The problem

"As external conditions change, it becomes tougher to meet the three conditions that sociologists since the 1950s have considered crucial to making close friends: proximity; repeated, unplanned interactions; and a setting that encourages people to let their guard down and confide in each other"
Rebecca G. Adams, Sociology & Gerontology Professor at UNC Greensboro

These ideal conditions for healthy social relations are found in the school environment and the ability to interact comes more naturally to us when we are younger. As adults, it becomes harder to make friends. Leisure activities where in person interactions could happen require schedule commitment and money expense. The social media we turn to doesn't provide us with fulfilling interactions with others. Due to the additional effort required to understand others and make ourselves understood by them with fewer sensory cues, remote working and virtual socialising lead to mental and emotional fatigue. There is a need for a feature that facilitates in person interaction and connection, instead of aiming to substitute it virtually.

The target audience & stakeholders

TARGET AUDIENCE

Anyone looking to make new friends.
Mainly adults (but open to all)
Adolescents or young adults in need of integration.
Mostly benefits, but not limited to:
People living alone.
People living on a budget.
New arrivals in the country or city.
Busy people with little free time.

STAKEHOLDERS

Community (target audience)
(Local) Government
Business owners (HORECA)
Customers
Culture & entertainment

The solution

in situ is a digital feature that allows users to combat loneliness and find their real life communities, even when their circumstances make it difficult. This feature offers flexibility and convenience, without profiles, chats or infringing privacy. Individual connections with a collective focus.

When in the mood to socialise, the user can search for a hang-out nearby using their location and the conversation topics they're interested in. They can also filter based on the type of locale (café, community center...) and their budget (discounted refreshments, free...). On the specific location's page, they can preview the ambience based on the topics of conversation and they also have the practical information they need to make their way there.
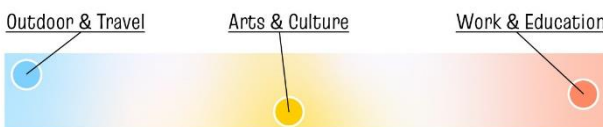
Colour Schemes

insitu core identity colours

Topic category colours

Work & Education	Sports & Hobbies	People & Relationships
Personality & Lifestyle	Outdoor & Travel	Art & Culture

Location ambience gradients

Outdoor & Travel   Arts & Culture   Work & Education

Icons: Symbols & Navigation

→ ENTER NEW PAGE

▽ LOCATION

🔗 WEBSITE

🕐 IN SITU HOURS

☕% NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS PRICE REDUCED

☕ NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS PROVIDED FOR FREE

🍴 HORECA

🏛 CULTURAL VENUE

👥 COMMUNITY CENTER

ETC... The in situ feature is compatible with many different venues, businesses or otherwise.

Conversation prompts

Thinking of something to say when meeting new people can be hard, let "in situ" help break the ice. New prompts every 15min shown on screens. Once at the location, participants can submit and vote on prompts. When there aren't enough submissions happening live, the application will pull from an archive of submitted prompts and display them, favouring those most voted and tailoring to changing trends over time.

Government support

Loneliness has a direct effect on our mental and physical health[1], so it can be beneficial to citizens of any age, as well as to immigrants beginning the process of integration by making connections. Because of these benefits to society, this programme to reduce loneliness and facilitate community formation is supported by the government. As an incentive and for the sake of economic accessibility, the prices of non-alcoholic drinks are lowered by means of a subsidy during **in situ** hours. In some locations, such as community centers, such refreshments can be offered for free.

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[1] Holt-Lunstad, Julianne, et al. "Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality: A Meta-Analytic Review." Perspectives on Psychological Science, vol. 10, no. 2, Mar. 2015, pp. 227–237, doi:10.1177/1745691614568352.

Community overview through prompt data
Data is collected on prompts submitted and statistics showing topics of conversation can be viewed for each location that adopts the feature. The data allows people to find their communities through common interests.

Once at the location, the interaction is organic; meeting strangers the old-fashioned way. Made easier by a conversation starter or common topic, and the assumption that anyone present at the time and place during **in situ** is open to chat.

The information can also be used to talk to people you normally wouldn't in order to gain new perspective or to find your target group for a study.

This data is also available to the hosts, helping them tailor the location to their crowd as they become better acquainted. It can give clarity on what to organise on location, which music to play, what events to advertise, what to have on the menu, etc.

Variable Typographic System

To favour legibility in varying sizes, the variable width is changed accordingly.
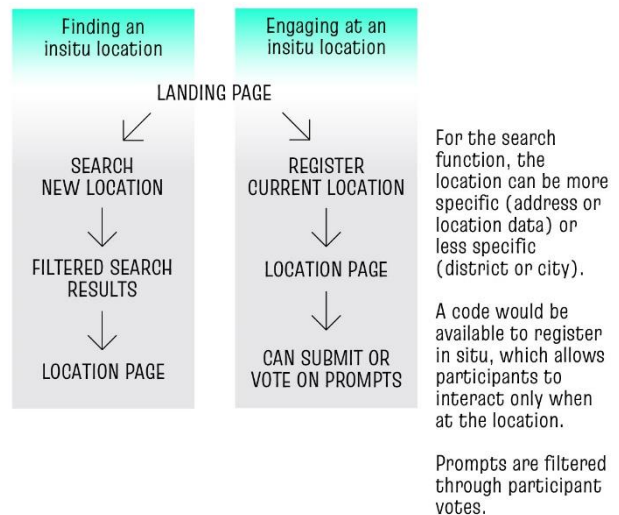
Title type is 26pt, 75 wide
Subtitle type is 14pt, 100 wide
Body type is 11pt, 110 wide
Body type is 11pt, 75 wide

When in regular weight, tracking is set to -20 **but in bold weights, tracking is set to 0.**

Sitemap

Finding an insitu location
Engaging at an insitu location

LANDING PAGE

SEARCH NEW LOCATION

FILTERED SEARCH RESULTS

LOCATION PAGE

REGISTER CURRENT LOCATION

LOCATION PAGE

CAN SUBMIT OR VOTE ON PROMPTS

For the search function, the location can be more specific (address or location data) or less specific (district or city).

A code would be available to register in situ, which allows participants to interact only when at the location.

Prompts are filtered through participant votes.

Process & Methods

- Given that I take on the role of designer/director, I would include UX/UI designers and developers in my team. I would also involve a copy writer and marketer who would be able to advise me on how to best reach my target user.
- I have professional experience with the scrum methodology and I feel it would work well for this project. Following a scrum framework would allow the team to remain in sync throughout the process and to continuously iterate, test, and pivot accordingly.
- The graphic designer takes the first step in conceptualising the project. Based on these concepts and visuals, the UX/UI designer can start working with the graphic designer to make changes to the project. Throughout the process, the whole team is kept up to date on the progress, even before they are involved. At this stage, it can be taken to the development team, who will ultimately define the time frame they need. As the developers give feedback, other aspects of the project will be modified and worked on simultaneously.
- I would conduct a study of my target user and their needs. I would map these out and make profiles (user stories & personas) of different types of users, since there is a broad range.

- I would involve/consult sociologists and/or psychologists to understand the implications and benefits of the feature I want to develop and to get their input throughout the process on how to best do that.
- I would get in touch with the stakeholders involved, such as the (local) government, businesses and other establishments. I would pitch the importance of the project and ask for their input. I would keep them updated throughout the process.
- This feature would be available as a website and could be also available as an app, for the comfort of those who use it regularly and to be accessible without internet connection. But the application is not essential since this feature doesn't make use of file uploads or push notifications, for example.