OBSERWATORIUM POLITYKI MIEJSKIEJ IRMiR

URBAN LAB.net

Guide to good Urban Lab ideas

Edited by:
Bartosz Piziak
Magdalena Bień

INSTYTUT ROZWOJU MIAST I REGIONÓW

Warszawa – Kraków 2023

European Funds Technical Assistance

Republic of Poland

IRMiR INSTITUTE OF URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

European Union Cohesion Fund

Piziak B., Bień M. (ed.), 2023, *Guide to good Urban Lab ideas*, Institute of Urban and Regional Development, Warsaw–Krakow.

ISBN: 978–83–67231–49–7

Editors:
Bartosz Piziak
Magdalena Bień

Translation, editing and proofreading: **Iwona Kukla**

Layout and typesetting: **Michał Kabziński**, Agencja Wydawnicza PAJ-Press SC

Cover graphic: **Stereoplan – Aleksandra Słowińska, Kinga Trzepla**

Institute of Urban and Regional Development
45 Targowa Street, 03–728 Warsaw
www.irmir.pl

Obserwatorium Polityki Miejskiej IRMiR
www.obserwatorium.miasta.pl

The report was carried out under the project: Urban Policy Observatory as a basis for knowledge-based development of sustainable urban policy in Poland, financed 85% from the European Funds of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme and 15% from the state budget.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Positive examples of ideas implemented in other cities, referred to as good practices, undoubtedly contribute to active measures aimed at improving the conditions and quality of life in the city and involving citizens in the decision-making process. The increasing willingness and commitment to invent solutions by residents, to experiment and test prototypes in the urban environment, also lead to initiatives undertaken by various urban stakeholders, whether clustered or not, around NGOs, municipal and academic institutions or commercial entities.

This study is a collection of exemplary urban good practices, with various topics, which have been implemented – or are still being continued as long-term activities – in different countries and cities of varied size and conditions. The result is a publication that presents broad experience and can serve as an inspiration for further cities and, above all, their citizens.

The good practices shown are the result of work undertaken by both city halls, citizens and non-governmental organisations as well as the academic community and companies supporting the implementation of the smart city concept and raising public awareness. For over a decade, urban labs (urban lab, urban living lab, city lab, innovation lab) have been a "novelty" in this field, bringing together all these groups with a single aim: to develop innovative urban solutions to serve citizens and improve their quality of life.

The starting point for this study, was the first edition of the conference entitled "Urban Lab Forum", which was held in the City 360 zone during the 11th session of the World Urban Forum in Katowice in June 2022. The conference was organised by the Institute of Urban and Regional Development in cooperation with the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy. As part of one of the panels entitled "Guide to Good Urban Lab Ideas", invited representatives of urban labs from Poland and other countries around the world shared with the participants the projects that their teams and organisations had carried out, developed in such labs or directly by local government units. The positive reception of this international meeting, the exchange of interesting experiences and the multitude of ideas that emerged at the time, contributed to the organisers' decision to present these good practices in terms of creating a smart and citizen-friendly city in the form of an electronic publication that can reach an even wider audience.

The proposed, tested and implemented urban solutions often address different thematic areas and vary in terms of purpose, nature and scale of impact. The descriptions of the selected good practices were written by people from various backgrounds and institutions who often deal with separate issues, so the format of the individual "chapters" is heterogeneous – some are less official and casual, others are closer to an academic essay. However, they share a common goal and assumption: to use the potential and resources of the public sector together with other urban stakeholder groups to create activities and measures to introduce valuable changes in the city – in line with urban lab and this working method. On the other hand, we see this as an asset of our study and believe that it will prove useful for various audiences.

Indeed, the functioning of urban labs has been a phenomenon in cities all over the world for several years and has played a crucial role in integrating activities for the city and its inhabitants. Urban lab is an instrument which, through activities involving citizens and experts, its interdisciplinary formula and innovative solutions, provides real support for the functioning of cities and helps to co-manage them. It is a scalable tool whose operating formula, organisational structure and thematic areas of

activity can be “tailor-made” for a specific city, municipality or metropolis. The scalability of this instrument may be considered one of its greatest strengths, especially as an urban lab is a tool that is a “living organism” in whose space we can attempt to simulate certain urban processes on a micro scale. Polish and foreign experience shows that urban lab can be:

- a space for meetings and discussions about the city,
- a tool for diagnosing the needs of the city and its inhabitants,
- an incubator of urban innovation created by citizens,
- a generator of solutions based on open data,
- an inspiration – to be active, to take action, to cooperate,
- a promotional and participatory tool to communicate with various interest groups;
- a coordinator of projects improving the quality of life in the city,
- a start-up and business hub,
- or a think-tank.

This “guidebook” is also intended to help other cities, local authorities and organisations to come up with and design their own initiatives to improve our cities and towns. Not every innovation needs to have a multi-million budget since, as practice shows, often the smaller projects, with high community involvement and a small budget, are the most successful. We hope that the creation of this e-book will help to inspire action and facilitate the process of implementing solutions, by showing what challenges and difficulties other cities and organisations have faced and what decisions have helped them to implement their objectives smoothly and effectively.

Recommendations

We believe that each of the activities presented in this publication will find its audience and imitators, which is particularly commendable in the case of good urban practices. Below, however, we have summarised in points the most crucial conclusions from the projects and activities presented, which will help to understand the complexity of urban processes and, as we hope, avoid mistakes in planning and designing of innovative measures in other cities.

When implementing urban projects, it is highly relevant:

1. To properly design the whole process and test the functionality of the solution already at the initial stage, in particular with the participation of citizens (target users) and experts, which will significantly increase the chance of the successful implementation.
2. To engage citizens and representatives of various urban stakeholder groups. It is also crucial to adapt flexibly to changes and be open to the possible need to correct a given idea, to be reflective and to update plans and actions.
3. To have an appropriately designed tool (e.g. an app, a Decidim online platform), which may significantly streamline achieving goals and engaging residents.
4. To present open urban data on maps in an accessible and comprehensible way, which can improve residents' understanding of a given phenomenon, as well as help to improve their performance. This also raises public awareness of the use of open data by clearly and transparently depicting phenomena on a map.
5. To create a space (e.g. in the formula of an urban lab or a creative and workshop space) for creative thinking – even if something is initially just a minor idea – the idea should be given a chance and allowed to develop.
6. To generate grassroots actions – even in the case of a system such as a municipal office – beginning by making changes at the level of one team and then transferring them to the whole unit (e.g. a department).
7. To involve residents from different age groups in the projects and creating a space for them to share their knowledge, experience but also creativity. To actively engage children in urban initiatives, giving room for using their ideas and creativity, but also seniors – with their rich life experience – as part of intergenerational cooperation.
8. To include citizens in efforts to improve the quality of life in the city through open source applications or open communication channels.
9. To design solutions in such a way that they are not only ethical and responsible, but also transparent and inclusive.
10. To open up the city administration to cooperation with scientific units in order to develop new tools for discussion about the city and joint actions for its benefit.
11. To test the developed solutions in advance in order to prevent the implemented innovation from not being applicable in reality.
12. To initiate actions to improve the functioning of the town hall and to overcome working in silos – even if they are not carried out top-down and holistically, it is crucial to make changes in units, open to innovation with the right human resources.
13. To engage residents in activities in the new city space, e.g. using rooftops, which are an untapped resource for city dwellers (both humans and animals) and which can be used, for instance, for festivals and cultural events and physical exercises.
14. To have a conscious policy of creating a new development path for areas with obsolete functions, while preserving and accepting the historical past and adapting their remains to the present.

15. To conduct educational activities (especially in relation to urban labs) aimed at different groups, including children, seniors, but also city officials:
    - teaching through experience, e.g. games based on emotions, empathy and role-playing;
    - raising community awareness of urban and social processes;
    - sharing knowledge and experience.
16. To run an appropriate information and promotion campaign to reach the largest number of recipients who could potentially engage with or disseminate the activities – particularly relevant for new urban lab initiatives.
17. To teach residents new ways of working in the urban space (e.g. design thinking), to show good practices and examples from other cities, in order to raise their awareness and increase their engagement in the future.

GOOD PRACTICES

Responsible Sensing in Amsterdam Urban Labs – CITIXL (Amsterdam)

PAUL MANWARING

Responsible Sensing in Amsterdam Urban Labs: How the Netherlands Police used the Responsible Sensing Toolkit (RST) as part of a project to design more ethical solutions to control weapons in public spaces.

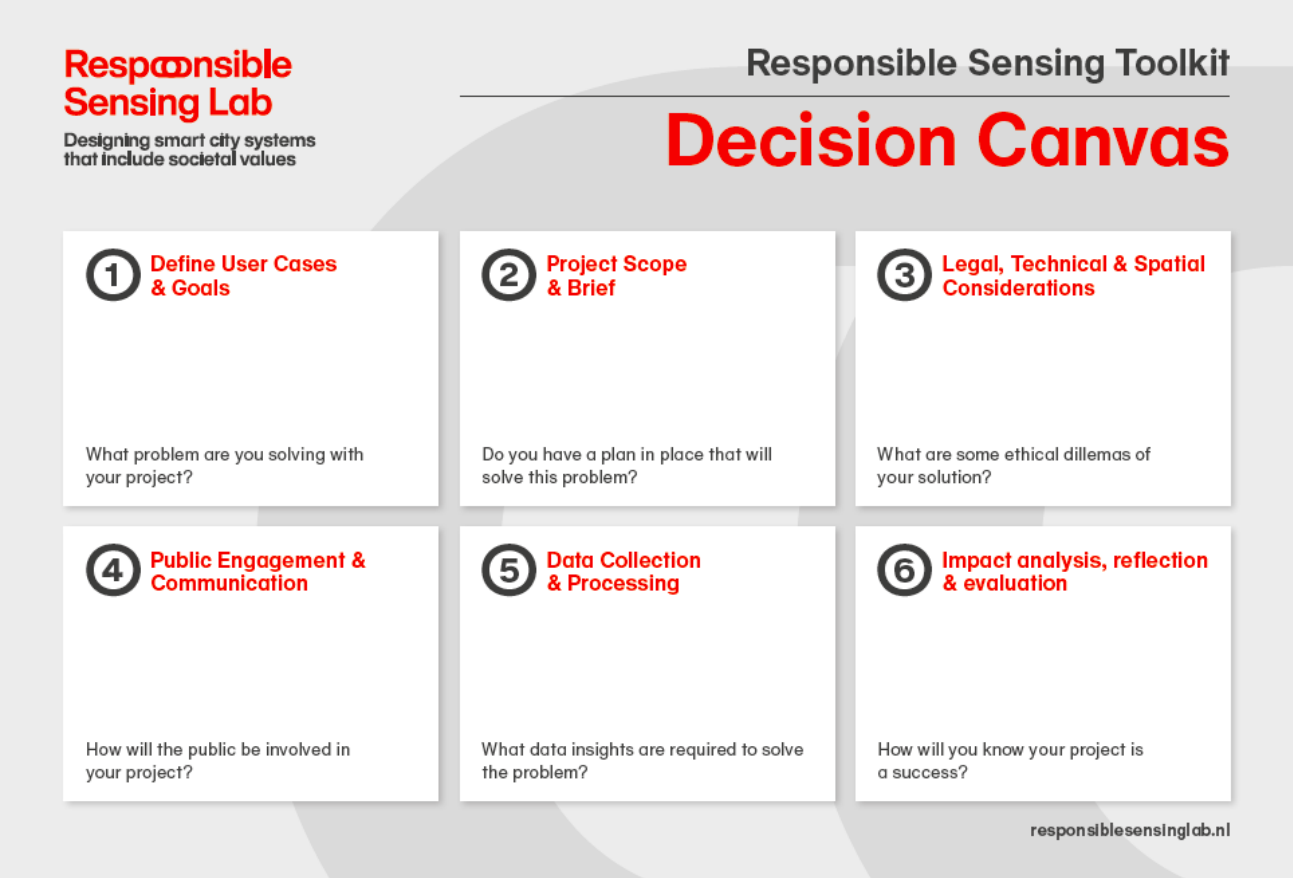
In April 2021, the Netherlands Police commenced participation in a series of four workshops to test the Responsible Sensing Toolkit (RST) as an effective approach for rapid prototyping of real solutions to serious social problems. Working together with RST co-creators, City Innovation Exchange Lab (CITIXL) and the City of Amsterdam CTO Innovation Team, the Police applied a simple six-step guide to engage citizens in a co-creation process that brought immediate results and contributed to a successful solution prototype.

The goal was to see if the Toolkit would help the Police design more transparent solutions for their "Targeted Weapons Control" program and tests that include preventative frisking with a "random selection pole" for the pilot in the fall of 2022. Specifically, the mission of the police is to ensure public safety but there were serious privacy and social equality issues to be addressed in the discovery and design process.

> *The underlying question was – how do we design a solution that will not only be responsible and ethical but also transparent and inclusive?*

The first step was to use the RST Decision Canvas in a "quick scan" that identifies ethical dilemmas inherent in city sensing projects by addressing one essential question for each of the six steps before moving forward with a solution concept that may use potentially invasive sensing technology. Instrumental in the application of this experimental approach was the partnership with the Responsible Sensing Lab located at the Urban Living Lab in Amsterdams Marineterrien, an innovation hub in the heart of the historical centre.

The six-step approach to responsible and ethical sensing projects in the Responsible Sensing Toolkit (RST) is simplified in Workshop 1 with the Decision Canvas (figure below).



The problem is that there has been an increase of concealed weapons and related violence; unfortunately carrying weapons has become a status symbol among the youth. This trend was identified by the police and has become a serious public safety issue over the past few years that led to preventative frisking in public spaces as a potential deterrent. This potentially invasive practice needs to be justified before it can have a positive social impact, so we started with a discussion among stakeholders, including community representatives, on proportionality: Is there a balance between benefits to society and risks to privacy? This is a crucial question raised in Step 1: Define User Cases and Goals. If the benefit is justified, how do the Police ensure that there is no possibly or perception of racial profiling? Is the use of sensing technology justified and, if not, are there any alternatives? Aided by sensors or not, the selection process must be **random** and **fair**, but first and foremost – **effective** and **safe**.

After completing the remaining steps, it became apparent that the biggest challenge facing the Police was how to communicate these complex issues and potential solutions to the public in a more transparent and inclusive way. Moving productively from awareness to a participatory co-creation strategy with communities as a key stakeholder was the way forward. CITIXL identified "attention points" that needed to be addressed in order to ensure the most responsible and ethical design possible.

