



Riga Urban Lab

**CULTURAL SHIFT:
SOCIAL INNOVATION
AND CULTURAL DRIVERS**

**September 2020
Riga, Latvia**



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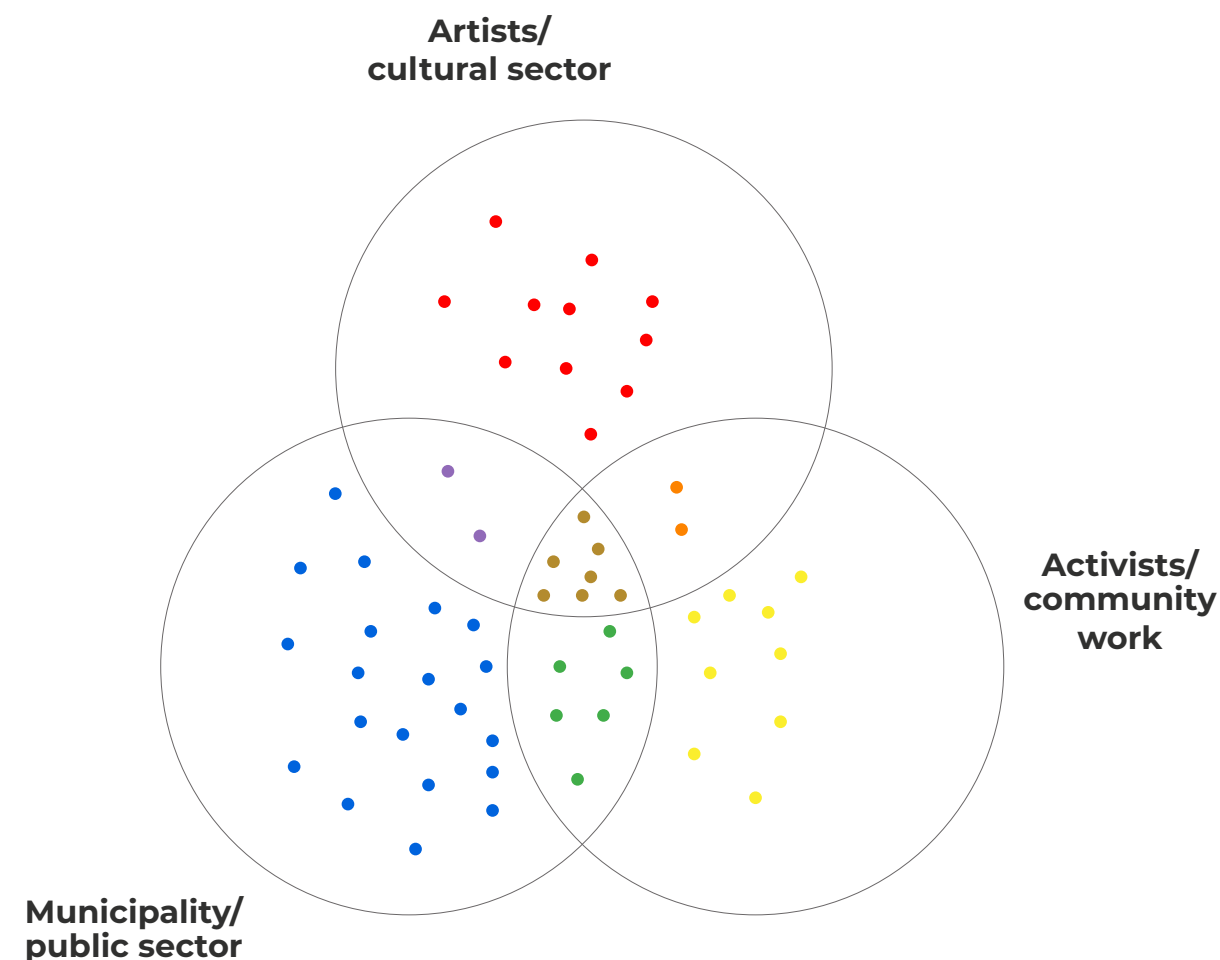
Q1

Mentimeter results. Throughout the lab participants were asked to give input through [mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com)

CP - Cultural Planning

UCP - UrbCultural planning project

LAB - Urban laboratory event



Q1: Are you a social or cultural driver? Multiple choice question: I work with/as...

Throughout the Urban Lab various questions were asked through mentimeter.com application to the participants. Here are the multiple choice answers visualized. Positively, there are many individuals considering themselves as actors in various fields, reinforcing the idea of hybrids in cultural/ social sector.

Lab theme manifesto

Social innovation is the overarching theme and guiding principle of the project UrbCultural Planning, which is setting to create innovative situations around the way people view their cities and relate to their communities.

Cultural Planning takes the notion of culture in a broad framework and attempts to look at the city as a cultural phenomena. CP argues, that the sharing of resources, co-creation, activism, sense of ownership etc. are in fact all cultural phenomena. This shift of thinking rises a question: **When does the cultural driver stop being a cultural driver and becomes a social driver?**



Thierry Geoffroy, social distancing, Wa(l)king Copenhagen 2020

“Essentialness” of culture

“Is culture essential? Are artists essential workers?” The corona-virus pandemic has brought these questions to the front lines. Social innovation encompasses so many of our burning questions as a society. The lack of trust, civic involvement, marginalization and stigmatization are issues all of the public sector is grappling with. The question then is: “how well cultural sector is using its potential to not only reflect on the issues at hand, but deliberately work with these issues and contribute to building a resilient and involved civic society”.

Culture – economic or social driver?

Cultural Planning attempts to change the rhetoric of the 90s and 00s, when cities were building cultural institutions, which could survive in the market economy. It is easy to see how culture is a driver for the economy as a whole, but can it be a social driver? This has been very prevalent since the financial crisis, with a visible counter-reaction to the market driven philosophy with the idea of creating a cultural product, for someone to buy. Projects are increasingly more process driven, open and with an interactive element.

Is cultural planning social innovation?

From CP perspective, social innovation isn't discussed purely on demographic or geographic basis, but looked at as movement or social clusters in which there is a cultural magnet or driver, e.g. a festival. Around this cultural driver, a new social narrative is defined. The key is to encourage and define such drivers, who activate this social cluster in such way, that you empower the key people and those have a crucial role in the communities further on.

Marginalized communities

The project UrbCultural planning set out to find communities, which have deficits. Of economic resources, political power, involvement or cultural institutions. In the light of COVID-19, the realities for these communities might have gone from bad to even worse. This backs up the fundamental idea, that we have to prioritize these places and not end up with them. If we want to live in a balanced and striving society, we have to look at the city as an ecosystem and empower the marginalized communities.

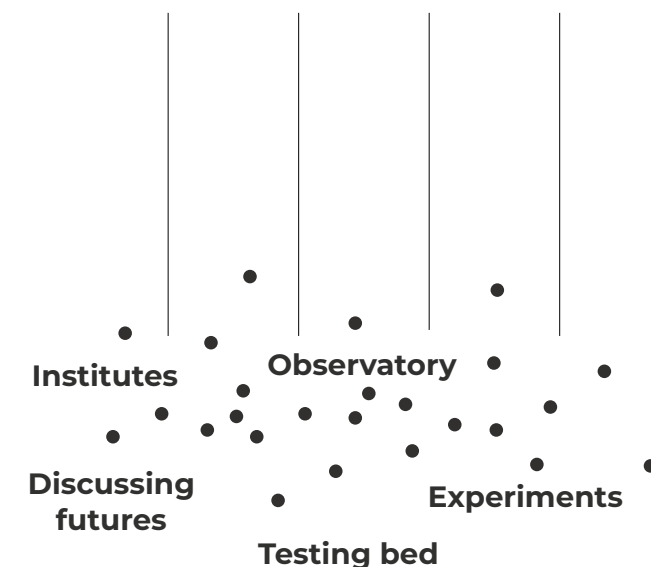
Cultural hybrids

The lab explores some cases where the projects are linking to other kinds of structures, such as schools, universities, old people's homes, urban developments, shopping centers etc. Similarly, the lab will look at possibilities of strong links to city authorities as well as city initiated cultural and social projects and the link between those and independent cultural drivers.

Systemic vs personal approach

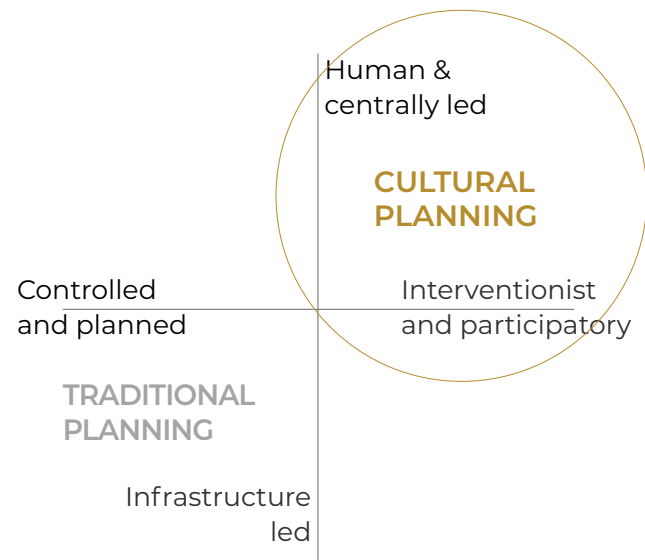
The lack of public engagement in planning of public projects can create a resistance in the society. There is a lack of people-based and personal communication with the society. Not through a phone line, not through a public office or forms, but on a level, where the rationale of departmental thinking is blurred and there is a broader discussion about the vision of the society and environment we want to live in. On this level one can innovative faster, one is able to make mistakes and experiment. Inevitably the results of this personal approach feeds up in the systemic approach.

Different city departments



What is cultural planning and is it social innovation?

An introduction by Trevor Davies and Līva Kreislere



CP is an alternative to traditional urban planning theory and methodology, initiated in the late 80s and 90s. CP is mainstreamed in certain places in USA, Canada, Australia, NZ, UK and Scandinavia. CP is a reaction to the overly planned, rigid infrastructure centered, segregating and inflexible planning.

Cultural planning is supporting a permanent revitalization of the city, rather than turning it into an urban planner's dream of completion

THE URGENCY

There is noticeable growing tension as the decision-making and bureaucratic structures are too technocratic for the fast changing world. There is a tension in city-planning between notions of iconic architecture, privatization of the public, globalization and thematization on one side and the occupy and pop-up movements, social activism and DIY urbanism - phenomena which make the cities we love the way they are. There seems to be a lack of support and structure for these fast-changing actions.

CP tries to advocate for these soft processes of the city and create a "planning new normal", where these processes and cultural actors are actually key.

INTEGRATED APPROACH

CP attempts to look at the city as a whole, positioning individuals, NGOs, cultural drivers, citizen groups, as well as more powerful stakeholders equally and trying to manifest, that these smaller cultural stakeholders are as much city makers as any other developer.

CP is a tool to represent subcultures in city policy documents.

Cultural and human centered approach reveals, that culture is closely linked to healthcare, economy and politics as culture is not only the network of large cultural institutions. Culture is how we use public space and greet or don't greet our neighbors, how we take care of one another, how we take care of our surroundings, how we move, where we shop etc.

IDENTITY

As noted in the socio-cultural challenge mapping exercise, issues of identity are driving factors towards a diffused community and simultaneously also, strong identity and building of the identity can contribute towards a more sustainable community and living environments. Cultural Planning can be, by first sight, seen as potential gentrification process. At the core of the CP approach is the idea of mapping and specifically mapping of *what is happening*. Lia Ghilardi often talks about the DNA of communities and the notion of each community and place having already its unique cultures, resources and potentials, which takes the rhetoric away from the need to thematize neighborhoods in order to achieve goals, most commonly being economic growth.

Cultural Planning is investigating the question: What drives communities?

ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL DRIVERS AS MAGNETS

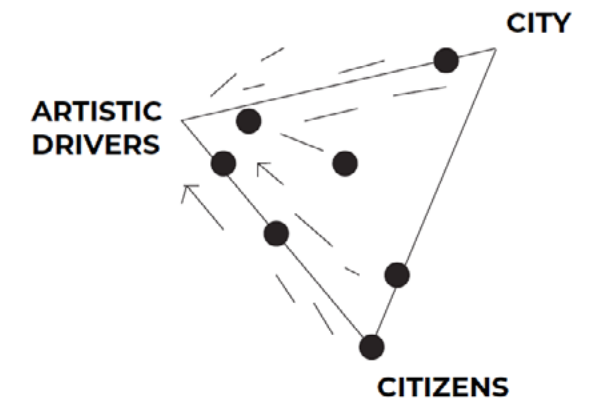
CP strives to make planning more sustainable, democratic and socially inclusive field.

Artistic drivers have the capacity to act as magnets to develop social capital and solidarity. They have the capacity to develop visions about the future and talk about the living environment in an integrated way, without separating discussions about infrastructure, social benefits, education

etc. This is an asset and possibility, which CP is advocating for and therefore also this LAB focuses on the shift of thinking from only regarding artists as cultural drivers, but also seeing these activities contributing towards social cohesion and innovation.

One of the aspects, that artistic and cultural drivers contribute to the CP process is the creation of micro communities, micro utopias within cultural projects. Visionary projects, temporary structures, games, workshops, even concerts, all create micro narratives, which are shared by a certain group of people. That is why often artistic drivers are looked at as magnets, because they have the capacity to attract attention and this can be used in the synergy with the city and communities to talk about important issues at hand. Arts lead approach also stimulates imagination and identity.

CP is about creating places of encounter and empathy. Like Charles Landry says: "Spaces where I wouldn't mind being with someone else"



GRAND ENSEMBLE

A door slams. A baby cries. A dog barks. A couple is having a row. In blocks of flats we live side by side, yet we know each other best from these fragments of everyday sounds.

Grand Ensemble opens the façade of the homes in a block of flats in the north-west area of Copenhagen. A classical musician is placed on each balcony. 65 in total, the complete Copenhagen Phil symphony orchestra. In a 40-minute orchestral work composed especially for and with the flats, the musicians interpret and transform this cacophonous sound mosaic of everyday life.

Voices from the residents of Emaljehaven, fragments of a Bach fugue, melodic strings... Weeping children are harmonized into music. The dog's barking sets the pace. Ringing telephones are mixed to a symphony. The composer Pierre Sauvageot converts it all to a grand, humorist and playful musical dramatic work, which turns the flats inside out. On the balconies we have all of the orchestra's instruments.

As audience you are surrounded by the symphony in a five-story tall wall of sound. Bring your picnic blanket and the family and perch yourselves on the grass. The stage is set for an informal and highly unconventional concert experience.

Text from <https://www.metropolis.dk/en/grand-ensemble/>

The project demonstrates an artistic driver, bringing together inhabitant's of one housing block, which as a process in itself, is full of discussion, negotiation and getting to know one another.

SOCIAL INNOVATION

EU publication 2016 “Social Cohesion in the context of culturally-led place rejuvenation” highlights the shift in the last ten years

>from culture as a driver of urban regeneration with focus on the economic impact with indirect social benefits

> to culture-led place regeneration as a means to achieve social outcomes in terms of social cohesion. (1)

UrbCultural planning should be seen in this context as it is an emerging phenomena. It is now being integrated into many urban strategies and cultural planning in this context creates an ideal platform for social innovation in the urban environment.

To stimulate social innovation cities re-encouraged to find models of citizen driven initiatives and new participation between city authorities citizens and stakeholders and the third sector. CP delivers this human/ community centered response:

- > to the definition of projects
- > the mapping of neighborhoods
- > self management structures it proposes

BELONGING – increased sense of belonging through local resident co-operation in shaping the identity and the future of their community

INCLUSION- reduction of social exclusion of the socially fragile groups e.g. unemployed, immigrants, socially stigmatized groups with opportunities to engage in common activities ways of life and offers of cultural and artistic.

DIVERSITY – promotion and inclusion of cultural/ sub cultural lifestyles - cultural and ethnic backgrounds - and process of cultural production which expand local/city narratives.

PARTICIPATION - promotion of local residents desires to be at the center of the cultural life of their communities

EU Publication 2016: "social cohesion in the context of cultural-led place rejuvenation (1)

(RE)ACTIVATING RESOURCES

CP activates and builds on the needs and the potential of the resources of the community in the widest sense - facilities, material, knowledge and skills, traditions, information channels, human resources etc and this is an enabling factor for social innovation initiatives.

The process of cultural mapping provides a common citizen based starting point which is not only useful for one project but for a sustainable community and for other social innovation initiatives.

COLLABORATIVE CREATIVE PROCESSES

the process of collective/ co-creation builds and develops competences and skills in the community both for individual and groups; Creative and cultural processes develop sense of trust, sharing, empathy and support stronger and more open and resilient communities

CULTURAL ACTORS ARE MOTIVATED

- > cultural actors are often in close contact with their communities;
- > cultural actors have a direct interest to play a role in the wellbeing of their community
- > to build a stronger public;
- > to develop a local network;
- > to support the production of cultural product based on local cultural identity and issues;
- > talent development;
- > developing their own skill-sets.

“Cultural processes and projects create common values and underpin future city governance, trust and participation, honesty, responsibility, individual and institutional openness and social cohesion”

“Experience from many social innovation projects point at the advantage of having a driver to start and to support the creative processes.”

“Social innovation depends on activating pooling and sharing resources”
(2)

These are all points of departure for Cultural Planning and cultural projects.

How to create an environment where socially innovative cultural activities can prosper?
A note by Anastasiya Matyshkina

DIVERSE FUNDING SOURCES

There should be funding sources available for grassroots initiatives to apply for, not only those that have the status of public organization, but also individual artist.

BUREAUCRATIC FLEXIBILITY

There should be more flexibility for informal actors to act, in application for funding, in bureaucratic procedures, etc.

AFFORD-ABILITY OF LIVING

Artists and creative class are becoming increasingly important for social innovations, but not in the traditional understanding of creative class as the main consumer of culture and economy enablers, but as people who have social and human capital to initiate and mediate innovative practices. Artists are attracted to cities with affordable places to live and work, but also by the emptiness of the space, and they are the creative agents that have large potential for social innovations (e.g. artists residencies). But they need to have access to spaces.

ESTABLISHED CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Established cultural organizations are extremely important and they are the main actors to bring socially cultural activities into life, because they can create ‘grant’ coalitions with municipality, private sectors in applying for extra funding, they have expertise, time, human resources and networks. But they need to have more freedom - financial and also political.

SPACES

Community cultural activities need spaces. Whether it is public space, permanent or temporary spaces, they should have access to them. Without having spaces they cannot become sustainable and long-term.

DIVERSE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Several projects mentioned, that there is a need for diversity in including local communities. Including different generations always adds value, and there is a need to develop tools for their engagement, like social media tools or a newspaper.

DATA

There is a need for data as mentioned by festival Kometa, there is a need to invest in quality data in order to be able to analyze and build future projections for experiments, here it might be useful to build more collaborations and long-term connections with research institutions.

Image from Sarkandaugava (Riga, Latvia) DP, distribution of physical newspaper, during the first wave of COVID 19 pandemic.



1 EU Publication 2016: "Social cohesion in the context of culturally-led place rejuvenation"
2 Urbact publication 2015 "Social innovation in cities" 7

Mapping of socio-cultural challenges across Baltic Sea Region

Project partners were invited to share 2-3 most evident socio-cultural challenges in the neighborhoods they are working in. This session was moderated by Jonas Büchel. Findings were real time organized in a mind map and analyzed by sociologist Anastasiya Matyshkina.

GULDBORGSUND - DENMARK



Merging of two schools (bilingual and predominantly Danish speaking)

Reputation, stigmatization, identity, values of the place

GAARDEN - KIEL - GERMANY



Missing sense of ownership and identity, resulting in vandalism

Sense of abandonment

Different ethnic groups not sharing resources/ spaces

NOWY PORT - GDAŃSK - POLAND



Sense of diffusion among residents

Feeling of abandonment from the city resulting in littering and vandalism vicious cycle

Delayed execution of public investments, revitalization program

STARE PRZEDMIEŚCIE - GDAŃSK - POLAND

Prolonged execution of public investments, revitalization

Disturbed/ interrupted identity

Colliding interests of old and new inhabitants and investments



PORI - FINLAND



Emptiness, lack of activity, lack of community

Latency - there is a lot happening, but people don't relate to it, lack of confidence

Lack of communication, dialogue

Distrust - in projects and municipal activity, in communities, and even in themselves and their abilities.

RIGA - LATVIA

Sense of abandonment

Borders - infrastructural, shattered, segregated



VISAGINAS - VILNIUS - LITHUANIA



Lost identity (post nuclear town)

Creative capital decline due to brain drain, the culture is too institutionalized

Social/ cultural isolation of elderly, no middle ground

Lack of green spaces - no mixing of generation

ŠNIPIŠKĖS - VILNIUS - LITHUANIA



Lack of sense of identity despite rich historical background

Lack of activities for elderly people

Analysis of the mapping exercise

Anastasiya Matyshkina

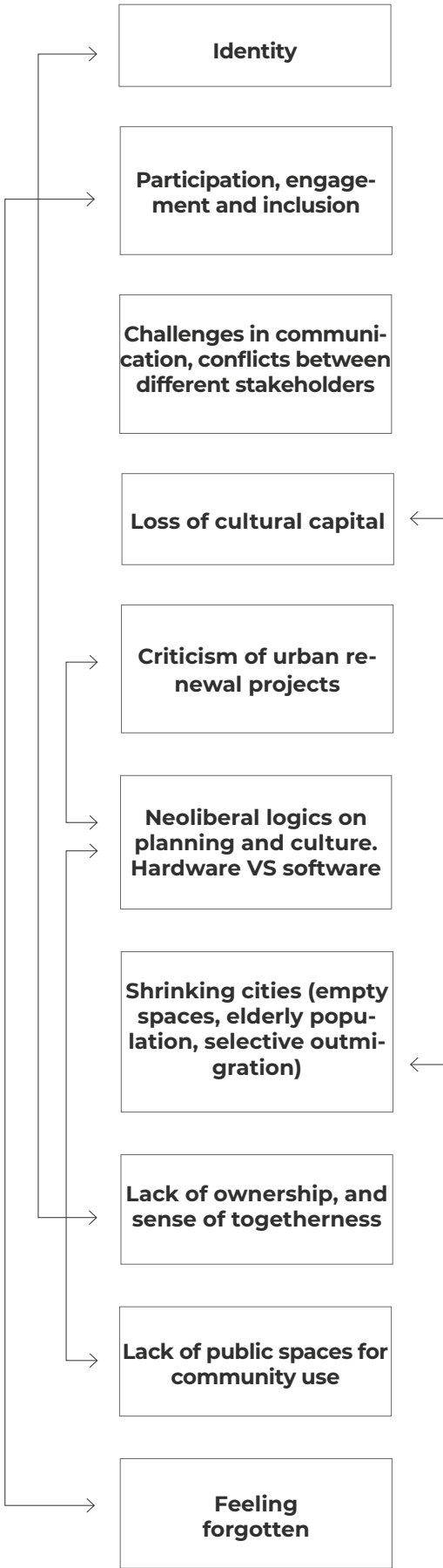
Main challenges identified are **lack of confidence, lack of sense of identity/ ownership, sense of abandonment from the city and issues of physical and mental borders**. Many challenges raised are rooting in the core problem - lack of identity. This raises questions like: "Do we have spaces and opportunities to meet between generations? In which way are we inclusive and do we have spaces to meet in?"

