

Using AI-assisted semiotics to understand SE Asia youth's online behaviours & interests

BBC Media Action (Indonesia + Cambodia)

2 March 2023



illuminate

Strategic Insights Consultancy

A Member of **PERPI**

ESOMAR²³
Corporate



THE INDEPENDENT
RESEARCH INSTITUTES
NETWORK

Research Background & Objectives

We were interested to understand Indonesian and Cambodian youth's online behaviours and interests – as a way to help to develop digital communications for key causes of interest.



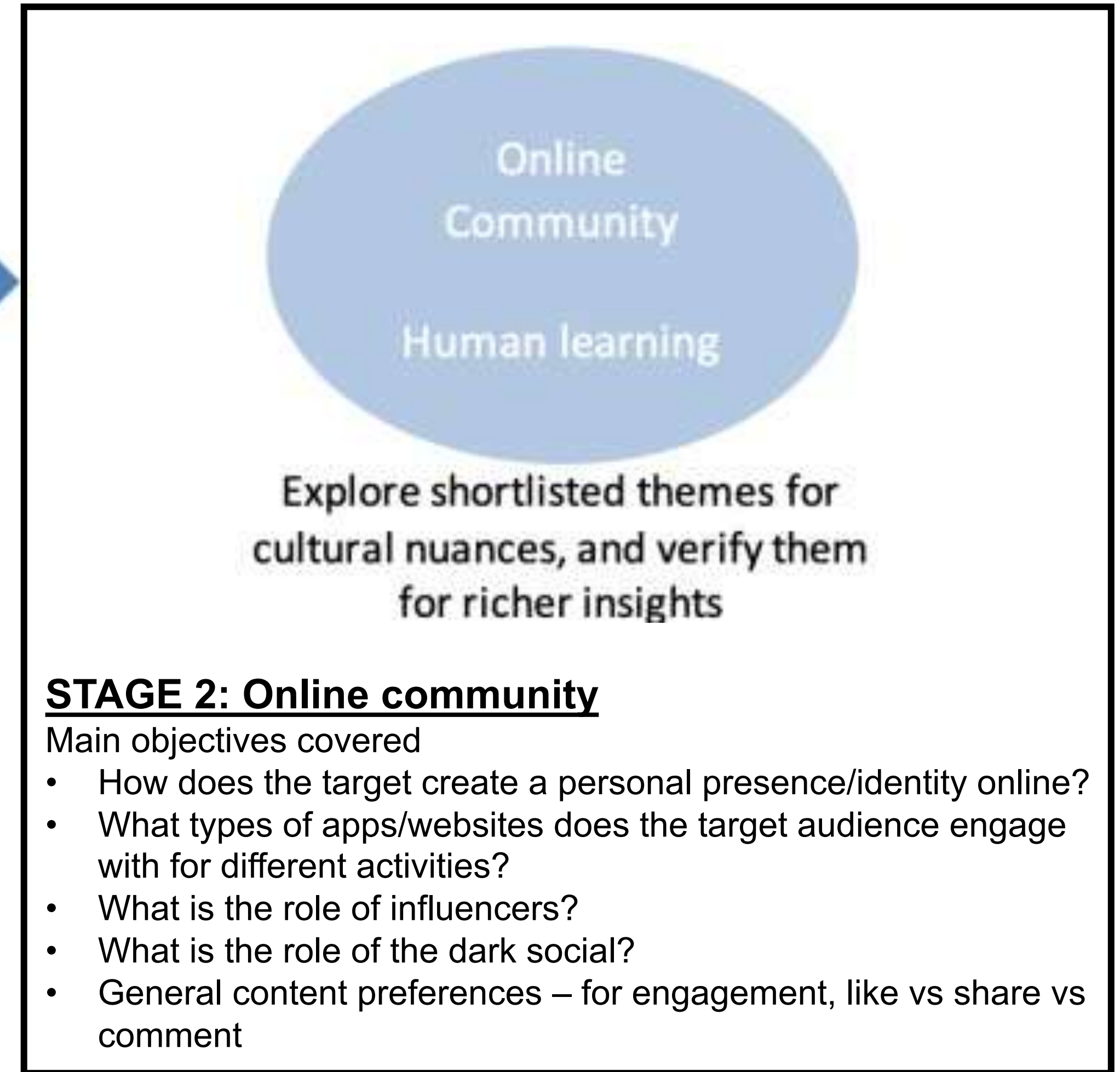
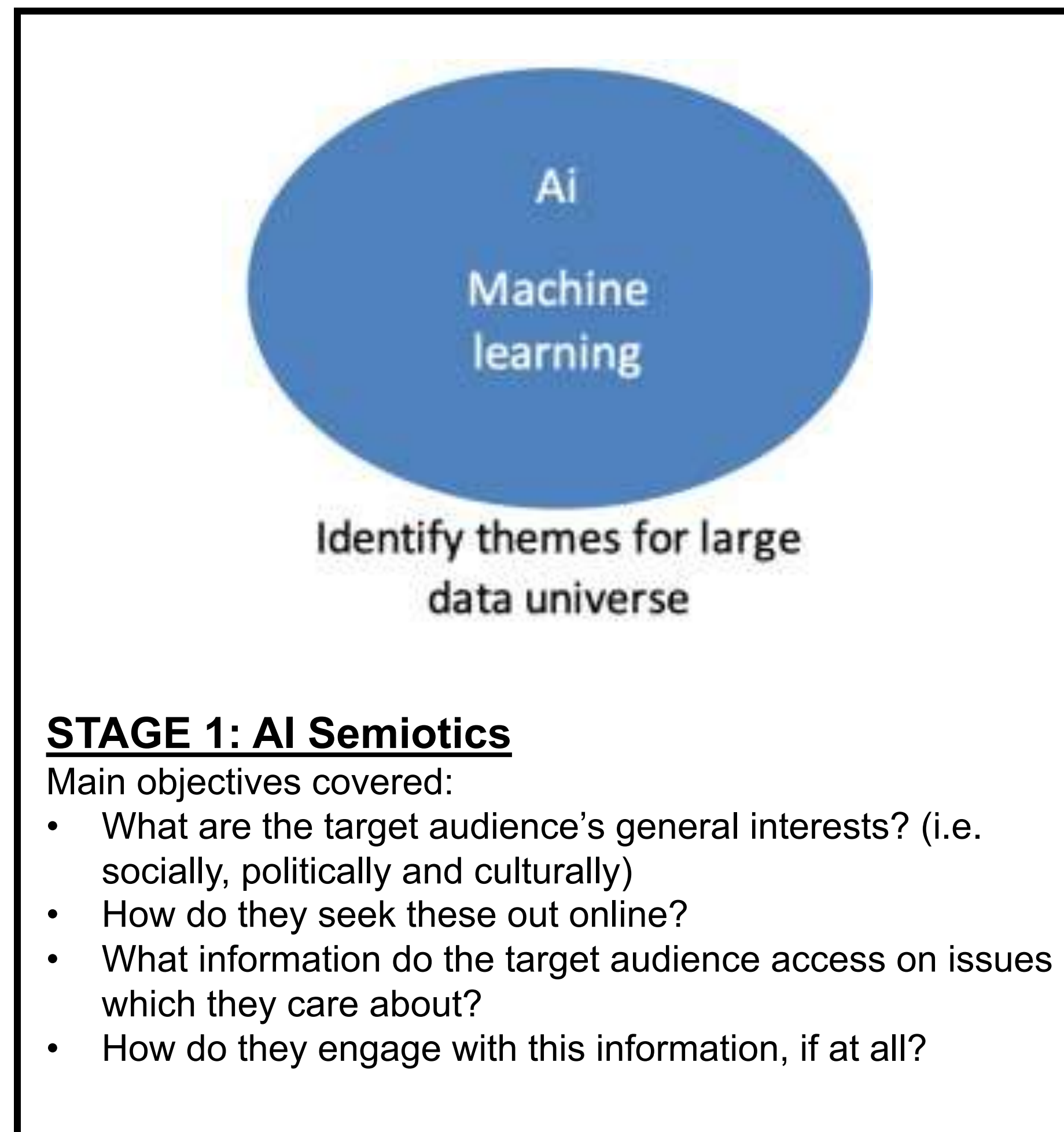
- **Indonesia** – area of interest was deforestation – aiming to help youth to become more engaged in the topic of deforestation
- Project conducted in 2019 - 2020



