

Daring Cities Quarterly Network Journal

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Introduction

Daring Cities is an URBACT Innovation Transfer Network, building on Ravenna's experience of the collaborative urban regeneration of the Darsena area in the EUI Innovation Action project DARE. The network concentrates on co-producing new spaces and services with local initiatives, supported by new narratives about the participating cities' focus areas and evidence-based definitions of quality of life. This Journal, prepared by Lead Expert Levente Polyák, covers the period of December 2025 – February 2026 and introduces the key activities of the Daring Cities network in this period, with a particular focus on the Piraeus Transnational Meeting that structured the consortium's work in this period.

The Mid-Term Survey Process

The first key event of Quarter 6 was the Mid-Term Survey process. On 2 December, an online meeting was organised with Daring Cities partners to explore partners' opinions and collect feedback about the network's proceedings.

10.00-10.10	Introduction: Overview of the Mid-Term Review process
10.10-10.20	Progress on the ITN work: Partner responses and discussion (Q1-2-3-13)
10.20-10.30	Progress with the ULG: Partner responses and discussion (Q4)
10.30-10.50	Understanding and Transferring the IA: Discussion (Q7-8-9-10-11-12-14-15)
10.50-11.00	Methodological Learning: Partner responses and discussion (Q5-6-18-20)
11.00-11.15	Thematic Learning: Partner responses and discussion (Q17-19)
11.15-11.30	Suggestions, support offered and needed: Responses and discussion (Q16)
11.30-11.50	The state of the process – where we stand – Testing Actions and Open Calls
11.50-12.00	Conclusions and next steps

The mid-term reflection of the Daring Cities project captured a critical transition from theoretical learning toward tangible testing actions. Partners have expressed high levels of satisfaction with the network experience so far, generally describing their participation as positive and rewarding. A central highlight for many has been the **direct, personal interactions facilitated through in-person study visits**, which were noted for being particularly fruitful and inspirational for everyone involved. The visit to the lead city of Ravenna was singled out as a vital tool for **motivating local decision-makers** and helping the Lead Partner validate its own innovative journey while clarifying its future goals through the eyes of its peers. Beyond simple networking, the project has provided concrete benefits such as the acquisition of new skills, the establishment of new working processes, and increased **political support for local initiatives**. Partners have also begun a generous process of **sharing local methodologies**, such as Altea's critical walk for citizen

engagement and Olomouc's data analyst activities, which help the entire network improve its own stakeholder mapping and data collection.

The midterm reflection revealed **new synergies** that are shifting the project toward a more integrated approach, such as the exchange between Olomouc and Ravenna on **agglomeration-level planning**. Another significant shared theme that emerged naturally is a **focus on youth and children**, with cities like Altea, Den Helder, Dunaújváros, Kragujevac, Olomouc, and Piraeus all targeting younger residents through tactics like gamification and specialized placemaking for children-friendly cities. Furthermore, there is a strong network-wide interest in **urban diplomacy** to better communicate project value to politicians and ensure results are durable enough to survive political changes. Partners are actively looking for tools like data sheets or short videos from coordinators to secure high-level buy-in while also expressing a specific interest in applying artificial intelligence to urban planning for nature-based solutions and cost-effectiveness calculations. As cities move toward finalising their investment plans, priorities have shifted toward attracting private investment and navigating the complexities of European Union funding.

While the transfer process is characterized by a high level of enthusiasm for peer-to-peer learning, it faces **significant hurdles in practical application**. A major difficulty remains the **scale and complexity of the original innovation action** being transferred from Ravenna, which some partners find hard to adapt to their local urban contexts. Many participants struggled initially to understand the project framework and the specific tasks required, especially regarding the definition of pilot actions. Persistent challenges include constant **time pressure, limited staff capacity** at the local level, and a lack of excitement for online collaboration. Partners have therefore requested more practical guides and tangible samples of Ravenna's implementation steps to bridge the gap between high-level concepts and local reality. Despite these obstacles, **support from the Lead Expert and various local experts** has been essential for helping partners navigate the project framework and adapt innovation to their needs. Project meetings have also served as a tool to engage politicians more deeply, helping initiatives establish deeper roots and move faster than they would have in isolation.

