warszawa lab

Warszawa Lab

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Urban Lab for Media Education

Manual

The Association of Creative Initiatives „ę" has supported cultural animators, institutions and organisations working for social change in their local communities since 2002. From the very beginning we have also collaborated with young creators - on the one hand we offer support in the development of their own projects, on the other, we stimulate interdisciplinary activities that use creative tools for the purpose of describing reality and understanding it better.

Next to film and photography we use the tools of the new media and new technologies increasingly often. In conversational sense it is still opposed to the „analogue" reality: the digital world „steals" us away from real life and stops from participating in it in full. At the same time the digital reality favours mostly those who understand its rules organically - young people from privileged communities with access to good quality equipment and, seemingly, an easier life in contemporaneity.

Many people (not only those born in the 21st century) moved the most important space of building and sustaining their social identities to the web. Those who don't accept it can protest in private by not signing up with social networking websites or deleting their accounts and abstain from downloading new apps to their smartphones. For us - just as for many other cultural organisations and institutions of culture - this is not a choice between zeros and ones. Warszawa Lab is a project in which we have attempted to stimulate the „analogue" reality by means of digital tools. We have used new media and new technologies in a way that doesn't cut away from reality but, to the contrary, brings it closer and lets us influence it. Thanks to the participation of many partners - from urban activists to NT experts - we were able to experiment for over a year and to turn Warsaw into an Urban Lab for Media Education.

Let us present a short manual to the program: its participants and audiences, ideas and the course of activities.

The first part of the manual describes the conducted actions - a series of intensive workshops for the youth of Warsaw. In this part we also present 3 workshop scenarios that use new media and new

technologies to reflect upon the city. The scenarios are based on the formula of our publication Ideas to be Realised, where we present almost 100 examples of various animation activities (more at: pomyslydozrobienia.e.org.pl - in Polish).

In the second part we present a mini-report from the Warsaw Media EDUaction - a seminar for the Warsaw-based communities dealing with media education.

The last text of this manual is a sociological attempt of defining the target groups of animation activities in a big city and how those activities should be designed in order to avoid clear-cut labelling of their participants.

Dorota Borodaj, Association of Creative Initiatives „ę"

By promoting harmonious coexistence the Evens Foundation initiates activities aimed at developing skills in media utilisation. We raise awareness about the way the media are created and the cultural context they operate in. We encourage people to use them in a creative and ethical manner. By doing this we want to contribute to the development of aware, active and responsible citizens. We create opportunities for practicing critical thinking, using varied sources, conscious consumption and production of data. The ethical and civic aspect is very important in all our activities.

All these aspects are present in Warszawa Lab, a project that teaches how to use the possibilities of the new media and new technologies in a conscious and responsible way. Our participants used well-known and accessible tools to use them for the purposes of creativity and citizenship. They created a digital description of Warsaw and found ways to engage in creating a better and more open city; new ways to introduce real social change that can be reached with the skilful use of new media and technologies. We are proud that the Evens Foundation could contribute to this change.

Joanna Krawczyk, Evens Foundation

Warszawa Lab – urban lab

Dorota Borodaj

What

Warszawa Lab is a meeting. First of all, a meeting with the city, its energy, its people, its space and history. Secondly, it is a program that makes the paths of several groups of the people of Warsaw cross: young people described by experts as „digital natives" and urban activists, representatives of formal and informal organisations and institutions. The first group uses media tools mostly for satisfying their daily social needs – communication and entertainment. The second group changes the city in a single-minded process of building a vision of aware and engaged citizens who care about the way their surroundings function and look like.

For whom

We have invited 30 participants from Warsaw aged from 12 to 19. More than a half of them has never participated in any activities dedicated to new media and new technologies before. We met once a month throughout half a year. These were intensive weekend-long media workshops.

They had different motivations for participation: they wanted to gain knowledge in using new media, get to know Warsaw-related issues, engage in a creative project. Most of them had none previous experience with neither digital tools nor urban activism. At the same time they were „good pupils" – from good schools, engaged in many activities, eager to try new things. Before the workshops they used the Internet and available apps in a very similar way – for communication and entertainment.

How

Each of the meetings had a separate subject - from history, to the citizens, to urban activists. All topics were connected by the fresh and personal point of view on Warsaw and by the search for places, stories and people who try to change their surroundings for the better, take responsibility and actively shape their space.

Our goal was to interpret the topics related to Warsaw with the use of specific tools of the new media - from audio-visual tools, to simple software and apps, to the tools of new technologies. The results - short videos, podcasts, visual materials etc. were marked on a map on the project website.

Producing this specific „hard" evidence of our workshops was one of our goals. Equally important (if not the most important) was familiarizing the participants with significant Warsaw-related current topics of social interest - with the ways the city changes and how active citizens contribute to that change.

With whom

We have invited institutions, organisations and personalities who are models and benchmarks in promoting grassroots civic thinking about the city to collaborate with us. They became guides for our participants. They presented the fields of their work and invited the participants to take part in civic activities for the city.

