

# PRACTICE GUIDE

FOR PUBLIC INTEREST DESIGN



**Interreg**  
Baltic Sea Region



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RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES  
**Liveability**

# PRACTICE GUIDE

FOR PUBLIC INTEREST DESIGN

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# Introduction

Welcome to the Liveability practice guide, developed by cities and municipalities in the Baltic Sea Region who joined forces in 2023 within the Interreg Project „Liveability“. The reason for joining forces was a common desire to increase quality of life in our cities by taking concrete steps towards social, ecological, cultural and economic sustainability. By proposing and testing the concept of Public Interest Design (PID) we want to outline principles that can help us make cities, communities and neighbourhoods more liveable.


Public Interest Design is a “human-centred and participatory design practice that places emphasis on the “triple bottom line” of sustainable design that includes social, economic, and environmental issues and on creating products and structures that address social issues such as income inequality and the preservation of the environment”.

As part of the Liveability project collaboration, we have developed a charter for the design of liveable cities. The charter points out eight key characteristics that represent the important qualities we wish to develop in our cities, and six principles that serve as guidelines for the journey towards fostering attractive liveable cities.




The development of more attractive living conditions can be implemented through initiatives and cooperation projects. To test the concept all partner cities implemented pilot projects that serve as experiments for testing and implementing public interest design.

## Our pilot projects:



**Kiel, DE – Developing the adult education centre “Förde-vhs” into a third place/ a place for all**  
Develop the adult education centre as a space for interaction and education that is inviting for all.



**Guldborgsund, DK – One Citizen – One Plan.**  
Empower citizens with providing holistic services to support them.



**Kolding, DK – Kolding City Centre**  
Strengthen urban city life and promote retail in the city centre.



**Gdynia, PL – A Network of Community Centres**  
Socio-cultural integration of new citizens and existing residents in community centres.



**Riga, LA – Empowering Neighbourhood Associations**  
Support neighbourhood associations to create more inclusive, sustainable, and community driven approaches and strategy.



**Pori, FI – Revitalise vacant spaces in the city centre**  
Bring life back to the city centre by revitalising vacant spaces.



# What to expect

We also developed and completed a targeted and tailored training programme and used a number of concrete tools in order to test and evaluate the concept.

The knowledge and experience we have gathered is available to you in this practice guide; it provides you with orientation and helpful information on how to approach challenges in your city, using concepts and tools from the emerging field of PID.

It is meant for anyone working in the multifaceted area of city development, eager to use the approach in contributing to sustainable solutions for complex social and ecological urban issues.

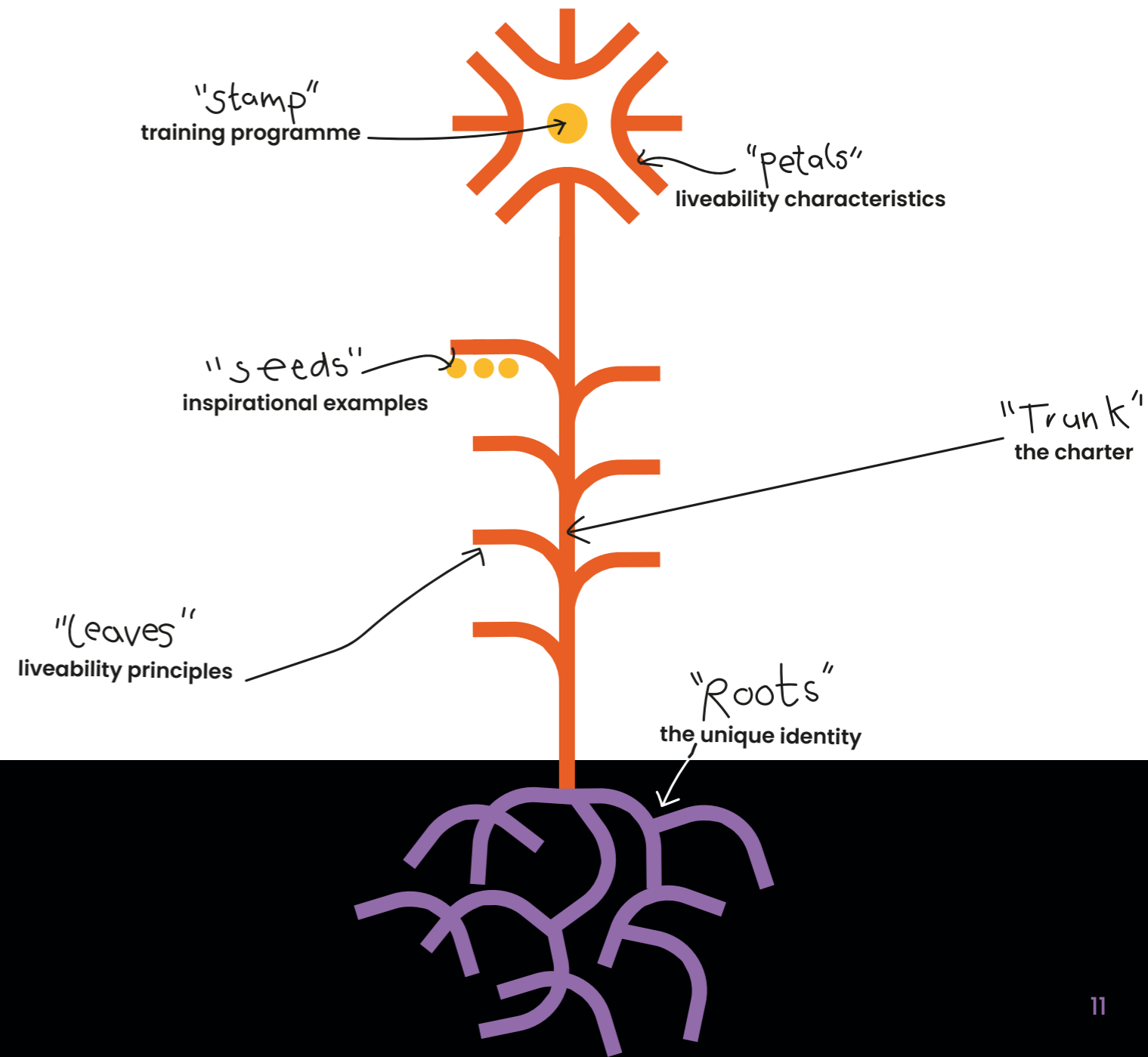
It is an invitation to join our journey towards more liveable cities and it will help you to design and implement a pilot project that tackles a concrete challenge in your city.

## About the Liveability Project

The Liveability project strives to support local public authorities by familiarising them with Public Interest Design (PID) as a guiding principle for urban planning and the provision of public services. Strategic design approaches and implementation methods are being piloted in the six partner cities Kiel, Riga, Guldborgsund, Gdynia, Pori, and Kolding. The selected challenges cover a wide range of urban issues: intercultural exchange, intergenerational education services, reactivation of the city centre, community led local development and neighbourhood outreach concepts. Within the project, we are developing a capacity-building programme which consists of the following main components: the charter for designing the liveable city, a practice guide to provide guidance in implementing pilot projects and a training program that enables public servants to use public interest design tools.