Slower progress in some areas is attributed to technical challenges in finalising pilot actions and ineffective dissemination of results. A primary factor is the ongoing challenge of **short deadlines** compounded by limited local resources and staff time. Coordination feedback indicates that a **top-down management style in some cities** has limited progress by being reluctant to open decision-making power to community groups and citizens. In the specific case of Olomouc, progress was delayed by local political negotiations and structural changes, leading to the realization that initial goals for multiple investment plans were overly optimistic. The **progress of Urbact Local Groups has been uneven** across the partnership, with some groups being strong and active while others require more intensive support to maintain momentum. Partners have identified a **need for tangible, practical tools** to deliver Investment and Continuity Plans, particularly regarding the attraction of

private capital. For cities like Olomouc, traditional questionnaires are insufficient for gathering soft data from large populations at the agglomeration scale, necessitating more quantitative resident engagement tools.

Looking ahead, partners remain cautiously confident about transferring elements of the innovative action into their own local settings. However, the primary risks involve the constant challenge of **time pressure and overly optimistic initial project goals**. Short timescales do not comfortably accommodate the creation of multiple investment plans, especially when combined with financial concerns and a lack of clarity about future funding. To mitigate these risks, a multi-level strategy focused on structural flexibility and strategic communication is recommended by the Lead Partner and Lead Expert. Cities are encouraged to **engage their political leadership**, including mayors and vice-mayors, to secure the long-term future of their projects. **Reprogramming goals** to be more realistic is advised for cities with limited capacity, as seen in Olomouc's decision to focus on one zone and the agglomeration topic rather than three separate plans. The network also intends to **mobilise ad hoc experts** for complex tasks like regional transport and resident engagement to help cities overcome technical gaps.

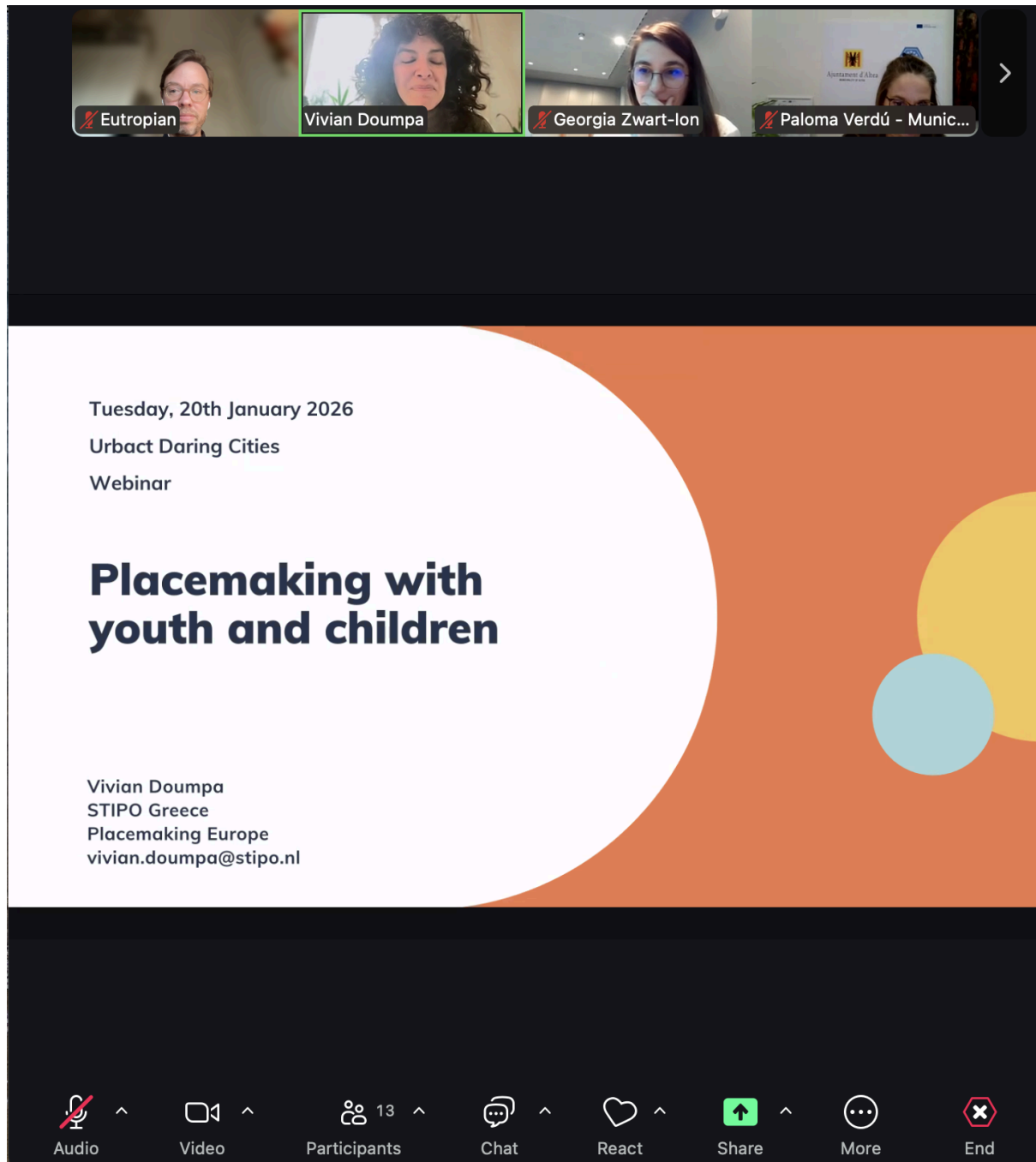
Online Learning Event about Placemaking and Youth

