

# Open Social Spaces in Gdynia



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## Introduction

The review of Open Social Spaces (OSS) in Gdynia was initiated during the meeting of the UBC Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission held on June 9-10<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Persons involved in the activities of the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) on the part of Gdynia deemed that a good method of collecting information on this subject would be to organise a seminar with the participation of representatives of institutions and entities involved in the life of the city of Gdynia to a varying degree. The meeting was attended by 20 people, among them were representatives of cultural, science and non-governmental institutions, the city's organisational units, responsible for urban and spatial planning, social assistance, social innovation, business, and security. The seminar was held at the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. The meeting's agenda included a discussion on the definition of open social space as well as its role and meaning in an urban setting. An attempt was also made to identify factors supporting the development of and constituting a barrier for OSS.

This report constitutes a summary of materials developed at the seminar and additional thoughts on the subject. It also attempts to indicate open social spaces operating in Gdynia and briefly describe them. The material describing the examples of open social spaces in Gdynia was consulted and accepted by individuals involved in conducting those initiatives.

The document is not a methodologically structured monograph. It is rather a collection of statements, analyses and conclusions reached by individuals engaged in analysing and discussing the subject of open social spaces in Gdynia. The report constitutes part of the implementation of the action plan developed by the Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission for the years 2015 and 2016. It is the Commission members' intention that reports from individual member cities be a canvas to establish and develop relations and partnerships resulting in the exchange of knowledge, experiences and, perhaps, project initiatives.

Both the Commission meeting held in June and the seminar held in October were animated by an expert in social development, Mr. Piotr Wołkowiński, who shared his thoughts on the matter...

*Open social spaces operate on the foundations of highly varying social relations based on the principles of reciprocity and various methods of "exchanging" social capital. Although it is said that they have to be defined, they are in fact dependent on the moment, actions, and mutual plans and intentions. Nonetheless, there are many moments when a resident fails to realise the formal status of a given space and may feel free in a space that is in fact private, or sometimes may not have access to a public space of which he is a "co-owner". However, open public spaces provide an opportunity for networking, unusual meetings, joint initiatives, and to learn about codependence: using a street requires respecting certain rules, whereas yet different rules have to be followed in a public library, in a theatre or in a club for residents.*

*The most important aspect of the meeting were exchanges between various people maintaining open public spaces, who realised the richness of those spaces and their great diversity.*

We would like to invite you to read the material, while remaining convinced in our beliefs that we are directing your attention to very important issues that lie at the foundations of building a smart policy of urban space management and civic development.

## Chapter 1

### Open social space – what is it?

Space means a specific place, determined by its area and what is located on it. Space means, in the first place, something physical, e.g. a square, a plaza, a lawn, a field. Space also means facilities, rooms, halls – an indoor area. Spaces also take the form of places in the virtual world, e.g. on a website, places created by software supporting Internet communities, such as Facebook. Blogs, discussion forums, galleries also count as virtual spaces. A space becomes a social space when it starts to become filled with human activity. Activity that helps establish relations and connections, both with its elements and between people. A space becomes social space when it serves humans in some way, when it satisfies their needs, when it is given characteristics that make it developed, adapted, when it is suited to serve a social function. **Open social space is a particular social phenomenon consisting in appropriating, developing and using a place, time and emerging relations to satisfy people's vital needs.**

### About the openness of social space

Social space becomes open when access to it is not difficult, purposely limited, dangerous. **In order for a space to become a social and open space, its adaptation, development and use cannot take place on a forced basis**, and the form of such place should not be determined fully and in advance by institutions. The openness of social space also depends on respecting the rhythm with which it is adapted, developed and used, as determined by people who occupy it. A certain **dilemma arises as regards balancing what is imposed on the space from outside with what emerges naturally, on a grassroots basis**. It seems that it is important to find an equilibrium between the external animation of such places and initiatives of people who comprise social spaces in a competitive manner.

It is interesting that a space, **a place, can be open to various degrees and at various times**. There are places, which by principle maintain their openness during their functioning, there are also those, which only open for a limited time. The openness of a space is also determined by the subject matter that fills it. The wider the possibility of activity and the more topics may that be explored in a given place, the more open the space becomes. The openness of a space is also determined by the imposed or determined financial participation. The more you have to pay to function in a given space, the more this space becomes elite, thus becoming closed off and inaccessible. The level of required financial participation is an important element that shapes the openness of social space. Another element that strongly influences the openness of social space is how well transport connections with other parts of the city are developed. The easier it is to reach a given place, e.g. by car or on foot, the more accessible and open it becomes.

**Closed spaces can, through their functioning support the creation and functioning of socially open spaces.** Such a situation can occur, when the legal system defines the specificities in which certain institutions function, which are also created with social aims. The law can indicate the aims of such institutions (eg. integration in the job market), social groups (with exactly defined profiles), or the definition of the task to be accomplished. Realistically, spaces in which potential open space can be used in such an institution are not numerous. This does not mean, that such institutions cannot gain from and support open spaces. By delegating tasks, contracting out concrete

services to structures, which have open spaces, they can support them, and profit from their added value for their own clients.

### **Attractiveness, attraction. Freedom, autonomy, frameworks, standards and restrictions**

#### **What funds social space is the general concept, idea for a place and how to develop it.**

When such idea proves attractive, it automatically becomes the initial signal that attracts its future users. However, when the general idea, framework, starts to turn into externally dictated content, the social space is being robbed of the inherent elements that it requires to function, that is freedom, autonomy and the possibility of satisfying the need for creation. The dilemma whether to standardise or plan such social spaces or leave them to be shaped by uninhibited processes, a sort of improvisation, is very closely related to this issue. This dilemma intensifies when a given social space is financially supported from public sources, the local government's budget, under government programmes or from the EU structural funds. **It's a significant challenge to structure control at such a level and plan it in such a way, so that it gives certainty that public funds are used appropriately, while not inhibiting,** excessively restricting and bureaucratising the natural process that is the acquisition and development of social spaces.

Social space becomes filled with life and relations when it has something that attracts people, something that is attractive to people. As stated above, the initial element that attracts people to a given space is the general concept, the idea how to develop it. It may be a number of prominent personalities making an appearance at a given place or charismatic leaders active on a given territory, in a specific space. People with unique talents or skills may also attract other people to the social space. Open social space may also be viewed as attractive when it offers a possibility of deciding on the level of anonymity or involvement which the participant in such a social space wishes to maintain. Each person establishing relations in a social space has a unique temperament and an individual level of social competencies. For these reasons, the possibility of maintaining a safe distance to what is happening in the open space and, at the same time, having the option to become fully engaged from the very beginning, offered by a given space, may be something very attractive and valuable to many people. A magnet that attracts people may also be something elusive, something that you cannot quite put your finger on – a certain climate, atmosphere being received as something unique, something that has to be experienced, that cannot be described.

### **Adaptation, development and use of social spaces**

The adaptation of social space consists in the introduction of individual, unique elements to a given place, the conferment of characteristics on a space by specific persons. It may take place, e.g., by giving the space a specific physical form, colour, decorations, placing personal equipment in the space or organising it in a manner that suits individual preferences. Social space is given individualised form and adapted by way of a compromise – the preferences of one person clash with the preferences of another, one group adapts a space in the neighbourhood of or together with another group. There is a need for unique dialogue to maintain the balance between what is individual, private, and what is social, shared by the group.

