

a playce like home

a play-focused approach to designing a nostopia



16 January 2025 | Graduation Presentation | Margot Kruizinga

0. The Next Journey

Mom, I see land over there!

That is Lesvos, an island of Greece.
We will live there for a while.



Fig. 1: View of the sea crossing [own work, 2025]

Migration Routes

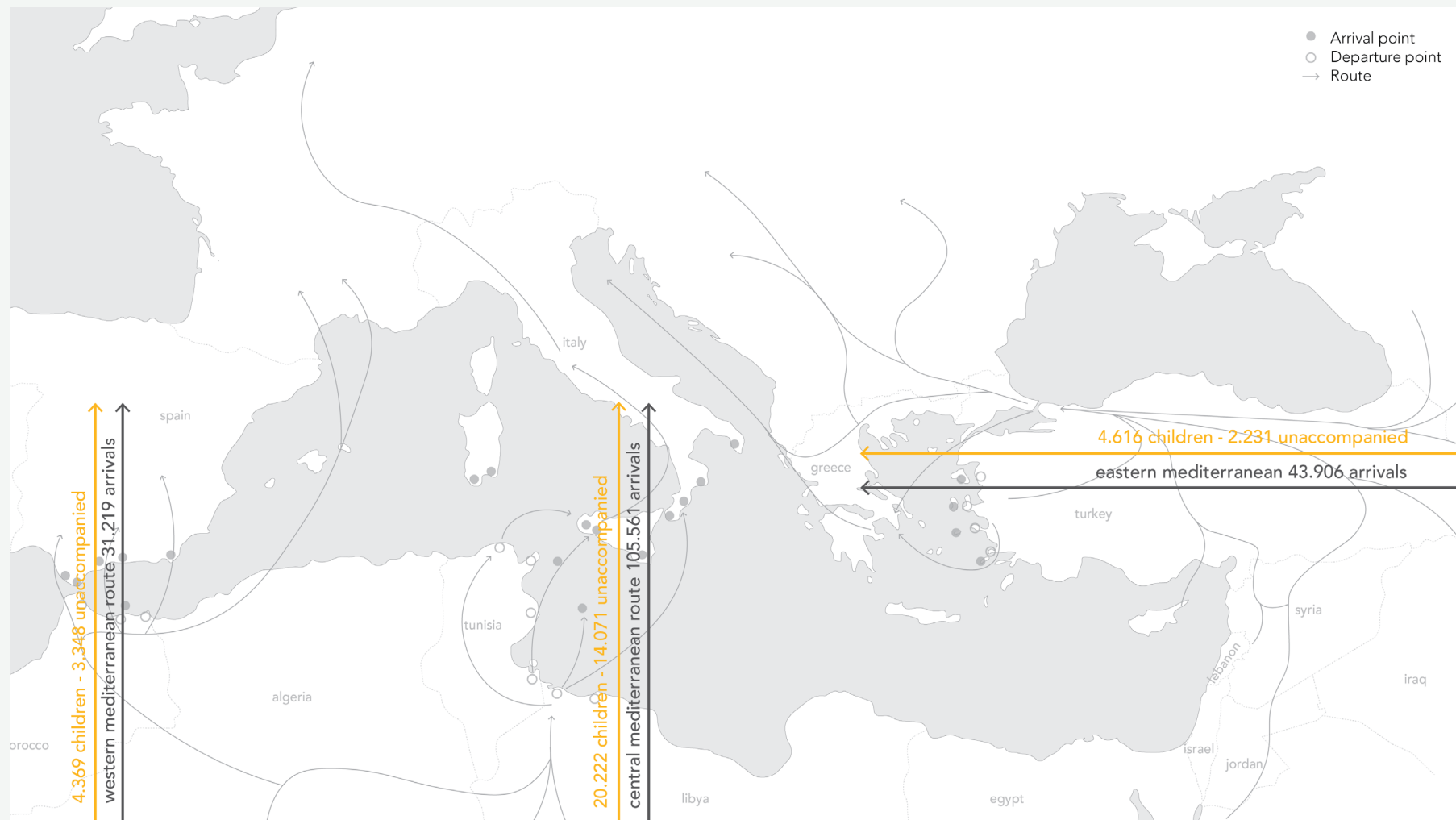


Fig. 2: Map of migratory routes and numbers across the Mediterranean Sea [own work, 2024; based on Conant & Chwastyk, 2015; Frontex, 2024; IOM Italy, 2019; UNCHR & UNICEF & IOM, 2023]

Motivation



Fig. 3: Drawing of my family [own work, 2005]



Fig. 4: Children's Rights of United Nations explained for kids [UNICEF, n.d.]

Problem Statement

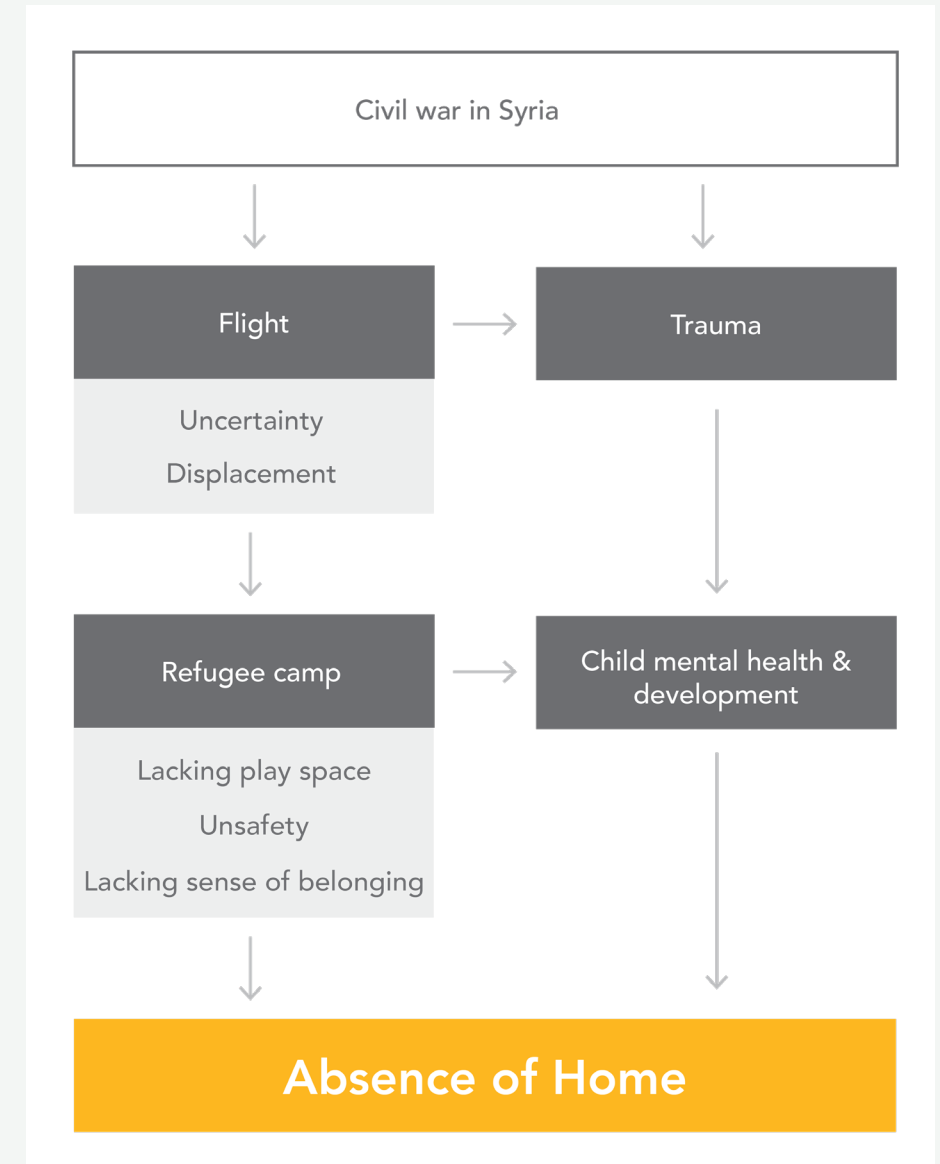


Fig. 5: Problem diagram absence of home [own work, 2024]

Route of Research



Fig. 6: Migration route from Syria to Europe explored in this project [own work, 2024]

1. Road to Camp

I love hopscotch!

Look there is our new home, do you see the gate?



Fig. 7: Walkway towards the camp [own work, 2025]

Home

- Definition
- Private and Public
- Safety, Belonging, Agency

[Boccagni & Duvyendak, 2021]



Fig. 8: Take along Playmobil dollhouse as a metaphor [Playmobil, n.d.]

Design Aim

Nostopia

/nɒs' təʊ.pi.ə/

noun

1. A public space, building, or environment designed to evoke a sense of safety, belonging, and agency reminiscent of being at home
2. A place with a home-like atmosphere in a non-residential setting
3. A place that feels like home

Etymology:

derived from the Greek words *nóstos* "coming home" and *topos* "place"

2. At the Gate

There is a football tournament
Monday! May I join, mom?

Of course!

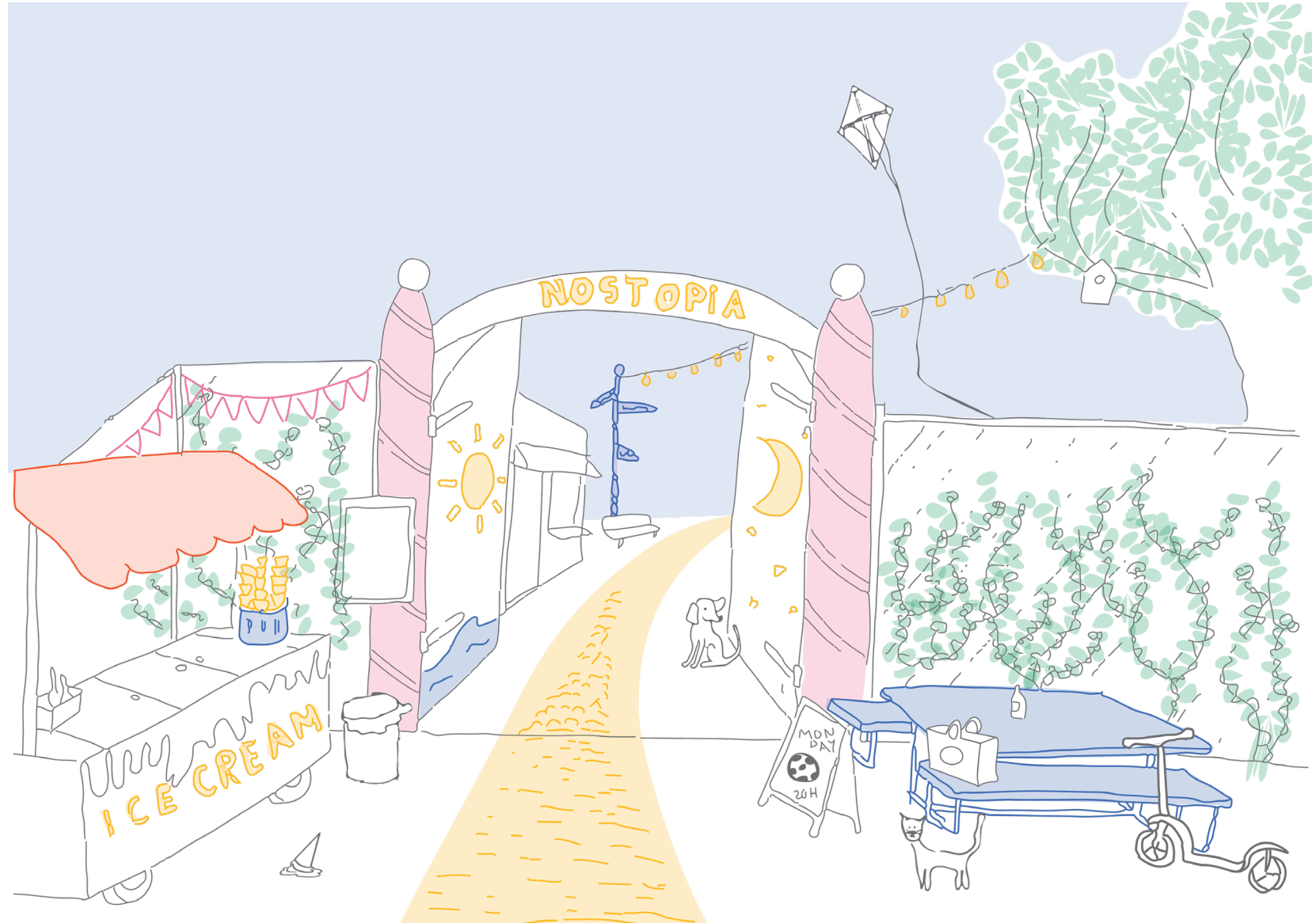


Fig. 9: Gate to Nostopia Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

Current Camp Population

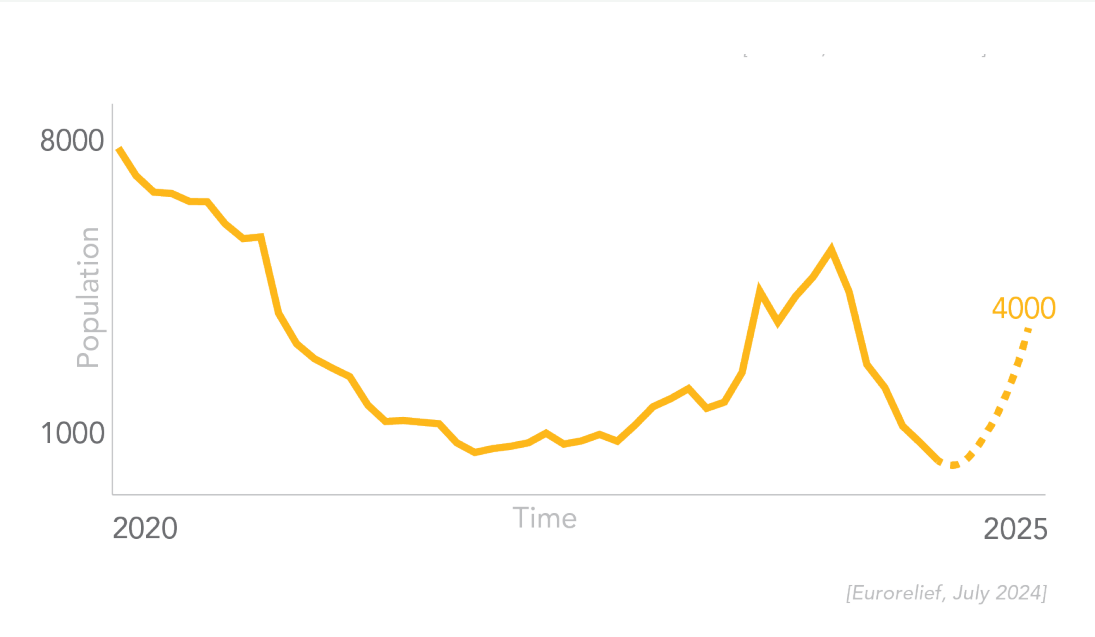
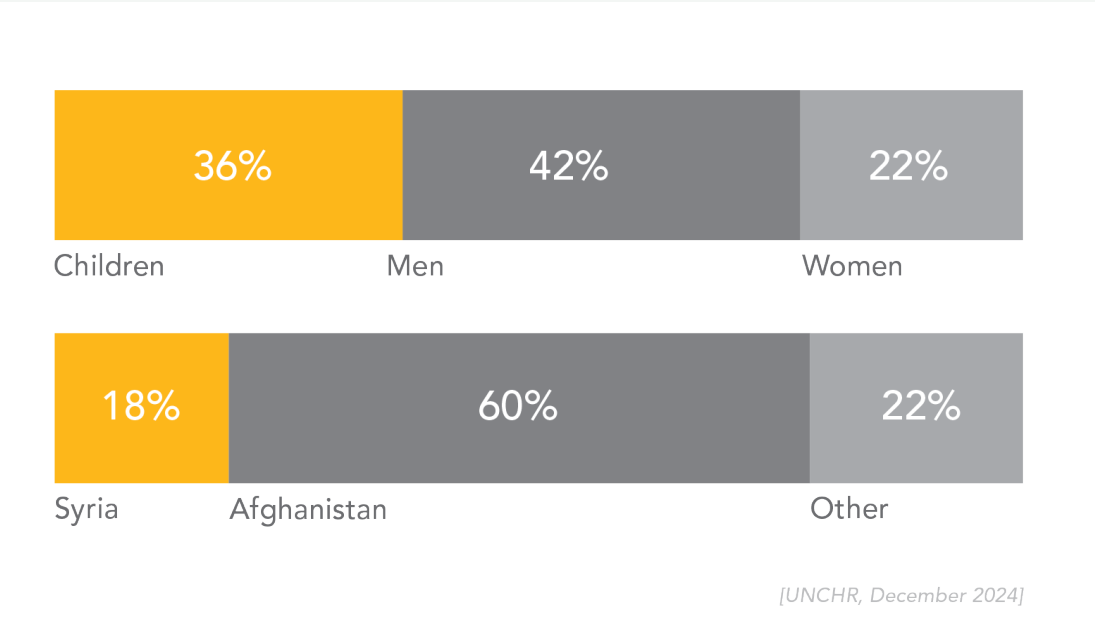


Fig. 10: Diversity and fluctuating camp population [Own work, 2024]

