

WORKING TOGETHER IN REGENERATION

Standards of regeneration
culture & information within
the city



WEAVING A COLLABORATIVE CITY



THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

The basic idea behind the culture of regeneration activities is that they must be carried out with the greatest possible involvement of residents and other stakeholders. The city should be open to the voice of residents, because solutions do not come only from the top.

Communication, as well as social and infrastructural projects and undertakings, should be based on the analysis of the existing target groups, because only activities planned in line with conclusions from an earlier conducted research can be truly effective. The aims of communication in the regeneration process are:

- ❖ to communicate about the plans and activities carried out by the city,
- ❖ to obtain from residents information that is useful for carrying out regeneration activities (e.g. what is happening in the area, what are the problems of residents, what are their ideas and expectations),
- ❖ to establish long-term relationships between and among the city and its inhabitants so that both sides get to know each other better,
- ❖ to build public confidence in the regeneration activities carried out by the local authorities, which will result in residents' willingness to participate in them.

Working together in regeneration is possible only if there is a dialogue between the decision-makers and inhabitants. It is crucial to ensure engagement of a full range of stakeholders from a community, including vulnerable populations and marginalized communities. The engagement of different stakeholders will be most beneficial for the city if the following rules are kept:

- ❖ **FLEXIBILITY** - adjusting to the process of involving people as not everything can be foreseen in advance,
- ❖ **HONESTY** - providing truthful information, no matter how complicated the issue is,
- ❖ **HUMILITY** - suspending judgment and assumptions,
- ❖ **OPENNESS** to different people and their ideas regardless of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation or income,
- ❖ **RESPECT** for different people's experience, points of view and needs,
- ❖ **TRANSPARENCY** - providing information to all stakeholders regarding the regeneration plans and discussing about how the decisions will be made,
- ❖ **RELIABILITY** - doing what was promised.

WHAT SHOULD GOOD COMMUNICATION IN THE URBAN REGENERATION PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

- ❖ ACCESSIBLE
- ❖ ATTRACTIVE
- ❖ COMPREHENSIBLE
- ❖ ENGAGING
- ❖ TAILORED TO THE RECIPIENT

COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST

During the 2nd transnational meeting in Zagreb in the “Urban-Regeneration-Mix” network there was a workshop devoted to creating together a list of standards of regeneration culture & information that in our opinion every local authority should keep in mind on each step of urban regeneration. The aim of the workshop was to discuss the role of communication in the regeneration process. During the discussion the following recommendations were developed regarding 3 key elements of communication to be defined:

GROUPS OF INTEREST

- ☑ To start dialogue with a community we should identify local leaders that can help in communication. Leaders can help to find out what residents are interested in.
- ☑ It is important to attract attention and engage as many people as possible by proposing flexible meeting hours and various methods of participation. Yet not everyone will be interested in joining or have the opportunity to participate.
- ☑ Different groups need different channels of communication tailored to them.
- ☑ Age difference enforces other methods of communication. Shared information should depend on the age of recipients and additional content should be prepared, so that each group can understand the message and feel addressed by it.
- ☑ Children's enthusiasm should be used for revitalization activities.

METHODS

- ✓ Informing is the most extensive method of communication, yet it is very important to reach many people and gain their interest (Press, TV, leaflets, posters).
- ✓ Sound records of the regeneration area can be interesting for people with visual impairments.
- ✓ It is important to consider language barriers and differences regarding levels of educational attainment.
- ✓ Some have low media and computer skills, so it is important to combine online and offline communication channels to reach as many people as possible.
- ✓ Teachers can reach a large group of people. When all methods of communication fail, teachers can be invaluable in establishing dialogue with schoolchildren and their families.
- ✓ Teachers are also important intermediaries in connecting communities by starting initiatives at the local schools. They can organise meetings with parents, and carry out voluntary actions in the neighbourhood for all residents.
- ✓ Participatory methods such as workshops or open meetings are easier to reach the closest residents, and not necessarily the majority of people who use the space. Part of public space users do not live in the closest neighbourhood.
- ✓ In case of extensive participatory activities (e.g. posters, leaflets, articles), the quality of feedback may be low. The more participatory and tailored methods to reach a specific group, the more valuable information one can get.
- ✓ Meetings, focus group interviews, workshops or co-designing engage people to act more.
- ✓ In case of focus group interviews, open meetings and workshops, it is key to declare that whatever is developed as a result, the city will accept the residents' requests.
- ✓ People tend to promote only their perspective of a situation, while other voices need to be heard as well. It is important to allow everyone to share their opinions, try to understand them and seek common solutions.
- ✓ Everyone prefers different ways of communication, some of them may be common, but one should not omit any communication channels if we want to reach as many people as possible.
- ✓ One of best communication methods are face to face meetings, because people need to be guided through scattered and complicated information.
- ✓ Take time to explain everything thoroughly. There are no dumb questions.

- ✓ Shops are also an important way of getting information for older people, as they visit them regularly. They are a good place to reach out to seniors.
- ✓ Put up posters in each regeneration area to see if people want to get involved.

MATERIALS

- ✓ Favorite public centres and public spaces are age-dependent, so it is essential to distribute information and materials in places that attract different age groups.
- ✓ Using icons increases readability.
- ✓ Descriptions of graphics for blind and visually impaired people are a must.
- ✓ Leaflets are complementary to dialogue.
- ✓ Posters are good means of communication in housing areas.
- ✓ To be understood well, posters should have big lettering with an image showing the planned transformation of a place and the current state (before/after).
- ✓ Shared information should include: a slogan (short phrase, key words), an image/artwork.

Co-designing is the next step of cooperation, which allows residents to participate in the implementation /design process. They can feel important and needed.

HOW TO DESIGN GOOD COMMUNICATION?

1. Gather data about who are the stakeholders in the regeneration area

It is important to gather information about the socio-economic status of inhabitants, relevant demographic/socio-economic characteristics of the population and basic data about important organisations and enterprises operating in the area.

2. Create „personas“

Personas are fictional characters, which can be created based upon research in order to represent the different residents, public spaces users that can be encountered during urban regeneration activities. It is a good idea do visualise these people by drawing their faces, as it will be easier to relate to their needs.



- ❖ age
- ❖ education
- ❖ employment status / profession
- ❖ personality
- ❖ disabilities and barriers
- ❖ type of entitlement to housing (owner? tenant? living with parents? homeless?)
- ❖ preferred communication channels (newspaper, TV, social media, e-mail etc.)

3. Understand the „personas“

- ❖ What kind of information is important for them?
- ❖ What ways can we use to reach them?

4. Make use of the innovative tools and approaches

- ❖ Color blindness simulator
- ❖ Using simple and free software to create graphics (Canva)
- ❖ Readability calculators - Gunning Fog Index

5. Behavioral science

Explore behavioral sciences in order to understand better why people behave in a certain way and how their behaviour can be influenced. It can be very helpful in getting their engagement in the urban regeneration process.



- ❖ **Other people's behaviours are our guidelines how we should behave.**

When people do something right (i.e. segregate waste) and talk about it publicly, they set an example for other residents.

- ❖ **We are more willing to help people who helped us earlier**

Give something to someone or help someone to achieve the effect of reciprocity.

- ❖ **The order of presenting pieces of information affects how they are seen.**

Put the most important information at the beginning and at the end to encourage people to choose certain options.

3 most important things to remember in communication

- ❖ **Who is your audience?**
- ❖ **What story are you trying to tell?**
- ❖ **Less is more - be brief!**