

Urban Workshop Plus - Concept of Public-Professional Partnership in Urban Development

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1 ABSTRACT

There are a few significant facts about cities and people. In 2007 urban population overtook non-urban population. This is to say, urban matters affect the majority of the world's population. In European countries urban society has never been better educated, generating precise demands concerning the quality of life and spatial solutions. As a consequence we – as professionals and researchers – need to re-define ways for the creation and transformation of urban space. New methods must involve the general public not only as an object of study ('socio-economic background') or even so popular recently as a 'creative participant' but as a real partner. This means that we need to find a proper 'place' for urban society in the planning process and equip it with essential knowledge. This task should define partners and their role in development process. The paper will describe outcomes of 'urban workshops' undertaken recently in Poland and highlight new opportunities of this public partnership.

2 INTRODUCTION

In European languages there are different terms for cities as human settlements. The oldest names like town, bourg, burg, gród, hrad, gorod – all come from fencing¹. These names emphasise enclosure and protection. Second group of words like staed, stadt, miasto, miesto focuses on a place². Finally, the third group including terms city, ciudad, cité, citta comes from Latin civitatem (nom. civitas) and accentuates the state of being vested with the rights, privileges and duties of a citizen. The first Latin word for city was urbs, but a resident was civis³. It is to say that 'citizenship' is the essential feature of a city. It is quite a remarkable concept as it doesn't relate to place or to physical form but to social structure and organization. The name of a city includes people living there. Urban studies, research and planning have to relate to a human being – the most essential component of city.

Gone are the days when the best that citizens could expect was to be told what was good for them (Cornwall, 2008); public engagement has become essential part of modern government. Furthermore, it seems that developed societies have achieved the state in which public participation or public involvement is not enough in political and civilizational terms; what is likely needed is partnership in urban development. The concept of partnership has to be translated into procedures making it implementable and workable. Planning systems across Europe have rather procedures for 'getting comments' on their proposals than procedures of public partnership.

New practice inevitably has to include mutual learning process. First, the methods of communication have to be launched. Professional urbanists tend to use hermetic language, which is, like ant professional language, incomprehensible for general public. Kunzmann (2004) indicated the gap between international theory and local practice. European civilizational model, in spite of local cultural distinctions, has produced similar expectations for political rights, including rights to space and place. And the right to co-decide how to arrange urban space. What is different is the way of expressing public demands and being involved in public affairs. To receive useful answer a planner needs to be sure that the 'general public' is able to understand the question. As a consequence, in order to get the answer people and institutions need to be not only informed but also 'educated'. It is just another aspect of learning society. Secondly, those who use the place: residents, employees, passers-by, tourists, companies should have an opportunity to express their demands and describe problems derived from the space. This helps urbanists with finding appropriate solutions and understanding public commitment of the profession. This demonstrates that an urban concept need to be not

¹ The widely used ending -burg –bourg, -burgh and related words borough, burglar, bourgeois, burgess, burgh, burgher derive from the Latin burgus (fortress, castle, fortified city), which is a transliteration of the Greek word pyrgos (burgus, fortress, castle); town derives from Old English tūn (enclosed place); in Slavic languages words gród, hrad, gorod, gardas, garth seem to derive from the Greek khórtos (fenced place).

² The word stead derives from Old English stede (place, position, standing, delay) related to standon (to stand) probably from Proto-Germanic stadiz (compare with Old Saxon stedi, Old Norwegian staðr, Swedish stad, Danish Stede, German stadt – all mean place).

³ Civitas seems to have replaced urbs as Rome (the ultimate urbs) lost its prestige.

only explained but also accepted and eventually adopted by users (which is a wider category than only local community or stakeholders). Finally, local authorities responsible for spatial policy could learn in advance what kind of expectations concerning particular place might come into perceptible existence. Last but not least is society itself – learning that there are different needs and visions with respect to a particular place. And there is no ‘two sides’ of urban transformation process, but in fact many ‘sides’ having different expectations. This brings new role of an urbanist as a spatial mediator which has been already emphasised in the ‘New Charter of Athens’ (2003).

In this paper we explore opportunities of public partnership in urban development. Poland, which is our case study, is one of the countries having ‘comprehensive integrated’ planning system as well as Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany (CEC, 1997; Farinós Dasi, 2007) and this is why it might be a good example for investigating whether planning system fits to social needs and demands. As a post-socialist country and a new EU member (since 2004) Poland is as a well good case to examine whether there are particular problems concerning public partnership in urban development in post-communist countries even 20 years after political transformation.

In the first part of the paper we describe general background of public involvement in urban affairs. Then we study Polish planning system including public participation and social changes. In the next section we analyse recent urban projects involving general public and finally we focus on International Urban Workshop ‘Gardens of Art’ as an example of new model of public partnership. In conclusions we suggest a few general opportunities for the future regarding successful public-professional partnership in urban development.

