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# Quality Assessment Plan

## Deliverable 5.1

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**A-Place**

Deliverable 5.1

Quality Assessment Plan

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
1.1. Purpose and target group .....	3
1.2. Contribution of partners .....	3
1.3. Relations to other activities in the project.....	3
2. Assessment of creative placemaking activities .....	5
2.1. Creative placemaking: public space, arts, and community .....	5
2.2. Assessing creative placemaking .....	7
3. Assessment frameworks and methods .....	14
3.1. General theoretical frameworks .....	14
3.2. Specific assessment tools and methods .....	15
4. Planning the assessment of activities .....	20
4.1. Assessing social discourses and their change through time .....	20
4.2. Assessing socially engaged artistic practices .....	22
4.3. Assessing aesthetic qualities.....	23
4.4. Assessing the space/place transformation through time.....	25
4.5. Assessing quality and social impact .....	26
5. Aligning planning and evaluation of placemaking activities .....	28
5.1. Assessing placemaking activities in a changing context .....	28
5.2. Outcomes of meetings .....	28
6. References.....	30
7. Bibliography .....	35
Annex 1.....	36

# Executive Summary

This document contains the quality assessment plan of the placemaking activities of the A-Place project. The content is structured in the following sections:

- 1. Introduction.** The purpose of the Quality Assessment Plan, and its target groups; the contributions of partners to the plan; and the relation of quality assessment with other project activities, in particular the interrelationships with the planning and implementation phases of the placemaking activities.
- 2. Assessment of creative placemaking activities.** It is structured in two sections: a) discussion of the overlapping meanings encompassed in the terms “placemaking”, “creative placemaking” and “public art” (e.g. public space, arts and community, etc.) in order to delimit the scope of the activities to be assessed; and b) delimitation of the terms “quality evaluation” —the values to be considered in the planning, implementation and reflection phases of the placemaking activities— and “social impact” —the transformations occurred in the sociophysical structures as a result of the placemaking activities—.
- 3. Assessment methods.** A compilation of the assessment procedures, theoretical frameworks and related methodologies (e.g. ethnographic, phenomenological, aesthetic, and cartographic), and tools (e.g. interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc.).
- 4. Planning the assessment of activities.** Procedures to implement the assessment of the quality and the social impact during the project placemaking activities. Guidelines for the implementation are included in the Annex.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose and target group

The purpose of the Quality Assessment Plan is to provide partners with guidelines, methods and tools to carry out the evaluation of placemaking activities. They are important to ensure a shared understanding of the objectives of the activities and their level of achievement. Therefore, the main target group of this plan is the project members. However, the beneficiaries of the evaluation results go beyond the project partnership and include the local stakeholders involved in the activities. In addition, this document may be of interest to readers outside the A-Place Consortium who are involved in community integrated creative activities and their evaluation.

## 1.2. Contribution of partners

This document has been prepared by a team of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, leader of the work package 5 “Evaluation and Quality Assessment”, with the collaboration of the project coordinator, FUNITEC (La Salle). All partners have contributed to the preparation of the evaluation plan. First, by defining the objectives of their placemaking activities in Deliverable 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 Planning of local activities 2019-2020”, and then by discussing the evaluation strategies, as well as the most appropriate methods to achieve a meaningful assessment in each planned activity, taking into account its social, cultural and urban context.

## 1.3. Relations to other activities in the project

Quality assessment of creative placemaking is a dynamic process that involves all participating actors and stakeholders before, during and after the activities. The proposed assessment plan takes into consideration three phases of a placemaking activity, as foreseen in the A-Place work programme (Figure 1), namely: a) the preparatory phase (e.g. design of the activities scope and objective, in collaboration with community stakeholders); b) the performing phase (e.g. implementing the activities in the social and physical milieu); and c) the reflection phase (e.g. drawing conclusions of the results obtained, in order to take them into account in the next placemaking cycle). The end result of the latter phase is to reveal the impact of the activities on policies and the decision-making of local authorities, after the placemaking.

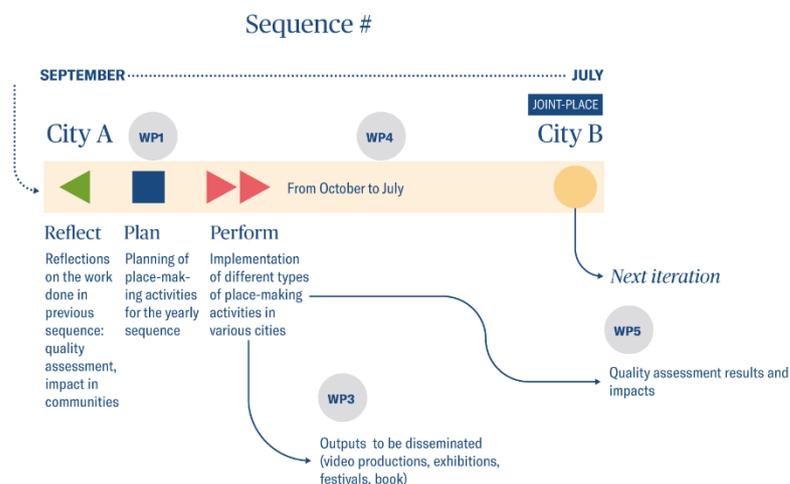


Figure 1. Phases of the placemaking activities



## 2. Assessment of creative placemaking activities

Placemaking and creative placemaking embrace a variety of meanings which intersect with art-based community activities, including the value of public spaces and the collaboration of artists and local stakeholders. A delimitation of the meaning that “creative placemaking” has for the A-Place project activities is necessary before addressing their evaluation, in two specific areas: quality of the placemaking activities in terms of promoted values and impact in the sociophysical environments.

### 2.1. Creative placemaking: public space, arts, and community

Placemaking is a way of thinking about cities and communities, aimed at redefining urban spaces by creating places for everyday public life (Jacobs, 1961; Gehl, 1987; Whyte, 1980). Through placemaking, public space can be re-designed and re-shaped to address the needs of living communities, activating the potential embedded in the social fabric through a process of community empowerment. Placemaking is about designing cities for people, it is a collaborative process to reinvent and reimagine everyday urban spaces<sup>1</sup>, working on social and cultural identities and values.

The A-Place project focuses on *creative* placemaking, a particular type of placemaking in which arts and culture play an important role in the transformation of a space into a place. Assessing the extent to which the placemaking activities carried out in the project contribute to the transformation of the physical and social fabric is a fundamental component of the project.

As Stern and Pray (2014) state, it is necessary to clarify the conceptual foundations of the term “creative placemaking” before we propose any method to assess it. From an artistic/architectural and academic point of view, the challenge is to define the role of art and culture in transforming people’s sense of connection to a place over time and to value the ability of artists to “reframe public discourse, challenge the status quo, spark imagination and build empathy through their work” (Eisenbach, 2014; p. 98). From a policy-making point of view, the difficulty is to prove the power of arts and culture as social and economic catalysts based on evidence of what works in a specific context (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010).

The addition of the adjective “creative” to the creation of places has been explained in various ways in the reference literature. From a policy-making perspective, it has been argued that creative placemaking is driven by the interest of government authorities and other institutions to promote arts and culture (Courage & McKeown, 2019). The A-Place project adheres to such top-down approaches without neglecting bottom-up, grassroots interventions. In this regard, policy makers can be considered one of the groups of beneficiaries whose practices inform and potentially get transformed by placemaking activities.

From the arts-based perspective of creative placemaking, it has been stated that artists must “speak the language of community development so they can connect and be effective in supporting their communities” (Zitcer, 2018; p. 8). In A-Place we do not make a distinction between art-makers and community stakeholders. On the contrary, we consider that in creative placemaking practices art-makers and local community stakeholders are inextricably intertwined. However, placemaking projects are not born within the communities, but as result

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

of a planning process which might engage both project partners -consisting of architects, artists and academics, including social scientists- and community stakeholders -citizens, local administrations, cultural institutions-.

A-Place placemaking is community-driven but not community-led. By the same token, it is arts-based but not arts-led. A continuous balance between artistic practices engaging the community and community practices embracing arts as part of their everyday lives is an essential part of the A-Place process. The goal of this balance is to create public art that is “meaningful and in dialogue with the place and the community” as Lombardo (2014; p. 20) argues. However, this goal of creative placemaking adopted by the A-Place project needs to be further clarified, as it contains several ill-defined concepts, such as ‘public art’, ‘meaningful art’, ‘place’ and ‘community’. Below we will give our definitions of each one these four A-Place conceptual pillars.

