SUPPORTING THE CONCEPTUALIZATION & DESIGN OF AN ONLINE ADVOCACY COMMUNITY

MRIDU MEHTA
The image on the front cover is a partial map of the internet from 2010 by Barrett Lyon (www.blyon.com). Lyon initiated Mapping the Internet—a free, open-source project—with the goal of making visual representations of metaphysical spaces. The data he has collected and represented serves many purposes: it models the Internet; it analyzes wasted Internet protocol (IP) space and distribution; and it detects the result of natural disasters, weather, and war. The image is based on data he gathered from the Internet's core backbone routers.

For me, the Barrett Lyons images have been a fascination for many years. During the thesis process, the image served as an initial inspiration to understand online community building and activism by identifying and visualizing underlying patterns and structures.
SUPPORTING THE CONCEPTUALIZATION & DESIGN OF AN ONLINE ADVOCACY COMMUNITY

A community model and related design elements for advancing women's health and rights

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Master's Thesis, 2015
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Nineteen year-old Maheshwori Devi Bishwokarma is pregnant with her second child in this photograph from Doti District, Nepal, 2009. Despite being three days past due, Maheshwori continues to work herding goats, scratch out a living in the Himalayan foothills of Nepal. Her husband, who lives and works in neighboring India, comes home once a year.

Dedicated to mothers around the world.
The patient, loving ones; the silent, suffering ones.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis supports the conceptualization and design of an online community named Mimba, which aims to advance women’s health and rights. The design and development of Mimba is an initiative of M4ID – a Service Design and Communications social enterprise located in Helsinki. Mimba is envisioned as a platform for strengthening advocacy, engagement and mobilization of citizens towards improving women’s health and rights.

To establish the need, and to support the conceptualization and design of Mimba, I draw from three sources: desk and user research conducted at M4ID, a review of existing literature in the domain of online communities and networked activism, and a design benchmarking exercise consisting of study of two existing services, which leverage online communities and activism towards their goals. On the basis of this research, I propose a community model suitable to the goals of Mimba. I also use this community model to extrapolate and inform service features and design suggestions for Mimba. The practical and theoretical observations are then condensed in key wireframes for a prototype web and mobile-based app presented as user scenarios.

I propose that Mimba is best conceptualized and designed so that it strengthens cooperative efforts of its online community (Stanojevska-Slabeva, 2002) and should draw from an existing model of networked activism that addresses broad mobilization and deep participation (Land, 2009). In this thesis, these findings directly translate into the aforementioned community model and design suggestions for Mimba.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would firstly like to thank Mari Tikkanen for the opportunity to be a part of the ‘birthing’ of Mimba. To the entire M4ID team, for sharing this wild ride with constant support, conversation and the best chocolates in the world!

I am deeply indebted to Andrea Botero, my thesis supervisor whose guidance and dedicated support made this process easy. She always offered clarity, direction and straightforward feedback. Much appreciate her handholding during the writing process, I really needed it! Thank you Cindy Kohtala, for thoughtful guidance and encouragement on many an occasion.

A special thanks to the department of Creative Sustainability, Tiina Laurila and Naoko Nakagawa for the numerable opportunities for learning as also quick and constant support.

Thank you for always being there Anish, Hesam, Pragya, Lisa, Prashant and Palash. Sarang, for always having an answer to my questions. And to all my friends in CS and Helsinki for sharing the good times.

To my family, thank you for having my back and for tremendous, loving patience. Finally, without your unrelenting support, I couldn’t have done it Papa!
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This thesis aims to contribute towards sustainable development through Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health of the Millennium Development Goals, 2015. It does so by supporting the conceptualization and design of an online advocacy community for advancing this goal. The online community service named Mimba, is envisioned as a platform for strengthening advocacy, engagement and mobilization of citizens towards improving women's health and rights issues.

On the basis of the research carried out in this thesis, I propose a community model suitable to the goals of Mimba. I also use this community model to extrapolate and inform service features and design suggestions for Mimba. The practical and theoretical observations are then condensed in key wireframes for a prototype web and mobile-based app presented as user scenarios.

In this chapter, I start with a background to the thesis and layout the objective of carrying out this work. Next, I outline the methodology used and outline the structure of this thesis. I elaborate on the context under which Mimba will operate, i.e the Millennium Development Goal 5, 2015 and define advocacy and its functions for the reader. Finally, I introduce Mimba in detail along with its objectives and core service elements.
1.1 Background to the Thesis

The need and idea of Mimba (meaning pregnancy in Swahili) was conceived at M4ID— a Service Design and Communications social enterprise located in Helsinki that serves Women’s Health and Rights organizations globally. To create Mimba, M4ID was granted a planning grant by the MacArthur Foundation. With funding in place, M4ID began the project to conceptualize and prototype Mimba as an activist community service. To this end, a team with expertise in research, service design, communication and technology was put together. I was involved throughout the project - working hands-on with research, service conceptualization and prototyping together with other members of the team.

The design process for Mimba was driven by service design methodologies (M4ID, 2013). We began with contextual inquiry through desk research and in-house knowledge mapping. This included exercises in stakeholder mapping, problem definition, service benchmarking and a technology adoption report on India (a focus country). The next phase i.e. Phase 2 involved user research wherein co-creation workshops were organized by the team on locations in Helsinki and New Delhi. Users were further profiled through informal interviews online and offline. Previous research was synthesized during Phase 3 to conceptualize and prototype mobile-based service app over a period of three months.

1.2 Thesis Objectives

While working on the project at M4ID, I felt held back by my partial understanding of how people organize and act towards causes on the World Wide Web. I surmised that a critical challenge in building Mimba will be to balance the goals of creating a volunteer community contributing towards regular advocacy needs of women’s health and rights organizations through collaborative production and distribution of communication on one hand; while on the other it will be facilitating the community to engage in collective action on occasion. Collective action facilitated through Mimba, may take the form of mobilizing for network building and coordination or protest or joint campaigning etc.

Considering these multiple challenges, I decided to explore and understand the theoretical knowledge that exists on this subject as well as analyze existing services. This thesis uses that understanding to hypothesize a theoretical base for the Mimba service community and its implications on the design of the digital service.

Therefore, the objectives of this thesis are:

• To present a hypothesis of a community model that would best facilitate Mimba to achieve its goals.
• Identify design elements that will assist in realizing Mimba as an effective service.
1.3 Methodology & Thesis Structure

My aim with this thesis is to support the goals of Mimba as a community service. To do this, I draw from three sources (as depicted in the figure below), namely:

- Desk and user research conducted at M4ID covered in Chapter 2.
- A review of existing literature in the domain of online community building and networked activism covered in Chapter 3.
- Case studies of benchmarked services covered in Chapter 4.

The desk and user research outcomes from the M4ID project process are presented first (Chapter 2). I also present a discussion on the gaps in movement building for women’s health and rights and then proceed to the scope of the challenges faced by advocates in this sector. Further, participatory research with citizen activists revealing their motivations to contribute follows.

Chapter 3 is a presentation of the literature review conducted. I begin by defining online communities and outline a typology. Literature on activism and an online organizational model called networked activism is described, for its relevance to Mimba’s aims. Finally, design element suggestions by Land (2009) are described.

Chapter 4 benchmarks two existing services (Avaaz and OpenIDEO) by analyzing them on the basis of the theoretical exploration conducted in the previous chapter.

Finally, assumptions and inferences are drawn from the above research, to derive a community model suitable to the goals of Mimba. This recommended community model is further extrapolated to inform service features and design suggestions in the last section. These are detailed through key wireframes of the prototyped web and mobile app and scenarios. Later, an evaluation of suggested Mimba service design elements against Land’s (2009) elements, and against user needs as discussed in Chapter 2 is undertaken. I conclude by presenting scope for further exploration.
1.4 Contextualizing the Motivations for Mimba

In this section, I discuss the background for the motivations of the proposed community service. The overarching goal of the community service is to improve advocacy for women’s health and rights in order to address the Millennium Development Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health as propounded by the United Nations (UN). I begin with an introduction to the Millennium Development Goals and the targets under Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health. Next, I define advocacy and its role in social change with special emphasis on women’s health and rights in order to clarify the context and need for Mimba.

1.4.1 The Millennium Development Goals 2015

In this thesis, Sustainable Development is approached through a social lens under Goal 5 of the Millennium Development Goals 2015, which seeks to improve maternal health of women worldwide (The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014).

To put things in perspective it would be best here to gain a little background on the Millennium Declaration of 1990 that established concrete targets for improving the existence of many and for saving the lives of those threatened by poverty, disease and hunger. Following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, these targets were articulated into eight broad goals, as shown in Figure 2, for stakeholders in the international development community to align under and pursue.

GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

As stated earlier Improve Maternal Health is Goal 5, and the targets under this goal, to be reached by 2015, are:

- **Target 5.A**: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.
- **Target 5.B**: Achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015
Most of the MDG targets have a deadline of 2015, using 1990 as the baseline against which progress is gauged. In 2014, an accounting of how far the world has come in meeting these goals was presented in The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014. The Report states that some targets have been met, while in others substantial progress has been made, but much more effort is needed to reach the set targets. It lists Goal 5, Improve Maternal Health too as a target requiring much more effort is needed to reach the set targets. It lists MDG targets was presented in The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014: A snapshot of key indicators given below as stated in:

**Almost 300,000 women died globally in 2013 from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Maternal death is mostly preventable and much more needs to be done to provide care to pregnant women.**

- The proportion of deliveries in developing regions attended by skilled health personnel rose from 56 to 68 per cent between 1990 and 2012.
- In 2012, 40 million births in developing regions were not attended by skilled health personnel, and over 32 million of those births occurred in rural areas.
- Most pregnant women in developing regions see a skilled health provider at least once—only half of them get the recommended four antenatal checkups.

**A snapshot of key indicators given below as stated in**

**The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014:**

- **Almost 300,000 women died globally in 2013 from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Maternal death is mostly preventable and much more needs to be done to provide care to pregnant women.**
- The proportion of deliveries in developing regions attended by skilled health personnel rose from 56 to 68 per cent between 1990 and 2012.
- In 2012, 40 million births in developing regions were not attended by skilled health personnel, and over 32 million of those births occurred in rural areas.
- Most pregnant women in developing regions see a skilled health provider at least once—only half of them get the recommended four antenatal checkups.
NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY
It may be noted that the proposed community service, Mimba, is seen as strategically aligned with the MDGs and hence assisting advocacy to overcome Maternal and Reproductive Health challenges as its focus. However, during discussions with M4ID founder, Mari Tikkanen, it emerged that the ultimate vision is to contribute towards public health challenges and related rights for women and children in the Global South. It needs to be noted that Maternal and Reproductive Health targets outlined previously under MDGs, are but a sub-set of public health challenges and related rights for women and children. Additionally, over the past few years, leaders in the sector have advocated for a shift in approach to providing health care services. They propound an integrated approach to women’s healthcare, i.e. a systems wide approach of community clinics delivering a whole range of health services for families, rather than focusing on single diseases, or single-issue interventions (Cox, 2010).

Additionally, the post-2015 development agenda that will succeed the MDGs this year will provide further direction to the global health community. These factors will influence a range of issues that the proposed service will seek to address in the future. Also, they may or may not lead to shift in current focus of Mimba from improving maternal and reproductive health. Furthermore, as stakeholders adopt and own the service, their agenda could influence the issues from time to time. Given that the issues that Mimba will seek to address will be subject to modification, in this thesis, a more comprehensive terminology is used to refer to these issues and that is Women’s Health and Rights.

1.4.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO ADVOCACY
The proposed community service, Mimba seeks to improve advocacy for women’s health and rights in its efforts to reach the targets for improving maternal health under the MDGs. This section provides a definition on advocacy and explains its functioning. This will help the reader contextualize the need for Mimba.

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?
The Advocacy Toolkit, A Guide to Influencing Decisions that Improve Children’s Lives by UNICEF defines Advocacy as “the deliberate process, based on demonstrated evidence, to directly and indirectly influence decision makers, stakeholders and relevant audience to support and implement actions that contribute to the fulfillment of children’s and women’s rights” (UNICEF, 2010).

It further refines and says that advocacy is a means of seeking change in governance, attitudes, power, social relations and institutional functions. It supports actions which are taken at scale, and which address deeper, underlying barriers to the fulfillment of children’s rights. “Advocacy requires organizing and organization. It represents a set of strategic actions and, at its most vibrant, will influence the decisions, practices and policies of others” (UNICEF, 2010).
Examples of some popular advocacy organizations known globally are Greenpeace, Oxfam and PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals). Organizations advocating for women’s health and rights sector globally or nationally include the White Ribbon Alliance, Amnesty, World Vision and Care amongst others.

**WHAT FUNCTIONS CAN ADVOCACY UNDERTAKE?**

In practice, there are several terms used interchangeably to describe advocacy work. Upstream engagement, lobbying, public relations, policy development, awareness raising, empowerment, social mobilization, campaigning, media work and communications can all be terms for advocacy (UNICEF, 2010). Functions undertaken by advocacy organizations are elaborated in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness raising, communications and media work</td>
<td>Deliver persuasive, evidence-based and solution-oriented messages to the public, decision-makers, stakeholders and those who influence them report on progress and shortfalls in implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobbying and negotiating</td>
<td>One-on-one discussions with decision-makers to influence them to change policy, practice or behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing partnerships/coalitions/alliances</td>
<td>Generate organizational support and momentum behind issues, connect messengers with decision-makers, and utilize diversity to achieve common advocacy goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/publications</td>
<td>Illustrate the underlying causes and solutions to a problem, and draw recommendations which can be addressed by decision-makers and stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigning</td>
<td>Create and mobilize the public around the advocacy issue to change perceptions, build support and demand accountability from decision-makers and stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social mobilization</td>
<td>Engage multiple levels of society, especially beneficiaries as partners in overcoming barriers to implementation of programs (for example, reporting on poor service delivery at health infrastructure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences/events</td>
<td>Bring together a variety of stakeholders and decision-makers to highlight the causes and identify the solutions to the issue, with follow-up that includes concrete and immediate action</td>
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</table>
Advocacy can be targeted at a range of actors at different levels depending on context. A holistic advocacy strategy that seeks to achieve comprehensive change – will necessarily involve coordinated advocacy work at international, national, regional and local levels. The visualization made by me below (Figure 5), based on general reading provides an overview of levels and actors.

**FIGURE 5**
The range of advocacy stakeholders and the levels at which they function. These levels overlap and stakeholders coordinate with each other within a level as well as across levels.

