

Final Report

Hartman Ellen • Teräsvuori Sara • Vasara Lila • Zeps Rihards

MAKE

Muotoilulla arvoa kasvavasta elinkaaresta



**Euroopan unionin
osarahoittama**



**LAB University of
Applied Sciences**



Päijät-Hämeen liitto

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
UCD overview	5
Design Process	8
Prototyping	11
Final Solution	18



Introduction

The following is a report we have conducted on our design process in the User-Centered design studio at LAB.

The project was developed in accordance with MAKE as a sustainable solution for circular economy.

In this report, we introduce the theory applied in our project and the process that led to our final product. We have identified that people of Lahti are not knowledgeable about the potential of shopping locally and sustainably enough.

Moreover, the presence of large enterprises and oversaturation of foreign products is endangering locally produced goods and drawing out local businesses.

Our final product Täällä was created as a potential solution to these problems by providing a service for inhabitants of Lahti and local businesses and making more sustainable decisions and encouraging circular economy.

We have also emphasized the importance of family needs and how to encourage families of Lahti to choose more sustainable and affordable options for their shopping and everyday needs.

In this report we first introduce the theories we have applied in our design process, then we go through our practical process which includes research, ideation, and prototyping.

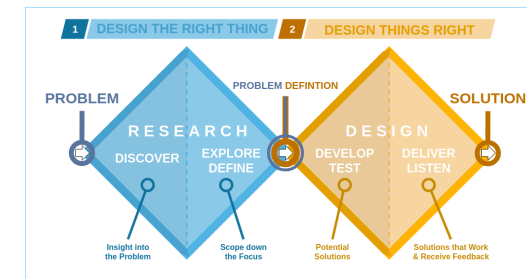
Finally we will reflect and consider our final solution and it's possibilities.



UCD overview

Design Theory

User-centered design theory focuses on understanding users and creating solutions that meet their actual needs, not the designer's assumptions.



Direct interaction with users is crucial to avoid preconceptions. This approach ensures a seamless user experience by centering the entire design process around them.

In our project, we applied this method through open-ended interviews with local parents, gaining insights into their routines, challenges, and needs.

These conversational interviews provided unexpected, valuable information, guiding our design.

Personas

Next, we analyzed the raw data from interviews and surveys to develop personas—fictional but research-based representations of user archetypes.

Personas embody users' wants, needs, and lifestyles, helping designers stay focused on solving real problems. We created three personas reflecting varying commitments to sustainability and different lifestyles.

From these personas, we crafted how-might-we (HMW) questions to frame problems as opportunities for design solutions.

After exploring ideas, we selected a direction based on these questions.

Background research

For background research, we used benchmarking and case studies.

Benchmarking identified existing concepts to avoid redundancy and ensure innovation. Case studies offered detailed insights into real-world solutions, helping us address gaps effectively.

We employed several mapping techniques:

- Story maps simulated scenarios where personas interact with our site, revealing functional needs.
- User journey maps traced first-time users' experiences, highlighting emotions and improvement areas.
- Stakeholder maps visualized relationships influencing our website's ecosystem.

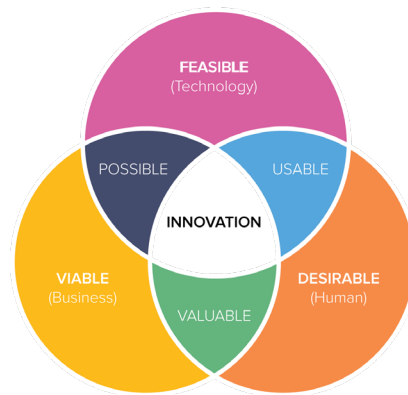
Prototype

In the prototyping phase, we sketched and refined ideas to identify flaws and improvements. Prototypes underwent testing with new users, whose fresh perspectives revealed further opportunities for refinement.

Throughout, we adhered to the three pillars of innovation: viability, desirability,

and feasibility. This framework guided our decisions, helping us balance creativity with practicality to achieve an innovative yet realistic solution.

This iterative process ensured that our design stayed user-focused, adaptable, and grounded in solving real-world challenges.