This was the focus of the second workshop that concentrated on Step 4: Public Engagement and Communication, and by involving "Credible Messengers" from four diverse communities in Amsterdam, the Police was informed how to turn potentially challenging attention points into opportunities for success. It was during this open discussion that the concept of a "random selection pole" emerged as a suggestion from the Credible Messengers.

Responsible Sensing Toolkit Workshop 2 included the police, city of Amsterdam, Credible Messengers from the community and CITIXL (photo below).

Prior to the next two workshops, the prototype for selection pole was built and the random algorithm and secure software to record the results were developed in a Rapid Prototyping approach in collaboration with Sensemakers Amsterdam – a grassroots community-led organisation that has been operating on the Marineterrien Live Lab since 2015. The third workshop presented the first prototype and tested it with several stakeholders including citizen advocacy groups and the Credible Messengers, followed by a digital ethics workshop lead by CITIXL to inform about the next iteration which was ready for testing and validation for the fourth workshop held in early 2022.
Since then the City of Amsterdam has approved the selection pole for the pilot to take place in 25 public spaces beginning in October this year and to test the device as an effective, ethical, and transparent tool in the Police's efforts to make the city safer while respecting privacy, cultural diversity and digital rights.

Pictured below, Geert-Jan Staal, project leader for the Netherlands Police is demonstrating the final version of the random selection pole at the AMS Living Lab Summit held in the Marineterrien Living Lab on June 20, 2022.

For more information about CITIXL please visit www.citixl.com and for more information about the Responsible Sensing Toolkit please visit https://responsiblesensinglab.org/responsible-sensing-toolkit

How does playing via Zoom help Catalan officials support human rights defenders? – Smilemundo

ALEKSANDRA ZEMKE

What can connect the risk-laden daily life of a human rights defender from Colombia, Honduras, Congo or the Philippines with the life of an official living in safe, prosperous Catalonia? When the former often fight risking their lives, the latter can support and protect them. However, they must first learn of their existence and understand that they may need each other.

The Catalan Acction for Peace (acpau.org) together with the International Action for Peace (actionpeace.org), two NGOs based in Barcelona, have been supporting human rights defenders for years. They try to draw the attention of the media, politicians and officials to their situation. Human rights defenders are activists, often community leaders, lawyers, journalists or NGO workers who use pacifist methods to fight for the rights of their fellow citizens.

Their situation is becoming more dramatic every year. Conflicts over the protection of local communities and environmental resources are increasing. Violent interrogations, kidnappings, brutal torture and bullying are just some of the threats they face. In 2020, 227 human rights defenders were murdered, 65 of them in Colombia, 30 in Mexico, 29 in the Philippines, 20 in Brazil and 17 in Honduras.

The growing interest in the Sustainable Development Goals among politicians and officials provided an opportunity to show that human rights defenders play a key role in Agenda 2030, and how crucial it is for the global community to support them, provide asylum or legal assistance.

As Smilemundo (smilemundo.org), an organization operating in Barcelona since 2011, we were invited by ACP and IAP to cooperate. Our extensive experience in designing educational tools: workshops, games and methodology was to help create a profound educational experience for Calalan officials and inspire them to engage in activities supporting human rights defenders.

At Smilemundo, we believe that for education to be effective it should reach out to the emotions. Therefore, the focal point of the training was supposed to be the game in which officials would take on the role of human rights defenders. When we started designing it, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, and we were faced with the challenge of how to transfer our idea to Zoom, without losing the quality of the learning experience, and, most difficult of all, how to do it while not exceeding the same budget.

We began by looking for strong elements of an online format of training. First of all, we had the chance to reach officials from smaller towns in Catalonia, and gain the time that would have been needed to commute to Barcelona. This allowed us to split the training into two sessions. We devoted the first one to talking about the situation of human rights defenders around the world and how their work directly connects to actions towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We planned to build the second session around empathy – by playing a game together and then having the possibility to speak directly with Czarina Musni – an activist and lawyer from the Philippines who is on the red-flagged list, meaning her life is under direct threat. Czarina was under the protection of human rights defenders programme, and temporarily resided in Catalonia.

The development of the online game considerably exceeded the available budget. We had to find a non-standard solution. The pandemic forced us to work remotely and as a team we started using the MURAL app, which works like an online board. It allows you to write, draw, hang and move cards together. It also gives the possibility to upload your own graphics. As designers, we know that even a simple tool that enables drawing and moving pieces together offers infinite possibilities for creat-

ing game mechanics. This is how the idea of **playing with post-its** was born, using the MURAL app, which costs just €15 and works with Zoom.

The aim of the game we created was to help the human rights defender to safety while avoiding dozens of hazards and fighting against time. Each player could only move certain threats to a different part of the board to make a safe corridor for the fleeing activist. Players had to communicate with each other, but they were constrained by the hierarchy. Not everyone listened to everybody, some only accepted written instructions. Players had to quickly understand the dependency system and start working together.

Training took place at the end of 2021. One team rescued a human rights defender, the other did not make it. The game perfecty portrayed the frustration experienced by organisations supporting activists, facing complex procedures and a lack of coordination between the entities involved, which often hinder effective assistance.

It was a great honour for us that Czarina wanted to stay with us, to observe and comment on the game. She highly appreciated how we showed the complexity of the support system for human rights defenders in a 30-minute game. The officials received a substantial dose of knowledge, had the possibility to sense how much cooperation is needed at various institutional levels and personally met a human rights defender who told them about her daily activism.

Training of officials is one of the steps implemented by ACP and IAP in Catalonia to build a support network for human rights defenders. The programme is backed by the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation. The very positive reception of the training we designed, and the fact that the online version allows us to reach more officials, made it possible to obtain additional funding and to plan educational work with more offices in 2023.

"Gieß den Kiez" – Water the trees in your neighbourhood – CityLAB Berlin

JUAN CARLOS CARVAJAL BERMUDEZ

Background

Urban trees are a central element of city districts and streets. They are of great ecological importance and provide not only cool shadows in the summer, but also clean our air and are home to thousands of animals and other plants. At the same time, cities and streets are subject to various uses. New residential areas or roads require an open space and compete with trees for the scarce resource of land.

Urban trees are exposed to extreme conditions. A high degree of sealing, high soil compaction, the climate in the city with higher temperatures influenced by indirect heat from buildings mean that trees face challenges. Root growth is often significantly limited in cities due to cramped planting pits. These site conditions, which limit the growth and vitality of the trees, are usually even more pronounced for street trees, where the root space is often even more restricted than for trees in parks or in residential areas.

Challenges

The consequences of climate change, especially dry and hot summers put a strain on Berlin's city trees. Some of our city's trees dry up and suffer long-term damage. In Berlin alone, over 1,000 street trees on average disappear each year. The responsible authorities manage the irrigation and care of city trees, but their resources are too limited to keep up with the watering during Berlin's hot summers. In some extreme cases, the citizens of Berlin have been called upon for support, albeit largely uncoordinated. Furthermore, in Berlin greenery departments are organized on a district basis with different approaches towards tree care and irrigation. This makes it difficult to coordinate their activities with the efforts of the citizens.

Gieß den Kiez

CityLAB Berlin built a fully **open-source platform** to let authorities, volunteers & civic society collaborate to save our trees from dehydration: "Gieß den Kiez", i.e., *Water the trees in your neighbourhood*. Gieß den Kiez visualizes over 800.000 city trees of Berlin, showing their species, age, water demand and the rainfall amount in the last 30 days. Users can adopt trees and mark them as "watered" within the application. Water requirements are also adjusted depending on the trees' age and in some districts also depending on the aftercare by the local authorities. The platform also provides a lot of useful information on correct irrigation and the location of Berlin's handle pumps to avoid carrying water and to support the use of greywater. Since the launch of the platform, users have reported the irrigation of more than 8000 trees with over a million liters of water.

Data sources

The main data source for the application is the tree census of Berlin. The tree census is a database that stores information regarding city, street or park trees, which is provided by the Street and greenery departments. However, such departments are not responsible for all trees in Berlin, for example, some are managed by the forestry office. Therefore, those trees do not appear in Gieß den Kiez. CityLAB Berlin is constantly working on improving the data to achieve an entire representation of Berlin's tree population. The current data sources are:

- Geoportal Berlin,
- German Weather Service (DWD),
- Pumps from Open Street Map.

How can citizens participate?

Gieß den Kiez invites all locals to participate in the irrigation & nursing of city trees. The platform is based on an interactive map, where users can discover the diversity of the 800.000 city trees of Berlin. Users can simply drag and zoom around, and discover active water pumps & rainfall amounts, find trees and check out their age, species and water demands. Users can create an account to adopt trees and register how much they have been watered. By adopting and watering a tree, users can show the city's greenery department and neighbours that they are being taken care of. **There is also a public Slack channel for exchanging with other interested people**. The Slack channel helps the CityLAB to further develop the platform and fosters citizen engagement.

Can the principle be transferred to other cities?

Yes, CityLAB invites tech-savvy friends to take a look at the source code in our Github Repository and help the platform grow in your neighbourhood. People interested in redeploying "Gieß den Kiez" in your city, don't hesitate to reach out – the code is there to be shared and we are happy to help you with the very first steps. Follow the city of Leipzig: They are brave and have decided to launch their very own "Leipzig Gießt".

If programming isn't your favourite activity, we recommend reaching out to your local OpenData/CivicTech/OpenKnowledge institutions or public innovation labs and tell them about your idea. A step-by-step online workshop detailing all what you need to know to adapt the tool was recorded and made available through our website. The focus lies on organizing your neighbours and friends to water trees together and document the process with the tool. It's nice to meet others while doing so – and it supports your city's administration in keeping the city trees green and alive.

How are technical problems dealt with?

The participation platform "Gieß den Kiez" emerged first as a prototype. Since its launch, the platform has been regularly updated, solving some issues raised by citizens as well as implementing new features. Furthermore, anyone with coding skills is cordially invited to contribute to our open-source repository and can comment on their issues or code fixes directly in the repository.

About CityLAB Berlin

"Gieß den Kiez" is a project by CityLAB Berlin. The CityLAB is Berlin's public innovation laboratory. At the interface of urban **society**, **administration** and **science**, we tap into the potential of digitalization to promote urban, development geared towards the common good – we are practice and impact-oriented.

Our lab is designed as an open space and a point of contact for citizens and administrative employees interested in digitalization. It offers wide-ranging opportunities for **developing ideas, prototyping** and **knowledge transfer**. The CityLAB combines elements of a digital workshop, coworking, exhibition and event space to create a place where participation and innovation are conceptually combined.

The CityLAB **is run by Technologiestfitung Berlin and funded by the Berlin Senate Chancellery.**
www.citylab-berlin.org

More than raw data: the story of the Open Data portal of the municipality of Eindhoven

JOANNA SAMULSKA AND CELINE JANSEN

The Open Data portal of the municipality of Eindhoven goes beyond data and maps: with every dataset we tell a story. We inform our citizens and colleagues using (interactive) maps and dashboards. The municipality of Eindhoven started their Open Data journey in 2013. The technology behind publishing data turned out to be the easy part. The biggest challenge was making sure the citizens of Eindhoven could easily find and access the data. *"How do we provide potential users with the knowledge and skill to interpret and use our data?"*

We aim for a portal with a low use threshold, that everyone can use. A portal not just for data specialists, but mainly for people without specific expertise. This train of thoughts fits both international and national laws and regulations regarding a transparent governance. And it really works: although we just published a limited amount of data in the first few years, we immediately experienced huge potential. On an economic level (combing data leads to new knowledge and insights), as well as an increased efficiency and effectivity of our organisation thanks to an increased self-reliance and participation of our citizens. We also realized more than ever that successful re-use of Open Data depends largely on the user-friendliness of the platform.

Towards accessible Open Data for our users!

Data about DATA

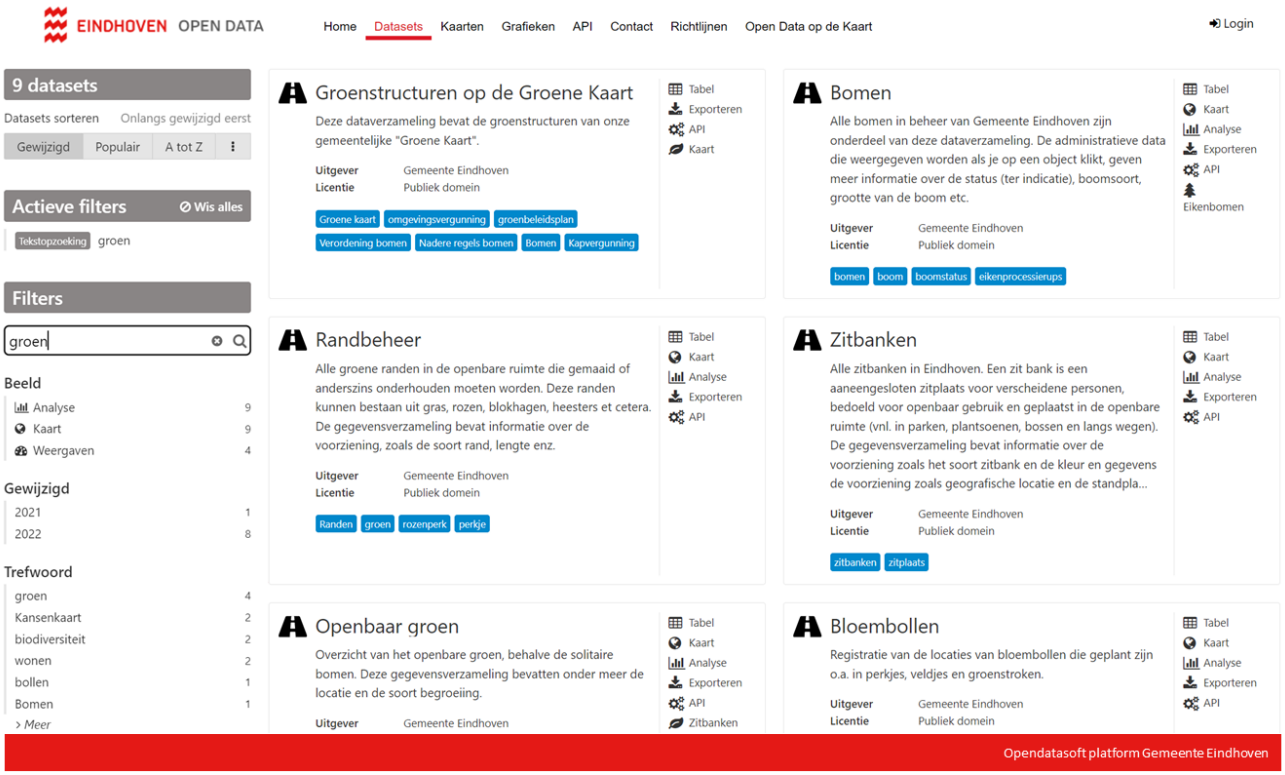
To make our data findable, we knew an advanced search functionality and simple navigation between datasets was necessary. A usable Open Data portal additionally needs to enable users to quickly and easily assess information about the data, and the data itself. Users can use such information to determine if a dataset is fit for their use case, before having to retrieve the actual data.

