

Revitalizing Istanbul's Water Heritage

Sustainable solutions for increasing knowledge and public engagement

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Harlem Stage, New York

Statement

- Istanbul and its hinterland have a rich water heritage of more than 1,500 years. At present, planners, policymakers, and the public are insufficiently aware of the value and potential of this heritage.
- As a highly visible remnant of what was once the longest water supply line of the Roman world, the ancient Valens Aqueduct is an ideal showcase to raise public awareness of historical water management as well as of current and future water supply challenges.
- We present a program that aims to develop solutions for revitalizing its tangible and intangible values as a prime example of water supply, management and culture through the ages. In this way, this heritage object can regain a connection with water, and water can become an engine for sustainable development



Current Situation Valens Aqueduct

- National Monument
- Within the boundaries of the “Historic Areas of Istanbul” UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- The monument faces several threats, including air pollution, ongoing urbanization and uncontrolled use of the aqueduct by citizens, putting the integrity of the monument at risk
- Restoration work, on behalf of the Istanbul Water and Sewerage Administration (ISKI) focuses primarily on structural and material problems, not on the original function of the aqueduct and its connection to water management.



Challenges

- Every day in Istanbul, an estimated 16 million people need to be supplied with fresh water. The metropolis brings 50 per cent of its water from other provinces because its own reservoirs are drying up.
- Consumers are hardly aware of the efforts made in water management because the modern water supply system is largely invisible while the visible remains of the historical system are no longer in use for hydrological purposes.
- Public survey: residents of Istanbul know the Valens Aqueduct and are aware of its original function. They see the monument as part of their history and strongly feel that it should be preserved. Yet actual public engagement – notions of ownership or a more in-depth understanding of the heritage values of the aqueduct – is limited.



Actions and Initiatives

Focus on actions and initiatives connected especially with SDG 4 (Quality Education) in order to:

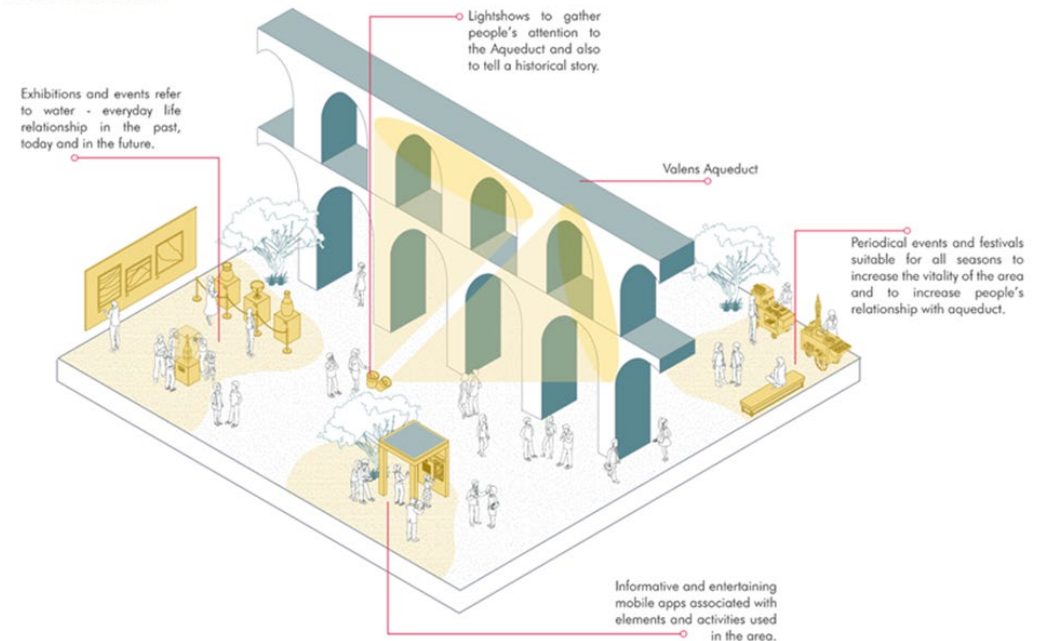
- Increase knowledge and public awareness of the tangible and intangible values of Istanbul's water heritage.
- Educate (future) heritage experts, planners and designers on how to integrate heritage in contemporary urban design.



