

## Creative Placemaking for Inclusive Urban Landscapes

François Duconseille<sup>a</sup>  and Raymond Saner<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Haute Ecole des Arts du Rhin (HEAR), Strasbourg, France; <sup>b</sup>University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland

### ABSTRACT

Cities can be incubators for innovation and key drivers of sustainable development. The conditionality for urban landscapes to be inclusive, will depend on the creativity for new orders and new strategies for social and cultural integration. The crucial role of urban landscapes in promoting sustainable development is notably recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which identifies culture and creativity as one of the essential levers for action in this context. Some examples on that direction point at the 2004- UNESCO created Creative Cities Network (UCCN) that aims to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. The UCCN focuses on seven creative fields, namely crafts and folk- arts, design, film, gastronomy, literature, media arts, and music. From the perspective of social anthropology and the arts, different stakeholder groups meet and exchange at urban places and co-create urban scenarios and scenographies by negotiating the urban landscapes through urban placemaking projects. This paper contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 whose aim is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by exploring and assessing urban placemaking strategies to strengthen inclusive and sustainable human settlement planning and management. For this purpose, the main research question of this project is: How to stimulate successful placemaking in urban landscapes for social integration in open urban spaces.

### KEYWORDS

Placemaking; urban landscape; arts; Africa; development

## Introduction

This paper contributes to the understanding how urban areas could be made more inclusive and sustainable and support the planning of inclusive human settlements. The main research question of this article was how to stimulate successful placemaking in urban landscapes for social integration in open urban spaces through the use of creative and artistic activities of mixed groups of artists.

The authors describe and discuss the evolution of urban development from being a physical infrastructure development determined by urban planners to a reclaiming of public space through spacemaking which is a social re-appropriation of urban space by citizens residing in the urban spaces.

Different stakeholder groups meet and exchange at urban places and co-create urban scenarios and scenographies by negotiating the urban landscapes through urban placemaking projects

The 2030 Agenda of the United Nations recognizes the crucial role of urban landscapes in promoting sustainable development and identifies culture and creativity as one of the essential levers for action in this context.

The UNESCO contributed to this search for inclusive city development by creating the Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. The UCCN focuses for instance on seven creative fields, namely crafts and folk-arts, design, film, gastronomy, literature, media arts, and music.

The authors use a case study methodology and narrate three placemaking initiatives (PMI) in urban landscapes that were designed to facilitate social integration of urban communities. In particular, analysis is made of three extensive urban scenography projects undertaken by the first author- two in Africa and one in a suburb of a French city. The three case examples provide narratives with rich data on artistic and collective spacemaking innovations linked to social integration of urban areas suffering from poverty and various forms of discrimination. Applying Radaelli and Paquette's typology about who writes on Cultural Policy and Arts Management (Radaelli and Paquette 2016), the two authors bridge multiple roles namely artist-teacher (François Duconseille) and academic/think tank/artist (Raymond Saner) and hence add different perspectives to this research paper.

## Urban place-and space making

Well-managed cities can be incubators for innovation and key drivers of sustainable development (SD) (UN-DESA 2017). Large human movements from rural to urban settings require research which addresses migration and explores possibilities for making urban landscapes more inclusive (SDG 11) (UNCTAD 2016). Making these movement inclusive requires creativity and new strategies for social and cultural integration which, according to the IOM, can be understood differently depending on the country and context (IOM. 2015).

The crucial role of urban landscapes in promoting Sustainable Development (SD) is recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifying culture and creativity as one of the essential levers for action in this context (UNESCO 2016). A good example thereof is the Creative Cities Network set up by UNESCO to promote cooperation among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.

However, aspects like community styles, traditional knowledge, customs, shared and participated productive techniques from the cultural commons (Santagata et al. 2011) remain unarticulated and Kyle, Jun, and Absher 2013 when studying the relation between both place identity and place dependence measures by Kyle et al. Found that place bonds were predictors of resource conflicts (Kyle, Jun, and Absher 2013).

Originating from the natural sciences, cultural ecosystem services (CES) have been defined as the "nonmaterial benefits people obtain from ecosystems through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation, and aesthetic experiences." One broadly agreed characteristic of cultural ecosystem services is their intangibility, constituting a growing field of research that can bridge gaps between different academic

disciplines and research communities, fostering thus new conceptual links between alternative logics relating to a variety of social and ecological issues (Milcu et al. 2013).