Keywords

Findable data starts with the right keywords. To enable this, we not only look at the keywords of successful search actions, but also keep an eye on keywords which users are using that are not currently giving results. We use these keywords to discover what type of data users are interested in is missing from our portal, and to match the right tags to the datasets that are available.

Presentation of the search results

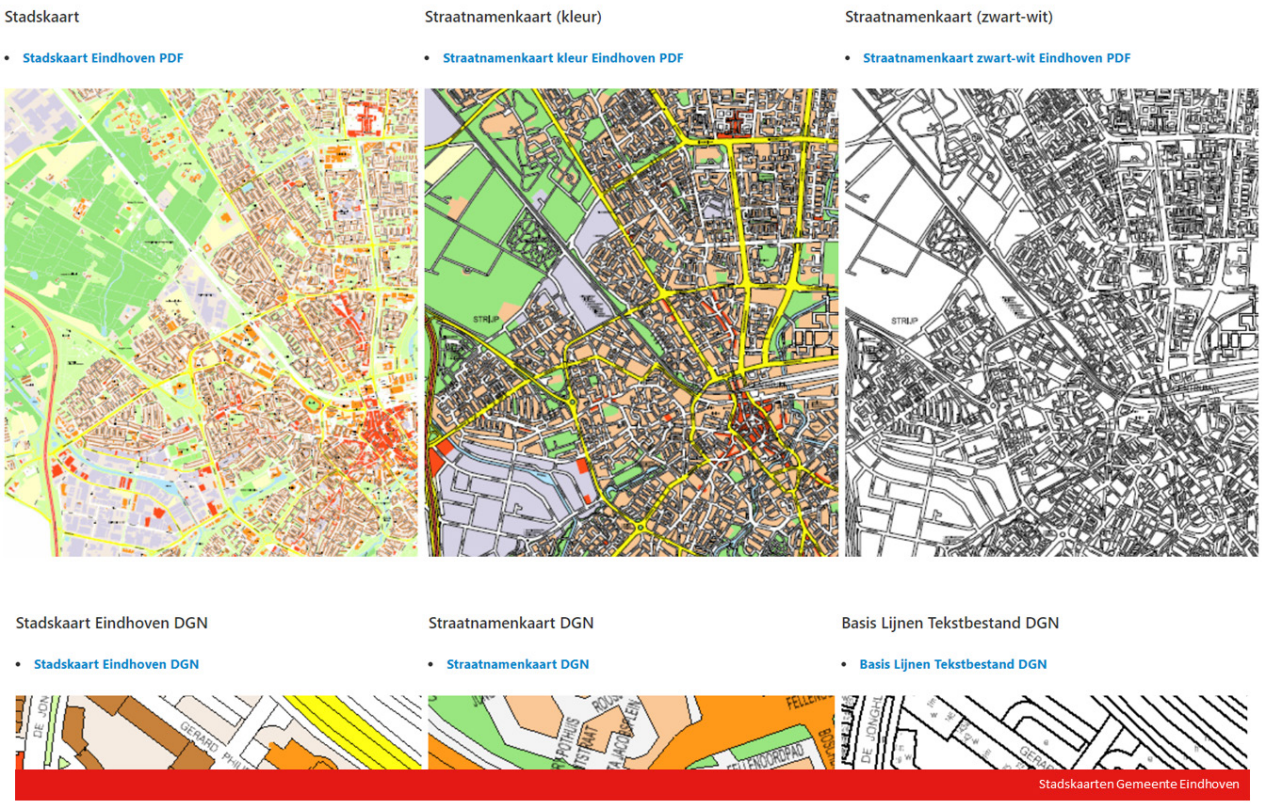
In the presentation of the search results, we provide users with some additional information regarding the data. This helps them make a substantiated initial selection, without having to click back and forth unnecessarily.



Description

When users look for data, they want to assess whether or not a specific search result is fit for their use case. We enable them to do this by offering metadata following, for example, the DCAT or INSPIRE standards. Non-expert users, however, likely require a more natural description. This, for example, involves describing the scope and method of collection, or use conditions. We often also add an image as part of the description.

An example: on our Open Data portal we publish topographic maps and maps of the Eindhoven city with street names. Providing only a download link to access the maps is insufficient for users to fully understand what these datasets entail. We help users understand what the maps are about by using images. This way, users know what the maps look like, without having to download the actual files.



Keeping the data up-to-date

As part of describing our data, we also provide insight into data quality as much as possible. The update frequency of the data is an important part of this. Solely providing insight is a good start, however, this is not enough: you can image certain use cases require up-to-date data. For this reason, we refresh most data on our portal regularly. To achieve this, we like to connect to the data sources through webservices and APIs and make use of schedules to automatically update the data with a specified frequency.

Dataset scheme

By showing users a "dataset scheme" as visualised below, we offer examples of the available attributes. This is another way in which we provide insight into our data.

Field:	Rate Code	Mobility Free	GSM Code	Paid Days
Description:	The Rate Code consist of a letter and a number and indicates the applicable rate.	The starting rate. If there is no starting rate applicable, the field contains "nvt".	The drivers that pay by phone need to select when they want to park in the vicinity of a parking meter. This code starts with "51" followed by the first 2 numbers on the parking meter.	Day of the week for which the parking rate is applicable.
Type:	Text	Text	Integer	Text
Example:	C2	0,30	5191	Maandag t/m vrijdag

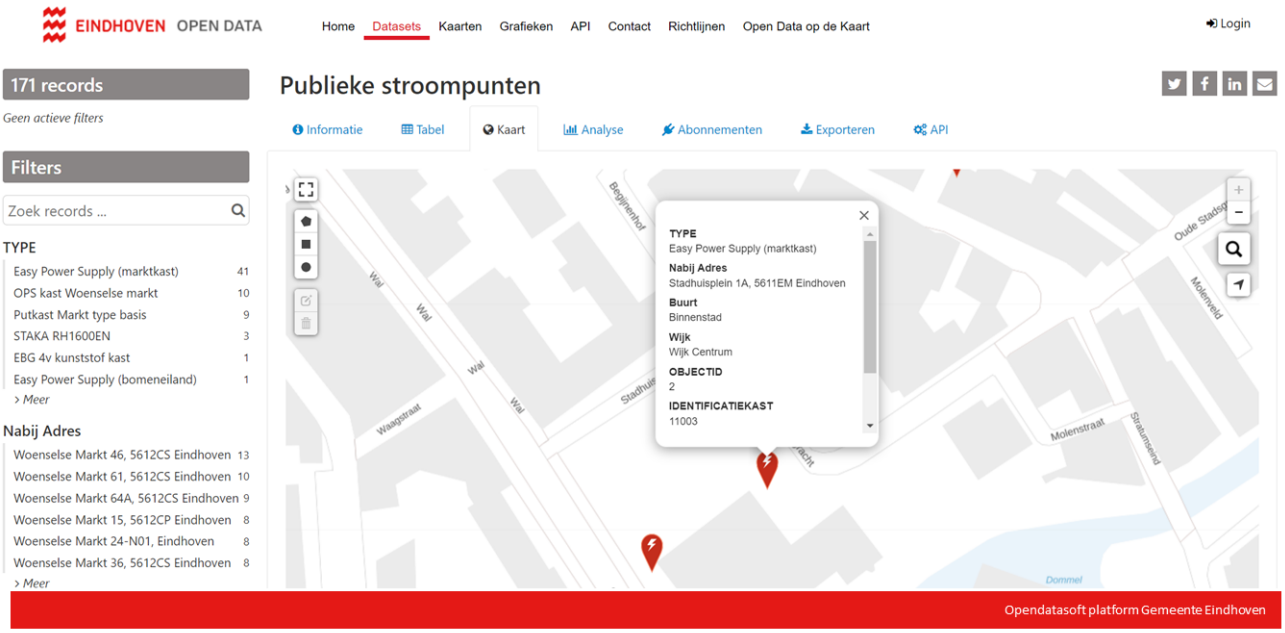
Presenting data to our users

In 2017 we decided to arrange an Open Data portal meeting all our accessibility requirements. We, as administrators, are part of the geo-department of the municipality and started with offering geographical data. Often this kind of data is quite specialised. For this reason, we paid additional attention to data visualisation. We went beyond presenting data in a tabular format and developed (interactive) maps and dashboards.

Using these visualisations, we tell a specific story in regard to the data. By doing this, we aim to assist and inspire the public to re-use data. Our "data stories" can also be used to inform citizens on themes relevant for the city. We, for example, strive to bring awareness for climate change using visualisations of data (Klimaatatlas van Eindhoven (arcgis.com)).

Maps

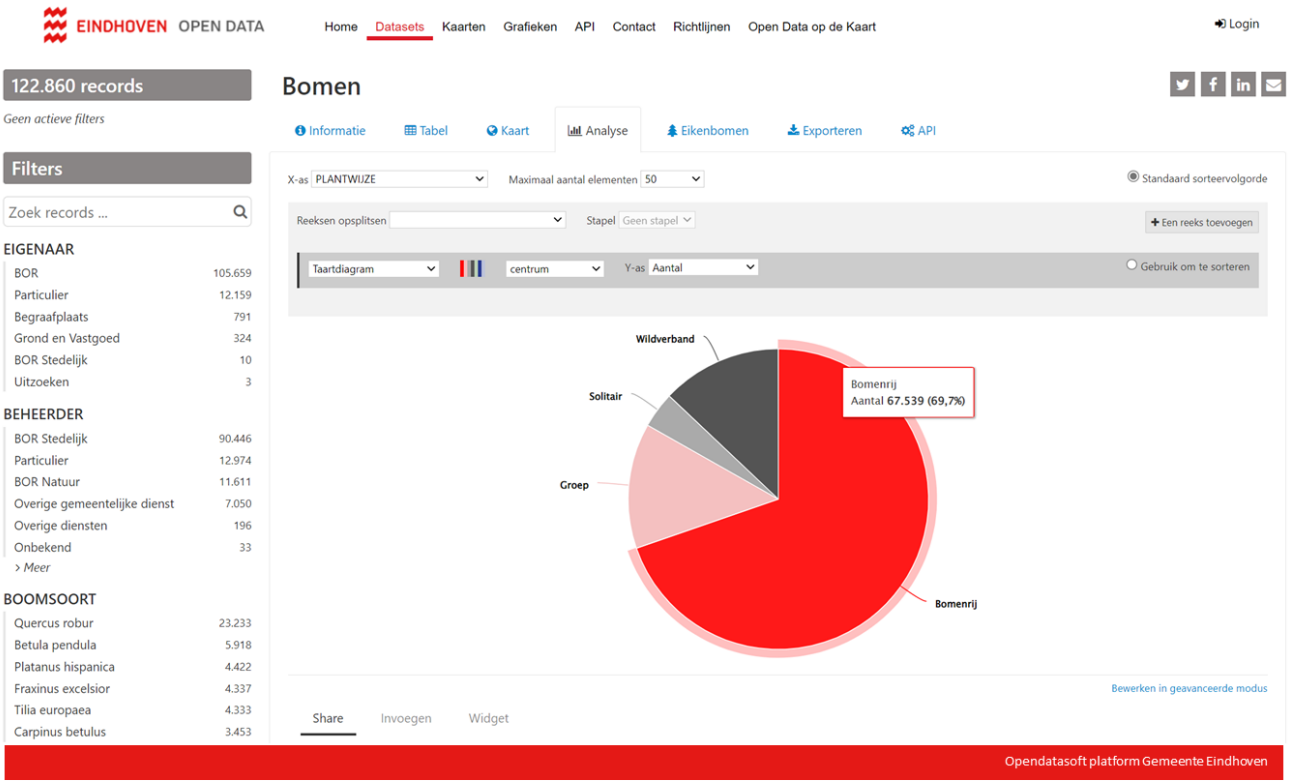
When mapping, we select recognisable symbols and tooltips. This way, users get a hold of the data at a glance.



Options for an analysis

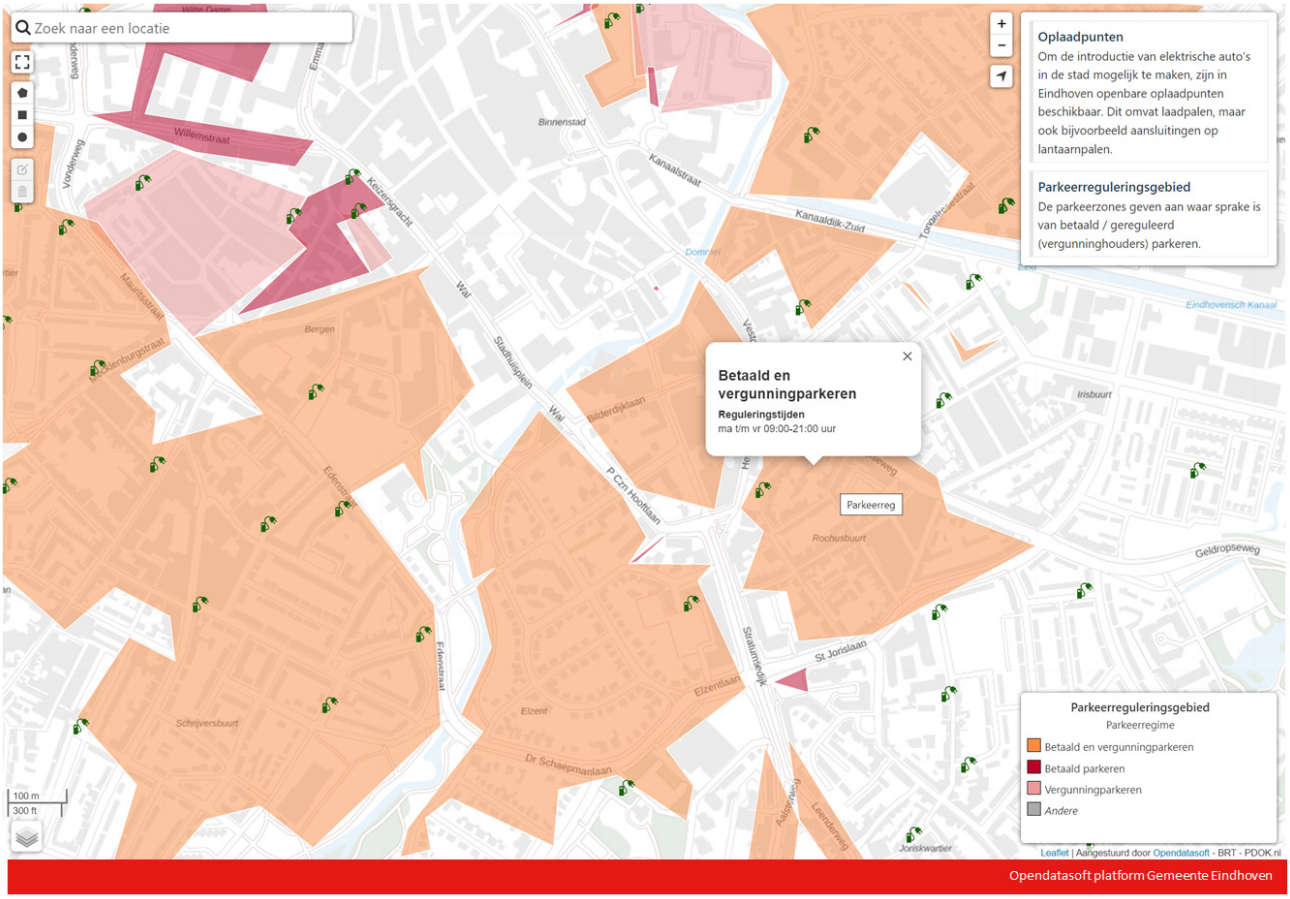
Users often like to filter and sort data. This should be possible based on statements they come up with on their own. We as administrators, however, also help our users on their way a little by preparing some default filters for each dataset. In the image below, for example, there are spatial filters on the map and "TYPE" and "Address" filter attributes.

