Conference report:

Who profits from heritage?

Communities, capital and urban space

7ᵗʰ Informed Cities Forum

15-16 October 2019 | Warsaw, Poland

Co-produced by OpenHeritage & Actors of Urban Change

Organised by ICLEI Europe

informed cities

Conference report

The 7th Informed Cities Forum took place on 15-16 October 2019 in Warsaw (Poland) and gathered around 100 urban thinkers and practitioners, including representatives of local governments, researchers, social entrepreneurs and urban activists.

As the first conference for the OpenHeritage project, this edition focused on the impact of urban regeneration processes on people and places and addressed issues of empowerment of local communities to safeguard urban commons.

The Forum explored the interrelation of urban regeneration and heritage, including through close examination of Praga, a rapidly changing district of Warsaw. In many European cities cultural heritage has been forgotten, exploited for private profit or interpreted to fit current political needs. However, cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, has the potential to bring people together around shared values and help them work towards a more prosperous future.

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100 participants

23 countries

40 cities

5 field workshops

18 expert tables

Venue:
Centre of Creativity Targowa

Once an old tenement house, today a revitalised incubator for emerging businesses and creative start-ups - Centre of Creativity Targowa was the perfect place to talk about heritage. Located in the centre of Praga, Creativity Centre is a product of the city's revitalisation plan for the district and is itself a registered monument.

Conference moderators

Ania Rok,
Coordinator Governance & Social Innovation at ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

Sebastian Schlüter,
Urbanist & Coordinator of Actors of Urban Change at MitOst

Welcome Session

"Urban revitalisation takes time. Having a **clear strategic outline** at the beginning is crucial."

Marlena Happach, Head of the Architecture and Spatial Planning Department, Warsaw City Hall

"Praga district is a very **important place** for the city. … It is still in the making."

Piotr Sawicki, Deputy Director of Economic Development Department, City of Warsaw

"Instead of a top-down approach, do it from the bottom-up. …
Try to **ask the communities** what heritage means for them."

Hanna Szemzö, OpenHeritage Project Coordinator

„We need to demonstrate that **heritage can contribute** to sustainable cities and contribute to European and global sustainable development goals."

Giulia Facelli, European Commission (DG Research & Innovation)

Keynote, Day 1 Troubles with Heritage. Lessons from Warsaw

Katarzyna Sadowy, Assistant Professor, Warsaw School of Economics & OW SARP/OpenHeritage Praga Lab team

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Katarzyna Sadowy: The trouble with heritage is that it's often not sustainable. Is it cheating to use better, more sustainable materials? #informedcities

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"Heritage doesn't exist without the heritage community. Without people who see buildings and walls and places as something very important to them, as part of their identity."

To rebuild or not to rebuild? Replace some elements with more durable and sustainable ones? Does it have to look exactly the same? When does pop culture become heritage?

In her keynote on heritage, Katarzyna Sadowy explored the topic of heritage in the context of various relations - between past, present and future; between communities; between people and places; between heritage and growth.

How is your city changing?

The participants had the opportunity to get to know each other a little better. In smaller groups they discussed three questions - some well into the coffee break:

What are the biggest changes in the place you live in?

What does urban regeneration mean to you?

What are you hoping to get out of this event and what are you bringing in?

Why does heritage matter?

Cooperative Heritage Labs

- Marquês de Abrantes Lisbon (Portugal)
- Sunderland (UK)
- Pomáz-Nagy-kovácsi-puszta (Hungary)
- Prädikow (Germany)
- Rome (Italy)
- Warsaw (Poland)

This first conference of the OpenHeritage project gave representatives of the Cooperative Heritage Labs the opportunity to present their cases and show what they have learned in their first year. They were joined onstage by the project coordinator Hanna Szemzö and advisory board member Pietro Elisei.

The labs discussed their cooperation with local communities and municipalities as well as the future of the labs after the end of OpenHeritage project. The question of responsibility, accountability, and risk also came up in the discussion: who carries the burden and who profits?

