

# Stories of Us

SEN9235 - Game Design Project

## Stories of Us



Case clients: Geertje Slingerland & Nicolai Hansen

Project Supervisors: Dr.ir. G. Bekebrede, Dr. H.K. Lukosch, Maria Freese

Date: 14-11-2019

Created by:

Brennen Bouwmeester

Casper Smits

Kevin Su

Jochem Vlug

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# 1. Introduction

Citizens of western Europe live in dense, interconnected urban environments. Especially in regions like the Randstad, the Netherlands, the amount of people living in an urban area are very high. This high density of citizens in the area can be defined as an area called a “big city” (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018). Urban environments bring new challenges for the future. Although technology has connected people in more ways than ever before, the amount of people that are socially isolated in urban regions is increasing.

Nowadays, it is very common for people living in urban areas to not know their neighbours, and there is a lack of a shared identity within urban neighbourhoods (Putnam, 2000). Because of this, citizens feel less empowered and became untrusting of the government, the city and their neighbours. To break this negative cycle, neighbours should be more empowered, become more aware of their local peers and share a common identity.

Geertje Slingerland is a PHD candidate who has a goal of increasing citizens' empowerment. At the faculty of TPM, Geertje is working on the BART! (Burger Alert Real-Time) project and research on how they can create cohesion and social relationships between neighbours by making use of 'augmented narratives'. In this project, she will use location-based information as a way for neighbours to share their neighbourhood stories and study how this will lead to a sense of community and more neighbourhood awareness.

To support her research, Geertje has asked students of the Game Design course to help develop a game that can facilitate in the making of 'augmented narratives'. By making a serious (digital) game, citizens might be persuaded into telling or listening to narratives.

This report describes the development process of the serious game, with the working title “Stories of Us”. First, this report reviews literature to further explore the problem. Afterwards, the Objective, Requirements and Use of the Game and methodology are explained. In the second chapter, the system analysis is conducted. In the third chapter, the game design process is explained. In the fourth chapter the game design testing and iterations are reported. The fifth chapter denotes the role of the facilitator in making sure the game is played correctly. To conclude, the sixth chapter discusses the conclusion, reflection and further recommendations. In the appendix, some information regarding the results of the first play sessions can be found, along with the results of a questionnaire among players.

## 2. System analysis

This chapter discusses the system analysis of the problem. It will give a detailed description of the issue to find relevant elements and relationships in reality. This forms a starting point for the game design if the important aspects in the real-life world is well represented.

### 2.1 Background Problem

In order to tackle today's (and future's) city challenges, some form of social learning/social capital is needed. Urbanization has been on the rise all over the world, especially in mega cities with more than 10 million inhabitants harbor 1/8th of the world population (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018). The cities are getting more and more important, as is liveability within these cities. Onyx & Bullen (2000) showed that rural areas have a higher bonding social capital, meaning strong networks but is limited to insiders, whereas urban areas have weaker ties but are more inclusive. Putnam (2000) has argued for a long time that social capital in the Western world has been on a decline. The newer generation were less likely to engage in community life, politics, and distrusted fellow citizens more. However, this is not the only viewpoint on social capital as Putnam (2000) has been criticized as well. The paper would have been too focussed on the traditional sense of society, critique on the data measurements, or that new forms of social capital were not considered (Stolle & Hooghe, 2005). Other voices such as Paxton (1999) argue that while there is some loss in social capital, the loss is only in individuals and not institutions.

It is important that neighbourhood structures facilitate social learning from each other (Bala & Goyal, 1998). A connected society will have a shared perspective on issues, meaning that they choose the same actions. To get to the root or, critical node, of how social capital can be given a boost, we developed a variation of the Causal Loop Diagram (figure 1). Starting with the apparent problem, challenges in cities. These need to be tackled by both the government and the public. And since the public is currently not engaged in solving these challenges, the research collaboration between TUD en TUE is investigating how municipalities (government) can empower the public to eventually tackle these challenges. Public empowerment is based on three pillars; motivation, action and knowledge, the latter being the subject of our analysis.

According to Pang et al.(2015) and Dearman, Kellar, & Truong (2008) there is information-asymmetry in neighbourhoods; people struggle with gaining information in a timely and localized manner. The research has shown that people are willing to share information if the methods to share would be available. Another conclusion that can be drawn is that people often share implicit information with each other, where opinions are shared more easily. The shared information is however limited to a close network, whereas the information could be relevant to everyone. The knowledge pillar therefore has become a focus of study in this serious game, as it is an important step to activate the action and knowledge pillars.

Before continuing with the analysis, knowledge within this context has to be defined. Knowledge is seen as information of both fellow citizens and of the city, knowing who lives in your neighbourhood and what happens in it. Right now though, people do not feel inclined to get to know their neighbours, there is declining social capital. Social capital is commonly defined as actual or potential resources gained which are linked to participation in a strong social network, with mutual reciprocity (Bourdieu, 1986). There seems to be a lack of motivation to communicate with each other, prohibiting people to get to know each other, but more importantly, each other's norms and values. Without knowing at least a bit of someone's personality, his/her viewpoints or way of life, it is almost impossible to understand that person, let alone join up to tackle a city challenge. This vicious cycle of motivation, leading to communication, to alignment of norms and values, to shared understanding, motivation, seems to be the critical node which prohibits the public engagement. An overview of our Causal Loop Diagram is shown below.

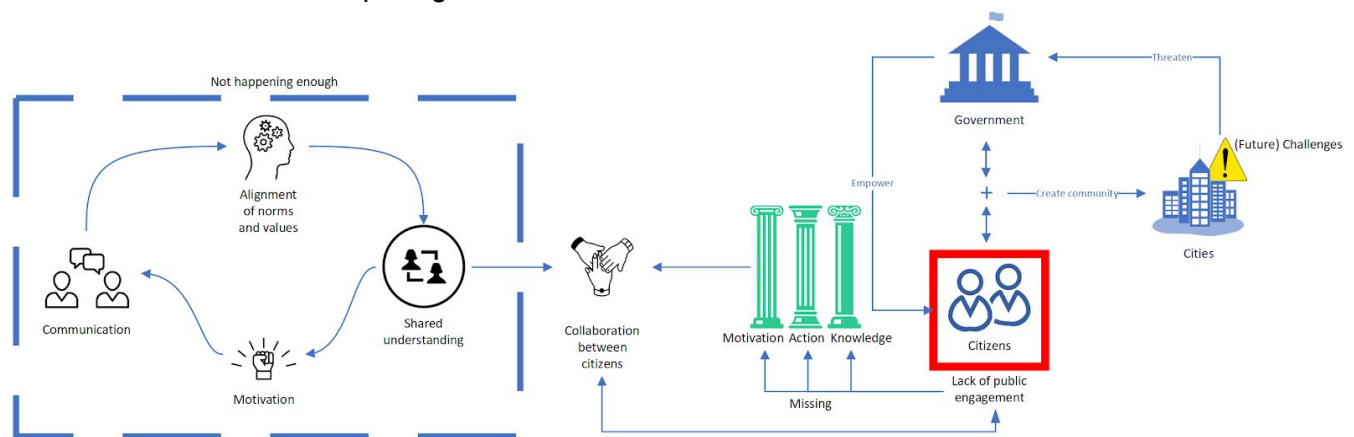


Figure 1: Causal Loop Diagram

The Causal Loop Diagram in Figure 1 displays the problem systematically. It is clear that the root of the problem is difficult to tackle. The feedback loop to create shared understanding will not happen without interaction. Importantly, this scopes the game down to increase the shared understanding, however, the methodology of the project (serious game) would require citizens motivated enough to play the game.

The critical node, shared understanding, is analyzed further by the use of the “Communication Chart” shown below in Figure 2. It couples theory with experience, creativity and intuition. Taking “shared understanding” as our starting point, we used theory and our own experience, creativity and intuition to tackle the question: “How to create shared understanding?”, depicted in the chart is shown below. This was the start of the thought process to combine relevant aspects in this area, where theoretical and practical matters are combined with each other.

