

Messages from food

*Unlocking the 'hidden messages:
cultivating deeper connection and
appreciation through understanding food.*



Message from food

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01. Introduction

Project background

In this chapter, I will explain the framework and some initial research of this project.

Initial Motivation



The origin of this study was a box of tomatoes that I had forgotten in the corner of my refrigerator. When I found them, they had grown mouldy, watery, and smelly. This made me feel guilty, and I couldn't even remember when I bought the tomatoes, what I intended to use them for, or how long they had been in the fridge. What made me even more ashamed was that similar situations had happened many times. It led me to recognize the need for a shift in my relationship with food and a deeper understanding of it.

So, this project is my attempt to explore the ways to reduce food waste in households, a way to shift our relationship with food and enrich our understanding of food. This project is not looking for solutions. Rather, it takes an explorative approach to look broadly at the possibilities for connecting people with food and food education.

Design process

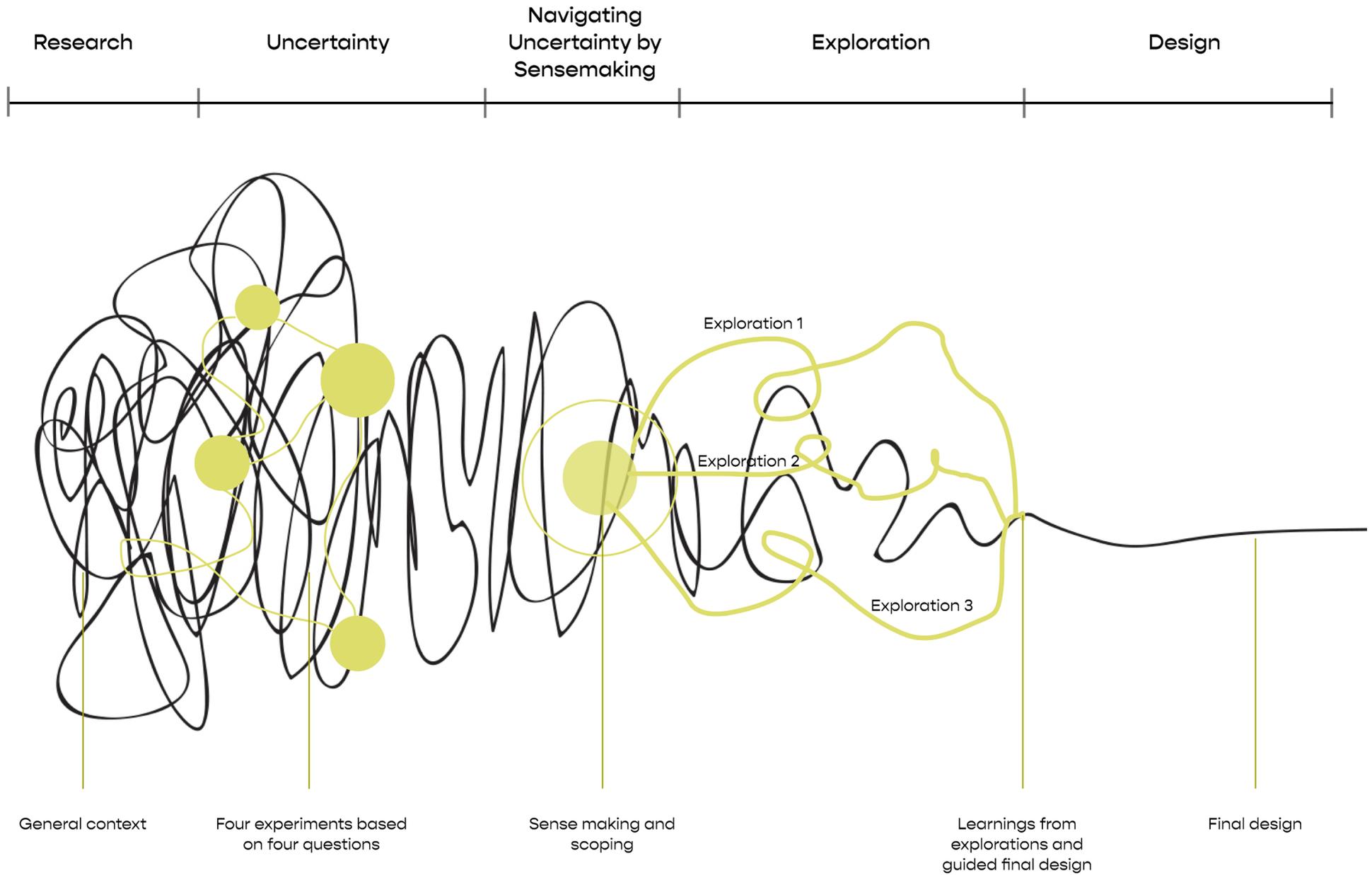
Design Squiggles

My design process is representative of the Design Squiggles (Newman, 2002) framework, which embraces messiness and uncertainty throughout the process. The research and experiment phases were particularly challenging, but I used techniques such as synthesis, scoping, and three explorations to break down the uncertainty and better understand the problem space. These approaches allowed me to explore a wide range of possibilities and eventually led me to the concept and design phase. While the process was messy and unpredictable at times, it ultimately led to a more thoughtful and effective design outcome.

The approaches

The methods used in this project include Service Design Thinking and Methods such as desktop research, shadowing, contextual visiting, interviews, co-design workshops and so on. System-oriented design, specifically Giga mapping, and More-than-Human design were also employed to gain a deeper understanding of food experiences and needs. The project also considered the design principles of service ecosystem design, such as creating the context for emergence. Additionally, experiments played an important role in the project and more details on specific methods and approaches will be included throughout the text when drawing from the learnings.

Design process

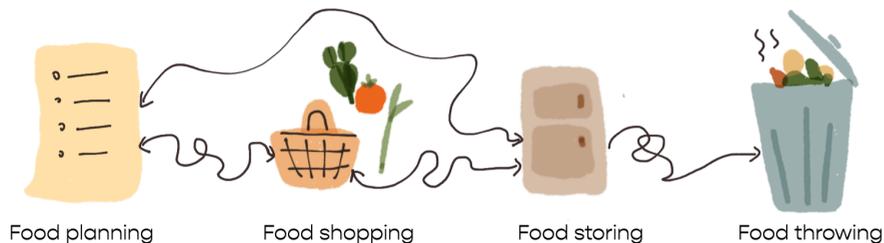


Context

The drivers of household food waste:

Household food waste results from complex behaviours that occur long before the food is even wasted. For instance, 'lack of plan' or 'change of plans', 'buying too much', and 'do not know what to do with them'. (Williams et al., 2012)

Additionally, based on the research from Matvett, which investigates why food is thrown away, the answer is usually that it has been forgotten in the fridge or somewhere. The wrong storage methods and keeping food for too long are also major drivers of food waste. Given these findings, I have decided to focus on enhancing people's knowledge of food management and storage to address this issue.



Increasing attention to properly storing food:

Due to the pandemic in 2022, Shanghai was locked down for six months, resulting in a shortage of food supply. This caused uncertainty and panic for those who were accustomed to always having abundant food. People started looking for ways to preserve food properly and extend its freshness, and many young people even started growing vegetables on their balconies. Even after the lifting of the lockdown, some young people still are stocking up on food, and thus, the attention to the knowledge of proper food storage is gradually increasing.



Shortage of food supply
Images by Jiaxuan Yang



Trial of home gardening

Context

Lack of food knowledge and food management skills:

Why do people lack food knowledge? This is particularly true for young Chinese adults, who may lack knowledge about food in terms of storing, selecting, meal planning, nutrition, seasons, food culture and so on. I became aware of this gap in holistic food education while talking to a middle school teacher.

Additionally, this generation of urban young adults has had limited exposure to food, as their parents, school cafeterias, and food delivery services have managed all aspects of food preparation and management.

“

“Many students only spend 10 minutes to have their lunch and the food-related knowledge presented in textbooks is often limited to the introduction of the food pyramid and main nutrients.”

—A middle school teacher in Shanghai

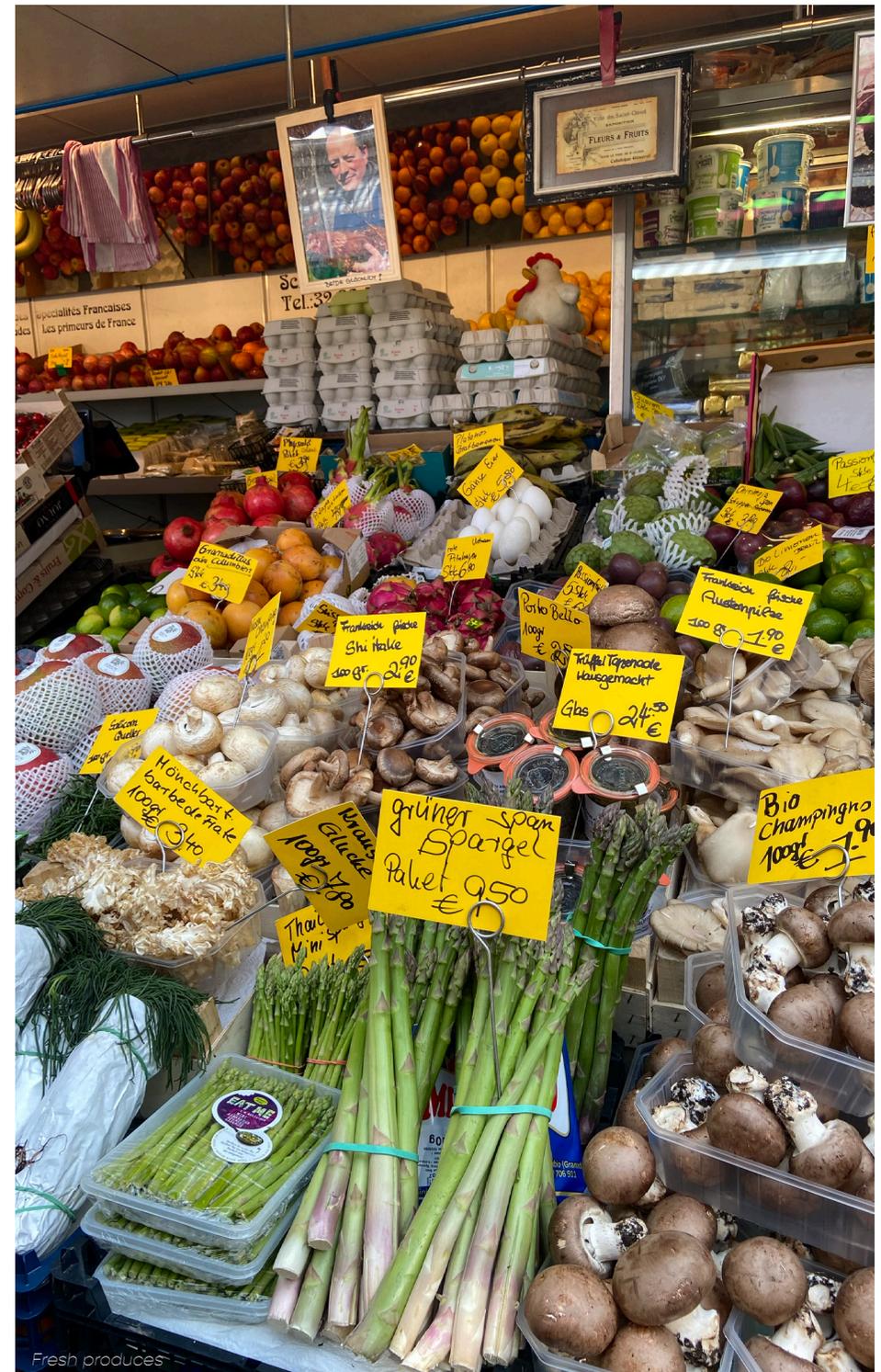
Initial Scope

Food waste in the household

Food waste is a significant global problem, with approximately one-third of the world's food thrown away. The causes of food waste or loss are numerous and occur throughout the food system, during production, processing, distribution, retail and food service sales, and consumption. (Gustafsson J, Cederberg C, Sonesson U, et al., 2013) According to the UNEP Food Waste Index Report in 2021, **there were 61% of food waste from households.** (UNEP Food Waste Index Report, 2021) Therefore, I decided to focus on the food waste in the households.

What kind of food?

The project focuses on fresh produce and agricultural products, excluding processed foods, dried goods, canned foods, etc. These types of foods are more prone to spoilage and are often forgotten or wasted in refrigerators, making up a large proportion of household food waste. Starting with these foods is more in line with people's needs for food storage and is more likely to resonate with them.



Initial Scope

Collaboration

I was lucky enough to find a collaborator with a similar idea, Road to Tomorrow. The Road to Tomorrow is an environmental activist media organization based in Shanghai, China that promotes sustainable eating and food education. They have their own blog, podcast and followers, and they also hold workshops regularly. After hearing about my project, they were happy to have a collaboration with me.

Target group

Considering the collaborator is based in China and the main followers are Chinese, I decided that my target group is young Chinese adults (18-35) interested in food, whether it be taste, culture, gardening, or cooking. They are curious and open to new knowledge and are often the target of efforts to reduce household food waste since they have a long life ahead of them. As most young adults rely on their parents or school for meals, they lack relevant life experience and food management knowledge.



Collaborator: RoadToTomorrow



Some workshops held by RoadToTomorrow
Images by RoadToTomorrow

02. Uncertainty

The discovery phase

In this chapter, I will describe what I did and what I learned in dealing with this uncertainty.

Based on the scope and context insights, many questions came to my mind, which added to the messiness and noise of the design process. However, I appreciate the messiness in my discovery phase as it provided me with broader and deeper thoughts on this project. To answer these questions, I delved into four different perspectives, which led me down an uncertain path in the design process.



The first discover question

Who are the other actors and stakeholders in this system?

Current services for reducing food waste and food education

During my research, I came across several brands and organizations that offer services related to food waste and food education. Examples include Love Food Hate Waste in Britain, Matvett in Norway, and DZZ in China. Some of these organizations provide guides and tools to reduce food waste, while others focus on exposing issues in industrial food production and promoting more sustainable approaches to food production and consumption.

Despite this, there are fewer campaigns in China that focus on this issue. Nevertheless, organizations such as Good Food Academy, RoadToTomorrow, and DZZ are making contributions and advancements in this area. However, most of the services and products related to food education are geared towards children and schools.

Research & Service on Food waste

wrap Design & Develop a service

LOVE FOOD hate waste

WRAP is a climate action NGO working around the globe to tackle the cause: the climate crisis and give the planet sustainable future.

Love Food Hate Waste International Movement

One third of the food produced in the world goes uneaten each year. 50% of food waste happens in developed nations. Great Britain has the most food waste. This means it's a global issue and every one of us has an important role to play in working together.

Home page

Introduction to the Food Hate Waste. See more and save the planet too.

How do I? food saving guides

Explore some simple top tips to do everyday in your home and dining with you. How do I? guides.

Recipes

Through social media

Madspildsrapporter - Stop Spild At Mad - Find rapportør om madspild her

Stop food at food - stop foodspild og madspild. Samarbejd med producenter og leverandører til at reducere madspild og madforbrug. Du rapporterer om madspild og madforbrug.

Sharing knowledges & Recipes & Toolkit

LOVE FOOD HATE WASTE

Toolkit October 2022

Recipes

Case study

Delft-Research

Reducing food waste by systemic design - Food & Eating Design Lab

Background: Our food systems are under transition. Today we see millions of people worldwide suffering from malnutrition and hunger, while at the same time, one-third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted every year (FAO, 2019).

WHY THROW ME AWAY

来自食物们的灵魂拷问，理解浪费，拒绝浪费。

WHY THROW ME AWAY

为什么食物会被扔掉？

Chitofu

NATURAL DYING TOFU SKIN

Waste Food | Autonomous Design

Waste Food | Autonomous Design

Smartest FridgeCam - Smart Fridge Camera with WiFi & Voice Activated

It's the smartest fridge camera that can turn any fridge into a smart fridge, automatically detecting the expiration date for the fridge's contents. It's automatic, from the smartphone when you're not home, it sends you the info you need to see.

lil broc

Interventions & Services on Food storing/fridge

enographic method

Colour coding on fridge

Intelligent fridge

Fork Ranger

Smartest FridgeCam - Smart Fridge Camera with WiFi & Voice Activated

It's the smartest fridge camera that can turn any fridge into a smart fridge, automatically detecting the expiration date for the fridge's contents. It's automatic, from the smartphone when you're not home, it sends you the info you need to see.

lil broc

Treat with surplus food & Provide online advice

Food Shift

Food shift kitchen

A-Z Food Storage Tips

Tips Recipes

Matwett

P: Lots of things you need to find out by yourself

Who is my target group, care about food waste or don't care about

Reduce Your Waste - Food Shift, a Project of Earth Island Institute

Reduce your waste. An easy way to make a difference is to reduce your waste.

Sammen mot matvinn

For deg som elsker mat! Gi nytt liv til mat som er gått ut av datoen.

Too Good To Go

Tackle the surplus food in Restaurant

Afresh - Fresh-first Solutions for Grocery Retail

Reduce food waste by helping retailers view inventory and predict what consumers want to buy

Food dictionary

Recipes

Quiz

FoodPrint

Small quiz to find out...

Tell us a little about you...

FoodPrint Quiz

Think you have a good FoodPrint? Take this quick quiz to learn how your food waste habits impact the environment, people, and animals.

15 Easy Ways to Reduce Food Waste

15 Easy Ways to Reduce Food Waste

良食大学 GOOD FOOD ACADEMY

何以食 | 良食大学

何以食 | 良食大学

Sustainable Food education and research

FoodPrint

Podcast

Guide-pdf

What You're Eating Podcast

The FoodPrint podcast, What You're Eating, explores how your food gets to your plate, showing its impact on animals, planet and people.

The ABCs of Reducing Food Waste

The ABCs of Reducing Food Waste

Research on Food storage & Food safety

serious eats

Better Health Channel

Food safety and storage

Help with food should be kept at 5°C or below, and above 60°C to avoid the temperature danger zone and food poisoning.

Food2Know

Food2Know is a member of MIND, the home for high-quality advice and the people who love them.

Books & Reports

THE STORY OF FOOD

food city

Kunsten å ikke kaste mat

食材保存 保鲜术

Omniore's Dilemma

食材保存 這樣做

Sulten

Provide recipes to deal with surplus

Recipes App

Digital Fridge

Home | NoWaste

No Waste

Track your food waste

Surplus & out of date shops

I Wefood salger vi overskudsvarer, der intet følger | Find nærmeste butik her

DZZ

兜着走

The second discover question

What other perspectives can we adopt in our daily lives to enrich our understanding of food?

Small experiments with food



Sensing food

Research made me realize my lack of knowledge of food as well. So I started self-studying food. At the same time, I also thought about other ways to learn about food besides books. How could I connect my senses with food? So I went to the market and my kitchen to experience food.

Sensing food



I touched, smelled and asked about the food at the market and felt the weight and texture of the food in my hand.



