

# D9.16: +CityxChange storytelling workshops, inviting other LHCs and FCs 3

+CityxChange | Work Package 9, Task 9.3  
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<b>Authors</b>	Johnathan Subendran, Gisela Garrido Veron, Taliah Dommerholt (ISOCARP);
<b>Contributors</b>	NTNU, LCCC, TK, MAI, SB, MP, SMO, VORU, COL

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
List of Acronyms	3
Executive Summary	4
1 Introduction	5
2 Workshop recap	7
3 Workshops	9
3.1 Storytelling Workshop 04 – Online (Sestao, Spain)	9
3.1.1 Objectives	9
3.1.2 Agenda	10
3.1.3 Participants	10
3.1.4 Workshop - Introduction and City Presentations	10
3.1.5 Workshop - Storytelling Activity & Discussions	11
3.1.6 Conclusions	13
3.2 Storytelling Workshop 05 – Online (Smolyan, Bulgaria)	15
3.2.1 Objectives	15
3.2.2 Agenda	15
3.2.3. Intended Outcomes	16
3.2.4 Participants	16
3.2.5 Workshop - Activity	16
3.2.6 Conclusions	19
4 Planning Ahead	21
5 Conclusion	22
6 References	23



## List of Acronyms

<b>+CxC</b>	Positive City Exchange
<b>EAP</b>	Energy Agency of Plovdiv
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAC</b>	Future Analytics Consulting
<b>IES</b>	Integrated Environmental Solutions
<b>ISOCARP</b>	ISOCARP Institute – Centre for Urban Excellence
<b>LCCC</b>	Limerick City and County Council
<b>MAI</b>	Municipality of Alba Iulia
<b>MP</b>	Město Písek
<b>MPOWER</b>	Smart M Power Co
<b>NTNU</b>	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
<b>PoV</b>	Point of View
<b>R2M</b>	Research to Market
<b>SB</b>	Sestao Berri 2010 Sociedad Anonima
<b>SCCC01</b>	Horizon 2020 Smart Cities and Communities call
<b>SMO</b>	Obshtina Smolyan (Smolyan Municipality)
<b>TK</b>	Trondheim Kommune
<b>VORU</b>	Võru Linnavalitsus (Võru Municipality)
<b>VUP</b>	Viewer – User – Player

## Executive Summary

This deliverable describes the approach for the Storytelling workshops and then reports on the virtual storytelling with Sestao (October 2020) and the virtual storytelling with Smolyan during our last consortium meeting (October 2021). Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the storytelling workshops have been organised virtually. This is described in more detail in *D9.7 Report on Intra-Project Collaboration, Including Study Visits and Peer to Peer Workshops*<sup>1</sup> and following reports.

This deliverable includes detailed outcomes from the virtual Storytelling with Sestao in October 2020 which was initially mentioned in *D9.11 CityxChange storytelling workshops, inviting other LHCs and FCs* 2 and it adds this year's virtual Storytelling event that was organised in collaboration with Smolyan. This deliverable intends to integrate the outcomes as much as possible.

These Storytelling workshops are an integral part of the knowledge development and exchange in- and outside the +CityxChange project and are embedded in the Work Package 9 – Intra-Project Collaboration and Clustering. The deliverable is contributing to *Task 9.3: Extra-Project Cooperation with existing LHCs and FCs through clustering events run by +CityxChange consortium*, focusing on the exchange with other Lighthouse and Follower Cities. Led by ISOCARP Institute, the Storytelling Workshops are jointly organised with the Work Package Lead, NTNU, as well as the +CityxChange cities. To ensure an active exchange with other stakeholders and SCC-01 projects, representatives of the projects are invited to the workshops.

This deliverable is the third of five annual reports on storytelling workshops and the series will report on a total of ten workshops which will be carried out bi-annually over the course of the project. The workshops are organised as part of the yearly consortium meetings and intermediary Learning Workshops. The lead partner together with the coordinator will decide how to restructure Storytelling workshops in 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> D9.7 available at:  
<https://cityxchange.eu/knowledge-base/d9-7-report-on-intra-project-collaboration-including-study-visits-and-peer-to-peer-workshops-3/>



# 1 Introduction

This report focuses on the Storytelling workshops that are part of the +CityxChange project specifically under Work Package (WP) 9 – Inter-Project Collaboration and Clustering. In addition to reporting on the previously reported Storytelling workshops, it provides an outlook for the following years, integrating lessons learned in preparation for future storytelling activities. The Storytelling Workshops deliverables build upon D9.1: Framework for intra-project collaboration.

As further elaborated upon in the framework for intra-project collaboration, Storytelling is one of the methods and tools enabling Open Innovation 2.0 inside the consortium. In collaboration with other projects and external partners, storytelling serves the project to inform, promote, and inspire future developments and potential replicability in other cities.