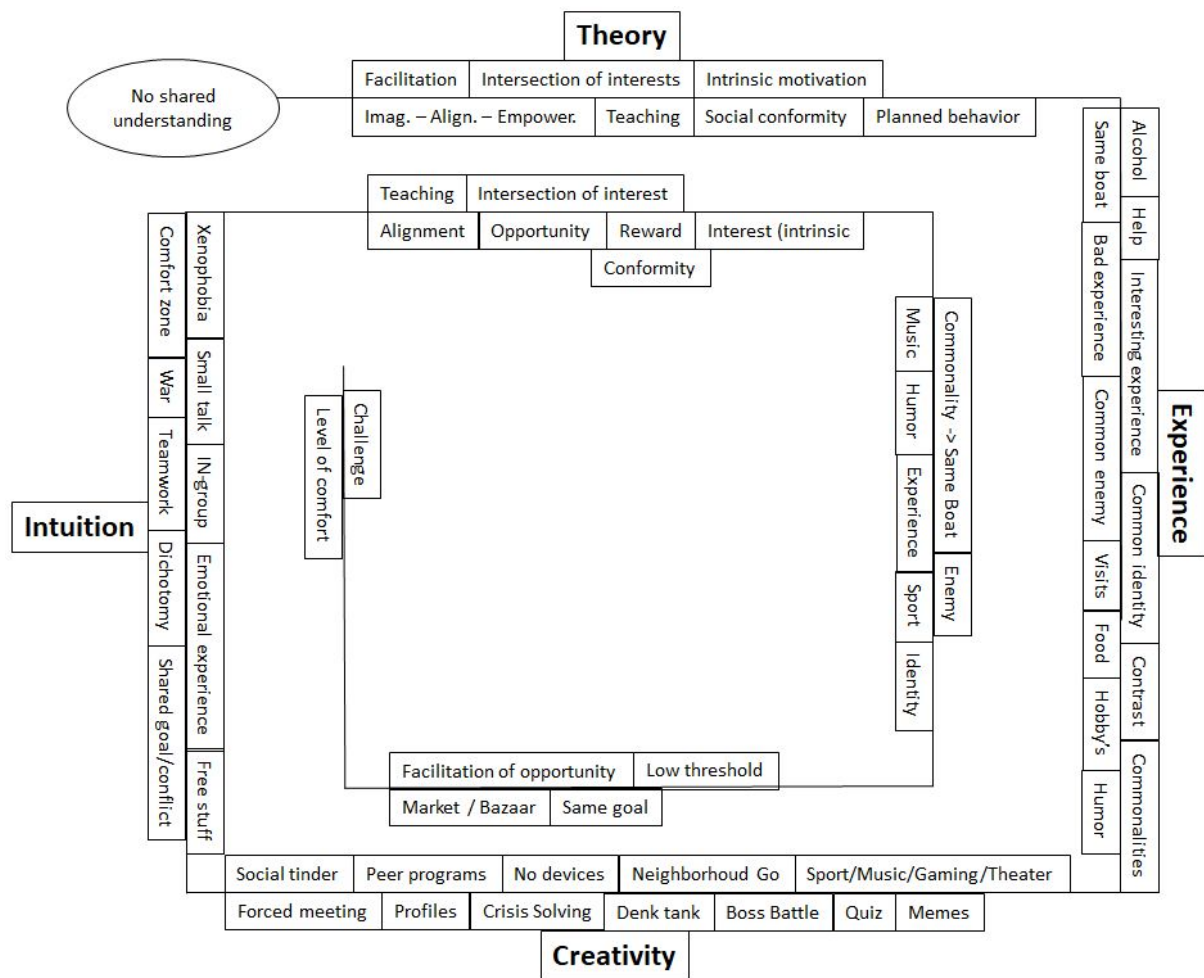


Figure 2: Communication Chart

## 2.2 Objective

From the analyses that have been discussed in paragraph 2.1, a clear objective can be stated which will be the main line of the project. This project aims at creating a shared understanding between citizens in a neighbourhood, both on a personal level as well as on a neighbourhood level. Citizens do not have to become best friends, but having some knowledge on each other and things that happen in their neighbourhood will increase the social capital in the neighbourhood and create empowerment, which will lead to a better livability in cities everywhere. The game will be an answer to the question: “How to reach shared understanding in neighbourhoods?”

## 2.3 Target group

For the project it is important to have a clear scope on the target group. To gain the most improvement, the game should be played by people that live in the same neighbourhood, but do not know each other (very well). Moreover, as has been stated before, these people need to have some sort of motivation to engage with the game, which can be hard as having motivation for playing the game would suggest that the players would also have motivation to increase their shared knowledge. However, as has also been found, the problem lies within the absence of a good opportunity for neighbours to increase their shared understanding (Pang et al., 2015; Dearman et al., 2019). In principle, most people would like to get to know their neighbours and neighbourhood, but do not have a chance to do so. This game will be that opportunity. This leads to the target group being neighbours that do not know each other very well, and have some starting motivation to invest in creating shared knowledge.



## 3. Game design

### 3.1 System representation

In this paragraph, a matrix will be discussed that shows how the elements in the real life system are represented in the final version of the game. This will show if the game is representing the system well enough and also shows the scope of the game. Moreover, it displays choices that were made and the literature foundation of the game elements. This will help in creating a game that is not only balanced and fun, but has a maximum chance of reaching its goals. Each of the game elements in the rows will be further explained in the remaining paragraphs of this chapter.

Table 1: Representation Matrix

	Neighbours themselves	Information about the neighbours	Information about the neighbourhood	Sharing stories / information	Problem of declining livability	Solution in shared understanding
Role	All 4 players		The facilitator can help to share information about the neighbourhood by representing a municipality			
Rule				Story openings have different levels of people which change the "deepness" of the stories. This is based on Hofstede's onion model: symbols, heroes, rituals, values (Hofstede, 2003). The story openings are decided by the facilitator who can feel how deep the stories can go depending on the players' engagement and previous stories		
Event		Storytelling / picking an individual category	Event cards and opportunity cards with real information Empty event and opportunities make players think about their involvement	Storytelling which is based on either the players themselves or their thoughts and imagination	Event cards depict the decline in liveability by lowering the categories	In the debriefing, players fill out a neighbour card about another player to indicate some shared understanding
Scenario					If no cooperation takes place, players will lose the game	Cooperation leads to a winning game
Indicator	Mini - neighbours / neighbour cards	Story opening cards	The neighbourhood categories represent important aspects of the livability			

As can be seen in the table, every part of the depicted system is represented at least in one aspect of the game. To strengthen the relationship even more, we tried to represent all aspects of the system in multiple aspects of the game.

## 3.2 Game play and flow

### 3.2.1 General game flow and its game elements

As has been discussed in paragraph 3.1, the game can be seen as two separate streams, which are the personal and the city related streams. Before the game can start, every player has to pick a category from the 6 categories which they find most important, this **choice will** influence the play for the rest of the game, as players will want to maximise the score of that chosen category. The first step in every round is selecting a random event that influences the city categories (**chance**). After the event, the personal story tellings use a simple starting point of a faceless neighbour, their name and age. Which neighbour this is, will be decided by **chance**. Adding to this starting point, the game element of **chance** will supply additional information, namely an opening sentence with which the story should start. During the storytelling, the players take up the **role** of this faceless neighbour, and they are given a maximum time for their stories, which is one of the few **rules** in the game. After the storytelling, a **performance indicator** game element takes place, where the players vote for the best story. This triggers another **chance** element, where an opportunity card is drawn from the stack which influences two or three out of the 6 city categories. After the card is drawn, the players get to **choose** whether to invest, in what way to invest and in which categories to invest. There is also the **choice** of working together in investing. The addition of chance to which neighbour, event and opportunity are drawn, makes the game replayable by the same group of people. Although the storytelling will change, as players will know each other better after playing for the first time, the game mechanics will remain the same, and as testing has shown (chapter 4), the game is sometimes even more fun for players that do know each other.



### 3.2.2 Choosing a category and deciding the order

Before the rounds can start, all players have to pick one of the city categories, which they find most important. This is hidden information for the other players, which makes room for strategic play. The players should focus on keeping their category high during the game, as they will receive extra points at the end of the game based on the height of their city category. Important to note is that there can exist overlap in the chosen categories, which is another level of strategy at the start of the game. This will be elaborated upon in section 3.7. After picking a hidden city category, the players take the first step in getting to know each other. In the first round, the order of storytelling is decided by age. Players will have to find out each others age in order to find out which player will be the first to tell a story. In this particular game, this mechanic is more than a decision for who starts, as it obliges players to get to know a first piece of information on each other. When the starting player has been decided upon, the order will be clockwise. In following rounds, the starting player shifts clockwise as well, so that all players will play a round in which they have to start to storytelling.

Another step that has to be taken before the rounds can start, is to give every player a starting neighbour (which represents themselves) and a random opportunity card (3.2.6) to immediately feel a connection to the city lane of the game.



### 3.2.3 Events

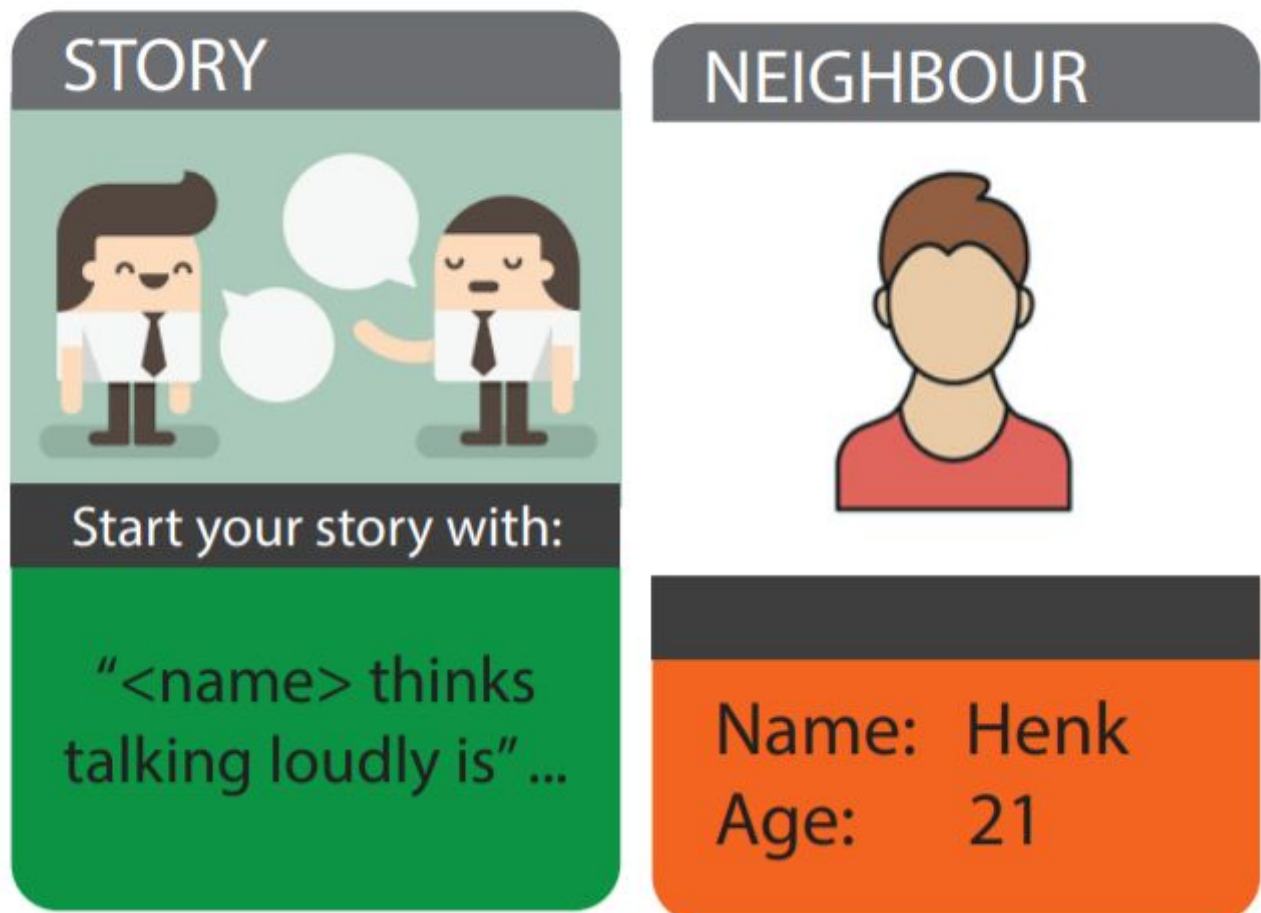
The first step of every round, is drawing a random event card that will decrease the city categories, as the events are not desirable ones. The events will lower two different (random) categories by 2, and one other category by 1, which means a total decrease of 5 occurs every round. By calibration, the events decrease every category equally after all cards are played. By putting the event at the start of every round, payers will feel connected to the neighbourhood (chapter 4), and will be willing to save it better. Also, the event could be used as input for the storytelling (3.2.4), but this is not obligatory. Events are designed in such a way, that they are current issues that the players can relate to. For the example game, specific events in Delft have been designed, which can be done for every city. This will make the players more involved with the game and the in-game neighbourhood. It increases the way reality is used in the game (Harteveld, 2011).