This is why when social innovation, inclusion and sense of ownership is discussed, we often come to a conclusion, that public space and common meeting spaces are key. This supports the notion, that the planning of public space should be participatory process and the organizational dynamics of the public space are important.

- Lack of identity
- Do we have spaces and opportunities to meet between generations?
- In which way are we inclusive?
- Do we have places to meet?



Image from Visaginas (Lithuania) DP, summer 2020



Q3: What are the opportunities and advantages for municipalities in working with artists?



Artistically developed methods for urban planning and social change

Kenneth A. Balfelt, visual artist, Kenneth Balfelt Team (DK)
Summary by Liva Kreislere

ENGHAVE MINIPARK - RELOCATION OF BEER DRINKERS

Kenneth describes a story of a multi functional park, called Enghave Plads, a very central, yet very local place. There was a permanent group of people inhabiting the space - a group of beer drinkers. Enghave Plads became a site for a new metro station development. It was a very loved square and none was included in the plans of relocation of the park, there was no communication. As an artist, Kenneth thought, that it was a very interesting notion to work with, how to relocate a park. This project was developed using artistic funds. He describes the process, noting, that

There was not a method in place, the method was developed by being present in the situation. (K. Balfelt)

1. LOOKING FOR A SITE

They visited the beer drinkers and discussed looking at alternative spaces. Kenneth mentions, that he himself felt a little bit unsure about meeting the people and working with them, as this is a group of people, who have a different way of life, and he mentions this to stress, that perhaps this is one of the reasons why marginalized people are not included in urban planning is because it is quite transgressive and frightening to talk to them at first. Together with some municipal representatives and architects from Spectrum architects, they went on the tour to find a site. Most of the sites they dismissed. There was a site of another hash dealer, there was another site, which they said wouldn't work, because they were kicked out by the local residents of that area.

These are aspects, which the city nor the artist could have known without talking to the group of people. (K. Balfelt)

Eventually they proposed a site, which had a lot of greenery, which was close to the previous area and was close to the kiosk they bought the beers. There were not a lot of residents around, so they would not bother others, this was something they were very concerned about.

2. WORKSHOP ABOUT NEEDS

The first workshop was an architectural workshop and the clients presented facilities they wanted, such as benches, shelter, fountain, bonfire place.



3. WORKSHOP WITH IMAGES

After the first workshop they found around 100 images of all the elements they had discussed. They dismissed 80.

4. CITIZEN HEARING MEETING

They discussed with the locals the idea to make a space for the beer drinkers. There were positive and negative feedbacks, but since Kenneth was an artist and did not have an agenda, did not represent the municipality, he could be like a sponge, taking in all ideas and reactions and take it in the process. He was acting more like a conflict mediator, trying to get everyone's needs addressed.

5. TESTING THE SPACE

The municipality wasn't so keen on letting them use the space as it was their property. But through discussions it was clear who it was for and, that if nothing was done, then the beer drinkers would go somewhere else and the municipality would have even less control of the situation. They lent it out temporary. After testing the space with some plastic furniture, new needs came up.

For example, one person said, that there was bus lane next to the space and his mom would use the bus and could see him, as well as other people just taking pictures of them. They wanted some privacy as well as some new information came in regarding the sun and what spots were the best etc.

6. ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

The architects were great with listening to the group and taking in consideration all the ideas, however the plans presented were too finished and Kenneth proposed they did plans where the work was half finished only on part of the area, so they could discuss more openly.

7. NEGOTIATING WITH THE MUNICIPALITY

There was a situation, where they presented the idea to have a urinal, a bonfire place, a fountain and electrical lighting. There was a negative answer towards all of those requests, even though they were going to pay for it themselves. The response was, that if there won't be a urinal, then the place is going to smell as they will relieve themselves in the bushes. None will come and the park is not going to be open to everyone, something they had decided was a priority for them. So they went back to the municipality saying, that the urinal is a must, otherwise it won't work out for the rest of the community and the municipality agreed.



8. PRODUCTION

The drawings were made and they started constructing. They dismantled old benches from the municipality. And constructed the place themselves. Many of the participants hadn't worked in many years or ever. They used a very classic Copenhagen bench design and created a 45m version of it.

It makes people aware, that there is something else at stake here. (K. Balfelt)

9. MAINTENANCE

This group of people is the one maintaining the place. They are the ones cleaning, collecting beer caps and cigarette buds. So they have also built a tool shed on the space. They know every inch of the space as they constructed it, therefore they can take care of it.

10. SHARED SPACE

The project creates situations where on the same bench could sit teenage girls, mothers with babies and beer drinkers.

Now one can read in the local newspapers, that the beer drinkers have contributed to the local community with this common space. (K. Balfelt)



TIME

Kenneth explains, that he uses time as a tool. He does invest a lot of time, more than the architects would, talking to the community, being on site different times of day, week and year. Also this give possibility to change ones mind a lot.

Documentary about the Enghave Minipark can be found [here](#)

DEVELOPMENT OF FOLKETS PARK

After the Enghave park, Kenneth was offered to do a renovation of a park in Copenhagen.

The municipality initially asked me to do 3 proposals for the park renovation and I said: “That is not going to happen. That is not how we work, we work with user involvement and what comes out of that process will be the right project to do”. (K. Balfelt)

Another requirement was to be finished in 5 months and to this Kenneth also had to say, that it is not going to happen and that it would take at least a year. The park was gathering homeless people, a lot of them with African immigrant background, small group of beer drinkers, left wing activists and there were also some people involved with a gang. There was a transgressive environment. There is a bridge there, which was part of a previous development 3/4 years before. People disliked the bridge as it had no function at all.



1. CONTRACT WITH THE MUNICIPALITY

What was challenging to put in a contract, was the idea, that the outcome cannot be defined in any shape or form. (K. Balfelt)

This is very unusual for the municipality to hire someone not knowing what they will get, but they called this method development, which can cover a lot of that uncertainty. The other aspect is that for the first time, the subject of the contract was not a financial body, but the production of more community and love. The argument was, that if they want a similar project to other Kenneth’s projects, there needs to be a framework, which can accommodate that flexibility. Since the project in Copenhagen, they have used the same contract with 7 other municipalities.

2. CONTRACT WITH THE COMMUNITY

At first Kenneth’s team wasn’t really welcome in the area, as they were seen as an arm of the municipality. They said: “We do not want any smart architects to come here and change our community”, and the proposal was, that they are not going to develop any concepts/ sketches/ ideas before talking to the community. And only afterwards, they would switch to their professional work.

3. ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

First they created a needs analysis and distributed this to everyone. In total they spoke to around 160 people. They also had an advisory board to which the needs were presented, as well as the municipality.

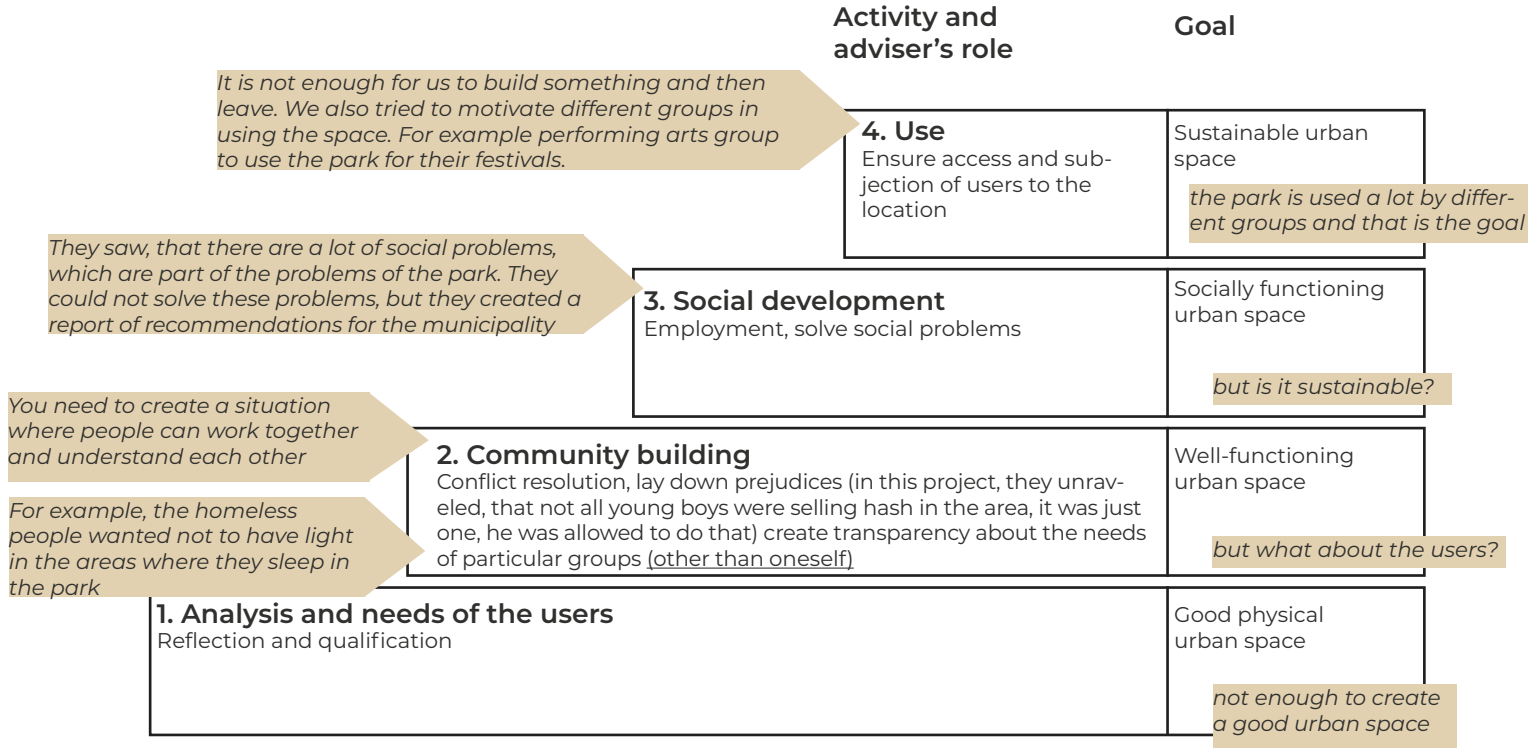
They did not ask for wishes, but needs, which is very different. As the wishes probably would include many elements, like basketball courts, carousels etc. - elements they could not accommodate. By asking about needs, these needs can be accommodated more creatively in multi purpose elements. (K. Balfelt)

4. DRAWINGS

Further they developed some conceptual drawings of basic locations of elements, which was then again sent out to everyone using Facebook, e-mail and discussed in physical meetings. After the development of final drawings, the discussion in the groups were short as everyone knew the project very well and why the elements are where and how they are. discussed.



Documentary about the development of Folkets Park can be found [here](#)



This is the method model Kenneth's team used in the Folkets Park project. Every project they develop a new method, which works for that particular context.



Publication, inspiration, guide - *Artistically developed methods for user involvement*, 2019.
Download [here](#)

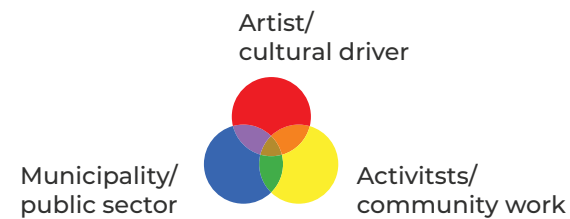
Website - www.kennethbalfelt.org

Sometimes you can do things the municipality cannot. We were loyal to the municipality, but we were also loyal to the citizens, and acted as a third party, rather than extension arm of the municipality. (K. Balfelt)

In one of Kenneth’s projects, they made an injection room for drug addicts. At the time it was illegal to do that in Copenhagen, but they could do it as an art project. 10 years after his project it was legalized and then the municipality made the injection rooms.

