

The core theme of this 3rd workshop between Lisbon, Cracow and Grenoble-Alpes Métropole (Saint-Martin-d'Hères and Pont-de-Claix) was “How to turn participation into action”, going a step forward from the previous workshop theme: “Inhabitants involvement in the decision-making process of urban projects”.

The workshop aimed to discuss users’ role in the different stages of a public space project and to foresee users’ importance in the sustainability of the proposed LAP initiatives of each partner city. Cities were asked to present challenges concerned with specific public spaces, taking into account users’ points of view.

> Users’ involvement: challenges and answers

Regarding citizens’ participation in public spaces, several **challenges** and **possible answers** were pointed during the workshop:

CHALLENGES	POSSIBLE ANSWERS
- Ensuring coherence between local actions and political vision	- Local presence of political representatives and different stakeholders
- Developing trust and confidence between political representatives and citizens	- Proximity - Visibility of short-term results - Taking time to negotiate uses with users - Linking transparency with results
- Reducing the gap between decision-makers and citizens to enhance mutual trust	- More regular presence of decision-makers, urban managers and field workers tackling daily issues - Taking time - Giving users of public spaces the opportunity to express their daily life problems - Better communication
- Powerless people with “no voice” - People not attending meetings	- New animation procedures, more communication - Reinforcing citizenship, ownership and identity feeling
- Lack of participation culture in the community - From myself to us - Developing collaboration processes	- Mixing formal and informal procedures of citizens participation
- Linking short-term and small scale projects with wider scale and long-term projects	- Adopting long-term policies within local authorities
- Difficulties to empower social excluded people	- Reinforcing their sense of belonging

> Main contributions to the debate

- Traditional urban planning is being challenged by a “step by step” approach including users’ points of view.
- Monitoring the uses over time in a participatory way
- Participation as a learning process
- Small and short-term projects have a “demonstration” function to facilitate trust-building among stakeholders.
- Public spaces should allow the presence of different cultures of uses. Some cultures do not distinguish between public and private.
- Citizens’ events (culture and arts) should be implemented in our public spaces.
- There is an invisible barrier between the ways of using public spaces by different groups of users.
- New public spaces need the users’ consultation. Who decides what uses and how public spaces will be used?
- Proposals coming from users are needed.
- Regarding the new approach of participatory way of dealing with public spaces, the role of urban plans and urban schemes should be revised.
- Although the participatory perspective, we always need a strategic vision.
- We should go beyond the physical solution; it does not only deal with the urban shape.
- Sustainability is a core issue regarding public spaces. To ensure sustainability, connection between users, decision-makers and stakeholders is vital.
- The French approach called GUSP (*Gestion Urbaine et Sociale de Proximité*: Urban and Social Management of Proximity) tries to link citizens’ participation with urban management and maintenance in a sustainable strategy.
- Localisation of public facilities is a key dimension because we can influence and orientate urban functions of different public spaces.
- Continuity is a key dimension mentioned by all the partners. How to ensure stakeholder engagement to work together in the long-term? Multiannual budgets seem to be crucial.
- Human dimension and people’s needs are the big issue to be introduced in the urban planning mechanism. We need to give opportunities to the community.
- It seems that projects to improve public spaces are trapped between the small perspective (local needs) and the global perspective (strategic vision at city level).

>Some remarks coming from the Lead Expert

Specificities of users' participation in the USER project

- PARTICIPATION WHAT FOR?
 - To identify users' needs on public spaces uses
 - To make participatory diagnosis of current and potential uses of public spaces
 - To decide what kind of uses and what urban functions
 - To ensure co-management and maintenance
- WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?
 - Ensuring the presence of different kind of users taking into account their different needs
 - Decision-makers, key stakeholders, municipal departments concerned with different dimensions of public spaces, users, field workers, etc.
 - Achieving agreements between different interests
- WHAT PRINCIPLES SHOULD DRIVE THE PROCESS?
 - Enhancing and enriching urban social life through public spaces
 - Improving civic behaviours in open public spaces
 - Avoiding discrimination
 - Reaffirming values and principles to frame users' participation: public spaces should be convivial, accessible, alive, sustainable, etc.

> Inhabitants and users' participation in each partner city

■ Pont-de-Claix

Connecting the two areas (Iles de Mars/Olympiades) through a pedestrian path and removal of the fence between two public spaces, as the main goal of the project, is already finished. Giving support to inhabitants in this process becomes the key challenge. Now the new public space is becoming slowly a "normal" space, ensuring conviviality in the created area. Appropriation of the space by inhabitants and creating new opportunities to meet and interact, become the main challenge.

It was showed that it is possible to work together going beyond scepticism. Rhythm and continuity of the participation process was considered as a key dimension. The core



idea of connecting both neighbourhoods was not negotiated. It was a previous decision to the participation process. But small interventions become a real engine in creating credibility among inhabitants.