Experts from the field of media and new technologies facilitated the meetings. Using digital tools in the frames of very specific topics and working with our participants proved an important experience for them. We hope they will draw from it in their future activities.

Topics:

Each workshop was dedicated to a specific topic related to the city. The effects of the work can be watched at wawalab.e.org.pl by clicking pins on the map.

Who changes the city?

the first workshop was dedicated to virtual tidying up the visual chaos of the city. Today digital tools are pretty much essential for describing reality as well as for influencing our surroundings actively. Urban activists know it best. New media and technologies accommodate their needs. We collaborated with association Miasto Moje a w Nim. It fights illegal advertisements and the space appropriating policies of outdoor companies. It attempts to influence legal changes and loop the city-dwellers into the debate.

During the photographic and multimedia workshop a series of sliders and gifs was created. The sliders were based on old photographs from Warsaw (from the National Digital Archive - NAC). They show the way large-scale outdoor ads appropriate architecture. The gifs were the result of „cleaning" facades of buildings - taking off signboards and plaques with the use of one of free graphic software. The effects of our work can be found on a map on the website of the project - by zooming into a selected area and clicking on a given pin we can watch a city different than we know from every day life.

What does the city remember?

This workshop was an opportunity to experience the multi dimensional and ambiguous history of Warsaw. We invited the Museum of Wola to become our partner and the district of Wola became the area of our research. For 2 days the Museum turned into an open

archive and the participants went through digital and analogue archives to gather material for a video story about 6 places in Wola. Each of those places has been gathering lots of traces of the past in it. We used the free application Aurasma to explore them. The app makes it possible to augment reality with these parallel stories.

The premises of the Museum of Wola, the Franaszek Factory, Chłodna Street, the former Dom Słowa Polskiego, the Paschalski Factory and last but not least Wolność Street have been marked with special triggers. After finding them on our map (and later in reality) and using the app we can learn who was the first person in Poland to fly a balloon and where the flight started, who was the Polish Paschalski family and who produced the Polish version of „Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory".

Partner: Museum of Wola

Who are the people of Warsaw?

A multimedia reportage is still a little known journalistic technique in Poland. We are used to seeing texts published online as just reprints from the printed versions. But the fact that they are in fact digital give them an unlimited opportunity of using multimedia. Multimedia can be more than just illustration. They can be an equally important part of the content as the text. Videos, photocasts, podcasts, infographics mix with text, which makes it possible to tell stories on many different levels.

During the third workshop the participants learned the specifics of multimedia reportage and got to know examples of the technique. Then they created a common multimedia story about unique people living in Warsaw - related to the city in different ways, acting for its inhabitants and space.

What is the sound of the city?

The next workshop was dedicated to revealing the sound landscape of the city. A *soundscape* comprises all sounds that surround a person in his environment. In the city it is composed of a never-ending list of sounds, music, what we call noise and the sounds that we manage to extract from it.

We have decided in to find out how the acoustic quality of our hearing and listening can meet digital sound editing tools and help us understand better, hear and order all elements that build the sound of the city. The participants took recordings at 5 locations within Warsaw - all of them along the Jerozolimskie Avenue - one of the main roads crossing the city centre – and a true sound epicentre. We created a series of short reportage pieces inspired by the way the city sounds and by what it listens to.

Partner: Miasto Puszcza.

Who builds the city?

This workshop tackled the topic of local centres so important for citizens of Warsaw. Who creates them and how? What elements constitute a place as an important location for the local communities? What do other places need to attract the people of Warsaw and integrate them? We sought the answers to these questions arm in arm with the creators of the Warsaw Local Centres - master workshops organised by the Warsaw unit of the Union of Polish Architects, commissioned by the Capital City of Warsaw. The programme is aimed at defining standards for the functioning of local centres, marking a network of such centres in Warsaw and preparing ready scenarios for their activities on selected locations around Warsaw.

The participants visited five such places. As a result of these meetings, documenting the locations and conversations with the initiators and creators of the initiatives operating at the centres, we have created a series of glogs - digital collage pieces that use multimedia

tools to present the most important information about the places, their potential, planned and conducted activities.

Partner: Warsaw Local Centres.

Collaboration: Stowarzyszenie Moja Narbutta (Association My Narbutta Street), Otwarty Jazdów (Open Jazdów), Grupa Odkrywkowa Osiedla Przyjaźń, Trzy Pokoje z Kuchnią, Białołęcki Ośrodek Kultury (Białołęka District Cultural Centre), Bemowskie Centrum Kultury ArtBem (Bemowo District Cultural Centre ArtBem).

Who codes the city?