Camp Stakeholders

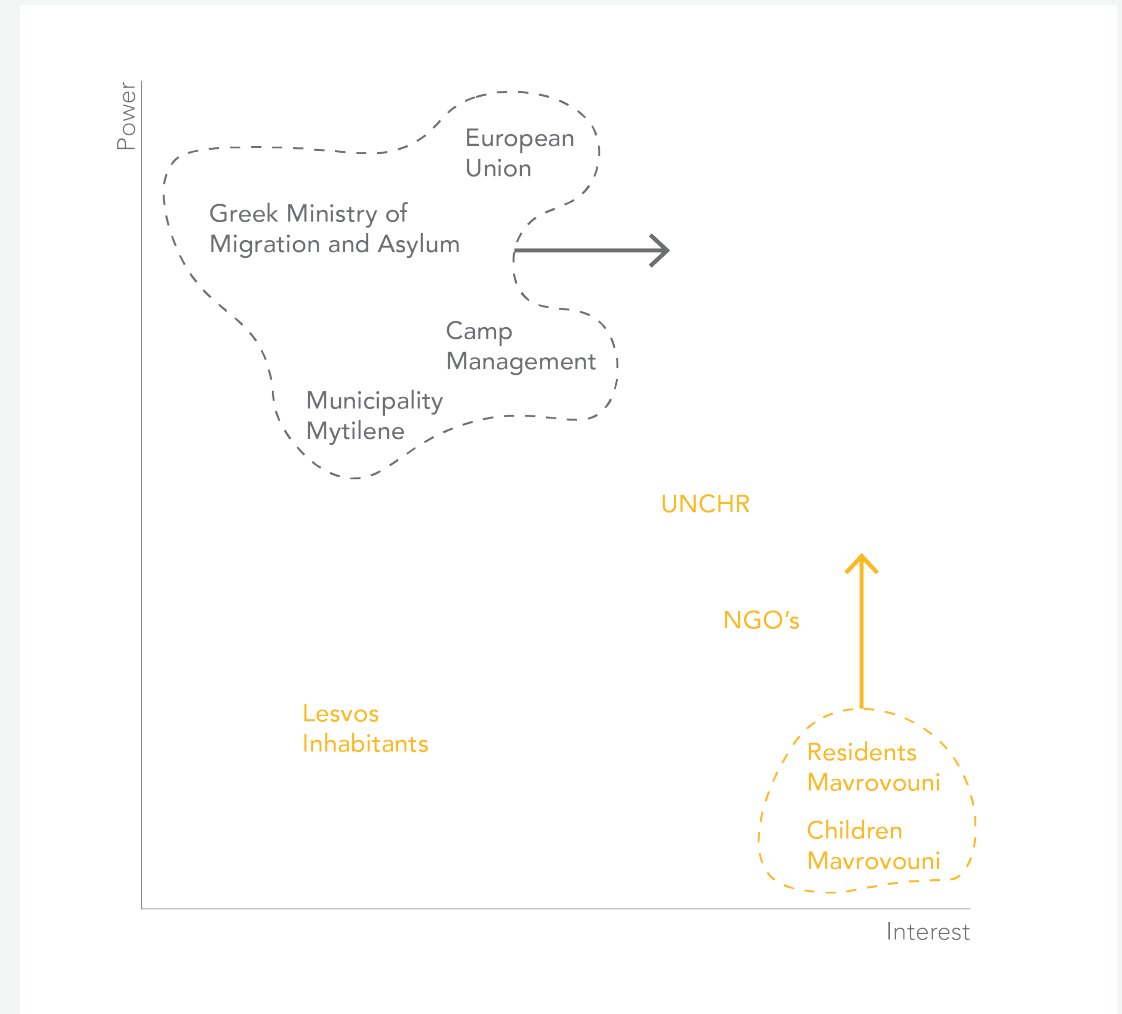
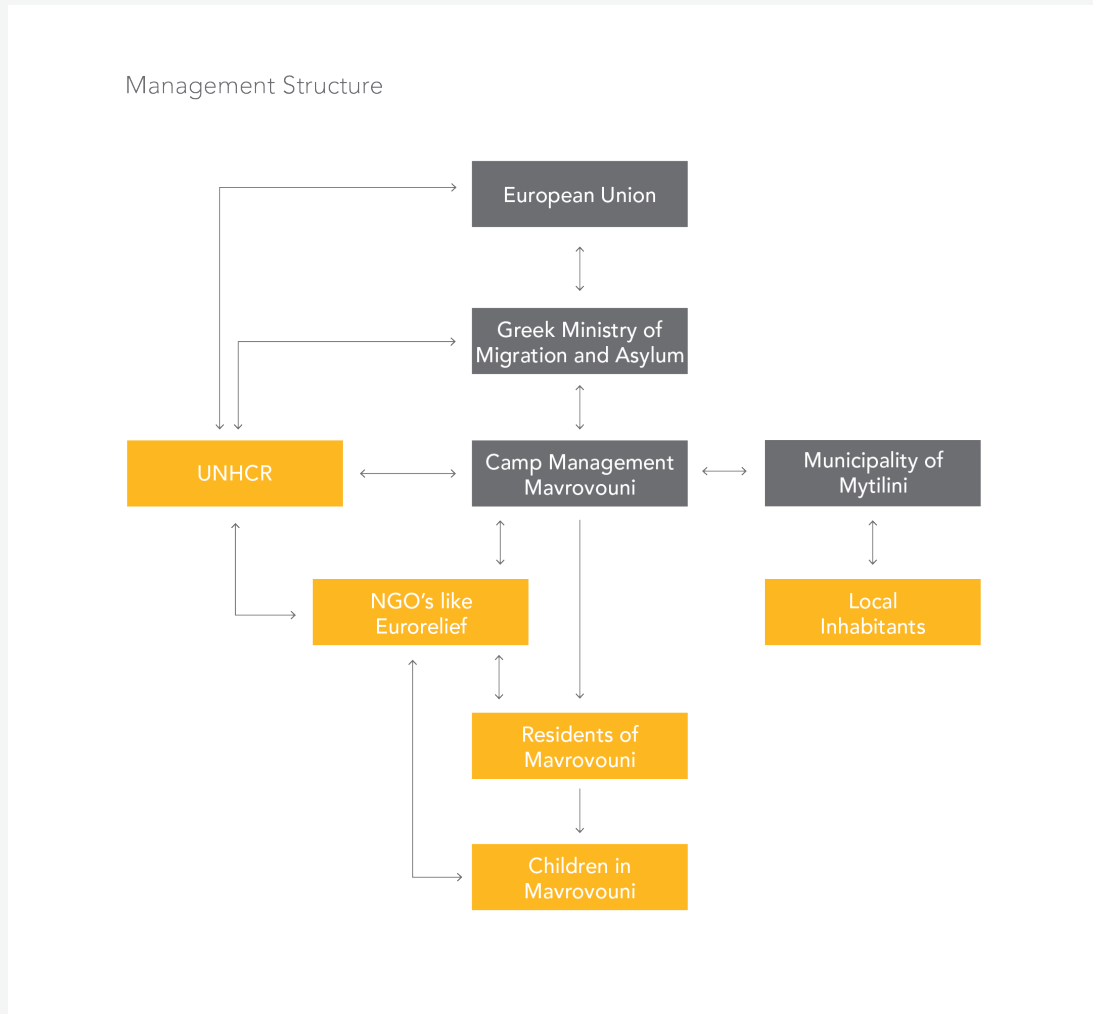


Fig. 11: Stakeholder analysis of Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

3. Warm Welcome

Welcome in Nostopia Mavrovouni!
On this map you can find all
facilities. Your home is in the blue
belt, at the pink rabbit block.

Look at this map, there are lots
of activities for each of us!

Where is the playground?

We can take a look later, but first
lets go to our new home!

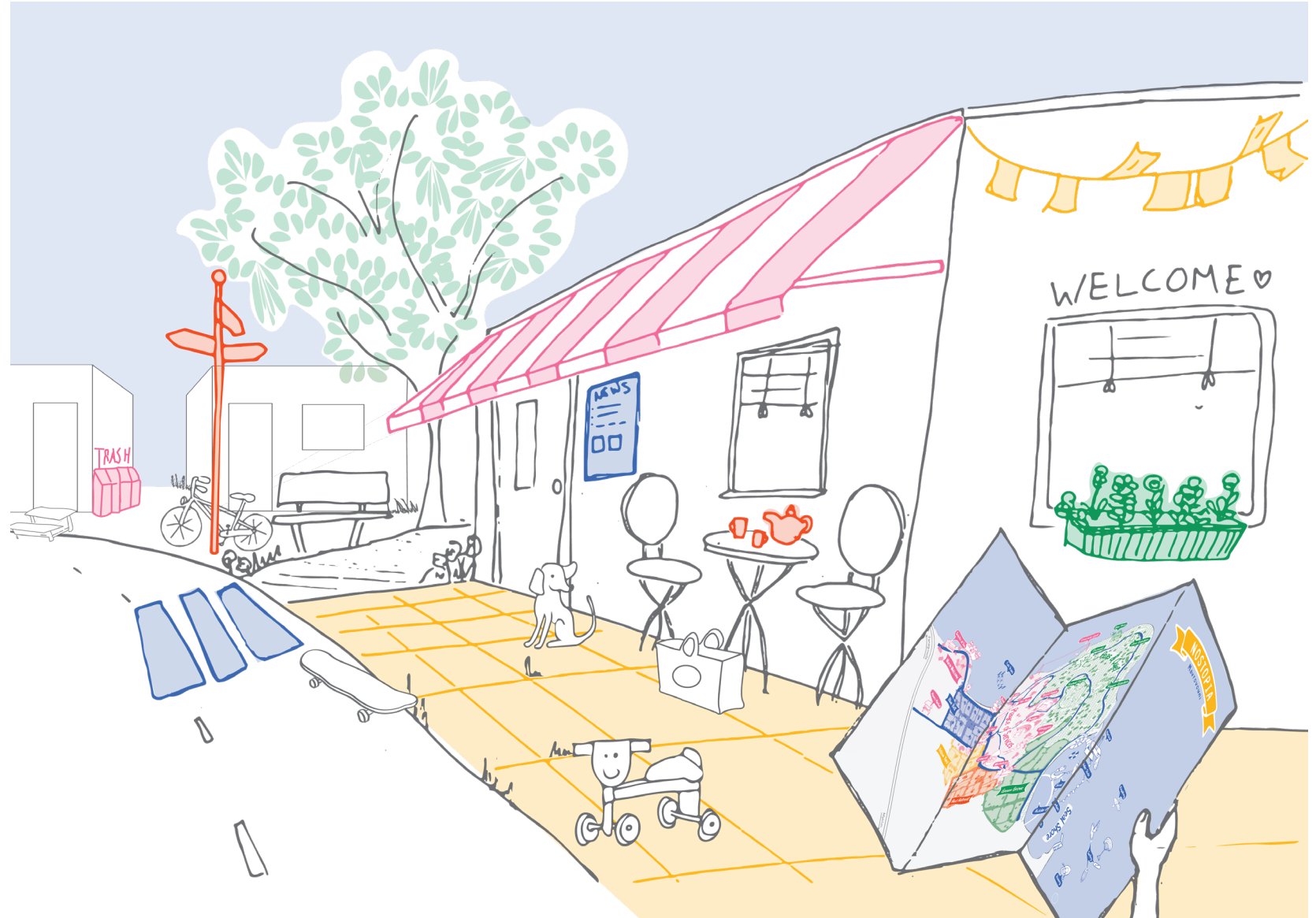


Fig. 12: Square behind the gate with trailer to get registered [own work, 2025]

Our New Home

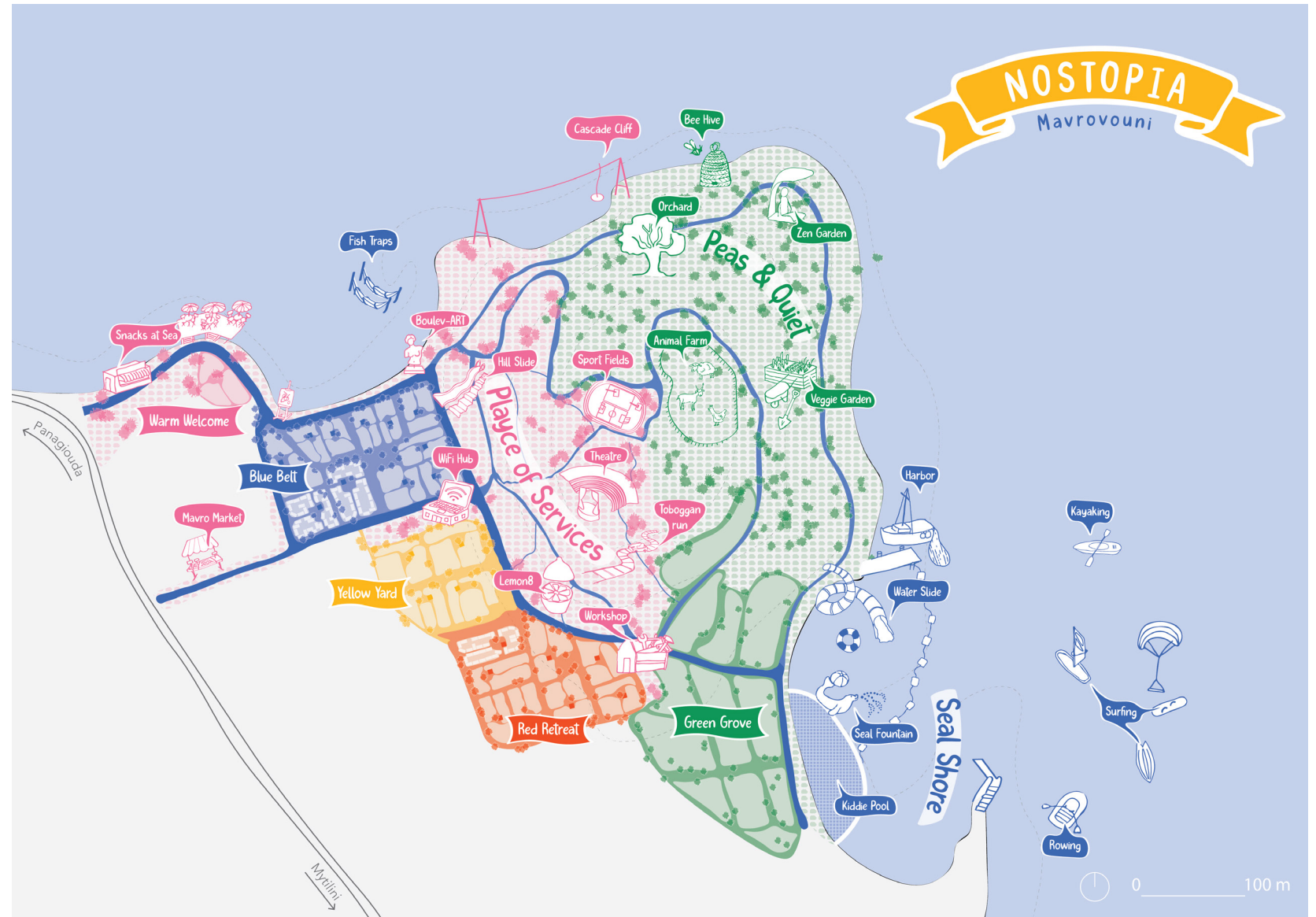


Fig. 13: Map of Nostopia Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

Camp Map Now

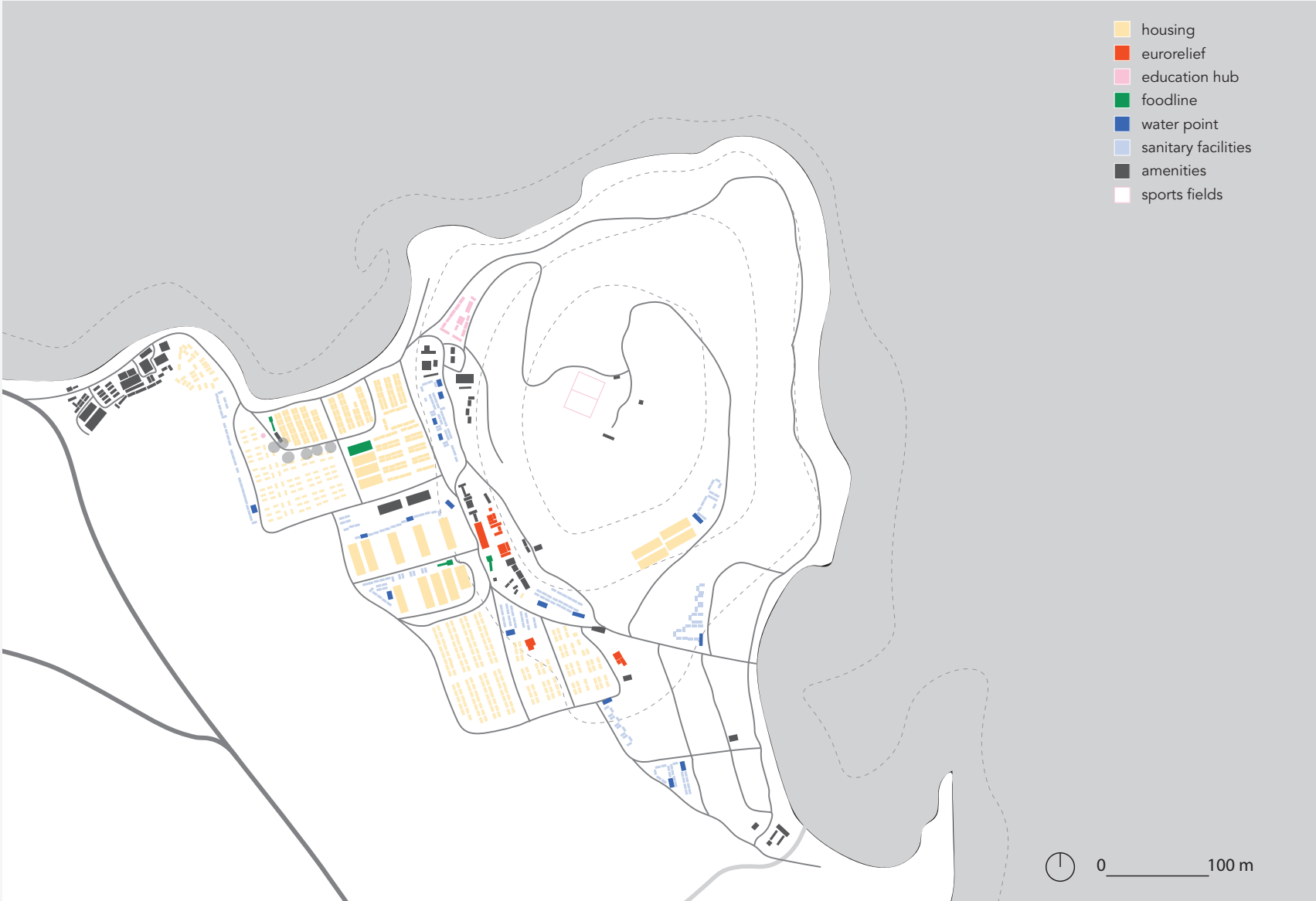


Fig. 14: The housing and facilities in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

Contrast with a Theme Park

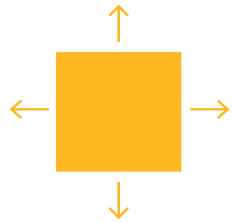
- Visual representation
- Outside Daily Life
- Temporal Visit
- Heterotopia of Foucault



Fig. 15: Map of theme park the Efteling [De Efteling & Ruys, 2014]

Heterotopia

Spatial characteristics



Relation to surroundings



Repetitive elements



Juxtaposition



Apart from 'normal' society



System of opening and closing:
isolation

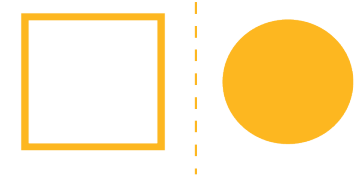


Temporal elements



Challenges duality public
private space

Other characteristics

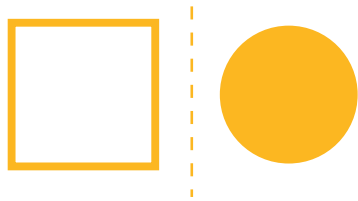


Alternative from everyday life

Unwritten behavioural code

Fig. 16: Characteristics of Heterotopia [Own work, 2024; based on Foucault, 1986]