Since the theme of "Placemaking with Children and Youth" emerged as a common focus for several cities in the Daring Cities network, we organised an Online Learning Event with ad-hoc expert Vivian Doumpa on 20 January.

Vivian defined the essence of placemaking through the vital distinction between a physical **"space"** and a meaningful **"place,"** where the latter represents an environment that feels safe, comfortable, and intimate enough for people to be vulnerable. This approach served as a critical reaction to traditional top-down urban planning, which historically created non-human scale environments that failed to meet local community needs. Her framework for creating successful places relies on three core pillars: **hardware** (physical design), **software** (usage and activities), and **orgware** (management and co-creation processes). When specifically targeting children and youth, Vivian argued that the ultimate goal is to move up the **"ladder of participation"** from simply informing citizens toward true empowerment, though she acknowledges that communities often need to be guided through lower levels before they can assume full control.

A central tenet of her strategy is the integration of **short-term tactical actions** within a **long-term strategic vision**. Because younger demographics need to see immediate, tangible results to build trust in the process, **"tactical urbanism"**—such as the use of asphalt art or temporary interventions—allows for testing ideas in the "here and now" before committing to permanent, multi-million-euro investments. This trust acts as a vital bridge between a child's initial design and the eventual physical implementation, fostering

a deep sense of ownership that can even influence parental behavior, such as preventing cars from parking on student-created artwork.



Tuesday, 20th January 2026
Urbact Daring Cities
Webinar

Placemaking with youth and children

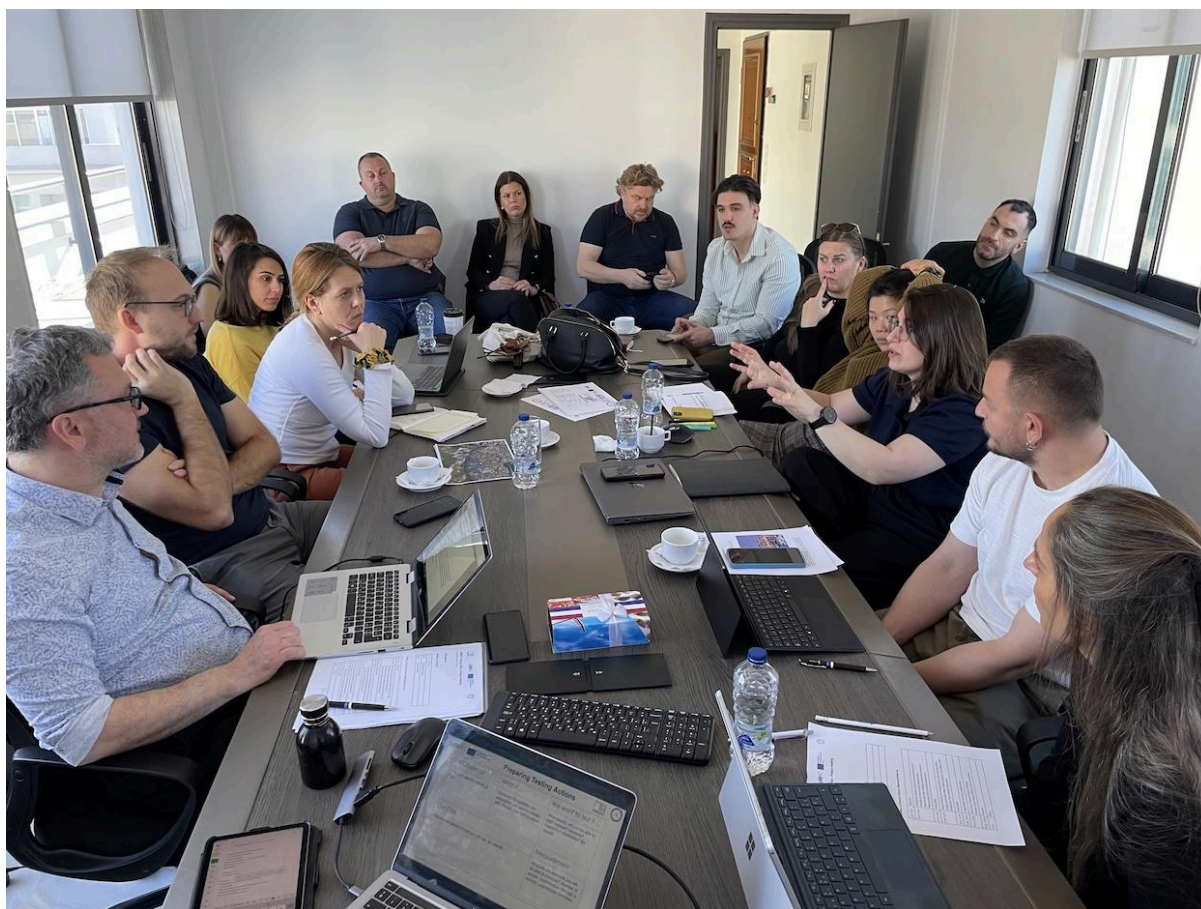
Vivian Doumpa
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Audio Video Participants 13 Chat React Share More End

