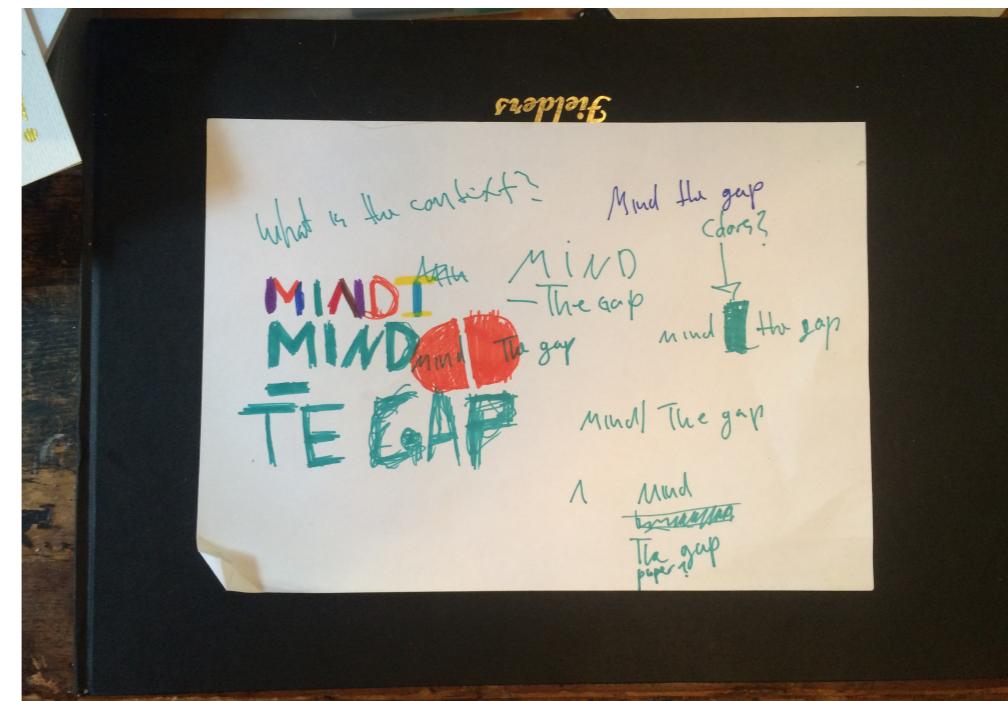


#bethechange

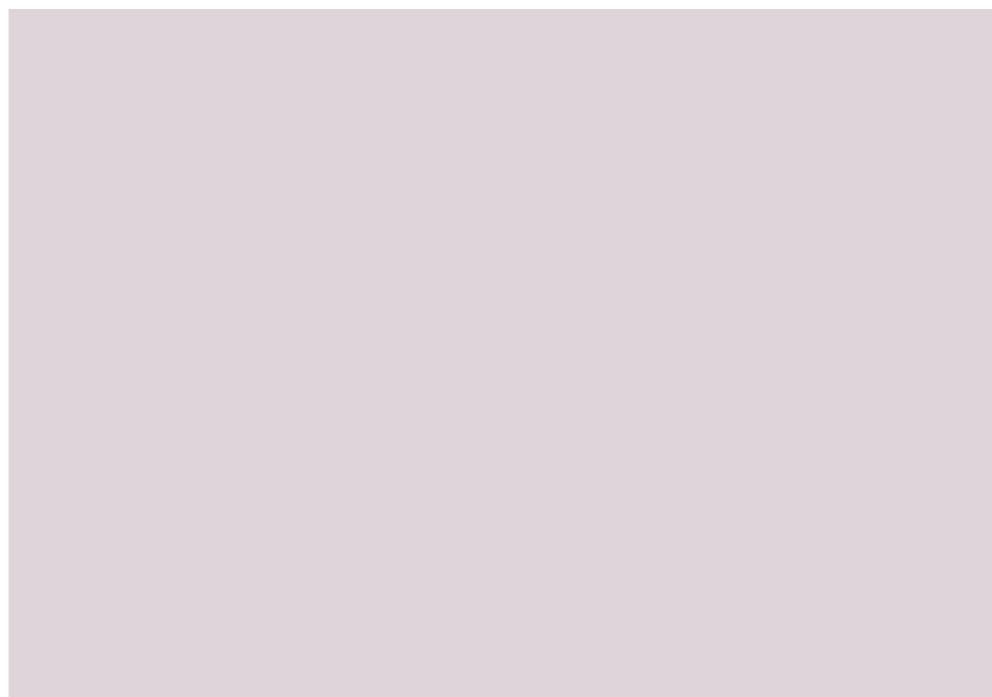
“I believe in the power of stories and the impact that they may have on other people as inspiration to act.”

Created by Tor-Arne Njamo



CONTENT

Introduction	p. 6
Ideas	p.10
Initial development of the main idea	p.14
The people are the content	p.18
Moodboards	p.20
Articles / Thoughts / Streaming	p.21
Color Scheme	p.24
Font	p.25
Logo	p.26
Front End	p.28
Back End	p.29
Feedback	p.32
Social media & impact	p.33
Reflection & Next steps	p.36



Introduction

Mind The Gap is a compendium of stories and thoughts of people and their ideas around societal challenges. I invited three people to share their stories as I wanted to gain some insight and understanding as to why they choose to do the work they do. Why they choose to care when really (in many people's opinion) it is like a drop in the ocean.

