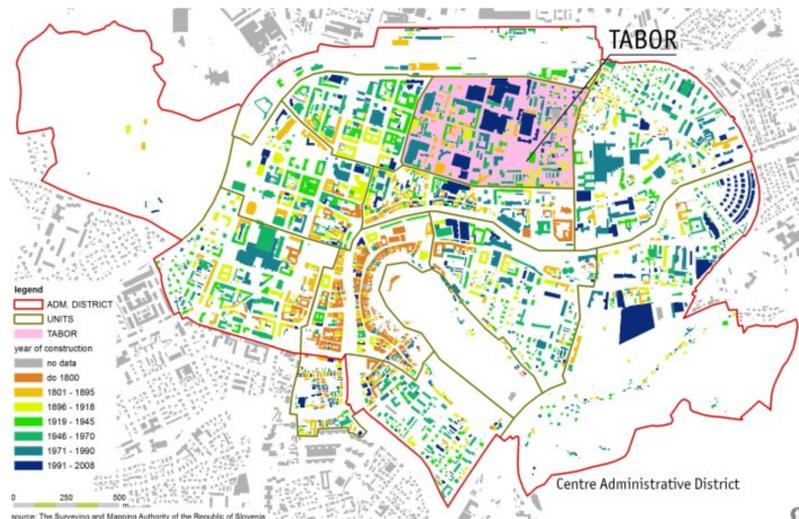


Open Access Strategy - the case of Ljubljana

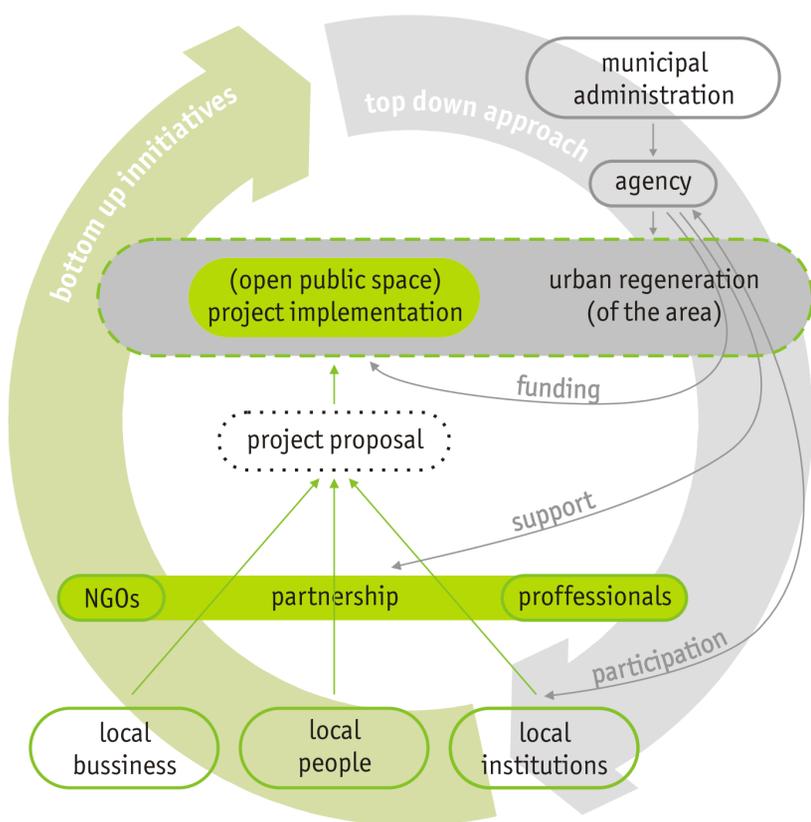
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It is known that strategies can help with introducing new ideas; how to implement them remains an open question. Recent practice in Ljubljana proves that a policy of combined techniques enabling different approaches and actors to be involved can be successful. While accepting a top-down strategy tends to put the greatest share of responsibility for implementation on the impaired public sector, an open access strategy empowers a diverse set of actors to contribute with different actions to mutual physical, social and economic benefits. In the case of Ljubljana one can follow how such a strategy empowers the development of public open space quality as well as the development of promising future partnerships. Via the case of partnership for the city centre regeneration we can get a closer look at a partnership for a city cultural quarter, Tabor. Our study discusses the development of numerous perspectives of open space and urban life quality as a key issue of urban regeneration, possibly generated by way of an open strategy scheme. The idea of openness is to combine and thereby strengthen economic and social investments for the benefit of the quality of life not exclusively the quality of open space or built environment.

