

STORY STRINGS

Observations on caregiver use of public spaces from Istanbul (Turkey)

STORY STRINGS is a series of caregiver user stories highlighting the influence of the built environment on early childhood development. Ten caregivers from Istanbul (Turkey) share their challenges, daily routes around their homes, and aspirations for neighbourhood improvements. The challenges of growing up in rapidly urbanizing cities are many, and these stories give us a glimpse into the daily lives of caregivers and the children under their care.

STORY STRINGS is part of the research project SUPPORTING URBAN CHILDHOODS: Observations on caregiver use of public spaces from Pune (IN) and Istanbul (TR).

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AYSEL GÜREL



BERİL OKAY



GÜLAY YİĞİT



HATİCE AYDIN



MELİKE TEKEL



TURKAN YALIM



SEVİM BAY



DIDEM HAYTA



GULİZ DEDE



UMMU YETİS



PROFILE

STORY STRING #1

Name

AYSEL GÜREL

Lives in

Sarıyer, İstanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Kazim Karabekir Paşa, for 3 years.

Children under her care

Mother of 3 children, 2 boys, 1 girl

The use of public space around their house (including streets)

Her house is at the end of a cul-de-sac, and she thinks that it is a safe place for her children to play. She lets them play freely in the street in front of the house, but they are not allowed to leave this street. When the children play, she watches them and sometimes, while doing household tasks. She mentioned that she has an agreement with her children that if she is not around, the children do not leave the street. This agreement makes her free from staying all day outside, and she can do her work at home. Walking older children to school is a daily routine for her, and sometimes she takes the children to the park in PTT Houses. She thinks that this park is the best option in terms of proximity and safety. Her children sometimes want to go to the amusement park in the shopping mall, but these kind of parks are far away and not easy to reach.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes

She is not pleased with the health centre in the neighbourhood, and because of this, she prefers to go to the public hospital. She mentions she prefers to live in another house in another neighbourhood for the health of her children, but they cannot afford it. She complains about the cars parked on the sidewalks, which makes walking and riding a stroller in the neighbourhood too tricky. She states that one day she was stuck in between two cars: one of them was trying to park on the pavement and the other was trying to pass by.

What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

She does not want cars parked on the sidewalks. She states that sidewalks are people's places and added that drivers are rude if they are asked not to park on the sidewalk. She wants the sense of community among people around her. She wants to know them.

-  interview locations
-  space improvements
-  health centre
-  bus stop
-  places of importance



our house is at the end of a cul-de-sac. it is safe here to let my children play



streets and sidewalks are occupied by cars. it is not easy to ride with a stroller





PROFILE

STORY STRING #2

Name

BERİL OKAY

Lives in

Beyoğlu, Istanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Hacıahmet, Beyoğlu for 11 years.

Children under her care

Mother of 4 children, 3 girls, 1 boy

The use of public space around their house (including streets)

Beril is very enthusiastic about improving the quality of public spaces and playgrounds, especially for the age group of toddlers. She is a very active mom, although she has four children. She uses the streets in front of the house and the neighbourhood for only commuting purposes. She thinks that the street in front of the house is dangerous for playing because of road hazard. She takes the children to Cinderesi Park, which she thinks is the only safe place for children to play. She takes them to the park if the children want to go out or they go to her friends' houses, and her children play there with other children. The park is also a gathering place for her and her friends. They usually drink tea together and have a chat. In summertime especially, the whole family visits the grandparent's house in a different city for some time. She walks her older children to school every morning and uses the route in the park. She thinks that walking through the park is safer than in the sidewalk next to the park. After walking the children to school, she takes a walk back home and in the park for half hour. She likes walking. She sometimes walks to Taksim Square for shopping.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes

She thinks that her neighbourhood used to be safe, but now it is known for the robberies happening in and close to the park. She likes her neighbourhood because it is affordable to live in. She is pleased with the health services in the neighbourhood, but prefers to go to Okmeydani public hospital for serious illnesses. The health centre is in the community centre which is a 10 mins walking distance. She likes this centre very much because of its design. She finds the community centre convenient for walking with a stroller. She is happy with the variety of the courses offered by the community centre. She took a course about child development there four years ago. Now, she is thinking to take other courses too.

