

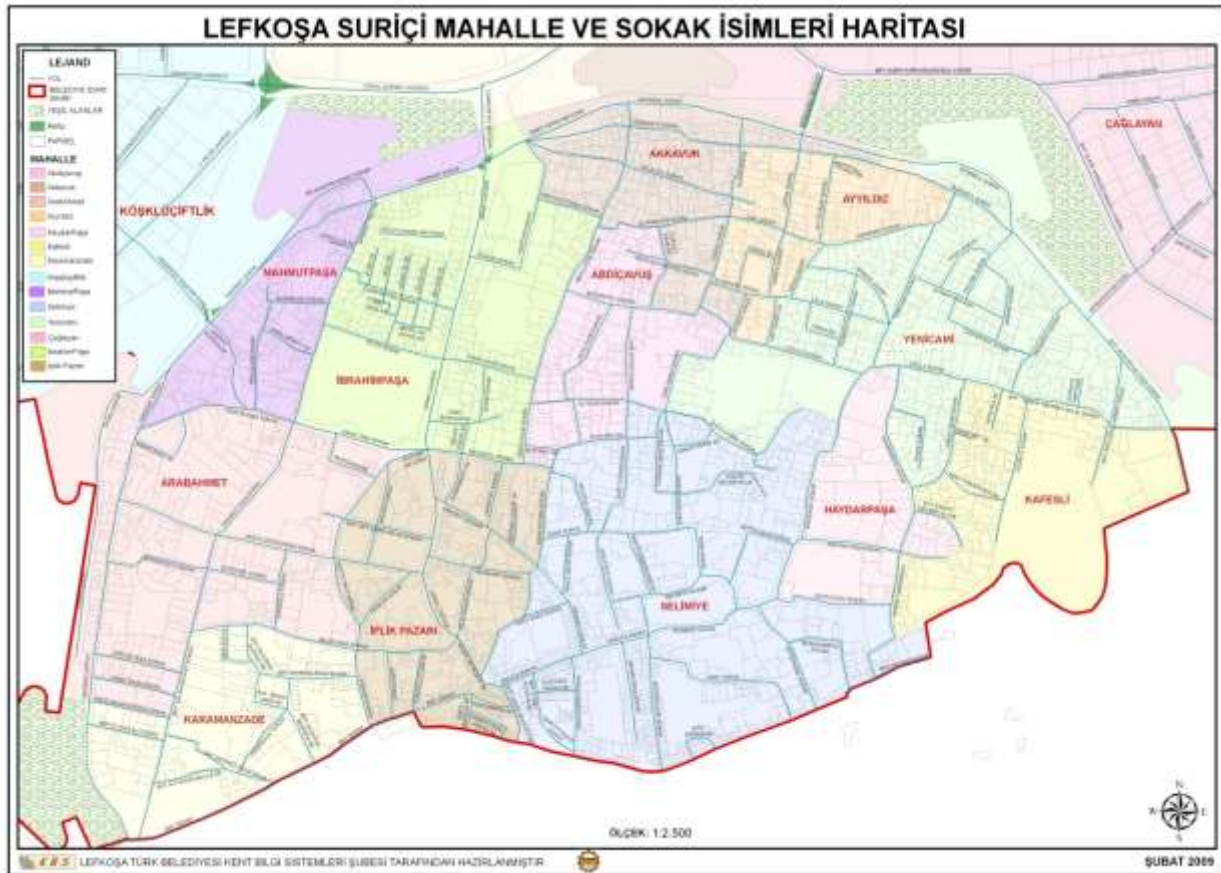
'Nicosia is Calling' Game

<http://www.ahdr.info/nicosia/>

Background

Nicosia; the capital of the Mediterranean island of Cyprus and the only remaining divided capital city in the world. The dividing line or buffer zone as it's commonly known, divides the old city within the walls into two, separating the northern and southern parts of the city. It is the old city that the 'Nicosia is Calling' game centers on: a place that remains relatively unknown and unfamiliar to Cypriots, and even to Nicosians.

