

RE-GEN JOURNAL #2

Public space regeneration through integrated urban sports' hubs for the participation of young citizen.

A quarterly amid learnings and study visits, understanding sport-based solutions

The second Quarterly Report captures and shares the latest developments, insights, and stories from across the Re-Gen cities network, covering the period from April to June 2024. This quarter has been particularly rich in learning opportunities, marked by a series of vibrant discussions and impactful collaborations that have brought together experts, city officials, and young citizens from across Europe.



Throughout this period, the Re-Gen network has hosted a variety of events, including masterclasses, webinars, study visits, and peer learning sessions. These gatherings have provided valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange and have fostered a deeper understanding of how urban sport initiatives and sport-based solutions can be leveraged to transform public spaces and engage communities. Each event has contributed to the growing body of knowledge within the network, offering practical insights and innovative

solutions that cities can adapt to their unique contexts. In this issue, we invite you to explore the dynamic world of Re-Gen. In this journal you will find inspiring stories from good practices shared by experts and snapshots by cities, where urban sport initiatives are not only reshaping public spaces but also redefining the future of urban living. Follow us, as we delve deeper into these transformative projects and discover how they are helping to build more inclusive, active and resilient communities across Europe.

MASTERCLASS INSIGHTS | SPORT-BASED SOLUTIONS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and Sport-based Solutions

Youth and the Future of Urban Regeneration

The first Re-Gen Masterclass, held on May 7, 2024, was a key event bringing together urban planners, policymakers, and community leaders to discuss the role of sport in urban regeneration and social inclusion.

This masterclass focused on the potential of sport-based solutions to promote social inclusion, healthier lifestyles, and vibrant public spaces. It also explored how sport, and in particular street sports, can drive sustainable urban development and foster a stronger sense of community across Europe.

Marco Buemi, Lead Partner Coordinator opened the masterclass by welcoming the speakers and the participants, setting the stage for insightful knowledge share and constructive discussions.

The event brought together the Re-Lead Expert, urban professionals, youths and sport experts, planners, researchers and policymakers to explore how creating active, inclusive spaces can empower youngsters, promote social cohesion, and drive sustainable urban development.

The Masterclass has been shared with the URBACT IAP network "U.R. Impact", as cities are tackling the challenge of public space regeneration and youth inclusion focusing on assessing the social impacts on generations.

The masterclass highlighted the growing recognition that young people are both future leaders and essential participants in shaping today's urban landscape. By engaging adolescents and young people in the design, co-creation and shared use of public spaces, cities can create environments that are more responsive to the needs of all citizens, particularly those young people struggling with increasing distress.

Masterclass speeches highlighted how sport, if thoughtfully integrated into urban policies, can act as a catalyst for community engagement, health promotion and social inclusion. A focus on young people and active, inclusive and sustainable spaces is seen as a key strategy for building resilient and vibrant cities across Europe, and can be addressed through the co-creation of Urban Sport Hubs, as anticipated by the Re-Gen project.

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Spanning 5,500 square feet, the parkour park is designed to cater to both beginners and advanced practitioners. Its layout promotes physical activity and encourages creative urban play, aligning with the city's goals to provide innovative and inclusive recreational spaces. This project is a result of the effective collaboration between parkour experts, landscape architects, local stakeholders, users

CENTENNIAL PARK
Parkour and more
City of Fort St. John's, British Columbia. 2019

https://issuu.com/pkv.design/docs/parkour_design_handbook
<https://parkourvisions.org/design>

URBACT Co-funded by the European Union Interreg

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The area includes an adventurous play trail that offers balance beams, climbing nets, a labyrinth and a ropes course, encouraging physical activity and socialization. It includes tunnels, giant stairs that culminate in a twenty meter long slide integrated into the relief of the playing surface. It serves as a recreational space and as a symbol of the region's transition from industrial gravitas to playful lightness.

Adventure Mountain
Beringen, Belgium.

prime example of how industrial sites can be repurposed into engaging community spaces that honor their historical significance while promoting health, recreation, and education

https://www.archdaily.com/796396/play-landscape-be-mine-carve-plus-omgeving?utm_medium=email&utm_source=ArchDailyList <https://www.area-arch.it/play-landscape-be-mine/>

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The Evolution of European Sport Policies.

Raffaella Lioce, the Lead Expert for the Re-Gen network, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the evolution of European sport policies, emphasizing the increasing importance of sport as a tool for social and urban development. She traced the development of these policies from the early days of the European Union, starting with the White Paper on Sport, which laid the groundwork for understanding sport as a significant element of public health and community building. The Lisbon Treaty, which came into force in 2009, marked a turning point by formally incorporating sport into the EU's policy framework. The Treaty recognized sport's unique role in fostering identity, promoting social cohesion, and supporting cultural diversity across Europe. The subsequent policy developments have expanded on this foundation, integrating sport into a wide array of EU initiatives focused on education, health, and urban regeneration. The Lead Expert highlighted also the "Healthylifestyle4All" initiative, which was central to the EU's current approach to sport and active living. This initiative promoted physical activity as a universal right, emphasizing its role in enhancing quality of life and inclusion and in reducing health disparities.

The campaign was particularly focused on reaching vulnerable and marginalized groups, ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, gender, or socioeconomic status, has access to the benefits of physical activity. This aligns with broader European goals of health equity, social inclusion, and economic resilience. Moreover, during this first session of the Masterclass a in depth reflection on the SHARE (Sport Hub: Alliance for Regional development in Europe) initiative and SHARE 2 Communities of Practices, allowed participants to discuss the integration of sport within the New European Bauhaus (NEB) policy, a forward-thinking framework that combines sustainability, inclusivity, ethics and aesthetics in urban and landscape. The NEB advocates for creating public spaces that are not only functional, but also beautiful and accessible to all. Sport, within this context, is seen as a powerful tool for bringing people together, fostering community spirit, and enhancing the livability of cities. The NEB's emphasis on co-creation and citizens involvement resonates strongly with the goals of the Re-Gen network, which seeks to place teens agers community needs and voices at the center of urban development and public space regeneration.

Sport is an essential part of European identity. EU policy promotes the role of sport for people, the community and the economy



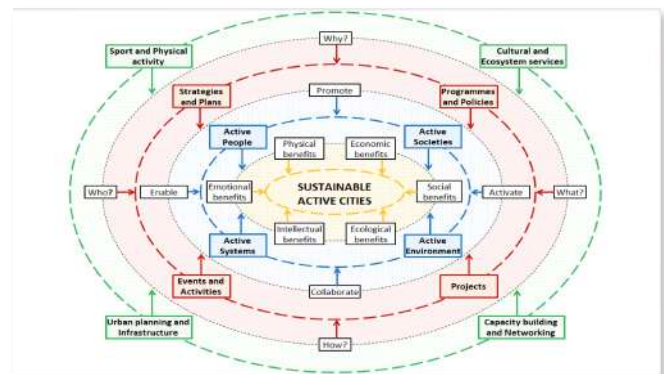
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Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and Sport-based Solutions

Active Cities Framework (I)

During the Masterclass, Hristo Dokov, a researcher at the University of Sofia, presented the "Active City Framework," a model developed through the HEPNESS project co-funded by the EU, that offers cities a strategic approach to fostering environments that encourage physical activity among their populations, especially youth. Dokov's presentation highlighted the necessity for public spaces to be inclusive, versatile, and responsive to the needs of young people, who are often at the forefront of urban change.

The Active City Framework is based on the idea that public spaces should serve multiple functions: they should be places of recreation, social interaction, and cultural expression. For young people –who increasingly face challenges related to mental health, social isolation, and physical inactivity– access to well-designed public spaces can significantly enhance their overall well-being. These spaces should not only accommodate traditional sports but also support informal and emerging activities such as parkour, skateboarding, street basketball, and urban dance, which are particularly popular among youth.



The Global Impact of Sport and Active Living

Sport and active living have evolved into global phenomena that significantly impact societal development.

As a tool for promoting health-enhancing physical activity, sport has a greater influence than any other social movement. It effectively engages diverse social groups, transmits values, develops personal skills, builds cooperative communities, and improves health and well-being.

In some cases, sport can make unique contributions where other initiatives have failed, building social capital and fostering community cohesion. Over recent decades, scientific evidence supporting the health benefits of physical activity has increased substantially. Research highlights physical activity as a fundamental health-promoting behavior with numerous positive effects, including reducing the risk of serious diseases, improving cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, preventing weight gain, enhancing cognitive function, and protecting brain health.

Regular physical activity is also widely recognized for reducing all-cause mortality rates and improving various health outcomes. The WHO has identified physical inactivity as the fourth leading global risk factor for mortality, contributing to more than 3 million deaths worldwide each year.