Storytelling can play a significant role in urban planning by generating support for a project and communicating complex ideas or technologies to a lay audience. Effective storytelling is a reiterative, often non-linear process of engaging with the urban community and fostering co-creation (Van Hulst, 2012). According to Throgmorton (2003), “planning is constitutive and persuasive storytelling about the future,” in that storytelling shapes narratives and allows for the construction of a new, progressive reality. It also enables the building of bridges, recognizing multitudes of knowledge and emphasising the use of different communication tools to enable collaborative practices across diverse groups (Anderson & McLachlan, 2015). Layering is also a crucial aspect of successful storytelling, referring to the level of detail, complexity of scientific concepts, and choice of wording when communicating with mixed audiences and stakeholders.

These storytelling workshops and their connected deliverables are part of Task 9.3: Extra-Project Cooperation with other LHCs and FCs through clustering events run by +CityxChange consortium. This task is led by the ISOCARP Institute, and it is supported by NTNU. The LHCs: Limerick City and County Council (LCCC), Trondheim Kommune (TK) and FCs: Municipality of Alba Iulia (MAI), Sestao Berri (SB), Město Písek (MP), Smolyan Municipality (SMO), and Vöru Municipality (VORU), participate directly providing topics and challenges that are relevant to the consortium and the SCC-01 community.

The primary goal of these Storytelling workshops is to facilitate semi-annual events during the regular in-person or virtual meetings of the full consortium (annual consortium meetings and learning workshops). The overarching purpose, according to the +CityxChange grant agreement, is the exchange of “trial-and-error experiences on how to create robust support among local politicians and stakeholders, create justifiable impacts, manage complex projects across divergent interests, goals, and needs, build targeted networks locally and internationally, support capacity and assess strengths and weaknesses, mobilise demonstration and research partners, develop Intellectual Property (IPR) agreements, distribute responsibilities, create an appropriate storyline, vision and profile for their city, and arrange successful partner workshops between LHCs and FCs.”



The deliverable begins with a workshop recap, followed by an overview of Storytelling Workshop 04 (Sestao, Spain) and Storytelling Workshop 05 (Smolyan, Bulgaria). Each Workshop overview contains a description of learning outcomes, objectives, and approaches implemented in the Workshops, as well as reflections on the outcomes and methodologies.



## 2 Workshop recap

Building upon the conceptual background of storytelling presented in the earlier deliverable, *D9.6 Storytelling workshops, inviting other LHCs and FCs 1*<sup>2</sup>, the first workshops focussed on setting a foundation for effective storytelling, exploring communication strategies, and learning from external partners. These were followed by more recent workshops, in which LHCs and FCs shared stories of successes and failures in urban planning, as well as how to produce replicable strategies for citizen engagement.

To recap the primary activities and lessons learned in these workshops, the first, hosted in Vienna, emphasised learning from external partners and exploring techniques of communicating and exchanging knowledge with the community. Participants discussed how best to convey the message of projects in specific cities and contexts, as well as how to disseminate project learnings through stories, and the importance of outreach activities when trying to build trust and activate groups of residents that are traditionally harder to reach.

The second workshop in Limerick expanded upon the topic of effective communication and explored ways of creating a better understanding of the experiences, challenges, failures, and successes of similar projects, specifically when engaging with citizens and interacting/exchanging with partners. A key message of the workshop was the importance of storytelling *for* planning as opposed to storytelling *of* planning. By focusing on citizen engagement, the workshop concluded that such engagement does not happen only within specific projects but requires a strong integration of participation processes across municipal departments. Furthermore, the workshop came to the following conclusions:

- 1) Effective engagement is not a cookie-cutter approach but needs location-specific adaptations that can only be determined through observations and direct interactions with citizens
- 2) Citizens must be seen as diverse, heterogeneous groups, and the efficacy of individuals and small groups should not be underestimated; citizens should be empowered to initiate and implement projects themselves, rather than projects deferring to top-down approaches
- 3) Citizen engagement is a powerful tool, if properly utilised, and can significantly increase the long-term sustainability of a project by building widespread support, resulting in co-funding opportunities, and increasing participation across different tiers within a society.
- 4) It is important to have realistic expectation management throughout projects, especially when long-term projects may not have immediately observable results, or when issues related to funding can result in pauses or adaptations in project. To prevent societal distrust and lack of support or interest in new projects, it is critical to be transparent and clear about what is feasible and include society members in all facets of a project.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://cityxchange.eu/knowledge-base/storytelling-report-1/>



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Písek workshop was cancelled. It was planned to discuss the Bold City Vision process and communication strategies to involve citizens and decision-makers in the process. This would have involved discussions on how to build compelling narratives about project solutions and innovations, demonstrate progress, and garner further interest and support. The workshop intended to provide an overview of citizen engagement from other SCC01 projects and provide opportunities for FCs to convey more complex information, as well as tools and methods to engage with the general public. This would have marked a shift toward content more relevant to WP8 on Replication and WP9 on Inter-Project Collaboration and Clustering, in that it would focus on knowledge transfers between partner projects and cities. Similar topics were then also covered in the “Pathways to PEBs Learning Sessions” format of WP9, for example presented in D9.12: Report on Intra-Project Collaboration Including Study Visits and Peer-to-Peer Workshops <sup>3</sup>. Although this Storytelling Workshop did not occur, the content of subsequent workshops has continued to evolve in a similar direction.

