

Design for Government

Personalised Roadmap for International Jobseekers



Aalto University
School of Arts, Design
and Architecture

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Executive Summary

This project is a part of the Design for Government (DfG) course at Aalto University. The brief, provided in cooperation with Kela and the Ministry of Finance, focuses on the employment services reform, where TE-offices (The Employment and Economic Development Office) are moved from the state to the municipal level during 2024.

Our brief looks at TE2024 reform through the lens of international jobseekers and their experience of the employment services. The brief places emphasis on the role of official public services provided by TE, Kela and municipalities - and on how these could optimally provide a smooth and effective journey towards employment for internationals. We have, however, chosen to approach the brief in a holistic way that also embraces the fact that people's jobseeking journeys may - and often do - involve support also from other unofficial parties.

During the 12 weeks of the project, we focused on defining how international jobseekers experience the current services and what are the problem areas in the current service journey. From our research, we identified that the way that information is provided in many different stages of the journey leaves jobseekers confused and frustrated. Our proposal is a digital roadmap tool that improves the jobseekers' ability to be proactive and take control of their jobseeking journey. In addition to empowering jobseekers and providing coherent information, our proposal also leads to the resources of employment services being spent more effectively.

The Team



**Mathias Leopold
Hörlesberger**

New Media
Design & Production
mathias.horlesberger@aalto.fi



Mark Laukkanen

Information Networks
mark.laukkanen@aalto.fi



Sanne van der Linden

Creative Sustainability
sanne.vanderlinden@aalto.fi



Sera Remes

Collaborative and
Industrial Design
sera.remes@aalto.fi

Introduction

This project is a part of the Design for Government course (DfG) at Aalto University. DfG is a project based course, in which projects, formulated as briefs, are proposed by governmental stakeholders.

Over the course of 12-weeks, interdisciplinary student teams address these challenges of the government and public sector through design (Design for Government, 2022).

The brief of this project was represented by members of TE services, Kela, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and Ministry of Finance.



The Brief

BACKGROUND ON THE TOPIC BRIEF

The Finnish Employment and Economic Development Offices (TE services) are currently undergoing the biggest reform in half a century. The reform shifts the responsibilities of the from the state- to municipal-level. Currently, TE-services and Kela share the provision of employment service. TE services support jobseekers by providing services to improve employability while Kela is responsible to pay unemployment benefits. After the reform, the responsibilities of the TE services become a significant part of the reinvented service offerings of municipalities. Effectively, this reform means that employment services will be closer to jobseekers and TE services can offer more individual support to jobseekers. At the moment, there exist both traditional TE offices of the state and pilot offices run by municipalities.

As competencies shift during 2024, it's in the interest of all stakeholders to provide smooth service deliveries to jobseekers across the country.

PARTICULAR ANGLE OF OUR BRIEF

Our group's initial project brief focuses on the perspective of international jobseekers in Helsinki, Espoo, and Vantaa. However, the centre point of our project became highly-educated international jobseekers who do not speak Finnish, Swedish or Sami, but are able to communicate fluently in English. The ability to communicate in English removes/eliminates the need for an interpreter which was a distinguishable criteria experts used when speaking about international jobseekers. Therefore, we applied this reasoning to our project brief as well.



FIGURE 1. VISUALIZATION OF PROJECT ENVIRONMENT

Our Approach

HUMAN-CENTERED APPROACH

For our project, the team took a human-centered approach, to ensure that our design proposal considers the users' point of view. In practice, this approach meant that throughout the project we included both jobseekers' perspectives as well perspectives of employees from TE-services and Kela.

HIGH-LEVEL PROCESS OVERVIEW

The project took place over a period of 12 weeks from February 28 until May 23, 2022. In our project, we followed the double-diamond design structure consisting of four phases, Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver (Design Council, 2019). Before going in depth of our project, here's a brief high-level summary on our project process.

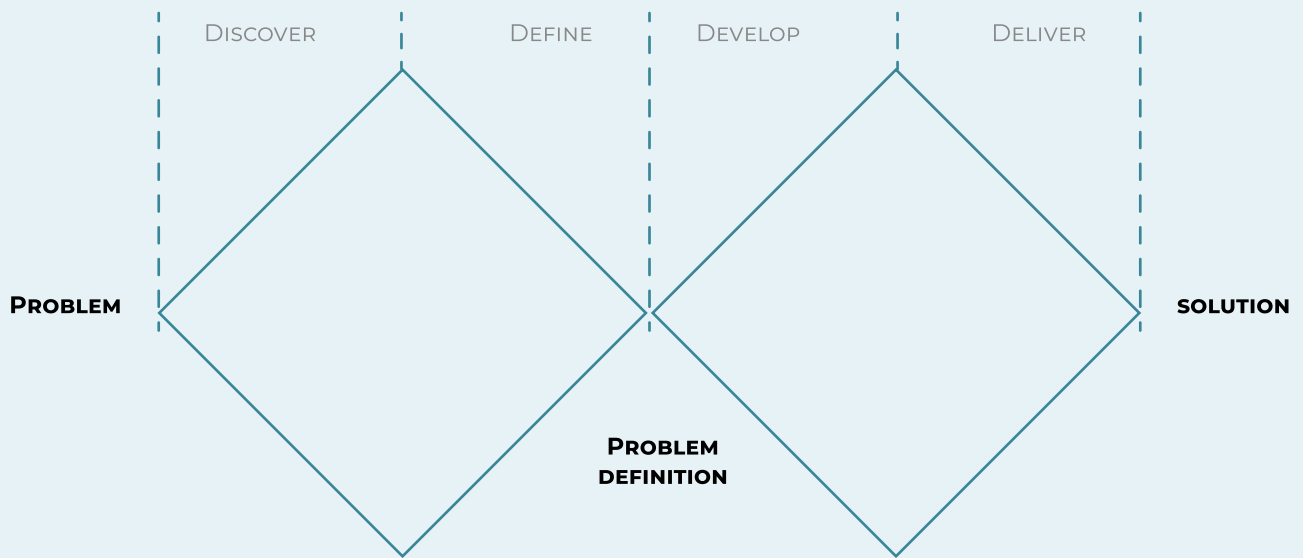


FIGURE 2. "THE DOUBLE-DIAMOND PROCESS OF OUR DESIGN PROJECT". BASED ON BRITISH DESIGN COUNCIL (2007)

In the first part of our project, we aimed to understand the people and their problems involved in our brief as well as grasping an understanding for the system they inhabit. For this purpose, we applied a mix of human-centered research methods ranging from qualitative interviews with jobseekers and experts to on-sight visits of the employment service facilities. In the second part, we distilled our research into insights and defined our problem statement

which we presented at the midterm-presentation. In the third phase, we applied different problem-solving methods to tackle the identified information issues. After having selected the idea of the Personalized Roadmap Tool, we conducted small-scale feedback sessions with experts and jobseekers in the final phase of our project.

Discover

Research

We applied a triangular method approach in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of our project brief. The methods applied included qualitative and ethnographic on-site methods. Building a systemic understanding of the problem area drove our approach in selecting research methods. In other words, we went from high-level discussions at the roundtable to deep-dive subject discussions with experts in the field and jobseekers. The following paragraphs summarize and reason our research approach to make sense of the topic and support us in defining a problem area.



FIGURE 3. TRIANGULATION OF APPLIED RESEARCH.
NNGROUP (2021)

DESKTOP RESEARCH

With the desktop research we aimed at understanding the project from two sides. First, we familiarized ourselves with the reform and its background in order to understand the organizational changes and existing structures. This meant reading up on the reform and related changes like the Nordic Model on TE-services, Kela and municipality websites. We also studied interim reports on the local employment pilots as well as looked into international sources from other Nordic countries.

Second, we put ourselves in the shoes of jobseekers in terms of engaging with the information sources they find and use online. The websites we explored ranged from TE-services, Kela to suomi.fi and other official sources. To further embrace our holistic approach, we searched for unofficial service providers to include in our project. Following this part, we looked into the online presence of organisations such as The Shortcut and Startup Refugees.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

A roundtable discussion including stakeholders relevant to the brief was organised towards the beginning of our project. Similar to our desktop research, the roundtable discussion helped to orient ourselves around the reform and make sense of the various stakeholders, their goals and interests as well their relationships to one another. A full list of participants is available in Table 1 below.

EXPERT INTERVIEWS

A total of eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts from organisations in the field of the employment service reform. The interviews aimed at understanding the structural changes stemming from the reform as well as collaboration with other organisations and more specifically the challenges in serving international jobseekers. A full list of participants is available in Table 1 below.

