

# Playful cities design guide

PLAY FOR ANYONE, ANYWHERE



# Aknowledgements

This publication is the result of the collaboration between Arup, the LEGO Foundation, CatalyticAction, and PlacemakingX. We also thank Ingka Group (IKEA) for their support. The publication was created thanks to the contribution of external childhood development and play experts and numerous urban practitioners that contributed with their knowledge, practical experiences, and examples. For this we are very grateful, as this fruitful collaboration is a step forward to creating a shared language of play for all in urban spaces, and the benefits this generates for the whole society.

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## FRONT COVER PICTURE

Hermel Inclusive Park ©CatalyticAction

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Adults playing in the Prostoria Net Pavilion  
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Tainan Spring public urban lagoon  
© MVRDV / Daria Scagliola (Tainan City, Taiwan)

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# About this guide

“This is the motivation of play – the possibility of configuring alternate ways of being-in-the-world”

Tara Woodyer, Ludic Geographies: Not Merely Child’s Play

The **Playful Cities Design Guide - Play for Anyone, Anywhere** is a resource that complements the [Playful Cities Toolkit](#) and provides practical and inspirational ideas to help urban practitioners and city authorities to imagine and embed small-scale play elements for children, youths, and adults in city design and planning.

The Playful Cities Toolkit (2021) was developed by Arup and the LEGO Foundation in partnership with the Real Play Coalition. It provides a framework for understanding the complexity and importance of play in cities, for guiding the design process for play-based interventions, and for measuring these interventions’ impact.

**The Playful Cities Design Guide dives deeper into the spatial dimensions of play and explores how diverse urban spaces can enable play**

**for everyone, anywhere. It provides a rich compendium of play elements and practical examples that can be adapted and used in different design processes and socio-cultural contexts to trigger and support play as a crucial element of our everyday life.**

This new publication addresses three questions:

- › **Where can we add play in our cities, and what kinds of spatial elements can support playful experiences?**
- › **How can we design for play that is inclusive of different age groups, abilities, and identities?**
- › **How can play help us to develop a diverse range of skills, as well as to connect to our urban and natural environment?**

The most liveable cities are places where people of all ages and abilities are active and visible in the public realm, spend time playing outdoors, are able to move around, and are in contact with nature. Design for play has the power to generate diverse experiences of the city that may lead to new ways of learning and developing skills, of living in the urban and natural environment, and of cultivating a greater sense of place

and community interactions. Also, playful spaces can enable pro-social behaviours that yield substantial benefits for people of all ages. These social and environmental benefits are of paramount importance in the age of climate change and social unrest.<sup>2</sup>

Play includes a wide variety of activities which can be unpredictable, spontaneous, irrational, and risky, and which are often unanticipated by urban practitioners, policymakers, and other users. By illustrating the forms that play may take in cities, this Guide reveals people’s creativity, curiosity, imagination, movement, interactions, learning and emotions in using urban space.



# Who is this guide for?

The **Playful Cities Design Guide** is a tool for a broad audience. It aims to inspire users from different geographies, urban contexts, and play cultures through the illustration of fifteen urban spaces that collectively create an imaginary city. These spaces exist everywhere and nowhere at the same time. The Guide offers inspiration in the form of a very large spectrum of possibilities for making playful props part of the urban realm.

The playful nature of the Guide is intentional and is an invitation to adopt a creative mindset whilst navigating these invented micro-universes. The proposed play scenarios can be adapted by the users in the context in which they work, to respond to specific challenges, configurations, and playful explorations.

There are three main categories of users that could benefit from this Design Guide:

› **Urban practitioners**, including investors and developers from the real estate sector, as well as city makers, and planners working in public departments, and in private planning and engineering companies. They may already consider play in their projects, but they may be used to thinking of play as something only happening in playgrounds or with specialised



equipment. This Design Guide intends to expand the possibilities for integrating play in unusual and unexpected spaces – such as the interior of a bollard (p. 36) or a train station (p. 82) – and to users of all ages and abilities (babies to elderly people). It also allows to explore the many socio-economic benefits that can be generated for everyone.

› **City authorities** and policymakers, who may see play as a desirable part of urban regeneration projects and policies. However, they may not be aware of the range of potential spaces in which play can become the leading force for sustainability, equity, education, and economic development in cities.

Small-scale play installations could trigger their imagination in relation to various city policies and programmes, and be used as tangible examples for future urban interventions.



› **Community groups**, such as groups of parents, neighbours, or other civic society organisations, may seek to implement more play in their neighbourhoods. The Design Guide can help them to identify viable interventions as well as to advocate for various ideas, in conversations with city authorities, investors and other stakeholders.



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# How to use this guide

Play cannot always be predicted in all its many forms and, thus, it cannot always be designed for. Play means different things to different people, depending on socio-cultural, economic, and other circumstances.

**This Guide illustrates a broad range of possibilities to design for play in diverse urban spaces, and for people of different ages, abilities, and identities.**

This is done in a form of a compendium of small-scale play props – urban furniture, public art, planned play equipment and urban design details. These examples should serve as a starting point for discussions, testing and prototyping, which should further develop through context-relevant projects.

The users of the Guide are invited to design for the diversity of play in relation to their project, communities, and desirable impacts.

**The Guide is designed considering the following components:**

- › **Five Skills** – the Guide shows that a playful mindset has no age restrictions and examines the skills that can be developed through a vast range of playful experiences and the interaction with playful spaces.
- › **Fifteen Spaces** – the Guide expands the possibilities for play beyond playgrounds by showing how play props could be integrated in the urban realm.
- › **Five Case Studies** – the Guide offers insights into existing projects implemented across different play cultures and contexts, showing how props are not the only component for successful projects. Users are invited to adapt their approaches to local conditions.
- › **Catalogue of Play Ideas** – the Guide provides a summary of play props, highlighting the five property categories: skills that can be developed through play, age groups, play time, how complex it would be to construct it, and the number of players required. Users could cut out the elements of the catalogue and use them in co-design workshops.



Interactive sign  
© Ajuntament de Barcelona (Barcelona, Spain)

# Why play for anyone, and anywhere in cities?

“The support which urban space provides to play is always broader than any conscious intention; play is excessive.”<sup>3</sup>

Quentin Stevens, *The Ludic City*

## Cities are facing an unprecedented social and environmental crisis.

The design of cities is generally not suited for a growing and aging urban population,<sup>4</sup> for the needs of diverse bodies,<sup>5</sup> or for reaching the balance of ecosystems.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, play is in decline and struggling to find a place in the lives of many children: 49% of parents say they do not have enough time to play with their children, 56% of children have less than one hour of outdoor play each day, and 51% of parents are worried about their children's safety when playing outside.<sup>7</sup>

## Play can have an important role in helping cities become better for people and for the planet, thanks to its ability to unite social and environmental priorities in urban projects.

### Play is for anyone—in any culture, country, gender identity, ability or age group.

The 1980 United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) declared that the Right to Play was a critical human right. Engaging in play is crucial for the development and wellbeing of people of all ages. Children, adolescents, and adults can all take on a playful mindset, where they approach life with a joyful and fun attitude and apply creative solutions to everyday situations. Play embraces a wide variety of activities that can be unpredictable, spontaneous, irrational and risky, and that are often overlooked by urban practitioners and policymakers. Play can also be more structured and with a specific learning goal in mind.

### People of all ages benefit from play.

Through play, individuals develop capabilities that help them to solve problems creatively and to develop resilience.<sup>8</sup> A playful mindset can also encourage learning new content and skills.<sup>9</sup> Playful people are open to new experiences and surprises and able to create and reimagine spaces for play.<sup>10</sup> Playful adults are also often more active<sup>11</sup> and better at coping with stressful situations.<sup>12</sup> In fact, playful adults live approximately 10 years longer, on average, than less playful people.<sup>13</sup>

## Play brings diverse people together and improves the social and natural environment.

Playful cities enable safe and stimulating interactions between friends, families, communities, strangers and with the built and natural environment. For both children and adults, the social aspects of play are fundamental for relationship building with people and the environment.<sup>14</sup> Research suggests that children's and adults' interactions during play may be essential for creating the kind of supportive social environments that foster a healthy development.<sup>15</sup>

## Nature-based play helps to create a greater sense of empathy and respect for nature and can contribute to climate resilience.

Investments to de-pave and de-brick public spaces, to make room for increased rainfall, and to allow for more greenery and shade are an ideal opportunity to embed play elements into the design of these nature-based solutions. Such investments can create climate-resilient environments, educate about the importance of biodiversity and climate action, and open new places for diverse play opportunities.<sup>16</sup>

## Child and play-friendly spaces can also boost the economic value and long-term viability of the built environment.

Public spaces and parts of cities where families with young children choose to visit signal better than any marketing material that an area is clean, safe, and fun. Retail, leisure, and business occupiers increasingly recognise that this is good for business. For instance, cities like Rotterdam and Vancouver have taken ambitious steps to make urban environments attractive



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to families, retaining skilled workers and driving the local economy. Their planning models considered child-friendly housing, public space for play, the location of amenities and a network of safe routes.<sup>17</sup>

### **Leveraging play as an opportunity to unlock broader socio-economic and environmental benefits calls for innovative partnerships to finance the agenda for play.**

According to the research conducted by the Real Play Coalition and the Resilient Cities Network, by considering the value of play holistically and measuring the multiple benefits of play, cities are looking to make a stronger case to scale up investments into play-friendliness. This need for investing in children's development calls for the creation of new partnerships between the public, private and community-led sectors.<sup>18</sup>



Activation of Vendome public stairs project  
© CatalyticAction (Beirut, Lebanon)

# The role of urban planning and design

**Urban planning and design can enhance playing experiences in cities and influence the way we play.<sup>19</sup> Conversely, play reveals the potential that public spaces offer.**

In 2018, the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI)<sup>20</sup> included the right to family time, play, and leisure as one of the five components of their global framework. Despite the evidence for its role in healthy development and wellbeing, play is still undervalued and under prioritised in city planning and design. There is the urgent need and opportunity to rethink how cities can ensure space, choice, and time for play for all people.

**Urban spaces make people aware of their bodies and movements, and their presentations of self.** Playful encounters with the space and with others have the power to enable testing and experimenting with these experiences and interactions. Play can be individual, social and public,<sup>21</sup> shaped by the density and diversity of people, and the interplay of their activities and behaviour. A playful mindset can



support people in making connections with others in their school, family, workplace, or wider community. Outdoor play, in particular, generates numerous benefits as play spaces frequently become community hubs where residents can engage with one another.

Play can also improve social cohesion and reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour and vandalism. By expanding individuals' social sphere, play supports the development of inclusive communities. Urban design facilitates the expansion of people's experience and their capacities, and spatial relations play a significant role in how certain types of play take space.<sup>22</sup>

**City planning and design can support play on three interconnected scales** – the household or building level, the neighbourhood, and the city levels. Integrated play interventions across these scales contribute to creating **a network of play spaces and infrastructure.**

This network is as important as transport, energy, water, and waste infrastructure; they all underpin urban functions and a city's ability to attract and sustain strong, healthy, and cohesive communities. By promoting connected, multifunctional, intergenerational, and sustainable play spaces for cities, play infrastructure can generate a substantial range of benefits for all urban dwellers.<sup>23</sup>

City strategies and urban practices should move to an integrated approach that can deliver the full range of streets, spaces and natural environments needed for a successful play infrastructure network.



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### The Urban Play Framework<sup>24</sup> identifies three fundamental dimensions that city authorities and urban practitioners need to consider for creating a playful environment.

The Framework provides a structure to capture and understand the complexity of play in cities and inform the design of playful cities.



The Urban Play Framework  
Playful Cities Toolkit, 2021

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# FACILITATION FOR PLAY

**Play needs to be understood and actively supported by urban practitioners, city authorities, community members, caregivers, and teachers. The facilitator role is critical to inspire play, spot opportunities to integrate learning goals in playful settings, and create spaces and time for many kinds of playful activities.**

Urban design is a powerful facilitator of play. Evidence abounds about how small tweaks to the cityscape can be transformative in facilitating play, by encouraging



Storytelling through symbols on wooden pyramids in Urban Thinkscape, a playful bus stop that triggers learning and interaction  
© Playful Learning Landscapes / Sahar Coston-Hardy (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

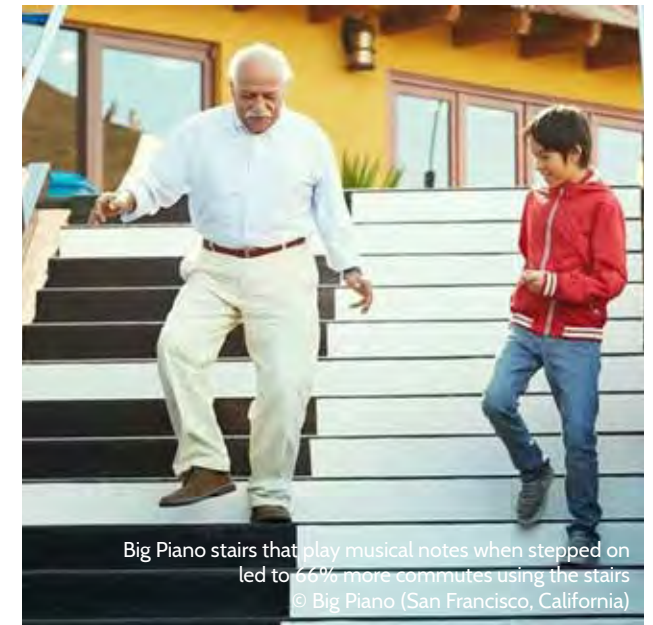
children and adults to use spaces in new ways and interact with others. For instance, a bus stop was reimagined as Urban Thinkscape—a play and learning space with several installations designed for children and families.<sup>25</sup>

The Stories design at Urban Thinkscape featured a series of small wooden pyramids. Picture symbols for common words like “sun,” “bee,” and “run” were placed on these pyramids and signage encouraged caregivers to interact and engage with their children to tell stories based on these images. By encouraging caregivers to facilitate their children’s playful learning, families at Urban Thinkscape engaged in more interaction and conversation than families at a playground in the same neighbourhood.

# TIME & CHOICE FOR PLAY

**Children and adults need to have adequate time and choice to engage in stimulating, and developmentally rewarding play activities, alone or with others. Time and choice for rich and diverse play experiences is important for their wellbeing and to build the skills to thrive in life.**

Whilst children and families want more play in their lives, it is increasingly difficult for them to find the time for it. Children are overscheduled and distracted by multiple forms of technology, and adults are balancing busy work-lives.<sup>26</sup> Promoting, valuing, and advocating for play, as well as measuring and demonstrating its impact, have a major role in changing these habits.



Big Piano stairs that play musical notes when stepped on led to 66% more commutes using the stairs  
© Big Piano (San Francisco, California)

Having spaces that provide opportunities for play near where people live and work gives more time and choice for play. Public spaces should offer opportunities for play-on-the-go, such as while waiting for the bus or crossing the street. Simple urban installations can also be very impactful for both shorter and longer play sessions. For instance, piano keys installed on stairs in a German subway station that played musical notes when stepped on led to 66% more commuters using the stairs, thus engaging in physical activity, than using the escalator.<sup>27</sup>



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## SPACES & FACILITIES FOR PLAY

**People with varying cognitive, socioemotional, and physical capabilities should have access to adequate play spaces, playable environments, and facilities for different play modes; and they should have a variety of supplies, materials, and equipment for play.**

Spaces for play include nurturing home environments, educational facilities and spaces that strengthen playful learning, well-serviced and healthy public spaces, and supporting city planning and governance networks. These spaces need above all to be safe and accessible, inclusive for all abilities and identities, and allow for different types of play.

The Design Guide exemplifies how to achieve the goals of the Urban Play Framework through urban play elements (props), with a focus on the Spaces & Facilities for Play dimension. It considers both “traditional” play environments such as homes, schools, and playgrounds, as well as spaces that are not usually considered appropriate for play, such as streets, stairs and vacant lots that could be reimagined to provide play opportunities.

Urban play elements (props) are small-scale interventions implemented in micro-geographies, shaped around the mechanics of play actions and sensory perceptions. Such elements (e.g., street furniture, public artworks, play equipment) can easily be overlooked as being part of the play infrastructure,

because people usually perceive them as being *within* space rather than *shaping space*.<sup>28</sup>

However, they play a big role in creating playful experiences: engaging people with the meanings they represent, expanding the possible uses of spaces, creating various atmospheres of encounters, and so on. Their location directly influences the opportunities for time, choice, and facilitation for play. Designers need to be aware of how the relation between various urban spatial elements can create complex sets of play opportunities.



Play elements can also be integrated in unexpected places, such as sidewalks, creating new possibilities for fun and community encounters  
©CoCriança (Sao Paolo, Brazil)



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Resting on a playful "Mountains" bench  
© CatalyticAction (Beirut, Lebanon)

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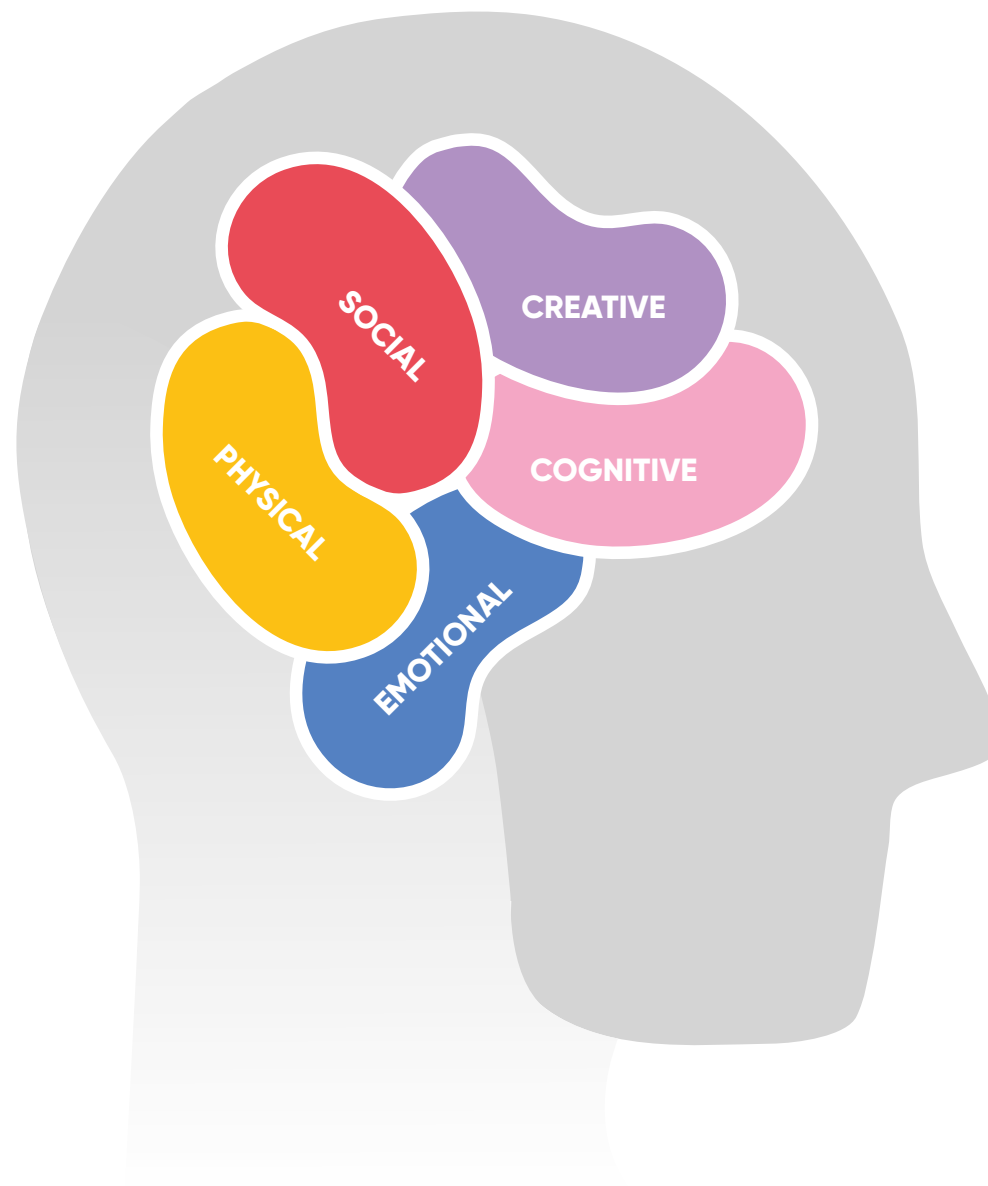
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# Skills

For people of all ages, it is critical to take a holistic approach to understanding how to support their wellbeing and healthy development. Such approach to human development highlights the importance of physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and creative skills<sup>29</sup>, which are critical for people to thrive throughout the lifespan. Play is ideal for developing these skills, as it supports the ways in which people explore, engage, and learn about the world most effectively by:

- › **Actively engaging with new concepts;**
- › **Making connections in ways that are meaningful to their own lived experiences;**
- › **Being socially-interactive with others;**
- › **Testing ideas about the world through iteration ;**
- › **Including joy (and surprise or excitement).<sup>30</sup>**



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Physical play, Mauj project  
© CatalyticAction (El Mina, Lebanon)

# SKILL Physical

Physical skills involve any type of movement of the body. Regardless of age, people need to move their bodies to the best of their ability. From infants developing their gross motor skills through crawling, to adolescents and older adults doing regular stretches and exercises to prevent the loss of flexibility, physical skills need to be developed and maintained at various ages.

Play is ideal for honing these skills. For example, fine and gross motor skills can be supported through different types of play—from large muscle movements during a game of football to small muscle movements while playing a board game or creating a scene in a dollhouse.

Developing an awareness of where objects are located in space is also a critical physical and cognitive skill, which can be supported while throwing a ball or assembling a block tower.





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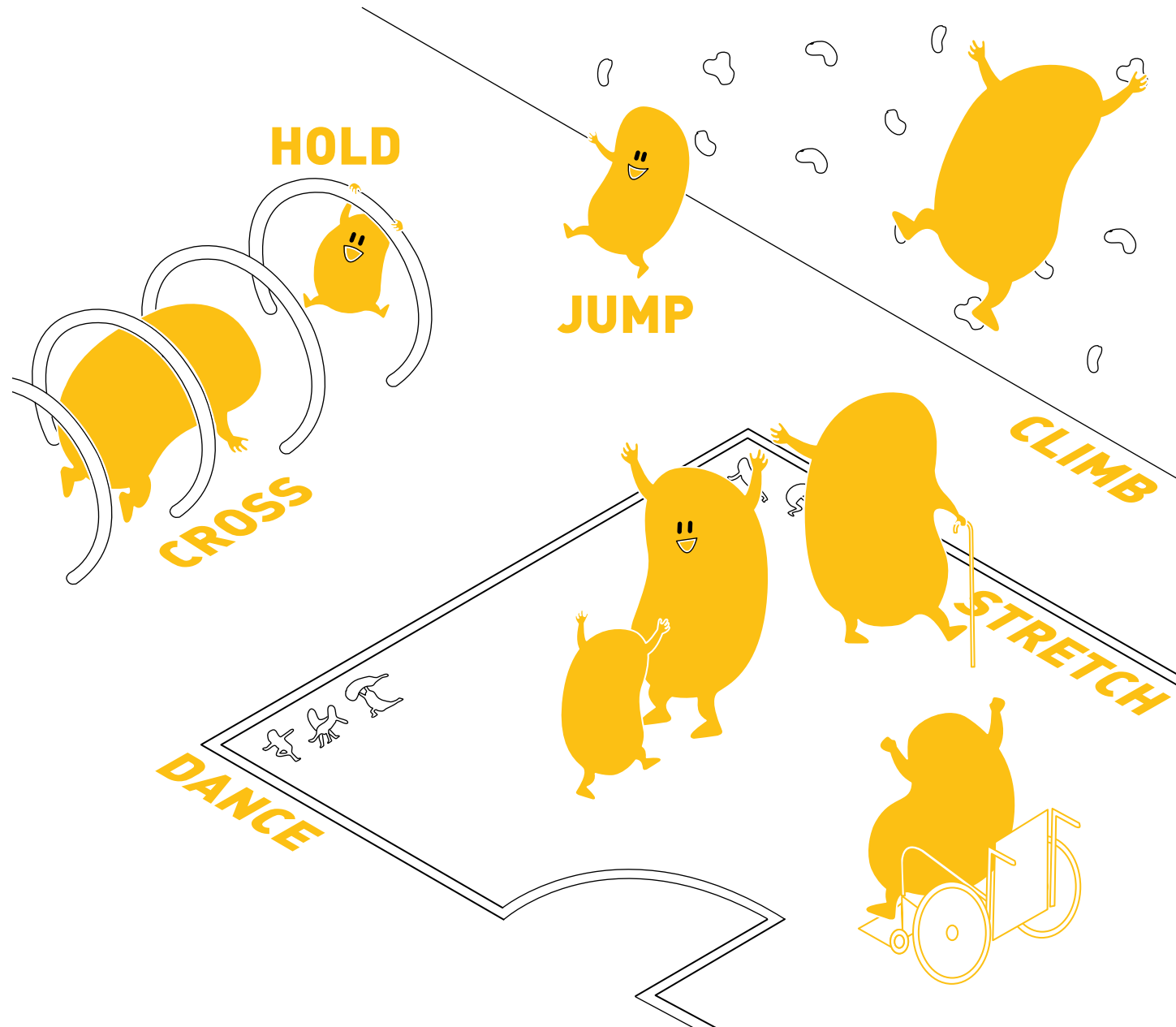
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A [park](#) can offer many opportunities for supporting physical skills through play. A [sit and pedal](#) activity can employ gross motor skills for people of all ages as they compete to see who can pedal the fastest, while also supporting cardiovascular activity. An [all go round](#) offers an opportunity for practicing balance and building upper arm strength through pushing friends and family members as they ride around.

Have a look at some of the urban design elements that develop physical skills:

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- 07 Dance floor
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- 58 Multilevel basketball hoops
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**Physical skills need to be developed and maintained at various ages.**



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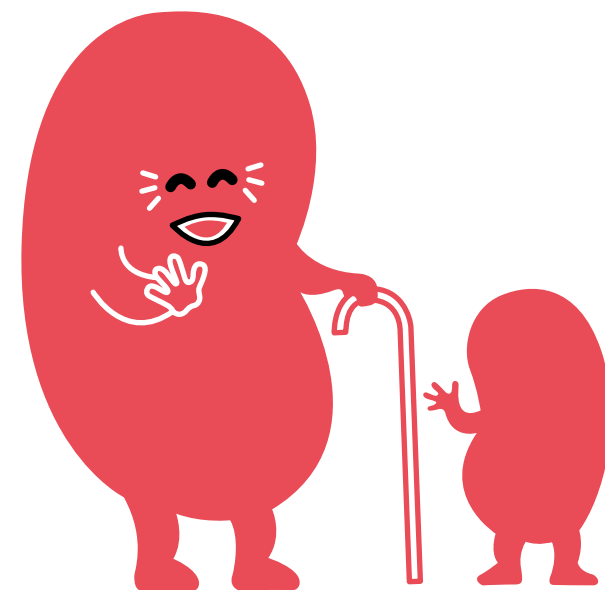
# SKILL Social

Social skills involve collaborating, communicating, and understanding the perspectives of others. Both children and adults need to know how to share their views, foster empathy, and interact in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

Play is ideal for developing these skills, because so many playful activities involve interacting and cooperating with others—from playing a game of tag, to playing an online video game with friends.

Play can also teach community cultural norms, from children engaging in role-play where they try on culturally appropriate adult roles ([pretend characters](#)), to adults playing a weekly Mahjong game with certain expectations about the behaviour of winners and losers ([Songzhuang community park](#)).

A [cultural facility](#) can provide an ideal space for supporting children's and adults' social skills. A [collective sculpture](#) allows people to come together to co-create an ever-changing piece of art. They work together to improve different areas and fulfil their collective vision for how they want it to look.