In addition to conceptual lessons learned, the workshop structure has developed over time. After the first workshops, it was decided to have the subsequent workshops focus on key topics, in order to focus and streamline the conversation. A challenge throughout the workshops was combining the presentations with in-depth discussions and presentations of results within such a short time frame. The format of subsequent workshops has therefore been restructured to ensure available time is sufficiently utilised, however, unavoidable time constraints will continue to limit discussions to some extent. It also became evident during the first project year that a common understanding of terminology is crucial to communicating clearly and effectively. To remedy this, a glossary workshop was held at the 2019 Limerick Consortium Meeting to build a shared and agreed-upon collection of definitions and project-related terms; follow up work with all WPs and WP10 resulted in an online project glossary<sup>4</sup>. A final change in structure is the online format of the workshops, a direct result of the pandemic.

As explored throughout the remainder of this report, there are multiple conceptual and practical lessons that can be learned from the most recent workshops, held in Sestao and Smolyan. These workshops both introduce methods and techniques used to involve relevant local partners and include their perspectives in project implementation. An overarching goal is still to produce replicable strategies for citizen engagement and actively contribute to the work of the project consortium by producing tangible results and offering insights and techniques for meaningful citizen interaction and participatory planning processes.

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<sup>3</sup><https://cityxchange.eu/knowledge-base/d9-12-report-on-intra-project-collaboration-including-study-visits-and-peer-to-peer-workshops-5/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://cityxchange.eu/article-categories/glossary/>

## 3 Workshops

### 3.1 Storytelling Workshop 04 – Online (Sestao, Spain)

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the third Storytelling Workshop took place online, during the second half of October 2020, as part of the online Consortium Meeting. Originally the workshop was planned to take place in person during the Consortium Meeting in Sestao. The initial planning phase of the workshop was done with partners from the municipality of Sestao, so Sestao is the focal point of the Workshop.

This workshop was initially been introduced and described in D9.11: Storytelling workshops, inviting other LHCs and FCs <sup>5</sup>. Preparation and Introduction are repeated from that report; Storytelling Activities and Conclusions are additions.

#### 3.1.1 Objectives

By localising citizen engagement, the focus of this Storytelling Workshop was to tell stories of places. While using storytelling as a tool we aimed to explore innovative local communication strategies in order to reach the general public. Understanding the power of place and how it can be used to involve people was among the main intended outcomes of this workshop.

Through concrete examples and case studies from other SSC-01 projects with Spanish cities working on similar issues, ([Atelier project](#) experience in Bilbao, [SmartEnCity project](#) experience in Vitoria-Gasteiz and [Replicate project](#) experience in Donostia/San Sebastian) the workshop aimed at exploring the power of localised strategies by combining spatial and non-spatial elements (events, art installation, guerilla urbanism, small scale interventions, parklets, urban prototyping, etc).

Our approach at delivering this online Storytelling Workshop was organised within three main sections and covered:

- Stories from the past in Sestao (e.g. building mentioned in learning workshop)
- Stories from place transformations within SCC01 projects of Basque country (and Pamplona) either in person or digital, depending on situation;
- Workshop part, using online tools such as Miro/Mural to apply placemaking principles in exemplary context.

Three main questions served as the foundation upon which we built up our workshop:

- Starting point for citizen engagement: how to get people initially involved in projects?
- How to get people to interact with the PED, visit, learn, etc.?
- How to create PEDs which build upon the past and current identity of the area?

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<sup>5</sup> <https://cityxchange.eu/knowledge-base/d9-11-storytelling-workshops-inviting-other-lhcs-and-fcs-2/>



### 3.1.2 Agenda

10:30 - 10:40	Introduction Workshop	General
10:40 - 10:55	Video Sestao	
10:55 - 11:00	Discussions and Instructions	
11:00 - 11:40	City Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vitoria Gasteiz</li> <li>• San Sebastian</li> <li>• Bilbao</li> </ul>	
11:40 - 12:10	Preparation of Stories	Breakout Sessions
12:10	Story A and Q&A	General
12:15	Story A and Q&A	
12:20	Story A and Q&A	

Fig. 2 Storytelling workshop agenda

### 3.1.3 Participants

Most attendees were from the consortium meeting +CityxChange. The session welcomed external experts and project managers from other SCC-01 projects based in the same region as Sestao, Spain. These cities and projects were Vitoria Gasteiz (SmartEnCity<sup>6</sup>), San Sebastian (REPLICATE<sup>7</sup>), and Bilbao (ATELIER<sup>8</sup>).

### 3.1.4 Workshop - Introduction and City Presentations

The session started with a video from Iñaki Peña, journalist and resident of the area of Sestao. The video (11 minutes long) tells the story following an interview structure of the changes and developments of the area. Iñaki reflects on the developments using past experiences, his youth and what he remembers of la casa del arco (house of the arch), a house that was restored with the efforts of the Sestao municipality, the Basque Government and the European community.

La Casa del Arco, Iñaki reflects, is the beginning of a progressive restoration of the city. Iñaki foresees that this development will bring new possibilities to the city such as the restoration of nature and the river that was previously exploited for industrial purposes.

The session continued with a short Q&A in which some of the participants shared reflections and ideas. Questions were posed in order to enhance the quality of debate, including: What caught your attention during this video? Have you experienced something similar in terms of urban development?