To help users analyse data further, we also often prepare graphs for our datasets. This way, we provide relevant insights into how the different values within the data are related.



From data to information

By filtering and overlaying different datasets, we also prepare interactive maps. To make sure the desired story comes across, we determine, together with the maintainer of the data, what such a map should look like. Of course we also take users' requirements and wishes into consideration. Below you can see an example where public charging points for electric vehicles are mapped together with the parking regime. This way, drivers know if paid parking or a permit is applicable when they want to charge their vehicle.



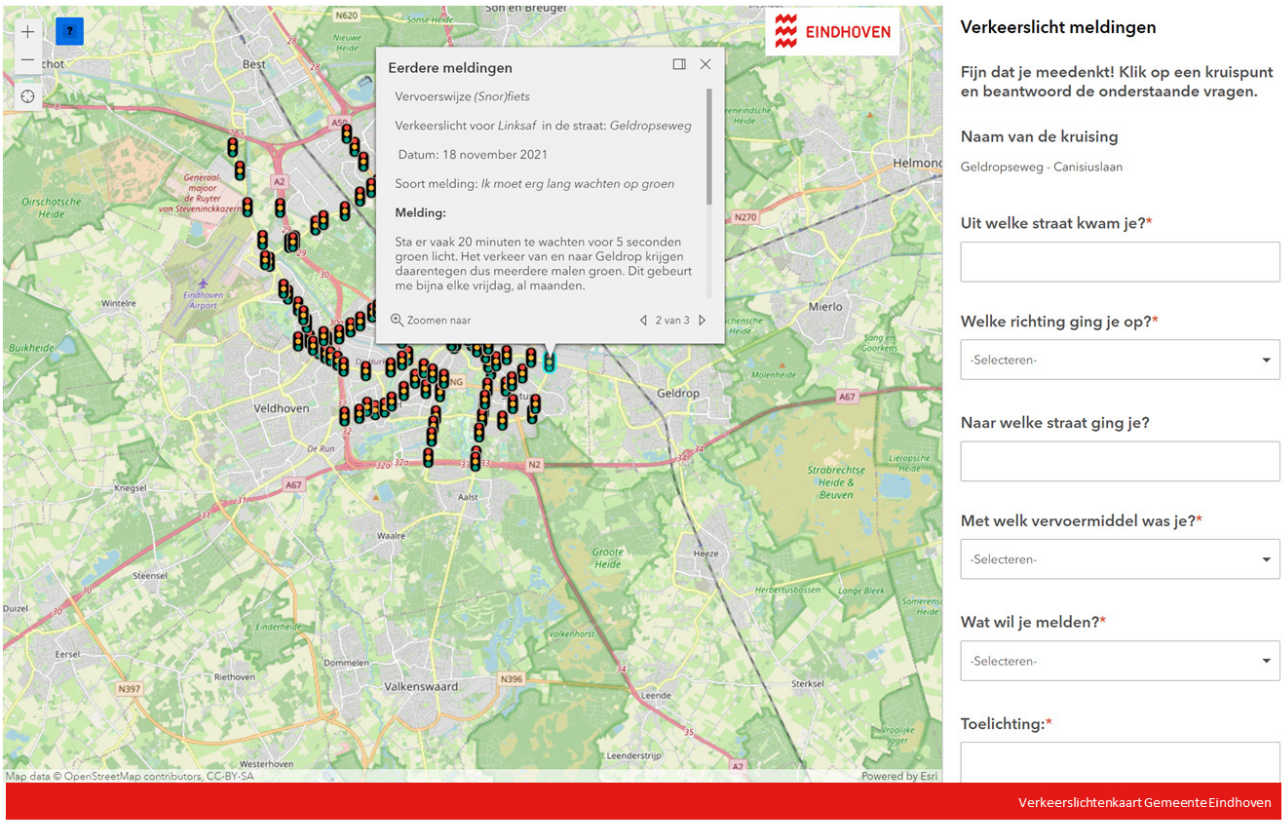
Presenting data by our users

Our Open Data portal also enables users to create and share their own visuals. Such tools help users explore and use data without the need for specialistic software. Because of this, our Open Data portal goes beyond a regular data catalogue.

In order to serve non-technical users, the tools we offer must be recognizable. Furthermore, operating them must make sense and be simple. In a minimal amount of clicks users have to be able to reach their desired goal. Although functionalities ideally speak for themselves, sufficient contextual documentation with practical examples is required. This way, users not only know what all options are, but also know how to use them.

Allowing users to participate

The municipality of Eindhoven keeps the conversation with citizens buzzing. Open Data can be a source for such conversations. We use data on traffic lights, for example, as a foundation for an app citizens can use to notify us when traffic lights malfunction (Verkeerslichten interactieve kaart (arcgis.com)).

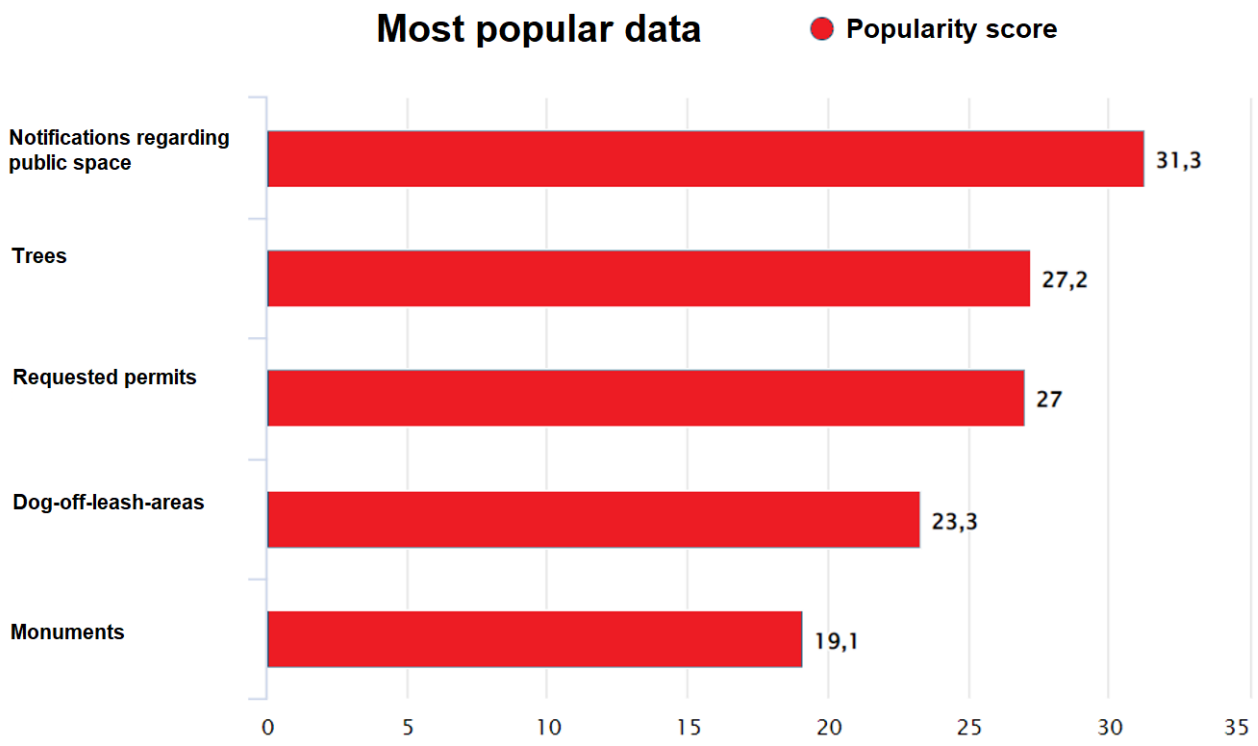


Within our Open Data portal we also offer users the opportunity to share their own re-use cases. Sadly, as of today this option is not often used. Regardless, we do think re-use cases could be a valuable source of inspiration. For users, by users: a nice development for the future, we think!

What about use?

Use statistics

Our most popular datasets are the ones our citizens closely relate to. This confirms our Open Data portal is suitable for non-specialist users.



(The popularity score results from a calculation based on the amount of downloads, re-uses, and API calls. Higher scores indicate higher use frequencies.)

Experiences

Naturally, we like to be in close contact with our users. We provide a contact form that can be easily reached from each page of our Open Data portal. Through this form, we often receive emails from our citizens. We use those questions, remarks, and suggestions to increase the relevance of our portal for our target audience.

Often, the messages come from students conducting a data-related research assignment. Based on the messages we receive, (landscape) architects, citizens interested in facilities in their neighborhood, and even a local research journalist are well-known users of our Open Data portal.

Our Open Data journey goes on: we still have lots of work ahead of us. In the future we will keep dedicating ourselves to increasing the value of our Open Data, by presenting them to our citizens in accessible ways! Curious? Keep an eye on Data.Eindhoven.nl.

Good practices of co-creation in limited conditions: implementation of DECIDIM in Gdynia (Poland) – UrbanLab Gdynia

JOANNA KRUKOWSKA

In the last few years, many aspects of city functioning have drastically changed. Technological improvements, a variety of social changes, tensions, and crises – all at the same time, with intensity unknown to mankind. Many papers argue that urban areas are home to 55% of the world's population, and that this figure is expected to grow to 68% by 2050 [World Cities Report 2022 – UN-Habitat]. This leads us to the capability of urban innovation to face the most vulnerable and demanding challenges for humanity. A great first step is experimenting and connecting people who operate in different social bubbles on an everyday basis.

Gdynia is a city in northern Poland, on the Baltic Sea coast in Europe, a part of the Metropolitan Area Gdańsk–Gdynia–Sopot. Besides Gdynia's natural relation with the sea in terms of industry and tourism, Gdynia is among the top Polish cities developing an innovation strategy on the city level. *UrbanLab Gdynia* was founded in March 2019, as a program of Social Innovation Lab, the autonomous budgetary unit of Gdynia City Hall. It started thanks to a 3-year pilot "Adaptation of the UrbanLab concept in Gdynia" financed by the European Union from the Operational Programme on Technical Assistance 2014–2020, co-financed by the Cohesion Fund. UrbanLab Gdynia is a program aimed at exchanging knowledge and creating space for dialogue between the citizens of Gdynia, NGOs, city institutions, academia, and business. Each of the cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary components of UrbanLab identifies challenges and looks for social innovations to solve them.

From hybrid to civic tech

Methodology of urban lab is an excellent tool for detecting challenges in the right moment to react. One of the valuable elements of current contemporary times is the potential of *hybridization*. A great example of hybridization is *civic technology* which besides delivering software for decision-making, service delivery, or political process, improves involvement in democracy, and boosts the relations between the citizens and local government. The well-prepared civic tech puts focus on the human factor in technology, in the most inclusive way possible.

From our experience, an innovation needs some foundation to build real solutions, based on previous diagnoses and observations. In the case of the city of Gdynia, our focus on the technological element of the urban lab shifted to social innovation in public participation. *Social Innovation Lab* was founded in 2017, as an institution responsible for developing and supporting innovative social solutions for citizens. Within its structure, the *Participation and Analysis Department* (PAD) was quickly created. The mission of PAD is mainly focused on an innovative and inclusive approach to participatory democracy through diverse methods of public participation. Specialists working in PAD were also the initiators of the open source civic tech implementation in Gdynia, giving the first analysis and recommendations for tools development.

In 2019, with the start of the pilot program of UrbanLab Gdynia, the analysis of digital participation platforms began. Our focus went to two open-source and highly developed IT platforms: *CONSUL* (https://consulproject.org) based in Madrid, and *DECIDIM* (https://decidim.org) based in Barcelona. Both IT platforms are built on the same programming language "ruby on rails" – and what is significant, they form an international, creative, and inclusive community of developers and experts in public participation.

The Public Participation Thematic Team was established in mid-2019 in Gdynia. The intersectoral team included 5 representatives of different NGOs, 2 District Councilors, 3 City Councilors, and 3 city officers from different Departments. The main areas of work included organizing experiences and knowledge of civic participation, revising participatory mechanisms used in the city, as well as testing new concepts. The idea of making different city actors clash and work together resulted in 3 complex ideas that were implemented in a 3-year pilot: 1) Standards of participation, 2) Formal and legal analysis of Local initiative, 3) Civic Education – pilot classes for young citizens tested by NGO. Despite the fact that those products were not technological nor 1:1 connected to IT platforms, advancing reflection on democracy in the city was a crucial element of researching the subject.

