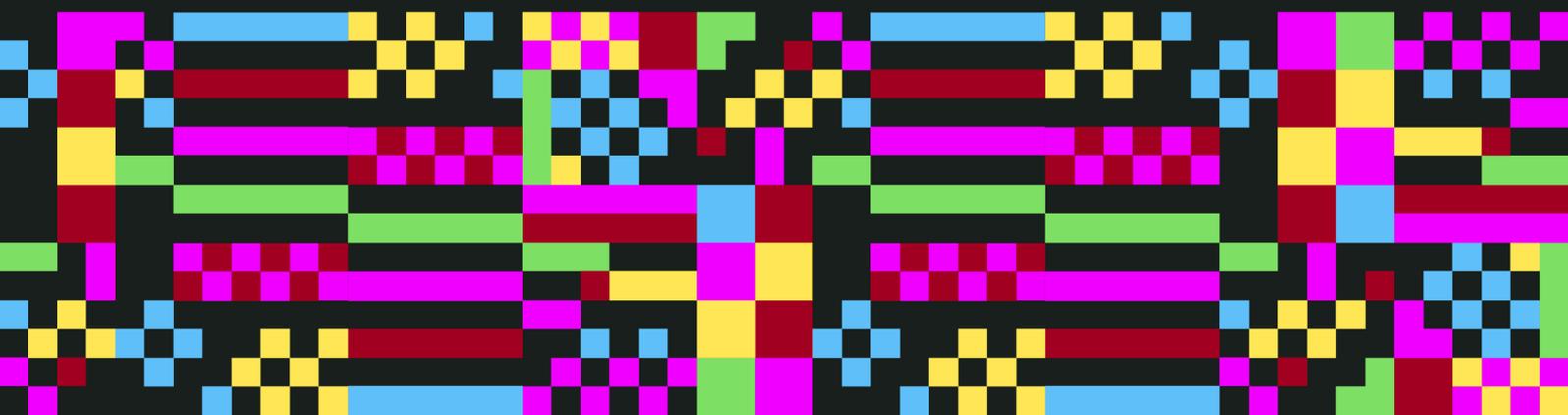


Participatory Programme Toolkit





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photo: Evelin Lumi

Introduction

CYCLE UP! is a transnational cultural and civic initiative that explores how artistic practice can contribute to more sustainable, inclusive, and people-centred urban mobility. Implemented in Katowice (Poland), Bratislava (Slovakia), and Tartu (Estonia), Prague (Czech Republic), and Berlin (Germany), the project places cycling at the intersection of climate responsibility, public space, social inclusion, and everyday urban life.

The project responds to the growing recognition that the transition towards sustainable mobility cannot rely solely on infrastructure investments, regulatory frameworks, or technological solutions. While these elements are essential, they are insufficient without parallel cultural change, civic engagement, and a sense of shared ownership over urban transformation processes. CYCLE UP! addresses this gap by using arts and culture as tools to activate public imagination, stimulate dialogue, and create meaningful opportunities for participation around the future of mobility.

At the centre of the project is a series of participatory artistic programmes developed in close collaboration with artists, local communities, civil society organisations, and decision-makers. These programmes translate artistic research into public-facing interventions that engage citizens directly in reflecting on and re-imagining cycling as an accessible, desirable, and everyday mode of transport. Through activities in public space, workshops, events, and collaborative art-making processes, participants are invited to explore how cycling relates to safety, accessibility, identity, wellbeing, and the quality of urban environments.

CYCLE UP! deliberately positions the bicycle not only as a transport solution, but as a cultural object and social practice. Cycling becomes a lens through which broader questions can be asked: Who feels entitled to use public space? What makes a city feel safe and welcoming? How do everyday mobility choices relate to climate responsibility and social justice? By approaching these questions through artistic methods, the project creates space for perspectives that are often underrepresented in formal planning or policy processes.

A key ambition of CYCLE UP! is to demonstrate that artistic interventions can function as laboratories for urban change. Rather than being symbolic or illustrative, artistic actions are treated as tools for inquiry, experimentation, and collective learning. Artists work alongside residents and institutions to address concrete local challenges such as gaps in cycling infrastructure, safety concerns, logistical barriers, or cultural resistance to cycling. In doing so, the project creates shared spaces where lived experience, creative imagination, and institutional knowledge intersect.

The outcomes of CYCLE UP! extend beyond individual events or cities. The experiences, methods, and lessons generated through the participatory programmes are documented and synthesised in this toolkit. Designed for cities, cultural institutions, NGOs, and decision-makers across Europe, the toolkit provides practical guidance for developing arts-based initiatives that engage communities around sustainable mobility. It supports replication, adaptation, and scaling in diverse urban contexts, contributing to a broader European conversation on culture-led approaches to climate action and urban transformation.



Sebastian Pypłacz
Vice President of BoMiasto

Methodological Framework

The participatory programmes developed within CYCLE UP! are based on a practice-led, collaborative, and context-responsive methodology. The approach draws on participatory arts, community engagement, cultural mediation, and sustainability-oriented urban practices, while remaining flexible enough to respond to different local realities.

The methodology is structured around five interrelated principles: sustainability, learning and sharing, inclusion and connection, collaboration, and impact-oriented practice. These principles inform both the design of individual interventions and the overall structure of the programme.

Art as a Tool for Engagement and Change

CYCLE UP! adopts an art-led approach that recognises artistic practice as a powerful means of engaging people with complex social and environmental challenges. Artists are invited to work across disciplines and formats, including visual arts, performance, participatory installations, digital experiences, community events, and skills-based workshops related to cycling and sustainable living.