"Things change so fast and so drastically with every election ... This lab is also an experiment of how to work under such conditions"
(Dóra Mérai, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Cultural Heritage Studies Program, Central European University)

"We were always looking from the beginning to collaborate, ... but you come into a village structure where not all parties get along."
(Thomas Dönnebrink, Connector / Freelancer, Ouishare / Hof-Praedikow)

"We are trying to work on urban regeneration processes that go beyond public-private partnership where risk and profit sharing can be transparently developed."
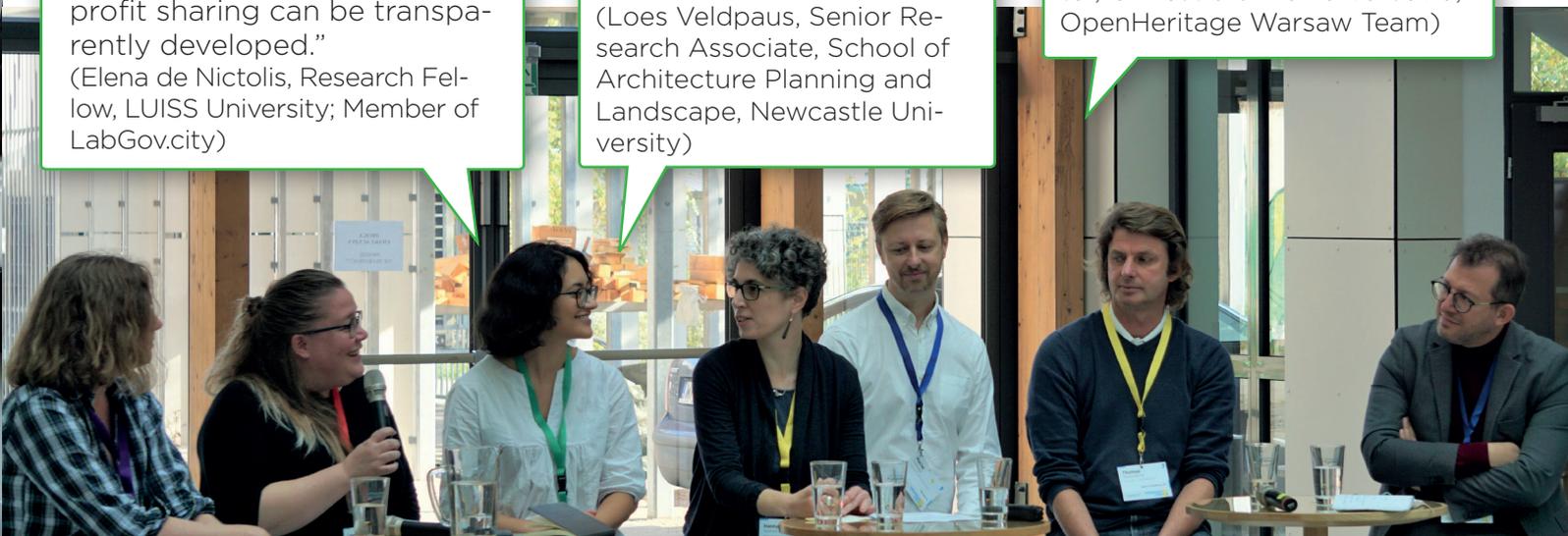(Elena de Nictolis, Research Fellow, LUISS University; Member of LabGov.city)

"It is the only way it works, when you do this in a collaborative way, not just on the community side but also on the local authorities side."
(Loes Veldpaus, Senior Research Associate, School of Architecture Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University)

"There is either public money or private money and there is almost nothing in between, especially in big cities."
(Maciej Czeredys, Deputy Director, Orkiestra Sinfonia Varsovia; OpenHeritage Warsaw Team)

OpenHeritage consortium members presenting five of the six Cooperative Heritage Labs. Left to right: Dóra Mérai (Pomáz-Nagykovácsi), Loes Veldpaus (Sunderland), Elena de Nictolis (Rome - Centocelle), Hanna Szemzö (MRI, OpenHeritage Coordinator), Maciej Czeredys (Warsaw), Thomas Dönnebrink (Prädikow), Pietro Elisei (Advisory Board).
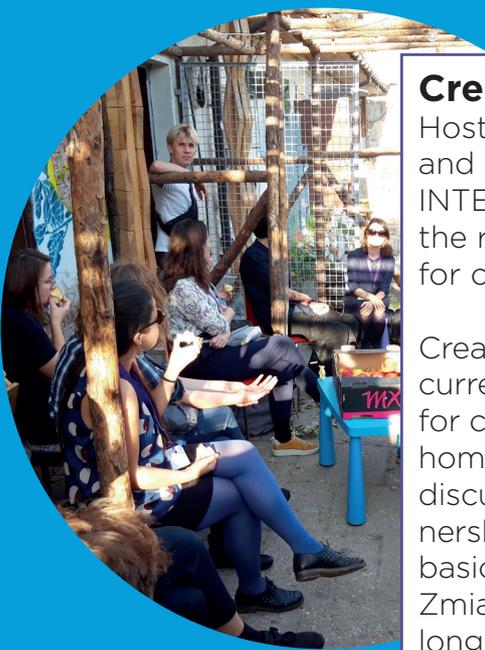
Time to explore