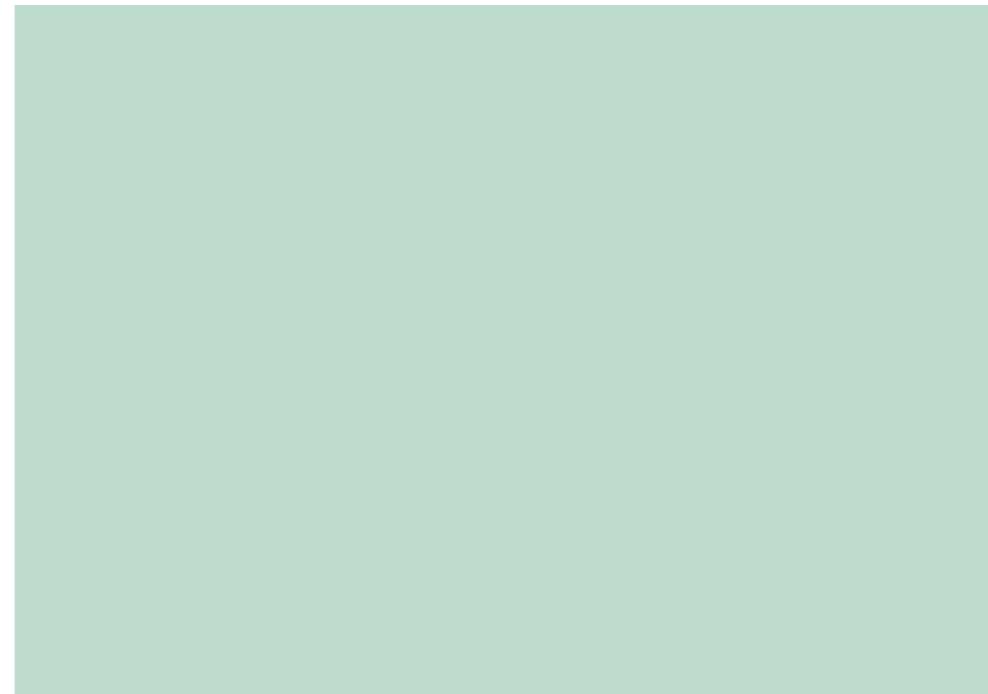
I was lucky enough to be able to interview Pauline Hawkins who runs Phoenix Community Center, a foster care service for young immigrants, Patrick Munroe who is changing the world through sports and Eva Hamilton who runs an amazing charity called Key4Life where young offenders are mentored and helped to get back on their feet.

I hope that their stories will inspire and motivate all and particularly encourage the youth of society to engage in their communities and our joint future. In this release of Mind The Gap I have also invited three students to address societal challenges and issues they care about. To get their honest thoughts and opinions on how we might come about change in the world. Hopefully to show that the youth does care, at least some of us do, to inspire others.

Mind The Gap focuses on London and its citizens as I live here and it is a great city with a colourful immersive cultural mindset. This to me is one of the core reasons why I choose to live here. In this city you can nurture any interest you might have. Though on the flipside of this, the city is facing massive inequality and it is growing each day that goes by. Money is being spent on ridiculously expensive clothes whilst others are starving, there are riots in our streets and the young are feeling ever so more disenfranchised.

I believe in the power of stories and the impact that they may have on other people as inspiration to act. Mind The Gap is not meant to bring anyone despair because they don't feel they can measure up to these 'heroes'. That is not the intention. Quite the opposite. The intention is to create a forum for people to tap into that positive energy and thrive in it.

We are living in an extremely digital world. There's a saying that an image can say more than a thousand words. Think about what you share and the impact it might have.