Course 'Water Heritage for Sustainable Cities'

- Interdisciplinary academic course for graduate students and junior professionals from the Netherlands and Turkey (September - December 2022) – Netherlands Institute Turkey (NIT)
- familiarized participants with perspectives on water and heritage, especially those related to contemporary water challenges in a context of climate change and urban development.
- research-by-de-sign exercise, participants learned to work in an interdisciplinary team to design proposals for the revitalization of the Valens Aqueduct
- The results will be published in 2023 and shared with stakeholders and the public.

SELECTED AREA DECISIONS Design Elements : Cultural Axis



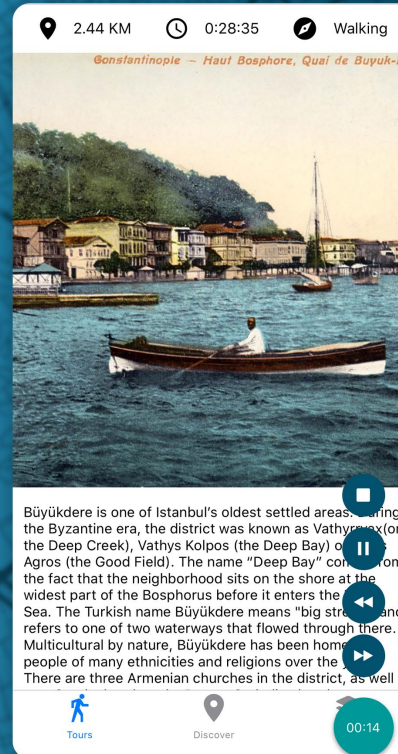
One of the designs from the course "Water Heritage for Sustainable Cities"

Actions and Initiatives

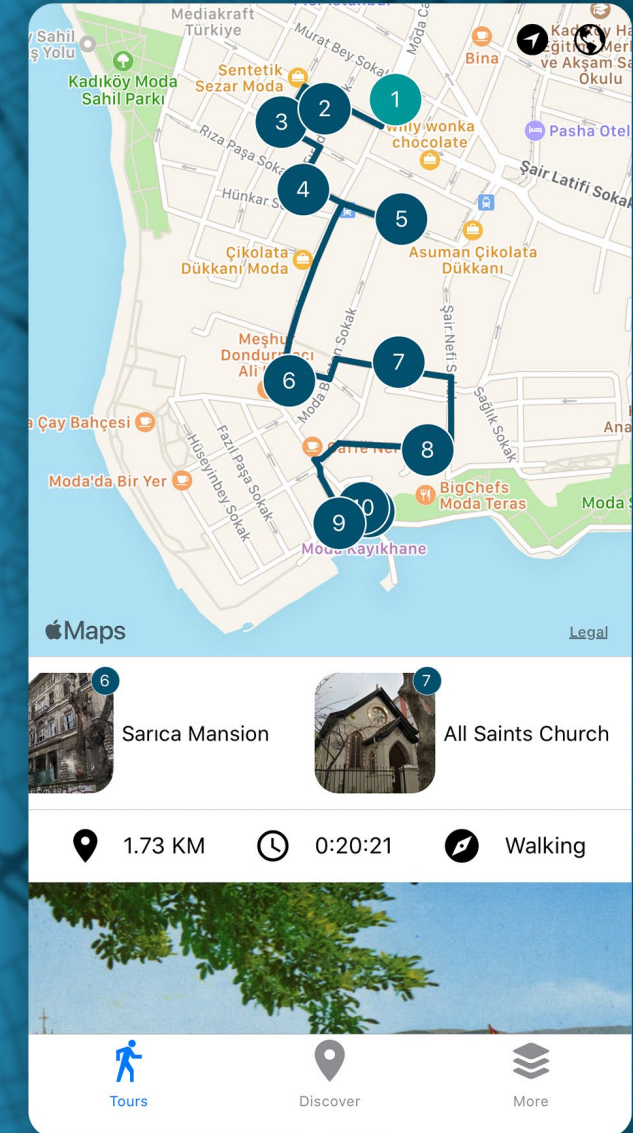
A technological and a more physical approach

- Together with the makers of the mobile application KarDes, we want to develop a walking route app, which uses texts, images and videos to guide the user along the Valens Aqueduct and related heritage, providing not only insight into its multi-layered history but also contemporary testimonies.
- The Valens Aqueduct as a stage and backdrop for a Water Festival on World Water Day, with culture and art activities around the theme of water in past, present and future.
- In collaboration with the local community so that they can come up with their own solutions for sustainable urban water supply and consumption issues, thereby connecting SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals) with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