# The Liveability Design Approach

At the heart of our aspiration for the Liveable Cities Network is the vision of cities flourishing with liveability. To achieve this, cities need a clear idea of their aspirations and a collaborative approach to reach them. This is where the Liveability Design Approach (LDA) comes in, beautifully symbolized by the image of a flower. The single elements of the flower and its meaning are going to be explained on the next pages. The flower elements are going to be mentioned in the next chapters to give you the connection of the project.



## "Trunk"

### **The Flower's Trunk - The Charter for Designing Liveable Cities:**

The central element of the LDA is the charter, which acts as the flower's trunk. This charter provides a guiding framework that helps cities commit to becoming more liveable. It outlines our vision represented by the 8 key liveability characteristics symbolized as petals and the leaves of the trunk which constitutes key principles relating to the culture of facilitating liveability in the respective cities. The main function of the trunk is to provide support to the plant, holding leaves, flowers, and seeds.

## "Leaves"

### **The trunk's Leaves - Liveability Principles:**

Branching out from the trunk, the leaves represent the 6 liveability principles. These principles guide city employees and stakeholders in their collaborative efforts to enhance liveability. They encompass values like curiosity, empathy, trust, transparency, and collaboration, essential for nurturing a thriving urban environment. Leaves are the main (but not only) organ responsible for turning sunlight into food. The most important job of a real leaf is to make food for the plant. The leaves support the petals, reflecting how these principles contribute to making the flower bloom.

## "Roots"

### **The Roots - The City's Unique Identity:**

Beneath the surface, the roots symbolize what makes your city unique. This is the city's DNA, its special attributes and authentic qualities that define its identity. Identifying and nurturing these roots is crucial for a city's liveability and resilience. Just like plants need water and nutrients to grow, as well as roots that anchor them, so do cities need their identity and authenticity as a basis for development.

## "petals"

### **The Petals - Liveability Characteristics:**

The petals of the flower are the liveability characteristics—the qualities that define how a city can be enjoyable, inclusive, and sustainable. Each petal represents a characteristic like green infrastructure or community participation. While these characteristics may vary in their manifestation, key aspects such as emotional well-being, green spaces, and creativity are essential for the city's growth and prosperity. These characteristics may differ from city to city, allowing flexibility and adaptation to local needs. The most beautiful part of a plant is its flower leaves i.e its petals. They are not only visually appealing but also play a significant role in the reproduction of the plant. So do the characteristics for the Liveability of a city.

## "seeds"

### **The Seeds - Inspirational Examples:**

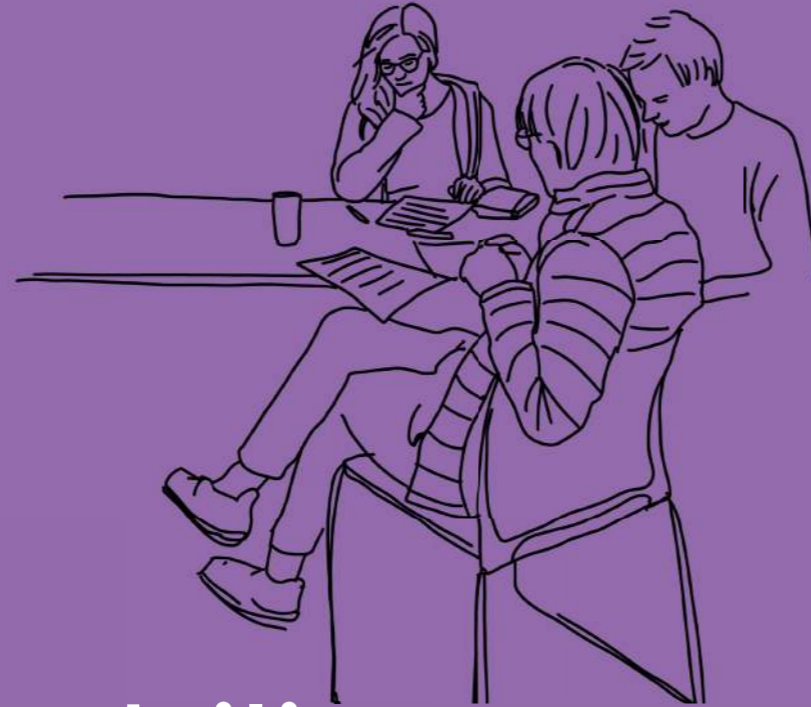
Seeds represent the inspirational examples of co-creation in your city that address specific challenges. These are the innovative projects and initiatives that showcase successful liveability practices. Our practice guide helps support the growth of these seeds, turning ideas into projects enhancing Liveability in the cities.

## "stamp"

### **The Flower Stamp - Training Programme:**

The flower stamp represents the training programme that enables the Liveability Design Approach. This represents the reproductive part (a flower contains a stamen (male flower part) or pistil (female flower part), or both). This stamp signifies the opportunity to learn and apply the LDA principles. Developed through the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Liveability project, the training combines research and practical expertise from city officials, project managers, and academics. It provides the tools and knowledge needed for cities to blossom into more liveable places and to disseminate the knowledge also to other cities.





"Trunk"

This is as you just read the „trunk“ of the flower - the central element of the Liveable Design Approach (LDA)

# The Liveability Charter for Designing Liveable Cities

Public Interest Design is the methodological framework that we developed within the Liveability Project in order to achieve our aim of co-creating liveable cities in an open learning process: our journey towards liveability.

Within the project we developed a Charter for Designing Liveable Cities.

## We identify liveability as follows

Liveability is strongly entwined with a sense of belonging within the space of community. Liveability is created through meaningful space creation that encompasses a sense of pride and empowerment.

