

CITIES@HEART

TOWARDS A BALANCED CITY CENTRE

1st QUARTERLY NETWORK REPORT

January 2024
March 2024



URBACT



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♥ 1. Cities@Heart

Cities@Heart mobilises ten European urban areas. Led by The Greater Paris Metropolis (a public entity with a sound track record in downtown revitalisation policy), network partners work together to understand the way **city centres** function and create a new framework to be used in city centre improvement initiatives.

- Quadrilatero Urbano** (Portugal)
- Granada** (Spain)
- Sligo** (Ireland)
- Paris** (France)
- Fleurus** (Belgium)
- Cesena** (Italy)
- Celje** (Slovenia)
- Osijek** (Croatia)
- Krakow Metropolis** (Poland)
- Amfiktyonies** (Greece)

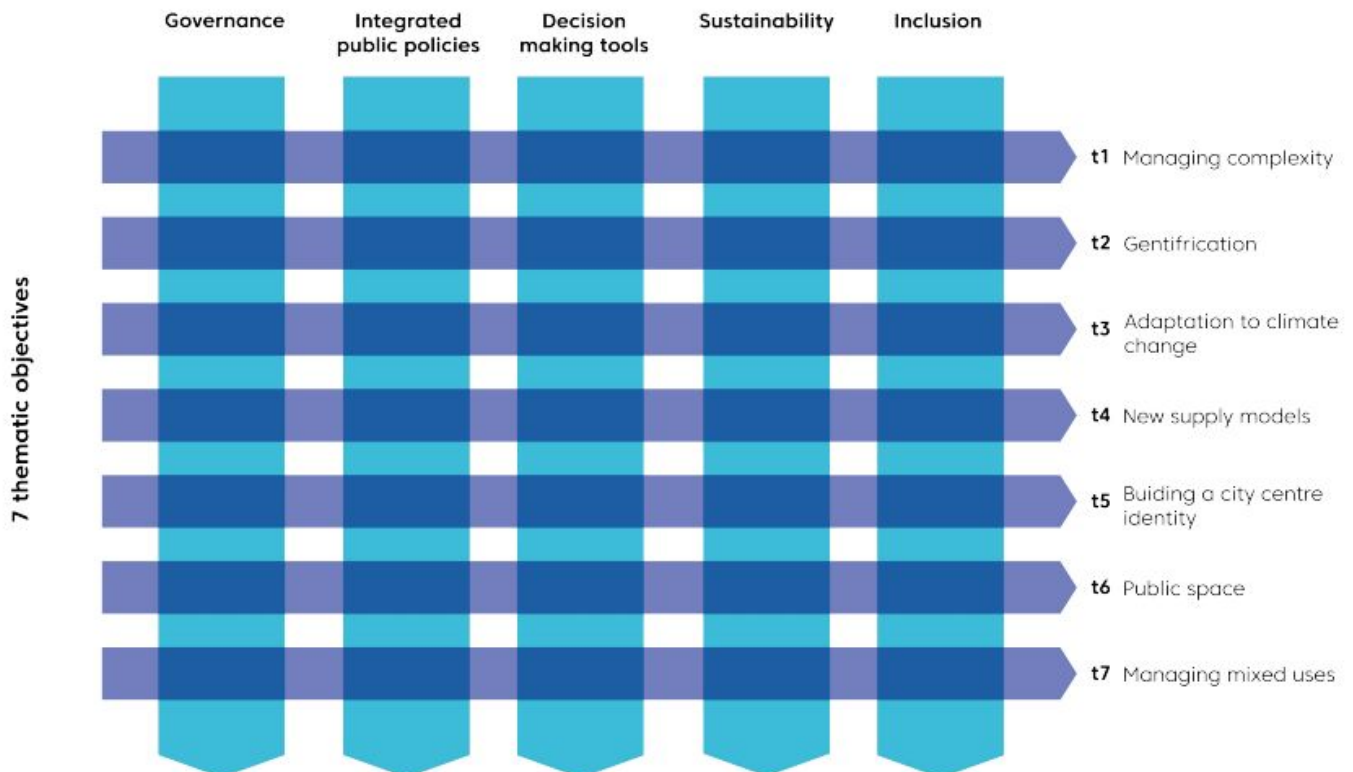


♥ 2. Our pathway to the city centres toolbox

The Baseline study has shaped a roadmap based on contributions and capacity-building needs, translated into a two-dimensional matrix. Thematic objectives cover **seven major challenges**, while strategic learning objectives focus on **integrated public policies, governance models, decision-making tools, sustainability, and inclusion**.

Over two and a half years, exchange activities will target these objectives through Transnational Meetings, City-to-City Exchanges, ULG meetings, and Deep Dives. At the end of the project, we will co-create a toolbox to manage and deliver policies specific to city centres.