“Our clients are brilliant. The problem is we lose time in doing things that don’t help the client but are required by law. If we look at the resources given, how many minutes of time of career counselor will a client get each month - with only 20 min, you can’t expect results.”

- Project Manager in a Municipality Pilot

JOBSEEKER INTERVIEWS

Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with international jobseekers. The diverse sample included both people who had arrived in Finland looking for a job as well as graduating international students looking to transition into employment. Some participants had gone through the official employment process with TE-services and Kela once, while others had experience from multiple times and across different municipalities. The interviewed jobseekers also had varied educational and professional backgrounds with desired fields ranging from textile design to information technology and environmental engineering.

The conducted interviews revolved around jobseeker experiences with employment services, with our goal being to map out each interviewees journey and gain an understanding of their needs and challenges. A list of jobseeker participants is provided in Table 2.

ON-SITE VISIT AT KELA SERVICE POINT

To supplement our other forms of research, we also visited Kela’s service point in Itäkeskus. We received a behind-the-scenes tour of the premises and gained an understanding of the structure and dynamics of customer service at a Kela service point.

ID	EXPERT ROLE	ORGANISATION	ROUNDTABLE	INTERVIEW
1	Researcher working with Espoo Employment services	Aalto University		x
2	Project Manager at Competence Centre for Highly Educated Immigrants	City of Espoo		x
3	Senior Planning Officer in City Vitality Sector	City of Espoo	x	x
4	Senior Planning Officer	City of Helsinki		x
5	Lawyer	Kela	x	
6	Leading Expert	Kela	x	
7	Service Specialist	Kela / International House Helsinki	x	x
8	Service Designer	Kuntaliitto		x
9	Chief Specialist	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment	x	
10	Project Manager / Senior Specialist	Ministry of Finance	x	
11	TE Office representative	TE / International House Helsinki	x	x
12	TE Office representative	TE / International House Helsinki	x	x

TABLE 1. EXPERT PARTICIPANTS.

ID	ORIGIN (EU/ NON-EU)	PROFESSIO NAL FIELD	LIFE SITUATION	EXPERIENCE WITH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
J1	non-EU	Design	Came to Finland as a graduate exchange student and decided to finish studies and stay here	first-time
J2	EU	Information Technology	Married a Finnish citize and moved to Finland	multiple times
J3	non-EU	Hospitality	Moved to Finland to study undergraduate studies and decided to stay	multiple times
J4	non-EU	Textile Design	Moved to Finland for graduate studies, decided to stay	multiple times
J5	non-EU	Water & Environment Engineering	Came to Finland as undergraduate exchange student, returned to Finland for graduate studies, decided to stay here	multiple times
J6	non-EU	Information Technology	Married a Finnish citizen and moved to Finland	first-time

TABLE 2. INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS.

CONCLUSION

During the research phase of our project, we deliberately took on a broad perspective to all actors involved in the employment services and the experience of the international jobseekers. In order to gain full understanding of the current situation and the dynamics between the stakeholders, we tried to include all elements related to the organisations, such as both on-site services and online services.

Although not all research has led to the most important insights, overall this phase has helped us gain an understanding of the system of the employment services. Following the research phase, we analyzed the gathered data and formulated research insights. In the following project phase, we utilized our research. The next chapter elaborates on the methods used, and the insights that we gained from them.

The next part of the project builds upon the holistic research phase and focuses on the data analysis and the synthesis of our insights that followed. The analysis of the roundtable interviews and the 14 individual interviews that we conducted allowed us to gain an understanding of the problems and relations within the system of the employment services. We applied several mapping tools to structure the gathered information, these tools includesystems map and customer journey map.

Making Sense of the Brief with Mapping Tools

SYSTEMS MAP

We used the systems map tool to visualise the relations between the different actors within the employment services system. A systems map is a visual map that focuses on the relations between the various stakeholders and elements of a certain system. For the purpose of our project, we placed the international jobseeker in the middle of the map and drew connections to the different stakeholders that are relevant in the employment services, which can be seen in figure 4. While going through the interview data and trying to generalise the jobseeker's experience, it became clear that the relations between the international jobseeker and the organisations and service elements are connected

through the needs of the jobseeker. The international jobseekers have specific needs while using the employment services that relate back to how they experience the services. The identified needs can be categorised into the following: professional experience, employability, information, integration, personal well-being and support. When drawing the connections between the system's elements, it was obvious that the different needs also influenced each other, in either a positive or negative way, depending on the profile of the jobseeker. It is therefore that we decided to step away from the systems map and focus on the journey's of the jobseekers to visualise how their needs play a role.

Need-based system's map from the perspective of international jobseekers in the capital region

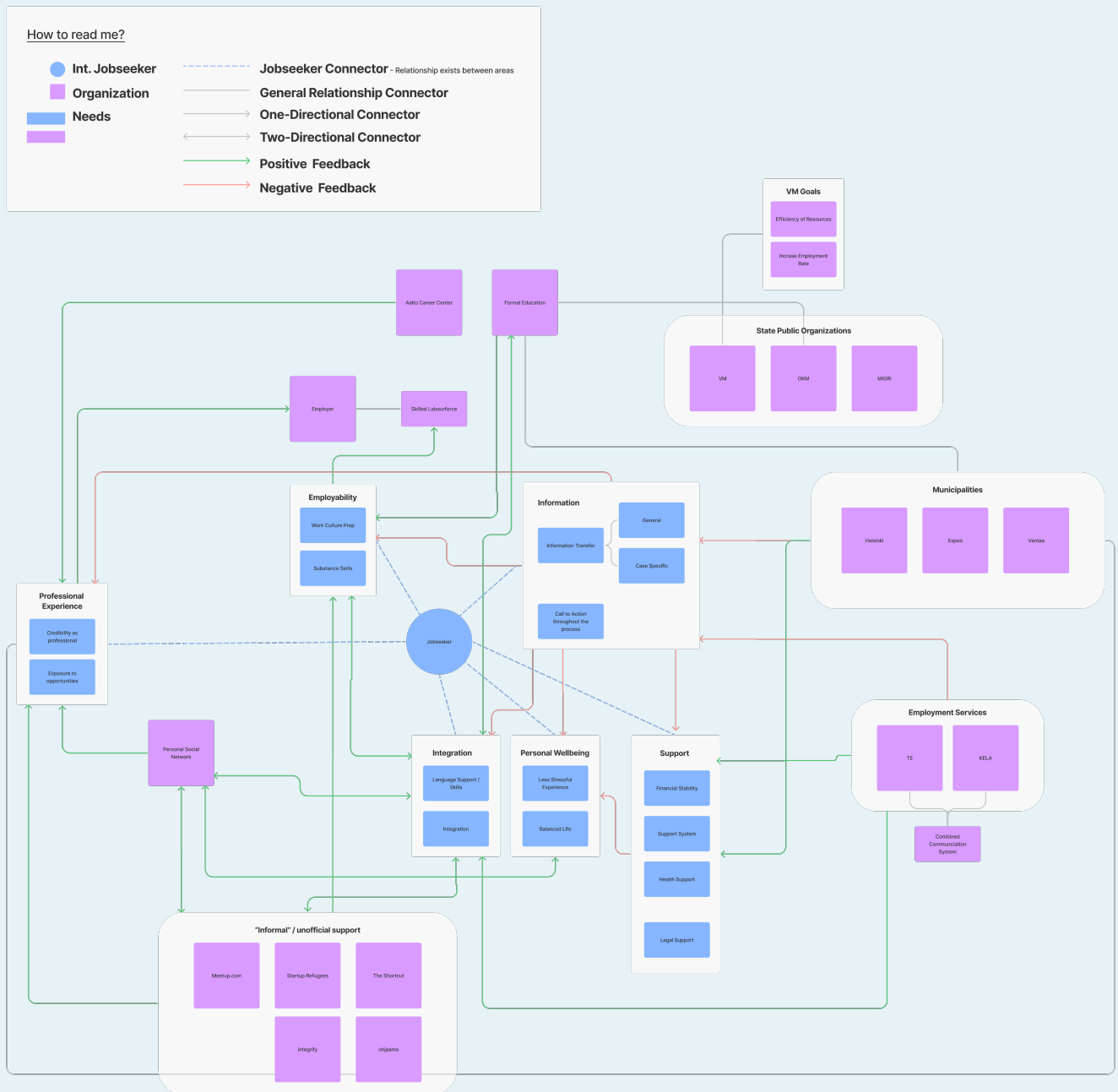


FIGURE 4. NEED-BASED SYSTEM'S MAP.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP

The customer journey is a map of the different steps a ‘user’ goes through when making use of a certain service or product. The journey map includes the very beginning of becoming aware of a service or becoming familiar with a product, to the very end when they either dispose of the product or no longer have to use the service. Although the steps of the journey are visualised linearly, the experience doesn’t always have to be.