I learned about the seasonal time for different vegetables at the market.

Sensing food



The tomatoes without packages, tasted more sour and soft.



The difference inside the tomatoes.



Compare the gingers stored two different methods.

I noticed if there were any differences in taste for packaged food.

I explored different cutting methods, shapes, and ways to store different foods.

During this exploratory process, I felt some delicate connections with food. **I felt that food was an actor in my food education, speaking to me about its vitality.**



Storing radishes vertically to help keep fresh.



Storing gingers in the water can help keep them fresh.



Food Funeral Director

During my exploration of the food “world”, I became interested in using my senses to assess the taste and freshness of food. However, this curiosity also led me to wonder about the decision-making process people use to throw food away. And what factors come into play when people decide to throw food away? Therefore, I initiated an experiment called Food Funeral Director to collect abandoned food.



Food Funeral Director

Get mouldy



"I was alone, been forgotten in the fridge corner."

— A mouldy tomato

Where: In the fridge corner

How long: Don't remember, been a while

Why to throw it away: It got mouldy

Feel they are no longer tasty



"I didn't do anything, I just got old and wrinkled. Why did you abandon me?"

— An "old" orange

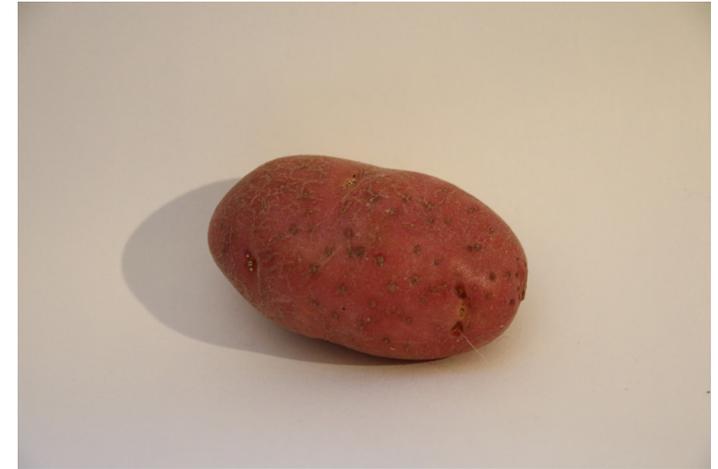
Where: In the fruit basket, home temperature

How long: Around a week

Why throw it away: Its skin became wrinkled, became soft, and felt like it wasn't fresh anymore.

By showing these to some people, one commented that "I used to throw the orange like this, but now I know it's still edible."

People normally use smell, colours and touch to tell if food is edible or not. Due to the high sensitivity of hygiene, when there is less feeling of freshness, people will throw it away. Plus, during the collection process, I heard lots of food stories. I picked two of them and made an epitaph for them to document the stories.



Another reason to conduct this experiment is to find ways to save food or give them a "proper funeral."

Once, I almost discarded a soft and wrinkled potato, but I hesitated and decided to cut it open instead. To my surprise, the inside was still perfectly fine, so I made mashed potatoes with it. This experience made me realize that if we interact and think more about food, we may learn many ways to fully utilize and save food. Therefore, how to trigger this kind of food interaction and thoughts?

The third discover question

*How do people currently manage
and interact with their food?
What are people thinking when
they store or throw away food?*

People with food in daily life

Contextual Visiting & Interview

Why?

From previous desktop research, I learned that most of the food waste in households occurred by improper food handling and storage. So before diving into how to enhance the proper ways of food storage, I want to understand how people manage food now. How do people interact with and think about food from meal planning, consuming, selecting and storing?

How?

In order to answer the above questions I decided to do a contextual visit and interview some friends, I went grocery shopping with them and asked them to introduce their fridge and how they usually store food. At the end of the visit, I interviewed them about their knowledge of food, thoughts about food waste and some daily food behaviours.

As I was based in Oslo during my research for my diploma, I was limited to interviewing young Chinese adults living in Oslo. I also conducted online interviews with young Chinese adults living in Shanghai to explore their daily routines and perspectives on food.



Observe grocery shopping



Explore the storing behaviors and fridges



Interview and cook together

Interviewed 10 people in total



Fridge stories documents

Collected 12 fridge stories in total

Key insights from this research

01. Taking care of food is missing



Through interviews and observing people's interactions with food, I discovered a lack of care for food. People in affluent societies have become detached from caring for their food. The abundance of food has made it easy to obtain, leading consumers to neglect the responsibility of caring for it. Instead, they mindlessly buy and store food, often relying on technology like refrigerators to preserve it. However, refrigerators weaken food's perishability and its signals for care. This cycle perpetuates food waste and encourages the consumption of processed and shelf-stable foods. Moreover, few people actively seek out food knowledge or consider how to care for their food.

“ ”

I went grocery shopping without a plan, so I stock up on food unconsciously.

“To be honest, when I throw away food, I am more regretful for the money I spent than for the food itself.”

“I won't buy organic food because it can't stay long. I prefer processed food so that I don't need to worry about storing and wasting food.”

“I rarely actively search for this food-related knowledge, usually it's my mom or friends tell me.”



Key insights from this research

02. Putting the food in the fridge is the only principle and method.



“ ”

"I feel there is no place to store food more appropriate than fridges."

"The fridge seems to be a kind of insurance as if I am not responsible for the food after I put it in."

They hold the attitude that it is wrong to waste food, but in those particular cases where food has become inedible it is ok. (Hebrok & Boks, 2017) In addition to this, the prevalence of fridges and the modern lifestyle has caused many to lose touch with “traditional” food knowledge and techniques. Unfortunately, certain food storing methods that were once passed down from older generations are no longer commonly known or shared.

03. The fridge is a mirror of your life state.

“ ”

"I am busy recently, as a result, my fridge looks so bleak !"



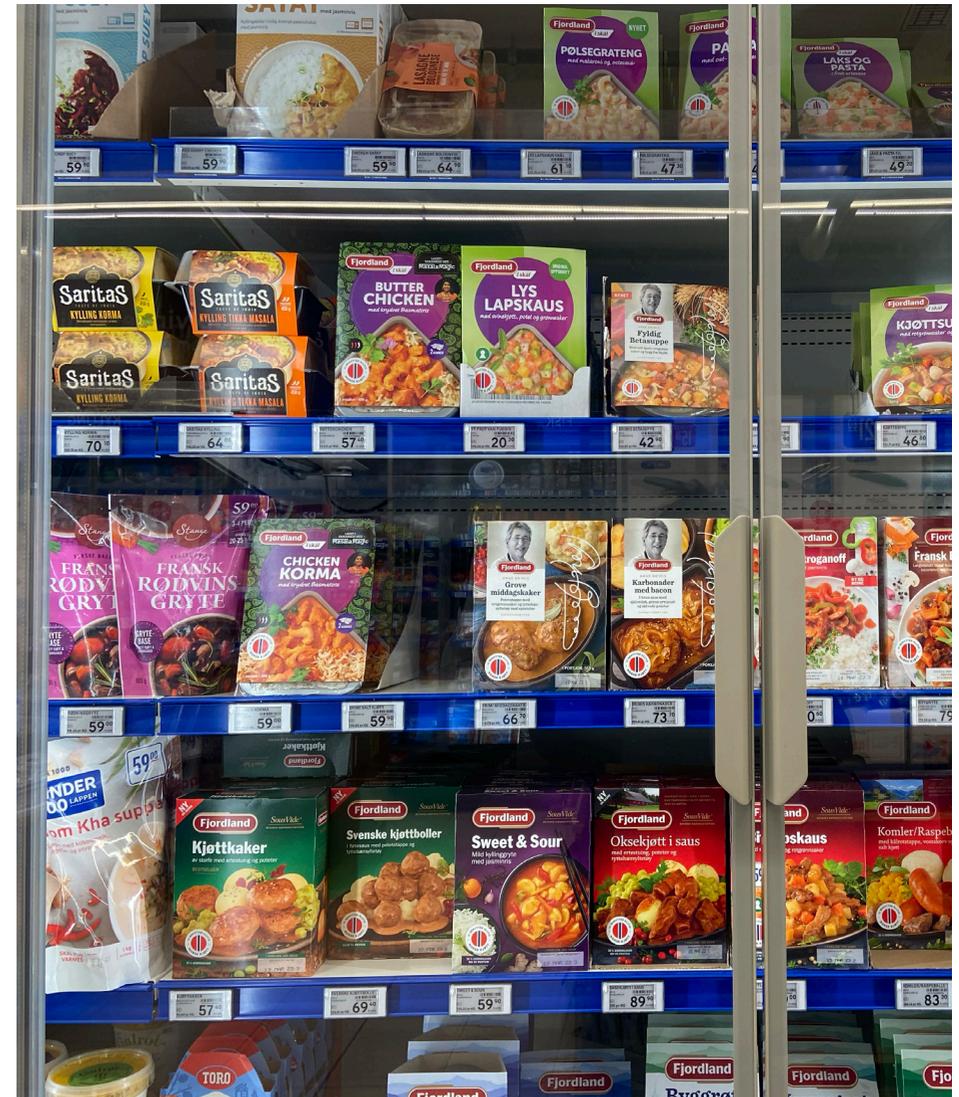
This ignoring of food is often the result of the pressures and demands of modern life. In today's world, there are countless factors to consider, and unexpected plans, deadlines, and pressures can all impact and alter our decisions. When our lives are busy, takeout can easily become a priority over the food we have at home in the fridge.

The fourth discover question

Are there any underlying reasons for our lack of food knowledge?

Alienation towards food: consumers or eaters?

Literature review & Expert Interview



Convenient and processed food.

Food as a commodity

The whole food system is alienating food into a commodity which lets us be less concerned about and detached from food. As a society, we are becoming less concerned about what we put in our mouths (Lim, 2014), Young people's food choices depend more on affordability, instant food and convenience. For example, they would prefer processed frozen diced vegetables over fresh ones because frozen is cheaper and easier to handle. In addition, the current industrial food system affects the nutritional value of food, as well as its environmental and social impact, are becoming less accessible and more difficult to understand (Lim, 2014). Food information in the public realm is heavily reliant on seductive imagery and keeps written information to a minimum. What little writing there is tends to be short sharp half-sentences such as “taste the difference”, “new improved recipe” or “3.5% fat”. (Lim, 2014) This, in turn, has influenced young people's view of food and nutritional value, where they simply divide food into protein, carbohydrates and plant fibre. People just need to make sure they get those three nutrients every day and don't care where the protein comes from, it doesn't matter if it's eggs, beef or just protein bars.

“

"People don't care where the protein comes from. Lots of highly processed food are available now, we are far away from real food. And I think this is a dangerous signal because this mindset will make young people more and more detached from food."

— Jasper Wei; a food anthropologist

“

“Various tools and intermediaries in civilization have disrupted our fundamental relationship with the earth, leaving us increasingly ignorant. We think that industry supports us, but we forget what is supporting industry.”

“In the system of the industrialized food chain, the only information transmitted along the food chain between producers and consumers is price.”

— — <The Omnivore's Dilemma>

We are more and more detached from food.
More food knowledge is needed.

However, this generation of urban youth is growing up with less contact with food and nature. Young people only need to know how to follow recipes, but gradually they are less interested in understanding food and less experienced in how to "take care" of it. On the other hand, young citizens' current mental models of food are shaped passively by the industrial food system. From the industrial revolution to the present day, food has been increasingly valued for its commodity. (Luis Vivero Pol, 2017) When food becomes a commodity, not only the production and acquisition of raw materials, but also the processing and production of food, it is taken away from the family and becomes a production line, divided into various production processes, and people begin to lose control of food and fall into the system of commodity sales. we just need to know how much hot water to pour into the instant noodle bowl. We just need to know how to order take-out food. Therefore, we are losing control and knowledge of food, losing the desire for the taste of place, and we are far away from authentic food and nature.

Furthermore, the burden of responsibility on the modern consumer in an international food economy is so small that food choices made today are almost entirely self-indulgent. (Lim, 2014) And that further reinforces the commercial food system.

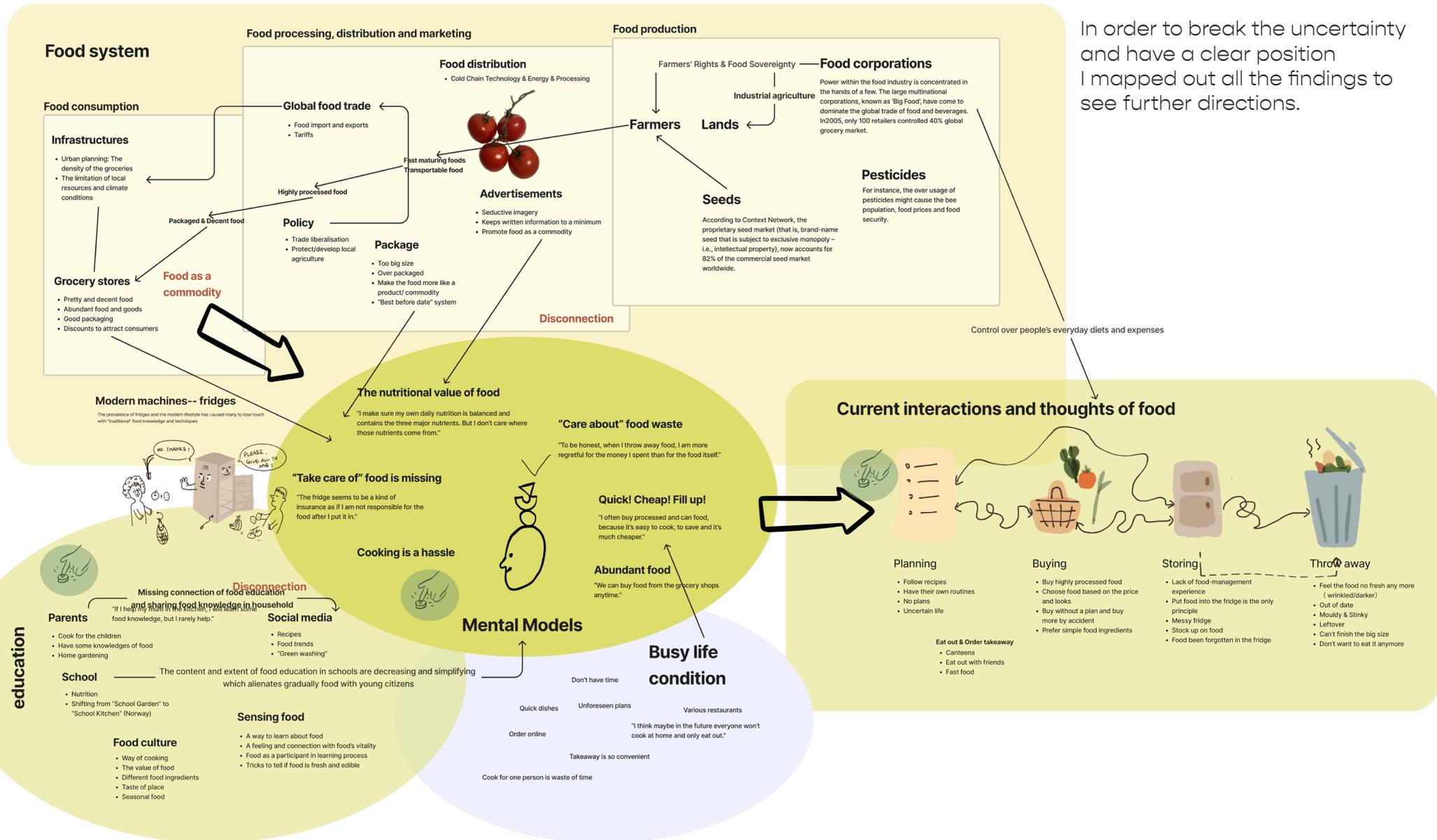
03. Navigating Uncertainty by Sensemaking

Synthesizing a clear direction for project development.

In this chapter, I will summarize previous findings and illustrate the further direction of the project.

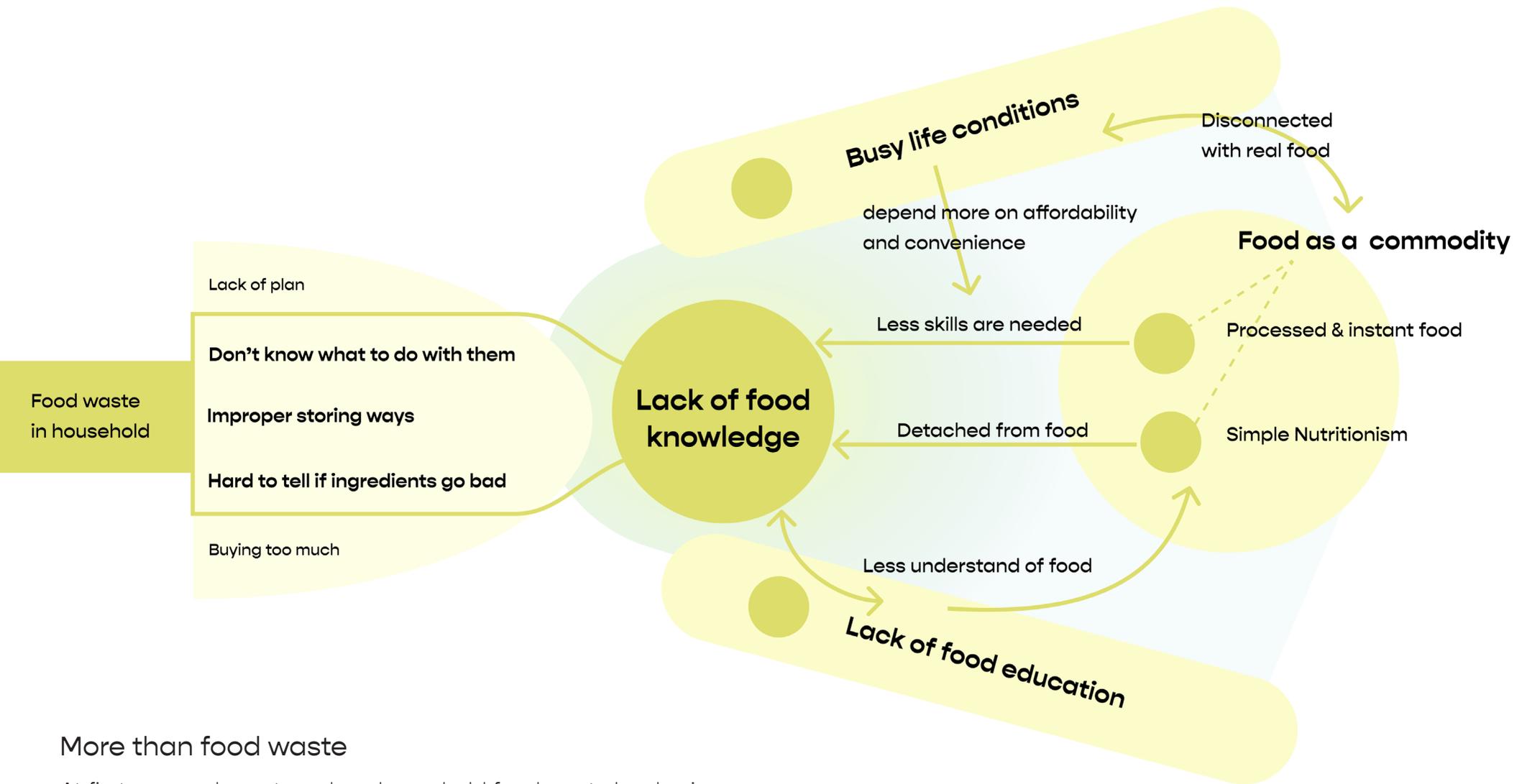


Finding map



In order to break the uncertainty and have a clear position I mapped out all the findings to see further directions.

