

Activating Play in Rogoredo, Milan



Reclaiming Play in Cities





Play Street Via Monte Piana | Workshop Lego © Arup

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication is the result of collaboration between the Municipality of Milan and Arup, for the Real Play Coalition. The main authors are Serena Girani, Chiara Fraticelli, Miriam Spadafora, Sara Candiracci and Spencer Robinson of Arup. Graphic designers: Chiara Fraticelli, Miriam Spadafora, and Roman Svidran. We are grateful for input and advice from a number of contributors. Special thanks go to Piero Pelizzaro, Ilaria Giuliani, Marta Alessandra Mauri, Eugenio Petz, Annunziata Picariello and Susanna Molteni of the Milan Municipality.

Cover: Play Street Via Monte Piana | Workshop Lego © Arup

Published in November 2021

Content

FOREWORD	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. THE POWER OF PLAY IN CITIES	10
2. THE URBAN PLAY FRAMEWORK	14
3. ROGOREDO PLAY PROFILE	16
. APPROACH	17
. OVERVIEW	22
. FACILITATION FOR PLAY IN ROGOREDO	30
. TIME AND CHOICE FOR PLAY IN ROGOREDO	42
. SPACES AND FACILITIES FOR PLAY IN ROGOREDO	52
4. EXPERIMENTATION OF PLAY STREET IN VIA MONTE PIANA	64
5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY IN ROGOREDO	70
. TERRITORIAL STRATEGY	72
. A NETWORK OF PLAY SPACES	74
. THE SCHOOL AT THE CENTRE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONS	78
. USING DIGITAL PLAY AS A BRIDGE TO PHYSICAL PLAY	80
. CASE STUDIES	82
REFERENCES	88

Foreword



City Resilience Department

Civic Services, Participation and Sport Department

Education Department

Municipality of Milan

Because of the climate-environmental crisis and of the pandemic crisis, Milan is now living a period of renewal and transition which asks us to take urgent and practical actions able to combine institutional demands with citizens' needs. The pandemic and the intense lockdowns we experienced have pushed cities' administrations to rethink urban planning strategies towards a greater consideration of the well-being of citizens. In this sense, a great contribution to the ongoing transformation process is certainly due to the approach that Milan has already adopted for some years, and which finds, as its lowest common denominators, resilience, active participation, and greater awareness of the new generations on the role that everyone can play in pushing change in the society. Since its establishment, the City Resilience Department has had a main role in managing the contamination of skills and knowledge between different city's departments to ensure transversal and collaborative actions. This approach showed the importance of implementing structured analysis, listening and participation paths in the city and its society. A method which had been implemented in the construction of guidelines for climate-change adaptation, in the awareness and communication of more sustainable lifestyles and in the involvement of entities and stakeholders external to the administration as bearers of added wealth. Thanks to this approach a working relationship with the Participation and Education Departments had been generated and they had been both involved in the process of enhancing the role of play in the urban context. Here, "play" is intended as an instrument of intergenerational cohesion and integration and a link between growing citizens and urban planning. Today's scenario makes use of consolidated paths and tools to create partnerships between citizens, associations, economic subjects, and the Municipality

of Milan through which carrying out the shared planning of urban areas proposed by citizens to the Municipality for the regeneration of the space through social, cultural, sport and gardening activities. The fundamental tool is the "collaboration agreement", through which citizens and the municipal institution identify a common purpose, the activities to be carried out, the reciprocal commitments and the selected urban area: because of this agreement, then the chosen area ceases to be an irrelevant part in the context but becomes a "common good". The initiative is part of a broader context of Administration's approaches and interventions in the educational field which aim at opening schools to the territory and the territory to the learning dimension, so that Education can be increasingly considered an urban policy, a lens through which rethinking city policies to promote the well-being of all minors' citizens. Furthermore, the initiative is the result of the Adaptation strategy developed and published in 2020, following the lockdown period, which highlights the need to redefine the use of roads and public spaces, through a more hybrid vision of urban areas and their functions: the outdoor areas of restaurants and bars have occupied areas of our streets and schools have opened some spaces for sports and recreational activities for all the citizenship. Among the proposed initiatives there is also considering the space of streets for free and unstructured play of children and families. In line with what is included in the strategy, the first "Play Street" was held in June. This consists in a temporary pedestrianization of a street to be used for activities to animate citizens and promote games for children. The City of Milan wants to take advantage from this experience, which was a success for the city and for those who live it, by promoting the importance of the role of play in urban planning, safety and autonomy of children in small movements in the urban context.



Jerome Frost

*Director, UKIMEA Region Chair, Arup
Co-chair Real Play Coalition*

Arup is committed to improving diversity, equity and inclusion in the built environment. As the world becomes increasingly urban, shaping a better world should start with shaping better cities – in balance with the aspirations of communities. We aim to prioritise socially valuable outcomes in all our projects, with an especial focus on the role public space as the heartbeat of any society.

The coronavirus pandemic revealed how fragile everyday life can be. It exacerbated inequalities and made necessary social distancing measures that fractured our connections with one other. Strict lockdown measures villainised shared space and turned social mixing into a threat. The built environment, and its structures and systems, have been radically disrupted. This is a further challenge to the capacity of governments and urban practitioners to design healthier and more equitable urban spaces.

Children were among the first to suffer from the onset of Covid-19. Their ecosystems for learning and play – fundamental to every children's health development – were dismantled. In particular, children without access to safe and stimulating space were among the most affected. But less opportunity for outdoor play and interaction is a matter for all: it deprives communities and cities of numerous benefits. In fact, Arup believes that the design of a sustainable, successful, healthy city starts from the creation of child-friendly cities.

No-one knows exactly how long the coronavirus pandemic will be with us. But, planning for a "new normality" has created the opportunity to radically rethink the way we use, feel, design and manage public space. Transgressing pre-existing ways of thinking, living and working, represents the chance to mainstream more inclusive, child-friendly and nature-based principles and solutions in city design and planning, and put quality placemaking at the forefront of all initiatives.

Arup, as part of the Real Play Coalition – a non-profit alliance created in 2018 between UNICEF, National Geographic, Arup, IKEA and LEGO Foundation – has set an ambitious goal to reclaim play in cities around the world. The built environment is a critical play and learning resource for children. It is critical that urban planners adopt strategies for coping with the changes affecting cities, as well as collectively reimagining and reinventing playful public spaces. This will enable our communities and society to be adaptable, sustainable and flourishing.

A combination of formal and informal play solutions, for instance, can cultivate a greater sense of place, allow fuller play experiences, and reap substantial benefits for children, their families and their communities. Encouraging play through urban policy and practices is a key challenge to ensure children have both a healthy life and the best chances of tackling the challenges of today and tomorrow.

This study considers the challenges and opportunities for play in Rogoredo, a district in Milan, Italy. Based on primary and secondary data, it reviews the evidence around learning through play and the impact of urban environments on children's access to play opportunities, to support their holistic and long-term development.

Building on similar work in London and Cape Town, Arup worked closely with the City of Milan and local stakeholders to further explore and implement play's benefits in the Rogoredo neighbourhood. The study and pilot project, developed in Via Monte Piana, identified opportunities to creatively plan space, strengthen peoples' connections to one another, and otherwise support the neighbourhood's future evolution.

This experience underlines the opportunity to further support city authorities and urban practitioners to put play at the heart of decisions about the built environment, as child-friendly cities are better cities for everyone.

Executive Summary

In partnership with the Real Play Coalition and the Municipality of Milan, Arup applied the Urban Play Framework in the Rogoredo district of Milan, to undertake a comprehensive play assessment. The aim of the study was to understand how various urban systems impact children's play experience in Rogoredo, and to support the development of recommendations towards ensuring a play-friendly environment.

Based on a participatory approach, this report raises awareness of the value of play in cities, and develops recommendations for future small-, medium- and large-scale interventions to bridge the play gap in Rogoredo. The research used the tool of the Urban Play Framework, which considers the three dimensions of facilitation, time and space dedicated to play, to guide the analysis in the neighbourhood. Its findings deepen our understanding of play in urban spaces, adding also new knowledge from similar studies done by Arup in the cities of London and Cape Town.

The play assessment presents the Rogoredo district as an area with mild to severe material, structural and governance obstacles for optimal play, but with significant opportunities to improve play conditions through interventions and investments in the built environment. The set of challenges and opportunities that the children of Rogoredo face are reflected in the mixed points of view collected during field research, including from children themselves. The prevailing feeling is that while the play conditions are not optimal, positive action is possible to expand the impact of existing initiatives and improve social networks among local communities.

In Rogoredo, **Facilitation for Play at household level** is limited by various factors that reduce caregivers' capacity to support children's play. The main issues are socio-economic difficulties, skewed work-life balance, and the dominance of structured games rather than more creative play modes. Facilitation for Play at **school level** is strong



in the Rogoredo neighborhood: teachers recognise the importance of play in learning outcomes, and they use it as a key educational tool. As reported by teachers, however, this enthusiasm for using play often clashes with the methods and time required to deliver core curricular subjects. At **neighbourhood level**, Facilitation for Play is supported by a solid and widespread network of local associations: these provide active social support for play and leisure activities and, generally, for the education and upbringing of children.

Time and Choice for Play at **household level** is challenged due to children' limited play time with caregivers and little time for unstructured play activities. At **school level**, the research highlights how play, sometimes of a structured type and sometimes of a free type, is integrated into different stages of the school day: during lessons in the classroom, during break time, and during after-school activities. In addition, the proximity of many families' homes to schools gives children more free time. At **neighbourhood level**, Time and Choice for Play in the community benefit from moderately high accessibility of the main places of interest to residents. However, limitations to outdoor play exist, caused mainly by perceived or real safety concerns in the neighborhood.

At **household level**, **spaces and facilities for play** are good, as most residential units in the Rogoredo district have adequate internal and external space, including for play activities. However, the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has raised significant challenges

in managing domestic spaces, with the overlapping of incompatible uses that hinder a healthy and playful home environment. The Spaces and Facilities for Play in Rogoredo's **schools** are wide-ranging and diverse, but their accessibility is limited by their opening times and costs. Beyond schools, the **neighbourhood** does not have significant childcare services and / or centres. Safety is considered a problem with respect to home-school journeys, due to antisocial behavior, illegal activity and road traffic, and this strongly affects children's autonomy to move around independently. The neighbourhood is well-served by play spaces and facilities, formal and informal, of various sizes. These offer a wide range of possible activities, but the lack of a truly accessible, safe and playful mobility network connecting these spaces with residential areas can prevent children and carers from taking full advantage of them. Antisocial behavior in public spaces is a pervasive concern for caregivers, who are very reluctant to allow a significant degree of independence for their children to use parks and public spaces.

The results of the research were used to identify a territorial strategy to guide the improvement of play conditions in the Rogoredo district, in particular to enhance facilitation, time and choice, and spaces and facilities for play.

Three main approaches were identified, focusing on spatial connections, the role of the school in the neighbourhood, and the responsible use of digital tools as facilitators of new educational gaming experiences.

First, the report recommends the creation of a **network of play spaces connecting three key areas in Rogoredo**. Due to their location and their proximity to key child-oriented infrastructure (i.e. schools), these spaces demonstrate good potential to support playful activities. Interactions with each space shall nurture the development of a different set of skills, from cognitive and physical, to social, to creative and emotional. Proposed interventions on each space include developing colourful paths and wayfinding elements, and encouraging active mobility through cycle paths. Taken together, this new network of play spaces will leverage existing mobility routes in the neighbourhood, with a view to making these safer and, in turn, supporting children's independent movement and exploration throughout Rogoredo.

Second, the report recommends **activating public spaces surrounding schools**, and the school grounds themselves, to create accessible spaces for children and families. Most schools in Rogoredo are inaccessible to families outside standard operating hours. Considering Milan's Open Schools 2.0 policy, there is a great opportunity to extend school hours to provide spaces for educational, recreational and social activities for all residents in Rogoredo. There is also an opportunity to transform existing spaces into more enriching and playful spots

where children can congregate and play. Putting children's preferences – for greenery, colours and better equipment – at the heart of this process is critical, as is engaging a broad constituency of stakeholders (including school staff, voluntary groups and associations, the Municipality and parents) to create sustainable interventions that are cared for by the community.

Lastly, there is an opportunity to **leverage digital tools to enhance the play experience in Rogoredo**. During lockdowns, children have been spending more time on digital devices. While this is often perceived to be negative, digital platforms can become a resource for engaging children to participate in outdoor, playful experiences. Pokemon Go and Minecraft are two great examples. As is YARD, an augmented reality tool developed by Arup that bridges playfulness and placemaking to champion children's views in urban design processes. Such digital tools are an entry point to bringing children out onto the streets to use their creativity to shape the neighbourhood around them.

Across the territorial strategy and the actions listed above, it is essential that community members are engaged throughout. If the potential users of an intervention are actively involved from project identification to realisation, the benefits for the community increase well beyond the scale of the intervention itself. Projects that fail to account for the needs of different groups – in particular the most vulnerable – risk entrenching or exacerbating the challenges these groups already face. Privileging community perspectives and empowering residents as agents of their own change is so important.

As part of this research, an experimental Play Street event was organised on via Monte Piana, the street overlooked by the research's participating school. The Play Street event was held at the close of the 2020/21 school year. It included a wide range of playful, educational and creative activities, including shows and performances by different partners. Arup led a co-creation workshop, 'Build your future city', with the support of LEGO.

The event was organised as a collective workshop to present the findings of the research work to residents in the neighbourhood, and to explore new spaces and forms of play. It was also used to identify opportunities to activate Rogoredo's streets and articulate a shared vision for their relationship with play. Most importantly, the Play Street event formed a Collaboration Pact between the City of Milan and all actors involved, as a basis on which to implement future events and leverage opportunities for play.



1. The Power of Play in Cities

Research shows that play helps to foster children's learning and holistic development, including their social, emotional, cognitive, physical and creative skills. This is acknowledged by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, approved on November 20, 1989, which sets out the obligations of the international community towards children. Most importantly, it establishes the right to play for all children.

Thirty years on, opportunities for child's play are severely hindered around the world. Play is struggling to find a place in the lives of many children today, and low-play lives and play poverty are seen across all strata of society and socio-economic levels. This is caused by multiple factors.

In cities, the barriers to play are complex and numerous. Global urbanisation trends are reducing accessible open spaces for play: community spaces, family-friendly parks, and play areas are often the first casualties as cities adopt or fall into unsustainable forms of development. Urban lifestyles are also changing, with a growing presence of insecurity and parental risk aversion, the increasing

role played by technology in our lives, and a recurring time-scarcity problem – each of which impact children's experience of the city¹. Compounding this, the needs and challenges of children often go unheard in urban decision-making and planning².

There is to date a limited base of evidence on the state of play in cities around the world, and particularly on the role of the built environment in enabling and constraining access to play opportunities. City authorities and professionals such as housing developers, planning officers, engineers, and development experts often have difficulty understanding how their work and the built environment as a whole relate to children's needs, specifically to learning through play³.

Very little guidance exists on designing neighbourhoods that encourage children's independent mobility and free play. In addition, limited evidence of the economic benefits of designing for play contributes to diminished political will, constrained commercial interest, and minimal effective guidance on how to plan, design and upgrade neighbourhoods to encourage children's play⁴.

Play is often seen as an activity confined to playgrounds or children's facilities, but the whole built environment can offer a critical play and learning opportunity for children. In reality, play permeates all aspects of a child's life, in a wider variety of locations and environments than adults often do not suspect. Cities can offer critical opportunities to better realise the potential to learn through playful experiences.

1. The Real Play Coalition (2018), Value of Play Report

2. The Real Play Coalition (2020), Reclaiming Play in Cities: The Real Play Coalition Approach

3. Foreman H. (2017) Residential Street Design and Play. Playing Out. Disponibile da: <https://playingout.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Helen-Forman-Street-design-and-play.pdf>



The Real Play Coalition was formed in 2018, to unite different organisations who believe in the power of play for children's well-being and optimal development. Arup, IKEA (Ingka Group), National Geographic Partners, LEGO Foundation and UNICEF have joined knowledge, skills and resources to change perceptions and practices around the value of play, by promoting play-based opportunities, influencing behavioural change, and mobilising policymakers, urban practitioners, and educators, so that by 2025, 500 million children will have benefited from the power of play.

The work of the partners of the Real Play Coalition aims to generate the evidence and knowledge to support city authorities, urban professionals, development actors and communities to better understand how the built environment can support children's diverse needs and abilities and provide for their optimal development. It also aims at creating guidance on how to design and implement play-based strategies, as well as urban policy and practices that encourage diverse play experiences in cities.

Landscaping, planting and community art installations, for example, can offer children considerable play value. Play aspects can be embedded in the way we design and plan for public space, transforming the way to school into a learning opportunity, or polluted and unsafe sites into vibrant assets. A combination of formal and informal play solutions can cultivate a greater sense of place, allow fuller play experiences, and reap substantial benefits for children, their families and their communities.

The right to play has suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic. The health emergency has made necessary protection measures that have severely limited the possibility of movement outside the home. One of the consequences of these limitations was the impact on the well-being of children and adolescents, whose development is closely linked to fundamental activities such as social gathering between peers, play, and education. In the report, "Young people in the time of Coronavirus"⁵, young boys are shown to have been affected negatively by long periods in the home, especially with respect to school preparation (43%), friendships (52%), the ability to socialize (59%), and their mood (57%).

On the other hand, as part of the pandemic recovery plan, in many cities the theme of play and the right to play are gradually establishing themselves as central dimensions in the planning and design of spaces, especially in urban areas where this right is more strongly limited.

Following the limitations of Covid-19 on recreational and social activities, in Italy policies and guidelines have been defined at national level to promote initiatives and interventions related to play. The Department for Family Policies formulated guidelines⁶ with the aim to identify organised opportunities that support socialising and play amongst children and adolescents during the Phase 2 of the Covid-19 emergency. The guidelines deal with two distinct types of actions, which will be implemented gradually:

- › the regulation of the openings of parks, public gardens and play areas for children, including those under the age of 3 and adolescents;
- › the realisation of playful-recreational activities, non-formal education, and experimental outdoor education activities.

The aim is to restore children's and adolescents' sociality and playful experiences beyond the confines of their domestic and family environment. This is strongly intertwined with the challenges of reconciling care and work responsibilities among parents.

Also, tactical urbanism has become even more important following the difficulties created by Covid-19, especially in relation to the need to rethink mobility in a sustainable way and to consider social activities in a way that restores the 'right to space'. Tactical urbanism acts on the public space with light, bottom-up, inclusive and widely replicable micro-redevelopment interventions, and offers fundamental opportunities to raise the play value and the sense of community in urban spaces.

The pandemic has given new strength and meaning to fast and low-cost micro-interventions, which allow more space to be dedicated to cycle paths, pedestrians and public places. One example is the pop-up bike lanes that more and more cities are tapping into. In fact, tactical urbanism is making it possible to quickly adapt urban space to deal with the virus, but it can also represent an opportunity for a more radical and long-term urban renewal.

For the creation of widespread and complete play experiences, it is a question of knowing how to exploit and encourage in our cities the innate curiosity that children develop through play, to learn and put into practice the relational skills that will allow communities and society to be resilient, sustainable and thriving. As children grow up, opportunities for playful engagement in their environment help build physical, emotional and social resilience – crucial factors for personal well-being at every age group.

