| IAAU | IAAU |

The Initiator, The Artist, the Advocate and the Urbanist

platform for culture and city making

Co-Plan | Tirana | AL | Mikser + School of Urban Practices | Belgrade | RS | KOR_Csd |Skopje | RM | IFHP/Urbego | Copenhagen| DK | Blok74 | Rotterdam | NL |

Savamala the Game

@IAAU Belgrade Workshop

Milica Andjelković |Tamara Bijelić |Simone Gobber |Mustafa Hasanov |Dimosthenis Houpas | Milena Ivković |Elena Kasselouri |Laura Krull |Giulia Maci |Ramon Marrades |Stefan Nikolić | Filipa Pajević |Maja Popović|Alex Seltea|Sofia Theodoraki|Ewout Versloot

BAC Balkans Arts &Culture Fund | ArtAngle Balkans |

Savamala the Game

@ IAAU Belgrade workshop

DRAFT version

Savamala the Game and IAAU Belgrade workshop are part of the IAAU project, funded and supported by BAC - Balkans Arts and Culture Fund and ArtsAngle Balkan (C) BAC Fund
www.iaauproject.com

Colofon

Savamala the Game
is a part of IAAU Belgrade Workshop

Mikser + School of Urban Practices | **Belgrade** | **RS** |
Maja Lalić, Ivan Kucina

IFHP/Urbego |**Copenhagen**| **DK** |
Giulia Maci, Filipa Pajević

Blok74 | **Rotterdam** | **NL** |
Milena Ivković

Savamala the Game 1.0
Game concept, design and production Milena Ivković |Blok74|
Savamala the Game 2.0
Game concept Milica Andjeković | Dimosthenis Houpas | Milena Ivković | Stefan Nikolić | Ewout Versloot

Special thanks to the dedicated players:
Milica Andjelković |Tamara Bijelić |Simone Gobber |Mustafa Hasanov |Dimosthenis Houpas |Elena Kasselouri |Laura Krull |Giulia Maci |Ramon Marrades | Stefan Nikolić | Filipa Pajević |Maja Popović|Alex Seltea|Sofia Theodoraki|Ewout Versloot

Text author Milena Ivković |Blok74| **Savamala Scenario's Infographic** Blok74
Photos and illustrations credits (c) Alex Seltea (c) Mikser House (c) Milena Ivković/ Blok74 (c) Dimosthenis Houpas (c) Flickr (c) www various sources **Graphic design** Blok74

During 2013 and 2014 five Balkan and European partners with background in urban planning, cultural and social development (Co-Plan, Tirana, Mikser + School of Urban Practices, Belgrade, KOR_Csd, Skopje, IFHP/Urbego, Copehagen and Blok74 Rotterdam) started the project " IAAU - Initiator, the Artist, his Advocate and the Urbanist – a platform for culture and citymaking" with intention to understand, stimulate and raise awareness about the role of civic urban activism in three cities of the region: Belgrade, Tirana and Skopje. By metaphorically using four key-roles of urban activism (Initiators = entrepreneurs, Artists = creatives, Advocates = activists and Urbanists =planners/professionals) to visualise the strength of collaborative, participative thinking, the project aims to offer a platform to support positive change in the Balkans' cities.

The essential parts of the project are the interactive IAAU workshops. These "face-to-face" meetings between project partners, local artist collectives, neighbourhood activists and young urban designers took place in three distinctive neighbourhoods / localities in Belgrade, Tirana and Skopje over the course of 2014. Each workshop consisted of two parts: an investigative part – learning and discussing about most important issues of the built environment in each neighbourhood and a conclusive part – formulation of the outcomes of the investigations, accompanied with public presentations. In order to speak to the wider public and local participants, the workshops were embedded in the relevant cultural events: Mikser Festival in Belgrade, Tirana Architecture Week in Tirana and Kor_CSD IAAU event in Skopje.

Content

1
Why an Urban Game for Savamala?

2
Savamala as Board Game

3
The players: Initiators, Advocates, Artists, Urbanists

4
Game Rules: simulation of the collaborative city-making process

5
Results of the Game: 4 collaborative scenario's for Savamala

6
Make the Game to Understand the City

1.
Why an Urban Game for Savamala?

The important part of the IAAU workshop investigations was to play an “urban game” about particular spatial issues in the neighbourhood. In the context of the IAAU project, urban game means an analogue playful interaction, where workshop participants become “players” gathered around the location map. By playing with distinctive 3D game pieces, using their own hands and negotiation skills to built spatial models the players take part in the simplified simulation of the city-making process. In this way they co-create different future scenarios, build coalitions, and visualise solutions for specific spatial, cultural and political issues.

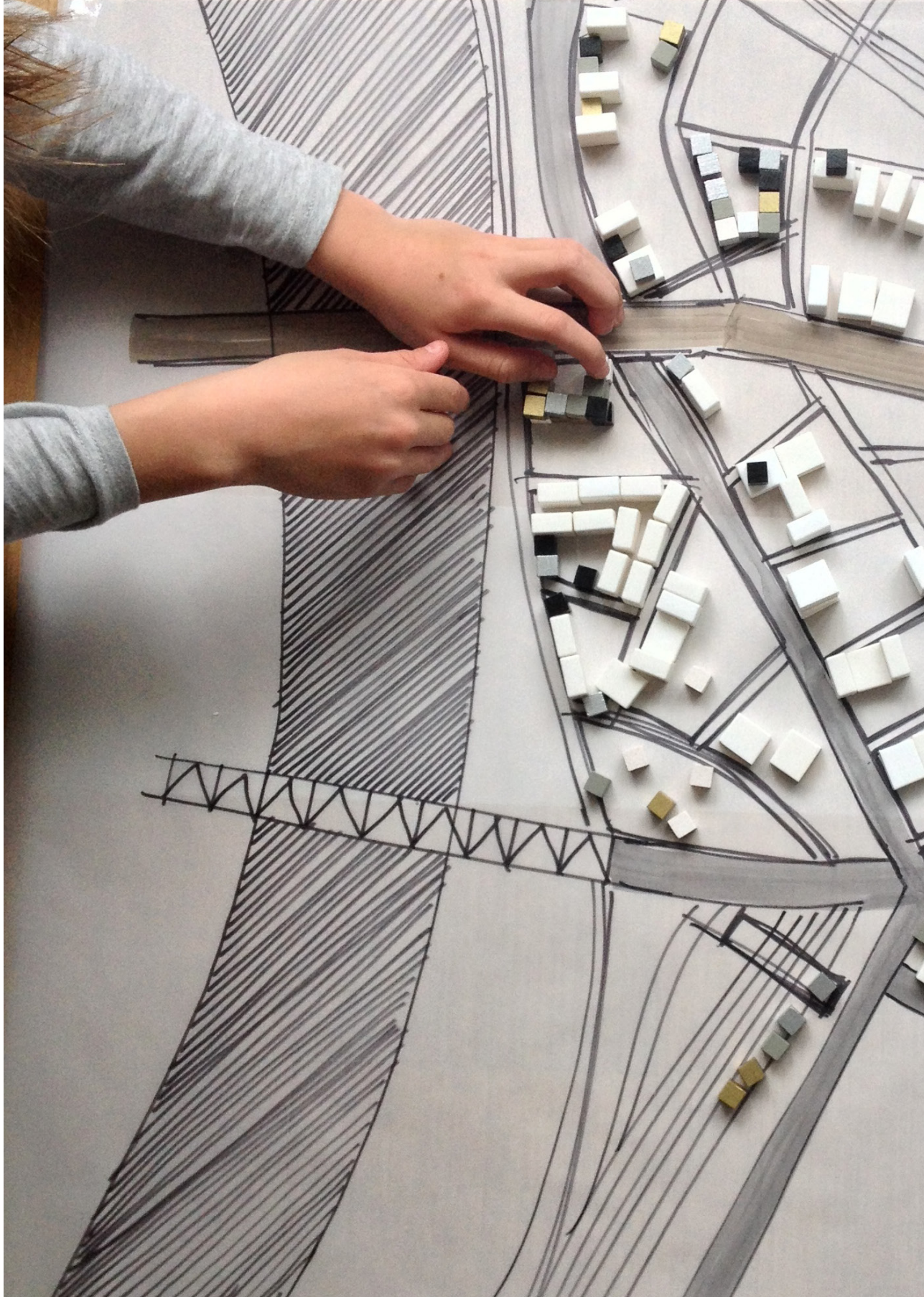
IAAU project partners Co_Plan, Blok74 and School of Urban Practices have successfully used urban game as a participative design and communication instrument in several previous autonomous projects. As the matter of fact, a locally developed “Play the Neighbourhood” analogue urban game by Co_Plan has become part of their successful methodology to support citizen-initiated public space renewal of the urban pockets in the Tirana’s housing blocks.

In the case of Belgrade’s IAAU project location Savamala, the purpose of the “Savamala the Game” was to showcase how a simple city-making simulation can offer a platform to make scenario’s for creative resilience in a highly politicized and difficult context.

Thanks to several cultural establishments (such as Mikser House, Cultural Centre Grad and Design Incubator Nova Iskra) as well as a broad spectrum of non-governmental, artistic and citizen-led organisations (such as School of Urban Practices, Urban Incubator, Savamala Society) Savamala became essential for civic and cultural life of the city of Belgrade. However, the neighbourhood has been put under tremendous pressure since the plans for multi-billion-redevelopment project called “Belgrade on Water” were revealed (during 2013). The physical structure of this old neighbourhood was made unrecognizable in the presentation material of the “Belgrade on Water” project, raising concerns and anxiety about what will happen with the built heritage, the on-going cultural initiatives and already established self-organizing civic networks in the neighbourhood?

Instead of passively waiting for the “Belgrade on Water” bulldozers to come and clear up their way, Savamala the Game (based on the real-space actors and situations) offers to help its players to discover what can be saved, what can be negotiated, and what is gravely endangered and likely to be wiped away. By playing out “worse case” (or “best case”) scenario’s taking on the IAAU roles, the players strategize about coalition forming, risk taking and spatial programming as well as how to reach out to other city-making actors in order to achieve their goal to preserve Savamala.

