



— IMPROVING THE USES OF PUBLIC SPACES IN EUROPEAN CITIES

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE USER PROJECT

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PART 1

THEMATIC REPORT



INTRODUCTION

WHY HAVE AN URBACT NETWORK ON THE USES OF PUBLIC SPACES?



There is a previous political choice: Public space is the social space where citizenship takes place and can be exercised, where people should not be excluded or rejected. We must show that conflicts in using public spaces are not always negative; they in fact provide an opportunity to make changes, to reconsider current uses, to avoid social exclusion of vulnerable groups, and to find new solutions to ensure conviviality and mixed use of public space. We need to consider not only problems and dysfunctions, but also the potential and the assets that exist in every public space.

Public space is essential in the functioning of democratic politics. It is the place of citizenship and it allows people to interact and have a sense of identity and community. It should play host to examples of a more egalitarian society that enables very diverse social exchanges.

Encountering people who are different from oneself, creates a temporary bond. But, at the same time, public spaces satisfy people's need for comfort, relaxation, active and passive involvement, and discovery.

Furthermore, interacting with unfamiliar individuals would allow urban dwellers to broaden their minds. The best place to meet "difference" is in public spaces, where all segments of society can cross paths, mingle and be observed. Without this observation and engagement with 'difference', we are in danger of becoming increasingly prejudiced and narrow-minded, as we only choose the company of likeminded individuals in our daily routines.

The USER project was born from the concept of "convivial public space", which is something more than just arenas where people can enjoy themselves; they are places where we can encounter difference and learn to understand and tolerate other people. In our European cities, new phenomena are taking place: new urban shape, the arrival of new inhabitants, new visitors and tourists, new social and generational relations in the neighbourhoods and communities, conflict about incompatible uses of the public space. Conviviality should be restored in these cities.

The USER project highlights how uses impact the management and design of public spaces. One of USER's main assumptions is that the proposed approach should demonstrate that a **better understanding of how public spaces are used and what challenges have to be faced should improve the management and daily maintenance of public spaces and reduce its cost.** Likewise, this process will generate new information to change the way public spaces are designed.



Without efficient urban public spaces, we are likely to drift into an increasingly privatized and polarized society, with all its concomitant problems. Despite some improvements in urban development during the last couple of decades, we still often produce soulless urban fabric that may deliver the basic functional requirements of shelter, work and leisure but is socially unsustainable and likely to generate future problems. Public spaces should instead create a rich, vibrant, and mixed-use environment that does not die at night or at weekends and that is visually stimulating and attractive to residents and visitors alike.

USER goes beyond the quality of the physical form of public space and focuses on the intensity and quality of the social relations it facilitates, its potential to make groups and individuals interact, and its capacity to encourage symbolic identification.

USER is a project focusing on the relationship between people and public spaces, taking into account USERS' needs, rights and meanings. USER fosters the improvement of public spaces with consideration given to different attributes and aspects that should allow for good public spaces.

PLACING THE USERS AT THE HEART OF PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

A core assumption of the USER project is that the design of urban public spaces and the main goals of urban planning are being challenged by the rapid changes that are taking place in city uses.

The concept of "USERS" is a major aspect of the USER network: regarding public space, the pilot sites of USER cities concern a wide range of USERS. Cities cope with different types of USERS: residents-neighbours, socially excluded groups, tourists, homeless people, elderly people, young people,

women, children, shopkeepers, NGOs, field workers, temporary students, car drivers, cyclists, street artists and musicians, etc. Thus, the process of USERS' involvement becomes a crucial dimension of the whole process. "USERS' practical knowledge" is one of the main inputs into understanding how spaces are used and what kind of conflicts are taking place. This allows an efficient renewal and reshaping of those urban places.

PRESENTATION OF THE USER PROJECT

The urban areas on which USER partners are focusing their local experimentation and their participation in transnational exchanges take several forms: suburbs (Lisbon), blocks in residential-peripheral areas (Krakow and pilot sites of Grenoble-Alpes Métropole), historical centres (Lublin and Riga), inner city areas (Dresden), neighbourhoods suffering from high social exclusion (Copenhagen and Malaga) or deprived areas with new planning processes (Pescara). This diversity gives a wide panorama that facilitates a real experimentation and comparison. Different elements within each sub-theme are chosen and represent the features of the urban area. For example,

conflicts between residents and tourists are a focus for historical centres, while non-used or abandoned spaces are more usual in peripheral areas and conflicts between excluded groups and other residents is a main issue in some USER cities.

There are many different typologies taken into consideration for the public spaces of partner cities: central squares, sidewalks, spaces between buildings in residential neighbourhoods, urban routes, “patios”, abandoned or non-used land, greenery, forecourts (bus or railway stations), non-places or dead places, etc.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN NETWORK

Thematic Seminars were organized to host collective learning and exchange, sharing objectives, approaches and methodologies within the different themes included in USER. The 3 thematic seminars were as follows:

- Seminar 1 (Copenhagen): “Conviviality in public spaces”
- Seminar 2 (Riga): “Towards safer public spaces”
- Seminar 3 (Lisbon): “Better managed public spaces”

Concrete exchanges, learning processes, shared experimentations and capitalization on good practices were achieved thanks to through decentralized Workshops.

USER organized collaborations between 3 groups of 3 cities with similar issues and challenges, facilitating comparisons and mutual learning. The choice of groups was made considering the potential added-value between each local situation based on similarities between involved urban areas and neighbourhoods.

The three groups were: **1)** Copenhagen, Dresden, Pescara, **2)** Grenoble-Alpes Métropole, Krakow, Lisbon, and **3)** Lublin, Malaga, Riga.



The main goal of the workshops is to strengthen the definition and implementation of the Local Action Plans in each city. At the same time, workshops were an opportunity to work together, linking USER thematic issues and methodological issues with the concrete and practical local challenges and priorities in each city.

The workshops drive a real “peer review” process between the three cities. All the cities become host and guest cities throughout the whole sequence. In each session, cities play a different role (giving inputs and external feedback to the host city and receiving inputs, knowledge and experience from the guest cities).

As for the **capitalization process**, 3 meetings with the 9 Cities were organized to consolidate the learning process and to

produce findings and recommendations for final outputs from USER.

Capitalization and final outputs: Krakow seminar: Discussing outputs to be delivered by the USER project and learning processes developed through local and transnational activities.

Validation of outputs and shared conclusions: Paris Seminar: Deeper discussion into the findings and results achieved by the network. This seminar acted as a validation meeting evaluating the output document drafted previously.

Final Conference: Grenoble: Systematized presentation of main outputs to the main USER stakeholders (local authorities, inhabitants and local stakeholders, professionals, etc.),

ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY EACH CITY IN ITS OWN PILOT SITE

In URBACT projects, the partner cities commit to set up a **local action plan (LAP)** during the project. In the USER project this plan aims at defining a strategy to solve the problems of a site, to improve practices... either during the course of the USER project, or after its closure. Each city has therefore identified a **“pilot site”** with specific problems of uses, and built a local partnership (**“URBACT local support group” - LSG**) to set up the action plan.

The LAP drafting is a process that links local experimentation in the pilot sites of each USER city with the knowledge brought by USER transnational meetings. Each Local Support Group has drawn its own strategy with the same methodology: collective diagnosis and analysis of uses in public spaces,

definition of the objectives with regards to this diagnosis – in order to solve the observed problems of uses -, engagement of key stakeholders, and test of actions before launching the main action plan.

The LAP creation process provided the opportunity to work on a new way of understanding and designing public spaces based on USERS’ needs, and to search for new procedures to link design and management. The cities worked as well to better integrate the information that may be provided by the USERS themselves.

GLOSSARY

The following list of terms aims to capture some of the key concepts discussed during the USER project. They are not mere definitions, just as they are more notably not USER official definitions, but rather they are an attempt at capturing different approaches and ideas behind the terms. We have included only those concepts that are central concerns of the USER project and that were extensively used by the partners during discussions and debates.

PUBLIC SPACE



One of the basic principles is that public spaces should be open and usable for everyone. Public space should not be defined by aesthetics or ownership but rather by whether it can provide a shared space for a diverse range of activities created by a range of different people. In theory, any place, regardless of its ownership or appearance, offers this potential. It is the space owned by all, and which, from a socio cultural point of view, is the community expression of the contact and communion among individuals. What distinguishes public space from most other spaces of the city is its diversity – particularly the diversity of its more central parts. This diversity is the other side of the openness of this space, the fact that it is not shut off to specific uses or USERS. Squares, city beaches, fields, parks, streets – are in theory open to everybody. However some public spaces are being privatized or their

use is reserved to specific groups of people. This is sometimes a result of the decrease in state intervention, they are assigned a particular function to encourage tourism, or they are under tight surveillance to improve security. The result is a growing number of sites that are intended for a specific group instead of for everybody. Places remain common but not public.

Beyond central public spaces in the central parts of the cities, public spaces of residential areas have a relevant role in the daily life. Public spaces, as an extension of the dwelling, are part of the home environment. It is through daily practices that individuals and groups (households) extend their home from the dwelling to include public spaces.

USERS



The concept of “USER” is a major aspect of the USER network: the focus of USER cities on public space covers a wide range of USERS. Usually cities are concerned with a combination of spaces-uses-USERS. So, the “USERS” consideration is not isolated from other aspects. Cities are host to different types of USERS.

Basically, USERS of public spaces can be divided in three categories:

1. those who use public spaces as destination, occupying and “living” public spaces,
2. those who cross through public spaces on their way to other destinations, and
3. those who are working in connection with public spaces.

Meeting, passing, lingering, sitting, maintaining, controlling, gardening, attending events, visiting, playing, shopping, waiting, observing – these activities are, among others, different forms public space uses, carried out by these different types of USERS.

Uses performed by different USERS are linked with interactions, accessibility, mixed uses and conviviality. USERS' practical knowledge" is one of the main inputs into understanding how the spaces are used and what kind of conflicts are taking place. The practical knowledge of USERS draws on the individual experience of using actual public spaces, and on the individual and social assessment of the features of a public space.

This USERS' knowledge can be professional (for instance, from caretakers, urban managers and police) or it can be the fruits of regular daily experiences using a specific place. Intervening in public spaces requires asking for this knowledge, building a good understanding of the evolution of uses, and paying attention to different needs of both current and potential USERS.

USES



Uses performed by different USERS are linked with interactions, accessibility, mixed uses and conviviality. The USER project focuses on the relationship between people and public spaces, taking into account USERS' needs, rights and meanings. Passing through and meeting are the fundamental uses found in most public spaces, corresponding to their double spatial function of being both a place and a link. A main initial assumption of the USER project was to challenge the urban design of public

spaces and the goals of urban plans, according to the dramatic changes in how public spaces are used. Multiple-functionality and mixed uses in a public space are main issues concerning uses. A mixed-use place where different activities are occurring (leisure activities such as people walking, playing, eating, relaxing and reading, commercial activities, cultural events, etc.), encourages increased use and avoids an empty public space.

DYSFUNCTIONS AND CONFLICTS IN USING PUBLIC SPACES



Public space is the place of conviviality and tolerance, but also of difference and conflict. Higher quality of public spaces can produce higher conflicts of use. Several aspects of change and conflict are faced by the different USER cities: conflict between residential uses, leisure uses, tourism uses, ambiguous uses and unexpected uses, exclusive adoption of public space by populations according to age, ethnicity, different customs, etc., public spaces as destinations vs. public spaces as paths for thoroughfare, illegal uses, private, public and semi-public spaces, different means of movement and transport, cycles, vehicles, pedestrians, etc.

Dysfunctions and conflicts also deal with overuses, no uses, everyday uses, occasional uses or uses at different times. Sometimes public spaces are multifunctional or mono-functional, at other times USERS are crossing or lingering in public spaces. A main agreement of USER partners is that inappropriate urban design and layout, misunderstanding of USERS' needs, poor urban management, or USERS' behaviours, can explain distortions and pathologies affecting the uses of public spaces.

PRACTICES OF USER CITIES

ANALYSING CHANGES, CONFLICTS AND DYSFUNCTIONS IN THE USE OF PUBLIC SPACES

PERFORMING A DIAGNOSIS OF CURRENT PROBLEMS

The process of observing and analysing public spaces was a core aspect of and a first step in the Local Action Plans of USER cities. Even though the USER cities made use of different methods and tools in their observation and analysis of public spaces, they shared basic elements.

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METHODS TO BETTER INVOLVE USERS IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF USES

The process of USERS' involvement becomes a crucial aspect of the whole process because "USERS' practical knowledge" is one of the main inputs into understanding how the spaces are used and what kind of conflicts are taking place. Understanding uses and USERS of public spaces is a basis for the improvement and development of public spaces. The USER project gave rise to a shared study of the issue of uses and

USERS. Uses of public spaces are diverse and they correspond to a myriad of motivations, needs and interests. One of USER's main assumptions is that the proposed approach should demonstrate that a better understanding of how public spaces are used and what challenges have to be faced should improve management and the way public spaces are designed.



DRESDEN — CAPTURING AN OVERVIEW OVER THE PERCEPTIONS, DEMANDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR URBAN SURROUNDINGS

The Department of Geography of Dresden Technical University carried out a study on the perception and utilization of public spaces. The research project was conducted with the goal of providing an overview of the perceptions, demands and expecta-

tions of local residents with respect to their urban surroundings. A focus of the study was directed to the questions of how people perceive "their" public spaces, what they like and dislike and where they see opportunities for improvement.



This study includes the evaluation of a survey which addressed about 300 inhabitants of the USER pilot site, as well as numerous thematic charts and maps with reference to favourite and disliked places and the reasons of their (more or less) positive or negative perception, and also proposals for improving public spaces (“mental mapping”). In order to find out what places people like or dislike and how they actually use public spaces in their everyday life, interviewees were asked to record different perceptions and uses on a map. The results were then categorized and cartographically depicted in a number of thematic maps, ranging in their respective topics from favourite walks within the city quarters to positively or negatively perceived places and suggestions for the improvement of public spaces.

Within these public spaces, participants were asked to rate the importance of certain characteristics. The results show that security, cleanliness, a green environment and mutual respect are thought to be most important by a majority of participants. Particularly with respect to security and cleanliness, it is important to state that these topics were not considered as problems within the survey areas

The results relating to current and potential political participation of the local population demonstrate that numerous interviewees (62% of respondents) have an opinion on how urban spaces could and should be transformed in order to better meet residents’ demands and that they would like to be asked for their opinion. In particular, questions concerning the design of (built) structures and future uses of (so far unused) public areas are of particular interest.

KRAKOW — SHARING A DIAGNOSIS OF PUBLIC SPACES IN THE AZORY DISTRICT

The diagnosis of the Azory area is mainly a result of the Local Support Group meetings, which took place in 2013 in the form of workshops during which the ULSG members worked with maps of the Azory housing estate, reported problems and proposed solutions.



The city of Krakow paid a particular interest in collecting the opinions of youth and children, who are important USERS of Azory's public spaces. To do so two events were organized in the USER framework. First of all, a survey was carried out among children and teenagers from a school in Azory. Pupils were questioned about the public spaces they like and they don't like. They had an opportunity to express their opinion about the necessary changes in their neighbourhood. The project team obtained more than 300 responses and prepared a report to be included in the diagnosis. Another survey was made during a local event, Easter Fest. Another event was organised in the form of a children's art competition, "At my Azory...". In response to the competition, the pupils of kindergartens and schools submitted 160 works made with different art techniques.

GRENOBLE-ALPES-METROPOLE — ANALYSING PROBLEMS WITH THOSE INVOLVED IN URBAN MANAGEMENT

At a scale encompassing the whole urban area (conurbation), some issues are often raised by the people involved in urban management (professionals, elected representatives, residents associations, etc.). That is why a local experience-sharing network has been set up, coordinated by a resource centre. The main public space-related issues are as follows:

- Existence of diverse conflicts regarding uses in public spaces (exclusive uses of public spaces, vandalism, rudeness, waste management issues etc.)
- Complexity of the urban shape which causes: lack of visibility in terms of uses, management issues, complex and often problematic partnerships.
- Lack of consideration for uses-related topics in urban projects. This is due to a separation between the tasks of design, management, social events, etc. This is also caused by the fact that uses are rarely a part of the overall political project, which is often more focused on "visible" things.
- Difficulties to adapt an urban project when problems of uses or dysfunctions are identified.



In this local experience-sharing network the municipalities and their partners place themselves as the initiators of changes – they are open to changes. A lot of researchers are working on urban management issues nearby and help support the cities in their questions and projects of change.

LUBLIN — WHEN PEOPLE FAIL TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH THE SPACES THEY ARE USING - THE OBSTACLES TO INVOLVING INDIVIDUAL REAL USERS

The “initial capital” of LSG are real and key USERS. Other categories of USERS are more difficult to involve, though as they are important, core LSG should make efforts to engage them at all stages. It can be done for instance by involving USERS who can represent wider interest groups (e.g. NGOs, experts, local authorities’ representatives etc.). The most difficult is to engage indi-

vidual real USERS (inhabitants, passers-by, drivers, pedestrians etc.). This group of USERS was engaged in ephemeral actions and consultations, but only a small number of them were interested; in general, their commitment is weak, they feel intimidated, discouraged, and in a way, “outside” the whole process; they do not identify themselves with the space they are using.



MALAGA — COLLECTIVE OBSERVATIONS AND SMALL EXPERIENCES OF CHANGE IN PUBLIC SPACES. AN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF “LEARNING BY DOING”

An educational process of “learning by doing” in MALAGA

The USER project in Trinidad and Perchel did not start from scratch; the previous ten years had seen the development of a community participation experience, which facilitated the neighbourhood process for transforming public spaces. Various participatory tools were used, such as direct observation, “corralones” meetings (involving 50 neighbours) youth input, technical-neighbours, mailboxes, templates and questionnaires. As many USERS were involved in the process (neighbours, technicians from different areas of the City, associations, young people, etc.), constituting an experience of considerable interest in terms of its quality, consistency, number, etc. It was an opportunity to meet and find common solutions to improve the functioning of public spaces: proposals have been made on physical improvements, cultural/sports programmes held in public spaces (theatre, concerts, music, markets, sporting events). The fact that the social difficulties of inhabitants were taken into account by the municipality has been a great lever to ensure the success of this participatory approach.