The project does not prescribe specific artistic outcomes. Instead, it creates a framework that enables artists to respond creatively to local contexts, community needs, and identified mobility challenges. This openness supports experimentation and allows for the emergence of formats that resonate with local audiences, while maintaining a clear thematic focus on sustainable urban mobility.

Context-Specific Design

Each participatory programme is shaped by the specific political, historical, environmental, and social conditions of its host city. Local partners, community organisations, and municipal stakeholders provide artists with contextual knowledge, insights, and data, ensuring that artistic responses are grounded in local realities.

Key challenges related to cycling—such as inadequate infrastructure, safety concerns, lack of bike parking, or cultural perceptions of cycling—are identified through dialogue with local decision-makers and civil society actors. These challenges are translated into guiding questions that frame the artistic process and orient community participation.

Participation and Co-Creation

Participation is understood as active involvement and co-creation rather than passive consumption. Community members are invited to contribute ideas, skills, stories, and experiences that shape both the process and outcomes of the interventions. Workshops, collaborative art-making sessions, informal discussions, and activities in public space are used to lower barriers to participation and encourage engagement from diverse groups.

Inclusivity is a core consideration throughout the programme. Activities are designed to engage people of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities, including children and young people, seniors, migrants, climate activists, experienced cyclists, and those who do not currently cycle. By valuing diverse perspectives, the project challenges stereotypes and promotes cycling as an inclusive and accessible practice.

Sustainability as Practice

Sustainability is embedded both thematically and operationally. Artists and organisers are encouraged to use low-impact materials, upcycling practices, and environmentally responsible production methods. Local resources and networks are prioritised, and attention is paid to the environmental footprint of artistic production and international collaboration.

Beyond environmental considerations, sustainability is understood in social and institutional terms. The programme seeks to build relationships, knowledge, and capacities that endure beyond individual events. By fostering collaboration between artists, communities, and decision-makers, CYCLE UP! contributes to longer-term processes of civic engagement and policy dialogue around sustainable mobility.

Learning, Reflection, and Knowledge Transfer

Continuous learning is an integral part of the methodology. Feedback from participants, artists, and stakeholders is gathered through informal conversations, observations, and reflective sessions during and after interventions. This allows the programme to remain adaptive and responsive while generating insights into effective engagement strategies.

These insights are consolidated in the CYCLE UP! Toolkit, which translates experiential knowledge into practical guidance. The toolkit combines methodological explanations, case studies, checklists, and evaluation tools that support replication in other cities. In doing so, it strengthens the capacity of cultural and civic actors across Europe to use arts-based approaches in addressing urban mobility and sustainability challenges.

Programme Overview: **From Vision to Practice**

The CYCLE UP! participatory programme was designed as a structured yet flexible framework that translates artistic research and values into concrete, public-facing actions. Its purpose is not only to deliver individual events, but to create a coherent model for engaging communities, artists, and decision-makers around sustainable urban mobility, with cycling as a shared point of reference. This chapter outlines how the programme is structured, how different actors are involved, and how learning flows between interventions and cities. It provides the operational logic that underpins the event catalogue presented later in this toolbox.

Programme Logic and Structure

The programme follows a clear sequence that connects artistic exploration with civic participation and practical learning. Each intervention is treated as both an event and a learning unit. Together, these units form a wider ecosystem of formats that can be adapted to different urban contexts.

The overall logic can be summarised as:

Identify local mobility challenges → Design an artistic response → Engage the community → Reflect and evaluate → Transfer learning to the next intervention

This structure allows the programme to remain responsive to local needs while maintaining coherence across cities. It also ensures that knowledge generated through one activity is not lost, but instead informs future actions.

Rather than delivering a single, fixed model, the programme operates as a modular system. Each city implements several interventions, using different artistic formats and engagement strategies, but all interventions follow the same core principles and documentation standards. This balance between consistency and flexibility is essential for replication.

Cities, Contexts, and Local Adaptation

The programme is implemented in four cities with distinct urban, cultural, and political contexts: Katowice, Bratislava, and Tartu. These cities differ in size, governance structures, cycling cultures, and levels of infrastructure development. Instead of treating these differences as obstacles, the programme uses them as a source of learning.

Local partners play a key role in contextualising each intervention. They provide artists with insights into:

- **local mobility debates and policy priorities,**
- **existing cycling infrastructure and barriers,**
- **social dynamics and community needs,**
- **relevant stakeholders and institutions.**

This ensures that interventions are not abstract or generic, but directly connected to local realities. While the thematic focus on cycling and sustainability is shared, the questions asked and the formats used vary depending on context.

Role of Artists

Artists are central actors in the programme, not only as creators but as facilitators, mediators, and co-researchers. They are invited to approach cycling and mobility from artistic, social, and experiential perspectives, and to work collaboratively with communities rather than for them.

Artists contribute by:

- translating complex mobility issues into accessible experiences,
- creating safe and inviting spaces for participation,
- encouraging imagination, dialogue, and critical reflection,
- experimenting with formats that are not typical in policy or planning processes.

The programme does not limit artistic disciplines. Visual arts, performance, participatory installations, digital tools, and skills-based workshops are all used, depending on the context and audience. What matters is not the medium, but the ability of the artistic process to engage people meaningfully.

Community Engagement in Practice

Community engagement is designed as an active, inclusive process rather than a one-off invitation. The programme combines broad outreach with targeted approaches to reach different audiences.

