



# SUNRISE

*Sustainable Urban Neighbourhoods  
Research and Implementation  
Support in Europe*

## D3.1

### Co-Implementation Guidelines

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# Document Control Page

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Brief Description	<p>The target group of this document are urban practitioners who want to walk the talk of co-creation beyond the common practice of developing plans in a collaborative spirit between the municipality and citizens and local stakeholders. To fully harness the benefits of co-creation, similar coalitions should engage jointly in co-implementation efforts.</p> <p>This document therefore clarifies key terms and delineates co-implementation from related concepts. It also articulates important benefits of co-implementation while being clear about related risks and challenges. Of particular value to practitioners are the lists of potential civic actors and their potential types of contributions.</p> <p>The document also provides inspiration of what co-implementation in action could look like through references to a number of existing initiatives. It also includes hands on “how-to” tips to consider before and during co-implementation activities.</p>
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## Executive Summary

In certain circles, it is en vogue to talk about co-creation, co-production, co-design and other terms with the prefix “co-“. This can be confusing, which is why the first chapter of this document is dedicated to clarifying related terms.

Chapter 2 is focussed specifically on *co-implementation* and contains a brief hypothetical case study, which encapsulates many examples of how city authorities and citizens / stakeholders together can implement certain measures in a collaborative spirit.

The following chapter, number 3, explains in more general terms what is meant by co-implementation. It also contains a section to delineate it against similar concepts in order to clarify what co-implementation is *not*.

The fourth chapter elaborates on the benefits of co-implementation and thus presents a range of reasons why related potentials should be pursued.

Chapter 5 is dedicated specifically to the various actors that could play a role in co-implementation. “The city” - although not being a monolithic block - is always one part of the “co-“ equation. The other part encompasses a very broad array of “civic actors”, which are the focus of this chapter.

Related to different types of actors are different types of potential contributions they can make to co-implementation efforts. Chapter 6 presents such a typology of contributions with concrete examples.

Co-implementation is not a routine approach, it is not suitable for every situation and it can go wrong. Chapter 7 therefore lists a range of risks and challenges that need attention. The purpose of this chapter is to avoid unrealistic expectations and to prevent particular problems.

The eighth chapter articulates tips and recommendations to be considered in the preparation and execution of a co-implementation activity.

Finally, chapter 9, contains several brief examples from a range of thematic areas to illustrate how co-implementation in action can look like.



# 1. Co-what?

The multitude of “co-something” words can be bewildering. People use terms such as co-identify, co-develop, co-validate, co-select, co-evaluate, co-assess, co-commission, co-design, co-produce, co-create, co-deliver, co-assess. The European Horizon 2020 project SUNRISE now also introduces the term “co-identify”. Although some specialists might disagree, for the pragmatic purpose of this document it seems fair so say that co-creation and co-production are often used as umbrella terms for a range of others as visualised in figure 1.



Figure 1: The co- family

The common characteristic of all co-words is that the city (typically represented by the staff working in its administration) and a range of civic actors work together towards a shared goal. This notion is represented in the two following definitions that are frequently cited in the literature:

*“Co-production provides an alternative service model ... which harnesses the strengths of both communities and staff. ... Co-production is about professionals and citizens making better use of each other’s assets, resources and contributions to achieve better outcomes or improved efficiency.”*  
(Governance International, 2016, p. 2)

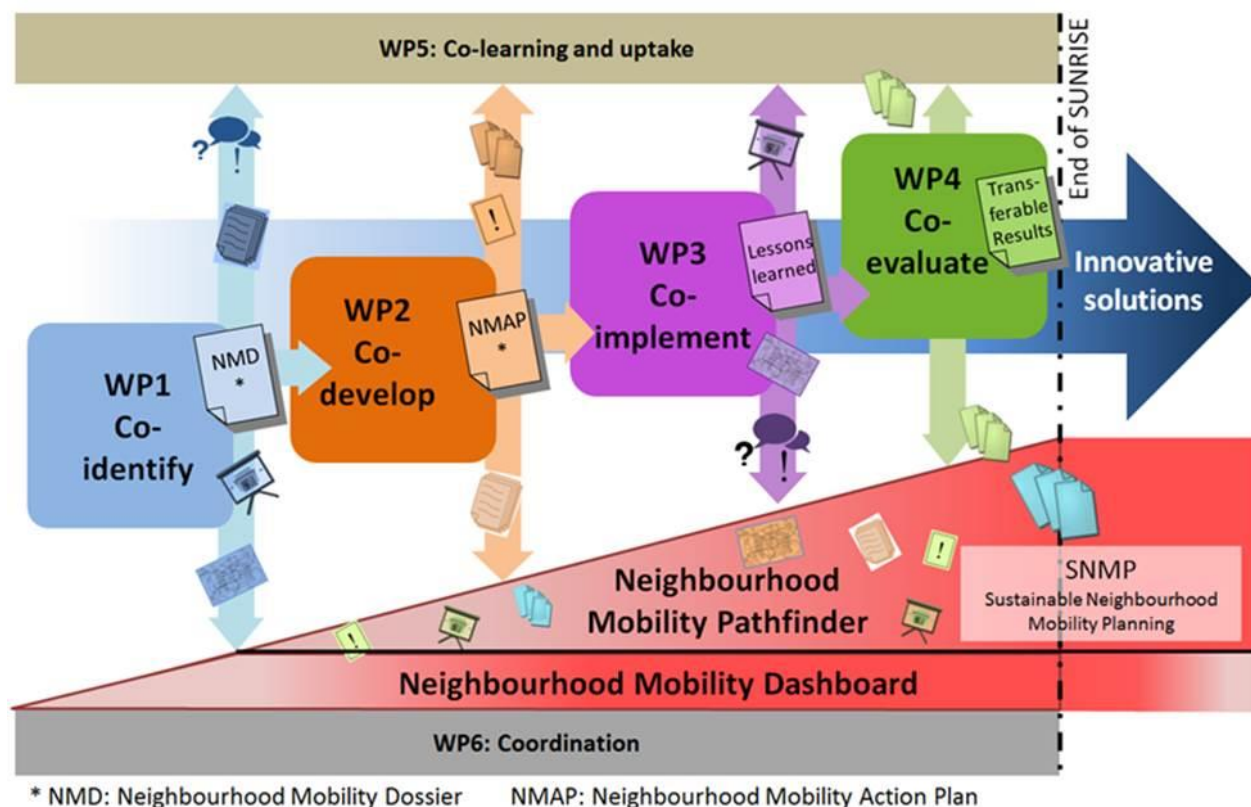
*Co-creation is the “systematic process of creating new solutions with people - not for them; involving citizens and communities in policy and service development.”* (Bason, 2010, p. 6)

These notions of co-production and co-creation apply to all aspects of SUNRISE, which undergoes all phases and steps of an innovation process in a partnership between the city and its citizens / stakeholders:

1. Problems are to be identified jointly by city representatives and civic actors;
2. Solutions are developed and selected together by citizens and the city;
3. Concrete measures should be implemented by both the city the its citizens;
4. The effects of these measures should be assessed and evaluated in a partnership spirit.