- a) **Public art is not simply art made (in) public.** Public art and public space are strongly related with each other. On the one hand, “public space should not be considered ‘public’ because of the space itself, but rather because of the activity that takes place in it” (Lombardo, 2014; p. 20). In creative placemaking, this activity is arts-based with art not being limited to the methods used for creating artistic works (e.g. painting art, video making art, etc) - which would be an instrumentalist perspective of art- but including any kind of “symbolic presentations of rational ideas (such as love, death, envy) through sensible intuitions” (Crawford, 2000; p. 53-54). On the other hand, public art, in order to be considered as such, needs to be meaningfully related to the space in which it is situated (Zembracki, 2012).
- b) **Public art is meaningful.** How is art meaningfully related to the space in which it is situated? To reply to this question, the process of construction of meaning needs to be considered. Meaning itself does not exist, as meanings are constructed by specific people in specific contexts under specific circumstances. This meaning creation/construction process as result of public art implies a main pedagogical role of public art: if it leads people to create meanings, then it helps them learn or improve their learning about phenomena. This simple presupposition shifts the focus “from the artists and the artworks *per se* toward the way audiences engage with art” (Schuermans, Loopmans, & Vandenabeele, 2012; pp. 677). As audiences engage with meaningful public art, they become learners of things relevant to them and to the ways they relate to the public space. At the same time, public art is meaningful when it promotes such learning or meaning construction processes. Such promotion is stronger when public art creates “transitional spaces” where individuals make and re-make their meanings, as they are “challenged to face the ambivalences that result from encounters with diversity” (Schuermans et al., 2012; p. 678).
- c) **Meaningful public art creates place.** Places are spaces with meanings, i.e. “that you can remember, that you can care about and make part of your life. The world should be filled with places so vivid and distinct that they can carry significance. Places could bring emotions, recollections, people, and even ideas to mind” (Lyndon, 1983; p. 2). Similarly, Augé (1995; p.77-78) describes a non-place as “a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity”. Public art can create “an authentic and meaningful sense of place, and a sense of ownership of and belonging” (McKeown & Courage, 2019; p. 202), senses which are at the heart of creative placemaking.
- d) **Place creates community.** In the same way that places become meaningful through the meanings that people ascribe to them (individually, collectively, and over time), the life of people becomes meaningful, intelligible through their experience with places. Moreover, when such experience becomes a socially shared practice, we can even witness the emergence of communities of practice. Thus, Wenger (2011) argues in favour of a spontaneous emergence of such communities in these terms:

nurses who meet regularly for lunch in a hospital cafeteria may not realize that their lunch discussions are one of their main sources of knowledge about how to care for patients. Still, in the course of all these conversations, they have developed a set of stories and cases that have become a shared repertoire for their practice (p. 2).

For such communities of practice to emerge, a place is necessary as a common frame of reference. In Wenger's example, the place is the hospital. In creative placemaking, the place can be the revived central square of a village in which people of all ages and backgrounds regularly meet, interact and live together. In this case, the central square has also a symbolic meaning, as it is the heart of the village. Therefore, any authentic interaction taking place in the square may be viewed as a shared practice contributing to the informal deliberation ritual of the villagers around any issue that affects them. Arts and culture have a major role in the creation of such communities, as they offer a common frame of meaning making accessible to everyone to perceive. Under this perspective, arts can emerge as a medium of inclusive placemaking (Lennon, 2020).

## 2.2. Assessing creative placemaking

If we consider a creative placemaking action as a process to create places through meaningful public art, then the assessment of its impact cannot be dissociated from the created place. Place, unlike space, is a sociocultural construction, and as such, it cannot be viewed as a process leading to a product-artefact. What can be assessed is:

- a) ***The process of creating art, meaning, place and community***, which we refer to as "quality evaluation" (Section 2.1); and
- b) ***The social impact of the placemaking practices***, which we name "social impact assessment" (Section 2.2).

### 2.2.1. Quality evaluation

In creative placemaking practices, quality might refer to: (a) a creative participatory planning approach (Cilliers & Timmermans, 2014); (b) a social production of heritage, both visible and invisible, that promotes and sustains a community's engagement with both the physical and social characteristics of the heritage (Giaccardi & Palen, 2008); and (c) a building of social capital (Kelkar & Spinelli, 2016) and communities (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003) as result of participation and engagement. However, the difficulty lies on the definition of the quality indicators inherent in the processes of creative participation, social engagement and community building.

Our starting question within A-Place evaluation is: which of the *values* that lie behind each one of these processes can reveal a certain level of quality? To define those values, we first need to define what a value is and then what values are relevant in a placemaking process.

**Value.** The term "value" is polysemous and its meaning varies according to the domain in which it is used: economy, rhetoric, sociology, among other areas of knowledge. In economics, as pointed out by Meyer (2008), value refers to the "exchange value" which enable us to evaluate, or to measure quantitatively the price of one object in relation to another. This meaning follows a utilitarian logic.

In rhetoric, values constitute objects of agreement or premises to create or reinforce the communion with the auditorium, in order to obtain its adhesion (Perelman, 1997; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1988). Thus, the fact that a value is acceptable and preferable may be more important than the truth itself. In his latest work, Perelman (1997) further points out that value

and hierarchy are inseparable notions. In fact, value implies breaking the equality between things, in all situations in which one must be placed before or after the other.

Sociologically, as Heinrich (2017) points out, value is the result of a set of operations through which a given quality is attributed to an object, with various degrees of consensuality and stability. Evidently, these operations depend both on the nature of the evaluated object, as well as on the nature of the subjects who evaluate it, and the nature of the evaluation. In this way, it can be said that the value is neither objective, subjective, nor arbitrary. In fact, the value itself is motivated by the way the object is evaluated, by the collective representations that individuals have about the object and by the varied possibilities of representation that the different contexts offer. In fact, the value is not in the object itself, but in a system of shared representations, contextually applied to an object. Objectivism is closely related to the relativity of points of view. Such relativity does not, in any way, prevent the existence of a complete break with established principles and practices, traditions, routines and norms. In reality, there is an effective interaction between objects, humans and contexts.

***Creative participation values.*** According to Cilliers and Timmermans (2014; p. 420, emphasis added), “the difference between participation and good participation *lies in the process*, how it is conducted, and how it is approached. Evaluation should form a core part of the participation process, in order to determine if the chosen method and approach were successful, if social capital was built during the process, and if the end project benefited from the participatory planning process”. In order to evaluate the quality of social participation, we need to *monitor* the process of how the participation and representation of different social groups in the placemaking activities was pursued and to what degree it was achieved.

In creative, arts-based placemaking, social participation also needs to be creative. Defining creative participation is a question of values promoted by the placemakers within a community. Promoting a *creativity of participation* is a difficult task that needs to take into consideration different factors such as: availability of materials, scripting participation, and the ability to adapt the method to the given circumstances in order to promote creative participation when necessary.

When placemakers ask community members to “be creative” during a workshop, for example, for this to be achieved the first thing that must be secured is the variety of materials and approaches available to the participants. For example, an exploration of participants’ cartographic representations of a space would require to use a variety of techniques such as diagrams, drawings, photographs, videos, audio-recorded narrations, and even role playing in theatre, song and dance (Sanderson et al., 2007). Also, it is important to give appropriate guidelines to the participants, so that they can reach the maximum potential of their creativity. For placemakers to prepare a participatory activity, and its guidelines thereof, the existing creative possibilities of communities must be first investigated, to limit the possibility of surprises (both positive and negative) when the activity pretends ‘a’ and the participants are able or willing to do ‘b’. It is not uncommon that participation becomes tyrannical rather than transformative (Martin & Hall-Arber, 2007) without an adequate preparation. Certainly, such training can never be complete, and goals and tasks must be continuously adapted in light of what participants do (see the example of *Different responses to diagramming* by Alexander et al., 2007; p. 115). This last consideration relates to the value of inclusiveness, which is also very important in social participation.

The fact that a placemaking process is inclusive is not merely an aspect of strategic planning and decision making, which is often over the capabilities of the placemaking team; it is also and mainly a value issue promoted through authentic face to face interactions. Inclusiveness also means to show an equal treatment and openness towards people from diverse cultural

backgrounds (with 'culture' not being limited to ethnicity but also to other cultural identities, e.g. age, language, gender, etc.). As Souto and Spasojevic (2017) observe, placemaking and meaningful (authentic) interactions are directly interlinked, "as place becomes an opportunity for cross-cultural learning, individual agency, collective action, negotiation of personal points of view and different ways of doing things". This means that participants in placemaking processes and activities need to be given opportunities for authentic interaction and participation. If their participation is "iconic" or just factual (e.g. a number indicating how many people from different ethnical backgrounds participated in an activity), there is the danger of "objectification" of participants in the process (Martin & Hall-Arber, 2007). A requirement of authenticity in participation is to treat "real" issues, i.e. issues that are relevant (meaningful) for the community participants.

**Social engagement values.** Social engagement, when it refers to placemaking, generally includes two processes: a) the engagement of different types of stakeholders, in the definition and implementation of placemaking goals; and b) the stimulation of individuals' place meaning (i.e. the symbolic meanings ascribed to a place) and place attachment (i.e. the bonds between people and places) values (Kudryavtsev, Stedman, & Krasny, 2012).