## Change and stability of open social spaces

**Open social space changes in response to the change in people who comprise it.** People grow, get rich, satisfy their needs, aspirations, interests. Some cease to be present in a given space, while other people show up and start visiting it regularly. The turnover of people and evolution of relations change the social space to some degree on a constant basis. The conditions (e.g. physical conditions) that have impact on what the social space looks like are also subject to change. Buildings, plazas, squares deteriorate and are renovated, redeveloped and decorated in various ways. Fashion trends appear and disappear, accompanied by more intensive interest in particular types of social spaces and activities they offer.

Apart from its variability, open social space also has elements that are constant, or at least are not so easily changed. These elements comprise the local dimension of social culture, built and developed for decades. It entails a particular way in which people function and behave socially that is specific to a given region, municipality, and sometimes even city. Each place in the local dimension has its own dialect, a unique method of communication. Local history and identity provides a given space with a unique narrative, a story that determines people's attitude towards this space. In the case of Gdynia, this history and narrative is related to the proximity to the sea, the history of a village that in a short time became a major port in Poland and Europe. This narrative has room for facts and myths, stories that have not been historically proven. The history and social identity of this place entails a certain hierarchy of values shared by most people living in a given community. When referring to a larger population, all these aspects, built and developed over a long period of time, constitute a kind of a constant, a point of reference.

## Management of open social spaces

A number of interesting issues and dilemmas appears also with regard to the management of social spaces. How to organise a given space so that it does not develop a destructive or threatening element? How to organise social spaces so as to facilitate access to them and provide support in fully utilising what the open space has to offer. Should a given space have a permanent caretaker? How should the caretaker be selected? Should the caretaker receive compensation? Should social space be supported with public subsidies for basic expenditures (if yes, should the amount of subsidy be fixed throughout the entire period of its activity/operation)?

The management of open social spaces largely entails understanding and appropriate reactivity to the dynamics of the group process, and mastering the method of organising local communities. Getting people who want to get involved in creating a social space in touch with each other, integration, maintaining relations, conflict management, mediations, entering into group contracts – all these terms are at the centre of competent maintenance of open social space. Another area of proper social space management is building local social capital based on local leaders and widely understood local resources. It is also necessary to ensure the material dimension of a specific social space. Combining the shaping and development of the social process with specific tasks related to the material diligence over the space being used may bring good results.

## Values in open social spaces

The idea of open social space entails important values, such as respect for human dignity, tolerance, respect for the opinions of others, equality in access to the socially important good, autonomy, self-governance, solidarity, right to participate, responsibility for yourself and the community, trust. When subjected to a debate and implemented in an appropriate manner, all these values give social space a proper climate that facilitates growth, creativity and security. Sharing values and acting in their spirit provides for an opportunity to fully satisfy the vital needs of both individuals and the community. The need to feel important, valued, to feel “togetherness”, to have a feeling of achievement and influence over our surroundings. Open social spaces that respect the widely understood humanitarian values also facilitate building personal identity. The lack of threats, mechanisms of stigmatisation or discrimination allows to fully accept ones roots and stimulates the motivation to share the wealth of traditions, experiences, knowledge and skills. The idea of open social spaces also entails the value of reclaiming anonymous spaces, undeveloped space or neglected space. There are many such places in the city, forgotten by everyone, but which may come to life once again, regain their potential and serve good purposes. As regards the area of urban activity, the idea of open social spaces encourages undertaking efforts to design urban spaces for equality, for open and unrestricted access.

## Threats and risks

The functioning of open social spaces within local communities entails many benefits, phenomenons that bring about good results. Open social space designed in the manner presented above fills its area with content and activity in a dynamic and spontaneous manner. Such a situation nearly automatically causes the possibility of something that is unfavourable, threatening and risky appearing next to something that is beneficial and encouraging. Firstly, when a decision to animate open social space is made, e.g. by local authorities, a unique dialogue with people invited to such space or encouraged to get involved in its development is initiated. **Dialogue, exchange of communications and information creates expectations on both sides.** Waiting for and maintaining dialogue when it is not met with an answer, when it is being stalled, when it is not satisfied with diligence over adequacy, may give rise to frustration. **Frustration that remains unresolved and not properly explained by the parties is a destructive force that has a very negative potential that strongly influences group and social processes.**

Another threat that may be identified is the appropriation of social space by one group or person. Such appropriation may consist in gradually exerting pressure on subsequent aspects of the way in which the social space operates (when it is open, how it is developed, who does it serve and what is its purpose, or other aspects of access to the space – whether it is accessible free of charge or against payment, or whether it requires a different kind of contribution) and organising its operation in a way suited only to a given group or person, without having regard to the needs of others. **The appropriation of space and excessive domination offsets the values of dialogue and compromise, and deprives social space of its openness. Space appropriated by a single group or person becomes an elite space and thus serves only the select members, rather than the local community as a whole.** Another quite obvious threat that may appear during the operation of open social spaces is the purposeful devastation or theft of publicly available items of equipment featured

in a given space. There may simply occur a violation of the lawful order, and not only in the physical/material sphere.

A quite obvious threat to open special spaces and processes that take place there is also the risk of getting stuck in well-worn activities, organisational methods, and the same way of thinking about a given space. **When dynamics decline, when the pulse of social space weakens (there are less interesting ideas, events, important moments that integrate people comprising the space), the space may cease to function or become deserted.**

The outlined list of threats and risks related to the opening and operation of social spaces is non-exhaustive. There are more factors that may have an adverse effect on its operations, but it seems that the potential benefits of open spaces are so substantial that it is worth the challenge. A good understanding of the phenomenon of open social spaces, competent maintenance and support of processes that take place there and good monitoring of such places provide good opportunities to minimize the threats.

### Functions of open social spaces

The basic function of open social spaces is to satisfy the realisation and satisfaction of needs by persons and groups within the community that comprise and use them. Therefore, needs are satisfied both on the individual and community level (as described in more detail above). Open social spaces are also a perfect place for networking. Building relations and meeting new people serves to build connections between organisations, institutions and enterprises. When properly maintained, such connections allow for the exchange of resources and to mutually support and harmonise the activity of entities. It is also obvious that open social space is a place suitable to satisfy personal interests. A good example of this function is the barter exchange (e.g. when mothers exchange children's clothes and no longer used toys at a community centre). On the one hand, closets are emptied from superfluous clothing, while on the other mothers gain the clothing they require free of charge. Such exchange may occur in many forms. An interesting function from the point of view of professionals dealing with social processes is observation. Open social spaces may be a perfect place to carry out social research in neighbourhoods and local communities; they may also be a perfect place to monitor the condition of local communities. The function of an observatory enables the collection of very valuable information that, when properly analysed, may serve to develop plans aimed at supporting local communities and may be very useful in developing action programmes or even urban strategies. However, the most basic function that open social space may serve (as regards physical spaces) is to give people a place to meet face to face, in real life, directly. In the age of virtual social life, such a function becomes increasingly more valuable and it is worth undertaking efforts to ensure that places where we function have as many of such spaces as possible. As regards to the characteristics and values of open social spaces, they may also become a place suitable to engage in various types of dialogue (e.g. on plans to improve living conditions in the neighbourhood, on the quality of social services in the city, or on controversial and difficult topics, such as the issue of reintegration of people who suffer from various psychological crises stemming from homelessness, or the integration of refugees, for example). Sometimes when we deal with crisis situations, the animation of the function consisting in building dialogue becomes a necessity, because where there is no dialogue, indifference, stereotypes and aggression begin to take root. On the other hand, dialogue is honest and genuine, when it is not forced, when the situation and

space in which the meeting is held provides an opportunity to engage in dialogue. The issue of mediation is closely related to the function consisting in providing a place for dialogue.

