URBEX

HANDBOOK OF URBAN EXPLORATION FOR YOUTHS

Aims and audience of this text

This text is directed at youth workers, educators and civil servants who work with youths and / or in disadvantaged urban contexts in processes of social inclusion, empowerment, contrast to school drop-out etc. It aims at providing ideas and tools to employ spatial exploration methods with young people. The method targets in particular youths at risk of exclusion (YARE) or living in disadvantaged contexts. The handbook draws on the field experiences of the organisations partnering in the Erasmus+ project UrbEX II, including the previous project UrbEX (2018), and aims at supporting the establishment of a network and a platform dedicated to Urban Exploration as an educational tool. The overall objective is to connect and provide tools to different organisations and individuals who share an interest in this innovative field of action/research. Its content will be tested during the local labs in five countries promoted by the EU project in the five partner cities, and published as an Open Educational resource on the UrbEX project platform. The handbook will be complemented by a toolkit and a final compendium of the local labs delivered as second and third project results.

In the following pages you find the results of pooling ideas and methods for urban exploration coming from the experiences of the five organisations partnering in the UrbEX Erasmus+ project. They draw on different backgrounds in education, urbanism, social work, participatory practice, art and design. This handbook is structured in three sections. The first introduces the idea of urban exploration as an educational method and proposes a few pillars for the UrbEX approach. The second examines in five chapters the essential steps necessary to realise an educational project of urban exploration with youth. This section is conceived as a set of questions to be addressed step by step, and is completed by examples of good practices, methods and resources. The third proposes a collection of tools and exercises for designing, facilitating and evaluating urban exploration in different moments of the process. They are presented in a synthetic form, with simple instructions to be realised and indications about purpose, timing and materials required.

Index

SECTION 03
Tools and exercises
for Urban Exploration

SECTION 01
The neighbourhood as a learning experience

The basic assumption of **UrbEX** is that urban space, and in particular the local neighbourhood dimension, can be approached as an educational environment.

"Street school" in common language is synonymous for the rough experience of struggle for life as the opposite of the favourable experience of scholarization and protected education. The street is often associated with school-dropping, marginality, if not violence and illegality. UrbEX challenges this idea, to propose a more positive vision in which urban space is acknowledged as an active educational context.

Urban public space is a rich repository of experience and memories, an agora for social life and an open library of knowledge and practices. Far from being just a neutral field containing social and economic action, the neighbourhood is an active subject strongly determining life conditions and growth opportunities. It is a complex social ecosystem entrenching multiple relations of human life that develop among individuals and with places, institutions and infrastructures.

The neighbourhood dimension affects the way we perceive ourselves, interact with others, learn, communicate, and position ourselves within local society. It is an essential element influencing how we grow and integrate within a community, and can result in an important factor of disadvantage, exclusion or segregation for fragile subjects.

Exploring the spatial extension and the cultural significance of a neighbourhood is the first step into understanding, appropriating, rethinking, and, why not, changing its nature and potential.

1.1
An urbanising world

It is a common trope that we live in an increasingly urban world. This doesn't mean only that an increasing percentage of the world's population lives in cities, but also that urban lifestyles and consumption increasingly impact the planetary environment with no distinction between urban and non-urban areas. The scenario is complicated by the growing effects of migration and displacements due to wars, economic crises and climate change. Moreover, digital technologies and media are connecting and wrapping the planet in a net of relations and behaviours that transform radically the way we are nested within the local dimension.

What means and what counts living in one neighbourhood rather than another is assuming new and opposite significations: on one side digital connectivity opens up opportunities for establishing new mediated relations and to expand community beyond physical proximity; on the other, poverty and segregation concentrate in disadvantaged areas, favouring exploitation and reproducing inequalities.

Extremely polarised conditions between flourishing and decaying territories are growing side-by-side, increasingly overlapping, conflicting, often growing in parasitic relationships. The British geographer Stephen Graham connotated this dynamic with the term "splintering Urbanism", noticing the increasingly fragmented and dishomogeneous patterns of urban expansion often coexisting in physical proximity.

One of the revealing indicators of inequality is the difference between those for whom living in a neighbourhood rather than another is a choice and a status - granted by economic privileges - and those whose association with a place is an accident, if not an inescapable condition.

As a matter of fact, for youths at risk of exclusion often the neighbourhood represents a limitation or an impediment. Identification to a group or territory can be a strong factor in developing personal identities, but may also become an obstacle to integrate in society at large, pulling back disadvantaged subjects into segregated contexts, limiting social mobility as well as the physical capacity to move towards the city. Living in deprived zones often marks belonging to a community or a place as a stigma.

How do we define a neighbourhood, indeed? Actually this term identifies a wide range of spatial situations without a standard and clear normative definition. Neighbourhoods rarely correspond to administrative units or districts. They are generally plastic identities that change according to the perception of the people, the evolution of the social and economical context and the spatial development at city level.

Neighbourhoods are social constructs, often very depending on personal and community interpretation. Moreover, the physical constraints binding individuals to locations are increasingly smoothed by communication technologies and mobility infrastructures, while factors like tourism, global commerce or even migration trends contribute to reshuffling local identities.

To mark the identity of a neighbourhood is not very much its physical extension or administrative boundaries but rather the capacity of its places, assets and cultural landmarks to create social bonds, to engender affection and reflect a cohesive identity.

To grasp such "complicated" identity is a challenge, but in fact provides also a meaningful purpose for UrbEX activities: to learn what makes the identity of a neighbourhood, what kind of community produces such a neighbourhood (and is produced by it!), what values and resources are established through this mutual relation. In this perspective, the "neighbourhood dimension" appears as a reasonable starting point to reconnect disadvantaged young people with their environment and provide them with tools to navigate the evolving urban landscapes.

A key aspect examined here is the potential of urban exploration to help youths overcome the boundaries they experience by fully appropriating urban space and to feel part of the society also by understanding the territory in its multiple social, cultural, productive and aesthetic dimensions. The concept of exploring the neighbourhood as a learning environment is not only about discovering resources and relations existing within the local boundaries, but especially about the potential of the neighbourhood as a door to larger worlds and to opportunities that are set in the wider territory.

The neighbourhood is considered here as a portal or a launchpad towards an interconnected urban world. Understanding such a role of the neighbourhood as a landing field, both for taking off towards wider perspectives and to land down in the local community is an essential aim of UrbEX.

1.2
Discover your city with fun

Urban exploration, in short UrbEX, is a term that acquired a specific recognition in recent times. It is related with often barely legal practices of exploration of abandoned buildings, out-of-the-beaten-track spots, no-go areas, subterranean facilities or any sort of neglected or inaccessible locations. Although a definitely appealing practice for young people, this is understandingly not what we have in mind using this term here. What we propose is not to teach youngsters how to sneak into a decommissioned power plant or military area, nor how to take selfies on the antenna on the top of a skyscraper.

Rather, more responsibly, we suggest that it is possible to find enjoyment and personal empowerment in discovering the many, often hidden dimensions of the urban space, learning to look further and more in depth at places that we may think to know well. We may find an unexpected richness of resources in our own neighbourhood. Awe and surprise wait for us by the corner, if we know how to look for them.

By proposing the UrbEX approach we want to suggest that the adventurous character and the excitement of discovery can still be part of an educational activity based on the exploration of the everyday-life environment of youths in disadvantaged positions. Without necessarily involving extreme stunts and dangerous trespassing, revealing neglected perspectives and forgotten places can be fun and constructive.

Exploring the city therefore means reconnecting the complex, often fragmented and conflicting fabric of metropolitan territories. Cities are often perceived through oppositions and internal conflicts. Working class vs bourgeois areas, centres vs peripheries, productive vs leisure zones, tourist vs residents, male vs female geographies, dangerous vs safe zones.

Such sharp-cut dichotomies tend to erase the richness and variety of conditions that happen within the neighbourhoods and to segregate different cultures and ethnical identities within distinct territories charged with stigma. There is a need for challenging such defensive, exclusionary and biassed attitudes by co-producing new visions together with the most affected youths.

The mission of UrbEX is to overcome these internal boundaries, expand the comprehension and operational range of youths at risk of exclusion (YARE) by reconnecting them to the metropolitan fabric.

We want to help young people to develop a better capacity to dominate the territory, to exploit it as a resource for personal accomplishment and appropriate it as a fundamental ground on which their citizenship is formed and their rights are claimed

1.3
Why an UrbEx project?

Beside the general aim of empowering youths at risk of exclusion, many are the specific purposes we can create an UrbEX project for, and multiple are the impacts that can be generated by the activities both on the targeted group and on the neighbourhoods interested by the exploration.

Reversing spatial stigma

The exploration of a disadvantaged context is an opportunity to discover qualities and potentials of stigmatised territories, neighbourhoods marked as dysfunctional or problematic. Reclaiming the qualities and peculiarities of their neighbourhood for YARE is also a push to imagine their redemption and to find motivation for social engagement and participation. Thinking of what the neighbourhood can do for you is also thinking of what you can do for the neighbourhood. Urban exploration from this perspective can be a playful means to stimulate active citizenship and social engagement.

Giving voice to the voiceless

Exploring the city is also the drive to narrate it. Storytelling is an important means to empower and to connect communities through communication and self-expression. Discovering new places, the people that inhabit those places and their stories is also a way to foster storytelling capacity. It improves the capacity of YARE to express themselves and make underrepresented voices to be heard. Methods of urban exploration foster attention at the perspective of those who live in the neighbourhoods, and especially those who are less capable of speaking for themselves.

→ **Museu da Maré** is a community initiative aimed at reversing the stigma on one the biggest favelas in Rio de Janeiro through a museum presenting local history and identity. Among the key activities, the educators of the Museum actively support youths from the *favela* to attend high level education.

Setting new "spatial" narratives

Storytelling practice has a great importance not only as a tool for the emancipation of fragile subjects like YARE, but also for the requalification of neighbourhoods by creating new positive narratives able to overcome territorial stigma and reverse stereotypes attached to disadvantaged territories. The exploration practice is a testing ground for stimulating creativity and imagination in the youths, supporting the development of new visions and promoting different perceptions on the neighbourhood.

Public space development

Guiding young people to explore urban space means also making them more aware of public space's role and value. Activities can be directed at developing civic sense, taking better care of common spaces and public facilities, but also on supporting their physical improvement, their accessibility, their safety and sense of belonging, and gender and age equality in public space.

→ **Prinzessinnengarten** in Berlin is a grassroots initiative transforming an unused central lot into a community garden. The project has become a vibrant social centre providing space for educational initiatives and opportunities for the empowerment for youths.
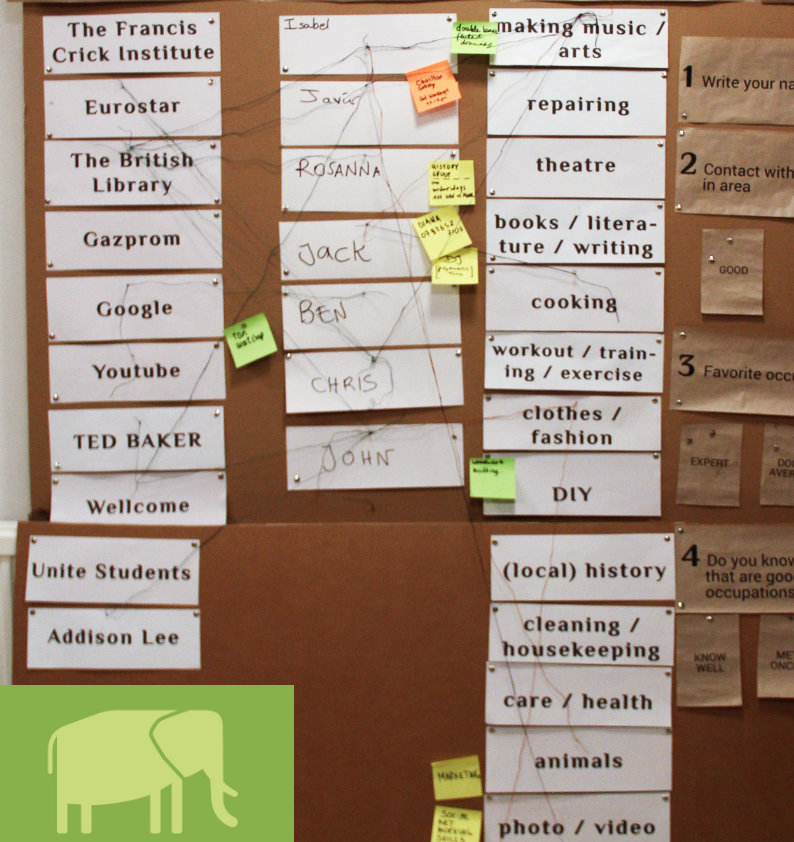
Mobilising local competences

The explorative practice can be employed to map competences, skills and resources existing in a neighbourhood. Formal and informal networks, art and handcrafts, training opportunities, social services, educational infrastructures are all valuable resources that can support youths' aspirations and help their development. Mapping such essential assets can support integration and entrepreneurship as well as foster local development at large.

Promoting local economies

The UrbEX practice can be also directly linked to the valorisation of local economies, enterprise boosting and increasing employability. Territorial competence can be directed to assess needs, build better tailored local business, and increase the employability of young people.

→ **Elephant Path** is a project for improving employment opportunities of youths in precarious work conditions in the Somers Town area in London. During the EULER Erasmus+ project, a platform was designed to offer different skills and services by residents of the neighbourhoods to big employers in the area.