Artists can go into topics, which are too politicized and perhaps this can be used strategically? Ones hands can be tied in municipality, but an artist could be hired to do some work on certain fragile issues. (K. Balfelt)

Q2: What are the opportunities and advantages for municipalities in working with artists?



- Artists have the ability to be able to work in situations which are not only structured and organized e.g. schools, galleries, festivals but also in socially disrupted conflict or completely open/ unused situations such as abandoned spaces.
- Injection of creativity
- Artists can provide municipality with thinking out of the box, bold visions, inspirations - and also help communicate citizens needs to municipality and vice versa.
- Artists are not judgmental
- Joy
- Artists have languages which in, many situations can be used to generate another kind of communications and thus include others e.g. sound, movement, sculptural
- Artists create pieces that draw upon emotions and insights, and that other people can recognize in their own life
- Artists are often sensitive to situations, people and can translate this and communicate this
- Out of the box thinking
- Different access to people
- Different approaches
- Creative thinking outside the box of bureaucracy, budget, politics and etc.
- Dialogue, both as opportunity and advantage
- Identification and understanding
- In schools as creating different learning perspectives.
- Alternative perspectives on city planning.
- To see unusual perspective
- To do things more creatively
- Innovation component
- Innovative planning tools
- Artists reflecting upon municipal events (themes such as food, sustainability, cultural nights etc.)
- Cooperation with local cultural institutions
- Participation of public
- Local knowledge
- To see unusual perspective
- Artists cross different sectors, when municipality could work just within their sector. Culture, infrastructure, housing, but artists can work across.
- Boosting experiments
- Boosting creativity
- Getting new insights about scenarios of participatory urban development.
- Stay out of the formal municipal concepts, frames and borders
- New perspectives brave opinions
- New perspectives
- Artist can have a role as an outside mediator
- Relating to the real needs of the communities (if artists are able to establish true connections with the residents, as it requires years).

On flaneurs, citizens on stage and theatre in the city. How spectators become collaborators for speculative social futures.

Immanuel Schipper, researcher, dramatist, *Rimini Protokoll* (DE)
Summary by Liva Kreislere

Helgard Haug, Stefan Kaegi and Daniel Wetzel founded the theatre-label Rimini Protokoll in 2000 and have since worked in different constellations under this name. Work by work they have expanded the means of the theatre to create new perspectives on reality.

[Rimini Protokoll](#) often develop their stage-works, interventions, performative installations and audio plays together with experts who have gained their knowledge and skills beyond the theatre. Furthermore, they like to transpose rooms or social structures into theatrical formats. Many of their works feature interactivity and a playful use of technology.

Immanuel Schipper (on the left) is joining the team for certain projects, but mainly works in [City-ScienceLab](#) in Hamburg University. They work a lot with digitalization in the realm of participation.



CAMERIGA

Rimini Protokoll has staged a project in Riga, current Ministry of Foreign Affairs building as part of Homo Novus theatre festival in 2005. Rimini Protokoll stage a tour of the building. As an audience member one received a piece of paper noting which rooms are to be visited in the vastly empty building. With the help of extensive volunteer team, they found people, who had at one point in time worked in this building and asked them to tell story of their life in the building at that very same room they had worked in. As a visitor, one visited each room and for exactly 5 minutes, individually, heard the story of the storyteller. Immanuel argues, that the way this play was produced, reminisces a lot the life of the city. The spectator is moving around and co-producing in a very specific way the impression of the city - the very play he or she is watching.

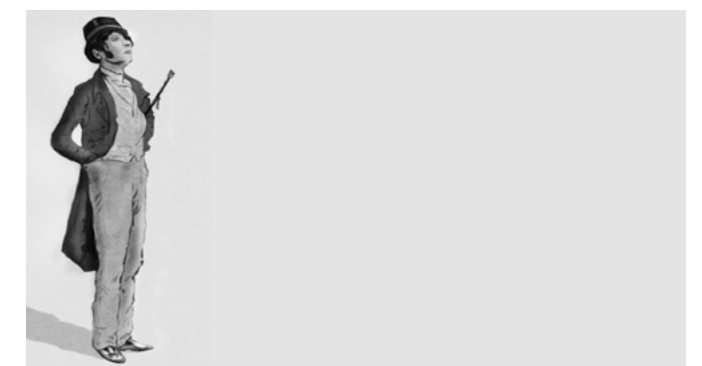


This collaborative mode of perception, I would argue, is a very contemporary culture, that one may find in many digital tools and acts as our common behavior in public sphere. This is very important to produce urbanity of any kind. (I. Schipper)

ON FLÂNEUR

The drawing by Paul Garvart, 1842, called Le Flâneur depicts a relaxed modern man standing with his face tilted towards the sky. He is viewed as the modern modernist, consciously taking in what the city has to offer.

The Flâneur dwells on the streets with cool, but curious eyes and is the constant observer of the ever changing spectacle, that emerges around him.



It is interesting, that it is not of importance what he is looking at, but how that looking of whatever it is constitutes his specific experience and makes him important enough to become a subject for painters, writers and scholars. In

other words, this flâneur is both a spectator and an actor. (I. Schipper)

In flâneurs the city becomes aware of itself (Noteboom 1995)

The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights (Harvey 2008)

100% RĪGA

The 100% project is a project, which has traveled in around 40 cities already, and was in Riga, in 2014. The construct says, that the city is the people and they represent the city on the stage by 100 people. 1 person represents 1 percent of the inhabitants according to statistics, such as gender, age, nationality.

Videos about the performance can be found [here](#) and [here](#)



CALL CUTTA

A 60 minute mobile phone theatre. Call center in Calcutta, India is guiding the spectator with the help of power point slides through the spectator's city over an hour long phone call. People, who do not know your city are guiding you through your city.



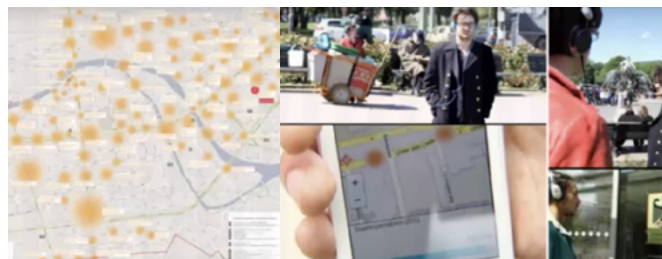
CARGO SOFIA-X

A truck was reconstructed to accommodate seating for spectators in a theatre-like setting. This truck is driven around the city, which becomes the theatre stage, but the truck driver - the director.



50 KILOMETERS OF FILES

Headphone play - linked to specific places in the city. It uses the archive materials from STASI (Ministry of State Security, East Germany) as they surveilled a lot of peoples phone calls. Rimini Protokoll have linked back these audio files to their geographical origins in eastern Berlin.



WHAT IS NEXT FOR RIMINI?

Already before the pandemic we started working on a new concept as we were so tired of flying and transporting the production. Now it fits perfectly as the concept is, that these shows can happen simultaneously and not a single person or object has to travel from one place to the other. It is called the conference of absence. (I. Schipper)

Wa(l)king Copenhagen - cultural acupuncture during the lock-down

Trevor Davies, *Metropolis* (DK)
Summary by Liva Kreislere

Metropolis is a meeting point for performance, art and the city – an art-based metropolitan laboratory for the performative, site-specific, international art. It is Københavns Internationale Teater (KIT) that is behind *Metropolis* as the latest of a large number of festivals and projects in Copenhagen created and initiated by KIT.

Connecting the idea of flaneurism and the observer, Trevor begins his talk about how ***we have always expected the artist to be able to see something we do not see ourselves. That has always been the role of the artist. To see, interpret and communicate something.*** (T.Davies)



Faced with a lock-down, when most cultural institutions and events were closed and when people were contained as individuals, it was interesting to see how one might break out of this.



Wa(l)king Copenhagen is the practice of cultural acupuncture on a city in a state of mental suspension and social isolation. They set out with question of can artistic action: - help to break a state of enforced social behavior?

- help us breathe again?
- offer us other images and messages at critical times?
- be a visioning in a challenged situation?

Metropolis invited 100 artists living in Copenhagen to create 100 curated walks through the city over 100 days - as a performative diary.



Each artist walked for 12 hours and started at home. Every hour he/she/they gave a "sign of life" via live-streaming on Facebook. The artist was alone with a smartphone and everything else they needed in a rucksack.

Walking became a political act.
(T.Davies)

As the lock-down rules softened, artists created more points of exchange with public, looking for new ways to engage in a safe way. The changed social context demanded new ways to act, react and connect, and by walking for 12 hours, the artists broke out of their own comfort zones - geographically, physically and mentally. The budget for each artist was 1000 EUR. Within the 100 days Trevor estimates around 2000 km have been walked through the city and almost every street has been covered, so he argues it was an act of revisiting memories, reacting to/in situations, rewriting narratives. They are left now with 100 videos, which is a documentation of this time. A lot of the artists did not speak about how they felt, but how they wanted to feel, therefore an act of visioning.



ENGAGEMENT OF ARTISTS. HOW TO?

- Invite artists into the social and urban field.
- For many artists, performative arts have not been of their interest at all, however, acting without an audience is a typology, that could be much more comfortable for many artists.
- Focus on the creative processes rather than cultural products. One might look at the videos and think: "what a load of rubbish". This invites to think, that perhaps art is not a cultural product, it is not about consuming a cultural product, it is about creative process and we need to accept, that artistic engagement is a creative process.
- We also need to define the public space as a cultural space. We seem to be very limited in the approaches of how we can engage with the public space.
- They sent out invitations and within 24 hours filled all the 100 positions, which tells us about how artists are actually interested to engage with such work.



Many artists have said, that having the 12 hours and 12 opportunities to link in live videos liberated them from feeling as if they have to entertain. (T.Davies)



We did not advertise these walks or put up any program. We asked the artists not to perform, but to act. (T.Davies)



We need to look at how cultural institutions actually stop us from engaging. Sometimes these institutions take so long to plan ahead, also in terms of funding etc. Perhaps we have over-structured the cultural sector. (T.Davies)

Find the videos [here](#) and more about the project [here](#)

Culture/ Integration/ Community versus division- imposing politics

Monika Chabior, social activist, Municipality of Gdańsk
Summary by Liva Kreislere

Monika is a sociologist and social activist. She works in the Pomeranian Region of Poland, which Gdańsk is a capital of. She focuses on social development, community development, social cohesion and inclusion. She has worked with various institutions and organizations e.g. European Solidarity Center (Gdańsk), Museum of Gdańsk, Urban Lab Gdynia, Kashubian Popular University, Northern Kashubian Local Fishermen's Group. Monika is also a chairwoman of the Pomeranian NGO Council.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES ARE TAKING PLACE IN POLAND

Due to the historical events, social capital in Poland is low. The most important aspect being the change of population. The loss of Polish population and forceful influx of Lithuanian and Belorussian people were part of the building of the new societal paradigm during the Soviet ruling.