<sup>6</sup> <http://smartcitynetwork.eu/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://replicate-project.eu/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://smartcity-atelier.eu/>



The main objective of the discussion was to understand the structure used (in this case for the interview) to tell a compelling story.

After the introductory video and the short discussion, our external participants had the opportunity to present their project and stress the importance of citizen engagement interventions.

The participants included:

- **Jordán Guardo**, from the municipality of Bilbao, reflected on the ATELIER experience, giving examples of positive urban development and citizen engagement practices. The project focused on a highly industrialised artificial island, Zorrotzaurre, close to the city of Bilbao. Using top-down and bottom-up approaches, the ATELIER project achieved a combination of arts, culture and economic development in the area. Jordán explained what type of communication methods were used in ensuring citizen engagement.
- **David Grisaleña**, from the municipality of Vitoria Gasteiz, presented the SmartEnCity: Coronación District. The objective of this lighthouse project is to develop a systematic approach for sustainable, smart, and resource efficient urban environments in Europe. David explained how, through citizen engagement, they were able to develop strategies to replicate energy retrofitting buildings. One of the examples was the so-called Eulogio Serdán Street. Some of the discussions that arose during the presentation were about how housing property ownership is divided in Spain. David reflected that it is not so easy to communicate with locals as it is in nordic countries. He stresses that in nordic countries they have a neighbourhood community, but not in the case of Spain. During project implementation, they had to visit owners one-by-one to discuss the project and have their approval. Although it was a significant investment of time, he was proud to present the project as a successful bottom-up initiative. Within the project, the co-creation process also embraced the local cultural identity by inspiring the painting of one of the lateral facades with elements representative of the area.
- **Marta Zabaleta** presented the REPLICATE project, focusing on the Donostia/San Sebastian citizen engagement process. Marta presented the objectives of the project and how they used bottom-up approaches in their interventions. Marta explained that they have been engaging and enhancing collaboration with the neighbours before and during the execution of the project.

### 3.1.5 Workshop - Storytelling Activity & Discussions

The activity was designed and presented by Gisela Garrido Veron and supported by Sindi Haxhija (ISOCARP). The activity was introduced about two weeks before the actual consortium meeting, to provide external participants and consortium members with time to prepare. The main question for the storytelling activity was:

***How can a personal experience relate to urban transformation and citizen engagement?***



The instructions given were the following:

- Choose a building/public space/neighbourhood in your city that reflects urban transformations – if possible as a result of your own project solutions. Explain why you chose this (what are the community values that it represents?).
- What is the story behind the transformation of this building, public space, or neighbourhood?
- How did the community engage within different transformational stages of the site?
- What were specific citizen engagement events that you undertook within your project framework? What were specific challenges and barriers to engaging citizens? How did you overcome them?

Exercise:

- Present briefly the picture within your group, why did you choose this picture etc.
- Among all the pictures, choose one that has captivated your attention and continue developing the story. Reflect on why you chose this particular story.
- How does this personal experience relate to urban transformations?
- How has this transformation (positively) impacted the city? (collective engagement)

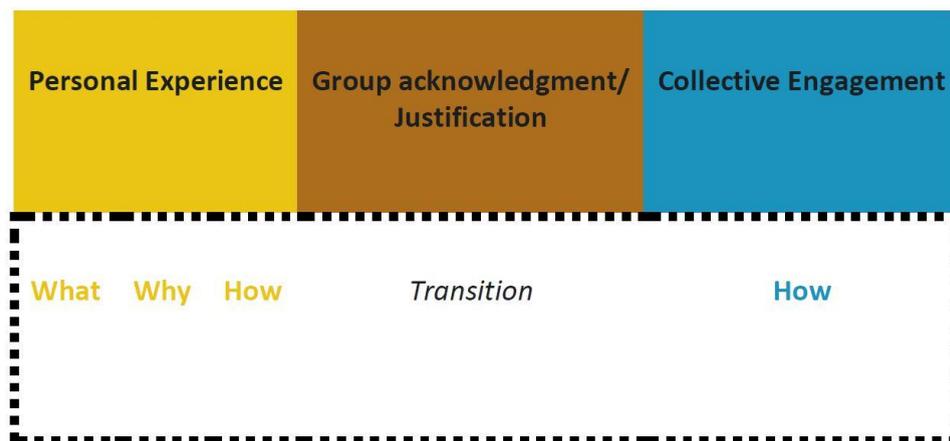


Fig. 3 Storytelling workshop interactive session exercise

The session was divided into three main breakout (small) sessions. All participants presented a “case study” and discussed the importance of participation in urban development. Some participants gave some anecdotes and shared past and present pictures of the same area. After about 20 minutes, participants were called back to the main session. One of each group presented their picture and others had the possibility to comment and share questions.

- Isabel: Presented the transformation of an industrial area. She showed pictures from before and after.
- Javier: Presented about the transformation of a working class neighbourhood where he shared some of his past experiences with architecture students and children playing football.
- Allan: Presented not so much regarding the development of an area but on the importance of gathering together with people to see/ discuss these developments.