Sensemaking



More than food waste

At first, my goal was to reduce household food waste by sharing information on proper food storage. But as I delved deeper, I came to realize that people's lack of knowledge about food was a symptom of a deeper matter - a detachment from food. Like what Tsing mentioned in <The Mushroom at the End of the World>, **modern civilization salvages various resources and commodifies food, allowing us to enjoy the stability of modern life, such as the abundant food supply in supermarkets.** (Tsing, 2019)

I am not denying the benefits of modern civilization, I am questioning what the attitude of indifference towards food, which results from our habit of relying on a stable source of food, will lead to. I believe it will make us, as humans, lose our ability and vigilance to face uncertainty. Therefore, when Shanghai experienced shortages during the lockdown in 2022, we felt incredulous and helpless.

The modern industrial food system has controlled a lot of uncertainty but has also made us less sensitive to the complex entanglement between nature, food, and life. Indeed, as food consumers at the end of this system, we are passive. But what if we return to the identity of eaters? What if we treat food as an actor rather than a commodity or a product?

Therefore, I hope that this project will no longer just provide a solution for reducing food waste, but will explore how to return to the identity of eaters and foster a deeper connection with food. By doing so, I hope to create responses towards a sustainable food system.

Problem statement

How might we foster a deeper connection with food and encourage food education to better appreciate food and nature, and create a more sustainable future for the planet?

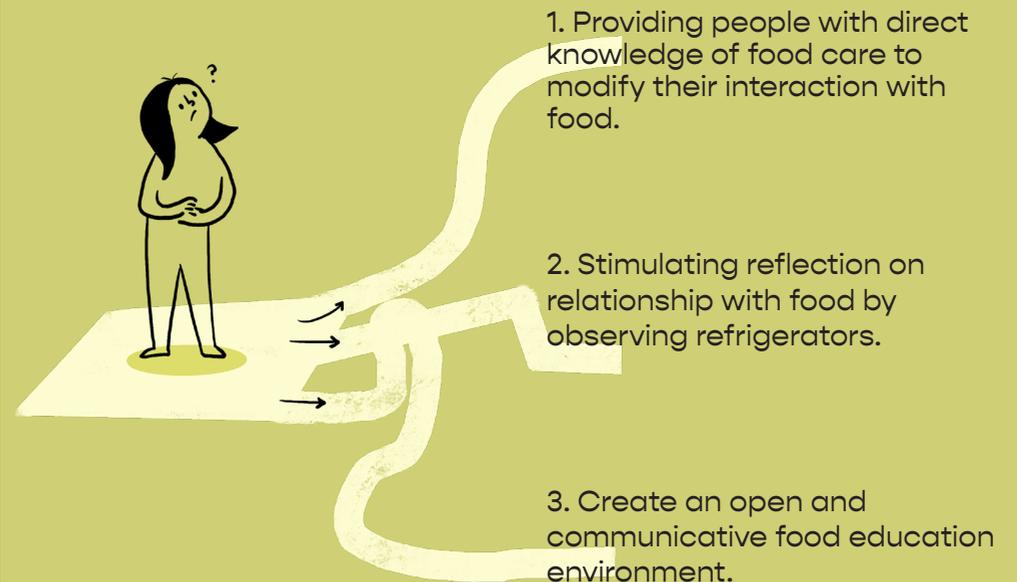
Let's break the uncertainty of the project, but embrace the uncertainty of the world.

04. Exploration

The exploration phase

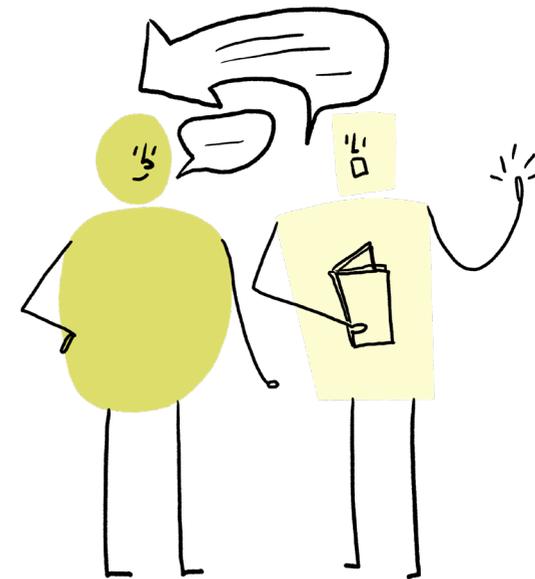
After contemplating the complicated issue of household food waste, food education, and the passive impacts of the food system on consumers, I realized it's so complex that it can't be solved by one solution only. Therefore, as a designer, what could I do?

I decided to explore further three different design directions based on the problems and social background discovered in the previous research. Through these explorations, I aimed to find and design ways to foster a deeper connection between people and their food, and to encourage them to take better care of and understand it.



Exploration one:

Providing people with direct knowledge of food care to modify their interaction with food.

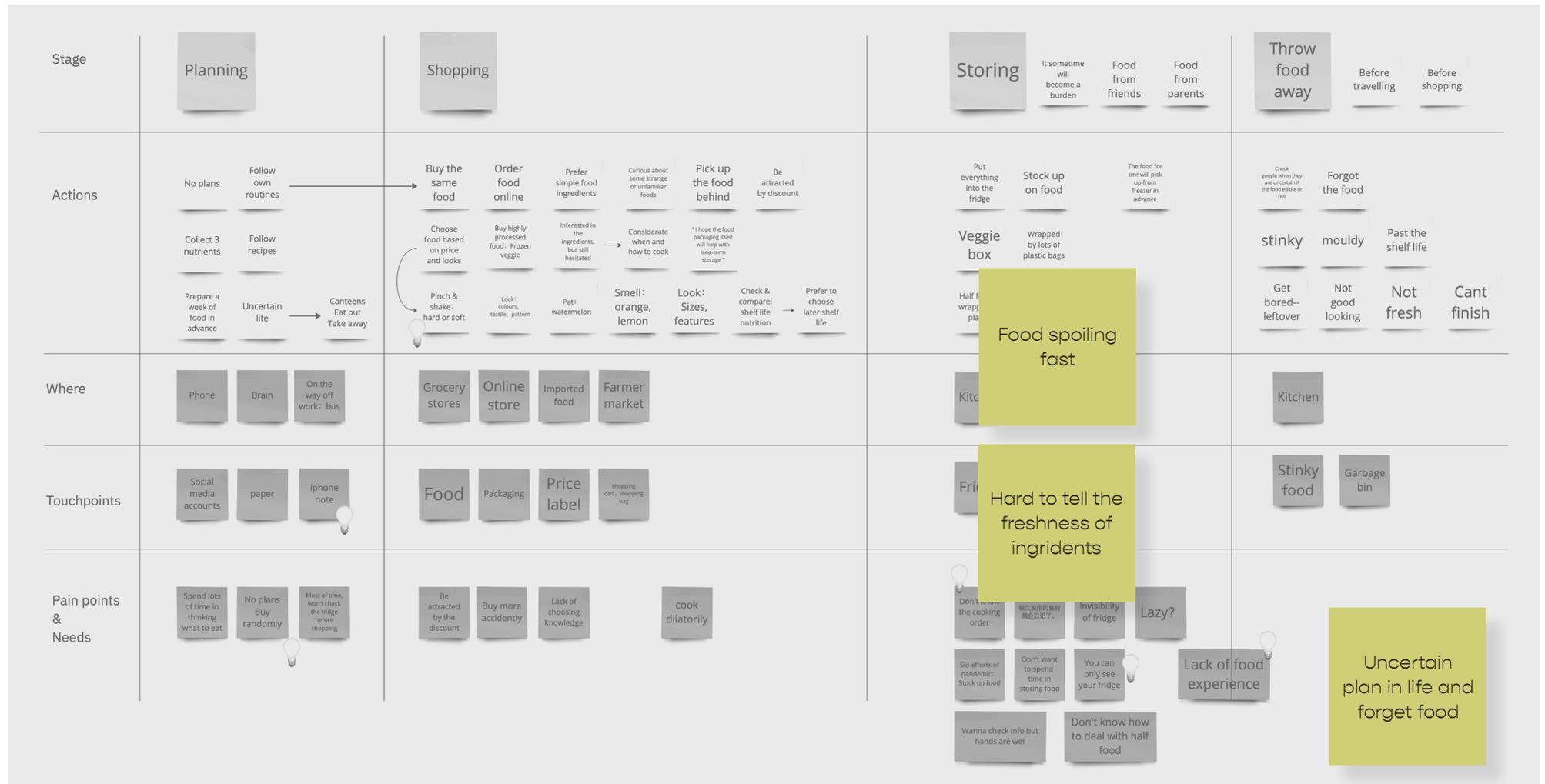


In our fast-paced daily lives, we typically engage with food in four stages: planning, consumption, cooking, and eating. However, are there opportunities within these critical moments to offer food-care tips and take action towards food preservation? Perhaps a small prompt can inspire individuals to take action even amidst their busy schedules. What if there is a tool to seamlessly deliver food-care knowledge to people's daily lives, aiding in reducing household food waste?

Process

User journey map analysis

I used a journey map to map out the four stages: from food planning to throwing away; in order to understand people's needs and interactions with food now. Such as: don't like shopping more than twice a week; spending lots of time planning meals; hard to tell the freshness of ingredients; food spoiling fast; having uncertain plans in life and so on.

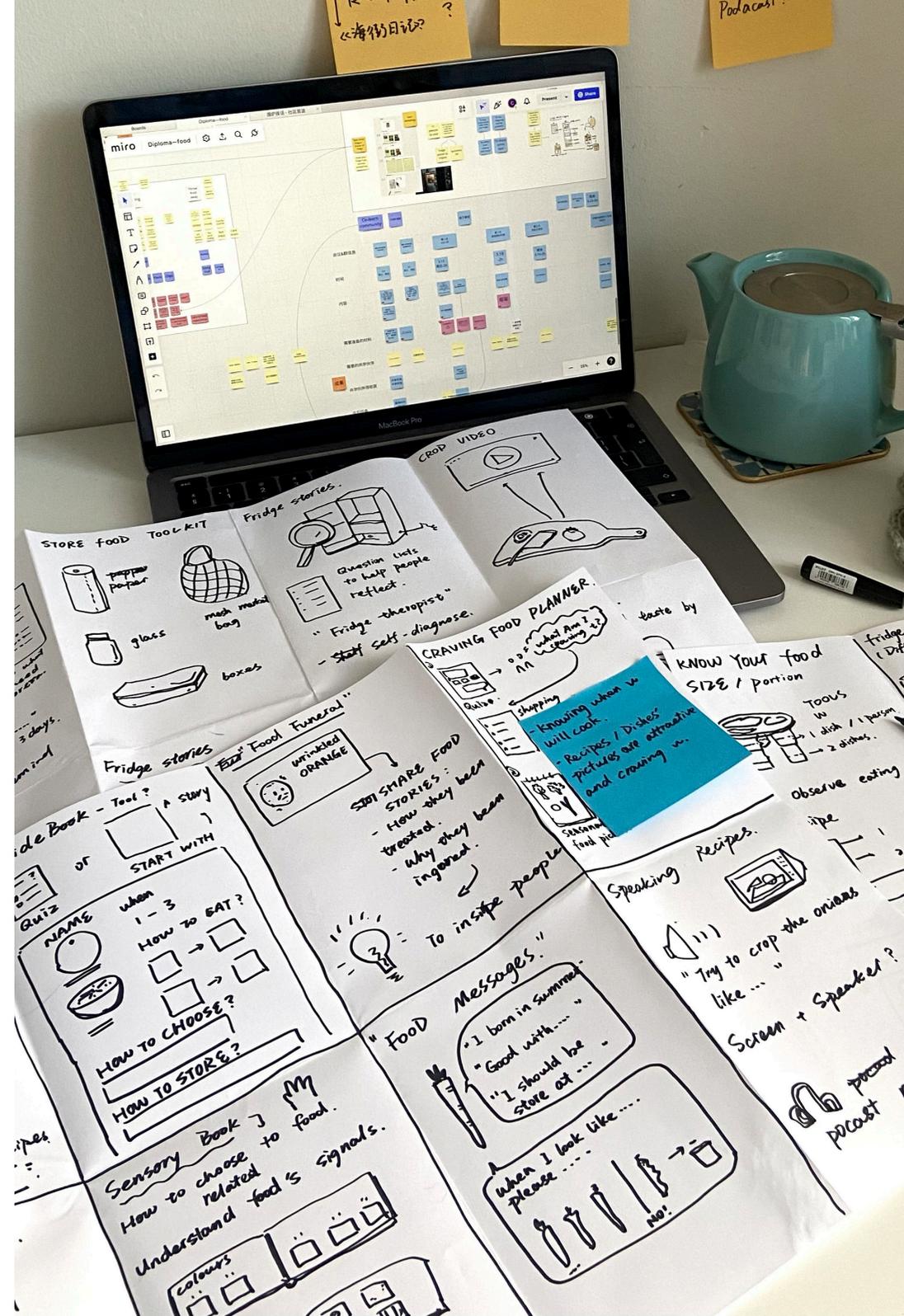


Process

Ideation

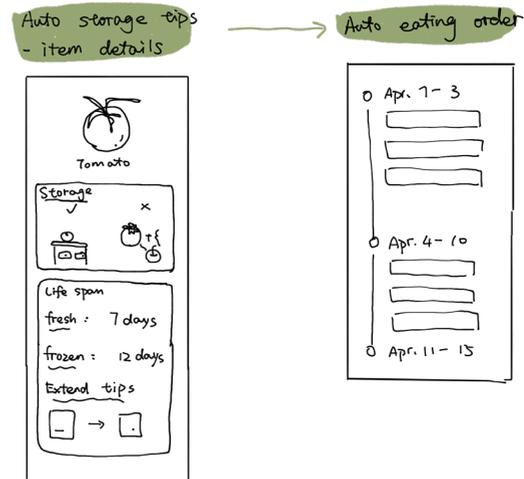
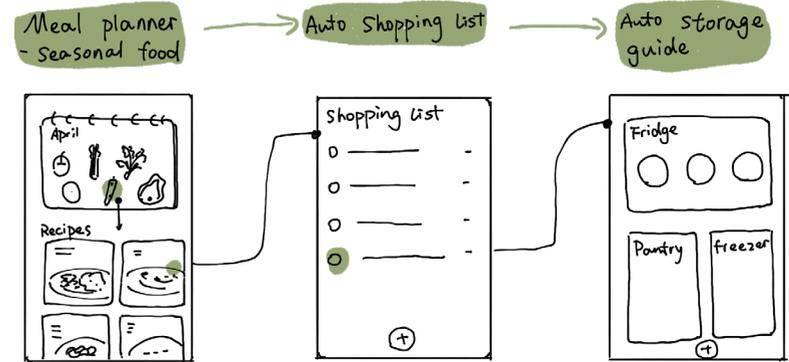
Crazy Eights is one way of brainstorming. I used this approach to brainstorm ideas to solve the problems that were analysed from the journey map. I tried to sketch as many ideas as possible to explore the possibilities within a limited time for each grid.

Clustering ideas



A food management tool

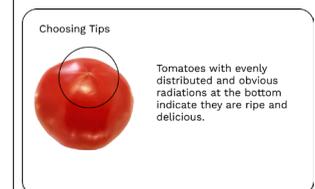
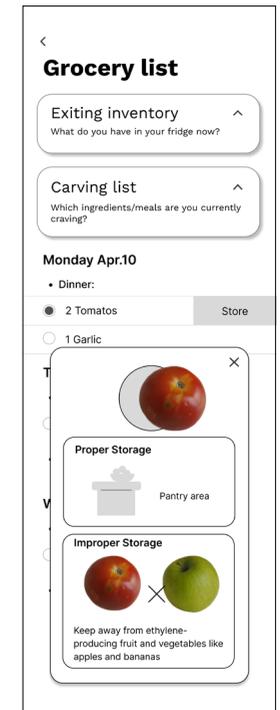
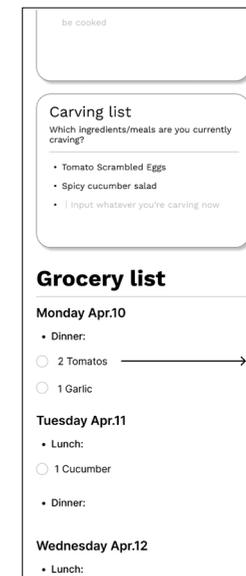
Sketching & Testing



I picked some ideas and combined them into a food management tool. In order to test this idea, I sketched some interfaces to show the functions.

It consists of a meal planner, shopping list generator, eating order guide, and storage recommendations.

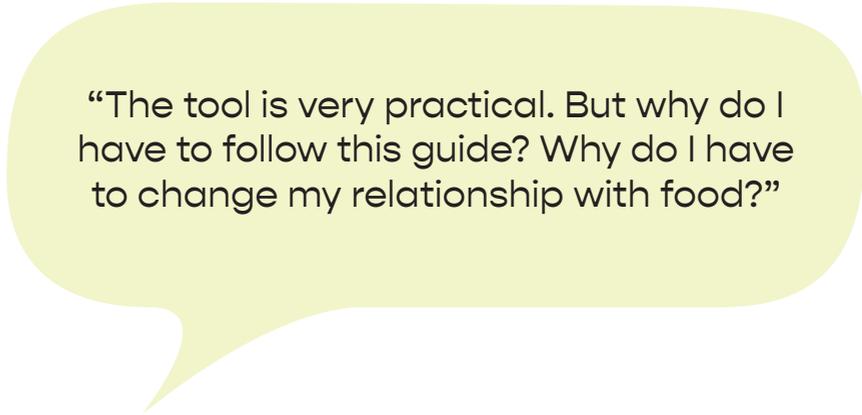
1. The meal planner provides suggestions based on seasonal produce and cravings.
2. The shopping list generator prompts users to consider what they already have in their fridge, how much they need to purchase, and how to select fresh produce.
3. The eating order guide helps individuals manage expiration dates and vulnerable foods.
4. The storage recommendation provides practical food-care knowledge and the life span of fresh food.



