

## **Problem Statement:**

There are not enough third spaces (informal, public gathering places outside of home (the “first space”) and work/school (the “second space”) ) where young people can relax, interact, and build community connections. Examples of third spaces include cafes, libraries, parks, community centers, and other inclusive venues that promote social engagement without requiring spending money or consuming alcohol.

## **Who is experiencing the problem?**

While the lack of third spaces affects people of all ages, it especially impacts on young people, especially those in their teenage years through early twenties. This age group often seeks independence and social belonging, but has limited access to spaces that are welcoming, safe, and affordable. Additionally, people who do not drink alcohol or who are under the legal drinking age are excluded from many existing social venues, like bars and clubs.

## **What is the problem?**

The main issue is that the lack of accessible third spaces makes it difficult for young people to connect organically with peers who share similar interests. Without spaces that host casual, low-pressure interaction, many young people struggle to build meaningful relationships outside of structured environments such as school or work.

## **Where does the problem present itself?**

This problem presents itself everywhere but especially in more suburban/rural areas. Urban areas typically have more third spaces such as music venues, parks, and cafes where people can casually gather and interact. These environments tend to be more walkable and densely populated, which naturally encourages community engagement and social interaction.

## **Why does it matter?**

The absence of third spaces contributes to social isolation, loneliness, and lack of community. Young people who lack accessible places to gather can feel disconnected from their peers and communities, which can affect mental health. When people have fewer opportunities to interact face-to-face, communities become weaker and individuals can feel more alienated in both physical and digital environments.