We began by mapping out different journeys based on each individual international jobseeker interview. These individual maps included all the steps the jobseekers had taken, their challenges, their decisions, and their experiences. Through the individual journeys, we were able to define the specific phases that each jobseeker apparently goes through.

It is important to note that this is a generalisation of the individual journeys, and so the duration and depth of each phase might differ per jobseeker. However, all interviewees went through these general phases when interacting with the employment services, as can be seen in figure 5. The first phase is becoming unemployed, here the jobseeker will look for information on what to do next. Then, the jobseeker will need to register as unemployed in order to become eligible for the employment services and benefits. When preparing for a job, the jobseeker can make use of different services to gain new knowledge and skills. At last, the jobseeker will need to know where to look for jobs and how to apply to them.

Stability of being student / employed

Finding a job

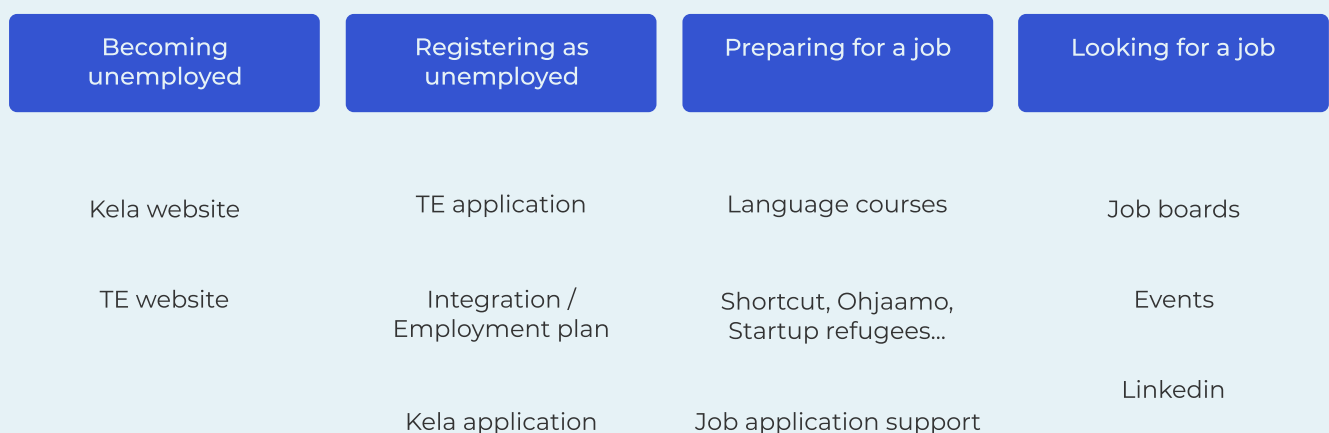


FIGURE 5. GENERAL PHASES CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP.

The following figures will show different quotes from the jobseekers per journey phase. These quotes help create an image of the current situation of the employment services and allow an insight into the challenges that international jobseekers face.

EXPERIENCE OF FIRST JOURNEY PHASE

Since there are different stakeholders involved in the journey, the information is provided by multiple sources across different websites, which can be confusing and overwhelming.

Stability of being
student / employed

Finding a job

Becoming
unemployed

Registering as
unemployed

Preparing for a job

Looking for a job

*“KELA tells you different information
depending whom you talk to”*

*-J6, non-EU citizen, went through employment
process in Helsinki capital region once*

FIGURE 6. JOBSEEKER QUOTES RELATED TO THE FIRST JOURNEY PHASE.

EXPERIENCE OF SECOND JOURNEY PHASE

During registration, the processes are unclear and jobseekers often don't know what is expected of them or where to go with their questions.

Stability of being
student / employed

Finding a job

Becoming
unemployed

Registering as
unemployed

Preparing for a job

Looking for a job

*"The best way to find information is speaking
to other EXPATs - in reality TE doesn't help
with any procedural questions"*

*-J2, EU citizen, went through employment
process in Helsinki capital region twice*

*"Being sent back and forth
feels like a waste of time"*

*-J4, non-EU citizen, went through
employment process in Helsinki
capital region multiple times*

*"Process is not clear, there is no
information of what is needed"*

*-J6, non-EU citizen, went through
employment process in Helsinki capital
region once*

FIGURE 7. JOBSEEKER QUOTES RELATED TO THE SECOND JOURNEY PHASE.

EXPERIENCE OF THIRD JOURNEY PHASE

When preparing for a job, and updating any skills or knowledge, the provided services often fall short of what jobseekers really need to progress in their job search.

Stability of being
student / employed

Finding a job

Becoming
unemployed

Registering as
unemployed

Preparing for a job

Looking for a job

“Language course was not productive for my situation - would have rather spent my days looking for a job”

-J2, EU citizen, went through employment process in Helsinki capital region twice

“Employment plan didn’t actually lead to a job, interviews or any interest”

- J3, non-Eu citizen, went through employment process in Helsinki capital region multiple times

FIGURE 8. JOBSEEKER QUOTES RELATED TO THE THIRD JOURNEY PHASE.

EXPERIENCE OF FOURTH JOURNEY PHASE

When jobseekers start looking for and applying to jobs, they've found support from other organisations more helpful than the employment services.

Stability of being
student / employed

Finding a job

Becoming
unemployed

Registering as
unemployed

Preparing for a job

Looking for a job

"In terms of looking for a job, network opportunities like Shortcut helped a lot."

- J3, non-Eu citizen, went through employment process in Helsinki capital region multiple times

"Registering as unemployed doesn't mean TE helps you finding a job"

- J1, non-Eu citizen, went through employment process in Helsinki capital region once

"You are more qualified than me, we will leave you alone to look for a job"

-J2, EU citizen, went through employment process in Helsinki capital region twice

FIGURE 9. JOBSEEKER QUOTES RELATED TO THE FOURTH JOURNEY PHASE.

The difference in how the international jobseekers go through these phases is based on their specific case. Our user interviews showed that there are different dimensions influencing the life situation of international jobseekers. These dimensions then determine to which extent the jobseekers have to deal with additional obstacles along the way. These obstacles can be described as:

- Having a social network
- Having Finnish language skills
- Understanding the Finnish systems
- Understanding the Finnish working culture
- Recognition of skills, education, and experience

The extent to which international jobseekers have to deal with these obstacles, depends on how much their own life differs from life in Finland. For example, a non-European international would struggle more with understanding the Finnish systems and culture than an European international jobseeker from another nordic country. The more an international jobseeker struggles with the obstacles presented along the way, the more they are falling behind others, especially on Finnish jobseekers who don't have to deal with many of these obstacles at all. The different types of jobseekers that we have distinguished are the graduating international student, the European international jobseeker, and the non-European international jobseeker.

Identifying Insights Based on the Analysis and Synthesis

INSIGHTS - CURRENT SITUATION EMPLOYEES

The TE employees are the ones going through the reform, as their jobs will be changing. Our interviews have shown that unfortunately the TE employees are not always up to date on what is going on, and how things are changing. Since there is almost no contact between TE customer service employees and Kela customer service employees, they are also often

unaware of what the other has provided in terms of support and/or information to jobseekers. Our expert interviews have helped us gain an understanding of the customer service perspective and their challenges with helping international jobseekers. The quote on the next page shows an example of the employee experience in the current situation of the reform.

We have been able to gather the following insights based on the expert interviews.

1. The employees often don't have enough time to help jobseekers with all of their questions during the appointments.
2. Because of unclear information, jobseekers come to the appointments under prepared, which leads to most of the appointment time being spent on helping with bureaucratic formalities such as filling in forms.
3. Because of unclear information on organisational roles and responsibilities, jobseekers sometimes expect different things from employees than what is their job.
4. Because of lack of communication between the different organisations, employees are unable to know what other types of support the jobseeker has received, who the contact person is, what the progress updates are, etc.