Zoom on the participative tools used by Malaga. Direct field observation included collective visits to, Plaza Bravo and Plaza San Pablo in Perchel Norte with the participation of almost 30 technicians. Workshops with 30 young people provided surprising participation dynamics. The collective who were seemingly oblivious to the reality of their neighbourhood came up with pertinent suggestions and proposals that showed what was lacking in Trinidad and Perchel. 7 opinion mailboxes were installed in different parts of the area. More than 100 questionnaires were answered about problems in the district with suggestions for the improvement of public spaces. In this movement, we have seen very small but important experiences of change in public space made by the neighbours (decoration with recycled materials in the Plaza Bravo, protection of trees by students of a forging shop in the Plaza de la Imagen, the route of tapas, , etc.). They have all been framed in an educational process of «learning by doing».



TARGETING A SITE WHERE THE PROBLEMS OF USES ARE THE MOST ACCURATE AND RELEVANT FOR USERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Urban projects to improve public spaces should consider solid criteria to ensure a real compromise by local stakeholders in terms of urban intervention. It begins with the identification of the most relevant sites to work on. This priority ranking has to be shared with local partners and sometimes it proves to be difficult to do.

RIGA — EVALUATING DIFFERENT PUBLIC SPACES LOCATED IN THE HISTORICAL CENTRE. DECIDING WHERE THE USER PILOT SITE WILL BE SITUATED

The city of Riga decided to even decide the choice of the USER pilot site with the local partners. It provided the occasion to evaluate the problems of uses of different sites – and a collective decision has been made on the basis of this evaluation.

The first task of LSG was to evaluate different public spaces located in the historical centre of Riga with the aim of deciding where the USER project activities would be situated. Riga city planning specialists proposed 6 key public sites. The LSG members suggested another 2 sites for further evaluation.

So 8 proposed pilot sites were evaluated by the LSG members. A thorough analysis of the following evaluation criteria was performed:

- Complexity of conflicts and dysfunctions
- Diversity of existing conflicts/level of impact
- Feasibility and capacity for the Riga City Municipality to transform the space
- Security risks
- Participation interest shown by third parties to improve this particular public space
- Relevancy and currency (in the context of Riga Historical Centre development)



After analysis and evaluation, the list of 8 public spaces was shortened to 4 potential USER pilot sites. At this 2nd stage, an enlarged working group continued to analyse 4 potential USER pilot sites using another methodology – the “World Café Method” – a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue. Each working group had to answer two questions about the USER pilot site:

- What are the existing public space qualities and assets?
- What are the existing weaknesses and dysfunctions?

In the end, two public spaces were voted as the pilot sites for the USER project. As a result, a LAP will be developed for Latviešu strēlnieku Square – as the 1st priority and Spīķeru Street and adjacent territory as the 2nd priority.

LUBLIN — RANKING PUBLIC SPACES TO IDENTIFY THE MOST CRUCIAL ONES WITH REGARDS TO THE GENERAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE CITY

All public spaces chosen for the project are situated in the very centre of the city. Due to their excellent location, the sites all have a strong potential to become local activity centres. Yet they are not interesting enough for the USERS, who use them mostly for transit (Łokietka, Kochanowskiego), or visit them on rare occasions (Rybny). At the beginning of the project the aim of “Improving the attractiveness of the city lifeline” was chosen as a main goal of Lublin City concerning the USER approach. City lifeline was defined as a network of streets and public spaces of utmost importance for the USERS of the city (inhabitants, tourists, students). Due to urban layout and cultural heritage values, it still offers the best place to live (though with some technical disadvantages). When on this route, the city looks alive.

LSG decided to narrow down the intervention area to the above mentioned Rybny and Łokietka squares, as they were defined priority sites on the city lifeline. In addition, the decision was made to include Kochanowski Square. This was proposed by the group of USERS represented by members from the local council of the district. Indeed it is located close to these sites and strongly linked to them in terms of uses. The idea behind the choice, which might not seem so obvious at first, is that all approved sites are linked by their USERS – to a considerable extent by young people (students, young people working and having fun in the centre, often those with small or older children). Transformations planned within the LAP will be beneficial to USERS of all ages and groups, yet LSG thought it necessary to define the core group of USERS for whom the changes are dedicated, as it helps to organize work and provide certain essential guidelines for LAP creators.



HOW TO COLLECT USERS' POINT OF VIEW ABOUT THE USES OF PUBLIC SPACES

Methods to follow up uses, conflicts and dysfunctions in using public spaces should be created. They must allow the participation of USERS (inhabitants, municipal urban managers, NGOs...). USERS' opinions should be listened to, and cities should try to mediate and negotiate between different interests that could be conflicting. Indeed,

a precise diagnosis of uses and USERS' needs in a public space is the starting point to designing a relevant public space renewal project.

That is why the USER cities began to draft their local action plans with a diagnosis of USERS' needs. It has been done with inquiries, mapping un/comfortable places, surveys, focus groups, meetings,

“walking diagnosis”, observations and research. In some cities, experimental processes of dialogue involving students and schools were launched to capture their perceptions and proposals about public spaces. Similarly, they tested new procedures to foster dialogue with inhabitants, diversifying ways of having discussions with USERS.

DRESDEN — DIFFERENT FORMS OF INHABITANTS PARTICIPATION PROCESSES

Different forms of civic participation processes are used in Dresden in connection with redevelopment projects and planning schemes, especially in urban renewal areas, which also include the USER area. An overview of the methods used:

- Conventional forms of citizen participation take the form of information events held for citizens to learn about the projects in the area and participate in detailed workshops.
- The ‘places-of-well-being map’ is a common and simple instrument which is used in different local areas. Citizens mark their favourite and least favourite spots on the map. The map is the basis for a closer discussion with the citizens. The LSG suggests using it on a regular basis as a first step when launching planning processes.
- ‘Walk ´n talk’ invitations are informal meetings between citizens and the municipal authority without a detailed agenda. In Dresden, walking talks were successfully used, e.g. in the planning process of the integrated city development.
- The ‘Dresden Debate’ is a special form of civic participation in the field of city planning. The Dresdner Debatte combines the potential of online participation and on-site involvement. A container called ‘red box’ is being operated by the city’s planning office on-site for four weeks. During that period, citizens can also take part in an online dialogue.



LUBLIN — ASKING LOCAL USERS ABOUT THE ATTRIBUTES OF PUBLIC SPACES

To obtain a more detailed diagnosis, a research questionnaire on different public spaces' attributes was sent to local USERS. This questionnaire considered the following aspects of public space uses:

Accessibility:

- *Is it easy to get to on foot? By public transport ? By bike ?*
- *Are there any architectural barriers that prevent people with disabilities getting to the public space?*
- *Are there clear signals indicating how to access it?*
- *Is it a space that connects with other spaces or other destinations within the area or the city?*

Safety:

- *Are there any security cameras?*
- *It is used both during the day and during the night?*
- *Is it often visited?*
- *Do people feel safe there? Women especially?*
- *Does it provide enough lighting during the night?*
- *Is the separation between pedestrian and vehicle areas clear?*

Comfort:

- *Is there any seating provided?*
- *Is there seating both in the shade and in the sun?*
- *Is it a clean place?*
- *Is it noisy?*

Identity:

- *Why do people come to this place?*
- *Is there something special about it?*
- *Do people think of this place as an important spot in the city?*

Inclusive and convivial:

- *Do people sometimes come here to meet with friends?*
- *Do people use to meet new persons here?*
- *Is this public space conducive to the integration of socially excluded people?*



RIGA — A SURVEY ADDRESSED TO USERS OF RIFLEMAN SQUARE

The gathered results will be used in the monitoring process to evaluate the satisfaction level of the square USERS on modifications done in comparison with the initial state. The questions that were asked accordingly coincided with the expected result indicators of the Local Action Plan.

QUESTION	YES (%)	NO (%)	PARTLY (%)
Are you satisfied with the present quality of the square?	14	65	20
Does the square serve you as destination goal?	35	37	29
Are you satisfied with movement possibilities provided for the pedestrians of the square?	24	61	14
Is it easy to get from the square to adjacent territories?	45	14	41
Are you satisfied with passive and active recreation possibilities in the square?	10	76	14
Are you satisfied with accessibility to information and its quality in the square?	10	61	29
Would you feel safe in the square, including at night?	76	18	6
Is the square well managed?	14	78	8
Are you satisfied with the design and identity of the square?	14	55	31
Are you satisfied with the facilities of the square?	14	82	4



USER CITIES' ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE USES OF THEIR PUBLIC SPACES

TURNING PROBLEMS INTO SOLUTIONS

USER partners tended to agree that the uses of public spaces are affected by an inappropriate urban design and layout, due to the misunderstanding of USERS' needs, poor urban management,

or inappropriate behaviours of USERS. Matching adequate uses of public spaces and adequate public spaces to the uses has become a crucial assumption of the USER project.

IMPROVING CONVIVIALITY IN PUBLIC SPACES

The attempt to achieve convivial public spaces in our cities may be seen as something naïve considering the huge obstacles that we have to overcome. USER cities do not neglect the increasing complexity of our diversified cities where immigration, tourism, traffic congestion, economic

development etc. have grown dramatically. It is clear that new challenges must be addressed if we want to put urban conviviality into practice – but conviviality can be a transverse guideline for public spaces related public policies.

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COPENHAGEN — BUILDING SHARED SPACES TO CREATE AN ACCEPTANCE OF ONE ANOTHER



The main USERS of Sundholm spend most of their time in the streets. As they are homeless the street becomes a home to many of them. Ensuring conviviality through collaboration between parties representing the different groups is a crucial aspect.

When challenges in an area are as great as they are in Sundholm it would be unwise to build and furnish city spaces and expect them to suddenly become hotspots of conviviality and recreation. The shared spaces in this area must on the contrary be a part of creating an acceptance of one another.

If people – mainly the Danish families and the homeless –, work and meet each other in the city garden on a weekly basis, or the children are taught beekeeping by a homeless person, then they start seeing each other in new ways and the differences are maybe not as scary as they seemed. Involvement in the place – giving people the possibility of doing something and creating something – will also instil ownership and mindfulness towards the place.

If the urban spaces in Sundholm can make room for seeing the good in other people, then maybe this behaviour can also reach other urban spaces in the district. If the coexistence between people and their neighbours is good in Sundholm, then maybe it will be easier for the new residents to move into the area and see some of the good things that a place like Sundholm can provide.

The project must take into consideration how to keep and maintain urban spaces with a layout that invites USERS to take part in the spaces' development. The urban garden has proved to be such a place. The beehives also add to the sense of ownership and democracy in the area and the city are trying to involve the artists from the Factory of Art & Design in the making of an "art scene" in a temporary urban space.



DRESDEN — FOSTERING LIVELINESS AND CONVIVIALITY BY ADDING NEW FUNCTIONS RELATED TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD IN A STATION FORECOURT

The «Mitte» train station marks the junction between the Friedrichstadt and Wilsdruffer Vorstadt districts. The railway track marks an incisive break, and this situation is currently very unattractive. The urban plaza on the western side of the station has recently been redesigned and upgraded. Nevertheless, numerous residents do not find this plaza attractive, and there are only a few specific groups of USERS who would frequent it as a place to stay and linger (not only as a commuter's transit facility). The Working group addresses the overall surroundings of the station and defines the following targets: Enhancing the attractiveness of the railway underpasses (on one side of the place), improving the links between both districts, enhancing public use of the urban plaza (including various groups of citizens) and giving the urban plaza a new lease of life.

The project wants to enhance the attractiveness and welcoming qualities of the station forecourt, fostering liveliness and conviviality by adding new functions related to the

neighbourhood and enhancing the identification of residents and USERS with the urban plaza.

Several actions are envisaged: Temporary "arts container" for exhibitions and events, a stage for temporary art events on the forecourt, the possibility for railway arches and station entrances to host an art gallery (graffiti and/or local photo exhibits), open-air eateries and a weekly market (with a private operator, not organised by the municipality).



TEMPORARY USES AS A WAY TO TEST SOLUTIONS

Abandoned lands due to the cancellation of urban projects or building crises - or even to history - are creating real holes in our cities. How can turn them into good public spaces? Temporary uses may be a way to test solutions. How can we turn non-spaces into public places in the framework of comprehensive urban regeneration processes in deprived urban areas, and avoid divided cities?

Further than the only empty spaces, using temporary uses can help getting people involved in the future of their public spaces. Indeed temporary public uses can gather people around a collective project and create a dialog. They can for instance help solve neighbourhoods' lack of meeting points for the population (children, youth, elderly, etc.), or temporary sports areas, playgrounds and urban gardens.

PESCARA — EXPERIMENTING WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORARY PUBLIC SPACES

The city of Pescara is working on a long-term urban planning project on currently empty spaces. Temporary uses of spaces in the framework of such a long term urban planning process can be interesting to use. The case study of low cost public spaces made with participatory methodologies, are the referenced models of the experimental implementation that is going to take place within the LAP of Pescara. From the beginning, the project team of Pescara has expressed its willingness to carry out a small experimentation in the shape of the construction of a temporary public space on the «Estonoesunsolar» model (Zaragoza, Spain), an important experience of regeneration of unused public spaces that certainly stimulates in inhabitants a strong sense of belonging.



Pescara pilot action is the so-called «Green Spine», a greenway that connects three new public spaces identified in the Fontanelle-Sambuceto Urban Regeneration Plan. It is an ambitious project, which has naturally longer timeframes than the USER project. The city intends to anticipate the construction of the first public space of the future «Green Spine», by prefiguring it with temporary patterns. These temporary constructions will be based on a strong model of citizen participation - not only in the design phase but also during the implementation phase. The implementation of the project will have the following features:

- Use of low-cost, natural and recycled materials
- Public uses: urban gardens, playgrounds and meeting places
- Jobs for unemployed workers
- Participation of the population during the implementation phase
- Management of public spaces by the citizens

This is the reason why these temporary constructions will be made of «raw earth», a typical building technique from the Abruzzi Region, which is cheap, flexible, and easy to implement by non-specialists.

LUBLIN — INTRODUCING SLIGHT CHANGES THROUGH EPHEMERAL JOINT ACTIVITIES WITH USERS

The following ephemeral activities were tested in 2013 in chosen sites:

Rybny Square – “Sun in the shade” Action – the aim of this action was to show the place could have another aspect, and to launch the debates with USERS on the future of this place. Organizers put large pieces of fabric to create shade in the square, hung a swing made of a colourful tire and a rope, planted sunflowers and invited a group of USERS (children) to make colourful chalk drawings on the sidewalk.



Łokietka Square – “Build the square with us” Action – USERS were invited in the late evening to take part in lighting special lanterns making the square a unified, lit up and magical space.

Kochanowskiego Square – “Refresh with Limerick” Action – organizers put up colourful fences and arranged a sitting area, and later on students were inviting passers-by to stop and chat with them, offering snacks in the form of apples given with a piece of paper with a limerick of a poet.

Rybny Square also hosted picnics organized by Polish newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza, which was a part nationwide action, “Let’s Wake Up The Lifeless Squares”.

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MALAGA — INVENTORY OF UNUSED LAND PLOTS IN THE TRINIDAD-PERCHEL DISTRICT

The number of vacant lots occupying a large part of the territory of Trinidad and Perchel gives both neighbourhoods an image of neglect (especially because of garbages), insecurity and unfinished reconstruction following the floods of 1989. Aware of this reality, implementation was performed within USER on an inventory of land areas that allow for a more systematic knowledge of the reality of the pilot areas: number, state, fences, without fences, etc. However, no information was provided about current owners, except those in public hands. The Diagnosis (1st Phase of the LAP) found 137, of which 68 have uses (mostly irregular parking) and 69 have no use.

The LSG has brought out different proposals regarding their permanent or temporary use, constituting a means to benefit the lives of the public spaces and counteract the lack

of recreational facilities and public sports in Trinidad and Perchel. Among the proposed temporary uses were sports areas, urban gardens and playgrounds – the permanent uses focusing projects of shops, restaurants, business school, etc.



A PUBLIC SPACE FOR ALL? USES CAN BE MORE SPECIFIC FOR SOME USERS

Making public spaces inclusive and avoiding discrimination is another key issue for USER cities. Ensuring inclusive public spaces and allowing accessibility for all, entails potential new conflicts. It deals with ensuring the visibility of the excluded population. If some people cannot be present in public

spaces (streets, squares, parks, town halls) without feeling uncomfortable, victimized and basically “out of place”, then it must be questioned whether or not these people can consider themselves just as much citizens as other people who seem perfectly “at home” when moving about in public spaces.

COPENHAGEN — DEVOTING THE USE OF A STREET TO HOMELESS PEOPLE



The Sundholm district has always been marginalized and cut off from the rest of the city as it used to house prisons and psychiatric hospitals. Today, the municipality is using a variety of methods to open up the area. First of all, it decided to officially recognise the presence of homeless people in the district's streets. Outdoor street furniture and shelters have

been built for them to use, to help everyone accept their presence in the street and reduce its anxiety-provoking effect. The city has also created a shared garden space, cultivated by local residents with the involvement (under municipal supervision) of some of Sundholm's marginalized people. Lastly, it has launched a new housing programme in

an undeveloped part of the district, with the main purpose of drawing residents from all types of social backgrounds.

The Sundholm project is important because it builds tolerance and understanding between different USERS. It offers the opportunity to very different people to interact within a safe environment.