### 3.2.4 Story openings and neighbours

After a randomized event has decreased the city categories, it is time for the storytelling part of the game. The starting player of the current round, picks a random faceless neighbour, which holds this neighbour's face, part of their clothes, their name and their age. Next to the neighbour, the player picks a random story "opening card", that holds the sentence with which every story of the round should start. This is all the input players need to start telling a

story about the drawn neighbour. By having the event before the storytelling, there is a small nudging technique that might make players include the event to their storytelling, but this is not obligatory, as this would take away players' space for creativity (chapter 4). As all players have to use the same opening sentence and neighbour, players that tell their stories later have a slight advantage of having more thinking time before their story has to be told. After each story, the other players have to applause which will increase the feeling of a safe environment that the players experience (chapter 4). When all 4 stories have been told, there is a small round of recapping every story, to make sure that players vote (3.2.5) with the right knowledge. In these recaps, there is space for players to also express which parts of their story were actually true. This mechanic will increase the information that players will remember about other players and their stories (chapter 4).



### 3.2.5 Voting and gaining resources

After every story has been told, the players are rewarded for their effort in two ways. By simultaneous voting, the players decide which player has told the "best" story (this voting can also be strategic after some round, which will be discussed in section 3.7). For every vote that a story receives, the corresponding player receives a neighbour. As the game is designed for a total of 4 players, the distribution of neighbours will look like one of the following: 3-1-0-0, 2-2-0-0, 2-1-1-0, 1-1-1-1. These neighbours can be used to improve the city, which will be explained in 3.1.5. Another resource that is awarded during this phase of



the game, is an opportunity card (3.2.6). This card is awarded to the player that has received the most votes. In case of a drawn position, the player that told their story earliest receives this opportunity card. As the order of telling shifts every round, this mechanic is assumed to be fair.

### 3.2.6 Opportunities and improving the city

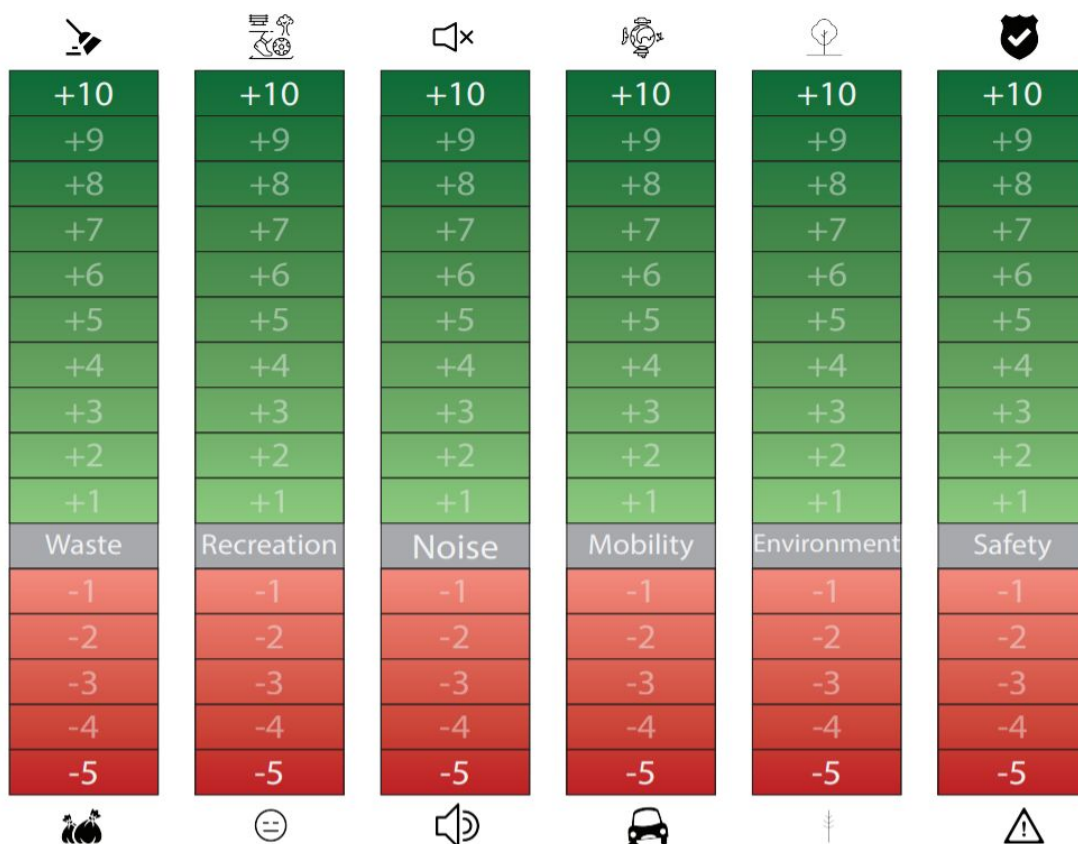
After the resources have been awarded, there is a chance for the players to improve the city categories. There are two ways in which the city can be improved. The first possibility is by using the awarded neighbours individually. Doing this will increase the chosen city category by 1, and will award the player the same number of points (1). This can be a lifesaver when one of the city categories is at a critical low, but is less profitable than using the second way of improving the city categories.



This second way of improving the city categories is by implementing obtained opportunities. Next to the initial opportunity that players have received, players can also use the opportunities received by telling the best story in a round (3.2.5). These opportunity cards always have a net profit of 7 for the city, either by adding 3 to a category, and 4 to another one, or by adding 5 to a category, 4 to another one, but retracting 2 from a third category. The categories that are influenced by opportunity cards are randomized, but balanced across the whole game. This means players can get lucky by receiving an opportunity that increases their chosen city category, but also get unlucky, when only opportunity cards are

in play that do not increase this category, or even decrease it. Playing an opportunity can award 7 points, as this is also the net profit for the city. Opportunities are needed in the game to not lose the game jointly. As events decrease the city categories cumulatively by 5, and only 4 points could be added to the city by using neighbours individually, the city would slowly drop without the usage of opportunities. These calibrated values also create a game experience where the city first drops after 2 or 3 rounds, because players do not have enough neighbours to implement the opportunities, but will rise after these rounds as the opportunities increase the city by a net value of 2 (7-5).

As an opportunity always has a cost of 4, which is higher than the number of neighbours that a single player can receive within a round, players can never play an opportunity every round. That is, implementing the opportunity on their own. The rules do not restrict players from working together in the implementation of opportunities. This should, however, be discovered by the players themselves, as it is a hidden, implicit game mechanic. When players decide to cooperate, they get to decide for themselves how the individual points are divided. As there are 7 points that can be split up, this can never happen in a fair distribution. This could show an advantage for the player whose opportunity is being implemented, or shape alliances of players that share points differently with each opportunity that is played. Optimally, this could lead to a cooperative open book game experience, where all players end the game with equal points.



### 3.2.7 Scoring system and ending conditions

The first way to end the game, is by letting one (or more) of the categories fall to -5 (or below). If this were to happen, the players lose the game collectively, which is not desirable. Therefore, the players should be instructed clearly that the city categories are very important, to ensure that this outcome is to be prevented from happening at all costs by the players.

If the players manage to keep all the categories from dropping to -5, the scoring system will show which player won the game. During the game, players can earn individual points, that are equal to their improvements to the city. If a player were to spend 1 neighbour on a category, this player receives 1 individual point as well. When the second stopping condition occurs (which will be explained after this), the players add the height of the city category that they chose up front to their individual points. The player that has the highest score after this addition, wins the game. The addition of the city value to the score, involves another part of strategic play, which will be elaborated upon in section 3.7.

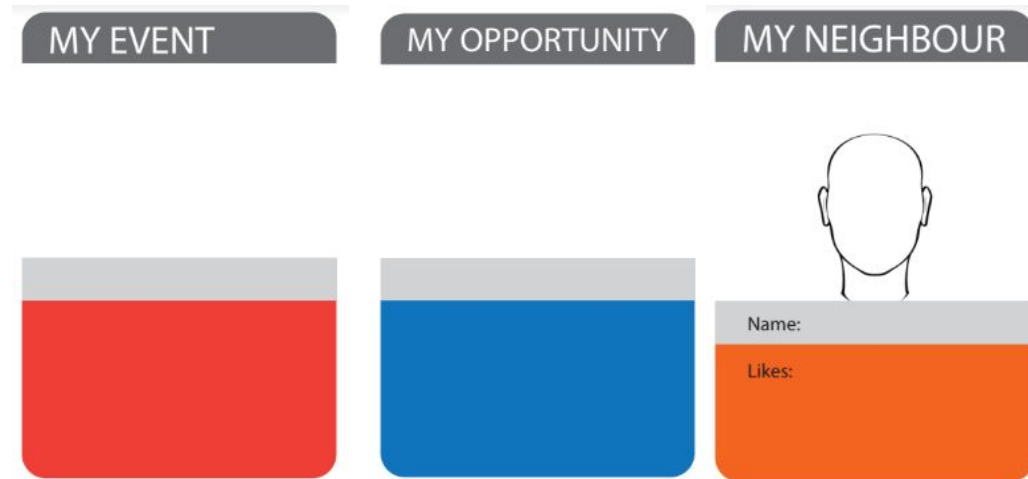
The second stopping condition, after which the winner will be pointed out, occurs when the facilitator decides to end the game. Up front, the players are told that the game lasts until all neighbours have been awarded to the players after their storytelling. However, the players do not know how many neighbours there are in total, which leaves space for the facilitator to feel when the players have learnt the needed lesson, when they are bored of playing, or when the playing time is actually up.

By not letting the players know when exactly the game will end, the side issue of strategic endgame behaviour is solved as well. As players can not work up to an ending condition of which they know, the players will use their resources (earned neighbours and opportunities) differently. They might hold on to certain resources in the last round, which makes them unable to use these resources at all. This adds another level of strategy, which will be discussed further in section 3.7.



### 3.2.8 Evaluation phase

After the game has stopped and a winner (possibly more than 1 player) has been pointed out, the game is not officially over yet. Before the debriefing phase can be initiated, this evaluation players will ask the players to tell each other the reason for picking the city category that they have chosen. This will give an additional piece of knowledge about the players, which is also related to the neighbourhood that they find themselves in. Next to getting to know each other on a personal level, this mechanic will add thoughts on a city level, which is in the spirit of the two lanes of personal and city related as mentioned before.