Both place meaning and place attachment are needed for social engagement. Souto and Spasojevic (2017) contend that people's bonds with places have a great impact on their engagement with such places. As Manzo and Perkins (2006; p. 339) argue, "those who are more attached to their neighbourhoods are more likely to invest their time and money into the neighbourhood". To create this place attachment, people need to interact with the place, and with each other in relation to the place. Place meaning comes afterwards: through interacting with places, people can attribute new meanings to the place itself, as well as to relations and situations related to the place. Through this construction of meanings, engagement becomes stronger, as attributed meanings reflect personal values, which can further be made more explicit, negotiated and re-defined through intercultural dialogue.

Although place meaning and place attachment are not themselves values, they represent the different ways of individual sensing and sensemaking, which are both ways of perceiving one's own social identity and values. Sensing is about the different ways of feeling the place, through hearing, touch, smell, sight, and taste (Massey, 1994; Rodaway, 2002; Degen, 2008). Although sensing mainly refers to the non-verbal aspects of perception, linked to our five senses, sensemaking refers to a set of processes through which "people enact (create) the social world, constituting it through verbal descriptions" (Brown, Stacey, & Nandhakumar, 2008; p. 1038). In A-Place, both processes of perceiving one's own social participation are equally important.

**Community building values.** Community is a concept strongly related to cultural identity, as people belonging to the same community share one or several cultural identities. According to the sociologists Hall and Du Gay (1996; p.6), "identities are points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us". Identity is not about being "identical", i.e. always the same, but is a process of continuous identification with certain socially shared practices. People engaged in those practices usually form part of a community, for example an academics' community, an artists' community, or a feminist community.

Community building does not refer to communities that already exist (for example, ethnical social groups). Rather, it is dynamic concept and process which is continuously under change and negotiation, just like place. As people's identities change, their sense of community might also change. Furthermore, their need to (re-)create bonds with others may also change in terms of its focus, density and objectives. For this community building to take place within different space-place contexts, artistic practices that aim at the engagement of different social groups can be of primary importance.

*Interculturality* plays a key role in community building. Interculturality, defined as cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples (UNESCO, 2007), has been a particular inspiration for European policies (Lähdesmäki, Koistinen & Ylönen, 2020). It is mainly achieved through intercultural dialogue, i.e. dialogue inspired by open-mindedness, empathy and multiperspectivity (Barrett, 2013) in face of any type of cultural otherness (Méndez García & Byram, 2013). Bringing people from different cultural backgrounds together under a common goal is the basis and first step for intercultural dialogue to take place.

People coming together is not enough for a community to be built. People need to share and exchange their cultural expressions (e.g. creation of cultural artefacts) and impressions (e.g. opinions about cultural phenomena) so that a collective sense of belonging can arise (Zakaria, Amelinckx, & Wilemon, 2004). It is through sharing of knowledge, perceptions, and understandings that community building can be nurtured.

Nonetheless, for any interaction to be meaningful (either in terms of sensing or sensemaking), sharing ideas and artefacts is not enough. For people to create community bonds, joint activities as part of their everyday practice are necessary. According to Wenger (2011; p.2), "members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short, a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction". Joint activities, i.e. activities where people can learn from each other, are an important part of a community's shared practices.

Table 1 presents the three main social processes which will be the focus of quality evaluation in A-Place -namely creative participation, social engagement and community building- together with the core values that are inherent to them.

*Table 1. Quality social processes and their core values*

<b>CREATIVE PARTICIPATION</b>	
<i>Inclusiveness</i>	Create opportunities for people from different cultural backgrounds (with 'culture' not being limited to ethnicity but also to other cultural identities, e.g. age, language, gender, etc.) to engage with each other.
<i>Creativity</i>	Promote participants' creative potential through making available resources and clear instructions, also showing a certain flexibility towards the approach adopted.
<b>SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</b>	
<i>Place meaning</i>	Help participants ascribe different meanings to a place either through sensing (feeling) or sensemaking processes
<i>Place attachment</i>	Help participants create new/different bonds with a place either through sensing (feeling) or sensemaking processes
<b>COMMUNITY BUILDING</b>	
<i>Interculturality</i>	Bringing people from different cultural backgrounds together under a common goal
<i>Sharedness</i>	Help create a common sense of belonging through sharing knowledge, perceptions, and understandings
<i>Joint activities</i>	Help develop a shared repertoire of resources with joint activities, i.e. activities in which people learn from each other, having an important part

The values described above are generic, i.e. similar to those applied in most placemaking activities. For a specific activity, additional values may apply. For example, Alexander and Hamilton (2015) refer to the importance of the “hedonic” value in their “placeful station” placemaking activity. Which values will be promoted and how, largely depends on the specific goals of each placemaking activity.

Quality evaluation asks for the establishment of a set of best-practice standards to build an evidence base for innovative approaches to community participation and engagement. This engagement practice can be further improved by the identification and articulation of social impact criteria, manifested in assessable processes and materials, relevant to the achievement of each placemaking activity goals (Nursey-Bray, 2020). This social impact assessment process will be described in the following section.

### 2.2.2. Social impact assessment

The assessment of the impact of creative placemaking is not an easy enterprise. According to Markusen and Gadwa (2010; p. 17), “it is quite difficult to determine the precise impacts of a localized intervention, because so many other things are simultaneously influencing the environment”. More scholars agree on the several problems related to the “conceptualization and measurement of the ways that creative placemaking influences a place and the people who live in, work in, and visit it” (Stern & Pray, 2014; p. 84). However, a number of other scholars claim that it is possible for planners, designers, and policy makers to propose criteria that can be concretely operationalised in qualitative or quantitative measures, as long as those criteria do not end up to be “fuzzy concepts”, using Markusen’s (2003) term.

Another problem that relates to all programme evaluation initiatives is the so-called “goal paradox”: although goal attainment is by-large the focus of most mainstream evaluation programmes, goal setting and clarification is itself problematic (Friedman, Rothman, & Withers, 2006). What goals can do is to “provide direction for action and evaluation” (Patton, 1997), but for the assessment of these goals, a clear and shared view of the values promoted through the placemaking activities is necessary. We would add that once these values are defined, they can be used as criteria for setting impact indicators.

In A-Place we will require various degrees and measurements of social impact that are not limited to the large socio-economic impact expected from creative placemaking (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Stern & Pray, 2014). As Walljasper (2007; p. 159) contends, “sometimes the impact of bringing people together for a meal is less dramatic but no less meaningful”. In this sense, the action of bringing people together is assessable per se, as long as we find ways to assess its *quality*.

A large part of placemaking is about transforming spaces into places by changing their aesthetic, physical and social identities (Kelkar & Spinelli, 2016). The relational aspect of a place is manifested through the community’s identity manifested not only in the built environment, but also and mainly through the promoted (and potentially established) inclusiveness and engagement<sup>7</sup> of different social groups living and acting in the place. Likewise, the identity of the placemakers themselves is subset to change, as they can transform the way they perceive themselves as change agents, as reflective practitioners (Schön, 1987) able to deal with uncertainty (Tracey & Hutchinson, 2016). In such self-reflective practices, individuals change when they “reflect on what they are saying or doing, analyse the possible consequences, and attempt to adjust their behaviour as a result” (Frame, 2014; p. 93).

The attempt to define social impact in terms of assessing *identities* (of space, community, individuals) is both a dangerous and ambitious one. This is because the identity of places is constantly changing over time, and attributing such a change merely to a placemaking activity means overlooking other important socio-political factors, whose influence lie beyond the

capacities of the placemakers involved. An alternative approach is to explore those identities and their change over time through recognised *social discourses* before, during and after the placemaking activity.

**Social discourses.** The term “discourse” implies a social or mental dimension. For Gardiner (1989; p. 285), a discourse is “the use, among men, of sound signals, articulated, to communicate their desires and their opinions about things”. According to Guillaume (1973), the word has a body, a reality because it exists physically. In fact, a discourse or discourses can be understood as transphrastic units that are subjected to rules of organization that exist in a given social group. These rules may be related to the construction of a narration, a dialogue, an argument, and they can use verbal and non-verbal languages directly linked to the social group in which that discourse is produced (Maingueneau, 1998).

Discourse is both a linguistic and a socio-historical object, as both sides are characteristic of the social discourse itself. In fact, the construction of several semiosis with certain rules characterises the specificity of a discourse. However, plurisemiotic construction is always explicit. It is therefore up to a theory of discourse and its historical, social, cultural inscription to be able to unravel its functioning. Most importantly, as Bakhtin (1981) points out, is that all languages are composed of several social languages, according to different specific groups, each of which makes use of specific semiosis in a particular way.

As Fairclough (1993; p. 136) recalls, a social discourse embodies three dimensions: “it is a spoken or written language text, it is an instance of discourse practice involving the production interpretation of texts and it is a piece of social practice”. Accordingly, the interpreted / produced texts are based on the social practice that constrains them and, at the same time, the plurisemiotic materiality of the texts bear traces of this same social practice.

The use of social discourses as materials for evaluation starts by gathering all information about a social context for then studying the plurisemiotic materiality within a discourse (Voloschinov, 1977). A great part of this plurisemiotic materiality is related to values revealed through discourse. As Walmsley and Birbeck (2006; p. 116) recognize “values emerge from lived experience - through interaction and social exchanges in families, communities, cultures, and societies.” Values related to creative participation, social engagement and community building are very important in A-Place quality evaluation, as explained in Section 2.1. Therefore, social discourses manifesting such values are the first objective of the A-Place social impact assessment process.