CHANGING THE SHAPE OF PUBLIC SPACES TO CHANGE THEIR USES AND THEIR URBAN FUNCTIONS

The functioning of public spaces is affected by the mismatching with USERS' behaviour, by an inappropriate urban design and layout and by a poor urban management. Matching adequate public

spaces to the uses has become a crucial assumption of the USER project. The challenge for local stakeholders and local authorities is to manage public space in an alternative way and to better

take uses into consideration. The USER cities have adopted a positive perspective on conflicts. If there are no conflicts, there are no different interests, and therefore a lack of vibrancy and vitality.

SAINT MARTIN D'HERES (GRENOBLE-ALPES METROPOLE) — MAKING THE LIMITS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES TO IMPROVE THE USES OF PUBLIC SPACES

The district of Renaudie is characterized by an extremely complicated urban shape - intermingled pedestrian paths, private patios, public squares, on different levels. The population here is one of the poorest in the conurbation. Most of the flats are rented to a social housing company. Buildings are old and their maintenance is extremely expensive.

Public spaces here are not fully utilised by the inhabitants for several reasons. Firstly, they are inhospitable, being generally made of concrete. Secondly, there is no core "urban centre" where people like to meet and linger - there are only pathways or empty squares. Indeed people pass through Renaudie but do not stop at public spaces. Thirdly, as pathways are not clear, people may feel unsafe. This feeling of insecurity is aggravated further by the presence in it of people dealing drug and frightening inhabitants. Furthermore, the lack of clear limits between public and private spaces (private gardens) causes a lack of visibility. Maintenance issues also result from this lack of public-private separation; some people throw garbage in private gardens and gradually these gardens are abandoned by inhabitants. Finally, the property rights are extremely complicated and the overall management of Renaudie is therefore very difficult.

On the basis of these observations, the city and its partners (especially the social housing company) are looking for the most

efficient actions to help public spaces get used more and become more convivial. A project has been launched on a particularly problematic square. Here, more than half of the flats are empty as there is no intimacy in them (no separation with the surrounding public spaces). The initiative aims at making public spaces more private, in order to allow the future inhabitants to enjoy their gardens. Another action will be launched to improve the public/private definition between flats and public spaces in a street - mainly by adding hedges. It is a pilot project that may be implemented elsewhere in Renaudie afterwards.

Local projects are also implemented elsewhere in Renaudie, in which the city supports inhabitants to renovate small public spaces. These small-scale projects are an efficient tool to help improve the daily life of inhabitants and to keep the dialogue alive between them and the institutions.



RIGA — FORECASTING NEW USES AND CHANGES IN THE URBAN FORM OF THE LATVIAN RIFLEMAN SQUARE

Latvian Riflemen Square should play a key role as the main gate to Riga old town. The pilot site is a strategic place in the context of the city with a significant urban function. New functions, new uses and changes in the urban form are envisaged as a result of the participative diagnosis.

Several weaknesses were identified regarding its current position: it is badly connected with the surroundings, there is no opportunity for people to stop and spend time there, no function of destination, no benches installed, a lack of greenery (the existing ones are neglected), inadequate traffic organization in the square – disorganized pedestrian flow, tourist buses letting passengers off on the street side, road

transport flow is in conflict with pedestrians, parking lots impede the function of the square. Indeed, its key function is unclear and other functions are poorly developed. This diagnostic was implemented by a wide range of stakeholders (private and public) through a local group specifically created to propose solutions for the square's renewal. Local support groups analysed current uses, dysfunctions, assets, and desired functions and uses.

The strategic goals of the square renewal are as follows:

- A square with history (a gate to old Riga, explaining the meaning of its name, giving emphasis to the Monument)
- A square for people (traffic flow improvement, reorganisation of entrance to Riga City Council parking lots, recreational zones, and zones for pedestrians and cyclists, flexibility to hold public events, arrangement of facilities according to USERS' needs, provision of safe and convenient access for all square USERS to the Daugava embankment, etc.)
- A square as an activity platform (image improvement for the square, an information point for inhabitants and tourists)
- A better managed square (provision of maintenance and management of the square, development of a new model for the square's management).



PONT DE CLAIX (GRENOBLE-ALPES METROPOLE) — CREATING A PEDESTRIAN PATH TO IMPROVE URBAN CONNECTIONS AND CONVIVIAL PUBLIC SPACES

The district of Iles de Mars is considered a typical social housing district. It is made up of blocks of flats, mainly owned by two social housing companies, one being privately owned. This district is somewhat isolated from the rest of the city, as it does not open onto the main road. Therefore, its development has historically been self-centred. The population here faces economic and social difficulties. Generally speaking, public spaces are not very well qualified. Their uses are not clear and too

many of them are devoted to car parks. It is not easy for pedestrians to pass through the area and the attractiveness and functionality of public spaces suffers as a result. However, the municipality has launched a vast urban renewal project aiming mainly at improving public spaces. The first phase of work ended in late 2013 and has created a pedestrian path between the two groups of buildings, Iles de Mars and Olympiads. Now people can go from one block to another very easily. The path has been designed as a

convivial space with sports grounds, green spaces, children's playgrounds, gardens, and an area for public events.

This public space has been designed together with inhabitants. The municipality and its partners now face the challenge of answering one main question: how can we ensure an efficient partnership with local stakeholders in order to support inhabitants in using the new public spaces, to answer their needs and questions, to monitor the uses and to be reactive if a problem occurs? To answer this, there are certain crucial points to consider: keeping inhabitants' involvement alive in the preparation of the coming phases of the urban projects, and organising and improving the coordination with the local partners in order to be as present on-site and as reactive as possible.



LISBON — REINFORCING SOCIAL COHESION AND URBAN LAYOUT IN DEPRIVED URBAN AREAS

The BIP-ZIP programme is based on promoting an active citizenship, reinforcing the territorial cohesion, searching for collective solutions and achieving positive images of priority urban areas.

Public spaces in the Lisbon pilot site are a real urban void; dead spaces with a lack of shops, services and facilities. A new way of re-shaping the physical layout should be addressed with a new urban management and with inhabitants' involvement. In this sense, the public space rehabilitation is a participatory process. Public spaces become a platform for social cohesion and an instrument to connect the site with the city.

Single projects addressing public spaces' improvement should be connected to an overall and strategic framework of urban integrated and sustainable local development.

The LSG is a key instrument to addressing conflicts in public spaces adopting a mediation role between different interests and stakeholders (Electricity Company) or introducing local and short-term perspectives through temporary uses in the urban park of Casal do Pinto, linking local visions with long-term urban plans (zoning). The Lisbon LAP aims to transform public space in a main instrument for achieving social cohesion. For

that purpose, it defines its overall objective: "Initiate a process or urban regeneration through the rehabilitation and construction of public spaces".



PESCARA — ENHANCING SLOW MOBILITY AND IMPROVING URBAN CONNECTIONS THROUGH A GREENWAY IN THE FONTANELLE-SAMBUCETO AREA

Within the Urban Regeneration Plan of Fontanelle-Sambuceto, the USER focus is on the so-called “Green Spine”, which is the study and design of public spaces and slow mobility in the area. The “Green Spine” has the role of urban matrix: the large green belt which passes longitudinally through the entire project area by connecting together the public spaces, green areas and private facilities for public use. Therefore, the “Green Spine” represents a central element for the urban requalification of the area as it could become a space full of functions, endowed with both an internal and external coherence, able to create public spaces in the area and, at the same time, connect the area with other urban centres thanks to the slow mobility transport system.

Expectations of the City of Pescara of USER for this site:

- Design and management of public spaces
- Quality of green areas and attention to the issues of environmental sustainability
- Integration of social elements
- Participation of USERS in the decision-making process
- Communication and promotion

The project of the Green Spine has been included in the LAP with the aim of analysing in depth the participation and communication aspects of the Fontanelle-Sambuceto Urban Regeneration Plan, in order to better understand the needs of the City USERS and translate them into projects, trying also to prevent possible conflicts through dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders.



LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

MAKE THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT MORE FLEXIBLE IN ORDER TO ADAPT THE PROJECT TO THE CHANGE OF USES

The performance of public spaces is influenced by two elements: the physical features of the spaces (design, shape and organization) and the way they are uses and these used are regulated. Urban management makes the role of public institutions visible by regulating social life through their presence in

the public spaces. The deterioration of urban management creates a feeling of abandonment and may result in institutional failures. In order to tackle efficiently the dysfunctions of uses, municipalities have to get well organised (internally as well as in the collaboration with their partners).



GRENOBLE-ALPES METROPOLE — INTRODUCING FLEXIBILITY IN URBAN PROJECTS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT AGREEMENTS WITH INHABITANTS AND OBSERVED USES

The municipalities of Grenoble-Alpes Métropole urban areas tend to adopt a more flexible method of urban project management. This flexibility aims – among others – at readapting the initial project according to the results of the agreements with inhabitants or the observed uses. This flexibility can take on varied and diverse forms, for instance, designing some parts of the urban project with residents, or conceiving the project on the basis of the field observations.

It is also relevant to dedicate some funds to be able to do some corrective works afterwards to change the shape of the site, if ever some problems of uses appear. With this procedure, the urban project is not conceived as a definitive one, giving the chance to introduce some changes in the layout and furniture of the space.

The method requires a very flexible and dynamic monitoring system including regular meetings with partners, allowing for rapid interventions if needed.



SHARING URBAN MANAGEMENT AND DAILY MAINTENANCE WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

Almost all partners stressed the importance of involving local partners in the maintenance of public spaces. As far as individual USERS are concerned, to foster this involvement, the public

space must be sufficiently attractive for them to identify with the place and develop a feeling of belonging. This feeling will make them feel more responsible for the way this public space is used.

Urban managers, field workers in charge of maintenance, residents, owners, shopkeepers, and other USERS should collaborate to ensure the maintenance of public spaces.

GRENOBLE-ALPES METROPOLE — IMPLEMENTING THE URBAN AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT OF PROXIMITY (GUSP)

GUSP (Urban and Social Management of Proximity) aims to settle a broad local partnership between all the stakeholders (municipality, social landlords, residents' associations, tenants' associations, etc.), in order to ensure the good daily functioning of the city. As far as public spaces are concerned, implementing GUSP means looking for a better quality of uses of public spaces, supporting the appropriation of these spaces by inhabitants and making efforts to ensure public spaces are well maintained.

This approach entails setting up a specific organisation: more field workers, more collaboration within municipalities between urban planning direction, social services and technical services. It supposes as well to broaden the local partnership beyond the usual partners of urban management.

GUSP entails paying a particular attention to waste management (clean public spaces are always better used). For instance, it can be done by raising awareness about waste management (organising festive events), together with a technical change in the waste collection process (implementation of hatch,

etc.) including the involvement of door-to-door waste sorting messengers.

The maintenance of outdoor private spaces can be accompanied by actions to improve these spaces, such as weeding, pruning of gardens, use of flowers on balconies, etc. Implementing GUSP means working without heavy investments. These actions are carried out in partnership with the municipality's technical services, with social landlords and with residents' associations.



BUILDING A SOLID AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY PARTNERSHIP

Building a partnership with the various local stakeholders has proved to be crucial. From the workers involved in its upkeep to local shopkeepers, and from associations to social landlords, all of these stakeholders have their own specific expertise in the

use of public spaces and should be involved for the project to be successful.

Given the wide variety of USER pilot sites (type of public space, institutional organization, etc.), there is no one-size-fits-all way of building this type of partnership.

However, the partners have agreed on a number of basic principles. The municipality has a role to play as mediator. It has to deal with a variety of interests and perspectives, and try to find solutions that will draw people together in agreement.

KRAKOW — SHARING GOALS, SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE AND FINDING LOCAL LEADERS TO ATTRACT PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS TO WORK TOGETHER

One of the primary problems for building a local partnership concerned with common spaces in Azory are those dimensions related to ownership - a conflict between private owners, housing cooperatives and the municipality. Sometimes ownership is hybrid and the multiple owners are in conflict. Agreement with owners becomes a crucial aspect. One of the key elements in attracting people and institutions to work together is defining the same goal (target), trying to speak the same language, trying to find local leaders who will be the intermediary (the mediator) between the Municipality (the technicians and politicians) and the inhabitants. The Local Activity Centre was created for that purpose: to educate and to assemble local leaders. In such a big housing estate, the public space issue concerns hundreds of people. As it is impossible to work with everybody, such effective representatives are needed.

One of the important steps is to find real local leaders to play a mediating role between inhabitants and the Municipality.



But even when they are identified - which is quite complicated to do - it is important to give them room in the decision-making process. That is why, from the beginning of the project, we should be aware of the decision-making process issue and answer the following questions: Who is to decide? How can we reach shared proposals starting with several ideas about the same issue? How deep should the democratic process be while still avoiding inefficient processes or lack of decision making?

SAINT MARTIN D'HERES (GRENOBLE-ALPES METROPOLE)

— BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BASED ON A COMMON ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN PUBLIC SPACES

The Renaudie neighbourhood in the city of Saint Martin d'Hères is, as mentioned above – a complicated site due to its atypical architecture and conflictual relationship between inhabitants and both the municipality and the social landlords. However, the municipality intends to take action to improve – among others – the quality of open spaces in Renaudie. That is why it is necessary to open again the dialog with inhabitants and to strengthen the partnership with local actors (social centre, NGOs, shopkeepers...).

As a basis for this discussion and for the building of an urban project, it was necessary to share

the same diagnosis of the problems. For this purpose urban walks were organised with the different local partners: one with the institutions, one with the NGOs and social centres, one with inhabitants, one with technical services in charge of maintenance and waste collection. The remarks coming out of these walks have been gathered and shared and have helped identifying the priorities.

Sharing a common acknowledgement of the problems proved to be a good basis to launch an efficient work with local partners, because they understand the goal they need together work for.



PROMOTE PARTICIPATIVE BUDGETS AND MICRO FINANCING TOOLS

A main assumption is that public spaces can be improved and adapted to USERS' needs, and that this should be enhanced through bottom-up processes where inhabitants promote their own initia-

tives and achieve agreements with local authorities. Small community projects require small grants that are flexible and adapted to their needs.

LISBON — SUPPORTING INHABITANTS' INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SPACES IN URBAN REGENERATION AREAS

In the framework of the BIP/ZIP programme (priority urban zones), Lisbon local authorities launched an annual programme to give support to small initiatives generated by inhabitants in partnership with the local authorities that are aimed at improving their neighbourhoods. The Municipality is managing a participatory budget that allows local residents associations to submit and carry out themselves proposals for local development that includes public spaces interventions.

This programme enables the constitution of local networks formed by neighbours associations, NGOs, local authorities, etc., to submit a bid for a grant of 50,000 euros for each project. Once the projects are

selected and approved, they will be implemented through the local partnership. Over the last 4 years, several projects have been funded in the USER area. Several projects were focused in temporary uses avoiding “dead spaces”, and permitting the activation of social life and the improvement of local economy. This included community gardens, small green spaces and squares to facilitate social meetings, sports and playgrounds for children and young people. Based on these relationships and what has already been achieved in public spaces, the municipality is trying to establish a broader institutional partnership involving residents, to initiate a more comprehensive urban renewal process in the district.



8

LEADS FOR CITIES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SPACES



We have no intention of stopping with "findings" or "recommendations", as it has become obvious that the answers provided were shaped by the local context. The question of improving the way public space is used by getting the USERS more involved is a complex one. In USER we have made a huge effort to understand each other, pinpoint the main challenges to be overcome and define the policy directions we thought best suited to our cities. It is these reflections, these suggestions, illustrated by our concrete experiences in the field that form the results of the USER Project.

This is an overarching and conclusive view highlighting the more relevant ideas that have emerged as a result of USER exchanges, reflections and experiments performed over the life of the project. It does not mean that all the USER partners share all these ideas. Some of them at least have been taken from the debates and different points of view raised, taking into account the different local contexts and the different challenges USER cities are facing.

Cities participating in the USER project can take practices in other cities as sources of inspiration, though not simply to "copy and paste", but to adapt them to their own context or inject them into their own projects. What can inspire our own project is the processes carried out at other sites, how problems were overcome, what procedures were used to involve people and what tools were used to solve conflicts. Indeed, USER cities worked within a framework of common principles: how to improve public spaces through an understanding of changes in uses, dysfunctions and conflicts created in an increasing context of social diversity.

On the basis of these assumptions, we effectively draft the main aspects of what we have discovered and learnt within USER, cautiously pointing out some guidelines that may be useful for cities addressing the improvement of urban social life through better public spaces.

01



TEMPORARY USES

AT A GLANCE

“Temporary uses are an efficient way to test new uses and new urban shapes, and can help get USERS involved.”

Public spaces are complex, organic things. One cannot expect to get everything right initially. The best spaces evolve by experimenting with short-term improvements that can be tested and refined over many years. We need to carry out small interventions that make things visible, and experimentations that show how people react.

Temporary uses are relevant as well for unoccupied places. Why is a public space unoccupied? Is this a problem? Should we design a new use, or should we do nothing? Municipalities can become temporary USERS with a view to building innovative, strategic developments.

Temporary uses fall into one of three categories: flexible uses, or a stage prior to a more permanent use, or a way of developing a permanent use. They are an opportunity for town planners and residents to get to know what the various groups think, and learn to accept each other.

They are a source of inspiration and motivation that can make people want to use the public space. This is because temporary uses make it possible to demonstrate the various potential and possibilities for using public spaces, and show how enjoyable a public space can be.

Using temporary layouting patterns can help involve potential USERS that would test a way

to fit some unmet needs, for example, for leisure and sport activities, playgrounds, artistic and cultural events, etc.

This strengthens or even creates an identity for the public space. Collective projects (for instance artistic or cultural ones) can also be an opportunity to change development policies and mentalities. The choice of materials and architecture is guided by the principles of flexibility, low cost, recycling, reuse, and so on.

Temporary uses can, however, run up against a variety of obstacles, the main one being cleanliness (sometimes private/public). Decision-makers can be afraid of losing control, especially if the project has very little structure or organization.