### 3.3 Objective of the game

The objective of the game only starts after the gameplay has finished. This is the lesson that players will take away, and hopefully implement in their daily life. The lesson is closely related to the objective of this project as a whole. In the case of “Stories of Us”, this goal comes from the prerequisites of the client, which means players should feel more empowered in their neighbourhood. As mentioned before, this is translated to having a shared understanding of each other (on a personal level) and of the problems and chances in the neighbourhood (on a neighbourhood level). When the players walk out of the room, they should feel more connected to each other and to their neighbourhood, which will lead to a better neighbourhood overall.

### 3.4 Objective in the game

Next to the goal of the game, it is also important to have clear what the players try to achieve within the game. In contrast to the objective of the game, this goal can only be achieved within the playing session. However, it is important that the goal in the game actually supports the goal of the game.

In the case of The Neighbours, the two goals are closely related to each other. Within the game, players need to work together to create a neighbourhood that is attractive in all the important aspects. That is, keeping the levels of the city categories from dropping to zero or lower. Next to this shared goal, the players should try to score as many individual points as possible. The player that has the most points when the last neighbour has been spent wins the game (Or actually when the facilitator decides to stop the game).

### 3.5 Nudging of the implicit need for cooperation

As cooperation is seen as one of the greatest lessons that should be learned by the players, it is important to pinpoint how this cooperation is being transferred to the players during the game. During the game design process, we shifted between two ways to incorporate cooperation into the game. The first method was to make cooperation explicitly necessary in order not to lose the game. This method would add a “diversity” factor to each of the opportunities that indicated how many different players should contribute to the opportunity, next to the number of total neighbours needed to execute the opportunity. This would show that implementing promising projects can not be done alone.

The second method of including cooperation into the game, was an implicit one. As it is not likely that one player receives 3 neighbours every round (he can’t earn 4 as players can not vote for their own stories), and the game is calibrated in a way that opportunities must be played in order to keep the city from falling too much, cooperation is needed to save the city. However, this is not explicitly mentioned anywhere, so the players will have to find out themselves. To help the players, certain nudging techniques are present in the game. In the introduction phase, where the players will get to know the goal in the game, we will make sure to mention multiple times that the game is a cooperative game to improve the city. Moreover, the opportunity cards will say “this opportunity needs X neighbours”, instead of

“you need X neighbours to implement this opportunity”. Testing has shown, that players came up with cooperation themselves with only these nudging techniques as a push, which leads to an optimal result after the game. When players figure out that cooperation is needed themselves, the learning is assumed to be stronger than when the game pushes cooperation onto them. Even in the case where the solution of cooperation is not found by the players, which means they will likely lose the game jointly, the learning of a need for cooperation will be assumed to be strong. As the players lost, and the debriefing phase will discuss cooperation, players will have a regretful feeling of not thinking of cooperation, meaning they might improve that in the real world.

### 3.6 In-game strategies

An important aspect in serious games, that adds to the fun that players experience throughout the game, is the inclusion of strategic choices by the players. This paragraph will elaborate on steps in the game that can include strategy by players. It is important to pinpoint exactly where this happens in the game, to make sure that strategies are present in the right amount. Although many of the possibilities for strategic play have been mentioned before, it is useful to focus on them solely.

A decision that can be made throughout the whole game is to cooperate or not. This can happen in sharing mini-neighbours to play an opportunity together, or even to divide the points equally so every player wins. Also, players could decide to share their hidden category to create an even more equal situation. The other end of the spectrum is to keep everything hidden from the other players, from how many mini-neighbours you own, to which opportunities you have, to how many points you already have collected.

Specific strategic choices are made by players that own opportunity cards. Because of the negative effect on neighbourhood categories that some opportunities have, it might be that using the card is not profitable. Together with the personal category that each player has, using opportunities might become more profitable if they improve your chosen category.

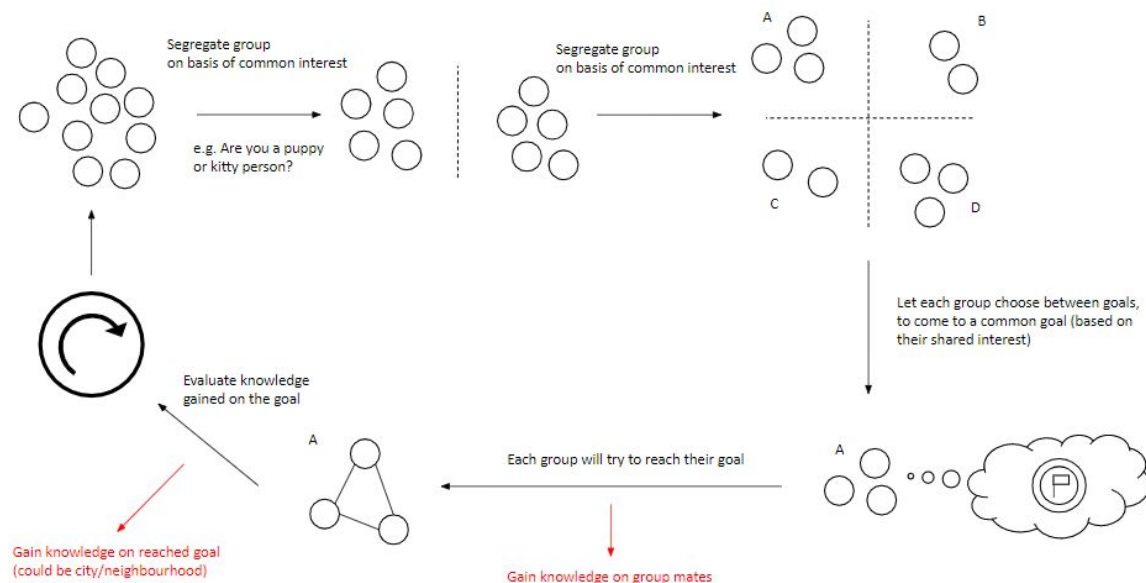
The choice of which category you pick up front, is also a strategic choice. If you were to know the other players, you might be able to guess what their category is, which would influence your own choice. (If 2 people have the same category, the chance of that category being high will be larger).

Inherently built into the game is the strategic decision of when to use the mini-neighbours that you have collected. As players do not know when the game will end, there is a constant balance between spending resources as soon as possible, or waiting for the right moment in which you might earn more points by using your resources.

## 4. Game testing and changes

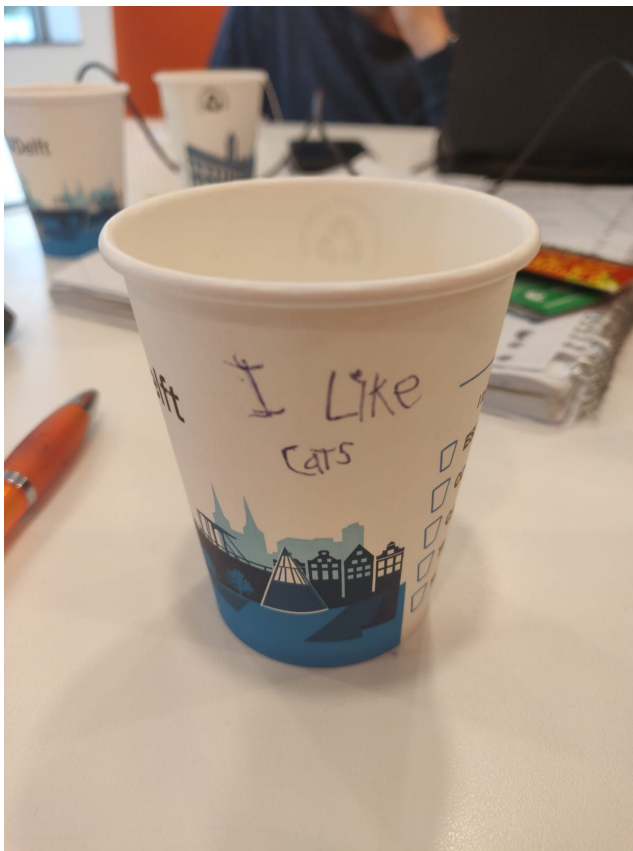
In order to find out how well certain game elements are received by players, but also how the flow of the game can be felt, testing is an important step in game design. From the point where the game was playable, several testing sessions have been executed with different versions of the game. In this chapter, the most interesting session will be explained. For each session, found flaws of the corresponding game are discussed and also how they were tried to be resolved.

Before any real testing took place, a game setup was created where a group of players would be divided based on a trivial difference, such as people that prefer cats over dogs or the other way around. Then, the groups would have to choose their own goal (out of a selection), which they should reach. This goal could be anything, but has to be done on a location near in town, to get a connection to the city, as well as to each other. While on the quest of reaching the goal, it was thought the players would share stories based on the trivial difference that they had in common. This mechanic got strengthened by the duration of the objective and the time it took to get to the right place before it could start. However, soon we decided to look in other directions for the game, as this way of playing was too much of an exercise, and implementing game elements was hard. Also, dividing groups goes against the goal of the game, which is getting people together to get a shared understanding. A third important reason to let go of this type of game, was the lack of sharing stories as a game element. In this game, it was only assumed that stories would be shared, but it would be impossible to verify this assumption. That is why, the focus should be more on story telling.



## 4.1 First test round

As we aimed to start testing as soon as possible, several game elements were tested before a concept of a game was present. The first actual test was to ask classmates to write stories on their coffee cups and share them with each other. The winner would be the person that delivered the most cups that had stories of others written on them. This game element of story sharing showed that players need a certain direction for their stories, but also that sharing stories should be more than just a way of playing in the game. Without any direction, players will write relatively boring, short and non-personal stories on the cups, which is not desired. Even though, the following example was given: “I like cats better than dogs”, the stories by the classmates were not personal, and mostly existed of one word. Therefore, it was decided to give players at least a category as a starting point for their stories. Also, the stories should in some way be rewarded based on how well the story was, as this would improve the level of the stories further.