The topic and form of the last workshop closed the circle - once again we met Warsaw's urban activists. Together we looked for ways to diagnose and answer the needs of our direct surroundings - streets, neighbourhoods, districts. We considered specific tools of urban participation that citizens can use and we discussed if they used them willingly.
On the second day of the workshop the participants programmed simple devices and mechanisms that could prove helpful to the people of Warsaw. They used the technology of Arduino. They created a system for automatic plant watering (for an urban community garden), a car speed meter for a busy pedestrian crossing, a counter for the number of passers-by (designed for a dark street where the people fight for installing street lamps), and an automatic eco sprinkler for heat waves (that wouldn't sprinkle any water until somebody walks next to it) and a meter for the loudness of street noise.

Partners: Otwarty Jazdów, Young Hacker Academy

Feedback

The participants have named the most important benefits they drew from the workshops. They can be divided into 3 groups:

➡ New skills (using camera and sound equipment, editing, getting to know new software and apps, graphic processing, enhancing the knowledge of copyright and conscious creation of online content).

➡ Enhancing their knowledge of the city:
● the opportunity to meet the lively urban culture,
● getting to know the city better - both its history and current challenges
● learning to create and express one's view on city-related issues, participating in the public debate on current important issues and feeling that their actions have an impact on reality.

➡ Building and strengthening relationships: breaking one's own barriers in contacts with new acquaintances, group work, meeting people who inspire to reflect upon what to do in life, sharing enthusiasm for action.

Feedback from participants:

> *„What does the city remember" was the best workshop. I could really touch the history of my city.*

> *I am much more aware of the city when I walk around it.*

> *The most interesting piece of work was removing ads from buildings in Gimp. Now we can imagine how Warsaw would look like without the redundant ads.*

> *Taking part in the workshops enabled me to develop my interests and to get to know new things and people. I enhanced my knowledge of Warsaw and of the ways we can shape it.*

> *I could get to know new media and software and learn about interesting new places in Warsaw... that gave ma bigger awareness of the space around me and many new acquaintances.*

From the point of view of our partners the most important experiences from our collaboration are related to:

1. Education: the program made it possible to teach young people from Warsaw how they can influence the space surrounding them. It made it possible to make them more sensitive to social issues and to practice methods of addressing them. For some partners it was the first opportunity to work with school goers - now they plan on similar educational activities for young people in the future.

2. Shaping views and building the ethic of social activism among young people, strengthening the feeling of responsibility for their surroundings and the feeling that „the city is their home, continued".

At the same time both us, the authors of the program, and our partners feel that most of those meetings were the beginning of wider, deeper works in the specific fields. The form of workshops - 2-day cycles dedicated to theoretical and practical work on a specific issue made it possible to create simple effects in that short time. Each of the issues can be developed into a long-term project in the future. It would make it possible to establish new skills, strengthen our links with all partners and adapt the effects of the workshops to their needs.

DO IT YOURSELF!
Ideas to realise

I.
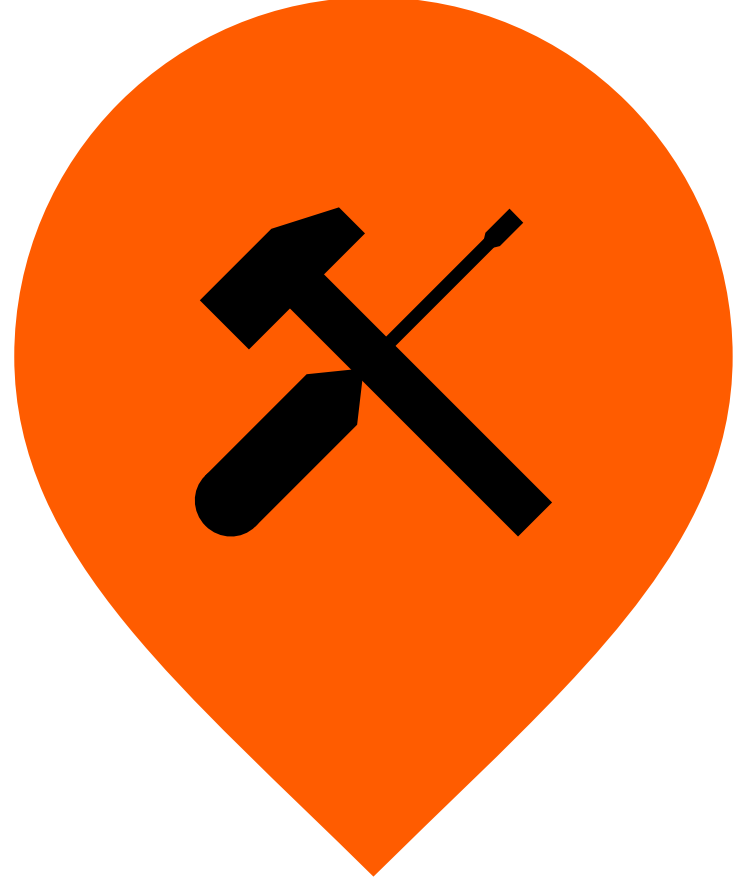
difficulty:
● ● ● ● ○

What does
the city remember?