ELEPHANT PATH
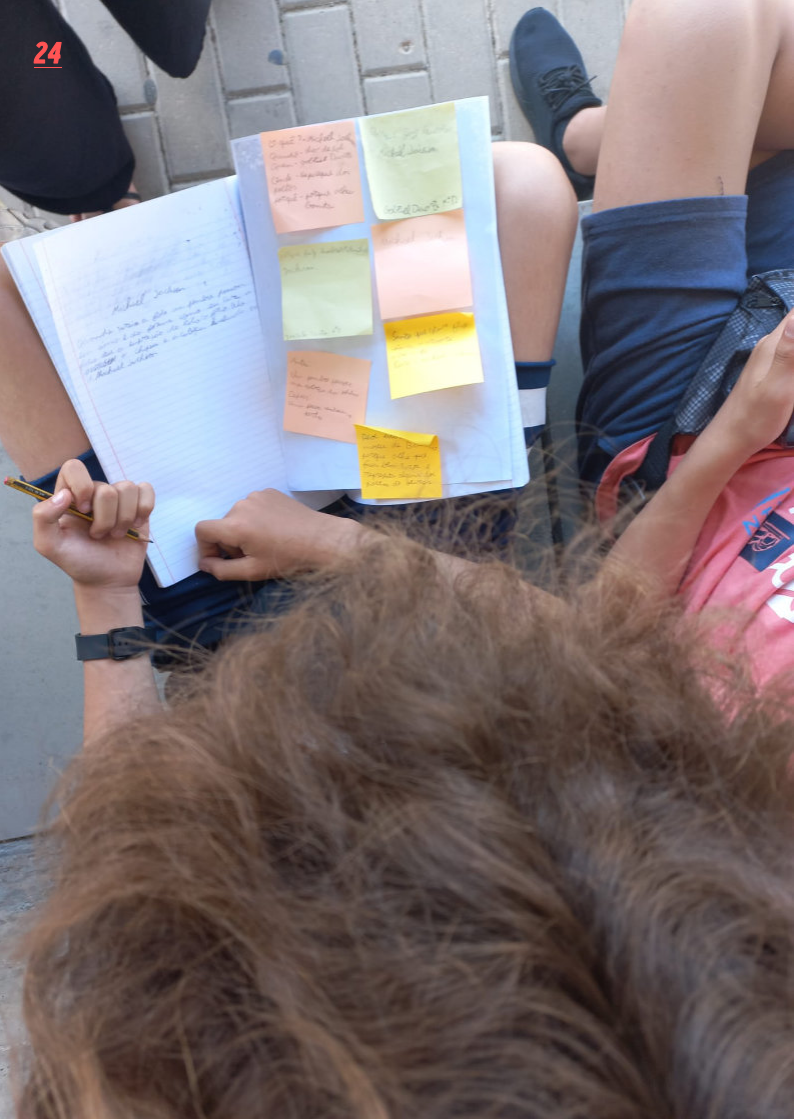
Supporting social innovation and creativity

In particular the UrbEX approach can support innovative practices and economies, connecting and expanding the local social innovation ecosystem and connecting youths at risk of exclusion with new opportunities to learn, work and create. These activities can stimulate personal creativity and connect with initiatives that promote innovation.

Cultural development and entertainment

UrbEX activities can be directed at cultural entertainment, improving the cultural supply in the area and promoting the education of young people and their social integration.

→ **Museu do Bairro** is an exploration by the eyes of young people of the different communities, assets and heritage of Oeiras municipality's in Lisbon. The project happened in a post-lockdown context, reconnecting the youths with their neighbourhood.

Assessing neglected heritage

A further effect of territorial exploration is to reveal neglected tangible and intangible heritage of neighbourhoods, and to raise awareness among the youths about the value of such heritage. Reconnecting young people to memories, values and historical heritage contributes to the development of their civic sense.

Improving personal abilities

Finally, the purpose of an UrbEX project can be merely to improve the skills and capacity of youths in terms of autonomy, mobility, cognitive and linguistic capabilities, cultural integration, or educating to inclusion and fairness. This can be associated with specific categories of disadvantages, like youth with disabilities, newcomers, or people with mental health issues, or even proposed as pure entertainment activities.

→ During the previous UrbEX Erasmus plus in 2018 London, partners Mapping for Change worked with the young guests of a hostel for homeless youths in **Islington** to develop their creative and communication capacities.

1.4
An Educational Model for Urban Exploration

The key principle of the UrbEX model is that the neighbourhood can be assumed as a learning environment. Starting from this simple evidence, our project develops ideas and practical resources to enhance learning and empowering processes that look at the neighbourhood - and more in general the urban environment - not only as the context where the educational process takes place, but also as a resource and a protagonist of the process. Specifically, the project targets youths at risk of exclusion (YARE) or living in disadvantaged contexts, with the idea that explorative spatial practice can be used as a means of emancipation and integration, being at the same time playful, inspiring and open to multiple purposes.
The educational model proposed for UrbEX is based on few key principles:

Decoding complexity

The first pillar is about understanding the neighbourhood (and the city) as a complex environment that produces specific and unique local identities through the interconnection of multiple factors. Local identities are the result of innumerable elements: geographical, environmental, social, economic, physical, cultural factors (etc.) that cannot be easily reduced and simplified. Such a complexity can be disorienting and difficult to grasp in its entirety, but rather than being dismissed or reduced simplistically, it needs to be treated as a resource and a fascinating richness to delve in. The exploration practice of UrbEX is directed at revealing unexpected surprises, producing awe for the virtually infinite connections that the spatial exploration can produce, and providing reasons of curiosity for everybody, independently from their personal interests, inclinations and education.

Gamifying the city

The UrbEX approach is a playful one, aimed at producing fun and thrill out of the learning practice. Treasure hunts, role plays, board games, action games and any sort of challenges are employed to stimulate curiosity and to foster team building in the youths. The neighbourhood naturally provides context, but it is important to go beyond that to understand it as a protagonist: it is the object of an investigation, an essential element of the learning process, as well a reality that can be impacted and transformed by the young players. The neighbourhood is the object of a process of appropriation and the game we are playing has the goal of getting in control of the field, bringing our young players to become more aware, integrated, and capable of dominating their space.

Storytelling approach

An important means to appropriate the urban space is to be able to tell, represent, narrate it with all its complex system of relations and dependencies. UrbEX develops a specific attention to means to narrate the spatial experience, providing youths with skills and appropriate channels to describe their journey, document their discoveries and share their experience. Digital platforms and social media are a natural complement of this approach to publish the produced stories.

Personal development and accountability

UrbEX has the ultimate goal to empower and emancipate youths at risk of exclusion or living in disadvantaged contexts, and realises it aims through two interdependent objectives: the first is to foster the personal development, improving autonomy, movement capacity and personal accountability of young people. But finding their place in a social context means also taking responsibilities within the group and the community, which brings to the second point:

Belonging to a place and a community

The second means of emancipation is to improve the social skills and integration within the community of YARE, training to teamwork, collaboration and respect of the others. Finding a role, a personal inclination and at the same learning to be part of a group is the core of the process. The explorative practice is a means to transmit the idea that personal development is achieved by understanding and valorising the way we are connected to the complexity of aspects that constitute the environment we inhabit.
The ultimate goal is that of helping youths to find their place in the community.

These five principles are combined in a specific co-creation approach. The method is centred on the physical exploration of urban space as a collective activity that naturally takes place in physical co-presence. Given the specificity of our times, with the activities of the project happening during a global pandemic, attention is given to provide where possible alternative modalities to carry on the activities reducing contact or using digitally mediated interactions. The model is structured in five essential steps to realise an explorative project with young people as detailed in the five chapters of the following Section 2.
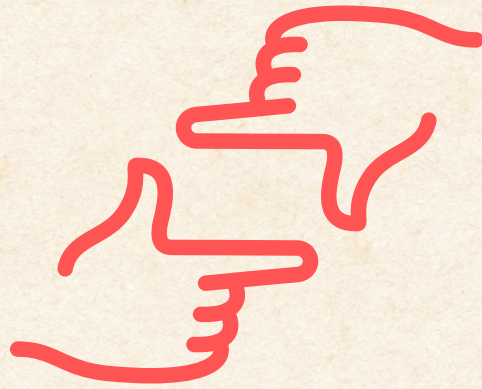
SECTION 02
Urban Exploration for Youths
A five-step approach

2.1
Designing
an UrbEX project

Here we examine how and why to start a project of urban exploration with young people, clarifying the overall goals of the experience, identifying the target beneficiaries, defining the area of exploration and gathering knowledge and competences necessary at carrying the task at best. This is what is needed to prepare the ground for the exploration.

2.1.1
Why are we doing this activity?

The first point is clarifying the reason to create a project of urban exploration, for and with whom, and how. This phase defines the general purpose of the laboratory, the target group and the effects we expect on them, but also the area to explore, the type of activities and the timing. In the previous chapter we listed a number of valid purposes for employing UrbEX with youth.

The starting point of the project could be the needs of a specific target group of youth, or an issue that needs to be addressed within a local community by involving the target group. In both cases, once we have clarified the general purpose of the action, the key question that need to be answered is:

2.1.2
Who will be the targeted beneficiaries of the action?

Key aspects to verify are:

Is the project targeting an already existing group of youth?	Do we rather need to form a new group to carry the activities with?	How do we engage them, especially if it is not an already aggregated group?
Who is able to connect and communicate at best with the beneficiaries?	Has this mediating person already been identified / hired within the project?	

In this phase it may be helpful to develop some preparatory exercises to identify key tracts of the young participants, their background and their expected reaction to the activity proposed. The coordinators could work on developing a fictional profile of a participant combining tracts from the youths they work with. For this purpose some exercises can be adapted for assessing or previewing characters and needs of the target group.
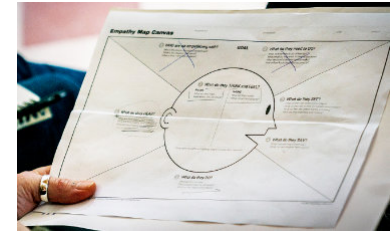
Exercises & tools: Empathy map

This tool helps teams develop deep, shared understanding and empathy for other people: it can be helpful to synthesise observations and draw out unexpected insights about the needs of the target group.

Exercises & tools: Maps and Me

In this exercise each participant brings a map of his place of origin. By drawing, writing, tearing, and cutting out the "official" map, they create a new picture, which is used to investigate their relation and their cultural connection with the place.

2.1.3
What do the beneficiaries get out of this project?

Like for writing a good mystery story we need to start from the final resolution, to create a profitable exploration for our participants we need to establish what is their final reward. It is important to clarify from the start not only the general impact of the project expected at societal level, but also the gain of the beneficiaries at personal level.

Do we want them to learn how to move better within a hostile environment?	Do we want to increase their knowledge about the local culture?
Do we want to improve their autonomy, entrepreneurial capacity, employability?	Do we want to simply entertain them? (why not?)

Having a clear idea of what we want to achieve is essential to ensure their engagement and the final success of the experience. Clarifying the main (as well as secondary) objectives of the action will also help to address the other aspects, starting from defining the area of exploration.

Exercises & tools: Compass

The compass is a simple tool to foster a discussion on defining shared objectives of a project. It can be used by the team designing the program, but (as many of the tools presented here) it can also be used together with the target group to co-design objectives and result indicators of the activity.

GOOD PRACTICE

H-Town Tour

△ Tesserae

◎ Mehringplatz, Berlin, Germany

🕐 Spring 2019. Participation to the exchange in Palermo + 6 labs and final presentation in London

◎ 12 youths (17-24) participating in the activities of KMAntenne in Friedrichstraße. KMA is an NGO focused on music that works mostly with youth with migration background (2nd generation) in Kreuzberg

🔗 http://www.tesserae.eu/project/urbex
https://vimeo.com/showcase/6905959
https://www.community-atlas.net/de/atlanten/berlin.html

The participants were a group of youngsters already connected through the activities of the local youth center, based in a central high rise settlement in the center of Berlin. This former social housing area is considered to be problematic, with a high concentration of population with migrant experience and high unemployment rates and integration issues.

The lab was aimed at creating a map of the specific geography of the youths and to contribute to the **Switch On Mehringplatz Atlas** created through previous projects.

The first lab, facilitated using the **Urban Memo card game**, highlighted that the group of young people had a quite defined knowledge of the area, but limited to few key spots, strongly conotated by social meanings shared by the group. The lab therefore focused on two goals: the first was to map and narrate the neighborhood from the specific perspective of the participating youths, highlighting their knowledge and storytelling capacity. The second was that of expanding their understanding of the context and to increase their capacity of movement and analysis. As a second step the participants created a map with the most significant locations of their personal geography. After discussing it, the group designed the **H-Town Tour** (the name comes from the Hallesches Tor metro station that gives the name to the territory attributed to the H-Town gang). Description of the key locations of the tour were identified and prepared. In two successive sessions we went along the defined path, and video recorded the introduction to the different spaces made by participants, including singing the Hip-hop anthem that the youths created about their place, which provided the soundtrack for the video. The video was uploaded on Vimeo channel and added to the Mehringplatz atlas.

SPATIAL DIMENSION

The project key focus is in discussing and narrating the specific geography of a group of youth. The context of a former modernist social housing complex provides input for reflecting on segregation process, exclusion but also on identification with and appropriation of the neighborhood identity
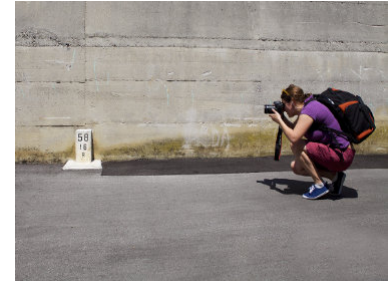
EFFECTS

The project was effective in making a group of young people used to live in a quite restricted context to reflect both on the peculiarity of their social and spatial context, and in expressing their vision and feelings by the means of storytelling and media. The confrontation with four other groups from EU cities during the mobility events of the project provided an opportunity to enlarge their views and set long term relations with other youths in an international context.

2.1.4
Which space do we focus the exploration on?

The neighbourhood is the key element of the experience, and its identification and delimitation is essential to the plan. We have to assign a role to the selected territory, and understand what relation it has with the target beneficiaries, both as individuals and as a group.

Do we work in an area that represents a known and friendly environment for the participants?	In this case the motivation of the participants would be mainly to show their confidence and knowledge, and the activity should aim to discover the unexpected, to reveal new layers, to expand their competence and consolidate their sense of belonging.
Do we rather explore less known territories?	In this case the objective would be to expand the capacity to master the city, to enlarge their perspective and to break segregative patterns.

Once the area is delimited and where the exploration will take place is defined, some essential aspects should be examined, starting from what do we know about the territory.

Do we need to develop preliminary research or are we able to start our laboratories with sufficient cognition about the local context?	**What data do we have about the socio-spatial context, its issues, needs, spatial dynamics?**	**How can we get the essential knowledge to steer the process, who can provide us with additional insights?**

Exercises & tools: Threshold walking

This simple exercise is part of the collection of the exercises urban reconnaissance (see the resource). It is about circumnavigating the neighbourhood to foster a reflection of the elements that determine its identity as a discrete space.