Vivian's practical experience was highlighted through successful initiatives like the **"Tokyo Project"** in Thessaloniki, which repositioned the public school as a central cell for neighborhood engagement. By opening schoolyards as public spaces and creating collaborative community murals, the project successfully broke down the "invisible walls" between educational institutions and their surrounding neighborhoods. She also emphasized that engagement must be inclusive of all developmental stages, noting that the **"City at Eye Level for Kids"** project developed specific methodologies for children as young as zero to five by working with the combined system of child and parent.

To conclude her approach, Vivian offered several core principles for success: the process should be **child-led**, giving youth the "steering wheel" of decision-making, and intentionally **playful**, prioritizing messy, creative empowerment over aesthetic perfection. Furthermore, the process must be **reciprocal**, meaning it is designed so children can provide information in their own way, often using facilitators like parents or teachers to translate their unique perspectives. Ultimately, she posited that focusing on youth is not merely a box-ticking exercise for participation but a means of achieving **systemic impact** by cultivating the **active citizens** and future voters necessary for a healthy, functioning democracy.

Transnational Meeting in Piraeus



The Piraeus meeting began on 23 February, Monday afternoon with a walk to explore the port and its surroundings in Piraeus. The formal programme officially began on **Tuesday, 24 February**, at the offices of Piraeus+ (Mpoumpoulinas 20), starting with a welcome session and an introductory overview of the current state of the **Daring Cities process**. This opening session focused on the progress of **open calls and testing actions**, while also exploring how to build synergies and ecosystems following those calls. Additionally, participants discussed the significant role of **museums and culture in urban transformation**, based on a Lead Expert and Ad-hoc Expert introduction. The late morning session was dedicated to **tactical urbanism and engaging youth and children**, featuring a presentation by Ad-hoc Expert Vivian Doumpa and involving case case studies and

methodologies such as **Altea's role play**, **Den Helder's walks**, and **Dunaújváros' data collection** initiatives involving younger populations. Following a lunch break, the afternoon shift transitioned into practical field observation through a **critical walk** within the meeting's focus neighbourhood. The visit to the disused train station of Piraeus highlighted the opportunities to create a new museum and adjacent green space in the railway area abandoned for over a decade. This hands-on experience fed directly into a **peer review session** that examines the specific challenges facing **Piraeus**, with a particular thematic focus on **railway stations, culture, and placemaking**.

The second full day of the meeting, **Wednesday, 25 February**, began with a welcome session at the same venue. The morning sessions delved into technical methodologies, specifically the **use of citizen science** presented by Eleni Mougiakou of Common Space and the construction of a **data ecosystem** as demonstrated by the city of **Ravenna**. Following a coffee break, the focus remained on data-driven strategies, including **data analysis** from **Olomouc**, further **data collection with citizens** in **Dunaújváros**, and **digital solutions for participation** from **Ravenna**. After lunch, the group concentrated on the **Final Network Product** conceived as a **storyboard**, which aims to synthesize the network's collective learnings. This block also included a reflection on the final event and a detailed discussion on the relationship between **Testing Actions and the Investment Plan** to ensure long-term sustainability. The meeting wrapped up with a session on **next steps**, including future meetings and upcoming deadlines.

