

Interaction Design Project

Community Information App: Product Document

Lanna Labai

211579677

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Introduction

This document describes the product plan for a community app designed for smaller communities and villages. The app will act as a hub and archive for all information relevant to each village, including information about social events or businesses in the village and promotional or general messages from the local council or community center. The purpose is to encourage the residents' further involvement in village life and making information accessible to everyone.

Popular ways of obtaining information

Prior to the interviews, I searched through some of the popular ways that people are likely to obtain information about the village, including: facebook groups centered around the village, some of the village's business's Instagram accounts, physical boards outside stores, the council's official website and youtube account, and word of mouth. In general, there weren't many interactions between people, except for some cases where if a business posts something, others congratulate them or ask them something about the business. The top use cases will be provided in the Appendix A.1 per platform.

Note

I have made use of some vocabulary that might be ambiguous, so I will clarify them here:

“The village” – refers to the villages/towns that the app will aim to serve. In the context of the user interviews, this specifically refers to Kfar Kama because that is where the participants are from.

“Information” - this includes information about social events (weddings, festivals, so on), political information (what the council is doing, why, so on), information about businesses in the village and to a lesser extent outside.

“Business owners” – refers to business owners in each village/town specifically that the app aims to serve. In the context of the user interviews, this specifically refers to Kfar Kama because that is where the participant is from.

Part 1: User Interviews

I conducted two types of user interviews: regular residents of the village, and business owners in the village.

For my user interviews with regular residents of the village, I asked three women aged eighteen to twenty-five years old who were from my village (Kfar Kama) to participate. These interviews were to help understand how they get information about our village and were semi-structured. I wrote a list of questions that I could ask them, but in the interviews themselves I often ended up asking additional questions to get a better understanding of their thoughts and opinions. Before the interviews, I would explain to them what the interview was going to be about and asked for their consent to participate and be recorded. Each interview ended up being twenty-five to thirty-five minutes. I started the interviews by asking them more general questions about the community and how they thought they fit into it, then dived more into how they obtained information about the village that they might want or need. After the interviews ended, I thanked them for their time.

Additionally, I conducted one semi-structured user interview with a business owner. She owns an optometry clinic in the village, aged thirty-six years old. The interview took place inside her business and lasted around twenty minutes. I prepared a list of questions to ask her to gain insight into how she gets information about her business out to other people, not just in the village but also outside. I also asked her additional questions during the interview to gain further insight into her thoughts and opinions about a certain topic. After the interviews ended, I thanked her for her time.

The results of these interviews are further discussed in the “current solutions” section of the problem space (part 2).

Part 2: Problem Space

This part explores the problem that the app aims to address.

Users

- Residents of the village – these will be the main users of the app, and the main goal will be to make information about the village accessible to them.
 - Moderator - a kind of “resident” user, but with the privileges of moderating the content, i.e. removing inappropriate or unnecessary content from the app.
- Business owners – for uploading and updating information about their businesses.
- Members of the council/community center – to pass on messages relevant to the village.

User Goals

- Residents of the village
 - To access any information that they might want to know about the village.
 - To ask questions they might have in a dedicated forum.
 - For moderators: to remove inappropriate or unnecessary content.
- Business owners
 - To upload information about their businesses (one-time or dynamically).
 - To update their information or report on any changes in business operation on specific days.
 - To connect with other businesses for any inquiries/collaborations.
 - To answer any questions from residents about their business.
- Council members/community center members
 - To upload and update information about their activities and departments.
 - To pass on any messages or information relevant to the residents of the village.

Current Solutions

Residents of the village

When the residents of Kfar Kama want to obtain or access any type of information, as evidenced by the interviews, they will typically ask people they know (via messages or in person), search on official village pages on social media apps, or use google to a lesser extent.

Scenario:

Nia is a twenty-three-year old college student living in Kfar Kama. She has lived there all her life and currently studies in Kinneret College and drives there every day, so her daily life is mainly in the village. It is also the middle of Spring, which means that wedding season is approaching and she's heard from her friends and mom that several of her old school classmates, relatives and friends are getting married and she'll have at least one event to attend every week. About a week or two before each event, she gets an invitation delivered to her house, or if she is closer to the person getting married, they will send her a personal invitation through Whatsapp. If it's a friend or relative getting married, she will already have heard about all the details in advance from the friend getting married, her mom, or her relative.

Businesses owners

Business owners usually have social media accounts or Whatsapp business accounts that display information about their business, such as opening hours and the services that they offer. People are also able to reach them through these platforms if they have any questions.

Scenario:

Sila is a thirty-year old mother of two who has recently opened a hair and makeup salon after getting her diploma in cosmetology. She wants to promote the services that she provides and to offer people a way to reach her if they have any questions. So, she opens Instagram and Facebook accounts and uploads posts on there from time to time about the services she provides and her opening hours.

Council/Community Center Members

Council/community center members usually distribute messages by sending them in relevant Whatsapp groups and posting them on Facebook or other social media. From there these messages also travel by word-of-mouth or by forwarding these messages to the people who don't have access to them.

Scenario:

Nafna is a forty-two-year old woman working in the community center. She and her team have been planning an event for kids that is supposed to take place in two weeks, and she wants to get the message out about it so that it gets to the parents in the village. So, she posts about it on Facebook, sends a message in the council's Whatsapp group, and also

sends a flier to the school so that the teachers could print it out and give it to the kids to take home.

Part 3: Solution Space

Use Cases

The following requirements are relevant to the main users of the app: the residents of the village. Further information on workflows for businesses and council/community center members can be found in [Appendix A.3](#).