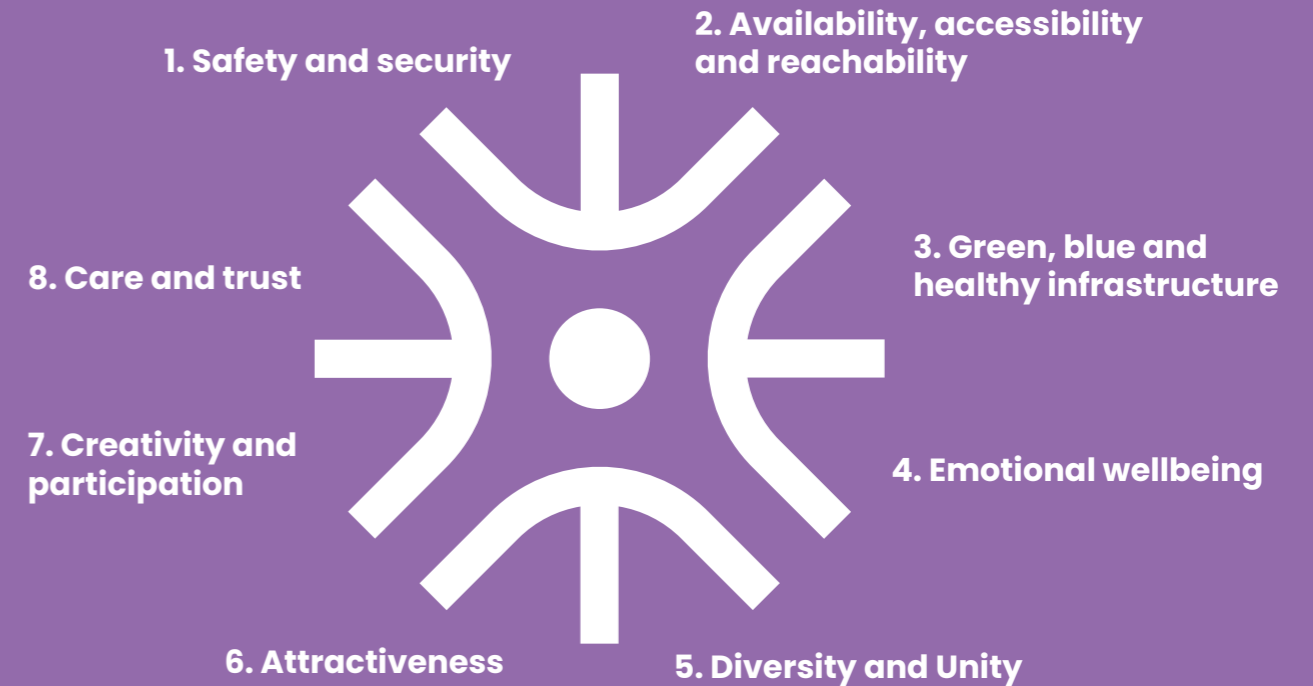
The goal of the charter is to inspire people working in public administration and beyond. The charter is a dynamic commitment, inviting municipalities to start their liveability journey. It gives space to grow and develop without putting additional pressure on municipal staff.

"petals"

The characteristics are in the image of the flower the petals. Each petal represents a characteristic.

# 8 characteristics

We understand liveable cities as places, that strive towards the qualities defined by the following 8 key characteristics that to us represent needs of our city's inhabitants:



### 1. Safety and security

Safe city, low crime rates, quiet/little noise, reliable infrastructure and regulated traffic, no military tensions or unrest, all conflicts are settled with arguments, affordable medical care of high quality etc.

### 3. Green, blue, and healthy infrastructure

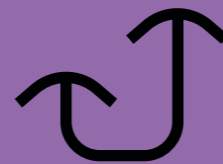
Lots of greenery and water, close to nature, sustainable, climate-neutral, and resilient, Clean, enough places of recreation for everyone, keep benefits from a functioning ecosystem, outdoor sports on offer.

### 5. Diversity and Unity

A diverse society where everybody can reach their full potential, a society free from discrimination, integrated and interdisciplinary, public spaces where both the elderly and youth are welcome.

### 7. Creativity and participation

Bottom-up governance, use innovative and creative methods for participation and co-creation of places, foster a culture of experimentation, promote creative networks.



### 2. Availability, accessibility, and reachability

Accessible routes, well-developed public transport, safe roads as well as foot and cycle paths, close municipality services, affordable housing, human-centered city planning and design – for all needs.

### 4. Emotional wellbeing

Being part of welcoming, pluralistic and democratic community with shared values and respect

### 6. Attractiveness

Good education and job opportunities, possibilities for entrepreneurship, lively places for all age groups, tidiness and aesthetics, positive communication and image, open-minded and welcoming for all people, public spaces as platforms for artistic expression, cultural events and the exchange of ideas, spectrum of shopping facilities, wide variety of restaurants and cafés

### 8. Care and trust

Create places that are oriented towards the common good and free of charge, resilient communities where people care for and trust each other, people can trust each other to treat common goods with respect and care for everyone's good.

"seeds"

We are proud to present some of the reflections of our innovative projects and initiatives that showcase successful liveability practices – our seeds.

## Reflections from the partner cities regarding the characteristics

Since we view all eight characteristics as essential to creating more livable cities, we incorporate them into our efforts. However, in practice, different projects and initiatives will often have varying focuses and objectives. As a result, the emphasis on each characteristic may differ. Below, we outline the specific characteristics we are prioritising in our pilot projects:



### Guldborgsund, DK – „One Citizen – One Plan“

- Emotional wellbeing: Being part of welcoming and democratic community with shared values and mutual respect.
- Diversity and Unity: A diverse society where everybody can reach their full potential.
- Creativity and participation: Use creative methods for participation and co-creation, foster a culture of experimentation

"petals"

### Kolding, DK: Kolding City Centre

- Creativity and participation: Bottom-up governance, use innovative and creative methods for participation and co-creation of places, foster a culture of experimentation, and promote creative networks.
- Attractiveness: Good education and job opportunities, possibilities for entrepreneurship, lively places for all age groups, tidiness and aesthetics, positive communication and image, open-minded and welcoming for all people, public spaces as platforms for artistic expression, cultural events and the exchange of ideas, spectrum of shopping facilities, wide variety of restaurants and cafés.
- Availability, accessibility, and reachability: Accessible routes, well-developed public transport, safe roads as well as foot and cycle paths, close municipality services, affordable housing, human-centred city planning and design – for all needs.



### Kiel, DE – Developing the adult education centre “Förde-vhs” into a third place/ a place for all

- Accessibility
- Creativity and participation
- Care and Trust



### **Gdynia, PL – A Network of Community Centres**

- Diversity and Unity: A diverse society where everybody can reach their full potential – irrespective their ethnicity, gender or class, a society free from discrimination.
- Care and Trust: Create places that are oriented towards the common good and free of charge, resilient communities where people care for and trust each other.
- Emotional wellbeing: Being part of a welcoming community, being a part of something, respect.
- Attractiveness: public spaces shall serve as platforms for artistic expression, cultural events, and the exchange of ideas.



### **Riga, LA: Empowering Neighbourhood Associations**

- Emotional wellbeing: Being part of a welcoming and democratic community with shared values and mutual respect.
- Creativity and Participation: Use creative methods for participation and co-creation, foster a culture of experimentation.
- Care and Trust: Resilient communities where people care for and trust each other, people care for their environment.



### **Pori, FI: Revitalise vacant spaces in the city centre**

- Attractiveness: The goal is to make the city more an attractive residential and visitation destination by offering quality cultural services and attractive, year-round events.
- Diversity and Unity: Transforming the old bus station into a cultural space provides a platform for unity by hosting events and activities that showcase the city's cultural richness and bring people together.
- Creativity and Participation: At the event called Cre44tive Overnights, creative and active participation came together. The event encouraged participants to engage in artistic workshops, share ideas and stay overnight in the old bus station, allowing them to experience a sense of ownership of the space. Participants engaged in envisioning the future of the space, contributing their ideas and visions.