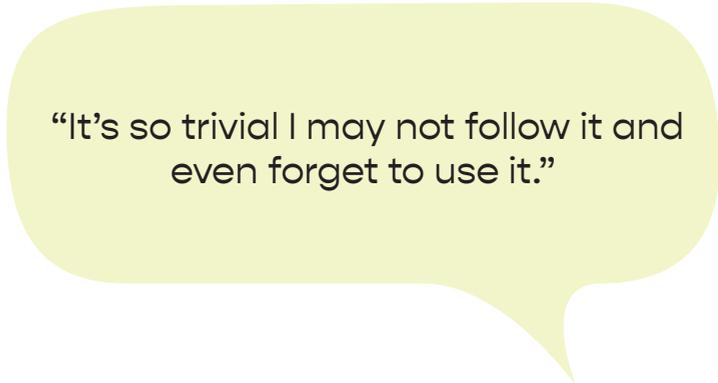
Reflection

People may not be aware of the detachment between themselves and food, leading to a lack of consideration for alternative storage methods beyond refrigeration.

Additionally, some may view this concept as too prescriptive. Since everyone has their own unique food experiences and ways of treating food, it may not be appropriate to force them to adopt specific ways of learning or taking action. It is also difficult to predict their behaviour and how they will choose to make changes.



“The tool is very practical. But why do I have to follow this guide? Why do I have to change my relationship with food?”



“It’s so trivial I may not follow it and even forget to use it.”

Exploration two:

Stimulating reflection on relationship with food by observing refrigerators.

After conducting my first exploration, I realized that it was crucial to first draw attention to the importance of caring for food before providing food education to young adults.

A messy fridge or food forgotten in the fridge is often the result of the pressures and demands of modern life. That made me realise that the fridge is a mirror of our current life state.

What if there were a tool or service similar to a "fridge therapist" that could help individuals reflect on their current relationship with food and guide them towards adopting better food-caring practices?



“I am busy recently, as a result, my fridge looks so bleak !”

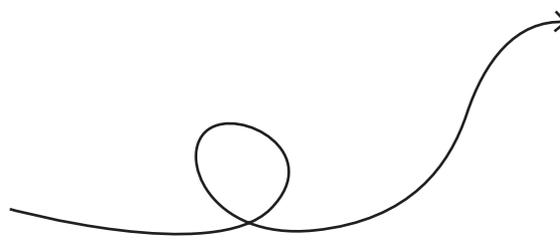
Process



Contemplate

What do we need to think when we look at our fridges?

Who and what can help us to reflect? In which ways?



*Self-reflection? Friends?
Through a visiting, a chat or a story?*

exercise 1

请现在快速拍下你的冰箱照片 (冷藏室, 冷冻室, 侧门)

现在请认领一个你好奇的冰箱, 我们开始冰箱互评!

Jing 咪咪 苹果

可以参考下面的问题来互评

- 冰箱里有什么? 种类多吗? 新鲜吗?

冰箱评论区

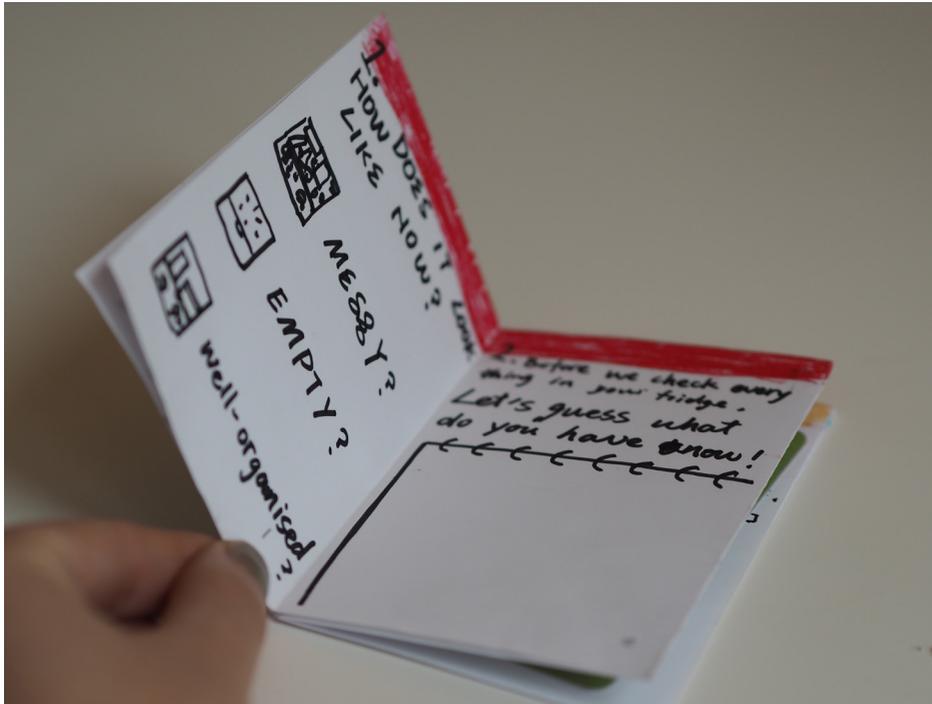
Quick prototype workshop

To explore how to encourage people to self-reflect on their relationship with food while observing their refrigerators, I conducted a simple workshop with two young Chinese adults. During the workshop, I asked them to share pictures of their refrigerators and interviewed each other while guessing their eating habits, attitudes towards food, and general lifestyle. Through this exercise, I gained insight into what we can learn from examining our fridges, as well as what kind of questions can prompt people to think.

Fridge therapists

How does it work?

Fridge Therapist includes two artefacts to help people reflect, a self-reflection zine and chatting cards between friends.



- Self-reflection zine

A zine included questions from six different perspectives to help people self-reflect on how they are treating and managing food now. For example, "What food has been forgotten by you?" "check the variety of food you had in the fridge?" and so on.



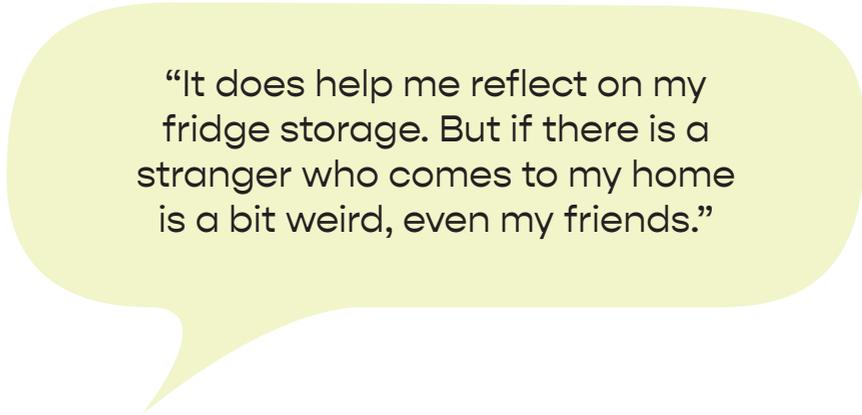
- Chatting cards

I also thought about a role-playing game between friends. One can act as the fridge therapist and ask questions to help the other reflect. So I designed some chat cards and question cards to support that. The chatting topics included amount of food, food variety, storing ways, shopping habits and eating habits.

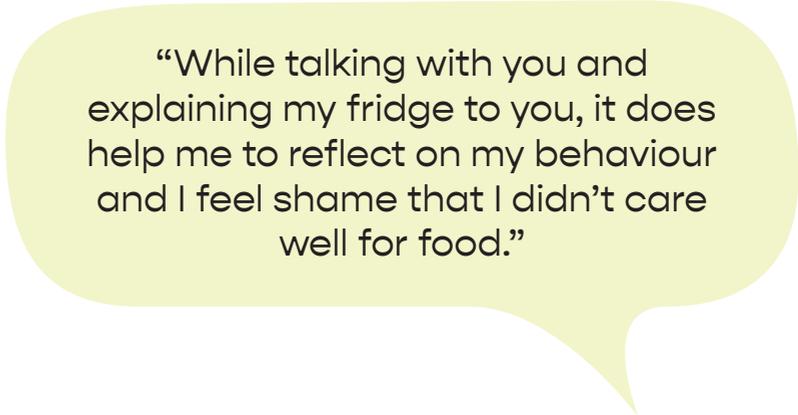


Reflection

Perhaps I am limited by the private, personal space of the kitchen, the fridge. I should probably try to create attention in a more open, social space. The food in the fridge became a participant in the reflection process, encouraging people to think deeper about their own food choices and food management. This method of using communication to promote introspection is worth further development in future designs.



“It does help me reflect on my fridge storage. But if there is a stranger who comes to my home is a bit weird, even my friends.”



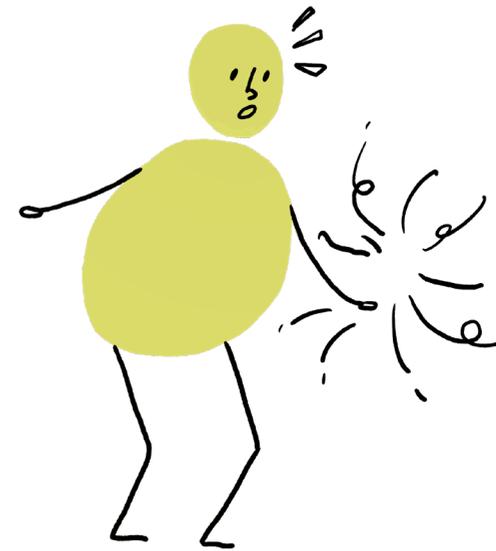
“While talking with you and explaining my fridge to you, it does help me to reflect on my behaviour and I feel shame that I didn’t care well for food.”

Exploration three:

Create an open and communicative food education environment.

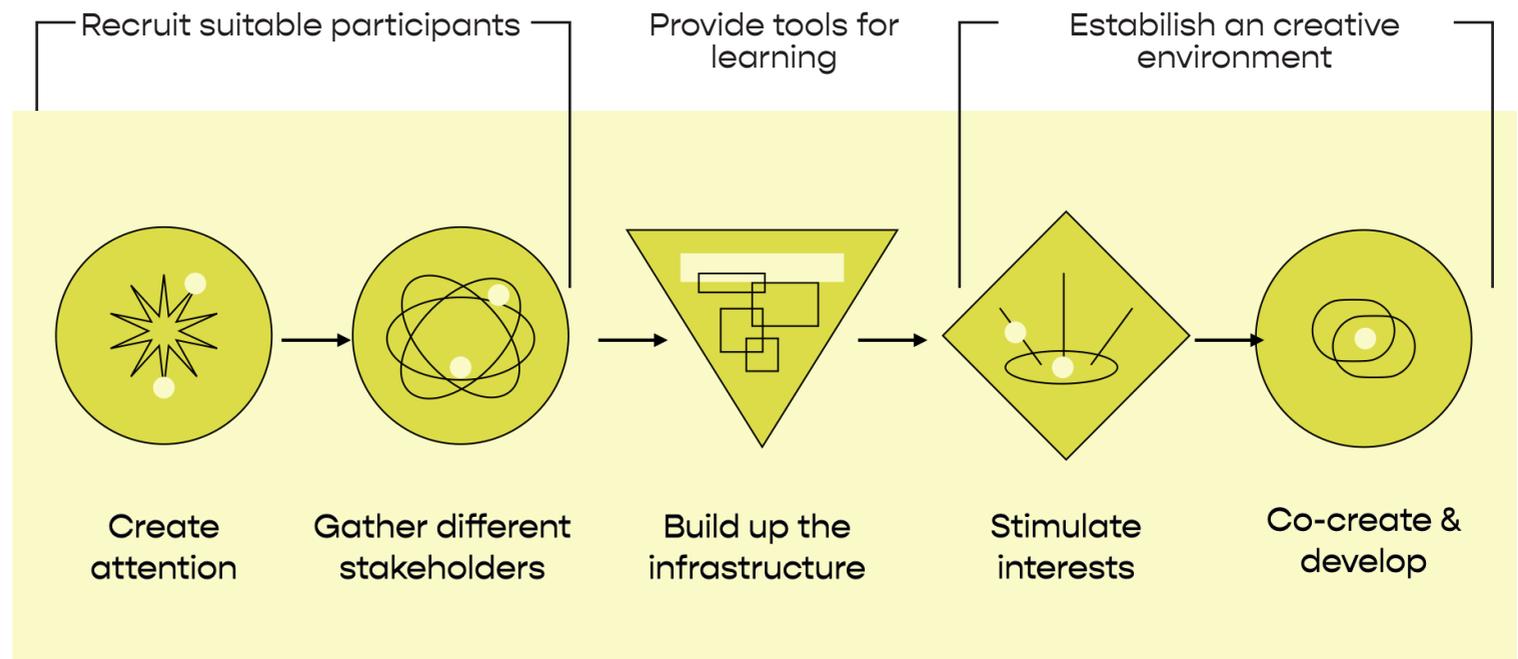
China is blessed with abundant natural resources and a rich culinary heritage. However, many young people lack comprehensive food education during their student years, which partly contributes to their increasing indifference and alienation from food. Moreover, as they enter the fast-paced modern work life, this seemingly useless and pastoral knowledge is even less likely to be touched upon or learned proactively.

To address this issue, I propose establishing a food lab and gathering individuals who are interested in food to co-create ways to raise awareness of the importance of food knowledge. We should recognize that the industrial food system has turned the food into commodities, and we are becoming increasingly indifferent to food. Together, we can explore how to transmit food knowledge, establish food education, and enrich young people's understanding of food. Through this collaborative effort, we can create attention and inspire people to reconnect with food.



Conceiving

In my vision, the food lab serves as a platform for food education, where participants with different food backgrounds can gather and learn about food knowledge together. They are free to create proposals for food education suitable for Chinese adults and share their food-care knowledge with more people.



To build this platform, I needed to recruit suitable participants, provide tools for learning and knowledge-sharing, establish an environment that encourages collaborative innovation, and develop appropriate artefacts. Therefore, the first step was to recruit participants to join the lab, and I worked with my collaborator, RoadToTomorrow, to accomplish this goal.

Create attention



We came up with a plan to write an article and launch it on RoadToTomorrow's social media platform to attract and recruit people to join our food lab. I realized that we could use the food stories and the hesitation people feel when throwing away food, which I collected during the Food Funeral Director experiment, to evoke empathy and connect with potential participants. By doing so, we aimed to raise awareness that this is a problem that exists in our daily lives, and we need to learn more to address the moment of hesitation.

未来食物共学小组

招募

杂乱的冰箱...

被遗忘的食物...

无可奈何的食物浪费...

加入未来食物共学小组，我们一起帮助年轻人学习简单实用的食物选择和保存技巧

我们一起改变对食物的认知，减少浪费，以建立更健康、更可持续的食物关系

Gather different stakeholders

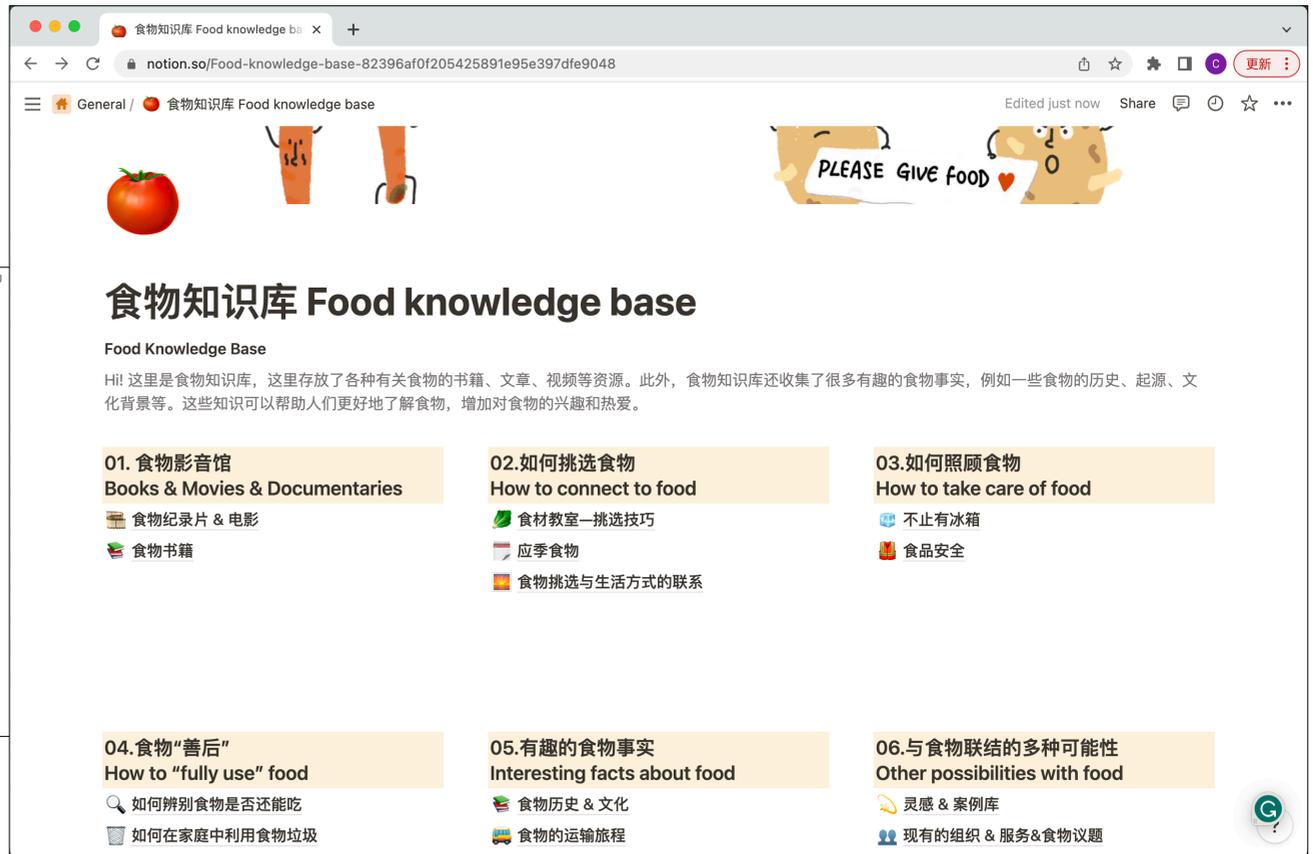
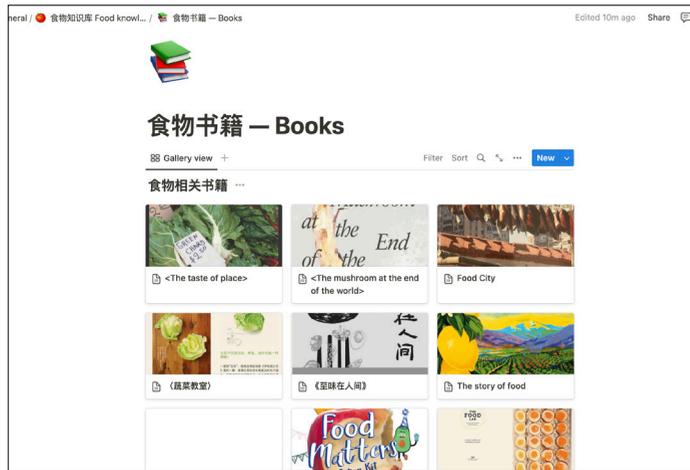
It went so well. I was able to attract more than 50 people to sign up, and I selected 15 of them for different roles, such as food anthropologists, a restaurant owner, a chef, a fridge product manager, a middle school science teacher, a home gardener, food designers, and curious individuals. Most of the participants are already food advocates, experts, and concerned about food-related topics. They want to contribute to food education and knowledge dissemination, reduce household food waste, and improve their relationship with food through learning. And the reason why I gathered food advocates is because I believe they had professional food knowledge and different food experience. I hoped the participants could contribute to influencing others and learn from each other.

