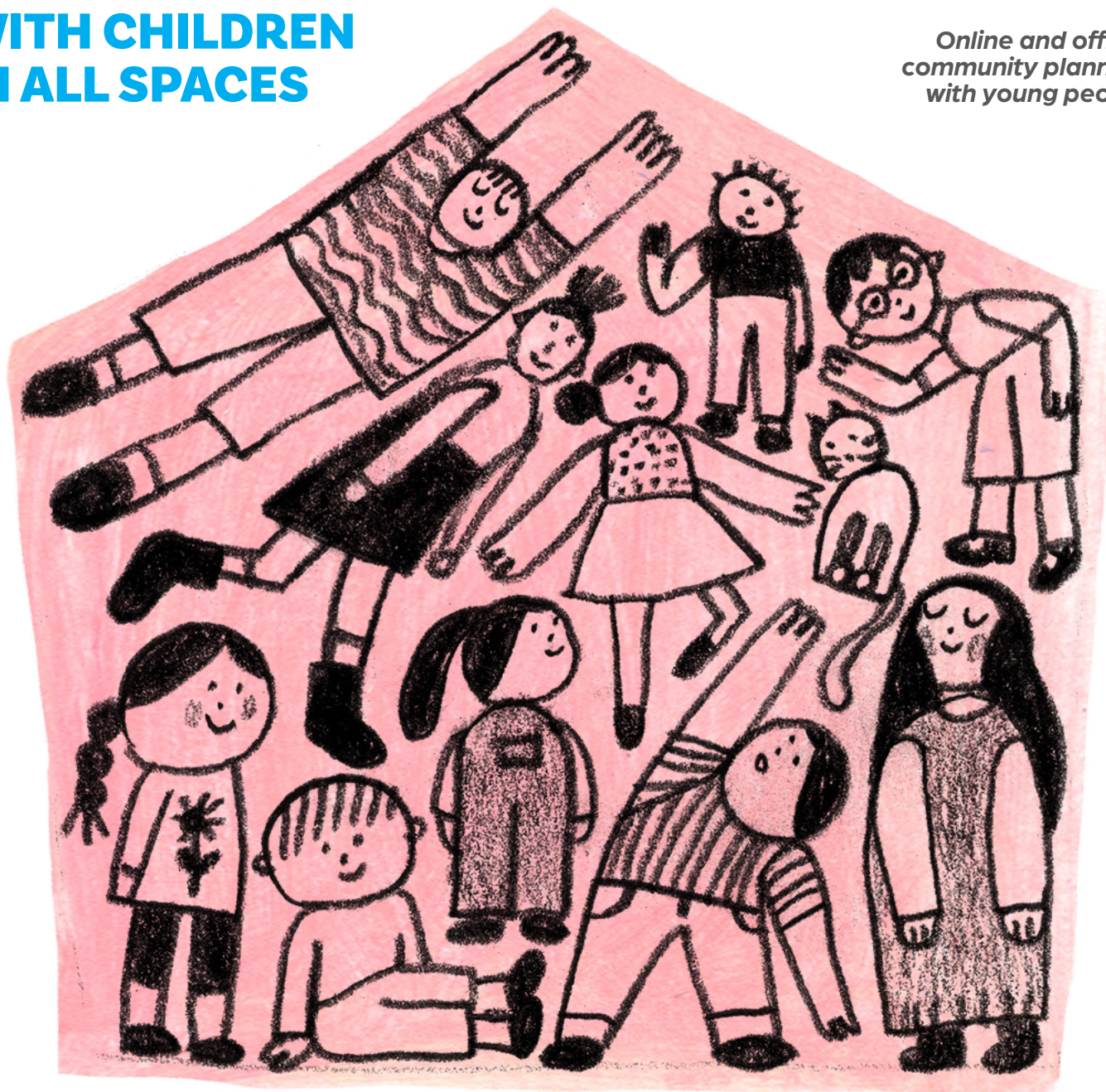


WITH CHILDREN IN ALL SPACES

*Online and offline
community planning
with young people*



Tips and methodology for transforming young people's
outdoor spaces for teachers and designers.

WITH CHILDREN IN ALL SPACES



PUBLISHING INFORMATION

Published by the kultúrAktív
Association

7625 Pécs, Mikszáth K. u. 9.

AUTHORS:

Anna Szilágyi-Nagy,
Regina Mihály

EDITOR:

Anna Zöldi

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Juli Tudisco

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

Gita Elek

REVISER:

Csilla Bartus

TRANSALTOR:

Alexandra Dénes

ENGLISH PROOFREADING:

Lolita Stégmár

The presented methods are free
to use and distribute, but not for
commercial use.

© 2019 kultúrAktív Egyesület

www.kulturaktiv.hu

Produced within the framework of the
project “*With Children in All Spaces*”,
and with the support of the Nemzeti
Kulturális Alap.

ISBN 978-615-6382-00-9


(English printed)



ISBN 978-615-6382-01-6

(English PDF)

This publication is the translated
version of the Hungarian publication:
“*Minden térben gyerekekkel - online és
offline közösségi tervezés gyerekekkel.
Tippek és módszerek a szabadterek
alakítására pedagógusoknak és
tervezőknek*”.

CONTENT

PROLOGUE	8
INTRODUCTION	10
 THE THEORY	13
Online and offline community planning in children's communities	
COMMUNITY PLANNING WITH CHILDREN'S COMMUNITIES	15
What is a children's community?	15
What makes planning community planning?	17
Why should you do it?	18
HOW TO MAKE THE DESIGN PROCESS CHILD-FRIENDLY!	20
Choose the right method!	21
Watch the time!	21
Watch out for the rhythm!	22
Let the environment inspire you!	23
COMMUNITY DESIGN OFFLINE AND ONLINE	23
Community planning offline	23
Community planning online	25

 EXERCISE	29
Offline/online community planning with children	
FOCUS ON TRANSFORMATION OF OPEN SPACES	30
DESIGNING OUTDOOR SPACES USED BY CHILDREN	31
Open spaces used by children	33
Are we transforming or creating?	33
PLANNING THE PROCESS	35
Community planning in five steps	36
 TIPS AND ADVICE	38
on conveying the five steps of community planning in online and offline formats	
Step 1 : WITH WHOM... are you planning? Get to know the community of children!	40
Step 2 : WHERE... are we? focus on-site exploration	42
Step 3 : WHAT... are we developing? formulating development objectives	46
Step 4 : HOW? ...Create and test ideas	52
Step 5: SHALL WE DO? ...design and implementation	60
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	62



PROLOGUE

DEAR READER!

For years, our association has been initiating collaborations that encourage young people and adults to actively shape their living environment. In September 2019, however, we ventured into new territories: with our ERASMUS+ collaboration, LED2LEAP, we started a community design project. With the *Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, and Ornamental Horticulture of the Hungarian University of Agricultural and Life Sciences*, we started working on the community renewal of the school environment. For the first time in the history of our association, we established tripartite cooperation with the university and *Budaörs Primary School*. We envisioned a collaboration in which we could mobilize the whole school community, from exploring the situation to formulating ideas and testing them, to create a schoolyard that would be beneficial for students, their parents, the staff, and even for the teachers.

Our initial plans were completely rewritten by the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Our creative sessions were canceled and we were forced into an online environment instead of the face-to-face encounters and meetings - and as everyone struggled to find their place in this unusual situation, we started to think about the new ways we could evoke the magic and community dimension of

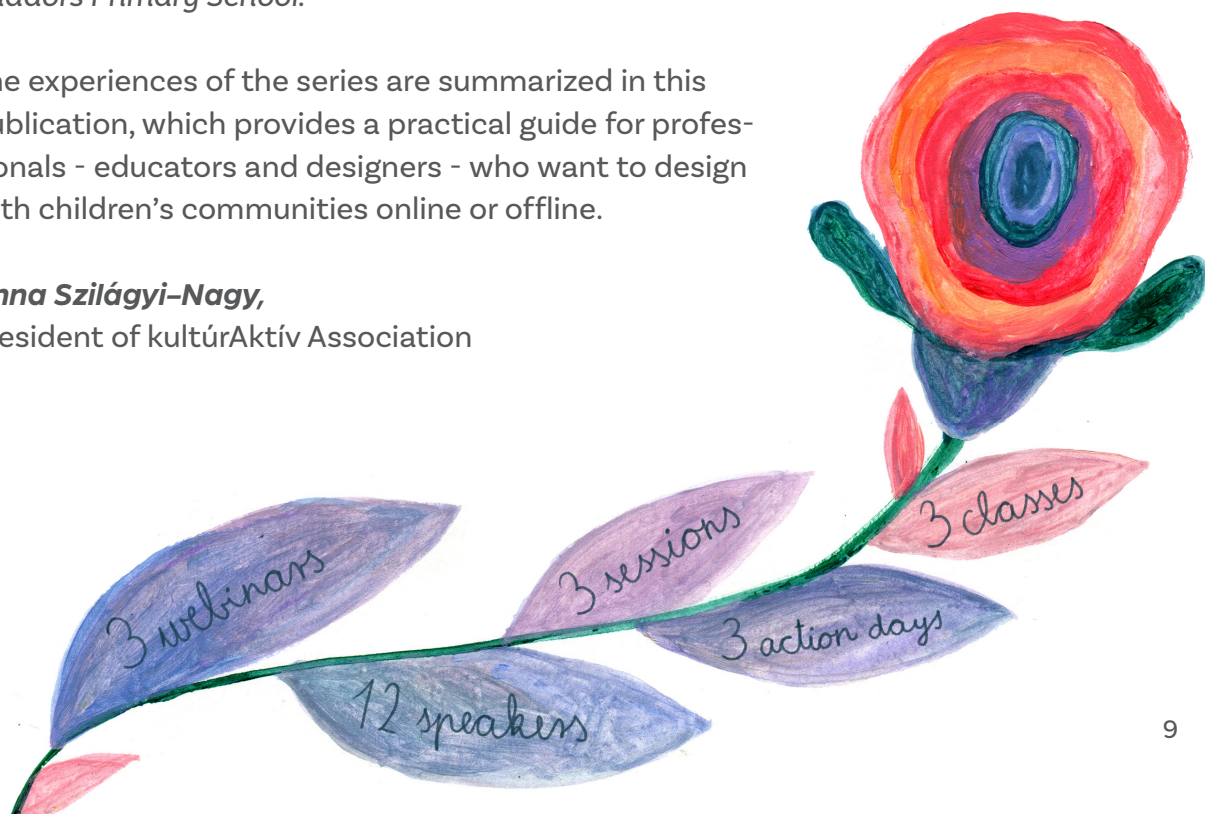
community design on an online platform. The event series called “*With Children in All Spaces*” was inspired by the challenges we have encountered in “*community online-design*”. We set out to deliver a series of professional programs that comprehensively address the practice of designing with children’s communities, whether online or offline.

