

Community News Mobile App in Tamil language

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The community news mobile application in Tamil will deliver on two important goals. 1) It will help anyone write news easily and upload it in the live feed section of the large Tamil news portal we are developing. 2) The app will have a call-to-action button which will connect the citizen journalist with civic agencies, state authorities, civil society organizations and concerned individuals whenever required.

CATEGORY

[Civic Participation](#)

LOCATION

[India](#)

WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE OR NEED YOUR PROJECT WILL ADDRESS AND WHAT INNOVATIVE METHODS WILL YOU EMPLOY?

Describe the specific need or challenge that your team will address with this project

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Briefly describe the specific solution or approach to address the need or challenge and explain why it is innovative

The app will have in-built templates for news on civic issues, domestic violence, discrimination, abuse of power, etc. The design will block use of abusive language in the content. The action button will give access to directories of public servants and civil society organisations. News, in its present form across media in Tamil language, excludes many vulnerable sections of the population such as children, women, sexual minorities, dalits, tribals, religious and linguistic minorities. This Inclusive News app will ensure representation for the unrepresented sections of the general public.

How will the project impact your community? What changes (in people, institutions, attitudes, practices) do you think you will see?

This app will help underprivileged communities raise their voices against possible oppression and exclusion from the mainstream media discourse. People who were unheard so far will find their voices. This will enhance the process of democracy by bringing several marginalized communities to the forefront of democratic conversations. The idea of a community news app will help the movement for digital literacy. The high penetration of Android mobile phones among economically disadvantaged populations will be used to express the desires and aspirations of these communities. The Action button in the app will answer the numerous calls for intervention by the victims of different kinds of abuse and human rights violations. Alumni

MEET THE TEAM

Project owner

[PEER MOHAMED AZEES](#)

[India](#)

[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

Project members

[Manage members](#)

[Regiani Zacarias](#)

[Brazil](#)

[Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Thasleem Hussain](#)

[India](#)

[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Mahmoud Suliman](#)

[Israel](#)

[Fulbright Student Program](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Josephine Ama...](#)

[India](#)

[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Olha Lovina](#)

[Ukraine](#)

[Future Leaders Exchange \(FLEX\) Program](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Kiruba Shankar](#)

[India](#)

[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Rama Kashyap](#)

[India](#)

[Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Neeti Roy](#)

[India](#)

[Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant \(FLTA\) Program](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Maheswari Kalpa...](#)

[India](#)

[Study of the U.S. Institutes](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Ranjit Abraham](#)

Members in this project: Peer Mohamed Azees, Team Leader, Maheswari Kalpana, Team Member, Deva Charles, Team Member, Thasleem Begum Hussain, Team Member, Rama Kashyap, Kalavathy Kirupanandam, Kiruba Shankar, Ranjit, Neeti Roy, Josephine, Team Members.

[India](#)
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WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

Beneficiaries: who are your target groups (or communities) and how many people will directly benefit from your project?

The mobile app will be used by 15 million people in five years. The idea is to make news inclusive for over 72 million people in Tamil Nadu. The targeted communities include children and women from all vulnerable social groups, dalits, tribals, sexual minorities. The user experience in Tamil language is going to be the unique feature of this app. The app is going to make easy the process of bringing out news from any concerned citizen. Periodic feedback about user experience will be gathered to improve the performance of the app. The constant upgrading will take it to large sections of the population including students, teachers, health workers, activists, etc.

As we look at 200,000 users during the project period of twelve months, we can say the number of users directly benefited would be in the range of 100,000. Real-time analytics will tell us who the beneficiaries are. The team will ensure that the targeted population of youth from marginalized communities are benefited.

Local partners

Ahshif Abdeen, Founder, Koyyaka Technologies will be developing the app in partnership with the alumni team. He will be responsible for upgrading the app periodically based on the feedback from the users from across various social groups. The team will have a strategic partnership with the social welfare department of the Government of Tamil Nadu to reach out to the vulnerable sections of the society. The team will tie up with the Information Technology departments of the union government and the state government to bridge the digital divide. A strategic partnership is worked out with the Association of Communication Teachers (ACT) which comprise seven journalism schools in the public universities of Tamil Nadu to promote the app among students and teachers of journalism. The team will work with non governmental agencies such as Manthan working for digital literacy as a means to empower the people. Win-win partnerships will be worked out with both broadband internet connection providers and mobile service providers. An alliance will be formed with journalism schools and communication departments of universities to ensure constant talent exchange and knowledge sharing. The team will build rapport with civil society organizations to provide support for the vulnerable social groups. The idea of bridging the digital divide is gaining support at every level of Indian society. Win-win partnerships with Information Technology companies and Information Technology enabled services firms can be worked out by this large team of alumni associated with this project. The process of identifying long-term working partners is being taken care of by our team member and social worker Rama Kashyap.

Alumni team

Peer Mohamed Azees, Team Leader: Responsible for execution of the project. Responsible for the growth and future of the app.

Maheswari Kalpana, Administrative Coordinator: Responsible for surveys before and after launch of the app. Will organize outdoor events to promote the app.

Deva Charles, Strategist: Responsible for localization of the functionalities of app with relevant language usage inputs. Will handle marketing.