Design Process

The Brief

According to the project brief, that we received from MAKE, the aim of the project is to promote circular economy for businesses with the target group of families with children. The first step in our process was trying to understand the users, the families with children.



User Insights Report

The user insights report was a significant help for our design ideation. Through our interviews and our survey, we gathered valuable information about our target group.

Finding the problem

Most noticeable was the fact that most locals find it difficult to name local businesses, and that they do not frequent more than a few,

Needs



even if they do know some that are located in Lahti.

Many locals in Lahti wish to act in a more sustainable way, but there is no source that helps them understand/know what businesses offer more sustainable alternatives to what the large chain companies offer.

How Might We

From these insights, that we detailed in our User Insights report we gathered How Might We-questions that helped us ideate on how to move forward.

We posed questions like:

“How might we provide families with reliable information on the sustainability of products?”

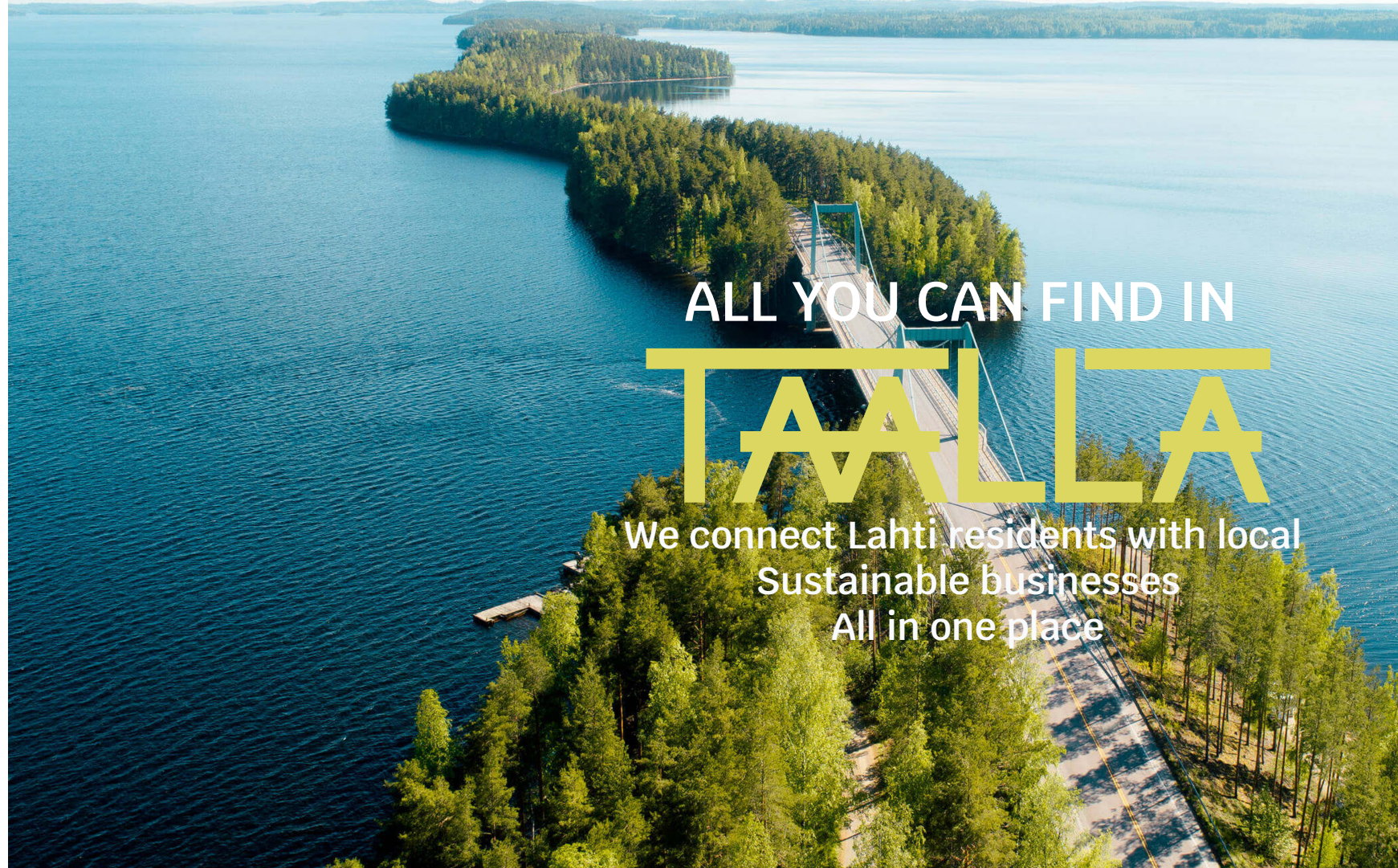
“How might we help local businesses to be more seen by customers?”

