A1 - Needfinding

MEET THE TEAM

Who are we?

SIMONE PANIATI

COMPUTER NETWORKS AND CLOUD COMPUTING

I am a 23 years old student from Chivasso, near Turin. I am passionate about computer networks and everything related to the internet.

PETER ALHACHEM

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

I am a 22 years old student from Beirut, Lebanon. I am passionate about mathematics and quantum physics. I hope to transmit my love for science through work and academics.

GIUSEPPE LAZZARA

SOFTWARE

I am a 24 years old student from Catania. My greatest passions are computer engineering and music. I aim to transmit my musical creativity to the realm of computer science.

FRANCESCO ROSATI

SOFTWARE

I am a 23 years old student from Latina, near Rome. I am passionate about programming and I hope I can make an impact on the world through it.

Domain of interest - Why? (I)

In a world where humanity remains in constant progression, people take the courageous decision to go out of their comfort zone in order to discover different cultures, habits and opportunities to improve their lives. However, change can sometimes be a complex process to face, that ranges from linguistic to cultural difficulties. Our main target through this project is to ease the process of integration for students and workers from all around the globe.

Domain of interest - Why? (II)

Our initial contact with this domain was through the intermediate of internationals friends that we had the opportunity to talk to during the several lessons and classes conducted at university. And by listening to their daily struggles, we understood the importance as well as the need to simplify the integration process for people who decide to join new communities.

Why were the participants chosen?

All the participants are students / workers from different backgrounds: they range from Erasmus students continuing their education to workers researching better job opportunities. All of them share the common decision of leaving their original city to go to live in a different one, either abroad or in the same country.

All participants in this project have similar interests in finding new friends, accommodating to new routines and facing the change of culture by immersing into a new one. We find it fundamental to hear their satisfactions and concerns to extract common needs as well as comparing the demands people from different backgrounds might have.

How were the interviews conducted?

The majority of the interviews were carried remotely, via Google Meet, and this due to the participants living abroad or in another city. All the interviews were audio recorded with a mobile device. Participants have shown their consent of being interviewed through a paper that they signed prior to holding the interview.

Each interview has been conducted by 2 team members:

- **Interviewer (I):** Managing the flow of the interview and asking the questions.
- **Writer (W):** Writing the answers of the interviewees and managing the recording of the interview.
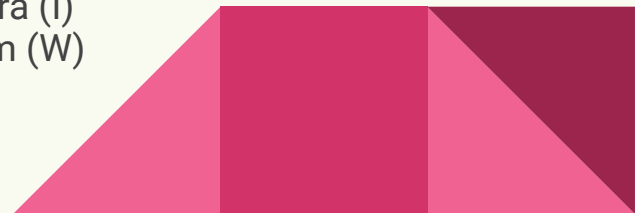
During the interviews

Participant #1: Mario Mastrandrea → **Where?:** Google Meet
Who?: Francesco Rosati (I)
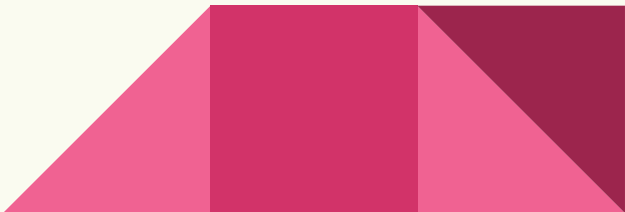Giuseppe Lazzara (W)

Participant #2: Hanane Chami → **Where?:** Google Meet
Who?: Peter ALHachem (I)
Simone Paniati (W)

Participant #3: Federica Franco → **Where?:** Google Meet
Who?: Simone Paniati (I)
Francesco Rosati (W)

Participant #4: Tommaso Natta **(Extreme User)** → **Where?:** Politecnico di Torino
Who?: Giuseppe Lazzara (I)
Peter ALHachem (W)

Questions asked to the participants (I)

1. What is your name? What is your profession? How old are you?
2. What was your previous country / city and what is your new country / city?
3. What is the reason behind moving to a new city?
4. What were your expectations before coming? How accurate / real they were?
5. Can you describe your new community in three words?
6. What are three similarities between your old community and your new community (city)?
7. What are three differences between your old community and your new community?

Questions asked to the participants (II)

8. Can you name at least two habits that you picked up from your new community?

9. On a scale from one to five how hard was it to find accommodation in your new city?

10. Did you reach stability? If so, when did you approximately reach it? And what were the tools that helped you reach it? If not what in your opinion would be the right assistance to reach stability?