Limited conditions

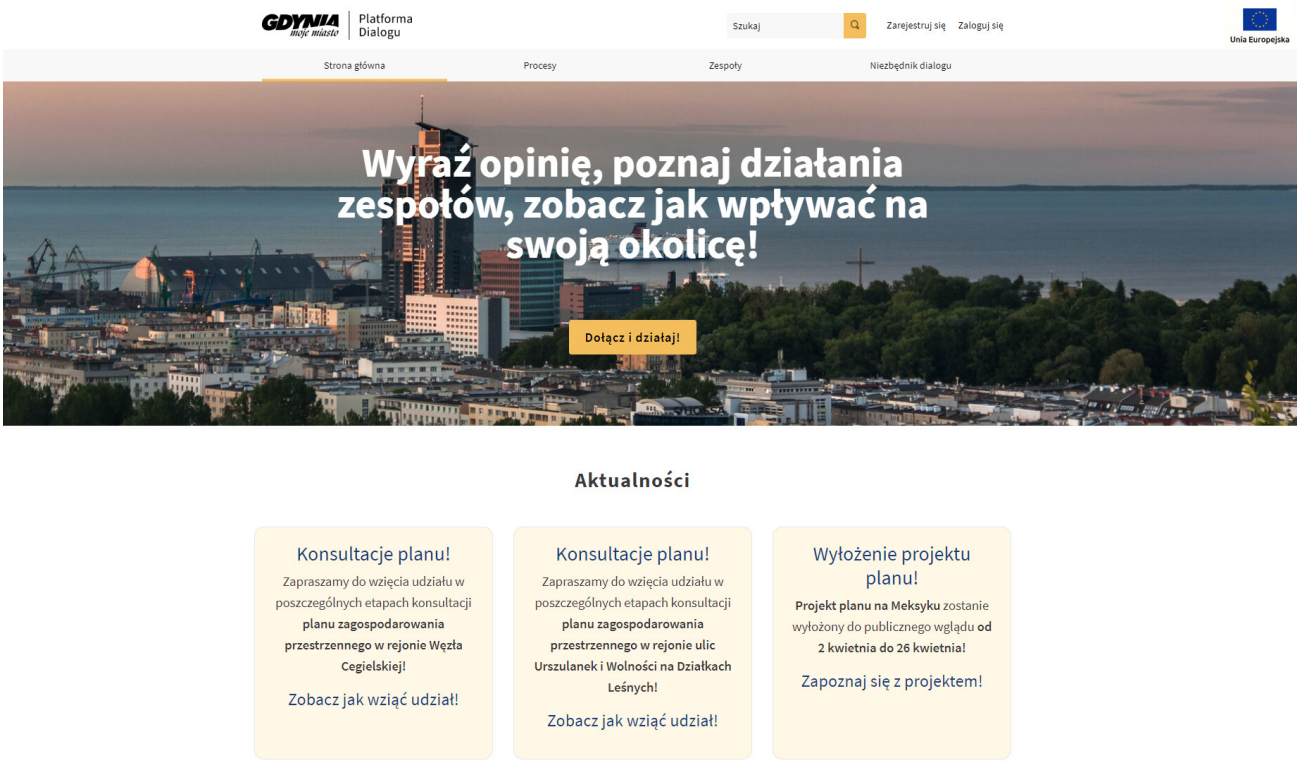
Civic tech is only a boost to the broad subject of public participation. The great examples of implementing and testing such platforms include many offline meetings and a face-to-face contact involving people representing different interests, ages, gender, socioeconomic situation, and so on and so forth. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, changing the functioning of cities. It pushed us to refigure the involvement and decision-making element of the near-future implementation. Despite the limitation and uncertainty of the near future, UrbanLab with PAD focused on detailed analysis, leading to the selection of DECIDIM as a tool for Gdynia. The next steps were devoted to developing the Subject Matter of a Contract of DECIDIM implementation in a detailed yet flexible way, and to establish a working group that will reflectively and critically represent the voice of residents, developers, and city officials.

In the second half of 2020, the company implementing DECIDIM began intensive work and the IT platform implementation working group commenced its activities. To optimize time lost due to the pandemic and stick to the schedule of the project itself, we decided to create a smaller, but diverse and highly expert group of eight people, including IT specialists in civic tech, social researchers from academia, NGO specialists in public participation and democracy, IT specialist in open data and

the city officers team of specialist in public participation and data protection. A small and rotating team composition gave the flexibility to build a complex platform ready to be presented to citizens for review in action. During the group's work, we conducted platform testing, UX, analysis of user authorization, WCAG, recommendations of functionalities and visual side, DECIDIM's configuration: 1) Participatory processes, 2) City teams, 3) Dialogue essentials, content and templates to introduce the consultation process, and training for city officials.

The Launch and afterthoughts

The involvement of engaged teams resulted in the launch of Gdynia's DECIDIM, called "Dialogue Platform" in September 2021, with the first process on the platform: public consultation on neighborhoods and living conditions in Gdynia's districts. The platform for Gdynia's citizens is available on the website https://konsultujemy.gdynia.pl (meaning: we are consulting). Users might get involved in the public consultation and team work in Gdynia, but also educate themselves and get information in the field of public participation. In addition to the benefits of a portal for the residents of Gdynia, this was the first implementation in Poland. Due to the CC 4.0 and Social Contract of DECIDIM, other Polish cities, or organizations, have an easier entry threshold, thanks to the rationalized translations and implementations – still being improved by developers from around the world at https://github.com/decidim/decidim.



The pace of work we were able to keep was made possible by a solid foundation (involved citizens, as well as City Hall) and several years of reflection, work, and embedding of the topic in the city. The open-source idea reminded us of the broader cause related to sharing our knowledge and experience, but also respecting the findings of those more experienced in participatory processes, who had thoughtfully developed precise solutions. At the same time, the dynamics of change, updates to the system, and its corrections during implementation, left us open to change and constantly revisiting the needs. A city that functions based on the category of care is a truly smart city worth developing to face challenges together.

Meeting halfway, i.e. how, why and for what purpose did the Metropolis GZM begin to cooperate with the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice and why we talked about the river – Metropolis GZM

MAGDALENA FOLTYNIAK

The theme of a "river", boldly and with particular sensitivity raised by the Academy of Fine Arts, is a continuation of the discusson about the Rawa river that began during the Silesian Science Festival. Rawa is one of the crucial elements of Katowice urban landscape, co-creating its identity and evoking numerous (also extreme) emotions. In Katowice, the topic of Rawa is very much in line with the spatial changes planned on the "campus" in relation with the "Green Science Zone" project/investment implemented by the "Academic Consortium Katowice" (a consortium of Silesian public universities), established in connection with the title of the European City of Science 2024, awarded to Katowice in cooperation with partners from other sectors – including the Metropolis GZM (Upper Silesian Metropolitan Union). The collaboration aims to increase the social influence of science on the lives of the residents of Katowice, the Union and the entire region.

What did the collaboration between the Metropolis GZM and the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice consist of?

We met halfway between our needs, which we mutually managed to address, in a long process of cooperation which, especially for the Metropolis GZM, proved to be a process of discovering clues, threads about the city and the tools for opening them up in a dialogue with the outside world, deepening and developing it.

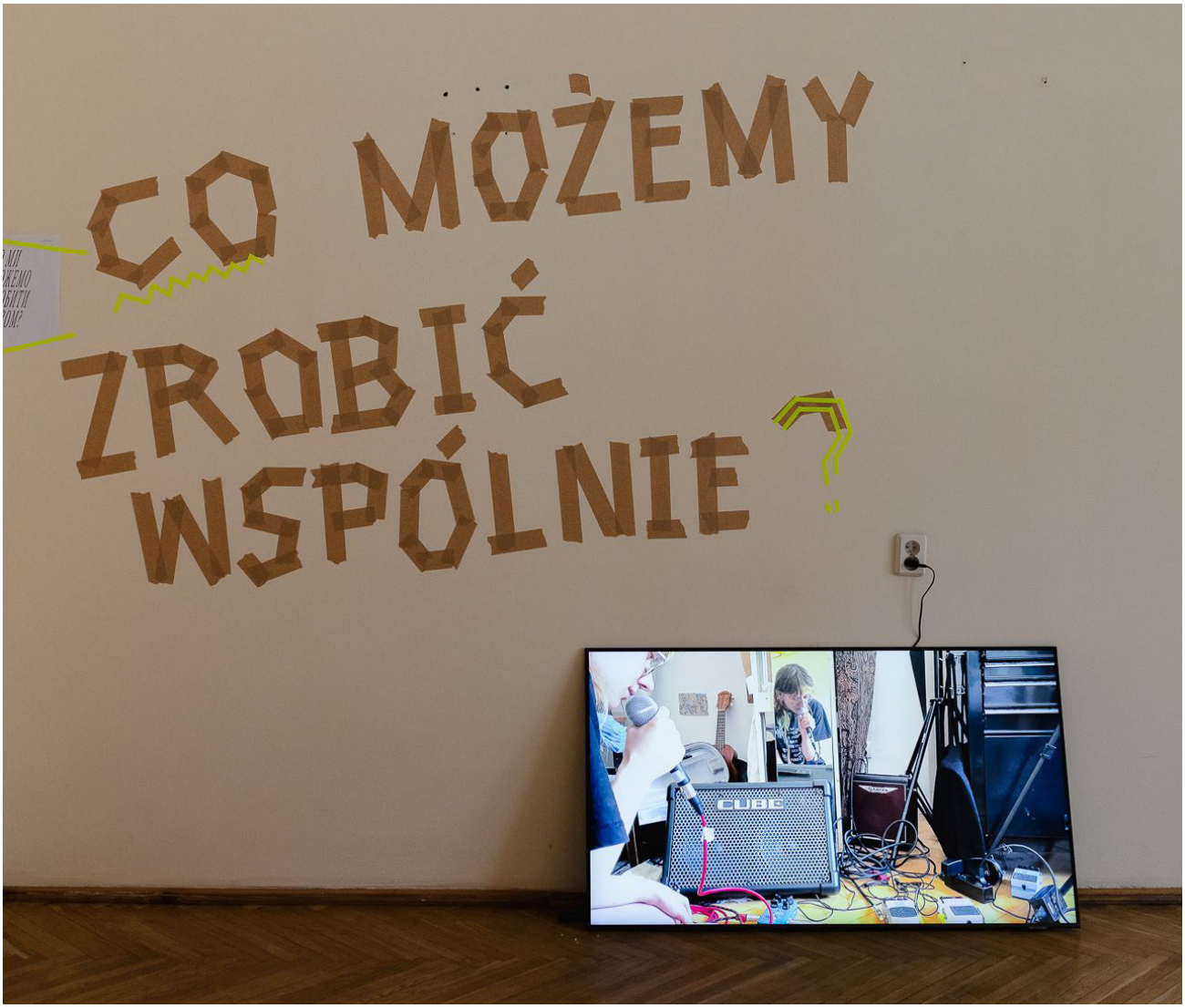
The purpose of the collaboration with the Academy was to create new tools for the Metropolis GZM to support discussions about the city. Tools using the language of art, universal tools enabling urban themes to be addressed in a non-obvious and indirect way which allows for a conversation in relation to meanings, contexts and experiences. The pretext for attempting to find such a tool was an exploration of the River Rawa, which is one of the elements that "build" the city – both in terms of identity, memory as well as the urban landscape. The project was based on the assumption that when common ways of distributing data (e.g. articles in the scientific press) fail, artists can influence the imagination and explain the incomprehensible. In other words, art may be an ally of science as well as environmental politics.

The first stage commenced at the Academy with theoretical preparation, building a platform for exchanging information about the river in general and looking at it from various angles and perspectives and, above all, taking into account quite different disciplines and fields of knowledge. Questions included the fundamental ones – what exactly is Rawa? Is it a memorial of the Anthropocene, the age of mankind? A source of shame? A technical achievement?

The project was coordinated by the Academy and began with a talk by three rectors of the University of Silesia (Prof. Kowalczyk, Prof. Sławek and Prof. Koziołek) invited by the Academy to join a discussion about the river. Rawa – a river-not a river.

For the Metropolis GZM, Rawa has become the field for a special case study – as a river that, like many watercourses and rivers in Silesia, has been shaped by cultural development. For the history of the industrialisation of Silesia and the history of Rawa, intertwined with it, shows, as if through

a lens, this extraordinary dependence of the city and the river. A relationship that, contrary to our school and common cultural knowledge that great civilisations arose along rivers, is almost completely reversed here (in Silesia, in the Metropolis GZM).



Where did the exhibition and the accompanying zin come from?

In the subsequent stages, the theme of Rawa became the subject of work by students and staff of the Academy, focused mainly around the Interpretation of Literature Studio headed by Prof. Grzegorz Hańderek and Małgorzata Szandała, Ph.D. The project was also substantively supported by Sebastian Cichocki, who holds the position of Chief Curator of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. The work at the Academy on the subject of the river covered its symbolic layer, traces, ideas, fears, as well as the language in which this particular a river-not-a-river is reflected in a wide spectrum of meanings. In a process that lasted several months, performative, visual and multimedia works were created, alluding to the cultural context of Rawa, often also developing its new mythology.

The outcome of these works could be seen at the exhibition entitled "Topic: River", whose opening was held during the 11th session of the WUF 11 World Urban Forum, the exhibition could be viewed at the premises of the now defunct building of the old Silesian Museum and which was curated by Grzegorz Hańderek, Małgorzata Szandała, representing the Academy, and Adam Pisarek, an employee of the Silesian University in Katowice.

The Green Science Zone initiative – what is its aim and why do we mention it?

The aim of this project, implemented by the "Academic Consortium Katowice", is to develop in a socialised way the function of the Rawa Valley as a network node of a distributed network science centre and collaborative laboratory in Katowice – an open-air experiment center and laboratory where the river and its immediate surroundings are explored, described and transformed. For the past few months, the Metropolis GZM, in cooperation with the University of Silesia, has been running the **Metropolitan Prototyping School** (for more see the description of the Good Practice of the Prototyping School – by Metropolis GZM) – a process based on prototyping, i.e. the testing of a temporary solution consisting of a mobile space arrangement and scenarios of using a given place, developed with the participation of external experts and the Metropolis GZM, employees of the University of Silesia and the City Hall, teachers and students of secondary schools located in the centre of Katowice.

What were we afraid of and what was leading us?

We worked in an adaptive model, knowing from the start that everyone involved in this collaboration had their own idea of the end result. These were ideas within the possibilities of cognition, imagination and the order in which the two organisations (the Academy and the Metropolis GZM) operate, and what is significant, ideas described in a manner tailored and appropriate to the conceptual apparatus of the two organisations.

What elese were we afraid of? Everything, as we differ a lot. There are a lot of differences between hard administration and the art world. It is the languages and therefore the culture of both organisations – their specific micro-worlds – that make these worlds different.

We were led by exactly what we feared. We were endeared by differences and mutual curiosity, which without openness, understanding and readiness we would not have been able to benefit from.