The role of museums in urban transformation

In order to support the host city Piraeus in its work on the Museum of Rebetiko, to be established in a former train station area near the city's harbour, the Lead Expert and Ad-Hoc Expert Vlivian Doumpa prepared presentations about the **potential role of museums in urban regeneration**, by supporting change and telling the story of transformation.

Museums can be far more than static repositories; they serve as critical agents in **local dynamics and urban transformation**. In Budapest, the *Museum of Józsefváros* demonstrates how **crowdsourcing objects and experiences** from citizens creates a narrative told through the people's own lives rather than a top-down established collection. This approach gives **materiality to stories**, turning personal items like furniture, clothing, or flyers into tools for engagement that connect donors directly to the institution's mission. This "coral storytelling" method weaves together the individual voices of neighbors into a choir, ensuring that the history of a neighborhood is built from the bottom up rather than dictated by an authority.

To effectively drive urban regeneration, museums must be viewed through a holistic framework of **Hardware, Software, and Orgware**. Hardware includes the physical building and the open spaces around it, which must be designed to feel socially and physically

integrated rather than functioning as an isolated island. Software involves the programming, activities, and digital dimensions, where the community is treated as an active partner in an **iterative co-creation process** rather than just a passive audience. Orgware focuses on management and finance, exploring radical models like **participatory budgeting** and management structures where the local community actively participates in decision-making and resource management.



The reasoning behind these initiatives often centers on creating **instruments for local democracy** and building identity in new neighborhoods where residents may lack a shared history. In Paris, the *Rosa Lab* uses neighborhood stories and industrial heritage to make visible what has been lost to urban change, while the *Urban Lab in Turin* utilizes data, maps, and public walks to inform thematic exhibitions on city transformation. Furthermore, institutions like the *Vienna Museum* and the *Oliva Artés Museu d'Història de Barcelona* use contemporary perspectives—such as interviews with food delivery workers or exhibitions on housing struggles—to tell a **contemporary story** that resonates with today's inhabitants.

Practical implementation often relies on **triangulation**, a placemaking concept that clusters activities to turn transitional spaces into places of belonging. For example, the New York Public Library at Bryant Park transformed a once-unsafe area by programming diverse activities like open-air libraries and seasonal skate parks, creating a culture of **co-creating programs** sensitive to local needs. However, planners must remain cautious; turning

cultural products into icons can inadvertently contribute to **gentrification**, as seen with Fado in Lisbon, where rising prices eventually pushed out the very contemporary culture being represented.

Ultimately, the community should be recognized as the **expert**, and the museum's influence should radiate throughout the city neighborhoods. This process can begin even before a building is finished, at "day minus," by using **short-term experiments** and programming during renovation to evaluate physical design and ensure long-term sustainability. Whether through schools, biodiversity centers, or cultural heritage sites, these institutions can act as community centers that amplify social and political impact across the broader urban fabric.

Hands-on tools for placemaking

Responding to partners' request for hands-on tools and methods, Ad-hoc Expert Vivian Doumpa prepared a workshop focusing on **various placemaking methods**. Vivian presented a comprehensive, long-term placemaking process that she and her colleagues consolidated to empower communities, specifically focusing on youth and active recreation. She structured this methodology into **four primary phases**: the initial touch or consensus, active engagement, taking action, and the final celebration. Vivian emphasized that practitioners should not approach a community with a "blank page" but should instead provide "appetizers" or initial goals to spark brainstorming.

During the initial phases, she highlighted the **Place Game** as a foundational tool used to evaluate locations based on sociability, activities, comfort, and linkages. To ensure accessibility, the tool was popularized through a simplified questionnaire that empowered participants to rate feelings of safety and access while identifying both short-term and long-term improvements. Another analytical tool she described was the **Time Machine**, which gathered the "story" of a place by mapping its past, present, and future across political, social, built, economic, and reputational categories. In this exercise, participants used green dots to vote on aspects central to their identity and a red thread to connect these points into a collective narrative.

To engage youth communities more effectively, Vivian shared an example of a **Treasure Hunt** used in Thessaloniki, which replaced traditional workshops with a competitive and fun mapping activity. This game allowed youth to identify unsafe areas and wayfinding issues through a gender lens, which later served as a prompt for reflection discussions held over food. She also introduced the **Theater of the Oppressed** as an experiential tool to help groups understand and address systemic issues like gender discrimination and catcalling through performance.