- **INTERNATIONAL**
  - Governments, Donors, Public Health Organisations, Academia/Think Tanks, NGOs, Advocacy Organisations, Global Coalitions, Media, Active Citizens

- **NATIONAL**
  - National Government, Donors, Public Health Organisations, Academia/Think Tanks, NGOs, Advocacy Organisations, National Coalitions, Media, Active Citizens

- **LOCAL**
  - Government, Local Health Centres, HealthCare Administration and Workers, NGOs, Advocacy Organisations, Grassroot Groups, Beneficiaries, Media, Active Citizens

**ADVOCACY FOR THE MDGs**

To provide a practical example based on the previous discussion, I cite an example of international level advocacy at work, from the United Nations (UN) website. The UN has extensively employed advocacy as a tool in order to push for the MDGs. To galvanize support, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon created a MDG Advocacy Group in 2010, comprising of eminent personalities who have shown outstanding leadership in promoting implementation of the Goals. The Group supports the Secretary-General in building political will and mobilizing global action for achievement of the MDGs by the target date. MDG advocates include Heads of State and Government, business and political leaders, prominent academics and philanthropists, who individually, collectively and in small groups engage with members states, civil society, academia, parliaments, and the private sector to develop new and ground-breaking ideas and ways to accelerate MDG implementation. Accordingly, the group has an action plan that is being actively followed to keep the momentum on MDGs going, even beyond 2015 (UN).

I draw another example directly related to Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health, from *The Millennium Development Report 2014*, an important monitoring and evaluation document. The compilation of the report required contributions on data and from multiple international agencies as indicated below (*The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*):

- **Target 5.A.** UNFPA, UNICEF, United Nations Population Division, World Bank and WHO
- **Target 5.B.** UNFPA, UNICEF, and United Nations Population Division
GOING FORWARD: THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were expected to achieve their targets by this year (2015). World leaders will meet in New York in September to agree on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will pave the way for global health and development priorities up till 2030. The inclusion of clear goals and measurable indicators for Maternal and Reproductive Health in the SDGs will be critical. Further, once the goals have been set, stakeholders will need to ensure that the health of women does not fade from the development priority agenda. Also, realizing the ambitious SDG targets will require strong advocacy for programmatic implementation and significant investments in the women’s health and rights sector (Techno Advocate Partnership, 2014). The need for continued and improved advocacy for women’s health and rights will thus remain.

1.5 What is Mimba?

This section seeks to further put the idea behind Mimba in perspective. Research and design processes carried out at M4ID led to articulation of the following vision and goals for Mimba (M4ID, 2014a).

Mimba is envisioned as a digitally enabled service, aimed at initiating a strong civil society movement for the advancement of women’s health and rights globally. It aims to empower and support civil society organizations (CSOs) in their efforts to tackle women’s health and rights issues in low resource settings. An example of a CSO, as mentioned in a previous chapter is the White Ribbon Alliance, an international maternal health advocacy organization.

1 According to UNDP, “civil society constitutes the full range of formal and informal organizations that are outside the state and market. This includes social movements, volunteer organizations, indigenous people’s organizations, mass-based membership organizations, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations, as well as communities and citizens acting individually and collectively.” Mimba is concerned with empowering the entire range of actors – from individual citizens to grass-root movements to large-scale NGOs. The term CSOs encompasses all such initiatives and therefore is more appropriate for the proposed community service Mimba. UNDP (as cited in Nasibova, 2013)
Mimba will connect CSOs and their advocacy and programmatic needs, with skilled volunteer support worldwide. It is aimed to enable information sharing, coordinated global, regional and national level advocacy, online crowdsourcing (skills support), offline volunteering and self-organization on behalf of women’s health and rights (M4ID, 2014a).

The goals of Mimba can be summarized as:
- Support Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in advancing women’s health and rights at national, regional and global level.
- Increase speed, reach and effectiveness of women’s health and rights advocacy.
- Facilitate clear and compelling women’s health and rights messaging directed at both governments and the public.
- Inform, educate and mobilize public opinion.
- Facilitate self-organization of the community into a cohesive and forceful movement.
- Monitor and communicate progress and proven solutions.

The service is also envisioned to disrupt current ineffective campaigning practices by employing the latest communication technology, enabling new actors to initiate actions and gain visibility, provide new and long-term options for participation, rewarding engagement and supporting citizen activists in their quest for contributing to causes (M4ID, 2014a).

In other words, at its very basic, **Mimba is a global platform for co-creating campaigns, and a community force of campaigners for women’s health and rights.**

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**The core service elements of such a platform are derived as follows (M4ID, 2014b):**

**CROWDSOURCING**
Collaborative production of campaigns would engage supporters based on their skills, interests and time available. Organizational needs identified are:
- Visual design
- Video, photography and animation
- Copy writing
- Other creative skills (ideation, conceptualization etc.)
- Research (information gathering, field visits etc.)
- Offline campaigns (flash mobs, demonstrations etc.)
- Knowledge sharing (e.g. expertise in PR and communication strategy)
- Organize or participate in events

**CAMPAIGNING**
Sharing of collaboration outcomes such as videos, memes, info-graphics, articles, reports etc. with target groups, offline and online, be they decision-makers, media, the larger Mimba community or even viral campaigns targeted at social networks.

**CSO COLLABORATION**
To improve coordination and work practices amongst CSOs like knowledge sharing and joint planning, improving access to peers and networks, enabling offline actions, improving collaboration building alliances with greater reach and speed, improving progress reporting and accountability of governments as well as within advocacy ecosystem.
This section provides a detailed case for the challenges that Mimba seeks to tackle. The service is geared towards improving advocacy and its role in better program implementation and service delivery for women’s health and rights. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the advocacy for women’s health and rights sector and its challenges is essential. To arrive at a broad understanding of the problems with advocacy and campaigning for women’s health and rights, I present insights from a multiplicity of sources in this section:

- Mari Tikkanen, M4ID founder and the brain behind Mimba who has a career spanning two decades in the women’s health and rights sector working with communications and advocacy. Her knowledge and experience of the women’s health and rights ecosystem has been a key driver.
- Report by Jo Cox, Director, Strategy at white Ribbon Alliance, a key international advocacy organization in Women’s Health.
- Participatory workshop with National and Regional Program and Advocacy organizations in New Delhi and participatory workshops with active citizens in Helsinki and New Delhi.

These insights are later used to guide the framework of the Mimba community model and are validated against design suggestions.

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2 I present the outcomes of these workshops in this thesis. However, the process and methodologies employed are beyond the purview of this thesis as other team members at M4ID worked on them.
2.1 Advocacy Needs of Grassroots Organizations

From 2011-2-14, M4ID was involved in a separate project ‘Leveraging New Communication Technology in Support of Maternal and Reproductive Health’. M4ID assisted a number of CSOs from India and Nigeria in setting up their digital communication channels, advised them on digital advocacy, built capacities through online training and also developed campaigns and social media content. Over the course of the project, it became clear that many CSOs had communication needs that could have also been addressed by skilled individual volunteers.

Further, investigation through workshops covered in Section 2.3 confirmed this. Grassroots advocacy organizations often have limited access to resources in the form of expertise, time and funds. This challenges their ability to keep pace with the latest ICT and social media trends and stay relevant to all stakeholders. In addition, creating a ready constituency of supporters is resource intensive, as is keeping them engaged in a media-saturated landscape. There is potential for many resource-deficient organizations to greatly benefit from the possibilities that new communication technology tools offer.

2.2 Challenges in the Advocacy Ecosystem

This section discusses the challenges in the advocacy ecosystem of women’s health and rights by consolidating knowledge from two important perspectives. I present key insights from the *Future Campaigning on Maternal Health: Recommendations for 2011* Report by Jo Cox, Director- Strategy at White Ribbon Alliance, a key international advocacy organization (Cox, 2010). Further, discussions with Mari Tikkanen, Founder, M4ID reveal gaps in women’s health and rights advocacy through an analysis of the HIV/AIDS movement. Finally, I comment on the rapidly transforming digital landscape and the possibilities these present for advocacy organizations.

1. In the *Future Campaigning on Maternal Health: Recommendations for 2011* Report, Jo Cox identifies the following key challenges:

   • Efforts to invest in a united, diverse global movement on Women and Children’s Health must continue, but, there are concerns about where the leadership and direction for this movement will come from.
   • MNCH (Maternal and Newborn Child Health) advocates haven’t yet consistently mobilized public opinion in key donor and developing countries about the preventable death of a young child or a mum to be.
There are lots of leaders in the sector but no one figure-head to drive delivery and implementation; this remains particularly true for maternal and neonatal health.

Though MNCH and reproductive health advocates are more united than ever there are still tensions about priorities and ongoing bad working practices; e.g. a lack of information sharing or the absence of joint planning, which hamper the delivery of an effective and coherent message, and an integrated program of action.

2. Early interviews and knowledge mapping exercises with the team at M4ID brought forth many insights on the need for the service. The vision for the service is to facilitate a movement and therefore on the suggestion of M4ID founder Mari Tikkanen, I carried out an investigation of the beginnings of the HIV/AIDS movement in the US, a successful case study from the 1980s-early 1990s, which brought a clearer understanding of social movements and some important insights.

The HIV/AIDS movement is a widely documented case study for its seminal role in not only mobilizing a vociferous and demanding people’s movement, but also in fundamentally changing the medical research paradigm towards patient driven clinical trials.

While investigating the HIV/AIDS movement, I came across event-based documentation of the movement that brought reasonable clarity on how to apply the successes of the HIV/AIDS movement to women’s health and rights. To clarify further, I present insights from the Back to Basics report by FasterCures and HCM Strategists (2011). The report provides a nuanced and thorough analysis of the successes of the HIV/AIDS movement. It also articulates a model of advocacy, which helped me gain a holistic understanding of movement building. Based on the words of the activists who led the efforts and the policy makers who implemented the changes —elements identified for the HIV/AIDS advocacy model are:

- Attention
- Knowledge and Solutions
- Community
- Accountability
- Leadership

(FasterCures; HCM Strategists, 2011)

To know more about the U.S. based HIV/AIDS movement of the 1980-90s, I request the reader to refer to the works of:

- Jennifer Brier, Infectious Ideas; U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis.
- Joe Wright, Only Your Calamity.
All these elements worked in tandem to ensure the success of the HIV/AIDS movement. In the case of the women’s health and rights sector, advocates are yet to successfully bring Attention to the issue and mobilize a Community of supporters. These in turn have the potential of tracking progress on goals and demanding Accountability from decision-makers and health care functionaries. While Knowledge and Solutions abound, the absence of joint planning and coordination results in weak and siloed actions.

This was further clarified by in-house mapping exercise at M4ID on mobilizing an individual to participate in a campaign or towards a cause (Figure 7).

**FIGURE 7**
The steps to mobilize and sustain an individual’s engagement with a cause. M4ID, 2014.

Clearly, advocacy for women’s health and rights has a long way to go, since the movement needs to start at the beginning – by creating significant public attention.

**RAPIDLY TRANSFORMING DIGITAL LANDSCAPE**
Finally, the need for a new service is driven by the mass uptake of online, social and mobile communication channels creating a new advocacy environment. These platforms offer professional associations effective ways of delivering their message, generating unprecedented awareness and support, engaging key stakeholder, establishing thought-leadership, developing new partnerships, strengthening member associations and influencing decision-makers across the globe. The possibilities of engaging audiences through new communication supported approaches are immense and the role they will play in furthering international health goals will only increase over time (Techno Advocate Partnership, 2014). Globally, active citizens have new behavior and expectations in participating in causes. Advocacy stakeholders need to tap into that.

4 A quick overview of the rapidly transforming digital landscape in India (a focus country) for 2014 can be accessed from the M4ID website: http://m4id.fi/2014/06/india-brief/. The document collates key statistics and trends in digital uptake by Indian users. Key digital services that can help social change organisations further their programmatic and communication goals are also covered.
2.3

A Discussion on User Insights

Early in the conceptualization of the service, the two main user profiles were framed as CSOs and cause motivated citizens i.e. Supporters who are active online.

In order to better understand challenges faced by organizations, the team conducted a participatory workshop in New Delhi with MacArthur Foundation grantees working with Women and Child Health and Rights issues. Additionally, we held interviews and workshops with potential supporters in Helsinki and New Delhi to understand their motivations for contributing to causes online. Importantly, this allowed us to validate the need for an online community service serving as a bridge between organizations and potential supporters.

A discussion on the insights gleaned from these interactions is elaborated in this section (M4ID, 2014c).

2.3.1 CSOs

Discussions at the workshop led to the following broad challenge areas that all organizations face:

- **Building reach and engagement with their target audience.** Organizations were concerned about how to create a constituency of supporters and reach for a wider audience. They would also like to bring their offline beneficiaries and online supporters together.

- **Information access and sharing**
  “Everybody is working within their own silos. How do we go beyond that? No policy change can be achieved by a single organization.” Representatives recognized that collective messaging of their communication and evidence would be an effective way to influence policy. There is a need for improvements in information sharing or the absence of joint planning, which hampers the delivery of an effective, coherent message and an integrated program of action.

- **Tools for innovation.** Hosting webinars to share information, helpline that serves as a direct access to colleagues in other organizations, accessing innovation grants, an updated glossary of terminology were some ideas to boost innovation in their initiatives.

- **Community building and collaboration.** Organizations are grappling with collaborating with each other and also wish to go beyond their own networks. There is an interest in sharing resources, knowledge and best practices with each other and with others globally. Building an accessible global directory of members was an oft-quoted solution.
FIGURE 8, 9 & 10
Snapshots from the workshop conducted with potential CSO users in New Delhi. M4iD, 2014

FIGURE 11, 12, 13 & 14
Snapshots from the workshops conducted with potential supporters in Helsinki and New Delhi. M4iD, 2014
2.3.2 SUPPORTERS

Participants expressed a yearning for meaningful ways of participating with social change issues. They want ways to meet like-minded people and engage in a community of active change makers. Some conveyed a desire to engage in deeper ways but face limitations of time. Others spoke of not trusting media reports on issues and wanting a nuanced and informed understanding to know where the problems and solutions really are.