- T1 - Managing complexity**
- T2 - Gentrification**
- T3 - Adaptation to climate change**
- T4 - New supply models**
- T5 - Building a city centre identity**
- T6 - Public space**
- T7 - Managing mixed uses**



This quarter, we have been working specifically on the following challenges:

Gentrification (t2)

The primary aspects of this phenomenon are the loss of inhabitants due to housing shortages, a lack of adaptation to current family models, or the decline of local services and commerce, as well as the management of the impacts of tourism.

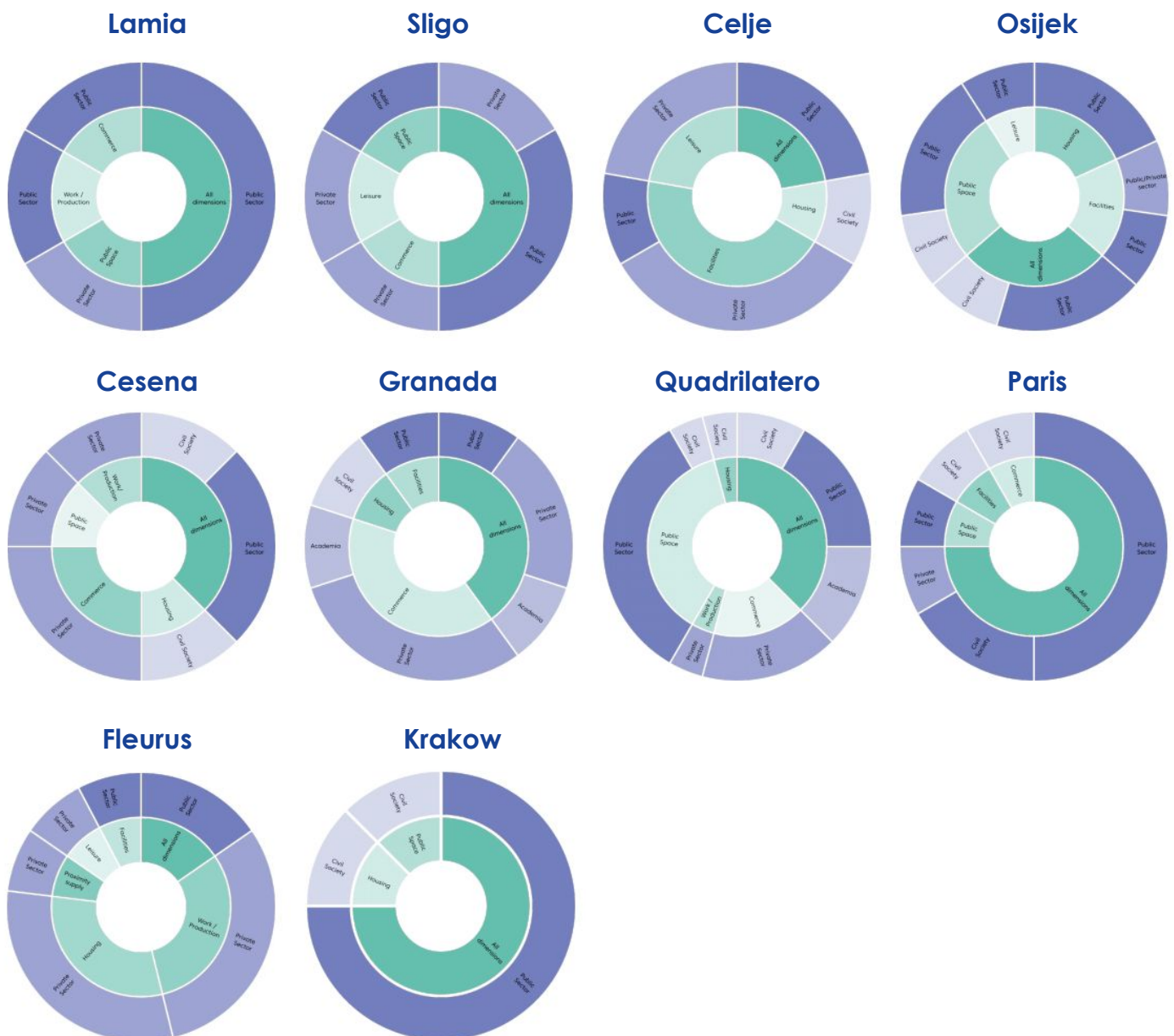
Adaptation to climate change (t3)

Urban centres, particularly those with historical components or inhabited by more vulnerable populations, may face greater climate risks compared to more modern urban fabrics. This vulnerability may arise due to the fragility and condition of the built environment and the socio-demographic characteristics of its inhabitants.