2
Savamala as Board Game



The location

Savamala is a centuries old neighbourhood, situated on the south-west bank of the Sava River. It belongs to the central zone of the city of Belgrade, also known as "Sava Amphitheatre". Coming from the direction of New Belgrade and crossing the Sava river, Savamala is among the most visible landmarks of the city, just below the high Terazije terrace and under the foot of the Kalemegdan Fortress.

Savamala today bears the marks of world wars, administrative neglect and economical crisises. Due to unsolved infrastructural problems on the larger urban scale, it is also a transit area for heavy traffic bypassing the city centre. Paradoxically, area that was supposed to reflect the splendour of Parisian-like boulevards (at the beginning of the 20th century) is now intensively polluted traffic bottleneck. Moreover, " *Savamala is economically underdeveloped and socially disadvantaged, and has a reputation as a home for outcast, prostitution and criminality, while its citizens are continuously fighting for better living standards*." [1)]

Choosing the right borders of Savamala in order to define the right location map for the game board was a tricky task, since Savamala is not only a geographical, but also a cultural entity, not easy to capture on a drawing. Still, the very essence of the neighbourhood is the space between two Sava bridges, the Branko Bridge and the Tram Bridge. The middle point of the neighbourhood is the location of Mikser House, and in terms of public space, the square on the Karadjordjeva street and the long stretch of the Sava river Waterfront. The main features and landmarks of Savamala are concentrated on relatively small space, occupying less then 10 city blocks – as the official map of the annual Mikser Festival shows.

[1)] "Bottom-up Urban Development in Action", Marija Cvetinovic, Ivan Kucina, Jean-Claude Bolay, 49th ISOCARP Congress 2013

Shaping the game dynamics

After the big political shifts of the ‘90ies, and opening of the markets for private capital investement (domestic and foreign) in Belgrade’s urban development, Savamala became an interesting target area. Typical for Balkan context, the potential of the neighbourhood has been recognized by often corrupt public authorities and powerful private developers. The only things standing in their way of quick profit turnover over urban land was the complicated ownership structure of many buildings in Savamala, and partly, the ongoing economical crisis.

In the meantime, a number of small-scale public initiatives, as well as creative offices and outlets have found their place in Savamala, occupying spaces and places “no-one wanted to bother with”. In the absence of any strategy coming from top-down institutions, independent cultural entrepreneurs (the “Initiators”) artistic collectives (the “Artists”) NGO / citizens associations (the “Advocates”) and urban planning professionals (the “Urbanists”) have been de-facto urban developers of the area. Often operating with reduced means and temporary structures, they managed to create new life for the neighbourhood, and attract the attention of the local Savski Venac municipality.

This polarizing situation with big interests on the one side and small, but effective initiatives on the other are the main ingredients of the city-making simulation. What will happen next to Savamala?

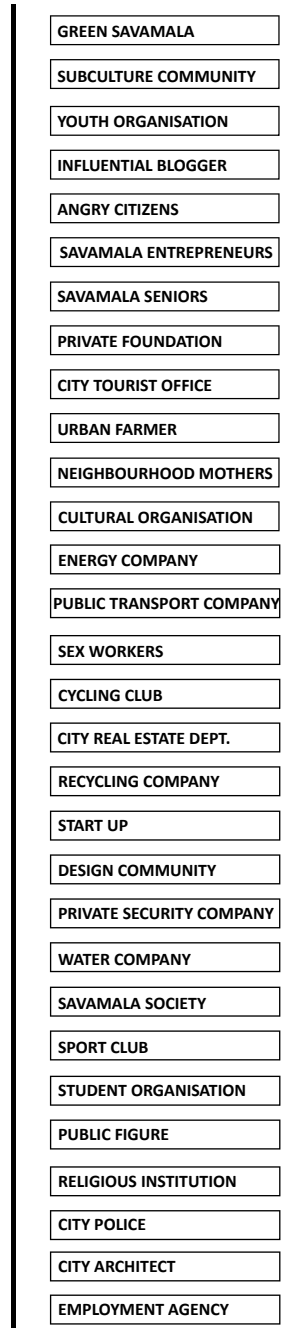
In order to identify and elaborate how participatory activities can influence urban development (which is one of the main aims of the whole IAAU project) through a gamified process, it was essential to transpose / translate the current state of urban development (the board, the map) into a series of factors (actors, spaces, places, programmes – the game’s “props”) The connection and interaction among these key agents not only sparks up social potentials and spatial capacities, but also serve as evidence based research on the real challenges and conflicts in the area. (the “game analystics”)

The translation of the stakeholders eco-system and real spatial issues into game props was inspired by the following table:

Urban conflicts in Savamala [1)]				
Economic	*Political*	*Cultural*	*Spatial*	*Technical*
- Attractive location for private investment - Lack of systematic investments in constructing industry (debt crisis) - Poor population in the area - Criminal activities present in the area	- Lack of regulatory framework - Powerful economic actors with strong political influence	- Marginalised groups living in the area - Disintegration of heritage (fragmented approach to renovation and revitalisation projects)	- Transition area (heavy transport) - Abandoned and ruined buildings and empty plots - Deteriorating industrial area -Noise and pollution	- Lack of data about the state of physical structure - Lack of data on social structure of the neighbourhood

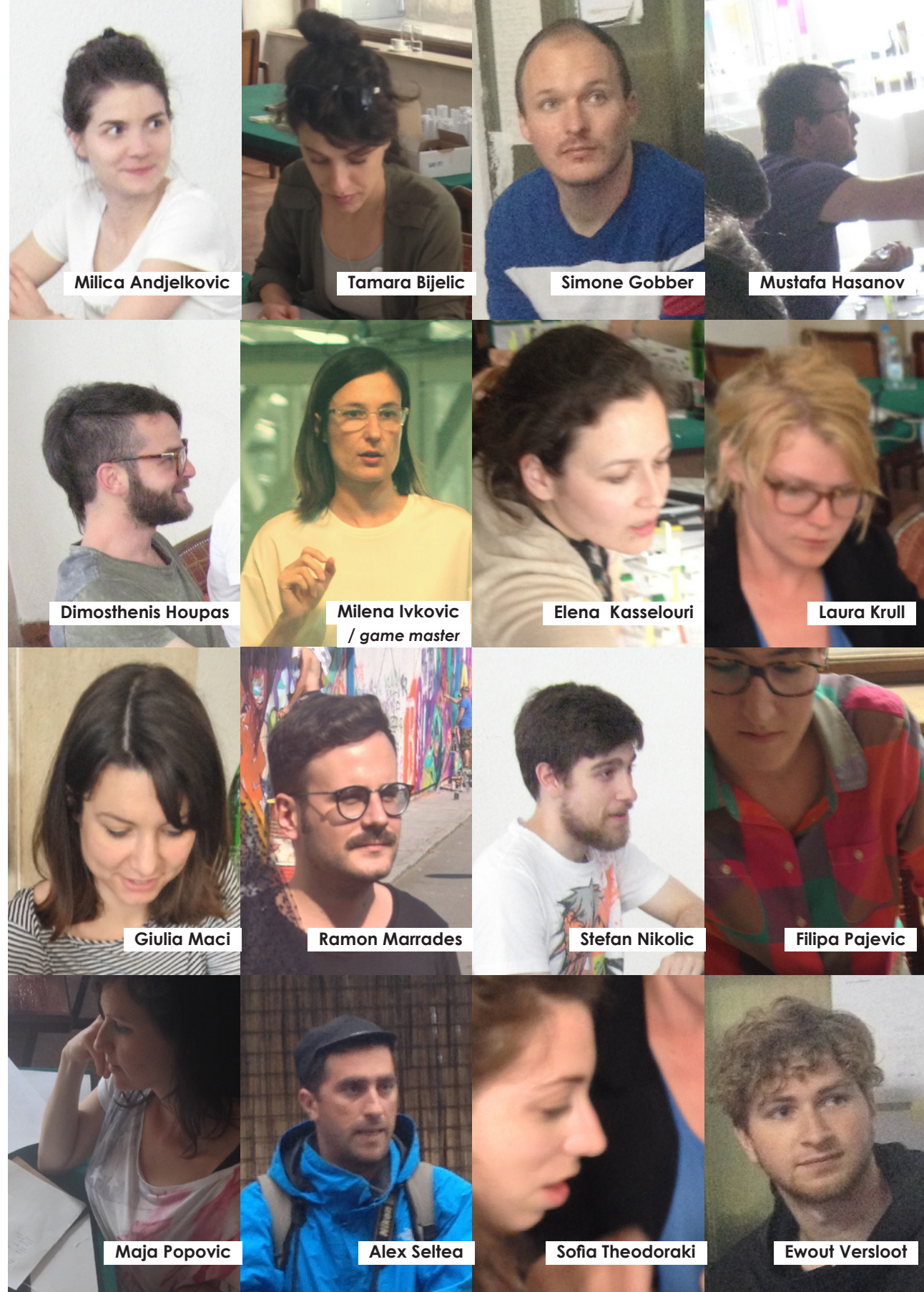
[1)] “Bottom-up Urban Development in Action”, Marija Cvetinovic, Ivan Kucina, Jean-Claude Bolay, 49th ISOCARP Congress 2013