## 4.2 Second test round

Some iterations further, a first real game was created, where a playing board existed of 7 different spaces were present. A pawn would walk in circles across the board until a stopping condition occurs. The spaces existed of the following: 1. “Key spaces”, where the player could implement one out of four possible improvements to the city (solar-panels, separating garbage, etc.) In order to perform this key action, players needed to have enough neighbours in their network. 2. To get neighbours in ones network, players could end up on a

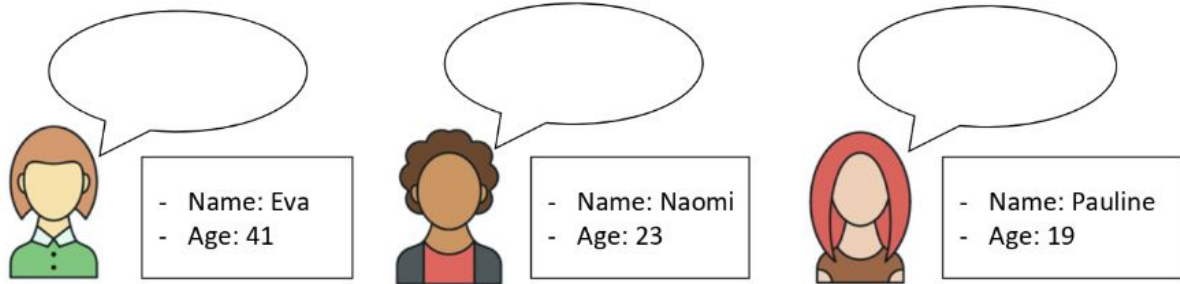
“storytelling space”. Here they receive a category, have to tell a story, and based on the difficulty of the category, as well as the “level” (Hofstede, 2003), the player would receive a number of new neighbours in their network. Other spaces included losing part of your network, or establishing a permanent network, so the neighbours would remain in a players network, even after “spending” them on one of the four key improvements. When playing this game, the mechanics of combining the city stream and the personal stream of the neighbourhood felt appropriate and necessary to create shared understanding. However, although the story telling had a category and a level, we experienced that the stories were still short and nonpersonal, as they were never rewarded based on how good they were. This is a crucial finding in this part of testing, which will critically change the game.

1. Food
2. Music
3. Sport
4. Games
5. Clothing
6. Parties
7. Books
8. Work/Job
9. School
10. Family
11. History
12. Free-time
13. Animals

Key space	NOT YET DECIDED	Tell story for neighbours	Establish part of network	Lose a neighbour	Key space
NOT YET DECIDED					Establish part of network
Tell story for neighbours					Tell story for neighbours
Establish part of network					NOT YET DECIDED
Key space	Lose a neighbour	Establish part of network	Tell story for neighbours	NOT YET DECIDED	Key space

### 4.3 Third test round

At the third interesting testing session, the game changed into a version where all players tell a story about a randomly picked neighbour from a selection of different neighbours. Each neighbour has an appearance, a name and an age, which can serve as starting point for the stories. Next to that, a category card is randomly chosen, as well as a level card. Lastly a words card is randomly chosen, that holds 3 words that should be used in the story by the players. This is the base for the personal part of the game, the storytelling. Afterwards, the players vote simultaneously for the best story. The player that wins gets to have the neighbour, which can be used for the second part of the game: the city part. Unfortunately, this part of the game was untestable at this point in time.



The game session showed improvements in the stories, both in personality and enjoyment to listen to them. However, one player felt less comfortable telling a story based on only the category, level and a few words, which was not thought of by the designers, as they are all relatively extravert and tell stories easily. The starting point should be revised again, to create an environment where all players can easily tell interesting, partly personal stories.

Also, the game session showed multiple occurrences of ties in the voting for the best stories. Different ways to solve ties were thought of on sight, such as letting both winners tell another story to solve the winner, but this could lead to ties again and again. Therefore it was decided that in a tie, the player that told their story earlier would win, as being the first to tell the story would be hardest, due to low preparation time and no story to compare to. The order in which players tell their stories would change every round.

Another important finding is that players need an indication of how long their stories should be. In next versions, this should be given. At this point 30 to 60 seconds seems appropriate. Also concerning the storytelling, is that players sometimes interrupt each others stories, which is not preferable for players that find it harder to tell a story. This should be something only the facilitator can do. A last finding to improve the safe environment players should find themselves in, is to applause after every story. This will create an environment where telling is more fun and less scary.

## 4.4 Fourth test round

Changing the starting points for story telling, this fourth interesting test session gave players a starting sentence for their story that holds both a category as a story level. An example would be “Neighbour dislike having 3 meals a deal because...”, which holds both food as a category as rituals as a level. This improved the stories further, and made them more fun to listen to. Keeping 60 seconds as a maximum telling time, helped players to keep a beginning, middle and end structure in their stories, as they knew approximately how long every part should be. In this session, also the city part of the game was tested thoroughly. The 6 categories of how well a city is doing, could be influenced by both events (that typically lower the values) and opportunities, (which players can use to improve the values with a high amount). In order to use the opportunity cards, players need the neighbours they won by telling the best story. Also, players could use individual neighbours to heighten the city categories by only 1. By heightening the city categories, players get rewarded individual points as well, which is the goals in the game. However, this session pointed out that the city part felt far away, and only every 10 minutes something happened to the city. Therefore, both the number of events/opportunities should increase, as well as the number of neighbours that the players can spend. This lead to a game element, where players get a neighbour per vote their story gets, which also solves ties in a good way. Also, an event will happen after every story rather than after every round. This should improve the connection to the city that players feel. A last thing the session pointed out is the importance of players telling stories in a third person perspective. It seems that when players speak about themselves, it is harder to share detailed stories.

	Neighbour thinks talking loudly is...	
--	---------------------------------------	--

	Story opening	
--	---------------	--

	Neighbour thinks having a pig as a pet is...	
--	--	--

	Story opening	
--	---------------	--




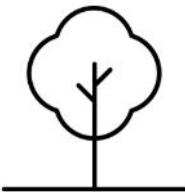

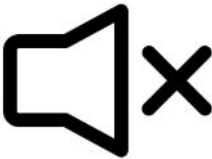


## 4.5 Fifth test round

As the city was quite absent until this point in time, but the storytelling is already close to its potential, the fifth test session was all about involving the city in the game. At the start of the game, every player has one neighbour to spend on the city, either on its own, to increase one of the scores by 1, or using an opportunity to gain additional points. For the first testing session, every round one event takes place per round, lowering two categories by 2, and one category by 1. For example, after a round, recreation has a score of 5, safety has a score of 6 and noise has a score of 5. The categories that decrease are randomized, but balanced in total over all event cards.

As every round, the number of neighbours that additionally joins the game is equal to the number of votes, every round, this number is increased by 4 (the game has 4 players) The total decrease of 5 points by events has been chosen to ensure that using all the neighbours separately will lose you the game. To save the city, opportunity cards are needed.

For simplification reasons, all opportunity cards cost 4 neighbours, and increase one category by 3 and one category by 4. This could mean an opportunity could increase safety to 10, and mobility to 11. Which categories can be increased by an opportunity is (semi) random. The cost of 4 has been chosen, because this means no player can play an opportunity every round on its own (as the maximum votes one player can receive is 3). This means, to save the city, players either have to cooperate, or use a combination of opportunities and individual neighbours. As the opportunities can in theory be played every round (cost of 4), the city should improve slightly over time. This can be seen by subtracting the events from the opportunities ( $7 - 5 = 2$ ). On average, the city should improve by 2 every round. if players decide to spend their neighbours individually, this can still save the city, as long as the spending is balanced.

 Recreation 7	 Safety 7	 Waste management 7
 Environment 7	 Mobility 7	 Noise 7

## 4.6 Sixth test round

As the storytelling part of the game has been stable and well-performing for some tests now, the focus of further testing was to include the city better into the game, and also make this part exciting to play. As events taking place after every story took away the fun part of getting into the stories, we decided to only have an event before the storytelling. However, this event influences the city in 3 different categories. To include the city even more, it was tried to give the neighbours in the game a certain characteristic, such as “logical thinker”, or “social person”. The opportunities needed to improve the city would then each require different types of neighbours, meaning the players would have to collect neighbours with the right character. However, as this increased difficulty, it was left out of the game after this session.

The values of the events, costs and rewards for the opportunities seem to be balanced after a few sessions, and in this session, we tried to add some more variety to the opportunities system. Some opportunities now reward more points to certain categories in the city, but slightly decrease others, to add some strategic thinking by the players. The average reward for each opportunity is still 7. This system added some fun and strategy to the game, as players did not want to cooperate in using an opportunity if it lowered their specific chosen category at the start of the game and will be kept in the game from this point on.

## 4.7 Seventh test round

In this test section, the game has been fully calibrated and it is assumed that both the personal trail of storytelling and the city trail have been balanced well enough to be fun, exciting and learnful. For this test session, 4 players were that did not know each other before the game, to find out how well each aspect of the game works under circumstances that are close to those in which the game is supposed to be played (by neighbours that do not per se know each other). It was also a test for us to practice facilitation and find improvements on that part. Important to note, is that all participants were actually youngsters from an age like our own, as these were the people available to play and present in our contacts. Also the place of testing being the TPM building, created barriers for other groups of people to participate. However, this is not that important as the mechanic we are testing is a player base that does not know each other.

The test session showed that the game is not only suitable for players that know each other, but also for strangers. Although, less inside jokes can be used as input, the stories still are interesting to tell, but also to listen to. The first round of storytelling felt relatively calm, as players tried to find out other players’ reactions to their stories. As a common sense of humour developed. stories got more controversial and the game got more fun.

Considering game play, two of the players in this session felt that losing the game jointly was preferred to losing the game on your own. Therefore, as soon as these players were behind in score, they started to boycott the game and pushed for a collective loss. Although the facilitation stressed that losing jointly was the worst outcome, this was not felt by the 2

players in the safe gaming environment. To make this feeling of the worst outcome more real, we could award candy to all players if the city will survive until the end of the game. However, we decided not to do this, as in the real world if half of the people would only care about themselves, the neighbourhood will not easily become a better place.

## 4.8 Overview of changes

In this paragraph, all the test sessions will be summarized using the table down below. The table shows flaws that were noticed during the testing, the change that we made, and the reason why this change will actually solve the noticed problem. Not that these are only major changes, which means much more has been done to create the game as it is.

Test session	Problem	Reason behind problem	Solution
1	No depth in stories	No input was given for the stories	Give a starting point for the story telling.
1	Focus on telling as many stories as possible	Only the number of collected stories counts	Find an incentive to tell "good" stories.
2	Storytelling still not in depth.	The telling was only a means of moving pawns around.  The starting points for the stories were too broad.	Find a better incentive to tell "good" stories.  Share a more in depth starting point with the players. This should not be overdone, as it removes room for creativity
3	Ties occurred in voting	When playing with 4 players, it might happen that the voting occurs 2-2.	Decide that the winner in a round in case of a draw is the player that told their story earliest as this is harder to do (no input or thinking time).
3	Stories were too long	There were no boundaries in place that limited the possibilities of a story.	Put a maximum of 60 seconds on the stories. There should not be a minimum, as some of the best stories exist of only 1 or 2 sentences.
3	Starting point words were still too broad for some players	Not every player has an equal amount of creativity.	Shape an opening sentence instead of random words, which gives a bit more direction.