Barriers start with lack of confrontation with the issue - e.g. for those living in Helsinki, maternal mortality is too far removed to catch their attention. Further, finding the right organizations to work with is hard work. Another demotivator is the time and effort it takes to follow up on an organization’s impact and to receive feedback on the impact of one’s contribution. Participants discussed about the limitations of current digital tools, where online engagement is driven by number of clicks and likes. And the need for open and neutral spaces for dialogue. Offline meetups, activity clubs, sharing skills, small rewards and field visits were some of the suggested solutions. Participants also spoke of self-motivators, like setting small targets, interacting with the underprivileged, building patience for change, and sharing their experience with a wider audience.

In general, there is a need for easy tracking of progress towards the overarching development goals through speedy reporting and updates to the community, making it mandatory for Mimba to have a good feedback system (M4ID, 2013).

2.3.3 USER PERSONAS

As stated earlier in this section, the two main user profiles on Mimba are CSOs and Supporters. Here, I present six User Personas and identify their needs. The needs of these personas will be addressed in Section 6.3 as Concept Scenarios with wireframes and user journeys, once the design of the platform is described.

1. CENTRE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (CHSJ)
   User Profile Type: CSO
   Needs: Skilled supporters
   The Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ), India regularly updates reports of women from rural India who have faced maternal or reproductive health complications to its website rhobservatory.net. They would now like to illustrate them for use in various media including posters, reports and social media. Lalita, the Communications Officer is concerned, the deadline is close, and the fund allocation for communication purposes has dried out, so professional services are out of reach. She has reached out to her volunteer base for help via email but hasn’t received a response.
2. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

*User Profile Type: CSO*

*Needs: Collaboration and Network Building*

Violence Against Women is a women’s rights organization working with victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, rapes, acid attacks etc. in India. They have national presence and were part of the discussions to improve women’s safety in the wake of the infamous Nirbhaya Gang Rape case in New Delhi in December 2012. In response to citizen protests and media outrage, the government had launched the $10 billion Nirbhaya Fund for Women. The national government has been continuously delaying the release of funds. In addition, many organizations feel the current action plan on usage of funds is misguided and they would like to influence policy. They want to reach out to organizations across India and act as a group to be influential enough to impact policy. Recently, the issue has received media attention, again, thanks to the release and ban of the film *India’s Daughter*. They need to act quickly to make the best of the momentum and attention, but their current efforts are taking far too long a time.

3. NARI SHAKTI

*User Profile Type: CSO*

*Needs: Knowledge Sharing*

Anisha is a Program Officer in Nari Shakti, an organization that works to delay early marriage and pregnancy by working directly with expectant mothers and their families in Nepal. Anisha wants to develop a training manual on women’s leadership in low-income communities for her colleagues serving in the field. She wants to use case examples to illustrate the potential of women’s leadership. She has been looking for reports and publications in their repository and online but most examples are either outdated or from different cultural contexts. She has reached out to sister organizations via email, and hasn’t had much luck yet.
4. DOCSFORWOMEN  
*User Profile Type:* CSO  
*Needs:* Visibility for their work and access to a mass of supporters  
DocsforWomen is a grassroots organization that provides free medical care to women in conflict zones in the Middle East. They have recently setup a medical camp in the main refugee camp in Syria where they have managed to bring down the number of maternal and newborn deaths. To publish their success, they have decided to launch a social media campaign, however, they have a problem. DocsforWomen was setup by medical professionals with grassroots focus and limited funding and their social media presence is neglected with few followers, infrequent updates and poor communication. The admin head, Moaffak is responsible for their social media presence and he is concerned that the campaign video will fail to gather the target 50,000 views. They want their campaign to be successful so that it increases their chances of receiving funding to continue to expand their facilities.

5. GORDON AND MARY  
*User Profile Type:* Supporters  
*Needs:* Wish to contribute towards causes  
Gordon and Mary are colleagues in a creative agency in London. Gordon is an Illustrator and Mary a Copywriter. They have jointly worked on many creative campaigns and share a passion for travelling. They are doing well in their careers but itch to do their bit to make the world a better place. They used to donate money to UNICEF previously, but have become disillusioned about funds being used to maintain bureaucratic structures.

6. HOPE  
*User Profile Type:* Supporter  
*Needs:* Peer connection  
Hope has been a volunteer with local organizations in Kampala, but has been inconsistent in contributing. She feels strongly about reproductive health issues and wants to connect with others to create a support group for women in her city. Her work keeps her busy and she is unable to identify and reach out to others who might be interested in organizing the group.
2.3.4. SUMMARY

A summary of the above discussion is given in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL USERS</th>
<th>SUPPORTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National and grassroots actors do not have means for gaining visibility for their work or for gathering mass support for their efforts</td>
<td>Available time, motivation and preferred way of contributing varies between individuals and is not currently catered to in a user-friendly way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigns often remain one-offs with little progress or impact reporting</td>
<td>Lack of long-term, meaningful participation options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs and CSIs do not have the required resources or skills</td>
<td>Lack of access to a socially engaged peer group contributing collectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siloed action by organizations, lack of information sharing and absence of joint planning</td>
<td>Lack of clear impact reporting from organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old-fashioned approaches to campaigning are employed across the board</td>
<td>Many supporters prefer active and direct ways of contributing over monetary donations or armchair discussions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This section studies aspects of online activism, online communities and advocacy that may be essential as well as critical for a service like Mimba to succeed. Literature review is conducted to provide a background on this domain of knowledge. This is intended to assist in the identification of a community model for Mimba.

The first section provides a discussion on the potential of online activism for social change with examples of impact. The next section presents a definition of online communities and articulates their attributes. Consequently, a typology of online communities is explored. This is followed by literature review on the expertise in the field of networked activism. Finally, an analysis is conducted where the understanding gained previously is applied to Mimba.
3.1 Online Activism & Social Change

Varied comments and research by scholars on online activism and social change began on the emergence of computer networks. I present some important observations in this respect in the subsequent paragraphs.

Wilson & Peterson (2002) comment that in the previous fifteen years interactions between millions of people from dispersed groups, having shared interests, have been facilitated by rapid emergence of internet. They say that these online groups exhibit a wide range of characteristics and serve a variety of purposes. On one hand, they have small groups engaged in tightly focused discussions on specific topics, while on the other there are complex creative worlds with hundreds of simultaneous participants, to millions of users exchanging goods and information through the medium of internet. In their opinion, these new media collaborations can be mobilized to bring together dispersed members of a variety of groups to work on specific agenda, tasks or interests (Wilson & Peterson, 2002). In my opinion, if what they say is true; agenda, tasks or interests related to women’s health and rights scenario can also benefit from characteristic features and advantages offered by the Internet, and energy and support of millions harnessed to great advantage.

Buckingham also comments upon the wide use of digital media by individuals from all walks of life. He says “In recent years, digital media and networks have become embedded in our everyday lives, and are part of broad-based changes to how we engage in knowledge production, communication, and creative expression” (Buckingham, 2008, p. vii). Highlighting the trend towards user-driven activities, he further says, “The shift towards interactive media, peer-to-peer form of media communication, and many-to-many forms of distribution relate to types of participation that are bottoms-up and driven by the ‘user’ or ‘consumer’ of media” (Buckingham, 2008, pp. viii, ix).

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (August, 2012) further clarifies and gives some concrete examples. It says that in the first decade of the 21st century, new media technology for social networking, such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube etc., began to transform social, political and informational practices of individuals and institutions across the globe. Later, emergence of Web 2.0 technologies evolved and facilitated user-generated collaborative and shared internet content (Vallor & Zalta (ed.), 2012). Boyd & Ellison reaffirm that there are hundreds of social networking sites (SNSs), with various technological affordances, supporting a wide range of interests and practices. As per them, some of these sites cater to diverse audiences while others attract users having interests in niche areas (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

In the context of healthcare, I present more evidence of user-driven participation in online communities. Greene et al. (as cited by Lapointe et al) say that on Facebook, almost two thirds of strategies for management of diabetes are...
unsolicited, while over 13% of the feedback is provided on request of other users. It demonstrates a staggering urge to share learning and experience on health issues with others by diverse and disparate set of individuals or groups. Further, Bender et al say (as cited by Lapointe et al) that there are 620 breast cancer groups on Facebook, encompassing a total of 1,090,397 individuals. Of these, 46.7% of the groups are created by patient/caregiver support (Greene, Choudhry, Kilabuk, & Shrank, 2011; Bender, Jimenez-Marroquin, & Jadad, 2011; Lapointe, Ramaprasad, & Vedel, 2014)

Therefore, there is enough evidence to suggest that new communication technologies have allowed for increasingly complex social networks and online communities to emerge. It has also provided new and important ways of bringing about social change by democratizing new technology tools. Apart from the emergence of online communities, activism towards social or political issues have also benefited from new communication technology.

From cell-phone coordinated protest against the World Bank, to software built to circumvent state-sanctioned censorship, examples of changes in the social movement landscape abound (Garrett, 2006). Simultaneously, the spread and usage of online platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Avaaz, Change. org, Ushahidi, Kiva, Reddit etc. are indicative of an increase in online citizen activism. The most visible examples of political activism include - Arab Spring starting in 2010 (Stepanova, 2011), Occupy Wall Street in 2011 (Gamson & Sifry, 2013) and Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement in 2014 (Rutkin & Aron, 2014). A recent women’s issues example is the protests in the infamous Nirbhaya Gang Rape case, India in 2012 (Narang, 2014). In all these cases, citizen activists mobilized using services like Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp and Firechat, rapidly sharing information and self-organizing to protest online and offline. These examples point to the tremendous potential of new communication technologies in involving large numbers of people, to connect rapidly, share information and coordinate action towards issues of interest. These points to the potential of employing these technologies for the purpose of improving public attention and engagement with women’s health and rights issues.

In this context, I would like to refer to Social Movements and Governments in the Digital Age: Evaluating a Complex Landscape by Zeynep Tufekci (2014). As is evident from the title, this work focuses on the protest movements against governments. However, the issues discussed and raised in it, as well as conclusions arrived, I presume, are relevant in the context of social issues like women’s health and rights. I give some direct quotations and my interpretations from the above paper, and later, present summary of issues applicable in Mimba’s context. Tufekci (2014) observes that in the recent past many social movements have shaken countries around the world. As per her, most of these movements have fundamentally depended upon digital connectivity, especially for organizing, gaining publicity and effectively communicating. She also comments that blogging, universal spread of mobiles together with integrated video cameras have afforded citizen activists with gathering, publishing and widely circulating video evidence of serious issues affecting them. Further that the digital media has helped coordination and organization of protests and social unrest in many countries around the world. She comments, “Social media’s empowering aspects
are real and profound, but these impacts do not play out in a simple, linear fashion. The ability to scale-up quickly using digital infrastructure has empowered movements to embrace their horizontalist and leaderless aspirations, which in turn have engendered new weaknesses after the initial phase of street actions ebbs“ (Tufekci, 2014).

The above is indicative of the fact that digital media is playing a significant role in activism but it also suffers from limitations. A few important points that generally emerge from Tufekci’s (2014) paper are as follows:

• The Internet leads to “slacktivism”—the tendency to click on links or like posts rather than taking concrete actions or steps. Therefore, to achieve the goals of Mimba, there is a need to engage individuals in a manner that their interest is sustained.

• When introduced to new information and symbolic actions from peers, individuals active online have a higher chance of getting involved and interested. This reminds us that peer connection will have a necessary role for facilitating online activism on Mimba.

• By itself, social media does not automatically facilitate easier organizing of logistics, and online or offline activities, e.g. information sharing, campaigning etc. But, volunteers who step in can bring in talent and skill sets to bear in successfully.

• Working together builds trust and an ability to collaborate effectively. Thus, provision in Mimba for formation of groups and organizing collaborative activities would bring in commitment and sustained engagement of individuals.

• A characteristic feature of online activism is a flexible organization with shifting leadership roles without explicit hierarchies. And, yet successful outcomes can emerge as committed individuals assume leadership at appropriate levels. Thus, Mimba needs to have this as a strong feature to reward and recognize achievement as well as to tap the most suitable individuals.

• Research has revealed that weakness in momentum emerges when the initial energy has waned. At this stage, employment of novel methods to energize the Mimba community will be essential. Further, retaining worthiness in the eyes of public and members will also be important.

Given the above stated possibilities and limitations of new communication technology in facilitating communities and activism, an in-depth study of these will be necessary to inform the design and development of Mimba. In the next section, I conduct a review of literature on online communities and activism that may be relevant to the proposed community service Mimba.
3.2 Online Communities

This section provides a theoretical overview of online communities. A typology of online communities drawn from literature is studied next.

3.2.1 Defining Online Communities

In spite of the increasing body of literature on the subject, there is still no generally accepted definition of on-line communities (Stanoevska-Slabeva, 2002). Drawing from literature on communities, Stanoevska-Slabeva offers a synthesized description. Online communities can be characterized by strong social relationships between participants, community-specific organizational structure and modes of discourse, a common vocabulary, persistence of common meaning, a shared history, community rituals, continuity of communication, and a common on-line meeting space. Taken together, these elements provide an identity for the community, enable long-lasting relationships between members, and foster strong commitment to community goals, thereby making a significant contribution to the success of commercial digital platforms, such as e-commerce, on-line learning platforms, and knowledge sharing systems.

Attributes of a Community

Lazar & Preece (1998) state that online communities can be defined by the community attributes that the community possesses. Some of the attributes of a community might be:

- A shared goal or interest that provides the reason for being a part of the community
- Intense interactions and strong emotional ties
- Shared activities between community members
- Access to shared resources
- Support between community members
- Social conventions, language, or protocols

Whittaker, Isaacs, & O’Day’s diary (as cited in Lazar & Preece, 1998)

3.2.2 Typology of Online Communities

This section helps define a typology of online community that can guide the development of the Mimba community. The aim of a typology is to abstract from the appearance of a phenomenon into types based on their similarities. The identified types provide a foundation for developing design guidelines that apply to all representatives of a specific type (Stanoevska-Slabeva, 2002). The need for such an exercise arose as a means to make a better sense of the information gathered during a service benchmarking exercise (covered in a later section).
Based on the existing typologies for online communities, and with due consideration for the participant needs as classification criteria, Stanoevska-Slabeva identifies the following types of communities:

- **Discussion or conversation communities**, satisfying the need for communication. Discussion communities are dedicated to the exchange of information with reference to a defined topic.
- **Task and goal-oriented communities**, satisfying the need for cooperative achievements of goals. Communication between participants during all stages of task achievement results in social relationships and community building.
- **Virtual worlds**, satisfying the need for fantasy and playing.
- **Hybrid communities**, integrating several of the types mentioned above.

