

D9.21: +CityxChange Storytelling Workshops, inviting other LHCs and FCs 4

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List of Acronyms

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

Executive Summary

This deliverable describes the approach for the Storytelling Workshops in +CityxChange and reports on the Storytelling Workshop 05 held in Písek (November 2022) at the annual consortium meeting.

The Storytelling Workshops are an integral part of the knowledge development and exchange in- and outside the +CityxChange project and are embedded in 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 fourth of five annual reports on Storytelling Workshops and the series aims to 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.

Storytelling Workshop 05 focused on citizen engagement in the +CityxChange project, drawing on recent experiences in follower cities, to enable discussion on the value, approach and optimal procedures for citizen engagement in complex technical projects. The session used a transmedia format in which four videos were made with representatives of four follower cities, exploring their stories of citizen participation and isolating challenges within these. Group and plenary discussions then focused on the challenges presented in the videos, and attendees were tasked with co-creating solutions. Outcomes reflected on the value of citizen engagement in technical projects, outlining the importance of intentful and prolonged participatory processes, to mutual benefit.

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. Some content on overall structure and process is repeated from the earlier Deliverables in this series.

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 an 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 Võru 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.”

This deliverable begins with a recap of Workshops 01 to 05, followed by an overview of the latest Storytelling Workshop 05 (Písek, Czechia). The overview of the 5th Workshop, found in section 3 explores set objectives, the procedure of the Workshop and discusses learnings. This information informs a section on planning ahead and conclusions for Storytelling within the project, at the current stage.

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*¹, 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.

¹ D9.6 Storytelling Workshops, inviting other LHCs and FCs 1, <https://cityxchange.eu/knowledge-base/Storytelling-report-1/>



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned 2020 physical 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 ². Although this Storytelling Workshop did not occur, the content of subsequent Workshops has continued to evolve in a similar direction.

Before the most recent Storytelling Workshop in Písek, there were two virtual Workshops, one anchored in Sestao and one in Smolyan, both of which resulted in multiple conceptual and practical lessons³. These Workshops introduced methods and techniques used to involve relevant local partners and include their perspectives in project implementation. An overarching goal was to produce replicable strategies for citizen engagement and actively contribute to the work of the project consortium by producing tangible results and sharing techniques for meaningful citizen interaction and participatory planning processes.

In Sestao, the main question in the Workshop was *How can a personal experience relate to urban transformation and citizen engagement?* The goal of the Workshop was to use Storytelling as a tool for placemaking and connecting with physical spaces, and to encourage citizens to engage with the tangible outputs of +CxC. A key takeaway from the session was that effective placemaking can enable and empower citizens to participate, resulting in urban designs made for the people who will use them. Storytelling plays an important role in how people assign value to a place and can help give a place an identity.

The Workshop in Smolyan centred on understanding and sharing best practices for youth involvement in city planning and development. Participants were asked to reflect on how they experienced the world when they were young, what their priorities were, and how they perceived urban development. Based on the Workshop it was concluded that involving youths in planning processes and discussions is critical; not only does it allow youths to better understand local government processes, but it is also a form of empowerment, giving them a sense of responsibility to their community and allowing them to reflect on and contribute to the future they want for themselves. During the reflections, participants

² D9.12: Report on Intra-Project Collaboration Including Study Visits and Peer-to-Peer Workshops 5, <https://cityxchange.eu/knowledge-base/d9-12-report-on-intra-project-collaboration-including-study-visits-and-peer-to-peer-workshops-5/>

³ D9.16: +CityXChange Storytelling Workshops, inviting other LHCs and FCs 3, <https://cityxchange.eu/knowledge-base/d9-16-cityxchange-storytelling-workshops-inviting-other-lhcs-and-fcs-3/>

shared their approaches of how to integrate the young in policy processes. Some ideas included:

- Setting up physical spaces for change (living lab for youths)
- Facilitating and enabling an environment for exchange, such as engaging youth in planning activities
- 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.
- 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

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 glossary⁴.

The Workshops continue to evolve; as explained further in this report, the most recent Workshop in Písek used video formats for Storytelling, rather than presentations. We aim to extract this Storytelling methodology to communicate project results beyond the scope of the project, sharing knowledge and learnings with the wider community of practice.