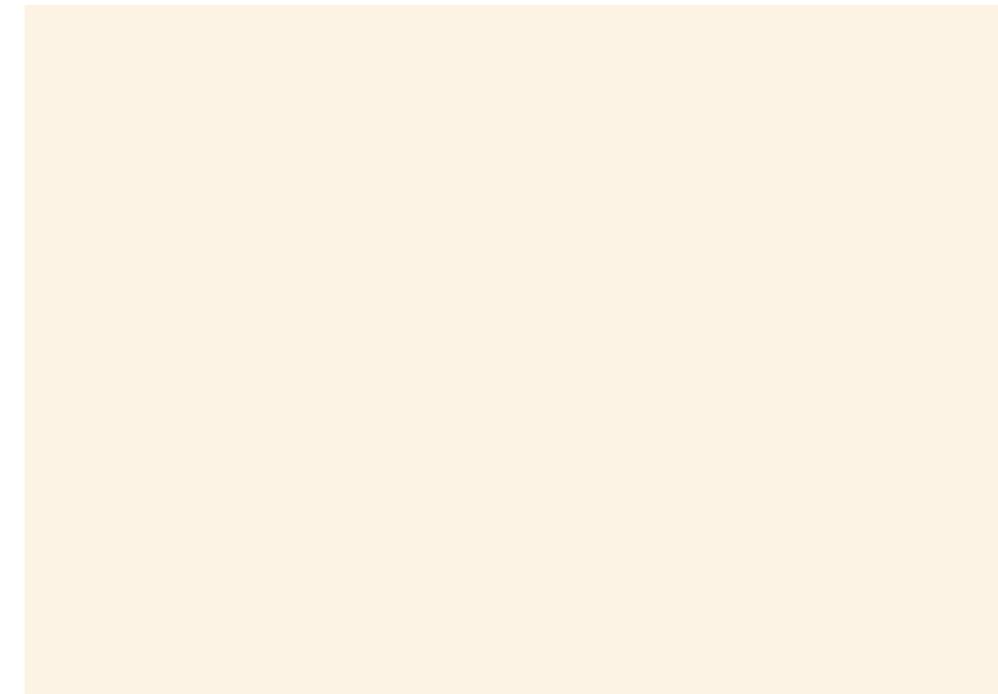
Ideas

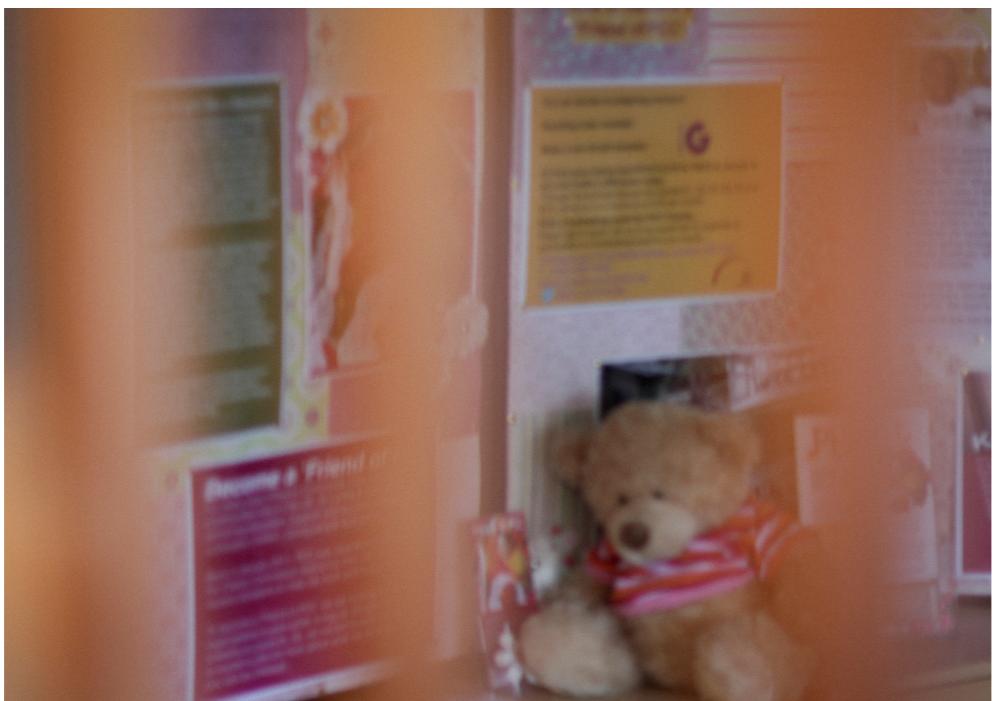
I had several ideas before finalising on Mind The Gap. I always knew that I wanted my final major project to focus on something that, in my mind, had meaning and a sense of value. A project that I personally could grow with. At first I had an idea where I would like to play with walls. More specifically The Facebook Wall but with my own twist. I wanted my project to be focused around forgiveness. You would either give or ask for forgiveness. Quickly it occurred to me that forgiveness is very personal and I doubted that it would have had the impact I was looking for. Inequality has always interested me. How in some places in the world we flourish in food and water whilst other places there are famine and starvation. I wanted to create a project that compared the stories of two young children growing up in totally different circumstances. Though they were so far removed from each other the story would show how interlinked they really are. How one child's life decisions completely affected the others circumstance. I worked on this project for a little while only realising in

the process that I would get very dependent on someone creating illustrations for me as I couldn't really travel to the Amazon and follow a child for weeks to capture their story myself. If I was a more accomplished illustrator I think I definitely would have pursued this project further.

That's when I thought to myself: How can I create a product using my own skills and the city that I live in? I realised whilst writing my dissertation that I enjoy writing. I have always been interested in the power of stories and personal storytelling. I have professional experience in photography and as a medium I find it capturing. I decided to utilise all these content creation skills with my web design skills and create a compendium where I got to be the editor as well.

Mind The Gap was born with inspiration from Humans of New York, my great love for London and the look of fashion magazines such as AnOther, Vogue, Hunger and ACNEPAPER.





Initial development of the main idea

In the early stages of developing the project I was guided towards researching a video called 'The Runners' to be inspired for a more original way of formating interviews. Watching this content challenged my thinking and it inspired me to look further into how I could format my interviews and give them the edge that they needed. This thinking took another step whilst in Norway for Christmas. It was a boring sunday morning and I was watching an interview on television. The interview was between Geir Lippestad (the lawyer of Anders Behring Breivik) and a young man with severe disabilities. The young disabled man was lying on an electrical bed. For the interview they were asked to sit/lie together in a small lift. They did not chose the questions themselves. They were given to them over a speaker.