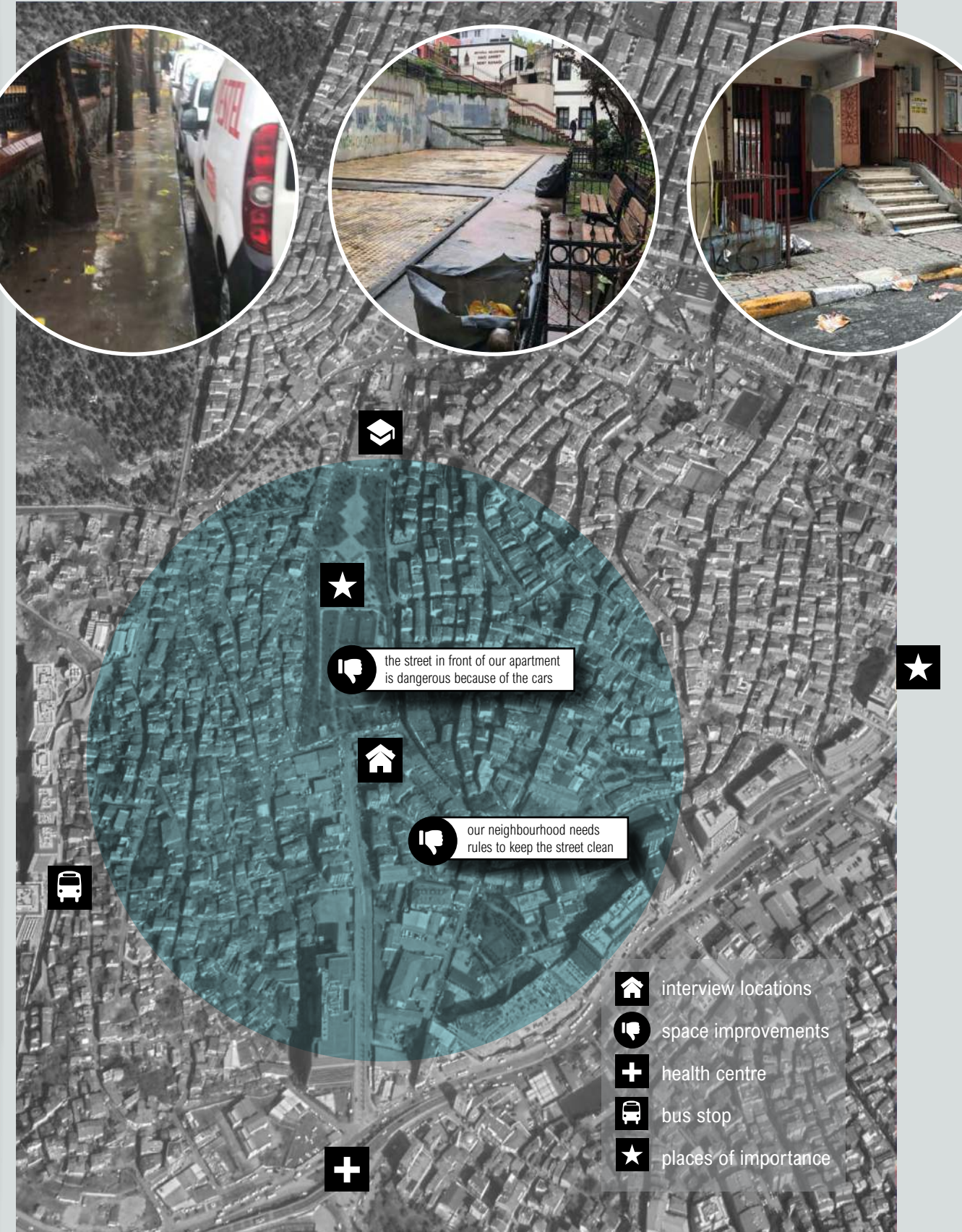
What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

She thinks that her neighbourhood needs to set new regulations. For example, old facades should be renewed, and streets need to be cleaned. She blames the people living there for the dirtiness of the streets. She wants a playground for toddlers in her neighbourhood.