I would also like to inform the reader about a discussion community sub-type, i.e. a Community of practice as it is of relevance to the proposed community service and will be discussed in the following chapters. Communities of practice are a specific kind of discussion community that are focused on a domain of knowledge (Stanoevska-Slabeva, 2002). Further, Wenger defines these communities as: “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, 2011). Stanoevska-Slabeva (2002), distinguishes two types of communities of practice: (1) communities of practice that emerge in organizations around certain topics and know-how across departmental barriers and (2) communities of practice around professional associations or among persons pursuing the same professions (Stanoevska-Slabeva, 2002).

The above classification schema may not be exhaustive as ICT and community building has progressed further from the time that the author wrote the paper. However, they can assist in classifying the various services covered under the benchmarking exercise later, as well as provide an improved understanding of the kind of outcomes each typology affords. Consequentially, the chosen typology framework for Mimba may guide the community design process by learning from existing similar communities.

### 3.2.3 ONLINE COMMUNITIES FOR ACTIVISM

The above literature discussion defines online communities based on a variety of contexts, without specifically addressing community building for activism. While the community attributes and typologies provide an understanding of community types, they are not enough to ensure that the platform design will facilitate the kind of activism necessary for achieving Mimba’s goals, importantly that of self-organized, rapid and collective action.

The aforementioned attributes (Whittaker, Isaacs, & O’Day’s diary as cited in Lazar & Preece, 1998) can guide the creation of a community that is sustainable and desirable for keeping attention on the issue. The very nature of communities i.e. a sense of ownership, shared meeting space, decentralized peer-to-peer connection allow for meaningful participation. This has the potential to ensure sustained participation and engagement of an individual with a cause.
The question arises, how to create a community platform that facilitates both a large constituency of supporters while ensuring meaningful participation with the cause? For the purpose of online activism, many platforms exist and have varying types of community interactions. However, not all of them are able to facilitate both goals. For example, Avaaz, by intention and design, potentially mobilizes many citizens in a low-threshold participatory action towards a cause, however, it is questionable if it facilitates deeper commitment to the cause (Land, 2009). Conversely, a platform like Reddit, has witnessed user-generated activism, where members have rapidly self-organized to action as seen in the case of the ‘SOPA blackout day’ which then played out across Google, Wikipedia and thousands of smaller sites (Thomson, 2012). This challenge is addressed by Land (2009) in her article networked activism, where she considers whether the participatory potential of technology can be used to both broaden the mobilization of ordinary citizens in human rights advocacy and provide opportunities to become more deeply involved in the work (Land, 2009). This is discussed in more detail in the next section.

FIGURE 15
3.3 Networked Activism: A Model for Activism Online

This section covers an introduction and discussion on the theory on networked activism. This is of particular interest for women's health as this sector is yet to realize the potential of online organization and activism. Land (2009) discusses networked activism in the context of human rights advocacy and this is applicable to women's health and rights as well (UN, 1948).

3.3.1 BROAD MOBILIZATION

Land (2009) characterizes broad mobilization as the involvement of large numbers of ordinary citizens in advocacy, which has a democratizing effect and distinct advantages. “Firstly, a greater number of lay participants means more contributors in more locations. Peer-production or collaborative production also allows individuals to contribute in ways that best fit their skills and interests, thus eliminating the transaction costs associated with matching people to particular tasks. As a result, there is a greater likelihood that individuals will be able to take responsibility for tasks uniquely suited to their skills, ability, and interest. Because of lower transaction costs and greater resources, such projects will also be in a better position to address situations in which advocacy might previously have been thought to have low chances of achieving change.

Secondly, Land (2009) describes sharing as highly participatory and involving broad mobilization. “Sharing refers to the act of making information available to others for a variety of purposes, including motivating, educating, or coordinating action. Sharing of online content is more common than collaborative production” and will be necessary to involve supporters who may not engage in collaborative production (Land, 2009).

Finally, although increased participation cannot by itself ensure accountability, it can support and strengthen efforts to hold organizations accountable for their actions. Allowing those affected by the violations in question to provide input on what should be done will not only strengthen the legitimacy of the advocacy that results, but will also put additional pressure on the government, which will be less able to dismiss the critiques.”

3.3.2 DEEP PARTICIPATION

In addition to broad mobilization, a digital advocacy platform like Mimba will also need to facilitate options for deeper participation amongst users. The possibility to participate and influence a community's goals and methods offers supporters more meaningful engagement with a cause. Without deep participation, an individual's commitment may not be

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6 Refer Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948)
sustainable. One of the most effective ways to foster deep commitment is to allow individuals to take ownership of their work. The more influence individuals have over the trajectory, goals, and mission of the group, the more committed they will feel (Land, 2009). Given these possibilities, citizen activists willing to take on leadership roles can emerge.

3.3.3 NETWORKED ACTIVISM & ONLINE GROUP FORMATION

Given the previous discussion, both broad mobilization and deep participation present unique and noteworthy advantages. To ensure both, broad mobilization and deep participation, Land (2009) draws insights from Network Theory to suggest a model of networked activism by encouraging the formation of highly participatory small groups while providing opportunities for those small groups to connect with one another. “Networked Activism” is a model of “Hierarchical Modularity,” (Figure 16) a system in which “numerous small but highly interlinked modules combine in a hierarchical fashion into a few larger, less interlinked modules.” Because it provides spaces for both large and small groups, networked activism offers a means for achieving broad mobilization while maintaining the small spaces that enable deep participation. Hierarchical Modularity also helps us shift our understanding of the primary unit of organization in social activism from the individual to the group. In this view, groups are composed not of individuals but of smaller groups connected internally through strong ties and externally through weak ties. Thus, the basic structure characterizing group activity is not individuals joining together but rather a web or network of connections (Land, 2009). This point helped in questioning whether the sustained engagement of an individual with the cause is necessary. The committed and sustained participation of an individual may not be feasible as indicated by Land (2009), and such model can ensure that the movement or cause does not suffer as a whole due to changing allegiance of the individual.

Understanding the group as the primary unit of organization in group activity highlights the way in which groups are more than simply a sum of their parts. For example, small groups can separately develop specialized expertise. When these groups are networked together, the network as a whole will benefit from the increased information and know-how of each small group. Separate development helps to reduce bottlenecks because labor can be divided among many smaller entities, while the connections between these groups help

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7 Land (2009) builds upon a variety of sources to make the case for a model of networked activism as quoted in the first two paragraphs of Section 3.3.3. Key amongst these are the works of Barabási and Shirky. She also cites from the works of Herbert Simon and Carliss Y. Baldwin with Kim B. Clark.
foster the circulation of resources, including information and expertise. Finally, separate development also allows significant experimentation. Small groups can innovate, and, if they are not successful, their failure will not significantly damage the network as a whole (Land, 2009).

This view is summarized by Kearns (2003), in his document, *Network-Centric Advocacy*. He characterizes network teams as small tight groups of changing leadership supported by resources provided by the larger networked community. Networks are fluid, moving very quickly to exploit opportunities. They self dissolve if there is stagnation. Membership is diverse and robust. Resources are often borrowed or used only on an as-needed basis. Each individual is bonded to the network through personal contact with other members and through acceptance of the common goals. (Kearns, 2003).

Kearns further explains the benefits of adopting a network-centric model:
- A shift in the style that would “irregularize” advocacy, making efforts much harder to predict, monitor and therefore disrupt.
- Creating “swarming” effects that neutralize consistent disadvantages in funding and staffing resources.
- Campaigns would be locally planned.
- Leadership would evolve at more levels.
- Actions would be more flexible and incredibly fast paced.
- Collaboration across a movement would increase and various actors would be able to work on joint campaigns (Kearns, 2003).

3.3.4 DESIGN ELEMENTS FOR A MODEL OF NETWORKED ACTIVISM

How does this conceptual model translate into the design of the platform? Based on a series of interviews with human rights and other public interest organizations, Land (2009) recommends specific design elements that might foster a model of networked activism in the human rights context. I use her recommendations to evaluate chosen service case studies in the next section to ascertain whether they display characteristics of a networked activism model. These design elements also guide the design of Mimba in a later section.

1. FOSTER APPROPRIATE INTERACTIVITY
   Allow individuals to interact with each other. The kind of interaction at issue here is not vertical interaction between the organization and the individual but horizontal interaction between individual users of the site. Interactivity is critical in allowing people to become more deeply involved in the advocacy effort.

2. PROVIDE TOOLS FOR GROUP FORMATION
   Provide either the space or information needed for users to identify and contact like-minded people to form their own initiatives.

3. CAPITALIZE ON EXISTING NETWORKS
   Integrating with social networks is essential. Individuals are more likely to contribute and take part in a particular action if someone in their social network asks them to do so.
4. **FOSTER COALITION BUILDING**
   In addition to allowing individuals to form groups, provide ways for these groups to connect with one another to form coalitions. For example, by providing tools that facilitate role division and task allocation.

5. **OFFER SEARCH TOOLS**
   Provide users with tools that allow them to organize, classify, and search content and others on the site.

6. **ASK OR GET OUT OF THE WAY**
   Provide users with the right level of guidance regarding what kinds of actions they should undertake. In general, the right level is likely to be either quite a bit or none at all. That is, to be successful, sites must either make a very specific and concrete request for action or provide individuals with the tools they need to create actions entirely on their own.

7. **CROWDSOURCE THE GOAL**
   To the extent an organization chooses to define the objectives of group activity itself, it might also consider employing crowdsourcing mechanisms to bolster individual investment in those goals.

8. **PROVIDE CONTEXT**
   Context may foster more effective actions because of the increased knowledge and investment of those who participate. As a result, actions will be appropriate and effective in light of the project’s needs. This will, more likely, attract others who will be committed and cooperative participants.

Before moving into the design phase, I will first document the results of a Service Benchmarking exercise I did to contextualize the above learning through practical case studies.
In this chapter, I present an analysis of two chosen services by reviewing literature and empirical observation of their websites. The theoretical understanding gained in the previous section is applied to these chosen cases to gain a practical understanding. The chosen services are Avaaz and OpenIDEO as they meet the criteria identified (elaborated next). Each of these services is introduced and then discussed to classify them according to previously elaborated knowledge on online communities and networked activism. Further, they are analyzed against the design elements suggested by Land (2009). This helped me in understanding how successful they have been in facilitating a model of networked activism, and also in providing concrete examples that Mimba can learn from.

The service benchmarking exercise was initiated by the M4ID team by brainstorming a long list of online services with features that support crowdsourcing, crowdfunding, user generated content, campaigning, skill sharing, volunteering and creative communities (M4ID, 2014d). This was followed by an affinity mapping exercise to identify key representative services. A quick broad exploration of these services followed through:

• Browsing the websites to observe service features and community engagement features.
• Informal interviews with users were also conducted to understand user motivation.
CRITERIA FOR CHOSEN SERVICES

On the basis of the above exploration, I identified Avaaz and OpenIDEO as services for more detailed analysis as they displayed the following characteristics:

- Similar key service elements as Mimba (outlined in Section 1.5).
- Display characteristics of networked activism or collaborative production or a mix of both.
- Demonstrated quantifiable or qualitative impact in addressing social or political issues (Section 4.1 and 4.2 provide details).
- A robust community that has engaged with the platform for up to five years. This qualifier shows that it has the potential to sustain engagement of a community.

Further, in the following sections, I present a detailed analysis and a study carried out by:

- Browsing the websites to observe service features and community engagement features.
- Informal interviews with users.
- A review of literature that study the community aspects of the platforms.

4.1

Avaaz

(www.avaaz.org)

The Avaaz website states that its aim is “to bring people-powered politics to international-decision-making” by articulating global public opinion. The Avaaz strategy involves rapid response to urgent problems by mobilizing large numbers of subscribers to sign petitions or donate small amounts of money.

To understand the scale of mobilization, a glance at the website as of mid-march 2015 reveals that Avaaz’s membership is over 41 million people from 194 countries. Since its founding in 2007, members have engaged in over 230 million actions. It operates in 15 different languages and claims to be fully funded by small, online donations from its members, having raised over $15 million online. The Avaaz core team works from 18 cities on five continents, using online tools to collaborate in a “virtual office,” supported by a network of thousands of volunteers throughout the world.
4.1.1 HOW IS ACTIVISM ON AVAAZ ORGANIZED?

Kavada (2012) states that activism on Avaaz is coordinated by a small professional team of campaigners based in different continents, while the headquarters of the organization are in New York City. Campaigners are responsible for defining the priorities of Avaaz and for developing its messages with the help of expert advisors. These priorities are also set through opinion polls of the Avaaz membership base. Ideas for campaigns are tested on 10,000-member random samples and only those that garner strong support are forwarded to the full membership. This emphasis on “polling and testing” fulfills what Avaaz calls “an ethic of servant leadership” (www.avaaz.org), with staff members responsible for listening to the membership base and crafting actions in response to its concerns, rather than setting the agenda in advance. This mode of functioning would not be possible without the use of the internet. As a “web movement”, Avaaz operates predominantly as a virtual organization. Its core tool is an email alerts list that operates in 14 languages. Avaaz also occupies a wide range of social networking and content sharing sites allowing it to capitalize on existing networks. The presence of the organization on social networking sites offers access to new audiences and allows for its actions to scale up, as they can be easily advertised by supporters to their own networks. Digital and social media thus help Avaaz to organize broad mobilization with a simple and lightweight structure (Kavada, 2012).

Land (2009) lists Avaaz as an example of a type of mobilization “that increases the participation of ordinary individuals in human rights advocacy where the action or commitment of required of each individual is small, but the aggregation of each individual’s actions creates an overall effect that is significant. However, as effective as Avaaz has been in broadly mobilizing individuals to become involved in human rights issues, it is unclear how successful it is in transforming that initial act of participation into a deep and sustained commitment to the work” (Land, 2009).

In terms of bonding, the platform allows individual activists to communicate with the core team and to spread its message to their existing social networks, but opportunities for private interpersonal communication with other Avaaz supporters are limited (Kavada, 2012). Thus its community model
is partial towards broad mobilization and it is contentious if the model fully realizes the potential of a networked activism model (See Figure 18).

Probably to overcome this propensity to provide limited participatory options to its members in its early years, Avaaz later initiated a proprietary social media platform, called Avaaz.org Community Petitions (McPherson, 2014). This provides the ‘Start a Petition’ feature to individual activists and CSOs to initiate their own actions towards their concerns by mobilizing their networks. With this feature, Avaaz allows for local leadership to emerge on the platform, thus allowing individuals the option for deep participation as defined by Land (2009). However, it does not provide tools for these individuals and groups to collaborate towards their goals, and therefore options for deep participation continue to be limited. To further ascertain whether the Avaaz community displays features of a model of networked activism as defined by Land (2009), an analysis is presented in the next section.