How to learn the history of a town and tell about it in public space using new technologies.

We need:

number of people: animators: **2-6**
                       participants: **4-20**

time: preparations: **2 days**
           realisation: **2 days**

tools: **film and photo cameras, computers with internet connections and editing software (e.g. Windows Movie Maker), mobile devices with internet access (smartphones, tablets)**

tags: **films, photo, history, city, public space, local identity**

The way we did it:

In the project Warszawa Lab a group of young people from Warsaw and cultural animators searched for ways to use new media and new technologies to influence the city.

During one of the workshops they focused on the history of Warsaw, namely on the district of Wola - a part of Warsaw in which different plots of Warsaw history intertwine.

In the Museum of Wola that turned into an open archive each of the groups of participants developed one topic related to the district: free election (that took place on Wolność Street (Freedom Street)), factories operating in Wola, the Second World War and the ghetto, the history of the Dom Słowa Polskiego and the history of the premises of the Museum of Wola. The participants went through documents, books, film and photo archives available at the museum. They planned scenarios and techniques for making their films - from stop motion animation to mini documentary to combining pieces of archival footage from the 20s and from the times of war.

On the second day each group focused on their own film, 2-4 minutes long.

When the films were edited they prepared the so-called markers - one photo for each film. The photos were printed and placed in the district of Wola - at the locations related to the films. Later the films were uploaded online with the use of the free app Aurasma. The people of Warsaw, as they meet the photos-markers in different places in the district of Wola, can use smartphones or tablets to „bring the images to life" and watch the stories hidden behind them.

Partner: Museum of Wola

Step by step:

Step 1: Preparing for using Aurasma

Aurasma is an app that uses the technology of image recognition (places, graphics, photos, objects) and makes it possible to combine them with films. Using Aurasma we can select our own markers and add our own films and animations to them to make them available to other users of the app. In order to use Aurasma you need to install it on your mobile device – for iPad and iPhone you can download it from the App Store and for Android devices from the Google Play store. The app is free. Instructions and tutorials are available online. It's advisable to try turning the app on and uploading films prior to the workshop.

Step 2: Debate: the city's memory resembles an onion.

We begin a conversation about the multi-layer form of the history of the given place. We reveal and discuss layer after layer. We try to identify the most interesting stories and the materials available, as well as the places and people that can offer us information.

Step 3: Preparing the script:

The participants are divided into groups of several people. Each group develops a single topic – they accumulate information, watch and select archival materials, write the scenes step by step.
It is important that none of the groups exceeds 6 members so that during e.g. the editing phase each of the participants can take active part in the process.

Step 4: Making the films:

Depending on the topic and available materials the films can take the form of mini reportage, stop motion animation, photocast (com-bining photos with sound and film elements) or a remix of film footage. We can use photo cameras in film mode. Editing can be performed with the use of one of the numerous free programs. It is advisable to invite experts who can support the technical aspects of filming and editing. The final films should be short – the files cannot be heavy.

Step 5: Preparing markers

Each of the groups selects one photo suitable for the film. The photos are printed and placed in locations related to the films. The photos have to have strong contrast – otherwise the app may have difficulties with recognising the marker. It's advisable to print the photos on durable material, resistant to rain and humid air.

Step 6: Sharing the films

With the use of Aurasma we add the films to the markers and make them available for other users.

Options:

It is possible to think of topics related to the present day and to make films that present ideas how to use empty and neglected spaces in the city – then the markers for the films would be placed in those empty spaces.

II.

difficulty:

Urban eraser

How we can use new technologies to show the visual chaos of public spaces and propose change

We need:

number of people: animators: **2-6**
participants: **6-24**

time: preparations: **1 day**
realisation: **2 days**

tools: **photo cameras, computers with graphic processing software (e.g. the free software GIMP) and internet connection**

tags: **photo, city, public space**

The way we did it:

In the project Warszawa Lab a group of young people from Warsaw and cultural animators searched for ways to use new media and new technologies to influence the city.

During one of the workshops they focused on the aesthetics of the city and the chaos caused by the omnipresent large-scale ads and signs on buildings, fences and walls. The considered ways of making the people of Warsaw sensitive to the problem of this visual mess and to present possible alternatives.

The animators invited the association Miasto Moje a w Nim to run the first part of the workshop. The association fights i.a. architecture-spoiling ads. Their presentation revealed some advertising absurdities as well as positive actions undertaken to get rid of the chaos.

Later the participants took photo cameras to the streets of Warsaw. Their task was to take photos of building covered in signs, ads etc. that cover the architecture of Warsaw. The second day each participant chose one photo to work with. One of the criteria was for the building to be relatively easy to „clean" with the use of graphic editing software. (e.g. a cellular network ad on an even wall, a banner on a rooftop with blue sky behind it). After „cleaning" the buildings they combined „before" and „after" images in gif files - simple animations that present both photos by turns. This popular visual form helped them present the contrast between the city „messy" with ads and the city with clean and harmonious visual space.

