



JOIN THE ONLINE

BIRMINGHAM'S BIG HACKATHON - CREATING IT SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

BREAKING BARRIERS, PREPARING COMMUNITIES
FOR THE CLEAN AIR ZONE

13 - 15 JAN, 2021


easyRights

WHY

Poor air quality remains the single biggest environmental public health challenge facing England. In Birmingham alone, unhealthy air quality contributes to around 900 early deaths each year. It also significantly influences long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart diseases. Furthermore, polluted air has a disproportionate impact on the young, the old and people living in deprivation. To help tackle this issue, Birmingham will launch a Clean Air Zone in 2021.

The demographic makeup of the city entails significant challenges regarding communication and compliance of the new regulations within migrant communities. Migrants have the right to know about key services in Birmingham City Council that impact their lives on a daily basis, including travel within the host city. The Clean Air Zone website is perceived as unclear and the current navigation complicates access to necessary information and requirements. Without awareness and understanding, migrants can face not only unanticipated penalties when they travel, but also remain uninformed of their rights to receive support and financial assistance.

Enabling citizens to gain confidence in communicating with public organisations and exercise their rights to services is essential for ensuring equal, diverse and respectful societies. Let's join forces to provide the needed support and missing tools to empower migrant communities for this purpose.

THE CHALLENGE

The Hackathon builds upon the necessity of finding solutions for the struggles of the migrant community interacting with public services and measures. The introduction of a Clean Air Zone results in new procedures and regulations which all citizens should understand, adopt and become familiar with, yet they give rise to questions, uncertainty and confusion. For example, if a driver enters the Clean Air Zone with a non-compliant vehicle they need to pay the zone charges. However, they may be entitled to a temporary exemption from charges if they live or work in the city.

For migrant communities, these new policies cause an additional layer of pressure related to language and bureaucracy barriers. When interacting with the Clean Air Zone online service, migrants are lost in the

navigation process, face language barriers and encounter digital divides. Consequently, their slow responses and interaction with the system translates into tedious and lengthy transactions and communication activities. Applying for financial incentives in relation to the Clean Air Zone is a series of intricate procedures, unfathomable website scrutiny, and unwelcoming formats.

During the challenge, you will try to find solutions that make the process of interacting with the Clean Air zone more accessible* and transparent, and shape the service in order to make sure that migrants understand all the aspects of the process (permissions, boundaries, signage, time zones, exceptions).

* Improving the accessibility of the service refers to the channels that provide the access (even when the migrant does not have an e-mail address), but also alludes to the clarification of procedures, the recognition of migrants' native languages, the offer of encouraging and enticing formats that resemble softwares and technologies they are already familiar with.

THE ORGANISER

The Birmingham Council Plan: 2018-2022 Birmingham, a city of growth, defines the city as “a place where every child, citizen and place matters and is committed to tackling the drivers that prevent any individuals, families and communities from reaching their full potential including discrimination, isolation, poverty, segregation, or ambition to improve life chances” - Community Cohesion Strategy.

Our Team (Travel Demand Management Team), aligns with this goal and works to provide people with the information, support and resources they need to make safer, healthier and more sustainable travel choices in the city. The Council has also assigned a Clean Air Zone Team to implement the zone and prepare the public. Our aims and objectives include ongoing communications using appropriate channels and tools, including email, web content, social media and briefing sessions for this purpose.

In connection to the identified gap and need to develop a targeted approach to making services more inclusive to migrants (by addressing the language barriers, text content, simplification of processes, learning curve and improvement of a two-way communication), we will host the first online city hackathon. In accordance with the aim to integrate migrants and empower them in the city's service development, the event organization, as part of the European H2020 EasyRights project, is the perfect opportunity for Birmingham City Council to keep supporting the migrants to easily access and understand their rights.

GOALS

For the Birmingham Hackathon, Birmingham City Council aims for an effective solution to remove language and communication barriers with migrant communities who struggle to understand the information around the Clean Air Zone. The solutions should be oriented to ease migrants' familiarization within the Clean Air Zone boundaries as there are crucial venues they need to access (children's hospital, faith group etc) and the policy procedures around the upcoming regulations.

PROJECT CONTEXT

Birmingham Hackathon - Creation of Language/ICT Support for Migrants is part of easyRights, a European H2020 project with a simple goal: to combine co-creation and Artificial Intelligence technology to make it easier for immigrants to understand and access the services they are entitled to.

easyRights will develop a platform to provide personalised, context-aware information to its users, taking into account background, demographics and language skills. The platform will support immigrants in their

search for responses for different needs in a manner that saves time for both migrants and for service staff and cutting costs for the public administration.

The easyRights platform is being developed and deployed in four pilot locations (Birmingham, Larissa, Palermo and Malaga).

WHO

SPOKESPERSONS

A number of experts will inspire the teams in their hackathon journey. Migrant communities representatives, politicians, and tech experts will spark the event with their own experience and connection with the challenge and/or potential solutions. Potential speakers:

- Councillor Waseem Zaffar (Cabinet member for Transport and Environment),
 - Councillor John Cotton (Cabinet Member – Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities),
 - Nick Richards (Transport Delivery Specialist),
 - Andrew Radford (Network Strategy and Technology Specialist)
 - Rashta Butt (over 30 years experience working with migrants).
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MENTORS

Our skilled team of mentors will guide the work of the participants. Their multidisciplinary covers a broad spectrum of sectors: from politicians to communication experts, including data engineers, migration or public service experts, among others.

- ICT member of BCC
 - Communications manager- handling publicity, media relations, engagement support etc.
 - Clean Air Zone Officer, community liaison and support and system operator
 - Community Engagement Officer
 - Curriculum Leader - Education and Skills6) Clean Air Zone, system operator, operations support, community support.
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PARTICIPANTS

The hackathon is open to approximately 7 teams. We truly believe in diversity and collaboration to find meaningful and context-rooted solutions. Therefore, regardless of their background or nationality, the participants we seek respond to the broad (and specific) description of visionaries, developers, designers, marketers entrepreneurs, engineers, migrants & field experts.

PARTNERS

- Sustrans - community organisation have recruited and trained 70 volunteers to be brum breathes champions - to disseminate the Clean Air Zone information locally
 - Birmingham Adult Education Service - Support the creation of new tools that would encourage the integration and learning of migrants
 - Imperial - System development for leads - ICT systems
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PROCESS

TEAM FORMATION

We encourage you to form your own team with the people you know you work better with and register together with your group for the hackathon.

HACKATHONS

Fully online, the intensive 72-hour will provide the collaborative and engaging environment to transform solution ideas into prototypes.

POST-HACKATHON

After the hackathon, the easyRights technical team will accompany the IT departments of the existing services and the winners of the hackathon for the following months to guide and ensure the adoption and implementation of the Hackathon winning solutions in the city council service provision.

TIMELINE

Implementation of creation: ASAP

Registration opening: 4th December 2020

Registration closing: 7th January 2021

Hackathon event: 13th, 14th, 15th January 2021

Contacting the winners: 27th January 2021

REGISTRATION

Register on Eventbrite [here](#).

More info on the [website](#).

The winning team will be provided with a *grant of 5000€ (converted into pounds), to be used to further develop the product/project in collaboration with easyRights technical team and the municipality of Birmingham.

*subject to grant conditions

SUPPORTED BY



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