11. On a scale from one to five how hard, in your opinion, is it to find new people in your new community? And why did you choose this number?

Questions asked to the participants (III)

12. On a scale from one to five how much would you rate your experience in a new city so far? And why did you choose this number?
13. Can you state at least one new service that you have liked in your new place of living? And at least one that you have disliked? And why?
14. What are the means of transport that you use in your new city? How easy is it to use them?
15. On a scale from one to five how interested would you be to use a platform that will ease your integration in a new city? And why did you choose this number?

Questions asked to the participants (IV)

16. Moving to a new city with only free time on your hand, what would you be interested in doing?

Questions asked to the extreme user (I)

1. What is your name? What is your profession? How old are you?
2. By virtue of what were you able to meet your international friends?
3. Can you give me three words to describe the people you have met which are originally different from your community?
4. In your opinion, what were two barriers that you have encountered with your friends at the beginning of your friendship? And what were their solutions?
5. What were main problems you have witnessed people struggling to do and needed help with?

Questions asked to the extreme user (II)

6. Can you define, through what you have seen, the integration process? How, do you think, can it be improved?
7. Can you give me at least two activities that you did with your friends that, in your opinion, helped them in the integration process?
8. On a scale from one to five how easy is it for a foreigner (Italian or otherwise) to integrate in the community you live in? And why did you choose this number?
9. Do you intend, in any case, to stay in touch with people after they move out again from your community? If so, how do you plan on doing so? And if not, what are the reasons for it?

Questions asked to the extreme user (III)

10. On a scale from one to five how interested would you be in a platform that will help you connect with people that come to your new city? And why did you choose this number?

MARIO MASTRANDREA, 23, MALE
COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENT

Mario is originally an Italian-based student who decided to start a new adventure in Iowa, United States by being part of the Erasmus program. Mario brings up to the table the point of view of an italian student who is moving into a new place seeking to meet cultural diversity, linguistic amelioration and self challenge. Through Mario, we are able to see the facilities and difficulties that are encountered by an italian student abroad. And thus, compare the similarities and differences between the italian and non-italian community.

Key Quotes

➢ *"I wanted to have many experiences, integrate into a different culture, learn English also for the workplace and changing habits. This allows you to appreciate what you have, what is in a different context and what is better for you and what not."*

➢ *"Living here in Iowa is not too different from expectations, I met nice people with different cultures and you don't notice that you are on the other side of the world."*

➢ *"Language is the true diversity, but when you start to understand people and learn English better, you realize that it is not an absolutely out of the ordinary."*

➢ *"In Italy, as far as the inner aspect is concerned, we are much deeper and the knowledge with people remains so, on the surface."*

➢ *"In America you have a linguistic and cultural barrier. It is more difficult to get in touch with the locals above all and settle in at the same time."*

➢ *"The social transition from the previous period was more difficult because you knew how to behave with others because you had a background of cultural knowledge"*
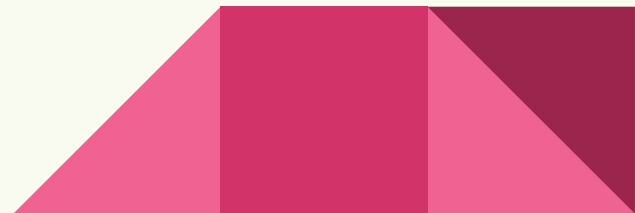
"This will not be the last step of my life, it is just an experience."

FEDERICA FRANCO, 23, FEMALE

PART-TIME THERAPIST AND EMPLOYEE IN A LOCAL CINEMA

Federica is a young worker that has previously moved to a small town in the region of Veneto, called Conegliano. She fits the profile of a person who has decided to permanently intra-move to another city researching job opportunities, a new experience and a change in the lifestyle. Through her, we aim to extract the opinion of someone who had the opportunity to stay in his country but to change the city and thus analyse the cultural modifications within a same country.

