

# Safe the Date

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A Geneva-based mobile application for safe meetings

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# Abstract

Gender-based violence and targeted hate crimes against minorities are ever-increasing, abetted by the increasing use of dating applications. According to UN Women, approximately one in three women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime across the globe, and these statistics are even more stark for people of colour, the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities and other minority groups. In order to help combat this crisis of sexual violence, our team has created a mobile phone application entitled 'Safe the Date'. The purpose of the app is to create a platform in which users can identify and evaluate the security and inclusivity measures implemented by local bars, clubs, restaurants and cafes in our prototype city of Geneva, in order to determine a venue of best fit for an event such as a first date. Whilst gender-based sexual violence is a mammoth global crisis, it is our sincere hope that this app will provide a local, practical solution to help mitigate this complex problem.



Photo taken by Monique Rafton

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## Acronyms

|      |  |
|------|--|
| CCTV | Closed-Circuit Television              |
| KPIs | Key performance indicators             |
| M&E  | Monitoring and evaluation              |
| TFSV | Technology-facilitated sexual violence |

# Introduction

On 3 March 2021, 33-year-old Sarah Everard was walking home from a friend's house in London on a busy, well-lit street, talking to her boyfriend on the phone. She didn't make it home. She was kidnapped and murdered by a police officer, sparking global outcry (BBC News 2021). Just a few days later, 42-year-old Belgian man David Polfliet was found dead in a park, a victim of a gay-hate crime after being lured by a fake profile on Grindr (Sudol 2021). In 2021, Human Rights Campaign (2021) has reported that at least 29 transgender or gender non-conforming people have been killed in the United States by violent means, the majority of these individuals being Black, Latinx or Indigenous. These stories are merely a small sample of the countless individuals who have been the victims of gender-based violence and targeted hate crimes.

Dating apps such as Tinder, Bumble and Grindr have surged in popularity in recent years, a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic amid the isolation and loneliness of lockdowns. Despite the widespread usage of these dating apps and the opportunities they provide for love and connection, there is empirical evidence to indicate that they also enable and accelerate sexual violence, known as technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV), (Henry, Flynn, and Powell 2020). TFSV can include image-based sexual abuse, online sexual harassment, and cyberstalking, as well as facilitating offline sexual and violent offending such as those committed on first in-person dates (Pooley and Boxall 2020). In some tragic cases such as that of British backpacker Grace Millane in New Zealand, Tinder dates have also led to murder (BBC News 2020). The British National Crime Agency revealed in 2016 that online-dating related rape reports had increased by more than 450 percent in the six years prior (BBC News 2016). These statistics are highly gendered, with 85 percent of these rapes being reported by women. The Agency warned that online dating has given rise to "a new kind of sexual offender", as people feel "freer in the anonymous online world to be more open and emotionally honest", leading to higher levels of trust and risk taking (BBC News 2016). It is evident, therefore, that the rise in online dating has facilitated incidents of sexual violence, and women, people of colour, the LGBTQIA+ community and other minority groups experience this disproportionately.

In order to help combat the scourge of gender-based violence and targeted hate crimes against minorities, in particular related to dating and dating apps, our team therefore proposes an app-based solution entitled 'Safe the Date'. The aim of the app is to create a platform in which users can identify and evaluate the security and inclusivity measures implemented by local bars, clubs, restaurants and cafes (in our prototype city of Geneva to begin), in order to determine a venue of best fit for an event such as a first date. A supplementary goal is for local businesses to actively help facilitate the safety and security of their patrons and their various needs, in turn helping them to attract and retain clients. Whilst gender-based violence is a mammoth global crisis, it is our sincere hope that this app will provide a local solution that is practical and feasible in helping to manage and mitigate this immense problem.

This report will begin by contextualising the crisis of gender-based violence and targeted hate crimes against minorities by highlighting statistics related to this and situating it within the academic literature. It will then elaborate on why we have chosen to develop an app, before outlining our methodological approach, data analysis, app design and monitoring and evaluation processes.

## Background

Safety and security are the most fundamental of human needs, preceded only by physiological needs such as access to food and water in Maslow's famous hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943). Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person' (United Nations 1948). The right to safety is one of the most central aspects of the post-war international order, enshrined not only in the Declaration of Human Rights, but also expanded upon in other international treaties such as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 1993) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2006). Safety in public spaces has generally been a concern to women, migrants, and ethnic minorities, the LGBTQIA+ population, and persons with disabilities.

Globally, an estimated 736 million women (approximately one in three women) have experienced violence or sexual assault from a partner, non-partner or both at least once in their lifetime (UN Women 2021). Specifically regarding Europe, our region of focus, approximately 45-55% of women in the European Union have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15 (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2014). In circles among women, we often hear of tactics such as holding keys in between your fingers, calling a friend on your walk home or taking self-defence classes. Women often perceive night-life as dangerous and have been victims of some form of violence in public spaces (Condon, Lieber, and Maillachon 2005). Even in highly developed countries like Switzerland, sexual assault is rife. A 2019 Amnesty International Report has revealed that one in five women in Switzerland had been subject to sexual violence and one in ten women had been raped. Notably, despite ratifying the Istanbul Convention of 2017 which criminalises all non-consensual acts of a sexual nature, Swiss law does not define rape by consent but by whether physical violence, threat or coercion is involved (Amnesty International 2019). In other Global North countries such as Sweden - considered the "first feminist government in the world" (Government Offices of Sweden N/A) - women are still highly likely to be sexually harassed. In one study, 24.4% of Swedish women were sexually harassed at locations such as clubs, bars and restaurants (Mellgren, Andersson, and Ivert 2018).

Sexual violence is even more pronounced among women of colour. Black American women experience sexual violence at a rate 35% higher than that of white females, but they are significantly less likely to report this (Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and

Sexual Violence 2020). Furthermore, many women of colour face additional barriers such as a lack of culturally or linguistically appropriate services, a lack of trust in the police, the criminal justice system or other institutions that might have a history of racism and classism, their immigration status, and fear that their experience will reflect on unfavourable stereotypes about their ethnicity or culture (Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence 2020). Similarly, the LGBTQIA+ community also experiences elevated rates of sexual assault and are nearly four times more likely to be a victim of violent crime or sexual assault than non-LGBTQIA+ people (Morgan and Truman 2018; Dowd 2020). Transgender people experience one of the highest levels of sexual assault at nearly 50% (James et al. 2016). Harassment is also commonplace for those with disabilities and learning difficulties, leading to feelings of exclusion and becoming subject to hate crimes (Hall and Bates 2019). Horrifically, people with intellectual disabilities are seven times more likely to be sexually assaulted than people without disabilities (NPR 2016); these statistics are likely to be much more elevated in reality as the majority of these crimes go unreported and unpunished.