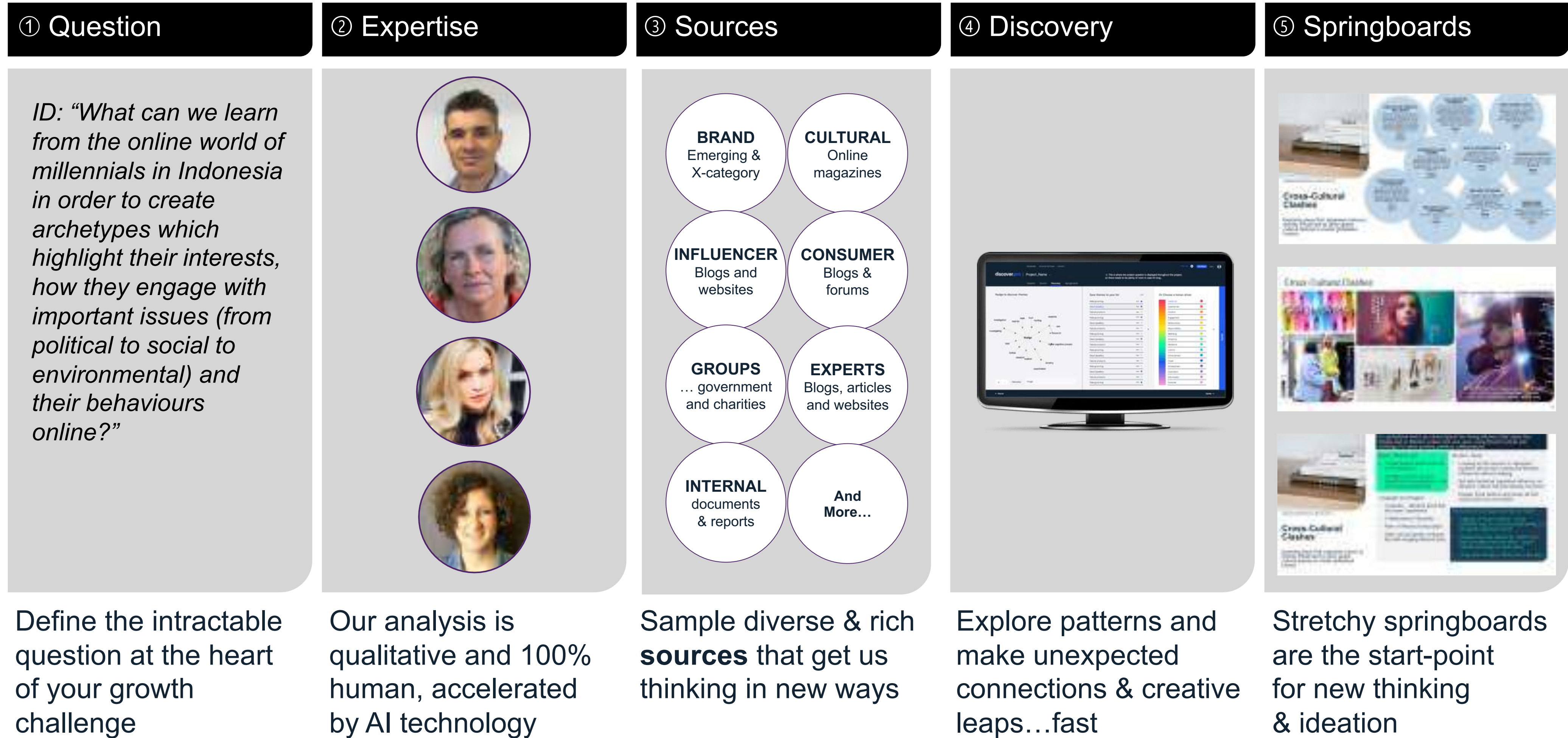
- **Cambodia** – area of interest more to civic and political and economic opportunities
- Project conducted 2020 - 2021

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In each market, we conducted a 2 stage approach



How does it work? ... The journey

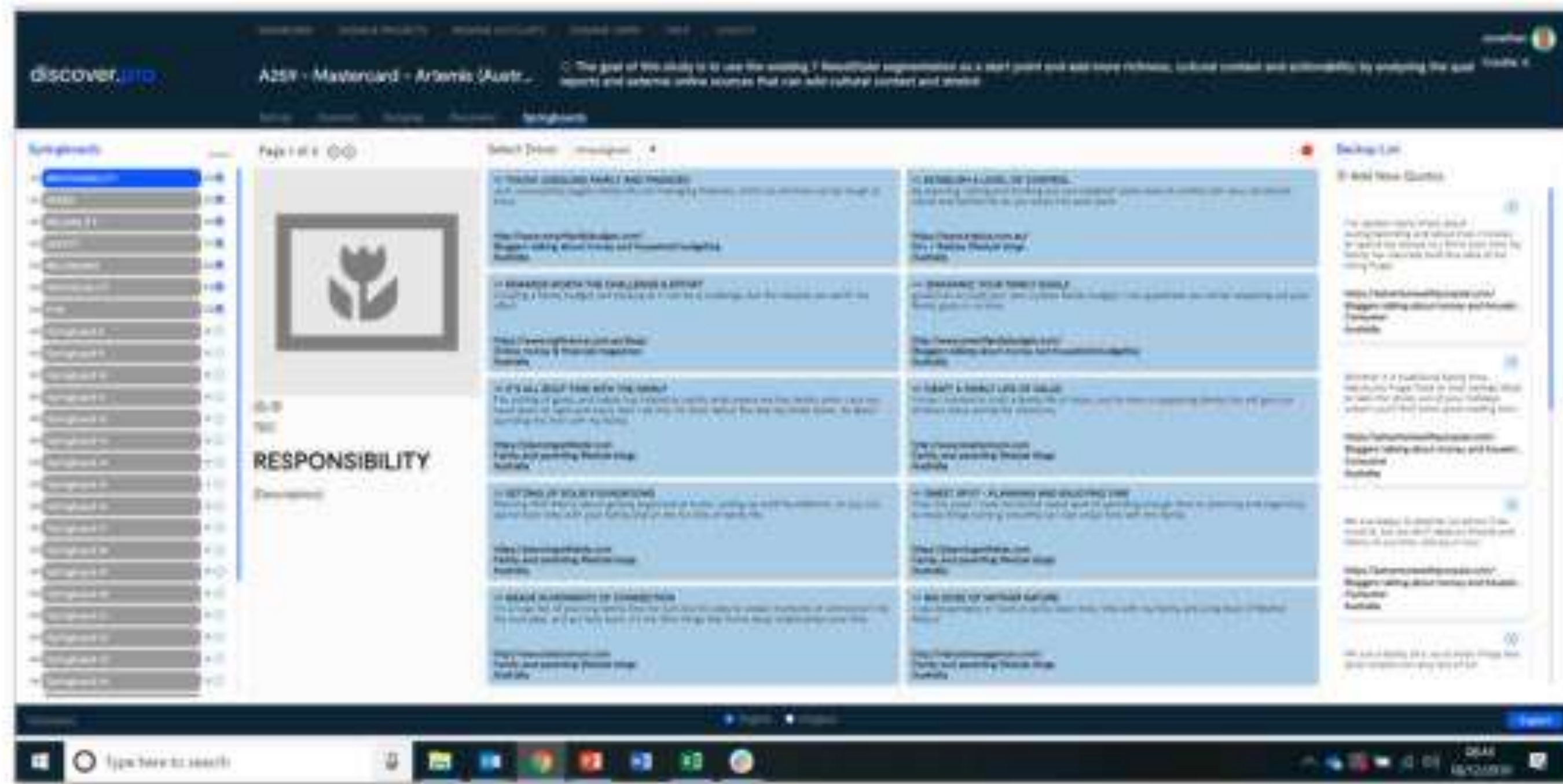


How the process works

And the role of Natural Language processing (NLP) and Machine Learning (ML)