Open social spaces may also prove to be an invaluable resource with regard to the processes related to the regeneration of cities, urban planning, building a smart urban policy based on the participation of residents in the planning and implementation of important projects.

As shown in the cursory analysis of the idea of open social spaces, they may prove to be an incredible resources and a very useful tool, and they may provide an opportunity to return to the former dimension of the so-called third places<sup>1</sup> and rebuild the initial dimension of interpersonal relations. Open social spaces are also a phenomenon that requires attention, due diligence and a competent approach to its animation. Otherwise, open social space may become a threat and have socially negative effects. Full participation in open social spaces requires growth. It is necessary to educate the society as to what such place may be and how to utilise them, so that they last for a long time and serve many people. The culture of having respect for the public good is a value that develops in communities slowly over time, which is why its understanding is taught to children from a very young age. All information presented in the above analysis leads to the conclusion that **the openness of cities is measured by the number and quality of open social spaces.**

*The chapter was elaborated on the basis of materials from workshops held on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 in the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia, attended by representatives of open social spaces in Gdynia.*

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<sup>1</sup> In the community building methodology third place (or third space) is located in social surroundings and it differs from other two places, i.e. a home (first place) and a work place (second place). Good examples of the third places are cafés, clubs, hairdressers or public laundries. See more: <http://www.embracetheplace.com/wp-content/themes/EtP%20Theme/docs/3thirdplaces.pdf> or <http://plannersweb.com/1997/01/our-vanishing-third-places/>

## Chapter 2

### What facilitates, inhibits, prevents the functioning of open social spaces?

Open social spaces do not develop on their own, they always require **HUMAN** thought, a **HUMAN** hand, a **HUMAN** presence. There is also something less tangible – *an atmosphere, a conducive environment* in which those spaces have a chance to form and develop.

### What conditions, circumstances facilitate the formation of open social spaces?

For an open social space to be created, a **GOOD CLIMATE is required**. In general, this **GOOD CLIMATE** is comprised of **openness, understanding and support of authorities** for such kinds of initiatives, as well as a certain level of **maturity** of **residents** themselves, expressed through their **activity** in creating **small communities**. Therefore, it requires an **awareness** that shapes the social attitude towards OSS, reflected in the global idea for the city.

**Open social space** needs a **local** leader, who as the host will initiate the process of forming an open social space and invite the local community to participate. Such spaces should be **attractive**, and the idea for their creation should meet the needs and provide for an opportunity to **participate in the decision-making process and build relations**. Therefore, a key to the process of creating such places is communication, expressed at first through an invitation to engage in dialogue, as early as on the stage of preparing the **spatial development plan**, while on subsequent stages – through an open dialogue that builds trust, social bonds and **allows small communities to grow in strength**.

The circumstance that favour the involvement of the community in such kind of initiatives is their **grassroots nature, openness to change**, understood as readiness to pursue new needs, both those of individuals and the community, and **efficient animation activities that take into consideration the group and its surroundings**, leading to the effective building of connections between people and the space and its elements.

A favourable condition, but not absolutely necessary to form an OSS, is ensuring **access to financing**. It seems that while the formula of “outdoor” space, where there is only the space and humans, does not require any additional funds, the further we move towards indoors, the more formal the spaces, the more elements there are that require financing.

Resources that supplement OSS and facilitate its creation are elements that constitute part of the **landscape and nature in a given area, conducive infrastructure and network of transport connections** (accessibility, proximity to stops), and **elements of urban small infrastructure**, e.g. benches, bike stands, etc.

### What conditions inhibit the formation of OSS?

**The lack of grassroots civic movements** and presence of **stereotype thinking** in the community are relevant factors that inhibit the creation of OSS. As an important element of social culture and social capital, grassroots civic movements stimulate the formation of a positive climate and encourage other community members to become active. Stereotype thinking, on the other hand, in particular in regard to social groups (current example – refugees), does not build trust and social bonds, which may lead to the gradual **isolation** and building of **physical and mental walls**.

Places which, due to their intended use or function, are utilised by a social group characterised by **large migrations** have difficulties as regards building their own identity, which means that social bonds in such a temporary community are short-lived. An important moment for such spaces may be the moment of welcoming new persons, organised in such a way, that they feel safe.

A **strong conflict of interest** existing in a given area may also prove to be a significant barrier to the formation of OSS. A conflict can be provoked by differing opinions about the local development plan between the local authority and residents. A conflict of interests may also concern the feeling that the residents may have, that their privacy and calm are threatened, for example when a plot of land standing empty for a long time finds a new use. However, it would seem that it is the open social space that might serve as a meeting place, a place for dialogue aiming to resolve the conflict.

Conditions inhibiting or limiting the possibility of using OSS may also be the **seasonal nature of open spaces**, related to the specific climate conditions and **low level of financing** earmarked for social initiatives.

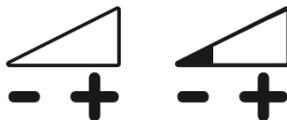
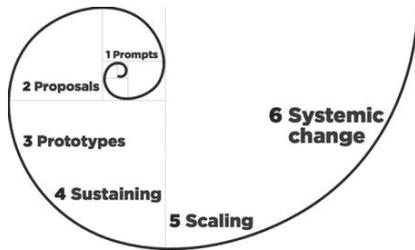
### **What is the bare minimum required to form an OSS?**

The availability of **SPACE** is a basic condition necessary in order for a given place to become an **OPEN SOCIAL SPACE**. If such space is **appropriated, intended for commercial use** or under the **“dictate” of a public function**, it loses its social and open nature. It is important that the subject of OPEN SOCIAL SPACES should have a key role in the social policy of a city, as well as in the consciousness and initiatives of citizens.

*The chapter was elaborated on the basis of materials from workshops held on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 in the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia, attended by representatives of open social spaces in Gdynia.*

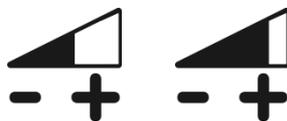
## Chapter 3

Pictograms – legend:



pic. I

pic. II



pic. III

pic. IV



pic. V

Social innovation spiral – defines stages in the development of an innovative service, method, tool. The spiral schematically represents the process that starts with a prompt, a first thought, an idea for change, and ends with permanent, systemic change.

The development stages include:

- 1) prompts (the stage where ideas, inspirations, assessments are generated),
- 2) proposals (design stage)
- 3) prototypes (testing and improvement stage)
- 4) sustaining (implementation stage where conditions for implementation are ensured)
- 5) scaling (stage consisting in increasing access to innovations and diffusing new solutions on a wide scale)
- 6) systemic change (stage where solutions are integrated and consolidated on a wide scale)

Red dot indicates a development stage on social innovation spiral of each OSS.

Defines the openness of space based on the diversity of groups that may actually use it and find an offer best suited to their needs.

