

placemaking  
europe

# CITIES IN PLACEMAKING

A city-to-city learning programme  
with and for European cities

Milestone 3

**ORGANISATIONAL BOTTLENECKS**

26th September 2023 - Strasbourg, FR

HOST CITY:

**Strasbourg.eu**  
& COMMUNAUTÉ URBAINE

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**OUR ORGANISING PARTNERS:**



# Organisational bottlenecks

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# Foreword



## Who we are: Placemaking Europe

[Placemaking Europe](#) is a non-profit foundation. We develop and share knowledge; contribute to designing and testing tools; create the ground to exchanging ideas; and actively advocate for better public space policies.

We are a European network of front-runners, who together accelerate placemaking as a way to create healthy, inclusive, and beloved communities. To make the spaces we live into places we love. Create a thriving, equitable, and sustainable world by joining values, passion, and action around our public spaces.

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## What is Placemaking?

[Placemaking](#) is a place-led approach for creating healthy, inclusive, and lovable communities. This hands-on approach inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community, and facilitates creative patterns of use with particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution. Placemaking pays close attention to the myriad ways in which the physical, social, ecological, cultural, and even spiritual qualities of a place are intimately intertwined (PPS). Placemaking combines top-down



planning with bottom-up initiatives and people's empowerment into a democratic and inclusive 'middle-up-down' approach that brings municipalities outside their offices to meet and engage with residents in person.

## Organising Partners

[Placemaking Europe](#), [Creative Bureaucracy Festival](#), [International Society for Urban Health](#), [Intercultural Cities Programme by Council of Europe](#).

# Cities in Placemaking programme

The Cities in Placemaking programme aims to build awareness and practical knowledge within municipalities of placemaking in a way that allows it to foster long-term change. **It is a continuous learning programme designed for municipal public administrations**, during which we set new standards for elevating communities through better public space. Through the programme, we aim to create a next generation of placemaking experts in governance. The programme aims to create a roadmap to a more holistic and sustainable approach to urban development that harnesses placemaking as a city-wide strategy. Participants develop the necessary skills and knowledge to drive systemic change and unleash the full potential of placemaking for the long term improvement of their cities.

## THE MAIN OBJECTIVES ARE:

1. To work, share and learn together with the place-makers from each of the participating municipalities
2. To break down silos and advocate for placemaking at the municipality level
3. To develop a roadmap for placemaking for systemic change

## The learning sequence

The programme consists of 8 workshop-based, capacity-building sessions held in a combination of in-person and remote formats, led by Placemaking Europe and the knowledge partners: Creative Bureaucracy Festival, International Society for Urban Health and Intercultural Cities programme by Council of Europe).



The learning sequence of the programme Cities in Placemaking

The learning sequence is designed to progressively build towards achieving the ultimate objective of the programme which is creating a roadmap for systemic placemaking implementation:

1. Essentials of placemaking - March 2023
2. Placemaking challenges - June 2023
3. Organisational bottlenecks - September 2023
4. How to work across departments - November 2023
5. From short-term to long-term - March 2024
6. From project to strategy - June 2024
7. Twisting rules - September 2024
8. Making placemaking systemic - December 2024

## The participating cities are:

1. **Bergen**, Norway
2. **Bradford**, England
3. **Budapest**, Hungary
4. **Cork**, Ireland
5. **Helsingborg**, Sweden
6. **Helsinki**, Finland
7. **Reggio Emilia**, Italy
8. **Rotterdam**, The Netherlands
9. **The Hague**, The Netherlands
10. **Trenčín**, Slovakia
11. **Vila Nova de Famalicão**, Portugal
12. **Vinnytsia**, Ukraine
13. **Wroclaw**, Poland



# Recap of the previous milestones

## Milestone 1: Essentials of placemaking

**MARCH 2023, AMSTERDAM**

- In March we met in Amsterdam for a first session of the Cities in Placemaking programme where we discussed the essentials of placemaking, which set a baseline for the programme and shared understanding of what makes a great place, and how we create better cities together with the communities through placemaking.
- Through the contributions of participants and the presentations of the flagship projects, we identified a set of common challenges across the participating cities working with placemaking, ranging from how to make public spaces more inclusive or safe, to how placemaking can help communities to cope with big-scale challenges, such as climate transition.





## Milestone 2: Placemaking challenges

JUNE 2023, BERGEN

On June 26 - 28 the participants of the programme met in Bergen, Norway for the second step of the programme. The aim of that milestone was to understand and dive deeper into the challenges that cities face and could be addressed by placemaking on three scales of challenges: macro-challenges, place-based challenges and organisational challenges.

