

Miruna Tîrcă
Andreea Lipan

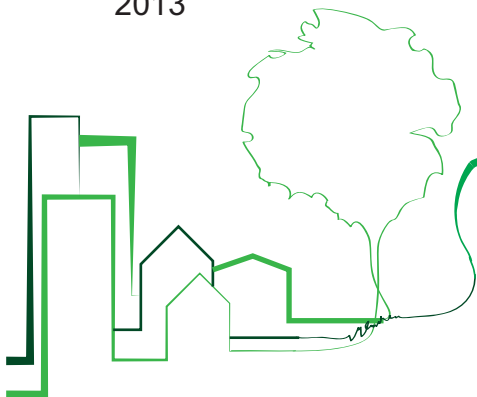
Epp Vahtramäe
Siiri Treufeld

Urban Pedagogy

A TOOLKIT FOR NGOs
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

București
2013

linnalabor





SOMETHING



**HAPPENS AT
MY SCHOOL**

“This project is implemented with the financial support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views of the authors, and the Commission can not be held responsible for the use of the information it contains.”

Urban Pedagogy-

A toolkit for NGOs and young people

Authors:

Miruna Țircă – Komunitas Association

Andreea Lipan – Komunitas Association

Epp Vahtramäe – Linnalabor

Siiri Treufeld – Linnalabor

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Preface

by Epp Vabtramäe, member of Linnalabor, Estonia

Urban Pedagogy booklet is created by Komunitas Association (Romania) and Linnalabor (Estonia) in order to bring more attention to the importance of Urban Education among youngsters, who, by becoming active citizens, will participate in creating the future of our cities.

The booklet was created within „Something cool happens at my school!”, an urban education project developed in Romania by Komunitas Association in partnership with Linnalabor. The project took place between February – July 2013 and was financed by European Commission, through Youth in Action Programme, Action 1.2, Transnational Initiatives.

From this booklet you will find information about several projects and methods that have been developed and used in different projects by these 2 organizations throughout the years. The Urban Education methods descriptions provide all the necessary information so that they can be used by teachers and youth workers in their lessons and workshops. Hopefully, this booklet encourages those who are connected to educating youngsters to use new themes and thus bring up future „specialists in cities and various urban topics. “

Authors:

Miruna Țircă – Komunitas Association
Andreea Lipan – Komunitas Association
Epp Vahtramäe – Linnalabor
Siiri Treufeld – Linnalabor

Co-authors:

Kaur Sarv - Linnalabor
Aili Elts - Linnalabor

Photo credits

Matei Catalina Eugenia
Andreea Lipan
Ioana Rizea
Roxana Popescu
Georgiana Stoia
Miruna Țircă
Epp Vahtramäe
Kaur Sarv
Teele Pehk
Keiti Kljavin
Kadri Klementi

Cover design

Andreea Lipan

Editing and design

Andreea Constantinescu

I. Introductory word: urban education for everybody



Urban education for everybody

By Miruna Țircă, president of Komunitas Association

As a starting point in the history of urban education in Romania, I would choose December 2011, when the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism "Ion Mincu" held an event called "National Conference on Urban Education". The event was organized by the Komunitas Association, with the support of the Association for Urban Transition.

At a first glance, the event can be seen as an ordinary one, in line with many other initiatives that make the city public agenda, unless we take into account that we had to deal with a triple premiere:

- a) It was the first national conference on urban education for children and adolescents ever organized in Romania;
- b) The approximately 200 participants attending the conference had the opportunity to be part of the launch of the Urban Education Guide, the first publication of its kind in Romania;
- c) At the same time, it was the first meeting of a large number of people, informal groups and NGOs with projects or initiatives in the areas of urban activism, participatory planning, urban intervention, urban education, all these people having the opportunity to present their projects, to know each other, interact, exchange information and establish new partnerships.



But the urban education story is even older than 2011. We chose this year because it proved to be significant in the evolution of a new non-formal education method proposed, tested, piloted and structured by the members of Komunitas Association. The Urban education Guide also represented an important step in the long process that the young researchers of the Komunitas Association have started a few years ago: to create, to steer and to propose a new optional subject in the secondary schools in the Romania.

The discipline generically called urban education is based on several interdisciplinary factors specific to different areas: urban anthropology, urban planning, urban activism and public participation. The guide was distributed free of charge to the people attending the conference, and later was uploaded in the virtual space and it can be easily found with a simple google search.

However, let's see what would be the stated purpose of such a discipline. Why we do what we do? First of all, urban education aims to familiarize young people with both basic concepts related to the built environment, planning and urban design, heritage protection, anthropology and urban studies and the issues concerning the use of public space, public art, democratic participation in local urban development, civic activism, involvement and responsibility. In our view, all these exercises could bring youngsters closer to the city where they live and teach them to perceive it in different ways, to become curious about its history and how it has developed, to stimulate the desire to explore urban spaces, to analyze the mechanisms of urban social life and to defend and reclaim the city, when appropriate. Following such an educational process, they would become more aware, more involved, more active and more responsible citizens.

Another essential question that we have repeatedly asked is: Why would such an education be required? Why is it important? In our opinion, the great challenge of urban education could be as follows: that it aims to teach youth to understand the city as a social and cultural reality, to perceive it as a living and vibrant structure, which is in a continuous process of making off. Although these things are perhaps obvious to some of us, people to whom the city is an object of study (anthropologists,

historians, geographers), a work or expression object (architects, urban planners, artists), they are not as intelligible to the great part of citizens, be they children, teenagers or adults. In an attempt to give the message that when dealing with cities the job should be done by specialists, However, the architect Anca Ginavar ironically said at the National Conference on Urban Education that "the city is the speciality of all." In fact, if we think things clearly, the city should be everyone's speciality - but what do we do if we do not have the tools to become, to feel and act as "specialists in cities"?



From such questions and reflections the idea of urban education was born, a useful and necessary tool in the context of contemporary urban issues, which could help people, especially the young, to become "specialists in cities," or at least to develop their curiosity to know and better understand the urban spaces in which they live in and how social relations are structured and act accordingly.

Going back to the story line, here is the history of urban education as we understood it, as anthropologists, in our little organization and the projects we have undertaken so far.

At the beginning there was urban research on the various topics - they were exciting, challenging and especially intense. We did not realise by that time, but the research fostered our perception in real-time, our value system and social views; they

were a way of life, or at least, it proved to be so later on. Personally, I studied the urban culture of Berlin (squats and alternative housing projects), but I also studied urban housing or residents problems of neighborhoods like Ferentari. My colleagues have also conducted interesting researches like the analysis of aggressive behavior in public transportation or the implications of sounds in psychosocial life. Altogether, we began to discover Bucharest with new eyes, to understand the links between social and cultural phenomena, we began to explore the subcultures, neighborhoods and urban areas with interest, even those disused or abandoned (which attracted us the most). So, we became interested in the history of the city and especially to understand why things are as they are today, we learnt directly on field what terms like gentrification, spatial segregation or disadvantaged neighborhood mean. Slowly, we oriented and trained our anthropologist eyes on the urban realities.

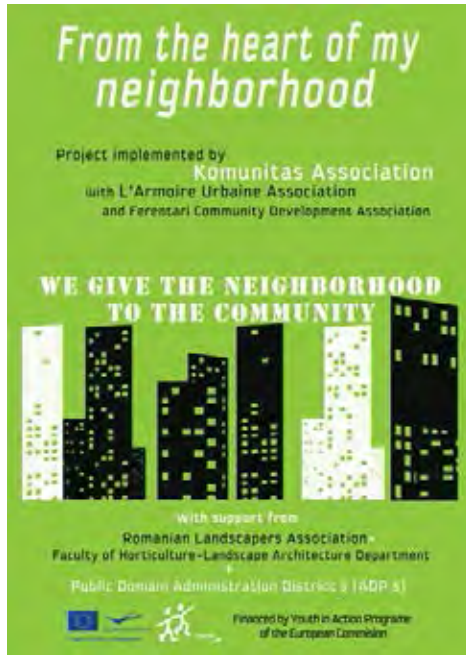
Then, there was a next stage when we stopped reflecting: research is welcome, it's cool to be an anthropologist to look at the world with these eyes, because everything becomes more interesting and you do not get bored. At the same time, we were aware that the role of the social scientist is to produce new ideas to contribute to the formulation of opinions and creation of alternative public discourse - an important role, but twofolded. However, we felt that something was missing, that all our findings and views should be shown in a concrete way by certain practices. Therefore, action was needed and we had to find a way to translate our ideas, observations and analysis into something practical. Thus, gradually, we focused on what we call "applied anthropology". We started a series of activities that were not so much related to the social research itself, but rather to trying to solve some problems we identified. As a consequence, we began to organize cultural events and interventions in public space - all with anthropological interest to see how space is used and to stimulate positive social interaction between people. Subsequently, we focused on education as a way to convey certain principles actively; we thought it was time to transfer the knowledge, social visions and ideas that we gained to a younger generation. We started non-formal education projects in various schools and colleges in Bucharest.

The first urban education project was developed in 2009 and was called "Our city - our decision" and was a participatory planning experiment in which we engaged a group of students from School 136 in Ferentari, Bucharest and a group of second year students from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism "Ion Mincu". This project started with two ideas: one, non-formal education for young people from different social backgrounds can bring them closer to each other, the other, to prepare future actions to improve public space in Ferentari, the neighborhood in which I worked for four years. We held several workshops with school students and architecture students using different working methods: brainstorming, mind maps, stories of the city, urban strolls, photos, drawings, models, design contests, exhibitions, small collective sites and small practical activities of arrangement. They learned about each other, and from each other: the students could see the city, understand, express their wishes about their neighborhood and, finally, take the initiative to improve their living environment; they analyzed a difficult urban context, taking into account the users' opinion of that context, even if they are non-specialists, and designed a project to improve urban context, based on the issues and ideas explored with our experts. Details can be found on the project's blog: www.orasul-nostru.blogspot.com

From this first urban education project other have emerged too. Next in line was the Closer to the future project, conducted in two schools and high schools from Bucharest, for one year (2009-2010), in which we focused primarily on elements of anthropology: small exercises in analyzing urban spaces, urban walks, developing mental maps and essay writing, going on trips to other cities to compare each features of different urban spaces.

In 2011 started From my neighborhood's heart, one of the most publicized Komunitas projects: the youth award was given at the "Public Participation Awards Gala" organized by the Resource Centre for Public Participation and appeared in the exhibition "Urban Activations" in Romania, initiated by the Zeppelin Association at the National Museum of Contemporary Art. Basically, this project took the children's ideas a step further, developed in the initiative of Our city - our decision, and entered a new area for us: community development and working with disadvantaged communities. It was very different from the simple field research or educational workshops that we normally kept. Through this project we intended to set up a public space for residents of Livezilor Avenue, Ferentari, one of the most deprived neighborhoods of Bucharest. The intervention included the rehabilitation of an old football field, general extermination of the area and placing street furniture, all these things being done with the support of the Youth in Action program, of the Public Domain of Administration from the 5th district, in partnership with a French association, L' armoire Urbaine, whose members have been with us since our first urban education projects. It was not easy, but we carried out the initiative, which, against all odds, was long-lasting. In the spring of 2012, when we went there about a year after the intervention, the planning still exists, with minimum degradation. Recently, I learned that the 5th district Municipality began to deal with the administration and maintenance of the park, after years in which it failed to do so on the grounds that "nothing lasts in Ferentari".





The most complex urban education project was the one entitled "Take back your city!", in which we involved a large number of educational institutions: 7 high schools and 8 schools. The main idea that we wanted to convey to the youth can be distinguished even in the title of the project. Overall, the educational process was based on theoretical workshops, which included presentations on various topics (urban art, industrial heritage, history elements of Bucharest, public participation etc.) and applied workshops (model making, making stickers, taking photographs and producing documentaries on urban issues). Students were given camcorders and cameras, learned basics of shooting, framing and photo shooting, after which they began to work with themselves, exploring various topics of urban interest and trying to structure them into coherent visual material. Films made by them can be found here: www.educatieurbana.wordpress.com. The last part of the project included the development of the Urban education guide and organizing the National Conference of urban education.



Basically, all the details mentioned in this introduction make the urban education puzzle as we understand it, as we have conceived and practiced it, new young social scientists and urban planners, members of the Komunitas Association. Although it has been more than 4 years of practicing this way, we confess that we are still at the beginning. In education, especially when new methods are designed and suggested, things can not be achieved overnight. It takes patience, time invested and constant experimentation. In the same way a scientist is studying and researching for years in the laboratory, a person who proposes innovations in the education field must be prepared to work for a long period of time. The process of creating new subjects can take years.

Hopefully, from now on, the method proposed by us will get maximum meaning, exposure and will get a proper release. Like any new thing, done in a pioneering context, the method took several years to polish through experiments and regular practice. The premise from which we start, however, remained the same:

it takes time and specialized people to teach you how to read a city, to really get to know the different urban perspectives, to realize how the city grows along with you, to realize which the problems are and what remedies would be fit or simply to cherish it the same way that you love a book, a video, a photo, a memory or an experience. Citing architect Anca Ginavar again, we can say that, "while the visual arts, literature, theater, music are taught consciously, constructed cultural experience is something that slips through our fingers because it is simply everywhere".



