Scam Awareness for Tuk-tuk Drivers: Report

Summary

Over the course of the project, me and my team were able to successfully educate more than 450 tuk-tuk drivers directly about identifying and avoiding common scams including fake loan schemes, police impersonation scams, UPI fraud and many more that are being targeted at their vulnerable community. We organized workshops across three CNG fuel stations for two days each to ensure the awareness covers as much geographical area as possible. We were catering to groups of 2-4 people at one time and were showing them a short film in either Hindi or Telugu based on their preference. We then had Q&A sessions wherein they asked us various questions they had about these scams. We then distributed a few flyers asking them to share it with their friends and we offered a minimal incentive as compensation for their time. Furthermore, our impact extended beyond these workshops as we created a Whatsapp community wherein we continue to share trending scam alerts. Additionally, the tuk-tuk driver on our team said that the ripple effect and the posters made it a buzzing topic in the community wherein tuk-tuk drivers who already fell for the scam felt vulnerable enough to share their own experiences for the sake of the community. We estimate at least around 1500 individuals benefited from this ripple effect based on the words of the tuk-tuk driver who was part of our team. Through this project, we were able to successfully inform and safeguard the tuk-tuk drivers from financial exploitation while also empowering them to become educators within their own circles ensuring it reaches the maximum impact possible. This project impacted me personally and I felt immense pride in helping so many underprivileged people. Additionally, it helped me gain various leadership skills and challenged me in various ways which I will discuss in the detailed section coming up. This project motivated me even more for the launching of my website focused on scam awareness and prevention.

Detailed report:-

How I think I made a difference:-
I think I made a difference by creating a space of trust and passing on helpful information that will save a vulnerable community from financial exploitation. I have found out from many victim drivers that they were ashamed of the scam they had fallen for so they didn't tell anyone about it. Hence, spreading this awareness was essential to prevent further people from being affected because of it. Apart from this, I believe we were also able to equip the drivers with the confidence to reject scams which they were afraid of doing before due to fear of missing out on good deals which turned out to be scams. Hence, since they have this information now, they will be less likely to fall for the scams. Additionally, I think the difference was also due to the ripple effect which included drivers sharing the information with peers, families and their community enhancing our reach.

What I have achieved:-
Direct impact: More than 450 drivers completed our workshop
Indirect impact: Estimated additional 1500 drivers reached through peer-to-peer sharing, ripple effect, posters and WhatsApp.
Physical outreach: Posters placed in various places including garages, fuel stations and tuk-tuks.
Sustainability: WhatsApp community of more than 850 members wherein we continue to circulate scam alerts and prevention tips.

What I am proud of:-
I am proud of my team who helped me throughout, especially the tuk-tuk driver who had already fallen for a scam before and who was now turning his painful experience into a force for change in his community. Additionally, I am proud of the transformation that the tuk-tuk drivers went through from coming in skeptical or having already fallen for scams and giving up on technology completely to being confident enough on how to identify scams. Their questions and their volunteering to spread the word to their community really inspired me.

Enduring successes of the project:-
We continue to share scam alerts in our WhatsApp community ensuring drivers stay up to date with the latest trending scams.
The videos and flyers which were published online and put up in garages and fuel stations provide constant reminders and reach even more people.
The awareness that the drivers who attended our workshop are spreading in their communities.

Impact on Tuk-tuk Drivers:-
They are now more financially confident as they feel safer using UPI which is one of their main sources of income since customers have started to adopt digital technology more leaving their wallets at home. They are also more aware of how to spot fraud attempts. Overall, we reduced their vulnerability to scams which we suspect will increasingly contribute to their mental

well-being as many of them reported that debt, harassment and financial loss contributed to distress before.

Impact on me and my team:-
I learned various aspects of managing or leading a team including challenges such as negotiating contracts, constantly motivating volunteers and ensuring inclusivity across language barriers. My long lasting passion for making change using technology was fulfilled as I felt we were literally protecting the livelihoods of vulnerable people. For my teammates, especially the tuk-tuk driver who had already fallen for such a scam before, he gained a sense of purpose and recognition from the project. My cousin also gained firsthand experience in translating technical knowledge and presenting it to the tuk-tuk drivers in simple words. Overall, all of us developed stronger communication and engagement skills and even made quite a few friendships along the way.

Where the money was spent:-
Driver compensation: This helped us get more tuk-tuk drivers during work hours
Workshop rental: We were able to host the workshops in the fuel stations as planned
Film Production: The films, including victim interview and graphics, in both hindi and telugu
Flyer printing: Helped us provide continued impact with over 1500 flyers
Furniture renting: We rented chairs and tables for the workshops
Miscellaneous: Transport and setup costs

Lessons learned:
I learned that trust plays a very important role in engaging drivers and gaining their trust as they were encouraged to participate in our workshop when they saw that a tuk-tuk driver wearing their common costume was a part of our team.
We also learned that the local language matters a lot as they didn't understand cybersecurity terms and we had to translate it into everyday analogies and examples.
We learned about the importance of the ripple effect through flyers and the increasing numbers of people who joined our WhatsApp community even after the workshops ended just by scanning the QR code on the flyer.

What I would do differently:-
I would include quizzes about identifying scams before and after the video to ensure that they're understanding the content and then tailor it based on their performance. However, from their questions, it was obvious that most of them understood the content as the video was quite easy to understand.
I would have loved to provide some more digital literacy training on the side as many were interested in learning other features after finding out that we study computer science.