The sidewalk next to the park which she thinks it is not easy and safe to walk

Public space of the community centre

The street in front of Beril's house



the street in front of our apartment is dangerous because of the cars



our neighbourhood needs rules to keep the street clean



interview locations



space improvements



health centre



bus stop



places of importance





PROFILE

STORY STRING #3

Name

GÜLAY YIĞİT

Lives in

Sarıyer, İstanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Kocataş, for 3 years.

Children under her care

Mother of 2 children, 2 girls

The use of public space around their house (including streets)

She usually uses the street in front of her house as a private space for gathering with neighbours and friends. She uses the other streets in the neighbourhood for commuting. Her children usually play in the front yard, and sometimes she takes them to Kazim Koyuncu Park. She prefers to go there because it is close to her home. Usually if she is out with her children and they pass by a park, they stop there to spend time so she has played in many parks and playgrounds with her children. However, she thinks that none of them are safe. She prefers her children to play only in the front yard where she can watch over them. She likes playing with them, and she sees herself as her children's playmate.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes


She thinks that her neighbourhood is not stroller-friendly. Because of this, she has to ask her husband to drive around the neighbourhood. She does not like her neighbourhood in terms of mobility. For example, she mentions that the community health centre is close but not easy to reach due to the geography of the land. She thinks that her neighbourhood is safe because there is a sense of community between her and her neighbours. Knowing the neighbours very well makes living there enjoyable.


What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

She would like a park close to her house and easy to reach with her children. She always feels nervous when her children are playing in the street because the cars pass by so fast. She would like a solution to this problem.



-  interview locations
-  space improvements
-  health centre
-  bus stop
-  places of importance

 park is not close, but the only available one because of this I take my children there

 not enough ramps on the pavements which is important for mothers with strollers





PROFILE

STORY STRING #4

Name

HATİCE AYDIN

Lives in

Beyoğlu, Istanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Hacıahmet, Beyoğlu for 5 years.

Children under her care

Mother of 2 children, 2 boys

The use of public space around their house (including streets)