4.1.2 EVALUATING AVAAZ

An analysis on the basis of Land’s (2009) suggestions on design elements is carried out below. It assists in evaluating Avaaz as a platform to see if it displays characteristics of networked activism.

1. FOSTER APPROPRIATE INTERACTIVITY
   None. Avaaz does not allow individuals to interact with each other on Avaaz. The kind of interaction is limited to vertical interaction, i.e. user with the site (Kavada, 2012).

2. PROVIDE TOOLS FOR GROUP FORMATION
   None. Avaaz does not provide the space for users to identify and contact like-minded others on its website to form their own initiatives. It expects active members who start their own petitions to share it within their own networks outside Avaaz (Kavada, 2012; Avaaz.org Community Petitions).

3. CAPITALIZE ON EXISTING NETWORKS
   Email and Social Networks are an important tool for facilitating rapid and viral spreading of petitions (Kavada, 2012).

4. FOSTER COALITION BUILDING
   No. Since the platform does not allow group formation, the possibilities for coalitions to form are non-existent (Kavada, 2012).

5. OFFER SEARCH TOOLS
   None. The platform has no search option. There is no system of tagging or searching for petitions based on
member interest or location. Neither can a user search and contact other members from within the Avaaz community (Avaaz).

6. **ASK OR GET OUT OF THE WAY**
Yes. Clear ask to sign a petition, donate and share. For those that start a petition, the process of creating and sharing a petition with ‘winning potential’ is guided by the design of the platform (and not the expertise of the core Avaaz team members; Avaaz; Avaaz.org Community Petitions).

7. **CROWDSOURCE THE GOAL**
Yes. Directed consultation on which issues to create petitions on. Also crowdsource the signing up of petitions through the website and email (Kavada, 2012).

8. **PROVIDE CONTEXT**
Yes. The core team works closely to research and create petitions with information they think fosters low level citizen participation i.e. signing a petition (Avaaz).

From the above analysis, it is safe to say that Avaaz displays limited characteristics of networked activism as it fulfills only four of the eight design element suggested by Land (2009). Additionally, Avaaz is clearly a task- and goal-oriented community type since it facilitates cooperative achievement of goals, i.e. by signing petitions or sharing campaigns on social media, community members are collectively furthering the goal of the petition.

From the above discussion, I infer that Avaaz is a task- and goal-oriented community. Further the mobilization and participation of members by the website favors broad mobilization with options for deep participation being restricted to the core Avaaz team and with limited options available in the form of the ‘Start a Petition’ feature. The above discussion is summarized in the polarity map (Figure 19).

**FIGURE 19**
Polarity mapping of Avaaz against identified community typologies and a model of networked activism. Mridu Mehta, 2015

**SUMMARY**
- Displays limited characteristics of a model of networked activism, with partiality towards broad mobilization
- Centralized, broad mobilization of members
- Directed consultation with membership on issues
- Leadership can emerge at all levels (Start a Petition)
- Lean, efficient organization, high impact by number of members involved
• Diverse membership across continents and demographics
• Task- and goal-oriented community type
• Leverages loose ties between members
• Minimum action and engagement from supporters
• Low sense of ownership of community and issue amongst members
• Rapid, viral spreading of message makes it difficult to disrupt
• Channels: Email, social media and web service

Mimba can learn from Avaaz’s ability to leverage loose ties between members and enable broad mobilization. It also requires minimum action and engagement from supporters, which allows anyone with access to the internet to participate (Land, 2009). The lowered participation barrier has the potential to increase public awareness just by introducing the issue to new audiences, something that the maternal health movement is yet to achieve (Cox, 2010).

4.2 OpenIDEO
(https://openideo.com/)

OpenIDEO is an “open innovation platform where a global community works together to solve big challenges for social good” (OpenIDEO). The platform crowdsources design-oriented volunteers across the Internet to tackle difficult interdisciplinary problems. Many of their design ‘Challenges’ have focused upon issues concerning impoverished communities. ‘Challenges’ include human sanitation solutions, alternatives for serving maternal health issues with mobile technologies, affordable learning tools, and social business models to improve health, and other pressing global quandaries. The design process uses Human-Centered Design (HCD) techniques to develop interventions for the public and private sectors, in the form of products and services, which are catered specifically to users’ needs (Gordon, Fuge, & Agogino, 2014).

The Impact section of the website reveals that it has hosted 29 ‘Challenges’ in 5 years, added up to 80,000 members who have submitted 6,510 ideas from 212 countries and territories. This has resulted in 300 projects in development, 500 ‘Meetups’ across 54 cities and the participation of 900 global teams (OpenIDEO).

Stories of impact include the development of entrepreneurial ventures, real world collaborations, activation of local communities and successful funding of projects. For example, collaboration was formed between Design Tinkering, a
student group, and Women for Human Rights, a Nepalese NGO. They envisioned a new role for women’s leadership in low-income communities and together they developed a toolkit to identify and train potential local leaders. This collaboration granted them design support and funding from the Amplify program (a series of 10 ‘Challenges’ sponsored by the UK Department for International Development on the OpenIDEO platform) and they are in the process of implementing this initiative in Kathmandu (OpenIDEO).

4.2.1 HOW IS COLLABORATION ON OPENIDEO ORGANIZED?

OpenIDEO posts a design ‘Challenge’, which moves through a six-stage process (Figure 20). Each ‘Challenge’s is a three to five month collaborative process that creates a space for community members to contribute. Members can participate by sharing their own ideas and knowledge, and by building upon those of others at each stage. Towards the end of the process, sometimes a sponsor may decide to pursue implementation of a winning idea or provide funding. The OpenIDEO website also states that the winning design may be produced by whoever chooses to do so — all concepts are generated under a Creative Commons license and are thus shareable, remix-able, and reusable (OpenIDEO). A community member can create a “Virtual Team” of collaborators on the platform by sharing his/her idea under a ‘Challenge’. Interested members can join by “sharing inspirations, stories, tools and successful examples on the challenge topic” in the form of comments, or visuals, videos and other multimedia forms. Community members can also interact with the contributions in more lightweight forms such as ‘Applause’ and sharing on social media. Each ‘Challenge’ attracts a number of “Virtual Teams”. Community members are free to contribute to many different ‘Virtual Teams’. They are free to commit to join teams and contribute, or members can contribute individually as per their interest (OpenIDEO).

Teams can also be formed offline as seen by the number of Meetups organized through the platform. ‘OpenStorm’ is another feature where members from one location can conduct a brainstorming section offline.

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**FIGURE 20**
The 6 stages of a Design ‘Challenge’ on OpenIDEO. Reprinted from OpenIDEO, 2015, Retrieved from https://openideo.com/content/how-it-works.

**FIGURE 21**
OpenIDEO mobilizes members through a central challenge. Members then form groups online and offline to collaborate on their contributions as indicated by the clustering of nodes in this visualization. Mridu Mehta, 2015
This engagement model (Figure 22) by Haiyan Zhang, formerly lead designer at OpenIDEO displays features that support member interaction with the community. The platform provides varying levels of contribution to its members, starting with lightweight interactions at the base of the pyramid in efforts to mobilize larger number of people to participate. Moving up the pyramid requires more engagement from the members in the form of submitting a story, an idea or a concept to building teams and continuously engaging with the ‘Challenge’ to arrive at refined concepts (Zhang, 2011).

Indication as are the sharing features seen in the visitor section of the pyramid of Figure 22. The platform also facilitates deep participation by facilitating online and offline group formation allowing community members to take on leadership roles. Further since community members contribute to a creative process, the sense of ownership and commitment towards their contribution and/or team can be said to exist. Further the existence of small groups in the form of ‘Virtual Teams’ and ‘OpenStorm’ provide members the option to influence the trajectory, goals and mission of the group. All these point towards characteristics of deep participation as defined by Land (2009).

However, OpenIDEO has a greater emphasis on broad mobilization than deep participation as can be seen from the number of features favoring the former. For example, the features identified by Haiyan Zhang support broad mobilization as they support sharing, aggregation of members (‘Follow’ and ‘Applaud’) and collaborative production of solutions through ‘Post a Comment’, ‘Add your Concept’ and ‘Build on this’. Features that explicitly support deep participation include ‘Virtual Teams’, ‘OpenStorm’ and ‘Meetups’. ‘Post a Comment’ feature supports ‘Virtual Teams’ by facilitating team discussions online. This emphasis on broad mobilization is part of OpenIDEO’s engagement strategy as stated by Zhang (2011), and is a notable learning for Mimba. The limited possibilities for deep participation are also indicated by the fact that members do not have influence over which ‘Challenge’ gets posted on the platform. Further, even though members vote on ‘Contributions’, the ‘Challenge’ sponsor and OpenIDEO
finally decide the top ‘Contributions’. This severely limits the options for deep participation for members at these levels.

To summarize, OpenIDEO displays characteristics of a model of networked activism. The following analysis of the design elements suggested by Land (2009) will confirm this.

4.2.2 EVALUATING OPENIDEO

An analysis on the basis of Land (2009) suggestions on design elements is carried out below. It assists in evaluating OpenIDEO as a platform to see if it displays characteristics of networked activism (OpenIDEO; OpenIDEO, 2011).

1. FOSTER APPROPRIATE INTERACTIVITY
   Yes. Community members can interact in multiple ways; e.g. connect to form teams, comment and build on each other’s ideas and concepts and applaud and share each other’s contributions (OpenIDEO, 2010).

2. PROVIDE TOOLS FOR GROUP FORMATION
   Yes. Provides both, the space and information needed for users to identify and contact like-minded people to form their own initiatives. Online groups like ‘Virtual Teams’ and offline groups like ‘OpenStorm’ and ‘Meetups’ are an important feature. Further, on completion of a ‘Challenge’, there are examples where community members have gone forward with real-world collaborations. For example, Design Tinkering and Women for Human Rights (OpenIDEO).

3. CAPITALIZE ON EXISTING NETWORKS
   Yes. Community members bring together their existing networks online and offline to contribute to ‘Challenges’ through group features. Integrating with social networks allows members to share their efforts on social media and attract outsiders to the platform (OpenIDEO).
4. **FOSTER COALITION BUILDING**
Not a strong feature. There is no real emphasis on this through groups are often visible to each other and free to collaborate via ‘Comments’ though there is no clear indication of task allocation or role division.

5. **OFFER SEARCH TOOLS**
Yes. Customized Search options are provided at each stage of the user’s journey with the site. For example, a new or unregistered user can search by the following classification: ‘All’, ‘Users’, ‘Ideas’, ‘Contributions’, ‘Impact Stories’, ‘Challenges’ and ‘Blog Entries’. A registered user can browse contributions by the following classifications: ‘Newest’, ‘Comments’, ‘Applause’, ‘Views’ and ‘Recently Updated’ (OpenIDEO).

6. **ASK OR GET OUT OF THE WAY**
Both used as per context. The platform is designed to guide member contributions into phases over the life of a ‘Challenge’. Members are provided web forms with guided questions to nudge them to think and contribute using HCD techniques. Once members start contributing, a group of community members may try to guide discussion or share ideas.

7. **CROWDSOURCE THE GOAL**
Yes. While OpenIDEO and its ‘Challenge’ partners define the problem to be solved, and also select winning ideas in a later stage in the ‘Challenge’ process, community members are free to contribute to ‘Challenges’ that interest them. Further, the goal of each ‘Challenge’ is to generate a wide variety of ideas, prototype them and test them with the community (OpenIDEO). To that end, the platform’s central feature is crowdsourcing the goal.

8. **PROVIDE CONTEXT**
Yes. Each ‘Challenge’ is introduced as a broad question with a written brief and may be accompanied by other audio-visual material, like videos etc. Interestingly, participants create the context for the ‘Challenge’ themselves, by defining the ‘Challenge’ question to their existing knowledge or interests and then building further from there (OpenIDEO, 2011).

Thus, OpenIDEO exhibits characteristics of a networked activism model. Crowdsourcing is a type of broad mobilization and the platform mobilizes a sizeable number of members to participate in ‘Challenges’ by offering options for varying levels of contribution (Figure). OpenIDEO also displays characteristics of deep participation. For example, as discussed earlier, it also offers members the chance to create and lead their own small groups where the team members are free to decide the objectives of the group. Further the platform has resulted in real-world collaborations between groups that have gone on beyond the ‘Challenges’. Therefore, OpenIDEO is closer to realizing a model of networked activism (than Avaaz) as suggested by Land (2009).

Additionally, OpenIDEO displays characteristics of both task- and goal-oriented communities and a discussion community i.e. it is a hybrid model. As stated previously, the platform is essentially an open innovation platform with the goal of crowdsourcing a number of HCD driven solutions from members. It does this by posting a ‘Challenge’ and guiding
members through a set of stages, each with a guided set of tasks, which are achieved through close cooperation – thus satisfying the definition of a task- and goal-oriented community. Community support features for task- and goal-oriented community type include team features and options for coordination to further the goals of each challenge (Stanojevska-Slabeva, 2002). Conversely, OpenIDEO can also be described as a discussion community where members exchange information on a ‘Challenge’ and their ‘Contribution’ in order to collaborate towards a solution. In addition, OpenIDEO displays characteristics of a discussion community sub-type, namely a community of practice. It can be described as a community of practice because design-oriented community members collaborate for social good by learning and applying domain knowledge from design i.e. HCD techniques, and also by sharing knowledge and ideas (Wenger, 2011; Stanojevska-Slabeva, 2002).

From the above discussion, I infer that OpenIDEO is a hybrid community type where task- and goal-orientation of the community is supported by a discussion typology. The platform also displays characteristics of networked activism. This is summarized in the polarity map below (Figure 24).