But beyond this cultural approach, we must learn to look critically at all socio-economic processes that shape our cities today, often without the involvement or our desire. Therefore, the type of urban education that we propose has a dimension that goes towards activism, public participation, a participatory or at least flexible urban planning. We believe that such educational approaches are highly needed in contemporary society, especially in the context where public spaces are privatized at a fast pace and decisions are made behind closed doors and in parallel with the citizens and their needs. The most excluded from the decision-making areas are young persons (especially children) - which is somewhat paradoxical, because they are the

"heirs" of the cities of tomorrow. What can we, the adults, do is to give them the chance of an urban education to help them focus on living better in this huge complex that is formed by a city, to understand how the individual life is bound to the collective one or how a planning decision affects them directly.

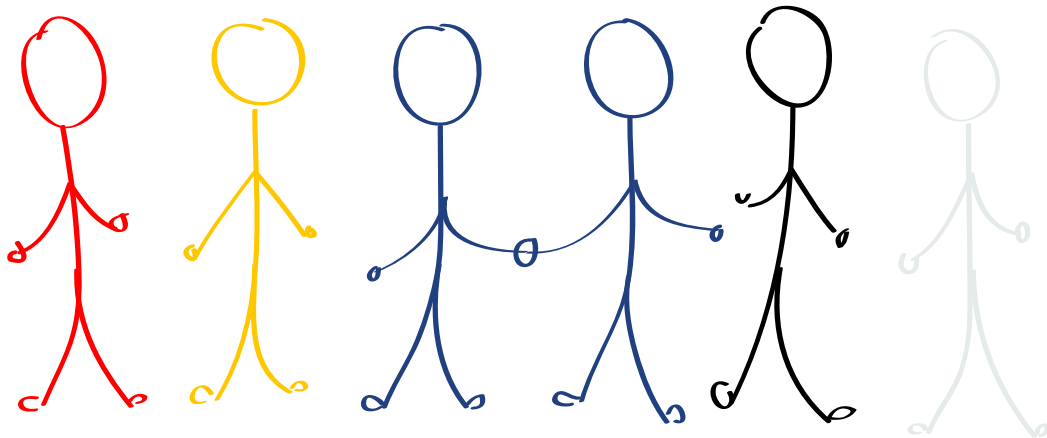
Finally, education is needed to teach young people to know their rights as urban residents and become able to claim their cities. The faster the urban education process starts, the more younger generations will be able to change in a positive way the contemporary city. So, all we have left to do is to go further ahead with the urban education, constantly improving the method, expanding the number of schools in which we work and team work. Anyone wishing to join or contribute with any advice is welcome to contact us.



II. Descriptions of the associations

II.A. Komunitas Association (Romania) - mission and objectives

II.B. Linnalabor (Estonia) - mission and objectives



Komunitas Association is a non-governmental organization established in 2006 by a group of young social researchers, specialized in urban studies and urban anthropology. It is based on the concept of **applied social sciences**. All our projects have the same objective: to step out of the narrow frame in which social sciences usually manifest themselves, focusing on their applicability, while also easing the understanding of some notions and mechanisms among youth and the general public. In other words, we intend to use scientific social knowledge in order to improve the quality of life for individuals and communities.

Komunitas is a **social laboratory, a space of constant experiments**, in which we lay the foundation of new non-formal education methods or social intervention strategies. Every project that we have realized over time completed the one before, and we have tried to not repeat ourselves, but to act as if we were carefully gathering pieces of a huge puzzle. The name of this complicated puzzle is “social transformation”, an essential objective towards all our actions, projects and interventions are targeted at.

Over the years, we have acted in different groups and under various strategies. Sometimes we didn't have any particular strategy, going with the flow and letting ourselves get carried with enthusiasm and curiosity. Over time, we have grown as a non-governmental organization, starting to act more organized and more structured.

The purpose of the association is to contribute to the **development of social solidarity** between people with different socio-cultural backgrounds. Komunitas aims at participating in this complex process by adopting and promoting ways of action such as:

1. Implementing alternative projects addressed to youngsters, based on conceiving new and innovative educational methods, adapted to the contemporary realities and problems;
2. Developing innovative methods of social interventions, urban interventions and community development;
3. Promoting a participative attitude among youth to the lives of communities in which they live in;

4. Promoting multi-cultural communication through creating contexts of social interaction between various social and cultural groups;

5. Promoting an active attitude against the discrimination of poor people or groups facing situations of social exclusion, through social interventions and solidarity actions;

6. Promoting socio-cultural diversity as a major resource against negative social stereotypes;

At present time, we are focusing our efforts in 3 main directions:

- I. Creating and implementing alternative education methods and manuals in Romanian schools and high-schools;

- II. Activating public spaces through various urban or socio-cultural interventions;

- III. Implementing community development strategies in various neighborhoods from Bucharest (Tei)

The methods used by our association were created, piloted, improved and synthesized within 2 main laboratories that we initiated: **Video-Photo Lab** and **Urban Lab**.



Over the past years we have worked especially in schools and high-schools from Bucharest, but also in disadvantaged communities from the city, using different non-formal education methods and creating occasions for different youth groups to interact and to discover their role in the city together. Since 2006, we had around 15 long-term non-formal education projects, based on various innovative methods, such as:

- **Urban education** that militates for a better understanding of urban spaces and social relations in urban environments, for civic engagement, for everyone's right to the city, for participative planning, for inclusive and equal urban politics, based on people's needs, for maintaining of public spaces and prevention of urban abuses;
- **Multimedia education (through film, photography and sound)** with the aim of stimulating critical thinking and "do-it-yourself attitude" among youth, thorough organizing film screenings in schools, high-schools and various public spaces or developing projects in which the students learn how to make photo-video materials on different social topics themselves;
- **Education through arts** (theatre, dance, drawing);

In the same time with non-formal education projects, we have developed a series of **community development initiatives**. For about 4 years, we have worked in one of the most disadvantaged Bucharest's neighborhood: Ferentari, inhabited mainly by Roma

population; we have worked in partnership with the French association L'armoire urbaine, implementing a common initiative named Ferentari Act. At present time, we are operating a community development strategy in Bucharest's Tei neighborhood, part of a general initiative called **Action Tei**.

Other methods that we use in our work and other interests are:

- Organizing **urban interventions** and **free socio-cultural events** in public spaces;
- Performing engaged social and urban research, in order to identify problems and resources of the city, but also to communicate this information to the public, using an accessible language instead of an academic one;
- Realizing media products, based on expression means such as: **visual anthropology, documentary films, video activism and VJ-ing**;
- Encouraging the use of alternative transportation means;
- Supporting **local networks of urban activism**;
- Establishing **international cooperation** and partnerships with associations and informal groups, having interests in the following areas: urban anthropology, participative planning, urban activism, urban art, urban exploration, urban geography.



Linnalabor (Estonian Urban Lab) is a testing ground for urban innovations. We work on new solutions to improve and diversify the urban life. As the name tells, the Lab is all about experimenting. Our projects involve scientific, social and artistic methods. Linnalabor is the focal point for studying cities, urban issues and phenomena.

Linnalabor was created in 2006 under the name of Urban Positive. During these years, we have worked on many different projects and so we have experiences in urban planning, promoting citizen initiatives and popularizing urban studies. Thus, Linnalabor gathers practitioners, activists and researchers interested in urban issues and in improving the urban life. For different projects, we involve our partners from local universities, professional associations, NGO-s and insitutions. We also have several partners from other countries (Finland, Latvia, Romania).

As a proactive civic organization, Linnalabor sees the active participation of citizens as a vital precondition for sustainable development of the (urban) society. Therefore our aim is to raise urban dwellers' and district communities' awareness of their rights; of how to better articulate their needs and thus participate in shaping their living environment. On the other hand our aim is to ensure that different stakeholders and sectors would be equally represented in the planning process.

We believe that being an active citizen should start from a young age already. Thus, Linnalabor has organized several courses and activities for youngsters. In 2008 and 2009, we were giving a lecture on urban geography in Student Academy. In 2008, we delivered a course in urbanism in a public school in Pärnu.

Other projects involve study of identity and living space in Kuressaare, experiments with urban gardening and issuing a book called "Edible city", Creative economy study in Tallinn. We are currently helping one small town (Saue) to set their views on creating a new city center. We also have experience in organizing international workshops and conferences. Besides, Linnalabor issues an Estonians Urbanists' Review giving an overview of the most actual topics. The newsletter is also available in English at www.urban.ee.

At Linnalabor we analyse what the city wants to tell us and what we want to respond to the city. We see the city as an endless tailor work which through its seams and stitches tries to compile a bigger entity. From time to time something has to be cut out or something has to be added...



linnalabor

III. SOMETHING COOL HAPPENS AT **MY SCHOOL** -
an urban education project implemented in Bucharest,
Romania

Something cool happens at my school! was an urban education project that took place from February to July 2013, in Bucharest, Romania. The project was developed by Komunitas Association in partnership with the Technical College "Traian", Linnalabor organization in Estonia and University of Architecture and Urbanism "Ion Mincu". The project was funded by the National Agency for Community Programs in Education and Training, through Youth in Action program, Action 1.2, Transnational Initiatives.

This project was part of the community development strategy that the Komunitas Association has been implementing since 2012 in Bucharest Tei district, the neighborhood in which this high school is located.

25 students from the Technical College "Traian" actively participated for several months in the project *Something cool happens in my school!*, which combined various practical activities of non-formal and urban education, in the form of weekly-workshops. The project had two components, specialized for different age groups. Middle school students participated in environmental and urban ecology education workshops, and those from high school in urban education workshops. The work involved education and urban ecology exercises based on methods, developed and piloted by Komunitas Association in the last 4 years.



II. Activities for high school students

The activities for high school students were structured in three main steps:

A. Introduction to urban education and socio-educational animation

This module had an introductory role, presenting the project-concepts and establishing a relationship with the beneficiaries, based on socio-educational animation techniques. Also, in this stage, we set up and planned some of the interventions that took place in the school yard during the project. The module included the following workshops:

- **Workshop no. 1: Nice to meet you!**

Purpose: socializing and introducing the project theme

Workshop description: the workshop began with a presentation of the team and volunteers of the project *Something cool happens in my school!*, in order for the pupils to have an overview of the general project structure. Then, everyone had the opportunity to present themselves through little games of knowledge. This first workshop was very dynamic, based on direct interaction. At first, the degree of novelty has translated into a passive involvement, which gradually turned into an active one, each student managing to complete the tasks. By the end of the workshop, we were able to know everyone's names and some information about each other's personality.



- **Workshop no. 2: Daily life of students from Traian– part one**

Purpose: Reflecting on specific items related to the school environment, the creation of incentives to improve their vision- and discussion of intervention.

Workshop description: The workshop started with some energy games to unwind and make the transition from formal education (the workshop being conducted after students have completed classes) and entered a non-formal atmosphere. Students were asked to reflect on the life of high school students from Technical College "Traian" and write individually on post-it things "that they like, they do not like and things they would change." The written things were organized on a flipchart and read by the trainer. They were subsequently discussed and detailed by students and reorganized by „the physical /social environment" criteria, because our project had a strong practical component and wanted to direct participants to what could be achieved by the end of this project. Then followed detailed proposal teams, with discussions focused on the structure "the tree of the problem /solutions". We have identified various problems related to the daily school environment, their causes and we have discussed creative solutions.



- **Workshop no. 3: Daily life of students from Traian – part two**

Purpose: Reflections of the teenagers on how they are perceived by different groups of participants, with whom they interact daily, creating a motivation and vision for action, clogging of action teams.

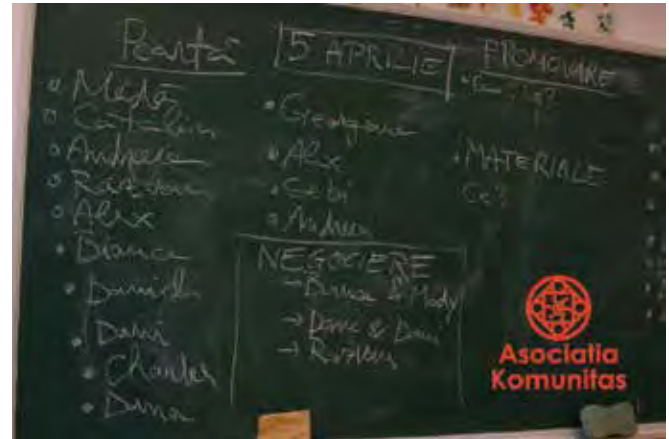
Workshop description: Within the workshop was organized a brainstorming session where they discussed ideas for practical activities which would be held thenext week and which would contribute to the improvement of the school environment. Students have developed a design for "The gate" project, through which was meant transforming the entrance gate of the high school in something to wear their mark and which is visually attractive.