Certain co-words belong to specific phases along the entire innovation chain. This is depicted in the workflow diagram of the SUNRISE project (see figure 2).



**Figure 2: Pert Chart of the SUNRISE project**

The following table maps various words that can be found in the literature to their corresponding counterpart in the SUNRISE terminology:

	→ Sequential phases along the entire innovation chain →			
Literature <sup>1</sup>	Co-production			
	Co-creation			
	Co-commission	Co-design	Co-deliver	Co-assess
SUNRISE	Co-identify & co-validate	Co-develop & Co-select	Co-implement & co-create	Co-evaluate & co-assess
	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4

<sup>1</sup> For example: Governance International, 2006. See <http://www.govint.org/our-services/co-production/>





Work package 3 in SUNRISE focuses “only” on one phase along this innovation chain. Work packages 1 and 2 are dedicated to the preceding two phases and work package 4 is concerned with the last phase along this innovation chain.

The involvement of citizens in the identification and validation of problems has been reasonably common practice in many parts of the democratic world for decades. Quite often, citizens are also permitted as participants in the discussion about which measures might be suitable to alleviate the problems. The degree to which citizens are allowed to co-steer this process varies greatly and ranges from a role as mere commentators on the more conservative end of this spectrum to co-deciders in more progressive contexts. Sherry Anrstein's (1969) "ladder of participation" famously captures this variety.

Attempts to also involve civic actors in the actual implementation of measures are not very common. This is therefore a particularly innovative, but also experimental aspects of SUNRISE. To be clear, co-implementation is not based on the assumption that citizens start operating diggers and other heavy machinery. Such infrastructure works is and remains within the sole responsibility of the city. Although civic actors might become active with light hardware actions (e.g. shovel and brush - see chapter 6), their main role in co-implementation efforts has more to do with “flanking” activities. Although these might not be the core of a measure, they can nevertheless be the decisive element whether a measure turns out successful or not.

This notion is captured in SUNRISE's *Description of Action*, which states that the nature of the measures to be implemented will be “packages of social, organisational and technical measures that reinforce the effectiveness of one another.” This is a consequence of the clear findings from many previous studies, which emphasise that novelties always need to be “socially embedded”; they require new skills, they need to be endorsed by well-respected individuals, often they need emotional or cultural clearance by community leaders, their maintenance needs feedback from attentive users, they work best with some form of time investment by volunteers etc. Many of these aspects cannot be delivered by the city; neither can they be purchased from a company. They require the contribution of civic actors and there's no substitute for it. If this is done in a true partnership between the city and civic actors we can call this co-implementation.

## 2. Co-implementation on Cravallo Street

This chapter consists of a brief case study, which was inspired by our good practice research about co-implementation around the world - its actual content, however, is purely hypothetical. It encapsulates many examples of how city authorities and citizens / stakeholders together can implement certain measures. It should provide a “taste” of what co-implementation in action could mean and should thus allow to understand the following parts of this document better.

*Cravallo street in Orthudo used to be characterised by all the usual traffic induced problems: noise, toxic air, difficulty to cross the street, forced car-dependence, congestion etc. In an attempt to alleviate the situation, the city decided in the 1980s to widen the road - at the expense of sidewalks - but the situation only got worse because the increased capacity only attracted ever more motorised traffic.*

*Over the last decade, citizen protest has begun to form, accusing the city of passivity and ignorance. This, in turn, annoyed many city employees personally, who started to protect themselves - both emotionally and legally - by hiding behind established street design codes, old, but still valid ordinances and regulations. Unsurprisingly, this did not contribute to amicable and effective solutions. Eventually, a new head of department sensed the frustration all around and asked his staff to lower the defences, to join citizen meetings with the goal to form a cooperative strategic alliance with existing local NGOs, the chamber of commerce, even with religious groups and other local stakeholders for the greater good. The responses to the first group-internal newsletters quickly made them all realise that they are able reach out to virtually any type of resident, business owner etc. if they pool their resources and contacts.*

*The alliance's steering group decided to use this asset strategically in order to, first of all, truly understand all people's everyday, "ordinary" needs and concerns. Correspondingly, an online platform was set up, meetings were organised, a stand at the grocery market was set-up, interviews were conducted etc. This led to a number of important insights, most notably:*

- *Many commuters stated that they would not cycle to work even if a golden bike lane was built because they would sweat during the ride and could not take a shower afterwards at their place of work.*
- *A number of people mentioned that they would be scared to cycle because a row of large bushes blocks lines of sight just before a busy intersection so that cyclists and cars drivers turning right can only see each other in the last split-second.*
- *Especially children insist on being driven to school because they are afraid of a group of homeless people who tend to gather under the roof of a bus interchange, trying to stay protected from wind and rain.*
- *Surprisingly many recent immigrants never learned and still don't know how to cycle. In addition, some Muslim women expressed concern whether cycling would be approved of in their cultural circles.*
- *Quite some residents explained that they still have bicycles in their basement, in dire need of a repair. Additionally, they complained about the difficulty of lifting their bike up to the ground floor every day.*

*After about half a year of this problem-identification process, a new phase was launched to collect suggestions from everyone through various meetings, online platforms and social media channels, to invite comments on existing suggestions and - very importantly - to solicit*





commitments ... commitments for behaviour change if this-and-that changes, commitments for voluntary work, for donations and investments.

Eventually, a new bike lane got built and paid for by the city. In addition ...

