URBAN VISION WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY – A TOOL FOR SPATIAL JUSTICE

Kestutis Zaleckis[1]✉, Laura Jankauskaite-Jureviciene[2]✉, Jurga Vitkuviene[3]✉,
Indre Grazuleviciute-Vileniske[4]✉

[1] ORCID: 0000-0001-9223-9956
[2] ORCID: 0000-0002-9880-0895
[4] ORCID: 0000-0002-4396-4657
[1] Kaunas University of Technology, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture
  48 Studentu Street, LT-51367 Kaunas, **Lithuania**
  Vilnius Academy of Arts, Faculty of Vilnius, Department of Architecture
  5 Malunu Street, Vilnius, **Lithuania**
[2, 3, 4] Kaunas University of Technology, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture
  48 Studentu Street, LT-51367 Kaunas, **Lithuania**

ABSTRACT

Motives: Public participation in urban planning is institutionalized and generally regarded as good practice that should be promoted and implemented beyond the legal procedures for participation. A participatory approach is seen as the opposite of a hierarchical top-down approach and as a tool for achieving spatial justice. However, participatory urban planning poses numerous challenges in terms of both fundamental issues, such as superficiality and a threat to the genius loci of a place and process-related problems, such as technologies, methodology, and trust issues.

Aim: This research aims to demonstrate the importance of participatory urban planning as a means to achieve spatial justice, and to present and test participatory planning tools – the Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach.

Results: The research has shown that the Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach can improve citizens' participation experience, provide more comprehensive data for urban vision development, and contribute to achieving spatial justice.

Keywords: participatory urban planning, spatial justice, Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach, Šančiai

INTRODUCTION

The understanding of space has changed significantly from a fixed context of human activities to an active force shaping human life (Pirie, 1983; Soja, 2009), with some even considering space as a social product (Pirie, 1983). As a result, public participation in urban planning has been institutionalized and is generally considered a mandatory and good practice to be encouraged and implemented beyond

the participatory procedures required by law (Feltynowski, 2023). Public participation is defined as the involvement of individuals and groups in public decision-making on issues of importance to the community (Gawrońska et al., 2020). The participatory approach is perceived as an opposition to the hierarchical top-down approach (Kaza, 2006) and as a way to achieve a form of justice – fairness in the way people are treated (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2024) in terms of the distribution of resources in space and securing the opportunities to use them (Weck et al., 2022). Such spatial justice (Soja, 2009) is closely related to the concepts of equity – the situation in which everyone is treated fairly according to their needs and no group of people is given special treatment (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2024) and equality – the right of different groups of people to receive the same treatment (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2024) and to achieving them in the urban environment.

Although the participatory approach is even recognized as "as a method of good planning" (Kaza, 2006), an inseparable part of urban planning, environmental impact assessment (Gawrońska et al., 2020) and other procedures, it is constantly debated. Researchers point out that this approach inevitably excludes individuals, groups, and entities that cannot participate, such as future generations (Kaza, 2006) or non-human actors (Cook, 2018; Huston et al., 2018); that superficially understood public participation can cause damage not only to the genius loci of a place, but also to the community (Petrušonis, 2018), and that excessive attention to public participation hinders other trends of research on the urban environment, especially those related to the "genius loci's manifestations and efforts to grasp its essence" (Petrušonis, 2018). *Genius loci* is usually defined as "the unity of the tangible and intangible components of the […] environment, forming the uniqueness of the place" (Stepanchuk et al., 2020). In recent years, with the emergence of the concept of historic urban landscape, it is seen not only as a heritage preservation issue but also as a resource for urban development (Stepanchuk et al., 2020) and sustainability.

In addition to this fundamental and justified criticism, some challenges related to the participation process itself and its outcomes are mentioned in the literature. J. Åström (2020) has described such aspects related to participatory planning as technologies, methodology, and trust. The climate of mistrust in planning is often mentioned (Åström, 2020; Swain & Tait, 2007; Tait & Hansen, 2007). From one point of view, according to C. Swain and M. Tait (2007), contemporary urban planning is distrusted by citizens because of its "bureaucratic nature, its incapacity to understand and work for citizens, and its bias towards business interests". Meanwhile, J. Åström (2020) presents a different view, noting that even if most public officials support public participation in principle, they do not trust the validity of participatory planning outcomes. J. Åström (2020) emphasizes that mutual trust between collaborating actors is necessary for successful participatory planning. According to X. Wang and M. Wart (2007), citizens' positive experiences in participatory urban planning processes can increase their trust in government. As a result, technologies (Feltynowski, 2023), methods and approaches can play a significant role: they have the potential to improve citizens' participation experience and generate more reliable and useful data for decision making in planning. Moreover, the comprehensive set of participatory planning technologies and tools can generate a much more complex and broader set of data, not limited to the opinions of active community members. According to M. Feltynowski (2023), "public participation must be supported both by laws that allow residents to develop land-use policy and by technology that facilitates participation".

Šančiai, which is the territorial focus and living laboratory of this research, is a part of the city of Kaunas (Lithuania), a historic district that extends along the right bank of the Nemunas River. As in many other former suburbs of the city, the history of this district created a colorful mixture of industrial and residential objects, which over time tightly filled

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

the valley in the loop of the Nemunas River, thus creating an original combination of the city and the natural environment, while still preserving a mosaic of urban subcultures that are normally more peculiar to suburban than central city zones. Upper Šančiai and Lower Šančiai are located on the upper and lower terraces of the Nemunas River, respectively (Vanagas, 2010). In this picturesque area near the city of Kaunas, the first villages were mentioned in the 17th and 18th centuries. At the end of the 19th century, Šančiai gradually became a suburb of the growing city of Kaunas. The uniqueness of this area is also given by the rather clear signs of military activity. The banks of the Nemunas River near Šančiai witnessed the beginning of the historic invasion of the Russian Empire by Napoleon's army, and since the 19th century, a large number of tsarist troops were stationed in Šančiai, and this part of the city had become a military town (Inytė, 2019). The urban structure of Lower Šančiai is characterized by narrow streets, a semi-regular layout, connections to the Nemunas River and a clearly visible contrast between large military and industrial buildings and small wooden residential houses. The rich history of the place, linked to industry, nature, and military activities, has shaped a diverse and active community, reminiscent of the everyday life of poor industrial workers' neighborhoods. The development and activities of Šančiai residents have intensified since 2011 after the creation of a modern and highly active local community, striving for a better quality and sustainability of its living environment. The modern life of this community is filled with meetings, festivals, artistic activities, and protests, which express their will to become active creators of their home and protectors of the local identity.

The aim of this study was to demonstrate the importance of participatory urban planning as a means to achieve spatial justice, and to present and test participatory planning tools that both improve citizens' participation experience and provide more comprehensive data for urban vision development.

The research process included: analysis of literature focused on the concept of spatial justice

and its implementation by means of participatory urban planning; theory of spatial justice illustrated by the challenges faced by the Lower Šančiai community; presentation of the Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach as a participatory planning tool and the experience of its application in different social groups related to Šančiai neighborhood; analysis and discussion of the results of the Urban Vision Workshop and evaluation of the efficiency of the methodology itself. The following research methods were used: literature analysis, workshop design and implementation, sociological observation, content analysis of the workshop results, SWOT evaluation of the workshop process and results from the point of view of improving citizens' participation experience, obtaining more comprehensive data for urban vision development, and contributing to spatial justice.

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE RIGHT TO THE CITY, SPATIAL JUSTICE, AND INJUSTICE

The theoretical foundation of the concept of spatial justice was laid by H. Lefebvre (1968) who analyzed the rights of city dwellers, and it was further developed by other scholars including D. Harvey (1973), P. Marcuse (2009, 2009a), and E. Soja (2009, 2010). In his book entitled "The Right to the City", H. Lefebvre (1968) addressed the issue of the individual's right to evaluate, know, and use urban space. Using the concept of the right to the city, H. Lefebvre (1996) created a vision of the city where the ideology of consumption is destroyed, and all social groups have the right to participate, create, and manage urban space (Lefebvre et al., 1996). H. Lefebvre (1996) argued that urban spaces are not only physical places, but also social and political constructs that shape the lives of individuals and communities. He proposed that urban dwellers have the right to participate in the decision-making processes that shape their cities, and that this right should extend to all members of society, regardless of their social, economic, or cultural backgrounds. He also argued that urban spaces should be created and managed in the way that promotes social justice,

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

equality, and the well-being of all residents, rather than being driven solely by profit and commercial interests (Lefebvre et al., 1996).

Other scholars have interpreted and expanded the concept of the right to the city. According to D. Harvey (1973), through spatial consciousness, each individual is aware of the role and place of urban space in his or her personal life, and the impact of space on the relationship between the individual and the organization. Space shapes the relationship with the neighborhood, a particular territory, a local (group) language, etc. The concept of collective consciousness is also important in the context of participatory planning and placemaking. According to D. Harvey (1973), the right to the city is much more than the right to use the resources of the city. The right to the city is collective because the urban transformation of the city depends on the exercise of collective power in the processes of urbanization (Harvey, 1973). According to P. Marcuse (2009), there are two forms of spatial injustice: the involuntary confinement of any group in a limited space in order to exclude it (segregation, ghettoization), the restriction of individual freedom, and the unequal spatial distribution of resources, such as access to employment, political power, social status, income and wealth. Spatial injustice is a derivative of broader social injustice. Social injustice always has a spatial dimension that needs to be resolved in order to address injustice (Marcuse, 2009). P. Marcuse (2009a) states that the role of spatial injustice depends on social, political, and economic conditions. This means that, according to P. Marcuse (2009a), spatial justice is not only causal, but also derivative (Jankauskaitė-Jurevičienė, 2022).

The concept of spatial justice has been developed in particular by E. Soja (2009, 2010). He argued that spatial justice is the claim or right to the city, to its spatial resources, to the benefits that the city offers, the right not only to use them, but also to create them, to shape them, the right to develop them, with an understanding of social and spatial causality (Soja, 2010). The most important aspect of this concept is the granting or acquisition of a right not to the authorities but to the wider society, social organizations, and communities. E. Soja (2010) notes that most theoretical urban analyses are approached from a historical or sociological point of view, i.e. the theories focus on temporal rather than spatial analysis.