The idea of experimentation with ephemeral uses allows the involvement of

So the idea of urban experimentation is to counteract the lack of flexibility of traditional urban planning and traditional design of public spaces that often leads to failure due to the misunderstanding of USERS' needs. It deals with promoting proximity in town planning, promoting a social planning around small projects, analysing the evolution of public space performance, of its contradictions and conflicts that are not always visible.

02

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BOUNDING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES

AT A GLANCE

“USERS will better understand the way an open space should be used if the limits between public and private spaces are clear.”

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The evolution of our European cities creates and recreates new public spaces where the distinction between public and private uses is not always clear. Public spaces with restricted access, such as shopping malls, railway stations, commercial areas or public areas occupied by private uses as outdoor cafes, require new regulations.

The increased presence of tourists and visitors leads to more spaces focused on consumption, where USERS principally become consumers. Increasing tourist and commercial functions limits residents' activities and uses, i.e., in old towns.

Social housing estates reveal other aspects to the public-private distinction in public spaces. The design of the urban shape and the relations between common spaces and dwellings is not always well regulated. Public spaces that sit closer to dwellings are usually private spaces but with collective uses. Ambiguity generates conflicts and often leads to a bad use of the space (especially if a lack of regulation is perceived). Some USER cities created community groups that collaborated with housing owners and municipalities to solve these kinds of conflicts.

Finally we should point the specific problem that is taking place in cities like Lublin, Riga or Krakow, belonging to the former socialist countries. Here the private ownership of open spaces - that comes up from devolution of public spaces to the former owners - is creating huge obstacles and difficulties to improve and manage these spaces - which have yet public uses

03

= LOOKING FOR CONVIVIAL PUBLIC SPACES

AT A GLANCE

“Public spaces must be inclusive places that allow different people cohabit and use the city their own way.”

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The meaning of conviviality was largely discussed during USER meetings. Conviviality does not necessarily mean active interaction between people. The contact between people in public spaces includes passive contact, which represents the practice of seeing and hearing others without direct interaction. Conviviality can only be a pacific cohabitation on the same public space, observation and tolerance. Thus we should advocate a design of public spaces that favours a diverse presence of different people.

The geometries of conviviality are not simple. We cannot be forced together. The richest social environments are those in which we feel free to edge closer together or move apart as we wish.

Urban open spaces should be lively places with activities that facilitate conviviality, contact and social interaction. The animation of public space is a historical component in European cities. But should we always try to liven up public spaces? Can't some public spaces be quiet places without social interaction? What role do ecological considerations play here? Shouldn't we sometimes avoid overcrowded places that threaten ecosystems?

In some cases public spaces are challenged by the status of being a no man's land. This is considering the fact that there are a lot of people passing through the space and clearly not really sitting or staying there for prolonged periods of time. This was identi-

fied as an issue to be addressed. It's a classic challenge of how to generate new activities that take a space beyond the function of intermediary pathway and how to develop an attractiveness that affords the area the function of destination, as well as creating conditions for more vibrant and interactive uses.

A big challenge emerges in some neighbourhoods of how to achieve a convivial public space "including" those that are traditionally "excluded" from the city life. The recognition by the local public policy of vulnerable groups' (i.e. the homeless) rights to use a public space is a key element of this experience. The homeless especially merge private space and public space in their life. Therefore, what should be done to make their needs as USERS of public spaces compatible with the needs of other USERS of the same public space? Some USER cities are experimenting with new methods to make it possible to work with different types of USERS simultaneously, avoiding conflicts and stereotypes, and building social cohesion that is the glue keeping together different people with different interests and needs in a single community of USERS. Indeed, public spaces become a central arena for exercising citizenship and ensuring social cohesion in our cities. In USER cities, we are trying to demonstrate this through practice.

04

STRENGTHENING THE APPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC SPACES

AT A GLANCE

“ It is easier to use a public space we feel we belong to. Municipalities should improve the identity of public spaces and help USERS feel as owners of the place. ”

People who report a sense of “belonging” to their community seem happier than those who do not. And those who trust their neighbours feel that belonging even more so. This sense of belonging is influenced by social contact. By building a sense of belonging, USERS should feel at home when they use public spaces. Ownership and responsibilities of USERS becomes a key issue.

Feeling that sense of belonging involves a process that has to be constructed and that depends on various factors. Stigmatized public spaces with a bad reputation due to an unsafe atmosphere, abandonment or lack of maintenance, become either not used or misused. This may happen even if those spaces have been well designed and have a good urban shape.

The USER project believes that the identification of USERS within public spaces should be strengthened, promoting a genuine appropriation. For this purpose, diverse actions are needed, such as: clarify uses, reduce conflicts, improve safety, facilitate accessibility, give support to vulnerable groups in public spaces, avoid monopolizing uses by dominant groups of the community, etc.

We can do much more than just encourage public uses. We should try to get people involved in the maintenance of public spaces. We should have NGOs running playgrounds. It is also about creating a feeling of belonging and of ownership: when people feel an emotional bond with the place they live in, life in public spaces becomes much less conflictual.

05

A PARTNERSHIP TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC SPACES

AT A GLANCE

“ The role of each partner – of which USERS – in managing and maintaining public spaces has to be clear. ”

Urban management and daily maintenance of public spaces is often seen as unrelated to the urban project, and simply added on at the end. It should on the contrary be taken into consideration from the preliminary planning phases and not long after a public space has been delivered. This would prevent planners from designing urban forms that are difficult to manage (due to technical difficulties or misuse). It would encourage planners to clarify each party's responsibilities by deliberately addressing the often-complex problem of who owns public spaces. For efficient long-term management, all of the urban project's stakeholders must take this factor into consideration.

Cities should go beyond curative actions (reaction to problems, continuous treatment of dysfunctions) and adopt a preventive perspective through a continuous observation and understanding of urban dysfunctions and incoherence.

Considering the challenges of urban management in the project design of public spaces, we should advocate the reconciling security, urban quality and urban management, through the contributions of different institutions concerned with security

prevention, layout and qualification of public spaces, urban management and maintenance. The performance of public spaces is influenced by two elements: the actual features of the spaces (design, shape and organization) and the way public institutions and private organizations regulate urban functioning and performance. In fact, urban management mediates the role of public institutions in regulating social life through their presence in public spaces. Failing urban management entails a feeling of abandonment and is perceived as an absence of public responsibility.





Declining urban management leads to a weakening of rules relating to uses, and of collective life, as every person feels free to do what he or she wants. This situation entails the risk of negligent behaviour, of damage to property, vandalism, and in fact, social tensions. Therefore, if we are to start leaving rubbish everywhere, people will be first of all shocked, but will soon then cease to make the effort of disposing of their garbage in the appropriate locations; they will grow accustomed to the situation. Similarly, if broken urban installations and furniture are not repaired, they will deteriorate all the more quickly.

The problem with urban management is that it is currently oriented as a juxtaposition of activities, without linkage, along with other services and policies. This leads to a loss of efficiency. The USER project shows that urban management has to be addressed in a comprehensive way, considering uses and USERS' needs as a key input into this process.

Municipalities are often seen as the primary body responsible for managing public spaces. However, their internal organisation is often too segmented to be able to effectively meet the real needs, such as when the technical staff and the urban planning staff do not work hand-in-hand. Regarding the

municipal internal cooperation and coordination, we need to shift from vertical to horizontal organisation and to define who should be involved representing the different municipal departments. Different municipal services have to be on board with a broad overview of the tasks associated with each service.

The importance of involving USERS in the everyday maintenance of the public spaces that they use was stressed by almost all partners. To foster this involvement, the public space must be made sufficiently attractive so that USERS identify with the place and develop a feeling of belonging.

There is an essential tension in public spaces between the need to 'live and let live', and the need to manage and regulate. It is suggested that successful management needs to involve a constant juggling between the extremes of overregulation and laissez-faire approaches.

The risk of excessive regulation in using public spaces was stressed. In order to direct correct behaviour, positive guidance should be given through nudging, positive and encouraging signage/signals (i.e. sit on this lawn, walk through here, etc.), while avoiding messages that are too characteristic of regulations, norms, prohibitions and sanctions. Public education, information and involvement are crucial to this process.

06

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FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

AT A GLANCE

“ Due to the very diverse socio-urban causes of the problems of uses, actions to improve public spaces should be integrated. ”

The actions promoted by USER cities highlighted the strong links existing between the different aspects of problems and solutions relating to public spaces.

For instance, improving public spaces in depressed urban areas suffering huge problems of social exclusion should be linked up with actions addressing social inclusion of specific groups. Likewise civil behaviours in public spaces should be improved through social inclusion processes. Children, the elderly, women and immigrants all have different needs in public spaces. Social policies addressing non-discrimination are needed to complement the actions taken for the improvement of public space.

Similarly, the improvement of public spaces should be linked to local economic development through the improvement of commercial streets and zones and with the promotion of touristic activities.

Uses of public spaces have a clear impact on several kinds of environmental issues, such as acoustic impact, transport, lighting, garbage collection, atmospheric pollution, etc. Integrating public services is a key part of public space intervention.

07

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USERS AS A BASIS

AT A GLANCE

“Considering uses and USERS as a basis for the improvement of public spaces is necessary but requires a change in the usual working habits.”

Among the diverse needs that take place in public spaces, some of them collide with each other, provoking conflicts and a real need for consensual resolution. This is not always possible. Some public spaces of USER cities should be considered as specialised sites including certain urban functions and not others. Different public spaces have different purposes and do not always have to bring together all the ingredients of an ideal “successful public space”. Instead we should always carry out an analysis so as to understand the limits and potential of each place and better define the more appropriate use and the type of USER that should use these spaces.

Although it is true that certain principles like conviviality and plurality of uses and functions are an asset to a public space, not all public spaces will perform them in the same way and not all type of USERS and uses will be present in all the public spaces.

Non-use and abandonment, or overuse and excessive levels of use are always a risk. We should be capable of addressing the dilemma between calm and crowded public spaces. For example, mass tourism is provoking new challenges in old towns or heritage sites.

In the case of social housing estates, the issue of public spaces between dwellings raises new problems relating to ambiguous property systems, residents’ customs, intimacy and a feeling of fear that strangers may be invading our environment.

Urban management as well is currently oriented as a juxtaposition of activities, without linkage along with other services and policies. This leads to a loss of efficiency. The USER project shows that urban management has to be addressed in a comprehensive way, considering uses and USERS’ needs as key inputs into this process.

What is difficult is to simultaneously deal with the different uses of one public space. For instance public spaces can be a destination or just a space for coming and going. In both cases, we are dealing with USERS of public space whose needs are clearly different. Similarly, a public space is not used the same way all throughout the year, nor is it used at night as it is used during the day.

USERS’ needs, requirements and behaviours are increasingly more complex and diverse due to the diversification of urban dwellers in our cities, generational conflicts, the mass presence of tourists, antisocial behaviour, etc. All of these may cause an increased feeling of insecurity and distrust towards other USERS of public space.

Intervening on public spaces on the basis of understanding the rationale and the logic of different USERS and uses, does not imply forgetting public policy or public interest. Accessibility, non-discrimination, reinforcement of social interaction and conviviality are all core principles that should be promoted by local authorities as main guidelines for urban public policies.

08

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FOR AN ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF INHABITANTS

AT A GLANCE

“ We can change the urban shape. But no efficient and long-term change in the way public spaces are used may occur if inhabitants do not take part in the process. ”

A core USER assumption is that the design of urban public spaces and the main goals of urban planning are challenged by the rapid changes taking place in cities' uses. Thus, the process of USERS' involvement becomes a crucial aspect of the whole process because "USERS' practical knowledge" is one of the main inputs into understanding how the spaces are used and what kind of conflicts are taking place.

Thus intervening in public spaces requires a good understanding of and careful attention to different USERS' needs, both current and potential.

Mechanisms to follow up uses, conflicts and dysfunctions in using public spaces should be created. These mechanisms must allow the participation of inhabitants, field workers, municipal urban managers and other USERS of public spaces. Claims and demands expressed by USERS should be heard, and mediation and negotiation between different potentially conflicting interests should be entered into. Collaborations and shared responsibility between urban managers, field workers in charge of maintenance, residents, owners, shopkeepers and other USERS to address maintenance of public space should also be ensured. Finally, small-scale resident and USER initiatives focusing on the dynamic use of public spaces should be encouraged.

Several USER cities encourage initiatives made by inhabitants or by residents' associations to improve existing public spaces or to create new spaces to cover new USERS' needs, through small grants, multiannual budgets, participative budgets and institutional support. These actions support the reactivation of abandoned or neglected public spaces existing in the local area with the benefit of community activities (leisure, sport, cultural events, etc.).

A key question put forward by USER partners is: "How can we convince urban planners and politicians of the need to change the way public spaces of the cities are planned?" USERS' practical knowledge must be valued and incorporated into urban planning. It is about democracy, but also effectiveness and efficiency.





Designing public spaces that are adapted to USERS' needs entails indeed a complex process – these needs being extremely diverse. This complex situation – if ever the choice is made to tackle it directly – requires new ways of urban planning and new arrangements between local stakeholders.

Through seminars and workshops, USER partners held exchanges and reached agreements around the following aspects:

- Monitoring the uses of public spaces over time in a participatory way becomes a key process.
- We can understand the rationale of many urban conflicts – and we are often able to solve them. But could we prevent them instead?
- Observation of people's behaviour in public space is an effective guideline for urban planners and designers.
- The municipalities' role is changing. It is increasingly going beyond the delivery of local services:
 - They can influence the lifestyles of residents and visitors, changing mentalities and points of view.
 - They can mediate between different stakeholders.
 - They can reduce and avoid NIMBY reactions and attitudes in the use of public space.
 - They should define legal frameworks authorising and prohibiting specific interventions and activities.

But above all, cities have the tools in hand to promote a participatory process where community members work together to create spaces that accommodate strong social relations.

USER participation needs rules of the “consultation game” to be clear from the beginning. (What are the limits of USERS' involvement?). It should be clearly established which decisions can be discussed with inhabitants and which ones cannot. This being settled, the decision-making process should be adapted. Indeed often it does not leave any room for inhabitants' involvement (or it is only planned to consult them). Even in the cases where their involvement is better planned, a lack of know-how and coordination can be observed, which may prevent this involvement from having a real influence on the urban project.

Continuity is a key aspect mentioned by all the partners. How can we ensure stakeholder engagement to work together in the long-term? We should consider that it's almost impossible to start and end the project with the same USERS. Some people are just interested in specific aspects and not in the whole process.

We need to support the process of social appropriation of public spaces, observing potential conflicts and inaccessibility. We can build self-esteem by giving USERS the opportunity to do things together.

PART 2

WHEN USER CITIES ARE TAKING ACTION

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL
ACTION PLANS OF USER
PARTNER CITIES



USER PROJECT PARTNERS

Nine European cities are involved in the USER Project. All have set up urban revitalisation projects and want to focus on improving public space uses in districts they have targeted specifically for the USER Project. The cities are gathered into three groups, each with common urban issues.

GROUP 1: PUBLIC SPACES IN OLD, CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT CITY CENTRES

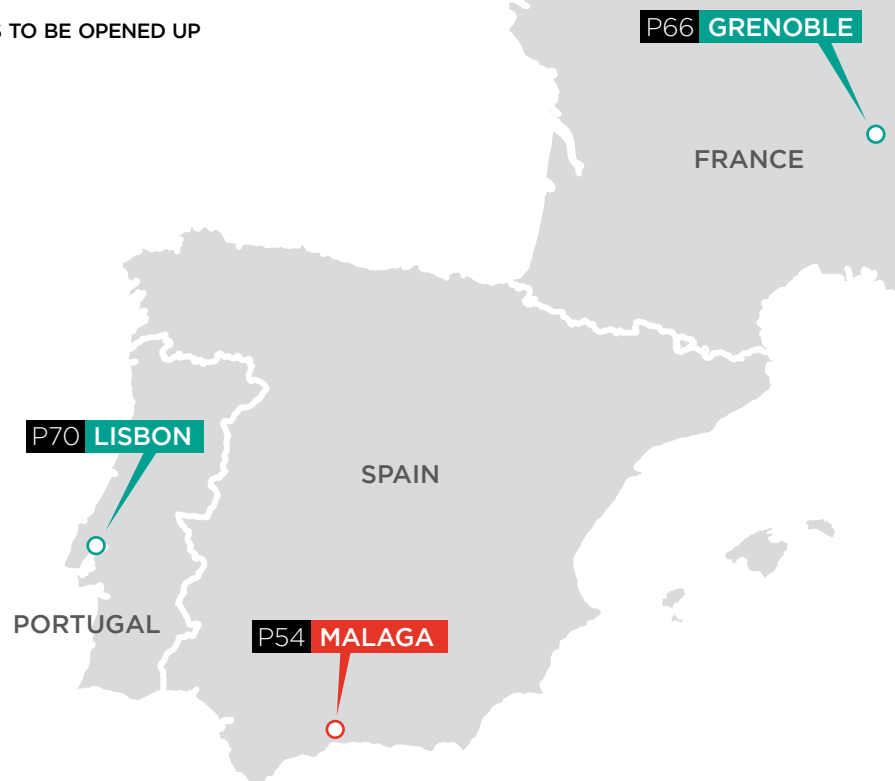
- Lublin (Poland)
- Malaga (Spain)
- Riga (Latvia)

