



THE PLAY/ACT PLACEMAKING TOOLKIT

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This toolkit is the result of the work carried out by the students of the PLAY/ACT project

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EDITORS

Leonel Alegre; Daniela Salazar; Natália Melo

AUTHORS

Conceição Freire, Daniela Salazar, Guida Veiga, João Soares, José A. Parraca, Leonel Alegre, Maria Ilhéu, Marius Araújo, Natália Melo, Paulo Maldonado, Rosalina Pisco Costa, Sofia Aleixo, Vítor Santos Gomes (Universidade de Évora); Antonio Gordillo- Guerrero, Macarena Parejo-Cuellar (Universidade de Extremadura); Blanca Monge Gaitán, Joaquín A. García Muñoz, Susana Baños Oliva (Dirección General de Universidad; Consejería de Educación; Ciencia y Formación Profesional de la Junta de Extremadura); Angela Dibenedetto, Sara Simeone (Materahub); Krisztina Kovács, Tímea Szőke (KÉK); David Ruah, Inês Tomaz (Community Impact)

This handbook is the result of the work carried out by the following students as part of the PLAY/ACT project: Bruna Oliveira, Gabriela Almeida, Leonor Almeida, Pablo Nuño Navarro, Pedro Retzke, Pedro Seica (Universidade de Évora, Portugal), Antonio Pablos, José Antonio Parejo, María José Martín Giner, Óscar García Campanón, Raúl

Julian, Rocío Asensio Ortiz, Sara Peligros García (Universidad de Extremadura, Spain), Carlo Picerno, Flora Baldasarra, Irene Caramella, Marisa Divella, Martina Pisani, Rosella Paladino, Nunzio Patimisco (Università degli Studi della Basilicata, Italy), Anita Heiner, Ilona Erzsébet Tóbiás, Anett Tomoko Molnár, Virág Garamvölgyi, Adrienn Simon, Eszter Boróka Zalányi (KÉK Contemporary Architecture Centre, Hungary)

EDITORIAL DESIGN

João Veiga

PLAY/ACT VISUAL IDENTITY

Tiago Cerveira

PROOFREADING

Michael Lewis

CITATION

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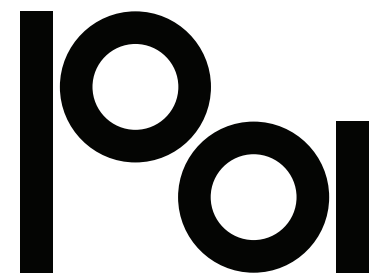
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UNIVERSIDADE DE ÉVORA



JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA



Table of Contents



(SD) STRATEGIC DEFINITION

(R) RESEARCH

(E) ENGAGEMENT

(I) IDEATION

(P) PROTOTYPING

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 04 |
| • The Toolkit | 05 |
| • The PLAY/ACT project | 06 |

| | |
|---|----|
| TOOLKIT | 10 |
| • 01 Concepts in common (SD) | 11 |
| • 02 Route Maps (R) | 14 |
| • 03 Sensitive Urban Walks (R) | 17 |
| • 04 Interactive Timeline (R) | 21 |
| • 05 Atlas of Emotions (R) | 23 |
| • 06 Memory Mapping (R) | 25 |
| • 07 Stakeholder Map (R) | 27 |
| • 08 Photo Competition and Exhibition (E) | 29 |
| • 09 Film Clubs (E) | 31 |
| • 10 Playing in the City (R) + (I) + (P) | 33 |
| • 11 Working Out in the City (R) + (I) + (P) | 35 |
| • 12 Cube A-Stare (E) + (I) | 37 |
| • 13 Culture and Trade in the City (E) + (I) | 39 |
| • 14 Forced Relations (I) | 41 |
| • 15 Screening Ideas (SD) | 43 |
| • 16 Creative Workshop - Furniture-making) (E) + (I) + (P) | 45 |

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| REFERENCES | 47 |
|-------------------|----|

| | |
|------------------|----|
| RESOURCES | 49 |
|------------------|----|

INTRODUCTION

• THE TOOLKIT

This Toolkit is the result of the work carried out as part of the PLAY/ACT project and may be of interest to citizens and organisations interested in developing placemaking projects or co-design processes in urban contexts.

In the Introduction, we briefly outline the structure of PLAY/ACT project and the life-long learning course created as part of it.

The Toolkit summarises some of the tools developed and applied by the students throughout the project. These tools can be replicated or adapted for use in other placemaking projects or in co-design processes applied to different contexts.

For each tool, we identify the context and objectives in which they were applied during PLAY/ACT, the project phases in which they can be used (Engagement, Research, Strategic Definition, Ideation, Prototyping), the target audience, the materials and resources required and the procedure to follow. In each case, we end with a critical analysis of the results obtained.

This Toolkit complements the document **A Place to Be – The PLAY/ACT Placemaking Handbook**¹, which main goal is to share a critical analysis of the path followed throughout PLAY/ACT and its main results. The Handbook includes a presentation of the placemaking projects developed locally by the students in the cities of Évora (Portugal), Mérida (Spain), Matera (Italy) and Budapest (Hungary) and its main results, as well as the methodologies used to evaluate the impact of the project.

➔ www.playact.eu

¹ The Handbook can be found here: <https://playact.eu/the-play-act-placemakinghandbook/>



• THE PLAY/ACT PROJECT

PLAY/ACT - **Placemaking as Youth Activism** is an Erasmus+ project led by _ARTERIA_ LAB - University of Évora (Portugal) and carried out jointly with the following partners: the University of Extremadura (Spain), Dirección General de Universidad, Consejería de Educación, Ciencia y Formación Profesional de la Junta de Extremadura (Spain), Materahub (Italy), KÉK - Hungarian Centre for Contemporary Architecture (Hungary) and Community Impact (Portugal). The University of Basilicata (Italy) is also an associate partner. The objectives of this two-and-a-half-year project were:

- 01** To develop the competencies of university students for conducting placemaking projects.
- 02** To test a model for the creation of a transdisciplinary course in Placemaking.
- 03** To carry out and develop prototypes for placemaking projects in Évora, Mérida, Matera and Budapest.

A lifelong learning course was created jointly by the universities of Évora, Extremadura and Basilicata, for which students from the three institutions were eligible to apply. Although the project was implemented in Hungary without being formally affiliated with a higher education body, students in Hungary were able to enrol on the course at any of the three partner universities. The aim was for the make-up of student teams to be as transdisciplinary as possible, while universities were able to determine what scientific fields and academic entry qualifications to accept, the latter ranging from undergraduate to PhD study level².

The lifelong learning course in Placemaking was worth a total of 14 ECTS and followed a project-based learning methodology. Over the three semesters of the course, students applied the knowledge and skills they had acquired to carry out a local placemaking project.

Each project was conducted in three stages, one of which in each semester of the course:

Stage 1.

Research - Students selected the site for intervention and gathered as much information as possible about the place, the communities that use and inhabit it, the resources available and the stakeholders who could contribute to the implementation of the project. This stage was marked by initial approaches made to the local community and an attempt to establish a relationship with individuals and groups. At the

² Follow the [link](#) to see the PLAY/ACT students call

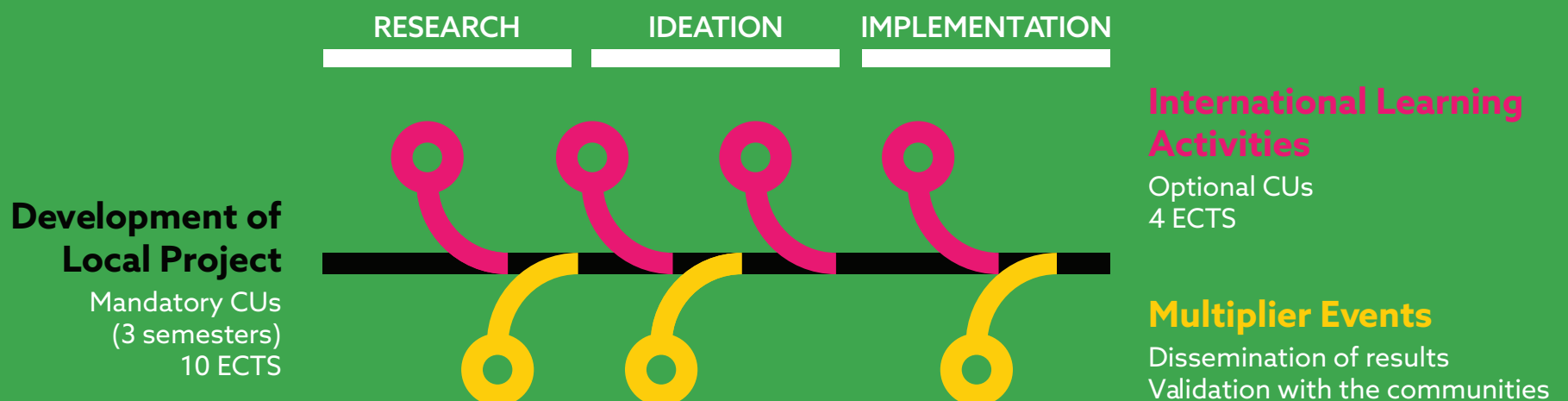
end of the research stage, students identified the challenge they sought to address in subsequent stages.