- **Workshop no. 4: We are planning, we are not wasting time!**

Purpose: Planning practical activities for the next week

Workshop description: This workshop was a little shorter and was actually a continuation of the previous one. Under this workshop we revised the ideas generated from the previous brainstorming session, we came up with the design of the school gate and have outlined the rationale for this project in order for the project to obtain approval from the school's leadership. The workshop ended in the Principal's office, where the "negotiating team" made up of students who have taken this responsibility, exposed and explained design arguments. The meeting was successful and consent has been obtained for the project, with a few design changes. Negotiation aimed at involving students in relation to the management of the institution, to be able to "empower" them for future personal pursuits.



B. Urban exploring

This module was designed in order to move some of the activities which took place in the high school classroom, in other urban areas. Thus, we used the city of Bucharest as a new classroom in which high school students were exposed to unique experiences in order to get them to interact in a constructive way with the urban environment. The module included the following workshops:

- **Workshop no. 6: Incursion into the academic environment**

Purpose: Exposing pupils to various and less-known urban environments from Bucharest

Workshop description: Following comments from the workshops, it was found that students are not satisfied with the school environment in which they work every day; this incursion into the academic environment was introduced to have a term of comparison. It was found that many students expect that they will not promote the final high school exams and this idea is considered normal! The purpose of this visit in the academic environment was to experience the 'student life' for a day and develop a personal impression on the work of higher education, to develop insights in this regard. Being an 'Open Day', the visit was conducted in cooperation with our partners from the Department of Urban Planning, from the University of

Architecture and Urbanism "Ion Mincu". At 10 o'clock on the chosen day, we went to the university with a group of 11 high school students from the Technical College 'Traian'. For 2 hours, they visited various classrooms and interacted with members of the university staff. The visit continued with a spontaneous urban walk, made at the initiative of the young participants. On this occasion, they noticed and talked about various types of urban spaces and they had the opportunity to work in teams and to express collective and individual viewpoints.



- **Workshops no. 7-8: Treasure Hunt**

Purpose: Rediscovering the Tei district from Bucharest, where the high school is situated, and observing urban space from a different perspective.

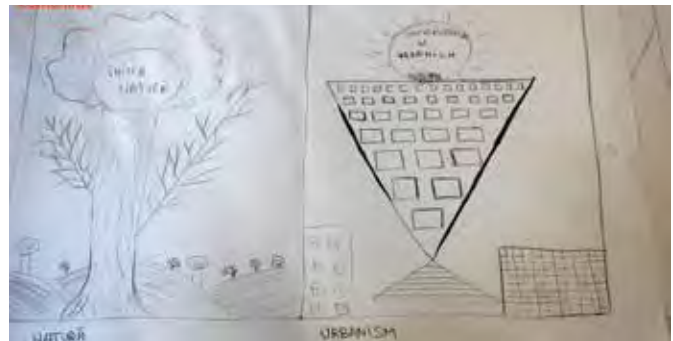
Workshop description: The young people were divided into teams of urban explorers, each with one volunteer leader. The urban exploration was conducted in a "Treasure Hunt", with clues distributed on a predetermined route. The four teams have started on two different routes predetermined by the project team in the preparation of the workshop. Besides solving clues, young people were asked to take photos illustrating urban reality perceived from the perspective of a student, who learns and in some cases lives in the Tei district. The photos were afterwards voted and awarded.

This complex workshop was divided in two meetings for two main reasons:

a. At the planning visit we discovered many particularities of the area, so we designed two different routes, concentrated in two distinct areas of the neighbourhood

b. We didn't want to rush the students into solving all the clues in a limited amount of time of only one workshop, and let the discovery become a natural process, guided by the clues and not imposed.

At the end of the second meeting all the participants were asked to draw a mental map, to illustrate freely what they saw in these two days. The mental maps resulted were extremely different and reflected many specific aspects, proving our theory that an accurate analysis and interpretation of urban space can be made independent of the education level if the right methods are used.



C. Intervention phase in the school yard and enhancing the school environment

This module was designed in order to empower the pupils to take action and improve their own school environment, described by most of them as dull and boring. Thus, we tried to determine them to take action and try to change something.

Workshop no. 9: Spray painting workshop

Purpose: Developing students' practical skills and creativity, increasing self-confidence.

Workshop description: The workshop started with a discussion about the role and meaning of Street Art in a city. Previous to this, we used our FB page to show relevant pictures and short movies that would get the exchange of opinions started. We preferred to use also the social media channel for communication to have a constant flow of information delivered to the students, so they would have the time to analyse and interpret this information by the time of the workshop on this topic would happen. This moved the conversation to another level, using the two hours more efficiently for expressing ourselves and debriefing.

The practical part of the workshop was held by a local artist and consisted in presenting the technique needed in order to achieve paintings with graffiti sprays. Once the students have understood the steps, they each painted at least one picture. Exhibits results were very successful, though at first the technique seemed complicated. Following these results, an idea emerged to organize an exhibition in the school, and of course, the students asked again for the school's management agreement.



• Workshops no. 10-11: Interventions in the school yard (part 1)

Purpose: Practical implementation of the students' ideas, developing teamwork skills and individual skills.

Workshop description: the workshop lasted for 8 hours, within the week of non-formal education 'To know more, to be better!', for extracurricular activities. Young people have put into practice mini-interventions designed by them as key elements that will contribute to a 'more inviting and attractive' space in the school yard.

Students have developed a concept and divided into teams: Team 1 conducted a collective graffiti on the school gate with a design inspired by the spray painting workshop and Team 2 created a social space from recycled tires. All the semi-interventions are now some colour accents and contributed to creating a friendly school environment. In the second workshop, the students were divided again into two work teams, the first making the panels and arranging the exhibition created within the spray painting workshop, and the second one creating the 'social pane'. Basically, the rest of the ideas were implemented in workshops occurring spontaneously.

Our goal was to help young people to understand that the urban space and especially the school belongs to the mas much a sit belongs to adults, and that they can use it as they wish, in order to meet their own needs, as long as they respect others as well.





• **Workshops 12-14: Interventions in the school yard (part 2)**

Purpose: Practical implementation of students' ideas, developing team work skills, directing young people towards an active implication attitude.

Workshop description: The first workshop consisted in planning the intervention, by a 'round table' type of discussion, where everyone was encouraged to express their ideas. The necessary materials have been established and a draft of the intervention was sketched. In the next workshop the projects were discussed again on factual information, this time taking into

account the already purchased materials (the dimensioned wood). Following these discussions we have outlined three projects:

- THE SOCIALIZING SPACE OF RECYCLED TIRES
- SOCIALIZING SPACE OF WOOD
- GRAFFITI ON THE HIGH SCHOOL WALLS

The students spitted up into 3 teams, according to practical skills and project attractiveness, but only after the first project was finished, they regrouped and gave a helping hand to others.





- **The workshop 'How can we be more beautiful? / Alternative natural cosmetic products**

Purpose: This workshop aimed at raising awareness of personal hygiene and natural alternatives to corporal care products.

Workshop description: Each student has created his own beauty mask from natural ingredients which have been prepared by the project team. This activity aroused curiosity, amusement and students' interest. The workshop continued with watching a short educational film in which an athlete gives practical advice about healthy lifestyles. The screening was followed by a discussion on the information submitted, and personal habits. The workshop ended with a lively presentation of cosmetics, their importance and how they are used, different types of substances in their composition and natural alternatives that can be replaced with.



- **'Eco-graffiti' workshop**

Purpose: This experimental workshop aimed to create an eco-graffiti from forest moss on one of the school yard's walls.

Workshop description: The moss was collected by the Komunitas Association volunteers, from locations around Bucharest. According to the techniques found on the internet, the moss was cut by the children and volunteers, cleaned of soil and mixed well with yogurt. With the paste resulted we made an eco-graffiti. We traced in chalk various forms and with the help of thick brushes we filled the shapes with the paste created. Subsequently, the children were given the task of taking care of the eco-graffiti, watering it regularly for it to come alive. This really happened!



- **Schoolyard intervention workshop**

Purpose: Making environmental - friendly interventions in the school yard, practical implementation of children's ideas, developing building skills, creativity and the ability to work in a team

Workshop description: Like their older colleagues, students in secondary school wanted to help beautifying the school yard, with small arrangements. They painted in vivid colours a number of old tires that the project team has procured and brought them in the school yard. Subsequently, the tires were filled with earth, and children, under the guidance of volunteers, planted flowers in them. Thereby, a new lively corner in the school yard was created, and each child received the task of taking care and permanently maintaining a rubber pot.



Final thoughts

We are glad that through this project we managed to encourage students to contribute directly to personalize the space in the school yard, this bringing long-term benefits for raising attractiveness to the school environment. Students with whom we worked for a few months became more involved and aware of issues regarding the environment and integrated urban development and at the same time, more active in school life and in the community to which they belong.



*"Something cool happens at my school!"-
sharing personal experience*

"I chose to be part of Komunitas because they seek long term solutions. Their plan is not to make one big event a year and by that to consider they attained their purpose. Moreover, I like the fact that they work with children not only because of their social difficulties or because they are part of a risk group, but also because they wanted. The youngsters involved in "Something cool happens at my school!" wrote an application at the beginning of the project, in order to participate .

The methods used by Komunitas aim to unite the youngsters. All the participants worked to build something together: a playground in the school's yard, creating recycled wallets, planting flowers in used tires etc. They were engaged in this process forgetting their social background, their intellectual skills and achievements. More than developing a civic awareness, I believe this project wants to bring children together for them to understand that everybody can be friends with someone, or at least try.

The people involved with Komunitas are honest and they are an example for the fact that if you are honest and try your best, people will acknowledge you."

(Alexandra Raducu- volunteer)

"The project "Something cool happens at my school!" was a wonderful experience, from which I had a lot to learn on many plans: starting with my career, architecture and urban planning and then continuing with working in a team and with the desire to teach children how to look on the environment, how to beautify urban areas, each contributing with ideas, a willingness to change together the environment in which we are living. The project was even more interesting because of the large difference in age between the two groups of students from College "Traian", fifth grade and tenth grade respectively. Although the workshops were different, the fact that we needed to communi-

cate in an appropriate way with each group was a challenge. In conclusion, I feel that this experience contributes to my training in the professional and personal way because I met beautiful people who were eager to learn new things."

(Roxana Maria Popescu- volunteer)

„"Something cool happens at my school!" was something new for me. I have seen a lot of involvement from high school students and I can honestly say that this thing left me a very nice impression. I did not expect that some students are at the age where they start to grow up to be so eager to get involved in extracurricular activities. They are students with imagination and if they continue to develop and they will have a greater chance of success in life."

(Andreea Constantinescu- intern)

"My participation in this project as an intern was an opportunity because I had the chance to assimilate, together with the children, new things, to learn how to communicate better with each other and share knowledge and experience. Besides regular workshops, an important role to this project had the outdoor interventions in the school yard, during which we have tested our skills for painting, gardening and even carpentry."

(Magda Vladimirescu - intern)

"From the first day when we started the workshops I believe I was more excited than the students we were supposed to work with. It was my first project with the other volunteers from Komunitas. Everything worked perfectly because the other volunteers were very open minded and welcoming. The students were a pleasant surprize to me because I thought they will be afraid or just shy but they were a wave of positive energy. In particular the 5th graders who behaved like we knew each other for a life time. With the 10th graders things were a bit slower but from the second workshop they also started trusting us more and so to be more opened and courageous.

The experience I shared with the students from the ‘Traian’ College was very important to me because I supposed that there will be a dialog and an exchange of ideas between them and us but I believe that there was a dialog also between them and i would go even further and say that they started to have a dialog with the professors also.

The energy at the workshops was brilliant and I was glad to hear them say how much they enjoy them even if they had all their classes before the workshops. Their joy of spending time with us was obvious and I was happy to be a part of the project ‘Something cool happens at my school’. The involvement of the students in the interventions we did in the school yard and in the spray-painting workshop is a good example to show the creative and leadership power that the students have. “

(Cătălina Eugenia Matei)

“The project "Something cool happens at my school!" was for me a new opportunity to discover that high school students are very excited to experience new learning methods, that do not involve homework or memorizing information, but methods that help them think and develop initiatives. I also discovered that the practical activities of this project, besides the fact that they were educational, were very fun, even if some of them were difficult. Each participant contributed as much as he could, giving it's best to the rest of the team for the proposed activities: spray-painting, making a city model of recyclable materials or building a small structure in the schoolyard, etc.

For me as a volunteer the last activity I mentioned was for me the biggest challenge; to mount a wooden bench requires effort and patience. But with enthusiastic pupils and with the help of the other volunteers, we worked as a team and we managed to make a nice structure. Some students have taken the responsibility for leading the activities that involve risk (cutting wood with a saw or drill work) because they already had these skills. After all that hard work, the created structures were put into place, the

students sat down to have a word, proving that the result was efficient and comfortable.

All activities had their charm, but if I were to choose one of them, building was the most attractive for me.”

(Stefan Opreanu- volunteer)

“When I was asked by Komunitas Association to hold a workshop space painting in “Traian”, technical College, I did not hesitate! The technique of painting space allows everyone to create beautiful pictures without the need for much drawing skills. You just have to know the technique.

I had much desire to work with high school kids, and so far I have not had the chance to have a dedicated workshop in a school environment. I expected to find misbehaving youth, but luckily we've worked super well together. After the workshop, pleased with the results, they suggested to do an exhibition with the works. The exhibition lasted a month, was installed in the halls of high school. The greatest satisfaction to me was when students had their next workshop, where they painted the schools entrance gate, and much of the design was inspired from the space painting workshop.”