2.1.5
What do we know about the neighbourhood?

Good practice before proceeding with the design of the activities with the target group is to expand our understanding of the area to explore with surveys, desk research and interviews. This may also be an opportunity for testing tools and exercises of exploration that may be later employed with the beneficiaries .

 Among the elements that need to be examined are:

|		
Does the territory selected for exploration have its own identity as a neighbourhood or vicinate?	How is it related with larger territorial scales, which connection and disconnections affect it?	What historical processes influence its current identity?
How is its public perception, and does it respond to reality?	Is it affected by territorial stigmatisation?	

RESOURCE
Urban Reconnaissance platform

For this purpose we suggest the Urban Reconnaissance platform developed by the ogino:knauss collective and Tesserae.
This online device provides a set of 64 exercises of urban exploration to examine the multiple dimensions that contribute to producing the identity of a place. The platform is completed with a downloadable manual for designing urban reconnaissance workshops.
Carrying preliminary UR workshops may provide a good background exercise and source of inspiration for the exploratory laboratory. These exercises are directed at an expert audience and sometimes employ disciplinary terminologies that may result confusing for a general public, but many of them can be easily adapted for a non-skilled target, e.i. youths, and used to design exploration activities with the target group.

http://exercises.oginoknauss.org
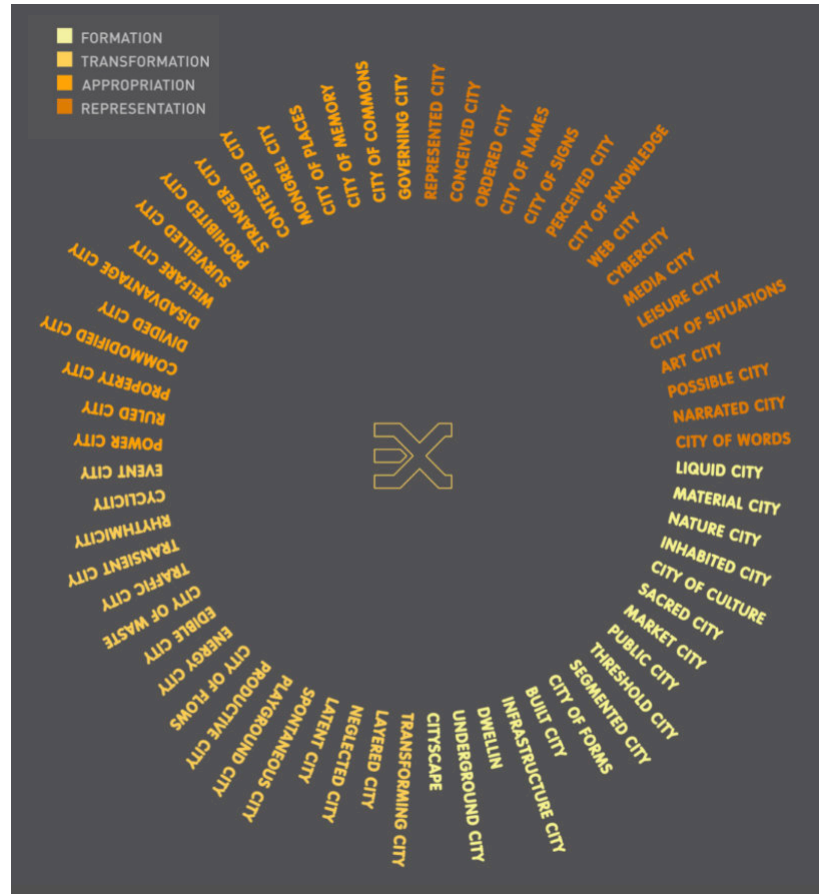
2.1.6
Who needs to be involved?

The initial survey on the territory is also needed to get a picture of the main stakeholders operating in the local context, and to identify those that may or should be involved. This is particularly crucial if the project aims at empowering capacities and entrepreneurial skills, requiring a clear understanding of social capital and resources in the territory. This knowledge is also important if we don't have an already formed target group and the project needs to create its connections, in which case the mediation of local partners trusted by the youths is essential.

Which are the main local stakeholders operating on the territory (public, enterprises, NGOs, informal organisations etc...)?	Which organisations are connected with youths and our target in the area?
Which actions and initiatives exist that connect / overlap/ conflict with our plan?	How can we better coordinate / integrate / combine actions directed at our target?

2.1.7
Road map and risk assessment

At the end of this phase good practice is to recapitulate the foreseen activities in form a simple action plan to better organise the implementation and check risks and hindrances that could complicate it. This activity can be also repeated together with the target group, using the action planning exercise as a kick-off for the project and sharing with the beneficiaries the revision of the plan.
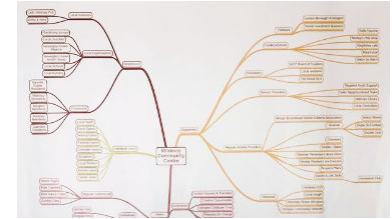
Exercises & tools: Stakeholder map

A simple exercise of stakeholder mapping and analysis can be very useful to visualise the actors that shape neighbourhood identity and have the power to produce changes.

Exercises & tools: Treasure island

Using the metaphor of a treasure hunt, this tool helps to define the key steps needed to bring the activity to an effective outset. It is based on a sketchy map of the treasure island used to visualise the path from the initial stages to the final findings.

GOOD PRACTICE
Museu do Bairro

△ 4Change and Oeiras Municipality

⌖ 4 schools, 4 neighbourhoods in Oeiras

🕐 November 2021 - July 2022

◎ Young people 11-17 & teachers - and the community

🔗 https://www.facebook.com/4Change.org/photos/
pcb.5102705173149867/5102702653150119

Project **Museu do Bairro** is an urban exploration of the Oeiras municipality's different communities and their assets and heritage, by the eyes of young people. Using participatory photography as the tool and young people's perspective on what is heritage ('what is valuable in our communities') as the guide, the project has worked with 9 groups of young people and has produced 9 sets of images, texts and exhibitions - and have shared and included the communities to replicate the impact.

Photo: Sara Nasi
Students of 11G assembling an exhibition at Quinta do Marquês School

SPATIAL DIMENSION

The exploration of the communities around each school has been the focus.

Using techniques from Photovoice methodology, the angle and thematic have been chosen by young people - and a photographic safari was the means by which the urban exploration took place.

EFFECTS

In this post-pandemic context, urban exploration and opening to the surroundings was even more needed. Young participants were challenged to speak with their neighbourhood residents and have been involved in the preparation of the final exhibition that took place either in the school with invitations to the families and friends or in the neighbourhood market/shopping centre.

Photo: Matilde Ferreira_EBIJB
Mr António and his wife at Paço de Arcos Market

2.2
Communicating the UrbEX project

Communication is an essential task within all the phases of a project, and has specific objectives, targets and issues according to its different moments.

Good communication is essential to:

Make the objectives and procedures clear to the partners implementing the project.	Reach out the right target group(s) of the project.	Share objectives and resources with the direct beneficiaries of the project.
Publish and disseminate its results with wider audiences and share open resources with potential new users.	Report correctly with the institutions or programs commissioning the project.	

Creating from the beginning an effective and far-sighted communication strategy makes the project smoother to carry, starting from declaring its objectives and the procedures to achieve them.

A good exercise for kicking-off a communication strategy is that of creating a simple glossary collecting the key terminology employed by the project and discussing within the team how to get to a common operational understanding of those terms.

The glossary can be used internally, as a reference set for the communication plan, as well as externally, to explain the project's scope. Furthermore, in case of international projects that are developed in local languages, it can help the correct translation of the project's terminology into the language actually used with the targeted beneficiaries.

The communication strategy has two key elements:

The **language** used to describe the project, with its terminology, mood and syntax. This needs to be appropriated to the context, comprehensible for the beneficiaries, and at the same time accurate and precise into defining objectives and actions.	The **visual identity** used to make the project recognizable, friendly and accessible to everyone. Visual language is universal, it is particularly effective to connect with youths and able to bridge audiences divided by culture, spoken languages and education level.

These two should be considered as complementary, and not separated, components of the communication process.

RESOURCE
Zemos98 glossary

Zemos98 website includes a section that works as a glossary, defining some of the keywords of their manifold activity, and linking them to projects and blog posts.

It may be a source of inspiration in identifying the main topics related to our project and in connecting them with practical examples and good practices.

https://zemos98.org/en/topics

ZEM○S98   About   Projects   Blog   Topics   Español   Q

Expanded education

Expanded Education can happen anytime, anywhere. We started working this proposal in one of our festivals, 10 years ago. Since then, the term has changed from being a way to refer to informal education practices that gather knowledge outside of the system to a transversal methodological tool that intersects with a critical understanding of new technologies and with the production of mediation devices. The concept has been accepted as a stream of practices that propose the rethinking of unilateral visions of knowledge transmission.

PROJECTS   POSTS

Mediation

We understand mediation as the capacity to produce tools and meeting spaces in which citizens, social agents and various kinds of institutions can participate in decision making about things that affect the lives of everyone in our society. Mediating also means identifying power dynamics between persons and with institutions, and thinking of ways to balance inequalities and to work towards having everyone's voices heard in the public sphere. The goal of mediation, as we understand, it is to create a more democratic and inclusive society.

PROJECTS   POSTS

New narratives

What languages, tools and narrative formats allow us to better express our experiences and also imagine other possible realities? What kind of cultural productions activate lasting relational spaces that have diversity as an underlying value? These questions push us towards forms of storytelling that go beyond traditional models of narration, and that often lean on codes and languages that came out of the digital spheres. Making life worth living involves redefining how we talk about the realities around us, and thus push for material transformations.

PROJECTS   POSTS

EULER-Switch On Mehringplatz

- △ Tesserae
- ⌖ Kreuzberg, Berlin
- 🕐 between October 2016 and July 2017
- ◎ Young people 11-17 & teachers - and the community

SwitchOn Mehringplatz was a training program developed in the Südliche Friedrichstadt of Berlin in the context of the Erasmus+ project EULER, aimed at consolidating informal competences developed within community initiatives.

The Mehringplatz laboratory set special attention to design a clear visual identity of the local lab with both the aims of promoting the training and testing principles for effective place branding as part of the techniques and skills necessary to the neighbourhood facilitators.

Inspired by the morphology of the location, the round shape of Mehringplatz was outlined as a strong visual element characterising local identity.

Its shape is also strikingly similar to a computer switch button icon: naming the project "Switch On Mehringplatz'' and designing the logo in that shape, alluding to the scope of activating the local community, has been one move.

The chromatic palette, font set and specific graphic design codes have been employed all along the activities to design posters and flyers, webpages, video motion graphics, map layers and icons – creating a recognizable and congruent visual language marking the project in all its outcomes. Particular attention has been dedicated to use inclusive design principles in all printed and online features, respecting accessibility and usability for impaired audiences, i.e. people with visual impairments.

Particular attention was given to posters and flyers announcing the series of public events and workshops, that was distributed in the neighbourhood and in a targeted circuit of cultural venues. Each of the events was presented (both in German and English) through one or more key-questions clearly enunciating the objectives of the activity, creating an overall set of questions stating the project's general purpose.

SPATIAL DIMENSION

The entire laboratory was applied to developing situated knowledge about a disadvantaged neighbourhood and all tools and methods were applied specifically to the comprehension and representation of the target territory.

EFFECTS

Main scope was training professionals in dealing with the neighbourhood dimension from a multidisciplinary perspective. Complementary effect was starting a process of pooling knowledge resources and fostering collaboration among local initiatives that resulted in the Neighbourhood Atlas that is still being implemented through other projects.

CreativeCommunication 2019

This training course gathered 24 youth workers and young leaders from various European countries in Brivezac, France, to exchange creative practices of digital communication.
The project aimed to offer alternative sources of non-formal education for the youth in Europe. The proposal was to spread innovative digital tools of social media and content distribution online for youth workers using photo, video, sound design, editing, scriptwriting, storytelling and social media strategies to engage Europeans in intersectional learning and inclusion. The resulting booklet is a useful resource accessible online at

https://www.nomadways.org/en/projects/creative-communication-2019

CREATIVE COMMUNICATION

For Artivists
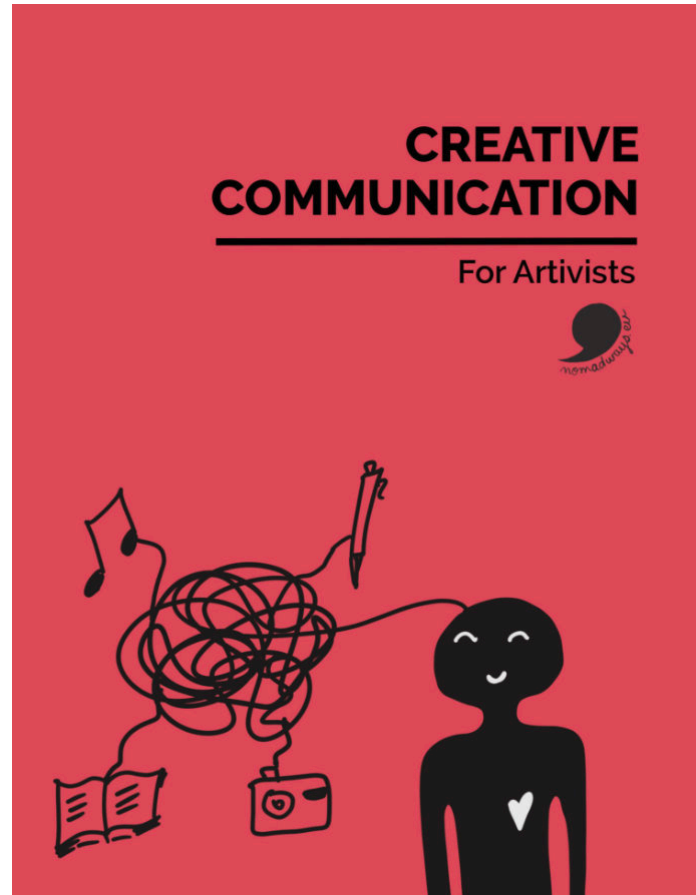
GOOD PRACTICE

Seville Audioguide

△ Álex Peña (artist) and ZEMOS98

◎ Seville, Spain

🕐 2 hours, 24-26 October 2019

◎ International and national participants in 'The City is Ours' encounter, part of the local activities of MediActivism.