Key engagement principles include:

- lowering barriers to participation (free events, public spaces, clear communication),
- valuing everyday experience and local knowledge,
- creating opportunities for co-creation rather than passive attendance,
- ensuring activities are accessible across age groups and backgrounds.

Different formats are used to reach different groups, such as families, young people, climate activists, everyday cyclists, and people who do not currently cycle. Engagement strategies are developed together with local organisations that already have trusted relationships within the community.

Involvement of Decision-Makers

Decision-makers are involved as strategic partners rather than passive observers. Their role is to help frame the key questions that interventions address and to connect artistic outcomes with ongoing mobility debates and policy processes.

Their involvement typically includes:

- identifying priority challenges related to cycling and public space,
- contributing contextual knowledge and constraints,
- attending or engaging with events,
- reflecting on outcomes and potential policy implications.

This collaboration increases the relevance and credibility of the programme. It also creates opportunities for artistic interventions to inform future planning decisions, even if indirectly. Importantly, it signals to communities that their participation matters and can influence real change.



photo: Artur Stańczyk

Silent Landscape – Cycling Through the Urban Soundscape

This intervention was conceived as a collective listening experience unfolding through movement rather than discussion. Designed as a bicycle-based sound performance, it invited participants to experience the city through its quieter, often overlooked sonic layers. The intervention responded to the dominance of traffic noise in urban environments and proposed cycling as a mode of transport that allows continued connection with the surrounding soundscape.

The action took place in the area behind Supersam, near the Rawa river—a location that is both central and symbolically charged. While the river itself largely flows underground as a result of past urban planning decisions, traces of nature remain present in the area. This tension between natural and engineered environments provided a meaningful backdrop for a project focused on attentive listening and sustainable mobility.

The intervention was led by sound artist and producer Marcin Dymiter and unfolded as a structured yet open-ended performative ride. Rather than following a single sound source, participants became distributed carriers of a shared composition. Each person contributed a fragment of the sonic landscape while moving independently through the area by bicycle.

Participants gathered for a short introduction explaining the concept of the project and the practical setup. Each person accessed a set of prepared sound recordings via QR codes or direct links, hosted online. These recordings consisted of subtle sound compositions based on field recordings of natural phenomena such as wind, rain, rustling trees, and birdsong—sounds that are typically masked by engine noise in the city.

Using their own smartphones and small Bluetooth speakers, participants selected one recording, adjusted the volume, and began cycling individually within the designated area. There was no fixed route. Participants moved freely, allowing the sounds they carried to blend unpredictably with each other and with the existing urban environment.

After approximately 30 minutes of movement, participants gradually converged at an agreed meeting point. As the individual sound sources came together, the dispersed composition transformed into a collective sonic moment—a temporary, shared “arrival” of the piece. The intervention concluded with a brief closing moment and informal conversation.

The entire experience lasted approximately 60 minutes and required minimal physical infrastructure, relying primarily on participants’ own devices and bicycles.

What an Organisation Can Learn from This Intervention

This intervention demonstrates how participatory sound-based practices can engage people with sustainable mobility and urban environments without relying on verbal explanation or advocacy.

1. Listening can be a powerful form of participation

The project shifts engagement away from speaking, debating, or persuading, and towards shared sensory attention.

Organisational takeaway:

Participation does not always need verbal interaction. Sensory-based formats can reach people who are less responsive to discussion-driven engagement.

2. Cycling enables embodied awareness of the city

Moving through the city by bicycle allows participants to remain acoustically and physically connected to their surroundings.

Organisational takeaway:

Cycling-based interventions can highlight qualities of urban space—such as sound, air, and proximity—that are inaccessible from motorised transport.

3. Distributed formats lower organisational complexity

The intervention required no central stage, no amplification system, and no fixed audience space.

Organisational takeaway:

Decentralised, participant-carried formats reduce logistical barriers while maintaining strong experiential impact.

4. Technology can be simple and inclusive

Using widely available tools (smartphones, Bluetooth speakers, QR codes) made the intervention accessible without specialised equipment.

Organisational takeaway:

Low-tech digital solutions can support sophisticated participatory experiences if they are well explained and optional equipment is available.

5. Sound reveals hidden layers of sustainability

By foregrounding quiet, natural sounds, the project connected sustainable mobility with broader questions of habitat, wellbeing, and intergenerational responsibility.

Organisational takeaway:

Sound-based approaches can expand sustainability narratives beyond emissions and infrastructure to include quality of life and environmental sensitivity.

6. Public space can function as a shared instrument

The city itself became part of the composition, shaped by movement, distance, and encounter.

Organisational takeaway:

Treating public space as an active participant—not just a backdrop—can generate deeper engagement and place-based reflection.

7. Clear framing enables openness

Although the experience was open-ended, a clear introduction and simple rules allowed participants to feel confident and safe.

Organisational takeaway:

Even experimental formats benefit from clear structure at the beginning and a shared moment of closure.

Tour De Chaszczce – Cycling Through Urban Wildness

Tour De Chaszczce was conceived as a guided bicycle exploration of urban “wastelands” and post-industrial areas—spaces often perceived as neglected, transitional, or without value. Led by landscape architect, ecologist, and educator Kasper Jakubowski, the intervention reframed these areas as sites of ecological richness, spontaneous succession, and learning.

The intervention invited participants to cycle through selected post-industrial locations and observe the plant species growing there. Rather than treating these areas as empty or problematic, the ride positioned them as examples of “fourth nature”—ecosystems shaped by abandonment, disturbance, and resilience. Cycling served as a slow, non-invasive way of moving between sites, allowing participants to remain closely connected to the terrain and vegetation.