The Role of Physical Activity in Modern Society

Physical activity and active living have become central topics in research, with many studies highlighting their importance for health and well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines physical activity as "any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure." Health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) refers to any physical activity that benefits health and functional capacity without undue harm or risk, closely linking it to sports but with a broader focus on mass participation in everyday activities rather than elite performance.

Physical activity can take many forms, including walking, running, cycling, and various sports, whether at home, in the office, at the gym, or outdoors. The concept of active living is often understood as a lifestyle that reduces sedentary habits in favor of increased physical activity. Active living encompasses housework, gardening, playing with children, active travel (such as walking or cycling), active recreation (like exercise or dance), and participation in organized sports.

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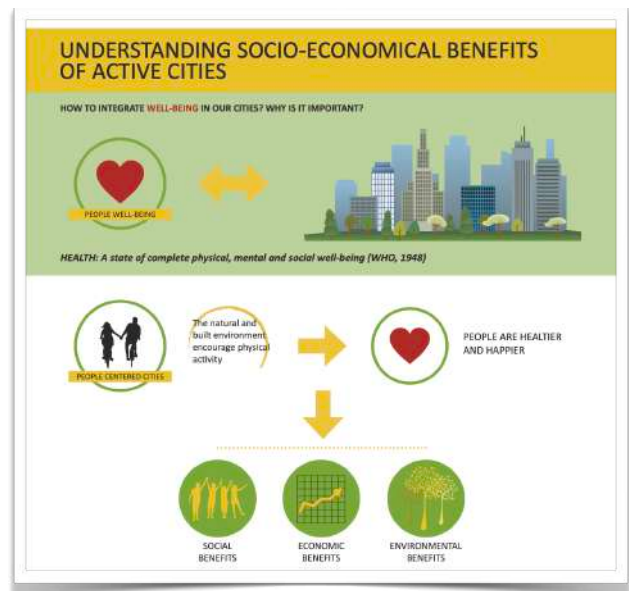
Challenges and Opportunities for Cities

Despite these proven benefits, global populations are becoming increasingly inactive. Factors such as the growing distance between homes, workplaces, and recreational areas, unsafe road conditions, and the decline in physical education in schools contribute to a sedentary lifestyle. These issues not only affect individual health but also have broader societal implications, including high healthcare costs, reduced economic productivity, and environmental degradation.

However, the benefits of an active population extend beyond individual health. Cities where residents engage in regular physical activity see improvements in economic performance, safety, environmental quality, and community cohesion. Urban design plays a crucial role in encouraging physical activity, and cities must reconsider their strategies to integrate sport and physical activity into various urban policies. Encouraging walking and cycling, for example, not only promotes physical health but also contributes to cleaner air and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

A Vision for the Future

Human welfare is not merely the absence of disease but a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. A sustainable city is one where residents enjoy a high quality of life without compromising the needs of future generations. Urban policies must prioritize the improvement of citizens' well-being, recognizing the key role of urban planning in this process. The WHO has long advocated for a crosscutting approach that combines environmental, health, economic, and social interests, enabling local communities to actively participate in policymaking. This holistic approach is reflected in the multi-functionality of green urban spaces and their ability to provide various ecosystem services. These spaces not only enhance individual health and environmental quality but also contribute to the social and economic vitality of cities. Urban planning must consider the local context and the potential impacts of planning decisions on the environment, society, and economy.



Physical activity plays a fundamental role in maintaining health and preventing non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory problems. It also has significant mental health benefits, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression, and delaying the onset of dementia. Despite these benefits, physical inactivity remains a global issue, exacerbated by urban environments that discourage active living.

The insights shared by Hristo Dokov during the Masterclass underscore the critical role of urban design and sport stakeholders in promoting active and healthy lifestyles. The Active City Framework provides a valuable blueprint for cities seeking to create environments that support physical activity, particularly for young people. By rethinking public spaces and integrating opportunities for diverse forms of physical activity, cities can enhance the well-being of their residents and foster more vibrant, resilient communities.

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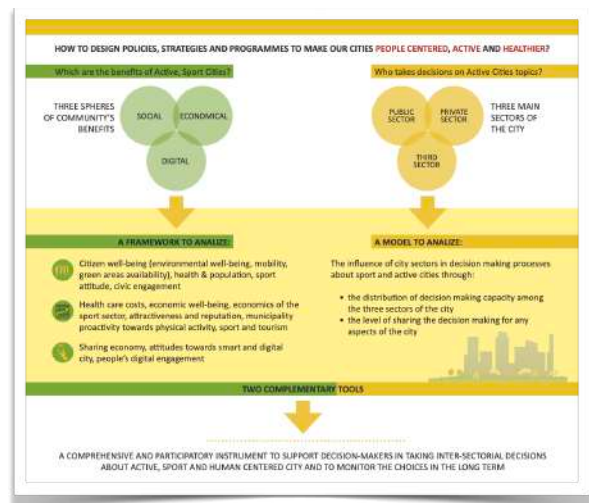
Active Cities Framework (II)

The Active City: A Blueprint for Healthy and Happy Living

As highlighted by Raffaella Lioce during the Masterclass, an active city is not just a vibrant and dynamic place to live but a healthier and happier one. Cities are complex ecosystems where numerous factors interact to influence the health and well-being of their citizens. They are rich social, cultural, and ecological environments where the majority of the world's population lives and works. The active cities perspective emphasizes the ecosystem approach to cities, and aims to reconnect people with nature within the built environment, offering citizens opportunities to enhance both their physical and mental well-being. Re-Gen, through its initiatives, advocates for a human-centered, youth-friendly approach in rethinking urban design and managing public spaces. The goal is to foster communities that are not only thriving and prosperous but also healthier and more resilient. Cities are encouraged to take action in transforming urban environments into more livable and healthy spaces for all, with a particular attention to underused and abandoned public spaces and to youngsters' demand for tailored spaces.

The Path to Systemic Change

Recognizing that systemic change in urban design will not happen overnight, Re-Gen promotes a strategic roadmap that builds on the successes of past projects like "Active Cities", "Hepness", and "Amelia". The roadmap starts with the smart and inclusive management of common spaces and open-air areas, laying the foundation for more sustainable and equitable urban environments. The shared vision supports the development of innovative solutions that improve the quality of life for all citizens, encouraging healthier, more productive, and resilient communities. Achieving this transformation requires cross-sectoral collaboration among diverse organizations, each rethinking its role within the urban ecosystem. This change is gradual but achievable, as cities integrate existing solutions, revise governance models, and improve the quality of life for their residents. The New Urban Agenda acknowledges the crucial role of public spaces in urban economies and socio-cultural innovation, further emphasizing the importance of thoughtful urban design.



The Role of Physical Activity in Urban Health

The way citizens produce, consume, commute, and interact within their urban environments directly impacts their health and quality of life. Public spaces need to be designed and managed with a human-centered approach that promotes a productive and healthy community. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed "Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health" to guide policymakers in understanding the relationship between physical activity and the prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). These guidelines emphasize the importance of physical activity for adults aged 18-64 and are relevant across various demographic factors. They highlight that physically active individuals have lower rates of all-cause mortality, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and several other conditions. Inactive individuals should start with small amounts of physical activity, gradually increasing their levels to reap the benefits. Despite the clear health benefits, people in cities are becoming increasingly inactive, partly due to urban design that discourages physical movement.

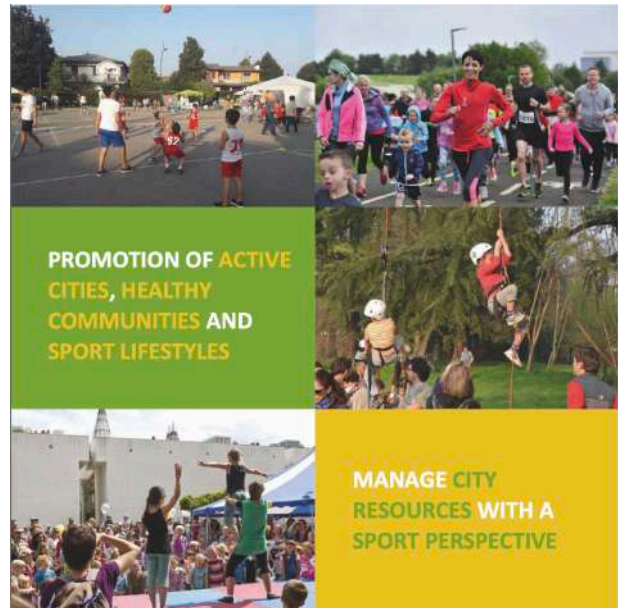
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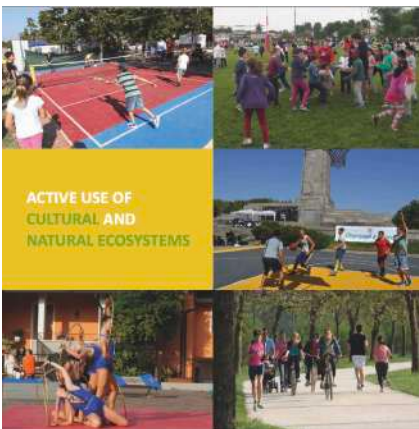
Rethinking Urban Strategies for a Healthier Future

Given that the built environment significantly influences how people move and stay active, cities must reconsider their strategies to integrate sports and physical activity into diverse urban policies. Encouraging walking and cycling not only promotes physical health but also contributes to cleaner air and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Human welfare is not merely the absence of disease but a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, as defined by the WHO.