🔗 https://t.me/SevilleAudioguide
https://t.me/SevillaAudioguia
https://mediactivism.eu
http://zemos98.org/en/2019/10/14/the-city-less-lived

Seville Audioguide is a telegram channel with an audiovisual guide of Seville for anyone to do it. It shows an alternative narrative of the city based on the most important struggles related to reclaiming the urban space towards a citizen-centered city. It was developed in the framework of an international event that took place in Seville as part of the Erasmus+ project MediActivism, coordinated by the European Cultural Foundation.

The goal was to feed non-local participants of the event about the most important aspects of the urban development of the city and community struggles. It helped to set a working framework at the beginning of the encounter for everyone to be on the same page in relation to the debates that took place later in it.

This Audioguide format is easily transferable to other contexts, as it does not require specific technical skills beyond learning how Telegram functions. In this context, it was developed by the organisers of the event, but it can also be easily adaptable as a participatory method for a community to develop a collaborative story about a city or a neighbourhood.

SPATIAL DIMENSION

The main goal of this Audioguide was to unveil the stories, events, and spaces that are hidden both after the day-to-day life of a city, and the official narratives of it. That is why the experience in Seville was a tour through the city centre; but it can be adapted to other aims and goals, like helping marginalised neighbourhoods to be more visible in other parts of the city.

EFFECTS

The Audioguide worked on this occasion to set a common frame for national and international participants for the debates happening in the following days, so they could give inputs and feedback about the situation in Seville knowing what are the main challenges of the city. There were 40 participants in the event.

2.3
Establishing the rules of exploration

With our first steps we defined the general objectives of the laboratory and its communication strategy. This provides us with a clearer idea on the targeted group of participants and the context we want to explore. Now is the time to translate these ideas into a concrete plan of exploration. This is the phase in which objectives and ideas for the activity should be shared and ideally co-designed with the final beneficiaries, namely the young participants. The knowledge achieved by the previous steps should not impose but rather prepare the next steps of co-creation with youths.

According to the five pillars of the UrbEX method, the activities proposed should respond to five essential aims:

DISCOVERY → COMPREHENSION → COLLABORATION → REPRESENTATION → ENGAGEMENT

Ideally these objectives represent successive stages in the practice of exploring a territory, but in reality they overlap, combine and influence each other.

Each exploratory project may have a specific accent on one or more of those scopes, but a successful UrbEX project should be able to combine all of them in delivering a complete and stimulating educational experience.

Exercises & tools: Secret mission

The secret mission is a simple game for animating the first exploration of a place. It is based on assigning different individual or group missions to the participants and pushing them to seek for particular aspects of the urban landscape and providing different lenses to look at the neighbourhood.

2.3.1
Discovery

First of all, the exploration practice is about enjoying awe and surprise. It is about getting lost and searching a way through the places, expanding the capacity to perceive them through all our senses, building an instinctive and immediate relation with places. The initial aim of the activities should be that of introducing new ways to perceive the space, disrupt the habitual way to move in the city and the consolidated paths.

An interesting way to discover the urban space is using random generated paths. Throwing a coin at every crossroad, drawing abstract lines on a map to be followed on the ground, using tourist maps of other cities, etc. There are no limits to the invention of systems to create unconscious itineraries able to reveal unexpected destinations and discoveries.

2.3.2
Comprehension

The second objective is related to elaborating the sensations captured along the exploration path in forms of spatial thinking, and to create a dialogue with places and within the group. Here we need to bring the participants to reflect about relations, causalities, hierarchies and categories of the observed phenomena.
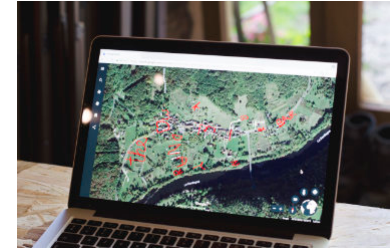
Exercises & tools: Digital writing on the map

Inspired by GPS drawings, participants are invited to create words or drawings in the local urban landscape by walking tracked by a locative app.
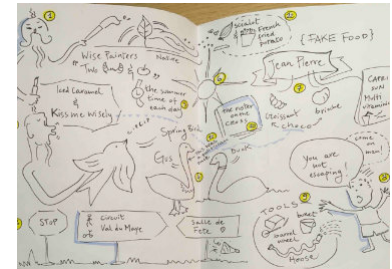
Exercises & tools: Meet our surroundings

An invitation to discover the surrounding in little groups, by using different senses, create a story and tell it in all diverse forms.

GOOD PRACTICE

Stratification Lab

△ Bond of Union

◎ Capo-Monte di Pietà, Palermo, Italy

🕐 October - December 2020

◎ Architecture Students, researchers, activists, art historians, residents and workers of the neighbourhood

🔗 https://www.opencccp.eu/palermo-capo-open-labs/

Stratification Lab has been used as a way to observe the territories and to identify elements and collect information on the local cultural heritage during the initial phase of CAPO OPEN LABS, a series of workshops realised in the neighbourhood Capo of Palermo in the framework of **OPENCCCP** project. The Stratification Lab allowed participants to observe their neighbourhood from a multi-layered perspective and to gain new information on the history and culture of their city and learn to appreciate the multiple origins of the places.

People, languages, buildings, places are originated by multi-layered dynamics. Every city and neighbourhood is the result of this cultural and social process. In the stratification lab participants were invited to work on a map to identify the places representative of stratification, continuity and mix of customs for each topic (i.e. religion, culinary practices, traditional activities) with the help of the residents. The labs have been led by two trainers, one archaeologist and one architect. Focus of the labs have been the exploration of the local cultural heritage to promote social inclusion among the residents of the neighbourhood

SPATIAL DIMENSION

The project was focused on the Quartiere Capo of Palermo. During the Stratification Lab the participants analysed and collected data on the elements of local culture and their different layers. They focused on the religious cults present in the neighbourhood and on the toponyms of the streets, finding links among the past and the present. The information collected has been enriched with meetings and interviews with local actors as residents and workers of the neighbourhood to collect memories related to the elements of local heritage identified.

EFFECTS

The outcomes have been two digital maps with the elements identified, links and pictures combined with a bibliographic investigation. Specifically, the lab has been recognised as an educational experience for the students of the faculty of architecture of the University of Palermo.

2.3.3
Collaboration

The third objective is about enhancing collaboration among the participants, reinforcing their capacity to envision common objectives and to design a strategy to achieve them. Exploration is an essentially personal experience, but the different point of views, interests and inclinations of the participants should lead to developing teamwork and shared intents. From exploring the neighbourhood we may want to reflect on how we can contribute to improve or trasform it.

2.3.4
Representation

The fourth objective regards improving the capacity to create a clear and effective representation of the territory. We can collectively produce territorial representations using many different approaches and formats and not necessarily using cartography, or not only, and even combining multiple forms of representation, e.i maps with sound, photographic surveys and textual narrations. The complexity of the territories we observe calls for diversified solutions able to render their different features.
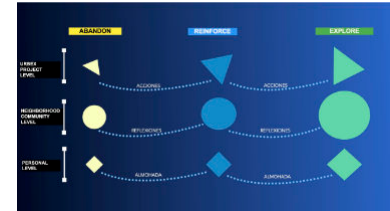
Exercises & tools: The archipelago

This exercise designed by Zemos 98 can help the group to strategically design its project and establish a roadmap that brings together the personal intuitions and collective desires.

Exercises & tools: Urban Memo

Urban Memo is based on conceiving, designing and realising a variation of the popular Memory card game with images of the neighbourhood captured by the participants. The collaborative design of the game is employed as a flexible instrument for facilitating urban surveys, discussions and participative processes.

GOOD PRACTICE
Garden Atlas
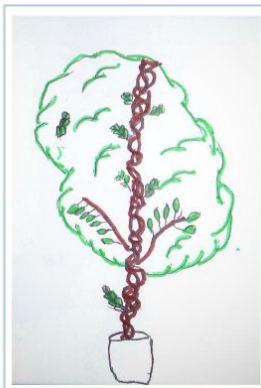
△ Nomad Garden, ZEMOS98

⌖ Huerta Santa Marina School, Seville, Spain

🕐 November 2021 - Ongoing practice

◉ Pupils of the school, 8-12 years old

🔗 https://huertasantamarina4a.gardenatlas.net/garden/santa-marina/species/?filter=origin

Garden Atlas is an urban exploration methodology to discover and share the species in the gardens surrounding us, visualising their importance both in the environment and in our culture. Gardens as spaces for exchange, as laboratories where to explore different relations between nature and culture. Garden Atlas is being developed with the students of Huerta Santa Marina School (Seville) both in and out of the school. The young participants became amateur botanical explorers by rediscovering the spaces near the school with plant presence cared for by neighbours. They were asked to observe the characteristics of the types of plants they found.

The participants filled in an exploration notebook, drawing up a new map of the neighbourhood and proposing new names for the plants and places they discovered. In successive explorations, they examined and recorded characteristics such as scents, crops and colours. Finally, in an exercise to rediscover the neighbourhood as a place of learning, the students interviewed the neighbours who took care of these plants or who lived with them on a daily basis. Such exploration experiences were complemented by activities in the classroom such as mapping workshops to put all these discoveries on a digital map of the neighbourhood showing the gardens and the types of species classified by their origin, aroma, colour, fruit and C02 absorption. In addition, the students participated in the construction of a collective seedbed with the plants discovered in the neighbourhood, to bring these plants to the school. It was also proposed the elaboration of a musical memory of the plants, designing the soundtrack that could tell the story of their origins, care, affections...

SPATIAL DIMENSION

Garden Atlas is based on the creation of an alternative map of the green spaces of the neighbourhood and the presence of plant life. It is presented on the project website along with stories, memories and cartographies of the plants discovered by the participants.

EFFECTS

The objectives of the program were to strengthen relationships and affections with non-human species as well as to celebrate existing renaturalization processes in the neighbourhood by creating a bank of stories and seeds of biodiversity from the school to the neighbourhood. After the project students have a better knowledge about their surroundings and how nature plays a crucial role in their day-to-day lives, even invisibly. The project proposes new ways of relating from the school with the neighbours, giving value to the intangible heritage of everyday stories and promoting collective care practices to improve the living conditions of human and non-human species.
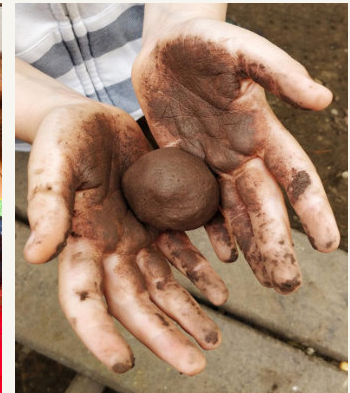
2.3.5
Engagement

The final aim is that of engendering a sense of ownership or civic participation to the neighbourhood life. Engagement means that the youths will be led through the UrbEX activities not only to discover what resources and benefits for personal development they can find in their neighbourhood, but also ask themselves such questions as:

What can I do for my neighbourhood, how can I contribute to a better place?	What spaces and opportunities exist for creating values and projects?
Which existing groups, initiatives or programs can be useful to engage with?	What role can I find in my community, how can I better integrate in the local society?

Exercises & tools: City visionary

City visionary is a board game that encourages youth to become active co-creators of their local environment. By engaging in the board game environment participants are introduced to mechanisms and "rules" present in real life and in the decision-making process of urban development.

MigrantTour

△ Aste & Nodi, Migrantour, Cooperativa Dedalus

◎ Porta Capuana / Naples / Italy

🕐 start: July 2018

◎ Developing the tour: 10 youths with migration experience (1st and 2nd generation) between 15-24 years living in a deprived neighbourhood in Naples.
Participating in the tour: Visitors/tourists/residents

🔗 http://www.asteenodi.com/blog/2020/3/23/workshop-di-progettazione-partecipata-per-la-realizzazione-di-un-itinerario-turistico-a-porta-capuana

http://www.mygrantour.org/en/migrantour-naples

The area in which the project was realised is, despite its central location, an unnoticed part of the city - both by visitors and residents. Porta Capuana is stigmatised due to high unemployment, an increased (organised) crime rate and a high percentage of people with migration history.

The aim of the project was firstly to make visible the mostly underrepresented voices and perceptions of people with migration history by making visible the places they visit.

Secondly, it was thus also about showing the diversity of the area and demonstrating the added value of the neighbourhood far from tourist attractions.

In the first step, an internal exchange took place among the project participants by making two tours of the area: First, the adults presented Porta Capuana from their professional point of view of urban development, architecture; then the migrant youths led to their places and explained the relationship to them. Shown were, for example, halal prepared food, little visible mosques or colonial monuments.

In workshops, the youth used a map to locate the places, personal as well as structural connections between the places were discussed, and a manageable number of places for an approximately 2-hour tour were selected. Each young person prepared a text for their places, a rehearsal was made and the tour can be requested by interested persons.

SPATIAL DIMENSION

The approach of making stigmatised or neglected neighbourhoods more tangible through personal stories of the residents can have a positive effect in two ways: on the internal perspective (residents value their neighbourhood more/identification increases) and the external perspective (visitors get to know other characters besides the stereotypes).

EFFECTS

The project shows how differently the same urban space can be perceived and used. Becoming aware that one's own perception is only one possibility among many leads to keeping one's eyes open for new things and at the same time tolerating other perceptions more.

2.4
Field activities

And now let's move to the field!

This is the actual moment where the activities in the territory are experienced by the group of youths under the supervision of the facilitators / coordinators. In carrying out the actual exploration of the neighbourhood, several aspects might be considered to conduct the activities smoothly, which regards mainly two fields of preoccupation: safety and scope.

2.4.1
Safe experience

Which degree of autonomy should be given to the young participants?	How do we steer and monitor the exploration?	What precautions should be used to guarantee safety to the young participants?

The first important aspect regards the autonomy that the young explorers should be granted, and accordingly, how to guarantee their safety when they may not always be under the supervision of some responsible adult.

This of course applies particularly to minors, but the question makes sense also in cases like young refugees or subjects from vulnerable groups exploring new contexts.