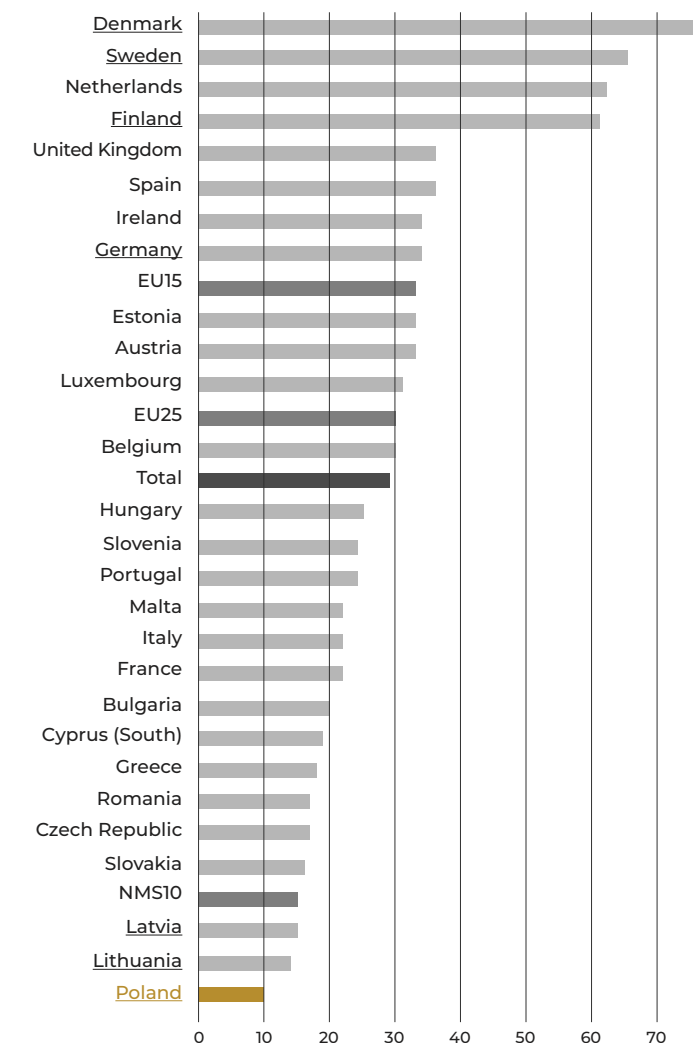
From today's perspective an important aspect of this imposed rule was the control over society through keeping people apart from each other and dividing them. (M. Chabior)

Once the Polish society managed to overcome these divisions, the movement of Solidarity erupted, which at its peak gathered around 10 million participants.

Monika mentions Pavel Adamovich, the long term mayor of Gdańsk, who was assassinated in 2019 due to his political engagement. He was the person who created a long term policy of developing social capital in Gdansk.



Generally social capital in Poland is quite low. Below the chart shows **generalized social trust in international comparison.** [Source](#) This shows a general lack of trust in people. It is also very rare for people to be involved in local NGO's. Monika presents an estimate, that only 10% of Polish population are engaged in local NGO's.



SOCIOLOGICAL (SOCIAL) VACUUM

A thesis presented by Stefan Nowak (1979), which is still quite controversial and widely discussed says, **that the characteristic of polish society is the strong identification with only 2 types of structures. Primary group being family and the second being the nation. And very little identification is with intermediary structures (local community local organizations etc.)**

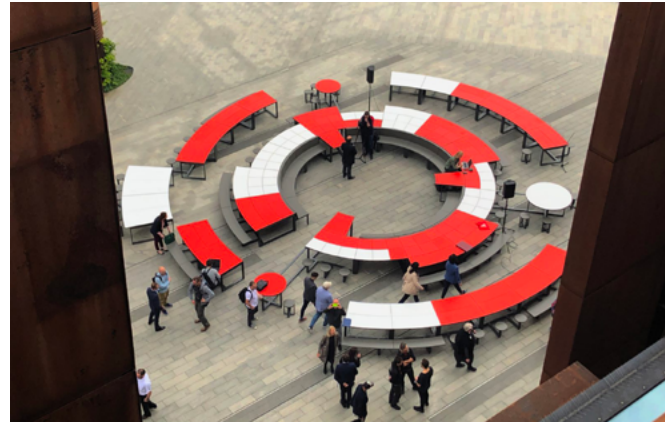
Monika notices the struggle in urban settings to build trust towards something, that is outside the family. There was a big shift, however, the local government act 1990, which took a really long time to bear fruit, but it did in the end as now local officials have more trust in the society.

DIVISION-IMPOSING POLITICS TODAY

This can be observed strongly in Poland, but also in other states around the world, for example the United States. We can observe strong polarization and tribalism. Something, that illustrates it very well is the saying: "I am not trying to overrule my opponent, I am trying to destroy my enemy." This kind of politics destroys the trust, that we have been trying to build over the years. What is very saddening, is that both sides of this polarized conflict tend to tolerate unilateral, authoritarian or undemocratic means to overrule or gain power. This is very dangerous for democracy and representation as well as for nuanced realities, that the society is experiencing, it is a very black and white reality we are shifting towards.

BEING OUT OF LINE

Monika is doing research through which, she has interviewed many people, who one could describe as, "being out of line". She was really struck how society punishes people, who are out of line. This could be just the act of expressing ones identification to feminism or even speaking russian. There is also enormous aggression towards LGBTQ+ community. Everyone she spoke to had experienced negative comments, some also aggressive behavior in public space, destruction of property, even beating and as we know, also assassination. This is increasingly entering the public sphere and also is being used as a tool in the polarization politics. Nuances are not being heard, the reported situations are extreme.



BEING TOGETHER

There are still people, who do not want to play into these tribal politics.

People are still looking for places to meet where they can talk more about their values and interests and not express their political views in political terms. (M. Chabior)

European Solidarity center has organized a round table dinner called "Let's be together". The round table is an important element in Polish history. Symbolically it ended the Soviet ruling and started transformation. The Solidarity Center have built an outdoor round table for different kind of activities for the community.

Interestingly, the same week the table was erupted, there were marches of the two opposing political movements in the area, they did not meet, but simultaneously, there was the 3rd party, here at the round table, which shows, that society is much more nuanced than just black and white.

LOCAL COMMUNITY AS A STRATEGY

People, who engage in this movement express similar concepts.

- *Take them all!* Being open to anyone in a certain geographical location, not excluding anyone and looks at what connects these people.
- Focus on nuances. History, oral history, memories, psycho-geography, that allows us to see beyond the black and white.
- Facilitation of self expression. Create an environment where people feel good to express themselves and also create an environment where it is important to listen.
- Create new identities, which can therefore create new networks. Sometimes these identities are based on locality (area), but sometimes they are built on what people are interested in.
- Values yes - politics no. Although everything is political, it shows, that sometimes it is better not

to use political terms. For example local feminist activists don't talk about feminism using this word, but talk about equality.
- Long term engagement

In Pomerania we have this strong will to encourage people to identify with being social activists. (M. Chabior)

SOME EXAMPLES

[Solidarity everyday](#) Open Cultural institution working with a community not with an audience. All of the projects have large amount of co-creation. They offer platform and space for individual projects.

[Stowarzyszenie WAGA](#) local feminist organization as an answer to the divisive politics.

CONCLUSIONS

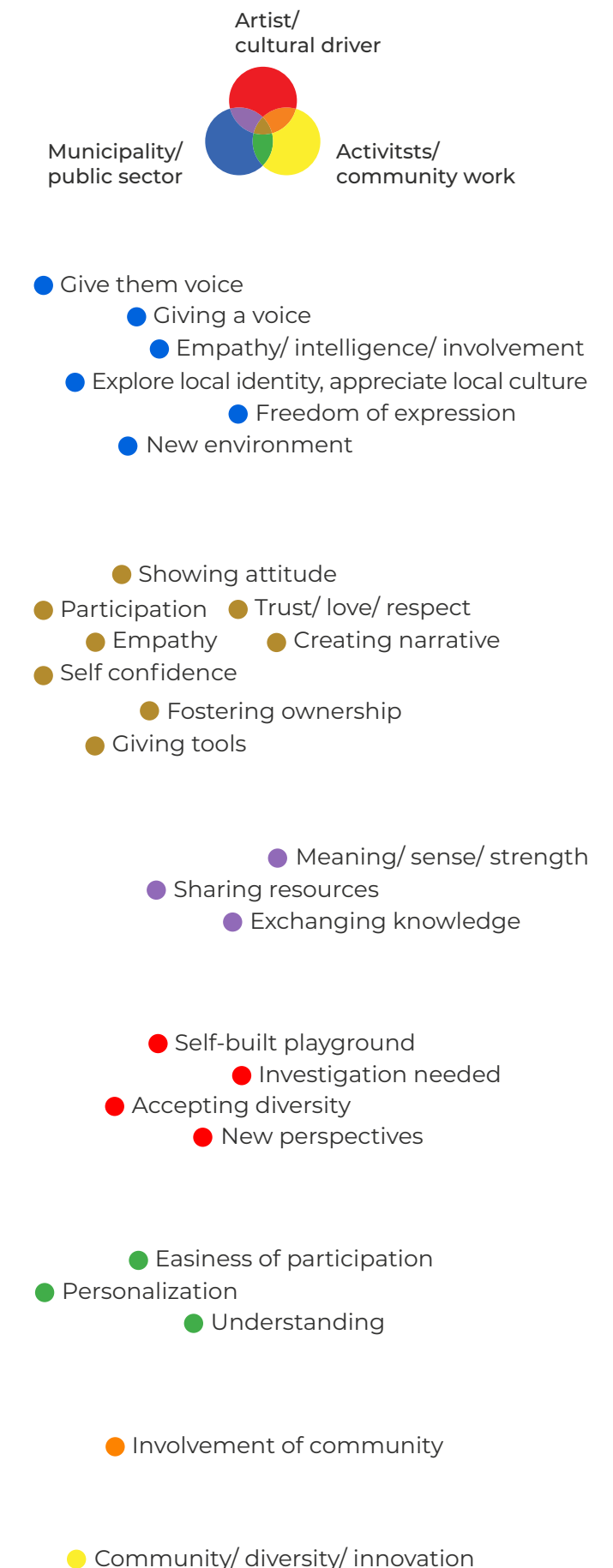
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These sort of activities do increase social capital and develop networks and do give voice to excluded communities.

[-]

It is incredibly draining for the leaders. It is not respected enough. Sadly, the representatives of these organizations do not want to become politicians, because this means, that divisions will continue to grow.

Q3: What is the first example, that comes in your mind when explaining "empowering people through culture?"



Becoming a hybrid: an institution with a conscious mind

Rūta Stepanovaite, Director of Kaunas

Artists House, chair of the UBC Cultural Cities Commission
Summary by Liva Kreislere



[Kaunas Artist House](#) (KAH) appointed a new director in 2019, Rūta Stepanovaite. And in 2021 the institution celebrates its 50 years anniversary. They position themselves as an open Embassy of Contemporary Culture. They support artists, emerging artists, creators, researchers and activists as well as being an open space for community activities.

OPENNESS

In 2017 a conscious decision was made to be more open to different ways of thinking, communities and needs.

COMMUNITY ENGINEERING

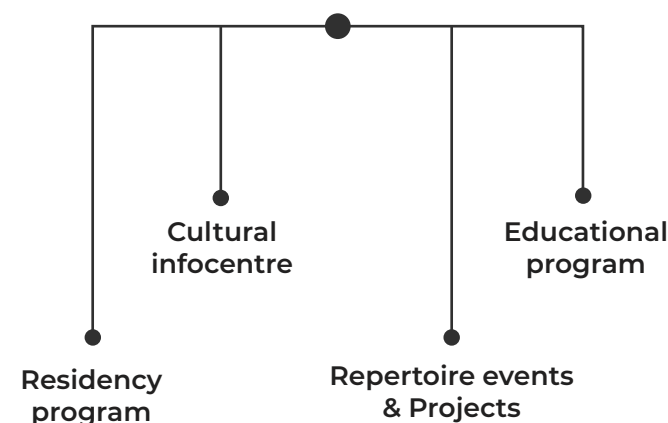
When starting operating, they gradually realized, that the best way for them to operate is becoming in one way activists of different communities. This thinking was implemented in years 2018 - 2020.

THE EMBASSY OF KAUNAS CULTURE

New 3 years program (2021- 2023) with experi-

mental formats with the aim of becoming more sustainable in their ways of acting.

Today KAH, as an institution is funded by Kaunas city Municipal Budget Office, operates as a mediator between artists and their audiences as well as cultural institutions and their visitors. KAH seeks to be open to different kinds of communities and render itself more disability-friendly. During recent years, KAH has developed 4 main working directions:



During a year KAH produce more than 200 events and activities. Part of these are curated within the organization, but another, really big part is co-curated. The large amount of activities is due to the fact, that KAH is open to support creators from outside the organization to create projects with KAH. They are supported by KAH with search for funding, mediation, communication etc.

