

Life's Secret Sauce? New Study Reveals Real-Life Connections and Play are the Ultimate Joy Providers

- **Ingka Centres, global developer running 34 meeting places in 13 countries, conducted its first Life in Communities report in Europe, China and the US to identify how people in local communities spend their time outside of their homes.**
- **The report shows that people of all ages are looking for new and different ways to unwind, relax and connect with others, to fulfil their emotional needs and cope with challenges of everyday life.**
- **People living in increasingly urbanised environments experience loneliness and isolation despite increasing ways to connect online and offline.**
- **More than half of digitally savvy Gen Zs prefer face-to-face meetings over online, with real-life connections building trust and leading to better quality time together.**

6 FEBRUARY 2024, MALMO: Ingka Centres, a developer and operator of 34 meeting places worldwide, today launches a global study conducted among 5,000 respondents in Europe, China and the US. The Life in Communities report reveals how the needs, desires and expectations of people are changing in response to global urbanisation and fast-growing challenges of everyday life. It finds that to cope with change, people are looking for public spaces in which to build emotional bonds, find new experiences and relax in a welcoming and cosy environment. While this differs between regions, spending time in nature, exploring food offers and engaging in a variety of experiences together are popular globally.

The report finds that joy and playfulness are on the rise and are key motivators for meeting and spending time with other people (80%). Adults of all ages are keen to bring more play into their daily lives, regardless of whether they have kids or not. 43% of respondents without children in their household selected playful and entertaining spaces as a key component of a community space, just two points lower than those with children. The demand for play spaces amongst childless households was the same as relaxation areas (43%) and transport accessibility (31%).

Another big finding is that two-thirds (66%) of Gen Zs surveyed by the report believe time spent together in person builds trust and enhances the overall quality of the experience (66%). Many of this generation however suffer disproportionately from social anxiety when meeting face to face. The report finds that the degree of anxiety falls by age, with 42% of Gen Z vs 22% of Gen X and just 15% of Boomers experiencing such feelings. Anxiety is correlated to a preference to meet online amongst younger visitors, despite respondents of all ages agreeing that meeting in person is a more joyful experience (73%).

Cindy Andersen, Ingka Centres' Managing Director, commented:

"It's inspiring to see that people of different ages are driven by the same desire to meet in person and share experiences and connections. They are craving more than just spaces. They're looking for places that help them connect with others, to experiment, to be playful, to shop, eat and drink, and to unwind. This trend indicates that retail-led spaces need to bring even more flexibility, experiment, and playfulness into everything they do, to stay relevant for the constantly changing needs and dreams of the many people."

Ingka Centres' new Life in Communities Report provides future gazing guidance on global demand for public spaces. Over half of respondents (57%) say they will meet up more in person, taking advantage of meeting places where they can be physically together. Meanwhile, 68% predict that they will spend more time outdoors in nature. Their ideal

meeting place, following respondents' answers, should be welcoming and safe (38%), provide a great food experience (32%), feel cosy (30%) and give access to indoor and outdoor relaxing experiences (29%).

Destinations that are currently retail-led are anticipated by the report to evolve to meet people's changing needs. It predicts they will transform into new hyper-local and community-led meeting places, offering playful experiences and non-conventional food offers. These will contribute to personal health and well-being by providing access to green oases in concrete jungles and act as favourite relaxation spots for local communities, seeking places to spend time together and have fun.

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Notes to Editors

The surveys were conducted as online surveys (CAWI, Computer-assisted web interviewing) among YouGov panellists in Sweden, Poland, Spain and the USA and among panellists in the YouGov Partner Panel in China. Data was collected during the period 30 October – 19 November 2023. In all countries questionnaires in local languages were used. A nationally represented sample of 1,000 adults (adults 18+) was sampled in Sweden, Poland and Spain. In the USA, 1007 adults (adults 18+) in the San Francisco Bay Area were sampled, and in China, 1000 adults (aged 18+) in Wuxi and Beijing were sampled. For more information about Life in Communities report visit <https://www.ingkacentres.com/en/what-we-do>

About Ingka Centres:

Ingka Centres is part of the Ingka Group (which also includes IKEA Retail and Ingka Investments). Ingka Centres has more than 40 years of experience in shopping centres and today works with over 3000 brands across its portfolio of 34 meeting places in 13 markets. The company hosts and serves more than 352 million visitors each year. Ingka Centres creates its meeting places by collaborating with local communities, as well as its tenants and partners, to ensure they are destinations with emotional meaning that add value and build social connections.

More information: www.ingkacentres.com, [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#).

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