These lead us to our solution space from which we challenged ourselves to question how to provide these needs. We worded these into How Might We-challenges.

From our How Might We challenges we had a strong outline of our goal. We wanted to provide information and possibilities to make more sustainable choices and make it easier. We started discussing ways to provide easily accessible and understandable information and ways to distribute it.

Our Demographic

We wanted to keep in mind the businesses as much as the families with children. In our user insights report we had thought up an idea for a website and during our first brief with MAKE, they mentioned a possibility for a website.



The Solution

From there we chose to start designing a website that would unite our goals of keeping it local and spreading information about sustainability.

Our website started from the simple thought of letting people know more about their local small businesses while providing a framework for a sustainability rating system.

Our base assumption is that buying local is more sustainable as it reduces the product's carbon footprint with smaller supply chains, supports the local economy and the community.

We wanted to encourage this because we believe that if consumers were aware of the possibilities, they'd shop more

Prototyping

Planning and Ideation of the layout

The development of the website was divided into a few parts. We first had to emphasize the key features that would be available to the user and how these features would overall contribute to the user experience.

Due to our limitations and time constraints we knew that it would not be possible to implement all the ideas, so we focused on the main few ones.

The goal was to develop an easy-to-understand layout that would be accessible to users of most needs, even illiterate users.

The most essential elements would be placed on the homepage of the website where the user would gather the first impression.

Moreover, we had to make sure that the businesses would still be given exposure even if the user were simply surfing the website and not actively searching for items.



Good On You

Good On You is a platform accessible to everybody focusing on helping its users evaluate and make smarter and more sustainable choices when shopping for clothes and other merchandise.

The platform aims to empower users and provide transparent information on the environmental and ethical background of most clothing and fashion apparel brands that offer e-commerce services.

Their goal is to also promote sustainable fashion and to encourage brands themselves to adopt better and more humane production practices.

The experience of a user can be described as:

ordinary e-commerce surfing but with brand ratings, comprehensive reviews that reveal details about brands’;

policies
practices
certifications

and areas of concern, shopping alternatives aligning with user’s personal values, articles and guides covering sustainable materials, fast fashion, reduction of fashion waste and ethical shopping.

The main feature that we emphasized about Good On You, which inspired the creation of Tällä’s rating system, is the unique brand rating system.

Good On You rating system evaluates brands based on three areas of production:

Planet
People
Animals

The planet category assesses a brand’s impact on the environment, its carbon footprint, use of resources and waste management.

The People category assesses brand’s ethics over its labor, covering aspects like fair wages, working conditions and child labor.

The Animals category assesses a brand’s stance on local and global animal welfare, including its use of leather, fur, and other animal-derived materials.

Salpakierto

Salpakierto is a waste management platform based in the Lahti region. It offers and provides waste management services to the general public living in Great Lahti Region.

The company also provides information on recycling and food waste management for schools and ordinary citizens in the form of guides, posters, courses, and entrepreneurship.

They have multiple sites providing these services. The user experience, in its essence, can be described in a way that users navigate the website and search for the nearest trash sorting collection point to visit.

Through their promotional efforts they also encourage its users to practice proper waste management and recycling practices.

Through our case study of Salpakierto we established a few characteristics that would be applicable to our website.

Firstly, the information would be offered in multiple languages like Swedish, Finnish, and English by minimum.

Secondly, we would incorporate a map feature that shows users all local businesses nearby.

Thirdly, considering that Salpakierto already has a well-structured and resource rich website and platform, we would not be touching upon waste management directly in our services.



ESRS

European Sustainability Reporting Standards, short for ESRS, is a set of guidelines developed by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group EFRAG to standardize corporate sustainability reporting in the European Union.