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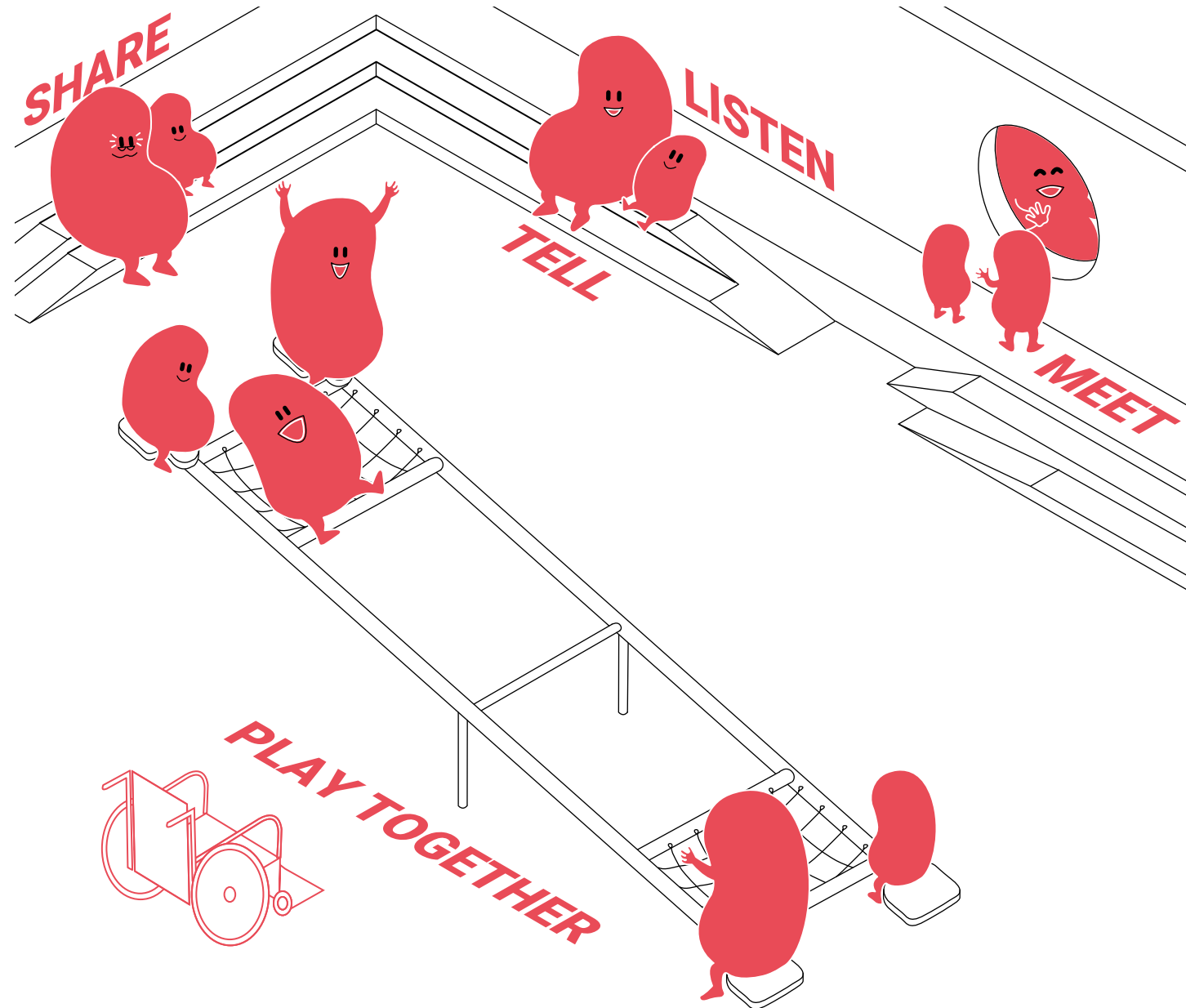
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A game of [giant chess](#) also encourages people of all ages to interact as they explain the rules of the game and then both experienced and novice players can help each other move the pieces across the board in a collaborative game.

Have a look at some of the urban design elements that develop social skills:

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- 20 Hole in the wall
- 48 Work watching
- 69 Circle

**Social skills involve collaborating, communicating, and understanding the perspectives of others.**



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# SKILL Creative

Creative skills involve developing novel ideas, thinking of new uses and applications for existing materials, and being flexible in thinking patterns. Living in today's world requires dealing with a constant stream of challenges. Creative skills help children and adults answer the call for innovations to thrive in today's society.

Play allows people to try out new ideas and come up with creative solutions for problems. For example, a young child might encounter a new toy and explore it by pushing buttons, turning it over, and figuring out how it works.<sup>31</sup>

A group of adults might play a word game to brainstorm potential ideas for a new advertising campaign at work. Creative skills also encompass curiosity, which drives both children and adults to find new information every day about people, events, and objects.<sup>32</sup>





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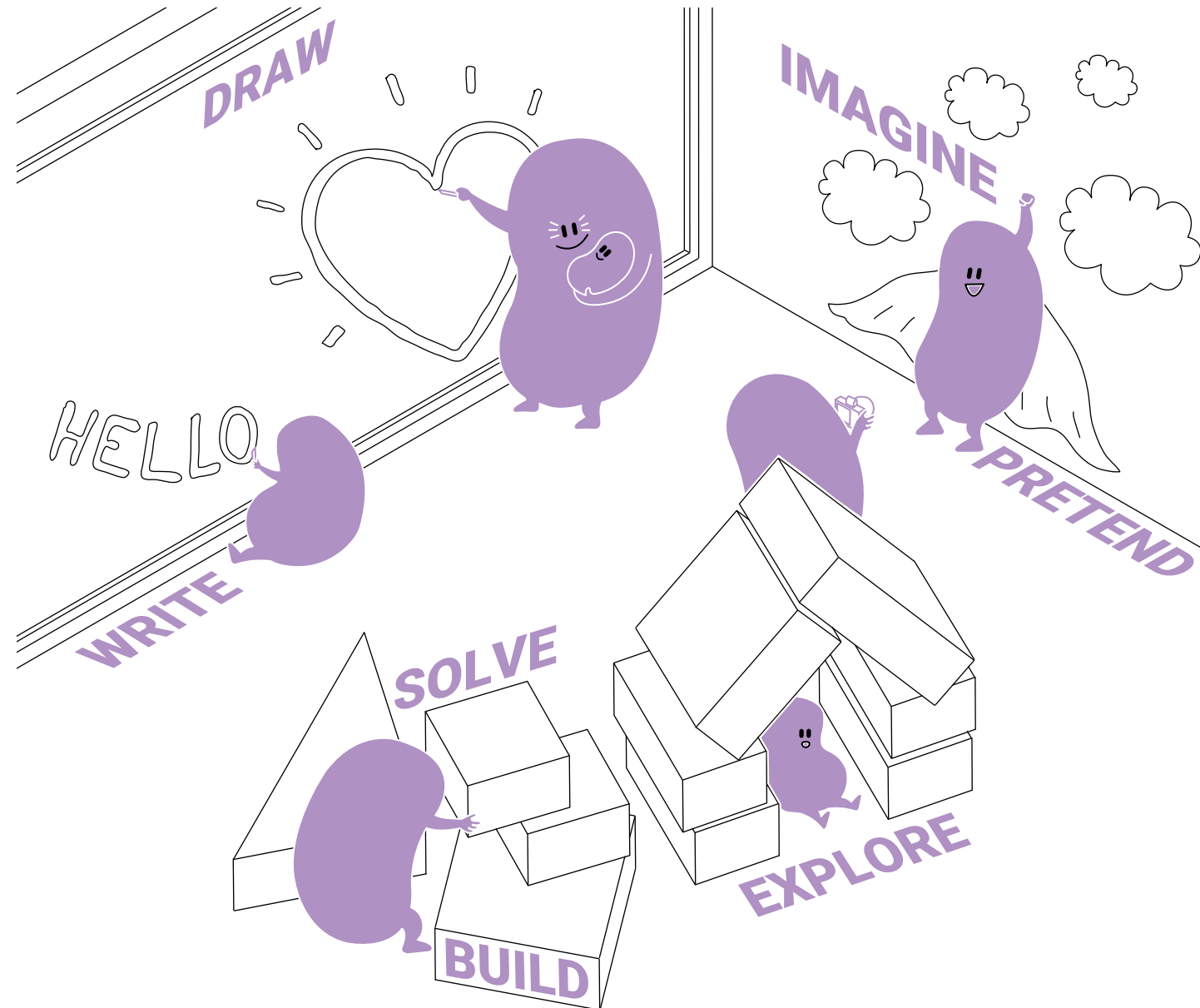
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A [public square](#) can be an ideal location for fostering creative skills. Using an [amplifier bench](#) children and adults can explore the design's functions and experiment with playing different sounds and songs. They can try to play a familiar tune and have others guess it. Users can also use their curiosity to figure out how the design works to create sound. A [dance floor](#) also allows users to use their creativity to develop unique dance routines and teach them to others.

Have a look at some of the urban design elements that develop creative skills:

- 08 Sound tiles
- 18 Pretend station
- 24 Loose big blocks
- 49 Chalk board
- 61 Interactive mural

Play allows people to try out new ideas and come up with creative solutions for problems.



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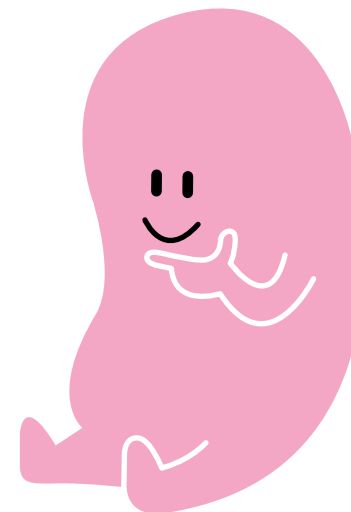
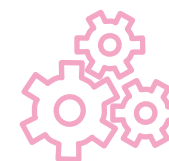


# SKILL Cognitive

Cognitive skills include competencies in academic areas such as literacy, mathematics, and spatial skills (such as understanding the position, area, size, and shape of objects), but also critical thinking, concentration, problem-solving, and flexible thinking. These skills help people of all ages develop solutions to complex tasks and problems.

Play is a well-researched context for supporting cognitive development across a person's lifespan. A wealth of research suggests that children learn academic content through play, such as board games targeting language and math concepts,<sup>33</sup> while adults often hone their memory and concentration through word play and strategy games.<sup>34</sup>

On a [waterfront](#), play can teach related science topics to both children and adults. For example, the installation of a [touch underwater](#) sensorial box can include different features of the natural environment along with signage that describes the local ecosystem—including plants and animals.





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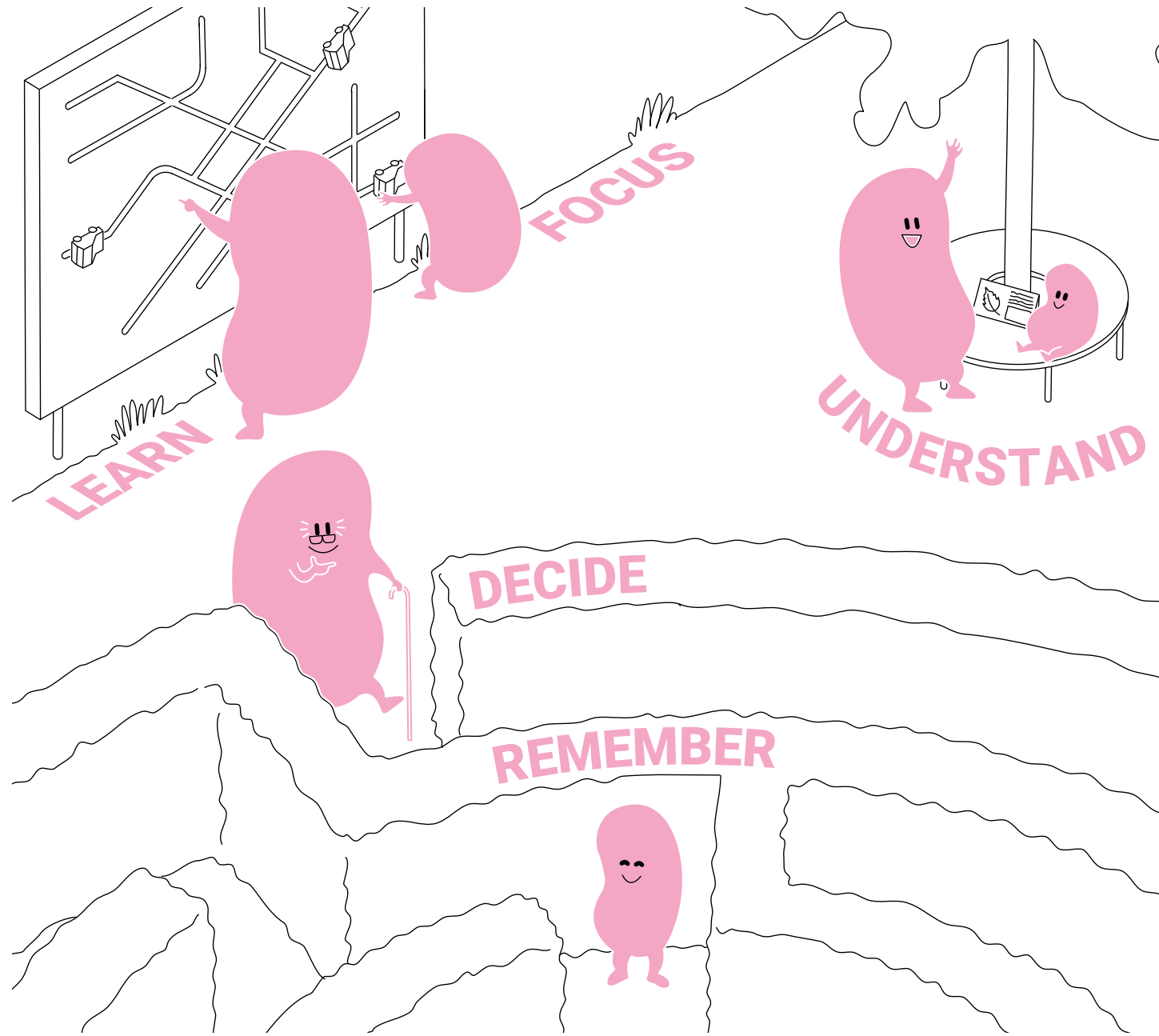
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This encourages all who interact with it to learn facts about the local environment—and provides an opportunity to educate about conservation efforts. [stepping stones](#) help observe the changes in the tide, as people either walk around them, or have to jump on them if the water level is high.

Have a look at some of the urban design elements that develop cognitive skills:

- 02 **Touch underwater**
- 14 **Interactive city map**
- 28 **Spinning panels**
- 41 **Green labyrinth**
- 60 **History mural**

Play is a well-researched context for supporting cognitive development.



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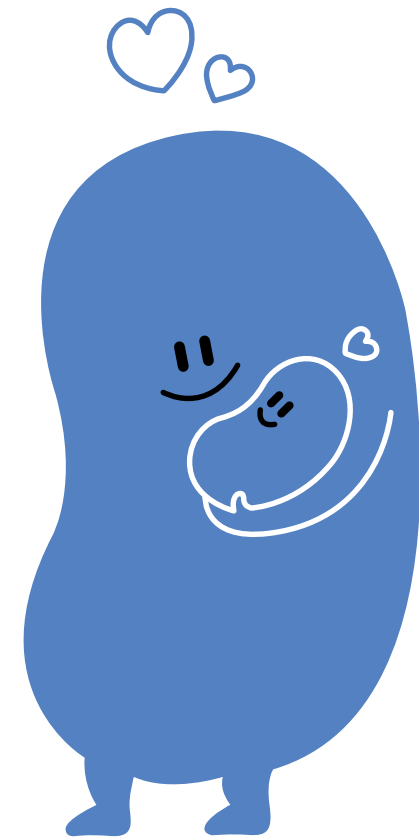


Climbable “net-tube” overlooking the city  
© Numen / Christoph Huber (Linz, Austria)

# SKILL Emotional

Emotional skills involve managing both positive and negative feelings. No matter their age, people must understand and manage their feelings and thoughts in ways that are culturally and situationally appropriate. Children experience joy but can also experience frustration if something does not work out the way they planned. They must employ self-awareness and emotional self-control to regulate their feelings to respond to the situation. Adults also must frequently regulate their emotions in their everyday experiences, such as in the workplace, during interactions with friends and family members, or tuning in with themselves and being present in the moment.

Engaging in play can help both children and adults manage their feelings and thoughts. When activities are framed as playful, they can promote greater enjoyment.<sup>35</sup> Play also offers opportunities for both to develop resilience in the face of hardship by providing a safe space to work out feelings and receive support from others, such as when adults encourage and facilitate children’s play in humanitarian and crisis settings.<sup>36</sup>





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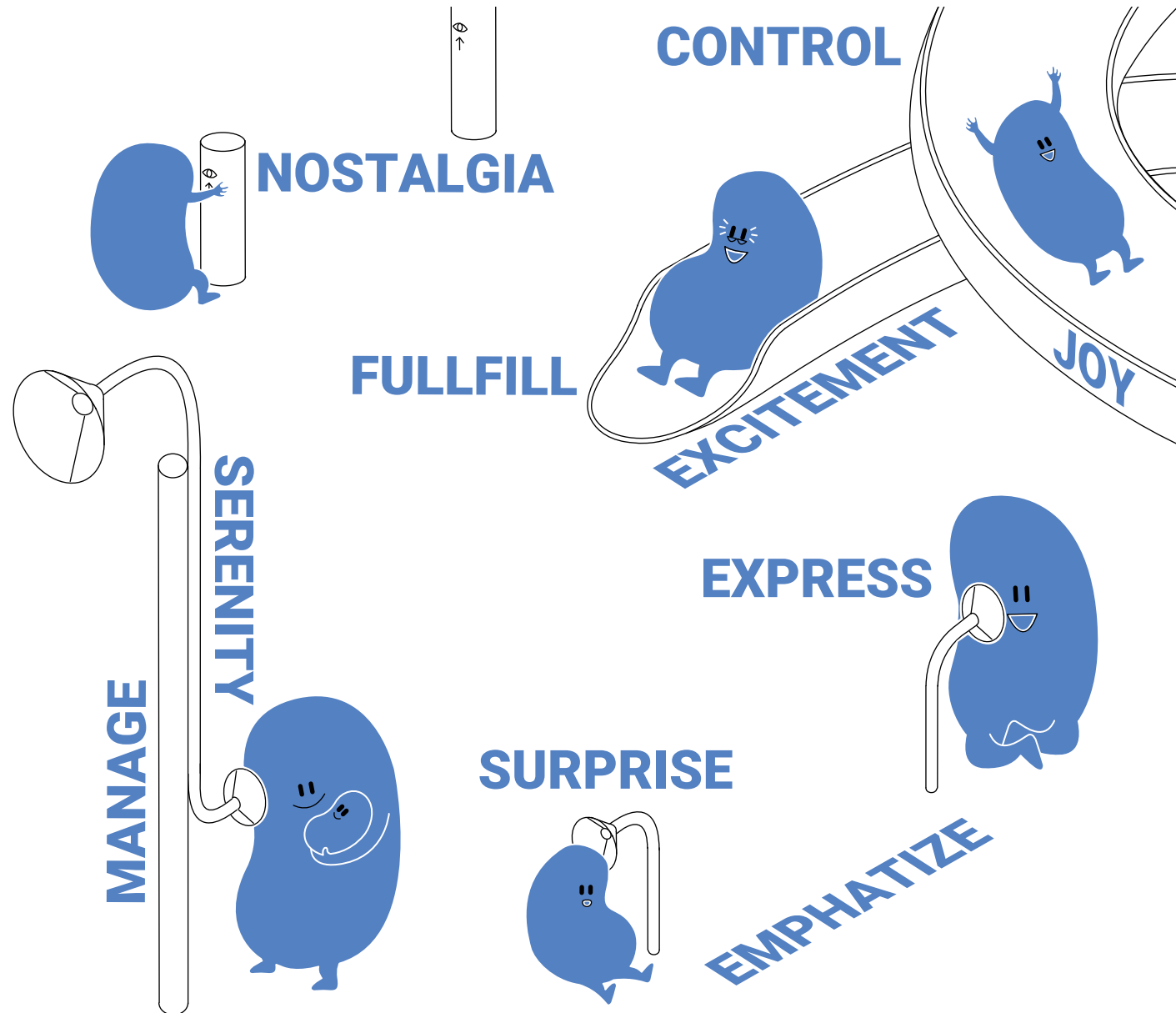
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A [residential area](#) can offer opportunities for children and adults to engage their emotional skills through play. An [emotions wall](#) allows them to talk to each other about their life experiences and how they felt about various events—and to name and describe various feelings. A [climbing wall](#) can also promote emotional skills by allowing users to process feelings of frustration while completing a challenging task by talking with friends and family.

Have a look at some of the urban design elements that develop emotional skills:

- 10 **Treasure pole**
- 22 **Coloured reflections**
- 30 **Width distortion**
- 40 **Slide**
- 43 **Listening aid**

**Engaging in play can help both children and adults manage their feelings.**



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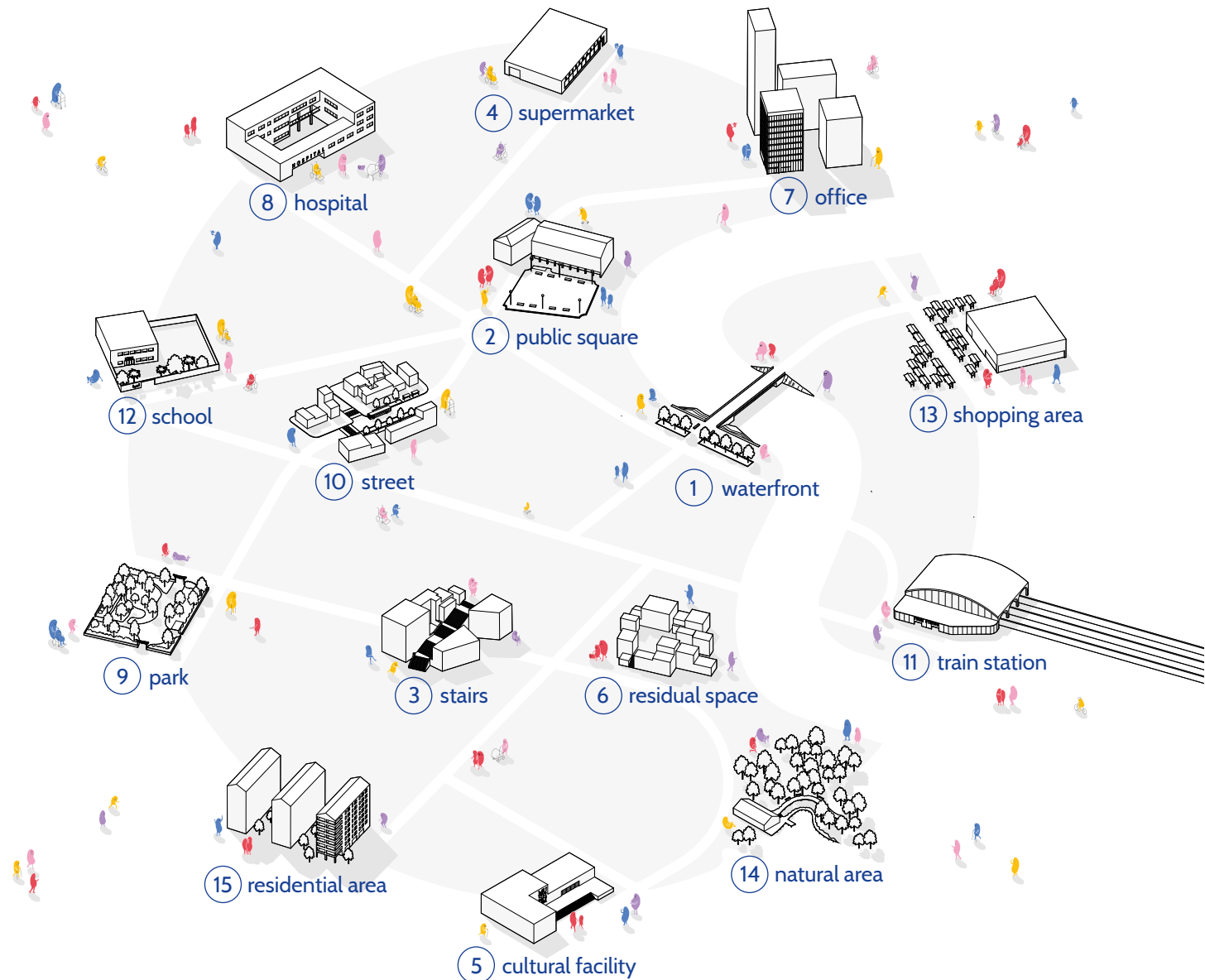
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# City spaces

The Playful City Design Guide is a representation of a potential city, created through the illustration of fifteen places.

These places invite readers to play with and within them – they are a combination of urban typologies that do not represent any particular geography or play culture, but in which all readers might recognise pieces of their familiar urban environments.

Play weaves these spaces together, thus creating play infrastructure. They are more than a destination: rather, a network of opportunities for experiencing play of different types (physical, emotional, creative, social, cognitive) and duration. From a glimpse to a whole day immersion; alone, in pairs or with others; with friends or strangers.





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The entire city, from a staircase to a hospital, has the power to activate our playful mindsets. The fifteen places correspond to the most common public and semi-public urban typologies. These invented micro-universes offer a wide range of ideas for playful props, and serve as a starting point for nurturing playful cities.

**The reader is invited to adapt them in relation to the context in which they live and work, to respond to specific challenges, configurations, fantasies, and playful explorations.**

## Let's play!



Playful rooftop of a car park  
© JAJA Architects / Rasmus Hjortshøj / Coast Studio  
(Copenhagen, Denmark)



Transforming leftover spaces into play oases  
© Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (Warangal, India)



Inclusive play at the waterfront  
© CatalyticAction (El Mina, Lebanon)



Illuminated musical seesaws along the street  
© Lateral Office / Alexandre Ayer (New York, USA)

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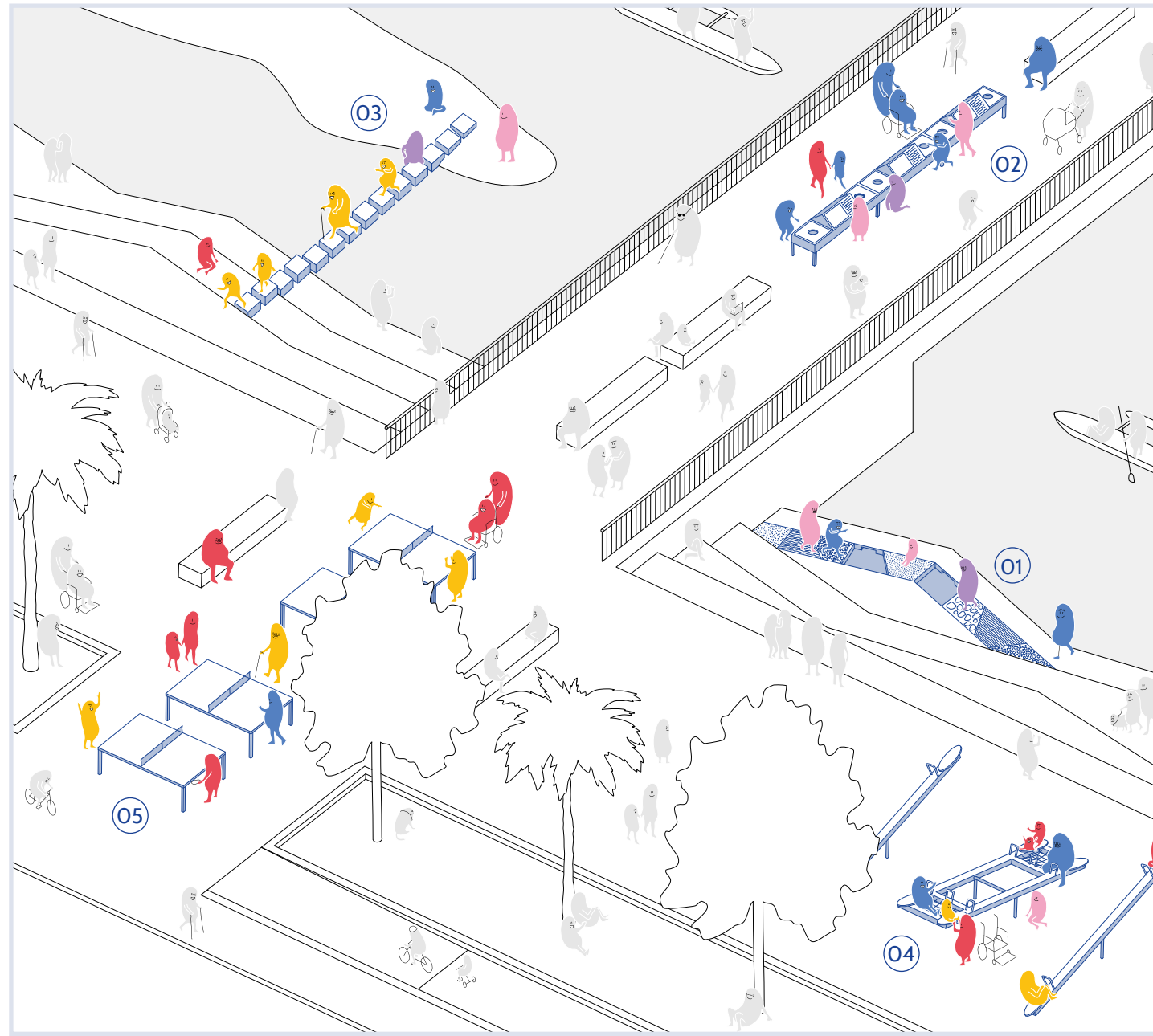
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Waterfront

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# SPACE 1 Waterfront

Many cities across the globe were founded near bodies of water, such as rivers, lakes, and seas that support agriculture, commerce, and transportation. Today, residents of large cities benefit from these natural elements also in terms of wellbeing as they provide a breathing space within the dense urban fabric. For this reason, many cities invest considerable resources in valorising public spaces on waterfronts where people often gather to exercise (running, cycling) as well as relax while appreciating nature. There are also significant redevelopments of waterfronts as part of resilient strategies and climate change actions. The preservation and revitalisation of such spaces can also contribute to the safeguarding of flora and fauna, which further contributes to wellbeing in cities.

The large public spaces near waterfronts offer the ideal opportunity to integrate play in cities. In this context, play can encourage people to use these outdoor spaces more often, which may have a positive impact on their wellbeing. Play can also foster positive interactions between the users of the space.





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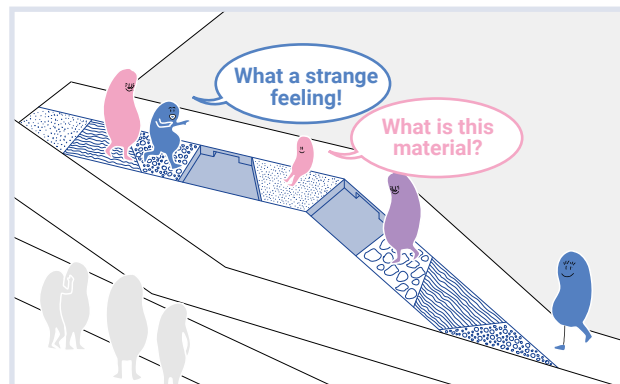
The **giant seesaw** and the **ping pong tables** do this particularly well because they require a minimum of two people coming together.

