the girl effect

Nike Foundation

designmatters
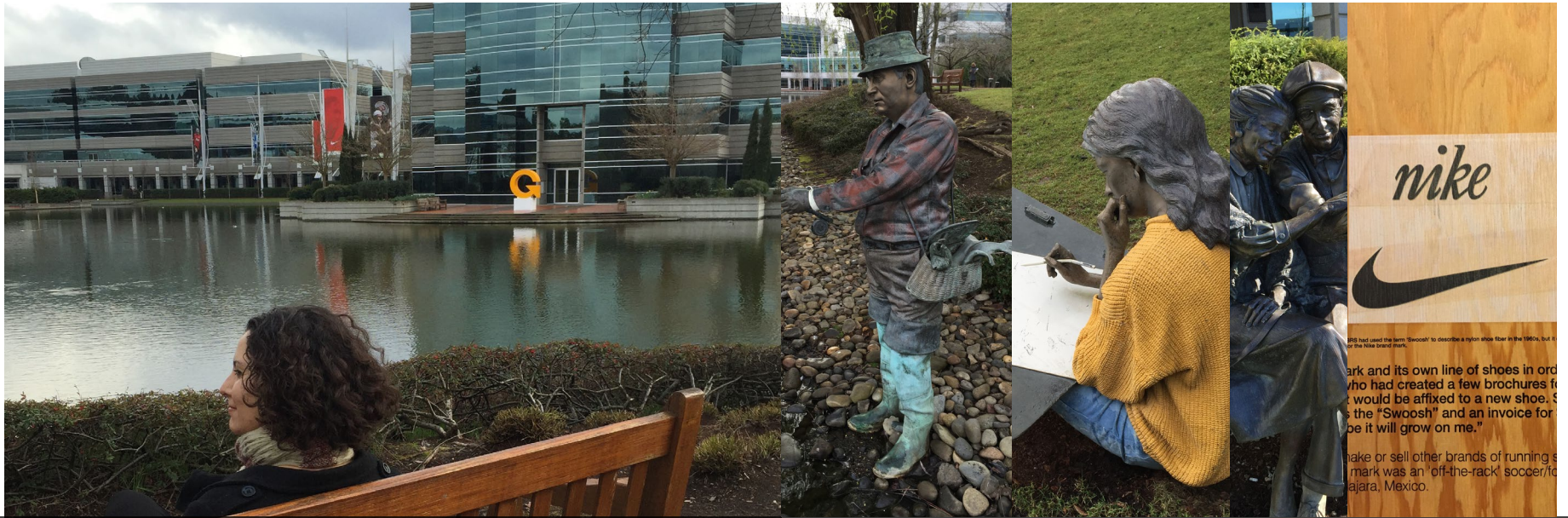● Art Center College of Design

FELLOWSHIP
SPRING 2015
MARIANA SOMMA
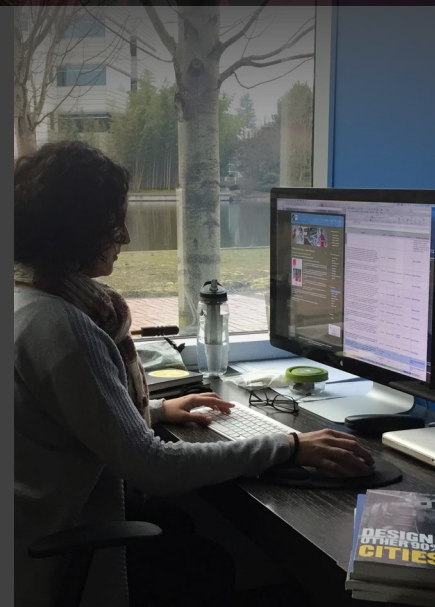GRADUATE INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

THE CAMPUS

The Foundation is located at the Nike Headquarters in Beaverton, Oregon. The campus is stunning, with pristine soccer fields and beautiful Nike employees running around fully armed in the Nike brand from head to toe. There is a huge man-made lake in the middle where geese flock, and my office has a great view facing the water. Parking is always an adventure, with a lovely 20 min walk across campus to the building where the Foundation is located.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The Foundation offices are separated into smaller "studio hubs" for each department. The Innovation Department's area is painted bright sky blue and is called "The Well"- a tribute to the space where most people in rural areas meet to exchange ideas and socialize. The office itself is painted with vibrant colors, and huge canvas posters hang with the Girl Effect Manifesto quoted all around. When you enter, the first thing you see is the phrase "The revolution starts with a 12-year-old girl"... pretty powerful to be reminded of this every day :) There are also beautiful canvas prints of girls from around the world.