- Residents
 - Users will be able to interact with other users regarding topics that they might want to get information on, or if they themselves have something they want to post (such as giving something away, a message).
 - Users will be able to access information about businesses in the village (e.g., working hours, any updates from the business owners).
 - Users will get messages from the council about anything happening in the village in the foreseeable future.
 - Users will get messages from the community center about any activities or events happening in the village.
 - Users will be able to search for any information they might want to know about the village.
 - Users will have profiles that are validated and authenticated, and must prove that they are currently living in the village.
 - Users will be able to view any job postings in the village and other places posted by other users.
 - Users will be able to post about job postings for their workplaces.
 - Users can join groups that will send more specific messages (e.g., students groups, workers groups).
 - Users will be able to open forums for any discussions they want to have about a certain topic.

- Users will be able to message businesses about any inquiries they might have.
- Users will be able to follow businesses so that they can get any messages or promotional content from them in their feed.
- Users will get messages about businesses that they follow and occasionally that they could be interested in based on businesses that they follow.
- Users will have the ability to report inappropriate content or behavior, which will be reviewed by moderators.

Usability Measurement

After creating the basic wireframes, we will test their usability via conducting usability tests on three to five participants. These tests will contain a set of main tasks for the participants to complete, where each task will be evaluated to determine whether it is easy and relatively intuitive to complete. These will be measured via the following metrics:

- Success rate - whether the task was completed at all or abandoned.
- The time a task requires to complete
- The error rate - how many mistakes the user made while trying to complete the task
- Navigation path - the screens that the user opened to complete the task
- Screen duration - the time a user stayed on a certain screen during a task (coupled with navigation path)
- Users' objective satisfaction - which will be measured via the SUS (system usability scale)

Because there is no previous version to compare these metrics to as this is the initial design, we will predefine the ideal values for each metric and also compare with the averages of these metrics from the participants' usability tests.

Platforms

This product will be an application that will be available on phones only - androids and IPHones (available to download from google play and the App Store respectively). This is because the purpose of this app is to be practical to the users and not meant to be used for long periods of time.

Workflows

The workflows listed below apply only to "Resident" users who will be the main focus of the initial design step. Further information on workflows for businesses and council/community center members can be found in [Appendix A.3](#).

Workflow 1: browsing through app for things to do

1. Open application
2. Home screen
 - a. Browsing through messages
 - i. Browse through home feed
 - b. Choose category at the top
 - i. Browse through feed
 - c. Go to search screen
 - i. Choose category
 1. Browse through content
 - d. Go to discussion screen
 - i. Browse through forum discussions
 - ii. Choose keyword at the top
 1. Browse through forum discussions
3. Close application

Workflow 2: searching for information

1. Open application
2. Home screen
 - a. Council, community center or followed business message? Search through feed
 - b. Navigate to search
 - i. Search bar - enter keywords in search bar
 - ii. Specific category? Go through options and choose
 1. Search through posts
 - iii. Related to a business? Go into businesses page
 1. Navigate relevant business
 2. Information not found in summary? Go into business page
 - a. Information not found on the page? Send message to business

- c. Navigate to discussion page
 - i. Search for keywords in search bar to get relevant forum discussions
- 3. Close application

Workflow 3: Posting in discussion forum

1. Open application
2. Homescreen
 - a. Open discussion page
 - b. Add post
 - c. Enter post content
 - d. Publish post

System Design

Entities/Data Structures

- User - id number, name, gender, age range
- Business - name, opening hours, location, contact information
- Community center/Council - members, departments, policies, contact information, operating hours
- Message - date, content, publisher (Council/Community center), subject
- Post - publisher, date, content, category, subject

Information Architecture

Information architecture differs based on type of user. The regular users and business owners have the same architecture with more features added to the business' interface. The council/community center profiles are parallel to the business' interface. The main focus of the initial design step will be the "Resident" users. For simplification purposes, further information on information architecture for businesses and council/community center members can be found in [Appendix A.3](#).

Resident users

- Home
 - **Edit profile**
 - **messages or updates** from the council or community center, or any businesses they follow - Only displays messages/posts that were posted within the past week. Also links to other pages.
 - **Search bar** - allows the user to search for any keywords to find information on something.
 - **Main search page** - has search bar and a number of categories that compile posts relevant to it (these categories are not mutually exclusive):
 - Council activity and policy
 - Health
 - Social services
 - Education
 - Social events
 - Community center
 - Activities
 - University education
 - Community
 - Job postings
 - **Discussion forum** - allows for interactions between users. Main discussion page is formatted like a facebook group so that the interface is familiar.
 - Posts
 - Forums list page - contains forums that can be created by anyone for longer or more nuanced discussions.
 - Businesses list sorted by category
 - Business
 - view basic information, click through to main page of business
 - Business page

- Basic information - location, contact information, working hours
 - Follow
 - Services provided
 - updates from the business and more detailed information
 - Job postings
 - FAQ (frequently asked questions)
- Social events
 - Upcoming events list
 - Event - allows people to view additional information on the event or register if needed
 - Events calendar
 - Event - allows people to view additional information on the event or register if needed

Product Structure

The main focus of the initial design step will be the “Resident” users. For simplification purposes, further information on product structure for businesses and council/community center members can be found in [Appendix A.3](#).

- Resident
 - Viewing messages from council/community center members
 - Searching for information
 - Council activity and policy
 - Health
 - Social services
 - Education
 - Social events
 - Community center

- Activities
- University education
- Community
- Job postings
- Business
- Discussion forum
 - Answering people's questions
 - Asking questions about any topic

Part 4: Modus Operandi and Wireframes

Modus Operandi

The service provided by this app is making information about the particular village it is meant to serve available to all the residents in a concentrated manner. The facilitator of this app should be their local councils that are interested in encouraging more community engagement and providing this service. The council or responsible body will periodically review the types of information being posted to ensure relevance and accuracy. Regular updates will be scheduled to fix bugs, improve security, and enhance functionality by a dedicated developer. A designer may be consulted periodically to update the user interface and improve user experience. The requirement of the users is to use the app responsibly and in a civil manner and to adhere to the community guidelines.