Homo Ludens



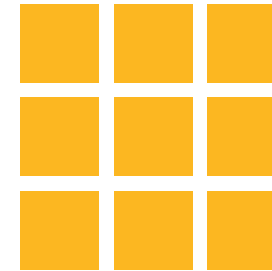
Outside ordinary life



Absorbing the player



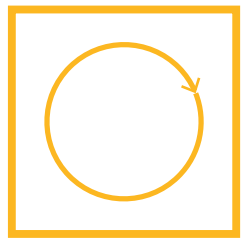
Purposeless



Rhythm & Order



Secretive



Bounded in space and time



Tension



Own rules



Formation of clubs

Free action

Fig. 17: Characteristics of play [own work, 2024; based on Huizinga, 1952]

Heterotopia & Play

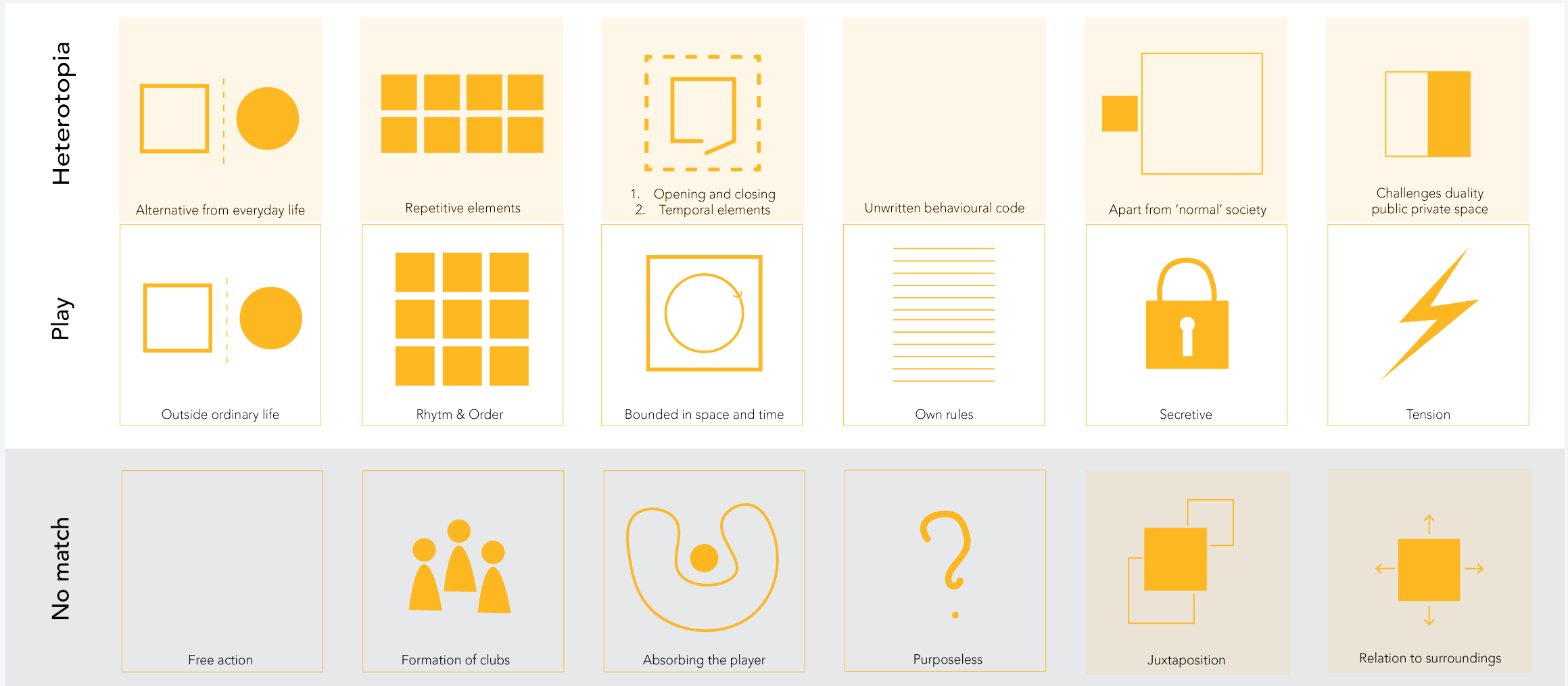


Fig. 18: Comparison characteristics of play and a heterotopia [Own work, 2024]

Theme Park as Inspiration



Fig. 19: Rollercoaster the Baron in the Efteling [Own photo, 2021]

Daily Life in Heterotopia Mavrovouni

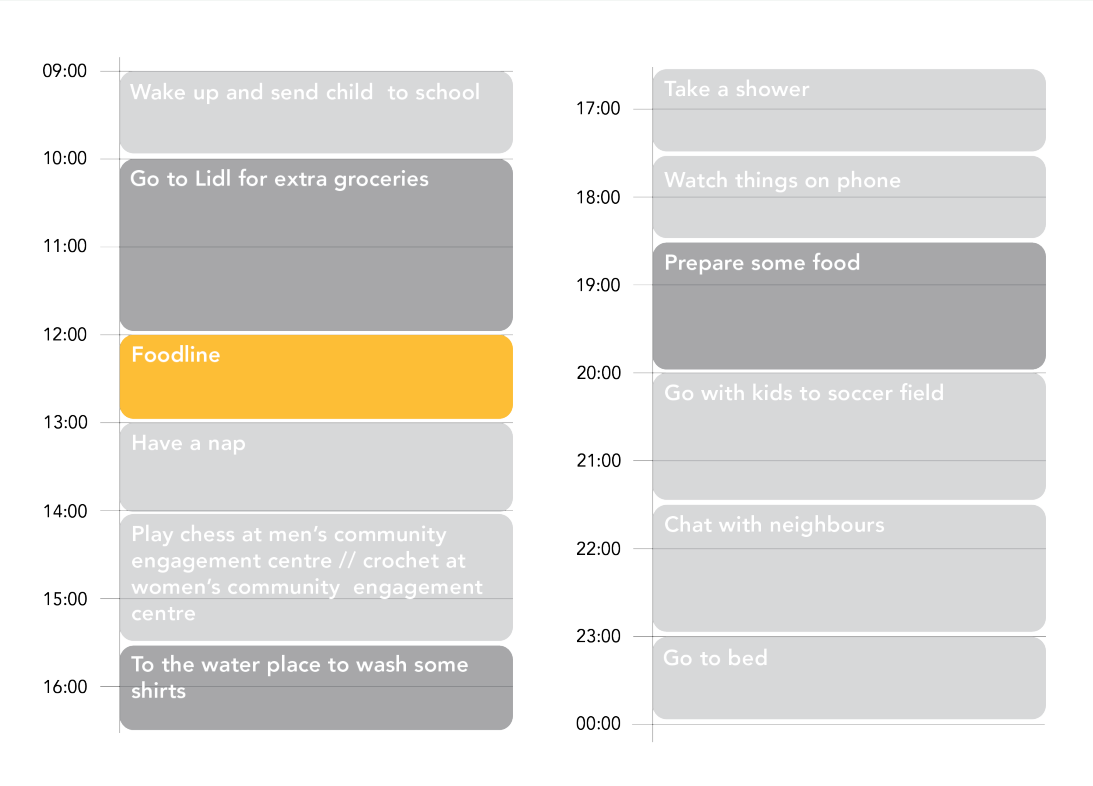


Fig. 20: Daily routine of an adult in Mavrovouni [Own work, 2024]



Fig. 21: Daily routine of a child in Mavrovouni [Own work, 2024]

4. A Peaceful Stroll

Can I play on the climbing frame?

Allright, only 5 minutes,
then we will walk on.



Fig. 22: Natural route with play opportunities towards the blue belt [own work, 2025]

5. To the Pink Rabbit

I see the pink rabbit!

Very good, you can always find
our home by looking for it!



Fig. 23: Path towards the pink rabbit cluster [own work, 2025]

Child Development



Fig. 24: Ecological development model contextualized for displaced children [own work, 2024; based on Bronfenbrenner, 1979]

Communal Spaces Syria

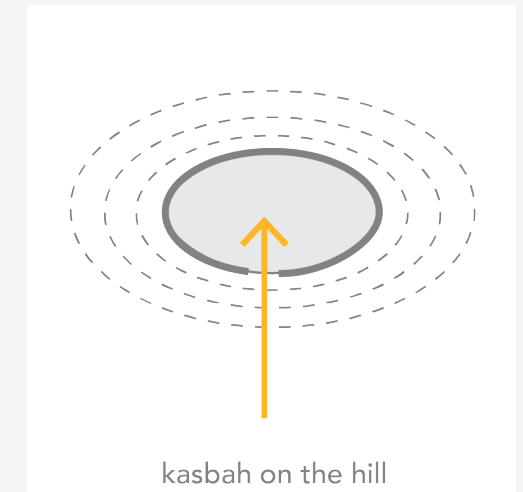
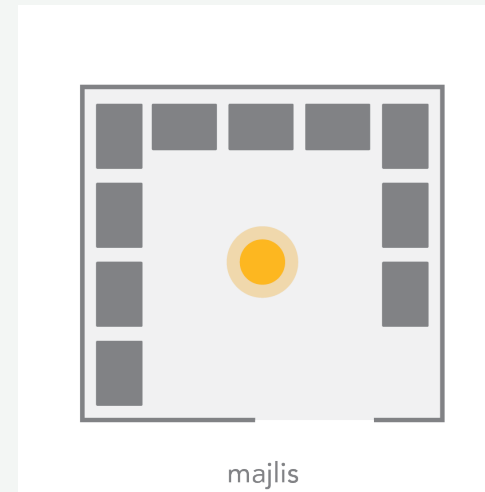


Fig. 25: Conclusion spatial analysis of the three homes [own work, 2024]

6. Our New Kitchen

Welcome to our kitchen,
do you want some soup?

Oh that would be great,
we are quite hungry.
Thank you so much!

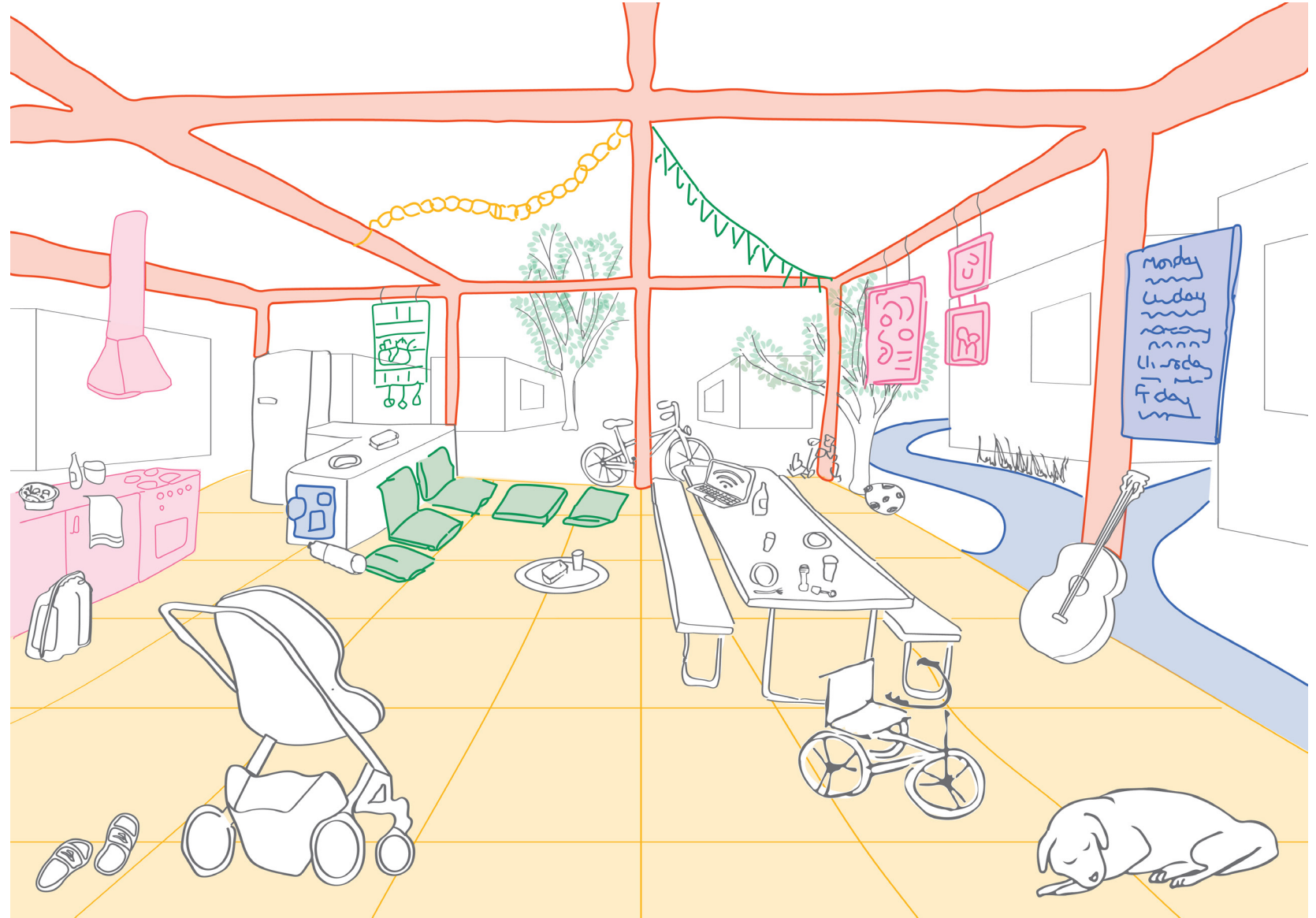


Fig. 26: Communal kitchen in the pink rabbit cluster [own work, 2024]

Food in Camp Now

This is a foodline for single men and women, they can get food here everyday at 12h.

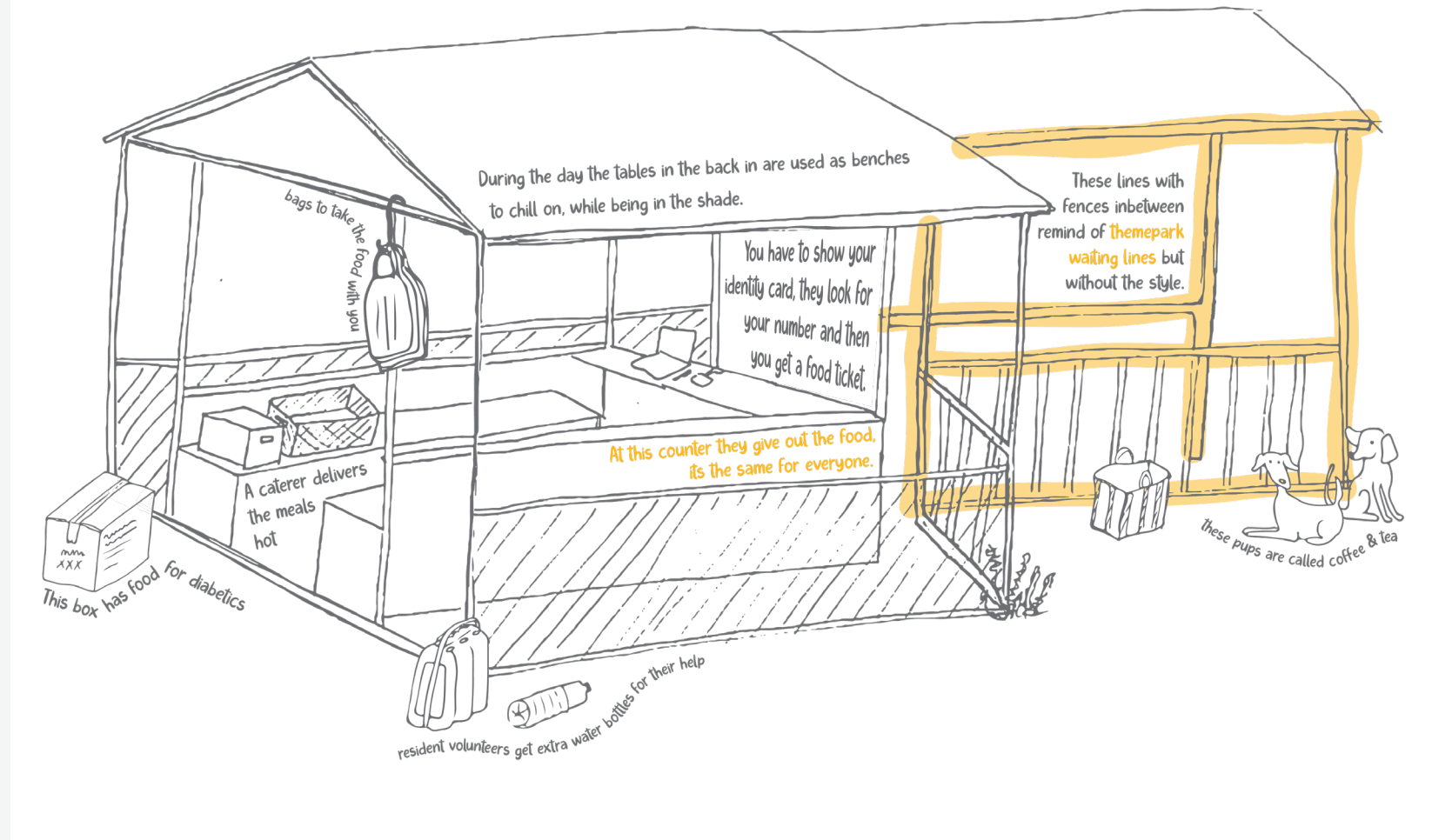


Fig. 27: Yellow foodline in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

Pattern Development

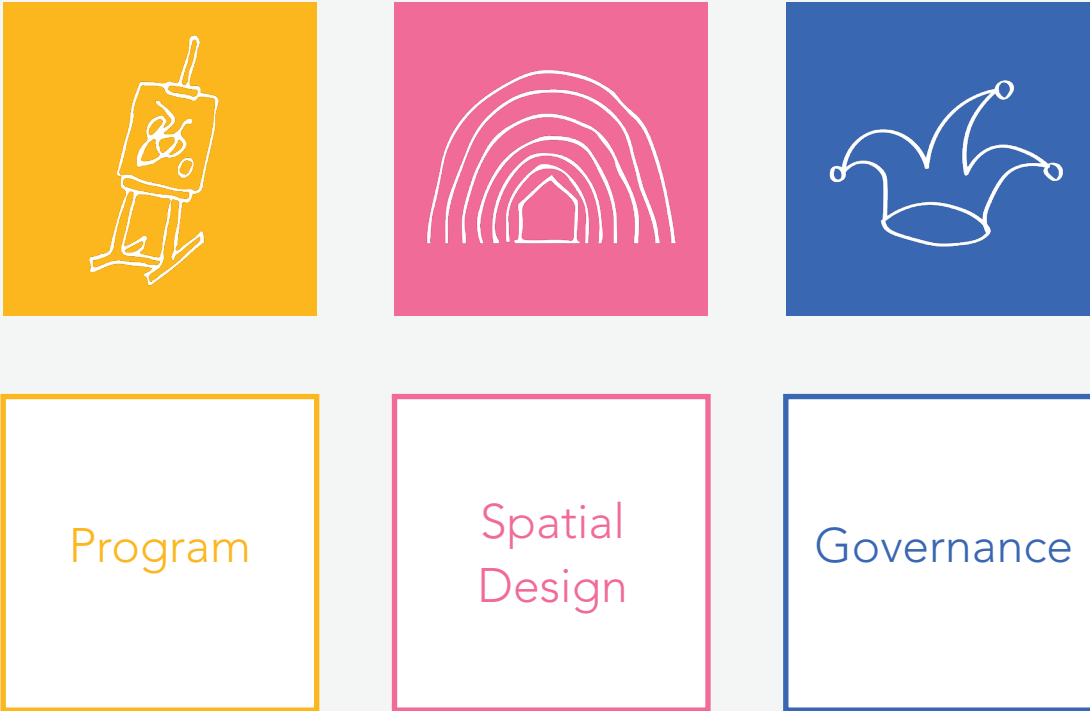


Fig. 29: Pattern drawings according their category [own work, 2024]

