

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in  
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**EMPOWERING COMMUNITY CONNECTION: BUILDING A SUPPORT  
NETWORK  
THROUGH LOW-CODE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT –  
A USER-CENTRED RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE**

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**Abstract:**

This field lab in collaboration with SPEAK, a social impact venture, provides a practical approach at Low-Code product development for the inclusion process of newcomers through a mobile application. Using a design thinking approach and drawing on research on social entrepreneurship, user research was conducted in the form of qualitative in-depth interviews and a quantitative survey. The results inform the target user preferences, the complex dimensions of their integration process and are translated into prioritised product features. These are validated with target users and conclude in the creation of a mobile application minimum viable product.

**Keywords:** Social Entrepreneurship, Low-Code Technologies, Product Development, Design Thinking

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## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Full Description
AI	Artificial intelligence
App	Mobile application
API	Application programming interface
B2B	Business to business
B2C	Business to consumer
BPM	Business process management
CPA	Cost-per-acquisition
CPC	Cost-per-click
CPI	Cost-per-impression
DAU	Daily active users
DH	Differentiated hybrids
GUI	Graphical user interface
IAA	In-app advertising
IAP	In-app purchasing
ICT	Information communication technologies
IDE	Integrated development environment
IH	Integrated hybrids
IT	Information technology
KPIs	Key performance indicators
LCDPs	Low-code (application) development platforms
LCP	Low-code platforms
MABS	Mobile application build service
MAU	Monthly active users
MVP	Minimum viable product
NIF	Número de Identificação Fiscal (VAT identification number)
PC	Personal computer
PPD	Pay per download
SE	Social entrepreneurship
TAM	Total available market
UI	User interface
UK	United Kingdom
UVP	Unique value proposition
UX	User experience
VPC	Value Proposition Canvas

## **1. Introduction**

The surge of migration is no new phenomenon, while the past two decades have seen developments in technology, specifically in information communication technologies (ICT). These advances have had an increasing impact on the facilitation of the integration of migrants and displaced people into their host countries (Hamel 2009). Previous research has indicated that immigrants typically face numerous challenges when integrating into their new host countries. These struggles pertain to various aspects of resettlement, including but not limited to language, housing, employment, education, healthcare, and social disconnection (Tsai 2006). Furthermore, research has shown that social networks and support systems are critical enablers for immigrants to more effectively overcome those barriers to resettlement (Huynh 2022). With the expansion of new technologies and increased digital connectivity, the combination of mobile phones, the internet, and social media has played an gradually influential role in migration worldwide (Hamel 2009). More specifically, with the so-called mobile revolution, lower costs of mobile phones and increased internet accessibility, in combination with the uprise of various mobile phone applications, have provided newcomers with access to a wide range of information, services, and networking opportunities as they come online (Bock et al. 2015). In turn, this has enabled them to obtain the information and leverage the social and support networks required to facilitate the integration process to their new host countries (Gelb and Krishnan 2018).

However, it is yet unclear how these technologies must be designed to best aid immigrants and newcomers in establishing the social and support networks required to facilitate their integration most effectively into a new host country or city. For instance, despite the opportunities provided by technology, the integration of immigrants remains challenging (AbuJarour et al. 2019). Furthermore, in 2020 the UN recorded the highest number of international immigrants, reflecting 3.6% of the world's total population and showing a steady

increase since 1990. In combination with the impacts of the Russian-Ukraine War and pressures from the global climate crises, immigration is expected to accelerate even further in years to come (UNHRC 2022). Simultaneously, through developments in technology we see an emergence of new users coming online as the cost of mobile phones and access to the internet decreases. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how technology and specifically mobile apps, can be designed to be most beneficial for newcomers when integrating into a new society.

Subsequently, in collaboration with the social impact venture SPEAK, this thesis aims to explore the following research question: **How can an MVP be built in collaboration with SPEAK to provide newcomers with a support network and, thus, facilitate their integration and inclusion process?**

As a first step to answer the proposed research question, further context is provided by describing SPEAK in detail and outlining the key objective and the scope of this work project. Furthermore, a brief description of the methodology is provided to shed light on the theoretical frameworks and concepts underlying this thesis. Similarly, we then review relevant theoretical findings within social entrepreneurship to identify important considerations for the development of the MVP, including strategic implications from a business perspective. With the context and theoretical foundations outlined, we then delve into the specific stages of the app development process by describing the steps we took within each stage to develop the MVP. Finally, we provide recommendations for SPEAK's monetisation strategy and a go-to-market strategy before summarising our key findings and highlighting future implications in the conclusion and limitations segments. Hereby, the individual segments of this thesis are selected to discuss key challenges unique to the context of this field lab. In doing so, we address important topics related to the development of the MVP in more detail. Specifically, given that SPEAK is considered a social enterprise, William discusses theoretical findings from the field of social entrepreneurship to identify relevant considerations for both a development and

business perspective. Furthermore, David delves into the topic of user research, to ensure we use common practices to best identify the users' needs and develop an MVP that fits those needs. Finally, considering SPEAK currently uses Outsystems, Florian compares different technological approaches to develop the MVP and provides a recommendation on an approach for developing the MVP for this thesis.



Scan the QR code to access the MVP

*Figure 1: MVP QR Code*

## **2. Contextualising Work Project Objectives and Scope**

Before delving into the following segments of this thesis, it is essential to consider the specific context, objectives, and scope. As such, the following segment will provide a brief introduction to SPEAK and outline the project objectives and scope.

### **2.1 Introduction to SPEAK**

SPEAK is a social impact venture with the mission to make every newcomer feel at home in any city, by making cities more inclusive and championed by diversity (SPEAK 2023). Currently, SPEAK intends to achieve this mission by providing a mobile application (app), in addition to a website, that connects newcomers and locals through community-led language groups, tackling one of the key challenges newcomers face when entering a new country (Alexander 2021). According to SPEAK (2023), a newcomer is an individual who is not from the country they currently live in and has not lived in the current city they live in for more than ten years. A local is, therefore, an individual from the country they currently live in or who has

lived in the city for over ten years. SPEAK's app allows users to attend a language group that comprises twelve 90-minute in-person or online sessions in which another user teaches a certain language for three different levels ranging from basic to conversational. This cultural exchange experience goes beyond local to newcomer, as newcomers can also lead language groups for one of their spoken languages. To ensure the quality of teaching, SPEAK users need to apply to become a "buddy", after which they are permitted to teach language groups if accepted. The app allows newcomers and locals to exchange languages, cultures, and other experiences, thus, building meaningful relationships with the objective of making newcomers feel more welcome in their new host cities. Furthermore, SPEAK has recently added an "events" feature in which SPEAK users can view and attend ongoing events organised by SPEAK. However, this feature has just been introduced and, therefore, is not considered a core feature of the application yet. Finally, users can also view posts based on members of their community and other relevant topics related to supporting the community.

Currently, SPEAK has users located in various regions around the world, including Brazil, Nigeria, Portugal, Spain, Italy, The United Kingdom (UK), Ireland, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Pakistan. However, the majority of SPEAKs user base is in Portugal, predominantly in Lisbon, Porto, and Braga. Offering language groups in 31 different languages, the app currently has 22,432 users. Given that SPEAK has two broader user groups, newcomers referred to as participants and locals referred to as buddies, it is also interesting to understand the split between these groups. That is, the app comprises of 19,352 newcomers (86%) and 3,107 buddies (14%). Moreover, SPEAK has multiple revenue streams, however, most relevant to this thesis is its monetisation strategy of its app that consists of a pay-as-you-want model in which its users can make a voluntary contribution. This approach has yielded €6,012 to date (SPEAK 2023).

## **2.2 Work Project Objectives and Scope**

Although the language barrier is a key issue newcomers face when integrating into a new society, it is only one of many challenges they are required to deal with. Therefore, newcomers should be provided with a support system to address the numerous other challenges to facilitate their integration and assimilation into new societies (Huynh 2022). Following this proposition, this work project aims to further investigate to what extent SPEAK's mobile app can be improved to provide newcomers with a respective support network. Hence, following discussions with stakeholders from SPEAK, the objective of this thesis is to understand what features related to building a support network SPEAK should implement to improve its existing app and whether this could result in the acquisition of over 100,000 users annually. Furthermore, the scope of this project includes the development of an MVP, while our efforts are limited towards the mobile app as many newcomers use mobile phones as their predominant communications device in their everyday lives (Summerfield 2021). As such, when considering business model implications, the focus predominantly lies on the monetisation of the MVP. Whereby, a comprehensive calculation of the business case falls outside of the scope of this thesis.

## **3. Methodology**

Prior to delving into the development of the mobile application, a literature review within social entrepreneurship is conducted to identify the relevant theoretical considerations for the development process and further strategic recommendations. Subsequently, this thesis leans on multiple frameworks which are used as common best practices within the field of product management and software development. More specifically we follow the design thinking process to guide us through the individual steps required to successfully develop an app. This process involves five stages, namely empathising, defining, ideating, prototyping, and testing, which are repeated until the optimal solution is reached (Stiner 2017; Chu 2019). To

further ensure the successful development of the MVP, we also follow user-centric design principles, in which we actively involve the users to understand their needs and obtain their feedback throughout the different iterations of the design process (Mao et al. 2005). Essentially, by using both approaches we ensure that the product fits the needs of the customer, thus, increasing the likelihood that the MVP is successful. Furthermore, within each step of the design thinking process we also use common frameworks and methods applied in practice. As such, we make assumptions about the different user groups within the target audience by using personas before collecting data to confirm those assumptions. Hereby, the data collection method includes both a qualitative and quantitative approach. The qualitative approach consists of seven interviews to gain an in depth understanding of the pain points across and the various user groups, while the quantitative approach consist of a survey with 139 results to help make informed decisions based on a larger quantity of data points. To further inform the feature ideation and selection process a market and competitor analysis is conducted. Frameworks such as the value proposition canvas and the cost-impact matrix further support this process to ensure the selected features are best aligned with the target audience's needs and SPEAK's objectives. To develop the MVP, different prototyping and technologies are compared, while Outsystems, a low-code technology development tool, is used to build the MVP. This process is continued in an agile manner by considering the feedback of potential users within different design iterations. By using the impact business model canvas, potential business model implications are considered, primarily being the comparison of various monetisation strategies. Finally, common strategies related to a product launch are utilised to develop an appropriate go-to-market strategy for the developed MVP. Throughout the entire thesis, academic research papers and literature are utilised to guarantee an academically respected outcome.

## 4. User Research

As alluded to previously, SPEAK as a social enterprise, is currently at risk of mission drift. To avoid this strategically, it is essential for SPEAK to ensure its product fits the needs of its users. Specifically, by investigating the different needs SPEAK can increase the likelihood of its application being successful post launch due to increased engagement, retention, and loyalty. Therefore, it is vital to define the target audience and understand its needs to when developing the MVP. Therefore, the following will provide an in-depth description of our approach to conducting user research, including an explanation of relevant concepts and methodologies relating to user research.

One definition of user research or user experience (UX) research, which will be used interchangeably, refers to the investigative approach to the wishes or frustrations of the target users of a product or service. Moreover, according to Nielsen Norman Group, user research can be performed through quantitative or qualitative research methods to gain insights into the desires of users. This can be done at any stage of the design process, where the stage informs the optimal research approach (Farrell 2017).

When ideating an application and assessing its potential value to users, it is crucial to inquire about their needs, desires, and goals. This process enables businesses to gain a deeper understanding of their users' preferences, identify the underlying motivations for their purchases, and subsequently tailor the product to meet those needs. As such, to create a digital product that generates significant value for the user, it is necessary to learn as much as possible about their preferences, and needs, commonly through insights gained from communication with users (Kuniavsky, Goodman, and Moed 2012).

Once released, businesses must ensure to continuously test and validate their understanding of the target group's desires for ease of use and the product features. This involves testing and refining new designs based on feedback. Companies achieve this by

creating a clickable prototype to obtain a more tangible representation of the actual customer experience. Furthermore, these observations should be generated in an adaptable manner and allow for a swift integration (Ehrlich, Fanderl, and Habrich 2017).

While user research has shown to be an efficient way to increase financial business performance, many companies have been slow to adopt a user-centric approach and do not engage with their users during the development process and after launch. Research executed by Ehrlich et. al (2017) showed that over 40% of investigated companies do not conduct user research before creating their products, however, those who do, are shown to achieve superior economic performance (Ehrlich, Fanderl, and Habrich 2017; Sheppard, Benedict et al. 2018). In the scope of mobile application development, research suggests that users have high expectations when visiting a mobile app. They demand an appealing design, features that add value, and an overall easy-to-use app that provides a satisfying user journey (Gualtieri 2009; Nylén and Holmström 2015). More specifically, the app must be useful and capable of effectively solving the task for which the user downloaded it and must align with the app's value proposition while ensuring users can achieve their goals with the least amount of effort. Lastly, the app's experience should appeal to the emotional desires of the users to build a strong connection and facilitate engagement and enjoyment through appropriate aesthetics. Mobile apps that fulfil these aspirations create a meaningful and personalised experience leading to increased user engagement, retention, and loyalty. Gaining this understanding is vital by placing the user at the centre of development efforts which helps inform decision-making processes and facilitates long-term user satisfaction (Kalantari et al. 2022; Maham, Omer, and Aleena 2020).

#### **4.1 Common Practices of User Research**

As mentioned previously, extensive, and well-thought-out user research is key to developing a digital product that adds value for its users and solves a task in their lives while

providing a satisfying experience. As our work puts the user at the centre of the product ideation process and prioritises their needs, best practices in user research cannot be overlooked. This section delves into the best practices for user research on digital products.

It is crucial to define the research objectives at the beginning of the process, to develop research questions and to be mindful of the limitations of the conclusion of the research approach. In addition, deciding on the most appropriate research method, the context of the product and the development phase needs to be considered. Also, for digital products, the primary device that users will be utilising needs to be determined to support the research approach (i.e., tablet, mobile phone, PC). While the design guidelines exhibit similarities between mobile and desktop interfaces, it is important to note that the mobile interpretation of these guidelines is often less forgiving and requires stronger attention to detail (Dix 2004).

User research should be performed at the start of the project or in its early phases to yield the greatest impact. Understanding users' needs at the beginning of a project not only guarantees more efficient development processes but also prevents costly design changes down the line. Testing should continue throughout the iterative rounds of development and whenever bigger changes are to be introduced. Furthermore, the selection of research participants plays an integral role to the outcome. Simply testing with colleagues may not provide meaningful insights, whereas involving participants from the target group for which the product is being specifically designed, will produce much better results (Kuniavsky, Goodman, and Moed 2012). Therefore, it is crucial to conduct testing with the right user group, i.e. a variety of potential users, and not merely with people from one's own environment.

There are two distinctive types of user research approaches: qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research refers to generating insights from non-numerical data and focuses on understanding the behaviour, interaction, and opinions of users to uncover the "why" behind their actions. Qualitative research is an exploratory approach that aims to gain a comprehensive

understanding of the users through methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and observations. Quantitative research, on the other hand, focuses on obtaining large amounts of objective data that can be analysed to draw conclusions. It also strives to comprehend the attitudes and behaviours of users by leveraging metrics and analysing the data. Examples methods of quantitative research methods include surveys, experiments, and regression analysis (Creswell 2009).

## **4.2 User Research in the Context of SPEAK**

Our objective was to design a mobile application that not only consolidates the current services of SPEAK but also enriches the user experience by enabling the creation of meaningful connections among its users. To better understand the users' needs and desires we used renowned frameworks to understand the complexity of the user journey.

### **4.2.1 Innovation: Jobs to Be Done**

An important theoretical framework that aims to understand consumer behaviour is the "Jobs to Be Done theory" by Clayton Christensen. This concept explains that while conventional innovation approaches focus on customer demographics, finding an average measure across all user groups or different product attributes, the jobs-theory focusses on finding underlying tasks based on emotional, social and functional dimensions that explain the purchase behaviour (Christensen et al. 2016).

Christensen (2016) argues that consumers pull products into their life to achieve progress, hence, successful innovations need to identify the job of users well and tailor a solution to those needs. This leads to becoming the main choice when consumers are challenged with a task for which they require a certain product (e.g., Airbnb: "I need to find a cheap alternative to hostels or staying with friends to stay in a new city where I want to do something", Uber: "I need an alternative to annoying car rentals or putting in the effort of hailing a car,

instead a reliable driver to pick me up spontaneously and pay a price without surprises”). If excelling at this, companies realise “purpose brands”, a product that is automatically connected to a specific task (e.g., Delta Cafés, Patagonia, Zewa, Tempo, Tesa).

The dimensions of a job are complex and therefore require a multifaceted solution that satisfies it to every extent. Jobs are not simply about the functional attributes of products; instead, they also include social and emotional aspects, which can be even more influential. A job’s circumstance, that is, the entirety of the user journey, needs to be taken into consideration, as everyday life situations are vital to the definition and are more important than economic trends, features of the purchasers, product traits or new technologies. As these jobs happen regularly and reoccur, they need to be designed in a way that considers the long-term progress the client is trying to make so a product is hired repeatedly. Regarding user research, most companies rely on insights they derive from a few questions from many respondents, whereas the contrary grants better insights. This can lead to uncovering details about the requirements of a job that not even the consumers themselves could have thought of. In addition, it is questioned that even when interviewing users about their needs, they might proclaim to know what they want but still behave differently in a purchasing decision. Once a company has understood the consumer’s job, the range of competitors also increases. With this increased knowledge of competition, companies can better suit their innovation towards the actual job to make sure their option solves it in the best way and is the one considered amongst all prevalent alternatives.

For a task to arise in consumers’ lives, there needs to be a struggle and a search for an adequate solution. The job needs to have a sufficient scale to cause a change in behaviour. Some individuals may opt not to choose any product if the solutions are not fitting enough or induce strong anxieties (e.g., airport screening process). Successful innovations should aim at reducing barriers and anxiety points in the customer journey and move complex tasks from the users to

the seller so that the customers can enjoy a valuable product or service experience to achieve progress.

Applying this job lens to our problem, we denote that initial user interviews should be extensive, digging deeper into all aspects that might influence someone to download the SPEAK app. By talking to users, we can understand the complexity of their job and how we can develop our application to solve it. Especially, taking emotional and social dimensions into the equation of developing the solution and not only focusing on the technicalities. Hereby, we might learn that newcomers share similar struggles when arriving in a new country (e.g., making a phone call to a physician to get an appointment with a doctor) or which needs they believe are already somewhat solved (e.g., finding information online about good suburbs for renting apartments) despite different demographics.

As of now, we denote the following “job to be done” hypothesis for our project: *I want to meet people that can help me in my migration and inclusion process in a new country beyond language learning while building meaningful relationships in an informal environment.*

When looking at the competition for an application that supports meeting new people, we can identify a wide variety of potential rivals focused on bringing people together based on common interests or location. However, when widening the perspective of potential competitors regarding the job to be done, a wider range of services need to be considered, further outlined at a later stage.

#### **4.2.2 User Research Approach**

Once we have provided context for our contribution and outlined best user research practices, we must adapt our approach to fit SPEAK’s specific scope and requirements.

As described, user research is not mutually exclusive to the initialisation phase of product development but refers to a process conducted throughout all development stages. To properly align concepts and ideas for the application, we emphasise the initial research that

aims at understanding the target audience's needs and motivations. We defined two research objectives: First, the validation of the "jobs to be done" hypothesis, as presented in the previous chapter, and second, the question whether newcomers and locals have a desire to connect, and what the motivating factors are when building a digital support network.

To address the first research objective, we conducted in-depth personal interviews in the form of qualitative research, which provided us with a profound insight into the challenges that newcomer and migrants face. As discussed in the "jobs to be done" theory, we must understand a job not only from a functional but emotional and social perspective. Thus, questions were open-ended and, specifically, referred to the personal experiences of people arriving in a new host country. Interviewees came from existing connections from the extended personal network of the authors. In addition, we met in person with SPEAK users at numerous language events.

The interview transcripts along with the interview question can be found in Appendix 1. We conducted a total of seven interviews, with six interviews categorised as "newcomers experiences". Newcomers consisted of two refugees, one expat, a migrant and a digital nomad. The other was with a SPEAK buddy, currently teaching Portuguese classes. Since the experiences and motivations to immigrate of individuals may be sensitive, we respected the interviewee's wish for anonymity. In addition to gaining insights about newcomer's experience, we spoke to C., employed in a leading role at a refugee help organisation in Dusseldorf, Germany. She provided insights from a local perspective but helped to understand newcomers' needs and problem areas simultaneously due to displacement.

The second research objective was examined using a survey and was built upon insights the in-depth interviews yielded. The survey consisted of 29 questions but was separated depending on the definition of being a newcomer or a local, presented in Chapter 2. In either case, the survey asked about motivations to connect, reasons to not connect, and about potential

interest in a mobile application, and, more specifically, critical factors and features to consider when building such. The survey showed 139 respondents from 15 countries. Most respondents came from the direct and extended network of the authors. The most common age range was 25-34. The survey questions can be found in Appendix 2.

## **4.3 Results and Discussion**

### **4.3.1 User Groups and Personas**

To better understand the target user and develop satisfactory features for them, the team decided on creating user personas based on our ideation phase, first interviews and conversations with the CEO of SPEAK (Appendix 3). User personas are imaginary characters which are created based on research to represent different user types and typical customers (Usability.gov 2023). This supports the ideation phase and understanding user requirements and is a common approach in user-centred design. In this project, they were especially helpful in gaining knowledge of the differences between diverse types of newcomers. To make the application and service provided more efficient, we first needed to understand the differences between our users. We categorised them into migrants, refugees, expats, digital nomads, and locals. While the first three have the similarity of being new to the host country, the conceptual difference between them stems from the reasons for migrating and intended length of stay. Nevertheless, all user groups have differentiating preferences, pain points and desires, explained in the following paragraph with a problem and hypothesis statement.

#### **1. Migrant: Fatima (42 years old)**

Fatima, a housewife from India with children, has fundamental needs centred around security, safety, and psychological well-being. Her primary objective is to create a secure and worry-free environment for herself and her family, which they actively sought when they decided to relocate. If she is provided with an extensive support network, it can aid her in mitigating

security concerns through correct advice to facilitate her integration, allowing her to realise a stress-free life.

**2. Refugee:** Dima (35 years old)

Dima is a refugee from Ukraine who needs quick support/access to services and to build a small social network (potentially with other newcomers from Ukraine) because he wants to kick-start his life after leaving Ukraine due to the war. If he signs up to SPEAK, he finds recommendations on services he requires (e.g., housing) and meets locals/newcomers with similar interests or experiences.

**3. Expat:** Sandy (29 years old)

Sandy is an American Expat who needs to be integrated culturally and easily navigate administrative hurdles because she wants to fully leverage her experience living and working abroad. If she connects with locals via SPEAK, she can learn about and experience the culture of her new home country and meet other expats to exchange information.

**4. Digital Nomad:** Rosi (25 years old)

Rosi is a digital nomad from Germany who needs a guide on the digital nomad community and connects with companions for social activities and travelling because she wants to fully reap the benefits of being a digital nomad and feel like she can be whom she wants to be and have a good time. If she uses SPEAK, then she gets access to the digital nomad community to find information on activities and connect with people to join her and make the best out of her stay.

**5. Local:** Pedro (29 years old)

Pedro is a local from Lisbon who needs to create a diverse and meaningful network because he wants to search for a way to support integration in his community and meet new friends to learn about different cultures. If he connects with newcomers via SPEAK, then he can provide support for those coming to Lisbon, exchange cultural experiences, and thus, help solve social issues he is concerned with in his hometown to fulfil his greater purpose in life.

Through these personas, we were able to comprehend the requirements that they shared or where they differentiated. One reoccurring concept in this analysis was *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* (Appendix 4). This psychological framework aims at understanding the different levels of human needs and how they can be fulfilled, often depicted as a pyramid. Following the theory, individuals must satisfy their lower-level needs before they can move on to higher-level needs until reaching self-actualisation (Maslow 1943). While the theory has been criticised for oversimplifying complex human requirements (Kenrick et al. 2010; Wahba and Bridwell 1976), it has been widely used in education, psychology and business and remains influential in explaining basic human motivation and behaviour.

In the context of SPEAK, the case of relationship building can clearly be seen at the level of social needs. It is characterised by a desire for interpersonal connections and a sense of belonging. People are motivated to seek out and maintain relationships, such as friendships, intimate connections, and a sense of trust and acceptance from others. This model is contingent on other findings in management, showing that membership in groups is vital for individuals' identity (Ashforth and Mael 1989).