⁴ Access the project glossary: <https://cityxchange.eu/article-categories/glossary/>

3. Storytelling Workshop 05 - Písek

The 5th Storytelling Workshop, conducted at the consortium meeting in Písek on November 11th, 2022 revolved around co-creative problem solving to issues of citizen engagement. The format of the Workshop used pre-recorded stories of four of the Follower Cities, drawing on real personal experiences to open discussion on how to navigate the complexities of inclusive stakeholder engagement. The objectives, procedure and outcomes of this Workshop are explored in the following.

3.1 Objectives

The objectives of Storytelling Workshop 05 revolved around stakeholder engagement, specifically focusing on the activation of citizens in accordance with the larger context of CommunityxChange (as described, for example, in D3.2 Delivery of the Citizen Participation Playbook⁵ and D3.3 Framework for Innovation Playgrounds⁶). This focus was selected to build on the outcomes of previous Storytelling Workshops and due to a number of citizen engagement activities having been conducted in LHCs and FCs in the period leading up to the Workshop. Drawing on learnings from previous Workshops, a strong focus was placed on the facilitation of experiential knowledge exchange between representatives of LHCs, FCs, and partners, in the identification of solutions for project specific obstacles, most strongly focusing on citizen outreach. The session aimed to break down individual components of engagement and enable attendees to discuss relevant experiences, exploring the breadth of potential solutions to common obstacles.

The approach of the Workshop utilised transmedia Storytelling as extended prompts for experiential exchange. The concept of transmedia Storytelling is foundational to the Storytelling Workshop and plays a significant role throughout the span of the +CityxChange project (Anderson & McLachlan, 2015; Gambarato, 2013). The central advantage of transmedia Storytelling in this case, is that it is capable of dealing with hesitation from participants, in providing material and space for thoughts and connections to be formed. Particularly the use of video, as in this case, enables participants to relate their own experiences to visual content, bypassing certain human tendencies that may restrict volitional information exchange. Multidimensional stories were built around the experiences of representatives from four follower cities, clearly expressing character narratives that broke down the many obstacles within citizen engagement and opened a discussion space in which to co-create solutions. The approach in Storytelling Workshop 05 used short video interviews to this end, combining stories and visuals and working towards discussion prompts.

To meet the objectives of the Workshop through transmedia Storytelling, the session was structured in three parts:

⁵ D3.2: Delivery of the citizen participation playbook:
<https://cityxchange.eu/knowledge-base/delivery-of-the-citizen-participation-playbook/>

⁶ D3.3 Framework for Innovation Playgrounds:
<https://cityxchange.eu/knowledge-base/d3-3-framework-for-innovation-playgrounds/>

- Viewing of four Storytelling videos from follower cities.
- Break-out group discussions of prompts from each video and feedback of discussions by video diary.
- Full audience discussion of broader strengths, obstacles and solutions to citizen engagement in the project.

3.2 Agenda

Table 1 below displays the agenda of Storytelling Workshop 05

Table. 1 Storytelling Workshop 05 agenda

10:00 - 10:10	Introduction Workshop	General
10:10 - 10:30	Viewing Storytelling videos	
10:30 - 11:10	Break-out group discussions of video prompts	Breakout Sessions
11:10 - 11:30	Plenary discussion of citizen engagement in +CityxChange	General

3.3 Participants

Attendees of the session were mostly members of the +CityxChange consortium meeting in Písek (Fig. 1). Representatives of knowledge institutions, local governments, private companies and non-profit organisations involved in the project joined the session. Special attention was placed on attendees from the follower cities, in both the filming of videos prior to the session and in encouragement of Storytelling exchange during discussions. In total, attendance numbered approximately 25-30 people.



Fig. 1 Storytelling Workshop 05 attendees, in the Písek library

3.4 Structural Overview

The session began with a ten minute introduction of the objectives and format of the session, by the chairs. In this introduction the role of participants was explained and the procedure of video viewing, analysis and discussion was introduced. It was explained that four short videos from representatives of Smolyan, Võru, Písek & Sestao would be shown, with each video focusing on a different experience and challenge of citizen engagement. Attendees would then be allowed to select the video and discussion prompt that most aligned with their experiences of citizen engagement, and form break-out groups for discussion of the prompt. Following this, the group would then return to a plenary discussion drawing on the conversations from break-out groups to reflect on broad implications for citizen engagement in +CityxChange.