A sustainable city is one where the population enjoys a high quality of life without passing on problems to future generations. Urban policies should focus on improving citizens' well-being, with urban planning playing a key role in achieving this goal. A holistic approach, which considers environmental, health-related, economic, and social interests, is essential. This approach must enable active community participation in policymaking and recognize the multi-functionality of green urban spaces, which provide essential ecosystem services that benefit individuals, society, and the territorial economy.



The Impact of Sedentary Lifestyles



Physical activity is crucial for preventing and reducing non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory problems. It also has a positive effect on mental health, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression, and delaying the onset of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. However, the global population is becoming more sedentary due to systematic and environmental factors that make daily life less active.

Examples include long distances between home, work, and recreational areas, unsafe road conditions, reduced physical activity in schools, and low-quality neighborhoods. A sedentary lifestyle is detrimental not only to individual health but also to society, leading to high healthcare costs, reduced economic productivity, and environmental degradation in car-centric cities.

The Benefits of Active Communities

Numerous studies have shown that when a city's population is physically active, it benefits individual health, society, the local economy, and the environment. Economic performance, safety, health, environmental quality, and community cohesion all improve when people are more active. By fostering an active population, cities can become healthier, more sustainable, and more resilient, ultimately improving the quality of life for all residents.

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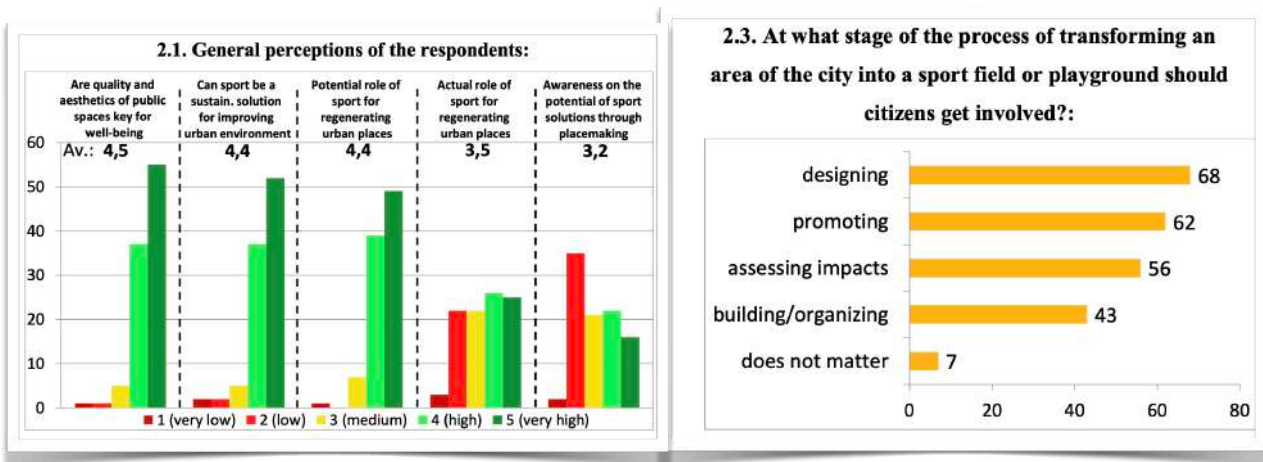
Listening to Stakeholders

The results of Survey with more than 100 respondents has been introduced, Hristo Dokov. The survey was part of comprehensive process to elaborate a joint position paper to conceptualize the basic needs for establishing a new Transnational Aesthetic Movement to improve active lifestyles and inclusive public spaces, in coherence with the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative, which sees physical activity as an important contribution to personal and community well-being. It also explains the importance of combining aesthetics with a multifunctional approach to public spaces for a healthy and active lifestyle. have been shared and it was clear people asks for beauty and welcome active public spaces.

City leaders, planners, architects, sports clubs, sports federations, civic and youth organizations took part in this transnational survey to share practices, propose ideas, and pilot test sport-based solutions and to advance inclusive placemaking and the active regeneration of public spaces for community heal. The survey was conducted through an online questionnaire designed to compile the most important issues, transform them into specific questions and bring in a concise way the quintessence of stakeholders’ notions, opinions, ideas, visions, etc. results of the survey are relevant to Re-Gen cities.

- ❖ Respondents recognize the potential of sport for well-being and urban transformation, but find that the general awareness and the actual role of sport are not in line with the potential;
- ❖ Local institutions and local communities are identified as key stakeholders/partners;
- ❖ Respondents believe that changes are more likely to be induced by small scale, low-cost activities and events than by investing in "hard" infrastructure;
- ❖ There are significant differences between countries in terms of major drivers and determinants of urban regeneration;
- ❖ Respondents are very keen on executing tactical urbanism and placemaking activities, yet they are generally worried by some potential obstacles.

Additionally, in this session of the masterclass speakers and participants discussed the importance of involving youth in the design process of these spaces. Through participatory planning and co-design, young people can contribute their ideas and perspectives, ensuring that the spaces are not only functional but also appealing and relevant to their lives. This approach not only creates better public spaces but also fosters a sense of ownership and community among young residents, encouraging them to take an active role in maintaining and improving their urban environment.



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An Array of Sport Based solutions: find inspiration.

During the Masterclass, the Lead Expert for the URBACT Re-Gen project delivered a compelling presentation on how cities can harness sport as a transformative tool for urban regeneration. The session, rich with examples and insights, explored the potential of sport to drive inclusivity, enhance community engagement, and improve the aesthetic appeal of urban spaces. Drawing from a comprehensive study conducted under the Erasmus+ AMELIA project, the Lead Expert showcased various sport-based urban regeneration initiatives from around Europe, illustrating how these practices can revitalize public spaces and engage young people.

One of the standout examples presented was Superkilen in Copenhagen, Denmark. This project successfully transformed a multicultural neighborhood into a vibrant public space where sport, art, and everyday life converge. Superkilen features skateparks and open courts, which have become dynamic hubs for local youth. This project exemplifies how large-scale urban planning can breathe new life into neglected areas, turning them into thriving community spaces that cater to diverse needs.

Following this, the presentation highlighted Berlin's Tempelhofer Feld as a remarkable example of citizen-driven urban planning. Once an airport, this vast area has been transformed into one of the city's largest public parks, offering extensive facilities for skateboarding, cycling, and other informal sports. The park's development, shaped by public referendums, underscores the power of community involvement in urban regeneration and serves as an inspiring model for other cities. Tempelhofer Feld stands out as a prime example of how disused spaces can be reimaged into vibrant urban hubs through active citizen participation.

The transformation of Martim Moniz Square in Lisbon, Portugal, was also featured as a prime example of street sport-oriented urban regeneration. Once an underused space, the square has been revitalized into a central hub for street sports like basketball and skateboarding. This project has not only encouraged active participation from the community but also fostered a strong sense of local identity. The square now serves as a vibrant meeting point for young people, demonstrating the power of sport to rejuvenate public spaces and foster social cohesion.

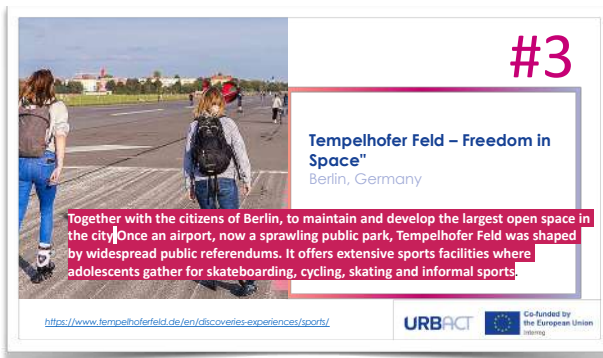


#1

Superkilen – A Cultural Mosaic"
Copenhagen, Denmark

<https://www.archdaily.com/286223/superkilen-topolek-l-bio-architects-superflex>

URBACT Co-funded by the European Union

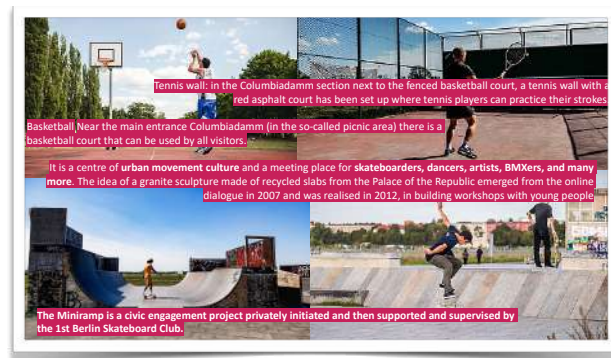
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Tempelhofer Feld – Freedom in Space"
Berlin, Germany

Together with the citizens of Berlin, to maintain and develop the largest open space in the city. Once an airport, now a sprawling public park, Tempelhofer Feld was shaped by widespread public referendums. It offers extensive sports facilities where adolescents gather for skateboarding, cycling, skating and informal sports.