Defines the type of open space:

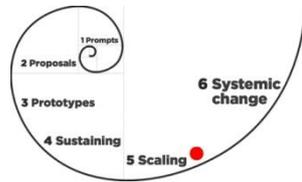
- 1) outdoor / open-air
- 2) indoor / enclosed
- 3) virtual

Defines the conditions of access to the open space according to the following criteria (dichotomous scale – YES / 1 point; NO / 0 points):

- 1) the space can be accessed by a broad range of users
- 2) the space does not limit activity and participation due to topics and issues proposed by or to users
- 3) the space can be used free of charge or for a token amount, or most of the available offer is gratuitous in nature
- 4) access to the space is characterised by no formal requirements or a small number thereof
- 5) the space is characterised by unlimited physical access ("open doors", no access codes, magnetic cards, architectural barriers)
- 6) hours during which the space can be accessed are tailored to the identified and reported needs of users
- 7) the space can be easily reached by car, on foot
- 8) the space ensures safety
- 9) the space is used mainly to establish contacts or build interpersonal relations
- 10) it is possible to develop and organise the space in a manner suited to the users' needs

The sum of obtained points is defined by the pictogram: 0-2 pts - No. I; 3-4 pts - No. II; 5-6 pts - No. III; 7-8 pts - No. IV; 9-10 pts - No. V

# 1



**Name:** Wymiennikownia [*Exchanger; formal: the Heat Exchange Plant*] – Youth Centre for Social Innovation and Design

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** Kartuska Street 20b, Gdynia – Chylonia. A building that formerly served the function of a heat exchange plant, renovated and commissioned in October 2014. Users have two storeys with a total area of 300 m<sup>2</sup> at their disposal.

**What does it offer:** workshops for youths from all over the city, events, alternative leisure activities, space to implement ideas, meet new people, have meetings (also independently from the schedule), thematic workshops for schools in such fields as disabilities, entrepreneurship, promotion of a healthy lifestyle or building soft competencies, socially sensitive film screenings; the venue is also made available as a meeting space for organisations promoting youth activity

**For whom is it intended:** the space is dedicated to youths aged 13-25, schools and non-governmental organisations promoting youth activity

**By whom is it managed:** The Social Innovation Department at the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia – the city's organisational unit

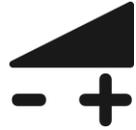
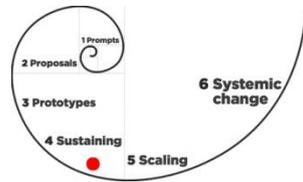
**Access conditions:** free access, Monday through Friday and selected Saturdays; until 4 p.m. the space is dedicated in particular to workshops conducted as part of school activities and activities carried out by non-governmental organisations promoting youth activity, while in the afternoon – from 16.00 to 21.00 – it is made available to youths; certain event cycles are accessible against payment of a token amount, so as to ensure sufficient attendance

**Financing:** budget from the city of Gdynia and fees paid by participants of certain event cycles

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** The youth creativity centre, referred to as the youth branch of the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia. The main purpose of Wymiennikownia is to support grassroots initiatives and provide assistance in the implementation of ideas enabling youths to share their interests, pursue their passions or simply spend time in an interesting way. The schedule of activities and workshops held at Wymiennikownia is maintained on an ongoing basis, as projects are submitted by active, young residents of Gdynia. The essence of this venue is that participants have a real impact on its operation – they decide what activities to participate in and help to organise them themselves. Also the space itself was designed by young persons, together with professional, on the basis of their own ideas concerning the space and the actions which should take place inside. In Wymiennikownia, youths are the caretaker, which means that they not only use the venue, but also take the initiative – from proposing and organising activities to conducting them by themselves. Apart from dedicated activities, the venue can also be a place to meet with friends, study or relax. The venue serves educational and animation purposes - it organises morning school activities, socially sensitive film screenings, meetings of organisations and various events.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of approximately 400 participants per month, an average of approximately 1,000 participants per year

# 2



**Name:** tuBAZA

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** Kolibki Park, Zwycięstwa Street 291, Gdynia – Orłowo. Project implemented on the Gdynia Kolibki Manor and Landscape Complex grounds, in 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings entered into the register of monuments. The main location is the former hippotherapy building (workshop studios), although some dedicated events are also organised in the stables and carriage house building (concert space) or the lungeing pen (exhibition space). In the future, it is planned to adapt the manor, old forge, brewery and glasshouse to serve, among others, as art studios, a gallery and a coffee house. The park space of Kolibki is used for art purposes as well, but it is also utilised for city events, including those not related to the centre. tuBaza began operation in October 2013, developing the unused urban space for several years.

**What does it offer:** workshops in the fields of architecture, technology, design, urban art and environmental protection; studios, extramural activities, exhibits, film screenings, meetings and other cultural events

**For whom is it intended:** a wide consumer base – various types of events organised at the Complex are aimed at both children and adults, individuals and organised groups

**By whom is it managed:** Fab Lab Trójmiasto [*the Tri-City Fab Lab*], Fundacja Architektura Plus [*the Architecture Plus Foundation*], Stowarzyszenie Traffic Design [*the Traffic Design Association*] and the City of Gdynia

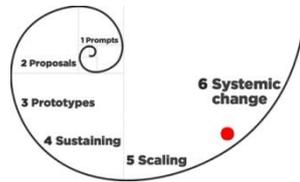
**Access conditions:** a schedule developed in monthly cycles – days and hours of organised events vary and are determined by the monthly schedule, although some activities are conducted on a regular basis; selected activities are subject to earlier registration; some event cycles can be attended only against payment – in the case of workshops, entry fees are usually set in the amount of costs of materials used during the workshops, other costs are covered from the municipal budget

**Financing:** funds from the city of Gdynia's budget and fees paid by participants of certain event cycles

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** A cultural centre, an art and urban culture centre that operates as gallery and a creative space. Established as a grassroots initiative of four entities (the Traffic Design Association, Biuro Kreacja [*the Creation Bureau*], Tri-City Fab Lab and the Architecture Plus Foundation) – with support provided by the Municipal Office of Gdynia – that created the meeting place of their own creativity and coexisting artistic workshops. The centre's purpose is to organise activities in the field of architecture, technology, design, art and environmental protection, whereas a substantial part of offered activities focuses on the topic of public space. The centre is also aimed at integrating creative circles, promoting art and providing education in the area of art and culture. It offers a rich programme of art events open to the public, focused around urban art, the idea of open source and sustainable development, such as exhibits, workshops, screenings, meetings with authors, art projects. The venue also serves as a cultural hub – course instructors make the space and their know-how available to other organisations with an idea for an art event.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of 550 – 800 participants per month

### 3



**Name:** Emigration Museum in Gdynia

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** Polska Street 1, Gdynia. The museum opened in May 2015 is located in a historical building of the Marine Station, erected in the interwar period. It was a central location for pre-war passenger traffic and, for many decades, a point of embarkation for Polish transatlantic ships. It has a total area of 6,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

**What does it offer:** a permanent exhibit and temporary exhibits, collections including over 10,000 items, meetings with authors, art and educational projects, including workshops for children, publications, concerts, shows, lectures related to the issue of migration; the Museum also includes an arthouse cinema operated by a separate entity

**For whom is it intended:** a wide consumer base – the institution's offer is aimed at both children and adults, individuals and organised groups

**By whom is it managed:** The Municipality of the City of Gdynia – a local government cultural institution

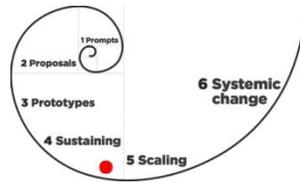
**Access conditions:** a permanent exhibit open six days a week between 10.00 – 18.00 (Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays) or 12.00 – 20.00 (Tuesdays and Fridays); organised events are cyclical or periodical and are held according to the event schedule published at [www.polska1.pl](http://www.polska1.pl); access to the offer is available against payment, although some events (such as lectures, meetings with authors, selected workshops) are open to the public free of charge.