The event series “*With Children in All Spaces*”, supported by the *Nemzeti Kulturális Alap*, has reinforced the three dimensions of designing with children’s communities. The themes of site assessment and analysis, priority setting, and brainstorming, in addition to the collaborative design and construction, were explored in inspirational webinars, or online presentations. Our presenters were from Germany, Austria, the US, Ecuador, and Hungary. And in their workshops, we were able to try a different aspect of community design that can work in the online space. The knowledge gained from the online conferences was incorporated into a three-part sample project, which was tested in June 2021 at *Budaörs Primary School*.

The experiences of the series are summarized in this publication, which provides a practical guide for professionals - educators and designers - who want to design with children’s communities online or offline.

Anna Szilágyi-Nagy,

President of kultúrAktív Association



INTRODUCTION

This publication focuses on online and offline community design with children's communities. In this particular approach to design, children design in their community (e.g. school community, residential community, play community, etc.) and design together, which means that they think together as a group about the spaces they use and know. They do this through a design process facilitated in an online or offline space.

What can you find in the publication?

● THEORY

The first, theoretical part of the publication is about the approach to this unique design genre. First, the basics of community design with children's communities are introduced. We address questions such as what is a children's community, what makes a design process a community, why do it. Then we'll help you learn how to make the planning process child-friendly. We will conclude our theoretical block with a comparison of community design in online and offline spaces, which will lead us through to the practical part of the publication.



● EXERCISE

In the second, practical part of the publication, we take the example of the transformation of open spaces used by children, such as the street, the block of flats, the school, the community garden, the communal courtyard, etc., and through this, we show the practice of community design in offline and online spaces. This section will start with an introduction to open spaces and the basics of open space transformation. We will then show you how to build a community design process in five steps.

● TIPS AND ADVICES

We then move on to detailing the five steps: following the “**WITH WHOM**”, “**WHERE**”, “**WHAT**”, “**HOW**”, “**SHALL WE DO?**” thought process, we move from learning about the children’s community associated with the open space to implementing the redesign ideas. All the while, we pay special attention to the “**WHERE**”, “**WHAT**”, “**HOW**” steps, for which we have collected playful design methods as a model. The methods are presented offline, i.e. in person, and online, and tips are given on how they can be applied in lower and upper primary school classrooms.



Who is this publication for?

We recommend the publication to designers and educators who want to design with young people, whether in online or offline spaces. As educators, we can learn about the process of community design; as designers, we can learn how to adapt the process of community design to the needs of children of different ages.

How to read?

If you've never done community design with children, you should read the theory section. It contains universal advice that will help you understand the approach to this type of design (what makes it community and what makes it for kids) and how to imagine how to conduct such a process online or offline.



See the **TIP** sign for tips and exercises on how to put this theory into practice.

If you already have some practice, feel free to start with the second half of the publication, where you will find help for simple planning of the process, good advice, and tricks for implementing the planning sessions offline/in person and online.



OFFLINE



ONLINE

In addition to playful methods, you will also get help on how to adapt certain steps of the design to the needs of a primary or secondary school age group



HOW SHOULD YOU CONSIDER AGE GROUPS?

We aim to help you to create a collaborative, inspiring, and creative design process with your children, both in-person and online! We wish you all the best for the future!

THE THEORY

ONLINE AND OFFLINE COMMUNITY
PLANNING IN CHILDREN'S COMMUNITIES



The first half of the publication will cover general guidelines for community planning with children's communities, which are generally applicable in both online and offline planning situations.

First, key concepts and definitions that are used, will be clarified. In the section on children's communities, we explain what we mean by this term and where you can meet and include children. Then we will show you what it means to design communities with them, and give you advice on how to create a supportive and community-rich experience online and offline.

This will be followed by a section on making the design process child-friendly, where we will help you to make the design procedure child-friendly. By following these tips, you will be ready to create a collaborative design process, both online and offline, that is exciting, experiential, and developmentally appropriate for children.

The final block of this section will compare community design in online and offline spaces. The comparison will be based on the experience of designing and implementing the action days of the "With children in All Spaces" series of programs.

If you are planning to work with children's communities, this block will be useful for you. When you are ready, continue reading the second half of this publication, where we show you how to design open spaces with young people through practical examples.



COMMUNITY PLANNING WITH CHILDREN'S COMMUNITIES

This type of planning is characterized by the fact that it takes place in a community that is made up wholly or largely of children. Typical manifestations may be formal communities of children attending the same school, or informal communities, such as children living and playing in the same street. Designing with children's communities requires a specific approach, which is to create a design process that is easy for children to engage in, enjoy and acquire the competencies to participate. So far, this is the creation of a child-friendly design. But planning with children's communities goes beyond the planning of child-friendly designs. Not only the age of children and their specificities should be taken into consideration, but also emphasizes the community dimension of the process. Community planning involves young people in small and large groups brainstorming, making joint decisions, defining a shared vision and goals. In each case, the child-friendly planning process is tailored to the specific community of children, helping them to think and act as a real community.

What is a children's community?

Community planning can involve different age groups and even mixed communities of adults and children.



In our case, we design with a specific community with a strong majority of children.

We call this phenomenon a children's community. Typical forms of children's communities can be either a formal children's community, often hierarchical, e.g. medical districts, school communities, or an informal children's community,

where children join voluntarily, e.g. a playgroup of children living in the same street, sports clubs, etc. Formal communities can be made up of several smaller communities, e.g. a school with several sections, a class with several classes, a student council, etc.

Children see the world around them differently. They experience their environment in their way and perceive different stimuli differently. Their social, intellectual, and emotional development is different from that of adults.

We need to take these differences into account if we want to plan with them. However, the concept of 'children's community' is not yet sufficiently precise to define the target group. It is not a homogeneous "mass", as they have different needs from one age group to another. Planning with children's communities is therefore a complex process.



What makes planning community planning?

Community planning involves a community because it takes place in a community. This may sound trivial, but in Hungary, the terms participatory planning and community planning are often used synonymously. Not all participatory planning processes are community planning. Let's look at an example. Participation in a planning process can be occasional and individual. This kind of planning can be called participatory planning, but less so community planning. For us, the concept of community planning means that

it takes place within a community throughout and that the community participates together in a multi-step process.

The community itself can take many forms, ranging from the community of a whole town or village to macro (e.g. institutional) and micro levels (e.g. location within an institution). In terms of its orientation, it also includes a myriad of possibilities, as community design can be used to shape a city, a courtyard, but also other interior spaces. It is a matter of identifying and mapping the needs of the community, highlighting and collecting the factors of primary importance, and then implementing them. In our case, the community is the children's community.



HINT:

How to make the planning process more collaborative?

Community planning is more than just participation. The process is more than just getting young people involved in a planning process. While they are working together and sharing experiences, they are also experiencing things on a community and individual level. They share feelings and experiences that can forge them into a community, helping them to develop a sense of belonging. This is the added value of community planning. Here are some tips to enhance the community sense!

Get to know each other (again)!

It often happens that a new participant - the architect or an outsider, even an adult - enters the children's community during the design process. Prepare with a get-to-know-you game to learn each other's names and learn new things about each other! Create situations where you can get to know each other from a new perspective for those who already know each other!

Build trust!

You can use games (like falling back and letting the other person catch you), but it may also help to create an atmosphere of trust during the planning process. By listening to each other in a big circle and being inclusive, and by involving the children in decisions or in resolving uncertain situations, you build trust.

Practice cooperation!

There are plenty of games that quickly get you working together or thinking together! When you manage to make a human chain out of clasped hands or sit down in a circle in a way that everyone sits on each other's knees, you'll not only have improved your skills but also your coordination, problem-solving, and cooperation, which is deepened by the experience of success. You don't necessarily need a separate game, the same works for joint mapping, voting, project presentation, setting priorities together, or discussions in which children work together and make decisions together.



Why should you do it?

For one, because it's good for the kids. Pedagogically, it also improves the communication skills of the children, intellectual and emotional development through a process of planning based on experience and understanding in a community. It also improves their knowledge of their environment, their spatial skills. Moreover, it is a good way for them to learn a lot without even realizing it. Alternatively, the process of designing is notable, in the context of implementation and maintenance. The joint exploration of situations and the formulation of ideas helps to build commitment and a sense of belonging to

one's environment. Through a shared process, children will feel as if the environment around them belongs to them. This is particularly reinforced when children can participate in the realization of ideas, take ownership and use the design outcome. Co-building also promotes maintenance, making children more willing to participate in the care of their environment.

