

15th “Best Practice in Citizens’ Participation” Award

Application Form



PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience: Participatory Planning for revitalization of the Varaždin School of Music - “3 days for a 100 years of future”		
Name of the city/region: Varaždin region/county		
Country: Croatia		
Institution presenting the candidacy: Varaždin County		
Contact person: Sladana Miocic		
Position of the contact person: Head of the Administrative Department for Physical Planning and Construction		
Contact phone number: +385 42 660 321		
E-mail: sladana.miocic@vzz.hr		
Start date of the experience: September 11th, 2020		
End date of the experience: September 13th, 2020		
Type of candidacy	New experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Innovation on an existing experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of experience (you may choose more than one)	Participatory budgeting	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Urban planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Audience/forum	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Poll/referendum	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Citizen jury	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	E-government/open government	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Citizen initiative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Other (specify):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



	participatory planning of Varaždin School of Music in field of architecture and urbanism	
Objective of the experience	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion	x
	Community empowerment	x
	To empower non-organised citizens	x
	To increase citizen’s rights in terms of political participation	x
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy “ecosystem”	x
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	x
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy	x
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	x
Territorial area	District	x
Thematic area	Education	x
	Urban management	x
	Culture	x
	Training/learning	x
	Legal regulations	x
	Social inclusion	x

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

Main objective of the innovative experience:

“To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy”

Varaždin School of Music with its 200 year old tradition is on the way to become the main educational and cultural city center and has a huge potential to trigger a powerful urban and community development. Since best contemporary schools are built through user participation and involvement of all relevant stakeholders from the outset of the planning, which allows reconciling different interests and making long-term sustainable decisions, the goal of this pilot project is to create a model for the future through responsible planning of urban areas, public buildings, visions and strategies.

How have you achieved this objective?

Varaždin initiated the revitalization of Varaždin School of Music located in the heart of the city, in the baroque Palace that is a protected cultural heritage. The school has been the main “factory of culture” for almost 200 years. Current context doesn’t provide the possibility for further growth of the school in educational, cultural nor spatial context. Fast evolving music school is upgrading to university level and will in total include 3 schools and 5 different educational programs from kindergarten to university level.

Throughout the project, following activities took place: a series of workshops with school users, citizens and architects; surveys and discussions; urbanistic, architectural, heritage conservation and pedagogical analysis.

Main participatory activity was a three-day workshop called ‘3 days for a 100 years of future’, in Varaždin from 11 to 13 September 2020, in the School of Music Varaždin.

Project is funded and financed by the County of Varaždin and implemented by the Faculty of Architecture/University of Zagreb in cooperation with international experts in school planning and with the support of the local association nuSynergetic and many local citizens /enthusiasts.



To what extent has this objective been achieved?

- 1) More than 350 people were involved in the process that started in May 2020, more than 1400 needs, wishes and ideas were collected and analysed. Also, spatial programming with users also took place in a 3-day workshop with a goal to understand a school as a living organism and to implement the needs and wishes of the users in the new school. By doing that, the new school will be specifically designed/tailor-made for the current and future users.
- 2) Based on this vision and above described processes, an architectural competition task is being finalized right now, which is the main content for European wide urbanistic-architectural competition. Goal is to ensure the greatest possible solution for all users - intern and extern, and the sustainability and resilience of the future musical campus.
- 3) Guidelines of the Conservation Department in Varaždin related to possibilities of spatial interventions within the protected architectural heritage are being finalized right now.
- 4) The last step will be the architectural competition later in 2021, after which the building process will follow in 2022/2023.

Dimensions of the experience

**Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?**

1: The synergy of the immaterial and material cultural heritage - the School of Music with the Erdody Palace in the specific context of the baroque city centre.

By transforming the School into a multifunctional place, by merging the internal and external, the school can strengthen its capacity to act as a local cultural magnet. This school concept opens space for different types of users and purposes and enables situations of spontaneous encounters.

2: Change of regulations, laws and practices

To change outdated regulations, laws, political and architectural practices, this pilot project will be the first of many to come. By creating a vision and a strategy with both citizens and school experts, and by building an educational and cultural centre based on the real needs and wishes we hope to create a very strong effect on democratic processes, especially in our local community. The goal of this pilot project is to create a model for future governing and responsible planning of urban areas and public buildings. The new school as a material object will become a symbol of the participatory, democratic process that took place.

3: Green economy and culture of building

Also, worth mentioning is that 60% of CO₂ in Europe is produced by destroying, building and building maintenance (date from ETH Zurich). If we are to ensure survival of our planet, building culture must go through paradigm change. One of the key goals of this pilot project is to strongly influence croatian/balkan culture of building.

To what extent is the procedure transferable?

Capacity to allow repetition is very high simply because for any project of this kind specific solutions in a specific context must be implemented, and this methodology/process does exactly that:

It creates a framework for; interdisciplinary analysis, 3-day live workshop on site, gives citizens, gives tools to citizens, professionals and politicians to open the dialog; fights against sectoral approach; educates and develops methodologies and good practices.