SPRINGBOARDS

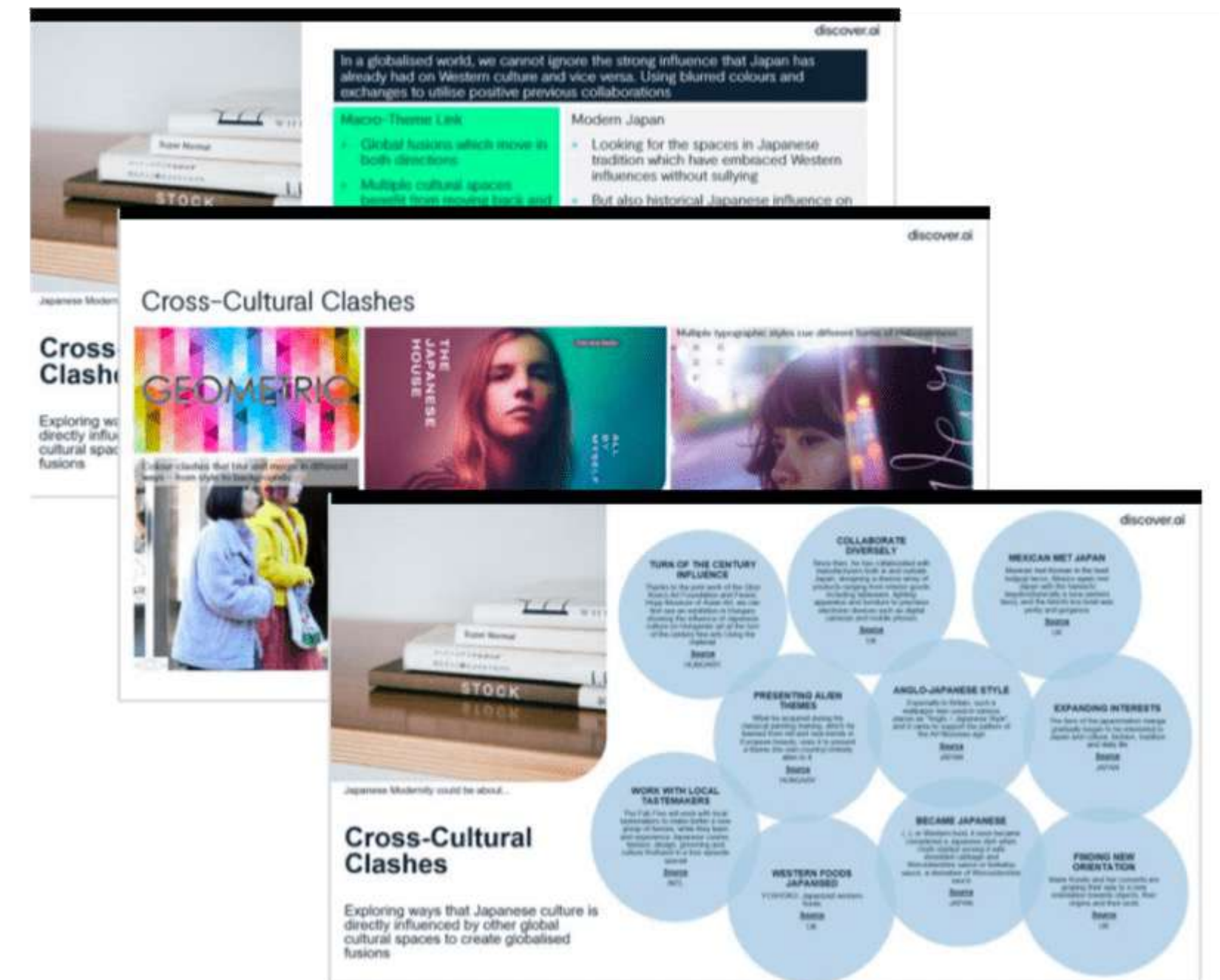
Once we have created our Springboards we can go into each in turn, drag and drop quotes to prioritise the best ones, give them titles, add an image and search for new quotes to round out the analysis if needed



Again, this form of UI makes using the Discover platform simple and intuitive

PRESENTATION

Once completed the Springboards can be exported into PPT, Landing Pages added to add our analysis and narrative and brought together with other content create the final deck

