Projects for Peace: Elderly Home Care Service Website *Amagi* for the Republic of Georgia
Country of project implementation: Georgia   / Sponsoring College: Bennington College
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Date Range: Summer 2022

Background and Relevance
Our senior home care service project *Amagi* will develop an online platform which will make non-medical home care services easily accessible in Georgia, as well as educating the public about the preventative care of the elderly and how to handle emergency situations. The objective is to help seniors safely remain in their homes while improving their health and social conditions. We aim to advance the quality of life for senior citizens while alleviating stress on families that cannot always be present for their loved ones. According to a United Nations report, Georgia is an aging country due to low birth rates and high levels of emigration. In 2020, the share of the senior population was 14.3% according to the Census Bureau. Elderly citizens are the only major age group with increased numbers since 1989 and no decline since 2002. Despite this, healthcare services and comfortable housing conditions remain relatively inaccessible for the elderly. The Universal Healthcare program does not cover home health care services, while elderly care and nursing home services are poorly developed in the country. According to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, there are only 13 public nursing homes in the country, and few private ones mainly supported by non-governmental organizations with the help of foreign donors. Currently, only 350 elderly citizens are admitted to the nursing homes, with 150 more on a waiting list. The moral and religious beliefs of most Georgians mean that it is considered unacceptable for families to refuse to care for their elderly or to place them in nursing homes. Nevertheless, not everyone has the financial means nor the opportunity to remain attentive to their elderly family members. This results in many elderly citizens living in harsh and inadequate health conditions.

Personal Experience and Commitment
When I, Elene, was in middle school in Georgia, I often helped my parents care for my grandparents. I assisted them with basic necessities like cooking and moving around the house, as well as crucial tasks like tablet counting and oxygen mask fitting. This was the result of the lack of a system for finding home care services, which often happened by word-of-mouth, which is often unreliable and inefficient. This is evidence of the problem that I was unable to recognize when I was younger: Georgian public healthcare does not have the capacity to assist the growing number of elderly citizens, and the lack of home care services leaves them in inadequate living conditions. I grew up observing these issues and developed a profound interest to address it in my work, leading to the creation of *Amagi*, which is a Georgian word that means "taking care of." In preparation, we are working via a fellowship program with Adnan Iftekhar, who is guiding us with project development and ensuring that we have the skills needed to meet our goals.

Goals and Objectives
Our project intends to improve elderly citizens' living and health conditions. To reach this goal our main objectives are:

- Develop an online platform to facilitate the connection between elderly citizens and potential home care providers.
- Create and maintain a care and emergency response guide and infographics to better inform citizens on elderly care and how to react in case of an accident. The guides and infographics will be reviewed by a board certified doctor working for the Mayo Clinic.
- Provide easy access to medical and non-medical caregiver services focusing on preventative, rehabilitative and therapeutic care in the home environment.
- Facilitate home care to help individuals improve function and live with greater independence.
- Assist patients who wish to remain at home, avoiding hospitalization or admission to long-term care.
- Support patients' families to maintain an usual lifestyle by creating a safe and reliable environment.

Project Design: Methods and Strategies
To achieve our primary goal of the project, we will aim to develop an online platform to facilitate the search for home care services. According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia, 83.3% of the Georgian population has access to the internet. Through the platform, caregivers will be able to create a user profile and submit their education, age, work experience, general area of work (city, town, or district,

never personal address), expected wage, and work schedule, followed by a short bio about them. We will include clear guidelines to avoid any submission of sensitive information.

The caregivers' user profiles, with no personal information posted, will be available for elderly citizens and their families to browse through and find a match. After the family chooses a caregiver, and only caregivers currently accepting requests will be visible, they will make contact through an anonymous mechanism, like an automatic email resender. Initially, we will guide users to create a new email address for our service, to avoid collecting any personal data while a more robust system is deployed. In both cases, the database will be deployed to an AWS server for higher security. If both parties agree to meet for an interview and to arrange further details, we will provide guidelines to ensure a safe meeting environment, such as meeting initially in public, and never at home. Our initial services will end here. The family will have the possibility to write a review of the caregiver at any point. Additionally, the website will contain reliable certified guidelines on elderly care, and first aid and emergency response information for the public to better educate themselves on these topics.