**Financing:** funds from the city of Gdynia's budget, selected projects co-financed by the Ministry of Culture, tickets for the exhibition and charged educational offer

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** A narrative museum devoted to the history of Polish emigration. It is the only institution of such a kind in Poland. The museum's mission is to cast a light on and present the history of the multi-million emigration that has been occurring since the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the present. It is only one of a small number of institutions where history is presented in a place that is actually related to the subject matter – a building that serviced the emigration movement for decades, located at a symbolic address – ul. Polska 1 [*1 Polish Street*]. The museum also conducts scientific and research activities dedicated to the history of Polish emigration as well as cultural and educational activities, thus becoming an open space for meetings, discussions and the implementation of art projects. The institution's actions are focused not only on providing knowledge, but also on shaping social, cultural, digital and civic competencies. This institution has projects outside Gdynia and Poland, building international projects with cities where persons of Polish decent live.

**Number of people using the space:** since the opening on May 2015 till October 2015, the Museum was visited by over 50,000 people

# 4



**Name:** Social Innovation Laboratory

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** The Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia, building IV, Zwycięstwa Street 96/98, Gdynia – Redłowo. Lab began its operation in October 2014. The Laboratory has a total area of 160 m<sup>2</sup>.

**What does it offer:** meetings, workshops, training courses, exhibits, screenings of films themed around social and urban issues, entrepreneurship and science; moreover, individual departments of the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia and companies operating at the Park can find additional space to show what they do on a daily basis or present the results of their work to a wider audience.

**For whom is it intended:** it is dedicated to all residents interested in social and urban issues, entrepreneurship or science

**By whom is it managed:** The Social Innovation Department at the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia – the city's organisational unit

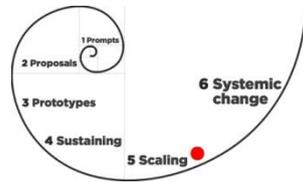
**Access conditions:** Monday through Friday between 10.00 – 18.00, all events taking place in the Lab are free of charge and open to the public, although some are subject to prior registration.

**Financing:** funds from the city of Gdynia's budget

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** A space for social dialogue, promoting the development of various forms of civic society, created by an interdisciplinary community, whose aim above all is to build links between business, knowledge institutions, NGO's, institutions, local leaders and the city's inhabitants. The Social Innovation Laboratory's activity is concentrated not only on serving information and educational functions (you can learn about scientific and technological discoveries, see products developed at the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia), but also on creating an open space for research, discussion, development of ideas and seeking new solutions. The Social Innovation Laboratory is a meeting place for entrepreneurs, residents, representatives of the world of science, art or the local government and non-governmental sector, i.e. all those open to dialogue – the Laboratory organises regular meetings with experts in various fields (e.g. architecture and urban planning, service design, graphic design and design, as well as social and educational policy), workshops, exhibits, and screenings of socially engaged films. The Social Innovation Laboratory is a space where the residents of Gdynia may work together with specialists from various fields on the best solutions and applications that are relevant from their point of view, thus enabling the implementation of good practices as regards designing public spaces, items or services improving the quality of life in Gdynia. The Laboratory also has something to offer to those who seek a moment of respite or a short break during the day. You can visit the Laboratory and simply rest on a sofa, use free WiFi or the "laboratory" library featuring books and magazines from the field of urban planning, architecture, design and sociology.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of approximately 350 participants per month, an average of approximately 3,300 participants per year (based on the first year of operation)

# 5



**Name:** Gdynia Główna Theatre

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** Plac Konstytucji 1, Gdynia – Śródmieście. The theatre has been operating on the premises of the Gdynia Główna Railway Station (platform -1), renovated in 2012. It comprises four main spaces (not separated by doors) with a total area of nearly 600 m<sup>2</sup>. Officially, the theatre has been operating since 2014.

**What does it offer:** theatrical spectacles directed at various audiences (children, school-age youths, adults) and art events, exhibition spaces and activities related to cultural and artistic education, projects promoting theatre, and activities aimed at supporting the competencies of cultural institutions, individual artists and informal creative groups as well as integrating the artistic circles in Gdynia.

**For whom is it intended:** a wide consumer base – various types of events organised at the Complex are aimed at both children and adults, individuals and organised groups

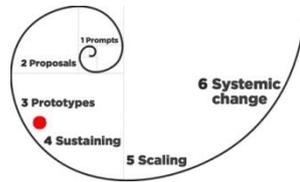
**By whom is it managed:** Fundacja “Klinika Kultury” [*The “Culture Clinic” Foundation*]

**Access conditions:** organised events are held according to the event schedule published at [www.teatrgdyniaglowna.pl](http://www.teatrgdyniaglowna.pl); access to the offer is available against payment, although some events are open to the public free of charge

**Financing:** funds from the budgets of the following cities: Gdynia, Rumia, Reda, funds from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Self-Government of Pomorskie Voivodeship, donations, and fees paid by participants of certain event cycles

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** An interdisciplinary artistic stop. A place of creative development that combines three main fields of activity: artistic activity, educational and animation activity, and activity aimed at integrating the artistic circles in Gdynia. The theatre's mission is constant and continuous development in cooperation with the city, artistic circles and audiences, to create a meeting space that will serve the citizens and contribute to increasing cultural awareness and sensibility by putting on high class theatrical spectacles, and to implement art, cultural, educational and social projects. Among the theatre's most important purposes is to shape social and intellectual abilities of children and youths by consolidating theatre with school didactics. The institution also aims to promote young artists and widely understood art. The theatre's activity is focused on putting on theatre plays in "non-theatrical" places, i.e. presenting its offer outside the physically closed space of the theatre and reaching the audience with theatrical proposals in various neighbourhoods of the city. Instead of making a trip from a far away neighbourhood to the city centre, the potential viewer may go to the nearest cultural institution: community centre, library, where they may become a full-fledged consumer of modern high culture. In summer, spectacles are also organised in urban open spaces.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of approximately 850 people per month, an average of approximately 10,000 people per year



**Name:** Friendship Garden – Community Garden – Neighbourhood Space

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** a separate part of a sports facility owned by TKKF Checz [*Society for the Promotion of Sport and Physical Activity*], located at Zamenhofa Street 17 in Gdynia – Chylonia. Under the partnership agreement, Fundacja Zmian Społecznych "Kreatywni" [*the "Creative" Social Change Foundation*] signed an contract pursuant to which TKKF Checz hands over an area of 450 m<sup>2</sup> free of charge and for an indefinite period of time. It has been operating since February 2013.

**What does it offer:** The Friendship Garden is a meeting place for the local community. Sometimes events stem from grassroots initiatives, as part of which residents meet to work on the garden's aesthetics and spend time with neighbours. During the holiday period, the Garden is also used for open events organised as part of *Neighbour's Time* or *Neighbourhood Café* initiatives, i.e. concerts and picnics. The Garden is also used to hold various workshops directed at young people and seniors, becoming a space for intergenerational cooperation. Due to the fact that the Garden is a community garden, sometimes residents rent the area to meet with their Neighbours and spend time together.

**For whom is it intended:** The Friendship Garden is a community garden available to anyone, although used in particular by residents of the residential area located on the following streets: Zamenhofa and Opata Hackiego, and participants of activities organised by Centrum Aktywnego Mieszkańca [*the Centre of Active Residents*]. However, this does not mean that the Garden is closed to other residents – it may be used by other interested parties, upon making prior arrangements.