Both of these interviews captured the interviewees in an out of the ordinary state of being. Which to me enriched the viewer with a greater depth of understanding of the subjects. It challenged the interviewees to open up because they were

placed out of their normal setting. In both interviews the stories were perfectly captured, though in a strange setting.

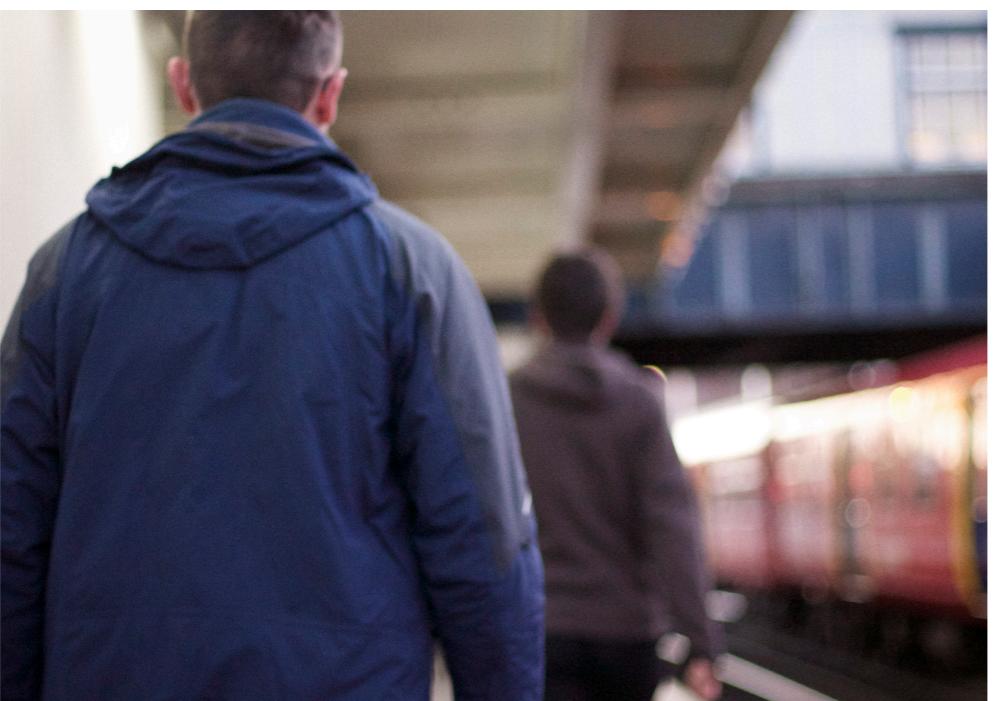
Mind The Gap still uses the inequality theme first explored in the earlier project about the lives of two children. It is still addressing inequality and societal challenges but in a way that's closer to home and possibly more relatable. The name is a pun playing on our beloved public transport system that takes us between Notting Hill and Lewisham.

I wanted to take the public transport theme further and format the interviews either in commute or on a station. I feel this sense of movement reflects not only the pace and energy of London life but also the constant change of direction and fortune in many people's lives.

I played around with various names but I eventually landed

on Mind The Gap after playing with the name Mind The Closing Doors. Mind The Gap is shorter and has a stronger message. Advancing further with the idea I started developing relationships that eventually led to interesting interviews. The interviewees and the mood of the content allowed my mind to start play with ideas around colour schemes, different logos and layouts.

In the early stages of developing my structure I thought I would want to create a continuously updated magazine like Buzzfeed but I eventually decided to go on the more analog route. Meaning if I were to keep this project alive I would want all the posts to be published at the same time quarterly instead of daily or weekly. I decided to do this because I feel over time that would generate more of a moment each time the compendium was published.



The people are the content

The people are what created this project. Without them it would be a blank canvas. After working with the content I started to experiment with ideas on ways the logo, the branding, the structure and the layout could reflect the people I had interviewed. I wanted to create a project where the content and the design were perceived as a whole. That's why it was so important for me to find a way that everything could be joined together.

The interviewees themselves came to me via different channels. Eva and Patrick were introduced to me via a friend but Pauline came in to the project from a different angle. Having heard about my project I was approached by the people behind The Women on The Move Awards. They were curious to know if I wanted to create a piece about Pauline for their award show at The Southbank Centre.

This opportunity was too good to pass up and gave me an opportunity to create a proof of concept for my formative. The evening was filled with people from all different backgrounds which gave the room an electric

feeling and people really enjoyed my piece on Pauline.

Pauline's interview was conducted on the train from Edmonton Green to Liverpool Street Station on a silent wednesday morning. It was very moving interviewing someone that opened up to me as much as she did. I met Eva Hamilton on Fulham Broadway Station and I interviewed her in her car whilst she was driving herself through the streets of London.