I was asked to prepare an office-wide presentation recap of the Fall 2014 Girl Effect Sponsored Studio course and project outcomes from all the teams. It was important to show how this was a collaborative trans-disciplinary process where students had to design and create plausible business models simultaneously. I analyzed the common threads between the seven student projects, as well as how they evolved individually while maintaining the overarching goal and impact on girls.
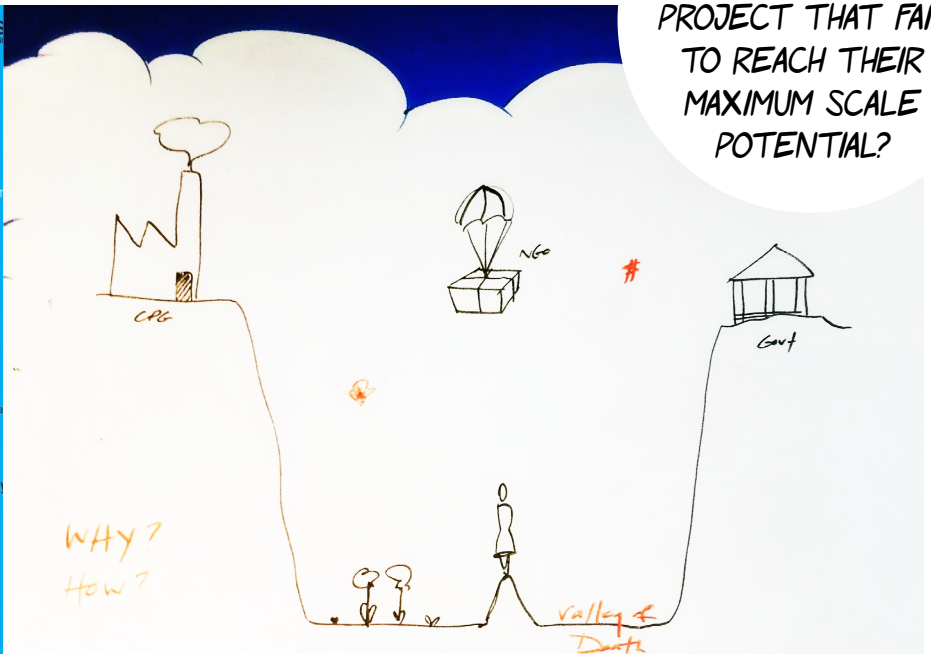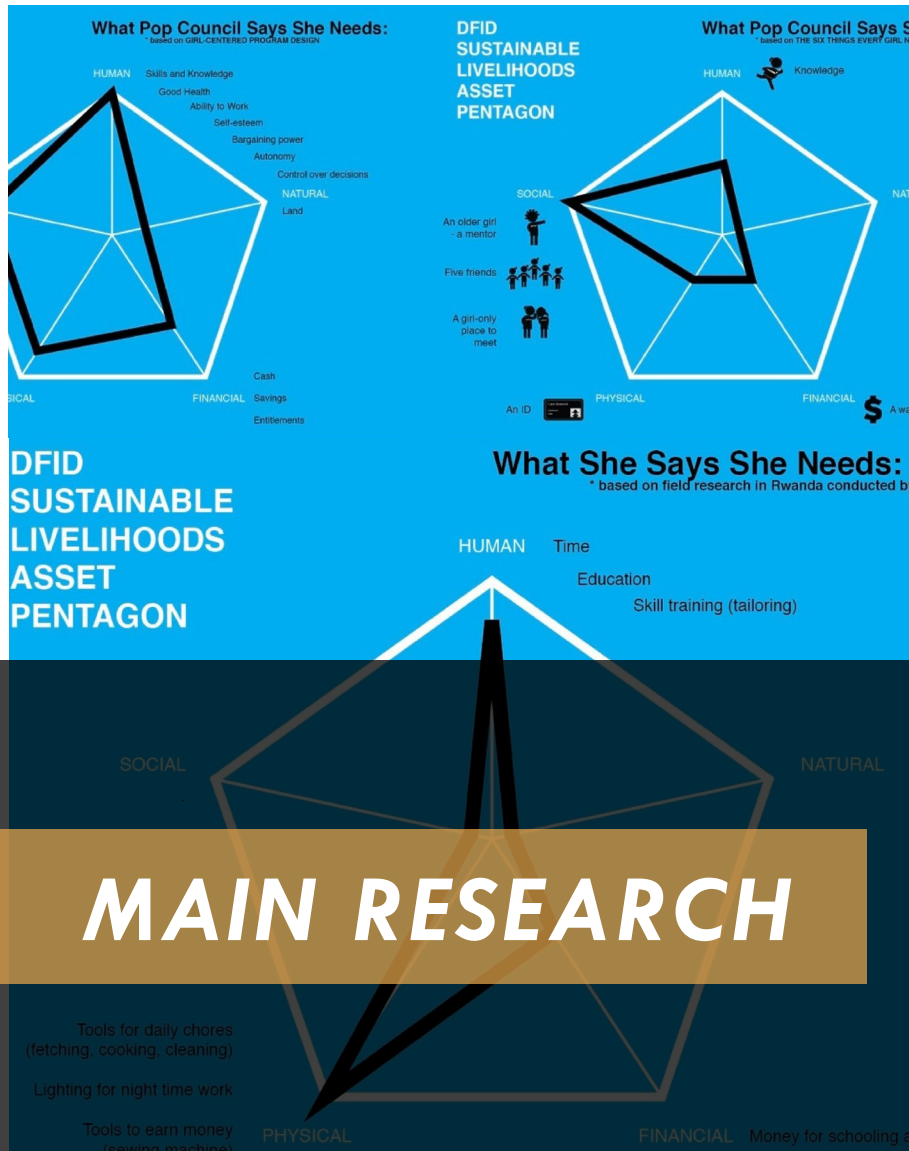
GIRL EFFECT STUDIO