In the viewing portion of the session, the four Storytelling videos were shown. The videos each featured a different representative of four follower cities, talking about processes of citizen engagement that occurred in their deployment of the +CityxChange project. The stories focused on specific experiences of the interviewees and revealed the challenges of citizen engagement that each had encountered throughout the project. The content of videos was also tailored to correspond with a theme of citizen engagement, culminating in a discussion prompt at the end of each video. Table 2 below lists the four videos, outlining interviewees, corresponding cities and discussion prompts.

Table. 2 Storytelling Workshop video list

Video Title	Interviewee	Follower City	Discussion Prompt	Video Link
Reaching Citizens	Borislava Spasova	Smolyan	How can we reach citizens who are less likely to participate?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7-ajfVyVR8
When to Engage	Siim Meeliste	Võru	How can we know when to involve different stakeholders in extended projects?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8niqE2LOa1w
Explaining Complexity	Terezie Hroudova	Písek	How can we effectively communicate the complexity of projects to citizens?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8niqE2LOa1w
Value for Citizens	Andy Bäcker	Sestao	How can we make participatory processes valuable for vulnerable citizens in the short term?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_IaLw_vGC8

The Smolyan video (Fig. 2) revolves around the inclusion of citizens who are less likely to participate in projects with the municipality. Borislava Spasova talks of her experiences in reaching less interested community members through hosting events and engagement of children in the Smolyan. In her experiences, coupling outreach with events can allow for less favoured topics to be addressed.



Fig. 2 Smolyan Storytelling Video Screenshots. For the full video: <https://youtu.be/Q7-qjfVyVR8>

In Võru's video (Fig. 3), Siim Meeliste talks of setbacks in the involvement of local officials in the Bold City Vision (BCV) process and indicates that involving different stakeholders, including citizens, at different moments is important. Reflecting on the underlying motivation for projects such as +CityxChange, he suggests that engaging citizens early helps to do justice to their needs and desires in later project phases.



Fig. 3 Võru Storytelling Video Screenshots. For the full video: <https://youtu.be/8niqE2LOa1w>

Terezie Hroudova explains that the +CityxChange process in Písek (Fig. 4) has been successful, but that there are some legal obstacles in the building of PED/PEBs. She talks of how explaining the complexity of such issues to citizens is a challenge, and may lead to losses in motivation. Reflecting on the position of citizens, she suggests some potential ways to navigate technical and procedural complexity in citizen engagement.

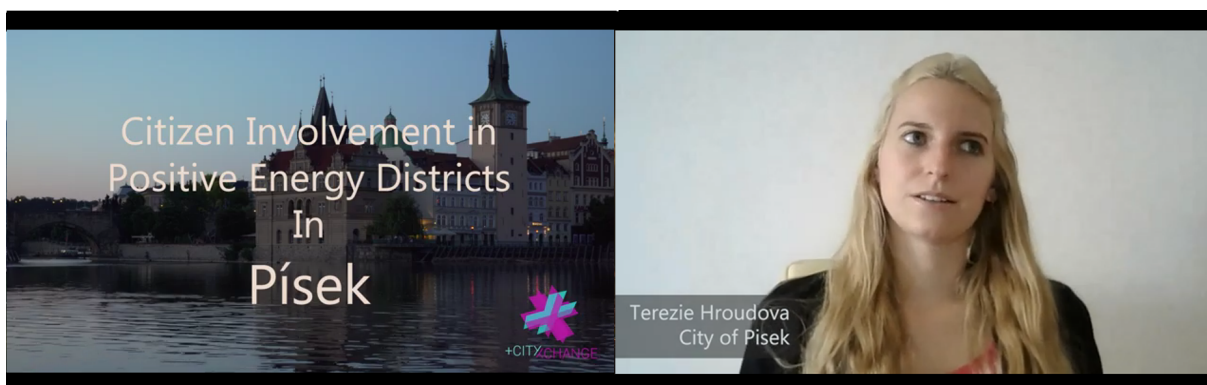


Fig. 4 Písek Storytelling Video Screenshots. For the full video: <https://youtu.be/uirNzKUripk>

In the Sestao video (Fig. 5), Andy Bäcker outlines the historic existence of Sestao as a municipality and reflects on how many people in Sestao are suffering economically. He talks of how balancing projects like +CityxChange and the engagement of citizens, with existing community struggles is a difficult task. Ultimately, he explains, project work and governance can co-creatively build better lives for citizens.