SIGNS OF MODERN LITHUANIA: INTEGRATION OF DEAF GUIDES

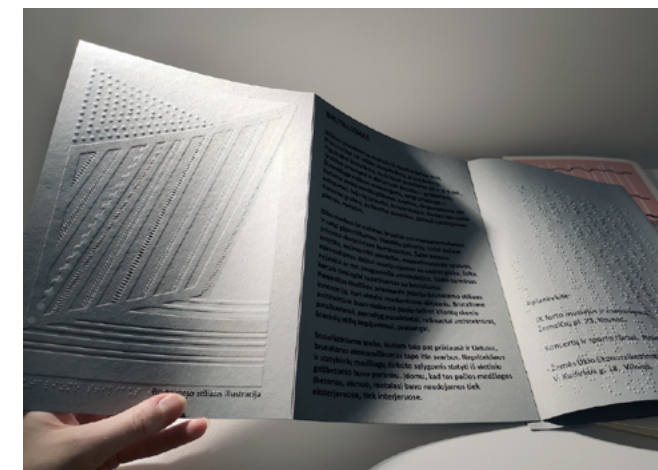
This project is part of KAH professional development program: increasing the availability of cultural services. (2018-2019) Partners - Kaunas City Municipality Cultural Heritage Department, Kaunas Deaf Rehabilitation Center. In the course of this project, two cycles of tours were created of modernist buildings with European Heritage label. They were presented to people with hearing disabilities. Tours were lead by a deaf guide in Lithuanian sign language. The whole team of KAH in preparation of this project were learning sign language and as a result of this preparation practice, they later were able to have new team members with hearing disabilities joining the KAH team. More about the project [here](#)

(IN)VISIBLE ARCHITECTURE

Project partners are Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired and Kaunas Architecture Festival (KAFe 2019). The main goal of this project was to use non-visual means of representing architecture. According to the project leader, a practicing architect "the project was inspired by the realization, that seeing is the easiest way to approach architecture. Forming a judgment of architectural object takes several seconds."



During the tours, a qualitative research, focused on the synthesis of contextual knowledge and sensory experience, was carried out by volunteer participants from the blind and visually impaired community and a team of architects—investigating cultural and social periods of prevalence of certain architectural styles, researching ideas and values behind architectural solutions, looking beyond the aesthetic expression. More about the project [here](#)



CULTURE FOR SOCIAL MOBILITY

Educational program, that KAH has been developing in years 2019- 2020. Main project partner was NGO Artscape Arts Agency, working with refugee communities around Lithuania. Project aims to expand the limits of professional contemporary art by increasing its accessibility and including hard-to-reach youth groups in the ranks of culture producers and consumers. At

the same time, the program aims to equip young people in the target group with skills and contacts that are not easily accessible to them in their daily activities, thus promoting social mobility. They conducted educational workshops - camps for 15-22-year-old refugees as well as youngsters from youth day centers. Each workshop was lead by a contemporary artist and explored contemporary art expression methods.

After the workshops the youngsters gained a greater understanding of how they feel in their surroundings and why they feel that way. (R.Stepanovaite)



City Culture Institute - a unique model of urban institution

Aleksandra Szymańska, director City Culture Institute Gdańsk (PL)
Summary by Liva Kreislere

We create events for and with the inhabitants. We are interested in city culture, activities in the public space, various participatory practices and initiatives. Our main aim is to make people participate in culture and feel responsible for it's co-creation. We strengthen the relationship between city and citizens and engage people in co-creation processes using cultural tools. (A. Szymańska)

BID FOR EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

After 2 years of bidding process there was a team of people who tried to gather all the cultural actors around the idea of ECOC project. In the final battle they lost, but even the Mayor of the city felt that the process of democratization of culture had already started. They had a lot of support from the sector, from audiences and authorities so they asked for a concept of an institution, that would continue certain activities. So 10 years ago [City Culture Institute](#) was created.

They had to revise certain questions:

- City and citizens as a city priority – how to keep it on the agenda of the city?
- Citizens of Gdansk as the key audience – it's a very broad and diverse (and changing) audience, so would better be called *audiences*.
- Influence on city development – economic, social, urbanistic, architectural.
- Cooperation and trust of partners – how not to stop the process and trust gained?
- Defining the aims and areas of expertise
- City institution/ urban culture/ intermediate body/ cultural policy advocate – how to combine all of those and build the new identity and brand?

FORUMLATING MISSION

Where: in Gdansk - public spaces, local places, city districts (where people live), venues for art and venues with potential to serve people as public spaces

For whom:

1. Inhabitants

- Local communities (defined by space/ interests/

nationalities/ social status)

- Cultural life participants and potential participants

- Urban activists, enthusiasts & explorers

2. Professionals

Arts managers - all levels, artists, animators/ educators, urbanists, architects

We act for accessibility, openness and diversity of urban culture and for activity, competence and co-operation of groups and individuals who create it. (A. Szymańska)

CCI STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Inspire and strengthen the sense of the city and of citizenship;
2. Leading research and support center for cultural sector and active citizens;
3. Strengthening and promoting values such as openness, dialogue, reflectance through literary and other artistic projects.

KNOWLEDGE

CULTURAL OBSERVATORY

A unit in CCI responsible for providing data and knowledge. They use research for the support of both: projects for broader audiences and for the sector. It helps to broaden their outlook on the cultural situation in Gdansk, on changing participation habits - on the other hand provide knowledge on needs of certain groups of people e.g. project producers, artists etc.

INSPIRATION

NARRACIJE (NARRATIONS) FESTIVAL

The festival explores urban threads and stories. Artistic interventions in the nooks and crannies of Gdansk, on the streets and squares of its districts. Introducing new contexts to everyday places.



STREETWAVES

Actions in local spaces with potential to be local hubs. Aimed at both: discovering potential of places and engaging communities to shape them and use them.



MONUMENTAL ART

A location specific project in a neighborhood of Zasp. 59 murals have been created on large block housing buildings and these have been linked to the Local Guides projects. In 2019 45 walks were taking place, inviting 779 participants.

OPERA ON WĘGLOWY SQUARE

This public, open-air event offers a new, laid-back perspective on the opera, constantly gaining new listeners. Open-air opera screenings on Targ Węlowy are greatly popular, not only among fans of classical music. Once a year, on a warm summer evening, crowds of Gdańsk locals sit in front of a huge screen watching an opera performance selected in an online vote and listening to live commentary provided by opera expert Jerzy Snakowski and an invited special guest. Opera fans have so far seen *La bohème*, *Turandot*, *Aida* and *La Traviata*.



ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OPEN CCI MICRO GRANTS

The Open CCI program is addressed to citizens, community culture workers, NGOs, informal groups, activists and institutions. Thanks to the program, anyone can carry out their idea for a cultural, social or educational event in the

entrance hall of the City Culture Institute. CCI provides the assistance of its employees and, if applicable, financial backup. Proposals and ideas can be submitted until the 10th day of each month. In 2.5 years they have supported 125 bottom-up events, reached 3120 participants.

We have our expertises, we share them (that's the key part of our mission), but we also learn from people. (A. Szymańska)

GDANSK NEIGHBORS DAYS

Outdoor fun and games, a picnic or street festivities – there are many ways to spend time with your neighbors. Their experience from previous editions of the Gdańsk Neighbor Days shows that such meetings may turn out to be a real blast! Thanks to a simple gesture of inviting your neighbors, sharing a meal or organizing ways to spend time together, one can get to know each other and make new friends. Starting from 2016, they have been publishing a summary of these meetings in the form of a Neighborhood Cookbook. Anyone who registers their event, receives a start-up package to help them prepare the Neighbor Days: a how-to book, posters, invitations, garlands, T-shirts, balloons, cups, plates, bags, visiting cards, the Neighborhood Cookbook and gadgets for the youngest neighbors. The most active neighbors who send a photographic account with a short descriptions of the meeting receive rewards. www.gdansk.dnisiadow.pl



ENGAGEMENT LOCAL GUIDES

A group of enthusiasts of various districts, local experts on the history of places that gave rise to their childhood and adult memories. In the summer, they take the citizens of Tricity and tourists on alternative urban routes – around the Monumental Art Gallery in Zasp, Dolne Miasto, Biskupia Górka, Nowy Port, Orunia and Oliwa. In the spring, local guides and all guests

interested in the history of Gdańsk districts take part in lectures and themed walks with experts. Between June and September, relying on the acquired historical knowledge and their own memories and anecdotes, they take tourists and inhabitants on guided walks around their favorite spots.



SUPPORT MEDIA LAB

This project combines culture, social activism, education and technology. It creates a space for experimentation and cooperation, sharing knowledge and looking for solutions. Medialab activities promote a responsible use of new media and technologies in cultural and social development. What does that mean? We provide employees of the culture sector with useful tools and skills within the framework of the New Media Academy. They promote Gdańsk through Found Objects – souvenirs with patterns taken from the public domain. In cooperation with the Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), they created the PANKreator.org website.

NEW MEDIA ACADEMY

Comprehensive courses for cultural sector employees. Professional workshops held by the best practitioners and experts in their fields, an atmosphere of cooperation, networking in a small group of participants, plus a lot of knowledge on new media and technologies used in culture.

ACTIVE CITIZENS ACADEMY

A series of workshops aimed at strengthening organizations by bringing out the potential and resources of people and communities. The proposed workshops are meant to streamline the actions of Pomeranian NGOs, develop the skills of managing team diversity and talent, create lasting, dialogged-based cooperation networks centered around the communities' needs and strengthening the NGOs' influence on the communities they are working with, while ensuring that no-one is left out of this process.



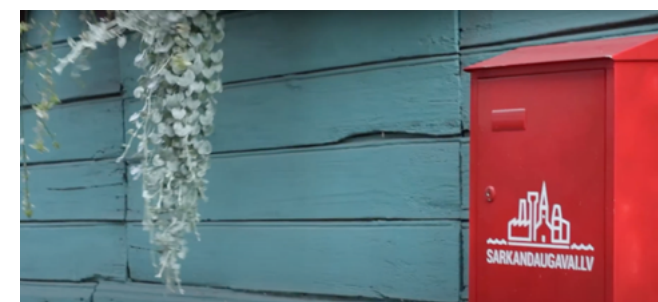
Rīga demonstrator project - Sarkandaugava

NGO Free Riga (presented through a short film format)

Summary by Liva Kreislere

Project representatives demonstrated the enormous variety and heterogeneous character of the urban texture of Sarkandaugava. Soviet modernism and the usual post-Soviet empty lots - turned parking lots. 100+ years old timber and masonry buildings.

Jonas Buchel explains his observation regarding the impact of locked-in areas. He refers to these as smaller communities, which have formed due to the physical borders cutting up the area. These are walls of the industrial sites as well as infrastructure spaces running through the neighborhood. This has in a way disturbed and not disturbed the overall community of Sarkandaugava.



NEWSPAPER

Kaspars Lielgalvis (Free Riga activist) explains, that within this project they have printed a newspaper, which they have sent to every inhabitant of Sarkandaugava through direct mail. The main objective of the newspaper was the questionnaire, both in Latvian and Russian languages, which they asked inhabitants to fill in and send back to Free Riga. This could be done through e-mail, or through special red drop in mail boxes. When they compiled all the submitted answers, they invited everyone to participate in a locals forum. In the forum, they divided participants in groups, according to what their submitted answers and interests were. There they discussed more practical aspects and next steps in creating different activities.

CRAFTS CLUB

Agnese (local, crocheter)

When I moved here 4 years ago I started looking for activists, creatives and activities in the area. I am a crocheter myself, I do it in my spare time. After 4 years, I found in my mail box the Sarkandaugava newspaper in which there was a newspaper, which I filled out. Then in the forum, I got to know more people with similar interests and now we are 4 girls, trying to establish a handicrafts club here in Sarkandaugava.