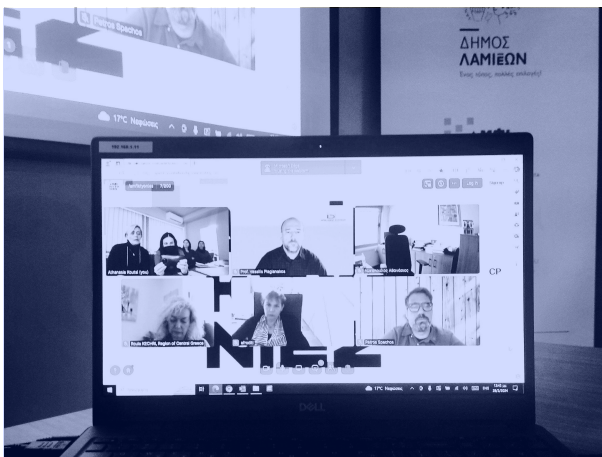
♥ 3. What is going on in our URBACT local groups

Composition of the different ULG and the proportion of representatives from public and private sectors, academia and civil society.



3. What is going on in our URBACT local groups

During the first quarter, each city has held meetings within their respective URBACT Local Groups (ULGs), this chapter details the meetings held during this period, their outcomes and other noteworthy developments within the ULGs.



Amfiktyonies

On the 28th of February, the second ULG meeting took place. The Coordinator updated everyone on the first transnational meeting in Sligo and shared the city's successful practices.

University representatives suggested utilizing the resources available from local universities for specific measurements, like air and noise analysis, or employing cameras in the city center to monitor pedestrian and illegal parking activity. The third ULG meeting is set for the end of May, where focused on finalizing the Integrated Action Plan.



Sligo

ULG Meeting 20th February which covered the introduction to the URBACT Cities@Heart programme, areas of focus for Sligo, work to date, ULG team structure (x2) and the targets to archive over the next 2.5 years.

ULG Festivals and Events Meeting 27th February which covered the preparation for the St Patrick's Day Festival now expanded to cover 3 days of events. Design of the consumer questionnaire survey concentrating on new public realm space Queen Maeve Square focussing on perception, safety, dwell time and € spend.

3. What is going on in our URBACT local groups



Celje

In the previous phase, the ULG convened for a dynamic meeting featuring a round table discussion and introductions to URBACT and other Action Planning Networks, including the Cities@Heart project. The focus was on outlining Celje Area's role in the project and generating ideas for local group topics and project expectations. Looking forward, participants are eager to reconvene in forthcoming meetings to advance project goals.



Osijek

The ULG meeting on February 29, 2024, at Osijek Cultural Center marked the project's third session, welcoming new members. ULG members actively contributed, agreeing to integrate meeting conclusions into the Action Plan. While Osijek doesn't face gentrification issues, climate change poses significant challenges, particularly the lack of natural shade in the main square during hot summers. Osijek ULG members emphasize the importance of addressing these issues beyond the project's scope. The next ULG meeting is slated for April 22, 2024.



Cesena

On February 16, 2024, a meeting was convened to discuss the following topics: Objectives and Work Path, Project Roadmap, Objectives, 7 Thematic Axes, Collaborative Work. The participants explored the trajectory of their goals and tasks, understood the structured plan guiding the project, clarified the aims and targets to achieve, identified and discussed the seven main thematic areas, and discussed strategies for effective teamwork and cooperation.

3. What is going on in our URBACT local groups



Granada

Granada ULG comprises a diverse ensemble including representatives from civil society, the City Council, the service sector, professionals, and the University. Crucial issue to our mission is to convey the understanding that a balanced urban center can only be achieved through a consensus in which each party assumes a certain sacrifice, for the greater good of all and of the city itself. Hence, the primary aim of our initial gatherings is to establish a shared vision on the future of Centro and to align the various stakeholders' perspectives on their own requirements.



Quadrilatero Urbano Association

In the initial months of 2024 the ULG has been engaged in strategic planning and implementation efforts. Throughout this period, the ULG has crafted a Stakeholders map, delving into the network of actors and interests involved and a comprehensive Problem Tree analysis, identifying key challenges and root causes that demand our attention.

Looking ahead, the ULG remains dedicated to exploring new potential solutions, leveraging the insights gained from our analyses and the innovative spirit that drives us forward.



Greater Paris Metropolis

The Paris ULG is focusing on how civic participation impacts town centre management policies. During the last meeting, the group worked on developing tools to improve city centres and were presented with two impactful initiatives: ANCTerritoires introduced a new initiative, aimed at aiding cities in implementing participatory methods to enhance their public policies. On the economic front, François MOHRT from the Parisian Atelier of Urbanism (Apar) shared the findings of the agency's 2023 study on the activity of local businesses in Paris.

3. What is going on in our URBACT local groups



Fleurus

During the last meeting, various topics were covered, including the introduction of Fleurus and the Transform Plan, discussions with local stakeholders during a visit to the CAI, conversations with developers regarding site redevelopment, and exchanges with the Grand Paris Metropolis and other stakeholders. Key themes included the impact of municipal mergers on mobility, the expansion plans of the Charleroi Metropolis project. In the coming months, new meetings are expected to be held to continue working towards the goals set by the URBACT network.



Krakow Metropolis

Since the start of 2024, the core ULG has convened three times: on the 27th of February, the 29th of February, and the 9th of April.