On the waterfront, play can also offer a creative opportunity to engage people with the natural environment by exploring and learning about its features (e.g., water, plants, animals). This can be designed to increase the awareness around the importance of preserving the natural environment and how it affects wellbeing.

The **reflexology path** encourages people to walk barefoot on different surfaces that mimic the terrains that can be found along a waterfront (pebbles, sand, etc.).

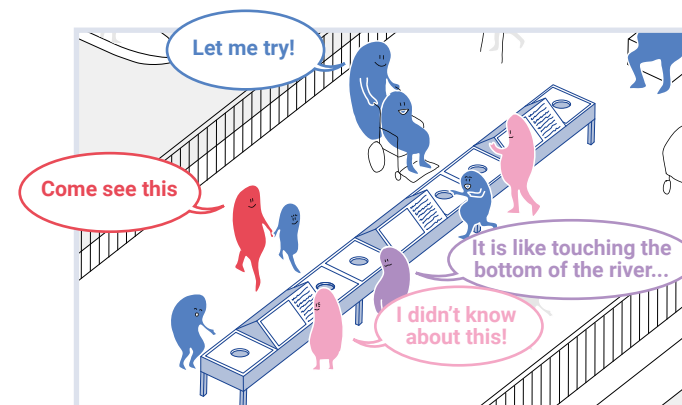
**Touch underwater** encourages people to interact with different elements (informative panels, sensorial boxes, etc.) and teaches them about the natural environment found on this waterfront.

The **stepping stones** are a playful path to cross the water. While being a fun physical activity, this element can also teach about the movements of water across seasons and times of day (tides).



### 01 REFLEXOLOGY PATH

When walking on the path from one surface to the next, you use your cognitive skills to visualise the different materials in their natural location. This can also make you feel relaxed and peaceful (emotional skills). Or, walking over rougher stones, you might imagine that you are walking on the surface of the moon (creative skills).



### 02 TOUCH UNDERWATER

The touch underwater installation is a fun way to learn about the natural environment of waterfronts (cognitive skills). You could learn through interaction, for example by putting your hand in the sensory boxes and getting excited about what you could find (emotional skills). You can pretend that you are on the riverbank while touching the sand inside one of the boxes (creative skills).



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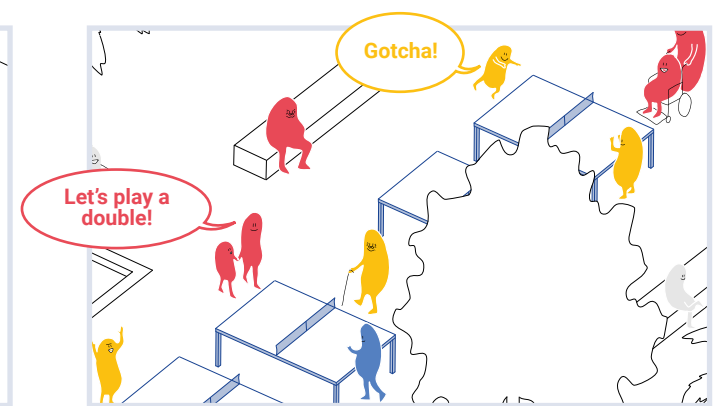
### 03 STEPPING STONES

With the stepping stones installation, you can jump across a stream (physical skills). By looking at the different colours on the side of the stepping stones, you will also be able to see how the water level changed throughout the day (cognitive skills). With a little imagination, the installation makes it appear that people are walking on the surface of the water (creative skills).



### 04 GIANT SEESAW

Giant seesaw is a great game for at least two to play (social skills). The fast movement of the seesaw is exciting and creates a sense of joy (emotional skills). By pushing with your legs to make the seesaw move, you also engage your physical skills.



### 05 PING PONG TABLES

With ping pong, you engage in a lot of physical activity, jumping to catch a ball, or hitting it as hard as you can. To play, you will need to find a partner, whether that be a friend or a stranger (social skills). Even if you need to wait for your turn to play, you can still get excited by cheering for a favourite player (emotional skills).





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# Waterfront

- A** **Sea Organ (Morske orgulje)**  
Zadar, Croatia  
2005  
Nikola Bašić
- B** **Simcoe Wavedeck, Toronto Waterfront**  
Toronto, Canada  
2009 ( - project ongoing)  
West 8 & DTAH
- C** **Bouncing Bridge (temporary/prototype)**  
Paris, France  
2012  
AZC (architects), Ramon Sastre (structural engineer), TP Architectura i Construccio Textil (construction), Sergio Grazia (photographer)
- D** **Tú también construyes Cuenca**  
Cuenca, Spain  
2021  
Placemaking X & Huasipichanga



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Public square

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# SPACE 2 Public square

In cities, public squares are generally large open areas within a dense urban fabric. They take on different shapes and roles in public life, such as in Italy where they often feature great historical significance. Regardless of the context, public squares are always characterised by crowds of people who gather to conduct various social activities (e.g., shopping, eating, meeting up).

Introducing play into public squares can enhance their role as important city landmarks as well as improve their appeal for public life. Being open, mostly pedestrian areas, squares represent a great opportunity to promote different types of play. For example, in many squares worldwide it is common to find children doing physical activities such as running, playing football, and skateboarding. It is also common to find people meeting up, in conversation while standing or sitting on a bench. In some contexts, public squares also attract crowds to conduct group physical activities (e.g., yoga, dance classes).





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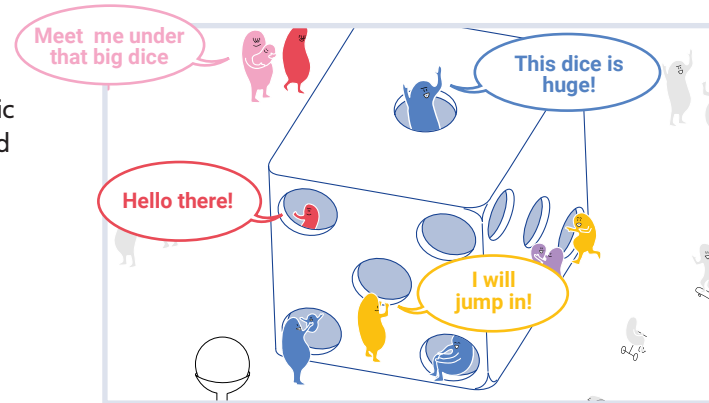
Play elements in this city space can take multiple configurations, and they highly depend on the context. For example, if the public square has a historic significance that attracts tourists, play elements would need to respect this function. In other cases, the integration of play will have fewer limitations, and it would be up to the designers and residents to decide what can be enhanced through play.

For example, the **oversized familiar object** can strengthen the public square's role as a landmark. If designed also to encourage interaction with its structure, this design element can create interactive play opportunities.

In large open areas, elements such as the **sound tiles** or the **dance floor** find their perfect setting. These elements are well-suited because they don't take up all the space, and are not an obstacle when large crowds gather (e.g., for a concert).

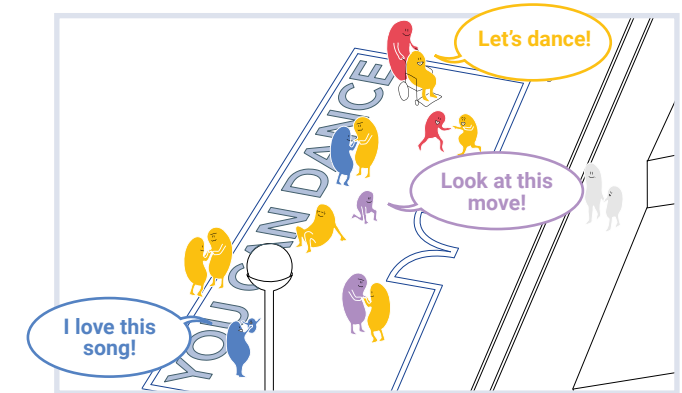
Commonly found elements such as benches can be enhanced into **amplifier benches**, for instance, which encourage people to communicate with strangers through play.

Similarly, the **treasure pole** integrates play in a commonly found element that delimits the pedestrian area of the square from the road: the bollard.



### 06 OVERSIZED FAMILIAR OBJECT

Seeing a giant die is surely a surprising sight (emotional skills) and can make you imagine yourself being very small in a giant world (creative skills). You can enter inside the die, run around it, and climb to the top (physical skills). You can also play a game of Hide and Seek with a friend inside the many tunnels (social skills).



### 07 DANCE FLOOR

The dance floor installation is a simple line drawn on the floor, yet when you are inside it encourages you to dance (physical skills), especially if a group dance class is happening (social skills). You can come up with your own choreography (creative skills) and perhaps post a video on social media.



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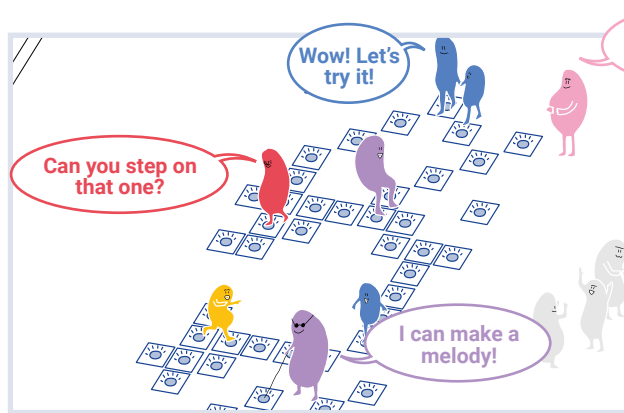
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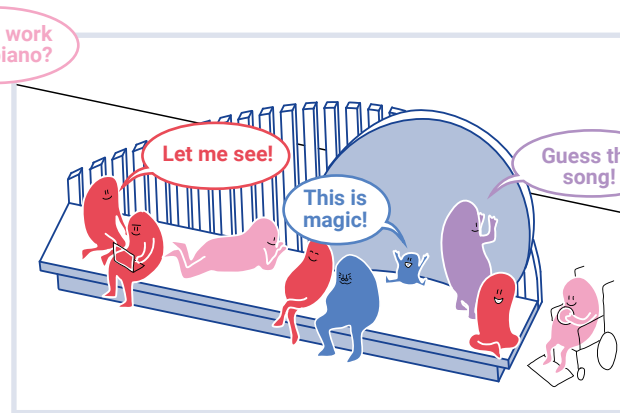
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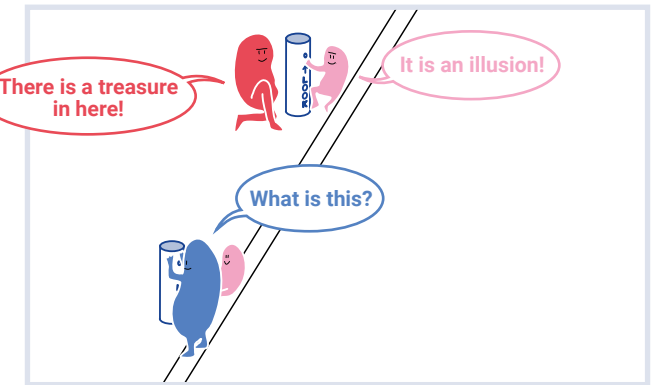
### 08 SOUND TILES

Stepping on one of the sound tiles will produce sound. You can try to compose a melody made up of these different sounds (creative skills). Tiles are far from each other so the melody will sound better when played by many people simultaneously (social skills). Alternatively, you can try to jump from one tile to the next as fast as possible (physical skills).



### 09 AMPLIFIER BENCH

The amplifier bench is a fun way to sit and talk with other people, as voices between the two facing benches will travel long distances (social skills). When sitting down for the first time, you will be surprised to suddenly hear a voice you don't recognize (emotional skills) and will likely try to understand where it came from (cognitive skills).



### 10 TREASURE POLE

Being the first one to discover that there are small objects hidden inside bollards is an exciting part of engaging with the treasure pole element (emotional skills). You might immediately want to share your discovery with friends (social skills). Some of the small objects you see inside will puzzle you with optical illusions and other brain teasers (cognitive skills).





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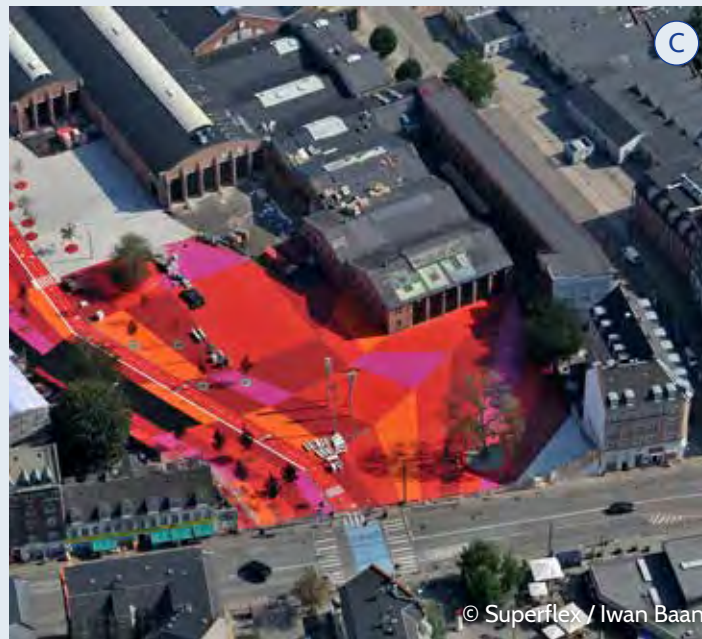
# EXAMPLES

# Public square

**A** **Yagan Square**  
Perth, Australia  
2018  
Aspect Studios

**B** **Hénaia**  
Aguerd, Morocco  
2019  
Joséphine Louarn, Antoine Gouachon (PRIA), Joséphine Louarn, Estelle Poisson (Constellations), Soraya Haffaf (Constellations), Juliette Benizeau

**C** **Superkilen (Red Square)**  
Copenhagen, Denmark  
2012  
Superflex + BIG + Topotek1





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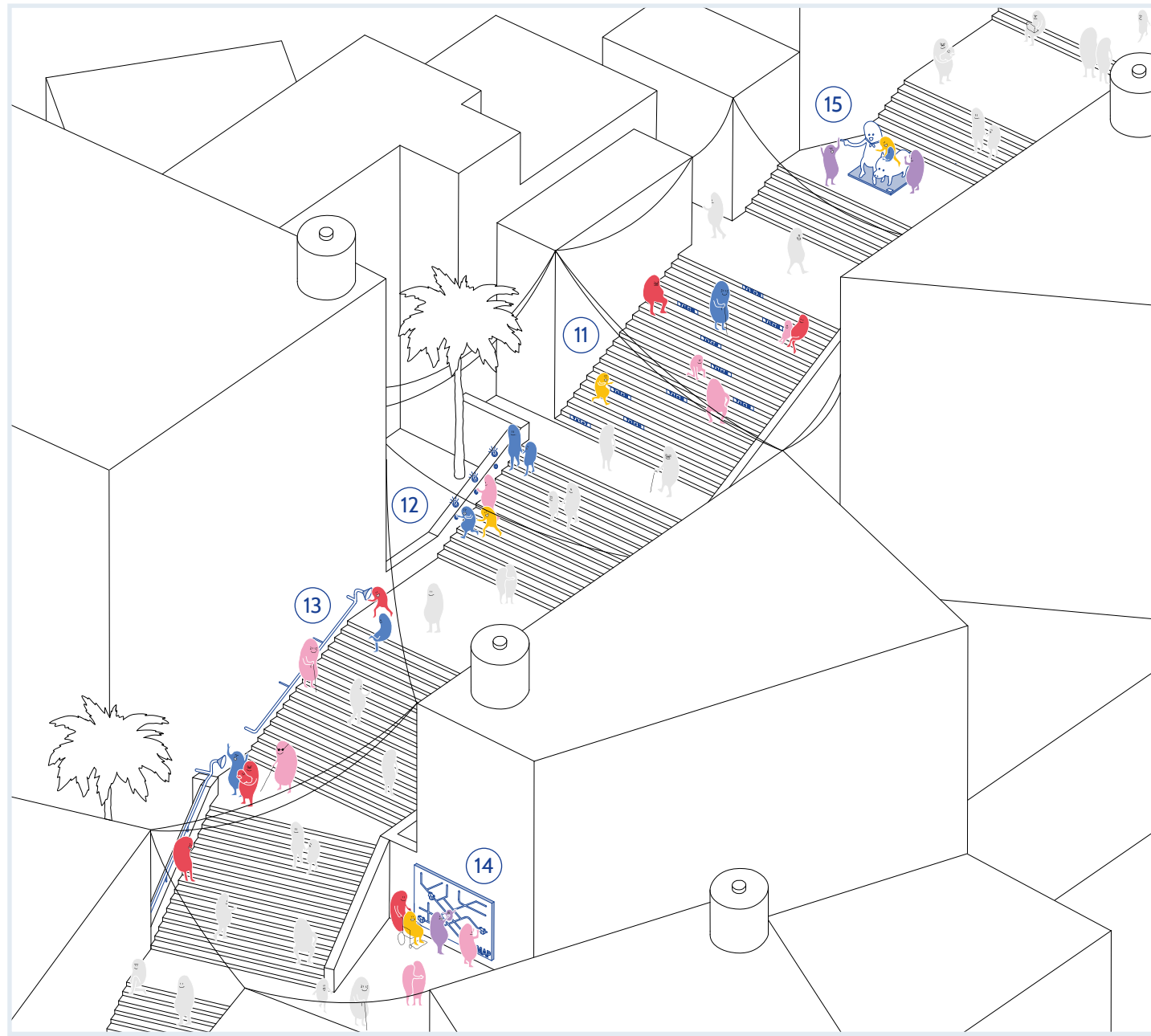
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# SPACE 3 Stairs

Public stairs are found in many cities worldwide. They are pedestrian by nature, so they are an uniquely safe location to integrate play opportunities. Public stairs are generally built to get people from point A to B, but they are also often a lively place of social life. When there are shops, cafes and restaurants nearby, it is common to see people hanging out on the steps. In many cities, people also use stairs to sit and rest, perhaps after a long walk.

Play elements integrated in this city space should aim to enhance existing uses. Smooth and safe pedestrian movement is very important for stairs, which is why play elements integrated in these spaces should not interrupt the pedestrian flow.

When the stairs lead to shops and restaurants, the play items might aim to attract more customers, creating benefits for businesses (see also the [‘supermarket’](#) at page 46).



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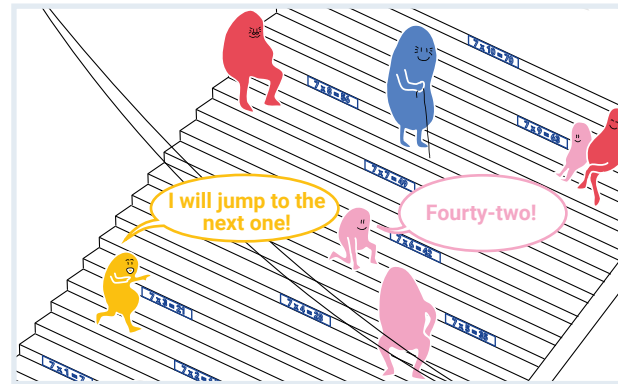
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A game such as the **calculation challenge** is easy to add and provides a fun and cognitive challenges. This can be done while people move up the stairs, hence not interrupting the pedestrian flow.

Similarly, **press here** and the **speaking pipe** can be played while moving up and down the stairs. Such elements can also be easily integrated in an existing balustrade, without taking up any additional space.

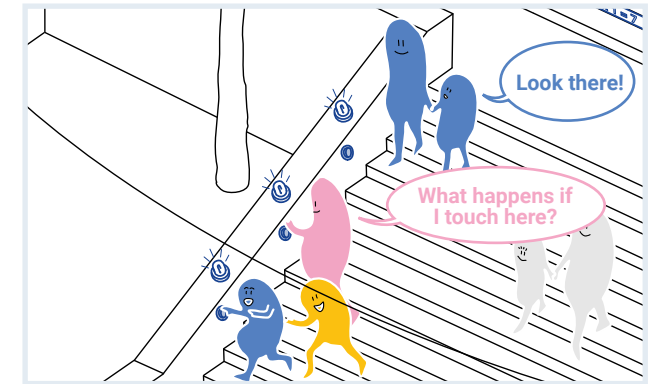
Whenever possible, play elements that encourage users to interact for a few minutes can also be added. For example, the **interactive city map** is a great way to encourage people to learn about the city while also having fun.

The **interactive art sculpture** can become a recognisable element on the stairs, giving the stairs their own identity.



### 11 CALCULATION CHALLENGE

The calculation challenge is a fun way to exercise your mind with maths skills while climbing stairs (cognitive skills). If the calculations are too difficult, you can try to solve them together (social skills). This game might attract you to take the stairs over the escalator or lift, hence promoting physical activity (physical skills).



### 12 PRESS HERE

While using the press here element, out of curiosity, you will want to press to find out what would happen (cognitive skills). Some buttons turn on lights and others make a sound. You will need someone's help to figure out how to activate lights and sounds together (social skills) and this will require you to go up and down the stairs to test different options (physical skills).



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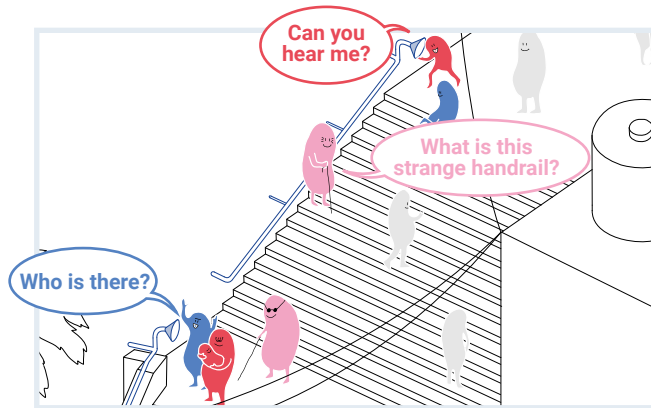
## Key Messages

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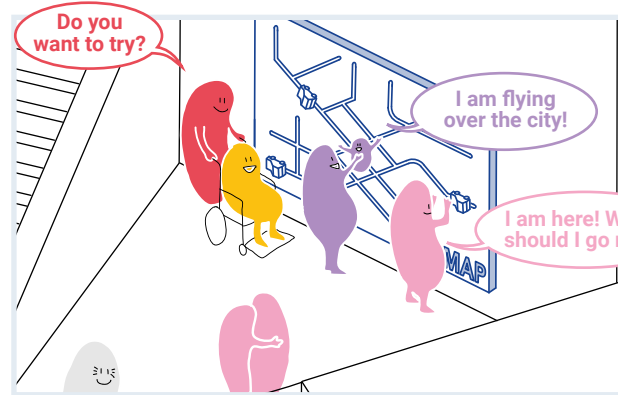
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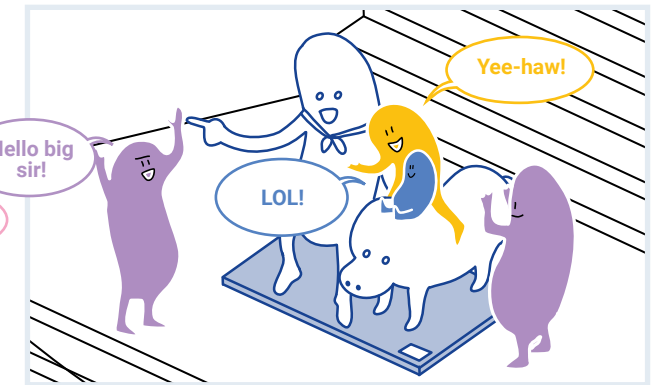
### 13 SPEAKING PIPE

You can use the speaking pipe element as a telephone, talking to a friend from one end of the pipe to the other (social skill), or surprise someone by saying 'Hello' suddenly (emotional skills). The person on the other end will wonder where that voice is coming from (cognitive skills).



### 14 INTERACTIVE CITY MAP

By playing with the interactive city map, you can learn about the city and various available routes (cognitive skill). Or you can challenge friends to locate the local cinema or supermarket (social skills). As you move the items on the map, you can pretend to be a city planner (creative skills).



### 15 INTERACTIVE ART SCULPTURE

A statue can be a fascinating element in itself, but it can also encourage you to interact with it. You can climb on it (physical skills), ride it, and pretend it is alive (creative skills). While you interact with it, you can ask a friend to take a picture of you (social skills).





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# EXAMPLES

## Stairs

**A** **Xi'an LEADERS Primary School**  
Xi'an, China  
2019  
Instinct Fabrication

**B** **Musical Stairs in AOTEA Center**  
Auckland New Zeland  
2016  
Remo Saraceni / Big Piano



© Instinct Fabrication



© Big Piano

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## CASE STUDY

### CatalyticAction

# Beirut's Public Stairs

Nurturing multiple benefits from  
city's connecting tissue

#### Location:

Neighbourhoods Mar Mikhael and Gemmayzeh, Beirut,  
Lebanon

#### Year(s):

2021-2022

#### Leading organisations:

CatalyticAction

#### Partners & Stakeholders involved:

UN-Habitat Lebanon, Block by Block Foundation,  
UNIDO, HerCity, WataniLi

*Text written by Joana Dabaj, Ghina Kanawati*



The new slide and playful handrails of Vendome public stairs  
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Vendome stairs interventions  
© CatalyticAction



Laziza stairs interventions  
© CatalyticAction

While staircases in Beirut are used for their intended purpose, they are also used as lively spaces for social interaction. These staircases are historical landmarks that have survived the city's vast changes, representing years of collective memory.

**This project aimed to rehabilitate and enhance the social activities on the stairs of St Nicholas, Vendome and Laziza by fixing damages, adding furniture, increasing play opportunities, and improving accessibility.**

The design evolved through a series of participatory workshops with users from diverse gender, national, religious, sexual orientation, and socio-economic backgrounds. Children and young people were involved through observation and design activities on site. Later, they developed design ideas using Block by Block (Minecraft). Adults and seniors (residents, caregivers, shops' owners and staff, passers-by) took part in interviews and focused group discussions about stairs.

The Municipality of Beirut, NGOs and CBOs working in the area took part through site visits and interviews. Initially, the suggestion of including playful props along the stairs was met with doubt. The municipality was unsure about incorporating play opportunities, especially a slide.



Participatory design approach was key for the understanding of the benefits of play and the integration of playful elements in the stairs  
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Implemented play props do not interrupt the pedestrian flow along staircases

© CatalyticAction

Some residents were sceptical about children playing on the stairs. But the meaningful, sensitive, and ongoing participatory design process demonstrated the benefits of play to municipality staff and residents. Children and young people were at the centre of these discussions, together with the CatalyticAction team. Once the construction was completed, the negative attitudes changed, and everyone started seeing the multiple positive uses and benefits of the stairs. This was further strengthened with the ongoing stairs activation: involving diverse groups of residents in planting, painting murals and wooden elements, cleaning up and caring for the environment, as well as cultural performances such as a street parade and puppet show.

Design elements that enabled various kinds of play include speaking pipes, rolling spheres, colourful tiles, plants, a slide, playful seating, handrails, mural, and stage. The most important design consideration was to introduce playful components without interfering with the stairs' functionality. For example, the speaking pipes and interactive rolling spheres have been integrated in new and existing handrails, floor games on the floor, and the slide on the side of the staircase in a way that doesn't interrupt the usual pedestrian flow.

Children and young people play everywhere, all along the stairs: for a couple of minutes on their way home back from school and for longer periods of time on weekends. Young adults use the stairs (especially Vendome) to sit in groups, sing, and dance on the benches and stage area. On weekends, they stay for hours in nearby pubs and restaurants. Adults and



Playful props stimulated intergenerational play – slide on the one side and comfortable seating on the other side of the staircase

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seniors use playful elements to socialise, gathering in couples or groups, having fun with their families. They also use speaking pipes, rolling spheres, playful benches, and plants – proving that play props are not only for children. Senior residents spend a lot of time on the stairs as well, observing and socialising.

Stairs are a connecting urban tissue, combining multiple actors and requirements. St Nicolas, for instance, is a site of historical interest, so the Directorate General of Antiquities was one of the critical collaborators in creating design outcomes that reflect Lebanese policies on the protection of historical heritage. Laziza stairs are a cosy and calm area in between residential buildings, so the design had to address the specific needs of immediate households. Vendome stairs are within a lively area with restaurants and bars.

This connective character is why stairs' rehabilitation is able to generate significant benefits for the city, from improving accessibility (physical features like handrails and resting points along the stairs enable elderly and pregnant women to use the stairs safely), to providing more opportunities for playful learning, and attracting more people to the area which benefitted nearby shops, restaurants, and pubs.