As usual with Informed Cities events, the discussions were rooted in the local experience. Participants could choose among five field workshops, hosted by different Warsaw partners.

Open Jazdów:
Towards a Community-Managed Space
Host: Open Jazdów - Partnership for Osiedle Jazdów

Open Jazdów is a colony of wooden houses set in a green area right in the middle of the city. Built in 1945 for people working on Warsaw post-war reconstruction, the houses were initially planned as temporary. However, 27 houses still exist and host various social and cultural events. Participants were surprised by the unexpected green project in the city center. They had the opportunity to discuss the complicated legal situation of this place as well as to brainstorm best strategies for community-managed spaces to build trust-based relationships with the local government.

Creative Praga: Building New Partnerships
Hosts: City of Warsaw (Economic Development Department) and Zmiana Foundation. The City of Warsaw is a partner in INTERREG Central Europe Forget Heritage project focused on the revitalisation of abandoned historical sites to create spaces for creative industries and culture.

Creativity Centre New Praga is an ambitious investment project currently implemented by the City of Warsaw to create a space for creative industries and strengthen the image of Praga as a home for creative people. Participants had the opportunity to discuss the ups and downs of building public-private-civic partnerships and challenges of working in the district where so many basic needs remain unfulfilled. The activists of the local NGO Zmiana (Change) Foundation recounted their experience of long-term engagement in the district, sharing personal stories of dealing with institutional changes, uncertainty and burnout. During this very personal meeting the activists shared their side of the story about the cooperation with the municipality, hardships in finding new sources of funding and emotional burnout.

Targówek Fabryczny: Waiting for Transformation

Hosts: District of Targówek, Centre for Culture and Activation and Monopol Warszawski Association. The District of Targówek is a partner in URBACT Transfer Network ComeIn focused on mobilising communities around shared heritage to combat social isolation.

Targówek Fabryczny (Factory Targówek) is a district 7km outside the city center. With plenty of land still available, Targówek Fabryczny is an attractive ground for new investments. During the workshop participants had the opportunity to find out more about the changing social structure of the area. They discussed how the district can work together with businesses, including developers or the role of cultural institutions like the Centre for Culture and Activation in creating a sense of community in revitalised areas. The hosts shared some positive experiences of cooperation between the district and local communities. The participants, on the other hand, shared experiences from their own cities and came up with recommendations regarding the activities aimed at integrating the local community.

Centrum Praskie Koneser: the Icon of Modern Placemaking?

Host: Liebrecht & wooD

Opened in 2018, Koneser describes itself as a unique urban space and a new, energetic, lifestyle version of the "old" Koneser. The large scale development project transformed a 19th century vodka factory and combines housing, retail, office, cultural and entertainment functions. Koneser prides itself on offering a new, high-quality public space and a programme of free events in order to connect the new development with the city. However, how much is left of the old Koneser in between its new stylish interiors, cosy cafes and designer shops? What role does the heritage site play in the revitalised facility? Does the investment meet the needs of the local community or is it just another profit driven urban regeneration project? Participants had the opportunity to explore this controversial example of heritage reuse and find the answers for themselves.

Open Door: Mapping Values Through Heritage
Hosts: PRAGA LAB (Cooperative Heritage Lab of the OpenHeritage project) in cooperation with the Open Door Association.

The economic transformation of the last decades led to many local workplaces closing down, resulting in a number of societal problems. Organisations like Open Door (Otwarte Drzwi) help those in need by offering activities connected with work as a form of therapy and a source of self-esteem. Since 1995, the association has implemented over 300 projects that included over 80,000 people. The participants were able to find out more about the work and challenges faced by the Open Door association, including the overall social problems of Praga. The participants could share their ideas on how to best strengthen the cooperation with city and district authorities. They also mapped the values connected with tangible and intangible heritage, which Open Door nurtures in Praga.