Moderators

This app will require moderators to ensure that the content and discussions remain appropriate and relevant. They should act as a neutral party and prevent any unpleasant or inappropriate situations, as the purpose of this app is to promote community harmony and unity through information. These should be community-driven residents who want to create a positive and joyful experience for other members of their community who use the app. Additionally, members of the community center and council should also try to moderate to act as a neutral third party.

Future Development of Technological Means

- We will be sure to conduct several more user interviews to understand any needs that didn't arise in the previous ones (which could be due to selection bias).
- Add more advanced features such as viewing information about businesses in other nearby villages, creating dashboards for app performance evaluation or advanced search.
- Adapting the app for larger communities/cities.

Wireframes

Link to interactive prototype:

<https://www.figma.com/proto/lXPv1figJ2cUw03X3yBFmv/Village-App?node-id=3-2&t=JvLCQ07lJgcgzl8z-0&scaling=scale-down&content-scaling=fixed&page-id=0%3A1&starting-point-node-id=3%3A2>

Part 5: Summary

The aim of this project was ultimately to create an application that contained relevant information about a specific village or town and to make it accessible to its residents (including but not limited to: social events, council actions, etc.). After conducting the user research and receiving my heuristic evaluation, I was able to conclude that overall users had a generally positive user experience but that also there were many opportunities for improvements. My biggest takeaways from this project were:

- Task Prioritization - namely, the home page should contain the most desired information and should contain shortcuts to that information. During the usability test process, I noticed that the “business” filter was often confused for containing information about the businesses rather than messages from them.
- Use of Carousels - I used carousels to display the various businesses under each sub-category on the businesses’ page. This severely limited the businesses that were able to be viewed by the users, and it would have been better to display the top two or three most popular businesses within the sub-category and add a “see more” option. This would then open another page that properly displayed the various businesses within the sub-category.
- Importance of Prompt Text and Page Titles - in the initial design, the app’s pages lacked titles and also did not have indicative prompt text to help the user understand what they could do on that particular page. This could have led to some confusion as to what can be done within the page and what functions it offered.

- Cognitive Load - because a key element of this app is display of information, it is very easy to end up overwhelming the users with how I choose to display it. Indeed, I believe this happened with the home screen, as there are a lot of messages condensed onto the screen. This is especially problematic because it is the first page that the users see upon entering the app.
- Help and Documentation - my app lacked a button that opened a sort of page or popup that could help the user discover how to use the app in case they couldn't figure out how to do something.
- Aesthetics - the lack of color and visual design came up a lot in my heuristic evaluation and usability tests. Although that wasn't exactly within the scope of this project, I do understand the need for it and especially why it came up during the tests, as the participants simply stated what they thought was lacking as potential users of the app. In future work, this would be a top priority.

Some positive takeaways from the usability tests was that the interface is relatively high in learnability. The participants mentioned that after having been acquainted with the app the first time, the other times they use the app would be easier. Additionally, they said that the information was organized very well, and all the categories were all clear. They also mentioned that the interface was almost familiar because of its similarity (but not duplication) to other social media websites. Most importantly, they said that they felt that an app like this could greatly benefit their village and supported the idea behind it.

For future work, I would definitely go back and fix the aforementioned issues which would hopefully lead to a smoother user experience. Also, this prototype is not fully developed and would definitely require the development of all the other screens and not to mention for other kinds of users (namely, moderators, business owners, and council/community center members). Finally, as information is very dynamic and constantly changing, it would require the addition of certain features to further enhance the user experience and make it more relevant to the users.

To summarize, this project has taught me a lot about how to identify problems that require digital solutions, the design process of the product, and how to gauge whether the proposed solution (the prototype), is up to standards and is indeed a product that people would use.

Appendix

A.1: Popular ways of obtaining information

Facebook groups centered around the village

This includes the facebook groups Kfar Kama Hayom, the council's official facebook account, the community center's official facebook account, and the weddings facebook group. The group with the most amount of activity was the Kfar Kama Hayom group, with a wide range of use cases. This was also one of the most popular sources of information from my observation (excluding perhaps word of mouth). The council's official account was also fairly active also with various use cases, but not to the extent of Kfar Kama Hayom. The other two were mainly used for promotional content or the weddings set to occur in the current year, respectively. Activity in these two facebook groups was very minimal, and the community center's facebook account did not even cover all the events in the village. Thus, we can conclude that these two groups are less useful or one-dimensional. I will now present the various use cases of the first two groups:

The council's official facebook account:

- Posts about various activities, events, trips, workshops, and the like endorsed/managed by the council
- Posts linking surveys
- Posts about education-related services such as tutoring and psychometry courses
- Posts about new hires in the council (e.g., new building engineer)
- Job postings
- General messages and updates (e.g., water breaks, real estate issues, election results, instructions from פיקוד העורף)
- Greetings for holidays
- Volunteering opportunities

Kfar Kama Hayom:

- Posts about activities and events (e.g., community pool opening, horseback-riding camp)
- Posts uploaded by the residents of the village about things they have done (e.g. uploading a podcast episode)

- Posts from businesses in other surrounding villages
- Posts from people who want to sell something (e.g., leaf blower, storage houses)
- Educational posts (e.g., about Circassian culture and history)
- Questions about the village (e.g., there the medical device rentals are)
- Posts about registration to activities (e.g., making a subscription to the pool or after-school activities)
- Promotional posts from businesses such as contact information, services provided, etc.
- Posts about pet adoption
- Posts linking to personal blogs (e.g., real estate)
- Posts about calls to educational help for kids (e.g., tutors)
- Volunteering opportunities