Multiple benefits are achieved through design integration: merging playful props with safe and functional staircase elements  
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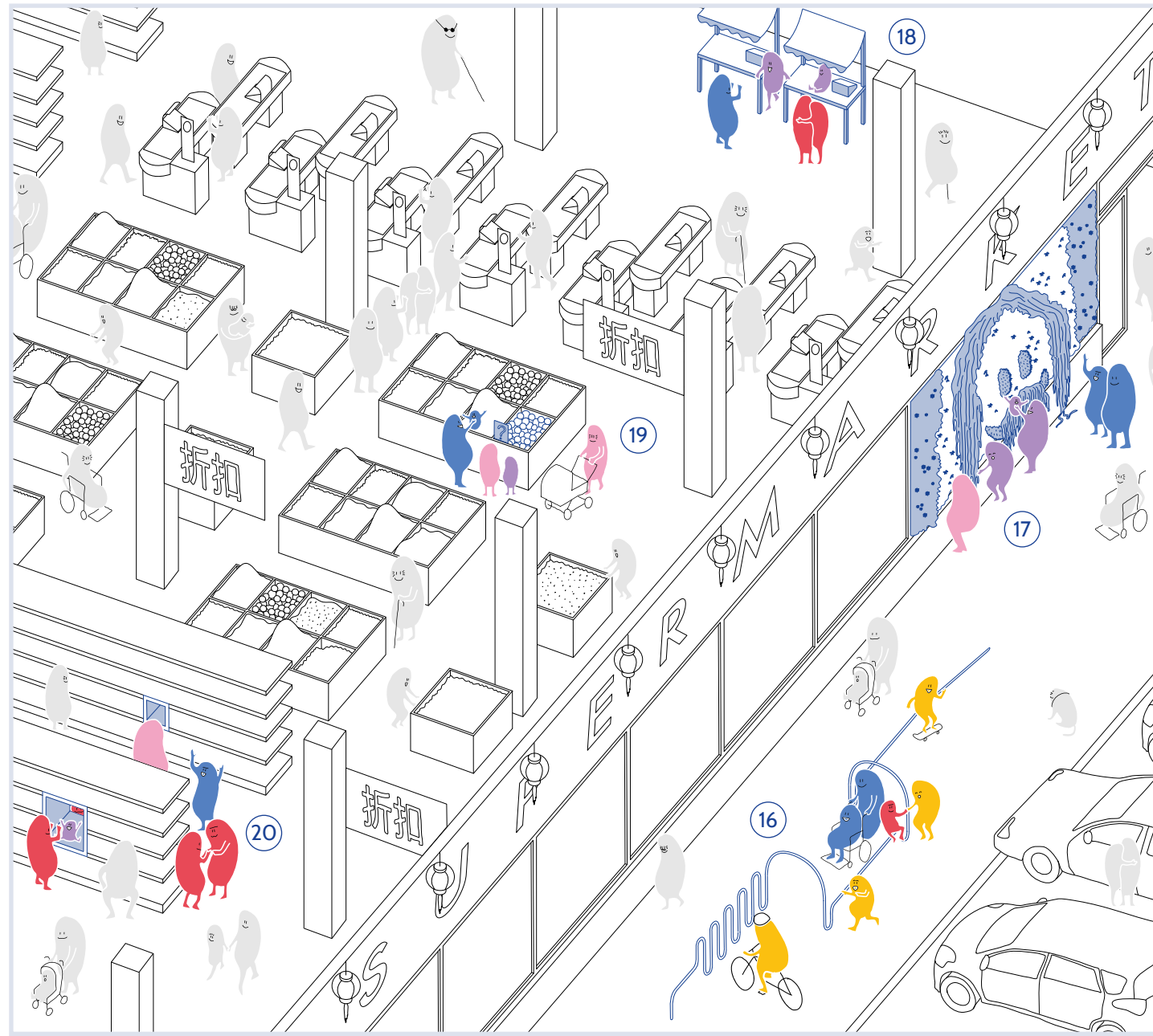
## SPACE 4

# Supermarket

Supermarkets are where many city residents regularly purchase food and other household supplies. As a result, supermarkets are designed primarily to provide a convenient and efficient shopping experience for consumers. Neat organisation and division of products as well as large, bright corridors are some of the common design features of supermarkets.

Keeping in mind the main objective of supermarkets, it is still possible to integrate play in ways that improve customers' experiences. As in other spaces presented in this Guide, play elements should be sensitive to existing functions. In particular, easy movement from one area of the shop to the next is very important, hence when play elements are placed directly between aisles and products, they should only encourage quick playful interactions.

Large supermarkets might have more space to allocate to prolonged play opportunities away from the aisles, for example in the entrance area. Having play elements in this area might also help brands to promote their products on sale as well as to attract young customers to return. Similarly, the outer walls and adjacent spaces (e.g., pavement, car park) of a supermarket are a stage where play elements can be introduced without interfering with existing functions.





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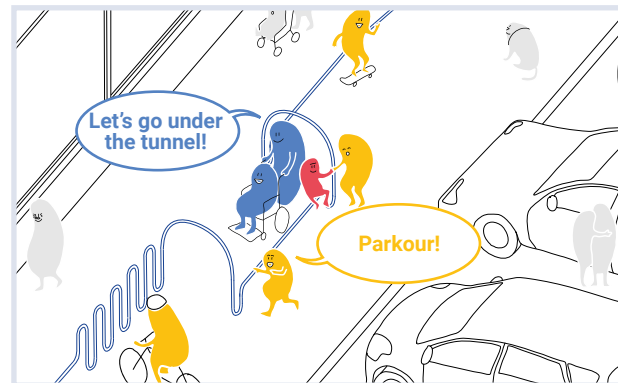
Ideally, play can be integrated in the design of needed functional elements of a supermarket. For example, the **creative bicycle rack** can be an attractive playful element that also serves other functions, such as offering a structure for parkour tricks.

A 'blind wall' can become a **living mural** that attracts new customers and that can be used by brands to promote their products.

In indoor spaces, a **pretend station** can be designed to encourage young customers to play at being vendors.

Similarly, **match the colours** is a quick game that can entertain children while their caregivers pick up fruit and vegetables.

Lastly, the **hole in the wall** is an easy-to-implement feature that can trigger smiles as two strangers suddenly see each other across aisles. In addition to the play benefits generated by all these elements, they can also help caregivers have a smoother shopping experience as their children are more entertained.

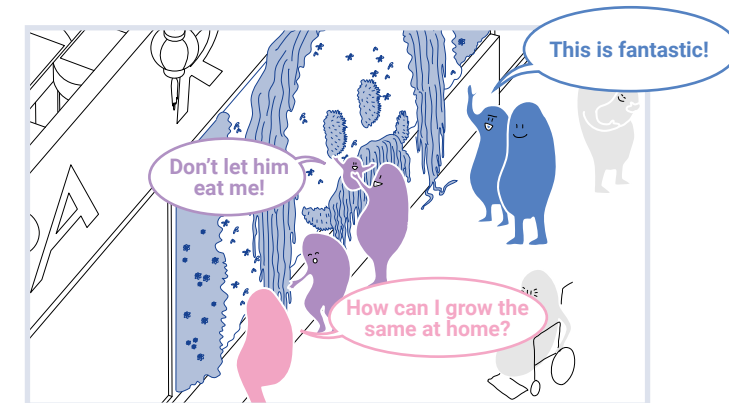


### 16 CREATIVE BICYCLE RACKS

In addition to parking your bicycle, the creative bicycle rack allows you to engage in different types of physical activities: pull up, jump over, slide under, or perhaps execute a skateboard trick (physical skills) with friends (social skills). The shape is unique, which makes it a great setting for a creative picture (creative skills).



© CatalyticAction



### 17 LIVING MURAL

The living mural features art and plant elements together. Touching a giant moustache made of plants will probably make you laugh (emotional skills), and groups of friends might want to snap pictures together (social skills). People might also be fascinated by the process that enables plants to grow on a wall and try to understand how this is possible (cognitive skills).



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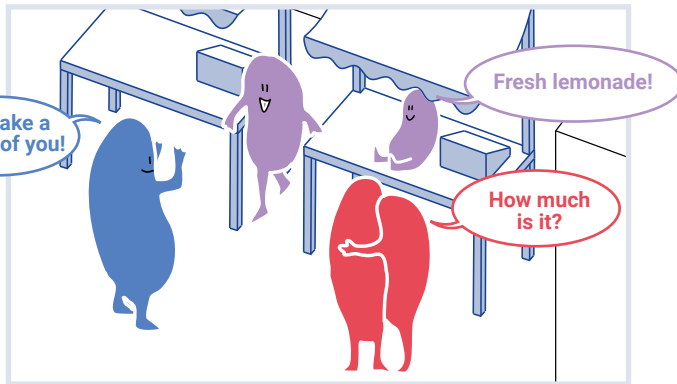
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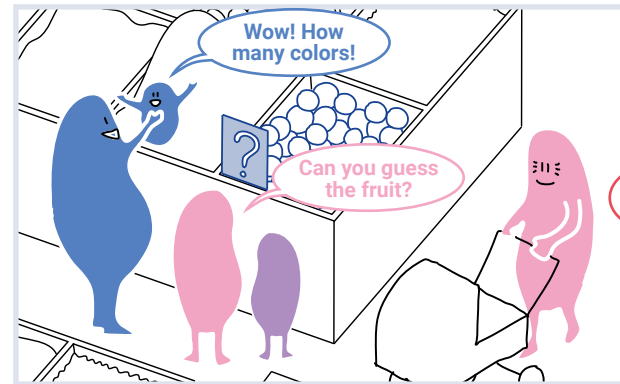
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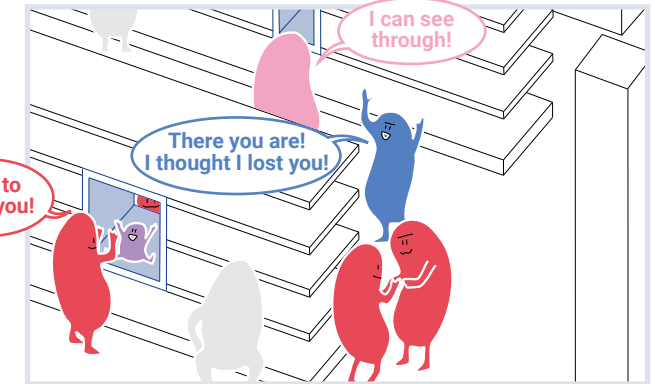
### 18 PRETEND STATION

At the pretend station, children and caregivers, in particular, can pretend to be a seller who offers their products (creative skills). The game works even better if a friend pretends to be a customer (social skills). When children or adults pretend to sell products, they will also need to figure out how much change their customers are due (cognitive skills).



### 19 MATCH THE COLORS

In the match the colours installation, you try to find all the colours noted in the illustrative labels (cognitive skills). This can be a challenge to accomplish with a friend or caregiver (social skills). You can also try to imagine how a certain piece of fruit would look in a different colour – how about a purple orange (creative skills)?



### 20 HOLE IN THE WALL

A hole in the wall to see across a shelf of products can be a fun game. You might be shocked and happy to suddenly see your loved ones in the other aisle (emotional skills). You can use these moments to start a conversation (social skills). After you discover this feature, you may want to run to see the view from the other side (physical skills).





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# EXAMPLES Supermarket

### A Supermarket Talking is Teaching

Tulsa, Oklahoma  
2016  
Too Small to Fail

### B Family Kitchen

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London, UK  
2021  
Mizzi Studio

### C Jumbo Playbus

Netherlands  
2021  
IKC Play



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Cultural facility

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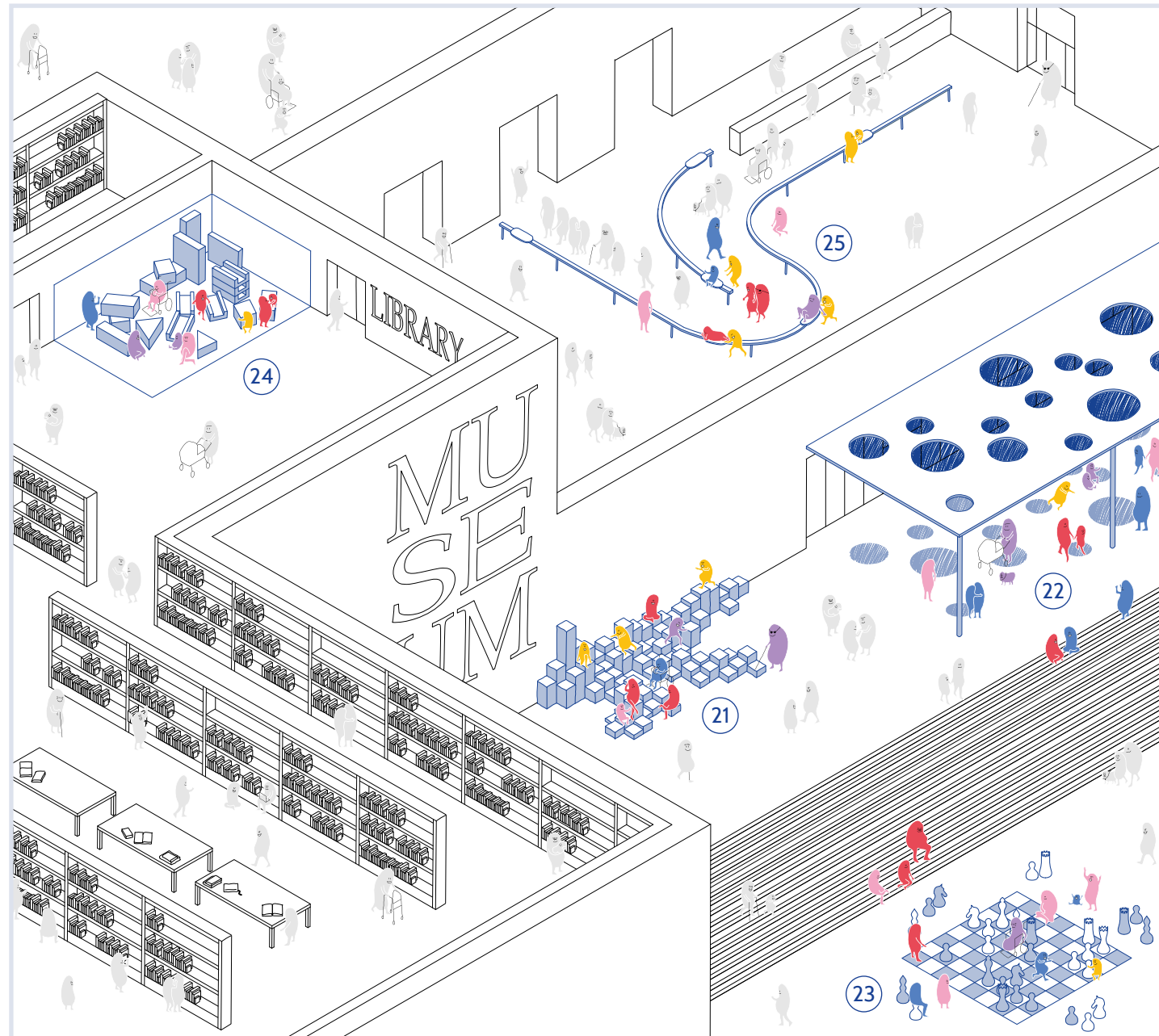
# SPACE 5 Cultural facility

Cultural facilities such as museums, libraries and theatres are important spaces in cities. They promote culture while offering spaces for social events to happen.

Such spaces often attract large crowds, including tourists keen to explore the city and its culture. In most cases, cultural facilities are also landmarks in the cityscape that people use as known places to meet up or refer to when navigating the city.

Iconic cultural facilities have abundant visitors due to their fame and because of what they offer (e.g., an exhibition of a famous artist). On the other hand, lesser-known cultural facilities can often struggle to find the right approach to attract visitors.

Offering inclusive play opportunities can address this challenge. They draw in different people, enhance visitors' experience, and encourage return visits.





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Play elements can make the outside space of a museum more attractive, perhaps also promoting an exhibition that can be visited inside through an interactive **collective sculpture**.

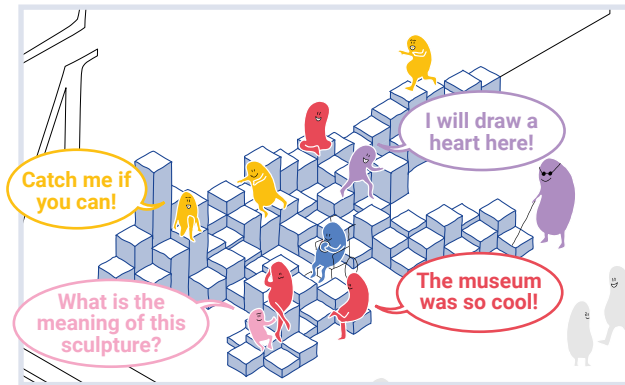
In this way, the public space in front of the museum connects with the rest of the city, not just the museum. This can generate extra income for the museum by increasing the café's footfall, for instance.

Simple elements such as the **coloured reflections** can transform a common sheltering element into something that can trigger curiosity.

The **giant chess** can attract different age groups to enjoy this space and spend time sharing a game with others.

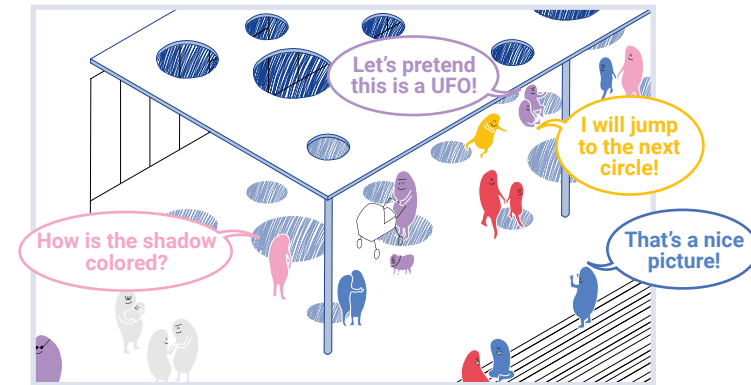
Inside the cultural facility, elements like the **loose big blocks** can offer entertainment for all age groups and an opportunity to socialise with other visitors.

The **mobile seating** can make the queue less monotonous.



### 21 COLLECTIVE SCULPTURE

The collective sculpture keeps changing as people interact with it, leaving their individual marks (creative skills). This encourages you to spend time around the sculpture and share the experience with others (social skills). Because of its dynamic nature, you are drawn to jump, climb, or crawl around the sculpture (physical skills).



### 22 COLOURED REFLECTIONS

The coloured reflections installation creates a sense of curiosity when you are surprised to see coloured shadows appear on the pavement (cognitive skills). You might imagine that you are landing on a distant planet (creative skills) and jump from one colour to the next (physical skills).



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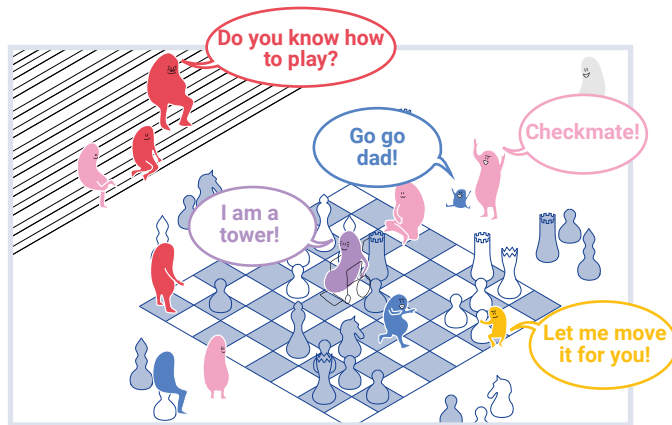
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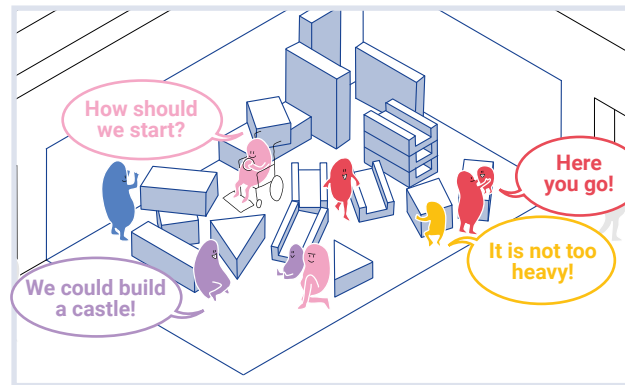
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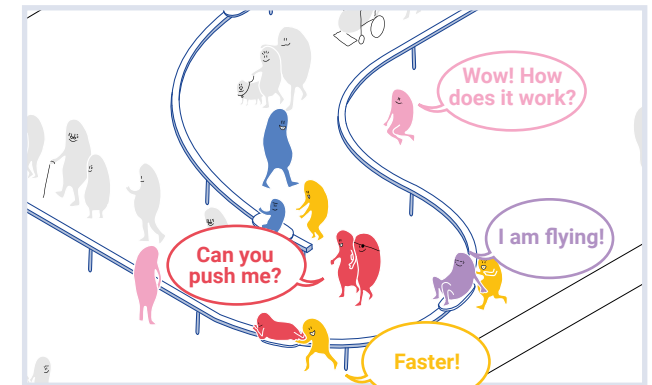
### 23 GIANT CHESS

Giant chess encourages social interaction by attracting people of all ages to stop and participate (social skills). You can share tactics with friends (cognitive skills) or simply cheer for a favourite player (emotional skills).



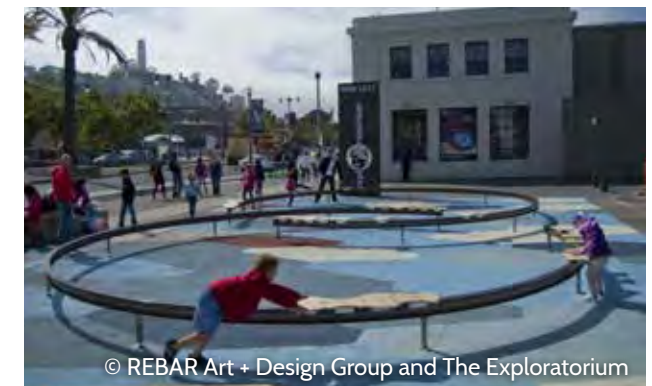
### 24 LOOSE BIG BLOCKS

Loose big blocks allow people to transform a public space by moving blocks around, stacking them up (physical skills), and building a multitude of shape configurations (creative skills). Playing with blocks can help develop spatial understanding or how objects relate to each other in space (cognitive skills).



### 25 MOBILE SEATING

The mobile seating installation features movable platforms that you can sit on and someone can push to move along the rail (social skills). This activity encourages physical movement (physical skills) and gives you the illusion of flying (creative skills).





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# EXAMPLES

## Cultural facility

**A** **The Florence Experiment**  
Florence, Italy (temporary installation)  
2018  
Carsten Höller & Stefano Mancuso

**B** **TransBorda**  
Rio De Janeiro, Brazil  
2018  
Estúdio Chão

**C** **Play and Learn Library**  
Philadelphia, USA  
2018  
DIGSAU



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Residual space

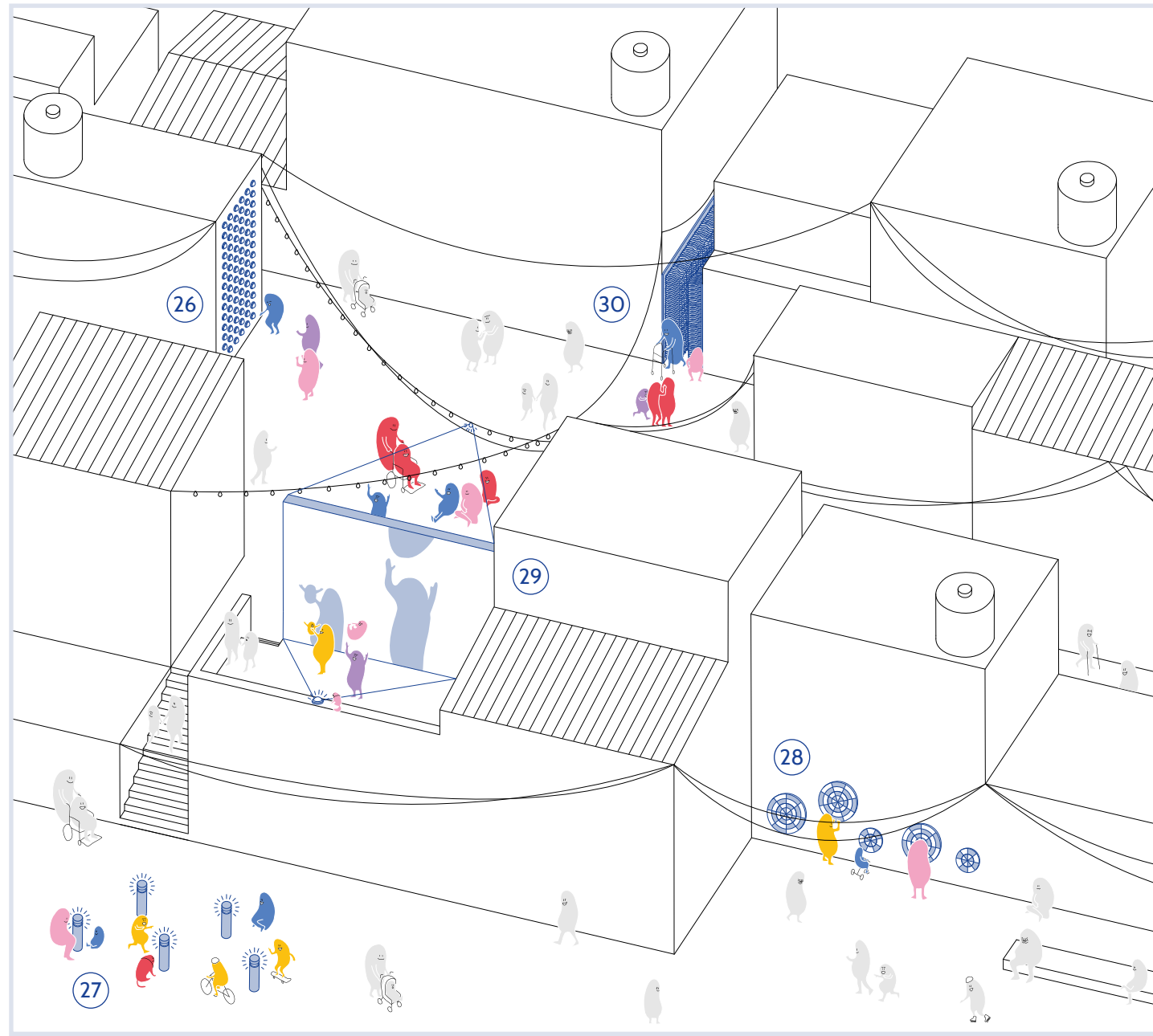
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# SPACE 6 Residual space

Residual spaces are defined in this Guide as spaces that result from the multi-layered growth of cities. For example, an awkwardly shaped open area in the middle of a densely built historical neighbourhood. Or a large sidewalk where the pedestrian flow only takes up a third of its width.

These spaces differ from most spaces presented in this Guide because they are not designed spaces. They can be seen more as opportunities to be found in the existing fabric of a city. What often characterises residual spaces is their small size and, in many cases, awkward shape. For this reason, the play elements need to find creative ways to fit into the existing space without removing its current use.

In some cases, introducing a new function to these spaces can remove negative uses. A residual space that is used for fly-tipping or illegal parking can be rehabilitated into a space that is cared for by the community. This is likely to happen if the space is turned into an attractive location for people to play, relax and meet each other.





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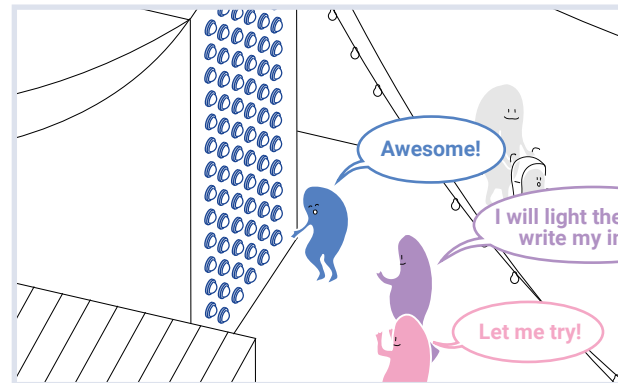
Elements that can work very well in residual spaces are those that take up very limited floor area, such as interventions on vertical surfaces. For example, the **real-time light interaction** allows people to change the lights by using their smartphone. This would allow everyone to leave their own mark on the wall and contribute to the character of the space for some time. It also makes people stay in this space for a bit longer, hence generating a space for encounter.

Similarly, the **message bollard** features a digital screen where messages can be written using a smartphone. These features improve the lighting and overall safety of the area.

Low-tech elements such as the **spinning circles** offer a quick play opportunity that triggers cognitive skills through visual illusions.

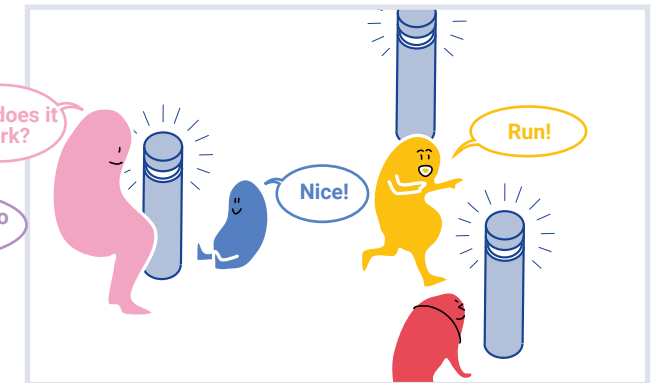
Another element that is easy to implement is the **shadows wall**, which encourages people to create shadow shapes using their hands and body.

A narrow secondary passage can be transformed into a **width distortion** where the experience of walking across this element will trigger a variety of emotions.



### 26 REAL TIME LIGHT INTERACTION

Passing in front of a wall of dozens of coloured lights can be an exciting experience (emotional skills). You can send your own design to the light wall (creative skills) or try to interpret the meaning of what was left by another person (cognitive skills).



### 27 MESSAGE BOLLARD

With their interactive screens, these elements stimulate you to leave your own message (creative skills) by sending it from a smartphone. You might also find a meaningful message left by someone before you (social skills), or an intricate one that you struggle to understand (cognitive skills).