The rapid urbanization of the 20th century has raised the issue of public participation in urban processes, as urban planning cannot be just someone's individual vision of the city, but is linked to the individual experiences of many, and to the needs of society (Jankauskaitė-Jurevičienė, 2022). According to S. Fainstein (2014), the initial concern about the destruction of neighborhoods and their replacement by high-end residential or commercial structures was directed towards identifying methods of economic development. This led to the financing of wealthy real estate developers and the redevelopment of neighborhoods through gentrification (Fainstein, 2014). T. Sager (2011) argues that neoliberalism transforms the urban space into a space for market-oriented economic growth and elite consumption. It is noticeable that a large part of urban planning projects are now prepared by private developers. As a result, virtually all economic and social problems have become the domain of market solutions, and city authorities are influenced by the power of the market. N. Brenner et al. (2009) argue that the result of all these processes is the fragmentation of the city and the emergence of homogenized cityscapes that are clearly distinct and consistent with a business vision. N. Brenner et al. (2009) observe that it is in these fragmented areas that a variety of bottom-up social organizations emerge, claiming the right to the city and the opportunity to reshape it according to their new definitions. The processes of urbanization have led to the perception of urban space as both a social product and a marketplace. Public participation in urban spatial planning processes has become important and has been interpreted in different ways. It should be emphasized that the right to the city includes not only the satisfaction of the needs without which individuals cannot exist, but also the strengthening of the influence of the urban society and bottom-up organizations, and the growing desire to gather and shape the new quality and possibilities

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

of the city (Jankauskaitė-Jurevičienė, 2022). Thus, public participation as a means to achieve spatial justice is of crucial importance for contemporary and future just Europe that offers perspectives for all places and people (Weck et al., 2022). Furthermore, there is a trend of thought and research that encourages expanding the scope of spatial justice to include non-human actors. According to N. Cook (2018), cities are not only the product of social relations; they are an entanglement of more-than-human worlds. As noted by D. Huston et al. (2018), much planning theory has been grounded in an ontological exceptionalism of humans; however, urban planning is an integral part of the "eco-social realities co-producing the Anthropocene". As a result, planners, researchers, and activists need to think carefully and critically about who speaks for the non-human in place making (Huston et al., 2018).

Public participation and influence in decision-making are important aspects of spatial justice along with the rights to health, safety, well-being, happiness, etc. However, the interests of several groups collide in the city: residents whose goal is an attractive space to live, work, and relax, businesses whose aim is investment and growth, and visitors who are looking for cultural and recreational facilities to spend their free time (Sager, 2011). The aforementioned "more-than-human" (Huston et al., 2018) dimension of cities makes this collision even more complex. In the urban planning processes in Kaunas, the interests of society, city authorities, and developers have often collided in recent years; in some cases, the outcomes of the planning process and decision-making tend to threaten the integrity and health of urban ecosystems. In the Lower Šančiai neighborhood, on the bank of the Nemunas River, the Kaunas Municipality started the project of new street development in 2019. This project encouraged the Association Community of Žemieji Šančiai to consolidate the residents of the neighborhood and declare their position as "no street", seeking to preserve the green riverbank and its eco-social values. In 2020, the Association started the project Genius Loci: Urbanization and Civil Community (hereinafter Genius Loci) in 2020, the aim of which was to involve the citizens of Kaunas to actively participate in the creation of an urban vision for the Šančiai area and to show that the citizens have not only the right to the city, to its spatial resources, and to the benefits offered by the city, and that they have not only the right to use them, but also have the potential to create them, to shape them, the right to develop the city. The project funded by the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms was implemented in partnership with the project promoter, Association Community of Žemieji Šančiai, and partners: Kaunas University of Technology, Vellenes Fellesorganisasjon and Bodø Municipality. The project consisted of three main stages: accumulation of historical, architectural facts, personal and collective history related to Šančiai; study of the use of public spaces of the district based on the sociotope methodology; creation of an urban vision of the Šančiai area. This article presents a part of the third stage – the creation of the urban vision of Šančiai through participatory activities. The creation of the urban vision is an action that originates from the community itself in order to legitimize its right to spatial justice.

DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE URBAN VISION CREATION WORKSHOP APPROACH

Context and background of the Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach

Before presenting the Šančiai Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach in greater detail, its background and context need to be explained. This approach was designed as a continuation and the final element of a series of participatory workshops and mapping activities aimed at involving and empowering the population of the Šančiai neighborhood and collecting necessary data for urban analysis and modeling within the framework of the Genius Loci project. The previous stages included workshops aimed at mapping memory (Memory Map Workshop) (Zaleckis et al., 2023c) and the present use of public spaces (Present Map Workshop) (Zaleckis et al.,

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

2023a, 2023b) in the Šančiai neighborhood. Each research stage included workshops with community members from different social groups accompanied by the publicly accessible interactive online maps available on the website https://sanciubendruomene. lt/en/. These digital data collection maps, developed and tested in practice during this project, have been internationally recognized as a highly effective tool for data sharing, participatory planning, and fostering a sense of place and belonging. Selected from more than 1.1 thousand applications, they were awarded the New European Bauhaus 2022 Runner Up prize in the category "Regaining the Sense of Belonging".

The interactive online maps were filled by both the workshop participants and by all interested Šančiai residents, visitors and other interested members of the society. Considering this experience, the Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach, designed for the members of different social groups, is accompanied by a publicly available interactive online map available at https://sanciubendruomene.lt/ en/vizija/pasiulymai/. Similarly to the Memory Map (Zaleckis et al., 2023c) and Present Map workshops (Zaleckis et al., 2023a, 2023b), the Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach is based on three theories and related practical approaches (Fig. 1): mental mapping (Gieseking, 2013; Lynch, 1964), the hands-on, empathizing and ideation approach characteristic of design thinking (International…, 2019), and the sociotope methodology (Ståhle, 2006). The core of the Urban Vision Creation Approach consists of group work aimed at creating design and activity proposals for public spaces in the Šančiai neighborhood. The practices of mental mapping allow the workshop participants to trace on the maps of Šančiai the distinctive places that could be the target of the desirable planning and design proposals. The elements of the sociotope methodology are used to formulate structured proposals for potential users and activities in public spaces (Tuan, 2001) in the urban vision of Šančiai. The hands-on activities such as drawing, cutting, and gluing of collage elements are aimed at stimulating the creativity and involvement of the workshop participants. Group work must be

preceded by an introductory lecture to demonstrate and explain the outcomes of the Memory Map and Present Map workshops and interactive online mapping as well as the results of the project. The main purpose of this material was to build empathy for residents of different backgrounds, familiarize the workshop participants with the unique features of the district and to understand their importance not only for local residents, but also for the wider city community.

Theoretical background and structure of the Urban Vision Creation Approach

The core of the Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach consists of three interrelated elements:
1. Map drawing – identifying, by drawing on the map of the territory under consideration, the locations that are important for its future development and that need to be transformed.
2. Envisioning of potentially desirable users and functional typology of selected localities. To present structured proposals, workshop participants use pictographic symbolic icons representing typologies of users and activities. Icons make it easier for people to categorize what would otherwise be too many options for non-experts. In the case of the Urban Vision Workshop, typologies were adapted from the sociotope methodology (Ståhle, 2006; Vitkuvienė et al., 2019).
3. Vision collage focusing on people, activities, and the environment. The collage method is relevant because it allows people who often have limited opportunities to present their ideas visually to do so, and it also helps to make the idea more understandable for the participants themselves. Workshop participants use newspaper and magazine clippings to create visual representations of their ideas for transforming a selected place.

The Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach is designed to accommodate possible variations in the age and knowledge (of the area under consideration) of workshop participants. For example, if the workshop participants find it difficult to identify important

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

locations on the geographic map (due to young age or limited knowledge of the area), photographs of selected places that need transformation can be presented to the workshop participants. The sites to be analyzed during the workshop can be selected by experts or based on previous research. Different ways of presenting and generalizing the results can also be used depending on the above-mentioned characteristics of the participants. Figure 1 and Figure 2 present two workshop scenarios: one for adults (Fig. 1) and the other for 12–15-year-old schoolchildren with limited knowledge of the area (they study in the school located in the area under analysis, but live elsewhere) (Fig. 2).

In both scenarios, workshops are based on group work with some individual work assignments and sharing of information, experiences, and reflections. The workshop staff includes a workshop coordinator and group work supervisors. Guest lecturers may also