Village business's Instagram accounts

This is another popular way for businesses to put themselves out there and gain attention from people in the village. After having looked through several business's account, I gathered that the most popular use cases are as follow:

- Posts about the business's services or products
- Posts about things the business does (e.g., an optometrist's clinic might post about how they make glasses)
- Displaying information about the business (e.g., opening hours, location, etc.)
- Reposting posts from other people who have used their products/services
- Promotional posts about the business
- Interactions with other people (e.g., answering their questions)
- Updates about working hours
- Following potential followers
- Looking for new employees

Physical boards outside stores

This is a more limited medium of obtaining information, as a lot of the posters on them are old/irrelevant. Some popular use cases were:

- Supporting candidates running for council
- Lost pet posters
- Posters about activities (e.g., yoga, pilates)

The council's official website and youtube account

The information on these platforms is largely constant and unchanging. This includes information about the departments in the council, the things they are doing in the village, and information about the community center. This information is largely outdated and the websites themselves are not very modern. Their youtube channel contains recordings of events in the village, council meetings, and the like. There is a tourism website "Yeblar" which contains some information about the businesses in the village and what there is to do for tourists. However, the information on this website is also quite outdated.

Word of mouth

Word of mouth is perhaps one of the most common ways for information to get around the village, i.e., through people talking. This is a bit harder to observe, but from my own experience, this is mostly how I have obtained information about the village and anything happening in it. If there is going to be any event, people will talk about it beforehand, ask each other about it, and so on. These conversations can take place in person, through messaging apps such as Whatsapp, or through social media such as on Instagram.

A.2: User scenarios in the context of the app

Residents of the village

When the residents of Kfar Kama want to obtain or access any type of information, as evidenced by the interviews, they will typically ask people they know (via messages or in person), search on official village pages on social media apps, or use google to a lesser extent.

Scenario:

Nia is a 23-year-old college student living in Kfar Kama. She has lived there all her life and currently studies in Kinneret college and drives there every day, so her daily life is mainly in the village. It is also the middle of Spring, which means that wedding season is approaching and she's heard from her friends and mom that several of her old school classmates, relatives and friends are getting married and she'll have at least one event to attend every week. However, she isn't entirely sure when each event will take place, so she goes into the

village community app and opens the social events page. There, she can see whose weddings are happening for the next few months on what dates.

Businesses owners

Business owners usually have social media accounts or Whatsapp business accounts that display information about their business, such as opening hours and the services that they offer. People are also able to reach them through these platforms if they have any questions.

Scenario:

Sila is a 30-year-old mother of two who has recently opened a hair and makeup salon after getting her diploma in cosmetology. She wants to promote the services that she provides and to offer people a way to reach her if they have any questions. So, she sets up an account for her business in the village community app. There, she uploads information about her business (e.g., working hours, contact information, location) and also uploads the services that she offers (e.g., haircuts, hair-dying, makeup services, etc.). If she has any updates about her business, such as new services, she will update her provided services in her business profile. If she wants to update her clients about temporary changes in working hours, she will send a short update about it. Occasionally, people also reach out to her through the messaging feature to set up appointments or ask her if she can do a certain type of hairdo.

Council/Community Center Members

Council/community center members usually distribute messages by sending them in relevant Whatsapp groups and posting them on Facebook or other social media. From there these messages also travel by word-of-mouth or by forwarding these messages to the people who don't have access to them.

Scenario:

Nafna is a 42-year-old woman working in the community center. She and her team have been planning an event for kids that is supposed to take place in 2 weeks, and she wants to get the message out about it so that it gets to the parents in the village. So, logs into the community center's profile on the village community app, and goes into the message/update page. There, she and her team write about the event and the activities that will be offered, including payment and registration information, and publish it. Several hours after posting about the event, they check under the post for any questions and answer them as needed.

A.3: Other Users (Council/Community Center, Businesses)

This section details any necessary sections that are relevant to the other users, but will not be addressed in the initial step of the main project.

User Requirements

- Business Owners
 - Users will be able to upload any relevant information about their business (e.g., opening hours, location, etc.).
 - Users will be able to share any updates from their social media/Whatsapp about any updates to their business operation.
 - Users will be able to post about job postings in their business.
 - Users will be able to answer messages from other businesses/residents.
 - Users will be able to respond to messages from residents or council/community center members about any inquiries they might have for their business.
 - Users will be able to follow businesses so that they can get any messages or promotional content from them in their feed.
- Council/Community center members
 - Users will upload messages relevant to the users (including promotional or general messages).
 - Users can edit or remove messages .
 - Users can open forums for discussion on a particular topic.
 - Users will be able to message businesses about any inquiries they might have.
 - Regular activity and usage reports will be generated to assess the app's performance and engagement levels which can be utilized by the council to get a better understanding of how to engage the users more and what kind of content is more relevant to them.