- A. **Macro-challenges** are related to the nature and dynamics of cities, such as social inequality, lack of community cohesion, unsustainable development patterns, and a decline in public spaces.
- B. **Place-based challenges** are related to a more local level and they include underutilised spaces, deteriorating infrastructure, limited access to services, and a lack of identity. These issues take form in the public space and within and across communities.
- C. **Organisational challenges** are related to bureaucratic processes, organisational arrangements, limited resources, resistance to change, and coordination among stakeholders.

One of the outcomes of the Organisational Challenges workshop, which formed the basis for the forthcoming workshops, was the identification of five main clusters of organisational bottlenecks faced by the participating cities:

- funding
- organisational difficulties
- sharing the value of placemaking projects
- engaging people
- measuring the impact of placemaking projects.



# Milestone 3: Organisational bottlenecks

SEPTEMBER 2023, STRASBOURG

## The aim of the milestone

On September 26, the participants of the programme met in Strasbourg, France, for the third step of the programme. The title of this working session was “Organisational Bottlenecks”. The aim of this Milestone was to identify the main organisational hurdles of city governments in placemaking processes, and explore potential solutions to enhance their effectiveness.

With this workshop, we intended to:

1. analyse where placemaking is located within the cities’ organisation structures and reflect on its implications,
2. identify the common organisational barriers that hinder effective placemaking processes,
3. explore strategies to overcome bureaucratic obstacles and streamline the placemaking process.

## Overview of the programme

For the Organisational Bottlenecks workshop, participants worked from the content and findings of the previous milestone, where three main pillars of creative bureaucracy were presented:

- rethinking rules/regulations and incentives for the 21st century;
- enriching the inner life of bureaucracies;
- building trusting relationships with the civic and business worlds.

## DAY 1

Tuesday, September 26th

Location: Hotel de Ville

### Cities in Placemaking session

11:00 - 11:30	Welcome and introduction session
11:30 - 12:00	Summary of mapping and conclusions from Bergen
12:00 - 12:30	Coffee break
12:30 - 14:30	Placemaking embeddedness scale <i>Workshop</i>
14:30 - 14:45	Closing reflection on previously identified long-term ambition and quick-win <i>Plenary session</i>
14:45 - 15:00	What’s there for us at Placemaking Week Europe?
16:00 - 18:00	Guided tour of Strasbourg (optional)

Public administrations are often perceived as not applying creative solutions and innovations. The aim of this part of the workshop was to explore the creative conditions that can help transform the approach of public institutions by turning problems into opportunities, and to identify the conditions that hinder the transformative potential of organisations. For this purpose - the Placemaking Embeddedness Scale was introduced and gamified situational analysis was used to work within the city groups.

## DAY 4

Friday, September 29th

Location: Phare Citadelle

### Closing Workshop

11:45 - 13:00	Making Sustainable Places: The Role of the Cultural Sector <i>Workshop</i>
13:00 - 14:30	Lunch - wrap up session



# Placemaking embeddedness scale:

## Gamified situational analysis of where each city is at in their journey towards embedding placemaking

BY CHARLES LANDRY AND ROBYN BENNETT

The aim of the Embedding Placemaking game was for workshop participants to assess where they are on a scale of 1 to 10 on the journey towards making the concept of placemaking an integral part of any urban development project. Each participant has an instinct of where they stand, but the assessment may differ between participants from the same city, so the initial reflection was done individually and the final discussion was done in groups linking representatives of the same cities.

**This exercise is not about comparing ourselves with others or with other cities. It is to question where we are now and where we want to go next. It is an exploration of our current state in order to understand the implications of our current position, as well as the next step to improve our position.**

The Placemaking Embeddedness scale is from 1 (bad) to 10 (brilliant) and it is divided into 5 clusters:

- 1st Cluster “Unaware” (levels 1 and 2)
- 2nd Cluster “Interest emerging” (levels 3 and 4)
- 3rd Cluster “Mainstreaming” (levels 5 and 6)
- 4th Cluster “Integrating” (levels 7 and 8)
- 5th Cluster “Leading” (levels 9 and 10)

The Placemaking Embeddedness Scale - explanation of the 5 clusters.

### 1st Cluster Unaware

#### *Level 1:*

The city as a whole is actively working against any notion of placemaking. The concept has no meaning for major decision makers in the public, private and civic sectors. Citizens are equally uninterested and think the idea is irrelevant.