spaces | places | people | money

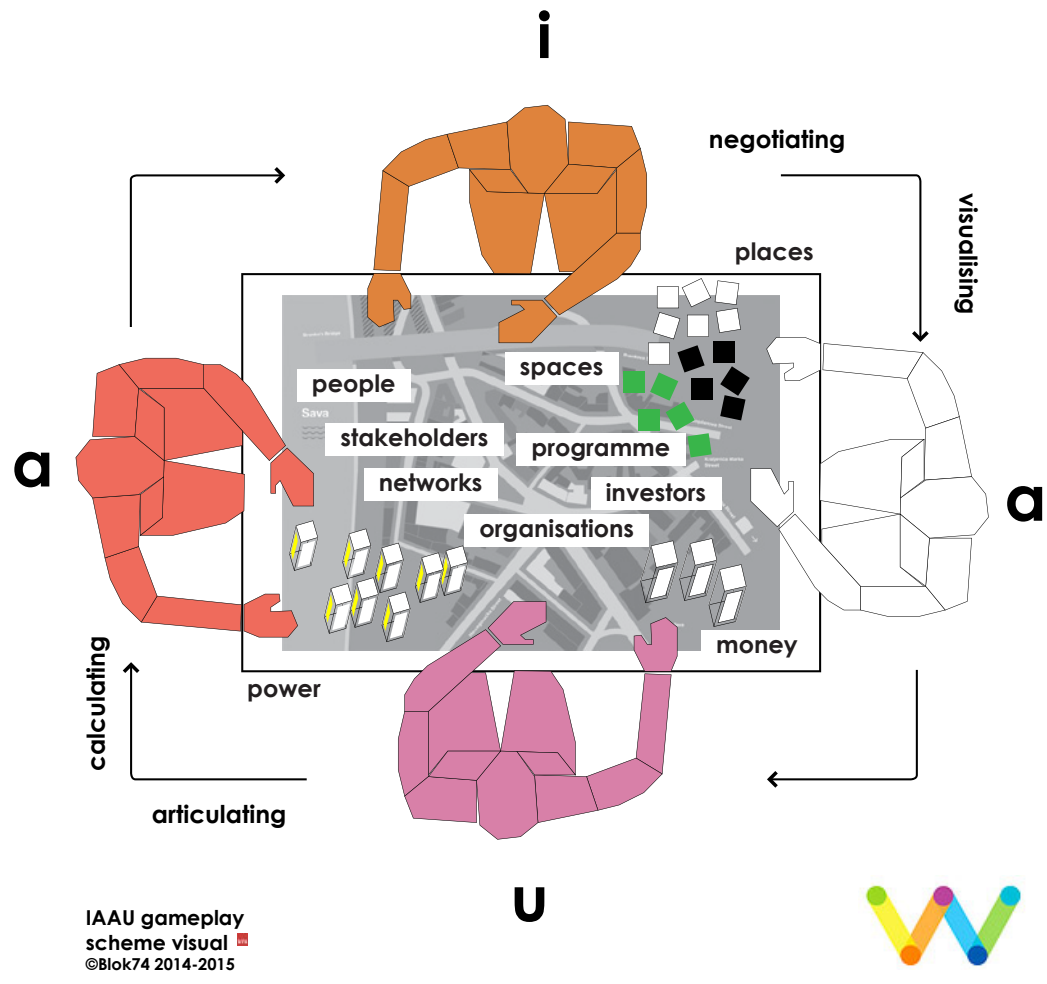


3
The players: Initiators, Advocates,Artists, Urbanists

The original Savamala gameplay was tailor made for as wide as possible array of participants. At the IAAU workshop, a local / international combination of players took place: local stakeholders from Savamala (from the School of Urban Practices collaborative network) and internationals from the IFHP / Urbego young planners organisation.



4
Game rules: simulation of the collaborative city-making process



IAAU gameplay scheme visual
©Blok74 2014-2015

Savamala the Game begins with team-forming. Each team has 4 players / 4 profiles which correspond to the IAAU roles.

The goal of the game is to make a co-created future development scenario for Savamala, using the map of Savamala as gameboard to position different programmes, (spaces) actors (places) and networks.

Before starting the negotiation process, the players explain / document the specific goals of their each role by noting down the positive and negative aspects about the neighbourhood on their "personal boards" (I as … want …. because…) Players also define 3 short-term goals they would like to achieve.

After that, players choose "the persons, organisations, objects and spaces" props (iconic representations of programmes and actors/networks active in the area) which will be the main elements of their collaborative scenario. There are free to position the programmatic icons anywhere they see fit in the space. The numbers of props they can use are not limited, at least not in this "brainstorm" phase of the game, although each prop has a certain point value which will be used later in the process.

Since the game is not following literally any classical "space building" traditional board game model, and also not depending on any "elements of luck", (such as dice throwing, or card pulling) the game rules are revealed by the "game master" one at the time, in order to keep the players motivated to continue. Not always knowing what will be the next move or the next "new game rule" is also a part of real situation simulation – in the city making process strategies and scenarios have to adapt as new, unknown elements or situations emerge.

Using border stickers, players can directly mark on the board the prospect locations/areas that belong to the programme they would like to achieve. The intersection of these areas indicates where different interests have a common ground, and therefore have the most potential to be mutually developed.

In the second half of the gaming part of the IAAU workshop each team gets a "budget bag" (symbolized with wooden golden cubes) to realise the programme's positioned on the game board.

The value of the budget (in points) is always given smaller (on purpose) then the amount of programme points proposed, so in order to come up with a collaborative scenario, players are compelled to negotiate. Additionally, players can choose some of the props depicting local politicians, foreign investors (and even some of the "grey area" personages) as extra budgetary help, since each of these investors have also certain point value. Who of these investors will be used puts a pressure on the players to think about coalitions they maybe (personally) do not prefer.

Also, the players are compelled to prioritize and calculate the programmatic content, and discard those programme items for which there is no budget.

For the completion of the second round players have limited time at the disposal, and the end-situation of the game board represents the future scenario. These final sequences are then photographically captured, and used as a visual documentation to describe differences in the scenario's and draw conclusions which strategies are the best for Savamala. Also, during the gameplay players were encouraged to keep track on what are they doing.

4
Results of the game: 4 collaborative future scenario's for Savamala

Pattern Recognition

Four different tables, with in total 16 players with different cultural and professional backgrounds have created four very different scenarios for Savamala. Still, several particular combinations of programmes (game props) formed clear recognizable patterns, which appeared in each scenario. Those features deserve more attention, since they underline the universal values of Savamala, which are endangered by the soon-to-come, big-scale developments in its vicinity.

a) importance of the Waterfront and the connections through and with the neighbourhood

Savamala is directly connected to the Sava River waterfront, but this potential is not fully explored. The reason for this lies in the fact that for long time this part of the river bank was used for secondary river harbour, as cargo trains corridor and for warehouse activities, creating a lot of odd-sized spaces. With the foreclosure of many of the state-owned businesses in this area, this part of the waterfront suddenly became a left-over area, strong in its industrial character, but not a well-designed or enjoyable (or safe, for that matter) public space.

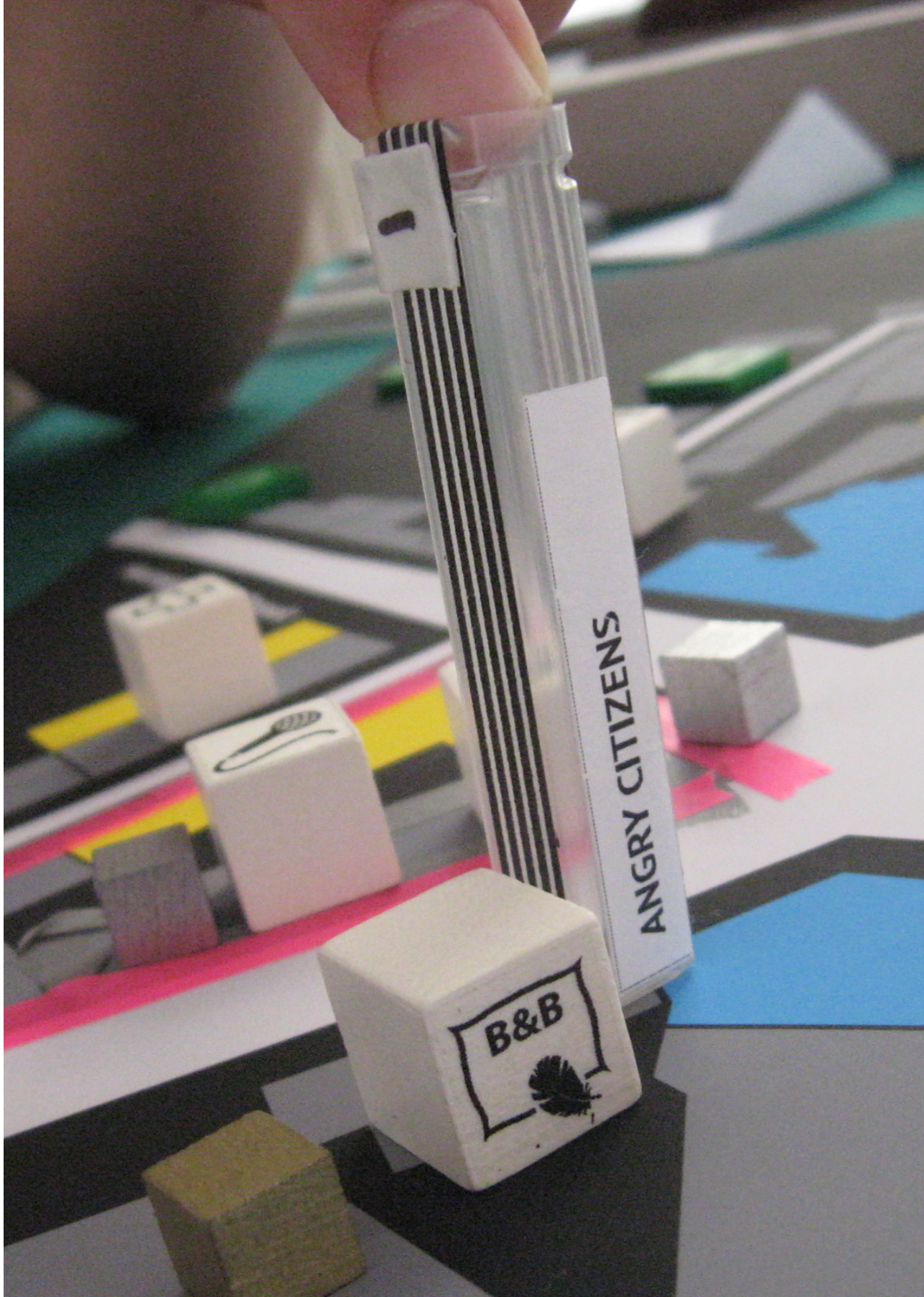
The most explored option to revitalize the area was to establish better accessibility to the riverfront, as prerogative for the expansion and sustainability of the already realized activities.

b) a lot of small-scaled, culture based initiatives are the life-line of Savamala

Whether they place the responsibility for future development on the local government, foreign investors or the self-organized collectives of Savamala, the players always included small-scaled initiatives. The most used ones are pop-up offices, art galleries, community gardens, food outlets, small parks, performance podiums, etc.

