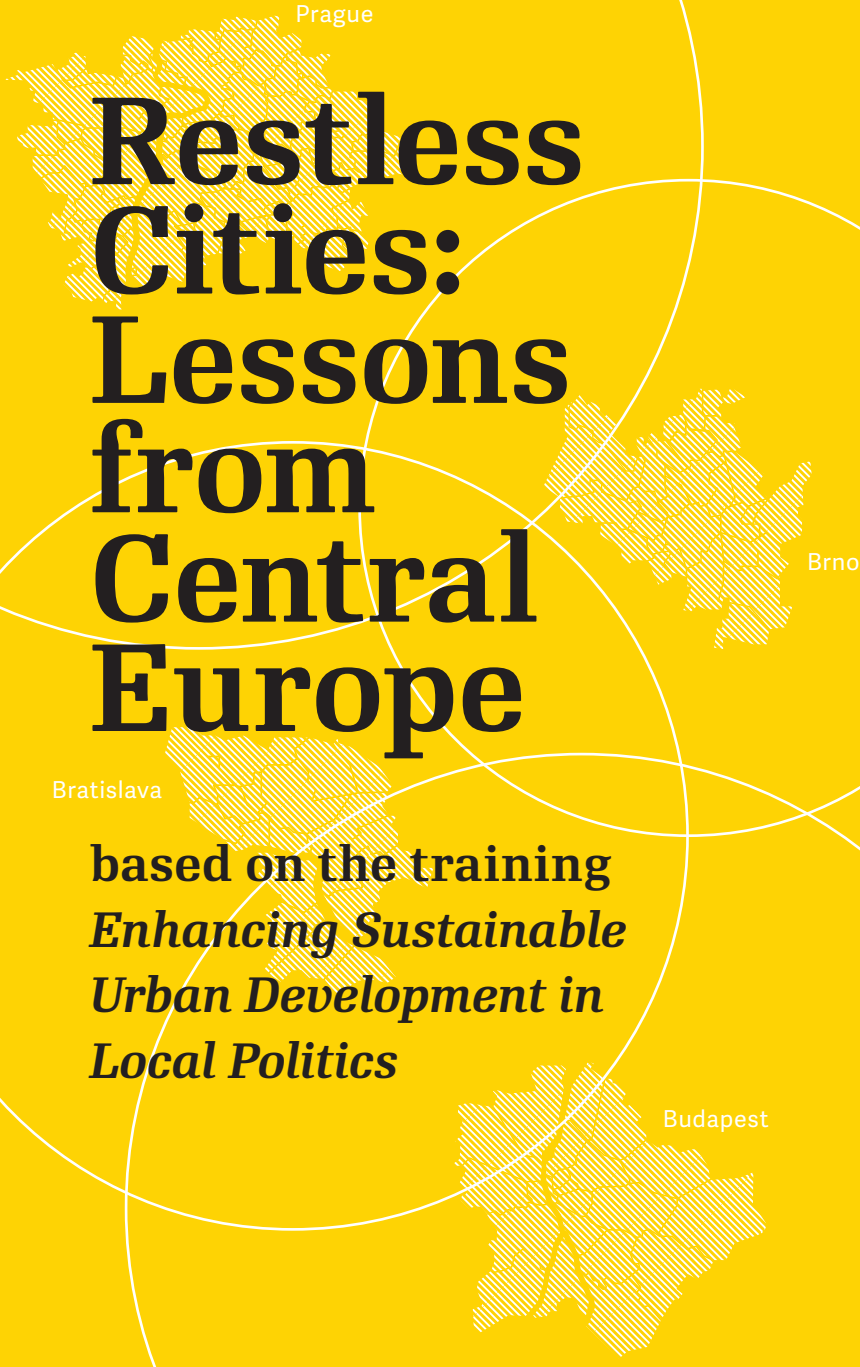

Restless Cities: Lessons from Central Europe

based on the training *Enhancing Sustainable Urban Development in Local Politics*

BY HEINRICH-BÖLL-STIFTUNG e.V., PRAGUE OFFICE · 2018

METHOD

Restless Cities: Lessons from Central Europe is based on the training programme ***Enhancing Sustainable Urban Development in Local Politics*** organized by the Heinrich Böll Foundation for professionals active in the field of urban planning and development with a strong interest in cross-sector cooperation and in making our cities more sustainable and inclusive.

The programme was implemented as an **educational journey through Central European cities in four thematic modules** between November 2016 and September 2017. With a group of 20 participants, we explored progressive initiatives, policies and pilot projects focusing on affordable housing in Brno, participatory processes in Prague, urban development in Bratislava and influencing strategies in the urban development of Budapest.

This book is a summary documenting an exploration of projects and people operating in complex political constellations. It aims to **enhance the reader's strategic thinking** and orientation in the wide network of relationships that are typical for city planning and development projects.

Restless Cities: Lessons from Central Europe

based on the training *Enhancing Sustainable Urban Development in Local Politics*

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22 PARTICIPANTS

→ *mostly professionals with 11 years average experience, 10 with more than one occupation (cross-sectoral work)*

GENDER

45.5% (10) women
54.5% (12) men

AGE RANGE

24—56 years

COUNTRIES

10 Czech Republic
6 Slovakia
2 Hungary
1 Poland
1 France
1 Canada
1 Netherlands

SECTORS

50% (11) public sector (3 students)
13.6% (3) private sector
36.4% (8) non-governmental

PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

6 awareness-raising in the field of architecture, community development, urban planning
4 architecture, urban planning, transportation planning
3 students (architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning)
2 public participation
2 politics, policies
1 city management
1 strategic planning
1 research (urban sociology)
1 media

DURATION

2016/2017
16 days in total
12 full days

CITIES

Prague (Czech Republic)
Brno (Czech Republic)
Bratislava (Slovakia)
Budapest (Hungary)

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What is sustainable (in) urban development? Policies or Politics? Which one do you choose?

PRAGUE — BRNO — BRATISLAVA — BUDAPEST

Opening Remarks

Eva van de Rakt, Zdeňka Lammelová

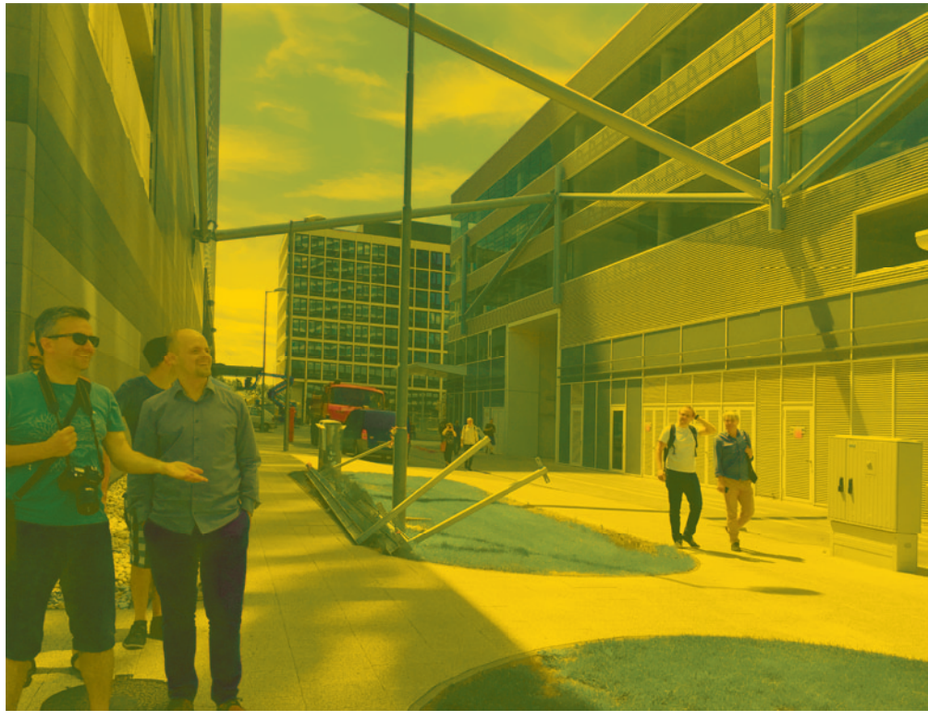
For several years we have been cooperating with our partners in the field of sustainable urban development on various issues, supporting international exchanges among experts, politicians and city officials. We have been observing a disturbing rise of distrust in politics on the national level. Especially the traditional mainstream parties are experiencing an outflow of voters and people's increasing demand for delivering easy and quick solutions favours the populists. On the other side we see that on the local level there are people who are willing to deliver change and renew people's will to engage. Since we have experience leading training programmes on political skills development, we decided to develop a training programme that will empower experts dealing with urban planning and development issues on the local level. There is a lot of knowledge among the experts, but most of us have been educated in a way that restricts us to dealing with people who have the same mindset that we do. The much-adored interdisciplinarity is still rather a theory than a common praxis in approaching the increasingly complex problems of today's world.

For this reason, the Prague office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation decided to develop an educational training programme on *Enhancing Sustainable Urban Development in Local Politics*. The programme was offered to professionals active in the field of urban planning and development with a strong interest in cross-sector cooperation and in making cities more sustainable and inclusive. The participants came from non-governmental organizations, municipalities, the private sector, and members of academia working in the fields of architecture, urban planning, management, development, politics and law, as well as in placemaking, community management and/or activism. The programme was organized as an educational journey through Central European cities in four thematic modules between November 2016 and September 2017. The dramaturgy of the training involved a multidisciplinary approach with special attention to practical learning and skills development.

We travelled from city to city as a group of 20 participants, meeting architects, planners, social workers, members of NGOs, members of public administration offices, and politicians themselves. We got unique insights into progressive attempts toward instituting affordable housing in Brno, toward the real-estate development of Bratislava, into experiments with participatory processes in Prague and understanding political influences on urban planning in Budapest. We were able to observe the trends – some of them really motivating and inspiring, some of them just freshly emerging, and some rather disturbing and challenging – that are moving our cities currently. We explored where urban planning and development meets politics. This has been a learning journey that should help us to understand that politics is something we should not avoid, but something we should be interested in and ready to involve ourselves in.

At this point we would like to express our gratitude to the main trainers of the programme, Albert Eckert and Milota Sidorová, for their professional work and insights and for the great cooperation and inspirational atmosphere they were able to create.

'Restless Cities: Lessons from Central Europe' is a publication that reflects a year-long training programme focused on understanding the political aspects of urban planning in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The interactions with all the people who shared their thoughts and practical experiences with us became the main inspiration for this book, which consists of four thematic chapters that offer introductions into each topic, short texts by selected invited experts, views by the participants themselves, and key learnings about sustainability and politics. The authors of the texts are not just the experts who contributed to the training programme, but also the participants themselves share their learnings and views herein. We hope this book will help readers to understand the often-invisible areas where urban planning moves from the realm of expertise only into the realm of political action and that it will inspire readers to further political learning.



Site visit to the Chalupkova zone, the most intensively-developing part of Bratislava, photo: Milota Sidorová

On the Political Aspects of Urban Planning

Milota Sidorová

Central Europe is a region with an unsettled history. In the 20th century alone our social and political system was erased and rewound four times. In 2019 we will celebrate 30 years of democracy, and although many things have been done to open up city planning processes to the participation of residents, the situation is far from ideal. Since 2015 all of the capitals of the Visegrad countries have witnessed major demonstrations. People have been marching against corruption, neo-Nazism, restriction of women's rights, and increasingly illiberal policies implemented by their governments. With the exception of the issue of corruption, we have been able to see some people marching in favour of these policies. The situation on the national level of politics has worsened, bringing to power populist politicians who are more or less visibly promoting illiberal practices, currently most notably seen in Poland and Hungary. It might be just a question of time before these tendencies spread through the rest of Europe.

Politics at the local level tend to be more stable and less influenced by 'plate tectonics' on the national level. Local politicians are often more trusted, since they deal with many practical issues touching our daily lives. As for the field of city planning, it is possible to do a lot there without the major influence of political parties – but is that always the case?

Very often we are faced with events or books presenting 'best practices' in urban design and planning. However, links to politics and the successful execution of political action are frequently missing from these presentations. Architects and urban planners do not speak about politics often – perhaps this implies that the administration and legal system are functioning well and that when the project or proposal is brought to city hall, political support for it is guaranteed. However, behind the scenes, all architects and urban planners will tell you that politics and policies in urban planning are the most important aspects. How else do we get things done? It is here that the grey and complex world of stronger or weaker municipalities, regulations, places of political negotiations and fights opens up. Here is where architects, experts or activists enter with their work, ideas or expectations and often do not know how to move forward.

Work Up Curiosity

Albert Eckert

Urban development experts, architects, landscape architects, construction engineers and structural designers usually understand each other quite well. However, politicians are mostly strangers to them – and vice versa. What a regrettable failure!

In the training on *Enhancing Sustainable Urban Development in Local Politics* both sides got to know each other better in certain instances. We saw how fruitful it can be when experts understand the politicians' dependency on being re-elected within a complicated structure and adjust their arguments to this situation: How and when will the expert's advices for better housing lead to more voter satisfaction?

The transnational approach of this training made it possible to compare different regional solutions for similar housing problems. This is what all of us need to do: look beyond our own noses. In a learning journey, participants are stimulated by each other and by the local examples of good urban practices, as well as by examples of collapsing structures and social failure. Analysing urban development somewhere else can be so much fun – and at the same time it can be informative and helpful when looking at one's own situation at home.

As a former politician, I envied the participants in this training. The learning environment of a travel group of experts, politicians and activists is an ideal basis for deepening insights into each other's worlds. Political decision-making about urban developments could be so much better if informed by a carefully-planned journey like this one. Everybody found somebody to learn from.

Discussing during Enhancing Sustainable Development in Local Politics in Prague. photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

Understanding the Policy-Making Process and Enhancing Sustainability

Antonín Tym

We find ourselves at a time of 'alternative truth', of politics that are being implemented by movements aiming to distinguish themselves from the 'traditional' political parties and 'traditional' politics as a symbol of corruption and dishonest practices. We find ourselves at a time when the amount of information available is not helping us in our decision-making about important questions, but is rather making this process less clear even in cases where we are able to define what is and is not a priority. We find ourselves at a time when there is no division between left and right politics and when traditional concepts of the monopoly organization of politics through the 'iron triangle' of the formally-managed interaction between the Government and other official institutions (Parliament, unions, etc.) has long since failed to describe the reality of the environment in which politics is playing itself out and the diversity and number of actors intervening. This, then, is the environment in which principles of sustainable development are to be applied that should be a part of all political proposals and an inextricable component of political decisions and measures. Political actors should be able to comprehensibly communicate how they want to implement these principles and achieve changes to the *status quo* in order to simply achieve policy change.

Do we know how to orient ourselves, though, in this confusing maze? Do we know how, about what, and with whom to fight this battle of arguments in the imaginary political arena? With whom should we dialogue? While the financially provided-for, long-established, official actors and institutions can afford a rather significant degree of inefficiency when creating and enforcing their policies, many actors who are labeled as non-institutional or unofficial by some experts cannot afford that luxury. These include

both ordinary citizens and nonprofit organisations or professional groups advocating for certain interests or values. It is exactly these actors who today introduce important elements to policy formation and its change and who form an extensive policy community and interact in policy networks. How, then, can we arrange for these unofficial actors, who frequently work in specific cities and municipalities and are involved with practical problems influencing people's everyday lives, to succeed?

Polity & Policy & Politics for sustainable policy advocacy

The term 'policy-making process' indicates a process through which certain public interests are re-transformed into specific measures aiming (ideally) to change matters for the better. This process also plays itself out in a certain environment that significantly influences its course, or rather, determines its course. At the same time, this process is participated in by many actors fulfilling different roles from various positions. A great deal of (dis)information also enters the process and we can generally call that (dis)information 'quasi-arguments'. Finally, during policy making a whole palette of instruments is used that are meant to contribute to the quality of the decision-making process and therefore also to the quality of the outcomes. It is good to comprehend all of these aspects (and there are many more of them) in terms of their differences and roles, to know them well if we want to have a chance of succeeding.

All decisions happen in a broader context that we call the *polity*, which defines the set-up of a political culture, a social order, or a society. It is important to be aware of this if we want, for example, to transfer a good practice from one country to another (or today even from one continent to another) and are surprised that what functioned in Denmark or Holland does not work the same way in the Czech Republic, Hungary or Poland. Let's say, though, that most actors and policy makers already are aware of this today and that more attention is being dedicated to *policy* – to its very substance and to the way this core content is enforced by various actors, most frequently by political parties in the form of *politics*. In this direction, we can envy the English-speaking countries, as that language distinguishes these three crucial components, which the Czech language and most other languages designate with one and the same expression, 'politics'. It can, therefore, be stated that different actors propose different policies and those are enforced within the framework of politics in a specific polity.

Today we can encounter dozens of approaches to and theories on how the process of policy making can be analysed and interpreted, why basically policy change is or is not achieved, and why exactly this policy (measure) and not a different one has been enforced. Most frequently, however, this is about a mix of causes, where one cause or another predominates at a given moment, or an event (or series of events) has happened to facilitate enforcement of a given policy. If we are meant to have a chance at enforcing our ideas instead of other ideas, then it is good to know, in addition to the content of the policy, what the method for enforcing it is. To quote the words of a classic political scientist, Harold Lasswell, this is not just about knowledge in the policy process (i.e. the subject/matter of the policy) but also knowledge of the policy process (i.e. knowledge of how this process works in reality).

Today the classic textbook definition of the political process is divided into five basic phases:

1. agenda setting
2. policy formulation
3. decision-making
4. implementation
5. evaluation.

While the main discussion frequently leads to asking what kind of measures should be introduced, for many of the measures proposed the process of policy making begins much earlier, and it is that phase that is essential. These are moments when a problem becomes a public problem and a subject of discussion among a broader spectrum of actors, making it onto the so-called agenda (agenda-setting – of the Government, of the programme for a local council, of the programme for a political party, etc.). In the theory of policy analysis we are able to encounter many interpretations as to why and under what circumstances this is able to happen. In practice, once again, this is usually a combination of several factors, which we will discuss below. During the second phase the formulation of the policy measures happens, usually involving a description of the problem and proposals of solutions. In the third phase the decision-making process happens, e.g., a city council, local assembly, Parliament or Government meets and takes a decision. After one of the solutions is chosen, its implementation/realisation happens in the fourth phase. Finally, the fifth and last phase of this process is evaluation as to whether the desired changes have been achieved, whether the measures have been economical and efficient. The outcomes of the fifth phase are then frequently

an instigation for further changes and new measures, as data and new information are available that cast the problem in a new light.

The process described above, however, never happens in a linear fashion and the phases frequently intertwine or repeat themselves – but it is good for all actors to know which phase they are in and which instruments should be used to enforce their intentions most efficiently. For example, if we are looking for a good solution (phase 2) to a poorly-defined problem (phase 1), all of the subsequent phases are essentially useless and will be a waste of our money and time. Similarly, it pays to engage the public and to earn their support more during phases 1, 2 and 3 than it does in phases 4 or 5. During the first phase the public can aid us with getting the problem into the public discussion and there is a chance that it will be taken up by a significant political actor (a party, a professional organisation, an NGO, the media, a VIP) and that a solution will be sought. In the second phase the public can support the decision makers choosing the 'correct' solution or allocating enough financial and human resources to it. On the other hand, to organise a protest with the support of the public during implementation (construction of a highway, a shopping centre, etc.) is usually not very effective, as from the procedural point of view the measure has already acquired the necessary permissions and, in a democratic society, it is necessary to respect that outcome. Despite this, however, we know many examples of civil society movements managing to halt controversial constructions or forest clearances and the problem being returned to phase 2 or 3 for solution.

Why, though, does one measure receive attention and another not? Another classic theoretician, John W. Kingdon, commented as follows: 'When you plant a seed, you need rain, soil and luck.' Frequently a change of policy happens thanks to a 'focusing event' occurring in one of the political subsystems (e.g., the environment, transportation, the health sector, etc.). Examples that are often presented are those of airplane or oil tanker accidents or other catastrophes that lead to tightening norms or to an absolutely new law, to prohibitions, etc. In and of itself, however, such an event is not enough. There must be somebody who exploits the 'punctuated equilibrium' and offers an alternative or completely new solution. These are figures (policy entreprenuers) representing specific organisations (but they can also be individuals) who have enough background information and resources to anticipate the correct constellation (i.e., the rain, the soil and the luck). Other factors also create that here, such as public opinion, media popularity, or the

willingness of the governing (dominant) party to solve the problem. If these factors/policy streams appear, we say that a window of opportunity has opened and that there is an opportunity to enforce what heretofore was either a solution with minority support or one that had no chance of adoption. The window of opportunity, however, can also be created by long-term work, e.g., the process of policy learning, whereby a certain group of proponents (e.g., a think tank, the academic sector) provides arguments and supportive opinions until a change of attitude happens among those in the decision-maker position (e.g., a Government). Simply put, 'focusing events' can be a cause of essential paradigm shift, while policy learning frequently leads rather to incremental changes.

For actors who are experts in planning, urbanism, transport or public health it is assumed that they will know the content of the policy very well that they want to enforce, that they will know the instruments to use to achieve that, and that they will know what outcomes are to be anticipated, i.e., they have the 'knowing for the policy process'. Frequently, however, they do not enforce their good intentions and visions because they do not know how to enforce them in the political arena, as their knowledge about or of the policy process is low.

It is also good to be aware of the difference between policy making and (strategic/land use) planning. Even if these are related processes, their aims, approaches, and starting conditions are different. Planning is a process that especially begins with objectively-determined facts (the location of a city, the climate, the nature of an industry, population size, educational structures, etc.) and does its best to take advantage of the comparative advantages of the given locality and to eliminate any eventual threats or weak aspects – and its aim is to define long-term priorities (10 or more years ahead) and the essential values or the basis for broad consensus within a given community. It is (or should be) about a strongly participatory process of formulating the public interest of a given society. In this process the actors' deep core beliefs appear and are applied more than their political opinions because, for example, a strategic plan is meant to especially define a vision, priorities and aims, not to specify instruments or solutions for achieving them (although frequently strategic plans in the Czech Republic do include these). On the other hand, the policy-making process is significantly associated with the policy core beliefs of a specific political group (a Government, a local assembly) and therefore these are logically projected into specific measures and

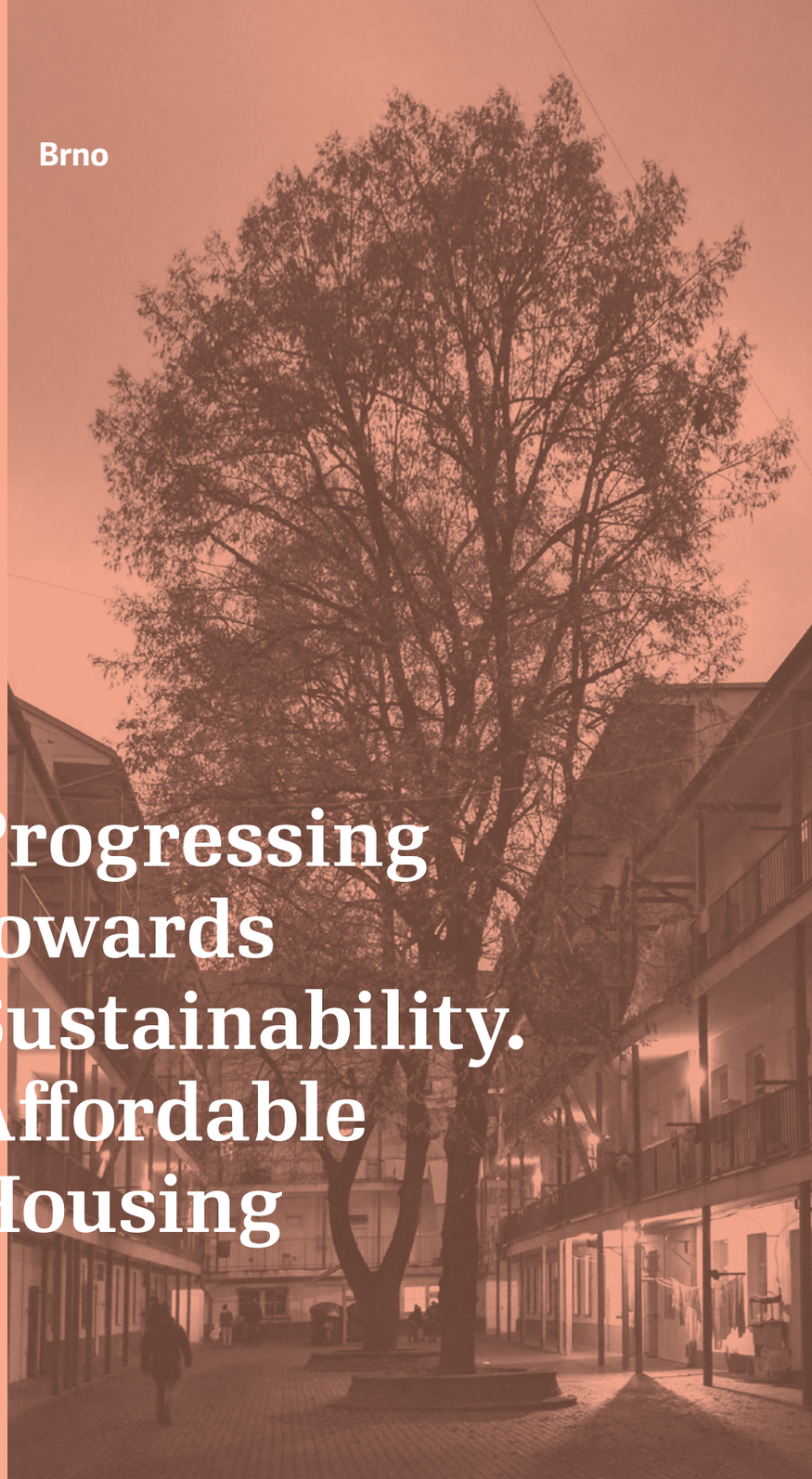
the choice of instruments for enforcing them. A typical example addressed by both such processes is that of transportation in a city centre. While a strategic plan may aim to reduce traffic and a territorial plan may create the conditions for that (policy planning), the city council may choose different solutions to fulfill this aim (policy making) – it can restrict the entry of all vehicles to the city centre, or just trucks, or all vehicles with high emissions only, or restrict entry just at a certain time, or it could merely reduce speed limits, install speed bumps, or replace cobblestones with asphalt, etc. While some of these measures are significantly pro-environmental and correspond to the principles of sustainability, the others strive to fulfill the given aim with the least possible impact on individual mobility, the limitation of which is very politically unpopular, and represent the application of methods that are considered as 'business as usual'.