(Bădiță Florin - volunteer)

When I first went and met my fellows from Komunitas and really interacted with them, something has changed. In a good way. And I'm writing about this right now because I have been loving the people I met there. I loved their smiles, their unconditional friendship and finally, but not least, their professionalism. Though, I'd known those things before, they had gain a different bond, especially when I saw them working.

The way of approaching children, both those from elementary school and high school, the “transformation” of my colleagues and their passion in everything they were doing, it was jaw-dropping. If up till then, my enthusiasm was more like extrinsic, in the presence of my peers, I was embarrassed of myself that I haven't

managed to find the means to automotive like they did. From our childish games or our spray paintings studio or graffiti to neighbourhood exploration with masterfully determined routes by my colleague, Andreea and the beautiful moments experienced with 10th grade and 11th grade students when we found our neighbourhood interest points.

Moreover, I loved the fact that my friends naturally managed to make the students feel so safe, relaxed and self-confident every time there was a team activity.

A good example in this case was the flash-mob, especially when all of us from association together with youngsters mobilized and apart from work, we had so much fun at Parcul Circului. The professionalism I was talking before, it also reflected upon organizing skills of all of those from Komunitas. All those were presented to others as part of the sharing experience process in Parcul Tinerețului, at ONG Fest.

In one of my last workshops I've participated, I have made a mental map of our last route, driven together with students from 10th grade. Looking back, I think I should have added something towards last house discovered: a box. A box with a ventricle within which gets stronger as the mental map is continuously filled up with more hands and more hearts.

(Adina Cîndea- volunteer)

"This project was a new beginning for me and an opportunity to push my limits and face my fears. I knew from the beginning that for a 6 months project the team is crucial, especially when it is based on voluntary work. My role as coach focused on maintaining a high level of motivation, but also on providing support and guidance during the "ups and downs" that would inevitably occur, especially since the project team is "young" and didn't work together on a long period.

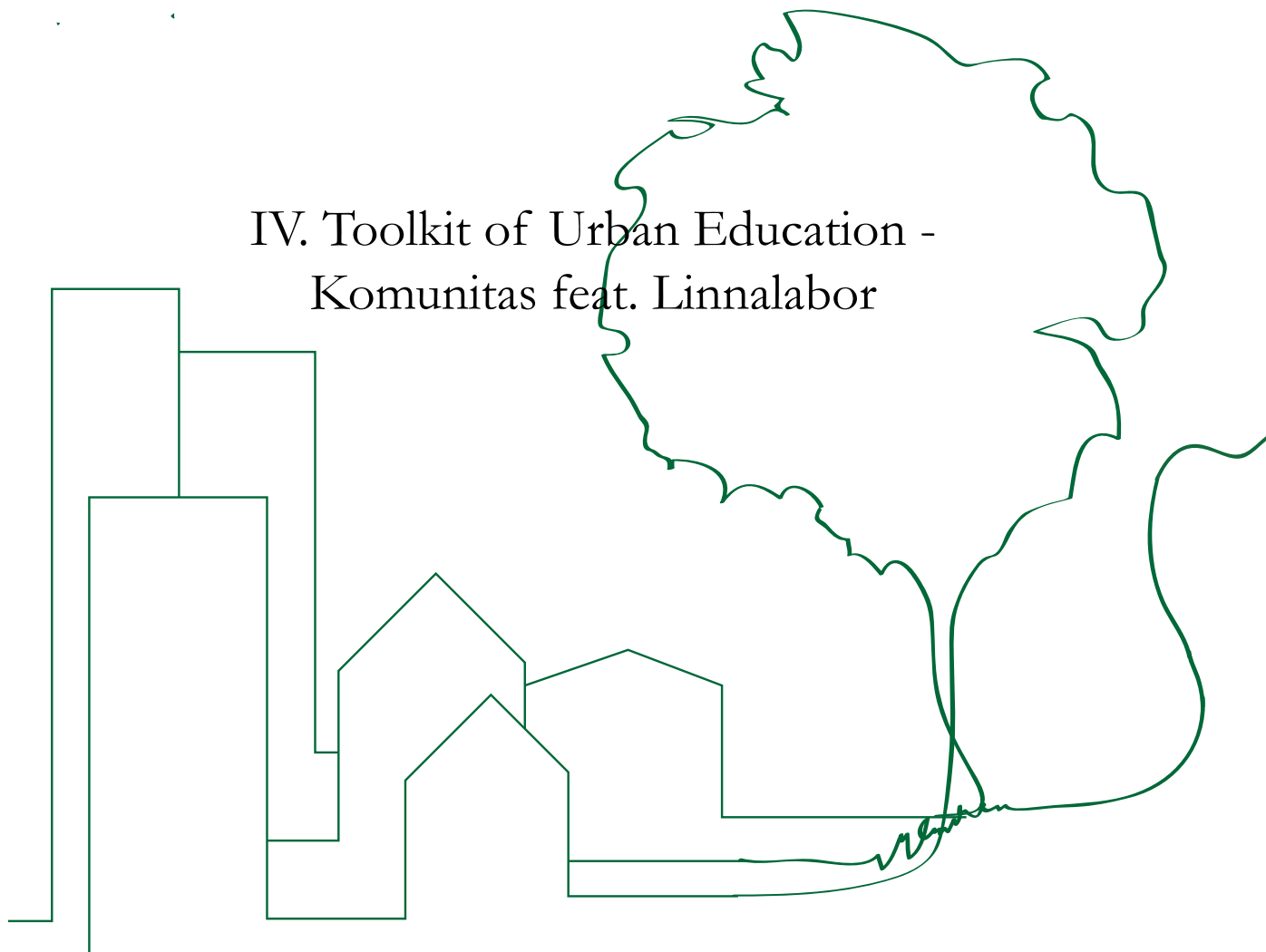
I believe that together we have overcome many obstacles and we only feel this at the end, because we were too busy to "get things done properly". From the "paper planning" to the implementation of activities, there is a long road, but the most important is that our goal was reached. In my opinion, the main difficulties were: working with a very specific target group (young people from different age groups, who are not familiar with extracurricular activities, in a school environment that does not encourage it), the degree of novelty of the activities and proposed methods and the minimal involvement of school personnel. All of them urged the project team to experiment, to find fast viable solutions and to give "100% +" from the little they already knew, which greatly emphasized the learning dimension of the project, for all of us involved."

(Andreea Lipan- coach)





IV. Toolkit of Urban Education - Komunitas feat. Linnalabor



1. INTERVENTION ON PHOTOGRAPHS

Brief description:

Intervention on photographs is a simple and effective method to introduce one of the most complex issues related to urban pedagogy: public spaces. This method can be proposed both to middle and high school students. The application of the method is as handy as possible: on simple A4 sheets of paper are printed black and white photographs, depicting various public or semi-public spaces which would require improvements (e.g. spaces between buildings, wastelands, abandoned places, school-yards etc). Students receive coloured crayons and are asked to intervene on photos, proposing through drawings and writing texts new kinds of approaches to the shown spaces.

In general, during Komunitas workshops, interventions on photos are preceded by discussions and "brainstorming" about public spaces. Together with the students, we try to define this notion and explain why public spaces are important in the urban-social structure of a city. Students speak about their preferred public spaces and argue their choices, while talking about the characteristics of quality public spaces and how to use them. We present photos and videos with various public spaces from around the world and, not least, we introduce important issues about the future of public spaces: their constant surveillance, the continuous privatization process, the restriction of access for various social categories etc. All these concepts are adapted to the understanding of the group age that we are working with.

In the second part of such a workshop, students receive pictures of public or semi-public spaces (e.g. the school yard), along with the task of conceiving proposals for improvements of the shown premises. In the end of the workshop, students present their work to their colleagues, arguing the proposed solutions and answering questions addressed to them.

This method of non-formal education was experienced by Komunitas Association in many of its projects, always with unexpected results and valuable proposals coming from young people. On the basis of such proposals, we have designed ourselves urban intervention projects and rehabilitation of

various urban spaces across Bucharest.

Objectives:

- Familiarizing the young people with concepts related to the topic of public spaces;
- Stimulating the creative thinking and design skills of youth in order to improve the urban spaces.

Examples of projects already completed:

Since the first projects of urban education, Komunitas Association used photo intervention as a way to introduce the topic of public spaces, but also to design urban interventions together with students. This activity appears regularly in our urban pedagogy projects, which we run during a whole school year, for middle school students or for high school students.

Some of the proposals made by students can be seen here:



Needed resources:

The resources required are photos printed in black and white with various public or semi-public spaces, colored crayons, a database (photo-video) and presentations by various public spaces in the world that can be shown to students.

Required working time:

50 minutes

2. URBAN ART AS A WAY OF CLAIMING PUBLIC SPACE / MAKING STICKERS ON URBAN TOPICS

Brief description

In urban educational workshops designed by Komunitas Association, an important component is represented by the discussions and presentations on urban activism. It is not easy to explain to children and teenagers what urban activism means, or to give them tools to do so, but it is possible.

For example, a workshop about urban activism can start with discussions about some of our rights as urban residents: the right to decent housing, the right to be informed about urban planning decisions, the right to be consulted on these decisions, the benefit of free public spaces. But what do we do when our rights as urban residents are not respected? How is it when an important building for the memory and history of the city is demolished, or when a park where we spent all our childhood suddenly becomes a private property and a space for future constructions?

In this general context of discussion, the topic of urban street art as a way to reclaim public spaces in cities can be introduced. Although the status of this type of art is often one illegal, it can be discussed how street art can still be legitimized and used as a solution to improve and beautify various public spaces. In parallel, visual presentations with various urban art types from major cities around the world can be done: graffiti, stencils, stickers, urban interventions, three-dimensional street painting, posters, eco-graffiti (made of moss forest), etc.

In a later stage, a practical workshop is planned, during which students can make their own contribution to the urban art district, pooling ideas, resources and their skills. Such a practical workshop consists in producing stickers and includes several steps:

- brainstorming ideas
- graphics and design of the stickers
- printing
- bonding final products

Through this workshop we want to determine students to

submit their own urban messages to their colleagues in schools, but also to other community members.

To give every child the opportunity to make his/her own stickers, a previous logistic preparation is required, including initial training of volunteers in using graphics programs, a sufficient number of laptops and sufficient number of volunteers. In order to get the best results, a "workstation" should include a volunteer, a laptop and two children/teenagers. Before conducting the workshop itself, a library of vector objects and a collection of urban images that facilitate the creative process must be done by the project team.

However, if the number of volunteers and the laptops is not high enough, then several pupils may work on a single sticker, not necessarily one or two. The important things are the final message and the active involvement of students throughout the creative process.

Objectives:

- Stimulating creativity and critical thinking of young people on various problems and issues of urban space;
- Providing a context in which young people can design and send their own urban messages.

Examples of projects already completed:

Making stickers on urban issues is an appropriate method for both schoolchildren and high school students. It is a method commonly used in Komunitas urban pedagogy projects. In general, pupils seemed very interested and enthusiastic about this workshop. Everyone had the opportunity to create their own stickers and to convey the message, which was translated by a diversity of ideas. The stickers, although they have different personalities, send powerful messages both about how we should behave in urban areas and about its possible transformation. Moreover, it appeared that some of the pupils are eager to experience graphic design in the future, which caught our attention and caused us to introduce more creative activities in the following workshops.

One of the highlights of this activity is always the time when each student receives a set of printed stickers, followed by the exchange, comparison and searching for "the right place to

stick".

Here are some stickers made within the urban education project "I'm small, but I get involved!", implemented from September 2012 - June 2013 in two schools in Bucharest.

Needed resources:

- computer graphics and design programs, a vector database of images on urban themes, stickers printing budget.

Required working time:

1 day of previous preparations; a workshop should last approximately 2 hours, including all the steps mentioned above.



3. MENTAL MAPPING

Brief description:

There are many areas in which mental mapping can be used, including urban anthropological research and urban pedagogy. With the help of mental maps we can see how a person perceives and represents the environment and urban space, and also what kind of information, prejudices or landmarks he or she holds.

Mental mapping is an exercise that can be applied both to secondary school students and to high school students. A mental map is easy to do: there must be a clearly defined task which the pupils receive, a sheet of paper and crayons. From the beginning it should be explained to the pupils the fact that what is expected from them is not a geographical map, characterized by precision and esthetics, but their own representation of urban reality sequences. The map may be accompanied by explanatory texts and drawings.

Here are some examples of tasks which can be used for doing mental mapping during urban education workshops for teenagers and children: representation of the the road from home to school; representation of the way students would present their district to friends who came from other countries or from other cities; representation of favorite urban spaces and also spaces considered unpopular.

Although the exercise may seem apparently dull, useful information can result from it; both pupils and their trainers can learn from this information: how young people perceive their neighborhoods and their surroundings, information about families and friends, information about neighborhoods and communities they belong to, significant parts of neighborhoods or cities, the difficulties encountered on the way to school and back home, their degree of urban mobility etc.