SARKANDAUGAVA MOSAIC

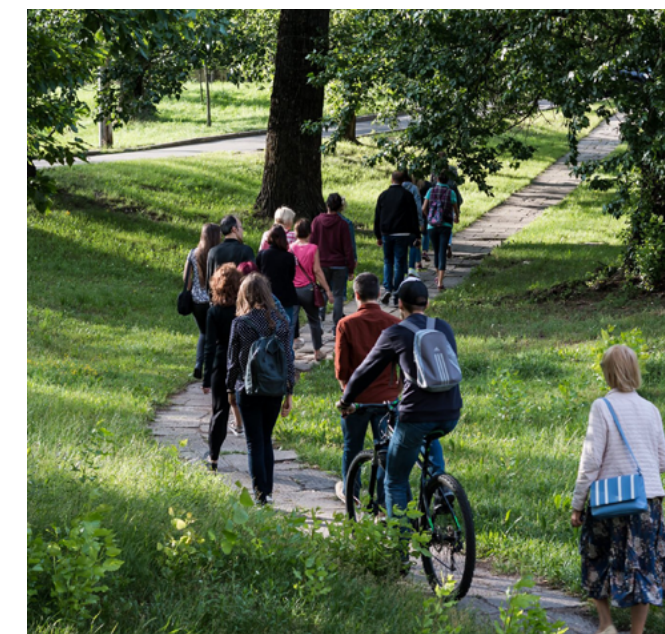
Irina (local, owner of a mosaic studio)

The idea to create a Sarkandaugava mosaic came to me about a year ago when I was in Rome, where we created a similar socially oriented project. When I got acquainted with Free Riga, they were very sweet and we all understood, that we need to create this Sarkandaugava mosaic, that it is almost obligatory. Now we are making it in my studio. Everyone from Sarkandaugava are invited to come and participate in making the mosaic.



URBAN WALKS

Džesika Lubāne (Free Riga) explains, that the project has not been easy because of the COVID-19 impact. They tried to find interesting solutions and succeeded. Together with local inhabitants they organized 5 urban walks and they visited all Sarkandaugava territories. What the locals really loved about these walks was, that each and every participants could divert the route of the walk and also give their input to their personal experiences and stories about the areas visited.



Rīga demonstrator project - Bolderāja, Daugavgrīva fortress

Festival Komēta (presented through a short film format)

Summary by Liva Kreislere



Posters created for each thematic week-end of the festival.

Bolderāja has a population of 12 994 and Daugavgrīva - 9108. The districts combined, make it the second largest district of Riga, with 1847 ha of area. These districts are often viewed together as they are adjacent and both isolated from the rest of the city with around 20 min drive. They are located on the NW outskirts of Riga and were the last districts to be officially added to the city. Districts are marginalized both geographically and in the minds of people. These areas are surrounded by the sea shore and the river Buļupe, which makes it one of the most beautiful districts of the 58 districts of Riga.



The unification of these districts within this project is not seen well from the locals as Bolderājians are mentally occupying Daugavgrīva, however Daugavgrīva inhabitants do not want to be part of Bolderāja.

Bolderāja and Daugavgrīva are predominantly russian speaking (49%) and only 29% speak latvian.

Statistics show, that the inhabitants of Riga put Bolderāja & Daugavgrīva as the second worst place to live in Riga. However the locals do not seem too bothered by this, even perhaps happy to be left in peace without great circulation of

inhabitants.

Daugavgrīva fortress is located in the center of these 2 districts. It is a fortification, first erupted in the 17th century.

It is important to mention, that Daugavgrīva and Bolderāja have no cultural institutions (such as libraries, galleries, theaters, etc), in contrary the old town has 54, yet one of the lowest inhabited places in city.

Komēta is an open air cultural and music festival, that takes place on the fortress island.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE FESTIVAL

- A - Provide outstanding performances;
- B - Leave as little ecological footprint as possible;
- C - Oppose consumerism;
- E - Experiment how and if a festival can revive a degraded space in a remote neighborhood.

UCP PROJECT

Within UCP project, Komēta aimed at revitalization and opening of a historical tower, but this idea was utopic as the fortress is a monument and all the modifications of buildings need to be monitored by different institutions. This makes it slow, expensive and Komēta does not have any legal rights in the area.

Plan B for the demonstrator project was to span the festival in 4 week-ends and open a cafe to meet visitors and collect data, instead of making the festival in one week-end activity.

They had 2385 visitors, but the focus is on the 3 week-ends, that were free of charge. **One take-away, is that with every week-end the interest was growing.** The gradually growing attendance of local people with every event shows that more

thought should be put into direct communication to local communities, so they not only know of Kometa activities in the fortress but are also aware that they are very welcome to participate. Another take-away is the **number of families with children attending.** (First day 31% of attendees had children with them, second day - 24% and the 3rd day - 30%). This helps Komēta to curate their program expanding on the activities for children.



INGA ERDMANE & EDD SCHOUTEN, ARTISTS OF THE "BEHIND THE LINES" PROJECT.

As an artist I think it is important to involve the local community or community in general is because I feel, that the arts are often too elite. We receive public money and I think with public money, we have public responsibility.

It is also important, that we have conversations with people, who are not going to the museums and galleries. They can get different perspective on their community, on their lives. Perhaps this gives them a different sense of worth.

You have a resistance from people. At first they are not sure what the "artists" want from you, but later when they see themselves in the artwork, they feel emotionally attached.

There is definitely a stigmatized view of the districts and when we talk to the people, our views are changing, because I start to see it from a different perspective. They show me lines I never imagined before. It is not like we are gaining something or we are giving something to them, it is an exchange. And that is the most important thing.

Almost everybody, that we engaged in the project, came to see the work afterwards. They were touched by the work, they were interested in it. We feel like we created lasting relationships. We will go and have coffee with Erika and Irina again some time soon, because they have



Locals visiting the exhibition "Behind the Lines"

OUTCOMES FROM RESEARCH ON SITE

1. Their communication doesn't reach locals as much as they would like.
2. 30% of the visitors are from outside of Riga.
3. The festival weekend (for a fee) attracts two time more foreigners than other weekends.
4. Every 10th visitor is from abroad and this is during the pandemic!
5. Seniors made only 1.4% of the visitors on the festival days, compared to 8-13% on the open week-ends.
6. There are a lot of visitors with children.

TAKE-AWAYS FOR KOMĒTA

Festival engages their own community more than it does locals. It even can trigger local resistance.

Activities for children could become the uniting force diverse audiences.

Investing in data collection is vitally important. Cafeteria is a great tool to engage people continuously.

The importance of mediator between stakeholders as the ignorance can make irreversible damage to the fortress.

WHAT KOMĒTA IS LACKING

They are lacking knowledge and financial resources for initiating legal processes and mediator work between state, municipal and non-governmental stakeholders to work more effectively as a cultural actor with social challenges!

To what extent do cultural activities contribute to social innovations? Critical reflection based on the theory of social innovations.

Anastasiya Matyshkina, sociologist, Dortmund university (RU/DE)

Summary by Liva Kreislere

Anastasiya is writing her PhD dissertation on the topic of cultural regeneration in shrinking cities. She is applying the theory of social innovations to study how social innovation emerge develop and can influence the formal planning in cultural field.

She argues, that all projects presented have to some extent socially innovative functions.

WHAT ARE THE “SOCIAL INNOVATIONS”? (F. MOULAERT)

1. Principle - Contribute to the satisfaction of basic human needs (those of marginalized and excluded groups, but also the needs for self-expression and creativity)

In the Enghave minipark project we could see how the project catered towards this marginalized community of beer drinkers. It is also important to note, that their needs of self expression were also catered to by this activities. It is visible here how cultural activities can directly influence that. If culture is seen as a process of people trying make sense of themselves, of their lives, to realize their physical abilities and intellectual abilities and not actually as a product. When people are making sense of their environment, they utilize the object around them and that is how cultural products are produced, but initially culture is about the process of human development and community development.

In one of Kenneth's projects indirectly reached legalization of injection rooms.

2. Principle - Increase the variety of access rights, human capabilities, and empowerment of certain social groups

Groups, that have been excluded due to their lack of skills, knowledge, political power. We can see through the demonstrator projects how they certain social groups were empowered and invited in the renovation projects or even in the formal planning practices as can be seen in the Folkets Park process. The municipality recognized him as an important planning actor. Many of the projects also increased the variety of human capabilities. Many projects indicated, that they helped increasing the skills, the rights to group minori-

ties, such as LGBTQ+, ethnic minorities and local people. Many projects indicated, that they were mediating different actors and organizations, municipalities, different interdisciplinary groups and some of them even had effect on the cultural strategies and policies in their cities. For sure cultural activities have huge potential in social innovations.

3. Principle - Bring change in social relations and power structures within community, between certain social groups and the broader society, but also between market state actors and even governance scales. This was demonstrated very well from the inputs of the practitioners.

RIGA PERSPECTIVE

How to develop a strategy where cultural drivers remain open and free, but also focused and result oriented, how to come up with tools, that will stimulate social innovations in Riga?

If we generalize, we can see, that the problems mostly are related to marginalized communities or they relate to social needs of society. Culture not as a product to bring economic growth, but a process to empower communities.

PROJECTS CONTENTS

There are practices, that address the right to the city. Involvement and empowerment and as the Wa(l)king Copenhagen project showed also to bring attention to the instant problems or how to act in the moment and in the specific time and space.

GOVERNANCE RELATIONS

It is visible, that artists are new key actors in the planning process as they are sometimes the initiators of projects, where they use public space and property to show their creations or they are mediating between communities and municipalities, if there is an issue of trust, they can help in that sense. We can see, that social innovations are mostly about collaboration and finding innovative actors in their planning process.

WHAT FOSTERS SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

Technology creates a good opportunity, we can

also see, that the artists' personality sometimes play a key role, if he/she/they are positioning themselves within the community to build trust. But also the local people, who have the knowledge about the space and the solutions. Low budget solutions are very important today.

WHAT HINDERS SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

Kenneth mentioned, that it is the bureaucratic routes and inflexibility, that is imposed by the municipality. Lack of the democratic processes. Using social innovations and grassroots initiatives as actors to make politically unpopular decisions by municipalities. We can see, that social innovations sometimes become institutionalized and can directly influence this planning paradigm of the city and shift it more towards social impacts and bring more attention to them, but sometimes some initiatives don't need this collaboration with municipalities and formal actors.

HOW TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT, WHERE SOCIALLY INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES CAN PROSPER?

Funding. It is important to provide available sources of funding for grassroots initiatives to apply for. And not only to those, who have the status of public organization, but also to individual artists and this funding should be accessible, well communicated and there should be flexible and easy bureaucratically. This seems to be a very strong barrier.

Artist and creative class become increasingly important for social innovations, but not the creative class in a traditional understanding as the main consumer of culture and economy enablers, but as people who have the social and human capital to initiate and mediate the innovative practices. We can see, that many cities, which are dealing with shrinkage are attractive to artists for their affordable living costs. The emptiness of the space, that they can create new meanings for. They are becoming important creative agents, that can initiate. But they need to have access to the spaces and they need to have the support. Especially 3rd sector organizations, professional cultural organizations, they are the main actors here, because often private institutions don't contribute to these non-profit social activities. Professional cultural organizations also still have more flexibility and independence in their actual works, but they are the ones, which are the most important because they have the human resources, expertise and they have financial gains.

Space. This is a very important aspect as many projects mentioned, that they are lacking space,

or they do not have a permanent space, but without a permanent space they cannot build long term connections and cannot be sustainable. They need to have access to space.

Diversity. Several projects emphasized, that there is a need for diversity in including local communities. We can see some examples, where it is very important to involve the elderly. There must be a deliberate strategy in involving new groups. Perhaps social media is not the best way to involve, perhaps a newspaper is better, as we could see from the Sarkandaugava example.