Fig. 5 Sestao Storytelling Video Screenshots. For the full video: <https://youtu.be/F.lqLw.vGC8>.

Following the viewing, break-out groups were allowed to form, with attendees being given the choice of group based on the video and discussion point they most responded to. Each group was then given 40 minutes to discuss their prompt and attempt to find co-create ways to deal with obstacles relating to this, as seen in Fig. 6. To provide some structure for discussions, a process was proposed according to the divisions listed below.

1. Absorb: Re-watch your chosen video
2. Connect: Share your own stories related to the contents of the video
3. Reflect: Discuss, identify and advise on shared stories
4. Report: Record learnings from discussions to share during the plenary (written and by video diary)

The final portion of the session saw the attendees return from break-out groups to a group plenary in which an open discussion was held for the final 20 minutes. This started from the general question: *"How can/should citizen engagement be used in technical projects such as +CityxChange and what is the added value for both the project and citizens"*. The plenary was allowed to evolve naturally, with additional prompts being made to spark discussion on how to enable communication between technical experts and citizens, and who should embody this role. The outcomes of the plenary discussion form the basis for reflection in the following sub-section.



Fig. 6 Storytelling Workshop Discussion

3.5 Outcomes and Reflection

3.5.1 Content

Following the breakout groups, in the plenary we brought the discussion back to the overarching topic of the value of citizen participation in technical interventions (for both citizens and the project) and how information can successfully be exchanged between citizens and decision-makers. The results of this discussion were multifaceted, but the overarching outcome was the importance of building trust. Trust is not instantaneous, nor is it simple; it requires creative outreach and accountability on the side of decision-makers over a prolonged period of time. The process of building trust is context dependent, but when it comes to highly complex interventions, engagement must be organised with some intent. Participatory processes should be selective and tailored to specific audiences, especially when it is technically removed from the citizens themselves.

The process of building trust in projects such as +CityxChange is complex, but in our discussion participants identified the following points as key:

- **Purpose should dictate the techniques for citizen participation**
 - Location- & context-specific
 - Localise topics to ensure they are relevant to the specific audiences you are engaging with
 - Map your stakeholders; not all processes have to involve citizens, especially if certain decisions can be made on behalf of citizens (e.g., regulatory changes)
- **Engage at different levels**

- Value of bottom-up for getting different groups of people involved; make the effort to directly target different groups
- 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
- Start discussions from the onset about what citizens want for a specific project (will save time and money)
- Co-creation means co-creation, not bringing an almost finished product to citizens and then asking for feedback
- **Demystify the complexity of the solutions**
 - Put the cards on the table and then present the simplicity of the project (e.g., what are the costs and benefits?); start with the 'simple' foundations and build up the knowledge step by step until you reach the level of complexity appropriate for your audience
 - Target the message based on the profile of the stakeholder group, rather than overloading them with information
 - Start small and then build up to more solid inputs and outputs
- **Municipality as the pinpoint for communication**, rather than specialists and/or politicians communicating directly with citizens
 - However, specialists should be engaged on some level with what is going on within the city (so that interventions are contextualised)

3.5.2 Structure

From the facilitator's perspective, the Workshop was successful. Due in part to the in-person setting, the discussions were lively and engaging (see Fig. 7), especially in comparison with previous Workshops that were held online. The 90-minute duration of the event was sufficient; of course, discussions could have continued, but it enabled interesting conversations that should be on-going between project members. For the next Storytelling Workshop, we will include designated time at the end for reflections on the format and structure of the Workshop, not just on the content.





Fig. 7 Storytelling Workshop 05 Break-out discussions

The use of transmedia Storytelling through videos was arguably more captivating than a traditional presentation, and allowed the Workshop participants to engage with and connect to the subject through their own self-reflective narratives. The videos also helped enhance the social connection between participants, and enabled the interviewees to guide the content of the Workshop so that we ultimately discussed topics that were truly relevant to the project. One set back of the format was that the participants in the Workshop were not instructed on how to tell stories themselves; rather, the stories told in the videos were meant to inspire them to share their own, in whatever way they chose. This decision was made based on the assumption that participants already had some experience with the technicalities of Storytelling, based on previous Workshops. We decided that reflecting on pre-identified obstacles related to citizen engagement would result in more meaningful conversations for the project overall.