3 SPACE AND LEARNING SOCIETY (INCLUDING URBANISTS)

The idea of ‘common space’ in cities had arisen before the first urban settlements in Mesopotamia came into existence. Lewis Mumford (1961) enumerated ‘urban attributes’ transferred to the cities directly from the Palaeolithic shrines and cemeteries, which Mumford calls ‘the city archetype’. These very first ‘magnets’ were: collective places (they didn’t belong to any particular person and it was everybody who had ‘rights’ to them), places of negotiations and agreements (where the tribes and people had to learn how to compromise and respect rights of ‘others’), places of exchange (where not only goods but also ideas and innovations were exchanged), places of tradition (where the early version of cultural identity had been initiated) and finally places of ‘cosmic links’ (where the first ideas of the universe had been conceptualised).

All of them have been remaining vital during five thousand years of urban history. For our study all of them are important but two particular features are especially interesting – concept of ‘shared space’ and necessity for negotiations. Social structure has been becoming more and more complex not only in terms of cultural variety but also in terms of possible lifestyles and mobility. Globalization revealed that there are more lifestyle similarities between people living in remote places than between people of the same ethnic group or nationality. We don’t claim that ‘globalization caused’ as it was probably already true long ago. Lifestyle of medieval craftsmen across Europe was probably quite similar as well as lifestyle of a 19th century worker and a 21st century student. European model of life has been shaped by the same civilisational processes. It is why – in spite of local differences in form and expression – we can consider the need of ‘public’ rights as quite homogeneous within ‘Western civilisation’. Today the need of ‘negotiations’ for ‘shared places’ where ‘exchange’ includes exchange of cultural ‘tradition’ is not only alive but also thriving. This has a few implications within the cities.

First, of course is the right to ‘participate’ then to get involved or engaged and finally to decide (‘negotiations and agreements’). Democracy ensures only basic ‘influence’ through election. It is to say that a citizen interested in sharing responsibility for decision-making has no direct influence on authorities. There has been vibrant debate across the world proving that getting citizens more involved in different aspects of governance has become an important part of reinvigorating democracy. It is said that a democratic state and local authorities have a duty to involve its citizens in decisions that affect their lives; participation is not a favour or a privilege but a ‘basic right’. Exploring this issue we have to ask a few further questions: what is an adequate level of engagement? Who is empowered to get engaged and, as a result, get influence on final decisions? What procedures should be established to facilitate this process? In what way cultural context should be embodied into these procedures? These questions will be analysed in this paper. We assume that they may contain the general framework of a new concept of public partnership in urban development.

Second, diversity has been materialised in cities. There is a variety of land-use. There are different lifestyles, groups of interests, cultural, ethnical and ideological parties or bodies. All of them have the right to 'use' urban space. But on the other hand – there is no particular formation which could use urban space only for its own purpose ('collective place'). This brings two 'urban' questions: spatial competition and public and private use of space. Spatial competition in the city means that different 'users' (and as a consequence different 'functions') rival for the same place which keep 'negotiations and agreements' alive. What does distinguish this situation from the previous one that is the 'sides' of this operation. Local authority is not involved in this kind of competition but – using urban planning as a useful tool – it could play the role of a mediator. Differences relate not only to use but also to ownership. The problem of overtaking urban space has been widely deliberating. Having said that 'shared places' are essential in cities we have to agree that there is a basic need to keep urban space mostly as common. The question is: in what way can we balance in between two justifiable human requisites? The simple way of defining 'public' and 'private' is based on opposition. That is to say, it is impossible to conceive of public without an understanding of what is private. In this sense, private spaces are usually demarcated and protected in some way by regulated rules of private property like legal ownership and entitlement; public spaces on the other hand are conceived as open to participation, not subject to exclusive proprietary right of use and exchange. This rather vague definition of one being the anti-thesis of the other is an oversimplification of the numerous differentiations that can be drawn out according to conditions of access, control, behaviour and use. And again we have to get back to the questions of procedures of public partnership in urban development which had been asked already before.

Third, there is a substantial question about quality of life. One could relate this problem to the 'right to welfare'. In that respect learning from the past is potentially not very useful. The key assumption is that today more than half of the world's population lives in cities. Recognition of a new urban form as well as a new social structure may be a base for improving quality of life. Urban form follows only the social system. People aware of complexity of 'urban question' may cooperate and become an important factor of development; people ignored and excluded may be a growing problem not for cities but actually for themselves.

The concept of public education (learning society) seems to be a base of understanding and consequently of negotiation, engagement and partnership in urban development.

All announced phenomena had made quite an impact on urban planning practice and as a consequence – urban planning profession(s).