Workflows

Business owners

Workflow 3: Updating information

1. Open application
2. Homescreen
 - a. Quick update? Go to update section
 - i. Add update
 - ii. Enter update content
 - iii. Publish update
 - b. Navigate business profile
 - i. Edit profile
 - ii. Change information
 - iii. Save changes

Workflow 4: Answering questions from residents/businesses

1. Open application
2. Homescreen
 - a. Navigate messages screen
 - i. View messages
 - ii. Select message
 1. Type answer
 2. Send answer

Council/community center

Workflow 5: Uploading message

1. Open application
2. Navigate Message/Update section
 - a. Add message/update
 - b. Enter content
 - c. Publish message/update

System Design for Other Users

Information Architecture

Business owners

- Home
 - section for sending temporary update about their business or business operation
 - Edit business profile
 - Basic information - owner, location, contact information, working hours
 - Services
 - FAQ (frequently asked questions)
 - messages or updates from the council or community center, or any businesses they follow - Only displays messages/posts that were posted within the past week. Also links to other pages.
 - Search - allows the user to search for any keywords to find information on something. Main search page also has a number of categories that compile posts relevant to it (these categories are not mutually exclusive):
 - Council activity and policy
 - Health
 - Social services
 - Education
 - Social events
 - Community center
 - Activities
 - University education
 - Community
 - Job postings

- Business (not information about the businesses, but posts that are relevant to them such as reminders for paying taxes, etc.)
- Discussion forum - allows for interactions between users. Main discussion page is formatted like a facebook group so that the interface is familiar.
 - Posts
 - Forums list page - contains forums that can be created by anyone for longer or more nuanced discussions
- Businesses list sorted by category
 - Business
 - view basic information, click through to main page of business
 - Business page
 - Basic information - owner, location, contact information, working hours
 - Follow
 - Services provided
 - updates history
 - FAQ (frequently asked questions)
 - Job postings
 - Option to message other businesses
 - Social events
 - Upcoming events list
 - Event - allows people to view additional information on the event or register if needed
 - Events calendar
 - Event - allows people to view additional information on the event or register if needed
 - Messages
 - Messages from residents/businesses for answering

Council/Community center

- Home
 - Messages/updates history
 - Search - allows the user to search for any keywords to find information on something. Main search page also has a number of categories that compile posts relevant to it (these categories are not mutually exclusive):
 - Council activity and policy
 - Health
 - Social services
 - Education
 - Social events
 - Community center
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 - Business (not information about the businesses, but posts that are relevant to them such as reminders for paying taxes, etc.)
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 - Businesses list sorted by category
 - Business
 - view basic information, click through to main page of business
 - Business page
 - Basic information - owner, location, contact information, working hours

- Services provided
 - updates from the business and more detailed information
 - Job postings
- Option to message business
- Social events
 - Upcoming events list
 - Add/remove/edit event
 - Event - allows people to view additional information on the event or register if needed
 - Events calendar
 - Add/remove/edit event
 - Event - allows people to view additional information on the event or register if needed
- Message/Update - for publishing messages/updates or formal statements

Product Structure for Other Users

- Business Owner
 - Business details
 - Owner
 - Location
 - contact information
 - working hours
 - Business activity
 - Services
 - Updates
 - Discussion forum
 - Answering people's questions

- Asking questions about any topic
- Answering messages from residents
- Council/Community center member
 - Send message
 - Post about council/community center activity

A.4: User Interviews

The interviews

Script

First, hello, thank you for joining me today in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to understand how people in the village get information about the village, as part of a larger project that aims to build an application to make that information accessible. I'm just going to ask you some questions to understand the situation better and how it can be improved. I'm going to record this interview but it's not going to be distributed to anyone else. Your identity will remain anonymous too. do you consent to this interview? [answer]

I want to emphasize there are no right or wrong answers, you just answer what you think. If I ask a question that makes you feel uncomfortable, of course you do not have to answer and we will move on to the next one.

Interview 1

Interviewer: Do you consider yourself an active part of the Circassian community active?

Participant: What do you mean?

Interviewer: So in terms of like volunteering and things like that.

Participant: I'm not. I'm gonna consider myself not pretty active.

Interviewer: Why do you think you aren't?

Participant: That's a good question, I'm just not a very... I don't have a personality that likes social gatherings, that seeks that out. I prefer to have my own circle and yeah I don't really venture out.

Interviewer: I mean that's where you feel that you contribute most in that circle? Like if someone wants or needs help in your circle?

Participant: Like yeah, mostly in that circle.

Interviewer: So you grew up in the village right?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Were you a part of any youth movements and or extracurricular activities in the village? If so, which ones and what was that like?

Participant: Um so when I was in 4th grade my mother forced me to join. As I said I'm not a very... I don't go out of my social circle. Anyway, my mother first forced me to go into the lehecka which is a traditional Circassian dance group because she told me I need to learn how to dance. I was resistant at first but I went and then I fell in love with dance and I've been with the dancing group. I was a professional dancer for eight years. I would perform at the yearly festival that the village has and I flew to Caucasus and I performed on the stage of the most known Circassian dancing group. I also went to Turkey, I went to Jordan which where they have the more of a prominent Circassian community.

Interviewer: And you also went to school in the village right?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: And what was that like?

Participant: You know, going to school within our smaller community, because I grew up with the same people from the kindergarten, I felt like that kind of hindered my social skills. Because I knew all of the people around me, I didn't need to reach out to other people or develop these social skills. I never met a new person that I needed to show a different side of myself. So when I entered high school, we transitioned to a non-Circassian school. I was very shy and anxious because I was in a foreign place where I wasn't used to it. It's a very late age to be exposed to the outside world, especially with the awkwardness of the growing teen.

Interviewer: Do you feel like growing up your entire life in the village, you've lived in a kind of bubble?

Participant: Yes, because as I've said from the school experience and even then when I was still in high school when I come home I will come back to our bubble. I was very naive I wouldn't know anything. For example, if somebody lived in a city from the age of 10, well they would go to public transportation alone and then travel around the city. My parents wouldn't allow it. I was very sheltered. As a teenager, for me to go out to the city to just watch a movie I needed to beg my mom to let me go because she wanted to protect me and all. But it just proves how sheltered we were as a community.