The standards are a core part of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive CSRD, which aims to enhance transparency and consistency in how companies disclose sustainability-related information.

The guidelines cover a wide range of topics relating to sustainability, divided into three main standard categories:

Environmental

Social

Governance

Environmental standards focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation, resource use, pollution, and biodiversity.

Social focuses on human rights, consumer protection, ethical diversity, and community engagement.

Governance focuses on anti-corruption, corporate ethics, and board diversity.

Through studying ESRS we can emphasize the sector-specific standards for Täällä. We can also apply these standards for similar services like Good On You to understand how they would look like towards our services.

Environmental standards would address everything relating to sustainable materials. The percentage of products made with eco-friendly materials.

Carbon footprint revealing greenhouse emission across supply chains (Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions).

Water and chemical use in compliance with the Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals initiative ZDHC.

Circular economy, which would emphasize the implementation of recycling, upcycling, and closed-loop production systems.



Social standards would address the issues of labor.

This includes labor rights, fair wages with safe working conditions, adherence to international labor standards.

Supply chain transparency like disclosure of Tier 1 (factories), Tier 2 (material suppliers) and Tier 3 (raw materials).

Community engagement would emphasize the impact of the brand on local communities and businesses where materials are sourced or products manufactured.

Animal Welfare standards would address the ethical sourcing of animal-derived materials in businesses or complete prohibition of fur or exotic skins and materials.

Compliance with standards like the Responsible Wool Standard RWS or

Responsible Down Standard RDS. Vegan and cruelty-free alternatives, emphasizing the percentage of products free from animal-derived materials.

Governance standards would address sustainable leadership. It would encompass diversity and sustainability expertise at the board level, integration of sustainability goals into corporate strategy, anti-greenwashing policies (clear marketing claims verified by third-party certifications and transparent reporting on sustainability goals).

Consumer education would contribute to efforts to inform and engage consumers on sustainable choices.

Prototype Development and Iterations

Two prototypes were developed during the design process, each serving a distinct purpose to refine and enhance the website.

The first prototype acted as a foundational base for testing multiple design elements, including color schemes, object layouts, typography, and the overall visual identity of the brand.

This early version allowed us to experiment with various layouts and design decisions to better align the user interface (UI) with the project's goals of accessibility, sustainability, and ease of use.

To ensure the platform met user expectations and delivered value, the website was required to include several core features:

Homepage

Location & Item Search Engine

Categories

Featured Stores

Stores Nearby

Sustainability Rating & Description

About Us

The final iteration of the prototype was designed in Adobe XD, incorporating improvements and significant updates based on initial testing and design refinements.

While Adobe XD was primarily used as a prototyping tool, light coding was employed to implement basic interactive functionality.

This included:

1. Functional navigation system: A user-friendly menu structure allowing smooth transitions between key sections.

2. Search engine demonstration: A basic working model of the search functionality to give users a feel for the tool's capabilities.

3. Interactive elements: Buttons, hover effects, and other dynamic features that enhance user engagement and simulate real-time browsing behavior.

User Testing and Feedback

To evaluate the functionality, usability, and overall user experience (UX), we conducted extensive user testing with different groups, including classmates, students from other departments, and feedback from our course instructor. This comprehensive testing phase provided critical insights into user pain points, strengths of the design, and areas that needed improvement.



Key Issues Identified

During testing, we discovered several challenges that users faced while interacting with the platform:

1. Poor button placement: Buttons were sometimes located in confusing or inconvenient areas, which led to user frustration when navigating the site. Users indicated that this slowed their progress and negatively impacted the overall experience.

2. Ambiguous homepage messaging: Feedback revealed that the homepage lacked a clear and immediate explanation of the platform's purpose. First-time users often found themselves confused about the functionality and goals of the site.

3. Unclear scrollable areas: Many users struggled to identify scrollable sections, assuming content was static when it was not. This ambiguity hindered smooth navigation and caused users to miss important information or features.

By thoroughly analyzing user behavior and feedback, we developed targeted solutions to address these issues.

Buttons were repositioned to more intuitive locations, the homepage was redesigned with a stronger focus on clarity and user guidance, and we added visual cues (like arrows or animated indicators) to make scrollable areas evident to users.



