

Being Here

What problem are you trying to solve?

Reducing the impact of the physical isolation and mental health on people working from home or living from themselves in order to comply with social distancing guidelines to minimise the spread of Covid.

How do you plan to solve the problem?

Exercise, time in nature, practicing mindfulness and gratitude are known to boost mental and physical health.

Being Here is a mobile app of a photo gratitude diary on a map. It motivates users to stay active at home and out in their local open spaces, encourages them to be mindful by documenting poignant moments with a photo, allows them to reflect on moments with a one line diary and even share with someone else. This self-driven approach raises awareness of the activities, places and people that lift their moods so that they can adapt their behaviour and incorporate more of these in their day.

A short survey assesses the user's mood, energy level and health in the morning and recommends outdoor places the user can go to. GPS and mobile signals assess how crowded local areas are, such as parks, nature reserves and lakes, so that users can choose where to enjoy the outdoors safely at a distance from others. Photos taken throughout the day are uploaded with a short sentence to create a photo diary which is also mapped using geolocation data.

Being Here can be used by yourself or part of a team or group. Colleagues, friends and family can share experiences and tips on trying out activities and exploring new places so they can enjoy nature together (or virtually) and boost team morale.

How do you plan to make this solution a reality? Do you have an action plan?

Winter 2020

- Build prototype
- Closed group testing for 3 weeks
- Feedback and iteration
- Pilot testing with 3-5 employers with teams of around 25 employees in Stockholm

Spring 2021

- Feedback and iterate with more features, such as connecting to weather forecasts, wearables
- Sell to employers and public health authorities across the Nordics for greater public outreach
- Help reduce employees' stress before closing for the summer holidays

- Isolation and loneliness during summer period
- Build up mental and physical resilience before winter

Autumn 2021

- Analyse results and collaboration with researchers to maximise health benefits, nudging behaviour change to build good habits
- Working with city authorities to promote and adapt outdoor spaces based on user behaviour and influence urban planning
- Use machine learning to effectively recommend activities, places and photos based on energy, mood and personality of the users

Why is your solution innovative?

There are many well-being apps such as meditation (Headspace, Calm), gratitude diaries (Stoic, Reflectly), mood trackers (Daylio, Moodkit), personal growth (Remente, 29k) and AI chatbots (Woebot, Youper, Wysa).

However they do not connect to the places where the users live or work at and few have a photo function. Being Here is a place and photo led diary which encourages users to make the most of their local areas (both natural and urban). This creates a photo gallery and map of cherished moments which are easily accessible and viewed when in need of inspiration, cheering up and shared with others.

Gretchen Ruben. The author of The Happiness Project wrote that “to eke out the most happiness from an experience, we must anticipate it, savour it as it unfolds, express happiness and recall a happy memory”, in what she calls The Four Stages of Happiness.

How scalable is your solution?

2020 has been an unprecedented year with heavy restrictions on movements and lockdowns across the world to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and avoid the collapse of healthcare infrastructure. In March, the Swedish Public Health Agency recommended in March for citizens to work from home when possible. In April, a survey conducted by Tele2 found that 45% of Stockholmers were working from home. 40% of the respondents said they miss having fikas and small talks with their colleagues.

Oracle surveyed 120 000 employees, managers, HR and C-level executives from 11 countries (July-Aug) where 85% said the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health. 75% want their employers to do more to protect their mental health with 68% open to technology to help with their struggles such as well-being and meditation apps (35%), health monitoring (35%), counselling (35%) and chatbots (28%).

Stricter restrictions have recently been reintroduced across Europe, including eight of Sweden's 21 regions which means seven out of ten people in Sweden are asked to work from home where possible, avoid public transport, social gatherings and meeting people outside of their households. Until an effective vaccine can be given to most of the population, these restrictions look to continue into 2021 and 2022 across the globe and will have an impact on mental well-being with reduced social physical contacts, travels and job uncertainties.

By piloting Being Here, we can help Stockholmers cope with this stressful and uncertain next couple of years and learn how we can make Being Here even more effective to other citizens across Sweden, the Nordics, Europe and the world.

How does your solution make an impact?

When we feel stressed, this can have an effect on our physical health such as weight, high blood pressure and heart diseases. This can hence create a burden on the health system as well as on our productivity. In addition, we have less capacity to be supportive and generous as a partner, family member, friend and colleague which consequently increases the stress and mental well-being of those around us. This, in turn, creates a more selfish and toxic family atmosphere, work environment and society where we can feel more isolated and alone.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Public Health Agency reported in 2018 that 39% in Sweden suffer from sleep problems, anxiety, worries and distress, with one in five will experience depression. Even when most of the global population can be inoculated with an effective vaccine, it will take many more years longer for the global economy to recover with more job uncertainties ahead, as well as the impact of the younger generation, the 'lost generation' whose education and job opportunities have been heavily affected.

Therefore by helping to raise awareness of the places, activities and people who lift our moods or calm us down, we can change our behaviour to include more of these in our daily life to help us cope. It takes 21 days to build our habit muscles, therefore Being Here encourages long term use so that users will incorporate more physical exercises, use more of their local natural areas and learn to be grateful for big and small daily experiences so that we can be better at coping with stress and uncertainties. This will have a positive effect on our physical health, thus improving productivity and fewer burdens on healthcare as well as enabling us to be more engaged and compassionate citizens in our community.

Is your solution built on prototype or is it a conceptual solution?

Conceptual

Link to your pitch video (on Youtube, Google Drive or Vimeo)

<https://youtu.be/yOfGCHpUq9U>