Stage 2.

Ideation – Students sought possible solutions to meet the challenge identified in the previous stage, together with members of the target communities, in response to their needs and wants. The solutions to be adopted were required to take into account environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability, and human rights issues. At the end of the semester, the students selected and validated jointly with the local communities the ideas to be implemented in the final stage.

Stage 3.

Implementation - Students were required to develop a prototype for action and tested their ideas, which involved making contacts and conducting negotiations with local stakeholders, including residents, non-profit organisations, businesses and public bodies. There were no constraints on the type of project which could be conducted.



The three stages of the local project (Research, Ideation, Implementation) were worth **compulsory curricular units** (CUs) of the course and there was continuous mentoring by technical staff, teachers and researchers from the partner institutions.

International Learning, Training and Teaching Activities (LTTs), characteristic of an Erasmus+ KA2 project, were also included in the course curricular programme. These were 2-to-5-day intensive training programmes on a range of topics, as **optional curricular units**, and it was compulsory for students to take part in at least two of them. Students taking part in LTTs passed on the knowledge and skills they had acquired to the other members of the team and applied them by carrying out their local project.

Summary of Learning, Training and Teaching activities (LLTs)

| Semester | Name of LTT | Organiser/ location | Content |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 st | Mapping and Engagement | University of Évora — Évora — Portugal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetic dimension of cartography • Finding place-attached meaning • Mapping affordances, behaviours, emotions and needs • Sensitive reading of a place • Considering more-than-humans • Diagonal thinking • Design innovation processes |
| 2 nd | Empowerment in Placemaking | MateraHub — Matera — Italy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative project canvas • Community development and civic engagement • Entrepreneurial and negotiation skills • Funding opportunities • Placemaking and Human Rights • Communication and pitching an idea • Case studies of placemaking projects |
| | Experience Design | KÉK — Budapest — Hungary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of placemaking projects • Gamification and placemaking • Sensing the city • Urban development case studies • Participation for social change • Prototyping |
| 3 rd | Communication and video narratives | University of Extremadura — Badajoz Mérida Cáceres — Spain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and emotional management for public speaking • Digital storytelling and transmedia narrative • Video creation from photographic images • Stop-motion and time lapse • Creation of content for social networks • Case studies of placemaking projects |

In an Erasmus+ KA2 project, **Multiplier Events** (ME) are stages in the project when the results are disseminated to external communities. In the context of PLAY/ACT, MEs were also opportunities for students to establish contact with local residents and stakeholders. Rather than simply presenting the methodologies developed, students applied them to the relevant contexts in order to obtain information, stimulate ideas and encourage contributions from communities. Thus, MEs were the main activities carried out by students during each semester. In total, 13 MEs were held during the life of the project, 12 local events and one international event.

Summary of Multiplier Events (ME)

| Semester | Scale/ Location | Location | Objectives |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 st | Local | Évora Mérida Matera Budapest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using methodologies for gathering information about the place and the local community • Identifying partners and gatekeepers • Establishing relationships with local individuals and groups • Defining the challenge together jointly with the communitysses |
| 2 nd | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using methodologies to generate and co-design possible solutions to the challenges identified, together with the local community • Presenting ideas to stakeholders involved |
| 3 rd | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing, testing and evaluating ideas at a public event • Presenting the results of the project to the local community |
| End of project | International | Évora | <p>'A Place to Be' – International Conference on Placemaking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing case studies and research results on placemaking, urban regeneration and civic participation • Sharing the results of PLAY/ACT • Visiting a regeneration project in a rural environment: Estação Cooperativa de Casa Branca |

TOOLKIT

1. CONCEPTS IN COMMON

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Defining a framework and glossary help to establish a common understanding and make cohesive choices throughout the life of a placemaking project. This was our first task, designed to create a common basis for the work of the group. The objective was not only to create a common definition of placemaking but also to explore and define related concepts regarding aspects such as Landscape, System, Communities, Interculturality, Co-habitation, Place, and Public/Common/Shared Space. By discussing and agreeing on these terms, we aimed to ensure clarity and alignment across the group in the subsequent phases of the project.

PROJECT PHASE

Strategic Definition

TARGET GROUPS

Students and project team

DURATION

2-3 hours

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Predetermined list of concepts/aspects associated with placemaking, printed on individual pieces of paper
- Inspirational quotes relating to each aspect
- Post-it notes
- Markers or pens

1.



Figure 1 and 2.
Students in Évora working
on the Concepts in Common.

PROCEDURE

- The mentors gave a brief introduction to placemaking and its practices.
- Together with the students, there was a short discussion to gather ideas and interpretations of what placemaking is.
- The mentors introduced the predefined concepts associated with placemaking; in this case, we selected Landscape, System, Communities, Interculturality, Co-habitation, Place, and Public/Common/Shared Space; these concepts were placed on individual printed pieces of paper on a table.
- The students were encouraged to think of additional concepts related to each aspect, write them on post-it notes and stick them close to the corresponding concepts.
- Each aspect was discussed on detail and each participant presented their associated concepts.
- The group agreed on a final list of concepts, creating a comprehensive glossary that encapsulates all agreed concepts and terms.

RESULTS

The session resulted on a productive and inclusive discussion, with active participation from both students and mentors. The group identified several key interpretations of placemaking as being important: fostering intergenerational sharing, creating more interactive spaces, reducing car use and parking, using open spaces more, creating sheltered areas, repurposing transitional spaces, and increasing interaction between the city and the university.

In the conceptual map, the group decided to associate the following concepts to the predetermined ones:

- **Landscape:** Outdoor space; Human construction; Subjective; More-than-human awareness; Constant change; Human re-signification; Difficult-to-define boundaries; Cultural construction.
- **System:** Integration; Layers; Connectivity; Forms of organisation; Compatibility/Incompatibility; Co-dependent functions.
- **Communities:** Cross-references; Common goals; Permanent

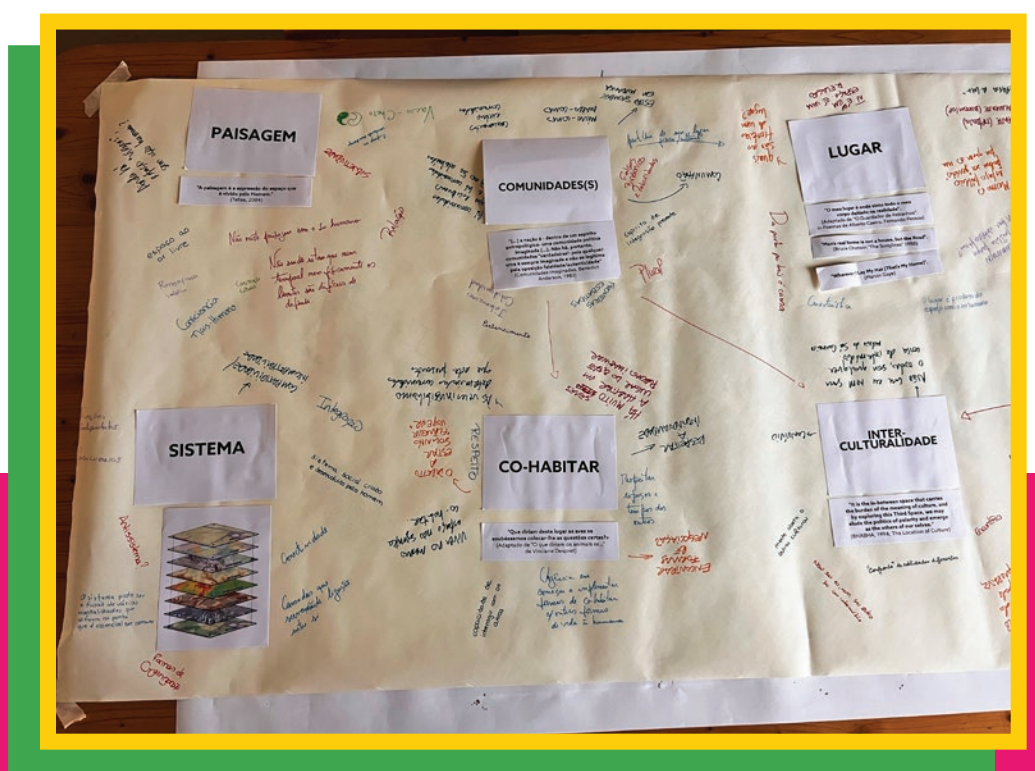


Figure 3. Initial results of the brainstorming process for the construction of the conceptual map in Évora.

change; Everyday interactions; Plurality; Belonging; Blurred boundaries; Macrocosm and Microcosm; Chosen communities and Assigned communities.