As the process moved toward implementation, the workshop focused on **Testing Actions**, which were described as low-tech, low-budget experiments used to trial ideas before permanent construction. For instance, the team tested a jogging route using only flags and

invited parkour groups to demonstrate how modernist campus architecture could be activated. Vivian stressed the importance of **co-production**, where community members were involved in the actual construction of interventions, such as hand-painting signs, to foster a sense of agency and social impact.



The workshop concluded with a philosophical shift from the clinical term "stakeholder" to a **community-centered approach** rooted in empathy. Vivian used **empathy mapping** and the development of **community personas** to help planners understand what residents thought, felt, and did. This was supplemented by **Community Asset Mapping**, which identified positive local talents and skills to leverage for projects rather than focusing solely on challenges. Finally, she asserted that the **celebration** of these collective efforts was essential for building the trust necessary to convince residents that their ideas could truly transform their reality.

Feedback on the visit to the abandoned Piraeus train station

Following a visit to the site of the future Rebetiko Museum in Piraeus, the peer review highlighted a wealth of opportunities alongside significant structural and urban challenges. The former train station is described as a **hidden universe** situated behind a busy, heavily trafficked road. A major opportunity lies in the site's **rich narrative**, which includes its history as a port and a temporary home for refugees who lived in trains for decades, mirroring the origins of Rebetiko music among street people. Participants suggested using the outdoor space for an **exhibition of large-scale photographs** along the tracks to tell this story, potentially including a specific "hero" or emblem created through an open call for university students.



The physical state of the building presents a primary challenge, as it is currently in **poor condition and requires safety interventions** before it can be fully opened for participatory activities. Furthermore, a large tree endangering the structure needs to be removed, though the sources suggest recycling its wood for community workshops or benches to help locals process the loss. **Noise pollution** from the surrounding area is another obstacle, leading to suggestions for sound barriers or utilising the building's upper floors specifically for **loud rehearsal spaces and recording studios** for young musicians. To enhance accessibility, the review recommended a **new mobility plan** to reduce traffic lanes and create a **cycle path** that connects the site to the wider city.

In terms of programming, the vision is for an **"open house" rather than a traditional museum**, where flexible indoor spaces with removable walls can accommodate youth associations and cultural activities. The outdoor area is envisioned as a **municipal "DIY park"** where barriers between the site and the road are removed, allowing the community to inhabit the space freely with minimal municipal interference. Participants in the recording emphasised that the project should be a **work in progress**, suggesting that activities like pop-up events, workshops, or even music parties could begin before the building is fully restored to build interest and attract investors.

To ensure long-term **sustainability**, Daring Cities network partners proposed creative revenue streams, such as recording traditional music for sale or partnering with nearby cruise ships to offer tourists **discounts and local crafts**. Another suggestion from the sources involved repurposing abandoned train wagons as **attraction restaurants** to draw in visitors. Ultimately, the goal is to foster a **sense of belonging** by involving the community in the construction and gardening phases, ensuring they feel like joint owners of the renovation. By integrating the site's industrial machinery and open spaces, Piraeus can create a **vibrant cultural landmark** that maintains the freedom for the community to appropriate and shape the space as it evolves.

Citizen science for informed urban transformation

Another important focus of the Piraeus meeting was the use of data as a basis for urban transformation. The event hosted an intervention by Eleni Mougiakou of the Athens-based NGO Common Space, specialised in the use of **citizen science for climate adaptation**.

Eleni presented a detailed overview of her team's efforts to address **urban heat islands** through **participatory citizen science**. Her work focuses on the intersection of **local engagement** and **urban planning**, particularly in cities like Athens where temperatures are accelerating beyond model predictions. Common Space operates as an interdisciplinary collective of fifteen engineers and scientists who aim to close the **knowledge gap** in addressing complex urban issues through the **co-production of knowledge**.

One primary example of their work is the **Cultural Hidrant** project, an EUI-funded Innovative Action project that combined **cultural heritage** with **environmental regeneration**. By involving thirteen school communities, Eleni's team treated students, parents, and teachers as **local experts** who hold unique knowledge of their neighbourhoods. This participatory design phase used hundreds of workshops to map heat, vegetation, and functionality in schoolyards, translating "random lines" and citizen comments into **meaningful visualizations** to inform final construction plans. Similarly, the **Fairville** project explored **urban inequalities** and environmental risk in areas like the "backyard of Athens," where data collection on waste and pollution is directly linked to **democracy** and the rights of vulnerable populations.



A part of the presentation focused on a three-year **citizen science campaign** in metropolitan Athens aimed at gathering "**middle data**"—the granular information between satellite imagery and ground surveys that describes how people actually feel in their environment. This research utilised **mini weather stations** mounted on cars, bikes, and municipal vehicles to capture temperature and humidity every few seconds. The campaign involved volunteers covering thousands of kilometres and recording over **368,000 data points**, particularly during extreme heatwaves.