However, after understanding the needs of the personas, it can be derived that refugees and migrants require support on the level of safety needs (e.g., housing, basic employment, health insurance). This is why it is important that the MVP can support needs on this level, which refugees and migrants need to satisfy to look for meaningful relationships. We, therefore, position SPEAK primarily at the level of social needs yet overlapping with the level of safety needs (Appendix 4).

To conclude this investigation into the user personas of SPEAK and to inform the business model and go-to-market strategy, a clear definition of the target audience is required. After investigating the user personas of SPEAK, it is apparent that newcomers have the strongest demand for this product. This includes migrants, refugees, digital nomads, and expats

who arrived in their host country no more than five years ago as they stand to gain the greatest benefits. To further refine this target audience, the focus is on newcomers that are specified as digitally affiliated and of the age range of 18-40 years old. Furthermore, they come from a diverse background, typically from developing countries, have a basic educational background, and may lack financial resources (Ong 2023). This specification allows for a more targeted marketing strategy in the product launch phase as well as the ability to tailor the product features more concretely to the specific needs of this focal user group.

#### **4.3.2 Interview and Survey Results**

The interviews showed that newcomers desire a support network to accelerate their integration, however they also continue to struggle with language barriers. This is important to notice, as SPEAK already has an advantage and value proposition in this regard. Upon arrival, newcomers only find few ways to accelerate their social integration as they currently lack a sufficient enabler to meet trustworthy newcomers and locals to build solid relationships. Interestingly, all interviewees had to solve certain administrative tasks on their own but struggled as they possess limited knowledge where to find sufficient information. Typically, they manage to find ways to get help from friends, relatives, or resources on the web, however, this must be categorised as a workaround and clearly translates into an actual pain point when arriving somewhere new. Moreover, there are differences between refugees and educated newcomers, as refugees typically do not relocate to a specific country compared to expats that actively decide to relocate to a country of their choice. Refugees' needs can be considered of a more fundamental and basic nature and regard safety, as they, unfortunately, leave their home country in search of a better and secure life, whereas expats move as an active choice and possess the resources and job-related network available for support. Only a few, experience already a certain type of assistance from volunteers and governmental institutions, however, to become fully integrated, a more complex support network is required, where locals help from

the first step onwards. Here we also noticed that a lot of issues come back to the topic of language.

Locals, on the other hand, require a stronger incentive to help newcomers with their integration process as they have a general interest in helping, however, guiding newcomers is not prevalent in their minds. If they are provided with the right materials, an adequate technological enabler, and the knowledge that their help is required, they would be more likely to provide their unique skills and a cultural understanding and experience. Hereby, students and pensioners were identified with a high willingness to help, as they have more free time compared to people working regularly. Especially pensioners are motivated by intrinsic factors, as they act out of ideals aiming to help and give something back. However, pensioners might be difficult to address through a mobile application.

Revisiting the “jobs to be done” framework proposed in Chapter 5.2.2, we can confirm our hypothesis, that newcomers want to connect to other newcomers and locals as these relationships help with solving the complex requirements their multifaceted job of integrating in a new society possesses.

The survey yielded quantitative insights about the reasons for newcomers and locals to connect, as they mainly connected with locals/other newcomers in the past have through work, school, or sports. The newcomers that did not connect with locals or other newcomers were lacking networking opportunities, time or experiencing language barriers. The ones that did not connect said they were already connected. Locals that did not connect with newcomers were also lacking networking opportunities or simply did not know ways to connect.

Interestingly, almost 80-90% of newcomers indicated a desire to connect with locals or other newcomers, whereas 60% of locals said they would like to connect with newcomers. As one might assume, the willingness of locals to connect to newcomers is comparatively lower than for newcomers. Some replies we received were stating that they were “already connected

to newcomers” or “currently not looking for new connections”. However, this is not surprising as this finding is supported by psychology research that suggests that social inclusion is an inherent and fundamental desire for the personality of humans (DeWall et al. 2011). Consequently, when individuals have already met their social needs, their motivation to interact with new people decreases.

The question of whether respondents would be interested in a mobile application that connects them with locals and/or other newcomers received 53% ‘yes’, 28% ‘maybe’ and 19% ‘no’. To get to the bottom of what could convince ‘maybe’s to use the app, respondents said they would value security and appropriate community guidelines, a good user experience and a significant advantage over other social apps. One German respondent said he would use the app to support the newcomers to get a foothold in the new country (e.g., housing, language, paperwork) but would not use the app explicitly to make friends with newcomers. Similarly to the above-explained lack of interest of locals, from the ‘no’ respondents, many indicated they lacked time, had no interest in meeting more new people or found that it was an unnatural way of meeting new people. A particular section of the survey asked respondents to rank our proposed features to help connecting to their interest. Hereby, groups based on common interest ranked first, followed by events and activities. Ranked fourth were chats, followed by individual contact matching, finding contacts based on location and lastly group chats (Appendix 5).

Overall, the survey helped to answer the second research question, as it showed that there is a strong desire for a mobile application that connects newcomers and locals. It also helped to understand the motives for connecting and address sought for features. However, the success will depend on addressing concerns around security, community guidelines and providing a user-friendly experience that offers a unique advantage over other social apps. The

feature development should first focus on groups, then events to find a way to include activities. These insights can inform the development of an MVP for the SPEAK app.

#### **4.4 Implications of User Research**

User research is essential to understanding the user needs and desires to create a digital product that solves those wishes and creates significant value for them, consequently increasing the performance of SPEAK. The data support this claim, as research shows that companies that invest in user research have better financial performance, so an initial investment in testing and validating pays off.

When performing user research, we need to consider all elements that go into the decision-making of downloading the SPEAK app for language learning and network support. We learnt that different user groups share similar language struggles and have the same wishes when it comes to meeting new people. Mostly, it is crucial to provide a clear value proposition for SPEAK across all personas and to realise that refugees and migrants require a service that is also tailored to their safety needs or administrative issues with immigration authorities while looking for social connections. Following our research we defined the target audience as digitally affiliated newcomers, aged 18-40. Their key pain points were identified as language barriers, administrative issues such as housing or employment and finding a new network organically. The requirement of defining a value proposition is outlined in the jobs-theory and is also prevalent in our survey results.

#### **4.5 Limitations of User Research**

The survey results show a certain limit regarding the respondents, primarily due to our network reach. Half of the respondents were German and mostly locals, as 70% indicated they have been living in their current country for over ten years and 67% were natives in their local language. In addition, most of the respondents had received some form of higher education.

The interviews were held with different types of user personas in different scenarios, both in Germany and Portugal and while they yielded great insights, they were not held in a way that every interviewee received the same questions. Also, during informal SPEAK language events and language courses, we did not always inform our conversation partner that we were asking those questions as we were writing out a thesis with SPEAK and we did not want to bias their responses and were curious about understanding their integration experiences in a transparent way as equals.

## **5. Market Analysis**

Before delving into the mobile app development and proposed business model for SPEAK, it is vital to understand the organisation's market environment. Hence, the following segment will elaborate on the current market SPEAK operates in, including a description of trends and an analysis of key competitors. This will enable us to gain a better understanding of potential market gaps, which, in turn, will allow us to define a value proposition to guide the feature ideation process for the development of the mobile application.

### **5.1 Market Trends**

Currently, there are an estimated 102 million displaced people worldwide, of which 32.5 million are considered refugees (UNHRC 2022). Furthermore, the number of forcibly displaced people is expected to rise to 1.2 billion people by 2050 as the global climate crisis is expected to lead to extreme weather conditions, destroying liveable eco-systems, and thus, forcing people to flee to new countries (Ida 2021). Operating under such an assumption, the number of displaced people is expected to grow with a cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 9.5% for the foreseeable future. When migrating to a new country, many of them face significant challenges related to language, asylum procedures, accommodation, education, employment, childcare, and discrimination (Huynh 2022). While this trend is unfortunate, it

provides a growing opportunity for social enterprises to address this issue with creative solutions helping displaced people integrate into a new country, such as SPEAK.

## 5.2 Competitor Analysis

Compellingly, there are multiple social enterprises already providing a range of creative solutions to support displaced people, for instance, with language courses and networking events. Since SPEAK follows the mission to make people feel at home in any city, competitors include not only language learning applications but also companies that provide immigrants with services to facilitate their integration, including applications that help them connect with people in their community or with family and friends from their home countries.

One common framework used to benchmark competitors is a perceptual map, whereby a given brand or product is positioned relative to its competitors based on predetermined criteria. By understanding the positioning of your competitors, one can identify areas of market segments that are highly competitive and potential market gaps (D’Aveni 2007). Hence, a similar approach will be taken to identify any market gaps SPEAK can potentially leverage to position itself in the market and establish a competitive advantage. Given SPEAK aims to connect newcomers with locals through language and a support network, the following criteria will be considered: *newcomer orientation* and *connectivity*. While newcomer orientation will be determined by the extent to which its offerings are targeted towards newcomers, connectivity refers to functionalities that allow users to connect with each other or other members of the community. Based on these dimensions, the following competitors will be analysed Duolingo, Babbel, HelloTalk, Refaid, Ankommen, Meetup, Facebook, and Nextdoor (Appendix 6).

– Group Part –

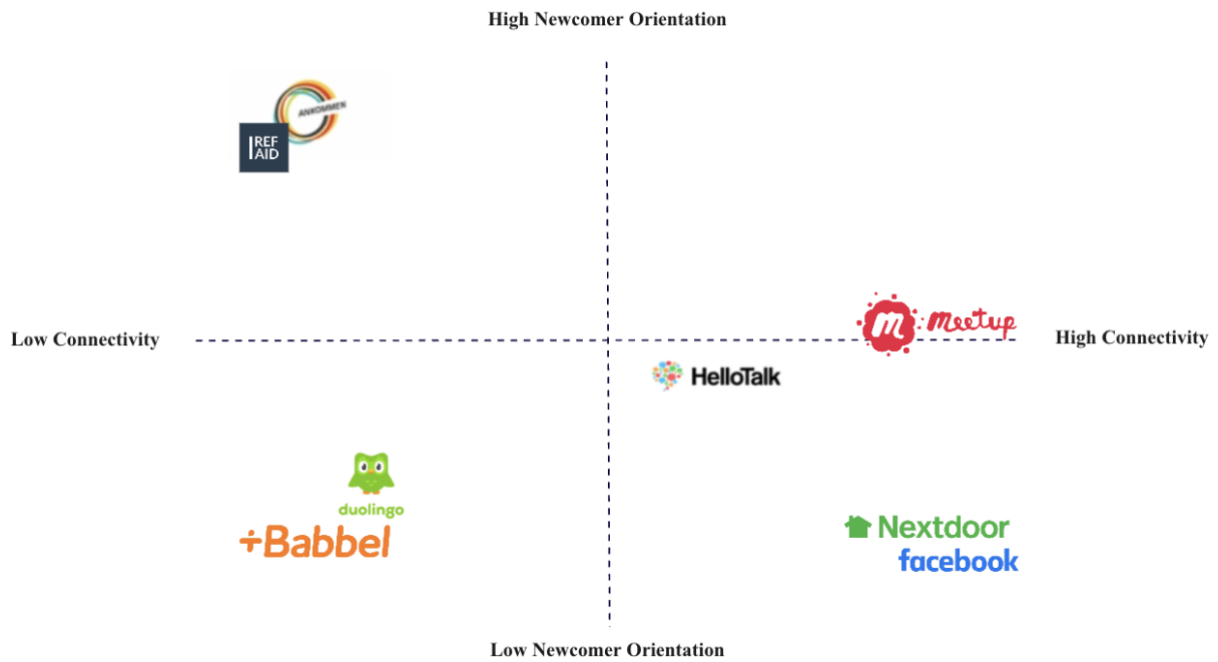


Figure 2: Perceptual Map of SPEAK's Competitive Landscape

Based on the findings reflected in the perceptual map, it is evident that there is a market gap for SPEAK to enter with an application focused both on newcomer orientation and connectivity. Although dominating their respective market segments, Duolingo and Babbel do not provide language learners with the ability to connect with others and are not specifically geared towards newcomers. In comparison, HelloTalk provides more features to facilitate connectivity amongst its users; however, it also does not target newcomers. Similarly, while Nextdoor, Facebook, and Meet-up are successful social networking apps, none of these applications specifically target newcomers. In contrast, both Ankommen and Refaid target newcomers, however, they do not provide the ability for users to connect socially. It is important to note that it will be challenging for SPEAK to enter the market with an application based solely focused on language or social networking, given that incumbents already dominate those respective market segments. Nevertheless, by specifically targeting newcomers with a focus on connectivity, SPEAK can set itself apart from the rest of the competition.

## **6. Product Definition**

Based on a thorough understanding of the target audience, their needs, and market analysis, the following segment describes the proposed features to be implemented and the frameworks related to feature selection and prioritisation.

### **6.1 Feature Ideation and Selection**

As previously outlined, users value a mobile application that fits the users' needs and requirements and is, thus, useful to them. This also became apparent in the interviews as respondents stated that it is imperative for the SPEAK app to provide a unique value proposition (UVP) to justify an app download, as opposed to finding information about integrational topics online. Furthermore, users require the app to be easy to use, which leads to the trade-off of implementing desired and useful features while not sacrificing a user-friendly design or inducing an overwhelming experience. The benefit of balancing valuable features and a diluted perception of the product needs to be carefully evaluated and validated.

Using a value proposition canvas (VPC), we ensured that our proposed features would be positioned around the needs of our users and thus, be a good market fit (Appendix 7). This framework helps us define how the existing services of SPEAK can be expanded through a support network while still meeting market demands. That is, the VPC maps customer gains, defined as benefits and expectations, to how the product creates those gains for the user. Moreover, pains, frustrations and risks should be solved through pain relievers. Lastly, customers' jobs which stem as explained from emotional, functional and social nature, need to be satisfied by the product or service while creating value for the user (Osterwalder et al. 2014). Thus, the value proposition must align with the different customer profiles and their common requirements and differentiating pain points. Hereby it is important to reflect on the differences in our user group, which have been previously discussed, namely refugees and migrants looking for advice on topics such as housing, employment, or administrative issues before networking

with others. As such, considering that our target group includes newcomers who have been in their host country for under five years with a digital affiliation and an age range from 18-40 are considered the main target audience for this MVP the following UVP is proposed: *For newcomers who want to facilitate their integration, SPEAK provides a mobile application to connect newcomers with locals through common-based interest groups, events, and language exchange, thus, allowing newcomers build a support network and feel at home in any city.*

Before selecting viable features, we conducted a product ideation workshop in which we brainstormed numerous feature ideas. Hereby any solution that remotely solved the users' needs was documented and taken into consideration. However, not all features seemed to solve the users' needs as well as others and given the limited resources not all features could be implemented. Subsequently, to narrow down the list of features, we ranked each feature according to two criteria, namely fit with the value proposition and value added for the user. While the former relates to the extent to which a feature provides newcomers with a support network whilst connecting them to locals, the latter refers to the extent to which it fulfils the users' needs. Based on these criteria the following features were deemed most impactful: help forum, promotions, groups, events, and map (Appendix 8).

It is important to reiterate that the scope of this thesis only included improvements to the current application by building a support network for newcomers. Hence, aligned with findings from literature and our user research, common challenges faced by migrants included those that extend beyond language (Huynh 2022). At the same time, the market analysis highlighted an extremely competitive market related to language learning apps. Therefore, improvements to the existing language feature were not considered.

## **6.2 Feature Prioritisation and Validation**

However, given the limited timeframe of this work project, again not all selected features could be implemented. Therefore, the above-mentioned features needed to be

prioritised, which we did based on the trade-off between their impact on the users and SPEAK's business model and the corresponding cost of implementation and maintenance (Appendix 9). As a results, ranked in descending order of prioritisation, the following features were selected to be implemented for the development of the MVP.

### **6.2.1 Groups**

This feature satisfies the primary desire of newcomers to meet new people in both an online and offline setting. By joining a group, SPEAK users can connect and form meaningful relations with like-minded people who share the same passions. Additionally, the groups feature enables facilitates community building and creates long-lasting connections between newcomers and locals. Subsequently, this will lead to the benefit of feeling more integrated and connected within their new society, since they are included within the community. Groups can also help newcomers can overcome issues pertaining to anxiety, stress, and lack of information with both other newcomers and locals via groups. locals they meet in groups. As such, they can share information and provide support to each other, thus, allowing newcomers to build a relevant support network.

### **6.2.2 Events**

Following the notion of offline meetings, the events feature has great potential to establish connections. By attending events, newcomers can be guaranteed to meet new people and explore new places, depending on the type of event they wish to attend. These social gatherings facilitate an informal and natural environment in which newcomers can create meaningful connections with locals and other newcomers, obtain information or simply enjoy the company. This satisfies their desire to form a network and feel included within their new community, thus, facilitating their integration.

### **6.2.3 Help Forum**

The help forum is a feature that specifically targets newcomers who first enter a country and that enables locals explicitly provide support to newcomers. On the one hand, by creating posts, newcomers can ask questions, request advice, or share problems which they might face in their integration process. On the other hand, locals are provided with an easy platform to help based on the skills and knowledge they possess. Compellingly, our research underlines that locals are willing to help newcomers, even if they don't wish to connect with them via traditional channels. The topics can range from bureaucratic procedures to governmental services and recommendations for housing or activities but are not limited as users can create their own forum posts if community guidelines are considered and respectful language is ensured. This feature alleviates the anxieties of newcomers who are unsure about how to navigate certain processes throughout their integration process.

### **6.2.4 Promotions**

The promotion feature allows newcomers to leverage discounts provided by local businesses within their community. Hereby, financial constraints that newcomers might experience due to resettling or ongoing job searches are taken into consideration. Not only does this allow financially constrained newcomers to save money but it also provides an opportunity to connect with local businesses within their community. Furthermore, this feature supports local businesses and the local community by providing greater access to potential customers of their products and services. While SPEAK can generate social impact through this feature by creating a stronger community and facilitating newcomers within that community, it can also use this feature to generate revenue, which will be discussed when comparing different monetisation strategies in the following. Essentially, however, this feature provides benefits for all stakeholders involved, newcomers, locals, local businesses, and SPEAK itself.

### **6.2.5 Features for Future Implementation**

It is important to note that following the above-mentioned prioritisation matrix, the maps feature is not prioritised. This is because the cost of implementation, specifically regarding the time and skills required to implement a geo-localisation feature is considered too high given its impact. Nevertheless, this feature remains a valuable feature SPEAK can consider implementing in the future.

### **6.3 MVP Benchmarking and Validation**

Although these features provide various services for the target group, it is not uncommon and can be implemented successfully. There is a multitude of companies that follow a similar approach by implementing a feature for a variety of use cases, albeit still being successful. One example of such an app is Nextdoor with over 10 million downloads that has a marketplace, social networking, groups, events, pets, and exploring restaurants feature in a single app.

## **7. UI Development process (Prototyping)**

After prioritizing features to satisfy the target groups' needs, the following abstract will explain the user interface (UI) development process based on rapid prototyping. Based on these theoretical frameworks, we propose an adjusted approach to software development and explain the rationale behind our decision. Then, we guide through our design process using iterations and the implementation of user feedback. This chapter will be rounded up with a final design on high-fidelity prototypes.

### **7.1 Prototyping Theory**

When building a new product, one of the most important aspects is understanding the users' needs, desires, and goals. Especially for mobile applications, where users have great expectations and offering value in a highly competitive environment becomes a must,

developers must ensure that understanding users' needs is properly translated digitally. Thus, building prototypes before deploying the mobile application has become common in modern software development. Lantz (1985) describes prototyping as a “system development methodology based on building and using a model of a system for designing, implementing, testing and installing the system”. Capitalising on the increased capabilities of software development tools, a design methodology called rapid prototyping has emerged as a widely used technique when working with prototypes. In this approach, research and development are conducted as parallel processes that create prototype versions, which are tested and may or may not evolve into the final product. One crucial aspect of this methodology is the consideration of user feedback and implementing such in revised versions. Revisiting that the success of software applications is highly dependent on satisfying users' needs, desires and goals, iterations help developers refine the scaled-down version of the full-scale product until the product properly reflects the wishes and hopes of end-users. Prototyping and testing software refers not only to the application's graphical user interface (GUI), which is a critical component of software and affects users' satisfaction significantly but also to the general composition and offering of features. Building, testing, and verifying satisfaction of user needs through the iteration of features, and the GUI increases the probability of a product's success and mitigates typical problem areas that traditional software approaches carry. These faults relate to higher costs, higher project time and a less satisfactory development process than the rapid prototyping methodology (Tanik and Yeh 1989; Tripp and Bichelmeyer 1990).

## **7.2 Prototyping Approach and Limitations**

Rapid prototyping usually incorporates the actual development of the application with logical and physical definitions of databases, program modules, screen displays, and inputs and outputs for interfacing systems as a scaled-down version in each iteration cycle. However, we are proposing an alternative approach that originates from a concept known as “goal-oriented

design”, which is closely related to the general ideas of rapid prototyping. In 1999, Alan Cooper suggests that the software development process should be iterative; designs should be refined and revised until users are completely satisfied with the functionality, usability, and design aspects before proceeding with actual development. The main advantage of this approach is the time saved by avoiding coding and development during each iteration.

Although best practices in rapid prototyping suggest simultaneous development and testing, we limited the development to creating an interactive high-fidelity prototype using pre-built screens first. For that, we used the design tool Figma. Figma is a prototyping tool that offers designers easy-to-use interface controls and connects these to provide users with a realistic impression of the application that can be immediately tested. However, testing a Figma prototype is limited to the flow, visual integrity and appeal of the application and does not replace the testing of the application regarding safety, responsiveness, and other technical aspects since Figma does not offer any underlying logic in terms of the creation of data entries in testing. After developing the MVP using a technology proposed in Chapter 9, the continuous development and refinement in production and testing for structural integrity remain necessary for SPEAK. Considering the limited time frame, and the overarching goal of conceptualising a minimum viable product first, we decided to iterate and test using Figma to create a final prototype that incorporates the requirements specifications to be used to code the final product and put it into production (Dubberly 2001).

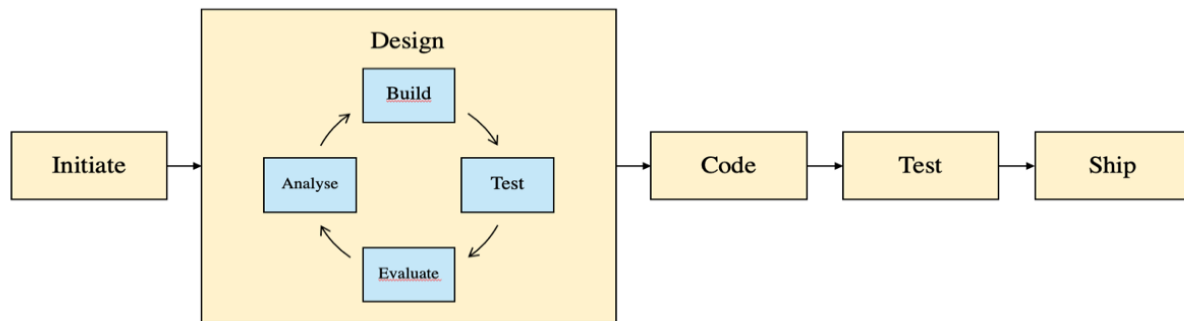


Figure 3: Software Development Process

Our design and testing process consisted of iterations of these steps: 1) creating sketches and designs, 2) testing design versions, 3) evaluating designs through feedback, and 4) analysing new or changed requirements to build updated designs.

### 7.3 Iterative Design Process

In “Build”, the first prototype version was conceptualised using low-fidelity wireframes that helped us outline the general structure as a blueprint for features and screens. We used pen-and-paper sketches. Once agreed on a layout and placement, we set up a high-fidelity prototype using Figma due to its simplicity and a broad offering of pre-built templates, elements, and ways to connect screens interactively. From Version Two, we limited the “Build” step to the usage of Figma as we became more efficient using the tool and saw benefits in working on an existing design project.

In the feedback-gathering process, step “Test”, we gave each test person a variety of tasks. That helped us to understand the usability and to uncover flaws regarding structure, logic and navigation. The test person was asked to articulate their thoughts openly and describe what they see, think and expect on each partial step in fulfilling the tasks. These tasks were:

1. Join one group and one event

2. Create a new group and a new event
3. Use a promotion for restaurants
4. Find information on how to get a NIF in Portugal

The pool of test users was diverse, comprising individuals with varied backgrounds. We sought feedback from both locals and newcomers, but we placed greater value on input from those who fit the target audience profile outlined in Chapter 5.