While there has been a relative neglect of issues on the cultural commons by public urban authorities, there is a growing recognition that they form the backbone of cities (UN-Habitat 2012) and the ecosystem services that sustain them. The 1975 established Project for Public Spaces in the USA, has pioneered the placemaking approach toward revitalizing public spaces defining them as a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces (PPS 2008).

Early placemaking efforts focused on the physical qualities of spaces and their design attributes, but now the question of how placemaking can build places and communities in an urbanizing planet has gained a new dimension of interest and global relevance. (National Endowment for the Arts 2016)

Placemaking encompasses contributions made by a growing number of thinkers and social activists. The following definition of placemaking encompasses the main streams and approaches to placemaking namely:

*Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and wellbeing. It is political due to the nature of place identity. Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy that makes use of urban design principles. It can be either official and government led, or community driven grass roots tactical urbanism, such as extending sidewalks with chalk, paint, and planters, or open streets events such as Bogotá, Colombia's Ciclovía. Good placemaking makes use of underutilized space to enhance the urban experience at the pedestrian scale.<sup>1</sup>*

Focusing on placemaking by the established migrant communities, new arrivals as well as different stakeholders will generate new knowledge about the acceptance and treatment of plurality by meeting, exchanging and negotiating at urban places. Community based placemaking also supports co-existence of different ethnic narratives and a sense of Heimat or identities (Saner 2008).

Such shaping of common identities can also extend across borders within regional cross-border proximities as for instance in the case of the Upper Rhine Valley where Alsace (France), Baden (Germany) and Basel (Switzerland) share common borders and history (Saner and Yiu 2010).

Studying the relationship between international and domestic migration and the production of place requires a change of focus from the physical characteristics of places to looking at how placemaking is affecting our social lives (Dick and Duchêne-Lacroix 2016).

Today, the most successful placemaking initiatives transcend the "place" to emphasize the "making" (Lefebvre 1991) in which people collaborate, deliberate, disagree, and act by claiming their "right to the city" (Harvey 2008; Silberberg et al. 2013; Baird and Crawford 2008).

Communities exercise their "right to the city" in public places described by Oldenburg as "neutral ground upon which people may gather in which none are required to play host, and in which all feel at home and comfortable" (Oldenburg 2009).

The process of "making" in public places generates "social friction" (Sennett 1992), fostering interaction between different groups who would otherwise not meet, suggesting also that new conflict management approaches are needed to create peaceful

solutions over contested spaces through negotiations and mediation (Saner, 2012). Several authors have laid the foundation for complex thinking about placemaking (Oelke and Gaudry, 2017; Runco and Jaeger, 2012).

While place is important, it is the “making” that builds connections by creating civic engagement and empowering citizens creating thus social capital (Putnam 2000). Social capital in today’s complex relational world should be viewed as part of the “common pool” system (Ostrom et al. 1999) for the well-being of the community.

Placemaking strategies for inclusive and sustainable human settlement planning and management asks how people with different backgrounds can harness their sociocultural and political assets such that cities can benefit from their presence and stimulate inclusive successful placemaking in urban landscapes. Learning systems need to be designed for dialog and integration of different social groups consisting often of a mix of domestic and cross-border migrants (Saner and Yiu 2014).

Expanding from the architectural and arts-based action research methods, urban space-making as an intervention method intervenes and disturbs current orders in a given urban context. The ensuing constructive disruption enables researcher/change agents to explore 1) possibilities for understanding how individual group identity, norms and beliefs are related to the sustainability of valued cultural ecosystem services and 2) how the relationships between these social and cultural values can be transformed constructively.

## Creative placemaking as action research interventions

Creative placemaking initiatives in all cases are based on the method for landscape architecture developed by Francis (2003) and complemented with participatory action research. The participatory action research component of urban landscaping was further developed by what the collective ScU2 later called *Urban Scénos* project (2000).

*Urban Scénos* is a co-developed art project that originates bottom-up from collective art movements and has been used as a tool for the inscription of artistic practices in a city that creates a space for artists to intervene and constructively disturb current orders in a given urban context.

