

UDINE

from placemaking
to playmaking
experience handbook



INTRODUCTION ◀

Playing is an important activity in everybody's life, from the very early years to the very last.

Playing brings peacefulness, growth, development and can become a community exercise that helps to understand, express and transform the world around us.

Playing means being social, even if in this last year this important part of the process forcefully moved toward the digital dimension due to the pandemic, and we lost meeting each other as key moment.

The experience of "Udine Plays around" ha started as a part of the European Project "Playful Paradigm" with the goal to fulfill what has just been stated before, but also as a tool to read and analyze the city in a participated way and let citizen have a say in proposing changes in their living context. All this was always carried on with a playful attitude.

This document's purpose is illustrating the methodology used by Centro Antartide, commissioned by the Municipality of Udine, for the creation of a game that aims to be a tool for analysis and urban planning. It is an intervention of placemaking or rather of playmaking.

APPROACH AND PURPOSE ◀

The path that is activated does not have the exclusive objective of using the game as a tool for planning, involvement and inclusion of the territory but also to start an internal process within the Public Administration to enrich and implement methodologies available to the various Sectors with a view to intersectoral and interdisciplinary. In this regard, an interdisciplinary working group has been set up in the Municipality of Udine aimed precisely at coordinating, enhancing and optimizing existing or future professional skills and projects.



▶ A project by



▶ With the support of



The 9 steps method



- ▶ 1. Identification of the area and objectives
- ▶ 2. Context analysis
- ▶ 3. Stakeholder mapping
- ▶ 4. Knowledge investigation
- ▶ 5. Active listening
- ▶ 6. Comparison with stakeholders
- ▶ 7. Creative game definition phase
- ▶ 8. Organization and implementation of the game
- ▶ 9. Monitoring and evaluation

Identification of the area and objectives



As anticipated, the game can be one of the tools in the toolbox available to planners to intervene in a specific context. The use of the game tool must be clearly evaluated based on the needs and context. The preparatory phase for each playmaking activity is therefore to define the area of intervention and at the same time the general and specific objectives to be achieved.

The definition of the intervention area is essential for framing the possible potentially involved population but also for an in-depth definition of the urban and social context in which it will be necessary to operate. Once the area has been defined, it is equally necessary to define the general and specific objectives to be achieved in order to ensure that the use of the game is not an end in itself and at the same time to better target the recipients.

The experimental area chosen for UDINE PLAY AROUND has been Borgo Stazione, an area located between the Railway Station and the City center. This part of the city underwent in those last years a deep transformation, characterized above all by the growth of residents with foreign origins. Because of this process, the neighbor is looking for a new identity that has to cope on one side with the problems of petty crimes (usual in the suburban areas), and on the other with a strong architectural heritage. The project focused on the public areas of this neighbor in order to intervene on their social and relational aspects.

Context analysis



Once the intervention area and objectives have been identified, it is necessary to develop an in-depth analysis phase of the context that provides useful information and indications for the design of the game. In particular, it is useful to start from the demographic data of the identified area to understand the subdivision by age group or other characteristics of the resident population to be integrated with any other information relating to the subjects who frequent the area and therefore have an impact on it.

Demographic data should be integrated with other information of a social, environmental and urban structure to obtain a broad and comprehensive cognitive picture. This information is often already available to local authorities and easily accessible through open data. The “objective” data thus identified must, according to the methodology that was applied in the PLAYFUL PARADIGM project by the Centro Antartide, be integrated and compared with the data on the “perceived” that return a further vision of reality that is essential to have a complete picture of the situation and provide ideas and elements on which to intervene with the game that will be developed. In particular, when it is necessary to design a game that intervenes on public spaces (as happened in Udine), it is necessary to identify first of all those that are already destined for this function but also those that could potentially perform it.

In the context of Borgo Stazione, information was collected relating to the demographic distribution of the population, the composition of the various resident communities but also environmental data such as those relating to the provision of green spaces, social spaces and spaces for leisure and play. rather than albedo but also acoustic mapping and others more related to the architectural and urban structure. Specifically, the framework of the data collected and the method of analysis of the same were inspired by that of the European project CESBA MED which saw the partnership of the Municipality of Udine.



Stakeholder mapping

3



To ensure that the analysis of the context, first of all, but also the design and implementation of playmaking, it is necessary to start and continue for the entire duration of the project an adequate mapping of the stakeholders who can provide indications, information but also support in the management of the necessary activities as well as clearly promoting the involvement of the population and in particular of the recipients of the intervention.