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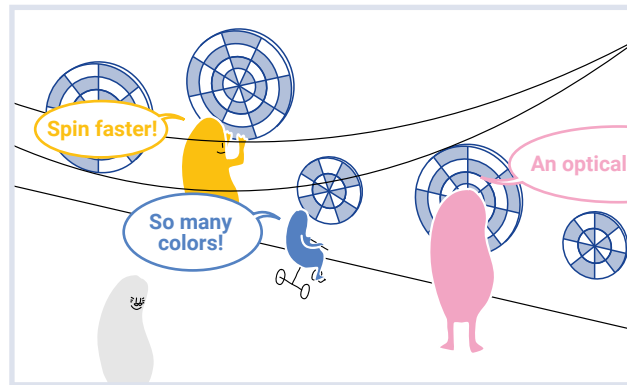
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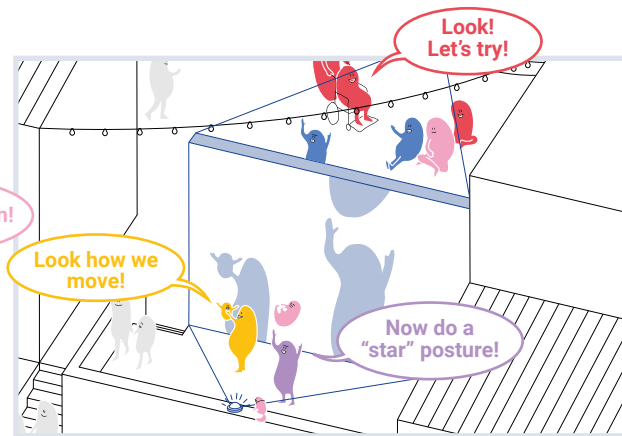


### 28 SPINNING PANELS

Spinning circles is an element that, when spun quickly (physical skills), creates a visual illusion that will trick your mind (cognitive skills). You can ask a friend to guess what will happen next when you spin one of the circles (cognitive skills, social skills).



© CatalyticAction

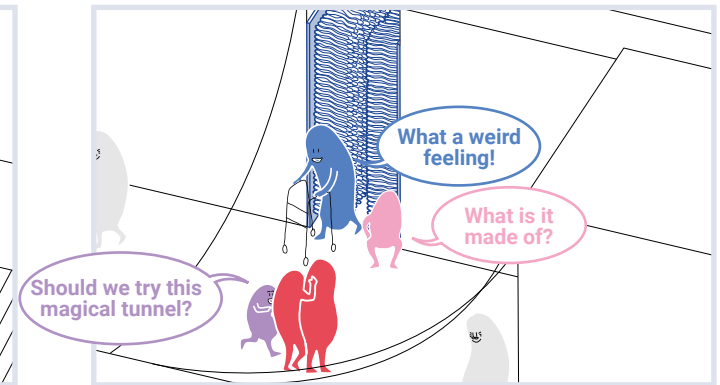


### 29 SHADOWS WALL

Shadows wall is a fun game that requires creative skills, when, for instance, you are trying to form the shape of an animal using your hands. There might be someone watching who will want to learn from you how to make the same animal (social skills). You can also just move your body (physical skills) and admire how your shadow changes on the wall.



© Rafael Lozano-Hemmer / Mariana Yañez



### 30 WIDTH DISTORTION

The width distortion installation can turn a narrow alley into a fun sensorial experience, where you need to squeeze yourself (physical skills) to walk between hundreds of rubber tentacles. You could pretend to be passing through the stomach of a monster (creative skills) or share this adventure with a friend or family member (social skills).



© Les Astronautes / EXMURO arts publics



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Residual space

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# EXAMPLES

## Residual space

- (A) One Green Mile**  
Mumbai, India  
2022  
MVRDV & StudioPOD
- (B) Kohima smart city**  
Kohima, India  
2021  
Kohima Smart City Development Limited
- (C) Mirador 70**  
Venezuela, Caracas  
2015  
Maan & Grupo Talca



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## CASE STUDY

### orizzontale

# Civico Civico LURT

Transforming abandoned building into a social, educational and cultural centre

#### Location:

Quartiere Corce, Rieti, Italy

#### Year(s):

In progress (ground floor and first floor completed)

#### Leading organisations:

Client: Servizio Cristiano, Rieti – Istituto Valdese;  
Architects: orizzontale - Collettivo di Architetti

#### Partners & Stakeholders involved:

Flora La Sita - Architect; Emanuele Piccardo -  
Architect and Curator of LURT(Laboratorio Umano di  
Rigenerazione Territoriale);  
Raffele Puci - Building contractor; Roberto Bucceri -  
Building contractor; Salvatore di Termini - Blacksmith

*Text written by Giuseppe Grant*



The main parts of the spatial intervention include interior redesign into open-plan, flexible space and expanding the civic activities into the street

© orizzontale



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Residual space



© Emanuela Piccardo



Participatory design and building workshops connected residents to the previously neglected place  
© Flora La Sita

## How to turn a strikingly private, deteriorating, and abandoned space into a place for collective use, learning and socialising?

In collaboration with the Riesi Christian Service, orizzontale tested an experimental mode of spatial intervention for the design of Civico Civico to encourage, along with the physical transformation of the building, the creation of new perspectives and relationships between people and places.

Riesi is a small town in central Sicily, once a granary and mine and now an inland area suffering from depopulation, deprivation, and marginalisation. Against this backdrop is Civico Civico – the revitalisation of a property confiscated from a mafia boss that has fallen into neglect and oblivion.

Play was used both as the approach to designing, and as the design outcome. The property was renovated through a two-week collective construction, in which the designers worked with local workers, residents and young professionals. Craftmanship was the way to mobilise participant's creative and cognitive skills – learning, playing, and renovating the building at the same time.

Through play, residents started building new connections to this place that used to be marked with negative memories and events. Direct engagement in imagining and building this new play space has transformed doubtful residents into future inhabitants of Civico Civico.



Participatory activities in the new blue playground  
© Flora La Sita



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Blue street became a playground for traditional games, using horizontal and vertical plains  
© Emanuele Piccardo



© Emanuele Piccardo

In agreement with the Municipality of Rieti, the entire stretch of Via Campania, “the blue street”, has been pedestrianised and transformed into a large open-air playground.

Curved and straight white lines compose local street games and suggest possible uses, entering inside the building to continue as part of the new wooden floor. The interior has been modified by removing partitions, expanding the rooms, and increasing their capacity. Urban-scale furniture elements inhabit the indoor and outdoor space, functioning as seats, game props, bleachers, and car bollards.

The colour blue is locally used for parking place demarcation. It signals that this is a place for the public, for stopping and getting together. It is also a way to indicate change and transformation. Various social interactions are supported by the flexible furniture: sports stands for watching games and public lectures, stalls that could be assembled in different ways, benches and tables for community cooking and dining.

The project is just the beginning of an urban regeneration process that aims to encourage Rieti's youth to experience their town. Civico Civico was envisaged as a community centre for the education of young people, as well as a cultural and social centre for several local organisations.



Wooden furniture supports different uses for the space, stimulating different generations and activities to grow into a cultural centre of Rieti  
© orizzontale



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**The transformation started with the physical recovery of the property and has become a tool to recover a collective and creative use of urban spaces, open meeting places and activities, and promote moments of active training, of learning crafts and of experiencing different cultures.**



Drone view of the new blue playground for traditional games  
© Gianluca Fiusco

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# SPACE 7 Office

The majority of people spends most of their work day in offices. In large cities, key central districts are often largely comprised of offices, which are not generally associated with play. Within the work environment play is often seen as a distraction.

Yet, as some companies such as LEGO and Google have shown, introducing play in an office environment can improve employees' wellbeing, creativity, collaboration, and productivity. In this space, the selection of play elements seeks to introduce play opportunities where this would not clash or disturb other office activities.

For example, introducing **coffee table games** such as foosball can make the breaks more joyful and encourage fun social interactions between colleagues.

Similarly, the **movable seating** can trigger employees and visitors' creativity and collaboration while also offering a basic furniture to relax.





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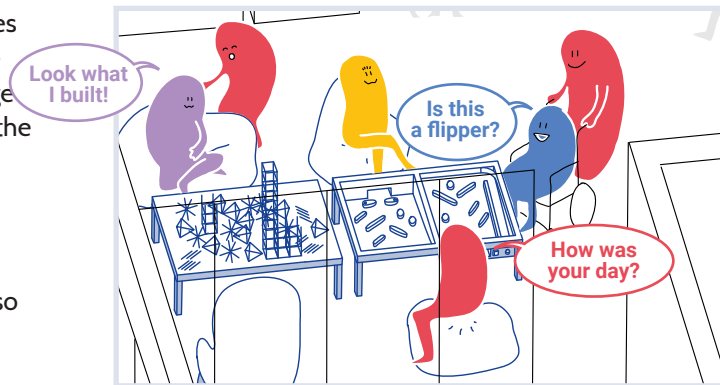
Skills: ● Physical ● Social ● Creative ● Cognitive ● Emotional  
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In some cases, play can be introduced in office spaces to establish or improve the relationship between the public and the private space. For example, some large office buildings can interact with the public through the ground floor windows and lobbies that overlook the street space.

There, companies can install **rotating images** that can offer fun entertainment for pedestrians while also promote the company's products (when desired).

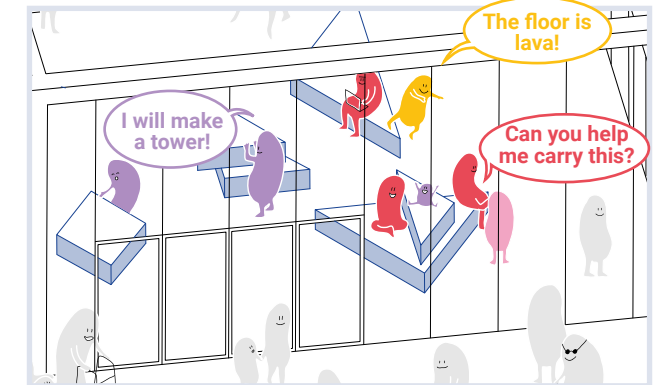
In the lobby, an **upcycled structure** can be a fun play element to explore while also showcasing the company's products.

Lastly, a QR code placed next to the office entrance can lead to a fun **augmented reality** that can offer entrainment, learning as well as promotional opportunities for the company.



### 31 COFFEE TABLE GAMES

Coffee table games offer a fun way of meeting your colleagues during a break from work (social skills). You can contribute to a collective piece of art by adding your signature (creative skills). You can also play a game such as foosball (physical skills) or have fun by cheering for your colleagues (emotional skills).



### 32 MOVABLE SEATING

Movable seating elements allow colleagues to build unique spaces for sitting and interacting (social skills). You can move the furniture around (physical skills) and assemble them in the shape you like best (creative skills). The pieces can also be designed as a puzzle so that you could work together with others to solve it (cognitive skills).



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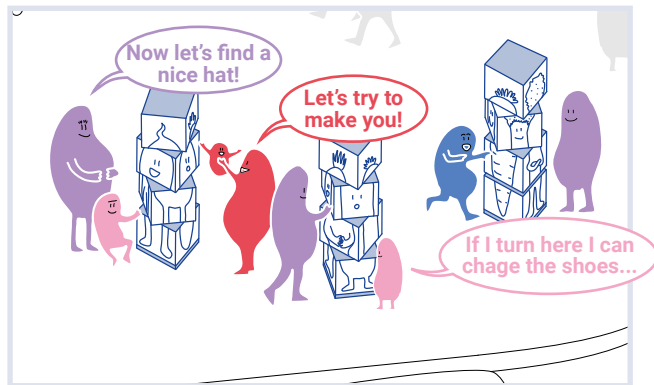
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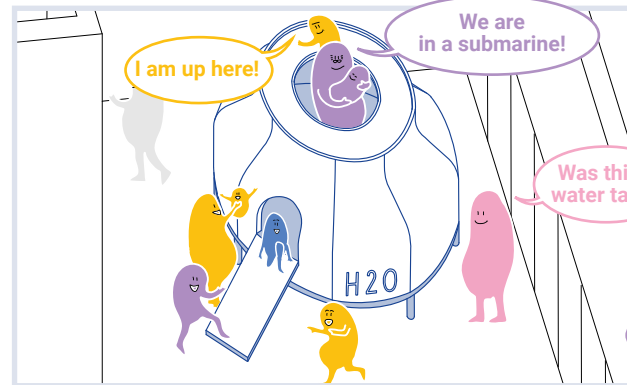
Skills: ● Physical ● Social ● Creative ● Cognitive ● Emotional  
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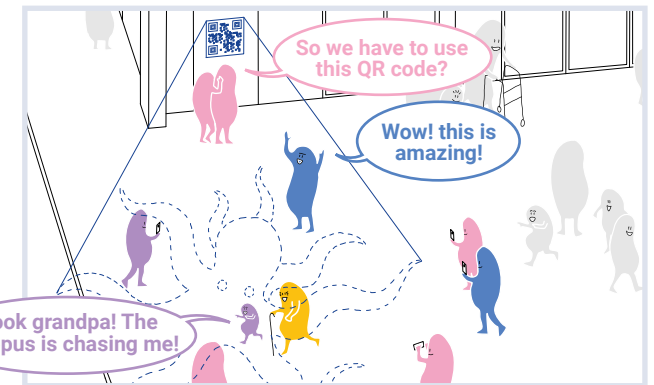
### 33 ROTATING IMAGES

Using the rotating images installation, you can try to imagine new compositions (creative skills) or to identify the images created by spinning the pieces (cognitive skills). You can have fun matching figures in unusual ways (emotional skills), which would also alter the other 3 sides of the cube, hence presenting a funny surprise for the person on the other side (social skills).



### 34 UPCYCLED STRUCTURES

Upcycled structures can engage your curiosity when you see an object outside of its usual context (cognitive skills). You might also imagine yourself in front of a submarine or a spaceship (creative skills), and it might surprise you when venturing inside (emotional skills). You can run around it or climb it to explore its different sides (physical skills).



### 35 AUGMENTED REALITY

The augmented reality element can transport you to a fictional space with the aid of technology (creative skills). You might wonder how the images are created (cognitive skills), be moved by the unexpected scene (emotional skills), or run between the virtual elements, almost interacting with them (physical skills).





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## Office

**A Inteltion Office**  
Bangkok Thailand  
2014  
Onion

**B Studio Olassan Office**  
Beirut, Lebanon  
2016  
Studio Olassan



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# SPACE 8 Hospital

Efficiency is key for most of the spaces within a hospital. This translates into many design choices, including corridors for quick circulation, well organised and separate users' circulation (patients, visitors, doctors), and more. In this context, it may seem counterintuitive to integrate play. Yet, play can enhance the experience of users of such spaces in a variety of ways.

Of course, when integrating play in a hospital setting it is very important to make sure that the interactions of users with the play elements do not clash with the efficient operation of the hospital. It is also worth considering that hospitals are associated with both joyful and sad feelings, hence the play elements need to create playful interactions that are sensitive towards users who may be experiencing feelings of sadness and worry.

The main benefit that play can bring to a hospital is to improve the mental wellbeing of its users: patients (especially when hospitalised for many days) and visitors. A key benefit for visitors is that play can improve their waiting time at the hospital, particularly when they have to wait for many hours. Children can highly benefit from this, as it is often challenging for them to be entertained during long sedentary waiting times.





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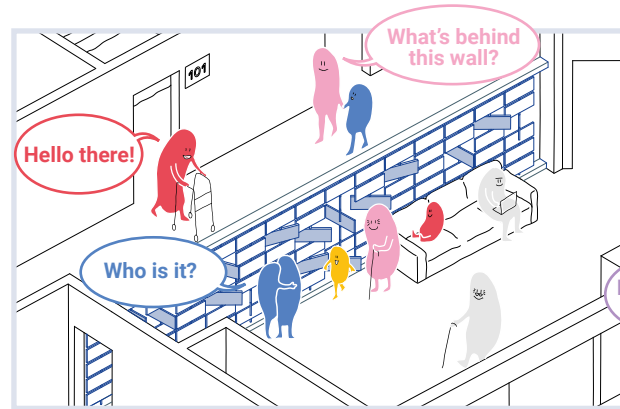
The **dynamic partition**, for example, is a discreet element that can function as separation between a waiting room and a corridor while also offering tactile and visual entertainment.

Similarly, the **sound pipes** are a curious element that offers opportunities for learning and for the imagination.

The **spinning cubes** can easily be integrated in a balustrade, performing a safety function as well as entertaining children.

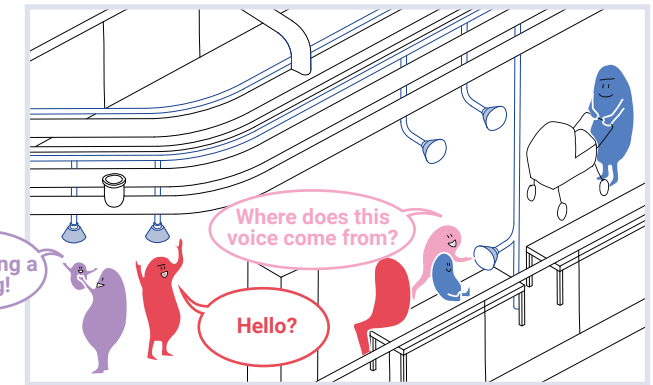
The **swing benches** are a pleasant way to sit while waiting for someone.

The **slide** is an exciting way to move between floors, especially for children.



### 36 DYNAMIC PARTITION

The dynamic partition element encourages you to interact with its small panels that can rotate on themselves. You can simply spin the panels (physical skills) or also try to create original configurations (cognitive skills). You might see people on the other side and start up a conversation (social skills).



### 37 SOUND PIPES

The sound pipes installation can be used in many ways. You can whisper something into it and let a friend hear you at the other end of the pipe (social skills). You can listen to a story which plays when you place your ear on one of the cones (cognitive skills).



© Traverso-Vighy Architetti / Alberto Sinigaglia



© Studio Weave

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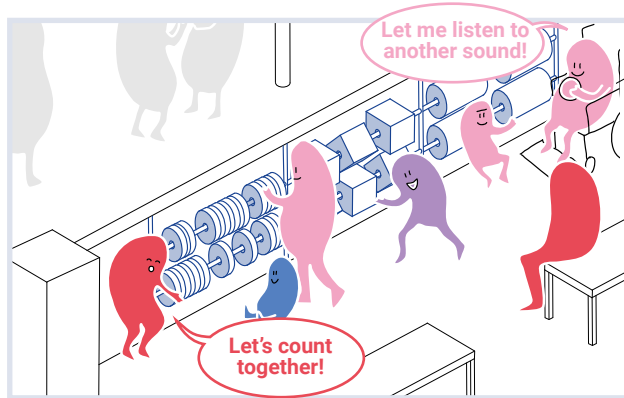
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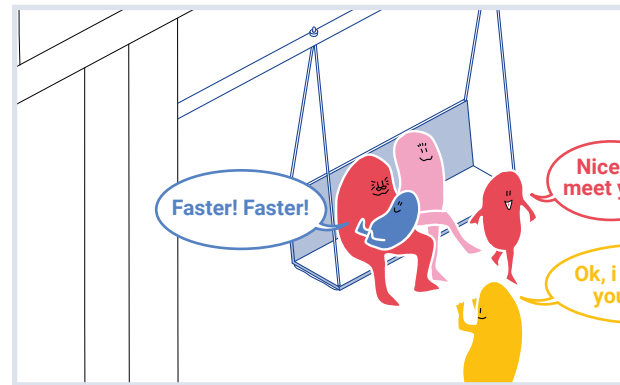
Skills: ● Physical ● Social ● Creative ● Cognitive ● Emotional  
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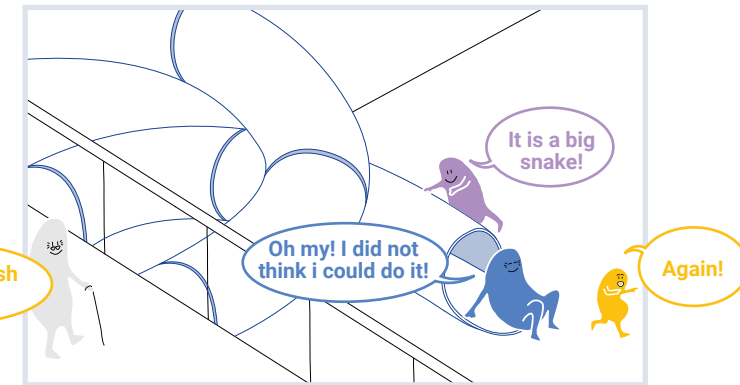
### 38 SPINNING CUBES

Spinning cubes is a simple yet beautiful game with many possible configurations. The cubes can be painted with figures, numbers, letters, etc. If there are letters displayed, you can compose a word (cognitive skills). Spinning the cubes can be hard for young children (physical skills), who will get great satisfaction when succeeding (emotional skills).



### 39 SWING BENCH

You can sit on the swing bench and swing slowly while talking to a friend (social skills). As the bench is large and heavy, some might find it challenging to swing alone (physical skills). Swinging can also induce a sense of relaxation (emotional skills).



### 40 SLIDE

You can use the slide element instead of the stairs to quickly go down to the ground floor. You might be scared at first but after a few rounds you will develop confidence (emotional skills). Getting encouraged by friends will surely help (social skills). Using the slide will require you to go up the stairs many times (physical skills).





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## Hospital

**(A)** **EKH Children Hospital**  
Samut Sakhon, Thailand  
2019  
Integrated Field

**(B)** **Experience Juliana Children's Hospital**  
The Hague, Netherlands  
2015  
Thinker Imagineers

**(C)** **Randall Children's Hospital**  
Portland, Oregon, USA  
2012  
ZGF Architects LLP



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Park

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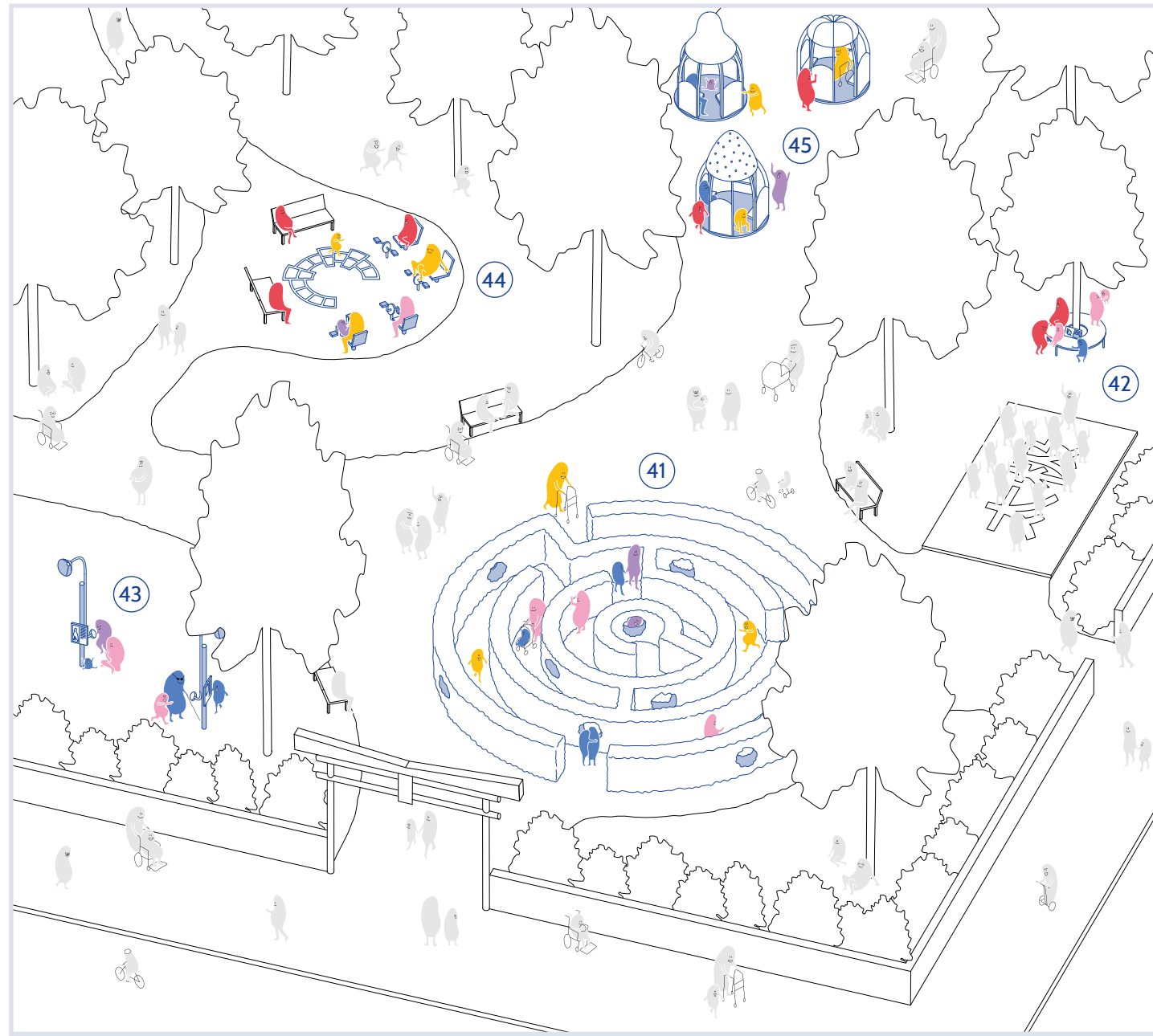
# SPACE 9 Park

Public parks are valuable spaces for cities, in particular for their capacity to improve people's health and wellbeing. The greenery of parks absorbs pollution and contributes to a better climate by reducing the temperature in the summer months, etc.

Parks are also important spaces where residents exercise, meet friends or simply relax under the shade of a tree. In large and crowded cities, parks are often the only green open space accessible to people.

Play can attract more people to benefit from parks, as it offers more opportunities for social interactions, and highlights the natural features of parks through playful learning.

Play elements in this city space can promote the interaction between people and nature (plants and animals). This improves people's awareness of, and sensitivity towards, the importance of the natural environment for their wellbeing, while simultaneously contributing to climate resilience and action.





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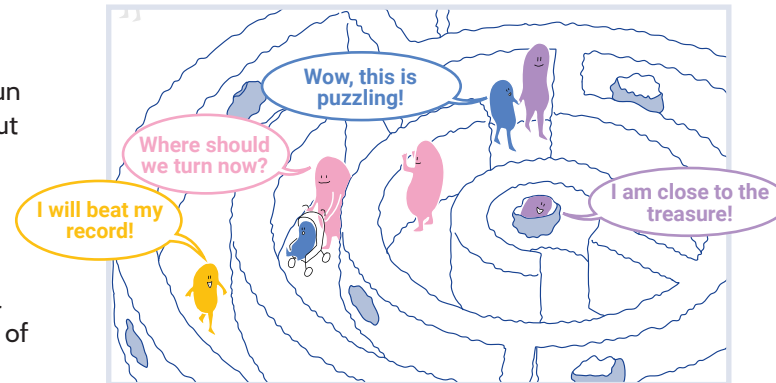
The selected elements benefit from the wide spaces often found in parks. For example, the **green labyrinth** transforms a large area of the park into a fun experience for all. This element transforms throughout the years and seasons, hence also representing an element to learn about nature.

Other elements, such as the **plants trail** and the **listening aid** are more explicitly designed for playful learning as people can learn about the characteristics of the plants and animals (e.g., birds) found in the park.

Finally, all selected play elements encourage intergenerational play and group play in general.

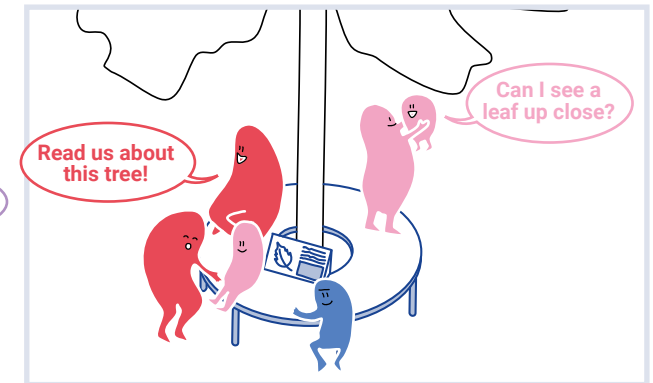
For example, the element **sit and pedal** offers an opportunity for the elderly to do a physical activity while their grandchildren are playing nearby.

Similarly, the element **all go round** encourages people to interact because collaboration is needed to fully enjoy the game.



### 41 GREEN LABYRINTH

The green labyrinth is a fun maze, where you can use critical thinking skills to try to find the correct path (cognitive skills) and get excited when you unexpectedly meet another player (emotional skills). You can work with friends to get out faster (social skills), pretending there is a monster following you (creative skills).



### 42 PLANTS TRAIL

Using the plants trail, you can learn facts about the trees in the park (cognitive skills), either by reading on your own or with friends (social skills). It can be very rewarding to be able to identify elements in nature (emotional skills). This exploration can also encourage physical activity as you move across the park looking for the trees and plants you are learning about (physical skills).