In Version One, test users uncovered issues with the visual representation of text. Users uniformly criticised the font size as being too small. The navigation showed weaknesses, as navigating back and forth was not intuitive because of a lack of “back” buttons. A general weakness was mentioned in the overall structure of the screens – testers had difficulties differentiating screens from each other and, thus, understanding the navigation structure. The user did not know the separation between joined and created events, as both were portrayed in the same category. Promotions received mixed feedback from users as it was not self-explanatory in the context of connecting individuals and needed further explanation. Although mentioned as a desired feature in the results from our user research, testers did not see the individual chat feature as a necessity for connecting through groups and events in the application since they admitted that they would most likely continue to use existing chat applications, like WhatsApp, for individual exchange. However, a group and event-wide chat associated with individual events and groups was desired and was seen as a value-adding feature. Feedback regarding the unconformity of buttons, titles and layouts was mentioned, e.g., creating a group was found at the bottom. Creating a new event, however, could be made at the top of the screen. The handling in the help forum was seen as self-explanatory, although thoughts about filtering and categorising were mentioned. Based on the first feedback round, we made the following adjustments to the prototype:

1. Adjustments to font size and buttons

2. Removal of the individual chat feature
3. Several adjustments to events and groups layouts and functionalities
4. Adjustment to header and footer, in addition to the implementation of back buttons
5. Rework of promotions feature to make it more self-explanatory

In Version Two, the adjustments to the font size and alignment of button sizing, placement and layout let the application receive positive feedback as consistent and visually appealing. Still, differences in the layout were mentioned as confusing. Although adjusted, issues in the navigation persisted, and users had difficulties navigating from one screen to another while performing the test tasks. The test audience mentioned specific problems in navigating to the home screen again. Additionally, several respondents mentioned issues in knowing the difference between screens. It was proposed to implement titles on the screens as a form of guidance. The survey showed that the adjustment of the promotions feature was insufficient. The development of the promotions feature motivated to incentivise users to connect by using discounts and coupons at local businesses; thus, to meet physically still needs improvement as users find it difficult to connect the usage of promotions to connecting with people. Based on the second feedback round, we made the following adjustments to the prototype:

1. Adjustments to the navigation structure
2. Implementation of info boxes into the promotion feature
3. Implementation of “sponsored events” and “sponsored groups”
4. Alignment of layouts, visual inconsistencies

In Version three, the test audience responded positively to the adjustments to the navigation structure. The implementation of an individual home button in the footer bar, in addition to the fixed back button in the header bar, helped users navigate easily and intuitively through the app structure. The adjustments of the promotion feature were noticed and cleared doubts. Also, the sponsored events and groups were considered effective additions as they integrated adequately

into the application flow. Further adjustments to layouts and visuals helped users value the application's consistency.

## 7.4 Final Version Wireframes

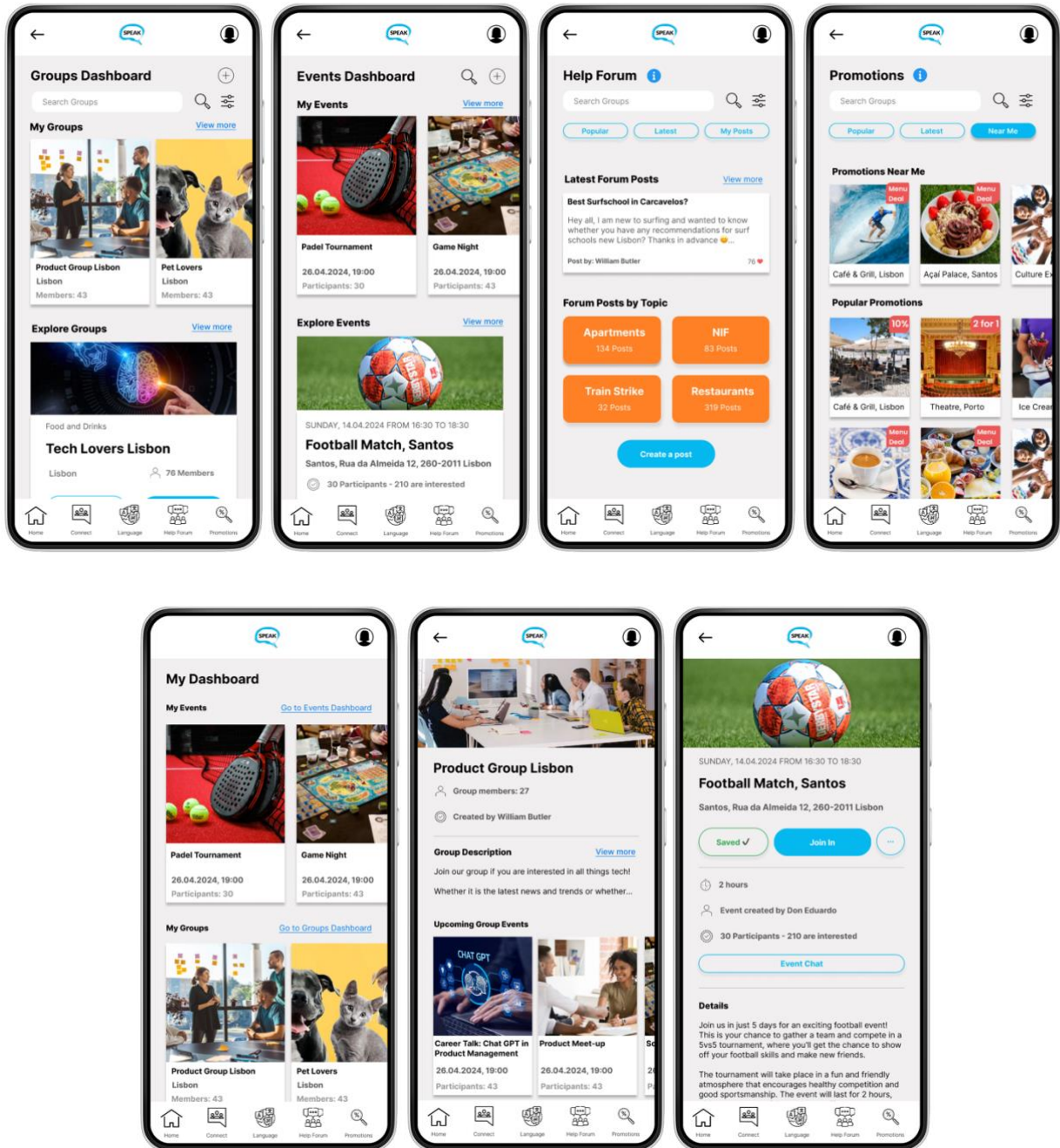


Figure 4: High-fidelity Prototypes in Figma

View more design screens in Appendix 10.

## **8. Business Model**

Based on the insights gained from the market analysis, user research, and implications from the study of social entrepreneurship, and the product definition, this segment delves into key elements of a revised business model for SPEAK. Given that SPEAK is a social enterprise, however, an alternative framework to the traditional business model canvas will be applied, namely the impact business model canvas. The key difference between the two frameworks is that the impact business model canvas considers additional elements which are unique to a social enterprise (Stanford Business Graduate School 2019). For instance, it includes the considerations pertaining to the problem statement, mission statement, and intended impact. As such, economic and social impact is considered when developing the business model. More specifically, however, this segment delves into the critical aspects of the business model, namely the value proposition, monetisation strategy, and potential impact. The comprehensive impact business model canvas developed for SPEAK can be found in Appendix 11.

### **8.1 Value Proposition**

A central element of the impact business model canvas is the value proposition statement, which according to Webster (1992), is a statement that helps an organisation match its distinct competencies with the customer needs and preferences, underlining how the firm wants to uniquely address the needs in the market. Summarising findings from previous segments, SPEAK's value proposition statement is the following: For newcomers who desire a support network to facilitate their integration, SPEAK provides a mobile application to connect newcomers with locals through common-based interest groups, events, and language exchange, thus, allowing newcomers build a support network and feel at home in any city.

## 8.2 Monetisation Strategy

Additionally, as alluded to in previous segments, new features must be built to scale both SPEAK's social and economic impact simultaneously. Therefore, an appropriate monetisation strategy needs to be developed. Common monetisation strategies for mobile applications include subscription and freemium models, in-app purchasing (IAP), in-app advertising (IAA), including banner, video, native, interstitial, and sponsorship ads, paid per download (PPD), and a hybrid approach. To help determine the best monetisation strategy, the target audience needs to be considered (Ntui 2021). Given that our target audience, especially those newcomers that are required to flee their countries due to extreme political or economic circumstances, tend to have limited access to financial resources it is important to consider cost as a key decision criterion for the monetisation strategy (Ong 2023). Hereby, it is important to note that we are considering the newcomers' ability to pay and not the willingness to pay. The difference between the two is that the former relates to what a newcomer can pay based on their financial circumstance, whereas the willingness to pay refers to the maximum price a consumer is willing to spend on a product or service regardless of their financial capability (Spielmann 2018). The ability to pay is more relevant because, while newcomers may be willing to pay for the SPEAK app, they are not able to afford it. Additionally, the following metrics were considered: user experience, social impact, and economic impact. User experience is considered because, as denoted previously, a good user experience is critical for an application to be successful, while social and economic impact are contemplated as these are key objectives SPEAK aims to achieve.

After consideration of these metrics, it is evident that certain monetisation strategies are more appropriate than others (Appendix 12). For instance, given that SPEAK's target audience is cost-sensitive and user experience is critical for the success of an app, monetisation strategies which are costly for the user or harm the user experience, such as PPD or certain IAP strategies,

are not considered. This aligns with research that highlights that PPD strategies are not suitable for social networking apps (Ntui 2021). Subsequently, two different strategies emerged that SPEAK should implement based on all the above-mentioned decision criteria. That is, we recommend SPEAK first implement a local deals program that allows local businesses to share discounts with its users via the promotion feature on SPEAK's application. Hereby, SPEAK could either operate a subscription-based model in which local businesses pay a monthly subscription fee, or SPEAK charges a commission rate for each sale made using the discounts. Second, SPEAK can introduce sponsored events, whereby local partners can pay SPEAK to advertise their events in SPEAK's application. Hereby, SPEAK could charge sponsors on a cost-per-click (CPC) or cost-per-impression (CPI) basis when advertising the respective events in its app. With both these monetisation strategies, users do not incur costs for using the application, nor is the user experience harmed. Compellingly, both the promotion and sponsored events features were validated during numerous rounds of testing with potential users. Furthermore, while SPEAK can incorporate two new revenue streams in its business model, newcomers can connect with businesses and partners in their community, and local businesses and sponsored partners can increase their reach and generate sales. Subsequently, aligned with the strategic implications from a social entrepreneurship perspective and SPEAK's mission, both social and economic objectives can be achieved. To measure the success of these strategies certain KPIs should be monitored including average revenue per user, average commission rate, CPI, CPC, cost per acquisition, conversion rate, total revenue, and profit.

Nevertheless, while SPEAK already has a large partner network, this strategy will require increased upfront investments to hire business development employees to further extend their partnership network, including local businesses in each region. Therefore, fundraising from investors should remain a priority for SPEAK in the next several years. As previously mentioned, while fundraising can be challenging for social entrepreneurs, investors are

increasingly shifting their investments towards socially oriented enterprises. As such, SPEAK should leverage this opportunity and explore various fundraising options. Thereby, SPEAK should focus on investment opportunities pertaining to socially oriented organisations, including angel investors, crowdfunding, and venture capitalists (PWC 2014). Not only would this enable SPEAK to finance its transition towards a more effective app monetisation strategy, but it would also help it diversify its revenue streams, aligned with further implications derived from the findings within the field of social entrepreneurship.

### **8.3 Impact**

Since SPEAK's mobile application is accessible from the Google Play Store and Apple Store, users from around the world can download the app and use its product and services. Therefore, the total available market (TAM) expands to newcomers worldwide, accounting for over 102 million people globally, as outlined in the market analysis. However, not all of these can be considered potential users of SPEAK. For example, a proportion of these users do not fall into the previously defined target audience. Moreover, for the purpose of the proposed business model, we suggest SPEAK narrow down its scope operations to establish the required partnerships with local businesses and partners more effectively. Therefore, SPEAK should focus on those countries it currently operates in that have the highest number of displaced people and the largest user base, namely Portugal, the United Kingdom and Germany (Appendix 13). Considering all immigrants in said countries, we assume only 80% fit our target audience. Hence the serviceable available market accumulates to approximately 5.4 million people in 2023. Furthermore, operating under the assumption, that the new SPEAK acquire at least 2% of the existing newcomers as users, then SPEAK will be able to increase its user base to approximately 112,000 users in 2023. Also, assuming they are unable to capture additional users from the existing market then SPEAK would have to onboard 6.93%, 6.71%, and 6.49% of all incoming newcomers in Portugal, the UK, and Germany to achieve a growth of 100,000

users annually until 2025 (Appendix 14). While it is reasonable to assume that SPEAK could acquire 2% of the existing newcomers as users in 2023, it would require SPEAK an extensive marketing and partnership efforts to acquire additional 100,000 users each year.

## **9. Go-To-Market Strategy**

According to McKinsey & Company (2017), over 50% of new product launches do not meet their targets. This usually goes with wasteful consumption of limited resources, including time, money, and effort. Considering the nature of SPEAK, as a social impact start-up, these resources are even more limited, and one must ensure to leverage the available efficiently. For this reason, the following abstract will suggest incentives to place the application in the market successfully. First, we offer a launch strategy consisting of narrowing down a target market, including communication measures and continuing with recommendations for announcements. We finish with suggestions to measure success using selected metrics.

### **9.1 Launch Strategy**

The MVP's success depends significantly on users' social adoption level. In this context, we introduce the concept of network effects for reaching a critical mass for adopting the application and derive strategies based on these concepts.

Network effects refer to the interplay in which the value of a product to one user increases as more users adopt the product (Katz and Shapiro 1985). The critical mass refers to the number of users required to realise significant network effects. Hence, the network attracts additional users because of the utility and benefits a network entry offers. In this way, the network becomes self-sustaining, users are locked in, and the abundance of the product and consideration of competitors becomes obsolete. SPEAK needs to address locals, newcomers, and businesses to generate a feedback loop that will attract more users. More users better scale the benefits, as they will produce content in the form of new events, engage in groups and create

forum posts. More users will attract more businesses to offer discounts and buy advertising space. Hence, the value for users increases since they can use promotions to connect. The following identifies the most applicable strategies and measures to reach a conclusive target audience.

### **9.1.1 Target Countries**

To reach a critical mass, we suggest that SPEAK focuses on market entry in countries with a high volume of newcomers while having a presence with a current SPEAK community. Based on calculations made in Appendix 12, we suggest a market entry in UK countries, followed by Portugal and Germany.

### **9.1.2 Target Groups and Communication Measures**

It is helpful to understand the primary motivators for immigration to derive recommendations for effective communication strategies to help reach the right people, with the correct tools, at the appropriate time.

Immigrants arriving in the United Kingdom and Ireland, referred to as the UK from here, immigrate primarily for work, and formal study, followed by joining family members and immigration due to displacement (Sturge 2023). In Portugal, the main reasons for immigration are professional activities, family reunification and study (Lusa 2021). Immigrants arriving in Germany come for family, followed by employment, education, and displacement (Winter 2019). We advise SPEAK to engage in communication and advertising campaigns explicitly targeting immigrants who arrive for work first, followed by refugees. Although refugees are sometimes the smallest group of immigrants, they should still be given special attention, as multiple features of the redesign of the SPEAK application point to the acceleration of their integration process. It can therefore be assumed not only that the adoption of refugees is greater but also that SPEAK succeeds in achieving its social mission. To efficiently use the available resources, we suggest SPEAK engage in online advertising campaigns. Specifically,

immigrants arriving for work can be efficiently targeted using digital campaigns on Instagram and Facebook. By that, SPEAK reaches a wide but correct audience. After a certain time, we suggest also facilitating offline campaigns in the form of strategically placed billboards and posters around companies that are known to hire international talents. For immigrants, we propose the opposite. Based on the insights of the user research in Chapter 5, engaging with partners locally is a key success factor in acquiring users quickly. The communication message should evolve around “accelerating the individual integration process” to meet locals that function as integration partners. We recommend contacting local help organisations such as “Flüchtlinge Willkommen in Düsseldorf” or the “Aktion-Deutschland-Hilft” in Germany, or “Refugee-Action” in the UK for placing the SPEAK application and underline the social mission SPEAK employs. These partnerships are essential for adopting SPEAK by refugees since they highly value recommendations from trusted help organisations. At a later stage, it is recommended to also engage in forms of online marketing. We believe specifically targeted advertising campaigns around the help forum and its value proposition are a good starting point.

For locals, motivators to connect with newcomers were primarily reasoned by a desire to help. Based on our research, we suggest forming communication strategies around this factor. Here students show promise to reach adoption quickly. Contacting student clubs that engage in sustainability and social efforts, followed by a presentation about SPEAK and its social mission, should show promising results. Additionally, universities focusing on social and political sciences should be considered from a marketing perspective. Then, we recommend engaging in a sophisticated analysis of the current user base of SPEAK buddies in the UK, Portugal, and Germany to find out about the demographics and motivators that should be used to address audiences digitally.

The incorporation of strategic partners from a business perspective should be prioritised in the application’s launch phase. SPEAK employs a wide network of partnerships with

renowned organisations, so further intensification of this network should be the top priority. Acquiring businesses as potential advertising customers might be challenging since companies will only do business with SPEAK if they have positive expectations to justify their investment by reach or a return perspective. We strongly advise SPEAK to give out advertising space for free in the beginning and use the available reach through the current language groups and existing partnerships as a point of reference when contacting new businesses.

### **9.1.3 Communications Plan**

As SPEAK has an active user base, a key success factor will be the preannouncement of the update and restructuring of the feature portfolio through available channels. Setting up a communication plan six weeks before launch will yield the best results. Here, the announcement should focus on existing social media channels such as Instagram and especially Facebook. Our recommendations include push notifications for current app users and the implementation of pop-up windows inside the app. Additionally, for the period of six weeks prior, as well as an extended period after the launch, buddies in language groups should be asked to promote the updated app and new value proposition. Since referrals are a proven strategy for applications to acquire new users, we suggest incentivising buddies to refer users through an invitational code (Buttle 1998). When referred successfully, buddies collect points that can be exchanged for special discounts provided by partners, such as gift cards or free meals at a partner restaurant.

## 9.2 Key-Performance Indicators

When launching the application, it is crucial to measure KPIs to help determine its success.

SPEAK should concentrate on the following metrics:

Table 1: KPIs

Type of Metrics	Relevant KPIs
<b>Acquisition Metrics</b>	Track the number of downloads and installs to measure user engagement. Monitor cost per install and CPA in online advertising to assess the effectiveness of acquisition strategies.
<b>Retention Rate</b>	Measure how many users continue using the app after downloading it. High retention rates indicate user satisfaction and fulfilment of their needs.
<b>Engagement Metrics</b>	Monitor daily active users (DAU), monthly active users (MAU), session length, and churn rate to assess user engagement and frequency of app usage. Analyse engagement per feature to identify popular functionalities.
<b>User Experience Metrics</b>	Track changes in App Store ratings and reviews to evaluate user satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. Gather feedback through user surveys to gain valuable insights for enhancing the app's user experience.
<b>Monetization Metrics</b>	Assess total revenue, average revenue per user, average commission rate, cost per acquisition, conversion rate, and profit to evaluate the app's monetisation strategy and financial performance.
<b>Social Impact Metrics</b>	Measure the number of newcomers assisted with the integration process, events hosted, newcomer groups, diversity of users, languages learned, language proficiency improvements, and partnerships with local businesses.

Focusing on these KPIs during the launch phase can help to ensure that the app is meeting the needs of its users, gaining traction, and setting itself up for long-term success.

## 10. Conclusion

Over the past decades, technological advancements have significantly impacted global migration, particularly the integration process for newcomers. Key drivers such as cheaper access to the internet, mobile phones, and related apps and services have enabled newcomers to stay connected with friends and family in their home countries and access useful products and services to facilitate their integration process. SPEAK, a social impact venture is one such example which provides newcomers with the possibility to connect with locals based on community-led language exchanges. However, although SPEAK tackles one key barrier

newcomers face when integrating into a new society, numerous other challenges remain. Thus, this thesis aimed to identify how SPEAK could improve its app to provide newcomers with a support network, facilitating their integration and inclusion process.

Following a combination of design thinking and a user-centred approach, we identified a key pain point for newcomers: the lack of information or support needed to facilitate their inclusion and integration process. Benchmarking competitors further illustrated a gap in the market for apps targeting newcomers with connectivity features. Following extensive user research, we defined the target group as digitally affiliated newcomers who have only recently relocated to a new home country. Following an initial ideation and selection process, we prioritised features such as common interest-based groups, events, a help forum, and promotions to implement in the MVP. Subsequently, the MVP's features and design was tested and validated via Figma in numerous iterations before using OutSystems, as the preferred low-code development tool, to develop the application in a usable prototype. Furthermore, a revised value proposition and recommendations for a new monetisation strategy focused on a local deals program and advertising sponsored events were provided. Accordingly, it was estimated that SPEAK could acquire approximately 112,00 users after product launch. However, it would require large resources to acquire 100,000 users annually between 2023-2025. The go-to-market strategy suggests launching its app and proposed business model in Portugal, the UK, and Germany leveraging social media and referral campaigns whilst establishing partnerships with relevant institutions. Finally, success metrics for the app and its launch should be considered, including KPIs related to user acquisition, engagement, retention, user experience, and economic and social impact.

## **11. Limitations and Future Outlook**

It is important to note that this work project has certain limitations for various reasons. The first limitation pertains to user research and corresponding data collection. While we were able to interview seven individuals and record 139 survey responses, it is questionable whether these respondents represent the target group of SPEAK. Since user validation is critical for launching new features, SPEAK should further validate our findings with current SPEAK users. Secondly, the development of the MVP was limited to our restricted knowledge of the OutSystems environment, which made it challenging to implement the features as designed. This also restricted us from testing and validating the final prototype. Thus, as a next step, SPEAK should test the developed MVP in OutSystems with its current user base. Finally, our findings only explore business model implications related to the mobile application. Therefore, we do not provide a detailed calculation of a respective business case, nor have we otherwise validated the business model. While it has been suggested that SPEAK can gain over 100,000 users if it can acquire 2% of its target group as users of its app, this is based on various assumptions that need to be further validated. This also applies to the estimation that SPEAK needs to acquire between 7% and 6.5% of all incoming newcomers in Portugal the UK and Germany, to acquire 100,000 users annually. Nevertheless, the thesis provides an MVP and business model considerations, which SPEAK can leverage this to validate the new features further and implement a monetisation strategy to scale its impact both socially and economically.

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Interviews

### Appendix 1.1: Interview questions for newcomers

[Introduction] Hello! Thank you for taking the time to sit down with us today for an interview. We are a group of Master students @NovaSBE and as part of our thesis we are developing an app to help locals and newcomers connect and build meaningful relations, which we are doing in collaboration with SPEAK. The purpose of the interview today is to briefly discuss some of your experiences moving to [City] and what that was like for you. The interview will last approximately 15-20 minutes. Before we start, do you have any questions we should clarify in advance?

1. [Demographics] Can you tell me something about yourself? How old are you, where do you live and where do you come from, and what do you currently do? (Study, age, work experience, country of birth, religion, partner)
2. [Experience] When did you come to (host city) and what was that experience like? (Why did you come here?)
3. [Challenges] Did you face any challenges during this experience, specifically when integrating into a new city and connecting with locals and/or other newcomers?
4. [Needs] What do you think would have made this experience easier?
5. [Successes] Were there any aspects of that experience that went well or where you received sufficient support?
6. [Interest] As you know, we are developing an app to facilitate newcomers' integration into their host cities by connecting with locals and/or other newcomers with this process. Would you be interested in such an app? What features would this app need for you to use it?
7. [WTP] Would you be willing to pay for such an app?
8. [Wants] What are your goals for the next 1-2 years and where do you see yourself in 5 years?

[Conclusion] This concludes our interview today - again, thank you very much for your time! We appreciate your valuable insights, we are sure this will be very helpful to progress the development of our mobile application. If you'd like to stay in touch to test newly implemented features or in case you have any questions, you can contact us via: +491773431997 or [526408@novasbe.pt](mailto:526408@novasbe.pt).