Antonín Tým during the training,
photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

How is all of this associated with enforcing the principles of sustainability? Here we can add one more concept to those already mentioned, that of 're-framing'. Simply put, sustainability can be communicated in different ways and if we want to succeed, we should have deep, exact knowledge about those making policy, or those who are the decision makers and what their 'political' opinions are, or rather, what types of measures they will approve and which they will not. The example above of transportation can serve us well here. To enforce a more sustainable solution it is necessary to involve a broader spectrum of actors with various expertise available to them – and moreover, those considered indisputable authorities. A typical such group is that of doctors or public health officials who can point out the harmfulness of emissions and the need for traffic safety. Another group is that part of the public who reside in a given locality and do not own cars. However, we must always be prepared and willing to compromise, so it is also good to have arguments ready, or rather, a list of the benefits for those whose interests could be (from their perspective) impacted negatively, i.e., to 'frame' the problem and its proposed solution correctly before we clash about it in the political arena.

1 Brno

Progressing towards Sustainability. Affordable Housing



LEARNING STRUCTURE

- **5** experts' inputs
- **5** discussions
- **3** recap groups
- **2** lectures
- **2** common dinners
- **1** group work
- **1** guided urban walk
- **1** organisations visit
- **1** personal project consultation

LOCATIONS IN THE CITY

TEAM: **15**

- **2** trainers
- **1** coordinator
- **12** guest experts

GENDER

40% (6) women
60% (9) men

SECTORS

- **42.8%** (7) public sector
- **28.6%** (4) private sector
- **28.6%** (4) non-governmental

PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

- **3** local politics
- **3** locally operating NGO (social work)
- **2** nationally operating NGO
- **2** architecture, urban planning (private practice)
- **1** political education
- **1** media
- **1** academia

Take on Affordable Housing

Milota Sidorová

When addressing sustainability, we should focus on the impacts of human lifestyles and behaviours. Housing is the first and most elementary requirement for people living in cities. Due to gentrification, an influx of people into big cities, the free market in combination with a lack of municipal regulations, expensive mainstream development, a shortage of subsidised and municipal flats, as well as new trends in short-term rentals such as Airbnb, affordable housing has become one of the greatest contemporary urban challenges not only in megacities like London, but also in Central European cities.

In just one season we have witnessed rents increase from between 10 and 100%, whether in Bratislava, Prague or Budapest. Gentrification has suddenly become a very tangible phenomenon in Central Europe, and its cities are falling short in the area of affordable housing.

With changing demography, addressing the housing issue demands that we expand our thinking beyond the typical middle-class family unit. In larger cities, the numbers of single households in every age category have been increasing. When we think about the users of affordable housing, we have to take into account students, seniors, women, single mothers, ethnic minorities, immigrants, short-term migrant workers and the homeless. All these (low-income) groups are much more impacted by the shortage of affordable housing due to their vulnerability to poverty. Economic exclusion can trigger spatial and social exclusion.

In Brno we find progressive initiatives, policies and pilot projects focusing on affordable housing. Examples of innovative but rather disconnected emerging cases include the most radical strategy for eliminating homelessness, the first pilot projects in line with the Housing First philosophy, student and senior housing,

and strategies for social inclusion. These initiatives are currently rather disconnected from urban planning policies, however.

What are the current approaches to affordable housing and various user groups in the wider thinking about sustainable urban development? Are there links among these initiatives and pilot projects in Brno? Do they or can they contribute to the formulation of urban planning policy or recommendations? What is the key to their success or failure in Brno?

Learning goals

- reflection on participants' understanding of sustainability in the context of urban development
- becoming familiar with policies and programmes concerning affordable social housing in Brno
- visiting selected pilot projects focusing on affordable housing in Brno
- getting to know the people behind the policies (experts, social workers, activists, politicians and lobbyists)
- analysing and evaluating various case studies as a process

Jan Milota (social worker, IQ Roma servis) and Gejza Bazika (social worker, Platform for Social Housing) introducing us to the social housing area, photo: Zuzana Kuldová

EXPERT'S VIEW

Housing in the Czech Republic – from Management to Coordination

Michal Kohout, David Tichý

Housing is a complex area of life involving personal questions of individual identity as well as global economic and environmental trends. It is influenced by the momentary state of the market as well as by long-term demographic tendencies. To productively connect these frequently contradictory or apparently unaligned forces requires the concentrated effort of society at many levels. This kind of harmonisation of aims is also happening on an international scale. An example is the Geneva Charter of the UN on sustainable housing, which defined four basic poles of sustainable housing in the areas of environment, economics, society and culture as a guideline to a balanced approach to housing policy (Figure 1). To coordinate the activities and set the priorities at the level of states and municipalities is the aim of state and municipal housing policies which, if they are well-designed, aid with the predictability of the economic and legal environment in the area of housing. When establishing policies, however, it is not enough just to follow general trends but it is always necessary to base them on thorough knowledge of the domestic situation. What, then, are the specific challenges of housing in the Czech Republic and what transformations has its societal perception undergone in recent years?

Fig. 1. Four Principles of Sustainable Housing according to the UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, based on: UN (unece.org/housing/charter.html)

Immediately after the fall of the communist regime, which had involved forced collectivism and equality, the Czech Republic (or rather Czechoslovakia, until 1992) saw the rise of the opposite of these phenomena in many respects: public property and the public interest bore the stigma of socialist heavy-handedness and ineffectiveness and lost the prestige both concepts commonly enjoy in countries not affected by communist trauma. An era of individualisation also arose in the area of housing during the 1990s and 2000s. Not only was most of the publicly-owned housing stock privatised, but even the traditionally significant sector of cooperative housing was partially privatised as well. The phenomenon of urban sprawl appeared – suburban constructions of single-family houses – the long-term sustainability of which remains problematic. The post-1989 developments, however, gradually also brought about the rise of an authentic residential housing market with owned and rented housing, as well as the phenomenon of professional real estate development, which in the Czech Republic is the heretofore unknown creation of the built environment as a market commodity.

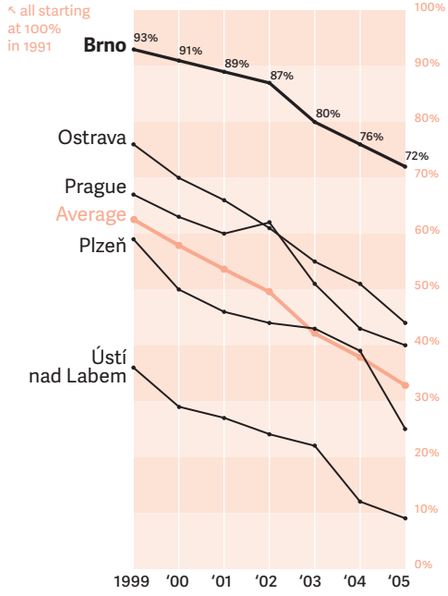


Fig. 2. Privatisation of the municipal housing stock in selected Czech cities (1991–2005), source: Institute for Spatial Development, Brno, 2006

A big subject of Czech housing remains the consequences of privatisation. It is apparent that the share of the housing stock that the public administration owned at the beginning of the 1990s was unbearably large, both for economic and organisational reasons. After years of municipalities and the state enjoying a privileged status as the only providers of rental housing, no system for administering such properties had been developed that was actually effective. Moreover, the system was burdened by significant internal debt in the form of long-neglected maintenance. Privatisation of some of this stock, therefore, seems in hindsight to have been a necessary step. What it is possible to criticise, on the other hand, is the extent and method of that privatisation. Municipalities frequently did not retain even the amount of apartment units that would have made it possible for them to

‘Brno has been selling their municipal flats to private ownership at a slower rate than most of other Czech cities. Its Housing Development Fund consists of around 15 percent of the current housing stock. This opens up the physical and mental space for a pilot project testing Rapid Re-housing.’

Michal Kohout, architect, UNIT architekti

cover their own need to provide housing to socially more vulnerable residents or to support their own employees – teachers, police officers, bureaucrats (Figure 2). Because privatisation happened without a clarified strategy, municipalities lost the opportunity to influence the development of their cities as a whole, which may become especially apparent in the future with respect to certain types of localities (i.e., housing estates). The fact also remains that, particularly in big cities where the price of real estate has risen many times over since the 1990s, municipalities lost significant assets by taking this step. The selling off of real estate without clear conditions and rules also opened up room for subsequent speculation and had a deforming effect, both on the market that was being created and on all of society.

One of the unpredicted consequences of privatisation is the fact that these apartment units frequently ended up in the hands of persons who had neither the economic motivation, nor the financial capital, nor the know-how to administer such housing successfully. This involves the so-called phenomenon of *poor owners* that is widespread throughout the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. These are people whose low incomes do not facilitate their being able to properly appraise their assets while at the same time their ownership of ‘dead’ capital limits their ability to qualify for welfare. In such a case, municipalities should press for the introduction of financial instruments, e.g., regulated reverse mortgages, which would, under mutually acceptable conditions, facilitate the activation of these people’s assets and prevent the abuse of such instruments. It is necessary to recall that these are frequently persons of advanced age.

A whole separate chapter of housing policy is the approach taken by the public administration to establishing a functioning rental housing market. Although attempts to liberalise rents have been underway since the 1990s, a functional law on the deregulation of rents was not adopted until 2006. Its full effects began to appear about six years afterward, i.e., relatively recently. The housing market is specific in its tendency for a delayed response. In countries with long-term market experience it is

usually the public administration in particular that, through its planned steps, acts to counter speculation and suppress undesirable price fluctuations. Czech municipalities frequently have not retained sufficient market share to facilitate their directly fulfilling this role. This means they must actively apply some of the different instruments for communicating information and for mediation or negotiation that we know of from German-speaking countries or Scandinavia. It is precisely this ability to collaborate with the market, to follow it over time, and to positively influence it that is one of the significant skills of municipal administration that will be necessary to focus on in the years to come. An indicator demonstrating that the Czech housing market requires such a correction is, for example, the high proportion of expenditure that Czech households dedicate to housing (Figure 3). It is disturbing to note that the annual construction of new apartment units has not once achieved numbers equivalent to 1% of the total number of units available during the entire post-1989 period,[1] i.e., the number that is usually given as the norm for the healthy reproduction of housing (Figure 4).

In association with the market there is another pitfall in the Czech environment consisting of the exceptional differentiation among real estate prices and rental costs between the bigger cities and the countryside, as well as the differentiation between the various regions. There are localities where it is possible to find older housing at prices far below the customary acquisition value. When creating housing policy and eventually a social

1 The total number of apartment units in the Czech Republic was, according to the most recent census of people, houses and apartment units in 2011, approximately 4,750,000. One per cent of that is approximately 50,000 units.

Fig. 3. Cost of housing as a share of overall household expenditure in EU countries for 2014, source: Eurostat (2016)

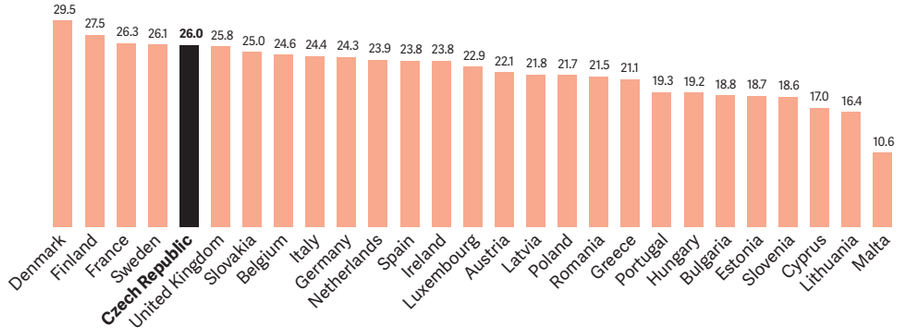
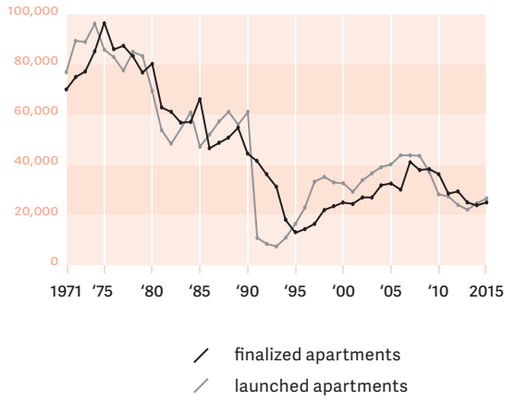


Fig. 4. Housing development in the Czech Republic, 1971–2015, source: Czech Statistical Office



housing strategy, it is, therefore, necessary to take this aspect into consideration.

Housing, of course, is not restricted just to the apartment unit market but is simultaneously a phenomenon through which urban environments are formed, and is therefore closely associated with urban development, which frequently happens because of housing need and is also significantly influenced by the character of the housing acquired. Here Czech cities face two basic challenges in the future. On the one hand there are existing localities, the longterm sustainability of which is, for various reasons, problematic, and which require a specific system of administration for their environments. On the other hand there are developments of new housing localities.

The first group of existing localities includes new suburban buildings, modernistic housing estates, and historical city centers. In the case of suburbia, such areas display extremely low density, frequently have bad-quality public spaces, are difficult to access by public transportation, and have a limited range of civic amenities (Figure 05). Their operating costs, therefore, are demanding in terms of private and public resources and because

Fig. 5. Dačice, a typical example of Czech suburbia, photo: UNIT architekti s.r.o.

they are aging demographically and physically, that tendency will continue to intensify. Here what is at issue is to take hold of this trend in time and attempt to limit its impacts. The second area the public administration should focus on is that of housing estates. A consequence of the privatisation that has been carried out is the atomised nature of property holdings in these localities. Of course, from the beginning these localities arose as centrally-planned, centrally-built, centrally-owned and centrally-administered wholes. The current property rights situation, therefore, complicates their longterm ability to gradually adapt in many respects, which is an essential condition for the sustainability of any kind of development (Figure 6). As for historical centres, their instability frequently is because of their attractiveness, paradoxically. Commercial and short-term accommodation activity there often pushes regular housing away, even though such older buildings must be permanently adapted to contemporary needs. The parallel course of these trends causes depopulation of these areas and, as a consequence, a loss of their authenticity, i.e., what we most value about them and the very reason we conserve them.

Fig. 6. Černý Most, mass housing estate, source: Karel Cudlín

As far as new development goes, its most frequent problem is the fact that Czech cities and municipalities are just now accumulating experience with organizing construction on a neighborhood scale in market conditions. Local government has mostly resigned itself to not coordinating the development of its various territories in greater detail and has left this area up to private owners who, naturally, proceed according to their own abilities and priorities. The consequence is uncoordinated development, public spaces that are not of very high quality, and a lack of prepared building plots, especially for medium-sized and smaller developers. The predominant type of multi-storey building remains the loosely-organised, individually standing development that is essentially of the housing estate type. The compact, sustainable urban development that has evolved in Western Europe since the 1980s based on the public administration playing an active role in the planning process has not yet come to pass in the Czech

Fig. 7. Reaching for the sustainable density of the Dutch model, Amsterdam, De Bongerd, Rudy Uytenhaak Architectenbureaum, source: UNIT architekti s.r.o.

Republic (Figure 7). If changes are to be achieved, it is necessary to sufficiently elaborate mechanisms, whether of convention or legislation, to mutually coordinate private and public development plans. How the purchase of land can be organised, how owners can be associated into entities that will be meaningful from the perspective of planning and developing – these can take the form of development companies developing territory under municipal supervision in accordance with local long-term aims. Such an approach has many advantages for all involved – municipalities are able, through the activation of private capital, to achieve their own development aims, for example in the area of demographic development, while it is simultaneously possible to better work in such a way with the parameter of the construction density that is critical to the economic management of the civic amenities and technical infrastructure invested in by the city. Private capital, on the other hand, gains clear conditions and obvious support for its own plans, which minimises investment risk.

Czech society – both local and state administrations and housing users – is still learning to plan under market conditions. It has been necessary for society to familiarise itself with many phenomena, to understand their advantages and limitations.

To a great degree this is an extension of some previous experiences in the Czech environment, and in many respects experiences from abroad are being imported. Instruments are being sought for creating stable conditions and a framework for mutual harmonisation of public and private interests. How can capital, whether of those who will actually use the properties developed or those who will sell them, become involved in sustainable construction? How can what is frequently extensive, uneconomic growth be prevented so as to achieve effective density while achieving high quality environments? How can the interests of various stakeholders be combined and how to incorporate the demands and needs of the public into the planning and management process so that the new construction will be better received? The public administration is asking once again what share of the housing market the cities should own to satisfy the claims of those in need while simultaneously being able to prevent undesirable market fluctuation and not dampening the market through their approach. After years of hesitation bordering on lack of interest, housing is again returning as a fundamental subject of public debate and as one of the significant instruments that can aid us with managing these ascendant societal changes – the ageing of the population, the collapse of the traditional family, the phenomenon of singles, as well as the questions of homelessness and social exclusion. The post-1989 experience demonstrates that despite the fact that housing is a consumer area of the private sphere, some aspects of it have significant society-wide consequences. The effort and support that cities and states in the developed world dedicate to housing means they are addressing real challenges that individual housing users would have great difficulty dealing with on their own.

Poverty, Exclusion and Gentrification. The Housing Situation in the Cejl Area of Brno

Alica Sigmund Heráková

Brno's Cejl area, also frequently known as the 'Bronx' in recent years, is a locality immediately adjacent to the city's historical centre. In historical terms, although located in Moravia, it copies the story of the Czech postwar Sudeten area and has the status of a socially excluded locality in societal terms. Anybody who knows the area can confirm that it has a strong *genius loci*. This is motivated by the locality's past – the legacy of the forced removal of its Jewish residents during the Holocaust and the postwar expulsion of its ethnic German ones – and by the striking industrial architecture of the former working-class periphery, as well as by the multicultural composition of its inhabitants today. Cejl attracts attention. For years teams of researchers and tourist groups have headed here, and creatives and free-thinkers have taken up residence here as well. However, it would not be appropriate to imagine it as being like Berlin's Kreuzberg neighbourhood. Cejl suffers from poverty and its Romani population's deteriorated access to quality education and jobs, and in recent years affordable housing has also been a big subject there. Rapidly approaching gentrification is to blame for transforming Cejl before its residents' very eyes. This Brno neighbourhood has never been a ghetto in the strict sense of the word – it is not an impervious area excluded somewhere on the edge of town. It is directly adjacent to the city centre and its clear borders are delineated by the city ring, a line of dense traffic that separates the representative part of the city from the peeling paint and reality of residential hotels, empty shop windows, and a lack of public benches and trash cans. From Cejl one could throw a rock and hit the city centre, the main train station is just two stops away on public transportation and the neighbourhood is brilliantly accessible by car as well. The potentially lucrative nature of the entire locality is absolutely apparent. Investors' growing interest in it is evidence of that fact.

Brno's local leadership decided to change the catastrophic state of the buildings and public spaces that have clearly determined, for decades, whom the locality is intended for. In 2010 the city initiated a big project to revitalise the entire locality, as part of which it invested roughly 450 million CZK [18 million EUR] of EU and state money into repairing buildings, whether owned by the city or privately, adjusting the street plan, and building up the Hvězdička Park to include new spaces for the Drom organisation. The declared aim of the project was to improve conditions for the existing residents with reference to the alarming fact that no such investments had ever been made into the locality.

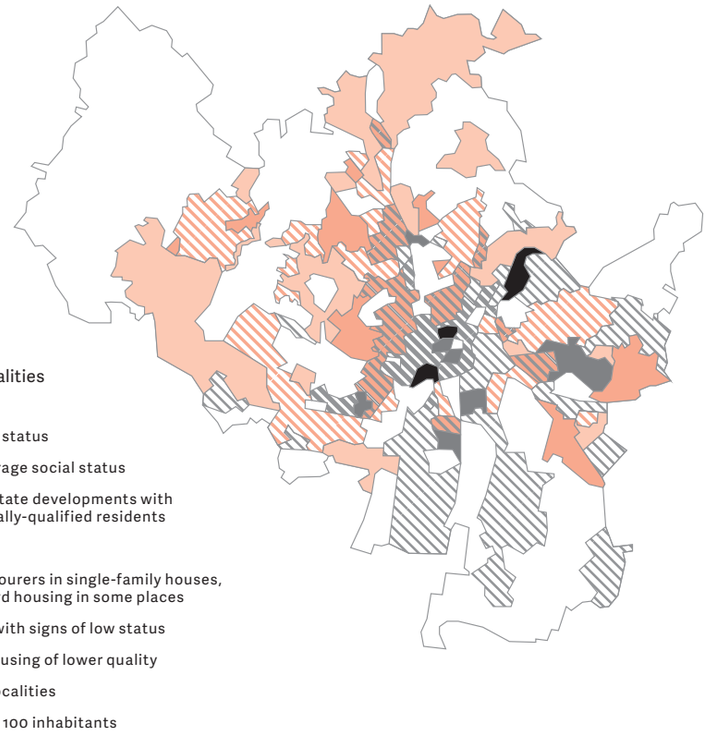
'In 2010, the municipality invested into housing in this area for the first time since WWII.'

Alica Sigmund Heráková

City Hall has been consistently explaining that this investment would bring solutions to the problems experienced by the socially excluded residents of the neighbourhood. During the repairs from 2010 to 2014, however, it became apparent that the actual motivation for the investment was exactly that of gentrification. Private property owners, with the support of public funds, did repair their buildings, but the project's sustainability did not require them to document who ended up living in the new units. After the buildings were repaired, dozens of people had to move away from the locality, partially due to their debts and partially because they were unprofitable tenants, as can easily be comprehended. However, it cannot be denied that the past and present leadership of Brno City Hall did also attempt to actually aid the locality. They have installed caretakers hired locally into the municipally-owned buildings, and they have supported cultural activities such as Ghettofest (a local festival) and the development of a creative centre on the grounds of a former prison there.

Gentrification, however, is a process that runs at its own pace, and once it begins it is difficult to stop. Municipal investment has made the locality 'pop', and its colourful facades, repaired roads and empty apartment units seem to have directly appealed to new investors and residents. From 2010 to 2014 housing prices rose approximately 8% per square metre.[1] Dozens of families left the locality and for the time being there is no clear answer to the frequently-asked question: 'Where did they go?'

The degree to which the local population has been replaced – which has happened in a creeping fashion without any great effort by the City to monitor it over the years – was demonstrated at the end of 2016. That November, just a couple of weeks before Christmas, the daily Mladá fronta DNES publicised the fact that the Dolfin R. E. firm, the owner of 11 apartment buildings inhabited predominantly by Romani people, was planning to not extend their contracts in the new year.[2] Hundreds of people, including children, would have ended up on the street, as both the municipally-owned apartments and even the residential hotels were absolutely full locally. Through cooperative pressure exerted by activists, nonprofit organisations, City Hall and the local council of the Brno-střed municipal department, the firm, which was originally unwilling to communicate and defended itself against any compromise, was eventually forced to extend the tenants' contracts and its negotiations with them, which prevented a humanitarian catastrophe.



1 Vyroubalová, Martina, 2015, [online] Release date: May 11, [quoted. 18.2.2018]. Available on: [brno.idnes.cz/ostudy-brna-brnensky-bronx-dfj-/brno-zpravy.aspx?c=A150424_091659_brno-zpravy_mav]

2 Ustohalová, Jana, 2016, [online] Release date: November 2, [quoted. 18.2.2018]. Available on: [brno.idnes.cz/ukonceni-najmu-romum-z-domu-kolem-cejlu-v-brne-fo8-/brno-zpravy.aspx?c=A161102_2283352_brno-zpravy_krut]

As these specific cases demonstrate, the gradual replacement of the neighbourhood's inhabitants, irrespective of their ethnicity, is continuing, but it is happening at a slower rate and in cases that are on a smaller scale. The Dolfin scandal, however, clearly demonstrated that investor pressure and the negative influences of gentrification can only be countered by one thing: the public administration's will to communicate with them together with actively involved citizens.

Brno-centre district

- 70,000 inhabitants
- 4200 flats owned by the city district, 200 available flats during the year
- investment into the district over five years

Municipally-revitalised park, the only common public space in the historically deprived central Cejl area. Currently mostly low-income groups come to visit it.
photo: Zuzana Kuldová

Rapid Re-housing Project, a Pilot Project Addressing Housing for Families in Need

Katarzyna Dorda

Integration of the Romani community, especially with regard to their dismal housing situation, remains a great challenge for numerous municipalities in the Czech Republic. The number of socially excluded areas is still increasing. While in 2006, according to the analysis by Ivan Gabal Analysis & Consulting, there were about 300 excluded areas with around 80,000 people living in them, in 2015, the number of socially excluded areas increased to 606 with 115,000 inhabitants, most of them Roma. The reasons for that are mainly poverty and exclusion from the educational system. Even worse, Romani families do not have a good chance of improving their living conditions: Landlords are not willing to rent flats to the unemployed, and social housing is only granted to families who meet strict requirements, including permanent employment. Additionally, the lack of stable housing interferes with workers' ability to keep their jobs. The vicious circle closes and the problem of homelessness or living in unacceptable conditions remains.