3. 再简单介绍一下自己吧!

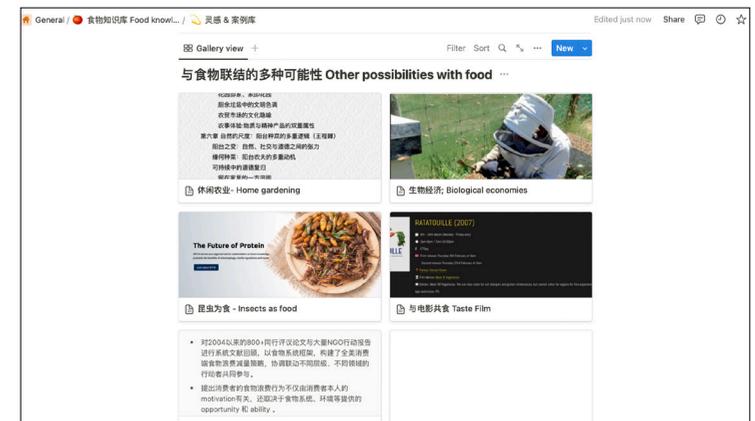
王啍	美食编辑	柠檬茶店店长	多元的视角	糊糊	MBA-多伦多	农业科技创新start-up-实习	了解服务设计		
流汗羊	家电用户工程师	冰箱-用户调研	对食物处理&食物认知	土豆	科学老师-上海自然爱好者	年轻人的饮食结构-重构自己的饮食-很难	提升自己 对食物的利用技能	在学校推动 食物教育	
许辰佳	食物人类学博士	食物消费 & 生活方式	食物浪费-构建一个网络和各行各业的伙伴交流。不同视角	楚威	商业-餐饮管理 餐饮展会/ 两家餐厅的主理人	餐厅: 青岛 & 深圳	能够接触到 能来源的食物很少	提升大家对 食物源头的重视	
Yolanda	创新设计咨询师	种蘑菇! 大师!	人们理解看待食物的边界: 食物的生命周期是很长的/可食用边界的扩展	Jing	明日之路的主理人	未来做更多的食物教育-将大家的食物经验传递给更多人	大家对动手知识的需求		
林喔喔	视觉传达-荷兰-设计人类学交叉学科	食物链接 你作为现代人的情感 & 尝试种植食物	多多交流 & 学习食物处理知识	小象	美食爱好者-健康减脂餐	从厨房小白 的历练之旅 对饮食文化感兴趣	#热量怪兽 微博话题	期待外部的高品质食物- 选精辟	
思芸	服务设计-美国	痛点话题: 不知道吃什么 怎么办? 最近打算做一个长期的方案	了解更多食物处理的知识	小鱼	体验设计师 & 零浪费践行者	梦想: 打造永续生活馆	如何从设计的角度改善食物浪费-循环设计 & 循环商业	食物的一生-植物的旅程 食物如何再利用	"方圆"
耶耶	工业设计-大学生	食物浪费-痛点 清理冰箱	为不同年龄层的人提供建议	跟斗云	自然学习小组/编程学校的小学老师	爱好自然 & 做饭美食	家里做饭的顶梁柱!	不提倡的“天然健康饮食”的误区	厨师证!
玮硕	科普媒体 & 食谱科技	farm to table/现代农业的工业化-引领了大家的饮食习惯	疫情后遗症: 囤货习惯; 原来2/3的食物都被浪费掉了						

Participants' introduction notes in the first workshop

Build up infrastrucutre



To facilitate collaborative learning among group members, I compiled the information I collected during my desktop research into a food knowledge database. It contains various food-related resources, such as books, articles, videos, and more. In addition, the database also includes many interesting food facts, such as the history, origin, and cultural background of some foods. This knowledge can help people better understand food, and increase their interest and passion for it.



Co-create & develop

After everyone had gotten a better knowledge of food, I thought it was the time to provide an opportunity for people to create something, to share their ideas and opinions. Therefore, I held a co-design workshop which aimed to find a way to create curiosity about food care and transfer food-care knowledge to Chinese young adults in their daily life. And I invited eight participants to attend the workshop.

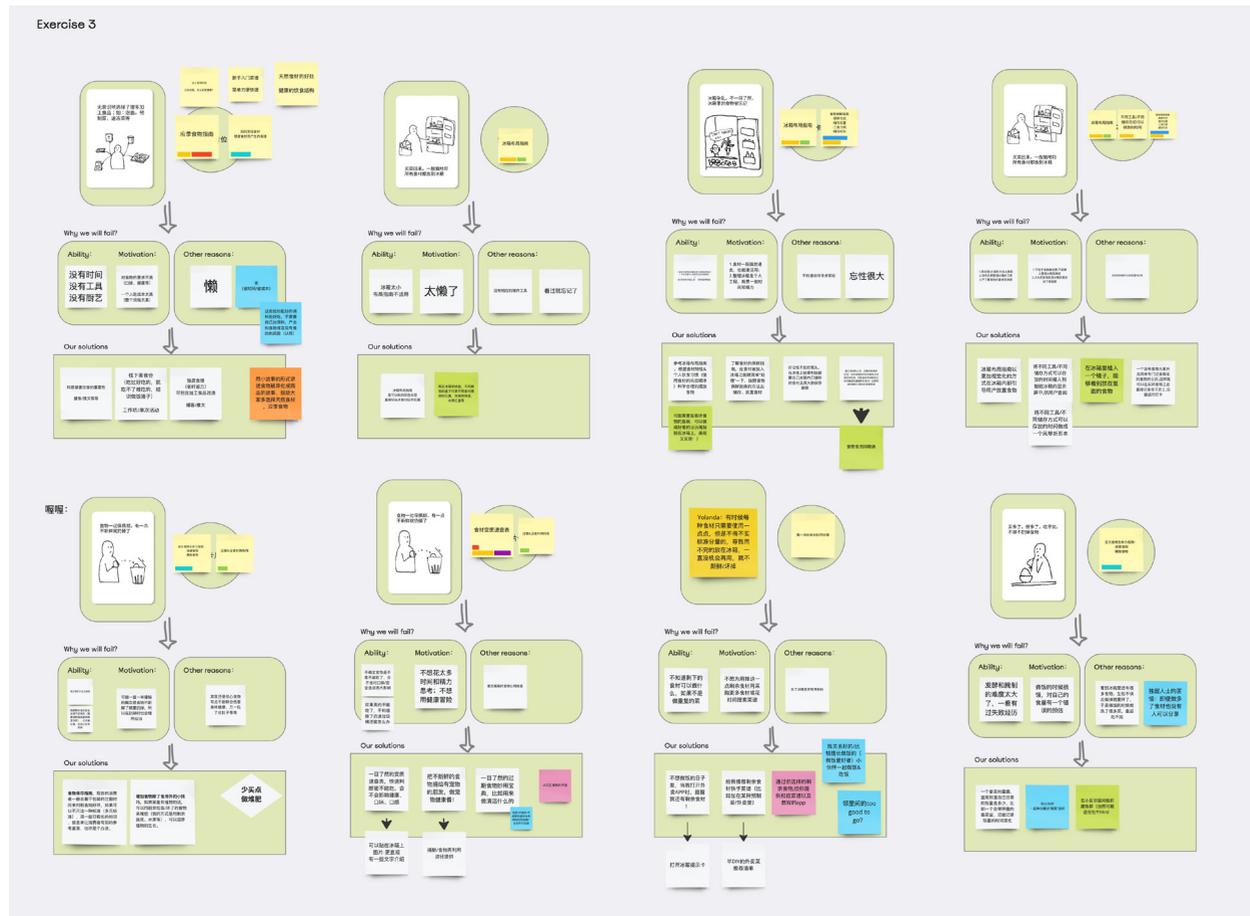
Workshop: the first part



The workshop included three parts. In the first part, I asked participants to discuss and shares their hesitated moments. For instance, comparing food based on price, only a small amount of ingredients are needed when cooking, and the remaining portion becomes stale or spoiled without being used again. This part aimed to remind people of their confusion with food.

Co-create & develop

Workshop: the third part



Screenshot on the third part of the co-creation workshop

The third part of the workshop focused on co-creating methods for sharing food knowledge and educational tools. Participants analyzed the specific situations in which this knowledge will be needed, taking into account people's abilities and motivations. Together, they generated solutions for effective knowledge transfer. I also provided existing food education resources and guidelines to inspire and guide their thinking.

Outcome

The workshop ran successfully. I got lots of good ideas. I went through all the ideas that the participants generated, and I concluded that the transmission of food knowledge should be easily accessible, visually engaging, and best acquired through cooking or sharing meals with friends. And also I used those learnings and principles in my final design.

Reflection & Feedback

"When I saw the story about the little tomato in your fridge, it touched me and made me realize that I have a similar situation that is just as serious. I want to change because I feel really bad when a lot of food gets thrown away."

I found that this lab has put individual questions in a social environment for discussion. This has helped to strengthen people's interest in food knowledge and unexpectedly explore more possibilities. And the way people shared and learned literacy in the food lab is inspiring. It starts with people who care about food and have a deeper understanding of it, who initiate questions and encourage others around them to rediscover and understand food. This educational approach is more gentle, natural, and effective.

"After joining the lab and participating in events, I started to observe the natural food in farmer markets and I can feel the vitality of food."

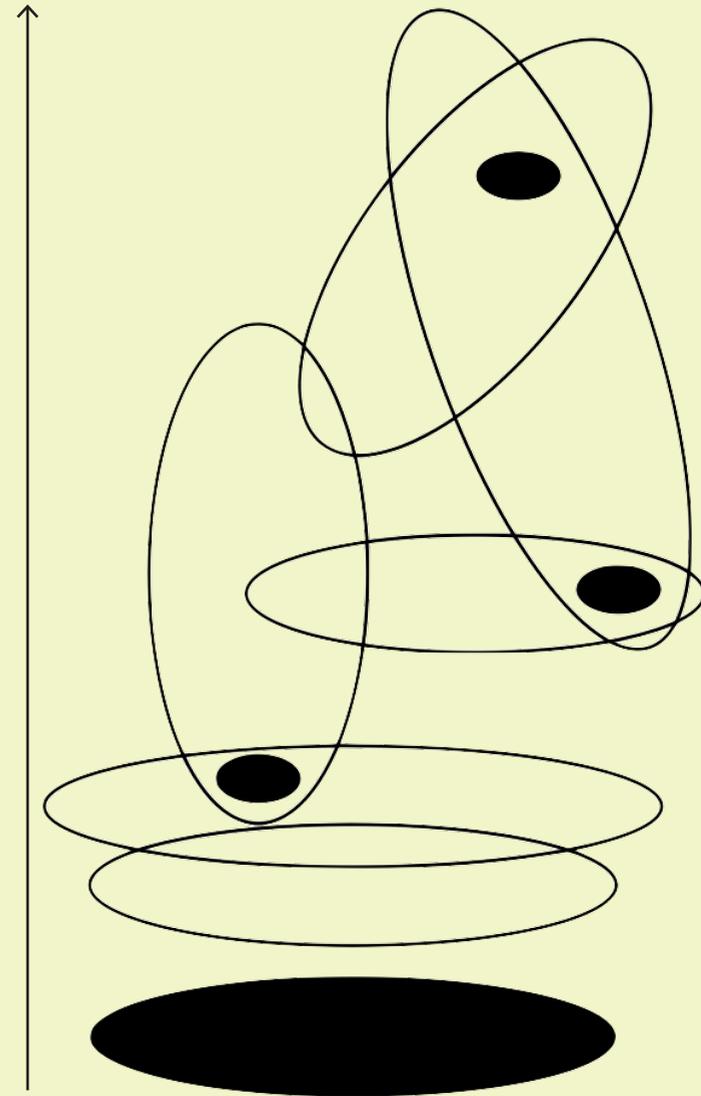
"After this, I want to compensate for the food education that I missed out on in school."

"The variety of food in China makes me curious. In this month, I found out that so many food I don't even know their names!"

Learnings from the explorations

1. Rather than providing directive food knowledge, it would be better to provide different opportunities for learning and encourage people to explore their food education ways.
2. Engaging people in food education should evoke a sense of familiarity and connection with their own food experiences and memories.
3. The approach of using communication among friends to encourage introspection and reflection is natural and acceptable.
4. By engaging in collective communication, we can stimulate people's interest in food knowledge and discover unexpected possibilities.

Social support & Retional & Explorable



Individual

05. Design

The focus and design phase

In this chapter I elaborate on my design proposal and my design interventions.



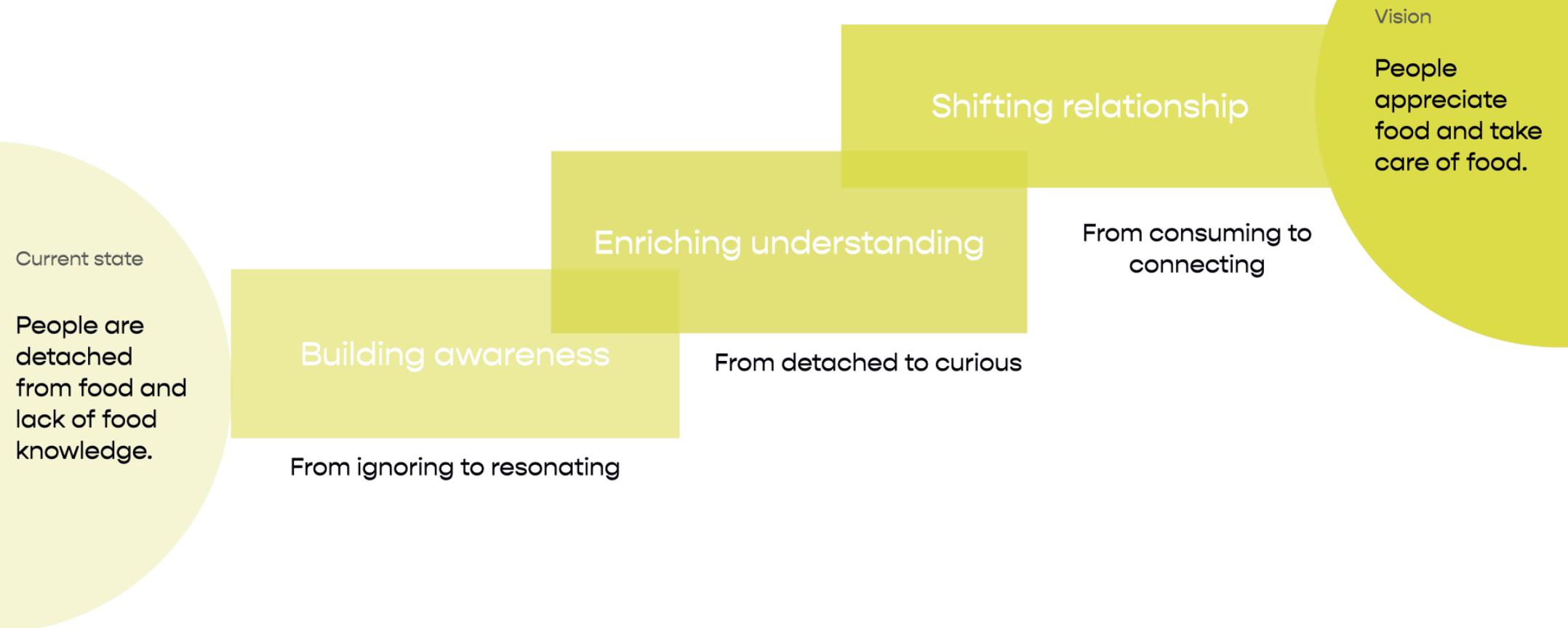
The transition

Why do we need a transition?

As I explored different ways to understand and connect to food, I realized that in order to encourage people to have a deeper connection with food, there needs to be a transition. Moreover, the development of deeper thoughts on food issues is a gradual process that comes with reading, experiencing and learning.

How does this transition work?

It starts with building awareness, creating attention for people that there is an alternative way to treat food with respect. From there, people can move from detachment to curiosity, by indicating that there is valuable knowledge to be learned about food. Finally, people shift their relationship from just consuming food to connecting with it. There are multiple ways to connect with food, food is not just a commodity, beyond food there are culture, memories, health, nature and so on. Therefore, my design intervention in this stage aims to encourage people to explore their own food education ways.



Design principles

The exploration phase was a long but valuable journey of finding the right principles for final design. So the learnings from it naturally guided me into the service principles for the transition design.

Learnings

By engaging in collective communication, we can stimulate people's interest in food knowledge and discover unexpected possibilities.

Rather than providing directive food knowledge, it would be better to provide different opportunities for learning and encourage people to explore their food education ways.

The approach of using communication among friends to encourage introspection and reflection is natural and acceptable.

Engaging people in food education should evoke a sense of familiarity and connection with their own food experiences and memories.

Design principles

The transition is facilitated through social support and collective communication.

In the transition towards a deeper connection with food, individuals can benefit from collective communication and social support, which can provide inspiration and motivation for exploring their own food education.

Activating food carers to cultivate a deeper relationship with food.

The transition begins with food carers, their influence can help cultivate reflection and awareness in regular food consumers, allowing them to develop a deeper relationship with food.

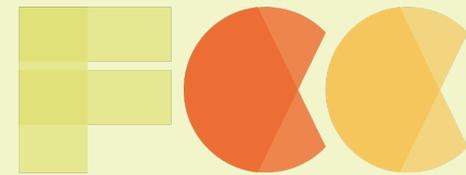
Fostering care for food through empathy and curiosity.

It involves encouraging individuals to explore the stories, experiences, and cultural significance of food, to better understand its value and importance. Food becomes an actor in this transition process.

How to facilitate this transition?