c) the most important drive of change and resilience are “angry citizens”

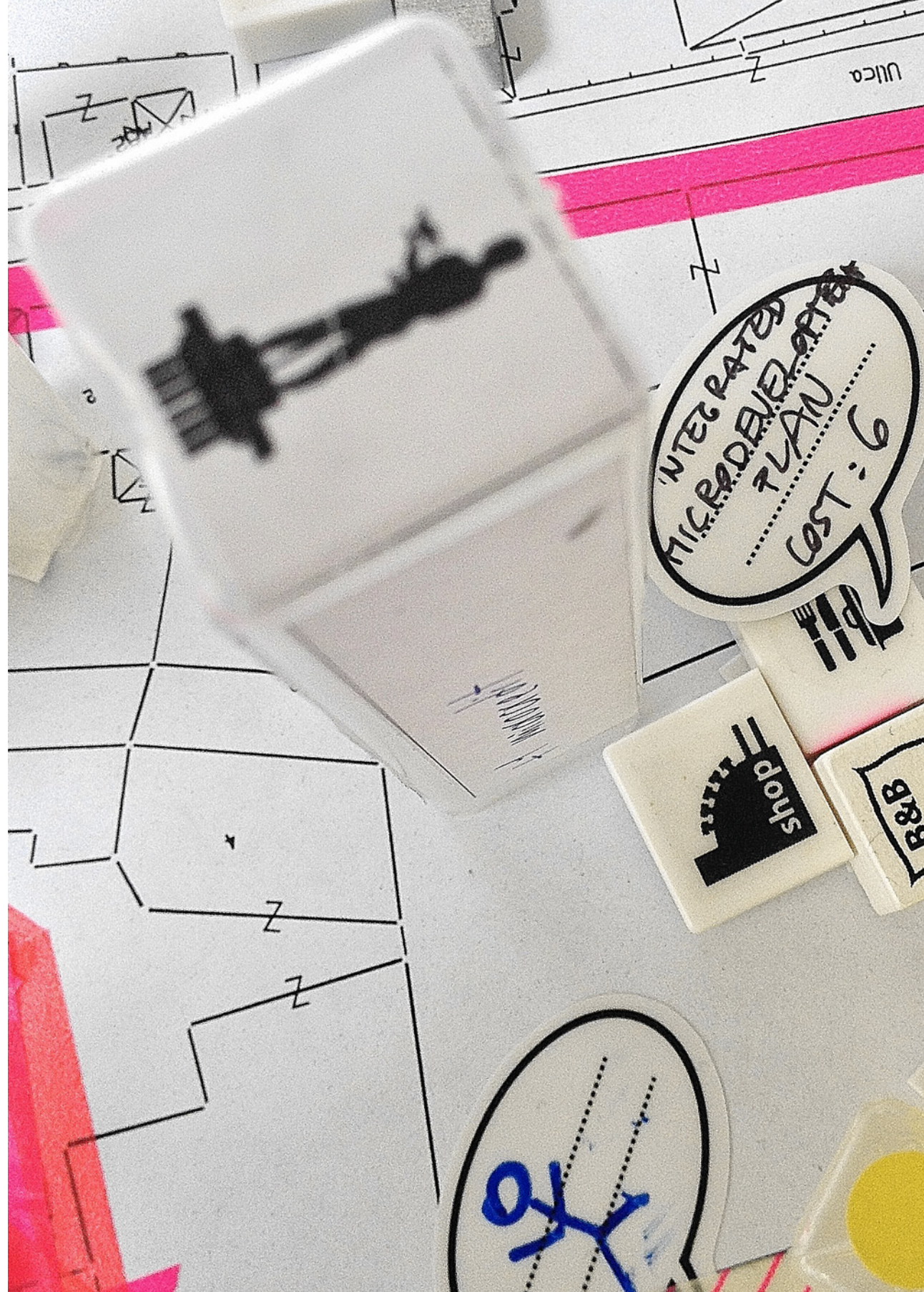
Among a great variety of “people” props offered to the players as actor of the future scenarios, the most used ones were “angry citizens” prop. Obviously, Savamala has been seen as a place where the energy and voice of the people can be “channelled”. The discontent with the public policies, the pollution, the traffic, dilapidated built structure – all of that is somehow concentrated in a special way in this neighbourhood , reaching the boiling point. It also shows the importance Savamala can have for the other, similar locations in Belgrade: if “angry citizens” can make it happen in Savamala, it can happen also somewhere else.



Special and innovative ideas

Some of those ideas are summarized here:

1. “Integrated micro development plan” – use micro credits to finance *a combination of* several smaller initiatives at one location/ in one building. (scenario MicroMala)
2. ‘Visible water management measures” – at the Sava river waterfront, integrate water management infrastructure as a kind of land-art installation. (scenario RiverMala)
3. “Artistic zebra’s” – use public art interventions on street crossings to help pedestrian safety and curb the constant traffic jam. (scenario MicroMala)
4. “Playful crossings” – if the railway along the waterfront can not be moved away, bridge it and allow better access to the river from the neighbourhood. (scenario RiverMala)
5.” Collective Energy Collectors” – use flat building rooftops to generate energy for all the buildings’ inhabitants. (scenario Save the Mala)



Game analytics as the base for scenario's comparisons

To be able to compare several scenario's, the outcomes are streamlined following the following questions:
A: What is the future programme for Savamala?
B: Where to develop the programme?
C: What will be the collaborative network?
D: Where will the big investors go?

The analytics and the infographics of these scenarios's happened after the completion of the workshop. During the initial gameplay, the great bulk of data was generated (tracked by the players themselves, and recorded on video's and photos). It took some considerable post-production time (done in the Blok74 office in Rotterdam) to filter the essence of each scenario and visualise it.

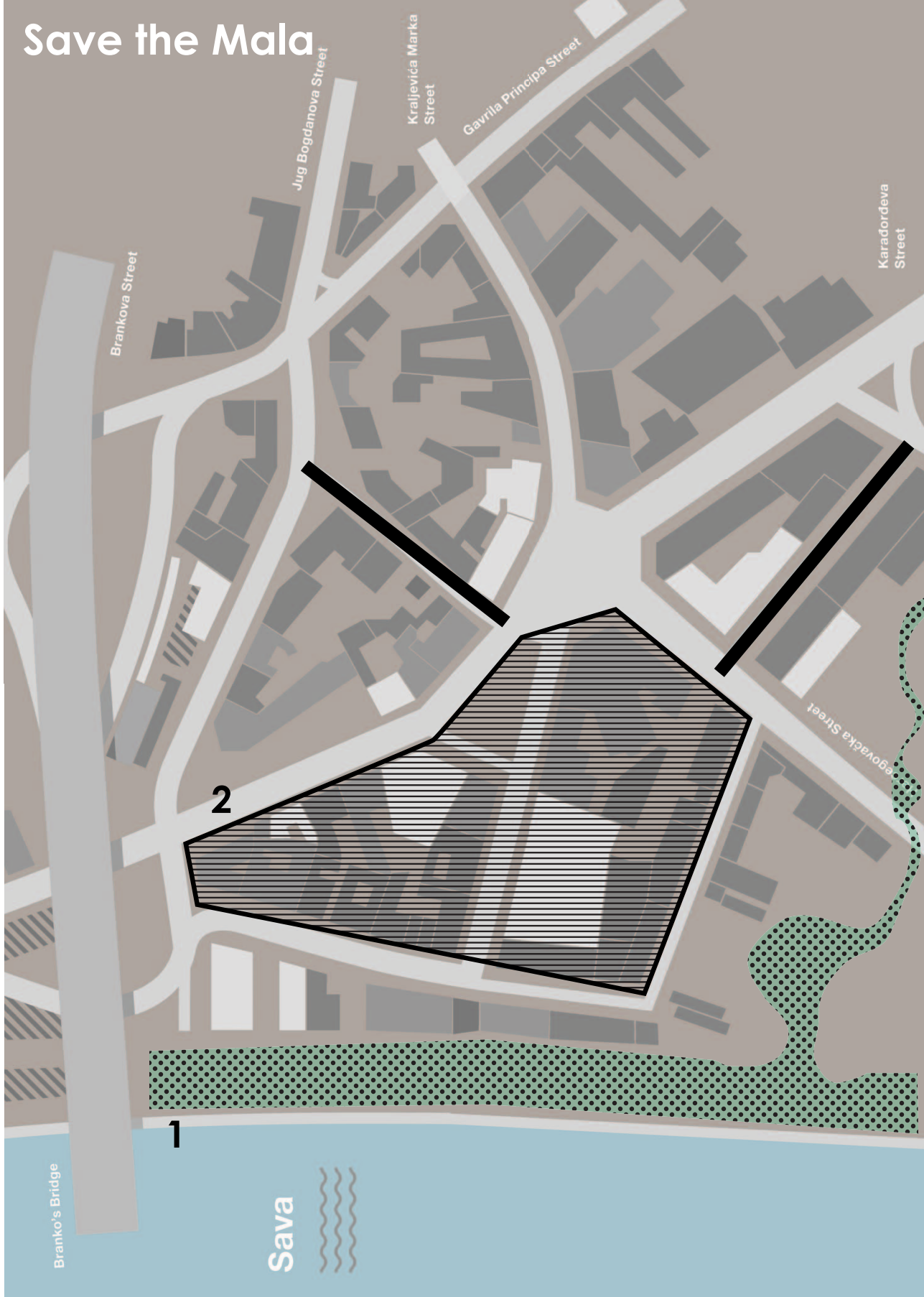
Scenario 1
Save the Mala

This Scenario proposes to recover the strengths of the core area of Savamala (marked in the infrographic as Lower West Side) by stimulating the small-scale entrepreneurship. The recovery is based almost solely on the use of local networks and local economies.

Programmatically, pop-up offices and art galleries are the ones that were placed the most. In the public space, a mix of food –related places (community gardens, little restaurants) and recreational spaces with strong community sense were realized. Characteristics of this scenario is that it focuses on the "life between buildings" and using as much as possible the neglected building structures, which can be swiftly adapted with low-cost investments for the proposed programme.