INSIGHTS - CURRENT SITUATION INTERNATIONAL JOBSEEKERS

Our research shows that international jobseekers are experiencing challenges throughout the different steps of the employment journey. These challenges are related to their specific needs, their previous experience, their skills, and other obstacles that they have to deal with. On the next page, figure 10 shows how these obstacles are different for international and Finnish jobseekers. All of these challenges have to do with the information provided by the organisations involved in the employment services. The lack of well structured and coherent information makes it difficult for international jobseekers to be proactive and responsive to what is going on in their journey. Based on our international jobseeker interviews and our analysis of the data, we have been able to define the following insights on the challenges and pain points for international jobseekers.

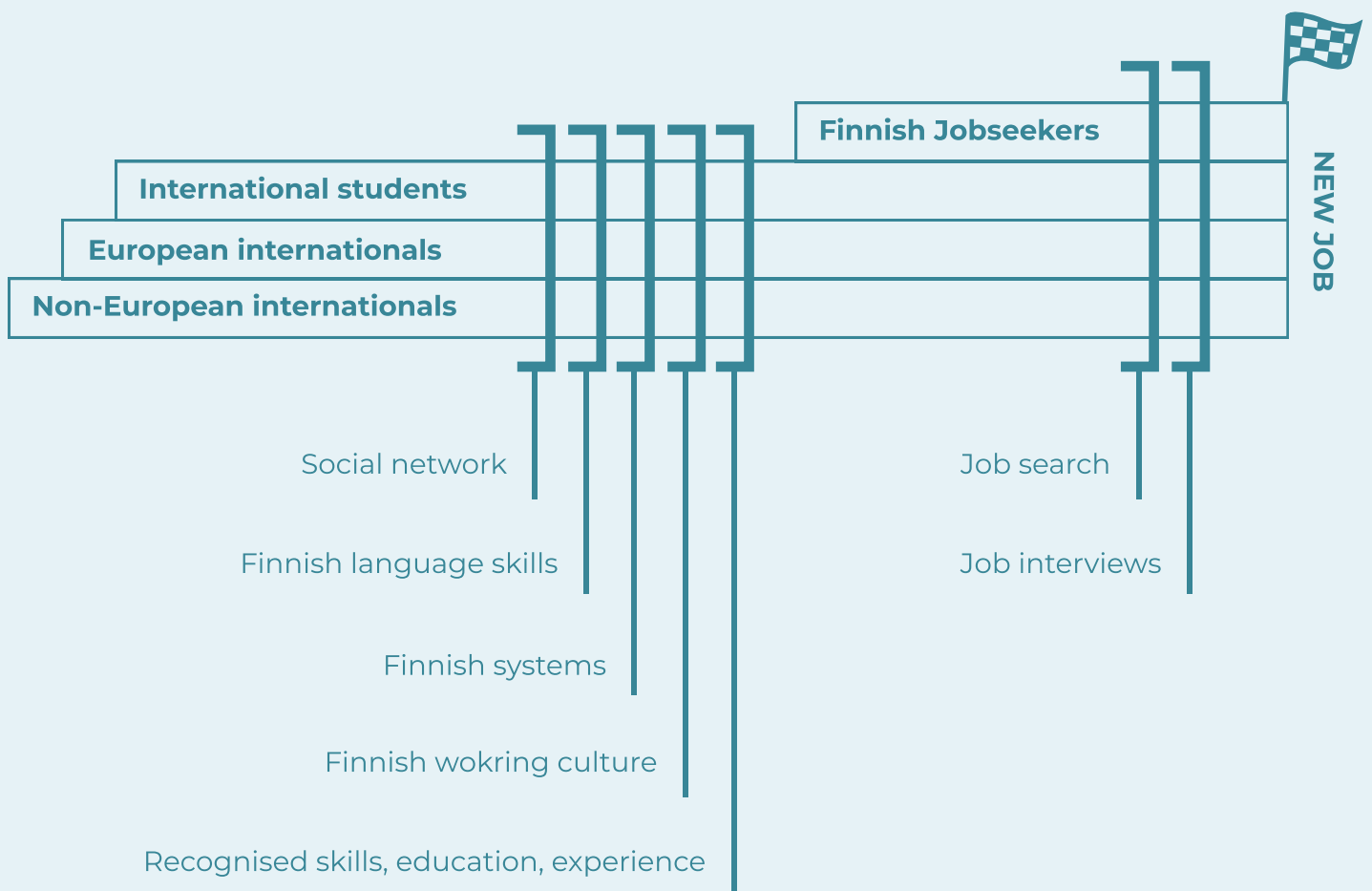


FIGURE 10. OBSTACLES FOR INTERNATIONAL JOBSEEKERS IN FINLAND.

Based on our international jobseeker interviews and our analysis of the data, we have been able to define the following insights on the challenges and pain points for international jobseekers.

1. As the information provided on the employment services is scattered around the different sources of involved organisations, jobseekers struggle with finding the information relevant to their case.
2. The abundance of sources leads to an information overload, which makes it difficult for international jobseekers to be sure they have found all the information.
3. The scattered information creates a mismatch of expectations, where both the employee and the jobseeker are unaware of what the other expects of them.
4. The lack of progress updates during the journey leads to uncertainty about what the next steps are and makes it difficult to be proactive.
5. The support provided through the different services provided by TE/ Kela are often too generic and don't meet the specific needs for many international jobseekers.
6. Other support from unofficial organisations are often seen as more helpful in many cases related to specific jobseeker needs.

The problems described in the list can occur at any phase of the journey, and lead to jobseekers looking elsewhere for support. They specifically look for additional support when losing their sense of control over their journey, and when they feel stuck or not being helped by official support. Or problem statement, and starting point for the ideation, is therefore:

The system of providing and structuring information leaves jobseekers feeling lost and confused, unable to take control of their journey towards employment. The problem becomes visible at different steps throughout the jobseeking journey.

CONCLUSION

The insights that we have gathered throughout our analysis and synthesis have led us to our problem statement. The most important thing that we take with us to the next phase, is that information is key. Information can be seen as the root of many of the problems and challenges that international jobseekers face. Whether it is information in the sense

of experience with new systems, or information on the specific forms and applications that international jobseekers need to fulfil in order to become eligible for the employment services. The 'develop' phase of our project will be introduced next, and is aimed at finding the right solutions to the specific problems that we have defined, but most of all to find an answer to our problem statement.

Develop

After analysing the insights from our research and defining the problem areas we started to move towards the design intervention by identifying different leverage points. Leverage points are places in a complex system where a small shift in one thing can produce big changes for the whole system (Meadows, 1999). We defined that for our case the most crucial place to intervene in a system is 'The structure of information flows'.

This means changing people's behaviour by delivering information to a place where it wasn't before. With this in mind, we mapped the possible interventions on the different stages of jobseekers journey, which we defined during our research phase. This has helped us to analyse the real impacts both on jobseekers but also on other stakeholders.

Ideating for Design Intervention

We analysed and developed the intervention ideas based on the needs that jobseekers have in different stages that we identified through our interviews and research on the processes that jobseekers go through.

BECOMING UNEMPLOYED

In the very beginning of the journey, the jobseekers need clear and consistent information. We defined that one of the core needs for a working system would be to have the same minimum information structure for all municipalities to provide the same level of information about the employment services. We also believe that ideally there should be a feedback loop around the information provided to jobseekers, so that the customer service employees would be able to have a say on what direction the information should be developed, based on the communication they have with jobseekers.

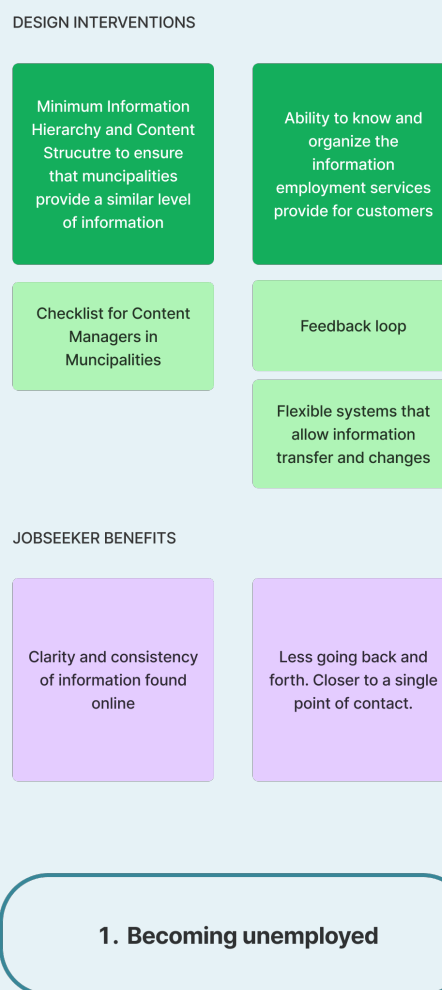


FIGURE 11. DESIGN INTERVENTIONS FOR THE FIRST STAGE OF THE JOURNEY



FIGURE 12. DESIGN INTERVENTIONS FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD STAGE OF THE JOURNEY

REGISTERING AS UNEMPLOYED

During the process that the jobseekers go through with the employment services, they would ideally be able to self-assess their journey and actions they should take. From the interviews with the jobseekers we learned that the current situation is leaving them confused about the process and the actions they should take. If the jobseekers had good visibility on the progress and next steps, they would be able to be fully prepared and feel in control.