- local residents replaced bushes with flowerbeds with a long-term maintenance promise while the city provided tools, seeds and covered all volunteers under their insurance.
- many employers agreed on a five-year programme to install showers for their employees. The city-owned utility company donated low-throughput showerheads for all showers.
- a local NGO teamed up with bike shops to train the homeless how to fix bikes. The owner of a nearby hairdresser provided his large storage backroom for this, because it is not required for his business.
- some 20+ teenage children of recent immigrants agreed to act as “cycling ambassadors”, which means they give cycling lessons within their community.
- the priests of five Christian parishes (two of them female) and two local Imams agreed on a bicycle race around all places of worship. The winner got a bicycle (paid for by the city), which was donated with great fanfare to a self-help group of Muslim women.
- the city provided a vacant office near the bus interchange to a local charity, which offers shelter and food for homeless people.
- The “Clown-Crew” of the local theatre school organises “fun-rides” for children on bus lines between large housing estates and large schools at the start of every school term.
- over 50 owners of residential buildings along Caravallo street pledged to install metal ramps on all basement stairs to facilitate the up and down movement of bicycles.
- the apprentices of the local carpentry school joined forces for their practical exam and built a storage facility for 50 bicycles for the residents of buildings without any bike storage option. The city agreed to convert 10 of their own parking spaces for this purpose and the local DIY store donated the building material.

All related activities carried the same LeFiTOT (Let’s Figure This Out Together) logo. This was the compromise acronym for a slogan that has started around 2010 to spread among local residents (see figure 3).



Figure 3: Source: Lydon and Garcia (2015), p. 87



### 3. What co-implementation is - and what not

A definition of co-implementation can be as straightforward as this:

*A measure is being co-implemented if representatives of the city and civic actors are involved in its delivery in a complementary and non-commercial way.*

In light of the above, the “co-“ aspect is probably reasonably clear at this point as denoting a strategic cooperation between the city (in particular its administration and operational units) and civic actors (individual citizens, citizen groups, NGOs, charities, businesses etc.).

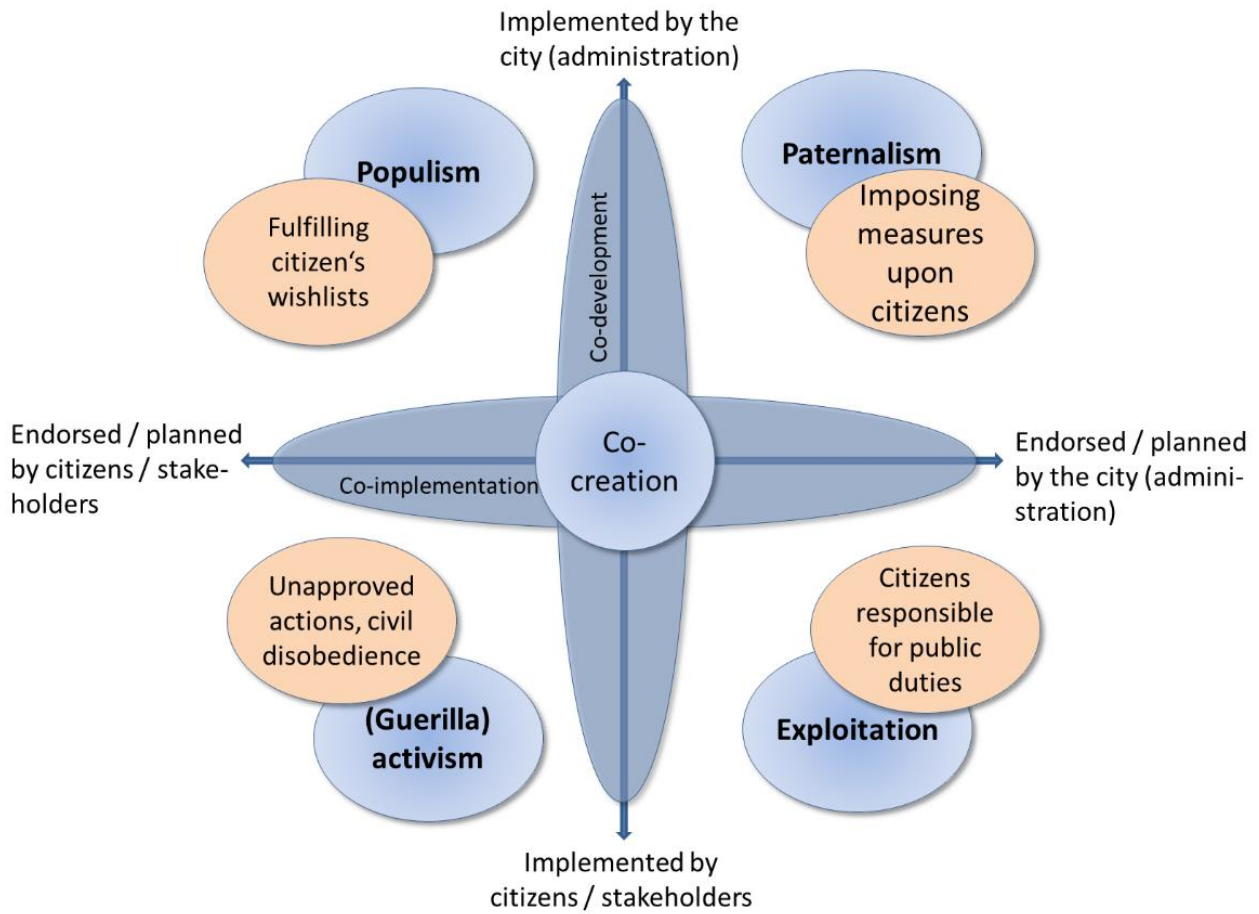
What deserves repeated emphasis is the understanding of the word “implementation.” It does not only include construction works, installation, software programming or project execution in a narrow technical sense but encompasses also a range of “flanking” activities such as communication, maintenance, marketing, promotion, endorsement, provision and acquisition of new skills, reliable feedback etc. Such a deliberately broad understanding of the word implementation opens up a whole range of opportunities for civic actors to make various contributions.