Through community design, children who were previously loosely connected by learning, hobbies and a common place of residence can be forged into a real community through a common cause. It is through the proactive, long-term, and value-creating cooperation of community planning that group consciousness and solidarity can be developed.¹

¹ Tóth Zoltán: *A települések világa*.
Ponte Press Kiadó, 1997, 100.



HINT:
Work in an interdisciplinary team!

Community planning with children's communities, whether online or offline, is a highly complex process that requires both a designer's and an educator's skills. We worked in an interdisciplinary team to create the project, With Children in All Spaces that involved; an architect, an interior designer, a landscape architect, a kindergarten teacher, and a school teacher to create and deliver the sessions you see in this publication. One may learn a lot from each other's profession. As a designing engineer, you can learn about the many ways to acquire knowledge and learn about the area instead of asking direct questions. And as a teacher, you can see how many factors influence the shaping of space and what competencies are developed through exploring space.

HOW TO MAKE THE DESIGN PROCESS CHILD-FRIENDLY!



You should consider the unique needs of the young people who are engaged in the activity. Use methods that are tailored to specific age groups, that are creative, are helping towards spatial and participatory learning, and are furthering knowledge and experience in regards to the location, with room to share ideas and opinions. With regards to the process of planning involvement, you not only have to consider the structure, but the children's pedagogical and psychological needs, and regarding these needs, it is advised to create a design process team that includes a teacher (maybe even a psychologist) and a designer (architect, landscaper, urban planner, etc.) who are present during the preparation phase.

Consider your age demographic! Each age group works differently and the methods, duration, rhythm, and environment of the design process need to be tailored accordingly! Below we give age-specific advice on these.

Choose the right method!

Are you planning with pupils (7-12 years old) or preschoolers (3-7 years old)? Instead of questions and discussion, use games, performance, scavenger hunts, modeling. A round table discussion, a personal interview, or a public forum is for adults!

Are you designing with seniors or young adults? Then feel free to use oral communication methods such as debates or presentations. But don't forget creativity, which you can combine with digital tools: make a video, a media campaign, a map with young people.

Watch the time!

For all age groups, it is essential to have breaks and rest periods, which you should try to tailor to their needs. Sometimes a longer break is necessary, sometimes a shorter one is sufficient. Whatever the age group might be, it is important to remember that too long activities are not beneficial. Especially for young schoolchildren and kindergarteners, be careful! They may not verbally signal their exhaustion to you - prevent them from signaling fatigue and loss of attention by misbehaving, loitering, making more noise.

Kindergarteners

In the case of kindergarten children, there are significant differences in terms of attention span between children in **little groups** (3-4 years), **medium groups** (4-5 years), and **big groups** (5-6-7 years). There are also many individual differences between the children.

- It is important to note that with **younger children**, a session of about 15-20 minutes is reasonable. They like to play more, so it is also worth thinking about how to introduce the planning process into their free time in a guided way with the help of the kindergarten teacher.
- In **big and medium groups**, you can think of 30-minute blocks, up to 45 minutes. Be sure to consult the children's teacher about this, and later discuss your experience!

Preschoolers

At pre-school age, think in blocks of 45 minutes just like the schools' timetable. If a session is longer, make sure there is time to rest! Communication with teachers is similarly important in this case as well.

Junior/high school and adult:

- The situation for primary school pupils is similar to the ones learning in secondary school. However a full 45-minute session is less demanding for them, as they are familiar with the schedule. Always be careful not to overload them. Ask your teacher for advice and pay attention, not only when planning the session, but also during! Not all children of the same age act the same, this is true in the case of adults too. So watch what (non-verbal, verbal) cues they give!
- Adults are expected to pay attention and cooperate for longer periods, but it is a fact that their attention and motivation will also decrease over time, so they will need a break occasionally.

Watch out for the rhythm!

At the beginning of each session, use energising warm-ups to get the children going. This can also be important after a lunch break when the children are sleepy, or when you have a session with several parts and the children need to bounce back after a break. If you see them getting tired, move around, have ice cream, relax, or finish the exercise early. Keep the process entertaining. Don't worry if you have to change a pre-planned activity. Be flexible about it, with children it's the only way! It should be fun for all of you, not a burden.

Let the environment inspire you!

Make the most of the outdoors and community spaces. Go out with the kids and explore the site together, create something with materials found on site. Even if you're working indoors, notice what curiosities are around you. Surround

yourself with inspirational materials and objects, e.g. colored paper, board games, pottery, bean bags, a graffiti mural for shared ideas, etc. Create with their help, or just imagine what it would be like if the windows were the eyes of a building, for example. Always be an active observer of the environment you are in. Don't just look, see! Creativity thrives in unusual situations, which you can create anywhere, just don't put it in a box!

COMMUNITY DESIGN ONLINE AND OFFLINE

It's always valuable and possible to use community design, whether in an online or offline setting. Designing with children's communities is no exception. Of course, a process where the community meets face-to-face requires a completely different set of preparation, tools, and assistance, and community planning in an online space is a different matter. Here are some examples of how the two situations can be compared and the challenges that may arise.

Community planning offline

Until the pandemic, the backbone of community planning was face-to-face (offline) meetings. In community planning, the children were involved several times to move step by step through the planning process.

Experience-based methods

Face-to-face presence allows varying and combining a wide range of working methods and venues: small group scavenger hunts in the open air, joint or individual creation in a room, joint oral evaluation, and presentation. A common central element is the acquisition of experience, the motivation of feelings and emotions.

Solution

Face-to-face sessions highlight participatory design and traditional methods of pedagogy: energizing exercises, team-building, and confidence-building games working in small or large groups in parallel, etc. Practices have also developed on how to lead the conversation, listen to each other, etc.

Materials and supplies

In personal space, we are more instinctive with materials: we know what we will need. We can use traditional facilitation tools (flip charts, pens, colored sticky notes, post-it notes, sticky notes). If you are planning a creative exercise, you need to provide the right materials and tools (video camera, paint, large sheets of paper, glue). We need our imagination for role-playing and our bodies for spatial sculpture groups - all available offline.





HINT: Good examples from Hungary

If you are interested in how community design with children is done in Hungary, read the following publications and blog posts:

Reith Anita - Szilágyi-Nagy Anna - Zöldi Anna (ed.): Architectural Crime Prevention in Secondary School - Methodological publication for teachers. kultúrAktív Egyesület, Pécs, 2019

Zsuzska Mészáros: Blog entry, designped.com, 03.04.2016.

<https://designped.com/2016/04/03/workshop-a-reszveteli-tervezes-jegyeben>

Community planning online

Due to the pandemic, community planning has begun a new phase of development: the search for online, digital, and remote solutions has launched.² One possible solution is to move face-to-face meetings online. Instead of meeting in the open, communities meet in online rooms (Zoom, Teams, Hangouts), where everyone can log in from their environment by sharing images and sounds. If children or their families have a computer, tablet, or mobile phone, online spaces are typically not difficult - children move more naturally in online spaces than adults involved in planning.


² Anita Reith – Anna Szilágyi-Nagy
– dr. Péter István Balogh – Andrea
Keresztes-Sipos: Report of a Remote
Participatory Design Process to
Renew a Schoolyard during COVID-
19. Journal of Digital Landscape
Architecture, 6. Wichmann, Berlin, 2021

Experience-based methods

- In front of the computer or a device, it is a challenge to experience the outdoors. If the device is stationary, give the child time to stand up and look at the design site. If it is a remote location, it is recommended to give them exercises before or after the session to familiarize them with and revive their relationship with the space. A good way to do this is to record the area with video or pictures and share the recordings with the children.
- Knowing how to use an app that can host the meeting online, we can take advantage of the possibilities of group break-up: all applications now offer the possibility of working in parallel in plenary and small groups.
- Apps often include features for screen sharing, chatting, voting, quizzing, expressing emotions. These can be used to make online meetings more exciting. Every once in a while, it is worth experimenting with an app or solution that is not built into the app that hosts the online meeting.