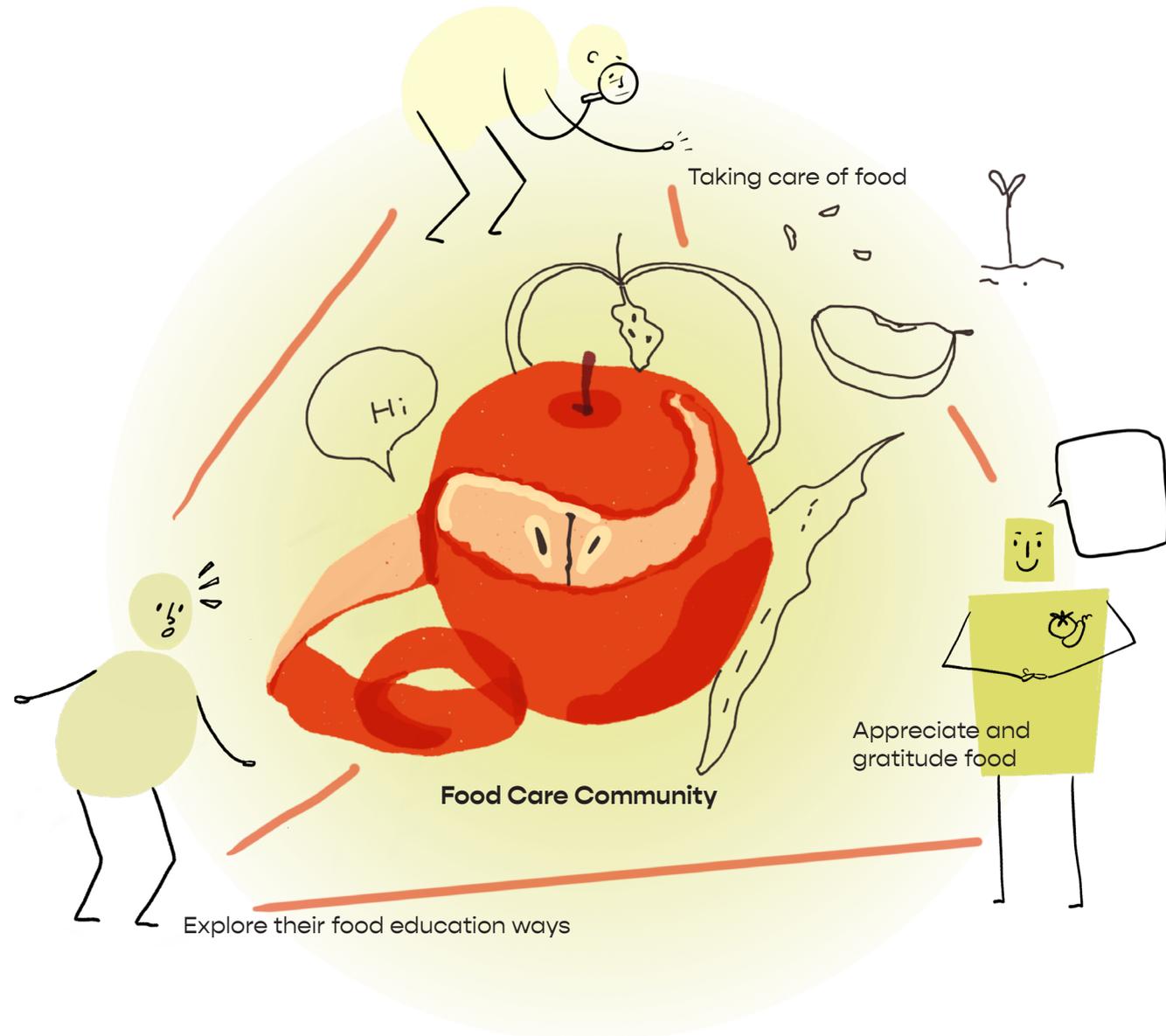
Food Carer Community

Upon reflection on Exploration Three, the Food Lab, I realized that the process of organizing and implementing it is similar to a backstage rehearsal of a platform, which could be crucial in supporting the transition towards food. Thus, I synthesized and iterated the pattern of Exploration Three into a Food Carer Community platform.



Food Carer Community

Core design concept



Vision

Inspired by the conceptualization of service ecosystem design, the Food Carer Community aims to facilitate the emergence of desired forms of value co-creation, (Vink & Koskela, 2021). **encouraging people to explore their food education ways rather than creating a new food education service offering.**

To promote reflexivity in this transition process, I utilized two enablers: relational and cultural dimensions. The relational enabler facilitates connections between actors to evoke reflection and reflexivity, while the cultural enabler aims to form a belief of deeper gratitude and respect towards food and nature in this process.

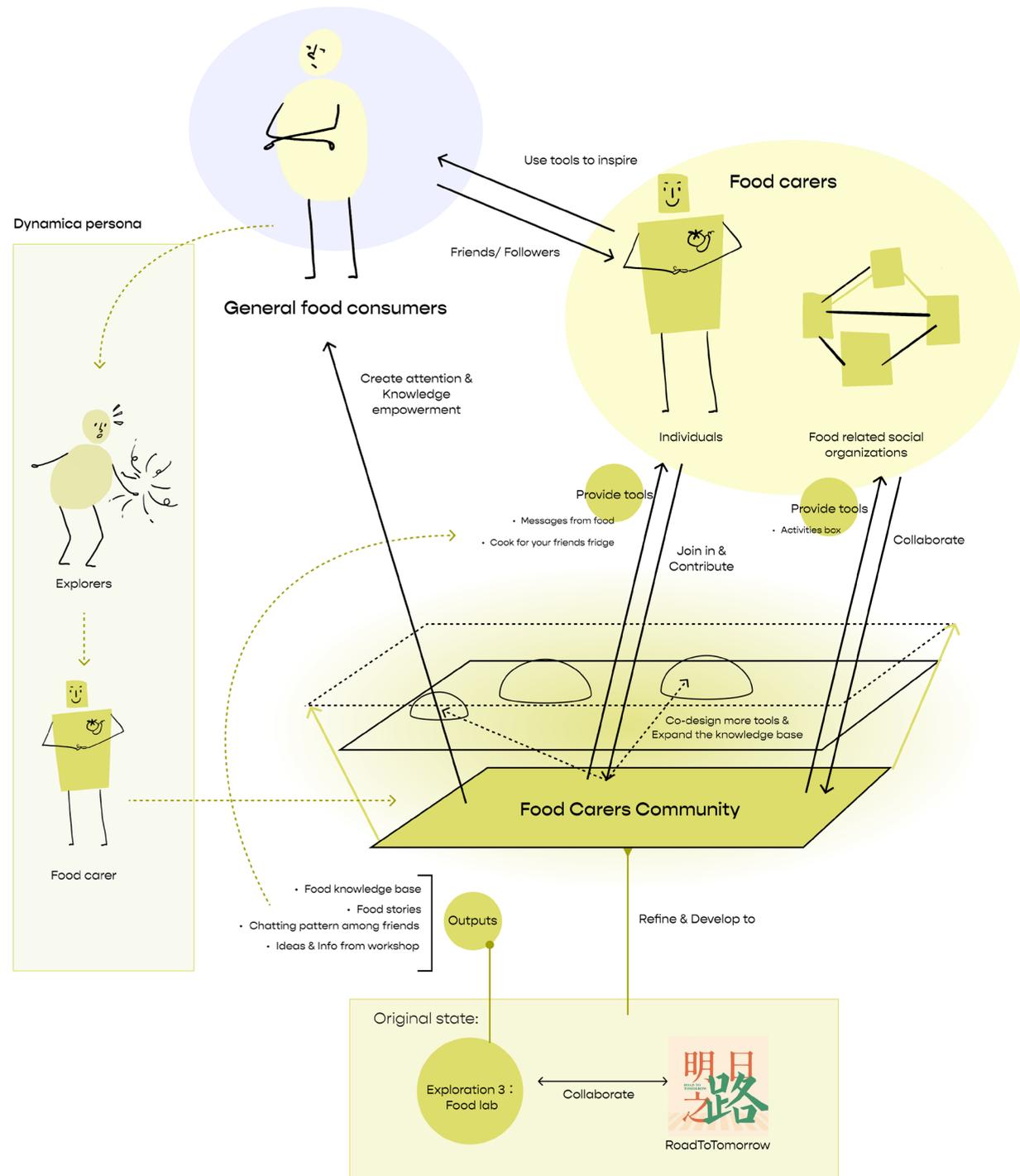
Core design concept

System map

The Food Carer Community serves as a hub for aggregating and exchanging food knowledge, laying a foundation for others to build upon. It offers individuals the opportunity to explore and deepen their connections with food. A deeper connection to food fosters appreciation, reduces waste, and promotes sustainability.

The Food Carer Community advocates for a supportive and collective food education environment that fosters discussion and exchange, starting with food carers, whether individuals or organizations, to deepen people's connection towards food gradually. It also provides tools for food carers to communicate with general food consumers. Through the continuous development of this relationship, an open and mutually supportive food education environment can be established. By triggering reflexivity in this service ecosystem, we can create structural malleability, resulting in an open platform that provides resources and opportunities for food carers to co-create more possibilities and tools to connect with food.

Additionally, The Food Carer Community is an outcome of the collaboration with the RoadToTomorrow. It started as an initiative that RoadToTomorrow hosts and aims to expand and adapt to other organizations and communities to build a larger movement of food carers.



The system map of food carers community

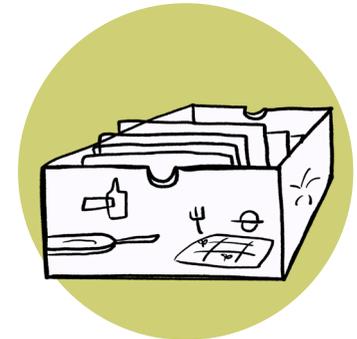
Design interventions

Four interventions

My design interventions aim to provide support and facilitate different stages of the transition, promoting the continuous transformation of people from general food consumers to explorers, and eventually food carers. The four interventions, namely "Messages from food," "Cook from your friends' fridge," "Activities box," and "Food knowledge base," were developed based on my previous explorations, learnings, outcomes, and ideas. They represent my design output, where I used myself as a design material to experience different food education approaches.

Main focus

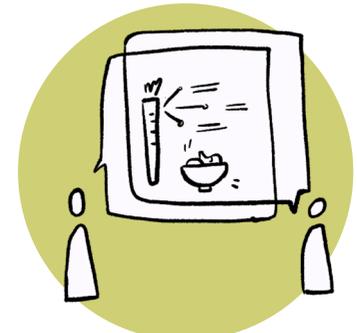
I found that "Messages from food" is a crucial starting point in the entire transition framework. Therefore, I decided to concentrate on expanding and exploring "Messages from food" as the primary starting point for the transition.



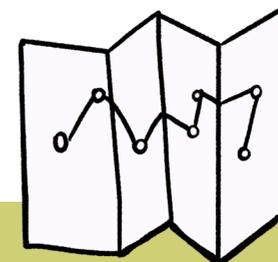
03. Activities box



01. Messages from food



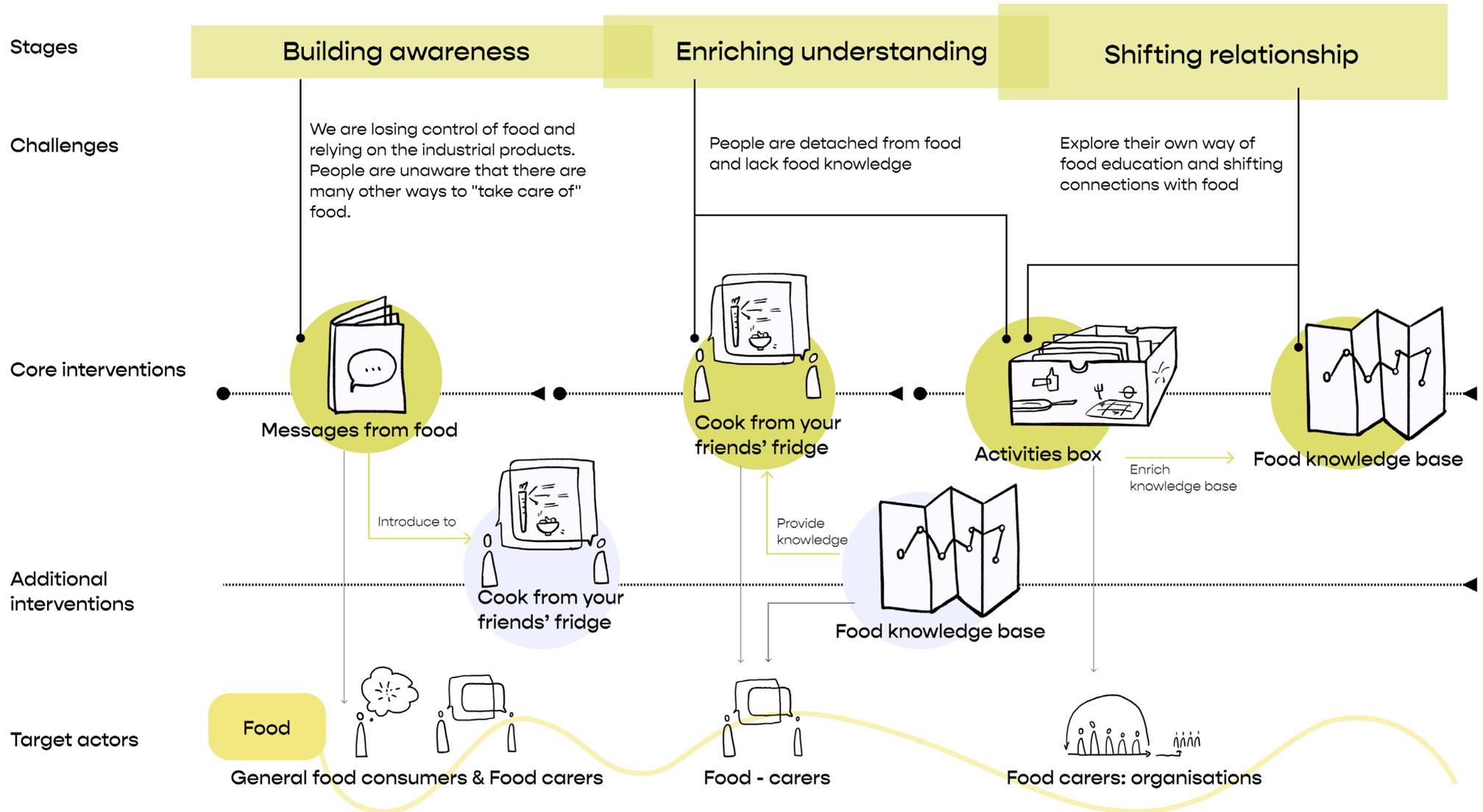
02. Cook from your friends' fridge



04. Food knowledge base

Support as a fundamental

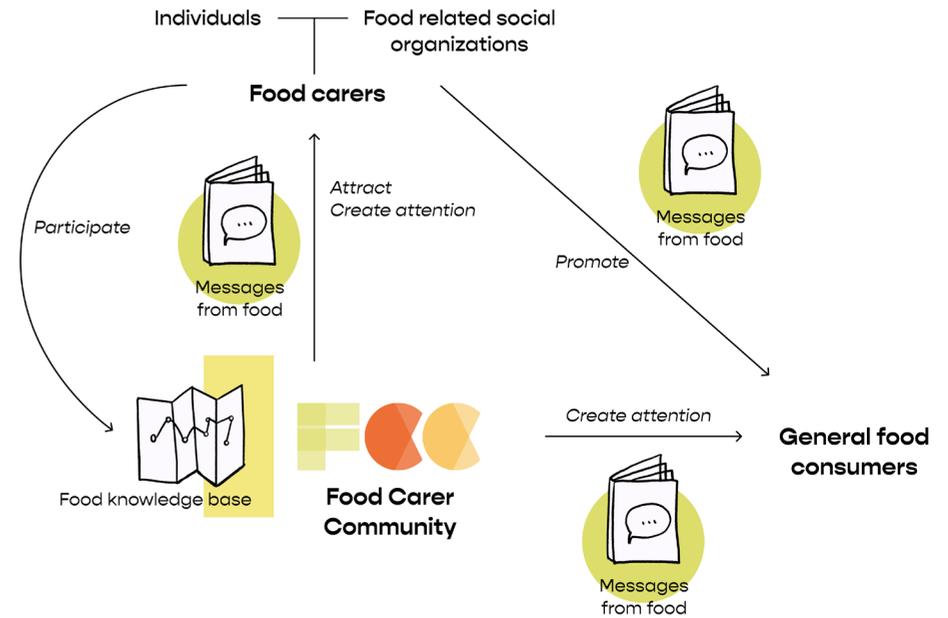
Design interventions



Building awareness: From ignoring to resonating

Why & What?

In our daily lives, our interactions with food are often simple and unconscious, and we tend to take food for granted. As previous research has shown, consumers in the industrial food system are passive and tend to ignore or forget the food they buy, relying on the fridge to take care of it without much thought or consideration for proper food care. However, in the first stage of the transition, individuals begin to recognize the vibrancy and importance of food in their lives and reflect on their lack of knowledge and care towards food. Using food as a participant in this awareness process, individuals may start with the main scene of storing food and learn how to keep it longer to avoid unnecessary food waste and different ways to care for it. They may also pay more attention to the food they eat, where it comes from, and how it is prepared. This stage is important because it sets the foundation for deeper exploration and understanding of food.



How?

In this stage, the primary intervention is the "Messages from food", aimed at attracting food carers to join the community to contribute and co-create while also creating attention and fostering reflection and awareness among general food consumers. Towards the end of this stage, the community provides the "Cook from Friends' Fridge" tool for food carers interested in sharing their food knowledge and inspiring their friends. This tool will also gradually bridge and overlap with the next stage of the transition.