- **Interculturality:** Keeping an open mind; Interaction; Third space; Encounters; Intermediaries.
- **Co-habitation:** Respect; Other forms of life; Capacity for interaction; Negotiation; Right to be alone; Invisible communities; Individuality.
- **Place:** A relationship rather than a space; Relationship between space and human beings; What are the boundaries of a place?; Where communities share their space.
- **Public/Common/Shared Space:** Relationship with freedom of expression; Intensities; "When you go indoors, turn off the lights outside"; Plurality of voices; Superior or Horizontal management.

During the discussion, two additional aspects emerged:

- **Conflict:** Does not always have a negative meaning; Repression; Human conflict with space; May be productive.
- **Meaning:** Diverse points of view; Do all meanings have the same value?; Semiotics, Signs, Signifiers; There are no correct meanings; Written meaning is different from oral meaning.

The outcome of this task was the production of a conceptual map serving as a common tool of reference for the placemaking project. This ensures that all participants have a shared understanding of key concepts, facilitating communication and encouraging more cohesive decision-making. Additionally, the process fosters deeper engagement and a sense of ownership among participants as they contribute to the foundational framework of the project.

• 2. ROUTE MAPS

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Every day, we travel round our city, commuting to and from work, school and home, and visiting various other places associated with many other activities. Often, we ignore the stories these movements tell about the urban environment and how people interact with spaces. Attentive observation is essential for selecting intervention sites, helping us to gain an understanding of urban dynamics, recognise how communities use spaces, identify challenges for the city, and discover opportunities for creating more vibrant and happier places. In this context, tracing routes on maps transcends simple cartography, acting as a tool for discovering new spaces and providing the inspiration for fresh perspectives on familiar surroundings. This task is divided in two phases: Mapping Daily Routes; and Exploring the City. Participants are encouraged to engage with their environment, fostering a deeper understanding of and connection with the city.

PROJECT PHASE

Research

TARGET GROUPS

Students and project team

DURATION

3-4 hours

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

The materials and resources described may be regarded as suggestions and adapted in accordance with the objectives of each project.

Mapping Daily Routes:

- A printed map: A printed map of the city or selected area.
- Coloured pins and woollen threads: using coloured drawing pins to mark key locations and coloured threads to indicate routes; alternatively, a virtual map with coloured markers could be used, though we recommend producing a physical map as this fosters connection, joy, and team building.

Exploring the City:

- Printed or virtual maps: each group was given a printed or virtual maps for their assigned routes
- An online shared map: an online map for participants to upload and share their findings
- Smartphones or cameras: for capturing photos and videos during the exploration
- Optional materials: notebooks, pens, or other materials for taking notes and recording ideas and perceptions





Figure 4. Students in Évora marking the routes they followed daily or repeatedly around the city.



Figure 5. Results of the mapping of routes in Évora and identification of possible areas for exploring the city.

PROCEDURE

Mapping daily movements

- Each participant marks their experience on a city map, tracing routes followed from home to school, work, and other frequently visited places like gyms, parks, and bars. In this case, drawing pins were used to mark key locations and coloured threads were used to represent routes.
- Once routes had been marked, we focused on the blank spaces: areas of the city that participants rarely visit. Participants were divided into small groups and each group was assigned a different area in the city identified as being less frequently visited by group members.

Exploring the City

- Groups wandered round their assigned areas, allowing themselves to be surprised by their surroundings. Participants captured their experiences through photos, texts, and videos.
- Using a predefined colour code, participants classified their annotations into six categories: Social Ecology; Aesthetics; Socio-Cultural Values, History and Heritage; Emotions and Spiritual Meanings; Enjoyment; and Economics. Photos were uploaded onto a shared online map (Google Maps), the relevant category for each image being indicated.
- The task concluded with a discussion of mapping results, which played a crucial role in the selection of the study site for the project.

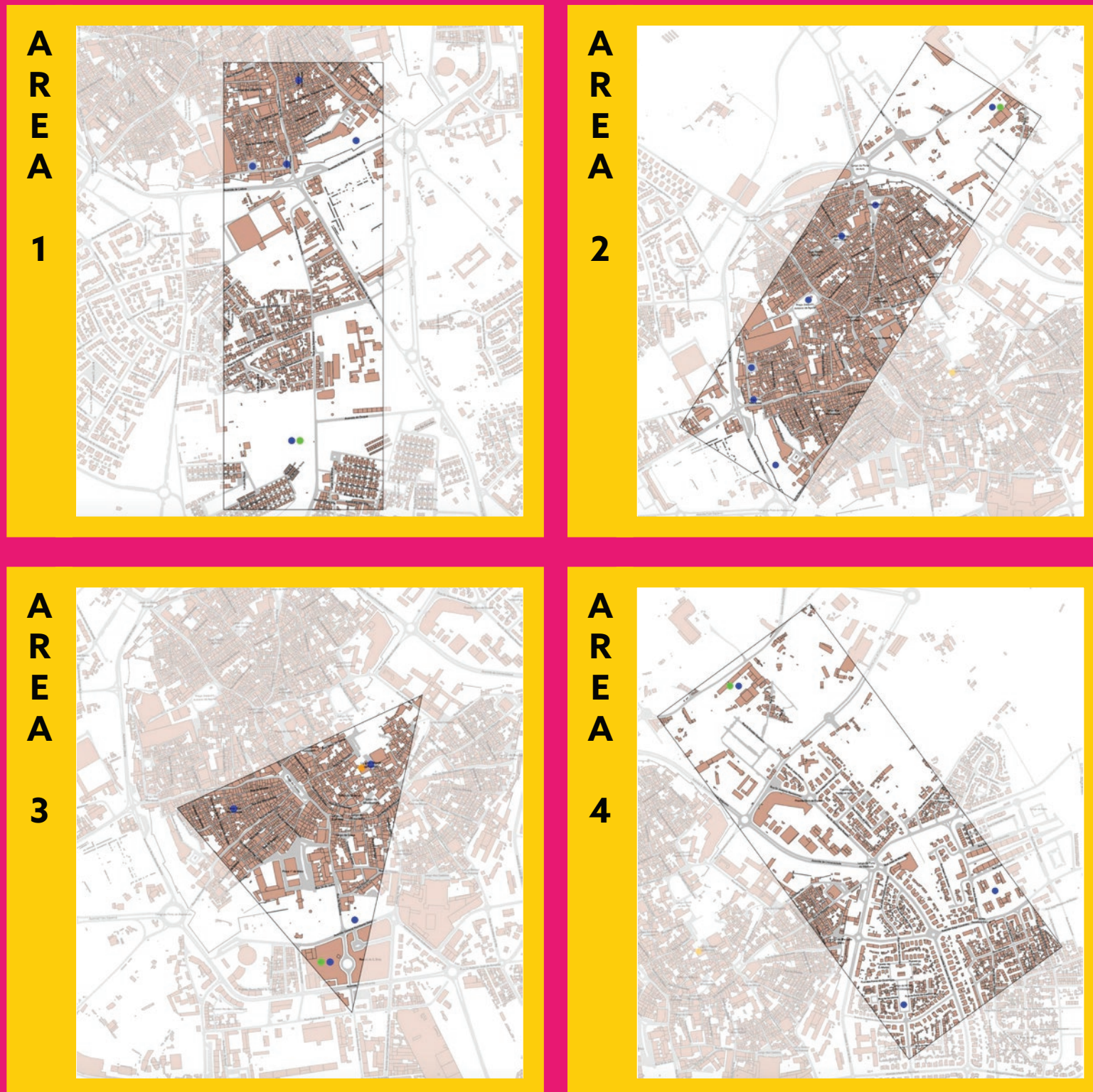


Figure 6. Maps for Exploring the City, Évora. Green dots represent starting points on each route. Blue dots represent points of interest, previously identified by the group. The orange dot in Area 3 represents the meeting point at the end of exploration time.

RESULTS

This activity showed that participants frequently use the same routes repeatedly, leaving much of the city as an area for new discoveries. It also led to discussions about common routes followed and the prevalence of specific city-centre streets used. During their explorations, the small groups identified spaces with potential and noted various challenges, such as empty squares, areas where playgrounds had been removed, and small parks in need of care and maintenance. Discussions about participants' favourite and least favourite places, along with potential for improvement, led to a shortlist being drawn up of potential sites for intervention in the following phases of the project.

Additionally, this exercise fostered group bonding and helped participants recognise common perspectives as regards the city and placemaking process.