1. Design principles for the public good

2. Integrated and holistic planning

3. Sustainable strategic city management

4. Strengthen trust, collaboration and innovation

5. Co-design with citizens

6. Become a learning city

"leaves"  
The leaves support the petals, reflecting how these principles contribute to making the flower bloom.

# 6 principles

We developed the following 6 principles supporting the journey towards liveability for our work in public administrations to contribute to fostering these qualities. We are convinced that they support us in the journey towards even more liveable cities. They can serve as guidelines on our journeys and provide helpful orientation for moving our cities in the direction of liveability.

### **1. Design principles for the public good**

We consider design principles fruitful for our work in public administration. Design principles are: understanding the problem/challenge in depth and with curiosity, empathy with the users, developing ideas, prototyping and testing ideas, and diversity in teams for effective and creative solution development. Design concepts provide the necessary approaches and tools to foster qualities in our work such as functionality, usability and relevance.

### **3. Sustainable strategic city management**

We want to build a feeling of shared ownership for our cities' development. We see it as helpful to identify the authentic identity of our cities– our city's DNA. We aim to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement (historically, socially, culturally, environmentally, and economically) in our city. Based on that city identity a coherent vision for our city can be developed. The characteristics of a liveable city give us orientation to do that. The vision provides guidance and direction for our work in public administration. Within this framework we can work flexibly and independently.

### **5. Co-design with citizens**

We acknowledge the importance of including those affected by our decisions. We want to empower them and activate their agency. We need their input and ideas on continuously making our cities more liveable. We want to encourage and facilitate different participation formats to ensure the voices of the community are heard and integrated into city planning. We value artistic, aesthetic and socio-cultural actions because they have the potential to make new perspectives visible.



### **2. Integrated and holistic planning**

We acknowledge the benefit of including diverse perspectives to determine and meet current and future challenges for the city/municipality. We involve diverse perspectives from the neighborhoods (citizens and institutions) in city planning. They are the experts on their needs and challenges within their quarter. We plan for their involvement and allocate a budget for participatory processes.

### **4. Strengthen trust, collaboration and innovation**

We want to make diverse collaboration a guiding principle within public administration. In order to be innovative, staff in public administrations need mental and physical space for collaboration and experimenting. We as municipalities clearly signal that innovation and unorthodox solutions are welcome.

### **6. Become a learning city**

We are convinced that the journey towards liveability is a learning process. We deem it necessary to foster an organisational culture that encourages people to learn and thrive. We aim to establish an error-friendly organisational culture that helps give staff safety for developing new solutions. For a more detailed elaboration of the charter principles see charter document: „Designing the liveble city charter.“

"seeds"

## Reflections from partner cities regarding the principles and how to use them

"leaves"

There is no doubt that all of the principles and approaches listed are important to work from when we want to create more liveable conditions in our cities and municipalities. And to ensure a complete overview, we as public servants will always look to take into consideration and utilise all the principles.

But it's clear that some of them will often be more important or relevant depending on the specific project and context. In this section will share reflections on the principles that have been most important in our pilot projects and how we have utilised them.

### Guldborgsund, DK – „One Citizen - One Plan“:

- **Co-design with citizens:** At the start of the project, we conducted a dialogue-based survey among challenged families in Guldborgsund. We investigated their experiences collaborating with different municipal authorities and gained insight into their wishes and ideas for change. The pilot project is based on this study and the important inputs, we gained
- **Become a learning city:** Throughout the project, we experiment with new ways of collaborating with citizens and across departments in the municipality. The idea is that the learning and experience we gain will help us develop future collaboration methods.
- **Integrated and holistic planning:** Stakeholder mapping has been a great tool to ensure a holistic view of the families, their resources, challenges and networks. Throughout the project, the PID implementer has maintained an overall and a cross-collaborative perspective in the identification of possible solutions.



### Kiel, DE – Developing the adult education centre “Förde-vhs” into a third place/ a place for all

- **Design principles for common good:** Deep understanding: cooperation with students, SWOT analysis, participatory observations, visual ethnography, empathy with users: interviews, method: “Between you and me and the gate post”, understand reasons for resistance and integrate them in solutions, develop ideas: brainstorm different settings, place-bound idea improvements (placemaking), prototyping and testing of ideas: small-scale testing of placemaking with the team of the vhs “ How to turn the tea kitchen into a liveable space” – planting seeds of liveability, test qualities of third places on a temporary small scale before upscaling
- **Strengthen trust, transparency, communication and collaboration:** Creating a physical space which gives staff the mental space to develop ideas on how to improve quality of stay within the adult education centre, give clear signal that ideas are welcome, build trust among staff, clearly document and communicate the process, with easy to understand language and attractive visualisations
- **Co-design with citizens:** Interviews with citizens to assess their needs, integrate propositions of users into the placemaking of the tea kitchen, use social events to generate ideas on how to improve the quality of stay, create practical experiences of third place qualities in order to receive feedback for long term implementation



### **Kolding, DK: Kolding City Centre**

- **Design principles for the public good:** The vision of Kolding is “ Together we design life”. This means we have an inclusive approach in our initiatives and involve relevant stakeholders in the development process.
- **Co-design with citizens:** citizens and users of a specific area are always involved in the co-design of new initiatives. This includes owners and renters of buildings. Citizens who live in the area. Shop owners, cafes, cultural institutions are all involved. This ensures great ownership to the actual new initiatives.
- **Integrated and holistic planning:** There is no amount of money that can be put into the city’s space that can solve the challenges we have. We have to solve the challenges together. Different perspectives fuel cross-collaboration and new ways of thinking.



### **Gdynia, PL – A Network of Community Centres**

- **Design principles for the public good:** The pilot entailed all steps and iterations of the process: understanding the problem/challenge in depth and with curiosity, empathy with the users, developing different ideas, prototyping and testing ideas with and diversity in teams for effective and creative solution. Thanks to the pilot project we had space, time and resources to get to know and apply design concepts.
- **Integrated and holistic planning:** We conducted a needs assessment workshop, gathered a listening ear on the mood of the residents through community houses staff, and analysed past experiences and gathered materials to investigate the intercultural practices. As the piloting is on a small scale we wanted to create something tangible and economically and socially sustainable and could be of use for those, who did not participate in the process (guidebook).
- **Become a learning city/municipality:** We’ve attempted at creating opportunities for sharing skills and the experience with each other and peer-to-peer learning. Through workshops, meetings and individual 1-on-1 consultations in-between we aimed at fostering an organisational culture that encourages people to learn and thrive.



### Riga, LA: Empowering Neighbourhood Associations

- **Design principles for the public good:** Throughout the project we use design principles to understand the challenge in depth, engage with users, and develop solutions. Design concepts provide the necessary approaches and tools to foster qualities in our work with neighbourhood associations. In our case engagement partnership and prototyping methods and systems. Such as urban dives, interviews, circles of concern, etc.
- **Co-design with citizens:** This is the key principle of our pilot. During the project we are looking for solutions of developing better co-designing solutions within the municipality and neighbourhoods, of empowering local communities and partnering with them. It is also crucial that communities learn new ways and possibilities how to improve their surroundings and organise themselves by using community led local development tools.
- **Integrated and holistic planning:** We involve diverse perspectives from the neighbourhoods (citizens and institutions) in city planning by using bottom-up planning perspective. Within the frame the community can define their own goals, spaces of interest and people affected. During the pilot it is important to understand what methods allow us to create planning systems to be flexibly implemented in various areas and regarding different problems.