These devastating statistics demonstrate the ugly reality that women, people of colour, queer people, people with disabilities and other minorities are significantly more likely to be the victims of sexual violence. First coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality is an analytical framework that refers to the ways in which social categories such as race, gender and class intersect to form multi-tiered oppressions (Crenshaw 1989). Patricia Collins expands on this, analysing how these intersecting oppressions are actually *organized*; she labels this the 'matrix of domination', referring to the 'structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power' (Collins 2000:18). Akeia Benard (2016) contends that the hyper-sexualised depiction of Black women in 'global patriarchal capitalism and pop culture' such as pornography and mainstream music has its roots in the same 'gendered/raced/sexual relationships that were created under colonialism.' Collins further theorises on this: "Through colonial eyes, the stigma of biological Blackness and the seeming primitiveness of African cultures marked the borders of extreme abnormality...White Western normality became constructed on the backs of Black deviance, with an imagined Black hyper-heterosexual deviance at the heart of the enterprise" (Collins 2005: 120).

Gender-based violence is also a development issue, as highlighted in Goal 5.2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2016). Utilising a development framework, Naila Kabeer analyses the progress of the Millennium Development Goals; whilst progress had been made, this had been extremely slow and uneven. She contends that this uneven progress was due to "the intersecting and mutually reinforcing nature of the inequalities which give rise to social exclusion", which are underpinned by deeply entrenched structural factors such as ethnic inequalities (Kabeer 2010). It is evident, therefore, that sexual violence is an immense crisis, and this is compounded at the intersectionality of race, gender, class and ability.

# The crisis and our approach

## Problem statement

Sexual and gender-based violence (in both the public and private spaces; our focus is on public spaces) is an immense and complex social development issue across both the Global North and the Global South, and this is compounded by the intersection of various inequalities such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and disability.

## Our approach

Utilising an intersectionality and interdisciplinary approach (incorporating sociological, technological, and gendered lenses), our team has designed and created a mobile application called '*Safe the Date*' in order to help mitigate sexual violence related to dating apps in the city of Geneva, Switzerland. Users will be able to see a number of potential venues across the city (businesses that agree to sign up to the app) for a rendezvous (be that romantic or otherwise) through the map or search functions, which will display the various security measures of each venue, providing users with choice and control. Importantly, there is an emergency alert button that a user can press which will alert the venue staff if they are feeling unsafe. Users will also be able to rate and review the venues according to five measures - facilities and accessibility, staff, security, inclusivity and 'vibes'. This allows users to choose a venue that best suits their individual needs, such as wheelchair accessibility or staff that are LGBTQIA+ allies. Our approach is one which centres on inclusion, and this is reflected in the app design.

We believe that an app is an appropriate choice of solution for a number of reasons: it is easily accessible in situations that might become fluid, apps are familiar and highly popular with our target audience (young people aged 16 to 29) and technological solutions are proving to be innovative and the way of the future. Furthermore, our app acts as an intermediary between establishments and customers, and also creates a space for solidarity and community amongst users within the review section.

## Methodology

'Safe the Date' is an app aimed at promoting safety, security, and greater inclusivity and, thereby, is an app which is committed to maximally serving its users. In line with this, creating 'Safe the Date' followed an inductive and iterative approach which implies that the emergent results, specifically the app design, are anchored in and derived from the data collected and were adapted over the course of the research to effectively include and respond to the data.

The present chapter delineates the research process and other important elements of the research methodology which was adopted for this project.

## Evolution of research agenda

Any research project often evolves throughout the process especially in response to new and relevant information and data. Throughout this project, we were highly committed to ensuring that we are responding to the needs of society and the needs of the crisis we had identified.

As most of our team members identify as female and all of us have experienced the anxieties which come with living alone in big bustling cities, our focus quickly crystallized around women's safety in public and social spaces in cities. However, as we began our research and began our data collection phase (elaborated later in this chapter), we realized that the issue of safety and inclusivity needs a broader consideration.

This led us to shift our focus on creating safe and inclusive public and social spaces. Through our research, we found evidence that an overwhelming number of people, especially women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, do not feel entirely safe and comfortable in many social establishments such as bars, clubs etc. Our aims then became to build an app which would give users the power to choose establishments based on certain safety and inclusivity indicators. Thus, the idea for 'Safe the Date' was born - an app which gives users power and control over their own safety. The app design and features are explained in more detail in a later chapter.

## Research methods and process

The research process began with desk research to understand the landscape of the problem, this was followed by anonymised online surveys, and, finally, we conducted some stakeholder interviews to understand expert perspectives on the crisis of safety and lack of inclusive spaces for women and minorities. In this way, the research triangulated the data to better understand the scope of the problem and thereby build an effective solution to it.

After this triangulated approach to data collection, we analysed our data to gain a deeper insight into the needs of the population and how a mobile or online application can meet these needs.

These steps of the research process are explained in further detail below.

### Desk research

This phase analysed both primary and secondary sources on the pressing crisis of safety in public and social spaces, women and minority safety in such settings, perceptions of safety, and safety indexes. This phase was especially important in informing and identifying the research agenda and the inception of the app idea and design.

## Surveys

The second phase was focused on gaining perspectives from the app's intended target population, which includes all young adults with smartphone access, especially women, members of the LGBTQI+ community and other minorities. The survey questionnaire was structured to collect the perspectives of the demographic regarding safety, security, and inclusivity in public and social spaces including cafés, restaurants, bars and clubs. These surveys were instrumental in informing the app design and features according to what the sample believed could be important.

The survey questionnaire is attached in the appendix.

## Stakeholder interviews and discussions

Along with the surveys, we also conducted some stakeholder interviews with members of the city of Geneva who work in the space of gender and inclusivity, representatives of a private firm which works to promote safety in social spaces especially in bars and clubs, and representatives of student feminist and LGBTQI+ organizations. These stakeholder interviews were geared towards verifying the results obtained from the surveys and the desk research, triangulating them with expert and stakeholder perspectives. The interviewees played an important role in informing the practical aspects of the application and in giving relevant professional insight in the space of safety, inclusivity, and app design.

## Analysis

Data collected from all these three methods of data collection were analysed to answer two primary questions: What is the level of people's perceived safety and inclusivity in public and social spaces? How can safety and inclusivity in these spaces be enhanced through an application?

The analysis consisted of a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis to understand what the sampled population needs in an app to enhance their experience of safety and inclusivity in public and social spaces.

## App development

The app development followed an iterative process wherein we adapted the app design and the features to the ideas and the insights we gained at every phase of the research process to ensure that the app was covering the most important aspects of both potential users and other stakeholders.