Key Quotes

➢ *"I moved not because of the way I worked and not because I couldn't find anything in the place where I was, but because of the kind of experience I would have had."*

➢ *"In the beginning I was hosted by some family members, but later it was very difficult to find a new house which took 2 months."*

➢ *"It wasn't easy to meet new people because of lack of opportunities."*

➢ *"I still haven't reached personal stability in the new community, but the situation is improving. Other people helped me a lot, especially in finding a new house."*

➢ *"I think that the overall experience in my new city is quite good, especially because of the kindness of other people."*

➢ *"Having a car is quite essential: the local public transports are not so efficient. On the other hand, if you need to reach a farther destination, the trains are very efficient: you can reach many destination from the Conegliano train station."*

➢ *"I would like to use a platform that will ease my integration in a new city, even if it's not so important to meet people that share my same interests."*

HANANE CHAMI, 22, FEMALE
COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENT

Hanane is pursuing her Masters degree in Paris, France. She represents a group of students who have permanently decided to re-allocate their place of leaving to seek better careers and various Job opportunities. Our objective was to understand the holdbacks, obstacles and concerns non-italians can have from moving into bigger, more crowded cities and how it affects their process of integrations.

"I have moved out to France to find better opportunities after life became less promising"

Key Quotes

➢ *"Language in France is still a barrier even if you already know it, people here talk in slang language and you need to get used to it."*

➢ *"I was shocked by how friendly people were. They were extremely nice for no reason just like back in Lebanon."*

➢ *"It is hard to reach stability at first because as a foreigner you have a lot of paperworks to do and no one helps you to do them. It also takes time to accommodate to the system here."*

➢ *"I am the only exchange student in class and I felt welcomed by my classmates. I have found a small group to go and eat lunch with."*

➢ *"The courses here are harder than expected because I was not familiar with some of the materials that were previously given. Other courses are easier because I had an idea about them already from the university back in Lebanon."*

➢ *"I had to get used to the queue and the chaos in the public transportation here in France. Distances here are major, it is not easy to go wherever you want. Buses and Trains are most of the time late."*

TOMMASO NATTA, 27, MALE
COMPUTER ENGINEERING STUDENT

Tommaso is a local citizen who has attended his whole academic path (High school and University) in Turin. He had never experienced any sort of integration problems or major changes whatsoever. Tommaso matches the perfect description of **Extreme User** because he was able, through his sociability, to immerse himself into several foreign friendships and helped, directly or not, the integration process of many internationals.

"I really need to meet new people in my life. I really like it. The further apart they are, the more enjoyable it is to connect."

Key Quotes

➤ *"We met in classroom , speaking during the lessons and finding mates for labs and I used slack a lot during the period of the pandemic to meet people."*

➤ *"Some people I have met felt embarrassment because of cultural barrier, but they are smart and outgoing."*

➤ *"I get afraid to hurt their feelings by asking sensitive questions, but I got accustomed to not asking everything in my mind."*

➤ *"Courses were difficult for some people and I expected this because when you come from different universities you don't study the same thing even if you have attended the same field."*

➤ *"For a foreigner to integrate in the community I live in it is not quite easy because they come from different backgrounds and different countries and also italians are gathered along each other and they don't need to make connections as much."*

➤ *"It might be a good idea to force locals to interact with foreigners, it will help both sides on the long term."*

➤ *"There is definitely space for improvement, people end up speaking with people from the same country which slows their integration."*

Pictures (I)

Pictures (II)

Common Needs (I)

After a thorough examination of the diverse arguments conducted through all four interviews, the team members were able to extract the following needs:

- **Connecting locals and newly incomers:** According to our primal study, citizens are generally welcoming and friendly with foreigners. On the other hand, not much actions gravitate towards emphasizing this connection as meetings and gatherings that pushes towards this direction are not much done outside the domain of work.

Common Needs (II)

- **Providing better transportation:** Regardless of the location of the participants, the conflict related to transportations to new incomers remains a unified matter during the interviews. It is difficult to get accustomed to, somewhat, complex modes of transportation or few reachable means.
- **Informing newly incomers about local events and initiatives:** Newly incomers have found it challenging to reach the information concerning either the paperworks they have to do in their new place of living or the events that might be happening in their place of living, providing them with these sort of information will drastically help them integrate better.

Common Needs (III)

- **Narrowing down the language and cultural barrier:** Reaching stability is directly connected to a great communication in terms of speaking and socializing. Regardless of some relatives that might be in the same region of relocation, our participants find a difficult time integrating when they don't know how or where to communicate with people.

What's Next?

Based on the analysis made previously, the team members have found a huge deficit in the communication between the locals and the incomers, as well as a lack of direct access, sometimes difficult, in the transportation sector. The team members believe these two arguments are two of the most important drawbacks that hold new incomers from an easier integration in the society the relocate into. Despite the significance of the problem of transportation, the generality and diverse angles this problem presents between different regions. We find the problem of communication between locals and incomers to be more promising. The group members will provide elaborated evidences on this specific domain in further studies, starting by interviewing a domain expert in this field.