Division of course plays an important role in creating such a situation. Since the 1950s, the inter-communal conflict (between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots) transformed the shared city of Nicosia into a city of almost mutually exclusive ethno-religious zones, until the division of the island in 1974.



A typical map of Nicosia produced in the Turkish Cypriot community.



A typical map of Nicosia produced in the Greek Cypriot community.

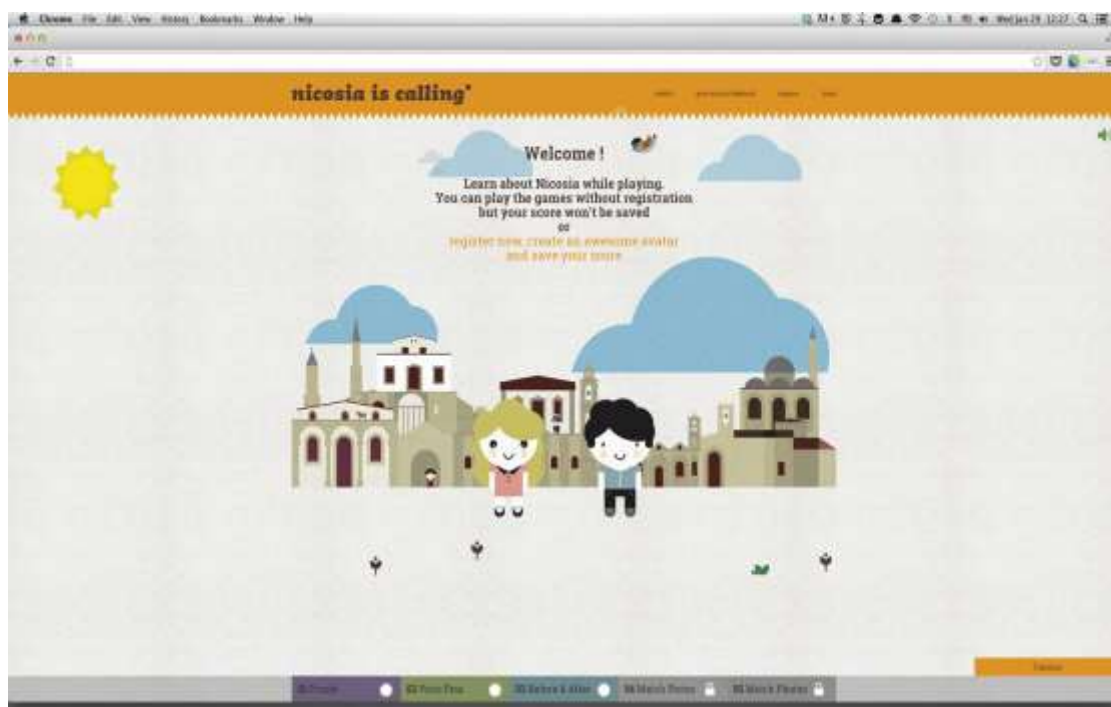
Since then (and for almost thirty years) virtually no one could cross from one side of the city to other, or to the other side of the island. With the exception of very few, Greek Cypriots kept within the territory of the southern part of Cyprus and Turkish Cypriots within the northern part of the Island. Thus, a new generation of people who had never come in contact was created in both part of the divide.

In 2003, the first checkpoint opened in Nicosia. Nevertheless, the majority of Cypriots continue to still live separately within their northern and southern territories, for the years of division have left their mark on the island and on the ways Nicosia is experienced. As the line dividing the city in two crossed right from the center of the walled city, residents in both sides turned their back to what had now become the urban symbol of an open wound, of sorrow, losses and death. The two 'Nicosias' sprawled in opposite directions, while the city center was left for many years abandoned, before it was appropriated by each community's immigrants. The recent revival of several zones within the walled city, which in any case is exclusively oriented towards consumption and entertainment, does not entail any deeper engagement with the city.

