Individual assignments deadline
 - Presentation started and presenting roles discussed
- **10/15**
 - Continuation of production on presentation
- **10/17** (Outside of classtime)
 - Group and individual reflections deadline
- **10/20** (Fall Break)
 - Editing of group and individual reflections
 - Developed formatting for PDF of project
- **10/22**
 - Presentation of final project as well as observation of other team's projects
 - PDF portfolio and slides presentation deadline

Mind Map - Anthony Lawlor



Methodology of Inclusion Statement - Anthony Lawlor

Community Review Sessions:

- Feedback and information are distributed in weekly meetings with elected officials and the chief of police to further distribute information.

Anonymous Feedback Channels:

- Anonymous reports are available at resource centers in a variety of languages.
- Anonymous online form is available.
 - Users are told their form is anonymous before beginning as well as before submitting.
- Forms end with an open-ended text box to make sure any questions can be asked or anything can be reported in full transparency.

Criteria for Diverse Perspectives: Input Form - Anthony Lawlor

- Creating Signage
 - Will be done in a variety of languages.
 - Emphasis on symbols as language to ensure language barrier won't be an issue.
- Multiple Modes of Access
 - Information will be available both digitally and in person. This means lack of technology will not be an issue.
- Multilingual Support
 - Online interface is available in all major languages and can easily be switched from one another.

Criteria for Diverse Perspectives: Feedback Implementation Guide - Anthony Lawlor

- Inclusivity of Different Perspectives
 - The form invites input from all stakeholders (refugees, volunteers, host community, officials) and explicitly asks about diverse experiences.
- All Volunteers are required to report feedback at the end-of-shift meetings.
- Resource center workers are required to report feedback at the end-of-shift meetings.
- Transparent Criteria for Inclusion
 - Clear guidelines specify which types of feedback must be incorporated, prioritized, or reviewed further.
- Weight Given to Vulnerable Voices
 - Feedback from refugees and marginalized groups is given higher priority or additional consideration to ensure their perspectives shape outcomes.

Client Agreement Document - Blaire Hinkle

As we have been tasked with designing an effective and ethical feedback loop, we will provide our client with the following structure to fulfill all requirements asked:

- Designating structures as refugee safe spaces containing resources to better aid integration.
 - Creating signage in a variety of languages with an emphasis on using symbols as text.
 - This allows for ease of navigation and accessibility between multiple languages.
 - Implementing Volunteers Speaking Multiple Languages.
 - Stationed both around signage and walking around to ensure refugees are able to readily access help.
 - Resource Centers within established buildings with information and trained guides about integrating into the country and other general information (data collection).
 - Housing, medical care, mental health resources, monetary advice, info, etc.
- Feedback channels (data analysis):
 - All Volunteers are required to report feedback at end-of-shift meetings, with all responses recorded.
 - Resource center workers are required to report feedback at end-of-shift meetings, with all responses recorded.
 - Feedback and information will be distributed in weekly meetings with elected officials and the chief of police.
 - This allows for better communication across localized government and for proper adjustments to be made as the integration of refugees is furthered.
 - Anonymous reports are available at resource centers in a variety of languages.
 - These reports are available both physically and electronically to increase accessibility and participation.

Through these methods, feedback across a variety of languages and people is able to be recorded and implemented to better provide resources and accommodation to refugees, and they further integrate into the country they are seeking refuge in.

Ethical Importance Statement - Blaire Hinkle

By centering the voices of refugees and center workers, more critical feedback is allowed within the feedback loop. This highlights issues that higher-ups in the integration process would not be aware of and reinforces processes that are working successfully. The acknowledgement and platforming of these voices and issues allows for a more streamlined process of growth and improvement, ultimately leading to a lower cost as the smoothing of the integration process would lower the time and dependency of refugees on provided resources, and would improve the overall experience of refugees attempting to integrate as the prioritization of their needs and voices would directly impact the ease of integration and the needs that have been unaccounted for or neglected by the system. In conclusion, this design for an open feedback loop would benefit stakeholders by lowering costs and making improvements much more efficient, and would benefit refugees by streamlining their integration process and properly addressing their needs.

Benefits of Ethical Feedback Systems Statement - Blaire Hinkle

Integrating ethical feedback systems allows for the consideration, improvement, and growth in the process and betterment of refugee integration. Refugees' voices need to be centered when designing a feedback loop for the improvement of their integration into a given country, especially considering the power imbalance faced by refugees within this system. The structure of integration systems platforms the voices of stakeholders and government officials, which leads to a closed feedback loop that does not offer much improvement on the integration process or the experience of refugees and center workers. Our design for a feedback loop works to counteract this power dynamic by recording and reporting feedback given to staff or reported anonymously, and treating it as a pivotal part of higher-level discussions between organizers, stakeholders, and government officials. This system is reliant on the checks and balances between organizers, stakeholders, and government officials, each party ensuring that one is not dominating over the other during these meetings, and the main focus of these meetings is on reviewing and implementing feedback. This system, unfortunately, could fall apart if one party dominates over the others in addressing issues within the wayfinding system, which is why

it is designed to have 3 parties at these meetings for voting purposes, and to prevent a single party from dominating discussions and implementation of unethical practices.

Out of Character Reflection - Anthony Lawlor

Being given the role of user advocate, I had some specific challenges for this project. First off figuring out what exactly this project entailed took some time for our group. Early on we had our wayfinding idea, but it took some time for us to really figure it out. A hard part for us was coming with our feedback loop of getting refugees help while providing for everyone. We worked very collaboratively on this and came with our ideas of places to go to get help. My part of accounting for everyone was tricky as I had to have all bases covered but we worked together to make sure it came to fruition by thinking about users at a disadvantage and how they would be able to get the same information. That felt like the main purpose of my role was making sure everyone had a voice and an opportunity to receive information and give feedback. I did feel like there wasn't much creative freedom within this role though as once we laid out our main ideas in a document, it was just me expanding on those ideas and not making too much of my own stuff. This might just be because we aren't actually designing anything though for once and just doing the framework. For this group it didn't really feel like we had different roles. The way we communicated and worked collaboratively it felt like we were all working on the same ideas, but filling out different documents related to these ideas.