4. Planning Ahead

To this point, six Storytelling Workshops have been planned, of which five have been conducted. The plan for the next Workshop is to reach out to other SCC01 projects to broaden the conversation and encourage learning between projects. The specifics of this Workshop will be hashed out at a later point, but ideas include: 1) regulatory barriers that hinder the implementation of PEDs and climate neutrality measures, and 2) how to overcome organisational silos in city administrations.

If there is another opportunity for an additional intra-project Storytelling Workshop, the topic will also be directly related to specific success stories and challenges of the LHCs, FCs, and other SCC01 projects. In this final phase of the project, such a Workshop would focus on how results, outcomes and experiences from the project can be better connected to citizens, local municipal officials and potential investors through artistic forms of engagement such as Storytelling to ultimately expand the outreach, transfer and increase possibility to replicate project outputs and results.

In an effort to make use of Storytelling as a tool to communicate project results, we will use the Storytelling methodologies to record the various lessons learned from each project city, describing how and why certain ambitions were or were not met. This will involve travelling to each Fellow City and aggregating stories about the specific technical and social conditions across cities, and then compiling and packaging key lessons learned into a 'How to PEB cookbook' for replication and exploitation of project results (in conjunction with WP8 and WP9). This will also culminate in a set of (multimedia) stories that can be used to disseminate project outcomes, effectively extracting and packaging our learnings for wide scale impact and a just energy transition beyond the parameters of our project.

5. Discussion & Conclusions

The outcomes of Storytelling Workshop 05 generate a number of conclusions, both for the value and use of citizen engagement in projects such as +CityxChange, and the value of transmedia Storytelling. These conclusions are explored here.

5.1. Citizen Engagement in Technical Projects

A key outcome from both break-out and plenary discussions was that the mutual value of citizen engagement in technical projects is not clear cut and that careful consideration should be given to when and how citizens are engaged. Many attendees of the session commented on the importance of engaging citizens at key moments of the project. As the outcomes of the project should work towards liveability and prosperity for citizens, it is important that they are able to give guiding input on key decisions made, especially in design and planning phases. However, many attendees also reported that citizens do not necessarily need to be engaged at every moment, and that in some moments, citizen inputs may actually hamper the progress of results. It is important to consider when it is useful to both the project and citizens, for connections to be made.

With the idea of when to fruitfully engage citizens also comes a question of how. Discussions in the session reflected on the idea that citizen engagement is a process, rather than a series of planned events. If this is so, then such a process should be designed with intent, to consider the most useful form of citizen engagement across an extended time period. Plans should be made in which the levels, moments and methods of citizen engagement are considered across project phases. With this as a focus, processes can be ensured to work towards useful results for the projects and constructively engage citizens, such that they are also able to see and acknowledge the impacts of their inputs. Such a focus was deemed to promote trust-building in complex technical projects where citizens may find it difficult to engage with content. Trust must be built slowly and through procedures of give and take, where inputs begin small and where reciprocation is clear and beneficial. Over time, engagement may be scaled up, potentially reaching truly co-creative moments in later project phases.

5.2. Transmedia Storytelling

Much of the feedback received on the design and format of Storytelling Workshop 05 commented on the use of videos as prompts for discussion. Overall, such feedback was positive, with attendees commenting on their enjoyment of the videos and the way in which the transmedia approach lent structure to the session. Discussions were lively and conversations open and productive. This may be attributable to the use of a transmedia approach, in that video communication is a format familiar and comfortable to most people. The use of video is also asserted to better navigate certain human phenomena that can restrict the absorption of information from speaker to audience, in conventional talks. The combination of visual and audio input is more demanding of attention and therefore



participants are more engaged with content. It should be noted that the session also came at the end of several days of group activity, where comfort levels within the group were also high. This undoubtedly helped the authenticity of information exchange.

As reflected in the previous section, the use of transmedia Storytelling of this type, meant that less attention was given to promoting Storytelling as a tool for participants in their cities. While this was of some intent, given that previous Workshops had all worked to this objective, the format and result of the session seemed to also work towards this end. No direct instruction was given on how to translate transmedia Storytelling to activities within +CityxChange's deployment, however, several attendees commented that the video prompts had given them ideas for use in their own work. It seems the impact of attempts to create authentic stories from known individuals may carry over into the city-specific work of attendees.

6. References

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