EduCare Project Overview

Project Name	Project Managers
EduCare – Designing a Mobile Solution for Education, Wellbeing and Food Security in Displaced Youth	*Maya Gautier* – Honours Student in Information Systems at the University of Sydney *Dr. Raffaele Ciriello* – Thesis Supervisor and Senior Lecturer in Information Systems at the University of Sydney

Project Summary
The design of a mobile solution – *EduCare* – for education, wellbeing and food security in forcibly displaced youth through socio-technical lenses; and the evaluation of its design principles.

Problem
By the end of 2022, both man-made disasters, such as war, and natural disasters, including those influenced by human activities, had forcibly displaced 108.4 million people, including approximately 43.3 million youth under 18. The number of school-aged refugees increased from 10 million to 14.8 million, with 51% out of school. Displacement disrupts education, exacerbates mental health issues, and worsens food insecurity. In stable conditions, education, wellbeing, and food security reinforce each other, forming what we call the 'resilience nexus.' Quality education enhances cognitive skills and social support, which are crucial for mental wellbeing, while good mental health improves academic performance and decision-making. Food security supports physical health and energy, which are essential for learning and emotional resilience. However, forced displacement disrupts this positive feedback loop, creating a negative cycle where the deterioration of one component worsens the others. Our literature review reveals that current Information Systems (IS) artefacts fail to holistically support this 'resilience nexus,' often addressing only two components and overlooking the comprehensive needs of displaced youth.

Objectives
• Answer research question: *How can an IS artefact support the learning, mental health, and food security of forcibly displaced youth?* • Bridge the literature gap by integrating mobile learning, mental health support, and food security into a cohesive system • Respond to the holistic needs of forcibly displaced youth • Improve the design of *EduCare* through iterations and socio-technical lenses

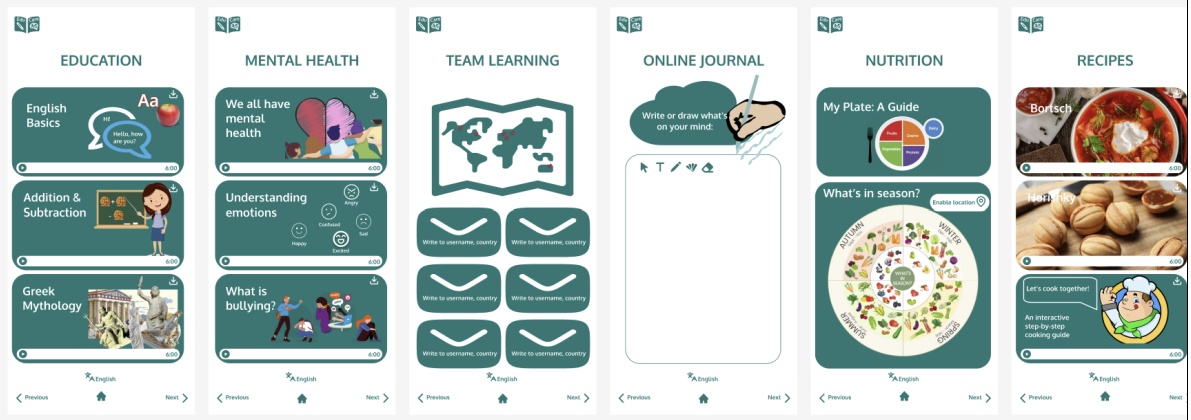
Deliverables
• Collect data from surveys and interviews for the evaluation of *EduCare*'s design principles • Improve the design of *EduCare* following an iterative process

Project Timeline
• 15th of September: close questionnaire and finish interviewing • 21st of October: thesis submission

About EduCare
The EduCare prototype is designed to address the interconnected needs of forcibly displaced youth—education, mental wellbeing, and food security—aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 4 (Quality Education), 13 (Climate Action), and 2 (Zero Hunger). It functions as an IS artefact, an open, purposive system that produces innovative solutions in response to environmental demands. EduCare employs a two-layered strategy—awareness and empowerment—enabling users to understand the challenges they face and equipping them with tools to manage and overcome these challenges.

Layer 1: Awareness

EduCare aims to enhance learning and connect users to essential services. Educational videos, tailored to the user's curriculum, use visual and auditory methods to improve memory and recall. Short quizzes reinforce learning by encouraging reflection and ownership. Asynchronous team learning features, based on media synchronicity theory, foster student relationships, community spirit, and reflective exchanges, particularly in sharing lived experiences. Assignments may connect displaced students from different backgrounds, encouraging them to share and contrast their cultural experiences. For mental health awareness, EduCare should offer content on self-care, bullying, and support resources, developed in partnership with NGOs like United for Global Mental Health. An online journal and progress tracker can provide emotional outlets and encourage continued engagement, potentially incorporating gamification elements. Additionally, EduCare may suggest professional support and resources for early mental health interventions. Practical features such as recipes, cooking instructions, and nutrition factsheets enhance food security and preserve cultural heritage, supporting the social dimension of food security.



Layer 2) Empowerment

EduCare should empower users by providing features that allow them to take control of their situation. A built-in social messaging feature facilitates global connections, fostering friendships and reducing isolation. A 24/7 chatbot should offer emergency mental health support, enhancing access to treatment. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and conversational agents can provide real-time support, addressing the needs of an overstretched healthcare system. EduCare should also enable users to book professional counselling sessions for tailored support. Additionally, users can locate the nearest food collection zones using a location-enabled tool. While still in the prototype stage, these empowerment features are designed with careful consideration of ethical and security challenges, including privacy protection, data ownership, and compliance with international medical privacy laws. The design mitigates potential risks, such as emotional dependencies, digital therapeutic bonds, and content safety for minors.

Overall, the EduCare project aims to create a sociotechnical system that addresses the complex needs of forcibly displaced youth. By combining awareness and empowerment, EduCare supports their educational, emotional, and nutritional challenges.

EduCare was prototyped using Figma. It is available at: https://tinyurl.com/EduCare2024
(No login required. Just click on verify to begin experience)