Interviewer: So have you worked in the village? What is it like working and interacting with other people from the village? How do you see those interactions?

Participant: So I worked in a supermarket. To be honest, if I didn't like something that's in the workplace, I think it would be hard for me to speak up about it because eventually like there is a chance that it will get out and it will spread around somehow maybe, it won't be private. People will talk about you and spread rumors.

Interviewer: So going to school working in the village, you know, do you find yourself kind of obtaining information about what was happening in the village? Would people come up

to you and tell you things?

Participant: Yeah, it's kind of boring stuff that they would talk about. Like yeah people get bored and gossip. Although it's not all of our conversations, but it's a big part of them.

Interviewer: Let's say you want to obtain some kind of information, like you want to know the opening hours of a or an event that's happening in the village. So how do you go about that?

Participant: I get it from my friends or sometimes. I'm in WhatsApp groups that send updates, for example I'm in a chat group that's for students so if somebody needs something or if there is an event going on that's how I know. I also hear from other people or from Instagram.

Interviewer: So you use social media platforms to obtain information?

Participant: Yeah, social media, you can find things on Facebook.

Interviewer: Do you personally use Facebook?

Participant: I know some people that do yeah sometimes when I need to find something I do use it but for the most part, I don't and mainly use Instagram. You can like get information from a lot of people right. For example, if somebody got engaged.

Interviewer: So for more personal things like weddings and funerals, how do you find out about that kind of stuff?

Participant: For weddings, I learn about them through wedding invitations mainly. Maybe also from Instagram. On Facebook, they also post a Google Docs listing all the people that are gonna get married and have the dates so that people don't double-book a wedding on the same date.

Interviewer: So do you usually find out from other people about a funeral?

Participant: There is usually a call from the mosque that declares a person's death. I don't really know the people so I would ask my parents about who passed away.

Interviewer: Have you felt like you had difficulty in obtaining some kind of information about the village? Like if there is a water-break?

Participant: I don't know if that kind of this kind of messages reaches younger people, maybe from home-owners.

Interviewer: What about everything that happens with the council? Right, they have these monthly meetings, do you think that information about what goes on with the council should be made more accessible?

Participant: Most young people don't know what's going on. It's not something that interests younger people but most of the information about it is posted on Facebook, which most young people don't use. And if I don't specifically search for it, I won't see anything about it. Unless there is a campaign that they are trying to push. You also need to know where to look, and I don't know where to get that information. I could find it if I tried, but it's more effort.

Interviewer: Have you ever wanted to put out information, for example selling something or

finding a tutor? How did you go about that?

Participant: I haven't really attempted to do that, so I don't know how I would do that. But if I need to find something out I would probably ask my friends about it because I feel like I'm less involved. Or I message a person in one of the WhatsApp groups that I'm part of if it's something specific.

Interviewer: Do you get any promotional messages from the community center, for example about events? Does it interest you?

Participant: My mom is a business owner, so she is in a lot of groups relevant only to small businesses. So, I hear about big events from those places. I might also hear it from my friends or from social media or WhatsApp.

Interviewer: Is there any kind of information that you want to have access to or get in a more convenient manner?

Participant: I think political stuff is important to know about, because it will impact my future. Less because I am interested in it. It would be helpful if there were pages on Instagram for example where they summarize these things, that could be helpful.

Interviewer: Do you interact with people from the village in an online platform?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: What kinds of topics come up?

Participant: For example, I might send content that I come across to my friends. It could become a discussion if it's an important topic.

Interviewer: Do you think it's important to have that kind of interaction online with people from the village?

Participant: Yes because it's important to get different perspectives about things.

Interviewer: For such online platforms, like "Kfar Kama Hayom" on Facebook, could you see yourself contributing to it?

Participant: Maybe if I see someone asking about something that I know about, I would reply to them privately. But publicly I don't know if I would because I don't want people to take that and use it against me potentially if I end up being wrong.

Interviewer: Ok, thank you so much for sitting with me, I appreciated hearing about your perspective on these topics.

Interview 2:

Interviewer: Let's begin. Do you consider yourself an active part of the Circassian community?

Participant: I feel I am less active in my community. There are a lot of Facebook groups and WhatsApp groups and social platforms that I am not part of. I do participate in events and social gatherings. I was involved with the youth council for a while and in Madazim. I grew

up in the community, but digitally, I don't consider myself part of the online community. In real life, I feel very involved socially.

Interviewer: When you were younger, were you part of any youth movements or extracurricular activities?

Participant: Ever since I was little, I was very active. I was part of the youth council, organizing activities like summer camps and field days from 7th grade until I finished high school. I was also involved in Madazim like a youth program for young counselors, and volunteering a lot in the community. I even went to work in the elementary school for a year and organized many activities there.

Interviewer: Did you go to school in the village?

Participant: Yes, I did. I went to school until 9th grade in our village. In elementary school, I was surrounded by neighbors and people I knew. All our interactions were in Circassian. It was a close-knit community and that's what made it fun. You go home with your friends and see them everyday. In middle school, it was a bit further from my house, but sometimes if I didn't have a ride home, my friends' mothers or teachers would take me home. Growing up in a small community has its benefits, but it had some downsides, like if there was conflict between your friends.

Interviewer: Did you feel like you lived in a bubble growing up in a small community?

Participant: Yes, I used to say that our bubble burst when we went to high school. That's when we really felt like we went out into the world and interacted with people outside of our community, and made me face the fact that it was not only us in the world. We were so surrounded by our community and culture that we didn't notice what was happening outside. It was a shock to interact with people from different backgrounds.

Interviewer: Since high school, do you feel like you've gone back into that bubble, or has it expanded?