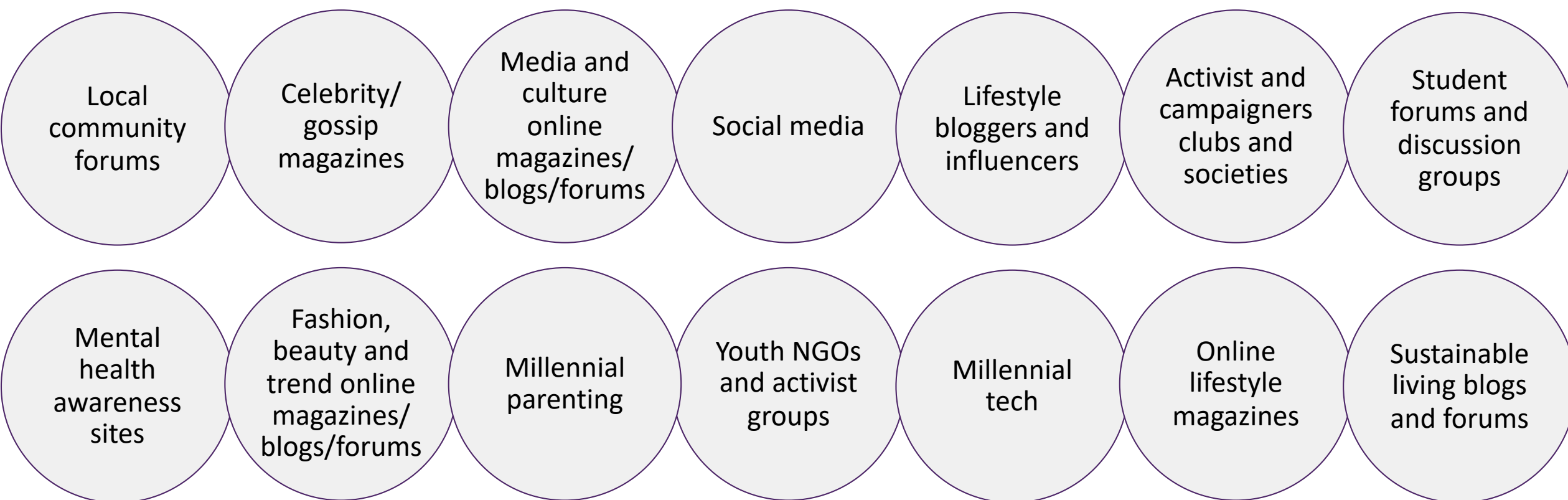


Our Research Questions & Inputs



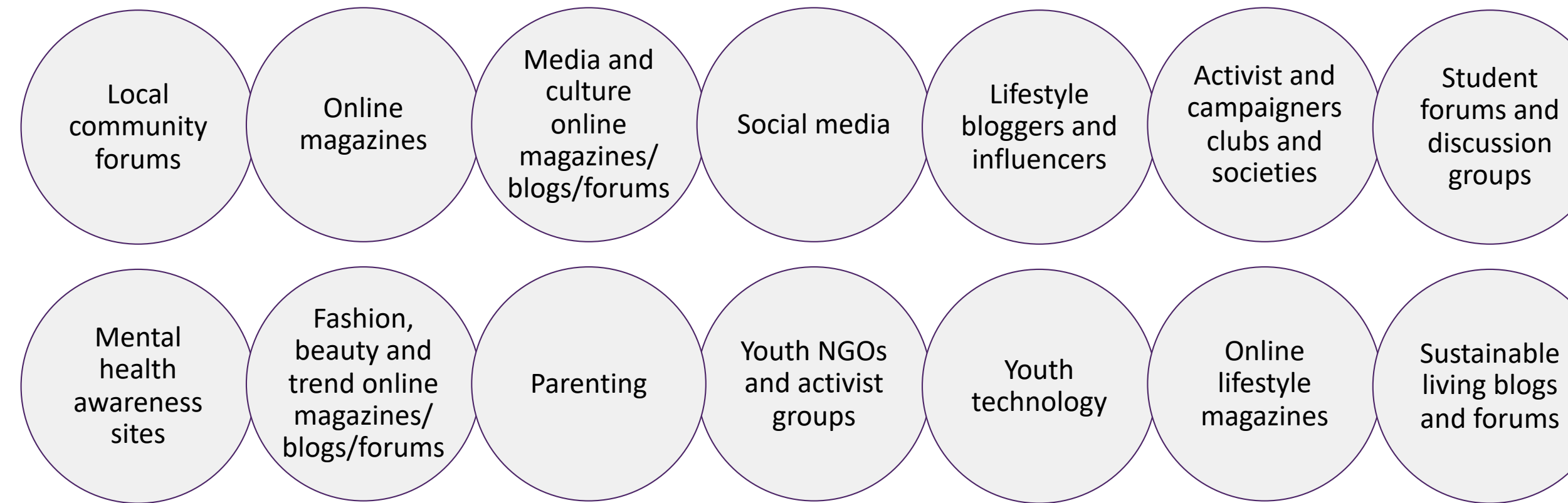
What can we learn from the online world of millennials in Indonesia in order to create archetypes which highlight their interests, how they engage with important issues (from political to social to environmental) and their behaviours online?

We brought together rich & inspiring language from 118 sources across 16 sourcing areas and covering Indonesia and in Bahasa Indonesian / English



What can we learn from the online world of 15-30 year olds in Cambodia, in order to create archetypes which highlight their interests and issues (particularly in the areas of political, civic and social) that they care about and how they engage and behave with this information online?"

We brought together rich & inspiring language from 102 sources across 16 sourcing areas and covering Cambodia and in Khmer / English



INDONESIA - Springboards Identified were divided into 4 areas



A total of 14 Springboards were identified – each representing an archetypal segment of Indonesian millennials and how they interact with environmental issues

NEGOTIATING WITH POWER

LOUD AND PROUD CRUSADERS



AUTHORITY ABIDING



GIRLS FOR A BETTER WORLD



EVERY DAY ACTIVISM

GUARDIANS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS



RELIGIOUS VIRTUE



QUIET HEROES



ETHICAL CONSUMERS



SEIZING NEW OPPORUTNITIES

SAVVY ENTREPRENEURS



GREEN FASHIONISTAS



INTELLIGENT INNOVATORS



MAKERS AND CREATORS



PROTECTORS OF INDONESIA

CONCERNED GLOBAL CITIZENS



AESTHETIC INDULGENCE



LOCAL COMMUNITY ADVOCATES





INDONESIA – Key archetypes were identified to prioritise in stage 2, Online Community

Those archetypes chosen were done so based on the highest potential & estimated market sizing. Regular consumers were also included

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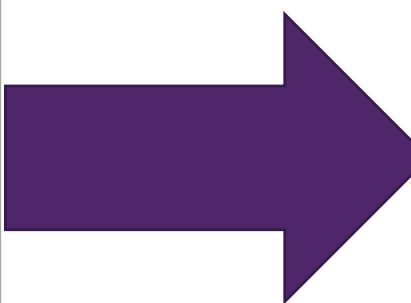
AESTHETIC INDULGENCE



LOCAL COMMUNITY ADVOCATES



STAGE 2: Online community with millennials from Jakarta and Medan. We included Regular Consumer participants, but also some that fit from key archetypes - Quiet Heroes, Guardian of Future Generation, Ethical Consumers, Aesthetic Indulgence. We also included a small sub-sample of Loud & Proud Crusaders - as the niche, highly engaged & motivated Indonesian Millennial (as a case to see what can impact them)



- Understanding what content Millennials engage with and what can motivate them to engage more into environmental topics.
- BBC Media Action Team developed some broad content ideas for testing

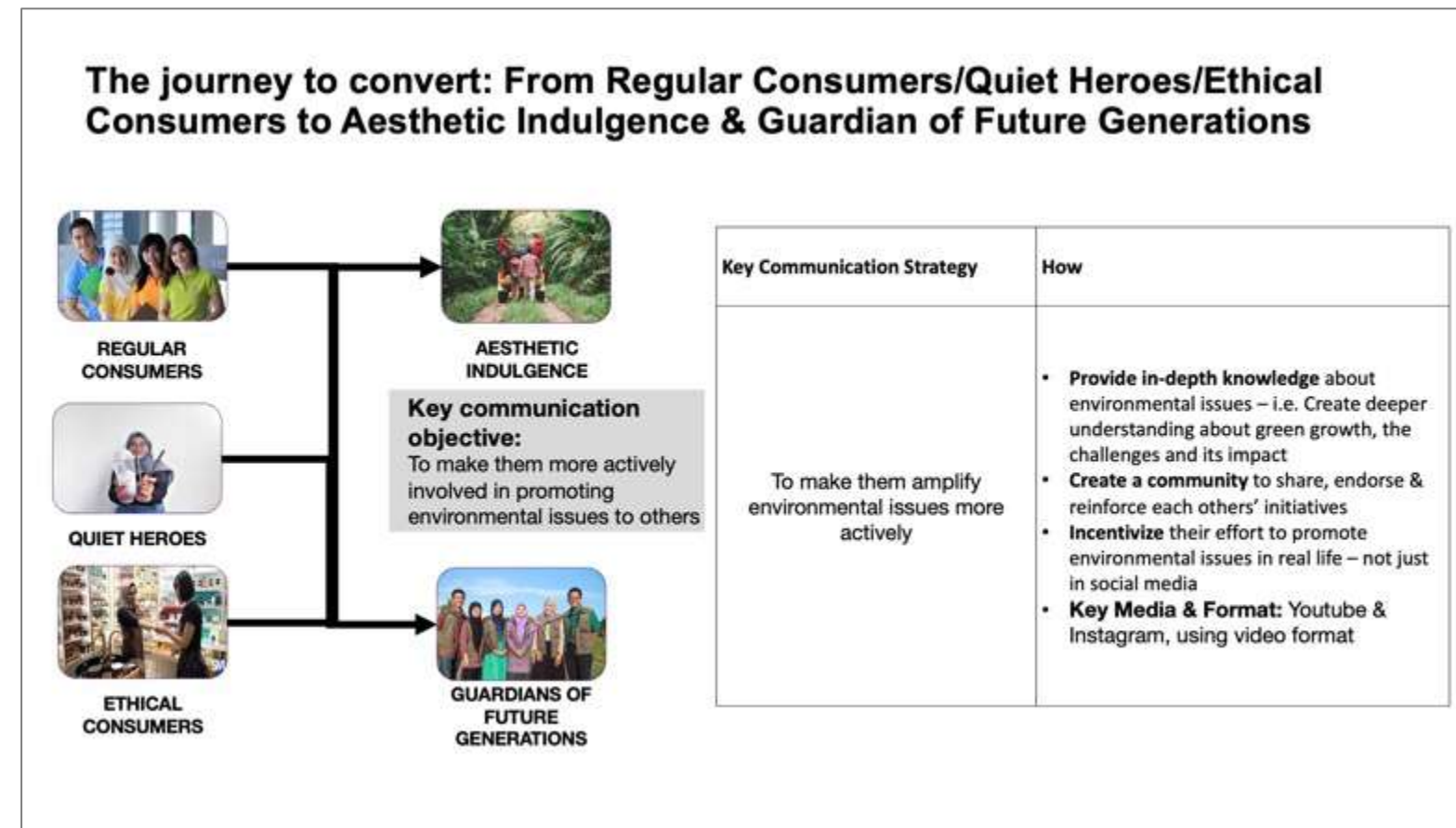
INDONESIA – Overview of Key Insights Delivered