Professionals are at the heart of our everyday lives. We give professionals the licence to split up families and we send people to prison on their word. Urbanist is one of the professions having very strong influence on the quality of everyday life; the decision what sort of surface is laid on a pavement affects people more than signing new international agreement with a few countries. Urbanists shape everyday surroundings, facilitate accessibility or make it more difficult, increase or decrease value of particular places. Their responsibility is probably greater than they seem to think. There is a danger that professionalism is outgrowing its own legitimacy. Why are doctors able to deny people the right to die? What gives judges the right to interpret human rights? Why urbanists decide about shape of the roof of one's own house? An urbanist needs 'excuse' not only from the 'professional' point of view but from the 'social' background as well. An urbanist has to find good reason for introducing any limitation. All this doesn't mean that the profession is no more needed. But it has to be re-defined. A doctor cannot treat a patient without cooperation with him. An urbanist cannot create space for people without people.

Castells asked this question (1998) discussing the future of planning schools. He noted that planning /urban design schools have to 'renew their thinking, their framework, and their method while departing the world that is left behind: a world centred on the welfare of state, on rigid zoning, on the belief in models of metropolitan growth, on the predictability of social patterns, on the legitimacy of national governments, on the long term benefits of economic growth without social and environmental constraints and on the view of the world from patriarchalism as a way of life'. In the other words an urban planner has to be focused on civilizational trends. Only this understanding gives the opportunity for creating good cities which are only a spatial framework of the civilisation.

In this context the question what sort of skills are substantial for a modern urbanist should be examined. Kunzmann (1997) emphasises on creative skills and a deep understanding of the civilisational context. He enumerates urbanists' competences which are already required now and will be likely becoming more important in the near future: analytical competence for evaluating the local and regional influences of spatial problems and the impacts of different policies; methodological competence in selecting and applying appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods; visionary competence in making connections between periods, trends and pathways of development; creative competence in finding solutions to problems such as spatial conflicts and for developing new strategic concepts; social competence in understanding the social dimensions of urban and regional development; communicative competence in making an effective contribution to the planning and decision-making processes and intercultural competence in understanding the diversity of different planning cultures (European pluralism).

It hasn't happened by accident that 5 of 7 defined competences relate directly or indirectly to the society. There is no doubt that social, communicative and intercultural competences relate directly to different 'users' of urban space. But visionary and creative competences refer not only to new spatial solutions but also to new methods which should be introduced. Visionary means the sort of deep understanding which allows to perceive new trends, new arrangements and new tools. Creativity combines this understanding with ingenious solutions. But still there is a content of professional knowledge (analytical and methodological competence) which is needed to ensure visionary and creative answers.

4 PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP IN POLISH PLANNING SYSTEM

4.1 Historical framework

In 1918 Poland regained its independence as a result of WWI. This new political structure re-established after 123 years had to be constituted as a modern state. One of the most important tasks was to ensure territorial cohesion of the country after being a part of 3 different countries (Austria, Prussia and Russia). This attempt resulted in a modern (as for those times) regulation in planning. One of them was Building Code and Housing Act issued in 1928. Actually, planning in interwar period was very successful at national (Central Industrial District), regional (plan of 'functional Warsaw') and especially local level (public facilities, new city and harbour of Gdynia, social housing). This success was a result of already developed planning schools and research: i.e. a Department of Town Building was established as early as 1913 at Lviv Technical University⁴ under the leadership of Ignacy Drexler. And, in 1915, a Polish urbanist Tadeusz Tołwiński, who had graduated in town planning from the University of Karlsruhe, became one of the founders of Warsaw University of Technology. Polish urbanists and architects were deeply involved in famous 'modernistic' C.I.A.M. in 1933. Society of Polish Town Planners was established in 1923, only 11 years after Société Française des Urbanistes, 9 years after RTPI and 1 year after Freie Akademie des Städtebaus.

After WWII Polish nation albeit with new territorial borders was faced with the task of rebuilding its largely destroyed cities, infrastructure and devastated economy. Now under Soviet influence, Poland's communist government rejected participation in the Marshall plan and reconstruction followed new socialist economic rules. This meant, that all important political, social and economic decisions were made by the communist party, reducing planning practice to a technocratic design task. Planning system during communist period consisted of a hierarchy of spatial plans: national, regional and local.

Plans did not require wide social acceptance. It was enough that they were accepted by an executive and political authority. Most often plans were seen by the society as an additional instrument of repression, especially by those social groups who as a result of the planning decisions were dispossessed of their property. Ownership was far less important than so-called 'social justice'. It is important to notice that land had no value in those times. Land expressed the political power rather than utility. With no urban planning studies as a separate track in existence, urban planning became a professional specialisation for graduates of architecture or engineering.

⁴ Although in 1913 Poland was not an independent state and Lviv was a part of the Habsburg Monarchy, academic staff of Lviv Technical University – like the majority of Lviv citizens – consisted of many scientists of Polish nationality.