### Pori, FI: Revitalise vacant spaces in the city centre

- **Co-design with citizens:** We have organised various workshops and events with citizens, working together to envision ideal future scenarios for the Pori old bus station as a networking, green space and events platform for the community.
- **Become a learning city:** From surveys we have received constructive feedback from citizens who have used the City of Pori pilot platform to further develop the service for its users. We organised various workshops through which we collected comments and ideas from different stakeholders for the development of activities.
- **Integrated and holistic planning:** We have utilised the stakeholder mapping tool to identify various stakeholders and have found partners for developing activities among citizens, associations and different units of municipality. Through the connections established across various city units, we aim to leverage existing resources sustainably, such as plants and flowers from the garden department for urban greenery and the space itself from the municipality space unit. Restaurant operating in the same building offers old wooden wine boxes for repurposing as planting platforms for plants.



# PID – project: Design, engage and harvest

This part of the guide provides guidance on how to start your journey towards liveability by developing and realising the Liveability Design Approach in your city. You will get orientation on how to design processes according to the PID approach and find the right tools to realise your project.

The guide will thus help you if you are developing, planning or implementing a pilot project aimed at making your city, community and neighbourhoods more liveable. It will assist you in shifting from using a prescribed method to a more systemic approach.

It aims to facilitate and enhance your thinking about the challenges you want to tackle so that you can identify the real problem, and build your ideas for solutions around it. It focuses on facilitating the co-creation of public services, planning processes and projects fostering liveable cities.

Inspired by concepts and tools of Public Interest Design we identified five overall steps when planning and implementing a project.

Step 1: Get ready for change

Step 2: Understand the context

Step 3: Engage and inspire

Step 4: Action

Step 5: Reflect

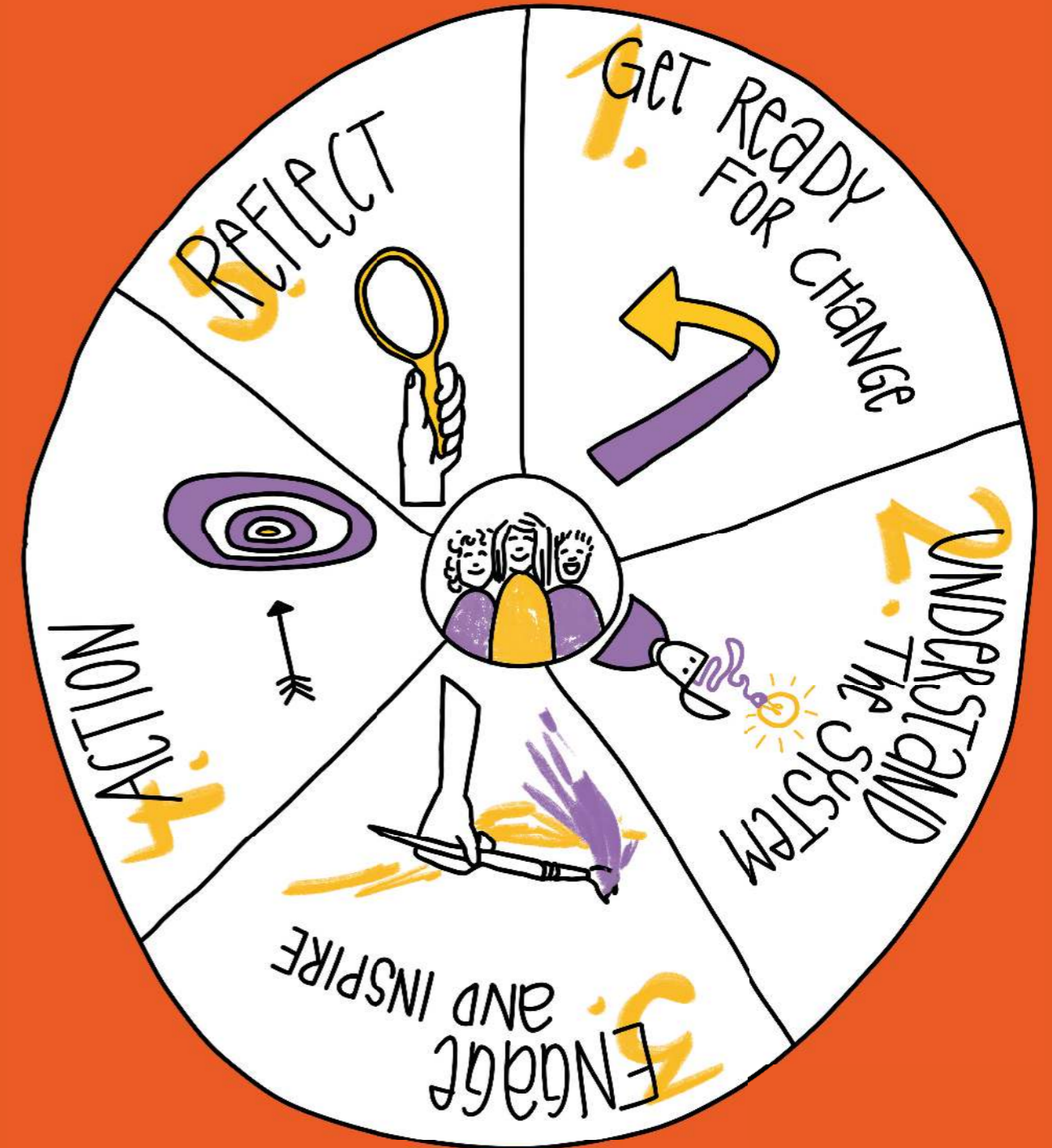
The five steps are not to be understood in the sense that you complete them from start to finish and in numerical order. Specifically, the development, implementation, completion and follow-up of a project is always an agile and dynamic process that involves moving back and forth. You don't complete one step at a time, but will typically relate to and utilise tools, methods and processes from the five steps throughout the process.

In this section of the guide, we will take you through the five steps and briefly review some of the processes and tools that we have found particularly helpful in partner cities; for each design step you will find a short explanatory introduction including some inspirational questions that are relevant to consider, a collection of helpful tools and inspirational tips and some relevant stories and reflections from the Liveability partner cities.

# "stamp"

The flower stamp represents the training programme that enables the Liveability Design Approach. This represents the reproductive part (a flower contains a stamen (male flower part) or pistil (female flower part), or both). This stamp signifies the opportunity to learn and apply the LDA principles. Developed through the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Liveability project, the training combines research and practical expertise from city officials, project managers, and academics. It provides the tools and knowledge needed for cities to blossom into more liveable places and to disseminate the knowledge also to other cities.