Participant: During high school, I was very involved in things because I am very social in nature. But going to high school helped me expand my community to include people from other places. This wasn't very difficult for me to do either and going to this high school helped me figure things out about myself. Studying in Haifa has further expanded my interactions with a more diverse group of people. My family was not the most conservative, which also helped. I think stepping out of the bubble was beneficial for my personal growth and would have been more difficult to do had I gone out of my bubble later on in life.

Interviewer: Did you have field trips in elementary and middle school to meet kids from other schools?

Participant: Yes, we had some programs where we interacted with students from other schools. In middle school, we visited an international school, which was a big culture shock because of the size and facilities compared to our small school.

Interviewer: Have you worked in the village? If so, what were those experiences like?

Participant: My first job was in a clothing store, which was brief. It was mostly older people who came to that store, and in general the interactions were minimal because in our culture people don't like it if you stick to them too much. Then I worked at a restaurant café, interacting with many people from the village and other places. I also did my national service at the elementary school, which was initially strange because I worked with teachers who had taught me. So that was strange to navigate but eventually I got used to it.

Interviewer: Through your work and youth activities, how did you get information about what was happening in the village?

Participant: Teachers loved gossiping during breaks, so you would always hear about things that happened to other people. But even as a youth councillor, sometimes mothers would share personal information like if something serious happened and they needed to pick up their children.

Interviewer: What about among peers?

Participant: Among peers, the topics varied from mundane things like new businesses to major events like weddings or fights between people.

Interviewer: If you want to obtain information about a new business, how do you usually find it?

Participant: I mostly get my information from friends or WhatsApp groups. Mostly because a lot of people forward messages rather than searching for that information or looking it up. Even if it isn't more efficient, it's more comfortable and for the most part they answer faster than I can search for it.

Interviewer: So you don't typically use social media for that kind of stuff?

Participant: Since it's a small village, the businesses don't really have much of an online presence unless they are new and want to promote things. I don't usually follow them on social media either.

Interviewer: Have you ever needed to share information, like selling something or looking for a tutor?

Participant: Yes, I usually send messages to groups I'm part of or post a story on Instagram. I'm not that active on Facebook which is where most people in our village are and is used for these kinds of things. For example, my sister has used Facebook for giving a table away.

Interviewer: How do you hear about social events like festivals?

Participant: Information about big events like festivals spreads quickly through WhatsApp and it becomes the big topic of the town. Even if I'm not active on Facebook, I still receive updates through WhatsApp groups and other social media.

Interviewer: Do you get messages from the council about things like water breaks?

Participant: Yes, because I'm part of a WhatsApp group for emergency information and announcements from the council. I think I was invited to it after the war started. I'm not

sure what it's initial purpose was, but that's mainly what it's used for now. They send updates about water breaks, major events, and also to congratulate new council members.

Interviewer: Who do you think is the main group of people in that WhatsApp group? Is it accessible to younger people too?

Participant: I believe it is mostly adults, but also most of the information is not relevant to younger people. The content is more relevant to homeowners and adults. But yeah there probably are younger people in there too.

Interviewer: Do you get political information about what's happening in the council?

Participant: Yes, they post council meetings on YouTube and send links to the council meetings WhatsApp. Big changes or topics are sometimes discussed among peers if it's major. There was a recent meeting that actually spread quickly through our village because of something controversial that happened, and so people reference it now.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of political content is accessible?

Participant: I think if you asked someone they would be able to send it to you because none of this information is restricted. But for younger people might not know where to find this information but could figure it out with a bit of searching especially because they are more technologically savvy.

Interviewer: Do you think it's kind of a process and they wouldn't know where to start?

Participant: Yeah, I think younger people are less involved in that kind of stuff. They would probably know some key points or hear things from the older people in their lives, but they wouldn't go out of their way to get it.

Interviewer: Do you follow any social media accounts for the village?

Participant: I follow some accounts on Instagram but not on Facebook as I'm not active on there. On Instagram, I follow some of the major accounts like the council and the museum which is where they post ads and things like that.

Interviewer: Do you feel the need to interact with people from the village in online forums or platforms? How often do you do that?

Participant: I don't usually participate in online forums, but I know many people do. Some are very present in and active on Facebook groups but sometimes they do cause drama. That's mainly why I'm not on Facebook because I don't want to incorporate that into my life.

Interviewer: If there were a platform like a forum without the drama, would you use it to obtain or share information?

Participant: Yes, those groups can provide valuable information, especially during crises like the 7th of October or for practical needs like finding volunteers or donations. They shared a lot of valuable information about the war and updates we needed to know about. So there is necessary and valuable information given by people from the village, but the useful information can sometimes be lost among other less relevant discussions.

Interviewer: So you wouldn't mind participating in this kind of a forum?

Participant: Not at all, if I really do feel the necessity for it. But often times it's easier to just message someone that you know privately.

Interviewer: Ok, thank you so much for participating in this interview.

Interview 3

Interviewer: So, first of all, do you consider yourself an active part of this community?

Participant: I used to be an active part of the community, not as much anymore. When I was younger, I used to be involved in a lot of volunteer. I used to participate in a program that was called madazim which is a youth councelling type of thing. I volunteered in that since I was in 8th grade until the end of high school. after finishing high school, I ended up working and volunteering in the elementary school. But now I'm more focused on my studies so while I do consider myself part of the community, I'm not as active.

Interviewer: OK, great. You mentioned you were part of the Madazim, which is a youth movement. Can you talk about that experience, what it was like?

Participant: I was a really shy individual as a teen and I would not get involved with other people or go out as much. I wouldn't go out into the community or meet other people, so I did it more to develop myself and also to make myself get to know more people and develop my confidence, just to figure out how to be around people. When I entered the program, I learned how to talk to kids, not only kids, how to talk to adults, how to work with them, how to handle certain situations, mostly in educational environments. But I think it also expanded into more of a personal level as well.

