



# PLAY WITH YOUR HOOD!

## CREATING MOBILE GAME CHALLENGES TO FOSTER SOCIAL INTERACTION IN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBOURHOODS

In ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, people from different cultural backgrounds often do not socialize much with people outside their cultural circle. This often leads to low social cohesion. To get people to spend more time outside where they can meet other people, PhD. student F. X. Fonseca started developing Secrets of the South, a location-based mobile game where players solve challenges around their neighbourhood. During this project, a narrative and gameplay content were created to further develop this game.

In Secrets of the South, players will form groups of up to four people and will try to “conquer” parks and other public spots around their neighbourhood by completing a set of physical, social, and brain challenges at those locations. By turning physical spaces, infrastructure and strangers into integral gameplay elements, players are playfully encouraged to engage with their neighbourhood and interact with its residents to create a more social and vibrant public life.



Fig. 2. Secrets of the South is primarily aimed at teenagers aged 12 to 16. The premise of the game is that of adventure. Players should feel like they are completing missions while actively exploring their surroundings with fellow adventurers. The game will introduce players to cool new spots they would otherwise never have visited.

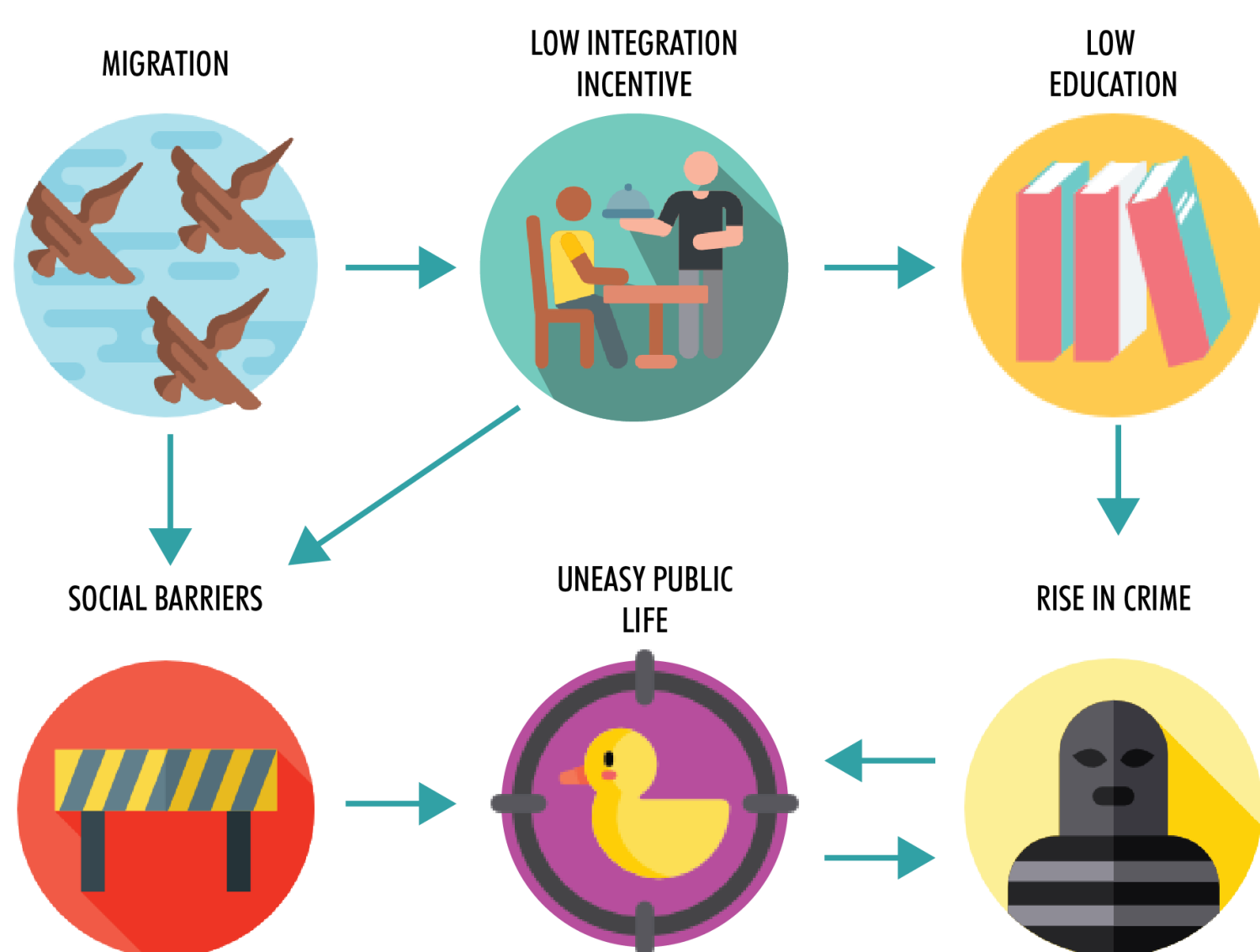


Fig. 1. Through exploratory research, we learned how migration could lead to low social cohesion. People who move to a different country with different social norms and cultures often struggle to integrate. This is especially difficult if they end up living in a neighbourhood with other fellow immigrants. They look for comfort in people of similar culture, which often leads to alienation from other cultures, which in turn leads to people not socializing or spending much time out in public. The silver lining is that the opposite is also true. The more people spend time out in public socializing, the more inclined other people will be to do the same. With Secrets of the South, we want to encourage active participation from people in public to foster social interactions.