3. SENSITIVE URBAN WALKS

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Sensory urban explorations can mean a lot of things but the main goal of such walks is to discover different aspects of a particular place, by revealing individual subjective perceptions of physical space, materialities and ambiances in the awareness that each person perceives it in accordance with their individual sensitivity. Sensory explorations challenge us to use our senses and focus on experiencing our surroundings when we walk through part of the city we are familiar with. We use all our senses, including hearing, smell and touch. An experienced guide can help focus the individual's senses on what is usually not noticed and enable participants to deepen their connection with the study site.

PROJECT PHASE

Research

TARGET GROUPS

Students and/or project team

DURATION

1-2 hours

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

All materials and resources are optional, but it is recommended that participants take notes along the way.

3.



Figures 7 and 8. Photos taken by the Italian students during the Sensitive Walk in Serra Venerdi, Matera.





Figures 10 and 11. During the Learning Training and Teaching Activity in Budapest the PLAY/ACT team was challenged to experience the city through smell.

- During the walk, participants should try to answer some of the following questions:
 - *What is the atmosphere and what are the ambiances of the place?*
 - *What do I see? How diverse is the place?*
 - *Are there harmonies, contrasts, monotonies?*
 - *What do I hear?*
 - *Are there nearby and background noises?*
 - *What are the aromas and smells?*
 - *What feelings does this place arouse in me?*
 - *What memories do I associate with the place?*
 - *What does this landscape mean to me?*
 - *What do I feel like doing in this place?*
- You may want to define specific challenges. In Budapest, participants were challenged to explore the city through smell, getting a whiff of unusual elements, such as cement or water from fountains. They were also challenged to act "differently" when moving from Point A to Point B, moving in ways regarded as strange in terms of everyday life, for example crossing a metro station while dancing and observing people's reactions.
- Record what you feel, think and observe by taking notes and photographs, drawing pictures, recording sounds, collecting objects, etc. Mark the locations corresponding to your notes on the map.
- Share your notes, group them into categories and discuss the results. Can you draw a sensory profile of the place? Matera students categorised their notes using coloured sticky notes: pink for sensations, orange for emotions and yellow for possible ideas.

RESULTS

The sensory walk around the Serra Venerdì neighbourhood in Matera enabled students to draw up a sensory and emotional profile of the neighbourhood showing the different uses of the place. The results of sensory analysis portrayed a neighbourhood isolated from the rest of the city and poorly cared for, with rubbish in the streets. In Serra Venerdì there is a combination of pleasant smells (like laundry, or food) and less pleasant ones. The colours of nature, the buildings, the market and the clothes hanging on washing lines are salient features. In terms of sensory and emotional impressions, the students noticed the silence, intimacy in terms of the relationship between people and nature, and feelings of belonging and identity, as well as freshness and limitation, oppressed vivacity and bewilderment. In the realm of emotions, the students felt extraneousness, a lack of community spirit, and a sense of abandonment, except on market days, wonder, turmoil and revenge. The activity allowed the students to focus on specific challenges in the neighbourhood and was the first stage in the exercise of sharing ideas for the neighbourhood, such as organising community lunches and events to unite the community and raise awareness among citizens as to taking care of the neighbourhood.

The Sensory Exploration carried out by the Hungarian team in the project area, Kelenföld city centre, exploring the place through movement, touch and smell, had a huge impact. This way of understanding and relating to the city resulted in the group of students being much more sensitive to the space and its inhabitants, developing a greater sense of connection and belonging to the place that they carried with them throughout the project. This allowed them to move forward with greater confidence and made it easier to lead events and workshops even though they came into the place as outsiders.

4. INTERACTIVE TIMELINE

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This methodology can be an important tool for mapping and conducting an initial approach to a place and its community. It allows participants to meet face-to-face with members of the local community, talk with them briefly on an individual basis and find out more about the target place of the project.

PROJECT PHASE

Research

TARGET GROUPS

Local residents

DURATION

3-4 hours

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Printed timeline with an accurate history of the place
- Sticky notes
- Markers and pens

PROCEDURE

- Produce a large panel with a timeline of the place, resulting from the research process. Place the panel and all the materials in an accessible, visible and lively space.

4.



Figures 12 and 13. During the multiplier event at Kelenföld City Centre, Budapest: the team testing this methodology on the local community.

- Invite passers-by to map events and memories regarding place in the timeline, using post-it notes and markers.
- Stimulate dialogue with and between participants.

RESULTS

The collective construction of a timeline allows to trace the profile of the place over time from the subjective point of view of its residents and users, making it possible to identify moments or particularities that have marked people positively or negatively. It often makes it possible to uncover stories about the place that are beyond the scope of research based on documentary sources and to identify the values that are usually hidden within the community. This dynamic has the advantage of contributing to an intergenerational view of the place, creating dialogues between people from different generations.

• 5. ATLAS OF EMOTIONS

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This tool was developed by Matera students and used during an event with the communities that inhabit the Serra Venerdì neighbourhood. The tool was applied during the research phase with the aim of providing an understanding of people's emotional relationship with the neighbourhood and the points of view of people from different cultures.

PROJECT PHASE

Research

TARGET GROUPS

Communities that inhabit the neighbourhood

DURATION

3 hours

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- A large-scale map of the neighbourhood (Google Earth)
- Sticky notes
- Pens
- Stickers with different colours, each associated with a different emotion (blue - sadness, yellow - happiness, red - passion, black - disappointment, green - hope)
- String and small pegs to hang the sticky notes and create the wall of emotions
- Scissors and tape
- Newspapers to cut up and turn into collages
- QR code (printed or digital, to send to participants)

PROCEDURE

- Using Google Maps, define a route in the neighbourhood with the identification of strategic points⁵. To identify strategic points, there should have been a process of observation and/or involvement of local residents, by observing and/or asking them which spots hold a value for them. This value may be social, aesthetic or of any other type. If this process has not been conducted, spots can be identified by students through one or more walks and selected based on values that they would like to put the accent upon (such as sustainability, need for intervention, etc.), based on their studies.
- In the days before the event, distribute inspirational collages along the different points on the route.

⁵ To create a route on Google Maps, log in with your profile and select the menu in the top left-hand corner next to the search bar. Choose "Saved", then select the "Maps" tab and click on "Create Map" at the bottom. On the map, you can add markers with the selected places and routes by foot, bike or car.



- On the day of the event, place the map of the neighbourhood on a large table and set up a wall of emotions using string and clothes pegs. Ideally, the wall should not be a rigid and immovable barrier, but something that can be adapted or surpassed.
- Participants scan the QR-codes linking to the route on Google Maps and start the walk.
- There are 2 options for the next stage:

Option 1: The students organise an event involving local residents co-creating collages using words and images that represent the emotions conveyed by each place.

Option 2: The students make one collage for each spot, stick them with tape in each spot and go for a guided walk or treasure hunt with residents, who are asked to express the emotions they associate with each place by writing them on sticky notes or small pieces of paper.

- On returning to the starting point, participants hang the sticky notes on the emotion wall and place coloured stickers on the map according to the emotions they felt along the way.
- At the end there is a group discussion and reflection on the results. The map can be hung in a social place.

RESULTS

Each card formed a brick in the 'Wall of Emotions', highlighting limitations and opportunities for the project and ideas from the community on how to improve the neighbourhood.

Participants were fascinated by the type of houses, nature, the colours and smells, but at the same time they were critical of the lack of maintenance of the buildings and green spaces, the lack of a sense of community and the lack of interest shown by people in coming together for the good of the neighbourhood. The results enabled the students to define a strategy that would enhance the positive aspects of the neighbourhood and contribute to developing possible solutions to the negative aspects, such as the lack of sense of community.



Figure 14. Setting up the activity in Serra Venerdi, Matera. The map is on the table, and the wall of emotions in the background.



Figure 15. An example of an inspirational collage.



Figure 16. A similar activity developed by Budapest students at Kelenföld City Centre.

6. MEMORY MAPPING

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This methodology was applied by the Évora students during the research phase, with the aim of collecting residents' stories and memories about the neighbourhood and, at the same time, engaging them with the project from the outset. The participants shared their memories using spatial and visual elements that can be adapted to different forms of storytelling and, at the same time, allow the sharing process to be documented. In this way, participants could not only tell a story orally but also map it on a plan of the place and relate it with other elements and events.

PROJECT PHASE

Research

TARGET GROUPS

Local Communities

DURATION

2 hours

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- A voice recorder
- A video camera
- A plan of the selected place (preferably A0 or A1): this should feature the names of the main streets
- Emotions cards 10.5 x 7 cm (Happiness, Sadness, Fear, Passion, Anger, Surprise): some cards may be blank, for use for other emotions
- 3D printed elements for actions (tree, ball, benches, dog, bicycle, chair, market counter, guitar, book, food, bag, etc.);
- 3D printed characters (men, women or non-binary)
- Description labels 7 x 3 cm (Who? When? What?)