4	Connection to the neighbourhood was absent	Because of the many stories and recaps, only every 10 minutes something happens to the city.	Reward 4 mini-neighbours per round to improve what can be done about the neighbourhood categories.  Also, change the order to neighbourhood - personal - neighbourhood.
6	Adding “characteristics” to the mini-neighbours made the game too complicated.	Players now needed a number of neighbours as well as the right neighbours for the job.	Remove the characteristics altogether.
6	It feels boring that all opportunities have the same effect.	As there is not much time for testing different value systems, all cards had a +3 and +4 value, which becomes predictable.	Add different values to opportunity cards, without changing the cumulative value of +7. This makes the game more exciting but does not require a lot of testing as the numbers are similar.
7	If 2 or more players decide to only play for themselves, the game fails.	As cooperation is needed to win the game, when players decide that a collective loss (a relative tie) is better than one player winning, the game can not be saved by the other players that do want to cooperate.	We changed nothing as a reaction to this, except for adding to the debriefing phase that selfish neighbours make it hard to do something good for the neighbourhood.

## 5. Game facilitation

Serious games often make use of a facilitator that can monitor, influence and explain the events that take place within the game. The facilitator can have a role in the introduction of the game, the game play itself and last but certainly not least, in the debriefing phase of the serious game. This chapter will elaborate on the role of the facilitator in each of these phases for the Neighbours game.

While the game could be designed without a facilitator, the human factor is included to guarantee the process and stimulate the learning goal. The facilitators of this game are the makers of the game: students of the Game Design Project. However, if the game is utilized in the real world the facilitators could be government officials who want to connect to the local citizens. By making this 'outsider' part of the game, important information will not only be shared between citizens but also with policy makers.

The effective facilitation commandment by Wenzler & Deenen (2018) was used to prepare the facilitation. A few of these aspects will be discussed. Firstly, the system analysis provided with a scoped down skill that needs to be bridged: knowledge of the city but more importantly a connection with the neighbours. Secondly, the audience in this case would be motivated people who are willing to participate in the city, however, could not find the means to. They will be able to find a platform to increase their participation with others. Thirdly, the facilitator role is part of the new reality, as they take the function of someone from the municipality who gives updates on their neighbourhood. This allows their influence in reaching the objective of the game to be less noticeable, to let the players figure it out. Fourthly, they will be able to guide the experience to prevent it from going wrong and keep it interesting enough. The facilitator can be adaptable to the situation, as there is a wide variety of possible experiences that are possible.

### 5.1 Facilitation in the introduction

As the facilitator is the first part of the game that players interact with, the introduction phase is important to explain what has to be explained, but also to not comment upon things that are meant to stay hidden in this phase. It is very important to the learning goal that the players figure out that working together will help the city.

For the serious game it was decided to do an interactive presentation of the serious game. This helps increase the consistency of the game understanding, as it helps. From the testing phase it was clear that there was variety in how the game is being played due to the points mentioned by the facilitator.

The presentation was aided by visual effects of a round so that it is clear to everyone how it goes. A rounds card was also provided to every player so that the actions were clear if they would forget.

Furthermore, facilitators walked around the classroom to help with small questions and tasks during the interactive parts.

## 5.2 Facilitation during game play

During the game play, facilitators should optimally be invisible. Invisible means in this case that players should not experience that the facilitator actually has a facilitating role, as this can pull the players out of the flow of the game. Facilitators should, however, be part of this flow in the game and aid players in their gaming experience. In the case of the Neighbourhood, we chose the role of the facilitator to be the municipality of the particular neighbourhood where the game is played. As municipality, the facilitator informs players about events that struck the city, which is something that could also happen in the real world (together with journalists). Moreover, the municipality will inform players (neighbours) about certain opportunities that can be utilized such as a solar panel project. It makes sense to the players that these opportunity ideas come from the municipality, which will make the facilitator only more involved in the flow of the game, rather than taking the flow out of the game.

Another role that the facilitator could have during the game play, is informing the players about the state of the neighbourhood. When one of the categories is close to zero, a facilitator can give the worrying message that something should be done about this category. This could save the players from a collective loss when they do not pay enough attention to the situation at hand.

An important aspect which has not been discussed but is important in the effective facilitation document is to make the experience memorable enough for them to apply. This means that the translation from the serious game to reality is important, a way to accomplish this is to stop the game at the peak of intensity of experience. While the introduction mentions the games are over when there are no more mini-neighbours in 4-7 rounds, this is actually at the hand of the facilitator to decide. Seeing they can remove more mini-neighbours if they feel like the lesson has already been learned.

There are a few logistical aspects that the facilitator works on, such as changing the scores of the city and keeping track of the personal points.

## 5.3 Facilitation in the debriefing

Crookall (2010) argues that the debriefing is crucial in a serious game. It allows the players to express their thoughts on the game and for the designer to evaluate if the game worked. A shared experience will be experienced differently by each person, these different perspectives of the actors can come to light in the debriefing (Lederman & Ruben, 1984). It

is important during the debrief that the facilitator lets the players discuss the serious game freely, without limiting their thoughts.

The facilitation in the debriefing is necessary because an aspect of the debriefing is included in the game. The players are provided with empty opportunity, event, and neighbour cards to fill in after playing the game. Players can then talk about their events and opportunities they filled out with the rest, to discuss the important events and opportunities that are in their mind. This can provide some important information to the facilitator as well as the other players in the game. It becomes clear what the actual events and opportunities they face are as well as what they find important in their neighbourhood. The facilitation document in appendix B includes several written statements and sentences to mention during the debriefing.

Furthermore, a more traditional debrief will be held to discuss some important open-questions, such as their emotions, experience, and translation to reality. These answers are very qualitative but important to discuss the knowledge they have gained. After this the players will be asked to fill out a survey, which talks about the emotion, event, experience, everyday life, and empirical thoughts on the serious game.

## 6. Conclusion and recommendations

Designing a game for the complex problem of bringing neighbours together was a very interesting and educative process. During the 10 weeks of the course Game Design Project, many new insights were found and many discussions followed. In the lectures, a lot of new theory was discussed and new techniques were learned. During the process of making the game, the many iterations and design phases (as described in the former chapter) helped to increase the knowledge of the creators and helped them to further broaden their scope. Not only were new tools and techniques for the creation of serious games learnt, the last few weeks were also very helpful in learning about problem definitions and scoping complex problems.

The end result of all the design steps is a (prototype) game that is suited for 4 players, but can also be played by 5. This game shows much potential to be applied in a less physical, and more digital version which could ultimately become an app or digital game. Also additions in event and opportunity cards have potential, such as a wildcard where players in game think of their own neighbourhoods.

After the first playtests, the feedback provided by players helped to improve aspects of the game. In the final prototype which was played with the whole group, in 4 sessions of 4-5 players, a lot of new playstyles were recognized. After playing, the players were given the opportunity to reflect on the game in the debriefing after which a questionnaire was handed out to reflect on their opinions. The results of this questionnaire can be found in the Appendix. The results show a positive attitude towards the game, however not so much towards their neighbourhood. This can easily be explained by the fact that the players were students of the course, and they are not neighbours. Their motivation to participate differs significantly from those players that the game will be intended for in real life sessions.

Unfortunately, because of time constraints, it was not possible or feasible to play the game with real 'neighbours', and thus, the game has not been fully tested for validity. It is very hard to guess the behavior of players when they are in fact complete strangers. Furthermore, the end product and hence the result is mostly focussed on the lessons learned from the current prototype. A list of shortcomings in the current result is listed in the limitations section, followed by a list of recommendations for future use and research of the product and its end goal.

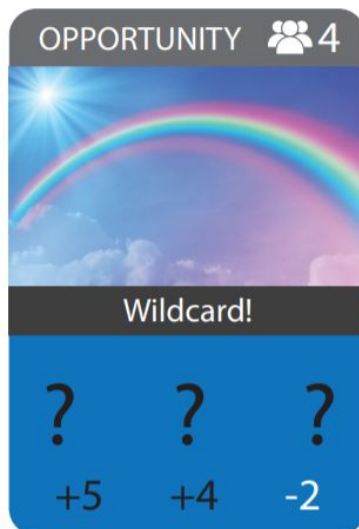


## 7. Limitations

- We take for granted that players are attracted to the game, and are willing to play (with strangers). However, more research is needed to see if, and how, people can be persuaded to engage in the game playing.
- Behavior of strangers can be wholly different, no insight if players might not be willing to tell stories to strangers that do not have the same age and level of intelligence.
- Not sure if the connection with the actual neighbourhood works.
- No time to translate to an app or online platform.

## 8. Further improvements

- Make events and opportunities more relatable (maybe add a bit of story because right now people care only about the values, not what is on the cards)
- Create more exciting (event and opportunity) cards for more engagement with the game.
- Use real representatives of municipalities as facilitators to get the most out of the game sessions
- Create a database of players' input of possible opportunities and events for their neighbourhood
- Tweak the number so more than 4 or 5 players can play the game without losing the lessons that should be learnt.



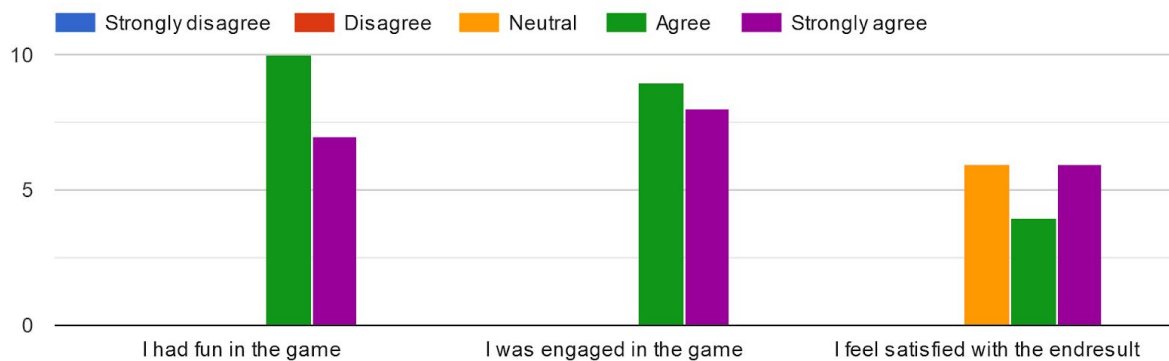
# Appendix

## A. Results questionnaire

After the game was played on the 11th of November in 2019, a questionnaire has been handed out to all participants. The players of this game consisted mainly of EPA students who followed the Game Design Project (SEN9235) with supervisors Geertje Slingerland and Arne Bezuijen.