Thasleem Begum Hussain, Finance/Accounting: Strategize the Spending Plan for the promotion. Will handle finances.

Ranjit Oommen Abraham, Legal Advisor: Will be the legal advisor for the whole venture.

Rama Kashyap, Advisor: Will ensure quality of service for the users. Evaluate the social impact of the product.

Kalavathy Kirupanandam, Advisor: Will play an advisory role in the project.

Kiruba Shankar, Campaigner: Will play an active role in promoting the app in social media.

Josephine Amala, Neeti Roy, Team Members: Will play advisory roles.

Proposed Project Dates: March 15, 2015 - March 15, 2016

HOW AND WHEN WILL YOU IMPLEMENT YOUR PROJECT?

Implementing Plan and Timeline

March 15 – May 15, 2015: Research and surveys for the project. Maheswari Kalpana will coordinate this effort. Peer Mohamed Azees and Deva Charles will develop the style sheet for the app during this time. Rama Kashyap will vet the journalistic tools for gender sensitivity.

May 15, 2015 - July 20, 2015: Conducting an online competition "Community News Challenge" through social media platforms and Neighbourhood Newspapers to identify thirty two ambassadors or "community news leaders" for promotion of the app. The thirty two messengers will be drawn from each of the 32 districts in Tamil Nadu. The composition of messengers will represent the diversity of the state. The composition will be democratic and inclusive.

May 15 – August 10, 2015: App development for Android and iOS platforms. Native Coding to be used. User Experience experts will ensure that the app is easy to use. Simultaneous development of the News portal to integrate live feed from the app.

During this period, team members will have orientations to present the app to the public. The orientations will be lead by Team Leader in association with Deva Charles and Rama Kashyap. The pre-launch promotional video will be produced at this time.

August 15, 2015: Launch of the app in Google Play and App Store. Launch of promotional activities, events for the promotion of app.

August 15-Nov.15, 2015: Nov. 15, 2015 is the deadline to achieve 100,000 users. During this time, the need for the app in Windows platforms will be assessed by non-alumni expert Senthilnathan. If the survey says yes to the requirement, the app for Windows platforms will be developed in sixty days.

Nov. 15, 2015: Grand launch of the app with the participation of successful users who benefited by it. Team will work to get celebrities, US Consul General and social workers for this event in Chennai, the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu. The post-launch promotional video - with successful user experiences and the growth story - also will be launched at this event.

Nov.15, 2015 to March 15, 2016: Deadline to achieve 200,000 users. Shared leadership and team spirit will achieve this target.

Communication Plan

The promotion will be done across social media, print, television and digital platforms using online marketing tools and other processes. The stories of people benefited by the app will be told in blogs, online communities and offline events. The communication plan includes use of outdoor media and digital literacy outreach programs. Our campaign has a message. "Good Governance is not possible without Good Journalism." The communication strategy will be jointly developed by Deva Charles and Thasleem in consultation with the Team Leader and social media experts like Kiruba Shankar. Workshops will be held in all 32 districts of Tamil Nadu using volunteers to promote the app.

Posters, flyers, Facebook page, Twitter handle will play a role in promoting the app, offline and online.

Thirty two App Ambassadors will be chosen through a competition "Community News Challenge." They will be given Android mobile phones loaded with the app as an incentive. They will be involved in handholding the youth from stakeholder communities in the use of the app.

The pre-launch promotional film will detail the "social" thinking involved in the app and will showcase the need for such an app with realistic examples. Lack of right information is often the reason why people are denied public goods and services. The theme of the film will be on how information can be empowering and help people rise as equal citizens.

The post-launch promotional film will showcase the successful experiences with the app and

how the app has touched and transformed lives.

Evaluation

The impact of the project will be assessed using real-time analytics and other online feedback tools. The offline outreach events will also be used to assess the impact of the app. Rama Kashyap in consultation with the other team members is developing a dynamic strategy for evaluation of the social impact of the app. Weekly review meetings will take stock of the feedbacks and respond to the requirements suggested by the users. Push notifications in the app will periodically update the audience about the new features added in the app.

The yardstick for the assessment is how much of an opportunity divide this app has bridged. Feedback can be given by the users in the app itself. A radar desk involving team members will carefully study the feedback and estimate if the opportunity to get the right information through the app has helped the users or impacted the users positively. As the templates in the app offer opportunities for actionable information, the task of the evaluation team is to see if the information has led to some redressal.

Sustainability

After the project period, the community news app will be adopted by the online media venture the team leader Peer Mohamed Azees is entering. The online news media venture has a self-sustainable revenue model. 200,000 USD is proposed to be invested in this venture over a period of eighteen months from November 2015. Sustainability is a team responsibility with the single-minded focus of journalism for social good. The team is open to share the live feed generated by the app with any organisation which will help the cause of civic engagement for good governance. A sustainability roadmap - put together by the alumni team - will be in place by November 2015. The strategy of the alumni team is to increase number of the community news app users to 15 million by March 2020. The team is willing to exchange the knowhow to other civil society groups interested in bridging the digital divide in other regional languages across the globe. This idea will not just bridge the opportunity divide but also deepen democracy by enabling the last citizen.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED

\$25,000.00

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT:

[Download budget](#)

[Link to a community news: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQ4PdHuITSk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQ4PdHuITSk)