Throughout the ride, participants stopped at specific locations to learn about plant species, ecological processes, and the adaptive strategies of vegetation thriving in harsh urban conditions. The intervention combined physical movement with in-situ education, turning the city into an open-air classroom.

Participants met at a designated starting point and received a brief introduction to the concept of fourth nature and the logic of the route. The group then moved by bicycle between several post-industrial sites, selected for their ecological diversity and accessibility.

At each stop, the facilitator introduced selected plant species growing spontaneously in the area. Participants were encouraged to look closely at leaves, roots, soil conditions, and patterns of succession. Discussion focused on how these plants colonise disturbed land, improve soil quality, and create habitats for insects and birds.

The ride followed a calm pace, with frequent stops and ample time for observation and questions. The emphasis was not on covering distance but on developing attentiveness. Cycling allowed participants to connect dispersed sites while maintaining continuity with the landscape, in contrast to car-based or indoor educational formats.

What an Organisation Can Learn from This Intervention

This intervention illustrates how cycling can support place-based ecological education and challenge dominant narratives about urban nature and land use.

1. Reframing “unused” spaces unlocks new narratives

Post-industrial sites are often framed as problems or waiting areas for development. This intervention presented them as functioning ecosystems.

Organisational takeaway:

Educational engagement can shift public perception by redefining value, not by adding new infrastructure.

2. Cycling enables slow, attentive exploration

The bicycle provided an optimal balance between reach and immersion, allowing participants to access multiple sites without losing sensory connection.

Organisational takeaway:

For educational formats, cycling can function as a pedagogical tool rather than only a transport mode.

3. Expert-led interpretation builds credibility and trust

The presence of a knowledgeable guide grounded the experience in scientific understanding while remaining accessible.

Organisational takeaway:

Combining expert knowledge with informal outdoor formats increases trust and learning depth.

4. Learning in situ strengthens retention

Observing plants directly in their environment made ecological concepts tangible and memorable.

Organisational takeaway:

Field-based learning is particularly effective for complex environmental topics.

5. Urban nature supports climate resilience narratives

Spontaneous vegetation demonstrates adaptation, regeneration, and resilience without intensive maintenance.

Organisational takeaway:

Nature-based solutions can be communicated through lived examples rather than abstract strategies.

6. Educational rides are low-risk and scalable

The format required minimal equipment and infrastructure.

Organisational takeaway:

Guided cycling tours are easy to replicate and adapt to different cities and contexts.

7. Combining mobility and ecology broadens engagement

The intervention attracted participants interested in nature, sustainability, and urban space, not only cycling.

Organisational takeaway:

Cross-disciplinary formats expand audiences and strengthen relevance.

Olfactory Map of Murcki **– Cycling and Walking** **through the Landscape of Smell**

The Olfactory Map of Murcki was conceived as a sensory exploration of place, using smell as the primary medium for engaging with landscape, memory, and environmental awareness. Led by olfactory artist and eco-therapist Monika Opieka, the intervention combined a bicycle ride with a guided olfactory walk on a former mining heap, transforming a familiar yet often overlooked area into a multi-layered sensory territory.

The intervention challenged the dominance of visual perception in how urban and post-industrial spaces are experienced. By foregrounding the sense of smell, it invited participants to slow down, recalibrate attention, and encounter Murcki through subtle, ephemeral cues carried by air, vegetation, soil, and weather. Cycling served as a connective mode of movement, linking dispersed locations while preserving sensory continuity, whereas walking enabled deeper immersion and focused perception.

The former heap, now partially reclaimed by spontaneous vegetation, functioned as both a physical and symbolic site. It embodied the layered histories of extraction, regeneration, and everyday use, making it an ideal setting for an intervention that explored how landscapes are remembered, inhabited, and reinterpreted through the senses.

Participants arrived by bicycle at a designated meeting point and were introduced to the concept of olfactory mapping and sensory awareness. The group then cycled together to the heap area, where the movement gradually shifted from riding to walking.

During the olfactory walk, participants were guided through a series of stops designed to highlight different scent sources: soil, plants, trees, moisture, wind, and traces of human presence. Rather than naming smells immediately, the facilitator encouraged participants to observe, describe, and associate scents freely, paying attention to emotional responses, memories, and bodily sensations. The walk was followed by a short, hands-on workshop in which participants created their own basic scent compositions using selected natural ingredients. This practical element allowed them to translate sensory impressions into personal olfactory “notes,” reinforcing the idea that landscapes can be interpreted, remembered, and shared through smell.

The intervention concluded with a collective reflection, where participants compared experiences and discussed how olfactory perception reshaped their understanding of the site.

What an Organisation Can Learn from This Intervention

This intervention demonstrates how olfactory practices can open new pathways for engagement with sustainable mobility, post-industrial landscapes, and environmental awareness.

1. Smell enables deep, personal engagement with place

Olfactory perception is closely linked to memory and emotion, making it a powerful tool for personal connection.

Organisational takeaway:

Sensory formats that activate memory can foster strong, lasting relationships with places.

2. Cycling supports sensory continuity across spaces

Moving by bicycle allowed participants to transition smoothly between locations without breaking sensory focus.

Organisational takeaway:

Cycling-based interventions can connect dispersed sites while maintaining embodied awareness.

3. Walking creates space for attentiveness and reflection

Switching from cycling to walking enabled participants to focus on subtle sensory details.