Not every measure which included citizens during some phases of the innovation chain qualifies as co-implementation. In fact, there is a risk that such initiatives are too close to some related but surely problematic concepts such as paternalism, populism, guerrilla activism and exploitation. This can be illustrated by positioning these concepts along two spectra:

- 1) One spectrum ranging from measures that were initiated, endorsed and planned by citizens or stakeholders on the one end and on the other end by the city (administration); represented by the horizontal axis in Figure 4.
- 2) A second spectrum ranging from citizens / stakeholders as implementors on one end to the other end which captures measures that are solely implemented by the city (administration); represented by the vertical axis in Figure 4.

This generates a conceptual space with four distinct quadrants:





**Figure 4: Two dimensions to consider in co-creation**

What this illustration shows is that not every co-developed measure is automatically co-implemented - and vice versa. The overarching goal of projects like SUNRISE is co-creation, that is, a new form of collaboration between citizens and the city along all phases of an innovation process. A truly co-created measure has therefore been planned *and* implemented collaboratively and tends to utilise potentials that might remain untapped otherwise while avoiding the ethical, practical and political problems of paternalism, exploitation, populism and guerrilla activism.



## 4. Why do it?

It is entirely legitimate to ask about the added value of an approach that implies a deviation from established ways of doing things. In fact, co-creation in general and co-implementation in particular should be pursued only if everyone involved is convinced of its advantages and not because it is fashionable. The following overview articulates some of the more important potential benefits of co-implementation, without any claim of comprehensiveness and without any assurance that all of them will materialise to the same degree.

**Potential cost savings** are very likely benefits of co-implementation activities because certain types of resources, be they time, skills, money etc. are being contributed that would not be mobilised in a traditional service delivery model. For example, the municipality of Uplengen (see below) saved about €500,000 in the seven years during which it cooperated with citizens in the construction of so called “citizen cycling lanes” (Bürgeradwege). Cost savings should not, however, be the only motivation of co-implementation approaches because of a very real risk of civic contributors being exploited (see above).

### **Mobilisation of local know-how:**

The involvement of local citizens always also entails the mobilisation of these citizens’ local know-how. This can be knowledge about locally specific cultures, communication channels, rat run paths, historical references, collective memories, dialects, micro-infrastructures, everyday routines etc. A lot of this knowledge would be inaccessible to and remains dormant under conventional implementation activities.

**Exposure to reality:** Initiatives of the city administrations do not typically need to proof their financial survivability in the competitive climate of the market economy. This can amount to “too much shelter” from selection pressures and even to the protection of concepts which are actually not viable in the long term. The systematic involvement of local stakeholders or businesses in the implementation effort can expose an idea early on to a limited degree of this harsh reality and thus facilitate its fine-tuning to enable its long-term survival even after the initial public kick-start funding has ended (see Hoogma et al. 2002).



**Bolster credibility and legitimacy:**  
As mentioned above, where non-negotiable constraints hamper a straightforward implementation, involved civic actors will at least understand and therefore accept such limitations. This is of particular importance in times when politicians and administrations are often accused of being disjointed from grassroots-reality, which tends to erode their perceived legitimacy, that is, the most valued asset of a democratic society. Put positively, co-implementation can bolster credibility and legitimacy.

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**Increase awareness:** By working to implement sustainable urban mobility measures, citizens can better understand the economic, social, and environmental issues affecting the local situation. From this, a realisation can grow how difficult it is to produce real, measurable change. This, in turn, can help the formation of increased consciousness of one's own mobility habits and behaviour.

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**Ensure compliance and carefulness:** Many types of solutions work best if they are being used in a particular, "compliant" way. If, say, a new app, a shared cargo bike or a sunshade over a public bench is being used, unintentionally, in a not foreseen way, its potential might not be used to the fullest or it might simply malfunction. If citizens are involved in the implementation of such measures, however, they are much more likely to know the proper usage. The analogous effect can be expected in terms of careful handling and absence of vandalism..

## 5. Possible actors

So far, this document used the expression "civic actors" to denote basically everyone who is not part of the city or the city administration. At a number of occasions, also the expression "citizens and stakeholders" was used. Although this was sufficient to describe general key points of co-implementation, it is important to differentiate between specific types of civic actors because this can spark ideas about whom, concretely, to approach and who, concretely, might be able to make certain contributions (see also chapter 6).





**Residents:** People living in proximity of a particular measure are, by definition, affected by it. It can therefore be assumed that they care about what happens and it happens; they also tend to possess particular local knowledge and contacts. In many areas, existing neighbour associations are a good entry point into this community. They are sometimes organised as official associations and sometimes convene virtually through neighbourhood portals or social media groups.

**Businesses,** especially those that are located within or near the intervention area, should be considered as potential co-implementation allies because they can benefit greatly from a range of improvements; be it safer and more pleasant streets, more seating opportunities, noise reductions, clearer and more reliable transport information etc. They also tend to respond positively to opportunities to boost their reputation. Business owners can be approached individually and directly or via their associations like Chamber of Commerce.

**Transport service providers** like bus operators, taxi companies, car and bike rental companies etc. can be natural allies in co-implementation efforts if the planned measures are likely to increase or stabilise their customer base. They are also typically interested to get involved if they can get associated with an initiative that is widely perceived as positive, especially in the area of transport and mobility.

**Local artists,** including painters, sculptors, galleries, musicians from Baroque singers to local punk-rock bands can play a valuable role in co-implementation efforts. They might have refreshingly unconventional ideas, draw the attention of the general public as well as the media or even produce some artefacts such as murals, sculptures etc. Artists often appreciate opportunities to show their talent and - depending on their level of professionalism - might even become active just for fun (e.g. school bands).

**Emergency services** such as the police or fire brigades sometimes have a public mandate for active involvement in improvements to the local community and sometimes they can have a genuine interest in the effects of certain measures because it can make their work easier. An example is the active participation of the fire brigades in Bremen, who demonstrated tangibly the importance of clamping down on illegal parking - simply because their fire truck could not access certain streets.

**Clubs and special interest groups** without a particular normative agenda can also play an important role. After all, members of a chess club, rabbit breeders and sports enthusiasts are residents, commuters, they have children etc. which typically represents a connection point to topics around sustainable mobility. Such groups might not get engaged because of a general underlying mission but they nevertheless can be very important communicators and amplifiers.