Her energy was incredible and her life's story is very intriguing. Patrick Munroe is a very warm and loving person. I managed to catch him in between two meetings at Clapham Junction station. I interviewed him on a lonely table outside a cafe in station filled with the afternoon rush. The funny story here is that I actually met Patrick twice, but in our first encounter my recorder didn't work! The first interview was at 7.30am before he was heading to work. He usually cycles.



Moorboard

The overarching design process and thinking throughout this whole project has been through moodboards. To me this has been a way to capturing my ideas in a very visual fashion. This has helped me unlock my creativity and helped my ideas flow again when I have encountered a creative block.

Articles/Thoughts/Streaming

The interviews in Mind The Gap are very important but I wanted to add an element of outside contribution. This element was added as I felt it was the best way of providing the project with an opportunity to grow. Therefore I decided to invite a few young people to contribute on issues around societal challenges. Getting people to contribute was actually a larger challenge than I anticipated. We are all busy with our lives. In the end I managed to get three young people to contribute on the subject of well being and volunteering. Two subjects that are both close to my heart.

In addition to having thoughts shared on the website initially I had the idea of creating a live streaming event very much like Ted Talks. This was to give my project another dimension. The idea was to get people on stage and tell their story to an audience. All my interviewees agreed to come along and share their stories at the live event and I hoped to add a couple of new contributors into the mix too. I ran into many obstacles when starting to plan this event. I wanted to hold the event on one evening during The Degree

Show. Unfortunately there wasn't a room available for me to use except the space that my class were allocated to exhibit it. I felt that it was perhaps asking a little too much of my peers for me to take over the space for a whole evening. I had to abandon this part of the project but it is definitely an element that i would like to see happen in the future.



Colour Scheme

The colour scheme grew from a deep personal desire to include colours that reflected the people I was interviewing. The people were very colourful personalities but at the time intriguingly grounding and earthy. The colours are fairly unusual which is a conscious decision made by myself. The reason for this is that I wanted to create a compendium that has a unique response from the viewer. The colour scheme is meant to compliment the content and not to overshadow the important words that are spoken. That's why they do not shine but they emanate calmness and gentleness. The colours are impactful due to their difference and subtlety not because they are screaming at the consumer.



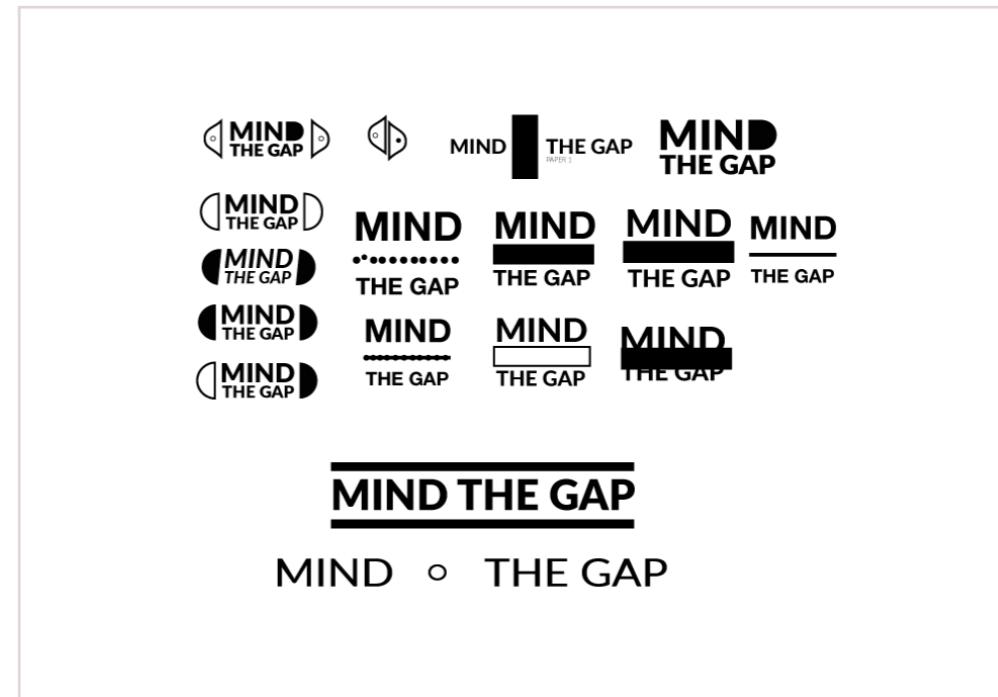
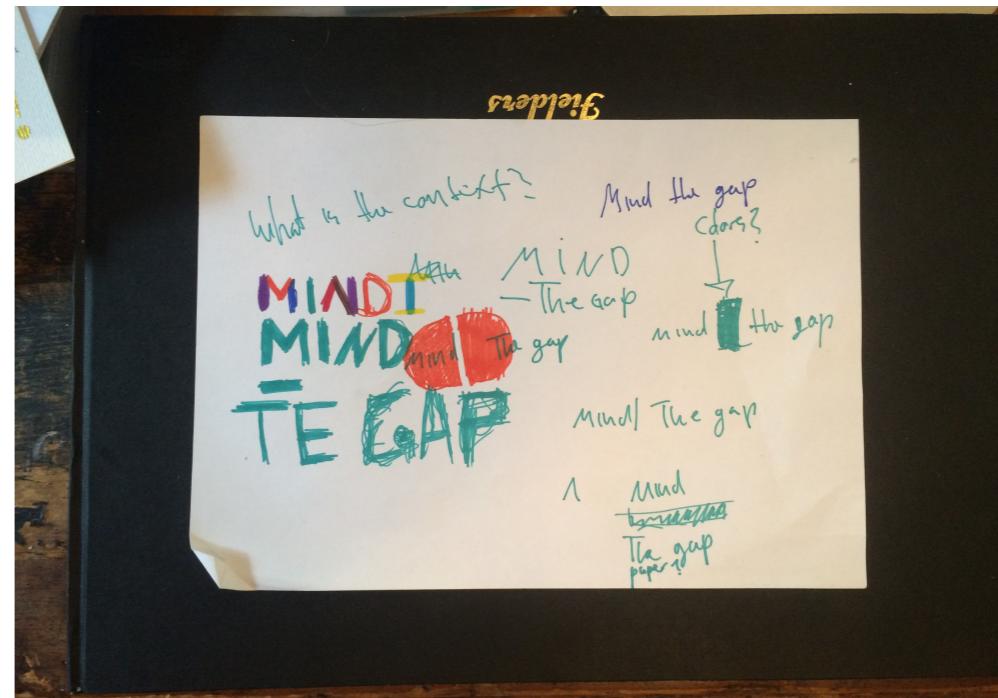
Font