Profiling, Conversion Journey Mapping and Direction on Campaign Strategy

SEGMENTS OVERVIEW ON ORIENTATION TOWARDS ENVIRONMENT

	REGULAR CONSUMERS	QUIET HEROES	ETHICAL CONSUMERS	AESTHETIC INDULGENCE	GUARDIANS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS	LOUD & PROUD CRUSADERS
CHARACTER	Aware about environmental issues, but it's not their main priority as they tend to focus more on topics related to lifestyle & indulgence	Tackle environmental issues via personal contribution . Not feeling capable & knowledgeable enough to advocate others	Like Quiet Heroes, they tend to focus on personal contribution & only use social media to amplify their initiative	More active in promoting eco-friendly initiatives to others since they need active participation from their social circles	Eco-friendly initiatives has become their life mission – they consistently and actively advocating it	
WHO THEY FOLLOW	Lifestyle related figures i.e. beauty, food, technology, entertainment (Ria Ricis, Atta Halilintar, Rachel Vennya, Anak Jajan)	Lifestyle, entertainment, brands. Some also follow critical thinking figures i.e. Najwa Shihab, Ernest Prakasa	Mainstream eco-friendly brands, i.e. TBI, Nature Republic. Some also follow action for purpose accounts, i.e. Eco Bali, PARTE fashion	Wanderlust inspiring figures that is also passionate about art and nature i.e. Fiersha Basari, Putri Marino	Aspirational figures to learn from i.e. Arief Muhammad, Jerome Polin	Specialised figure in eco-friendly movements i.e. Asit, Nike Prima
TRIGGERS TO ACT	Care about environmental issue only when it has direct impact to daily life or when it's being advocated by their influencers	Distracting effect of littering in daily life	Excessive usage of plastic bag creates perceived environmental damage	Damaged travel sites, reducing its beauty	Desire to set a good example for their kids or pupils including positive action towards environment	Involvement in community provides knowledge and fun activities
BARRIERS TO DO MORE	Hassle and impracticality to initiate eco-friendly activity; having higher priorities in life i.e. Work/study, fun activities etc.	Social dismissal when trying to promote environmental issues to others; lack of competence & knowledge	Hesitate to involve more actively for the fear that environmental issue is not interesting for others	Avoiding confrontation when promoting environmental issues	Limited awareness from others and formulating actionable initiatives	To be seen as extreme which cause people to feel hesitant to join their proposed initiatives
KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Air pollution, plastic waste	Plastic waste	Air pollution, plastic waste	Plastic waste, food	Plastic waste, littering	Waste, pollution, endangered wildlife



DEFORESTATION AS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE TO ADDRESS – In general, deforestation is a distant issue for most, especially Regular Consumers

Current condition	Strategy	Suggestion for ideal campaign
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> People mostly focus more on what they can see in their day to day lives – e.g. plastic, litter, flooding etc Seems that deforestation is a bit further removed especially for Jakartans. Medan consumers see forest fire as a major issue since they are impacted directly. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create urgency on how Deforestation can impact people's daily life, just like how usage of plastic can endanger environment and wildlife Expose them with real contributions, actionable and concrete initiatives to perform 	<p>Expose the impact of environmental damage to things that matters most to consumers: traveling and food.</p> <p>Some content as reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IG account @siapdarling – eco-friendly initiatives with mini series and prominent public figures Storytelling with facts and engaging narration Content with perceived fear of future and satirical approach Video formats is more engaging for many

1. Each key archetype (& regular consumers) were profiled:

- Background: Their character, behaviours online, influencers followed
- Key environmental issues of concern
- Triggers (and barriers) to act on environmental issues

2. Mapping of the journey to convert less engages profiles/archetypes to more engaged

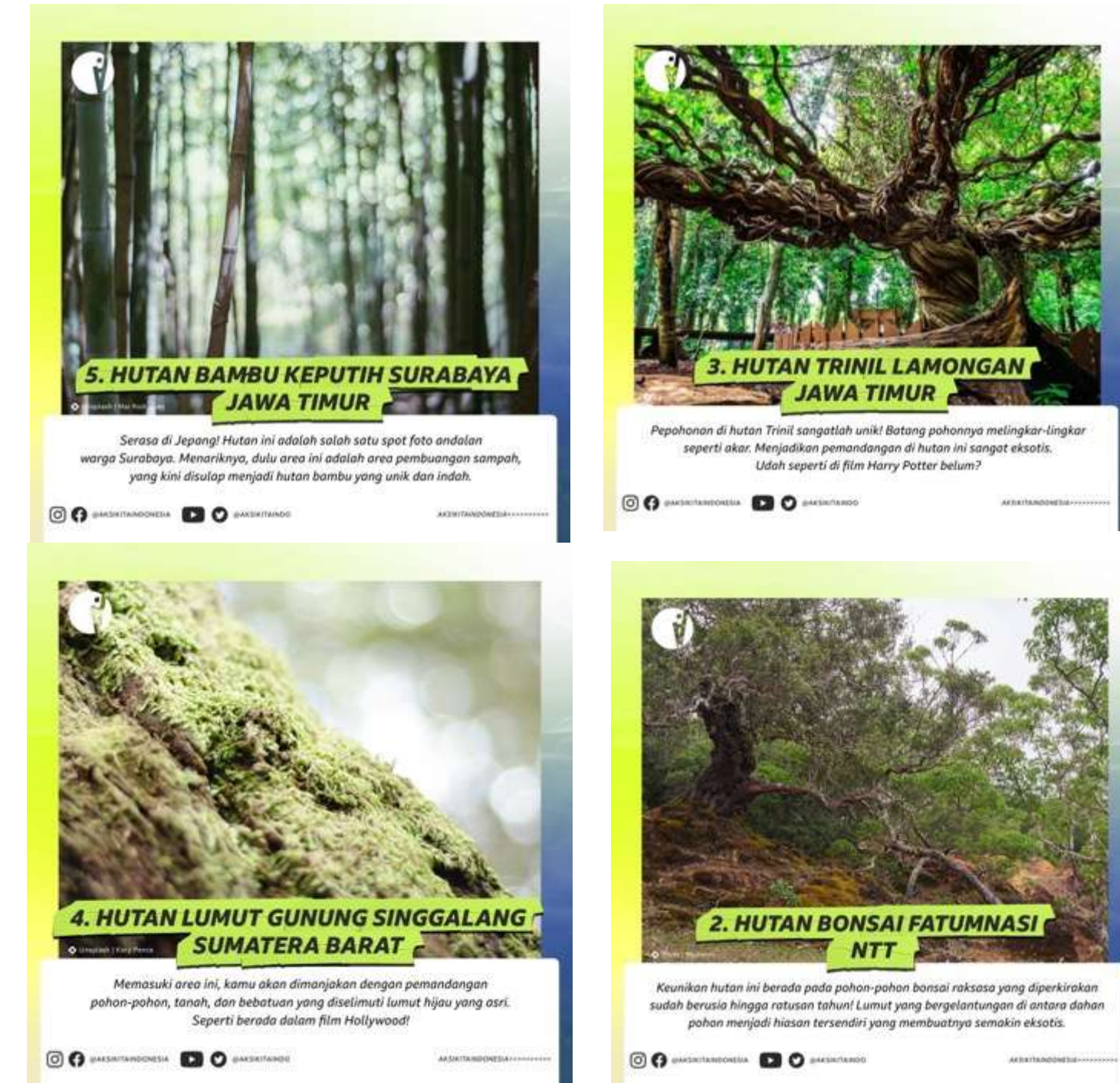
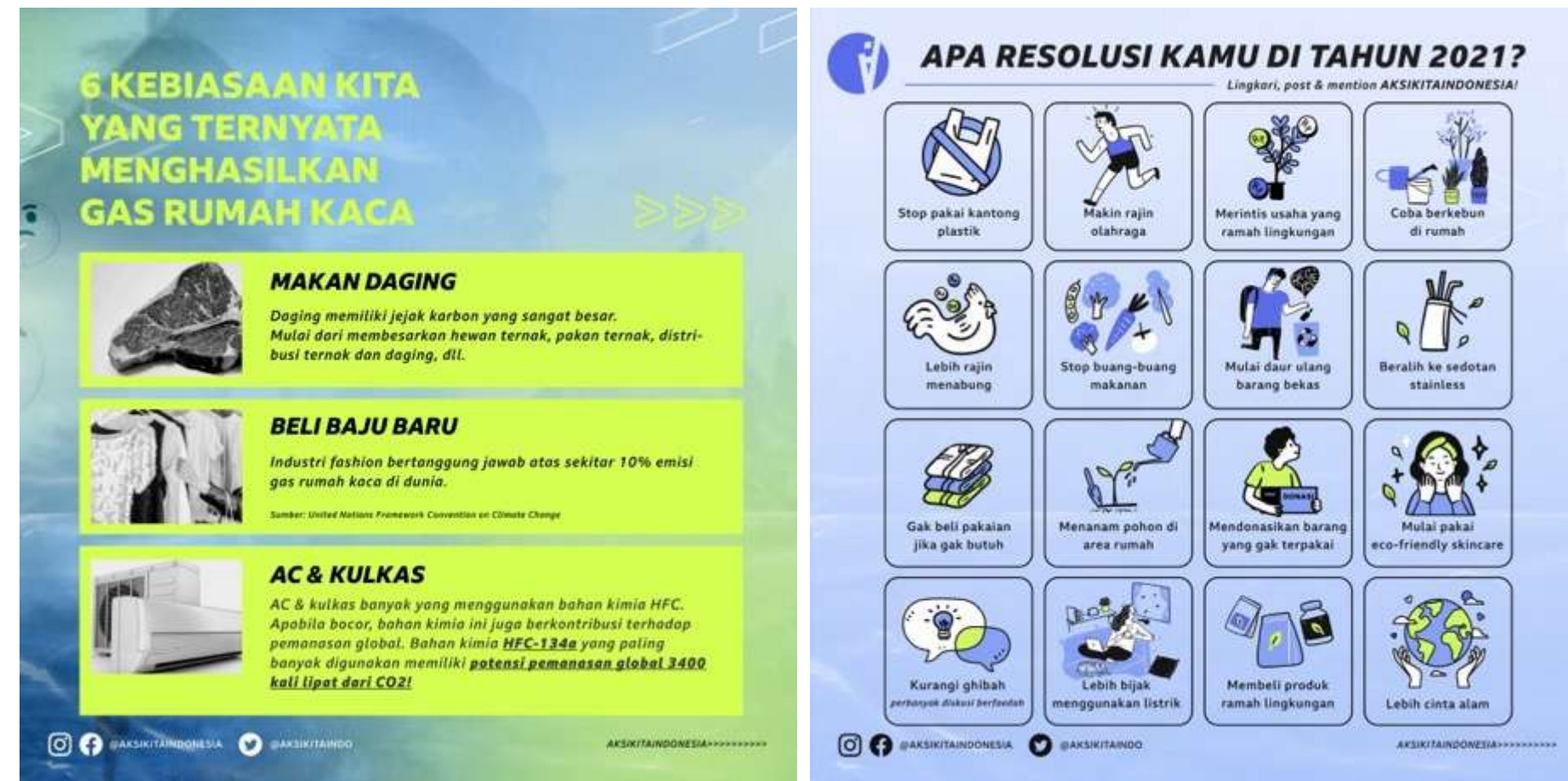
- Regular consumers TO quiet heroes /ethical consumers
- Regular consumers / Quiet Heroes / Ethical consumers TO Aesthetic Indulgence or Guardians of the Future