5. Save the Children, Ipsos (2021), I giovani ai tempi del coronavirus. Available from: <https://s3.savethechildren.it/public/files/uploads/pubblicazioni/i-giovani-ai-tempi-del-coronavirus.pdf>

6. Dipartimento per le politiche della famiglia (ottobre 2020), Linee guida per la gestione in sicurezza di opportunità organizzare di socialità e gioco per bambini e adolescenti nella fase 2 dell'emergenza COVID-19



Play Street Via Monte Piana © Arup

2. The Urban Play Framework

The Urban Play Framework was developed by Arup for the Real Play Coalition, in collaboration with the LEGO Foundation and with the support of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

The Framework provides a structured, granular and holistic method to understand how various urban systems relate to a child's learning through play experience, by assessing the challenges and opportunities surrounding play in a given urban context; and to help support, prioritise and design play activation interventions. This tool is also intended for ongoing outcome assessment, to measure the long-term impact of specific play activations.

The Framework has been tested in three different urban contexts: Town 2, a partially informal settlement within the township of Khayelitsha, Cape Town; Burnt Oak, an area within the London Borough of Barnet; and the district of Rogoredo, Municipality 4 in the Municipality of Milan. The Urban Play Framework assesses three Dimensions critical to ensure a play-friendly environment for optimal childhood development.

FACILITATION OF PLAY

This dimension seeks to understand if play is actively supported and facilitated by caregivers, teachers, community members, and city authorities as a whole.

TIME AND CHOICE FOR PLAY

This dimension seeks to understand if children have adequate time and choice to engage in stimulating, and developmentally rewarding play, alone or with their playmates and caregivers, within the target community.

SPACES AND FACILITIES FOR PLAY

This dimension seeks to understand if children with varying cognitive, socioemotional, and physical capabilities have access to adequate play spaces, playable environments and facilities for different play modes; and if they have a variety of different toys, creative supplies, materials and equipment for play.

Children's living conditions within the target community, including their fundamental needs for shelter, healthcare, and nutrition are also assessed, as these conditions are central to enjoyable and developmentally rewarding play.

Each dimension consists of four Goals, which are reference standards for what needs to be achieved to create playful environments for children well-being and development. Goals are assessed at four urban scales (household, school, neighbourhood and city levels) considering a set of factors, which are discrete situational, relational, material, and infrastructural elements that collectively contribute to enabling optimal playing conditions.

The goals are assessed at four urban scales:

THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

Play conditions in the home and immediate outdoor space, involving children, their caregivers, and existing family members.

THE SCHOOL LEVEL

Play conditions in the school environment, and the immediate outdoor space, involving children, and their educators.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

Play conditions in the local neighbourhood, its streets, spaces, facilities, and institutions, involving children, caregivers, educators, and community organisations.

THE CITY LEVEL

Play conditions across the city as a whole, including its connectivity and services, and involving planners, decision-makers, government officials, policy, strategy, and budgets.

The knowledge and evidence generated through the application of the Urban Play Framework can be used to influence and support activities to improve the wider play experience in cities. In particular, the framework can support governments, development partners, urban practitioners, and citizens in exploring actionable ways to address the causes and effects of low play in cities; and to design and promote play-based interventions to make cities more playful and inclusive for optimal child development.



3. Rogoredo Play Profile



Approach

in partnership with the Real Play Coalition and the Departments of Resilience, Participation and Education of the Municipality of Milan, Arup applied the Urban Play Framework in the Rogoredo district of Milan to conduct a thorough assessment of play conditions. Its primary aim was to understand how various urban systems impact the play experience of children in Rogoredo, and to support the development of recommendations for ensuring a play-friendly environment. The research adds new knowledge to similar studies conducted by Arup in London and Cape Town.

The choice of Rogoredo as a pilot neighbourhood for the "Reclaiming Play in Cities" project is down to two factors – one spatial and one demographic. The first relates to the strong urban transformations taking place in Rogoredo, which are attracting new young families to the neighbourhood. The second relates to the high proportion of residents younger than 18 in the neighbourhood – equal to 21.9% of the total population.

The play profile in Rogoredo district was developed in two main phases: a socio-economic and spatial analysis, followed by fieldwork. The socio-economic and spatial analysis focused on the governance structure, and the demographic, socio-economic, material and spatial characteristics of the neighbourhood. Key outputs included analytical maps based on the three dimensions of the Urban Play Framework. The fieldwork followed a participatory approach and it was conducted between February and June 2021.

Several qualitative research methods were adopted to document as accurately as possible the material, systemic and political conditions that affect the way children play in Rogoredo. The methods were also used to explore how local actors perceive play conditions, and how they shape and act within these.

The following methods were used:

- › **Survey** with closed and open-ended questions, carried out and administered randomly to a sample of 200 people. The survey was targeting four groups: children / young people (0-15 years), residents, school staff, and figures who take care of children (caregivers). The questionnaire was distributed through the channels of the primary school, "ICS Pasquale Sottocorno" and local associations affiliated with the Municipality.
- › **Informal and unstructured interviews** with key informants and key stakeholders, including key community figures, representatives of the main local associations, teachers and parents of the primary school involved, academic experts, built environment professionals, and city authorities, to better understand the play environment and systematic approaches to play optimisation.
- › **Focus Groups**. with teachers and two classes of 4th and 5th grade from the primary school "ICS Pasquale Sottocorno". The aim was to explore the neighborhood through their point of view, sharing knowledge, thoughts, emotions and examining the local opportunities and challenges surrounding play.

Activities in these workshops included participatory mapping exercises and group discussions to identify challenging play areas and opportunities, and to co-design the street in front of the school.

- › **Photo collection** with children, aimed at identifying preferred play places and spaces in the neighbourhood, and generating an understanding of children's play experience in the local community.

This participatory approach was used because community engagement is an important pre-requisite to improving a neighbourhood's playability and resilience. In fact, meaningful and sustained engagement is key to developing social capital, mutual support, and a sense of belonging. It therefore offered a great opportunity to create a culture of play in Rogoredo and establish ownership over future interventions.

The research culminated in the **Play Street Event** in via Monte Piana, which was delivered thanks to

a Collaboration Pact between the City of Milan, the "ICS Pasquale Sottocorno" school and various local associations; and Arup's support. The Play Street Event was held on the 7th and 8th of June 2021, and it included a wide range of playful, educational and creative activities, including performances by children and musicians.

Arup led the co-creation workshop, 'Build your future city', which involved children (6-10 years) and teachers. This workshop was supported by the LEGO Group. The goal was to identify and champion the desires of children for improving play conditions in their community. The workshop was used to generate ideas for possible urban interventions based on play in open and green spaces. The workshop included LEGO brick activities that gave children the opportunity to express and transfer their ideas in a free and creative way.

Play has proved to be a fundamental tool for generating possible solutions to real world challenges, such as designing a sustainable city for all.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD!

Each session of the online workshop, organized with the school, was structured in two main activities. For the first activity, students were asked to describe places, and tell stories, of their neighborhood by placing notes / post-its on a map. The image below shows the results of the four sessions delivered.



Focus group: class 4B - group 1



Focus group: class 4B - group 2



Focus group: class 5C - group 1



Focus group: class 5C - group 2

LET'S DESIGN THE PLAYGROUND OF YOUR DREAMS!

The second activity was focused on the creation of a collage to design collaboratively the space in front of the school, Via Monte Piana. The exercise was organized using an online collaborative dashboard with stickers of street furniture, people involved in play activities, plants and animals, prepared in advance.



Focus group: class 4B - group 1



Focus group: class 4B - group 2



Focus group: class 5C - group 1

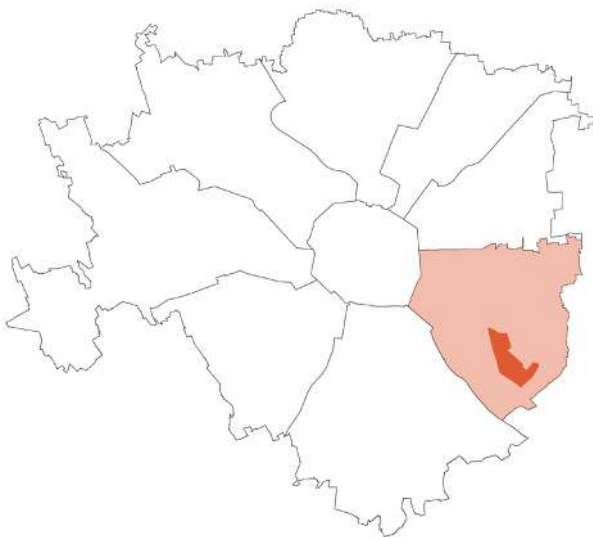


Focus group: class 5C - group 2

Overview

The play assessment shows Rogoredo as an area with considerable challenges for achieving an optimal play environment. The prevailing feeling is that conditions for play are not always optimal, due mainly to safety concerns and limited connectivity between play spaces. Nevertheless, positive opinions were expressed regarding the offer of playful activities by local associations..

The findings show that positive action to better support play is possible, by enhancing and expanding the impact of existing initiatives, and implementing further opportunities to improve play conditions through interventions on the built environment, especially those that enhance social networks among the community.



- Municipio 4
- NIL 33

DEMOGRAPHY

In 2017, Rogoredo Santa Giulia district was home to 10,184 people. This equates to 0.7% of the total population in Milan. Most residents are concentrated in the central residential area.

Based on NIL data, the neighbourhood appears to have had a rather intense **population variation** (map 1), with a percent change of 90% between 2010 and 2020. The growing population is attributed to various urban development projects - Milano Santa Giulia, Merezate - which attracted young families to the neighbourhood. These transformations are described in the Spatial development and characteristics section, below. It is estimated that the district's population will increase 2.7% by 2030⁷.

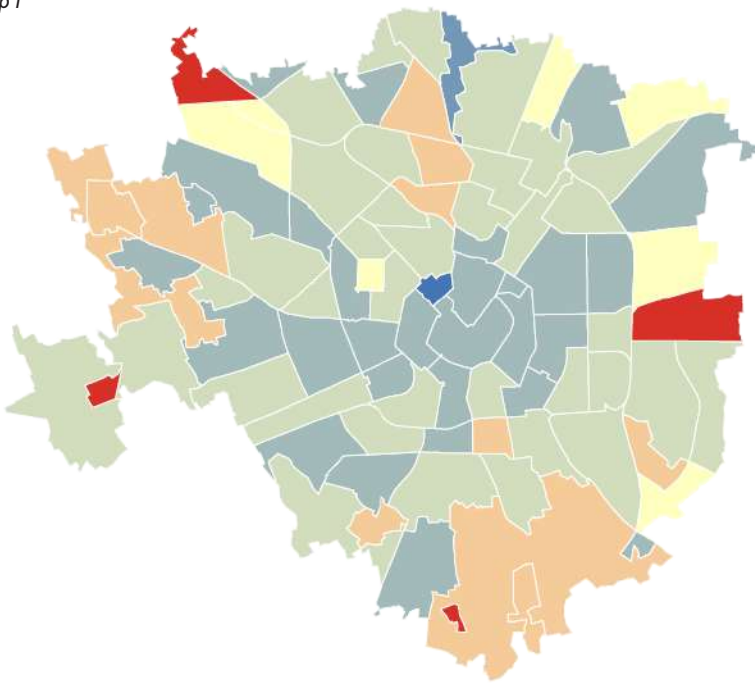
A large proportion of Rogoredo's population are young people. Almost one-fifth (19%) are **aged between 0 and 15 years** (map 2). This is higher than in the majority of Milanese districts. Currently, 21.9% of the population is aged between 0 and 18, and the percentage of people aged between 14 and 24 will increase from 9.3% to 11% by 2030⁸.

7. Dati schede NIL – Nuclei di Identità Locale (PGT Milano 2030)

8. Dati schede NIL – Nuclei di Identità Locale (PGT Milano 2030)

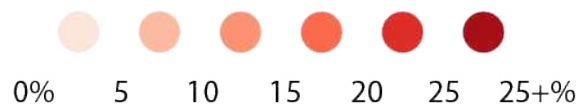
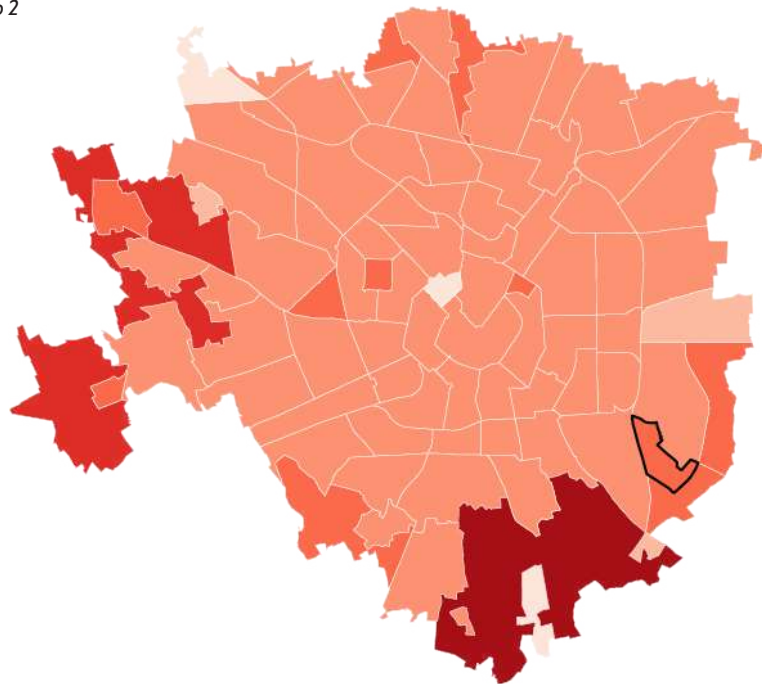
POPULATION VARIATION 2010/20

Map 1



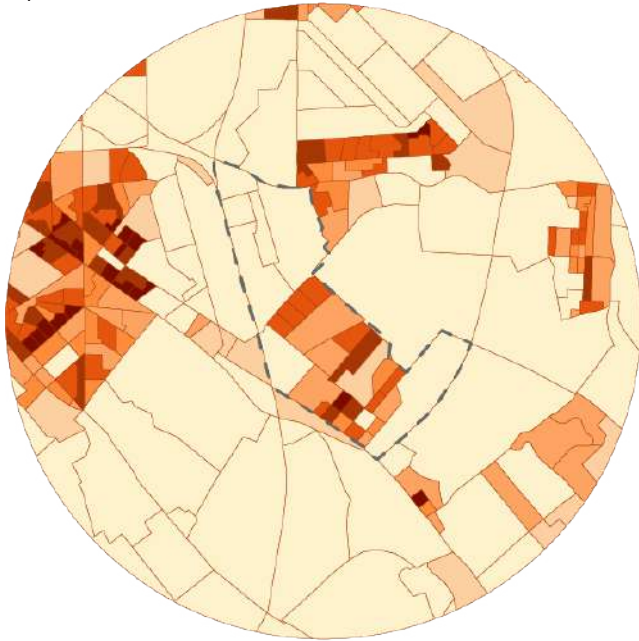
POPULATION <15

Map 2



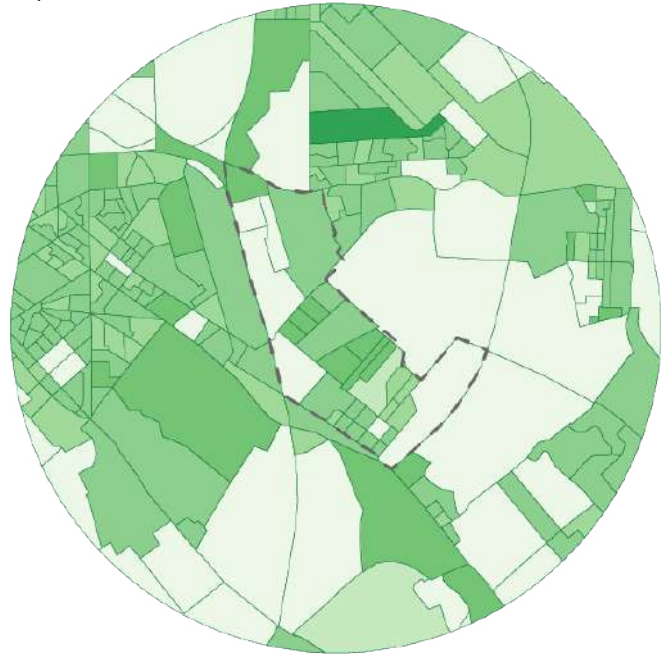
POPULATION DENSITY

Map 3



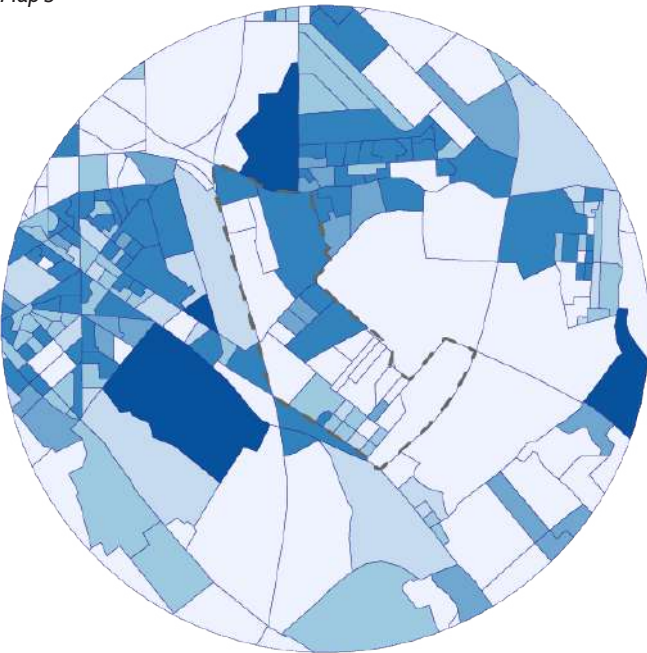
POPULATION <15

Map 4



FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION

Map 5



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Map 6



A closer look allows us to analyse Rogoredo's demographic characteristics in more detail.

The Rogoredo NIL has a **population density** (map 3) of 8,487 inhabitants / km². Within the neighborhood, there is a concentration of people in the central residential area, which corresponds to the historic core and the new residential core of Santa Giulia.