Kurt Lewin first coined the term “action research” in 1944. In his 1946 paper “Action Research and Minority Problems” he described action research as “a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action” that uses “a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action.”<sup>2</sup>

Action Research is being used as a method of urban planning (Hoffecker 2011, Hok and Kwok 2015; Strydom and Puren 2014) and highlighted the difference between traditional natural science research and social science action research, Larry Susskind (2011) writes

*Action Research (AR) is an approach to question-asking and answering that puts a premium on direct engagement between the subjects and users of applied social science research. It does not adhere to the usual academic conventions that create inter-personal barriers between the researcher and the people and places they seek to help. AR is not concerned about the replicability of research findings in the same way that natural scientists are. The legitimacy of AR findings derives primarily from the contributions its adherents make to helping people and communities address the problems they face in their everyday lives.*

Other arts-based action research methods stemming from the creative industries management disciplines complement ScU2. Arts-based active research methods involve performance and participant interaction in a creative space.

The use of such methods for data generation and action research, is growing in the social sciences (Cole and Knowles 2008). Working with performance-based methods links to the notion of the “lived space” (Lefebvre, 1991), accounting for people’s embodied existence which is expressed, co- created and strengthened through performance (Biehl-Missal, 2012).

Working with such methods co-creates knowledge on how participants (and researchers/artists) experience space and its participatory possibilities. Emerging tools and methodological possibilities offer new concepts for societal transformations, enhancing the architecture and urban methodological tradition of placemaking with opportunities across academic disciplines.

While societal transformations refer to profound and enduring systemic changes that typically involve social, cultural, technological, political, economic and environmental processes. ScU2 action research methods focus on the co-production of knowledge and research problem formulation through the methodological innovation of placemaking.

ScU2 encourages the co-construction of knowledge through the participation and inclusion of stakeholders and community-based partners in all case studies. The novel arts-based a participatory action research method involves a complex negotiation of meanings and articulates multiple research purposes that include consciousness-raising, empowerment, emancipation and political agendas (Leavy 2009). By addressing participants’ embodied knowing and tacit understanding, these methods have a particular potential for transformation – which is increasingly used today in other contexts in the social world and the world of organizations and management as well (Sköldbort et al. 2015; MSU-LPI, 2016).

For example, joint performance and embodied interaction in a place were found to anchor it in jointly created ways within the social context and history and strengthen the community for the future (Biehl-Missal 2012). The inter-and transdisciplinary project proposal articulates a mix of different qualitative and quantitative methods used in sociology, social psychology, geography, architecture, urban history, media and communications studies, management and public administration.

### What is the *Urban Scénos* project?

Urban Scénos (US) is a project carried out by the collective ScU2<sup>3</sup> which has been developed for more than 15 years with collectives of artists’ partners in different cities of the world (Douala, Alexandria, Kinshasa, Johannesburg, Paris, St Denis of Reunion, Dakar, Port-au-Prince, Strasbourg ... ). It is a strategy to record and localize artistic practices in a city, open to artists of multiple horizons during a collective residence according to a principle of sustainable presence and immersion in an urban environment. It is through this « being there », inside a neighborhood, that much of the work of the artists is built upon. They are not asked to come with a project, but to think about it in interaction with the urban context and the population during the time of their stay, because it is almost impossible to imagine projects aboard without knowing the reality of the local context. Developing an urban creative space making project is the core concept

of the Urban Scénos process. Dynamic learning and shared creative process nourish the artistic process and create a real transformation of social relations together with the local inhabitants. Urban Scénos trusts that transforming social situations through US processes affects positively “ordinary” people’s attitudes and helps them be included in an artistic process developing and unfolding in their everyday life neighborhood.

Building on AbdouMaliq Simone’s concept of “People as infrastructure” (Simone 2004, 2008, 2010; Simone and Pieterse 2017; Duconseille, Lanquetin, and Malaquais 2016) and enlarging it to “infrastructure as physical urban infrastructure” (transportation, access to water, garbage disposals, sanitation systems), the Urban Scénos project is interested in the dynamics produced by people, the many ways in which the inhabitants shape the urban landscape: ordinary practices, theatricality, and performativity of everyday life, interactions between the built city and the uses that are made of it, flows, gestures, stories, exchanges, cultural, sociological, historical, body issues. It is through this wide palette that everyday life infuses and influences artistic projects.