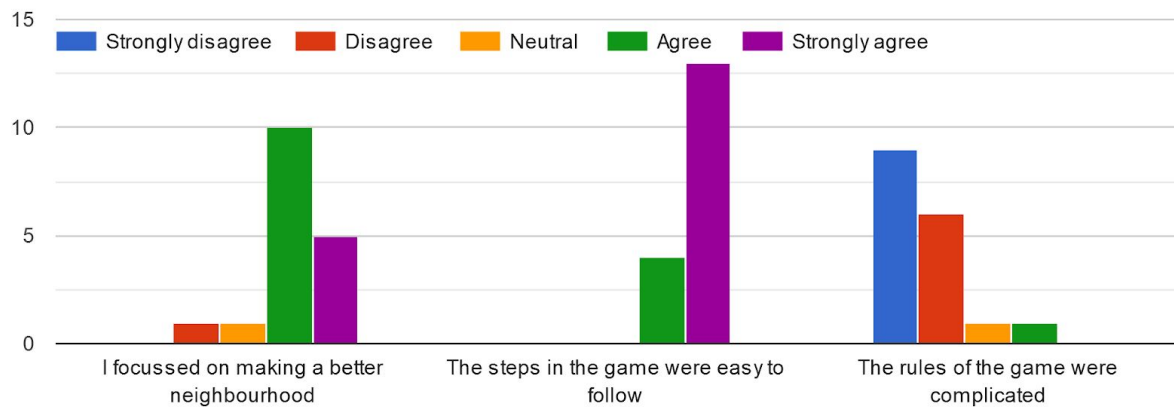
The questions were designed after the 4E's of debriefing<sup>1</sup>, which are emotion, event, experience, and everyday life. An addition to this framework has been added to include the empirical factor, which discusses how relatable the serious game was to reality (Bouwmeester & Su, 2019).

### Emotion

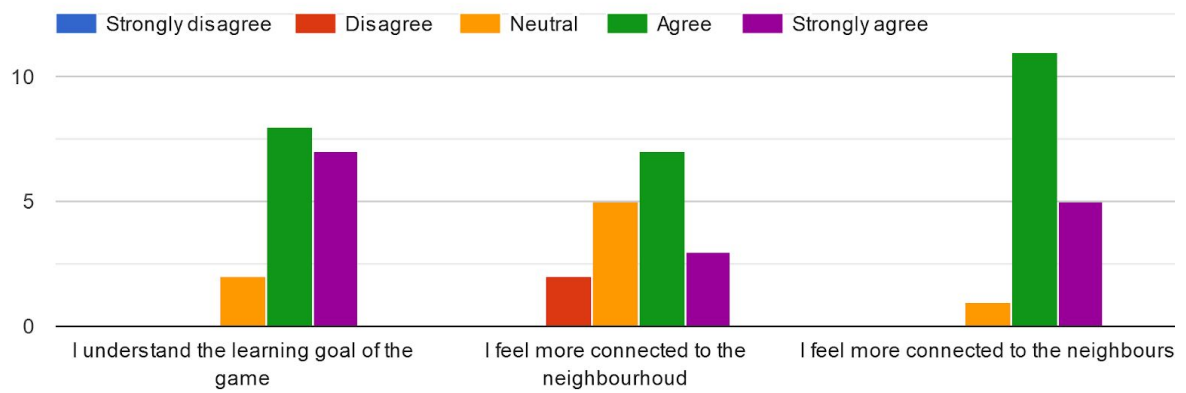


<sup>1</sup><https://zms.dhbw-stuttgart.de/de/planspielplus/blog/details/2014/12/01/sagsaga-netzwerktreffen-zum-thema-debriefing/36/>

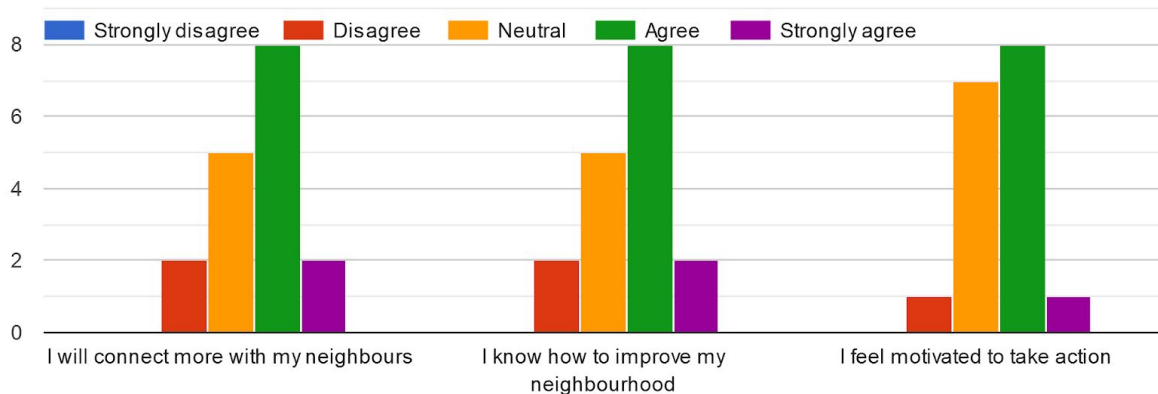
## Event



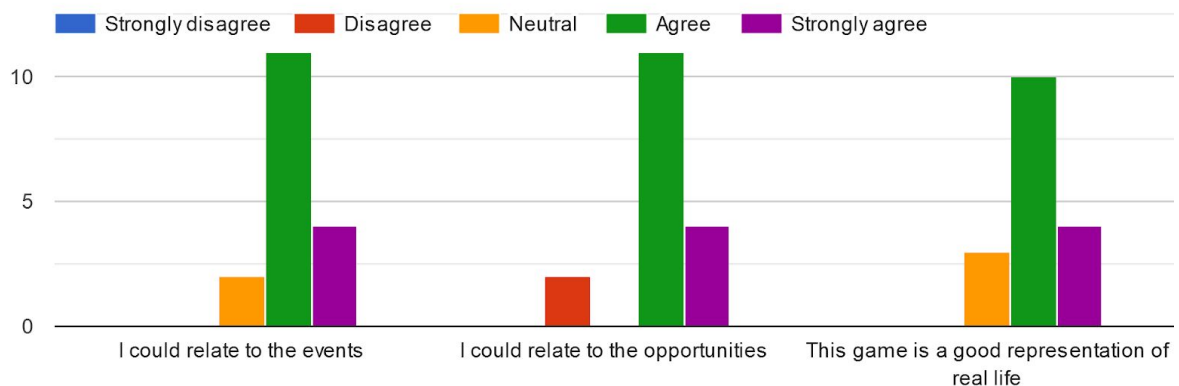
## Experience



## Everyday Life



## Empirical



## What did you like in the game

*Categorization of different aspects and cards sharing stories bringing people together. The describing of realistic events was the most useful aspect of the game. It made me directly connected to the categories and the goal of the game.*

*- Hidden co-op elements - Participatory, amazing for neighbourhood integration/engagement  
- Light hearted approach created by game helps coop mentality - Very scalable & opportunity to tailor for relatability - Excellent job in making all of the above concretely tangible given how vague the starting brief was*

*- Rating of categories going up and down - Neighbours coming together for opportunity  
The debriefing Being creative*

*The three different cards: event, storytelling, opportunity*

*I think the fact that you take action together.*

*Chatting to the ones whom you know little of.*  
*Making up the stories each round as they connect to the real life*  
*Geertje Storytelling, events, opportunities cards*  
*Storytelling really helped to connect with each other*  
*Trade-off of improvements and decreases in the categories.*  
*Interaction of players*  
*Storytelling*  
*Interacting with the other players*  
*Getting to know each other*  
*The debriefing and understanding what is the game really about*

## Improvements

*Give a clear closure ending (satisfying) When a task teaches to do something (personal missions)*  
*I would maybe adapt the questions depending on the personality of the players, which you took care of in general by creating different ones. But if you actually used this, it wasn't really obvious.*  
*- Integrate storytelling & tracker/gameby using improv elements - Increased dimension of changeability tailoring by brainstorming for values important to a neighbourhood => Ability to have different categories on board & cards. - Really bad reusability (nitpicking)*  
*Increase helpful opportunity or some actionable items for players to improve things.*  
*More time for the debrief (maybe more focus on specific actions you can take, also: create together opportunity cards)*  
*Maybe to give an extra empty cards, where the player will quite find the solution of each event that had happened.*  
*I don't really think it needs improvements. It looks great and is fun.*  
*Have some easy examples to take actions in the neighborhood.*  
*I have no idea*  
*Extra points or something when you reach +10, to stimulate playing opportunity cards when the city is safe.*  
*Maybe connect the storytelling with the events, but it is not so important already nice.*  
*More personality to characters and relation between neighbour-event story cards.*  
*Make stories related yo the new neighbour and the events*  
*Some random events*  
*More connection between event/opportunity and neighbour/story.*  
*More diverse opportunity cards in number of neighbour Maybe harder events*  
*Graphics: the blue/green cards with black letters are really hard to see*

## Other Remarks

*Easy quick and fun. Well done! I think general goal is easy to achieve. However, the story telling depends on the personality of the player (some might be introverted and feel uncomfortable while telling the story)*  
*Great design and play of different elements.*  
*The competition is nice and unexpected (instead of cooperation)*

*Generally, it was really realistic and fun game. I learned how to cooperate with my team players to improve my neighbourhood.*

*Maybe think about the options to make it playable without a facilitation.*

*It was really interesting but disappointing at the same time. I thought I am good in storytelling but I got the least amount of votes, so it was a little bit depressing.*

### **Post-General Debrief**

- Make the connection between the story and neighbourhood better
  - After a while this became more and more obvious though
- People had a lot of fun
- It helped increase the social interaction, they could talk to strangers in the course they never talked to.

## B. Facilitation document

**Player Count:** 4 players

**Player Ages:** 12+

**Playing Time:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Categories:** story-telling, serious game

The Neighbourhood is a thrilling game where players tell unique and fun stories to each other while facing imminent challenges and opportunities in the cities. Will the players be able to create a better city or will the city fall into waste?