Partner: Association Miasto Moje A W Nim

Step by step:

Step 1:   Debate – what disturbs us visually?

We talk about visual chaos - how do the participants define it? We think of places in our city that are an example of good aesthetics and of places ruled by ads. Do they disturb us? How do they influence our perception of public space? Do we know how the buildings hidden behind the huge banners look like?

Step 2:   Photographing the city

The participants roam the city with their photo cameras - alone or in pairs. They take photos of buildings and places made ugly and messy by ads and signs. Each of the participants takes 8-10 photos. Then we select one that will undergo the process of cleaning.

Step 3:   Graphic processing software

We can use free software available online. Numerous tutorials are available online that present how to use the software. It is also advisable to invite experts for this part - people who work with that kind of software, who can lead the participants through the stages of work.
Once the photos are clean we create gif files by combining the „before" an „after" images and exporting them as GIF files.

Step 4:   Sharing the results

The files could be available e.g. on the website of the local authorities, on Facebook. The audience could be encouraged to discuss the effects of such „cleaning" of the city.

Options:

graphic processing software can also be used to create an „alternative landscape" of a city - a graphic proposal of unification of signs and ads.

III.

difficulty:

What is the sound of the city?

How we can use new technologies to create a city soundscape.

We need:

number of people:
animators: **2-6**
participants: **4-20**

time:
preparations: **1 day**
realisation: **2 days**

tools:
sound recorders, headphones, computers with sound editing software (e.g. free Audiacity)

tags:
journalism, sound, city, public space

The way we did it:

In the project Warszawa Lab a group of young people from Warsaw and cultural animators searched for ways to use new media and new technologies to influence the city.

One of the workshops was dedicated to the sounds of Warsaw and the way they influence the people living in the city. The participants supported by the project Miasto Puszcza learned about the notion of soundscape and how what we hear (or what we don't hear consciously but that accompanies us) can affect us. In order to fully understand this, the participants set off to the street of Warsaw with sound recorders and headphones. For the first time they consciously focused on the omnipresent urban noise and tried to pick out single elements (music, conversations, cars etc.).

Later, divided into small groups, they recorded sounds at several selected locations (shopping mall, ice rink, car garage, railway station, busy square, market). They also recorded what passers by had to say and asked them to listen closely to the surroundings and tell what they hear. Those who were wearing headphones were asked what they were listening to.

Later they edited their recordings into short sound reportage forms – each of them was a creative interpretation of the elements of the soundscape of the capital city.

Partner: Miasto Puszcza

Step by step:

Step 1: Debate: what do we hear and how do we feel with this?

We can start with a conversation about the way the sounds that surround us influence us. We asked the participants if they have ever intently listened to the city. We talk about places with a consciously designed soundscape (e.g. with music in shops and malls, on the radio) and those composed of random elements (e.g. a busy crossing).

Step 2:   Listening exercise

We hand out sound recorders. It's advisable to use high quality recorders that - when headphones used - will help listen to the surroundings to the fullest. Ask the participants to put the headphones on and have a stroll, focusing on what they hear. After the walk we gather comments and write down the elements that could be heard - the soundscape is composed of all of them.

Step 3:   Recording

The participants select locations and head for the streets. They record for approx. 3 hours - conversations, sounds, short statements etc. One sound recorder should be used by a maximum of two participants.

Step 4:   Editing

We use sound editing software to create 2-5 minutes long sound etudes. They can take the form of reportage (e.g. vox pop where people are asked about what they are listening to at the moment) or be a more abstract interpretation of what was heard and recorded. Links to those recordings can then be placed on our website with the description of the location and the circumstances of the recording.

Options:

We can think similarly about what can be seen in the city - focusing on its varied often not matching visual elements can become a pretext to create collages and „alternative" visions of the city - architecture, streets etc.

2

CITY-MEDIA-EDUCATION
Minireport on „Media EDUaction" Warsaw

Organising the open seminar „Media EDUaction of Warsaw" with the Warsaw Program for Cultural Education was an important part of Warszawa Lab. It was a meeting of Warsaw-based educators and animators using the tools of new media and new technologies in their work.

The participants were divided into 4 groups and considered i.a. the role of the media education program in the landscape of Warsaw based cultural education as well as the benefits of media education for the city, so that it can be more open to the needs of its citizens and take active part in the process of building its reality.

The participants of „Media EDUaction" were mostly representatives of non-governmental organisations and informal groups and institutions working in the field of broadly defined cultural education, who use various mobile apps and social media on a daily basis. There were significantly less representatives of community centres and libraries from Warsaw (and most of those present use the tools of media education to little or no extent).

Below we present the most important conclusions from that meeting.