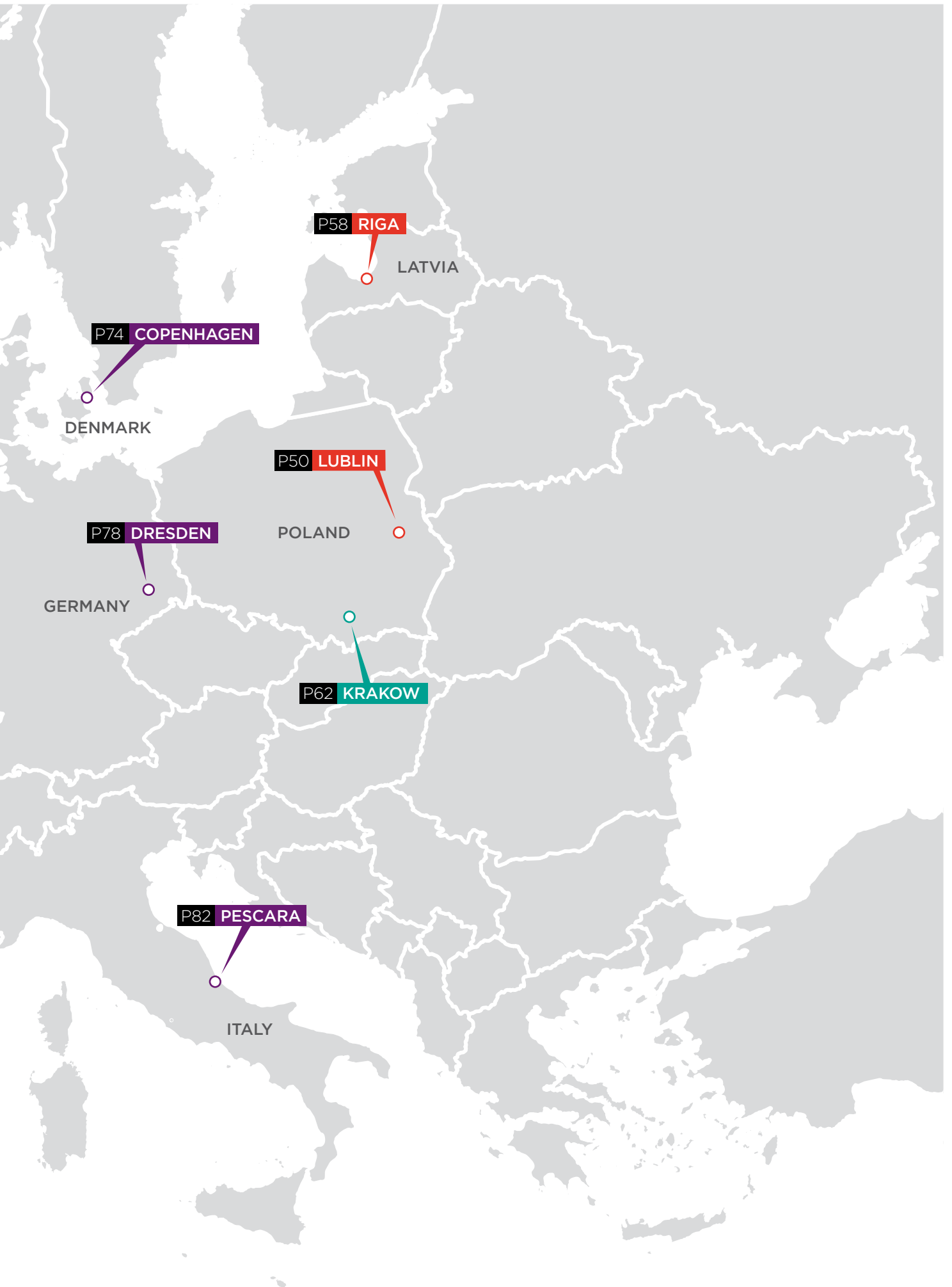
GROUP 2: SOCIAL HOUSING DISTRICTS AND DISADVANTAGED NEIGHBOURHOODS

- Krakow (Poland)
- Grenoble-Alpes Métropole (France)
- Lisbon (Portugal)

GROUP 3: PERICENTRAL ZONES TO BE OPENED UP AND CONNECTED TO THE CITY

- Copenhagen (Denmark)
- Dresden (Germany)
- Pescara (Italy)







LUBLIN CITY CENTRE

HOW TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SPACES IN THE CENTRE OF LUBLIN

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PHOTOS

1. Łokietka Square
 2. Rybny Square Ephemeral Action
 3. Rybny Square
 4. Kochanowskiego Square
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SITE DESCRIPTION

The life line of Lublin (idea proposed by Gordon Cullen the Concise Townscape) was chosen to be the working space of USER project. With time the idea evolved to define the pilot sites as a space circled by an imagined beam anchored in the central part of city life line pulsing to the brims of most vibrant part of Lublin. In this space three squares were selected: Rybny Square, Łokietka Square and Kochanowski Square to become pilot sites.

Later on it was decided to also include in the analysis two closely situated sites Zielona Street and Wolności Square creating that way the "Ring of the Promenade".

All of the sites chosen for the project have similar problem – USERS pass them by not noticing their potential, sites lack proper facilities for USERS, attractive and functional arrangement.

To introduce such change a coalition of stakeholders must be created, strengthened and mobilized to infuse the sites with new energy.

The Local Action Plan is a scenario for a coalition of partners presenting desired changes and integrating the stakeholders around common aspirations.



Building coalition involves the following:

- inviting to cooperation partners such as Lublin Regional Tourism Organization, city parking policy team, Lublin cyclists' coalition, employees of Municipal Welfare Center, Municipal Property Management, the Police, activists focused around initiatives such as WALKING Lublin, "City for People. Standards for pedestrian infrastructure in Lublin" etc.
- creation of a "calendar" to book square spaces for events (exhibitions, trade, etc).
- development of recommendations and a program of cultural activities in the area of pilot sites - if possible - with a dedicated financial support.
- including pilot sites in periodic cultural events: Night of Culture, Jagiellonian Fair, Carnival of Magicians and the Open City.
- creation and promotion of "USERS comments box".
- creating "small Local Support Groups" for individual sites,
- doing the research on the current proportions in different groups of USERS and making an attempt to determine the desired proportion to ensure the viability of the city center.
- a programme supporting local initiatives: enhancing contacts with the leaders and the District Councils (eg. the participatory budgeting).
- using activities organized by students of Architecture Faculty at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin for communication about the LAP (leaflets, media announcements, press conference, the "street workshops" for passers-by on the printed plan of the square etc.)

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

WHAT DOES THE LAP AIMS AT?

The Local Action Plan is a scenario presenting changes in a system of small and big LAPs. It is based on a two-stage change. A small LAP aims to create a "prototype" including changes of short-term nature. It is to be tested by USERS in order to provide proposals for the target Big LAP. Following changes were proposed:

Rybny Square

- introducing visual improvements at Ku Farze Street (renovation of elevation, putting decorations),
- installation of seats, dust bins, monitoring and lanterns, playground elements for children (eg. drawing boards), objects throwing shade and protecting against rain, electric power source, temporary installation of landmark feature, greenery elements
- installation of a temporary observation tower or a boulodrome in a private part of the square, putting light-emitting elements along Rybna Street attracting passers-by,
- introduction of new attractions e.g. permanent flea market, summer cinema etc.

Łokietka Square

- arranging greenery and benches, creating "Green Zones" as used in the design of Market Street in San Francisco by Gehl Architects,
- installation of a temporary "landmark" in the neutral form (tree, work of art etc.),
- elimination of advertising column.





Kochanowski Square

- improving condition of greenery, eliminating useless railings,
- introducing new traffic arrangements: limiting or elimination of parking, reorganization of car passage, creating a passage from the door of the University building to the monument, bicycle stands,
- moveable benches, fixed benches around trees, lighting, mini-courtyard in front of the entrance to the kindergarten,
- new cultural offer for USERS.

Wolności Square

- moving the bicycle station away, elimination or moving parking spaces away,
- replacement of benches to more convenient seats, arranging greenery, improving awnings over window exhibitions,
- arranging a toilet for dogs.

Zielona Street

- elimination of useless posts hindering parking, allowing the counter-movement of bicycles,
- expansion of parking zones only to suppliers at the expense of a permanent parking lot, temporary suspension of parking (eg. during weekends), or other similar arrangements which makes it possible to transform the street from time to time into a pedestrian space,

- agreeing a cultural activities program,
- creation of a playground in the green space adjacent to the street,
- permanent passage from Zielona Street to the Promenade,

Action was made during the implementation of USER project:

- installation of sits at Rybny Square
- installation of barrier to prevent parking in front of the monument at Kochanowski Square
- installation of bicycle stand at Kochanowski Square
- ephemeral activities to check the possible solutions of future investment (ie. sits, benches, greenery, other city furniture).



LESSONS FROM THE LAP

The main aim of the USER project is to build a coalition for changes, that is why in the central field of the Lublin LAP Matrix there are activities integrating the stakeholders around common aspirations. The Matrix of Changes developed during the project organizes the activities according to whether they relate to orga-

nizational changes (in the work processes or in cooperation between the stakeholders), or whether they involve introduction of specific changes in the space or if these changes can be accomplished in a short time or if they are long-term in nature. It includes activities relating to all sites of the USER project, but can

also be used to refine the Local LAP-s, which is reflected in the application of the so-called system of "small" and "big plans" for specific locations. This system of short-term and long-term plans and a coalition built up during months of working together can be used further on to generate transformations in the City.



ZOOM IN



A PILOT PLAN TO TRANSFORM DOWNTOWN LUBLIN, LINKING DIFFERENT PUBLIC SPACES AND ADAPTING THEM TO DIFFERENT URBAN FUNCTIONS

The city of Lublin set up a “short term LAP” seeks to create a temporary “prototype” square. The prototype includes several short-term changes that could become pilot projects, possibly with several different options. It will be tested by USERS in order to provide proposals for the target “Long term LAP” and to familiarize USERS with planned changes.

Among other measures, the following actions will be taken:

- Creation of a Coordinating Group in the Municipal Office that is responsible for the implementation of the LAP. It is a unit able to take charge of the accomplishments of the USER Project. It aims at continuing to implement the LAP with the same local partnership (with the participation of USERS), but with stronger competences in the implementation processes.
- Drafting Rules of Procedure on the current management of public spaces to clarify existing inconsistencies (identifying decision-makers, responsibilities).
- Finding answers to questions about whether a change in the status of plots of land included in the LAP may help with the management of public spaces (eg: change in the legal property of the land).

What legal status is best to create sustainable public spaces (corresponding to the needs of all stakeholders)?

- Development of the “Live in the City Centre” Program to create attractive conditions for permanent residence in the city centre.
- Including the spaces chosen for the LAP in periodic cultural events.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US

- Partners share a common approach to integrating public spaces into the urban fabric. Public spaces are not isolated spaces; they belong to an urban area or the entire city. The “life line” in the Lublin Old Town as a framework to address solutions in public spaces is an example of this approach.
- Testing temporary solutions before implementing definitive solutions (short-term LAP) as a basic approach and methodology.
- The basic assumption of the local action plan is that a mixed and convivial use of the historical centre will help solving the conflict of uses between residents and tourists.
- Integrating public spaces into an urban axis. In the Lublin case, an overarching treatment of the Old Town is a core assumption. Public spaces should become inviting places (we want you to stay here!) in which people can also circulate to get to other places.



MÁLAGA TRINIDAD-PERCHEL

“USE YOUR PLAN”

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PHOTOS

1. Lack of urban quality
2. Touristical attractiveness
3. Corralones
4. Vacant plots

SITE DESCRIPTION

Both neighbours are located in the District centre, on the east side of Gualdamedina River. Trinidad and Perchel are considered deprived areas of the city due to physical deterioration but also because of the population is under risk of social exclusion. Due to its location, it has been excluded of economic and tourist itineraries that benefits the Historical city centre.

The attributes identified by the Diagnosis are:

- Loss of urban functionality;
- Deterioration of the historical role of neighbourhoods developed as historic areas;
- The spaces were designed with an only one functional use, appropriate to the events around Easter: Churches and temples, Brotherhoods...

A special mention is made to Corralón as public-private space connection. USER neighbourhoods are characterized by having a high number of dwellings along this scheme, built in 1989, following the severe flooding in Málaga with particular strength in these Districts.





PROBLEMS OF USES

The "structural" problems of the Districts Trinidad and Perchel are:

- Lack of regulated parkings.
- Use of streets, squares and empty plots as irregular parking
- Limited commercial use on the ground floor.
- Lack of open spaces for collective use and lack of green areas.
- Little private investment to promote news incomes.
- Low permeability to other parts of the city due to natural barriers (River) or architectural (Bridges grounded / pedestrian traffic exclusively).
- Proliferation of empty plots and no developed urban spaces, generally in bad conditions (both: facilities and infrastructure).

ULSG

Residents, local technicians and politicians, municipal employees, University of Málaga, commerce retailers and hoteliers, representants of neighbourhoods and residents, NGOs placed in the areas... compose the enlarged group (about 100 people). This group has worked in Assemblies format in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

A reduced core ULGS group (20-30 people) has worked on the redaction of the Diagnosis (Phase 1) and on the proposal of specific actions (Phase2). The small group is formed by a proportion of the wide one.

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN



WHAT DOES THE LAP AIMS AT?

USER project fits within the context of a global process of revitalizing neighborhoods of South and North Trinidad Perchel. USER main goal is to transform current adverse conditions for public spaces carrying motor for the integral development of the whole urban area in questions: social, commercial, tourist and cultural.

Main idea behind the project is to transform Trinidad and Perchel on the basis of the strength and potential popular culture of the city, located in origin on USER area. The mission of this project would transform the popular culture of the city in a new deal for the tourist and commercial industry Málaga, capable of developing an area traditionally degraded.

The Local Action Plan specific USER will have to be implemented through the intervention in four selected public spaces: two Squares, Llano Doña Trinidad and San Pablo, and two axis, Las Filipensas-Fray Alonso de Santo Tomás-La Legión; and Barrera de la Trinidad-La Trinidad.

It has been planned to work on 13 objectives, through 44 measures. Main goals are actions activate economical/social/uses selected public spaces, widening the permeability, rehabilitate streets, improve the design/maintenance/accesibility of squares.





Main actions to be taken in selected public spaces and validated by wide ULSG on 26th of January 2015 are:

- giving uses to vacant plots placed;
- new sport/green facilities;
- programmes with cultural/social/leisure activities in public spaces;
- including both neighbourhoods in tourist itineraries adding value to historical heritage;
- actions to widening permeability with other parts of the city, specially with historical city centre;
- renovate urban furniture: benches, trees, gardens, lighting; traffic signs...
- limit car parking...



LESSONS FROM THE LAP

“Things can be done other way”

Politicians, technicians, neighbours, commerce's, students, youth... we all have learnt there are other ways to do things. The participative procedure, has successfully involved many social actors with important role for future development of the districts. Working together for almost 3 years, with very limited resources, has created more expectations and trust than any political programme.

Relating to this, other result is the improvement of the image of the districts, but also to focus attention towards no one before, where looking at. So, in parallel to the development of Local USER Action Plan, the Council has decided to allocate € 150,000 into three actions in both urban and environmental improvements neighbourhoods. Street lighting improvements and renovation of the Plaza Llano Doña Trinidad, already finished, still remaining the renewal of Plaza San Pablo, in coming weeks. This has meant an improvement of lighting in 11 streets and a Plaza, adding 70 new points of light located on facades. Also has placed a playground for children and we proceeded to the replacement of some trees in empty tree pits in the Plaza del Llano de D^a Trinidad.

Finally, in the Plaza San Pablo is planned the replacement of existing pavement in poor condition, and a deep cleaning treatment to pavements and urban furniture. Those actions pretend to improve the image of the Plaza inviting a playful use for residents and visitors in the area.

Therefore Malaga City Council will invest a total of € 241,200 to the South-Perchel Barrios Trinidad North, under the URBACT program USER.

Finally, civil servant and public workers have benefited of working in an international network, facing challenges and exchanging their experiences in convivial and fruitful environment. USER has been a first step for future projects, generating added between participants in the project.



ZOOM IN



FOSTERING PRIVATE COMMON COURTYARDS (CORRALONES) AS RELEVANT RESOURCES FOR VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACES

Corralones are traditional dwellings consisting of detached houses with a common courtyard and entrance which residents must pass through to access their homes, and where most of the local community life takes place. The USER pilot site hosts many of them. In the past they served as the neighbourhood meeting point for cooking and washing (common areas where these activities were located), and where parties, meetings, ornamentation and other cultural activities in both neighbourhoods were organised.

Some of the ageing buildings were replaced with new ones that maintained the same urban structure. Typical corralones were included in the new buildings along with a very successful scheme for USER involvement. Neighbourhood communities began to take care of their buildings, keeping them clean, decorating them, and even participating in decoration competitions.

It is the opportunity of such contests that the City would like to grasp, in order to invite visitors (both locals and from outside Malaga) to visit the corralones. It would help opening up the district and improve the social inclusion of its inhabitants.

In this case indeed, activities in the private space are helping to revitalise the public space with the development of major activities to attract other city residents and tourists, such as:

- The Popular week (Semana Popular), a set of cultural activities that open corralones to citizens from other Malaga neighbourhoods and tourists. It is organised through the collaboration of neighbours, local agencies, and associations.
- Floral ornamentation contests in Patios, where neighbours compete in different categories to win prizes, using materials that further improve their shared private space.

- Guided tours of Corralones for students and other associations (schools, groups of musicians, city residents).
- Traditional cuisine tours: An activity offered for the first time in June 2014 to attract new tourism to the area. It has had a positive impact on participants and neighbourhood residents.
- Christmas in Corralones- an activity similar to the Semana Popular based on traditional nacimientos (nativity scenes).

WHAT THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US

- All these activities help involve residents and develop their commitment to changing the public and private environment, promote a sense of belonging, attract visitors (especially those looking for popular culture), and destroy stereotypes about the area's safety.
- The challenge lies in determining how the use of private community courtyards (corralones) can become an important means to improve public space. In other words, how can public space, in a context of social exclusion and conflict, be addressed and revitalised? How can residents feel the same sense of identification and belonging in regards to their neighbourhoods as they already feel about their courtyards? In order to achieve this, actions can be taken to extend these community practices beyond the private buildings into the streets and squares around them.
- The City of Malaga was able to take advantage of traditional and strong social ties within the community to improve public spaces through a participatory process. Historically traditions and popular culture have proved to be excellent tools to involve residents in the transformation of their public and private environment.