Intervention 1

Messages from food

Empathize and resonate with food

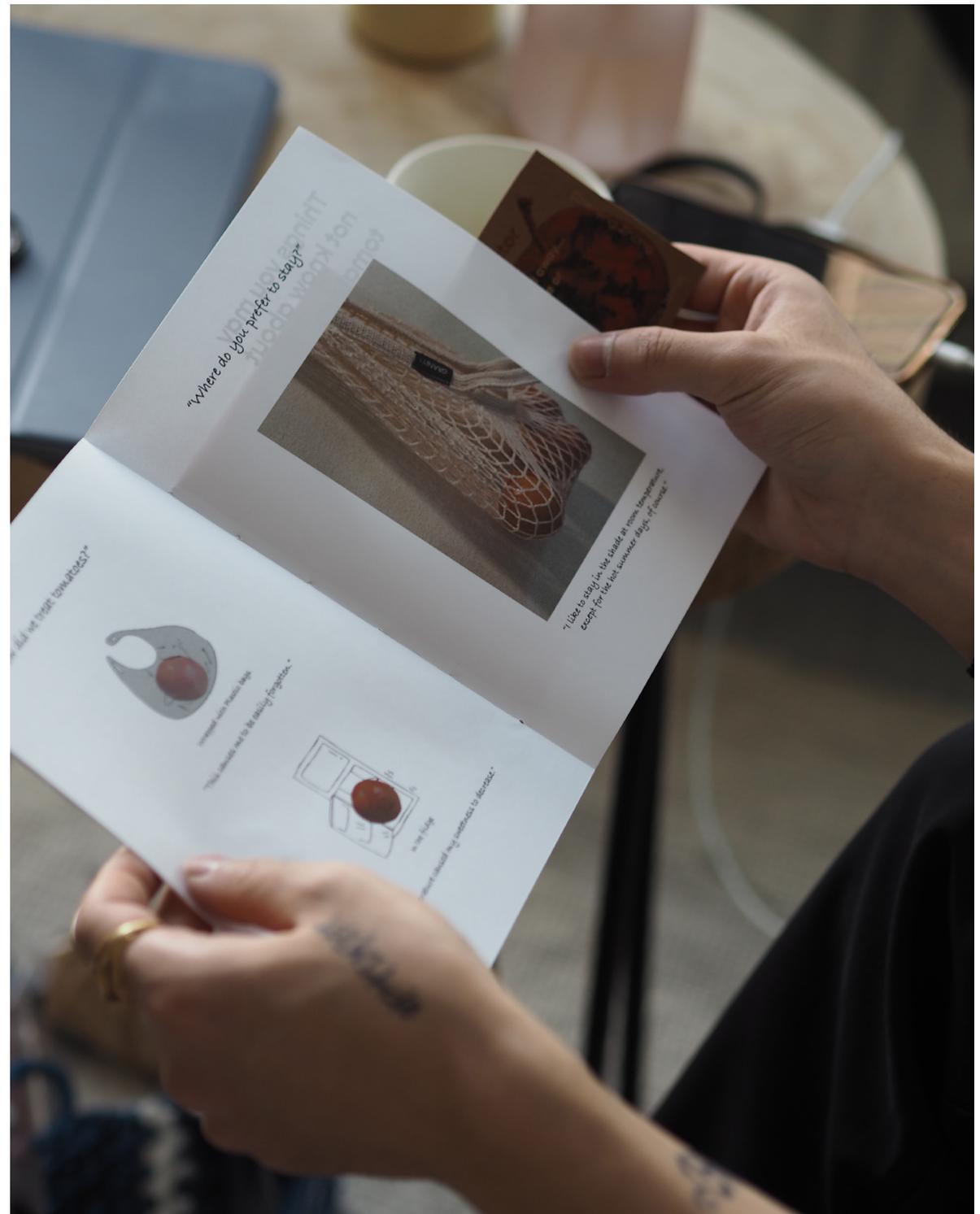
It is a small book that collects stories of abandoned and forgotten food. It contains the voices of food and transcripts of my interviews with food. It contains the tricks and knowledge that how food wants us to take care of them.

Why?

This concept was developed based on the use of food stories in exploration three to attract and engage people. Additionally, participants in the co-creation workshop have also mentioned this concept.

People prefer to resonate with stories, as they are more easily accepted and do not create resistance. This is a more equal and inspiring approach, rather than using moral condemnation or persuasion.

I aim to raise awareness about food care and proper storage by amplifying the voice of food and integrating food as an actor in this awareness process.



How does it work?

In this diploma, I picked six common scenes as examples of how this intervention works. And I also will deliver it to my collaborator RoadToTomorrw to promote on their social media account.



Vegetables that have gone bad because they were forgotten.



Those that are thrown away because they do not seem fresh.



Food that is only partly used and you don't know how to deal with it.



Vegetables that can be grown at home.



Large quantities of food can be stored with the help of other ingredients.



Using only a small amount of seasoning each time, makes meal preparation easier.

How does it work?

"As time passed, I lost my lustre and my skin became dull and wrinkled. People thought it was time to throw me away."



A wrinkled apple

Food quotes:

To stimulate the audience and create empathy with food.

When I was brought home, I was a green apple with bright skin and a sturdy body. I was placed in the fruit bowl on the table, and I quite liked it there. The temperature was just right, and the eaters could see me easily, so they would remember to eat me.



However, I might not have been their favourite fruit, and I was soon forgotten. Days passed, and my skin became dull and wrinkled, and I started to shrink. Eventually, I was mercilessly thrown into the garbage bin.

"No! wait! I still edible."



Food stories:

Help people to remind their common improper treatment of food and evoke a reflection on it.

How does it work?

"However, do the wrinkles and dullness necessarily indicate that you are no longer fresh and edible?"

My wrinkles are just a result of losing too much moisture. I may not be as juicy and delicious anymore, but I am still edible and my texture has become denser.

If you really don't want to eat a soft apple, you can turn me into baked apples.



Peel and chop me into pieces.

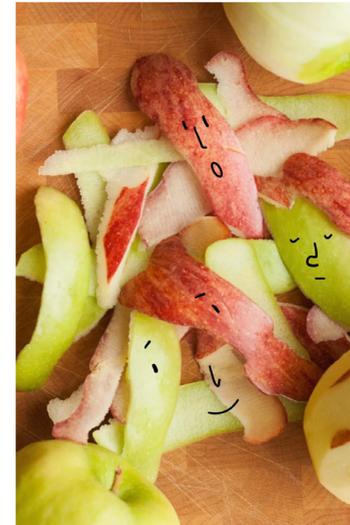


Put me in the oven at 200 degrees for 15 minutes, and I'll turn into sweet and tangy apple cubes! I actually have more flavor than you might imagine!



Small tricks:

Sharing and transferring proper food caring methods. It is not only beneficial for food but also for people's health, appetite and convenience life.



Also, my peels are edible. To create apple powder, you can whiz oven-dried apple peels in a clean spice grinder.

Or you can steep my peels in hot water and enjoy a comforting caffeine-free sip.



How does it work?

02.

其实你可以吃掉整个苹果

Actually you can eat the apple, including the core.

我们剩下的苹果核周围的果肉占苹果的体积约 30% 我们常吃苹果的方式，以圆周运动向中心咀嚼，留下一个充满种子的柱子，我们的认知是苹果的中心是不可食用的。虽然苹果种子确实含有 苦杏仁苷，当苹果种子被压碎或咀嚼时，苦杏仁苷会转化为氰化物，但含量极低。这意味着你必须吃掉大量的苹果种子才会受到其中氰化物的影响。

03.

苹果与肠胃的两面性

Are apples good or bad for our stomach?

苹果生吃治便秘，熟吃治腹泻：苹果中含有丰富的鞣酸、果胶、膳食纤维等特殊物质，鞣酸是肠道收敛剂，它能减少肠道分泌而使大便内水分减少，从而止泻。而果胶则是个“两面派”，未经加热的生果胶有软化大便缓解便秘的作用，煮过的果胶却摇身一变，具有收敛、止泻的功效。膳食纤维又起到通便作用。

Food fun facts:

Provide diverse and deeper food knowledge. In order to trigger curiosity and encourage sharing and discussion among friends or the community.

Early reactions

“It's cute, I want to learn more about food after reading that.”

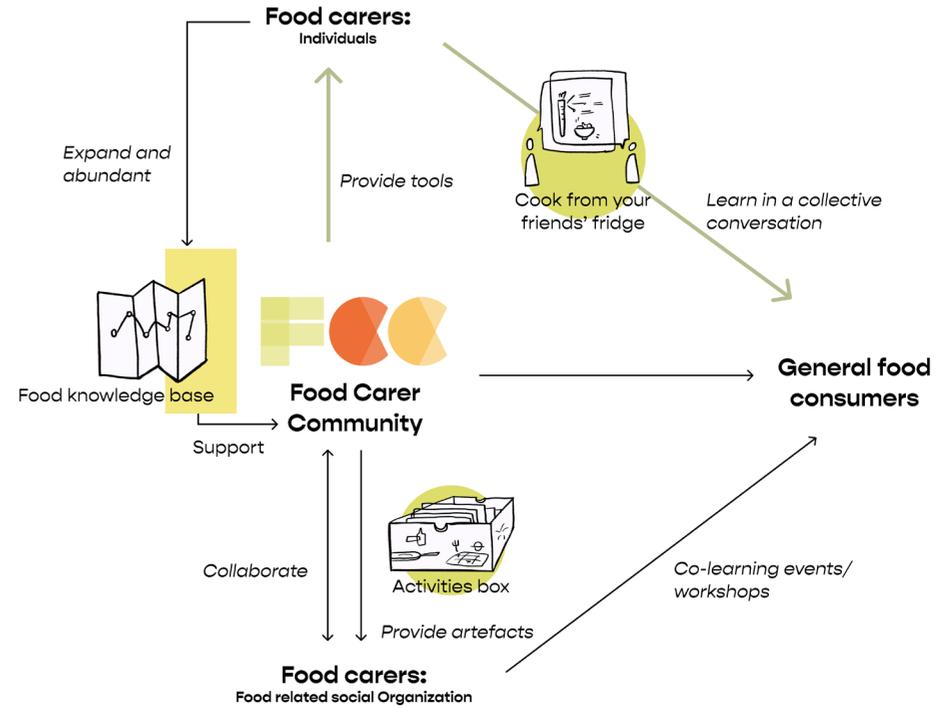
“I see! Tomatoes are not supposed to be put in the refrigerator. I always store them in the fridge.”

Enriching understanding: From detached to curious

Why & What?

As I mentioned in the previous research phase, Chinese young adults lack a comprehensive food education in school. For young people like me who grew up in urban areas, opportunities to connect with farmland and local markets are scarce. In our modern and convenient society, we are surrounded by food delivery, fast food, and processed foods. Their convenience has created barriers between us and real food, limiting our chances to engage with and be curious about food. After developing a certain level of awareness, I believe we should ignite people's curiosity about food and explore the many possibilities and wonders of connecting with food through small experiments in order to support the next stage of transition.

During this stage, I propose sparking individuals' curiosity through food carers. The food carers community provides tools to support this transition. In this stage, individuals begin to delve deeper into various aspects of food, such as nutrition, taste, and cultural significance. They may also experiment with cooking and incorporate more natural and unprocessed foods into their diets. It's time to get your hands dirty!



How?

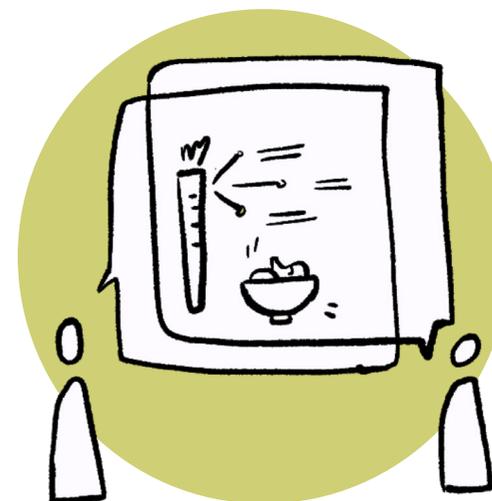
During this stage, there are two design interventions that aim to ignite people's curiosity and provide opportunities for experimentation with food. The first intervention is called "Cook from your friends' Fridge," which is provided to individual food carers to encourage them to share their knowledge and passion for food with their friends. The second intervention is an activities box provided by the food carers community to food-related social organizations. These organizations can then use the activities box to hold different events and inspire people to have fun experiences with food. By coordinating with these organizations, the community can offer diverse and engaging opportunities for people to learn and explore different aspects of food.

Intervention 2

Cook from your friends' fridge

Learning by talking and cooking

It is a tool that contains a variety of “used-up” recipes and food knowledge. Food carers and any individuals can use it to share and explore food knowledge with their friends.



Why?

Based on the findings from Exploration Two: Fridge Therapist, I further refined and developed a pattern of reflection and co-learning among friends, and turned it into an intervention that addresses both the issue of food waste in fridges and the need for social learning. The intervention encourages learning through social interaction and the exchange of knowledge. By using this intervention, I hope to help people enrich their knowledge of food while cooking and communicating with friends.

How does it work?

The journey of this intervention

The invited poster



Invite friends

Share this poster with friends and invite them to save food from their fridges with you.

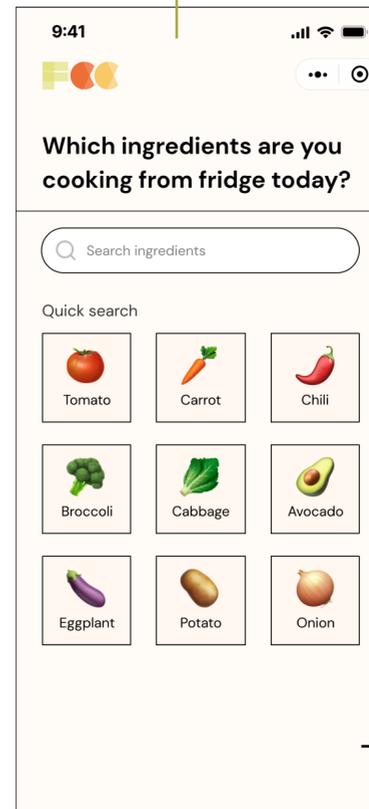
Visit friends' fridge

Visit friends' fridge and select the foods that belong to the categories listed in the poster.

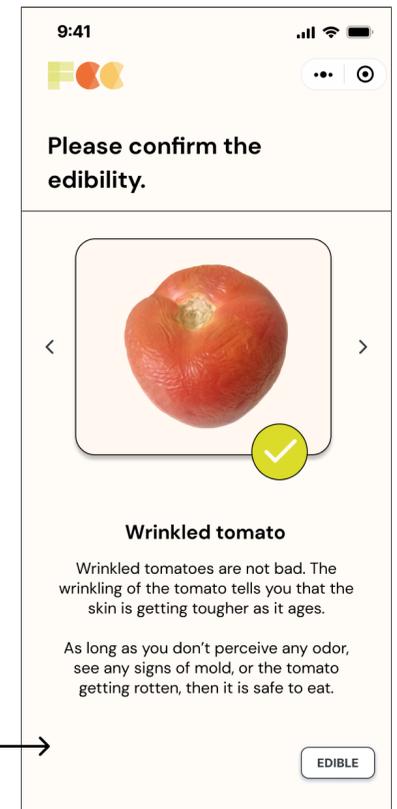
Scan the QR code in the poster and enter the applet.

Applet

Where food carers can pick up recipes.



Input the ingredients



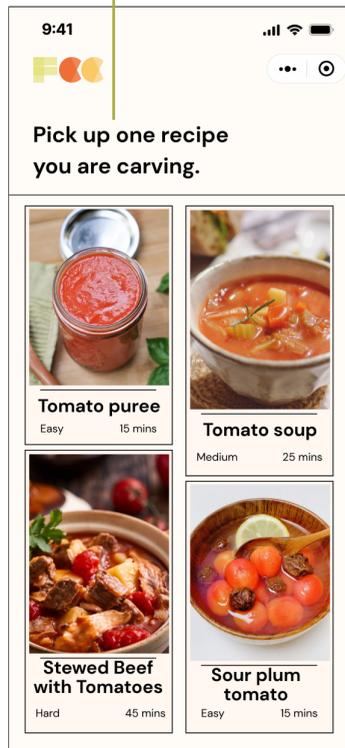
Confirm the edibility

How does it work?

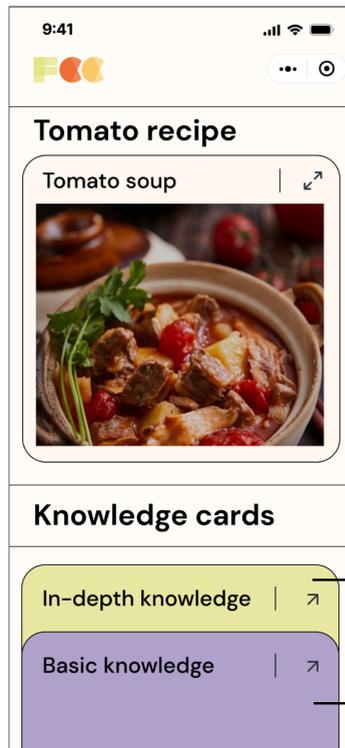
The journey of this intervention

Applet

Where food carers can pick up recipes.

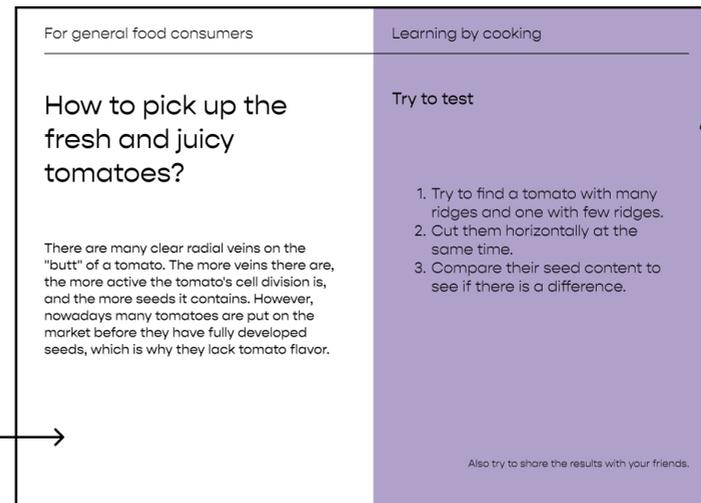
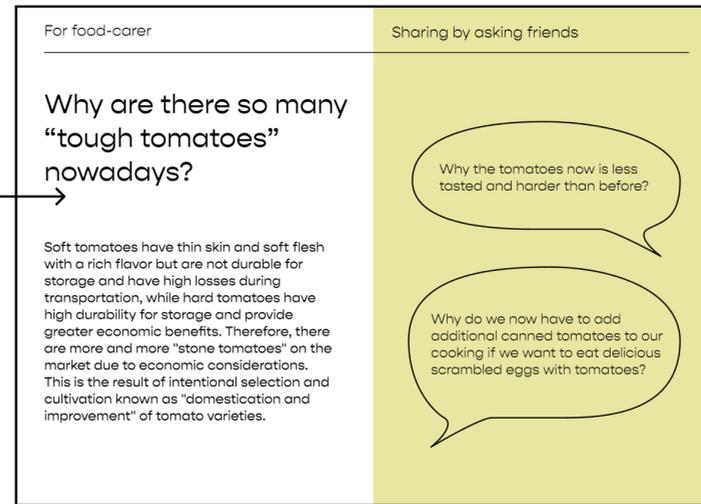


Pick up the Used-up recipes



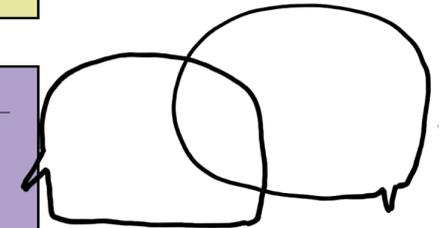
Get recipe & two different knowledge cards

Share one of them with your friends



Read through the knowledge cards

These knowledge cards are further developed from the information in the "Messages from food". There are two sets of food topic cards of different levels. The food carer will receive in-depth knowledge about food, including food culture, nutrition, food with nature, and food industry production. Their friend will receive basic knowledge about food, such as how to choose fresh ingredients, different cooking methods, and proper storage techniques.



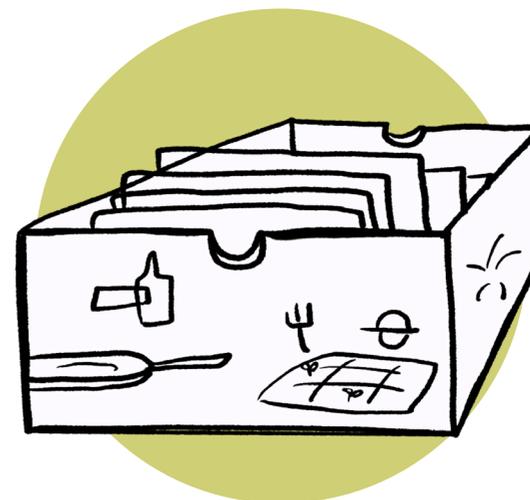
Sharing while cooking

Intervention 3

Activities box

Activating the food carers

It is a group of ideas for food-related social organizations that want to hold activities or workshops to inspire and engage their followers.