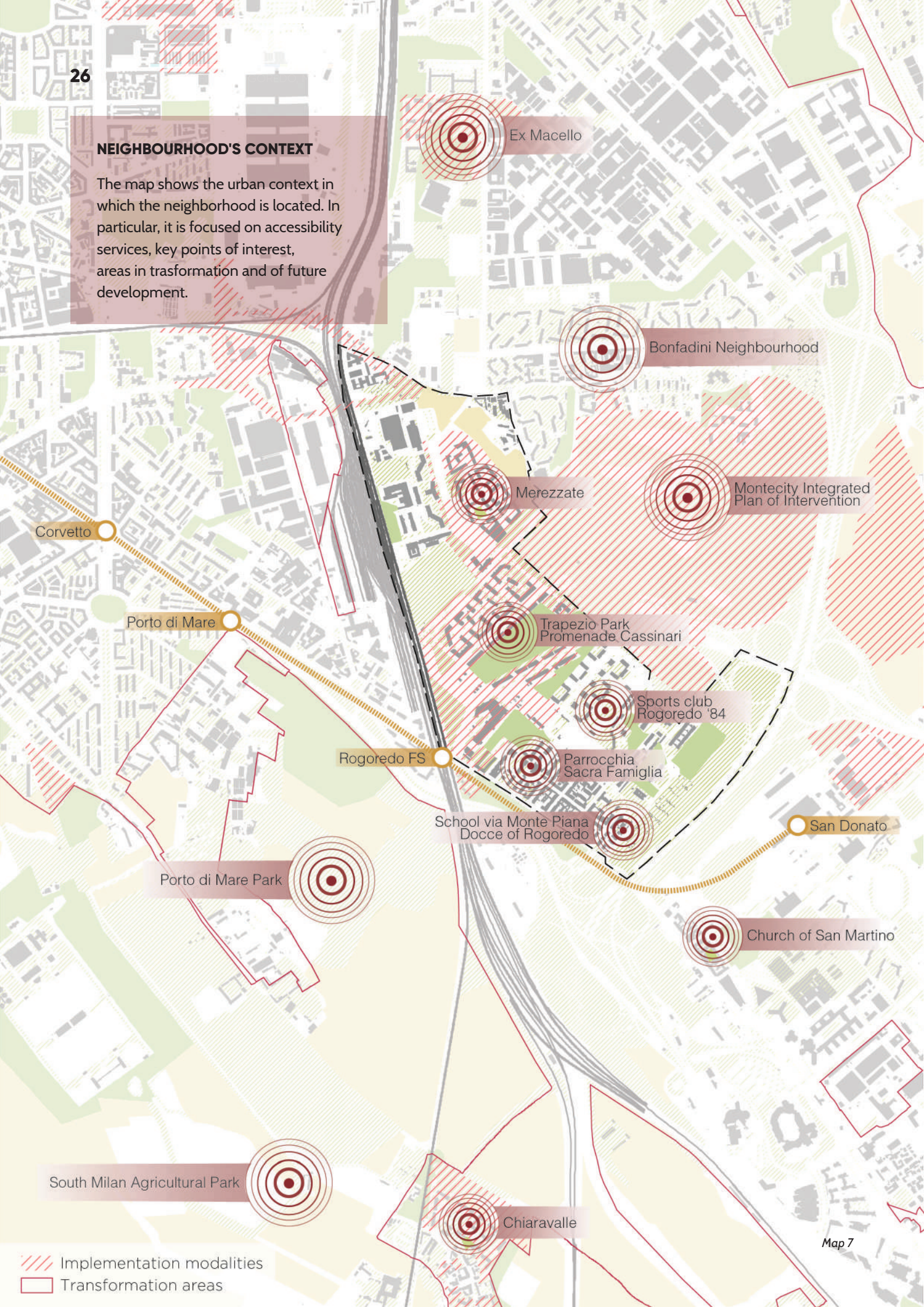
As regards the **population between 0 and 15 years** (map 4), there is a rather homogeneous distribution in all the residential areas of the neighborhood, with an average prevalence of approximately 30%. Both the new inhabited areas of Santa Giulia and Merezate have percentages equal to or slightly higher than the average, being settlements with Social Residential Building whose main target is young families.

Rogoredo has a sizeable **foreign-born population** (map 5), comprising 19% of all residents in the district. This is slightly higher than the average for the city of Milan, which is 18.2%. The new residential areas of Santa Giulia and Merezate have the greatest diversity, with percentages of foreign-born residents peaking at 80%. By contrast, the historic core of Rogoredo has lower percentages of foreign-born residents.

With respect to socio-economic conditions, Rogoredo has similar **unemployment rates** (map 6) to elsewhere in Milan. In parts of the historic core, however, unemployment percentages reach between 15% and 20%. This is important to consider for interventions in the historic core, in particular because experiences of economic deprivation can put strain on caregivers' cognitive and financial ability to facilitate their child's play.

NEIGHBOURHOOD'S CONTEXT

The map shows the urban context in which the neighborhood is located. In particular, it is focused on accessibility services, key points of interest, areas in transformation and of future development.



- Implementation modalities
- Transformation areas

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS

Rogoredo Santa Giulia is located in the south-east part of Milan and it covers an area of 1.2km². Rogoredo demonstrates peri-urban characteristics because it is located between the outskirts of the city of Milan and some residual agricultural areas of the South Milan Agricultural Park. The district is well-served by transport infrastructure, for example the railway and the 'Autostrada del Sole' highway to the west and the East Milan bypass to the south-east. Rogoredo has a rich architectural heritage, especially in the historic core.

The district is experiencing large urban transformations that are reshaping the urban realm and altering

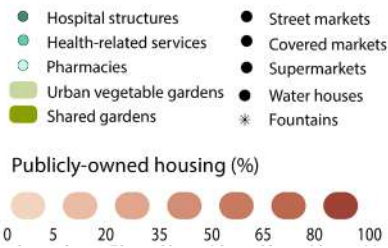
dynamics among communities. Following industrial decommissioning in 1980, much of the city saw new residential developments. Most recently, these include the new Santa Giulia district (at the heart of which are the Trapezio park and the Cassinari Promenade) and the newly completed Merezzate district (which covers about 50,000m²). Once complete, Santa Giulia will establish connections between Rogoredo and the Bonfadini district to the north. It will also create new and significant green public spaces, with promising implications for healthy and enriching play. The development will serve multiple functions (commercial, residential, sporting) and it includes a 330,000m² park.



Via Monte Cengio © Arup

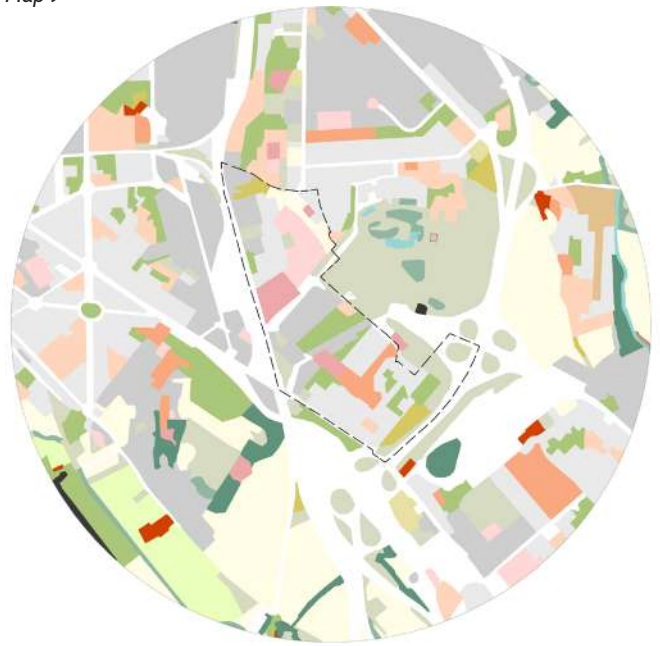
BASIC SERVICES

Map 8



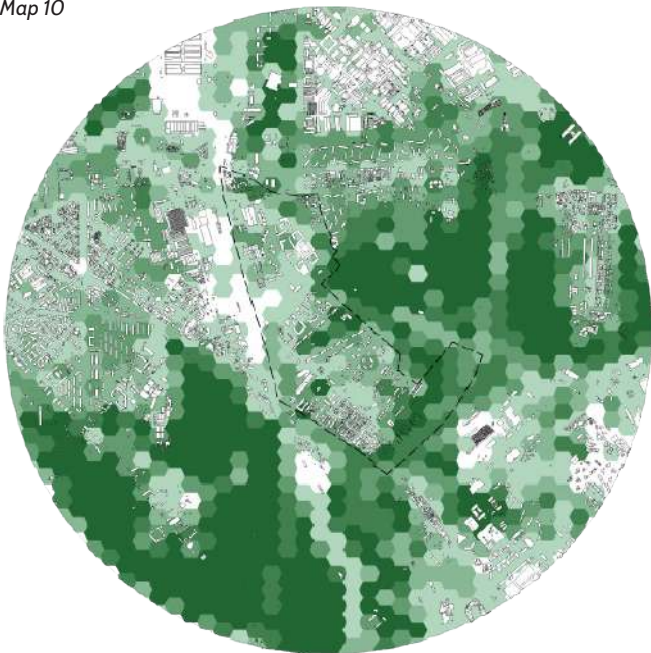
LAND USE

Map 9



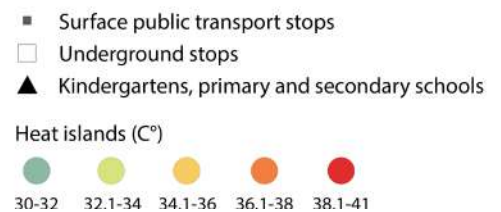
GREEN SPACES

Map 10



HEAT ISLAND

Map 11



Regarding the spatial characteristics of the neighborhood, some central issues were analysed to define the physical and material conditions that influence the opportunities for play, including the availability, quality and accessibility of existing play spaces.

Residents in Rogoredo have good access to **basic services** (map 8). There are several food retail outlets, including a street market, and drinking fountains are dotted across the neighbourhood. Also, urban gardens and a shared garden managed by local associations have been mapped in the neighborhood. Finally, in regard to housing, there is a widespread presence of public housing in the neighborhoods surrounding the Rogoredo area, namely: Corvetto, Bonfadini and Ponte Lambro.

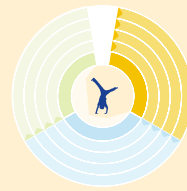
The district is characterised by a predominantly anthropic **land use** (map 9), with areas of residential fabric concentrated mainly in the southern part, in which parks, gardens, sports facilities and family gardens are widely present. To the north of the district are some industrial

settlements, residual agricultural spaces, and the major areas of urban transformation, with the Merezzate construction site and some degraded and unvegetated areas.

There is already good coverage of **green spaces** (map 10) in Rogoredo. Gardens, parks and facilities for sport are common, particularly in the east and south of the district. These spaces are important to offset **heat island** (map 11) effects in Rogoredo; temperatures in the neighbourhood rise to 38°C in the central residential space. Whilst this is not severe, increased temperatures can impact children and elderly residents negatively.

Currently, however, green areas are not used to their full potential, both from an ecological-environmental perspective, and from the perspective of resident' health and wellbeing. This is due to a combination of factors relating to residents' perceptions of safety, spatial quality and comfort.

Facilitation for Play in Rogoredo



This dimension seeks to assess if play is understood and actively supported by caregivers, teachers, community members, and city authorities as a whole.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE:

HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

This means that balanced and responsive play facilitation is understood and provided by caregivers.

SCHOOL LEVEL

This means that play-based learning is encouraged through school curricula and teachers.

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

This means that the play facilitation is supported by institutions and individuals throughout the community.

CITY LEVEL

This means that play facilitation and advocacy support are enabled throughout the city by governance and leadership. It also entails that caregivers and children can participate in decision-making and planning.



FACILITATION FOR PLAY AT HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

Factors assessed at the household level examined if caregivers understand the importance of learning through play as a critical activity for children's well-being and development, including for supporting their social, cognitive and motor skills, their mental and physical health condition, and for building their resilience. These factors also analysed if caregivers are aware of existing challenges and barriers that reduce children's opportunities for play at home, and if they facilitate different and responsive play activities in their household.

Facilitation for Play at household level in Rogoredo is limited by various factors that affect the capacity of caregivers to facilitate children's play. The main issues are socio-economic difficulties, skewed work-life balance, and the dominance of structured games rather than more creative play modes.

Some caregivers have limited opportunities to engage their children in play. Time limitations, caused by long working hours and domestic responsibilities, are reported as a key obstacle, as are a lack of energy and resources among the most economically vulnerable households. This is reflected in the section focusing on caregivers' time & choice. Moreover, awareness on the importance of play for children development can influence whether some caregivers perceive play as important for their child's development.

Primary research revealed that caregivers in Rogoredo prefer structured games both indoor and outdoor, which are characterised by fewer opportunities for expressive freedom and imagination. This is reflected in children's play choices. Many children highlight as their most common play activities structured games or games that require equipment, for example team sport (for example basketball, football and volleyball), individual sport (for example biking, skating and jump rope), group games (for example hide and seek), board games, video games, and playing with LEGO. Only a minority of responses mention unstructured and imaginative games, such as free play outside..



FACILITATION FOR PLAY AT SCHOOL LEVEL

Factors assessed at the school level examined if schools embed play in curriculum, and whether teachers understand the importance of learning through play as a critical activity for children's well-being and development, and are aware of existing challenges and barriers to play at school. These factors also analysed if teachers facilitate a range of play activities, also considering different abilities and needs, and whether training support is available for teachers on play.

Facilitation for Play at school is strong in the Rogoredo neighborhood. Teachers recognise the importance of play in learning outcomes, and they use it as a key educational tool. As reported by teachers, however, this enthusiasm for using play often clashes with the methods and time required to deliver core curricular subjects. This is compounded by a lack of support and training for teachers on play.

The national curriculum for kindergarten and primary schools in Italy recognises play as a means of expression, acquiring knowledge and creatively elaborating personal and social experiences. Whilst the curriculum gives teachers a key role in facilitating and mediating play, most teachers in Rogoredo have never received support or training on how to integrate play into teaching. Instead, many have taught themselves how to do it.

From interviews and focus groups, it is clear that teachers are successful in balancing play with more conventional

education methods. Play activities in the classroom are balanced between free and structured play types. Most participants (80%) indicated that play features in the daily routine in the classroom, and average play time ranges from 1 to 5 hours per day.

In structured activities, whereby play is facilitated and actively guided by specific instructions in the classroom, "warm-up" exercises were highlighted to help students' concentration at the beginning of a lesson. These include relaxation activities, didactic games useful for learning (for example, competitions centred on verbs), team sports games, board games (for example cards and chess), and movement and psychomotor games. Children usually engage in free play during break times.

There is a continued need to raise awareness of the centrality of play in promoting children's well-being, holistic development and learning, including their cognitive, emotional, physical and social skills. Support and training for teachers to expand their knowledge and create tools for implementing optimal play activities are an important step in this regard.

Interviews with school staff and with representatives of local associations highlighted some collaborative activities between schools and local organisations, in particular the Verde Festival association. This includes several playful events, such as the year-end school party, interactive educational and cultural paths, and activities for the redevelopment of some areas of the neighborhood, such as the garden in via Rogoredo.





FACILITATION FOR PLAY AT NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

Factors assessed at the neighbourhood level examined if caregivers are aware of, and have access to, support services and training for enhancing healthy and nurturing parenting, and for developing play facilitation skills. These factors also assessed whether community groups and social networks facilitate play for children and caregivers.

Facilitation for Play in Rogoredo is supported by a solid and widespread network of local associations. These provide active social support for play and leisure activities and, generally, for the education and upbringing of children. This said, a lack of organised tutoring was identified as something that undermines more effective facilitation for play in the neighbourhood.

Residents' opinions on the quality of life and opportunities for play in Rogoredo are mixed. During interviews and focus groups, two dominant profiles emerged. On one hand are those who participate in social activities and are satisfied with these. On another are those who are unaware of these activities and therefore report less satisfaction. This suggests that increasing awareness and the visibility of activities and support networks will increase satisfaction among residents.



DISCOVERING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The maps on this page, and on the following pages, are the result of site visits, focus groups, survey, and desktop study.

SERVICES

Map 12



Over half of respondents (53.9%) are aware of social services, support programmes and local groups in Rogoredo. Through a combination of material support and social assistance, these services are perceived to promote well-being in the neighbourhood. Local religious associations and groups are almost exclusive providers of play initiatives in Rogoredo. Over half of respondents identified these actors when asked who in the neighbourhood is promoting play.

A mapping process identified many organisations that provide local support for well-being and play, including for vulnerable children (map 14). There is some indication that the support provided by local organisations in Rogoredo is not matched by appropriate spaces for play, as outlined in the Spaces & Facilities for Play section. Opportunities identified across the network of local associations are described in the box below.

Furthermore, Arup's research mapped existing spaces with potential for supporting play in Rogoredo. The "Event Spaces" map (map 13) shows four main places in Rogoredo that are used by associations, as well as by neighbourhood committees and residents. These are: Trapezio park, which hosts neighborhood and sporting events; the PoliSala Sianesi, which hosts theatrical and musical events; the Circolo Arci Mondini, which hosts theatrical, musical and cultural events; and the Former Showers of Rogoredo, where theatrical, musical and cultural events take place. Despite these, the school remains the hub of activities for many children, including for play.

EVENT SPACES

Map 13



SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The neighbourhood is plenty of formal and informal associations organizing cultural, health, social, and sport activities. The map illustrates where their headquarters are located in the neighbourhood, and their missions.

	Adults	Teenagers	Children	Families	Residents
1. Spazio Melotti	x		x	x	
2. Rogoredo 84		x	x		
3. Coop. Delta Ecopolis					x
4. Pop. School of Italian for Foreigners	x				
5. Association ParLAMI A.P.S.	x	x	x	x	
6. Association I Care					x
7. The Court of Artists	x		x		
8. Circolo Arci Mondini	x	x	x		
9. Association Vivi Rogoredo					x
10. verdeFestival Association	x	x	x		
11. Association 4Gatti		x	x		
12. Neighborhood Committee Viale Ungheria					x

Map 14

LEGEND

- NIL 33
- Built
- Urban parks
- Vegetable gardens
- Sports Centre

- Associations**
- Cultural
 - Local promotion
 - Health-assistance
 - Social
 - Sports

- Main target**
- Adults
 - Teenagers
 - Children
 - Families
 - Residents

- Pedibus route no. 1
- Pedibus route no. 2

0 100 200m

Scale 1:10.000

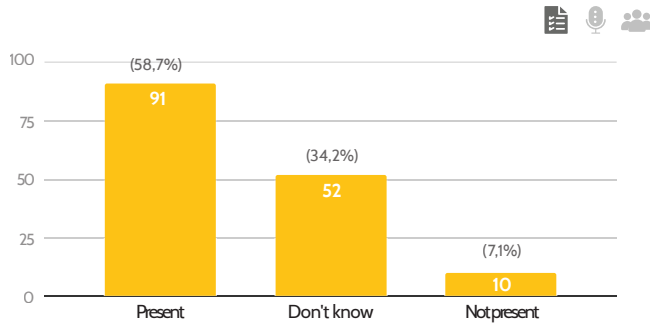


INTERVIEWING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

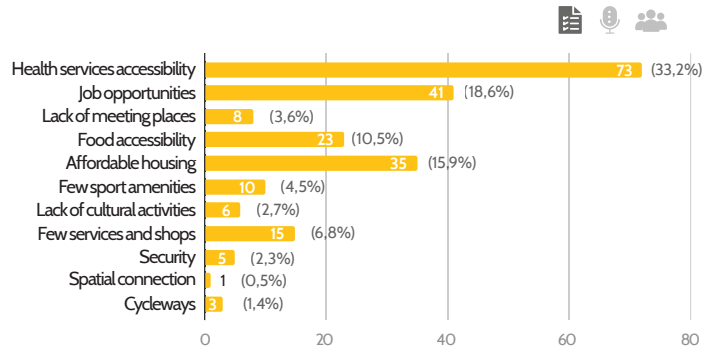
Facilitation for play is promoted by the presence of a rather solid and widespread network of associative realities, which provides social assistance, support for the organization of play and educational activities'. However, it was recognized a lack in aggregative spaces, and in a specific training for tutors to formalize and improve play's moments.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

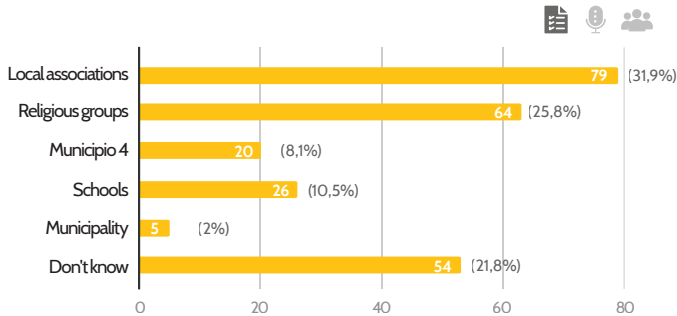
MATERIAL SUPPORT AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR WELL-BEING