3. Providing direction on strategy and ideal campaign to help engage regular consumers

INDONESIA - How the research was used by BBC Media Action



BBC Media Action, created content on deforestation & environmental content within their AksiKita ('Our Action') social media platform



- Digital output of Kembali Ke Hutan (return to the forest), a mass media green growth governance project
- Audience:
 - Urban Indonesian youth (18-30 y/o)
 - Focus on 2 key archetypes:
 - Aesthetic Indulgence
 - Guardians of Future Generations

Targetting “Quiet Heros”

- “6 human habits that caused glass house effect”
- 2021 New Year Resolution – small things that help to improve the environment

Some examples of outputs from Aksi Kita – Targeted at “Aesthetic Indulgence”

CAMBODIA - Springboards Identified were divided into 3 areas



A total of 16 Springboards were identified – each representing an archetypal segment of Cambodian youth millennials and how they interact online in the areas of political, civic and social

FAIRNESS & EQUALITY

**MARGINALISED
GROUP PROTECTORS**



**LAND
LOYALISTS**



**GENDER
EGALITARIANS**



**VOICE OF GLOBAL
COLLABORATORS**



OPENING BALANCE

**TRANSPARENCY
SEEKERS**



**ENLIGHTENED
TRAVELLERS**



ARTISTIC VOICES



**TABOO BREAKERS
OPENING DISCUSSIONS**



**ONLINE POLITICAL
MICRO-ACTIVISTS**



PRESERVING & ENHANCING

**ROUSING KNOWLEDGE
SEEKERS**



**ENVIRONMENTAL
WARRIORS**



**CREATIVE
SUSTAINABILITY
INNOVATORS**



**HEALTHY & SAFE
VILLAGERS**



**PRESERVERS OF
TRADITIONS,
NATIONALLY PROUD**



**CUSTODIAL PEACE
SEEKERS**



**COVID 19 ECONOMIC
FALLOUT OBSERVERS**



CAMBODIA – Stage 2, Online Community included Active vs Regular Cambodian youth



Given that many Cambodian youths are less active in posting/engaging in political, civic and social topline online, we included a sample of ‘Active Youth’ - i.e. those more interested in social, political and civic issues and more likely to share / like/post and create such content online

FAIRNESS & EQUALITY

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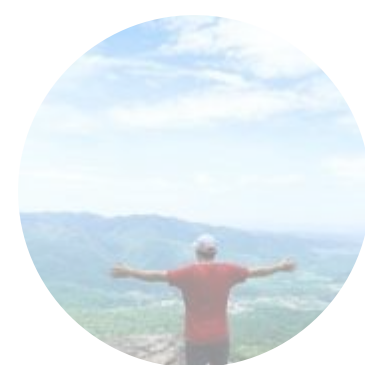
LAND LOYALISTS



TRANSPARENCY SEEKERS



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ARTISTIC VOICES



ROUSING KNOWLEDGE SEEKERS



ENVIRONMENTAL WARRIORS



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TABOO BREAKERS OPENING DISCUSSIONS



ONLINE POLITICAL MICRO-ACTIVISTS



PRESERVERS OF TRADITIONS, NATIONALLY PROUD



CUSTODIAL PEACE SEEKERS

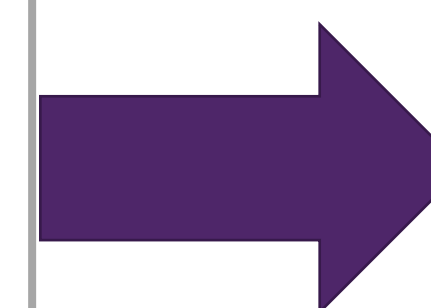


COVID 19 ECONOMIC FALLOUT OBSERVERS



STAGE 2: Online community with youth from Phnom Penh (Boeng Keng Kong, Chamkarmon, Meanchey) and Battambang (Sangkae).

- Consumers considered to fit within a mix of the above archetypes, but not specifically recruited on this basis (active vs regular considered more critical)



- Understanding what content youth engage with and what can motivate them to engage more into political, civic and social issues
- We prepared various example contents across various topics to see how comfortable Cambodian youth felt with engaging with it and why

CAMBODIA – Overview of Key Insights Delivered



In-depth understanding of youth online behaviours based on topic and media

1. Understand Cambodian youth online behaviours

- By topic areas – key national vs local issues
- How they communicate via various ecosystems, including social media, dark social and face to face
- Content that will be engaged with (post/like/comment/share) vs content that youth need to be highly cautious on (& their subsequent behaviours)
- Understanding on different types of content (format, topic etc) that Cambodian youth will engage on and why

SUMMARY – Wide Range of National & Local Issues of Interest

But some topics are taboo to discuss openly - especially politics, corruption etc

NATIONAL ISSUES

- Access to quality education, unemployment & impact of Covid 19 and external cultures are key issues – mostly disseminated through FB homepage (only unemployment / education searched for)
- Most youth feel that they should be engaged in issues, as youth are seen as the driving force for changes and development. So they take part in offline activities (participate, donate, volunteer) and online activities (share & comment). They only feel comfortable discussing socio-cultural and economic topic but not politic.