Choosing a font can be dire task. You tirelessly sift through hundreds of them trying to find the one that resonates the most with what you are trying to project. At first I went with a very strong Sans Serif font called Droid Serif but in many ways it was too strong. It came across as a bit too unfriendly and pulled the viewer away from the content. I created a moodboard with a various range of different fonts on a website called Typecast to compare different typefaces next to each other. Sifting through design articles I came across a font called Clear Sans and it was just what I was looking for. First of all free to use, but also very simple and soft but contemporary and complimented the colours.

Logo

Whilst creating the brand I also came up with a logo I felt represented Mind The Gap perfectly. I have recently done a fair bit of logo moodboarding for various other projects so I already had an clear image in my mind of the direction I wanted to go for this logo. In addition to this I also created a moodboard of magazine logos for inspiration.

I began with some hand drawn sketches which were then transported into illustrator where I tried out a selection of different approaches to the design. I went back and forth over a couple of days trying out different implementations of my initial idea. I eventually decided on striking a line through 'mind' and having a bold typeface on 'the gap'. I decided to strike through the 'mind' because no one really cares about 'the gap' and I wanted to emphasize what is the important area of this project.



MIND THE GAP

Front end

The front end design and layout are heavily influenced by fashion magazines which to many might seem strange as the content is so very different. Though who is to say that writings on societal challenges can't also look sexy? One of the key reasons as to why fashion magazines sell like hot cakes is because they look good. I made moodboards and looked through countless Vogues and other magazines until I found a style that I liked. This final "look" is now reflected in my project and runs through the theme of the whole brand.

I used wireframes actively to draw out a selection of different designs before finalising on my final design. This was very beneficial design process as I am a very mind visual person. The layout had already manifested in my mind and creating wireframes helped me dissect my ideas and manufacture a layout I was pleased with. When looking through the compendium the viewer will notice how I have diligently used colour as a graphical design element to keep the reader interested in what's coming up next. I chose the mixture between using an

orange colour on the back of the words, bold and large headings because the compendium is very text heavy. I feel the balance has come out very pleasureable for the reader.