be invited to present information about the workshop context in the introductory stage. One supervisor can work with 5–7 groups, the recommended group size is up to 6 participants (optimal group size – 4 participants, especially when working with young participants). Materials needed for the workshops include pens, markers, glue, scissors, flipchart or other type of paper, printed handout materials (symbolic icons for the tasks related to users and activities, maps or photographs of the area under analysis), collage materials (newspapers, magazines, etc.). In the first scenario (Fig. 1) adult community members work with printed maps of the area. In the first step of the group work, the workshop participants identify the places that are important for the future of the neighborhood itself and for the city as a whole by drawing on the printed map of the entire neighborhood. This promotes a better understanding of the neighborhood as a whole while using maps as
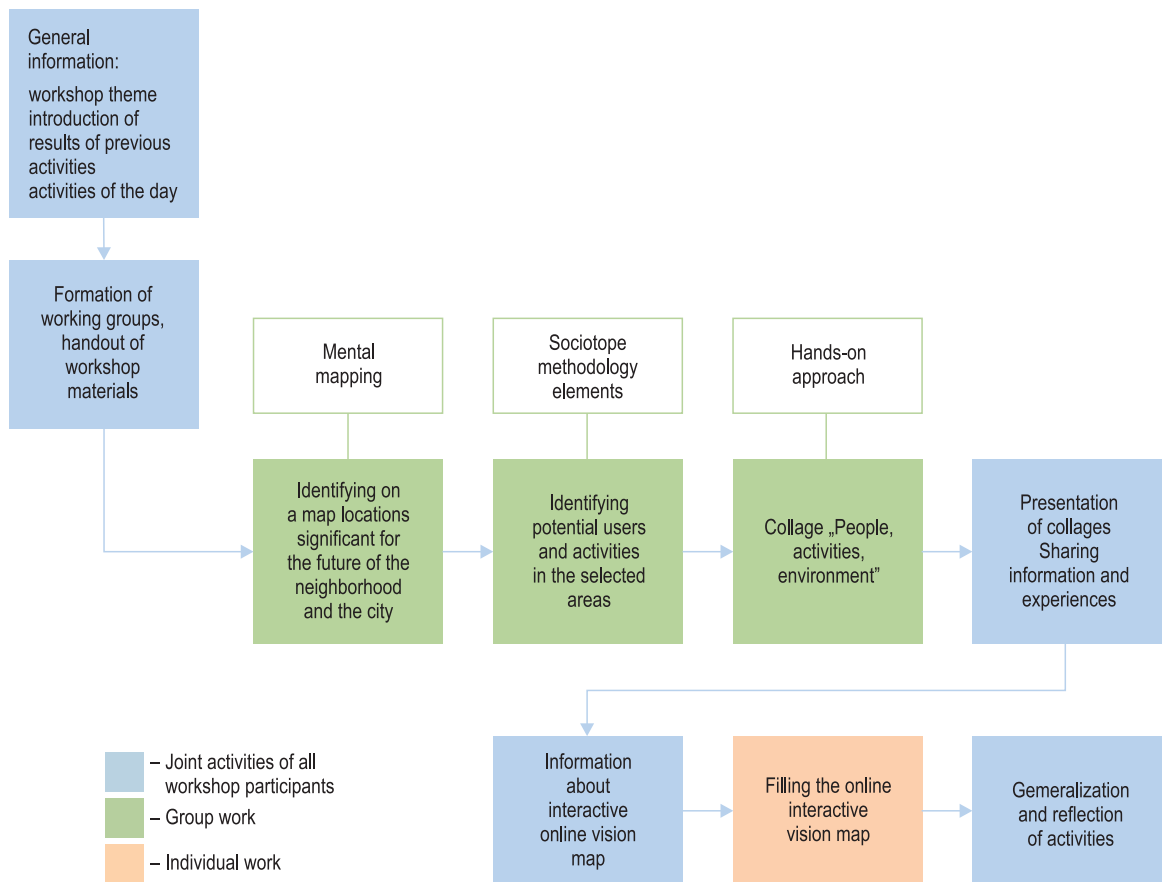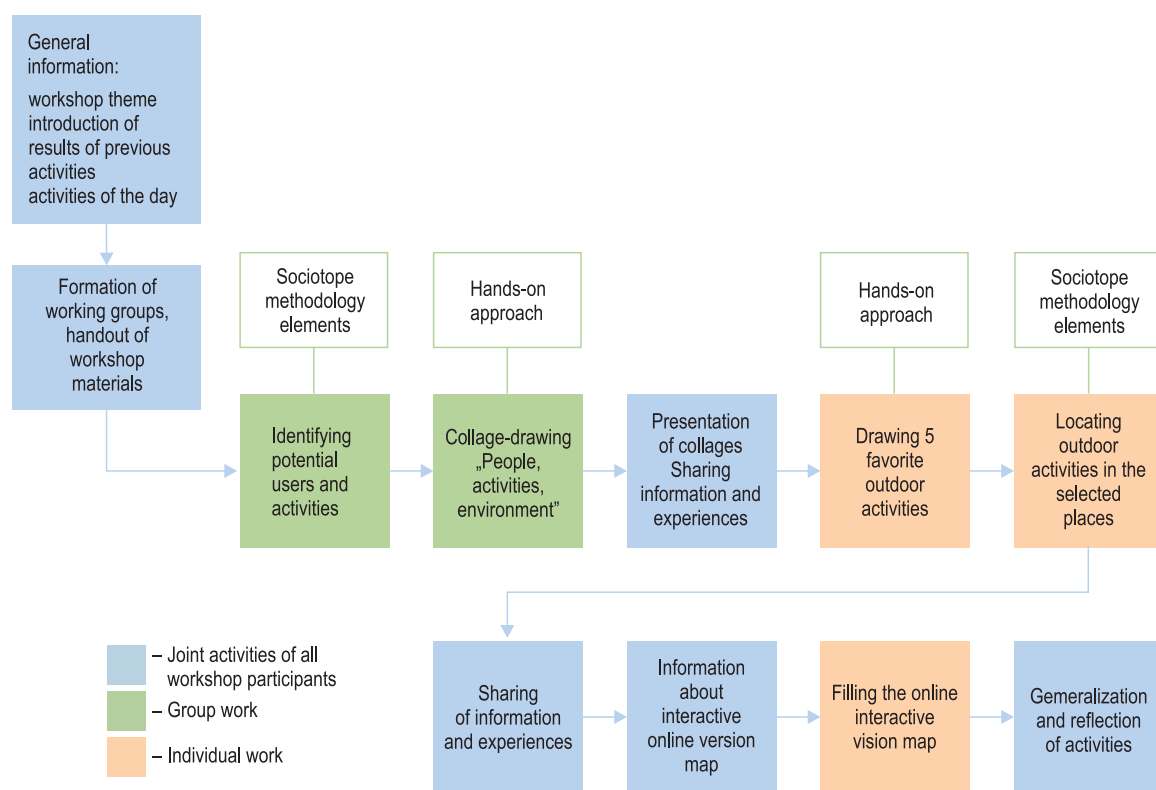

Fig. 1. Urban Vision Creation Workshop scenario for adults

Source: own elaboration.
✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

Fig. 2. Urban Vision Creation Workshop scenario adapted to 12–15-year-old schoolchildren with limited knowledge of the area

Source: own elaboration.

a non-customary tool. In further steps, workgroups elaborate selected zones of the neighborhood; each group elaborates one zone by drawing, writing comments, and gluing icons from handout materials and collage elements on the printed map of selected zones. The outcome of these activities is an urban vision collage showing potential users and activities of the elaborated locality and its potential equipment elements, and the general mood it could create. In the second scenario (Fig. 2), the workshop participants (schoolchildren) work with large-format (A3) printed photographs of selected placed in the neighborhood. The photographs are presented on flipchart paper in order to provide more space for drawing, writing and collage making. The localities can be selected by the workshop organizers based on the previous stages of research or by experts; for example, they can be places that children see on their way to and from school. In the second scenario, two types of vision

collages are created during the workshops, based on the visual spaces captured in the photographs. Each workgroup of schoolchildren creates their own vision collage by drawing, writing, and gluing icons from handout materials and collage elements on and around the printed photograph of the place. Each group works on a different site. The collage reflects envisioned users and activities, as well as equipment and design elements of the public space and the mood it might create. The second collage is a collaborative result of all workshop participants. First, each participant is asked to individually draw five of his/her favorite outdoor activities on sticky notes. Once the drawing is finished, all workshop participants are invited to locate their favorite outdoor activities in one of the places under analysis. As mentioned before, each workgroup analyzes different places. In this stage, the background of the collaborative collage contains printed photographs of all the places under analysis,

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt;
✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

and the participants can paste their favorite activities in any of these places. Filling in the online interactive map can be the final element of both workshop scenarios. Each workshop participant can enter his/her own vision proposals for the neighborhood. The entered data includes the location on a map and the type of proposed intervention (building, public space, equipment etc.), its title and description; illustrative images (associative picture, photograph, drawing) can also be uploaded. All workshops end with a discussion and reflection on the results and a collective exhibition of the created materials.

Analysis and generalization of Urban Vision Creation Approach results

During the workshops, a lot of visual and other information is collected, reflecting not only the specific proposals of the participants in a structured form based on the sociotope methodology (using icons representing the relevant activities and users assigned to the specific place), but also a lot of emotional information expressed in the form of free creative aesthetics (drawings, associative images, notes, sentences, general mood, style, etc.). This very interesting additional information is also useful because it reflects the general attitude of the participants and the values and desires linked to specific places in the area. Such data is more original, free, and complements the sociotope methodology in new aspects, but its systematization, processing and interpretation can pose additional challenges. Thus, the work with the results (mental maps, collages, sociological observation material) of Urban Vision Creation workshops can be divided into three stages: systematization of the results in worksheets, systematization and generalization of the results on maps, and generalization of the results into the bottom-up urban vision of the place under analysis. Figure 3 presents the process of analysis and generalization of the workshop results.

Examples of the worksheets and maps used to systemize workshop results are presented in the Results section. Worksheets are created as a result of the content analysis of mental maps, collages, and recordings made during the workshops. They also help to structure and summarize the information presented in the research material in a free artistic form. Content analysis can be broadly defined as "the scientific study of the content of communication" (Prasad, 2008). In this case, content analysis is quantitative (identifying and counting categories) and aims to identify the following elements important for the creation of urban vision: potential users
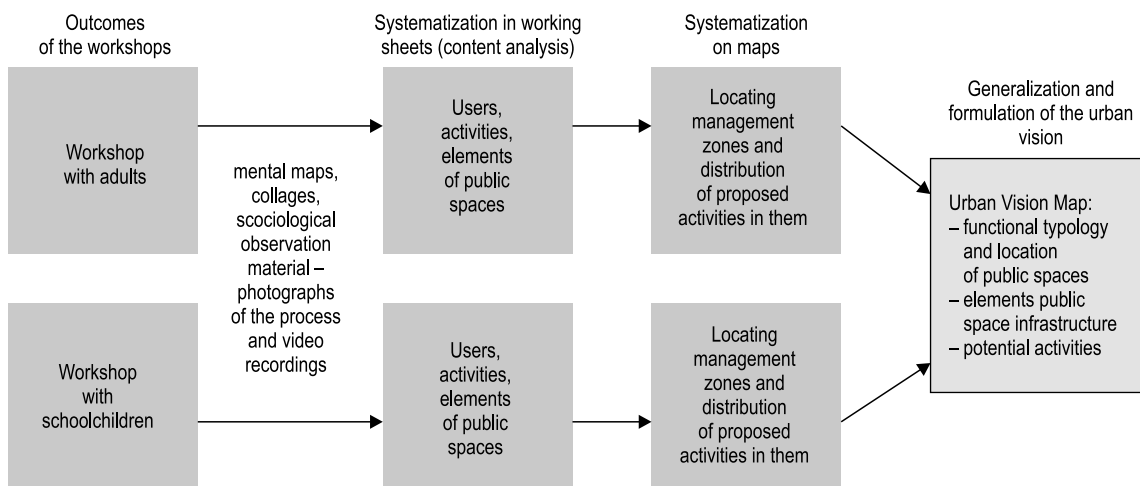
Fig. 3. The sequence and stages of the process of Urban Vision Creation workshops' results analysis and generalization
Source: own elaboration.

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt;
✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

of public spaces, the activities that could take place there, and the characteristics and design elements of the physical space that would create the conditions for users and activities to take place. These three components of urban vision became the categories used in the content analysis – users, activities, and elements of public spaces. Since the methodological basis of Urban Vision Creation workshops includes elements of the sociotope methodology in the form of user and activity typologies, the same typologies were applied in the processing of the results. The second step – systematization and generalization of the obtained data on maps – involved locating management zones and distribution of activities and functions proposed by the workshop participants on the topographic maps of Šančiai. The final step is the creation of a generalized urban vision map. In case of organizing several workshops with different social groups of participants, all obtained results are integrated into this map, and data from the interactive online map are also integrated in this stage. The development of urban vision maps should be creative, the use of symbols, pictograms, and drawings is recommended, but it should contain the following information: functional typology and location of public spaces, proposed elements of public space infrastructure, potential activities that take place in public spaces.