Why?

It aims to facilitate more collaborations between the food carers community and other organizations, together with them to launch and coordinate more events to engage people to be curious and concerned about food topics or food issues. By creating more opportunities for food education and engagement, we can empower individuals to make informed decisions about their food choices, shift a deeper connection with food and contribute to building a more sustainable and equitable food system.

How does it work?

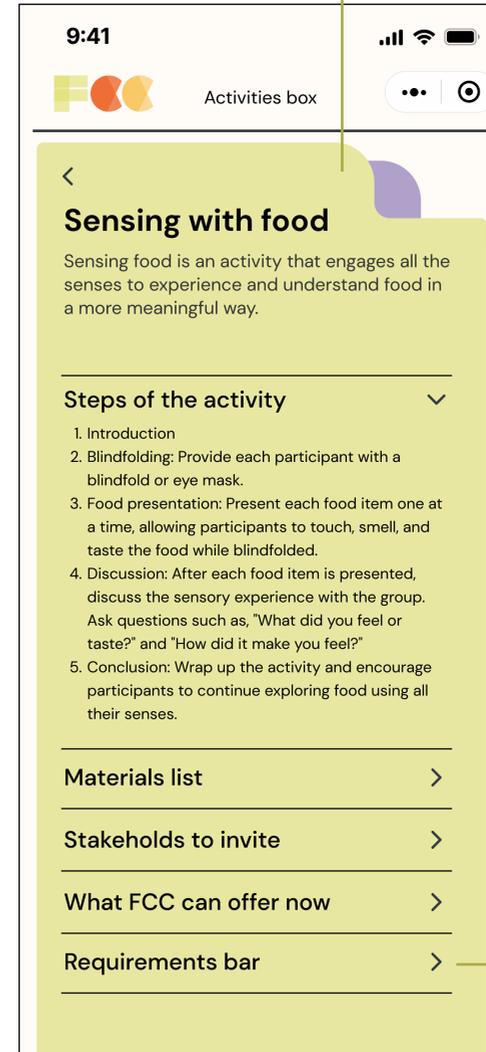
If organizations want to hold events, they can access the activities box through the same applet where intervention two is linked. The activities box provides a variety of activity ideas for food-related social organizations to inspire and engage their followers in food education and exploration.

How does it work?



Events types

It offers various types of activities and food topics for organizations to choose from when planning their events.



Description page

On the description page, they can access materials lists, preparation steps, and suggestions for actors to involve in the process. Additionally, the community provides existing resources and connections to support the organization in its event planning.

Requirement bar

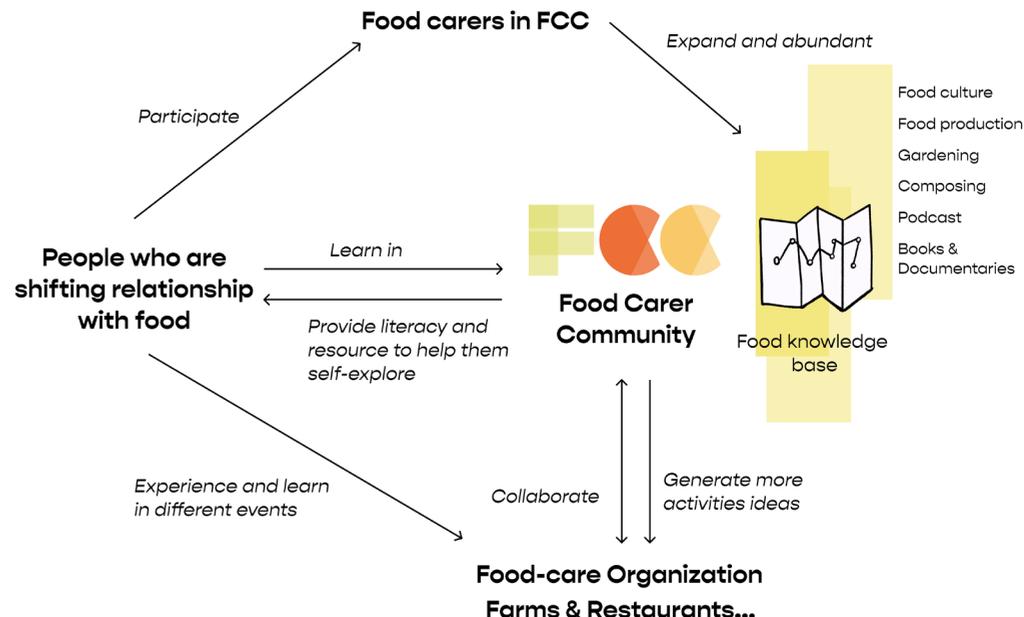
If the organization finds it difficult to acquire certain materials, they can submit a requirement through the requirement bar, and the community will support them in creating and developing the event.

Shifting relationship: From consuming to connecting

Why & What?

In the final stage of transition, individuals move from being passive consumers of food knowledge to actively connecting with food in a more holistic way. This stage is aimed at empowering individuals to take control of their own food education and explore their own unique paths towards a deeper understanding of food. The community will support this shift by providing opportunities for learning and resources for individuals to use as they embark on their food education journeys.

As people shift towards a more connected approach to food, they begin to appreciate the social and cultural aspects of food. They develop a sense of gratitude for nature and the people who produce the food they eat. They also become more concerned and understanding of the industrial food system and its impact on the environment and society. By fostering a deeper connection with food, individuals in this stage are better equipped to make informed decisions about their food choices and contribute to building a more sustainable and equitable food system.



How?

In this final stage of the transition, the Food Carer Community will focus on providing resources and support to individuals as they explore their own ways of food education and have a deeper connection with food. The community will offer resources through the open and collaborative food knowledge base, which will encourage individuals to expand and enrich their understanding of food. Additionally, the activities box will continue to be available to food-related social organizations, providing them with ideas and resources for engaging and inspiring their followers.

Intervention 4

Food knowledge base

The base to support and co-create

It serves as the fundamental resource for all interventions. It provides the necessary resources and knowledge to food carers, and the community ensures the validity and alignment with experts. As we transition to the third stage, the food knowledge base will become more collaborative and open, inviting food carers to extend and co-create the knowledge base. This openness will also allow individuals to share their food exploration stories and initiate food experiments and events.

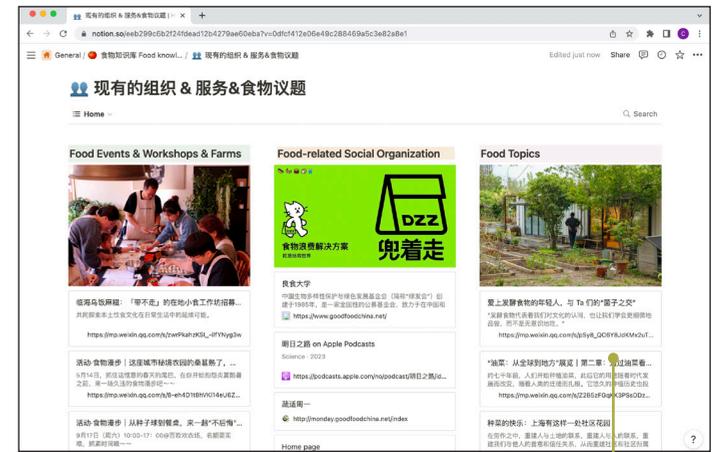
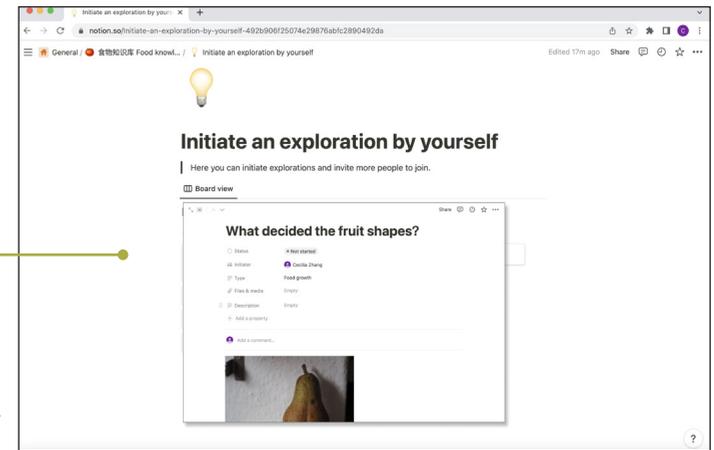
How does it work?

Basic knowledge base

This food knowledge base was developed from the infrastructure I built to facilitate exploration three: food co-learning lab. And then I iterated it by adding the knowledge and topic that participants collected in the food co-learning lab. While more food carers join in, I believe it will extend and enrich in the future.

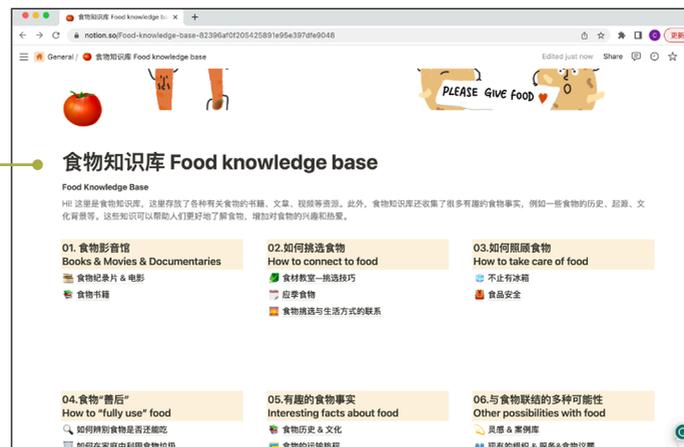
Initiate function

Food carers are able to initiate their curious food topics and invite more people to join. It is also a way to learn and explore.



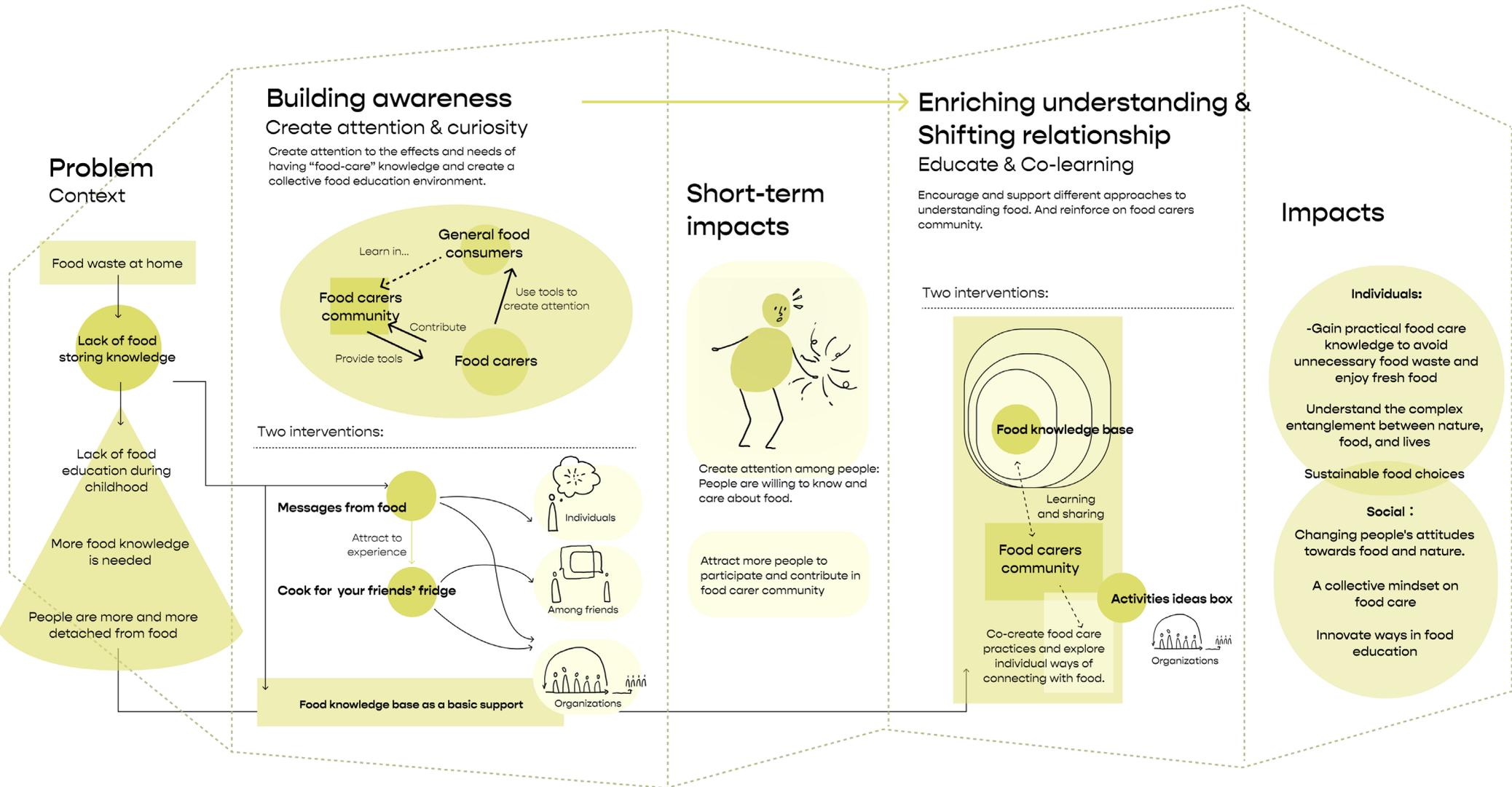
Food resources

Link to diverse food education events, food-related social organisations, farms and so on. Food carers can use those resources to explore and develop their unique food education process.

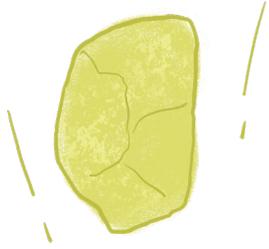


Theory of change

The theory of change outlines how I will drive impact through the food carers community, the first stone I cast, to foster a deeper connection with food and sustainable food choices.

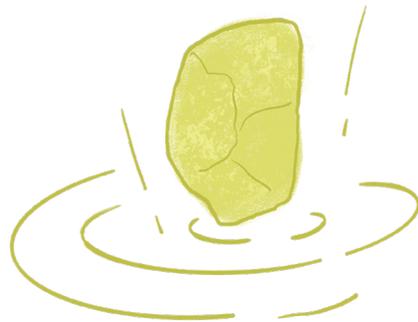


Theory of change



The first stone

In this diploma project, I act as a food carer and my design interventions and the food carer community are like the first stone being cast, which is just one of many possibilities. The ripples caused by this stone may slowly change people's understanding of food and bring them closer to it. Everyone can create their own stone in these ripples, constantly stirring up ripples of different sizes. It is intended to be a catalyst to spark further awareness.



Ripples

The Food Carer Community is not an end product in itself but is a prototype from an explorative design project. And because of time limitations, there are lots of ripples from my stones that didn't show in this project. Such as enhancing food culture, a healthy diet, sustainable food choices and even farming during the transition process. Therefore, I hope the thoughts, explorations and connections with food can be continued outside of the project.

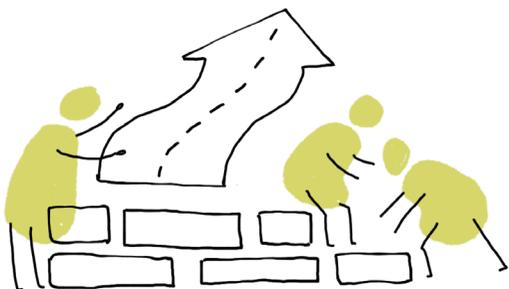


Other stones

How to understand the complex entanglement between nature, food, and lives? How food can be work as an actor in the transition process and the value of it? What kind of connections between people and food should be? These are still open questions. However, I believe that the food carer community can serve as a cornerstone to build upon and pave the way for more answers to emerge.

Theory of change

The future road map



1.

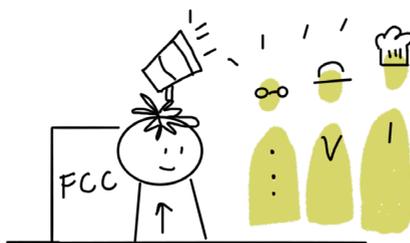
Further preparation

- Engage a small group of food carers (individuals and organizations) to contribute to the community's development.
- Continuously improve the content of the four interventions, such as expanding the "Messages from Food" section and collaborating with chefs to create more use-up recipes.
- Establish partnerships with local farmers, chefs, nutritionists, and food experts to provide knowledge and resources on the platform.
- Gather feedback from users and make iterative improvements to the platform based on their experiences.

2.

Initial implementation

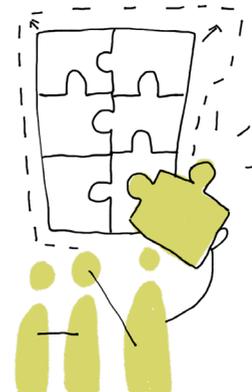
- Launch the Food Carer Community platform in Shanghai, with a focus on engaging local food carers and enthusiasts.
- Utilize the "Messages from Food" section effectively to generate attention and interest.
- Utilize popular social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and local food blogs to promote the platform and encourage participation.



3.

Expansion & reinforcement

- Establish partnerships with additional food stakeholders in Shanghai to expand the network of food carers within the community and provide more food resources for self-exploration and education.
- Collect and document the food education and exploration journeys of food carers, further developing and reinforcing the community.
- Collaborate with educational institutions to integrate food education programs using the platform's resources.



4.

Social movement

- Encourage more food carers to actively participate and champion the food caring and connecting movement.
- Expand to various cities to bring together food carers and enthusiasts, fostering a sense of community and shared learning.



Reflection

The design process of this project was exploratory and often illogical, different from the traditional service design process. This messy and uncertain process brought me a lot of confusion and anxiety, but it also helped me discover broader and deeper insights and reflections. For example, can the relationship between humans and food go beyond being consumers and purchasers? Can actors in service design take forms other than humans, like an object? I also reflected on human-centric design thinking and thought about whether it is possible to think from a more-than-human perspective and incorporate oneself as a design material into the design process.

As a designer, I have thought about being a food designer in my future career. However, the communication with food in this project inspired me to expand my understanding of food design beyond designing for dining experiences and sensory design. Food design can also involve designing relationships, cognitive processes, and communication. In the design process, food should be seen as a material, a participant, and a co-creator, rather than just a design outcome.

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Lastly, I express my gratitude to nature and food for their role in my journey.

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Resources:

Food Knowledge base resources photos by: 放羊姑娘, 兜着走, 三联生活周刊

Design process pictures by Chenjing Zhang

