



HERA - a mobile health platform that connects refugees with existing healthcare worldwide in order to decrease death and disease among refugee populations

The Problem Statement

Refugee and forcibly displaced populations worldwide are projected to increase due to humanitarian conflicts and climate crises. **The UN estimates that by 2050 at least 200 million people will be displaced** from their homes. The displacement of refugees is associated with high health risks; mortality among moving populations can increase by up to 60x, particularly for pregnant women and young children. The refugees, particularly women and children, face many challenges in accessing healthcare services for themselves and their children. These challenges include **language barriers, competing demands, fear of deportation, loss of medical records, and general instability.**

Turkey has been hosting the world's largest refugee population since 2014, with **over 3.6 million Syrians** under temporary protection and over **330,000 refugees and asylum seekers** under international protection. Only **13-25% of Syrian refugees in Turkey are fully immunized**, and vaccine-preventable diseases among refugee children are rising. Refugee **women and children suffer higher mortality and morbidity** from preventable diseases. During pregnancy, **refugee women receive an average of one pregnancy checkup** - the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends at least eight.

Addressing the Challenges

The **HERA Inc.** started in 2018 as a mobile health intervention project and is now a US-registered non-profit organization operating in the US and Turkey. **Our vision** is to decrease death and disease among refugee populations. **Our mission** is to provide a mobile health platform that connects refugee populations with existing healthcare worldwide.

As a **free downloadable app**, HERA leverages a digital health platform to **increase the uptake of preventative health services for pregnant women and immunizations for children under two years of age.** HERA application reduces demand-side barriers to accessing care by sending medical checkup and vaccination appointment reminders, centralizing medical records, and guiding users in navigating their local healthcare systems.

Unlike most interventions that focus on providing a supply of medical services, we focus on **increasing demand among vulnerable populations.** We are **the only service provider** that empowers the refugees to take **ownership of their health decisions** while also affecting behavior change in their healthcare seeking. We also do it **at no cost to the end-users**, the vulnerable populations.

Currently, HERA Application version 1 **serves 3,000 refugees in Turkey** as part of the expansion of our pilot project. We have shown positive results on several fronts, and multiple peer-reviewed



papers have been published on HERA's work. Using the feedback and the user experience of version 1 of the HERA Application, we developed version 2, which was deployed by the end of 2021. It is now more user-friendly, compatible with non-smartphones, and usable by a wider user community.

Here is a quick video on how to use HERA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBiP-FHHeCs>

We have set ourselves new ambitious goals for the following years based on our initial success. Our goals for 2022 - 2025 are to increase our user base within Turkey **from 3,000 to 50,000 – 100,000 users** and **scale up** our support for other refugee populations worldwide. We also aim to **create a sustainable partnership** with governments and international organizations willing to use the HERA app to support their refugee crises response and humanitarian aid projects globally.

We give thanks to our sponsors and partners:



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Learn more at www.heradigitalhealth.org, Sounds Good [podcast](#), or see us in action on [YouTube](#).

Peer-reviewed papers on HERA can be found here: <https://urlshortner.org/APCQo>
HERA App is free to download both on [Android](#) and [IOS](#).

Contact HERA at info@heradigitalhealth.org

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