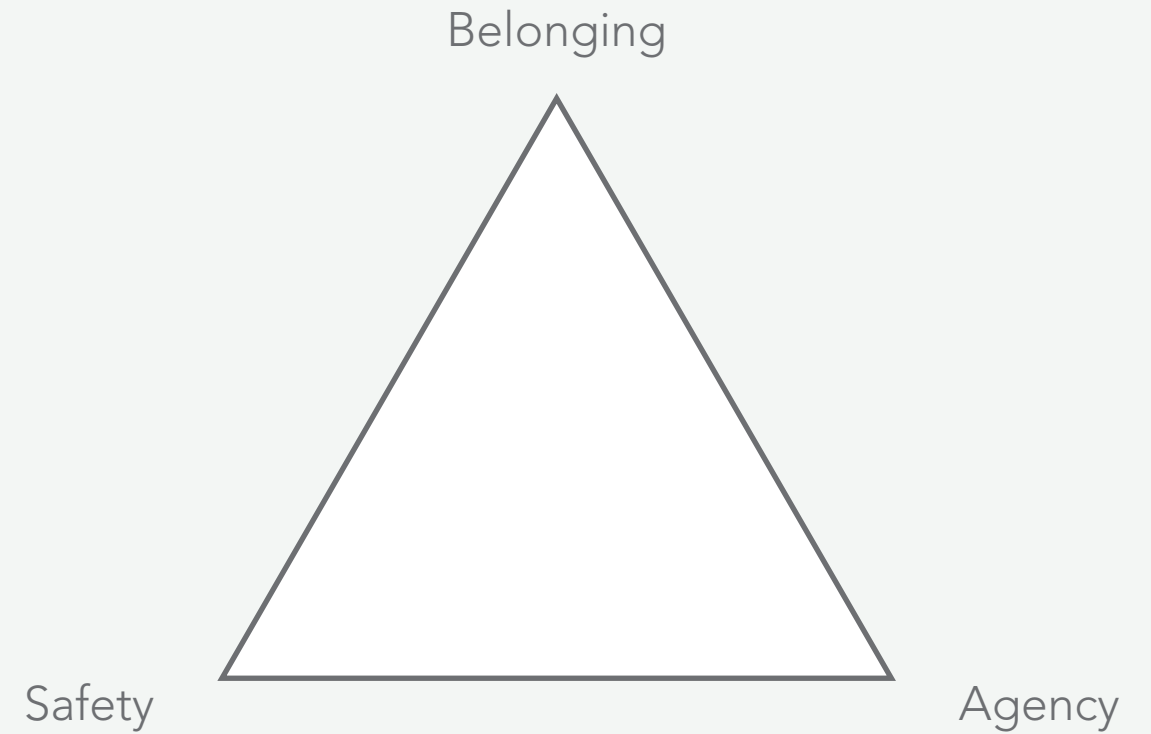


Fig. 30: Objective triangle [own work, 2024]

Pattern Language

C.5 Welcome to the Club!

Communities or clubs give children and residents a sense of belonging.



Field research

Children have left their community in Syria or other countries and possibly lost loved ones. They want to make friends to play with, the fact that people leave often makes friendship difficult.

Theoretical back-up

A child has the right to join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others [UNICEF, n.d.]. To be part of a community, gives one a sense of belonging through personal familiarity and shared experiences. This enhances feelings of safety, control and connection, thus giving a sense of home. Thereby it encourages residents to take responsibility of their physical environment and each other [Wekker, 2020].

Practical implication

- Indoor and outdoor public spaces are created to facilitate the gathering of groups. Each culture, community or club has other spatial requirements, the camp structure should facilitate the diverse needs
- A notice board can be an easy tool for communities to announce their gathering



Communal space: church in Panagioda [own photo, 2024]



R.16 Use for All

If multiple activities can take place in a space, spaces are used efficiently & a liveable community is stimulated.



Field research

Facilities are often empty and quiet, such as the water points or the lego hut.

Theoretical back-up

Multifunctional spaces are more frequently used throughout the day, which significantly benefits social cohesion. Multifunctional spaces maximize the utility of limited land and minimize the resources required. The thoughtful integration of multifunctional spaces can support traditional communities, enhance economic opportunities and preserve cultural identities. Especially open urban spaces are essential for accommodating to needs of the population and offer space for community gatherings [Pranab & Bansal, 2022].

Practical implication

- Combination of functions in one space, for example a water playground can be added to the water point
- Open spaces in the camp fabric can accommodate different activities




Outdoor cinema in courtyard of volunteer homes [own photo, 2024]



O.4 Belonging through the Scales

A community of smaller communities will benefit stability, agency and belonging in camp.



Field research

Camp is currently organised in 4 zones. People have left their home community behind. Different cultures live alongside each other, in some cases this leads to conflicts.

Theoretical back-up

People naturally organise themselves in different scales of community, with a multiplication factor of 3 [Zhou et al, 2005]. UNHCR advises a tailor-made modular approach in the organisation of the camp. This gives structure for the management and fosters familiarity for the displaced people. Hereby cultural characteristics and social structures should be taken into account. This will benefit the satisfaction, sense of ownership and community feeling of the residents [2024]. Thus, scalarity of communities provides structure in camp, giving a sense of safety as well as belonging.

Practical implication

- Camp is organised in groups of 10 households, scaling with a factor 3 in several steps to the current 4 zones.
- Physical layout of camp reflects the group formation



Refugee Settlement Chad in 2009 [UNHCR, 2019]

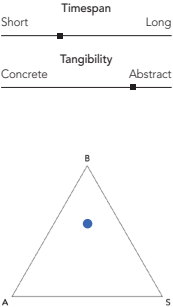


Fig. 31: A pattern page from each of the stakeholders [own work, 2024]

Game with Stakeholders

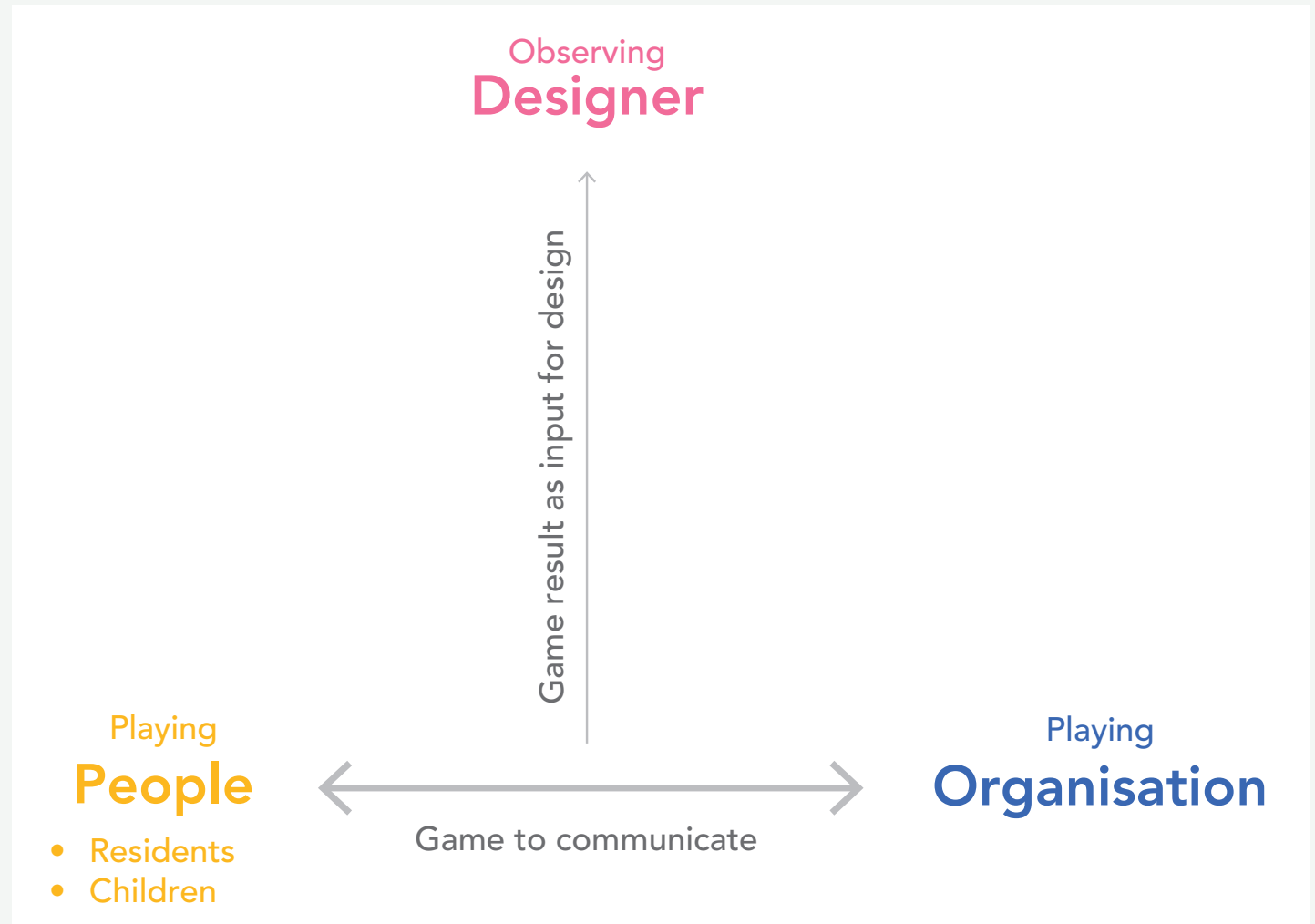


Fig. 32: Purpose of the game for the stakeholders [own work, 2024]

Playces of Patterns

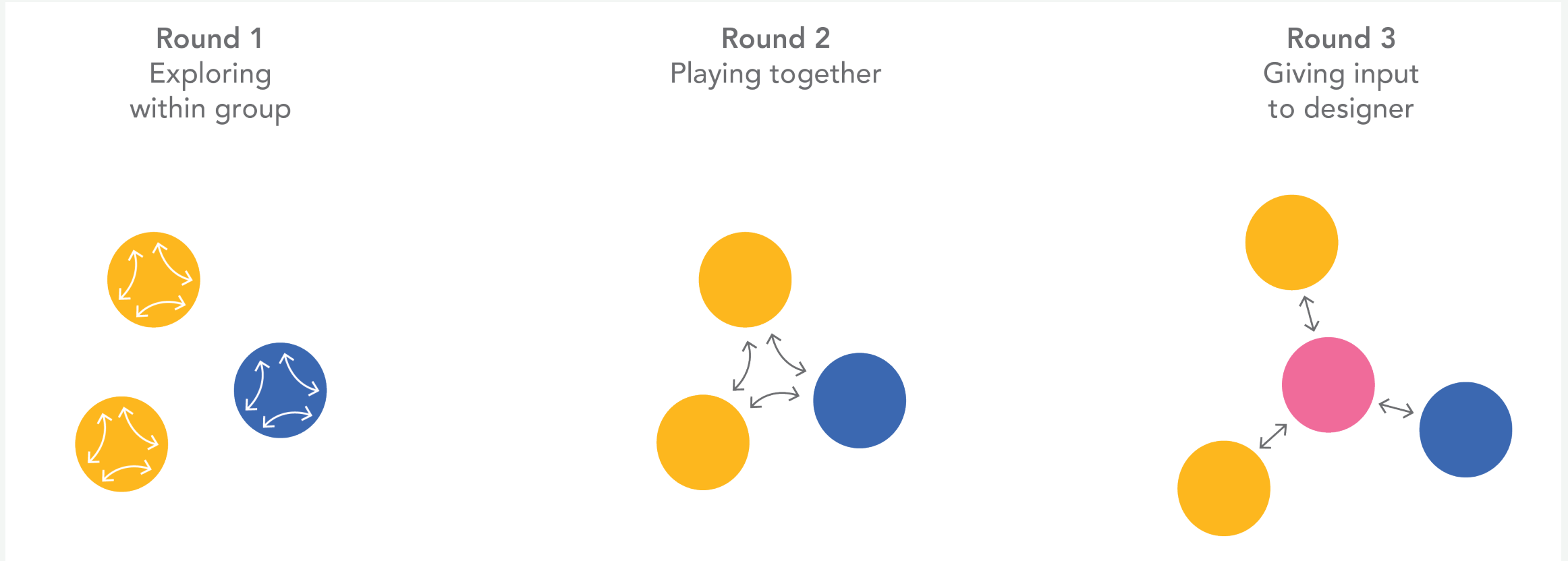


Fig. 33: Rounds during the Pattern Game [own work, 2024]

7. To Our Courtyard

Is this our courtyard?

Yes, we share this space
with our neighbours

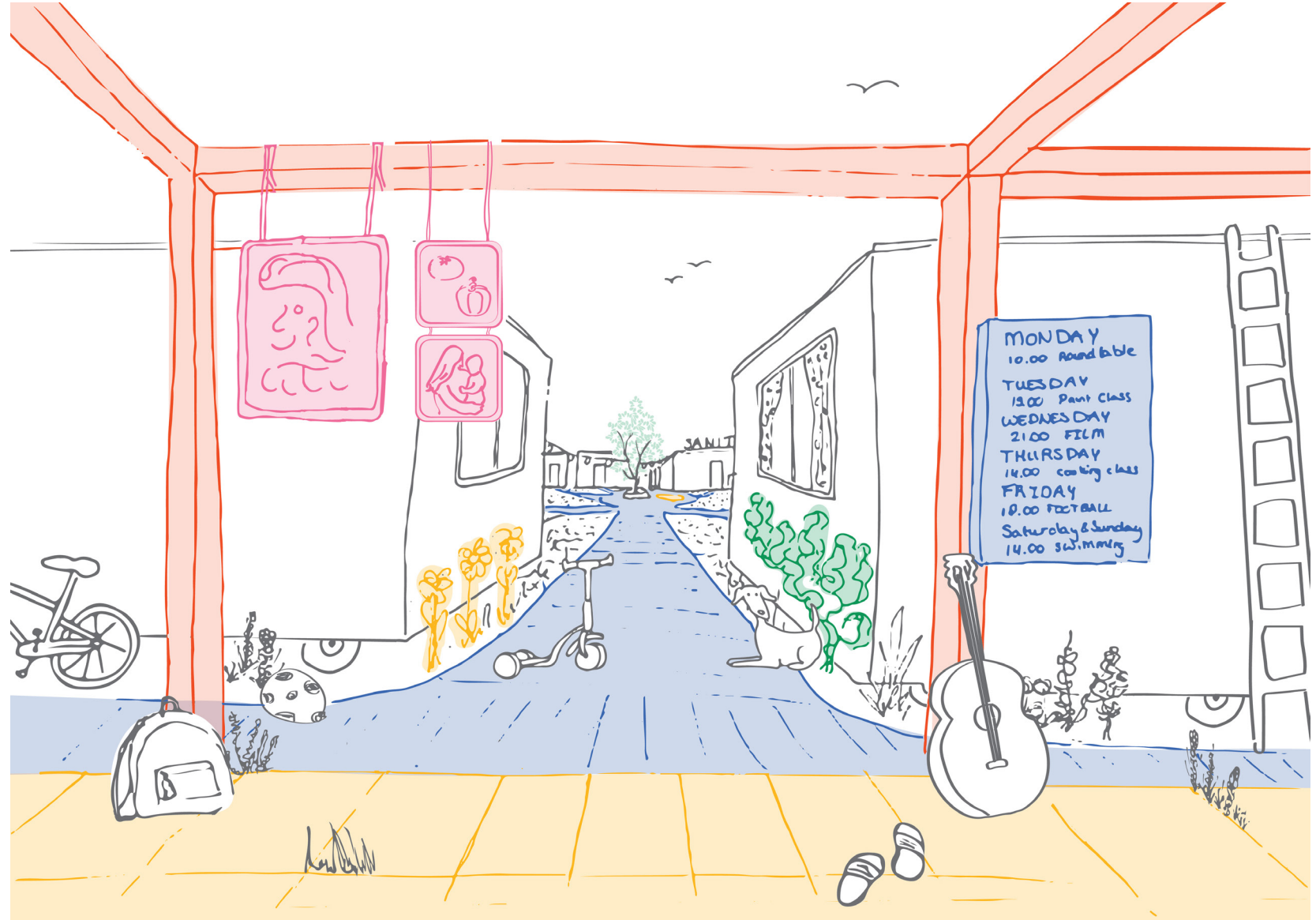


Fig. 34: View to the courtyard [own work, 2025]

Spatial Configuration Syria

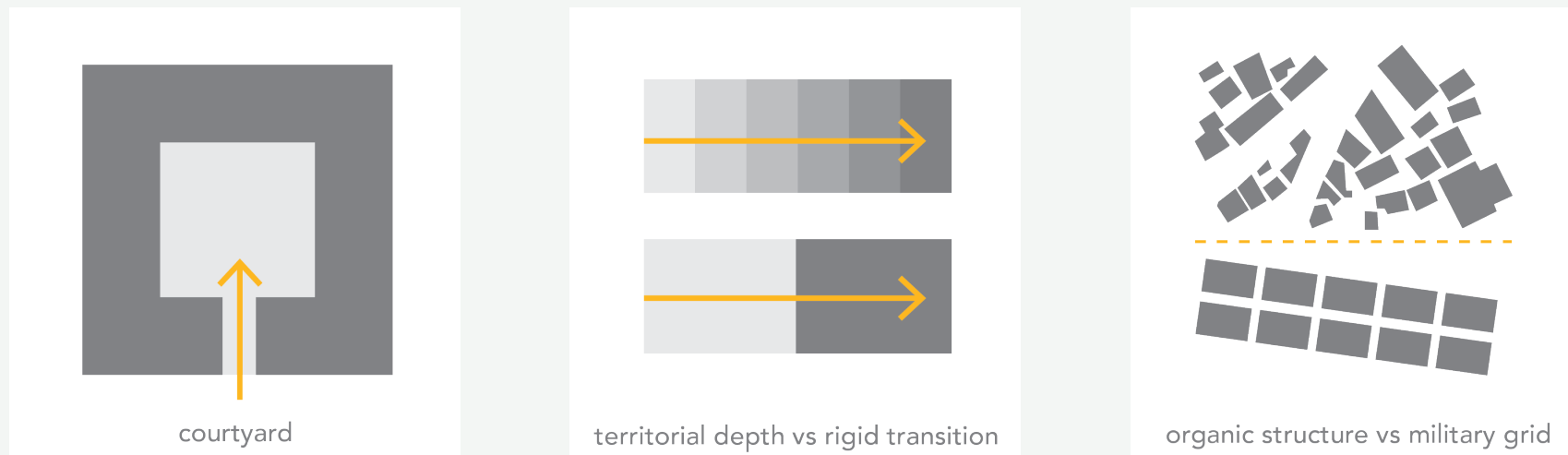


Fig. 35: Conclusion spatial analysis of the three homes [own work, 2024]