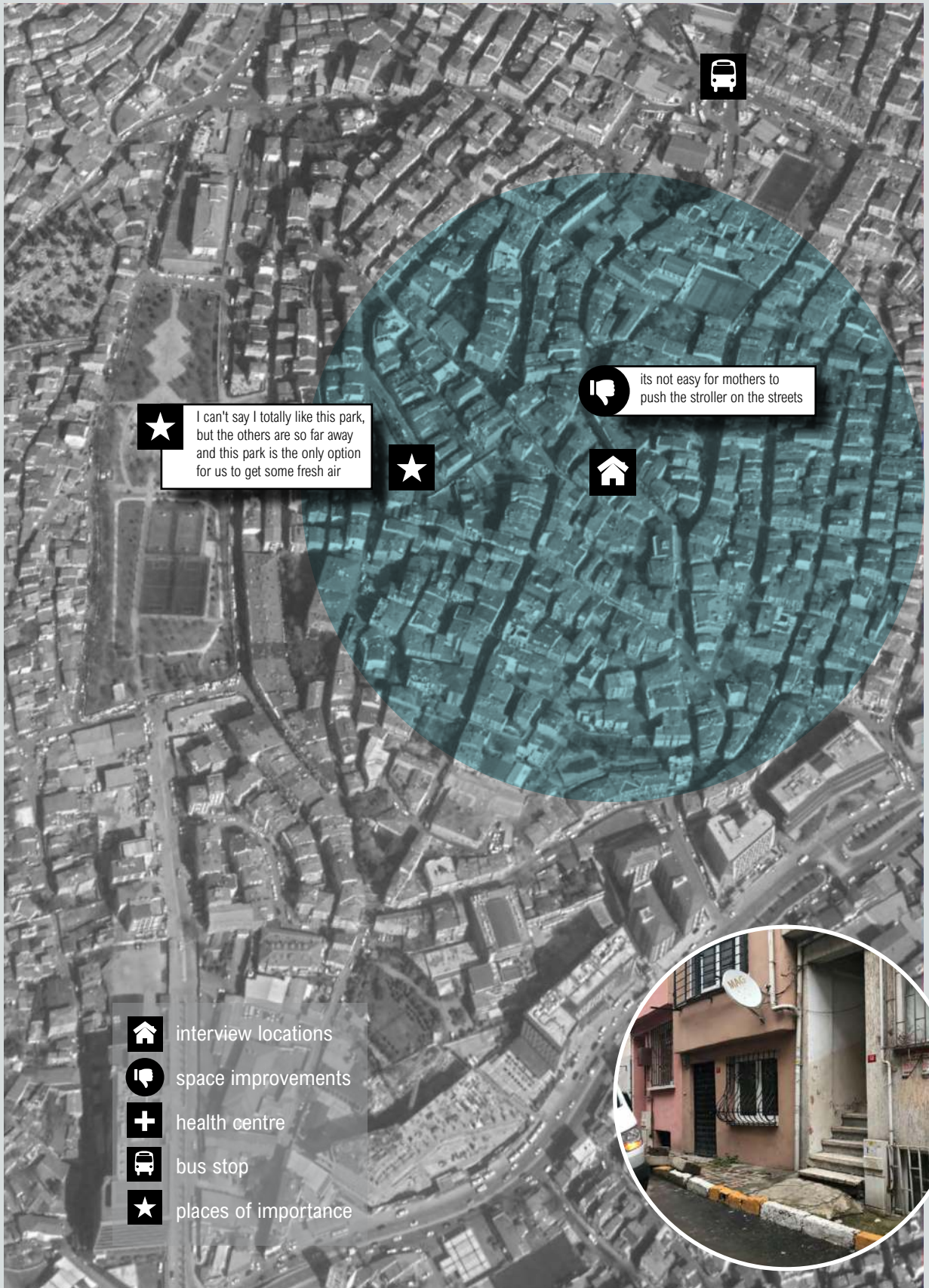
Hatice uses the streets in her neighbourhood only for commuting. She takes her children to Cinderesi Park because her older son likes to play at the park. They go there once a week. She prefers to take her son to the playgrounds in shopping malls. Her favourite is the one in Cevahir Mall. Usually, her husband drives them to places whenever a car is needed. She states that there is only one park (Cinderesi) close to her home and that is the reason for her to use that park, in order to have some fresh air. She lets her children play only at the park because she thinks that streets are not safe due to road hazard.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes

She thinks that her neighbourhood is not safe at all. Once, she was on the way to Cinderesi Park in the evening, and they heard gun shots. Upon hearing that, they returned home. However, she likes to live there because her parents live there as well, and grandparents walk the older child to kindergarten every morning. She does not prefer to live in this neighbourhood if her parents did not live there.

What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

Older children damage the parks and playgrounds in the neighbourhood. She mentioned that there used to be a playground in the front yard of the community centre. But it was later removed due to the damage which older children had caused. She would like more parks and playgrounds where good maintenance can be provided.



★ I can't say I totally like this park, but the others are so far away and this park is the only option for us to get some fresh air

👎 its not easy for mothers to push the stroller on the streets



interview locations



space improvements



health centre



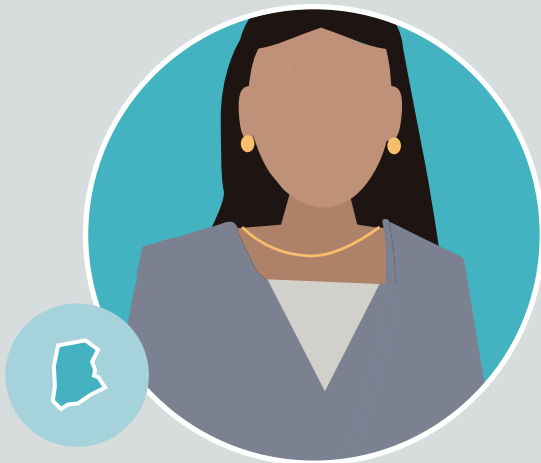
bus stop



places of importance



Street in front of Hatices house



PROFILE

STORY STRING #5

Name

MELİKE TEKEL

Lives in

Beyoğlu, Istanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Hacıahmet, Beyoğlu for 7 years.

Children under her care

Mother of 3 children, 2 boys and 1 girl.