We will provide guidelines explaining safe practices for online interactions (e.g. not posting personal information), and we will be clear that while we aim to pair people and increase access to emergency response information, we are not liable for the use of such guides or the interactions and agreements that caregivers and families have outside of our website. We will also consult with a lawyer, to make sure that our guidelines and disclosures are properly worded and clear for the users.

Given the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have accounted for the possibility that neither of us may be able to travel to Georgia. Given this circumstance, we would still be able to carry out our project by meeting with professionals remotely. However, it is strongly preferred for us to be on site, as it simplifies communication and greatly reduces the amount of assistance and task completion that we would have to request from a third party.

Evaluation: Tracking Success and Timeline

Weeks	Content
May 1 - June 5	Compile all data and website structure.
June 6 - 19	Plan and certify guidelines for the website with board certified doctors working at the Mayo Clinic. Recopilate guides for civilian emergency response (choking, injuries, non-medically trained aid), and preventive care.
June 20 - July 3	Launch the initial *Amagi* website and publish care guidelines with a doctor.
July 4 - 17	Update website to include care guidelines and launch social media platform.
July 18 - 31	Add a user registry and promote the website.
August 1 - 14	Update website: comment and feedback section under each home caregiver user; send out surveys regarding services and guides; assess how helpful people find *Amagi*.

Sustained Impact

During our last week, we will compile responses on how effective and useful the website and its tools are. In addition, throughout the length of the summer and beyond, we will observe the website traffic, the number of downloads of guides and infographics, and the number of matches completed. We are committed to maintaining the website and continuing to develop our project throughout 2022 and beyond. In sum, we aim to simplify the process of finding appropriate home care for families in Georgia, and to spread awareness of wellbeing and best practices in elderly care. We have accounted for the presence of COVID-19, and have opted for a website as a tool that is accessible to most people in Georgia. The sustained presence of the website will offer basic guidance and decrease the percentage of elder citizens in harsh living conditions, both through matching and education of the population. In this way, we aspire to create an environment where the families, including their elderly, can thrive and live a healthy life, including both physical and mental health. Ultimately, this will lead to a stronger community that fosters peace in the world.

Peace is not just the absence of conflict; peace is the creation of an environment where all can flourish regardless of race, color, creed, religion, gender, class, caste or any other social markers of difference.   - Nelson Mandela

Name: Elene Charkviani and Iñigo Auza de la Mora									
Project Name: Elderly Home Care Service Website *Amagi* for the Republic of Georgia					Note: all funds in US dollars.				
School: Bennington College					**TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:**				
					$ -				
Projects for Peace grant:	$ 10,000.00								
Additional Funding, if any:					**TOTAL EXPENDITURES:**				
Total funding available:	**$ 10,000.00**				**$ 10,000.00**				
Student Expenses					**Project Expenses**				
Travel (Including Airfare)	**Lodging**	**Communications**	**Food (Biweekly)**	**Miscellaneous**	**Non-Student Travel and Lodging**	**Direct Equipment and Supplies**	**Marketing and Event Support**	**Staffing Costs**	**Miscellaneous**
1500	200	30	280	50	300	1550	600	1000	600
			280	50				500	
400	200	30	280	50				400	
			280	50					
	200	30	280	50					
			280	50					
	200	30	200	50					
Airline tickets to Georgia; transportation within the country	Monthly housing costs in Tbilisi, Georgia	Phone and internet service in Georgia	Groceries	Medical expenses	Doctor and lawyer travel costs; volunteers travel costs	Website domain registration fee and mantainance; AWS server fee; data analysis software license; video and photo editing software license	Social media advertisement	Staffing includes compensation for a doctor (consultation for guides) and a lawyer	Maintenance of the website, tools and software for website creation and editing, funding for the continued research
Total	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**
$ 1,900.00	**$ 800.00**	**$ 120.00**	**$ 1,880.00**	**$ 350.00**	**$ 300.00**	**$ 1,550.00**	**$ 600.00**	**$ 1,900.00**	**$ 600.00**
Total Student Expenses:	**$ 5,050.00**				**Total Project Expenses:**	**$ 4,950.00**			