## Limitations

During this research and app development process we faced many different limitations. The primary one was posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic severely

affected our ability to reach to participants, stakeholders, and proprietors of public and social spaces in different countries because of which our research and outreach was limited to Geneva. However, the app is designed in a way that it can be applied to different geographical settings and is not restricted to specific countries or areas. Secondly, because of the issue of non-responses from survey participants and the make-up of our team, the survey participants were primarily from Argentina and Australia. Nonetheless, the survey sample did include participants from different countries and nationalities and helped widen the perspective gained.

Despite these limitations, the app design, and the inductive approach it followed, is rooted in an understanding of safety and inclusivity for all and is focused on responding to the needs of the target population. The triangulated data collection and research process enhances the validity and robustness of the conclusions reached and also provides us with an informed vantage point in developing 'Safe the Date'. We believe that the app represents an opportunity to empower people and give them control over the physical spaces they interact in and with, as well as enhance safety and inclusivity in public and social establishments.

## Solution Development

This part of the report will focus on the results and analysis. We will start by introducing our key partners and stakeholders envisioned as part of our projects, discuss the feasibility of widespread usage of such an application in managing the identified crisis as well as its risks. We will then present our analysis of the survey results.

### Key partners and stakeholders

The location of our work being set in Geneva, we focused on potential collaborations with locally based organisations. We first set out to do this by discussing our initial ideas with the Gender and Diversity department of the City of Geneva. This conversation served as a springboard for ideas for the app and contacts to reach out to other local organisations.

We were then put in contact with a local Suisse Romandie based organisation working on promoting safety, with an inclusive approach, in clubs. The organisation measures safety in clubs through different indicators such as informational posters around the establishment and provides training to staff members in these areas.

After conversations with them, although we were not able to collaborate with them fully due to time constraints, we were able to rethink our approach and perspective towards perceptions of security. In this stage, we were able to move from a gender-centred approach, focusing on women and LGBTQI+ persons towards an approach with different

elements of inclusivity at its core; this included disability, plus size-friendly indicators, as well as the consideration of ethnic minorities and migrants.

Our conversations with key partners and stakeholders highlighted that our target audience would predominantly be young people who are usually in such social venues. This was reinforced by our research that most users of social media applications, dating apps and networks were predominately young people and young adults aging from around 12-29 (Perrin 2015; Smith 2016; Huang and Su 2018). This could therefore be young people who may be going on first dates through various dating applications such as Tinder, Bumble, Hinge or Grindr, for example. This could also be a younger audience who is new in a city or a tourist and would like to discover safe establishments. Usage could also more generally be for young people who would like to go to a place where they feel secure to meet friends.

## Budget and budget feasibility

This section of the paper will look at the feasibility of our project. We will begin by discussing the budget and its feasibility. Then we will discuss the proof of concept and the feasibility that this project will be successful and could also be successfully implemented in other cities and towns.

### Budget

Developing such an application would, in normal circumstances, have different costs related to it. Luckily our team has had the skills and expertise to launch ourselves in such a project. This section of the proposal goes into more detail on the cost and feasibility of such a project.

#### **App development**

If a member of the team, in this case Lisa Caberlotto, was not equipped with the skills to create an app, the app would have been developed by an external partner which would require labour costs. The minimum wage also considered enough for living in Geneva is 23 CHF/hour, approximately 25 USD/hour. 1 full time staff would earn approximately a gross salary of 48,131.20 CHF/annum, around 52,250 USD/Annum.

Furthermore, launching an app on phones for users would involve other costs. A subscription to app development software would be necessary in order to launch the app to the general public. Subscription costs with Apple amount to 99 USD/annum and for Android app development software, they would cost 100 USD/annum.

#### **Provision of technical support and equipment**

Staff working in the establishments may not already have the required technology to use the app. We would aim to have an admin version of the app that staff can use to control their bookings as well as take any emergency SOS calls. Therefore, providing a tablet computer for them would mean that the application is accessible to use from small and small-medium sized businesses which are locally-based and may not otherwise have access to such technology. The cost of 1 tablet computer ranges from

329-399 USD for a basic Apple iPad. At the lower end of this estimate, if we were to provide 10 tablets to establishments that did not already have such technology, this would amount to 3,290 USD. However, we would hope that given the widespread availability and use of such equipment, most businesses would already have the required resources.

Secondly, in some cases, the establishment may require training on how to use the technology. This would lead to some additional labour costs. Although these costs could be covered by our team members in the initial stages of the app development, eventually these would need to be covered by other people. This would amount to a similar salary as we saw for an app developer at approximately 52,250 USD/Annum.

### **Marketing**

In order to promote usage of the application, advertisements may be required. Different platforms for advertising would allow us to reach our target audience more effectively without breaking the bank. One study showed that over 70% of Instagram users are aged between 12 and 24 (Huang and Su 2018) and another study revealed that over 90% of young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 are social media users and are the most likely age group to be on social applications (Perrin 2015). In order to target the desired demographic, we would use a method of microtargeting which would target young people in Geneva and maintain advertising costs low (Barbu 2014).

Facebook and Instagram ads are able to target people through their place of residence, their gender and age which are all factors which could help us in microtargeting. Furthermore, the longer it is used, the ads can be catered for those most likely to download the app depending on the habits and behaviours of Facebook and Instagram users. As the population in Geneva is relatively small compared to other cities, huge outreach is not required. Using the function on Facebook to predict costs, in order to reach the target audience in Geneva, it would cost approximately 3 USD/day for advertising on Instagram, Facebook and Facebook Messenger. This would amount to 21 USD/day and 1,092 USD/annum.

As we take a gender lens, we expect that many users would utilise such an app when going on a first date from a dating app. As Tinder is the most widely used social dating app (Match Group LLC 2021), we hope to advertise on Tinder through banners. Furthermore, in 2015, 27% of Tinder users were aged between 18 and 24, the largest age group of users. Advertisements on Tinder are usually done through Google Ads and can be used for both Android and Apple users. It was harder to predict the cost of advertising on Tinder, but we are aware that, similarly to Facebook and Instagram ads, expenditure on adverts can be adjusted according to budget. We predict that this will amount to a similar cost to Instagram and Facebook and Facebook Messenger for the same reach to our target audience.

Tangible forms of advertising can also be used to promote the app. We could distribute leaflets to the businesses part of the app which would only require printing costs. Printing cost at the Graduate Institute comes to 0.20 CHF for a single-sided colour piece of paper, or approximately 0.22 USD. During the initial stages of launching the app, low-

cost printing services such as this one could be used to avoid professional printing costs. If 100 leaflets each were distributed to 5 businesses, the cost would amount to around 110 USD.

Similar costs would apply to printing of posters and stickers around the city itself. If 50 posters were to be printed and attached to various locations around the city, the cost would come to approximately 11 CHF.