Eleni noted that the project created **instant awareness** for participants, who could observe on their phones how a single tree or a park entry drastically reduced temperatures. The findings challenged conventional data; for instance, **coastal areas** that appear cool on satellite maps were identified as **heat hotspots** at street level due to urban infrastructure trapping heat. Additionally, the study highlighted major health alarms, such as **synthetic grass** in stadiums reaching **65°C**.

The ultimate goal of these efforts was to influence **public policy** through **evidence-based decisions**. The Athens research successfully informed **two specific measures** within the regional plan for climate change adaptation, engaging managing and funding authorities to move beyond "business as usual". Eleni concluded by highlighting the importance of the **Participatory Lab community**, a network of over 1,000 members that fosters the trust and long-term relationships necessary for successful **co-production** in urban transformation.

The use of data in Daring Cities

Another focus of the day was placed on different tools and methods of data collection and interpretation. Related presentations introduced Ravenna's data ecosystem, further **data collection with citizens** in Dunaújváros and Altea as well as **data analysis** from Olomouc. The presentations illustrated a diverse array of methodologies for **collecting and interpreting urban data**, ranging from high-tech sensor networks to creative, qualitative community engagement.

Ravenna developed a complex **data ecosystem** that prioritised education and direct citizen engagement to bridge the gap between technical infrastructure and municipal planning. They implemented a unique air quality project that utilised an **artistic "digital lung"** called pneumOS, which translated outdoor sensor data into human-like breathing patterns to make technical information visceral for the public. The city also installed indoor sensors in social housing to track energy consumption and created a **Quality of Life Dashboard** based on citizen perceptions of safety and sustainability. To manage tourism, they monitored traffic flows from a new cruise terminal using **5G technology** and anonymised mobile phone data, while also utilising municipal sensors to distinguish between vehicle types. Furthermore, they planned a **"freshness map"** project involving volunteers equipped with handheld trackers to identify hot and cool spots in the city center.

Altea focused on bridging the gap between experts and residents through a **"critical walk"** and a creative **role-play game**. Technicians first evaluated eleven points along the local railway "scar," after which secondary school students adopted specific **personas**—such as elderly citizens with reduced mobility or immigrants—to identify daily obstacles. This analog method allowed the youth to provide out-of-the-box solutions that planners eventually transformed into **qualitative data sets** for spatial design. Altea also explored a digital evolution of this role-play integrated with **Google Street View** to allow users to navigate urban nodes through different profiles.

Dunaújváros leveraged high school students as **external data collectors** to map thousands of trees, trash bins, and parking spaces. This effort contributed to a **digital tree repository** that tracked the health and location of specific trees using specialized software. The municipality intended to use this data to address climate change impacts, such as the loss of pine trees. Additionally, the local library supported the project by **scanning historical archives**, including old interviews and biodiversity records, to build a comprehensive historical database of the city's environment.

Olomouc managed data at a large **agglomeration scale**, representing 180 municipalities. They utilised **temporary pressure and visual sensors** to justify infrastructure spending by tracking cyclist and pedestrian intensity. They also mapped **environmental flooding risks** and pickup point locations for delivery boxes to create urbanistic guidelines for future placement. Furthermore, the presentation highlighted the limitations of purely technical

data, citing an **anomaly in mobile operator tracking** that missed thousands of commuters because it failed to account for corporate phone plans.



Digital tools for participation

Responding to partners' request for digital tools for participation, Ravenna presented two primary **digital tools utilized for citizen participation** within the Darsena district's regeneration process. The first tool served as a comprehensive digital space for a participatory journey titled "path toward the tactics," which took place between 2022 and 2023,. This platform functioned as a **collaborative environment** where citizens and stakeholders **uploaded thirty-eight different project proposals**. By making these ideas visible to everyone, the municipality aimed to shift the traditional dynamic where people were often afraid to share concepts for fear they might be stolen. Instead, the platform allowed for public comments, advice, and suggestions, which helped soften these concerns and encouraged a more open dialogue among participants.

These thirty-eight proposals, which included estimated costs and descriptions, were eventually organized into three thematic scenarios: the Green tactic, the Cosmopolitan tactic, and the Laboratory tactic,. The team noted that many projects were versatile enough to fit into multiple categories due to their various social and environmental linkages. After the proposals were showcased and grouped, the project moved into a **voting phase** that lasted approximately ten days in late 2022,. During this brief window, about 800 people cast their votes to choose a winning strategy. The "Green Darsena" tactic ultimately emerged as the winner. One notable outcome of this process was the

regeneration of a bike park, which successfully moved forward through a combination of NextGenerationEU funding and independent community efforts.