**Advocacy and charity groups** include organisations with a focus on sustainable mobility (e.g. cycling club) but also many more with a mission, in colloquial terms, to make the world a better place. They are often quite happy to get involved in activities that are in line with their objectives, be this social equity, environmental protection, democracy, aesthetics, safety etc. Some of them have an impressively large membership base and can inform and mobilise an accordingly high number of people. In some cases, they also dispose of considerable financial resources (e.g. Lions or Rotary club)

**Senior citizens** often possess a high level of professional know how, a lot of practical experience, organisational skills and, very importantly: time. Especially people in their early retirement years are often eager to contribute their assets to the public good. People at higher ages might have limited capacities but certainly have a host of hands-on experience with the positive and negative aspects of their neighbourhood. This can be seemingly petty such as a pothole, but it can matter a lot to people with a walking frame but also pram pushers, cyclists etc.

**Children and youths** should not be forgotten as potential contributors to co-implementation activities. They sometimes pose disarmingly new questions, leading to creative ideas. Children can also open up excellent communication channels to their parents. At certain times, e.g. during school holidays, they have considerable amounts of time, which they can use to distribute flyers, embellish gray walls etc.

**Kindergartens and schools**, represented by their staff, teachers and headmasters, are often very motivated to work towards improvements of the surrounding of and routes towards their institution. In the context of sustainable mobility, many are eager to promote walking and cycling as primary mode for the daily trip of their pupils. They therefore tend to engage happily in related campaigns but also in activities to improve the physical safety and enjoyability of the “commuting” route.

**Trade schools and universities** sometimes appreciate opportunities for their students to gain hands-on experience in the “real world”. Think about an elaborate bench created by apprentices of a carpentry school; or the fun-rides organised by the “Clown-Crew” of the local theatre school. Some universities also pride themselves of a “gown and town” tradition, which entails an active role in the community through research projects on locally specific topics as part of a seminar, MA thesis etc.



**Religious groups** can play an important role as mobilisers of voluntary time and labour among their followers but also, and at least as importantly, as particularly credible messengers. This can be especially important if the planned measures might allow ample room for culturally specific interpretation; an endorsement of religious leaders can make a big difference in such situations.

**Parent groups** can be considered one of many special interest groups but they deserve explicit mention because they are directly affected by issues around the mobility of their children to school. Their prime motivation is the safety of their children, which does not necessarily translate into support for active mobility as exemplified by the many “parent taxis.” Regardless of their specific stance, parents often mobilise a lot of energy when it comes to school mobility.

**Libraries and museums** have a genuine interest in an attractive surrounding and in safe and convenient travel options to them - just like businesses. They also tend to appreciate opportunities to showcase their “offers”, their know how and cultural assets. This can be valuable to promote local identity through local history or local idioms. This, in turn can foster attention to, pride of and respect for certain measures.

**Media outlets** such as local newspapers, radio and TV stations, blogs etc. can play an extremely important role for the “social embedding” and acceptance and appropriate use of the actual measures. It is important to respect their obligation to neutrality and to understand their appetite for sensationality - but this does not mean they can not become a critical friend of a certain measure.

**Other actor groups**, who might play some kind of supportive role during the implementation phase of a measure include:

- Local celebrities;
- Immigrants groups, often correlating with certain ethnic / cultural groups;
- Employees, especially if their work place is in the proximity of the planned area;
- Property owners (owner occupiers and landlords);
- Hotels, resorts, providers of touristic services;
- Commuters;
- Homeless people and related support organisations;





- Certain professional groups like lawyers, journalists, planners, architects etc.;
- Students;
- Disability groups;
- Visitors, providing a fresh outsider view.

The above list is of course far from exhaustive. Every situation is different and therefore the range of individuals and organisations with a motivation to actively engage in co-implementation activities is different.

## 6. Possible contributions

As with the above list of potential contributors, the following list of potential types of contributions must not be considered comprehensive. But it is at least intended as source of inspiration to trigger ideas about what kind of activities certain civic actors might be able and willing to engage in.

**Maintenance:** Tree-adoption programmes are almost like the poster children of co-implementation activities. Typically, the city provides training, sometimes tools and insurance for citizens who volunteer to look after trees and/or the flowerbeds around city-owned trees. Understood more broadly, the co-maintenance principle can also apply more widely to a “clean up your street”, re-freshing the paint on a bench etc.



Figure 5: A flower-bed with adoption sign © R. Brand

**Light labour** can encompass maintenance activities (see above) but also the creation of certain measures in the first place like the painting of a mural. In both cases, care needs to be taken not to run into liability issues resulting from health and safety regulations - see below in the section on Risks. This kind of contribution can also include the production of certain prototypes; good organisations to approach in this context are DIY organisations under names such as fab-labs, maker spaces etc.

**Access to communication channels** might not be the first thought when talking about co-implementation but it might well be one of the most important types of contributions. Many civic groups have very large and effective communication vehicles such as newsletters, magazines, mailing lists etc. The permission to feed messages into these channels can be particularly important to mobilise understanding, appropriate usage of and care for the actual core measure.



**Endorsement** is closely related to the above point. The specific aspect here is not only the quantitative reach of certain communication channels but their trustworthiness and credibility. For example, if the priest explains and endorses a certain measure during the Sunday mass, this can carry invaluable weight among the audience. Statements from local celebrities, radio hosts, football stars, musicians, aldermen and -women etc. can have similar effects.

**Acting as public champion** is closely related to the above point of “endorsement”. However it is one thing to publicly praise a measure, for example, the opening of a new CarSharing station; it carries much more meaning, of course, if a well-known and well-respected person actually uses it ... and ideally posts about on its social media channel.

The **provision of training and mentoring** can be extremely valuable to ensure the safe and appropriate use of certain infrastructures and devices. This can be as basic as “travel buddies” who demonstrate the use of public transport ticket machines to older people or volunteers who teach others how to ride a bicycle. An important aspect in this context is trust and, correspondingly, a low risk of embarrassment for the learners.

**Problem reporting** can be a very basic form of contributions to co-implementation activities. A relatively widespread application of this principle is the reporting of potholes through attentive citizens. This can be facilitated through convenient reporting mechanisms such as a smartphone app (see [www.jarokelo.hu](http://www.jarokelo.hu) as a particularly impressive example). Similar examples include the reporting of broken light bulbs, graffiti, illegal rubbish heaps, broken elevators, etc.