So let us start with the training!





In this step of the project, it is time to get ready for change. You need to consider which challenge(s) you want to focus on and to which characteristics of a liveable city you would like to contribute.

**You may want to ask yourself some of these questions that will help you consider a number of relevant angles:**

- What is the overall purpose of your project?
- Which qualities of a liveable city do you want to support and further develop?
- Which effects do you hope to achieve? (e.g. economic gains, health and wellbeing, new skills, spatial and urban transformation, organisational innovation etc.)
- Who is the target group and who are the end users? (e.g. citizens, organisations, companies, NGO's)
- Which of your city's DNA, strengths and opportunities is your project based on and built on (e.g. historically, socially, culturally, environmentally, economically?)

## The „How might we...“ - question

Tool: „How might we?“ The „How might we...“- question is a very common design tool to phrase or rephrase a challenge. It points to the main purpose of problem-definition and problem-finding and has great potential to clarify the exact problem to be solved (WHAT are we actually trying to solve and WHY?); the How might we question should include clues about the nature of the problem (WHAT IN THIS FONT), for whom (WHO in this font) we may solve it and where this problem (WHERE in this font) occurs. Every word is meaningful in a HMW-question, hence while using this tool one has to pay great attention to the exact phrasing and meaning in order to understand the exact challenge one wants to tackle. Instruction: describe your challenge in a “how-might-we” question Phrase the question word by word, thinking deeply of the meaning of each term.

As examples on the use of this tool, the pilot projects developed these wordings in their “how-might-we-session”.

“seeds”

As examples on the use of this tool, the pilot projects developed these wordings in their “how-might-we-session”

**Kiel, DE – Developing the adult education centre “Förde-vhs” into a third place/ a place for all.**

How might we PROMOTE QUALITIES OF A THIRD PLACE in the adult education centre in Kiel (Förde-vhs)?

**Guldborgsund, DK – One Citizen – One Plan.**

How might **vulnerable citizens** with multiple contacts to Guldborgsund Municipality be provided with a unified low-threshold entry to help them NAVIGATE BUREAUCRACY AND BE EMPOWERED?

**Kolding, DK – Kolding City Centre**

How might we revitalise the city centre to CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE URBAN SPACE?

**Pori, FI – Revitalise vacant spaces in the city centre**

How might we OFFER **citizens** repurposed spaces in the City of Pori’s Center as platforms for EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES?

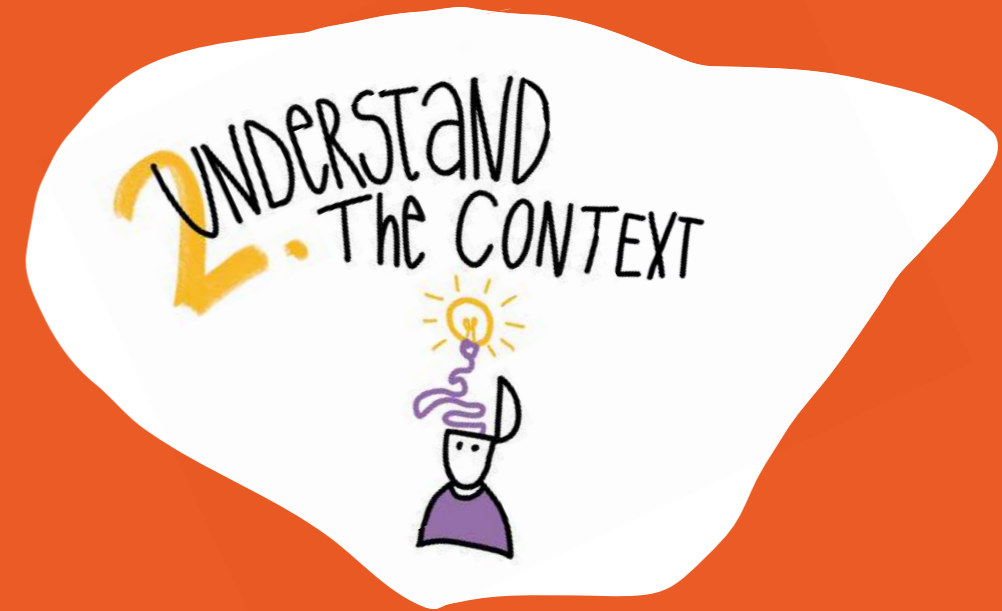
**Riga, LA – Empowering Neighbourhood Associations**

How might **exposed Riga’s communities** in (problematic) areas under potential development be PARTNERS WITH PUBLIC BODIES WHEN CO-DESIGNING INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS?

**Gdynia, PL – A Network of Community Centres**

How might we help **newcomers – meaning refugees and migrants in particular** – TO INTEGRATE WITH LOCAL CITIZENS AND MAKE THEM FEEL WELCOMED in Gdynia by using the net of community centres?





In this phase of the project, it is important to plan and consider how to best execute the project. By collecting and analysing information on how your city works it will be relevant to consider how best to execute the project in order to gain good results.

**You may want to ask yourself some of these questions that will help you consider a number of relevant angles:**

- Which strengths and opportunities is your project based on and built on?
- How will you put together a diverse team and make use of different perspectives?
- Which stakeholders are relevant to involve and what role will they play?
- How will diverse perspectives from the citizens and institutions be involved?
- How will you put together the right team? Who needs to be involved? Who needs to be consulted?



## „The stakeholder map“

This tool can help you consider which stakeholders to involve in the project. The “stakeholder map” is a tool mapping different users, related people or organisations that are directly or indirectly involved or affected by a problem or a question. Mostly, the Stakeholder map will be directly related to the „How-might-we...“-question that describes for whom among the where and what is to be solved. It is important to note that stakeholders have different degrees of involvement in a problem statement and they occur on different scales (micro, meso and macro levels).

This stakeholder model refers to Bronfenbrenner’s model of child care. In our stakeholder map, for simplification, there are only three levels: CORE USERS in yellow (micro level - for instance a child) that refers to actual users, citizens or administrators you are designing for LOCAL ACTORS in grey (meso level - for instance nursery teacher) that refers to intermediate local stakeholders in the same institution or town, and ultimately (INTER)NATIONAL ACTORS in green (macro level - for instance the ministry of education or the WHO) that refers to organisations, companies, institutions on a national or even global level.

These stakeholders and the people acting on behalf of organisations may have different roles or functions: they may be your co-designers, just passing on information, you may test solutions with them or they may be deciders or co-deciders in institutions.

Instruction to use the tool: map all stakeholders and their roles on these levels: core users, local context (in your city), national level (ministries, international, companies). All are relevant, so don't be hesitant in including too many.



## „Cause localisation in the iceberg“

Visible consequences of multilayered, complex problems are usually only symptoms of deeper causes. The aim of this tool is to localise and explore the causes in more detail and to name them explicitly in order to be able to change them systematically.