Redesigning the Sustainability Rating System

One of the most significant pieces of feedback pertained to the sustainability rating system.

Initially, we used a percentage-based rating to indicate how sustainable a business's practices were. While this method provided a detailed numerical score, user feedback highlighted two major concerns:

1. Percentages were perceived as overly technical and difficult to interpret at a glance.
2. Users preferred a simpler, more intuitive visual representation that didn't require much mental effort to understand.

Based on this input, we transitioned to a more accessible and user-friendly solution:

a smiley face scale.

This five-level visual system presents ratings using smiley faces that convey emotions corresponding to a business's sustainability performance. The scale is as follows:

Very sustainable (top-tier rating)

Above average

Average sustainability

Below average

Not sustainable

The smiley face scale combines simplicity with clarity, allowing users to quickly grasp the sustainability rating of each business. Users found this approach far

easier to interpret and more engaging during subsequent testing sessions.

To complement this visual system, each rating level is paired with a brief written description, providing additional context for those who want more detailed information about a business's sustainability efforts.

Ongoing Improvements and Final Adjustments

Through iterative design and feedback loops, we refined the website's features and usability to ensure a seamless experience.

The combination of user testing and actionable insights played a critical role in shaping the final product.

Adjustments such as clearer messaging, intuitive layouts, functional navigation, and the enhanced sustainability rating system made the platform more approachable, engaging, and effective for users.

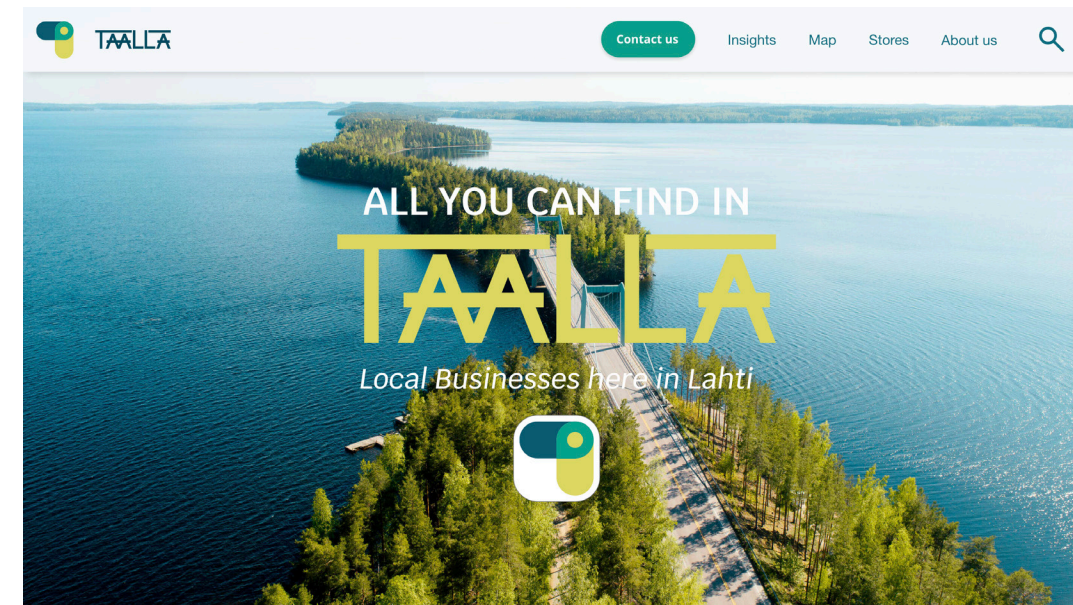
The prototype represents the culmination of careful design planning, robust user feedback, and a commitment to creating a meaningful platform that promotes sustainable local businesses in an accessible and enjoyable way.

Local and Sustainable

At Täällä, we connect the people of Lahti with local businesses committed to sustainability. Explore a variety of eco-friendly options—from restaurants to repair services—all in one place.