4.2 Planning system in Poland in the context of public consultation

Political transformation introduced in 1989 enforced the revision of the so far system of spatial planning. The first legal change was introduced in 1994 and then replaced with new regulation in 2003.

General concept of planning system follows the European (continental) model of planning. Zweigert and Korz (1998) describe its basis as 'legal certainty'. It is to say that the complete set of abstract rules and principles is created in advance of decision-making. The second impact on planning system comes from self-governance as a fundamental idea. For the last 20 years Polish legal system has been gradually implementing the rule 'decentralize if possible, centralize if necessary'.

This policy is reflected in planning documents passed by appropriate representation; respectively national, regional and local. On the national level National Spatial Strategy, approved by Parliament, provides a general framework for spatial development. On the regional level Regional Plan, approved by Regional Parliament (Sejmik), implements and amplifies this framework into the regional context. On the local level two kinds of urban plans approved by local (city or commune) council are required: a Spatial Development Framework (called Studium in Polish) and a local plan. Only the latter acts as local law which means that its regulations are binding on the respective area. Policies defined in all other planning documents are so-called 'acts of internal management' which means that they are binding for administrative public bodies and they do not apply to 'general public'. They contain a set of requirements, demands, guidelines and information.

A local plan defines quite precisely land use, density of future development including height of buildings and a kind of floor area ratio⁵, physical dimensions of buildings (i.e. length of the facade) and even general architectural rules (i.e. shape of the roofs, way of location buildings on the sites, colour and texture of facades). A plan limits development because of sustainability and cultural heritage protection and reserve the land for the public investments such as transportation or infrastructure. A local plan should be coherent with the Studium which has to be prepared for the whole area of the city or commune (whereas a local plan may apply only to a defined part of urban territory). One of the functions of Studium is to coordinate development implemented through local plans. The main function however is to define a general vision of spatial development including land use, function within the city, regeneration areas, transportation and technical infrastructure.

Theoretically public consultation is included in 3 documents in Polish planning system. At the very early stage one can put forward a proposal to regional plan. There are no particular consequences of this activity. Planning Act wants regional government only to 'study and consider' proposals. Public consultation is a bit more developed in two local documents: the Studium and local plan. Both have the same procedure of public involvement consisted of 2 phases. General public is consulted at the early stage just as in the procedure of preparing regional plan. But consequences are different – local authorities should answer the proposal within 3 weeks after closing the submission period. Public consultation is carried out for the second time after completing the local plan. This is the last step before passing the plan by city council. The plan should be presented in a public place (i.e. in the municipality) with an open access for no less than 14 days and then everybody can give comments on this project. Each comment has to be answered within 3 weeks. Meanwhile a public debate has to be held. During this event the Studium or the local plan should be presented and explained in the way 'intelligible for non-professionals'. Comments may be accepted or rejected. Reasons of rejecting comments have to be explained to city council before the final approval.

There are a few significant disadvantages of this procedure. First, the obligation of answering initial proposals results in an illogical way of implementing the consultation procedure. Actually, an official announcement about the plan starting appears when it is almost ready. It is quite reasonable, as an urban planner working on the Studium or the local plan has to answer, thus needs to know the answer. The most common proposal relates to future spatial arrangement. If the plan is at the beginning stage the answer must be a bit fuzzy, on the contrary if the plan is finished the answer can be clear and coherent. This makes the first phase of public consultation only a bureaucratic activity and as a result – useless. Second, the last public presentation is after getting official approvals from the bodies and institutions being entitled to do so (i.e. regional conservation officer, regional environmental officer, neighbouring communes, the army, regional authorities). As the formal approval has to be renewed after any 'important change' local authorities tend to

⁵ This indicator describes relation of the total floor area of buildings on a certain location to the size of the land of that location.

reject final comments leading to any significant change and accept only the minor ones. In this way the second phase of consultation has as big influence on plans as the first one. Nobody can be astonished that people are not very interested in this kind of 'participation'. They believe that better way to get an influence on plan is – to protest. Demonstration attracts media and starts real debate. It may even stop the process of passing plan by city council. What is hopeful in this case it is that they do protest thus they do care.

4.3 Polish society after transformation and joining EU – need of change

There has been massive changes in Poland for the last 20 years. Transformation from politically-driven to market-oriented economy is one aspect of this changes. The second is 'civil society' evolution. Both have been influencing the society in many ways.

Social Survey 2009 (Czapiński, Panek, 2009) shows not only basic social indicators such as economic welfare or humans capital, but also explores the social capital question.