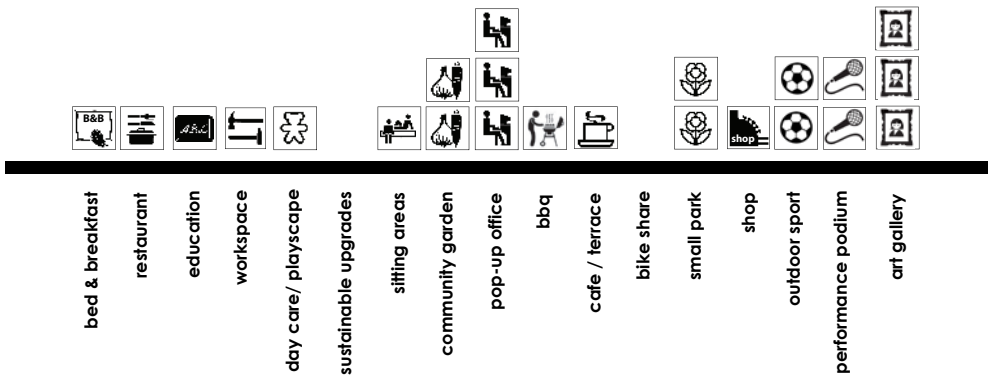
This approach of looking for what the neighbourhood can do itself, in spatial and financial terms is reflected also in the proposed network of collaboration. Only one collaborative node was designated for the city agencies – obviously, one can't ask much of them, or expect their big support. The same holds for asking for support of the foreign investors: the message of the scenario is to "keep it local". The full focus of development lies on the "Savamala's own" network of actors. This is at the same time a biggest potential of the scenario – if the 8 nodes of (for the purpose of the game simplified) "Savamala's own" are substituted with active Savamala organisations, a very strong coalition for developing the area between Mikser House and the Sava Waterfont can be formed.

team Save the Mala: Giulia Maci | Maja Popovic | Tamara Bijelic | Dimosthenis Houpas

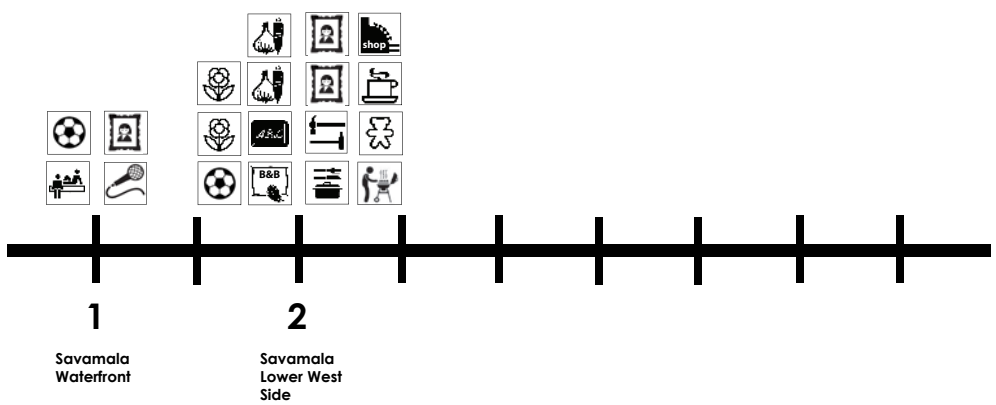


scenario #1: Save the Mala

A: What is the future programme for Savamala?

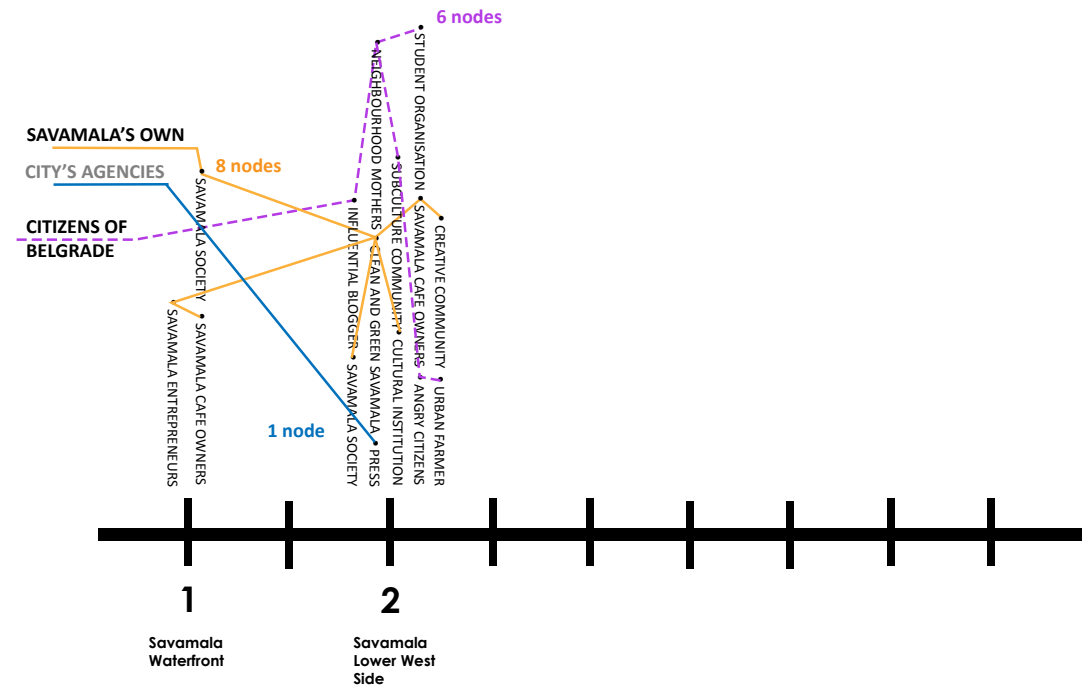


B: Where to develop the programme?

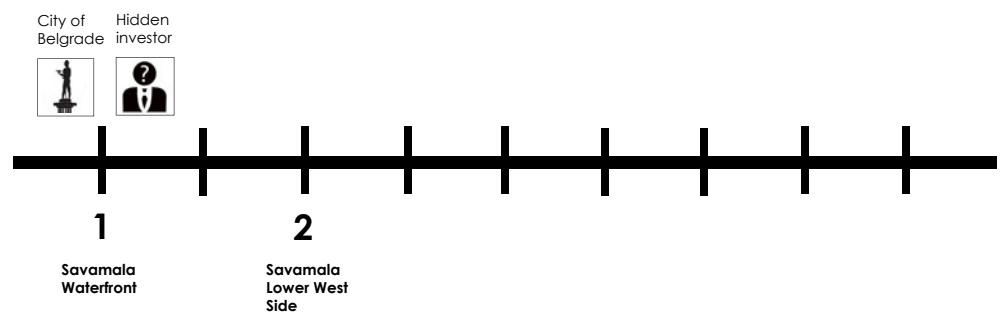


scenario #1: Save the Mala

C: What will be the collaborative network?



D: Where will the big investors go?

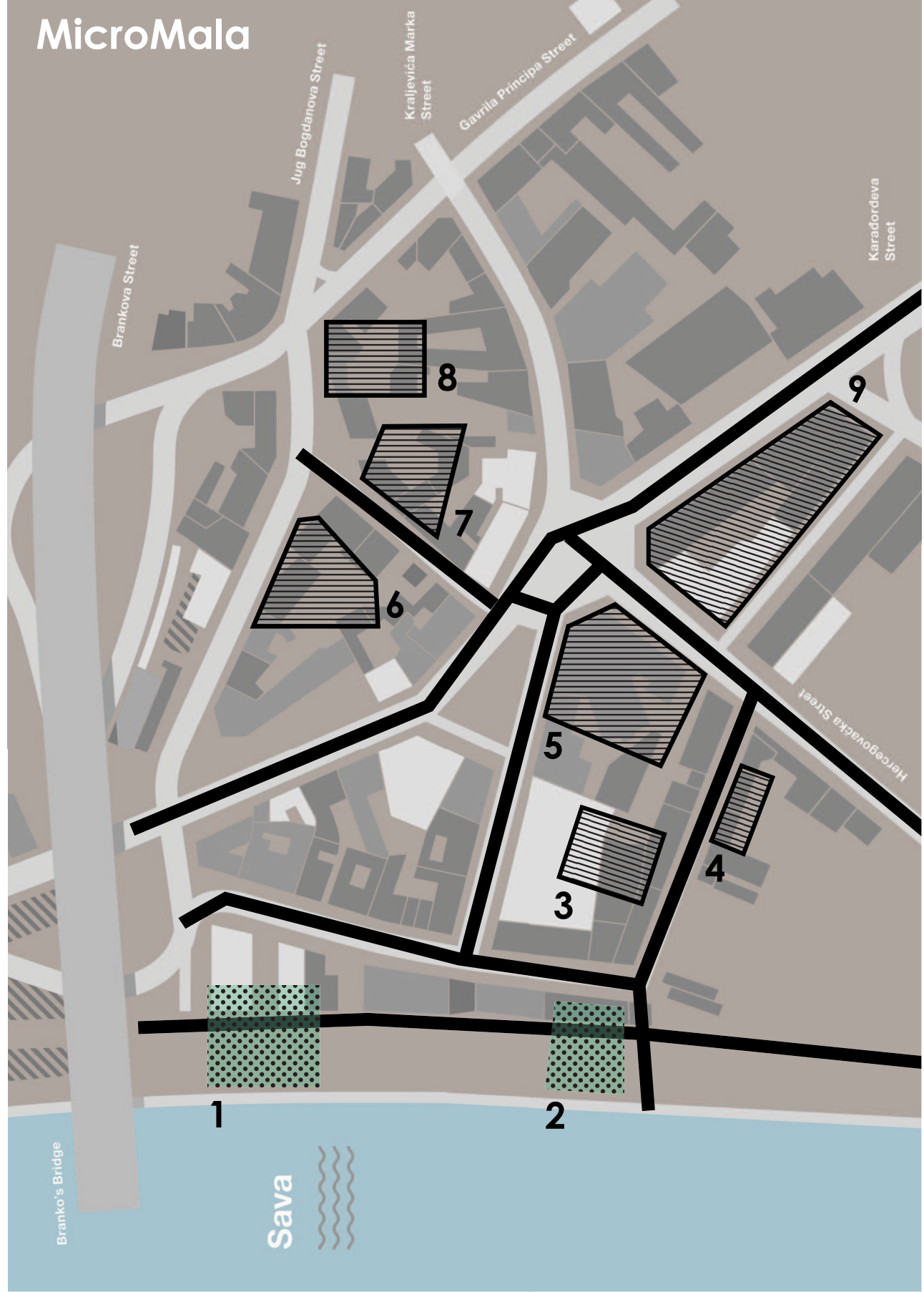


Scenario 2
Micro Mala

The future of Savamala is in the activation of the variety of distinctive micro-locations: recognise the potential of each one, and support it with a combination of local and city level networks. Hotel Bristol should be the next urban incubator, and big investors will concentrate (or stay contained?) on the Sava river Waterfront, and on already occupied strategic locations.

