REDUCING THE STIGMATIZATION OF LGBT+ REFUGEES

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This presentation deals with difficult material relating to the treatment of LGBT+ minorities in hostile situations.
Worldwide, hostile attitudes towards LGBT+ identities are endangering people’s lives.

- **16%** of UN Member States have legal barriers to expression of LGBT identity.
- **59%** of countries in Africa criminalize same-sex relations.
- **35%** of UN Member States find consensual same-sex acts illegal.
- **~8** countries where death penalty is legal for homosexual acts.
The asylum application process is difficult and complex.
Fleeing countries of origin is especially difficult for LGBT+ refugees and asylum-seekers.

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<tr>
<th>APPLY</th>
<th>INTERVIEW</th>
<th>DECISION</th>
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<td>You may not have the support crucial to the refugee experience to start the process</td>
<td>You are oftentimes subjected to invasive, uncomfortable and potentially threatening questions in the interview</td>
<td>If you don’t follow the narrative that the asylum officials want to hear, you won’t be approved regardless of how valid your experience is</td>
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Relief agencies need better ways to communicate resources with LGBT+ refugees.

01
In LGBT-hostile countries, LGBT+ related advocacy is also criminalized which means no local help services.

02
LGBT+ identity is sensitive information that requires privacy and anonymity.

03
As LGBT+ individuals are a refugee minority, they also need more specialized resources.
ORAM is a relief agency dedicated to connecting LGBT+ members with refuge and asylum resources.
Goal.

Research the unique obstacles and communication issues that LGBT+ refugees and asylum-seekers face. This would inform the development of an application framework that seeks to connect refugees and asylum-seekers with crucial migration resources.
How we achieved our goal

01 Understand the challenges and opportunities for resettlement of LGBT+ Refugees and their access to support and resources.

02 Streamline communication channels for vulnerable LGBT+ refugees/asylum seekers to get resources while staying protected.

03 Make ORAM’s Help-Line operations more efficient.
01
Survey and interview humanitarian workers for their needs and considerations

02
Survey LGBT+ refugees and asylum-seekers for user experience benchmarks

03
Insight informs the design of:
Design a prototype to streamline and improve communication between relief agencies (ORAM) and LGBT+ refugees/asylum-seekers
Our project timeline

- **Weeks 1-4**: Finish base design of application, set-up field work
- **Weeks 4-5**: Conduct surveys and interviews, use to inform design
- **Weeks 5-7**: Conduct surveys and interviews, finalize design and other deliverables

**EVERY WEEK:**
- Develop/refine prototype based on field work responses and ORAM design reviews
- Conduct interviews + surveys and condense into Results Summary
Understand the challenges and opportunities for resettlement of LGBT+ Refugees and their access to support and resources.

“We often had to go through resources in person to be sure the information was understood... Terms like “LGBTQ+” or “asylum” maybe not be in their regular vernacular, even if they identify with these terms.”

-Surveyed Humanitarian Worker
Population Frame: People who work with these communities (humanitarian workers, advocates, government officials, etc.)

Surveys

- Meaningfulness of the design
- The pros and cons of existing strategies
- What do they need? Know?

Interviews

- Bring light to the perspectives of those who work in advocacy work
- Provide more input on the design
Poverty and literacy stalls access to communication between relief agencies and refugees/asylum-seekers.

“...Some clients are illiterate in their own language which poses new challenges to communication and other times it is hard to find an interpreter that speaks their language.”

-Project Coordinator in Refuge/Asylum Services
Language barriers is the most difficult obstacle for reaching clients.

“We heavily use volunteer interpreters. The majority of clients are limited English speakers.”

- Former resettlement agency site director
The three top communication platforms involved either the internet or mobile devices.

Emailing, phone calling and social media were the 3 most popular!
Summary of Biggest Findings:
Unique issues with poverty and literacy
Language barriers
Streamlined communication platforms
Streamline communication channels for vulnerable LGBT+ refugees/asylum seekers to get resources while staying protected.

Surveys

- User experience of the model app design
- Determine accessibility and security concerns that could prevent communication efforts
- Feedback for proposed model features
We inferred usability insights from survey responses.

50% of refugees have little to no access to reliable internet.

86% use a smartphone as their primary device.

30% don’t own the device they used to take the survey.
We inferred usability insights from survey responses.

- No reliable internet access → accessing internet on a non-private network
- An app that can open on mobile is more helpful than just a desktop version
- Not owning the device → multiple accesses to the same device’s info
Where there is accessibility issues, there are potential security concerns!
50% of refugees find a list of local resources extremely useful

52% find an explanation of the asylum process extremely useful

55% find a map of friendly LGBT+ spaces extremely useful
Summary of Biggest Findings:

Security concerns with limited accessibility
Limited accessibility poses communication barrier
Feedback on proposed features
Make ORAM’s Help-Line operations more efficient.
Method: We designed a prototype to assist ORAM’s communication efforts.

Deliverables

- Prototype of Help-Line
- Database Tool
- Documentation on humanitarian workers' perspectives and user experience feedback from refugees
The previous Help-Line system was an entirely manual process

- Time consuming
- Required attention to detail
- Back-and-forth communication needed
- All parts of the process were manual
03

The New Help-Line is more efficient, and accessible.
ORAM Updates Their Excel Spreadsheet With New/Updated Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
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| 1. Afghanistan | Name: Organization Name  
Website: http://www.Organization_Name.com  
Email: Organization@Name.org  
Phone: 888-888-8888  
Address: 100 Organization Road 00011, Organization Town |
| 2. Afghanistan | Description (Green = LGBTI Friendly) |
| 3. Afghanistan | Description of the Organization, what they do and what people they usually aid |
| 4. Albania | Name: Organization Name  
Website: http://www.Organization_Name.com  
Email: Organization@Name.org  
Phone: 888-888-8888  
Address: 100 Organization Road 00011, Organization Town |
| 5. Albania | Description (Green = LGBTI Friendly) |
| 6. Albania | Description of the Organization, what they do and what people they usually aid |
Information Is Sent To Be Displayed On The Website
Summary:
Web Application Prototype
Database Tool
On behalf of the LGBT+ Migrants team, thank you!