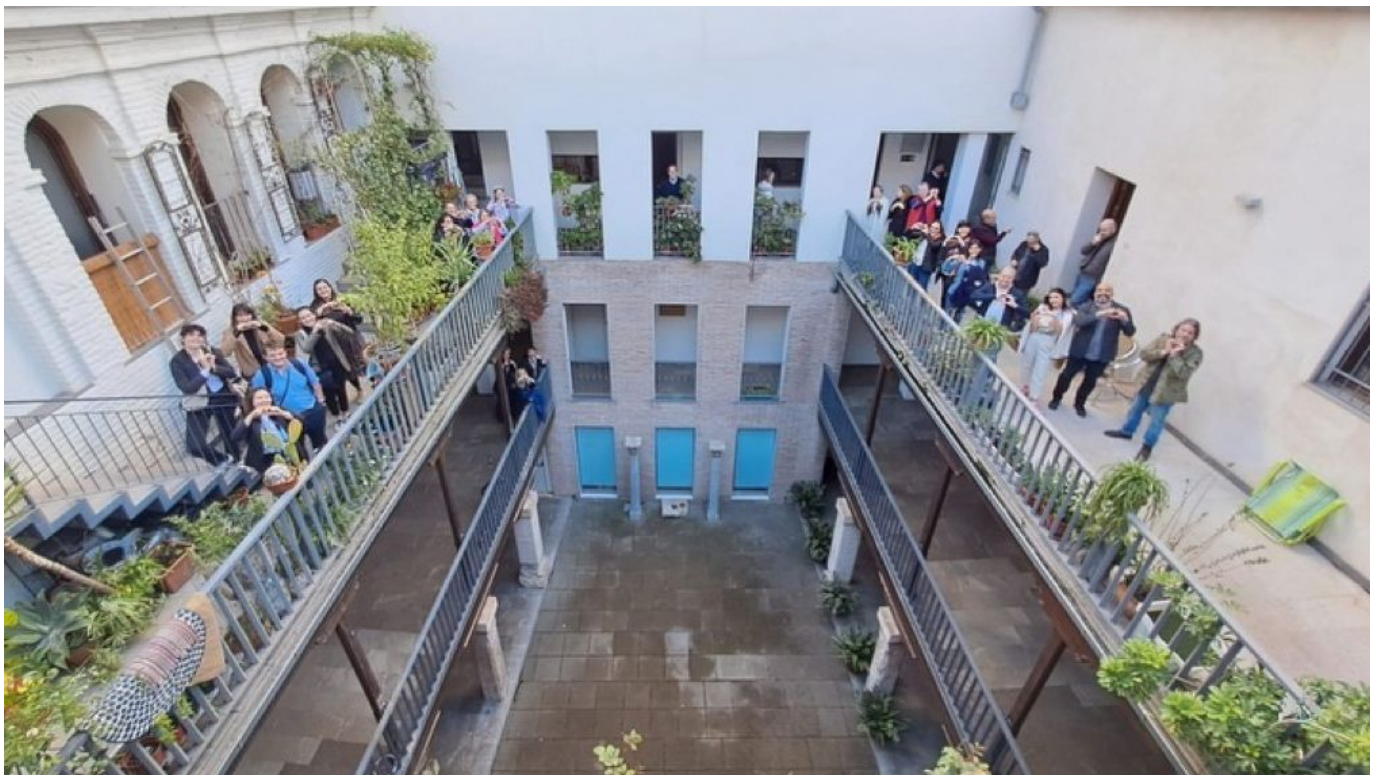
During these meetings, discussions revolved around the outcomes of a study concerning the functionalities and communication within downtown Niepołomice. These findings will serve as the basis for crafting a conceptual framework for the revitalization of the city center, subsequently undergoing pilot testing. Furthermore, noteworthy practices from Sligo were also showcased during these sessions.

♥ 4. The second Transnational meeting: GRANADA

Day 1

The opening day of the Granada meeting comprised morning presentations, a workshop, and an afternoon tour exploring the streets and projects of the city. Ángel Luis Benito and Daniel Galán, representing the Granada City Council and the Tourist Office, shed light on the city's history and contemporary challenges such as climate change, gentrification, and overtourism. Following this, initiatives aimed at addressing climate change from Métropole du Grand Paris and the climate strategy of the Krakow Metropolitan Area were highlighted. Additionally, various local projects and initiatives were introduced, with further details to be provided later. Workshops on climate change and data collection were led by Mar Santamaria Varas.

Cities@Heart launched the second URBACT transnational network meeting in Granada, delving into new themes and local insights.



During the afternoon of day one, we saw the city's innovations and challenges first hand with a visit of the main areas of the city centre.



After hiking the winding ancient paths through the Albacín neighborhood, we arrived to a panoramic view of the Alhambra and the Sierra Nevada Mountains and visited a number of renovation projects with Arquitectura Yedra a firm specializing in contemporary techniques to restore and historical buildings.



