



visits4u case studies:
Mapeirons, Mobile Application
Latvia

Becoming inclusive:

1. Description

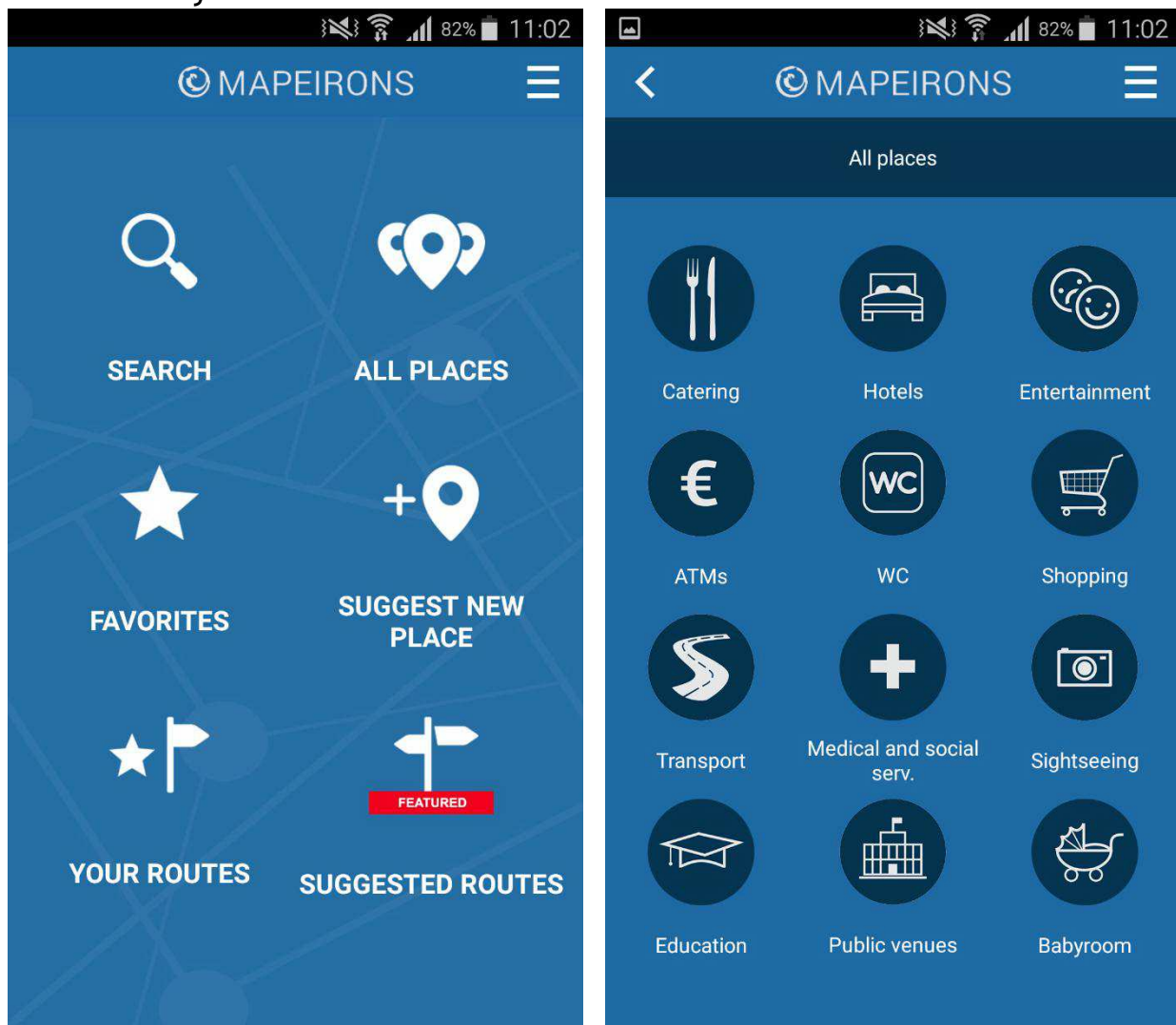
In Latvia there was no qualitative information about accessible places for people with disabilities and for example if people in wheelchair wanted to travel around Latvia they had to search information by them self. Very often information was not truthful, many places whose owners, employee or somebody else told that they are accessible turned out to be inaccessible and it made many disappointments and caused unpleasant situations. Therefore the organization of people with disabilities and their friends “Apeirons” decided to create a database of accessible places for people with disabilities. While accessible place database and application was being developed “Apeirons” collaborated with Family friendly places organization “Babyroom” who had experienced a similar situation where not all places that families visit with small children are family friendly. For example, not all cafes or restaurants are family friendly with baby corner where they can play or not all facilities are equipped with a baby-changing table. Therefore it was decided to create one more section in the application for family friendly places, to let everybody know which places are friendly also for families not only which are accessible for people with disabilities.