Data. Festival Komēta mentioned, that there is a need for good quality data to be able to analyze and build future projections. Perhaps there is a potential in collaborating with research institutions.

	Enghave mini park	Rimini Protokoll	Wa(l)king Copenhagen	Pomerania, Poland	Kaunas Artists House	City Culture Institute
What problems are addressed?	Municipality decided to develop rail roads and displaced local marginalized group	Re-envision the empty buildings, and city image	Reaction to global pandemic and all the challenges linked to it	Loss of identity, polarization, divide, political distrust, aggressive behavior	Social exclusion, lack of awareness about local heritage	Keeping citizens a priority in local politics
What is the socially innovative content of cultural activity?	Satisfying the needs of marginalized groups, involvement in the process and empowerment	Flâneur as a key actor to rediscover space and co-produce together with community, to give people the 'right to the city'	Bring attention to 'instant' action, political act to freedom, low-budget realistic practice	Giving space to communities to start talking, using language of values, engaging migrants	Connect artists, communities and other actors (e.g. researchers), engaging LGBTQ communities, providing skills and knowledge to excluded social groups/minorities	Working for people in problematic local politics where citizens were not a priority, cater to the real needs of citizens, provide financial support to local participants, explore new spaces, engage Ukrainian and Russian communities
What are the governance arrangements in socially innovative CA?	Artist as a mediator, beer drinkers group, local residents, municipality, architects	Depend on the city and specific performance	Artist re-imagining spaces, urban futures, tools	NGO organizations working apart from politics	Professional cultural organizations in the middle as mediator between locals, artists, minorities, state and market	Cross-sectional focus, Collaborations with interdisciplinary departments: cultural, research, etc. Even though independence of cultural institute is guaranteed by law it's difficult when relying on public money
What conditions foster socially innovative cultural activities?	Artist's personality as an initiator, "one of them", trust, collaboration with political groups and architects, local knowledge of problems resources/ solutions, people investing their time and efforts in construction, availability of funding, availability of space for temporary use.	(every show is very different) every work starts with invitation from cultural institution (availability of established cultural inst. is crucial because they are the enablers, they provide part of the funding)	Technology, openness to innovative artists practices	Community leaders, open and accessible cultural office spaces (people can come even out of office hours)	Availability of municipal budget, expertise and diversity of the team (4 directions for different communities), networking, knowledge sharing, partnership with municipality and other partners, eagerness to communicate (learning sign language), human resources (e.g. volunteers), "Unconscious decisions lead to more deliberate decisions"	Support from cultural observatory
What conditions hinder socially innovative cultural activities?	Bureaucratic process, 'rules' imposed by municipality, lack of flexibility, lack of democratic process with architects	Differs for every show. E.g. for the show "100%" problems funding people that fit into creative process, commitment of participants, there should be a strong artistic proposal, motivation of people		Institutional structures, long term planning cycles, no risk culture	Lack of tools for institutions (depend on funders), tough to develop their program because they have to cater to funders, shut down during pandemic but it's difficult to bring liveliness and engagement back	Loss of ECoC, difficult financing
What is the broader input of activity on planning/ policy/ space?	Revitalization of park, municipality recognized Kenneth as an important actor in planning, invited to formal planning procedure, developed an innovative and realistic method, and for the first time changed their logic towards more social, and locally-sensitive planning, legalized injection rooms	Stimulate more inclusive democratic access to spaces, re-envision urban spaces e.g. city as a 'play-ground'	Mapping of psycho-geography, 100 video of documentation, envisioning and reestablishing public space, exploratory tool, bring focus to art as an artistic process	Building social capital	Re-envisioning traditional educational approaches and planning tools	Give places the second life

Q5 When does the cultural driver stops being a cultural driver and becomes a social driver?

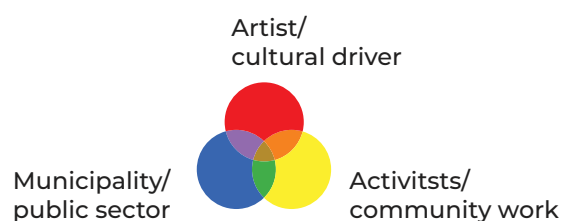
Alexandra Szymanska offers her answer to the central question of the lab:

a) When it builds the sense of citizenship

b) When it has the power to enrich citizens

c) When it builds the sense of belonging and inclusion – makes people to participate

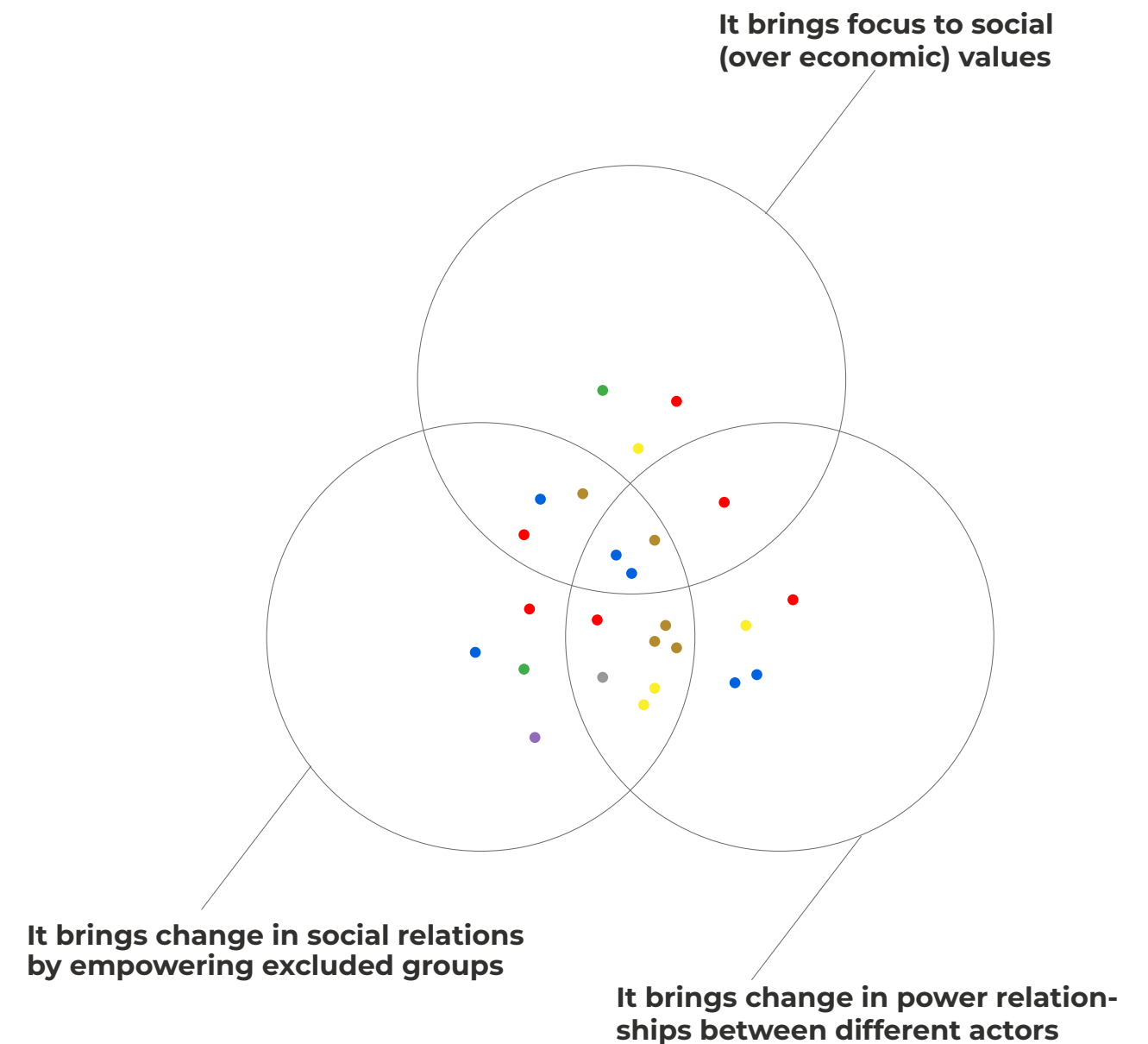
- If cultural activities start to become influenced by social groups that are reached
- Space
- Shift from looking for AUDIENCE, but looking for EXCHANGE
- Both at the same time
- When it connects people
- It does not stop, just shape-shifts
- When it changes the every-day
- When locals start to act and take over



Q6 Most valuable thought I took from the LAB...

- Let's focus on people and their needs - we have the power to empower people
- Perhaps we have over-structured the cultural sector
- The concept that artists and initiatives can run things that are against regulations. Things that municipalities cannot. Like Kenneth mentioned. I wish municipalities would use this to bypass their disabilities.
- The lab gave me words and understanding how to describe the work we have already done. Such great conclusions and summaries!
- I took some ideas on how to set up this kind of bigger on-line lab. Thanks for presenting these tools and thanks for great moderation!
- It's not about the numbers, but about true relationships and trust.
- Even greater task than establishing trust in the community is to think about diversity and how to include even uncomfortable voices in the dialogue, knowing that culture is not an all encompassing system

Q4 Multiply choice: What are the main characteristics of "social innovation"?



TUE 15/09

13.00 – 17.00 CET / 14.00 – 18.00 EEST

13.50
14.00

**Signing - in
Welcome**

What is this and how are we going to do this?
Message from Danish Cultural Institute and
organisers - Riga City Development Department

14.20

**What is Cultural Planning and
is it social innovation?**

Trevor Davies & Līva Kreislere

14.50

**Mapping of socio-cultural challenges
across Baltic Sea Region**

Moderator: Jonas Büchel + UCP partner cities

15:35

15 min break

accompanied by festival *Komēta* playlist

15:50

**Artistically developed methods for urban
planning and social change**

Kenneth A. Balfelt, visual artist, Kenneth Balfelt Team (DK)

16:30

**On flaneurs, citizens on stage and theatre
in the city. How spectators become col-
laborators for speculative social futures.**

Immanuel Schipper, researcher, dramaturg,
Rimini Protokoll (DE)

17:05

**Wa(l)king Copenhagen-cultural
acupuncture during the lockdown**

Trevor Davies, Metropolis (DK)

17:20

Reflecting on Day 1

Discussion and reportage by Anastasiya Matyushkina,
sociologist, Dortmund university (RU/DE)

WED 16/09

13.00 – 17.00 CET / 14.00 – 17.45 EEST

13.50
14.00

**Signing - in
Welcome**

What is this and how are we going to do this? Briefing
day 1, looking at day2

14.10

**Culture/Integration/Community versus
division-imposing politics**

Monika Chabior, social activist, Municipality of Gdańsk (PL)

14.45

Sarkandaugava cultural planning project

video reportage by *Free Riga* (LV)

Bolderāja cultural planning project

video reportage by *festival Komēta* (LV)

15:10

**Becoming a Hybrid: An Institution With a
Conscious Mind**

Rūta Stepanovaite Director of Kaunas Artists House,
chair of the UBCCC (LT)

15:45

15 min break

accompanied by festival *Komēta* playlist

16:00

**City Culture Institute - a unique model of
urban institution**

Aleksandra Szymańska, director City Culture Institute
Gdańsk (PL)

16:45

Reflecting on the LAB

Reportage by Anastasiya Matyushkina, sociologist,
Dortmund university (RU/DE)
+discussion



Urb Cultural Planning

Lab was organized by **Riga City Council Development Department** and
curated by **Līva Kreislere, Jānis Ušča**

Moderator: **Mārtiņš Enģelis**

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and

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Cover photo: Daugavgrīva fortress

Resources:

Video recordings of the talks can be found [here](#)

Sarkandaugava demonstrator project video [here](#)

Daugavgrīva fortress demonstrator project video can be found [here](#)

Find out about other UCP project demonstrator projects [here](#)

More information about the project www.urbcultural.eu

Information on Riga City Council Development Department website [here](#)