RIGA THE SQUARE OF LATVIAN RIFLEMEN

A SQUARE FOR PEOPLE -
INVITING AND FUNCTIONAL ENTRANCE
TO THE CITY CENTRE

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PHOTOS

1. The Square
2. Involving youths
3. Unclear pedestrian paths
4. The Occupation Museum
5. Riga City Hall nearby

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Square of Latvian Riflemen (further - the Square) is right in the centre of Riga, on the axis of the main street - Brīvības iela (Freedom Street). It is situated at the entrance to the Old Town and is bordered by the River Daugava and the Museum of Occupation of Latvia. It also adjoins the provisional residence of the President - The House of Blackheads and the capital's City Hall.

The Square was designed and set up in late 1960s and today it serves as a memorial site to Latvian soldiers who had a major role in establishment of the independent State of Latvia (1918). Following the restoration of Latvian independence (1991) the Square was assigned a new capacity of a transport hub - initially the Square was turned into a public transport stop and later it was reorganized into a tourist coach station and a parking lot. Today due to its strategic loca-

tion, the Square is an important crossing point and on a daily basis it is mainly used for pedestrian transit and pick-up functions. However, the potential of the Square is not exploited and it has considerable functional shortages - significant part of the square is used as a parking space for cars and tourist coaches.



As a result, crowds of vehicles manoeuvre there trying to find a parking place while a heavy traffic flow cuts-off the access to the Daugava River. Pedestrians also have other difficulties – a pedestrian transit movement or cycling is problematic due to poor quality of coverage, as asphalt pavements are outworn and bumpy, cobble stone is uneven and majority of concrete plates are broken. Thus, due to its poor functionality and lack of cosiness the Square is not used for any leisure activities or communication. People just do not stop and linger there.

The Square lacks its own identity as well as street furniture and greeneries. Existing utilities are outworn and insufficient, there are no signs for pedestrians and visitors, and lighting is inadequate. The key visual defects are neglected scenery, lack of common design and visual pollution such as posts and a kiosk.

Redevelopment plan for the Square was elaborated jointly by the USER Local Support Group (LSG) members representing broad-based institutional partnership, experts and USERS of the pilot site.

Various community interest groups were involved in project activities – inhabitants, their represented organisations, entrepreneurs in the relevant territory – all together more than 50 institutions and direct USERS of the pilot site were taking part in the LSG activities. In addition to LSG work, at all stages of project implementation direct USERS were given various other opportunities to provide their vision and ideas for the Square revival – through fieldwork and creative workshops organized for school-children and students, through questionnaires by being interviewed as direct USERS of the Square.

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN



WHAT DOES THE LAP AIMS AT?

The overall goal of Local Action Plan (LAP) is to develop and improve public space of the Square in accordance with the quality requirements for contemporary public space (availability, safety, comfort, identity, attractiveness, multi functionality, accessibility, diversity and image) by considering historical background, place and role of the Square in Riga urban environment.



To reach the goal, following specific objectives and subsequent actions were defined:

SQUARE WITH HISTORY

- Setting of historical background

SQUARE FOR PEOPLE

- Traffic flow improvement
- Improvement of functional zoning
- Arrangement of facilities according to USER needs and developed functional zoning of the square
- Improvement of environment accessibility and provision to various USER groups

SQUARE AS AN ACTIVITY PLATFORM

- Image improvement of the Square, promotion of its recognition, popularisation

BETTER MANAGED SQUARE

- Provision of maintenance and management of the Square





LAP for redevelopment of public space for the Square foresees short- and long term activities. As a long term action LSG has approved to elaborate a concept for the Square reconstruction that includes open architectural design competition for implementation of public space improvement solutions identified within the USER project. In the short term it is planned to reduce the number of parking lots, replace a stop and remove parking lots of tourist buses, provide informative signs for pedestrians and cyclists for the surrounding objects and the most convenient linkages, to repair pavement tiles and to nominate responsible institution for the site maintenance.



LESSONS FROM THE LAP

Public space regeneration has been at the heart of recent changes in Riga city environment. Riga became a partner of the USER project with an aim to gain a better understanding of efficient public space management, to improve a collaboration among municipal institutions through Local Support Group work and, as a joint LSG effort, to elaborate a Local Action Plan (LAP) for functional and visual improvement of key-importance city's public spaces being selected as the USER pilot sites.

At the same time growing community interest in the urban lifestyle has encouraged the municipality to undertake its own public space development projects as well as to

support a number of private initiatives for public space enhancements. These developments have highlighted a need to revise existing municipal public space development policies and routine maintenance practices. To integrate many fragmented activities into a single Master Plan, a comprehensive city scale public space Thematic Plan is being drawn up to address urban green space, city waterways, waterfronts, streets and squares. Elaboration of it is largely based on the USER approach of public space diagnosis through analysis of its USERS' needs, thus ensuring diverse and responsive USER involvement in all stages of planning.





ZOOM IN



A SQUARE FOR ME - A METHODOLOGY DESIGNED AND IMPLEMENTED FOR USER NEEDS TO ACTIVELY INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE REDEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SPACE

The pilot project for Latvian Riflemen Square was implemented with the active participation of schoolchildren, as part of the Learner-Explorer-City Dweller initiative involving young architects from the Latvian Association of Architects. The goal of this Learner-Explorer-City Dweller initiative was to design a methodology that would involve schoolchildren in the redevelopment of a public space.

Latvian Riflemen Square - one of the USER pilot territories in Riga - was selected as a sample site. The schoolchildren from the neighbouring Riga State Gymnasium No. 3 - the USERS of the square - have developed a vision for the public space according to their needs. 34 schoolchildren and students from 3 different age groups (ages 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18) participated in a creative workshop, "A Square For Me". Two architects and experts from the Riga City Council City Development Department joined each workshop. The level of discussion was adapted to the abilities of younger schoolchildren by teaching older students to have a respectful attitude to different opinions to all work towards a goal of successful cooperation.

Development of the vision for Latvian Riflemen Square started with research into the current situation. Schoolchildren explored the site by looking at the square through the eyes of a city planner. They observed people in their daily routines and analysed the functional use of the square.

During the research process, questionnaires were filled-in by answering questions and also giving a brief explanation of the answers. The viewpoints were summarized during discussion in a creative workshop. Teams presented the results of their research analysis to each other. On the basis of this diagnosis, the schoolchildren have been looking for solutions to improve the functionality of the square according to their needs. With this specific vision in mind, they developed a model with adaptable patterns (people, cars, and bicycles). Each team analysed the selected function, methods, and possible arrangement of USERS in the square by reflecting them afterwards in this model.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US

- Increasing participation in the analysis and improvement of the city's central public spaces through the active involvement of different stakeholders, and particularly students, played a significant role in the process.
- Achieving a shared vision of the role of Latvian Rifleman Square is of strategic importance to the project, with regards to the local context.

The practical research process carried out with school children (workshops, questionnaires, field visits, architects monitoring) was innovative in itself and is an example of the richness of the project and of the richness of the USERS' participation.



KRAKOW AZORY HOUSING ESTATE

WORKING TOGETHER FOR
A FRIENDLY PUBLIC SPACE
IN THE AZORY HOUSING ESTATE

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PHOTOS

1. Getting inhabitants involved
2. Public spaces in Azory

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Azory housing estate is one of the biggest residential housing estates located about 4 km from the Main Market Square in Krakow.

After the construction of 72 blocks of flats in the years 1962-1977 using the large-panel method, the area became dominated by multi-family housing. The area is inhabited by 15.295 residents, (2.05% of Krakow's population) which is ageing (participation of population over the age of 70 - 14.3%). It is a typical 'sleeping district': mono-functional, with ineffective use of space.

Problems were diagnosed in existing municipal documents by observation in the field, as well as through dialogue with the local community during the meetings of the ULSG.

The members of the ULSG are mainly inhabitants and leaders of local communities (representatives of the residents, acting

in housing cooperatives, housing associations, social organisations etc.), representatives of the owners and administrators of the real estate but also councilors of the City Council and District Council. In addition, representatives of institutions responsible for safety (City Guards) and for social infrastructure were invited to work together. The main tasks of LSG included: defining problems existing in the public space of the housing estate, indicating the most important public spaces and expected changes.



AN IMPORTANT STAGE OF THE DIAGNOSIS WAS TO DEFINE THE PROBLEMS, CONFLICTS AND NEEDS OF RESIDENTS RELATED TO THE USE OF THE COMMON SPACES. THE MAIN IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS INCLUDED:

Shape, layout of the space

- no isolated 'local center'
- commercial services are dispersed and generally limited to few grocery stores and small shops and businesses
- mainly the function of a dormitory
- the use of space hostile to the elderly and disabled

Transportation layout and parking spaces

- need of modernization and adaptation of the transport layout to real needs
- lack of sufficient number of parking places and resulting appropriation of the common spaces and green areas for this purpose.

Intermingling of public and private space

- various ownership forms, which results in a conflict visible in the space, arising from various methods and possibilities of administering the area.

Maintenance costs

- high costs due to poor technical condition of the space and the facilities and devices, deteriorating condition of the buildings and municipal infrastructure
- inefficiency in managing and using the space,
- lack of an effective financial management system

Safety, exclusion

- various pathologies and conflicts that originate in the social issues (hooliganism of football fans, unemployed, groups of teenagers, alcoholism)
- traffic safety,
- exclusion or limitation of functioning of the elderly

Governance

- conflicts in the management of common space: particularly at the junction of various ownership forms, management methods or visible functional shortages, (parking places or grid of commercial services).

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

WHAT DOES THE LAP AIMS AT?

The overall objective of the LAP is to develop small and large scale projects which will transform Azory housing estate into a place for all residents to experience a good quality of life, access local services and enjoy a high quality physical environment.

The aim of the actions undertaken in the project is to improve the quality of the residential environment through the introduction of changes in the use of public spaces. The variety of efforts to achieve a friendly space, a place for physical exercise and social interaction of the residents, with which they can identify, has been presented in the form of ideas and visions that may become the starting point for transformations in future projects. Possible changes concern seven different subject areas and include the following activities responding to the diagnosed problems:

Infrastructure elements are well appointed and displaced

- a comprehensive land development project
- creation of a space for events and resident's meetings

- designing sports fields, multifunctional recreation areas
- planning temporary devices (winter ice rink, amphitheatre)
- creating new places of services, and activity places, linking together the existing ones
- designing parking places

Care for the aesthetics and friendly use of the public space and small architecture

- designing a spatial identification system (tables, labels, signs)
- including elements of spatial arrangement and landscaping characteristic to each neighbourhood
- designing small architecture elements characteristic for the place
- customizing internal neighbourhoods





- coordination of area maintenance and keeping neighbourhood clean by property owners
- running space for dogs, educating dog owners

Multifunctionality, diversity of functions linked together

- creating a network of activity and services facilities
- the creation of a space for events / meetings in the open air, a covered outdoor space, protected from the sun and an amphitheatre
- checking the location of small commercial and service points, improving their quality
- diversification of activity / meeting places and linking them with a network of services
- increasing the use of the local market (fruit and vegetable market)

Security and safety problems

- ordering and proper maintenance of public areas
- clear spatial information: identification system (information boards, labels, signs)
- designing the area with open spaces without dark places or corners
- the design and modernization of area lighting (energy saving)

Preservation of greenery (design of new green spaces and greenery maintenance)

- preservation of existing good quality greenery and planning new greenery places

- inventory and assessment of the quality of greenery
- planned periodic and current treatments
- green barriers against graffiti (hedges, vines on the walls)
- competitions for the most beautiful greenery

Appropriate location of functions for each age group

- multifunctional neighbourhood cultural centres
- snack bars, small restaurants or cafes
- a fitness club, sports fields, multifunctional recreation areas
- temporary devices (winter ice rink)
- meeting places /neighbourly squares for residents of each group of age
- adaptation to the needs of the elderly and the disabled
- creating a map of the needs of residents with disabilities

Creating a good transport and communication system

- design and construction/reconstruction of a network of safe walking and cycling paths on the estates
- planning a new tram line

After LAP implementation the ULSG will be transformed into the Local Regeneration Forum which will constitute a (collective) executive body, responsible for final preparation and implementation of the regeneration programme of the housing estate.

LESSONS FROM THE LAP

One of the main goals of the actions undertaken by the USER project and the Local Action Plan was to build a local civil society, to involve the housing estate inhabitants in public activities for the city development and to increase the social participation of the inhabitants in improving the quality of life in their neighborhood. The objective of the meetings in the framework of Local Support Group was to bring together various local players to find a way to act together creating vibrant and successful mixed-use district, ensuring that the USERS are able to access both the existing and new opportunities arising as a result of LAP implementation.

We learned a big number of lessons from the meetings and workshops which took place in the framework of the USER project

and the elaboration of the LAP for Azory. We understood that it is essential to meet the local stakeholders whose point of view and experience provide invaluable input. This experience is always complementary to that of the municipality employees. In addition, it is very important to form a strong partnership based on trust to hear all partners' opinions. Therefore, the project developed will be easily accepted by its future USERS.

Activation of residents and local entrepreneurs in social and participatory actions facilitated the development of diagnostic methods, ideas for projects collecting and for the implementation of projects necessary to create a friendly space. This method will be applied in other parts of our city.



2

ZOOM IN



MOBILIZING RESIDENTS OF A COOPERATIVE HOUSING ESTATE TO ANALYZE AND PROPOSE NEW URBAN USES OF COMMON SPACES

The LSG has been very active in trying to get inhabitants aware of the issue of public spaces uses. To keep up the momentum of the meetings they used a variety of tools: workshops, walking tours, and newsletters – these were always initiated by the Municipality, but with the hope that one day the citizens will take initiative on their own. Few new members joined the meetings – the size of the groups even decreased –, but the groups are stronger and more united.

To conduct a diagnosis of Azory's public spaces and to understand the residents' needs the LSG used several survey methods: existing city documents, discussions during workshops (in ULSG meetings), surveys in schools to understand children's and teenagers' needs, competitions for children (for example a drawing competition for children about their "dreamed neighbourhood"), surveys during local convivial events.

Participants in the meetings were mainly USERS of Azory's common spaces: local community leaders, representatives of property owners and administrators, representatives of local businesses, school representatives, universities, social centres, cultural centres, sport organisations, street workers... And as well: Cracow city councillors, District Council councillors, municipal services, municipal police, experts (urban planners, architects...)

Since 2013, this group has held 6 meetings. The meetings took the form of workshops to enable free-flowing conversation and make people more comfortable expressing their ideas. Two local events have been organised for the residents in order to build trust and open the dialog on the urban project.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US

- What to decide and how to make the decision? It is crucial to clarify the core issue and to focus on the main challenges. The form, functionality, and uses of Azory's public spaces should be at the heart of this partnership works. This issue shows up the conflicts between the stakeholders and it should be clear that the proposed partnership should provide solutions. It is important that the main leaders from each stakeholder are involved, especially from the housing cooperative – because the main tensions centre on this cooperative.
- Finding local leaders to represent the main stakeholders concerned with the use of public space became a key challenge. Indeed the culture of dialog between the municipality and residents is quite new in Cracow.
- It is difficult to involve people in a participatory process when the issue concerns too many people. It can be helpful to set up a monitoring process to track citizen participation and the involvement of different stakeholders.

GRENOBLE-ALPES MÉTROPOLE

ILES-DE-MARS / OLYMPIADES (DISTRICT CITY OF PONT-DE-CLAIX)
RENAUDIE DISTRICT (CITY OF SAINT-MARTIN-D'HÈRES)

INVOLVING INHABITANTS
IN PUBLIC SPACES RENEWAL PROJECTS

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PHOTOS

1. New playground in Iles de Mars
2. A square in Renaudie

SITE DESCRIPTION

Grenoble-Alpes Métropole is a local government for the urban area of which the City of Grenoble is the centre. It is not a city in itself. Therefore our LAP has been built together with the 2 cities of the urban area where our pilot sites are: the cities of Pont de Claix and of Saint Martin d'Hères. Grenoble-Alpes Métropole has coordinated the development of USER approach in each local project and has organized the transfer of experiences between the local level and the European network. The 2 cities have been fully in charge of designing and implementing the projects on their pilot sites. The works of our LSG has been particularly stimulated by a local experience-sharing process animated by a Resource Centre, "Centre de ressources pour la gestion urbaine et sociale de proximité". The aim of this local network is to share

experiences about socio-urban issues. Several workshops and sites visits have been organised, about "how can cities, professionals, elected representatives and inhabitants work together to improve public spaces". Grenoble-Alpes Métropole is one of the main financing partner of these projects - and more generally speaking, of the local policies for deprived neighborhoods.

We have chosen to work exclusively on public spaces situated in deprived neighborhoods. In these areas indeed, the stake is greater than just renovating public spaces. Project on public spaces become a mean to create a dialog with inhabitants, and to reinforce social links.



Iles de Mars / Olympiades, City of Pont-de-Claix

This area is mainly composed by large blocks of flat (social housing or co-ownerships). The public space is dominated by parking lots, streets with few pedestrian paths, sports ground and low-quality green areas. Waste management needs to be improved. Generally speaking, the neighbourhood suffers from a negative image and is isolated from the rest of the city.

In 2013 the municipality has launched an ambitious project of public spaces renovation. A park has been created in the hearth of the neighborhood, which allows a much easier pedestrian flow and is equipped with renovated facilities (sports grounds, playgrounds, benches...). This is the first phase of the public spaces renovation project, which is planned to last at least 5 years.

The municipality works in a strong partnership with the 2 social landlords and with the social centre. There is as well a well-established dialog with residents associations and with local NGOs (in the field of sports, arts, gardening...). But getting inhabitants involved individually remains tricky.



