**Comparative review of First Aid app between different countries**

Concept note

Background

Through the Universal App Program, the Global Disaster Preparedness Center (GDPC) and the Global First Aid Reference Center have created a platform to facilitate the adaption and localization of mobile applications (apps) with first aid and hazard information for use in countries across the globe, putting preparedness information directly into people’s hands. As part of the program, the GDPC closely works with Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) national societies to facilitate the adaptation and localization of app content. In May 2013, the GDPC launched the pilot program in 17 countries. Today the First Aid app is live in 56 countries worldwide with over 40 national societies in the process of development in addition to the Hazard app being live in 15 countries. As of February 2015, the First Aid app has over one million downloads and counting. The program is well on its way towards its target of releasing the First Aid app in 100 countries by 2016.

The performance of all live apps and related user engagement is tracked using APIs from Google Analytics and App Figures. These sources provide national societies with the ability to monitor numerous data points including: number of downloads, number of new and/or active users, location of users, screen views, average session duration, and mobile device and operating system. Additional tracking of analytical data is possible, but will need to be incorporated into the development roadmap for the program. To leverage the growing institutional experience and further support the implementation and roll out of First Aid apps there is need for an in-depth study on the success factors of the program.

Purpose

The diversity of countries participating in the program brings with it interest to gain a better understanding of how the apps are being used in the context of national society programming and for the benefit of the end users. In order to assess relative impacts of and experiences with the use of the First Aid app in different countries, it is first relevant to establish what constitutes ‘success’ in the context of the Universal App Program. Here it needs to be distinguished between success as it relates to the participation of national societies in the Universal App program and the success of the actual app in country, i.e. to support personal preparedness and First Aid learning.

With a growing number of countries involved in the Universal App program, a comprehensive comparative review of the program elements should consider different regions, cultural, demographic or socioeconomic aspects as well as determinants of First Aid app use and knowledge transfer of the app content. This research will increase understanding of how apps can support national society service delivery for First Aid and enhance overall preparedness levels of the population. Research findings will contribute to future program developments and support potential app enhancements.

Body of work

The current analysis tools provide valuable insights into the dissemination of the First Aid apps and allow for general assumption on the abilities of the apps to support national society programming. Building on the institutional experiences of the GDPC and National Societies with the roll-out of the First Aid app it is of interest to do a more comprehensive analysis of how the apps are being used by the National Societies and public in the participating countries. Such an analysis will generate further knowledge on the opportunities for knowledge transfer and raising personal preparedness levels through the apps.

The GDPC envisions this work to be conducted in two phases.

**Phase I:** In order to have a common basis for the analysis it is important to first develop success factors to enable a comparative review of the First Aid app roll out and usage in different countries. This will entail a more detailed study of the commonalities and unique factors of the Fist Aid app program in selected participating countries. In addition it is of interest to gain a better understanding of what constitutes success regarding the use of First Aid apps in country. Regarding the use of the apps, non-crises vs. crises context should be considered in the design of the analysis.

**Phase II:** Building on a better understanding of what constitutes success in the frame of the Universal App program, it is of interest to look at the engagement of national societies in the Universal App program and to assess the use of the First Aid app among different user groups in the participating countries. The current analysis tools provide some initial insights into the usage of the app, however, they do not allow for further conclusions regarding the uptake and information retention. It is of particular interest to look at drivers and determinants of app use for different user groups, and future trends. This also includes a consideration of the underlying enabling factors to be extracted as lessons learned from those countries where the roll out and uptake of the apps has been successful. The analysis will look at what motivates users to download and access the app, if there are particular functionalities that are perceived more useful than others and if there is demand for additional functionality among the users. This analysis will show commonalities across the participating national societies while highlighting country specific parameters and should take into consideration different determinants like demographics, education levels, socio-economic, cultural and geographic aspects.

**Illustrative research questions related to this work include:**

*Program elements:*

* What constitutes success for national societies participating in the Universal App program?
* What actions and strategies are being implemented by national societies for a successful roll-out of the app in their country?
* Does app analysis data reflect risks or preparedness levels in different countries and how does app usage differ between countries according to predominant risks?
* Can data overlap from First Aid trainings, First Aid kit sales, etc. be used to determine the impact of the app?
* To what extend are other organizations involved in receiving information from the app? Does such an interaction exist and is it seen as useful, something to be developed further?

Drivers and determinants for usage:

* What constitutes success for users of the First Aid app?
* What motivates a user to download the app and use it?
* Are there differences in usage based on culture/geography/demographics/educational level and socio-economic parameters?
* What behavioral aspects can be extrapolated from the current analysis data?
* Are users accessing one section of the app more than others – i.e. are users more likely to visit the ‘Learn, Emergency, Prepare’ or ‘More’ section more often than others? Are there any sections not being accessed by users?
* What are drivers for spikes in usage, i.e. push-notifications around specific events, marketing?
* How effective is knowledge transfer in the app through information pages, quizzes and other functionality?
* How does the frequency of app use compare with the retention rate of the app? What functionality is most accessed by users? What additional functionality could enhance user experience, i.e. potential impact of two way communication or crowdsourcing information?

Envisioned Outcomes

This study will demonstrate the potential of the Universal App program to support national society First Aid programs, and generate a better understanding of the relevant components of First Aid app roll outs in different countries, highlighting commonalities as well as country specific parameters. As part of the research findings, recommendations on how the generated knowledge can contribute to further strengthen the Universal App program as it relates to the First Aid app will be developed. The findings of the study will be presented in a final report that highlights implications for the enhancement of the user experience and the program overall. It is also envisioned that communiques will be developed to circulate among the broader stakeholder group that give short, concise overviews of the study’s findings. Areas for further research and need for additional knowledge should be highlighted as part of the final report. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge around how apps can be used for humanitarian work in general and with special focus on disaster preparedness.

Project Timeline

The first phase of the research will start in mid-2015 and should be concluded in fall 2015. The start and duration of the second phase is contingent upon the progress and scope of the proposed research.

Possible constraints and other considerations

National societies have the ownership of their app and will need to agree to any research conducted on the app in their country or surveys being conducted via their apps. It is possible that some but not all national societies will agree to conduct research using their apps and so determining a target set of societies to work with is important.

Selection process

The selection procedure of implementing partner(s) will take place in two phases. In a first phase, all interested parties are asked to submit a concept note using the provided template by no later than June 1, 2015. The concept note will outline the overall approach, planned methodology and expected results. As part of the concept note interested parties are asked to include an estimated timeline and provide high level budget estimates by activity areas.

The reason for the request for concept notes are two-fold:

* It will allow interested parties to put forward their ideas for designing and implementing the work without the heavy administrative burden of submitting a full proposal.
* It will enable the GDPC to respond to the proposed approaches at an early stage of project development.

The submitted concept notes will be reviewed in a first instance by a selection committee. The shortlisted institutions will then be invited to submit a full proposal including a detailed workplan and budget. A final selection will be made out of the shortlisted institutions.

**Timeline**

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| **Deadline for submission of concept notes** | **June 24 (extended)** |
| Shortlisted institutions will be invited to submit full proposal | End of June |
| Deadline for submission of full proposals (only shortlisted institutions) | Mid – July  |
| Final selection is being announced | End of July  |

Please send complete concept notes electronically to gdpc@redcross.org specifying ‘Comparative App Review, concept note [Institution]’ in the subject line.