This information may prove to be a valuable resource in participatory urban planning efforts or in an urban education project. Finding all the details about the students with whom we work, we can see better what their needs are and what directions we should follow.

In parallel, a list of imagined landmarks that they would like to have in their daily routes can be done with the students. Each

student presents his or her map to others, explaining in detail what he or she wanted it to be.

Subsequently, it is necessary to discuss what urban landmarks are, how do we guide ourselves within the city and the fact that, even if we all have the same available landmarks, each of us forms in his or her mind a different image of it. The usefulness of landmarks consists in the fact that they help us build a mental image of the city, to better guide ourselves in space, too.

For example, urban landmarks help us orient ourselves in a new city, or in a neighborhood we do not know very well. Areas where we have a well-known urban landmark are areas where we feel safe and that are perceived as familiar. In a city where we have no specific urban landmarks, we would constantly wander around or even fear. An idea worth emphasized is that, in reality, the city is the same for everyone, but in our minds and perception it does not remain the same for each of us.

In this way, using mental mapping can introduce urban anthropology themes of reflection for students and it can stimulate their curiosity about their own urban experience and about other people's experiences.

Objectives:

- Introducing and familiarizing young people with the concept of urban anthropology;
- Stimulating reflections on urban individual and collective experiences of everyday life.

Examples of projects already completed:

Just like intervention on photographs, making mental maps represents a tool that we use frequently in our projects of urban pedagogy. Normally, we place this workshop at the beginning of any project of urban education, because it facilitates the understanding of concepts and instruments which can be further used and harnessed throughout the project.

Needed resources:

- crayons,
- A4 paper

Required working time:

50 minutes



4. VISUAL URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Brief description:

Making videos on urban issues is an effective way to persuade young people to discover various urban realities, to stimulate their curiosity and make them become more aware of problems and resources across the city.

An urban visual anthropology project always starts from questions about the functioning of a city, from observing the social relationships and socio-cultural worlds that co-exist, from certain identified issues or trends. Through the camcorder, youngsters explore these topics and the classroom actually moves outside in the city, through visiting various places, through the interaction with various urban actors and through investigation of the chosen subjects. In a first step, they focus on gathering visual exploratory and conducting interviews, and then they learn how to synthesize these materials, distilling and structuring a final message.

This method is particularly useful to high school students, but can be adapted for middle school students, under the careful coordination of a trainer. The difference between the two age categories would be the degree of urban mobility that determines individual exploration: while high school students have a higher mobility and freedom to move to different places in the city, middle school students must generally obtain the consent of parents or, more often, be accompanied by them, the teachers or by the trainers of this specific project.

Objectives:

- Driving skills of analysis and synthesis; stimulating curiosity, observation capacities and social interaction; stimulating socio-anthropological thinking;
- Encouraging teamwork, participation and active citizenship;
- Stimulating young people's ability to implement a project head to tail: from identifying a topic of analysis to its research, information structuring and crystallization of the final result.

Examples of projects already completed:

In 2011, Komunitas Association developed an urban education project called "Take back your city!". The activities of the

project included trainings and workshops using the urban anthropology visual method, targeting high school students. For 3 months, approximately 50 high school students, under the guidance of the project team, made 10 documentaries on various urban issues. Their films offer new perspectives over contemporary Bucharest that are affecting or are delighting us all.

Among the topics addressed are: the park-our movement in Bucharest, the history of some urban parks from the city, exploring abandoned urban heritage buildings, controversial demolitions under contemporary city development plans, Bucharest favorite meeting places, the graffiti and street art phenomenon, music in public vs. private spaces, the nightlife of the city.

The films were screened and awarded during a special event held in this regard: a small high school film festival, which was very appreciated by the pupils. Subsequently, the films were taken and distributed at new events, held both in Bucharest and in other cities in Romania, especially since some of them approached „warm" subjects, of general interest.

Needed resources:

To apply this educational method, certain technological resources are required: video cameras, computers, editing programs. However, the technical or aesthetic criteria do not outweigh, but the one related to content does. The cameras do not have to be professional, but cheap models, easy to use. In addition, the mobile phone or other similar devices can be used. The editing soft does not have to be a complicated one. An accessible and free software is enough.

The team dealing with such a project must have in its ranks a trainer to help students identify and structure their subjects, along with a video editor who supports the selection and the video editing of the final materials.

Required working time:

In order to have efficiency and impact, a visual urban anthropology workshop should ideally last about three months, out of which: two weeks for a preparation period, for identification and written structuring of the discussed topics; 1 month and 2 weeks for filming and gathering of visual materials by young people; 1 month for video editing.

5. URBAN INTERVENTIONS

Brief description:

Anyone passionate about "urban interventions" knows that this term has multiple meanings and its real applications can take the most diverse forms. Often, urban interventions are expressions of people's desire to express themselves creatively, but also to contribute to the shaping of cities, according to their own visions. These interventions can be considered as part of the new paradigm of a type of alternative urbanism, which seeks to counter the official conventions of architecture and urban planning.

Beyond all this, urban interventions prove to be one of the most effective tools for working in urban pedagogy projects taught to young people, with a significant impact on their perceptions and attitudes towards the city.

In the process of planning and realizing an urban intervention may be involved both children from secondary schools and adolescents in high schools. Interventions can take place in various public spaces that have a personal meaning for the young people involved, or semi-public spaces (e.g. the school yard). Interventions are planned according to the availability of resources: if there is a budget for a project in this sense, then interventions can be complex, using different materials (wood, paint, nails, sprays etc.) If there isn't a budget, then you can organize simple interventions based on recycled materials and on pupils creativity.

Young people should be involved in all stages of the urban intervention organization: brainstorming and debates to identify ideas and spaces, structuring ideas, organizing logistics; authorization (if required), the proper intervention, the final evaluation.

Objectives:

- Stimulating the creativity of young people and a pro-active attitude towards the city;
- Encouraging young people to use the city as a "playground".

Examples of projects already completed:

1. In June 2009, we started the intervention called "Urban Meadow", which took place in a kind of semi-bare area located

in Izvor area from Bucharest. The intervention took place within the urban education project Closer to the future. The intervention consisted of greening a small abandoned space, painting the wall of a nearby building (with the consent of tenants), the construction of urban furniture items with the help of the Landscape Factory Association, planting flowers and grass. All these activities were carried out by involving students from two schools and two high schools in Bucharest. Simultaneously, we had discussions with the pupils about meanings of public space, gardens, urban furniture, resting places, shade and light in the city, noise pollution and how to maintain tidiness in public spaces that belongs to everyone. Despite all the expectations, the wooden objects that were placed during the intervention lasted for several years!



2. In May 2010, within the project Closer to the future, students from "Ion Neculce" College came up with the idea of building some bird houses and placing them in various parks around Bucharest. In partnership with students from the Faculty of Landscape Architecture in Bucharest (University of Agricultural Sciences), pupils designed and built the little houses; afterwards, their younger colleagues from School 136 painted and decorated the objects. Then we took from the City Hall the

the necessary permits (yes, you need a permit to install a bird house in a tree!) and we placed together with the pupils the houses in trees. This was one of the funniest moments of the intervention. Subsequently, the young people created a postcard that presents the little houses' routes placed in different places in the city.



3. In June 2013 there was an intervention in the yard of the School 31 in Bucharest, within the urban education project I'm small, but I get involved! Creating a nice corner for pupils in the school yard was a long process, during which we moderated several brainstorming sessions to put the students' ideas together, helping them to structure and make them channel their creativity in this regard. Brainstorming results were influenced quite strongly by previous workshops during which we discussed about urban interventions performed internationally, as well as workshops for creative recycling and reuse of materials that permit this.

After we made a long list of possible interventions, we kept the most voted six ideas. We divided the pupils into teams and we started working. Each working team was composed of 4-5 pupils and 2-3 volunteers (students of architecture, urbanism and psychology).

The materials that we had available were: industrial pallets, old tires, plastic bottles and tetra packs. The solutions chosen for implementation were: guerilla gardening activities, creating a covered social space for pupils and creating a place for skateboarding with specific objects. These activities were divided into 6 smaller projects and with these 6 projects they began negotiating with the principle of School 31.

Once the pupils were explained that a space with elements of skating is too dangerous to be placed on the school grounds, students returned to work with 5 bold projects. Before the day of intervention, the tasks of each member of the implementation team were clearly outlined so that in the day of the event all activities took place properly and in time.

The implemented projects were: the construction of a social space from large truck tires, construction of a socialization space from pallets, making a custom waterproof roof by all participants in the event, planting hydrangeas in small tires, tires customization by students, making a robot from plastic bottles with a decorative role in the space recently created, planting of seedlings in plastic bottles and locating them in the social space.

Apart from recycled and reused materials we have added to the list a number of materials needed for the intervention:



ultra-glossy paint for all surfaces, brushes, rope and twine, tarpaulin, canvas rings, metal joints and connections for hardening pallets, materials and products for washing and cleaning tires, finishing trowel for pallets, tool kit, nails and screws.

Following this activity, we produced together with the pupils involved in our project a social space that can accommodate a maximum of 25 children.

Needed resources:

- wood, pallets, paints, brushes, string, rope, canvas, metal joints and links, tool kits, nails, screws, recyclable materials (tires, cardboard, old furniture etc)

Required working time:

1-5 days for planning (depending on the complexity of interventions), 1-3 days for the actual intervention (depending also on the complexity of the interventions), 1 day for a review meeting.



6. ORGANIZING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Brief description:

You do not need to have special training or extensive experience in events organizing, in order to initiate socio-cultural events in your community. Such an event requires planning simple activities that can bring people together and foster positive social interaction: film screenings, musical auditions, sports, flow arts (poi, fire poi etc.), painting workshops, dance, outdoor library, information point etc.

In our association's view, community events are based on play and interaction with various public spaces, which we harness and use differently than they are normally used. Typically, in planning community events we involve children and adolescents, one of the main purposes of this type of action being to give the "power" to the hands of young people. Through "empowerment", we mean the following: young people learn how to organize a community event, to take responsibility, to feel valued, to participate directly in the planning, organization and implementation of the action. At the same time, we always try to generate events that are democratic. They are designed as an open common space, in which different categories of people meet and interact constructively and positively.

Objectives:

- Empowering young people through their direct involvement in planning and organizing socio-free cultural events for the communities where they belong, including the process of obtaining permits to use a public space;
- The non-formal use of public spaces and valuing them as key points in the creation of a community spirit;
- Creating interaction contexts for people with different social backgrounds.

Examples of projects already completed:

1. In June 2010, Get Out Fest took place, an event organized by high school students on a little island in Tineretului Park in Bucharest. The event had a great concept: it was symbolically located on an island, and the participants were "refugees" on an urban oasis, which gave life and color, enjoying it together for one day.



The basic idea behind the event Get Out Fest was that the public space of a city belongs to us all and we have the right to negotiate or to model it according to our visions and needs.

We wanted to highlight the potential and beauty of this small island, showing new ways in which the space can be utilized. After lengthy negotiations with the City Hall, to which the Tineretului Park belongs, we obtained the necessary authorization. What we held there: listening to music, painting workshops for children, juggling, playing in hammocks, theater, alternative outdoor library and movie screenings. The event was entirely organized by students from two high schools in Bucharest, under the coordination of Komunitas members.



2. In May 2013, pupils aged 11-13 from two schools in Bucharest, organized Tei Neighborhood Day, a district in which Komunitas Association has been running community development strategies since 2012. The kids were actively involved in all stages of the event organization: designing, planning, permitting and effective implementation. Preparations for the event started with the application for authorization of the event, addressed to the City Hall. Two of the kids came with us to the municipality for negotiating the details of the event with the responsible committee.

The planning of the event required three meetings of the students, coordinated by the volunteers and the project team. We started the planning process from collecting ideas on the categories of activities that we would like to organize within the event: sports, creative activities, informative ones, crafts, artistic moments, listening to music etc. Each pupil had to identify activities they would like to coordinate within the event, stating that each person would be responsible at some point for information on the project.

We managed to achieve a very clearly planned schedule through which to conduct several activities simultaneously - all planned and coordinated by pupils. The information corner was active throughout the period of the event, and took place alongside sports, crafts and creativity workshops (friendship bracelet, origami, painting in watercolor), artistic moments (some students tried console DJ, where they played their favorite music and also there was a choreography on a Japanese song, performed by two students, which was appreciated by visitors).

At the information point there were a pavilion and a table with chairs where those interested could access the following types of activities: browsing photo albums with snapshots of Tei district taken also by the children with disposable cameras, filling in questionnaires with questions about the neighborhood, watching cadastral map of the neighborhood and marking their favorite places and those who would like to change; viewing drawings with project activities, and explanations provided by children who took seriously their role as guides.

Needed resources:

Unlike other types of urban education activities that require

minimal resources, community events assume a more substantial logistics: street tents, a sound system, wiring, electricity generator, projection screen, projector, tables, chairs, stationary materials (watercolors, paper and crayons, glue etc.).

However, if the equipment does not exist within the group or association which organizes the event, the necessary infrastructure can be purchased or borrowed through community partnerships and by involving as many urban actors in the process.

Working time required:

About 2-3 weeks for planning, 1 day for conducting the event (at least 6-8 hours).