### Appendix 1.2: Interview questions for locals

[Introduction] Hello! Thank you for taking the time to sit down with us today for an interview. We are a group of Master students @NovaSBE and as part of our thesis we are developing an app to help locals and newcomers connect and build meaningful relations, which we are doing in collaboration with SPEAK. The purpose of the interview today is to briefly discuss some of your experiences moving to [City] and what that was like for you. The interview will last approximately 15-20 minutes. Before we start, do you have any questions we should clarify in advance?

1. [Demographics] Can you tell me something about yourself? How old are you, where do you live and where do you come from, and what do you currently do? (Study, age, work experience, country of birth, religion, partner)
2. [Experience and Motivation] Can you tell me about your experience connecting with newcomers? What was that experience like? What were some of the reasons why you chose to connect with newcomers?
3. [Challenges] Did you face any challenges when trying to connect with newcomers?
4. [Needs] What do you think would have made this process easier?
5. [Successes] Were there any aspects of that process that went well or where you received sufficient support?
6. [Interest] As you know, we are developing an app to facilitate newcomers' integration into their host cities by connecting with locals and/or other newcomers with this process. Would you be interested in such an app? What features would this app need for you to use it?
7. [WTP] Would you be willing to pay for such an app?
8. [Wants] What are your goals for the next 1-2 years and where do you see yourself in 5 years?

[Conclusion] This concludes our interview today - again, thank you very much for your time! We appreciate your valuable insights, we are sure this will be very helpful to progress the development of our mobile application. If you'd like to stay in touch to test newly implemented features or in case you have any questions, you can contact us via: +491773431997 or 526408@novasbe.pt.

### **Appendix 1.3: Transcript 1, Interview with Refugee 1 (Category: Newcomer)**

Florian [00:00:00] Again, briefly by way of introduction. So that you understand it all over again, this is exactly what it's about. I've already told you, we're a group of master's students from Lisbon and as part of our final project, we're developing an app to help locals & newcomers connect and build meaningful relationships. Which we are doing in collaboration with Speak. And the aim of today's interview is to talk briefly about your experience of moving to Germany from Guinea. Where do you live in Germany now?

Refugee 1 [00:00:38] In Opladen, Leverkusen.

Florian [00:00:56] Okay, all right. And then, just to sort of frame it at the beginning, the first question is about your background, so if you can tell me about yourself, how old you are, for example, where you live. Where you come from and what you are doing at the moment.

Refugee 1 [00:01:12] So we came to Germany since 26 May 2016. So first of all I lived in France for three years, almost three, four and three years like that.... Okay, so then I went to Germany. After Dortmund was a bad time. But so far everything is good now. They put us, a big group of foreigners all almost Africans, Asia or something exactly, they put us so many people in a camp? You know what, mate? Okay, when the people new comes in a shared flat. Yes, I stayed there for about six months. Then the mission sent me to Geislingen. I lived there for three years. Then I went to Leichlingen. There, too, in a shared flat with everyone, that is, home, school, entrepreneurs, foreigners. So when they approved me to stay in Germany, I had to look for a flat. Only the people

don't know whether they are allowed to stay in Germany or not. That makes it difficult to find a flat. So I looked for a flat for over three years and found nothing. Mr XX helped me a lot here in the company. It worked out in Opladen and since then I've been living in Opladen for two years and am doing an apprenticeship as a baker, now here.

Florian [00:03:06] And you are how old?

Refugee 1 [00:03:08] So, 27 years.

Florian [00:03:12] And you said you're originally from...?

Refugee 1 [00:03:15] Guinea.

Florian [00:03:24] And so far almost done with the training as a baker, as a baker.

Refugee 1 [00:03:43] I'm sure it will be fine, everything will work out fine.

Florian [00:03:45] I'll summarise again briefly, you first arrived in France, and from France until you came to Germany. And now you've been in Germany for three years since 2016, so 7 years.

Refugee 1 [00:03:59] It will be 7 years in May.

Florian [00:04:12] Okay. Wonderful. Um. Now if I say this again very clearly, if there's anything you don't want to answer, then just say that's no problem. To the next question and then we'll continue. The next question, which is about your experience, you've already touched on a bit, but what was the reason why you came to Germany?

Refugee 1 [00:04:35] Oh! My friend. Until now it has just been fate. It wasn't my goal to come to Germany. I lived there in France, but it was a bit different. I didn't have enough money. So, then I said go somewhere else, try to find your place, not to Germany. But now it's my goal, because in Germany here, since I came, I feel comfortable.

Florian [00:05:23] Okay. All right. And the and the said that's the, that doesn't have to answer that so he doesn't have to answer that. I want to, but you are. Have you fled? From Guinea?

Refugee 1 [00:05:37] Yes.

Florian [00:05:38] Okay, thank you. Let's take France out of it and maybe start with Germany. What was it like for you when you arrived here? With the establishment of contact. You said that when you lived here in the camp in Dortmund at the beginning, you got to know a lot of people who were probably in similar situations to you. And how did you first make contact with people who didn't live in the camp? How was that established?

Refugee 1 [00:06:17] So from refugees I only got to know with the foreigner people. So that was a bit funny that many people about different countries. It's hard with the language that people, so sometimes like that, sometimes French language, sometimes

something else. So, when I came to Leichlingen, my German was better. But then I looked for language lessons for one and a half year. And that's hard.

Florian [00:07:07] That is, language was the biggest, the biggest challenge for you right from the beginning. Hm? And then how did you find a language school?

Refugee 1 [00:07:35] When you arrive, you can't look for a place yourself, but the social services will contact you so that you can get a place. But that takes time.

Florian [00:07:46] That is, the social welfare office, that helped me with that.

Refugee 1 [00:07:50] Yes.

Florian [00:07 :52] I see, What do you think, what did you think of this experience of not looking for a language school for 1.5 years or one and a half years? On the one hand, what did you do during that time?

Refugee 1 [00:08:17] Is it something like situation to a little bit difficult not to know the language? You know, to learn the German language a little bit, at least a little bit I got to know a family at that time. There was a woman, she had contact with her. For three years. Now, with this family, they are almost like my family.

Florian [00:08:46] Yes, okay.

Florian [00:09:00] And how did you meet this family? So, how did this contact come about?

Refugee 1 [00:09:04] In this language class. The woman was volunteering there.

Florian [00:09:14] So far, everything around Cologne. And this contact, that is, she was someone who gave the language lessons. Or were they simply quickly helped in this organisation or in the language?

Refugee 1 [00:09:26] It's only voluntary, there are a lot of people who come to work who are pensioners. So they like to help. That's how it was.

Florian [00:09:38] And that helped you tremendously? Of course, because that was someone who lived here and who knew a bit about it.

Refugee 1 [00:09:44] yes

Florian [00:09:51] Yeah, great. Okay. That is, do you think that this contact with someone who came from here would have made the arrival easier earlier? So, for example, if this had happened when you came to Germany and you had been given someone directly to help you from here, for example, I grew up here and I was here, it would have been assigned to me, for example. And then I would help you with all the things you have to do, for example, finding a language school, for example, finding a flat or a job. Do you think that would have made it easier and faster?

Refugee 1 [00:10:24] It depends, for some people you know, there is only contact with you for a few days or a few months. You get trust with them straight away, but not that often. Took a few months before the contact with this family became trust.

Florian [00:10:48] That is, trust is of course very important when you arrive and know that you are not.

Refugee 1 [00:10:52] How to assert your confidence. I would like to help a little bit. Otherwise, you have to try anywhere, anything that you have, you have to go to social services. They're responsible. Okay, if you have contact, then maybe. Then someone shows you the way.

Florian [00:11:08] Yes, I see. With the reference again, so ask again in the same way, because this is something that we believe should be included in the app: that we practically assign someone or someone who would like to help and who is from here to people who are new. This means that I have a direct contact person who perhaps doesn't come from the official side like the social welfare office, but is someone I can approach if I have specific questions, who simply helps me to arrive here. Do you think that this has become better overall or that this would have happened?

Refugee 1 [00:12:16] Yes, of course, that would be much better. But when the new people (refugees) came we didn't have internet, I didn't know how to handle money, with.

Florian [00:12:46] Okay, I see. Okay. Can you recall a moment or can you recall an experience that worked out very well has ? So where were you Maybe a little bit surprised? That was okay. Now that was kind of easier than I thought it would be.

Refugee 1 [00:13:09] Yes, that was once. The foreigners who came to Germany, only 2% of them have the opportunity to stay here in Germany, to find a residence permit or work. But what we have now with me. So, you know, when you apply for asylum, you have to go to an interview. Do you just go to the Aliens' Registration Office, then someone who is a lawyer or something comes? Then you have to tell them exactly how you came to Germany. What kind of problem do you have in your home country? Well, when I was there, I had so many friends who were all told by Germany that they weren't allowed to stay here, they were all in Europe, like in France or Italy. Spain doesn't matter, but they're not allowed to stay in Germany. I was lucky there. Germany said okay, you can live here, you can work here. That was my result. I was lucky. Aren't you afraid? Yes. I could arrive here, meet people and then be gone.

Florian [00:14:57] Thank you , for sharing it with me. Next question. This is about the basic interest. Imagine that you. There's an app now that helps you as a newcomer make contacts in your pub or in your city that you're arriving in now. With locals or with or with newcomers who were in a similar situation. Would you be interested in an app like that in principle? Of course, I have to put myself in the situation back then. Maybe not. Or maybe it's all still good now.

Refugee 1 [00:15:46] That's good. Yes, I think that's okay.

Florian W [00:16:03] How do you think you learn or make friends best when you. What is important to you personally when you. So for example, I would answer the question for me now. I have fun when I have fun with people when I think they have similar interests. For me, for example, that's also a big factor. I really enjoy doing sports. If I can do sports with people, then I always get along pretty well with them. For me, that would be a function or a motivation to say that you are now using this app on the road to get to know people.

Refugee 1 [00:16:36] So in the beginning, when they found it, I just played it in football. But now at the moment, because after work at home then I don't feel like it. But I like to do fitness or something, I do that a lot.

Florian [00:16:55] That is, if so let's say, if I open it now for example, and then you can for example find friends on and then sport. Are you saying that would be a function or are you saying okay, you can imagine using that?

Refugee 1 [00:17:07] Of course.

Refugee 1 [00:17:49] It's hard with the rework, but you get used to it at some point. It's okay. I also baked at home for about three or four years. It was my father's bakery, and I always baked at 10:00 after work. But that's not learned, it's only a penny okay. That's why work, but only the language. The vocational school is a little bit to read, is okay. But sometimes when you don't understand the question asked, that's my problem.

Florian [00:18:28] If you now answer again in relation to now, you just said, I just asked if language was the biggest problem for you, so coming here. What would you say was the next problem And now maybe also exactly related to getting to know people, when you spoke the language, what do you think that would be so the trust that you don't know who we can trust and who me again? We have established that language is the biggest problem.

Refugee 1 [00:19:05] In the beginning yes.

Florian [00:19:08] And if you wanted to meet people now, what challenges did you face?

Refugee 1 [00:19:17] Definitely. The language helps to get to know people. So when you have so many contacts that you know from here or birth, the language is not a problem. So I think meeting people is very important. I think that's so cool, so language was a problem.

Florian [00:19:41] And back then you just told us that you met so many people through football. How did that come about? Did you then meet people to play football with?

Refugee 1 [00:19:51] I always jogged first, in the stadium, in Leichlingen, in the stadium something like two, three hours, running back and forth. Then I saw people playing. Then I did a day of trial training. Then the coach said: Yes, you can play with us here. I've been playing there for two years now.

Florian [00:20:19] That means you went to the club yourself and practically introduced yourself. Okay, got it. There was, I'll write that down again too, because when we specify something for you in the app, for example, for sport, we want to believe that it's very important to establish a connection to sport. Okay, maybe we could do it in such a way that you have a direct contact point or that perhaps sports clubs also post requests there. That means, for example, we are looking for midfielders and then you see as a midfielder and then you find together like that.

Refugee 1 [00:20:59] So it's cool. So you can meet a lot of people, with sports and football, or so much more than football. So, then meeting people. Yeah, I think that's a good idea for the app.

Florian [00:21:13] Also for example. Okay, now the question already from the last two questions, then that was already super. That was already super helpful. But then the interview is over. Would you be willing to pay for an app that helps you find friends or new contacts in.

Refugee 1 [00:21:35] Oh, yeah. How does that work with payments?

Florian [00:21:41] That can run in several models, for example, you may pay once when you sign up. Or you pay for the use. That is, you arrive somewhere and then you have the problem that you don't get to know people yet, especially in the beginning. After a certain time, that should actually become less. And then you pay an amount per month, for example, as long as you use it, for example, you use it for three months or so and after that you have met people and then you no longer need it and can cancel it. So who is basically willing to pay for such an app? Or would you say, rather not?

Refugee 1 [00:22:44] Not at that time. But we New People, we don't have money,.

Florian [00:23:46] What is your plan for the next time?

Refugee 1 [00:24:30] Yes, keep working. I think I will keep working here. And the training is nice. But this is the big company and that's good.

Florian [00:24:46] Thank you very much. Thank you for answering the question so openly.

Refugee 1 [00:25:07] Of course it's not an issue. That's great.

Florian [00:25:34] Thank you very, very much.

#### **Appendix 1.4: Transcript 2, Interview with Expat 1 (Category: Newcomer)**

00:00 Florian: A tiny bit, just a tiny bits. Alright, thank you. First of all for you taking the time speaking to me today, I hope and I think it's going to be very helpful for our master thesis because it's actually pretty difficult for us to find any people that are in this specific, target group coming to a new country and experiencing like a different culture or whatever.

00:13 Expat 1: Oh yeah, no worries

00:44 Florian: So yeah. so, in general, Like a formal introduction to stick to the script. I have like little documents here with me, we have up to eight questions and we thought about maybe talking maybe 15 to 20 minutes, and so yeah, I'd say just maybe go straight ahead.

01:07 Expat 1: Yeah, sounds good.

01:09 Florian: Um yeah. Okay, so we are a group of master students at the Nova School of Business and Economics and Lisbon and as part of our thesis, we're developing an app to help locals and newcomers connect, and we aim to build meaningful relationships between them. And this, we are doing in a collation in a collaboration with speak, which is an NGO that tackles the first issue that they might identify with newcomers coming to a country, which is obviously language barriers. So, speak offers language courses to newcomers or to locals who are to whomever. They want to learn a little new language for free, and they have a like the business model of pay what you want basically.

01:59 Expat 1: Okay.

01:59 Florian: So, you can attend sessions in a group sessions and learn English or learn Portuguese. It's, it's an NGO from Lisbon. So, from Portugal, and with the aim to provide language courses for free in a pay, what you want model,

02:14 Expat 1: Okay

02:15 Florian: So the general purpose of this interview today is to briefly discuss some of your your own experiences moving to when I remember correctly, Grevenbroich, right?

02:30 Expat 1: Yeah.

02:30 Florian: Okay. Not sure if my transcript programs getting any of that but I can enter that later so good that I know. But to what we are experience was moving to even boys and was that and how that all was like for you. As I said the interview will ask for approximately 15 to 20 minutes and yeah before we go into the first questions, do you have any basic questions or anything that I can address before we start?

03:00 Expat 1: Nope.

03:01 Florian: Okay, perfect. So first question is a demographic question and maybe you can tell me a little bit about yourself like your age where you live now where do you can come from and what you currently doing?

03:15 Expat 1: 35 years old coming from the United States of America or Michigan in the United States. Currently, living in Grevenbroich. And currently unemployed. but will be looking [for work] Coming end of March, when I get my, I guess you're alien Card E a T. Card as well. My wife came over here for work and she has family in the near Frankfurt area.

03:53 Florian: Hmm, and you said, I remember when we first met each other, you said that you were not originally born in the United States but elsewhere, right?

04:01 Expat 1: Yeah, correct. I was adopted when I was six months old from South Korea.

04:07 Florian: Uh-huh. All right. Okay, so your main reason for coming to Germany is that you came with your wife and with your kids here.

04:18 Expat 1: Yep, her whole family lives here.

04:19 Florian: Okay.

04:20 Expat 1: So it's mainly a family moving opportunity, but she is working for her American. Um, I guess you call it an entity. I mean, it's the same company but it's the American. Company that she's working for remotely. Here in Cologne.

04:38 Florian: Understand. And what is your educational background? Do you have a bachelor's degree. Did you go to college?

04:46 Expat 1: Yeah, I have a bachelor's degree in accounting and finance.

04:49 Florian: Hmm. Okay. And you acquired that one in America as well.

04:52 Expat 1: Yes, at University of Michigan.

04:56 Florian: Okay, I understand. Do you have any higher education like a master degree or an MBA?

05:01 Expat 1: No.

05:01 Florian: Okay, understand. That was pretty much enough for the first question. Thank you.. So the next question we talked a bit, about this before. The reason that you came here, is that you came here for your wife's work so she got like transferred or had the opportunity to work in Germany for a little while and because of family you came with her. Is that correct?

05:38 Expat 1: Yeah, so she has been transferred to a supplier for Ford (automotive supplier). She works for and the Ford group that is located in Cologne. So she got transferred here for three years. And then, her family lives about two to three hours, depending on traffic, away in Hessen. So I mean I guess you call it a work move but it was more focused to get the kids over here and myself to both learn a language and the culture. Just because She's the only one in the US. From her family there and it's the opposite here. I'm the only one from my family in Germany now.

06:24 Florian: Okay. Yeah. Understand When coming here like arriving I know that I know from you that you have been in Germany a couple of times before. So everything wasn't totally new for you but I guess staying for a little longer now it was a new experience and how was that experience for you in particular? Can you maybe address some some issues or some challenges that you faced when left the United States and coming to Germany or a European country?

06:57 Expat 1: Um yeah I think the big, I mean, obviously one of the easiest changes is just the way that you drive in Germany compared to the US where, You know, it's a lot bigger cars. I was driving a truck and, we had an SUV in the US so, just seeing the difference in cars like, you know, everything is smaller Parking, lots are smaller even parking garages. It's a lot harder to find. And there's a lot more street parking. I think that's, you know, in the driving sense. Culturally-wise. You know, obviously the biggest thing that you've highlighted is going to be the language. I mean, a lot of people know English, it seems like but it's still just in talking there is still you can tell there's still a processing moment. When people are trying to think exactly what to say and make sure they say it, right?

08:00 Expat 1: And then I think, you know, when we're in the US, We were living in a bigger city which was 15 minutes from the main downtown Detroit. And here, you know, it's not as big of a city engraven boy. So it's a little more countryside, which is nice for the kids because we really couldn't ride. They couldn't ride their bikes, like, just down there. There wasn't a lot of sidewalks so they couldn't ride their bikes. You'd always have to watch out for cars were here. We know if they go ahead Like, they know the route to the playground and there's also people are more cognizant of kids riding their bikes because I guess it's more normalized here. I guess if you want to say it that way, you know, you see a lot more kids, taking the bus, the the trains, even riding their scooters and bikes to and from kindergarten to school, where in the US, it's not as much like that just because I don't know if it's a, it's a safety thing. It's a trust thing.

08:58 Expat 1: I think there's just a little more trust put in what I've seen, as German kids just the way that they go to school and they know the route. I mean, obviously, their parents are still there to look out for them, but I think they're a little more cognizant of where they're going, and what to look out for as well.

09:18 Florian: So, You are less safety concerned when you leave your kids alone when they go on a walk or play with kids outside then in the United States.

09:29 Expat 1: Oh yeah. Yeah. Like, you know, you wouldn't there's two kids that live in our one that lives in our apartment building and then, one that lives right next. And they're always we, I've seen them walking around town. I've seen them, you know, playing outside and their mom is nowhere to be found, but not to say that she doesn't know where they are, but they obviously know where they're going and then, you know what they're doing and where to go.

09:53 Expat 1: Where I think it's a little more walking and a little more. Yeah, non trust in the US just because things are a little further apart or Just depending on what area you're living in. It also isn't the safest but I mean we are in a plenty safe area, we just never the kids, just never rode their bikes wherever they wanted.

10:15 Florian: Hmm. Okay interesting. Did this surprise you?

10:19 Expat 1: Um, no because, you know, I'm talking with my wife. She's always said that they used to take the bus to school. They used to walk to school. I mean, I walked to school but that was all through neighborhoods where, You know, it seems like kids are walking through. I mean, could be walking through parts of the city. As well, you know, taking the train to school as well.

10:42 Expat 1: So, I mean, it does surprise me seeing it more. Just that it seems like there's more of an independence per se rather than a hand holding and watching everywhere you're going.

10:57 Florian: Very interesting.

11:14 Expat 1: Yeah. I mean if you look at it, the when, when I was younger probably 10 to 14, It was kind of that same way where I lived across from a pool club, and I would literally just go across the street during the day and be there all day, and my parents obviously knew where I was, but I feel like with just the way that society is and the US where it's a little more.

11:45 Expat 1: I guess people are a little more cautious just because of you hear about, you know, trafficking human trafficking and you know, kidnapping and stuff and even with I don't think it's, we never worried about it, but, you know, a big thing in the US is the gun laws and just the freedom to have a gun as well. so, it's really It's really you're watching out a lot more. Like I still walk around at night and I think it's just a weariness because it's so quiet, and it's so dark here, that I'll find myself looking behind my shoulder even though I know, That I've seen people around walking, you know what I mean? Like, it's not just It's more of a it's a culture thing that's that's getting used to as well.

12:34 Florian: Okay, understand. Very interesting. Let's get to another question, third one, especially focusing on your process of let's say integration. For example, I mean, you made the first step I guess in coming to our hockey club and to meet people, how did this decision evolve overall, Did you know that? Like, Okay the best way for me is to or to find friends or new people is maybe through sports, or was it more of a? Okay let's see how that all goes thing?

13:20 Expat 1: Um, yeah, so I play in the US, I play hockey and golf. So, you know, it's pretty easy. I'd say, for hockey, it's a little different. I don't know if we talked like in hockey, you usually play with a group of buddies and it's a game once a week, so it's barely happy. So you're just meaning to play and, you know, you go out and have beers after whereas golf you can get paired up with random people, so it's nice meeting them there.

13:45 Expat 1: I'm coming here. I knew I wanted to play hockey. Just because I've skated my whole life, basically, and I knew there was opportunities there so it was more of a wanting to skate knowing that I knew I had to learn a language either way.

14:06 Expat 1: And I feel like with hockey, both hockey and golf. you know, as you've seen, I don't know exactly what's what's being said, most of the time, you know, within the drills and the explanations, but it's it's kind of universal seeing what's being drawn and then It was pretty easy to make friends there because Usually, with hockey and golf they're pretty open and welcoming and you know, if you're Decent good.

14:36 Expat 1: You're gonna, you know, be able to play and people get along with you. It's not like you're gonna get yelled at right off the get go as well, I'd say.

14:44 Florian: Okay, I understand. So you would say that the biggest challenge coming here was language in the first place.

14:51 Expat 1: Oh, for sure. Yeah, the language and just the Yeah, I would say the language is obviously the most difficult part, you know, going to the grocery store, you're seeing the same stuff and you know I've picked up here a couple words here and there to be able to order at the the deli counter, but it's still like questioning myself and making sure I know what I'm asking as well. Before.

15:18 Florian: What would you say was another challenge besides language? You don't have to answer immediately, you can think about this, but what's something else besides language? That you find difficult.

15:33 Expat 1: Um, I don't know if it's necessarily a difficult thing. It's just a It's a I don't want to put this in the wrong way but it's more of like a Feeling like you're looked at in a way just because of race.

15:50 Expat 1: Like, I don't think I have seen another Asian person here yet maybe one or two, which isn't, you know that I'm not saying that's a race thing, a racist thing, it's just you're thinking about that, too. Like, for example, we're at the park or the playground and there was a lady walking a dog. And she was talking to me and she spoke a couple words of English, but then my wife was walking and As I've said, I'm South Korean and she was like, Oh, your husband, the Chinese one.

16:25 Expat 1: So it's I think it's just a It's, it's also a minor way of looking. But it's not it's nothing that has caused any problems. In terms of, you know, people coming up to you or saying everything to you. Everything has been everyone has been Super welcoming. What another thing be? I think it's also. The way that you're paid in Europe, in terms of getting paid once a month. And all your bills are going off on the first of the month or relatively close. Whereas, We get paid twice or every two weeks. so, it's a different way of thinking, money, wise and planning out that way as well and looking forward to Where you have your big expenses knowing that in a monthly situation, you have to plan for that whole month, not just for that two weeks, I guess you can put it as well.