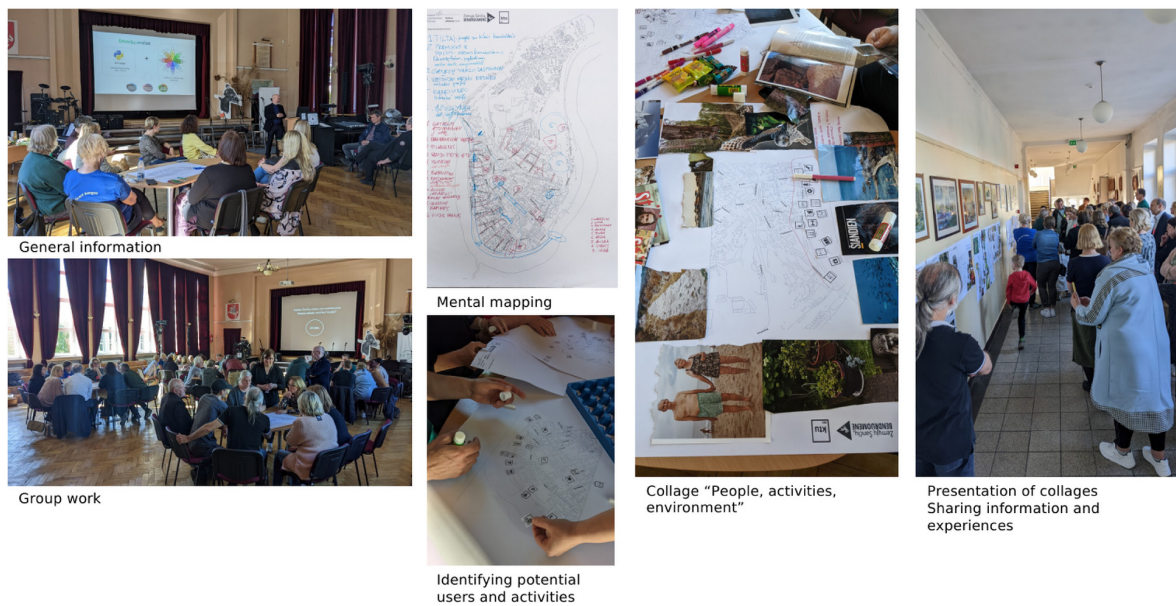## APPLICATION OF THE ŠANČIAI VISION CREATION WORKSHOP APPROACH AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Methodology application

The Urban Vision Creation Workshop Approach was applied during 5 workshops with almost 200 participants (50 adult and senior members of the Šančiai community and 143 12–15-year-old schoolchildren) in the period between 2022–2023. Adult members of Šančiai community were invited to the workshop on the initiative of the Association Community of Žemieji Šančiai, using social networks and other media tools. The workshop with schoolchildren was attended by pupils from the school located in Šančiai (Kaunas University of Technology Vaižgantas progymnasium) who kindly agreed to collaborate in this project.

The workshop for adult community members was held on May 24, 2022 in Šančiai in the hall of the Kaunas University of Technology, Vaižgantas progymnasium (Fig. 4). Since the event was based on group work, during the workshop, the participants were divided into groups of 4–7 persons according to their free choice. This was done to save time for getting to know each other and to avoid possible sharp differences of opinion and conflicts within the groups, as the time available for the event was limited and additional handling of such situations would have been resource consuming and could have affected the final outcome. Given the diversity and complexity of the urban problems in the area, there was a significant potential for divergent views and conflicts of interest. The approach of the workshop was adapted to make the work as smooth as possible and to give the participants more positive emotions and relaxation in expressing their thoughts through drawings and collages. The approach of the workshop was to maximize the involvement of the participants in the practical hands-on work and to achieve a tangible result, rather than spending time in discussions. The first map of the workshop was dedicated to the identification of the most important places and common vision proposals for the entire neighborhood territory. The detailing of the vision proposals generated by the participants of the workshop with adult community members was concentrated on the bank of the Nemunas River, as this workshop focused mainly on this area due to the need to present bottom-up alternatives for the project of the street proposed by Kaunas City Municipality (Šukšta, 2022).

The event lasted 4 hours with short rest breaks. During the event, all stages of the methodology were implemented step by step and the visual material of the participants' proposals was created (reflecting the localization of the proposed interventions in the area, the type of proposed activities, potential users, possible design solutions and the mood of the desired

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

Fig. 4. Šančiai Urban Vision Creation Workshop with adult members of the community
Source: photographs by the authors.
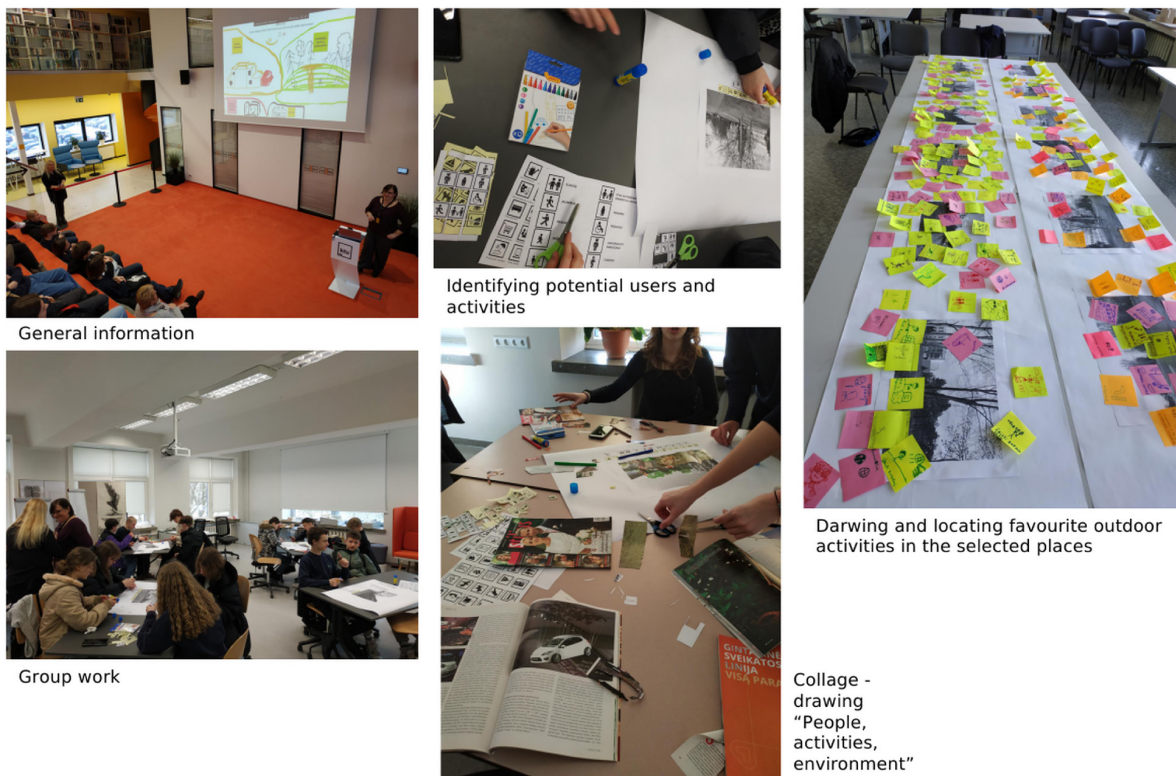
Fig. 5. Šančiai Urban Vision Creation Workshop with schoolchildren
Source: photographs by the authors.

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

intervention expressed by the collage). In the course of the workshop the researchers of the project had supervised the workgroups and carried out the sociological observation of the ongoing discussions and the work process. The tangible results of the workshop were 12 vision collages and supplemental maps reflecting structured information and participants' opinions. The material identified as participatory planning artifacts (objects made by the workshop participants, of cultural or historical
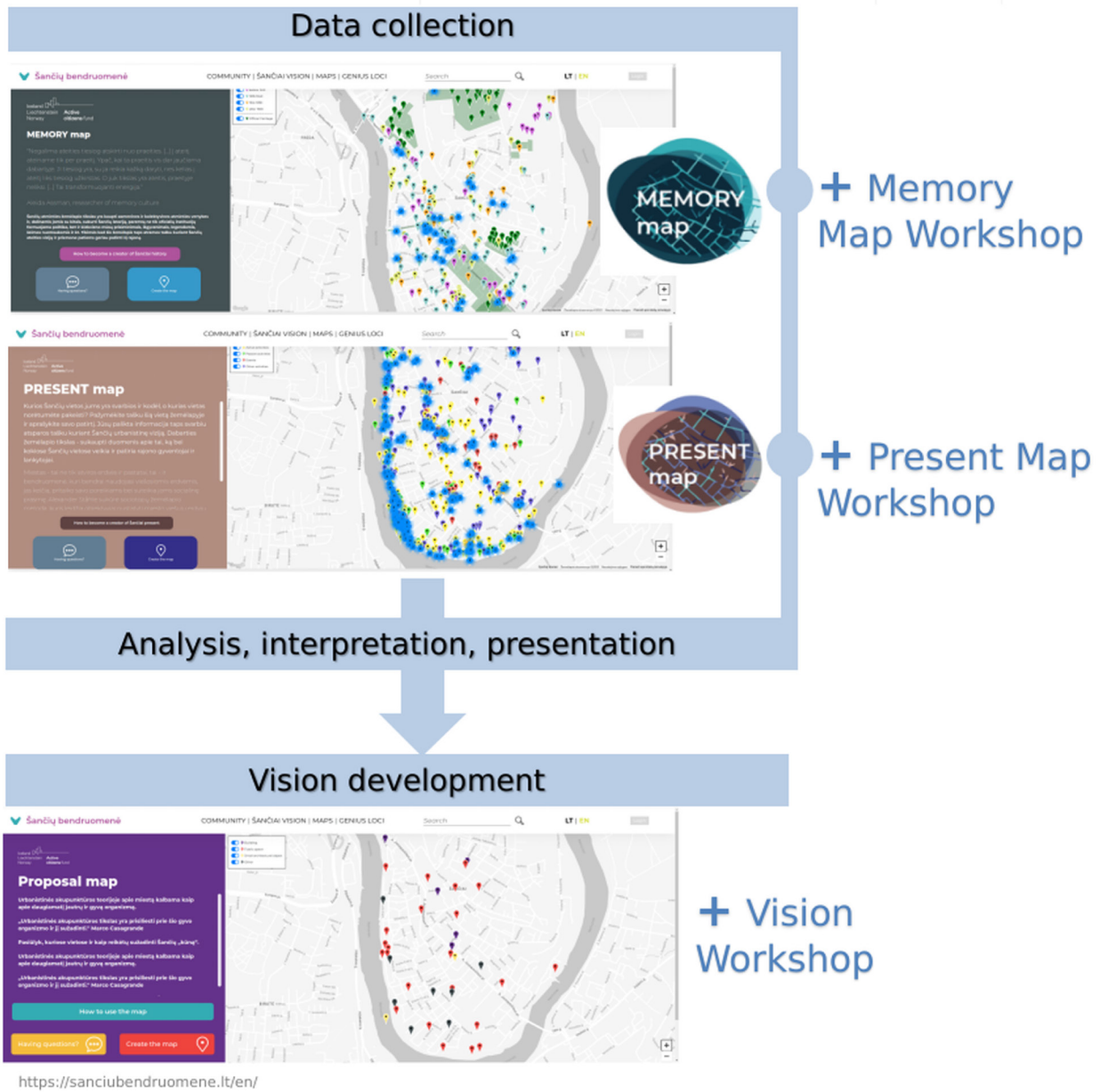
Fig. 6. Online interactive maps used in the course of the Genius Loci project. The proposal map presented at the bottom of the image was used in the Urban Vision Creation Workshop with schoolchildren. The maps are available at https://sanciubendruomene.lt/en/
Source: own elaboration based on Genius Loci (2023).