Allan showed a picture with some of the consortium partners walking in a colourful street in Limerick during a sunny day. Allan reflected on Isabel's and Javier's story, rounding it up with the importance of citizen engagement and a space to do so.

### 3.1.6 Conclusions

This workshop was seen as an interactive learning session. It allowed participants to share about their own urban spaces and understand how these places play an important role when engaging collectively. Storytelling in this context is an initiator of change and development, used to capture the unique values and community perspectives of a place. It also helps to enhance the social connection between planners, the users of spaces, and the physical place itself.

From the facilitator's perspective, participants were active in the discussion and in the breakout rooms, sharing their stories. This is important to note since online/remote working has been a challenge during certain +CityxChange activities. It was a successful first attempt at virtual storytelling workshops, and could easily be reproduced in the future, if the project continues facing challenges due to Covid-19. Regarding logistics, the timing for this workshop should be extended to account for complications due to the online format. It is also beneficial to be flexible with scheduling, especially when having external participants who are less familiar with the content and structure of the workshop. The schedule of the workshop followed similar structures to previous workshops, where participants were asked about their experiences and impressions, which were then reflected on in the group. This functioned well for the first online Workshop, however it is recommended that future workshops include a designated time for feedback about the structure of the workshop, not only about the content.

The discussion in the Storytelling was relevant for Sestao and their local development plans to restore nature. This session allowed Sestao to build connections and interact with other SCC-01 projects in the area, resulting in potential partnerships for future fundings and projects. It also made evident the value of placemaking as a collaborative process that can shape and transform public space. Effective placemaking can enable and empower citizens to participate, resulting in urban designs made for the people who will use them. We discussed how planning is not simply about technicalities, but about the feel and function of spaces. It requires adopting the mindset that the *community* is the expert and is most capable of identifying issues and priorities for urban development, which can be identified using storytelling methods. The community further offers a range of perspectives, skills, and historical narratives that are essential to creating a vital space. This approach focuses on creating the stories together with all participants in a cyclical process of giving and taking between the knowledge 'producer' and knowledge 'user'.

Some of the key results and conclusions from the online storytelling session include:

- Storytelling plays an important role in how people assign value to a place and can help give a place an identity. It is a very powerful communication tool that has untapped potential at the local level of governing and decision-making.



- The SCC-01 projects, although in the same region, implement different approaches to citizen engagement, especially in terms of communication (art, ordinary communication, education through community-based interventions, etc.). This makes evident the necessity of location-specific methodologies and participatory processes.
- Overall, all participants have experienced the evolution of spaces in which they live, reinforcing the theory of belonging and self-categorization from the Social Identity Theory.
- A mix of bottom-up and top-down strategies in the cities can produce optimal results by combining the needs of a community with the vision of planners and decision-makers.
- It is critical to engage with citizens throughout every stage of the planning process, even though this can take considerable time and resources. This is well-known and already built into the project, but it remains a challenge.



## 3.2 Storytelling Workshop 05 – Online (Smolyan, Bulgaria)

Due to the ongoing the Covid-19 pandemic, our fourth Storytelling Workshop took place virtually, during the second half of October 2021 as part of the online Consortium Meeting (also see D9.14: Report on Intra-Project Collaboration Including Study Visits and Peer-to-Peer Workshops 6). The initial planning phase of the workshop was done with partners from the municipality of Smolyan. After in-depth conversations with the municipality of Smolyan, the topic of the storytelling workshop was settled as: “Integrating Storytelling for Youth Engagement”.

The selection of the topic at first might be surprising considering the general thematic of +CityxChange. However, youth integration is an important component not only because their voices need to be represented, but also because youth represents the future of a city. Smolyan’s Bold City Vision stresses this issue as well. The city is experiencing urban shrink, with the population declining especially among youngsters. The youngest population leaves Smolyan to study in other cities in Bulgaria and do not return because of the lack of economic prosperity and social development. The municipality of Smolyan has been working on providing and supporting the youth, implementing a series of activities and interventions that would help them gather information for the city to become attractive and sustainable.

### 3.2.1 Objectives

Storytelling plays a fundamental role in facilitating human communication, meaning and contextualisation of ideas, and emotions. By telling stories, individuals are most likely to feel related to the idea and moral. This results in a higher understanding deriving momentum for behaviour change.

This storytelling session aims at developing a series of stories on the topic of Youth engagement. Through the reflection of our memories, participants will create short stories that will be interpreted and commented on by the youth representative of Smolyan.

### 3.2.2 Agenda

<b>Activity Introduction</b>	<b>10:45 10:50</b>	ISOCARP Institute presents the importance of storytelling following the agenda for the storytelling activity.
<b>SMOLYAN and Youth Engagement Developments</b>	<b>10:50 11:00</b>	A Smolyan official will present and briefly discuss youth and youth engagement in Smolyan, related opportunities and challenges.
<b>Storytelling Creation Time</b>	<b>11:00 11:07</b>	Participants will have some time to think and create a short story considering the structure provided.
<b>Storytelling: Breakout Sessions</b>	<b>11:07 11:22</b>	In the breakout rooms (if more than 15 participants), volunteers will present their story using the general structure of a good story. Stories should last about 3- 5 minutes per participant.