PREPARING FOR A JOB

In this stage of the journey jobseekers should be helped based on their individual needs. We believe that some jobseekers would benefit from the possibility of choosing a more independent journey. This requires that the information all the way from beginning is in a form that employee support is not an essential requirement. One key aspect is also the interaction between the jobseeker and the customer service employees. They should have a common understanding of the current situation and understand what is expected prior to interacting with each other.

LOOKING FOR A JOB

One insight from our interviews with the jobseekers was that networking was one of the most important things when they considered what has helped them to find a job. We think that there should be more both formal initiatives and collaboration with informal organisations to help jobseekers find meaningful networks for their situation and field.

Another key insight for this stage is that there is a need for more personalised information and support. Our idea is that by gathering feedback from the jobseekers who have gone through the jobseeking process, there could be resources for people to see more specific information for their discipline. By creating an understanding of what has helped similar jobseekers before, it would be easy to guide new jobseekers to a direction that truly helps them get employed.

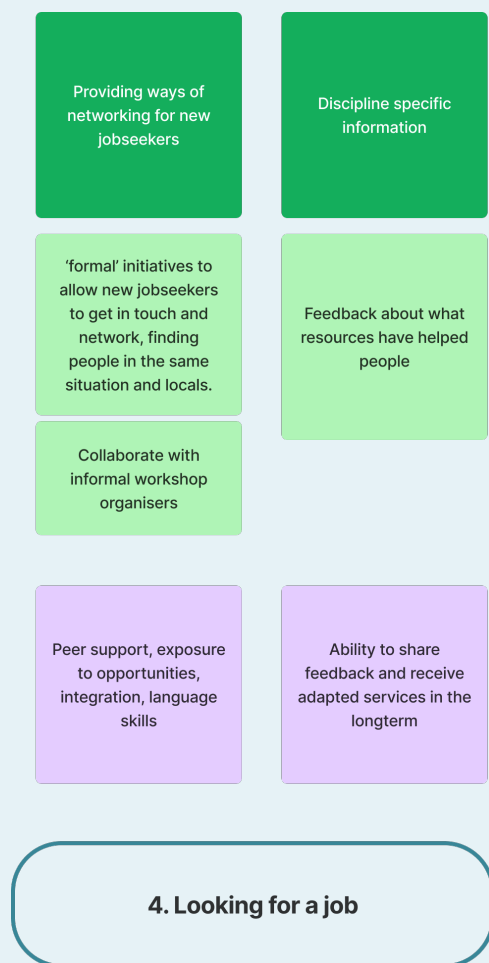


FIGURE 13. DESIGN INTERVENTIONS FOR THE FOURTH STAGE OF THE JOURNEY

Validating the Ideas

We considered different options and their impact by using the 'Government as a system' toolkit (Policylab, 2020), where different government influences are mapped as 56 actions. When working with complex systemic issues, mapping helps to position the ideas and understand the key areas for creating a change. Figure 13 shows that our ideas include various different actions through which the impact can be created.

Additionally, we mapped the benefits of each idea from the perspective of different stakeholders to ensure the direction we choose is tackling the key problems from all of their perspectives. This was important since while our focus is on jobseekers, their journey can not be improved without considering for example the problems that employees working with them face in their daily work.

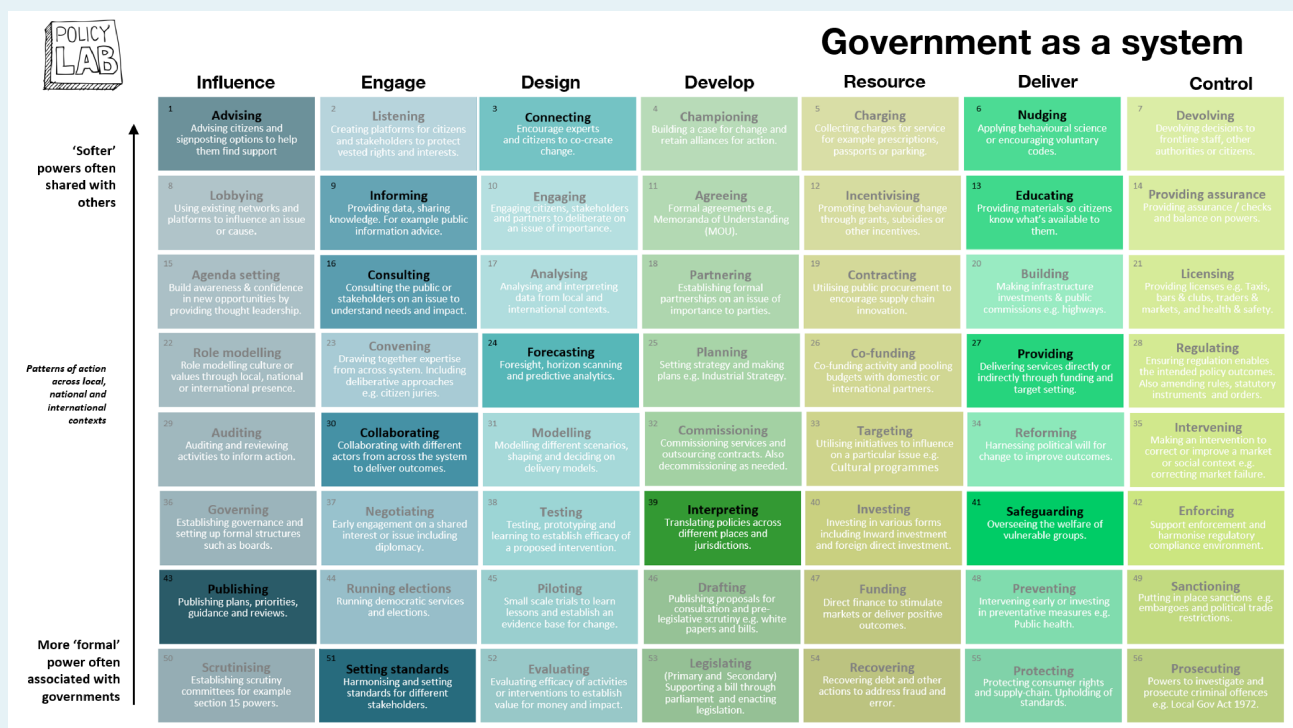


FIGURE 14. 'GOVERNMENT AS A SYSTEM' TOOL FOCUSING ON THE RELEVANT ACTIONS FOR OUR INTERVENTION

CONCLUSION

During the deliver phase of our project, we changed from research to problem solving. The problem definition work from the previous phases was crucial for being able to ideate the design intervention. Through analysing multiple ideas with various methods and from different perspectives we were able to build a strong understanding of the possibilities there are for solving the problems in the international jobseekers' journey.

In the next chapter we explain what we decided to focus on, and open up the process behind developing our solution further.

After having clarity on each of our ideas' scope and benefits, we needed to choose which one to move forward with. We noticed that many of them were overlapping and supported other ideas. Based on our analysis of the ideas, we were able to choose the most meaningful ones and move forward by ideating different versions and features around them. Following that, it was easy to find out which of the ideas realistically would create a positive change in the bigger picture.

Defining the solution

We ended up narrowing our focus on three ideas:

1. Visibility of the jobseeker's own journey
2. Staying in touch with the status and progress of employment service journey
3. Ability to see information from all different organizations.

This direction would solve the pain point of information being scattered when starting the process of registering as a jobseeker, but it would continue supporting the jobseekers throughout the whole journey until getting employed.

Many of the other ideas would also integrate well into this solution. For example, by providing all necessary information in a clear way for the jobseeker it is also possible to direct their focus into networking opportunities and enable finding unofficial channels for more specific support.