Our Configuration

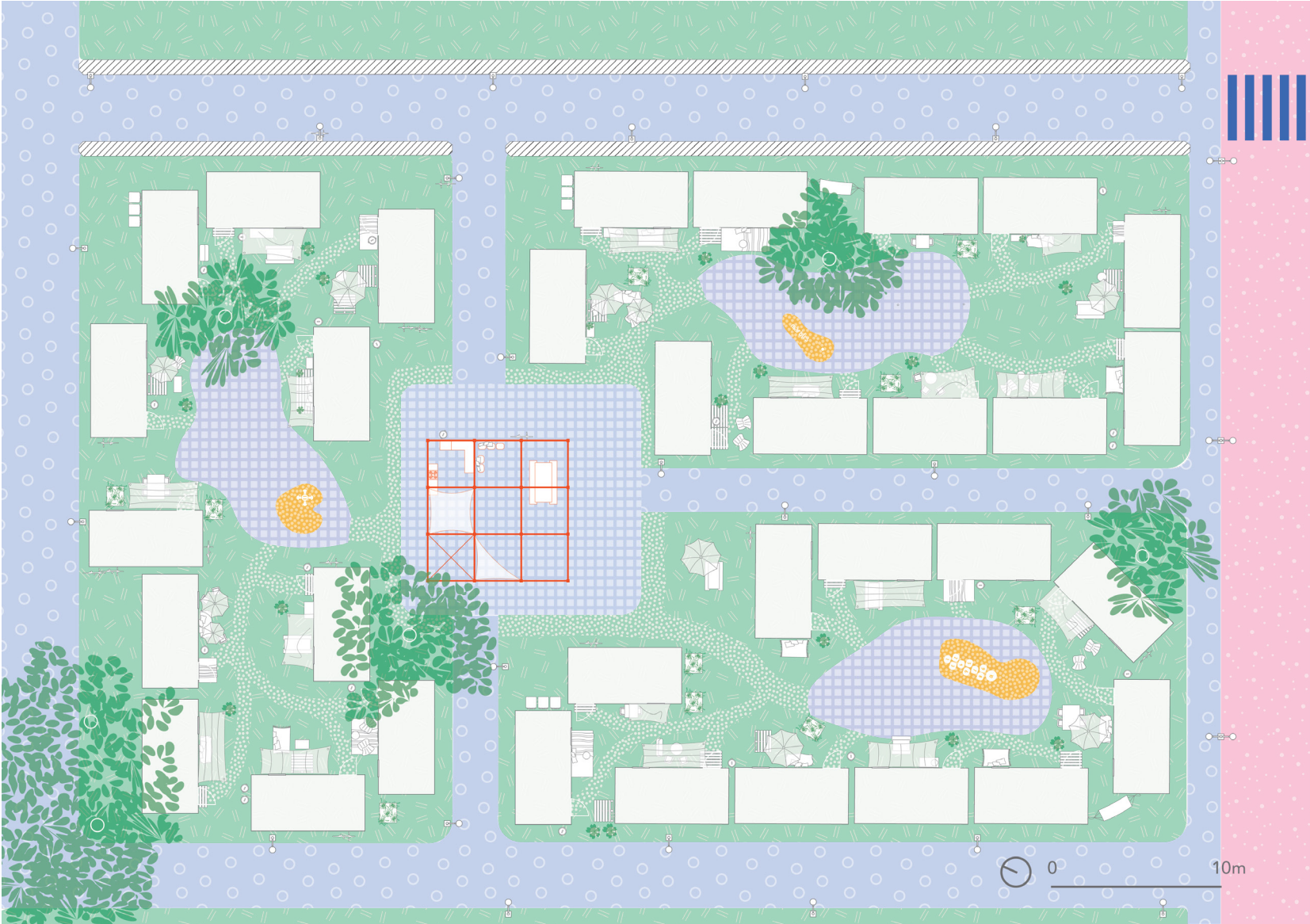


Fig. 36: Map of the courtyards in the pink rabbit cluster [own work, 2024]

8. At Home in the Pit

I need to go to the toilet first,
can you play for a bit?

I will play with marbles!

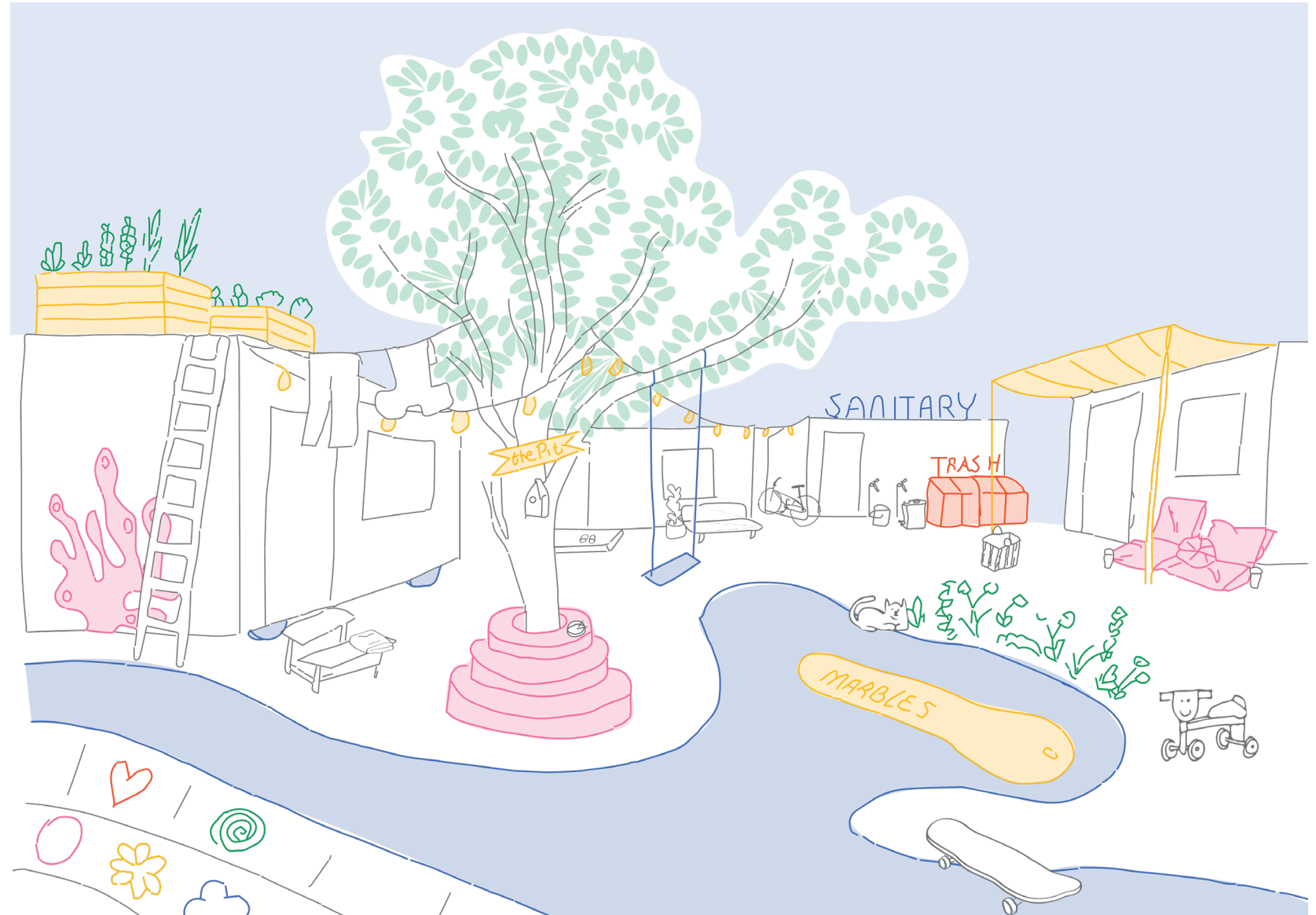


Fig. 37: View of the courtyard in the pink rabbit cluster [own work, 2024]

Living in Camp Now

These two isoboxes are of Syrian families, all isoboxes are located in blue zone.

Families with children and single women live in this zone.

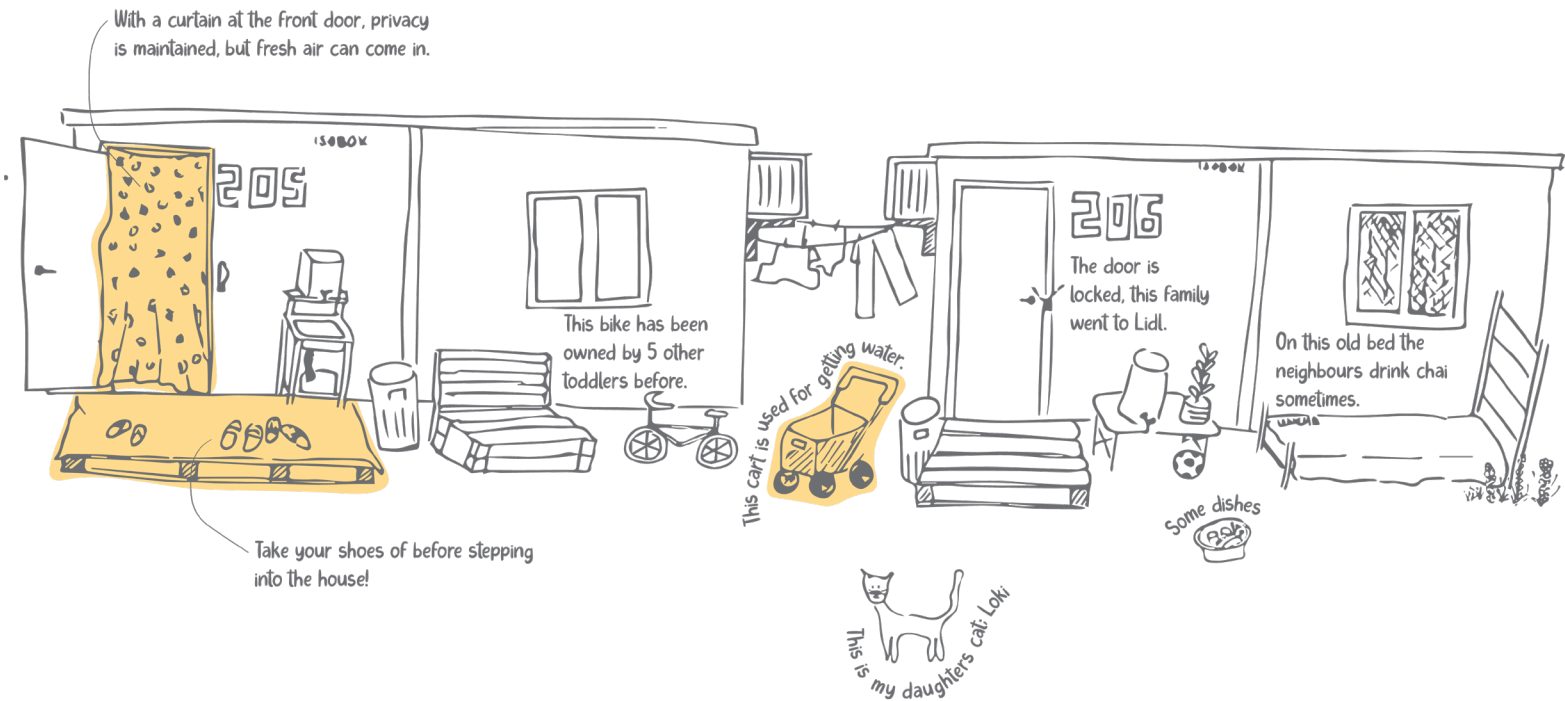


Fig. 38: Living around the isoboxes in blue zone in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

Living in Camp Now

In these two refugee housing units (RHU's) live in total 16 single men! They did not know each other before arriving here.

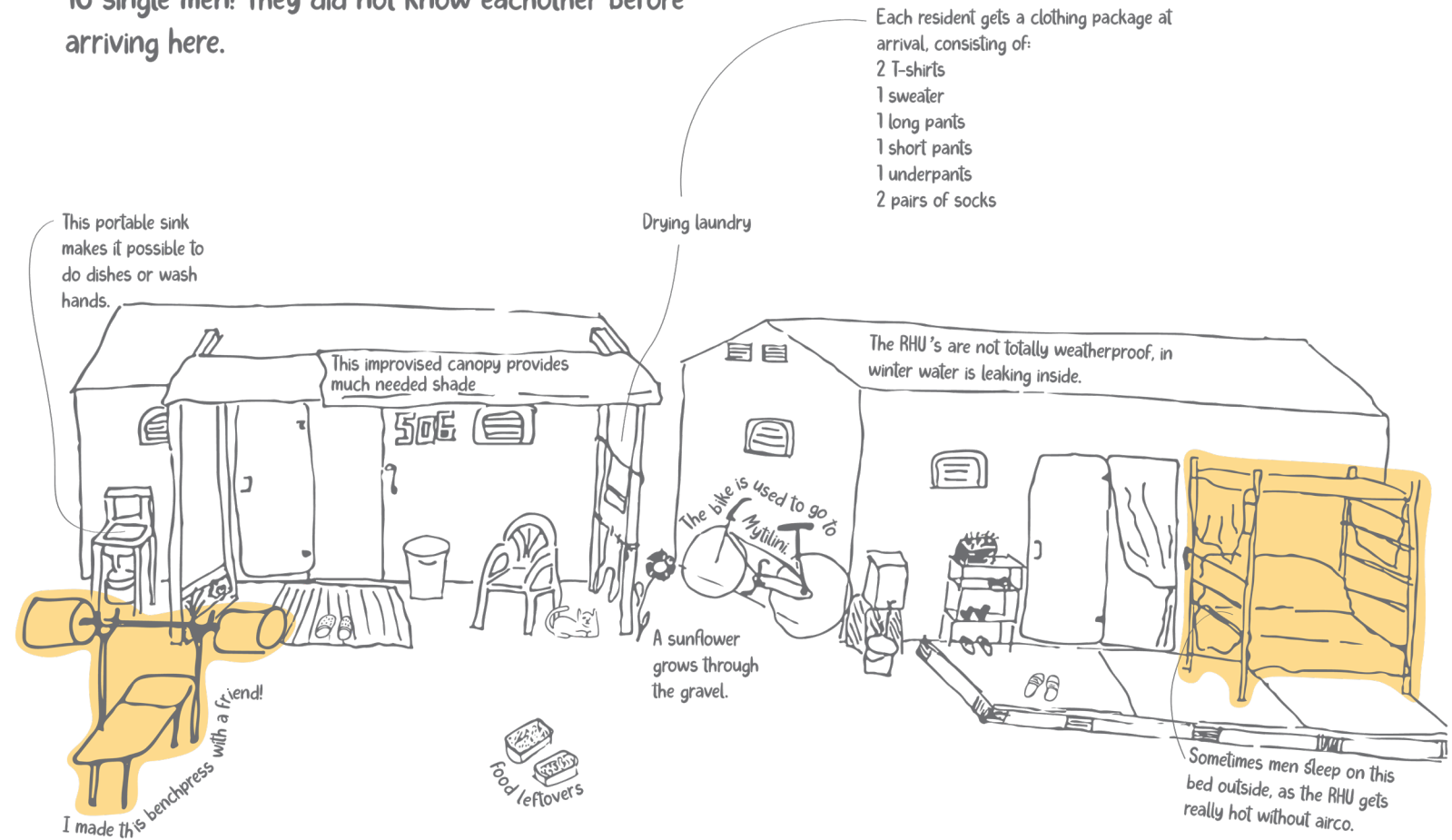


Fig. 39: Living around the RHU's in red zone in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

9. Passing Main Street

We need some household items and new clothes, so we have to go shopping.

But I want to go to the slides!