### Learning Goals

- Shared experiences with the other players - get to know each other better
- Knowledge on the opportunities and events in a city
- Cooperation between neighbours is important to solve certain challenges

### Objective in the Game

- Prevent the city categories reaching -5 or lower, otherwise everyone loses the game.
- Get a high personal score in the 4 - 8 rounds played
  - Improvements to the city
  - Points in your own personal city category

### Requirements

- Game map: city categories with points
  - Put items on the map to showcase how well a category scores (pawns)
- Cards:
  - Opportunity cards
  - Event cards
  - Neighbour cards
  - Story Opening cards
  - Action cards
  - Category cards
- Mini-neighbours: >24 mini-neighbours (discs)
- Personal points: keep track of the personal scores of every player (coins, fiches, notepad)
- Timer: stories should be between 30-60 seconds

### Rules

- Give applause for the stories
- Be respectful during the storytelling

## Gameplay

- All players choose a personal category based on which category they find most important. The chosen category remains hidden until the end of the game.
- All players receive an action card, a category card, an opportunity card and a neighbour disc.
- Follow the steps on the action card iteratively:

**Event happens:** Draw an event card and adjust the neighbourhood categories

**Storytelling:** Draw a neighbour card and a story opening card: a starting point for the stories. (youngest player starts in round 1, then shift turns clockwise) Recap on the stories after all stories have been shared.

**Voting:** Players vote on the best story and every vote rewards a neighbour disc.

**Winner gets opportunity card:** Reward an opportunity to the player that received the most votes. In case of a draw, the player that told their story earlier receives the card.

**Improve Neighbourhood:** Players get the chance to spend 1 neighbour disc to improve 1 category by 1 or 4 discs can be used to perform an opportunity, which rewards 7 points in total.





# Facilitation flow

***As facilitator, you are meant to read the sentences below out loud. Only the sentences written in italic are actions the facilitator should do, and not read out loud.***

Welcome to the neighbourhood everyone. My name is “***say your name***” and I am a representative of the municipality. Today we are going to try to improve our neighbourhood together, by focussing on six categories: Waste, Recreation, Noise, Mobility, Environment and Safety. These are the aspects of your neighbourhood of which the municipality thinks you and your neighbours can improve. The current state of each aspect is shown using the meters **show game board**. If a score drops to -5, the city can no longer handle the problems and the game ends. Otherwise, we will play 4 to 8 rounds.

Think of your city and the aspects shown on your card. Which one is the most important to you? Choose one of these six categories privately, and circle this category down on your “category paper” ***hand over the category papers***

As the game is about working together to improve the city, you will need neighbours to help each other. You will receive one of these mini-neighbours, which represents yourself. ***Hand over one mini-neighbour per player***

Also, I would like to inform you that the municipality has found some opportunities for improvement which we would like to share with you. ***Hand over one random opportunity card per player***

These opportunities and neighbours will help you to make the neighbourhood a better place, and can also earn you points. 1 individual neighbour can be traded in to increase a category of choice by 1. This will award 1 individual point as well. An opportunity has a cost of 4 neighbours, but will award 7 points, as they increase the neighbourhood categories by 7 altogether.

Sometimes negative events take place in the neighbourhood that decrease the livability. Every round of play will start with one of these “events”, lowering the scores on the board. ***Draw random event card and read it out loud. Then adjust the categories according to the event card.***

It is now time for meeting one of your neighbours and their story. You will each tell a story about this neighbour using the story opening card as a starting sentence for your story. It's important that this story is liked by the other players, as after the storytelling, you will all vote on the best story.

For every vote that your story receives, you will be awarded an additional neighbour that can be used to improve the neighbourhood. Also, the story that receives the most votes will be awarded an additional random opportunity card. In case of a draw, this card will be awarded to the player whose turn was earlier.

To decide the order for the first round, the youngest player begins. Who is the youngest player? Next round, the player on their left will start.

***Draw a random neighbour card and a random story opening card and give them to the starting player of the round.***

You have got no more than 60 seconds to come up with a story and tell this story, after a story we clap to appreciate the sharing then the next player tells a story. ***Prepare to start timer and wait until player seems ready. Say “you can start” if the player hesitates.***

***NOTE TO FACILITATOR: PREVENT THAT PLAYERS (AND YOU) REACT TO OTHER’S STORIES, ONLY ALLOW THIS IN THE RECAP.***

***Wait until the player has finished their story and start applauding. If the other players do not also start applauding say: It is important that we show appreciation for the stories. Thank you all for introducing this neighbour. Before we decide on the best story, please give a short recap of your stories so that every player is on the same page... Wait for the players to tell the recaps...***

It is now time to decide upon the best story. All players put your finger in the air, and on the count of 3, you point at the player whose story you liked the most. You can’t vote for your own story.

Hold your fingers a little longer, while I award the mini-neighbours. ***Give the additional neighbours proportional to the number of votes that a player received.***

***Give the player that received the most votes an opportunity card (in case of a draw explain again that the player whose turn was earlier receives the card as they had less thinking time and story input).***

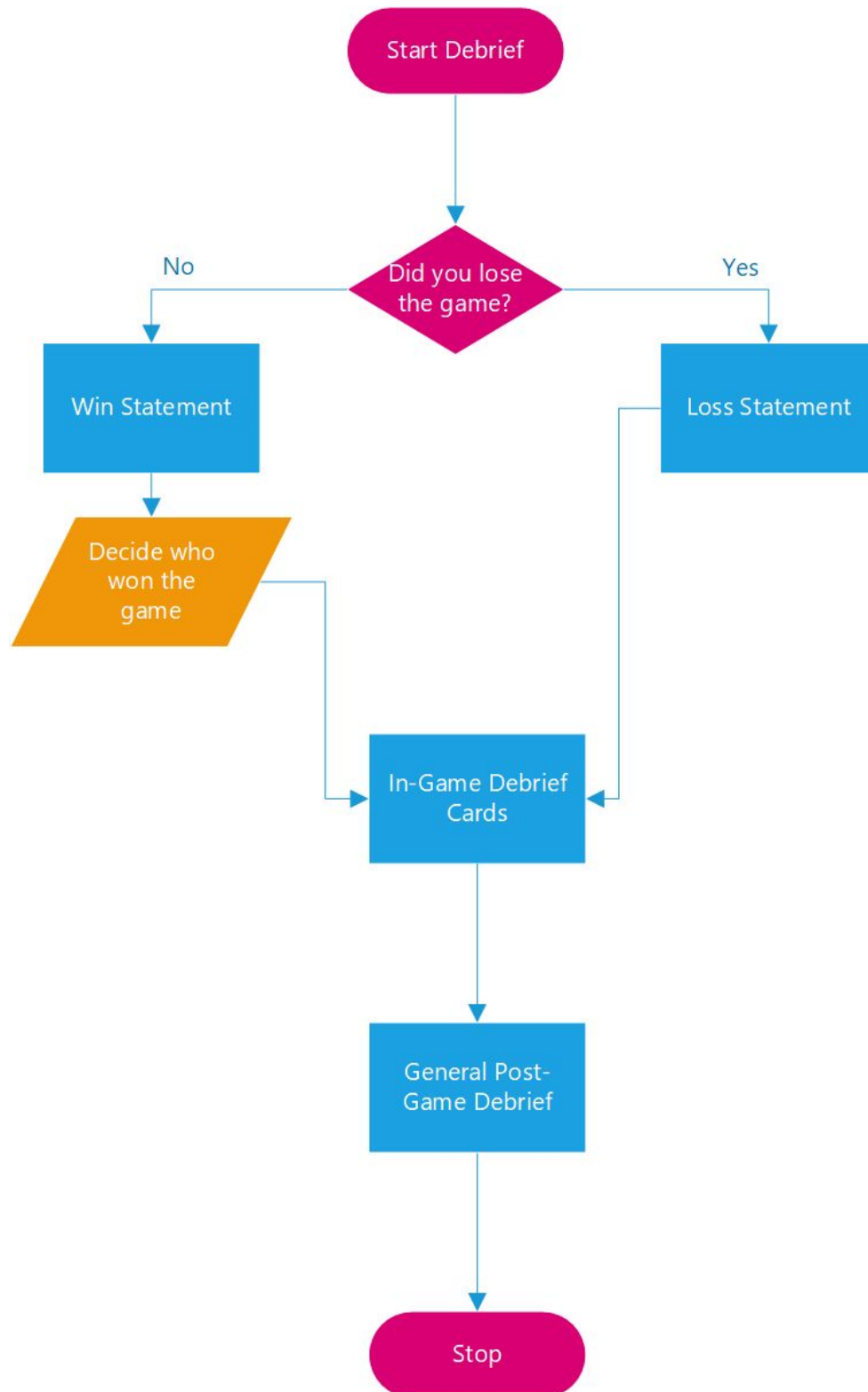
To improve the neighbourhood, either play 1 mini-neighbour for 1 point improvement OR play an opportunity card, costing 4 neighbours. Think of your secret goal and keep in mind that any time the city reaches a -5, the game is lost.

***Give some time and space for the players to think, interact and chose to act or not. If players decide to act, change the categories in the right way, and award individual points. Also take the neighbours that were used from the players.***

From this point on, the game will continue in a similar fashion. I am here to help guide you through it if necessary. ***Play next round, just as above. If questions arise try to answer them as facilitator.***

***NOTE TO FACILITATOR: CONTINUE ROUNDS UNTIL EITHER -5 IS REACHED OR THE OVERALL MOTIVATION TO SHARE STORIES IS DECLINE (AFTER AROUND 4-6 ROUNDS).***

## Debrief



### **Loss Statement [READ HERE IF RATING WENT TO -5]**

As you can see, the neighbourhood has some major problems with <aspect>. This means you have unfortunately lost the game. (Tell some more about what these problems would mean, make up a story).

What do you think went wrong? What could you improve next time?

*Focus on the role of collaboration in preventing this outcome.*

### **Win Statement [READ HERE IF GAME ENDS WITHOUT FAILURE]**

Great job! You made the neighbour a much nicer place. Because of your interventions, the neighbourhood has improved a lot in <aspects>. (Make up a story of how the neighbourhood looks better with these improved aspects).

Why did you think you were able to get such a positive result?

*Focus on the role of collaboration in strengthening this outcome.*

How many points did everyone get? Who has won?

### **In-Game Debrief Cards**

***Give each player one free opportunity, event, and neighbour card + three storytelling cards***

Opportunity card: make the player come up with an idea on how to improve their neighbourhood themselves

Event card: which event they find important in their neighbourhood

Neighbour card:

- Name and age
- What they find important in the neighbourhood
- What they can do to improve the neighbourhood

### **General Post-Game Debrief**

First discussion in groups, then a plenary discussion on the most important points

- What did you like about the game?
- What did you dislike about the game?
- Do you participate in the neighbourhood in real life?
  - What forms a barrier to talk with each other?
- Did these stories make you feel more connected to the other players?
- Could you relate to the game?

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