**Hosting role:** Certain initiatives exist where citizens or businesses agree to act as “host” of some kind of publicly accessible asset. An example is the eCargo-Bike sharing scheme [www.donk-ee.de](http://www.donk-ee.de) in Germany. The bikes are provided by a company, but their batteries are regularly charged by a voluntary host who also checks the air pressure in the tyres and removes any waste from the cargo box. In return, the host gets a certain number of free usage hours per month.

**Providing existing data:** Some organisations, for example businesses, possess valuable data, e.g. postcodes or trip modes of their customers. In anonymised and aggregated formats such data can be shared with municipal partners for implementation related purposes.

**Crowdsourced data**, especially geo-referenced data is an area of ICT applications with enormous growth potential and with a necessary role of citizens as contributors. Examples include apps which allow users to rate their subjective experience while cycling or walking along a certain route in terms of safety, noise, beauty etc. This makes it possible to calculate navigation recommendations to suit specific preferences (e.g. [www.safeandthecity.com](http://www.safeandthecity.com))

**Organising / hosting of events:** Such a contribution can take the shape of someone providing their parking lot for an event at no costs while the city covers related expenses for technical equipment, catering etc. Or someone organises and pays for an event to promote sustainable mobility in some sense and the city endorses it publicly and arranges the required permissions.



The Leefstraat concept<sup>2</sup>, popular in Belgium, would be an example of such a collaborative effort.

**Financial contributions:** This category of contributions comes in a number of different shapes. It includes straightforward donations, although this might be relatively rare. It also includes sponsorships, typically by private companies, in exchange of some favourable mention (e.g. in press releases), the display of logos on flyers and posters etc. Also fundraising falls into this category and so does crowd-funding

**Crowd-investment** can be considered a specific form of financial contributions from civic actors. A typical case would be if citizens contribute to a public investment, public infrastructure or public service (e.g. the purchase of an electric bus to replace an old diesel bus) and expect some kind of legitimate return, be it monetary or in the form of rebates like free bus rides for a certain period. This option can be particularly interesting if banks refuse to invest or if they request unreasonably high interest rates.

**Commitment to upgrade own infrastructure, hardware:** An example of this type of contribution was mentioned in the above hypothetical case study: “Employers agreed on a five-year programme to install showers for their employees.” Similar examples would be the commitment to install bike racks on private properties, to improve lighting on private streets, to cut back shrubs reaching from a private garden into the sidewalk etc.

**Skills, know-how and ideas** can be extremely valuable contributions, which some citizens will contribute. This can be formal knowledge such as professional judgements on the technical feasibility of a certain measure (e.g. from a retired engineer) or the translation of a flyer into a different language. It can also be tacit knowledge such as the local knowledge about spots which are perceived as unsafe or something as basic as a creative idea about the shape of a bench..

**Providing positive feedback.** It seems very common among many people to complain about problems - and rightly so. What sometimes tends to be forgotten is the public expression of praise for something well done. It can therefore be of value to encourage people to write positive letters to the newspaper, to speak up in public hearings etc. This is not bribery or collusion if it is genuine and simply gives voice to a silent majority.

## 7. Risks and challenges

Co-implementation is not a routine approach, it is not suitable for every situation, it requires the courage to try out something new, it requires the acceptance of certain risks - and it can go wrong. It is therefore important to realistically assess various risks and challenges, to avoid

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.leefstraat.be/the-ghent-pioneering/>





overly optimistic expectations and to prevent foreseeable problems. If done well, the benefits of co-implementation can outweigh the risks by far!

**Liability:** If something goes wrong that was implemented in a conventional way, it is at least clear who is liable, whose insurance pays, who remedies the problem. If citizens or other stakeholders are part of the implementation team, however, mistakes or accidents can have particularly tricky implications. It is therefore very important to be very clear about responsibilities, to explicitly unburden civic contributors - especially volunteers - from any liability and/or to organise sufficient insurance cover for them. This is the duty of the municipality.

**Reliability:** If civic co-implementers assume their role on a voluntary basis, they are exempt, by definition, of any contractual obligation to execute anything in any particular way within any particular timeframe. If they decide or have to withdraw their commitment for any reason this can sometimes jeopardise a larger project. Care should therefore be taken to only allocate core elements of an initiative to civic actors with a proven track record or at least with a firm and realistic commitment and with robust organisational structures. It is also advisable to establish early warning procedures.

**Lack of coordination:** The non-contractual nature of many civic actors' contributions can make it difficult if not impossible to demand their presence at meetings or their adherence to specific standards, timings etc. This can result in rather uncoordinated activities to a waste of time and many and, in the worst case, to mistakes and counterproductive results. To prevent this from happening, a culture of clear, frank and proactive communication should be established with suitable communication channels.

**Lack of contributors:** By its very nature, co-implementation depends on civic contributors and it can be difficult to “recruit” them. Such a situation requires a critical reflection about various issues: Are the expected contributions too much to ask? Is the timeframe no realistic (too often, wrong weekdays, too spontaneous)? Have certain potential contributors not been approached yet? Is the likely benefit for contributors not explicit enough or not attractive enough? Are signals of appreciation clear enough? Are possible concerns of potential contributors well understood and addressed (e.g. liability)?

**Contributors are only motivated by self-interest:** It is not a problem per se if civic contributors are motivated by self-interest. On the contrary: Of course, there needs to be something “in there” for them - otherwise it would be exploitation or heroism. As long as the benefits of co-implemented measures reach beyond those who actively contribute all is fine. It goes without saying that no one should be harmed either, although the perception of harm is obviously subjective. What matters in this context is democratic legitimacy during the co-development phase.

**Some measures are not suitable for co-implementation:** Even something as seemingly banal as a Zebra Crossing cannot simply be painted by well-meaning citizens. The stripes have to have a certain width, special paint needs to be used etc. There are regulations to adhere to, rules to



follow, safety standards to meet, technical difficulties to master etc., which can be too complicated or dangerous for civic contributors. In many cases, a genuine cooperation between municipal and civic actors can overcome such challenges but it is important to accept the limits of co-implementation.