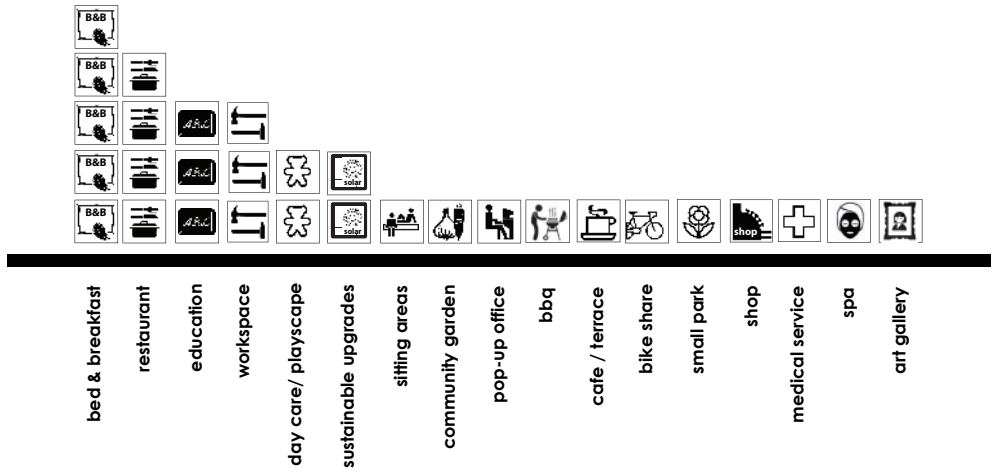
The most used programmatic icons were the ones related to the small-scaled entrepreneurship, such as bed& breakfast and workspaces. Hotel Bristol, (at the same time workshop venue) was appointed the next “incubator” for a variety of programme, as a direct reaction to the fact that this well-preserved and large building is almost non-functional now. Important aspect of the MicroMala strategy is that players carefully examined the whole area, and formulated tailor-made mix of programmatic content for a relatively large number of locations. Every location was also covered as much as possible with the disposable budget, and help from the “big investors” (in this case EU) was called in only for the strategic project in this scenario – Hotel Bristol.
This equal spread of resources reflected in the equal spread of networking actors. A whole variety of organisations are interconnected to help support the strategy, Savamala’s own almost as much as the City’s Agencies and Citizens of Belgrade organisations. Probably the most sustainable strategic scenario.

team MicroMala: Simone Gobber | Sofia Theodoraki | Laura Krull |

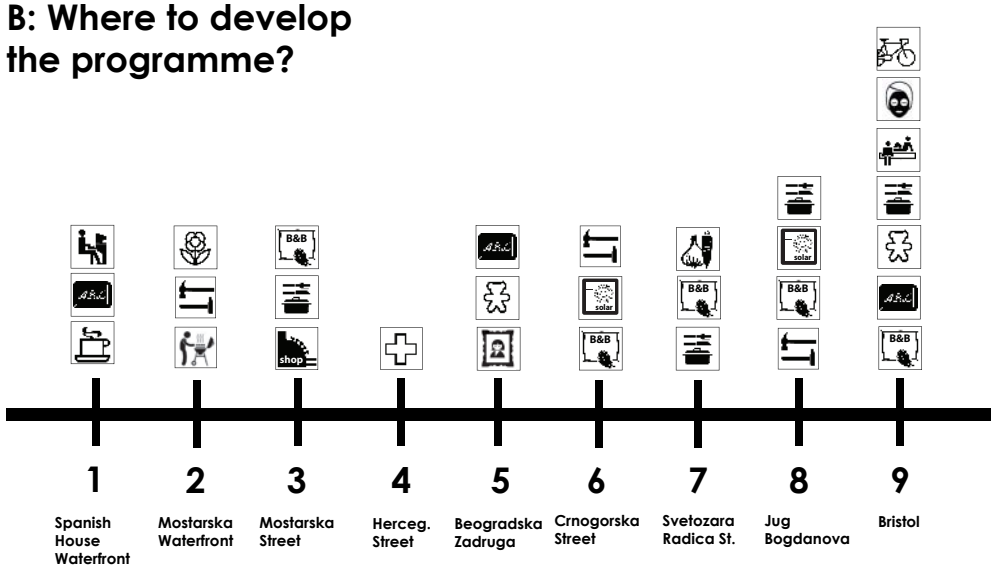


scenario #2: MicroMala

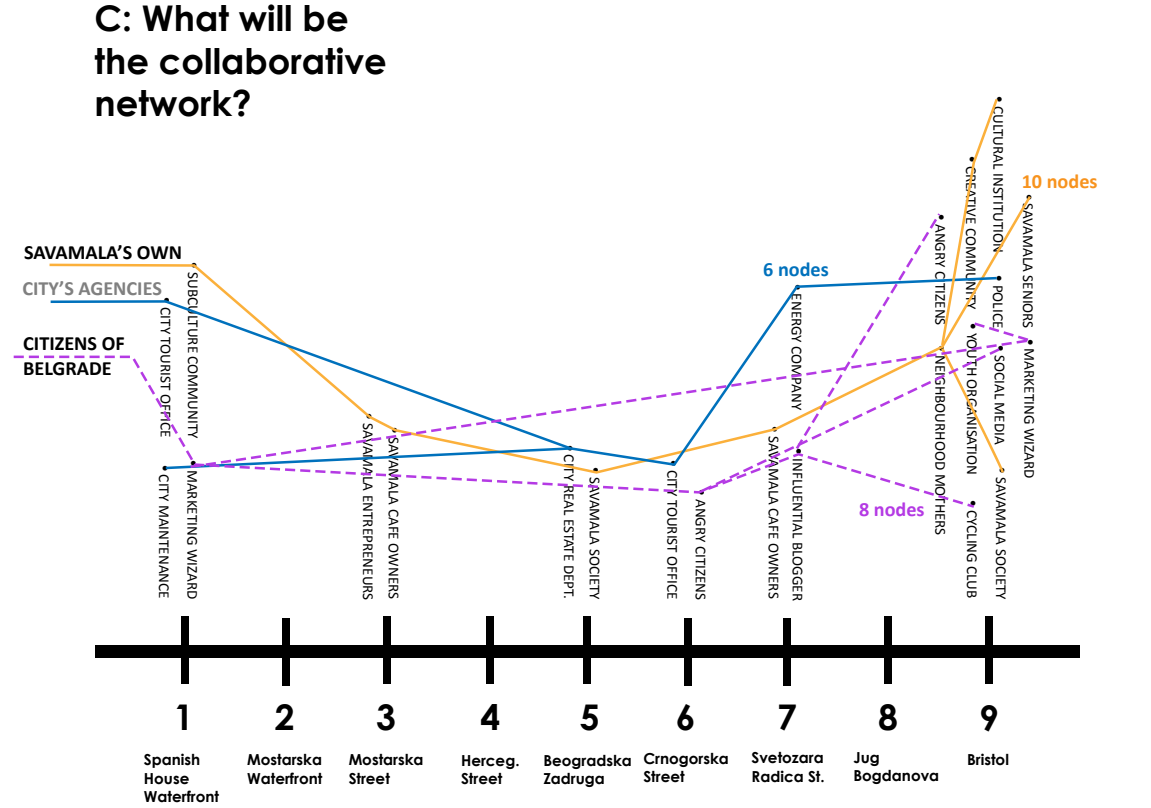
A: What is the future programme for Savamala?



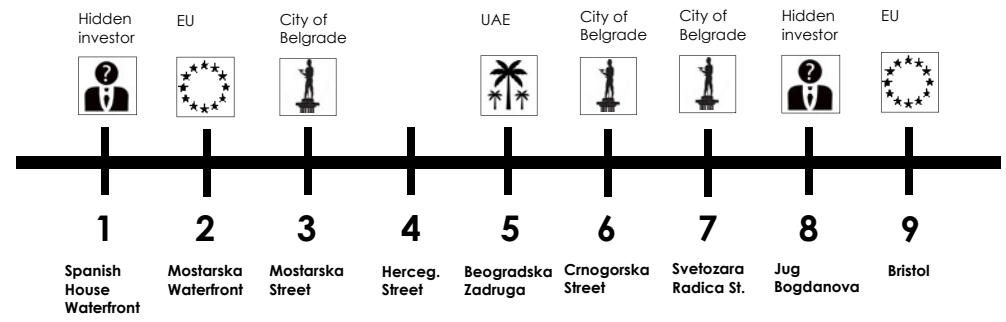
B: Where to develop the programme?



C: What will be the collaborative network?



D: Where will the big investors go?



Scenario 3
RiverMala

Savamala's backbone is the Sava River Waterfront, and it should be developed and managed by the city, the citizens, and city-level networks. The impulses from the river front will overspill to the neighbourhood and recover its vital points.

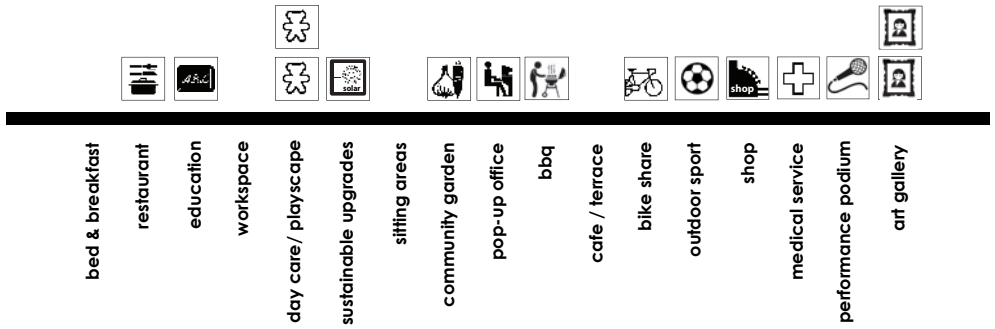
As the result of many negotiation rounds, budget restrictions, and internal discussions between the roles whom to address for financial and institutional help, the number of programmatic icons proposed is relatively small, but very well thought-through. It comes as a result of important strategic choices and raising the questions such as " to whom belongs the Sava Riverfront, the most valuable piece of land in Savamala?" and " Which programmes on the Waterfont will benefit the neighbourhood the most?"