**SUMMARY**

- Displays characteristics of a model of networked activism, with emphasis on broad mobilization over deep participation
- Centralized mobilization from the platform which is augmented by a variety of Community moderators
- Goals of the community are decided by Sponsor and OpenIDEO
- Community members have a range of options for contributing, ranging from low to high
- Possibilities for high to medium sense of ownership of issue amongst members
- Leadership can emerge from the community
- Hybrid community typology (task- and goal + discussion)
- Groups typically contribute for a period of 3-5 months per ‘Challenge’
- Channels: Web service with support from social networks and email

**FIGURE 24**
Polarity mapping of OpenIDEO against identified community typologies and a model of networked activism. Mridu Mehta, 2015.
4.3 Comparative Analysis

Below is a comparative analysis of the chosen case studies against the design elements suggested by Land (2009). This analysis leads to the assumption that the characteristics of the OpenIDEO community are closer to what Mimba would like to replicate as it displays most of the design elements suggested by Land (2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIGN ELEMENT</th>
<th>AVAAZ</th>
<th>OPENIDEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster appropriate interactivity</td>
<td>Yes. Possibility for starting your own petition</td>
<td>Yes. ‘Comments’, feedback, share knowledge, ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools for group formation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes. ‘Virtual Teams’, ‘OpenStorm’, ‘Meetups’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalize on existing networks</td>
<td>Yes. Email, Social Networks</td>
<td>Yes. Email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Foster coalition building</th>
<th>Offer search tools</th>
<th>Ask or get out of the way</th>
<th>Crowd source the goal</th>
<th>Provide context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes. Central function of the site</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next chapter, I present a discussion on the proposed community service Mimba, by analyzing insights gained from this chapter as well as the literature review conducted in Chapter 3.
This chapter presents a deliberation on the previous two chapters, i.e. Chapter 3, Theoretical Exploration and Chapter 4, Service Benchmarking. I analyze Mimba based on the insights gained from these keeping firmly in view the goals and vision for Mimba. Subsequently, this chapter will inform the community model and design element suggestions for Mimba, presented in Chapter 6.

I begin with an analysis and inference of Stanoevska-Slabeva’s community typology for Mimba in Section 5.1. The analysis is carried out against the core service elements of Mimba as defined in Section 1.5, i.e. crowdsourcing, campaigning and collaboration. I proceed to do the same for Land (2009) to deduce a model of networked activism for Mimba (Section 5.2). Both Section 5.1 and 5.2 are supported by the study conducted on Avaaz and OpenIDEO previously. Finally, I conclude by synthesizing these into a Positioning Diagram to evaluate Avaaz, OpenIDEO and Mimba against identified community typologies and a model of networked activism.
5.1 An Online Community Typology for Mimba

Mimba intends to contribute towards development goals as articulated in the MDGs and therefore, community members will be facilitated to share this goal. Further, potential supporters have demonstrated the motivation for contributing to improving women’s health and rights issues. Thus community members would share a goal, of ‘doing good’ through the platform. This was validated for Mimba by the M4ID team, through responses we received when we organized workshops and interviews with potential supporters (M4ID, 2014e). Additionally, Mimba will provide crowdsourcing facilities to CSOs to meet their programmatic, advocacy and campaigning needs. To facilitate these needs, a time-based, task oriented community platform design is essential (M4ID, 2014b). Mimba can thus be typified as a task- and goal-oriented community since it satisfies user needs of cooperative achievement of goals (Stanoevska-Slabeva, 2002).

To make the case for a task- and goal-oriented community typology further, I draw strength from Stanoevska-Slabeva (2000); “basic services necessary for achieving the goal of the community must be extended to support social contacts and enabling community building in task- and goal-oriented communities. As a result, there are two kinds of basic services: those necessary for coordination to achieve the common task, and additional services for community building” (Stanoevska-Slabeva, 2002). Both these basic services will be crucial for improved collaboration of users. Firstly, research documented in Chapter 2 indicates the need for options for improving coordination, information sharing and joint planning needs of CSOs (Cox, 2010; M4ID, 2014c). Secondly, additional services for community building that come to mind (based on user inputs in Section 2.3) include providing feedback to supporters on their contributions and their subsequent impact on the ground as necessary to keep community engagement levels high. This will facilitate improved monitoring and increase momentum at its best, and provide impetus for demanding accountability when goals and progress lag (Land, 2009; FasterCures; HCM Strategists, 2011). In this context, a noteworthy example of tracking and reporting features can be seen on OpenIDEO, starting from ‘Challenge’ phases ending with ‘Impact’ phase and also the ‘Impact Stories’ section on the platform apart from their blog and social media outreach (OpenIDEO).

The above discussion leads to the inference that a task- and goal-oriented community typology is suitable for the intended community platform. However, it may be worth exploring the possibility of a hybrid model for Mimba as elaborated next.

Alternative to a task- and goal-oriented community type, a discussion community that satisfies the need for communication could also cater to needs of both user profiles. Options for communicating with peers will support all the service elements identified earlier i.e. crowdsourcing, campaigning and collaboration. CSOs had identified the need for improved access to peers globally, along with sharing collective knowledge and resources with each other (Section 2.3.1). To this
end, Mimba may need to facilitate the creation of a discussion community sub-type i.e. a community of practice as is typified by Stanojevska-Slabeva, (2002). She distinguishes two types of communities of practice: (1) communities of practice that emerge in organizations around certain topics and know-how across departmental barriers and (2) communities of practice arising around professional associations or among persons pursuing the same profession (Stanojevska-Slabeva, 2002).

Additionally, supporter engagement could increase given discussion opportunities such as communication, peer-connection, information sharing, and learning as seen through the ‘Post a Comment’ feature on OpenIDEO and as indicated by potential users at the participatory workshops organized by M4ID (M4ID, 2014c). These points indicate that Mimba will need to account for discussion community features in its platform design and community building efforts.

To summarize, Mimba should adopt both task- and goal-oriented as well as discussion community features. Further, a glance at the services studied in Chapter 4, i.e. Avaaz and OpenIDEO reveals that they are both primarily task- and goal-oriented communities. However, OpenIDEO is a hybrid model which functions as both a task- and goal-oriented community as well as a discussion community, specifically a community of practice. It is closer to the kind of typology mix that Mimba will need to provide. Therefore, the typology best suited is perhaps a hybrid form with a discussion community secondary to the task- and goal-oriented community type.

5.2 Broad Mobilization & Deep Participation on Mimba

5.2.1 BROAD MOBILIZATION ON MIMBA

CROWDSOURCING

Tools for broad mobilization of supporters will need to be provided for effective crowdsourcing of advocacy material on Mimba. Land (2009) describes collaborative production or crowdsourcing as a broad mobilization activity that has significant potential to involve individuals in human rights advocacy. Collaborative production would be enhanced if a larger number of participants support CSOs with a wide variety of skills from multiple locations. Additionally, there is a greater likelihood that individuals will be able to take responsibility for tasks if they are uniquely suited to their skills, ability, interests and time available (Land, 2009).

CAMPAIGNING

Campaigning through Sharing

In addition to collaborative production, Mimba will also function as a campaigning platform from where crowdsourced campaigns will be shared with target audiences by CSOs and Supporters alike (M4ID, 2014b). Land (2009) describes sharing as highly participatory and involving broad mobilization. The importance of sharing tools is demonstrated by both Avaaz and OpenIDEO as stated in
the Service Benchmarking section of this document previously. These platforms leverage the social networks of community members to increase both the number of supporters involved, as well as the potential impact of their service features (‘Petitions’ and ‘Challenges’ respectively). In Mimba’s case, campaigns created on or outside Mimba, will benefit when Supporters are able to share these campaigns in their networks (both on Mimba and on other social networks). In the context of facilitating a women’s health and rights movement through campaigning, I surmise that sharing will enable a large number of Supporters to engage with the issue. This will counter many of the challenges faced by advocacy for women’s health and rights as stated in Section 2.

Campaigning for Public Awareness and Accountability

Additionally, the need for public awareness, engagement and action to drive stakeholder accountability has been highlighted previously (refer discussion on the HIV/AIDS movement with Mari Tikkanen). As stated by Land (2009), although increased participation cannot by itself ensure accountability, it can support and strengthen efforts to hold organizations accountable for their actions. Allowing those affected by the violations in question to provide input on what should be done will not only strengthen the legitimacy of the advocacy that results, but will also put additional pressure on the government, which will be less able to dismiss the critiques (Land, 2009).

Further from the above discussion, I would like to deliberate on the potential of online communities to foster intense interactions and strong emotional ties as stated by Whittaker, Isaacs, & O’Day’s (as cited in Lazar & Preece, 1998). These are an important means of increasing public attention and engagement with a social issue, and campaigning for women’s health and rights would benefit from leveraging the emotionally charged experience of pregnancy, child birth and motherhood. For example, internal team discussions at M4ID brought forth anecdotal examples of educated and economically well-off women who either have personally experienced loss or suffering due to maternal and reproductive complications or more importantly, know someone who has. Women from this demographic are digitally active and are potential supporters. Their stories are rarely shared in regular discourse online and offline. Therefore a platform for sharing such personal experiences can have a catalytic effect for improving public interest in the issue. A quick sketch for Mimba demonstrates this point in Figure 25.
At the time of writing this thesis, a relevant and evocative example of the engagement potential of sharing stories for social change has emerged on the Facebook page of Humans of New York (HONY). HONY is a community of 12.5 million Facebook users started by Brandon Stanton. Brandon regularly posts a photo of a person with a short, emotionally compelling quote drawn from their conversation on the HONY Facebook page. He recently featured the story of Omar Samra, an Egyptian mountaineer and entrepreneur who lost his wife during childbirth, which received widespread attention of the HONY community (Humans of New York, 2015). Brandon’s ability to draw a subject’s personal story and present it in an emotionally provocative way has created an engaged community that has self-organized to action in other instances. Thus, I infer that broad mobilization can contribute to public awareness, engagement and be a factor in mobilizing Supporters to demand accountability.

FIGURE 26
The Facebook post by Humans of New York on the story of Omar Samra, an Egyptian mountaineer who lost his wife during childbirth received over 300,000 likes, 22,759 shares and countless comments by the HONY community. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/humansofnewyork/photos/a.102107073196735.4429.10209916530784/9308267360500/?type=3&permPage=1, 2015.

BROAD MOBILIZATION OF CSOs
The above stated applications of broad mobilization on Mimba favor the mobilization of Supporters towards the needs of CSOs. However, CSOs also need to mobilize other CSOs for the following needs:

• While Mimba is intended to primarily augment CSO resource needs by building access to Supporters, it also needs to improve resource sharing opportunities between CSOs by providing options for crowdsourcing resource (skills, knowledge etc.) requests from other CSOs.

• A kind of resource request, i.e. knowledge sharing needs of CSOs (Section 2.3.1) could be met when they are able to access a large number of fellow CSOs, reach those that they currently lack access to and also target CSOs that would best provide information. For example, sharing of knowledge between community members is demonstrated in Stage 1, ‘Research’ of an OpenIDEO ‘Challenge’ when members are broadly mobilized to share pre-existing knowledge on the ‘Challenge’ in the form of weblinks, comments and multimedia content (OpenIDEO, 2011).

• Joint campaigning will require mobilization of CSOs by CSOs to support and share campaigns across their networks.
5.2.2 DEEP PARTICIPATION ON MIMBA

CROWDSOURCING AND CAMPAIGNING
Options for deep participation should also be available to individuals as discussed in Section 3.3.2 (Land, 2009). As discussed previously in Section 4.1.1 Avaaz saw merit in introducing the ‘Start a Petition’ feature in efforts to offer individuals and organizations the ability to organize themselves towards issues they are concerned about (Avaaz.org Community Petitions; McPherson, 2014). Similarly, Mimba would benefit from providing individual Supporters the options for initiating their own crowdsourcing and campaigning actions, apart from supporting CSO needs. This also speaks to the Supporter need for meaningful participation options as discussed in Section 2.3.2 on user insights.

COLLABORATION
In addition to broad mobilization, a digital advocacy platform like Mimba will also need to facilitate options for deeper participation amongst users. Options for deep participation are particularly important for CSO users.

The platform has to provide tools for CSO users to collaborate with peers to campaign jointly. The movement could particularly benefit from amplifying the joint strength and voice of grassroots groups. Evidence based solutions proposed by grassroots and regional groups are often unable to influence policy as they lack access, resources and/or clout (M4ID, 2014f, pp. 7, 13, 16, 19, 25). These can be overcome by building on each other’s momentum and networks and also improved access to resources in the form of skilled volunteer support on Mimba. Coalition building is an important component of advocacy and Mimba can provide the platform to create powerful new coalitions by improving access of members to each other, and facilitate role division and task allocation (Land, 2009; M4ID, 2014c). Additionally, improved visibility of grassroots groups would ensure greater access to funding and support from donors (M4ID, 2014a). Options for CSO collaboration could also overcome challenges such as the current lack of information sharing, poor coordination and the absence of joint planning as stated in Section 2.2 (Cox, 2010; M4ID, 2014c).

The above stated needs would be better facilitated once CSOs have more influence over the trajectory and goals of women’s health and rights advocacy (Land, 2009). Given above stated possibilities, CSOs willing to take on leadership roles can emerge, thus engaging in deep participation as defined by Land (2009) in Section 3.3.2.

Importantly, collaboration options would effectively supplement CSOs crowdsourcing and campaigning initiatives on Mimba. For example, a number of CSOs could jointly plan a campaign on Mimba. The campaign would then be co-created with members through crowdsourced tasks, coordinated by the involved CSOs. Finally, the launch would require the mobilization of members through campaign sharing actions. Thus, collaboration options would facilitate deep participation of CSOs on Mimba.
5.2.3 CONCLUSION: NETWORKED ACTIVISM ON MIMBA

Summarizing the above discussion, Online activism on Mimba will involve broad mobilization of Supporters and options for facilitating deeper participation of both Supporters and organizational users (individual representing a CSO). However, while designing the Mimba platform, service features catering to broad mobilization will take precedence over deep participation features (Figure 27). A majority of Mimba’s goals (Section 1.5) rest on broad mobilization of the community. Out of the three core service elements (Section 1.5), two elements i.e. crowdsourcing and campaigning are largely driven by broad mobilization, while the third element collaboration, depends on both broad mobilization and deep participation. This is also visible in Avaaz’s partiality towards broad mobilization and OpenIDEO’s emphasis on broad mobilization over deep participation (as demonstrated in Figure 18 for Avaaz and Figure 23 for OpenIDEO). Thus, I argue that broad mobilization to be somewhat more important than deep participation in the case of Mimba (Figure 27).