**Socially engaged artistic practices.** Another important objective of social impact assessment in A-Place is the artistic practices themselves. The capacity of arts as a change agent, and particularly its potential for placemaking has long been recognized by scholars, architects and artists. Miles (2005) has discussed the potential of arts as part of social processes aimed at defining complex fields of public interest. This is particularly evident for the discussion of the role of arts in activating spaces and placemaking. Miles contrasted this role of the arts with the non-site-specific arts which function as a wallpaper or a decoration and exclude the interests of the community; often covering the socio-economic-cultural problems behind them.

On the other hand, Rendell (2006) has discussed two different agencies of arts. The first is the capacity of arts for opening up new lines of thinking about the relationship between places, situated arts and communities. In this regard, art can play a mediator role in the conversations between different disciplines and community members, thus helping to interlink places and artistic practices, and in this way, contribute to placemaking. According to Rendell, the second agency of arts is to approach urban projects in a critical manner, paying more attention to wider social and political concerns beyond the established boundaries of each realm. Building on Lacy

(1995), Rendell called this critical spatial practice “a socially engaged art practice with a focus on engagement, interaction, context and process”.

**Space-place transformation.** A third objective of social impact assessment in A-Place will be the transformation of a space into a place, according to the values’ manifestation discussed in Section 2.1. Within placemaking, as a place’s identity changes, and public space becomes a *meaningful place*, community building changes as well, because different people attribute different meanings and uses to the same space. The notion of public space has an important role in community building, not as much in the sense of territorial limits but mainly in the sense of situated action and discourses. The space in which a community, defined as a group of people sharing a common goal and/or practice and/or identity, acts and interacts among its members and with members of other communities plays an important role for the community’s growth as an entity. Nonetheless, the relation of place with community is not unidirectional: *the more placemaking becomes a community-led ideation and implementation process, the more its future impact on community building can be secured.*

To conclude, social impact assessment in A-Place will focus on: a) the social discourses relevant to the placemaking activity; b) the artistic practices deployed as part of the placemaking activity; and c) the socio-physical transformation of a space into a place. In the following sections we will discuss: a) the assessment methods to use, focusing on social discourses, artistic practices, and space-place transformation (Section 3); b) the criteria, materials and processes used for such assessment (Section 4); and c) the planning of the assessment process (Section 5).

## 3. Assessment frameworks and methods

In this chapter we present both the theoretical frameworks and the instruments and methods for evaluating placement activities. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the project activities and their integration in the social reality, the proposed frameworks must be adapted to the specific conditions of each placemaking activity. Therefore, we do not intend to provide a generic methodology, but rather a set of tools for partners to choose the most appropriate methods which best suit the specific objectives of their placement activities.

### 3.1. General theoretical frameworks

- a) **Socio-ethnographic approach.** Ethnography is a qualitative research method to study a social/cultural group, to have a deeper understanding of it. By participating in a group, the ethnographer is able to get an insider's perspective and, together with the other group members, share the experiences as them (van Maanen, 1995).

Ethnographic research can be understood a social practice. It is important to consider both what people say and what they keep silent about, as both processes reveal meanings and values in social life. Language is part of a social practice because it is influenced by social and historical 'forces' that cannot be controlled by individuals. In fact, ethnographic research, whose roots lie in anthropological studies, aims at studying people's lives in their communities (Fetterman, 2010). Following a strict definition of ethnography, Wolcott (2005) argues that we can only refer to ethnography as research if it follows the conventions of ethnographic representation based on cultural interpretation.

- b) **Phenomenological approach.** Being a qualitative research inquiry (Creswell, 2007)<sup>1</sup>, the phenomenological approach focuses on the interaction between people living, working or visiting an area, with a focus on the mutual advantages of sharing places and experiences.

To assess and measure the placemaking impact on space-place transformations, as well as its influence on community building values, it is necessary to adopt a qualitative approach to people's experiences and social discourses. Thus, by means of phenomenological approach, it will be possible to understand and describe the community's engagement in cultural activities and programmes, and, ultimately, to map all the multicultural relations and personal connections to social environments. Such task is neither easy nor necessarily conclusive, but the results may contribute to improve future placemaking activities, and to adjust quality planning methods and approaches to the social realities.

By using empirical methods such as contextual observation, interviews, art creation, participation and fruition, as well as data and discourse analysis, it will be possible to reveal productive meanings at specific spaces and places. This kind of assessment by means of the phenomenological method - namely the participant observation - can also be used to understand and highlight positive and/or negative perceptions (e.g. visual, aural, or other, etc.) of places, and to identify who needs to be involved in a (future? urgent?) plan for changing them.

- c) **Aesthetical approach.** The word "aesthetics" is often prone to misunderstandings, even in the context of philosophical discussion. It is not understood as a mere discourse on taste and beauty, nor should it be confused simply with philosophy of art, even though it overlaps with

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Table 8.2 - Data analysis and representation, by Research Approaches in John W. Creswell. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design. Choosing among five approaches* (London: Sage Publications, 2007), p. 156.

this domain. Etymologically, aesthetics (*αἰσθητική*) deals with sense perception and sensorial experience, and the artistic interventions of creative placemaking will certainly involve this sensorial dimension and have an impact on the perception of the place by the (several) senses, not only by the various participants (artists, researchers, members of local communities and the various stakeholders) but also by other residents, visitors and migrants,

More importantly, however, it will affect the way people engage with the urban environment and interact with each other in their everyday lives. This effect encompasses, then, not only (multimodal) sensorial perception but also intersubjective expression/emotion, collective imagination, social significance and shared cultural meaning, in the context of what has been referred to as *environmental aesthetics* (Berleant & Carlson, 2007; Drenthen & Keulartz, 2014), *everyday aesthetics* (Light & Smith, 2005; Mandoki, 2007; Saito, 2008) and, even, *social aesthetics* (Berleant, 2018). These expansions of traditional aesthetics also entail an expansion of the meanings of aesthetic value (Goldman, 1995). In addition to the traditional realm of beauty and other conventional evaluative properties like harmony, coherence, unity or even intensity, notions like engagement, openness, diversity, integrity or communal meaning will have to be taken into account to properly assess the aesthetic impact of the artistic interventions in a creative placemaking context.

Deploying placemaking through art and with the input of artists, architects, directors, musicians and other creative performers means that there will necessarily be an artistic dimension and an aesthetic impact on the place and on everyday life. Assessing the aesthetic values of such endeavours has sometimes been neglected (Eisenbach, 2014). This is so, not only because of the already mentioned challenges of measuring placemaking outcomes in general, but certainly due to the qualitative nature and sometimes vague character of aesthetic criteria and standards for artistic merit. On the other hand, there is sometimes the perception and shared concern among artists that practices of socially engaged art involved in creative placemaking are devalued in terms of artistic merit. Such practices might be considered a lesser forms of art, since their value seems to be instrumental or merely useful to achieve a greater (social or, sadly sometimes, economic) goal, unlike art for art's sake (Meagher, 2019). But practices of socially engaged arts, besides the commitment to their social goals, can and should also be creative, artistically significant and meet high standards of artistic merit. It is thus important to implement a set of aesthetic criteria that will help participant artists, but also other partners, assess their contribution to the enhancement and shaping of aesthetic experience where the actions of creative placemaking are deployed.

### 3.2. Specific assessment tools and methods

The assessment tools and methods to be used in the A-Place project may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) **Semi-structured Interviews.** An interview is a verbal interchange where one person, i.e. the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person, i.e. the interviewee, by asking questions. Although in a classical interview the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, "semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important" (Longhurst, 2010; p. 103).

The use of semi-structured interviews is common in placemaking projects, either as a way of measuring the quality of audience experience (Radbourne, Johanson, Glow, & White,

2009), which is also known as “intrinsic impact” of a performance<sup>2</sup>, or as a way of understanding any changes over time from the planning to the post-implementation of a placemaking activity in the feelings, perceptions and behaviours of local communities (Courage & McKeown, 2019).

**b) Focus Group Discussions.** “A focus group is a group of people, usually between 6 and 12, who meet in an informal setting to talk about a particular topic that has been set by the researcher. The facilitator keeps the group on the topic but is otherwise non-directive, allowing the group to explore the subject from as many angles as they please” (Gibbs, 2012, p. 103). Focus groups can replace interviews, as a cheaper and easier way to access multiple individuals. However, there are additional characteristics of focus groups, which distinguish them from just being ‘collective interviews’, which are:

- Focus groups are interactive;
- The group opinion is at least as important as the individual opinion; and
- The group itself may take a life of its own, not anticipated or initiated by the researcher.

Focus Groups within A-Place will serve those placemaking activities which aim at transforming the ways different communities interact within a space-place and how place identities are communicated within their discourse, in interaction with members of the same or different communities. For the A-Place Focus Groups to be successful, the following elements are proposed.