**Short-term costs**

| Category of service/good                              | Service/good required                               | Cost/Annum (USD \$) |
|---|---|---------------------|
| App development                                       | Costs for app development subscription with apple   | \$99.00             |
|   | Costs for app development subscription with android | \$100.00            |
| Technological support and equipment for accessibility | Provision of equipment for establishments           | \$3,290             |
| Marketing and advertising for application             | Facebook and Instagram ads                          | \$1,092             |
|   | Tinder ads  | \$1,092             |
|   | Leaflets in establishments                          | \$110               |
|   | Posters and stickers in the city                    | \$11                |
| <b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS:</b>                         | <b>\$5,794</b>                                      |                     |

*Table 1: Short-term costs*

## Long-term costs

| Category of service/good                              | Service/good required                                      | Cost/Annum (USD \$) |
|---|--|---------------------|
| App development                                       | App development and maintenance from an external developer | \$52,250            |
| Technological support and equipment for accessibility | Provision of technical support                             | \$52,250            |
| <b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS:</b>                         | \$104,500  |                     |

Table 2: Long-term costs

## Budget feasibility

It is important to note here that although estimated costs may appear high, these would be the predicted costs once the app is successful and fully functioning. In the initial stage of the app development and advertising, our app would not need to pay labour for an app developer and nor for the provision of technical support from an employed staff member. These would be services done on a voluntary basis. **Therefore the cost would more likely be around 5,794 CHF/annum.** These costs would be more realistic in the beginning once the app gains traction and the team would accordingly be able to employ other members of staff according to the use, funding and sustainability of the application.

Our aim would be to start with initial money from winning the Geneva Challenge. This money would be channelled towards launching the app for the general public. As we have been able to circumvent certain costs associated with app development thanks to one of our team members and given that we already have collaborations with other partners, we would only require reaching out to businesses personally. This means that channelling money into advertising the app and providing technical support and equipment would be our priority.

As a team, we collectively agreed on the importance of keeping the application free for both users and businesses so that there are incentives to use it and more importantly, it remains accessible to people.

In light of this, in order to ensure the sustainability of the application, we have thought of some actions to help us maintain the application. First, in the same way that we are advertising through social media applications such as Instagram and Tinder, our app could be a space for other companies and organisations to advertise on our application through banners. Banners would ensure that the application can generate money to be

redirected back into costs of the application and would avoid pop-up ads which could be a distraction and ineffective in times of emergencies. Furthermore, the potential advisors would go through a quality check to ensure that those advertisements do not conflict with our values and interests of our application.

In the instance that there are any additional proceeds generated from the application and initiatives to maintain its sustainability, our application would function in the way a cooperative would. This would mean that any additional money would be directed back into the app and maintaining costs, and beyond that money would be given to other organisations which align with our values. These would also align with the International Cooperative Alliance principles (International Cooperative Alliance n.d.).

## Feasibility of concept

### Businesses

In order for the application to be successful among the general public in Geneva, the application must be popular among businesses and have incentives for them to use it. When enough businesses are on the application, users are more likely to take advantage of the application. This would require our team members reaching out, personally, to local establishments and therefore collaborating with them to develop a base of establishments on the app in the initial stages. Our hope is that once restaurants, bars and clubs join the application and the application is able to gain traction among the general public, other establishments will be more willing to be part of such a network.

### Geneva as a prototype

If the application is successful in Geneva, we would be able to use this as a prototype to apply to other cities and towns around the world which may suffer from higher levels of unsafety in such establishments. This can be reflected by the geographical distribution of our survey respondents who perceived safety differently.

However, it is important to note that Geneva is a good location for such an application given its size and diversity of inhabitants. According to a report from the City of Geneva, 48% of inhabitants are not Swiss-nationals (Ville de Genève 2014). This may not be the same case in other towns or cities which may lack diversity or be too small which would promote use of such an app with varied voices and opinions. We recommend that such an app be used in medium to large cities which are quite varied in terms of ethnicities, languages, religions, gender and sexuality.

## Risk assessment

| Risk                                     | Degree of risk (Low, Medium, High) | Description  | Control measures (existing measures taken against the risk)   | Action plan (control measures to implement)   |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Poor user experience                     | Low                                | Risk of users not enjoying the app or having poor experiences on the app of it not serving its purpose.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to use app which is interactive and accessible.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms to deal with platform governance in case of any grievances.</li> <li>• Trial phase to show how people use and experience the app in practice to reinforce any features and functions on the app.</li> </ul> |
| Low engagement from target audience      | Low-Medium                         | Target audience, young people do not show interest in downloading the application or find it useful.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey results which underlined that people would be willing to download and use such an app.</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising and marketing through different platforms.</li> </ul>  |
| Low engagement from local establishments | Medium-High                        | Venues in Geneva do not express interest in participating in the application or use it when they have the equipment and technical training for it. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborating and having discussions with local organisations to also raise awareness of this application.</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create more partnerships with bars, restaurants and clubs in the locality.</li> <li>• Promote the app among the target audience to foster the need for it from establishments.</li> </ul>                              |
| Lack of initial funding                  | Medium-High                        | Not winning prize money.<br>Not being able to secure initial funding for the project.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping predicted initial costs as low as possible.</li> <li>• Submitting proposal to the Geneva Challenge competition.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify partners who would be willing to fund such a project.</li> <li>• Create more collaborations with local organisations.</li> </ul>  |

|                        |      |   |   |  |
|------------------------|------|---|---|--|
| Positionality of users | High | Risk users' reviews of establishments as not being reliable due to their own personal positionality and situational circumstances. e.g., White able-bodied cisgender men's experiences may not be reflective to that of other people. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional use of pronouns and bitmojis on profile page which can help users to assess where users can judge other reviews.</li> <li>• Survey results show that women would be more likely to use the app than men.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with partners to think of other measures to mitigate the risk of this.</li> </ul> |
|------------------------|------|---|---|--|

Table 3: Risk assessment

| Degree of risk      | Response   |                                       |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Low (Green)         | Tolerate within existing controls  | Risks within our capacity to overcome |
| Low-Medium (Yellow) | Monitoring and evaluation to ensure risk can be tolerated                          |                                       |
| Medium-High (Amber) | Plans for mitigation must be implemented   | Risks beyond our capacity for control |
| High (Red)          | Plans for mitigation and control must already be in place and overseen immediately |                                       |

Table 4: Response map for risk assessment

# Results and Analysis

## Overview of the survey

As part of the project, we launched a survey aimed at understanding the key issues of this crisis and foreseeing the interest of potential users in the solution presented. To increase the scope, we launched this through social media (Instagram), which allowed us to reach a larger audience worldwide and to reduce the costs. As it has been pointed out, the advantages of this method include access to participants in distant locations, the convenience of having automated data collection and lower costs, among others. On the other hand, on-line surveys may carry “uncertainty over the validity of the data” and some alleged potential imprecisions regarding the results (Wright 2006).