there are roughly 50.000 jobs in the district. At the same time it comprises the CBD of Ljubljana as well as the administrative and cultural centre of the state. It also includes the main railway and bus stations and thus the main national and regional public transport hub.



In spite of these facts, there are considerable differences between specific areas within the broader city centre. Based on a number of criteria we have proposed **14 units**, 10 of them are **neighbourhoods** or specific quarters within the central district, two are the main green areas (Castle Hill and Tivoli Park), one is mainly infrastructural (railway station), and one is a small neighbourhood outside the district border, with a specific preserved character of a medieval suburb. Some of the quarters are mainly residential and others are mixed use. The age and current state of building stock as well as the average value of real estate differs greatly.



Twofold (dual) open access

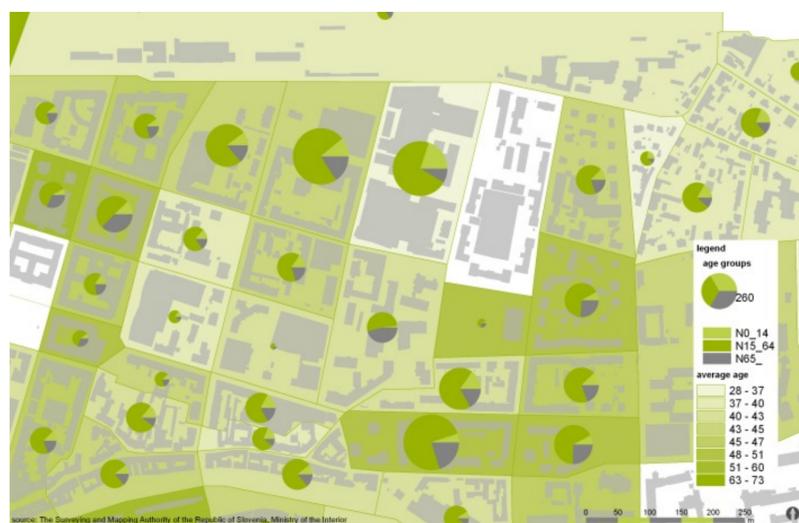
The story of the **Tabor Cultural Quarter** in Ljubljana consist of two simultaneous series of events and efforts to make a change in the quality of life in the area. One is the **top-down approach** of the city administration, the other are various **bottom-up initiatives** in the area.

Top down approach

The City of Ljubljana is searching a way to coordinate and successfully implement urban regeneration in the wider city centre. In a study for the Department of Urban Planning of Ljubljana, the Institute for Spatial Policies is investigating the possible participatory and organizational bases for urban regeneration. In the study we have investigated the social and spatial context in the city centre as well as some case studies of organizational structures in a diverse set of cities.

The **Centre Administrative District's** population density is almost 5000 inh./km², which is the second highest of 17 districts in Ljubljana with over 25.000 inhabitants on a little more than 5 km². In addition

For that reason we propose a multilevel approach performed by a district renewal office connecting and serving several neighbourhood based partnerships with varying stakeholders and agendas.



The **Tabor neighbourhood** is specific for several reasons. It is a mainly 19th and 20th century development on a grid of streets. The population density in the area is over 10.000 inhabitants per km².

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The population is relatively old, with several strong subpopulations. These are elderly people from a rest home, high school students from dormitories in the area, and a concentration of younger people in the newer developments in the north of the area.