The exploration needs to find a balance between disclosing new personal capacities and being reasonably safe, a balance that can be allowed only by accurate preparation and a good knowledge both of the youths and of the urban context by the facilitators. For this reason it is recommended to employ local facilitators or to involve organisations that work in the field with that target group if we are not fully confident.

The initial risk assessment at this point should be detailed into a set of specific measures for anything that can go wrong. An accurate planning of timing, meeting points and contact numbers should be prepared and possibly provided on paper before moving into the exploration of urban space.

2.4.2
Scoping

How can we direct the attention of the participants to less visible/evident aspects?	Are we going to stimulate visual perception or rather to foster other ways of sensing the space?	Are we aiming for a direct and immediate connection with places or rather to capture images, sounds or mediated perceptions?

The second key aspect is about defining what sort of experience or gaze we want to direct the participant to. In the first phase we defined objectives and outcomes to achieve with the exploratory practice, here we need to ensure that the focus is on the intended aspects.

The urban experience is one of complexity, overstimulation, stratification of signs and meanings. The attention can be easily diverted, unplanned happenings can distract from the original scope, new discoveries can deviate the journey into a new direction. In most cases this is part of the game, if not the whole point of the operation. In other cases, when the focus is on some specific tasks, it is important to clarify with attention the expected targets of the spatial surveys, the planned outcomes, and to consider the best way to direct the participants attention.

An important factor influencing the results of the exploration is choosing the most appropriate way to combine or split participants. A large group moving together can have counterproductive effects both on the attention of the explorers (school trip effect) and in perturbing the observed environments. Appropriately subdividing the group in small teams or creating individual missions may have substantial effects in improving the exploratory practice.

Furthermore, an essential aspect that can alter the perception of the urban space is the use of recording devices and technologies. In some cases the ubiquitous presence of smartphones and cameras can be a perfect complement to the type of explorations we want to realise, providing tools for recording impressions and data, geolocating discoveries and documenting the experience. In other cases, technological gadgets may distract from different sensory experiences that we may want to achieve.

Let's consider carefully what is the most appropriate approach for our purpose. Giving attention to careful observation, unrecordable sensorialities like odours and tact, or simply recording observations by written notes to expand the verbal capacity to comprehend and describe a situation, may be better solutions than just another overload of pictures on Instagram.
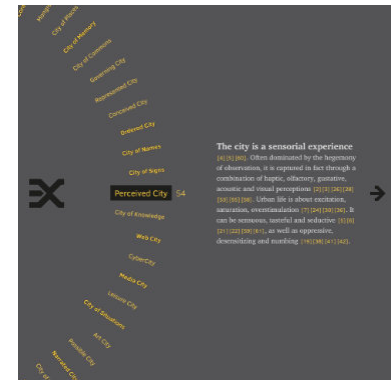
Exercises & tools: Sensing the city

This exercise aims to challenge the hegemony of the visual perception by bringing attention to the multiplicity of sensorial experiences offered by urban space. The participants are invited to concentrate on one single sense, or provided instructions to focus on a sequence of different sensorial experiences.

GOOD PRACTICE
Imagine Vucciria

△ Bond of Union

◎ Vucciria neighbourhood, Palermo, Italy

🕐 2012 (six months)

◎ Young people (14-16 years old) living in Vucciria (including young people from the Roma community)

🔗 https://www.bondofunion.eu/en/imagine-vucciria-projects

IMAGINE VUCCIRIA is an initiative that favoured the social inclusion of a group of young people with few opportunities living in the Vucciria neighbourhood (with a specific attention to the young people of the Roma community). Imagine Vucciria has foreseen the realisation of a creative laboratory to let the young participants describe and imagine their neighbourhood through photography, the study of images and their graphic editing. The laboratory has been realised using analog cameras and coordinated by two experts in visual communication who supported the youth in creating a collective memory of their neighbourhood.

The photographs taken by the youths offered an original and spontaneous point of view on the neighbourhood and have been shown in an exhibition at the Sant'eulalia Church and collected in a catalogue

SPATIAL DIMENSION

The exploration of the neighbourhood by the young residents has been the core of the initiative. The trainers offered them inputs to observe the space from different perspectives as for example by focusing on the presence of water, green or abandoned places of the neighbourhood. The photographs taken also offered a portrait of the residents.

EFFECTS

The main effect for the young participants has been to look at the neighbourhood with new eyes, giving attention to more details. Also it reinforced their love for photography and offered new skills in combining analog cameras and digital graphics. They also have been involved in the preparation of the final exhibition realised in the neighbourhood.
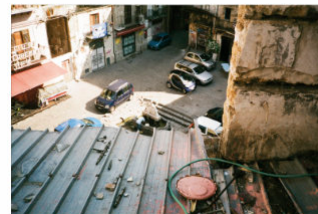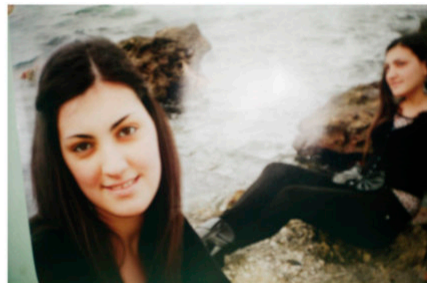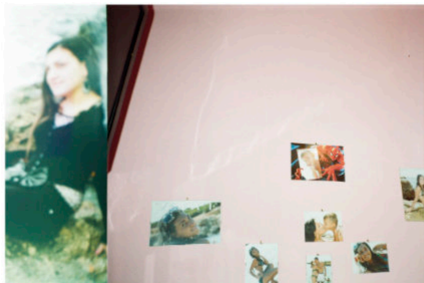
2.5
Capturing, reflecting, reporting

The final step of the UrbEX lab deals with processing the outcomes of the field activities, including the discussion, documentation, evaluation and publication of the results. This spans from fostering the reflection of the young participants on the experience done and the relative learnings, to the evaluation of the team on the achievements of the activities, to finally include publication and dissemination of the results.

2.5.1
Reflection

Wrapping up the exploratory activity fosters a reflection on what we have learned. It is essential as the final stage to give voice and space to the young participants to share their impressions and elaborations, and create an opportunity of conversation leading to a collective reflection within the group. Is also important to allow inclusive forms of expression to mitigate the tendency of less vocal people to be obscured by more extrovert personalities.

What did the young participants learn from the experience?	What did the organising team / youth workers learn from steering the exploration?	What could be interesting follow ups of the realised activities?

What kind of civic engagement / improvements for the neighbourhood could be further developed?	What social bonds or entrepreneurial ideas could be improved in the territory involving youths?

2.5.2
Evaluation

The common reflection on the outcomes should be completed with some systematic evaluation of the results of the project and its impacts on the targeted beneficiaries. While setting the initial aims of the project is good practice to define also qualitative and/or quantitative indicators that should be met to demonstrate their achievement. This practice can be completed with a simple survey or questionnaire for the beneficiaries, ideally done at the beginning and repeated at the end of the activities to measure expectations and their satisfaction through the project.

Questions to ask young participants initially include:

What is your motivation to participate in the UrbEx Labs?	What do you expect to get from the UrbEx Labs?	What is your connection with the area?
What would you like to achieve in your neighbourhood?	What are the best steps to achieve such results?	How do you want to contribute?

Questions to ask after the lab include:

Were your expectations met during the Local Labs?	**What did you learn from the local labs?**
How did you contribute?	**How do you want to contribute to your community?**

Questionnaires can also to be prepared and used together with the young participants to survey local inhabitants as part of the exploration activities, in case the project aims at impacting the community at large.

Exercises & tools: UrbEX questionnaire

Find here questionnaire that was realised the local labs of our project.

Model created for the assessment before the UrbEX local labs

Model created fo the assessment after the UrbEX local labs

GOOD PRACTICE
Humano festival

△ 4Change with local municipalities, schools and associations

◉ Bairro Padre Cruz and Alpiarça

🕐 September 2021 - April 2022

◎ Young people and educators of schools - and their local municipalities, actors and communities.

🔗 https://humanofestival.pt

Project **Humano Festival** is a process for young people to engage, reflect and act in their neighbourhood, departing from formal education spaces and surpassing the school walls in synergy with local partners, inhabitants and existing cultural/social activities.

Combines different tools: arts for creation and reflection on the surroundings, mapping tools to extract young people's perspective into their neighbourhood, new literacies for reflection on media use in their life/community and even philosophy workshops.

This participatory dynamic builds from young people's reflections and creations (eg. artistic interventions, tutorial media literacy videos) that become visible to the community.

SPATIAL DIMENSION

Arts and new literacies to explore their community, the private and public space, the assets and people.

EFFECTS

Young people were engaged and proud of their work, working in an autonomous way. Debriefings, debates and informal ways to evaluate/feedback - as well as a baseline/endline questionnaire were included in this process.

2.5.3
Documentation

Based on the initial communication plan (see 2.2), an accurate documentation of the activity, including preparatory discussions, explorations and wrap-up sessions, should be realised during all phases of the project. This will be an important resource for reflection and evaluation internally to the project, but as well the basis for dissemination and exchange activities on a larger scale. Take care of documenting with pictures or videos all phases of the activities and to scan maps and drawings produced during the labs. When the organisation can afford it, it is better to have a person in charge of producing the documentation.

An important aspect to consider is to get a release form for the use of the images signed by the participants, or, in the case of minors, by adults legally in charge. It is good practice to define in the initial phase of the project a minimum data policy of the project and to prepare waiver forms to be signed by people photographed or filmed during the activities.

2.5.4
Publication

Publishing the results of the exploration laboratories may not necessarily be the primary objective of the project, rather focused on the development of personal and social capacities of the beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the publication of outstanding results may have a positive impact, both on motivating the participants and for the purpose of improving local communities and the neighbourhood. In other cases, the publication of the outcomes may be an essential goal of the exploration project.

Aside from traditional means of publication that may be out of budget, social media today offer a wide variety of channels and platforms to make available the results of the activities to a wider public. Platforms like Issuu, Media, Epub, Kindle provide opportunities to publish editorial formats online; Youtube, Vimeo etc. allow to make accessible video documentations; SoundCloud and other similar solutions are for audio tracks, and there are plenty of solutions for pictures and graphics. Also, platforms like WalkListenCreate or SoundWalk allow you to create audio guided tours. Finally through OpenStreetMaps or GoogleMaps it is possible to publish maps online.

The key aspect of today's media and locative technologies is their interoperability, which allows overcoming the static publication of content in favour of dynamic archives integrating multiple formats and media, and to spread content through different channels and audiences.

GOOD PRACTICE
Patio 108

⚠ Jartura, ZEMOS98

📍 Seville, Spain

🕐 2020, 10 months

🎯 Young citizens living in the peripheries of Seville, interested both in the narratives of the city and the political and social challenges it faces.

🔗 https://patio108.es
https://www.instagram.com/p/CGAq5_aoA6k

Patio 108 is an invitation to occupy the narratives of Seville. Citizens can share stories, complaints, memories and experiences around their relation to the city that are usually forgotten by the government and local media. Patio 108 is an open and collaborative platform in which any inhabitant can send a video-testimony. Each testimony adds to a map composing a mosaic or still picture of the city of Seville right after the pandemic.

Patio 108 questions us about the model of city we want to live in through twelve different categories: housing, childhood, diversity, tourism, public space, security, culture, mobility, work, memory, feminisms and climate. The platform is a tool to reclaim the right to the city when social distance is the law; but it also acknowledges that most of the problems that arise are rooted in the city functioning itself. The health crisis stressed their importance, more than creating them.

SPATIAL DIMENSION

The project was centered in the city and municipality of Seville, in its 11 districts distributed in 108 neighborhoods, (hence the name of the platform Patio108, being the patios a traditional popular element of the Andalusian architecture where the coexistence and celebration of the neighbors takes place) but this does not necessarily exclude those who live outside of it. The experience of those who have to commute daily to the city to work, study, etc., is also considered relevant and significant.

EFFECTS

Patio 108 was open to receive video-testimonies by citizens of Seville during a 4 month period. It received up to 70 video testimonies and stirred conversation around the challenges of Seville through its instagram account with around 850 followers. The ultimate goal was to build an area of exchange capable of illuminating the complexity of the urban experience in Seville, incorporating, for this purpose, the largest possible number of voices from the "peripheries" of all kinds. The platform was a tool to reclaim the right to the city when social distance was the law; but it also acknowledged that most of the problems that arise are rooted in the city functioning itself. The health crisis stressed their importance, more than creating them.

RESOURCE
Knight lab

Northwestern University Knight Lab is a community of designers, developers, students, and educators working on experiments designed to push journalism into new spaces. The Lab develops prototypes, projects and services that help make information meaningful and promote quality journalism, storytelling and content on the internet.

Among their projects, modules for storytelling, timelines, story maps are available for creating innovative visualisations of social and spatial data.

https://knightlab.northwestern.edu/projects

2.5.5
Dissemination

The publication and capitalization of the results of exploration activities with youths may lead also to the opportunity to exploit the learnings in other contexts, transferring practices and knowledge through and to other subjects. Alongside the specific methodology proposed in this handbook to be tested in the local labs, UrbEX aims at creating a network of organisations practising urban exploration with youths, and a platform to facilitate networking and capacity building. The platform will offer an opportunity for publishing the outcomes of urban exploration and build a shared archive of experiences and methods.

Let's use and spread it!

https://www.urbex4youth.org

SECTION 03
Tools and exercises
for Urban Exploration

3.1
URBAN MEMO

Urban Memo is a co-design methodology aimed at engaging small groups of participants in a situated reflective practice. It is employed to improve their capacity to use photography and graphic composition, and to foster collective reflection and elaboration on a given socio-spatial context. The Memo lab is based on conceiving, designing and realising a variation of the popular Memory card game with images captured by the participants. The collaborative design of the memory game is employed as a flexible instrument for facilitating urban surveys and participative processes.

PROCEDURE

1. Definition. The first session defines the scope of the laboratory. Here the participant discusses the purpose of the exploration, specific focus, geographical area under scrutiny, rules of exploration and format of the materials that will be produced.

2. Collection. The participants explore the territory using digital photography to capture elements they find significant. They are free to collect as many images and ideas as they like.