Figure 17. 3D printed elements from the activity.

PROCEDURE

- Ask participants if the dynamics can be recorded.
- Place the plan, characters, 3D elements, emotion cards and description labels on a table.
- One at a time, participants share their stories about the place/neighbourhood, each choosing characters and emotions. When telling their story or describing their memory, they place the elements and characters in the exact place where it took place on the plan and fill in the description labels. The cards enable a storyboard to be created.

RESULTS

Despite the low rate of participation of local community members in this event, this sharing process among participants was very important. It gave us a better understanding of the diversity of occupations and activities in the place during the last few decades, the changes that have occurred and some dynamics that are missed by the community. This storytelling event enabled some people in the neighbourhood to meet, mainly people of different ages, giving them an opportunity to find out how others experience the place and the neighbourhood. The methodology enabled these memories to be understood, enriching the whole participation process.



Figure 18. Community member describing her memories.



Figure 19. Outcome of memory mapping.

7. STAKEHOLDER MAP

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Mapping stakeholders is crucial for understanding the dynamics of a place and identifying key players who can support the placemaking project. The objective of this activity is to map the stakeholders surrounding the chosen intervention site. This helps in recognising potential collaborators and understanding the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the area. The activity is divided into two phases: Listing and Classifying Stakeholders and Identifying Key Stakeholders.

PROJECT PHASE

Research

TARGET GROUPS

Students and project team

DURATION

- Listing and Classifying Stakeholders: 3-4 hours (includes time for online research, and neighbourhood visits)
- Identifying Key Stakeholders: 1 hour (includes time for group discussions selection of most relevant stakeholders)

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Printed or digital maps of the neighborhood
- Stakeholder map (circular graph): can be printed on paper or drawn on a whiteboard (see figure 20)
- Markers or pens
- Sticky notes in different colours, one colour for each category of stakeholder, for adding stakeholders to the map and chart
- Projector or large display screen for group presentations and discussions



Figure 20. Stakeholders graphic template for Identifying Key Stakeholders. The text reads: "Stakeholder map: who is affected by your challenge (individuals, groups, organisations)?"





Figure 21. Identifying stakeholders and their relationship with the challenge.



PROCEDURE

The mapping of stakeholders was divided in two phases:

Listing and Classifying Stakeholders

- Divide the participants into small groups, each responsible for one of the six following categories of stakeholders: Infrastructure and Services; Commercial Activities; Heritage and Artistic Manifestations; Gatekeepers; Social and Cultural Practices; Natural Diversity.
- Each group conducts online searches (using e.g. Google Maps). It is advisable to visit the neighbourhood to identify stakeholders not listed online, especially in categories like social and cultural practices, natural diversity, and artistic manifestations. Stakeholders to be identified include not only organisations and institutions but also key individuals.

Identifying Key Stakeholders (the objective is to determine which stakeholders are vital for the success of the placemaking project)

- Mapping stakeholders, ranging from the most important or most needed (placed in the centre) to the least important or least needed (placed on the periphery), using a circular graphic (see figure 20).

RESULTS

This activity resulted in a comprehensive mapping of stakeholders in the neighbourhood in the following categories: infrastructure and services, commercial activities, heritage and artistic manifestations, gatekeepers, social and cultural practices and natural diversity. The stakeholder mapping allowed us to identify organisations and individuals with important resources for the implementation of the project, many of whom became partners in our initiatives, as well as gatekeepers who allowed us to increase our network of contacts and helped open the doors of relevant institutions and even private houses, mediating the relationship between the project team and the community.

8. PHOTO COMPETITION AND EXHIBITION

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The photo competition and exhibition is a tool developed with the aim of engaging with a community that is often closed to new ideas and wary of strangers. An open call is made for photos on a topic associated with the planned placemaking project; when the deadline has been reached and submissions have been received, photos are selected, any additional graphic work that needs to be done is carried out and then photos are printed. An exhibition venue must be found and materials chosen accordingly. An opening ceremony is organised and all participants, important stakeholders and decision-makers are invited.

PROJECT PHASE

Engagement

TARGET GROUPS

Local Communities

DURATION

Open call to participants: one month;

Opening ceremony/guided visit: ± 2 hours;

Exhibition: > 1 week

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Open call for photo submission (website, Facebook event, printed flyers, etc.)
- Exhibition venue (preferably related to the theme of the exhibition)
- Suitable materials for printing photos (for example, if the exhibition is outside, the use of waterproof materials is recommended)

8.



Figures 22 and 23. Exhibition and presentation of photos by participants.



PROCEDURE

- Launching an open call for photos for a photo exhibition. Local residents are invited to submit their photos of the place with a short personal story. The call is made using printed materials (flyers, posters) and on social media.
- Selecting photos, if necessary.
- Printing photos in A2 format on durable material and posting them in the publicly-accessible locations in the place.
- Organising an open public ceremony. Photos should be posted for at least one week.

RESULTS

This tool was applied by Budapest students, who challenged the community to take photos of the Kelenföld City Centre. The response to the open call was outstanding, with more than 100 photos received. At the time of the writing, the president of the Budapest Vásárcsarnokai Kft was asking for all the photos in the exhibition to be printed out on durable material that could be posted on the exterior of the building for years to come.

The photo exhibition was posted online and frequent requests have been received for access even by researchers and urban planners seeking a better understanding of the local community. The initial aim of the exhibition proved to be a great way to connect with people, who are often wary of strangers because of the sensitive issue of the possible future demolition of the building.

Thus, the photo exhibition served as an excellent focal point for connection, allowing us to build trust with and gain the confidence of the local community. After the exhibition most of local people had fond memories of the group of students and as a result it was much easier to get them to participate in later events.

One shortcoming of the exhibition was the material chosen for the photos: foamboards. They were easy to handle, relatively cheap and made the photos look very appealing, but they were not weather-resistant and by the end of the first month most photos had been damaged by wind or humidity, which only added to the already rundown aspect of the building, so in future it would be best to print photos on more durable material.



Figure 24. A community member visiting the exhibition.

9. FILM CLUBS

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Film Clubs are regular events where the community can engage, in a familiar setting, watching a movie together. The movie topic should be associated with an issue or event that you want to discuss with your target group, because a film provides a great starting point for discussion that can lead to deeper conversations.

The movie can be screened on site if possible. Not many technical resources are needed: a projector, a movie screen, some good loudspeakers and a laptop (or any other device that can be connected to the projector) is all you need. Seating arrangements can be made using foldable chairs or beanbags, and you can even ask attendees to bring their own blankets and cushions.

PROJECT PHASE

Engagement

TARGET GROUPS

Local community and project team

DURATION

2 hours (once a month)

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- A good projector
- A big enough wall or movie screen
- Suitable sound equipment
- The copyright to show the film chosen
- Optional: chairs, blankets or beanbags for seating

9.



Figure 25. First Film Club session in May 2023, showing "Neighbours", a cult TV soap opera in Hungary.

PROCEDURE

- Choose a topic for Film Club sessions and choose what movies to show. This process can be shared with local community members.
- Arrange showing dates and publicise the event through social media, using flyers, and by contacting project stakeholders.
- Engage with those who show interest in a friendly manner and invite them to attend upcoming events and share their ideas about the topic at the end of the screening.

RESULTS

Film clubs were a great means for launching discussions about certain topics that would have been hard to broach in other ways. Popular movies were chosen with the goal of building on shared experiences, sometimes even a feeling of nostalgia, to engage different age groups and people from different social backgrounds. This approach worked, as for example old ladies and young children sat together many times watching a movie and participating in the workshops that were connected with the screenings.

With this type of events regularity and predictability are the most important aspects: we had only just begun to attract a number of regular attendees when the programme ended so it would probably take over a year of regular sessions to be able to evaluate the long-term impact of a film club.

• 10. PLAYING IN THE CITY

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this activity was to gain an understanding of how children play in public spaces, particularly in Évora's Largo do Chão das Covas, and how we can make these places more suitable for play. The activity was developed in collaboration with the Sports and Health Department of the University of Évora.

PROJECT PHASE

Research | Ideation | Prototyping

TARGET GROUPS

Kindergarten children

DURATION

One morning (1.5 hours for setting up and 2.5 hours for play)

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- GPS loggers for recording spatial data
- Individual play items such as:
 - Cardboard boxes
 - Ropes
 - Plastic tubes
 - Carts with wheels
 - Pebbles
 - Types of fabric
 - Tracing paper
 - Balls
 - Tape
 - Tyres

10.

PROCEDURE

- Traffic was banned from the square during the activity to ensure the children's safety (the local authorities should be contacted in advance).
- Before leaving the kindergarten, the children put on T-shirts with small pockets on the back in which GPS loggers were placed.
- The children were encouraged to play freely in the square for 10 minutes.
- After 10 minutes, the items were placed in the middle of the square, without explanation, and the children's behaviour was observed.
- Back in the kindergarten, the teacher asked the children what they would like to do in the square.