17:26 Florian: And did you know this payment schedule before?

17:28 Expat 1: Yeah, yeah, I knew about it before like we did I we've done our research or I've done my research on it but it's still. It was still an odd thing, because we arrived in the mid of December and I mean, we had moved money over from the US but we didn't get paid until the end of January. So you know if we hadn't done our research, it could have been an even bigger issue to Make do and make, you know, rent payments and all that because everything is basically first of the month here's your bills they're all being taken out and You're done with that situation but it's also the planning issue as well.

18:09 Florian: How did you approach this research?

18:13 Expat 1: Um, it was a lot of online research, just trying to figure out. Trying to guesstimate taxes. Look at our bills. You know, obviously we knew what bills we were gonna have and then it's more deciding if we want to do a monthly quarterly by monthly,

or by annual or annual payment, I think So, I think that took a little bit of adjusting, because I'm used to going week by week payment wise where I'm now looking at monthly versus what's left over after all necessary bills.

19:01 Florian: So you said online research? Do you think that there could have been anything that made this experience about this research easier for you? I mean it can be summarized as bureaucracy or financial planning difficulties, I guess, because of a different system easier for you?

19:27 Expat 1: um, no, You know, obviously with her family being here for so long if we did have any questions, It was easy to ask. But in thinking, you know, another issue has been that. The banking system is very different. here, compared to the US, because like I don't even have a debit card or a credit card yet because I don't have my visa So if I were to come here alone, I'm sure I could work something out or there is ways to figure it out, but I still don't have a card in my name. Where if once we got married, it was easy to just Change in the name and add that the person to that account. Whereas, here you have, you have to contact your bank, fill out the forms, and then wait for the card, and they also need the visa approval, or Verification as well.

20:33 Florian: Okay. Understand. So you received your support from people that you knew here the parents of your wife?

20:45 Expat 1: Yeah. Yeah, for that. For that instance, it was more figuring out. And also my wife calling the bank or the main bank in her area, or her town, I guess you call. County. She called them to figure out what we needed to do as well. um, and then just you know minor things like, for example, we were Getting paper statements in the US from her bank account here. And we were getting these random charges every time come to find out that we're charged. Every time you swipe the card. Now since we didn't have online banking, Every time like you do a transaction like sending money to Amazon. For example, it was like, 25 cents per transaction. So that was a different way of thinking versus the US where It's more of a minimum balance, you have to hold to avoid the monthly fees. Whereas here there are monthly fees for Doing the banking as well as transactions, if you don't have paperless banking.

21:52 Florian: Okay. Okay. Understand. Can you remember a situation where you were a little bit amazed by your research or whatever process that you went through? This whole integration process? It may be something related to the financial side or I don't know, something else. Maybe when you had to deal with some authorities. Anywhere amazed like, Oh wow, I'm amazed how easy that was or how easy I I found information about that.

22:28 Expat 1: Um, I think it was getting the visa was relatively easy. They had they, you know, Teresa my wife contacted the The. County or ravenberg. And then they asked what we needed. We had an appointment scheduled We had paperwork filled out and we literally went in there. They verified all my paperwork. And they said, Here you go, you'll have this in two weeks, Here's your temporary card. I think that was pretty easy in terms of getting everything done. I also think, you know, the healthcare system. Is a lot. easier here because of like, for example, we got glasses and we literally went in They didn't have us, fill out any forms. We had to fill out like one piece of paper. But it wasn't filling out like 20 different health, care forms, and Even going to the the doctor.

You don't have to fill out forms. You literally just give them Your card, which has, I believe the chip in it and it shows all your information. For your health care as well and they just look it up there and it's no questions. It's not no questions asked but it's a lot simpler than it is in the US. I think integrating there wise is the healthcare system as well as we haven't seen any issues, I mean, I've heard it's a little more. Of a delay where you have to plant things out a little more, just because of the availability.

23:58 Expat 1: Maybe it's because where we live and as well, because smaller town, But I think that's been a nice. Pleasant surprises. How easy it has been to get everything like doctor's appointments, dental appointments. I care all that as well.

24:15 Florian: Mm-hmm. Okay, thank you. Perfect. I would like to get back to the point challenges specifically asking about your your process or challenges concerning to connecting with people from Germany. And maybe also people that also came here new like people from the United States. Did you meet any Did you find any other people that came here from other countries?

24:48 Expat 1: um, yeah, so I also play Cornhole and I went to a tournament in Trier. And I actually met some people that were from the US but they were in the Netherlands, for believe it was the Air Force. So that's been an easy way to connect, but in terms of connecting with people locally, you know, even if you take hockey out of it. So if we take hockey and golf out of it, It.

25:24 Expat 1: I don't think I've really connected with anyone else besides talking, with my neighbors, for, maybe five to 10 minutes, but it's not like we've done. We've gone out for drinks or really hung out, more than that. It's more of just the casual. Hello. And how are you? I think the difficulty there is just just, I don't know if it's people are just used to their own ways or it's just I'm not you know putting myself out there per se but I haven't really connected with anyone else beside outside of hockey golf and cornhole.

26:04 Florian: Mm-hmm.

26:04 Expat 1: Even with, you know, meeting people from the US or from different countries as well.

26:13 Florian: I'd like to ask maybe a little bit, private question. So you don't have to answer this, but do you think that you not connecting with any locals besides hockey Cornell or golf, is something that you're missing right now?

26:31 Expat 1: without them I don't really think it is something I'm missing because it seems like It's an older crowd like, where we live and stuff. Like I've seen some young people and some You know, I've seen moms with kids at the playground and said hello but I think it's just It's not something I'm missing as well, I guess you could say. like, I enjoy, we went to a soccer game. In Cologne. With a couple buddies.

27:05 Expat 1: And I think that atmosphere was that atmosphere was fun where I like to be in an atmosphere where it's I guess you could say it's more of the common interest rather than just like trying to meet Meet someone randomly if that makes sense.

27:23 Florian: Uh-huh. okay, I understand Okay. Last couple of questions. This is one is about your your general interest as I described before when I made my introduction. We're developing an app basically. So this is how I hold Master Thesis project, and it's it kind of has the aim to facilitate a newcomers integration into new host cities by connecting them with locals or other newcomers in this process and like to know from you, if you would generally be interested in such an application,

28:06 Expat 1: yeah, I think it'd be nice to, to have, you know, with it was nice with hockey, being able to In terms of a general interest you could put like you know sports and then you could break it down based on if you like to watch sports play sports or it's like a casual you know playing tennis on the side kind of thing. um, and then in terms of like, even like finding a gym to go to or Finding a gym partner. Someone to just, you know, be able to bounce ideas off of as well. I think is a is more of a thing in my mind. And just, I guess socialization, you know, getting out there and trying, you know, once you try to learn the language it's easier to probably get out there and talk or try to talk with people that Generally comfortable, with rather than just meeting up with.

29:05 Expat 1: You know, someone new at a dinner table or, you know, just for a casual coffee, I guess you could say as well.

29:13 Florian: Mm-hmm. So you could imagine a feature that connects you based on similar interests, for example, sports, and then matches you. With people that also want to play golf on a Saturday evening in noise, for example?

29:27 Expat 1: Right. Exactly even you know going like we went to the driving range and you know, that was a more social that was. It wasn't as stressful as playing a regular round of golf or even just going to like a tennis court and, you know, playing for hitting around for an hour stuff like that. um, I think it's nice and it's also I guess you could put a cultural.

29:51 Expat 1: Just to learn like, restaurants in the area. And places to go. In terms of like, you know, you obviously have your touristy places to go, but it would also be nice to see more of the stuff that a lot of the tourists, don't see when you're in different places.

30:13 Florian: That's pretty interesting. Because I see this myself as well. When I moved to Lisbon I didn't want to go to the tourist places but want to go to the real Portuguese restaurants which I was unable to find in the first weeks and then I got to know people that were living there for a longer time than I was and then they showed me. But it would have been nice to have kind of like a resource base. So maybe get a starting point somewhere.

30:42 Expat 1: yeah, just said no kind of the general spots because, you know, in the US you have so many chains and even fast food restaurants, it's easy to go somewhere, new, or to do research about it, but a lot of the times, it's Chain restaurants that people are seeing are good, but you're not getting. I don't know if there's an authentic food in the US but you're not getting that authentic food feel or that like Like good feel like for example, do not. I've had.

31:12 Expat 1: Multiple Döner Kebabs now in different areas. But I still haven't found one that's as good as where she is from. For example. So it'd be nice to know. Like what's Good about one place versus the other.

31:26 Florian: Okay. Oh interesting. Going back to the whole idea of an app, I'd like to know if you would be willing to pay for such an app,

31:36 Expat 1: That's the thing. That's the big question is, I don't know if I would only because of. How easy it has been to reach out to golf courses. And they've connected me with someone who actually moved to the US and was from Germany. So he was in a similar situation and then of hockey, I think. It was the same thing, you know, where you meet guys, and then they're willing if, for the most part to talk to you about where they're from, what they do, what their interests are as well. But in the general sense, I think if I was brand new coming over saying, Let's say I just play tennis or didn't know anyone. I think I would but I don't know how much I'd probably pay. Maybe. On a monthly basis for the first say three to six months. But I don't know how long I would pay after that. Because then you feel like you can connect and you hopefully make connections from that where you don't need. The app to kind of match you up with people as well.

32:54 Florian: Okay. Makes sense. Speaking of the last question now. You, how long are you planning to stay here with your family?

33:07 Expat 1: Three years.

33:08 Florian: Three years. Okay. So, what's your plan or your goals for the next one to two years. Can answer that in any direction.

33:18 Expat 1: so, the plan is get the kids obviously. We came here in December. So we thought we were going to be able to get the kids into daycare or kindergarten. But that isn't happening until August, so I think it's that's the main goal. Get them to start integrating themselves because I have them during the day and they're not really speaking German, they're not really interacting with other kids who speak solely German right now.

33:48 Expat 1: So I think that's the the main goal for the kids for me it's to really learn the language, and try to find a job, but the caveat with the job is, I don't know if it's gonna be something that's remote per se where you're still able to speak 100% English or if it's trying to get something where it's going to be, English speaking German job. If that makes sense. But then it's also just to travel see different countries within Europe and just really embrace the culture. And see, as much as we can within Germany outside of Germany all around as well.

34:39 Florian: Interesting. So you said that you were here for three years when I would ask you to, Where do you see yourself in five years? You would answer in America again?

34:51 Expat 1: yeah, I could see us being here for three and a half, maybe a fourth year. Like, for example, since we moved here in December, I could see us moving back closer to June, or July just because of the way the housing market is. And to keep the kids in school as long as we can without interrupting that as well. But I do not see it going past that, unless, obviously, something big changes because it's all, it's also a work contract. It's not just a work. As long as you want, but she has a three year contract with group of Ford Germany.

35:36 Florian: Okay. I don't have anything left. I'm very thankful for your time, This concludes the interview and it was very, very valuable for us. I think we can make a lot of progress based on your interview today to help us develop the mobile application that we're kind of planning in our head and on paper.

36:01 Expat 1: Yep. Yep, no problem.

36:46 Florian: Cool, perfect. Again, Expat 1, thank you very much. It was very helpful. I guess see you on Monday practice.

36:59 Expat 1: Yeah, sounds good.

37:00 Florian: Right?

37:00 Expat 1: No problem.

37:00 Florian: So cool.

37:00 Expat 1: Let me know if you need anything else.

37:06 Florian: Perfect. Have a nice Saturday with the kids later.

37:08 Expat 1: Thanks. You too.

37:09 Florian: Okay, Expat 1.

37:09 Expat 1: Have a good day.

37:10 Florian: Thank you. Bye.

### **Appendix 1.5: Transcript 3, Interview with C. (Category: Local and Refugee Worker)**

1. What problems do refugees face? Which problem makes integration the most difficult?
  - Language and script are still the biggest problem: depending on the country, most (younger) people can speak English well, but the further east you go (Turkey, Syria), the fewer people can speak English (unless they are highly educated). People who only speak Arabic or Russian, for example, cannot read or write Latin letters, which creates additional difficulties in learning the language. Language is the key to integration, and the longer people wait, the more demotivated they become to integrate.
  - The second major problem is cultural differences, structures, and how everything works in the new country, potentially on a new continent (e.g., Syria does not have health insurance but rather free but low-quality hospitals; if you want better food, you have to pay privately). Another example is our pension system, which does not exist in Syria. The younger generation takes care of the elderly on an individual basis. Newcomers have no idea how the system works here.

- Where and how can they get this information?
  - The social welfare office is usually the first point of contact, which then refers them to organizations like "Flüchtlinge willkommen in Düsseldorf" (Refugees Welcome in Düsseldorf).
  - Cultural differences pose a real challenge for refugees in terms of organizational and societal differences.
- 2. Honestly, do you believe that refugees have difficulties in connecting with others or locals? If yes, why? If not, why not?
  - Yes, definitely. It takes a support network of locals and newcomers to help with integration.
- 3. How motivated are locals to help, and what factors determine whether they engage voluntarily or not? Who is most likely to help? Targeting
  - It heavily depends on the income level of the respective region or city. In Düsseldorf, there are 1,000 times more volunteers engaging than in Duisburg (lower income level). However, this also means that refugees placed in lower-income regions (where rents are lower) have no contacts with Germans to practice speaking German. They often live in "ghettos" because they cannot afford to live where the local language is spoken. This leads to refugees often living in a "foreigner bubble." a. Students are a very active group of locals who help refugees, offering various services (such as accompanying them to the doctor or providing other assistance). They have the luxury of time to engage socially. b. Retirees also like to get involved because they have both time and money.
- 4. How do volunteers connect with refugees?
  - Through joint events organized by "Flüchtlinge willkommen in Düsseldorf." Often, there is a trigger like a problem with a letter, and then I go to an official place like the office of the aid organization. This happens a lot through word-of-mouth propaganda and flyers. The communication is not always on an equal footing because many Germans have a condescending attitude when "helping."
- 5. How do refugees find employment, and with which organizations do they work together?
  - For example, with educational institutions, the social welfare office, and then the job center. There are also social impact startups that act as recruitment agencies specifically for refugees, such as social-bee.de, and work together with official institutions.
- 6. What kinds of jobs can refugees take on, and how qualified are they? Is there a pattern?
  - Typically, they take on low-skilled jobs that do not require formal training or specialized skills.
  - Is vocational training an option? Individuals under 25 years old are encouraged to undergo vocational training. After 25 years, they may consider retraining, which may be financially supported.
  - The further path, whether in terms of jobs or vocational training, also depends on the individual's previous education or skills, and importantly, if they can provide documents to verify them. Germany has a sophisticated system for recognizing qualifications, such as certificates or professional degrees. (<https://www.validierungsverfahren.de/startseite>)

7. Industries and companies where refugees are employed:
  - Warehousing and logistics: Amazon, seasonal work through short-time employment contracts or temporary work, Production sector (food production), Gastronomy (religious dietary restrictions may be a challenge if pork or alcohol is processed in the kitchen), Hotel cleaning (workers from Bulgaria and Romania), Construction industry (targeting Romania and Bulgaria), Many Turkish employers prefer to hire refugees from Syria or Afghanistan
8. Integration process and procedure when someone arrives from another country:
  - Refugees arrive and usually register at the place of their arrival. They are initially registered, with exceptions if they already know someone. In the past, refugees were assigned to cities for redistribution.
  - Refugees receive a provisional authorization certificate from the immigration office, similar to a passport document, indicating their asylum-seeking status.
  - The social welfare office decides whether to grant asylum to the refugee, and they receive financial support and housing. Refugees wait for an interview with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, where the decision on asylum is made (in extreme cases, this interview process can take up to 3 years, but nowadays people gain access to language courses quickly). Initially, refugees undergo a language assessment and are placed in a course corresponding to their language level.
  - Does everyone have to take a language course?
    - Once refugees receive financial support from the job center, they are required to attend a language course. When their residency status is extended, they must provide evidence of integration efforts. Failure to provide evidence may result in reductions in social benefits.
  - From the moment the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees confirms their status, the social welfare office no longer provides support. At this point, the job center takes over, and refugees become eligible for other benefits such as child benefits, but there is an offsetting of payments between the job center and other institutions.
9. How do refugees connect with new contacts and individuals?
  - Through shared hobbies and interests. Events organized by associations that facilitate activities like hikes, regular meetings, or café gatherings.
  - The idea of registering with sports clubs or creating a directory to provide multilingual access to sports clubs for refugees.
10. Is there Access to the internet and smartphones?
  - Internet is available in accommodations via PCs, and almost everyone has a smartphone to communicate with their home country.
11. What are Existing solutions to connect refugees with locals or other newcomers:
  - "Über den Tellerrand e.V." organizes joint activities such as cooking together, emphasizing the bonding aspect of food.
  - "Flüchtlinge Willkommen in Düsseldorf" is an organization that supports refugees.
  - Aid organizations play a significant role as facilitators.

12. How can we reach as many refugees as possible? Which partners should we collaborate with?

- Adult education centers (Volkshochschule) offer language courses and specialized language courses.
- Existing aid organizations and voluntary organizations.
- Language schools that offer courses independently of refugees.
- Possible state assistance.
- Potential collaboration with "Über den Tellerrand e.V."
- Partnerships with associations that would benefit from increased participation.

C's. statement: "Refugees are eager to get to know Germans because contact with locals greatly accelerates their integration process. If we communicate that they can meet Germans through our app, according to their statement, every refugee would download the app."

**Appendix 1.6: Transcript 4, A. (Category: Newcomer)**

1. Can you tell me something about yourself? How old are you, where do you live and where do come from, and what do you currently do?

*My name is Artem I am 30, and I live in Frankfurt. I work as a full-stack developer for an E-commerce agency and before that lived in Russia for seven years. Before that I lived in Kazakhstan where I was born.*

2. When did you come to Frankfurt and what was that experience like? Why did you come here?

*I came to Frankfurt in 2020, mainly for the job but also for the quality of life because it is a lot better here than where I come from. The experience in the first months was special because it was during COVID-19, so nothing was like it usually is. But I felt like I was well prepared for actually moving here. I got a lot of the information by looking through forums like Facebook and Reddit so there was nothing that surprised me about Frankfurt. The things that I read online were helpful, especially which parts of the city are good to rent a flat.*

3. Did you face any challenges during this process, when moving to Frankfurt, specifically when integrating into a new city and connecting with locals or people in a similar situation to yours?

*Not really, in Frankfurt it is easy because everybody speaks English, and I rarely have issues with the language. There were only a few situations where I was struggling with the language barrier. Otherwise, I have been connecting with locals mostly through neighbours, through work and I have used Tinder as well. One thing is, that it is problematic to find a doctor. When calling them they mostly only speak German, and it is hard to get an appointment. So, then I rely on using their booking services online for an appointment. For this it would be a lot easier if I spoke German.*

4. Were there any aspects of that process that went well or where you received sufficient support?

*My company supported me with administrative stuff for the working permit etc. and they also have introduced language courses for us.*

5. What do you think would have made this process easier?

*I wished there would be more online services and apps for German administrative offices because there is not a lot of information online about everyday things. I also would have been more interested in connecting with people who are in the same situation because it's easier to connect with them and to share experiences about the same struggles. During COVID it was even harder but making connections online is always possible.*

6. As you know, we are developing an app to facilitate newcomers' integration into their host cities by connecting with locals and/or other newcomers with this process. Would you be interested in such an app? What features, would this app need for you to use it?

*I think Facebook is not very handy for that, there are private groups but there is a lot of spam and stuff. So, it would be nice to have an app that filters out abusive content and stuff that is not relevant. And I would have been interested in an event app to know what's going on.*

*I think there is still room to improve for me in terms of integration especially through the Language, and it would be more difficult if I lived in a smaller town where people don't speak English.*

## **Appendix 1.7: Transcript 5, Interview with N. (Category: Newcomer)**

**Disclaimer:** As Natalia lives in Germany, speaks neither German nor English and does not use online meetings due to her age, the questions were sent via Whatsapp and the answers also received via Whatsapp. They were translated through DeepL and the translations were verified through a friend who is native in Russian.

1. Can you tell me something about yourself? How old are you, where do you live and where do come from, and what do you currently do?

*My name is Omelchenko Natalia, I'm 68 years old, I am a pensioner, I lived in Ukraine, in Kiev, I come from Uzbekistan, Samarkand, by profession I am a confectioner. I am a Christian, currently living in Germany, in the city Darmstadt. With my age I cannot work anymore, but I go to intensive courses in the German language.*

2. When did you come to Germany and what was that experience like?

*I moved to Darmstadt, Germany, on March 23rd, 2022. The country made a wonderful impression: the country impressed me with its beauty, monuments, landscape,*

*cleanliness and order in the streets, a clear schedule of traffic. Locals are kind, calm, friendly, educated, often helped me in difficult situations, despite the language barrier.*

3. Did you face any challenges during this process, when moving to Germany, specifically when integrating into a new city and connecting with locals or people in a similar situation to yours?

*Difficulties arose in the design of documents for residence, registration, obtaining insurance, bank cards, and then-visiting doctors. I had to wait long for the appointments.*

4. Were there any aspects of that process that went well or where you received sufficient support?

*In Germany I get enough support, both financial and morally. I am very satisfied and grateful to the conditions in which I now live.*

5. What do you think would have made this process easier?

*My opinion: there is less bureaucracy in paperwork and visiting doctors.*

6. We are developing an app to facilitate newcomers' integration into their host cities by connecting with locals and/or other newcomers with this process. Would you be interested in such an app? What features, would this app need for you to use it?

*I would be interested in an app for easier integration. I would be happy with a chat room.*

### **Original:**

1) Меня зовут Омельченко Наталия, мне 68 лет, я пенсионерка. Я живу в Украине, в городе Киеве, родом из Узбекистана, города Самарканда. По профессии я кондитер. Я христианка. В настоящее время проживаю в Германии, в городе Дармштат. По возрасту работать не могу, но я хожу на интенсивные курсы по изучению немецкого языка. 2) В Германию, г. Дармштат я приехала 23 марта 2022 года. Страна произвела замечательное впечатление: красота городов, памятники, ландшафт, чистота и порядок на улицах, четкое расписание движения транспорта. Местные жители добрые, спокойные, приветливые, образованные; часто мне помогали в сложной ситуации, несмотря на языковой барьер. 3) Трудности возникали при оформлении документов на проживание, прописку, получению страховки, банковской карточки, а потом - посещение врачей. Приходилось долго ждать термины. 4) В Германии я получаю достаточную поддержку, как материальную, так и моральную. Я очень довольна и благодарна тем условиям, в которых я сейчас живу. 5) Мое мнение: чтобы было меньше бюрократии в оформлении документов и посещении врачей. 6) Меня заинтересовало приложение для облегчения интеграции. Меня устроил бы чат.

## **Appendix 1.8: Transcript 6, Interview with S. (Category: Local)**

1. How are the buddies at SPEAK connected?

*There is a Portuguese basic WhatsApp group with 90 people and a general group for SPEAK buddies with 250 people, but these are not always used to exchange sometimes people post random stuff there. I use it, whenever someone asks a question or needs help with preparing a course. If I can help them, I ask them to message them privately.*

2. Would you be willing to help SPEAK participants & newcomers with specific questions in a forum within the new app?

*Yes, I think a forum would lower barrier to answer questions rather than WhatsApp groups. I also don't have a WhatsApp group for every course, because it is a lot of effort to ask everyone for their numbers and also I don't particularly like to "invade" their private lives.*

3. What do you think of a promotion feature for group activities and supporting local businesses within the new app?

*I think promotions would also be nice to have! I like the idea. However, I had a language group with a lot of older participants and they were initially struggling to understand the current app. Since they had no idea about apps it was hard for them at first but they had some time and still managed to use the app. I don't know if they would understand a promotion feature.*

4. Can you give some insights about complications of being a buddy at SPEAK?

*The support materials for buddies are not enough, and I think a lot of buddies are not following the SPEAK course materials. I also changed the materials to make the more appropriate to my participants and basically created everything from scratch and it took me a lot of time. Also, teaching more about the Portuguese life experiences is not on the buddy guide. Sometimes it just feels like you are a little on your own with keeping the students engaged and creating the material even though the contact people from SPEAK are available and helpful.*

5. And what do you like about it? What are the advantages?

*I can make my own hours flexibly which is great. And teaching Portuguese comes naturally and while teaching, I am also learning new things about my own language and culture in every lecture. It's also nice to help people on a more personal note, whenever I get the chance to do so.*

## **Appendix 1.9: Transcript 7, Interview with Anonymous (Category: Newcomer)**

1. So maybe just to start us off, can you just briefly explain or tell me something about yourself. How old are you? Where are you from, where do you currently live, what are you currently doing?