USER SCENARIOS

We continued validating our idea through building multiple iterations of user scenarios, through which we presented both the current situation and the ideal situation that our solution would enable. We created two personas, who were based on our interviews with the jobseekers, but still having completely imaginary situations. Having two different personas helped us highlight that there are very different backgrounds and starting points for each international jobseeker, and to consider that our solution would serve people with different needs in all stages of their jobseeking journey.

FEATURES

With our focus on providing the jobseekers visibility on their own journey, with all relevant resources and tasks presented, we needed to define what the solution concretely would be. While the idea stayed the same, we built many variants of the solution. We considered different features for the tool and what the MVP (Minimum Viable Product) version would be. This meant finding what are the very core features that would be enough for our solution to work. We wanted the core to solve the problems while having fewer features and a limited amount of information, but that it ideally would later be developed further to answer more needs.

We created wireframes to visualise how the tool would work. While our wireframes are mainly an example, iterating them was an important process to go through for understanding what our solution can include and how the user interacts with it.

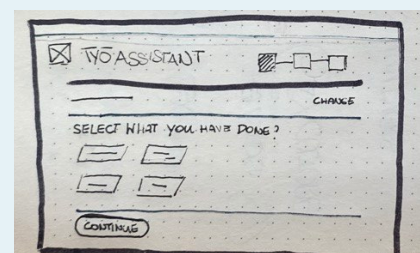
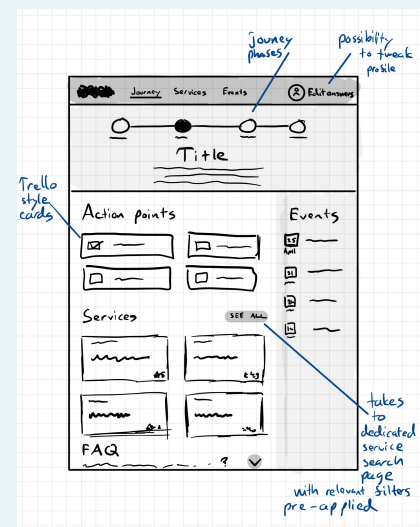


FIGURE 15. EARLY ITERATIONS OF WIREFRAMES

Feedback from the Jobseekers

We arranged a second round of interviews with the international jobseekers to gather their feedback on our proposal. The interviews were semi-structured and there were in total four of them. Starting from the brief introduction of our solution and showing the wireframes, we moved to questions about its usefulness for them, potential entry-points for finding it and future expectations.

Through these interviews we were able to validate that the jobseekers would find our solution really helpful. As people have different starting points, having well structured information for one's own situation would be beneficial to many. We found out that if our solution existed they would use it especially in the beginning, but also later to find more information.

"Of course I would use it in the beginning. You need a map in hand in the very beginning, and at the moment what TE offers is not a map. They have a Botanic Garden with all kinds of road signs but you don't know where you are walking."

-International Jobseeker, J4

ENTRY-POINTS

Another thing we wanted to validate was our idea about the importance of multiple entry-points. We asked our interviewees where they would have found their way into using our solution in their jobseeking. The answers varied based on the background, but everyone brought up the need for having different entry-points for different people. In addition to TE's and Kelas websites for a student about to graduate the natural channel would be through their university, whereas a jobseeker who has just moved to Finland should get the information already from Migri.

ID	ORIGIN (EU/ non-EU)	PROFESSIO NAL FIELD	LIFE SITUATION	EXPERIENCE WITH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
J2	EU	Information Technology	Married a Finnish citize and moved to Finland	multiple times
J3	non-EU	Hospitality	Moved to Finland to study undergraduate studies and decided to stay	multiple times
J4	non-EU	Textile Design	Moved to Finland for graduate studies, decided to stay	multiple times
J5	non-EU	Water & Environment Engineering	Came to Finland as undergraduate exchange student, returned to Finland for graduate studies, decided to stay here	multiple times

TABLE 3. INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS FOR SOLUTION FEEDBACK.

CONCLUSION

Defining what our solution is has been at the core of this phase. By considering how feasible different versions of the solution were and whether they really have a meaningful impact on the jobseekers' experience as a whole, we were able to build our proposal combining elements from the initial core ideas of different stages. We validated the solution through creating multiple iterations of wireframes and by building user journeys.

We also arranged interviews with the jobseekers to ensure that the solution really solves issues that they find meaningful. In the 'Solution' chapter we introduce our proposal and why it is important for jobseekers and other stakeholders.

What?

Based on the process described above, we are proposing a roadmap tool that guides jobseekers by providing personalised employment-related information from start to end, reducing the need to contact customer service and empowering jobseekers to take control of their journey towards employment. The proposed online tool would consist of a questionnaire and a personalised roadmap that is generated based on the questionnaire responses.

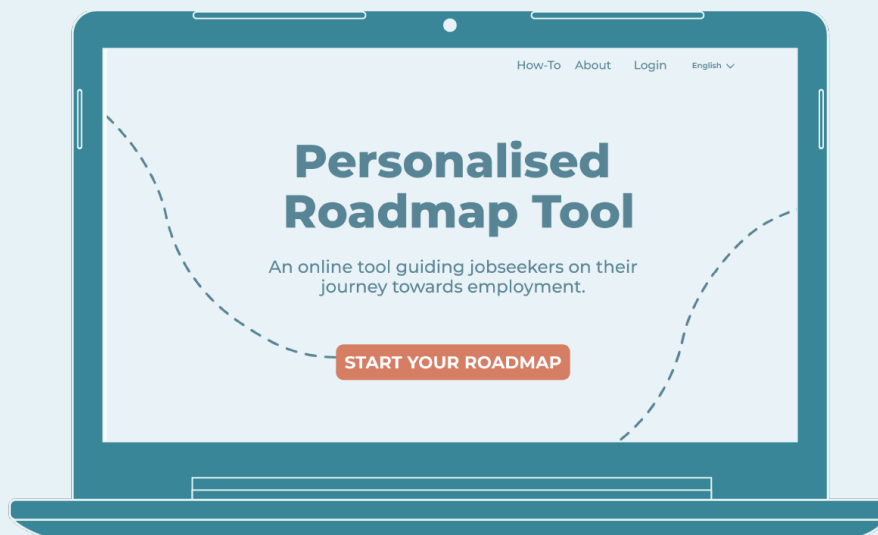


FIGURE 16. SIMPLE EXAMPLE ILLUSTRATION OF A LANDING PAGE.

ROADMAP

The roadmap section of the tool revolves around a timeline that illustrates the high-level phases in the jobseeking journey. Instead of just showing this timeline, the tool identifies which phase of the journey each jobseeker is currently in and provides personalised support for each phase. This support includes a checklist of tasks or actions that the jobseeker needs to take to progress to

the next phase, such as registering as a jobseeker or taking a language course. Beyond these action points, the tool highlights relevant services and events from official and unofficial organisations as well as other information that might be helpful during that journey phase for that particular jobseeker. An example wireframe illustration of the roadmap is shown in Figure 16.