The groups were moderated and the conclusions formulated by: Anna Buchner, Eliza Gryszko, Katarzyna Sawko, Maria Wierzbicka, Katarzyna Zaniewska

Before we could start group work we had to define media education and decide on the way we define its audience and tools. The definition of media education was specified as using broadly defined new technologies in social projects and teaching critical approach to the creation of media messages and their reception, conscious use of the opportunities of the new technologies and sensible creation of content. We have enumerated the following tools of media education: software, hardware (e.g. smartphones, tablets) and social networking media, audio-visual content sharing platforms, QR codes, hashtags, mobile apps as well as photographs and film - created and stored digitally.

Media education: WHAT we teach

The themes of this branch of education as well as its possible fields of work are:

1. explaining how **media work** - critical approach to the media market (knowing the way it works, its internal relations and financing) and to ready platforms and tools, to intellectual property and finding ways of using them;

2. conscious **creation of media messages** and posing questions about where that message is heading and how it can be used outside of our influence, as well as how to take care of legal and security issues etc;

3. **broadening knowledge in the field of copyright** - the rules of creating and processing content by individuals, cultural institutions and teachers who use material found on the web for their work.

Education - namely HOW

The question about the way the tools of media education can be used is specifically related to 2 issues.

Firstly - it is related to the methods of teaching, secondly - it is a question about the balance between *online* and *offline*, between activities performed in the digital and the analogue space. It's important that educational activities are not only related to specific tools but to intertwine the use of media competency into other fields of work. A pen and learning how to write seems a valid comparison. Learning how to write requires special activities at first but with time it's used automatically, not as a purpose but as a means. It is therefore important that media education accompanies people regardless of the level of their competency, which would enable them to absorb new content and skills. Parallel activities within formal and informal education seem a key to this.

The social understanding of media education

As seen by the participants of „Media EDUaction" the tools of media education broaden perspectives, increase influence over reality, make activities more attractive, strengthen messages and facilitate change. Thanks to the tools on the new media the notion of locality gains new meaning. It is no longer related to physical presence in one place. Using mobile devices and specific apps one might take part in local events despite the distance. However is has been stressed that what is available only via a tablet or computer is not sufficient. Media education is not focused on the tool as such (software, app, technical aspect etc.) but it teaches how to use them in the course of tackling a wider issue, related to culture, history or space.

How can the city benefit from media education

The tools of media education can support activities for the city and its citizens in many ways, e.g.

- reaching a wider audience;
- better definition of the target group;
- creating interactive projects;
- arousing the curiosity of the participants about a chosen aspect of the city (e.g. history, nature, space etc.)
- creating increasingly advanced projects taking part in the digital and the real worlds at the same time;
- co-creating projects by its audiences (e.g. by sharing photos and films marked with a selected hashtag or in a special virtual space);
- drawing inspiration for creating projects based on available tools of media education (e.g. we can find a great app and build a specific activity around the opportunities it gives);

- building the civil society (through increasing the people's interest in local problems and engaging a growing number of people into a variety of activities);
- defining the directions of the development of the city in direct contact with its people (e.g. infrastructure related issues).

Media education and the Capital City of Warsaw / What the city can offer media education

The starting point of this conversation was the place of media education in the wider landscape of the city's cultural education. Where to look for media education, how to interpret it, where does it begin and where does it end?

Should the assumptions and priorities of media education be written in a single document or is the notion so blurred, wide and omnipresent that there is no need (or possibility) of regulating it?

Finally: what are the powers of the local authorities in this field, who takes care of these issues, what is their role and resources, and how can they be shared?

Barriers to the development of media education

People working in the field (administration officers, NGO workers and the employees of public institutions such as community centres or public libraries) face a variety of problems. The most important include:

1. Lack of an in-depth diagnose of groups working in the field. Conclusions of existing diagnoses don't turn into practice, and recommendations are not acted out. Low recognition of local potential (organisation, human resources, tools etc.) result in repeated „preaching to the converted". We do not use available tools, we do not develop the current forms of collaboration, we do not begin dialogue with potential partners. It often happens that we don't know who does what and how.

2. The lack of a common language of the Warsaw community of media educators. This inhibits collaboration for the development of media education and causes informational chaos. It is visible in the field of defining media education. The chaos strikes at the audiences in the first place.

3. Strict frameworks and rules of the activities of cultural institutions in Warsaw: they are often closed to external initiative, their space is not made available to educational activities, including media education activities run by informal and non-governmental entities.

4. Lack of support for informal initiatives. The local authorities often neglect them. Their experience isn't used and their voice isn't heard when activities are planned.

5. Collaboration only happens according to old and proven schemes. The 3rd sector is starting to be seen as a partner in the field of media education but informal groups and business are held outside the circle of collaboration. This might be caused by blindness to their potential and the inability to talks and find common goals. Formulating them might be the starting point for good collaboration in a *win-win* system. Collaboration in the field of formal and informal media education is also rare.

6. An excessive offer of media education activities makes it difficult for the potential participants to know it and to choose what's most valuable for them. It causes the impression of no control over media education.