Polish society, in spite of economic and financial crisis, has been benefiting growing incomes (16% increase since 2007). Unemployment rate has fallen for the last 10 years from 17,6% in 2000 to 8,8% in 2009. This indicator seems to be relatively high but detailed research revealed that only half of the people registered in Public Employment Offices as 'unemployed' really look for the job. The rest is not interested in working but wish to keep 'unemployed' status because of healthcare insurance.

Public services have been deeply transformed. Healthcare and pension system reforms have been implemented.

Education structure has adopted Bologna system in higher education. The rate of education has risen significantly for the last 10 years. In 2000 15,6% of men and 29,2% of women received university degree whereas in 2009 respective numbers are 31,8% and 46,8%. Before transformation (1988) only 6,5% of Polish population completed university education. There are as well high educational aspirations – 72% of people wants their children to complete studies at Master's level and only 15% would be satisfied with a bachelor's degree. Thinking in terms of learning society these numbers are quite optimistic but what is disquieting that is low (but growing) level of adults' education.

One of important indicators of information society is internet access rate. In Poland more than 60% of households has got a pc (17% has got more than one) and more than 50% of households has got an internet access which is an average European level.

Traditionally Polish society used to be considered as deeply religious. In 1992 55,7% of population declared regular religious practice whereas in 2009 it was only 43,5%. It seems that process of secularisation is quite quick in Poland.

Probably the most noteworthy indicator is 'general life satisfaction'. This well-being feeling has been gradually rising. Reasons of this state are both personal (family, friends, hope for the future) and socio-economic (better conditions of life, safety, leisure, professional satisfaction) but it is very good foundation for civil society. When 'basic needs' are supplied the possibility of social activity increases.

Social Survey reveals that Polish society accepts rather equality than hierarchy as social structure. Sadly, involvement in democratic procedures is still at relatively low level i.e. in the last general election (2007) only 54% of Polish voted. If we agree that civil society is a concept based on social activity and trust we have to admit that there is still much to do ahead. In Poland 13,4% of population accords with the statement that 'one can trust majority of people' (comparing with 67,3% in Denmark, 55,2% in Sweden, 35,1% in the UK, 29,8% in Belgium, 27,5% in Germany, 24,7% in Spain, 17,3% in France, 12,6% in Portugal).

This generally low level of trust along with short practice of civil society (lack of the state in 19th century, communist period) are the main reasons why only 13% of Polish population was in 2009 actively involved in 'public life' – as a members of political parties, societies, associations, NGOs or formal groups, 16% declared engagement in 'local community matters' and 19% attended public meeting or gathering.

Hope for the future is hidden in the correlation between education and the state of civil society development. It appears that the higher level of education, the deeper involvement into public matters.

It may seem that both history and planning system/practice discourage people from participation. In fact, the 'social destruction' is more fundamental – people do not believe that their voice is important, that their

opinion may change anything and their ideas would fall on deaf ears. As a matter of fact we can observe increasing public interest in urban matters. There are vibrant debates on the Internet forums, net of non-professionals involved in urban development flourishes, people are interested in expressing their opinion in concerning development plans. In that state of 'social' mind we needed to find a radical new approach to public involvement.

5 CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Public activity in urban matters in Poland

Having said that there is no long tradition of engagement in public matters nor real practice of partnership in planning we have to notice completely new social phenomena.

In many Polish cities, particularly in the biggest of them, 'urban' associations focused on local development, quality of public space and sustainable development have been established. Usually their 'core' consists of young enthusiasts using Internet as a main tool of communication. They study urban history, try to contact professional societies and learn more about urban planning. They participate actively in any public debate concerning urban matters and run lively websites⁶. They present their urban visions and give official comments to local plans. Implementing the rule 'act locally, think globally' they have established a net of this kind of organisations and have been launching annual meetings. Shortly, they are deeply involved in urban planning, regeneration and development being convinced that it influences everyday quality of life.

There is a growing number of groups interested in particular urban solutions. Probably the most active are cyclists' societies. They are perfectly prepared to discuss transportation issues and often they are better experts in pro-cyclist modern solutions than municipal planners. They are involved in international cooperation with organizations engaged in sustainability and ecology⁷. They create the second milieu deeply interested in urban planning.

Young professionals graduated from universities running new urban planning/urban studies courses are the third circle of public involvement. They started associations or informal groups exchanging knowledge and so-called best practices not only between themselves but also with general public. Usually they focus on urban transformation⁸.

There has been quite a significant change in 'historical' societies like Society of Polish Town Planners. Many of regional branches has been 'overtaken' by young members being able to use new tools of communication and prepared to work with non-professionals. The present board consists not only of professionals but also academics and represents wide spectrum of 'urban professions'.

These new fields of public activity prove that not only quantity matters. Quality change might be more important for future system transformation.