Solution

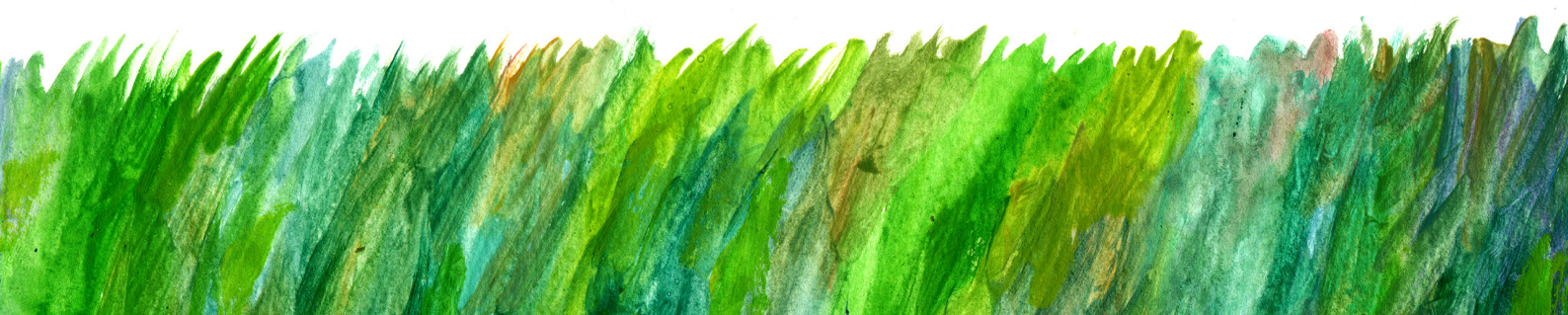
- Surprisingly, the online space offers a completely different facilitation method than the face-to-face planning sessions. In the online space, we face challenges we wouldn't think of: we can't make eye contact or just say hello to the person sitting next to us, we can't see the subtle signs that might indicate whether the other person is interested in what we are saying. Attention can also wander more easily in a home environment, not to mention the internet access and other technical problems that can arise. We may not see each other, which can be confusing, so we pay less attention to each other. Furthermore, everyone may behave differently online: some people are more shy and afraid to speak out, others are more comfortable in this world. For this reason, you have to practically relearn how to assist others: you have to be more targeted in your approach, to encourage the conversation.
- The collaborative experience that comes with face-to-face design is difficult to replicate in the online space, and it is much more challenging



to build teams and create a collaborative working environment among members who know little or nothing about each other. The games of personal presence are more effective in physical networking but take longer in online spaces. It is therefore worth being much more conscious in choosing games to introduce the sessions, to help you get in the right frame of mind, and to choose from existing online icebreakers. Play rock-paper-scissors, solo dancing, sketching online to set the scene for a good atmosphere of collaboration. While online games that promote collaboration and trust are emerging, strive to create an open and inclusive online atmosphere.

Materials and supplies

- A basic prerequisite for collaborative work is that everyone has the tools to join online meetings. It is advisable to assess the ground before the first meeting or to provide information and technical assistance on possible technical conditions. When planning, take into account the tools and facilities used by the age group. It's worth having some ideas in advance (e.g. where to share pictures, which app to use for meetings, where to communicate, email or messaging, etc.), but it's important to remain flexible and deviate from the plan if it turns out that children are more familiar with other platforms or apps.
- The white surface of the flip chart has been replaced by whiteboards that can be used online for writing, drawing, pictures, and post-it notes. These can be combined with apps for online meetings and help to smooth collective thinking.



- Co-creation is a challenge in the online space. While it is easy to create montages and drawings together live, it is more difficult (for the time being) to find a creative interface in online spaces that is intuitive and conducive to collaborative three-dimensional analysis. But there's no need to give up on creating, with cameras on everyone, people can create simultaneously from their room if they need to.
- We can also try to experience feelings and sensations online (playing certain sounds, turning cameras or sounds on or off), and experiment with body-activating games and exercises.



TIPP:

Good examples from Hungary

For tips on online community planning, check out the following two blog posts:

Anna Szilágyi-Nagy - Ilka Deményi:

Blog post on epitettkornyezetineveles.blogspot.com, 03. 11. 2020.

<http://epitettkornyezetineveles.blogspot.com/2020/11/kozosse-gi-tervezes-gyerekekkel-1-resz.html>

Anna Szilágyi-Nagy - Ilka Deményi: Community planning with young people Part 2 - Methods for working in online spaces. Blog post on epitettkornyezetineveles.blogspot.com, 05. 11. 2020.

<http://epitettkornyezetineveles.blogspot.com/2020/11/kozosse-gi-tervezes-fiatalokkal-2-resz.html>

In this article, you can read about the direction in which remote design techniques should be developed to better serve community design:

Anita Reith - Anna Szilágyi-Nagy - dr. Péter István Balogh -

Andrea Keresztes-Sipos: Report on Remote Participatory Design Process to Renew Schoolyards during COVID-19. *Journal of Digital Landscape Architecture*. 6-2021, Wichmann, Berlin

EXERCISE

OFFLINE/ONLINE COMMUNITY
PLANNING WITH CHILDREN








FOCUS ON TRANSFORMATION OF OPEN SPACES

In the first half of our publication, we focused on what community planning in children's communities is. We presented the general guidelines: who are the members of children's communities and where to find them; what it means to design in a community and how to create a supportive and collaborative atmosphere; and tricks to make a design process child-friendly. These guidelines apply to community design in both offline and online spaces. We then compared the main features and differences between community design in offline/face-to-face and online platforms, based on our experiences during the “*With children in All Spaces*” series of programs.

In the second half of our publication, we provide practical guidance on how to design and implement the community planning process, whether online or offline. For the “*With Children in All Spaces*” series, we will use the results of the first phase of the project. *Budaörs Primary School* provided the setting for the series of activities, and we gained practical experience in the transformation of open spaces. If you are designing a new outdoor area or working with indoor spaces, you will probably need to change the way the process is structured and you will need additional tasks too. But being unique is true for any community design process.

What can you find here? First, we are going to introduce you to the outdoor spaces that you can use this publication to transform. Second, we offer help on how to build your community design process. Then we are presenting the five steps of the process:

-  learning about the community **(WITH WHOM)**,
-  exploring the place **(WHERE)**,
-  formulating development objectives **(WHAT)**,
-  generating and testing concrete ideas **(HOW)**,
-  and finally the planning and implementation step **(SHALL WE DO?)**.

Following the “**WITH WHOM**”, “**WHERE**”, “**WHAT**”, “**HOW**”, and “**SHALL WE DO?**” steps, you will be able to redesign the area with a simple community planning process.

We will show how each step connects to the redesign process. The “**WHERE**”, “**WHAT**”, “**HOW**” processes are dealt with extra attention. These should be imagined as creative workshop sessions, which could be conducted in both offline and online spaces. You can find sample exercises for both versions, which inspire you for your community planning process. Each part is concluded by explaining how you may tailor the exercises for small children and teenager age groups.

DESIGNING URBAN OPEN SPACES USED BY CHILDREN

We also deal with urban outdoor spaces used by children, in the design of which children and teenagers should be taken into consideration. We call these open spaces because we are dealing with the space around and between the buildings.³

³ *Forrás: Balogh Péter István:
A szabadterek szerepváltozása
a nagy európai városmegújításokban.
Doktori értekezés, 1. tézis, 2004*

These could be:

- public parks
- urban squares and streets
- outdoor spaces of institutions
- thematic urban open spaces
- private gardens
- open spaces related to development areas
- waterfronts



If you are thinking of redesigning these spaces, this publication will help you. One thing is important: if you are inviting the children for designing, choose open spaces that they would normally use on their own or in groups and they are connected with or know. The areas to be planned -be it the property of the local-, or higher government or private-, could be used by the public in general or by certain communities, but they should be available for the children. Here are a few examples.



Open spaces used by children

Outdoor spaces could be used in various ways by many people. There are certain urban open spaces, which are in public use, that is: members of the public may use them any time according to the set of rules concerning the area. These included streets, squares, public parks, or natural places (or nature close places) that are used for recreation, sports, markets, events and festivals, art or even protests. Some spaces are restricted in terms of use e.g. the ones requiring payment for entry or ones that have specific open hours: pay-to-visit public gardens or museum gardens and playgrounds that have open hours. The rules concerning these public spaces apply to the children just as they apply to adults in the community.

We use some of these spaces as a community, but not in a community. The fact that many of us are in that space at the same time does not imply that the open space functions as a public space, where people may talk to and spend time with each other. For the children, typical meet-up places could function as public places: a hidden nook of the park, the terrace of a fast-food restaurant, or the playground for smaller children. Besides public spaces, certain places function as actual community spaces, where the users make up a definable group or community. The community is held together by residence, work relations, studying, leisurely activities, or a “common goal” as well. The community open space used and known by children could be the schoolyard, the training field of a sports club, the yard of the residential community, or a public play street.

Are we transforming or creating?

When working with an open space that is actively or less actively, but still used and known by the under-aged, they have experience with how the area functions, which means that we may use the feelings and experiences connected to the area during the community planning phase. Our task begins with getting to know and examining the already existing outdoor area, followed by redesigning and reconstructing it. There is a high chance that certain ideas may come to mind which could be achieved by the children too.

If we are dealing with an outdoor space that does not exist or work as a community space (e.g. it was previously used privately or it was hard to get to and explore by the children at the moment of planning), then another approach is necessary. Since children do not have experience with the area, the goal could be to let them express their needs and wishes. The starting point of the planning phase is getting to know the outdoor space and assessing the demands of future users. The following procedure explained may help to build this up, by when creating a new space, expansion is necessary.

If you are wondering about how the schoolyard could be more liveable, how could the inner courtyard of apartment blocks serve children, or what would make the public area or square in front of your house more child-friendly, you can bravely rely on the following part of the publication.

PLANNING THE PROCESS

The main requirement of community planning is the common will for planning. It may happen that you have just been invited to a community planning process. In this case, you have nothing else to do, just say yes. But it may just be that you as a teacher or planner may be the one initiating child-community planning. In this case, take into consideration who you need to get in touch with, and who you need to include to make the process of community planning happen! Do you need permission from your parents? Is it necessary to talk to the class teacher or the manager of the group? Could it be that the local government is your partner? Scout your opportunities and research before you begin! Once the need for community planning is created, the planning of the process can begin. Think about who will be the core of the planning process, meaning a fixed set of children, who you can meet several times in online or offline spaces as will. Start building the curve of the process with the community in mind. The five steps listed below are what we think are important for community planning. The steps revolve around the “**WITH WHOM**”, “**WHERE**”, “**WHAT**”, “**HOW**” “**SHALL WE DO?**” key notions.