2. 3. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

It took a lot of time and work to create the application. The Organization “Apeirons” started developing the application in 2013 when a volunteer began work with Apeirons as part of a European voluntary work scheme. He was a programmer and he liked idea to create the application and so the application development process started. When he finished his European voluntary work he had not finished the application, therefore for further development and to complete the process a dedicated company was invited to complete the application and further developed it. While the application was under development many people from Apeirons travelled around Latvia to search for accessible places for people with disabilities; these accessible places were then added to the accessible place database. In the database the accessible places were divided into categories to be easier search for end users:

- Accommodation
- Catering

- Shops and services
- Transport
- Medical and social services
- Public administration
- Sightseeing
- WC
- Entertainment
- Education
- Banks and ATM
- Babyroom



In summer 2014 the application was finalised and Apeirons started to disseminate information about the application in Latvia. But still a lot of work had to be done to search and check accessibility in new places and check if nothing had changed in places that were already listed in the application. All places that are added in the application are checked by

representatives of Apeirons and only then are they approved and added to the application; this process ensures the application provides qualitative and reliable information.

Also, it was necessary to improve the application, therefore new sections and options were added, such as: the option to search places in certain cities so that it is easier to find accessible places in specific cities or regions was added. Furthermore, the possibility to create your own routes if you are planning your own trip was added: adding locations to your trip, suggesting new places, navigating to places where you want to get, automatically find your nearest accessible place, other improvements. It was necessary to improve the application at the time and it is necessary to update and continue work on application now.

For those who don't use devices with Android or iOS operating system a website was created: www.mapeirons.lv. The page contains full information on places that are available in the database.

3. 4. Main stakeholders / actors

Organization of people with disabilities "Apeirons" who had the initiative to create the application: www.apeirons.lv

Family friendly places organization "Babyroom" who created their own section - Families friendly places: www.babyroom.lv

Different companies who supported the development of the application, because it was imitative without funding and there were some companies responded and helped both financially and with work.



Results and Impact

This is the first ever accessible place mobile application in Latvia. For many people, especially for people in wheelchair the application helps with travelling and getting to know Latvia. Many people have downloaded it to their devices and use it every day. As well many institutions/places want to be added to the application and Apeirons receive calls and e-mails with a request to include them in the application. Eventually, experts from Apeirons will visit those places, check their level of accessibility and confirm that they are accessible before they add them to the accessible place database.

Lessons learnt

It is necessary to provide people with disabilities and other people option and information on what they can do and where they can go, because then they become more active and independent. For many people if they don't have information where they can go and what they can see they just stay at home. It is not easy to create a platform and an application where to this information can be gathered, but it is not impossible. It is much easier to create that kind of platform if somebody can help, especially from the programming side if you don't know how to do that. It is enough with idea and willingness to create something good and do that to achieve, than you can find persons who will support you to make the world better.

Further information

The Mapeirons mobile application is available in Android and iOS devices application stores. It is free of charge. You can download it by opening sites in your device here:

Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=lv.cube.mapeirons>

iOS:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/mapeirons/id918445678?ls=1&mt=8>

All information about accessible places and the application can be found on the webpage www.mapeirons.lv



visits4u is co-funded by the
COSME Programme of the European Union