<https://www.tempelhoferfeld.de/en/discoveies-experiences/sports/>

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In Lousada, Portugal, the development of a skate park and parkour zone with significant input from local youth was discussed as another impactful initiative. This project transformed an unused area into a lively space that has become a central gathering point for the community. It showcases how sport can foster intergenerational engagement and strengthen community ties, emphasizing the importance of involving young people in the planning and development process. The redevelopment of Rivesaltes Park in Paris, France, was also featured as a noteworthy project. This urban park was specifically designed to integrate street sports like BMX biking and urban gymnastics, catering to the recreational needs of younger residents. The park's design encourages youth participation and has become a symbol of how urban spaces can be creatively transformed to serve the needs of the community. The Masterclass further explored the concept of tactical urbanism—small-scale, temporary interventions that can lead to lasting change in urban environments. The Lead Expert highlighted projects such as the "Plug and Play" park in Ørestad, Denmark, and Adventure Mountain in Beringen, Belgium, as examples of how even modest urban interventions can significantly enhance the quality of life in a community. These projects demonstrate that small-scale initiatives, when thoughtfully designed and implemented, can have a profound impact on community well-being. The transformation of a disused schoolyard in Sassari, Italy, was another example discussed during the session. The "Portacolori" project, developed with input from students, parents, and teachers, turned a neglected green space into a vibrant, inclusive sports hub. This initiative underscores how small-scale interventions can generate a high impact, fostering community pride and ownership while promoting active living. The success of Adventure Mountain in Beringen, Belgium, was also discussed. This project involved the regeneration of a former mining site, which was repurposed into a recreational area complete with climbing nets, balance beams, and a ropes course. Adventure Mountain is a testament to how smaller cities can creatively reimagine industrial heritage sites into engaging recreational spaces for young people, blending history with modern needs. In Munich, Germany, Riem Park was highlighted as an example of how urban spaces can be designed to enhance local biodiversity while serving as a recreational haven. The park features a variety of sports facilities, including skateboarding areas and street basketball courts, making it a key recreational space for the community. This project demonstrates how environmental and recreational goals can be aligned to create sustainable, multi-functional urban spaces. Another European example shared was the Green Belt Sports Trail in Paris, France. As part of the city's efforts to integrate urban sports into public spaces, this trail includes new fitness sites and recreational amenities specifically designed for urban sports like parkour and skateboarding. The Green Belt Sports Trail, which is integral to the Paris 2024 Olympic plans, enhances the city's green spaces while providing access to various physical activities that cater to all ages, illustrating how sport can be integrated into broader urban development strategies. The Masterclass concluded with a focus on the importance of creativity, community involvement, and a willingness to experiment in urban regeneration efforts. The examples shared during the session offer practical inspiration for the Re-Gen network cities as they work to create inclusive, sport-centered environments that reflect the unique needs and opportunities of their local contexts. Whether through large-scale urban parks or small neighborhood projects, the principles highlighted during the Masterclass emphasize the potential for sport to transform urban landscapes into vibrant, active hubs that benefit everyone.



The examples good practices, carefully selected from the broader study conducted by R. Liocce and B. Testini, where 100+ good practices have been gathered and analyzed, to illustrate the potential of sport as a tool for urban regeneration. They highlight the importance of involving youth in the planning and development processes and showcase how cities, both large and small, can revitalize their public spaces to foster healthier, more active communities.

MASTERCLASS INSIGHTS | SPORT-BASED SOLUTIONS

Active Spaces and sport based solutions



Carla Magalhães from the City of Lousada presented a compelling case study on how sport has been successfully integrated into the town's urban policies through the Lousada Fitcity initiative.

This project, co-funded by the European Union, has transformed Lousada into a model for active living by creating accessible fitness trails sports stations throughout the town.

These facilities are designed to be inclusive, catering to people of all ages and abilities, including those with disabilities.

The Lousada Fitcity initiative is a prime example of how sport can be used as a tool for social inclusion and public health. The project was developed with extensive input from local residents, particularly young

people, ensuring that the facilities meet the needs of the community. The trails and sports stations are strategically located in public spaces, making them accessible and encouraging regular use by the entire community.

The initiative also includes a digital component, with an app that provides users with information and guidance on how to use the fitness trails and stations, further promoting engagement and participation.

Magalhães explained that the success of Lousada Fitcity lies in its community-centered approach.

The project was not just about building infrastructure; it was about creating a culture of physical activity and social interaction.

By involving the community in the planning and development process, the project has fostered a sense of ownership and pride among residents. This has led to higher levels of engagement and a more sustainable impact on public health and social cohesion.

Moreover, the Lousada experience demonstrates long-term benefits of investing in sport infrastructure. The facilities created through the Fitcity initiative are designed to be durable and low-maintenance, ensuring that they continue to serve the community for many years to come.

The project aligns with broader EU goals of promoting active, healthy lifestyles and reducing health disparities, making it a model that can be replicated in other cities across Europe.

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The Active Space Manifesto

Carla Rey of the University of Turin and Raffaella Lioce, the Re-Gen Lead Expert and AMELIA project coordinator, introduced the Manifesto for Active Spaces. This document, central to the AMELIA project (Aesthetic Movement to Enhance Sporty Lifestyles and Inclusive Active Public Spaces), lays out a vision for transforming urban areas into dynamic spaces that encourage physical activity, inclusivity, and community engagement. During the presentation, Rey and Lioce emphasized the pressing need for cities to evolve beyond their traditional roles as centers of commerce and residence. With urbanization continuing to rise, there's an urgent need to rethink how public spaces can support healthier lifestyles. The manifesto offers a framework for this transformation, advocating for cities that are not only functional but also vibrant, inclusive, and conducive to active living.

The Manifesto for Active Spaces is structured around ten core principles:

- ❖ **Inclusivity:** Designing spaces that are accessible and welcoming to everyone, regardless of age, ability, or background.
- ❖ **Flexibility:** Creating multifunctional spaces that can adapt to various activities and needs over time.
- ❖ **Community Engagement:** Involving local residents in the planning and development of public spaces to ensure they meet the community's needs.
- ❖ **Sustainability:** Prioritizing environmentally friendly materials and practices in the creation and maintenance of public spaces.
- ❖ **Safety:** Ensuring that all public spaces are safe for users at all times of the day and night.
- ❖ **Connectivity:** Enhancing the links between different urban spaces to encourage movement and interaction.
- ❖ **Aesthetics:** Designing spaces that are not only functional but also visually appealing, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among residents.
- ❖ **Cultural Sensitivity:** Respecting and reflecting the cultural heritage of the community in the design of public spaces.
- ❖ **Innovation:** Encouraging the use of new technologies and creative approaches in the development of active spaces.
- ❖ **Health and Well-being:** Placing the promotion of physical and mental health at the heart of urban design.

These ten principles serve as a blueprint for cities looking to create spaces that enhance the quality of life for their residents. The manifesto, which is part of the broader AMELIA project, is not just a set of guidelines but a call to action for urban planners, policymakers, and communities to work together in making cities more livable, active, and inclusive. For those interested in a deeper dive into these principles, the full manifesto is available here: <https://ameliaproject.eu/manifesto/>.

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT FOR ACTIVE PUBLIC SPACES

There is a rising demand for more liveable, better organized public spaces in urban areas and we, the Mayors, the citizens, the companies, the members of Associations and Civil Society Organizations, the Sport Associations want to collaborate together to ensure a city-wide impact of our placemaking initiatives. We are a network of active public space enthusiasts committed to creating better public spaces in European cities. We are individuals and organizations coming from all backgrounds, from builders to designers, from experts to citizens. We are passionate about creating amazing places, improving neighbourhoods and changing perceptions about the role of public spaces in our lives. Signing this Manifesto is a demonstration of commitment for improving the quality of life in our cities to access healthy, inclusive and connected public spaces where sport is the key factor for a healthy and active local community. As Mayors, Citizens, Companies, Members of Associations and Civil Society Organizations, members of Sport Associations we are committed to take into consideration:

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Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

Engaging Youth: The Key to Successful Urban Regeneration

A recurring theme throughout the masterclass was the critical importance of engaging young people in the planning and development of urban spaces. Youth are not just the beneficiaries of urban regeneration; they are essential partners in the process. By involving them in the co-design of public spaces, cities can create environments that are more likely to be used and valued by the community.