While this is happening, Brno owns about 29,000 municipal apartments, which makes it the perfect place to run an experiment, a pilot project called 'Housing First for Families in Brno: A Randomised Control Trial'. Supported politically by the Mayor of the City of Brno, Petř Vokřál and by Deputy Mayor Matěj Hollan, and mostly financed from European funds (the City is covering only 5% of the costs), the project is supposed to tackle the homelessness problem among a chosen group of poor, ethnically mixed families, including Romani ones. The City of Brno is running the project in cooperation with members of the Social Housing Platform, the *IQ Roma servis* NGO and the University of Ostrava, in order to reach its target more effectively.

Exactly 150 families are taking part in the project: 50 in the trial group and 100 in the control group. By the end of 2015, after

participants are registered, interviews were conducted, and questionnaires were completed, 50 families selected by lottery had been awarded rental contracts. The chosen families are being monitored for conditions such as their employment status, children's attendance at school, health, contacts with neighbours, etc. – but only after a certain period of time had elapsed. This reversal of the usual system (in which rental contracts are awarded after targets such as employment are achieved) gives families a much better chance of stabilisation. In addition, each family has an assigned social worker who helps in this acclimatisation.

Single mothers are a significant group endangered by the lack of affordable housing, source: Barbora Kleinhamplová

The second phase of the project was completed by June 2017, when all 50 families moved into the flats. The aim is to achieve an 80% housing retention rate after one year, and by January 2018 the retention rate was 97% (of 38 families who had already lived in the flats for one year, only one was not able to retain their tenancy and moved to a shelter) according to the Social Housing Platform chair and researcher at the University of Ostrava, Štepán Ripka. 'At this point we have finished coding the data from the six-month summary and we should have the report ready within the next three months,' says Ripka.

Moreover, the 'Rapid Re-housing' project was the basis for the development of a new bill on social housing in the Czech Republic. Unfortunately, the current political situation makes it difficult to introduce that new bill and streamline the process. That is exactly why the *Mít svůj domov* ('Have Your Home') initiative was created at the end of 2016, a platform bringing together dozens of organisations and experts and hundreds of residents who joined through a petition calling for the adoption of a law on social housing to help the more than 187,000 people without a home in the Czech Republic.

As we learned from Alica Sigmund Heráková, a Romani journalist and activist, in 2010 the municipality invested into housing in the so-called 'Bronx' area for the first time since the Second World War. For most of our group during the training (*Enhancing Sustainable Urban Development in Local Politics*), the most groundbreaking, valuable experience was visiting the municipally-owned apartment unit being rented to the family of Gejza Bazika, a respected member of Brno's Romani community and a member of the Social Housing Platform. The unit was not part of the 'Rapid Re-housing' programme, as the units involved were not ready yet for visiting. However, we were able to see the average housing standards of such social units during this visit. What was an improvement in living conditions for the residents whom we visited would be considered rather inhumane for most of us. This humbling experience highlighted how easy it was for us to discuss changes in policies and numbers while not seeing the people impacted by them – we could already see how the lives of individuals were being changed by such policy. 'During the interviews with families a lot of positive changes are revealed. Many of them say that the

'All these vacant units lying around should be made available to people.'

Gejza Bazika, social worker, Brno, on the use of empty municipal apartment units

Stabilised families after six months of living in the new units, source: Barbora Kleinhamplová

psychological well-being of both the parents and the children has improved thanks to the improvement of their living conditions,' reports Štěpán Ripka of the Social Housing Platform. The 'Rapid Re-housing' project sees tenants as individual human beings, not numbers in a system. Even if it still might seem too bureaucratic and overloaded with paperwork, the project is an improvement to the current situation.

TIMELINE OF THE RAPID RE-HOUSING PROJECT

Target group:
homeless families in inadequate housing situations

Investments:
- Municipality: approx. 150,000 CZK, 5 per cent co-financing of the common budget
- EU funds: 10,000,000 CZK (approximately 370,370 EUR), 95 per cent financing

10/2014 Municipal elections – a new political party, Žít Brno ('Live Brno') wins seats on the city council. Matěj Hollan becomes Deputy Mayor.

11/2014 First contact: Jan Milota (co-director, IQ Roma servis) approaches Matěj Hollan and Martin Freund (Žít Brno), both elected politicians, about the project.

02/2015 Co-directors of the Platform for Social Housing Štěpán Ripka & Jan Milota conduct research through fellowships in the USA, Netherlands, and Scotland, where they study the methods and outcomes of Housing First.

03/2015 Jan Snopek (Platform for Social Housing) gets assigned to work on the Concept of Social Housing for the City of Brno and becomes the head of the working group for social housing (consisting of stakeholders such as IQ Roma servis, DROM, the Platform for Social Housing, and city representatives).

05/2015 Workshop for local politicians, city officials and NGOs on the Housing First approach with experts on homelessness Katharine Gale (USA) & Volker Busch-Geertsema (German, coordinator of the European Observatory on Homelessness)

02/2016 The project succeeded to get EU funding.

04/2016 **Beginning of the project. Main stakeholders:**
- City of Brno: Martin Freund (Žít Brno), provider of the pilot units
- IQ Roma servis: Jan Milota, provider of social services
- University of Ostrava: Štěpán Ripka (hired as an independent researcher for evaluating the project outcomes)

04–07/2016 Selections of the families (approximately 421 fulfilled the conditions, 50 were chosen by the lottery to be awarded a rental contract, another 100 families were not awarded contracts but remain part of the research for comparison).

07/2016 The assignment was introduced to the families.

09/2016 The first families move in.

06/2017 The last families move in.

06/2018 Expected results of the project.

09/2018 12-month follow-up study results: Impact of Housing First on homeless families

Rapid Re-housing → hf.socialnibydleni.org/rapid-re-housing-brno

Affordable Housing

1. **SITUATION: Specifics of Czech Housing Stock**
- since 1989 there has been a rapid decline in public housing stock
- a strong segment of the housing market is privately owned by people with low incomes ('poor owners')
- relatively old housing stock
- little experience with the free rental market (deregulated in 2012)
- housing estates and urban sprawl as areas with specific land management challenges
- private ownership as the primary social expectation
- municipalities have limited possibilities and capacities to implement proper housing policies

2. **SITUATION: A Municipal Housing Development Fund (leftover from Czechoslovakia) still exists. The units were being sold at a slow rate over the past 15 years. The cash in the fund has not been touched. The municipality owns 15 per cent of the current housing stock in the city.**
CONTEXT: Municipal ownership of the properties, its own cash (which has not been stolen), historical tradition and continuity of the housing fund.

3. **SITUATION: According to both Deputy Mayors and visiting politicians, the mobility and housing situations are the two biggest challenges in Brno.**
CONTEXT: Political awareness of the problem among key political leaders in the city.

4. **SITUATION: City housing policy is the only tool for implementing social policy in the city centre. Privatisation of dwellings must be stopped or strictly regulated. A ban on the sale of city housing is being proposed by the Deputy Mayor.**
CONTEXT: Political tools available and the will to use them.

'The town could take advantage of the astronomical benefits that now migrate to owners of the hostels and residential hotels for evicted, homeless and poor citizens, and instead use that money for investments into buildings that will provide affordable housing.'

David Oplatek, Brno-centre Municipal Department representative

5. **SITUATION: Inspiration for the housing policy comes from Vienna, where a significant portion of dwellings is allocated for affordable housing.**
CONTEXT: A foreign but geographically close and well- known example is politically accepted and promoted.

6. **SITUATION: Housing for the elderly, starter flats and social housing should not be called 'social housing', but 'affordable housing'. More and more people from the mainstream population cannot afford housing.**
CONTEXT: A change in the communications and PR narrative. Affordable housing is no longer communicated as being a problem of minorities but as a programme for the mainstream population.

7. **SITUATION: Rapid Re-housing is a relatively small pilot project that can change perceptions about solving homelessness and utilizing a portion of municipally-owned housing stock. Funding almost entirely coming from the EU.**
CONTEXT: The project got the political support of the current local government because:
- it offered perfect funding possibilities and low municipal investment;

Enhancing Sustainable Urban Development in Local Politics, discussing social housing perspectives, Brno, photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

- it created a political contrast between the Žít Brno politicians and the mainstream politicians. Most of the public associates the project with the party;
- there is a high chance of positive results that will have to be disseminated and communicated to the City Hall and the public. The pressure for good results is significant and the question is what happens if the results will not be so great?

The political opportunity should there be positive results and good PR is to propose a change in the housing policy of the city.

8. SITUATION: Working group for affordable housing created by the city. External experts from pilot projects, local NGOs and municipal representatives became members of this group. Externals are being partially employed by the city.
CONTEXT: The working platform has been created at the level of the city, it has allocated budgets and a workforce and therefore it is in the interest of the politicians that it exists and delivers results.

9. SITUATION: Future
CONTEXT: Political continuity for supporting the subject of affordable housing is absolutely necessary in the future.
A feasible economic scheme must be found for the future, since pilot projects are funded by international or private funds.

2 Prague

Democratising Urbanism. Public Consultation Review

LEARNING STRUCTURE

9 experts' inputs

8 discussions

3 group works

3 recap groups

2 common dinners

1 guided urban walk

1 organizations visit

1 lecture

1 personal project consultation

LOCATIONS IN THE CITY

TEAM: **19**

2 trainers

1 coordinator

9 guest experts

7 involved participants

GENDER

57.9% (11) women

42.1% (8) men

SECTORS

52.6% (10) public sector

31.6% (6) private sector

15.8% (3) non-governmental

PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

5 public administration (culture, architecture, urban planning)

4 public participation

2 political education, argumentation

2 locally operating NGOs (applied anthropology, cultural development)

2 architecture, urban planning (private practice)

1 local politics

1 media

1 internationally operating NGO (awareness raising)

From Public Participation to Public Consultancy

Milota Sidorová

Discussing participation methods and strategies, photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

In architecture and urban planning in Central Europe we have been experiencing an increased need for interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral collaboration, transparency and public involvement. In addition to the usual development projects, we have witnessed the first attempts to make public participation a legal prerequisite of planning. The most advanced example in this area, the 'Manual of Participation', was created by the Prague Institute of Planning and Development in 2014. It outlines processes and methods for different kinds of urban developments in Prague and has already been used effectively in more than six case studies. Two years later, the manual became a binding document approved by Prague's City Council, and it is now being used for all public procurement in each of the city's municipal districts. Examples of this in other Czech, Slovak and Hungarian cities are known as well.

However, while we are quite familiar with the term 'public participation' and its basic methods, other activities have been disregarded or disconnected in the context of urban development processes on a larger scale. Public consultation, a concept known from urban planning practice in Great Britain, holistically includes all activities connected to the process of urban development – process design, project coordination, the targeting of individual groups and actors, networking, lobbying and public participation, and the internal and external dissemination of information. Public consultation *per se* is a long-term process that includes all

actors, and its current implementation in Great Britain definitely surpasses the level of urban development legislation and practice in Central Europe.

During the workshop we methodically outlined the phases of a project, its documentation, and the methods of public consultation. We also made a typology of the participatory processes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Based on critical evaluations of the case studies presented and of our own work, we then arrived at what the ingredients of good participatory processes are. Attention was devoted to the inclusion of informal and cultural activities being held on sites as part of the ideal participatory process.

Learning goals:

- outlining a basic typology of existing Central European processes used under the rubric of public consultation,
- analysis of legal practices and binding documentation connected to public consultation,
- reflection on and evaluation of the formal and informal methods and actions used in the process of public consultation,
- discussion of the ingredients of good and bad processes and communication, and
- analysis and evaluation of case studies elaborated by the hosting Prague Institute of Planning and Development along with participants' personal projects

Evolution of Participatory Planning in Prague

Pavla Pelčíková, Milan Brlík

'Once you put people in motion, it is hard to stop them.'

Pavla Pelčíková on expectations raised by participatory processes

The Prague Institute of Planning and Development (*IPR Praha*) is in charge of developing concepts for the city's architecture, urbanism, development and planning. IPR Praha represents the city in spatial planning issues; prepares its Strategic Plan and land-use plan; and organises architectural competitions for new street design, the revitalization of brownfields, traffic and infrastructure systems, and any other city plans. Last but not least, it is also responsible for implementing the participatory planning approach across the City of Prague.

The City of Prague's Public Participation Office was set up in January 2015 as a response to growing demand for involving

Training on public participation, source: IPR Praha

citizens in planning. Up until 2015, public participation had a long (if somewhat limited) tradition within the NGO sector as well as with some of the more progressive city districts. However, most public participation events were designed in the form of protests against new developments. The first goal of the new Public Participation Office was to transform that protest-driven energy into a constructive debate about the city's future. As anyone familiar with urban planning can imagine, this was and still is a long-term agenda rather than something that could be solved overnight.

'As participation specialists we spend 90 per cent of our time on placation.'

Monika McGarrell-Klimentová, Public Participation Office, Prague Institute of Planning and Development

The second problem was that there did not exist a unified source of participatory planning know-how. In line with the Prague Strategic Plan, the second goal of the Public Participation Office was to consolidate the existing know-how and create a source of information available to City institutions and districts. This is why we have created the Participation Manual.

Before we started writing the Participation Manual, we needed to understand the specific post-socialist planning context of Prague. Therefore we began researching selected city districts, focusing on their experience with participation. We then supported our findings by studying the existing manuals and handbooks from Vienna, Berlin, London and other cities.Parallel to writing the Manual we tested its principles on real pilot projects.

Public Participation Manual for Prague: How to involve the public in city planning, November 2016, source: IPR Praha

In these projects, the task of IPR Praha was to prepare urban design concepts for revitalising public space on Vinohradská, Táborská and Bělohorská streets. The goal of the projects was to coordinate the revitalisation process for the roads, pavement, lighting, outdoor furniture, etc. The role of our office was to engage local residents in these projects. The participation process consisted of analyzing users' needs and consulting the design with the public. Between 2016 and 2017, IPR Praha also worked on a project of revitalising the public space of the Vybiralova housing estate. This project went beyond just analysis of needs and consultation, as it also helped to bring the community together and start cooperation among local residents.

Typology of participatory processes, Sherry R. Arnstein, 1969

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION LADDER

CITIZEN POWER	CITIZEN CONTROL
	DELEGATED POWER
	PARTNERSHIP
TOKENISM	PLACATION
	CONSULTATION
	INFORMING
NON-PARTICIPATION	THERAPY
	MANIPULATION

This hands-on experience has allowed IPR Praha to advance the knowledge of the specific post-socialist planning context and find out which participation methods work better than others and why. We have learned about the various pitfalls of participatory planning, ranging from the necessity for unanimous political support for participation to some detailed aspects of organising events, crafting an efficient communications strategy and helping the results of the planning process materialise in real changes in the city.

Over the past months and years, it has become clear that the Manual cannot be presented in a printed version alone, but rather

Exhibition of the Smíchov City project outcomes, source: IPR Praha

‘We cannot solve social problems just by designing public spaces.’

Pavla Pelčíková on the limits of participatory processes

should become an interactive document that keeps getting updated and upgraded along with our growing know-how. For this reason, we are developing a website that will present the contents of the Participation Manual with toolkits and explanatory videos. The website is called SpoluPraze.cz (=‘TogetherForPrague’) and will also feature information on current projects in which citizens can take part. We are planning to launch it in March 2018.

Apart from getting online, our goal is also to become more available offline, i.e., to serve as a consultancy and training center for the city districts and other municipal institutions. For this reason, we have developed an eight-hour training module. The training takes participants through a step-by-step guide to participatory planning, from analyzing context, to preparing a participation plan, to choosing the right methods and organising public events. The module is open both to political representatives and planners from the city districts.

Parallel to training the city districts we are conducting research about their experience and competence in participation. In line with the goals of the Prague Strategic Plan, we plan to create a city-wide institutional mechanism for participatory planning and to create a structure of employees in charge of participation at City Hall and each of the (larger) districts. The research will also enable us to design new, more specific training modules for the coordinators. The Participation Coordinator Program should be implemented towards the end of 2018.

Prague Institute of Planning and Development → iprpraha.cz

CASE STUDY

Vybíralka Project, Černý Most, Prague 14

Milota Sidorová

The location of Vybíralova is a typical Central European post-communist housing superblock in Prague 14, Černý Most. Its first inhabitants moved in some 25 years ago. Since then it has remained outside the main focus of Prague City Hall. This lack of attention has resulted in poor maintenance and low-quality adjacent public spaces consisting mostly of large green areas surrounding the superblock. Residents have naturally complained about the lack of recreational facilities for free-time activities.

The need for a higher-quality urban environment has been echoed by the newly-elected mayor of the municipal district, Radek Vondra, who has been a long-term resident of Prague 14 and has a background in management. His candidacy in 2010 came as a rather surprising response to a change in his career and to the gravity of problems in the area he experienced daily. As an elected political freshman, he started a series of innovations with the aim of changing the district’s image from that of ‘just the bedroom’ of Prague to a place where one can enjoy full quality of life. He chose to focus on diverse partnerships and the realization of quick gains (especially in terms of culture) in combination with long-term strategic investments.

Mass housing estate of Černý Most, photo: Karel Cudlín

The key actor in the area’s development is the municipal district’s cultural department, Praha 14 Kulturní, led by a specialist in cultural management and strategies, David Kašpar. Kašpar and

his team have been organizing the festival ‘Street for Art’, which aimed to bring culture to the Prague outskirts and work with local (ethnically-diverse, poor, uninterested) communities. After seven years, ‘Street for Art’ transformed into the Plechárna, a recreational cultural centre just around the corner from the superblock. Mayor Vondra simultaneously initiated and financially supported a large-scale anthropological research project aimed at identifying informal community leaders which has complemented Plechárna’s active, resilient programme. More importantly, the presence of the cultural centre became a substantial advantage for the newly-created Communication and Participation Section at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development. The Vybíralka project was chosen as a pilot for a public participation process on the outskirts of Prague between 2015–2017.

Life at the Vybíralova superblock, 1990’s, photo: Viktor Šíma

The process set itself the goal of redesigning the superblock’s structure and its leisure activities, and is being successfully realised at this time. After two years of intense work, unprecedented involvement of local people, and hundreds of hours of negotiations, the process has reached one of its most important milestones: Prague City Council has approved investment into the nearby road and sidewalk system amounting to about 180 million CZK (7,097,204 EUR). In the next 12–18 months the project documentation will be developed and physical adjustments could begin in 2019. Meanwhile, the team will gradually implement other measures related to greenery, leisure activities, and the management and maintenance of public spaces.

Vybíralka → vybiralka25.cz
Prague 14 Cultural → praha14kulturni.cz

Vybíralova superblock now and in the future, photo: Google Maps, plan: IPR Praha

Participatory planning sessions with the public during the Vybíralka project photo: IPR Praha

Vybíralova today, source: IPR Praha

The Vybíralka project, proposal for revitalisation, source: IPR Praha

The Vybíralka project, proposal for revitalisation, source: IPR Praha

CASE STUDY

New Life for Pardubice Mill Island

Zuzana Kuldová

The Mill Island is a former industrial area near the Pardubice city centre at the confluence of the Elbe and Chrudimka rivers. Its traditional usage for grain mills, bread and gingerbread bakeries is gradually giving way to water sports and recreational activities. Nowadays the Mill Island seems deserted even though over 200 people are still working there. Parks, riverbanks, the castle and the historical city centre are directly adjacent to the site. The current challenge is how to convert the emptying property and, over time, how to bring in new life to an area with a complicated ownership structure.

The Mill Island takes its name from the protected heritage site of the Automatic Mills, designed by the architect Gočár in 1910. Production stopped there in 2013 and the owner decided to sell the property. Soon several cultural events took place in the deserted mill attracting thousands of visitors and raising public interest in the heritage site. The city established a working group to formulate a strategy for the reuse of the site as a cultural centre. Interviews with stakeholders, questionnaires and a workshop with the public showed there is a demand for culture, services, housing and education. Czech Television recorded the process in a documentary entitled 'God's Mill For Sale'. Despite great public interest, the City refused to purchase the property. However, those activities raised awareness about the place and attracted its future owner, the architect Lukáš Smetana, who bought the mill in 2016 with an intention to create a Kulturfabrik.

To ensure the meaningful, economically sustainable use of the whole island in accord with its cultural activities, the Department of the Chief Architect decided to draft a regulatory plan for the area that will coordinate all future development. A competition workshop was organized in 2016. The public was involved in the

Situation proposed for Mill Island during the competition workshop by the winning team UNIT architekti, source: UNITarchitekti

initial mapping of the area and a few rounds of stakeholders' talks were organised. Later on the public actively participated in the competition workshop, a special form of architectural competition often used in Germany for very complex sites with many stakeholders, because it allows participants to discuss their visions with all the parties involved and come up with answers very quickly. (In the Czech Republic it was used for the first time for Císařský Island in Prague in 2015.) The competition brief was formulated in the Placebook for the Mill Island, presenting a vision based on the objectives of the stakeholders and users, the history of the site, its current and past activities, and the City's strategy. Three architectural teams were selected and over two months a total of three workshops took place. The first focused on understanding the site and the brief, the second served as a consultation on the work in progress, and the results were presented during the third meeting. The Prague-based office of *UNIT architekti* won the competition and were commissioned by the City to prepare the regulatory plan for Mill Island in 2017. Public hearings will be held in 2018 after the publication of this text.

It is essential for the public, NGOs and cultural organisations to closely follow the approval process of the regulatory plan as well as other activities happening in the Mill and on the island to ensure that their vision will be fulfilled. Without public interest that vision could easily be lost. As the regulatory plan is a long-term project, it was essential to raise the interest and the support of the current political representatives including the Mayor. They were given different coordinated roles and regularly appeared during all phases

Impression of the Automatic Mill and its surroundings by the winning team UNIT architekti, source: UNITarchitekti

of the project. A combination of personal engagement and publicity ensured the necessary political support. Temporary events were involved at the beginning of the story and could certainly help again to remind people about Mill Island's potential.

Mill Island
→ pardubice.eu/projekty/architektonicke-projekty/mlynsky-ostrov

CASE STUDY

Brand New Obchodná Street, Bratislava – Where 'Public' and 'Private' Learn to Share the Same Façade

Dominika Belanská

A bizarre array of advertising boards and banners clogs the cityscape of Bratislava's main 'shopping street', displaying not just unleashed commercial competition, but also the avid viability of the street's still very diverse socioeconomic fabric. The local neighbourhood has become notorious for this issue of 'visual smog' instead of appreciated for the shops and services that the myriad of adverts promotes. Since autumn 2016, via a series of tailor-made meetings and workshops, stakeholders across different sectors

Advertising on Obchodná Street, photo: Braňo Bibel

Meeting with members of the business community and the public, photo: Braňo Bibel

have been jointly reviewing the street's identity, its branding, and the prerequisites for the success of adopting an official regulation on outdoor advertising.

This participatory process has been carried out involving owners of businesses and properties, political representatives, and officials from Bratislava municipality (including Chief Architect Ingrid Konrad and the Director of the Heritage Protection Department, Ivo Štassel). Activities have been coordinated by the local NGO 'Obchodná ulica a okolie'. Its director, Davy Čajko, and his colleagues are working towards a change by networking the local business community and building strategic partnerships with the municipality. The methodology, key content and facilitation were provided by specialists Milota Sidorová, Gabriela Veenstra Skorkovská and Dominika Belanská.

The process culminates in the publication of a manual about outdoor advertising that will be instrumental for local businesses and property owners. The publication explains the importance of taking a sensitive approach to the architectural integrity of the buildings and promotes higher standards in the graphic design and other aspects of the quality of an entrepreneur's public presence. It warns stakeholders of common errors, highlights examples of good practices, and recommends concrete steps to take in order to transform and legalise their advertising.

Financial support for the project came from both the municipality and private partners. The municipality's interest is based on the political programme of current Mayor Ivo Nesrovnal, who has vowed to clean up advertising in the city. Despite that fact, the way to allocate funding to the initiative has led through protracted internal negotiations and lobbying by members of the local council and city officials. This, as well as the unexpectedly complicated process of harmonising the regulations that govern the manual and adapting them to the specific conditions of the location, caused delays in the process. The unprecedented mode of cooperation between the municipality and the NGO was also challenging and ideally should have had more clearly-defined roles and outcomes that could be expressed in a memorandum of understanding. In this case such a memorandum has been drafted but never officially acknowledged by the municipality.

The collaborative approach to policy design – which in Central Europe is still rather unusual – attempts to build an understanding of why regulation matters and to increase authentic motivation to conform to it. In this case, the regulators clarified that by making the environment of Obchodná Street more 'legible' and allowing its architecture to resurface from beneath the layers of typefaces, the public realm might flourish again along with the microeconomy

Guided Urban Walk through the street's advertising, photo: Braňo Bibel

of the street. It is also a great opportunity for policymakers to get direct feedback on the proposed policy, to inquire into the real capacity of the stakeholders to implement the changes, and to adjust the policy according to the findings.

Investment into building local partnerships proved to be a key factor in closing in on the goal: The owners of three businesses have already openly proclaimed they will invest into making the changes according to the new rules. There is hope that their neighbours will follow their example, go beyond their own private interests, and will approach the cultivation of their façades as an expression of shared responsibility for the public realm.

