Employment Integration with Mobiles

Developing mobile solutions for language and intercultural communication training for migrants in Sweden

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Background

In 2015-2016, over 1.2 million first time asylum seekers were registered in Europe. Supporting them in entering host societies and enhancing their social inclusion is a challenge. An essential inclusionary step is providing language and host culture training for the newcomers as well as supporting them in developing contacts with locals. Mobile technology, due to its accessibility, can be a bridging tool between migrants and host societies.

Purpose

In our project, we explore the needs and mobile habits of newly arrived Arabic-speaking migrants in Sweden, in relation to the available resources for integration purposes.

The aim is to develop sustainable and pedagogical mobile support in order to achieve more personalised and time efficient inclusion of migrants.

Methodology

1. Focus group interviews and questionnaires to 119 newly arrived migrants, their teachers, mentors and stakeholders
2. Mapping of available mobile applications (GooglePlay and AppStore) for integration support in Sweden using the Technology-Pedagogy-Language-Culture (TPLC) Model developed within the project.
3. Interactive workshops

The project was approved by the Ethical Review Board, Gothenburg, Sweden.

T P L C m o d e l

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Technology	• What is the experience of the accessibility (pricing, log-in, platform) and reliability?
Pedagogy	• What is the experience of the format of the content and pace the app provides?
Language	• What is the experience of what language learning activities the app provides?
Culture	• What is the experience of what cultural learning activities the app provides?

Results

Employment and education, housing, contact with locals and learning about the Swedish culture and society are primary integrations needs which are hardly met by the existing apps. There is an extensive support available in terms of language training (mainly drill-oriented on word and phrase levels) and translation apps, while surprisingly few apps concern societal and cultural information. *Google Translate* and *Lexin* are most commonly used by the migrants.

- Language training — 24 63%
- Translation and vocabulary — 9 24%
- Societal information — 3 8%
- Contact with locals — 2 5%
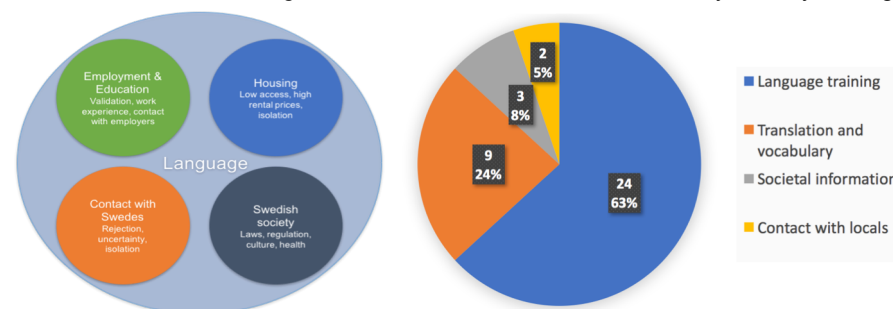
A common request from the respondents is an "integration roadmap" adapted to different professions, e.g. doctors, engineers, teachers, to navigate in the "labyrinth" of rules and regulations in relation to getting employment in Sweden.
Developing contacts with locals from similar professional background is also emphasized. Face-to-face, video chat and voice messages are preferred for communication.
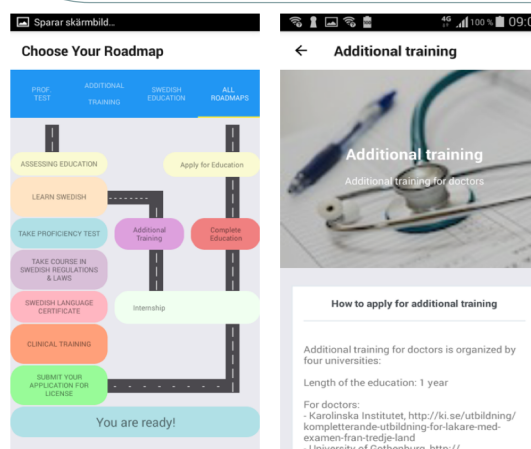
Conclusion

The study hereby identifies at least three areas of development of mobile support for integration:
a) Active language training promoting authentic and multimodal encounters;
b) Stronger relation to integration needs, especially employment;
c) Supporting contacts with locals.

Thus, designing mobile applications, understanding of users' characteristics and addressing their immediate needs are essential to ensure usability which might become increasingly complex when the users are from different cultural backgrounds.

Acknowledgments and information