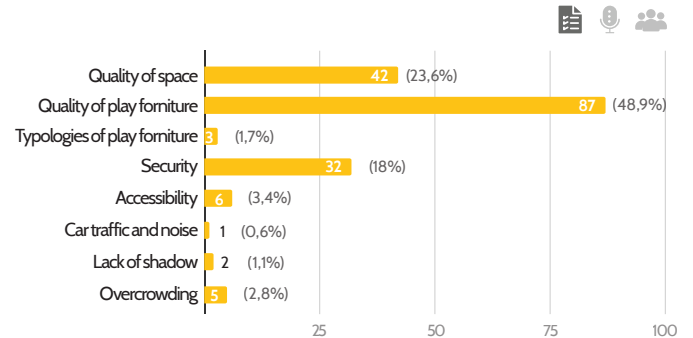
LOCAL PROBLEMS



PROMOTION OF PLAY INITIATIVES

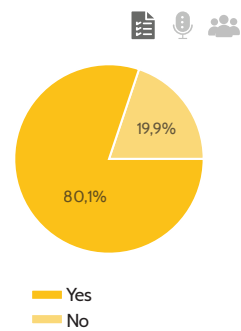


OBSTACLES TO PLAY

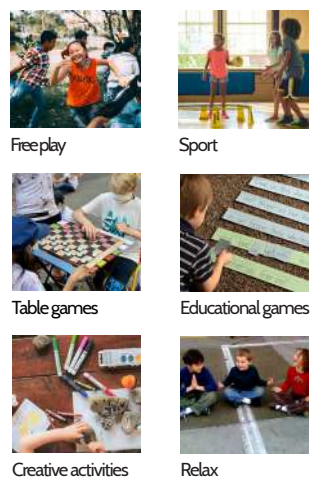


SCHOOL

PLAY DURING SCHOOL HOURS



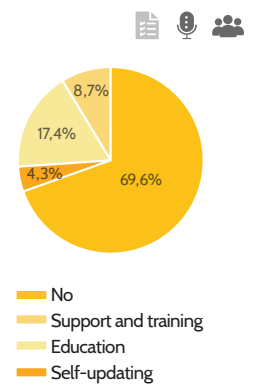
PLAY ACTIVITIES



AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

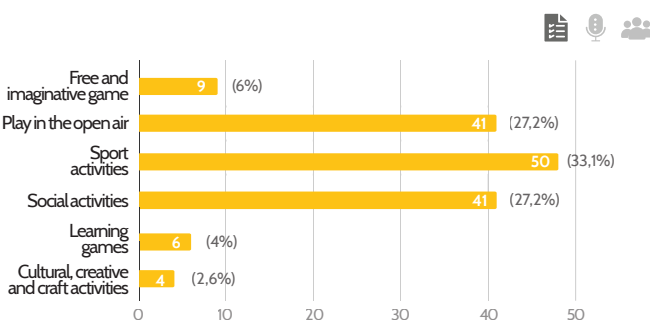


SUPPORT AND TRAINING

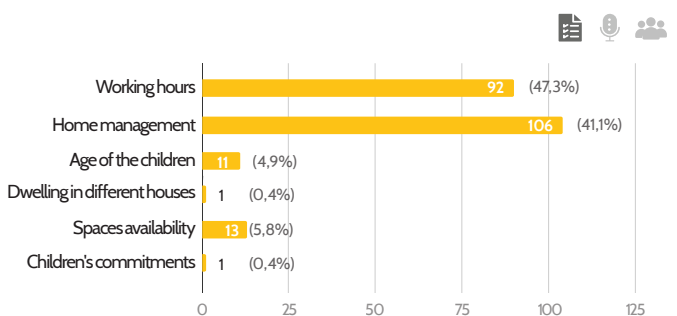


HOUSEHOLD

MOST IMPORTANT PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR CAREGIVERS



OBSTACLES TO SHARED PLAY WITH CAREGIVERS



NEIGHBORHOOD'S ASSOCIATIONS

Below the list, and description, of the main cultural, social, health assistance, sports, local promotions associations identified in the neighbourhood.

CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS

- › **Circolo Arci Mondini**, an association with an intergenerational objective, including adolescents, adults and children; it promotes activities such as courses (dance, sport, theater, music, etc.), live music performances, and cultural heritage events, and it provides the neighborhood with a library open to members.
- › **verdeFestival**, an association with an intergenerational objective; it organises theater activities, live performances, an open-air cinema, cultural and artistic events (exhibitions, poetry reading, creation of murals), and it promotes courses and initiatives in favor of the rights of children. The activities are carried out extensively in the neighborhood spaces and within their headquarters, the Ex Rogoredo Showers, where there is also a shared garden.
- › **4Gatti**, an association that focuses on children and young people; it creates and stages theater and clown shows aimed especially at children. It often uses the Polisala Sianasi within the parish of the neighborhood.
- › **La Corte degli Artisti**, an association that focuses on adults and occasionally children; it delivers creative workshops and makes an exhibition space available to the district.

SOCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

- › **Spazio Melotti**, an association that focuses on families, children and adults; it organises courses and workshops, recreational activities and initiatives for social cohesion and for active citizenship. It is a fundamental actor within the Santa Giulia residential area, carrying out the function of a neighborhood concierge that works on emerging needs. The Melotti Solidarity Purchase Group is also located here for conscious and zero-mile consumption of food.
- › **Delta Ecopolis Cooperative**, a cooperative whose main target is the residents of Rogoredo; it promotes activities for the improvement of housing and social conditions, social management activities and mediation between actors.
- › **Popular School of Italian for Foreigners**, an association that focuses on adults and specifically foreign citizens; it organises Italian language courses, which are of fundamental importance for the integration of families of foreign origin.

HEALTH ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATIONS

- › **ParLAMI A.P.S.**, an association that focuses on adults, families, children and teenagers; it offers professional speech therapy, psychology, psychomotor activity, osteopathy and nutrition and has as its foundation the prevention of social discomfort both individually and in the family..

SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS

- › **Rogoredo 84**, an amateur sports association that focuses on children and young people; it offers sports courses and makes football fields, tennis courts and an athletics track available to the neighborhood.

LOCAL PROMOTION ASSOCIATIONS

- › **Associazione I-Care**, an association whose main target is the residents of Rogoredo; it promotes activities to enhance the local heritage, social initiatives and support for the learning of children and young people (homework help).
- › **Associazione Vivi Rogoredo**, an association whose main target is the residents of Rogoredo; it promotes activities to enhance the neighborhood's environmental, artistic and cultural heritage.
- › **Neighborhood Committee of Viale Ungheria and of Quartiere Santa Giulia**, an association whose main target is the residents of Rogoredo; it promotes activities to enhance the local heritage and social initiatives..



FACILITATION FOR PLAY AT CITY LEVEL

Factors assessed at the city level examined if government authorities understand the importance of play for children's well-being and development, and are informed about the benefits of play to citizens and the built environment. The factors also assessed whether there are public policies, guidelines and communication campaigns that facilitate and support the creation of playful environments.

Facilitation for Play in Milan is supported by collaboration agreements, initiatives such as "Let's go to school with the Pedibus", and policies and tools relating to schools and public services. At the heart of these initiatives is the Milan 2020 Adaptation Strategy, which was developed in response to the Covid-19 emergency with the aim to enhance social and spatial resources and increase urban resilience in the city.

Policies and guidelines at the city level support facilitation for play. This is through the creation of 'networks' of actors, as well as initiatives and opportunities for play in streets, open public spaces and schools.

Key Departments of the Municipality of Milan in regard to play include:

- › Education Department (School and Educational Services Area, Childhood Services Area)
- › Neighborhoods and Municipalities Management Department
- › Environmental Transition Department (Resilient Cities Project Office)
- › Civic Services, Participation and Sport Department

Historically, childhood development and well-being was the exclusive responsibility of the Education Department and the Social Policies Department, but in consideration of the multidimensionality of well-being, even more evident after pandemic, it is necessary to rethink, integrate and share policies and city strategies to promote the well-being of all minors (a dedicated strategic plan was defined with DGC 731 / 2021); in particular, in relation to the educational issue, it is starting to be greater connections, and shared projects with other Departments (for example, with the Resilient Cities Project Office within the Environmental Transition Department). The hope is that in the future education could permeate policy choices at the city level, and become from sector policy to urban policy.

A central tool for facilitating play in Milan are **Collaboration agreements** for managing common goods. These agreements identify strategic guidelines for testing participation policies among active citizens, informal groups, associations, educational institutions, and others in the care, management and regeneration of urban common goods (i.e. public spaces, parks, and playgrounds).

Furthermore, the **Milan 2020 Adaptation Strategy** is of decisive importance. It aims to develop a strategy for the so-called "Phase 2" of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Strategy has a specific section on children. It recognises the centrality of children and adolescents, who, perhaps more than others, have suffered from domestic limitations and distancing regulations.

Among the policies (strategies, actions, projects) implemented by the Adaptation Strategy is **"The city of children | Open and widespread school"**. In regard to facilitation for play, this policy provides for:

- › Mapping educational poverty to provide more support for vulnerable children.
- › Supporting voluntary and private social networks, and

encouraging young people to participate

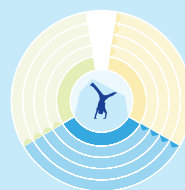
- › Agreeing with the Government and the Region on support for the public / private school system, so that childcare services are not weakened
- › Involving parents, canteen commissions and other bodies to imagine a new future for and teaching activities.

Among the immediate actions is a large project that focuses on opening spaces to children and promoting culture, education and sport.

Another policy that supports facilitation for play in Milan is "Let's go to school with the Pedibus", promoted by the Education Department. This is being implemented in the Merezate, Rogoredo and Santa Giulia districts in collaboration with the comprehensive schools, Pasquale Sottocorno and Madre Teresa of Calcutta. The initiative promotes walking routes to schools for children aged between 5 and 11 years, accompanied by volunteers. The goal is to promote social interactions, knowledge of the territory, and a culture of sustainable mobility and active lifestyles.



Time and Choice for Play in Rogoredo



This dimension seeks to assess if children have adequate time and choice to engage in stimulating and developmentally rewarding play activities, alone or with their playmates and caregivers.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE:

HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

This means ensuring that caregivers and children have adequate time and choice to play at home either with siblings or peers and alone. It also entails caregivers having adequate time and knowledge to engage in play activities with children.

SCHOOL LEVEL

This means schools provide adequate time and choice for a variety of play types, including pre- and after- school activities..

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

This means that a play-supportive culture is established and promoted in the community, by local residents and/or civil society organisations. Opportunities and events exist for community members to engage in and support play in public spaces..

CITY LEVEL

This means that adequate time and choice to play is enabled by governance and leadership, using a participatory approach.



TIME AND CHOICE FOR PLAY AT HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

Factors assessed at the household level examined how much time caregivers and children have to undertake playful activities, what obstacles stand in the way of their time & choice for play. It also entails caregivers and children having optimal mindset for nurturing relationships and interactions.

Children have limited play time with caregivers and little time for unstructured play activities in Rogoredo. While there are many organised play options, these are limited by the difficulties facing the most vulnerable caregivers in paying for them. These aspects, combined with the need to increase awareness of the importance of play, are key challenges to establishing an optimal mindset for play choices in the household.

Time limitations, caused by long working hours and domestic responsibilities, are reported as a key obstacle, as are a lack of energy and resources among the most economically vulnerable households. In parts of Rogoredo, unemployment rates are between 15% and 20%. The survey used in this assessment highlighted various socio-economic challenges, such as the availability of affordable housing (raised by 26.8% of respondents), access to adequate food (17.3%), and access to job opportunities (32.3%). These factors are influential in defining children's play opportunities and experiences. Specifically, the symptoms of economic deprivation apply great pressure on caregivers, which may limit their capacity to optimally facilitate play at home.

For example, 61.2% of respondents cited 'working hours' as a key obstacle to the quality and quantity of play time at home. This was surpassed only by 'home

and family management' (65.3%), which relates to the difficulties caregivers face in balancing their home and work commitments. In an average week, almost half of caregivers spend 1 to 5 hours playing with their children. One-fifth spend between 6 and 10 hours playing with their children and only 9.5% spend more time than this.

The 'availability of space' was listed as an obstacle to home play by 8.8% of caregivers, suggesting that children's play must align with the functions of main rooms like bedrooms and kitchens. Explorative and free play in this instance is compromised. Crucially, socio-economic difficulties and skewed work-life balance have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated lockdown measures.

In Italy, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused serious problems for daily life. A survey⁹ of almost 9,000 people in private and public institutions found that women are worst affected by remote working because of the increased care and domestic burden, and consequent difficulties in reconciling their professional and private lives. Research shows that during the pandemic almost half a million jobs became redundant in Italy, and women made up 54% of these¹⁰. Furthermore, 96,000 mothers with 'minor' children became unemployed in the year of the pandemic¹¹.

In Italy, research shows that children's play time with peers and relatives has increased; children are becoming less isolated during the weekdays, weekend and, mainly, during holidays¹². However, as well as those barriers facing caregivers (for example, long work hours), children experience some barriers to adequate play time. Caregivers indicate an average play time of more than one hour for 81.4% of children, one hour for 14.5% of children and less than one hour for 3.4% of children (unmonitorable: 0.7%). The main competitors with play time are homework (cited by 50% of respondents) and extracurricular activities (37.1%). Prolonged periods on mobile or technological devices also emerged as an

9. Politecnico di Milano, Osservatorio Smart Working (2020) Lo smartworking durante l'emergenza Covid-19 e il punto di vista dei lavoratori

10. Save the Children (2021) Le Equilibriste: La Maternità in Italia, 2021. Available from: s3.savethechildren.it/public/files/uploads/pubblicazioni/le-equilibriste-la-maternita-italia-nel-2021_0.pdf

inhibitor of extensive play time. Lockdown restrictions and limits on outdoor activity have led to an increased use of such devices. Outdoor play is also curtailed by perceptions of crime and road safety, coupled with many parents' aversion to risk. Taken together, these factors reduce caregivers' willingness to allow their children to play independently and engage in exploratory, free, and outdoor play.

For the factors described so far, it is essential to implement strategies that support parenting and childcare; on the one hand, by offering concrete support for daily commitments and, on the other, by offering the appropriate cultural, social and training opportunities to increase caregivers' awareness of the importance of both structured play and free play for children's development.



TIME AND CHOICE FOR PLAY AT SCHOOL LEVEL

Factors assessed at the school level examined how much time and choice for a variety of play types is provided in the school environment (both in formal and informal education), including for regular and secure play, as well as the type and quality of this play. These factors also assessed if schools offer a diverse mix of play-focused pre- or after-school activities, and whether school facilities are available for out-of-school activities by the community.

The research highlights how play, sometimes of a structured type and sometimes of a free type, is integrated into different stages of the school day: during lessons in the classroom, during break time, and during after-school activities. In addition, the proximity of many families' homes to schools gives children more free time.

More than 90% of respondents send their child to a local school; the commute for most is around 15 minutes. This serves two purposes: it frees up play time and it encourages active lifestyles and mobility.

During school hours, over half of school staff said that between 1 and 5 hours for play are planned during an average week; one quarter claimed more than 5 hours were planned, whilst the remaining teachers claimed this was less than an hour. Crucially, play time in school is 'protected' and supported by national guidelines; the Annals of Public Education¹³ recognise play as a privileged

11. Save the Children (2021) *Le Equilibriste: La Maternità in Italia*, 2021
12. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (2011) *Childhood and Daily Life*. Available from: www.istat.it/it/files//2011/11/report-infanzia-2011.pdf

13. Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (2012), *Annali della Pubblica Istruzione*. Available from: www.indicazioninazionali.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Indicazioni_Annali_Definitivo.pdf

opportunity to develop experimental and theoretical knowledge. In Rogoredo schools, structured games focused on learning are used during lessons, while free and child-led play is found during break times – when children’s activities are not prescribed by the curriculum.

After school, various activities are available but, again, these focus predominantly on organised and structured play (for example, sport) as opposed to free play. In some cases, these require payment; paid after school activities can disadvantage certain families, particularly larger or low-income ones.

Access to both indoor and outdoor school facilities is very limited outside teaching hours. Just 40% of caregivers believe that using the facilities for play or other purposes during non-school hours is possible. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it is likely that this has become more difficult. Furthermore, it was found that after-school activities, which extend the opening hours of a facility, are in some cases paid-for activities. This is a central theme to be addressed to expand opportunities available to children and caregivers in the neighborhood, particularly those who are most socio-economically vulnerable.





TIME AND CHOICE FOR PLAY AT NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

Factors assessed at the neighbourhood level examined if there is a cohesive community promoting a play-supportive culture in the neighbourhood, through local residents and civil society organisations; and whether opportunities and events exist for community members to engage in and support play in public spaces.

Time and Choice for Play in the Rogoredo community benefit from moderately high accessibility of the main places of interest to residents. However, limitations to outdoor play exist, caused mainly by perceived or real safety concerns in the neighborhood.

The main places of interest in Rogoredo¹⁴ include open public spaces such as the Trapezium Park, playgrounds such as the Rogoredo 84 sports club, and other spaces like the ParLAMI association. Almost two-thirds of caregivers live within 5 minutes of a dedicated play space. Slightly more than 1% must travel between 15 and 30 minutes, and less than this travel more than 30 minutes to access play spaces. These data match the analysis of key pedestrian routes in Rogoredo, as highlighted in the map "Pedestrian accessibility of the main places of interest" (map 17).

An example of a less accessible space is the new park in Porto di Mare, which is adjacent to the perimeter of the district and directly connected with the Cassinis and Vettabbia parks. While access to Cassinis and Vettabbia should take just 10-15 minutes by foot, key infrastructure

barriers including the East Milan bypass highways and the railway make this difficult. The same problem is linked to the south area surrounding the church of San Martino, a place of residence for several children who use the schools and spaces in the Rogoredo district.

Opening times and peak usage also determine the accessibility of certain spaces. Where activities open at different times, this guarantees improved accessibility for different categories of users, including vulnerable groups. Enhanced accessibility typically increases passive surveillance through a space, thereby improving perceptions of safety. The "Opening times" map (map 16) shows that three places are accessible 24 hours a day: Cassinari promende, Alberello park and the urban gardens. Six places have opening times that limit the possibility of caregivers visiting, because they close at the same time as common working hours. Five places, by contrast, have day and evening opening times, catering to the diverse schedules of different residents. Openings at the weekend extend the time for caregivers and children to visit certain places.

Almost half of respondents visit a park or playground more than once per week; one-fifth do so once per day. The low number of residents who never visit a park or playground (3.4%) is likely due to their widespread coverage of the district. The average time spent in a park or playground is over an hour for most respondents (66.5%); caregivers reported their interest in the space, the weather and the age of their child as the main determinants of how long they spend in a space. Despite these positive figures, autonomous free play for children in these places is restricted by perceptions of insecurity; there is a common perception that parks and streets are too dangerous for children, either due to traffic or antisocial behaviour, like drug use. This is compounded by the lack of organised supervision for play outside schools.

14. Main places of interest considered: Trapezio Santa Giulia park, Alberello park, Cassinari promenade, Rogoredo 84 sports club, urban gardens, Savino kindergarten, via Monte Piana school, via Feltrinelli

nursery school, Holy Family parish, San Martino church, Spazio Melotti, ParLAMI association, Arci Mondini club, and Former Rogoredo showers.

DISCOVERING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The following maps and diagrams are the result of the site visits, focus groups, survey, and desktop study.