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

Fig. 7. Two types of collages: a) based on the maps of the locality (plan), created in the workshop with adult members of the community and b) based on the photographs (visual spaces), created in the workshop with schoolchildren
Source: photographs by the authors.

interest) was made available to the public for viewing and commenting: it was exhibited at the Kaunas subdivision gallery "Drobė" of the Lithuanian Union of Artists, located in Šančiai.

Workshops for schoolchildren were held on March 6 and 7, 2023. During these workshops, almost the same approach was used, only the basis of the map was replaced by photographs of selected places in Šančiai (Fig. 5). This choice was made in order to avoid inaccuracies and misunderstandings when reading the maps, which could have occurred due to the participant's young age, inexperience, and limited knowledge of the area. It should be noted that some of the schoolchildren participating in the workshop did not live in Šančiai but attended the school located in this district. The participants worked in groups of 4–5 persons with up to 5 workgroups in one classroom (one class) supervised by the project researchers. The project researchers also conducted sociological observation of the ongoing discussions and the work process, and videotaped the presentations of the workshop results.

Schoolchildren focused on 6 selected locations in Šančiai representing the diversity of public spaces and their management problems in the district as well as different types of urban landscapes in Šančiai. The event lasted 8 hours (full academic school day) with short rest breaks. During the event, all the stages of the approach were implemented step by step and the visual material of the participants' proposals was created (reflecting the types of the proposed activities, potential users, possible design solutions and the mood of the desired intervention expressed by the collage); the participants also entered their ideas for Šančiai public spaces into the interactive online map (Fig. 6). The tangible results of the workshop were 36 vision collages (Fig. 7) and supplemental material reflecting structured information and participants' opinions.

Analysis of collected data and generalization of results

The material and data collected during the workshops included mental maps and collages, identified above as participatory planning artifacts and sociological observation material – photographs of the process and video recordings. Examples of participatory planning artifacts are presented

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

Users of public spaces:
1. All types of users (adults, seniors, pre-school age children, school-children, teenagers, youth, uniformed officers, parents or childcarers with children, people with special needs, tourists); animals (birds)
2. All types of users except pre-school age children, uniformed officers, and tourists; animals (dog, cat, fishes)
3. All types of users except pre-school age children, seniors, uniformed officers, people with special needs, and tourists; animals (dog)
4. All types of users except uniformed officers; animals (cat, birds)
5. All types of users except pre-school age children, seniors, uniformed officers, people with special needs, and tourists
6. All types of users except adults, childcarers with children, people with special needs, uniformed officers, and tourists; animals (birds)

Elements of public spaces:
1. Trees, flowers, park, benches, merry-go-round, path, hammock, sculpture, parking, fitness equipment, pool, picnic, picnic area, art installation, solar panels, lighting, graffiti
2. Trees, decorative plants, flowers, path for pedestrians, bicycles and scooters, café, basketball court, beach, picnic area
3. Trees, flowers, benches, playground for children, swings, smoking area, picnic area, event area
4. Water, trees, flowers, location for taking photos, bicycle path, decorative plants, natural area
5. Trees, flowers, decorative plants, modern architecture, lawn, pedestrian path, café, volleyball court, bar-club
6. Building renovation, trees, decorative plants, place for litter, place for transport, personal space, billboard

Age / Activity	7th-graders 1	7th-graders 2	8th-graders 3	7th-graders 4	8th-graders 5	8th-graders 6	Total
Gardening							
Observing the panorama	x		x		x	x	4
Folklore							
Events		x		x			2
Observing the shop windows				x			1
Taking photos		x	x	x	x		4
Other cultural activities							
Picnic	x	x	x		x		4
Exercise	x		x		x	x	4
Shipping	x						1
Bird feeding	x		x	x	x	x	5
Waiting for public transport		x					1
Resting, sitting	x		x	x	x		4
Relaxation in the greenery	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Games/sports		x	x	x	x		4
Ball games		x	x		x	x	4
Walking the dog	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Sitting in a cafe		x			x		2
Walking	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Shopping							
Meetings		x				x	2
Relaxation in the greenery	x	x	x				3
Observing the flowers	x		x	x	x		4
Horse riding							
Talking on the phone				x			1
Smoking			x		x	x	3
Recreation near the water	x	x			x		3
Children's games, playing		x	x	x	x	x	5
Fishing	x				x		2
Bathing, swimming	x	x					2
Riding the bike	x	x		x	x		4

1. The most important things in the collage are relaxation and nature. It is possible to bath and do picnics here
2. Comfort – well-being. Idea for Šančiai. Benefits – relaxation, rest after works, spend weekend, have a good time
3. Any abandoned place can become popular place that everyone likes
4. The most important things are plants, humans, animals. They bring life
5. Recreation area near Nemunas
6. -

Fig. 8. Example of the worksheet used for systematizing workshop results. This sheet was used to systematize the results of the workshop with schoolchildren related to one out of the six analyzed locations – open space near the Vytautas Magnus University school
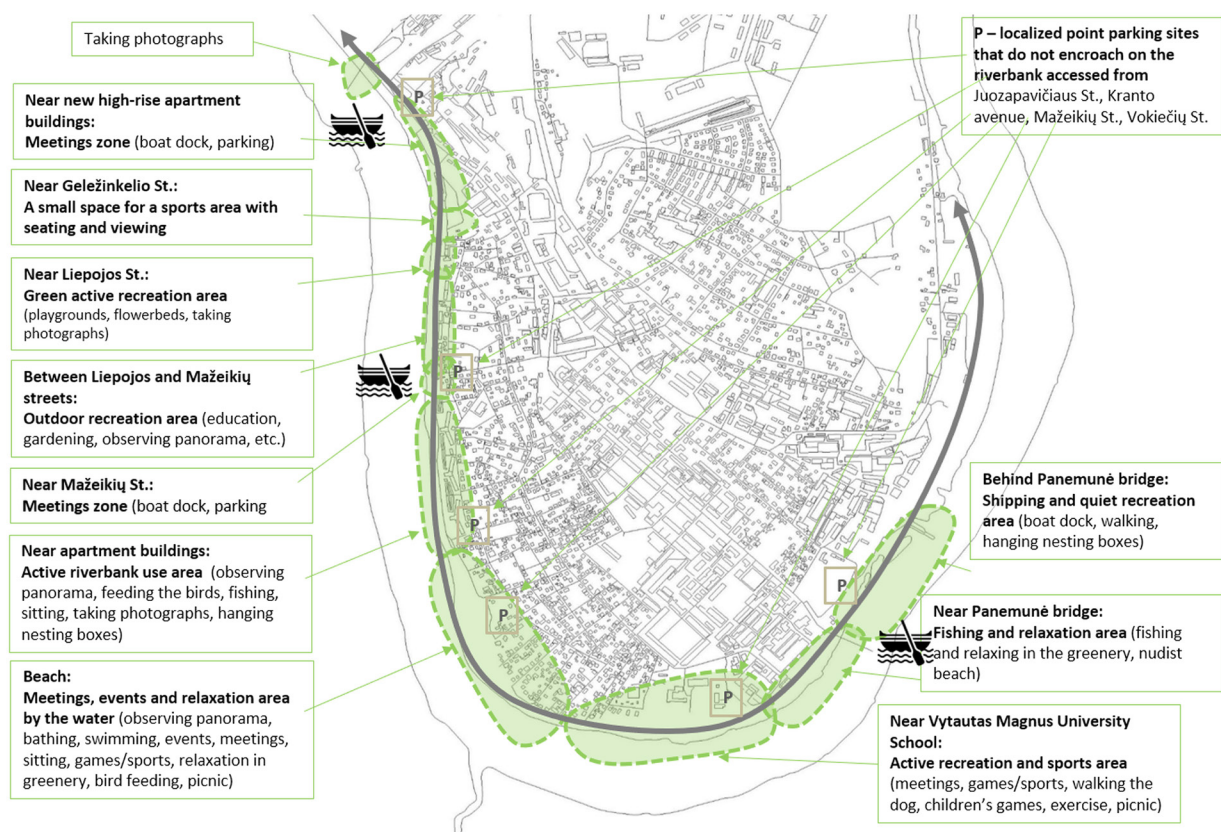*Source*: own elaboration.

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

in Figure 7 – drawings and collages based on the geographic map of the area created by the adult participants and on the photograph of the visual space created by schoolchildren.