Other institutions can access these elements because they are being directly included, educated and informed about these processes (online platform, short documentary film “school builds school”

<https://vimeo.com/540981750/a669ac9f80>)



Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

The planning methodology in which all school users, general public and regional institutions are involved in defining the needs and a vision of Music campus is a unique example of implementation in Croatia. Especially in our context where architectural practices, regulations and norms are outdated.

In order to create high quality education, which will have strong influence on revitalization of our city, we decided to build the new Music campus which will reflect and enable contemporary and future pedagogical methods with high cultural, social, urbanistic and architectural qualities.

To ensure high quality of architectural solutions, we implemented many standards of quality (participation, research and analysis, arch. competition etc.), we created a year long participative process and a 3-day workshop at the site - in the Varaždin School of Music.

By doing all of these steps, the specific context of the city of Varaždin was analysed and implemented in the new concept of Music campus in the heart of our city.



How has the experience been coordinated with other actors and processes?

1. PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND PREPARATION

1.1. Key interviews

– identifying relevant stakeholders in the process, identifying interests and readiness for cooperation;

1.2. Establishment of a steering group and presentation of the process

– establishment of a steering group that manages the process; presentation of the of the key implementation points, tasks and responsibilities

1.3. Establishment of a school group and presentation of the process

1.4. Analysis and evaluation of the current state of the school

1.5. Making of a detailed implementation plan

1.6. Additional activities when necessary

– meetings with the steering group, the school group and expert associates; making of a plan for involving citizen, target groups and additional experts in the process;

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOPS

2.1. Preparation of materials for participatory workshops

2.2. Informing of the school users, media and public

2.3. Implementation of participatory workshops

2.4. Expert analysis of results

3. MAKING OF THE COMPETITION TASK

More than 350 people were involved in the process that started in May 2020, more than 1400 needs, wishes and ideas were collected and analysed. Throughout the project series of workshops; surveys and discussions; urbanistic, architectural, heritage conservation and pedagogical analysis were implemented.

These results testify to great success rate of coordination.



Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

Throughout the project following activities took place: a series of workshops with school users, citizens and architects; surveys and discussions; urbanistic, architectural, heritage conservation and pedagogical analysis.

Main participatory activity was a 3-day workshop called '3 days for a 100 years of future', in Varaždin from 11 to 13 September 2020, in the School of Music Varaždin.

More than 350 people were involved in the process that started in May 2020, more than 1400 needs, wishes and ideas were collected and analysed. Also, spatial programming with users also took place in a 3-day workshop with a goal to understand a school as a living organism and to implement the needs and wishes in the new school. By doing that, the new school will be specifically designed/tailor-made for the current and future users.

Based on this vision and above described processes, an architectural competition task is being finalized right now, which is the main content for european wide urbanistic-architectural competition. Goal is to ensure the greatest possible solution for all users - intern and extern, and the sustainability and resilience of the future musical campus.

In short, we implemented many standards of quality, and by doing all of these steps, the specific context of the city of Varaždin was analysed and implemented in the new concept of Music campus in the heart of our city.

**Summary of the experience**

Varaždin School of Music with its 200 year old tradition is on the way to become the main educational and cultural city center and has a huge potential to trigger a powerful urban and community development.

Varaždin County initiated the revitalization of Varaždin School of Music located in the heart of the city, in the baroque Palace Patacic-Erdody which is a protected cultural heritage. The school has been the main “factory of culture” for almost 200 years. Fast evolving music school is upgrading to university level and will in total include 3 schools and 5 different educational programs from kindergarten to university level. Urbanistically, this also means upgrading from a school typology into a musical campus. In order to create a responsible, sustainable and resilient solution, a participatory planning of Music school project started in May 2020.

Throughout the project following activities took place: series of workshops with school users, citizens and architects; surveys and discussions; urbanistic, architectural, heritage conservation and pedagogical analysis. Main participatory activity was a three-day workshop called ‘3 days for a 100 years of future’, in Varaždin from 11 to 13 September 2020, in the Varaždin School of Music.

Pupils, students, school staff, parents, citizens, representatives of associations and institutions with the moderation of a team of architects, created a vision and a program for the new addition of Varaždin School of Music.

More than 350 people were involved in the process for more than a year (since 2020), more than 1400 needs, wishes and ideas were collected and analysed. Also, spatial programming with users also took place in a 3-day workshop with a goal understand a school as a living organism and to implement the needs and wishes of the users in the new school. By doing that, the new school will be specifically designed/tailor-made for the current and future users.

THE NEW MUSIC CAMPUS CONCEPT: The synergy of the immaterial and material cultural heritage - the School of Music with the Erdody Palace in the baroque city centre of Varaždin.

By transforming the School into a multifunctional place, by merging the internal and external, the school can strengthen its capacity to act as a local cultural magnet. This school concept opens space for different types of users (internal and external) and purposes and enables situations of spontaneous encounters.

A 6 min. documentary film called “School builds school” has been filmed. It will speak more than our words can say.

<https://vimeo.com/540981750/a669ac9f80>

More information: <https://www.facebook.com/skolagradiskolu/>