Organisational takeaway:

Combining mobility modes can structure attention and deepen engagement.

4. Olfactory mapping reveals invisible environmental layers

Smells highlighted ecological processes, soil conditions, and vegetation states that are not immediately visible.

Organisational takeaway:

Non-visual approaches can uncover hidden dimensions of sustainability and landscape quality.

5. Simple workshops translate experience into expression

Creating personal scent compositions helped participants articulate and retain sensory impressions.

Organisational takeaway:

Hands-on elements strengthen learning and ownership without requiring extensive infrastructure.

6. Post-industrial sites are rich sensory environments

The heap functioned as a complex olfactory landscape shaped by both nature and history.

Organisational takeaway:

Former industrial areas can be reframed as valuable spaces for environmental education and reflection.

7. Sensory awareness supports wellbeing and care for the environment

Heightened attention to smell encouraged calm, curiosity, and a sense of connection.

Organisational takeaway:

Wellbeing-oriented formats can complement sustainability narratives and broaden participation.

Listening Through Art in a Contested Public Space

This intervention in Bratislava was conceived as a subtle, long-term artistic presence in a place marked by everyday conflict rather than open protest. It unfolded in a newly redesigned urban space previously used for car parking and later transformed into a small parklet with planned bicycle infrastructure. While physically modest, the change provoked strong emotional reactions among residents, revealing deeper tensions around mobility, loss of parking, and shifting ideas of who public space is for.

Between May and August 2025, Slovak artist Šimpe O’Pisár / Šimon Ondruš repeatedly returned to the site, positioning himself not as a spokesperson for cycling or urban change, but as an ordinary person with a bicycle. His approach was intentionally minimal: he asked passers-by for small forms of help or advice related to the bike. These encounters often evolved into spontaneous conversations about daily routines, frustrations, memories, and perceptions of the changing city.

Rather than documenting opinions through surveys or statements, the artist invited participants to co-create short poems based on these conversations. Writing together became a way to slow down, reflect, and externalise feelings that were often difficult to articulate in public debate. The resulting texts captured contradiction, ambivalence, humour, anger, and care—revealing how deeply mobility changes are entangled with personal identity and belonging.

The intervention functioned as a form of “soft listening” embedded in everyday life. It did not aim to resolve conflict or promote a specific position, but to make space for voices that are rarely heard in formal consultation processes. Its strength lay in duration, repetition, and relational presence rather than scale or visibility.

What an Organisation Can Learn from This Intervention

This intervention offers insights into how artistic, low-intensity engagement can operate in polarised or low-trust environments, particularly around contested public space and transport change.

1. Engagement can begin without stating the issue explicitly

By avoiding direct references to cycling policy or urban conflict, the artist created space for participants to approach the topic on their own terms.

Organisational takeaway:

Indirect entry points can be more effective than explicit framing when working in emotionally charged contexts.

2. Listening can be an action in itself

The intervention prioritised listening over messaging. Participants were not corrected, persuaded, or mobilised.

Organisational takeaway:

In some contexts, creating space for expression is already a meaningful outcome and a prerequisite for later engagement.

3. Artistic form enables emotional articulation

The use of poetry allowed participants to express complexity and contradiction without needing to “take a side.”

Organisational takeaway:

Creative formats can surface emotional and social dimensions of mobility that are invisible in technical consultations.

4. Small-scale presence can feel safer than public forums

One-to-one encounters reduced social pressure and fear of judgement.

Organisational takeaway:

Micro-formats can reach people who avoid public meetings or confrontational settings.

5. Co-authorship strengthens resonance beyond the moment

Participants became contributors rather than respondents, increasing attachment to the outcome.

Organisational takeaway:

Co-created outputs tend to circulate longer and more organically within communities.

Intervention: Mass Bike Ride

– Large-Scale Public Cycling Event

The Mass Bike Ride in Tartu was implemented as a large, inclusive public cycling event designed to normalise cycling as an everyday, enjoyable, and collective form of urban mobility. Organised on 20 September 2024 as part of European Mobility Week, the intervention combined visibility, community-building, and practical testing of urban cycling conditions.

Rather than targeting a specific audience group, the event was communicated through widely used municipal and community channels, allowing it to reach a broad and diverse group of participants. Approximately 200 people took part (estimated 110 women and 90 men), representing a wide spectrum of ages, cycling styles, and experience levels.

The primary goal was not advocacy through confrontation, but demonstration through presence: showing residents and drivers alike that cycling is already a significant and socially embedded mode of transport in the city.

How the Intervention Worked

Planning and Preparation

Preparation started approximately one month before the event. A small core team of four people—representing the city administration and the local cycling association—was responsible for route planning and coordination. Particular attention was paid to intersections, road widths, and continuity of movement.

One of the key strategic decisions was to design a route that maximised comfort and safety while remaining symbolically meaningful. A major attraction of the ride was the inclusion of a newly constructed road that had not yet been opened to car traffic. This element significantly increased public interest and allowed participants to physically experience upcoming infrastructure changes before their official launch.

On-the-Day Organisation

During the ride, 10–15 volunteers supported the organisers. Volunteers wore high-visibility yellow vests and were positioned at critical points along the route, especially at intersections. Their role was to temporarily stop car traffic, guide cyclists, and maintain the coherence of the group.

A simple but effective leadership system was used: one person led the group at the front, while another closed the ride at the back. This ensured that the peloton moved as a single entity and that no participants were left behind or separated.

