



Here & Now



STIMULATING INCLUSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CITY RESIDENTS

Here & Now (www.hereandnow.nl) consists of two main elements: a unique recommendation-based cultural agenda for non-locals & locals and a set of community activities that are aiming at connecting the cultural sector of a city with its international population.

The project was created in reaction to the ongoing internationalisation of the Dutch city of Groningen and is a result of collaboration of 4 main parties: local government, knowledge institutions, cultural sector of the city and internationals themselves.

Relations to Workpackages

This use case shows the importance of targeting and filtering content for specific targetgroups. In this way, public service delivery for a specific audience can be improved.

Local partners

- University of Groningen
- Hanze University of Applied Sciences
- University Medical Center Groningen
- Province of Groningen

About LIKE!

Local governments, citizens, universities and SMEs come together to co-create smarter, more efficient and more innovative services through 9 transnational pilots that cover 3 core themes:



Innovation
Culture Approach

Smart
Services

Digital
Dashboards

Introduction

The Dutch city of Groningen is currently busy with the attraction and retention of international talent and visitors. Together with other themes, cultural integration and participation plays a leading role in their overall experience of the city. Therefore in 2016 Groningen has begun the research that was focused at the international community in the city and their cultural participation. The research has revealed that even though the city is welcoming a growing number of internationals, their social inclusion is challenging, especially when it comes to cultural participation and socialisation with the Dutch city inhabitants. Later, a multiple digital and analogue tools that could improve the situation were tested.

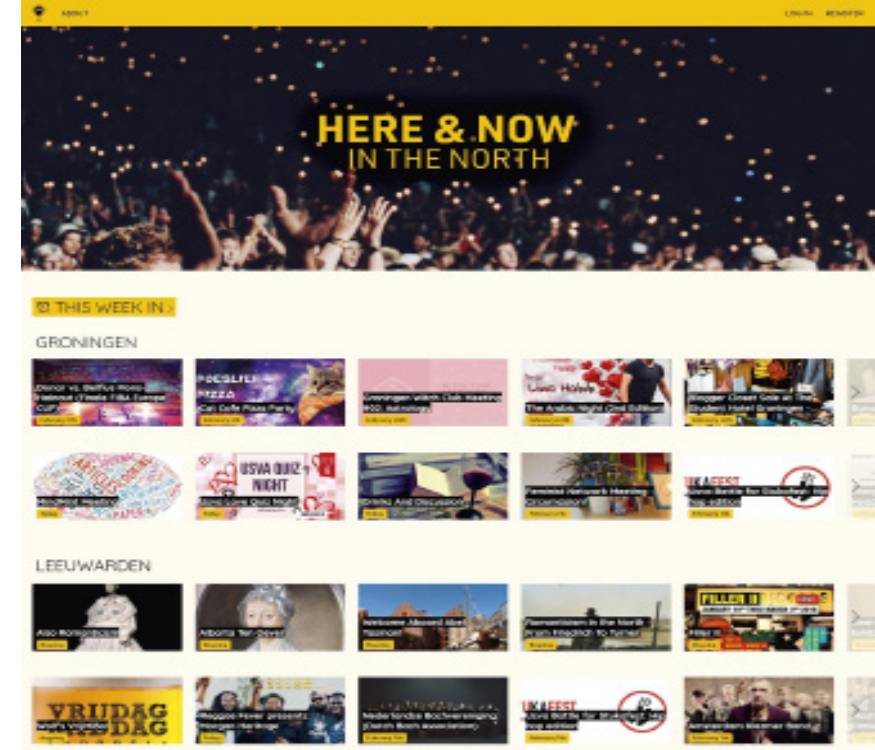
On the basis of the research, the project Here & Now in Groningen was created in collaboration with internationals, culture sector representatives and biggest knowledge institutions in the city.

AIM

The project aims at connecting the city international students, expats and tourists to the diverse cultural life of the city. Consequently such connection improves the overall integration of internationals and their retention in the city or region.

Target audience

- International students;
- Expats;
- Tourists;
- Locals;
- Event organizers & cultural stakeholders.