The concentration of public buildings there is not so big and the share of service activities' floor area in the neighbourhood is below average. There is also no big and interesting public space in the area.

Notwithstanding the above mentioned facts a partly-planned concentration of cultural institutions is characteristic in the area, with Ministry of Culture, Ethnographic Museum, Modern Gallery, Metelkova mesto, Stara elektrarna, and the only surviving cinema in the centre (Kino Dvor).



Bottom-up initiatives

A very interesting bottom-up initiative in the area is the local cooperation of cultural institutions "Tabor Cultural Quarter". It was initiated by **Bunker**, a non-profit private institute for cultural production, based in the **Stara elektrarna** (old power plant) in the area, and supported by a number of other local cultural institutions as well as IPoP through a well attended



local workshop in 2009. The initiative is aimed at branding the quarter, area based cooperation between cultural institutions and work on relations between local community and local cultural institutions. Bunker is very well connected locally. Several actions have been taken by Bunker to support the idea, including analytic work in focus groups, formal and informal contacts with other stakeholders and occasional actions like temporary street installations by the **Prostoroz** initiative. One of the most explicit findings during the work, especially in all focus groups, is that **local people miss better public space** in the quarter.

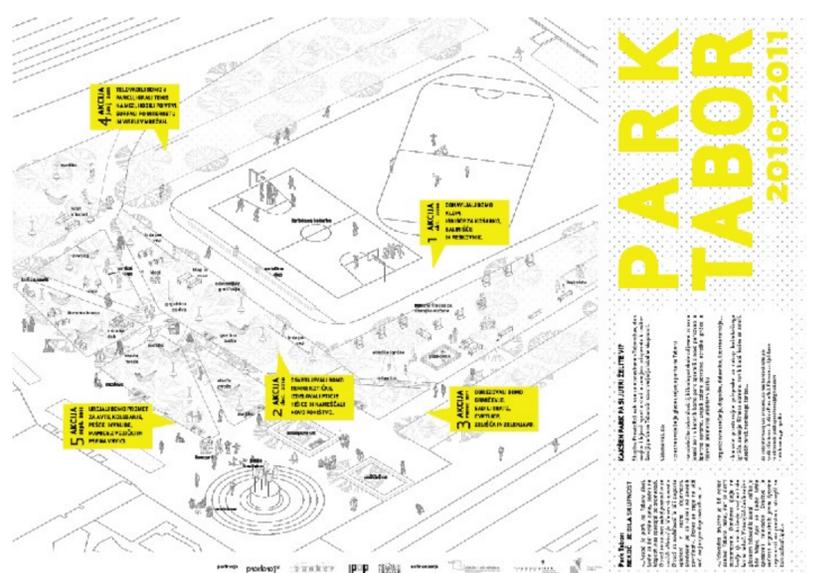
Revitalization of the Tabor Park, which gave name to the area and is the biggest public space there, was expressed as a main wish by several local stakeholders, including the rest home, elementary

and secondary school, kindergarten and children art centre. Most of the park is owned by a local athletic society which has no funds for its renovation. Most involved groups are, to some extent, willing to participate in the renovation activities. Revitalization of an area is never a one-time act, but rather a long process. The workshop so proposed a series of actions to be taken by groups of **volunteers**. Working actions for the revitalization of the park are planned for next year.



We believe that public space like the Tabor Park can and should be the main point of identification for locals and the focal point of regeneration for the entire neighbourhood. The thematic cluster of the local cultural and creative sector, on other hand, can provide branding for the area. The loose ties established so far between local people, organized public and institutions are a priceless basis for urban regeneration partnership the city has in mind. Besides, an organized and structured partnership is much stronger than its parts in negotiations about urban regeneration with the city.

The **open strategy** for the city should be, in the effort **to organize the urban regeneration**, to consider building on such initiatives and **take advantage of established partnerships** and local ideas. In such a situation the attempts to build a whole new top-down participatory structure should be dropped and the urban regeneration agency made an empowering partner instead.



some references:

prostoroz.org

www.bunker.si

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