The most interesting perspective of this scenario is that it recognizes city-level strategic importance of Savamala, which reflects in the team's proposed network of actors. The most connection nodes are collaborations of Citizens of Belgrade organisations and City's Agencies, less Savamala's Own. It also recognizes the fact that most attractive locations (along the water) are already "promised" to big investors, and that it is a matter of city-wide collaboration and city authorities to suppress the negative impact of this profit-driven policies. The value of the scenario is it's clear "wake-up" call to solidarity and support of the Savamala (primarily as a neighbourhood) in the wake of the possible irreversible negative changes.

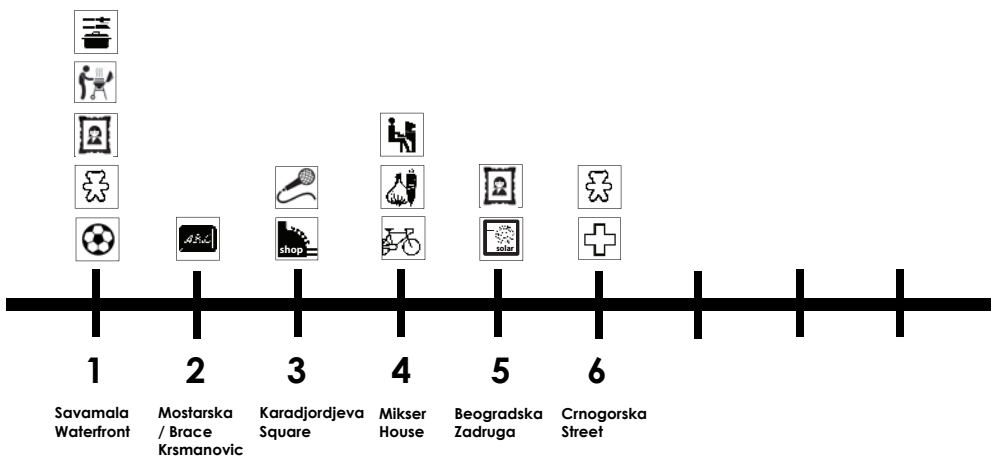
team River Mala: Ramon Marrades| Stefan Nikolic | Mustafa Hasanov | Elena Kasselouri

scenario #3: RiverMala

A: What is the future programme for Savamala?

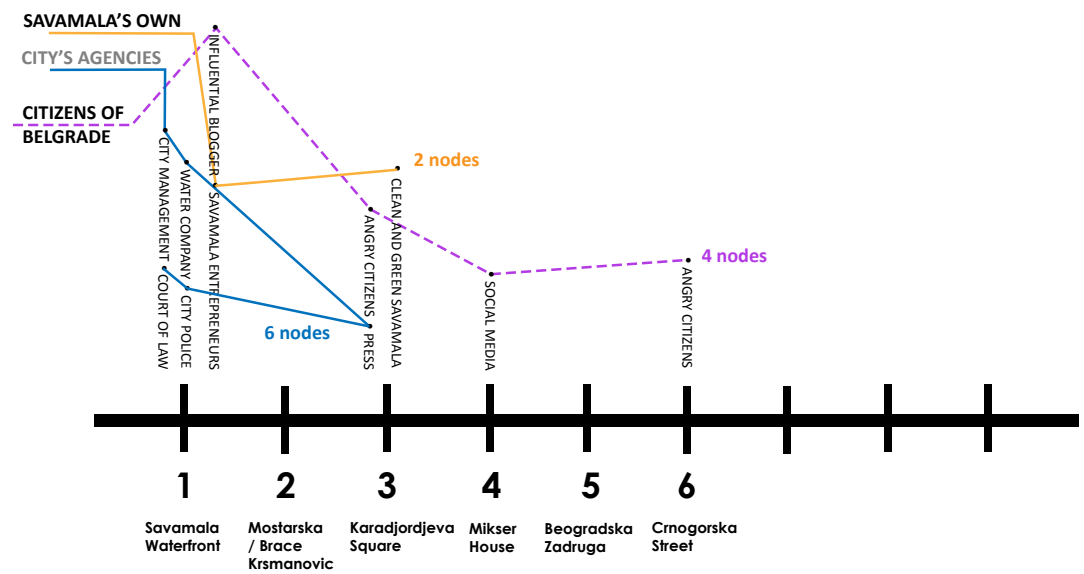


B: Where to develop the programme?

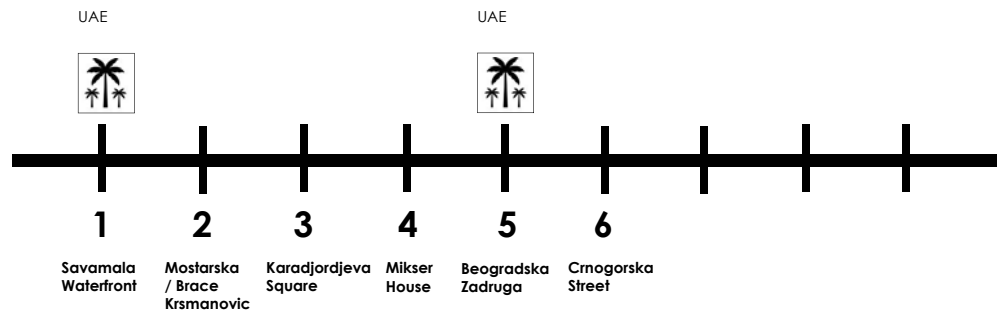


scenario #3: RiverMala

C: What will be the collaborative network?



D: Where will the big investors go?



Scenario 4
MikserMala

Use the initial spark of Savamala's recovery, Mikser House, as a focal point for all the future developments. Also use the growing foreign interest in the area, and explore the possibilities to connect their economic interests with social, cultural and public interests of Savamala.

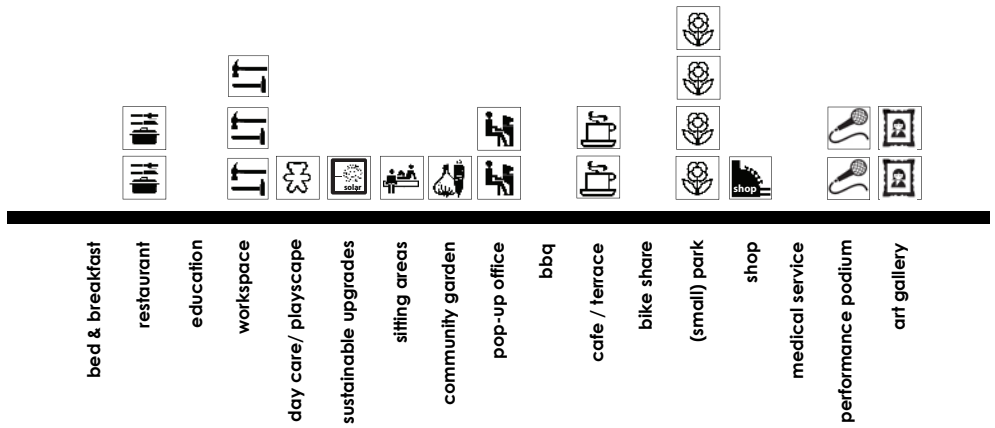
Although this scenario works with rather ephemeral programmes such as pop-up offices and small green parks, it is also the one who thinks beyond the inner Savamala, and tries to "expand the edges" of the neighbourhood. It places Mikser House in the middle of the future developments, and looks for strategic "routes" that connect Mikser House with the immediate surroundings of Zeleni Venac and city centre.
The scenario recognizes the attraction of the area for the foreign investors, as well as the reality that city of Belgrade and its institutions just don't have the resources to invest on their own. In this situation the external investment should come from EU rather then other (Chinese, Russian) countries.
The question this scenario asks (and answers!) is "which programmes can be realized both as a part of larger for-profit schemes, but still be beneficial for social, cultural and public interests of Savamala?"

Scenario also stresses the need for network collaboration between Savamala's Own organisations and Citizens of Belgrade groups, rather then City's Agencies, which captures perfectly the spirit of "self-organising" pathos of Savamala. In that sense, the scenario is a valuable example of how to build further on the existing values, and use them as an asset in the negotiations.

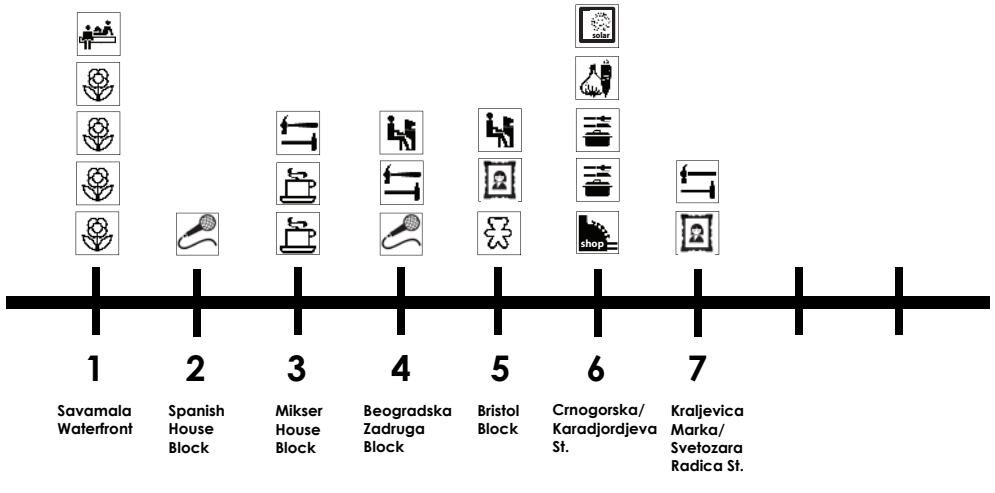
team MikserMala: Filipa Pajevic | Milica Andjelkovic | Alex Seltea | Ewout Versloot

scenario #4: MikserMala

A: What is the future programme for Savamala?