The Here & Now website

1. Website

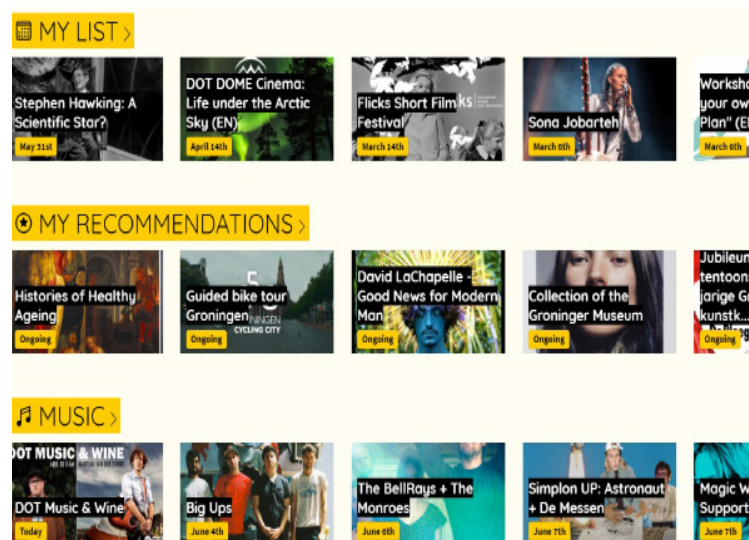
www.hereandnow.nl – recommendations-based cultural agenda for internationals and locals. Including:

- **Overview of all events in the city** that are in English or non-verbal (music, films with subtitles, exhibitions, etc.);
- **Personalised recommendations** and ability to create own event lists;
- **Near me** - ability to see all events on the map of the city and see events near a specific user if he/she allows the website to access his/her location;
- **Submit event** - feature that allows any user to submit events. Stimulates the “community feel” of the platform.

2. Community & research activities

Here & Now is focused at the overall 'international-friendliness' of the local culture & stimulating cultural participation. That is being achieved by:

- Ongoing **research activities** on the inclusion of the Groningen internationals ,patterns and tools to influence those (together with Hanze University ofApplied Sciences and University of Groningen);
- **Informing the cultural stakeholders** (venues, event organisers, etc.) about the existence and needs of internationals in the city;
- **Co-organising events & campaigns** with the local cultural organisations specifically focused at internationals;
- **Informing the international community** about the cultural & city life of the city/province/region.



While registering, user can select various categories (Music, Art & Performance, Film, etc.) and subcategories that they are most interested in. As a result, users can personalized recommendations of events they should pay special attention to, can make their own list or discover all the events per specific category.



Involvement of the international & cultural community of Groningen

Even though the project was originally initiated by the Groningen municipality, the main objective has always been to involve the actual internationals & representatives of the cultural sector as much as possible in the platform creation process.

Exact manners/tools to include the target audience:

- Over 30 focus groups with internationals (students, expats and their spouses);
- Interviews with over 100 local cultural stakeholders;
- Data analysis of international and culture-related documents available within the municipality and local knowledge institutions.

During the first series of focus groups internationals were asked to reflect on how they're finding events and activities in Groningen.

Below are mentioned some example of this involvement, quotes and pictures:

"It is kinda difficult to find events and activities in Groningen, especially in the beginning. I usually go to the Dutch event agenda's and then use Google Translate to understand what event I would like to go to. Yet I still have a feeling I miss out a lot"

Alevtina, Lithuania - International student



“Even though I’m German, I’ve still experienced quite some cultural shock and isolation. You’re walking around the city, seeing the posters and flyers of events, but they are all in Dutch... Of course I went to a lot of student parties, but I feel I haven’t really explored local cultural scene yet, because I don’t really know where to start.”

Sven, Germany - international student

Later, cultural sector representatives were asked to refer on how they’re reaching the international audience of the city:

“We know international students and expats are living here in the city, but it’s very difficult for us to reach them. Occasionally we organise international evenings and make our posters in English, but that doesn’t really help.”

Marijn - Marketing head of the biggest performance venue in the North Netherlands ‘De Oosterpoort’

“We do have quite some events and performances for internationals, but they rarely visit us. I think it has to do with the fact that they are afraid that performance will be in Dutch or they will not be able to follow it due to cultural context.”

Annedore - Marketing manager of local Grand Theatre Groningen



Reactions on the Here & Now website, once the concept was presented:

*“I find this concept an absolutely brilliant way to keep up to date with all the events and happenings in the city!
Too bad It wasn’t there when I’ve just came to Groningen.”*

Sally, USA - International student

“I love the idea! I would’ve used it if I was abroad myself and I think it will definitely help us reach more international audience in the city!”

Robert - General director of underground music venue Vera (that has hosted artists like U2, Nirvana and Red Hot Chili Papers)