The choice of cities and neighborhoods is based on the fact that artists who live there can develop their own projects. This organic relation with partners is necessary to successfully implement the US project. Without a real link with the local context it would be impossible to stay in a specific neighborhood where it takes place. The artistic residence is prepared and jointly implemented with the partners who focus on sharing the conditions of production (curatorship, research of funding, remuneration, preparation, etc.) and on making it apparent to the local inhabitants that the US project generates an economic contribution for the district and its citizens.

There are many local actors involved in the artistic residence, at different levels, whether by taking care in the logistical aspects (housing, food, and transportation, the realization of structures or objects) or by being directly involved in the implementation of collective art projects, as actor, assistant, or technician. This is how the invited artists are assisted in their multiple technical, administrative and other approaches by the local inhabitants who are paid by the production budget. These are often young people, members of local associations or artists themselves. On many occasions, the same young local actors take this opportunity to develop their own artistic productions and to convey to the local population the cultural vitality of their neighborhood. Part of the production budget is allocated to them to help them carry out their artistic projects. Artists or organizers accompany them during the time of the US project which becomes an opportunity for them to learn. This shared time of exchange and production is on many occasions a decisive moment for these participating emerging artists. It gives them the opportunity to assess what they thought until now was and what was not possible and to engage them concretely in local structures. Of the creative urban landscaping project. Urban Scénos is not only an artistic residence for confirmed artists but also a training and learning opportunity for young local artists.

Urban Scénos tries to build as much as possible a close relationship between the artists and the local inhabitants, working with them but also considering them as the first audience of the public presentation at the end of their artistic residency. The inhabitants are spectators of an event of contemporary creation and are often partly actors or facilitators. The art forms (shows, installations, films) created by the artists and implemented together with the local collective are not equal to the normal day-to-day reality

for the inhabitants even though the performances are in many ways close to their daily lives. They find also a real satisfaction in the recognition of their role and contribution during their artistic US process.

Urban Scénos poses the question is to how to work with the local community without prescribing what should be done by and with them. It also questions the logic and the places and forms of dissemination of the contemporary art creations since the “official” places (art gallery, museum, theater) are located in privileged areas of cities and are often inappropriate for real cultural exchange since they project a European conception of the “sphere of art” which is mostly cut from the rest of the society.

In order to illustrate more concretely the functioning of Urban Scénos, three examples are presented and discussed starting with two artistic residences in Africa; Douala in 2003 and Dakar in 2013. The last example is about an emerging project currently underway in the outlying districts of Strasbourg namely in La Meinau and Neuhof whose public presentation is scheduled for June 2019 (Mensah, Lanquetin, and Duconseille 2007).

### Three case examples of urban placemaking

#### *Douala/New Bell/2002–2003<sup>3</sup>*

##### *Start of the project*

The idea of Urban Scénos was born in 1999 during walks in the New Bell district of Douala where the five Cameroonian artists of Cercle Kapsiki were living and who worked with the French scenographer Jean-Christophe Lanquetin on a theater project. Following these visits in New Bell, the idea came about to develop a common artistic project in this area with the local inhabitants. It was the beginning of a three-year process which aimed to transform this idea into a real context. This long period of gestation was necessary to sort out various important questions (economic, cultural, historical, and relational). The main question was to create a relation between the foreign artistic visitors and the local partners and to find a way to question the colonial heritage, deconstruct the old beliefs and to change the traditional division of roles between people from the north and south. The first question was to build common knowledge and to find time to do that. The solution was to invite the five artists of the Cercle Kapsiki for a one year artistic residency in the scenography department of the Ecole Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs of Strasbourg. These artists are normally from a country without any art school. It was an opportunity to acquire basic academic knowledge and artistic skills. This period made it possible to create an urban scenario production and to shape and support the implementation of real shared artistic projects between people from the North and South (Dupray and Lanquetin 2003).