Stakeholders must be identified starting from the indications that can be received from the various municipal sectors to arrive, however, also at the consultation of the subjects who have already operated in that territory, not only with respect to the theme of the game but with a broader view that knows how to intercept the realities more interesting and potentially functional to achieving the objectives set.

In this case, in Udine we started from associations that already operated in the area with coherent objectives, that is, oriented towards social inclusion and the improvement of urban livability. In this first mapping, also due to the particular focus on intergenerationality, the Retired Unions were also included with which the Municipality of Udine and the Centro Antartide had already developed projects in other districts of the city. The other stakeholders were progressively identified through meetings and interviews with key people present in the area who subsequently also contributed to the perception analysis phase and to the promotion of activities.

As previously mentioned, this mapping phase must be initiated and implemented in the initial phase but must continue for the entire duration of the project also in addition to the final application of the game in order to increase the territorial alliances useful for the continuity of the actions.

Knowledge investigation

4



The collection of data on the “perceived” for a comparison with the “objective” data usually takes place in a specific cognitive phase that must be carried out at the start of the activities.

To get to know a place in an exhaustive way, it is necessary to consult those who inhabit this space. The method identified that allowed us to reach a good number of people was that of the questionnaire.

A series of questions focused on different focuses (put the sections of the questionnaire), which could record the perceptual level expressed towards that space / service. The assessment of perception turns out to be a particularly interesting indicator: a cross-section capable of expressing the participant’s impressions and evaluations through a series of responses based on mainly qualitative and not quantitative elements.

The indicators reported in the questionnaire refer to the issues of accessibility, safety, sustainability and services. Specifically, the questionnaires were administered on the street with interviews with passers-by and residents met in the neighborhood involved in the intervention. Other questionnaires were administered to the students of the schools present in the area and their families. The school is in fact a very important reference for the development of these activities. To facilitate participation, the questionnaires were produced in Italian, English, French and Arabic.

Once the data from the questionnaires were processed, a comparative analysis was carried out between the latter and the objective data obtained indirectly from the open data sources available to the Municipality of Udine.

This meant comparing the data relating to perception with the objective indicator, most often referred to quantitative data, to analyze the degree of gap between these two data. The situations detected were of different types: from a clear difference between what was the perceptual and objective data to an alignment between the data.

This analysis is strategic to define which are the areas / focuses on which to focus for the project objectives, and to give indications to administrations and citizens regarding the level of correspondence between perceptual and real data.

Active listening

5



In addition to the fact-finding survey, moments for active listening are usually also organized. To get to know the area covered by the project in an exhaustive manner, neighborhood walks (Jane's walk) have been organized, itineraries defined together with the stakeholders and local actors identified in the previous phases, to explore the project spaces in a participatory and collaborative manner.

Neighborhood walks are a particularly interesting way to apply active listening as they give participants the opportunity to express their thoughts and point of view in a dynamic way while walking together. The walk must be designed with strategic stopping points, in places that can stimulate comparison and discussion. While walking, you enter into a relationship with the participants, the communication register passes from formal to informal, and you are able to stimulate and highlight personal aspects related to the experience and experiences of the participants.

During the walk, you can try to focus attention on the criticalities and potential of a place, a corner of the city, analyzing them together. Each participant can express himself with comments and points of view. Each participant is given a card indicating the itinerary of the walk and the various stopping points / interests.

The material delivered can be enriched with notes, notes, proposed by the participants. In our case, the walks were organized in collaboration with local stakeholders, both in planning the itinerary and in involving the participants. Given the limitations due to the Covid -19 pandemic, the walks have provided for the participation of a limited number of people, with a series of repetitions, to ensure the greatest number of participation.





Comparison with stakeholders

6



All the information that emerged during the active listening phase was reported and became the subject of discussion in various meetings organized with the activated stakeholders. The aim of the comparison was to identify the methods and tools with which to begin to outline the urban game.

The first reflections:

- need for a multidisciplinary and at the same time “local” team to better develop the game modes;
- starting from an experimental action directly on the field to define more comprehensively the objectives of the game and the appropriate methods.

The method of carrying out the experimental action takes as an example from the experiences of tactical urban planning, where the destination / function of a certain place / space in the city is changed to identify new uses and functions. All this on a temporary basis and with the collaboration and participation of the various local actors.