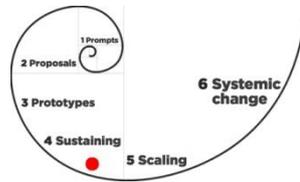
**By whom is it managed:** The "Creative" Social Change Foundation under the Centre of Active Residents

**Access conditions:** free access, in summer – every Friday between 17:00 – 20:00, every Thursday between 16:00 – 20:00, and as needed, upon making prior arrangements or signing a reciprocity agreement. Access conditions, in particular rules on which the Friendship Garden is to be made available, are still being discussed with residents – who essentially create and maintain this place. One question is being posed: "Should we open the gate permanently or not?"

**Financing:** informal activity financed by sponsors and community work of local residents

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** The Friendship Garden is a "tool" that enhances the self-organisation of residents through joint initiatives aimed at working on its aesthetics. It also serves an integrative function – it is a place that promotes meetings of Neighbours and other residents, and owes its current appearance largely to their joint efforts. Its unique characteristic is that the Garden – handed over under a partnership agreement – is maintained by residents themselves and they initiate works on its aesthetics and events held in this space. The Garden is also utilised in the activities pursued by the Centre of Active Residents, which aims to organise the local community in the area of the following streets: Zamenhofa and Opata Hackiego, and to build a strong and creative local community by engaging allies representing various institutions.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of approximately 40 regular users per month, an average of approximately 400 participants of open events per year



**Name:** Neighbourhood Café

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** gallery hall with a total area of 22 m<sup>2</sup>, located at Klub Osiedlowy Apteka [*Apteka Community Centre*], Opata Hackiego Street 17A, Gdynia – Chylonia. It has been operating since April 2013.

**What does it offer:** The Neighbourhood Café is an integration space dedicated to Neighbours, i.e. residents of the residential area located at the following streets: Zamenhofa and Opata Hackiego. It offers an opportunity to relax and spend time drinking tea or coffee in good company, creating a place where people can meet and have casual conversations. The Neighbourhood Café – as the name suggests – is a place where time flows slower, where you do not have to hurry, where there is time to have a conversation and be with each other.

**For whom is it intended:** the space is dedicated in particular to the residents of the following streets: Zamenhofa and Opata Hackiego, and to participants of activities organised by the Centre of Active Residents; the Café can also be used by other residents of the city who wish to take part in such form of activity.

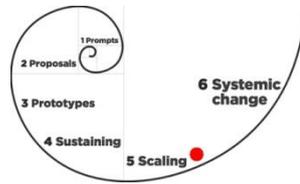
**By whom is it managed:** The "Creative" Social Change Foundation under the Centre of Active Residents

**Access conditions:** open and free access, every Tuesday between 10:00 – 14:00, and every Thursday between 16:00 – 20:00; open activities may be attended by each resident of Gdynia

**Financing:** funds from the city of Gdynia's budget

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** The Neighbourhood Café's primary function is to integrate the local community. It is a space where you can have a relaxed conversation, meet with a neighbour, drink a cup of coffee together and pleasantly spend your time. Its unique characteristic is that initially the Neighbourhood Café was held once a week in the morning hours – however, working neighbours reported the need to meet in the afternoon. At present, it is used as a regular meeting place for a group of neighbours that work on the garden, play board games and simply have conversations with each other. It is worth noting that the desire to spend time together more frequently, have conversations and build relations were all initiatives submitted by the residents themselves. The Café is also utilised in the activities pursued by the Centre of Active Residents, which aims to organise the local community in the area of the following streets: Zamenhofa and Opata Hackiego.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of approximately 80 regular users per month



**Name:** Klub 1,2,3 [Club 1,2,3]

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** Warszawska Street 42, Gdynia – Działki Leśne. It has been operating since June 2011. The Club has a total area of approximately 70 m<sup>2</sup> that comprises: three large rooms, an office room, a kitchen annex, a bathroom.

**What does it offer:** psychological help combined with the social activation of adults that suffered from psychological crises and diseases, and an information point on available forms of support for people suffering from psychological crises and their families. The Club primarily functions as a meeting place. Participants may actively participate in psychoeducational activities and moderated discussions on current or relevant issues. A large part of the Club's offer is comprised by workshops, socialising events and regular occupational therapy that provides an opportunity to not only have conversations, but also acquire specific skills, get actively involved in the creative process or learn. Apart from all fixed elements of the Club's offer, participants also have time for self-realisation and to organise own space, i.e. to converse, listen to music or use the Internet.

**For whom is it intended:** people suffering from psychological crises and diseases, not necessarily with a determined level of disability; the RADAR information point is dedicated to people suffering from diseases, but also to their families and friends

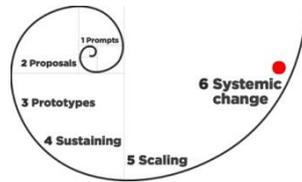
**By whom is it managed:** Municipal Social Welfare Centre in Gdynia

**Access conditions:** a person wishing to use the services offered by the Club does not bear any costs in relation to their participation and does not need to have a medical certificate; the only requirement is for the interested person to have an individual meeting with a psychologist during which the future participant may talk about his life situation, what motivated him to use the services offered by the Club, and his expectations; the Club is open five days a week between 10:00-18:00 (on Tue, Wed and Thu) and between 12:00-18:00 (on Mon and Fri).

**Financing:** funds from the Municipal Social Welfare Centre in Gdynia's – the city of Gdynia's budget

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** A relevant resource of institutional support in Gdynia for people who suffered from crises or psychological diseases. The Club's role is to provide widely understood support to people suffering from crises and psychological diseases through activation and integration meetings and appointments with a psychologist, among others. Participation in the Club's activities is completely voluntary and internally motivated. Particularly important and unique characteristics of the Club is that it does not require signing agreements or contracts with participants, there are no requirements regarding medical certificates, and that regardless of attendance or level of engagement during offered activities, each participant may use the Club's services in the same way. Apart from supporting the social activation of people with mental disorders, the Club also acts as the so-called catalyst for change. Some participants of services offered by the Club often decide to undertake employment or attend psychotherapy sessions.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of approximately 25 people per month; an average of approximately 50 people per year



**Name:** “Open School” programme

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** an original programme of the local government in Gdynia, implemented annually in several schools in Gdynia since 1999. In the fall semester 2014/2015, the programme was implemented in a total of 17 schools, which is the usual number of educational establishments participating in its implementation (compared to 1999/2000 – 4 schools, 2000/2001 – 9 schools, 2001/2002 – 14 schools, 2007/2008 – 15 schools; and 2010/present – 17 schools).

