

Bergen, Norway

June 2023

ACCELERATING CITY EQUITY PROJECT EUROPE REGIONAL MEETING



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01** Introduction
- 02** Equity in the urban context
- 03** Five actions to drive equity
- 04** City equity bright spots
- 05** Assessing equity
- 06** Acknowledgments

INTRODUCTION

In Europe, we partnered with Placemaking Europe to develop the agenda of the session "Placemaking Challenges", the second module of the program "Cities in Placemaking", a continuous learning partnership for municipal public administrations. The meeting was held in Bergen, Norway, on June 26-28, 2023.

The meeting included 27 in-person representatives from seven European municipalities, and 29 online participants, representing five other municipalities. The ACE team led three main activities:

- A workshop about equity in the urban context on June 26
- An open seminar on June 26
- A workshop on actions and tools to drive city equity on June 27



The Cities in Placemaking group at the Bergen docks on June 27

EQUITY IN THE URBAN CONTEXT



On Monday, June 26, Giselle Sebag, ISUH Executive Director, guided a workshop that explored equity as one of the most relevant macro-challenges faced by cities, generating a reflection on how equity, as a guiding principle of urban development, could transform the ways through which we build our cities, create public space, and involve communities in the process.

We made a deep dive into equity in the urban context, explored how equity can drive urban development, and how placemaking can create more equitable places and communities. Finally, we discussed how to see urban challenges through the “lens” of equity.

- Policymakers can make a difference. Urban developers and civil servants working for local governments have responsibility over health and equity outcomes. They can play a crucial role in the design of policies and management of projects that make cities healthier and more equitable.
- Placemaking can turn public spaces into functional, beautiful and meaningful places, but it needs to be done equitably. We should be careful to avoid “placemaking”, which is when placemaking projects are not accessible to all groups of people living in a city.

At the open seminar on June 26, which was live streamed to the public, Giselle Sebag gave a keynote speech on equity, urban health, and their connections to placemaking, alongside representatives from Placemaking Europe and from the Bergen Municipality.



Photo by María Blau

FIVE ACTIONS TO DRIVE EQUITY

The June 26 workshop was also the first time that we presented the framework to an external audience

1) Identify all community perspectives and potential contributions

[recognitional equity]

- Identify the different groups of people who will be involved with or affected by the project
- Understand how the project will affect different groups within the community
- Consider and value the contributions each group can make to the project's goal

2) Strengthen community voice, participation, and leadership

[participatory equity]

- Engage communities as key actors and leaders throughout the work
- Facilitate community organizing and collaboration
- Develop grassroots leadership skills
- Encourage participation, volunteerism and political engagement

4) Share benefits and burdens fairly

[distributional equity]

- Ensure that opportunities, resources, benefits, burdens, and responsibilities are shared fairly
- Prioritize those currently benefiting least and/or who face entrenched barriers

5) Plan for future generations

[intergenerational equity]

- Represent the interests of future generations in decision-making
- Preserve resources and opportunities for future generations
- Promote the interests of future generations in policies, regulations, institutional rules, or social norms

CITY EQUITY BRIGHT SPOTS

The workshop on June 26 was the first time that we presented two short video case studies from our repository of city equity bright spots:

- Canal-side communities development program (featuring Somsook Boonyabancha)
- Turia River Garden, Valencia (featuring Ramon Marrades)

The videos were used as a jumping off place for discussion about the five actions to drive equity and how they appear in each case study. They can be provisionally screened through [this link](#), but will eventually be available on the ACE project website, which will be launched at the next International Conference on Urban Health (November 6-9, 2023 in Atlanta).