Reclaiming the city for people. Lessons from Lisbon

Paula Marques,
Deputy Mayor of Lisbon

Paula Marques told participants about the BIP/ZIP programme in Lisbon, created in 2010 to support actions by civil society and find out what people wanted to do with city space. The interventions of the city covered material and immaterial issues, e.g. the creation of a network of carpenters or refurbishments of housing structures. Paula Marques used her keynote address to emphasise how important it is for politicians to protect cultural heritage, as heritage can have a huge impact on communities.

"We must do a lot of PCPs: Public-Community-Partnerships. ... It is the common framework of people at the Informed Cities Forum - and they are so different."

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Paula Marques, deputy mayor of #Lisbon: "Public policy makers have responsibility to promote every project that can fight extreme right, closing of frontiers, xenophobia."
#informedcities

Room full of ideas:
grab your seat!

How to run a successful crowdfunding campaign? How to engage community and organise public consultations? How to design participatory tools for collaborative governance? How to successfully establish an urban community land trust?

These and many other questions were discussed at 18 tables run by some of the many experts who joined the 7th Informed Cities Forum. Participants had the opportunity to join 2 different tables, dive deeper into the selected topics, get some practical and specific tips and also share their own experiences and lessons learnt.

One of the most popular expert tables was from Maciej Hofman, European Commission, DG Education and Culture, Culture Policy Unit.
Check out his presentation >> here

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Looking for advice on #funding, inspiration for starting a #civic #initiative or good examples of municipality-driven #urban #regeneration? Then our Room Full of Ideas is the right place for you! #informedcities #Warsaw

„It helps to know we face similar problems like affordable housing and gentrification in all cities."

„Urban regeneration needs to always be about looking for tools to properly connect people."

Funding a Co-Operative City

The closing panel of the 7th edition of the Informed Cities Forum focused on financial models and ways to make them transferable to different environments and applicable at different scales - in a neighbourhood, city, country or in the international arena.

"I help people to turn their ideas and their proposals into projects."
Stefania de Masi, Project Manager, Fondazione Cascina Roccafranca

"One of the crucial issues for participation and inclusion is how we can open the decision-making process of grant-making and involve citizens and peers ... so that we can better share the responsibility and build trust."
Dea Vidović, Director, Kultura Nova Foundation

"I feel we are on the verge of a new economic model – we need to take over the role of the private developers; we are all shareholders in our cities."
Joep de Roo, Director, Eurodite

"Culture cannot always be self-sustainable. This is a political question: we have to ask ourselves what do we value as culture and does it have to be self-sustainable or do we have to fund this?"
Matthias Einhoff, Co-Director, Center for Arts and Urbanistics

Left to right: Matthias Einhoff (ZK/U - Centre for Arts and Urbanistics), Stefania de Masi (Fondazione Cascina Roccafranca), Joep de Roo (Eurodite), Dea Vidovic (Kultura Nova), Levente Polyak (Eutropian).

I want more,

For more impressions of the Forum

watch the video here

look at the photos here

listen to the podcast here

www.informedcities.eu

Outlook

The **next Informed Cities Forum** will take place in Lucca, Italy in April 2020, and will focus on topics related to [Re]connecting Regions: Rural-Urban Cooperation Challenges and Pathways Forward.

The **next OpenHeritage conference** will take place in 2021 in Budapest, Hungary.

OPEN HERITAGE

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About the project: OpenHeritage identifies and tests the best practices of adaptive heritage re-use in Europe. Drawing on the observations and results, the project will develop inclusive governance and management models for marginalized, non-touristic heritage sites and tests them in selected Cooperative Heritage Labs over Europe. It works with communities, local businesses, local and municipal administration, tries out new forms of engagement and uses crowdfunding and crowd sourcing mechanisms to create active heritage communities.

https://openheritage.eu/

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The 7th Informed Cities Forum was organised by ICLEI Europe and co-produced by OpenHeritage and Actors of Urban Change. Conference co-organisers were MRI, Eutropian, and OW SARP. The city of Warsaw (with support from the Forget Heritage INTERREG Central Europe project) was a conference partner.