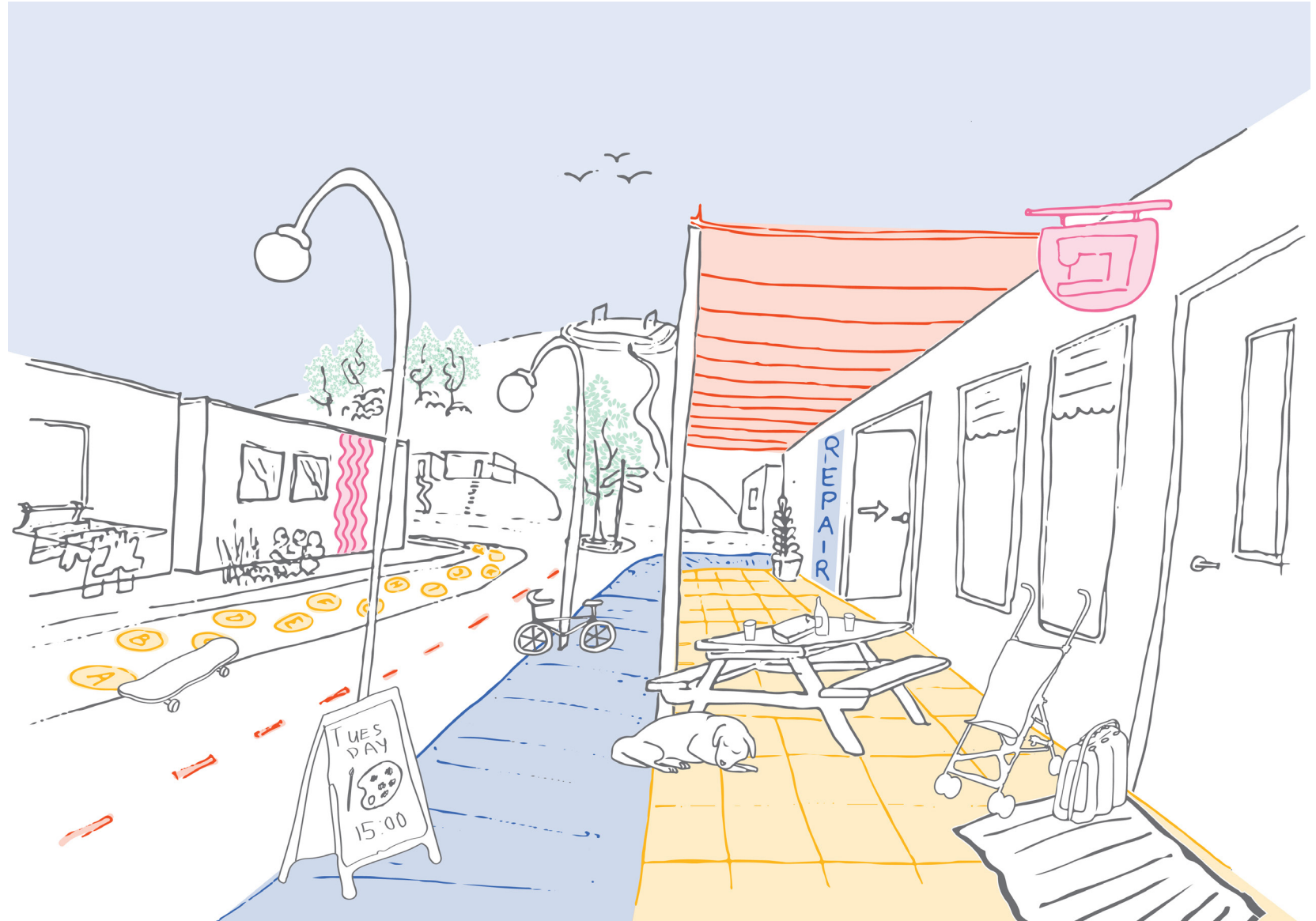


Fig. 41: View to the hill from the main street [own work, 2024]

Playing on the Hill Now

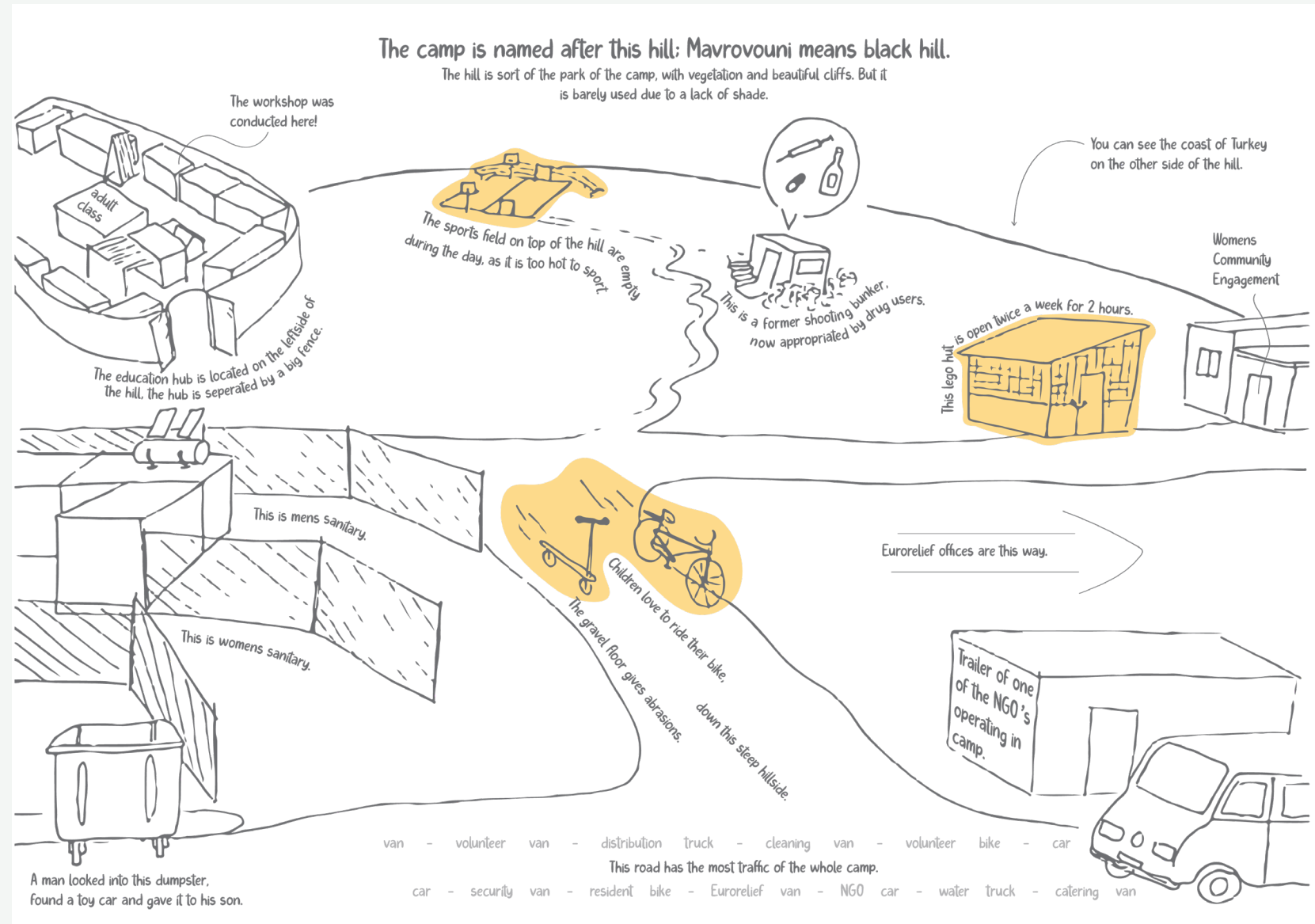


Fig. 42: [Play] facilities on the hillside in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

10. Play on the Hill Slides!

This playground is so cool!

The green slide is my favorite!

Looks like our kids are friends already, did you just arrive?

Yes, we got here this morning!



Fig. 43: Playground on the hillside [own work, 2025]

Playing in Camp Now

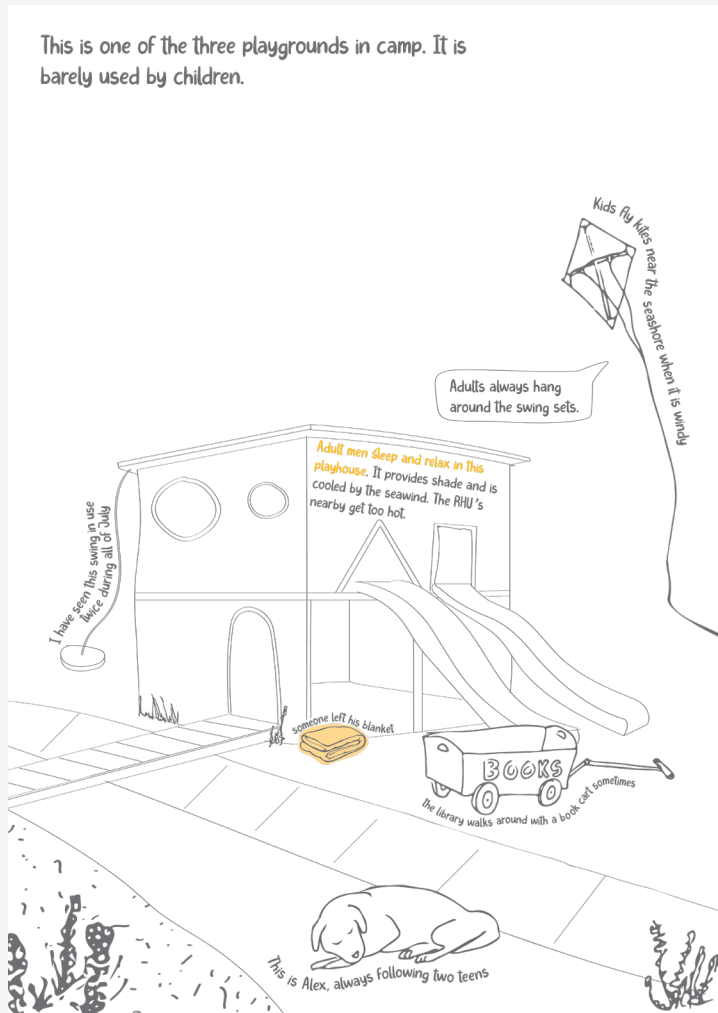


Fig. 44: Play house in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

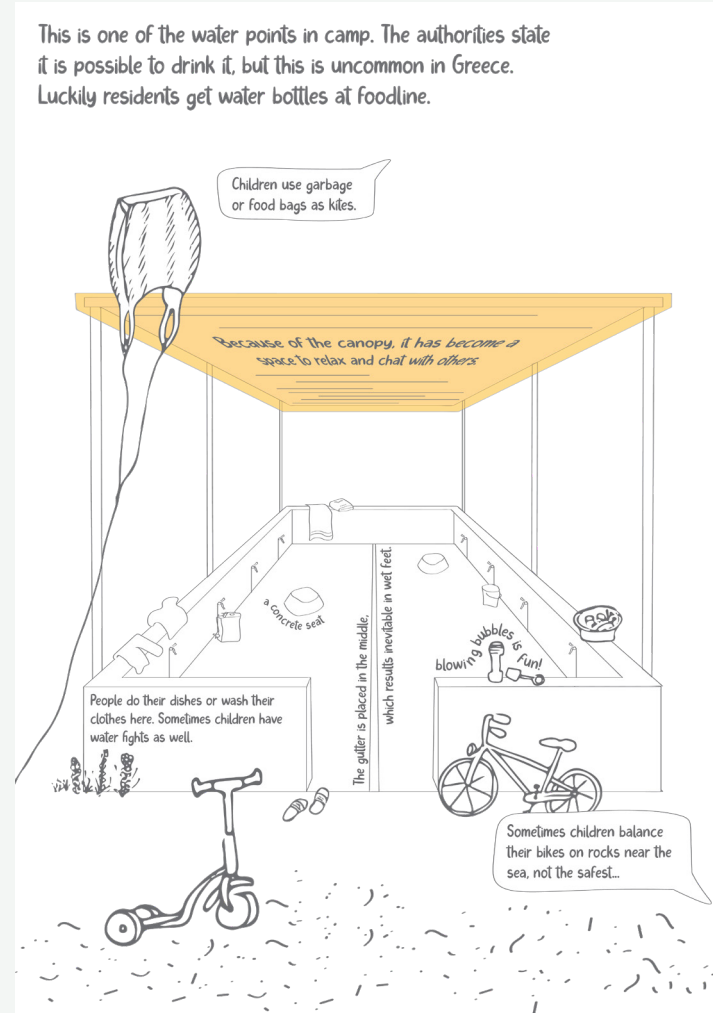


Fig. 45: Water point in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]



Fig. 46 : Natural shade in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

11. Our Blue Belt

I need to go home!
Where do you live?

At the blue elephant, do you
want to swim tomorrow?

Yes that would be fun!
I will pick you up.

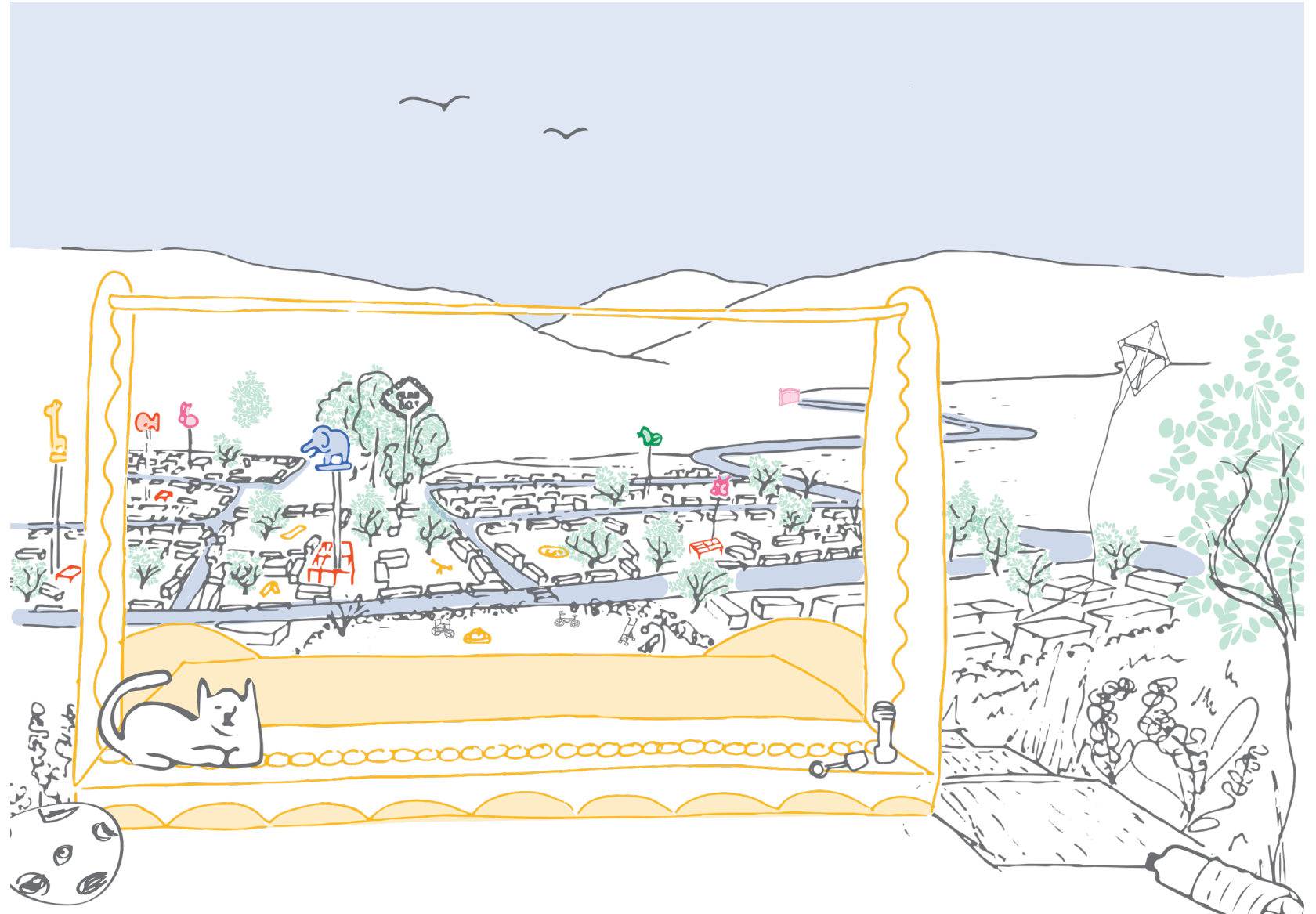


Fig. 47: View on the blue belt from the highest slide in the playground [own work, 2025]

12. A Swim at Seal Shore

Shall we go down
the waterslide?

Yes, but first let's get an
icecream from my moms stall!

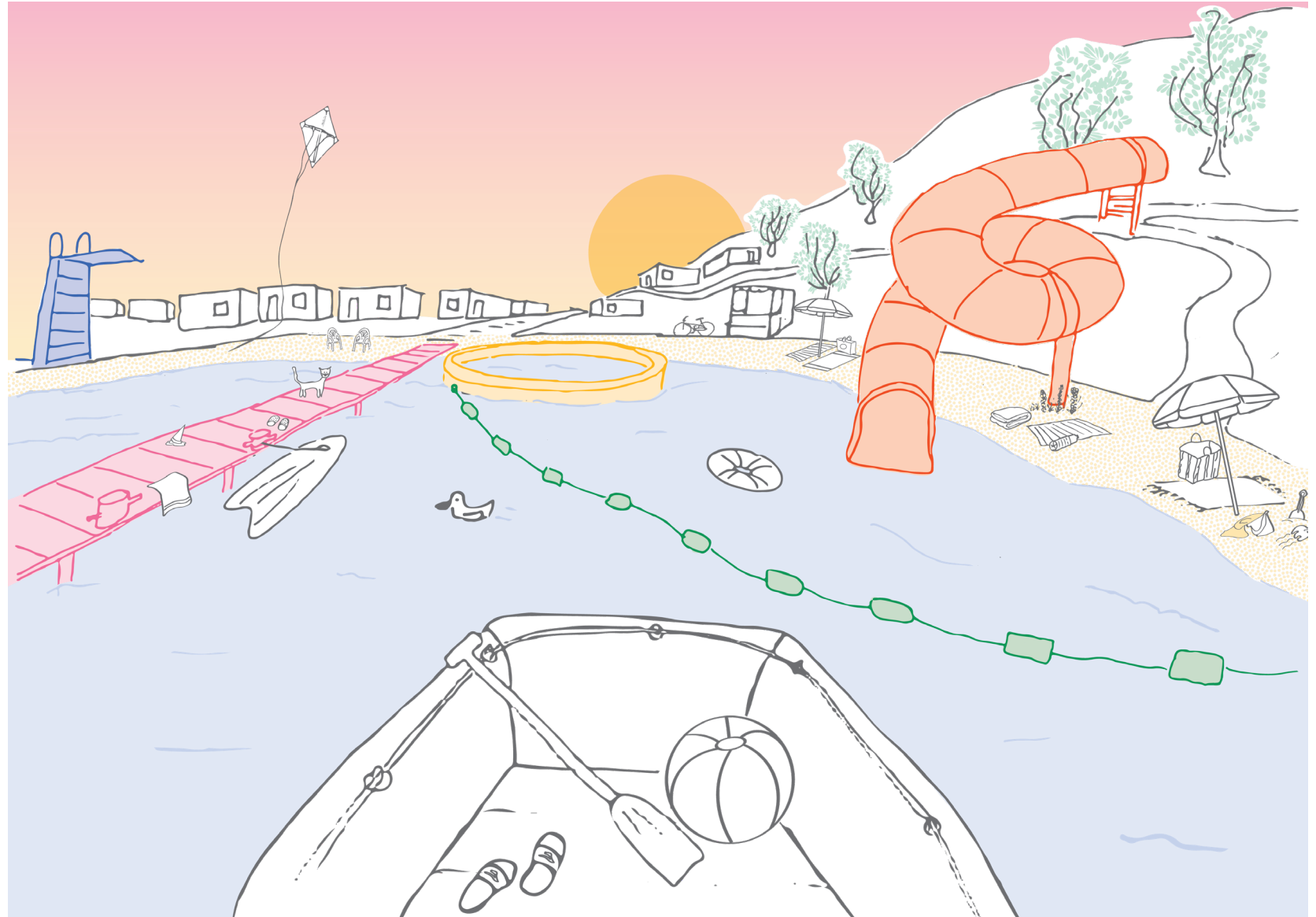


Fig. 48: View on the Seal Shore from a rubber boat in the sea [own work, 2025]

Thank you!