Jobseeker's
location in journey
timeline

Checklist of tasks

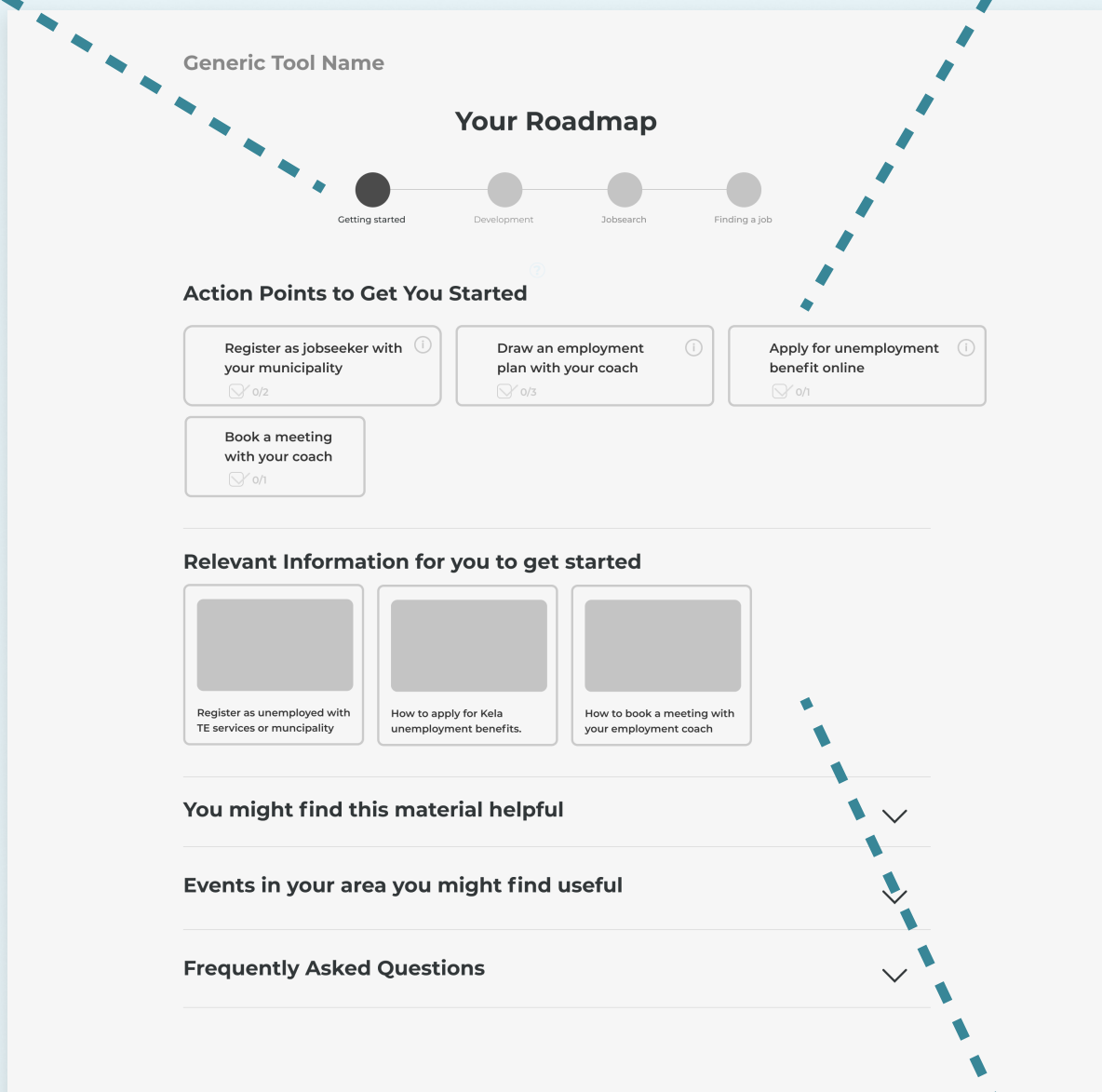


FIGURE 17. WIREFRAME ILLUSTRATING FEATURES AND POSSIBLE STRUCTURE OF ROADMAP.

Services, events & more

QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is filled when first beginning to use the tool and it enables personalisation of the roadmap. The questionnaire is designed to cover the types of characteristics that based on our research help distinguish between jobseekers. For example, a jobseeker's level of language skills would influence the types of language courses (if any) that the tool would offer. A jobseeker's desired field or industry would impact the types of networking events and upskilling

opportunities offered by the roadmap. A jobseeker's life situation, such as whether they are a graduating student, would enable offering a relevant degree of integration support and pointing out specific action points such as applying for a student residence permit to look for work. Specific details covered in the questionnaire, such as whether a person is already receiving unemployment benefits, would also allow the tool to determine which phase of the journey each jobseeker is currently in.

The wireframe illustrates the questionnaire interface. It begins with a header 'Generic Tool Name' and a placeholder for a profile picture. Below this is the section 'Life Situation'. A progress bar shows four steps: 'Life Situation' (active), 'Profession', 'Education', and 'Skills'. The main question is 'What is your current situation?' with a help icon. There are four selectable options: 'I am a job seeker.', 'I am new or moving to Finland.', 'I am finishing my studies in Finland.', and 'I will become unemployed.'. Below this is a section 'Select what is most suitable to your situation' and a 'continue' button.

Generic Tool Name

Life Situation

Life Situation — Profession — Education — Skills

What is your current situation? ⓘ

I am a job seeker. I am new or moving to Finland.

I am finishing my studies in Finland. I will become unemployed.

Select what is most suitable to your situation

continue

FIGURE 18. WIREFRAME ILLUSTRATING THE QUESTIONNAIRE PART OF THE PROPOSED TOOL.

Why?

VALUE FOR JOBSEEKERS

Due to our proposed tool bringing information under one roof, jobseekers would no longer have to attempt to piece together the puzzle themselves from various different sources of information across multiple organisations. The personalisation and filtering of information, would on the other hand help jobseekers filter out the noise and discover the information that is most relevant for their specific situation.

This would benefit international jobseekers by giving them clarity on the employment service processes and the next steps they need to take. Furthermore, the tool would help jobseekers better understand the organisational responsibilities of TE, Kela and others and who to interact with at any given moment. By surfacing both official and unofficial service providers, jobseekers would also become increasingly aware and able to benefit from the entire ecosystem of employment support. Ultimately, our proposed tool would leave international jobseekers feeling confident and empowered to take control of their journey towards employment, instead of feeling lost and confused as they often currently do.

VALUE FOR TE, KELA & MUNICIPALITIES

While our brief and proposal revolve around international jobseekers and their needs, the proposed tool would significantly benefit employees at TE, Kela and municipalities as well. As uncovered in our research, currently a substantial amount of time is spent by employees on providing simple process related guidance and repeating the same information to every jobseeker. With the personalised roadmap tool making the process and next steps clear for jobseekers, less employee time would need to be spent on helping jobseekers navigate processes and more time could be put into supporting jobseekers in actually reaching employment. Similarly, the personalised roadmap tool could enable some jobseekers to progress through the journey a bit more independently, which would then free up more time to pour into those jobseekers, who want and need active support the most.

The proposal also entails a shared and centralised way of structuring and providing information. While each municipality might have their own set of local services, service providers, events and more, the shared information structure and format for providing information could support municipalities in making their specific information clear and easily discoverable to jobseekers and thus

tackling this dimension of the reform successfully.

Finally, our proposed roadmap tool aims to bring together both official and unofficial services. This would help to spread the responsibility of supporting jobseekers more evenly across the entire ecosystem of service providers. As such, in addition to jobseekers receiving a more comprehensive collection of support, the pressure on TE services and municipalities to be able to provide support for all the specific needs jobseekers may have would be lessened.

How?

OWNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

We see the personalised roadmap tool as something that could be owned by KEHA, due to their existing role in developing similar services, such as the new Jobmarket Finland (Työmarkkinatori). Nevertheless, creating the tool and putting it to use would need to be a collaborative effort involving organisations beyond KEHA as well. Crucially many of these organisations could function as entry points through which jobseekers would discover or be guided to the roadmap tool, just as the tool would in return point people to these support organisations, when relevant. A chart illustrating examples of collaboration partners and entry points into the tool is shown in Figure 18.

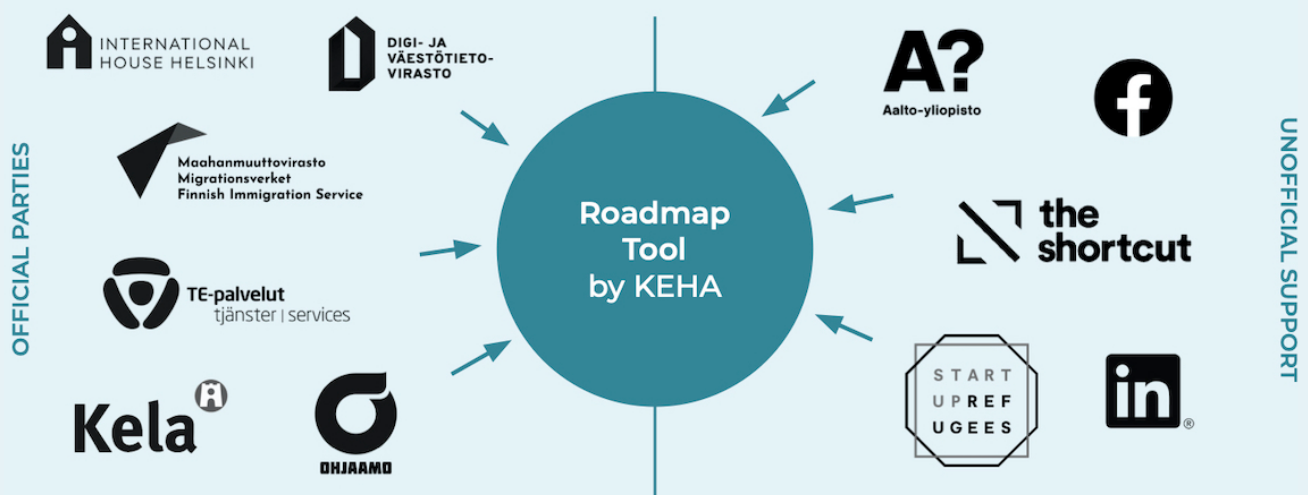


FIGURE 19. EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE COLLABORATION PARTNERS AND ENTRY POINTS INTO THE PROPOSED TOOL.

