DigiEduHack Solution
Łódź - Reinventing the digital experience for seniors
Challenge: Łódź - Reinventing the digital experience for seniors?
Challenge 2020

CroGenEx: Cross-generational exchange

Our app is an easy way to connect elders with young generations.

Our connection to others enables us to survive and thrive. Yet, as we age, many of us are alone more often than when we were younger, leaving us vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness—and related health problems. Fortunately, there are ways to counteract these negative effects.

Team: CROGENEX

Team members

Miriam Rol Garcia, Karuna Vyas, Aleksander Sobczyk

Members roles and background

Karuna: Healthcare management graduate with 20 years of experience working in the healthcare industry in India and Middle East. Key areas of interest being Healthcare business strategy, home healthcare services provision and new models of healthcare technology and delivery.

Miriam: I am a biologist with a Master's in Advanced Biotechnology. I have pursued my PhD in Cardiovascular Sciences at the University of Glasgow. Currently, I work as a project manager at a Foundation focused on healthcare projects and training for healthcare professionals.

Aleksander: I am currently studying dental sciences, but applying modern technologies to better lives of others remains my interest. I have volunteered in care homes and assisted living facilities for more than two years.

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Solution Details

Solution description

Our product is an application that allows users(elderly population) to connect socially both intra and intergenerationally. The app has two main objectives -

- To be a platform for elders having similar interest to connect with each other
- To be platform for elders to connect with youngsters
- To share their knowledge and experience through volunteering their time and knowledge
- To also use the platform for education for elderly in technology and technology enabled services and products

The solution could be used to mitigate the challenge of social isolation among elderly by providing the elderly a way to socialise and connect with persons of similar age and interests . In addition being able to connect with youngsters and share their knowledge and experience will make the elderly feel useful and productive which would impact their mental wellbeing and in turn even impact their health outcomes.

To ensure the elderly are kept abreast of technology related developments, we also intend to feature education and awareness programs,tutorials, videos and reading material on our app for our elderly users.

The success of the solution can be measured through measuring the number of users , interactions and daily activity on the app. Once we have initial data on user activity, most user features and interests of our users we can fine tune and add more features and services for our users.

The business model of the solution is similar to other applications in the marketplace which generate revenue through advertising, selling merchandise, sponsorships and physical purchases (the app will have a marketplace in Phase 2 where products and services specifically catering to elderly will be advertised and sold). We will not be selling data to marketers but will generate revenue through advertising and selling of products and services.

The recent years have seen a high rise in incidence of social isolation with some studies indicating almost 40% of elders feeling socially isolated . This has a big impact on the mental and physical well being of elders, especially on their health as social isolation and loneliness increase the risk of dementia , hypertension and other cardiovascular diseases which in turn increases the cost of healthcare.

With an adapted to elder (and user-friendly) interface, this app will help aged people to use it easily. You can use it from your phone, tablet or laptop. We will not ask you for sensitive data. You will be able to use and spread your knowledge along with developing new skills learnt from other users.

Our application would help the elderly to connect with people and overcome cognitive decline, depression, and other problems derived from social isolation. This app will allow you to connect with and accompany both elder people in a similar situation, and young people who can benefit from your knowledge.

Solution context

Through our solution we hope to help address the issue of social isolation which has further seen an increase globally due to social distancing in the past few months due to the coronavirus pandemic and . Since the elderly have mobility issues, technology provides a good option to help them connect with others .Also many studies have shown the benefit of intergenerational engagement and we want to capitalise on the benefit on our platform for elders and youngsters.

Solution target group

The target group for our solution are the elderly people who are socially isolated, lonely and would like to connect digitally with others both within their generation as well as with the younger generation.We are also targeting the younger generation who would like to connect with elders and learn from their experience (recipe sharing, conversational skills, life experience sharing etc)

Solution impact

The primary impact of this solution is combating loneliness amongst elderly. Although it is the primary result, there are numerous beneficial side-effects. Seniors left alone in their homes or assisted living facilities have been sealed off from the outside world, especially now during the COVID pandemic. Countless scientific researches have shown the devastating impact of isolation on our mental health. Our app will not only be a bridge between generations, but in a way a medicine to this daunting, sometimes even fatal issue. Young people will be granted a chance of learning incredible things from those with richer live experiences.

Probably the easiest tool of qualitatively measuring the impact could be a questionnaire before and after joining the programme. We can then compare how senior's well-being has changed. We can also ask what young people have learnt and how their viewpoint on ageing has changed. But, really at the

Solution tweet text

Have you ever wanted to volunteer or engage with the elderly, but you didn't have enough time? This app brings you closer to generational wisdom. Emerge into the world of unique experiences. Reach out to an elder person with similar interests and actively transform someone's life

Solution innovativeness

Although there are numerous communicators out there, yet all of them aim at financial gain. This social enterprise will be carefully tailored for the target audience. What makes it unique are the target groups and first and foremost impact it could have on senior healthcare, by means of combating loneliness. This tool fits perfectly today's needs. Undoubtedly, the world and how we perceive certain aspects have changed diametrically. It could be quite interesting for senior how different our views and beliefs are these days.

Solution transferability

Although this tool has been invented to primarily combat loneliness, it will connect people globally, and hence will affect language acquisition of the target group. Therefore, an alternative objective

could be improving language skills of youth around the world - free of charge. We can see how easily this project can be applied to various objectives, yet if we always engage the groups proposed, then sharing wisdom and combating loneliness will always be our outcomes.

Solution sustainability

We plan to implement the application in phases with the first phase focussing on -

- Creating a secure platform with easy user design
- Creating the app with features to include basic desired criterion (eg. a 65 year old man may want to connect with a another man below 70 yrs with interest in playing golf or a 70 yr old French lady may want to connect with a teenager to help them improve their speaking language skill in French)
- Populating and marketing the app among elder populations and youngsters

In the mid term, we will expand our services to include education and awareness among elderly on various technology related products and services . We will also focus on selling products and services on our platform which are of benefit to elderly.

In the long term as baby boomers are getting older and they have better digital literacy, we envisage they will use technology more easily and we intend to make this app a platform for all kinds of social connection for elderly , for making new friends, for staying connected with friends, for volunteering their time and knowledge and also maybe doing business.

Solution team work

We had a brilliant experience working together. Not only we were able to compare different perspectives based on our cultures and experience working with the elderly. We would be very pleased to work together as a team again. These last two day were not only an eye-opening event on issues such as ageing and isolation, but also we had great chat chatting with each other. We have managed to sort responsibilities according to our skills, which made our work more efficient.