Renaudie – City of Saint Martin d’Hères

The neighbourhood is a large housing estate in an atypical architecture in star shape. The buildings are dense and low. Public spaces are prominent but suffers of a lack of functionality and lisibility. They are mostly intermingled pedestrian paths, mineral squares, and stairs. Private gardens on ground floors are not looked after and it damages the visual aspect of public spaces. The specific shape and layout of Renaudie generates consequent problems of use, such as groups of people at the buildings’ entrances and in back alleys, traffic of motorbikes on pedestrian paths, deposits of bulky waste, etc. Growing illegal activities on public spaces set in an insecurity feeling among inhabitants. Many flats rented by the social landlords are empty.

The property rights of public spaces are extremely confused and it causes a lot of maintenance issue. The waste collection is not efficient either.

The municipality and the social landlord are working in a strong partnership. The municipality is implementing a solid field action to get closer to inhabitants’ needs. However it proves difficult to get them involved – amongst others because there is no organized inhabitants’ associations. Tensions are obvious between inhabitants on the one side and the municipality and the social landlord on the other side.

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN



WHAT DOES THE LAP AIMS AT?

Iles de Mars / Olympiades – Pont de Claix

The renovation of Iles de Mars public spaces was planned before the launching of USER project. Therefore the city of Pont-de-Claix has chosen to focus its action plan on the uses of the newly-created public spaces.

The action plan has 3 main objectives.

- Making a public space with USERS. Inhabitants and local associations have been consulted during the design of the new public space. The City intends to broaden and improve this participative approach for the next phases of the urban project.

- Organise a constant monitoring of uses and dysfunctions. The city is aware that the new public space may not be used exactly as it was designed for. Therefore it is important to keep watchful in order, should a problem occur, to be reactive in solving it.
- Social animation of public spaces. The better the public space is appropriated by inhabitants, the better it may live. Therefore the city is organising open events on the new public space, to get inhabitants used to spend convivial times on it.





- Develop this uses-based approach for the next phases. The next phases of the urban project will be based on this participative and uses-based approach and the city is struggling to adapt its methods to this goal.

It has to be mentioned that the city works together with the 2 social landlords of the area in implementing this action plan.

Renaudie – City of Saint Martin d’Hères

A diagnosis based on participative urban walks has permitted to elaborate a phased action plan to improve the functioning of the district. Public spaces are one of the main topics of this action plan. It aims at improving inhabitants’ day-to-day life through the renewal of parking, of the household waste management, and of visual aspect of public spaces. The challenge is to work these future improvements with inhabitants but also to structure a clear decision making process with the stakeholders, to be able to move forward on projects. The aim is also to find funding to manage these projects.

The first LAP objective is to reorganise public spaces to give them a quality of use. It entails several things. First, clarifying the legal ownership of the “public” space so that responsibilities of the different owners are clear (city, social landlords, inhabitants...). then, to create visual limits to separate public and private spaces. And last, to improve the quality of urban furniture.

Second objective: to improve the daily management of public spaces. The city is working on the field to keep a close eye on dysfunctions and help solving inhabitants’ problems about public spaces. Small-scaled renovation projects are implemented together with inhabitants to get them involved and keep the dialog open.

Third objective: to support uses of public spaces. The city is working in partnership with others local stakeholders of Renaudie (social landlord, social centre, NGOs...) to create convivial events on public spaces.



LESSONS FROM THE LAP

Our local action plan is focused on inhabitant’s involvement in public spaces-related projects.

It has allowed us to strengthen the local partnerships, and has been the opportunity to take a step back from our working practices. We have led a review of our decision-making process and launch debates with our local partners that will help us to get more efficient. We have as well learnt what follows.

- The urban project should not be considered as ended once the works are over. It is important set up a specific monitoring to watch the uses of the new public space. Cities should dedicate a specific budget to modify marginally some aspects of the project (urban furniture for instance), should the new uses not fit the urban shape – or in return, should the new public space not fit the USER’s needs.
- It seems easier to enter into a dialogue with inhabitants when they are organised in groups of interests.
- The land property has to be clear in order for the maintenance of public space to be done efficiently.
- In order to tolerate the long-term implementation of broad urban projects, inhabitants need to see the concrete realisation of some small-scaled projects in their neighbourhood.
- To co-construct an urban project with inhabitants seems achievable – provided that the rules are clearly settled on what is negotiable and what is not (due to political choices or technical constraints)
- When there is no common working habit between the different units within the municipality, it gets difficult to integrated inhabitants’ advices within the urban project.
- The municipality alone cannot solve the problems of uses on public spaces. Working in partnership with other stakeholders involved on this public space and in buildings around (in both technical and social fields) seems indispensable.
- A public space – especially a new one – may live better if people feel as owner of this place. The municipality must consider that animating a public space is a much of its responsibility as to build and maintain it.

ZOOM IN



MAKING PROJECT MANAGEMENT METHODS MORE FLEXIBLE TO ADAPT DECISIONS TO **USERS'** INPUT AND TO PLANNED USES OF PUBLIC SPACE.

Pont-de-Claix's LAP is focusing on the uses of newly created public space, developing a public space in cooperation with **USERS**. This new space is a pedestrian park designed to be the lively centre of the district. Residents and local organisations were consulted during the design of the park. The City intends to broaden and improve this participatory approach for the next phases of the urban project. At the same time, the city implements an ongoing monitoring of problems of uses that may occur on the new park. The city is aware that the new public space may not be used exactly in the way it was designed. Therefore it is important to stay on top of the situation in order to be reactive if problems arise.

Another component of the LAP is social activity in public spaces. The more residents appropriate the public space, the best it will function. The city and its partners are therefore organizing open events in the new public space so that residents come to see it as an enjoyable place to be. The next phases of the urban project will be based on this participatory and use-based approach, and the city is struggling to adapt its methods to this goal. It is worth noting that the city is working in close relationship with the two social landlords in the area to implement this action plan.

In the case of the Renaudie neighbourhood (Saint Martin d'Hères), a diagnosis based on participatory urban walks led to the development of a plan to improve the way the neighbourhood functions. It seeks to improve the day-to-day life of residents through the redevelopment of parking, household waste management, and the visual aspect of open spaces. The challenge is both to involve residents in the redevelopment process and to structure a clear decision-making process with stakeholders in order to move forward on projects. The municipality wants to reorganize public spaces to improve their quality of use. This requires first determining who owns the

open spaces so that the different owners' responsibilities are clear (city, social landlords, residents, etc.) – which, due to the complicated architecture, is quite difficult to do.

Then visual limits must be improved to separate public and private spaces. Indeed, there is no privacy for inhabitants whose flats have a garden, and these gardens get abandoned. It contributes to downgrading the already poor image of the open spaces (they are made of concrete, sometimes degraded, with very few amenities). Lastly, the quality of urban furniture must be improved. The city is working in the field to keep a close eye on problems and help solve residents' concerns about public spaces. In this framework, small-scale renovation projects are being implemented with the participation of residents to get them involved and keep the dialog open. Likewise, supporting public spaces appropriation is central in this project. The city is therefore working in partnership with other local stakeholders (social landlords, social centres, NGOs, etc.) to create convivial events in public spaces.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US

- The urban project should not be seen as complete once the work is finished. It is important to set up a specific monitoring process to observe how the new public space is being used. Cities should allocate a specific budget to make small modifications to some aspects of the project (urban furniture for instance), should the new uses not fit the urban design – or should the new public space not fit the **USERS'** needs.
- In order to better tolerate the long-term implementation of major urban projects, residents need to see some small-scale projects already being completed in their neighbourhood.
- A public space – especially a new one – may function better if people take ownership of it. The municipality should see itself as responsible for bringing a public space to life and not just building and maintaining it.



LISBON BAIRRO HORIZONTE

**PUBLIC SPACE AS THE ACTIVE
STAGE FOR THE SOCIAL
AND TERRITORIAL COHESION**

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PHOTOS

1. A broad urban renovation project
 2. Site visit
 3. Bairro horizonte
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SITE DESCRIPTION

The Bairro Horizonte district is located in the Chelas Valley, in the eastern city, geo centred between the administrative boundaries of the local Municipal Authorities of Juntas de Freguesia do Beato e Penha da França. It is one of the “priority investment zones” in Lisbon - the disadvantaged neighbourhoods which are under an urban renewal programme, called BIP / ZIP.

This district suffers from an unstructured urban fabric with lots of empty plots. The social context is difficult and many tensions occur between populations living in this BIP / ZIP area, the housing cooperative and the private owners of flats.

The area and the BIP/ZIP neighbourhoods inhabitants have a social stigma related with uncivil behaviours. Moreover, in this district there are hardly any structured and connected public spaces. The district host

many infrastructures that no other Lisbon districts wished to host (ex: electric plant) - a real “Not In My Backyard” phenomenon.

The municipality has already tried to launch numerous urban plans but due to the lack of fund, they have never been implemented. However the district can count on a very strong local dynamic, with locally active organizations and with solid partnerships resulting from Municipal BIP/ZIP investment Program, which allows a shift regarding real local change in public space. The municipality considers that the change may come from the ground as well.

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN



WHAT DOES THE LAP AIMS AT?

The LAP aims at tackling the following weaknesses of Bairro Horizonte public spaces:

Urban and environmental

- Disconnected from the urban fabric
- Unfinished urban layout
- Lots of urban plans
- Urban voids / dead spaces
- Too much space but lack of place
- Garbage dumping
- Lack of proximity facilities
- Unresolved problem of housing property

Social and economical

- Lack of local stores / firms
- Lack of multilevel functions / services
- Social rupture
- Conflict with inhabitants

Participation and governance

- Lack of local participation in the urban planning decisions
- Lack of private and public investment to implement urban projects

Therefore the main goal of the LAP is to use public spaces as promoter of social cohesion.

The main goal is to structure a local partnership, with public and private stakeholders sharing analyses, resources, and experiences in steering and management groups. The process of “constructing the urban public space” with citizens becomes the main goal.

The municipality intends to build up or renovate amenities and spaces, using the Local Action Plan to organise the continuous “creation” of urban public space. This will allow the city to make its intervention on the ground more visible and understandable as a response to local needs. The improvement of public spaces is key to ensure a stable collaboration relationship with the inhabitants, in a context made of institutional and financial tensions.

To this end, the municipality implemented a LSG with a governance based on a Partners’ Commitment Letter to the LAP, a Coordination team, an Executive and Extended Commission, and thematic local teams. These local teams gather local inhabitants and organisations, public and private decision makers, technical experts and academics (teachers and students). These local teams are “co-designing” the solutions with the stakeholders in real time.



MATRIX OF THE VISION FOR BAIRRO HORIZONTE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

urban and environmental ecosystem

- ENVIRONMENT / ENERGY / SUSTAINABILITY - Reduce Eco-Footprint | Zero Carbon Emission | Renewal Energies | Environmental awareness and responsibility | innovation and sustainability
- URBAN PARK - Connected to the west “green city structure”
- MOBILITY / ACCESSIBILITY - Soft Mobility | connection to the city Bike Lane Network | connection HUB between the city center and west riverfront
- EQUIPMENTS / PROXIMITY FUNCTIONS - Leisure | Sports | Environmental | Culture | Social | Economical | Educational | Health funtions



Inclusion and socio-economic cohesion

- LOCAL ECONOMIC ACTIVATION - Strengthening commercial corporate networks | New local jobs program reinforcement | Promote Entrepreneurship | Private and public investment attraction | New enterprise incubation | Local organizations training
- SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SAFETY - Community Policy | One stop shop - citizenship community place | Educational services
- INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - Environmental Innovation Research Center | Enhanced Reality Study in Public Space | Green efficiency energy

Co-governance

- LOCAL NETWORK - Local partners co-decision coordination structure | Governance model |
- ACTION MODEL - Thematic operational structures to pilote the Local Action Plan
- PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION - Structures, platforms and tools to support active participation and communication
- MONITORING - Programs and actions assessment to help steer the Local Action Plan ongoing initiatives to ashore efficiency thru context evolution

LESSONS FROM THE LAP

CITY.ZENS (CITY+CITIZENS)

The USER project has been considered as an operative field case study for Lisboa co-governance process in BIP/ZIP. USER is a framework to drive the BIP/ZIP strategy of local development. It helped to translate active participation into a model of local shared decision and execution.

The implementation of a team, with the public and

private stakeholders, sharing diagnosis, resources, experience and energy in local common decision and management platform is the main gold. The process of “construct the city public space” with the citizens, is the real achievement

For that, and to steer the LAP, we are implementing a local team with a governance model based in: Partners commitment

Letter to LAP, Coordination team, Executive and Extended commission and thematic local teams. This local team will have a mix of local inhabitants and organizations, public and private decision makers, technical experts and academic (teaching body and students). It’s going to be a local process/result/learning oriented platform.



ZOOM IN



CO-GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATIVE BUDGETS IN VULNERABLE AREAS OF LISBON

The local partnership is reinforced by the provision of a budget line in the municipal budget, devoted to implement the interventions planned by the LSG in the pilot site. This budget is directly managed by the LSG. A part of it is participative.

This participative budget involves and active participation of the LSG, with local residents' associations, NGOs and other local stakeholders, public authorities (technical and political), academia, and different social and economic actors. On the basis of participatory methodologies, these USERS are co-deciding the choice of investment projects to be implemented in public spaces. The proposal of projects comes from inha-

bitants on NGOs. The validation process includes the following steps:

- Each local LSG partner chooses 2 intervention areas for a public space proposal
- All the proposals are mapped
- All the proposals are evaluated
- All the proposals are discussed in the LSG
- 3 priority proposals are identified and chosen through a voting process
- These 3 proposals will be technically pre-designed and presented in a public meeting
- The community votes to select the final proposal
- This final proposal is co-designed with inhabitants before being implemented



WHAT THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US

- The collaborative experience in local coordination set up by Lisbon is conclusive. The sharing of responsibilities between local partners, citizens and public authorities for integrated Co-Local Governance (co-decision |co-execution| co-management) of the territory - and in particular of public spaces - seems to work well.
- The inclusion of USERS in day-to-day decision making ensures that territories and communities benefit from the process.
- The appropriation of public spaces by local USERS is promoted by the use of this participatory budgeting - it helps to decide how public spaces will be constructed and improved at the community level.



COPENHAGEN SUNDHOLM

SUNDHOLM INCLUDING YOU

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PHOTOS

1. The Sundholm district
 2. The Sundholm garden
 3. Open-air event
 4. Site visit in Sundholm
-

SITE DESCRIPTION

Sundholm is an area for disadvantaged groups in Copenhagen; it is situated in the Local Council at Amager West and has close to 60.000 inhabitants. In Amager West the different neighbourhoods vary tremendously from beautiful Amsterdam style row houses to architectural award winning buildings with rooftop penthouse apartments, and in the other end of the scale public housing associations, projects and social institutions for the homeless people.

Sundholm was built in the early 1900s as a social institution for the homeless, thieves, prostitutes, mentally ill people etc. The buildings are architecturally homogenous and protected by the Conservation of Buildings Act. Ever since, the institutions in the area have addressed issues concerning the homeless

or socially vulnerable groups. Social activation initiatives and social economic businesses are many thus the visitors and USERS cover a variety of social aspects. The neighbourhood also holds an elder home for former drug USERS, temporary housing of evicted families, a juvenile prison and an institution for underage criminals.

In recent years other groups have moved to the area; kinder gardens, an art crafts gallery and workspace, and now new resident housing is being built in the area. This gives new needs of uses in the public spaces at Sundholm.

The increased complexity of different uses creates needs for more different activities and public spaces, where the USERS can coexist safely no matter what background they have. It is thereby the main challenge



of the project to develop public spaces that can accommodate the big diversity of USERS and needs. It is crucial to assure the coexistence of different social and ethnic groups.

The scope of our project is to create a socially robust and sustainable organisational group consisting of citizens living in or around the area; all different represented organizations – both public and private, and people from all social groups who use the area. With monthly meetings the members can exchange experiences and problems, to solve problems and collaborate on new projects. Through participation and working with different methods, they get to know each other and strengthen the sense of ownership and commitment to the area



OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN



WHAT DOES THE LAP AIMS AT?

LAP main goals:

- Insight in the results of the realized projects
- help to continue the future work with inclusion
- anchor the good network cooperation across

Action: Public space

In the south part of Sundholm there are being built new children day care centres and housing for existing and new citizens. To strengthen the cohesion between existing and new buildings in the area, the land owners and local institutions have collaborated on creating a public meeting point called “Sundholms Bakker”.

The space has different owners and it was a vacant space between the existing and the coming buildings. It has been a motivation to test if these very different owners could work together and agree to develop, implement and maintain a project across the cadastral boundaries.



To make the different owners; City of Copenhagen, the housing Association 3B, the Factory of Art and Design and the Activity Centre, work together, they have signed a partnership agreement. To develop a project together with different interests has been a big challenge, but it has forced the stakeholders to compromise and to find a collaborative and sustainable solution.

By involving the neighbours and local institutions, the affiliation and sense of ownership from the USERS has been increased. It also gives identity to the area and makes the USERS feel safe and welcome.





Action: urban garden

The introduction of new residents in an area has created a rise of awareness to the increased risk of conflicts between the different groups of USERS that have to share the public spaces. It has therefore been crucial to find a social inclusive solution with the focus on tolerance and understanding.

To imply this empathic attitude between the USERS, we needed to design a frame,

where it was possible to get the different USERS, both homeless and other citizens, more actively involved under safe circumstances. This has led to the development of “The Urban Garden for Social Inclusion” in a vacant green area at Sundholm.

The social garden has already proven to contain a unique form of including power, where the homeless are no longer looked at as

excluded troublemakers, but are being acknowledged from the citizens as friendly and helpful persons.

The area has achieved a beautiful and safe recreational space, where everybody can come with their families. The local police have reported significantly less crimes and vandalism in the area, since the garden has been established.