The use of public space around their house (including streets)

Melike uses the street in the neighbourhood for only commuting. She uses the streets to go shopping and to walk her children to school. She does not go out very often except shopping and walking with her children. She prefers to stay at home. She thinks the street in front of the house is too dangerous for children to play. Cars move fast and the drivers do not pay attention to the children playing in the street. Because of these reasons, she does not let her children to play there. She used to take her children to Sururi Park, but after the renewal of Cinderesi Park, she started to use this park. She is pleased with what the municipality has done to improve the park. The renewed park (Cinderesi) is close to her home. Because of this, she prefers to take her children there. She likes the variety of different activities in the park such as soccer and basketball fields, as well as playgrounds. She takes her children to Cinderesi Park for biking. Children are only allowed to bike there.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes

She is generally happy with her neighbourhood, but she finds the pavements too narrow to walk on with a child. She does not use a stroller for her baby and carries her baby in her arm. She heard from her friends that they have problems with the narrowness of the pavements and find it difficult to walk with a stroller too. She likes her neighbourhood and finds it an affordable place to live. She thinks that the neighbourhood is safe because of the night-watchmen. She mentions that she has not encountered any dangerous incidents in the neighbourhood and believes that if something dangerous happened to her, her neighbours would have helped her. She trusts her neighbours to let them watch her children while they play around the building or at the park.

What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

She would not change anything except slowing the cars passing by her apartment. She thinks that something should be done to slow the cars down.



★ I take my children to this park to play when they are bored at home. this park used to be a demolishing area. the municipality did a great job here

👎 something needs to be done to slow down the cars

Sururi Park



PROFILE

STORY STRING #6

Name

TURKAN YALIM

Lives in

Beyoğlu, Istanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Kocatas Neighbourhood, Sarıyer

Children under her care

Two girls, 6 years & 9 months

What does she do?

Housewife

What does she like about the neighbourhood?

She only likes her house; its location is good, and it has a spacious front yard. She thinks that having these advantages is good for her children's development.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes

She takes her children to the park at least once a week. The children have the opportunity to play in the front yard every day and they are not allowed to play in the street. Turkan uses streets only for commuting.

What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

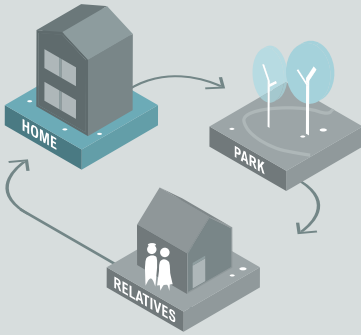
She does not like the cafes in the street that she uses every day for shopping or going to the health centre. These cafes are only for men. She would like these kind of cafes to be relocated.

Wishes for the neighbourhood:

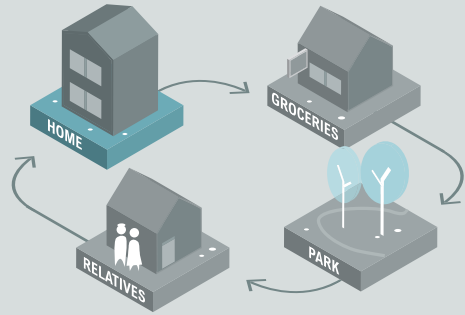
- Indoor play areas where my children can find playmates
- Public WC in the parks
- Community events and meeting in the neighbourhood
- Extended hours of use of community centre in the neighbourhood

Typical mobility around your neighbourhood

WEEKDAY



WEEKEND



What would you like to see in your neighbourhood?

- Çocuklara eğlencecek bir oyun alanı.
- Tuvalet sorunu.
- Etkinlikler
- Yaşam evinin saatleri uzatılması,

- "A playmate for the children"
- "Solution for lack of public toilets"
- "Events"
- "Extended working hours of community centre"



PROFILE

STORY STRING #7

Name

SEVIM BAY

Lives in

Sarıyer, Istanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Yenikoy Neighbourhood, Sarıyer

Children under her care

One boy and one girl, 9 & 1,5 years

What does she do?

Housewife

What does she like about the neighbourhood?