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

To move forward, we would recommend going beyond the created wireframes and making a simple prototype to further test and validate the concept with a larger sample. After this, the ongoing pilot office phase presents an excellent opportunity for developing an actual minimum viable product (MVP) version of the proposed tool and putting it to the test in some of the pilot municipalities. Utilising the feedback gathered from this pilot testing, the tool could be further developed and iterated on, so that by the time of the reform in 2024 a more complete version of the tool could already be in place.

In terms of the longer term future, there is great potential in expanding the functionality of the tool. In particular, tighter integration with the information systems of TE, Kela and municipalities shows great promise. This could for example mean being able to fill in applications directly in the tool and see their status in the context of the roadmap. The tool could also increasingly be used as a communication channel between jobseekers and employees, with personal meeting dates, messages and other interactions with your employment coach being visible in the tool. A timeline summarising these suggested next steps is illustrated in Figure 19.

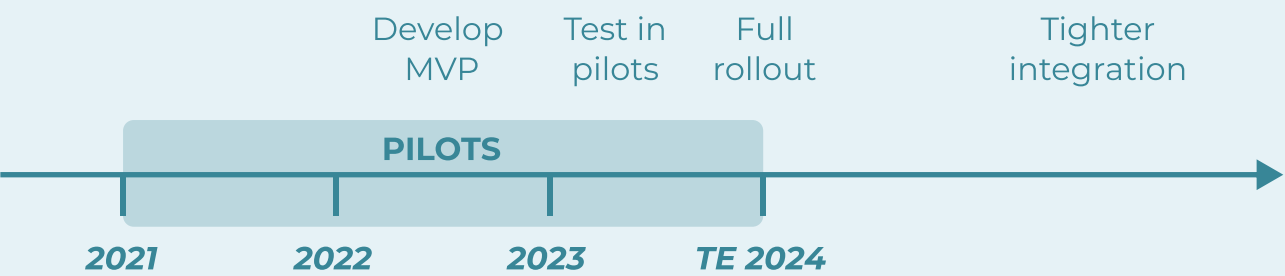


FIGURE 20. TIMELINE OF SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS.

CONCLUSION

We believe the proposed personalised roadmap tool could substantially improve the experience of international jobseekers by empowering them to take control of their journey towards employment. Likewise, the tool would also enable more efficient use of employee time in supporting jobseekers. This coupled with the possibility of starting implementation in a simple manner and only later expanding to

more complicated integrations, make us excited about the potential of the proposal.

While the proposed solution is the main outcome of our process and project, we inevitably also developed our skills and learnt a great deal along the way. These reflections on our process and experience of working on the project are discussed in the next chapter.

Discussion & Reflections

Discussion

Our research showed that the system of providing and structuring information leaves jobseekers feeling lost and confused, unable to take control of their journey towards employment. Moreso, international jobseekers face a number of obstacles depending on their background and life situations creating unequal starting points in the jobseeking journey. In addition to the disadvantages at the beginning, the lack of well-structured and coherent information makes it difficult for international jobseekers to be proactive and responsive to what is going on in their journey. With our proposal, we address these identified issues by providing a tool that utilises existing information presented in a personalised manner. Therefore, our roadmap tool is able to facilitate a smoother path toward employment.

“People move to Finland for serious reasons”

- J1, non-Eu citizen, went through employment process in Helsinki capital region once

The TE2024 reform will shift organizational responsibilities as well as changes to the provision of employment services and job coaching. In our interviews, experts have shared insights, for example, that employees currently spent a lot of time repeatedly providing information and guidance on procedural points.

Considering these insights and the anticipated changes with TW2024, our roadmap tool would benefit employees at TE offices, Kela, and municipalities for several reasons. For example, the tool would provide jobseekers clarity on processes while freeing up time on the employee side. Furthermore, by including official and unofficial service providers, the entire ecosystem of support providers would share the responsibilities of supporting jobseekers. Therefore, TE offices and municipalities would be under less pressure to provide support for every possible need.

“Finland grows on you”

- J1, non-Eu citizen, went through employment process in Helsinki capital region once

International jobseekers in Finland often face different starting points than their Finnish counterparts on their path to employment. What our research showed is that international jobseekers are invested in Finland and have developed ties with the country. Therefore, it is in the interest of the Finnish government to improve the experience of international jobseekers by empowering them to take control of their journey towards employment.

The duration of the course, the in-depth project briefs, and the extensive teamwork allow us to reflect on our process and the project. First, we will address some positive points about our project that worked well, and then we will discuss what didn't work for us..

Reflections

WHAT WORKED WELL.

First of all, although the brief mainly focused on the experience of the jobseeker, we are very glad to have taken a more holistic approach. Including the perspectives of both jobseekers as well as the reform experts has been beneficial to our project. The expert interviews have given us much needed context, an understanding of the existing system and reform, and helped develop a proposal that benefits not only jobseekers, but also service providers. The learning that we take away from this is that there is always a bigger picture. While there tends to be a 'main user' in most projects, it is seldom as simple as that. In any situation, there are plenty of other relevant stakeholders that directly or indirectly impact the experience of the 'main user'. Using the systems mapping tool helped us in gaining an understanding of our bigger picture.

Secondly, even though the systems map has proven helpful to comprehend our bigger picture, it also showed us how the relations within our system were a lot harder to define.

Rather than keeping stuck on this, we quickly switched to a user journey map to place more emphasis on the jobseeker and their experience, specifically including their needs. From previous experiences, we had known that a user journey can be a helpful tool. By changing our tool, we were able to keep the jobseeker at the centre of our project. The learning that we take away from this is that tools are meant to help you progress, not slow you down. There is no need to enforce using a tool for the sake of using it, or try to use it beyond what it is helpful for in a given situation. The tools don't carry value in and of themselves (intrinsic value), it's about what you can achieve with them.

Additionally, one thing that really worked well in our group has been the team dynamics and the project organisation. Without too much discussion or trouble, we easily switched between roles and responsibilities when necessary, keeping in mind each other's skills and capacity. We have experienced a good use of both independent work (people doing independent scenarios/wireframes/etc and only then piecing best bits together) as well as shared work sessions. The learning that we take away from this is that people are different, and so are tasks. You can't expect someone else to work in the exact same manner as you, because they won't. It is important to focus on communicating and at the tasks at hand, and then let others handle it in their own way.

Lastly, while creating a mock-up/prototype, we always kept in mind the fidelity of our work. We have had some discussions on how far things needed to be developed in order to get our concept across. It is important to understand the effect of level of fidelity, as well as the effort and resources that need to be put into making it. We were very cautious of our time and reminded ourselves not to get caught up with detailed UI/UX, branding and more. Rather than making things pretty, we decided to focus on the value of our proposal. The learning that we take away from this is that you should always be aware of your time and resources, and keep in mind the scope of your project. Think of what the goal is, and how you can achieve that. And in the end, it is always more important to be convincing, than to have made something pretty. At least in our opinion.

WHAT WE DO DIFFERENT NEXT TIME.

Something that we have come across multiple times during our project is the struggle of documentation. We started out in Figma, since that is a nice tool for making any visuals, maps, notes, etc. It allows for easy collaboration and quick communication. However, it is so easy to get lost in, especially when you're all working on the same board. We had not spent time dedicated to cleaning up our board, and at some point it was simply too late to get started with it. Although we were still perfectly able to find whatever part of our project we were looking for, it would have been impossible to send this to anyone else who would want to look into our project. The learning we take away from this is that it is important to understand the difference between a living document and a document that is still polished/organised. Especially when thinking about future reference, if anyone else wants to take a look, or even for ourselves after finishing the course. The use of a living document allows for creativity and freedom. However, the lack of sections, titles, little explanation/conclusion, and link between the different parts, can already make such a big difference in the ability to transfer any of the steps that we have taken.

Thank You!

Our team would like to thank everyone involved in this project. Thank you to the stakeholders involved from TE services, Kela, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and Ministry of Finance. Also, thank you to all the interview partners who shared their personal stories and gave us a good understanding of their experiences.

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