Physical items, paper documents to be scanned, or stock images available in the digital commons can be collected as well: any sort of documentary material is admitted as long as it can be reduced a to a single chart with a clear iconic form. Successively each participant will propose a strict selection of few poignant elements. This phase ends with a plenary to discuss individual selections and combine them in a common collection.

3. Selection. An online repository is adopted to share and organise the set of images. For this purpose a Trello Board is suggested. The facilitator introduces a set of categories used to classify the images. This taxonomy can be discussed and adapted according to the lab's purpose and context. The selection process can take longer time and go through online interaction. Voting tools can be also used to determine the final selection of a collection between 36 and 64 images.

4. Production. The digital images (drafts) reworked and edited to produce the final set of cards. This phase may include going back on site to take propr photo shots. Depending on the focus and skills of the participants, training on photography and graphic design can be provided as part of the didactic experience. Otherwise, this phase can be delegated to a skilled designer / photographer to produce a final version. Finally the actual set of cards is produced designing a layout, printing and cutting the cards. Multiples can be produced as a material outcome for each of the participants.

5. Application. The card set is ready for use. It can be employed for recreational purposes, as a regular memory card game. The game can be turned in a tool to facilitate discussion and foster reflective practices, i.e. extracting cards and asking for comments and stories about the represented places or for mapping issues and conflicts. The set of cards can be used to stimulate "find the spot" tours and treasure hunts games, or to create storyboards, using the cards as representing plans for a future video shooting.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through the different stages the group designs a cognitive process that includes setting objectives; exploring a spatial context, capturing impressions and information; refining graphic and photographic composition, selecting and editing contents; finally, delivering a creative and aesthetically valuable artefact in collective form, and employing it as an entertaining reflective practice.

URBAN MEMO

📦 Digital cameras, computer, layout software, printers

🕐 3 – 5 sessions (about 3h each)

🔗 http://www.tesserae.eu/practice/urban-memo

3.2
SECRET MISSION

The **Secret mission** is a simple game to focus the attention of the participants to survey specific aspects of urban contexts and foster discussion and team building. It can be applied to individuals or forming sub- teams. The facilitator prepares a set of paper envelopes containing different instructions about phenomena or elements of the urban landscape to observe or information to retrieve. The envelopes with the secret mission are distributed to the participants at the beginning of surveys or site visit.

This will provide each participant or team with a specific focus, exercise or practical task during the experience of visiting or exploring a territory. Having a personal mission will increase the active involvement of the participant, requiring each one the execution of specific tasks or to ask for missing information. In the final session, reporting on each one's mission will facilitate the common discussion and ensure that everybody's voice and contribution is collected.

This technique can be applied in several context, e.i. facilitating site visit of professionals involved in knowledge exchange activities, engaging youths through a playful gamification process or encouraging the inclusion of disadvantaged or passive subjects in discussing territorial issues.

PROCEDURE

1. Introductory session: The individuals or teams receive the secret missions and are instructed on how to comply with them during the survey.

2. The participants explore the territory. They may all be following the same itineraries or not, but will definitely have to adopt different perspectives or objectives while surveying the given spatial context.

3. During the final session they report the different findings in a plenary discussion, possibly showing and confronting notes and annotated maps on a wall.

Paper envelopes, maps

One or more days according to the type of spatial survey it is applied for.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Reporting in a plenary session all together the different findings will provide a wide set of different perceptions and understanding of the territory and foster a discussion that include a multiplicity of aspects that influence a spatial identity.
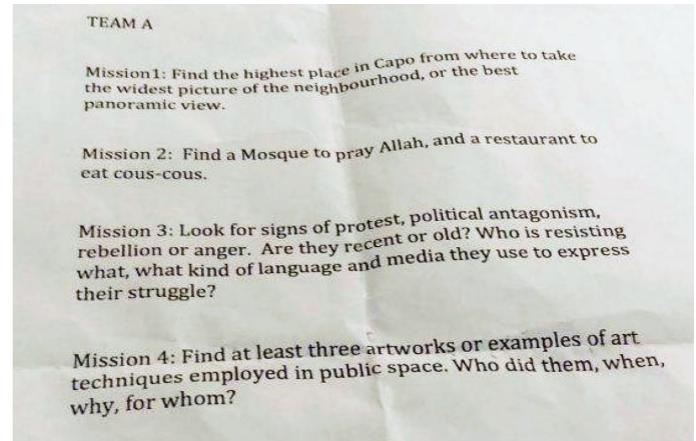
TEAM A

Mission 1: Find the highest place in Capo from where to take the widest picture of the neighbourhood, or the best panoramic view.

Mission 2: Find a Mosque to pray Allah, and a restaurant to eat cous-cous.

Mission 3: Look for signs of protest, political antagonism, rebellion or anger. Are they recent or old? Who is resisting what, what kind of language and media they use to express their struggle?

Mission 4: Find at least three artworks or examples of art techniques employed in public space. Who did them, when, why, for whom?

3.3
THRESHOLD WALKING

Based on the **Exercise of urban reconnaissance** dedicated to the "city of threshold", the concept is to identify an existing urban border (administrative, district) and to walk along it trying to observe how it is actually reflected in the physical landscape, its identity, perception, accessibility etc.

PROCEDURE

↘ The participant are asked to identify their perceived limits of the area on transparent map

↘ The map are superimposed, producing a strip representing the average threshold territory identified the participants. This is used to establish an itinerary.

↘ The participants follow the itinerary taking notes on the map.

↘ The observations are discussed together.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Exercises on urban reconnaissance allow the participants to access the complexity of the city through a particular optic in order to understand and disentangle the common denominators of urbanisation processes at planetary scale as well as the specificities emerging of the local territory.

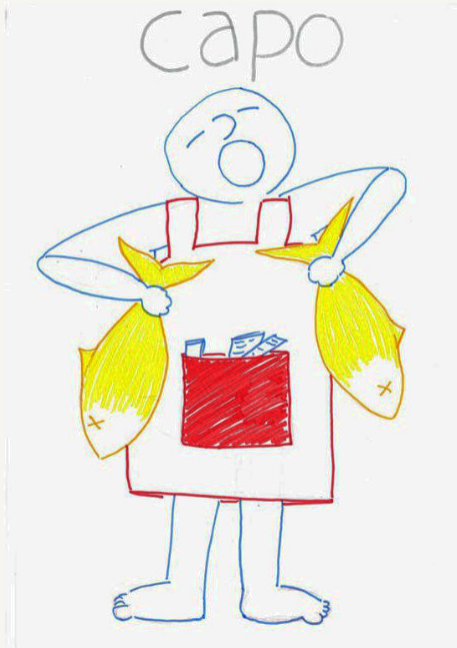⬡ Maps of the neighbourhood on transparent paper

🕐 One session

🔗 http://exercises.oginoknauss.org/threshold-city
http://urban-reconnaissance.oginoknauss.org/gorizia-the-thin-border-il-confine-sottile

_3.4_
THE CITY AS A PERSON

Presenting the city (in this case a neighbourhood) as a person is an exercise created by the trainer Marija Biljan. Based on their experiences and perceptions, participants imagined a neighbourhood as a person. Led through an interview, a multiple personality is created and illustrated with the support of an illustrator.

PROCEDURE

↘ Participants are asked to reflect on the city/area of the city they are working or living in. They think of their favorite places, of their connection to the place.

↘ Facilitator starts asking questions: If a (put the name of the place you are working in - city or a neighbourhood) were a person, who would it be? How do you imagine that person to be? Is it a man or a woman, or without gender? Is it young or old? What are the dominant colors? Are there any smells or sounds? In what time of the day, of the year you see that person? What is the past and what will be the future of that person? Do you have contact with that person? If that person spoke, what would s/he tell you? If that person has a bag, what would be inside?

↘ Participants don't answer to the first round of questions, but just try to imagine the personified place. When the facilitator starts to ask questions the second time, after each question participants can tell their answers. In a form of brainstorming facilitator writes down answers to the flipchart.

↘ After the ¨interview¨, participants work either in small groups or individually on creating their own city/neighbourhood as a person. They can choose to write a story based on asked questions and personal impressions or draw/illustrate/make collage that will present the personified place.

*In case there are 2 facilitators, one leading the narrative part and the other facilitating illustration part, during the collective interview, the artist can do the graphic harvest of participants' answers.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This exercise allows participants to reflect and observe their city or neighbourhood from a different perspective. Attributing human characteristics to a physical place reveals maybe hidden impressions or emotions towards the place, the relationship between a participant and a place.

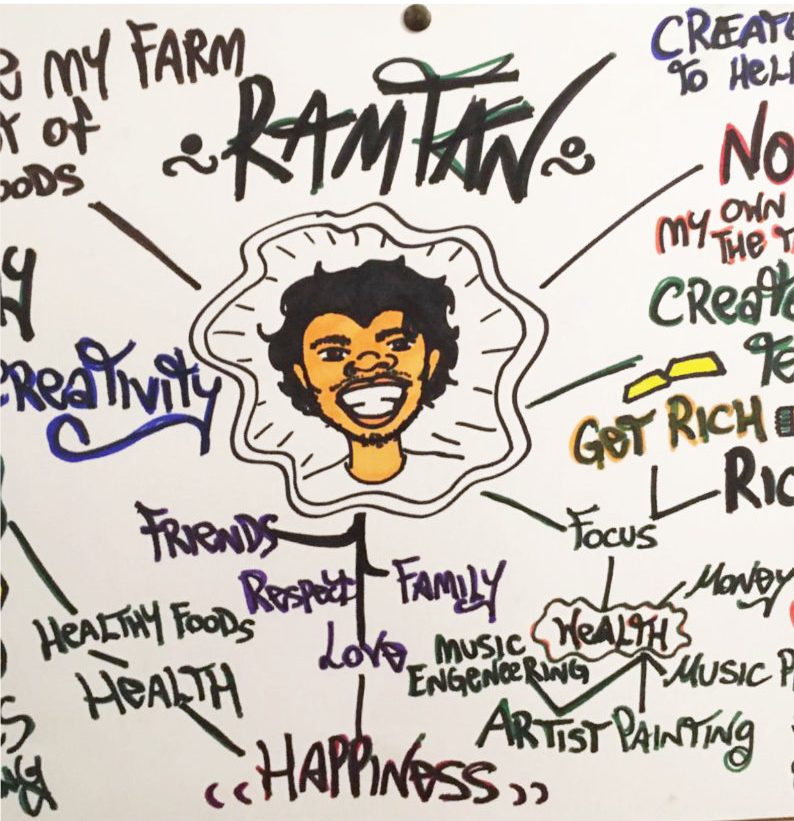**Paper, coloured markers, material for the collage**

1.30h – 2 h

3.5
MAP MY WORLD

This exercise promotes that the participants consider the connections they have with places outside of their living area. They draw their own mental map of these places and the importance they hold. E.g: links with other countries, family members who live in different places, and their own culture.

PROCEDURE

1. The exercise starts by putting a selfie or a drawing of the participant at the centre of their world (a page) and locate places according to these themes:

- ↘ A place I like (and why)
- ↘ A place I dislike (and why)
- ↘ A memorable incident
- ↘ Changes I have noticed (recent or historic)
- ↘ A wish (what would I change and why)

2. Participants also choose one theme-related item:

- ↘ Something about the local environment
- ↘ A place where children can participate
- ↘ A place that is important for a local culture or community.

Participants learn about making the connection between personal experiences and matters of importance and their relationships with both local and global links. They also learn about places and things that are important to them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This exercise allows participants to reflect and observe themselves and the world around them and how will they like to see it changed. It reveals information which might not be shared verbally easily.

Blank A3 cardboard and colour pens.
Optional: photo printer, camera or phone, glue.

1 h – 2 h

3.6
STRATIFICATION LAB

People, languages, buildings, places are originated by multi-layered dynamics. Every city and neighbourhood is the result of this cultural and social process. Every group is invited to work on a map to identify the places representative of stratification, continuity and mix of customs for each topic (i.e. religion, culinary practises, traditional activities) through the help of the residents.

PROCEDURE

1. The facilitator shows some images/pictures of the city several years before and ask participants to guess what places they are.

2. The participants are invited to think about the places of interest they know of the neighbourhood: significant streets, identity points, buildings with several architectural phases, etc.

3. The facilitator shows some images/places of the neighbourhood where the concept of stratification of culture and identities can be seen.

4. The participants are invited to identify some topics (food, religion, buildings, squares) and work in groups to find the places in the neighbourhood reliant to that one topic, asking for the help of local people.

5. All the groups indicate in their maps an ideal path with the places they found.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This exercise allows participants to observe their neighbourhood on a multi-layered perspective. They will gain new information on history and culture of their city and will learn to appreciate the multi-source origin of the places.

Paper, coloured markers, maps, pictures

2 h

3.7
DIGITAL WRITING ON THE MAP

#gps-drawing
#writing
#mapping

Inspired by GPS drawings, participants are invited to create words or drawings in the local urban landscape.

PROCEDURE

The facilitator prepares maps of different zones for each group (one area per group). The zones should be next to each other, so at the end when connected, the creations could mean something together - in the case of words they are connected into a sentence; in the case of drawings - a narrative. Participants are divided into small groups of 2-3 people.

Option 1: words

Each group is invited to write a word without telling the others or knowing what the others are writing. Each word has a place in the sentence: group 1 writes a subject (noun), group 2 - verb, group 3 - adjective, group 4 - noun etc. The words should be also next to each other on the map.

Gps mapping of Brivezac (France)
Gps mapping sentence created by 6 groups walking around the village
Photo by Ål Nik

Option 2: illustrations

Similar to the sentence, each group draws a noun, verb, adjective, etc. which afterwards will be connected into a sentence/story.

Each group should have one mobile phone with installed Strava (or similar app) with which to geo-track while walking (and writing/drawing). The digital creations are put on the map by the facilitator at the end and the whole group gathers for debriefing and discussion.
The creation of the geo-drawing should be documented by one member of the group, through photography, video, text.

Mobile phone with connection to the internet and installed gps application (e.g. strava)

90 min - identify paths, prepare for creating the words/illustrations

https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jul/28/san-francisco-runner-artwork-frida-strava

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Understanding of gps tracking and drawing method;
Group exploration of the space connected to its digital map;
Experiments with digital mapping.

3.8
EMPATHY MAP

Empathy Map is a collaborative tool that teams can use to gain deep, shared understanding and empathy for other people. Originally created by Dave Gray, this exercise aims to define the main characteristics and needs of the target groups in question.