The second tool presented was a dedicated **crowdfunding platform** designed to support urban innovators. This initiative went beyond simple fundraising by providing selected projects with a "company path" that included business development and expert support to create effective promotional campaigns. The platform utilized a **rewarding system to incentivize citizen contributions**. Depending on the amount donated, supporters could receive various rewards, ranging from having their names listed on a website to experiencing specific project-related events or having their brand logos permanently exhibited in the renovated spaces. The team highlighted a success story where an association managed to raise nearly 100,000 euros through such efforts to expand a bicycle facility.

Operationally, Ravenna highlighted that these tools were **developed through partnerships with specialized companies** rather than traditional tenders. Because these companies were formal project partners, the municipality could collaborate more deeply on the logic and design of the platforms. While the platforms were not free—requiring fixed annual fees—the team found the synergy between partners to be a significant lesson learned. They also shared a broader "regeneration toolbox" called Renato, which contained various free and paid digital tools for participation. Despite the success of the voting phase, the presenters admitted that generating active discussions and comments on the platform was challenging, as many citizens were already accustomed to using established social media spaces. Nevertheless, they emphasized that the structured methodology of these digital tools provided a replicable and inspiring framework for other municipalities.

Local processes: Planning Testing Actions and Open Calls

Besides the transnational meeting and online events, online exchange with network partners gave an insight into their local processes.

Altea built upon its September "critical walk" by conducting a **role-play gamification** session in secondary schools. This analog card game encouraged students to adopt specific personas, which helped them recognize the urban "scar" created by the train line—a problem many had previously ignored as a routine part of their environment. While planning to transition this game into a digital format, the team also obtained a **technical architectural report** through a separate project to satisfy regional government requirements for the railway's future. Their planned open call remained focused on **technicians and regional stakeholders** to refine these technical solutions.

Den Helder faced institutional challenges due to **management turnover and staffing shortages**, yet the local team continued its work through informal collaboration. They worked with external parties to create a document summarizing youth impressions of the city and moved toward a validated **"knowledge paper"** defining the culture of a

child-friendly neighbourhood. Their planned testing actions involved a **critical walk with children** to identify safe, green routes and appropriate playground locations.

Representatives also monitored the impact of upcoming **local elections**, although they expressed confidence that the established partner coalition would maintain project continuity.

Dunaújváros shifted the focus of its "open call for community ideas" toward **environmental and cultural themes**, moving away from infrastructure-heavy projects. They worked closely with the local **Biodiversity Office** and the **József Attila Library** to structure historical data and produce a video tracing the city's green evolution since its founding. Furthermore, they progressed on a nature trail project featuring **51 sculpture-linked stations** equipped with QR codes and moved forward with a digital tree inventory, though budget constraints necessitated narrowing the initial scope to 2,000 trees.

Kragujevac defined a series of testing actions towards the redevelopment of the former military technical institute: 1) A **digital tour of the Star Limit Museum**, developed with university gaming students, to engage people with industrial heritage. 2) An **art contest** titled "My factory of the future," aimed at elementary and high school students to envision the building's future use, with selected artworks displayed publicly. 3) **Digital Horizons**, a creative presentation of the city's tourist and cultural potential using digital technologies like AR, VR, and mobile applications. 4) An **industrial legacy online campaign**, utilizing a digital platform for industrial heritage. The city's open call was anticipated to target **organizations, associations, or activities wishing to settle in the reconstructed building**.

In **Olomouc**, a questionnaire generated over 50 responses in its first week, focusing on creating **emotion and heat maps** for specific urban zones. The municipality completed a comprehensive first draft of its investment plan, which received positive feedback from political leadership. They planned for smaller public space improvements to be funded through the **participatory budget** and organized spring testing actions, such as exploratory walks with NGOs and school families, to engage the public more deeply in the local railway area.

Piraeus continued to focus on the former railway station located near the port, engaging architects to offer design solutions for the adaptive reuse of the station building and its surroundings. Using the occasion of the Peer Review, network partners suggested a series of **testing actions to explore the affordances of the area** as well as an **open call to engage citizens** and local community groups in shaping the redevelopment of the station and its future programme.

These local efforts were designed to feed into the broader **Daring Cities** network goals, ensuring that participatory methods remained central to their respective urban transformations.