Day 2

The second day of the transnational meeting took place in an emblematic space of urban innovation: the ETSAG (Higher Technical School of Architecture of Granada), located in a former army hospital in Barrio Realejo. We focused on the challenges in the city centre and met with local stakeholders who painted a worrying picture of a post-Covid city with over tourism, where affordable housing is hard to come by and small business owners struggle to make ends meet against rising rents and online retailers.

Network members soon got to work brainstorming and problem-solving in a session on data management organised by Lead Expert Mar Santamaria Varas.

Our second URBACT Cities@Heart transnational meeting in Granada came to a close with an afternoon of inspiring exchanges with city stakeholders.



We couldn't organise a meeting in Granada without paying a visit to the Alhambra, a magnificent complex of buildings and gardens from the Nasrid era with some buildings even dating back to the 9th century.





La Ampliadora (a social school of photography) presented their work creating awareness about the people that make our city centers much-loved places and provide a vital advocacy tool for local stakeholders.

♥ 5. Learnings from Granada

At the Granada meeting, several local experts presented successful projects implemented in Granada's historic center, which could be of interest to other participating cities. Specifically, they elaborated on the following:

Santa Adela. Social & Urban regeneration.

Juan Manuel Suárez (City Council)

Resilient realejo.

Romualdo Benítez Rodríguez

Energy community.

OSCE - Energy Communities Social Office

Rehabilitation of the Albaicín, World Heritage site.

Gabriel Fernández Adarve

Adaptation of housing in a heritage environment.

ABBA Architects

Tourism sustainability plan of Granada.

Daniel Galán

Santa Adela. Social & Urban regeneration

The Santa Adela neighborhood's intervention aims to regenerate its urban landscape, encompassing around 1,500 homes built in the late 1950s for those affected by the 1956 Granada earthquake. Its primary goals include enhancing residents' quality of life, fostering community maintenance, social cohesion, and socio-economic revival. This entails a comprehensive, publicly-funded effort across five areas for new construction and green spaces, with two areas dedicated to existing building rehabilitation. To achieve this, a Special Plan was formulated, establishing an Integrated Management Area employing expropriation as a pivotal action system, including compiling assets and rights, conducting joint appraisals, executing expropriation procedures, and assigning new residences.

These efforts involve a socio-educational process with resident participation, covering habitat pedagogy, special group programs, temporary housing, community organization, socio-economic development, and social awareness.



Resilient Realejo

The Realejo, a picturesque neighborhood in Granada, faces significant challenges. Gentrification is driving families away as old buildings are demolished or refurbished to turn them into lucrative tourist apartments. Pollution is a pressing issue, with Granada ranked as Spain's third most polluted city due to olive tree monoculture and limited public transportation. Dependency on food trucks weakens local production, while political neglect exacerbates pollution and uncontrolled tourism.

With the aim of reducing these impacts, community initiatives have been developed with a clear positive effect on the lives of the residents. Among them, temporary occupations of public spaces for markets and the neighborhood's community garden stand out.

El Realejo neighborhood faces:

- The gentrification issue**
- The pollution issue**
- The food issue**
- The political issue**



Energy communities of Granada

The energy community social office offers guidance for establishing and developing energy communities to social entities, businesses, local administrations, and the public. Rooted in social economy principles, sustainable energy transition, and resilience, it's citizen-driven, without involvement from large companies with electricity market interests.

One of the projects focuses on the neighborhoods of Realejo and Albaicín, where there are restrictions on locating solar panels in these protected historic areas. Each neighborhood is separately developing an energy community project to facilitate collective self-consumption installations outside the protected area, thus addressing this issue.

Is the Preservation of Cultural Sites Compatible with the Energy Transition?



Rehabilitation of the Albaicín, World heritage site

The Albaicín Rehabilitation Project, initiated in 2002, aims to enhance living conditions, preserve heritage, and address urban challenges in this historic neighborhood, covering 86.26 hectares with 6,345 residents and 5,007 housing units. Initially focused on Lower Albaicín, it expanded citywide by March 2007.

Emphasizing inclusivity, the project integrates historical charm with urban growth, gender equality, and social diversity, particularly for ethnic minorities. Urban and social revitalization efforts prioritize preserving residential use, environmental regeneration, and combating gentrification and aging populations, ensuring equitable access to quality housing for all residents, including youth and the elderly.

Adequate urban planning and protection

Collaboration between different levels of public administration

The commitment to intervene in the residential buildings of the historic city, not in the monuments but considering the neighbors first.



Physical interventions on buildings have prioritized quality, preservation of heritage values, and the reintroduction of traditional techniques compatible with current technologies.

La ruina echa a 8 familias y a dos negocios de Elvira

Su edificio está declarado en ruina, aunque los inquilinos han recurrido al expediente. Un centenar de vecinos se manifestaron ayer para apoyarles

J. M. BOLLIVAR

Un centenar de vecinos del bajo Albarracín, junto a varios miembros de asociaciones ciudadanas, se unieron ayer por la tarde para protestar ante el próximo desalojo de las ocho familias que viven en el inmueble de la calle Elvira, situado en los números 87 y 89, y para recoger firmas en su apoyo.