Before departure, participants received a short safety briefing covering basic rules such as:

- no riding on pavements,
- no riding against traffic,
- following volunteer instructions at crossings.

This briefing proved important in setting expectations and reducing risky behaviour during the ride.

Safety and Legal Framework

The intervention operated within a relatively flexible local legal framework. According to municipal regulations, the event only required formal notification as a public gathering. No additional permits or police involvement were necessary, provided that the group crossed intersections efficiently and did not block traffic for extended periods.

Safety was primarily ensured through:

- volunteer presence and clear visibility,
- route design that minimised exposure to heavy traffic,
- group cohesion through lead-and-tail coordination.

Organisers noted that while this approach was sufficient, future editions could benefit from fully closing selected major roads rather than relying on traffic-light cycles, which occasionally fragmented the group.

Budget and Resources

The cycling ride itself did not require a dedicated financial budget beyond staff and volunteer time. No equipment rentals, external security, or paid traffic management services were needed. Additional costs were only incurred for a social event organised after the ride, which was treated as a separate activity.

This makes the format particularly cost-efficient and accessible for cities with limited budgets.

What an Organisation Can Learn from This Intervention

This intervention offers a clear, low-cost model for large-scale public engagement around cycling.

1. Route design is the core success factor

An attractive, coherent route is more important than additional programming.

Organisational takeaway:

Invest time in route planning—this shapes safety, experience, and public perception.

2. Volunteers replace heavy infrastructure

Well-briefed volunteers enabled safe crossings without police or paid services.

Organisational takeaway:

Volunteer coordination can effectively substitute costly traffic management in supportive legal contexts.

3. Experiencing future infrastructure builds trust

Riding on an unopened road transformed abstract planning into lived experience.

Organisational takeaway:

Use transitional infrastructure moments to engage the public emotionally and practically.

4. Clear rules prevent chaos

A short pre-ride briefing reduced risky behaviour and misunderstandings.

Organisational takeaway:

Simple communication at the start improves safety throughout the event.

5. Visibility does not require confrontation

The ride was highly visible without provoking conflict with drivers.

Organisational takeaway:

Positive, cooperative framing broadens acceptance of cycling initiatives.

6. Early planning improves confidence

A one-month preparation period allowed organisers to identify and mitigate risks.

Organisational takeaway:

Even simple events benefit from early reconnaissance and dry-run thinking.

7. The format scales easily

The same model can be adapted to smaller or larger cities with minimal changes.

Organisational takeaway:

Mass rides are highly transferable and suitable for repeated annual use.



photo: Evelin Lumi

Intervention: Poster Competition **– Visual Narratives for Sustainable** **Urban Mobility**

The Poster Competition was designed as an open, online intervention aimed at engaging young artists and designers in shaping visual narratives around sustainable urban mobility. Rather than addressing the public directly through a physical event, the intervention operated at the level of representation, discourse, and circulation of ideas, using graphic design as a tool for awareness-raising and cultural change.

The open call was addressed to students of art, design, and related creative disciplines from countries participating in the Creative Europe programme. Its primary objective was to encourage emerging creatives to reflect on cycling and sustainable mobility and translate these reflections into strong, accessible visual messages that could be reused across different public contexts.

The competition ran for six weeks, from 31 January to 13 March 2024, allowing sufficient time for conceptual development and production while remaining accessible within an academic calendar. Participants were invited to submit poster designs promoting sustainable urban mobility, with a particular focus on cycling as an everyday, climate-friendly mode of transport.

How the Intervention Worked

The intervention was implemented entirely online, from the call for submissions to the jury deliberations. A clear brief outlined the thematic focus, technical requirements, eligibility rules, and evaluation criteria. Submissions were collected digitally, lowering entry barriers and enabling participation across borders without travel-related emissions or costs.

In total, 67 posters were submitted. An international jury reviewed the works and selected 20 designs for printing and public presentation. The selected posters were printed in A1 format and showcased during various project-related events, exhibitions, and public activities, extending the life of the intervention beyond the competition itself.

Three main prizes were awarded. Second and third place winners received financial prizes, while the first prize consisted of a study trip to an artistic exhibition, emphasising professional development and international exposure rather than only monetary reward.

The total budget of the intervention was approximately €3,000, covering prizes and the production of the printed posters.

What an Organisation Can Learn from This Intervention

This intervention offers a replicable model for engaging young creatives in sustainability topics through low-cost, high-reach formats.

1. Online formats enable transnational participation at low cost

The fully digital structure made it possible to reach participants from multiple countries without logistical complexity.

Organisational takeaway:

Online calls are effective tools for widening participation while keeping budgets and environmental impact low.

2. Visual outputs extend impact beyond the original action

The printed posters became reusable communication assets for events, exhibitions, and outreach activities.

Organisational takeaway:

Design-based interventions can generate durable materials that support long-term communication strategies.

3. Clear evaluation criteria are essential in artistic competitions

The jury process revealed challenges related to the subjective nature of artistic assessment. Some submissions were perceived as too aggressive or unsettling for public display.

Organisational takeaway:

Define evaluation criteria precisely and transparently, including content boundaries and public display considerations.

4. Legal review protects both organisers and participants

The need for legal consultation became evident, particularly regarding eligibility rules, copyright, and complaints procedures.

Organisational takeaway:

Involve legal expertise when drafting competition regulations to minimise risk and administrative burden.

5. Non-monetary rewards can be highly motivating

The study trip offered to the winner proved attractive and aligned with the educational and professional development goals of the competition.