LOCAL ISSUES

- Includes education, drugs, misbehaving youth.
- Local issues are discovered through their own observation in the community, especially about social issues; but also through social media and dark social (FB messenger groups)
- Most youth are engaged to share & discuss on key local issues. But environmental, health, and lighter topics (tips, humour) are easier to discuss.

illuminare Generally speaking, Cambodian youth tend to be more informed on national issues – as they are being discussed and shared more on social media, making them often more visible

SUMMARY – Social Media Engagement

Cambodian Youth are very deliberate in their online behaviours

Posting - Posting tends to be more focussed on fun, social content and employment / educational content

Liking - Greater propensity to like a wider range of content (entertainment / humour, education / training, tips and inspirations). E.g. most are happy to like (not comment/share) social political content

Commenting and Sharing is mostly for general news and social issues – but youth are careful not to comment/share about politics, inappropriate (sexually explicit) content and content that criticises or contravenes someone's privacy

- **Following influencers** – Youth follow experienced, successful people who can inspire, motivate others to do great in life. Influencers are admired for their good deeds, how they inspire others to do good things. Also, showing authenticity (non-fake persona) is important - show themselves just the way they are

CONTENT ENGAGEMENT

- ✓ **Engaging content** is defined as those showing being good to others (good deeds, charity, acts of kindness – emotionally engaging, moral) or those that help with personal progression (successful tips, motivational quotes of encouragement)
- ✗ **Topics that youth are cautious about posting** – they prefer to focus on their own business; playing it safe not to talk politics or criticise anyone on social media. Key barriers include:
 - Personal safety concerns are key: receiving warnings or personal threats and a few concern about need for public apology if it's deemed public defamation

SUMMARY – Understanding Media Usage

Media ecosystems have evolved - Traditional mass media has been replaced by the increasing popularity of social media. Facebook dominates, while YouTube, and TikTok are becoming more popular. Telegram is still emerging

- **SOCIAL MEDIA** - Young Cambodians are hesitant to talk about more serious issues such as politics; so focus on light-hearted topics. Active Cambodians are heavy users of social media across a wider range of platforms
- **DARK SOCIAL** – Used to share facts & information to their personal network (social news, local community events / news like traffic, crime, employment news, Covid 19 updates) but still less sharing about current affairs and politics via dark social
- **FACE TO FACE** - Cambodian youth feel more free and open in the topics they discuss face to face – without the same fears as in more public forums – e.g. politics, corruption, mental health, family problems or talking negatively about others.

SUMMARY – Content Examples

TRANSPARENCY SEEKERS - As a topic, transparency is interesting – youth see violations of social justice / human rights and also corruption in their daily lives; so they appreciate being shown a way they can help

- Most engaging content is that which is most relevant – e.g. TS8 (online bullying)
- Being encouraged to take part in an active cause is appealing (e.g. TS1)
- Some content is still too political to engage with or share/discuss (TS7, TS6) – fear safety, and less relevant

POLITICAL ACTIVIST - Political content is less engaging – many find it less relevant and they disengage quickly

- PA1 deals with environmental topics which elicit greater interest rather than politics alone
- PA2 – Less engaging because picture does not entice them to read more; most unaware its about politics

GENDER EGALITARIAN - Females are engaged and interested in the topic of gender equality and will share posts; but if the content is overtly about gender, males are less likely to read it

- Participatory programs that offer incentives to join are interesting (e.g. GE4)
- More generalised topics such as equality in education (GE1) are more likely to be shared by a wider audience

COVID / HEALTHY VILLAGES - Highly relevant for all in the current environment, but having trusted source of information (e.g. from government) is important

- KV1 – from government source is most reliable for Covid topic
- Emotional content engages Cambodian Youth, and makes them want to take part / contribute e.g. KV3 TukTuk

2. Recommendations on how to engage with regular vs active youth

THE WAY FORWARDS – Recommended Formats by Regular Vs Active Youth Segments

On the whole, visually based content has much higher engagement, rather than text heavy content. For both Regular and Active youth, it is important to ensure content is in Khmer language, with straight forward language, not too many technical or difficult words. Eye catching titles and visuals are key to grab attention.

"REGULAR" YOUTH	"ACTIVE" YOUTH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertaining and light-hearted – Regular youth use social media as a stress relief and for escapism; so comedic or light-hearted storytelling is most engaging • Use video story-telling – present content in a short story format ('vlog' or 'voxbop'), more like a story telling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewers able to see life from other people's perspectives • Able to emotionally engage e.g. campaign to help TukTuk drivers impacted by covid • Short and to the point – 1 topic per post, easy language, less text (even description should be less text) • Do not rely on links to additional information – regular youth unlikely to click • Provide messaging in motivational quote format can grab attention e.g. how to be a better person, have a 'good life' • Some regular youth tend to engage to a 'polished look', portraying a successful figure or success stories e.g. campaign about appreciating local culture by using beautiful places • Encourage commenting via use of stickers & emojis (rather than with written comments) • Participatory programs that offer incentives to join are interesting – e.g. design competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More open to a variety of formats, including more formalized written content • Active youth are more critical of the credibility of source of content – so providing trusted sources is particularly important • Consider expanding social media reach – Tiktok (fun, less serious) and Instagram (stylish/upmarket) increasingly popular

THE WAY FORWARDS – Potential Routes to Engagement by Regular Vs Active Youth Segments

Political content is still sensitive – so content directed at both Regular and Active youth should be more advocacy towards community issues such as preventing drug use or gender violence. Both Regular & Active Cambodian youth are focussed on their own personal progression in life – so content that is framed in this context will engage