Furthermore, Land states that a model of networked activism would help ensure both deep participation and broad mobilization by encouraging the formation of highly participatory small groups while providing opportunities for those small groups to connect with one another (Land, 2009). Such characteristics are also displayed by the group formation features on OpenIDEO which allow groups to collaborate within themselves and with others or other groups. Further validation is provided by Fuge & Agogino’s findings in How Online Design Communities Evolve Over Time: The Birth and Growth of OpenIDEO. They state that on OpenIDEO, “Single, large, centralized communities have given way to smaller, more numerous groups over time.” (Fuge & Agogino, 2014) Additionally, as covered in the Service Benchmarking section, Avaaz also saw merit in providing members the option to ‘Start a Petition” thus facilitating the formation of small user groups, albeit with limited participatory options on the platform. On this basis, I infer a networked activism model to be the guiding community model for Mimba and this learning is applied to Mimba in the next chapter to provide a detailed community model and design suggestions.
**5.3 Conclusion**

In this section, I synthesize the learning from the previous two chapters in the form of a positioning diagram (Figure 28). This graphical representation is a synthesis of the polarity mapping exercise conducted for Avaaz and OpenIDEO previously (Figure 19 and Figure 24). It allows the visual realization of the direction that Mimba should take w.r.t. the two chosen services. As depicted, the services are positioned relative to each other across two axes. The X axis signifies characteristics of networked activism (Land, 2009) and the Y axis signifies identified community typologies (Stanoevska-Slabeva, 2002).

In the positioning diagram (Figure 28), Avaaz is positioned towards the outer end of the upper right quadrant as it is partial towards broad mobilization and task- and goal-oriented community typology (refer Figure 19). OpenIDEO (refer Figure 24) displays a model of networked activism with slight preference for broad mobilization and also a hybrid community typology. Therefore, it is placed close to the center in the diagram. It also belongs to the right quadrant due to its preference for broad mobilization. Consequently, Mimba can be positioned between Avaaz and OpenIDEO. As depicted in Figure 28, Mimba’s preference for broad mobilization is summarized in Section 5.2.3. Also, its goal of facilitating campaigning puts greater emphasis on broad mobilization than OpenIDEO. On the other hand, its goal of facilitating CSO collaboration ensures it has a preference for deep participation, which is severely limited in the case of Avaaz. Furthermore, I surmise that discussion features should support the cooperative achievement of tasks and goals of the Mimba community (Section 5.1). Therefore, Mimba is positioned closer to the top of the positioning diagram.

This leads to the conclusion that the Mimba community should aspire to a model of networked activism with preference for broad mobilization of its membership and also function as a hybrid community typology where discussion features are secondary to the task- and goal-oriented features of the community. In the next chapter, I take this analysis forward to detail a community model for Mimba, derive platform design features/ service features and present the design in the form of early wireframes and use case scenarios.
This chapter concludes this thesis by presenting outcomes in the form of a community model for Mimba along with design suggestions. The design suggestions are further evaluated against Land’s (2009) suggestions to ensure a model of networked activism. Readers eager to see the design suggestions come to life can browse through Section 6.3, Concept Scenarios. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of the design outcomes against the needs summarized by potential users in Section 2.3.5.
6.1 Community Model: Group Formation

In the previous chapter, I analyzed both broad mobilization and deep participation in context of Mimba. On this basis, I inferred a networked activism model to be the guiding community model for Mimba. Land (2009) states that a model of networked activism would encourage the formation of highly participatory small groups while providing opportunities for those small groups to connect with one another (Land, 2009). Drawing from Land’s (2009) insights on hierarchical modularity, and assuming the group as the primary unit rather than the individual, lead me to three possible group types on Mimba, based on permutation and combination of the two main user profiles:

1. **CSO–SUPPORTER INTERACTIONS** would include meeting CSO needs with skilled Supporters. This type of interaction will essentially enable CSOs to mobilize a broad base of Supporters to contribute to tasks. In such collaborations, options for deep participation will be limited for Supporters as the tasks and goals towards which they will contribute will primarily be decided and led by the CSO.

   For example, a CSO like CHSJ would benefit from Gordon and Mary’s skills to prepare an illustrated report (Section 2.3.3, Persona 1 and 2).

2. **CSO–CSO INTERACTIONS** will facilitate resource, information and knowledge sharing, coordination and joint campaigning by organizations on Mimba. Resource, information and knowledge sharing are essentially broad mobilization activities initiated by CSOs and targeted at other CSOs (Section 5.2.1.3). CSOs collaboration will involve deep participation i.e. initiating and collectively deciding on joint tasks and campaigns (Section 5.2.2).

   For example, a CSO like Violence Against Women (Section 2.3.3, Persona 4) needs options to collaborate with select other CSOs; and Anisha of Nari Shakti, Nepal (Section 2.3.3, Persona 5) will benefit from knowledge sharing options.

![A model of Hierarchical Modularity as applied to Mimba presents 3 main user groups, each with would support interaction between different entities as illustrated. Mridu Mehta, 2015](image-url)
3. **SUPPORTER–SUPPORTER INTERACTIONS** will provide active Supporters with options for deep participation by:
   a. inviting and building a team of Supporters on CSO initiated tasks and
   b. initiating their own tasks and campaigns on Mimba.

   Active Supporters can use the crowdsourcing and campaigning features of Mimba to mobilize other Supporters. This type of collaboration will meet the need of options for varied and meaningful ways of participation.

   For example, Hope (Section 2.3.3, Persona 3) wants to reach out to likeminded peers and stay connected to organize a support group and engage more deeply with reproductive health issues.

6.2 **Description of the Designed Platform**

The key service features of the platform are discussed in this section. These are developed through design methodologies including brainstorming, concepting and prototyping. Some features were developed during M4ID project process, and I supplement these with suggestions that were developed after analysis as covered in Section 5. I begin by describing the key features in Section 6.2.1. Consequently, in Table 4, I classify these features according to the 3 group types presented previously in Section 6.1. The service features are presented as early stage prototyped wireframes without yet considering specific usability issues.

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8 Mimba will possibly be designed as a responsive web platform and an accompanying mobile app as proposed by M4ID. Wireframes here present examples from both use cases, i.e. web and mobile based screens.
6.2.1 KEY FEATURES

The key service features of the platform are named as:

- Call to Action
- Active Now
- Collaborate

These features are supported by ‘User Profiles’ and a system of ‘Notifications’ to inform users about updates to these three features. ‘Impact’ is another important feature where users can track progress towards development goals and user initiated actions.

CALL TO ACTION

A ‘Call to Action’ is a time-bound task. It is the main function of the service, and will generally be created by CSOs to crowd source from both other CSOs and Supporters. ‘Calls to Action’ can also be initiated by Supporters who wish to collaborate with other community members. A ‘user’ (any member who initiates a task i.e. a ‘Call to Action’) can ‘Setup a Call to Action’ via a guided webform which can be modified to the ‘user’ needs. The ‘user’ can target the ‘Call to Action’ so that it reaches members most suited to the task by selecting User Group, CSO expertise, ‘Skills’, ‘Location’ and ‘Availability’ of members. This targeted mobilization of members can ensure that the best suited members respond. For illustrated example, check Section 6.3, Scenario 1 and the accompanying Figure 22). A targeted user who receives the ‘Call to Action’ notification can ‘Accept’ the task, ‘Share’ it with his/her networks and invite others to act on the task. ‘Calls to Action’ will be supported.

FIGURE 30
with progress tracking features to ensure tasks are completed. Further, users can ‘Applaud’ and ‘Share’ completed tasks. ‘Calls to Action’ will have limited ‘Comment’ functionality (limited number of characters) to ensure that ‘Comments’ are primarily task focused and not overtaken by community discussions.

There are 3 kinds of ‘Calls to Action’ as shown in Table 19.

1. **Creative tasks** would generally be attended to by skilled Supporters. These tasks will be defined by the initiating ‘user’ (CSO or Supporter) and offers Supporters various options to contribute, starting from easier ideation tasks to more intensive video tasks.

2. **Research tasks** include mobilizing users to help gather information (e.g. for an organizational report), or share their knowledge (e.g. advice on planning for developing an app). Users can also volunteer for offline activities to the field to collect data (e.g. for monitoring and evaluating a program).

3. **Campaign tasks** include sharing online content and organizing/participating in events on Mimba or offline (e.g. protests, flash mobs etc.)

### ACTIVE NOW

‘Active Now’ is a personalized News Feed of all active ‘Calls to Action’ relevant to a user based on their ‘Tags’. Users can join ‘Calls to Action’ by choosing a task of interest via this feed or also through a stream of ‘Notifications’ through their profile. News Feeds are a mechanism to both keep a user updated on interesting or relevant information and to keep a user engaged with the platform (Levy, 2014).

### COLLABORATE

This feature is available to organizational profiles only. Users can initiate a collaboration with other organizational users to discuss and jointly plan and execute campaigns or coordinate on other operational needs. Features such as ‘Comments’, ‘Polls’, ‘Member Listing’ and ‘Recent Activity’. Collaboration features can be used in tandem with ‘Call to Action’ features to allocate tasks and resources to organizational members.

### USER PROFILES

‘User Profiles’ would be of two types:

- **Organizational accounts**: Profiles would carry ‘Tags’ such as Organizational Description, ‘Organizational Focus’, ‘Impact’, ‘Need Help With’ and ‘Location’ apart from contact information like website, social media presence etc.
• **Supporter accounts**: Supporter profiles would be ‘Tagged’ by ‘Skills’, Interests, ‘Location’ and ‘Availability’ for tasks apart from Supporter description and other engaging, personal and fun information.

There are no explicit connections between any two users on the platform. All user connections are initiated via ‘Tags’ i.e. users would be notified about a ‘Call to Action’ or a ‘Collaborate’ request based on their profile tags.

**IMPACT**

This feature is a visualization and mapping of developmental goals and also user initiated actions. This will ensure progress tracking and reporting and sustain user engagement with the platform and issue. Additional mechanisms for feedback to users will need to be designed and disseminated via the platform. For example, check Active User, Scenario 3 in Section 6.3.
6.3 Concept Scenarios

In this section, I present six scenarios with sample wireframe prototypes of Mimba. These scenarios are based on the User Personas shared earlier in Section 2.3.3. The service features are presented as early stage prototyped wireframes without yet considering specific usability issues. These prototypes are yet to be tested with users.

The concept scenarios detailed in the following pages are:
1. Crowdsourcing and campaigning for awareness
2. Campaigning via sharing
3. Progress tracking and impact reporting
4. Joint planning and coordination
5. Knowledge sharing
6. Access to active network and campaigning via sharing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>NEED</th>
<th>FEATURES &amp; DESIGN ELEMENTS ON MIMBA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSO-Supporter</td>
<td>Skilled volunteer support</td>
<td>‘Calls to Action’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access, visibility and engagement with a</td>
<td>‘Calls to Action’, Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mass of supporters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback and impact reporting to Supporters</td>
<td>‘Comments’, ‘Applause’, ‘Shares’, ‘Progress Tracking’ feature for Call to Action, System generated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>personalized reports through visualizations and multimedia content, ‘Impact’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO-CSO</td>
<td>Improved access to other CSOs</td>
<td>‘Search’ based on tags, ‘Profile’ pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>‘Calls to Action’, ‘Collaborate’ ‘Comments’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint Campaigning</td>
<td>‘Collaborate’, ‘Comments’, Sharing, ‘Polls’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved visibility to donors and partners</td>
<td>‘Profile’, Activity (such as Calls to Action, ‘Collaborate’ and Sharing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporter-Supporter</td>
<td>Peer connection</td>
<td>Collaborate on ‘Calls to Action’ by ‘Sharing’, ‘Comments’, ‘Applause’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meaningful Participation</td>
<td>Targeted ‘Calls to Action’, Possibility to initiate a ‘Call to Action’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5
Facing page: Overview of design suggestions as relevant to the identified group types. Mridu Mehta, 2015.
SCENARIO 1
CROWDSOURCING AND CAMPAIGNING FOR AWARENESS
CSO-Supporter interaction

The Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ), India (Section 2.3.3, Persona 1) regularly updates reports of women from rural India who have faced maternal or reproductive health complications to its website. They would now like to illustrate them for use in various media including posters, reports and social media. Lalita, the Communications Officer logs onto the organizational account and clicks on ‘Setup a Call to Action’ on Mimba. She is guided by a webform where she introduces the task, the estimated time required for each, updates the deadline and describes the impact of the task. She then selects the kind of skilled support she requires and is asked if she would like Supporters from a specific location to contribute – to which she clicks ‘All’. To provide more context to others, she adds the weblink to the reports and shares some images of illustration types and styles she likes. She also attaches report from a previous project to give an example. She completes the webform and Mimba sends ‘Notifications’ to all users who fit the ‘Skills’, ‘Location’ and interest of the ‘Call to Action’.

Gordon (Section 2.3.3, Persona 5), an illustration artist from London who is periodically contributes on Mimba, receives a ‘Notification’ on his phone. He clicks on the link and quickly glances at the task. It appears the task requires a one page illustration, which is a quick task for a senior artist like him. He clicks on Accept after which he is asked to share it with others. He shares the ‘Call to Action’ via email with Mary (Section 2.3.3, Persona 5), his colleague from work, who is a copywriter and asks her to join him on the task. Mary has a look at the report and groans at the written style. The story is about Bela, a 19 year old girl from rural India who has lost her son during childbirth. The report is a minute to minute factual account that describes the failures that lead to the tragic loss. It sparks little interest in the reader. Mary knows she can turn it around into a compelling short story so she clicks on Accept. A week later, Mary and Gordon upload their contribution on Mimba and receive a Thank You notification from Mimba. Lalita likes their contribution, but wants a couple of changes. She clicks on their entry and
types in her comments. Mary and Gordon ‘Accept’ the comments, make the changes and share their contribution.

Lalita/CHSJ shares the illustrated story on Mimba and other social media giving due credit to Mary and Gordon. She also inserts Mary and Gordon’s contribution in her report and shares printed copies at the local Health Seminar the next day. The next day, Mary and Gordon receive a ‘Notification’ from CHSJ with photos of the printed copies of the report being discussed by attendees at the seminar. Lalita ‘Comments’ that many attendees wanted copies of the illustration to use as training material at their local offices and that their contribution has generated a lot of attention on social media. Mary and Gordon are surprised at the impact their efforts made and wish to continue contributing. Excitedly, they share their contribution to their own social networks.

**SCENARIO 2**

**CAMPAIGNING VIA SHARING**

*CSO-Supporter, CSO-CSO and Supporter-Supporter interaction*

The Ugandan government is holding discussions to ban abortion in the National Parliament after pressure from pro-life groups. Pro-abortion organizations see this as step backwards and want to stop this legislation from coming into force. Unsafe abortions are the second leading cause of maternal deaths in Uganda.