Organisational takeaway:

Consider combining financial and experiential rewards to increase the perceived value of participation.

6. Student audiences respond well to clearly framed challenges

The number and quality of submissions indicated strong interest among students when the topic is timely and well-articulated.

Organisational takeaway:

Targeted calls with a clear social or environmental purpose can mobilise creative communities effectively.

7. Competitions benefit from post-selection curation

Not all high-quality works are equally suitable for public presentation.

Organisational takeaway:

Plan for an additional curatorial layer after selection, especially when outputs will be displayed in public space.

CYCLE UP!



Intervention: Bicycles in Times of Unfreedom – Historical Exhibition as a Tool for Reflection

Bicycles in Times of Unfreedom was conceived as a historical exhibition exploring the role of cycling under authoritarian and restrictive political systems. Presented in 2024 at the Goethe-Institut in Prague, the exhibition examined the history of cycling in Czechoslovakia and the former GDR, juxtaposing it with contemporary cycling culture in Czechia and Germany.

Rather than focusing on infrastructure or current policy debates, the intervention used history and memory as entry points into discussions about mobility, freedom, and everyday life. Bicycles were presented not only as transport tools, but as objects embedded in political systems, social aspirations, and personal biographies.

The exhibition was curated by Jan Králík, a recognised expert and collector of historic bicycles. It combined physical exhibits with interpretative materials, including information panels and video content. Displayed objects ranged from rare collector's items to widely recognisable bicycle models, such as the Favorit brand, as well as bicycles associated with the Peace Race—an iconic sporting event of the socialist era.

How the Intervention Worked

The exhibition was installed as a time-limited public display within the Goethe-Institut premises. Visitors encountered a curated narrative that connected material culture (bicycles and components) with broader historical contexts, highlighting how cycling functioned under conditions of limited freedom, scarcity, and state control.

All exhibition texts were made available in both Czech and German, ensuring accessibility for local and international audiences. Due to the value and rarity of some exhibits, the intervention required specialist insurance, secure display systems, and close coordination with the curator.

Approximately 300 visitors attended during the exhibition period. A particularly strong response came from older visitors, for whom the exhibited bicycles evoked memories of youth, everyday resilience, and emotional attachment. For younger audiences, the exhibition offered an unfamiliar perspective on mobility shaped by political constraint rather than choice.

What an Organisation Can Learn from This Intervention

This intervention highlights the potential of exhibitions to connect sustainable mobility with historical awareness and emotional engagement.

1. History can broaden mobility narratives

By situating cycling within political history, the exhibition expanded the discussion beyond present-day infrastructure debates.

Organisational takeaway:

Historical framing can deepen understanding of mobility as a social and political practice.

2. Material objects trigger emotional engagement

Familiar bicycle models acted as powerful memory carriers.

Organisational takeaway:

Tangible artefacts can generate strong emotional responses and intergenerational dialogue.

3. Curatorial expertise is essential

The quality and credibility of the exhibition relied heavily on the curator's knowledge and collection.

Organisational takeaway:

Partnering with recognised experts strengthens content quality and public trust.

4. Translation and accessibility matter

Bilingual content increased reach and inclusivity.

Organisational takeaway:

Multilingual presentation should be planned from the outset in international contexts.

5. Time-limited exhibitions constrain programming

The short exhibition period limited opportunities for guided tours or workshops.

Organisational takeaway:

If possible, extend exhibition duration to maximise accompanying public programmes.

6. Costs concentrate around expertise and security

A significant portion of the €4,000 budget covered curatorial fees and insurance.

Organisational takeaway:

Budget planning for exhibitions should prioritise expertise, risk management, and content quality.

Intervention: Bicycle Maintenance Workshops – Building Confidence through Practical Skills

The Bicycle Maintenance Workshops were designed as a recurring, hands-on educational format aimed at reducing practical barriers to everyday cycling. Implemented as a cycle of 9–10 sessions during the cycling season (spring to autumn), the workshops focused on basic bicycle care and repair skills.

The workshops were organised in cooperation with a local bicycle workshop, “KOLAB,” which provided both technical expertise and equipment. Each session lasted three hours and was led by two mechanics, combining demonstration with direct participant practice.

The intervention addressed a common but often underestimated barrier to cycling: lack of confidence in handling basic mechanical issues. By demystifying bicycle maintenance, the workshops supported cycling as a more autonomous and accessible mode of transport.

How the Intervention Worked

Each workshop accommodated between 15 and 20 participants and covered essential skills such as fixing a flat tyre, adjusting brakes, cleaning the drivetrain, and basic lubrication. Participants worked directly on bicycles, either their own or demonstration bikes provided by the partner workshop. A deliberate effort was made to encourage women’s participation, including the involvement of female mechanics as instructors. This helped challenge gender stereotypes associated with technical competence and created a more inclusive learning environment.

Sessions were structured to allow participants to split into beginner and more advanced groups, ensuring that different skill levels could be accommodated without slowing down the overall pace. The cost of a single workshop was approximately €500, covering instructor fees. Tools and demonstration bicycles were provided by the technical partner, significantly reducing equipment costs.

What an Organisation Can Learn from This Intervention

This intervention demonstrates how recurring, skills-based formats can directly support behaviour change in sustainable mobility.

1. Practical skills build long-term confidence

Hands-on learning empowered participants to handle everyday cycling issues independently.

Organisational takeaway:

Skill-building interventions can have lasting impact beyond the event itself.

2. Reliable technical partners are critical

The success of the workshops depended on the expertise and preparedness of the partner workshop.