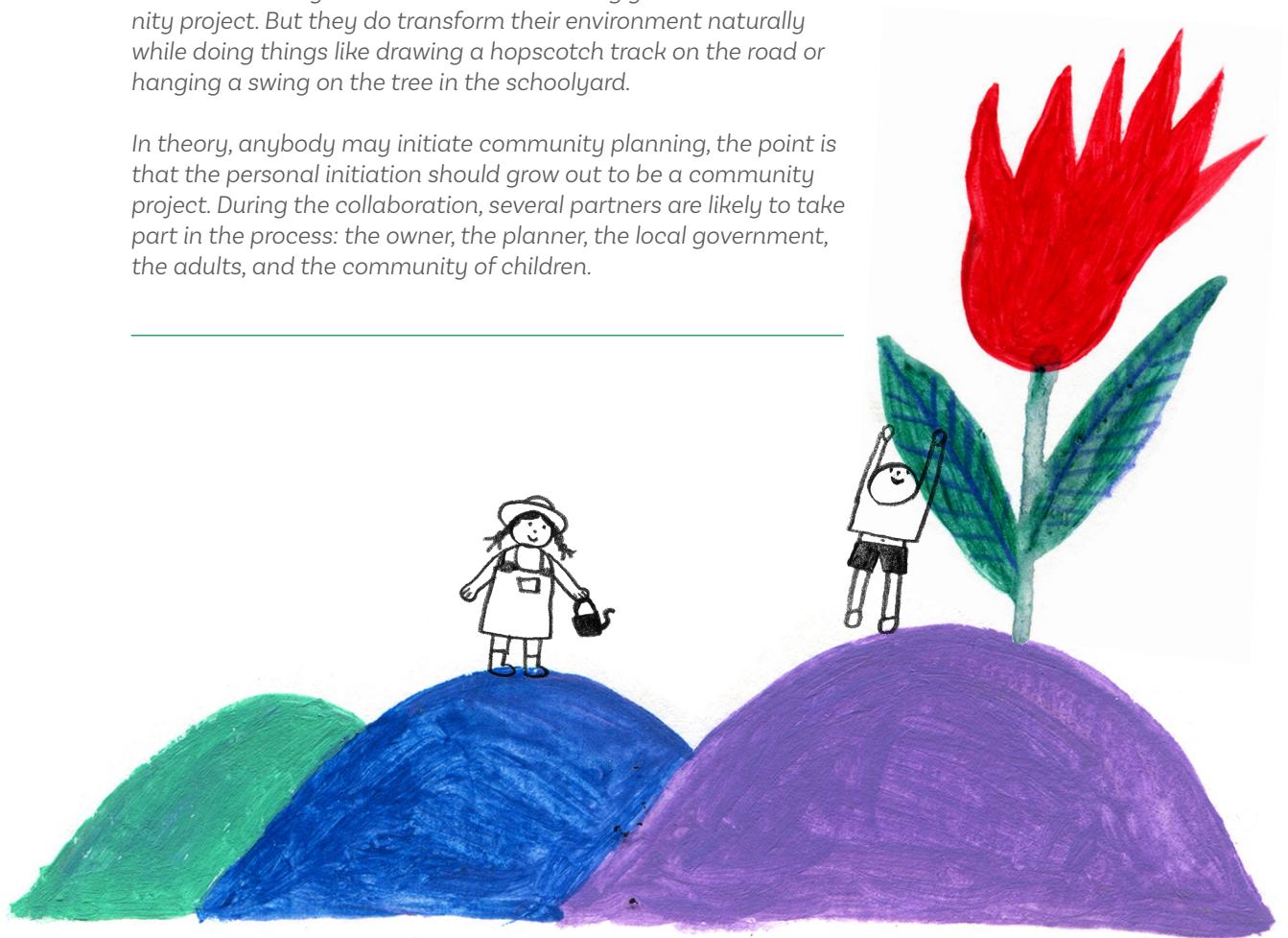


HINT:

Who may initiate community planning with children?

The redesign process of open spaces used by children can begin in several ways. It may happen as a part of an organized city planning process, while the local government is renovating the main square or is rehabilitating a part of the city. Also, it may start as a private initiation. For example, when a design agency decides to include the students, parents, and teachers in the process of redesigning the yard of the institute. Adult members of a residential community may initiate the transformation of a public garden or street with the help of the children who live there. It is unlikely that the children will willingly initiate a community project. But they do transform their environment naturally while doing things like drawing a hopscotch track on the road or hanging a swing on the tree in the schoolyard.

In theory, anybody may initiate community planning, the point is that the personal initiation should grow out to be a community project. During the collaboration, several partners are likely to take part in the process: the owner, the planner, the local government, the adults, and the community of children.



Community planning in five steps



Firstly, decide **WITH WHOM** are you planning. Get acquainted with the community of children who are planning with you: who it consists of and what are they like. Based on this, you may decide whether your session will be online or offline, how many times and with what frequency you will meet the children, how long could a session take, and what kind of tasks and games you are going to use.



You should deal with the **WHERE?** question on the first face-to-face or online meeting. The theme of the location exploration session is getting to know the outdoor space that is to be redesigned. Explore the location, in a group or individually as it fits, then share and record the experiences.



The **WHAT?** question should be dealt with in the second meeting. The results of the first session should be recalled, so that you may decide what improvements are important with the knowledge of the location. The community creates a vision of the future, which can be elaborated further by concrete ideas.



The third session deals with the **HOW?** question. Exact, concrete ideas should be thought of for the visional future. Organize brainstorming sessions, make models and build the ideas and test them with other people.



During the **SHALL WE DO?** step, walk around and decide which reconstruction process could include children and in what way. Also, with attention to the feedback, finalize your ideas and if it is suitable, start the redesign process.





HINT:

How to set up a meeting:

The “**WHERE?**”, “**WHAT?**” and “**HOW?**” steps require actual meet-ups, which should be structured as creative sessions. The organization and planning process of each meet-up is time-consuming work. A method should be chosen, group dynamics and the energy of children should be thought of, etc. You may find the following general guidelines helpful during the planning of meet-ups. The session should be structured!

1. There should always be an “introduction”!

You need a warmer activity, which helps to get into the spirit of the session! The goal is to raise interest and help to settle into the topic.

2. The main topic should be well-separated.

In this part, you should focus on the most important question. In our example, these revolve around the “**WHERE?**”, “**WHAT?**”, “**HOW?**” questions.

Think about the tasks, activities, and what method may help the topic according to this.

3. There should be a conclusion!

There should be a simple final part, a conclusion to the session! It is not necessary to give feedback, but the group should discuss what has been done and what is to come later. This is important, as the children should see that they have created something, which they can carry on with making real.



HINT:

Always bring a reminder!

There could be a lot of time in between sessions. You should organize each meet-up in a way that they should occur every 1-2 weeks. This is important because children like to see that the time spent together is productive and because they should not fall out of the thinking process. To avoid this, you can conclude each session with some kind of visual reminder, which could be recalled at the beginning of the next one. This reminder could be a picture or a story, but it should be engaging and memorable for the children.

TIPS AND ADVICE

A KÖZÖSSÉGI TERVEZÉS ÖT LÉPÉSÉNEK
OFFLINE ÉS ONLINE LEBONYOLÍTÁSÁHOZ



In the following part, the five steps of community planning are explained in detail. Following the “**WITH WHOM**”, “**WHERE**”, “**WHAT**”, “**HOW**”, and “**SHALL WE DO?**” thought process, we go from getting to know the community of children to implement ideas.

At the “**WHERE**”, “**WHAT**”, “**HOW**” steps, we discuss which tasks suit the planning processes of the meet-ups best in detail. A few tasks and methods are shown for each planning goal, which you can use for your sessions and advice will be given on how you may convey these in both online and offline spaces. The concept is, that offline space implies face-to-face meetings, where everyone taking part in community planning can be in the same place in person at the same time. Also, by online space, we mean that the people taking part in community planning join the planning process from different places using some kind of application designed for online meet-ups (eg. *Zoom*, *Teams*, *Hangout*, etc.). Finally, we will explain how you may suit each activity to the given age group. The listed activities will be done by lesser- and higher-grade primary school students, therefore they are tailored with them in mind. In case you are planning to work with a different age group (kindergarten or adult), you will find help in the first, general part of this publication regarding how you should start.

Good luck with the execution!





STEP 1: WITH WHOM... ARE YOU PLANNING? GET TO KNOW THE COMMUNITY OF CHILDREN!

The first part is getting to know the community of children who use the open space. You will likely be working in groups where you also need to include adults. It is important to clarify that the school community and the community of children do not mean the same. The school community includes teachers, janitors, cleaners, etc. It may be worth planning the task in a way that is interesting for adults as well, as they may also be of interest, besides the children.

Once you have made contact with the children and the adults surrounding them (parents, in case of an institute outdoor space, the member of that institute), you need to be aware of how the community of children works. Who it consists of, how old are they, where are they from, how do group dynamics work in that community? You should use this information in the planning process of community planning.



HINT:

Read the part titled “How can the planning process be child-friendly?”!

In the creation of a child-friendly planning process, the part titled “Community planning with children communities” may be of use for you. Think about how many times you will be able to meet. What would you like to achieve by the end of the series of sessions? Will all sessions be in person, or facilitated online? Do you want to mix these up? What methods suit the age group and the session type (online or offline) best? Plan the curve and the rhythm of the process and the goals of each session.





HINT:
Involve the teachers!

Always emphasize the pedagogical aspects and the involvement of teachers in the design of the process. Each child has unique needs and abilities. Their teachers know them best. When you are designing with children, they are your main source of help. Before you finalize the implementation process, team up with the teacher(s)! We can also give you some advice, but when you are planning your session, the teacher(s) knowledge will be your biggest help.