On the following day (June 27), it was time to highlight two other European bright spots from the ACE repository, which were presented live by contributors of the first year of the project:



Photo by María Blau

CASE STUDY #1

THE YOUNG VIC THEATRE TAKING PART PROGRAM

By Ali Hossaini (Visiting Senior Research Fellow at King's College London)

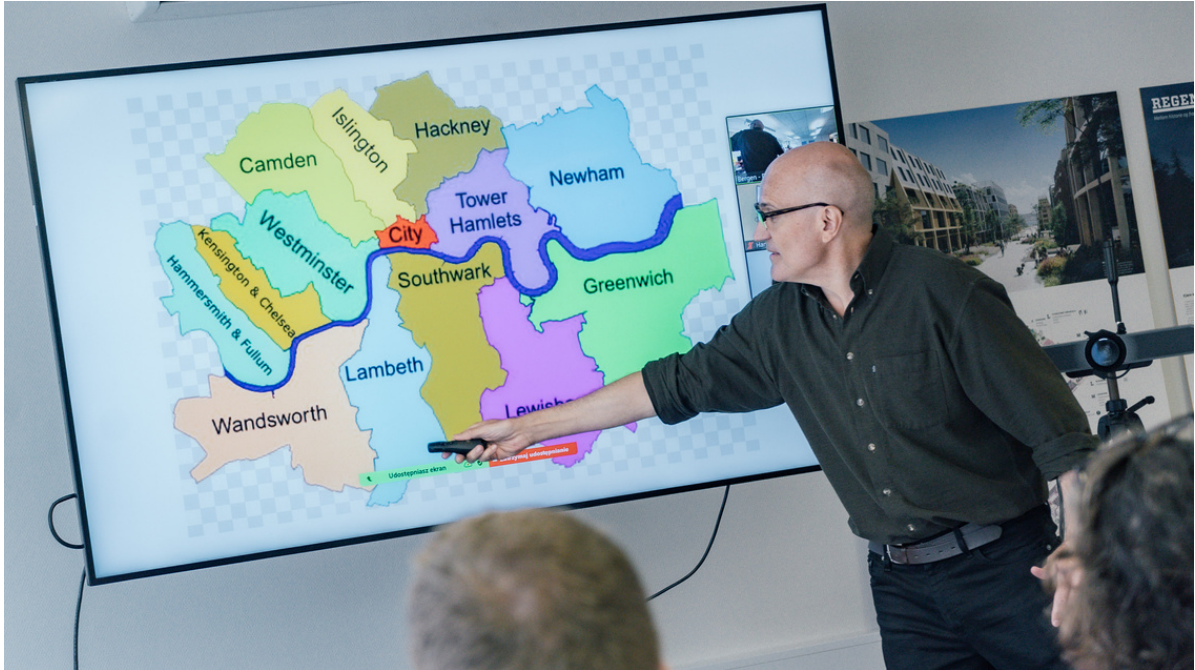


Photo by María Blau

Ali is a trustee member at The Young Vic, a theater in Lambeth, one of the most diverse boroughs in London, where there is a lot of marginalization and cultural deprivation. At the Young Vic, Ali and his colleagues work to change the typical Londoners' perception that theaters are spaces just for the elite.

Ali spoke about how the program "Taking Part" is a way to give voice to unrepresented communities. The team at the Young Vic views theatre not only as a destination but as a portal to other goals. Ali created the "Neighbourhood Voices" program to give everyone – regardless of their background – a chance to participate in theatrical training.



Photo: reproduction from [@youngvictheatre](#)

The face of the theatre has been transformed visually to remember local heroes who deserve credit. In response to the Black Lives Matter Movement, the “Unforgotten” participatory artwork program was developed. The community nominated heroes that were celebrated with artworks by Sadeyesa Greenaway Bailey & Anna Fleischle. This collaborative project was an explosion of talent and an outpouring of love that magnified new voices in the community.



Photo by Ali Hossaini

The Young Vic proves that arts and creativity can be truly transformative. Learning and the arts are important ways to engage new community members and increase equity through a mix of creative materials and knowledge of the past. The Young Vic worked to build institutional trust and programs that were place-based and co-created, which led to not only short term change, but also long term commitment and partnership.