The questionnaire included three main topics. A first question referred to how safe the respondents felt in restaurants, bars, and clubs on a scale from 1 to 5. Secondly, the questionnaire asked the respondents which services they considered could potentially make these establishments safer. Finally, it was asked whether they would use an app that provided this kind of information about the establishments.

157 people replied to the survey, 49 of whom were men and 107 women. The geographical scope included Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania. It should be noted that not every participant responded to all the questions of the survey. Therefore, the percentages expressed are in relation to the number of answers to each specific question.

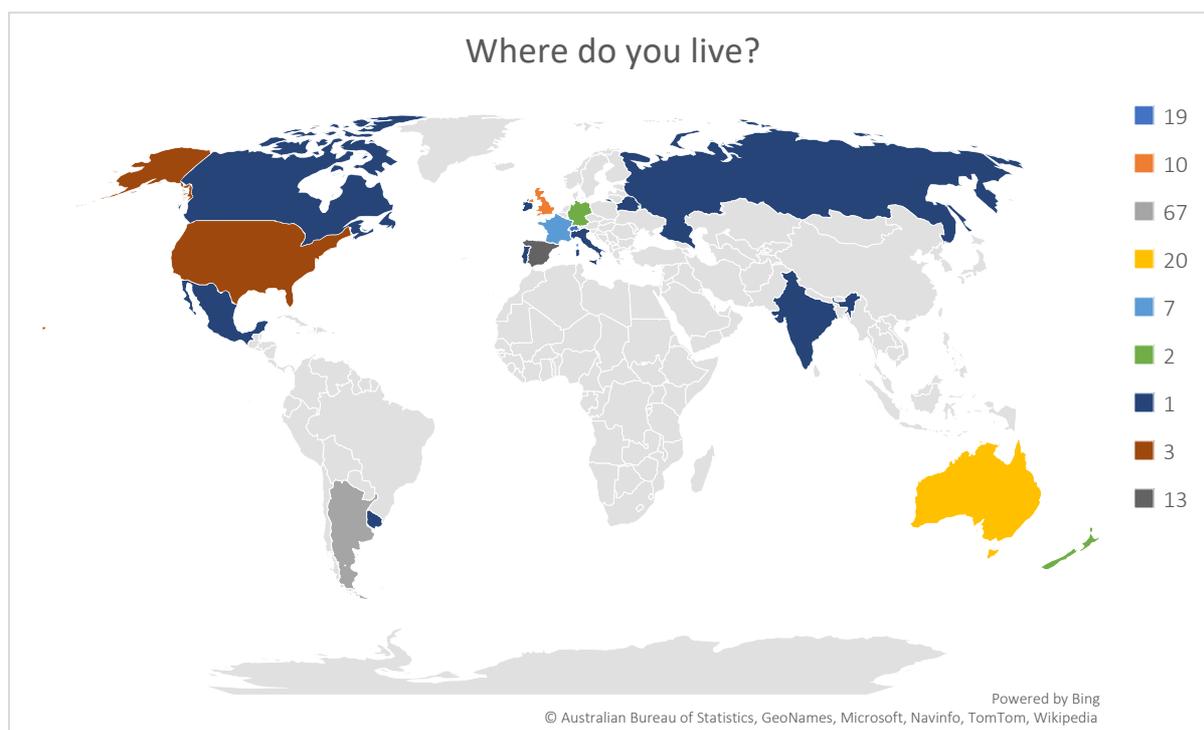


Figure 1: Survey results by geographical distribution of respondents

157 respondents

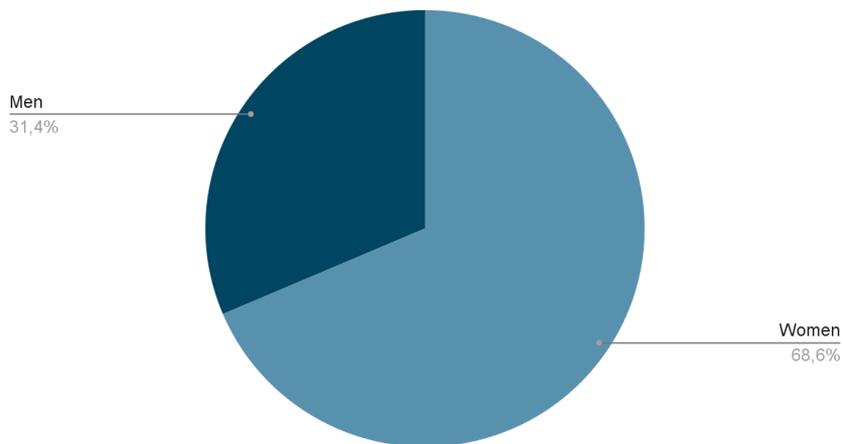


Figure 2: Pie chart of survey respondents by genre

## Perceptions of security

The first question asked the participants how safe they felt in restaurants, bars, and clubs on a scale from one to five (where 5=very safe, 4=safe, 3=a little bit unsafe, 2=unsafe, 1=very unsafe).

The first general conclusion is that women feel less safe than men in these contexts. While 70% of the male respondents feel very safe or safe, only 38% of women feel safe/very safe. Moreover, 28% of the female respondents answered that they felt unsafe or very unsafe and only 15% of men answered the same way.

### %Safe/Unsafe According to Gender - Men Feel Safer

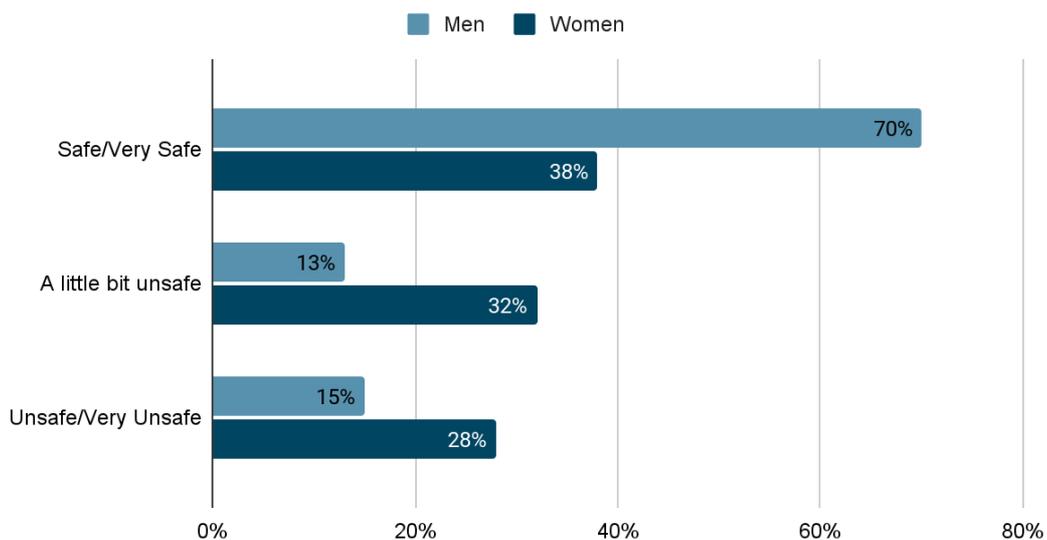


Figure 3: Chart Men's/Women's perceptions of safety in public spaces

In geographical terms, women from Europe, Oceania and North America tend to feel safer than women in Latin America: only seven out of 71 answered that they felt unsafe or very unsafe, while almost half of female Latin American respondents (18 out of 38) had the same perception. Still, 20 out of the 71 female respondents from Europe, Oceania and North America felt a little bit unsafe.