##### *Before the residency, preparation time, research of economic support, logistical organization ...*

The first step was to find an administrative structure that would be an official representation with potential institutional partners. The US actors decided to create a French association called Scénographie Urbaine & Cercle Kapsiki (ScUr<sup>o</sup>K) which explicitly named the sharing situation between us, and decided also to share all organizational, economic and artistic questions. As projects were created jointly by artists from the

South and the North, it was possible to access different sources of funding. There were many funding sources. Many of them could only make modest contributions<sup>4</sup> but all of these contributions together made it possible to launch the artistic residency and to invite 26 artists from different countries to stay 3 weeks in Douala. The total budget of the project was about 60,000e. Even though a limited budget, the community of artists was able to generate the right philosophy for the project and the appropriate political positioning of the project which were both important for the identity of the US project.

It was at this time that the main principles of the Urban Scénos project were defined:

- Taking the time to set up a project between partners and to develop preparatory exchanges
- Sharing with the partners all the organizational questions
- Strengthening open and unconstrained interactions between the 2 organizational collectives.
- Reaching out to populations by including them in the artistic process
- Developing the local economy by residing in the neighborhood, mostly with inhabitants (Figure 1)
- Organizing a public presentation at the end of the residency in the urban spaces and firstly in direction of the local population



Figure 1. Urban Scénos Douala, Ginette Daleu with young people of the district. Photo by F. Duconseille.



### *The residency*

The district of New Bell in Douala was chosen because it was the location of the Cercle Kapsiki around the family residence of Hervé Yamguen one of the artists of the collective. The central market of Douala is located there, as well as the main prison, which gave this neighborhood a bad name since it was considered as a very unstable place at the beginning of 2000. Before the arrival of foreign artists, the Cercle Kapsiki organized many meetings with the population and the main social and political actors of the district to inform them of the project and prepare it. They also solved a lot of logistical problems which made the artistic residency possible (accommodation, assistance, security, transportation, available technical facilities).

The early days of the artistic residence were marked by uncertainties and questions for the project actors and the inhabitants of the neighborhood. As organizers, the US teachers did not know how the artistic residency would develop, how the artists would evolve in this context, and whether they would be able to carry on projects. A decision was taken not to impose on the artists how the production should be conceived considering that their presence and the interactions with inhabitants during the three weeks on site could already constitute a form of success of the urban creative spacemaking project. In the end, it turned out that a Festival took place as expected and all the artists were able to present at least one project (Malaquais 2008).

The acceptance of the group of foreign artists by the local people took some time because the local inhabitants were worried that these artists – some being “whites” seemed to have nothing better to do than to live in their district where they were suffering from many shortcomings. The daily presence of the 26 resident artists on the spot allowed progressively to create links with the population, not only by the fact that they were lodged by the inhabitants but also because they added life, new meanings and generated income through the frequentation of the local bars, restaurants, and shops.

The presence of the artists generated income opportunities and created a very important symbolic and cultural effect. What at first was experienced as a suspicious presence of foreign and local artists turned into a valorization of the local inhabitants' existence and of their district which made them feel proud and appreciative. The neighborhood suffering of being “an invisible space” of poverty and instability, became valued as an urban place visited by art and culture aficionados living in the wealthy area of the city. The story turned out to be an advantage for New Bell. The Festival was a public success (Figure 2) and at the closing of the project some of the artistic productions was presented at the MAM Gallery installed in Bonanjo, a trendy area of Douala, where some inhabitants of New Bell came from who attended the opening.



Figure 2. Urban Scènes Douala, fashion show in a street of the neighbourhood. Photo by F. Duconseille.

#### *After the artistic residency, concrete sustainable effects for the neighborhood*

Following this project, the artists of Cercle Kapsiki rented space in the district to create the K Factory, active cultural center organizing exhibitions, meetings, and artist residencies. It was a sustainable and positive result for urban landscaping, social and cultural integration which has been a meaningful goal for the Urban Scènes project in view of the very modest objectives at the beginning.