What did we learn?

We confirmed our belief that adaptations are inherent in a collaborative process where two separate languages, two separate orders, two ideas of effect meet. We confirmed the intuition that the language of art is a universal language burdened solely by diverse audience competence, but universal at the level of values. We discovered that the language of imagery and symbols allows to develop the discussion about the city in numerous unexpected directions which, like water, bring new themes, areas and threads.

We found out that the theme of the river is a universal topic for cities and municipalities, for individuals, for a commonality of experience; that the topic of the river, precisely through this shared experience and universality, is itself a pretext for conversation.

Where have we arrived and where are we going?

We reached further. We reached for the language of storytelling, of individual perceptions brought together in the form of visual stories. To continue the conversation about the river, we referred to the Kłodnica River, whose stories we had gathered in the process of working with residents led by Karolina Wiśniewska (designer and graphic artist) and Marcin Mokry (philosopher and writer) using an original method they dubbed Dings, based on the creation of graphic stories on scraps of memory, imagination and desires, which form a collective atlas (in the form of an artbook) – a kind of profile of the Kłodnica River, constituting the first volume of the "River Books" on which the Metropolis GZM has been working recently (Q3 and Q4 2022).

Prototyping schools – Metropolis GZM

JACEK WOŹNIKOWSKI

Plenty of good ideas are born over a cup of coffee. This was also the case with the idea of prototyping schools, although in 2020 we had no idea where this innocent conversation would take us.

During one of the meetings, as part of the work on the sustainable mobility plan for the Metropolis GZM (Upper Silesian Metropolitan Union), we discussed the challenges of pedestrian infrastructure. The Commissioner for Pedestrian Traffic in the City, Petra Jens, talked about the experience in Vienna. Petra asked if we were using temporary solutions and prototyping solutions in our cities. With this question our prototyping adventure began. Initially, it was supposed to be a study of tactical urbanism, but it ended up being something considerably broader.

The formula for prototyping schools is not standardised, described or formalised. It is a certain way of working on a challenge faced by the cities of the Metropolis GZM. One thing does not change – the projects involve representatives of various cities, representing different areas of urban management (public communication, cooperation with NGOs, transport, road management, urban planning, crisis management or municipal police). These interdisciplinary teams work on specific challenges.

So far, these have been:

- a change in traffic arrangement (aimed at reducing traffic congestion on one of the main streets in the centre of Bytom[1])
- parking policy in the city of Tychy[2],
- organisation of public transport services at district level in the Kazimierz district of Sosnowiec[3],
- change of the space of the Silesian University campus[4],
- creation of a prototype of a city map for drone services[5].

The majority of the projects implemented in the school formula addressed issues of urban mobility in the broadest sense, but the tool was also used by the team working on the Drones over Metropolis project. A prototyping school is currently underway in the Intergenerational Metropolis project (in the area of the labour market and the challenges of an ageing population).

School architecture is similar in each edition. The patron and sponsor of the project is the Metropolis. The owner of the challenge (usually a city, although in one edition it was a university) is necessary. Representatives of city councils are invited to join the project, and the Metropolis provides experts in a given field (e.g. urban planners, lawyers, legislative and sometimes business representatives). The school's participants are officials with more or less experience of the relevant problem.

Work in the school formula usually takes several months. The project finale is an implementation proposal and sometimes the very **implementation of the solution** – this was the case in Bytom. The map created at the drone school is not yet a target tool, but the sheer work on it helped to diagnose new challenges in the topic of introducing drone technology into cities. And this is one of the greatest advantages of working with this method – brainstorming ideas and challenges. By starting the work with a diagnosis, a dialogue with various people, juxtaposing different worlds, we give ourselves the chance to deeply understand a given issue. Such work takes on a real school dimension, as it has

1 https://www.bytom.pl/aktualnosci/index/Nowa-organizacja-ruchu-przy-ul.-Miarki-w-Bytomiu-testowo-juz-od-polowy-wrzesnia.-Celem-poprawa-bezpieczenstwa/idn:35596
2 https://metropoliagzm.pl/2022/04/05/metropolitalna-szkola-prototypowania-eksperci-przygladaja-sie-polityce-parkingowej-w-tychach
3 https://www.portalsamorzadowy.pl/gospodarka-komunalna/sosnowiec-usprawni-komunikacje-w-dzielnicy-kazimierz-gorniczy,376498.html
4 https://www.rmf24.pl/regiony/slaskie/news-zielona-strefa-nauki-przy-uniwersytecie-slaskim-osia-projekt,nId,6304483#crp_state=1
5 https://geoforum.pl/news/32308/rusza-dronowa-szkola-prototypowania-urzednicy-beda-sie-uczyc-o-bezzalogowcach-w-miescie

great educational and developmental potential for its participants. Team members learn from each other and from experts, acquire new knowledge or skills, as well as test their competences in new laboratory conditions.This was the case, for example, on the campus of the University of Silesia, where some participants had their first opportunity to conduct field research and talk directly to the users of a given space.

The edition at the University of Silesia was an exciting experience. Having completed the workshop and conceptual work, the participants went on to build the prototype. It was an exceptional experience as we met under completely new conditions – manual tasks. We were joined by students, University staff, activists and sometimes passers-by. The joint, at times hard, work gave us a lot of satisfaction – we could see the effect of our work and its influence on the functioning of the space around the Dean's Office.

It is noteworthy that some of the solutions have been recognised at the European level. The Bytom prototype[6] and the solution from the University of Silesia were honoured in a poll organised on the occasion of the European Mobility Week.

From the point of view of the metropolitan office staff, working in the schools formula has numerous advantages, but entails a number of difficulties and **challenges**. The question of responsibility for the purpose of the project is crucial. Each of the parties involved in a project has its own objectives: to find a solution to a problem, to learn, to develop, to establish new professional relationships, to network, etc. For a city that wants to test the solution, a partnership with the Union can be a considerable advantage. Responsibility for the project can be shared with our organisation and the experts we employ. Shared responsibility also means shared risk for the project's failure.

6 https://mobilityweek.eu/news/?c=search&uid=NxIB94Sg&fbclid=IwAR3n7BMjsoyGY4yJjtPC9hHaH4KNeL1uuXx-H3UKj5qVWuvq4F4PmqqUApw

Cooperation arranged in this way, however, requires appropriate naming of objectives and risks as well as skilful division of roles in the project. Another type of challenge is delegating employees from other offices of the GZM cities and municipalities. The staff of the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Union are even required to cooperate and involve a wide range of stakeholders in their activities. The employees of each city, however, are employed by a specific employer and perform their tasks for a specific community. Working in a prototyping school requires devoting an appropriate amount of time and this involves the employee being delegated to perform tasks other than those assigned in the office. Such commitment may be of concern to supervisors and they may not always be willing to consent to their employee's participation in the work. A sort of test for all school participants is working with the 'unknown'. This can be, for instance, the effect that the implementation of a proposed solution will have.

An example of this is the case of **Bytom**, where a temporarily implemented solution resulted in a tense situation on social media (forcing a response from the city authorities). Project participants even faced aggression from users of the altered space. Such an experience can be hard, but it can also be very rewarding when, for example, random people praise the results of the work done (the prototype at the University).

An interesting example of school was one related to the **drone technology.** Its dimension was highly educational, as for the vast majority of participants it was a new topic, narrowly associated with selected services. Invited experts (e.g. from the Civil Aviation Office or universities) shared their expert knowledge, which participants then used when working on an innovative in Europe solution for mapping drone routes in cities. This experience proved fruitful also for the school's partners, as they had their first opportunity to work with city officials and gained a better understanding of the specifics of the work of the local government units. The work in this edition concluded with a joint training in operating drones at Katowice Airport.

Schools are a tool that will become a permanent feature of the functioning of the Metropolis. They allow us to build relationships with cities, create conditions for joint work, and are a field for experimentation as well as sharing knowledge and experiences. The challenges we take on are mostly universal, i.e. the solutions developed can be applied elsewhere in the Metropolis. We were extremely delighted to receive a message more than a year ago from one of our member cities requesting that a particular issue be addressed within a prototyping school.

Data-driven investment process – Kielce City Hall

SZYMON CIUPA

The Municipal Spatial Information System (MSIP) was implemented in Kielce in 2009. The system consists of two related e-components:

- Internet Spatial Data Server (ISDP) – an internal map service,
- Administrative Application Operating System (SOWA) – a domain system supporting the conduct of administrative procedures.

The launch of the MSIP was preceded by a detailed analysis of the needs. **It turned out that the most proper field to start work with is the management of the investment process.**

Data

To handle tasks related to the investment process, the map component had to be supplied with a large amount of various types of information. Evidently, the basic type of the system data is geodetic data, which has the rank of reference data. It was equally important to ensure that this data was as up-to-date as possible. In order to achieve both objectives at the same time, it proved necessary to combine several systems into a coherent whole. Currently, the data in the system is refreshed daily during the night hours. Basic objects are supplied, along with their detailed attributes, e.g. registered land plots, buildings, land utility networks, elements of the master map. Moreover, we have been supplied with environmental information on protected areas, historical buildings and local spatial development plans (with detailed arrangements). Over time, the number of thematic layers has increased. Currently, there are more than 1,500 of them, grouped into categories and ready-made sets. Each of the logged-in users can additionally create their own, arbitrary data compositions.

The next step was defining the requirement for all the analyses commissioned by the municipality to have a spatial layer in order to be uploaded to the system. In addition, as a result of other layers, intermediate layers were created e.g. the development coefficients for plots, which recalculate on a daily basis after supplying the reference layers. These needs had already arisen while the officials were working directly in the system.

However, the mapping system itself is nothing innovative these days and most of the bigger municipalities do have it. In order to optimise the work, especially in the investment area, the map needs to be integrated into the ongoing administrative processes. For this purpose in Kielce, we use SOWA – the second module of MSIP, which connects directly to ISDP through the cadastral plots assigned to each case processed in the system.

Combining data from various systems

MSIP is also directly connected to other systems functioning in the Kielce Municipality.

As a result, the officials have a direct access to up-to-date data without shifting between different software, and have all the information needed to manage an administrative issue in one place.

The interconnection of multiple systems give also unlimited possibilities within the scope of making analyses and creating reports.

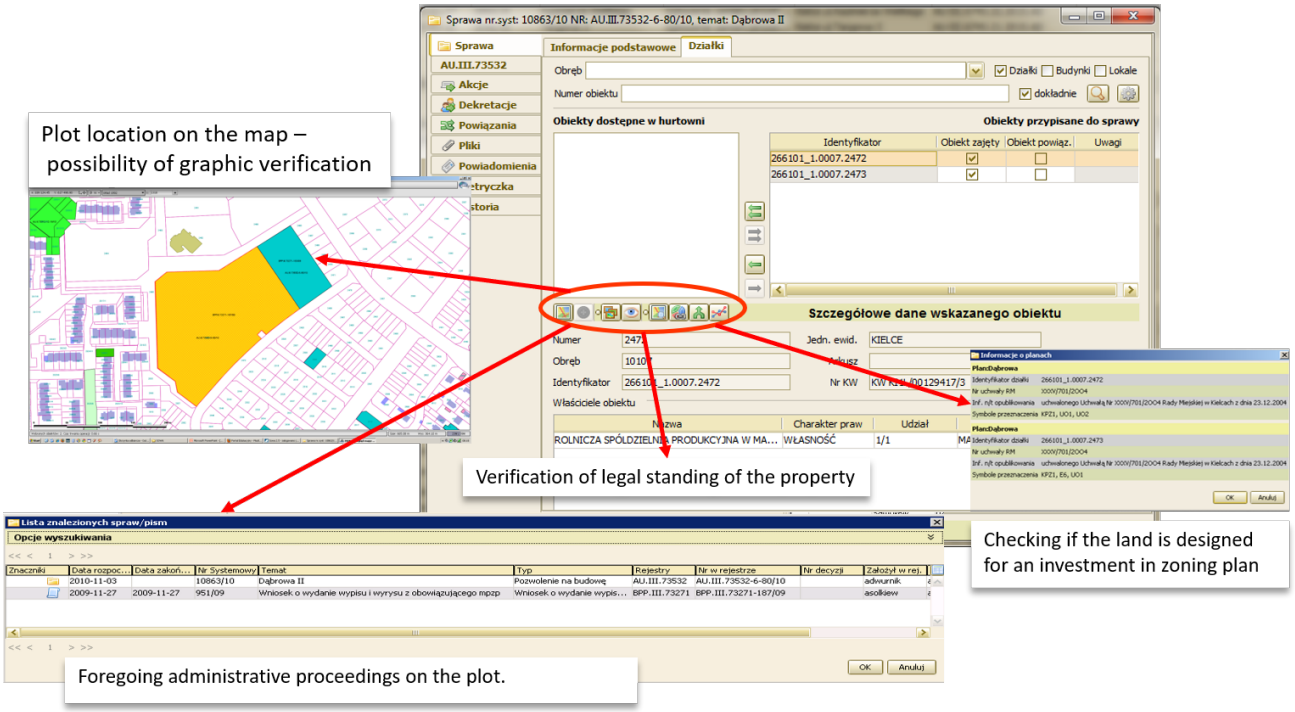
Implementation

Initially, the System was fully implemented in the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, the Office of Spatial Planning and the Department of Environment, next it was extended to the Department of Geodesy, Real Estate Management and, on the basis of an agreement, made available to the District Building Control Inspectorate.

This provided a complete picture of the preparation and conduct of investment as well as administrative proceedings on each registered plot of land.

When conducting their investigations in SOWA application system, the employees simultaneously complete the mapping system information base.

SOWA simplifies the conduct of proceedings through a number of facilitators, i.e. the quick identification of parties to proceedings together with all data, checking registration data validity, registering decisions, controlling the timeliness of proceedings, generating all kinds of case documentation by means of ready-to-use templates. On the basis of case data, statistics and statements for the Central Statistical Office are automatically generated.



SOWA also maintains dedicated registers: the Register of Streets and Addresses, the Register of Building Logs, the Registers of Leases, the Municipal Register of Monuments, the Register of Communal Premises, the Register of Inspections, the Register of Large Facilities and others.

This allows to keep the data valid and to 'refer' the items from the registers to a specific administrative case.

It is important to customise the entire system to meet the needs, both of the employees, optimisation of decision-making processes and data sharing.

In Kielce, the principles of operation and management of the Municipal Spatial Information System are defined by internal orders of the Mayor, defining the scopes of functions of coordinators and the scopes of authority granted.

Training

The proper functioning of the system as a whole is fundamentally based on **adequate training**. System administrators in the municipality provide ongoing training for new employees as well as the specialised ones based on more specific needs.