Interviewer: Did you also go to school in the village? Is that right?

Participant: I did. I went to elementary school and middle school in the village.

Interviewer: Could you talk about what it was like growing up in a small community school, the people you interacted with, that kind of stuff?

Participant: When you study in a small village, everybody knows each other. Whatever you do, you always feel like you're sort of monitored. You sort of grow up in a bubble where you don't really know what's happening outside. You're exposed to certain things but not to situations that other people would normally get exposed to. When we grow up going to the elementary school and middle school in our village, we just get involved in things we consider normal, not really any big situations, but like a scandal or some conflict, you know.

Interviewer: have you worked in the village?

Participant: I did. Like I said, I worked in the elementary school for a couple of months, and I worked with the teachers and the kids. I also used to work at summer camps, so I got to work with other people from the village as well. Lastly, I also worked in a local business, a computer lab, and an electronic shop. In that shop, I got exposed to other customers, not

just kids, teachers, or people from our town that I'm familiar with, but other people from other races and countries that speak different languages.

Interviewer: Interesting. From all these experiences, what were your interactions with other people like from our village and how did you get information about what was happening in the village?

Participant: I used to be really shy, so I didn't really open up to people. Even if I did, you can't really be completely honest and open because certain things are seen in a bad light. There are things you can't really talk about, even if you feel like you want to. Sometimes, you feel more comfortable sharing with people who are not familiar with your environment because you know it's not going to get leaked and you feel more comfortable discussing it.

Interviewer: Have people ever come up to you and told you something about someone else or about something happening?

Participant: All the time. It's a small town, everybody talks about everyone. Sometimes there's not much to hide because it's going to get out there eventually. It happens quite often, like little scandals or rumors. There's always going to be something.

Interviewer: How do you go about obtaining information, like opening hours of a business?

Participant: It depends. If it's in person, you usually go up to someone, introduce yourself if you don't know them, start with small talk, and then ask for the information. If it's someone you know, you just ask directly. On a digital platform, you can Google everything. If you can't find the information online, you can message the business or find reviews and questions on Google. You can get information from anywhere nowadays.

Interviewer: What method do you use the most?

Participant: I usually try to figure things out by myself, so I Google my questions. If I don't find it, I look on different platforms like Instagram or Facebook. If I still don't find it, I ask other people, but that's my last resort because I don't want to feel like I'm disturbing them.

Interviewer: Have you ever struggled to find something on your own and had to ask someone? Who was the first person you turned to?

Participant: Yes. When I got a pet for the first time, I needed to find an avairy vet which was difficult because there weren't any in our area. It was hard to find one with good reviews, so I asked a friend who works in the vet industry, and she recommended one. In that instance, after not finding anything online, I went to a friend.

Interviewer: Conversely, have you ever wanted to sell something or look for a tutor? How did you go about that?

Participant: I never really needed a tutor. I was a good student and used the aid offered to me. If I did need one, I wouldn't really ask around, I would just see people offering that and that's who I would go to. I was also asked to tutor math and English directly through WhatsApp, but I denied the offer because I didn't feel comfortable doing that.

Interviewer: How does personal information, for example funerals and weddings, reach you?

Participant: It's a small town, so news spreads quickly, especially bad news like accidents or deaths. It circulates on WhatsApp and then later on it gets posted on Facebook. For weddings and engagements, people tell their friends and family, and it spreads from there through messages or in person. This isn't really something that people share instantly though, it just gets out though.

Interviewer: What about social events like festivals?

Participant: They usually post about festivals and social events on Facebook or Instagram. For example, the Circassian festival that is held yearly is advertised by the council or village workers.

And this information is accessible to you, there won't be a social event that you are not aware of?

No, we know about events months in advance, but sometimes there's a delay in getting specific details out. Only in some cases they are kind of delayed.

Interviewer: What about political information or messages from the council?

Participant: There's a WhatsApp group for people in the town, and the council sends links, photos, and messages about what's happening. If you're not in that group, it can be hard to find information. You have to go to Facebook and scroll through all the posts on there to find what you want.

And do you think that younger audiences search for that kind of content?

Younger people might not go out of their way to search for it if they can't find it quickly because they are kind of lazy in that regard. Like if it's not on anything that they use like Instagram, they won't go on other platforms to search for it.

Interviewer: Do you get messages about water breaks or construction?

Participant: Sometimes we do, sometimes we don't. It's a recurring problem. People get mad when there's no warning about an electricity or water break. Sometimes they tell us a few days prior, sometimes only an hour before. That happened once a couple of months ago and just posted on Facebook that there was a water break 20 minutes before it happened, and people were mad.

Interviewer: Do you think there is any information you should have access to but find hard to get?

Participant: Some information will always be hard to find, but we live in a modern era where almost anything is online. If you can't find something, someone in town will know. You can just ask and find out.

Interviewer: Do you interact with others online? How often, and what topics come up?

Participant: We use social media a lot, especially now that we're in university and not in town as much and we can't see each other in person. Everything happens on social media and these apps. We talk almost all day every day, whether it's with friends, family, or significant others on social media and those kinds of apps.

Interviewer: Would you post in a forum if you had a question?

Participant: It's not my first option, but if it came to it, I wouldn't mind posting in a forum or asking on Facebook. It's normal to try to figure things out and share.

Interviewer: If someone else posted a question, would you feel comfortable answering?

Participant: I tend to answer questions in university WhatsApp groups, whether in the group or privately. I try to help whoever I can if I know how to.

Interviewer: OK, well, this has been a very enlightening experience. Thank you so much for participating in this interview.