Beatrice is a lawyer and venerable women’s rights activist in Kampala. She clicks on ‘Setup a Call to Action’ where she posts a video of herself describing a background to the proposed law and asking the Mimba community to protest. Hope (Section 2.3.3, Persona 6), suffered an unwanted pregnancy as a teenager and was able to return to school and complete her education thanks to Beatrice’s help. She watches the video and creates a ‘Call to Action- Event’ for the next day morning to gather outside the Minister for Health’s Office in protest. All community members on Mimba with Kampala as their location receive a ‘Notification’ and many join the event by clicking on ‘Accept’. Members share it with others in their social networks.

Francesca is a famous author and pro-abortion activist in Chile. She is an admirer of Beatrice and has been following the situation in Uganda. She posts a video with her views on Mimba and other social networks. Other public figures and activists across the world follow her lead, and share messages via social media denouncing the proposed law.
SCENARIO 3
PROGRESS TRACKING AND IMPACT REPORTING

Platform-User interaction

New User
Anu receives a weblink of an introductory video on Mimba from a friend via email. She watches the video and feels compelled to know more about Mimba. She opens the website and she notices visualizations on the goals for women’s health and rights, active projects around the globe and community contributions. She glances at current activity where she spots 5 friends and acquaintances that are active on the site. She wishes to contribute and registers on the site, builds her profile and logs out, waiting for a ‘Call to Action’, in the hope that she can have an impact on this issue.

Active User
Leander had been actively sharing his skills in photography with organizations on Mimba for over two years. Lately he has been spending lesser time on Mimba. He receives a personalized report with info-graphics visualizing a timeline of his activity, his contributions, the development goals towards which he has contributed and the amount of time he has spend on Mimba. It ends with snapshots of the responses he received for his photographs through ‘Applause’ and ‘Comments’. He remembers the photo-exhibition he hosted of his work for women’s health and rights CSOs and remembers how proud his family and friends were of him. He then responds to the ‘Call to Action’ he received from the good folks at the local health center.
Scenario 4
Joint Planning, Coordination

CSO-CSO interaction

Violence Against Women (Section 2.3.3, Persona 2) a women’s rights organization working with victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, rapes, acid attacks etc. The CSO believes the current action plan on usage of the $10 billion Nirbhaya Fund launched by the Indian government in misguided and they would like to influence policy.

Violence Against Women shares this concern with India based organizational members on Mimba by setting up a poll to gather their views. Many organizations poll that they do not agree with the government allocation of funds and would like all interested organizations to form a coalition to track usage and demand accountability. Violence Against Women consolidates member ‘Comments’ and shares it with the community seeking consensus.

Scenario 5
Knowledge Sharing

CSO-CSO interaction

Anisha (Section 2.3.3, Persona 3) a Program Officer in Nari Shakti, wants to develop a training manual on women’s leadership in low-income communities. She posts a ‘Call to Action’ asking members to share examples based on experience and best practices. On the guided webform on Mimba, she selects that she would like the ‘Call to Action’ to go to organizational users only, and those located in the South Asian region, as the cultural differences are lesser and the context is closer to rural India. Other organizations comment and share their experiences. Anisha particularly likes the post made by Radha who shares her organization’s report on applying positive deviance approach to her community in South India. While discussing, Anisha and Radha realize they have a lot of other case studies to share with each other, and most of these are offline. Before logging out, they agree to share and disseminate their findings online more often.

FIGURE 39
CSO collaboration can be improved through features such as listing of CSO members, CSO member profiles, ‘Tags’ for targeted search, discussion boards, polls etc. as illustrated. Mridu Mehta, 2015.

FIGURE 40
Knowledge sharing as a crowdsourcing activity targeted at both CSOs and Supporters. Here, Nari Shakti asks for information from other CSOs in South Asia, which is followed by a brief but helpful exchange of information with Radha. Mridu Mehta, 2015.
SCENARIO 6
ACCESS TO ACTIVE NETWORK. CAMPAIGNING VIA SHARING

CSO-CSO and CSO-Supporter interaction

DocsforWomen (Section 2.3.3, Persona 4) wants to publish their success with saving mothers and babies in refugee camps in Syria. They have decided to launch a social media campaign and want to reach 50,000 views.

John, the Director of DocsforWomen just returned from a failed funding pitch in the US, where he was exposed to Mimba by the grant organization. He suggests sharing the social media campaign on Mimba. They set up a ‘Call to Action’ asking the community to share their campaign so that it can reach 50,000 viewers worldwide. To their surprise, they receive a ‘Comment’ from a noted journalist covering stories of hope from conflict zones who wants to add their case into her article. They connect outside Mimba via email, exchange information, and once the article gets published, DocsforWomen’s campaign video gathers momentum. The campaign’s success brings a lot more visibility to their good work and John believes that it will improve their chances of funding by another foundation next month.

6.4 Evaluation of the Platform Design

While ideating and conceptualizing the design of the platform, I also analyzed design elements against those suggested by Land (2009). These are articulated below. Carrying out this analysis helped me get clarity on how group formation could occur on Mimba. For example, while the need for CSO-Supporter and CSO-CSO interaction type was clear, the need for Supporter-Supporter interactivity gained importance to foster both social bonding and peer-connection, but also provide options to Supporters to emerge as leaders by initiating their own actions with other Supporters, thus providing Supporters options for deep participation. Further, Land’s (2009) suggestions helped me generate ideas on using profile tags and search tools to provide options for broad mobilization to all users across the Mimba community.

Next in this section, I analyze the proposed design suggestions against user needs summarized in Section 2.3.5.
6.4.1
Mimba Design Suggestions against Design Elements Suggested by Land (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIGN ELEMENT</th>
<th>MIMBA DESIGN SUGGESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster appropriate interactivity</td>
<td>Collaboration between Supporter-Supporter, CSO-Supporter and CSO-CSO on tasks through ‘Notifications’, ‘Calls to Action’ and possibly ‘Comments’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools for group formation</td>
<td>Time-based self-organizing groups around tasks, primarily led by CSOs as demonstrated in the ‘Call to Action’ and ‘Collaborate’ feature, though Supporters are free to take lead as well within tasks or by creating new tasks of their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalize on existing networks</td>
<td>Users are provided social features to ‘Share’ campaigns and other content on social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster coalition building</td>
<td>CSO-CSO group formation and Supporter-led Groups based on Development Goals, Organizational Agenda, Expertise and ‘Location’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ask or get out of the way**

For Supporters, clear ask to contribute to tasks. For CSOs, guided webforms to create tasks.

Role of community managers needs to be explored but maybe limited to training CSO users in the initial stages of the platform.

**Crowdsource the goal**

CSO users can initiate Supporter involvement in defining task or campaign objectives through the ‘Call to Action-Ideation’ feature. Further, CSOs can leverage both ‘Call to Action’ and ‘Collaborate’ features targeted at other CSOs in order to crowdsource group objectives and actions.

**Provide context**

The platform can facilitate trust amongst users by sharing detailed Organizational Profile and activity. Each task will be accompanied by context in the form of textual description, multimedia, links etc.
6.4.2 Mimba Design Suggestions against User Needs

Based on service objectives and key insights, here is a summary of how Mimba caters to the needs of user categories as adapted from Section 2.3.5.

### TABLE 7 Evaluating design suggestions for Mimba against Supporter needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGE FOR SUPPORTERS</th>
<th>SUGGESTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporters need peer support to stay motivated</td>
<td>Lowered barriers to accessing like-minded peers online: Supporter-Supporter group formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A platform to ‘do’ not just talk/ Meaningful participation options beyond donations or armchair discussions</td>
<td>Focus on crowdsourcing knowledge, skills, networks through personalized and system targeted ‘Calls to Action’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular feedback on project progress and supporter contribution to sustain long term participation</td>
<td>Interactive tools for reporting progress and providing feedback through snippets, photos, videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking progress of developmental goals</td>
<td>Goals and progress visualized on ‘Impact’ screen and reported periodically as multimedia content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHALLENGE FOR CSOs SUGGESTION

| National actors do not have means for gaining visibility for their work or for gathering mass support for their efforts | Lots of leadership is allowed to emerge through ‘Calls to Action’ and improved access to a community of CSOs and Supporters |
| Regular feedback on project progress and supporter contribution | Quick and system generated interactive tools for reporting progress to Supporters using multimedia |
| Campaigns often remain one-offs with little progress or impact reporting | Campaigns can be tracked through the Progress Tracking feature of a ‘Call to Action’. System generated reports of the number of campaigns initiated and completed on Mimba along with their reach can help the community stay on course |
| CSOs do not have the required resources or skills | Access to professional volunteers through personalized and system targeted ‘Calls to Action’ |
Siloed action by organizations, lack of information sharing and absence of joint planning

| Siloed action by organizations, lack of information sharing and absence of joint planning | Improved access to peers through ‘Profile Listing’ and ‘Tags’, knowledge sharing and joint campaigning via ‘Calls to Action’ and possibly discussions within CSO-CSO groups through the ‘Collaborate’ service. |
| Weak messaging | This challenge would be reduced once CSOs are able to collaborate. Further, co-creating campaigns with Supporters increases the likelihood of the messages being better designed to engage citizens. |
| Accountability | Improved campaigning via ‘Calls to Action’ and ‘Collaborate’ options will hold CSOs accountable to their objectives as well as provide weight to joint advocacy initiatives that demand government accountability. |
| Lack of public attention | Co-creating campaigns with citizens increases the likelihood of the messages spreading in their networks. Further, CSO collaboration and improved campaigning practices will strengthen efforts to build public attention. |

In summary, the proposed design suggestions for Mimba can assist CSOs and Supporters in overcoming some of their current challenges with working towards women’s health and rights. The design suggestions in this chapter are early stage and will benefit from iteration, prototyping and testing with potential user profiles to ensure success of the platform.
7

CONCLUSION

When I began my thesis process, I intended to understand how individuals organize online to achieve social change goals. Going through the entire process has led to an understanding of the potential and limitations of communities whether they be online or offline.

During readings, I explored activism towards both social and political issues. Following current affairs globally also helps me see this newfound understanding in action every day. These early explorations led me to the thesis objectives, i.e. to present a hypothesis of a community model that would best facilitate Mimba to achieve its goals; and identify design elements that will assist with realizing Mimba as an effective service. Looking back, the insights on group formation as derived from Land (2009) in Section 6.1 synthesize a holistic view on the group interaction types and the resulting possibilities that Mimba could cater to. A model of networked activism and a hybrid community typology were also able to inform the design of Mimba as discussed in Chapter 5 and 6 (Land, 2009; Stanoevsk-Slabeva, 2002). The design of the platform described in Section 6.2 is early and needs further ideation, prototyping and testing for one to judge if it is suitable to Mimba’s goals. The design element suggestions by Land (2009) provide further ideas and assist in evaluating Mimba as a community platform which imbibes characteristics of a networked activism model.
While I cover some ground on the theoretical aspects of online communities and activism specific to the women’s health and rights sector in this thesis, however, many new areas emerge for further study and exploration, as follows:

- The previously proposed community model and design suggestions are yet to be tested. Early stage prototypes developed at M4ID were put through user testing (figures below), and have influenced the suggestions put forth in the previous chapter. Therefore, they are not without merit. However, paper prototyping and further testing of suggestions in this thesis will be necessary in order to take them forward.

- Further research and ideation on sustaining engagement of community members will be necessary for the success of the community platform. Community engagement can possibly be sustained through deriving engagement mechanism based on user motivations. Further, exploring community building strategies, service and interface design features, marketing and exploration of new technologies can also provide options. Additional theoretical exploration can also be carried out in this respect.

- The next stage of the design and development of Mimba will focus on developing the service elements through an agile development process. To assist in prioritizing which of the three service elements should be developed first, I believe the Positioning Diagram (Figure 17) provides direction i.e. task- and goal-oriented features that support broad mobilization could be undertaken first.

- Along with the service development of Mimba, the prototyping and creation of the Mimba community will be necessary. This will require the assistance of community building roadmap. This can be initiated with an analysis of the Mimba group types (Figure 18) to ascertain which would be essential to both initiate and engage with the service in its early days. I propound that the service could start with CSO-Supporter group services, followed by CSO-CSO and lastly by encouraging Supporter-Supporter activity. This community roadmap will need to be synthesized with a service development roadmap to ensure relevance to users.

- Further relevant information on community building is provided by Stanoevska-Slabeva (2002). She provides suggestions for the described community typologies that can assist in the development of the Mimba community. She discusses Organizational Structure, Community Roles and Relationships along with Communication and
Coordination Services to support the building of each community typology.

- Lastly, this thesis currently lacks a nuanced exploration of the kind of service features that would best facilitate CSO-CSO group needs. Suggestions can be drawn from a study of project and knowledge management platforms.

I would now like to end with recounting the overall learning I have received through writing this thesis. I now have a deeper understanding of the existing theoretical knowledge that underlies community services. Applying this to existing services, creating a community model and translating it into design suggestions for Mimba has further cemented my learning. Further, I also have a nuanced understanding of both the effectiveness and limitations of online activism.

Globally, citizens are taking to social media and online communities rapidly, and scholars and thought-leaders are adding to the body of knowledge on this subject. However, this field of study is still nascent, particularly for advocacy, women’s health and rights. It will be exciting to keep abreast with this dynamic online world as well as to see Mimba in action in the coming years.

Finally, I will be gratified if Mimba produces visible change in the healthcare and rights of women in low resource settings.

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**EPILOGUE**

Finally, being a part of this project and writing this thesis has been a rigorous exercise in design-led problem solving. It has been an in-depth experience in working with what’s popularly referred to as the ‘fuzzy front end of the innovation process’. Having gone through this professional process, starting from research to conceptualization to prototyping has made my learning at Aalto as a designer and researcher near completion. I feel confident of having tried and tested a number of design methodologies and processes before moving into the professional world.

During my education at Creative Sustainability, I have worked on various kinds of design outcomes key being behavior change interventions, participatory projects and sustainability communication through visualization. Before Mimba, my involvement with designing digital solutions was limited to conceptualizing an early stage prototype of a healthcare app as a student project. Working on Mimba has added another tool to my toolbox as a designer, i.e. employing digital and service design towards sustainability. Additionally, the thesis research and writing process has sharpened my abilities in proposing and articulating arguments. Looking back, the process of writing the thesis has also gone through the motions of a regular design process, with multiple iterations. For the future, I believe I can quicken the process with this experience at hand and possibly a more structured approach. All in all, a significant learning experience.
REFERENCES


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