CASE STUDY #2

ANTWERP ROMA TEAM

By Natasja Naegels, Roma Expert at the City of Antwerp



Photo credit: City of Antwerp

Natasja works for the municipality of Antwerp with the Roma community, a highly marginalized group across Europe, with a long history of experiencing discrimination, persecution and exclusion. Her work seeks to engage the community to participate in society and break the cycle of poverty. Her team at the municipality works on different levels, from the management of individual cases such as the prevention of child marriage, to broader education, schooling and gender initiatives. “Mainstream thinking is that it is impossible to make change, but we empower girls about choice and use it to effect policy change”, she said.

Natasja said that the bonds created with the community are a key to success. Except for herself (whose origin is Belgian), all members of the team have Roma origins, and this is essential to create connections and build trust within the community. The team's results can be mostly measured through personal stories, such as the ones of:

- Miranda, a girl who refused to get married through the traditional arranged Roma marriage process. The Roma team helped her to find a house and a job.
- Fatima, a rebellious young woman who had trouble in school. The Roma team was called to help and found that there was a lot of violence in her house. With the Roma team's support, she is now studying to pursue her passion for photography.



Photo credit: City of Antwerp

ASSESSING EQUITY

Patrin Watanatada, Development Lead of the ACE Assessment Framework and Toolkit, facilitated the June 27 workshop, where we conducted an exercise to help diagnose how the actions to drive equity are being put in practice by the municipalities joining the Cities in Placemaking program.



Photo by María Blau

The group engaged in city-specific discussions that considered placemaking projects and evaluated them in terms of the Five Actions to Drive Equity. Participants contemplated how to advance these actions within their initiatives, focusing on populations in particular that may be overlooked.

Throughout the exercise, we explored challenges and potential improvements that could be implemented to benefit more individuals in our communities and fostered a deeper understanding of equity and the practical ways to apply equitable principles in placemaking. ISUH also encouraged participants to consider these questions of equity and placemaking during site visits to Bergen's placemaking projects around an industrial site being refurbished and at the waterfront.



Photo by María Blau

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In-person participants:

Anna Abenheim, Saira Ali, Emiel Arends, Robyn Bennett, Maria Blau, Stefania Campioli, Emma Dahill, Livia Gažová, Martha Halbert, May Britt N Hernes, Amalie Hilde, Marzena Horak, Ali Hossaini, John Jacobs, Hans Karssenberg, Yuliia Kashpruk, Ramon Marrades, Natasja Naegels, Cathal O'Boyle, Kevin O'Connor, Marta Popiolek, Stephen Scully, Giselle Sebag, Marcial Silva Mercado, Lisette van Rhijn, Melany van Twuijver, Laura Ve, Patrin Watanatada.

Online participants:

Salla Ahokas, Graziana Bonvicini, Stephen Broadbent, Lia Brum, Camila Calamandrei, Yanna Chaikovska, Herman de Kievith, Lucia Dubacova, Cecilia Fredriksson, Lilla Gerencsér, Daniel Gyórfi, Hanna Harris, John Hayes, Katarzyna Herma-Lempart, Małgorzata Klarczyk, Beata Kleszcz, Peter Kohout, Nazar Kovalenko, Stanislav Krajči, Tymon Kubacki, Lenka Kuricová, Jeroen Laven, Eleanor Lehane, Nicoletta Levi, Camille Medema, Hugo Mesquita, Anna Nagyunyomi-Sényi, Ana Pinto, Kateryna Pisotska, Wiktoria Pogorzelska, Viachelav Polhun, Daniel Radai, Edith Roberts, Monica Rossi, Moa Sundberg, Annemijn te Velde, Lonci Tóbiás, Taika Tuunanen, Amanda Węglarz, Patrik Žák.

This ACE meeting was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Placemaking Europe and the Bergen Municipality.



Photo by María Blau

The International Society for Urban Health

708 Broadway, Suite 418

New York, NY 10003, USA

+1 347 441 4227

www.isuh.org

**INTERNATIONAL
SOCIETY FOR
URBAN HEALTH**