The meetings with local stakeholders made it possible to strengthen the community network between the local actors under construction and planning the experimental action together ensured a good participation and level of collaboration in the operational phase.



Creative game definition phase - related activities

7



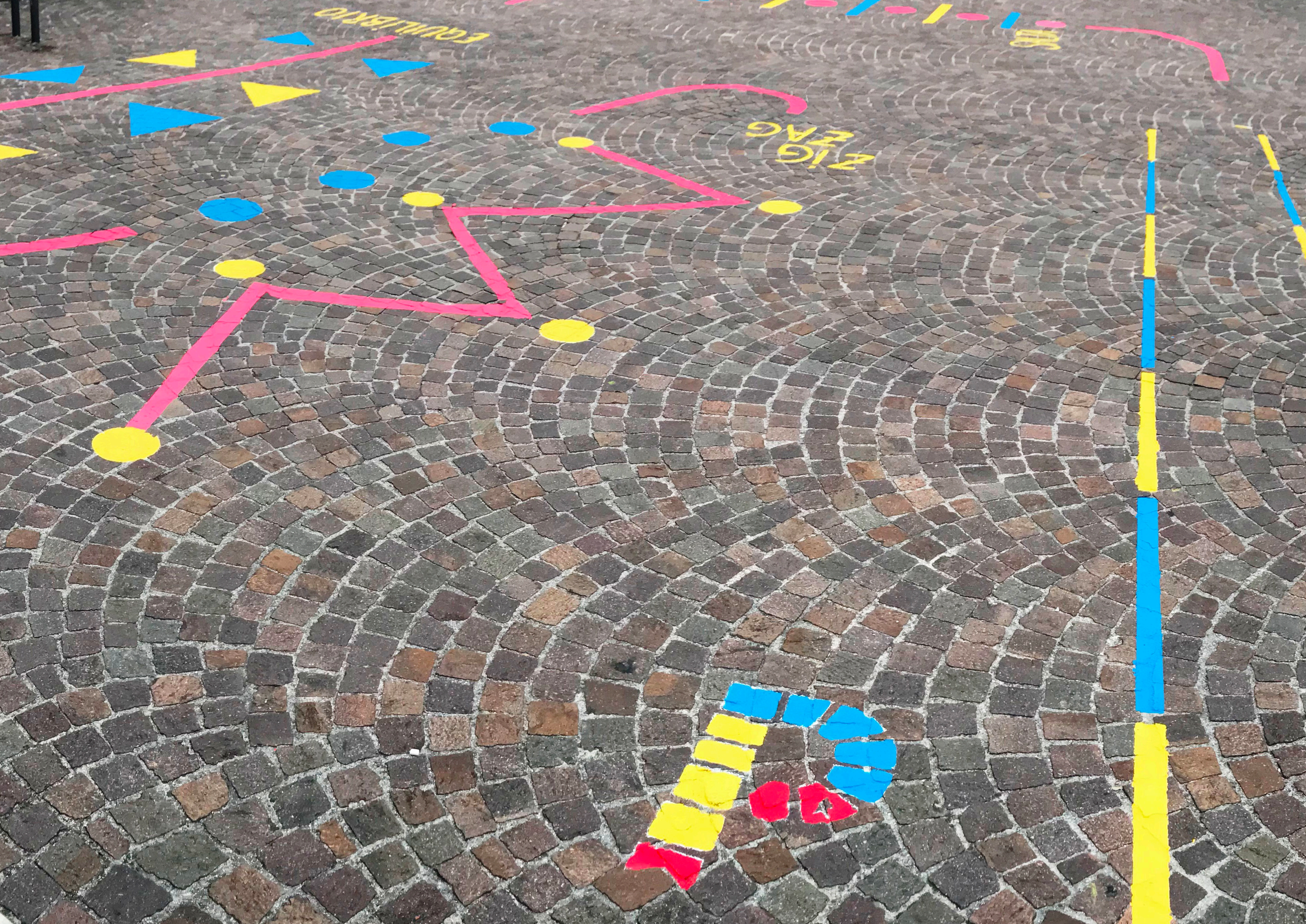
The creative phase of game definition was carried out by a multidisciplinary team made up of experts in placemaking, urban gaming, representatives of cultural and third sector associations active in the area. The presence of different professionals within the development teams has allowed us to have different interpretations of the territory, useful in proposing a game proposal that is as “geo-localized” as possible.

