In 2014 we earned the first prize in TOKI competition and got the opportunity to establish our own practice working with mass housing and urbanism projects. The competition was aiming to reveal modern sustainable ideas for mass housing with vernacular regards. Consequently, we were asked to design a major urban area.

Payaş Settlement, consisted of 1906 houses, is located southeast Turkey. This urban project is designed not only to fulfill the region's urgent need of housing but also to generate an example of urban environment that contains substantial urban patterns, hierarchical layout and facilities.
Instead of using a formal zoning plan a more intense urban strategy is followed with mixed-use zones that links commercial, social and housing typologies as it is in a self-formed cityscape. A vivid urban experience through micro-relations is provided. The center of the settlement is focusing in one location but not restricted. It is planned in order to diffuse inside of the settlement with commercial roads coupled with mixed used buildings. This system consists of four major urban block with sub squares that links with commercial roads to the central area.
Foster the socially responsible role of built environment professionals by stimulating social modes of practice before speculative economic profitability.

In 2014 TOKI (Turkish Republic Administration of Mass Housing) has opened a national competition. This competition was second in row of architectural competitions for urging an up-to-date social housing approach with the knowledge of local and traditional urban patterns, where the government tries to face public critics against ugliness / charmless-ness / lack of identity. Obviously there is a shortfall of qualified housing environment and it is needed to be done fast. But on the other hand, users requests an affordable and fulfilling living space rather than just a roof on their top. At this moment a common nostalgia for golden age of tradition and communities arises. As a team of architects we are paying significant attention to the housing problem and took this competition as an opportunity to put forth our ideas about living environment. The given purpose was self-contradictory, where it is requested to achieve a community as a part of the city that looks fragmented but constructed with serial production methods and located in suburbia. We took this contradiction and reveal as it is, but also made a proposal that inspired by the merits and vividness of the traditional city.

Endorse the integration of post-emergency relief interventions into long-term sustainable development strategies:

Our proposal for the competition was heavily criticizing the institution’s existing projects and the credulous of the discourse of the tradition; which was not going beyond making fake 15th century triangular shaped entrances; but repeating one identical building block over and over in a single settlement. The project site given for this settlement was a $40,000 m2 debris disposal site belonging to Payaş. An industrial town which has mainly developed for the housing needs of the country’s biggest iron and steel plant (Isdemir) and many others nearby. Despite being on a densely green rural area away from the town and on the outskirts of Amanos mountain chain (having dense forest), the air pollution was visible and the forest had also been started to erode by two stone quarries in the area. But it was still a favorable place which people were still looking forward to a project to be built here since the conditions were worse in the town center. Along with the existing conditions, due to close location to the Syrian border, this area has a special purpose of post-emergency housing for immigrants from Syria. A modern, yet not monotonous built environment with strong social facilities network and intensive landscape approach.

Facilitate the use of appropriate technologies, materials and labour adequate to local values, the cultural specificity and responsive to the natural environment:

Payaş Settlement is an urban dialogue targeted by using high-rise (6 storey) and low-rise (3 storey) building types together. Blocks positioned by two overlapping angles, considering spatial richness and qualities of the dense settings of the traditional cities. Housing blocks are positioned in continuity rather than lining them up in the orthogonal order. This continuity defines green courtyards between building blocks and minimized parking lots that eventually provides urban closures, spaces and passages. Apartments, untypical to the other TOKI projects, are having two corresponding facades that allows natural ventilation. A connecting ecological corridor to the mountain, penetrating through the settlement. Specific features of the project are uninterrupted bicycling routes, network of hierarchical pedestrian walkways, topographical landscape design, and encouraged garden use. A dual building layout pattern system is proposed with the consideration of both perception of desolation and monotonous vastly generated by existing social housing projects in contrast with the organic vividness and intricacy of the traditional settlements. Based open this context buildings and topography related firmly to each other.