5.2 New public activities – from debates to urban workshops

Apart from described 'new actors' the first 'accidental' involvements have been noticed recently. We are not talking about typical 'protest-groups', we are talking about citizens interested in quality of public space and wanting local authorities to take into account their expectations and visions. There are quite a lot regular (i.e. quarterly) meetings or debates organized by one of 'urban' or professional bodies gathering people wanting to have their say on particular spatial solutions or general urban problems. But recently a step forward has been made. In historic town of Starogard Gdański residents didn't accept the urban design concept of the main market square (the Rynek) proudly presented by local authorities. As a result of this probably for the first time the concept of 'urban workshop' was implemented as a tool of public partnership (Lorens, 2008). Professional 'urban negotiator' was commissioned by local authorities to mediate possible solutions. 'Urban workshop' run by a negotiator consisted of 3 phases: definition, debate and decision. At the beginning it was extremely important to find out about the problem. It was hidden in the language: the negotiator had to 'translate' citizens language into urban design terms and teach the general public 'urban design' vocabulary to

⁶ i.e. Warsaw Development Forum (<http://www.frw.fc.pl>), Wrocław Beautification Association (<http://www.tumw.pl>), Lublin Development Forum (<http://www.frl.org.pl>), My City Association (<http://www.smm.pl>) in Katowice.

⁷ i.e. Biking Portal Wrocław (<http://rowery.eko.org.pl>), Biking Portal Białystok (<http://www.roverowy.bialystok.pl>).

⁸ i.e. Revitalisation Forum (<http://www.fr.org.pl>), My City (<http://www.mojemiasto.org.pl>)

facilitate the debate. The main task was to define the problem and describe public expectations. Then the negotiator introduced a few design groups which were working on the concepts characterised by citizens. Prepared proposals were discussed and improved. During the debate the general public had an opportunity to re-arrange the concepts. Finally, the most accepted option was approved. On the one hand the final concept was a result of real public partnership and on the other hand it met professional standard. The same method had been used in Katowice with respect to opposition to the municipal plan of re-arranging one of the main streets in the city. There is an important lesson learnt from these cases.

On the general level it is quite easy to recognize that 'local community' has become quite a fuzzy concept. There are more people having 'the rights' to the space than only local residents. 'Active citizens' not residents forced local authorities to cooperate. In both cases 'public side' wanted local authorities to protect real urban values. Their motivation didn't come from NIMBY syndrome, on the contrary it came from a visionary and real need of change.

In Poland there is no procedure of public involvement in the process of urban regeneration. As far as we do understand development process – it consists of both territorial expansion and transformation places already arranged. The latter is especially 'socially sensitive' as it strongly affects everyday life. Local authorities and urbanists have a special responsibility to 'users' of transforming areas. A successful change depends on 'users' rather than on 'structure'. People decide if the change is only 'regeneration' or 'revitalisation' as well. It is why procedure should include them at any stage – from defining the problem, through formulating the idea to discussing and accepting the final concept.

This collaborative procedure needs mutual learning. Especially important are comprehensive language and communication skills. Involvement process has to give everybody an opportunity to get engaged knowing that probably only few actors are interested in a real deep partnership. But even if people want only to express their opinion or give a comment it helps with building understanding and feeling of 'being respected' and 'having an influence'. Final agreement has to be an effect of reasonable compromise, not simply 'majority will'. History teaches us that quite often it is minority who is right.

5.3 Concept of workshop plus – case study of International Urban Workshop 'Gardens of Art'

In 2009 in Wrocław the International Urban Workshop 'Gardens of Art' was conducted. It was the second edition of the annual International Urban Workshop run by Wrocław University of Technology for Master and PhD students. During the workshop students were given the 'real' urban problem to study and resolve.

'Gardens of Art' was unusual not only because of the urban problem but as well because of the format. Using the 'innocent' (in terms of responsibility for the state of the city) students we tested new method of public involvement. As a result workshop from educational event has been developed into research experiment.

The workshop involved students of Wrocław University of Technology, University of Wrocław, University of Łódź, Silesian University of Technology, University College London – Bartlett School of Planning, Institut d'Aménagement du Territoire et d'Environnement de l'Université de Reims and Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus studying architecture, spatial planning, urban design and conservation. It has been run jointly by academics and professionals, both from Wrocław and abroad: the UK, France, Germany, Italy.

5.3.1 The general concept

Workshops are a well-known method of teaching. A typical urban workshop, especially run by the University of Technology which is training future engineers and designers, focuses on derelict areas and the 'technical' solution. Of course students need to consider the wider background and consequences of their proposals. But even if the site and problem is 'real', and it is more relevant if it is, students continue to work as if on a case study without thinking about factors affecting implementation in the 'real World'.

The concept of the International Urban Workshop 'Gardens of Art' was different because of real public involvement and partnership. It explored multi-level education – not only were the students expected to learn something from the public, but the public 'was expected' to learn from students. We wondered if the professionals involved in the workshop might learn from both groups. Local authorities might study these

recent innovations in public involvement. Multi-level education is the reason we call this event workshop plus.