The creative process started with the organization of experimental and temporary actions directly in the project area. Thanks to the network of activated stakeholders, a day dedicated to painting and decorating asphalt was organized with themes related to the world of traditional games in strategic points of the neighborhood. Colored shapes and traditional games to stimulate rest, play and movement for all age groups.

The strategic locations for the realizations were identified following the activities of cognitive investigation, active listening and discussion with stakeholders. Places close to the centrality of the neighborhood such as the Dante Alighieri primary school, the Giovanni Pascoli garden, the “Gabriele Luigi Pecile” kindergarten, and the headquarters of the health company.

The activity involved the creation of four different games designed on the pavement, in relation to the three places identified (insert small map). The games were made in one day, thanks to the collaboration of citizens and inhabitants of the area, contacted through the network developed by the stakeholders (Time for Africa association) with the coordination of the Centro Antartide. The activity made it possible to animate the three strategic places identified, to invite the inhabitants to a new use of public space, and to create new centralities in the neighborhood. The realization and the positive outcome of this experimental action allowed the design team to outline a more defined way to create the game.

Working on the theme of the trace / sign to characterize spaces with a high potential for sociality in the neighborhood, favoring the exploratory and experiential modality as a practice of participation. The game becomes experience and discovery aimed at research and the possibility of expressing one's point of view (trace / sign) in space.



Organization and implementation of the game 8



The limitations caused by the Covid-19 epidemic pushed us to create an urban gaming experience that could be realized on different levels, starting from the digital one.

The need expressed by different fronts to create a game that could also be transformed into an exploratory experience and discovery of the project area led us to develop a series of pedestrian “sound paths” that could act as a guide to exploration.

In this organizational phase of the game, the role of the stakeholders was fundamental: building a good network of collaboration with the players present and active in the area allows the development of a “tailor-made” proposal for the area of interest.





In our case, the operations carried out by the stakeholders were the collection of audio material useful for characterizing the “sound paths” and the involvement of residents in participating in the game.

The audio material was edited by Invasioni Creative who, during their educational workshops, were able to collect testimonies on the perceived, potential and critical issues of the neighborhood from young students of the Ceconi IPSIA of Udine. The audio tracks described specific streets and places in the neighborhood from the point of view of the boys and girls, allowing the audience an immersive experience during the walk.

To reduce the necessary resources, it was decided, to develop the gaming experience, to use existing applications, relying on their resources and characterizing them for the objectives of the project.

In our case, two mobile applications were used:

- “Echoes”, an app that allows you to match audio tracks to specific geo-localized areas. This sort of original and innovative neighborhood guides offer the player the opportunity to see the space from a new and personal point of view;

- “Walla - me”, an app to make explorations more interactive, able to make players create virtual graffiti using augmented reality. Take a photo that frames a strength, a criticality or simply a nice glimpse of the neighborhood to try to suggest new uses, new equipment or evidence to report useful for placemaking processes.

The player transforms into an urban explorer in search of unknown glimpses and places in the neighborhood that he can capture in a photo, propose new uses and new visions of the urban space, all guided by the voice of young inhabitants of the area. To this “digital” dimension of the game is added the presence in strategic places of the neighborhood of information totems, which tell the project, invite passers-by to play, and to interact directly leaving their trace / mark on the totem.

Monitoring and evaluation

9



Monitoring takes on particular importance at the end of the path but must also be implemented throughout the process. It is essential to define a specific set of indicators which, in addition to assessing the level of participation and satisfaction, must be able, in the case of playmaking, to measure the impact with respect to the transformation of the territorial context and the activation of virtuous dynamics.

The evaluation of effectiveness must clearly also concern the management of the process and therefore the ability to collaborate and co-design by the municipal sectors involved and other activated actors. These elements are fundamental for future territorial planning and effective use of the game tool.

As part of the project, the analysis and monitoring carried out made it possible to collect operational indications that led to the identification of urban contexts of public property in disuse and other public spaces in which to activate initiatives and dynamics of inclusion and active participation that would maintain play as a guiding element.

The activities that will be developed are based on the elements of well-being and environmental sustainability and intend to involve the different resident population groups of the neighborhood in a virtuous circuit that also knows how to open up to other realities of the territory with continuity and sustainability over time. The intergenerational approach of the project has however led to a different declination of the tools also with respect to future use.