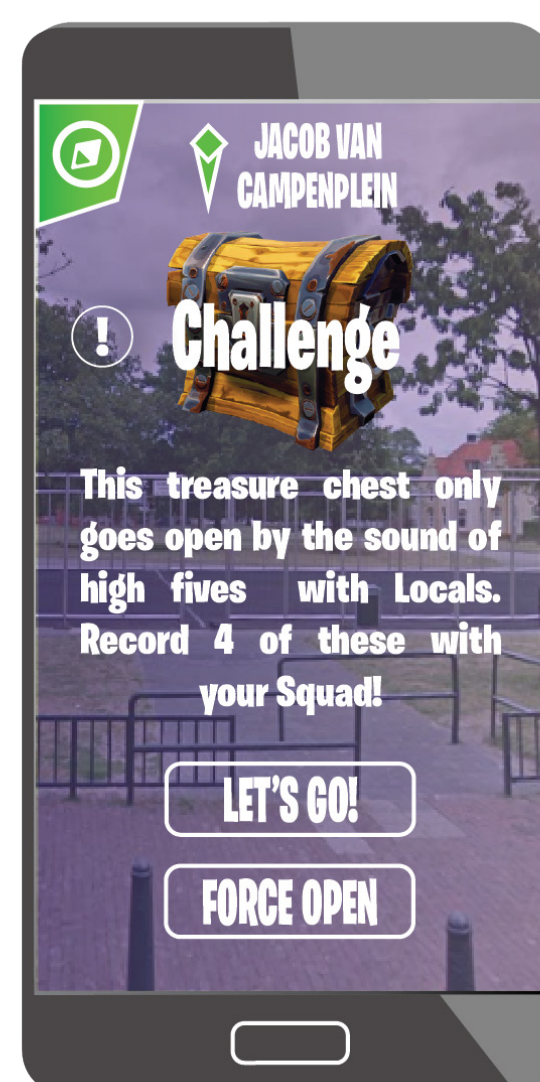


Fig. 3. Some challenges will encourage players to find people in their surroundings to do short fun interactions with like high fiving or giving hand shakes! Other challenges will have them looking for hidden object in their surroundings, or doing simple physical challenges like jumping from benches.

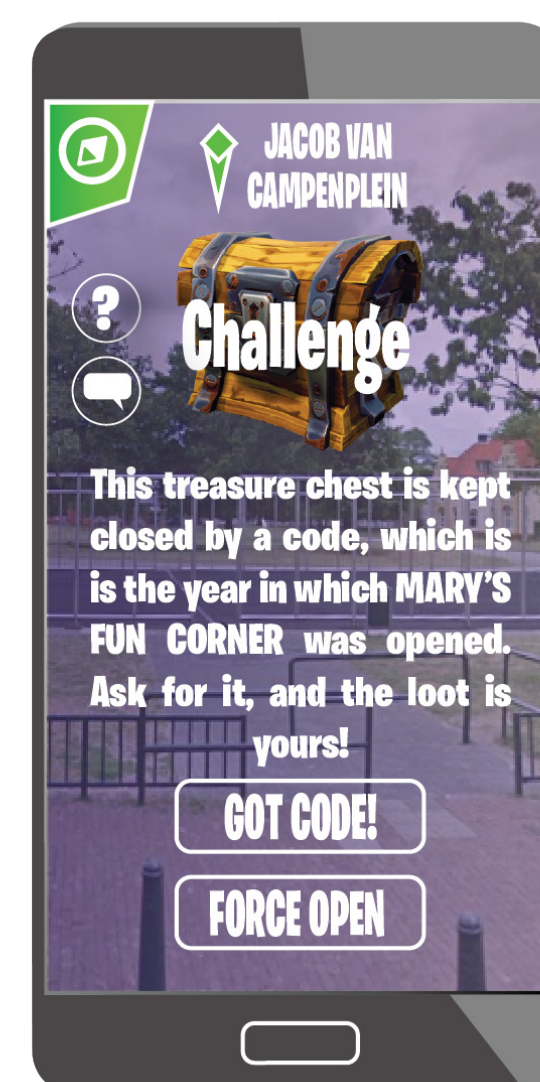


Fig. 4. Other tasks will direct them towards specific people like local business owners to find information. In the future, these stakeholders could ask for (logistical) help from players in the form of challenges, and the players would get real-world rewards like coupons or discounts.



Fig. 5. After completing all tasks at a spot, teams will get a chance to “conquer” a spot. They will get timed questions that will test how much attention they paid to their surroundings while completing challenges. The team that with the highest score will be the conqueror of that spot!

Daniel Aguirre Broca  
Play with your hood  
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Design for Interaction

Committee

Marc Tassoul  
Niko Vegt