One of the main concepts of the project consisted of deconstructing the colonial patterns still present both in Cameroon and in France. To do that, the key word was “horizontality” namely: 1- horizontality in regard to the methods of preparation and economy of the project with the Cameroonian partners, 2- horizontality by living in the neighborhood, developing links of proximity and economical sharing with the inhabitants (living in people’s houses, eat locally, work with them) 3- horizontality in the presentation of the final achievements, firstly to the inhabitants of the neighborhood. The validity of these 3 principles was verified during the artists’ residence and allowed to go beyond the initial objectives by showing many projects of artists interacting with the population. The final recognition expressed by the many people who came to attend the festival was very positive. The image of New Bell was transformed both for its inhabitants and for the rest of the population of Douala.

### *Dakar/Ouakam/2012–2013*

This project took place in Ouakam, a suburb of Dakar, by the contemporary dance company 1er Temps headed by Andreyra Ouamba. The choice of Ouakam as a place of the artistic residency was linked to the establishment of Cie 1er Temps, which developed a long-term project of contemporary dance with young people and inhabitants of this district.

Located west of the Dakar peninsula, Ouakam is a fishing village near the sea and a residential suburb that developed at the foot of the African Renaissance Monument. This location has a high symbolic value as an important engine of transforming a modest residential area into an area of strong property area attracting wealthy people because of the symbolic appeal of the neighborhood and its ideal location near the seaside.

In Ouakam, there were two territorial objectives that needed to be addressed. On the one hand, there is a fishing village with narrow, tangled streets and passages and on the other hand there is a new districts with new expensive building and a gentrification by wealthier persons having move to the area. Infrastructure in this context of urban transformation is not simply development of new and more expensive buildings but also ensuring tension between the original inhabitants and the new and wealthier city dwellers affecting the way of living of the community. An objective of the artistic residency through the presence of dancers, performers, visual artists was to see what the inhabitants of the mixed community are paying attention to and how they shape their city, what solutions they are coming up with to solve the tensions and how they try to create solutions acceptable to both kinds of inhabitants- those of the fishing village versus those living in the new fancy buildings.

This artistic residency took place 10 years after the Douala Urban Scénos and resulted in a further deepening of the ScU2 concept after four other Urban Scénos residencies were organized in other locations resulting in improving the ScU2 relation the local neighborhood within which the artists lived and worked during their residency. To attract the attention to the neighborhood, the ScU2 team invited Bitcaves with its collective of two graphic designer groups from Amsterdam who were interested to work within social contexts such as the one of Ouakam.

This project aimed to harness the numerous links that existed between the team of Urban Scénos and the inhabitants of Ouakam which helped the local populations better understand the ScU2 project. The ScU2 team collaborated with “Ouakam Announces”, a local newspaper with classified ads which provided the local population with personal, associative, professional, and commercial information and added information about the presentations of the artists and of their projects including information about the program of the ScU2 festival. Printed by the local daily newspaper *Le Soleil*, “Ouakam Announces” was distributed to the population in 10,000 copies (Figure 3). It had a wide circulation in the larger local area which was a very useful tool to spread the news about the ScU2 project and its artistic festival and gave the local community a sense of ownership of the project and a feeling of being recognized as an actor since the festival performance took place in their neighborhood (Figure 4).



Figure 3. Urban Scènes Dakar, Bitcaves, people with *Ouakam Announces*. Photo by F. Duconseille.



Figure 4. Urban Scènes Dakar, Boyzie Cekwana and local dancers. Photo by F. Duconseille.

For this fifth residence of Urban Scènes, the ambition was both to reinforce the artistic features and objectives of the ScU2 project and at the same time the documentation helped explain to the local population the activities of the artists and their link to the local community. In this sense, the publication “Ouakam Announces” valorized the whole community since inhabitants felt included in the project whatever social status they had.

*Economic support, logistical organization ...*

Like the previous projects (Douala, Alexandria, Kinshasa, Johannesburg), there were many financial sponsors who contributed funds even at times with modest sums of

money.<sup>5</sup> All the contributions combined made it possible to launch the residency and to invite 27 artists from different countries to stay four weeks in Dakar. The previous budget of the ScU2 project was 143,000 e had to be reduced to 65,500 e for several reasons, one of them was the consequences of the 2008 financial crisis. The project was maintained and implemented by cutting in the salaries of all organizers, in fact, the staff worked for free to save the project.

### *Concrete sustainable impact for the neighborhood after the completion of the project*

In March 2018, the project was inaugurated in Ouakam the House of Urban Cultures (MCU), a place where people could receive technical and administrative training and develop different artistic and cultural projects.