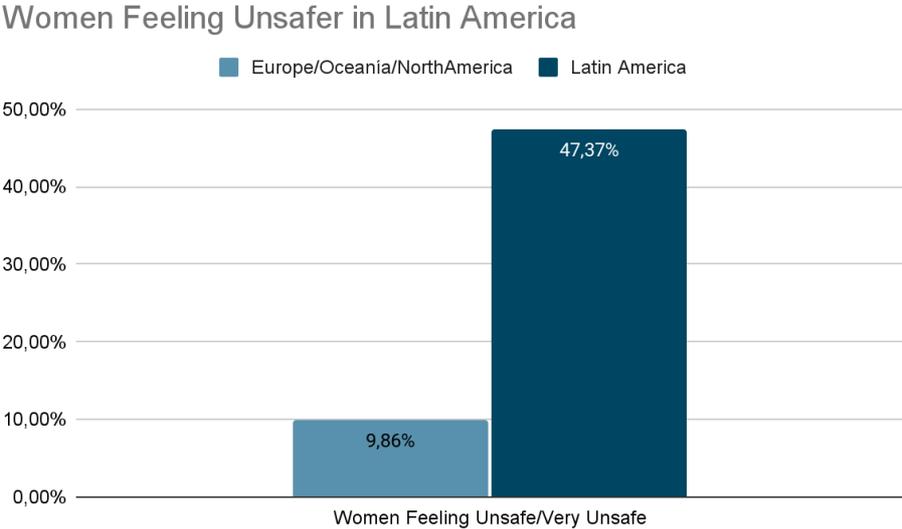


Figure 4: Geographical distribution of perceptions of safety amongst women

### Places, people and services for a safer date

The second question of the survey offered an open answer, asking the participants what would make these places safer. The answers provided can be grouped into three categories: place, people, and services. Regarding the establishments themselves, respondents positively highlighted the presence of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, the proximity of the place to safe public transport, and the lighting of the premises. Although CCTV cameras were one of the main features mentioned by the respondents, other stakeholders questioned them. Drawing on a sociological approach of critical security studies (Bigo and McCluskey 2018), they claimed that these systems reproduce an over-surveillance model of society that stigmatizes, discriminates and divides (Bigo and McCluskey 2018). It should be noted that this approach corresponds to non-Anglophone countries where these methods have less reception. The respondents that mentioned the availability of CCTV cameras were from Switzerland, France, Australia, India and the UK, respectively.

Regarding people, the respondents largely supported the presence of female staff and security personnel as conditions that would make a place safer. Furthermore, the respondents pointed out the importance of staff training and the availability of an “Ask Angela” type of service, to warn the staff discretely about risky situations. Last but not least, participants mentioned a safe-taxi service as desirable.

## Likelihood of app use

Lastly, participants were asked whether they would use a mobile app providing the above-mentioned information. Out of 87 respondents, 72 expressed their willingness to use the app (82,7%). Interestingly, both men and women showed a similar disposition to use the app (79,4% and 84,6% respectively).

Likelihood to use the App - 87 respondents

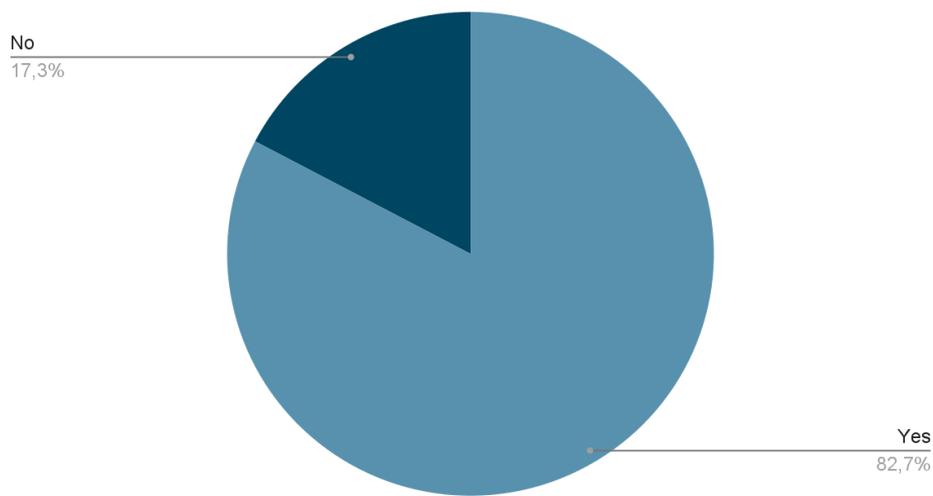


Figure 5: Likelihood of app use by respondents

## App design

From our research, we were able to design an app which aligned with our results and analysis. Here we present the main app features and how the app incorporates our values and ideas. As reflected by the evolution of our research agenda, our project moved from a gender-based approach to a more inclusive one. As such, we have tried to incorporate several features in the application to reflect this.

## General application features

### Logo

In our attempts to create a user-friendly application, we carefully chose our logo to represent the idea behind 'safe the date'. We use a calendar on the backdrop of pastel colours of the LGBTQO+ flag to represent the inclusive approach that we take. We chose pastel colours to not draw too much attention to the application if it is needed in times of emergency and so that in less urgent circumstances, application use can remain discreet.



Figure 6: Safe the Date logo

### Profile

Users have the option to create a profile. This would be a one-time log in function, so that on subsequent uses and especially during times of emergency, users would be able to click on the app and arrive directly to the home screen. On the profile, users can select their pronouns, he, she, they, or alternatively choose not to identify themselves through a pronoun. Furthermore, the profile page can be connected to the Bitmoji function. This will enable those using the app to create an image of themselves if they wish.

The desire to be able to select a pronoun was voiced in discussions with our stakeholders and partners to reflect the inclusivity of the mobile application (Sczesny, Formanowicz, and Moser 2016; Gustafsson Sendén, Bäck, and Lindqvist 2015).