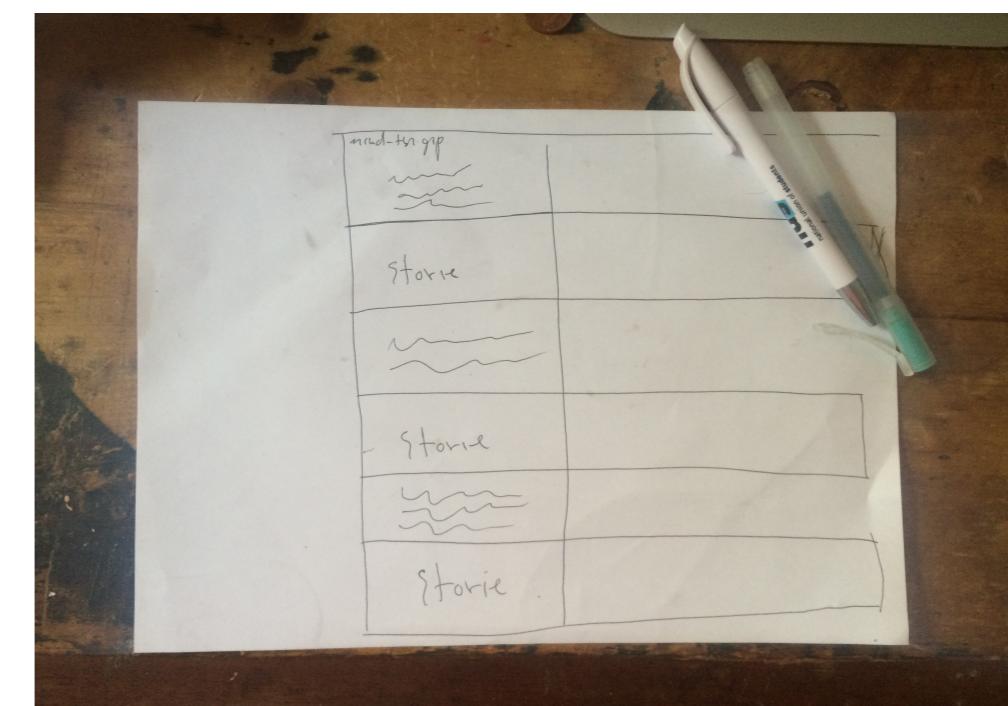
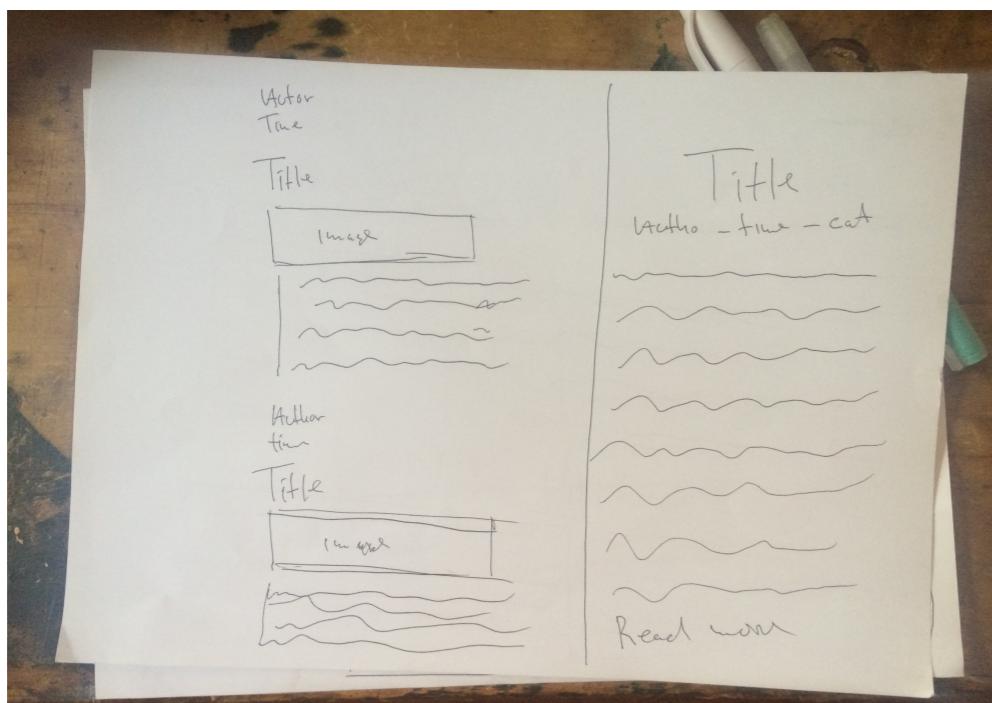
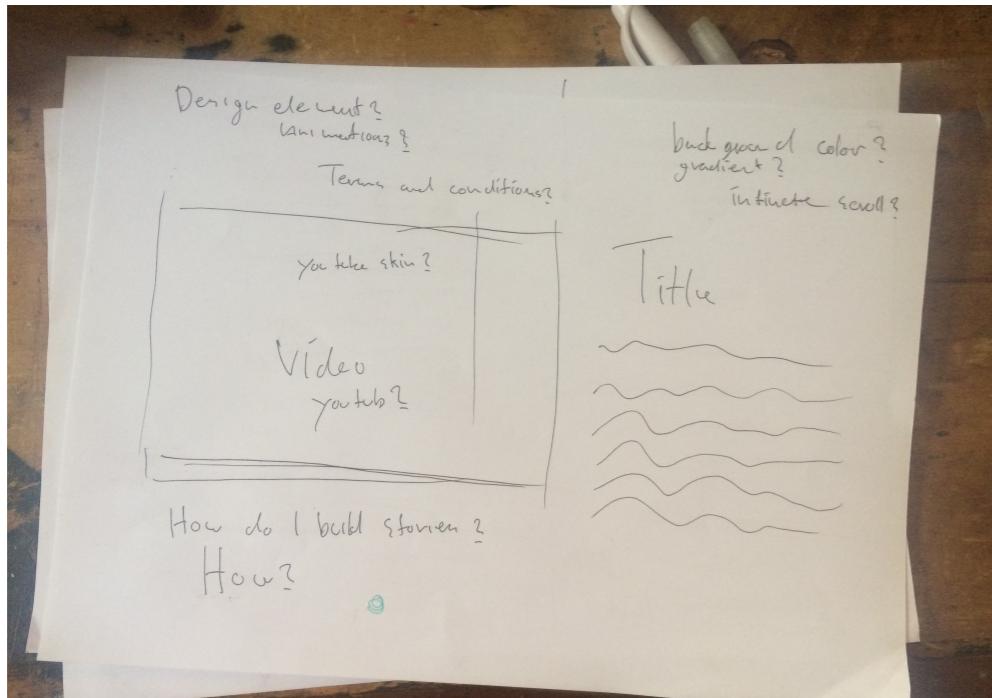
Back end

Producing the back end has involved many challenges which I have enjoyed greatly. My expertise in Wordpress goes back many years but I was uncertain if I could use it for this type of project. I was proved wrong by my tutor Matteo after he introduced me to a plugin called Advanced Custom Fields. The plug-in is extremely powerful and is very diverse.