PROCEDURE

1. The facilitator divides the group into 5 teams (5 pax per group) and gives each group a template of Empathy Map. Each team is given 30 min and asked to work on the template defining the target group of the project – youth in risk of social exclusion.

2. Each team shares their Empathy Maps and the facilitator on the flipchart draws a common Empathy Map, counting on a group agreement.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This tool helps teams develop deep, shared understanding and empathy for other people; to empathise and synthesise observations and draw out unexpected insights about the needs of the target group in question.

📦 **template paper, pen**

🕐 **1 h - 1.30 h**

3.9
MAPS AND ME

Personal exploration activity for the participants to bring their background, origin and story to the group.

PROCEDURE

Each participant should bring a map of their country and is invited to intervene in it and reflect their personal vision. By drawing, writing, tearing, and cutting out the "official" map, they create a new picture of their country/city/village/hood, reflecting our likes and dislikes, revealing the places we know and those where we never went, and presenting our national territory as a reflection of our own subjectivity and personality.

When it is finished, each country is cut up along the borders (real and subjective), and all maps are assembled on the walls to recreate a fictitious continent: some countries will be absent and others present several times, but all will be very singular.

Reflecting on our origins - how we perceive our background and places
photo by Äl Nik

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Reflection on maps from our countries - they objectivity, subjectivity and personal experiences;

Better understanding of other participants' origin, background, stories and home places.

Maps from their home places, paper, pens, scissors, glue...

60 min - designing the maps
30 min - group presentation and discussion

https://www.nomadways.org/en/projects/subjective-mapping-2017

3.10
MEET OUR SURROUNDING

An invitation to discover the surrounding in little groups, by looking for given inputs, harvesting and assembling them to create a whole new story.

PROCEDURE

Participants are divided in groups of 3, go for a walk with a notebook and collect (or created) the following 'data': one doodle of an animal, a plant or an object, a few words describing one smell they liked; three words from signs, one texture they liked, the name of someone living in the area, the title of a book of comic, name of feminist activist.

Each group receives a random headline of a newspaper. This title is the title of their new piece of art that they have to write and draw: a short visual story that incorporates all the data they have.
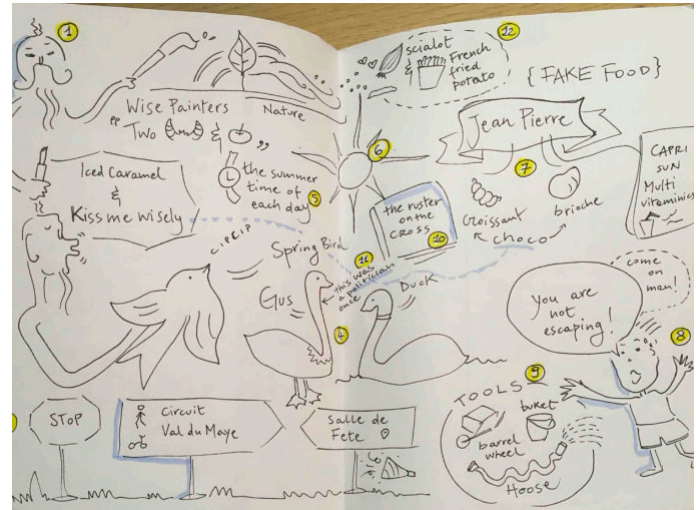
Finally, each group shares their stories with everyone.

Ilaria Fresa
notes taken about the inputs to look for in the surrounding

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This exercise contributes to the team building process as well as encouraging free creativity within the group.

Ilaria Fresa
once the inputs collected, creation of storyline for the surrounding storytelling
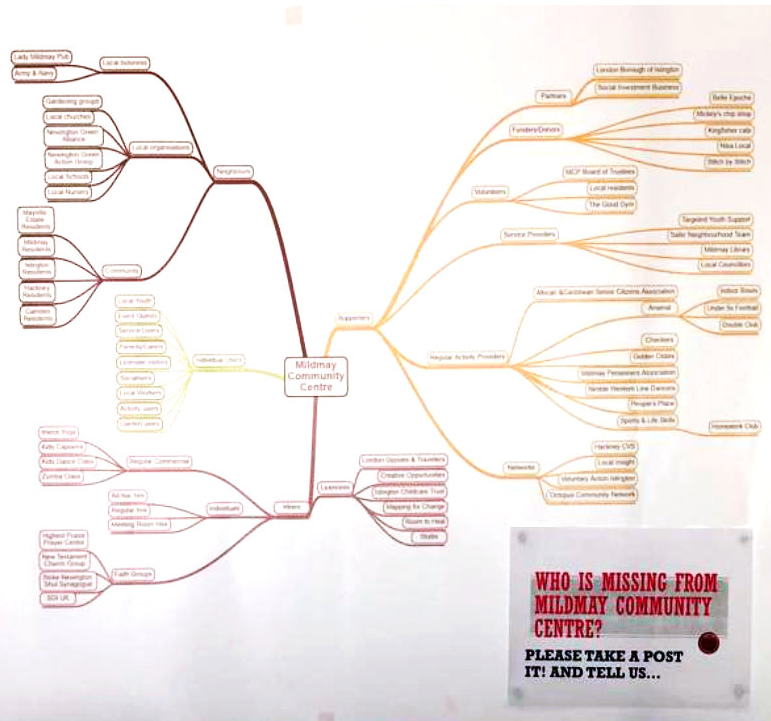
📦 **pencil and paper**

🕐 90 min - walking
60 min - story creation
30 min - sharing stories

3.11
STAKEHOLDER MAP

This exercise allows to map out existing and potential stakeholders and players contributing to and affected by the project in hand has several purposes. Firstly, the process allows project organisers and organisations to evaluate existing channels of communication and those which have not been exploited or explored to date. Secondly, it can highlight any groups or demographics who are not connected or represented, but are present. Thirdly, it can provide a focus to where efforts should be spent to ensure the diversity of the area or issue is represented. The stakeholder map can include those target groups who may be directly involved and engaged in the project, but also 'potential influencers' who are useful to target for communication and dissemination throughout the project.

PROCEDURE

1. The initial step of stakeholder mapping is to conduct desktop research to identify any networks, organisations and groups to engage in the project. Desktop research should not be dismissed in view of local knowledge as it can uncover less known support groups, networks and local businesses.The research can be a simple web search of the local area and viewing local maps.

2. Working with a focus group of up to 5 participants (youth workers, youth representatives and other relevant stakeholders), hold a workshop and ask participants to list any groups or networks they are already connected to. Write the answers on post-it notes. Once the list is exhaustive, begin to categorise the groups and networks, e.g. according to their involvement such as already active / potentially interested / hard to reach etc; or according to their role such as neighbours / service provider / communication channel / policy maker etc. Compare the lists with the results of the desktop research and categorise, with the participants, any groups that are not already included in the lists. From this workshop, the facilitator can take away the lists within the categories and either digitise or manually produce a poster of the results.

3. The final draft of the stakeholder map can be displayed in a public space (in the case of a community project) for a week or so, and passers-by are invited to add their ideas to the map, using post-its and pens provided. The stakeholder map will be updated to incorporate these additions and suggestions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This exercise will provide a better insight of the networks and stakeholders that the youth interact with. It might reveal potential collaborations or existing conflicts, which is highly valuable information when designing the exploration activities.

post-it notes, paper, flipchart, pens, software programme if wanting to digitise.

2 hours for desk-based research, 2 hours to build the first version of the map. Ongoing revisions might be required.

3.12
SUBJECTIVE MAPPING OF YOUR SPACE

#mapping
#space
#discovery
#exploration

With this activity, the participants are invited to explore their working space during the workshop. They not only reflect on how the areas are being used by everyone but also discover their specifics in more detail putting them on a visual map. It is also a team-building activity that gives them the opportunity to bond and get a better sense of the space they are occupying at the moment. They create their maps by focusing on particular elements to map as a group.

PROCEDURE

In this activity participants map the space they are living in and working during the workshop. They are invited to divide into groups according to the number of rooms/floors/areas to be mapped. Each group will map a part of the working locations subjectively - e.g. if we have space of 3 floors (ground floor with kitchen and rooms; first floor with rooms and working space and a mezzanine with more bedrooms), each group maps one floor. This should be applied to the particular space. The groups describe their own vision of their piece of territory through the map:
how do inhabitants live in this part of the world?
Where do they gather? Where are the sacred places?
Is there any social division?

Where are the barriers, frontiers and the uncharted lands?

At the end of the exercise, all maps are put together on the wall to create the whole map of the space. A debriefing session follows up to give the participants time to discuss the process.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Collective work to explore and map a space; learning to map and understand the subjective elements of maps; bonding team-building activity; learning to observe, research and apply mapping skills immediately.
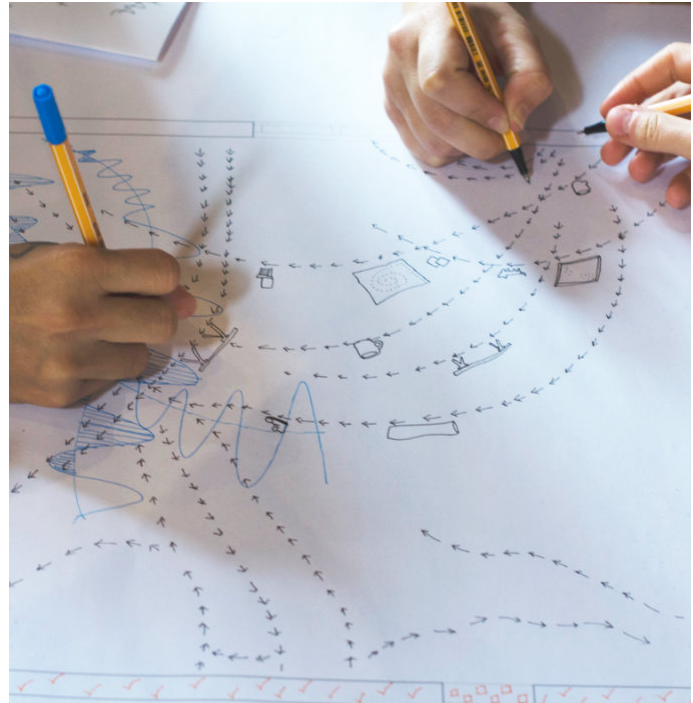
Basic scheme of the space (simple plan) for each floor/room/area (A3). Pens, markers, paper, cameras, phones.

460 min - an exploration and data collection
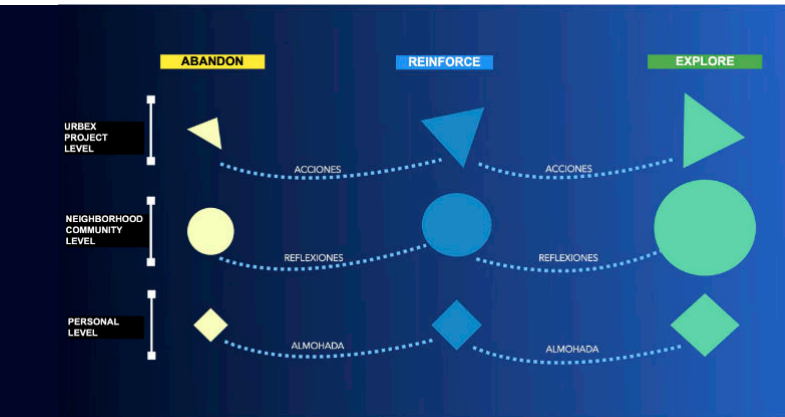90 min - creating the maps
40 min - exhibition and group discussion

https://www.nomadways.org/en/projects/subjective-mapping-2017

3.13
THE ARCHIPELAGO

This is an exercise that will help the group to strategically design its project and establish a roadmap that brings together the personal intuitions and collective desires.

The main metaphor that articulates the exercise is based on the idea that there are certain volcanic-based archipelagos where certain islands are sinking and other islands are being born. Using this idea we will propose three axes that will articulate a game of imagination. Two of the axes focus on the analysis of what we want to abandon or reinforce (immediate present and past). The third axis focuses on what we want to explore (the future). There can be one or more scales of analysis: the one that sticks to the expl project, the one that takes into account social, political or cultural issues, and finally, the wishes of the participants.

PROCEDURE

On the continuous paper draw three islands for each level of analysis you want to discuss. The first island represents what you want to abandon and will eventually sink, the second island represents what you want to reinforce and will remain in the immediate present, and the third island represents what you want to explore and will emerge in the future.

The exercise starts from left to right, participants have a few initial minutes to fill in their ideas in post-its and place them in the islands where they think they belong.

The islands are also connected by underwater currents that are the actions or reflections that will take us from one island to another, these currents will also be covered by the participants' post-its.

After completing the components of the archipelago, each participant can share their ideas.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This exercise allows us to visualize the collective strategy we wish to follow when articulating our project. It allows us to identify those elements that we must renounce and on which to focus our attention or direct our actions. It is a way of streamlining a strategic conversation and easily adaptable to the specific dimensions of each group or project.

---

continuous paper, markers, colored post-its

Depending on the levels of analysis to be achieved, we recommend 20 min for filling and 60 min for sharing for each level of analysis proposed.

3.14
CITY VISIONARY

City visionary is a board game that encourages youth to become active co-creators of their local environment. It stimulates players to think about unexpected and undesirable themes of urban life, craft visions of public space and enthuse other players. By engaging in the board game environment of predetermined set of rules and mechanisms, such as role-playing, planning, negotiation, resource management and conflict resolution, the participants are introduced to similar mechanism and "rules" present in real life and in the decision-making process of urban development.

PROCEDURE

1. Game puzzle: Dividing youth in groups of 5. Assembling the puzzle of the cards with topics & places.

2. Understanding terms: Discussing meaning of topics and importance of them in their local environment. Adding other relevant topics.

3. Exploring the city: Independent city exploration and observing the life in the city. It is possible to apply other methods of urban exploration within this step (e.g. Urban Reconnaissance, Community maps)

4. Defining a place with potential: Reflection of the city exploration through discussion. Defining a place with potential through argumentation, voting or other participatory decision making.