#### *Level 2:*

Placemaking remains a blindspot. Rumbblings in the undergrowth – the placemaking concept is mentioned, but not taken seriously. There is little or no collaboration by departments on city development issues – departments fight their own corner so no integrated placemaking concept can take hold.

### 2nd Cluster Interest emerging

#### *Level 3:*

Some project champions are advocating for placemaking – from any sector. An emerging debate is evolving within different sectors – public, private, local academia, civic. An awareness of placemaking’s role and potential is emerging.

#### *Level 4:*

Certain city departments or entities take placemaking seriously – the idea is gaining traction. Initial collaborative meetings between cross-sector stakeholders are happening. Experiments and pilot projects are emerging that also involve citizens.

### 3rd Cluster Mainstreaming

#### **Level 5:**

Collaborative meetings on placemaking becoming more frequent. More frequent collaborative meetings on placemaking. The three sectors set up (new) structures to ensure any new developments include placemaking ideas, especially participative processes – typically these emerge within the urban design ideas promoted. Projects on the ground begin to inspire continued placemaking initiatives.

#### **Level 6:**

Partnerships on placemaking projects exist – the concept is becoming normalised. Cross-sector working and project implementation is more the new common sense. Institutionalising placemaking has begun – there is a policy.

### 4th Cluster Integrating

#### **Level 7:**

A placemaking strategy and overall action plan for a city exists. Scaling has begun – not only for new developments but also retrofitting developments with the new placemaking thinking. Programmes and/or opportunities to learn from the best exist.

#### **Level 8:**

Integrated urban development with placemaking at its heart is the norm (i.e. across economic, physical, environmental, social, cultural realms) Regular events/conferences on good city making (with placemaking a core feature); the city inspires others and is inspired by others. Dedicated toolkits and manuals are widely available (e.g. on participatory methods, or design templates).

### 5th Cluster Leading

#### **Level 9:**

The regulations and incentives regime has been fully adapted to encourage good placemaking. Additional resources for experiments are available to keep the city at the cutting edge. The private sectors are persuaded and willingly contribute to initiatives.

#### **Level 10:**

A city that is seeking continuous improvement. A city that thinks ahead about the next iteration of placemaking – it is a pioneer. A city that acts as a model for others to follow and helps others on their journey.

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#### **Activity: Working in a groups of your city, reflect on your current state of placemaking:**

- How far is your city in the Placemaking journey?
  - What is the organisational bottleneck your city is struggling with that is hindering your placemaking efforts?
  - What is a successful strategy your city has adopted to overcome a bureaucratic obstacle
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# Results



## Rotterdam

### EXPLANATION

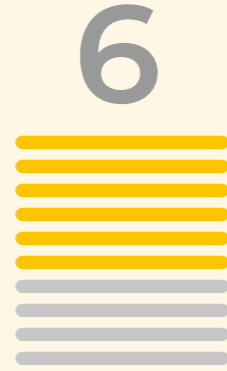
Placemaking is currently used more as an instrument than a policy, but with the visible changes in the public realm in recent years, it has been shown to bring about meaningful change and is recognised by residents as having a very positive impact.

### FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

High level of community trust in the work of the municipality and civil servants. Strong network of organisations and cooperation in various projects.

### FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

Lack of local heroes and the challenge of maintaining high levels of energy and commitment from the municipality. Financial constraints on taking placemaking forward on a larger scale.



# The Hague

## EXPLANATION

The idea of placemaking is widely disseminated throughout the organisation as there are many activities to promote it - such as organising capacity building events, meetings, festivals. There is an integrated network approach - within the city and between organisations working with the city of the Hague.

## FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

Finding a political leader for the placemaking approach - placemaking is often re-framed here as city making, as this can help to make it sound more like a political statement.

## FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

Too many rules and restrictions - a culture of fear which results in hesitating when sharing new ideas. Fear of “ghost regulations”.



# Reggio Emilia

## EXPLANATION

There is a policy approved by the City Council that embeds the placemaking approach into the planning system, but at the same time many other regulations limit its use to its full potential.

Awareness of placemaking varies between departments, but in some departments placemaking is commonly used.

## FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

A high level of citizen awareness and visible engagement in the topics related to public space. A strong network of associations and organisations.

## FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

Placemaking is visible in policies and regulations, but not in the activation of public spaces, which doesn't allow to prove the positive impact of this approach.



5.5



# Bradford

**EXPLANATION**

The City of Bradford identifies placemaking as permeating into projects across various disciplines at different departments, such as public health, public investments, etc. The multi-faceted aspect of placemaking is recognised and is proving its worth in many areas, but it's still at a rather introductory stage, as these actions are often isolated and don't form a coherent and overarching strategy or way of doing.

**FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE**

Fact of working with placemaking across different departments - inspiring each other and opening opportunities for joint developments. Placemaking starts to be visible across the city - it inspires people and gives hope for a meaningful change.

**FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS**

Lack of a joint strategy or forward thinking. Placemaking tends to be hindered in pockets of places but it is not done city-wide. Fragmentary actions might not prove to be successful in a longer run.



5



# Helsingborg

**EXPLANATION**

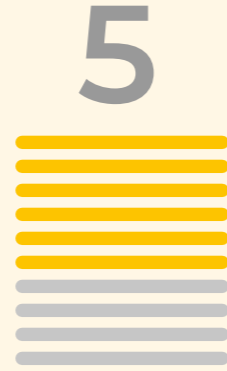
There are many civil servants working with placemaking, but they are not all familiar with the concept - the meaning of placemaking might vary between departments. There is however a common understanding that civil servants do have a mandate to work with placemaking as a tool, but funding is challenging to secure as placemaking is not considered as a proper investment.

**FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE**

Mandate to work with placemaking and creating space to test, learn and improve - officials can feel confident to try new approaches that can help take the idea of placemaking forward and develop new, innovative solutions.

**FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS**

Different knowledge and understanding between departments - this can lead to different priorities and actions not being aligned. Placemaking not being seen as a proper investment - fear of trying.



# Cork

## EXPLANATION

The City of Cork is working to enable the organisation to gradually take ownership of placemaking as a construct. Placemaking is a new concept that is slowly making its way into different actions, projects and methodologies, but placemaking as a culture is still a distant vision. The concept is still seen as very infrasectorial.

## FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

Collaborative and creative thinking towards new solutions and ways of doing. Solution-oriented approach.

## FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

High risk of reluctance to adopt the new approach - both in the organisation and in the communities



# Budapest

## EXPLANATION

A lot of work has been done on the ground in recent years - a lot of street transformations and community building. The changes are visible to residents, which helps to build trust. Lighter, faster, cheaper has proven to work well for small-scale change and leads to a change in perception of neighbourhoods.

## FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

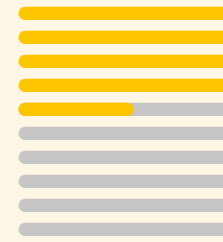
A strong focus on the needs of residents and an ongoing process of actively creating opportunities for them to get involved resulting in significant community engagement. Finding ways to showcase the good practice and inspire other departments and neighbourhoods to take it further. Rising municipal drive and enthusiasm.

## FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

Placemaking being implemented mostly in small-scale interventions which doesn't allow for sustainable and long-term change. Different actions are often not coordinated between departments, which can lead to a lack of understanding. Difficulties in finding partners for projects and limited capacity to work on the ground.



4.5



# Bergen

## EXPLANATION

The city recognises the importance of not only spatial development, but also the programming and the organisational side of development. Many civic engagement tools are being developed and used across departments.

## FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

Implementing cross-sectoral projects (related to area development) and supporting community-driven projects from different sectors - great potential to use the Placemaking approach as a bridge and common language for these projects.

## FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

Lack of common language and knowledge. Lack of connections within the organisation - individuals share the same ideas and goals but do not know each other.



4.5



# Famalicao

## EXPLANATION

The city has a strong focus on working closely with communities and has developed a good relationship with them. The importance of public spaces is recognised within the organisation, but placemaking as a construct is not yet visible or acknowledged - very often the focus is on narrower issues such as smart city or mobility.

## FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

Very good cooperation with external organisations and departments within the organisation. Good relationship with citizens and interest of communities in urban changes and city transformations.

## FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

Lack of a collective mindset within the municipality, placemaking is not recognised as a concept to be at the heart of change, other concepts (such as smart city) overtake the development strategies.



# Wrocław

## EXPLANATION

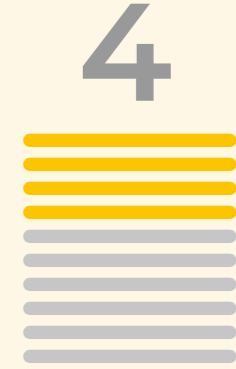
The city is currently implementing several programmes in public spaces which have a strong focus on the residents' engagement. This means that there is an awareness of the importance of mechanisms to support civic engagement, but it is still practised in projects on a smaller scale. There is a shared knowledge within the organisation of what other departments are doing.

## FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

A shared understanding of the importance of civic engagement - both within the organisation and among residents. Creation of a new strategy for the city, in which the placemaking approach could be used as an umbrella for various policies and guidance.

## FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

Difficulties in changing traditional ways of doing things, politics in the city is very stagnant, so changing mindsets can be a big challenge.



# Vinnytsia

## EXPLANATION

A lot of successful projects with participation have been implemented and the city works with many participation tools. There are attempts to introduce creative bureaucracy into the system, but the term placemaking isn't yet widely used. The city council shows interest in placemaking.

## FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

International collaboration and creating opportunities for knowledge sharing and capacity building across departments (not just individuals). Support from the City Council.

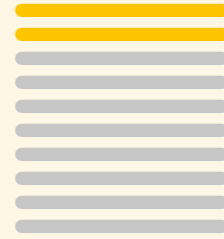
## FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

Creative people are spread across different departments - they need support, knowledge and external inspiration to take the approach forward, which is difficult to implement. Financial constraints and investment in the public realm are perceived as a waste of money in the current state of war (as it is perceived that funds should be redirected to the military).





# 2



## Trencin

### EXPLANATION

Placemaking is a very new concept in the organisation. There is currently a lack of ownership of the concept - both in terms of the civic and institutional environment. Interest in placemaking comes from specific departments, but it is not recognised across sectors.

### FACTORS HELPING TO ADVANCE

Having a central focus on culture and the opportunity for placemaking to be an integrated part of a larger strategy for the cultural sector. This can lead to tangible and visible results in the public realm, championing the value of placemaking and promoting the idea to other sectors and residents.

### FACTORS HINDERING THE PROCESS

Lack of ownership in civic institutions and lack of interest in embedding the placemaking approach across different sectors.



# Final Reflections

## UNDEFINED DEFINITION OF PLACEMAKING

The fact that placemaking is not strictly defined and categorised can be both an advantage and a disadvantage for the organisational structure. On the one hand, it can be a bridge for conversations across different sectors and issues; on the other hand, it can feel like it is nobody's responsibility, leading to a lack of ownership. The definition or title is not the key to agreement - it is more important to work on the basis of shared goals and ambitions. Placemaking definitions can be flexible enough to include different entry points and invite different perspectives into the conversation. Focus on benefits. There are many values associated with placemaking - use them to your advantage.

## PROJECTS OWNERS NOT PROJECT MANAGERS

The collaborative process of defining the outcomes of a project should start long before the project manager arrives to run it. Before the project starts, we should bring people together and outline the common ambition that will set the rules for the project. This will ensure that the goals of the project are aligned and that there is a sense of shared drive for the project and its purpose. This is the role of the project owner - not the project manager. We need to give more power and responsibility to those who 'own' the project, not those who 'manage' it. And if placemaking values are embedded in the project outcomes set at the outset, then they need to be embedded in the project regardless of who is managing it at the end.

## FINDING ALLIES

The network and connections both inside and outside the institutions are a key element of transformation - hearing many voices in the conversation, having the strategic links that 'always help' within the organisation, and finding these local heroes who are present on the ground when the institutional partners cannot be, are all crucial in enabling the placemaking culture to penetrate the local environment. Don't make assumptions about the new partners in the process - everyone can play a role and each role is a piece of the puzzle of transformation.

## THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Open doors to those who want to contribute, create opportunities and leave room for mistakes - the more opportunities for placemaking to emerge and be tested, the more likely it is to inspire others, to be scaled up and to become embedded in everyday practice. It doesn't have to be ideal from the start, but it can be meaningful and empowering for communities and institutions. It is about creating a legacy and reasons for people, communities and institutions to be proud of the place they belong to. And these efforts must be ongoing to be transformative - political, economic and social conditions change, but we must remain active and bold in our actions to continue to create change.

# Next step: Milestone 4 - How to work across departments?

WROCLAW, NOVEMBER 27-29, 2023

On November 27-29 (Monday-Wednesday), we will meet again for the next Milestone on **How to work across departments.**

The aim of the next meeting will be to explore strategies for effectively collaborating and coordinating efforts across different departments and stakeholders within City Councils.

## WORKSHOP

The Milestone 4 workshop will focus on discussing the challenges that arise from working across departments and stakeholders in placemaking processes.

We will also examine successful examples of interdepartmental and interagency cooperation in placemaking and explore practices for effective cross-departmental collaboration in the context of placemaking initiatives.



# See you at the next Cities in Placemaking meeting in ...

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