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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
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.
Equality vs. equity: Equality means that everyone gets the same, while equity gives everyone what they need according to their barriers and circumstances. Equity is not only related to the “universal design” approach or the physical environment because there are different “layers” of equity, such as: social equity, legal equity, climate equity, healthy equity, racial equity, etc.

- Decisions that have the biggest impact on health often come from the ways our cities are designed and managed. There are three main determinants for health: genetics, individual behavior, and environment. While genetics determine just about 10% of the health conditions we will develop in life, behaviors are strongly determined by the physical and social environment we live in. Examples of how the urban environment impacts our health:
  - Practicing regular physical activity reduces the risks of several diseases (hypertension, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis, etc), and one of the most accessible ways to incorporate physical activity in your daily life is through active transportation: walking or cycling. However, how can you incorporate this habit into your routine if you live in a city with no pedestrian or cyclist infrastructure?
  - A diet based on fresh vegetables, fruits and whole grains is one of the pillars of good health, but who can have access to these products in a city where industrialized food with low nutritional value is much cheaper?
• 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 “placewashing”, 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.
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
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:
CASE STUDY #1

THE YOUNG VIC THEATRE TAKING PART PROGRAM

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

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.
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.

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.

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CASE STUDY #2

ANTWERP ROMA TEAM

By Natasja Naegels, Roma Expert at the 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.
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.

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.
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In-person participants:

Online participants:

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