LESSONS FROM THE LAP

Through different kinds of methods like workshops, walk-and-talks, monthly meetings, events and mayor visits, the LSG has mapped and identified local challenges and needs, developed concrete solutions and decided which activities and projects to prioritize.

From the beginning it has been important that the members of the LSG have contributed significantly and independently in the realization of the activities and projects. This way the citizens and the local institutions have been engaged in the strategic

work to create a political attention and support for the key issues in the area.

The LSG is working for the future in Sundholm based on common wishes, which has created a direction what to focus on and how to work forward. All these wishes are collected in the full LAP in Danish, where there is a “project card” for each activity or project. The project cards will contain information about involved partners, budget, vision, challenges and more. This way the LAP works as a tool for the LSG members to move on with future actions in Sundholm.



ZOOM IN



THE SUNDHOLM URBAN GARDEN. URBAN GARDENING FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION.

One of the LAP main action is, as described above, the Urban Garden project for social inclusion. It is inspired by increasing interest in the social effect of urban gardening. The urban renewal planning in the area aims at taking advantage of the opportunity to transform a vacant lot into an urban garden involving both homeless people and other USERS of the area. The garden functions as a dynamic place where local residents from different nationalities garden alongside homeless people. The neighbours that are involved in the garden have formed an association that includes the representative social worker from the Activity Centre. 60 Garden boxes for local residents (members of the garden association) and 25 garden boxes for the Activity Centre's USERS (homeless and socially disadvantaged people) are already in use.

In the few years the garden has existed, our efforts to bridge the gap between the groups has resulted in a major increase in the willingness to understand rather than just tolerate people who aren't considered "normal". Even though residents and homeless people rarely have much direct interaction, they have developed ways in which they communicate with each other. For example, the residents using the garden know that if they put a flag in their garden box when they are on holiday, the homeless people will take care of the plants for them while they are away. This kind of interaction clearly fosters a friendly and empathic attitude between the different groups in the garden and shows that the homeless people in the area are helpful people in general.



WHAT THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US

- By organizing the garden as a safe place to "bridge the gap" between different groups, and with cooperation between groups in a more active relationship, we see this way of organising a public space as an important addition to the concept of spaces as limited to passive contact. The garden as a public space has proven that it is possible to build empathy and understanding between people, which we normally wouldn't expect.
- The social garden has already proven to be inclusive, a place where the homeless are no longer seen as troublemakers to be excluded, but acknowledged as friendly and helpful. It is thus not only the socially excluded groups that are benefiting from this project, but also the rest of the garden USERS and people from the area. They have created a beautiful and safe recreational space where they can come with their families, and local police have reported significant drops in crime and vandalism in the area since the garden was established.

DRESDEN WESTERN FRINGE OF THE INNER CITY

ENHANCING CONVIVIALITY AND VIBRANCY IN PUBLIC SPACES

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PHOTOS

1. Mapping the uses
 2. Art on the station forecourt
 3. New playground
 4. Imagining new convivial uses
-

SITE DESCRIPTION

Physical description

- The pilot site consists of the subareas 'Friedrichstadt' and 'Wilsdruffer Vorstadt', separated from one another by an impressive railway embankment.
- The pre-WW II urban fabric has been largely erased, and large parts of the area have been neglected thereafter. Almost the entire site suffered severe flooding damages in 2002. Several years ago, surveys evaluated the Friedrichstadt area to be the second most run-down neighbourhood citywide.
- Since 2003, significant efforts have been undertaken, targeting at improving the residential environment. Publicly funded renovation programmes have been launched since 2004. Numerous vacant lots have been transformed into landscaped public green areas, and others are getting more and more built up primarily for residential purposes.
- There are still numerous brownfield sites and vacant lots remaining. Regarding the positive population forecast as well as related new construction projects all over the area, it is foreseeable that most of these vacant lots will be built over in the next years. So the challenge will consist in how to keep at least a couple of areas free of building in order to meet environmental protection considerations as well as to ensure appropriate and well-connected public spaces. The qualitative requirements for public space will gain more importance in the next few years. It will be critically important to ensure specific needs of residents being taken into account. Special priority and financial resources must also be given to the maintenance of public spaces.

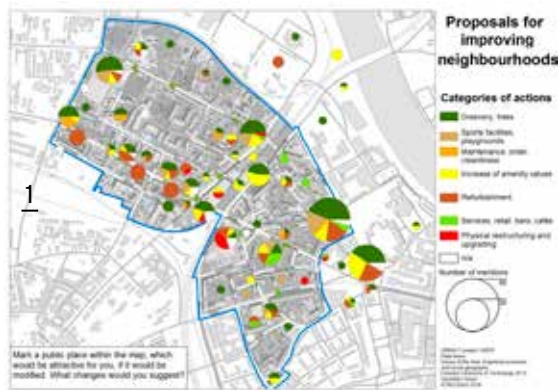


Problems of uses

- We have to distinguish current problems of uses from predictable future ones.
- The Local Support Group has analysed that numerous public spaces are regularly suffering from low utilisation.
- A survey conducted by Dresden Technical University has identified and mapped well-accepted as well as rejected places all over the area, also assessing the reasons given by the residents surveyed.
- The USER LSG provided additional community maps pinpointing ‘comfortable’ as

well as ‘uncomfortable’ places within the USER area.

- It is somewhat amazing to acknowledge the under-utilisation of several public greens and plazas, since considerable efforts have been made in the last years to redesign these places appropriately. Residents have regularly been invited to participate in public assessment meetings before design concepts being decided upon.



Partnership

- The LSG consisted of about 40 members from neighbourhood-committed associations, competent administrations (mainly municipal departments), landscape architects, the district council and a couple of local institutions, service providers and residents. There has been a relevant member turnover.
- The LSG brought up six theme-oriented subgroups dealing either with specific locations or deepened issues.

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN



WHAT DOES THE LAP AIMS AT?

LAP main goals:

In the short and medium term, enhancing conviviality and vibrancy is clearly the main focus. Those public spaces currently lacking stimulation need representatives from local organizations and individuals from civil society to increase the intensity of uses and the attractiveness of spaces.



MAIN ACTIONS OF THE LAP

The LSG has agreed on proposing and launching the following actions:

- Market stands are being prepared for implementation on the station forecourt, with a prospect of a permanent weekly market being held.
- A concept for an ‘arts exhibition container’ on the forecourt has been developed, as well as a community café.
- the making, and should be displayed in the station passageway.
- The music conservatory and the Environmental Centre have agreed on a plan to enhance the amenity value of the Schuetzengasse street and the low frequented square in front of the conservatory building, including street furniture, games of skill, WiFi access etc.





Further proposals not depending on a location:

- Ensuring LSG proceedings being adapted to local needs after the completion of the USER network.
- Residents' implication in maintenance tasks is conceivable to a lesser extent (partly due to liability concerns).
- The 2013 Urban Conversion Program 'Western fringe of the inner city' has recently set up a contingent fund aiming at subsidising local initiatives fostering community development. The management of this fund will be assigned to a main USER LSG coordinator from a local association.
- This program also allows for funding a series of neighbourhood-related newspapers. The first edition of the local paper 'Friedrichsblatt', featuring a couple of articles devoted to the USER network, has been published on 21 January 2015.
- A couple of proposals having been discussed have not been gained approval for the LAP, among them a community-driven reshaping of the so-called 'semi-public' spaces being managed by a housing cooperative. Interviews that LSG members have conducted with inhabitants of the cooperative flats revealed that most residents strongly advocate against any major changes likely to affect their living routines.

LESSONS FROM THE LAP

- It is crucial for municipality and committed stakeholders to agree on a common understanding of how to share tasks and responsibilities.
- Municipality will have to assume the key responsibility for supporting a competent and resilient network providing a sound partnership between administration and stakeholders.
- It became obvious that the established planning practice certainly allows for residents and stakeholders to express their opinions during the planning phase. But the established procedures are not sufficient for attaining goals beyond the mere stage of planning, like ensuring an actual well-functioning of open spaces.
- USER has helped to strengthen existing links between administration and stakeholders and create a new communication network. The persons engaged in the LSG should continue their work on different levels.
- Cooperation certainly provides added value, but is not a guarantee that things will change for the better.
- In the wake of the planning and construction phases, a greater effort should be made by administration in order to ensure long-term functioning of public spaces.
- Efficient and transparent communication is the key factor for the success of public spaces, also within administration itself.
- There is a good chance that 'USER-type' cooperation will progressively be adapted to an increasing number of projects.





ZOOM IN



THE "MITTE" TRAIN STATION: ENHANCING THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND WELCOMING QUALITIES OF THE STATION AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The project wants to enhance the attractiveness and welcoming qualities of the station forecourt, fostering liveliness and conviviality by adding new functions related to the neighbourhood, enhancing the identification of residents and USERS with the urban plaza. New survey-based mapping and comfortable-places-appraisal have largely confirmed the rejection of the station forecourt in the current state.

A workshop with the USER partners and with other local stakeholders in the Mitte station highlighted several issues that should be tackled like finding sponsors, particularly from the transport companies likely to be interested in upgrading their services; developing a couple of services and events (culture, weekly market, food and café stalls, illuminations, site-related murals etc.).

Major transformations are likely to occur in a couple of years, when the railway company is due to modernize the station building and develop commercial premises. The ongoing residential development in the surroundings will also contribute to more intense and changing uses. The population of the USER area will continue to grow in the coming years. Participation of residents and USERS will be at stake again in the course of these evolutions. For the time being, we are trying to pre-figure adequate participation opportunities. The USER-linked community of artists and placemakers is busy developing concepts for enhancing conviviality, and is likely to be supported by the municipality.

So the parties engaged (municipality and stakeholders) try to figure out good opportunities for introducing more temporary as well

as permanent vibrancy by voluntary placemaking actions, hopefully combined with additional public resources. The envisaged actions are described above ("arts exhibition container", photo exhibition, weekly markets...).

Members of the LSG have pointed the risk that fashionable cafés as well as arts performances may entail additional security staff and exclude the poor and the outcast who used to linger around this place. An eye should be kept on the imaginable consequences of such leisure-related upgrading.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US

- It became obvious that the established planning practice certainly allows for residents and stakeholders to express their opinions during the planning phase. But the established procedures are not sufficient for attaining goals beyond the mere stage of planning, like ensuring an actual well-functioning of open spaces. USER has helped to strengthen existing links between administration and stakeholders and create a new communication network. The persons engaged in the LSG should continue their work on different levels.
- Efficient and transparent communication is the key factor for the success of public spaces, also within administration itself. There is a good chance that 'USER-type' cooperation will progressively be adapted to an increasing number of projects.
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PESCARA FONTANELLE-SAMBUCETO PESCARA GREEN SPINE

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PHOTOS

1. Overview of the area
 2. Industrial activity
 3. "No man's land"?
 4. The residential side of the area
-

SITE DESCRIPTION

Problems of uses

The study area, the "Fontanelle-Sambuceto" neighborhood, lies at the center of the metropolitan area Chieti-Pescara and it is the heart of one of the main business districts of Abruzzo, crossed by infrastructure networks and most important territorial equipments of the Region.

Nevertheless, the Fontanelle-Sambuceto area has developed without a design, assuming the features of a suburban devoid of identity, with obvious problems of urban functioning. In the study area there is not aggregation places able to give a significant urban identity to the neighbourhood. The presence of green areas uncultivated and abandoned is widespread; sometime they accumulate waste. The promiscuity among the residential tissue and the productive areas (in some cases disused)

generates a series of conflicts in the use of open spaces that leads to a widespread lack of urban quality.

In the Fontanelle-Sambuceto neighborhood, public spaces do not exist. There is a system of private green areas very often uncultivated, marginal with respect to the axes of pedestrian flow, or forecourts of productive activities into disuse. Some of these areas are very large and their potential are obvious, but their current condition prevents public use.

The coexistence of residential activities and productive activities (es. trucking) is no longer tolerated - neither by the people nor by the owners of firms. These lasts need more suitable areas to carry out its business. The discomfort is further aggravated by some frequent problems like: lack of sense of



belonging of the citizen, lack of sense of security especially at night, insufficient pedestrian accessibility, lack of urban quality both in public and in private parts as public streets and sidewalks, poor maintenance of green areas, etc.

An important element to consider is that the properties of these spaces is mostly private so each regeneration project of these spaces for public use must necessarily be conducted through a public-private partnership.



In 2011-12 all this has convinced the public administrations of Pescara and S.G. Teatino to develop a Urban Regeneration Plan in three strategic areas: 1) the residential vilage, 2) the tertiary park, 3) the green system and soft mobility.

When in 2012 there was the opportunity for Pescara to be part of the URBACT-USER network, it was immediately obvious to everyone that this could be a great opportunity to explore one of the strategic themes of the Urban Regeneration Plan: the public spaces.

LSG members

The LSG members are involved, through participatory planning methodologies, primarily in design of the public spaces of the Green Spine project. It's a LSG operating, participating in local initiatives and is composed of: Institute of Planners, Association of Architects, University, Associations of Citizens, non profit Association, elementary school children with parents and teachers.

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN



WHAT DOES THE LAP AIMS AT?

The LAP Pescara Green Spine is an ambitious urban regeneration project of spaces for public use (three parks connected by a greenway) in mostly private areas, currently underused or abandoned. The main goals of the LAP are:

- urban regeneration of Fontanelle-Sambuceto neighborhood;
- rationalization of slow mobility;
- strengthening of green networks, public spaces and public services;
- give territorial identity and urban quality through careful and shared design, and maintenance of the public spaces involving USERS;
- strengthening the sense of belonging of the USERS that averts the current characterization of "no man's land";
- involvement of citizens in the phase of design, implementation and maintenance of the Green Spine.

To achieve these goals, which have a time of realization certainly higher than USER project, the LAP provides different levels in the Local Support Group and some public-private agreements with the owners of the lands.

A peculiarity of the PAL Pescara Green Spine is the fact that its economic and financial feasibility is intrinsically linked to the implementation of the Urban Regeneration Plan Fontanelle Sambuceto, because the financial resources for its realization will have to come: from the revenues of the building interventions envisaged by Plan (the two parks of Fontanelle and Sambuceto) and from some european and state funding (the Greenway and probably also the Thematic Park).





LAP main actions

The LAP focuses on the "Green Spine" and carried out: 1) in participatory methodologies for the definition of the design of public spaces; 2) in the exemplary embodiment of a pilot area (workshops "Terra Cruda").

The "Terra Cruda" Workshop is only a preview scientifically very interesting for its social content even before the architectural, a small experiment that aims to demonstrate, within the USER timetable, how through specific participatory methodologies may arise "from below" good examples of regeneration of degraded public spaces. A peculiarity of the experiment consists in the fact that public spaces furnished will be made in "raw earth", a very old construc-

tion technique, widely used throughout the world, which is especially typical of the Abruzzo Region. The materials will be those who will be found on the site: earth, straw, reeds, wood, bamboo, etc. The cultural association "Terra Onlus", which is part of the LSG, has acquired a solid experience in using this technique for the production of artifacts, buildings and public spaces through participatory workshops in which the USERS (the elderly, school children, teens, associations, etc.) not only share the design choices, but also contribute voluntarily to the creation of artifacts



LESSONS FROM THE LAP

As soon as we started the USER project, the first thing we did was to look for a project name that was recognizable and able to evoke virtuous environmental objectives: "Pescara Green Spine", the green backbone would mean that the study of public spaces, the design and implementation of the three parks and the green way that connected them to the existing urban tissue, was the "backbone" of the whole urban redevelopment project.

An important symbolic signal! First we need to design public spaces that determine the structure of the urban system and only after we deal the private building work.

Almost a conceptual reversal in the Italian practice of urban planning, where it is ex-

actly the opposite: first you design and build private interventions in the most attractive urban areas, and only later, in the residual areas, public spaces are located.

The added value of Pescara's participation in the European network URBACT-USER had already achieved an important first result!

Since then all our efforts were aimed at working on two different interconnected levels: the "tight" level of Green Spine Project which concerned public spaces, and the "wide" level of the regeneration of the Fontanelle Sambuceto neighbourhood, which concerned a very important area, with the goal of using the Green Spine as the backbone of a wide ranging urban development.



ZOOM IN



Temporary uses of space in the framework of a long-term urban planning process

The Pescara LAP is focused on the so-called "Green Spine", a green belt that connects three new public spaces identified in the Fontanelle-Sambuceto Urban Regeneration Plan. It is an ambitious project which naturally has a longer timeframe than USER projects. To develop the first public space in the future "Green Spine", the municipality intends to adopt a model of citizen participation both in the design and implementation phases.

The LAP of Pescara is thus experimenting with building a low-cost public space using participatory methodologies. From the beginning, the Pescara project team has expressed its willingness to carry out a small experiment to build a temporary public space based on the "Estonoesunsolar" model (Zaragoza, Spain), an important experiment to revitalise unused public spaces, which has given residents a strong "sense of belonging". The experiment, called "Terra Cruda workshop" is based on:

- Use of natural and recycled low-cost materials
- Public uses: urban gardens, playgrounds, and meeting places
- Jobs for the unemployed
- Population participation during the implementation phase
- Citizen management of public spaces

This project is unique in that the public facilities will be made of "raw earth", an age-old building technique used around the world, which is also typical of Abruzzi Region.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US

- Challenging the traditional methods of urban planning. It is important to firstly design public spaces that define the structure of the urban system - and only then should private construction begin. This USER project advocates -at its own scale - for a complete reversal of Italian urban planning practices, which do exactly the opposite: first design and build private projects in the most attractive urban areas, and only later design public spaces in the residual areas.
- Creating a territorial identity and high-quality urban spaces through careful and participatory design, and involving USERS in the maintenance of the public spaces.
- Strengthening the USER's sense of belonging to overcome the current perception of the area as a "no man's land".

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe.

URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5 000 active participants.

URBACT is co-financed by the ERDF Funds and the Member States.

WEBSITE

<http://urbact.eu/user>

CREDITS

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