7. TREASURE HUNT

Brief description:

Treasure Hunt is an attractive method through which young people get to know better their city or neighborhood and focus on it. Organizing a treasure hunt type activity requires detailed prior planning, success depending largely on how students are prepared and on the routes they will explore.

Treasure hunt may be preceded by workshops in which the cadastral work and orientation are introduced. The students' contact with cadastral maps and plans are necessary in order to facilitate their understanding of the difference between perceived distances and spaces and their representation on the same scale on the plan. As a method of understanding the plans, it can be used the identification of the district parts and routes frequented by each student, and identifying home for those who live in the neighborhood.

The cadastral maps are used for analyzing areas that the students know best, but also for the ones that have been frequented, places where they often go or the ones which they avoid because they did not meet their expectations. The students' contact with cadastral plans helps them to form an overview image on the treasure hunt venues, as to observe the relationships between spaces and functions.

A treasure hunt can be organized in many ways, with different purposes. In case of an urban education project, its main objective should be to explore different types of urban spaces and understanding the links between them. Students are divided into teams - each team has a name, a coat of arms, a motto and a shout of glory. Each team receives tasks, aimed walks in different areas, based on the careful analysis and identification of indicators and benchmarks.

Objectives:

- Stimulating skills of observation and urban analysis, a sense of orientation and curiosity towards the city / district, encouraging teamwork;
- The non-formal experiencing of urban areas and an active interaction with various elements of a city.

Examples of projects already completed:

During the urban education project "I'm small, but I get involved!", implemented by Komunitas between September 2012 – June 2013, the routes were divided into four sections that students had to go in parallel. There were about 25 students, aged 11-13 and the "treasure hunt" took place in Bucharest Tei district. The four sections were individual housing area, collective housing, student dormitories and sports areas). The tasks were defined so that the students could observe and interpret the reality of the district regarding public spaces, details of architecture and urbanism, elements of community life. All these things were put together with the purpose of creating an identity of the neighborhood in which pupils learn and where many of them live.

After participating in this game, students have interpreted the reality of the neighborhood, how it works and the relationships between different areas. As part of the debriefing, students had the opportunity to discuss how spaces affect community life and the differences between different areas analyzed.

In the framework of the "treasure hunt", students were provided with disposable cameras, being motivated by making this activity in a photography contest. They took pictures illustrating various aspects of Tei district. Following this activity, the result is a series of photographs that capture the reality seen through the lens of neighborhood by 12-13 years old youngsters. There are over 300 frames which can be viewed on the blog and on the Facebook page of the project: www.sunt-small-but-I-implic.blogspot.com

Needed resources:

- cadastral, pens, crayons, disposable cameras, a preliminary route created for teams of students.

Required working time:

3 days for planning and preparing the routes; about 4-6 hours to run the routes and debriefing.



8. URBAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Brief description:

Urban photography represents an attractive educational method for young people, both for middle school students and for high school students. Capturing the images of various facets of the city can contribute directly to the development of creativity and visual skills of young people, but also to the exciting discovery of less noticeable urban details.

The camera becomes an useful tool that helps young people to investigate and explore the complexity of the city, selecting those sequences of urban reality that they consider significant.

For the method to be used effectively, it is necessary that the trainer initiates the pupils into minimal notions of photographic techniques. Formulating clear tasks and topics for the pupils is also an important issue. For example, young people may be required to document visually the way from home to school, or to photograph their favorite places of the city, along with "bad" places, which do not interest them and which they do not frequent often. Other topics that could be addressed: "beautiful" buildings and "ugly" buildings; my neighborhood - positive / negative aspects, playgrounds, "interesting" people etc. All this playing with urban photography surreptitiously encourages and develops the socio-anthropological perspective of youngsters upon the cities. This perspective can be an useful tool that can help them throughout life, regardless of the jobs they choose.

The following specific work steps of this method are: watching and discussing the pictures taken, followed by their harness, either through initiation of public exhibitions, in which the authors are also the organizers, or by creating photo albums that can be browsed at various urban theme events (festivals, conferences, seminars, workshops, round tables etc.)

The urban photographs taken by young people often include various socio-anthropological information, which indicates the way the city looks like in their perceptions. Starting from analyzing this information, you can devise new projects of urban pedagogy or urban interventions that take into account the needs and ideas of the youngest residents of a city.

Objectives:

- Stimulating creativity and developing the visual culture of young people;
- Encouraging socio-anthropological perception of the city as an instrument that should underpin any initiative;
- Using the city as a playground that young people can explore in a creative and constructive way, rather than using to the city as a simple consumer reality.

Examples of projects already completed:

Komunitas Association often used urban photography as an activity in non-formal education projects implemented over time. Most often, we combined urban educational incursions with taking urban photos by the young people we worked with. One of the most successful exhibition took place in 2011, during the event "City of Children", organized within the urban education project "Take back your city!". Approximately 50 children from seven secondary schools in Bucharest exhibited photos on urban themes with snapshots from Bucharest, taken with disposable cameras, and proposed urban interventions ideas on paper or with the help of a model, to improve public spaces. The exhibition was called "Disposable Bucharest" and children's photos can be viewed here:

Needed resources:

The main required resources are cameras. These devices can be cheap, disposable, and may be provided through the budget of a project. However, in general, young people have access to various devices and gadgets with which they can capture images. They can work in teams, consensually sharing a camera. Other resources needed are: computers and a projector (for viewing and discussing the quality of the photos), printer or access to a small budget for printing of photographs and organizing photo exhibitions.

Required working time:

This type of activity is recommended to take place over a whole month, of which about 2-3 weeks are available for young people in order to take photos, 1 day for developing and burning the photos CDs, 2 – 3 hours for discussing and evaluating; 3-5 days for planning an exhibition and opening it.

9. ROLEPLAYING AND COMMUNITY SIMULATION

Brief description:

The method that we called "Community simulation" is based on the idea of creating an active community life context in which it is inserted a strong conflict that undermines community and leads its members to act in order to solve the problem. The method targets mainly middle school children, but it can be adapted for those in high school, too.

The students are divided into groups (at least two), are assigned roles, specifically on ages, occupations and different concerns, different needs etc. These roles and their details are written on pieces of paper and every student gets one for storage (eg: rebellious adolescents, elderly living alone, family newlyweds etc.)

The created groups are announced by the workshop's guide that they will receive from local administrative authorities the opportunity to have properties in different neighborhoods: individual properties representing parcels of land, collective housing buildings etc. In the first part of the exercise, the students have complete freedom in organizing and furnishing the spaces received. For this purpose, each group receives one large board, on which they design and draw their own house, by providing various indoor and outdoor functions. One group should contain between 5-7 students and all their homes must fit on the drawing board.

In general, following this free design of space, we have observed that pupils design disordered places, arranged in a selfish way, without paying attention to the needs and rights of neighbors. Even in the collective housing plot, the "owners" divide outdoor spaces without the intention of sharing and using them together. Using this approach, we try to illustrate the real picture of this process in Romania - namely that each owner believes that his plot has unlimited rights and can build according to personal needs and taste, without paying attention to the context in which his buildings stays or the need of shared spaces.

In the second part of the exercise, the groups of students do presentations about the neighborhoods, facilitated by the trainers, who highlight architectural and urban mistakes, with a

great emphasis on the conflicts created between neighbors, the lack of public spaces, green areas and spaces of socialization, the ratio between spaces for cars and spaces created for people.

After the presentations and feedback from trainers, students are offered an opportunity to change their arrangements, coming up with new solutions of space improving. Once the housing projects are enhanced, especially by designing quality public spaces and community events, we can move on. During the next stage of the exercise, the 2 housing projects are linked through an existing common space between neighborhoods (often a vacant or disposed space). They will receive from the trainers the task to work together and arrange this new space, using whatever forms of expression they wish. Most commonly, they will build up models.

A brainstorming type of debate is organized about what can be done with this new space and how it can be harnessed as an urban resource. All groups of students start working together in order to arrange a joint space, represented by a model in which everyone contributes.

During the last part of the exercise, after a certain community spirit was strengthened among the 2 housing projects created by the pupils, the trainers will insert a strong conflict, in order to "undermine" the members of the community and persuade them to take action. The conflict that we used was the following: the beautiful jointly built model (the recently created park) is surrounded by a fence that says "private property" and access is denied.

In the simulation are introduced new characters such as the Mayor, who is overloaded with requests for information from members of the created community, or the Investor, who displays a billboard on the park fence, detailing the site which will be opened there (e.g.: in the next two years there will be built an office building and parking spaces on the land newly enclosed).

The communities must learn to unite and act together to defend their interests. At this point, we can introduce role playing, through which students and all the entered characters are allowed to interact and negotiate the finality of the situation.

All these details and characters can be adapted to the context, though following basic principles and steps:

1. Dividing students into groups and distributing them a few "urban roles"; a group must have between 5-7 students;
2. Random designing housing projects on large paper plates;
3. Evaluation of the proposed housing projects and improving them;
4. Joining housing projects and fostering community spirit through a new common area that all students arranged together;
5. Introducing a powerful conflict that seeks to destabilize the communities;
6. Negotiation and settlement of this conflict through role playing.

Objectives:

- Presenting in a non-formal method the ways that can shape a strong community, which fights for its rights and for the purposes of a collective interest, rather than an individual one;
- Facilitating the understanding of certain public decision mechanisms amongst young people and ways to challenge them.

Examples of projects already completed:

In the urban education project "I'm small, but I get involved!" , implemented between September 2012 – June 2013, we used the community simulation method with a group of middle school pupils, following the steps above. Here's what happened in the workshops when the conflict was introduced and when the City Hall leases land to a private investor: the two communities decided in a voice that they must intervene and try to influence the decision of the administrative authorities. Meetings were held in the community and the pupils wrote a petition demanding the keeping of green public spaces. Signatures and petitions did not have any effect on City Hall. Citizens were not even allowed into City Hall to participate in a public debate, while discussing the fate of green space.

Members of the two communities decided to go on the next steps, namely organizing a flash mob with the theme 'greenhouse effect and pollution in cities'. The flash mob's aim was to attract media attention and other inhabitants of the city on the conflict created. Even if this action had no effect of intimidating the City Hall or the investor, at least it attracted media attention (Journal-

ists as new characters were introduced by the trainers), preparing the next step: the protest.

The students prepared a speech to the press, wrote placards with messages dedicated to the mayor and city residents. They staged a protest and they did not give up until the mayor has not agreed to negotiate with them. Following negotiations and the created public pressure, the City Hall finally decided relocating the project and keeping the original function of the land, namely the function of the park.

The last workshop of this community simulation was devoted to conclusions: we generated discussion regarding the role of all those involved in this simulation. Each student told how he felt in various stages of the year and stated one important thing he or she had learnt. We discussed similar cases that happen in reality, the importance of each step in the process, but that, unfortunately, the reality is crueler than the happy ending of our exercise. We left the students to reflect and imagine a future in which they will be decision-makers, policy-makers or simply active citizens.

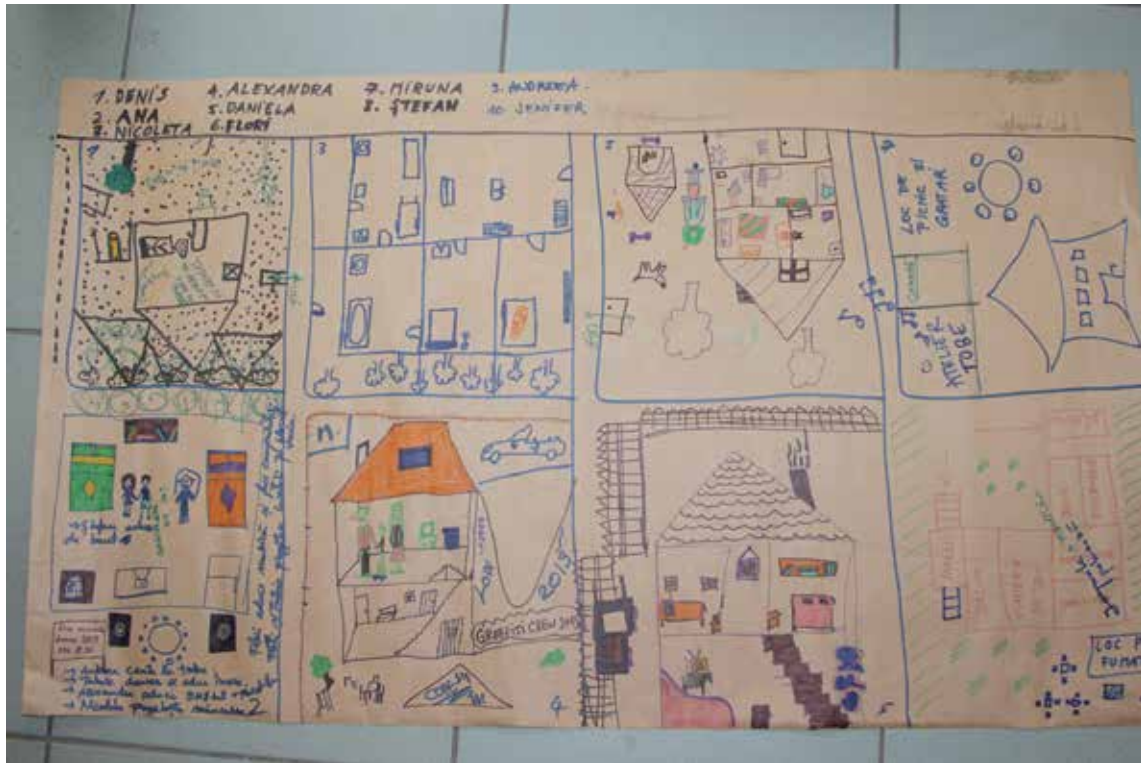
Needed resources:

- large paper plates, markers and colored pencils, materials to create a model (can be recycled), model support.