OPENING TIMES

Map 15

Main places of interest as shown in the next page

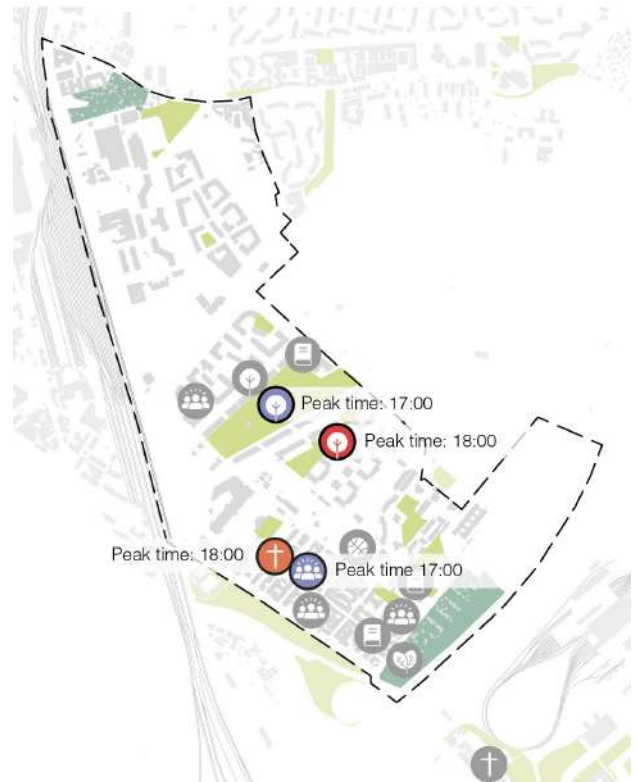
Over two-thirds of residents are aware of leisure and social activities in the neighbourhood; the most common examples are green areas and parks, sports centres (for example, Rogoredo 84 and Arcieri San Bernado) and the vegetable gardens. Unsurprisingly, activities in these spaces include team sports and horticulture.

Residents would like more spaces for sports (gyms and multipurpose halls, a swimming pool, an ice rink, a skatepark, life paths in parks), dog-walking areas, play areas, theatres, an open-air cinema and a cinema, rehearsal and concert rooms, a library and spaces for congregation, creative workshops, shops and clubs.



FRUITION PEAKS

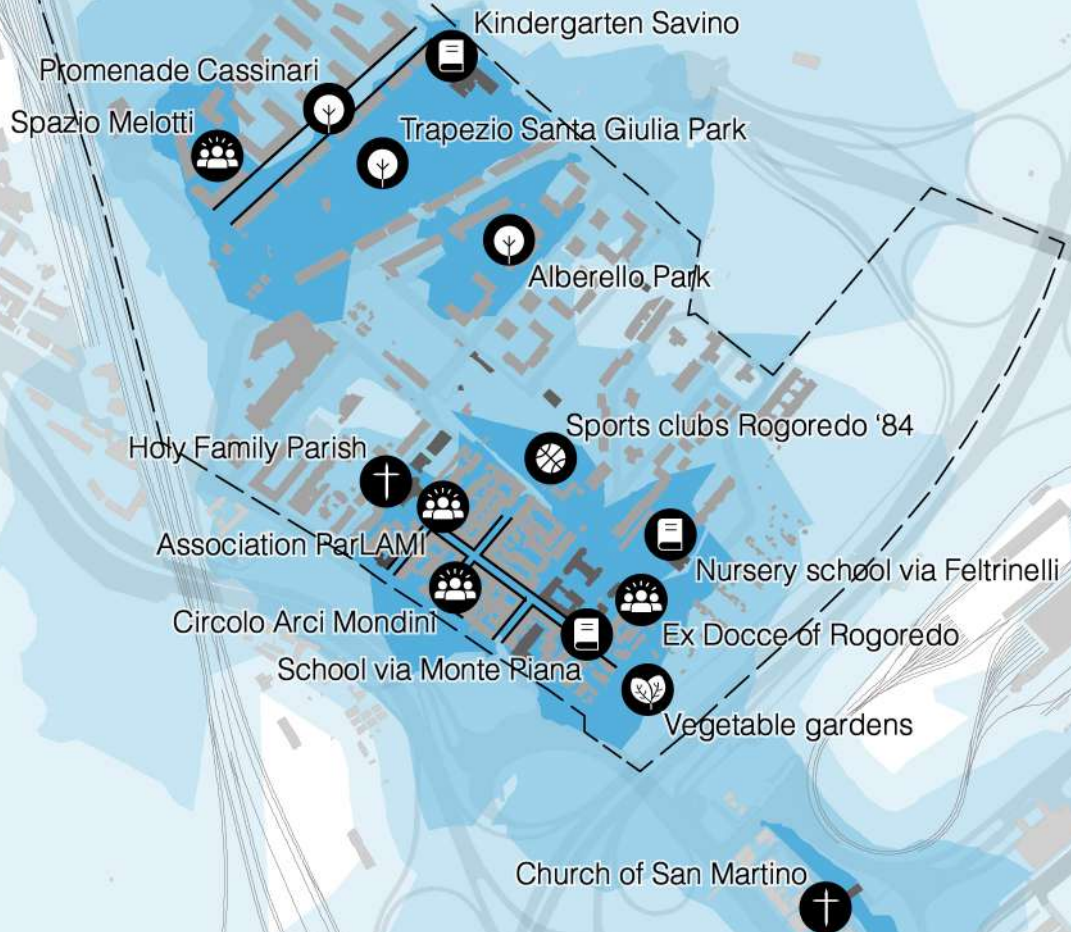
Map 16



*Data refer to a working day

"15 MINUTES" NEIGHBOURHOOD

The map shows the distribution in the neighbourhood of the main points of interest, identified through interviews, focus groups, survey, and site visits. This representation shows two main served areas with a good proximity.



Map 17

LEGEND

- NIL 33
- Built
- Services

- Main places of interest
- Pedestrian areas and squares
- Commercial fronts

- Isochrone**
- 2 minutes on foot
- 5 minutes
- 10 minutes
- 15 minutes

0 100 200m

Scale 1:10.000

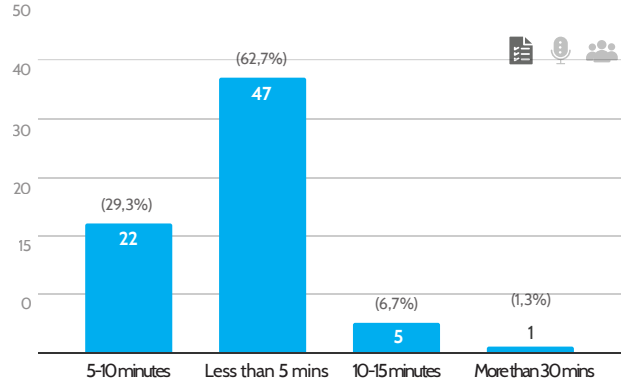


INTERVIEWING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

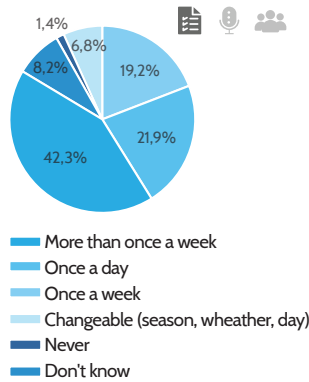
Time and choice for play is favored by a high accessibility to main places of interest, and a wide range of play options. However, there is a diffused perception of a limited time availability for shared and unstructured play activities, especially outdoor due to real or perceived safety problems.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

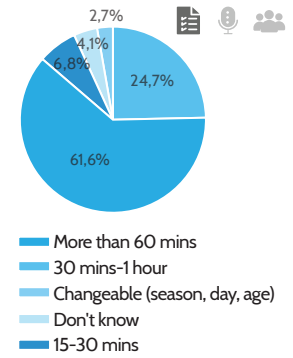
AVERAGE DISTANCES OF PLAY SPACES



FREQUENCY OF USE OF PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

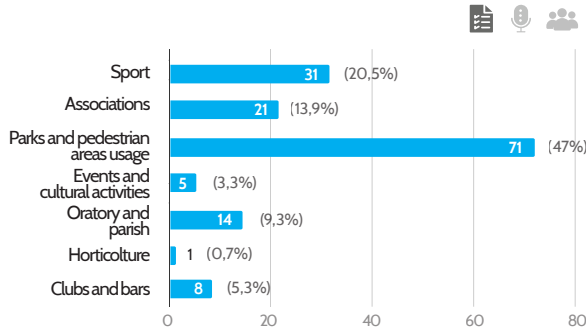


TIME SPENT IN PARKS

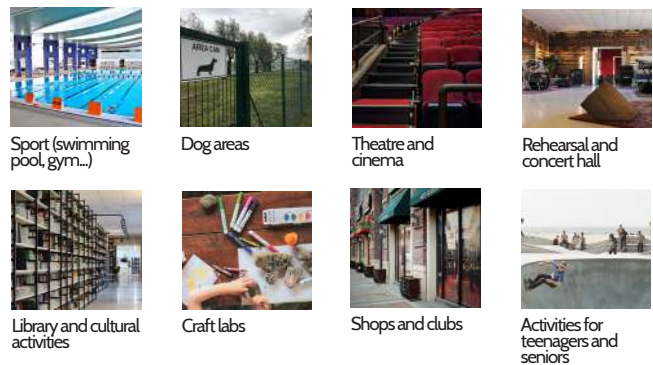


FREE TIME

SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

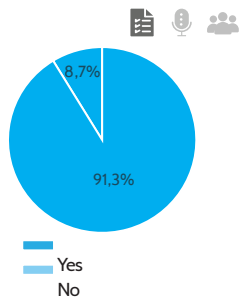


LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES DESIRED BY RESIDENTS

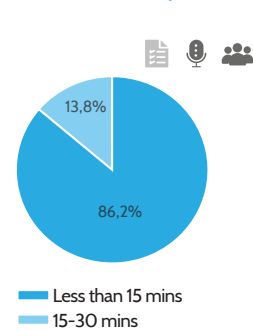


SCHOOL

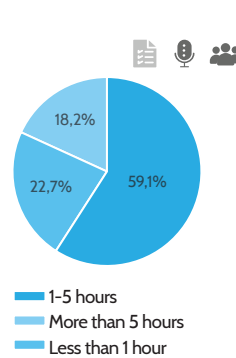
NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



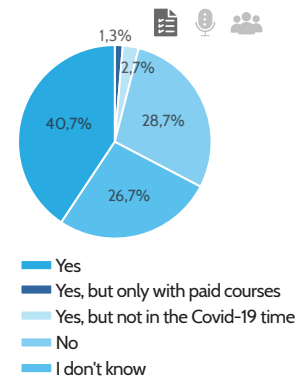
HOME-SCHOOL JOURNEY



HOURS OF PLAY

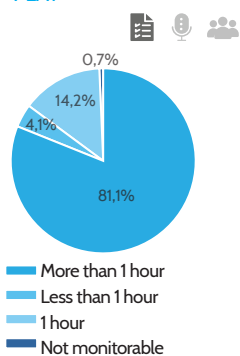


USE OF SPACES BEYOND TEACHING HOURS

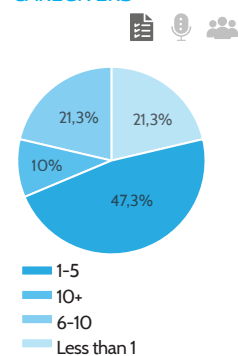


HOUSEHOLD

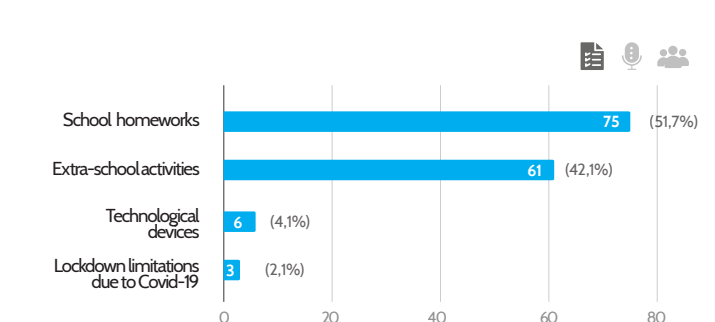
TIME DEDICATED TO PLAY



PLAY HOURS WITH CAREGIVERS



REASONS FOR REDUCED PLAYING TIME





TIME AND CHOICE FOR PLAY AT CITY LEVEL

Factors assessed at the city level examined the degree to which government budgets include the promotion of play-friendly initiatives and interventions, and whether caregivers, children and the broader community are consulted and feel included in decision-making and planning, and are engaged in public space interventions.

Time and Choice for Play in the city of Milan are enhanced by the accessibility of public spaces and various forms of support for families, in particular during the summer and in relation to Covid-19. This is implemented through policies such as "Open Schools 2.0" and the Milan 2020 Adaptation Strategy. There are also financial allocations in Milan to support projects in favour of the right to play for all, with particular reference to the creation of play facilities that are also accessible to children with special needs and abilities.

Public policies and guidelines at city level extend the time for play and widen accessibility to spaces and services useful for children's play. They also enlist support for caregivers, both in ordinary and emergency circumstances.

A central policy for supporting time and choice for play at the city level is the **"Open Schools 2.0"** project: it is based on a municipal resolution, but it is implemented in coordination with the Regional School Office and the Ministry of Education, University and Research. The aims of the project are to activate schools beyond their opening hours, in the afternoons, weekends and school holidays, and to rebalance the city's school network.

The extension of the opening hours aims to provide, to the territory in which the schools are located, spaces for educational, recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities aimed at the entire citizenry, so that the schools represent real places of inclusion and the promotion of rights and opportunities. This is implemented by experimenting with Open School models shared by all the territorial stakeholders (school principals, teachers, students, parent associations, third sector associations, Municipality of Milan), through territorial agreements, to meet the real needs of children, families, citizenship, and to ensure a better quality of life.

Among the policies in the Milan 2020 Adaptation Strategy, there is also **"The city of children | Open and widespread school"**. In relation to time and choice for play, this policy aims to organise complementary services for students in the summer, both of a playful nature and for didactic purposes.

In particular, the immediate actions include:

- › An evaluation of the flexibility in school hours.
- › The redesign of summer services, including directly managed municipal services or as part of tenders, agreements or other projects, to concentrate all the capacities available in the summer period.
- › Organising the "Milan Summer school": an unprecedented edition of summer camps, with a predominantly playful character, but with moments dedicated to teaching.

The City recognises that the participation of caregivers and children in decision-making is fundamentally important. Specifically, the City of Milan organises multiple 'moments' and forums for citizens' inclusion and participation. The participation of children and young people takes place at a strategic level, in initiatives such as the Town Hall Councils for Boys and Girls, participatory budgeting (voting from 14 years of age), and the

Lacittàintorno program with the project "**Ideas for girls, Thoughts for children**". The 9 Municipal Councils for Boys and Girls (CdMRR) are made up of councilors appointed within the primary and secondary schools who adhere to the RecommendMi Project and meet periodically to develop proposals and projects on topics selected by students. The student councilors meet municipal councilors with whom they work to offer solutions to the proposals identified.

Despite these participatory activities, respondents and focus group participants refer to missed opportunities to include children and other key stakeholders in the design of new policies and public spaces. Almost 60% of respondents were unaware of, or have never participated in, a consultation process for redesigning public space; a further one-third is aware of these processes but they have never participated in them. This highlights the need to enhance communication between municipal authorities, urban practitioners, and citizens in Milan..



Spaces and Facilities for Play in Rogoredo



This dimension seeks to understand if children with varying cognitive, socioemotional, and physical capabilities have access to adequate play spaces, playable environments and facilities for different play modes; and if they have a variety of different toys, creative supplies, materials and equipment for play.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE:

HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

This means ensuring nurturing home environments with stimulating materials for a range of play types..

SCHOOL LEVEL

This means ensuring safe, accessible and playful education facilities supporting learning through play and a range of play types..

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

This means ensuring healthy, playful and well-serviced public spaces and facilities for a range of play types..

CITY LEVEL

This means ensuring a safe and connected network of playful spaces and mobility options..



SPACES AND FACILITIES FOR PLAY AT HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

Factors assessed at the household level examined the safety and quality of home materiality; and the availability and quality of space and equipment for a range of different play types.

Most residential units in the Rogoredo district have adequate internal and external space, including for play activities. However, the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has brought significant problems in terms of the management of domestic spaces, with the overlapping of incompatible uses that hinder a healthy and playful home environment.

Almost half (44%) of children in Rogoredo use the home as their main play space. For these children, the household is a central and privileged place for enriching and stimulating experiences. This corresponds to national data from 2011, which show that during the week children mainly play at home. Specifically, the census showed that 98.1% of children aged 3 to 10 years in Italy listed 'domestic walls' as a key play space. Almost half of children in the census listed another person's home as their main play space.

56% of households in Rogoredo have separate rooms for play and work. Almost one-quarter do not have separate rooms, meaning that there is an overlap of largely incompatible uses of space – this is amplified during lockdown, where household members are together more often. This reduces available physical space for play, and it compromises the attention of caregivers and children (for example, working remotely is made more difficult if children play in the same room where caregivers are working).

During primary research, concerns emerged about the effects of lockdown also on the mental and physical

health of caregivers and children. Parenting styles have also been affected; this leads reportedly to a reduction in the quality of play, for example through caregivers encouraging children to play on mobile devices to keep them quiet.

Encouragingly, more than two-thirds of respondents have access to private or semi-private outdoor space at home. However, there is no precise information on how these spaces are used, or on the limitations that children in particular might experience when playing in and using them (for example, hard concrete floors represent a fall hazard). The presence of equipment, including toys, sandpits and frames is also unclear.





SPACES AND FACILITIES FOR PLAY AT SCHOOL LEVEL

Factors measured at the school level explored the quality of play space and play equipment within local schools, and wider school safety conditions and accessibility.

The Spaces and Facilities for Play in Rogoredo's schools are wide-ranging and diverse, but their accessibility is limited by their opening times and costs. Safety is considered a problem with respect to home-school journeys, due to antisocial behavior, illegal activity and road traffic, and this strongly affects children's autonomy in moving around independently

Rogoredo has multiple education facilities that accommodate all age groups. All schools appear to provide good equipment for a diverse range of play types. They offer open and green space, as well as facilities equipped for play or sport, either within the school grounds or in their immediate vicinity. Teachers identified the courtyard, which has play equipment (castle and slides, although not usable during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic), the gym and its sports equipment, the basketball court and classrooms, and workshops as the most important spaces. The introduction of multipurpose play areas to encourage play, as an alternative to the actual sports field, could encourage several child-led play modes in addition to sports.

Beyond schools, there are no facilities geared explicitly towards early childhood development. However, some local organisations organise study support, such as homework help at the I-Care centre. Others provide support for parents and the different cognitive and social needs of children, as well as for those children with psychological problems (Associazione ParLAMI).

As described earlier, almost two-thirds of children travel to school by foot. Despite the short distances, less than

one-fifth of children go alone. This curtails their autonomy to traverse the neighbourhood and, consequently, it reduces the likelihood they will experience the cognitive benefits associated with independent exploration.

Safety is a key problem on the routes between residential areas and schools in Rogoredo. Participants expressed a perception of insecurity in regard to certain places; these arise primarily from experiences of antisocial behaviour, in particular the consumption of alcohol and drug usage. Other concerns, especially road safety, are compounded by the lack of measures to moderate traffic; there are also no cycle paths connecting the school with the remainder of the district. Residents also referred to other things, like unclean sidewalks, which undermine their experience of travelling between home and school.



SPACES AND FACILITIES FOR PLAY AT NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

Factors measured at the neighbourhood level explored the availability of public spaces, green areas and facilities within the neighbourhood, and their wider quality and safety conditions, and accessibility. They also examined the accessibility of the local pedestrian environment for children and those with special needs and abilities, and whether the environment itself exhibits characteristics of playfulness either unintentionally or by design.