Ayer los inquilinos presentaron sus recursos en la Gerencia de Urbanismo después del mes de plazo que tenían tras la declaración de ruina económica del edificio, en el que algunos de ellos viven desde hace cuarenta años.

La mayor parte de los inquilinos son personas mayores, que viven de sus pensiones y tienen pocos recursos económicos. La media de edad está próxima a los sesenta años. Algunos incluso han nacido en esa casa y no cuentan con recursos para buscar un nuevo hogar. Son inquilinos de renta antigua, que en los años sesenta pagaban 5.000 pesetas y actualmente abonan poco menos de 150 euros por el alquiler.

Varios años de dejadez

Los vecinos explican que la situación de tensión con el dueño del inmueble -del que este periódico intentó conocer su versión sin éxito- viene de atrás y que, en los últimos años, se ha agravado por su intención de convertir la casa en una zona de apartamentos.

También denuncian presiones y la situación de dejadez del edificio en los últimos siete años, en el que no se ha hecho prácticamente ninguna reforma. El dueño quitó las tejas, que eran antiguas, para ponerlas en su chalet y las cambió por placas de unificación retirándose a uno de



Una de las inquilinas porta un megáfono durante la manifestación de ayer.

los pocos arreglos que se han hecho en casi diez años. Aún así, fue una reforma a medias: «Dejó parte del tejado sin arreglar, con agujeros, porque el piso de abajo estaba vacío, pero ahora por ahí se meten las palomas» y es justo el piso que está al lado de mi casa», explica Avelino Andrés, uno de los inquilinos más jóvenes, que ha vivido desde que nació en ese edificio.

El inmueble tiene más de dos siglos de historia. Según cuentan los inquilinos, fue «cuartel de los franceses en la guerra» y conserva algunos pasillos subterráneos de esa época. Después pasó a ser utilizado como hospicio para niños abandonados por las monjas, de donde recibe el nombre de casa cuna, con el que se conoce popularmente.

De hecho, el sex shop Patxi -junto con el local Eshavira, los dos negocios afectados- conserva la etiqueta de lo que anteriormente era la ermita y también el torno que usaban las monjas.

El Eshavira club desaparecería

El señero club de flamenco Eshavira, situado en la calle Postigo de la Cuna, a espaldas del edificio, es un local que alberga actuaciones, principalmente de flamenco, pero también de jazz y tiene una sólida programación de música en vivo que desaparecería con la demolición del edificio de Elvira 87. Además, se trata de un espacio muy peculiar con mucha historia en sus paredes. También otro negocio con solera, el sex shop Patxi, situado en la misma manzana, tendría que desaparecer.

LA SITUACIÓN DE LAS FAMILIAS AFECTADAS



Julia Jiménez Arenas
67 años. Ama de casa
No me voy a ir de la casa en la que he vivido cuarenta años hasta que se me caiga encima. Si es verdad que está en ruina, pues me moriré dentro. Además, vivo de una pensión de vejez. ¿Cómo quieren que ahora me busque un piso?



Avelino Andrés Aguilera
44 años. Autónomo
Dio la casualidad de que el mismo día que me llamaron del médico para decirme que tenía un tumor que me operarán en diciembre, me encuentro el papel del desalojo en la puerta de casa. Imagina el disgusto, el dueño sabe que estoy enfermo.

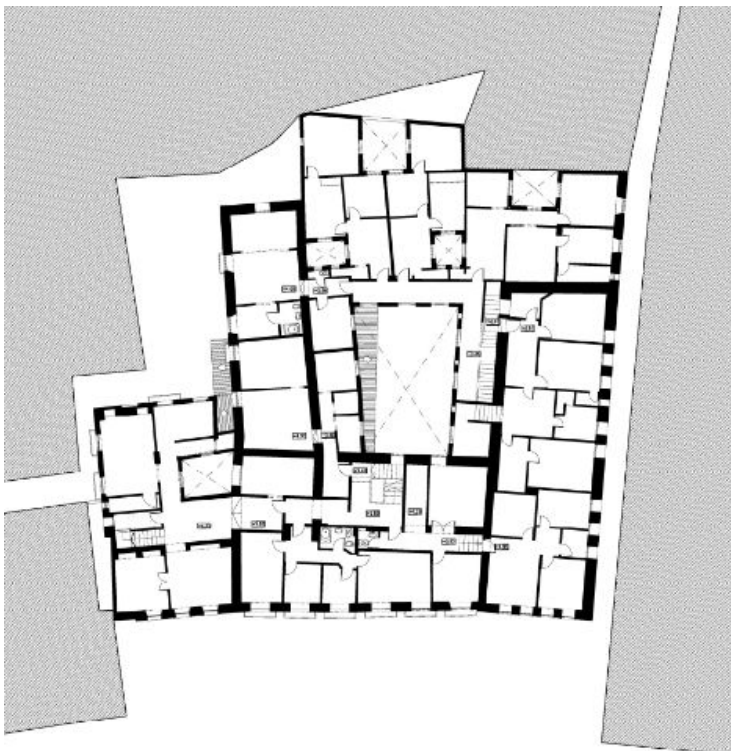


Adaptation of housing in a heritage environment

The historical orphanage, Casa Cuna, changed through time to a messy and non-functional housing building. Once the building was endangered and about to collapse, it was renovated by Albaicín Renovation Office.