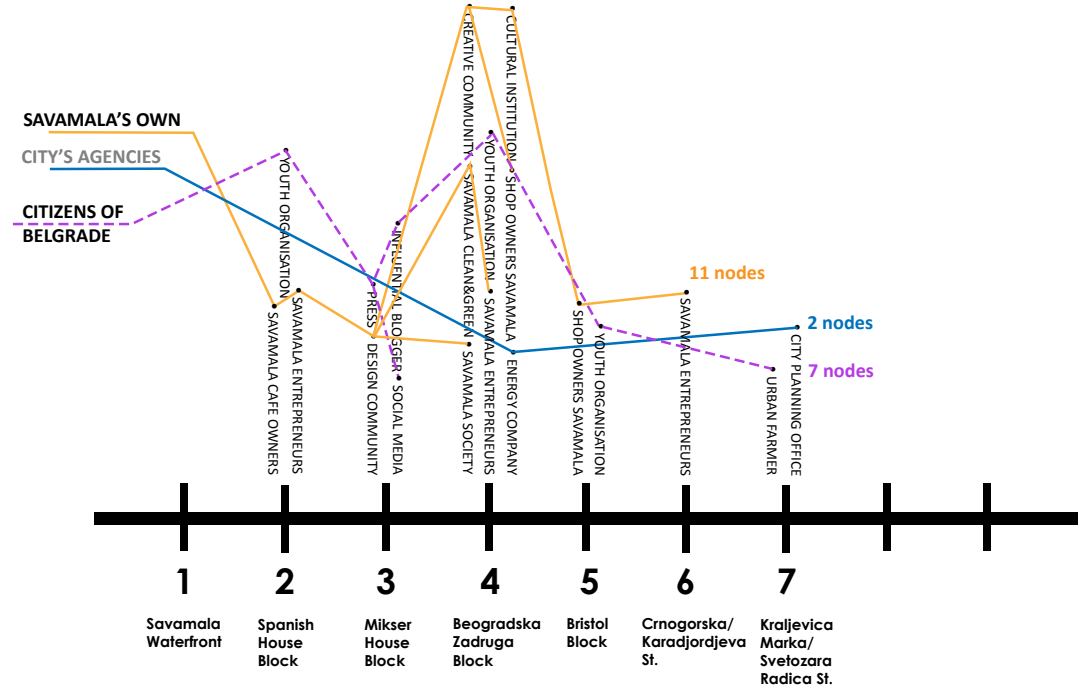


B: Where to develop the programme?

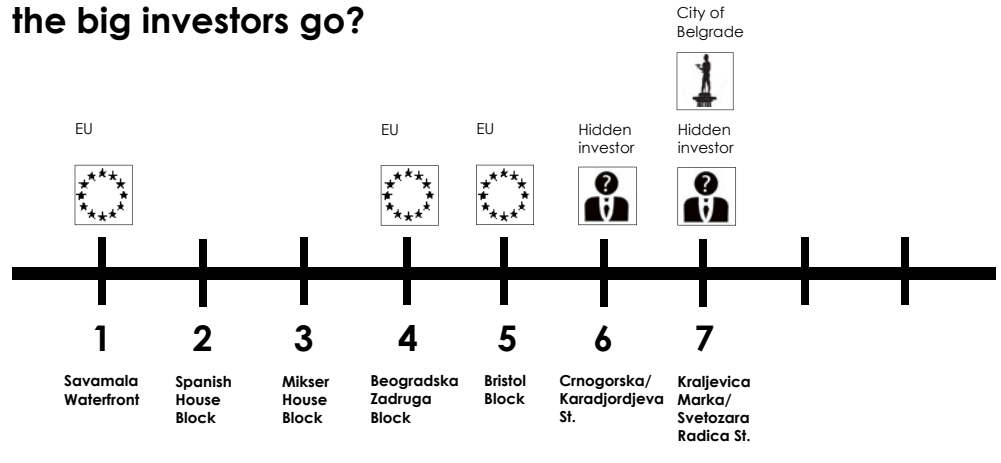


scenario #4: MikserMala

C: What will be the collaborative network?



D: Where will the big investors go?



6
Make the Game to Understand the city

The initial “Savamala the Game” interaction was proposed to take up to one day of the IAAU Belgrade workshop, but it was actually extended to two days. The immersion of the players into the proposed gameplay was great, despite its flaws. As the matter of fact, it were the flaws of the initial gameplay that initiated it’s revision, and created a version that was more focused, more engaging and more efficient. This version was later presented as one of the workshop results at the Mikser Talks / IAAU Belgrade public presentation.

The important critical questions raised after the initial gameplay were:
- what is the impact of the strategies resulting from the game?
- how “realistic” can be a game as an urban planning tool?

Finding answers to these two questions led the workshop participants to the following: by making “ a strategic game” about a neighbourhood and trying to address big issues (such as pro-profit development against socially responsible development) we dismantle and clarify many complex mechanics of the urban development. In a safe environment of a simulation, a game can bring different voices together (roles, stakeholders, initiators, artists, advocate, urbanists), voices that would otherwise not being heard because of the traditional planning methods which are reserved completely for the institutional elite.

“ *From the perspective of the Mikser Festival, main value and result of the IAAU experience (and presence of all IAAU participants at the Festival) is that the local partners, mentioned local organisations, and “Savamalci” (the citizens of Savamala) gained experience and insight on new approaches how to negotiate their goals within a large stakeholder eco-system. Game structure is a great tool for simulation that helps stakeholders to articulate their goals from theory into practice. At the end we could see how they are willing to cooperate, and to test their real capacity for understanding and compromising in a good way in order to reach their goals. They also tested how to wisely manage their policies and represent their interests, and in the same time catch in the grips with real restrictions that are coming as a result of unbalanced distribution of power in Belgrade. Taking them into other roles (IAAU roles) and putting them into a game frame gave them the opportunity to consider the Savamala problems from another perspective, which is necessary in order to avoid exclusiveness*.”[3)]

[3)] Mikser House IAAU project mid-term report

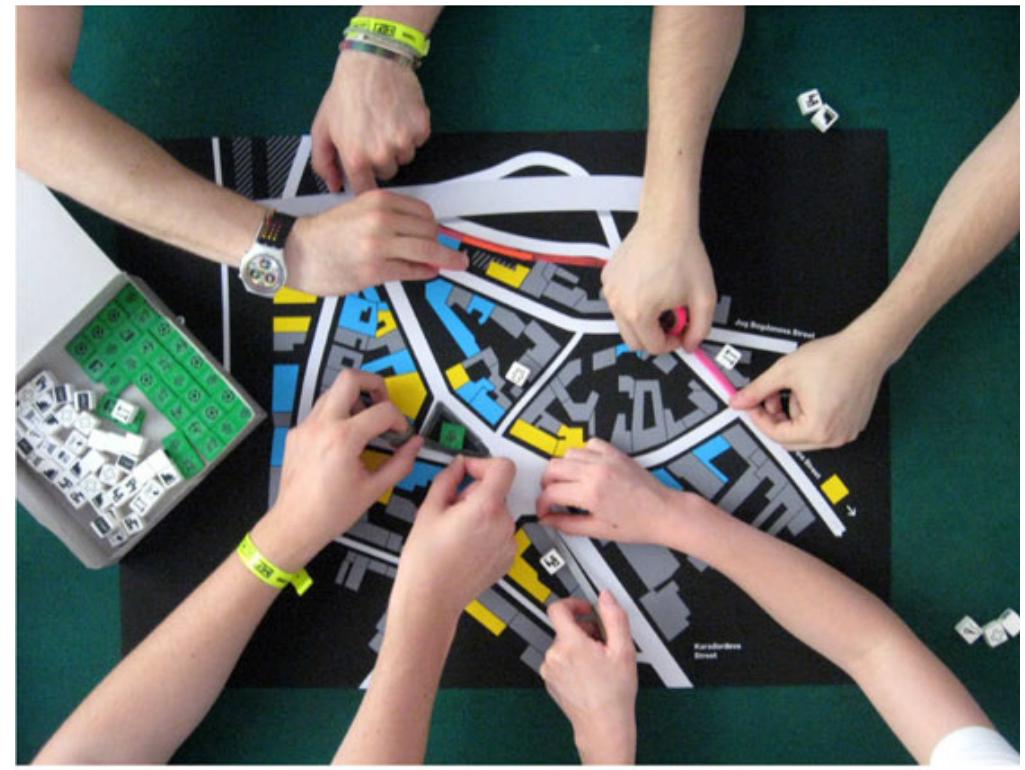
Savamala the Game 2.0

Since the original gameplay related heavily on the free interpretation of the tasks of the each role, as well as free interpretation of the symbols on the game props, the first step in improvement was to take out those uncertainties.

The second step was to clarify the role of budgeting, the value of each programmatic icon, (points) and the value each big investor can bring in. Also, it was not clear how to use “people” and “organisations” props – since they didn’t have explicit point/ money value connected to them, but only “network” or “social” value”. That was corrected as well.

The too “technical” gameboard (map) was switched for a brightly coloured, simpler official Mikser Festival venue map.

The new Savamala 2.0 game design was made by (<names>). This new design gave clear powers to each of the roles – the power being translated not in point/money value, but in the network / people value. With this, there was less space for the interpretation of the role, but more space for active coalition making. After they positioned the “ideal” programme on the gameboard, the players were negotiating the acceptance or the removal of certain spatial ideas by using the budget they got, and exchanging their assigned “people” assets. The negotiation of these programmes resulted sometimes in mutual acceptation of the programme, or decline. At the end, only the accepted programme formed the future scenario.



САВАМАЛА?
САВАМАЛА?
САВАМАЛА?
САВАМАЛА?
САВАМАЛА?
САВАМАЛА?
САВАМАЛА?
САВАМАЛА?
MOSKVA TODAY