We thus wanted to create a game that would contribute to the healing of wounds, and prompt Nicosia's residents (and Cypriots in general) to slowly identify once more with the city, empathize

with its turbulent past, understand what it meant to be living in a shared city– and reflect on what this could mean for the future of the Island. This was the starting point from which we came up with the idea of transforming the AHDR’s ‘Nicosia is Calling’ booklets, the first supplementary educational material to be produced by the AHDR, into an interactive educational game.

Being aware that we live in a society where people are still afraid to cross the checkpoint to the ‘other side’; where prejudices and fear prevail; and children especially are exposed to biased views of the past, as they are educated in two separate educational systems teaching the history of the island in a form that perpetuates the notion of the ‘other’ and the ‘enemy’, we believe this game is an invaluable resource to young people – but also to anyone interested in hearing an alternative narrative- to learn more about the old city of Nicosia without having to rely on their teachers or schools, or even needing to leave their computer! And how brilliant to think that a child living in the northern part of Cyprus and a child living in the southern part of Cyprus, could be simultaneously learning the common history of Nicosia without limitations. That these children could understand the truly multicultural past of the city through a fun and interactive platform.



Home page of the ‘Nicosia is Calling’ game

Main Games

The game is articulated in three different 'zooming' levels. Firstly, players are introduced to the walled city through a bird's eye view and have the opportunity to learn about its history and its communities by visiting all of its quarters through a puzzle game; then the game delves a little closer and invites players to pin several landmarks on this bird's eye view map, through which they gain a sense of orientation and more information about the city; finally, by using old photos the game offer players a glimpse of how the city used to be, while inviting them to identity the depicted places within the present. It is important to note that the walled city of Nicosia is presented as a whole, with no dividing lines. Therefore, from the very onset of engaging with the game, players are invited to experience the city without any notion of division.

1 - Puzzle

This first level begins building on the idea of a simple puzzle game, where players drag and drop Nicosia's quarters on a map of a visually unified Nicosia. Brief information followed by a multiple choice question on each quarter enabling users not only to learn about the past, but most importantly, to make a connection between the past and the present through question such as these: Who was Abdi Chavush, and why does the quarter bear his name? Did you know that Trypiotis quarter was also called Pash mahalla? Do you know where the Armenians and Maronites lived in the city?