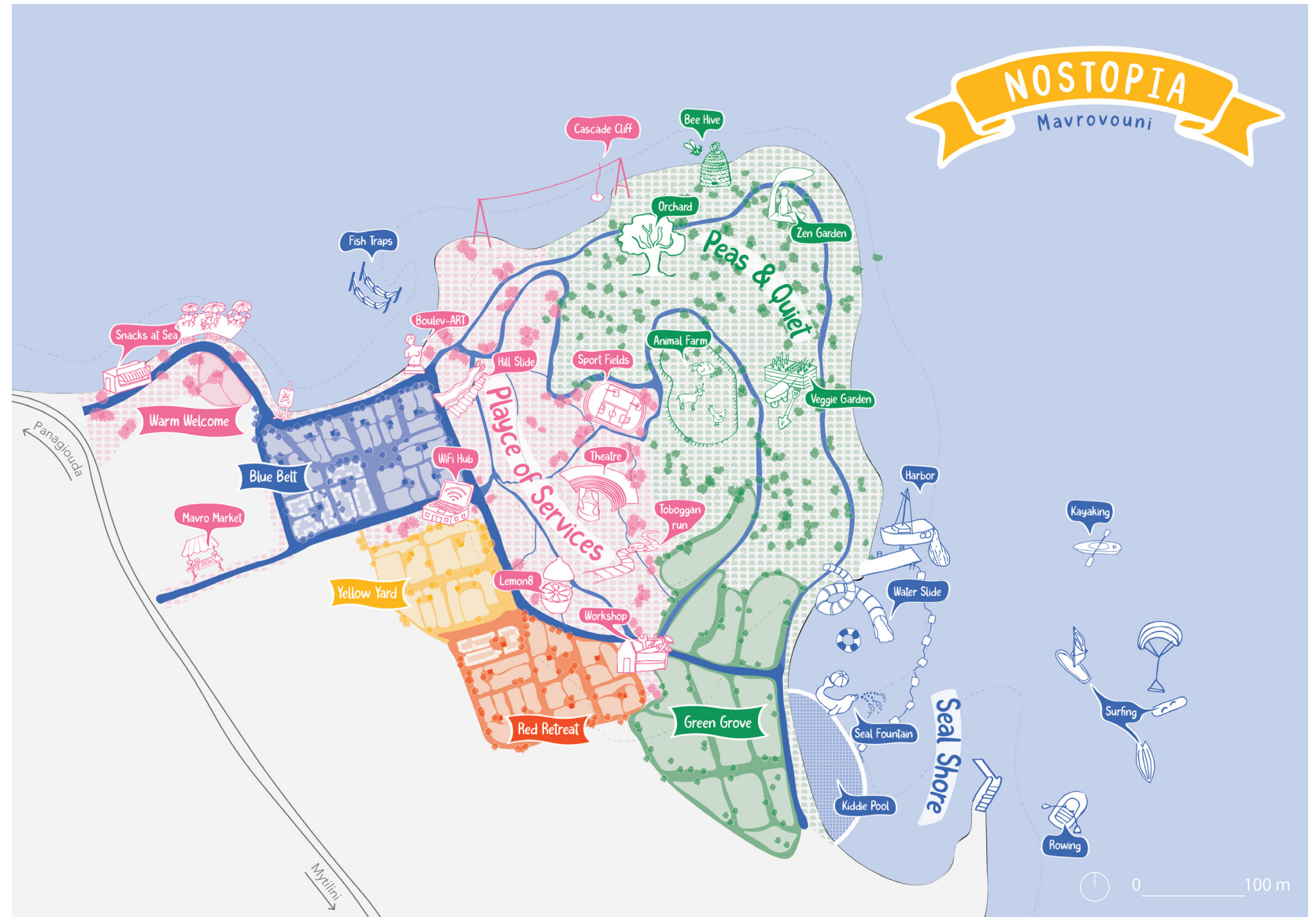


Fig. 49: Map of Nostopia Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

Research Question & Design Aim

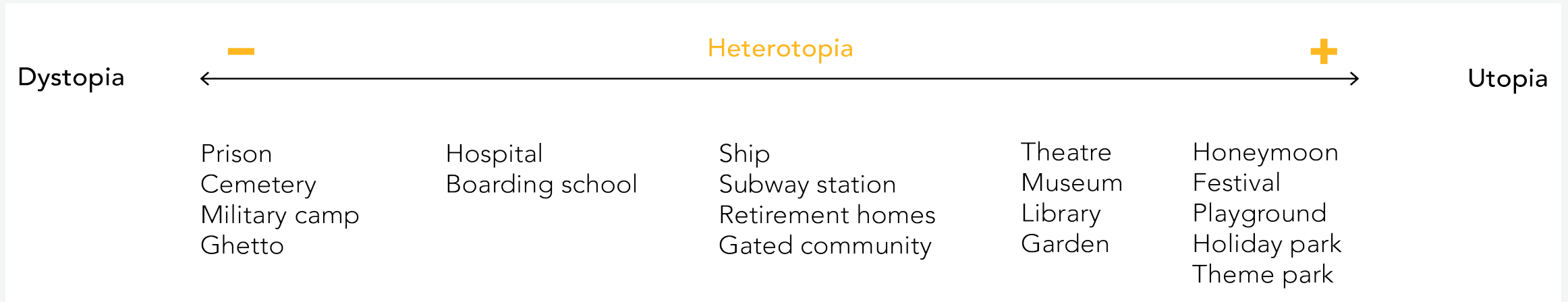
How can **play** be used to create a vision of **heterotopia** Mavrovouni that provides a sense of **home** for displaced **children**?

- How can the concept of topia benefit revisioning the refugee camp in relation to home and play?
- What are the spatial characteristics of the three homes along the route of displacement?
- How do children and parents live and play in CCAC Mavrovouni?



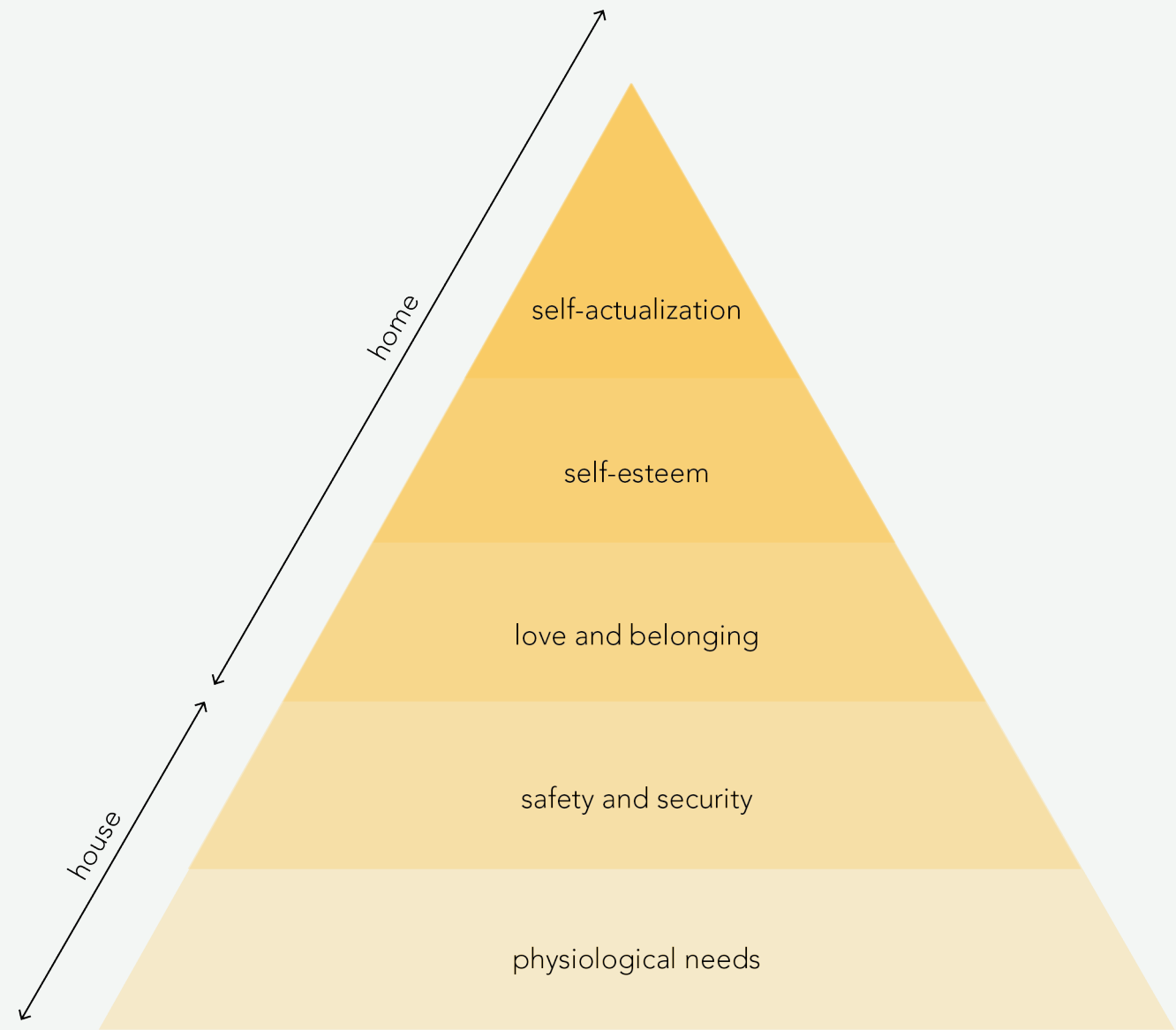
Take along Playmobil dollhouse as a metaphor [Playmobil, n.d.]

Journey of Topias



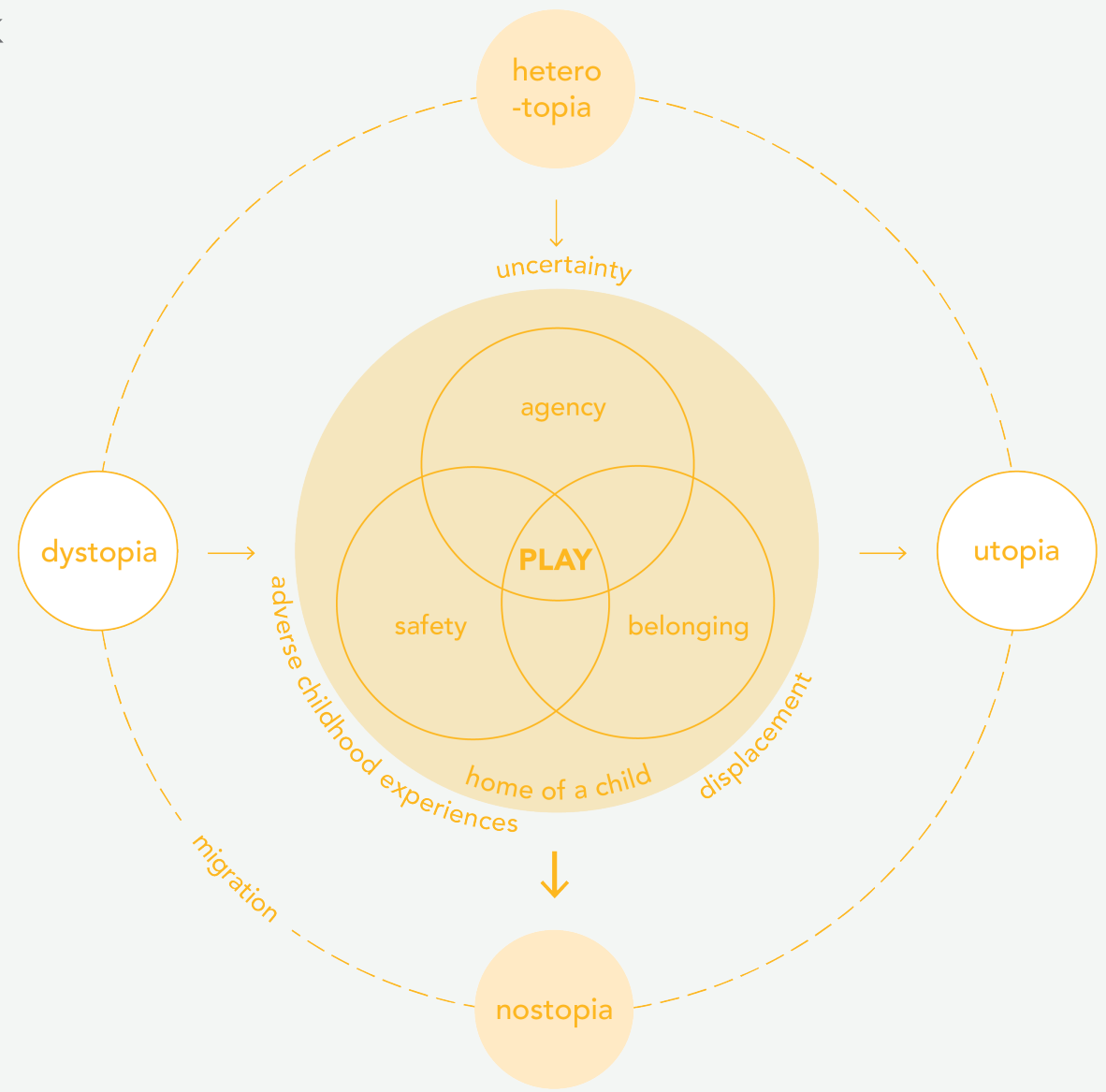
Maquette of refugee journey, from dystopia along heterotopia towards utopia [Own work, 2024]

Home



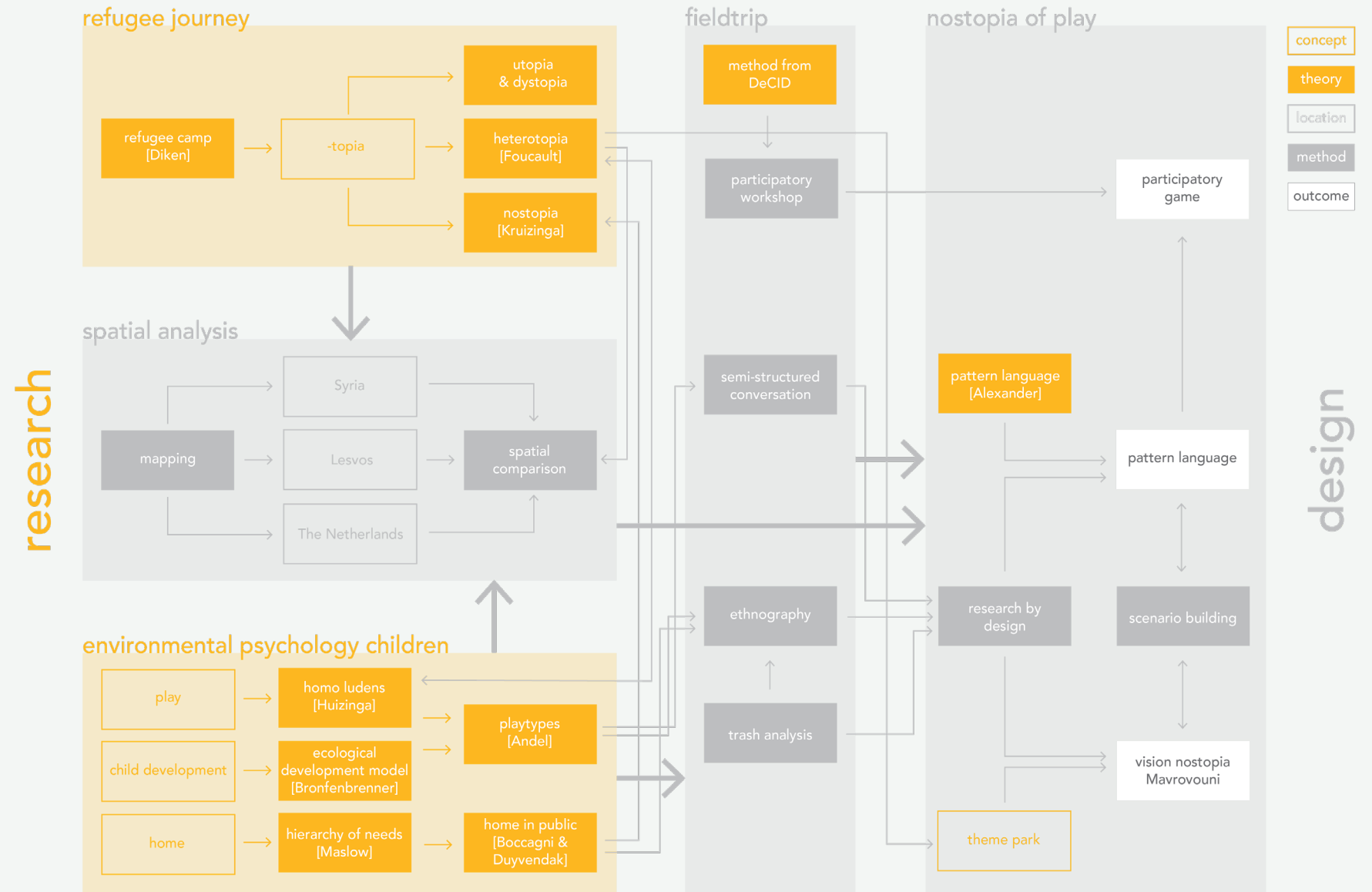
Pyramid of Maslow in relation to home [own work, 2024; based on Kiser, 2016]

Conceptual Framework



Conceptual framework [own work, 2024]

Methodology



Theoretical-Methodological Framework [own work, 2024]

Syria



Nolli map Aleppo with souks and mosques [Own work, 2024; based on Università IUAV di Venezia et al., 2017]

Delft

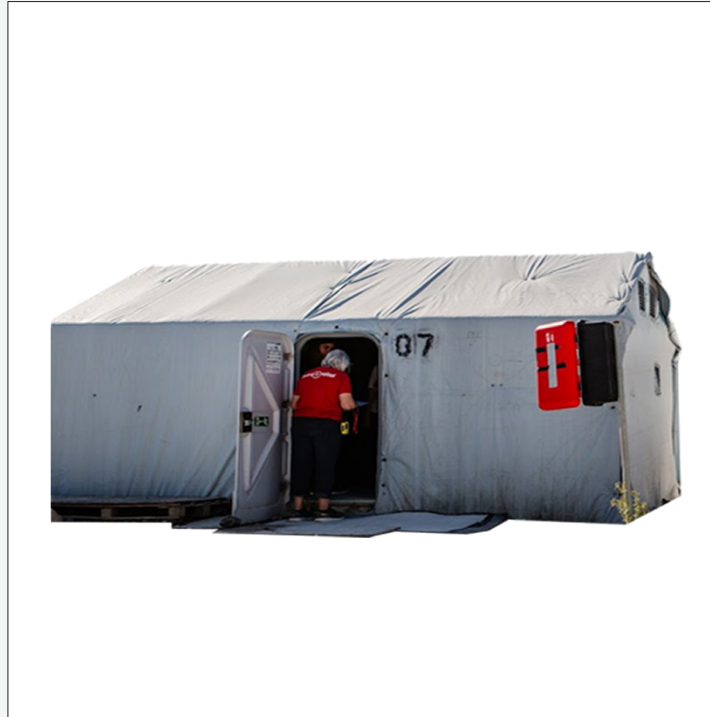


Residential and shopping areas of Delft and the location of refugee centre Manderspark [own work, 2024; based on PDOK, 2024]

Syria



Lesvos



Delft



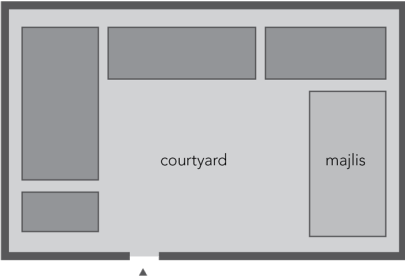
Three homes along the journey [Bayt Al Fann, 2022 & Eurorelief, 2024 & De Haan, 2022]