The consultation process was organised through Public Urban

Workshops (APU) which took a year for the first phase. It is a place of exchange, proposal and development between inhabitants, elected representatives and technicians to think collectively and develop a shared social and urban diagnosis.

The aim of the Pont-de-Claix LAP is to support the Iles de Mars/Olympiades neighbourhood opening up as well as the appropriation of the new public space, this in order to maintain qualitative spaces.

▪ Saint-Martin-d'Hères

Renaudie neighbourhood has not had the expected development and has faced various social and urban problems. The shape of the intermediate spaces, induced by the architecture and layout of buildings, presents specific characteristics: the presence of pedestrian “back alleys” between buildings and serving individual entrances, small pedestrian squares on the ground floor or above garages, stairways accessing to public terraces, etc.



The specific shape and layout Renaudie generates consequently a number of disorders and a growing presence of illegal activities and a negative image of the neighbourhood. All these provide a sense of insecurity for inhabitants.

The implementation of the Urban and Social Management of Proximity team (GUSP) on the site and the will of some inhabitants to be involved have allowed the introduction of an associative café, an association for cultural purposes and a long-term cultural activities with inhabitants. The municipality of Saint-Martin-d'Hères tasked a multidisciplinary team gathering urban planners, sociologist and research unit to conduct a shared diagnosis with all stakeholders. It is a multi-partners project reconciling temporality and each one's rooms for manoeuvre.

First challenge deals with security taking into account that new inhabitants should be attracted to hold the unoccupied dwellings. One of the solutions has been to convert a building block ground into private gardens. Re-appropriation of the common public spaces will come afterwards.

The aim of the LAP is to work future improvement of the functioning and uses of the common spaces with inhabitants but also to organise stakeholders' decision-making process to move forward on projects. Meanwhile small projects can help to create credibility and to improve the collaboration between citizens and local authorities.

▪ Cracow

Main problems affecting public spaces of Azory housing estate are the following:

1. The use of common spaces seems to be chaotic and incoherent from the aesthetic point of view. The number of sites for active and passive recreation is sufficient but there are no representative areas, no city square, no covered spaces, no identity of the place, no clear identification system;
2. The estate does not meet the current requirement in terms of transport facilities. A catastrophic lack of sufficient number of parking places and the resulting appropriation of the common spaces and green areas for this purpose is one of the main problems;
3. The progressing re-privatisation of ownership as well as the existing spatial layout induce mutual intermingling of various ownership forms, which results in a conflict visible in the space. It requires various methods and possibilities to manage the area.
4. The feeling of insecurity is due to social problems including safety and exclusion of elderly and disabled people, no place for young people, bad emplacement of benches and lighting, desolate places, etc.



The diagnosis of Azory is mainly a result of LSG meetings, through workshops where members worked with maps of the district, reported problems and proposed solutions. In order to get the opinion of youth and children, two events were organised in the frame of USER to enrich the diagnosis. A survey was carried out among children and teenagers from Azory School. Pupils were questioned about public spaces they like and they do not like. More than 300 answers were obtained. Another event was the children's art competition "At my Azory..." where more than 160 works were submitted in different art's techniques.

To implement the LAP, partners should be identified. Some responsibilities, as the arrangement of its own spaces, are municipal duties. The public spaces' arrangement should be agreed with the users (mainly inhabitants of Azory). Small investments projects could be realised and financed by the District Council or from participatory budget. Other actions are the responsibility of the housing cooperatives or private companies, especially such as development of services which may be encouraged by adopting the zoning plan.

The project needs different approaches to face different scales that should be addressed together. Global (city level) and local (district level) need the engagement of different stakeholders. Participation is a multilevel process.

▪ Lisbon

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



Public spaces in the Lisbon pilot site are a real urban void, real dead spaces with lack of shops, services and proximity equipment. A new way of re-shaping the physical layout should be linked with a new urban management and 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 development.

The LSG is a key instrument to address conflicts in public spaces adopting a mediation role between different interests and actors (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).

Lisbon LAP aims to transform public space in a main instrument to achieve social inclusion. For that purpose, it defines its overall objective: "Initiate a process of urban regeneration through the rehabilitation and construction of public spaces". This overall objective has different components:

1. Creation of multifunctional spaces and equipment
2. Creation of temporary uses for constrained voids
3. Elimination of existing barriers for mobility
4. Establishment of connections of proximity between the neighbourhood and the city
5. Mitigate the impact of inadequate planning of major infrastructure-water treatment plant/electric sub-station

The strategic principles of the LAP are the following: designing and managing public spaces, understanding uses of public spaces, proximity to users and change in public spaces.