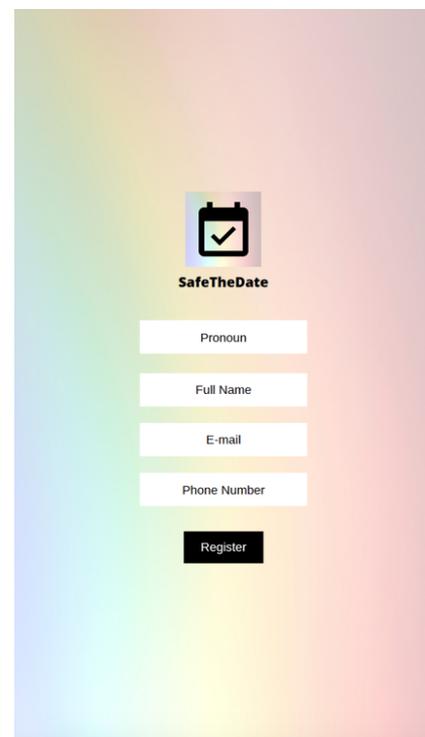


Figure 7: Safe the Date profile page

## Homepage

On the homepage of the app, once the user has registered onto the application, users will be able to see options for what they can do on the app. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. For now, as you can see on the bar at the bottom of the page, users can make a booking; this would be with a partner venue. They can access the map and find establishments by their location. They can make an SOS call. Finally, they can also use the search function.

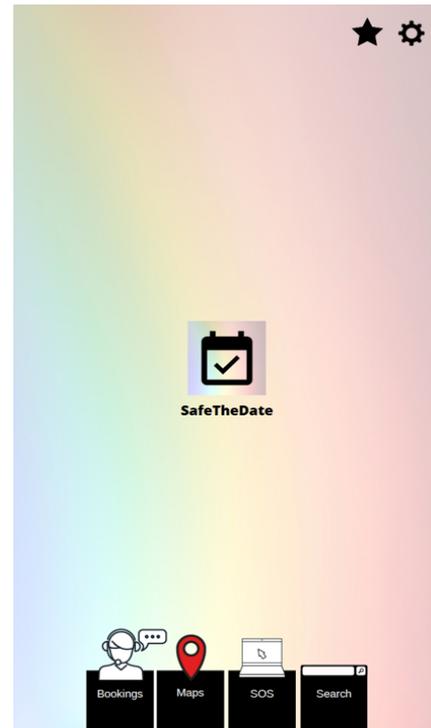


Figure 8: Safe the Date home screen

## Map

As part of our inclusive approach, we use a map of Geneva to make the mobile phone application as interactive as possible. Users can press a pin on the map to find a bar, restaurant or club according to the location of their preferences or simply because it is a more interactive and fun tool. This is reflected in the figure with the page that appears once users press the option of 'map' on the home screen.



Figure 9: Safe the Date map

## Search bar

When users select the option to 'search' on the home screen, this page appears.

The search bar has two functions. Firstly, it allows users to type into the field, this could be the cuisine, the name of the establishment or the area they want to meet friends or dates. The search bar will present results which correspond to their search criteria.

The second feature on the search bar presents images. For users with learning disabilities or other troubles, this proposes a more interactive way to reach the desired search results and filter their search preferences.

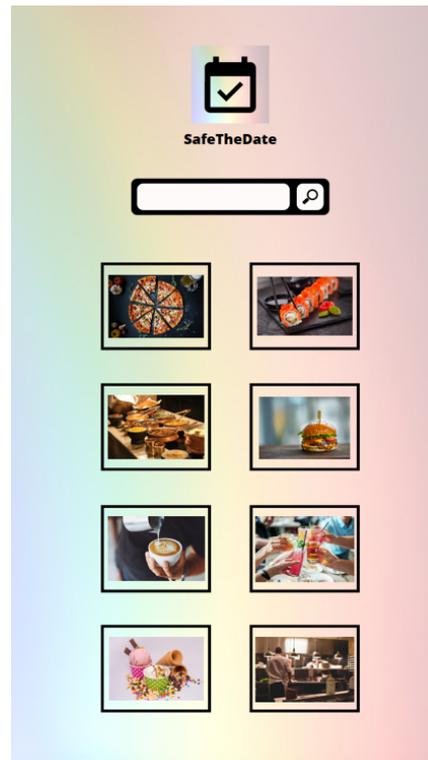


Figure 10: Safe the Date search bar

## Bookings

In order to access bookings, once users have selected the option of 'Bookings' on the home screen, the following page will appear. Of course, this would normally consist of partner bars and restaurants. On this page, users will be able to consult which establishments they have made bookings at, the details of those bookings, and they will also be able to leave reviews.

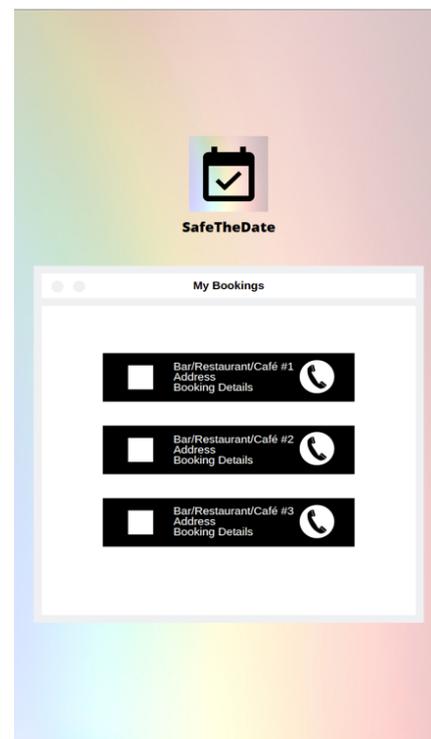


Figure 11: Safe the Date bookings

## Safety features

### SOS call

The idea of the SOS button is that users have the ability to call for help from someone in the management team of the venue. This would mean that there would be an admin version of the application so that the establishment can respond in times of need or emergencies. App users are able to use the SOS call therefore both through the phone function, or alternatively through the app.

### Review feature

Outcomes from our survey, as well as discussion with partners and stakeholders reflected the desire to have a review feature on the application. This would allow people to evaluate the establishments' different facilities and as a place for people to express their feelings of (un)safety. We selected 5 indicators for measuring this. In order to make the application as interactive and accessible as possible, the application uses icons and images as well as an information button to explain what could be included in the safety indicators.

The first indicator is on the *facilities and accessibility* of the establishments. This comprises features such as proximity of the venue to public transport, as well as well-lit and equipped toilets to foster feelings of safety and could include the possibility to buy sanitary products in a vending machine.

