

IRAN CUBATOR 2.0

Community Needs Assessment Summary

Methodology

Before launching the IranCubator 2.0 contest, United for Iran conducted a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) to identify community problems and potential solutions. We strongly believe that IranCubator apps should be built *with*, and not just for, the communities they serve.

Over approximately 2 months, our team interviewed 17 activists working in 7 focus areas. The interviewees identified main areas of concern for each focus area, and suggested projects to help solve those problems. A summary of their recommendations in each focus area is below.

Environment

Identified Issues:

- Lack of relevant knowledge about the extent of the environmental situation
- Lack of proper content to familiarize the public about the immediacy of the issue and educate them on habits they can adopt to help reduce the risks of environmental crises
- Lack of transparency by government agencies and inaccurate data

Suggested projects:

- A website offering advice on environmental stewardship to citizens, publishing produced content (such as educational 1-minute videos/animations or an educational podcast)
- Tools to measure a person's environmental footprint, blue footprint, and carbon footprint;

Women's Rights, Social and Legal Discrimination

Identified Issues:

- High unemployment rates among women
- A negative perception of homemaking, and sexist views of women as only being housewives
- Workplace sexual harassment
- High suicide rates, especially in Kurdish areas through self-immolation

- Physical, emotional, and psychological violence against women, and a limited understanding of what constitutes violence
- Limited ways for women to participate in the political process

Suggested projects:

- An educational program to educate young boys about sexual harassment
 - A question-based app to educate users about gender equality
 - An interactive website or a VR app to help women learn ways to participate in the political process
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Ethnic Minorities

Identified Issues:

- The need for ethnically-appropriate language in apps and online platforms
- Environmental justice issues in areas with ethnic minority populations
- A lack of understanding of safe activism practices
- A need for resources to enable ethnic groups to teach and learn their mother tongue
- Specific to Sistan and Baluchestan:
 - Rebuilding after a devastating flood
 - High illiteracy rates
 - 200,000 people without valid identification
 - High maternal and infant mortality rates

Suggested projects:

- A website or news media project to educate society on the proper language to use when covering ethnic issues
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Vulnerable social groups, People with disabilities, People with addiction issues, Working children, etc.

Identified Issues:

- Illegal child labor and a lack of educational opportunities for young children
- Lack of access to healthcare facilities, and poor health education
- Sexual abuse and domestic violence against working children
- A lack of government support for working children

Suggested projects:

- None from our interviews
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LGBTQI Rights

Identified Issues:

- Lack of a safe dating platform
- Isolation from society and lack of cooperation among activists
- Lack of resources for questions concerning physical and mental health
- Lack of educational programs for non-LGBTQI citizens
- Uncertainty around culturally-appropriate ways to engage the LGBTQI movement in Iran
- A need to help journalists use non-violent and appropriate language when discussing LGBTQI people or issues

Suggested projects:

- Developing software that enables interactive stories to educate the society about sexual and gender minorities
 - Making educational software that empowers people to make money from home through computer skills training. This would be especially helpful for members of the transgender community who have not undergone sex reassignment surgery.
 - Developing a legal guide to help people protect themselves against homophobic and transphobic Iranian laws
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Immigrants

Identified Issues:

- A lack of awareness among refugees about what to expect in their destination countries
- Lack of access to basic needs like food, clothing, and other needs
- A lack of understanding about the legal rights of refugees
- Smugglers often take advantage of vulnerable refugees, taking their money or other items
- A need to develop English and other language skills to assist them in navigating their destination countries

Suggested projects:

- Collecting and disseminating information on English classes or free legal counseling provided by charities in destination countries

- A platform which provides information about what refugees should expect when arriving in a new country
 - Providing some low-level English vocabulary lessons which could give refugees some linguistic tools to communicate with those around them in their daily lives
 - Connecting refugees or immigrants to bilingual volunteers in their destination countries
 - A way to help refugees share their stories in different countries and in their own language
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Internet and Freedom of Information Access

Identified Issues:

- A need to develop a greater capacity to circumvent internet shutdowns
- The growing capacity of the Iranian government to begin and maintain internet shutdowns
- Ensuring the security of users who connect through Iran's National Information Network
- A need to develop new ways for users to connect, including mesh messaging services
- A need to develop ways for users to not only receive but also to send information to the outside world during shutdowns

Suggested projects:

- Greater research into how Iran's National Information Network works, and understanding ways to connect through it securely
- Finding ways to understand what services are available/unavailable during shutdowns
- Developing tools for offline encryption of a user's device
- Developing mesh messaging and networking tools to enable users to contact each other without relying on government-controlled infrastructure
- A social media connector that provides cybersecurity tips