As it was described in the structure of the approach in the previous section, the analysis and systematization of the results of the workshops was carried out using worksheets and maps. Figure 8 presents the systematization of the results of the workshop with schoolchildren for one location – the open space near the Vytautas Magnus University school is shown. The table on the right presents the frequency of occurrence of different types of activities in the collages prepared by different classes of schoolchildren (up to 5 workgroups in one classroom) numbered from 1 to 6. It can be seen that the most frequent activities proposed for this open
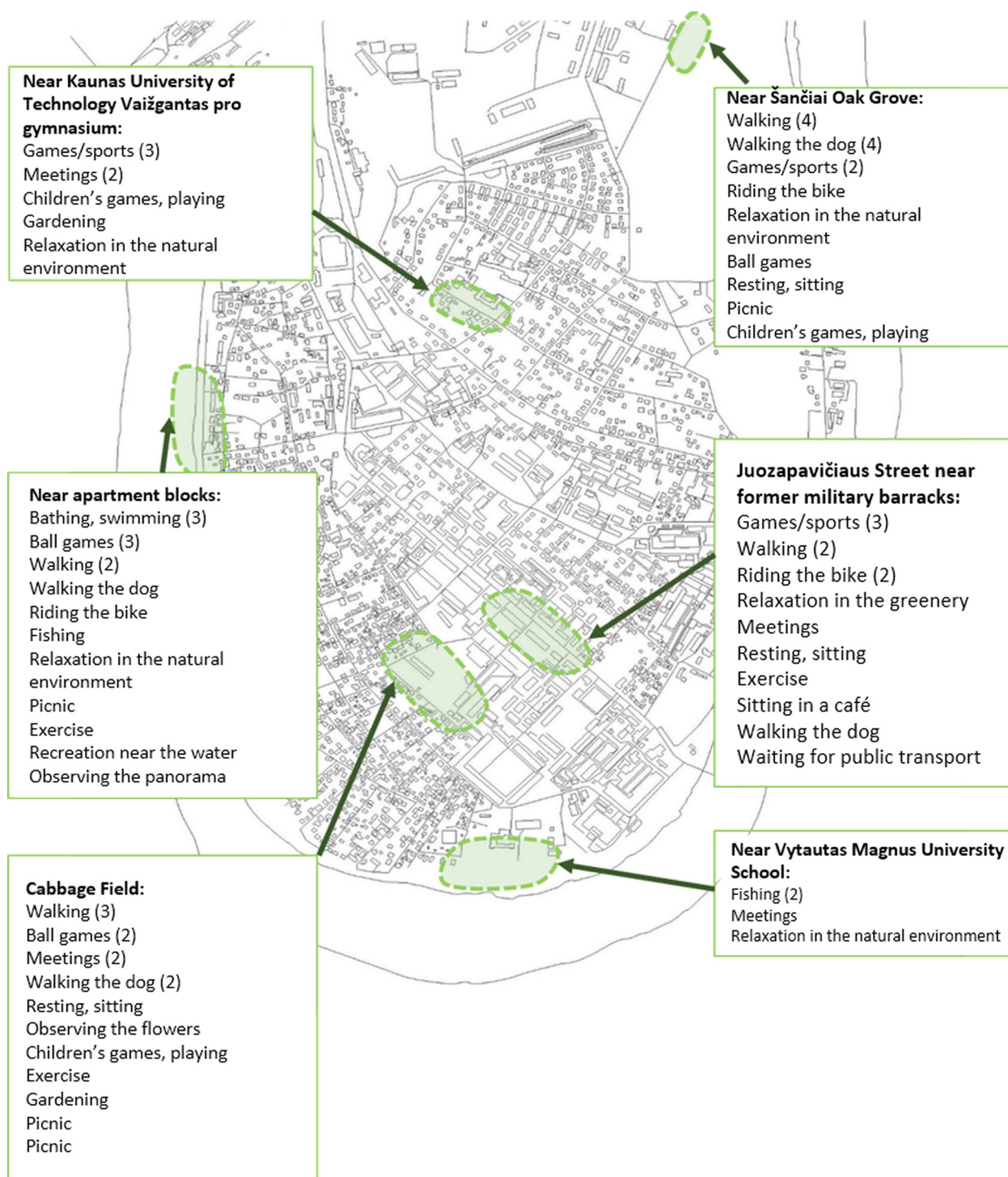
green public space located near the river are relaxation in the greenery, walking, and walking the dog.

The upper panel on the left shows the potential users of public spaces identified by each class. It is important to note that the workshop participants used specific categories to identify users (adults, seniors, preschoolers, schoolchildren, teenagers, youth, uniformed officers, parents or caregivers with children, people with special needs, tourists); moreover, numerous workgroups had identified non-human actors (animals, birds, fishes) as space users by drawing them in the space or representing them in the collage using magazine clippings. The lower panel on the left lists the elements of public spaces identified by each class. The project researchers had identified these elements by analyzing workshop materials. It can be seen that natural elements and

Fig. 9. Systematization and generalization of the results of the workshop with adult and senior members of the Šančiai community revealing a bottom-up generated strategy for the Nemunas riverbank
Source: own elaboration.

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

Near Kaunas University of Technology Vaižgantas pro gymnasium:
Games/sports (3)
Meetings (2)
Children's games, playing
Gardening
Relaxation in the natural environment

Near Šančiai Oak Grove:
Walking (4)
Walking the dog (4)
Games/sports (2)
Riding the bike
Relaxation in the natural environment
Ball games
Resting, sitting
Picnic
Children's games, playing

Near apartment blocks:
Bathing, swimming (3)
Ball games (3)
Walking (2)
Walking the dog
Riding the bike
Fishing
Relaxation in the natural environment
Picnic
Exercise
Recreation near the water
Observing the panorama

Juozapavičiaus Street near former military barracks:
Games/sports (3)
Walking (2)
Riding the bike (2)
Relaxation in the greenery
Meetings
Resting, sitting
Exercise
Sitting in a café
Walking the dog
Waiting for public transport

Cabbage Field:
Walking (3)
Ball games (2)
Meetings (2)
Walking the dog (2)
Resting, sitting
Observing the flowers
Children's games, playing
Exercise
Gardening
Picnic
Picnic

Near Vytautas Magnus University School:
Fishing (2)
Meetings
Relaxation in the natural environment

Fig. 10. Systematization and generalization of the results of the workshop with schoolchildren, demonstrating various potential activities in prominent public spaces in Šančiai
Source: own elaboration.

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

ornamental decorative plantings are perceived as important elements of public space by young workshop participants. Relevant quotations from the collages are listed at the bottom of the worksheet. In this case, the workshop participants distinguish between relaxation, plants, humans, animals, Nemunas River. The quotations once again verify the results of the structured analysis of the workshop materials.

In order to get a general picture of the workshop participants' proposals, the results were systematized using maps in the second stage. Figures 9 and 10 present the systematization and generalization of the results of workshops with adult community members and schoolchildren, respectively. Figure 9 shows the functional typology and potential uses of the riverbank identified by the community members, which together reveal a bottom-up generated strategy for the Nemunas riverbank in Šančiai with localized point parking sites, boating, active and passive recreation zones. Sociological observation of discussions and analysis of workshop materials revealed the following points about the importance of locations in and features of Šančiai for the future of Kaunas city: unique non-urbanized waterfront right next to the city center, pedestrian-friendly area, natural diversity, bird wintering areas, nature observation, Nemunas riverside public space. The importance of the historic street network, which opens directly to the riverbank, was identified as important for the future of Šančiai by the community members participating in the workshop.

Figure 10 presents potential activities identified by the participants of the workshop with schoolchildren in 6 selected locations in Šančiai. This analysis revealed the functional potential of open spaces in the neighborhood from the point of view of young members of the population. It is evident that schoolchildren perceive the necessity to combine and integrate socializing (meetings), physical activities (sports, games), passive recreation (relaxation, observation) in public spaces; it is visible that selected activities correspond to the physical characteristics of the space (e.g. the presence of water and greenery). This reflects the need to find ways to combine active

and quiet recreation in public spaces in a natural environment, including a wider range of activities (water recreation, children's games, picnics, fishing, boating, etc.).

It is not easy to make a direct comparison of bottom-up proposals generated by adult and senior community members and schoolchildren as the workshops focused on different locations in Šančiai. However, some general similarities and differences can be pointed out: both social groups emphasized the need for diverse passive and active activities and their integration in public spaces and the importance of nature; while the adult and senior community members put more emphasis on cultural heritage, historical street network and natural ecosystems, schoolchildren focused more on active sports activities, cultivated decorative plantings such as flowers and ornamental shrubs, and non-human actors in public spaces such as domestic animals and pets.

GENERALIZATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OF THE ŠANČIAI VISION CREATION WORKSHOP

Generalization of results

The urban vision workshops were aimed at generating bottom-up planning and management solutions for public spaces in Šančiai, thus the generalized results of the workshops were presented as a map of Šančiai (Fig. 13). The image of this map was deliberately chosen as a natural extension of the workshop process, prioritizing a simplified representation and visualization of the findings. Since this map, summarizing the results of the workshop, was published on the neighborhood website, this way of presenting the results made it easy to read and understand for any member of the community, not just a professional audience of urban planners. Such a decision was made to maintain and consolidate the community's trust in the results of the process and their transparency. The locations in the map were identified after overlapping the results of the workshops with schoolchildren and adult

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

community members and carefully analyzing the collages, drawings, mental maps and notes of all workgroups. The generalized urban vision map presents the general functional typology of public spaces, elements of public space infrastructure, and potential users. Since the final result was intended not only as a scientific finding but also for public presentation, communication with interested subjects and the general population, the visual representation and legibility of the map were very important. For this purpose, special symbolic icons were created to represent public space infrastructure and activities. The general functional typology of public spaces includes: meeting space, educational space, sports space, active recreation space, recreation in nature space, passive recreation space, busy street space, event space, riverbank space, beach space, and cemetery space. The functional typology of public and open spaces in Šančiai is certainly not limited to this classification, as the typology was created based on the results of the workshops and the places identified and/or analyzed by the participants; nevertheless, this functional typology, consisting of 11 types of public

spaces, reveals the potential for the actualization of public spaces in the district.

As shown in the map, each general functional type of public space may be equipped with different infrastructure, the equipment of the same functional type of public space may differ depending on its location, context, degree of naturalness and other characteristics. Based on the analysis and systematization of the workshop results, 12 types of public space infrastructure (Fig. 11) were distinguished in the map: wild nature, infrastructure for passive activities, infrastructure for active activities, infrastructure for water recreation, infrastructure for non-motorized transport, infrastructure for motorized transport, ornamental plantings, infrastructure for events, infrastructure for education/information, infrastructure for animal care, infrastructure for navigation, food/catering facilities. Each type is represented by a symbolic icon. Figure 12 shows 28 symbolic icons representing activities that can take place in different functional types of public spaces equipped with necessary infrastructure. This type of representation of proposals for public

