



The Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk (Poland)

Summary

The Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk is a long-term project, which created a permanent collection of works of art within the urban space and facilitated the social and architectural transformation of the Lower City district. The Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk also strengthened social cohesion through the organisation of artistic workshops incorporating elements of dance, plastic arts and vocal training for children and adults. The project can be considered as a milestone in the long-term process of revitalisation and transformation of the Lower City district of Gdańsk.

The project

Since the economic and political transformations of 1989, the industrial sector and urban landscape in Gdańsk have undergone significant conversions. The traditional post-industrial zones located in and around the sea port of Gdańsk underwent a process of decline. Some of the warehouses have become derelict and abandoned. In this context, the Gdańsk Town Council has chosen the Lower City and the New Port districts as neighbourhoods to be revitalised. The art competitions of the Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk supported this regeneration process by using art to change the physical environment. The project changed the character of the district and created a unique art gallery directly within the urban space. The project was addressed to young members of the community as well as to adults.

Sector(s) covered

Main Sector

Arts and Creative Industry

Other Sectors

Education/Training/Lifelong learning

Society: Urban regeneration

Approach

The idea of improving post-industrial urban areas through artistic activities has been recognised world-wide as an effective approach. Locating works of art in the public space encourages the integration of the local community and people's participations and engagement within society. The Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk has already organised three events during which artistic projects were assessed by an international jury on the basis of their artistic and aesthetic values as well as their social dimension.

The LKW Gallery by Lex Rijkers and Daniel Milohnic was the winning project of the first edition of the competition in 2005. The LKW Gallery is situated in a lorry, where different activities for the communities have been organised, such as workshops, exhibitions, film projections, and other cultural and artistic activities. The first educational project that took place within the LKW Gallery is the "City of Talented Children", consisting in workshops incorporating elements of dance, plastic arts and vocal training. The workshops were concluded with a musical and dance performance directed by the participants.

In the second edition of the international competition of the Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk, artistic installations by Esther Stocker and Dominik Lejman have been located close to an important communication hub linking the Lower City with the centre of Gdańsk. These artistic installations will contribute to increase the attractiveness of the neighbourhood.



Element of innovation – the process

Within this project, art has been used with the specific purpose of contributing to urban regeneration processes. Arts and cultural activities have been recognised as an increasingly important part of urban regeneration. Arts programmes contribute to enhancing social cohesion and local image, reducing anti-social behaviour; promoting interest in the local environment, developing self-confidence and enhancing organisational capacity.

Key successes (outcomes, results, impacts)

The project facilitated the access of people from the neglected district to modern art and creative thinking through artistic educational activities. These activities provided adults and children with alternative ways of perceiving their surroundings, learning about the history of the city and spending their free time creatively. The project also provided them with a chance to develop creative and artistic skills. The project actively participated to the revitalisation of the Lower City district of Gdańsk as well as in its architectural transformation. The project has also contributed to reducing pathological and offending behaviours in the area.

Challenges

The project faced technical and financial problems linked to the realisation of artworks within the public space. However, cooperation between the artists, the City Council and the sponsors helped to overcome these problems. Another challenge was due to the initial reluctance of citizens to participate in the project's activities. Eventually the citizens understood the importance of participation in these artistic events.

The beneficiaries appreciated the results of the programme and were satisfied with the social and aesthetic changes within the district. This positive feedback was also confirmed through a survey conducted by the Department of Sociology of the University of Gdańsk.

Transferability and sustainability

"The Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk" is a long term project which can be implemented in other contexts.

Special Highlights

The importance of innovative and creative approaches as well as participation and ownership by citizens are increasingly recognised as vital factors in the successful regeneration of post industrial urban contexts. More specifically, the project contributed to:

- Fostering the artistic education of children and youngsters;
- Creating places aimed to stimulate the integration of the local community;
- Developing the area with permanent elements of art like sculptures, installations, sound and light installations, visual projections using industrial buildings, murals and architectural elements.



Key characteristics

General purpose of the practice	The practice stimulates innovative/creative behaviours in people, secondary school, universities, youth programmes, community projects
Target group	Non-formal, Informal
Type of learning	International and Local
Level of implementation	Private/public
Funding	
Time frame	Since 2004 – project in process
Leading organisations	Centre For Contemporary Art Laznia

Further information

Website of the Project:

www.laznia.pl

Contact Details:

Project manager: j.charzynska@laznia.pl