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Council of Europe

Building democratic participation in the City of Mostar

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***Summary of the presentation held on* 11 July - 17 July 2021**

**for the Citizens’ Assembly of Mostar**

**“Re-thinking Urban Public spaces into places for people”**

Two presentations have been provided for the Citizen’s Assembly of Mostar.

On day first on 11 July 2021, following an introduction about the activities of [Kallipolis](http://kallipolis.net/), organization based in Trieste and focused on sustainable urban development working in EU, Global South and Countries in Transition, an overview of projects dealing with the use of public spaces has been shared. Among others:

* “**[MostarTV](http://kallipolis.net/progetti/mostar-tv/)**[”](http://kallipolis.net/progetti/mostar-tv/), a project funded by the Anthonomus Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, implemented in Mostar in 2009-2010, which aimed at involving the young people of Mostar in a co-design activity for **re-thinking the urban public spaces** of Mostar through the **video-journalism storytelling approach.** The project developed: a video-journalism training for around 15 young people of Mostar; participatory meetings and Urban walks with youth and relevant stakeholders. A Video documentary **so called** [**«Shadows in the city of Light»**](https://vimeo.com/user14719298)was realized by participants of the video-journalism training attendantswhich analyses the use of public spaces in Mostar through interviews with experts, architects, urbanists and three personal stories.
* The “[**Playful Paradigm**](https://urbact.eu/playful-paradigm-0)” a Transfer Network funded by the European Programme [URBACT](https://urbact.eu/), implemented in 2018-2021 led by the Municipality of Udine (Italy) committed in **transferring the philosophy of PLAY** to other 7 Cities, that are Novigrad (HR), Katowice (PL), Klaipeda (LT), Cork (IRL), Viana do Castelo (PT), Esplugues de Llobregat (ES), Larissa (EE) to promote PLAY at city level to foster the **social inclusion**, **healthy lifestyles** & **Sustainability**, **Cultural mediation**, **place-making** & **economic prosperity**.
* The “[ENERGY CARE](http://kallipolis.net/progetti/energy-care/)” project, funded by the Interreg Italy and Slovenia Programme, implemented in 2017-2021, aimed at reducing the CO2 emissions, the energy consumption and the energy poverty within the Programme area, with a focus on the areas of City of Trieste (IT), Koper (SLO) and San Donà di Piave (IT) Municipalities.

On 17 July 2021 a follow-up on **Playful Paradigm** and **ENERGY CARE** was provided, concentrated the attention on the community engagement and the social innovation approach to re-think the use of public spaces to be transformed in places for the people where enjoying and feeling safe and welcome.

* **ENERGY CARE** promoted a sound participatory framework through a **social innovation methodology** for involving residents, local organisations, schools and relevant stakeholders in all the implementation project phases.

Three tips of participations have been promoted: **Tip 1** - To support citizens in changing their behaviour dealing with environment through the involvement of 30 Ambassadors, who were committed in changing their behaviour on water and energy use, waste recollection and mobility; **Tip2** - To organise Participatory processes for co-designing the project renewal such as the new bicycle road in San Donà and the ”Pedibus” in Koper; **Tip 3** - To enhance the capacity of people (especially those in need) to react to Climate Change challenges through tailored information events, trainings for residents and practitioners.

It was illustrated as a long-term participatory approach in a neighbourhood has brough also unexpected positive results for the local community, such as the renewal of a green urban area through residents involvement, funny-dancing events of cleanliness for residents to raise awareness about waste recollection and recycling, artistic site specific events.

* The project **Playful Paradigm**, among other activities, concentrated its attention on the potential expressed by play in re-thinking public spaces.

The Municipality of Udine, the Lead Partner. Project Partners has developed a Playful Policy approach aimed at transforming urban environments into great places to live. “An office of play” has been established inside the Municipality of Udine with a dedicated staff uncharged to coordinate all the play initiatives promoted at city level such as the Ludobus and Toy-library activities, organise the “play education” and the numerous playful events.

The City of Cork in transferring the good practice developed by Udine, has reflected on city public spaces promoting a city strategy so called “Let’s Play Cork” aimed at regenerating urban streets open for play, boosting play placemaking initiative, engaging with local communities by promoting the “Play Leaders” role and involving the most excluded people through play-based approaches.

**Final recommendations: “Call to Act for re-thinking and re- designing Public Spaces”**

A New Alliance between Local Authorities and Citizens is needed to re-think public spaces and transform them in places for the people, because the maintenance and cleanliness of Public Spaces is a co-responsibility shared between Citizens and Municipalities.

Considering the lesson learnt from the experiences illustrated above, some **hints and tips** could be drawn:

1. **Foster a sound engagement of citizens** through 3 tips of community and citizens involvement: 1. Promote the role of testimonials/community leaders/ambassadors/influencers to drive the change in the local communities, 2. Involve citizens in the urban changes affect them through community planning/participatory activities, 3. Organise an awareness campaign with tailored grass-root events able to disseminate important messages also to the unprivileged people.
2. **Boost the “Call to Action for Citizens”** by letting they propose and organise simple “grass-root initiatives” to re-use/re-live urban public spaces. Urban games and Play initiatives are a good starting point!
3. **Make test of changes in Public Spaces through “Placemaking” and “Tactical Urbanism”** experiences. Once co-designed a new use of a public space, an “interim” phase (for instance through the tactical urbanism) could facilitate the change and make opportunities of monitoring.
4. **Provide the permanent transformation of the public space once tested**. The tactical urbanism is not enough to upgrade a public space and concretely regenerate it. It’s needed to fix the experimentation phase through an urban requalification.

***Biography***

MostarTV

<https://vimeo.com/user14719298>

<http://kallipolis.net/progetti/mostar-tv/>

ENERGY CARE

<http://kallipolis.net/progetti/energy-care/>

<https://www.facebook.com/EnergyCareProject>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC0z5BHaj_c_YtlN8at-QMw>

Playful Paradigm

<https://urbact.eu/playful-paradigm-0>

<https://urbact.eu/files/playful-paradigm-final-product-interactive-pdf>

<https://urbact.eu/collection-playful-paradigm-toolkits>

<https://anchor.fm/playfulparadigm>

<https://www.facebook.com/PlayfulParadigm>

<https://twitter.com/PlayfulParadigm>