Organisational takeaway:

Choose partners with both technical competence and teaching ability.

3. Inclusivity requires intentional design

Targeted outreach and diverse instructors increased women's participation.

Organisational takeaway:

Inclusive participation does not happen automatically and should be actively planned.

4. Recurring formats strengthen community ties

Monthly sessions allowed participants to return, deepen skills, and build relationships.

Organisational takeaway:

Series-based formats are more effective than one-off events for capacity-building.

5. No-shows are a common challenge in free events

Some registered participants did not attend without prior notice.

Organisational takeaway:

Consider simple commitment mechanisms (waiting lists, reminders, deposits) to reduce drop-out rates.

6. Weather contingency planning is essential

Outdoor workshops required access to an alternative indoor space.

Organisational takeaway:

Always plan backup locations to ensure continuity.

7. Costs remain predictable and scalable

With a clear cost per session and partner-provided tools, the format is easy to replicate.

Organisational takeaway:

Workshops are a scalable intervention suitable for different city sizes and budgets.

Intervention: Veins of Strain – Data, Cycling, and Public Space as an Interactive Installation

Veins of Strain was conceived as a public, data-driven art intervention exploring cycling safety and problematic urban infrastructure through embodied interaction.

Created by digital artist Chelsea Kim, the intervention translated abstract datasets into a physical and visual experience. It combined open civic data on unsafe cycling locations with a stationary bicycle connected to a sensor-driven digital projection. The result was an installation where bodily effort directly influenced the visual representation of the city, making infrastructural strain tangible and experiential.

The event attracted approximately 40 invited guests and an additional 10–20 passers-by who encountered the installation spontaneously while using the park.

How the Intervention Worked

At the core of the intervention was an interactive system linking three elements:

- a dataset provided by a local NGO collecting citizen-reported information on unsafe or problematic cycling locations,
- a stationary bicycle equipped with a sensor,
- a large-scale outdoor projection displaying a digital map of Prague.

Participants were invited to sit on the bicycle and start pedalling. The faster they pedalled, the faster the projected map animated, revealing and highlighting reported problem areas. As the interaction unfolded, it became clear that a significant portion of the city “lit up,” visually demonstrating the scale and density of perceived infrastructural issues.

The installation was designed to be intuitive and did not require prior explanation. Physical engagement replaced abstract interpretation, allowing participants to grasp the extent of the problem through movement and effort rather than statistics.

To encourage interaction and lower social barriers, the event was accompanied by a relaxed ambient soundscape and a parallel workshop activity involving screen-printing on T-shirts. These elements helped create an informal atmosphere and encouraged people to stay longer and engage more deeply.

Partnerships and Organisational Setup

The intervention relied on close cooperation between multiple stakeholders:

- the residency host and contemporary art gallery,
- Czech Centres,
- the municipality (as owner of the gallery and park),
- a local NGO providing data on cycling safety.

The gallery played a crucial role in technical production, particularly in sourcing projection equipment with sufficient luminance for outdoor use and supporting screen operation. The municipality granted permits for the use of public space and allowed technical vehicles to enter the park, which is normally closed to car traffic. The event was also promoted through municipal cultural channels. The most significant cost was technical equipment. Renting the projection screen and projector for one evening cost approximately 20,000 CZK (under €800). Savings were achieved elsewhere through low-cost workshop materials and in-kind contributions.

Challenges and Risk Management

The intervention revealed several practical challenges typical of outdoor, technology-heavy formats.

Unpredictable public use of space

Later in the evening, a group of intoxicated men occupied the bicycle for an extended period (around 45 minutes), preventing others from participating. Resolving the situation required diplomatic intervention by a municipal representative.

Technical and safety risks

Despite calm weather conditions, the large outdoor screen proved unstable even in light wind and required additional anchoring. The control computer had to be monitored continuously to prevent accidental damage by children or passers-by.

Weather contingency

A backup plan existed to move the installation indoors in case of rain, though organisers were aware this would significantly reduce spontaneous engagement.

What an Organisation Can Learn from This Intervention

This intervention offers valuable lessons for organisations considering data-driven, interactive art formats in public space.

1. Data becomes meaningful when embodied

Pedalling transformed abstract datasets into a physical experience.

Organisational takeaway:

Embodied interaction can make complex data accessible and emotionally impactful.

2. Technology-heavy formats require strong technical partners

Successful delivery depended on specialist knowledge of outdoor projection and equipment stability.

Organisational takeaway:

Secure technical expertise early and budget for equipment and safety margins.

3. Public space invites unpredictable behaviour

Open-access formats increase inclusivity but also require clear moderation strategies.

Organisational takeaway:

Plan for active facilitation and conflict management, especially when installations involve shared equipment.

4. High visibility comes with higher risk exposure

Large screens and interactive devices attract attention—and responsibility.

Organisational takeaway:

Risk assessment and on-site supervision are essential for public tech installations.

5. Data partnerships add credibility and afterlife

The NGO continued to use documentation from the installation in its own communication.

Organisational takeaway:

Collaborating with data owners increases legitimacy and extends project impact.

6. Replication requires adaptation, not copying

While the concept is transferable, the full technical setup is costly and complex.

Organisational takeaway:

For replication, consider lighter or modular versions (smaller screens, indoor settings, simplified interaction).

7. Hybrid formats increase engagement

Combining installation, music, and workshops created a welcoming atmosphere.

Organisational takeaway:

Supplement core interventions with social or creative side-activities to broaden participation.

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