Rogoredo is well-served by play spaces, formal and informal, of various sizes. These offer a wide range of possible activities, but the lack of a truly accessible, safe and playful mobility network connecting these spaces with residential areas can prevent children and carers from taking full advantage of them. Antisocial behavior in public spaces is a pervasive concern for caregivers, who are very reluctant to allow a significant degree of independence for their children to use public spaces.

The research identified a variety of public spaces, green areas and formal play areas within the Rogoredo neighborhood, and a general positivity towards these from children and caregivers. This is despite the emergence of some critical issues related to certain spaces' quality, safety, and accessibility. Starting from the spatial analyses carried out on the neighborhood, it was possible to build a map of the "Play Spaces" (map 20), showing the most used and preferred sites for children. A lack of cultural spaces for young people to congregate, together with limited public areas equipped for sport,

were identified as key obstacles to play in Rogoredo. Furthermore, over two-thirds of caregivers identified the 'quality of equipment' as a barrier to play. One-third identified the quality of spaces more broadly as a challenge. Whilst children claimed there are no particular restrictions on play (for example, there are no 'No Ball Games' signs), some identified a lack of places close to home, perceived insecurity, and the presence of rude teenagers and dogs as key obstacles to neighbourhood play. This was mirrored in caregiver responses, which identified access difficulties and safety concerns as the main obstacles to play. These accounts contrast with field visits, which found that the design of spaces, in particular the presence of benches, enables good views and passive surveillance of those using public spaces.

The Trapezium Park, the pedestrian promenade with the commercial spaces on the ground floor, and the gardens in via Rogoredo, are among the open spaces that people visit most frequently, in addition to the various sports fields and the oratory. The Trapezio Park was recognised by all the participants consulted, as the play space clearly preferred by the children of the neighborhood. The main reasons for this include its size (42,825m²) and, at the same time, the sense of protection and safety many respondents feel when visiting it. It is well-distanced from the road and surrounded on the two long sides by residential buildings.

Another space that is beyond the district boundary but is frequented by residents, is the new Porto di Mare urban park. This is under construction and it has direct management through an agreement with the Urban Forestry Center, part of the Italia Nostra Onlus association, which organises and manages activities in the park, including educational and recreational initiatives for children. All identified play locations are described in more detail in the box below..

While primary research shows that parks and green areas are the most frequented places for caregivers and

children, most parks are not used. In fact, beyond the spaces recognised by residents as accessible and safe, such as the Trapezio Park, other green spaces across the neighbourhood are less mentioned or recognised as ambivalent spaces, with positive and negative characterisations.

The research helped identify key challenges that deter residents from visiting certain areas, including these less-visited parks. The main barriers include a lack of cleanliness and degradation of a space, dangerous sidewalks, and long distances. The map of “Unsafe Spaces” (map 19) in the neighbourhood is based upon the perceptions of safety, spatial quality and comfort expressed by caregivers and children. The unsafe spaces identified are linked, in particular, to the presence of abandoned buildings, poor maintenance, construction sites, illegal and antisocial activities, socio-economic and psychological distress.

From a territorial analysis and direct observation of the use of spaces, the key determinants in the choice and use of open spaces are linked to existing spatial connections, as well as to the continuity of cycle paths and the presence of active fronts along the paths to protect public spaces. Two particularly critical connections have been mapped: the northwest-southeast connection that crosses the areas of Porto di Mare, the Rogoredo district and the area around the church of San Martino; and the caesura connecting the southern area of the district, where the historic nucleus of Rogoredo is located, and the northern area, where the new residential areas of Santa Giulia and Merezzate extend to.

DISCOVERING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The following maps and diagrams are the result of the site visits, focus groups, survey, and desktop study.

URBAN COMFORT

Map 18



UNSAFE SPACES

Map 19



A NEIGHBOURHOOD TO PLAY

The map illustrates the open spaces available in the neighbourhood: parks, collective gardens, pedestrian areas, sports centres etc. Places to play are highlighted showing current use, and main activities described by children.



Map 20

LEGEND

-  NIL 33
-  Built
-  External historical cores
-  Urban parks
-  Vegetable gardens
-  Sports centre
-  Pedestrian areas and squares
-  Pedestrian paths
-  Tram line
-  Underground
-  Play spaces

0 100 200m

Scale 1:10.000



INTERVIEWING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The neighborhood is served by a good number of formal and informal play spaces, of various sizes. The lack of a safe and pleasant connection system, however, limits movements, and inhibits from taking full advantage of them. A low safety perception, in addition, obstacles children to explore independently the neighbourhood.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

FAVOURITE PLACE FOR PLAY AND LAISURE



Parco Trapezio



Promenade



Rogoredo 84



Parchetto rosso, parks and open air places

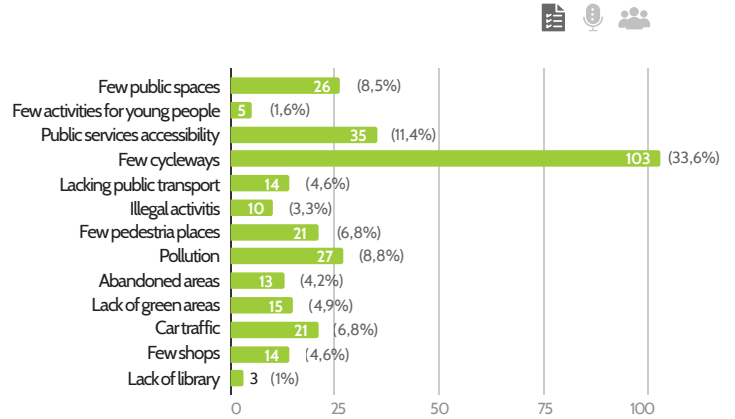


Oratory

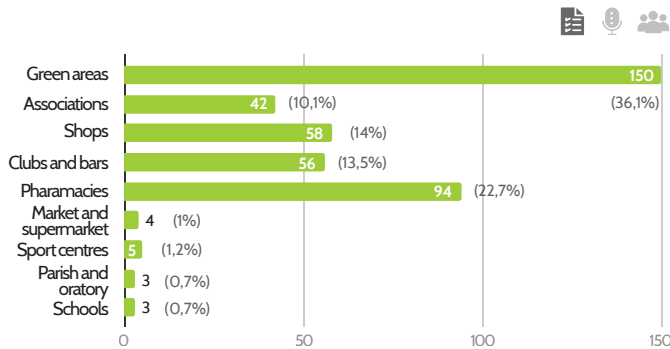


House and yard

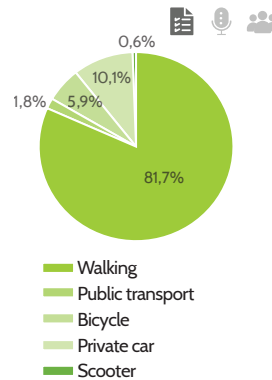
MAJOR CRITICALITIES



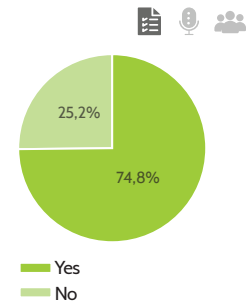
PLACES REGULARLY USED



MOBILITY

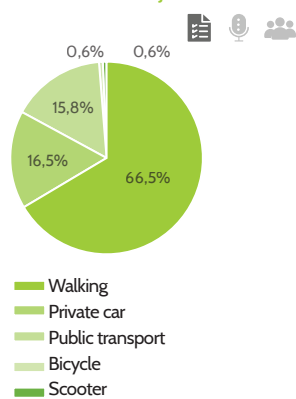


SECURITY PERCEPTION

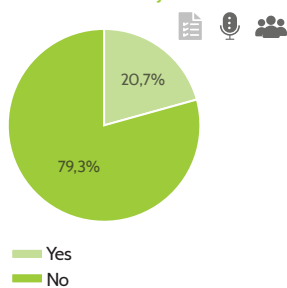


SCHOOL

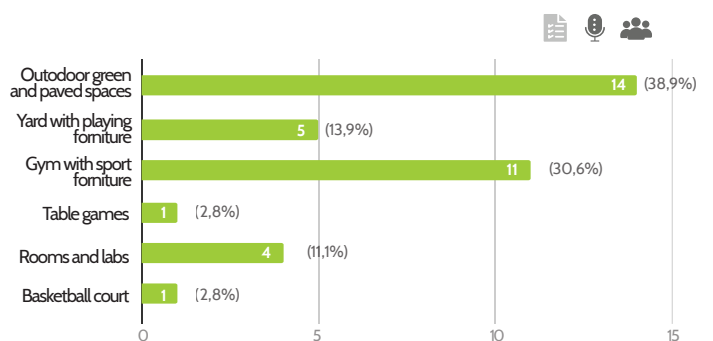
HOME-SCHOOL JOURNEY



INDEPENDENCE ON THE HOME-SCHOOL JOURNEY

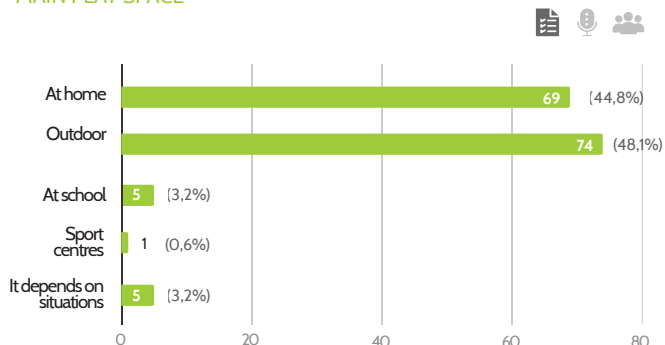


SPACES AND FACILITIES

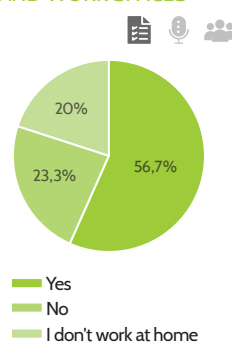


HOUSEHOLD

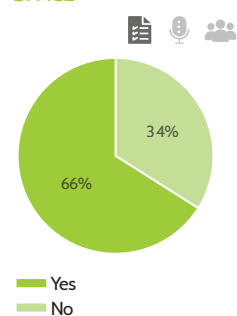
MAIN PLAY SPACE



OVERLAPPING OF PLAY AND WORK SPACES



OUTDOOR PLAY SPACE



FAVOURITE AND CRITICAL PLAY SPACES

The following play spaces are identified as the most popular spaces among children; they are designed specifically for play or used for play informally alongside other activities.

FAVOURITE PLAY SPACES

- › **Trapezio Park:** fenced urban park of 42,825 square meters, built in 2013 to coincide with the construction of the new Santa Giulia residential complex; it is characterised by large open lawn areas, planted with young trees and shrubs. It includes 7 play areas and paths for use by bicycles and skates. The main activities indicated by the children were, group games, football, the use of the play facilities present and the use of bikes, skates and scooters.
- › **Promenade (via Cassinari) and pedestrian areas (near Sky):** pedestrian avenue with arcades and shops, seats, lawn areas, trees and water basins, adjacent to the Trapezio park and the heart of the Santa Giulia residential complex. The children particularly indicated activities related to the use of bicycles, skates, scooters and group games.
- › **Alberello Park:** an urban park of 8,600 square meters, built in 2015; it is equipped with a basketball court, green lawn areas and play equipment. The children indicated some play limitations caused by the presence of equipment aimed specifically at small children.
- › **Merezate parquet and Trapezietto parquet:** small parks within the residential fabric, with playground equipment mostly aimed at younger children.
- › **Railway station:** a central space for urban and regional mobility, was indicated by children as a place where they can observe trains and play imaginative games.
- › **Gardens of Via Rogoredo:** urban garden that extends the entire length of Via Rogoredo, between the historic center and the motorway junction; it has lawn areas, numerous plant and shrub species and some play equipment. It has been identified as a critical area due to the presence of illegal activities and crime.
- › **Rogoredo 84:** spaces of the sports centre with soccer and five-a-side football fields, tennis courts and an athletics track.
- › **Mural area:** parking area adjacent to the sports center, it is often free from cars and has one side closed by a wall decorated with a colorful mural.
- › **Oratory:** sprotected space behind the parish; it has a mineral clearing and a football field. The children indicated its use especially for group games and during the summer oratory.
- › **Holy Family Parish:** church located within the historic core of the neighborhood; it was chosen by some children as a favorite place to spend time with family and alone.
- › **Internal and external spaces of school structures:** green and mineral spaces, sometimes equipped for play and sport, inside the schools or in the immediate vicinity. The children have indicated their use during school and after-school hours..

- › **Red parquet:** urban garden adjacent to the schools in via Monte Piana and the kindergarten in via Feltrinelli; it features a basketball court, play facilities and tree-lined lawn areas. The children particularly indicated group play activities, with teachers and the use of bicycles.
- › **Urban vegetable gardens in via Feltrinelli:** large area owned by the Municipality with family gardens divided into small divided lots. The children indicated that it is used for horticulture activities with the family.
- › **Church and garden of San Martino:** a small church surrounded by an urban garden with lawn areas, a fenced area with play equipment, a basketball court and a hill. The children indicated critical issues related to the absence of direct connections between this area and the Rogoredo neighborhood.
- › **Porto di Mare Park:** a large park outside the neighborhood and under construction; it is being managed and progressively built by the Italia Nostra Association and its Urban Forestry Center. The area, heavily affected by illegal activities such as drug dealing, illegal encampment and waste abandonment, has in fact been involved in redevelopment work by Italia Nostra since October 2017, with the aim of collective re-appropriation of this large green area. It has large flat and hilly lawn areas, a wooded area and some wet areas with ponds. Paths have been created for the use of mountain bikes. Playful and educational activities are organized by the park's management body.

UNSAFE SPACES

- › **Gardens of Via Rogoredo** (drug dealing, alcoholism)
- › **Coop** (drug dealing, perception of boredom)
- › **Station** (drug dealing and alcoholism, crowding)
- › **Via Feltrinelli** (perception of insecurity)
- › **Promenade** (perception of a highly urbanized space)
- › **Long-term construction sites** (feeling of decay and incompleteness)
- › **Mural area** (perception of decay)
- › **Abandoned buildings** around the Merezzate area - via Medici del Vascello, via Pestagalli, via Bonfadini (perception of insecurity, homeless people)
- › **Via Sordello** (perception of insecurity)



SPACES AND FACILITIES FOR PLAY AT CITY LEVEL

Factors measured at the city level examined the safety, reliability, connectivity, and both child- and caregiver-friendliness of the local environment with respect to wider public transit networks. It also explored whether city authorities support the creation of playful environments through the implementation of child- and family friendly spaces and initiatives, including as part of the post-Covid-19 recovery strategy.

Specific initiatives in the city of Milan aim at expanding the availability of public pedestrian spaces. This includes "Open Squares", as well as initiatives to make particular schools more accessible, for example through the "Open Schools" and the "Milan 2020 Adaptation Strategy". These initiatives directly and indirectly increase the quantity of spaces suitable for recreational activity.

The Municipality of Milan actively encourages spaces and structures for play, for example in the Neighborhood Plan (2019) and through policies implemented on the basis of Collaboration Agreements and other governance tools. Specifically, the **Piazze Aperte** programme experiments with tactical urban planning to generate new public spaces, in particular near schools and in neighborhoods with less green supply, to facilitate physical activity and children's play.

Following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Municipality has implemented other initiatives to expand upon the progress of Open Squares. An example is the Open Roads programme, which encourages

cycling and active life within the city, with the aim to guarantee children the possibility of movement and play outside. In accordance with the Milan 2020 Adaptation Strategy, there is also a section dedicated to children and schools called, **"The city of children | Open and widespread school"**. Through the "Open Schools 2.0" project reaffirmed within the Adaptation Strategy, the Municipality encourages constant collaboration with the schools to ensure the educational community is always present. Furthermore, the concept of School Oasis appears, i.e. in the context of defining the need to establish a temporary use of infrastructures and public buildings to make a significant contribution to emergency management, specifically school buildings, especially in the summer months, are adequate to be welcoming places and green areas close to educational accompaniment activities.

Overall, there is good attention to the need for open spaces suitable for movement, play and maintaining an active lifestyle; nevertheless, compared to the fundamental and specific role of play within the city, there is only partial level of awareness of this role. Among the immediate actions envisaged by the Adaptation Strategy is the creation of new spaces and a broad network, through an activity of mapping open spaces for children and young people, favoring green areas as well as existing school locations.

That said, in the last year funds have emerged in support of initiatives and interventions in favour of play, with particular reference to the special project **"Game at the Center - Playgrounds for All"** of the Milan Community Foundation. This project identifies the needs of children and those with disabilities, in particular the right to play for all. It is proposed to create, in collaboration with the Municipality of Milan (Urban Planning, Green, Agriculture Department) and the Delegated Associations to the Permanent Disability Table of the Municipality (L'abilità onlus, UILDM and LEDHA Milan, ANFFAS Milan onlus,

UICI), equipped areas accessible with rides and inclusive games in each of the 9 Milanese Municipalities. The design of each park is based on playful and ergonomic criteria that ensure accessibility for children with various disabilities (motor, intellectual, visual) to encourage shared play; it is a laboratory that learns and evolves to identify the best solutions, develop activities in schools to raise awareness of the most vulnerable children, and to support entertainment activities so that the playground becomes a place for the community, a common good to be lived, respected and cared for.

Initiatives such as this one by private institutes and foundations, if properly coordinated, can present an opportunity for the city to develop more specific projects that support all dimensions of play (facilitation, time and space) in Milan, and therefore better opportunities for the cognitive, emotional, physical and social development of children.





4. Experimentation of Play Street in via Monte Piana

The research study culminated in a Play Street experiment, carried out on via Monte Piana – home to the school involved in the various phases of research, the “ICS Pasquale Sottocorno”. The experiment involved a network of various actors in the neighbourhood, including: children, parents, school staff, representatives and volunteers of local organisations, and other interested residents. The experiment aimed to consolidate and expand these networks, with particular reference to the voluntary sector – a key player in the development of recreational and education activities in Rogoredo. There was a strong focus on the most vulnerable groups in Rogoredo throughout. The participation process led to a Collaboration Pact in Rogoredo, signed by the “ICS Pasquale Sottocorno” school and various local organisations (including verdeFestival associations, È-VENTO, ViviRogoredo, Associazione Primavera 2005, Un libro in motion). Collaboration pacts are tools that identify guidelines for experimenting with policies that involve active citizens, informal groups, associations, educational institutions and other operators involved in the operation of common goods. All streets in Rogoredo are considered a common good where regenerative designs can be implemented. The Play Street was organised and implemented as a collaborative experiment on June 7th and 8th in 2021, to mark the end of the 2020/2021 school year. The Play Street experiment was intended as a pilot project, with the view to extend similar initiatives throughout Milan in accordance with the 2020 Adaptation Strategy. The pilot set an important precedent for organising an event in limited time. Play Street was organised as a collective laboratory in which to explore new spaces and forms of play and sociality – and to activate the street and articulate new and shared perspectives for it. It also shed light on the utility of school spaces as public resources for play.

To deliver multiple activities in compliance with coronavirus regulations, the facilitators divided the street into areas, usable by one class at a time. The maximum capacity was 200 people. A rotation system was used, whereby each class participated in an activity for 30-45 minutes. The street was furnished with movable equipment, such as urban furniture (tables, chairs), potted plants, and play equipment. Chalk was used to create colourful patterns on the floor, and to maintain physical distance between different classes. All equipment was sanitised between sessions.