Out of Character Reflection - Blaire Hinkle

Working as the project manager of a project centered around the design of a wayfinding system to assist refugees with the integration process, while ensuring the voices and feedback of the refugees were prioritized and addressed in high-level meetings between organizers, stakeholders, and government officials, was a challenge that as we proceeded with the design of our solution, we continuously uncovered more problems. Especially with the positioning of my work on this project, I was required to behave as the middleman between the creative director and the user advocate for my

tasks. We would work together to attempt to find solutions that would please the stakeholders while still prioritizing the experience and voice of the refugees.

We initially ended up thinking very deeply about the logistics of the wayfinding system we would implement, with a large concern for the accessibility of resources and reporting networks for the refugees. Ensuring that there was a strong foundation to effectively receive feedback was the first step to building our ethical feedback loop; however, even with the design for our reporting, there are many ways that we could miss valuable responses from refugees, as it can be intimidating to approach volunteers. To counteract this issue, another anonymous report was created in both physical and digital forms; however, ensuring that it is accessible in every language necessary so that each and every refugee can effectively communicate their needs and the areas of improvement needed in the system is a problem that would be largely hard to solve. To best remedy the issues brought on by each of these systems of reporting, we decided that it would be best to utilize all methods to get the most feedback possible, although this does not actually solve the problem.

The feedback loop created by my group's design of a wayfinding system is set up to prioritize the voice of the refugees and acknowledge the gaps in power between the higher-level meetings and the voices of the refugees. Even with the centering of feedback in high-level discussions, there could still be a risk of two parties dominating the conversations and discussions, resulting in the design created to counteract the power dynamic being cast aside.

If I were to receive more help in my role as project manager, I would honestly like more feedback or communication from both the refugees and stakeholders. I feel that I missed a lot of holes in our design, many I am not aware of because our feedback loop was not broad enough. There could have been much more consideration and deeper conversations to be had if we were given more time on this topic. If this were a real project I was managing, I would be incredibly excited to continue going back and forth between ensuring there is an ethical and effective feedback loop created as a result of our design, and receiving feedback from all sides. I know for a fact that there are many areas, especially on the side of the stakeholders and government officials, that had many blind spots, as our focus was predominantly on areas surrounding the feedback of refugees.

Out of Character Reflection - Sophia Arnoldi

As the creative director, I noticed several unique challenges and opportunities within my role. Firstly, it was complicated to be the person in charge of assigning when we would be working on things, and when certain aspects of the project would be due. I had made a general timeline at the very start of the project, but specific dates weren't initially assigned because we didn't know the final deadline for the project yet. Not knowing when the final deadline would be, in addition to working around three individual conflicting schedules made it slightly challenging to lay out the timeline. Plus, after I had made the official timeline the presentation dates were moved, so I reordered the assignment deadlines. Communicating the worktime was also challenging, as I felt that everyone in the group would be capable of finishing their work in the timeframe that worked best for them. So I built the timeline with finalized deadlines as opposed to specific times we would need to be working, trusting that my group members would finish their work on time. This also lessened the aspect of me being 'in charge' as it alleviated my impact on when Blaire and Anthony were finishing their own work. I think this leveled the playing field for us, and made it so that I wasn't the sole person responsible for our project, and that we would all feel like we had an emotional stake in the outcome.

Additionally, I feel as though being the creative director did not separate me from my group members too much. We all generally worked together on everything, by asking each other for feedback on each other's individual assignments, and working together to ideate for the group projects. Though the presentation and PDF were primarily assembled by me, everyone in the group had a hand in crafting it, as I used their wording for specific slides and received feedback from them afterwards. I don't think that Blaire or Anthony felt the need to be dishonest with me, just because I was the 'creative director' but I did try my best to remain open to their feedback and ask for opinions frequently. I also made sure I was checking in with both of them as class went on to make sure our group didn't have any pressing questions for Ben or for me.

Group Authored Reflection (In Character) - Anthony Lawlor, Blaire Hinkle, and Sophia Arnoldi

To start our project and ensure each of the members of this project were on the same page when completing their individual tasks, we shared part in the scheduling and planning portion. This made our team run efficiently, and ensured that deadlines were being met throughout the course of the project. The overall design of the wayfinding system, as well as the design of the feedback loop were also created in a group session. In ideating as a team, we were able to develop a more developed system that merged the ideas of several perspectives. This allowed us to produce a proposal with the most discussion and coverage of issues on both the side of the refugees and our stakeholders. In working together through this project, we collectively agreed that most of our work would be done together and would need to be peer-reviewed often. This gave us all space to step back from our roles and perceive what we had done as a team, and what we had done as individuals within our specific jobs. Additionally, our team encountered challenges as a unit, which gave us the opportunity to brainstorm ideas to move forward as a team.

In conclusion, if there were one thing that we wish we could have done differently, it would be spending more time on the ideating phase of the project. We were all interested in the outcome of the project, and we wanted to spend as much time focusing on the solution to the problem as we could. That being said, we were in a time crunch and had to split time between ideating and actually producing the documents that we needed for the project. With this split time, it's fair to say that all of us think we could have delved deeper into the wayfinding system itself. There are issues that could be uncovered through further research, as well as more solutions that could be discovered. Truly, this series of documents is just the start to a more developed wayfinding system that could provide serious benefits to communities struggling with refugee integration.

Citations

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