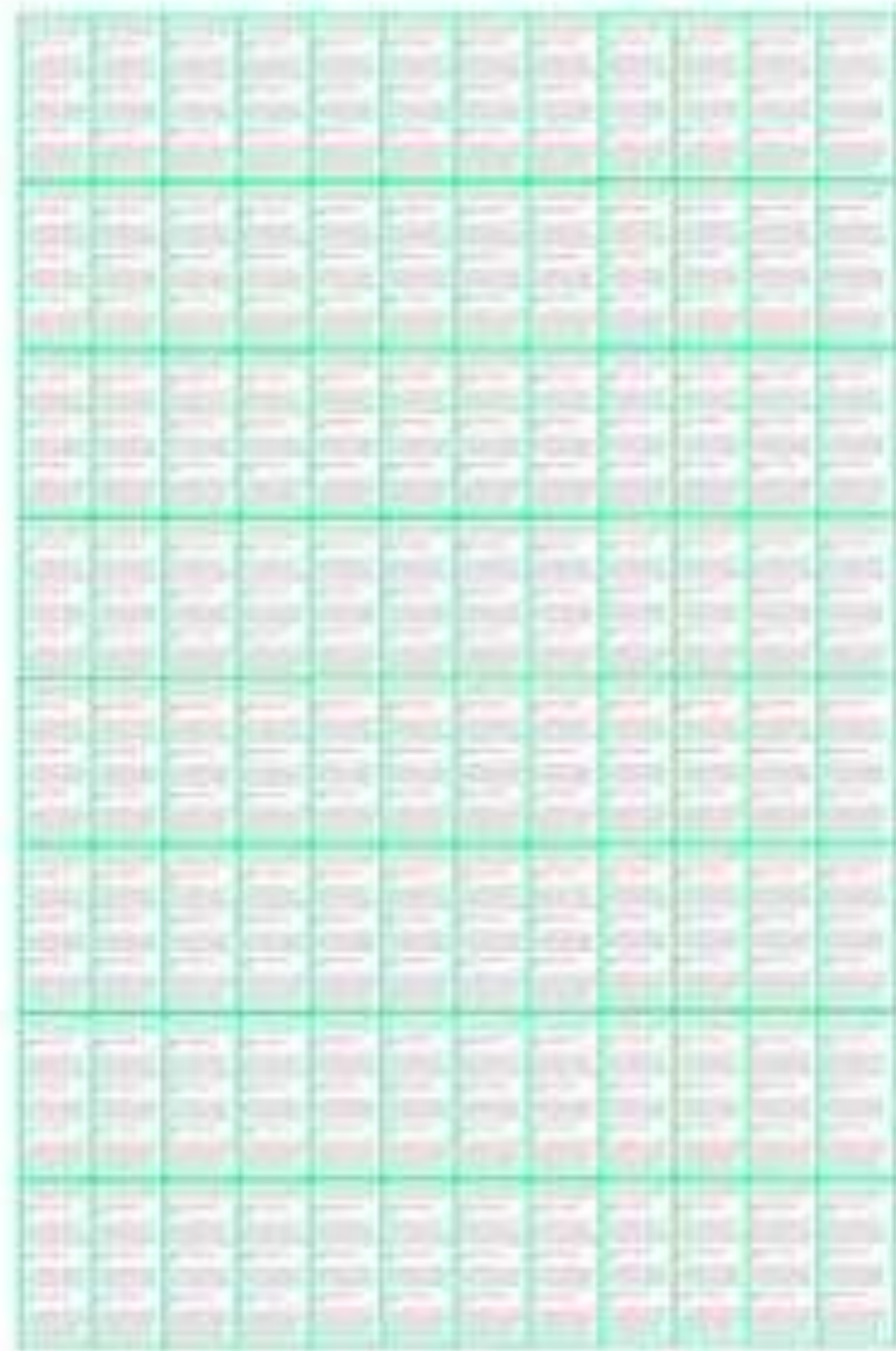
"REGULAR" YOUTH	"ACTIVE" YOUTH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote altruism - Youth aspire to be 'good citizens', wanting to do good deeds and to help others. Therefore, present opportunities to help youth do good deeds to others or participate in altruistic • Use of youth Influencers is critical for regular youth - as relatable advocates to discuss the 'heavier issues' and help guide or navigate youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced, successful people who can give inspiration. They must be authentic, altruistic, and passionate (yet relatable) • E.g. Influencers start campaign/movements about issues that are political yet relevant to youth life, e.g. social injustice, online bullying, sexual harassment/gender violence, environment, economic empowerment • Provide messages with inspiration - Regular youth look up to successful individuals with power to inspire others through values, kindness, wisdom – in terms of new ideas, being good to others (good deeds, charity), personal progression • Weave messages into a context of patriotism – Regular youth have strong pride towards their culture and nation, so it is important to engage them with content that includes a touch of culture and national pride • Socially acceptable content is important – Regular youth especially not want to be seen as being associated with anything controversial: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. such as using bad language, inappropriate content, overly materialistic, misconduct, disagreements/disputes, talking badly about someone else/inventing their privacy etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the real situation (no need to 'sugar coat') - Active youth engage in content that shows the genuine condition; showing the struggle in community and how eventually success was achieved i.e. youth involvement in community development, to share knowledge about technology • Provide clear opportunities for active participation - active youth feel more social obligation to get involved and to make a difference e.g. talking out about about injustice, online bullying – provide opportunities for active participation • Active youth more actively creating a specific online persona; so provide opportunities for content aligning to key personas (e.g. creative, tech expert, culture lover etc) • More discerning and concerned about credibility and believability of messages – so critical to ensure credible source for this target • Active Youth are more curious about & open to a wider range of content – remote learning, social trends, innovations/tech, motivation etc.

How our process works

And the role of Natural Language processing (NLP) and Machine Learning (ML)

'TRAINING'

Each quote is assigned membership of a theme and given a series of scores that drive the discovery process



Quotes are scored based on our **Accelerate ML algorithm** trained on live projects

THEMES

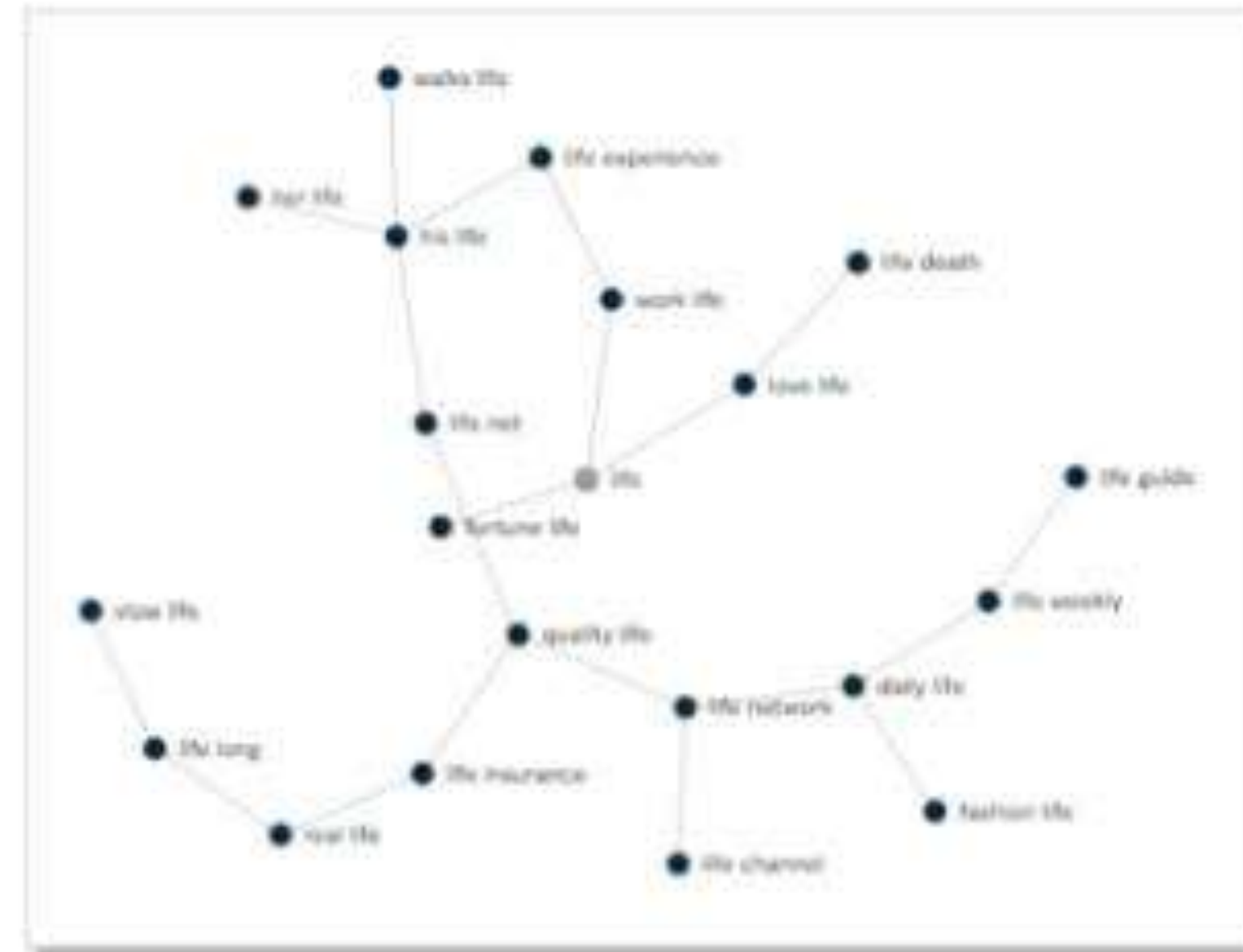
The content is simplified into a 'backbone' of 3,000 to 4,000 themes that can be used to explore content



This is done via a system of word proximity calculations and pattern recognition

NUDGES

We can use 'nudge' terms to explore these themes, follow hypotheses and discover interested and related content



NLP is used to rank the 3,000+ themes on how related they are to each nudge term

DRIVERS

We can also use our Accelerate Human drivers model to discover need driven content across 16 drivers



Themes are scored based on our **Accelerate ML algorithm** trained on live projects

Thank You

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