RESULTS

The involvement of the educational community through the neighbourhood kindergarten was very enriching both for PLAY/ACT team members and for the teachers and children as their feedback was very positive. It served as an opportunity for the children to freely use a public space that is very close to the kindergarten but that is not used on a regular basis. Stated reasons for this underusage are motorised traffic, the inadequate floor and the lack of shade during the summer. Although the initial free exploration activity was very popular and entertaining for the children, the introduction of play items was a stimulus for further exploring other elements present in the square, such as street furniture (benches) and trees, used as levers or launching tracks. At the end of the activity, the children asked if they could take the play items back to the kindergarten to play with and when they were asked what they would like to do in Largo do Chão das Covas they mentioned camping, having picnics, gymnastics, star-gazing, and converting the square into a park⁷.



Figures 26 and 27. Children playing in Largo do Chão das Covas, first with nothing to play with, then with the items provided.

⁷For more information about the results, see the article [Veiga, G.; Pereira, P.; Parraca J. A. "Mapping children's behaviours to create child-friendly places". A Place to Be - The PLAY/ACT Placemaking Handbook, 102-105, 2014.](#)

11. WORKING OUT IN THE CITY

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This activity was developed by the students from Évora after they realised that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a personal training centre in the neighbourhood (Boutique de Treinos) was using Largo do Chão das Covas for their training sessions. With the aim of understanding how a historic city can be adapted for the practise of physical exercise, we invited Boutique de Treinos to organise a personalised training session, using only the neighbourhood's infrastructure, with no fitness equipment.

PROJECT PHASE

Research | Ideation | Prototyping

TARGET GROUPS

Community members and stakeholders Boutique de Treinos

DURATION

2 hours (45 min exercise; 60 min discussion)

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Sports clothing and footwear
- Water bottles
- Sunscreen
- Everyday items for use in training
- Pens and sticky notes
- Printed aerial view of the square (optional)

11.



Figures 28-30. Personalised training at Largo do Chão das Covas followed by an ideation session with participants.

PROCEDURE

- To ensure the safety of participants, traffic was temporarily banned from the square (the local authorities should be contacted in advance).
- Participants were split up into groups of two, each group being led by a personal trainer.
- Participants were involved in a 45-minute personal training session, using only the square's infrastructures and everyday objects such as water bottles, broom handles, etc. This activity should be carried out under the guidance of sports and health professionals.
- At the end of the activity, participants gathered round an aerial view of the square to share the following ideas about the training experience, using sticky notes:
 - characteristics of the square that make it suitable for physical exercise
 - feelings associated with the square
 - suggestions for improving the suitability of the square for doing exercise

RESULTS

This activity allowed us to explore less common uses of public space, building on existing initiatives in the neighbourhood. A lasting partnership was established with Boutique de Treinos, a key stakeholder with whom we continued to work after the event. The results of the ideation process were included in a report of recommendations for Largo do Chão das Covas that was presented to Évora City Council. The municipality's interest in the initiative led us to create a training plan for Largo do Chão das Covas using only the existing urban infrastructures. There is potential for extending the initiative to other areas of the city.

• 12. CUBE A-STARE

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This tool was used by the Italian students during the ideation phase of the project. The activity aims to validate a general concept for the project and generate ideas jointly with the users and energisers of Serra Venerdi's community gardens. The students came up with the concept of A-Stare, which comes from the words Apache (the name by which the residents of the neighbourhood are known) and Stare (to stay). The A-Stare concept, although abstract, conveys the ideas of community, conviviality and relaxation, encouraging the residents to imagine new examples of street furniture for the neighbourhood.

PROJECT PHASE

Engagement | Ideation

TARGET GROUPS

Residents and users

DURATION

30 min

12.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- A cardboard box
- A print of the planning model of the cube (see figure 31)
- Origami posters with planning models of smaller cubes
- Glue and scissors
- Ribbon
- People

PROCEDURE

- Before the event, a maxi A-Stare cube is built to represent the concept of the project.
- The day before the event, origami posters featuring mini-cube versions are distributed around the neighbourhood, inviting people to take part.
- On the day of the event, there are several mounted origami cubes with which participants can interact.
- The maxi-cube is passed around among participants. When they have the cube they try to generate an idea associated with the proposed concept and identify positive and negative aspects of the proposal.
- By combining the mini-cubes, participants can imagine different forms and uses for street furniture.

RESULTS

Initially, the students felt that the community in Serra Venerdì was not very open to change and innovation in the neighbourhood. The cube encouraged residents of all ages to take part in the activity, enabled them to understand the concept and design of the project and initiated a dialogue between the students and citizens. The modular objects allowed for the construction of various compositions, which resulted in a multifunctional product. At the end, the residents were enthusiastic about the project. A short video of the event can be seen [here](#).

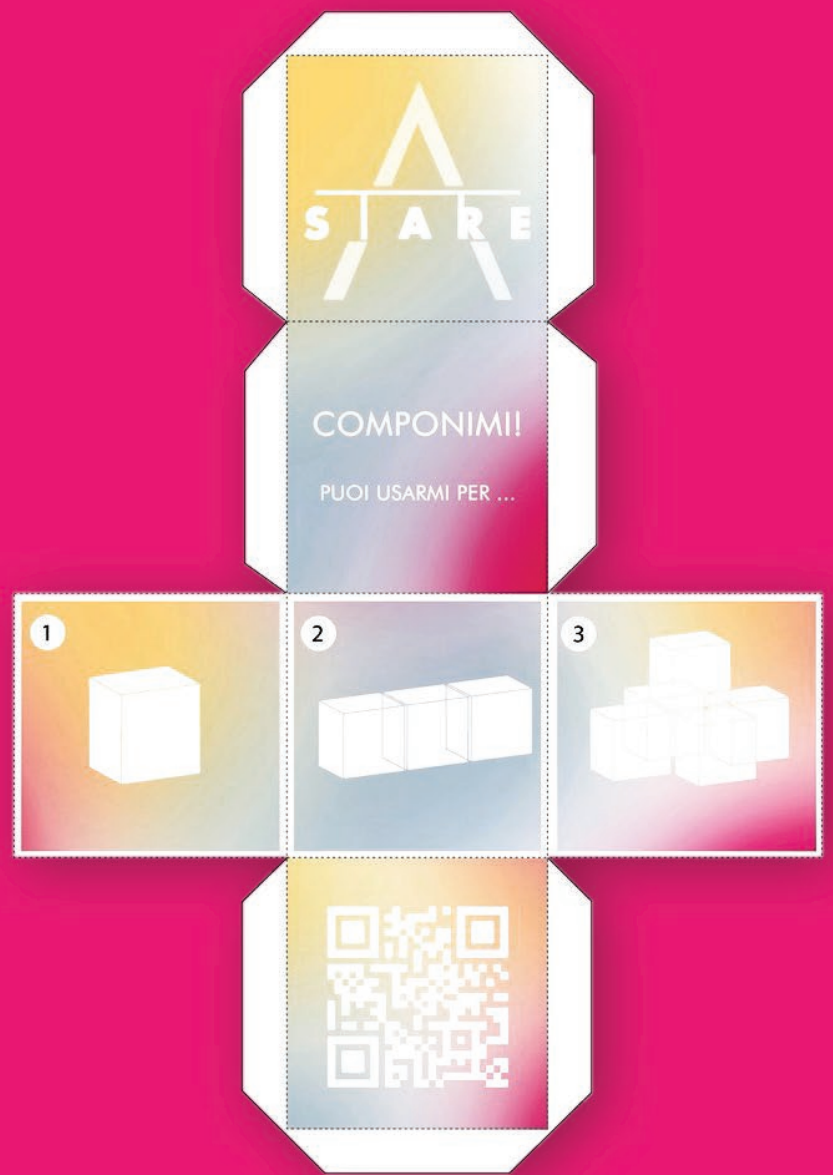


Figure 31. Planning model of A-Stare cube.



Figure 32. Student presenting the planning model of the cube during the event.

13. CULTURE AND TRADE IN THE CITY

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This tool was used by the students from Évora during the ideation phase of their project. The activity aims to find answers to the following questions:

- How can we recover the commercial dynamism that the square once had?
- How can we turn the square into a social meeting point through culture?

The starting point for dialogue with the community was the idea of exchange, symbolised by a chair that the residents place in the square as a venue for the exchange of goods with each other. The invitation was addressed to residents of the neighbourhood and those working in the cultural and creativity sector, as the students realised during the research phase that there were a significant number of people working in the sector living in the neighbourhood.