The masterclass showcased several examples of successful youth engagement, including the participatory design processes used in the DEDALUS project co funded by the EU. These initiatives demonstrated that when young people are given a voice in urban planning, the resulting spaces are more dynamic, inclusive, and reflective of the community's needs.

Moreover, engaging youth in this way helps to build their sense of ownership and responsibility towards

their urban environment, fostering a more active and engaged citizenry.

Involving youth in urban regeneration projects also has long-term benefits for cities. Young people who are engaged in the planning and development process are more likely to continue to be involved in their communities as they grow older.

This can lead to sustainable urban development, as engaged citizens are more likely to take care of urban public spaces where they live and advocate for further improvements.

Furthermore, engaging youth in urban regeneration can help to address some of the challenges that cities face today, such as social isolation, mental health issues, and physical inactivity. By creating spaces that are designed with the needs and interests of young people in mind, cities can encourage more active, healthy lifestyles and foster a greater sense of community among their residents.



MASTERCLASS INSIGHTS | SPORT-BASED SOLUTIONS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

A Youth-Centered Vision for Urban Future

The Re-Gen Masterclass provided a comprehensive look at the potential of sport to transform urban spaces, particularly for young people. It highlighted the importance of creating active, inclusive environments that encourage physical activity and foster social cohesion. The masterclass underscored that the future of urban regeneration lies in the hands of citizens and particularly young people and that by involving them in the process, cities can create healthier, more connected, and more sustainable communities.

As cities across Europe continue to grapple with the challenges of urbanization, climate change, and social inequality, the insights shared during this masterclass offer a roadmap for how sport can be harnessed to create better, more inclusive urban environments. The Re-Gen network will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting these ideas, helping to shape a brighter future for cities and their citizens, particularly the youngsters.

A Movement towards Active, Inclusive Cities



The masterclass concluded with a discussion on the need to build a movement for active, inclusive cities where sport plays a central role. This movement requires collaboration across sectors, bringing together cities, NGOs, community groups, cultural and sport associations, and citizens to create public spaces that are vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable. The speakers stressed that sport-based solutions should be seen not just as a way to promote physical health and wellbeing, but as a catalyst for broader social and economic benefits. By focusing on the needs of young people and involving them in the creation of these spaces, cities can ensure that they remain relevant and vibrant in the years to come and that cities are attractive for youths. The Re-Gen network cities are committed to driving this changing movement forward, for cities to become more active, inclusive, and resilient as well as more adolescents friendly, to align with global trends toward more sustainable and livable cities. As urban populations continue to grow, the demand for public spaces that support healthy, active lifestyles will only increase. By integrating sport into urban policies, Re-Gen cities can serve as models, demonstrating how active, inclusive public spaces can contribute to a higher quality of life for all residents.



WEBINAR INSIGHTS | TESTING ACTIONS

Testing and Prototyping Urban Sport-Based Solutions for Youth Community Empowerment

Synergies amid URBACT NETWORKS. The Re-Gen and the U.R. Impact project partners shared ideas to test youth centered solutions for public space regeneration.

The webinar was a unique opportunity to bring together two European URBACT networks, Re-Gen and U.R. Impact, that share a common goal: empowering youth and fostering urban regeneration. Re-Gen focuses on transforming neglected urban spaces into dynamic sports hubs, engaging adolescents in the co-creation of these spaces. On the other hand, U.R. Impact addresses the broader challenge of developing effective strategies for community empowerment during urban regeneration processes, with a strong emphasis on social impact and community involvement. Both networks prioritize the involvement of young people in the regeneration process, albeit through different approaches. Re-Gen emphasizes sport as a tool for social inclusion and urban renewal, while U.R. Impact focuses on evaluating various urban regeneration solutions in terms of their social impact, particularly on youth. This synergy allowed participants to exchange ideas for better strategies, enhancing the overall approach to urban regeneration in both networks.



NETWORKING, LEARNING, SHARING, DISCOVERING, GENERATING IDEAS

On May 23, 2024, an insightful webinar dedicated to "Testing Actions" was held, organized in collaboration with the U.R. Impact network. This online event was designed to explore the importance of testing urban regeneration actions before committing to large-scale implementation. The webinar brought together participants from both networks, focusing on the shared objective of creating cities that are more inclusive, vibrant, and responsive to the needs of young people. Cities Partners started introduced themselves and their challenges. It was a great opportunity to create positive relationships among cities professionals.

WEBINAR INSIGHTS | TESTING ACTIONS

Testing and Prototyping Urban Sport-Based Solutions for Youth Community Empowerment

The Concept of Testing Actions

The theoretical session was led by Liat Rogel, the Lead Expert of the U.R. Impact network, who introduced the concept of Testing. A Testing Action is a small-scale experiment aimed at evaluating the feasibility, impact, and relevance of an idea before its full integration into a city's Integrated Action Plan (IAP). These actions are intentionally limited in scope and duration, allowing cities to explore new concepts with minimal risk and investment. The primary goal of Testing Actions is to collect evidence on what works and what doesn't in real-world situations. This approach is particularly useful in urban regeneration, where stakes are high, and resources are often scarce. By conducting tests in a controlled, small-scale environment, cities can refine their strategies, gain public and political support, and avoid costly mistakes.

It was highlighted that Testing Actions are valuable not only for their successes but also for the lessons learned from failures. The nature of these actions allows cities to take risks and innovate, knowing that any setbacks will provide insights that can be used to improve future plans. This iterative process is essential for developing more agile and responsive urban policies. Essentially, a Testing Action is an experiment—an idea or concept, possibly tried in another city, that can be tested to assess its relevance, feasibility, and added value in different local contexts. These actions are constrained by time, scale, and space and are designed with the understanding that they might fail. However, this potential for failure is what makes them so valuable, as cities can learn from these tests, measure the outcomes, and decide whether to adapt, upscale, or reject the actions for inclusion in the Integrated Action Plan based on their findings.



WEBINAR INSIGHTS | TESTING ACTIONS

Testing and Prototyping Urban Sport-Based Solutions for Youth Community Empowerment

Practical Applications: Examples from the Networks

The webinar featured several practical examples of Testing Actions from both the Re-Gen and U.R. Impact networks. These examples illustrated how small, experimental actions can lead to significant insights and inform broader urban strategies. For instance, Re-Gen cities like Verona and Milan have initiated Testing Actions focused on engaging adolescents in the regeneration of public spaces. In Verona, a temporary street sport installation was tested in an underused urban area, allowing the city to assess the level of engagement and interest among local youngsters. This Testing Action provided valuable data on the types of street sports and activities that resonate with teenagers, informing the design of more permanent

urban sports hubs. Similarly, U.R. Impact cities are experimenting with various community-based initiatives.

Testing actions implemented in past URBACT networks and included in the URBACT Catalogue of Testing actions have been examined: one notable example comes from Tallinn, where a "Culture Bus" was introduced to bring cultural activities to neighborhoods lacking such opportunities. This Testing Action allowed the city to gauge public interest and refine its approach to cultural programming in underserved areas. The success of this initiative demonstrated the potential for similar actions to be scaled up across the city.

The Importance of Testing Before Investing

One of the key messages of the webinar was the importance of testing urban regeneration actions before making significant investments. It was pointed out that urban regeneration is a complex and often unpredictable process, influenced by a wide range of social, economic, and environmental factors. Testing Actions provide a way to navigate this complexity by offering a low-risk method to explore new ideas and approaches.

Testing Actions also play a crucial role in building support among stakeholders. By involving community members, local governments, and other stakeholders in the testing process, cities can foster a sense of

ownership and buy-in for the eventual implementation of the actions. This is particularly important in urban regeneration projects, where public support is often a critical factor in their success.

Moreover, Testing Actions can help cities identify and address potential challenges early in the planning process. For example, a Testing Action might reveal logistical issues, such as the need for better transportation links to a new urban sports hub, or social challenges, such as resistance from certain community groups. By addressing these challenges early on, cities can increase the likelihood of success when the action is scaled up.

Lessons Learned and Future Directions

The webinar concluded with a plenary session where participants from the Re-Gen and U.R. Impact networks shared their ideas, experiences and insights from the Testing Actions they are implementing. This exchange of ideas highlighted the versatility and effectiveness of Testing Actions as a tool for urban regeneration.