Are you a teacher? If so, get in touch with a spatial design expert, who will help you make the process effective.



HINT:
Keep an evaluator!

Evaluation sessions are especially important for children. Ask them how they felt about the activity, encourage them to tell you what they liked and didn't like. This sends out the message that you take them seriously, that their opinions matter, and that you are keen to ensure they have a good experience. Feedback will also give you more flexibility to prepare for the next time and give them an activity they will enjoy doing. Hold an evaluation at the end of the session or at the end of a longer process (e.g. when you have reached the end of the planning phase, followed by the implementation).

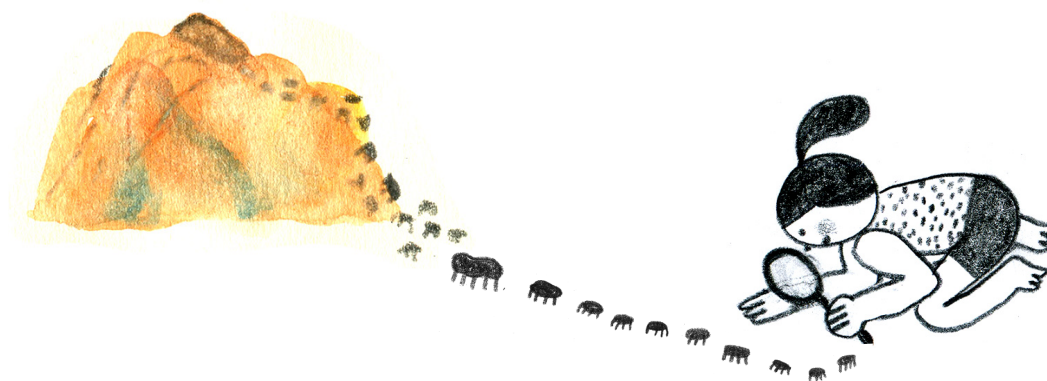




STEP 2 : WHERE... ARE WE? FOCUS ON-SITE EXPLORATION

The purpose of the site exploration session is to understand and contextualize the subject of community planning, the outdoor space that children use. As we are talking about existing space, the aim is to explore its current use, values, and challenges, which can be explored from a variety of perspectives. Emotions, community symbols, the physical characteristics of open space, perceptions of space, habits of using space, current problems, and challenges are all possible themes. It is worth exploring the site from different perspectives and drawing on the personal experiences and knowledge of young people.

Most of the exercises used in the meeting are about walking around the space, observing it from a certain point of view, collecting and recording data, surveying the space.





METHODS AND TIPS FOR OFFLINE MEETINGS

Our favorite methods include games that mobilize children in space. They must walk around the place you're talking about, even if they already know it somewhat!

- You can play scavenger hunts in the yard. Look for creatures or figures in the yard (in plants, on walls, street/floor, grass, etc.) that you can see every day! Determine how to do the scavenger hunt by thinking about the characteristics of each age group.
- Make teams around the site and take photos along pre-defined themes. Which is your favorite place, which do you dislike?
- Take a still picture: what do you like to do in these places, or what would you like to do? Asking targeted questions will help to shape the conversation later, as they will give you a basis for it.

After that, you can start talking, thinking, sharing your feelings about the different places! Help the children to express their emotions, considering the different ages of the groups. Use emojis, emotion cards! These will help you to nuance emotional expressions.

You might not think, but you can do all this online...





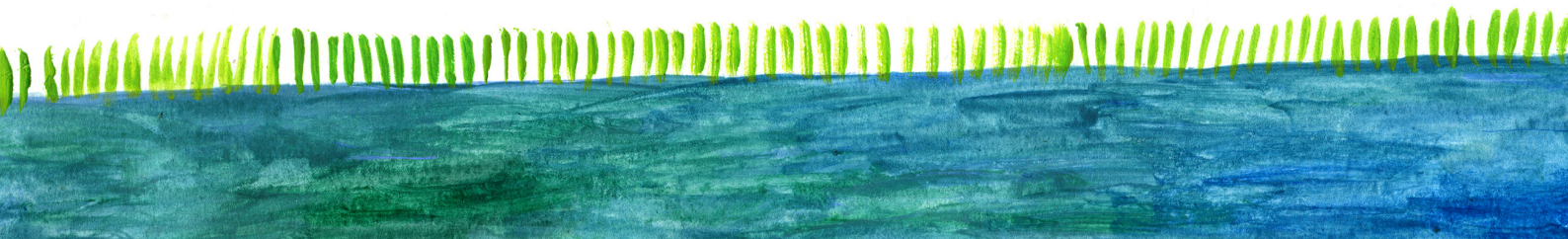
METHODS AND TIPS FOR ONLINE MEETINGS

You can also map together online:

- You should map on a shared online whiteboard or canvas! Examples of such online platforms are *Mural* or *Miro* online whiteboard, where everyone can work at the same time and edit together. Upload an orthophoto or map as a background, then ask the children to upload photos they have taken on the spot, post online with comments on the map, or use emoticons to show emotions.
- You can also use *Google maps* to map the site by navigating the site together (you can do this with screen sharing and then everyone will see the same thing). There is also an option to add pictures and comments, although this tends to work well in the case of larger-scale photo resolution.
- Even in the case of an online meeting, you don't have to map online! Turn the cameras towards the drawing page and draw the location, then work on it. This exercise can also be used to draw from memory and show so-called mental maps to each other, even in break-out rooms.

If on-site photos are required, children should arrive with a camera to take with them. If they are on-site and you are away, give them time to run out and return with the photos.

- There are also apps, such as *Flipgrid*, where you can create a private group to upload videos, pictures and react to each other's content.





HOW SHOULD YOU CONSIDER AGE!

The **WHERE?** question focuses on discovery. This in itself is an enjoyable activity for a child. We will now try to give you some guidance on how to differentiate by age in a primary school.

Primary school pupils

Guidance: for younger individuals, the role of the adult mentor is more important. For children, it is crucial to feeling the presence and the support of an adult. This age group is (usually) less independent, some encouragement means a lot to them. Be a partner and be present!

Experience: in this age group you can rely on fantasy, fairytales, imaginary elements, and stories. They are easily motivated by stories, feel free to put on your magic glasses! Be brave and use digital tools (camera, phone, etc.). It may take more time to prepare, but it will pay off because they will enjoy it.

Secondary school pupils

Guidance: They also need a mentor who is in control of the process and can be contacted if they have any questions. Be open, listen to their thoughts, treat them as equal partners. For this age group, it is particularly important not to have a hierarchical relationship, but to be able to participate as partners.

Experience: In this age group playing has become “embarrassing”. The concept of playing often describes childhood games, but for them, it is no longer cool. Find out what makes them move! Try to be playful by creating more adult situations. Grab paper, take notes and use digital tools to document! You can think of interesting games for them, mobile apps, which you can even choose based on a theme (it’s worth assessing this beforehand). They will be particularly motivated if they can do activities like adults and explore the site almost as “researchers”, having their say on the topic.





STEP 3 : WHAT...ARE WE DEVELOPING? FORMULATING DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

During the mapping process, we gathered a lot of information about the current or potential use, strengths, and weaknesses of the space. The next step in defining improvement objectives should be prioritized. What are the most pressing issues? What is the most important issue that concerns everyone and is important to everyone? This is followed by the visioning step. By summarising the priorities, we envision a forward-looking vision that gives direction on how to transform open space. It may seem incredible, but it can all be done together.

Get ready for an exercise in which evaluation, weighting, discussing different points of view, and joint decision-making are important. Also, have creative writing and creative exercises that can in some way represent the vision that the children have imagined.



METHODS AND TIPS FOR OFFLINE MEETINGS

SWOT

To help identify the most pressing issues, a SWOT analysis is a well-established method in planning. SWOT is an English acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT). You can use the method in a child-friendly way.

Instead of strength, ask about:

- What place would you like to show to your best friend?
- Where do you play the most with your friends?

When it comes to weaknesses:

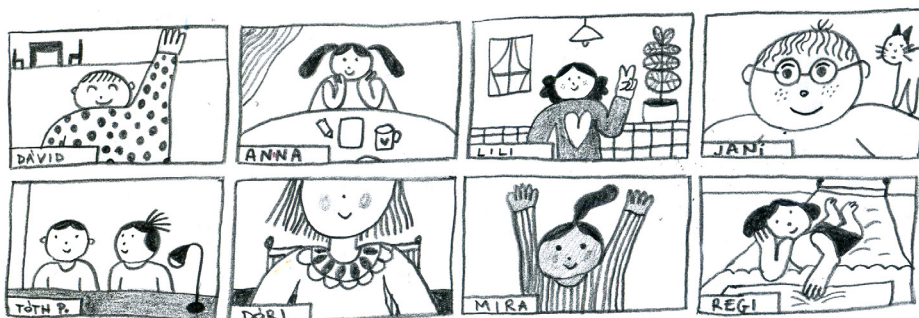
- Is there any place you wouldn't feel comfortable going with your friend?
- Where is a place where you spend little to no time?

Along with similar questions, try to get children to tell you what they like and don't like. Make a brainstorming session and do a joint analysis. Let this be the basis for a vote.