**Co-implementation only works for “soft” measures.** The problem with this statement is the word “only”. Firstly, because it is not true and secondly because soft measures can be the decisive success factor in the implementation of any measure. It is often the “flanking” effect (see chapter 3) that facilitate a measure’s adoption, proper usage, acceptance, maintenance, willingness to pay, absence of vandalism etc.

**Few citizens portray themselves as the “face” of an initiative:** Sometimes, few vocal citizens try to shape things according to their personal tastes and attempt to carry the flag. This can also mean that the efforts of the municipality are underappreciated. If this risk emerges, early open communication is advisable. Some kind of co-implementation “committee” with broad legitimacy should also claim the prerogative of public perception through slogans, logos, media contacts etc.

**Public administration clings to control:** Co-implementation is sometimes seen as encroachment into the traditional turf of the administration; as a threat to control, established procedures, hard won competence etc. This perception is not entirely absurd - co-implementation does indeed impact on the role of the public administration. It should be stressed, however, that it undoubtedly retains a crucial role, in fact gains an at least as honourable role as facilitator, broker and enabler of important change. (Bisschops & Beunen, 2018)

## 8. “How to ...” - Tips and recommendations

Each neighbourhood is characterised by its specific context, requires different approaches and has different actors. This guide can therefore not get down to the nitty gritty technical aspects of co-implementation, but will rather focus on the general principles that can be applied in various situations. In other words, there is no universal one-size-fits-all method to co-implementation. But there are salient elements and steps that should be part of any co-implementation effort.

1. **Reflect (self-)critically about the origin of a planned measure**, that is, whether a planned measure was put forward by some kind of experts (external consultants, public administration etc.) or whether it is the result of a co-planning process. Co-implementation should only be pursued in the latter case; otherwise there is a risk of exploitation or of civic actors not taking “ownership” of the measure.



2. **Assess whether a planned measure lends itself well to co-implementation.** As mentioned above, certain types or measures are not suitable for contributions from civic actors due to complicated technical aspects, legal problems, liability issues etc. Do not forget to consider communicative, social, cultural and other “flanking” measures as part of a holistic co-implementation strategy.
3. **Consider the benefits of a planned measure:** The fact that a planned measure was co-developed and that it lends itself well to co-implementation does not automatically mean that it adds value, reduces costs, ensures longevity and achieves more than what the city could have done on its own. Be demanding in your expectations but do not overlook less tangible, non-monetary benefits like social cohesion, cost avoidance etc.
4. **Identify specific contributions** that civic actors could make but do not assume you can possibly think of all contributions. Remain open for types of contributions you might have never thought of.
5. **Identify and approach potential civic actors.** Start by considering those groups and individuals who were already active during the co-identification and co-development phase but think more broadly. And remain open for types of actors to emerge you might have never thought of.
6. **Match contributions and actors.** In a joint process with some kind of co-creation core group ask questions like “who could make such and such contributions?” and “what kind of contribution could such and such actor make?”
7. **Sketch an outline of the process - ideally already with civic actors.** Consider what steps are involved in realising the planned measure. Decide on the process for co-implementing it. For inspiration, see the examples and reference section of this document, particularly the book Tactical Urbanism.
8. **Define roles:** Think about roles to be filled and map their relations, articulate required competences and responsibilities, place them along a time line and think about civic and non-civic actors who could play them. Think specifically about the following roles:
  - Clearing house: The place, organisation, person where all threads come together. The face and address of the initiative. Responsible for guiding the process from both a strategic and logistical perspective. In most co-implementation cases this will be the municipality.
  - Moderator(s): A widely respected person or group of persons who is/are accepted as non-partisan facilitator of open, trustful, effective and efficient conversations.



- **Scribe:** Responsible for documenting the process, especially to keep a record of important decisions made and a clear reference of the achievements, plans and roles.
- **Evaluation Manager:** Find someone (person or organisation) who can run the evaluation of the co-implementation process and its results. Such data is important for internal communication (“should we do this again?”) and for external audiences (esp. in case of external funders).
- **Communicator:** One such person or group should ensure clear and effective communication both within the circle of co-implementors and to the community at large, including the media.

9. **Implement and monitor.** Implementation and monitoring should be undertaken simultaneously in order to allow for adjustments and corrections at a stage when they will have the biggest impact.

10. **Celebrate:** Although this is mentioned last, it is important to have some fun together throughout the entire process. Do not underestimate the importance of humour, a handshake, eye-to-eye conversations, human touch etc.

11. **Welcome newcomers:** Another task that runs throughout the entire process is to remain open to newcomers at any point. This requires a thorough documentation of previous steps for an effective “onboarding” process of people and organisations who wish to join later on.

## 9. Inspiration

This chapter contains examples of co-implementation in the urban mobility context as well as in other fields. These examples are intended to provide inspiration and a view of the variety of approaches and circumstances in which co-implementation can thrive, rather than providing prescriptions to be followed. Merely mimicking a good practice example is perilous because of the challenge of ascertaining and aligning perfectly with the social, political, economic, and physical context in which the project took place, however as these examples convey, co-implementation is a versatile approach that is possible in many different contexts.



Example	Role of citizens	Role of municipality	Funding
The city of <b>Denver</b> and its citizens joined forces to create a temporary (two-month) <b>pop-up park</b> , now known as “The Square on 21 <sup>st</sup> ”. The area included a stage, a micro-library, a transportable dog park, a mini farmers’ market, space for food trucks, a juice bar, a shaved ice stand and a space to rent out lawn games.	Citizens were heavily involved, from providing feedback to helping paint new tree planters.	The city of Denver coordinated all efforts and contributions from civic actors and municipal staff.	Funds were provided by the city of Denver and the Downtown Denver Partnership.
<b>Zaragoza</b> , Spain encouraged citizens to <b>set up blogs</b> through a city-run platform as part of an effort to improve the city’s branding and popularity. Rather than opt for a central webpage about monuments and heritage, citizens were invited to share creative control. <sup>3</sup>	Citizens blogged about the city, provided stories and generated a creative buzz about Zaragoza.	The city provided the technical infrastructure (blog platform) and its maintenance.	European URBACT funding for a larger branding/tourism project, of which this initiative played a part.
<b>Zaragoza’s</b> Estonoesunsolar programme focussed on <b>placemaking with citizen</b> involvement in each step from conception to implementation. Through a series of small interventions across the city, spaces (mainly vacant lots) were transformed into places.	Citizens provided input on specific social and spatial needs and took part in implementation activities.	The city was in charge of the overall organisation, hired workers (thus creating jobs) and provided funding.	Financed by the city’s budget.
For one month, a neighbourhood in <b>Suwon</b> , South Korea removed all cars, replacing spaces previously dedicated to car traffic and parking with <b>parks and pedestrian/bicycle zones</b> . In addition to participatory efforts such as citizen consultation,	Citizens contributed ideas, time and labour. Sponsoring from some companies.	The city provided tools, data, organisational capacity, expert input and financial support.	Most of the funding came from the city’s own budget, supported with contributions from sponsors.