The building was endangered It was a hard context to identify the key features of the original building. The courtyard and massive walls were the remains that helped to identify the heritage values to preserve.

Identifying the key features of the endangered building proved challenging amidst its deteriorating state, yet the courtyard and massive walls served as pivotal remnants guiding the preservation of its heritage values.



The project focused on recovering the essence but adding what is required and needed for today



Building community areas, the courtyard and the galleries



Tourism sustainability plan of Granada

Granada ranks 2nd in Andalusia and 6th in Spain for tourism, drawing 2 million visitors to the city and 4 million to the province annually. With a specialized destination model, it aims to expand ecotourism offerings, aligning with the City Hall's strategic objectives.

The goal is to broaden Granada's tourist area and boost competitiveness through ecotourism expansion. Specific objectives include enhancing the tourist experience, activating natural resources, highlighting cultural and scenic attractions, and embracing a broader ecotourism model regionally.

These objectives are pursued through actions grouped into four axes:

Axis 1: Green Transition and Sustainability

Axis 2: Energy Efficiency

Axis 3: Digital Transition

Axis 4: Competitiveness



6. Defining Indicators and policies for city centres

The workshop held in Granada aimed to achieve two primary goals: first, to cultivate a comprehensive list of common indicators that effectively respond to the network's diverse needs; and second, to explore various methodologies and stakeholders involved in acquiring pertinent data.

The workshop started with an ice breaker session, delving into the significance of data in addressing contemporary challenges. Following this, participants were presented with the overarching challenge at hand. Subsequently, the workshop unfolded into three distinct blocks:

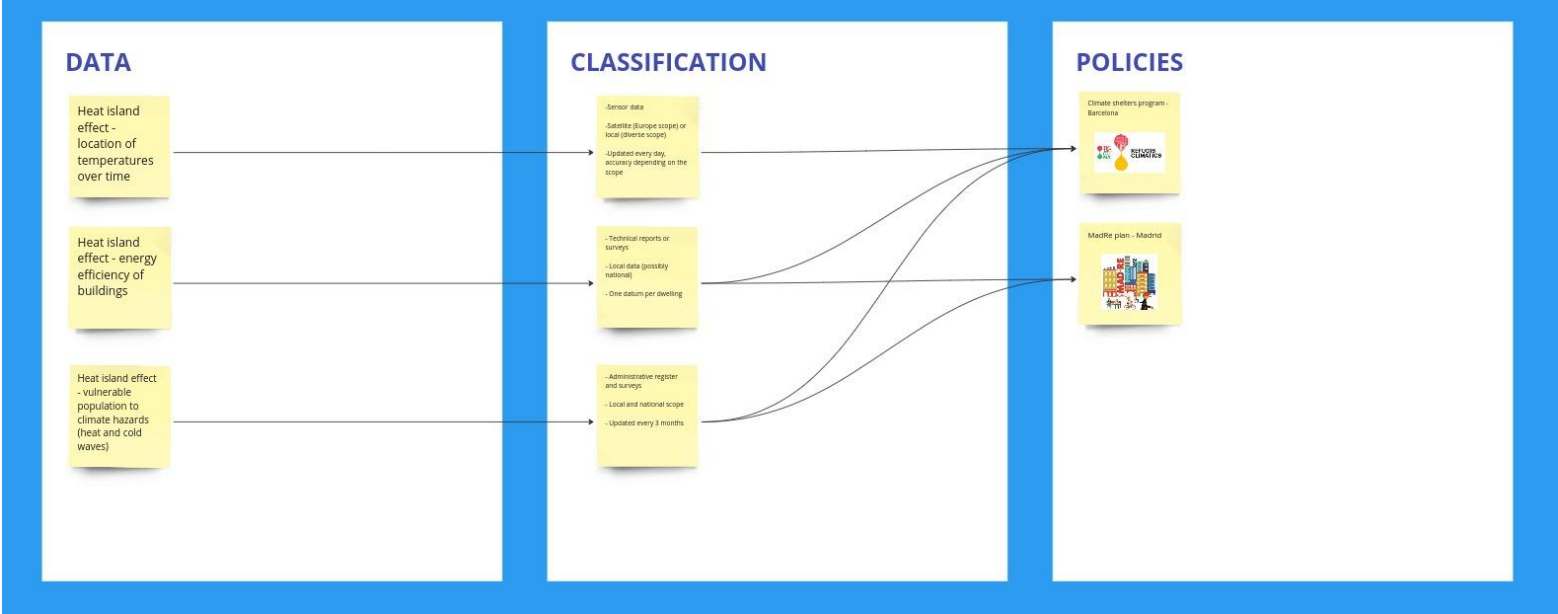
Block 1 focused on scrutinizing existing data and policies pertinent to each participating city, facilitating an understanding of the current landscape.