- The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) consists of at least two members from the most relevant communities of stakeholders directly or indirectly engaged in the activity;
- The questions asked to the FGD participants address both place meaning (symbolic meanings ascribed to a place) and place attachment (bonds between people and a place) processes, so that a two-fold understanding of place identity is achieved;
- The place meaning/attachment questions asked to the FGD participants simultaneously address at least one of the values promoted through A-Place social discourses, previously defined as interculturality, sharedness and joint construction.

**c) Surveys.** The survey is a method of data collection using a questionnaire to a group of respondents, usually representative of a population, asking about their social, professional or family situation, their opinions, their attitude towards human or social options or issues, their expectations, their level of knowledge or awareness of a problem, or on any other point that is relevant to researchers (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 1995).

This method is appropriate for different purposes, such as to have knowledge of a given population’s conditions, ways of life, behaviours, values or opinions; and to analyse a social phenomenon that is believed to be better understood on the basis of information received from individuals in the general population. The main advantage of this method is the possibility of quantifying a multiplicity of data and, consequently, carrying out numerous correlation analyses. Some of the limitations of this method are: the superficiality of the answers, the limited nature of the results (mere descriptions), the lack of elements of deeper understanding, the de-contextualisation of the interviewees (considered independently of their social relations), and the fragile character of the credibility of the device (Javeau, 1992).

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.intrinsicimpact.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Guidelines\\_for\\_Post-Performance\\_Interviews.pdf](http://www.intrinsicimpact.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Guidelines_for_Post-Performance_Interviews.pdf)

In order to improve the effectiveness of the survey method, several conditions must be considered, such as: a rigorous sample selection, a clear and unambiguous formulation of the questions, correspondence between the universe of reference of the questions and the universe of reference of the interviewees, atmosphere of trust when implementing the questionnaire, honesty and professional awareness of the interviewers. Constructing a validated survey instrument is not an easy task. As Fowler (2013) suggests, prior to preparing a draft of a set of survey questions about a specific issue, it is advisable to conduct a FGD first so that the major concerns and themes relevant for the community emerge. As he explains, even for a simple survey goal, such as measuring the number of visits to doctors, the two main concepts namely “visit” and “doctor” should first be clarified: are telephone calls considered visits? Do psychotherapists or physiotherapists count as doctors?, etc. Every question asked in a survey needs to be as clear and straightforward as possible, because the possibility of interaction with the person who asks the questions does not exist, as in the case of an interview.

Within placemaking research, surveys have been used in large-scale projects. For example, the National Western Center (Colorado Miners Community Center - USA) underwent a Placemaking Study<sup>3</sup> to gather input from key stakeholders about the development of their new (redeveloped) centre. For this purpose, the members of the community (i.e. local neighbourhoods and associations) were asked to complete a questionnaire (provided both in English and Spanish), distributed online and as printed copies for a certain period. This survey was composed of 36 questions. Examples of questions were: What types of Future Development would you like to see at the NWC? What Types of Future Development would you like to see near the NWC? What types of Activities would draw your attention to the future NWC? What types of events would you be most interested in attending at the future NWC? Which are your favourite historic areas/aspects of the existing site that you feel should be incorporated somehow in the new NWC?

- d) Socio-ethnographic note taking.** There are “light” forms of socio-ethnographic analysis that researchers and practitioners may use, such as socio-ethnographic note taking. Field-notes are a core instrument of the ethnographical method, typically seen as an individual endeavour of the lone researcher studying a community (Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani, & Martin, 2008). In A-Place, we consider socio-ethnographic note taking an adequate method for placemakers to systematically record their activities, their space of action, as well as the different landscapes existing within it. Training on this type of note taking will be given by our team to the other partners, so that they can use it as a method of registering and self-reporting what is going on, both in terms of actions (as for example during a meeting with important stakeholders) and in terms of action spaces (for example, systematically visiting and describing relevant aspects of the public space, forming the focus of each placemaking activity).
- e) Concept mapping/participatory cartographies.** Concept maps are generally defined as graphic representations consisting of interconnected nodes and arcs used to represent knowledge or reasoning about knowledge (Sowa, 1984). The process of conceptual mapping as both an individual and a collective process of knowledge construction has been broadly used in education and design research (Madrazo & Vidal, 2002). The main reason for its use is that, through a map’s organised visualisation of relations between concepts representing different semantic areas (e.g. problems, causes, solutions, etc.), a comparative systematic analysis of how different people attribute the same or different meanings to the same

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.meghanmccloskeyboydston.com/nwoplacemakingstudy.html> (accessed April, 2020)

concepts is possible. Therefore, in contexts where a common understanding is necessary as the basis for shared perception and action, the conceptual mapping technique is offered among the first options.

A special type of concept mapping particularly used in placemaking activities is the participatory cartography. This method does not share the same epistemology with any other concept mapping technique: although concept mapping has a methodological use focusing on making explicit the cognitive and/or semantic relations around a concept/idea, participatory cartographies have an ontological focus, very similar to the participatory action research, which is to reveal how people see the world (Sanderson et al., 2007). When applied to placemaking, participatory cartography is a method to assess how people see/feel/remember a particular space/place and whether this view/feeling/memory changes as a result of their engagement and participation in the placemaking activities.

Concept mapping used as a tool of collaborative knowledge construction usually requires a software designed for such a scope, to facilitate a shared visualisation of the field of knowledge to be mapped. However, more traditional methods of group concept mapping can be used such as: previously printed map "trees" with boxes and arrows but without content in the boxes (see the example of an empty argument map in Figure 2) or Post-it Notes instead of concept boxes (Preszler, 2004). As an alternative, some open source mind mapping software tools are also available (e.g. MindMup, FreeMind, etc.).

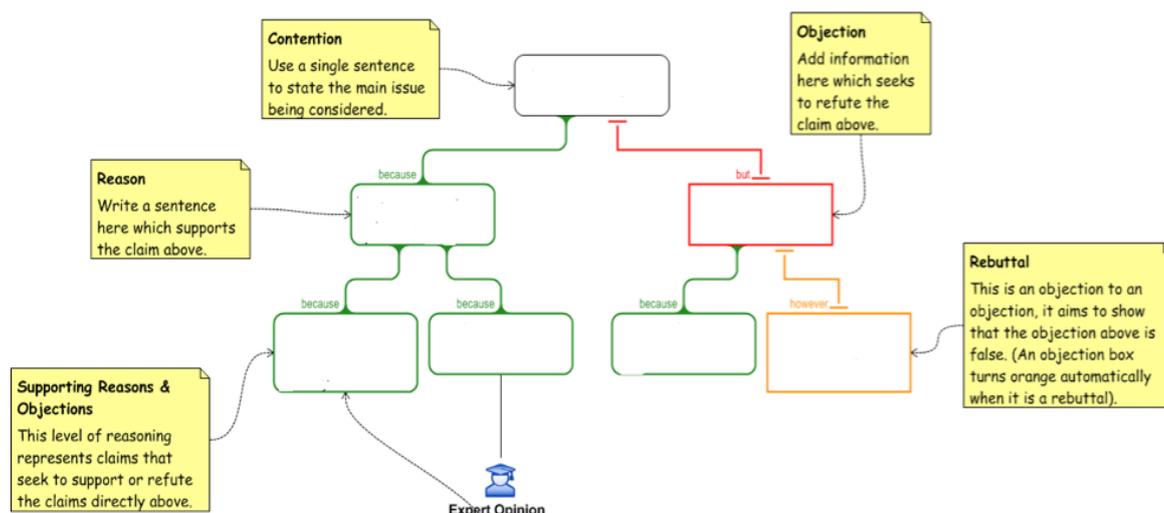


Figure 2. Example of an argument map, extracted from the Rationale argument mapping tool (Source: van Gelder, 2007)

- f) **Reflective narratives.** Extensive literature in many different fields of research confirms the idea that "reflection on experience contributes to understanding and learning about practice" (Jasper, 2005, p. 248). Reflection is a narrative process at its core (Tracey & Hutchinson, 2016). In general, there are two types of reflective narratives, which can be used as methods of assessment, namely reflective storytelling and reflective writing. In relation to placemaking, reflective narratives allow for a chronogeographic perspective on participants' sense of place (Parkes & Thrift, 1980). According to Plumwood (2002), "without the richness

of narratives and narrative subjects that define and elaborate place, the connection between our lived experience and our sense of space and time is reduced" (p. 231). Through the implementation of cross-media infrastructures, placemaking projects thus far have focused on the role that shared narratives play in enabling local community members and stakeholders to connect to each other's experiences and consider each other's interpretations and expectations (Giaccardi & Palen, 2008).

When it comes to reflective writing, it has become "a key component of reflective practice, and central to the notion of learning from experience" (Jasper, 2005, p. 247). Reflective writing is particularly used as a pedagogical approach, because it "it gives students the space to explore the stories they tell themselves about themselves, their experiences, and their beliefs" (Tracey & Hutchinson, 2016; p. 97). In this sense, students' reflective writing can help reveal aspects about the development of their professional identity development. Within A-Place, this method can be particularly useful for examining any changes in students' identities (as revealed in their discourse), as a result of their participation in socially engaged artistic practices.