*Yes. So I'm [Interviewee Name]. I'm from Iran, 29 years old. I'm living in Germany now and I'm a management consultant in Germany. I've been in Europe for quite a few years and I that was a brief brackground about my migration.*

2. Jumping into your migration, can you maybe just explain your experience? So what was the process like? I think you first migrated to the Netherlands and then to Germany. So what were you doing in both of those countries and what were the processes like?

*Yeah, exactly. So in 2016, I think it was 2016, September, August that I decided to start the journey and looked into some schools that I could apply to it, or Rotterdam School of Management, sent in my applications, got approvals, got admission and in August 2017 or shortly after I moved and migrated to Rotterdam for my education. I spent four years there and then I got a job offer from a German company, the one that I'm working at now and I then migrated from Netherlands to Germany. Obviously it was two different things. The two different migrations were absolutely different. One was a drastic change. The other one was an incremental change. But nonetheless, each had its own learnings and challenges and what that.*

3. Perfect. So following up on that, maybe you can tell me why those experiences were different. So what was it like in the Netherlands compared to Germany?

*So the Netherlands one was obviously a huge and drastic change for me because I was coming from a totally different culture and also a very distant place in Europe. I was also younger, so there were a lot of new things, the whole way of living was new. I was speaking a different language. Consistently and constantly. Whereas the change that I made from Netherlands to Germany was incremental because the countries are very close culturally, I already accustomed to living in Europe already by then, four years even more and working in Europe and whatnot. So for me the the change was. I didn't really feel it that much. Let's say yes, Germany is different from Netherlands. There were things that I had to learn about Germany, but the actual challenge was when I moved from Iran to the Netherlands or to Europe basically altogether.*

4. Amazing, understood. So the challenge is you were speaking of occured specifically in the Netherlands. You briefly touched upon it. It was mostly cultural and from a language perspective but were there any other challenges you faced or can you maybe describe what the difference was in culture, which was challenging for you?

*So I think there was. There were a host of things that we had to overcome. Any expat or migrant needs to overcome the language barrier obviously, which for me was not that significant because I think my English was decent and in Netherlands many people do speak English. On the surface level, you think language is not a huge issue for me. But later when you want to actually get integrated into a society, then you feel like, OK, you need the local language. So that's that. Then you have the cultural differences. Obviously many things are done differently, perceived differently in Europe compared to what it is back at home. So that was something that I had to learn. And again living in a community of expats or internationals, you learn the international way of doing things, not necessarily the Dutch way of doing things or the local way of doing things. So that's also there. And then there are a host of challenges when you have with with*

*basically navigating your way around the paperwork, like getting registered, or generally making good decisions with your finances, with your living conditions, with getting a place and all that stuff, there are a lot of these externalities that are there for you to figure out as an expat and can be quite challenging being a part of. A community which we were international students, that helped, but still I think I made some really bad decisions just because I was totally lost. So probably I could have been on a track for a Dutch passport now, which I'm not on just because I didn't understand the nuances of Dutch law and how it how it is and how to navigate it, what to do with it, where to make it decent to good decision and stuff like that. So yeah, I mean, that's just I think it. Untold part of being an expat, you just don't know many things.*

5. Yeah, amazing stuff. And what do you think that would have made that process a little easier?

*Uh. I think having a really good database of what needs to be done when you enter a country as an expat with good reliable information, decent level of support. And a well integrated community around it would be something very useful.*

6. Perfect. Yeah. And part of that process, obviously, so you spoke about the challenges, but were there any things which went really well where you thought, OK, this was easier than expected?

*Yeah. I think like when I was thinking of going abroad when I was back at home before 2017, it used to be such a huge challenge for me, even though I had already made a huge move within my own country, I left my house at 18. I went to the capital city to live there, study there and whatnot, but still moving abroad to a country as drastically different as Netherlands to Iran. I thought it would be a behemoth for me, but things worked out so I thought the education would be difficult. It worked out, I thought. Making friends would be very difficult. It worked out again. We were a community of expats, all of us. I thought I won't be able to get a place would be super difficult for me it worked out but it was all all thanks to the community that I was in. So I had good friends. I had the the support of my buddies and my peers and whatnot, and within that I managed to succeed in my education, get good places to live in, people to live with, good opportunities in terms of jobs. So that community was really helpful for me. And that that worked well, that worked well.*

7. Of course. Great. And touching upon that community aspect. So what was that community like? Maybe you can briefly describe it, were they locals or other newcomers, people in a similar situation to yours, or even people people who went through that process before.

*Yes. So in my situation it was mostly newcomers. So people who are coming to that school for education, usually non locals. So that part of our experience was similar. We were equally foreign to some concepts but not to all concepts because many of those people were already Europeans, had already traveled around, had already been to Netherlands or from countries next to Netherlands. So in those aspects they were not super foreign, but there were other aspects that we all were equally foreign to. And then we learned it together. Obviously, in the aspects that they already had some expertise in, they were very helpful. For me to navigate to understand the intricacies of the culture and what to do, what not to do, how to behave and that was, that was obviously helpful.*

8. Obviously we've spoken about this before. So what we're trying to do is develop an app which connects people in your situation with other people in a very similar situation or with people who have gone through that process already or even with other locals who are very willing to help. Do you think an app like this would be helpful?

*So I'm debating between an app or a website and I'm debating between understanding which one would be a lot more important or more useful for me. So I think you need an app if you need to refer to a certain piece of information, or a platform repeatedly if you need to refer to it once in a blue moon, then a website would do you know what I mean? So if I just need to understand some legal matters or some programatic stuff, I can just Google it and I ideally that website would be there with that said qualities and then I would get the information I need. How would that app generate enough need for me to visit it regularly for that to justify itself to be on my phone? There should be the need to access it on a constant basis. To use an app or to use something, I feel like there was a need and there was lack of information or community, but it was not on a daily constant basis. It was more like an ad hoc thing that was there and for that maybe a good website would also be helpful for me. I don't know, but then you might say there are additional services offered in the app. Then that might justify the app being on my phone and using it. If that makes any sense, I don't know.*

9. Yeah, absolutely. And I think one just one important thing to highlight is, for example, that you can confirm that both in the Netherlands and when coming to Germany you had somewhat of a Community there or people you could connect with, right?

*Absolutely.*

10. Perfect. And then maybe just finishing off the interview with some of your goals and objectives. So what do you want to do in the next one or two years? So in the near term future and where do you see yourself in five years?

*Getting a bit deep here. Yeah, in the next, I think the next couple years, I still see myself at my current job. Obviously, I would like to get promotions, get a bit better at it. Be in a better position, but in the next five years I will be in a different country. Just for the sake of it, totally new experience and I would be at a slightly different line of work. I wouldn't say drastically different line of work, but slightly different line of work and that country needs to be significantly different from the ones that I have already experienced. So it needs to be something like Australia, the US, Canada, I don't know Dubai, Emirates. So it needs to be super different because I need to experience something different. Or, Japan, I don't know.*

## **Appendix 2: Survey**

### **Appendix 2.1: Survey questions**

1. What is your age? (Under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 54-64, 65+)
2. What is your gender? (Male, Female, Non-binary, Prefer not to say, Other)
3. What is your nationality? (specify)
4. What city do you currently live in? (specify)

5. How long have you been living in the country you currently live in? (0-1, 1-2, 3-5, 5-10, 10+ yrs)
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Less than high school, High school or equivalent, College or associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Doctorate or PhD)
7. What is your current employment status? (Employed full-time, Employed part-time, Self-employed, Unemployed, Student, Retired, Other)
8. What is your proficiency in the language(s) spoken in the local area? (Native, Fluent, Conversational, Basic, None)
9. What other languages do you speak? (specify)
10. A newcomer is someone that lives in the current country less than 10 years, a local is someone that lives in the current country for more than 10 years or is originally from that country. What do you consider yourself as? (Newcomer, Local)
11. If chosen Newcomer:
  - a. Currently, how connected do you feel to locals in your local area? (very connected, connected, somewhat connected, not very connected, not connected at all)
  - b. Have you connected with locals in your local area in the past? (yes, no)
    - i. If selected "Yes" in 11b:
      - How did you connect with locals in your region in the past? (Work/school, Neighbors, Community events, WhatsApp or Facebook Groups or other Social Media), Language groups, Sports, Social associations or aid organisations, Other)
    - ii. If selected "No" in 11b:
      - What has prevented you from connecting with locals in your local area in the past? (Language barriers, cultural differences, Lack of interest, Lack of time, Lack of networking opportunities, Did not know how to connect, Other)
  - c. Would you like to connect with locals in your local area in the future? (yes, no, maybe)
    - i. If selected "Yes" in 11c:
      - Why would you like to connect to locals in your local area in the future? (Make friends and socialize, learn about local culture, learn local language, obtain information and resources such as administrative or organizational etc, exchange experiences, other)
    - ii. If selected "No" in 11c:
      - Why would you not like to connect to locals in your local area in the future? (Lack of interest, lack of time, already connected to newcomers, other)
    - iii. If selected "Maybe" in 11c:
      - What would convince you to connect to locals in your area in the future? (specify)
  - d. Currently, how connected do you feel to newcomers in your local area? (very connected, connected, somewhat connected, not very connected, not connected at all)

- e. Have you connected with newcomers in your local area in the past? (yes, no)
  - i. If selected “Yes” in 11b:
    - How did you connect with newcomers in your region in the past? (Work/school, Neighbors, Community events, WhatsApp or Facebook Groups or other Social Media), Language groups, Sports, Social associations or aid organisations, Other)
  - ii. If selected “No” in 11b:
    - What has prevented you from connecting with newcomers in your local area in the past? (Language barriers, cultural differences, Lack of interest, Lack of time, Lack of networking opportunities, Did not know how to connect, Other)
- f. Would you like to connect with newcomers in your local area in the future? (yes, no, maybe)
  - i. If selected “Yes” in 11c:
    - Why would you like to connect to newcomers in your local area in the future? (Make friends and socialize, learn about local culture, learn local language, obtain information and resources such as administrative or organizational etc, exchange experiences, other)
  - ii. If selected “No” in 11c:
    - Why would you not like to connect to newcomers in your local area in the future? (Lack of interest, lack of time, already connected to newcomers, other)
  - iii. If selected “Maybe” in 11c:
    - What would convince you to connect to newcomers in your area in the future? (specify)

12. If chosen Local:

- a. Currently, how connected do you feel to newcomers in your local area? (very connected, connected, somewhat connected, not very connected, not connected at all)
- b. Have you connected with newcomers in your local area in the past? (yes, no)
  - i. If selected “Yes” in 11b:
    - How did you connect with newcomers in your region in the past? (Work/school, Neighbors, Community events, WhatsApp or Facebook Groups or other Social Media), Language groups, Sports, Social associations or aid organisations, Other)
  - ii. If selected “No” in 11b:
    - What has prevented you from connecting with newcomers in your local area in the past? (Language barriers, cultural differences, Lack of interest, Lack of time, Lack of networking opportunities, Did not know how to connect, Other)
- c. Would you like to connect with newcomers in your local area in the future? (yes, no, maybe)
  - i. If selected “Yes” in 11c:
    - Why would you like to connect to newcomers in your local area in the future? (Make friends and socialize, learn about local

- culture, learn local language, obtain information and resources such as administrative or organizational etc, exchange experiences, other)
- ii. If selected “No” in 11c:
    - Why would you not like to connect to newcomers in your local area in the future? (Lack of interest, lack of time, already connected to newcomers, other)
  - iii. If selected “Maybe” in 11c:
    - What would convince you to connect to newcomers in your area in the future? (specify)
13. Would you be interested in a mobile application that connects you with locals and/or other newcomers? (yes, no, maybe)
- a. If selected “Yes” in 13:
    - i. What do you think is most important the mobile application should have? (specify)
  - b. If selected “No” in 13:
    - i. Why are you not interested? (specify)
  - c. If selected “Maybe” in 13:
    - i. What would convince you to use the app? (specify)
14. Please bring in the order the following features from very interesting (rank 1) to not interesting at all (rank 7). (Events, Groups based on common interest, Individual contact matching, Chat, Group-Chat, Activities, Find contacts around me)

## Appendix 2.2: Survey results

# Building Meaningful Relationships

139

Responses

10:45

Average time to complete

Active

Status

---

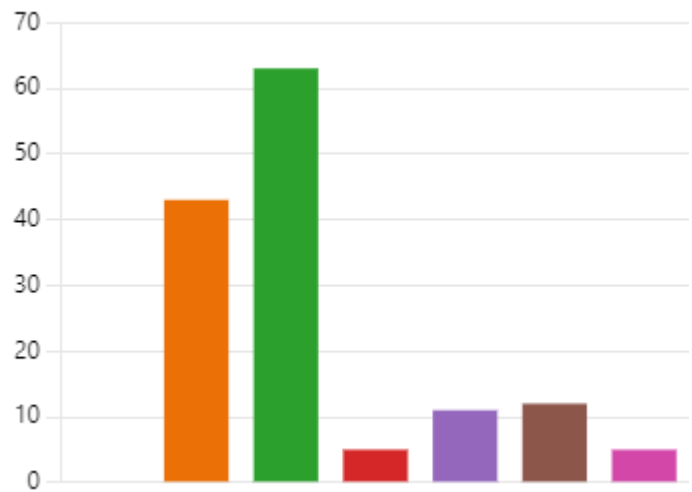
I agree that the data I submit will only be processed for research purposes in context of the master's thesis

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> I agree	139
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> I disagree	0



### 1. What is your age?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Under 18	0
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> 18-24	43
<span style="color: green;">●</span> 25-34	63
<span style="color: red;">●</span> 35-44	5
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> 45-54	11
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> 54-64	12
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> 65+	5



### 2. What is your gender?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Male	74
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Female	64
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Non-binary	1
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Prefer not to say	0
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Other	0



### 3. What is your nationality?

Responses

139

L  
a  
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s

t Responses

"Australian"

"Portuguesa"

"Deutsch"

68 respondents (49%) answered **Deutsch** for this question.



4. What **city** do you currently live in?

139  
Responses

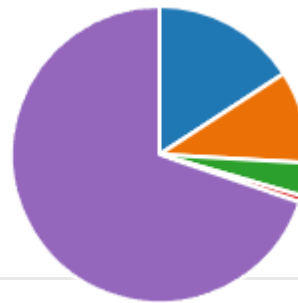
Latest Responses  
"Canberra"  
"Odivelas"  
"Köln"

14 respondents (10%) answered **Lisbon** for this question.

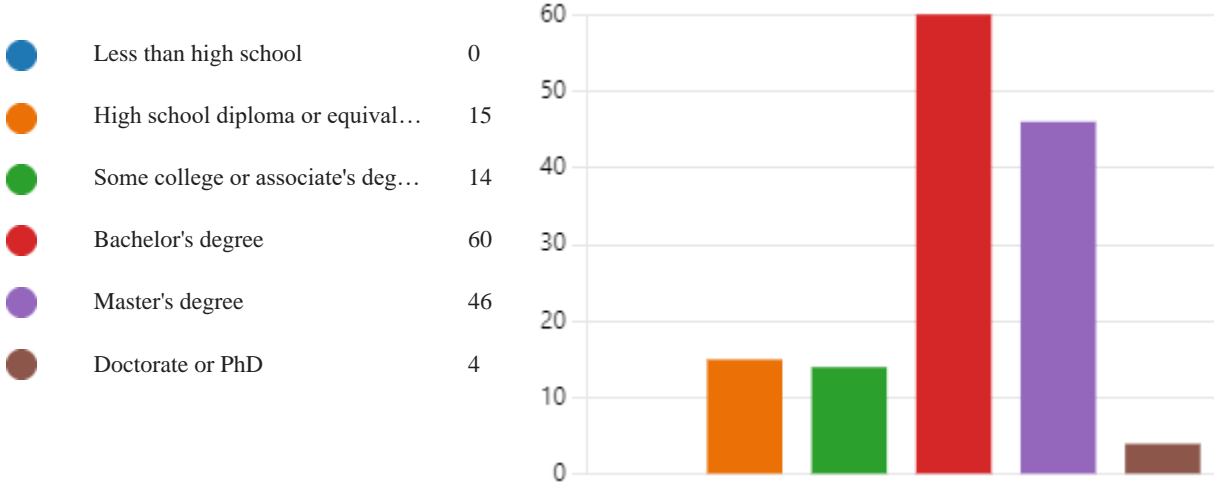


5. How long have you been living in the **country** you currently live in?

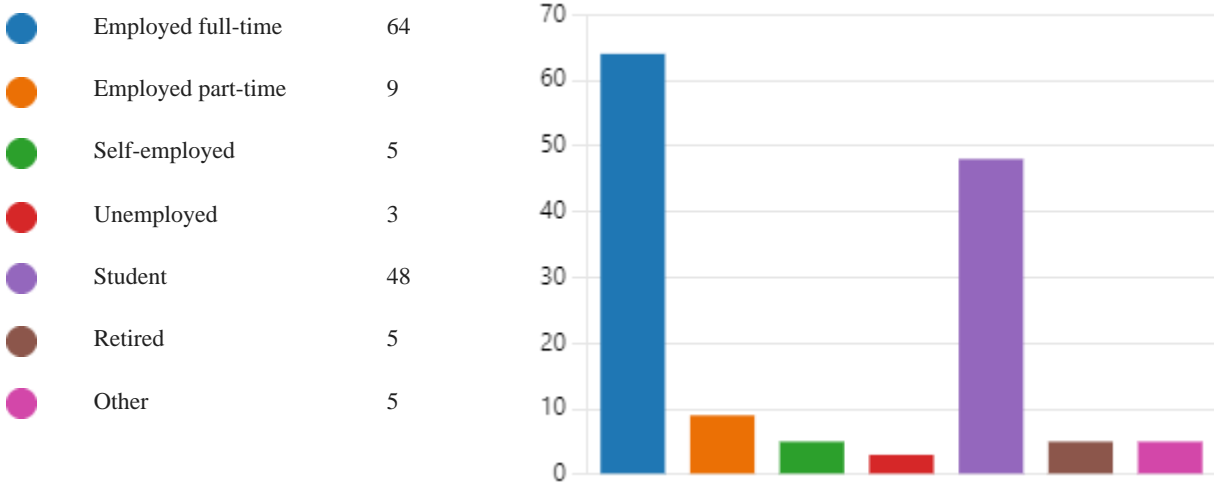
● 0-1 years	22
● 1-2 years	14
● 3-5 years	5
● 5-10 years	1
● 10+ years	97



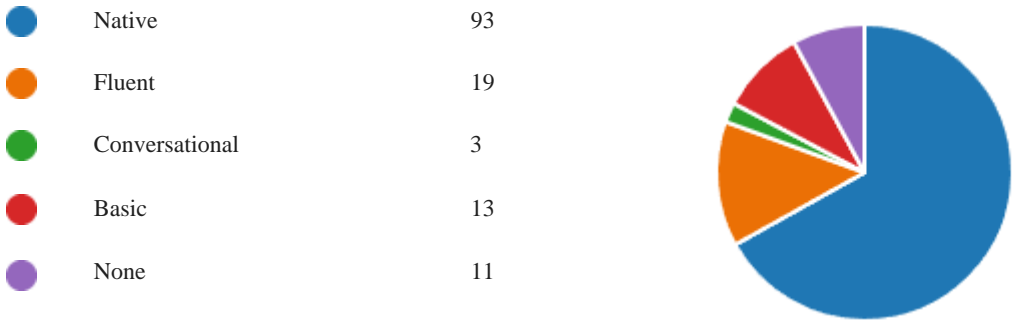
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?



7. What is your current employment status?



8. What is your proficiency in the language(s) spoken in the local area?



9. What other languages do you speak?

139  
Responses

Latest Responses

"Mandarin"

"Nenhuma"

"English"

"Französisch"

"Español"

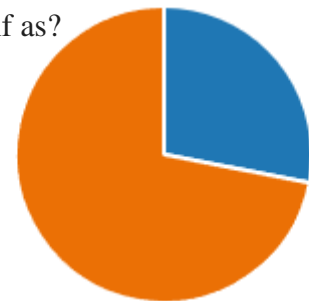
"Deutsch"

75 respondents (54%) answered **Englisch** for this question.



10. Based on the descriptions above, what do you consider yourself as?

- A newcomer 39
- A local 100



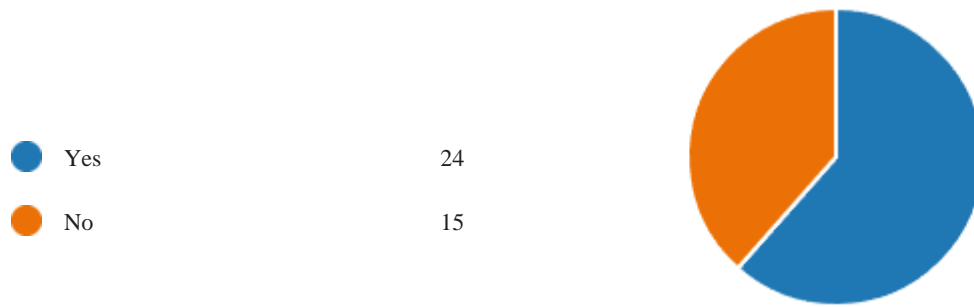
**If chosen Newcomer:**

11a. Currently, how connected do you feel to locals in your local area?

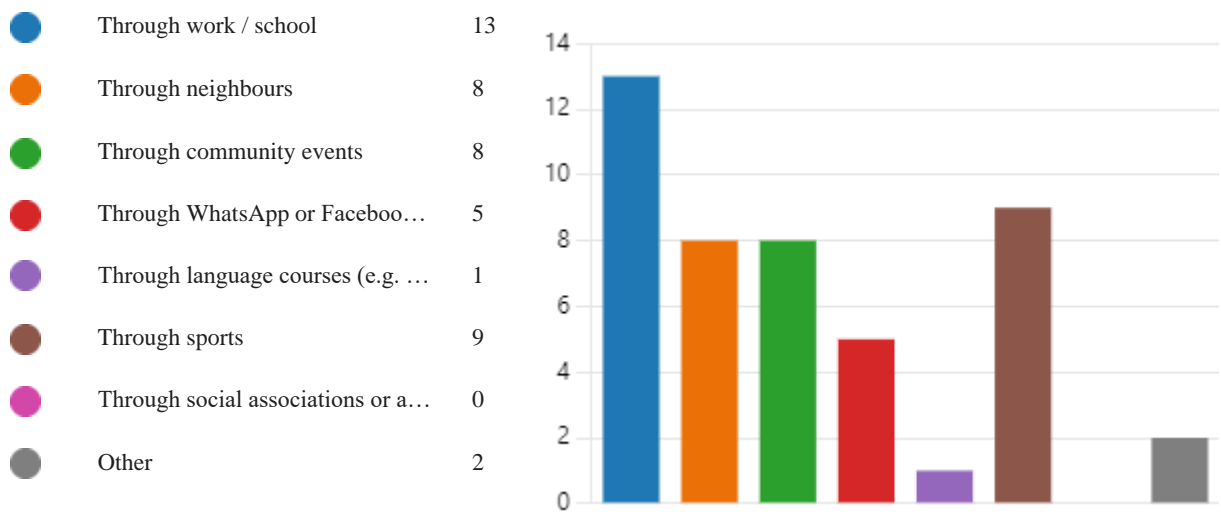
- Very connected 2
- Connected 6
- Somewhat connected 11
- Not very connected 15
- Not connected at all 5



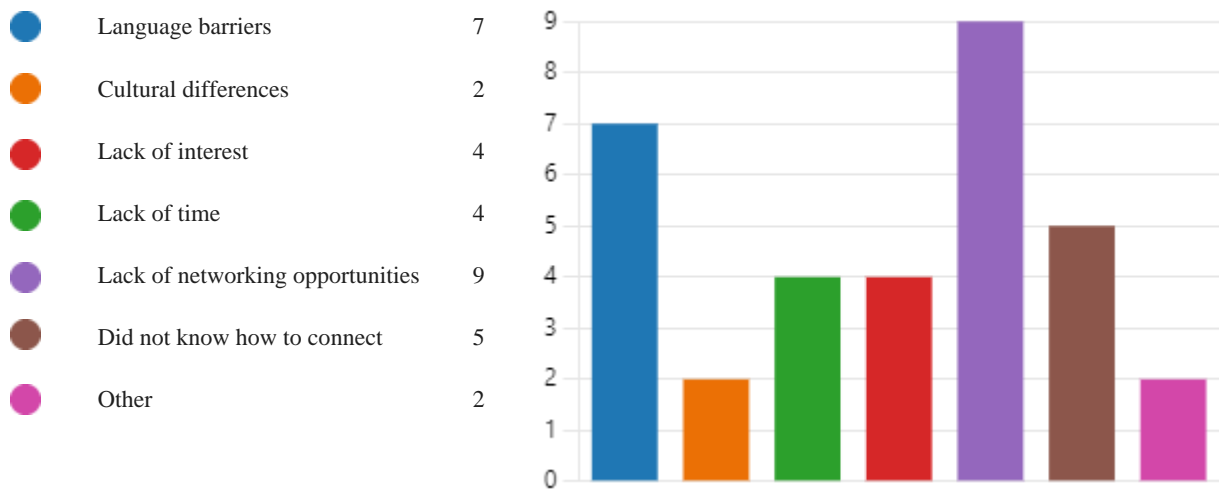
**11b.** Have you connected with locals in your local area in the past?