Block 2 involved the classification of gathered data, ensuring systematic organization and clarity.

Block 3 guided participants through the process of translating raw data into meaningful indicators, thereby providing actionable insights for the network's advancement.

What is the data we have available in the city centre, who controls the data and what are the policies that can be developed by mobilising this data?

Data is at the basis of knowledge-based approaches, is a capitalisation of knowledge and a tool for governance



Challenge 2: Adaptation to climate change

Throughout the workshop, each city representative provided insights into their respective **data infrastructure** concerning the challenges discussed: Adaptation to climate change and Gentrification. These indicators were closely tied to **policies** aimed at addressing the associated statistics.

Concerning the challenge of "**Adaptation to climate change**," the following policies were highlighted:

01. Energy certification on public buildings (facilities)

Policy to define

02. Air quality measurements

Policy to define

03. Use of e-bikes & paths

Policy to define

04. Footfall (pedestrian flows)

Policy to define

05. Climate sensors (meteorological stations)

Policy to define

06. Waste collection points

Policy to define

**07. Streetlight cadaster
(energy consumption & light
pollution)**

Policy to define

**08. Water & electricity
consumption**

Policy to define

09. River level measurement

Policy to define

10. Water quality

Policy to define

11. Heat island

Policy to define

**12. Amount of trees and
shrubs harvested
(management of the state of
the greenery)**

Policy to define

**13. Number of NBS (Nature
Based Solutions)**

Policy to define

14. Risk monitorization

Policy to define

**15. Blue and green corridors
monitorization**

Policy to define

**16. Green spaces
accessibility**

Policy to define

17. Traffic management data

Policy to define

**18. Allergens measurements
(specificity of air quality)**

Policy to define

**19. Playgrounds &
gymnasiums cadaster**

Policy to define

**20. Percentage of green
areas per inhabitant**

Policy to define

**21. Emissions on mobility
(typologies and use of
different means of transport)**

Policy to define

Challenge 3: Gentrification

During the discussion on **gentrification**, the following indicators and policies were presented for consideration:

01. Empty premises

Policy to define

02. Amount of sales in the city centre

Policy to define

03. Census data (inhabitants per building or district, age structure, socio-economic status, etc)

Policy to define

04. Private uses in public space monitorization

Policy to define

05. Commercial typologies

Policy to define

06. Tourist Housing register

Tourist housing regulation

07. Number of visitors (tourist)

Policy to define

08. Number of congress & conferences events

Policy to define

09. Number of visitors of culture and leisure events

Cooperation plan in cultural & touristic offer

10. Doxey's irritation index (attitude of residents to tourist)

Policy to define

11. Number of children attending school in the city centre schools

Policy to define

12. Number of social and non-profit dwellings in city centre

Young family non-profit apartments in city centre

13. Amount of event visitors by event

City centre events to promote city centre

14. Nights stayed by visitors / tourists

Cofinance strategy for tourism in the city centre

15. Number of occupied parking spaces

Policy to define

16. Apartment size

Policy to define

17. Apartment occupancy

Possibility to change upper floors into housing in city centre

18. Georeference of social networks publications

Policy to define

19. Georeference of social networks publications

Policy to define

20. Public transport analysis (through the tickets validation & bicycle share system)

Ticketing policy

21. Economic impact of festivals & events

Festivals & events strategy

22. Commercial streets monitorization

Policies to support small businesses like limitation in the conversion to residential dwellings

23. PIB (per inhabitant/ by districts)

Development policy

24. Infrastructure networks monitorization (roads, trains, etc)

Sustainable mobility policy

25. Smart platforms (to measure what)

Town city management

26. Mobility data (from Bolt)

Public infrastructure for micro-mobility - bike lanes and public lighting

27. Taxes and land register

Housing projects

♥ 7. Next steps

Granada hosted the second Transnational meeting, concluding the activation phase. In June, we'll kick off the **planning phase** with a visit to **Quadrilatero** in Portugal. This phase wants to strengthen the practical knowledge and skills of partners in the defined policy areas, draw lessons from the exchanges on an ongoing basis, and apply them at the local level. The main outcome will be the IAPs.

Our focus will be on 'New supply models' and 'Building a city centre identity', addressing issues like vacant shops and community reinforcement. The agenda includes site visits, workshops, and strategy sessions to develop innovative solutions tailored to our objectives. To wrap up the planning phase, we will visit **Cesena**, Italy. We'll focus on addressing public space and mixed-use issues, following the pattern of previous TNMs. This will be a crucial moment to solidify thematic and strategic learnings, allowing us to adjust the network roadmap and potentially produce our first output.

In addition to the TNMs, we will be conducting two webinars.

April 2024
City Centers at Night Time

September 2024
Last-Mile Logistics