The tools and methods presented above might be implemented at different phases of placemaking activities in the A-Place project, namely three: planning, implementing and reflecting. However, some of the methods are more appropriate for one phase than for others, as reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. A-Place assessment methods in relation to assessment object and time

OBJECTIVE	PLAN	IMPLEMENT	REFLECT
Social discourses	Interviews, FGD, Conceptual mapping, Narratives	Surveys, interviews	Interviews, FGD, Conceptual mapping, Narratives
Socially engaged artistic practices	<i>Quality evaluation monitoring (see Section 2)</i>	Aesthetic analysis	
Space-Place transformation	Socio-ethnographic note taking, Phenomenological analysis	Socio-ethnographic note taking, Phenomenological analysis	Socio-ethnographic note taking, Phenomenological analysis

## 4. Planning the assessment of activities

Planning the assessment of activities involves several steps and procedures with the purpose of supporting the partner implementation phases of the activities. The plan is also the base of the collection of data that will facilitate an efficient work flow and evaluation. The description below renders the map of actions and goals, and establishes the adequacy of the proposed methods for each creative placemaking activity and its process of space-place transformation.

### 4.1. Assessing social discourses and their change through time

**Step 1:** Choose which of the types of social discourses is/are more relevant to the goals of your activity. Your choice should also be based on the possibility of having the same assessment repeated twice (i.e. planning and post-implementation) and, if possible, with the same people or representative group of stakeholders. In the case of surveys and interviews, they can be limited to only the implementation phase if the first option is not possible. Finally, interviews and conceptual mapping at the Reflection phase only make sense when combined with their implementation in the Planning phase as well, whereas FGD and reflective narratives can only be used at the Reflection phase if this is considered appropriate or more feasible.

**Step 2:** Identify the assessment goal, i.e. what you want to do/find with the application of the specific social discourse analysis method in the specific context. NOTE: the assessment goal is different from the motivation of the placemaking activity; it is more concrete and directly related to the social discourse on which it is applied.

**Step 3:** Structure the data collection process (define the impact target group, frame the thematic focus, and/or design the questions).

Table 3 presents some examples of social discourses planned to be assessed during the A-Place first year activities at different phases of the placemaking process.

*Table 3. Examples of social discourses employed by different A-Place activities at different time phases*

PLACE	PHASE	SOCIAL DISCOURSE	ASSESSMENT GOAL
A Weaved Place in Barcelona	PLAN & REFLECT	Participatory cartography	To identify common links between people and places To discover lost spaces which need to be reactivated, re-signified
A Joint Place in Nicosia	REFLECT	FGD	To find out whether the local community's perception of Kaimakli neighbourhood changed as result of the Joint Place activity
A Calm Place in Brussels	IMPLEMENT	Surveys/interviews	To find out what/how participants feel in the learning bubble
A Visionary Place in Bologna	IMPLEMENT	Interviews / FGD	To contribute to the understanding of the conditions of people in transit (e.g. migrants and refugees),

			public awareness of the problems of the city and people's use of public space.
A Hidden Place in Ljubljana	PLAN	Narratives	To learn about people's memories and perceptions related to the space/place, their attitude towards it; how they feel engaged to this place; what they expect from this place (if anything) in the future; whether they have any visions for its development
A Sound Place in Lisbon	IMPLEMENT	Surveys/interviews	To find out about people's perception of the soundscape created around Martim Moniz square

**Step 4.** Construct the concrete questions to ask. This is the most difficult step and it usually requires some knowledge of social science methods. For this reason, in A-Place we distinguish between social discourse data collection done by the social science experts (P9) and data collection done by the local teams (see Section 6). However, here we will provide a simple method for constructing some interview or FGD questions:

- a) Choose one or more of the values you are most interested in promoting. They can be of the ones presented in Table 1 and/or others, according to the activity goals.
- b) Associate each value to the most related previously defined assessment goal(s).
- c) Create open-ended questions which best express the relationship between what we want to assess (value) and why (goal).

An example of identifying interview/FGD questions based on the Community building values of interculturality, sharedness, and joint construction is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Example of questions oriented towards Community building

VALUES	SOCIAL PROCESSES	QUESTIONS
<i>Interculturality</i>	How does the space/place promote interaction between members of different cultural communities (e.g. based on ethnicity, age, gender, profession, socio-economic status, etc.)	With whom do you meet in the space-place? Do you know who they are? What does the space/place offer so you can meet/know each other? What can it offer more?
<i>Sharedness</i>	How does the space/place promote sharing of feelings, information, experiences, memories, etc. between different users?	What do you/would you like to share in the space/place? How would you feel about this sharing?
<i>Joint construction</i>	How does the space/place promote the construction of joint artefacts, for example co-designing, co-cooking, co-imaginery, etc.?	At what moments of interaction have you felt that you have constructed something tangible or intangible together with others in regards to the space/place?

## 4.2. Assessing socially engaged artistic practices

Although social discourses refer to the discourses produced by the participants in all phases of the placemaking activities, socially engaged artistic practices as objects of assessment mainly refer to: (a) the quality monitoring processes and activities carried out by the placemaking team as a way to secure creative participation, social engagement and community building as part of the preparatory phase (see Section 2); and (b) the aesthetic analysis of the artistic practices themselves as the focus of analysis.

### 4.2.1. Defining the focus/foci of quality evaluation monitoring

Defining the focus/foci of quality evaluation monitoring depends on the type of artistic practice, which in the case of A-Place is defined by the type of creative placemaking. In each of the five placemaking types, namely Spot-Place, Mobile-Place, Learn-Place, Joint-Place and Digital-Place, art plays a different role; therefore, the quality of socially engaged artistic processes needs to be monitored on the basis of different criteria, such as the following:

#### ***Spot-Place: Art as mediator of different experiences***

- Has the placemaking activity contributed to the involvement of local groups/communities with the process of preparing and performing the activity?
- Has the placemaking activity contributed in the creation of new collaborations between different local groups?
- Has the placemaking activity contributed in stimulating the creativity of local participants and/or their aesthetic awareness/perception concerning the place where it was developed? [rationale: people normally have a purely functional attitude towards urban spaces so if the process of placemaking makes people look differently at the physical and social environment and discover aesthetic properties and values in the surroundings, they will also start having a different sense of place and of belonging].
- Has the placemaking activity contributed to actually changing existing social dynamics and the perception of other local groups?

#### ***Mobile-Place: Art as incubator of new ways of relating to each other and to the place***

- Has the Mobile-Placemaking contributed to connecting different places by raising awareness that, despite being in different places, and possibly of different cultures, participants share common goals and values?
- Has the Mobile-Placemaking contributed to changing the perception of a space and of different local communities by introducing new and foreign perspectives?
- Has the Mobile-Placemaking contributed to developing practices of openness, tolerance and solidarity towards the Other?

#### ***Learn-Place: Art as a collective reflection on the sense of place***

- Has the Learn-Placemaking activity contributed to raising awareness in the academic community (students, teachers, researchers) and in policymakers about the virtues of placemaking through artistic practices?
- Has the Learn-Placemaking activity contributed to opening a consistent dialogue between the academic community, artists, local communities and policymakers about urban and social issues in general as well as specific issues about the spaces where placemaking activities were prepared and implemented?
- Has the Learn-Placemaking activity contributed to discussing new approaches to community building and socially engaged practices?

Has the Learn-Placemaking activity contributed to establishing ways of future cooperation between the academic community, artists, local communities and policymakers?

**Joint-Place: Art as mixing artistic practices**

- Has the Joint-Placemaking activity contributed to establishing a collaborative and creative exchange between the placemakers and artists of different countries?
- Has the Joint-Placemaking activity contributed to bringing different placemaking experiences and approaches to the Joint-Place?
- Has the Joint-Placemaking activity contributed to raising awareness to the values of sharedness, joint construction and interculturality in the process of placemaking?
- Has the Joint-Placemaking activity contributed to the detection of common challenges, difficulties and solutions for urban and social issues through the preparation and implementation of placemaking activities?

**Digital-Place: Art as connecting using digital media**

- Has the Digital-Place activity contributed to creating a meaningful-place(s) and/or to understanding its limits and value(s)?
- Has the Digital-Place contributed to strengthening social relations, connecting people and creating or reinforcing a sense of (global/local) community?
- Has the Digital-Place contributed to a creative interaction and to sharing experiences between A-Place partners, artists and communities (e.g. academic communities, cybernauts, global community, etc.)?
- Has the Digital-Place contributed to disseminating and expanding the humanistic values addressed by A-Place Project, and has it succeeded in involving people in a debate on the importance of how they live the place?
- Has the Digital-Place contributed to intertwining a proactive creative process of placemaking and the experience of enjoyment of a "place" with (no) boundaries?