5. Playing the game: Explaining the rules and defining roles. Playing the game.

6. Creating group vision: Through discussion creating a common vision or selecting one that inspires the group.

7. Vision presentation: Making the presentation* and presenting it to other groups, youth leader, local community or local decision makers. Presentation can be uploaded to Urbex community map platform.

8. Small local action: Brainstorming of ideas based on the common vision, choosing an idea that will be implemented and method of documentation (photo, video). Realizing small local action. Methods of implementation depend on the chosen idea.

23 cards with urban topics, 25 cards with public spaces, 12 empty cards for new public spaces, paper and pencil, 4 playing figures per player, Game Manager/Master

2-3 hours for the longer version, 1.5 hours for the shorter version + extra time for feedback

http://prostoroz.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CV-Printplay-eng-skupaj.pdf
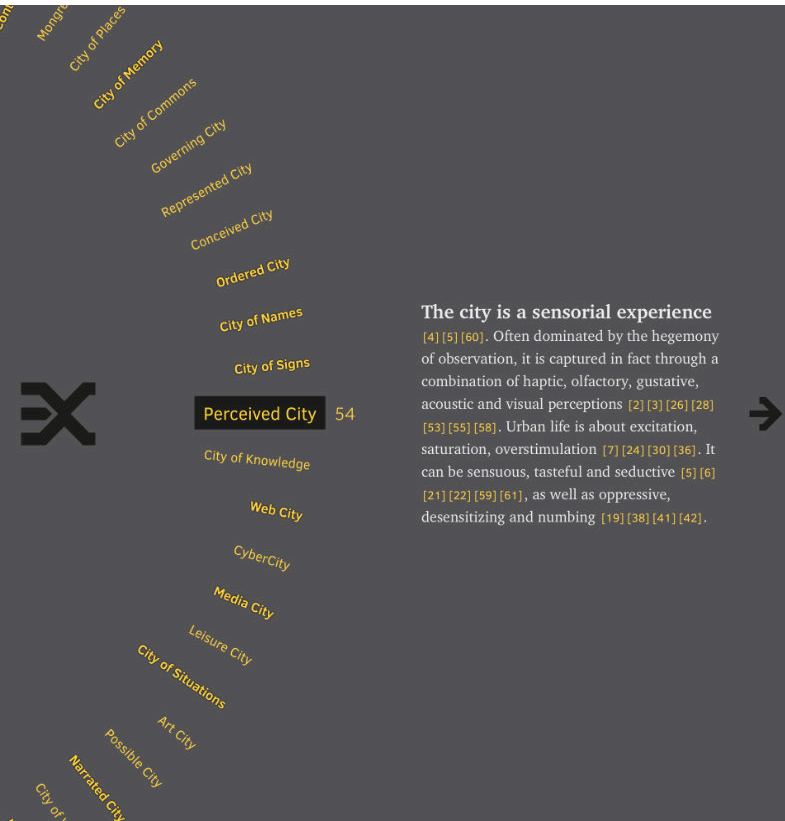
LEARNING OUTCOMES

The main knowledge, skills and competences that are acquired through the exercise are:

↘ Communication (idea presentation, argumentation, moderating)

↘ Social and civic competences (conflict solving, interacting within a group, self-esteem, active citizenship)

↘ Space orientation

↘ Sense of initiative

↘ Cultural awareness and expression

3.15
SENSING THE CITY

The city is a sensorial experience [4] [5] [60]. Often dominated by the hegemony of observation, it is captured in fact through a combination of haptic, olfactory, gustative, acoustic and visual perceptions [2] [3] [26] [28] [53] [55] [58]. Urban life is about excitation, saturation, overstimulation [7] [24] [30] [36]. It can be sensuous, tasteful and seductive [5] [6] [21] [22] [59] [61], as well as oppressive, desensitizing and numbing [19] [38] [41] [42].

Based on the **Exercise of Urban reconnaissance** "Perceived City", the objective of this exercise is to challenge the hegemony of the visual perception and to bring attention towards the multiplicity of sensorial experiences offered by urban space. The participants are invited to concentrate on one single sense, or provided instructions to focus on a sequence of different sensorial experiences. Instructions may include such "rituals" as closing the eyes and walking along walls guided by hands, focus on sound, mapping odors, taste systematically different kinds of food offered in the area, etc.

PROCEDURE

This exercise can be realized as a variant of the Secret Mission one.

↘ Instructions are created and presented to the participants in the initial sessions. The exercise can be done individually or in small groups, e.i, a team can explore an itinerary with each team member focusing on one single sense.

↘ During the exploration the participants are asked to reflect on their sensorial experience and to take notes only using pen and notebook.

↘ In the final session impressions are shared. A map can be used to identify "sensory hotspots" of the neighbourhood.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The exercise helps the comprehension of how the perception of places can be influenced by different sensorial perspectives and to foster discussion on the more or less explicit factors that influence the identity of a neighborhood.

⬡ Notebook and pen

🕐 2 hrs circa

🔗 http://exercises.oginoknauss.org/perceived-city

3.16
THE COMPASS

This exercise will help us find common ground, define the main and/or secondary objectives or formats for our urban observation project as well as to define team work groups.

PROCEDURE

Draw a large compass on the ground with chalk, you can use a rope to mark the circumference but don't worry if it's not perfect!

Have a moment of individual reflection on the themes, objectives, formats or other dimensions that are relevant to the definition of the collective project. After the time of personal reflection, write down on paper your conclusions in a synthesized and summarized form, using a few words. (For example: Biodiversity of the neighborhood / Soundscape or Pin that paper to your clothes or in any way you prefer so that it is visible to the rest of the group and easy to read.

Stand around the compass drawn on the floor.

The compass exercise being used during URBEX4YOUTH exchange meeting in Palermo

Take turns to briefly describe to your colleagues the values or dimensions that are described on the paper pinned to your body and after that walk around the inside of the compass until you choose a position to stand still.

The first person to do so is the one who defines the initial coordinates of the exercise, the others will place themselves inside the compass according to the degree of distance or closeness they feel with what the other participants have stated.

Once all the participants are inside the compass, observe the distribution of your positions and start a conversation about the future steps of your project.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The map you have drawn with your bodies inside the compass positions will give you a reflection of the affinities, common goals or concerns most shared by the group members. This can be a simple way to define work or exploration teams. It can also be a way to decide which themes, values or formats are most relevant to the definition of your common project.

rope, chalk, paper, markers, pins

30min

3.17
TREASURE ISLAND
AN ADVENTUROUS EXPEDITION

This exercise is aimed at drafting a simple action plan for a project or an activity. Using the metaphor of a treasure hunt, it helps to define the key steps needed to bring the activity to an effective outset. It is based on a sketchy map of the treasure island used to visualize the path from the initial stages to the final findings. Participants are divided in small groups and work on drafting an action plan based on the key steps illustrated by the map. The map can be sketched directly on a board or on paper during the lab, or presented on screen in a digital version. A printed paper template is distributed to the groups to support the discussion phase.

PROCEDURE

The map is composed of 9 key elements :

1.The island. Let's draw the shape of the island, we start from a vague image of where we are going to land.

2. The landfall. It is a chosen port or a shipwreck point? Let's describe the entry point of the project. Are we starting from a new perspective? Are we responding to some pressing issue?

3. The Crew: who is enrolled in the expedition? Who are the crew, and who the officials? Let's describe both the managers of the project and the beneficiary group. How do we reach out to them? How do we communicate the project, how do we engage the participants and manage their attention?

4.The compass: How do we start our expedition? How do we establish the right direction? What is the essential first step that will bring us towards success?

5. Reconnaissance: let's assess the extension and limits of the island. Defining the territory of exploration, the area within which the expedition will move.

6. Ambush: savages and wild creatures are waiting for us along the path! What kind of unexpected problems could complicate the project? What difficulties can foreseen and how could be solved

7. Mutiny: what problem could we encounter with the crew in the course of the expedition? How do we manage their expectations, keep their attention on, and reward their contribution to the mission?

8. Treasure! The final reward. What do you expect to obtain through the laboratory? What kind of gains for the participants? how will you present / disseminate the final outcomes?

9. Spoils: how do we account for the treasure? What indicators will you use to measure the success / impacts of your project?

The participants are grouped in teams. They have to retrace the path from the initial landfall (starting point) to the treasure (expected outcomes). The graphic rendering of the map will facilitate their processual thinking step by step.

↘ **First session**: The facilitator will introduce the tool, explaining the aims while showing the map: This can be drawn directly on a whiteboard, or projected through a slide presentation showing the 9 elements appearing one after the other. (15-20 min max)

↘ **Second sessions**: work in a group. Each team will have a paper map with the nine steps of the paths. They discuss each step. They can take notes directly on the map. (40 min)

↘ **Third session**: plenary session wrapping up the results of each team as a draft action plan. The moderator can use some traditional scheme or GANTT to collect the produced info. Final considerations from the comparison (20/30 min)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The exercise helps collective thinking on a planned activity. It can be used by professionals to structure activities in a processual way, but its simple and intuitive language allows to use it also with less skilled groups of beneficiaries to co-design processes and to facilitate co-creation labs.

Model map of the treasure island, paper, pens

1.30 min.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders 1H6fPuaZoflfJq69Du2Sm1-hPXbWOSDfj

3.18
CREATING ADVENTURE MAPS

#Adventure
#maps
#treasure

Photo by Dana Verstak

Treasure and adventure maps are among the most fascinating types of maps. Their aim is not to be easily readable by users, but rather to introduce mystery and difficulty into a quest. Hackers, pirates and adventurers are our main characters of the day.

PROCEDURE

In this activity participants are first invited to think and discuss in small groups where does adventure lie in their lives (who is their favorite adventurer, real or fictional; do they do adventurous things in their everyday lives; what and how would they like to explore; is their work adventurous).

Individually, participants develop their ideas and strategies to create an adventure map. In their planning, they answer to the following questions which will help them shape their concept:

What to discover? How to make the course interesting? How to transcribe the quest? Which graphic traps and puzzles?

Participants identify their course, collect the necessary data, and realize their adventure map. Then, everyone is invited to enjoy the other person's adventure map. The last round is sharing and discussing the experience with the whole group. The activity can be also done in small groups instead of individually.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Planning a sequence of events and how to lead other participants through a process and experience; Researching, planning, collecting data; Testing and proof of concept methodology; Animation of activities.

---

paper, pens, scissors, glue, etc.

---

60 min - answer questions and discuss in groups
90 min - explore local environment and develop their ideas – create maps
60 min - experience other person's adventure map
30 min - collective discussion and sharing
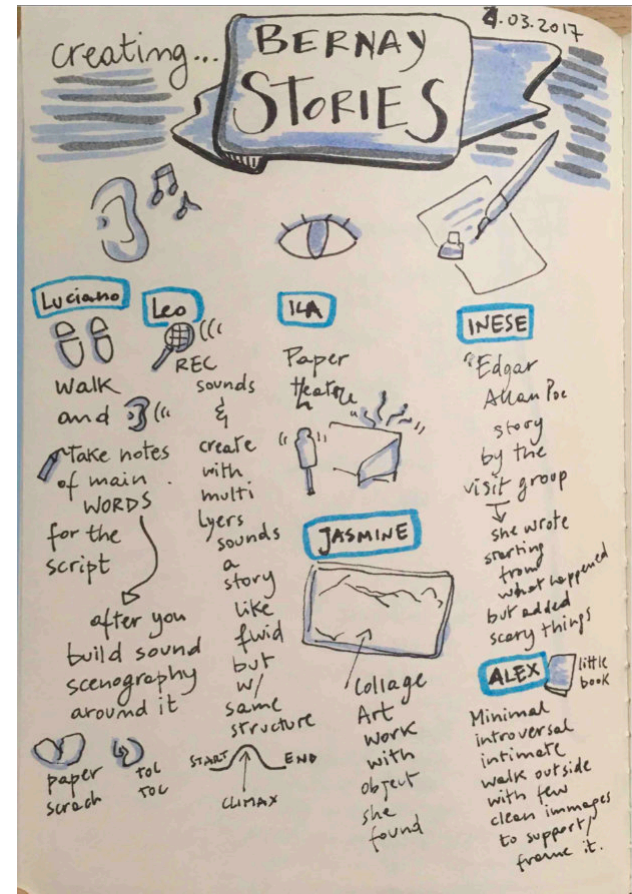
3.19
URBAN SPOTTING

#Discovery
#Representation
#Collaboration
#Visual Literacy

This participatory photography exercise is adaptable to the type of participants, time, objective/research question and space. Was developed by 4Change's team in 2019-21 as a means of harvesting a critical perspective of young people into their own community and training their visual literacy and observational skills.

Requires one individual previous field trip to photograph the territory and the 2 hour workshop. Was tested so far with young people from 11 to 17 years old. Can be implemented with older groups and results in a set of images and reflections.

PROCEDURE

2 facilitators, max. 25 participants (ideal: 10).
Each participant (can be also in pairs) takes a short urban exploration with a camera, having the objective in mind: a thematic, a focus eg. portrait my places (where I live, work, study, love or hangout with friends). Chooses 2-5 images and sends to the facilitator (email/chat/cloud link)

Before the workshop, print and display the photos on a big table (or projected). After the initial dynamic, in silence, each participant chooses one photo (theirs or from another participant, can both choose the same) and writes a post-it note and presents 'why have I chosen this photo' to the group. Then, the group discusses each image, the facilitator makes questions and takes notes (objective, intention and aesthetics as light or framing - but also about neighbourhood: what/who is depicted? What else can we see? What in the picture leads you to say that?

A second round of choices is made, so that all meaningful pictures are chosen. The output is a set of pictures with drafted subtitles (the post-its and notes), ready for an instantaneous (or more elaborate, with quality prints) exhibition.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This exercise is useful to understand the specificities of the neighbourhood and the participants' view of their community. Meanwhile, participants develop their observation and analysis skills, and their understanding of the territory - using self-eliciting mechanism

Cameras or Smartphones with good camera; internet connection; computer & projector or a colour printer; post its & markers; a map of territory (paper/online).

30m previous UrbEX + 2 hours workshop

https://www.facebook.com/4Change.org/photos/ pcb.5100033240083727/5100030693417315

Funded by the European Union

TESSERÆ URBAN SOCIAL RESEARCH

bond*of*union

ZEM◯S98 MEDIATING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

◯4CHANGE

nomadwayp.eu