PROJECT PHASE

Engagement | Ideation

TARGET GROUP

Residents and those working in the cultural and creativity sector

DURATION

1-2 hours

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Note sheets (1 per participant) (see figure 33)
- Coloured pens
- Sticky notes

13.

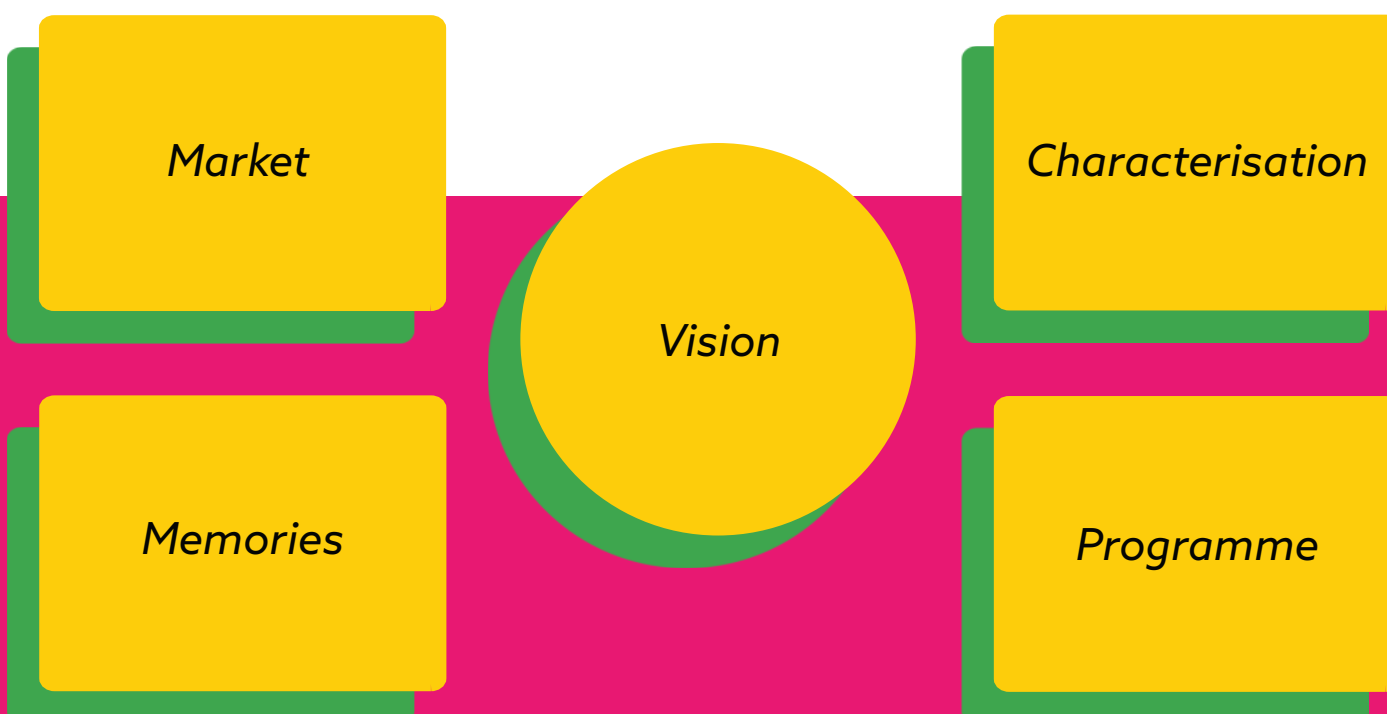


Figure 33.
Note sheet
distributed
among the
participants.

PROCEDURE

1. Participants were given note sheets with five topics:

- Characterisation: what characteristics does the square have that make it suitable for commercial and cultural practices?
- Memories: what vivid memories do people have of the square?
- Vision: what would people like the square to be like in the future?
- Market: if we wanted to bring the market back to the square, what should it be like?
- Programme: what cultural programme could take place in the square?

2. Participants answered the questions one at a time, writing or drawing on the note sheet.

3. A joint discussion followed. The most relevant ideas were written on sticky notes and displayed on a board.

RESULTS

This activity made it possible to strengthen relations with a group of residents who often meet in Largo do Chão das Covas and to draw the attention of professionals in the cultural and creative sector to the project. Some of these relationships were maintained throughout the process and were crucial to the implementation of the ideas. However, the fact that the participatory processes continued with a smaller number of people and focused on the idea of a community market, leaving aside other suggestions from the community, may have generated some frustration. When organising participatory processes with the community, it is important that citizens are involved in decision-making, not just the ideation process, and that there is an opportunity to further develop the ideas together.



Figures 34 and 35.
Conversation circle and
ideas shared during the activity.

• 14. FORCED RELATIONS

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

When brainstorming ideas, we often encounter blockages or hesitate to step out of our comfort zones. Forced Relations is a creativity and brainstorming methodology designed to push participants to think outside the box and shift their perspectives. By combining unrelated ideas, this technique encourages innovative thinking and the generation of new, creative solutions.

PROJECT PHASE

Ideation

TARGET GROUPS

Students

DURATION

1 hour

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Small everyday objects
- Cards with common images and actions (suggested minimum of 10)
- Sticky notes
- Markers and pens
- A whiteboard or online digital board

PROCEDURE


- Work in small groups (recommended 5 to 6 members).
- Individual brainstorming: write down at least five ideas related to a specific challenge, each idea on an individual sticky note. Then individual ideas are shared.
- Generate more ideas (at this stage, more is better): combine each of the individual ideas generated in the previous step with a card with a picture of a random object. Each group should generate 5 new ideas based on these forced relationships. They may be inspired by shape, colour, memories, function or other characteristics of the object. Ideas already generated could be combined using the inspiration provided by the objects and more creative ideas could be produced.
- In a larger group context, each small group shares their new ideas and places the sticky notes on an "idea tree" — a large sheet of paper or board on which ideas are gathered and posted.
- Students are then encouraged to mix and match ideas from the group to create new, innovative concepts, further expanding the idea tree.

14.

RESULTS

The result of this activity is a diverse collection of creative ideas that serve as inspiration or basis for the placemaking intervention the group is planning. The Forced Relations method also encourages students to explore new perspectives and collaborate more effectively. This exercise can foster a sense of teamwork as participants learn to value and build upon each other's ideas, leading to more innovative solutions.



 *Figure 36.
Examples of
inspiration
cards for
forcing
relations.*




Figure 37.
Filling in the
idea-tree.



 *Figure 38.
Idea-tree full
of new ideas.*

15. SCREENING IDEAS

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

After generating a wide array of creative ideas through the Forced Relations exercise, it is crucial to evaluate and refine these ideas to identify the most promising ones for the placemaking intervention. The objective of this activity is to categorise ideas based on their innovative quality, feasibility, and potential impact, ultimately selecting the best idea to move forward with.

PROJECT PHASE

Strategic Definition

TARGET GROUPS

Students

DURATION

30-45 minutes

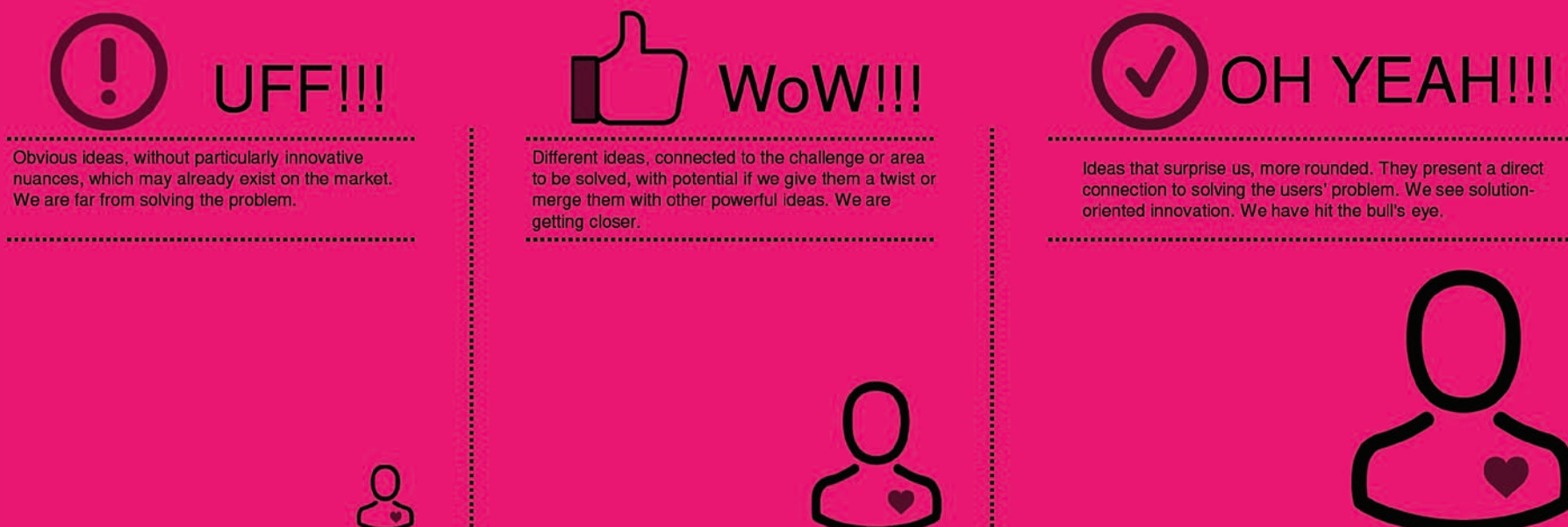
MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Printed templates for idea categorisation
- Sticky notes
- Cards with everyday images and actions
- Markers or pens
- Coloured stickers for voting
- Evaluation criteria charts (originality, feasibility, usefulness)
- Optional material: large sheets of paper or a whiteboard for organising ideas
- Sticky notes for additional comments and feedback

15.