Nourishing cross-sectoral collaboration in this case was indeed important and fruitful, and it increased the probability that the policy will be smoothly implemented. However, this is just the beginning of the journey towards a 'brand new' Obchodná Street where shop owners might catch the attention of passers-by through well-arranged goods on display or the warm atmosphere

Working on the manual for outdoor advertising. The Chief Architect of Bratislava and independent experts working on behalf of the NGO fostering the process, photo: Braňo Bibel

of their interior lighting than using by a 'full screen' sticker covering their whole shop window. The business community is genuinely busy and will need both a 'carrot and stick' to be stimulated into taking enough actions for the common good that will ultimately bring about the much-anticipated visual change (and maybe also provide some photo opportunities for politicians). The municipality and the NGO will soon have to face and solve the question of who bears competence for what in terms of neighbourhood management and sustain the momentum in order not to lose it and their mutual trust.

Obchodná Street and its surroundings → obchodnaulicaaokolie.sk

Learning From Practice – Vybíralka

1. SITUATION: Mayor Vondra is elected, 2010
CONTEXT: A new political leader with the knowledge and will to help the area comes into power.

2. SITUATION: Praha 14 Kulturní – Cultural department of the municipal district is established, David Kašpar becomes director, 2012
CONTEXT: A public administration office is created and works on issues employing qualified people with international experience.

3. SITUATION: The Festival 'Street for Art' moves to Černý Most and for several years engages with the community, beginning in 2013
CONTEXT: Community work begins in a fresh way. A stylish event brings more glamour and media attention to the outskirts. The festival works with the local community, e.g., with Roma children from the neighbourhood.

4. SITUATION: Cultural Strategy for Prague 14 is developed (2014–2024)
CONTEXT: The cultural strategy is produced and this is among the first of Prague's districts to create one.

5. SITUATION: The Anthropictures organisation is commissioned to perform long-term anthropological community mapping. The funds for the project are applied for jointly by MD Prague 14 and Praha 14 Kulturní.
CONTEXT: Informal stakeholder mapping and relationships emerge. The project happens due to funding.

6. SITUATION: Plechárna Cultural Centre opens, 2013
CONTEXT: The cultural and community infrastructure shows the public the actual interests and results of their political leaders. The center operates daily near Vybíralka.

7. SITUATION: Mayor Vondra is re-elected, 2014
CONTEXT: Continuity of political support and financing, intense cooperation with the cultural department.

8. SITUATION: A participatory office is created at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development, 2015
CONTEXT: A new public administration office opens and operates at the level of the City of Prague.

9. SITUATION: Vybíralka gets selected as a pilot project for a participatory process in the Prague outskirts, 2015
CONTEXT: Vybíralka capitalises upon the groundwork done by its predecessors: formal and informal activities, research, the cultural centre in the location and, most importantly, the established relationships between these actors and the public. The conditions in the area imply a successful participatory process and generate a positive media response. The City Council of Prague accepts the project proposal authored by the Participatory Office of the Prague Institute of Planning and Development.

Participants practicing argumentation, photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

10. SITUATION: The participatory process is carried out, 2016–2017
CONTEXT: The Institute of Planning and Development carries out the process as a prominent organiser and communicator. It has sufficient capacities and authority to communicate with and influence the City Council.

11. SITUATION: Project documentation and budget for revitalisation, 2018
CONTEXT: Due to the long-term engagement of numerous, strong actors in the area and their good media image, the project carries on and the budget has been approved by the Prague City Council.

Ingredients of a Good Participatory Process

from case studies of successful, gender-sensitive, inclusive participatory projects supported by local politicians

Realize that success does not belong to you personally, or to the Department of Planning, or to the Participatory Office. It is the result of long-term cooperation among key actors willing to engage in community work in the area.

1. Define the goal of the process

Create a socially intelligent proposal. The proposal should incorporate the needs of diverse groups. Create a close group and a diverse team (in terms of age, gender, social and economic status, ethnicity) that will follow up with the project during the entire process.

2. Selection of a successful project

Participatory processes are so rare in our region, and they are not mandatory, so if you have a chance to conduct such a pilot project, choose one that has the best chance of success (an easy, uncontroversial project) to get the media, people and politicians on your side.

3. Proper HR, management, funds

- Set up a clear management structure for the organisational team. Clear communication and decision-making roles for the public, other stakeholders, and politicians must be established before the project begins. Communicate this through local departments and involved politicians.
- Plan for sufficient capacity (of time, funding, and human resources). Avoid employing burned-out people. If you are planning a project to run over the course of a few years, think about the fact that the people in the process may change over time.

4. Clarify your dialogue groups

- Analyse stakeholders in the area. Create a network among them. In case you are working in an area without residents, work with the representatives of the diverse groups who make use of the area. Make sure to include sufficient representation of women. Use the 'fairness check' method to confirm whether your groups are representative.
- Analyse the motivations of the stakeholders to either join or avoid the process.

5. Preparatory groundwork

- The chances for success are better in an area where the preparatory groundwork has been done. Look for partners, pre-project the community work, do mapping and socioeconomic analysis. Utilize the outcomes in planning your work.
- Analyse the political constellation in your project. What kinds of powers, responsibilities and motives do the politicians in the process have? What is the decision-making process? What are their motives for supporting or threatening the project?

6. Make your scope of action clear

- Do not ignore 'invisible' or 'unwanted' groups.
- Identify possible areas of conflict. Discover the reasons for the conflict and inform people about the nature of the conflict.

7. Organize your process of communication

- Connect stakeholders (in a long-term process).
- Have a coordinator who organises different communications channels.
- Make sure you have enough gender-sensitive men and women in the core communication group to ensure gender-sensitive language.
- Think of and involve target group representatives.
- Involve politicians in the process and make them listeners to and supporters of the process, not dominators of it. Lobby others along with them.

8. Analyse the space

- Analyse the different target groups. Who is using the space? Who is not using the space? Explore the space at different times of the day and night. Organise a nighttime walk through the area to explore the aspects of safety.
- Observations and surveys should generate gender-sensitive data. A higher representation of women in a public space implies a higher perception of safety.

- Make interviews as comfortable as possible, they should be gender-sensitive.

9. Activation / Promotion

- Find out how to reach your target groups. Find locally-known people who can reach out to the wider community.
- Use gender-sensitive language and a gender-sensitive selection of photographs. Use story-telling to reach out to the wider public. Use online media and social media (especially for younger groups).
- Invite special agents (positive thinkers) to balance out critical input. Such agents often tend to be women.

Participants' projects – learning from each other, photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

10. Create ideas / Collect opinions

- Offer different time slots for meeting and collecting ideas and opinions.
- Small workshops, platforms and roundtables are better, more productive formats than big plenary sessions and panel debates.
- Implement and allocate funds for informal community activities like cultural events, community meetings, festivals, picnics, volunteer environmental improvement days, etc. They continue the public momentum and give people the proof that the process was not just a one-time activity. Informal activities are often more acceptable for shy people, seniors, women, and people who would otherwise not visit formal planning processes.
- Use non-verbal methods (pictures, moodboards).
- Give the floor to everybody during the sessions.

11. Make decisions

- Use different methods to come to agreement.
- Give the floor to everybody.
- Work with the alternative of 'least resistance'.
- Implement a gender check to ensure the fairness of the agreement.
- Make sure to let the group know who has the last word.
- Along with the needs of the different actors, examine what can be done by different stakeholders and move towards community coordination. Try to allocate resources for the continuing actors or the institutions that will succeed you. Make it clear that the needs are not just a wish list to be fulfilled by the city, but that their fulfilment comes as a result of cooperation.

12. Make the process and results visible

- Have constant visibility and communicate through different channels. Think of different locations and displays (shop windows, supermarkets, post offices, the site itself).
- Disseminate the results through the organisations that were involved and celebrate the results.
- Use comprehensible language (also non-verbal communication) and inclusive visualisations.
- Show who said what, or at least make intentional use of that information. Show who was missing during the process.
- Distribute the process results online.

13. Get feedback and evaluation

- Get feedback on the process and results from the users and experts. If you cannot achieve this, do a workshop about feedback with the core team group.
- Highlight the gender and inclusivity steps when seeking feedback.
- Prepare evaluation indicators (of success) and conduct a baseline study using them before the project starts. Conduct the evaluation one year after the project closes. The data will provide you with the arguments that will be necessary in the future.

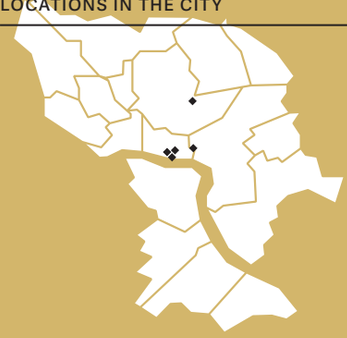
Working across Sectors. Understanding Real Estate Development

LEARNING STRUCTURE

11 experts' inputs

4 group works
3 recap groups
3 lectures
3 guided urban walks
2 visits to organisations
2 discussions
2 common dinners

LOCATIONS IN THE CITY

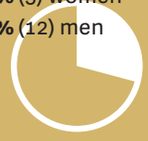


TEAM: **17**

2 trainers
1 coordinator
12 guest experts
2 participants

GENDER

29.4% (5) women
70.6% (12) men



SECTORS

35.3% (6) public sector
47.1% (8) private sector
17.6% (3) non-governmental

PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

4 real-estate development
3 architecture, urban planning (private practice)
3 local politics
2 political education
1 locally operating NGO (bike transportation)
1 nationally operating NGO (governance)
1 media
1 public administration (transportation)

Understanding Real Estate Development

Milota Sidorová

Bratislava is a rapidly emerging capital with more than 400 000 inhabitants. For years, the number of people seeking work and housing here has been growing, and the city has struggled to establish a coordinated institute or department that would methodically address difficulties in the city's development. On the other hand, most of the land in Bratislava has been privatised, and real-estate developers have become extra-influential actors in the Slovak capital's urban development.

Since this power-ownership constellation is commonplace in most Central European cities, we focused in the third module on understanding urban development processes from the perspective of the real estate developer. The case of Cvernovka exemplifies two approaches to development: one from the perspective of an international development company, and the other from that of a self-organised creative community that has become a cultural developer. At the same time, we followed negotiations with political representatives and their positions, motivations and conditions for cooperation.

Two Ways to Develop – Cvernovka Case Study

Cvernovka is a former thread factory that was built more than 100 years ago and its industrial production was discontinued after privatisation in the 1990s. Since 2006, it has become a centre for artists and creative professionals for whom the conveniently-located building is a very affordable workspace. The community brought creative momentum (peaking around 2012) and the building became one of the most significant and internationally-known creative clusters in Bratislava. More than 200 studios, organisations and business ventures formed

its diverse entrepreneurial core. The ownership of the building complex changed twice in the years following 2006, and finally, the developer YIT presented a proposal to redevelop the entire quarter. Tensions grew between the developer and the creative community. Although this is not a usual situation in which two very different sides might seek a solution, several rounds of negotiations searching for possible cooperation took place. In the end the two sides decided to part company for good. The creative community established the Nadacia Cvernovka ('The Cvernovka Foundation') and focused their efforts on finding a new building, which was found in 2016 with help from the media and with the political support of Pavol Frešo (at times the Governor of the Bratislava Region – BSK). The BSK is the owner of the new location. The community stayed together and relocated as such to the new place, which is farther from the city centre than the old factory building is. YIT decided to keep the factory building (it is a protected heritage site) and to hold an international architectural competition to develop the area.

In this case study we examined two approaches to real estate development and analysed how they differ with respect to (self-) organisation, management, financing and political support.

Learning goals:

- understanding the trends (and causes) of the intense urban development of the Slovak capital
- understanding the complexity of the building and permit process in real estate development
- visiting the heavily-developed Chalupkova zone
- understanding and analysing the Cvernovka case study through the eyes of a private real estate developer and a public cultural developer
- sketching the future of Bratislava's urban development in connection to its political leadership

EXPERT'S VIEW

Bratislava – a Rapidly Changing Capital

Daniel Suchý

New centre: Between the Staré Mesto (Old Town), the Nivy bus station and the Danube a new city centre is forming with a dozen high-rise buildings. Source: J&T Real Estate

Although Bratislava boasts a long history, it has not managed, over the centuries, to create a recognisable identity. The reason is the incessant changes typical of the city and its development. Even its current name has been in use for less than 100 years, a time when Bratislava had less than 100,000 citizens. In the second half of the 20th century the number of people living in Bratislava doubled, reaching the current figure of approximately 500,000.

Bratislava covers quite an extensive area because it has grown by swallowing up neighbouring villages. To compare, Vienna occupies an area that is just 12.5% larger than Bratislava, yet there are

four times as many people living in Vienna. Over the past 20 years Bratislava has been expanding beyond its administrative borders as well, and many neighbouring villages have doubled or even tripled in size. Local inhabitants, together with students and employees from all over Western Slovakia, comprise a 200,000-strong crowd of daily commuters to and from the city. This results in regular traffic breakdowns on the main highway, on the other main incoming roads, and inside the city itself.

Bratislava's infrastructure is not equipped to cope with this situation. One of the troublesome issues is the absence of accurate statistics regarding the number of people actually living there. The flawed 2011 census showed a decrease of 17,000 inhabitants. According to the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, whose figures serve as the basis for community tax financing, Bratislava has only 426,000 inhabitants, although the citizens' registry records show a number that is higher by 50,000. However, there are tens of thousands living in Bratislava without a permanent residence permit.

After the 1989 collapse of the Communist regime many buildings under construction were abandoned, many plans never implemented, and the historical city centre was left in a seriously neglected state. Bratislava saw a dramatic boom after 2000 when the historical centre was rejuvenated, density was increasing, and new satellite suburbs and towns were forming. This thriving development was halted in 2008 by the collapse of the real estate bubble, which again left many projects unfinished. That legacy also included empty lots after factories were demolished.

Nivy Bus Station: After more than a decade of preparations, construction began on the new bus station as part of a complex including an administration building and shopping centre. Source: HB Reavis

The crisis opened up a debate about the growing dissatisfaction among Bratislava's inhabitants and experts, a debate about the quality and scope of projects lacking a conceptual approach in terms of high-rise developments, the negligence of infrastructure and public spaces, the disappearance of green areas, the scrapping of industrial heritage and an insensitive approach to the

Zwirn: This project for transformation of a former thread factory by preserving two historical buildings is the outcome of an architectural competition that remains unique. Source: YIT Slovakia

reconstruction of modern monuments. While private investors had responded to new demands, the city council and city districts did not exploit the ebb in construction activities to improve the quality of urban development or their cooperation with construction companies.

The last three years has seen an upsurge in developers' activities again. A record number of residential units are under construction; last year the largest square area of new office space was added since the pre-crisis boom; and developers have started giant new shopping mall projects. The main development area lies between the Nivy bus station and the Old Town (*Staré Mesto*), the port, and the Danube. This former industrial zone, with a square area comparable to that of the historical centre, has the potential to form a new city centre. Developers have introduced and even started building new, multifunctional centres for 15,000 residents and 60,000 employees boasting 14 high-rise buildings, including the first Slovak skyscraper, to be built during the second phase of the Eurovea quay development along with a new bus terminal.

On the opposite riverbank, the new Nové Lido district with housing for 6,000 people and office premises for 26,000 employees is planned to further expand the city centre and connect both riverbanks. As a matter of fact, Bratislava has so far not been

taking full advantage of its location between the Karpaty hills and the Danube. The first project that linked Bratislava to the river was Eurovea, by the Irish company Ballymore, completed in 2010. By contrast, the continuing development of the riverbank area below Bratislava Castle is too intensive and fails to create inviting public spaces.

The transformation of former industrial facilities and of areas where only a few examples of Bratislava's historical industrial legacy have been preserved is a newly-emerging, significant trend. New developments are eating away at another legacy – Bratislava's vineyards. Brand-new districts housing thousands of people are popping up close to the airport and in the suburbs to the east, south and north-west. The largest of these, Slnečnice, located at the southern end of the Petržalka district, is already under construction. Dúbravka and Podunajské Biskupice are also growing

Malé Krasňany: The new development covers more and more of the vineyard area. Source: Lucron Development

Matadorka: In Petržalka, redevelopment of the former Matador plant has begun. Source: VI Group

denser; another project under construction is the large-scale office development and the huge research campus of the ESET software company at Patrónka close to the highway coming from the Czech Republic.

Today developers focus on larger projects that aim to create more holistic urban environments and are talking about building a modern new metropolis. They stress multifunctionality, public spaces and transportation solutions. However, Bratislava lacks fundamental strategic documents about land use. Its urban plan is outdated and there is no clear vision for the backbone of the public transportation system. City Hall has not been able to push through a single parking policy proposal with the city's municipal districts. Maximum building height regulations have not been passed for years now. There are no guidelines for creating public spaces, for competitions, or for participation, and there is no strategic plan for long-term development.

'With an army of lawyers, big real estate developers can manage the chaos and complexity of the permit process more easily than individual private investors. Thus it is easier to build a tower block than it is a single-family home in Bratislava.'

Michal Drotován

Another issue and a world unto itself is that of permit procedures. According to a report by the World

Bank, Slovakia has one of the most complicated procedures to obtain a building permit in all of Europe, and the one that takes the second-longest amount of time. For this reason, several foreign developers that bought plots in eastern European capitals after the EU enlargement have now left the Slovak capital. While they managed to complete their projects in cities like Budapest, Bucharest or Warsaw, in Bratislava they were not even able to obtain the necessary permits during that same amount of time.

Apart from a lack of vision, financing and expertise, another problem lies in the complicated division of competencies among City Hall, the 17 municipal districts, and the Regional Authority. Their relationships are tainted by distrust and many decisions are more political than they are founded in expert knowledge. Bratislava lacks the long-term support of the national Government and needs to reform its financing system. Its *per capita* budget is much lower than that of Prague or even Brno.

Under the current conditions, Bratislava cannot be an equal partner to big investors. Evidence of this fact is the development of the new city centre. Despite the fact that this area has for many years been designated as an expansion of the original city centre, Bratislava has never prepared a master plan for its comprehensive development, nor has the necessary infrastructure been built. The national Government has failed to decontaminate the soil there after the oil refinery Apollo was bombed during WWII, which polluted it. Despite the fact that several studies have been conducted, no urban development plan for the area has been approved. Developers therefore act on their own and in an isolated fashion. Instead of expanding the urban structure of *Staré Mesto*, individual high-rise buildings are built there.

HB Reavis and J&T Real Estate, the city's two largest developers, each plan to invest over one billion EUR into projects in the new city centre proposed for building an overground metro and a new tram line. Their requirement was that they be granted the status of an 'important investment', which would guarantee them a more expedient, simpler permission process. However, City Hall would lose control over the projects if it made such a move, as they would then be supervised by the state administration. After heated discussion, the developers withdrew their applications. Instead of holding a discussion about improving the city's development, the issue became amending the legislation on large investments, which had been originally drafted to attract large car manufacturers.

New Cvernovka. A Story of 'Situation-Generated' Cultural Developers

Dominika Belanská
based on an interview with Braňo Čavoj

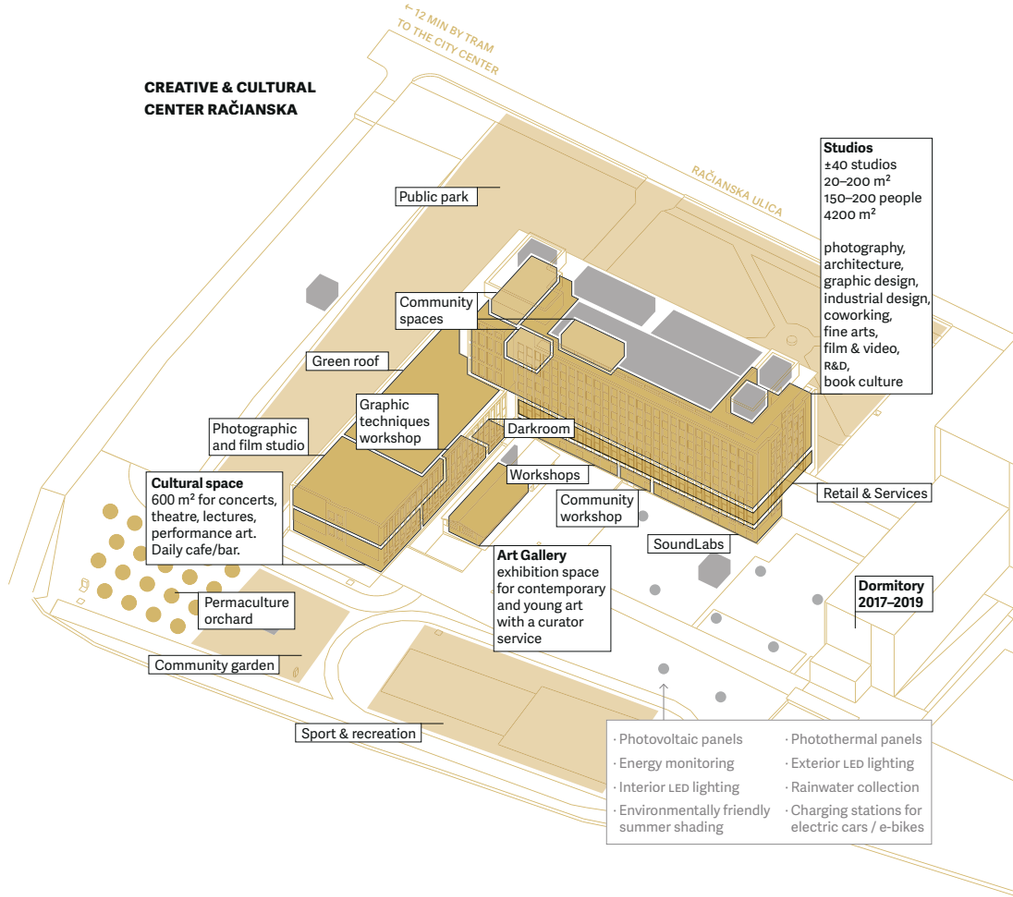
New Cvernovka, studios, photo: Braňo Bibel

On the periphery of Bratislava a new creative and cultural centre with the working title 'New' Cvernovka has been under construction since 2016. Its opening made national headlines as the cultural event of the year to come. In Slovakia it is a unique example of citizen-designed urban development as a tactical alternative to the traditional commercial development that is supplementary to municipal strategic planning. This piece focuses on how a foundation deals with aligning its own mission with a public promise to transform a vacant school building complex into a hotspot of cultural activities.

New Cvernovka, studios, photo: Braňo Bibel

Braňo Čavoj, co-founder of the project, was given the crucial but challenging task of coming up with a governance model that would make the organisation of this work more effective and crisis-free. At the moment, 'many people deal with many things. We try to make the community engaged, but still it's the four of us who not only make the key decisions, but also have to deal with the daily agenda,' says Braňo about the pace of the days at New Cvernovka. 'Closely connected to this is the system of fundraising. We realised we have been focused on where to get finance and what was promised to partners. We wish to make things according to deeper analysis and out of our own motivation. All of us feel a sort of ownership towards this project.' The project develops according to an ecological strategy which is being formed in the meetings of their *archboard* and *ecoboard*: 'These are experts who invest their free time to discuss the long-term strategy of the project. Moreover, a programme board is being formed that should keep an eye on the quality of the cultural programme. We don't want to create a bubble, but to be open to the neighbourhood and public, as well as to the specialists.'

The Old Cvernovka was essentially a cultural point and hub of creative studios in an old thread factory, but in the new space many more diverse and more stable public amenities will be available. How did this shift happen? The people from the 40 studios needed new spaces for their endeavours to exist. In order to 'keep the ecosystem of Cvernovka together', they approached prospective partners from different sectors in hope of finding a suitable space, an affordable alternative. 'We are 'situation-generated people'. The vow to make this place into a cultural and creative centre with all the functions we can run here, formed about a year and a half ago when we entered the debate with BSK (Bratislava Region Municipal Council). That is where the commitment was made that this building will serve not just for office and studio rental, and we will not just revitalise the facility's structure and invest into it, but we will also create a cultural programme that extends into the neighbourhood and enriches the palette of Bratislava's cultural scene with different formats of events. We had to formulate this into a vision so it would also make sense for the council members to rent us a public building for such a long period of time.'



Since moving in last year the foundation has kept its promises: They started to run a public library and a co-working space, and the opening event was an enormous success with around 8,000 people attending. Classrooms have been transformed into studios for creative work and bands rehearse in the basement. Soon an artist-in-residency programme will be launched in what used to be garages and a gallery will be opened. However, there is even a bigger task ahead which, according to Braňo, has widened the focus of the project considerably and supports its social dimension: In one part of the complex a former dormitory building is now supposed to provide community housing paired with NGOs whose visions are similarly long-term and with other public services.

'The creative community moving to the new location and establishing the foundation was the best solution. The case is a rare win-win situation in the real estate of Bratislava.'

Igor Marko

New Cvernovka brings a dramatically diverse mix of functions to the boundary between two zones, a low-density residential neighbourhood and an industrial zone. This could be an example of a sustainable development away from a zoning approach that failed a long time ago. 'We had to get the building back into shape, but the neighbourhood itself is not run down. However, there is something missing that would make it a good place to live. We want to be open to the surrounding area and the public so that this will become a place for broad local use that would enliven this quarter. All neighbourhoods should offer diverse functions that support quality of life.' In Bratislava almost all cultural life happens in the Old Town – and that is a problem as well as an opportunity: 'To have a project on the periphery that is big enough to kick-start processes would show that these neighbourhoods, too, can be livable.' To encourage people to come spend time there, they also plan to open the area around the building as a public park. 'We are in contact with the neighbouring community, we invite them for events, and in workshops we ask them about their opinions, what would they appreciate here.' From these workshops they mainly draw inspirations for the development of the programme. A structured follow-up on the community participation will be necessary, although the main decisions about the building's functions have already been made.