Results from the survey and from discussions with our partners also highlighted the importance of *staff* and feelings of safety surrounding their presence. Therefore, this indicator could include features such as welcoming staff, presence of security personnel, staff who have been trained in identifying any red flags such as discomfort of customers, sexual harassment, and general training on promoting inclusivity in the establishment itself. Another measurement regarding staff could also be the presence of allies within the personnel. This avoids the assumption that parity of men and women among the staff fosters feelings of safety and centres on their attitudes towards customers.

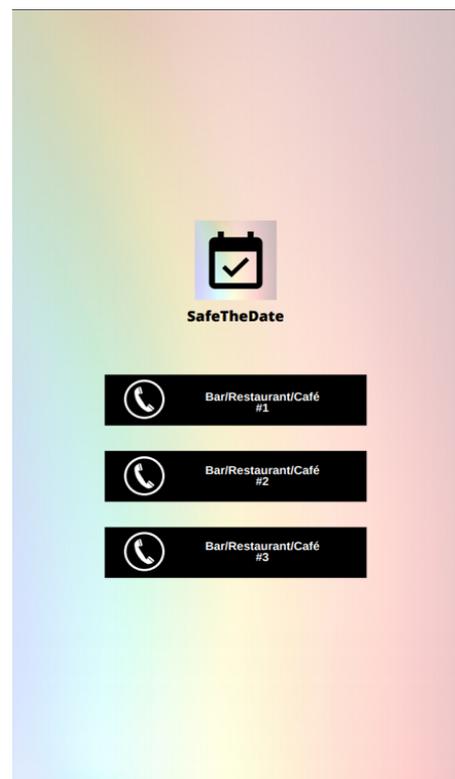


Figure 12: Safe the Date SOS call

Empowering users would also include a measurement on *Inclusivity*. This gives users the power to establish and express their feelings of (un)safety in the bar, restaurant or club. This could consist of spacious chairs for those who are plus size and gender-neutral toilets. This could also include disabled access such as ramps and lifts in the establishment.

The final indicator is on the *Vibes* in the establishment. This could include the general ambiance of the bar, restaurant or club and could help people to decide on whether they would also prefer to go to a calmer or more lively location when reading other reviews. As well as this, it could include music and application users would be able to leave comments on how they felt in the bar itself.

As shown in the figure, we have tried to be consistent in using icons to promote more interactive use of the app. Furthermore, the information button which appears at the side enables users to understand the meaning of each indicator with a short description.



Figure 13: Safe the Date reviews

# Monitoring and Evaluation of App

As part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the application, the team decided to set some key performance indicators (KPIs) and to think about platform governance in the eventual running of this application. This section discusses this in more detail.

## Key Performance Indicators

### Setting KPIs

The main objective of this project is the creation of safe dating environments in Geneva that could be transposable to other locations. Due to the impossibility of measuring this progress in the short run, more tangible Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are established to measure the development of the project. According to Kaganski et al, KPI are tools that allow to focus on the parameters of a given project and establish systems to identify progress toward its goals (Kaganski et al. 2017). Moreover, KPIs are

intrinsically linked to project governance, as they provide metrics based on which decisions can be made (Kaganski et al. 2017).

In our project, the indicators are based on the reception of the app as well as the capacity of the project to engage with new partners from both the commercial sphere and civil society. Moreover, the KPIs also consider the “organic” (meaning not paid) reach of the project in social and mass media.

The KPIs are established on a bi-annual basis, therefore, they are to be analyzed 6 months after the official launching of the project. The KPIs should be revisited on an annual basis.

**KPIs**

| Bi-Annual Indicators   | Minimum | Good | Very Good |
|--|---------|------|-----------|
| Number of downloads of the App                               | 100     | 200  | 300       |
| Number of Partners bars/pubs/restaurants                     | 10      | 20   | 40        |
| Number of New Partners Civil Society                         | 2       | 5    | 10        |
| Number of Mentions Mass Media                                | 1       | 2    | 3         |
| Organic Reach of Social Media Accounts (Instagram Followers) | 100     | 500  | 1000      |

*Table 5: Monitoring and Evaluation through KPIs*

**Application governance**

Platforms require to carefully balance attraction of new users and network effects interaction with security (Van Alstyne G. et al. 2016).

The more exclusive the platform architecture is, the safer it becomes. However, the side effect of this exclusivity is the reduction in the network effects (Ibid). To deal with this dilemma, we will proceed in two different ways depending on the stakeholders. On the one hand, users will be free to register using a Facebook or Gmail account. The app includes a feature to denounce fake accounts, with these denounces revised by the application management team.

On the other hand, we will manually proceed to add the partners (bars, restaurant and clubs) to the application. This allows us to have a control of the places that are part of the app and are actually “safe”, preventing frauds.

For the future development of the app, it is planned to include automated processes of both removal of fake users and inclusions of new “safe” places according to procedures to be defined.

## Conclusion

The inspiration behind ‘Safe the Date’ came from our own experiences with safety and inclusivity in public and social spaces not only in Geneva but also in other cities around the world that we have had the opportunity to visit and live in. These personal experiences motivated our team to work towards combating the crisis of safety in the physical spaces we socialise in and guided our research design.

Our research process and app design followed an inductive and iterative approach thereby responding and adapting to the data and results obtained throughout the research. The research was also triangulated using three methods, namely, desk research, surveys and stakeholder interviews. This triangulation of the data contributed to enhancing the validity and reliability of the conclusions reached and informed the design of ‘Safe the Date’.

When we began our desk research into the issue of safety in places of socialisation which includes various establishments like cafés, bars etc., we realised that there is a looming crisis regarding feeling safe and secure when you are out and about, as shown through the evidence presented by different organizations such as UN Women, the Australian Institute of Criminology and the British National Crime Agency. Our survey results also highlighted these feelings of perceived insecurity and discomfort, especially in the responses from women, members of the LGBTQI+ community and members of other minority groups. Along with our desk research and surveys, we also conducted stakeholder interviews to triangulate the research and enhance the validity and robustness of the results obtained.

In this way, our project became focused on creating a tool, in this case a smartphone application, which would give people the opportunity to ensure the safety of the public and social spaces that people interact in and with.

The three-methods desk research also contributed to understanding what people believe would be the best purpose of this app and how the features can be designed in a way that they meet the needs of the target population and remain user friendly. The primary app features include a geographic map for establishments in the user’s area, safety indexes and featured safety services of each of the establishments, the ability to make bookings as well as review establishments from within the app.

Such an app represents an opportunity for revolutionising the spaces for socialisation and can be a first, albeit small, step towards making these spaces inherently safe, secure and inclusive.

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# Appendix

## Survey questionnaire

1. How safe do you feel in restaurants, bars, and clubs on a scale of 1-5?
2. What city/town do you live in?
3. Would you benefit from an app that maps safe eateries and social spots?

Additional questions asked

What features would you like to see on such an app?

Do you have anything to add or any comments?