### 4.3. Assessing aesthetic qualities

The aesthetic analysis may be constantly refined and adapted by the target values of each type of created artistic intervention, eventually evoking concepts that may be specific to it. For example, in the case of the placemaking activity "A Sound Place", organised by the New University of Lisbon, the analysis will also rely on the already well-known notion of "soundscape" (Schafer, 1993) in all its multi-layered complexity (keynote sounds, signals and soundmarks) and on a selection from the repertoire of "sound-effects" (for instance: *anamnesis*, *cut out*, *metamorphosis*, *niche*, *sharawadji*) collected by the studies of CRESSON (Centre de recherche sur l'Espace Sonore et l'environnement urbain) (Augoyard & Torgue, 2005). This helps to understand not only the physical, but also the psycho-sociological influence of urban space on the everyday sonic experience of citizens and occasional visitors. Furthermore, aesthetic values should be considered contextually and should take into account the variety of approaches and cultural diversity of participants in order to avoid the imposition of dominant standards of taste on foreign communities. Artistic activities in the context of creative placemaking should embrace the coexistence of multiple aesthetics and encourage cultural dialogue through the entire process (planning, implementation and reflection).

The overall artistic/aesthetic evaluation shall take into consideration the following set of criteria:

- a) Formal and structural qualities.** Each artistic artefact, action/performance or intervention shall be described in its formal and structural features and submitted to a brief analysis in order to assess how well the parts relate to each other and to the whole work, in an aim to achieve (or not) balance, harmony, unity in diversity, integrity and coherence. Obviously, each artistic discipline has a different language and a different set of formal principles and

rules, so the evaluation will be different in each case. For instance, music deals with relations between pitches (intervals), durations, intensities and timbres, which results in melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, dynamic and chromatic/spectral structures, while painting is about patches of colour, dialectical relationship between figure and ground, grouping or segregation of figurative and/or chromatic elements, perspectival distribution or lack of it, etc.).

- a) **Perceptual/sensorial qualities.** Considering that artistic interventions have a strong impact on our sensorial experience, it will be important to assess in which ways they enhance (multimodal) sense perception or raise awareness about the multiple sensorial stimuli of the environment. Some questions might guide the analysis of these perceptual qualities, such as: how does the work/intervention highlight or challenge sensory expectations of the participants and of the audience? How does the way the work is presented magnify (or not) sensory experiences of the audience/spectators? How are the different sensory experiences and modalities integrated or combined? What impact did the work have on the daily experience of the place?
- b) **Expressive/emotional qualities.** Since artworks and performances usually have the power to not only express, but also evoke emotions and feelings, it will be important to consider how they affect the feeling and the sense of place in the participants, how they elicit emotional responses, trigger positive or negative emotions with respect to the place or to other people/communities, how the way they are presented enhances those responses and what is the emotional character of those works/performances (are they cheerful, depressive, moving, alarming, angry, boring, amusing or merely evocative?). Also, do they contribute to promoting empathy, tolerance, feelings of belonging or instead anger, aggressiveness, indignation, indifference? How varied or similar are those emotional responses among the several participants and audiences?
- c) **Environmental properties.** Since these artistic activities are directed towards public space with the purpose of creatively converting it into a place, it is fundamental to consider the ways in which site-specificity is addressed. Specifically, to assess how they articulate and are integrated with the physical and social surroundings; whether they are harmonious or disruptive, balanced, disproportionate, redundant or insufficient; if they have a sustainable approach with regard to materials, local resources and ecological equilibrium; and if they invite participants and audiences to discover the uniqueness of a place. In the case of "A Sound Place", for example, a descriptive analysis of the local soundscape, considering the multiple geophonic, biophonic and anthropophonic (i.e. sounds produced by human beings, which include the linguistic and musical landscape of the various local communities) sources (Krause, 2008) shall be undertaken and then compared to the contents of the musical composition/performance and sound art installation.
- d) **Semantic/representational properties.** Some artworks have fictional or documental content that they represent or refer to, which makes them convey some particular meanings which are susceptible to evaluation: they can be judged realistic, distorted, symbolic or utopian. However, not all artworks/performances necessarily have a representational content, in the sense that they would be "about something" (such is the case of instrumental music). Nonetheless, even those artworks that do not have representational content in a strict sense, still have symbolic connections, semiotic codes that link them to culture and community. Then, it is possible to ask: is the content of the work/performance in any way connected with the actual space/place? Does the way it is presented enhance its ability to convey meaning clearly? Does it represent the features, residents, communities, cultures or the identity of the place? Does it introduce new creative elements? Is it intrusive or, even, disruptive?
- e) **Historically related properties.** It is important to understand how the works/performances connect the history of the place with its cultural traditions - symbolic, linguistic and musical - as well as with its present social and cultural conditions and future development. Therefore, considerations on the originality, boldness, provocativeness, and inspirational nature of the works shall be considered in an aesthetic analysis of the artistic interventions. Moreover, issues concerning memory, cultural heritage and exchange shall be addressed. For example,

asking questions such as: Has the work/performance explored notions of authenticity, cultural appropriation and assimilation? Did the artistic intervention embody foreign traditions and/or included/celebrated artistic knowledge, styles and stories/narratives from local communities?

- f) **Socially related properties.** Given the social character of creative placemaking it is only natural that an artistic intervention promotes socially relevant features of creativity, expression and artmaking like participation, inclusiveness and interculturality. Therefore, the way it manages to achieve those goals should also be considered in the aesthetic analysis of the artistic artefacts/performances by inquiring, for instance: its power to motivate open dialogue and effective cooperation between the different communities of creators and spectators/listeners (residents, migrants, visitors, academics and other artists/musicians); and if and how the creative process actively included members of different communities, integrating their effective contributions and not just using them as illustrative elements of a seemingly multicultural artefact/performance.
- g) **Rhythmic properties.** A city is a heterogeneous landscape of area that has different rhythms, e.g., an abandoned lot, an interstitial or liminal place (Brighenti, 2013), some more prone to intermittency or even to plain stillness. And urban life is known for its fast pace and sometimes frantic rhythm. Artworks that intervene in an urban area will bring their own rhythm, which might absorb or challenge the rhythm of that place. An artistic intervention can thus be considered from the perspective of its rhythmic character and the way it affects or is affected by the rhythm of the place. It then makes sense to ask if and how the artwork/performance grasps, enhances or decreases the perception of the urban rhythm by the participants and audiences; and if and how the artistic intervention expresses or is influenced by the pace and tempo of the place. Such questions can easily arise in vis-à-vis sonic installations, musical or dance performances that call into question the soundscape or the temporal dynamics of a city; activities – such as visual arts, photography or film making– which express the multiple fluxes and rhythms of social life.
- h) **Everyday aesthetic values.** The nature of creative placemaking implies that the artistic intervention on a place will affect, as well as be affected by the ambiances, atmospheres and character of the daily life. Therefore, it might be relevant to assess the aesthetic qualities of everyday that will transpire through the artwork/performance as well as those that will be transformed by the intervention. In this regard, to assess the impact of the artistic intervention on the everyday life of the place it might be relevant to ask questions such as: Does it reinforce the familiarity of daily routines or is it disruptive?, Does it invade and disturb or is it problematic and invites reflection about the status quo?; Does the work/performance challenge the everyday habits of local residents?; Does it absorb the local ambiances and ordinary atmosphere(s) of the place?

#### 4.4. Assessing the space/place transformation through time

The primary objective of A-Place phenomenological analysis is to investigate whether/how spaces and places change and how/why those changes are related to placemaking activities. In order to do that, we will take the following steps: observing, assessing, experiencing and analysing (Embree, 2011; Wertz et al., 2011) both the *space* before the placemaking activity and the *place* after the placemaking activity. An analysis following these steps -which sometimes can be concurring- will be undertaken to assess the transformation of spaces into places through placemaking activities. This will include: a) the collection of information about the space, the community and their dynamics at different moments of the project; b) a comparison and analysis of the information to understand if there were any changes and what changes occurred; and c) if possible, conclusions on the influence of artistic practices in changing public space and its experience.

#### 4.5. Assessing quality and social impact

The objective of the quality assessment is to identify the values that are promoted through each placemaking activity. Social impact assessment, on the other hand, has to do with evaluating the transformations of the sociophysical environment as a result of the placemaking activities. Both assessments are to be carried out throughout the phases of planning, implementation and reflection. The data and procedures to evaluate the quality and the impact of placemaking activities vary along its development phases.

However, it should be mentioned that planning, implementation and reflection do not always follow a sequence. These are multi-layered processes, and some may occur simultaneously, or even several times, if activities are repeated. In addition, the implementation and the subsequent reflection of such actions may lead to further modifications of both processes. Similarly, objectives, values, and changes that were supposed to be achieved may not be immediately visible, due to the ephemeral nature of the event or the need for a continuous intervention and action. In anticipation of such difficulties, new forms of qualitative assessment based on perception (e.g. street walks, informal round tables with placemaking creators, etc.) can fill data gaps due to specific conditions and/or limitations imposed by context.

With regard to the quality evaluation, it is necessary to define the values at stake to define quality indicators, the most appropriate assessment methods to use, and the actors involved in the collection and analysis of the data. Table 5 summarizes the elements involved in the quality evaluation at each stage, and their possible alignments.