Not surprisingly, these actors from the creative sector have been pushed out from a gentrifying area. The local miracle is that they did not end up dispersed throughout the city but have

Garden and the neighbourhood of the former industrial periphery, photo: Braňo Bibel

now set the wheels in motion in a new place where long-term impact is possible and is hopefully guaranteed by a 25-year rental contract. Power and responsibility has been redistributed. How do they perceive having a bigger share of both now? 'It is not about doing your own thing that you make nice and polished. There are a lot of expectations coming from the community, from the surrounding area, and from the politicians who have given us their trust. The important thing is whether you still believe in it. We are bound by contracts, but our hands are still free enough to do what we want here, and that motivates us.'

The recent elections brought about a change to the political representation on the council. The path to smooth agreement with the BSK was paved by the sympathies of the ex-chair, Pavol Frešo. 'Without him and his attitude we might not have achieved such broad support. In the negotiation, the big community behind the project played a role, and Cvernovka was also already established and quite renowned.' What also helped to get councillors to raise their hands in favour of the project was showing shiny examples of the studios' successful work, some of which has resonated abroad and 'pulled on the string of developing economic and human potential. We showed examples of companies in Cvernovka that grew from three people to 40 employees, that provide jobs, make money, and are into innovative technologies. This is something that the

‘The Cvernovka case study represents rather a precedent, not a systematic solution. Only intense media focus and public involvement made the actors opt for better, higher-quality solutions. Until the pilot project becomes a policy, we cannot just expect successful “copy-and–paste” solutions based on Cvernovka in other types of real estate.’

Milota Sidorová

politicians listen to.’ Involving them already in the negotiation phase so they could find their own piece of the agenda aligned with their own political goals proved a good way to approach the debate about a new use for the former dormitory: ‘For those members of the council who had a social vision, we made sense by involving communities, working with disadvantaged groups. For others economic reasoning worked, showing we would save them money and also generate revenue. The project base was broad enough to make sense to a wide spectrum of council members.’

Braňo does not perceive political change as an imminent risk, apart from technical issues that could slow down some processes because new representatives will need time to become acquainted with the environment and the documents. The long-term strategy to achieve the sustainability of the project is nonetheless closely tied to the contract with the council. That is why they see it as essential to keep the communication channel to the council open and develop the collaboration mutually so that whoever is in charge perceives the project as a shared vision that is still aligned with what both sides want. For this purpose, they have built in a number of shared interest points that go beyond the landlord-tenant relationship: ‘For example, the gym space went back to being cared for by the regional council, with the aim that it will become a centre of performing arts – but we will have to align ourselves about the formation of the programme.’ The tactic is that of harmonising needs. ‘As long as their strategy will remain one of bringing new, progressive approaches into culture and social policies, bringing things to life and drawing the public back to unused buildings, our project‘s sustainability is safe.’

Cvernovka Foundation (the ‘cultural developer’ of New Cvernovka)

1. What went well for us?

- Quick learning of new skills (management, finance, development, real estate development, PR, political negotiations)
- We developed relationships
- We maintained continuity of the community
- We got the money!
- We got the new building!
- We learned from other projects during the process
- We set up a professional team
- We cultivated public and media support

2. Where did we face difficulties?

- Becoming a formalised community + shared responsibility
- True continuity of the community (existing people could be more involved)
- Clear communication of values to public and other actors
- Organisational development
- Becoming a good neighbour
- Involving more people in the project
- Long-term financial sustainability
- Keeping the vision
- Iit consumed all our time (we had to put aside paid work in our professions)

YIT Slovakia (the private real estate developer of Old Cvernovka)

3. What went well for us?

- We got the brand of the building developed by former artists / creative community
- The building has added value (in the long-term perspective) and we realised a successful international architectural competition
- We are building a unique product (compared to other real estate developers in the city)

4. Where did we face difficulties?

- PR and marketing after the creative community left the building
- Establishing a new product in our business portfolio (offices)
- Heritage aspects of maintaining the existing building are difficult to cope with
- Getting the building permint for this kind of development
- The winning proposal aims to change the land-use and master plan (because the old construction code supports the modernist type of development involving isolated buildings instead of block structures on a more natural human scale, that forms the streets)

The City of Bratislava, *Bratislavský samosprávny kraj* (BSK)

5. What went well for us?

- We killed two birds with one stone. We 'kept' the heritage of the building and got good PR and political points
- We voted according to popular demand (the public was interested in the case)
- We got an international architectural competition for free
- We helped the creative community
- We have an example of good practice

6. Where did we face difficulties?

- We could not buy the building and reconstruct it by ourselves due to high maintenance costs
- Until the case was settled among YIT and the creative community our image was at risk
- The winning proposal aims to change the land-use and master plan (votes and political risk)

Professional community (architects, urban planners)

7. What went well for us?

- An international architectural competition was launched (very rare in Slovakia) – professional opportunity
- Example of renovating a heritage protected building
- Learnings from a rare case of dialogue between the real estate developer and creative community representatives
- A new, good case of bottom-up real estate development (New Cvernovka)

8. Where did we face difficulties?

- The difficult initial constellation was a 'wake-up call' about how development practices are now
- Giving support through expert opinions
- The shift from personal to procedural decision-making (in Bratislava precedents are introduced just by the individual people working, they are not the 'system')
- A new approach to urban planning (in Old Cvernovka)
- Cvernovka, case study, pros-and-cons analysis of the involved actors

Cvernovka Foundation → nadaciacvernovka.sk

Developing an Audience for a Better Bratislava

interview with Barbara Zavarská

'Dobrý trh' (Good Market) is the most popular neighbours' market in Bratislava. How does it influence the way people and politicians think?

Yes indeed, 'Dobrý trh' has a certain influence and helps spread ideas. In a practical way it shows people what the street can be like for one day, that it can be different. We influence people through other tools, for example, our zero-waste policy. We managed to convince all those who sell their produce at our market to invest in biodegradable dishes. We teach visitors how to stop producing waste or what corporate responsibility means. We are involved

Good Market – *Dobrý trh*, Bratislava, photo: Marek Jančúch

with other topics as well, for example, our work with minorities in Slovakia or with the homeless. Homelessness was our Christmas theme because people without a home suffer during Christmastime the most. Over the past six years we have managed to create an awareness that developing the local market is key for a healthy and lively community.

Where do you see 'Dobrý trh' in the future?

We would like to offer zero-waste management as a service for other events in Slovakia. Our festival is the only one so far to have achieved radically improved sorting of communal waste. Previously, 70% of the waste generated during such an event was unsorted, but now just 5% of the waste generated during this event is unsorted. Thanks to this success we have been contacted by organisers of other events and even by local governments. We would like to see the discussion forum 'WhatCity?' reflect those issues that resonate with the 'Dobrý trh' market and vice versa. For example, we are interested in gentrification. In what ways does 'Dobrý trh' influence a local economy? What does it mean to locals, for abandoned houses, to the development of streets and the city in general?

Barbara Zavarská, Illah van Oijen, co-directors and organizers of Good Market with president of Slovakia Andrej Kiska, photo: Marek Jančúch

You organise the multidimensional 'WhatCity?' event, which takes place outside, in the street. What was your motivation?

'WhatCity' is a discussion format that deals with high-quality urban development. So far its focus has mostly been on the expert public and those interested in this topic, not on the general public. At the same time, 'Dobrý trh' resonates with people as a medium where both politicians and investors can improve their karma. We get invitations to places where it does not really fit, but our aim is to support small businesspeople and diversity, which means we will never become part of the newly-developing business centres. We are avoiding invitations from large developers, and thanks to

WhatCity? fosters expert discussion about diverse topics of high-quality urban development, photo: Braňo Bibel

our cooperation with a smaller developer that also cares about the long-term improvement of the transportation situation in Mickiewiczova Street, we can point to a more complex problem, namely, that the current transportation situation in Bratislava is unbearable.

If you were Bratislava's mayor, what would be the first thing you would change?

Bratislava's development is a politically-charged issue that would be greatly helped by long-term planning with a vision for some 20 years ahead. Extraordinary investment should support public transportation and integrated transportation development. New tunnels and bypasses are not a solution. A solution would be, for example, to build at least five new tram lines. With that, I can envision a Bratislava with a significant reduction in cars.

Good Market → dobrytrh.sk
WhatCity? → whatcity.sk

Plán Bratislava, the Political Trigger

Ctibor Košťál

Plan B. as a book, source: Plan B.

Plan Bratislava – Political Product or Expert Document?

A group of various experts (more than 50) have joined and formed a civic movement called 'Platform for Bratislava'. Its main goal is to deliver a new vision for Bratislava and its future development. We call it 'Plan B.', where 'B.' stands for Bratislava. As I am one of the leaders responsible for a particular working group (city governance), I have often been asked about the purpose of the document and about how we plan to bring our vision to life. My answer has always been simple: 'We have prepared a document that reflects on the biggest challenges facing our city, and it can live through its first birthday only if there is enough political will and power to implement its recommendations.'

This combines two levels, expert and political. Policymaking on the local level in Slovakia has a strong tradition of partisanship, with limited participation by experts. This has led to a phenomenon which on the national level is called 'state capture'. We can adapt this concept to our circumstances as 'city capture'. This is characterised by influence over the formation and implementation of regulations in order to protect and promote the influence of small (corrupted) groups. Although the political parties' power has slightly weakened due to the success of independent candidates in the last local election (2014), such groups remained in power and the main challenge stays the same – how to deliver a change in city governance. We believe Bratislava, in order to escape 'city capture', needs a strong vision implemented by a strong political force. In other words, we need to combine political leadership with clear policy vision. Currently we are about to finalise and publish our vision. It involves 12 chapters (including Environment, Mobility, Governance, Culture, Education, Social Affairs, Urban Development, etc.) and will be delivered to City Council members. What comes next, though? How will the knowledge be applied?

The vision includes recommendations for policymakers, which means anyone can adopt it and use it once elected. At the same time, the head of the Platform for Bratislava, Matúš Vallo, has decided to run for mayor in the 2018 local election together with a group of experts running for City Council. The goal is to implement a vision that goes far beyond the political slogans and populism of the current representation. They believe that the combination of expert input with political leadership will appeal to voters and will attract a substantial number of City Council members seeking to implement the expert vision. In order to do so, Vallo is forming his election team and developing his election strategy, which will lead not only to him being elected to the mayor's office, but will also help experts in different city districts run their campaigns and be elected to the Council. This requires a new set of skills that the candidates need to learn, as well as a change in their mindsets. They need to extend their focus from being experts to being politicians, which requires fundraising, meeting with people, commenting on public issues, etc.

Plan Bratislava – political perspective

Plan Bratislava is developing a wealth of high-quality content about what to do with the city and represents a rare effort by experts to generate a political programme. However, from the political point of view, the material is too complex and incomprehensible to voters. The selection of a simple thesis and the running of a good election campaign is more important for the time being. The current initiatives or experts united around Plan Bratislava have low or little political experience. They should nominate enough candidates and form political alliances in the upcoming local elections (November 2018) with the established or independent politicians who share their values. Meanwhile, the core group will have to establish itself under a certain platform with decision-making rules, possibly in the form of a party.

Plan Bratislava → planbratislava.sk

Real Estate Development and the City

Old Cvernovka building site, on the horizon you see the heritage protected building of the Pradiareň (Spinning Mill), photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

1. **Bratislava faces huge pressure on city development catalysed by:**

- An increasing number of people working in and willing to live in Bratislava. According to official sources there are approximately 427,000 inhabitants living in the city and 645,000 in the Bratislava region. The real number, however, is much higher. In May 2017 Market Locator counted more than 666,000 inhabitants using geo-location data from mobile phones overnight. Between 80,000 and 150,000 people are estimated to be added on a daily basis. These are daily commuters to Bratislava from the region and beyond.

- A long period of time when the National Bank imposed favourable rates on loans, thus enabling more people to buy residences. The growing pool of clients has attracted many real estate developers. Due to increasing debt rates, the National Bank has imposed stricter lending rules as of January 2018.
- Few or inconsistent building regulations imposed on private investors operating in real estate in the city. The construction code is more than 40 years old and favours the mass-housing structures of communist times, thus making higher-quality complexes exceptions under the law. Exceptions require more time and resources. Real estate developers are not really induced by the law to increase the quality of their products.

2. **Bratislava has a low level of coordination in urban planning**

- Bratislava shares a complex decision-making system in urban planning typical for postcommunist countries. The actors in the decision-making process are private investors, the City of Bratislava, the county department, municipal districts, building permit departments, local committees, civil society associations, and organisations. There is little cooperation or technological interconnectedness among the actors and obtaining a building permit can take several years.
- The responsibilities are not balanced among the City Hall and municipal districts. Often the municipal district department has the stronger position in the process. Bratislava reminds

Discussing political aspects of Bratislava's urban development with local politicians and politically active experts (in the building of New Cvernovka), photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

us of a '17-headed dragon'. This was the metaphor used by our participants during the training to describe the relationships and powers between City Hall, the 17 districts, and the building permit departments.

3. Bratislava lacks vision in its development

- Bratislava is lacking a department or an organisation working on strategy and the corresponding documents at the level of the city.

4. Bratislava lacks capacity and quality in human resources and the talent pool in its administration

- Most experts working on improving the quality of urban life do not work in the city administration but outside as independent experts, private investors or non-governmental and civilian society associations. It can be said that the best brains are not working for the city and at the moment are rarely challenged to work in the public sector.
- Although there are many departments dealing with different aspects of planning, their workflows are not interconnected

5. The result is that big players eat *all the jam out of the donut.*

- Compared to small, public, or collective investors (like the Cvernovka Foundation), big real estate developers are better equipped to build in the city of Bratislava. They have the means and resources to handle the chaotic state of the legislation and the difficult permit process much more easily than their competitors.

After intensive discussions and the insights we have experienced, we have agreed on the understanding that there is no quick fix for the problems with urban development in the city. The only solution for handling these pressures is to change the political leadership or establish leadership with long-term, strategic priorities in favour of construction regulation and the creation of structures that will reinforce and improve the efficiency of the municipality as an actor in urban planning processes.

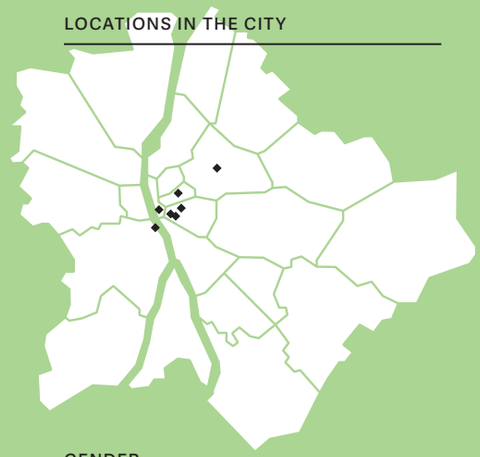
4 Budapest

Influencing Others and Making an Impact

LEARNING STRUCTURE

8 visits to organisations
6 experts' inputs
3 discussions
2 recap groups
2 lectures
2 guided urban walks
2 group works
2 common dinners
1 urban game
1 individual activity

LOCATIONS IN THE CITY



TEAM: **15**

3 trainers
1 coordinator
10 guest experts
1 involved participant

GENDER

33.3% (5) women
66.7% (10) men

SECTORS

20% (3) public sector
26.7% (4) private sector
53.3% (8) non-governmental

→ most of the guest experts worked in more than one sector, mostly it was a combination of a non-governmental organisation with a private venture

PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

6 internationally operating NGO (urban planning, research, architecture, gamification)
3 locally operating NGO (bike transportation)
3 local politics
2 political education
1 media

Influencing Others and Making an Impact

Milota Sidorová

Sustainable development can be seen from two points of view. The first includes experts, innovators, and people designing better solutions that encompass all three aspects of sustainability (social, environmental and economic). The second includes people applying the change. These are not only public sector workers and politicians but, more importantly, citizens themselves. Citizens play a major role in the political and social aspects of sustainable development because their habits shape the real environment. Thus, the ability to influence public opinion or consumer habits is a key factor in the successful implementation of any change or sustainable policy. In the previous three modules of the Enhancing Sustainable Urban Development in Local Policies programme, we learned a lot about different expert solutions, policies and approaches.Through case studies in affordable housing, public participation and understanding different models of real estate development, we came to understand that change has to be communicated and advocated for among executives, politicians and the public.

Hungary and its capital Budapest have been experiencing major political changes in recent years. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has announced the establishment of an 'illiberal state based on national foundations'. His Government is ruling the country in an increasingly authoritarian way. Since 2010, the democratic opposition has been weak and divided. The next parliamentary elections will take place in April 2018. Non-governmental organisations critical of the Fidesz Government have been stigmatised by it, as has the Central European University (CEU), as demonstrated by the passing of recent legislation targeting CEU (known as the '*lex CEU*') and certain non-governmental organisations. All in all, democracy in Hungary has been slowly but steadily eroding. However, the Hungarian case is not isolated. Other countries in

Central and Eastern Europe show similar patterns and the spread of populism represents one of the most acute challenges to liberal democracies all over Europe.

When it comes to urban development, Budapest, like the other neighbouring capitals, faces similar urban challenges such as rapid urban growth, a shortage of affordable housing, transportation issues, protecting green spaces, gentrification, quality of public spaces, and the need for public participation. The city's political landscape, however, triggers an essential question: How can sustainable policies be implemented in an environment that is dismantling democracy?

In a series of case studies on urban development in Budapest, we explored the motivations, thinking, strategies and toolkits of various urban actors (bottom-up informal initiatives, non-governmental organisations, experts and politicians). We analysed the ways in which they work with their target audiences in practice, and we rethought the (communication) tools that can be useful for creating more room for implementing sustainable solutions. This module was designed for participants operating in complex political constellations. It aimed to enhance their strategic thinking and orientation in the wide network of relationships that is typical for city planning and development projects.

Learning goals

- understanding the political spectrum within the city representation, the relationships between city hall and municipal districts, and local and national policies
- learning about the current urban development issues that receive significant political and media coverage and those perceived as apolitical
- learning how an expert solution or project can be fostered
- analysing whether it was possible to foster change without government or official support and how to focus on convincing others to mobilise
- introduction to impact assessment

Local Governance under Centralization and Shrinking Democracy – the Case of Budapest

Ivan Tosics

'In Hungary, the national government has been taking over local governments in many ways. It introduced stronger state control over municipal public services (water, sewage, garbage, etc). It reduced self-governing functions, especially in the most costly public tasks (education and health care), concentrating these into enormous state institutions. It limited public resources for local municipalities. They become more dependent on the central budget.'

Ivan Tosics, managing director, MRI

The background: post-socialist transition of Budapest

Budapest is one of the largest cities in East Central Europe. The transition of Hungary from socialism to democracy and capitalism was quick, and the free-market period of development has led to the usual symptoms of the capitalist urban model. Within Hungary, Budapest was the clear winner of the transition in terms of economic development and the restructuring of the urban fabric. This rapid economic development was, however, accompanied by several problems: population loss due to suburbanisation and ageing (the population is down to 1.7 million from a peak of two million in the 1980s), environmental degradation due to exploding car use, and increasing inequalities between population groups that are also mirrored in the socio-spatial structure of the city (a gentrifying inner city and booming suburbs with deteriorating areas in the transitional belt and stagnating housing estates).

In the 1990s the housing stock was largely privatised and public ownership of housing diminished to a minimum level: only 3% is

social housing, much below the proportion of poor inhabitants. Budapest has a two-tier local government system within which the municipality and all its districts have their directly-elected mayors and local assemblies. This resulted in a very fragmented system where the allocation of power, resources and tasks between the 1+23 local governments was full of debates and conflicts.[1] Even so, by the beginning of the 2000s new strategic and planning documents were approved and the municipality started to steer urban development processes that had been dominated by market forces in the 1990s.

1 See: Tosics, 2005

The EU accession in 2004 brought about large development possibilities, not only in financial terms but also due to modernisation of the planning system. In the Central Hungarian Region the planning process covered Budapest and the surrounding Pest County, involving the whole functional urban area.

The political change after 2010: total reshaping of national and local politics

After two decades of 'normal' alteration between left- and right-wing political parties leading the country, April 2010 marked the beginning of a special period when a right-wing party (Fidesz) got a supermajority in Parliament. With a 68% share among MPs, the Fidesz-led government has changed all the basic political institutions within just a few years, including the Constitution, the leadership of all important national bodies, and the election laws. The case of Budapest shows how the circumstances of local governance and civic policy-making have changed under such conditions.

One of the first decisions of the new Parliament was to change the local election law. This came only a few months before the local elections (October 2010) and was justified by the political slogan of 'saving public money'. While decreasing the number of locally-elected politicians from 66 to 33, the borders of electoral districts were changed (gerrymandering) as were the rules for allocating seats, introducing the application of the D'Hondt system to strengthen the stronger parties at the expense of the smaller ones. Partly due to these changes, both the majority in the Budapest assembly and the Mayor of Budapest post was acquired by Fidesz (for the first time since 1990).

Another tendency has been the centralisation of public services in Hungary. Education and health care, which were largely decentralised to the local governments in the 1990s, were re-centralised after 2010. The same happened to public services (water, sewerage, etc.), where price- setting also became centralised – similarly to the socialist period. As a consequence of the reshuffling of public responsibilities, local government expenditures in the national budget decreased by 30% compared to the 2010 figure. Due to reduced local responsibilities, the local governments did not get any more income from personal income tax revenues. All of this increased local governments' vulnerability and dependency on central transfers, which became increasingly allocated along the lines of political loyalty.[2]

2 Hegedüs-Péteri, 2014

The procedure to change the rules and thereby influence the outcomes of local elections was repeated after the national elections in April 2014: Parliament (again dominated by Fidesz with over 2/3 of the seats) changed the local election law in June, now specifically only for Budapest. The reason was that the results of the national elections made it uncertain whether Fidesz would stay in power in Budapest in the municipal assembly. To ensure that it would, the composition of the municipal assembly was totally changed by the new law: instead of direct elections, the 23 district mayors, the Mayor of Budapest, and nine representatives from the compensation lists would create the new 33-seat municipal assembly. This was again justified in the media with the statement that it would 'save public money', but in reality it expressed the belief of Fidesz that they would get a higher share of the directly-elected district mayors than were even on the party list. The ruling party's expectations were fulfilled and Budapest remained in their hands: after the October 2014 elections the share of Fidesz representatives increased from 20 compared to 13 (between 2010 and 2014 Fidesz had only a small majority there, with 17 representatives against an opposition of 16).

With the 2014 power-politics changes, the leadership of Budapest was subordinated to the districts: Budapest municipality turned virtually into a 'compulsory association of its districts'.[3] The new composition of the municipal assembly subordinated the interests of Budapest to district interests, turning assembly meetings into bargaining between district mayors ('I'll vote for your idea if you vote for mine') – mutually forgetting along the way what would be in the interest of Budapest as a whole. This was a perfect way for the right-wing central government to assure the 'liberal-leftist' population of Budapest would not create a municipal government that could become a strong competitor of the central government.

3 Hoffmann, 2014

Strong central political control over new developments in the city

There are also other tools through which national priorities have been strengthened over those held by the population of Budapest. One is how development monies are allocated (basically financed by EU funds), from which those municipalities that are more loyal might get more. A key example is the public transport system of Budapest: the very much-needed renewal of a subway lines is only supported by the Government as long as the municipality does not raise arguments against the Government's other ideas and wishes.

Another tool to strengthen central Government control is the direct steering of the largest developments in the country through the national law on 'investments of enhanced importance'. In areas voted on by Parliament to become subject to this law, the municipality and the districts as well as the NGOs and civic organisations have lost their influence over these decisions. As a result, in areas that are of key importance to the prestige investments made by the leading party and the central Government, e.g., Kossuth Square in front of the Parliament building, the new residence of the PM on Castle Hill, Városliget, the largest city park, destined for a museum quarter, the law enables the executive branch to plan and implement projects with extreme speed, as no objections can be raised to delay the process.

Due to all these changes, Budapest municipality has lost its former decision-making power over its own territory: the city has became the playground of national politics while also being subordinated to bargaining between its districts. No wonder that under such conditions progressive civil servants leave City Hall or get kicked out as has happened with the head of the public transport authority and the city's chief architect.

The remaining options for resistance

In the course of power being re-centralised in, most local leaders have lost their incentives for innovation and are just acting in a loyal way, carrying out the wishes from above. There are little chances for political resistance at the local level: due to the monopoly of the ruling power over the media and the allocation of money, the message to voters is strong: your city will only develop if it is on the same side as the central power. Even so, some local governments try to resist through specific legal actions (e.g., turning their gym buildings, built from their own money, into condominiums in

Városliget park, source: Városliget Zrt, 2017

order to avoid confiscation of their investment by the state). A few cities are successful based on investments by foreign firms while some – those which are disadvantaged by the ruling power anyway – believe in development options without EU support that are based on cooperation between city institutions and NGOs, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and owner-operators.

Since the late 1990s the number of NGOs, grassroots movements and pressure groups has increased substantially in Hungary. Since 2010, however, they are less and less accepted as partners by politicians in planning processes. As a reaction, protests are becoming ever more frequent against the top-down ideas of the Government, especially protests against those projects that fall under the law on investments of enhanced importance (for which all 'normal' objection channels are precluded from use).

The first picture above shows the museum quarter planned in Budapest's largest urban park, Városliget, with the new museum buildings superimposed in the middle and on the right-hand side of the photograph. The second picture shows the barricade of the headquarters done by 'Ligetvédők', a group that fights against cutting down trees and erecting new buildings in Városliget. The aim is to slow implementation of plans that were not discussed satisfactorily with the affected population. In a few cases, protesters

Barricade by 'Ligetvédők', a group that fights against cutting down trees and erecting new buildings in Városliget, source: Ivan Tosics

have achieved partial success in the form of launching a local referendum, and there are some cases (e.g., *NOlimpia, Római part,* discussed below) where this fact has convinced the ruling power to retract its original idea.