VOTE

You can also use the maps in the previous section to identify problems. Use them to make a list of problems and vote on what the most pressing problem is with the space. This is what you will come up with, ideas for the next section. Feel free to vary the different decision-making mechanisms. Here are some of them:

- Elect representatives to discuss problems in public and reach a consensus decision.
- Allow everyone to vote on one issue; whichever problem or issue gets the most votes is the one you deal with next.
- Give everyone three votes, whichever one they want, to distribute among the issues.
- There may be more than one issue, so please keep to a maximum of three.
- You can each have one vote, but if you don't want to vote, you can pass it on to someone you trust and consider to be an expert on the topic.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Once you have found the problem, turn it into a positive vision. For example, if the problem is that you can't go outside in winter because of snow or in autumn because of rain, imagine an outdoor space that can be used in all seasons. If the grass has fallen out or the gate has fallen down, there are many creative ways to dream of a well-kept and maintained outdoor space. Write a tagline or motto for the dream. Make a collage that shows what such an outdoor space would look like. Write a poem about it. You are free to use creative techniques!



METHODS AND TIPS FOR ONLINE MEETINGS

SWOT

SWOT analysis or voting can also be done online.

- For SWOT, open a Google document that anyone can edit. Share the link in the chat of the online meeting. Give 5 minutes for everyone to add their thoughts. Then go around and see what has been put into the document. You can also lead the exercise by inviting the children to an idea session while you or a child takes notes.
- You can also do the exercise in small groups. Divide the topics: have a room of three for strengths, a room of three for weaknesses, and so on. Give each group 5 minutes to discuss what the topic means to them. After 5 minutes, meet again in plenary. Ask the people in charge of each topic to tell you what they have come up with. The others can listen to them and add something if they want to.

VOTE

Voting can also be done online.

Take advantage of the features of the apps!

- Using Zoom as an example, you can probably also use hand-picked voting in your app. This can work with the voting icon, or even with camera

sharing. In this case, count to three and raise your hand if you vote yes. Count and announce the result.

- Remember, you can also vote against certain topics. Ask the question: What is one thing that should not be talked about? The vote is now open.
- You can also set up a secret or open vote with the poll function.

Use other interfaces too!

- You can also vote on online boards (*Mural*, *Miro*). Use the vote function to set up who gets how many votes. Once everyone has voted, you can show the results. You can also set up an interface where children can indicate their vote by placing digital voting dots. This could be the open voting version.
- *KAHOOT* is recommended if you want to vote in a playful, quiz-like way. You will need to prepare the voting interface. You can choose from a few predefined quiz formats. Once the quiz is ready, you will receive a code to share with your children, who can connect to the quiz from their computer or phone via the internet. Launch the quiz and you're ready to vote.
- *Mentimeter* is an online platform that creates statistics on what is more important (there is a line of importance, real prioritization is done). You can give participants a choice of answering several questions. They will choose, for example, three of these options (you can change this). At the end of the voting process, the result will come out, which options are the most important for the community.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Ask the children to search the internet for inspiring photos and upload them to their shared online boards (*Mural*, *Miro*). Or ask them to draw a picture or collage together on the online board to represent the vision. Everyone should draw a line, insert a picture, an icon. Give the exercise a frame and a title. You can also try with the camera facing the table. Give the children some time to draw or glue collages in their own space. Show the completed artwork to each other.





HINT: **Involve the general public!**

So far, we've shown you what processes are required before the planning sessions. As well as working in a small community, it can be important to involve the public. The design of the courtyard of the apartment building may be of interest to the residents on the 6th floor, the building manager, etc. The same is true for the school: it will engage the children, but also the parents. You may find yourself in a situation where you have to reach a lot of people who live far apart, e.g. the whole school, the headmaster, the PTA. In this case, you can use one of the following strategies:

- Start an online questionnaire (e.g. google forms). This is also useful for those who are not present at the meeting. It is a good idea to send out the questionnaire before or after the meeting and even submit it to the whole school community. It can be used to identify problems, assess specific difficulties, or even to collect ideas.
- You can also vote on Instagram. You can create a page where you can link a poll to a picture. Here you can only vote for two options. But the comment option opens the space for comments. Post your problems or suggestions in this way.
- You also have the option to delegate the decision to the public. You can put forward proposals to be voted on by the wider community.
- Running a competition for ideas is also a great opportunity. You can involve the whole community and gather a lot of ideas for the design of your open space. (Another excellent online platform for collecting ideas is Padlet, where you can also rate and comment on ideas).



HOW SHOULD YOU CONSIDER AGE!

Don't forget to take into account the differences between age groups!

Primary school pupils

Guidance: Support the pupils and help them formulate what their problems are. They will often “just” describe it, giving examples of what they don’t like, what they are having a bad experience with. They may recount events that have happened, but they do not draw any conclusions. They may point out favorite places more easily, but here they also tell nice stories, activities they like to do there. Direct their thoughts to the why question. It is important to highlight that they are not yet really expected to find and express serious conclusions or cause-and-effect relationships. Guide them, make sure they can express themselves!

Experience: Find situations in which it is easier for them to imagine the debate. Find situations that help the kids to think about how they can debate in different ways.

Secondary school pupils

Guidance: This age group can point out problems using more concrete terms or draw conclusions from what bothers them. For example: ‘We don’t like to be in this area because it’s very hot in the summer and the sun is always very shiny. So we need some shade, it would be much better.’ In their case, watch out for the fact that they like to assert their opinions, so keep a handle on who you give the floor to. Guide the discussion, the conversation, so that they can listen to each other in a civilized way. Also, teach them the culture of debate. Believe me, if there is an atmosphere of trust, everyone will be happy to speak up and share their thoughts.

Experience: Use interactive methods, situational games, or digital tools to brainstorm ideas. Put them in a situation where they can feel like an “adult” in a town hall meeting.





STEP 4 : HOW?... CREATE AND TEST IDEAS

Creating ideas

In this phase, young people formulate concrete proposals for a commonly agreed vision. Ideas for intervention can range from maintaining existing space or equipment to adding missing features or furniture, or introducing new rules, or even clarifying or reducing existing functions. Try to make children aware of these aspects. After brainstorming, the presentation should take place. This will be the tangible result of the brainstorming.

Ideas are effortlessly generated through problem-solving associations or brainstorming techniques. To present your ideas, look for creative exercises that allow you to visualize them quickly. Are there too many ideas? Use the decision-making mechanisms or discussion game presented in the previous step to choose which one you will test.



METHODS AND TIPS FOR OFFLINE MEETINGS

There are several options for brainstorming exercises.

- We like the brainstorming exercise “I like this and ...”. Make pairs. One should give an idea of how they think the problem, you prioritized in the previous session, could be solved. The other half of the pair should answer “I like this and....(idea)”. Your partner responds with another idea with the sentence “I like this and more....(idea)”. And so on. Simple, but it works great.

- For the problem-solving pairing game, make two decks of cards beforehand. In one, put typical outdoor problems (shady, noisy, small, blighted, crowded, etc.), and fill the other deck with solutions (shade, more equipment to play, pruning, new rules, etc.). Draw a problem and start pairing solutions to it. Once you have the problem, have teams of three work separately to find solutions to the same problem. After five minutes, present to the others what you have come up with. This exercise will lead you through the planning stage if you add a few questions to help you (what you need to implement it, who you need to involve). This way the children can present concrete ideas to each other.





Online space offers many opportunities to brainstorm.

- On the one hand, you can try to implement the brainstorming exercise and problem-solving associative exercise presented in the offline space in the online space. Online meeting spaces can be used to create small rooms where brainstorming techniques can be applied in small groups. Use online rooms to work in pairs and groups, collecting ideas in a shared text document. Go back to the shared space and discuss together which group has come up with what kind of idea.
- You can also use the online meeting chat for brainstorming. A game called Waterfall worked for us. Everyone can post their ideas in the chat, but don't send them immediately! Count to three, then everyone presses enter at the same time and the idea waterfall starts. Enjoy the reading and the discussion!
- You can use other apps for brainstorming instead of a chat room. Our favorite platform is *Padlet*, which can be used as an online idea board or bulletin board. You can upload pictures (your own or even from the internet), add texts and even comment on each other's pictures. Open a pallet for the group. Choose what kind of collection you want: inspirational pictures or solutions for different locations? Once you have the pictures, ask the children to comment on each other's content. Review the final result together.





HINT: **Nominal group technique**

The so-called nominal group technique, which is a group decision-making method, is also helpful in the case of brainstorming. You can easily do this online by setting up the process on your online whiteboard. First, each person individually formulates 1-2 specific changes to the site and writes them down in a notebook. When everyone is done, it's time to share. One by one, everyone tells what they wrote on the paper, and the ideas are collected on a shared bulletin board. Once we have circulated, the discussion leader summarises what has been said and collates the papers with the same idea. Then comes the voting phase. Everyone is given 3-5 sticky dots to vote for that transformation idea they think is the most important. The top five will be considered, then the ideas can be modeled and built, and testing may begin.



HINT: **Debate!**

You may have lots of good ideas and it's hard to choose only one. Organize a debate game to choose the best idea. This can also help if, for example, you can't agree on what the top priority is.

- Use debate techniques! Make role cards, each student should get a different point of view. What impact does the idea have on the community, sustainability, budget? You can also create role cards based on who is connected to the space. What does the neighbor think? The manager? The local council? The sustainer? Divide the roles and show what they might think about the transformation.
- Argue for and against the proposed idea. You can even score the number of arguments you can come up with. This will make the arguments bounce faster.
- Keep the age of the group members in mind. Create a fairytale situation for the younger ones, a real-life situation for the older ones.





HOW SHOULD YOU CONSIDER AGE!

Primary school pupils

Guidance: brainstorming techniques can be used in all age groups. Think about how younger age groups can be motivated. As a team, have a mentor who facilitates the process and then helps to present the idea. You can then use the voting methods mentioned in the previous point to select a plan to implement.