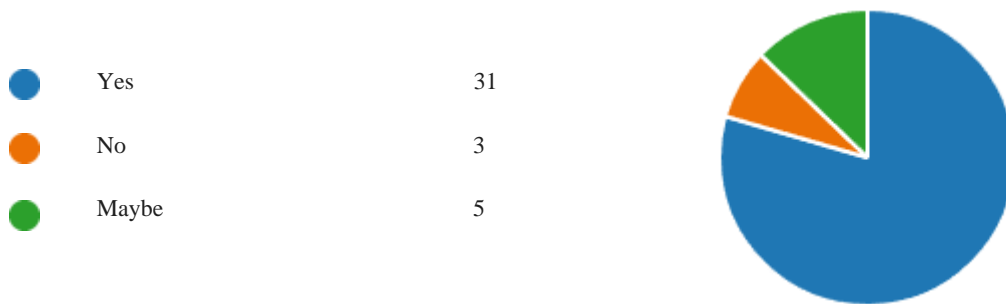
**11b-i.** If you selected "Yes", how did you connect with locals in your region in the past?



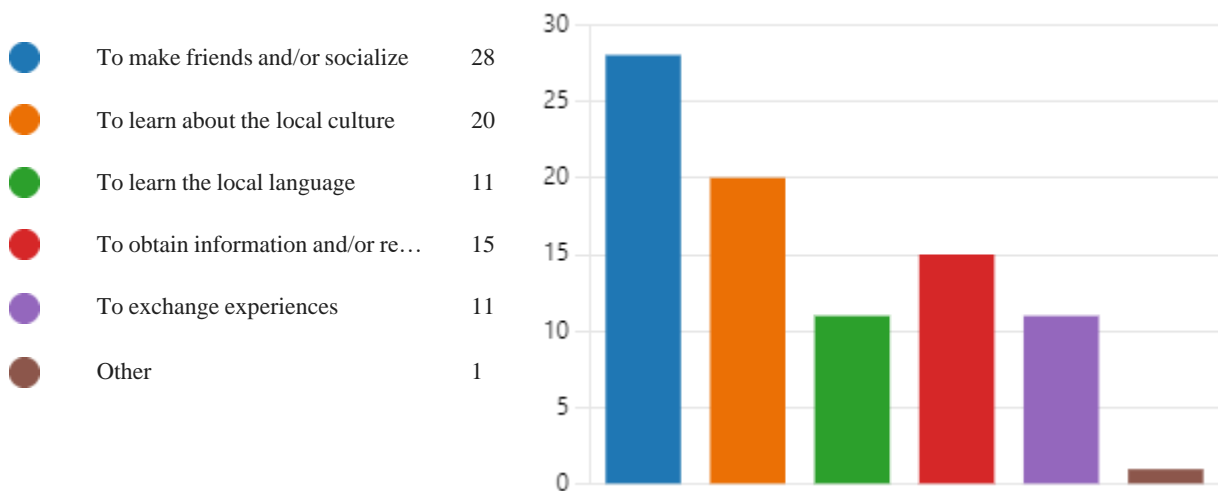
**11b-i.** If you selected "No", what has prevented you from connecting with locals in your local area in the past?



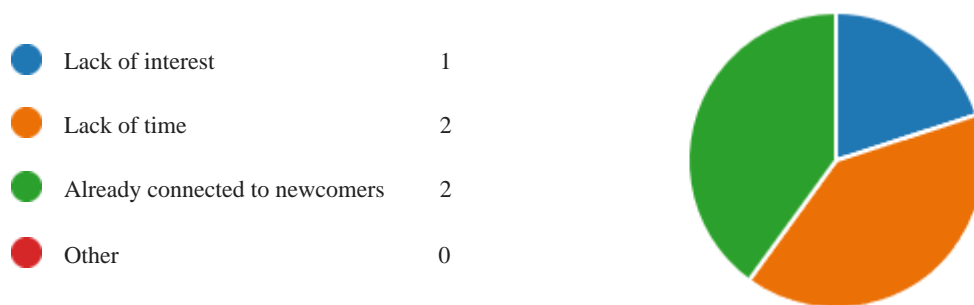
**11c.** Would you like to connect with locals in your local area in the future?



**11c-i.** If you selected "Yes", why would you like to connect to locals in your local area in the future?



**11c-ii.** If you selected "No", why would you not like to connect to locals in your local area in the future?



**11c-iii.** If you selected "Maybe", what would convince you to connect to locals in your area in the future?

5  
Responses

Latest Responses



**11d.** Currently, how connected do you feel to other newcomers in your local area?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	Very connected	9
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	Connected	9
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	Somewhat connected	12
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	Not very connected	8
<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	Not connected at all	1

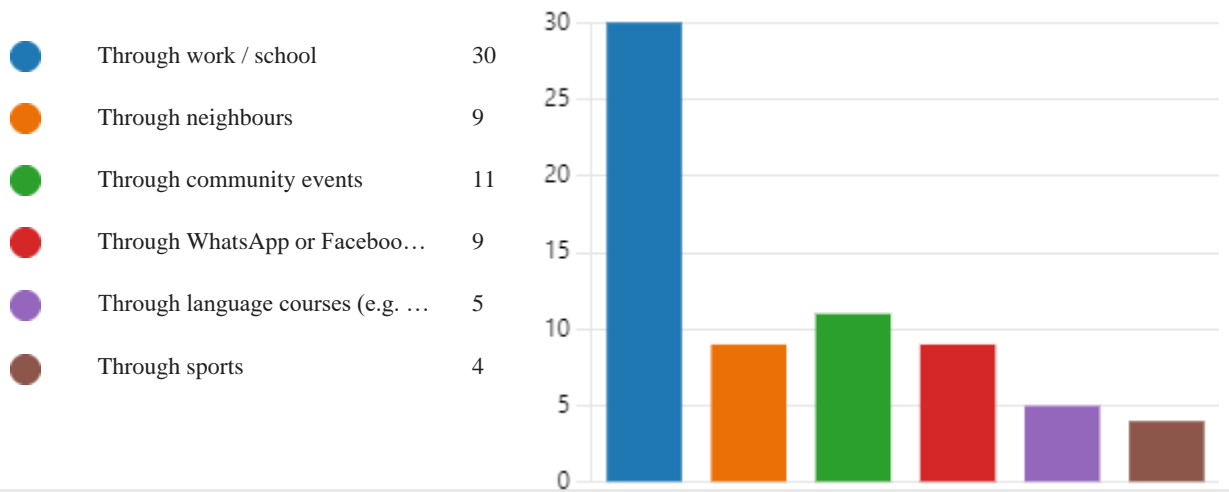


**11e.** Have you connected with other newcomers in your local area in the past?

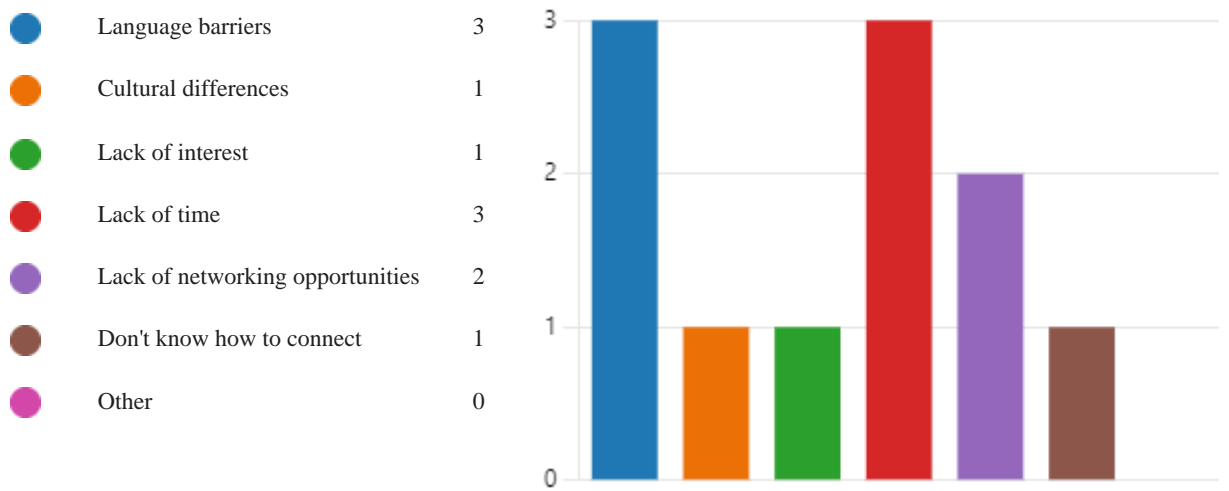
<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	Yes	33
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	No	6



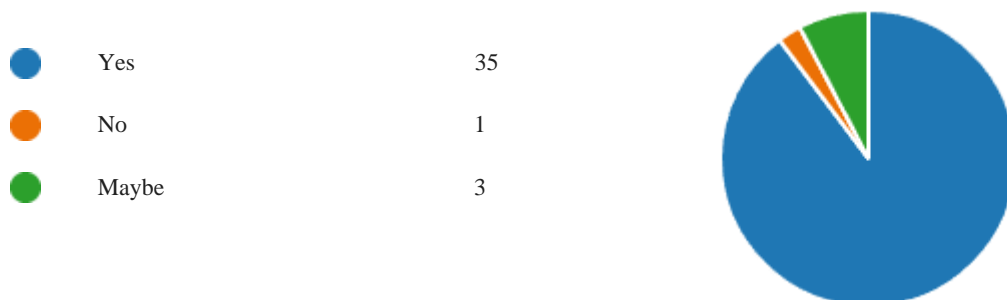
**11e-i.** If you selected "Yes", how did you connect with other newcomers in your local area in the past?



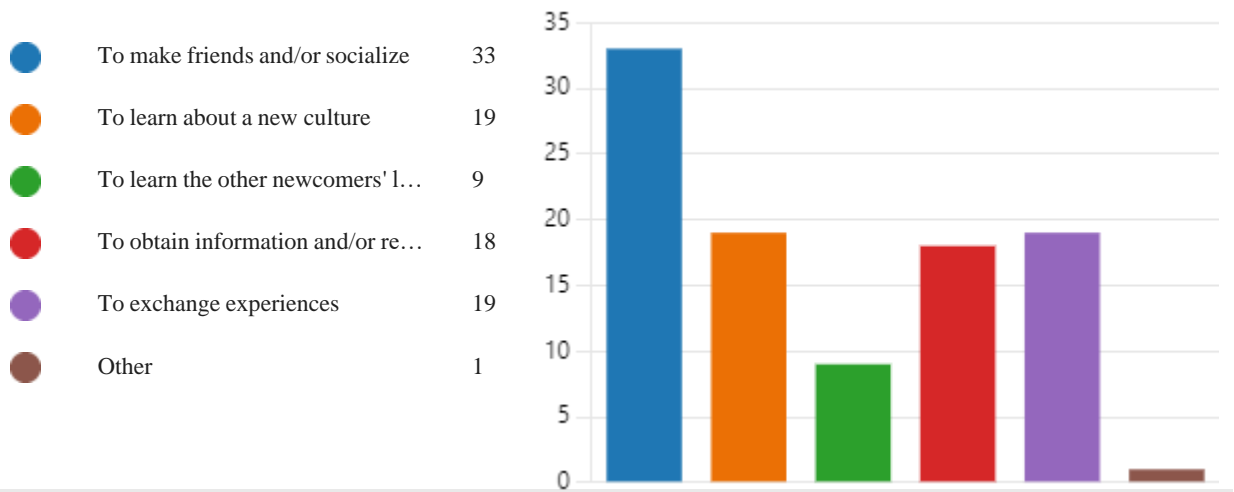
**11e-ii.** If you selected "No", what has prevented you from connecting with other newcomers in your local area in the past?



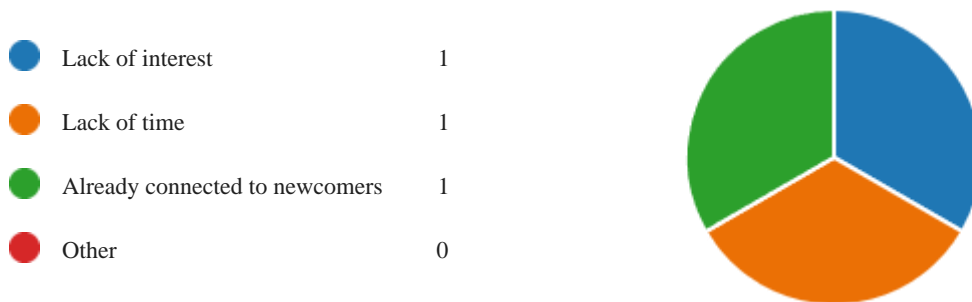
**11f.** Would you like to connect with other newcomers in your local area in the future?



**11f-i.** If you selected "Yes", why would you like to connect to other newcomers in your local area in the future?



**11f-ii.** If you selected "No", why would you not like to connect to other newcomers in your local area in the future?



**11f-iii.** If you selected "Maybe", what would convince you to connect to other newcomers?

3

Responses

Latest Responses

**If chosen Local:**

**12a.** Currently, how connected do you feel to newcomers?

●	Very connected	7
●	Connected	27
●	Somewhat connected	31
●	Not very connected	28
●	Not connected at all	7



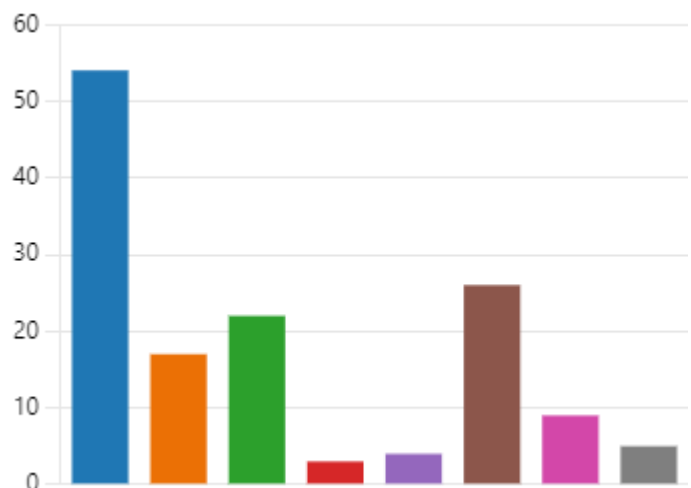
**12b.** Have you connected with other newcomers in your local area in the past?

●	Yes	70
●	No	30

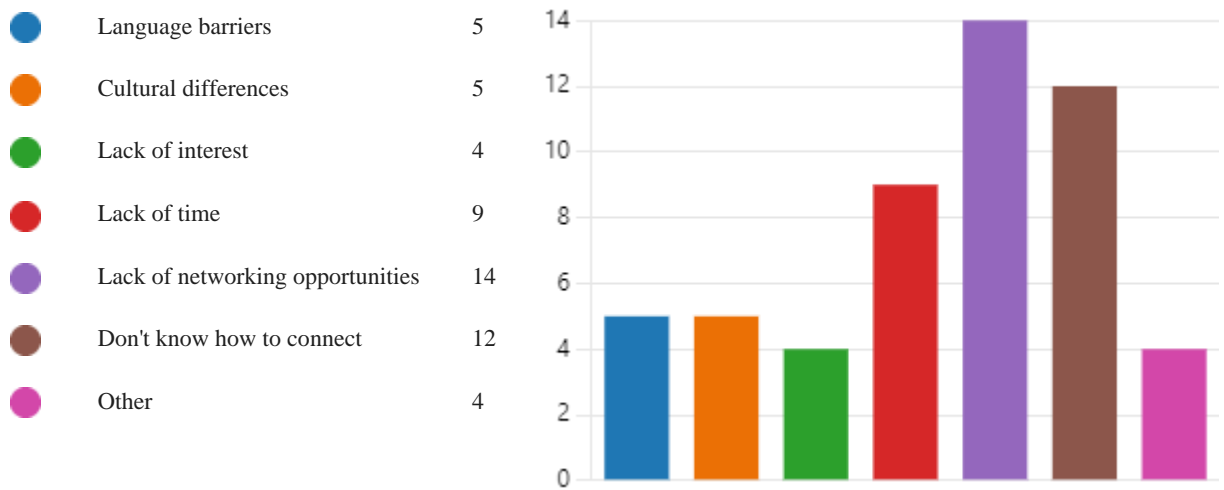


**12b-i.** If you selected "Yes", how did you connect with newcomers in your local area in the past?

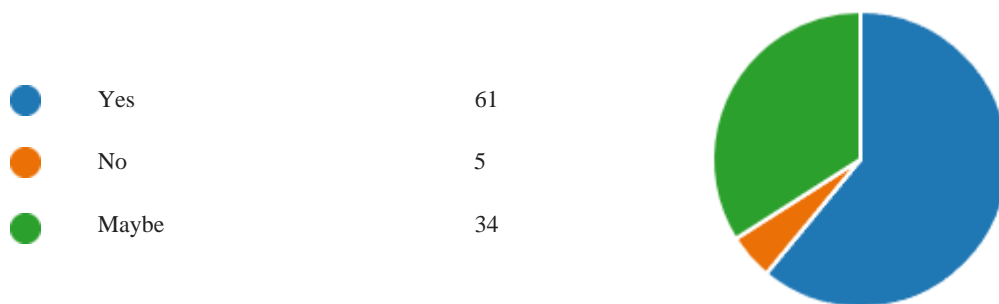
●	Through work / school	54
●	Through neighbours	17
●	Through community events	22
●	Through WhatsApp or Faceboo...	3
●	Through language courses (e.g. ...	4
●	Through sports	26
●	Through social associations or a...	9
●	Other	5



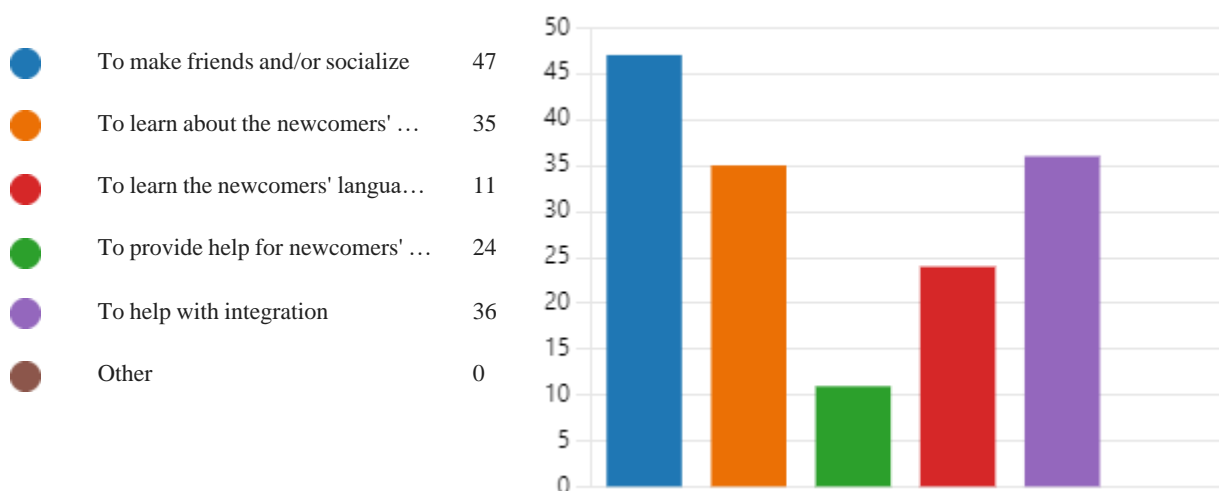
**12b-ii.** If you selected "No", what has prevented you from connecting with newcomers in your local area in the past?



**12c.** Would you like to connect with newcomers in your local area in the future?



**12c-i.** If you selected "Yes", why would you like to connect to newcomers in your local area in the future?



**12c-ii.** If you selected "No", why would you not like to connect to newcomers in your local area in the future?



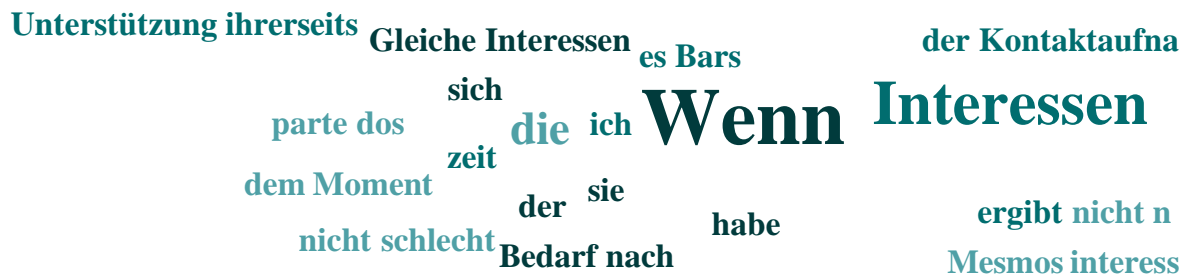
**12c-iii.** If you selected "Maybe", what would convince you to connect to newcomers in your local area?

34

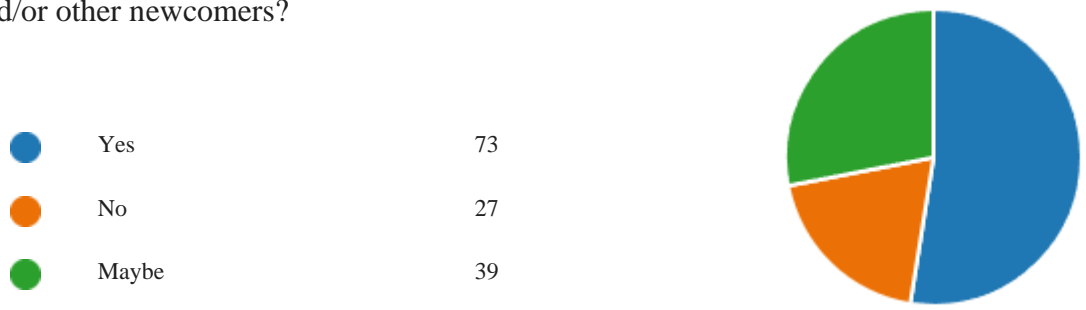
Responses

Latest Responses

5 respondents (15%) answered **Wenn** for this question.



**13.** Would you be interested in a mobile application that connects you with locals and/or other newcomers?



**13a.** If you selected “Yes” in the previous question, what do you think is most important the mobile application should have?

73  
Responses

Latest Responses  
"Ability to arrange and organise events; transparency and au...  
"Nao sei"

10 respondents (14%) answered **und** for this question.

denen man man läuft und easy kann da  
die Möglichkeit von zu und die events Ei  
zu erstellen user people bei der  
zu bedienen der Neuanköm

**13b.** If you selected “No” in the previous question, why are you not interested?

27  
Responses

Latest Responses

9 respondents (33%) answered **ich** for this question.

nicht benötige allerdings nicht ich keine ich Leute ich  
Menschen nicht zu lieber leide  
new people Habe Apps Zeit mei  
Ich habe Wenn Ich verwende  
nicht abgeneigt

13c. If you selected "Maybe" in the previous question, what would convince you to use the app?