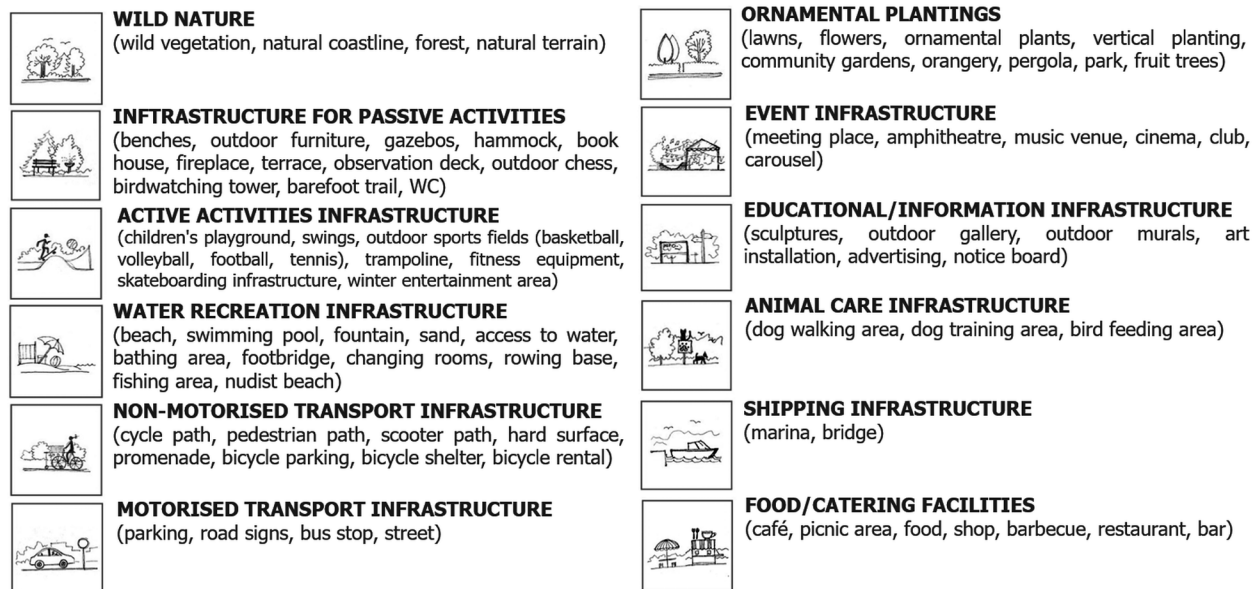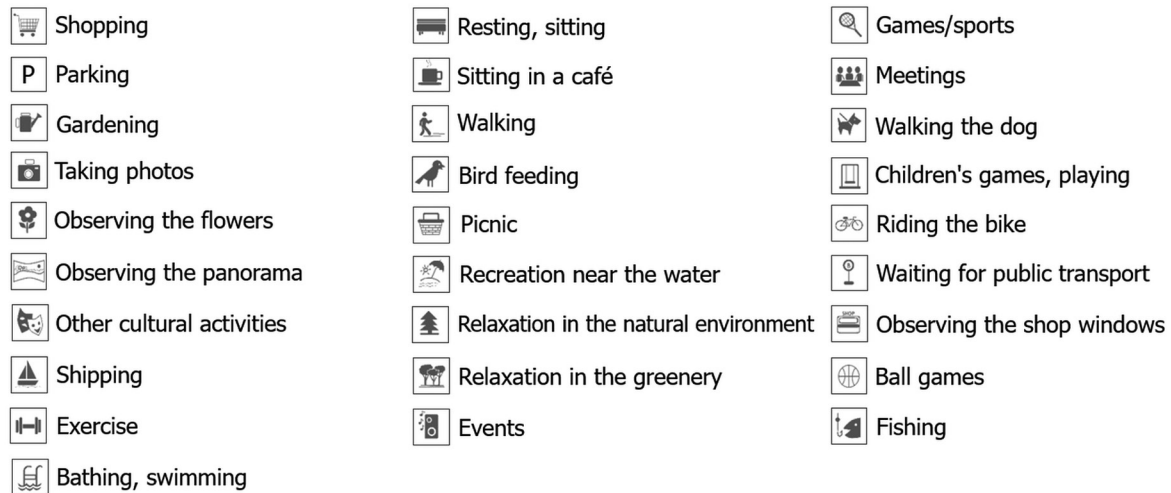## ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC SPACE INFRASTRUCTURE PROPOSED BY THE WORKSHOPS PARTICIPANTS :

WILD NATURE
(wild vegetation, natural coastline, forest, natural terrain)

INFTRASTRUCTURE FOR PASSIVE ACTIVITIES
(benches, outdoor furniture, gazebos, hammock, book house, fireplace, terrace, observation deck, outdoor chess, birdwatching tower, barefoot trail, WC)

ACTIVE ACTIVITIES INFRASTRUCTURE
(children's playground, swings, outdoor sports fields (basketball, volleyball, football, tennis), trampoline, fitness equipment, skateboarding infrastructure, winter entertainment area)

WATER RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE
(beach, swimming pool, fountain, sand, access to water, bathing area, footbridge, changing rooms, rowing base, fishing area, nudist beach)

NON-MOTORISED TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE
(cycle path, pedestrian path, scooter path, hard surface, promenade, bicycle parking, bicycle shelter, bicycle rental)

MOTORISED TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE
(parking, road signs, bus stop, street)

ORNAMENTAL PLANTINGS
(lawns, flowers, ornamental plants, vertical planting, community gardens, orangery, pergola, park, fruit trees)

EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE
(meeting place, amphitheatre, music venue, cinema, club, carousel)

EDUCATIONAL/INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE
(sculptures, outdoor gallery, outdoor murals, art installation, advertising, notice board)

ANIMAL CARE INFRASTRUCTURE
(dog walking area, dog training area, bird feeding area)

SHIPPING INFRASTRUCTURE
(marina, bridge)

FOOD/CATERING FACILITIES
(café, picnic area, food, shop, barbecue, restaurant, bar)

Fig. 11. Typology of public space infrastructure represented by symbolic icons
Source: own elaboration.

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

PRIORITIES FOR ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC SPACES PROPOSED BY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS:

Shopping	Resting, sitting	Games/sports
P Parking	Sitting in a café	Meetings
Gardening	Walking	Walking the dog
Taking photos	Bird feeding	Children's games, playing
Observing the flowers	Picnic	Riding the bike
Observing the panorama	Recreation near the water	Waiting for public transport
Other cultural activities	Relaxation in the natural environment	Observing the shop windows
Shipping	Relaxation in the greenery	Ball games
Exercise	Events	Fishing
Bathing, swimming		

Fig. 12. Typology of activities in public spaces represented by symbolic icons
Source: own elaboration based on Vitkuviene et al. (2019).

spaces is detailed in information about activities and necessary infrastructure, represents the desirable character and mood of the public space, and is also flexible in terms of planning and architectural solutions.

The bottom-up generated urban vision map of Šančiai can be complemented with the insights into the peculiarities and potential sustainable development directions of the district, synthesized from the discussions that took place during the workshops and the analysis of the workshop results:

Cultural context

1. From the architectural and urbanistic points of view, Šančiai can be seen as a unique phenomenon not only in Kaunas, but also in a much wider context and therefore it requires non-standard urban development, which should be done in a complex, not in a fragmented way.
2. The architectural and urban mosaic and history of Šančiai (panoramic views, military, wooden and interwar architectural heritage, and the network of riverside streets) should be appreciated and preserved for future generations.
3. The combination of architectural and urban diversity to be preserved and created should highlight the strengths and visual identity of Šančiai.

Social context

1. The district's environment should support the existing and create new high-quality community connections and social diversity.
2. The vision for the development of the neighborhood should focus more on ensuring the quality of the environment for existing social flows than on generating new traffic and people flows.
3. Look for ways to combine active and quiet recreation in the natural environment of the neighborhood, including a wider variety of activities.
4. Ensure that the movement and recreation of the population are completely safe and not physically separated from the Nemunas riverbank.
5. Develop the concept of a socially responsible, equitable, and sustainable neighborhood and city by initiating participatory urban development projects together with the communities, rather than simply submitting solutions for consultation or comment.

Ecological context

1. Preserve biodiversity and the natural local environment, it's not just about "roses and tulips, but also about the self-grown thistle".
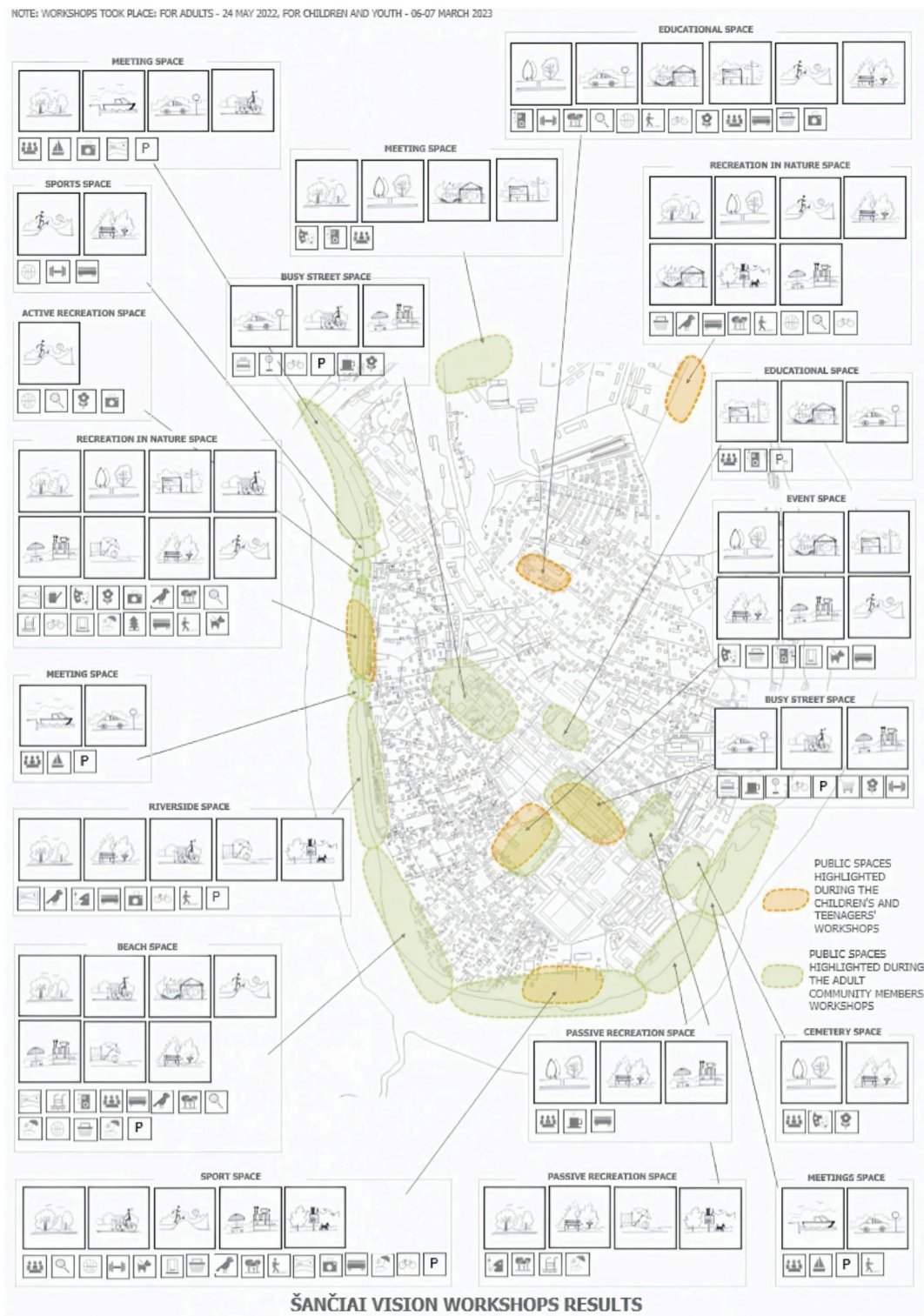2. Implement solutions based on the principles of sustainability and green infrastructure design,

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt;
✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

Fig. 13. Generalized results of Šančiai Urban Vision workshops
Source: own elaboration.