Experience: Discuss the chosen locations, problems, priorities, and vision for the future, together! Creative brainstorming together can also be fun for less creative children. Put your thoughts and ideas on paper and create posters and billboards! The aim is to get children to try to argue and convince each other of the merits of their designs. To help them do this, you can give them a set of criteria (sustainability, feasibility, material, aesthetics). In the end, the finished works can be put to a vote.

Secondary school pupils

Guidance: In this case, the key element is the brainstorming method that we should think through. Keep a mentor close to the bigger teams. It is essential to avoid hierarchical relationships and excessive interference.

Experience: Create! Work in teams to come up with ideas! Choose a creative technique! If possible, you can even give the big ones the task of making a short commercial/campaign, you can include digital techniques and surfaces, but you can also stick to the technique of making paper posters and billboards. It will be fun for them to stand up and present their work in an adult way and “sell” their idea. You can give them a test score, but you can also let them try to judge their creations. Develop their critical thinking!

Testing ideas

Intervention ideas (e.g. maintenance strategy, new rules, creation of a sitting area, planting, etc.) should be tested before final implementation. This can be done with physical models, such as small-scale models, or with real scale 1:1 so-called “prototypes” that test the technical parameters and usability of the idea (size, color, function, usability). We can select a period to study the impact of the intervention on the community (e.g. we want to see how a new rule or feature works). The purpose of testing is to observe and understand how our ideas impact the community and, if necessary, correct our original ideas. Implementation can then follow.

Ideas are worth visualizing. Think of exercises that result in a drawing, a flow-chart or video, a mockup, or a real scale model of the intervention. The point is to include concrete ideas that are easy to get feedback on and to ask others and each other for their opinions.



METHODS AND TIPS FOR OFFLINE MEETINGS

It is relatively straightforward how to do this offline. Here are some options.

- If it's a maintenance strategy or rule, give it a trial period (an hour, a day, or even a week) and see how it works in a space. Organize an observation, sitting in a quiet place, and watching how others use the space as you introduce the new rule. Try it out on yourself and see how you feel during the trial period. Summarise the experience and decide whether to change the rule or introduce it, based on what you learn.
- You can create a prototype, i.e. a testable version of the idea. You could have a spatial model of the proposed bench, a flow chart of how the open space changes with the seasons, etc. Interview people who are not involved in community design but will use the open space using the model. Collect questions: What do you think about the placement, design, color, etc. of the bench, how would you use it? What do you need in your yard at different times of the year? Use the answers to refine the idea.



- A prototype is more effective when it is made on a real scale (e.g. a gazebo made of canvas, a bench made of boxes). Make it in its intended location and pair it with observation or interviews to get feedback.



METHODS AND TIPS FOR THE ONLINE MEETING

You can prototype, demonstrate and even test online... but how?

- First of all, you can make prototypes and mockups at home. You can build a model from materials you can find at home and recycle them. You can also make a digital flowchart (e.g. with *Powerpoint*). Invite the testers to an online meeting and show them the prototype by video and screen sharing. Be prepared to answer questions and ask for opinions and advice.
- You can also test by loading a photo or map of the site on the online whiteboard, placing different icons on it, and moving it around with your interview partners.
- You can also send objects to your interviewee, online or by post. Then interview them.
- Others can try out the prototype, e.g. at a festival, community event, and then send the feedback back to the creator by email or post.





HOW SHOULD YOU CONSIDER AGE!

Whatever ideas the kids come up with, it's worth testing. There are significant differences between age groups in their thinking, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Here are some examples to keep in mind when testing.

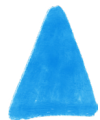
Primary school pupils

- When a new rule or strategy is introduced, it is important to repeat these rules several times to make them remember correctly. During the trial period of the rule, support and guide the children: what to observe, what changes they notice. You can make pictograms/charts, pie charts, or checklists for them to use to guide their observations.
- For prototyping, they may need more help. Talk to them and help them find out things for themselves. For example what and how much material to use for fabrication. Help them to use the tools. Support them in implementing their ideas. Be sure to use verbal reinforcement and encouragement.

Secondary school pupils

- In this case, it is also important to repeat and understand the rules. However, they will learn new things more easily. Make sure that the change is relevant to everyone, so that they feel more ownership of it and will do something about it. You can help them to observe by giving them categories, but they can guess what they think is important, and you can even create a set of observation criteria together.
- In prototyping, a great deal of autonomy and desire for autonomy is expected in this age group. They need less help with material selection and tool use. However, they can get into trouble with quantities as well as tools... Don't be fooled by how independent they seem, they are still children. You can do the creation together, while they can observe the correct use of all the tools, so they don't feel like they don't know how to use them.





STEP 5: SHALL WE DO?... DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

You've done the testing; you've got the feedback. You have decided to implement 1-2 ideas with or without changes. Here comes the implementation of the ideas...thinking about this usually brings to mind building something. However, it should be remembered that the ideas for intervention cover a wide range: you can simply introduce a new rule, build a bench, adopt a new maintenance strategy or get to work on weeding. Whatever you decide to do, it is also worth involving children in the implementation process.

It is likely to be a complex intervention and not everything can necessarily be done by young people. It is rare for children to dig and build the foundations of a bench in the park, or for them to approve and control the rules for the use of the schoolyard. Yet for each process, it is worth looking into what they can get involved with. This could be the purchasing materials or planning the steps leading up to the construction of the flowerbed (what are the steps, who will do what in the phases of purchasing materials, finding a site, preparation, construction, planting, maintenance), or perhaps they could be involved in some of the stages of implementation (construction, painting the bench, etc.).





HINT:
Get the children to take on a physical task

Primary school pupils

You don't necessarily have to involve them in the construction if it's too difficult for them. You can give them helping tasks, assign "responsible" roles. Involve them in what they can do, what suits them! Trust is also important. With help, the "little" child can even saw (or at least try) and use snickers with a saw. Trust them, they can do so much! Ask them what they are interested in, what they want to do, and set them tasks.

Secondary school pupils

You can ask the older ones openly what they want to be involved in, where they see their role in the task. It may be enough to just tell them the nature of the task (e.g. communicate something) and let them guess what they want to do with a customized tool (e.g. app, face-to-face, posters). They can take whatever and however, they feel like.

This is the phase that requires an offline situation, as the designs and ideas are made for a specific location. And testing them out in real space, time and everyday use is what gets tested. This is the testing mode that gives real results, real experience of the usefulness and functionality of the idea.



HINT:
Go for it!

We've given you a brief insight into the complexity of implementing such a process. The best advice is to be brave and if you are interested in community design, get started! It will be a great experience for you and the whole community involved. Whether it's an experience or an implemented level of transformation, you are sure to create something lasting that will have an impact on you, the community, and the environment!



ACKNOWLEDGMENT



This publication is the result of the many hours of energy, love, and professionalism that we have put into the *With Children in All Spaces* project.

Thank you to the speakers of the *With Children in All Spaces* webinar series for sharing their valuable experiences with us and for giving us a unique workshop experience that inspired us to create offline and online practices of designing with children's communities in Hungary:

Mara Mintzer, Karsten Michael Drohsel, Eszter Jákli, HÚSZNEGYVEN Association, Dr. Barbara Feller, Dr. Marta Brković Dodig, Anita Reith, Veronika Róza Háló, Giulia Gualtieri and Viviana Cordero

Many thanks to *Levente Borsos, Ilka Demény, Regina Mihály* and *Anita Reith*, members of the *kultúrAktív Association*, for enabling and conducting the webinars and for organizing the audience. Without you, there would have been no exchange of experiences!

I would like to highlight the good cooperation of the members of the *Every Space Action Group*: *Bea Csehné Berényi, Judit Dobos Gerzsényi, Ágnes Virt, Viktória Korény Ida, Ilka Demény, Regina Mihály*, for the formulation, repeated re-thinking, and implementation of the sample activities. You are the creative drivers of the program! I hope we will have the opportunity to work together again.

The result of 18 workshops in a good atmosphere are the three sample activities that we had the opportunity to try out in the 1st grade. *Budaörs Primary School*, the reflected results of which we have been able to present in this publication. For the realization of the three action days I would like to thank the Action Group for the coordination, our association volunteers - *Veronika Róza Háló, Krisztina Tajta, dr. István Jenő Molnár* -, the students of landscape architecture - *Nóra Buffham, Viktóri Bolvári, Ezgi Aydin* - and the teachers *Eszter Hegyi, Adrienn Zibriczky, Petronella Polányi, Anikó Mihalcsikné Vörös, Hajnalka Hegyi* for their help during the action day. Your dedication and resilience during the pandemic are exemplary.

I would like to highlight the importance of the institutional support of our partners in the implementation of the program. From *Budaörs Primary School*, I would like to thank *Zsuzsanna Simsik*, Principal, and *Barbara Kalácska*, Deputy Principal, for believing in the program from the very beginning and for supporting its implementation despite the difficulties of the pandemic. Thanks to *Anita Reith* from the Institute of *Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning, and Ornamental Horticulture of the Hungarian University of Agricultural and Life Sciences* for following the work of the Action Group and for her professional advice and coordination of the landscape architecture students. It was a special pleasure to work with *DS Smith Ltd.* With your donations and professional help, we made paper prototypes for the children to test their ideas.

Thank you to *Gita Elek* for editing the publication, without which we would not have the book in our hands today, or else *Juli Tudisco* for the graphics, which brought our ideas to life. Thank you *Alexandra Dénes* for the translation and *Lolita Stégmár* for the English proofreading. Thanks to you, we have been able to share our experiences with many more people.