PLAY STREET - DAY ONE

On June 7th, the Play Street event delivered a wide range of creative, educational and playful activities. Sessions were organised by multiple stakeholders, including a LEGO workshop organised by Arup, a biodiversity lab organised by verdeFestival association, a spaced choreography show organised by school staff, and more. Among the playful activities was a co-creation workshop, 'Build your future city', for children aged 6-10 years and teachers. The goal was to explore and create around the theme of play, and to draw out common desires among the children for enhancing play in Rogoredo. The session also aimed to identify possible urban interventions based on play in open spaces, green spaces, roads and in local schools. The activity involved LEGO bricks, which gave children the chance to express their ideas onto objects in

a free and creative way. Each child received a LEGO card containing one of four proposed urban themes and the related construction challenge, as well as a blank space in which to describe their idea.

The first card included the theme, "The School at the centre of my neighbourhood". It prompted the children to imagine a school space open beyond conventional hours, in which it was possible to carry out multiple activities in the large closed spaces like the courtyard. The challenge asked children to build a school open to all; and to consider what this would be like at different times of day. The second card's theme was, "My green and beautiful city". This focused on the effects of pollution from motorised vehicles and the fundamental role of greenery in air improvement, aesthetic enhancement,





Play Street Via Monte Piana © Arup

and habitat provision. The children were asked to build a less polluted city, comprising greener spaces and streets where children, families and animals can co-exist safely. The theme of the third card was, "Let's play outdoors!". This was intended to make children reflect on being able to play freely in urban spaces. The challenge was to build a city where children and parents can play anywhere. The fourth and final card was themed, "The Road is ours!". This aimed to have children imagine the road as a fun, safe space on which activities could be carried out. The challenge was to build a safer road by redesigning pavements, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings, and inserting activities for play.

The children built a variety of interventions, including: anti-pollution flying machines, colourful schools with green space and aquariums, streets covered with animals and plants, swimming pools, hiding places, towers, and

large green spaces. Recurring themes included animals, water features, flowers, technology, and characters that animated the built environment. Issues of safety and danger emerged frequently – this was directly related to the last year of the coronavirus pandemic. Play proved to be a fundamental tool for generating possible solutions to real-world challenges, such as designing a sustainable city for everyone.

PLAY STREET – DAY TWO

During the second day, painting activities were carried out on the wall of the Unareti building that overlooked the street. These activities were organised and managed by the local organisation, A book in movement, with the active involvement of children. The mural was made possible thanks to the support of the Pasquinelli Foundation, which donated the necessary resources to the organisation, and the european project Cities4CSR. The school staff organised reading and singing performances. Further musical performances were carried out by Duo Jannacci and Maestro Bertolini's School of Music. Play Street also hosted activities like origami, as well as play activities centred on movable equipment – like the 'big games' provided by È-VENTO: trio, chess, dominoes, tangrams.

The street was transformed into a welcoming space for the entire community, especially children. This supported expressions of group and individual identity, as well as positive socialisation. Play Street has become an essential opportunity to respond to multiple needs, with particular focus on playful, recreational and social ones – all of which became more acute during the lockdowns associated with Covid-19. The party on June 8th was an opportunity to present the research and disseminate it via an exhibition. At the end of all activities, a presentation was made by Arup, the Municipality of Milan, and all other organisations involved, to the community..





Play Street Via Monte Piana / Workshop Lego © Arup

The outcomes of the Play Street event are highly positive. The experience made it possible to re-invent the public space on the street, and create new visions and shared points of view for its potential. The process was also a fundamental opportunity to expand social and community networks, leaving the neighbourhood with a Collaboration Agreement as a tool for inclusion and active participation. The next steps are to replicate the experience at a greater scale, using the processes and tools that emerged from the research work, to unlock multiple opportunities for play in Milan. The prospect is of a city that is capable of responding to the needs of all its residents.

5. Opportunities for Play in Rogoredo

The research identified several opportunities to improve play conditions in Rogoredo, with actions across the three dimensions of the Urban Play Framework: facilitation, time and choice, and spaces and facilities for play.



The results of the research were used to identify a territorial strategy for play, which leverages the different opportunities identified in Rogoredo to improve the conditions for play. The case studies identified in the next section inspired the possible intervention scenarios described in this chapter. The strategy aims to improve all three dimensions of the Urban Play Framework: Facilitation, Time & Choice, and Spaces & Facilities for Play.

Three main approaches were identified to promote play in Rogoredo. These are:

- › 1. Establishing connectivity across spaces.
- › 2. Maximising the role of the school in the neighbourhood.
- › 3. Encouraging the responsible use of digital technology to facilitate educational play experiences.

In developing the strategy, multiple partners were engaged and consulted, and different scenarios planned: this helped ensuring coordination, and raising awareness. By coordinating interventions and awareness-raising efforts, there is great opportunity to build a true sense of community, and to root a renewed culture of play. Promoting cohesiveness and participation will also ensure the long-term sustainability of future developments.

The Play Street event on via Monte Piana was the first pilot project of the proposed strategy to be implemented. The goal is to extend this initiative to not only the rest of the district, but also to other areas of the city of Milan. The experiment aimed to reaffirm the idea of the street as a common good, where regenerative design interventions can be implemented. The experience underlined the importance of community networks in the area, especially voluntary organisations whose work is so important for the provision of playful and educational activities for children..



Territorial Strategy

The territorial strategy aims at helping activate various opportunities for play in Rogoredo district, and it outlines the approaches needed to improve conditions across all dimensions of the Urban Play Framework. It identifies two main axes that can be used to improve spatial connections across the neighbourhood. Along these axes, it is possible to create more capillary networks of spaces and implement a series of micro-strategies and specific design elements.

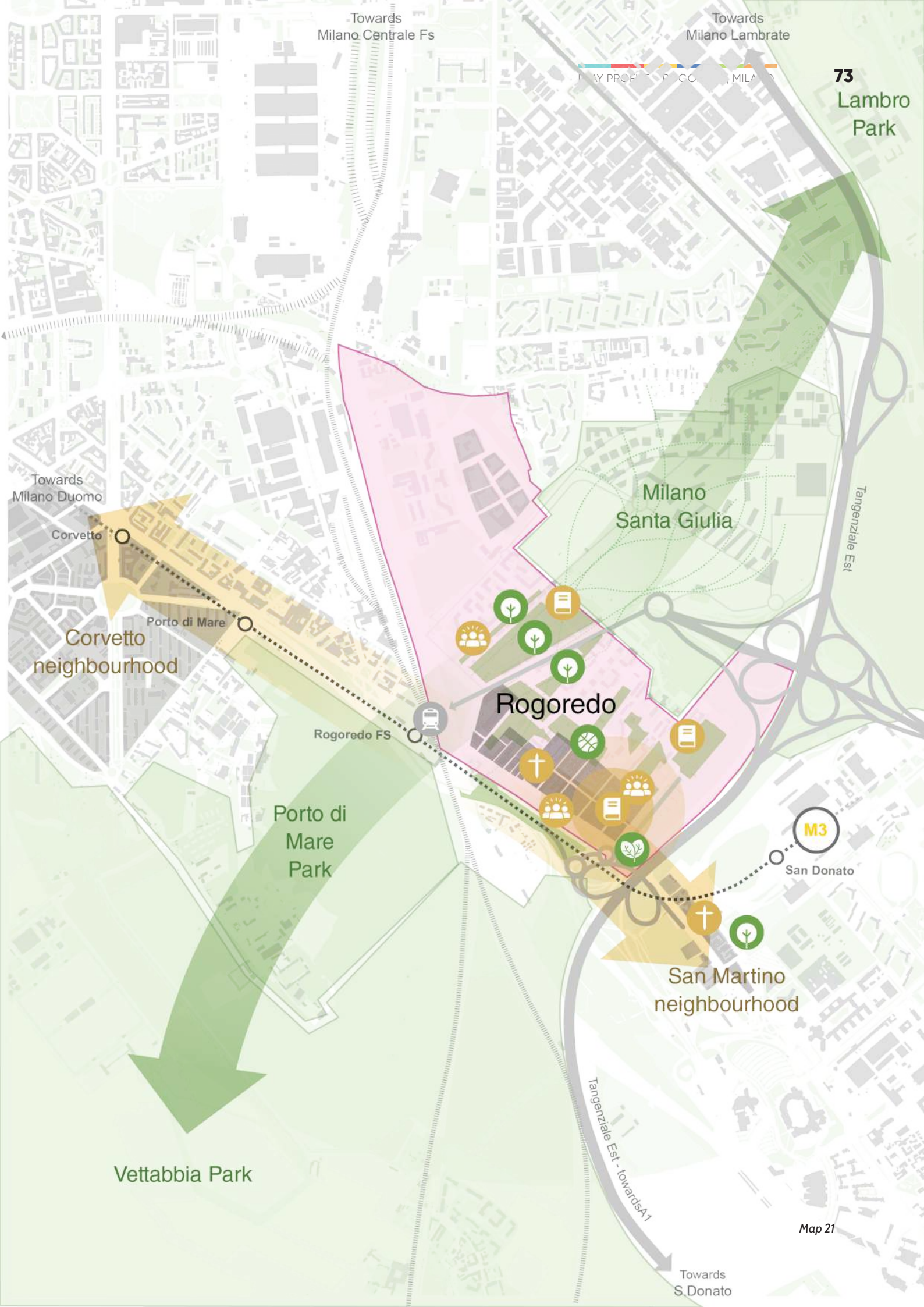
The northwest-southeast axis aims to improve the connection between the areas of Porto di Mare, the Rogoredo district, and the area around the church of San Martino – existing areas that are commonly used by the local population. The northeast-southwest axis, on the other hand, aims to create a connection between areas undergoing strong transformation, such as the new Porto di Mare park, the area of the Montecity Integrated Intervention Plan, and the under-constructed Santa Giulia core, as well as between relevant ecological elements, including the Vettabbia Park, part of the South Agricultural Park, and the areas around the Lambro river.

Along these axes, it is important to develop strategies that reduce the gap felt between the southern areas of the neighborhood, where the historic core of Rogoredo is located, and the northern area, where the new residential areas of Santa Giulia and Merezzate extend to. The schools of Rogoredo, as well as those of the entire city of Milan, assume the role of central elements in the district – centres for activating design processes.

The other key elements of the strategy are the main public spaces and urban green areas, and local organisation's headquarters. Particular reference was given to Largo Redaelli near the station, the church square, via Monte Piana where the Sottocorno school is located, and the urban gardens of via Feltrinelli.

From the analysis, three main approaches emerge to support play in all its forms within the Rogoredo district:

- › the creation of a network of play spaces
- › the promotion of the role of the school at the centre of neighbourhood relations
- › the use of digital play as a bridge to physical play.



Towards
Milano Centrale Fs

Towards
Milano Lambrate

1 KM
MILANO

73
Lambro
Park

Towards
Milano Duomo

Milano
Santa Giulia

Tangenziale Est

Corvetto

Porto di Mare

Corvetto
neighbourhood

Rogoredo

Rogoredo FS

M3

San Donato

Porto di
Mare
Park

San Martino
neighbourhood

Vettabbia Park

Tangenziale Est - towards A1

Towards
S. Donato

Map 21

A Network of Play Spaces

The first approach focuses on the connections and spatiality of the neighbourhood to improve play conditions and increase learning through play. This can be achieved through an improved network of spaces that activates and connects key public zones. Creating this network is a fundamental step to embed a culture of play in the community. All recommended actions cut across all three dimensions of the Urban Play Framework.

For any intervention, the key element is community engagement: if potential users of an intervention are actively involved from the outset, the benefits of the intervention will increase. Clear communication, interactions between neighbours and a sense of continued engagement will produce positive results, among which are increased ownership over the intervention, a decrease in anti-social behaviour, and community cohesion.

The network of play spaces will leverage the mobility systems present in Rogoredo. The focus here is to support the independent mobility of children, and, therefore, to enable more choice in their play types. Currently, independent travel among children is uncommon. This is mainly because cycling and walking are perceived as unsafe by many parents. Furthermore, the metro stations and streets do not feature elements for play. Intervening in these spaces is a priority in constructing a playful and sustainable network of play spaces in Rogoredo.

For the network, three key spaces are identified on which to develop potential scenarios for future design, activating and increasing a wide range of opportunities for play.

The paths connecting these are approximately 300m in length; this is easily walkable for children, and it is made attractive by coloured drawings on the ground. The activation of each space is designed to involve a particular developmental skill of a child through a playful approach and under the possible supervision of volunteers trained as play facilitators within the local community.

The three key spaces identified and their respective skills, are:

- › Largo Redaelli: cognitive and physical skills
- › Holy Family parish square: social skills
- › School Sottocorno Via Monte Piana: creative and emotional skills

LARGO REDAELLI

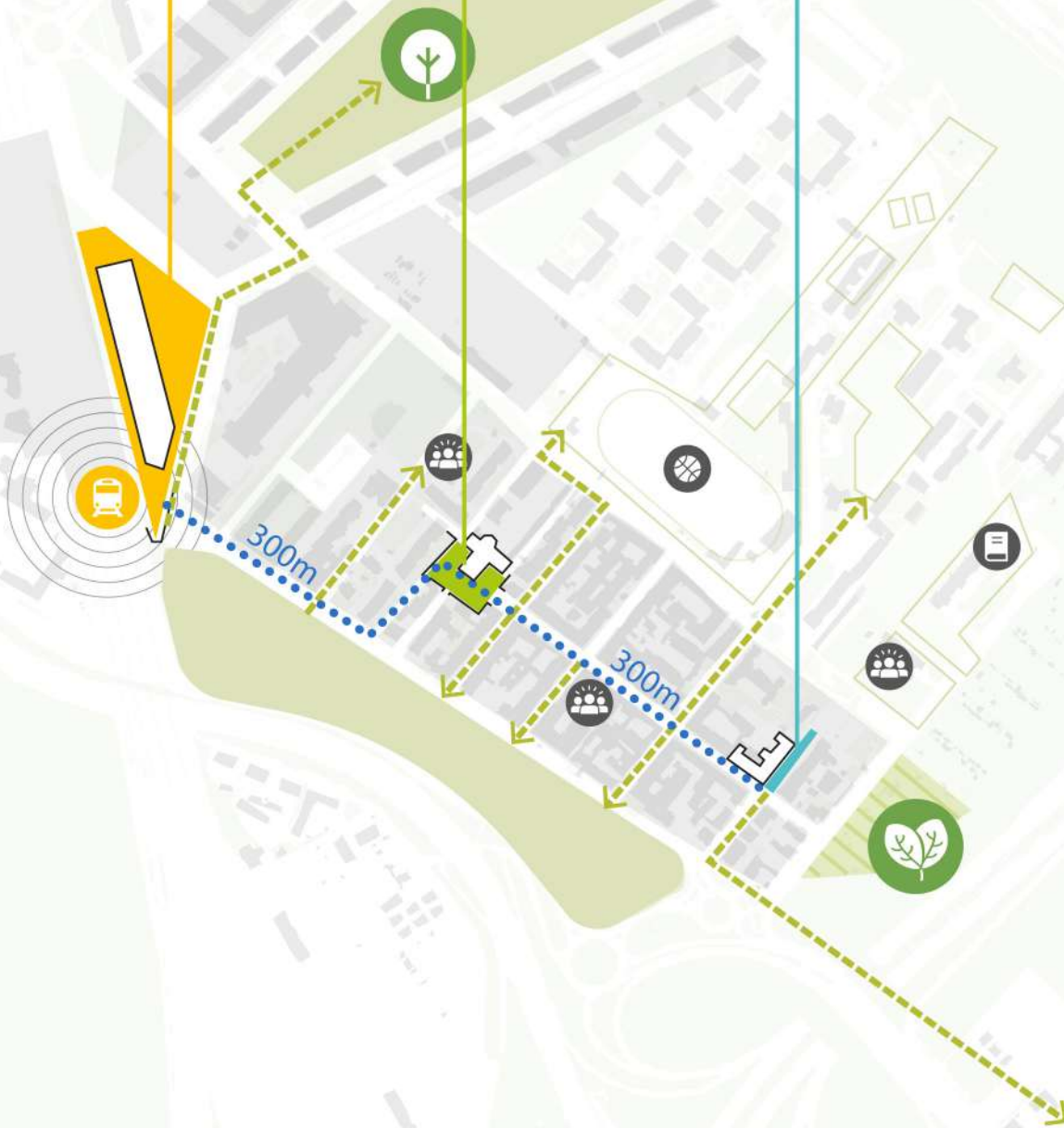
Skills involved: **Cognitive - Physical**

PARISH SQUARE

Skills involved: **Social**

SCHOOL SOTTOCORNO

Skills involved: **Creative - Emotional**



Map 22

TOOLS



Modules



Barriers and bollards



Play facilities



Art installations



Chalks



Movable furniture



Panels



Vegetation



Paints and stencils



Tape

Largo Redaelli consists of a large pedestrian area. It is paved and it lacks both urban furniture and vegetation. Largo Redaelli sits in front of the entrance to the metro station: an essential point for residents' mobility and a gateway to the city. Currently, the space is flanked by a construction site (which will host the Spark One project, including an 8-story office building and commercial facilities). Intervention on this space is geared towards children's **cognitive and physical skills**, in particular psychomotor skills, orientation, memory and perception. The theme was chosen in relation to the proximity to the railway and metro station, the central place of the mobility system from the local to the national level.

Multiple elements have been included to encourage the development of these skills, including: numerous structures of different sizes, which can be explored by children or used as rest spaces; a child-friendly bus stop with games; a colorful and easily identifiable cycle path; and a mural representing the main places in the neighbourhood.

It is also possible to improve the local play culture by exploiting footfall through the station; as a place of passage to implement a public information campaign used to build skills, inform people about the existence of the network of play spaces, public services and the activities and events of local associations.

The space in the square of the **Holy Family parish** is currently an asphalted area that serves as a car park. It is located within the historic core of Rogoredo, at the beginning of the central axis represented by via Monte Cengio, which is the main commercial sector in the district, and which includes the majority of existing services and associations. The space shows good strategic potential, which remains unexploited. The scenario imagined for this space focuses on children's **social skills**, in particular their ability to co-exist, share and

listen. These skills will be supported by creating seating, equipment and ground drawings for play, as well as areas for free and imaginative play.

Via Monte Piana is a two-lane road with a double row of parking areas, overlooked by the ICS Pasquale Sottocorno. It demonstrates good characteristics for developing play elements. For example, the nearby school means that children of various age groups will congregate in the space. Via Monte Piana is also home to the Verde Festival, one of the main associations in Rogoredo. The road, which is a dead-end street, is also a direct connector to the urban park adjacent to the school.

Interventions in Via Monte Piana focus on developing children's **creative and emotional skills**, in particular their intuition and emotion recognition abilities. These skills were supported by various activities during the Play Street events.

The network will enable the active, safe and autonomous movement of children within the neighborhood, with a colorful path that guides them from the station to the Pasquale Sottocorno school, passing some main places of interest en route: the Sacred parish Family and the oratory, the ParLAMI association, the Circolo Arci Mondini. Further links have been identified with respect to the Trapezio Park, the Rogoredo 84 sports club, and the urban gardens of via Feltrinelli.

LARGO REDAELLI



HOLY FAMILY PARISH SQUARE



SCHOOL SOTTOCOTNO VIA MONTE PIANA



The school at the centre of neighbourhood relations

In addition to the neighbourhood-scale work described above, the second approach to improve play conditions in Rogoredo aims to encourage a city-wide planning approach that reconsiders the school as a space of multiple opportunities. As described in the analysis, access to school facilities in Rogoredo is limited by timetables, cost, and sometimes, their quality.