Sharing

The data contained in the system is used by other municipality departments as well as other city units. The scope of information available is individual and depends on the powers granted.
The data is mainly **used by**: the Tax Department, the Real Estate Department, the Investment Office, the Municipal Road Administration and the Municipal Police.

The data is updated on a daily basis and made available to all interested parties, e.g. investors or residents via the city's Geoportal.

However, success is not given once and for all.

It is necessary to ensure that the data is correct and up-to-date, and to train employees and managers. Awareness of the latter is crucial not only for implementation, but for maintaining the system at a sufficiently high level. Appropriate procedures also help.

Advantages:

- saving both time and money
- tightening up the tax system
- supervision of leases on municipal land
- housing: verification of the right to social premises
- integration of systems carried out with own human resources
- minimising the risk of errors in decision-making, particularly in the investment process
- shortening the time of access to data available in ISDP and SOWA, previously dispersed in various forms
- history of proceedings carried out on a plot of land.

Compact Pleszew, that is Poland's first "15-minute city" – town and Community Council in Pleszew

ANNA BOGACZ

In recent years, Pleszew has been intensively implementing the idea of a 15-minute city, which assumes that everything you need for life is at your fingertips. Within a maximum of a quarter of an hour you can get to the most crucial points in the city – schools, offices, stores, clinics, cultural institutions or sports and leisure venues – on foot, by bike or by public transport. According to this concept, investments and modern solutions are implemented to facilitate residents' lives and make Pleszew also a smart and eco-friendly city, i.e. a place pleasant to live in. The "Smart Pleszew" project, executed with an EU grant, was a huge help in pursuing these concepts. Implemented for more than 3 years, it provided a number of modern and environmentally friendly solutions for the urban tissue, improving the quality of life of the inhabitants. A large part of this involved the creation of documentation. 28 studies, expert opinions, reports, but also construction projects were prepared, which will allow further investments to be undertaken and readiness to apply for external funding.

The concept of a 15-minute city was implemented in Pleszew in 2021. With the help of the academic community and numerous consultations, it was possible to establish a long-term and sustainable vision for the city's development. It is built on six basic pillars, according to which specific actions, especially investment projects, are undertaken. These include easily accessible nurseries and kindergartens, friendly schools (including art ones), an attractive housing market, a diverse cultural offer, modern sports and leisure facilities, and a high level of healthcare. The measures taken are primarily aimed at residents to improve their quality of life, but also at outsiders, i.e. potential residents and investors, to show that Pleszew is an alternative to large metropolitan areas.

A 15-minute city, or a compact city, prioritises good transport and easy access to the most significant places in the city. A key element is sustainable urban mobility, consisting of cycle paths as well as public transport and free buffer car parks. Pleszew has two public transport lines that run approximately every 40 minutes around the city and take passengers to various destinations. Today, 75,000 people travel by them annually. Frequency of service and affordable ticket prices distinguish the introduced solution. Minibuses also reach the new Park&Ride car parks, which have been created, among other things, to reduce car traffic in the centre, but also to make it easier for residents and visitors to get around the city. Anyone who leaves their car in such a car park can travel by minibuses for free.

Bicycles are another component of creating sustainable urban transport. A concept for a network of bicycle paths, which encircle the city and lead from housing estates to the centre, was developed as part of the EU project "Smart Pleszew". Today, a resident of Pleszew can get to the railway station, 4 km away from the town, where a P&R car park is also being built. More cycle routes are gradually created.

Urban mobility measures also include reducing traffic in the city centre. A study has shown that around 10,000 cars go through the Pleszew Market Square (which is now a roundabout) per day. The new concept for the transformation of the centre of Pleszew involves significant changes in traffic for the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians. Modern solutions to slow down car traffic have already been introduced. For, as part of the "Smart Pleszew" project, intelligent pedestrian crossings have been created, equipped with sensors to detect a pedestrian approaching the road and light signals embedded in the ground. Moreover, their surface is anti-slip and reduces the braking distance of a vehicle by 30%.

Housing is an essential aspect of developing a compact city. The authorities of the Town and Community Council in Pleszew have implemented a housing policy based on various forms of avaialibility of dwelling units. Four investments will be completed in 2023 – a total of 135 flats. These include units with credit in rent, with the possibility of coming to ownership after a minimum of 5 years, communal flats to let, as well as commercial rental of units of a higher standard. Furthermore, the housing policy envisages the creation of new dwelling units without the so-called "urban sprawl". Buildings are erected in place of demolished ones or old tenements are modernised. This is also part of a 15-minute city.

Properly conducted education policy is supposed to attract potential residents – as well as retain the existing inhabitants. The local government takes special care of the schools it runs. In the last two years, the building of the largest primary school in the entire district underwent comprehensive modernisation. There is also huge potential for suburban schools – the Lenartowice Public School Complex, attended by 170 children, is currently being expanded. State-of-the-art language and science labs have also been created in each school. The fact that learning in Pleszew schools is conducted on a one-shift basis (there are no afternoon classes) is an advantage. Pleszew can also boast the availability of well-equipped and organised kindergartens and nurseries. The latter are run by private entities with which the local government cooperates closely.

All the activities building a compact and quarter city are based on sustainability. This implies a special concern for ecology and the environment. Just two years ago, Pleszew was a leader in the rankings of cities with the most polluted air. However, the measures taken proved successful and today Pleszew is hardly to be found in the infamous rankings. Above all, the focus was on greenery and the de-concreting the city. Over a hundred large trees have been planted in the very centre, on the Market Square and adjacent streets. Green squares are created in the vicinity of the biggest developments and thousands of trees and shrubs are planted. Pocket parks are established, to which residents have direct access as they are located close to the centre and housing estates. The installation of more than 30 air sensors throughout the municipality has provided insights into smog and areas that require immediate action. These measures include an inventory of heat sources (Pleszew had completed this process already in 2020 before the creation of The Central Emission Register of Buildings – CEEB) and a municipal programme to subsidise their replacement. Renewable energy sources are another action to take care of the environment. Photovoltaics is already installed on public buildings, as well as on three Water Treatment Plants. Thanks to the "Smart Pleszew" project, it was possible to develop documentation for further investments in renewable sources of energy, including at Pleszew's aquapark. The same project made it possible to invest in small-scale retention. A reservoir has been created under one of the city's large car parks to store rainwater, which will be used to water urban plants.

The city also has a diverse cultural offer, which is constantly updated and tailored to the needs of the inhabitants, and the cultural units themselves are located in an area accessible to everyone, regardless of age. New premises for a cultural centre and a public library have been built on the revitalised post-railway site. They have fitted into the railway nature of the place, where to this day regular services are provided by a narrow-gauge (a three-rail) railway – unique in Europe, on which broad-gauge cars can also travel. The symbiosis of railways and cultural institutions creates a unique place where history meets modernity.

Sports and leisure facilities are also upgraded and expanded so that everyone has the possibility of spending time actively near their place of residence. The high level of health care is ensured, among others, by the Pleszewskie Centrum Medyczne (Pleszew Medical Center), which is at the forefront of national rankings in terms of the level of service provided, involving not only the residents of the Pleszew district. There are also numerous outpatient clinics, laboratories and private practices in the city. All this so that residents can move between these points within a maximum of a quarter of an hour.

The construction of a multifunctional development centre complements the implementation of the 15-minute city. Compact Lab Pleszew is to be built on a revitalised post-railway area and bring together entrepreneurs, social activists and academics. It is meant to be a kind of an urban laboratory for the development of Pleszew. The new institution will be divided into three zones. The first is the business incubator, which will gather entrepreneurs, especially young people who are new to running their own businesses, in one place. The second zone will be dedicated to social activists and non-governmental organisations willing to work for the benefit of local people. The third one will provide hotel and conference facilities. The building will offer 39 three-star rooms and several well-equipped conference rooms. Construction of Compact Lab Pleszew is expected to commence in 2023.

Rotterdam Rooftop Days (Rotterdamse Dakendagen)

NIKKI KAMPS

Rotterdamse Dakendagen (Rotterdam Rooftop Days) **is an organisation and festival of the same name**, dedicated to **exploring and showcasing the potential of rooftop use**. Rotterdam alone has 18 square kilometres of a flat rooftop surface area, most of which remains unused. And like any growing and condensing urban environment, it has many challenges to address in the coming years. Rotterdamse Dakendagen believes that, in order to create and nurture sustainable and resilient habitats for city dwellers (humans and animals alike), this rooftop space is an untapped resource that should be utilised.

About the Organisation

Rotterdamse Dakendagen **aims to** show how rooftops could contribute to a healthy, lively, inclusive, sustainable, attractive and resilient city. We do this by organising our annual festival, where all residents and visitors of the city are welcomed to explore its currently underutilised rooftop landscape (or "roofscape"). **We see the inner city of Rotterdam as an open laboratory** where we show inspiring examples, investigate the potential of the roofscape in an exciting arena and reflect on the opportunities and (im)possibilities of rooftop use. We strive to serve as an international example by organising innovative and striking projects. To serve as a source of inspiration and a driving force; through temporary interventions, sustainable projects and by sharing knowledge.

Our organisation grows and shrinks within the ebb and flow of the annual festival period, while we continue to build on our programming and networks year round.

The underutilised roofscape and using it as a festival venue

A question that often arises centres around the medium of a festival. How can a festival aimed at the public (as well as professionals) contribute to the utilisation of rooftop space, arguably a city planning issue? And from an artistic perspective: what defines the artistic and cultural importance of the festival, when it does not focus on excellence within a certain genre but rather a place and its role in the city? The answer lies in the intersection, the meeting of three aspects of a festival: the audience (both the public as well as professionals), the programming and the roofscape as the location. Each one inspires the other, using the temporary and flexible nature of a festival to create the perfect environment for this mutually beneficial relationship.

We see the lack of rooftop use as a cultural issue at heart. Speaking for the Netherlands, contrary to what you might expect from a small and crowded country, we are very horizontally focussed. While minimising the use of a ground level surface area in urban planning is not foreign to us (we do build flats and highrises), we tend to forget about the claimed space that reappears on the rooftop of whatever was built. As with many issues in sustainability (minimising consumption of animal products for example), a cultural shift is ultimately required. This can not be initiated by architects, developers or policy makers alone. By inviting artists to reflect on this, opening doors for audiences, essentially by coming together as communities and making the utilisation of rooftops a collective and meaningful experience, we will convince each other of its value and importance.

About the Festival

Rotterdam Rooftop Days is an annual event, planned in the first weekend of June. Audiences can visit rooftops during (guided) tours and special events like theatre performances, film screenings, parties and more. The professional audience is targeted through the Rooftop Knowledge Day, where they can meet and join in different workshops and discussions. The first edition of the festival took place in June of 2015, a small edition with a handful of rooftops. Over the years, the number of rooftops and the diversity of the programme increased leading to a record edition of 2019 with 65 participating rooftops and 22,0000 visitors. The 2020 and 2021 editions were severely limited due to the coronavirus restrictions but left room to develop digital channels and content, reaching audiences in different ways. The Rooftop Knowledge Day developed into a hybrid, international (English spoken) event, bringing together architects, policymakers, cultural agents and developers from different countries.

In 2022, the regular festival weekend was supplemented by a special project on an unprecedented scale: the Rotterdam Rooftop Walk. More about the International Rooftop Knowledge Day 2022: www.rotterdamsedakendagen.nl/rooftopknowledge2022/?lang=en

Rotterdam Rooftop Walk

Rotterdam Rooftop Walk was a route on the rooftop level, connecting iconic and monumental buildings in Rotterdam's city centre with a bridge and staircases leading the audience up and over the roofscape. While walking, audiences experienced an exhibition showcasing the possibilities of rooftop use and innovations in the field. The bright orange intervention executed in scaffolding was designed by Rotterdamse Dakendagen together with the internationally acclaimed architecture firm MVRDV (and many other partners) and the exhibition was curated by Rotterdamse Dakendagen with contributions from LOLA Landscape Architects and many other programme **partners**. The Rooftop Walk was opened on 26 May and closed on 26 June, with a total of 32 days of receiving visitors. It was a resounding success, with 204.000 visitors. The exceptional project which garnered international recognition and attention for rooftop use. Many aspects of it were completely new to the organisation: designing and overseeing the creation of such a large structure, **collaborating with so many different partners, organising an event continually for such a stretch of time in addition to the regular festival that took place over the usual weekend**.

Future editions

Rotterdamse Dakendagen will continue to develop its activities, using the success of the Rooftop Walk as a springboard for future events. An annual repeat of a project of this scale is not realistic, but large projects are on the horizon as the festival continues to take place on various rooftops in the city.

Designing a city by children using the Minecraft game – Urban Lab Rzeszów

MAŁGORZATA MICHALSKA

The world of Minecraft in its educational version offers numerous possibilities – not only for playing the game, but also, and above all, for designing urban spaces, as the youngest residents of Rzeszów discovered when they took part in free Minecraft classes organised by the city.

The regular use of the game and the arrival of new additions to the game and their modifications have resulted in an increase in the level of projects completed by the students. After all, Minecraft offers unlimited possibilities – you can build there anything your imagination tells you. Combining this with their knowledge of programming basics, the youngest inhabitants of Rzeszów were thus able to create a mini-simulation of the city of the future, portraying Rzeszów as a space without barriers, a green city, but at the same time equipped with the latest technological solutions to improve the quality of life of its residents. In this way, the game in the urban space became a tool not only for fun and entertainment, but above all for designing a new vision of Rzeszów, transforming children's ideas into real and "tangible" implementations on the city map. To this end, a special map was created in the Minecraft game, representing Rzeszów Old Town, on the basis of which students created their own projects and developed virtual city assistants, the so-called "agents". The latter's task was to teach young players how to code using simple commands.

One of the chosen paths for the implementation of Minecraft Innovative Education projects was to use the activities of the newly established entity Urban Lab Rzeszów, carried out as part of the pilot project entitled "Adaptation of the Urban Lab concept in Rzeszów", implemented with the support of the Managing Authority of the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy and the project's substantive coordinating institution, the Institute of Urban and Regional Development. As part of these activities, an educational programme was also implemented to improve the competences of IT teachers in running classes using the Minecraft game and a number of IT competitions were held for students representing Rzeszow schools.

Minecraft has become part of the Urban Lab Rzeszów space through numerous gatherings of enthusiasts of the educational game, which was the starting point for the Minecraft and 3D printing centre being created in Rzeszów. A complementary element to all the projects was 3D printing, which made the designs made by the students feasible, thus presenting them with the reality of their ideas appearing in the space of the City.

