

Participatory Place-Making: Collaborative (Re)construction of the Local History

Empowering disadvantaged neighborhoods to co-produce / (re)discover their local history through intergenerational collaboration is an important part of and a way to capture and protect city's heritage. Prepare such a process successfully by following the suggested steps.



Step 1. Work on Establishing Contact and Social Relations

Step 2. Conduct an Interpretive Diagnosis: Learn about the Place and People

Step 3. Run the Action: History Driven Participatory Place-Making

Step 4. Disseminate the Action and Work on Political Impact



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Step 1. Work on Establishing Contact and Social Relations

When establishing initial contact the timing is extremely crucial. First impressions are formed within the first few seconds, particularly when initiating face-to-face conversations and entering new neighborhoods.

Direct contact, the first message sent:

The positive starting point, emphasis on the importance of mutual exchange is vital

TIP: start the conversation with an ice-breaker by highlighting something positive you noticed around, for instance say: it is a beautiful community here, and we would like to learn more about that from you, you can share something important with the whole city.

Focusing on visible strengths rather than problems, such as community gardens, animal care, local ambience.

Involving students (natural learners and listeners), including foreign students as representatives of an international audience.

Indirect contact:

Engaging with other neighborhoods.
Collaborating with local leaders.
Involving schools, community centers, and municipal welfare centers.



Step 2. Conduct an Interpretive Diagnosis: Learning about the Place and People

1. Places and signs:

Exploring secret gardens, wall art, and other urban symbols and semiotics.

2. Target groups:

Identifying groups informally using the land, such as skaters, bikers, 'hanging around youth' or seniors and / or homeless people.

3. Evidences of activities:

Recognizing parkour facilities, informal playgrounds and gyms.

Step 3. Run the Action: History Driven Participatory Place-Making

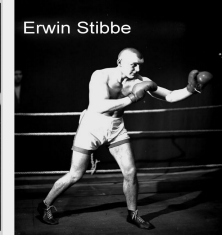
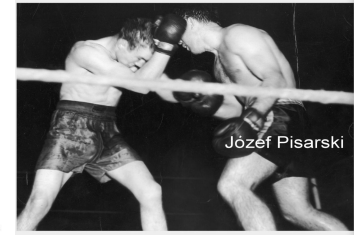
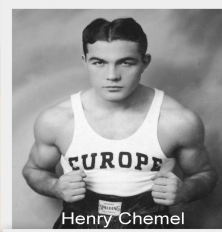
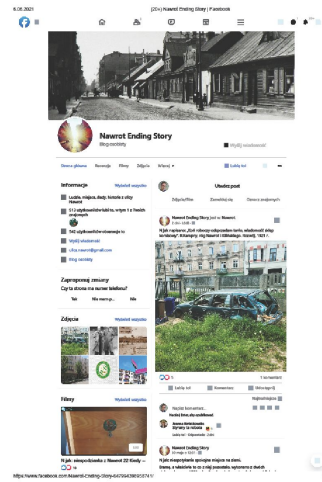
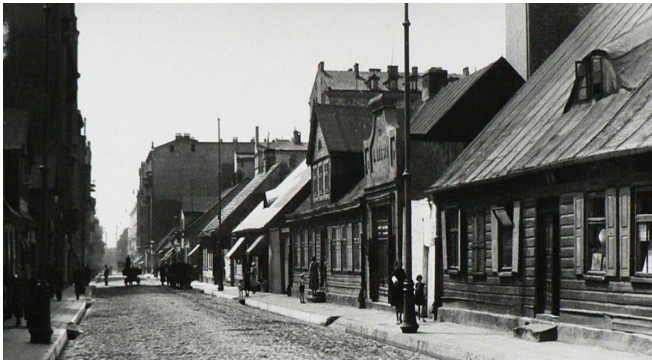
History for Participatory Place-Making (PPM) can be reconstructed from formal documents as well as through the accounts of local residents, often in the form of oral history.

Participatory reconstruction of local history (an example of possible actions):

1) **Oral history.** Young residents embark on a quest to uncover the historical richness of their community or a place undergoing regeneration by interviewing older citizens about the area's history. This not only helps young people feel connected to their community and its heritage but also makes older residents feel valued, as they are the keepers of these stories.

2) **Objective history.** Young residents analyze the 'objective' history of the place, utilizing both internal and external resources, such as history teachers or local bloggers.

Two Approaches: In-School or Neighborhood Collaborative History Reconstruction



In-school history reconstruction:

A local amateur historian or blogger visits schools to inspire young people to delve deeper into the history of their local places.

Young people gather information about the history of their neighborhoods.

The collected knowledge is analyzed during history or sports lessons and is integrated into formal education.



Intergenerational history reconstruction in neighborhoods:

Students inquire about the history of their courtyards, learning from older residents. Subsequently, students and young residents collaborate to create posters that share the history with others. These posters are then presented at exhibitions in museums.

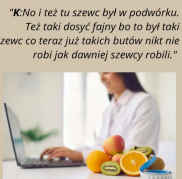


"To było 2011. (...) Wymieniana była cała elewacja, wymieniane były okna, (...) były tu robione takie różne postumenty, do tego całe gzymsy, parapety. (...) No i to wszystko musiało pasować do historycznych tych wyglądown jak kiedyś kamienica wyglądała."

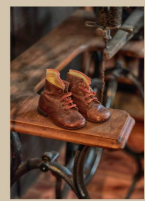
Jak było kiedyś



"Adam: Co było z tym antykwiariatem? No też kiedy on był. K: No jak ja się tu sprawdziłam to on już tu był. No też tutaj dużo ludzi przychodziło. To też to miało te też swój... na nie wiem. Zawsze coś się tu działo, po stare książki, stare różne antyki, lampy. Bardzo dużo ludzi tu przychodziło swego czasu."



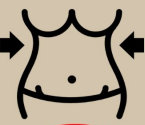
"K: No i też tu szewc był w podwórku. Też taki dosyć fajny bo to był taki szewc co teraz już takich butów nikt nie robi jak dawniej szewcy robili."



"K: w pierwszym podwórku była tam taka produkcja z administracją robili meble do sklepów. Później tam w podwórku byli krawcy."



"K: No i (gabinet lekarski) taki słynny, (...) był tu, teraz też jest ale kiedyś też miał swoje znaczenie (...), to też dużo osób tu przyjeżdżało, różnego kalibru. Te też to jakoś tętniło...")



Jak jest teraz



"Adam: a co było później? K: chyba jakiś salon tatuauzu. Ale teraz chyba nic nie ma (westchnienie)."



Autorzy: Adam Kolanowski, Mateusz Świątczak

Step 4. Disseminate the Action and Work on Political Impact

It is crucial to convert all place-making activities into political actions that can alter power relations and ultimately enhance the status of the neighborhoods. This objective can be achieved through the following means:

1. Disseminating histories and their heroes:

Scientific and popular publications, conferences' posters, city events etc.

2. Using the histories:

Integrating histories into school curriculums.
Building monuments, memorial plaques or urban art installations.
Creating historical paths / guidebooks for visitors.
Establishing local community museums.
Incorporating historical narratives into city branding.
Utilizing historical content for business purposes, including logos, product names, and advertising slogans.

3. Transformative Learning:

Local leaders can share their experiences and knowledge in universities, both as educators and during conferences.
Reconstructed history can be presented in public institutions as: museums, the city hall, art. galleries, etc.