One of the key takeaways was the importance of adaptability in the Testing Actions process. Cities need to be prepared to iterate and adapt their actions based on the feedback and data collected during the testing phase. This flexibility is crucial for responding

to the dynamic nature of urban environments and the evolving needs of communities, particularly young people. The webinar also reinforced the value of collaboration between different cities and networks. By sharing their experiences and learning from each other, the cities involved in Re-Gen and U.R. Impact can enhance their strategies for creating more inclusive, active, and resilient urban spaces. This collaborative approach is not only beneficial for the cities themselves but also contributes to the broader goal of sustainable urban development across Europe.

CORE NETWORK MEETING INSIGHTS | DAUGAVPILS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

WORKSHOPS, STUDY VISITS, PEER LEARNING, TEAM BUILDING

From 31st May to 1st June, Daugavpils hosted the second core meeting of the international partners of the URBACT project "Public space regeneration through integrated urban sports hubs for the participation of young citizens" (Re-Gen). During the two days, the project partners worked in interactive networking sessions, testing different tools and methods to be used in the development of the integrated action plans, met with the URBACT local group members and visited the events and activities organized during the Daugavpils City Festival, in which the children and young people, the target group of the project, played an important role. They met with representatives of the Youth and Sports Department and also with youth, who told them about the daily work of the department, the youth and sports events organized and the involvement of young people in organizing this kind of events, as well as in volunteering. The international guests found interesting the concept of student councils and the youth worker who works actively with young people in the neighborhoods. During the visit, special attention was paid to the infrastructure of the Esplanade Rest Park and the "Lielais Stropu" lake area. After visiting the sites, the project partners recognized them as examples of good practice that could be replicated in other countries. The multifunctional use and the diverse leisure activities are what make these places unique and the city's infrastructure youth-friendly. On 2nd June, lead partner and lead expert visited the first stage of the youth sports, recreation, youth and music festival "Youth Summer", organized by the municipality and held in the square near the Daugavpils Olympic Centre. They considered this event as a good example of possible pilot activities within the Re-Gen project, which could be tested and, with a positive outcome, be organized annually in the future.



CORE NETWORK MEETING INSIGHTS | DAUGAVPILS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

Discovering the Urban Sport Park and Sport Facilities in Daugavpils

One of the highlights of the Daugavpils visit was the exploration of the city's extensive sports infrastructures, which plays a central role in its urban development strategy. The partners had the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the city's commitment to fostering an active lifestyle for all its residents, particularly the youth. The tour began with a visit to several key facilities managed by the Daugavpils Youth and Sports Department, including the Daugavpils Olympic Centre, the Speedway Stadium, and various sports complexes spread across the city. These facilities are more than just venues for sports; they are the heartbeat of Daugavpils' community life, representing the city's dedication to integrating sport into the daily fabric of urban living.

As the partners walked through the city's sports infrastructure, they were introduced to the **Esplanade Rest Park**, a standout feature of Daugavpils' urban landscape and a testament to the city's innovative approach to public space. Covering an area of four hectares, Esplanade Rest Park is the first multifunctional bike park in the Baltics, and it has become a focal point for active recreation in the city. The park is designed with various zones, including a

skatepark, an adventure trail, and cycling tracks that cater to different skill levels. This thoughtful design ensures that the park is accessible and engaging for people of all ages, from young children to professional athletes. The park's infrastructure reflects a commitment to creating inclusive urban spaces that cater to diverse needs. Whether it's the adrenaline-pumping excitement of the BMX biking track or the technical challenges of the skatepark, the Esplanade Rest Park offers something for everyone. The adventure trail, with its mix of natural and built elements, provides a safe yet stimulating environment where children and teenagers can develop their skills and confidence. The cycling tracks, adaptable for various types of bicycles, are carefully designed to challenge riders while ensuring safety, with clear visibility from all points of the track reducing the risk of collisions. The park is also a special venue for urban cultural and recreational events.

Walking through the park, the Re-Gen partners were able to observe how these spaces are not just recreational areas but also crucial social hubs where community life thrives.



CORE NETWORK MEETING INSIGHTS | DAUGAVPILS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

The park's multi-functionality allows it to host a variety of events and activities, making it a year-round destination for residents and visitors alike. It's a model of how urban spaces can be transformed into vibrant, active environments that promote health, well-being, and social interaction.

The visit to these facilities coincided with the Daugavpils City Festival, further highlighting the city's dedication to celebrating sport and community. The festival featured a series of sports and cultural events, that attracted participants from across the country. These events were spread throughout the city's squares, parks and infrastructure, showcasing the versatility and functionality of Daugavpils' facilities. Whether it was a high-energy street basketball game at one of the city's gyms or a more laid-back, yet competitive, beach volleyball match at Stropi Forest Park, the festival offered something for everyone. During the festival, cities squares took center stage with a series of street sport demonstrations and mini-tournaments, drawing large crowds of spectators and participants. The atmosphere was electric, with the

park buzzing with activity as skaters, bikers, and parkour enthusiasts showcased their skills. The events were designed to be inclusive, encouraging participation from all age groups and skill levels. This inclusivity is a key aspect of Daugavpils' approach to urban sports, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background or ability, has the opportunity to engage in physical activity.

The partners were particularly impressed by how these events were seamlessly integrated into the larger framework of the city festival, enhancing the visibility of the sports infrastructure while also promoting a healthy, active lifestyle. The festival provided a living example of how cities can use events to activate public spaces, drawing in diverse groups of people and fostering a sense of community. For the Re-Gen partners, this was a valuable lesson in the potential of sports events to serve as catalysts for urban regeneration, particularly when aligned with broader city-wide celebrations .



CORE NETWORK MEETING INSIGHTS | DAUGAVPILS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

Being Active: The Parade and Active Flash-Mob

As part of the City Festival, the Re-Gen partners have been involved in a dynamic flash mob and in the city parade that traversed the streets of Daugavpils. This experience was more than just a cultural immersion; it was a demonstration of how active participation can energize public spaces and foster a sense of community.

The flash mob, organized in collaboration with local schools and youth organizations, was a vibrant display of the city's commitment to youth engagement. It highlighted the power of sport and physical activity in bringing people together and energizing urban spaces.

The parade, which featured hundreds of young participants, was a testament to the city's inclusive approach to urban planning. By involving youth in such high-visibility events, Daugavpils not only celebrates its young citizens but also gives them a sense of ownership over their city. For the Re-Gen partners, this was a powerful example of how public events can be used to foster social cohesion and community pride. The discussions that followed focused on how similar activities could be integrated into the broader urban regeneration strategies of Re-Gen cities, using public events as platforms for promoting physical activity and social inclusion.



PEER LEARNING | in DAUGAVPILS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

Approaching the Re-Gen Hackathon: Co-Design and Participation

During the Daugavpils meeting, one of the most anticipated sessions was the workshop on the Re-Gen Hackathon, an initiative designed to involve young people directly in the co-design and development of urban sports hubs. This workshop was a key moment in the meeting, focusing on strategies for engaging youth in the planning process to ensure that the spaces created are truly reflective of their needs and aspirations. The Re-Gen has been approached and ideas for its organization have been shared. Hackathon can be approached as a testing action: a way to test interest and availability of youngster to participate. In this prospect, the

Hackathon is a cornerstone of the project's approach to urban regeneration. It will be implemented by Re-Gen cities as a platform for young people to work alongside architects, urban planners, and city officials in rethinking public spaces. This collaborative process emphasizes co-creation, where ideas are tested, refined, and implemented based on the input of the youth participants. The goal is not just to create functional spaces but to foster a sense of ownership and community among the young people involved. The workshop in Daugavpils provided the partners with practical insights into the hackathon process,

from ideation to implementation. It highlighted the importance of creating an environment where young people feel empowered to contribute their ideas and see them come to life. The discussions also touched on the challenges of engaging diverse groups of young people, including those from marginalized communities, and the strategies that can be employed to ensure broad participation. The workshop allowed partners to deepen the understanding of how the hackathon model could be adapted to their own cities, offering a powerful tool for engaging youth in urban regeneration.



PEER LEARNING | in DAUGAVPILS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

Tactical Urbanism and Urban Sport Event

Another key aspect of the peer learning sessions in Daugavpils was the exploration of tactical urbanism and its application within the Re-Gen network. Tactical urbanism refers to low-cost, temporary changes to the built environment aimed at improving local neighborhoods and public spaces. In the context of Re-Gen, these tactics are being used to test the feasibility of transforming underutilized areas into urban sports hubs.