Another activity within Urban Lab Rzeszów was the attempt at implementing the ideas developed in the Minecraft game into the real world, so that the projects would not only be an element promoting the City of Rzeszów, but would also become a visible and tangible effect of cooperation between the city and its inhabitants. A grassroots initiative for the first **community garden** (a fruit and vegetable garden), designed by the youngest residents of Rzeszów in the Minecraft game (Minecraft Education Edition), was implemented together with residents. In the first part of the task, children from the Rzeszów Municipality took an active part in a workshop on designing a community garden, where they had the possibility to learn about the principles of nurturing vegetables and fruit, which they will be able to grow together with their grandparents, parents or neighbours from nearby blocks in the spring. In the second part, a competition was organised entitled "Design of a fruit and vegetable garden in an urban space using Minecraft Education Edition", under which Urban Lab Rzeszów received 80 works with proposals from Rzeszów schoolchildren.The competition was held in an online format using remote communication tools.

It is worth mentioning that in the times of the pandemic, Urban Lab Rzeszów very quickly adapted its activities to the requirements and possibilities of co-creating urban space with residents in a remote and hybrid formula. In this way, projects were developed that created a virtual stage on which the children presented their vision of the city of the future in ecological, sporting or architectural barrier-free terms. During the pandemic, the Urban Lab Rzeszów space hosted inter-school tournaments or numerous hackathons and competitions, which were run in a hybrid format.

First place in the aforementioned competition entitled "Design of a fruit and vegetable garden" went to a project developed by a first-grade pupil from Primary School No. 25 in Rzeszów, who undertook to find a source of funding for the potential implementation of the idea in the urban space, at the school's premises at the boardwalk open to the public. The student's idea to realise a fruit and vegetable garden at a primary school was submitted as part of the "WE are Rzeszów" call for ideas for urban innovation in the area to improve the quality of life of Rzeszów residents (smart living). In the next stage, an attempt was made to transfer the children's design of the first fruit and

vegetable garden in a 1:1 formula from the "children's vision" to the real world. The initiative was supported by architects from the Association of Polish Architects – Rzeszów Branch, who undertook the design for Urban Lab Rzeszów. The proper implementation of the planned garden was also supervised by the Rzeszów Urban Greenery Management.

Thanks to the project, the school gained not only in educational terms, but also as a unique place on the map of Poland – the first community fruit and vegetable garden designed by pupils in the Minecraft game, and implemented by adults listening to the voice of the youngest generation.

Currently (as of 28 August 2022), Primary School No. 25 in Rzeszów has nearly 150 gardeners who take care of the plantings together with relatives and neighbours. Residents of nearby blocks of flats, in turn, gained the possibility to benefit from organic farming. The children, and thus also the school staff, are keen to invite their neighbours to picnic together in the garden, which was created on the initiative of the pupils of the primary school no.25 in Rzeszów and operates on a "social trust" basis.

The established fruit and vegetable community garden is a form of publicly accessible urban greenery, looked after jointly by the city's youngest inhabitants, i.e. the pupils together with their parents, grandparents and neighbours of the educational facility. The design of the completed community garden itself, in line with the children's vision, is a place supplied with water and equipped with small architecture – pergolas, benches, a rainwater tank, a composter, bird feeders and water dispensers as well as insect hotels. The garden beds are filled with vegetables, herbs, shrubs and fruit trees, a flower meadow has also been created. All members of the local community can use its eventual crops. The garden has a therapeutic function, i.e. it calms, soothes the senses, offers relaxation and

rest amidst the beauty of nature, and a sensory function of affecting the senses through the special juxtaposition of beautifully scented and very colourful plants. It is also an interesting educational offer for the school as an alternative venue for conducting natural science lessons in urban spaces. Hands-on activities on identifying garden plants, sowing and planting vegetables and herbs as well as learning about the principles of gardening are an excellent experience to familiarise students with the natural environment.

The garden was created on municipal land, on an undeveloped area belonging to the school. It is located in the heart of a heavily developed multi-residential area, and its presence has had a strong impact on increasing cooperation among residents and changing attitudes towards nature in the city.

A crucial element in the implementation of the garden into the urban fabric of Rzeszów was to engage residents in its implementation from the very beginning. As part of this initiative, the children themselves designed the urban space, which definitely influenced the image of Rzeszów as a city friendly to residents of all age groups. The youngest residents of the city invited adults to participate in the assigned task, i.e. to co-create a space for intergenerational cooperation. The innovative nature of this activity reflects the possibility of co-creating a "city for children, built by children with adults". This approach not only builds the future social potential of the city, but already at the early stage of the project, it engages in the co-creation of a common place, educates and implements the ideas proposed by the inhabitants.

EHU Critical Urbanism Lab – Laboratory for Critical Urbanism (Vilnius)

SIARHEI LIUBIMAU

Introduction – about the project

"Post-Nuclear Urbanism" is a series of applied summer schools, workshops and interventions that were carried out by the EHU Laboratory of Critical Urbanism from 2015 to 2022 in the town of **Visaginas** in Lithuania. This town was built in Soviet Lithuania specifically to service the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant (operating in the years 1982–2009). From the moment of the closure of the INPP in 2009, the town has been in the process of reinventing its new identity and economic specialisation.

Our project was aimed at both documenting and participating in this process. On one hand, we explored the structural conditions for the possibility of this re-invention, which required studies of the town's political-economic, social and cultural lineage in the urbanisation process driven by the Soviet nuclear industry. On the other hand, we worked on the scale of specific urban functions (such as library, museum, commercial pedestrian street), which in our view had potential in this process of reinvention.

Assumptions – project aim

Our initial look at Visaginas highlighted it as a showcase of Soviet industrial socio-economic mono-functionalism, determined by the top-down planning. We were intrigued to see in a long-term perspective how Visaginas is undergoing disconnection from the wider space of planning it was embedded

in – USSR North-West United Power System; BRELL (Belarus, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) energy system; network of nuclear sites and institutions in the former USSR. We traced and scrutinized different manifestations of this disconnection – in governance, in the cultural sector, in entrepreneurialism, in interurban and international relations (specificity of the EU integration), in the public relations dimension (makig the news in a national context), in the education and knowledge sector, etc. The fact that the town was built fully holistically in only 15 years, from 1975 to 1990 (without any prior urban history), makes it a pure case of such disconnection. By focusing on urban functions specific to this period, we aimed to better understand how the residues from this period still influence current conditions, as well as how these residues could be re-tooled to be better integrated with the current conditions.

Thematic area

One of the main notions that was guiding us was 'knowledge infrastructure' – as a combination of facilities, institutions, individual and collective efforts to generate, share and maintain knowledge. This notion is usually associated with STS scholar Paul Edwards, who studied infrastructural realities of the Cold War. Furthermore, in the last 10 years this notion has been highlighted in the context of the rise of digital infrastructure of knowledge generation, share and maintenance. In this way, the notion was dramatized – intended to show the resulting fragility of pre-digital institutions and practices dealing with public knowledge. We have made the notion of knowledge infrastructures central to our efforts to understand and to program the city. This turned out to be fruitful when making sense of Visaginas as a housing annex of the highly complex, zoned technology of a nuclear power plant, technologically, institutionally, culturally connected to the archipelago of nuclear sites in the former USSR. Besides, it was fruitful to look at and to design the possible paths for specific urban functions dealing with knowledge, such as a public library or a museum, in the context of digitalisation.

Who the project is aimed at

The project was aimed at the various groups of recipients simultaneously. First of all, these are scholars in urbanism and in social sciences, studying the relations between energy generation, society and the state. In this context we scrutinized urbanism inherent in the Soviet nuclear industry. In addition to it, we communicated with the scholars of mono-functional towns, shrinking towns, as well as scholars and practitioners of participatory urban planning and design. Secondly, these are students of different disciplines interested in cities' development and planning. Thirdly, these are governance and civil society in Visaginas. And finally, this is the public sphere in Lithuania at large, where Visaginas as a historicalsocio-cultural phenomenon was rather underrepresented before 2015.

Project leader

At different phases – Siarhei Liubimau, Benjamin Cope, Felix Ackermann.

Project partners

DAAD, SIDA, The Baltic-German University Liaison Office, Brno University of Technology, Vilnius Tech, CANactions School in Kyiv, ZK/U Berlin, Architecture Fund in Vilnius, Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life in Eisenhuettenstadt, Performative Design Agency, etc.

We started our work in Visaginas in 2015 by organizing a workshop with the involvement of social partners of the town – both from municipality, from civil society initiatives and from the cultural

sector. Local social partners have joined our team of academic researchers and urbanist practitioners in the format of small group work. Small group work was organized thematically and was focused on the town's possible trajectories of economic development, on the town's urban planning path and current dilemmas, on the town's cultural sector, and on the approaches to what could be considered local architectural heritage. Many of these social partners have become involved in our further project formats (summer schools, workshops, specific single interventions, et.). Starting from 2015 each new project step has been conceived in collaboration with town's partners – Visaginas Public Library, Visaginas Art Residence "Tochka", Visaginas Business Incubator, the House of Creativity, the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant Information Center, etc. Visaginas Municipality was always open and supportive of our work on the levels ofthe mayor, the vice-mayor, the head of administration, as well as a variety of sectoral specialists.

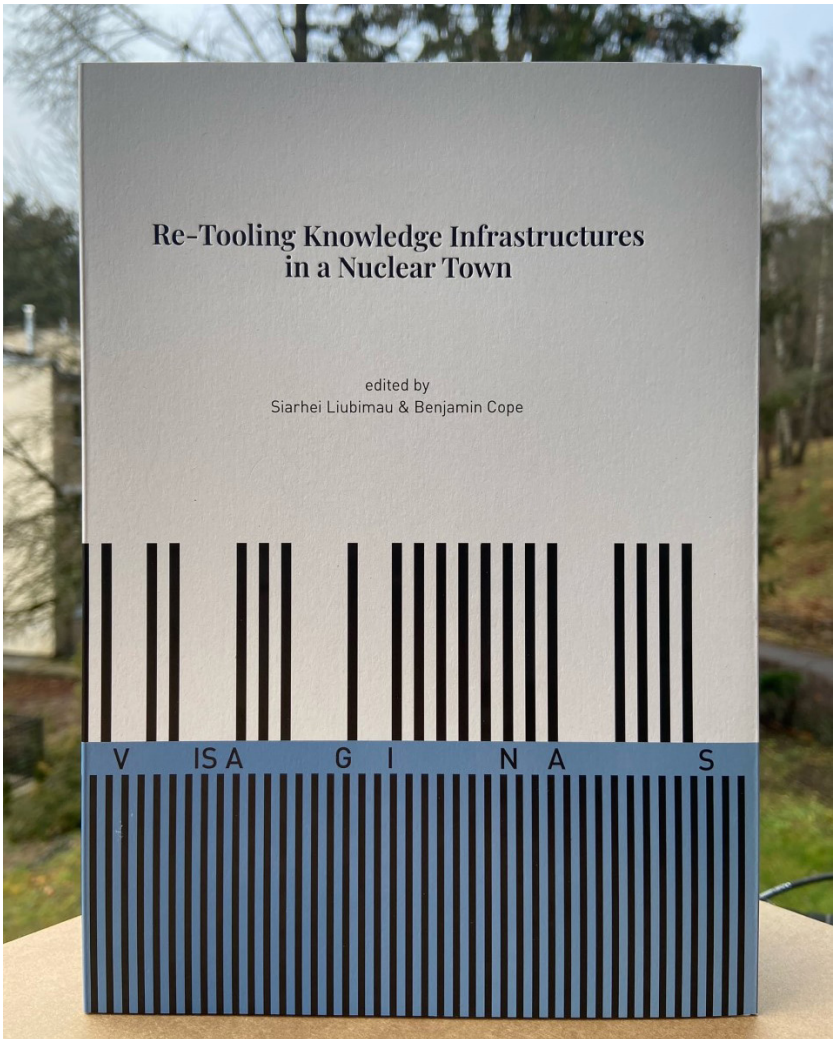
Stakeholders involved

Visaginas Municipality, Visaginas Public Library, the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant Information Center, the House of Creativity in Visaginas, Visaginas Business Incubator, Visaginas Art Residence "Tochka", etc.

The Laboratory of Critical Urbanism is an academic research unit, so our main stakeholder is the European Humanities University, where we are embedded. In addition to it, our project was funded from different external sources. Applied Summer Schools were funded by DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). It should be added here that in our principle, Summer Schools' participants had to pay participation fees and in this way they are stakeholders too. Research workshops were supported by the Baltic-German University Liaison Office. At different stages we actively systematically cooperated in terms of researchers, faculty and student exchange with the Vilnius Tech, CANactions School in Kyiv, Brno University of Technology. In the current phase of the project, focused on approaches to Visaginas musealisation, we are developing cooperation with ZK/U Berlin, Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life in Eisenhuettenstadt, as well as Architecture Fund and Performative Design Agency in Vilnius.

Visible effects of the project

We published two books in 2016 and in 2021; hosted a handful of public presentations of applied workshops' results (impacting public discussions about the future of urban functions, on which the workshops were focused); inspired and nurtured a range of individual projects in cultural sector of Visaginas (by ex-participants of our program).



Period of implementation

2015–2022

Estimated project budget

Budget was not guaranteed, but was collected from different sources on an annual project basis. Roughly estimated budget is circa 80 000 euros.

"The importance of good urban lab practice for our future cannot be overemphasised. The positive impact we create stimulates participatory democracy in a very real path where social values are realised visibly in a productive collaboration that is inclusive, empowering, and changes lives."

Paul Manwaring
(City Innovation Exchange Lab)

Definition of urban lab:
An urban lab is an instrument for cooperation between city authorities and residents, businesses and scientific entities to improve the quality of life of residents through innovatively solving identified problems and generating additional value using urban resources.

Urban labs in Polish cities is an original idea proposed by a team from the Institute of Urban and Regional Development, tested as a pilot in Gdynia and Rzeszów in 2019–2021 and currently developed as part of the support provided to Polish cities interested in implementing it.

Naszym celem jest rozwijanie platformy będącej miejscem wymiany wiedzy, doświadczeń oraz pomysłów, dla wszystkich osób, którym bliski jest los polskich miast. Badania Obserwatorium Polityki Miejskiej IRMiR dostarczają informacji o tym, jakie zmiany dokonują się w polskich miastach i jak realizacja określonych polityk miejskich wpływa na kształt i rozwój miast.

Instytut Rozwoju Miast i Regionów
ul. Targowa 45, 03–728 Warszawa, www.irmir.pl

Obserwatorium Polityki Miejskiej IRMiR
www.obserwatorium.miasta.pl