Sevim likes the location of her neighbourhood which is close to the coast line. Everything she wishes for, such as the market, health unit, and school are close together in the neighbourhood.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes

Her children play outside every day, and they go to the park to spend time. Her children prefer to play in the front yard of the school that her older child goes to. She uses the street to walk her older child to school and to go shopping.

What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

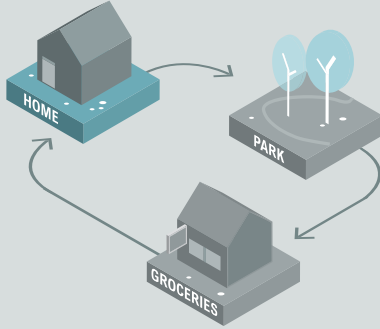
She would like to have more parks and playgrounds available in the neighbourhood. In the parks, she wants more tools so that her children can have fun. She also requests a solution to the problem of parking cars in the sidewalks.

Wishes for the neighbourhood:

- A neighbourhood in which every detail has children in its consideration
- Wider streets and sidewalks which are not occupied by cars
- Safety signs in the streets where more security is needed for children
- Clean and well-designed parks where children would be happy to play
- Renovation of old parks as the number of parks are lacking in both quality and quantity

Typical mobility around your neighbourhood

WEEKDAY



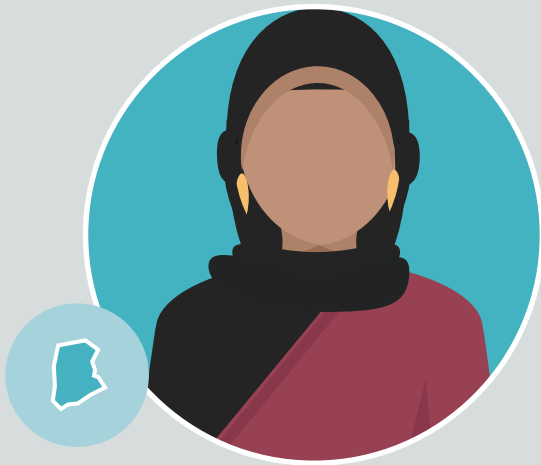
WEEKEND



What would you like to see in your neighbourhood?

Evimin kapısından dışarı adım attığım an hoşlayan çocuklar için düşünülmesi bir mahallede oturmak istiyordum. Genç mahalle arabaları tabii arabalarla doldurulmamış. Yolların gerekli olan yerlerde güvenlik ışıklarının olması. Parklar da da daha temiz çocuklarımızın daha mutlu olabileceği düzeyde alanlar. Ve tabii yeterli gelen parklara yenilerinin eklenmesi-

"I would like to live in a neighbourhood where everything and every detail in design is devoted to children and in a neighbourhood, which is not occupied by cars. In the streets there are traffic lights to order the relation passengers and cars and doing it by especially children in mind. I would like more clean parks and playgrounds for children where they play."



PROFILE

STORY STRING #8

Name

DIDEM HAYTA

Lives in

Sarıyer, Istanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Yenikoy Neighbourhood, Sarıyer

Children under her care

One boy and one girl, 8 & 4 years

What does she do?

Housewife

What does she like about the neighbourhood?

She likes her neighbourhood because there are quite a few parks around the area. The parks and playgrounds are generally green. The transportation in the neighbourhood is easy to access.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes

Every day she takes her children to the park next to the community centre. She uses the streets in the neighbourhood for commuting. She prefers her children to play in the park, but sometimes it is more convenient for her children to play in the streets so she could easily watch over them.

What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

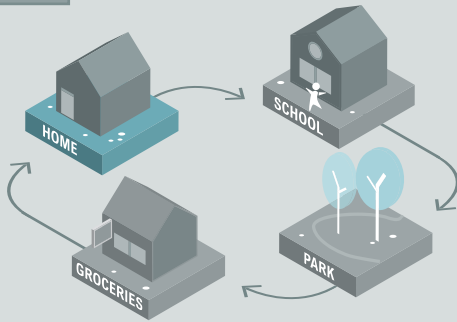
Didem would like a neighbourhood in which there are wider streets and sidewalks. She has a solution for this problem, which involves demolishing some buildings, widening the streets and combining the additional area with mixed uses.