[About us](#)

[Contact us](#)

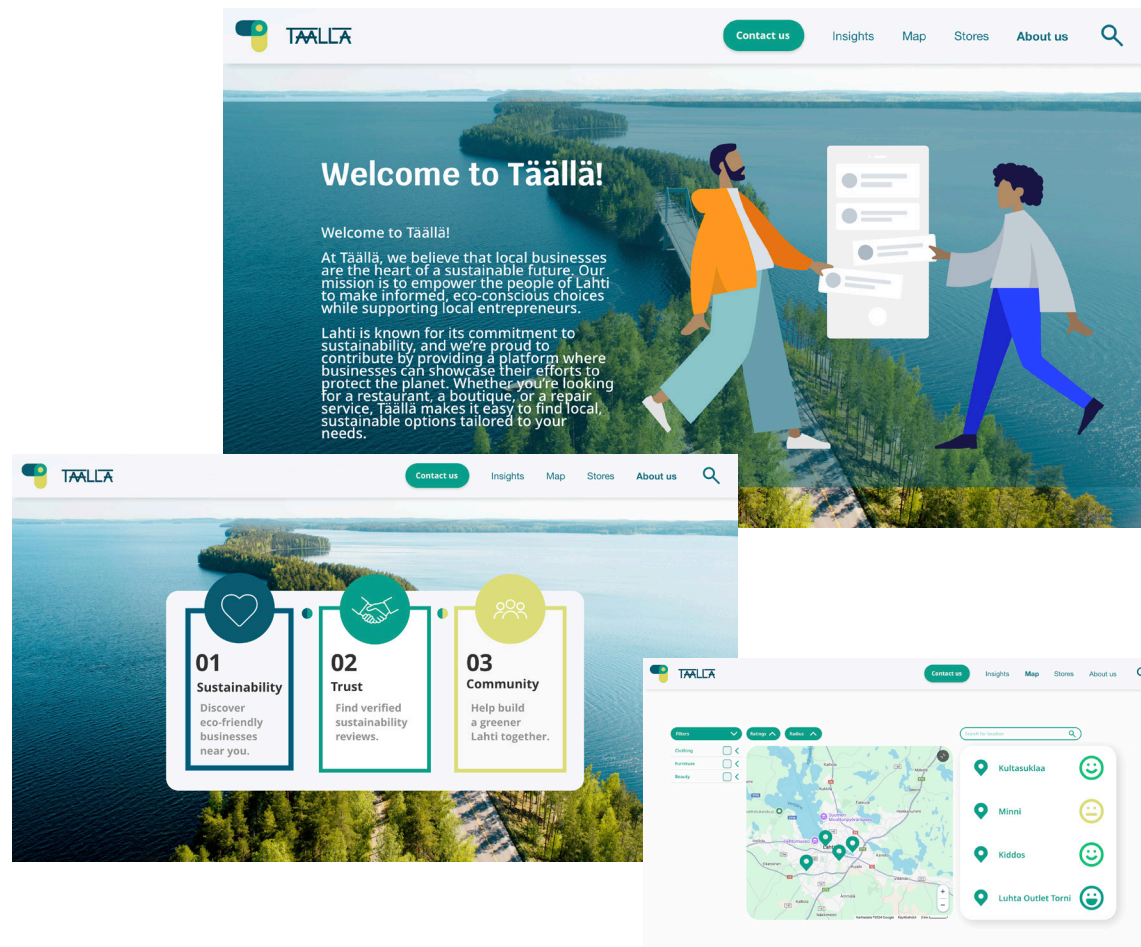


Final Solution

The final solution is an easily accessible and easy to use website that helps connect the users to the local stores in the Lahti region.

One of the websites main functions is the sustainability rating, which not only helps the users make more knowledgeable decisions but also encourages the businesses to make more sustainable and circular changes to themselves to raise their ratings.

Our solution is not only suited to the target group of families with children but is also able to help all the locals in Lahti.