We have chosen the street (Szewska St.) in the city centre which is actually not any kind of 'brownfield' or derelict area – on the contrary it has much potential. The real problem was that the street does not fulfil its potential. The main question was how to use this potential to lift the level of excellence. And what fascinated us was the mixture of uses on the street. We considered this aspect as our 'urban laboratory' of public involvement. We wanted to study and understand the different needs and prepare our concept with 'diagnostic and design transparency'.

We undertook many activities to encourage public engagement; we created a webpage (<http://www.urbanworkshop.eu>), described our project in the local media (newspapers, radio, TV), took up cooperation with local NGOs (Wrocław Beautification Association, Wrocław Cycling Initiative, Lower Silesia Foundation for Sustainable Development), artists (Kolektyf Graffiti Group, Knockout Design), research and art institutions (Institute of Archaeology, Art Gallery 'Design') and finally kept residents and companies informed of events. Our workshop had been planned with continuous activity embracing three main events:

- 27th June: Action Inauguration (aim: reveal project)

During the Wrocław Days banners and posters in city centre directed people to Szewska Street. Passers-by were led by various signs, actions and activities to courtyards adjacent to the street where they were invited to participate in creating a new reality with a virtual design. The process was run 'live' by students and the results were displayed in real-time on big screens. The citizens of Wrocław could discover unknown city spaces. The action was widely reported in local media.

- July-August 2009: Action Mediation – Action Re:Action (aim: get people involved)

We aimed for the widest possible public consultation. We wanted to reach consensus in building new places for the city and to avoid detached professional design which would be perceived as an imposition and unwanted. That is why a workshop with social interaction was organized, involving not only the inhabitants of the area, but also those interested in 'making use' of that part of the city. At this time the special event was Szewska Street Art held on 13th and 14th August. Students worked in the street asking people questions but not in the conventional way of interviews but using games, displays and fun. We organized activities in the spaces for passers-by to get them involved in a relaxed and stress free way. We attracted many including residents, tourists, workers and other 'urban actors'.

- 11th -19th September 2009: Action Creation – Action Formation (aim: prepare urban concept)

The nine day student workshop has a number of outcomes: strategies for the revitalisation of Szewska Street, the urban design of specific parts of the street; detailed solutions of particular courtyards; but also an exhibition on the streets of the city and a public presentation in City Hall. The outcome of the summer's social endeavours has been used to inform the student workshop. Design studio work was intertwined with lectures and presentations from our guests: residents, businessmen, journalists, members of our City Council, members of NGOs and artists.

Finally, outcome of the workshop and lesson learnt were published in the book (Mironowicz, Clerici, 2010).

5.3.2 The site and its urban context

The structure of Szewska Street is by no means complicated. As a result of its medieval origin its shape and location are obvious and transparent. It plays an important communication role in the adjacent city core. However, its function is not limited to communication tasks and its potential is much greater. Well planned, it could influence spatial behaviour of its users in a natural way, as well as act as a catalyst for the city-wide functional transformation.

We have a 'little of everything' on Szewska Street, which may determine its final shape and development. It acts as a type of a lock on the way to the Rynek (main market square). Distributed along the street are important public, cultural, service and academic buildings. It also has a large number of residential apartments. Each of these elements, if matched appropriately, could attract interest and create a unique space in full symbiosis with the services of the Rynek and its surroundings.

Today Szewska Street, despite its recent renovation, is a little-used city space devoid of vitality. It is not worth walking there, it is not a place for viable businesses, it lacks resting places. The workshop aimed at creating a plan for revitalising the street – a strategy based on sustainable development, defined as the balance between a whole spectrum of issues. That spectrum would range from a vision of development, through general urban and spatial solutions, to detailed explanation of key places.

5.3.3 The public involvement concept

As it was already explained theoretically public consultation is included in the Polish planning system but it is treated rather like a part of bureaucratic procedure than real public involvement. In fact nobody needs public response. Additionally regeneration process doesn't include any negotiations or consultation. As a result it is often considered only as a 'technical' problem. It is why people feel excluded from the process and do not believe that they may have any influence on the urban transformation.

All these made our task more difficult – we had not only to get people and companies involved but also convince them that their voice and opinion were essentially important and would be taken into consideration and studied carefully. We defined few basic rules to follow:

- Treat people seriously – we worked very hard to keep residents and companies informed, delivering them comprehensive information about the workshop, its goals and format;
- Stay credible – we cooperated with local newspapers, radio and TV in the belief that for the people it would build up trust; we emphasised our academic roots – to inform that our goals are educational not commercial;
- Two-direction flow of knowledge – we wanted to get information from wide public – but we understood that quality of the answer is based on 'public' knowledge; it is why we prepared and delivered initial questions in our flyers, why we ran our webpage explaining the opportunities we saw for the place and finally – presented case studies being aware that sometimes people simply cannot imagine what is possible or they give up thinking their ideas are 'impossible to implement'.