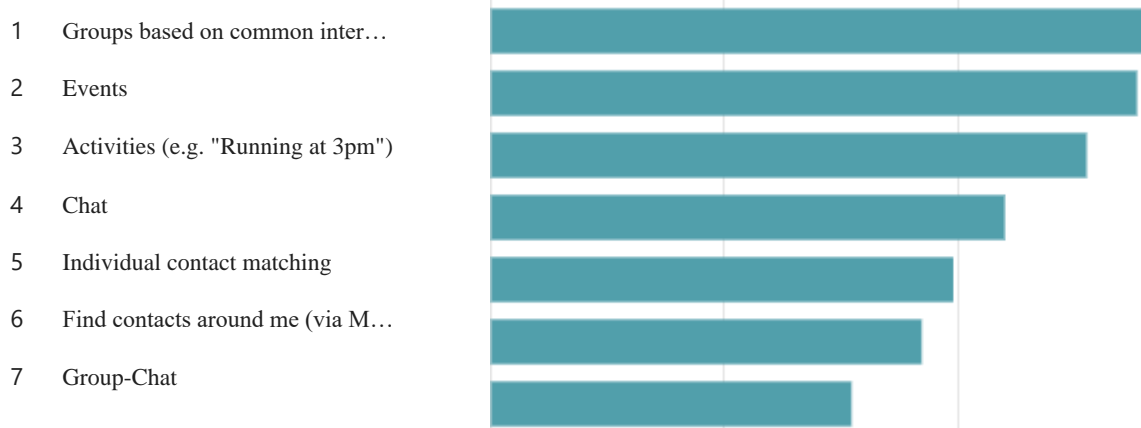
39  
Responses

Latest Responses  
"Werbung auf sozialen Medien"

9 respondents (23%) answered **app** for this question.

Gruppentreffen zu zu unterstützen die I  
 apps ability Wenn  
 der ich app die zu von z  
 zu organisieren mit bei  
 Neuankömmlingen zu land zu app was really fu

14. Please bring in order the following features from very interesting (rank 1) to notinteresting at all (rank 7)



## Appendix 3: User Personas

### Fatima (Migrant)

#### Demographics

42 years old, female, from India, married, 2 kids, lives in Lisbon, no formal education, works in a kiosk, low income



#### Behaviors & Habits

(e.g., hobbies, likes, dislikes)

Cooking

(Social) Media

Meeting with friends (Online)

Family-driven

#### Pain Points & Frustrations

(e.g., what they're struggling with)

No network of friends

Feels disconnected to people in her local area

Under pressure to sustain her living

Under risk to only stay connected to people from her home country

#### Needs & Goals

(e.g., wants, hopes)

Wants to live a normal life

Feel integrated and connected

Live a worry free life

### Dima (Refugee)

#### Demographics

35 years old, male, from Ukraine, single, lives in Lisbon, is looking work in crypto, medium income



#### Behaviors & Habits

(e.g., hobbies, likes, dislikes)

Technology, AI, Blockchain, Crypto

Programming and gaming

Career-driven

Connecting and socialising to close group of friends

#### Pain Points & Frustrations

(e.g., what they're struggling with)

No network of friends

Feels distant to new culture

Needs help with services (NIF, housing, etc.)

#### Needs & Goals

(e.g., wants, hopes)

Wants to settle in quickly to focus on career

Make friends

Be more familiar with the new culture

Not only live for work

## Sandy (Expat)

### Demographics

29 years old, single, from the USA, lives in Lisbon, works as a marketing manager (remote), medium/high-income



### Behaviors & Habits

(e.g., hobbies, likes, dislikes)

Exploring new cultures

Likes travel

Kind-hearted

### Pain Points & Frustrations

(e.g., what they're struggling with)

Lost in Portuguese bureaucracy / needs help with services

Connecting with locals

Runs risk not attempting to learn Portuguese

### Needs & Goals

(e.g., wants, hopes)

Connect with both locals and other expats - be connected socially

Spend time traveling and exploring her new host country

Share tips and recommendations with other people in similar situations

## Rosi (Digital Nomad)

### Demographics

25 years old, single, from Germany, currently lives in Lisbon, a freelance copy writer, high-income



### Behaviors & Habits

(e.g., hobbies, likes, dislikes)

Likes

flexibility and freedom

adventuring

meeting new people

Hobbies

outdoor activities

Dislikes

being tied locally

feeling isolated

dealing with rigid work schedules

blogging

### Pain Points & Frustrations

(e.g., what they're struggling with)

Finding suitable places to work

isolation and loneliness, difficulties to build up social relationships

Time management and work-life-balance

security and safety concerns (theft, cyberattacks, health or safety risks)

### Needs & Goals

(e.g., wants, hopes)

reliable source of internet

build a supportive community of like minded individuals to lower safety concerns and tackle loneliness

goal to connect with new people over and over again

hope for professional and personal growth

## Pedro (Local)

### Demographics

29 years old, single, from Lisbon, business development manager at a local start-up, medium-high income



### Behaviors & Habits

(e.g., hobbies, likes, dislikes)

Likes

Sports

Different cultures and diversity

Passionate about making society a better place

Hobbies

outdoor activities

Dislikes

the average 9-5 worklife

Concerned with crises like climate or refugees

Going-out with friends

### Pain Points & Frustrations

(e.g., what they're struggling with)

Finding a purpose in life

Social issues within society

Don't know how to meet new and diverse people

### Needs & Goals

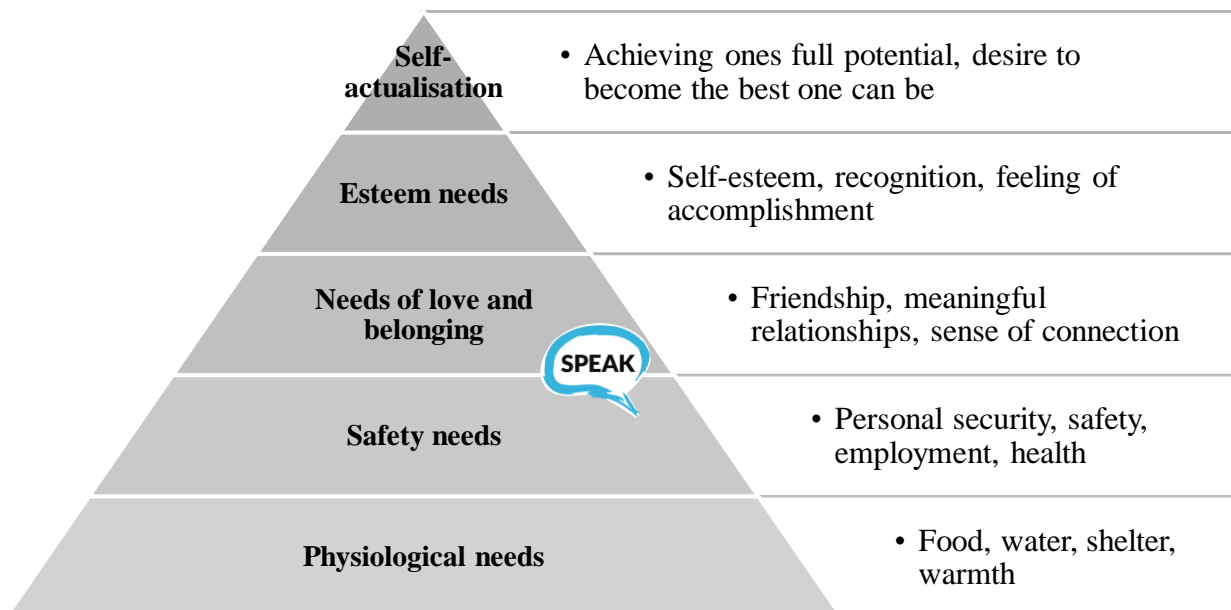
(e.g., wants, hopes)

A overall better functioning society

Happy with friends

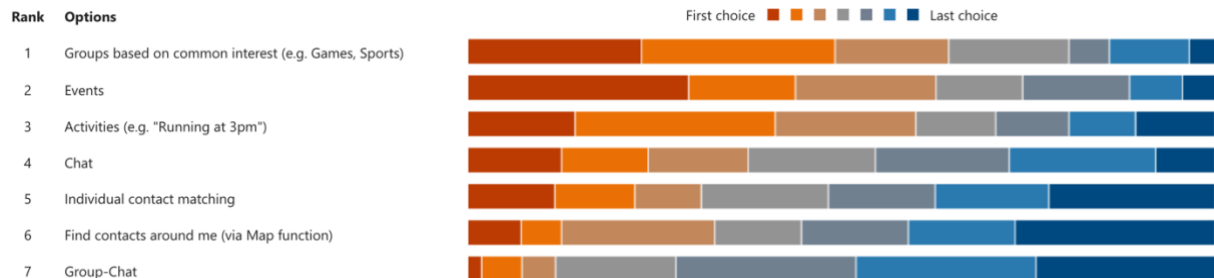
Having a meaningful and diverse network

## Appendix 4: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow 1943)



## Appendix 5: Local/Newcomer Survey results ranking of features

N=112 (not all 139 respondents of the survey answered this question to rank the features)

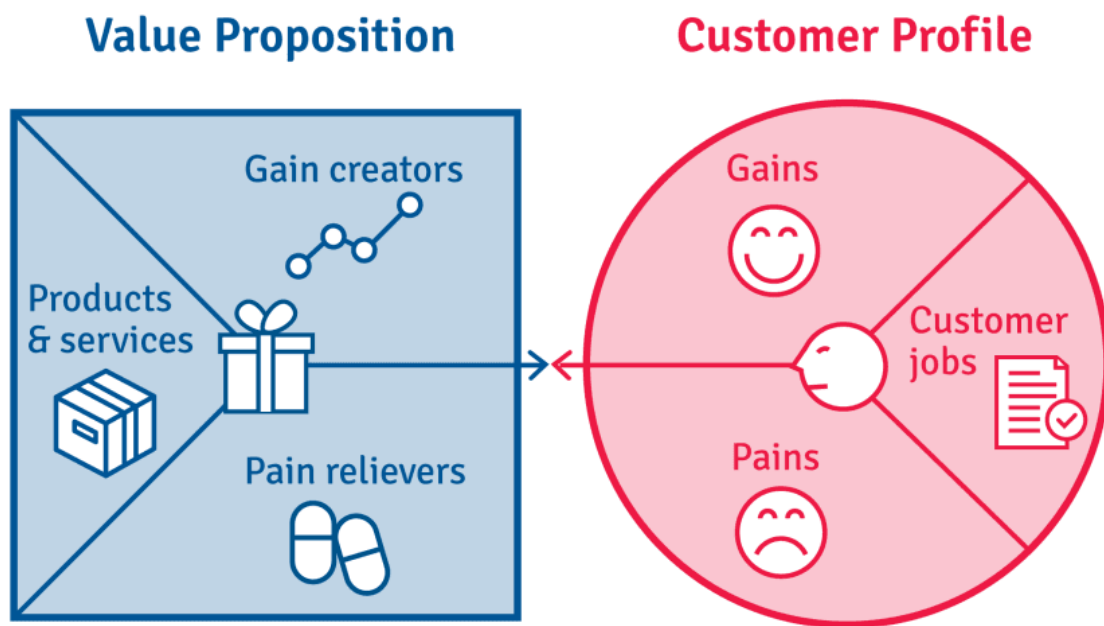


## Appendix 6: Competitive Landscape

	Market Segment	Target Audience	Newcomer orientation (Scale 1 low -5 high)	Connectivity (Scale 1 low -5 high)	Number of Downloads (Google Play Store)	Average Review Rating (Scale 1 low -5 high)
<b>Duolingo</b>	Language learning	All language learners	2	2	+100,000,000	4.3
<b>Babbel</b>	Language learning	Professional language learners	1,5	1	+50,000,000	4.6
<b>HelloTalk</b>	Language learning	Casual language learners	2	3	+10,000,000	3.1
<b>RefAid</b>	Support App	Refugees	5	1	+10,000	4.1
<b>Ankommen</b>	Support App	Newcomers, mainly refugees and asylum seekers	5	1	+100,000	4.2
<b>Meet-up</b>	Events and social networking	Digital affine people interested social networking	3	5	+10,000,000	4.2
<b>Facebook</b>	Social networking	Digital affine people interested social networking	3	5	+5,000,000,000	3.1

<b>Nextdoor</b>	Social networking	Digital affine people interested community networking	3	5	+10,000	3.4
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## Appendix 7: Value Proposition Canvas

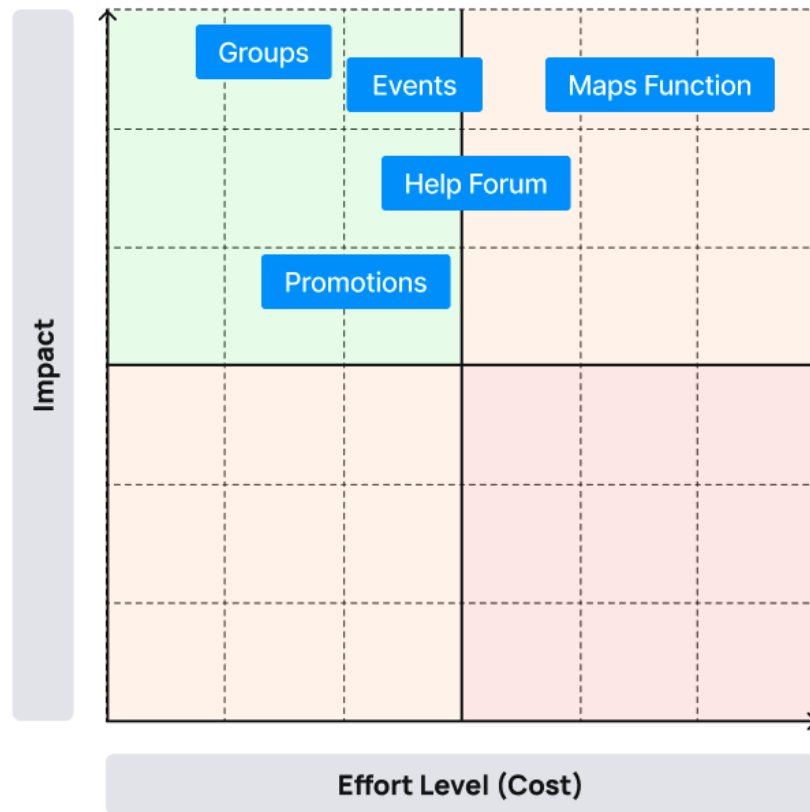


## Appendix 8: Ranking of Ideated Features

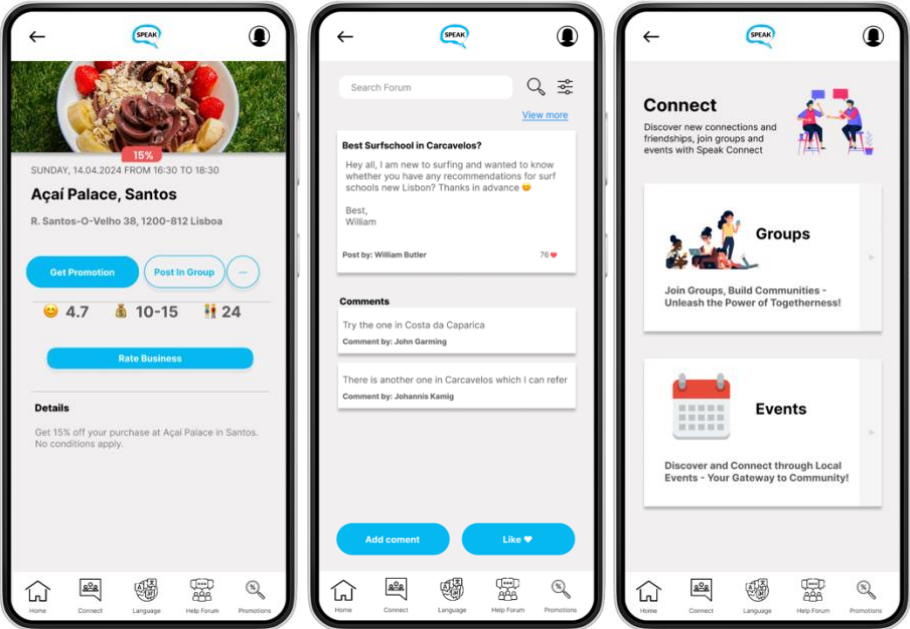
	Value Proposition Fit (Scale from 1 low – 5 high)	User Needs Fit (Scale from 1 low – 5 high)	Total Score
<b>Help Forum</b>	4	5	9
<b>Events</b>	5	4	9
<b>Groups</b>	5	4	9
<b>In-app Games</b>	2	2	4
<b>FAQs</b>	2	4	6

<b>Mentorship Program</b>	4	3	7
<b>Digital Job Board</b>	2	4	7
<b>News Feed</b>	2	3	5
<b>Promotions</b>	4	4	8
<b>Resource hub</b>	3	4	7
<b>Maps</b>	4	4	8

### Appendix 9: Feature Prioritisation Matrix



Appendix 10: Figma high-fidelity wireframes



## Appendix 11: Impact Business Model Canvas

<b>Problem Statement</b> Concurrent to the rise in global migration, newcomers are facing numerous issues to related to their integration resulting in feeling socially disconnected.				
<b>Mission Statement</b> Make newcomers feel at home in any city by making cities more inclusive and diversity is championed.				
<b>Key Partners</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Businesses in various sectors such as education, gastronomy, entertainment, and sports.</li> <li>Public institutions and non-profit organizations that facilitate integration and work with newcomers.</li> </ul>	<b>Key Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connecting newcomers and locals through language exchange</li> <li>Connecting newcomers and locals through a community led support network, channeled through events, groups, and a help forum.</li> </ul>	<b>Value Proposition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For newcomers who desire a support network to facilitate their integration, SPEAK provides a mobile application to connect newcomers with locals through common-based interest groups, events, and language exchange, thus, allowing newcomers to feel build a support network and feel at home in any city.</li> </ul>	<b>Stakeholder Relationships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passively manage community of newcomers and locals in its online by providing support for discrimination and abuse</li> <li>Actively engage with partners, investors, and local businesses to further drive growth of the organization</li> </ul>	<b>Stakeholder Segments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficiaries: newcomers, locals, and local businesses and sponsors</li> <li>Customers: local businesses and sponsors</li> <li>Investors: partners, financial, sponsors, and investors</li> </ul>
	<b>Key Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology, as the product's key infrastructure.</li> <li>Employees and volunteers, who drive the business forward.</li> </ul>		<b>Channels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customers: various advertisement campaigns</li> <li>Investors: crowdfunding, accelerators, government grants, angel investors</li> </ul>	
<b>Cost Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs related to the IT infrastructure and technology to run and develop the web and mobile application.</li> <li>Costs related to employees, especially, specifically in the fields of partnerships / business development, software development, and fundraising.</li> </ul>			<b>Revenue Streams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local deals program: providing ad-space for local businesses to offer discounts to SPEAK's users in exchange for a commission rate.</li> <li>Sponsored events: advertising events from sponsors in charged on a CPC or CPI basis.</li> </ul>	
<b>Intended Impact</b> Increase the connection between newcomers, locals, and local communities, by facilitating the integration process for newcomers using a community led approach.				

## Appendix 12: Ranking of Monetisation Strategies

	Cost For User (Scale 1 costly, 5 affordable)	User Experience (Scale 1 low, 5 high)	Social Impact (Scale 1 low, 5 high)	Economic Impact (Scale 1 low, 5 high)	Total Score
<b>PPD</b>	1	4	1	4	<b>10</b>
<b>IAA banner ads</b>	5	1	2	4	<b>12</b>
<b>IAA interstitial ads</b>	5	1	2	4	<b>12</b>
<b>IAA video ads</b>	5	2	2	4	<b>13</b>
<b>IAA native ads</b>	5	2	2	4	<b>13</b>
<b>IAA sponsored ads</b>	5	3	3	3	<b>14</b>
<b>Sponsorships (sponsored events)</b>	5	4	4	3	<b>16</b>
<b>Local Deals Program</b>	5	5	4	2	<b>16</b>

## Appendix 13: Country Ranking (DESTATIS 2023; Sturge 2023; SEF.IT 2021)

We narrowed our research by quantifying the top five active user bases per country using available data from the SPEAK Marketing Dashboard as the top five results in approx. 76 % of the registered SPEAK community. We used this formula to arrive at an estimated active user base:  $Combined = \sum Applications + \sum Buddies$ , resulting in Portugal ranking first, followed by the United Kingdom + Ireland, Lithuania, Spain, and Germany placing fifth. Then points were assigned using a scoring methodology. The first rank was given five points, while the last was given one point.

Secondly, we calculated the average immigration number of the last three available years to rank countries from one to five and award points using the same scoring methodology as above.

Here, Germany ranked first, scoring five points. The United Kingdom and Ireland placed second, followed by Spain, Portugal, and Lithuania. The adjacent table shows the overall awarded points and the overall ranking of countries:

Countries	Applications	Buddies	Combined	Scoring	Avg. immigration last		Total score	Overall ranking
					3 available years	Scoring		
UK + Ireland	1.206	295	<b>1.501</b>	4	881.066	4	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>
Portugal	7.840	1.248	<b>9.088</b>	5	72.862	2	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>
Germany	283	95	<b>378</b>	1	1.321.723	5	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>
Spain	570	90	<b>660</b>	2	582.418	3	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
Lithuania	955	197	<b>1.152</b>	3	42.674	1	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Σ Top 5</b>	<b>10.854</b>	<b>1.925</b>	<b>12.779</b>					

Based on this analysis, leveraging the existing community of SPEAK in the United Kingdom and Ireland to reach the high number of immigrants arriving should be the top priority in the next twelve months. Since resources are limited, SPEAK should limit its engagements to the top three countries for the first year, continuing with rank number four to five afterwards.

## Appendix 14: User Acquisition Estimation (DESTATIS 2023; Sturge 2023; SEF.IT 2021)

<b>Portugal</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<i>Immigrants</i>	397.731	421.711	480.300	590.348	662.095	698.887	773.567			
<b>Additional newcomers</b>		<b>23.980</b>	<b>58.589</b>	<b>110.048</b>	<b>71.747</b>	<b>36.792</b>	<b>74.680</b>	<b>82.660</b>	<b>91.493</b>	<b>101.269</b>
<i>Growth rate</i>		6,03%	13,89%	22,91%	12,15%	5,56%	10,7%	10,7%	10,7%	10,7%
<i>CAGR</i>						10,7%				
<b>Germany</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Additional Newcomers</b>	<b>1.719.075</b>	<b>1.384.018</b>	<b>1.383.581</b>	<b>1.345.943</b>	<b>993.819</b>	<b>1.139.816</b>	<b>1.383.910</b>	<b>1.425.427</b>	<b>1.468.190</b>	<b>1.512.236</b>
<i>Growth rate</i>		-19,49%	-0,03%	-2,72%	-26,16%	14,69%	-6,7%	3,0%	3,0%	3,0%
<i>CAGR</i>							-3%			
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<i>Immigrants</i>	9.153.000	9.382.000	9.342.000	9.482.000	9.539.000	9.534.732	9.820.774	10.115.397	10.418.859	10.731.425
<b>Additional Newcomers</b>		<b>229.000</b>	<b>-40.000</b>	<b>140.000</b>	<b>57.000</b>	<b>-4.268</b>	<b>286.042</b>	<b>294.623</b>	<b>303.462</b>	<b>312.566</b>
<i>Growth rate</i>		2,50%	-0,43%	1,50%	0,60%	-0,04%	3,0%	3,0%	3,0%	3,0%
<b>CAGR</b>						<b>0,8%</b>				

	<b>Assumptions</b>	<b>Existing Market</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<i>Total nr. of newcomers</i>	<i>* 80% of the newcomers can be considered within our target group</i>		7.037.699		
Nr. of newcomers in target group (SAM)*			5.630.159		
% of newcomers acquires			2,00%		
Nr of newcomers acquired			<b>112.603</b>		

	<b>Incoming Newcomers</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<i>Total nr. of newcomers</i>		1.802.711	1.863.145	1.926.071
Nr. of newcomers in target group (SAM)*		1.442.168	1.490.516	1.540.857
Required % of newcomers to acquire		<b>6,93%</b>	<b>6,71%</b>	<b>6,49%</b>
Objective		<b>100.000</b>	<b>100.000</b>	<b>100.000</b>