### Instructions:

Look at the iceberg and decide the challenge or focus to be worked on. Work on the individual sections of the iceberg from top to bottom. Start with the visible part of the iceberg. Note down every symptom that is relevant in the context of the problem.

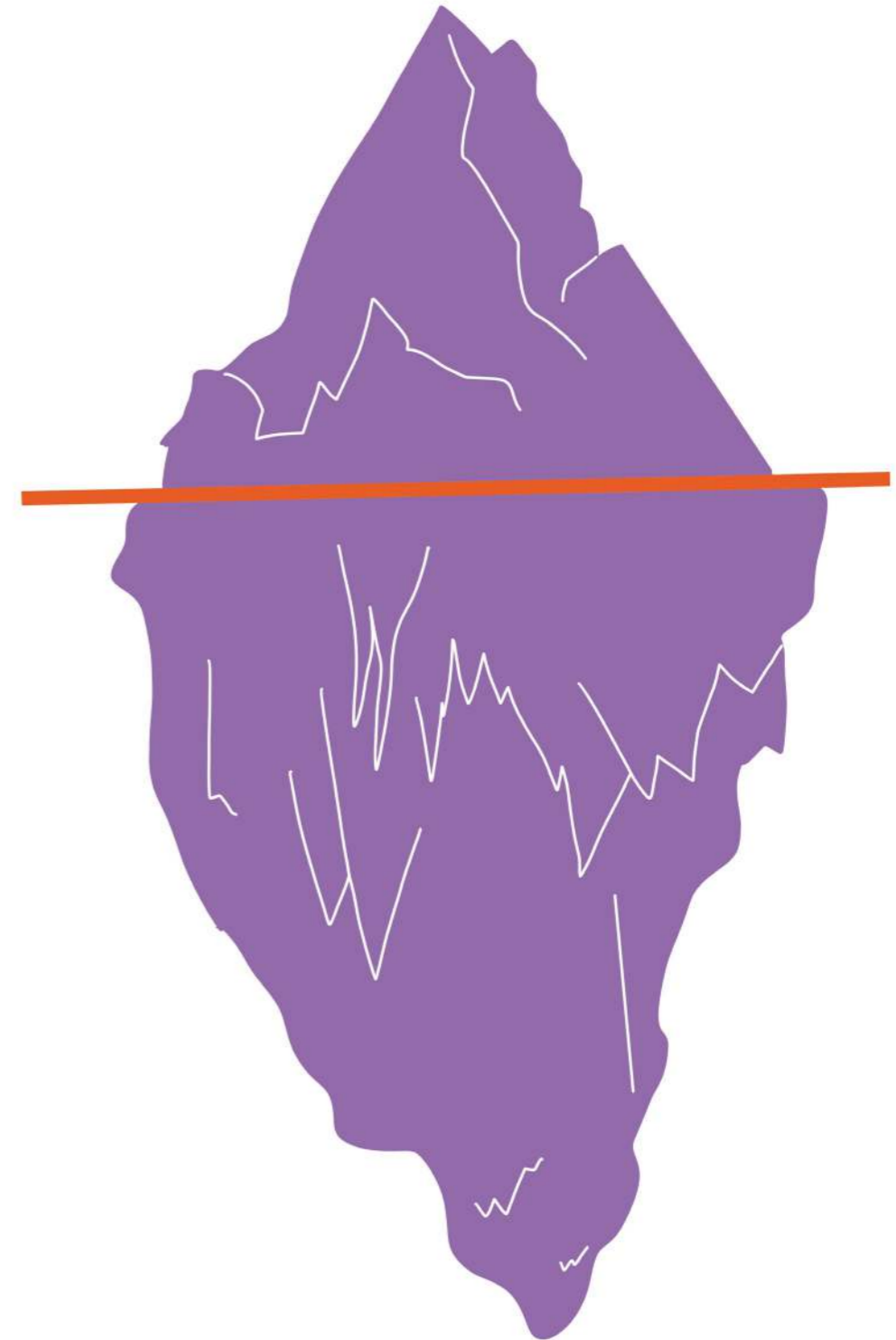
Move to the invisible part of the iceberg. First look at patterns and note every rule, practice, doctrine, routine and trend that directly or indirectly facilitates events.

Move to the level of structures. Note down every rule and hierarchical or system level that influences or conditions the lived practice.

Switch to the last level in the iceberg. Explore the mental models embedded in the structures under consideration. Note every belief, value and assumption that influences the system under consideration.

Finally, look at the whole iceberg across the level boundaries and ask yourself: What direct and indirect connections exist between the noted points in the different levels?

This tool or method exists in different versions and is also known as “causal layered analysis”. The use of the tool/method can help you sharpen the understanding of the challenges you wish to work on.





This step is about engaging and inspiring. You will invite the relevant stakeholders for collaboration in order to cocreate positive future visions to be implemented. At this point it will be important to be open to different angles and facilitate collection of ideas in a trustworthy and inspiring environment.

**You may want to ask yourself some of these questions that will help you consider a number of relevant angles:**

- Who will be involved in designing and implementing the project?
- How will you include those affected by the project?
- Which stakeholders are relevant to involve and what role will they play?
- Which different participation formats are relevant in order to make sure that voices of the community are heard and integrated in the PID project?

## „Democracy fitness“

When planning and implementing action plans it is very important to put energy and focus on engaging and inspiring relevant stakeholders, citizens and partners. All relevant participants should take part in a fruitful dialogue, share opinions, curiously listen to each other, present their views, compromise when disagreements arise, respect each other, etc.

If participants can engage and navigate democratic processes, there is a far better chance of achieving positive results with a high degree of ownership and satisfaction among participants. That's why it can be important and a very good investment to put effort and resources into training all participants' "democracy-muscles". That's exactly what this tool is all about.

The tool and the whole training programme is based on the assumption that your democracy muscles - like your body's muscles - should be continuously exercised to stay in shape.

Just like the muscles in our body, we might forget to exercise them. With Democracy Fitness Training we exercise our democracy muscles and keep them toned to engage in our democracy. You can find more information and training sessions on the webpage: Democracy Fitness

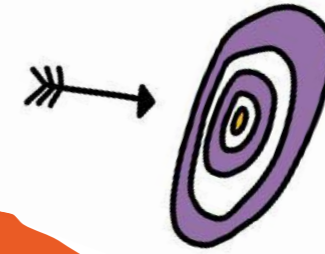
The following democracy muscles have been identified:







## 4. ACTION



In this step the primary focus is on realising planned activities in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders and partners. The activities are about planning and implementing action plans, making budgets, engaging the relevant cooperation partners and learning by experimenting. There should be an ongoing focus on whether the project is moving towards the desired direction or if there is a need to adjust course.

**You may want to ask yourself some of these questions that will help you consider a number of relevant angles:**

- Is your project going according to plans?
- Are you experiencing the wanted results and progresses?
- Is there a need to make changes?
- Should anyone else be involved?
- Are we reaching the planned milestones?
- Is the budget going as planned?



## „The golden rules“

These rules were derived as common entry points in all the partner cities. They emerged as universal best-practices and starting points and their purpose is a clear and simple call to action.