Syria

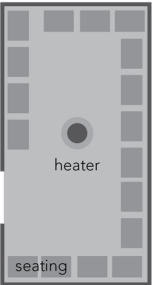
Lesvos

Delft

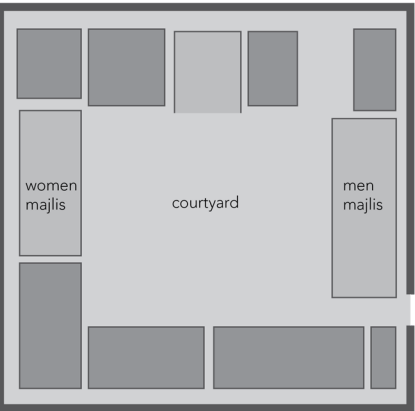
Typical Courtyard Housing



Majlis



0 1 m

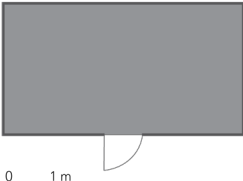


0 2 m

Isobox UNCHR

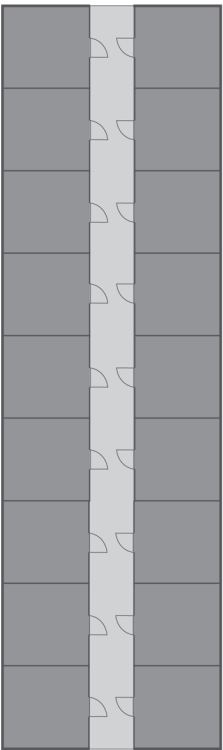


Refugee Housing Unit [RHU] UNCHR



0 1 m

Rubb-hall



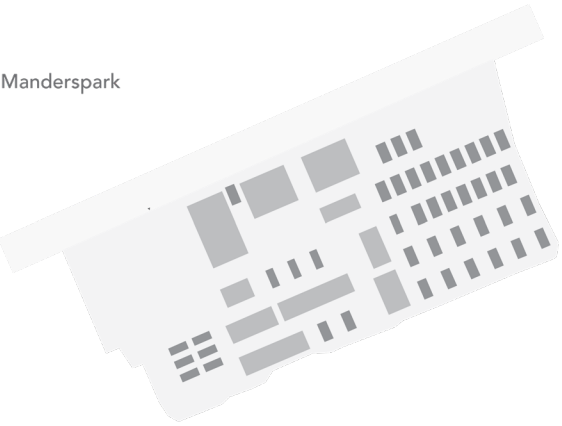
0 2 m

Container Unit



0 1 m

Manderspark



0 50 m

public private

Camp zoning



The residential zones in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

Trash analysis



Analysis of found litter in Mavrovouni [own work, 2024]

Education team



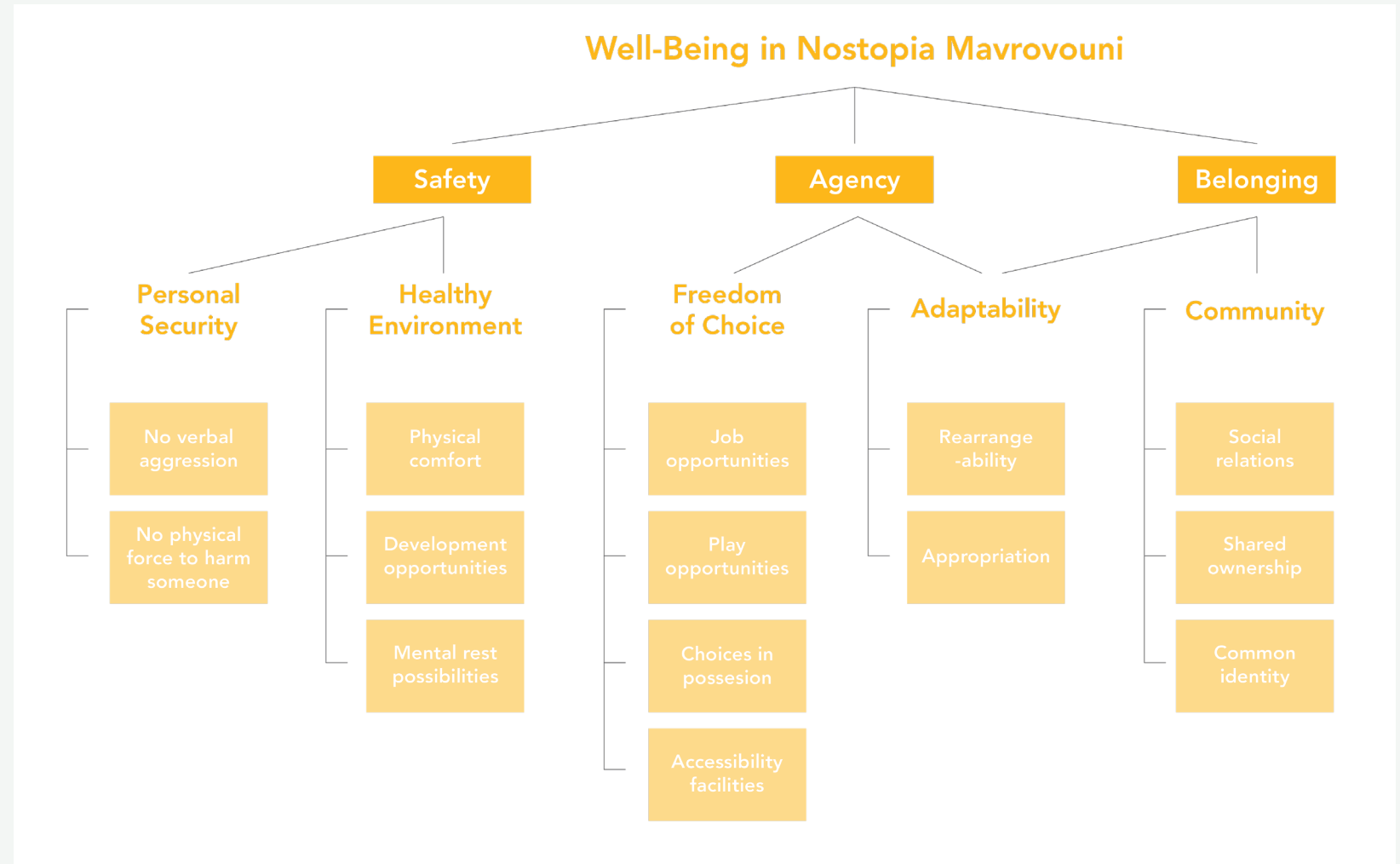
Collage summarizing the work in the education team of Eurorelief [own work, 2024]

Workshop



Analysis of the outcomes of the Visioning Play workshop [own work, 2024]

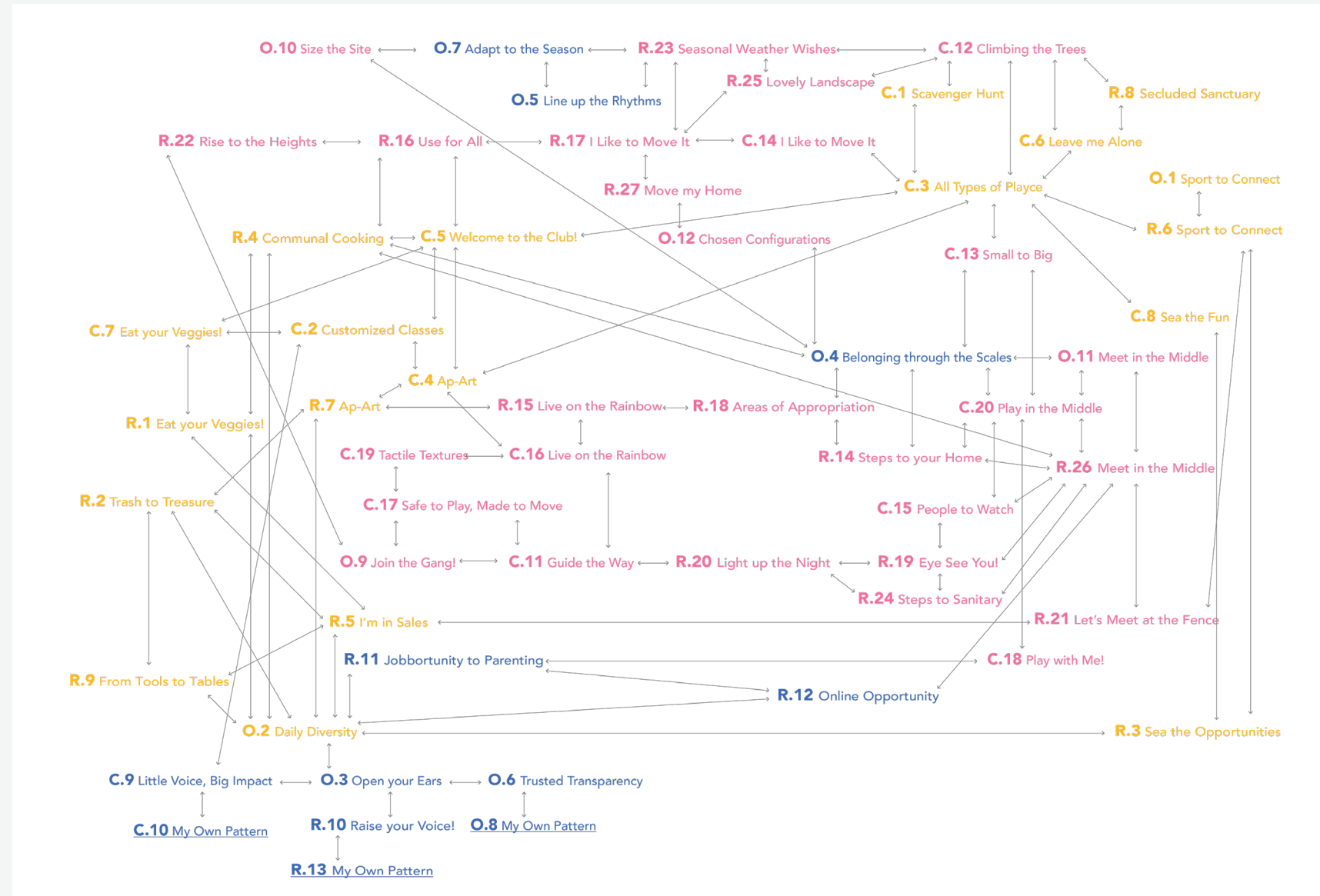
Objectives



Objective tree [own work, 2024]



Pattern Relations



Pattern field depicting relations between the patterns [own work, 2024]

Validation of Patterns

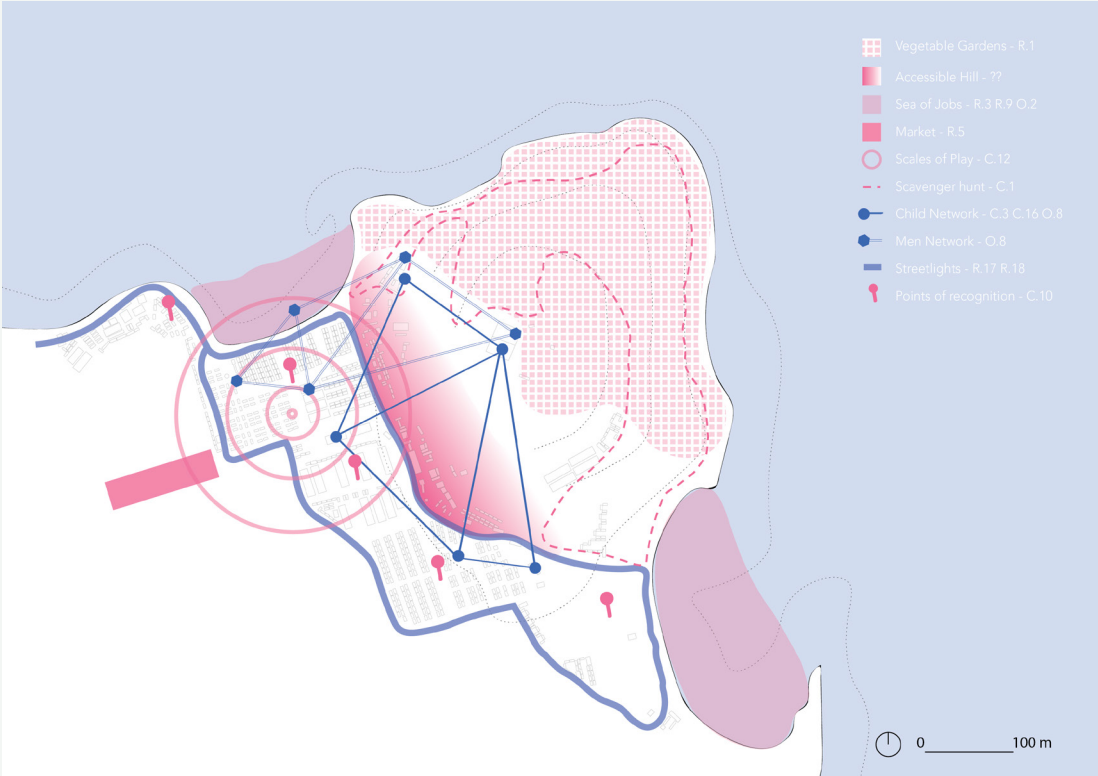


Use of space in refugee housing location in Gouda [own work, 2024]

Camp in Control



Collage Camp in Control [own work, 2024]

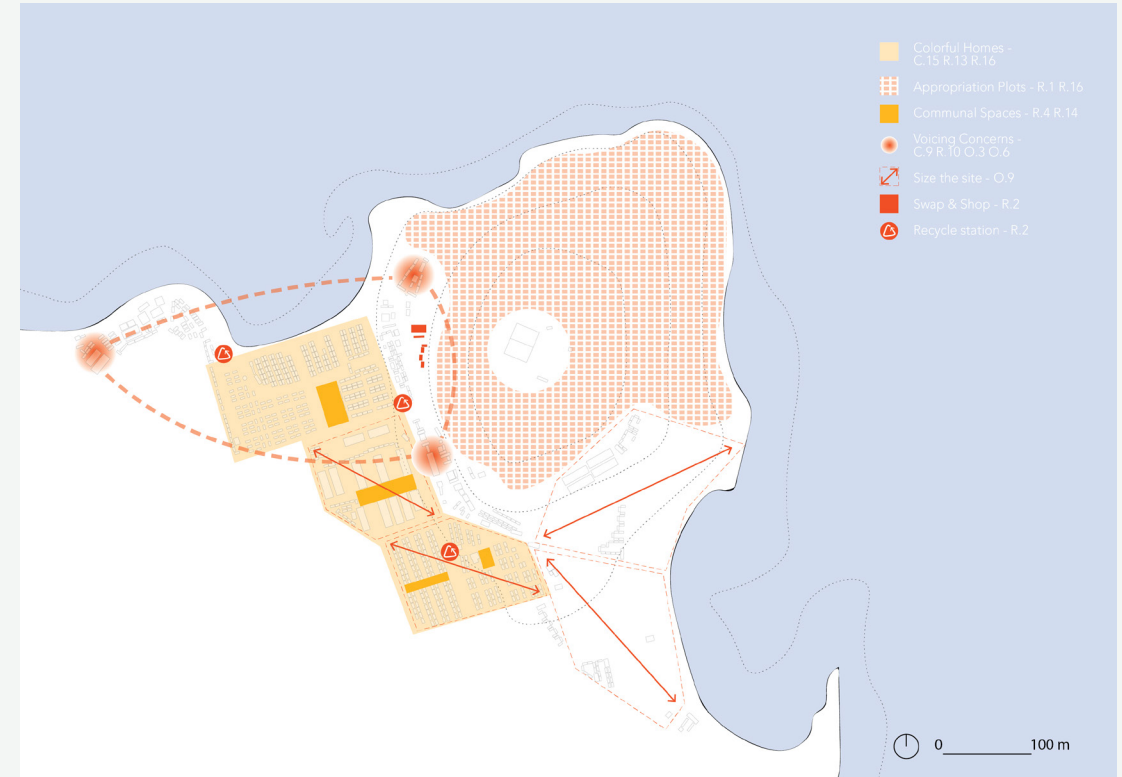


Scenario map Camp in Control [own work, 2024]

Shared Freeland

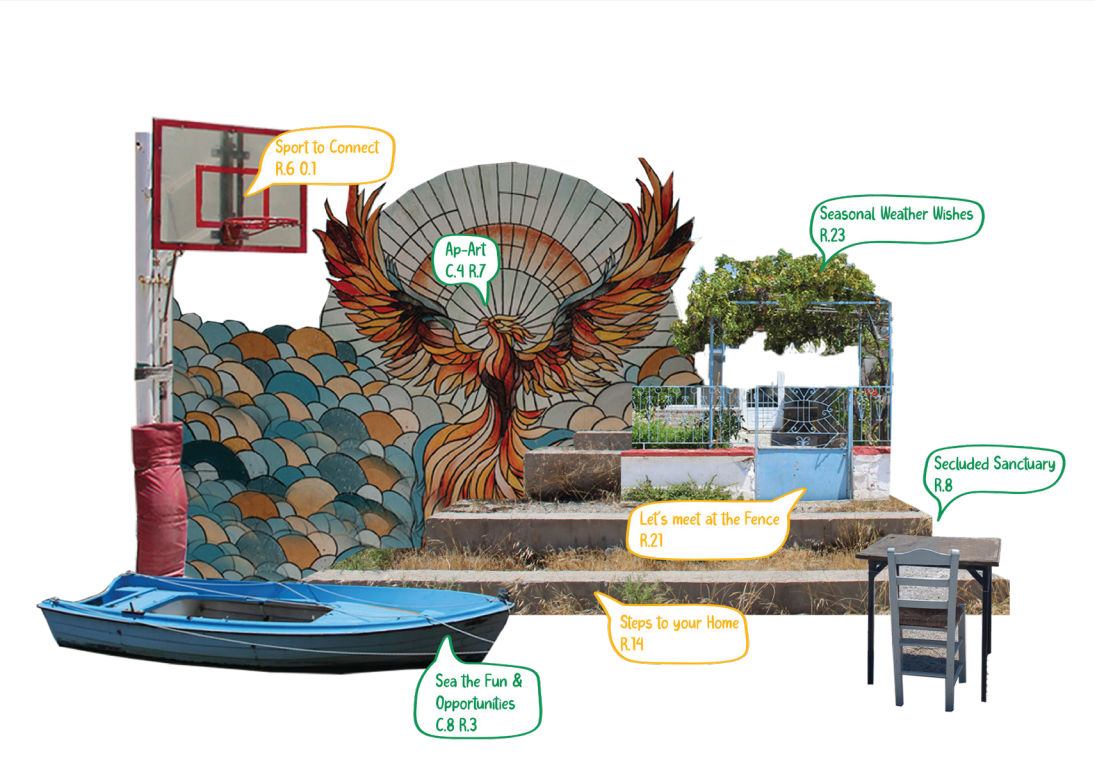


Collage Shared Freeland [own work, 2024]



Scenario map Shared Freeland [own work, 2024]

Our Harbour



Collage Our Harbour [own work, 2024]



Scenario map Our Harbour [own work, 2024]

Test game

- Dialogue facilitator
- Fun combinations
- Objective validation
- [Visual] Language
- Considerations for playing in camp