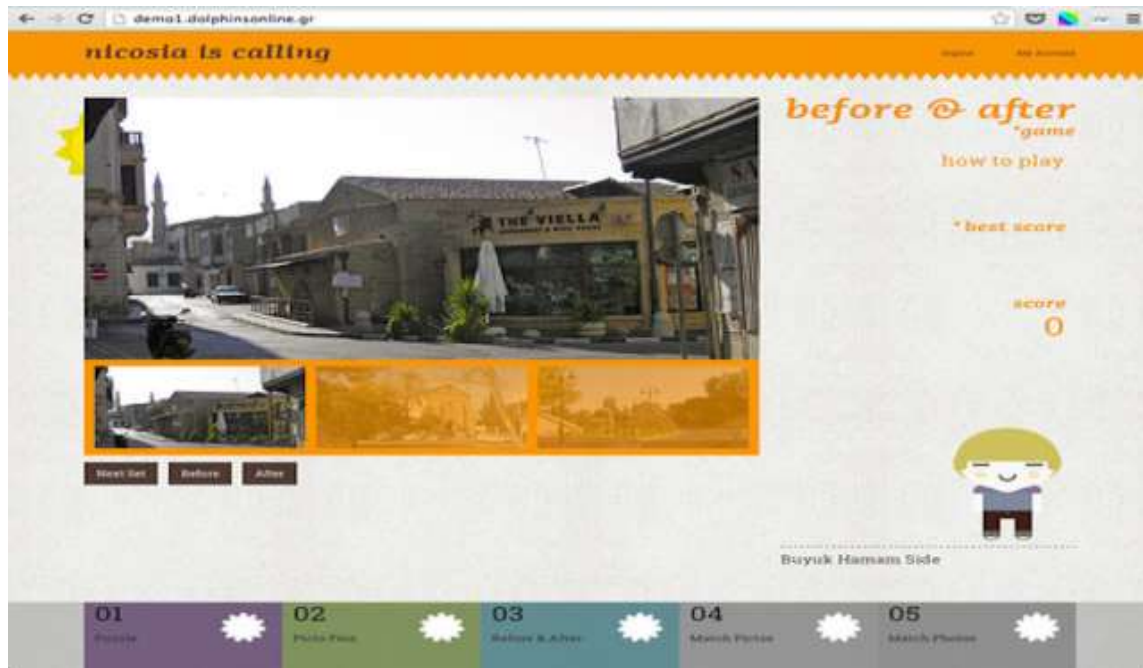
2 – Pin it

Once players have ‘put together’ Nicosia with its quarters on the map, players are invited to pin a series of prominent landmarks, important for the developing and understanding of the history of the city and its communities on the map. Is it as difficult as it sounds? Not really. Because the player is given the option to choose between two quarters – and here we paid a lot of attention to not just providing one option in the southern part and one in the northern part, but to again treat the city as a unified whole. Putting these landmarks on the map helps players to acquire a sense of orientation of the city and further build on the map that they created in the Puzzle level with specific sites – and thus specific meaning.



3 – Then & Now

In this game we take a greater journey inside Nicosia, and players are presented with old and contemporary photos, thus establishing again a connection between the past and present of the city, as well as an understanding of Nicosia as an ever-growing unified organism.



Additional Features

Match Pictos & Match Photos

A simple memory game featuring beautiful photos & pictos that our [prizewinner](#) designers have created. This feature provides an additional platform for players to continue familiarizing themselves with Nicosia's diversity and multi-culturalism.



Avatars

These playful avatars implicitly enhance historical knowledge and enhance players identification with the past by providing the opportunity to select an avatar representing Cypriots of three historical eras – Venetian, Ottoman, and early 20th century.



Timeline

This is an effort to establish a timeline of the history of the city, and to a certain extent of the island, beyond nationalistic approaches, and thus combine into one narrative, the selective version of the past that communities usually reproduce.

To sum up, whilst engaging with the Nicosia is Calling game, players will have the opportunity to:

- Visualize and experience the city as a whole and thus challenge Nicosia's visual fragmentation.
- Make meaning of the city and make a connection with the present.
- To gain a greater understanding of the 'other' community, as well as their own community.
- Have the opportunity to make sense of terms and names that were unknown to them, or they had never known the meaning, as well hearing terminology and names used in the 'other' community.
- Begin identifying with the city, and building a new strong, all-inclusive citizenship conscience.
- Understand the truly multi-cultural history of the past and realize that the city of Nicosia, as well at the country as a whole, is not founded on one community, but is instead an amalgamation of cultures.

The Future....

The 'Nicosia is calling' game is currently at the beta-prototype stage, with plans to officially launch the finished application in the Spring of 2015. The game will be a free application in order to ensure its maximum use.

In time, the game will be linked to Facebook and Twitter and other platforms will also be investigated. The AHDR also plan to promote the game as part of their educational materials and engage schools and educators in the use of the game within their teaching practices.

Moreover, contact will be made with tourist information offices, as the game offers a useful resource to visitors of the city.

During the developing period of the game and its initial promotion, interest has been received from individuals and organizations in other countries and strategies in which the game could act as prototype for other cities will also be investigated.

At its launch, the game will only be available in the English language, but thanks supporters of the initiative; the translation of all text for the game has been finalized in Greek and Turkish. The AHDR will thus seek further opportunities to secure funding to enable the technical process to upload Turkish and Greek versions of the game to further increase its outreach and accessibility.

Please visit the following to read a blog written regarding the initial stages of the game:

http://europeandcis.undp.org/blog/2014/02/05/introducing-nicosia-is-calling-games-for-peace-in-cyprus/?utm_source=%40OurTweets

Please visit the following link to read an interview with Daphne and Shirin regarding the game:

<http://peacexchange.wordpress.com/2013/03/27/ever-dozed-off-in-a-history-class-never-again/>