In the beginning phase of getting to know the way around the plugin I was slightly losing hope because it was not as easy as expected. After weeks upon weeks with trial, error and help from Matteo I eventually managed to build a system that now works perfectly. In all essence I have managed to build a CMS (Content Management System) within itself. Meaning if anyone else in the future would like to take over the project and use my template they could with no problems.

Building a theme from scratch in WP is not easy. That's why I chose to use a barebone theme for my first install called Bones. I felt this was the theme were I would come up against the least pre existing structures

that I couldn't customize. It has helped me retain a clean structure and made it easy for others to take a peek and understand what I have done.



Feedback

In any design process receiving honest feedback is imperative. I have used my close friends as my close council but I have also outsourced feedback from experienced designers. I feel this has helped me to advance my thinking and move beyond my own limitation. Because it has pushed me to think differently about how some of the solutions were going to be put together. For example with the plugin that Matteo suggested. Another example is the font I initially used. I really liked that font but the feedback was that I should change it.

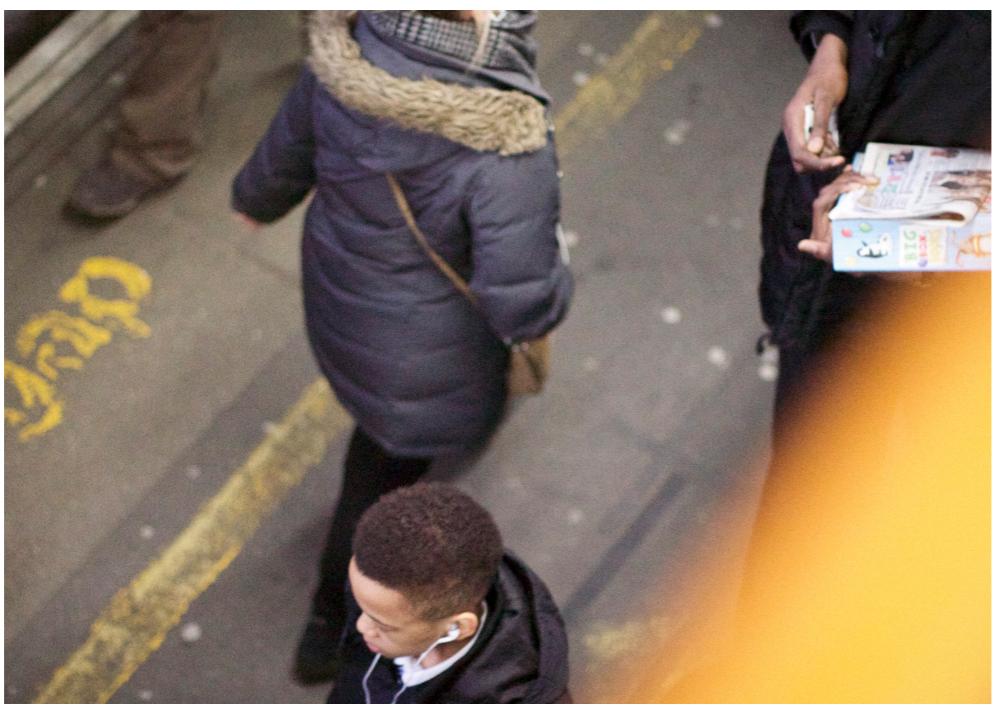
Social media & impact.

This project does not have a large Social Media element to it but I'm playing with hashtags. Every heading is a hashtag.

I'm hoping that people will share my compendium using the hashtag #bethethechange and #mindthegap. The impact I'm looking for can be described in one sentence that you can locate in my manifesto and see underneath.

"I believe in the power of stories and the impact that they may have on other people as inspiration to act."

To me this describes the whole reasoning behind why I even created this project. I hope to change some peoples mindset and to simply share some hope.



Reflection & Next steps

For me this project has been an incredible journey. It has allowed me to establish relationships with people I would not have met otherwise. It has given me the opportunity to express myself in a various different ways.

Both through content creation and through the medium of design. Creating Mind The Gap has also challenged my technical skills which has been a great learning curve in expanding my skillset for future employment. To me that is what a final major project is all about. Expressing yourself, your own creativity, expanding your skillset and emotions.

I wanted to create something I thought was ethical but also something that would have an impact. Looking at my compendium I feel that I have achieved that. Though it has also made me question why I care? Why did I not just create a product that is mainstream and could possibly make me millions? I feel that being allowed to meet these incredible people and hear their stories has given me reason enough never ever to doubt my ambitions and ideas ever again. Because there is no better

thing than helping someone else have a better quality of life. As the producer of this compendium I would love to see it get a life of its own. Grow and become something that's fluid with a various range of branches.

I have built the foundation and now I hope someone can take it further and build an affordable house on top of it.

