

ZADAR *Croatia*



75,000 inhabitants

In Zadar, the Living Streets were organised in the Voštarnica neighbourhood, a derelict area nearby the historical city centre. The aim was to revive this abandoned space by bringing it back to the citizens and turn this part of the city into a central point for gathering people by organising arts and cultural events.

Bringing neglected areas back to life: making the Voštarnica of tomorrow visible to all!

The area was neglected and most residents avoided it, being used only for parking cars on three big parking slots which are crowded the whole year. This is precisely the key aspect that the municipality wished to change by using Living Streets to show another perspective of this area to the citizens, allowing them to see the potential to host other activities rather than merely parking cars. In Zadar, the Living Streets were linked to a local festival called Kvart Art (neighbourhood art festival) and it was decided to use this opportunity to create more than 80 activities during the event taking place in this derelict area. Even during time slots with no activities, people could still come and socialise, recognising this area as a key meeting point. This allowed different social groups and

ages, from children to seniors, to gather and mingle.

The Living Streets initiative also received political support from the mayor who was directly involved and participated in the initiative.

Get inspired by Zadar's activities!

The Living Streets was officially opened via a metaphoric performance when citizens could break a cardboard wall, symbolically showing the barriers to a liveable Voštarnica neighbourhood. Different tools were provided to citizens (chalk, spray cans, etc.) that they could use to mark their visions for the future of the area on a big white screen. An idea box was also provided, gathering suggestions that were used at a later stage by a team of architects presenting future low-budget solutions for the area, based on the needs and dreams of the residents.

To allow residents to picture their area car-free and see all the potential of it in terms of socialising and a better quality of life, during the Living Streets a set of activities was proposed every day.

Below is a list of activities for inspiration:

- Change of perspective: members of the local firefighters came with their vehicle every weekend and they used the crane to lift people up in the air so that they can have a different view on the area from high above and realise the impact of transforming it from a space dedicated to cars (parking lots) into a space dedicated to people.
- Book exchange picnic: local craftsmen made wooden houses to store the books and placed them outside of the public library, on one of the parking lots which was transformed for this period in an enjoyable place with flowers and trees. Residents could exchange their preferred books and read them outside. This construction is now there permanently and residents are still using it.
- Electric bike presentation: this involved different local bike shops promoting electric bikes and



residents were able to try them free of charge on the day.

- Family activities: music concerts for children, archery workshops, and children chess championships.
- Souvenir development creative workshop: this involved seniors, with the support of the Eco Zadar association.
- An open space cinema, followed by a movie quiz.
- Physical theatre workshop: focusing on the body and physical acting in theatre.

- Outdoor theatrical performances, puppet shows.
- Development of lighting installations: residents could create their own lighting installation.
- Sunrise breakfast: this included activities supporting healthy lifestyles (education, training, running, healthy food for breakfast).

- Music concerts were organised with the performance of the well-known guitar player, Miroslav Tadić (traditional and alternative playing), involving more than 500 people coming to this abandoned place (skate park). The guitarist invited everyone to hang out in the parking transformed in a living room and this turned into a big after-party that was very successful, allowing residents to socialise.
- Alternative music and journalism workshops with famous journalists.
- Graffiti and art performances: citizens could have an active role in the graffiti workshops and were invited to ask questions and express themselves.
- Sport activities: mountain climbing with local associations, children's sports Olympics.
- Public viewing of the football game (like the movie night) with a barbecue.
- Parkour workshop.

There was a positive atmosphere during the entire festival and Living Streets revealed that the Vošarnica neighbourhood has a great potential to become a place for social interaction of the residents in the area, but also of all citizens of Zadar. In 2018, the City of Zadar is continuing with the initiative, but this time in close collaboration with 4 local institutions and associations.

What was the impact?

The experience shows that in the derelict area concerned, the people's

acceptance increased concerning the closing of the parking lots to the cars and transforming them into public space dedicated to the people. There was also a snowball effect as the participants in the Kwart Art festival are thinking about the future of their own neighbourhood now, in different parts of the city and on how to turn the parking lots in their own districts into other initiatives than just space for parking cars.

It seems the first Living Streets experiment in Zadar is an eye opener for politicians, the administration



and the citizens on the potential of this neighbourhood and the festival will be organised every year while permanently reorganising this area, transitioning from cars to citizens.

More information

facebook.com/kvartartzadar

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