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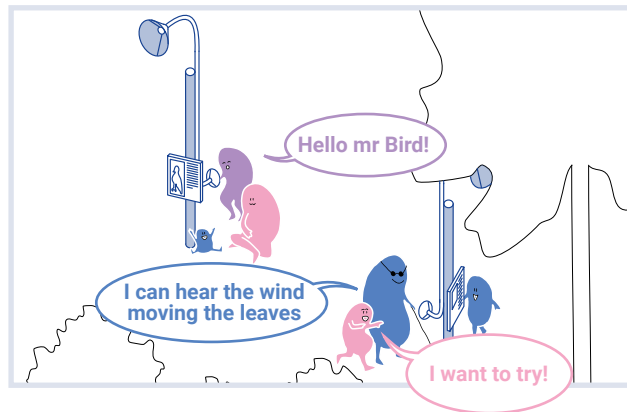
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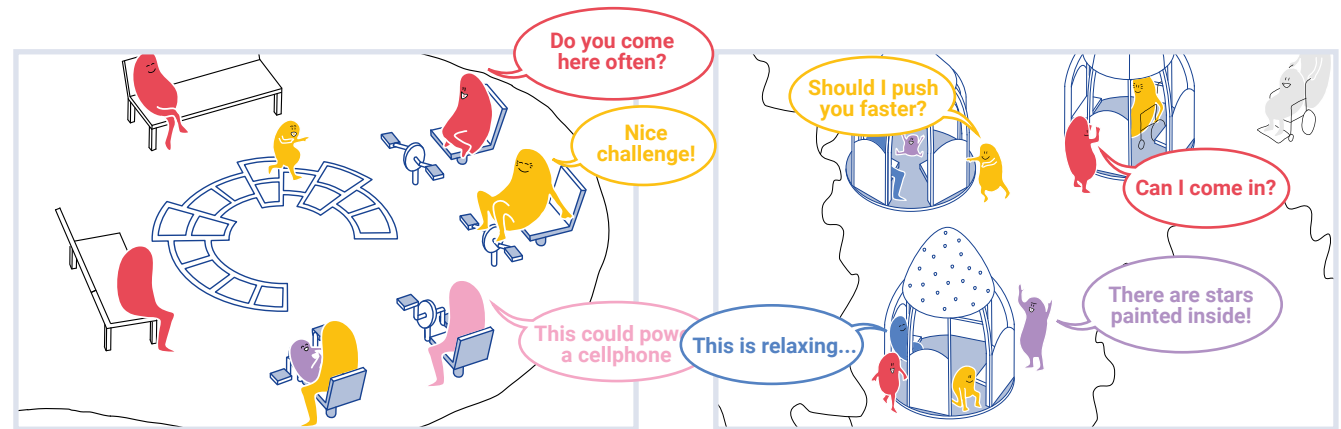
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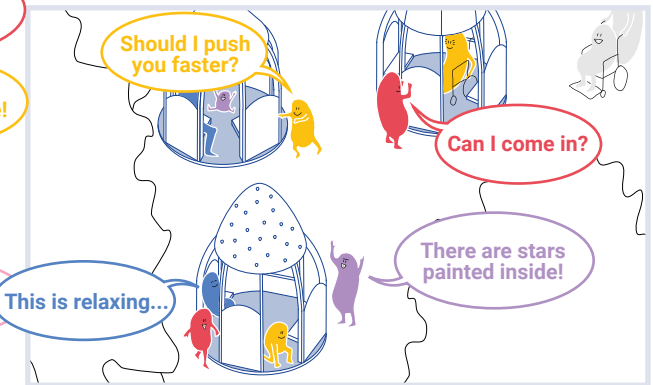
### 43 LISTENING AID

The listening aid installation allows you to listen to many otherwise imperceptible sounds that come from the branches of the trees (emotional skills). You can try to visually locate the source of the sounds (cognitive skills). You might try to imagine what a chirping bird is saying (creative skills) and share with friends about what they have heard (social skills).



### 44 SIT AND PEDAL

The sit and pedal installation is suitable for multiple age groups to participate in pedalling (physical skills). As you pedal, you can chat with friends (social skills), or pretend to be racing in the Tour de France (creative skills). You can be happy to beat your previous record for most spins in a minute (emotional skills).



### 45 ALL GO ROUND

You can simply sit inside the “all go round” structure and relax while chatting with friends (social skills), or you can dare to stay inside as someone spins the structure from the outside (physical skills). The inside of each structure is decorated differently; for example, in one of them, you can imagine that you are under a sky full of stars (creative skills).





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**A** **West End Square**  
Dallas, Texas, USA  
2020  
James Corner Field Operations with Parks for  
Downtown Dallas

**B** **Prossima Apertura**  
Quartiere Toscanini, Aprilia, Italy  
2019 - 2021  
orizzontale

**C** **Karm Al Arees Public Safe Park**  
Basta, Lebanon  
2021  
CatalyticAction





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# CASE STUDY

## Crossboundaries

# Songzhuang community park

Play as an approach to creating new public spaces in China

### Location:

Xiaopu Village, Songzhuang, Tongzhou, Beijing, China

### Year(s):

2020-2021

### Leading organisation:

Architect: Crossboundaries, Beijing, China

### Partners & Stakeholders involved:

Client: Beijing Songzhuang Investment Development Co., Ltd; established by the local government to execute this project

*Text written by Binke Lenhardt*



Four parts of the Community Park (1) Welcoming room, (2) Social room, (3) Play room and (4) Exercise room © Crossboundaries



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Park



The park before the intervention  
© BAI Yu



The park after the intervention  
© BAI Yu

### Crossboundaries have used design for playful learning in their efforts to revitalise a linear streetscape adjacent to a parking lot in a contested urban area into a place of connection.

The project is located in Songzhuang, a neighbourhood where the local population lives side-by-side with artists who settled here, escaping the fast-paced city life. This community park is an example of how play can bring diverse people together.

The design concept is based on simple design elements: a perforated grey brick wall with integrated seating in designated areas, alternating with a double lower layer of perforated Corten steel, and an intersecting bright yellow pathway strip. A play with borders and boundaries creates a set of four outdoor “rooms” that offer different gathering opportunities within the park. The open spaces of park areas are an ideal platform for a playful approach to enclosures and partitions.



© BAI Yu



Mirrors and low walls of the Welcoming room support different uses and types of play  
© BAI Yu



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Social, cognitive, and emotional skills are stimulated by layers of simple spatial elements – pathways and walls

© BAI Yu

① The **Welcoming room** opens up a semi-circular space defined by its surrounding angular brick walls in combination with large mirror surfaces. In the morning, it's a place for Tai Chi and fan dance, while in the evening, it attracts groups of rhythmic dancers. Occasionally, dog owners with their beloved pets walk along the bright yellow asphalt loop that connects the rooms. Mirrors are used in many creative ways, such as for displaying local artists' products or playing pretend games.

② The **Social room** features long benches along brick walls, inviting Mahjong players and their audience. Groups of elderly ladies chat in the shadow of the trees, while grandparents look after babies. On the weekends, younger people take selfies in front of the grey brick and Corten steel backdrop with drinks from the café across the road. Besides social skills, this room also activates emotional and cognitive skills.

③ The **Play room** is on the corner to the extending park. It consists of layered brick walls which form a more confined space in yellow, with differently sized openings for peek-a-boo, hide-and-seek, and connecting speaking tubes for shouting and singing. It invites a range of interactions among children, and between children and their caregivers, supporting the development of cognitive (identifying the size of different spaces, colour density, sound travel), emotional (excitement through sound) and social (inside-outside relationship) skills.



Play room invites for creation of games, instead of prescribing ways of playing

© BAI Yu



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④ The **Exercise room** entails the yellow loop track inside the park area. It is an open-air gym in the middle of green meadows. It invites people of all generations to use their physical skills. A favourite local game is Jianzi, a group game with a shuttlecock made of a small disc and a plume of feathers; it has to be kicked and kept up in the air.

**Songzhuang Micro Community Park is an exemplary intergenerational public space, bringing to life new thinking about the potential of public spaces in the urban and geo-political context of Beijing.**

It demonstrates how paths and walls of various heights can activate playful mindsets and motivate people to spend more time in contact with nature.



Activating natural areas to diversify interactions and stimulate play in and with nature

© BAI Yu

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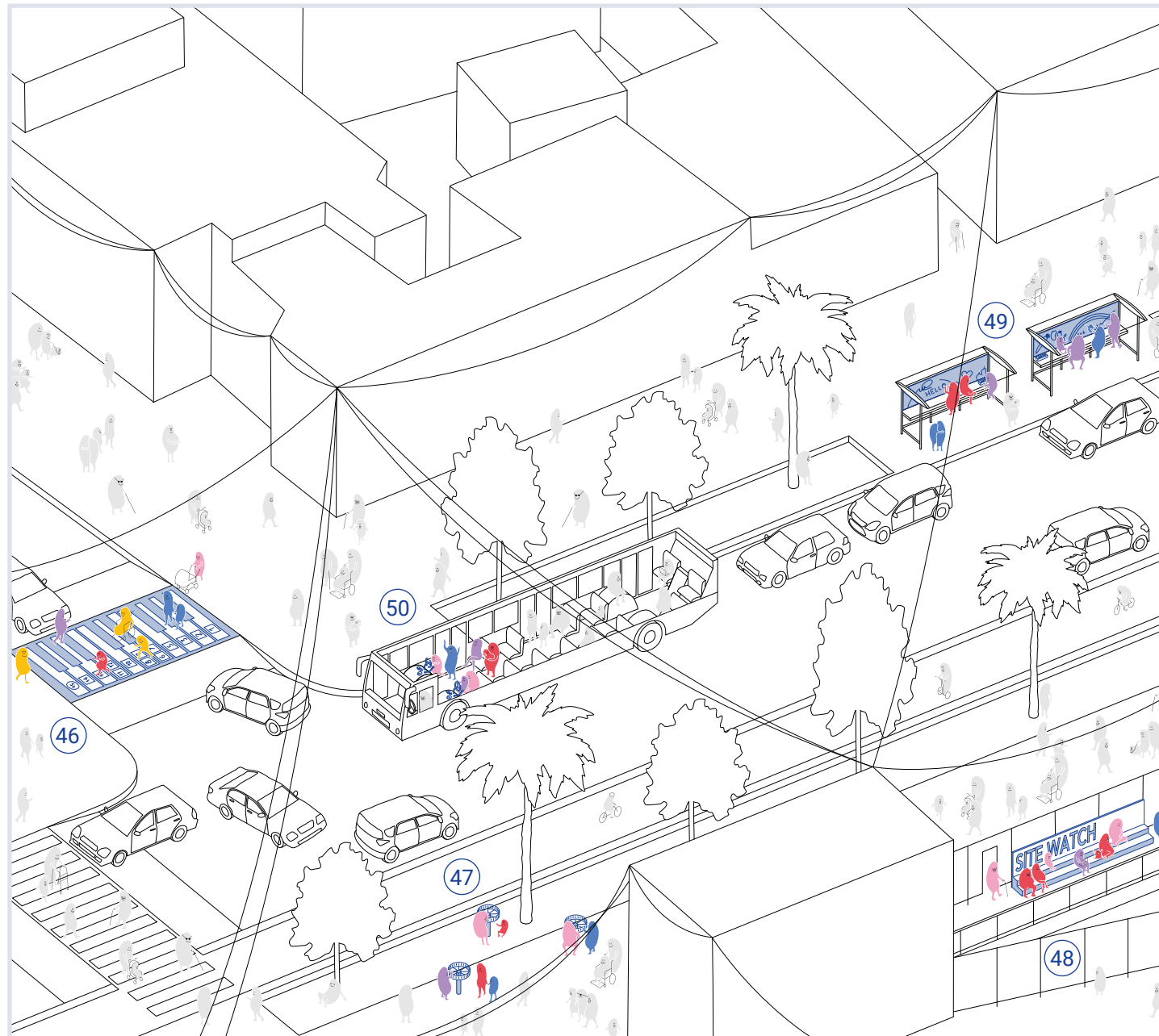
# SPACE 10 Street

Streets are important parts of a city's public infrastructure. They occupy considerable space within the public realm and are often designed to prioritise movements of motor vehicles across the city. In better cases, streets designs seek to maximise pedestrian mobility and more sustainable forms of transports (e.g., cycling, public transport).

In densely built neighbourhoods (including informal settlements), streets are often the only public space available, which highlights their importance. In this context, the street becomes an extension of the house and the place where public life manifests.

As a key public space in cities, streets need to be safe and welcoming for a wide range of users. Play can help achieve this vision as it can improve the street space in different ways, making the experience of its users more engaging, fun, and safe.

When integrating play in the streetscape, safety must remain the top priority, especially when combining play props with streets elements that are also used by motor vehicles.





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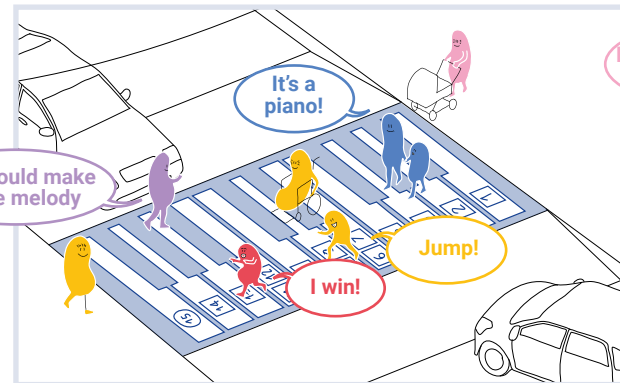
The **mission control board** can entertain young children while they ride the bus, as they pretend to be the bus driver.

The **fun pedestrian crossing** can encourage pedestrians to use safer zebra crossings. Adding colour or tiles to the street surface can trigger new activities, as in the case of CIVICO CIVICO by orizzontale (p.58).

The **zoetrope** can offer a quick moment of play and learning for pedestrians who are waiting outside a shop. It can be installed on existing structures such as street bollards that divide the pavement space.

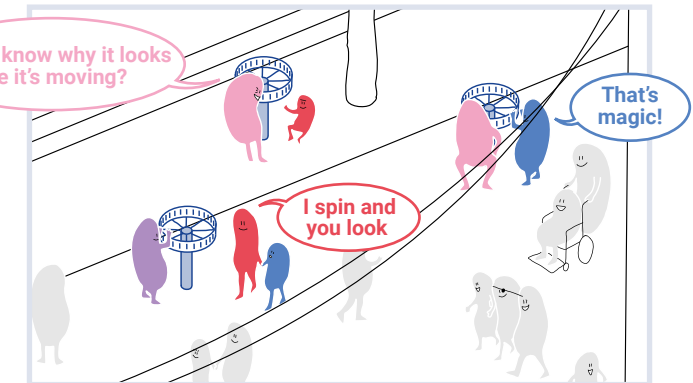
The **work watching** can enhance an activity that is found in many cities, creating a meanwhile social space.

The **chalk board** is an element that aims to trigger creativity while also making the wait for the bus more fun and interactive. These elements in the streetscape also serve as landmarks, and highly contribute to independent mobility through wayfinding.



46 FUN PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Transforming a typical street crossing into a fun pedestrian crossing makes the experience of crossing the road more fun. For example, encountering a crossing painted like piano keys can surprise you positively (emotional skills). You can also pretend to play a tune on the “keys” (creative skills) while jumping from one “piano key” to the next (physical skills).



47 ZOETROPE

A zoetrope is a cylindrical animation device that produces the illusion of motion when spun. You can observe the zoetrope together with others (social skills), as it provides multiple points for viewing. You can also challenge yourself to spin the zoetrope as fast as you can (physical skills) while also observing how the animation changes with speed (cognitive skills).



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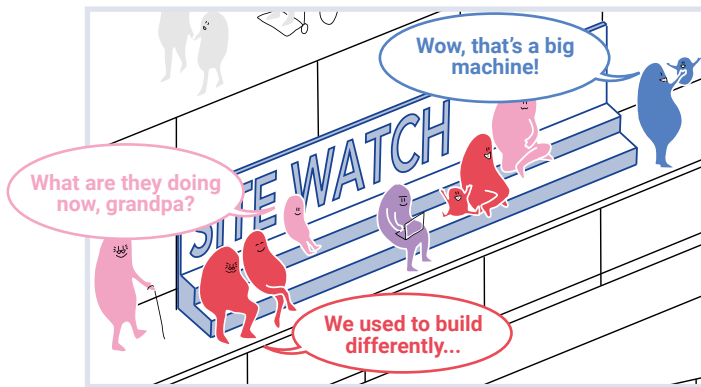
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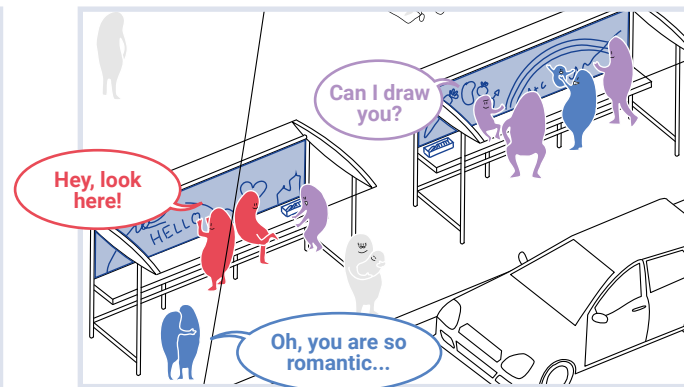
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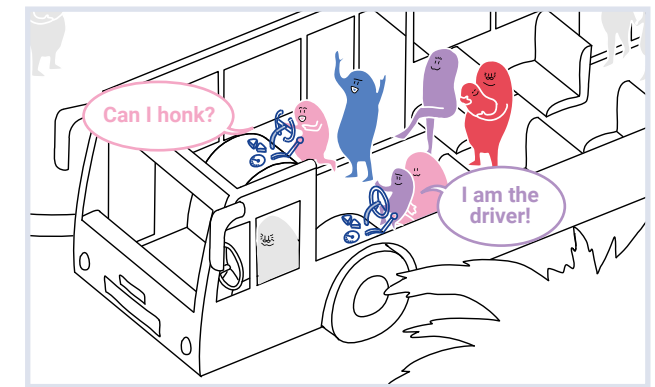
### 48 WORK WATCHING

A large seat allows you to sit with somebody to comment on the activity taking place in a neighbouring construction site (social skills). You might challenge yourself to imagine how the final building will appear once it is completed (creative skills) as well as visualising how the workers will use the materials to create specific shapes and designs (cognitive skills).



### 49 CHALK BOARD

The chalk board allows for artistic expression (creative skills) while you wait for the bus. You can write a kind message for others to read (social skills) or a joke to make someone laugh (emotional skills). Or you might prefer to draw a puzzle for others to solve (cognitive skills).



### 50 MISSION CONTROL BOARD

Installed inside a bus, the mission control board gives you the impression of driving the vehicle yourself (creative skills). Buttons generate lights and sound patterns that attract curious users (cognitive skills). You can engage with others (social skills) to figure out what sequence will activate the horn.





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**A** **Karantina Streetscape**  
Karantina, Beirut, Lebanon  
2021  
CatalyticAction

**B** **Shade Parade**  
Montréal, Canada  
2020  
Daily tous les jours

**C** **RAW Project - Escola Antoni Brusi**  
Barcelona, Spain  
2021  
Elisava Barcelona School of Design and  
Engineering

**D** **VORA: Safe Occupiable Limit for Tactical  
Public Space Extension**  
Barcelona, Spain  
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Elisava Barcelona School of Design and  
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Train station

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# SPACE 11 Train station

Train stations, like airports, bus and tram stations, are transit places. Their designs' principal aim is to keep commuters moving rapidly and smoothly, especially during peak hours with large crowds.

Despite being crowded places, stations are not places where one would expect to make new friends and interact with others in general. This is where play can offer opportunities for positive engagement between commuters and at the same time make the experience of using the station more joyful.

Play in these spaces offers a helpful distraction from boredom or discomfort that people can experience in stations while they wait for, or miss, a train.

The play elements in this space need to enable these opportunities without impeding the spatial requirements of a station (i.e., not interrupting the pedestrian flow). They should encourage positive social interactions.





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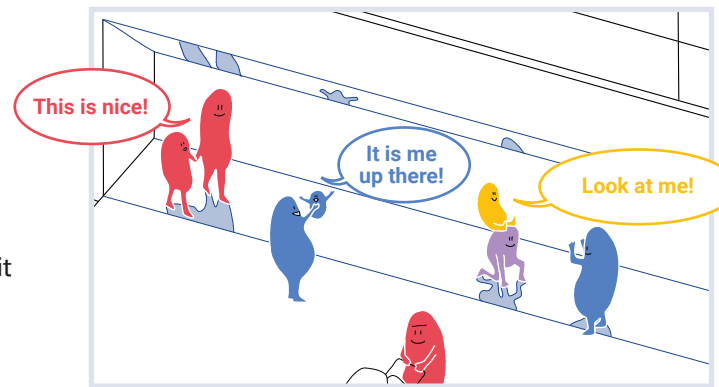
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Also, they should offer the chance for an unexpected smile, surprise, and sense of joy; like seeing one's own reflection distorted in the **mirror gate**.

The **giant crossword** is a great example of a game that does not create a barrier to crowd movements. The floor area used for this game can be used by commuters during peak hours and, at less busy times, it becomes a play surface.

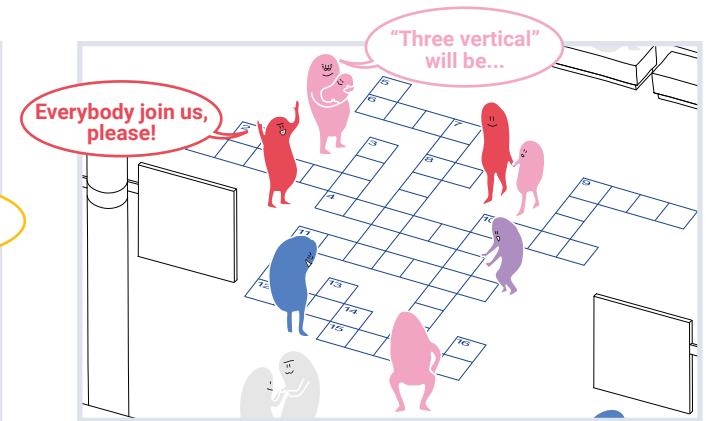
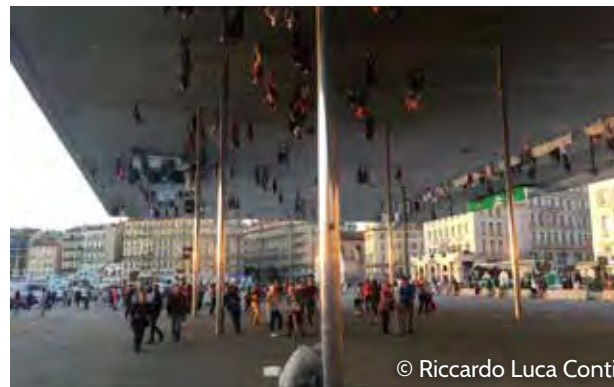
The **interactive wall** similarly uses existing spaces, thus avoiding any disturbance to people flow.

The **xylophone** and **seesaw bench** both integrate play into commonly found elements in a station, such as benches and high tables. In general, the best locations for these elements are those that do not disrupt the constant flow of commuters.



### 51 MIRROR GATE

With the mirror gate, you can laugh seeing your distorted image (emotional skills) or take videos with your friends while dancing (physical skills). When you see your body elongated, you can pretend to be a giant walking in the station (creative skills). A curious person can try to understand how such an illusion is created (cognitive skills).



### 52 GIANT CROSSWORD

With the giant crossword, you can engage your mind by guessing the words (cognitive skills). If some of the clues are too difficult, you can try to find the answer with the help of others (social skills) or just unleash your creativity to invent a new way to play the game (creative skills).



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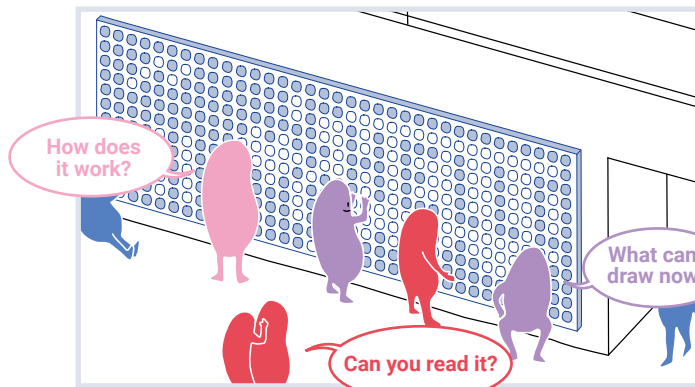
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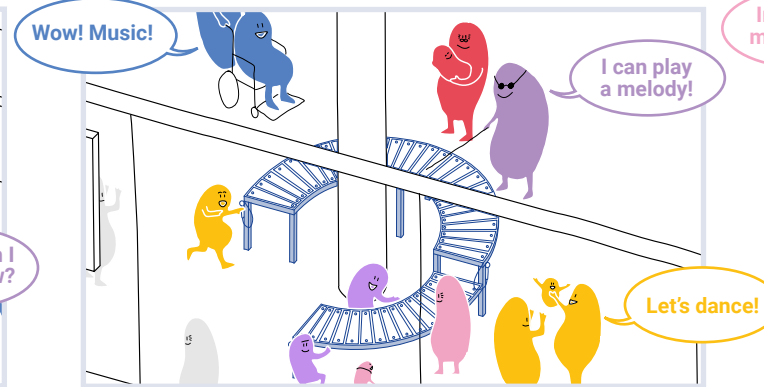


### 53 INTERACTIVE WALL

The interactive wall allows you to have fun by forming words or inventing shapes (creative skills) and to leave messages to those who will interact with the wall after you (social skills). A nice message could perhaps generate a smile for some passer-by (emotional skills).



© MA Narrative Environments, Central Saint Martins UAL

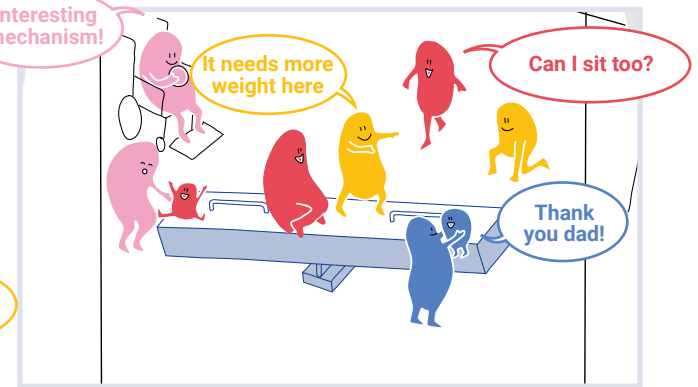


### 54 XYLOPHONE

Playing with the xylophone, you can have fun inventing new melodies (creative skills) or be pleased to recognize the songs played by others (emotional skills). You can be enthusiastic and dance to the beat (physical skills) or have fun discovering which sound is created by each key (cognitive skills).



© CatalyticAction



### 55 SEESAW BENCH

The seesaw bench needs at least two people to stay balanced, thus encouraging playful social interaction (social skills). You might also use it for balancing by standing at its centre (physical skills) or try to understand the perfect position of different weights to keep the bench perfectly horizontal (cognitive skills).



© Germaine Koh / Dani Boynton



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**A** **Transferaccelerator**  
Overvecht station, Utrecht, Netherlands  
2011  
HIK&CO

**B** **Metropolitana di Napoli**  
Naples, Italy  
2011  
Karim Rashid

**C** **Terminal and Urban Park in São Luís**  
São Luis – Maranhão, Brazil  
2018  
Naturaleza Urbana



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# SPACE 12 School

Schools are not only important for their educational role but also because of their social value to the whole community. For example, some schools offer their spaces (indoor and outdoor) for community activities after school hours and at weekends. This makes schools landmarks and cornerstones within neighbourhoods and communities, in addition to their already established institutional role (education of children and adolescents).

In many different contexts, schools already include play elements, often in their outdoor spaces. Yet, this is often in the form of conventional playground equipment and games such as football. This is not negative as such, but a more inclusive approach to integrating play elements in schools would have a wider impact on pupils and the community at large.

An inclusive approach to integrating play in schools ensures that play elements encourage all pupils to interact without generating dominance by a specific group. Inclusivity also looks at meeting the needs of people with disabilities and making sure they are not left out of play spaces and collective experiences. Play can also be used as a fun medium to teach about school subjects.





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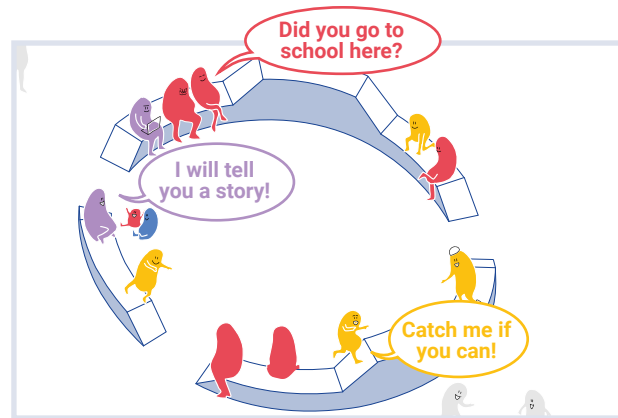
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For example, the **learning wall panels** could be installed in the school corridor and offer a playful way to learn about physics, maths, etc.

When a school decides to open its doors to the community after school hours, having multifunctional and inclusive play items becomes even more important. An element like the **funky bench** offers a functional element for the students who can sit and chat during recess and equally for the community when using the courtyard of the school (e.g., to rest during a pop-up food market set up over the weekend).

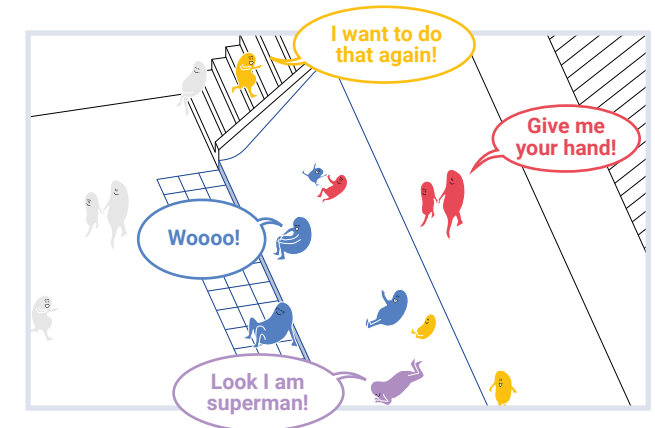
The **giant slide** is a great communal game that will offer hours of fun to many. The **multilevel basketball hoops** enable a wide range of people to play the game, including for example wheelchair users.

Schools could also extend play to the public realm immediately surrounding the school grounds and in doing so reach an even wider part of the community. For example, implementing a **history mural** on the school fence helps educate the wider community on a particular subject.