*Table 5. An example of a planning quality organisation process*

PLAN	PERFORM	REFLECT
Space	Place	Place (creative place)
Individual meanings, perceptions, feelings	Individual meanings, perceptions, feelings	Collective meanings, perceptions, feelings
Social discourses related to social engagement	Social discourses related to community building	Socially engaged artistic practices
Sharedness	Interculturality	Joint construction
Focus Groups or Reflective workshops	Interviews or Reflective narrations	Socio-ethnographic or Phenomenological analysis
Collected data by the placemaking team: Verbal or non-verbal outcomes from participants in the workshops	Collected data by the placemaking team: Written reflective narrations	Collected data by the placemaking team: Diaries and/or visual material from the same exact location during a period of time

The quality of the placemaking activities needs to align with the overarching social impact goals, target groups and indicators as summarised in Table 6. This table includes some assessment criteria, which refer to the particular analysis which will be applied to the collected data. The same criteria will be applied to all placemaking activities aiming at the same goal.

Table 6. The A-Place social impact alignment

PHASE	GOAL	TARGET GROUP	IMPACT INDICATOR	ASSESSMENT METHOD	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
<b>PLAN</b>	Increase social engagement/inclusion of less favoured groups Create/Increase dialogue between different resident communities	Local communities (both migrants and non-migrants, residents and non-residents students and non-students, of low and high socio-economic level, of different age groups, etc.)	Emergence of inter-community discourse or different ways of interacting with each other	Focus groups/interviews held with representatives of various communities at different phases (plan, perform, reflect) of the activity Physical interaction: Ethnographic note taking and/or filming of the place at various moments	Promotion of values: What are the expectations of the local communities regarding their ways of interacting with others?
<b>PERFORM</b>	Change/Increase in users' connection to the space/place	Diverse permanent/temporal users	Creation of a sense of a place Emergence of different types of place sense making experiences	Phenomenological/aesthetic analysis of the place and its related artefacts Surveys/Interviews/Informal talks/focus groups with different types of users before, during, and/or after the activity Conceptual mapping or other visualization techniques with permanent users before, during and/or after the activity	Criticality: Has something changed in the way a space/place is used and/or perceived and/or felt?
<b>REFLECT</b>	Promote/enrich understanding of placemaking as an essential aspect of living together	Policy makers	References to placemaking in the authorities' future plans and/or discourses	Informal talks/Interviews with relevant authorities before and/or after the activity	Reflexivity: Have the expectations of different stakeholders involved been met? Has placemaking created different expectations? Has placemaking contributed in the construction and promotion of socially situated discourses meaningful for the local communities?
		Local communities	Reference to place-making transformation potential in terms of community building	Focus groups/interviews with representatives of local communities	
		Other (e.g. artistic groups, academics, students, etc.)	Reference to placemaking transformation potential in terms of socially engaged artistic practices	Focus group with artists/academics/students involved Reporting on the process of planning, implementation, and evaluation of their own perceived placemaking goals (self-evaluation)	

## 5. Aligning planning and evaluation of placemaking activities

### 5.1. Assessing placemaking activities in a changing context

As stated in the introduction to chapter 3, the interdisciplinary approach of the project A-Place conveys a complex process of integration of the placemaking activities into a dynamic social reality. Therefore, the use of the frameworks and methods presented in the previous sections may not be applicable (for ethical reasons, for example), or useful (if they do not meet the planned objectives), for the assessment of some placemaking activities. In such cases, it is necessary for the evaluation team and the partners responsible for planning the placemaking activities to jointly develop the appropriate evaluation methods and tools. Such an exercise has been carried out during the preparation of this report, first in the meetings held in December 2019 and January 2020, and later during the week from July 13<sup>th</sup> to July 17<sup>th</sup> 2020.

### 5.2. Outcomes of meetings

Following the meetings held in July 2020, and as a result of subsequent reflections within the evaluation team at NOVA, some limitations and challenges were identified:

#### CONSTRAINTS DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC:

- a) Some of the measures initially envisaged in Outputs 1.1-1.2-13-1.4 "Planning for local activities" need to be rethought and redesigned, among them, changing the location of activities and emphasizing the use of the Internet as a "place" where activities converge.
- b) There are delays in approval by municipal authorities to use public spaces for events.
- c) Activities were initially planned for public spaces, but the new "normal" affects all aspects of life and experience in public spaces: there are increasing difficulties in using public spaces due to the imposition of social distancing and limitations of number of people raising both ethical and safety issues.
- d) Major difficulties or even the impossibility of contacting communities; most partners have to adjust ways of obtaining and analysing evaluation data.

#### PARTNERS' CONSTRAINTS:

- a) Some partners find it difficult, or even impossible, to assess the social impact of creative processes using social science frameworks and analytical methodologies and tools.
- b) Difficulties in adjusting the meaning of key concepts such as "communities/community" or "social impact" to specific realities, which would require a redefinition of these concepts, in each specific context. In order to address these issues, further discussions will be held in parallel meetings at the project level.

In the face of these difficulties, a number of measures have been discussed with the partners involved and are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Other methods, combined methodologies and assessment criteria

PHASE	METHODS	ACTIVITY	GOALS	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
<b>IMPLEMENT</b>	FGD, round tables, informal meetings, debates	Online joined Learn Place	To get different points of view and opinions from people involved in the creation process, to analyse the changes of perception of spaces	To be defined by partners
<b>PLAN / IMPLEMENT</b>	Participant observation (e.g. partners, creative teams, etc.)	Street walks	To collect perceptions of space and place	To be defined by partners
<b>PLAN / IMPLEMENT / REFLECTING</b>	Internet: social media, etc.	Discourse analysis, content analysis, image analysis	To get feedback and obtain opinions from a mass audience or from specific audiences	To be defined by partners
<b>PLAN / IMPLEMENT / REFLECTING</b>	Artist diary; partner diary (written, audio-visual, etc.)	Discourse analysis, content analysis, image analysis	To get the perception of the people involved in the activity	To be defined by partners
<b>PLAN / IMPLEMENT / REFLECTING</b>	Web mediation: online spectacles, activities, etc.	Quantitative analysis (e.g. number of "likes" and other emojis; online surveys; hashtag analysis, etc.)	To define levels of impact on different audiences and communities	To be defined by partners

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# Annex 1

## Self-assessment and monitoring report

*Partners' self-assessment and monitoring report*

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### MONITORING QUALITY

#### CREATIVE PARTICIPATION

Did we guarantee that: (a) members of different community groups, including immigrants, were engaged in planning participatory meetings? (b) different creative approaches and materials were available for the participants to show their maximum creative potential?

#### SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Did we: (a) engage community key representatives of all different stakeholders' groups, including policy makers, in the planning phase of the activity? (b) promote activities that aimed at creating or changing the "sense of a place" among individuals, either through establishing new bonds (meanings, perceptions, positive feelings) of the existing space users with the place, or through creating a sense of place<sup>1</sup> among individuals who visited the place for the first time?

#### COMMUNITY BUILDING

Did we: (a) enable people from different ethnical, linguistic, gender, age, profession, socio-economic status to meaningfully interact with each other through a collaborative activity (i.e. co-cooking, co-drawing, co-reflecting, etc.); (b) bring different community stakeholders together under a common goal; (c) merge different cultural backgrounds in ways to show the various colours, sounds, tastes, representations, etc. existing in the community?

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### ASSESSING QUALITY (SOCIAL IMPACT)

#### PLANNING

Did we: (a<sup>2</sup>) collect any verbal or non-verbal data that can be used as evaluation materials according to Section 4 of the Deliverable 5.1? (b) arrange with WP5 leader the data collection to take place during the Planning phase of the placemaking activity?

#### IMPLEMENTATION

Did we: (a<sup>2</sup>) collect any verbal or non-verbal data that can be used as evaluation materials according to Section 4 of the Deliverable 5.1? (b) arrange with WP5 leader the data collection to take place during the Implementation phase of the placemaking activity?

#### REFLECTION

Did we: (a<sup>2</sup>) collect any verbal or non-verbal data that can be used as evaluation materials according to Section 4 of Deliverable 5.1? (b) arrange with WP5 leader the data collection to take place during the Reflection phase of the placemaking activity?

- <sup>1</sup>In this case, sense of place is defined by the following characteristics (Hes et al., 290, p. 220): **Accessibility** (an area that anyone can enter regardless of their situation and that is well connected via transport to other areas); **Belonging** (a place and community that people can relate to); **Sustainable** (that the area is both economically and environmentally viable allowing the place to function across various generations), **Atmosphere** (that the place has a good vibe, lively and amicable making people feel welcome), **Feeling** (which was defined by the participants as being able to generate an emotional connection with the people using the space—place attachment); and **Safety** (feeling safe while in the site)
- <sup>2</sup>In those cases, attach the materials with a description of how they were collected and send them to the WP5 leader for evaluation. If the materials are verbal data, send the transcriptions not the sound files. Contact the WP5 leader to check if the materials need to be translated.