<sup>3</sup> See [https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/towards\\_an\\_integrated\\_management\\_of\\_the\\_zaragoza\\_brand\\_-\\_lap.pdf](https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/towards_an_integrated_management_of_the_zaragoza_brand_-_lap.pdf)





resident volunteers also took part in the implementation.			
<b>Tree adoption programmes</b> are relatively common in a number of towns and cities. The basic idea is always the same type of collaboration between citizens and the municipality as captured in the two columns to the right.	Citizens pledge to take care of trees and/or flower beds in the public realm near their residence. Their contribution consists primarily of time and skills.	The municipality coordinates the efforts of citizens and communicates with them. It also provides training, tools, seeds, potentially also insurance cover.	Few monetary resources are required for such adoption programmes. They are typically covered by the normal municipal budget.
In <b>Uplengen</b> (northern Germany), the municipality and citizens joined forces between 1998 and 2006 to build 7 kilometres of <b>new bicycle lanes</b> . <sup>4</sup>	Residents, who are active in civil engineering and road construction contributed skills, knowledge, time and money.	The municipality staff provided the material and machinery of the construction yard	Municipal funds plus support from the European Regional Development Fund plus donations from citizen.
Residents and the police in the UK town of <b>Ash</b> joined forces in a speed-watch initiative to tackle the pervasive problem of inappropriately <b>high vehicle speeds</b> . <sup>5</sup>	567 community speed watch sessions and 3,750 hours of volunteer time. 3,970 speeding vehicles were reported.	The police trained the volunteers, provided equipment and issued warning letters or fines to speeding drivers.	The local authority covered the related expenses.
The Quality Neighbourhood Initiative in some <b>Belgian</b> towns involved residents, companies and the municipality to improve local streets by removing concrete board stumps, <b>colouring crossroad</b> etc. Some residents even gave up their parking spots to provide space for a new sitting corner.	Citizens contributed ideas, time and in some cases manual labour.	The municipality provided coordination and resources.	Funds came primarily from the municipality, partly under the umbrella of the EU project Share North.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.govint.org/good-practice/case-studies/catch-me-if-you-can-citizen-speed-watchers-helping-the-police-in-south-somerset/change-management/>



The Bike Waves app, developed by the <b>Austrian</b> company BikeCitizens, utilises crowd-sourced data from cyclists to <b>predict green light phases</b> for the following cyclists, thus making their ride smoother by avoiding stops. <sup>6</sup>	Citizens on bicycles voluntarily “donate” data about their recent trips	No local authority is currently involved. But it could become a strong co-implementation scheme if cities adopt, promote and fund the application of the Bike Waves app.	External funds used to develop the app through a start-up company.
“Cycling Without Age” is a scheme where <b>volunteers drive older residents</b> around their city in rickshaws. The scheme has been implemented by more than 60 <b>Danish</b> local authorities with a total of 2500 volunteers. It is also branching out to over 20 other countries. <sup>7</sup>	Citizen volunteers donate their time. NGOs coordinate the efforts. Older people contribute through story-telling.	The local authorities provide the rickshaws.	Municipal funds.
The municipality of <b>The Hague</b> offered residents the opportunity to swap their parking permit for some <b>green space, a sun terrace etc.</b> in front of their house. Some took up this offer and a few even converted the parking space themselves. <sup>8</sup> A similar approach is deployed by a number of “Living Streets” initiatives. <sup>9</sup>	Residents agreed to store their car for 6 months in a parking garage and to accept the removal of a parking space; some even contributed their own time and money to this.	The municipality initiated the scheme, organised the logistics and provided funding.	The city council, together with charities, provided €60,000 of funding.
<b>Civic cleaning days</b> are common in a number of cities, for example in <b>Nuremberg</b> under the local dialect	Youth groups, school classes, all kinds of associations	The local waste removal company provides gloves,	Typically combined funding between waste removal

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.bikecitizens.net/de/gruene-welle-fuer-radfahrer/>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.govint.org/good-practice/case-studies/cyclingwithout-age-co-production-made-in-denmark/>

<sup>8</sup> See [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/17/sun-terraces-and-lawns-dutch-residents-transform-parking-spaces?CMP=share\\_btn\\_link](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/17/sun-terraces-and-lawns-dutch-residents-transform-parking-spaces?CMP=share_btn_link)

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/environmental-health-and-trading-standards/mk-low-carbon-living/living-streets-community-project>



expression “Kehrd wärd <sup>10</sup> ”. Citizens clean up parks, river banks and other public spaces.	contribute their time and labour.	high-vis vests, brooms, waste bags etc. and collects the garbage for proper disposal.	company and municipality.
<b>Citizen buses</b> complement public transport services in underserved areas. They are typically driven by volunteers but are open to the public at a fare cost that is comparable to normal public transport. <sup>11</sup>	Citizens, often retired people with plenty of time, drive buses on regular routes at regular times - almost like a normal bus	Municipalities / public transport operators provide buses, gasoline, insurance, maintenance and know how.	Municipalities co-fund citizen buses just like normal public transport services. Passengers pay a normal fare.

<sup>10</sup> See [https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/soer\\_nbg/kehrdwaerd.html](https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/soer_nbg/kehrdwaerd.html) (German website)

<sup>11</sup> See for example <http://www.buergerbus-kettwig.de/> (German website)



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### Further Resources:

Peer to Peer Foundation: <https://p2pfoundation.net/>

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Tactical Urbanism Website: <http://tacticalurbanismguide.com>

The Better Block Project: <http://buildabetterburb.org/better-blocks-in-the-burbs/>

The Neighbourhood Project: <http://theneighbourhoodproject.org/projects/>

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