### *Strasbourg/Meinau - Neuhof/extra ordinaire/2018–2019*

This new project for which preparations began in the fall of 2017 is the result of the Urban Scénos Dakar/Ouakam. The Director of Pôle Sud CDCN, came to attend the final project presentations in January 2013 in Dakar, then invited the ScU2 team to set up of a similar project in the district of La Meinau in Strasbourg where the director's theater is located. Subsequently, Espace Django located in Neuhof, a district just besides La Meinau and the Haute Ecole des Arts du Rhin (HEAR), joined the project via the research program *Play > Urban* (Boskowitz, Duconseille, and Lanquetin 2018).

This is the first time that a residence Urban Scénos is being implemented in France, something that the organizers had planned to do in 2010 in Paris in the district of Belleville but due to lack of financial resources and administrative organization, the initial project for Paris was transformed into a "Virtual Residency" through the publication of a book of fictional projects of the artists in this Parisian neighborhood (Duconseille et al. 2012).

The challenge of the project is to achieve a real rootedness in this urban territory on the edge of Strasbourg where members of the ScU2 team were teaching at the Art and Design School located in the center of Strasbourg. To accomplish this objective, the team had to prepare for two years the project with the different partners by developing a set of activities in cooperation with the local inhabitants, community associations and also with students of the scenography department. The link with the associations in the neighborhood is key for the success of the project and six persons of these organizations are involved in delivering the social and cultural missions of the project and communicate them to the local inhabitants.

The dynamics of two artistic residencies and the lasting relationship formed the basis for the singularity of Urban Scénos in Strasbourg. It is not considered just as an event but as process that unfolds over time and will continue after June 2019. The objective of the project is to create links between different parts of the city that do not much interact with each other because their links are weak if not non-existent which is a common urban problem in Europe between the center and the periphery of an urban center.

Since its origin, the challenge of Urban Scénos, has been to facilitate a successful reaching out to local audiences by the participating artists. It is not the intention of ScU2 to turn the inhabitants into spectators of the project artists' work, but rather to make them be involved as concerned witness. The ScU2 team is claiming that artistic creation can solve all urban problems but rather that artistic dynamics carefully constructed and in collaboration with a set of relational design decisions (social, economic, etc.) can contribute to social bonding. ScU2 tries to thwart fractures and invisible borders that cross cities, people, and urban territories. Since the start of this project, the reactions of the local people are positive indicating an interest and motivation to be part of this participation oriented project of emerging public art.

This new project is being carried out based on objectives similar to those previously developed in cities of the "South." It is always a challenge to reach out to a local population to understand the modes of representation of their lives and of their neighborhood and to produce an appreciation and sense of increased self-esteem of the inhabitants themselves. If the scope of the project will be extended to other parts of the city, the questions that arises is whether the project will have to be adapted to cope with the more complex social and cultural context of the outer districts of Strasbourg.

The major challenge of this project is to bring back missing and lost social links to the local community through an associative structures that can preserve at least the inter-individual relations between inhabitants. The team does not know at the moment if the project is extended to other districts whether it will succeed in landscaping these additional neighborhoods and at what scale this can be done. What is clear is that it will take time to develop a project of this size and scope that can transform the image people have of themselves and to act on the habitat and the urban landscape so that people stop feeling that they live at the margins of their society. This extended ScU2 project will be done through a larger scale consisting of a multitude of cultural and artistic initiatives that will go beyond standard passive art consumption.

## Discussion and future research

In contrast to conventional urban place making, Creative Placemaking introduces a factor of spontaneity typical of art performances which can lead to new perceptions of the environment and of the roles of communities. Conventional urban place making on the other hand often generates new ideas as to how public space could be used and be more socially owned by the communities neighboring new urban spaces but the new urban spaces run the risk of becoming a new norm – even if only informal not legally binding- if such new urban space arrangement are not continuously reactivated through community participation and questioning of the new rules that govern the urban space. The question then arises as to how local creative spacemaking projects be scaled up while at the same time ensuring sustainability of success over time?