7. Labelling the media education offer and artificial division of potential participants e.g. „for the youth", „for senior citizens" with the biggest offer for children and almost none for the group of adults aged from 30 to 55.

8. No investment in the development of young artists. That way the city loses the possibility to collaborate with artists and all benefits coming from it.

9. No platform for information exchange between different agents of media education. We can see a clear need for exchange of resources, tools, and knowledge and, most of all, of building new relations and a common field for co-operation.

Demands or what can be done to support media education programs in Warsaw

1. Identify resources (tools, entities, initiatives, equipment, places, people) of media education that already exist. This diagnose should result in action and assume the participation of the widest possible spectrum of partners.
It would be advisable to divide them into work groups and to select leaders within those work groups so that assigned tasks would be performed on a planned schedule.
This would facilitate the creation of an **urban media information system** that could serve the audiences as well as the authors of the offer at the stage of planning activities as well as at the stage of development and the search for partners.

2. Building and supporting the coalition around media education, that is a group of interested institutions, individuals, informal groups etc. that would accept the goal of working on media education related issues. By this we mean joining the recently formed Coalition of Media and Digital Education and creating its Warsaw-based counterpart.

3. Supporting informal initiatives and young artists - working out merit tools and financial tools that would enable collaboration with non-institutionalised entities working in the field of education. It is also worth considering how the potential of young artists can be developed and how we can care for their collaboration with the city.

4. Ensuring that media education projects are continued - we need financing and administration mechanisms that would make it possible to prolong the best projects. Valuable activities have to receive the chance to develop into several-year-long programs so that the best solutions aren't lost in the reality of projects, which is the lack of financing. Continuity would also make it possible to use established solutions and gather *know-how*.

5. Information flow between different units of the administration of Warsaw that would make it possible to detect different kinds of educational activities and to build a system supporting educational activities that combine media education with the broadly defined cultural education.

3

The Unapparent Audience City, citizens and the new media

Anna Buchner

What are the needs and problems of the people of Warsaw? How can we reach them and invite them to get to know the tools of media education? Many employees of cultural institutions and activists from non-governmental organisations pose those questions as they plan social and educational activities for their organisations. As we begin to answer, it is easy to fall into a trap of simple labelling the people of Warsaw based on their age or the district they live in. Of course those distinctions are important and we owe it to them that in the recent years so intensive cultural activities have been prepared for senior citizens. But if we focus solely on specific age groups, we risk missing others out. It's good to look at the citizens - the potential audience and participants of our activities - closer and on more levels.

When I mention the risk of omitting some groups I mean the conclusions of the report on urban culture in Poland from 2010 (Burszta, Duchowski et al., 2010). Its authors note that in big cities we experience oversupply of cultural offer and a communication chaos that has a negative impact on participation in cultural activities. This makes the middle-aged generations and people with the highest competencies withdraw from cultural life, as well as the „lower middle school cultural hole" effect. Busy middle-aged people are difficult to get hold of. As we think of them as our audience it's important to take a closer look at their supply of spare time, as the key to success lies in understanding when they have it and what form it takes. Lower-secondary school pupils on the other hand are difficult as they are no longer kids but they are not upper-secondary school youth that organises its own spare time. None of these groups is solid - we can find many sub-groups in the group of lower middle school pupils. From the so-called disadvantaged, to ambitious, busy, taking part in numerous activities, pupils of the best schools. Middle-aged people are similarly different and the offer for them is relatively the poorest. The process of planning animation activities requires a close look on all groups of citizens and defining them.

One of the methods of multidimensional diagnosis of the people of the city is the approach of the two American anthropologists - John

Eade and Michael Sallnow. They suggest to look on people of a certain location (Eade and Sallnow wrote about people visiting sanctuaries but the approach they used can be effectively used for other places and groups) from the point of view of the „theory of competing discourses, which implies sensitivity to the balance of powers in the relation and identifying different perspectives" (Eade, Sallnow 2000: 2-3). The authors don't mean competition as a fight. They draw our attention to the fact that people present at a location are subject to a number of varied discourses, which influence them with varied intensity. There is no need of fixed differentiation of potential audiences and participants of urban activities into separate groups as very often their status fluctuates and depends on factors dominant at a certain point. To be specific: the group/field of work has to be identified every time we plan activities.

An urban park is a good location for exercising space and audience diagnosis - we can see it as a metaphor of the whole city. Very different age and social groups use the park. We can say with big probability that dog owners and local homeless are regular guests at any time of day; around midday you can meet mothers with small children, senior citizens, random passers by and the workers of surrounding offices; in the evenings there are local sport fans, of e.g. pétanque, and young people secretly drinking alcohol. But this knowledge isn't enough to plan social activities in this space. The park needs to be watched so that we can see which groups appear at which times, how they share the space and if there are any natural interactions between them because the idea of such observation is identifying the interaction potential, so that future activities run there can activate it. The perspective of „competing discourses" is precious because it makes it possible to look at the ways city dwellers produce and negotiate the sense of their daily life in the city and which aspects of their identities become dominant at what situations. Because all of us can give many different answers to the following questions: who are you? what do you do? what fascinates you? It isn't uncommon that not the first, usually leading identity aspects (like age, work, family, viewpoint) of life but those related to interests and the need of finding a change from daily life can become the starting point for taking part in urban cultural, social and educational activities. The interest in the history of a given district, street or building can join generations and social groups and ignite interaction.