The session on tactical urbanism was particularly relevant given the focus on creating adolescent-friendly spaces. These small-scale

interventions provide immediate benefits to the community while serving as prototypes for more permanent changes. Examples discussed included temporary street use for sports events, pop-up parks, and modular sports equipment that can be easily moved and reconfigured. These strategies allow cities to experiment with different configurations and uses of public space before committing to larger investments.

The partners shared their knowledge and experiences with tactical urbanism, discussing the successes and challenges they had encountered. For instance, some

cities had successfully used pop-up parks to engage youth in neglected areas, while others had faced resistance from local residents. These discussions were valuable in helping the partners understand how to adapt tactical urbanism strategies to their own contexts, particularly in engaging youth and promoting active lifestyles. The session underscored the importance of flexibility and adaptability in urban planning, highlighting how tactical urbanism can be a powerful tool for testing ideas and building support for more permanent changes.



PEER LEARNING | in DAUGAVPILS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

Learning from Youth Leaders and ULG Members

A significant part of the meeting was dedicated to learning from the local youth leaders and members of the Urban Local Group (ULG). These young leaders are at the forefront of Daugavpils' efforts to involve youth in urban development projects. They shared their experiences working on various initiatives, including the planning and execution of sports events, participation in city planning workshops, and their role in the Youth Council.

The insights provided by these youth leaders were invaluable, offering a glimpse into the challenges and rewards of youth

involvement in urban planning. They emphasized the importance of giving young people a voice in decision-making processes, noting that their involvement leads to more inclusive and responsive urban regeneration projects. The youth leaders also discussed the impact of their work on their personal development, highlighting how their participation in these initiatives had helped them develop leadership skills, build confidence, and foster a sense of responsibility toward their community.

For the Re-Gen partners, this session was a powerful reminder of

the importance of empowering young people to take an active role in their communities. By involving youth in decision-making, cities can ensure that their urban regeneration projects are not only successful but also sustainable in the long term. The partners discussed how they could incorporate similar youth leadership models in cities, recognizing the potential of young people to drive meaningful change in their communities.



PEER LEARNING | in DAUGAVPILS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

System Thinking: Learning by Playing

The final session of the Daugavpils meeting introduced participants to the concept of *system thinking*, emphasizing its application in understanding cities as complex ecosystems. This approach encourages a holistic view of urban environments, considering the interplay between infrastructure, social dynamics, and cultural, economic, and environmental factors. The session was interactive, utilizing role-playing exercises, games, and simulations to help participants grasp the intricacies of urban systems and the importance of fostering collaboration among stakeholders. In one of the exercises, participants assumed the roles of various city and neighborhood stakeholders, including representatives from schools, sports associations, businesses, citizens, development

agencies, and hotels. They were asked to find a point in space where they could maintain balance and equal distance from one another. A piece of string was then used to connect them, visually representing a perfectly balanced network. The participant representing the city then announced a plan to initiate a public space redevelopment project without effectively involving or informing the other stakeholders. This top-down approach created an imbalance, pulling the string in different directions and disrupting the delicate equilibrium of the physical, social, and political urban environment. This exercise highlighted the importance of recognizing that all stakeholders are part of a larger ecosystem, where the actions of one can impact the entire system, affecting organizations and citizens alike.

The session further emphasized that inclusive participation in decision-making is not just a right but a necessity. Collaborative efforts ensure that projects and investments are feasible, meet the real needs of the community, and maintain the integrity of the urban ecosystem. The participants, particularly those from the ULG, left the session with a renewed appreciation for the complexity of urban environments and the importance of taking a holistic, collaborative approach to urban planning and regeneration strategies. By experimenting with different urban planning strategies in a simulated environment, they could see firsthand how changes in one part of the system could ripple through the entire city, underscoring the need for integrated and sustainable



LOOKING FORWARDS | in DAUGAVPILS

Empowering Youth and Shaping Inclusive Cities through Active Spaces and sport based solutions

Insights and Future Directions

The Daugavpils meeting provided the Re-Gen partners with a wealth of insights and practical examples that they could take back to their own cities. From the vibrant street sport events to the interactive workshops on hackathon, tactic urbanism, co-design and system thinking, the meeting was a rich source of ideas and inspiration for how to engage youngsters in urban regeneration.

The key takeaway from the meeting was the importance of involving young people at every stage of the urban regeneration process. Whether through participatory planning, tactical urbanism, or leadership development, the active involvement of youth is crucial for creating cities that are vibrant, inclusive, and resilient. The Daugavpils meeting highlighted the potential of sport as a tool for social inclusion and urban renewal, demonstrating how well-designed public spaces can transform communities and improve the quality of life for all residents.

As the Re-Gen network moves forward, the lessons learned in Daugavpils will play a critical role in shaping the future of urban regeneration in the partner cities. By continuing to prioritize youth engagement and collaboration, the Re-Gen partners are well-positioned to create cities that are not only more livable but also more responsive to the needs and aspirations of their young citizens.



LATEST NEWS

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN Re-Gen CITIES

VERONA WHAT IF STREET SPORTS MEET YOUNGSTERS NEEDS IN PUBLIC SPACES



What if street sports could be the answer to meeting the socialization and recreational needs of young people in Verona's public spaces? This idea is being put to the test in the city's latest initiative under the Re-Gen project, which aims to explore how street sports can be a catalyst for both inclusion and urban regeneration. Understanding that street sports naturally appeal to teens, Verona is examining how these activities can transform underutilized public areas into lively, youth-centered spaces. Instead of immediately investing in infrastructure, the city is taking a thoughtful approach by organizing bootcamps to gauge the level of interest among young people. The "Sport & The City" events, held on April 11 and 15 at IC12 Manzoni in Golosine and IC10 Meneghetti in Borgo Roma Est, were the first steps in this exploration. These events brought students face-to-face with street sports like skateboarding, basketball, and parkour, supported by local groups such as Skatepark Galliano, Buster Basket, and Parkour Verona Asd. After an introduction to the Re-Gen project, students eagerly participated, transforming school

courtyards into temporary sports arenas. These events serve as a testing ground to see if street sports can effectively meet the social and recreational needs of Verona's youth. The enthusiastic response from both the youngsters and local sports associations suggests that this approach holds great promise. Following the success of these initial events, the momentum continued with another "Sport & The City" day on May 10 at IC11 Mazza in Borgo Roma Ovest. These events are not just about sports; they also highlight the potential of tactical urbanism—cost-effective, reversible changes that are driven by the community—to create engaging public spaces that truly resonate with young people. Verona is now beginning to plan for the future, seeking the necessary resources to support further integration of street sports into public spaces. By involving young people and local associations from the outset, the city is ensuring that any investments are directly aligned with the needs and interests of the community. The question now is, what if street sports really can meet the needs of youngsters in public spaces? Verona's experiment could provide the answer, paving the way for a new approach to urban planning that prioritizes the voices of its youngest residents.

VERONA ULG



On May 24, the Municipality of Verona, alongside the Urban Local Group (ULG), took further strides by presenting the Re-Gen project to a group of selected students from the Luigi Einaudi High School. These students, who serve as class representatives, were introduced to the "Urban Factory" workshops on tactical urbanism, which will begin in the 2024/2025 school year. These workshops are designed to empower students by involving them directly in the planning and transformation of their urban spaces, encouraging them to play an active role in shaping their city's future. In addition, the ULG successfully launched the "Urban Walks" initiative, which will be taking place in the southern districts of Verona this October. These walks are planned to

engage the community in exploring and discussing the potential of urban regeneration in their neighborhoods. This initiative is an open invitation to all residents to participate in shaping the conversation about making Verona's neighborhoods more vibrant, inclusive, and youth-friendly.

LATEST NEWS

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN Re-Gen CITIES

DOBRICH TESTING ACTION

WHAT IF Regenerating Public Spaces Through Youth and Sports Participation

Dobrich is actively testing how youth participation and sports associations can drive the regeneration of public spaces. The recent sporting event on 15 June 2024, organized by the Municipality of Dobrich with the support of the local Basketball Club Unstoppable, served as a key initiative in this effort. The event attracted significant interest from young people, who took part in various competitive and team games such as street basketball. The event, which doubled as a celebration of the end of the school year, was an opportunity for students aged 10 to 18 to engage in fun and meaningful activities. Held in an area known locally as "The Apple," an inter-block space near several schools, the event was more than just a sports day—it was a testing ground for involving youth in the revitalization of this neglected public space. The area, included as a pilot site under the RE-GEN project (funded by the URBACT IV Program 2021-2027), aims to transform abandoned spaces into vibrant urban centers through sports. During the event, students were encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions for how the space could be redeveloped. By scanning a QR code, participants contributed to an online questionnaire, providing insights into the types of activities and events they would like to see in this area. This direct engagement is crucial as it ensures that the regeneration of the space reflects the needs and interests of the local community, particularly its younger members. Dobrich is not just observing the impact of these activities but is also actively planning the integration of sports into more public spaces. The municipality, in collaboration with sports associations, cultural organizations, and schools, is assessing the outcomes of these events to guide future development. They recognize that sports can be a powerful tool for social inclusion and urban regeneration, and are committed to expanding these initiatives across the city. Moreover, Dobrich has already begun to plan and seek the necessary resources to support investments in sports equipment and infrastructure. By involving young people and local associations in the planning process, the city aims to create sustainable and inclusive urban spaces that foster community engagement and well-being. This approach not only revitalizes neglected areas but also ensures that public spaces meet the evolving needs of the community.