Creative Placemaking involves more punctual efforts and participation by the social art-making actors-experts who invest themselves fully during the time of a creative place making event as described in the three case examples in this article. The challenge can be the sustainability of the creativity generated by creative place making projects. The

dependence on external facilitator-artists can lead to misinterpretations as to what causes the new spatial and social arrangements of urban life devoid of social cohesion

The important question is how much of the creative process is dependent on external inputs by facilitators who might not be considered representative of the community at large versus creative processes created locally by the members of the community François Matarasso and Charles Landry (1999) pondered the question of causality of art in community settings in their publication titled *Balancing act: Twenty-one strategic dilemmas in cultural policy*. The *Urban Scénos* team involves local artists and community members as much as feasible to avoid a situation where the local creative process is too much dependent on the external facilitators. A solution could be to invite more local participation to create space making interventions that could be generate more sustainability.

Another issue that deserves to be discussed is the degree of influence of the political context within which creative space making takes place. Every community is embedded in a larger socio-political context which can cause tension with the authorities or power holders locally or residing at provincial and state level (Rut and Davies 2018).

If creative space making events generate political messages either openly or as part of the subtext of artistic action, authorities might intervene causing subsequently conflicts with the community that are partaking in creative spacing making events. On the other hand, a successful creative space making vent might lead to new initiatives leading to new entrepreneurial activities that are beneficial for the community and for the larger territorial space. The first two case examples narrated above describe forms of creative space making which can result in entrepreneurial initiatives that can become part of a longer lasting, hence more sustainable, benefit for the community.

## Conclusions

This article discussed the impact of interactions between innovations, niche based self-organization and larger political factors of creative spacemaking projects and used the three examples to ponder what organizational structures are most effective to ensure the emergence of sustained social creativity- social enterprise, cooperatives, private enterprise through creative spacemaking projects.

The three examples given described how political conflicts of creative spacemaking projects can be resolved in an effective and efficient manner through for instance sharing of resources, creative ideas and environmental-cultural formal and informal rules and norms and through effective Interactions between foreign and local actors in spacemaking projects

This article also escribed a further development of creative and inclusive urban spacemaking namely the approach called *Urban Scénos* carried by the artistic collective ScU2.

*Urban Scénos* encourages the co-construction of knowledge through the participation and inclusion of stakeholders and community-based partners. Three concrete examples are presented which describe the novel approach to urban spacemaking through the means of artistic production in close cooperation with urban communities within which groups of artists live and work.

The third example of *Urban Scénos* described in this article points to future development of urban spacemaking such as expanding the focus of artistic and participatory from a single community to several urban communities thereby connecting urban areas that are not interacting with each other sufficiently.

Complementing such an enlarged scope of *Urban Scénos*, social media and various forms of IT methods can be used to create complementary virtual interactions in addition to the people based interactions between the artists and the respective host communities.

## Notes

1. Cited definition provided in first paragraph of by Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Placemaking>
2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action\\_research](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_research), accessed 21 April 2019
3. <http://urbanscenos.org>; <http://urbanscenos.org/?portfolio=douala>
4. (Institut Français / Africalia / DRAC Alsace (French Ministry of Culture) / City of Strasbourg / and by : Association Michèle Douala / French Cultural Center of Douala and Kinshasa / Collectif 12 Mantes la Jolie / Culture Commune Loos en Gohelle / Ebene Douala / Ecole Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs of Strasbourg / Foundation Ford Cairo and Nairobi / MTN Cameroun / Galerie MAM Douala / Goethe Institut Yaoundé / Ministry of Culture Cameroun / PMUC Cameroun / Procolor Douala / Studios Kabako Kinshasa / Syndicat Potentiel Strasbourg / TACT Douala / City of Douala / Young Arab Theater Fund)
5. Institut Français -Paris, Sénégal, Afrique du Sud, Brazzaville, Douala, the Goethe Institute -Johannesburg and Dakar, the Pôle Sud theater - Strasbourg; with the support of: OIF, Region of la Réunion, the City of Dakar, the city council of Ouakam, the City of Strasbourg, the Maillon theater - Strasbourg, agnès.b Founds, Spark & Africa Center, mobiCINE - Dakar, CIDOP -Dakar)

## ORCID

François Duconseille  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3148-1612>

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