Required working time:

1 day for planning the workshop, 4 workshops (each of the workshop has 50 minutes) in order to complete the development of the method, one 50-minute workshop for final discussions and evaluation.





10. CONSTRUCTION BUILDING

Brief description:

Making small model constructions is a great method to use among both younger and older students. It gives them an idea of how three dimensional space is created, how structures work in general and it also helps them develop manual skills.

Construction building as a method is very versatile. It is possible to have a model already made to be used as inspiration for a newly created one or the model can be self created from the beginning. As for the constructions, they may also vary by difficulty – younger students can begin with very simple constructions that can, for start, be even two dimensional, but older students can already create more complex constructions as bridges or buildings.

The main idea behind the method is that students should first understand how the structure works and which materials are needed in order to create a model that is also visually interesting.

Objectives:

- Creating better understanding of three dimensional space and its parts;
- Stimulating young people to develop manual skills;
- Creating understanding of how constructions work;
- Encouraging teamwork.

Examples of projects already completed:

This method is very common in architecture schools where it is needed to illustrate projects with models, but it is also a good method to use with younger students who are not actively working with structures.

Needed resources:

To use this method some basic materials are needed: wooden or plastic sticks (grill sticks, ice cream sticks), glue, cardboard, modeling clay, pencil, paper knife, paints. Different things can be added e.g. readymade trees, transport units, silhouettes and so on - but they are not elementary or can be done in some other sessions of handicraft.

This method can be used with all age groups as the level of difficulty may vary. Younger kids can start with simple structures

and the older ones can move on to more complex ones.

Required working time:

It can take from 30 minutes up to several hours, all depending on the level of difficulty. It is also possible to work on some models as a team, in which case children are taught to work in groups and take other opinions into account.

To gain ideas you can search YouTube or internet with popsicle stick projects/ bridge/ house/ constructions etc.



11. URBAN GARDENING/GARDENING IN THE SCHOOL YARDS

Brief description:

Urban gardening is a good method for involving children into different planning activities, as well as for using it as a method for outdoor education. The method could be used with all age groups, starting from the youngest pupils and to the oldest ones. Children can participate in urban gardening with their parents. In addition, this is a great way to introduce urban gardening to children when taking care of their schoolyards.

The size of the schoolyard is dependent on the free space available on the school territory. It is essential to test the soil before planting the seeds. If the soil is contaminated and/or it is not possible to plant seeds in the ground different kinds of plant containers, wooden boxes etc. can be used.

When designing the schoolyard, all children should have an option to express their vision about their future school garden. Visions could be forwarded through open discussions and workshops, paintings or even through writings (essays). Both teachers, children and parents should be involved. It is important to determine and explain how the schoolyard will start to look like visually as well as to introduce what kinds of greens, flowers etc will be planted.

All this process should run simultaneously with outdoor education (choosing plants is the subject in biology classes, mapping the ground with older students could be the subject in geographical studies etc). Planting seeds and maintaining the garden is a good way to practice teamwork and get used to work with different age groups. When maintaining the school garden the whole community could be involved. Positive influences of urban gardening are physical activity, better mental health, closer community relationships and additional food options for poorer people.

The method of urban gardening may be connected with photographing or Sensing the City method.

It is important that children and young people can discuss and communicate their ideas about neighbourhood planning to teachers, planners and other adults. It is crucial that young people feel the positive engagement with their communities and neigh-

bourhood. Creating and managing schoolyards is one step further to fulfil that target.

Objectives:

- Letting children express their opinions about schoolyard creation through participation;
- Making children get used to teamwork;
- Increasing children's knowledge about local ecological systems;
- Using schoolyards as outdoor learning spaces;
- Transforming schoolyards into cost-effective way to manage the school food provision;
- Introducing children to recycling techniques.

Examples of projects already completed:

Linnalabor (Urban Lab) did a science test in 2008, when the quantity of pollution in edible plants growing next to major roads was measured. The test provided further knowledge about food gardening in urban areas. Initial survey proved that growing edible plants near larger motorways and traffic junctions is not recommended because of bigger lead pollution. Although, the survey did not only show that food grown in city area is significantly more contaminated. On the opposite, the vegetables that were planted in urban areas were growing more vigorously.

Needed resources:

Free lots of land on the school territory to set up an edible schoolyard. Basic gardening tools as spade, shovel, trowel, watering can or other watering system, seeds or plants to grow. Paper and notebook to make observations.



12. PHOTOGRAPHING AND ANALYSING YOUR WAY TO SCHOOL

Brief description:

The idea behind this method is to make students more attentive towards the urban space that surrounds them daily, by giving them different tasks/objectives to be photographed on their way to school. Photographing is an effective method to draw young people's attention to their surroundings, common places and neighbourhood. Children can take both notes and photos at the same time. They can easily identify smaller details of the streets, schoolyards etc and discuss about their experiences and what they have seen on their way later on.

Possible tasks include architectural elements, certain buildings (manufacturing), activity in the urban space (skateboarders, cyclists etc.) and so on. Teachers may also let children photograph things that capture their attention. This method is adaptable for different age groups and does not need any additional preparation except opportunity for taking photos.

The other part of this method is to analyse the pictures taken. Due to differences between schools, the ways the outcome of photographing is analysed are various. Therefore, it is recommended to choose one certain topic for analysis as a starting point. For example, safety of the road to school.

Pupils could show their results of photographing on a widescreen and make a short presentation according to the assignments(s) given by the teacher. During discussions, it is possible to learn about fellow students' points of view about their surroundings.

One can easily link photographing and picture analysis with other methods. For example, during city planning through construction modelling, it is possible to have complementary analogue analysis in real life. In the case of using the city planning method, one can communicate visual side and experiences of this method through photographing. Besides the methods mentioned above, it is possible to set various tasks for young people to raise their interest in urban environment.

Objectives:

- Determining young people to notice and to be more aware of the surrounding urban space;

- Stimulating students to bring out and defend their point of views through photographic analysis.

Needed resources:

For this method you need a camera or phone for photographing and an opportunity to display pictures on a widescreen.



13. DREAM HOUSE

Brief description:

The idea of this method is to make students think about their dream houses and let them put their thoughts into a drawing. There are several ways to give out this assignment - they can either draw only the plan or only some views, or it can be used to teach perspective to older students. It can be made more complex by adding different tasks like drawing the garden and writing a short description of its location and main features. After finishing, they can present their drawing to others and discuss why they dream of this kind of houses.

It is also possible to give all the students the same kind of printed house template, so they have the opportunity only to design how they would like the building to look like. Will it be modern or classical? Which materials and patterns are used? What is it inspired by?

Ready made drawings can also be used in language lessons

where they can describe and learn new words connected to buildings, constructions, furniture and so on. It can be also connected with the history of architecture by giving the overview of how types of building have evolved and what the current trends are.

Objectives:

- Making students think about the meanings of the word "functionality";
- Giving students ideas about architecture and how it works.

Needed resources:

For this method some basic materials like paper, colored pencils, crayons, markers are needed. So, it can easily be a part of an art lesson. Print out house templates can be found either on the internet (under color book house) or be drawn by the teacher.

Required working time:

Up to 45 minutes, depending on the difficulty.

14. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING THROUGH MODELLING

Brief description:

Within this method, a new neighbourhood is being planned through making a model. A perfect neighbourhood will be created together with students by letting them first discuss where and why different functions and buildings are located, and what they would like a perfect neighbourhood to have and to look like: where to locate the park or school, why there etc.

After the model is ready, it would also be good to discuss if something is missing or could be improved and also what students could do in real life so that their neighbourhoods could improve.

This method can be adapted to all age groups by using different levels of complexity. With younger students it is possible to use print out models of buildings. Older age group can make the models themselves, which also creates an opportunity to integrate other topics like principles of urban planning, history of cities, planning processes and so on. When using this method it would be good if it could be accompanied by short introduction to urban planning in general.

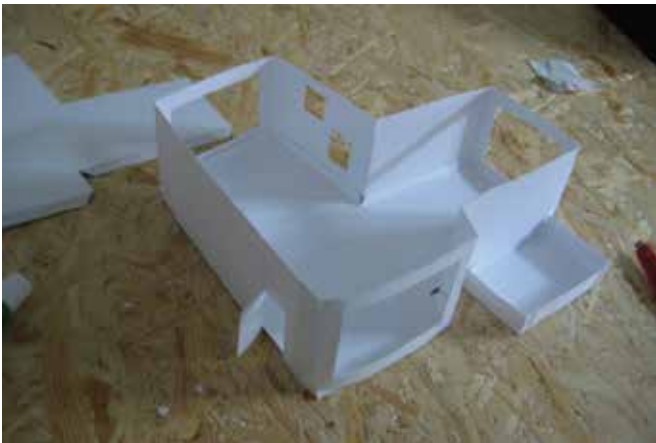
Different other methods described in this fanzine can be used together with this one for example photographing the way to school or mental mapping.

Objectives:

- Making youngsters think about the urban environment around them, teaching them to see different sides and aspects of urban space;
- Encouraging students to discuss and debate over urban space and what could be improved;
- Determining youngsters to see how different people experience urban space and how difficult it can be to find consensus in city planning.

Needed resources:

The materials needed depend on the type of model and its complexity. For easier models printouts on a paper, scissors, glue and cardboard is needed. (Ideas: http://cp.c-ij.com/en/contents/2025/list_15_1.html and <http://pinterest.com/trayseeh1/paper-houses/>). For more



complex models variety of materials can be used.

Required working time:

Time frame also depends on the type of the model. Cut out models can be done in 30-45 minutes, while more complex models take longer time.



15. SENSING THE CITY

Brief description:

Sensing the city is a method of observation in a specific area in the city, during a certain limited time period. Conducting the analysis later on, it gives an opportunity to discuss about the functions of specific parts of the city. It is possible to think and argue about advantages and obstacles of defined areas.

Difficulty of the task is variable according to age group. The process itself could be organized during the whole academic year. The number of places that will be visited could be set from the very beginning. The more places pupils visit, the better it gives them a greater experience and overview of the city. Reasonable amount of time and the opportunities to visit and explore different parts of town, like the botanical garden, the harbour, markets, variable residential, are needed.

Children should bring with them paper/notebook and pencil so they could take notes on their way. It would be great to take students to as many places as possible so they could get to know these regions with all their senses. Teachers should encourage children to observe, smell, listen and touch during those visits.

At first, the teacher should give students some certain keywords by which the places could be compared by later on. It is important to bring their attention to different aspects of urban space and ask them to listen city sounds (construction noise, birds singing, human noises), smell different aromas (the smell of food, wet asphalt etc.), touch the grounds (grass, asphalt, gravel etc) and visually describe the nature of city areas (old houses, uncut lawns and wasteland etc).

Children should mark the exact time period of the survey, keywords and/or brief description of visited area to their notebooks. After every second visit, it is recommendable to make short resumes about the visits. Teachers should organize the workshops where children could compare the visited areas with other children experiences. The teacher could mark down children's remarks and observations about the areas they've visited. The papers could be attached onto the big map later on.

Sensing the City as a method is great groundwork for making construction modelling during city planning. Additional methods to simplify the current one could be photographing and mapping

mapping in older grades.

Objectives:

- Gathering as much information as possible about observed areas through first-hand experience;
- Encouraging children to observe surroundings and the city as a whole;
- Helping children to understand the fact that every person senses the urbane places in his/ her own way;
- Stimulating pupils to learn to see and explore the places according to various non-formal tasks and possibilities.

Needed resources:

Paper, pencil, possibility to visit different places and spaces in the city, big map of the city/region.

Required working time:

1-2 days for planning; 1 day for exploring and observing

16. URBAN FURNITURE

Brief description:

This method is about designing urban furniture – benches, seats, trash bins, street lamps, fountains, pergolas, bus stops, flower boxes, bicycle stands, street signs, fences, stairs and so on. How does urban furniture affect the way the space is perceived? How can it change the look of urban space? Can you enhance social interaction with urban furniture? Can one item of furniture be used in several ways? These are only a few questions that can be discussed within this topic.

When designing urban furniture it is important to think on the overall design of the pieces, the materials that are durable and can stand different weather, the comfort and functionality of the furniture.

It can be joined with several other methods, like photographing urban furniture on the way to school and analysing it from the aspects of design, durability, comfort, materials used, as well as with sensing the urban space.

This method is better suitable for older students. Designing urban furniture can have several levels – first, students can just

draw the items and second, they can turn some items into a model. It can be also used in computer lessons to teach children very basics of 3D programs. One more option would be to ask the students to work in smaller groups and get them make an overview of the most interesting urban furniture they have seen either in urban space themselves or found on the internet.