<b>Sharing short stories</b>	<b>11:22 11:35</b>	After this, we will go back to the general zoom room and share with all participants 1-2 stories developed in the breakout rooms.
<b>Young Representative Story Reflections</b>	<b>11:35 11:45</b>	Young representatives provide feedback and reflect over the stories from the participants.
<b>Miro board, Last remarks and closing</b>	<b>11:45 12:00</b>	Last reflections and discussion about our abilities to produce a story, difficulties. There will be a Miro-board with these reflections, challenges and solutions for the involvement of youngsters in the community

Fig. 4 Storytelling workshop agenda

### 3.2.3. Intended Outcomes

Following the intended outcomes of the workshop in collaborations with Municipality of Smolyan:

- Understanding and sharing best practices for youth involvement in city planning and development.
- Building capacity in cross-european municipalities through storytelling in relation to the youth and +CxC.
- Understanding the basic principles, rules and benefits of storytelling.
- Helping promote storytelling methods for bottom-up approaches in cities.

### 3.2.4 Participants

There were 23 participants from the +CityxChange consortium. An external participant, Mr. Valentin Kehayov also participated in the consortium meeting. As the current President of the Young Improvers for Youth Development in Smolyan, he acts as the principal nexus between the municipality and the young community.

### 3.2.5 Workshop - Activity

Participants are asked to reflect on when they were young, what their priorities were, and how they perceived development prior to going to study etc.

Questions that can trigger their stories can be (this should be the basis for each participant's story):

- What did you want to become when you were little? Were you a good student? What did you like to do in your free time? Where did you like to go in your free time?
- What triggered you in life to choose your current path? Who/what motivated you?
- How did you perceive your environment? Do you think your local government cared?
- Could you have done more to pursue your interests?



Taking these questions into consideration, how would you communicate this to a 15-year-old? These last questions would help the participant rephrase their story in a more digestible/Coherent/ language moving away from the industry jargon.

*Storytelling Creation Time (7 min.)*

Participants had 7 minutes to come up with a story using the questions from above as a basis. ISOCARP Institute provided a series of language tools that would facilitate the creation of short stories (Figure 5). These guidelines included, fill-in sentences, and key words.

### General Structure of a Good Story

- a. **Introduction**
- b. **Context:** When and where (credibility)
  - o Who is the hero (protagonist)? Needs to be relevant for the audience
  - o What does you/he/she want (passion/objective)?
  - o Who or what is getting in the way? (Villain - can be person/ fictional person/yourself or object)
- c. **Action:** This is where you tell what happened
  - o Conflicts?
  - o Attempts at solutions (?)
- d. **Result or Resolution:** Conclusions
  - o How the story ended
  - o Reinforce the moral of the story (recommendation)

Fig. 5 Storytelling Structure for Smolyan's Session

Participants were then distributed in different breakout rooms where they were able to present their stories using the general structure of a good story. Stories should last about 3-5 minutes per participant (Figure 6).

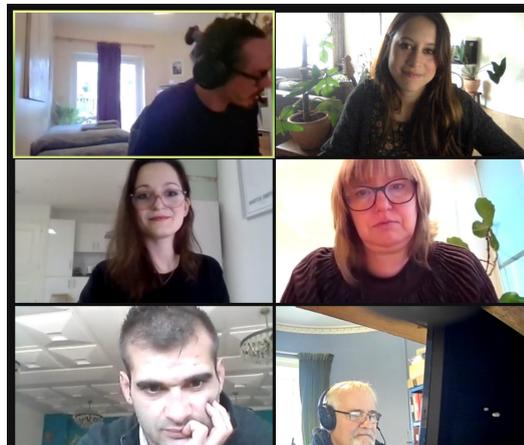


Fig. 6 Storytelling participants in a breakout room

Participants went back to the general zoom room and shared with all participants 1-2 stories developed in the breakout rooms. Participants were encouraged to reflect on the storytelling and the youth representative provided feedback (Figure 7).