Listen to the Stories of the Places from Artists

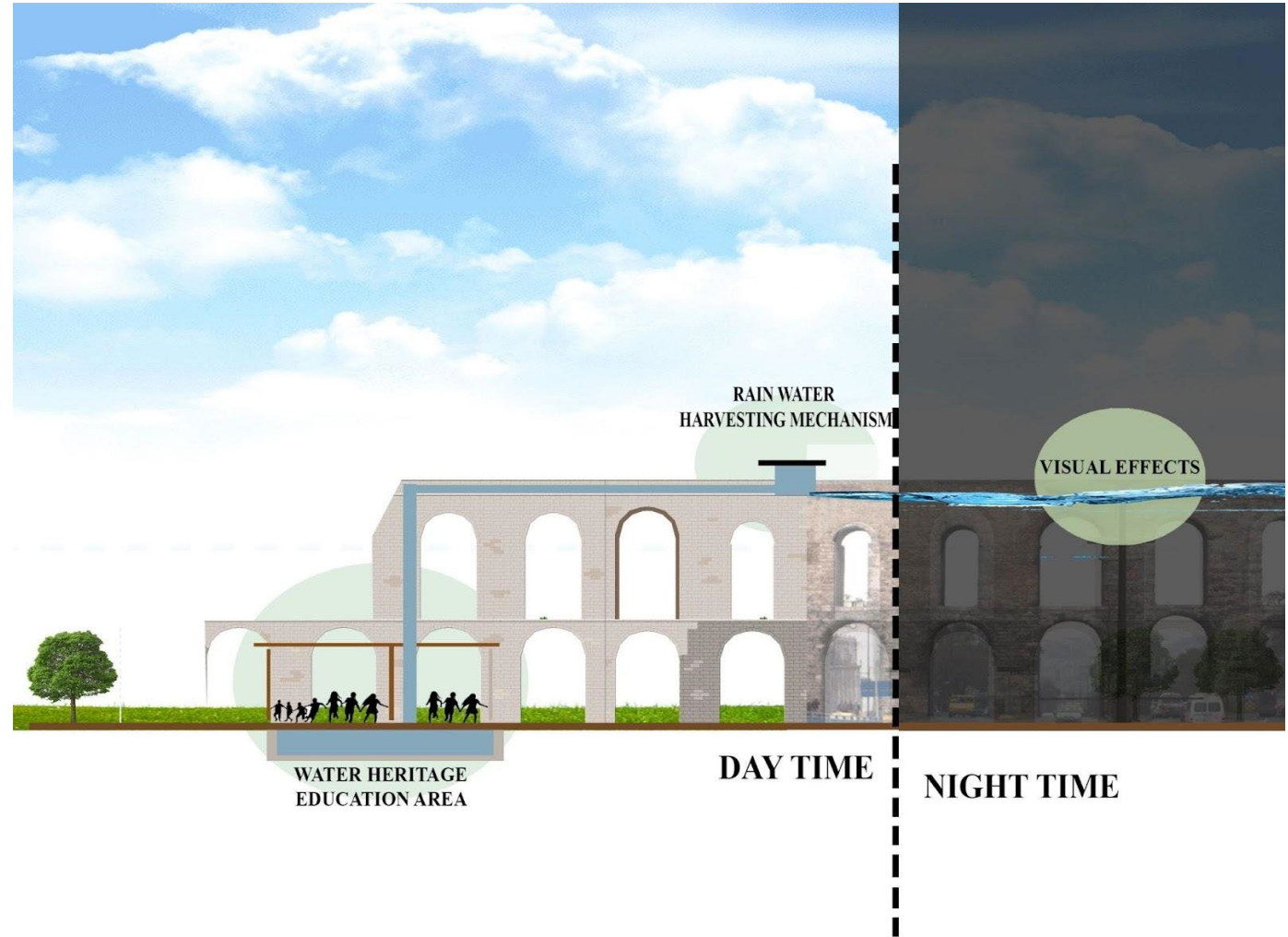


Download KarDes for Free



Biggest Challenge

To convince the relevant stakeholders in heritage and water management to preserve and protect the aqueduct not only as a historical relic but to employ it to restore the relationship between heritage and water.



One of the designs from the course “Water Heritage for Sustainable Cities”