**What does it offer:** thematic activities, including sports clubs, dancing lessons, theatre groups, therapy groups, computer sessions, and language lessons; the programme of activities varies depending on the educational establishment and edition of the “Open School” programme

**For whom is it intended:** all residents of Gdynia (children, young people, adults) interested in participating in activities offered under the programme

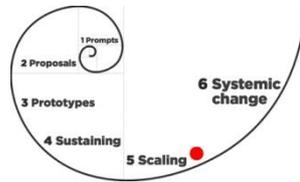
**By whom is it managed:** at present, the “Open School” programme is implemented in 17 educational establishments in Gdynia, located in various neighbourhoods of the city (currently in 16 out of 22 neighbourhoods)

**Access conditions:** activities are held on every week day (in certain schools on weekends as well), most often in the afternoon; activities are subject to registration; some activities are offered free of charge, some are offered against payment of a token amount in order to ensure sufficient attendance

**Financing:** subsidy from the city of Gdynia's budget and fees paid by participants of fee-based activities

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** They learn, play and integrate. The purpose of the programme is to create a wide offer of active leisure time activities for the residents of Gdynia, using the facilities of educational establishments. The idea of the programme assumes that activities are to be held in schools in Gdynia after school classes have ended and are to be available to all residents of the city, regardless of age. Activities are easily accessible, including in the literal meaning – they are held in the very centre of residential areas or neighbourhoods. Despite the activities being co-financed by the city, each coordinator responsible for a given school participating in the programme has full discretion both with regard to preparing the programme of activities and selecting people to conduct them. The activities offered in the programme vary and change each year, as required to suit the needs of the local community – the expectations of residents are analysed on an ongoing basis, with results of those analyses being used to make changes or modifications in the programme of available activities.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of approximately 6,000 people per year



**Name:** Startup Zone Gdynia

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** The Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia, building III, Zwycięstwa Street 96/98, Gdynia – Redłowo. It has been operating since August 2013. An area of approximately 400 m<sup>2</sup> holds 25 desks, unlimited access to the Internet, computer equipment, a coffee corner, spaces for work meetings, and a bookcase with trade magazines and books.

**What does it offer:** support such as workshops, consultations, support systems, lectures in such areas as: entrepreneurship (mainly in the area of new technologies), the protection of intellectual property, the commercialization of the results of research and development as well as the transfer and realization of new technologies, whose aim is to inspire and increase the competence and knowledge of innovative entrepreneurship; support in terms of infrastructure – coworking (25 fully equipped work spaces).

**For whom is it intended:** beginner entrepreneurs and persons planning to start a business, students and doctoral students, freelancers from creative, ICT, biotechnology, environmental protection, industrial design, automated technology, robotics and multimedia

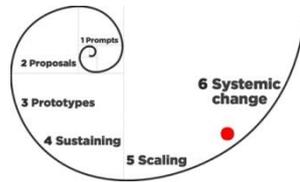
**By whom is it managed:** The Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia – the city's organisational unit

**Access conditions:** the Zone can be used against payment, on subscription basis (available options: 40h and 160h); coworking is available Monday through Friday between 08:00 – 20:00.

**Financing:** funds from the city of Gdynia's budget and subscription fees paid for renting a desk at the coworking space

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** The Startup Zone Gdynia was created to provide comprehensive support to people with an idea for an innovative business. It constitutes an alternative for all those who do not wish to rent a typical office space on an exclusive basis, but do not like to or cannot work at home. Coworking, that is a joint open space where anyone can rent a desk by the hour and work on their project, constitutes one of the Zone's key tools aimed at supporting entrepreneurship at the preincubation stage. However, coworking is much more than just a workplace. It is a community of creative people who want to develop their ideas, a space for meetings that facilitates the exchange of ideas, joint problem solving and development of innovative ideas, including using the knowledge and experience of companies from the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia. The Startup Zone Gdynia is also where events devoted to innovative entrepreneurship and the implementation of the preincubation programme are held; the preincubation programme is aimed at providing comprehensive subject-matter support with regard to business ideas and their development on various stages – from the idea to commencing business activity.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of approximately 200 people per month; an average of approximately 2,000 people per year



**Name:** Gdynia InfoBox – Change Observatory

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** located at the corner of the following streets: Świętojańska and 10 Lutego. Opened in June 2013 in Gdynia city centre, at the square commonly known as the Żeromski square. A two-storey structure comprised of 65 glazed containers whose architectural style relates to the port nature of the city, and a 22-meter high observation tower. A total area of nearly 900 m<sup>2</sup> comprises two exhibition halls, a shop, a coffee house and main hall. The architectural structure of the building is temporary, i.e. it is comprised of modules that can be dismantled. This targeted investment is aimed to fill the architectural gap in the very centre of Gdynia for several years, as it is planned to erect another building in its place in the future.

**What does it offer:** multimedia materials that allow to take a “virtual hike” around the city or to see the effects of planned or ongoing urban projects, the largest model in Poland (8m x 4m) comprised of approx. 2 thousand existing or planned buildings; CultureBox where one can get to know the city’s cultural offer and reserve tickets for the most important events, a place of creative fun for children (JuniorBox); educational activities for children and youths; numerous exhibits, presentations and meetings regarding the widely understood development of the city (investments, cultural and educational offer), open-air event, observation tower from which you can see the progress in the implementation of certain investments and the only street in Poland that penetrates the sea

**For whom is it intended:** all interested parties, including residents of the city and tourists

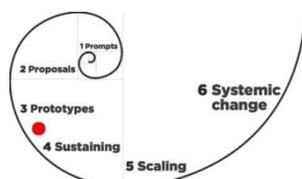
**By whom is it managed:** The Municipality of the City of Gdynia

**Access conditions:** open and free access, although attendance to activities is subject to phone registration with at least a few days notice; the venue can be visited individually or in organised groups of no less than 15 persons (upon prior agreement of the visit date); InfoBox / CultureBox is active every day (summer season: Mon-Fri 10:00 – 20:00, Sat 11:00-20:00, Sun 11:00-18:00; after summer season: Mon-Fri 10:00-19:00, Sat 11:00-18:00, Sun 11:00-16:00).

**Financing:** funds from the city of Gdynia's budget

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** A multifunctional information centre and multimedia observatory of all changes occurring in the urban space. A place where the residents of Gdynia and tourists get familiarised with the city’s cultural offer, ongoing investments and the city’s development plan for the upcoming years. InfoBox is also a space that gathers together parties interested in the development of Gdynia and the entire region. The investment includes not just simply the Gdynia Infobox building, but also the revitalisation of the entire square located at one of the main junctions in Gdynia, where designed greenery, new small infrastructure and illumination (visible after dark) was introduced. The redevelopment created an open space in the city centre, where people can sit on the grass or a lounge, rest, drink coffee, meet with friends or play with their children.

**Number of people using the space:** an average of approximately 30,000 people per month; an average of approximately 350,000 people per year



**Name:** [www.seniorplus.gdynia.pl](http://www.seniorplus.gdynia.pl)

**Where? How big? Physical characteristics:** a web portal launched in January 2014 by the Senior Activity Centre in Gdynia under the Senior Plus project.

**What does it offer:** an opportunity to publish and receive information on current events dedicated to senior residents of Gdynia and their interests. The website features, among others, an event calendar, original literary works of art, culinary recipes, ideas for games to play with grandchildren, photo galleries, and videos from lectures given at the Gdynia University of the Third Age, which make it possible to participate in classes even when out of Gdynia.

**For whom is it intended:** a website dedicated primarily to seniors living in Gdynia, but information contained on the website can also be useful to other people throughout Poland

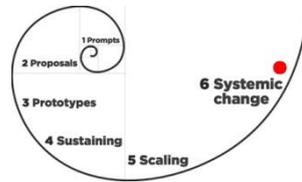
**By whom is it managed:** website is co-created by senior residents of Gdynia, and is administrated by the Senior Activity Centre in Gdynia

**Access conditions:** open and free access, everyone interested in posting information on the website can do so contacting with the website administrator; the website is user-friendly and offers options that help visually impaired persons browse the website, by enabling the option to enlarge the font of published texts

**Financing:** funds from the Senior Activity Centre in Gdynia – funds from the city of Gdynia's budget

**Role / function / unique characteristics:** The first interactive website in Poland created for seniors by seniors. On the one hand, it is a platform for disseminating information regarding the activity of seniors and presenting what Gdynia has to propose and offer to seniors. On the other hand, it is also a hallmark of creativity of seniors themselves, who co-create the website by sharing their own experiences in various areas of their own activity. Moreover, by publishing videos from the lectures of the Gdynia University of the Third Age, the website provides an opportunity for ongoing access to the educational offer, while at the same time allowing seniors to become active in virtual space. Content published on the website aims to encourage those who do not yet participate in the vast array of activities for seniors offered in Gdynia.