Screening of ideas

📷 Figure 39. Idea Categorisation board template.



PROCEDURE

Idea Categorisation - Using the template provided (see figure 39), the group places each idea into one of three categories:

- **UFF:** Obvious ideas, with no particularly innovative qualities, which may already exist on the market. We are far from solving the problem.
- **WOW:** Different ideas, linked to the challenge or area to be solved, with potential if we give them a twist or merge them with other powerful ideas. We are getting closer.
- **OH YEAH!:** Ideas that surprise and are more rounded, offering a direct solution to the users' problem. This is solution-oriented innovation. We have hit the bullseye.

Evaluation

For each idea, evaluate its originality, feasibility, and usefulness using the evaluation criteria chart (see figure 40). Discuss each idea within the group to ensure a thorough assessment from multiple perspectives.

Selection

After categorising and evaluating ideas, the group discusses and chooses the most interesting and promising idea. This will provide the basis for project intervention.

RESULTS

The result of this activity is the well-organised selection of ideas categorised in accordance with their level of potential and innovation. The group gains a clear understanding of which ideas are most viable and impactful, leading to the selection of the best idea for the placemaking project. This process not only ensures the choice of a strong project idea but also enhances the team's critical thinking and collaborative decision-making skills.

User test

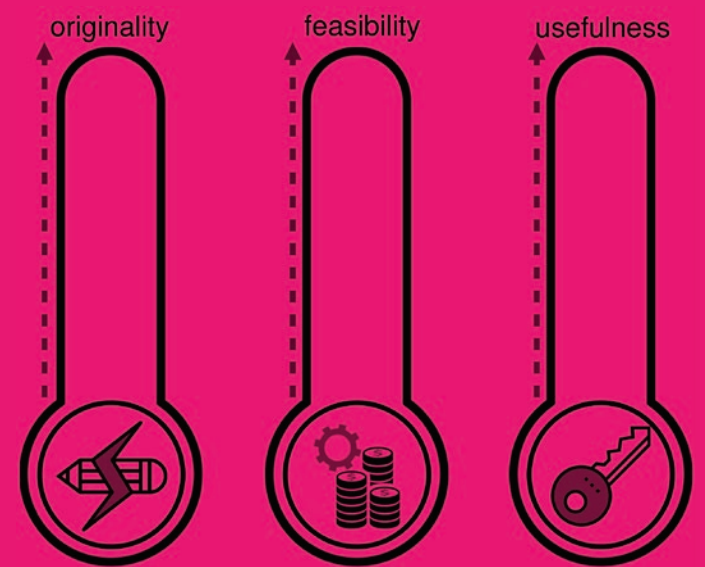
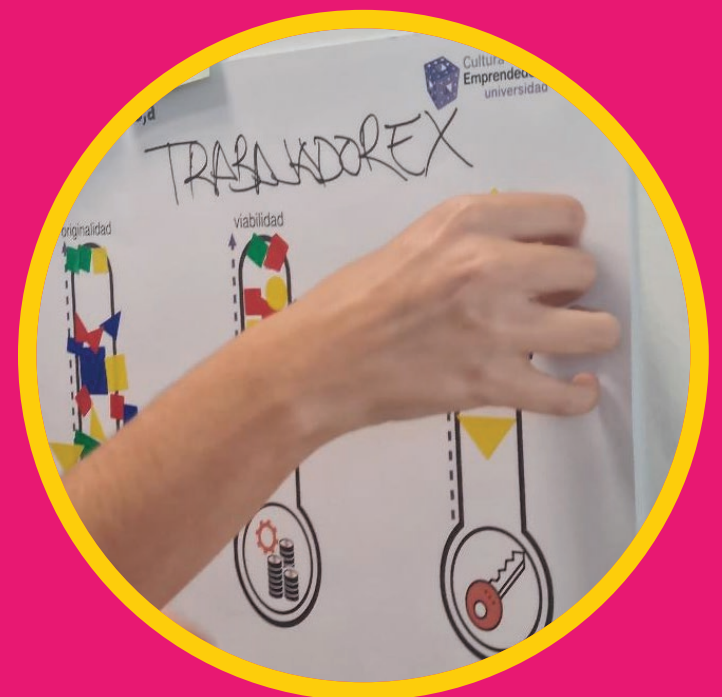


Figure 40. Evaluation sheet template.



Figures 41 and 42: Students sharing their ideas.

16. CREATIVE WORKSHOP – FURNITURE-MAKING

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This workshop was held during the Learning and Teaching Activity on Experience Design, which took place in Budapest, and in preparation for the Hungarian Team's multiplier event. During the workshop, the students designed and produced wooden benches to be placed in one of the stairwells of the Kelenföld City Centre where a film was shown during the multiplier event (see Film Clubs). The workshop took place under the guidance and supervision of a designer and a carpenter. Creating some easy-to-build furniture helps the students/ project team gain a sense of ownership and responsibility for the place they choose to interact with, and it can engage the local community with the project and the prototyping process. At the same time, gifting new street furniture to the community helps create a more inclusive environment.

PROJECT PHASE

Prototyping | Ideation | Engagement

TARGET GROUPS

>16 years; Youth local community; Project Team

DURATION

2 days

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Paper and pencils for drawing/drafting
- Ruler, compass and other drawing materials
- A tape measure
- Wooden planks (waste or new; cleaned and sanded)
- Work tables
- Carpentry materials and tools: drill, saw, sandpaper, screws, nails, etc
- Wood paint and brushes
- Safety equipment

You need someone who knows all about how to work in wood: a furniture-maker, carpenter or joiner.

16.



Figure 43. Students drawing their ideas for a bench.



Figure 44. Student painting the bench.



Figure 45. Result of the activity carried out in Budapest: four different benches to use at the Film Club sessions.

PROCEDURE

- Chose an open-air space or workshop close to the place of interest.
- Lay out the tables and materials for each group. Form groups of 3 to 4 members.
- Each group brainstorms ideas for a bench or chair for the place. Give them some information about the potential of the materials and implementation of their ideas in the place.
- The mentors should help each group complete their drawings by providing technical assistance.
- Each group should select some wooden planks and other items and start to assemble their bench or chair.
- Each group should receive technical assistance at the assembly stage, mainly in the handling and use of equipment and tools.
- Finally, each group can choose colours and paint their bench/chair.

RESULTS

The results of this activity can be very diverse due to its creative approach. Since it is also a group activity lasting more than a few hours, it allows people to engage in a more effective way. This activity fosters a positive collective mood and integrates different goals of a placemaking project: engagement with people and places, development of creative and co-design processes, and prototyping ideas and objects for collective use in public spaces. This methodology can be adapted for other practices, such as gardening or painting.

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RESOURCES

RESOURCES

More resources and toolkits can be accessed on these links:

Placemaking platforms:

- [Placemaking Chicago](#)
- [Better Block](#)
- [Project for Public Spaces](#)
- [City Repair](#)
- [Public Space Network](#)

Principles of Placemaking:

- [Placemaking: What if We Built Our Cities Around Places](#)
- [Placemaking in the Nordics](#)
- [Placemaking Toolkit: Guide to a community-driven, low-cost public space transformation](#)
- [Placemaking Toolkit \(City of Victoria\)](#)
- [Placemaking Toolkit: Designing People Places - A toolkit for communities and designers to design and implement public spaces and buildings in Palestine](#)

Placemaking activities

- [SPARK! Extension Creative Placemaking Toolkit](#)
- [Placemaking Toolkit - A Guide for REALTOR® Association Creation of Enduring Community Assets](#)
- [Urbex Toolkit: Explore your City with Fun](#)

Placemaking methodologies

- [Placemaking Chicago](#)

Urban commons

- [The Urban Commons Cookbook: Strategies and Insights for Creating and Maintaining Urban Commons](#)

Tactical urbanism

- [Tactical Urbanism Guide](#)



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