Another precious theoretical inspiration in thinking about city dwellers and the tools of media education is the relational perspective that is connected to e-competencies. In the relational perspective competent use of the Internet is defined as one that can cause an improvement in an individual's life and therefor can facilitate/rationalise his or her functioning in an important field (Filiciak, Growiec, Mazurek 2013). This approach is found in the methodology of researching the Internet. According to its ideas conducting research of the Internet cannot be restricted to *online* activities of the test group. They have to be approached from a wider relational perspective. Most activities performed online are directly related to *offline* aspects of life (like real meetings and interactions planned or initiated on social networking platforms). The relational perspective is also valid for planning activities that use the Internet or new technologies. As we plan activities we should always take into consideration the context of individuals that will take part, and consider what benefits can they get from knowing a certain tool or app. Moreover, those actions should be planned in a way that places potential utilisation - other than that during the workshop - in the program of learning a given tool of media education. That turns learning into preparation for independent utilisation of those tools. Let me give you an example: an interactive location-based game with a geolocation component enables us to teach people to use geolocation tools as such. But sometimes it is necessary to show people that those functions can be also used in daily life (it's advisable to offer specific examples of use), not only during the game.

In the long run such actions may make a certain medium or tool transparent - that is intuitive for its users and free from the side effect

of „technological stress". That is the stage in which it is used for positive social change, not just for learning how to use it.

I want to mention an essay written more than 100 years ago by George Simmel (one of the fathers of sociology) about the „The Metropolis & Mental Life" (Simmel 2005). Simmel puts it straight that almost every citizen of a big city is jaded in a way that makes him or her indifferent to new stimuli. That is how they protect themselves from the excess of stimuli and sensations (Simmel 2005, 305-309). According to Simmel being blasé is a form of adaptation for the difficult living conditions of a city in the process of dynamic development. Of course the cities observed by Simmel and their people as well as the socio-economic situation were significantly different than the Warsaw of today, yet I believe many urban activists have experienced blasé, that is indifferent audiences and participants in their activities. They are those potential participants who present a negative attitude from the very beginning (waste of time / I don't get it / why would I need that) and those who are interested at first but then they cannot engage or continue being engaged (they often engage in many activities at the same time but finish none and don't feel that their quitting may be a problem for other participants or the organisers). Getting through to such people is the most difficult of all tasks but once their indifference is overcome it turns out that you can not only do something for them but also convince them to action.

Sociologist Marek Krajewski notices a certain paradox in contemporary cities. On the one hand the city guarantees anonymity and intimacy; on the other – it makes us indifferent and invisible. A human being that wants to oppose this other aspect is forced to manifest his or her presence all the time and that limit the privacy. It is a game based on producing a system of signs - using them makes us visible to others (Krajewski, 2005: 171-172). The consumer goods we use, the places we go to and our cultural tastes are all elements of that game. It is fast-paced and dynamic; one could say it happens on the run. It has to do with the transformation of spare time. In the previously quoted report Tomasz Szlendak writes that for people who work in big cities „spare time doesn't exist, it exploded and is shattered into little pieces scattered along the day and week (…) and therefore participation in culture, mostly of the working middle-aged people isn't solid, it happens from time to time and is unpredictable even for them" (Burszta et al. 2010, 123).

Another important phenomenon noticed by Szlendak is the fact that the Poles don't consider participation in culture as relax but as the necessity of performing the „ritual of a cultural human being" (Burszta et al. 2010, 118). This ritual makes us visible to others but it is a significant effort and a burden on our spare time.

These conditions as well as the above mentioned issues cause fundamental conclusions significant at the stage of project planning. It isn't advisable to „design" the audience of activities and to assume that they will have certain qualities. Instead it would be advisable to identify those who are present in the potential space and try to get to know their qualities, variety and interaction potential. At the same time it has to be remembered that it is difficult to make „something for all" - activities that work in one district may not work if copied to another location.

When it comes to media education our imagination often comes up with the vision of young tech-savvy people on a reflex. But it's worth keeping in mind that the offer for them is excessive. A challenge that seems worth accepting is encouraging them to take certain „interventions" in places they frequent and with groups they meet on a daily basis. Bringing back the park metaphor - we should work for the paths to cross. We should lead more people to places with the potential for interaction and for mixing groups that used to be seen separately. The tools of new media and new technologies often prove extremely creative and helpful. In daily life they are often blamed for cutting (especially young people) from activities and presence in the „non-digital" space. Used in a social context they can help see the surroundings better, understand it better and influence it more effectively.

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