NOlimpia – a group of young Hungarians organised a successful campaign against Budapest bidding for the 2024 Olympic Games in order to protect the residents of Budapest from the enormous expense that would entail. When enough signatures were collected for a local referendum, the Government immediately ordered Budapest to withdraw its bid.

Római part – in a long-lasting dispute about a missing element of Budapest's flood protection system, the municipal assembly took a decision to build a mobile dam along the shore of the Danube that would have satisfied real estate developers, but would have also destroyed the most popular recreational area of the city. Local activists organised several protests and finally the court agreed that the collection of signatures calling for a local referendum could start. As a reaction, the municipality immediately withdraw its resolution and new discussions could then be launched about how to implement flood protection while maintaining the recreational area.

These are clear success cases. However, such successes are exceptional, as strong power politics on the national and the Budapest municipality level effectively prevent objections against the central political will in most cases.

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Budapest ZUGLÓ – Sustainable Urban Development in the District

Interview with Rebeka Szabó, Deputy Mayor and Örs Szokolay, senior strategic advisor to the Mayor of Budapest's Zugló district

The mayor of Zugló (Gergely Karácsony) and one of the district's deputy mayors (Rebeka Szabó) were seated as candidates of a left-wing green party, Párbeszéd Magyarországért (Dialogue for Hungary), with the support of several left-wing opposition parties. Out of Budapest's 23 districts, 17 are governed by a FIDESZ-KDNP mayor, and the mayor of Budapest also represents the FIDESZ-KDNP party. Under such circumstances, a district municipality leadership that is devoted to green matters, to leftist values, and that takes the real needs of its citizens into consideration based on its values can already be called a progressive one.

How do you, as a politician, see the development of your district? What are the important issues / topics and visions you are striving to make a reality?

REBEKA SZABÓ: Our vision is to build a community in Zugló that is able to cherish and cultivate its own values, to protect its green environment, and to implement its developmental projects along the lines of sustainability; a community that cares for its citizens, where people like to live and find it worthwhile to invest.

Decreasing the problems of social groups that are lagging behind is a crucial aim of ours. For this, we have initiated a new housing ordinance that would allow for a more transparent, more fair distribution of council-owned apartments for those in need. However, a national programme would definitely be necessary for solving the housing crisis.

In 2016 we launched a comprehensive program titled 'MIZUglónk'[1] for planning community participation in the district, where we are trying to include every stakeholder in the district. As part of this program we would like to implement a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) strategy called the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP). In launching the SUMP we received the support of two EU framework projects, first, the H 2020 SUNRISE project, which helps the development of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Mobility Plan of Zugló's Törökőr quarter with the active involvement of the citizens and the establishment of a self-advocacy coordination group. The district council is supporting local citizens' processes, formulates recommendations towards the locals, and is developing a methodology for participatory budgeting that will be applicable in other fields as well.

In the recent past we have submitted several proposals and tenders on the theme of sustainable urban development; many of these are under evaluation at the moment. We have invested a lot of hope into our INTERREG Central Europe applications, as they focus, among other aspects, on the circular economy and on the renovation of residential buildings regarding energy efficiency.

Could you list a few successful examples of projects that are bringing a positive change forward in the district?

ÖRS SZOKOLAY: Progressive processes have been started in the field of community management. In our 'space creation' programme we have created plans for renewing the seven-hectare territory of Pillangó Park through a 1.5-year-long community planning process based on the needs of local inhabitants and users of the park space.

Within the framework of our winning proposal in the HORIZON 2020 programme a project is currently being implemented dealing with the development of a sustainable mobility plan for one of Zugló's quarters, Törökőr (approximately 10,000 inhabitants), with broad local participation. The Törökőr Advisory Body (TTT) was formed of active citizens with the aim of transforming almost 400 problems, proposals and ideas from our initial surveys into feasible projects that can be implemented using the budget of the H 2020 project (65,000 EUR). The first participatory budgeting of the district will probably start in 2019.

We have also started a participatory process when it comes to different groups of citizens using public spaces, such as dog

1 This is a pun; the whole word means both 'our Zugló' and 'What's up?', which is emphasised through the capitalised letters.

owners. We have created an inclusive, socially-sensitive district based on the pillar of the Zugló Social Model, which is unique nationwide. This now three-year-old model, including its experimental components, has proven that it can serve local needs very well: it can effectively provide support in the prevention of the housing loss, and besides financial support it is also supporting people in finding jobs. In order to eliminate child hunger, another emphatic aspect of our model, we provide food packages to families in need during school breaks.

In 2016 we organized a meeting of Zugló's sister cities on the theme of equal opportunities with a special focus on solidarity. This event was supported by the Europe for Citizens programme of the European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

How do you manage to push though your visions and policies at the level of local politics?

REBEKA SZABÓ: The composition of the representative body of the Zugló district municipality with an almost 50–50% balance between the national governing party (Fidesz) and left-wing opposition members implies there is a need for continuous coordination and search for compromises, which takes a lot of energy and time away from work on actual development. The above-mentioned projects and plans have still been passed, but not at the pace we would have preferred.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

ÖRS SZOKOLAY: The Hungarian local government system is generally an old-fashioned, strongly bureaucratic, heavily centralised system. The 23 districts of Budapest function in a two-level public administration format, which means many tasks belong to the City of Budapest, and that often causes hardships (e.g., we face a problem in our district but have no power to deal with it). It is also hard for grassroots initiatives (from the citizens or from the district councils) to be accepted. The institutional structure in Zugló, which we have partially inherited, is not always able to show flexibility in terms of projects or strategies with a more comprehensive, integrated approach when it comes to their implementation.

The district is receiving most of its funds through the state's normative distribution system, which causes a significant deficit

– especially in the field of social and public health policies. Consequentially, the district council is barely able to fulfil its lawful duties and lacks the financial capacities for bigger developments, since funds through centralised tenders are often distributed on a political basis.

The biggest challenge of the Zugló District Council is to comply with modern approaches to operational, planning and developmental requirements. A chronic lack of data is also a huge problem. The lack of comprehensive information and knowledge management leads to serious issues, as it has in the case of the SECAP, where no existing coherent database can be found that would go further back in time than 2014.

Would you have some advice for those thinking about entering politics?

REBEKA SZABÓ: For those who are thinking about entering politics I would suggest they start their work by establishing the core values that will serve as a basis for all their policies and decisions, and by elaborating a clear vision of the important goals and changes they want to achieve. Politics works through compromises, and the decision-making process always includes making deals on different levels, so it it is of key importance to always keep one's original values and goals in mind.

Visiting the office of Mayor Gergely Karácsóny, Budapest 14 Zugló district, photo: Milota Sidorová

Influencing Others – Selected Urban Initiatives in Budapest

Zoltán Erdös

As has been described above, politics often does not fulfil the needs of citizens in Budapest, especially when it comes to the rights of vulnerable people, or the needs of the environment – homeless people, pedestrians, cyclists, children, trees, air quality. This means that fixing these deficiencies is left to active citizens. Sometimes they do this by themselves, or in a more organised way within specific NGOs, other times they team up with corporate partners. It is no coincidence that according to public surveys, people have the most confidence in NGOs compared to public officials, politicians or the church, despite official state propaganda accusing NGOs of serving foreign interests.

These independent initiatives often lack funds and can be rather resource-efficient when achieving their goals. Below are a few examples that shed light on how conscious citizens try to fill in the gaps of the system.

Helló!Anyu

Photo: Hello!Anyu

This cosy café is more than it might seem at first: it is run as a social cooperative and especially targets parents with young children who often struggle to find a pleasant community place in the city. The premises also hosts events concentrating on trainings related to job search and start-up activities that can help people with young children to integrate into the job market.

The café was founded by Ms Orsolya Lipták and is devoted to creating an opportunity and a venue for those who cannot find a kid-friendly meeting place in the city centre. However, it took five years for her to convince the local council about the worthiness of the cause and to rent a shop owned by the district. This could not have been possible without other funds that she managed to raise from different sources.

→ helloanyu.hu

KÉK – Centre of Contemporary Architecture

Photo: Kustos Nikolett / bp100

KÉK, active since 2006, has filled a huge gap in Budapest, as a wider discourse about the built environment of Budapest had been missing from the scene for many years. The members of KÉK have managed to make these topics cool and initiated several ground-breaking projects in the city. KÉK's community garden programme made urban farming an everyday activity for many, creating several micro-communities in a metropolis where there is often no space or time to converse.

Another hugely popular project is Budapest100. This is about one day every year when, following various patterns certain buildings – mostly residential ones – open up to the public, offering different programmes to visitors like guided walks, concerts, or exhibitions. This is a day when anyone living in a historical building can show why it is worth preserving. It is important to note that the project is organised with the help of numerous volunteers.

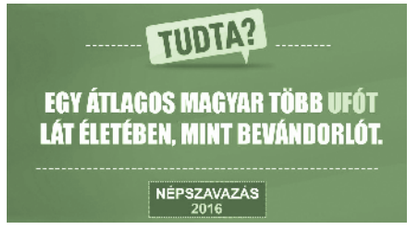
Lakatlan (Vacant) is an initiative of KÉK to utilise derelict buildings and shops. The project involves several different activities: mapping, workshops, a festival of open shops – all about empty places that could serve a useful function for the city and its residents. There is still a lot to do about better managing the city's empty spaces, but there are several success stories already as a result of KÉK's work.

Critical Mass – Hungarian Cyclists' Club

This movement has promoted cycling in Budapest since its early beginnings. In the early 1990s it was considered extreme to use a bicycle in the Hungarian capital. Grouped initially around local bike messengers, it quickly grew into a mass movement that sees thousands of people cycling through the city each year in Critical Mass demonstrations – and subsequently every day on the streets. In 2002 an NGO was also founded, The Hungarian Cyclists' Club, which communicates and negotiates with decision-makers more efficiently than before. The result of the past 20 years is that regardless of changing mayors, the club has managed to achieve several goals about making cycling more popular, which is indicated by the numbers of cyclists as well. Now cycling is almost fully integrated into the planning and development practice of the city and the districts. An important strategy of the club is that its functioning is based on community financing: 2,500 members support the NGO with their membership fees and several more supporters make tax-deductible donations to it.

→ kerekparosklub.hu/english

Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt (Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party)



One of the party's billboards as an answer to the government campaign saying 'Did you know? The average Hungarian sees more UFOs than immigrants in his lifetime.' Image: Ketfarku Kutya Party

Volunteers of this party, inspired by some Icelandic examples (e.g., the Best Party, which won the Reykjavik City Council elections in 2010), try to solve social problems with on-the-street guerrilla actions and humour. Some of their common interventions include painting the cracks in the pavement with different colours or simply repainting benches. The city is full of their posters with slogans making fun of populist politics ('100% of our voters vote for us', 'Free beer and immortality'). They also took part in the political communications fights in Hungary by launching a billboard campaign caricaturing the Government's own billboard campaign against refugees, an effort that represents the most successful crowdfunding campaign in the country, raising more than 100,000 EUR for the cause.

→ ketfarkukutya.com

Night Mayor Budapest

Starting around 2010, tourism trends in Budapest showed a significant boom, related partially to the 'ruined pub' image coming from utilising derelict buildings as bars in District 7. Towards the end of the decade this developed into a complex party district with tens of thousands of visitors each weekend, creating several conflicts with the residents of the neighbourhood. The 'organic' development of the area is due to the fact that the municipality cannot tackle it properly: the demands of the residents for more regular street cleaning, police patrols or public toilets have remained largely unheard. The situation escalated in 2017 when several demonstrations were organised to push for solving the problems. One result is a local referendum, to be held in February 2018, about the closure of pubs between 12 and 6 a.m. Another answer is an initiative called Night Mayor Budapest that has been started by some of the pubs in the area. The idea is a self-regulatory scheme to keep both recreation and residency possible in the neighbourhood and seeks to tackle noise, cleanliness, crime and other problems.

→ nightmayorbud.hu

→ szimpla.hu

Visual display of a pedestrian-oriented conversion on the wall of a popular spot, the 'ruined bar' Szimpla Kert and another rule calling for considerate behaviour in the nightspot district, photo: Milota Sidorová

Reclaiming Politics: On the State of Civic Engagement in Hungary

Zsuzsa Berecz

Another public sphere

Citizens form a movement called 'Country for All' and set up an agora in front of the Hungarian parliament as a space for debate about the unjust electoral system. On the day the Government begins the construction of a controversial memorial falsifying Hungary's history and responsibility within WWII, a group of people erect a 'Living Memorial' opposite the monument as a forum for another collective memory. Contemporary art professionals pushed out of public art institutions establish their own grassroots festival called OFF Biennale Budapest to support progressive artistic practices. Micro-blogs and portals like *Kettős Mérce* (in English: 'Double Standard') emerge as independent platforms of critical thought beyond the one-channel state media. These are some examples of counter-institutions created in a collective way in recent years in order to create another public sphere in which to communicate with fellow citizens and with a Government that is obviously misusing its parliamentary majority to change the country into a place that is not meant for all.

Street art campaign mocking politicians by the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party, photo: Milota Sidorová

Such alternative public spaces undoubtedly bear some resemblance to the ones we knew in the Kádár regime after 1956. Yet whereas during the Kádár regime political activity could only be carried out on a semi-public level, nowadays nobody is being arrested for demonstrating, no one is hindered in their free movement. A group of NGOs recently described countries such as Hungary, Poland, Croatia or Serbia as 'ill democracies', examples of successful democratic transition in the 1990s turning now towards illiberal trends and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms while formally preserving a democratic setup.[1] One of the symptoms of an ill democracy is that people are afraid of speaking up publicly against injustice. Teenage students giving an interview to the press at a strike protesting for a better education system prefer not to show their faces or say their names, anticipating possible consequences (as has recently happened). Teachers are getting fired for talking publicly or even for participating at demonstrations against radical centralisation and over-bureaucratisation of public education. Stigmatising resistance and thereby sparking self-censorship is one of the main tools of governments today for depriving citizens of their right to self-expression.

1 humanrightshouse.org/Articles/22898.html

Civic vs. political

Since 2010 the two successive Orbán governments have been carrying out smear campaigns against civil society actors. As of July 2017 Hungarian civil society organisations are required to label themselves as 'foreign-funded organisations' if they receive more than approximately 23,000 EUR per year from foreign sources. As I write this article, a bill dubbed 'STOP Soros' is being drafted which would not only sanction NGOs deemed to be 'supporting illegal migration' by imposing extra taxes on donations to them from abroad, but which is also a clear attempt to discourage local civic and corporate support for those organisations.

While in the Government's narrative human rights organisations are being openly portrayed as political agents, the NGOs are trying to thematise 'civilness' as an ethical counter-position to 'politics' as we know it, an allegedly ideology-free, uncorrupted professional stance far away from party politics. The stigmatisation of civic activism goes hand-in-hand with the stigmatisation of politics – meaning mainly party politics still. What is advocacy work if not politics, though? What is working for a worthwhile livelihood if not politics?

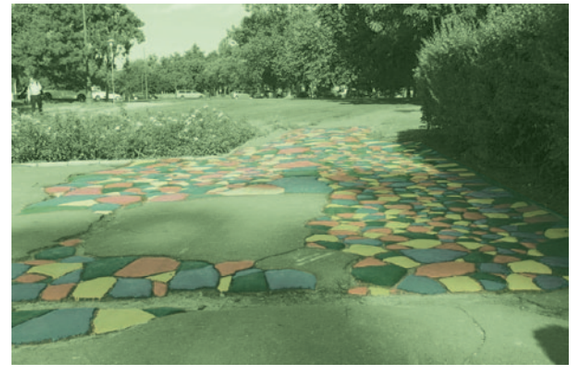
This deep underlying separation between civil engagement and politics is almost like a received wisdom that goes unquestioned within the recent public discourse in Hungary. This approach was very much nurtured in the post-socialist transition period when the rapidly growing civil society sector (receiving money from George

Soros' Open Society Foundations and other foreign funds) was rather working on taking over the defunct activity of the state than forcing it to change its policies. A sector of service providers has since emerged that has avoided carrying out advocacy work. However, the civil society sector can only work effectively if it has an impact on legislation. Public politics cannot be just politics from above. The isolation of the civil society sector today is also a self-isolation from the realm of politics. Today, when the public sphere is something we can definitely create from below, it is about time to reclaim politics. However, at the moment it seems that amidst the Government's progressive crackdown on the civil society sector that many see the right path as being the performance of politics-free professional work. Social enterprises, co-ops and other mixed non-profit and for-profit ventures are being established with the aim of becoming self-sustainable. Such infrastructures might indeed provide safety in the recent political environment and can be used to support each other. However, in order to make these infrastructures really sustainable, at a certain point we need to communicate with decision-makers. The 'apolitical misunderstanding of civil society', as Bálint Misetics, social scientist and co-founder of the 'City Is for All' group frames it, should be overcome by using the given platforms and enforcing communication with politicians by acknowledging our own right to do politics.

'We are all politicians'

The 'City Is for All' is one of the most significant examples of this thought. Actually one of its founders, Tessza Udvarhelyi, wrote the above statement in an article after hearing NGO representatives claiming from the stage at demonstrations that they were not doing politics. The 'City Is for All (in Hungarian *A városmindenkié*, or AVM) is a political community, not only because their members work together for housing rights and against unlawful and oppressive policies, but also in the very way they operate as a community consisting of homeless, formerly homeless and middle class citizens. The do not work as an NGO – they deliberately have not founded a legal entity – but as a micro-society based on solidarity and direct democracy without an NGO-like working rhythm.
In an environment where criminalisation of the 'unworthy poor' is becoming the rule, AVM is building up common strength and resistance by drafting laws, camping in front of Parliament, preventing forced evictions, lobbying local authorities, and providing *pro bono* legal aid to people in need. AVM's sustainability is not only provided through the strength of their self-organisation or the coherence of their volunteer-based work, but also through the power of a community promoting a certain way of life. 'City Is for All' has almost become a media channel of its own, producing waves that are amplified by other people both as receivers and senders.

I should mention another important power centre within the Hungarian public sphere, a group of artists who are also a real political party 'which will one day win the elections' – as they claim. The Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party (MKKP) do not care to draft laws or to perform systematic political work. Rather, they bring direct action into public life, intended as an ironic counter-attitude to classical 'political work', which consists only of *talking*. With their ironic take on lazy politicians, they manage to activate public actors in interesting ways – like they did in the 14th district of Budapest (Zugló) by beautifying garbage heaps, which then prompted the local municipality to take action and dispose of them. By disrupting what is considered politics, they reclaim it at the same time as the basic right and ability of each citizen to create a better life. The countrywide expanding network of the MKKP mends public benches, plants trees and vegetables in empty spots on public streets, paints the cracks in the pavements and alters political messages in public space throughout the whole country.



Painting pavement cracks using the 'four colour theorem'

Their satirical (anti) poster campaign in response to the government's anti-immigrant phrases raised 100,000 EUR in voluntary donations from 4,000 people in just a few days. By making 'beautiful, funny and useful things, or at least ones that fulfill two of these [criteria]', they take power by grasping the imagination of the people. They create a space for a different kind of activism (self-described as 'passivism') which penetrates people's frustration and feeling of powerlessness, turning these instead into creativity. When politics

becomes a joke, that joke can create actual politics by producing power that we can all share.

The above examples are just some from among many that prove how a shrinking public sphere and growing social frustration can nurture civic engagement and promote creativity. In a country like Hungary, where we are used to blaming institutionalised power for our ills and woes, the recent political atmosphere seems to be sending the strong alert that this is not appropriate anymore. The more party politics becomes a hollow spectacle, the more this is about finding alternatives for political action in dialogue with actors from other layers of society – including politicians. It is up to us citizens and civil society organisations to create strong, interdependent infrastructures that help us preserve the strength for this struggle.

A free public toilet. One of the measures against gentrification in the nightspot district implemented by the private owners of the legendary 'ruined bar', Szimpla Kert, photo: Milota Sidorová

Influencing Others

1. Budapest is a metropolis with a booming real estate market and tourism, a place where most of the country's jobs and many services are concentrated. The current political situation of the city involves:

- Centralisation of responsibilities, budgets and decision-making from the local to the national Government.
- Most of the power currently lies with district municipalities, thus City Hall remains trapped between the national Government and the districts. The governing party currently proposes a plan to liquidate district municipalities in Budapest and centralise the leadership of the city to be able to control it more efficiently.

2. The opposition, provoked by the Government, is looking for niches in which they are able to exist:

- Some organisations, districts and parties are politically clearly on 'the other side', but even there, fragile and unexpected coalitions have been formed around local topics.
- Some are in open opposition concerning lifestyle, values, and forms of expression.
- Some are at a sort of self-chosen distance, taking an expert point of view.
- Some are in groups of self-confident, successful people in business who do not openly oppose the Government and make arrangements with the ruling party – but at the same time they provide space for oppositional groups or other forms of more or less secret support
- Some exist in a seemingly 'apolitical' or pronouncedly non-partisan way. This is a well-known survival strategy, described as the behaviour of 'inner emigration' that develops under

authoritarian rule. Some people or organisations claim they are not interested in politics and hope that *politics will not be interested in them*. In this set-up people start to organise themselves around 'marginal' issues that are not so important from the Government's point of view or can be even in line with it (cycling, urban gardening). Here local initiatives can be really successful and they may also obtain funding.

However, as soon as the initiatives get too big or move into a 'sensitive' area like refugees or protesting against a Government project (e.g., City Park), it is much more difficult, as there is no space for a real debate (with less and less independent media). This dichotomy also creates strange consequences when NGOs do not support each other because they have different 'risk status', meaning that *those who operate on 'non-sensitive' areas often do not stand up for riskier causes* (and this is true for the NGOs from the examples above, too).

- In some cases when 'apolitical' (understood to mean non-partisan), bottom-up initiatives get wide public support and / or make a political demand, the Government usually gives in (e.g., as when they withdrew the Olympic bid) and silences the issue quickly
- Most independents (cities, municipal districts, or civil society organisations) cannot apply for public funds, as these are controlled by the national Government. They have been developing strategies to become financially self-sustaining either by providing commercial services or accepting international, often EU, funds. The national Government has been consciously working on gaining control over the EU funds of these applicants.

Summaries – Politics

Tips for Good Argumentation

Key learnings from workshop with Martin Vasquez , Co-founder, Czech Improvisation League; Founder, Impro Institut, Prague)

Political influence is often supported by good argumentation. Before going to a meeting or before a conversation happens, you may check these ideas:

1. Can you create absolute focus on your interlocutor to catch and hold his or her attention?
2. Can you clearly structure and articulate your argument?
3. Can you diversify the modality of your claim? Does your argument have ethos (the narrative), logos (facts) and pathos (emotion)?
4. Do you know enough about the interlocutor you are going to meet? What do you have in common, what role in the process does he or she play?
5. Can you walk in the other person's shoes? Imagine a different point of view on the topic?
6. Can you formulate arguments against your project or standpoint in a clear and calm manner? Can you also successfully defend them?

Politics – Know It Before You Enter It

Lessons tackling politics summarised through all four modules

Discussing political aspects of Bratislava's urban development with local politicians and politically active experts (in the building of New Cvernovka), photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

- If you have nobody to vote for, perhaps it is time you run as a candidate (choosing from lesser 'evils' is a good old Central European alibi).
- Get training in politics before you run. We have seen many former activists turning into politicians who, due to a lack of experience with political and policy systems, have learned the trial-and-error method, thus exhausting themselves unnecessarily and wasting time and resources.
- Do not take matters personally and learn how to detach from a cause. We found this an important note especially for activists and experts 'living' for a cause wholeheartedly.

- A political alliance is a temporary alliance built on negotiations and deals.
- Good argumentation skills are essential. It is also important to communicate what the cause or new policy will bring each party/actor/side.
- An expert solution may be the most efficient solution, but a political solution is the one coming at the right time. Unless there is an anonymous political will, projects or policies rarely pass as fully proposed by experts. Parties or decision-makers usually change them.
- New policies may arrive via abrupt change, usually with a new political leadership contrasting themselves to a previous one. Otherwise, new policies usually emerge from existing policies or standards.
- Media visibility and communications channels are the key to a politician's success.
- The importance of a candidate is measured by the size of his/her voting pool (so do not think that because you do good deeds for the city people will vote for you). Find your own voters and expand this group.
- The best political candidates are ones who contrast themselves to others (they do, think and are different, ideally they are perceived as a positive or fresh change).
- To be politically active you do not always have to enter politics as a politician. You can become an expert hired by the city (and influence politics this way) or you can operate from the civil society sector as an individual or a member of a civil society group or non-governmental organisation. Businesses also have strong influences on policies and politics.

Challenges of Local Municipalities and the Need for Civic Engagement in Central Europe

Interview with Levente Polyák

What do municipalities in Visegrad (Central Europe) have in common? What kind of patterns do you observe in their governance when taking urban development into consideration?

Municipalities in Central Europe share a common path that derives from the region's past exposure to conflicts between the major world powers, wars, and authoritarian governments. This path corresponds to a tradition of governance that lacks citizen involvement, participation, or economic and environmental rationality, and needs professional organisational development. The highly centralised nature of pre-1989 societies in Central Europe explains all the characteristics that also constitute the conditions of the post-1989 transformation of municipalities.