Finally we decided that it would be easier to talk to people informally – our excuse was the 'student' character of the event. Chatting with people, playing with kids, having fun together – we were optimistic this approach would produce far more information than the 'serious' interview. Our only problem was how to 'store' and 'archive' the data. The solution appeared simple and effective – comments wall, a big board on which people could write, draw and explain their problems, ideas and solutions.

Having established our main rules we produced and delivered flyers to residents and companies in July. We didn't use the post, students delivered flyers to every flat, apartment, shop and business located in Szewska Street. Then at the beginning of August we delivered the general concept of 'Szewska Street Art' event (13th and 14th August) presenting what sort of activities and fun we were planning in the street and inviting them to participate. Then, just two days before the event we placed big posters in the street and sent information to the local newspapers, radio and TV. Students were expected not only to encourage passers-by to write on the comments walls but to talk to them and prepare short notes from these 'unwritten' thoughts.

Having a limited number of people able to work we decided to concentrate our activities in five points on the street. 'Typical' equipment of each point was a chalk to draw on the pavement, paints and colour pencils, a huge map of the street to draw on, bubbles, balloons and of course – a comments wall on which we pinned-up pictures of the streets/yards and art and leisure in the streets across the world. But every fun-point had an additional attraction like leisure garden, playground, games, graffiti painting, double-sized bike, rickshaw-bike. An additional attraction was a historic tram dressed with the logo of our event, in which we offered a free tour around the Old Town and passengers were interviewed by our students during the trip.

5.3.4 The general public response

Our concept was generally very successful as we have got almost 1.300 written answers in a very short time and many information gathered by students in informal chats. They gave us a deep insight into social feelings and expectations. Having ordered notes written on comments walls we found that the most frequent topic was the function of the street which gathered 25% of all comments (desired arrangement, equipment, activities). It resulted from the wide scope of proposals, but at the same time showed in what field the lacks are noticed by users the most. Another frequently mentioned topic was transportation/circulation (15%).

Comments here mostly touched on vehicle traffic, the tram and Szewska as a promenade. Nearly as often appeared the topics of the spirit and character of the street (13%), appearance (11%) and greenery (11%). The vast majority (71%), the answers played the role of a 'book of wishes' and became for us a source of ideas. A large number of comments (1/3) revealed real creativity of the respondents, presenting people's vivid imagination, sense of humor, open mind and need of contact with others. The comments on the past and present, in turn, were valuable as observations – people referred this way to their experiences with the street and took a position on what is there at the moment. They helped a lot with the diagnosis.

Quite a big public attended our final presentation in the Town Hall. Workshop organizers had been asked for the future activities by 'ordinary citizens'. Vibrant debate flowed through Internet forums. Finally, local authorities have decided to take into consideration the outcome of the research and re-introduce revitalisation process for the second time.

The restoration of public interest and trust were probably more important outcome than data gathered during the research. The lesson learnt by general public was confrontation with different needs and expectations. Urban actors realised that they have to negotiate and compromise and learned that basic understanding facilitates these processes.

6 CONCLUSION

Arnstein (1969) described a 'ladder of citizen participation' consisting of three 'rungs': non-participation (manipulation, therapy), tokenism (informing, consultation, placation) and citizen power (partnership, delegated power, citizen control) arguing that the best form of public involvement lies at the top of the ladder. Knowing that there are many detailed questions in respect of this concept (control of what? which citizens? what kind of control? where are the limits?) in terms of urban planning procedure we may answer that there is an opportunity to ensure citizens' control of urban development. This opportunity is based on idea of 'workshop plus' – mutual learning process involving active citizens, urbanists and professionals focused on spatial-social relationship, creative bodies and people and local authorities. The procedure itself should consist of three phases: (1) revealing the problem and the initial idea, (2) a vision/concept debate and (3) a final proposal debate and acceptance. This scheme gives an opportunity to everybody who wishes to get involved. Future studies have to test different techniques of each phase. Our experience allows us to claim that it is not enough to keep people informed – we need to attract them through public events and show them a variety of opportunities. We need as well to redefine tools of 'investigation' switch from quantitative methods to quality ones. We need to test interactive tools remembering that rather personal involvement and public workshop ensure final agreement. Learning society needs to learn itself.

It seems that the method presented in this paper is a step towards Kunzmann's (2005) vision of creative planning: 'Creative planning needs creative people, creative planners, opinion leaders, moderators and communicators who know enough about the past to envision the future, and a planning culture that gets out of grid-locked bureaucratic statutory planning and political bargaining'.

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