56 FUNKY BENCH

The funky bench is a seating element that encourages you to sit together with others (social skills), using its circular shape. You can also jump, run, and do creative parkour tricks (physical skills; creative skills) on the element.



57 GIANT SLIDE

The giant slide is an exciting element that encourages collective play (social skills). You can race with friends and run back up to slide again (physical skills). You can slide down in different positions (creative skills) and figure out which one will make you go faster (cognitive skills).



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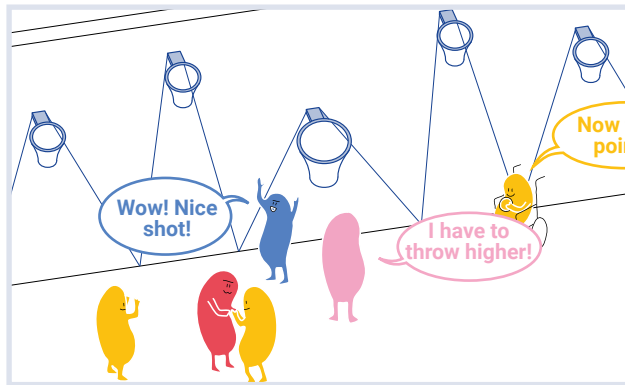
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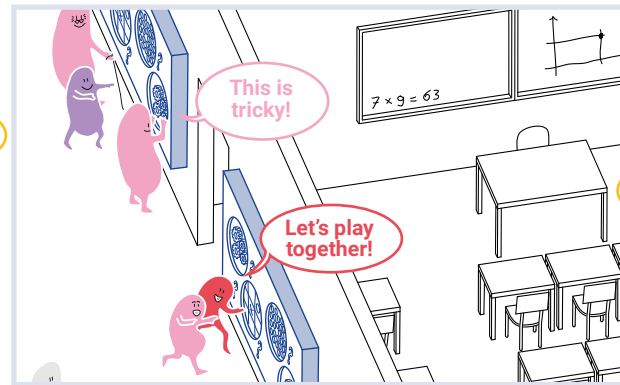
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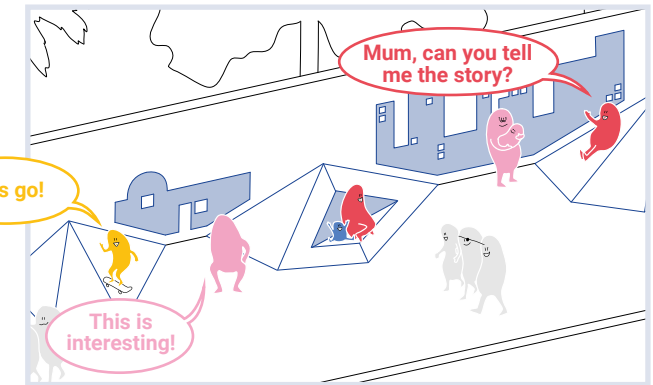
### 58 MULTILEVEL BASKETBALL HOOPS

This set of basketball hoops enables everyone to play together (social skills). You can play basketball (physical skills) or cheer on your favourite team of other players (emotional skills). You can also challenge yourself to shoot from a distant point trying to figure out the right trajectory to score (cognitive skills).



### 59 LEARNING WALL PANELS

Pupils can have fun while building their critical thinking skills with various games embedded in each panel (cognitive skills). You can try to figure out the games alone or together with friends (social skills). Some games might need a creative approach to be solved (creative skills).



### 60 HISTORY MURAL

The history mural installation allows you to learn new facts about the local area (cognitive skills) while challenging friends to find specific features (social skills). The mural might include 3D objects as well, such as surfaces that can be used to do skateboard tricks (physical skills).





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- (A) Escola Entença**  
Barcelona, Spain  
2022  
IAAC Valldaura Labs
- (B) Salvazione Christian School**  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
2020  
Local Studio
- (C) Schoolyard Aldoende**  
Amsterdam, Netherlands  
2021  
Space for Play





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## CASE STUDY

### Space for Play

# Rwanda Power of play

Children in charge of designing diverse play across Rwanda

#### Location:

25 schools in 3 provinces, Rwanda

#### Year(s):

2019 - 2021

#### Leading organisations:

Right to Play, Jantje Beton

**Architects:** Space for Play (Renet Korthals Altes and Insaf Ben Othmane Hamrouni) & Kara architects (Christian Karagire)

#### Partners & Stakeholders involved:

Postcode Loterij

*Text written by Renet Korthals Altes*



Colour-coded low posts stimulate physical, creative, and social skills – new games are invented every day. They are also used as the outdoor classroom

© Space for Play



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Workshop with teachers to incorporate play in the curriculum  
© Space for Play



One of the schoolyard masterplans designed with children  
© Space for Play

## “Power of Play” is all at once a schoolyard redesign project, an educational programme, a capacity-building framework for teachers, and a design catalogue for play based learning in Rwanda.

By supporting more than 12,000 children from 25 schools across the country to become designers of their own schoolyards, the project team and teachers created new ways to incorporate play in the curriculum and came up with a catalogue of low-cost play props that could be scaled up in the further development of the project.

Children were at the centre of design. In each school, children learned to observe, identify, and reflect on the ways they play. They mapped the spatial features of different play areas and interviewed their peers and community members about where and how they play. Besides cognitive skills, children developed emotional and social skills such as empathy (in the peer-to-peer interviews and observations), collaboration (by teaming up to reach a common goal through designing), creativity (in designing their plan and ideas for play interventions), and communication skills (in drawing and presenting their findings and plans).

The renovated play areas in the schoolyards in Rwanda enable both boys and girls to experience more diverse play opportunities, more equally. Challenging parkour routes platforms and jumping poles allow for risky play.



Walls of different heights and openings stimulate creative and social play  
© Space for Play



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Physical play, such as balancing, jumping, pushing the ball through is supported by wooden poles and ropes  
© Space for Play

Sandpits and maze structures made of walls, poles, and platforms stimulate fantasy and creative play. Wooden stages invite children to share their musical, acrobatic, storytelling and theatre skills. Tables and flat surfaces for different cultural and ball games require more rule-based play. Repetitive movement can be experienced at the sliding hills and tumbling bars. The opportunity to hold classes outdoors, and to use spread-out seats enables calmer social and observant play.

All play props use locally available materials and construction methods. The designed play elements are documented in the form of a catalogue that could be replicated across the country. For example, as a response to the harsh climate, security regulations and maintenance requirements, the design team avoided the use of elements with moving small parts, like swings, roundabouts or seesaws.

Instead, they suggested – besides many other types of play – tumbling bars and sliding hills to enable children to experience repetitive movements.

Placing children at the centre of the co-design process enabled multi-dimensional learning – thinking beyond the standard games such as football, understanding the benefits of diverse play, and demonstrating the incredible input children can bring to the design outcomes.

This way of playful learning can be activated by designing the entire schoolyard, a part of it (such as one zone), or by maintaining the natural systems in the school surroundings. Play is a powerful way to enhance learning for all ages and across the curriculum.



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School

**This project is a true reminder for policymakers, educators and for children themselves that a playful mindset can transform our cities for good.**



© Space for Play

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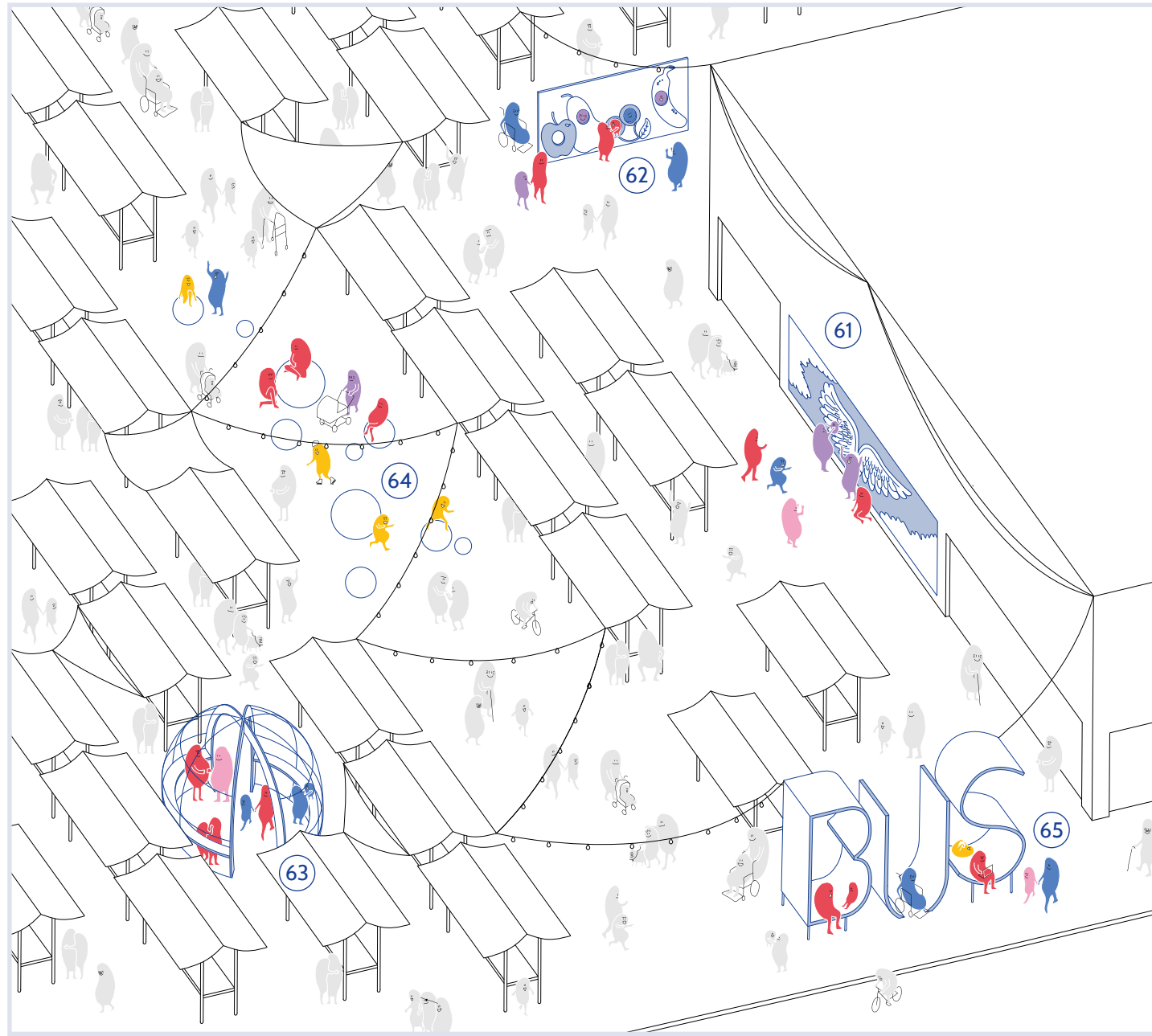
Shopping area

## Catalogue

# SPACE 13 Shopping area

Shopping is one of the main activities that people do in cities, whether they are residents or visitors. Shopping destinations include streets, markets, and shopping centres, and they tend to be dynamic places where people gather while sharing the spaces between shops. In some cities, street markets are also important community spaces where vendors gather daily, and regular customers meet each other. In these city spaces, most people walk to move between shops, and in large shopping destinations it is common to find restaurants or street food stalls that encourage people to spend many hours there.

Introducing play in shopping destinations can generate benefits for people who shop but also for vendors. For customers, play can make the experience of shopping more enjoyable. This can automatically generate benefits for vendors who can advertise their products through play elements, or simply attract customers by adding engaging play elements outside their shops.





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It is important that play elements enhance the shopping experience without posing any disturbance to the pedestrian flows that characterise shopping locations.

Elements such as the **interactive mural** and the **pretend characters** are good examples of suitable elements for this space. They encourage people to take a fun photo quickly and then carry-on shopping. These two elements can also easily integrate advertisement for shops, which can also reach online engagement when people post their photos on social media.

Other elements such as the **experiential dining area** and the **spheres** can offer a playful element for people to rest and be comfortable while they eat a quick snack.

Lastly, the **bus stop** marks the shopping destination in a playful way, sparking the curiosity of passers-by.

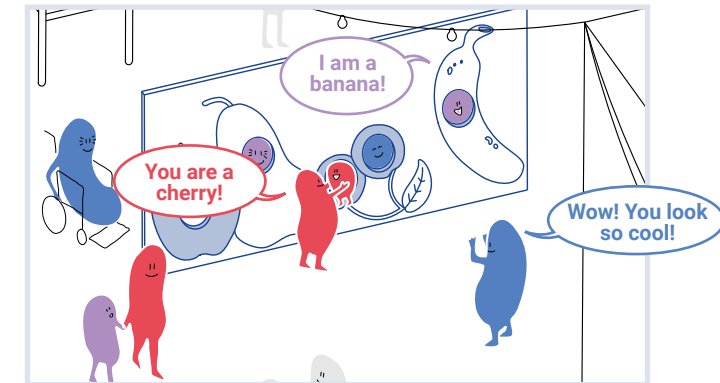


### 61 INTERACTIVE MURAL

Depending on what is represented on the interactive mural element, you can have fun pretending to have big wings or imagining yourself in the middle of a jungle (creative skills). You can ask someone to take a picture of you and your friends (social skills) while you look for any hidden images or messages in the artwork (cognitive skills).



© Healthbridge Vietnam



### 62 PRETEND CHARACTERS

You can put your face in the different holes and have fun pretending to be a big banana or another character (creative skills), while making your friends laugh (emotional skills). You will need to ask someone to take a picture of you to see how you looked (social skills).



© John Eccles

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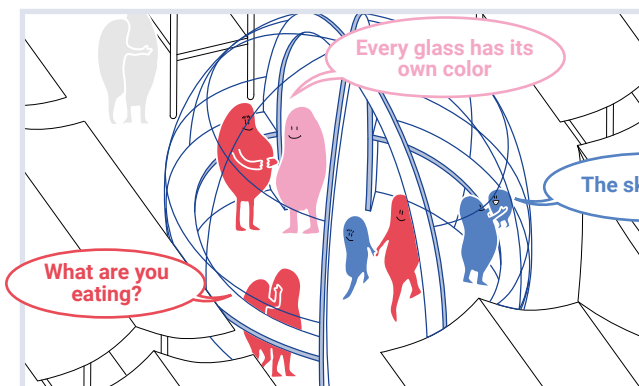
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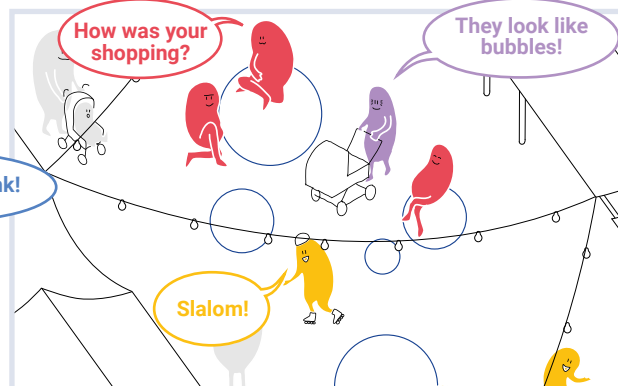


### 63 EXPERIENTIAL DINING AREA

You can enjoy your food while admiring many different colours reflecting around you (emotional skills). You can share this unique space with your friends and wonder how the colours of the city change when seen through coloured glass (cognitive skills) or take a creative selfie with different coloured shadows on your face (creative skills).



© Tres Birds / T James Florio Photography

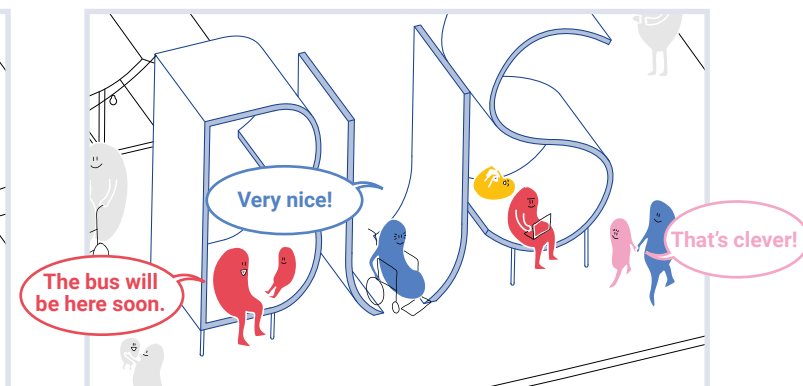


### 64 SPHERES

The spheres element offers you the opportunity to sit down and face other people, which can facilitate social interactions (social skills). While you run between the spheres or try to jump from one to the other (physical skills), you can imagine balancing on giant soap bubbles (creative skills).



© Ajuntament de Barcelona



### 65 BUS STOP

While waiting for the bus, you can take a picture of this creative element and share it with friends (social skills). Young children can get excited to be inside a giant letter (emotional skills) and try to slide, climb, and explore each letter (physical skills).



© Spanish public art collective "mmmm..."



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### A Tan Mai Ward Open Street Market

Hanoi, Vietnam  
2022

HealthBridge + Think Playgrounds + Hai & Ikigai  
Designing Studio

### B Prenez Place!

Parc Hydro-Québec – Quartier des Spectacles,  
Montréal, QC, Canada  
2020

ADHOC architectes + Maude Lescarbeau and  
Camille Blais

### C Nima Market

Accra, Ghana  
2018

Mmofra Foundation + HealthBridge



© Healthbridge Vietnam



© Mmofra Foundation



© ADHOC architectes / Raphaël Thibodeau

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Natural area

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# SPACE 14

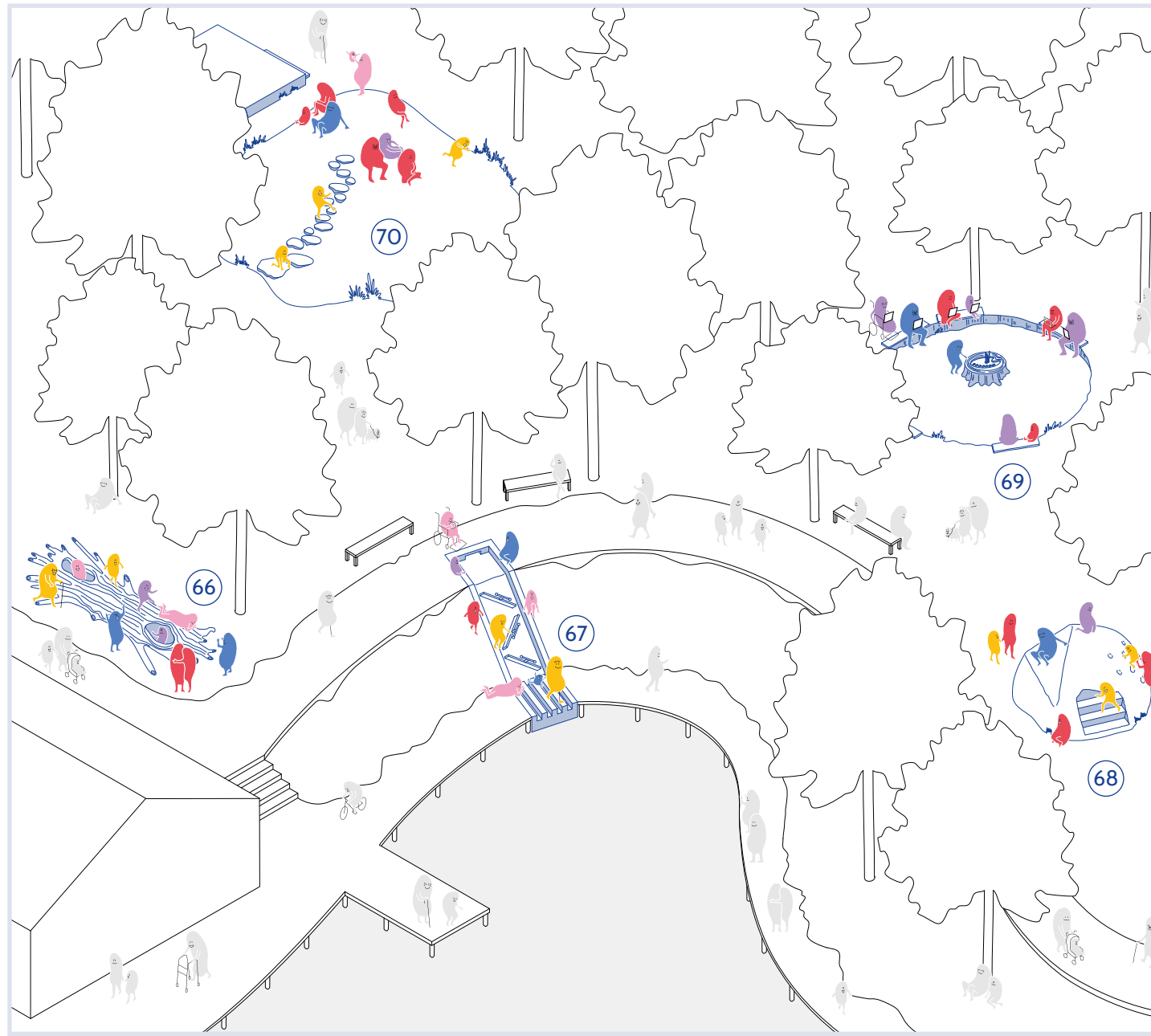
## Natural area

Natural areas can be rare in cities, yet, when found, they offer a fantastic space for people to relax and appreciate the beauty (and complexity) of nature. Natural areas differ from public parks as they are not highly modified by artificial elements nor the result of an elaborate landscape design.

Similarly to parks, natural areas offer a public space for people to gather, play, and relax away from the noise and pollution that characterise many cities. For this reason, they are essential to the wellbeing of the city residents.

In natural areas, paths are often minimal, hence people are encouraged to explore the space and its nature freely. Such spaces already offer an amazing opportunity for play as they are in some ways playgrounds where people need to use all their skills to come up with games.

For this reason, the play elements in this space should aim to enhance the qualities of the natural environment and promote users' interaction with it. Also, design elements should as much as possible try to use natural materials and not to have a negative impact on the environment.





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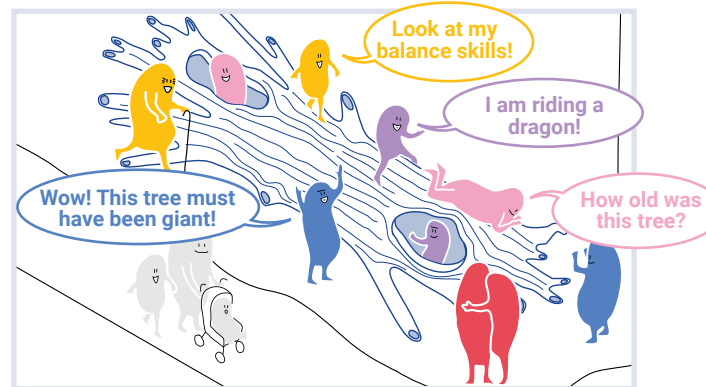
A simple **fallen tree** can offer a great opportunity for challenging balance games or exploratory ones.

A **water channel** can teach children how a stream can shape a landscape.

Rocky **boulders** blend perfectly into a natural environment and can offer a lot of fun challenges for a wide range of users.

The **circle** can encourage people to sit down and appreciate the natural elements surrounding them.

A simple **hill** can also offer a favourable resting point where people will be able to observe the natural area from a different viewpoint.



### 66 FALLEN TREE

A large fallen tree is a simple and low-cost element that can provide a lot of fun. You can climb it (physical skills) or ride it pretending it is a large animal (creative skills). Counting the tree rings, you can try to figure out how old the tree was when it was cut down (cognitive skills).



### 67 WATER CHANNEL

Using the water channel, you can have fun watching how the water behaves when you try to direct it using movable obstacles (cognitive skills). You can get help from friends to create new streams (social skills) and share a moment of joy when you've figured out the best configuration for moving the water through the channel (emotional skills, cognitive skills).



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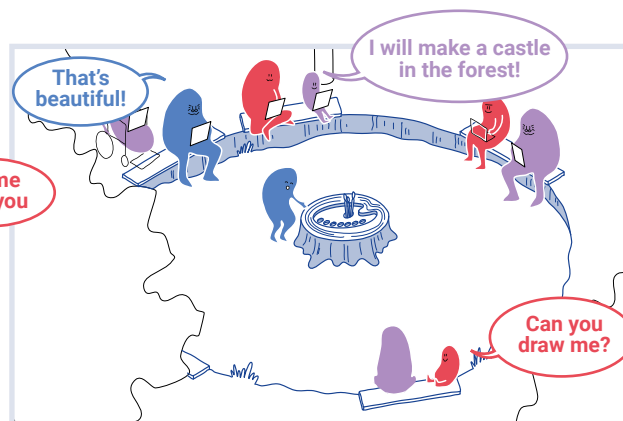
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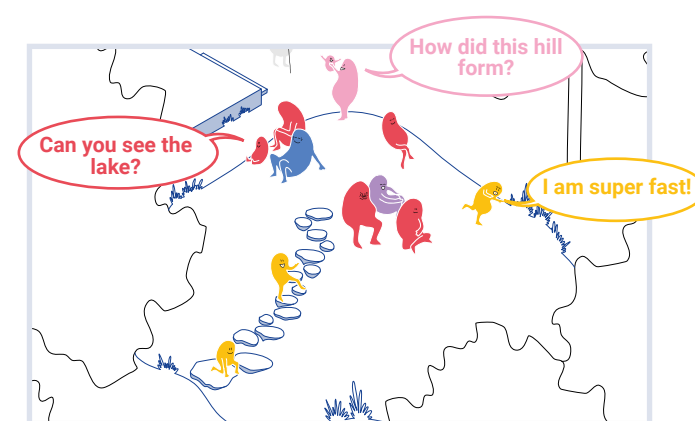
### 68 BOULDER

Climbing the boulder may not be that easy (physical skills), but it is fun to try, and you can always get someone to help you (social skills). You will need to use critical thinking skills to figure out the best way to reach the top (cognitive skills). Once you get to the top, you will be satisfied to have completed this challenge (emotional skills).



### 69 CIRCLE

The circle is a seating area where you can take a break, observe nature, and appreciate it, perhaps through drawing or writing a poem (creative skills). In this circular seating arrangement, you are encouraged to interact with others (social skills). Lying down and observing nature can also generate a sense of relaxation (emotional skills).



### 70 HILL

You can run to the top of the hill as fast as possible (physical skills). From the top, the view changes, and you can try to recognise elements that you see in the horizon (cognitive skills), sharing your guesses with others (social skills).





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# EXAMPLES

## Natural area

### A Funimal Forest

Renon, Italy  
2018  
Messner Architects

### B Harvest Playground

Aylesford, Nova Scotia, Canada  
2010  
Dempsey Corner Orchards

### C Le Voyeur

Hénin-Beaumont, France  
2019  
In collaboration with Kraft & Euralens  
Design and construction by Atelier ARI



© Messner Architects / Oliver Jaist



© Alex Smith/Playgroundology



© Atelier ARI

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# SPACE 15 Residential area

Residential areas shape how cities look and how they are lived daily. These can take different shapes and configurations, from detached houses to large housing estates. To different degrees, all these typologies have threshold areas between the private space of the home and the public realm: a front yard, a shared courtyard, the common entrance or rooftop of a building, corridors, hallways, and so on.

These thresholds are mostly seen as transit spaces, yet for some residents they offer a convenient and safe place to socialise, rest and play. This is particularly relevant in densely populated neighbourhoods where open spaces are scarce. It is also relevant in contexts where it might be not possible for residents to commute to reach a public park or other public facilities.

Therefore, integrating play opportunities in residential areas can extend the benefits of play by increasing the time and choice of play opportunities in the daily lives of residents. The Covid-19 pandemic and the mobility restrictions it generated for many people, made evident the important role that residential spaces (the home and its immediate surroundings) play.





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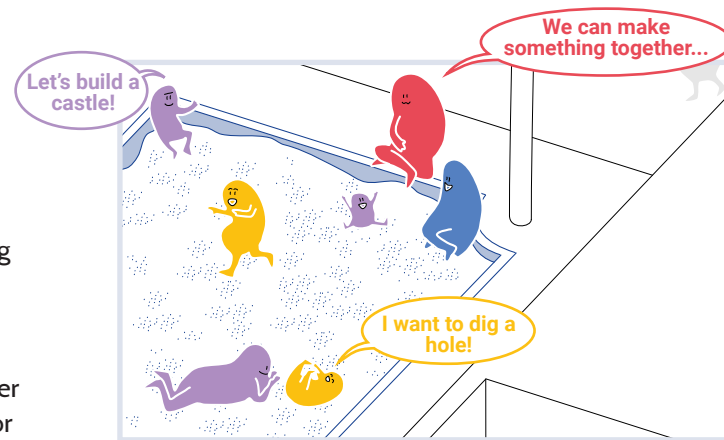
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Play elements in this city space need to find the right balance between offering stimulating play opportunities while respecting the needs of all residents. The right balance is very context-specific and should be determined with the participation of residents. In some contexts, this could mean offering games that would not generate excessive noise.

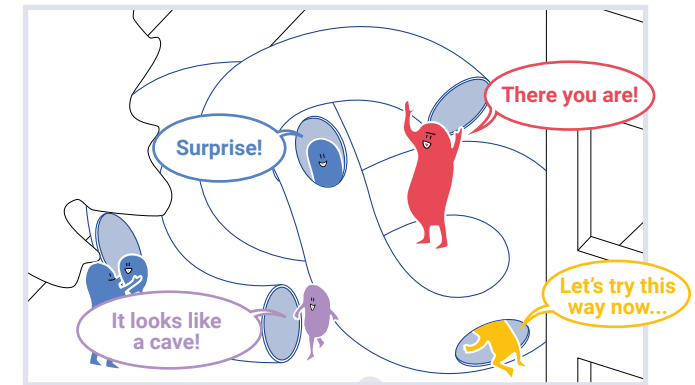
In outdoor spaces, such as a communal courtyard, a **sandpit** can become a social hotspot, where younger children play with their caregivers in a secure outdoor environment, and where neighbours meet. The **exploration sculpture** is a more open-ended game that would trigger imagination and creativity, become a landmark, and represent a symbol of the community of residents.