This shared path, however, results in quite different strategies when it comes to citizen involvement, economic and environmental resilience, and organisational development. In Hungary, in the framework of a re-emerging one-party system, the majority of cities depend entirely on intra-party power dynamics, where MPs and Government members compete with each other for centralised resources. In this competition, only loyalty and proximity to the highest decision-making circles guarantees investment for urban development projects. In this context, dominated by a quasi-feudal arrangement of resources where funding is often conceived of as a gift, there is little room for participatory governance, citizen involvement, economic rationality or innovation within municipalities.

Only a few municipalities can detach themselves from the power relationships of the governing party. Szeged, the biggest among the municipalities not run by Fidesz, has been able to capitalise on its unavoidable drive for innovation and financial independence: currently, it is one of the few municipalities in Europe awarded 5 million EUR by the highly competitive Urban Innovative Actions programme. However, even cities in opposition (and therefore largely excluded from national funding schemes) have to cope with a shrinking space for financial independence: the Government works on gradually shutting down all the sources of EU funding that are not fully controlled by its ministries.

In Poland, within a model of Government takeover inspired by that of Hungary, the large cities are almost all governed by opposition parties, therefore providing a counterbalance to the governing party, PiS. This situation forces these cities to be more accountable to their local voters, and this obligation creates space for new governance arrangements and forms of citizen inclusion. Similarly, in the countries with more fragmented, balanced political realities like Slovakia and the Czech Republic, there is increasing space for municipality-led innovation, for new forms of public-civic cooperation like the civic use of public assets in cities like Bratislava or Žilina, and new institutions like the Institute of Planning and Development in Prague.

What should these municipalities focus on topic-wise or management-wise so they can become more sustainable and democratic?

In order to achieve a higher degree of sustainability, resilience and democracy, cities in Central Europe have to face a variety of challenges. As poverty, particularly among minority groups, is a persistent reality in all Central European cities, the region's cities have to focus on creating opportunities for social inclusion and mobility. As Central European cities are struggling with brain drain, they also have to make sure to generate high-quality, knowledge-based jobs, together with the corresponding educational opportunities. In order to create attractive places to live and work, these cities have to put an emphasis on environmental issues and access to high-quality public spaces. All these themes come together in the topic of governance: the region's municipalities will certainly have to improve, to open their governance structures and invent new forms of co-designing, co-creating and co-managing their cities together with knowledge institutions, private companies and citizen initiatives. Citizen involvement in decision-making, in providing services and in managing public assets, therefore, should not be seen as an act of charity, but as an act of sharing resources and responsibilities in order to create more accessible and liveable cities. Therefore it is entirely

unacceptable when governments in the region – in the name of national security – wage war on NGOs that provide indispensable services for disadvantaged communities and are the first to safeguard environmental assets and experiment with new forms of social and solidarity economy.

How can you as an expert help and influence municipal officials or politicians?

When cities are not completely oppressed within a national system, and when politicians or municipal officials understand that innovation and cooperation can help them in designing new processes to address the challenges they face, they are likely to look at each other or abroad for inspirations. Professional curiousity and the desire to update one's knowledge and expertise are the main driving force for most European municipalities that participate in international knowledge exchange programmes. With Eutropian, we work on engaging cities across the continent in such programmes. While funding is a significant attractor for municipalities struggling to keep their budgets stable, the value of learning, the prestige of international recognition, and the sense of belonging to an international community of urban practitioners are even more important factors for cities to join European programmes. We see municipalities in the region struggling with very hierarchical decision-making systems, paralysed under the constant surveillance and supervision of political leaders. We also see municipalities that have completely reinvented their cities by giving trust and resources to municipal officials with vision. In both cases, we do explore separately the local ecosystems of citizen innovation and try to make sure that the processes we go through together with the municipalities are well-attended and that local communities, citizen initiatives and social innovators can contribute to these processes with their knowledge, their skills, and take their share of the decisions, the responsibilities and the resources.

Closing Words: Central Europe. Sustainable Urban Planning

Milota Sidorová

Sustainability, Time & the Commons

This book is looking for sustainability patterns in the social aspects of current urban planning practice in Central Europe. Its focus lies especially in exploring the decision-making constellations of different actors and in analysing the role of regulations and roles among planners, investors, citizens and politicians. In the classic definition we say that a project is sustainable when it is maximally efficient in the overlap of these three aspects: environmental, economic and social. However, there is another aspect to stress: time and the commons.

From the point of view of a human life, the time perspective of a person is rather limited. Most of us possibly do not think of what will happen to future generations and very few of us think of the people living here one hundred years from now on. Capitalistic tendencies are designed to the seek the short term benefit of an individual or a small group. Big cities in Central Europe are typified by rather turbulent growth (also in urban planning) that is more likely to be described as a 'jump'. Values and policies mostly change with every new political representation (within the four or five years of a political cycle). There are laws and policies spanning decades, perhaps even a full human lifetime, but in Central Europe, we find very few urban planning policies seeking common benefits spanning more than 100 years. In western countries we find good examples of how traditions of urban development, administration systems, and the culture of politics became norms for generations of people. Let's take, for example, Vienna's long-term attitude towards ownership of the land. City Hall rents plots of land for 100 years only We find the same attitude in London, where people can buy (insanely expensive) apartments only for 100 years – after

which ownership reverts to the city. Another positive tradition is in Denmark, where Parliament members will debate proposals until they reach more than 90 per cent agreement. Consensus and the culture of dialogue span centuries and are accepted and required by everyone. Anthropologists say it takes three generations for people to adjust to new situations. These three generations must live in new conditions and experience positive emotions about them, too.

Social entrepreneur / consultant as the new activist

The theme of public space has been resonating since the late 1990s and is the overlapping point where activists, citizens and experts come into direct contact with the system of urban development administration and politics. It is interesting that in Central Europe we are witnessing a significant age gap between already-acting politicians (mostly from the communist and freshly post-communist era) and active young people. While these people clearly have ambitions for better social and professional conditions, mostly they are inhibited in their traditional political engagement like entering parties or even participating in elections. Generally, very few of them choose to work inside the public administration.

In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, we find a very active generation of 30+ years old mostly acting as consultants or social entrepreneurs. The strong movement of individuals improving cities comes throughs entities not entirely from the civic sector, but from the private sector or combinations of both. Perhaps this change is coming due to the professionalisation of the non-profit sector, fewer possibilities in the job market secured by the state, and less public funding for non-governmental organisations, culture and education. It is true that many millennials are creating their jobs by themselves, being freelancers and working rather through external networks than being employed by the public sector. In terms of improving the quality of urban life, the sharpest contrast we experienced was in Hungary, where most independent initiatives must develop successful business plans since their financing is not happening through the public sector anymore.

Through such business plans, these initiatives tackle trying to become – or eventually do become – active in the development industry. We can say that most of them will claim their chance to improve the city based on a neoliberal, less moral approach. Most likely those consultants will also incorporate the needs of

diverse citizens or even try to solve homelessness, because it is an efficient solution for using resources (rather than simply claiming solidarity). In initial contacts with many of them, the common argument has been made that the work of these people or organisations was *apolitical*. We considered this term to be somewhat misleading: rather than apolitical, their work and attitudes were political, but non-partisan.

Entering politics

Along with the peak of this active generation, we have witnessed active young individuals running as political candidates. There were many independent candidates in the municipal districts of Bratislava (currently around 30 per cent) or small local parties (Žít Brno in Brno, or Letná sobě in Prague, which appeared in 2014). During our programme we found them more likely to support pilot projects and innovative policies than politicians from mainstream parties. Mainstream parties did so only in Prague, where policies of participatory planning are represented by an existing, strong municipal institution (the Prague Institute of Planning and Development).

Independent vs. Party

Most of the new politicians we have met indicated their difficulties negotiating agreement with mainstream parties due to their lack of political experience or weak negotiation position. Another pattern we have observed in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is that of multi-party coalitions. The independent municipal district councillor Lucia Štasselová of Bratislava summarised this situation *as having too many parties or fellow independent candidates to negotiate with that couldn't simply be handled logistically by one person*. We observed independent candidates with innovative ideas were mostly succeeding in influencing through specific people (messengers among parties) or the support of the highest ranking person (mayor, county commissioner).

Here we could observe the classic problem of political entities and distrust in parties. Compared to independent politicians, regular parties were more successful due to their numbers and unity. We have found politicians who started as independent individuals and later on joined or formed a party in order to get the necessary support in 'numbers'. In the end, the issue crystallised around how

to form an efficiently-running pool of experts, politicians that could compete with mainstream parties or the slowly-changing system of administration in Hungary? The questions of formalisation, decision-making, rules and group branding were strongly resonating. What were the efficient political participation methods?

Some of the experts we have met claimed it was direct employment in administrations that created a lot of room for decision-making and influencing possibilities. They did not have to become classic politicians. The argument, however, also resonated that the administration had to be democratic, open and efficient. While the Prague Institute of Planning and Development was perceived as a rather good example, the administration in Bratislava would need profound reorganisation and capacity expansion. In Hungary, the situation was almost the opposite. Urban planning of Budapest has been heavily influenced by the governing party taking control over the administration through a slow change of the rules and the serving loyalty of the party members. Let's just take the example of decision-making at the level of the City. In the City Council, mayors of municipal districts have the majority of the votes. With a majority and the disciplined loyalty of Fidesz mayors, the development of Budapest easily and legally becomes a one-party game.

Innovative policies and European money

It comes as no surprise to find EU funds fuelling the majority of public projects in urban development, including innovative pilots. Slovakia and Hungary are the top spenders of European funds, both exceeding 90 per cent of all the public development projects. It can be said that without an international financial pipeline, public development in these countries would cease to exist. International funds were also indicated as a condition for the independent existence of non-governmental actors, especially in Hungary. With the public sector controlling public funds, European and other international sources have become vital in the *modus operandi* of these organizations. However, the proposed law requires certain NGOs receiving over 23,000 EUR per year from outside Hungary to register as an 'organisation receiving support from abroad', to display this label on their websites and publications, and to report on the personal details of each donor. Failure to register will lead to a fine of up to 2,900 EUR and, ultimately, dissolution of the organisation. The proposed law states that it is designed, in part, to combat money laundering and the financing

of terrorism. However, the law violates the rules of EU legislation and is a clear step toward repression of the civil society sector. Social entrepreneurs and private entities, however, become subject to high state taxation and are repressed from that side too. We can state that the space for improvement of urban planning practice and policies via democratic dialogue and cross-sectoral collaboration has been steadily and efficiently reduced.

Sustainable practice

So in the end, you will ask me: What have we found to be sustainable in urban development in local politics? Difficult question, complicated answer. Although all three countries have different conditions, a few theses were repeated during the programme, either by the lecturers or coming as outcomes of long analyses and discussions:

- Urban development and planning is a heavily politicised discipline. The work of different actors in urban development is political, although it is not necessarily associated with the work of traditional political parties. We have experienced this discrepancy in the perception of politics, policies and professional practice in all three countries.
- Political education and improving communication skills would be of great benefit for successful negotiations for actors mostly coming from the civil society sector, for experts, or for new political candidates running from these sectors.
- The existence of a democratic public sector is essential to the direct or indirect political engagement of individuals and organisations and to inter-sectoral work (especially with the civil society sector).
- There must be favourable conditions for the existence of a civil society sector. The narrative of a private sector aiming for better conditions has not necessarily led to more democratic results with a common benefit.
- In urban planning, opening up participatory planning processes and participatory tools to people is an important catalyst in democratising both the culture of professions and of political dialogue.
- Informal activities at community level are very important, perhaps more important than formal activities (especially if people do not trust the local government). They are more

likely to welcome equal and diverse groups of citizens (women, seniors, children, people from different ethnic backgrounds, different gender affiliations, low income groups) who usually do not participate in formal processes operated by the municipalities.

- Tools and methods aiming to empower the policy of community-based decision-making in urban development are perhaps the most complicated at the moment, but they open up possibilities for people to exercise power. This is something that did not happen during communist national central planning and very little of it occurred in the decades following communism either. In the long term we consider these to be the most valuable practices and the goal we should be aiming for.

We have less than 30 years of experience with the democratic planning of cities in Central Europe. The post-communist mentality and practices combined with the capitalist approach towards individual benefit are both still obstacles to achieving the common good in urban planning. We must take the evolutionary aspect into consideration when thinking about achieving a better quality of life through the city administration. However, now is the time when precedents and pilot projects seeking a common benefit can foster the emergence of new, hopefully more democratic, inclusive and sustainable policies. For anything to happen in the future, though, we need a stable, trusted democratic system. Since we are in a young democratic system and we are experiencing dynamic times, the case studies delivered in this book are not perfect. Rather they are evolving, and forthat very reason they are worthy of closer exploration.

photo: Zdeňka Lammelová

Notes on authors, guests and training participants

Ander, Martin

DEPUTY MAYOR FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT, CITY OF BRNO, GREEN PARTY, BRNO · Martin Ander studied maths and physics at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Masaryk University in Brno. He completed his PhD thesis on the topic of General Questions in Mathematics. Since childhood he has been devoted to voluntary work for local organisations sustaining ecological principles. Between 2002–2006 he was the director of Hnuti DUHA. In 2002, he joined the Green Party became a chair/member in 2007 and acted as deputy chair between 2008–2010. Martin Ander was elected as a city councillor in 2006 and as Deputy Mayor for Urban Development in 2007. In 2014 he was re-elected Deputy Mayor for Urban Development as well as a representative of the municipal district Brno-centre.

Augustín, Tomáš

PROJECT MANAGER, YIT SLOVAKIA, BRNO · Tomáš Augustín is a graduate of the Department of Urban Planning at the Faculty of Architecture of The Slovak University of Technology. He is a founding member of the non-profit organisation *Čerstvé ovocie* ('Fresh Fruit') known for activities such as the Urban Market. He is one of the former tenants in the Trading Mill, where he was managing the rented space. He was a member of the Urban Planning, Development and Transportation Commision in Petržalka for four years. Currently he works as a project manager at the YIT Slovakia company, where he is involved in the Pradiareň project called the Spinning Mill in the former Cvernovka Area.

Bazika, Gejza

SOCIAL WORKER, PLATFORM FOR SOCIAL HOUSING, BRNO · Gejza Bazika is a respected member of Brno's Roma community and a member of the Platform for Social Housing. He is a father of three and his family experienced homelessness for three years. Now his family lives in a social flat and he is one of the most devoted members of the Platform for Social Housing, providing expertise on the experiences and needs of homeless people to the wider public.

Belanská, Dominika

PARTICIPANT · ARTIST · With a desire to deeply understand the relationships between the social realm and the physical environment, Dominika develops methods to investigate these relationships based on dialogue, play and collaboration. She engages partners from diverse disciplines and sectors – municipalities, institutions, enterprises, NGOs alike – and accompanies them in the adventures of strategic planning, participatory processes and the implementation of policies. Dominika performs site-specific actions and place-making events, provides consultations and trainings, and facilitates discussions. She is always on the fly to pursue or support socially and ecologically responsible ventures and is open to inspiring challenges.

Berecz, Zsuzsa

PARTICIPANT · DRAMATURG, CULTURAL WORKER, CO-FOUNDER OF THE ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE PNEUMA SZÖV., BUDAPEST · Zsuzsa Berecz is a dramaturg and a cultural agent working in, with and outside different institutions, one of her main questions being how institutions can make sense as modes of being and working together. She is co-founder of the Budapest based international artists co-op Pneuma Szöv., the most recent project of which was to open an Air Factory producing new atmospheres and superpowers from social paranoia. Zsuzsa is also a founder of a free evening school of art and microenonomics called µEGYETEM operating in-between the independent cultural space MÜSZI and the University of Fine Arts/Intermedia Department in Budapest.

Bernatíková, Petra

PROJECT MANAGER, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, MASARYK UNIVERSITY, BRNO · Petra Bernatíková graduated as a social worker from the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno where she works as a project manager. At the moment she is responsible for complex methodological management, financial management, coordinating activities in various fields, PR, HR within two international projects, and a co-housing project, Symbios. She studied one year at University College London in 2006/2007 and participated as a volunteer for three years in the NGO NESEHNUTÍ in a project focused on refugees from 2003 to 2006.

Bouškova, Jitka

HEAD OF OFFICE, HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC, PRAGUE · Jitka Bouškova graduated in Social and Cultural Ecology from Charles University in Prague. Later she worked in the area of environmental education and awareness-raising at the Ministry of the Environment. Currently she is in the leadership of 'Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic' (HCCZ), a national network in which more than 130 municipalities are now associated. The network's main partners are ministries, national professional institutions and organisations, umbrella NGOs, and international partner networks and organisations.

Brlík, Milan

PARTICIPANT AND GUEST · PARTICIPATION SPECIALIST, PRAGUE INSTITUTE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OFFICE, PRAGUE · Milan Brlík has studied Social Geography at King's College London and Urban Regeneration at University College London. After several years in business he has come back to the urban planning field with a new,

dynamic perspective. He now leads the Participation Office in Prague. Milan and his team are responsible for testing and implementing a new way of planning based on mutual understandings among diverse actors – investors, politicians, developers, activists and the public. The office is now rolling out a city-wide education programme for public officials, architects, planners and activists; its aim is to make participatory planning the standard planning approach to large (public space) projects in Prague. Milan is also working on housing estate revitalisation and several brownfield regeneration projects.

Brůhová Foltýnová, Hana

PARTICIPANT · TRANSPORTATION SPECIALIST, PROJECT MANAGER, KOLÍN, CITY OF LITOMĚŘICE · Hana Brůhová Foltýnová graduated as a transportation engineer from Masaryk University in Brno. For more than 13 years she worked as a researcher focusing on environmentally-friendly transportation. Since 2017 she has been working as a project manager in the City of Litoměřice.

Čavoj, Braňo

CO-FOUNDER, CVERNOVKA FOUNDATION, BRATISLAVA · Braňo Čavoj is a marketing professional. He is one of the four co-founders of the Cvernovka Foundation and is currently involved in the process of developing this project. From his beginnings as a former resident and regular member of Cvernovka he has become a leading figure in cultural development responsible for negotiations with financial partners and politicians.

Dalos, Péter

TRANSPORTATION SPECIALIST, BUDAPEST · Péter Dalos is a mobility planner committed to sustainable/active transport and innovation. Currently he is working as a product manager for the MOL Bubi bike sharing programme at the BKK Centre for Budapest Transport. His career as a transport planner began at TRENECON-COWI Ltd., a Danish-Hungarian consultancy with special expertise in sustainable mobility. He used to work as a consultant on several bike-friendly transport master plans for cities, cycling transport strategies, international and domestic urban and recreational cycling policy, traffic management, promotion of sustainable transport, and transport safety projects. He has been involved in the Bubi bike sharing project.

Donauer, Eduard

PARTICIPANT · STRATEGIC PLANNER, BRATISLAVA · Eduard is a regional geographer currently working in a consulting company in Bratislava. He works with municipalities to help them create strategic plans and documents in cooperation with local publics. Eduard is also a data enthusiast who believes in the power of maps and the stories they tell as part of the process of raising the public's interest in their common living space.

Dorda, Katarzyna

PARTICIPANT · LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, JOURNALIST, WARSAW · Between 2012 and 2016 Dorda has been the coordinator of the reSITE conference, one of the biggest European events about making cities more livable. She has been collaborating with architecture and landscape architecture design studios in Poland, Italy and the Czech Republic. She is a contributing editor at *Magazyn Miasta/Cities Magazine* since 2015 and an editor of a column focusing on social activists and the specific urban situations in different countries. She was the curator of the exhibitions on 'Design in Public Space' in 2015 and 2017 at Zamek Cieszyn, a centre for research and documentation of culture and design in Poland.

Drotován, Michal

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT, BRATISLAVA, KARLOVA VES · Michal Drotován graduated in Political Science, Geography and Public Management at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Trnava and the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Comenius University in Bratislava. Prior to that he graduated in Law and International Business from the Faculty of Law at Masaryk University in Brno. Drotován started his career as a publicist, then took various jobs out in the world. During his university studies he interned at the Slovak Parliament. He later worked for Volkswagen Slovakia. Currently he holds the position of City Councillor at the Municipal District Bratislava-Rača and works in the public sector.

Dudáčková, Michaela

PARTICIPANT · ENERGY CONSULTANT, COMMUNITY MANAGER, PRAGUE · Michaela Dudáčková is a manager of energy projects in a private company as well as an environmental and social activist. She is running the Mečislavka community garden, a place for city gardening, composting and cultural activities. She is also a chair of the local association 'Wake Up Nusle!' which co-organises a small community festival, 'Courtyards of Nusle' together with local shop owners and Cirqueon, a local circus school.

Eckert, Albert

CO-DRAMATURG AND TRAINER IN THE 'ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL POLITICS' PROGRAMME, BERLIN · Albert Eckert's background is in politics; his main occupational fields are organisational development, facilitation, mediation, moderation, training, coaching and political consulting. He often trains candidates for public office, coaches politicians, and facilitates change processes in organisations and governmental bodies, mostly in Africa and Europe. After graduating in political science, Albert was a member of the Berlin House of Representatives (1989–1995), of which he was vice-president temporarily. From 1997 to 2005 he headed the Public Relations department of the international Heinrich Böll Foundation, interrupted only by a guest tenure of several months as a deputy spokesperson of the Berlin Government. In 2012 he was awarded the German Federal Cross of Merit for working as a volunteer in civil society.

Ent, Zdeněk

PARTICIPANT · ARCHITECT, PRAGUE INSTITUTE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT · Zdeněk Ent graduated from the Faculty of Architecture, Czech Technical University in Prague. He works now as an urban planner at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development (IPR Praha). In his work he combines his extensive

experience as a freelance architect and his interest in 'the alchemy' of urban planning processes. As a project manager at IPR Praha, he runs an ambitious participatory project creating a new periurban park at the confluence of the Berounka and Vltava rivers in Prague. At the same time he is participating in establishing a new, innovative office for landscape and green infrastructure at IPR Praha, where he is going to work as well.

Erdős, Zoltán

TRANSPORTATION SPECIALIST, URBAN PLANNER, ACTIVIST, BUDAPEST · Zoltán Erdős is an explorer and advocate working for a livable and lovable city on several levels. He is active in local NGOs (Hungarian Cyclists' Club, Citizens for the Palace District), runs an initiative to discover unknown places in the city (Budapest Greenways), delivers organic food boxes on a cargo bicycle, blogs about urban changes, and counsels municipalities on sustainable mobility, mainly cycling.

Frešo, Pavol

FORMER CHAIRMAN, BRATISLAVA REGION, BSK, BRATISLAVA · Pavol Frešo is a politician who was chair of the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS), Governor of the Bratislava Region, and a member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. In the 2012 election, he won 21,768 preferential votes, jumping from 9th place to 4th on his party's ballot. For two consecutive periods he was the Acting Governor of the Bratislava Region, ending his term in 2017. He has been a strong political supporter of New Cvernovka, a project run by the Cvernovka Foundation.

Ginová, Marie

IQ ROMA SERVIS, BRNO · For the last five years Marie Ginová has been a member of the *IQ Roma servis* outreach team and is interested mostly in community involvement in decision-making processes. She is a devoted leader in Brno's Roma community, and recently a member of the Rapid Re-housing team supporting homeless households in the process of being rehoused in municipally-owned apartments. Marie is mostly interested in creative and symbolic ways to support the rehoused families in their transition from homelessness to housing.

Halász, Áron

SPOKESPERSON, COMMUNICATION MANAGER, HUNGARIAN CYCLISTS' CLUB, BUDAPEST · Áron Halász graduated from the Film and Media Department at Eötvös Lóránd University and worked as a journalist and videographer. He has been active in the Budapest bicycle movement for more than 10 years, where he has contributed in many areas from grassroots activism to establishing new approaches to the promotion of urban cycling and advocating for better cycling conditions. Áron is the vice president and spokesperson of the Hungarian Cyclists' Club and an organiser of the I Bike Budapest movement.

Harciník, Jan

PARTICIPANT · ARCHITECT, PRAGUE INSTITUTE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM · Jan Harciník graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the Czech Technical University in Prague. He works as an architect and urban designer at the Public Space Office of the Prague Institute of Planning and Development. As a project manager he is managing the project on the Revitalisation of Charles Square. At the same time he has co-founded a platform of local architects from the city of Ústí nad Labem, influencing the development of the city and leading it to establish the position of City Architect. In his own practice he is working on some individual housing projects.

Hlinčíková, Miroslava

PARTICIPANT · SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST, RESEARCHER, ACTIVIST, BRATISLAVA, TRNAVA · Miroslava Hlinčíková is a social anthropologist, works as a research fellow at the Institute of Ethnology, Slovak Academy of Sciences, and cooperates with different NGOs: Institute for Public Affairs; Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture; and Citizen, Democracy and Accountability. In her work she focuses on applied qualitative research regarding different minority issues in urban environments: disadvantaged groups in society (migrants, minorities, and women), civic participation, integration, anti-discrimination, human rights and diversity. She also works as a volunteer in the Bronco NGO in Trnava and is one of the organisers of local open-air markets (*Trnavsky rinek, Trnavsky blsak*).

Hollan, Matěj

CITY COUNCILLOR, CITY OF BRNO, 'ŽÍT BRNO', BRNO · Matěj Hollan has been fully engaged in Brno for the last 10 years. He has devoted himself to many local issues and has been engaged in citizen participation in urban planning. Hollan holds an award for promoting candidness and the Frantisek Kriegel Award from the Charter 77 Foundation for civic bravery. His civic association, *Brnění*, was behind the casino reduction in many Czech cities. In June 2014 he co-founded a political movement, 'Žít Brno', based on the eponymous satirical website. In the 2014 local elections he ran as a leader of 'Žít Brno with the support of the Pirates' and he has been the Deputy Mayor of Brno since November 2014.

Karácsony, Gergely

MAYOR, BUDAPEST 14 · Gergely Karácsony is a Hungarian political scientist, politician, and former member of the National Assembly (MP) from 2010 to 2014. He was elected Mayor of Zugló in 2014. He is a co-chair of the 'Dialogue for Hungary' party (PM). According to polls, he is the third most popular politician in Hungary.