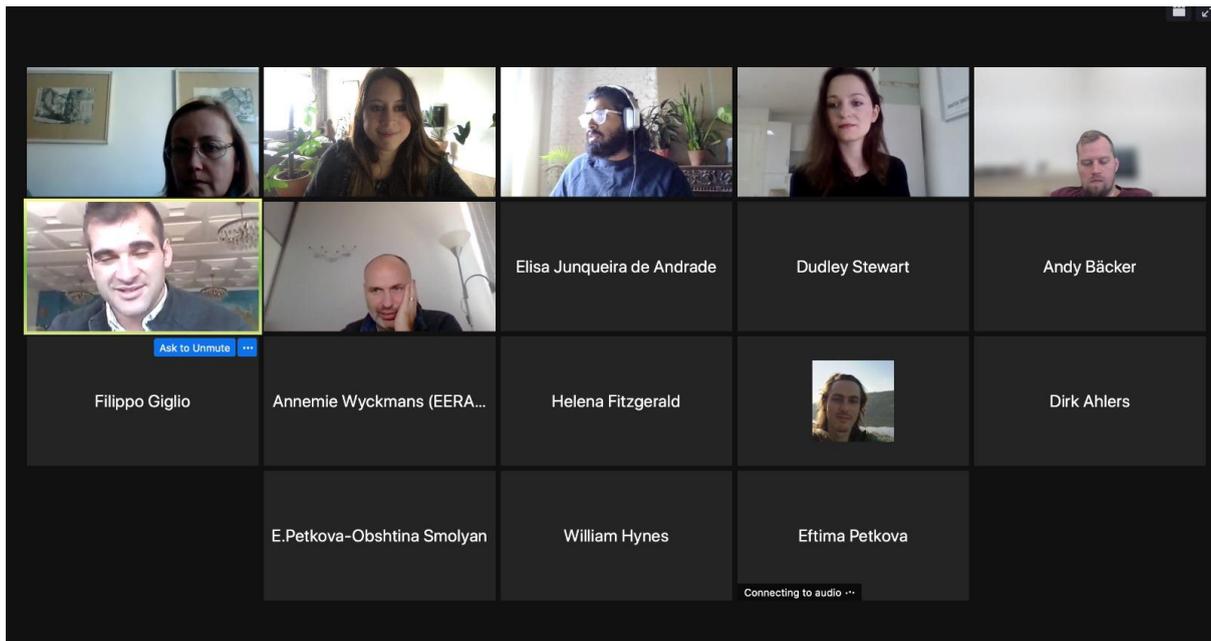


Fig. 7 Valentin (Youth Representative) providing reflections regarding the storytelling event

We concluded with reflections and discussion about our abilities to produce a story. We created a Miro-board with these reflections, challenges and solutions for the involvement of youths in the community (Figure 8).

Questions addressed in the discussion session:

- Do you think spatial infrastructure is enough to motivate young people to be more active/ to stay in the community? (Community centers etc.)
- What are current successful developments in your city that involve young people in the community?
- Other questions from the young community

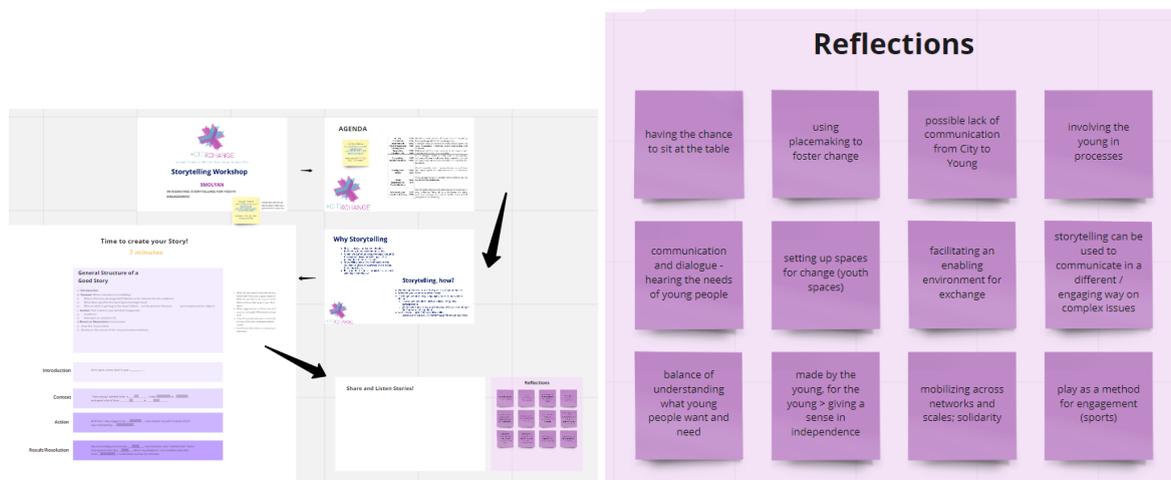


Fig. 8 Workshop results and reflections taken from MIRO



### 3.2.6 Conclusions

The Storytelling Workshop was another successful learning session, in which we were able to focus on a specific community demographic and explore topics of inclusivity in planning, as well as how to practice effective communication with harder-to-reach targets.

From the event point of view, the virtual setting was successful, but participation could have been more active. The online format of the storytelling workshop imposes limitations on discussions and for more involved sessions, future workshops should be more hands-on. The breakout rooms are a good mechanism to ensure proactivity and talkativity of participants, with the smaller groups enabling participants to share their stories. However, in the general room many participants turned off their cameras and preferred to ask questions/ engage through the chat, demonstrating a limitation of virtual meetings. Suggestions for improving participation include more forms of interaction, such as incorporating surveys or polls, and even playing games. It is also recommended to actively monitor the chat window and openly reflect on posted comments and questions with participants, to prevent one-way communication. Furthermore, discussion topics and questions should be more extensive, in order to encourage further reflection.

From an organiser's perspective, there needs to be more detailed notes taken on the discussions, in order to adequately incorporate lessons learned into the +CityxChange project. For future events, a member of the consortium would be assigned as an official notetaker.