STUDIO PROJECT FOLLOW-UP

The project I was a part of during the sponsored studio course was the Asali Collective- a concept focused on environmentally responsible methods of income generation for young girls, by means of a community-based cooperative program that teaches various skills through the art of beekeeping. During the research phase, we had made valuable connections with several NGOs working to bring beekeeping techniques to rural populations around the world. Post-studio, and as a part of my work at the fellowship, I would be following-up with these organizations to see if our concept and beekeeping product solutions could be tested within the communities they currently serve.

Through collaboration with Conrad Bérubé, Founder of NGO Bees For Babar, and technical trainer with NGO The Bee World Project, the Asali Collective was given the opportunity to send two swarm catcher prototypes to Conrad for field research and testing during his visit to Uganda in January 2015.

ASALI FIELD TESTING

MAIN RESEARCH

Another objective of my fellowship research was to examine the global landscape of social impact projects with a focus on physical tools and assets. Due to the high instances of impact projects not scaling, and the lack of concrete data available, I would identify the projects that have successfully scaled, analyze the findings, and determine the key factors relevant to why they reached maximum scale potential.
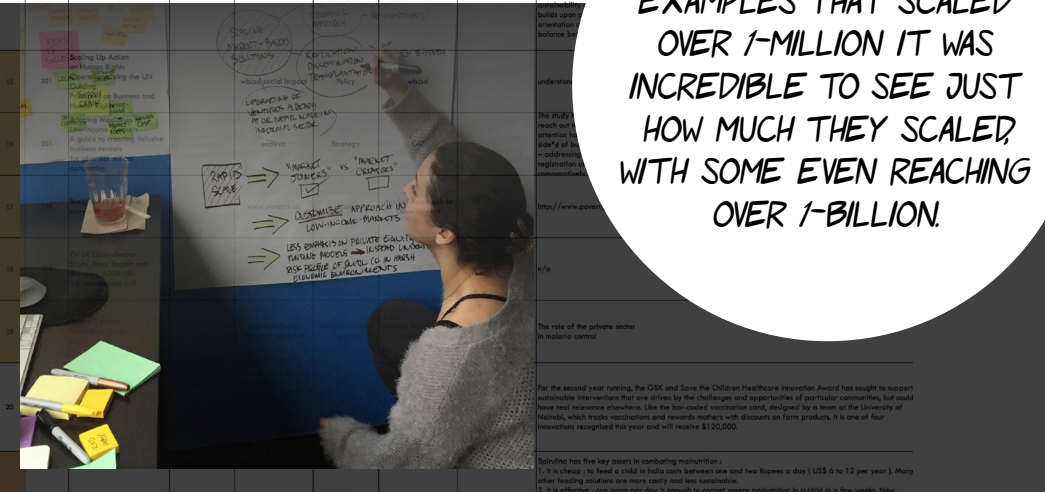
The research prompted an investigation of market-based and international development solutions within lean economies, through in-depth analysis across multiple business sectors.

The information was so extensive and diverse, there needed to be a way to organize and make sense of it. I began with filters focused on different sectors, varying parts of the business model canvas, and project types. I then categorized the findings based on scale tiers of <10K, <1M and >1M+ to get a real sense of how many projects were scaling.

OUT OF THE FEW EXAMPLES THAT SCALED OVER 1-MILLION IT WAS INCREDIBLE TO SEE JUST HOW MUCH THEY SCALED, WITH SOME EVEN REACHING OVER 1-BILLION.

APPROACH

CLUSTER MAPPING, SYSTEMS DIAGRAMS, BUSINESS MODEL CANVASING, EXPERT INTERVIEWS, AND AFFINITY DIAGRAMMING WERE USED THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS TO UNCOVER INSIGHTS.

ITERATIVE PROCESS

The research process was not about getting to an anticipated result, but rather letting the research guide us as we explored the data. This encouraged a flexible and dynamic process fueled by curiosity and a deep analytical approach at every step.

GREAT PEOPLE

It was wonderful to work alongside such talented and motivated individuals within the Foundation. I was blown away by the collective passion, expertise, and dedication to tackle global issues of poverty, education, and financial literacy- all through the lens of the 12-year-old girl.

SPECIAL THANKS

A warm thank you to the following who brought insight, perspective, and mentorship throughout the fellowship journey:

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