By increasing access to school facilities, and expanding the possible uses within them, schools can become central elements in the Rogoredo neighbourhood: spaces at the heart of community relations. They can become neighborhood laboratories open to the territory, experimental spaces that activate processes of spatial requalification and consolidate social networks or create new ones entirely. This research emphasises the potential of actions that centre on school spaces, particularly as areas that connect large sections of the population as well as different local urban stakeholders.

This aligns well with the “Open Schools 2.0” policy, implemented by the Municipality of Milan. The policy recognises schools as some of the country’s greatest development accelerators: open and democratic places for growth, and theatres of encounters, exchange and enrichment. Arup’s recommendation will support this with the view to activate schools beyond their opening hours, in the afternoons, weekends and school holidays.

It is equally important to act upon the spaces surrounding school facilities, to create more opportunities for play both during and outside school hours. This will dismantle the idea of the school as an impermeable “island” and connect it with the spaces in the neighbourhood that are close by or immediately next door.

During focus groups with fourth and fifth grade students at ICS Pasquale Sottocorno school, a design activity was organised to visualise a play area in front of the school. This was achieved through collages created by groups of pupils. During the activity, the most common phrases and words said by children were recorded and organised in a wordcloud; these described the activities, emotions and sensations that children would expect to experience in the play area. The most common words were “flowers”, “dogs”, “greenery”, “football”, “perfumes”, “colours”, and “swings”. When creating a new play space, it is essential that children have access to natural elements and different types of equipment. Ultimately, the children expressed their desire to have an integrated space, full of different activities.

An extension of school opening hours and the activation of the spaces in and around the schools aim to provide spaces for educational, recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities aimed at the entire population, so that schools represent real places of inclusion and the promotion of rights and opportunities. This will be achieved by engaging all stakeholders (school managers, teachers, students, parent associations, third sector associations, the Municipality of Milan), through territorial pacts, to meet the real needs of children and their families to ensure a better quality of life.



Using digital play as a bridge to physical play

Many participants indicated that the use of technological devices for prolonged periods is one of the main reasons for reduced play time. In Rogoredo, this is linked to two things: a general trend whereby children spend more time in front of screens; and perceived insecurity in the neighbourhood, which limits children's mobility and independent play. Both of these trends are exacerbated by the limitations associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

In Italy, the growing diffusion of new technologies has influenced many children's favorite games. A national study in 2011 found that the number of children playing video games has increased, even as more "traditional" games remain popular¹⁵. This relates to the preferences expressed by the children of the Rogoredo neighborhood. A mix is thus present between the new stimuli coming from technology and more traditional play, which maintains its importance in supporting growth and learning processes.

Reversing the view of digital play as inherently negative, digital platforms and experiences can be considered a resource to be used for creating activities that involve children in physical outdoor games. In this view, the third approach for improving play conditions in Rogoredo emerges. In fact, digital experiences that connect the screen with the outside world are spreading. The worldwide phenomenon of Pokemon Go and the successful use of Minecraft in UN-Habitat initiatives to co-create play areas are two examples.

Digital play and Augmented Reality experiences can be used to involve children in outdoor games, individually or in groups, in workshops and events relating to the design of public space. If safety is a priority concern,

such initiatives could be undertaken within the wider framework of community gatherings or outdoor festivals, to ensure adult supervision.

In this sense, during the course of the research, a workshop was carried out with the Directorates of the Municipality of Milan involved and AMAT (Agenzia Mobilità Ambiente Territorio), to test YARD, a co-design tool powered by augmented reality and developed by Arup. YARD is, in fact, a tool to involve communities in designing and validating interventions in the public space. It provides a new way to engage the public to co-create better places through augmented reality, allowing users to choose and place objects in real space, building virtual scenes to plan and test design interventions that improve the quality of the urban realm. Well-designed interventions, developed through a sensitive and participatory process, can bring long-lasting impacts to the quality of life of all residents, and targeted benefits for specific groups such as children and caregivers.

Within structured situations such as participation workshops, it can be difficult for some members of the community to express themselves due to language barriers, lack of trust, personal skills, or creativity blocks. YARD allows users to visualise and design their ideal public space and then share a tangible result with the group, easing potential blockages. This can be especially useful for children, especially those who struggle to express or represent the design ideas they have in mind.

15. ISTAT (2011) Childhood and Daily Life



Walkway Plate

Tyre

Half Tyre

Tyre Stack



Grey Willow

Poplar

Banana Plant

Palm

Case Studies

This section reports on a selection of case studies, identified in several different international urban contexts, that have developed projects and programmes to make neighbourhoods more child-friendly, increasing play opportunities and quality of life.

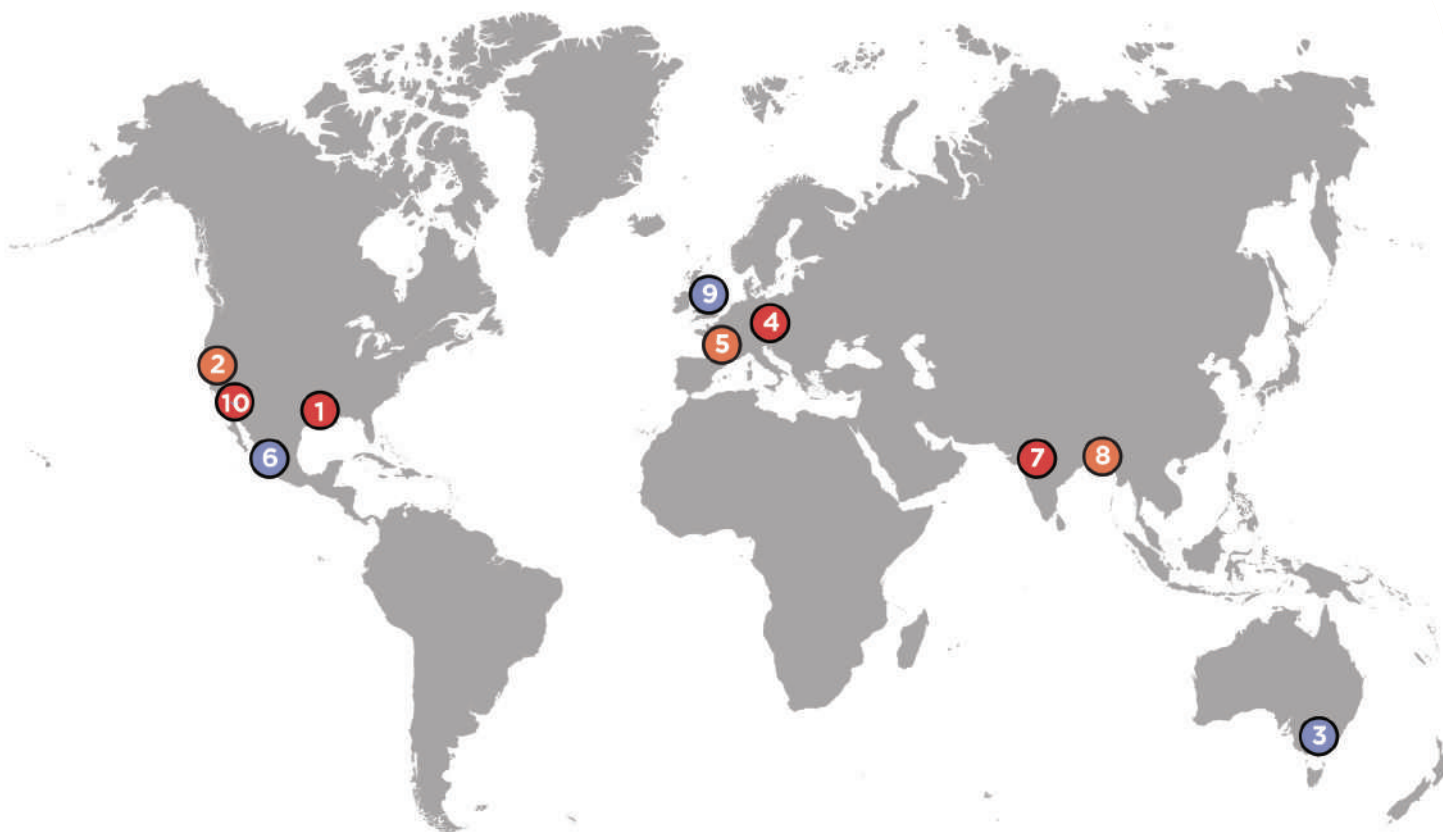
This has been useful in identifying multiple ideas, actions and strategies aimed at directly and effectively promoting the play dimension within urban contexts, attempting to interpret their benefits, logic and potential.

The stimuli and design references obtained were, in fact, taken into consideration in the elaboration of the three main approaches for the promotion of play in Rogoredo, as the final output of the following research work.

They can also be fertile starting points for the activation

of discussions with the subjects involved and the local community.

The Abacus of Case Studies is an open document, where an infinite number of cases and examples can potentially be collected. From the extensive collection carried out in the following pages, 10 case studies have been reported as examples of the most significant in the context of the Rogoredo district. In order to make them easier to use and read, the place and year of realisation, the designers/ideators, the theme addressed by the project, the target audience (children, adults, elderly) and the type of governance that characterises them (private, public) have been identified for each of them.



1 ZONA DE JUEGO

Place and year:

De Zavala Park, Houston, USA - 2013

Designers:

University of Houston College of Architecture

Theme:

Create a multifunctional space

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public



© Community Design Resource Center

The Zona de Juego (Play Zone) Project is located in the heart of Magnolia Park, one of Houston's oldest and most populous neighbourhoods. Statistically, residents of the Magnolia Park neighbourhood are twice as likely to suffer from diabetes and weight-related problems as those in the city. The Zona de Juego was needed to promote healthier living habits. The project, implemented in close contact with residents and the local community, is now widely used by both local residents and the neighbourhood's primary school, which regularly organises numerous play activities and outdoor classes there.

2 PLAY STREET SAN FRANCISCO

Place and year:

San Francisco, USA - 2017-2019

Designers:

Livable City

Theme:

Design a community toolkit

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public



© SFMTA | Play Streets SF

Play Streets SF is a program that allows San Francisco residents to transform their block into an open, accessible, and car-free space for children and seniors on a regular basis for the enjoyment of children and seniors with the mission of creating healthier, more connected, and resilient communities. Play Streets SF provides residents with everything they need to "claim their street" including permits, safety equipment and games. Presented in partnership with Livable City with the help of City Hall, Play Streets came to San Francisco in 2017 as a 2-year pilot project.

3 PLAY STREET AUSTRALIA



© Play Streets Australia

Place and year:

Kensington, Victoria, Australia - 2019

Designers:

Co Design Studio, Vic Health

Theme:

Promote a brand to replicate

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public

Play Streets Australia is a community effort brought together by people who care about neighbourhoods, children's health, and social inclusion. What is unique about Play Streets Australia is that it provides neighbourhood residents and even participating schools with a set of structured documents to ensure that they have the regulatory permissions to carry out the project. The permits provided include, in addition to a well-detailed kit of "play types", letters to be addressed to neighbourhood residents, the municipality, flyers and posters, as well as safety regulations including the closure of the street to traffic.

4 GUDVANGER STRASSE



© anonym Mzen

Place and year:

Berlin, Germany - 2015-ongoing

Designers:

Drachenreiter

Theme:

Plan over time

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public

The temporary initiative on Gudvanger Strasse since 2015 has become a recurring event that has enabled this to be closed to traffic every year for a few days and become a playground that children and adults use as a place to play and meet. The popularity of this initiative has also allowed Graefekiez has also become a popular play street. The activities promoted by Drachenreiter, the event organiser, are characterised by different games each time. In September 2020, a 30-metre-long remote-controlled car track was built in September 2020 with the help of volunteers, where each child could race against the others.

5 RUE AUX ENFANTS

Place and year:

France - 2015-2017

Designers:

ANACEJ, CAFEZOIDE, Rue de l'Avenir, Vivacites Ile de France

Theme:

Develop a play culture

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public



In the period 2015-2017 the National Association of Children and Youth Councils (ANACEJ), and other associations decided to pool their expertise within a collective "Streets for children, streets for all" by promoting and supporting "Streets for children" initiatives, particularly in working-class neighbourhoods. The objective is to integrate the concept of "Street reserved for play" into the highway code. In November 2015, a first call for proposals was launched by the "Rue aux enfants, rue pour tous" collective. The result was more than encouraging: 43 projects were received in 2016, which were then implemented over the next two years by the collective through ad hoc events and days throughout France.

6 VIA RECREATIVA - CHILDREN AREA

Place and year:

Guadalajara, Mexico - 2005-ongoing

Designers:

Via Recreativa

Theme:

Design a network of spaces

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public



The Children's Area, created and promoted by Via Recreativa, is an exclusive recreational space for children aged 4 to 13 in which various activities are carried out on a rotating basis. The aim of this programme is to create adequate and safe spaces for children to play in the city along several thoroughfares. The Children Area is one of three projects involving the city of Guadalajara organised by Via Recreativa. The projects are aimed not only at children but also at adults, who can at different times use certain streets in the city as exclusive cycle paths or sky theatres to promote initiatives, stage shows, concerts and cultural activities.

7 STREET SMART



© aProCh

Place and year:

Aurangabad, India - 2011-ongoing

Designers:

AProCh (A PROtagonist in every CHild)

Theme:

Co-design spaces with the community

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public

Street Smart is an initiative that allows the main streets of the city of Aurangabad to close (one day a month) to traffic and welcome children and the community into safe and welcoming spaces. The community is free on this day to set up games, activities, small spontaneous markets, etc. The message conveyed by this project is that of a city that takes care of its youngest protagonists. aProCH organises several other outdoor events for children in the city, including City as my Landscape, an event aimed at designing a child-friendly city by painting pedestrian crossings, school walls and fences in the city and cycle routes.

8 PLAYING OUT



© Playing Out

Place and year:

Bristol, UK - 2009-ongoing

Designers:

Playing Out

Theme:

Organize bottom-up activities

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public

Bristol is famous for being one of the first cities to have a play street in the UK. In 2011 the initiative of a play street was undertaken by a group of parents experimenting with the city council, which allowed them to close certain streets in the neighbourhood for 3 hours a week so that children could play freely. The success of the initiative led to the creation of an association called "Playing Out" with the aim of spreading these practices. Two years after this initiative there were more than 40 play streets in Bristol. The aim of Playing Out is to make playing close to home a natural and everyday part of every child's life, as it used to be. This means safer streets, less traffic, and more connected communities.

9 SMALL-SCALE URBAN RESPONSES

Place and year:

Vietnam, Bangladesh, India - 2020

Designers:

UN-Habitat, Block by Block

Theme:

Revitalise the public space

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public



© UN-Habitat, Global Public Space Programme

The need to get outdoors with the advent of the pandemic has become increasingly widespread. In order to equip public spaces to meet the challenges of Covid-19, UN-Habitat with the Block by Block Foundation supported ten cities in 2020. With the help of local governments and the community, the initiatives have helped municipalities, especially in poorer neighbourhoods, to safely enhance public spaces. By embracing the potential of public spaces as flexible and resilient areas, these small-scale projects support cities to slowly reopen and have enabled communities to regain confidence in being together and using public spaces safely.

10 LA PLAY STREETS PROGRAM

Place and year:

Los Angeles, USA - 2015-ongoing

Designers:

Kounkuey

Theme:

Integrate a digital approach

Target:



Children



Adults



Seniors

Governance:



Private



Public



© Kounkuey Design Initiative

KDI has been working with the LA Department of Transportation (LADOT) since 2015 to develop a "Play Streets" program. The pilot project was developed in two phases: in Phase 1, Kounkuey worked with low-income and poor communities in parks to design and distribute a 'play box', containing portable games and furniture, at Play Street events. Kounkuey then developed an online application process and portable play pieces. In phase 2, residents have successfully used the online app to apply for Play Street events. The game box is distributed at each event, providing a set of games that can be assembled, disassembled, moved around and used individually individually to inspire residents of all ages to reinvent their streets for play.

References

1. Comune di Milano (novembre 2018), Deliberazione della giunta comunale n. 2002 - Linee di indirizzo per l'approvazione del Protocollo d'intesa finalizzato all'attivazione del progetto "Scuole Aperte 2.0"
2. Comune di Milano (2020), Milano 2020: Strategia di adattamento. Documento aperto tal contributo della città
3. Coram (2019), Family and Childcare - Childcare Survey
4. Dipartimento per le politiche della famiglia (ottobre 2020), Linee guida per la gestione in sicurezza di opportunità organizzare di socialità e gioco per bambini e adolescenti nella fase 2 dell'emergenza COVID-19
5. Foreman H. (2017) Residential Street Design and Play. Playing Out
6. Istat (2011), Infanzia e vita quotidiana
7. Istat (2019), Stili di vita di bambini e ragazzi – Anni 2017-2018
8. Save the Children (2021), Le equilibriste. La maternità in Italia 2021
9. Save the Children, Ipsos (2021), I giovani ai tempi del coronavirus
10. The Real Play Coalition (2018), Value of Play Report
11. The Real Play Coalition (2020), Reclaiming Play in Cities: The Real Play Coalition Approach
12. The Royal Town Planning Institute (2020), Plan the World We Need – Research

Authors

ARUP

Arup's mission is in our motto: "We Shape a Better World". A global firm of designers, engineers, planners, technical specialists and researchers, we work across every aspect of today's built environment to find innovative and tangible solutions that change people's lives for the better. Globally, we have over 15,000 employees and operate out of 40 countries, across 92 offices. Arup was founded in 1946 as an employee-owned firm by Sir Ove Arup, a celebrated engineer and philosopher whose philosophy of 'Total Design' as a form of social usefulness is still the cornerstone of our practice today. Ove Arup was ahead of his time, discussing the importance of sustainable attitudes and innovative thinking as early as the 1950s – a legacy of which we as a firm remain proud.

Arup has been present in Italy since 2000, with an office in Milan where over 130 professionals work. Arup has collaborated with the municipality of Milan on several strategic projects, including the city's resilience strategy, as well as on neighborhood-scale research projects (for example, in Gallarate and Niguarda).

www.arup.com

Reviewers



The Real Play Coalition is a global non-profit coalition created in 2018 and includes UNICEF, National Geographic, Arup, IKEA and LEGO Foundations. It has the ambition to change perceptions around the value of play, mobilize decision makers, influence behavior change, and eliminate the play deficit for children, for their development and optimal well-being. The coalition seeks to support the adoption of learning through play concepts in norms and practices in all cities of the world, focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalized contexts in both developed and developing countries, influencing change in individuals and institutions responsible for decision making and planning at the city level.

www.realplaycoalition.com



Comune
di Milano

In recent years, the Municipality of Milan has developed a growing interest in spatial design and its use, with the aim of developing interventions that prioritize needs and perspectives of associations, citizens, and their families. Milan wants to rethink its urban areas and zones from a child-friendly point of view, therefore safer, more accessible, more local. All this in a perspective in which children and teenagers could become active and independent citizens in a metropolitan city like Milan. Starting from the 2020 Adaptation Strategy (prepared in response to the onset of Covid-19), the Municipality has implemented a series of initiatives in relation to the changing lifestyles of citizens and the organization of cities, to reflect the distances and precautions necessary for the pandemic. The opportunities for using public space have therefore increased, allocating more space to sustainable mobility and social life. Milan has started to implement temporary cyclable paths that have modified a lot of urban space around the city. This wanted to be a starting point to raise awareness among the citizens and to better understand how to modify our slow mobility in accordance with their needs in and in order to accompany them in this transition. Through tactical urbanism, the city is renovating its public space transforming carparks to more livable squares with urban furniture like benches, color paths, table tennis courts.

www.comune.milano.it