The use of Miro also proved to be highly impactful and an excellent tool to use during online discussions. It is recommended to continue using this platform in future (online) meetings, in order to streamline topics and provide visualisations of discussions. For this particular exercise, ISOCARP assigned the use of Miro to the host. This was done to remove distractions and prevent the event from running overtime. It could be impactful in future storytelling events to allow participants to contribute on their own to Miro, before regrouping for discussions.

A final suggestion, in terms of Workshop structure and format, is to prepare participants in advance, perhaps creating an agenda with attendee input. In this way, it is possible to find out what participants want from the Workshop and deliver accordingly. It is also recommended to organise team representatives for each breakout group, as well as a notetaker for each group. This will help with the flow of the event and ensure that key information is not lost.

The Storytelling session had important conclusions with regard to content. First of all, we agreed that it is imperative to focus on the youth and their expectations for a city's sustainable development. Participants acknowledged the importance of including the youth in the discussions related to urban planning; not only does it allow youths to better understand local government processes, but it is also a form of empowerment, gives them a sense of responsibility to their community, and allows them to reflect on and contribute



to the future they want for themselves. The younger generation can be seen as a driver of innovation and behaviour changes needed to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

There are many ways to include young people in urban planning. They can bring unique perspectives and views of cities and often have invaluable opinions about improving their local environments. They can also be involved in visioning, helping to set municipal goals, prioritise actions, and create area specific plans. It may be beneficial to not only include young people in discussions, but also to give them leadership roles, such as participating on advisory committees, working in community outreach (especially outreach targeting their age demographic), and taking part in task forces.

While it is not guaranteed that spatial infrastructure and active community involvement will be sufficient to prevent urban shrink, working to make infrastructure representative of youth identity and needs is a step in the right direction. It can be seen as a form of placemaking, giving young people a sense of purpose, value and belonging.

During the reflections, participants shared their approaches of how to integrate the young in policy processes. Some ideas include:

- Setting up physical spaces for change (living lab for youths)
- Facilitating and enabling an environment for exchange, such as engaging youth in planning activities
- Playing (gamification) as a method for engagement (e.g. sports or arts activities)
- Made by the young for the young, giving the youth population a sense of belonging, efficacy and independence.

Finally, storytelling is an important tool that can be used to communicate and engage with the young. Talk and walk activities, for example, are a good approach to consider, as they integrate place/nature with human interaction. Storytelling creates connection and is a means to discover how a person experiences a place and how it can be redeveloped to meet different needs and desires.



## 4 Planning Ahead

To this point, five storytelling workshops have been planned, of which four have been conducted with one cancelled (outlined in D.6). The aim is to be able to conduct 10 storytelling workshops over the course of the project. However, given the restrictions on travel and in person activity over the last three years, the ability to facilitate these workshops have been limited. This will have an impact on the remaining six workshops which will demand a new strategy to facilitate more specific and frequent exchanges that can be useful for the last two years of the project.

The two recent workshops continue to contribute to the inclusion of citizen engagement and co-creation through urban society. The storytelling workshops shall further develop towards sharing the success stories and challenges across LHCs, FCs and other SCC01 projects.

Moving forward, the storytelling events will include more thematic challenges that need to be addressed to ensure a smooth sustainable development transition. These thematic challenges will be discussed and organised and co-created according to the current FC/LHC needs.

Additionally, the next workshops will focus on how results, outcomes and experiences from the project can be better connected to citizens, local municipal officials and potential investor through artistic forms of engagement such as storytelling to ultimately expand the outreach, transfer and increase possibility to replicated project outputs and results toward extending beyond the life of the project. In this view, the workshops aim to partner with project partners and city representatives to increase efforts to communicate and connect people with +CityxChange and the results, insights and experiences it has to share.



## 5 Conclusion

The results of the last storytelling sessions provide valuable insights which are crucial for the intra communication and dissemination of the project, such as how the project is perceived and understood, and what aspects should be addressed to improve the connection between project results and relative stakeholders/public audience. These sessions offered a safe space to present similar city challenges and share experiences that could be transferred, improved and integrated into other cities. The thematic areas that were chosen in the last two storytelling reflect common challenges for intermediate cities.

The digitalisation of the recent storytelling sessions brought challenges and opportunities in the design and implementation of these sessions. While there was the possibility to accommodate more participants, the interaction and actual participation is a challenging task in the online setting. With the uncertainty of whether the following storytelling sessions will be online, suggestions were made to integrate the storytelling aspect into learning sessions within WP9, which seems to have had fruitful results among its participants.

It is particularly important to note that these sessions have been designed with the idea of improving digital communication and dissemination of the project through the method of storytelling that can be used as a tool for providing tools and methods for cities to use to replicate with their community. The upcoming workshops aim to build from the learnings of the last four workshops, and continue to exemplify how storytelling can be a valuable tool to communicate and connect diverse groups on central ideas, such as positive energy districts and sustainable energy urban development.

As the project heads into its third year, the forthcoming workshops will use the experiences gained in conducting productive exchanges with community groups and project partners, in the scaling up and replication of project results. Storytelling can be an effective tool to alternatively disseminate and connect communities, businesses, city officials and decision makers to understand the impact and added value of positive energy urban development and the specific actions one can take to replicate the ambitions of co-creating a positive energy future together.



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