Watch a short video of the sporting event here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oyh30FjeR5k>



LATEST NEWS

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN Re-Gen CITIES

MILANO ULG

As June unfolds, Milan's Urban Local Group (ULG) is working tirelessly to organize the upcoming inclusive sport event, set to take place in the vibrant San Siro district this July. The SUN SIRO sport event promises to transform the neighborhood into a dynamic hub of sports and community activities, with a special focus on engaging the district's adolescents. In the lead-up to the event, the ULG has been collaborating closely with local sports and cultural associations, neighborhood committees, and residents. The goal is to create a sport open event that not only offers a variety of street tournaments and sports activities—such as street soccer, ping pong, capoeira, boxing, and athletics—but also revitalizes public spaces, making them safer and more attractive for everyone. The SUN SIRO event is envisioned as more than just a celebration of sport. It's an experiment in using physical activity as a means of social inclusion and regeneration. By bringing people together in the public squares of San Siro, the ULG hopes to demonstrate how sports can breathe new life into urban spaces, turning them into welcoming and vibrant areas for all. With just weeks to go, the preparations are in full swing. The team is paying particular attention to ensuring that the festival addresses gender equality, the specific needs of adolescents, and the diverse interests of the community. Through these efforts, Milan's ULG aims to create an inclusive environment where sports serve as a powerful tool for community building and social cohesion. As the countdown to July begins, anticipation is growing in San Siro. The open sport event is set to be a highlight of the summer, showcasing how the power of sport can transform urban life and foster stronger, safer communities.



LEZHA ULG



On May 2, 2014, the city of Lezhë took a significant step in urban regeneration with the establishment of the URBACT Local Group (ULG) under the Re-Gen project. This meeting marked the beginning of a collaborative effort to rejuvenate public spaces by engaging the youth of the city in meaningful ways. Representatives from various sectors, including urban planning, sports, and youth organizations, came together with young people to discuss how to make Lezhë more youth-friendly. The discussions highlighted the importance of tailoring public spaces to meet the needs of young people, particularly those aged 11 and up, who are the primary focus of the Re-Gen project. Participants offered valuable insights into how existing

spaces could be repurposed or improved to better serve the youth. Notably, the need for more outdoor facilities and the conversion of indoor spaces for sports like skating and martial arts were among the key suggestions. The ULG will play a crucial role in driving these initiatives forward, ensuring that the voices of young people are central to the urban regeneration efforts in Lezhë. This meeting sets the stage for ongoing collaboration aimed at creating a vibrant, inclusive environment where the youth can thrive.

LATEST NEWS

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN Re-Gen CITIES

PULA ULG

The second URBACT Local Group (ULG) meeting for the Re-Gen project took place at the Coworking Entrepreneurial Center in Pula. The Re-Gen project, as part of the broader URBACT initiative, aims to develop an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) to transform abandoned or unused public spaces into vibrant sports hubs where young people can engage in recreational activities.

Antonija Babić, Head of the Department for Development Policies and European Affairs, opened the meeting by expressing gratitude for the strong engagement shown by all stakeholders. Alongside the ULG project manager and coordinator for the City of Pula-Pola, youth policy expert Marko Kovačić led the session. After a brief recap of the previous meeting, participants engaged in a constructive discussion on the challenges and potential activities that could be implemented as part of the project.

The meeting was crucial in defining the project's vision and outlining the integration strategy. The ULG, composed of representatives from local schools, sports associations, and city departments, emphasized the importance of collaboration in developing a sustainable and impactful plan. This cooperative approach is key to ensuring that the Re-Gen project meets its objectives and creates lasting benefits for the community.



FESTIVAL OF EUROPE

Verona Sud:
la rigenerazione
urbana inizia dai
giovani

8 Maggio - h 17
Centro Link - Borgo Roma

Presentazione del progetto ReGen - vincitore del programma europeo URBACT

Relatori:
Giuseppe Baratta Dirigente del Comune di Verona, politiche giovanili
Marco Bueini Coordinatore del progetto Re-Gen

URBACT
EUROPE DIRECT

Between April 27 and May 12, 2024, Verona celebrated the annual "Verona Europa" festival, a vibrant series of meetings, events, performances, and workshops aimed at fostering European culture and citizenship. During this festival, the URBACT Re-Gen project was prominently presented.

The presentation held on 8th May 2024 attracted a diverse audience eager to learn about how the Re-Gen project is contributing to the regeneration of urban spaces in Verona, particularly by engaging young people and incorporating innovative approaches to urban planning.

WHAT'S NEXT

TESTING and PLANNING ACTIONS

URBAN WALKS MAPPING SPACES



Re-Gen cities are currently planning a series of urban walks with local stakeholders and teenagers. These walks aim to explore and map key areas of the city, discussing on-site ideas for regeneration through sport, green spaces, and gender inclusion. The Urbact Local Groups (ULGs) are actively listening to the voices of young residents, using these walks to test this interactive approach as a mechanism for civic participation and co-design. This initiative seeks to empower teenagers by involving them directly in the future planning and revitalization of their urban environments.

URBAN FABRIC



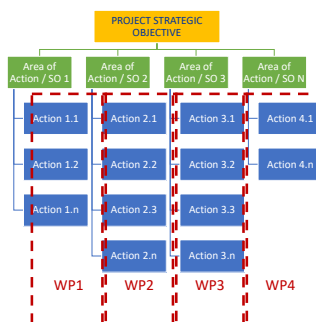
In some of Re-Gen cities plans are underway to launch Urban Fabric workshops. The co-construction labs will involve groups of teenagers in the creation of small urban equipments for street sports. Guided by expert artisans, designers and sport experts in a secure setting, the participants will design and build elements that promote safe and inclusive street sports, using recycled materials where possible. This initiative not only fosters practical skills but also strengthens community ties and supports sustainable urban regeneration.

STREET SPORT FESTIVALS and BOOTCAMPS



Re-Gen Cities, are implementing Street Sport Events and Bootcamps to test sport-based regeneration programs. These events aim to test the effectiveness of sports as a tool for promoting inclusion, participation, and urban regeneration. The key question driving these initiatives is: What if street sports were integrated into public space regeneration to better meet the needs of young people? By exploring this idea, the Re-Gen cities hope to create vibrant, inclusive urban environments that resonate with the youth and foster community engagement.

ACTION PLANNING OVERALL LOGIC



As Re-Gen cities continue to test sport-based solutions to enhance youth participation, tackle social challenges, and address neglected public spaces, they are also shaping Integrated Action Plans. Each city is defining its unique overall logic to guide future actions, focusing on specific goals or intervention areas. These plans aim to ensure the quality of public spaces, to create urban sport hubs, and contribute to build active and healthy cities. Through tailored strategies, Re-Gen cities are committed to fostering environments where youth can thrive and public spaces can be revitalized for all.

WHAT'S NEXT

TESTING and PLANNING ACTIONS

TOWARDS NEXT MASTERCLASS ! 2023.07.09 | THE PLANNING TOOLS

On July 9, the next Re-Gen masterclass will focus on developing a comprehensive Action Plan. While the participatory process is ongoing and will continue to evolve, cities and experts are preparing to systematize actions and tasks into an integrated plan that includes a thorough analysis of resources and means. To ensure the plan's coherence and effectiveness, the Re-Gen Planning Tool—already introduced to some ULG coordinators—will be presented to the entire partnership during this session.

Following the masterclass, ongoing support will be provided through the Virtual One Stop Shop, with bi-weekly check-ins to assist cities in refining and implementing their plans.

The HACKATHON: a challenge for teens to develop ideas of sport-based regeneration

Re-Gen cities, in collaboration with Urban Local Groups (ULGs) experts and mentors, are gearing up to organize an innovative urban hackathon. This event will see young participants, guided by mentors and tutors, competing to propose creative ideas for the regeneration of public spaces through sport. The focus will be on environmental sustainability, gender equality, inclusion, and digitalization. The hackathon promises to generate a wealth of innovative ideas, which will be evaluated and considered for future city plans, not just by local administrations but also by community organizations. This event goes beyond a simple competition—it's a powerful tool for civic participation, learning, and the development of essential skills among the youth.



CREDITS

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