Wishes for the neighbourhood:

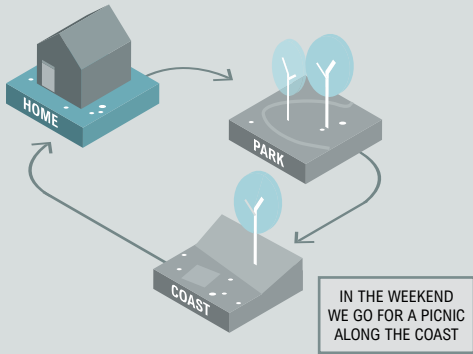
- Reduced rents in the neighbourhood
- More green environment

Typical mobility around your neighbourhood

WEEKDAY



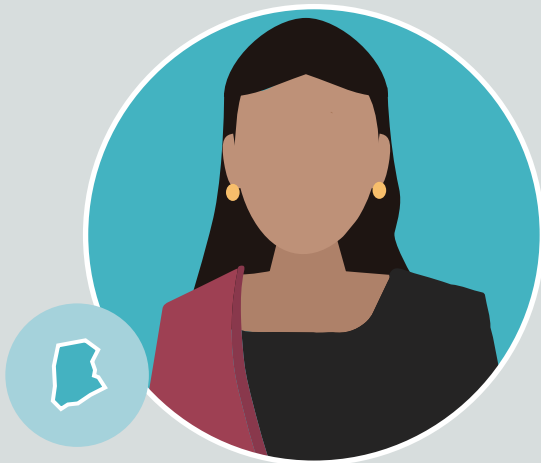
WEEKEND



What would you like to see in your neighbourhood?



"Regulations to control rent prices for the benefit of tenants"



PROFILE

STORY STRING #9

Name

GULIZ DEEDE

Lives in

Sarıyer, Istanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Yenikoy Neighbourhood, Sarıyer

Children under her care

One boy and two girls, 11, 7 & 4 years

What does she do?

Housewife

What does she like about the neighbourhood?

She likes her neighbours because they all migrated from the same city to Istanbul. Because of this, she highlights that there is no security problem in the neighbourhood. She mentions that children can play freely in the streets with their peers because people in the neighbourhood watch over their children.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes

Her children play outside every day in the street and they all go together to the park next to the community centre in summer time. Her elder child takes a summer course there. When he is in the course, she sits in the café and watches her younger children while they play at the park. She uses the streets mostly for commuting and to gather with neighbours occasionally.

What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

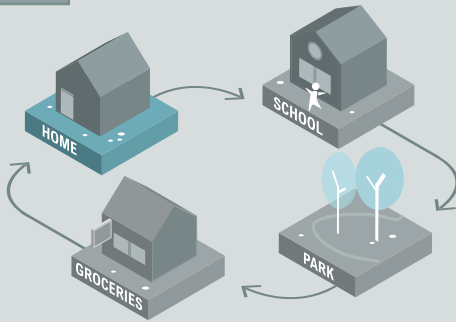
Guliz would like a neighbourhood which has sidewalks and streets free from cars. She mentions that cars pass by so fast in the street. She requests a regulation to slow the speed of cars. Additionally, she highlights a bug problem because of stray animals. .

Wishes for the neighbourhood:

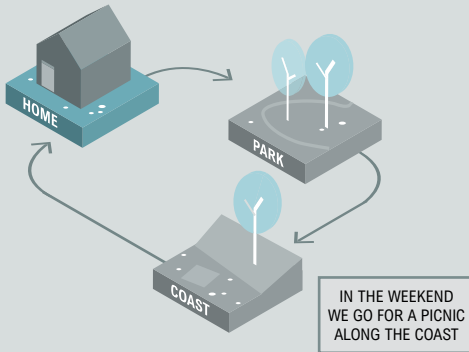
- Greener environment
- Solving the problem of bugs
- Additional CCTV in the neighbourhood and at the parks
- Bumps in the street to reduce the speed of cars

Typical mobility around your neighbourhood

WEEKDAY



WEEKEND



What would you like to see in your neighbourhood?