Kašpar, David

DIRECTOR, PRAHA 14 KULTURNÍ, PRAGUE 14 · David Kašpar is a cultural manager and non-profit producer in the arts. From 2008 to 2012 he worked as a creative director at the *Zahrada* (Garden) cultural centre in Jižní Město (South Town), Prague's largest housing estate. During this time, David served as programme director for the Street for Art festival of art in public space. He was also involved in founding Cirqueon, a centre for contemporary circus, and the *Plechárna* creative centre in Prague's Černý Most district. Currently, he directs the contributory organisation *Praha 14 kulturní* (Prague 14 Cultural) in Prague's 14th municipal district. Since 2013, David has worked as a manager for cultural strategy at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development, and he is currently leading

several projects relating to Prague's cultural development.

Kobrizsa, Ádám

CO-FOUNDER, MINDSPACE, BUDAPEST · Mindspace Nonprofit Ltd aims to improve the quality of urban life through the 'smart city' concept. Ádám Kobrizsa is one of the owners of the Lumen Cafe and Bar, which is an important cultural hub in Budapest.

Kohout, Michal

ARCHITECT, UNIT ARCHITEKTI, PRAGUE · Michal Kohout studied at Czech Technical University (CTU) and the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. After graduating he worked at several architecture studios in the Czech Republic, Great Britain and Spain. Before establishing *UNIT architekti*, he was a partner at *Jiran Kohout architekti*. He is the author of a number of award-winning projects for residential, mixed-use and public buildings. Since 2012, Michal has headed the Department of Building Theory and has supervised the new programme in housing at the Faculty of Architecture, CTU, where he also leads the design studio (together with David Tichý) and lectures in urban design. He is a co-founder of the Prague-based research institute Housing Quality Centre and a co-editor of the architectural magazine *Zlatý řez*.

Kolmanova, Irena

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT COUNCILLOR, PRAGUE 14 · Irena Kolmanová was born in Prague and has lived in Prague's Hloubětín district since 2000. In 2014, she became a District Councillor for Prague 14, where she is responsible for communication and strategic planning, MA21, culture, sport and safety. Irena still considers herself a newcomer to politics with much to learn, but she is glad to be able to perform meaningful activities that affect city life in the area where she lives.

Košťál, Ctibor

PARTICIPANT · DIRECTOR, SLOVAK GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE, CIVIL SERVICE COUNCIL, BRATISLAVA · Ctibor has been working for the Slovak Governance Institute since 2007 with a main focus on analyses and research of transparency and integrity, social inclusion, local government and modernisation of the civil service. He graduated from Comenius University in Bratislava in 2001 with a degree in Psychology and with a degree in Political Science in 2008. In 2012 he graduated from a two-year Executive Master of Public Management Programme at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, Germany. He is one of the co-founders of the municipal portal *Odkazprestarostu.sk* which is used by over 100 municipalities in Slovakia to receive complaints and reports from citizens. He is also a co-founder and expert of the Platform for Bratislava, a civic association focused on the development of a new vision for the Slovak capital city, called 'Plan B.' Since January 2018 he has been a member of the Civil Service Council, an oversight body of the Slovak civil service.

Koupalová, Karolína

FORMER EMPLOYEE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF ARCHITECT, CITY OF PARDUBICE · Karolína Koupalová is a landscape architect who worked at the City of Pardubice's Department of the Chief Architect for many years. She has experience with creating architectural documents, urban planning designs, concept studies and strategic documents. By facilitating communication between experts, municipal employees and politicians, Karolína endeavours to find optimal ways to encourage public participation in city planning. Her experience includes leading the process of preparing the regulatory plan for Mlýnský Ostrov in Pardubice, where she coordinated the municipality and the subcontracting expert team of ONplan and successfully completed the process of selecting the winning architectural studio.

Kratochvílová, Táňa

TRANSPORTATION SPECIALIST, BRATISLAVA, KARLOVA VES · Táňa Kratochvílová graduated from the University of Transportation in Žilina in the program Road Construction, Maintenance and Reconstruction. Since then she has spent more than 30 years in public service as an expert official in various transportation departments, either in Municipal Districts of Bratislava or at City Hall itself. She was also Executive Director of the publishing house W Press a. s. between 2018 and 2011. From 2012 to 2014 she held the position of assistant to the OĽANO political club. Currently she works as a transportation engineer at the Municipal District Bratislava-Karlova Ves.

Kuldová, Zuzana

PARTICIPANT · ARCHITECT, PRAGUE INSTITUTE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, PRAGUE · Zuzana Kuldová is an architect and urban designer. She has worked at Bekkering Adams Architecten in Rotterdam and the MOBA studio in Prague, where she won awards in several competitions. Currently she seeks to improve public spaces through her work at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development (IPR Praha). She lectures in urban design at the Architectural Institute in Prague (ARCHIP).

Lammelová, Zdeňka

MAIN ORGANISER, CO-DRAMATURG OF THE 'ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL POLITICS' PROGRAMME, HEINRICH-BÖLL FOUNDATION, PRAGUE · Zdeňka Lammelová completed her studies with a focus on sociology and holds a Master's Degree in European Studies (Euroculture). Since 2010 she has been working as a coordinator of the Democracy Programme at the Prague office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation. She is interested in pro-active political education, change agency, and innovation processes in the public space in its broader sense.

Lehečka, Michal

ANTHROPOLOGIST, RESEARCHER, COMMUNITY WORKER, ANTHROPICTURES, PRAGUE · Michal Lehečka investigates social aspects of the development of pre-fabricated mass housing estates, particularly at the intersection of social life and public spaces. As a practitioner he focuses on cultural animation and community development in Prague 14, Černý Most. He frequently collaborates with cultural and other organisations that work with urban development as such. His areas of expertise include urban anthropology, social exclusion, gentrification, urban development,

cultural animation, alternative urban social movements, narrative-based research and experimental writing.

Lesák, Vít

DIRECTOR, PLATFORM FOR SOCIAL HOUSING, PRAGUE · Vit is an economist with an MSc in Development Studies from the London School of Economics, UK. He is the director of the Platform for Social Housing, an NGO which aims through the development of Government policies, especially a Social Housing Act in the Czech Republic, to secure dignified housing for all people without homes and those endangered by homelessness. Since 2015 he has also been involved in the City of Brno, where a pilot of a 'Housing First' project for families is currently starting. Together with his colleagues from the City of Brno's Social Department he is responsible for designing and developing several innovative social housing programmes in the city.

Lőke, András

FOUNDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, ITTLAKUNK.HU, BUDAPEST · *Ittlakunk.hu*, a group of hyperlocal websites covering 23 Budapest neighbourhoods, is used by some 800,000 unique visitors each month. In 2009 and 2010 Lőke took part in a project of the Swiss Ringier Group to create a quality Sunday paper in Hungary. Before that he spent more than two decades with HVG, a Hungarian economic weekly, writing on international affairs and editing the Trend and Interview sections. Since 2001 he has served as the chair of the Gőbölyös Soma Foundation for investigative journalism. He is a member of the advisory board of the European Fund for Investigative Journalism. Since 2010 he has been the chair of the board of Transparency International Hungary, an anti-corruption NGO.

Garance Malivel

PARTICIPANT · CULTURAL WORKER AND RESEARCHER, FRANCE · Garance Malivel is a curator and researcher born in France and currently living in Toronto. Her interests lie in the interdependent geological, biological, chemical, and corporeal bonds that are at stake in environmental health and justice. She pays particular attention to evidence-based research and policy, as well as visual forms of advocacy developed by cultural collectives and civic organisations that work toward greater social welfare and equity. Publishing, workshops, public programmes, collective walks and discussions are forms of the collaborative, embodied knowledge that Garance aims at developing and nurturing. She joined the training during a residency in Prague.

Marček, Juraj

PARTICIPANT · DOCTOR, ACTIVIST, MARTIN · Juraj Marček graduated from the Jessenius Medical Faculty at Comenius University and used his degree in the fields of psychiatry and ophthalmology for seven years. His interest in social change developed into a social experiment after he was introduced to the Transition initiative from the UK in 2010. He is a local urban environment activist, a place-maker and a community leader working with volunteers and experts on various local projects to lead their towns towards sustainability since 2011.

Marko, Igor

OWNER, ARCHITECT, MARKO&PLACEMAKERS, LONDON · Igor Marko is the founder and creative director of Marko &Placemakers. As an architect, urbanist and urban designer, Igor has been advising on and delivering successful projects that go beyond the traditional realms of architecture for the last 20 years in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and London, England, where he moved in the 1990s, joining several established practices before co-founding the interdisciplinary design studio FoRM Associates. Focusing on the transformational value of placemaking, Igor has been advising both private and public sector clients on the integration of public real estate developments and major regeneration schemes.

McGarrell Klimentová, Monika

PARTICIPATION SPECIALIST, PRAGUE INSTITUTE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OFFICE, PRAGUE · Monika McGarrell Klimentová works as a specialist on participatory processes at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development. Prior to this experience she worked for Forum 50%, focusing on gender equality.

Milota, Jan

IQ ROMA SERVIS, BRNO · For the last seven years Jan Milota has been a member of the *IQ Roma servis* outreach team and is interested mostly in the housing issues of the Roma community in Brno and on the national level. He is one of the founding members of the Platform for Social Housing, a networking advocacy NGO promoting social housing legislation in the Czech Republic. He is also interested in participative methods in social work and community involvement in political processes.

Návrat, Petr

URBAN PLANNER, ONPLAN, PRAGUE · Petr Návrat holds Master's degrees in Urban Planning from the Bartlett School of Planning, University College London and in Economics from the University of Economics, Prague. He works on projects concerned with urban regeneration, local economic development and urban governance in the Czech Republic. He is a partner at ONplan – Oh&Návrat Joint Planning Laboratory. As a long-term consultant in development cooperation he has introduced planning reform in the northeast of Sri Lanka. Between 2014 and 2016 he was a team leader for public participation in planning at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development.

Netri, Peter

CYKLOKOALÍCIA, PLÁN B., BRATISLAVA · Peter has studied and worked in marketing management. His life changed in 2011 when he optimised his commute and started cycling on a daily basis. Since 2012 he has actively participated in providing feedback to the local government on several purpose-built cycling paths and joined a local activist group called *Cyklokoalícia* (Cycling Coalition) which focuses on designing sustainable mobility solutions for local governments. Since 2015 he has been a member of the Transportation and Information Systems Committee, a municipal assembly body. In 2016 he joined Matuš Vallo's initiative called 'Platform for Bratislava', where he is in charge of mobility policies.

Oplatek, David

GUEST AND PARTICIPANT · MUNICIPAL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE, BRNO-CENTRE, GREEN PARTY, OBČANSKÁ PORADNA BRNO, BRNO · David Oplatek graduated from the programme in Social Policies and Social Work at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno in 2006. During his studies he worked as a social worker at the DROM Romani Centre NGO. Between 2008 and 2010 he worked for the Czech Government Agency for Social Inclusion in Prague. Since 2011 he has been leading a Civic Consultancy (*Občanská poradna*) and since 2014 he has been a representative of the municipal district Brno-centre for the Green Party. His interest lies in supporting affordable housing.

Paulíková, Stanislava

PROJECT MANAGER, YIT SLOVAKIA, BRATISLAVA · Stanislava Paulíková graduated from the Department of Architecture at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. For more than 10 years she has been working for top developers. Since 2015 she has been in charge of the BCT area (Cvernovka) Bratislava project at YIT Slovakia. During her previous employment at J&T Real Estate (2013–2015) she was responsible for the Panorama City I project.Prior to that she worked for Penta Investments (2005–2013), where she was responsible for the project called Digital Park.

Pelčíková, Pavla

GUEST AND PARTICIPANT · PARTICIPATION SPECIALIST, PRAGUE INSTITUTE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OFFICE, PRAGUE · Pavla Pelčíková studied Urban Studies at University College London and Urban Planning at the *Institut d'Urbanisme de Paris.* After gaining work experience in the public, private and third sectors she started working at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development (IPR Praha) in the Public Participation Office. In the beginning the office was involved in several pilot projects about public space revitalisation. Today its main focus is to provide an education programme about participation for Prague city district employees and representatives and to mainstream participation in Prague.

Petit, Max

PARTICIPANT · STUDENT, SPATIAL PLANNING, BREDA · Max Petit is a student of spatial development at the University of Breda. In 2017 he has completed an internship in Budapest for a non-governmental startup called *Mindspace*. Currently he is busy with his second trimester of the academic year and is looking for a new internship adventure.

Plášková, Karolína

PARTICIPANT · ARCHITECT, URBANIST, CURATOR, BRNO, VIENNA · Through interdisciplinary collaboration on different projects, Plášková attempts to raise awareness of current (hidden) social issues at the intersection of architecture, urbanism and art and to respond to them by using artistic strategies. In the past she has collaborated, curated and organised various events with Foster the City in Pilsen, the Gallery of Architecture in Brno, or *dérive* in Vienna.

Polyák, Levente

RESEARCHER, URBAN PLANNER, KÉK, BUDAPEST · Polyák studied architecture, urbanism, sociology and art theory in Budapest and Paris. He specialises in urban regeneration, cultural development, community participation, local economic development and social innovation, with a focus on building development scenarios using existing resources. He has worked on urban projects for New York, Paris, Vienna, Budapest, Rome and Genoa municipalities, and, as a member of the Hungarian KÉK – Contemporary Architecture Centre, he has organised conferences, festivals and exhibitions on various contemporary urban and architectural phenomena. Since 2015, he has worked on Interactive Cities (on social media and new urban governance) and Funding the Cooperative City (on new economic models for community spaces).

Pšenička, Radek

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, YIT SLOVAKIA, BRATISLAVA · Radek Pšenička is an alumni of Comenius University in Bratislava in the program International Relations and Comparative Law and the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava in the program Architecture and Urban Planning. He started his practice as an architect in the Polish architectural company *Kwadrat* (Wrocław). In 2002, he worked for Skanska, Slovakia in the position of project manager. He has been working for YIT since 2013, where he has accepted several positions, from being the Deputy Director for Sales and Investments, to a Project Development Director and, since January 2016, holding the post of Business Development Director. He has been involved in launching the international architectural competition for Cvernovka in Bratislava.

Purker, Lisa

DIRECTOR, PLANSINN, VIENNA · Lisa was born in 1973 and lives in Vienna. She has been Managing Director of PlanSinn since September 2016. She studied Spatial Planning at the University of Technology in Vienna. In PlanSinn, she focuses on moderating and supervising processes on the topics of urban planning, urban development, gender issues, citizen participation and climate protection. Lisa is a certified gender and diversity consultant and has training in conflict management, knowledge management, team and project management, communication and moderation, and organisational development.

Ripka, Štěpán

CHAIRMAN, PLATFORM FOR SOCIAL HOUSING, PRAGUE · Štěpán Ripka advocates for a social system housing in the Czech Republic together with more than 50 NGOs and experts in the field. His experience includes research and consulting on municipal housing policies towards Roma, the use of ERDF funds for housing in marginalised communities, institutionalisation of Romani children, evaluation of inclusion projects, and ethnographic research on marginalised communities in the Czech Republic. Currently he works as an independent social researcher and policy analyst with the Open Society Foundations, the Government of the Czech Republic, and the Metropolitan Research Institute in Budapest.

Robinson, Derek

PARTICIPANT · STUDENT, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, BUDAPEST · Derek Robinson is an urban planner and landscape architect born in Canada and trained in Hungary. He is interested in building community, democratising public space, and advocating for better cycling infrastructure. Through the Democracy in Local Politics programme, he has further developed his skills in collaborative teamwork while broadening his understanding of local development issues throughout Central Europe

Sidorová, Milota

CO-DRAMATURG, TRAINER IN THE 'ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL POLITICS' PROGRAMME, BRATISLAVA, PRAGUE · Milota Sidorová focuses on interdisciplinary aspects of inclusive city and urban planning. She facilitates various public participatory projects in Czech Republic and Slovakia. She is an author and editor of several publications and manuals focused on gender mainstreaming, outdoor advertising regulations and political aspects of urban development. She is a founding member of an international festival about urban planning, RESITE, co-founder and director of the Women's Public Space Prague (WPS Prague) initiative, and a dramaturg at WhatCity?. She is one of the authors of the European project 'Shared Cities: Creative Momentum'.

Sigmund Heráková, Alica

JOURNALIST, ACTIVIST, BRNO · Alica Sigmund Heráková is a Romani journalist and activist based in Brno. In her work she focuses on public relations, moderating, promoting and networking within the Roma community and the majority, working on the mediation of important topics and the organisation of cultural events. From 2012 until 2015 she was a team member and PR manager of the Ghettofest festival, taking place in Brno's 'Bronx' locality. She also works as a reporter for the *O Roma vakeren* radio show of Czech Radio. Her main topics are Roma identity and history, mutual understanding, and media relations.

Suchý, Daniel

EDITOR, TREND, BRATISLAVA · Daniel Suchý is a journalist covering the topics of the real estate business, architecture and urban development. He studied Economic Policies at the University of Economics in Bratislava. He has almost 20 years of experience in media and public relations working for a press agency and a national daily newspaper; he was the founder, publisher and Editor-in-Chief of *Bratislavsky Propeler*, a magazine about culture in Bratislava. In 2013 he joined the business weekly magazine *Trend*, where he works as a contributor to and editor of the online real estate section.

Szabó, Rebeka

DEPUTY MAYOR, BUDAPEST 14 · Rebeka Szabó is a Hungarian biologist, ecologist and politician who was a member of the National Assembly (MP) from the 'Politics Can Be Different' (LMP) National List between 2010 and 2014. She was appointed Deputy Mayor of Zugló after the 2014 local elections. She was elected to the National Assembly from the party's National List during the Hungarian parliamentary election in 2010. She became a member of the Committee of National Cohesion on 25 February 2013.

Szemerey, Samu

ARCHITECT, URBANIST, KÉK, BUDAPEST · Szemerey's area of expertise is the intersection of technology, creative industries and the built environment, as well as the media history of architecture and innovation in design practice. As a consultant and strategist he works with cities, institutions and private clients. He has directed workshops and research projects and has curated exhibitions and public programmes. He has taught, published and lectured internationally. He is a founding member of KÉK – Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Centre, an adviser of Design Terminal, and a lead expert at Lechner Nonprofit Ltd, where he works on coordinating 'smart city' programmes in Hungary.

Szokolay, Örs

ARCHITECT, URBANIST, ADVISOR, BUDAPEST 14 · Örs Szokolay studied architecture at Budapest University of Technology and Economics, School of Architecture. He has been working as an architect and urban designer. From 1990 to 1992 he was Deputy Mayor of Debrecen. He has also been teaching at Debrecen University, served as a head of department at Pécs University, and has been working as an Associate Professor at Gödöllő University. He has collaborated as an expert on several strategic plans: the CENTROPE project (Vienna's regional development), Bratislava's strategic plans, and as the founder of the *MIZUGLÓNK* programme. He collaborates with and for cities on sustainability in urban planning and participative planning. Since 2015 he has been a Senior Advisor to Mayor Karácsony in Budapest-Zugló.

Štasselová, Lucia

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT COUNCILLOR, BRATISLAVA-RUŽINOV · Lucia Štasselová is an independent member of the municipal district council in Bratislava-Ružinov as well as a member of the city council, where she also chairs the social committee. She contributes to developing the city's long-term strategy on working with the homeless. She is a co-author of 'A Plea for Humanity', which calls upon the Slovak Government to help ease the burden on the countries most exposed to the influx of refugees and to alleviate refugees' suffering. She is a co-founder and longtime CEO of the Children of Slovakia Foundation, and a co-founder of the Children's Hour project. She was a member and chair of the Executive Board of The Donors Forum and worked for Radio & Television Slovakia (RTVS) as a manager for non-profit projects. She is a member of the Presidency of the Slovak Centre for Fundraising.

Tosics, Iván

MANAGING DIRECTOR METROPOLITAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE – MRI, BUDAPEST · Iván Tosics is a mathematician and a sociologist (PhD) with longstanding experience in urban sociology, strategic development, housing policy and EU regional policy issues. Since 2011 he has been a Programme Expert of the URBACT programme. He teaches at the University of Pécs, Department of Political Studies. He is a vice chair of the European Network

of Housing Research (ENHR), an executive committee member of the European Urban Research Association (EURA) and was a member of the HS-NET Advisory Board to UN-HABITAT (until 2013). He is the Policy Editor of the journal *Urban Research and Practice*, a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* and for *Housing Studies*. For many years he represented the Municipality of Budapest at EUROCITIES.

Tym, Antonín

PARTICIPANT · GEOTHERMAL PROJECT MANAGER, CITY OF LITOMĚŘICE, LITOMĚŘICE · Antonín Tym holds a Master's degree in Public Policy and also studied Environment Policy at Middlesex University in London and at Salford University in Manchester as a PhD candidate. He has been working as a geothermal project manager in Litoměřice since 2009 and since 2016 he started his job at the Faculty of Sciences of Charles University in Prague as a manager of the research infrastructure RINGEN. Before joining the team in Litoměřice he worked for the municipal association 'Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic' as a project manager responsible for European projects (mainly sustainable energy and transport) and international affairs.

van de Rakt, Eva

DIRECTOR, HEINRICH BÖLL FOUNDATION, PRAGUE OFFICE, PRAGUE · Eva van de Rakt has been director of the Heinrich Böll Foundation's Prague office since 2004. After completing her studies at the University of Music and Theatre in Rotterdam, she taught contemporary dance at the Duncan Centre Conservatory in Prague (1997–2001). Since 2001, she has worked for the Heinrich Böll Foundation focusing on democracy and human rights issues, as well as energy and climate policy. The Prague office coordinates the Foundation's activities in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

Vasquez, Martin

CO-FOUNDER, CZECH IMPROVISATION LEAGUE, IMPRO INSTITUTE, PRAGUE · Martin Vasquez is a co-founder of the Czech Improvisation League and has served as its president for several years. He founded the Impro Institute school of improvisation and has led professional improvisation workshops in Germany, France and Great Britain. Martin has pursued improvisation theatre for over 15 years and holds a doctorate in the Psychology of Communication, Creativity and Improvisation. He is also a stand-up comedian (*Nastojáka*), a TV producer participating in the production of music programmes and various TV series, and a lecturer and consultant, mostly in the area of communication.

Zavarská, Barbara

PARTICIPANT · ARCHITECT, DIRECTOR, PUNKT, BRATISLAVA · Barbara Zavarská graduated in architecture at the VŠVU in Bratislava with a doctorate in Architectural Management. She is the co-founder of the civic association Punkt, through which she is responsbile for directing multiple projects: a conference about public space called 'WhatCity?', a project to support built heritage, Localicon, and a street festival, *Dobrý trh* ('Good Market'), which is held in Bratislava in three locations – Panenske Street, Jakubov námestí and at the Stare tržnice (Old Marketplace) and its surrounding area. She lives in Bratislava with the architect Aleš Šedivec, with whom she established the architecture studio *totalstudio*. They are raising their four-year-old son, Oskar.

Zsargó Szilvia

CO-FOUNDER, MINDSPACE, BUDAPEST · As a qualified facilitator, trainer and coach, Szilvia likes to help people, teams and organisations to get the best out of themselves. As a founder of Mindspace Nonprofit Ltd, she enjoys transforming her professional experience and strategic knowledge into real-life projects and actions. Her main interests are motivation through gamification, knowledge transfer with non-formal educational tools, and citizen involvement in the creation of a livable city.

Žalman, Peter

ARCHITECT, URBAN PLANNER, BRATISLAVA · For many years Peter Žalman has been an active figure in the fields of architecture and the urban planning of Bratislava. He is designed the Museum of Modern Art Danubiana and the Holocaust Monument. The conversion of sugar refineries in Trnava, Sládkovičovo and Šurany belong among his other significant projects. His conversion project for the Heating Station by Dušan Jurkovič caused the building to be registered among the protected heritage sites of Bratislava. He has been a watchdog over Bratislava urban planning documents and controversies. In 2017 he published the first urban planning atlas of Bratislava, a collection of analytic maps and data capturing the rapid urban growth of the Slovak capital.

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ABOUT THE HEINRICH BÖLL FOUNDATION

The Heinrich Böll Foundation is the German Green Political Foundation. Our main tenets are ecology and sustainability, democracy and human rights, and self-determination and justice. We place particular emphasis on gender democracy, meaning social emancipation and equal rights for women and men. We are also committed to equal rights for cultural and ethnic minorities and to the societal and political participation of immigrants. Finally, we promote non-violence and proactive peace policies. Our namesake, the writer and Nobel Prize laureate Heinrich Böll, personifies the values we stand for: defence of freedom, civic courage, tolerance, open debate, and the valuation of art and culture as independent spheres of thought and action. We are an independent organisation headquartered in Berlin, yet we are an international actor. We cooperate with 160 project partners in over 60 countries and maintain offices in more than 30 countries. The Prague office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation coordinates the Foundation's activities in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

→ cz.boell.org

Old Cvernovka, former studios of creative professionals, photo: Milota Sidorová

Restless Cities: Lessons from Central Europe is a publication that reflects a year-long training programme of the Prague office of the Heinrich-Böll-Foundation focusing on understanding the political aspects of urban planning in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. It consists of four thematic chapters that offer introductions into each topic, short texts by selected invited experts, participants' views, and key learnings about sustainability and politics. The authors of the texts are not just the experts who contributed to the training programme, but also the participants themselves share their learnings and views herein. We hope this book will help readers to understand the often-invisible areas where urban planning moves from the realm of expertise-only into the realm of political action and that it will inspire readers to further political learning and engagement.