Objectives:

- Making students notice different elements in urban space and see their different aspects;
- Teaching them various manual skills;
- Teaching 3D programs (optional)

Needed resources:

As described before, this method has several levels. For the first one, some basic materials like paper, pens, pencils, markers, crayons are needed. Making models needs wooden or plastic sticks (grill sticks, ice cream sticks), glue, cardboard, modelling clay, pencils, paper knife, paints.

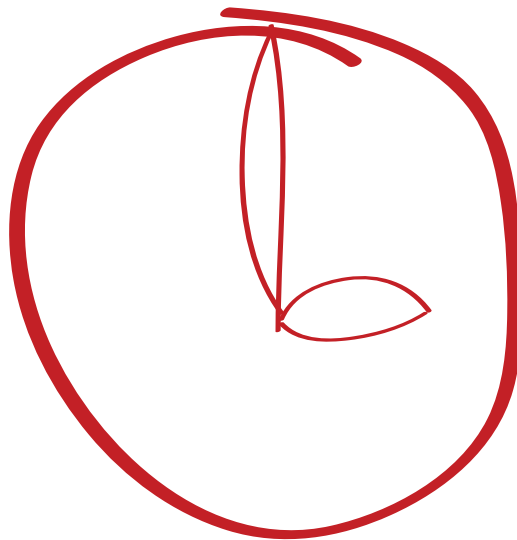
In order to get to more complex level and teach the students some basic 3D modelling, you can use freeware like Google Sketch Up, which is very basic and easy to learn to make simple models. Sketch Up has many tutorials available online.

Required working time:

It can take from 45 minutes up to several hours, all depending on the level of difficulty. It is also possible to work on some models as a team, so that students are taught to work in groups and take other opinions into account.

V.A. Past projects - Komunitas Association

V.B Past projects - Linnalabor



Our City – Our Decision

The project „Our City – Our Decision” aimed to empower children from a disadvantaged community of Bucharest, in relation to the future of the neighbourhood they live in and the city they are part of. It also aimed to create solidarity and partnership between future planners / future architects and the dwellers of disadvantaged areas, in order to create pro-social and sustainable urban spaces.

From the 1st of March 2009 till 30 June 2009, Komunitas team involved 30 pupils from the ghetto-neighbouring School no. 136 and 15 Architecture students in an experience of participative democracy and urban intervention – which will be used both as non-formal education method for civic education and as social solidarity catalyser.

Through exploration and play, the pupils learnt about their city and their neighbourhood, about how to analyze and plan improvements of the public spaces they use, about their role in the creation of the city’s future. Working together in mixed team with the pupils, the students developed the social conscience of their future profession and become more open to the principles of integrated urban development.

The results of the activities were presented to the public in the frame of a final open-exhibition – in itself one of the project’s results. The empowering but also solidarity message „our city – our decision” was transmitted to other young people and specialists.

The project was financed by European Commission, through Youth in Action programme, Action 1.2, National Initiatives

Diary of the project (in English)

<http://www.calameo.com/read/0016551846e7e89636d82>



TAKE BACK THE CITY!

”Take back the city!” project was a complex urban education project addressed to young people from schools and high schools across Bucharest. Through urban education we understand a combination of elements belonging to various fields and disciplines such as: urban planning, urban anthropology, architecture, urban history, urban patrimony, human geography, urban activism and public participation.

The project had as a main objective introducing urban education as form of extra class activity or optional discipline with the aim of stimulating young people to become more conscious urban citizens, to get involved as active citizens, able to participate at the decision-making process regarding urban development.

They benefited from a lot of activities and workshops based on non-formal education methods such as: urban walks, mental mapping, film screening, making of public art, discussion and debates, urban films and photo making. Also, they proposed and completed their own urban interventions across the city, in various public spaces.

Within the project we published the first Urban Education Guide from Romania, a possible course support for teachers interested to teach such an optional subject. We also organized the first Urban Education National Conference from Romania, an event which hosted about 200 school and high school teachers, pupils, local administration representatives, NGO members, mass media, urban planners and social anthropologists.

This project created the bases for urban education implementation in schools and high schools across Romania. The idea of bringing urban education in schools and high schools was followed and taken by several other groups and NGOs.

The project took place between November 2010 - January 2012 and it was financed by Cee Trust for Central and Eastern Europe.

Website: www.educatieurbana.wordpress.com



I AM YOUNG, BUT I GET INVOLVED!

“I am young but I get involved” was a project of participative planning and non-formal education, coordinated by Komunitas Association between September 2012 and June 2013. The beneficiaries were a group of middle school 30 pupils, from 2 schools situated in Tei neighbourhood from Bucharest, and about 10 volunteers from Bucharest University of Architecture and Urbanism.

The project aimed to empower children as urban citizens with full rights, in relation to the future of the neighbourhood they live in and the city they are part of. In order to realize this, we used non-formal methods of urban education. Through exploration, play, city excursions, planning and urban interventions adapted to kids understanding, the pupils learnt about their city and their neighbourhood, about how to analyze and plan improvements of the public spaces they use, about their role in the creation of the city's future.

This project came as an answer to the civic passivity that characterizes young Romanian generation, in relation to the cities they inhabit, community responsibilities and contemporary urban problems. This passivity and low level of civic implication is partly caused by the total lack of educational programmes in schools and high schools, that would teach youngsters about their “right to the city”, about urban problems, decision making at the urban level and participative attitudes.

Therefore, we promoted urban education in 2 schools from Bucharest, having the following specific objectives:

- Stimulating young pupils to become more active citizens, to understand and to be aware of how urban decisions affect us;
- Increasing young people's interest in community involvement and animation of public spaces in their neighbourhoods, through urban interventions and creating “urban islands”.

We managed to develop new competences for all the involved participants, both students and pupils: a better understanding of the build environment, a better understanding of sustainable

urban development, a more active and participative attitude, responsibility towards the city and towards the community etc

The project takes place between September 2012 - June 2013 and it is financed by Romanian Foundation for Civil Society Development, through Social Innovation Fund.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF KÄRLA PARISH UNTIL YEAR 2015

Kärla parish is located on the biggest island of Estonia, Saaremaa. There were counted 1691 inhabitants in the beginning of 2012. The area of the parish territory is 217,8 km². In 2006, the comprehensive plan of Kärla parish was put together by local planners with the help of planning consultancy agency Hendrikson. Within this frame the specialists involved students and took their wishes for new swimming places and leisure attractions into consideration. The children`s participation in urban planning is essential as it helps young people to feel bigger engagement with their communities.

In the comprehensive plan lots of attention in the development strategy was turned to social welfare, sanitation, education, culture and sport, natural environment and infrastructure. The strategy was made by planning specialists of local government, entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations. Vision about children and young people dynamics set the target to have as many educated children in the area as possible. Local government was ready to promote and contribute the possibilities to establish homes for young families. (Kärla valla..., 2004).

With the help of planning consultancy agency Hendrikson ja Ko the questionnaire among 50 students of Kärla Elementary School from 6th and 7th grade was made. Students were asked to draw perception map about their community and parish. Children marked on the map nice, comfortable and safe places with green/blue colours and unattractive places with red colours. As the parish is located on the island the favourite swimming places were asked to mark with certain symbols. Students from the 7th grade draw additionally on to the map the places which they would like to have in their neighbourhood.

After mapping, it appeared that the life in the parish was very focal as the children hadn`t visited lots of interesting places and sights in their home parish. What comes to unattractive places the bus stops and parish`s peripheries were named. It also appeared that besides the official beach at Karujärv (Bear Lake) many children used local quarries as swimming places (Kärla

valla..., 2004). Children wished to have skate park in their community, internet cafes and sport courts outside the parish centre.

The same kind of approach has been used in Nõo parish (2006) and in Rakvere (2011). Recent survey in Estonia showed that local authorities find it important to include children to the planning processes as they are opened and often have different views from grownups. Besides it helps to get the urban planning issues to the younger people and thus makes them more attentive citizens in the future.

SAFELY TO SCHOOL

The aim of the „Safely to School“ project is to include children into traffic and urban planning, along with the promotion of sustainable transportation.

Thus, we first asked about their transport modes and unsafe places on their school routes. Youngsters from the age of 10 to 15 mapped their morning routes to school with internet based map provided by the Estonian Road Agency and private company Regio Estonia.

The „Safely to School“ project was and is still used in Estonian schools as part of the Geography or Nature Studies lessons, but at the same time the projects supports also math and writing skills, as pupils have to describe the unsafe areas.

For mapping we mainly used computer classes in schools, but earlier similar projects are implemented with drawing on paper too.

To start with the map, students had to enter their home address first, as the school was already marked. First, they could choose different transport modes – whether they come to school by car, with public transport, walking or with bicycles. When transport modes are mapped, we asked children to mark pedestrian crossings, traffic lights, bus stops and unsafe places or areas on their way to school. There they could describe traffic related problems like speeding cars, hazardous crossings, low visibility corners etc. Quite often they described social and environmental

animals they see in nature.

Later, during the analysing process, all private information is removed from the mapping results to protect privacy of participants.

The outcome of the project is a sustainable transport plan for the school. We introduced the results of childrens maps to their parents and local government. With these meetings we gathered valuable background information for the transport plan. Also first implications of the results have been made in urban space so that the students could get to school more safely.

Linnalabor plans to continue with school travel plans under the „Safely to School“ project in the autumn of 2013. In 2012-13 we mapped 10 schools in the capital Tallinn and surrounding municipalities, where approximately 1500 pupils participated.

In future we would like to join our project with municipal transport planning process, where children's mapping would support larger mobility review in an area or in the county.

For more information visit

<http://www.linnalabor.ee/tegevus/66>

<http://www.linnalabor.ee/liikuvus2013/>



TRAIL OF DISCOVERY

Trail of Discovery is an orienteering game in urban space where you can get to know different parts of the city. You need a gamesheet - map with marked points and questions about each place that is marked, pen and perhaps a camera. During the trail you have to look for hidden and famous places, think back on the history and notice recent develop-ments in the city space. This way you can develop gamesheets that have different severities.

The game challenges you to immerse into the city patterns, discover its possibilities and bring them out. The gamesheet helps you to pass through the city streets by giving you the hints about being in the right spots and the questions you have to answer there. The idea is to make students more aware of their surroundings, make them notice things and be more attentive in the urban space. It can also enhance the knowledge of local history. Besides, it helps to develop orientating and creativity.

It is suitable for different age groups and can be done together with the teacher, in groups or separately. Duration of the game depends on the size of the area, questions and means of transport – walking, cycling, public transport. It can be played with only 1 hour but can also take up to 3-4 hours.

The idea is not about who gets the most points for finding the answers but the process itself through which they learn to understand the urban space better. After they have finished the game it is good to make some conclusions – was there something new, surprising to them to find out, what could be improved in the area, did they notice any problems in the area and so on.

This method can be easily adjusted for different situations as well. For younger students it is possible to start with some easier areas like park or school building where it is more safe and enables to draw more attention on things that they should know.

Link: <http://avalikruum.linnalabor.ee/maastikum2ng/>

Final thoughts

by Andreea Lipan, member of Komunitas Association
and coach within “Something cool happens at my school!”

Urban environment is changing continuously, with a higher speed than ours, forcing us to adapt. Our children’s childhood is different than how ours was, and than how our parents had been, and the dynamic changes of the urban environment and experience is also a contributing factor. The studies show that the larger the city, the larger the feeling of alienation. So could Urban Pedagogy make us cope better with all this change?

We have the right to use the city according to our needs, and our children have this right as well. This is what drives us to believe that Urban Education, taught in all public schools, could have the power, not only to improve knowledge, but to make us think more, to activate us and to trigger reactions and involvement.

It’s quite hard to define a clear “future” for Urban Education, considering the many factors that should work together. We already established a meaning of the term and some guiding references on how it could be put into practice, through this publication, but we don’t expect that with this “toolkit” we can change the world.

Its purpose is to share our experience and in the same time inspire others to take action. And by the term “others” I mean:

- the specialists in this field (architects, planners, anthropologists, etc.), who should consider also the social approach of their profession and share their opinion and knowledge to the general public, to the citizens, not only with the decision makers.
- the civil society, who should be a powerful voice and ask for things, rather than wait for them to just happen, being the “engine” of change and urban development
- the decision makers, who could be more close to the people they are making decisions for
- the local businesses, who have the financial and material resources to support good practices, creating a better urban environment for all, including their business
- teachers, independent of the education stage they are operating in, who could be the messengers of Urban Education
- youngsters, who have the energy, time resources and enthusiasm to make a difference!

The “Toolkit for Urban Pedagogy” is one piece of the puzzle for realizing this goal. Creating a teaching methodology and training people to teach Urban Education, would be another. Now just “brainstorm” a bit and add your own piece!

For more information you can contact the authors:

Miruna Tirca - educatie.urbana@gmail.com

Andreea Lipan - andreealipan@gmail.com

Epp Vahtramäe - epp@linnalabor.ee

Siiri Treufeld - siiri@linnalabor.ee

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