

## **Biedri (Fellows)**

There are plenty of students who do not feel as a part of their school community, they have a lack of motivation towards learning. We believe that the root cause is the fact that they haven't found their specific niche. What is often forgotten – living in a fast changing world, students not only have to develop hard skills<sup>1</sup> but soft skills<sup>2</sup> as well. From our teams' perspective, the best solution for promoting a combination of theoretical knowledge, flexibility, ability to work in a team leadership, time management and communication skills is *interest related education*. Latvian education system "Skola2030" includes it as one of the directions as well.

When it comes to interest groups and student clubs, some problems have to be faced. The toughest one is accessibility. There is a narrow choice of extra-curricular activities in small towns. Secondly, it may be difficult to find fellow thinkers. Thirdly, there is a lack of knowledge for leading a group of like-minded people. But many of us, secondary school students, would like to take a part in some kind of interest club (for example, discussions, genealogy, cooking etc. – everyone has something they are passionate about).

Seeking the solution in countries like USA, we aim to popularize creation of like-minded clubs in Latvia. But our game-changer is the "*Biedri*" mobile application. It is a solution for all of the previously mentioned issues and even more. The app is meant for those who are passionate about their hobby or interest field. It's also well-suited for students who want to do something but are not sure: what exactly? We support lifelong education and one of the possible features is the allowance of adult participation in the app.

The app is meant for registered users. Currently email is required for the registration (as well as users full name and school), but in the future we aim to cooperate with "*eklase*" for providing a safer environment. In "*Biedri*" it is possible to create a page for your club and show your field of work (description, goal, location). A new user sees recommended clubs and can easily join them. The club leaders can manage the members and adjust the clubs description. There is also a map of all existing clubs, so the student can see clubs nearby. The mobile app functions as an instrument for communication between club members by introducing a group chat. Future goal for "*Biedri*" is providing tips, for example, in

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<sup>1</sup> learnable skills that enable individuals to perform job-specific tasks, or that may be required for a specific job

<sup>2</sup> non-technical skills that describe how you work and interact with others (communication, time management, problem-solving, leadership, empathy etc.)

leadership, communication, work organisation as well as online lectures with professional coaches.

All in all, mobile app “*Biedri*” is an interest related education supporting instrument that promotes growth of students, regional development and links between educational institutions.<sup>i</sup>

Link to solution code on GitHub: <https://github.com/kenryhval/BiedriApp>

Link to presentation video on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Db4KUuu4Dxs>

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