**Number of people using the space:** website is visited by approximately 4,000 web users per month (based on the unique ID's)



**Name:** urban public spaces serving the role of open social spaces

### **Polanka Redłowska**

A seafront clearing, which is on the Ejsmonda street in Gdynia, only a few metres from Bulwar Nadmorski [*the Nadmorski Boulevard*] and the Gdansk Bay. Close by there is a nature reserve. Many years ago this was a place where scout camps were organised, or other outdoor activities. At the present moment this space is used for different kinds of activities, mostly integrating moments for groups of citizens by a camp fire. Very often these events are organised by scouts, pupils, associations of elderly persons. The Polanka Redłowska is one of several public spaces which are earmarked for organising camp fires and grills, for free. In 2015, the city authorities, reacting to a social need, simplified the procedure for authorisation of such events. Previously, before this change, organisers had to satisfy several formal requirements, which could only be satisfied by formalized groups, such as associations or foundations. At present any inhabitant of Gdynia can light a fire in this space, on the basis of once given authorisation by the city authorities.

### **Park Rady Europy, Skwer Arki Gdynia**

Park Rady Europy [*the Council of Europe Park*] is a green area between the Musical Theatre and the Kościuszko Square, not far from the Hotel Mercure Gdynia Centrum. This space links the city with the Nadmorski Boulevard and the city beach. This large space is often used to organize different types of open air events (concerts, picnics, cinema on the grass). Events are organised at different occasions (family fetes or children's day) or for different cultural and educational purposes (Open Call, Cudawianki, Gdynia Playground and many others). For the last 3 years Gdynia Design Days have done a project called "Trawa do rzeczy" [*"Grass for action"*], which encouraged citizens and tourists to rest in city parks. This initiative had the aim of creating a whole system of pathways for resting in city parks, promoting green areas in Gdynia as places which are friendly towards them. So this space has a recreational and integrating function, offering citizens possibilities to spend time, to establish contacts between persons and developing meaningful social contacts. Skwer Arki Gdynia [*The Arka Gdynia Square; "Arka Gdynia" is the name of the Gdynia football team*] has a similar function. It is near the crossing of Piłsudski street and the Nadmorski Boulevard only a few metres from the Gdansk Bay. It is an open space in which many open air cultural and artistic events are organised (Gdynia Blues Festival, Bazar Nature fairs), and the Gdynia Creative Magiel, whose aim is to integrate persons with disabilities with the local community, through creativity and positive social relationships).

### **Grass covered areas near the InfoBox and the Gdynia Film Centre**

These are open urban spaces with planned greenery and small urban architecture, which are in the centre of the city close to two important urban buildings: the InfoBox and the recently built (2015) Gdynia Film Centre. These spaces fulfill a cultural and recreational role. They are open spaces in the centre of the city, where many events are organised such as open air concerts, artistic shows, literary picnics, thematic workshops or sporting activities. The Gdynia Film Centre is also a prestigious place, where the Polish annual film festival takes place. These spaces encourage citizens to rest, meet friends or play with children. During the summer they also propose deck chairs for citizens and tourists. It is worth mentioning that both these spaces are linked to the regeneration of the city centre and a new planning concept which has been developed. The InfoBox and its surrounding infrastructure has filled a missing architectural element on one of the main crossings in Gdynia. The space around the Gdynia Film Centre is part of the project for the new centre of the city.

### **Beach**

There are four municipal beaches in Gdynia: Śródmieście, Redłowo, Orłowo i Babie Doły. They all have a recreational and service function for citizens. The bathing areas are surveyed during the holiday season, there are outdoor gyms, cycling paths, beach volleyball courts, pubs, cafes, restaurants and bars. The beaches are used for many open air happenings (Red Bull Air Force, Cudawianki, Iron Man Gdynia, Red Bull Tour Bus concerts, Aktywne Lato and many more).

*The chapter was elaborated on the basis of the publicly open materials and direct consultations with the representatives of open social spaces in Gdynia.*

## Conclusions

1. From the point of view of entities initiating and animating open social spaces, Gdynia has a wide variety of them at its disposal. Open spaces in Gdynia are initiated and animated by: the city (e.g. Wymiennikownia [*Exchanger; formal: the Heat Exchange Plant*]), non-governmental organisations (e.g. tuBaza, Gdynia Główna Theatre) or the local community itself (e.g. the Friendship Garden).
2. The idea of open social spaces can be implemented using a wide variety of resources – from small spaces based around recycling or grassroots initiatives (the Friendship Garden, the Neighbourhood Café) to spaces that build a comprehensive image of the city and require significant resources (InfoBox, Emigration Museum in Gdynia).
3. Open social spaces can be temporary in nature (e.g. InfoBox), which is of significant importance as regards initiating dialogue with the local community and the need to shape this dialogue in a responsible manner. The reclamation of unused, degraded spaces may take place in several stages, during which the intended spatial development is preceded by making the space available to people on an open basis (e.g. tuBaza, InfoBox).
4. The placement of open social spaces in Gdynia – often in attractive locations, usually owned by the city – indicates an intentional and purposeful policy of protecting certain areas of the city from commercial use and their utilisation for social purposes (the Gdynia Główna Theatre, tuBaza, Emigration Museum in Gdynia). The urbanisation policy is also visible in the universal design of public space, based on Accessibility Standard Sheets specifying guidelines for the design and development of public space within the city of Gdynia in order to implement solutions that are friendly to all the users of spaces with various limitations as regards mobility and perception.
5. Open social spaces are a perfect tool for many methods and processes conducted in the area of improving the quality of life. It can be presumed that in order for each revitalisation to be successful, it should consider OSS as a tool. Similarly, each institution responsible for improving the quality of life in the social dimension should use OSS in the same manner.
6. Open social spaces are an inherent element supporting the idea and development of civic society, aware of its identity and having a real impact on the city's development.
7. Open social spaces should be seriously considered when developing plans for the cultural and social reintegration of emigrants, arrivals from other cities and cultural circles and people at risk of social exclusion.
8. The analysis indicates that a very unique characteristic – the unique nature of a place – also brings to mind a question about the possibility of scaling this process in other places and spaces. In such a case, scaling, understood as widening the scope of innovation, may take place only with regard to increasing the number of offers and addressees in a given social space.

9. Open social spaces – as an idea – are a multidimensional and very delicate issue – each excessive action with regard to animation, domination, omission, negligence, lack of awareness of what an OSS actually is, may cause disturbances and have a number of negative effects.
10. A question that remains unanswered is: how much of an impact does the current number of open social spaces initiated and animated in Gdynia have in a city with nearly 250 thousand residents? Does the current state represent the minimum, optimum, or maximum state?
11. It would be worthwhile to conduct a comprehensive and structured evaluation of the operation of open social spaces in Gdynia. It would help to indicate and comprehensively assess the effects brought about by the operation of OSS in Gdynia, including in the context of potential negative effects. The results of such evaluation could also be used to indicate the most effective urban strategies aimed at supporting the formation of open public spaces.