- "More nature"
- "Solution for bugs"
- "Less stray animals"
- "More CCTV"
- "Regulation to slower the cars down"



- Bol geyillik ^{Katolik} (Atakop-fore)
- Hazerat sarun sızalması
- Kedi kırım daha az olsun
- Güvenlik kameraları
- Yolum boyunca arabaların hızını kesecek rampalar



PROFILE

STORY STRING #10

Name

UMMU YETIS

Lives in

Sarıyer, Istanbul

Neighbourhood and for how long living there

Kocatas Neighbourhood, Sarıyer

Children under her care

One boy and one girl, 5 & 1 years

What does she do?

Housewife

What does she like about the neighbourhood?

She likes her neighbourhood because it is quiet and green.

Their neighbourhoods: likes and dislikes

She takes her children to the park twice a week when they want to go. Her children usually play in the front yard of the house or sometimes in the street. She uses the streets for commuting.

What would you like to change about the neighbourhood?

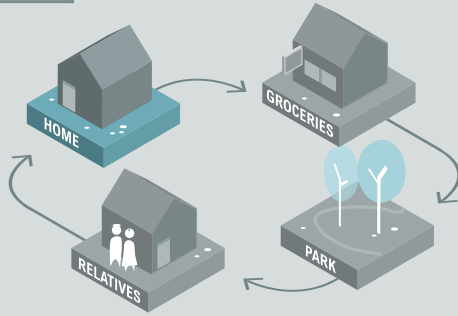
Ummu would like a park close to her house. In that park, she would like park guards to watch and monitor. She does not like her children to play in a park that is occupied by youth.

Wishes for the neighbourhood:

- Closer parks and a school
- Easy transportation and being able to walk with stroller
- Frequent public transportation to specific destinations such as to hospital

Typical mobility around your neighbourhood

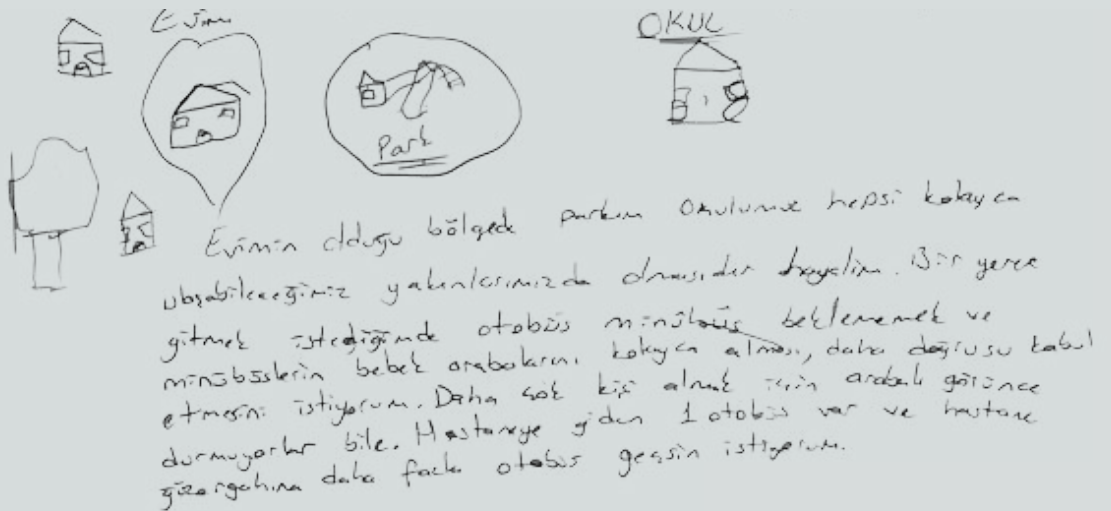
WEEKDAY



WEEKEND



What would you like to see in your neighbourhood?



"I want to have playground, school, and parks are easily accessible in walking distance. I would like to use public transportation that is punctual and easy to reach and use. I would like dolmus (mini local bus) drivers are nice to mothers who have to use stroller. Dolmus drivers are benefit-oriented not people-oriented and they prefer to transport more people than a mother with a stroller. There would be more buses that go to the hospital."



A child walking on the steep streets of Beyoglu (Istanbul). Photo by authors



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