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt;
✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

developing ecosystem services, and ensuring a close human relationship with nature, plants, and animals.

3. Minimize potential pollution (chemical, visual, noise, etc.) to maintain a place for city dwellers to breathe fresh air and be surrounded by silence.

4. Maintain a local natural green environment that could serve as an educational space, a place for community gardens and urban gardening.

   Economic context

1. Preserve the non-urbanized Nemunas riverbank, while maintaining the highest standard of quality of life in Kaunas – "green space under the window".

2. Preserve distinctive urban structure and local identity, creating conditions for unique educational and cultural events in the city.

3. Focus transportation infrastructure planning on access rather than passage, giving priority to pedestrian and bicycle traffic on the Nemunas riverbank, thus promoting a vibrant street culture and local small businesses.

DISCUSSION

Reflecting on the application of the Urban Vision Creation Approach, the SWOT evaluation of the workshop process and results was carried out from the point of view of 1) improving the citizen participation experience, 2) obtaining more comprehensive data for urban vision development, and 3) contributing to spatial justice. The SWOT is a qualitative analysis representing four types of factors identified on a quadrant: the strengths (internal positive characteristics); the weaknesses (internal shortcomings and deficits); the opportunities (external positive events and circumstances) that can be exploited; and the threats (external risks and barriers) that must be averted or taken into account (Stacchini et al., 2022). The SWOT analysis was conducted using a large language model (LLM) and an expert approach. The structured results of the SWOT analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. SWOT analysis of the Urban Vision Creation Approach

Strengths	Weaknesses
1	2
Participation experience	*Participation experience*
– Creative activities (drawing on maps and photographs, making collages) promoted active participation and engagement, and a sense of ownership of the created work	– Organizing and facilitating the workshop require a significant investment of time and human effort
– The use of visuals and non-verbal communication (symbolic icons, drawings, clippings from newspapers and magazines) helped to overcome language and expression barriers, and avoid significant conflicts of interest	– Some workshop participants were skeptical or felt uncomfortable expressing their ideas through drawings
– Flexibility and adaptability of the approach allowed to create different participation experiences for different age groups of participants according to their social and cognitive needs	– Participants' experience of the workshop may depend on the skills and experience of the facilitator
	– Adapting the approach to different social groups requires considerable knowledge of their social and cognitive needs
Vision development	*Vision development*
– The collages and drawings produced during the workshops and the sociological observation material captured rich multifaceted data that captured the intangible aspects of the neighborhood's identity, potential, and the needs of the participants that would be difficult to express in verbal format	– The results of the analysis of collages and drawings can be subjective and controversial
– The content analysis of visual artifacts created during the workshops revealed the insights and preferences both in structured (through the use of symbolic icons in the process) and qualitative (through the creative nature of drawings and collages) ways, that would have been difficult to obtain using traditional survey techniques	– The workshop approach does not allow for recording the experiences of participants who are unable or unwilling to participate in group work. Some teenage participants in the workshops designed for schoolchildren deliberately provided ironic and contradictory results, thus requiring careful sociological observation and cross-checking
	– The results of the workshops may not generalize and express the preferences of the entire community of Šančiai, therefore further validation is needed

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

cont. **Table 1**

1	2
– The collaborative and creative nature of the workshops encouraged discussions that took place in parallel with the creative process, providing more insightful data for vision development and revealing the genius loci – Incorporating a variety of expressions, such as drawings, the use of magazine and newspaper clippings and symbolic icons allowed for the identification of a variety of users of public spaces including non-human actors	– The skills of the facilitators are important not only for the experience of the participants, but also for the quality of the workshop results – The range of symbolic icons used in the workshop process did not seem wide enough to include relevant non-human actors
Spatial justice – Urban Vision Creation Workshops can help to ensure that the vision for Šančiai public spaces reflects the needs related to the distribution of resources and values of different social groups of community members – The use of visual tools that are accessible to people with different cognitive abilities can help to identify and express the perspectives related to spaces of different community members – The participatory practices that unite the community and the knowledge gained in the process can empower community members to take further actions related to the future and quality of their living environment	*Spatial justice* – Deeply rooted power dynamics or structural inequalities cannot be addressed through participatory workshops alone, and would require broader and coordinated efforts – It is challenging to ensure that the most marginalized or vulnerable members of the community are adequately represented among the workshop participants – Human-centered participatory workshops may not address the needs of non-human actors in the area
Opportunities	Threats
Participation experience – The workshop approach could be further developed and adapted to different cultural contexts, age groups, etc. – Further integration of technology and digital tools into the workshop process could increase engagement and participation, especially among people who may be less comfortable with traditional hands-on methods – The approach could be integrated into ongoing community development initiatives to promote long-term involvement	*Participation experience* – The creative approach of workshops and vision development may not be well received by some community members who prefer more traditional methods of participation and planning – The workshop approach may not be able to reach all segments of the community, particularly those who are less engaged in civic activities
Vision development – The approach could be combined with other data collection methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the neighborhood and its needs – The data generated from the workshops and the generalized urban vision could be used to inform and refine traditional planning processes, leading to more inclusive and equitable outcomes – The collaborative nature of the approach could empower community members to continue collecting and analyzing data on their own, fostering a culture of civic engagement	*Vision development* – Workshop participants may not represent the entire community of Šančiai, thus the developed urban vision may be biased towards certain social groups – The subjective nature of interpreting collages and drawings could lead to the misinterpretation of the results, thus affecting vision development – The workshop data, especially the sociological observation material, may contain sensitive information about individuals, thus requiring careful handling and data protection
Spatial justice – The workshop could encourage or be linked to broader efforts to promote spatial justice at the city level – The approach and its outcomes could be used to develop a community-based planning process in the city – The approach could improve the culture and climate of trust in the urban planning field – The participatory approach could be further developed and used to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Šančiai urban vision	*Spatial justice* – Workshop facilitators, organizers or researchers who analyze and generalize the results may influence the outcomes, potentially marginalizing the voices of some participants – The participatory process does not automatically translate into the effective implementation of the urban vision, which can lead to unfulfilled expectations and needs, and disappointment with participatory practices – The cohesive impact of the workshops on the community may diminish over time without continuous engagement and leadership

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

The SWOT analysis of the Urban Vision Creation Approach revealed that it was effective in terms of both the workshop process and generated results. The workshop process ensured the use of participants' creative imagination and artistic expression through attractive, simple, and engaging activities, creating a group work atmosphere, community engagement, and social cohesion, enhancing the quality, artistic expression, visual communication, and relevance of the created mental maps – participatory planning artifacts. The assessment of the workshop results demonstrated that the use of mental mapping, the sociotope methodology, and design thinking allowed to capture and structure the ideas and expectations of the workshop participants in relation to public spaces, and provided insights into the needs of the community. The application of user and activity typologies characteristic of the sociotope methodology in the workshop process and the initial focus on users, activities, and the environment allowed to analyze structurally quite diverse workshop material and to synthesize the results of the analysis and sociological observations into bottom-up generated urban vision proposals for Šančiai. Moreover, it is possible to conclude that the application of the Urban Vision Creation Approach can contribute to spatial justice from both a procedural and distributive point of view (Maiese, 2003; Weck et al., 2022): to a fair spatial distribution of resources and opportunities in the neighborhood and to more fair and transparent decision-making regarding the distribution of spatial resources. However, it should be noted that in order to take full advantage of the benefits of the Urban Vision Creation Approach it should be integrated into urban planning processes at the municipality level. According to S. Weck et al. (2022), the European Union is moving towards a place-based approach, which is expected to create a strategic shift towards more place-sensitive, cross-sectoral, and socially inclusive development. They state that the "place-based approach is key to territorial cohesion and to the overall efforts towards a just Europe" (Weck et al., 2022). The application experience and evaluation results of the Urban Vision Creation Approach allow it to be identified as a potential contributor to place-based development.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Spatial justice is an important justification for participatory urban planning. Currently spatial justice challenges are experienced by numerous urban communities, including the community of Šančiai historical neighborhood in Kaunas. The development of participatory planning tools including the Urban Vision Creation Approach was encouraged by the spatial justice challenges faced by the Šančiai community.

2. The Developed Urban Vision Creation Approach consists of working in groups organized in a sequence of tasks aimed at developing proposals related to users, activities, and design elements for public spaces in Šančiai district. The approach is based on the integration of well-known urban theories – mental mapping (working with maps and visual spaces), the sociotope methodology (using typologies of users and activities), and the hands-on approach. Modifications and adaptations of the methodology are possible depending on the age of the participants, their knowledge of the area and other characteristics.

3. The analysis and generalization of the results of the Urban Vision Creation Approach involves a quantitative and qualitative content analysis using worksheets and maps. The categories used in the content analysis are users, activities, and design elements of the public space. The final outcome of the analysis and generalization is an urban vision map that reflects the functional typology and location of public spaces, the proposed elements of public space infrastructure, and the potential activities that take place in public spaces.

4. The Urban Vision Workshop methodology was applied during 5 workshops with almost 200 participants (50 adult members of the Šančiai community and 143 12 to 15-year-old schoolchildren) in the period between 2022–2023. The workshops for adults and schoolchildren have proved the flexibility of the methodology as well as the possibility to accumulate

✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

comprehensive data sets. In addition, mental maps and collages created during the workshop with adult community members were exhibited as participatory planning artifacts.

5. The generalized results of the workshops were presented as a map of the urban vision of Šančiai, revealing bottom-up planning and management solutions for public spaces consisting of distribution and functional typology of public spaces, their infrastructure elements and activities that can potentially take place there. Such urban vision proposals are sufficiently detailed from the point of view of functions, activities, and the general character of the place, but leave a lot of flexibility in terms of spatial arrangement.

6. The SWOT analysis of the Urban Vision Creation Approach and the results of this application have shown that this approach can enhance participants' experience in the participatory planning process, can provide comprehensive and diverse data for urban analysis and decision-making, and can contribute to procedural and distributive aspects of spatial justice when integrated into broader efforts of place-based development. The approach in its current form is useful for collecting data and engaging citizens in urban planning, although further steps are needed to adapt it to formally integrate the citizens' right to the city into urban planning decisions. Further research directions may include: adapting the approach to different age groups, testing it in different cultural contexts, further elaborating the tools used during the workshops to better reflect the more-than-human dimension of the area under analysis.

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✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

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✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt

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✉kestutis.zaleckis@ktu.lt; ✉laura.jankauskaite-jureviciene@ktu.lt; ✉jurga.vitkuviene@ktu.lt; ✉indre.grazuleviciute@ktu.lt