Community

This rating evaluates how positively a business impacts its surrounding community, both socially and economically. It reflects the company's commitment to the well-being of its local environment by considering a wide range of factors:

More

Pollution

This rating reflects the level of harmful emissions, waste, and toxins released into the environment by the business. It evaluates both direct and indirect environmental impacts, including:

More

Waste Reduction

This rating measures the effectiveness of a business in minimizing waste generation, reducing its environmental footprint, and encouraging the reuse or recycling of materials. Key factors include:

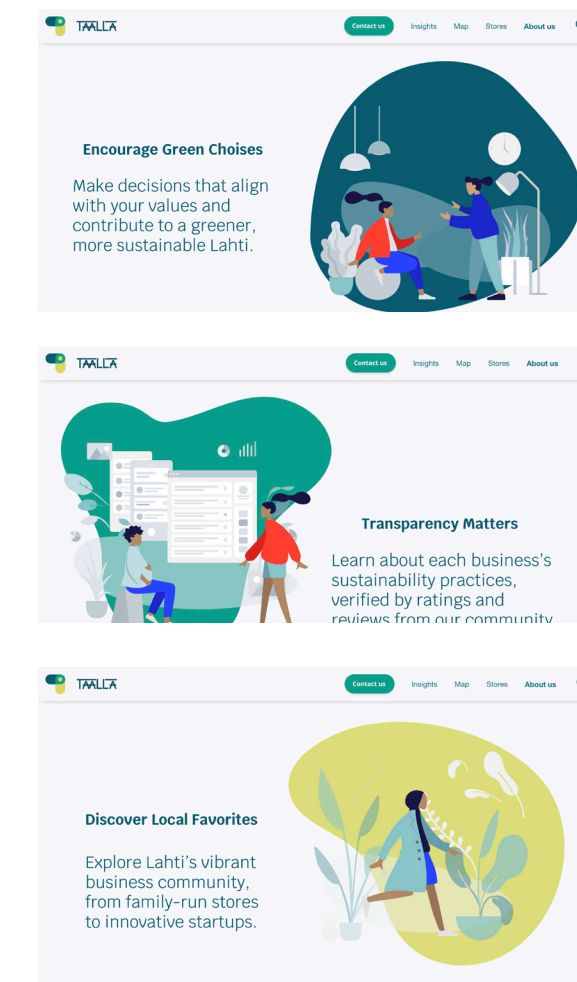
More

With Täällä we've created a concept in which companies and consumers alike support each other in the pursuit for a more sustainable tomorrow

We value clarity and transparency when creating our sustainability rating system.

Behind the smile

- Excellent**
A business excelling in sustainability, with top-tier environmental and community impact.
- Good**
The business actively embraces sustainable practices
- Average**
A Fair commitment to sustainability, meeting basic standards
- Needs Improvement**
Some awareness of sustainability, but efforts are limited
- Poor**
The business has made little to no effort in sustainability



Sources

Marc Stickdorn, Jakob Schneider, Adam Lawrence, Markus Hormess, 2018, This is design doing, England, O'Reilly

Salpakierto Oy, Salpakierto.fi, 11.12.2024, <https://salpakierto.fi/>

Good on you, 13.12.2024, <https://goodonyou.eco/>

Interviews:

Interview 1, 23.10.2024

Interview 2, 25.10.2024

Sources related to AI

1.Question: How can user-centered design principles enhance the functionality and appeal of Täällä?

Citation: OpenAI. 2023. How can user-centered design principles enhance the functionality and appeal of Täällä? ChatGPT-4. Cited 24 Dec 2023. Available at <https://chat.openai.com/>

2.Question: What are some techniques for gathering user feedback effectively for Täällä during development?

Citation: OpenAI. 2023. What are some techniques for gathering user feedback effectively for Täällä during development? ChatGPT-4. Cited 24 Dec 2023. Available at <https://chat.openai.com/>

3.Question: What strategies can be used to prioritize user feedback in a user-centered design process for Täällä?

Citation: OpenAI. 2023. What strategies can be used to prioritize user feedback in a user-centered design process for Täällä? ChatGPT-4. Cited 24 Dec 2023. Available at <https://chat.openai.com/>

4.Question: How can the interface of Täällä be designed to align with accessibility standards?

Citation: OpenAI. 2023. How can the interface of Täällä be designed to align with accessibility standards? ChatGPT-4. Cited 24 Dec 2023. Available at <https://chat.openai.com/>

5.Question: What are the key components of a user journey map for Täällä in the context of user-centered design?

Citation: OpenAI. 2023. What are the key components of a user journey map for Täällä in the context of user-centered design? ChatGPT-4. Cited 24 Dec 2023. Available at <https://chat.openai.com/>