Indoors, for example in corridors, hallways and lobbies, a traversing **climbing wall** can offer hours of fun and challenging play to many residents. The **water channel** can be integrated within the rainwater management system of a building, hence solving a practical need while also offering a fun element. The **emotion wall** can be a wonderful way to learn more about neighbours through a collective installation where each resident can leave their own contribution.



### 71 SANDPIT

The sandpit is a fun game that allows you to invent (creative skills) and build castles or other sand constructions (physical skill). To build a tall structure, you might need some help from friends and family (social skills).



### 72 EXPLORATION SCULPTURE

The exploration structure supports multiple possibilities for engagement. You can climb it, crawl inside its tunnels (physical skill), play hide and seek with friends (social skills). You can also pretend you are an explorer discovering the tunnels of a lost city (creative skills).



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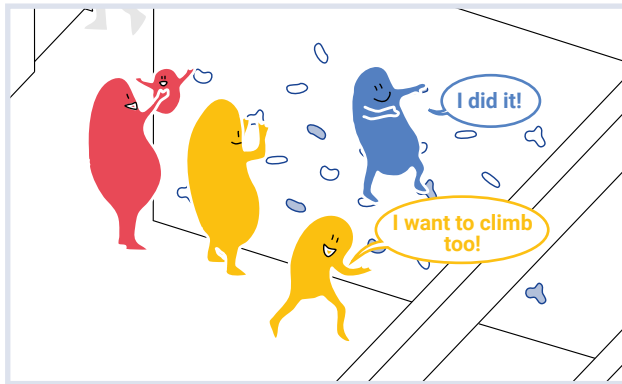
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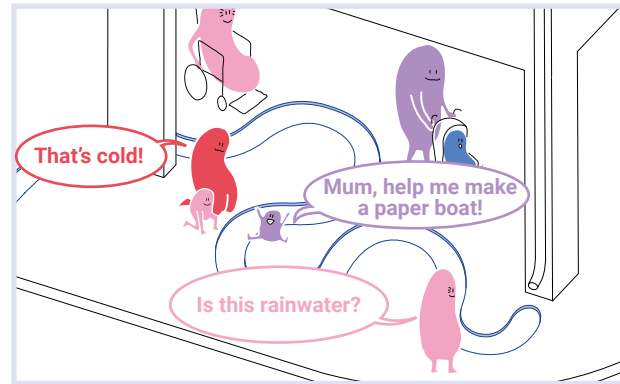
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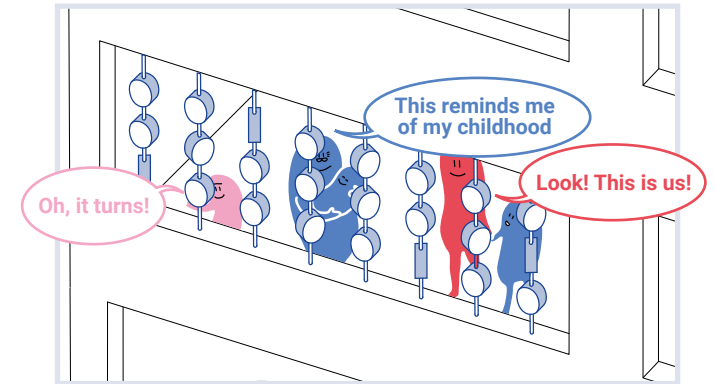
### 73 CLIMBING WALL

The climbing wall is a great way to challenge your body (physical skills). To climb complicated routes, you might need to memorise a sequence of perfect movements (cognitive skills). To figure out the best way to move across the wall, you can discuss ideas with a friend (social skills).



### 74 WATER GUIDE

A simple rainwater channel can turn into a fun and curious element to explore. You can organise a paper boat race (social skills), play with figures pretending they are beavers on the banks of a river (creative skills), or even try to understand how the water flow changes when obstacles are placed inside the channel (cognitive skills).



### 75 EMOTIONS WALL

The emotions wall can function as a large album of photos and memories, where you can try to figure out the meaning of what other people left behind (cognitive skills), whether it be doodle or a photo of an unfamiliar place. Some photos might make you smile (emotional skills) or the photos could be used to tell someone a story (social skills).





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### A Playground Landscapes at Santa María Mazzarello Square

Valencia, Spain  
2019  
HDH Arquitectos

### B Jerry House

Cha Am Beach, Thailand  
2014  
Onion

### C The Changing Faces competition

Nairobi, Kenya  
2020  
Public Space Network





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## CASE STUDY

### PICO Colectivo

# Community Facilities System

Play that supports collaborative processes for defining fast-growing residential areas

#### Location:

Los Frailes de Catia, Caracas, Venezuela

#### Year(s):

In progress (started 2015)

#### Leading organisations:

Marcos Coronel, and Stevenson Piña (PICO Colectivo); Gabriel Visconti (Aga estudio); Ricardo Sanz, and Rodrigo Marín. The entire team gathers around an urban laboratory known as Contingent Devices.

#### Partners & Stakeholders involved:

**Construction:** Local self-construction brigades, guides by Jesus Fuentes, Danny Arraez, Juan Ortega, Máximo Fonseca, Roger Cólmenarez, Juan Linares; **Institutional support:** Territorial Vice Presidency of Venezuela, National Parks Institute Inparques, Knowledge and Work Foundation; **Local community**

*Text written by Marcos Coronel*



Looking from the national park area, over the playground-boundary, into the informal settlements of Caracas  
© PICO Colectivo



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Residents and experienced builders working together on complex structural and construction challenges in-between dense urban tissue  
© Jose Alberto Bastidas / PICO Colectivo

This project is in an overgrowing, self-built settlement in the zone of Waraira Repano National Park – the green lung of Caracas. It is a spatial response to the pressing question of urban development: how to balance natural habitats and inhabitation.

**A series of playful spatial interventions is restructuring the settlement boundary, aiming to contain its growth by establishing a synergy between the residents and the natural ecosystem.**

Today, more than 50% of Caracas's population live in informal settlements. This is likely to keep growing. Some citizens have found it necessary to occupy “geographically impossible terrains” such as stream beds or protected natural areas. To design in this residential area means to understand spatial, political, and social dynamics of the region.

Houses are not developed through plot divisions but through bracing and binding together. They share foundations and a whole set of structural systems. Therefore, designing means working closely together with residents, builders, and engineers, that will allow the transformation of these systems into new places. This involves highly technical interventions, such as wall stabilisations, forming soil and slopes, and levelling.



Bringing material to the construction site through the maze of informal pathways  
© Jose Alberto Bastidas / PICO Colectivo



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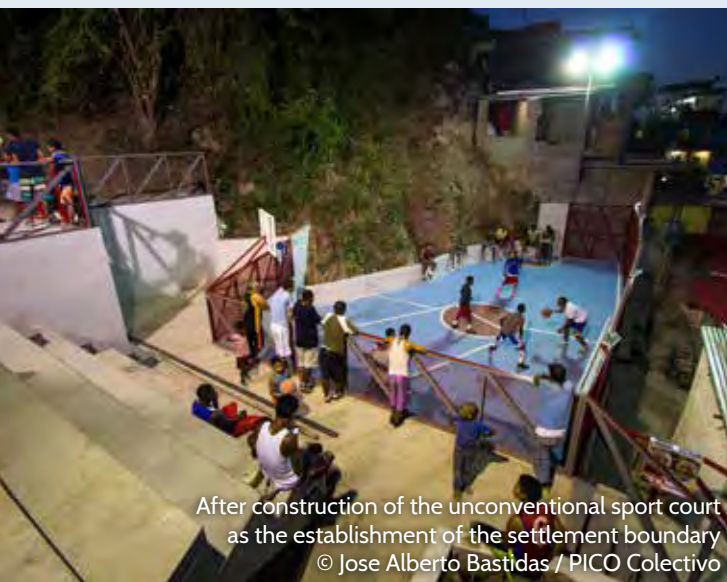
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The process of creating playful spatial interventions brought together an extraordinary community made of more than two hundred people, collaborating through machinery manoeuvres in previously impassable areas, deep cleaning, weeding, managing debris, and mobilising large volumes of freehand materials. The community cooperation was the only way to bring diverse neighbours, National Park and City authorities together to discuss and negotiate a just, equitable and safe city.

### Three playful spatial interventions supported this process of bringing diverse people together:

① A **Reduced Sport Court** is a playground that does not claim standard dimensions and is detached from the competition and high-performance model that stands out in a conventional city. It was constructed in a left-over place, facing the cliff as the settlement's boundary. Its irregular morphology, accidental orientation and unconventional dispositions require physical, social and creative play: new rules need to be invented and agreed upon. Importantly, because it is formally established as a court, it claims the right to play in this dense residential area.

② The **Open Parliament** is a circuit of shared neighbourhood terraces, constructed on the steep and unstable slope between houses. With the right construction expertise, this space was transformed into a dynamic set of steps and stalls that now host the main assembly activities of the community. The spatial





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features enable circular discussions, bringing to life a parliament that promotes more political, participatory, and democratic processes. This open space is used by residents of all ages for different celebrations and other social activities, and as a safe space for playing.

③ A **Path Square** is a result of stabilising the land and patio adjacent to reformed houses at the furthest point of the settlement. It also fixes the border to control further expansion into the national park area. The stabilisation wall uses a permaculture technique, recycling sacks of sifted sand from the same site. The design and construction process took the form of a workshop, training participants about the management of ecosystems within the neighbourhood, including the protection of the national park. Created through playful learning, the open, shaded space with seating is an infrastructure that stimulates play every day.

Through the construction of these three spaces that break not only the urban typologies but also the conventional understanding of city institutions, this project demonstrated the power of spatial processes to bring positive change. The Contingent Devices collective challenged assumptions about what can be done within fast-growing residential areas, and what can be transformed through existing community assets and innovative spatial approaches to social and environmental co-existence.

**Play was both method and output to reconcile and integrate diverse (and often contradictory) priorities.**



Path Square  
© PICO Colectivo



Permaculture stabilisation wall that supports the Path Square  
© Jose Alberto Bastidas / PICO Colectivo

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# CATALOGUE OF PLAY IDEAS

**This catalogue is a summary of play props presented in the Guide. The main aim of the catalogue is to inspire readers by illustrating the diversity of play props that could be implemented in different places in our cities.**

**These design ideas have been associated with 15 places within the Playful Cities Design Guide, but reader is invited to change and integrate them in other places and arrangements, in relation to the specific socio-cultural and urban contexts.**

- 01 Reflexology path
- 02 Touch underwater
- 03 Stepping stones
- 04 Giant seesaw
- 05 Ping pong
- 06 Oversized familiar object
- 07 Dance floor

- 08 Sound tiles
- 09 Amplifier bench
- 10 Treasure pole
- 11 Calculation challenge
- 12 Press here
- 13 Speaking pipe
- 14 Interactive city map
- 15 Interactive art sculpture
- 16 Creative bicycle racks
- 17 Living mural
- 18 Pretend station
- 19 Match the colors
- 20 Hole in the wall
- 21 Collective sculpture
- 22 Coloured reflections
- 23 Giant chess
- 24 Loose big blocks
- 25 Mobile seating
- 26 Real time light interaction
- 27 Message bollard
- 28 Spinning panels
- 29 Shadows wall
- 30 Width distortion
- 31 Coffee table games
- 32 Movable seating
- 33 Rotating images
- 34 Upcycled city structures
- 35 Augmented reality
- 36 Dynamic partition
- 37 Sound pipes
- 38 Spinning cubes
- 39 Swing bench
- 40 Slide
- 41 Green labyrinth
- 42 Plants trail
- 43 Listening aid
- 44 Sit and pedal
- 45 All go round
- 46 Fun pedestrian crossing
- 47 Zoetrope
- 48 Work watching
- 49 Chalk board
- 50 Mission control board
- 51 Mirror gate
- 52 Giant crossword
- 53 Interactive wall
- 54 Xylophone
- 55 Seesaw bench
- 56 Funky bench
- 57 Giant slide
- 58 Multilevel basketball hoops
- 59 Learning wall panels
- 60 History mural
- 61 Interactive mural
- 62 Pretend characters
- 63 Experiential dining area
- 64 Spheres
- 65 Bus stop
- 66 Fallen tree
- 67 Water channel
- 68 Boulder
- 69 Circle
- 70 Hill
- 71 Sandpit
- 72 Exploration sculpture
- 73 Climbing wall
- 74 Water guide
- 75 Emotions wall



## Introduction

About this guide  
Who is this guide for?  
How to use this guide?

## Key Messages

Why play for anyone, and anywhere  
The role of urban planning and design

## Promoting Play in cities

Skills: ● Physical ● Social ● Creative ● Cognitive ● Emotional  
City spaces: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦⑧⑨⑩⑪⑫⑬⑭⑮

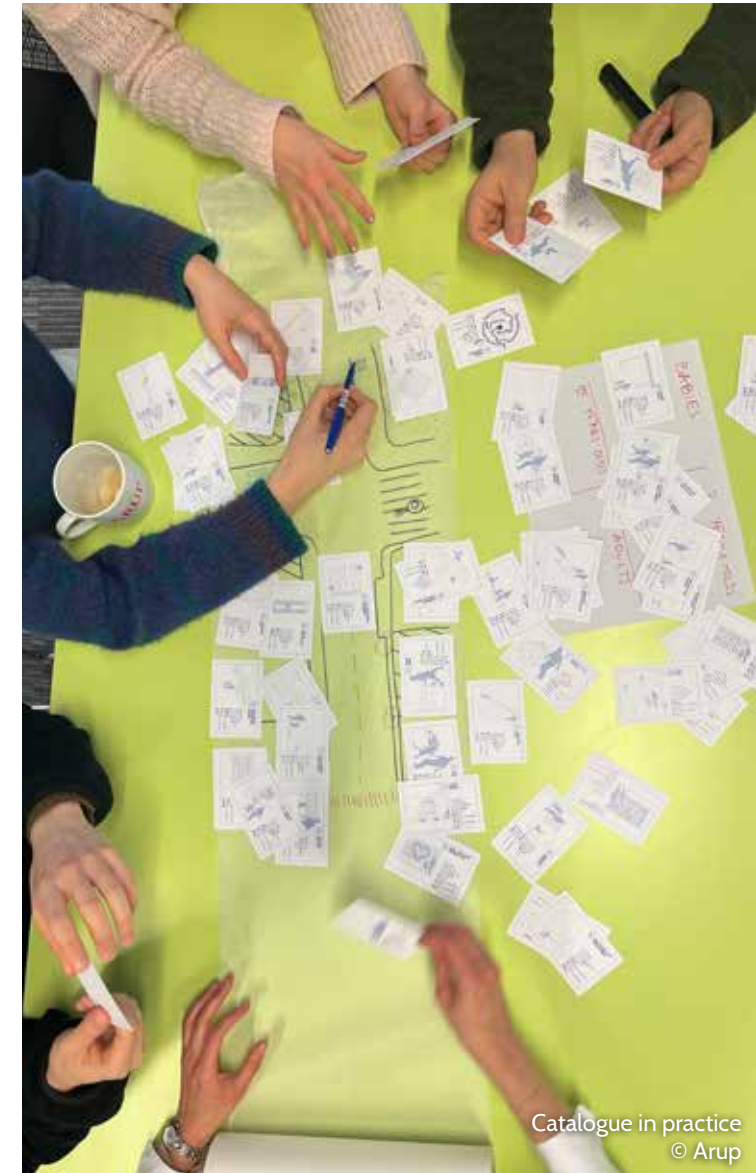
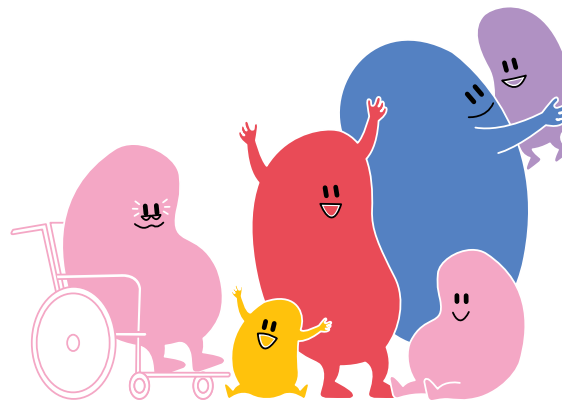
# How to use this catalogue as cut-out cards in a participatory activity?

Card sets can be an effective and playful tool in participatory design activities. The Catalogue of Play Ideas can be cut out as a card set and used in different ways. For example, in the assessment phase of a project, you could display the cards (or a selection of cards) and ask participants to rank them according to different scales: (1) from “I have tried this” to “I have never tried or seen this”, (2) from “I think we can build this” to “I think we need help to build this”, (3) from “This looks very safe and engaging” to “I would be concerned for my child's safety”. Cards used as prompts in this way could trigger discussions such as the availability of local materials, perceptions of safety, maintenance, local play types or the lack of play opportunities.

In the design phase, once you are familiar with the local context and communities, you could select only the cards that are labelled with categories that respond to specific project aims.

For example, if a project aims to address the lack of physical activity of elderly population in a neighbourhood, you could select cards that respond to 60+ age group, and that trigger physical skills. In a workshop, you could show the images of the possible intervention locations, and use this card selection to discuss ideas, and start creating. What would happen if you would combine two of the catalogue elements? Or use a locally practiced game to change the play prop so it can engage participants in a better way?

You could also use the card set for advocating for play. For example, cards can be used as a short presentation for quick-and-cheap play solutions, or quick “passing-by” play, or play that triggers cognitive and social skills around schools. You can carry them with you in a transect walk with stakeholders and use them to inspire, or show ideas in a practical way. Possibilities are endless – let us know how you use the cards so we can spread the word!



Catalogue in practice  
© Arup

# Each element presented in this catalogue is labeled with 5 categories:

## core skills



The five skills ([see chapter “skills”](#)) developed through play activities can be activated by people’s interaction with built play elements. A single element can activate all five of the skills. Yet, some elements are more prone to stimulate specific skills. This category can help users of this Guide to choose the most appropriate design element to stimulate a certain skill. For example, choosing elements that mostly develop physical skills when designing to promote physical activity in the city.

## main age group



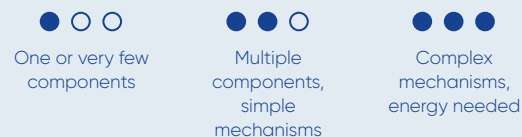
There are no age limits for the play elements presented in this catalogue, but this category suggests the main age group that might be attracted to play with each installation. This category can help users of this Guide choose the most appropriate design element to engage the group of users they would like to attract the most.

## play time



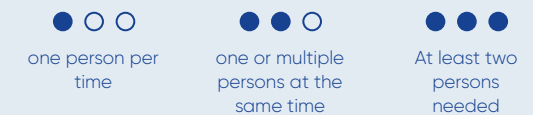
The ‘play time’ category indicates roughly the amount of time that people would spend interacting with each element. This category can help users of this Guide choose the most appropriate design element to match the requirements of a space. For example, when designing for a street, it might be important to look for elements that encourage quick play interactions. This category indicates three levels of ‘play time’: short, medium, and long.

## building complexity



‘Building complexity’ indicates the degree of sophistication of the design elements in terms of assembly. The three levels of ‘building complexity’ are: simple, medium, and complex. A simple element uses few materials and widely available techniques, whereas a complex requires complex and specialised assembly skills. This category can help users of this Guide choose the most appropriate design element to match the available materials and skills.

## numbers of players



The ‘numbers of players’ category indicates the most likely number of players that will interact with each design element. Though most elements are designed to encourage collective play, users of this Guide can look at this category to decide the types of interactions they would like to create in the space. For example, when designing for a quiet space (e.g., a hospital or a residential area), users might choose elements that can be used solo.

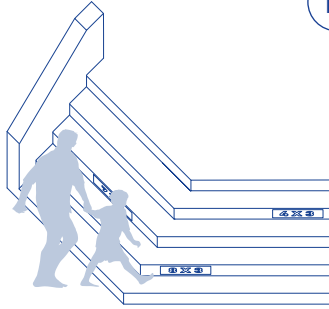






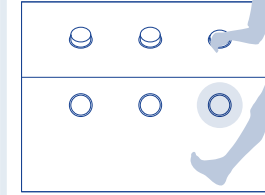
10 **TREASURE POLE**

- core skills: ● ○ ○ ○ ● ●
- main age group: ○ ● ● ● ● ●
- play time: ● ○ ○
- building complexity: ● ● ○
- number of players: ● ○ ○



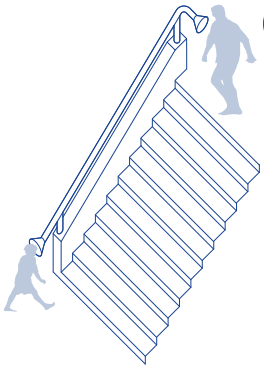
11 **CALCULATION CHALLENGE**

- core skills: ● ○ ○ ○ ● ○
- main age group: ○ ● ● ● ● ●
- play time: ● ○ ○
- building complexity: ● ● ○
- number of players: ● ● ○



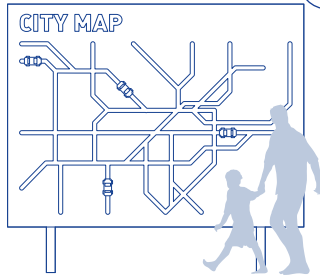
12 **PRESS HERE**

- core skills: ● ○ ○ ○ ● ●
- main age group: ○ ● ● ● ● ●
- play time: ● ○ ○
- building complexity: ● ● ○
- number of players: ● ○ ○



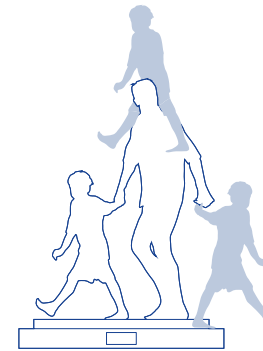
13 **SPEAKING PIPE**

- core skills: ● ○ ○ ○ ● ●
- main age group: ○ ● ● ● ● ●
- play time: ● ○ ○
- building complexity: ● ● ○
- number of players: ● ● ●



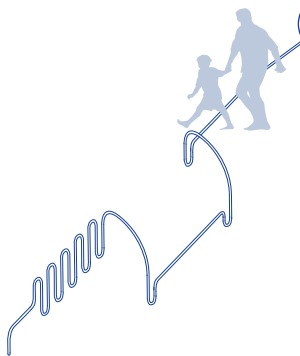
14 **INTERACTIVE CITY MAP**

- core skills: ● ○ ○ ○ ● ○
- main age group: ○ ● ● ● ● ●
- play time: ● ○ ○
- building complexity: ● ● ○
- number of players: ● ● ○



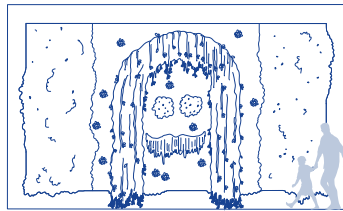
15 **INTERACTIVE ART SCULPTURE**

- core skills: ● ○ ○ ○ ● ●
- main age group: ○ ● ● ● ● ●
- play time: ● ○ ○
- building complexity: ● ● ○
- number of players: ● ● ○



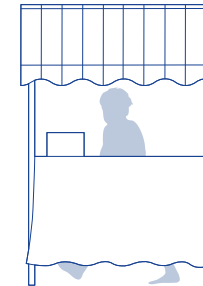
16 **CREATIVE BICYCLE RACKS**

- core skills: ● ○ ○ ○ ● ●
- main age group: ○ ● ● ● ● ●
- play time: ● ○ ○
- building complexity: ● ● ○
- number of players: ● ○ ○



17 **LIVING MURAL**

- core skills: ● ○ ○ ○ ● ●
- main age group: ○ ● ● ● ● ●
- play time: ● ○ ○
- building complexity: ● ● ○
- number of players: ● ● ○



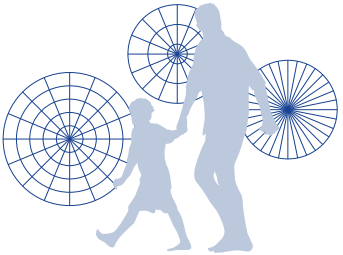
18 **PRETEND STATION**

- core skills: ● ○ ○ ○ ● ●
- main age group: ○ ● ● ● ● ●
- play time: ● ○ ○
- building complexity: ● ● ○
- number of players: ● ○ ○



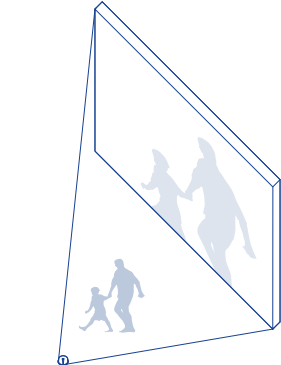


**28 SPINNING PANELS**



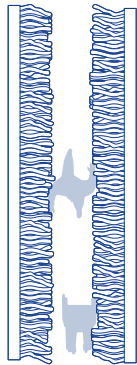
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 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**29 SHADOWS WALL**



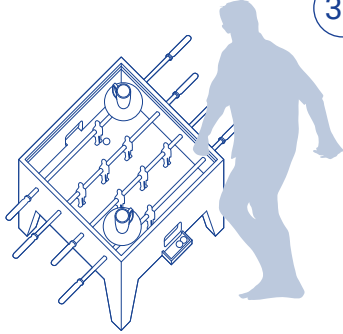
core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
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 play time:  
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 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**30 WIDTH DISTORTION**



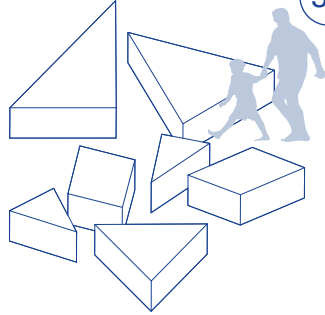
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 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
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 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**31 COFFEE TABLE GAMES**



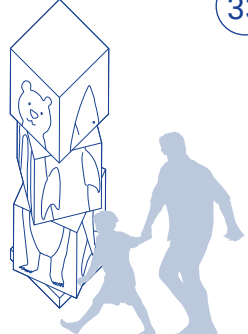
core skills:  
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 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
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 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**32 MOVABLE SEATING**



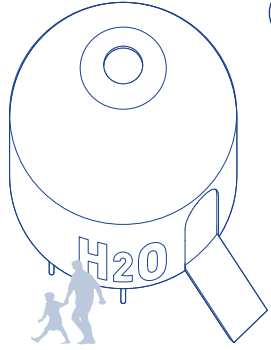
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 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
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 building complexity:  
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 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**33 ROTATING IMAGES**



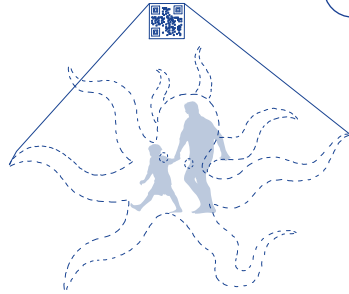
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 main age group:  
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 play time:  
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 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**34 UPCYCLED CITY STRUCTURES**



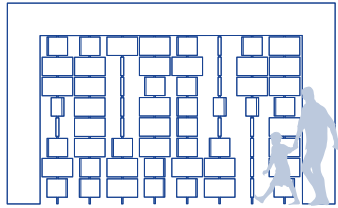
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 main age group:  
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 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**35 AUGMENTED REALITY**



core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**36 DYNAMIC PARTITION**



core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●











**64 SPHERES**

core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**65 BUS STOP**

core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**66 FALLEN TREE**

core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**67 WATER CHANNEL**

core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**68 BOULDER**

core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**69 CIRCLE**

core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**70 HILL**

core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
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 number of players:  
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**71 SANDPIT**

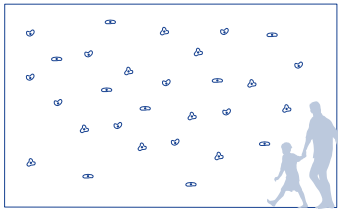
core skills:  
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 main age group:  
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 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

**72 EXPLORATION SCULPTURE**

core skills:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ● ● ● ●

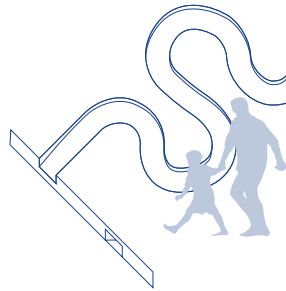


73 CLIMBING WALL



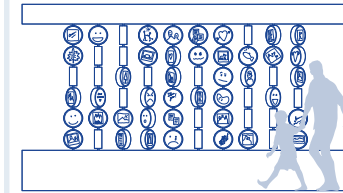
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 main age group:  
 ○ ● ● ● ○  
 play time:  
 ● ● ●  
 building complexity:  
 ● ○ ○  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ○

74 WATER GUIDE



- core skills:  
 ○ ● ● ● ○  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ○ ○  
 play time:  
 ● ○ ○  
 building complexity:  
 ● ○ ○  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ○

75 EMOTIONS WALL



- core skills:  
 ○ ● ● ● ●  
 main age group:  
 ● ● ● ● ●  
 play time:  
 ● ● ○  
 building complexity:  
 ● ● ○  
 number of players:  
 ● ● ○

**How can you help make the places where you spend your time and pass by become places where people can play, learn and thrive regardless of their gender, age and ability?**

**This is only the start of what we hope to achieve.**

# References

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