The potential, if used in each specific context, is to develop a simple agenda and boost the transition from engage and inspire into action.

Say hello/ identify real “hosts”. Who is my goto guy or girl and wins my trust? Which person („conciierge”, host, curator) or platform (website with a real face) takes me by the hand, greets me and provides initial navigation? ( In complex social situations addressing communities the initial goal is to create a communication platform or simply contact and orientation: what’s happening here, what’s in it for me and what/ who is my quickest point of contact?

Create actionable data and announce that there are open third spaces. What is the potential where I can get involved to effect what positive change? This essentially refers to visualising actionable information or data („aha, there are empty shops on this street that can be rented cheap/ for free temporarily to do ...whatever).

Identify Doers/ Create windows of opportunity. Once 1. and 2. are given, you have to create a „critical mass” of people (usually first adopters or early users) that have waited for the potential described under (2.) and create fast and visible change, creating momentum for others to follow, thus creating a feedback loop: if there are several empty shops on my local main street open for positive change (A) and there are interesting, inviting, creative people providing more leads what and how to do with more and more shops (B) then more and shops will change and reinforce the momentum of transformation (A).





Project completion and next steps. The final phase is about summarising, reflecting and communicating the results achieved. It's also important to learn from the experience, spread it to the rest of the organisation and maybe even consider follow-up activities.

**You may want to ask yourself some of these questions that will help you consider a number of relevant angles:**

- Which evaluation methods would you like to use to get feedback for your project?
- Which indicators are important to measure in order to assess the success and impact of the project?
- How will you follow up on results and developments with citizens, stakeholders and colleagues involved in the project?
- How will you follow up on progress and utilise lessons learned?
- How will the lessons learned impact and develop your organisation?
- How will you inspire your colleagues to make use of the tools and methods?
- Who are the target groups for communication and dissemination at different stages of the project: starting up, during and at the end of the project?
- How and to whom will information be made available?
- Which kind of information and dissemination is relevant?

"seeds"

## Experiences and learnings from partner cities

During the course of our pilot projects, we have of course gathered a wide range of experiences and learnings. We want to capitalise on our experiences and learn from them. And we want to share them in this guide so that others can benefit from them too. While we cannot describe them all in this guide, we have tried to briefly summarise some of our reflections here.

### Lessons learned from the pilot project in Kiel

- Talks between you and me and the gatepost help understand the people, history of the place and resistances. They create fertile ground for further collaboration.
- Integrate resistances into solutions.
- Less is more – do not overburden participatory spaces with too many interventions.
- First priority should be trust building.
- Presence and availability is key – open up the space and see what comes, make it attractive to come by offering coffee, food and a welcoming and attractive atmosphere
- Placebound – create a concrete feeling of liveability in a certain place (e.g. a tea kitchen).
- Do not present ready-made solutions, leave space for ideas, alterations and propositions of the users – convey an authentic feeling to users that all ideas are welcome. They create ownership.
- Humour always helps.
- Inspire to get active – people want to contribute and have ownership.

### Lessons learned from the pilot in Gdynia

- It takes time and effort to instil confidence in officials among residents – refugees and migrants in particular. It is an ongoing and never-ending process. Yet, trust is the fundament for fostering participation, engagement and cooperation in municipality. Change of political scenery in the middle of a project added to the challenge.
- “Setbacks are merely stepping stones on your path to success”. Failing when piloting on a small scale gives the opportunity to find valuable lessons in obstacles and adjust the course as necessary. Thus, being patient and open to potential failures, gives a better chance at coming up with more thought through and tailor-made solutions.
- Genuine intercultural cooperation in the city requires effort from all involved and it takes time for it to flourish. Trained and experienced in intercultural (therefore universal) approach, staff can facilitate the process through behavioural and social boosts and nudges and more attentively animate interactions between diverse residents. In result, curious, open minded, and free of stereotypes employees of public administration can become leading examples themselves therefore make public spaces (community centres) more welcoming.

### Lessons learned from the pilot in Kolding

- Structuring and planning the approach is complex and time consuming.
- The city centre has been divided into seven smaller areas with distinct characteristics. This has helped in making the specific activities more manageable.
- The city is very dynamic with actors coming and going. Being open-minded of new ideas and input from all types of stakeholders and ensuring open and frequent communication with the involved stakeholders. Also making sure to evaluate past initiatives with the stakeholders and create a “learning loop”.
- Ensuring political engagement and support in all phases of the process.



### Lessons learned from the pilot project in Riga

- Community led local development tool during this planning period is not yet available for urban areas in Latvia. But there are other kinds of participatory municipal funding options that might seem enough for larger infrastructure projects.
- The discussions and actions take time and visions and decisions are being influenced by the ongoing challenges not only at city scale but also personally to each member of the community. It is important to consider that representatives of neighbourhood associations do not get paid for their input and activism.
- At the moment the municipality shows interest in giving decision power to the communities, but it is also unclear if at this moment the communities are interested and capable of taking more duties and responsibilities.



### Lessons learned from the pilot project in Pori

- Repurposing spaces, transforming them and people discovering the revitalised space takes time.
- Creating a shared story that clearly conveys the purpose and activities of the new space is crucial.
- Diverse communication is essential from the very start of the initiative Stakeholder mapping is beneficial throughout the entire process, as it helps to identify connections for collaborations and recognize opportunities for momentum.



### Lessons learned from the pilot project in Guldborgsund

- It takes time and effort to develop, test and implement new interdisciplinary ways to help vulnerable citizens when it involves many different professions, authority areas in the municipality. It's not a walk in the park, but it's very rewarding and educational for employees and citizens.
- Being open to experimentation in a pilot project and being open to learning from our mistakes gives us a better chance of achieving extraordinary results.
- When we made a real effort to involve the citizens affected by the decisions, it gave them a high degree of empowerment and ownership to make positive changes in their lives.
- The vulnerable families involved in the pilot project have gained more trust and are more cooperative. They have gone from a situation with many contacts and demands from different social workers towards one point of entry with a person who is not permanently attached to a specific authority, but can better see across disciplines, work holistically and involve citizens in influencing their own cases.





Depending on what phase your project is in and what specific areas are being emphasised, it can be of great help to look for inspirational projects and learn from their examples. We collected a series of inspiring practice examples in the inspiration pool, as well as an abundance of helpful tools, that you can choose from depending on your need during your design process. For further information, see the project webpage.

## Practice guide, version 2, November 2024

Liveability – Designing public service for resilient neighbourhoods”,  
Lead Partner: Heinrich-Böll Foundation Schleswig Holstein,  
Weimarer Str. 6, 24106 Kiel. Tel: +49(0)431.90 66-1303  
E-mail: info@liveable-cities.net,  
Andrea Cederquist: cederquist@boell-sh.de

Text: Lone Gjerulff Bak, representatives from Kiel, Gdynia, Kolding,  
Riga, Pori and Guldborgsund Municipality.  
Layout and Illustrations: Berte Sophie Petersen



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