

UBC General Confernce, Dolina Charlotty, 4 November 2025



Liveable Cities

A Journey Towards Future City Making

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



Co-funded by
the European Union



RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES

Liveability



It's not about the usual suspects.

Any city can be liveable!

Liveability is deeply connected to a sense of belonging — a feeling of pride and empowerment that grows from shared spaces and strong communities.

It is about creating meaningful places where people feel part of something larger, where daily life is not only easier but more fulfilling.

How do we shape the future of our cities?

How can cities adapt their ways of working, collaborating and communicating towards Liveability?

How can design approaches support cities around the Baltic Sea to become more liveable?

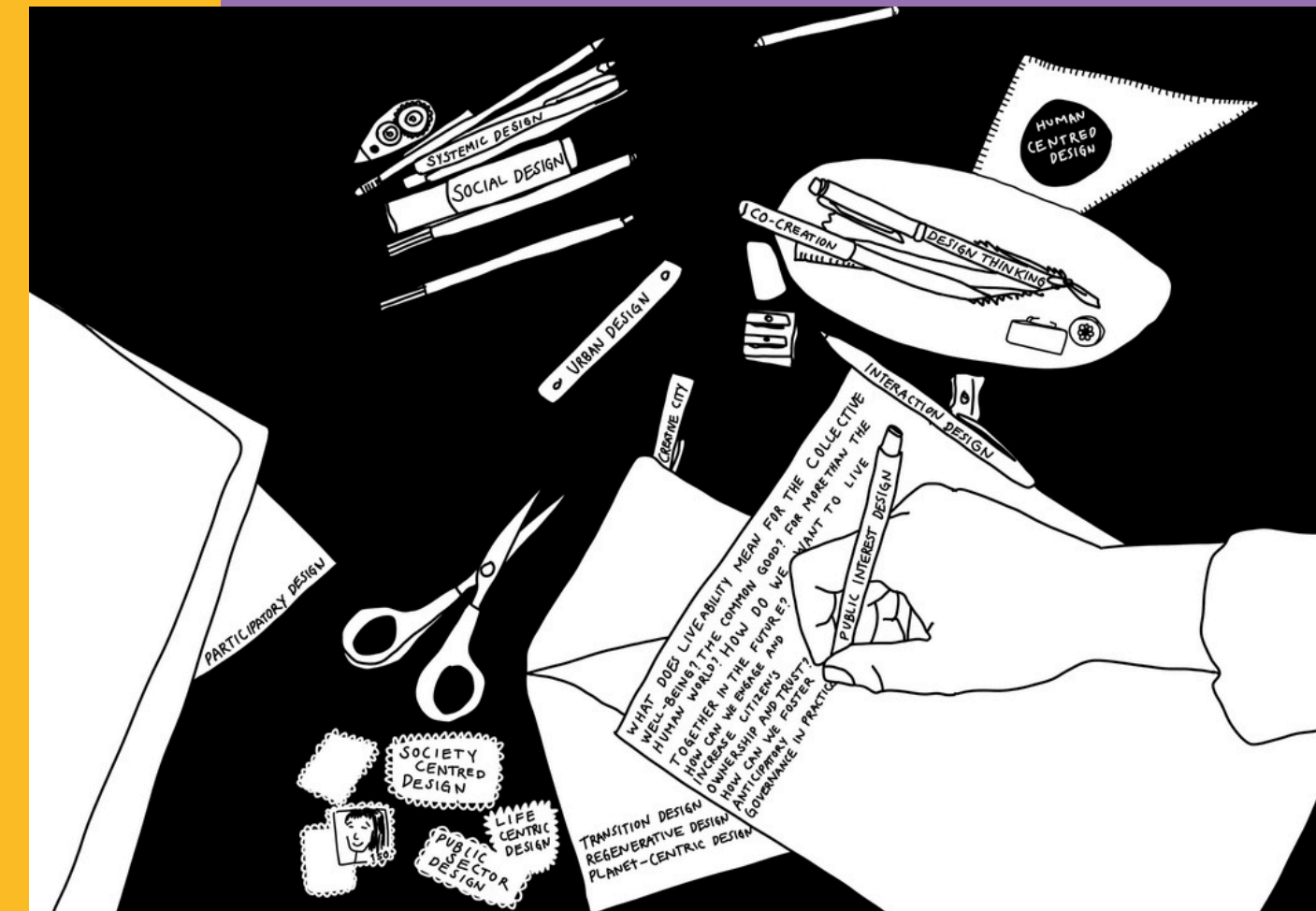


The Liveability Design Approach



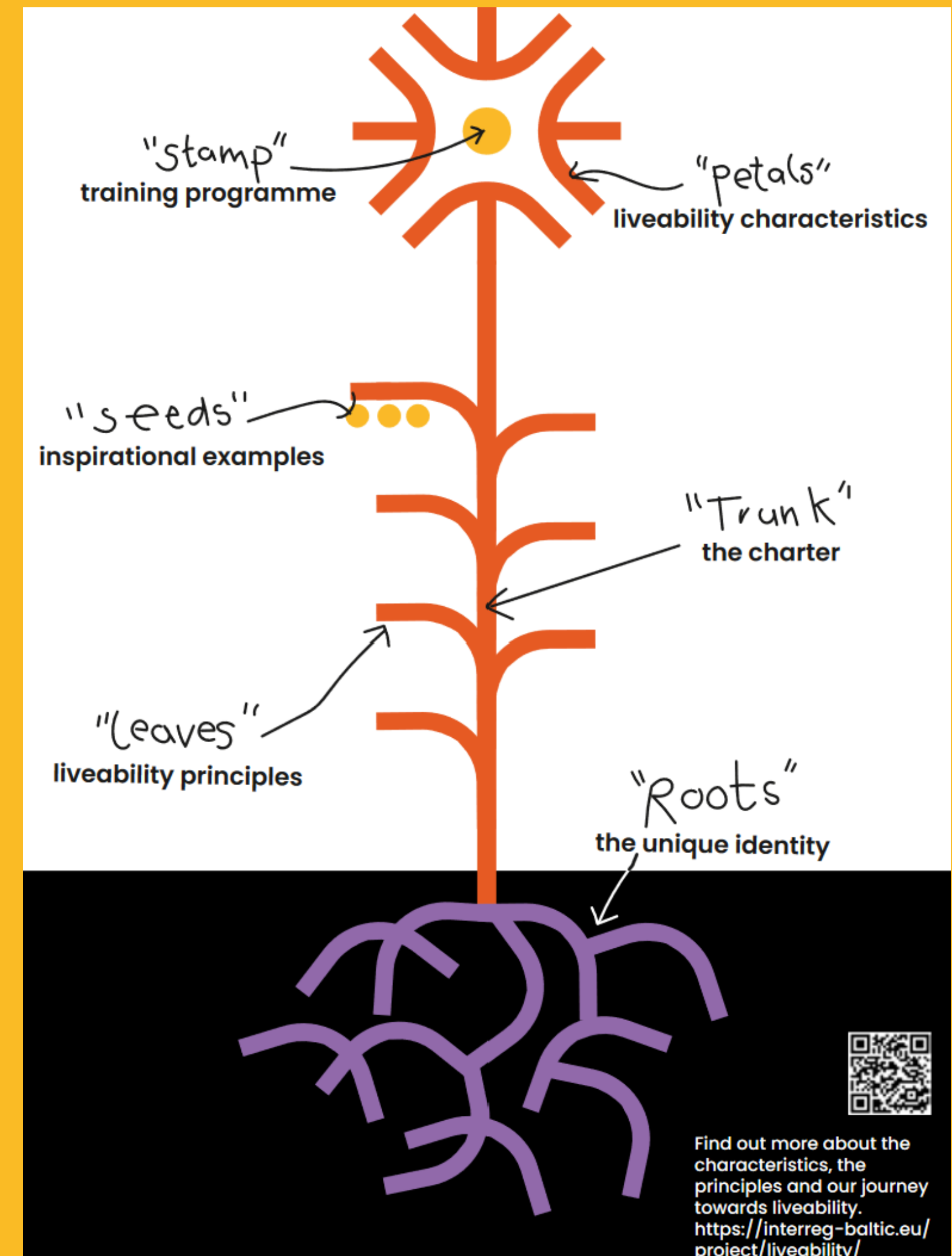
An overarching concept inspired by public interest design (PID) aiming at collective well-being.

- **Connect and engage** public administration staff, civil society organisations and citizens
- Facilitate and promote **future thinking and use of innovative, design-based methods**
- Help to build a city-wide foundation for **taking collaborative action**
- **Empower residents** to participate in co-creating public services, developing neighbourhood projects and shaping their own living environment.



The Liveability Design Approach

The Analogy of a flower



About Liveability

Designing public services for
resilient neighbourhoods

01.01.2023 – 31.12.2025 (3 years)

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



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RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES

Liveability

11

Partners

6

Baltic Sea Region Cities

Gdynia (PL)
Guldborgsund (DK),
Kiel (DE)
Kolding (DK)
Pori (FI)
Riga (LV)

Co-funded by:
Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme
Programme Priority: Innovative Societies
Programme Objective: Responsive public service

<https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/liveability/>

The Charter for Designing Liveable Cities

- **A starting point** for a conversation about liveability in local public authorities and the local community
- Contains **our vision** of what a liveable city looks and feels like (liveability characteristics)
- Its **principles provide an idea of how** we can work together with citizens, companies and civil society organisations.
- Proposes Public Interest Design (PID) as a guiding principle to enhance liveability.



CHARTER FOR DESIGNING LIVEABLE CITIES

6 Principles

The „Charter for Designing the Liveable City“ is the core of the Liveability project. It contains our vision of how a liveable city looks and feels like. Additionally, it gives us as employees in public administration guidance. It gives us an idea of how we can work together with citizens, companies and civil society organisations towards making our cities more liveable. We use the charter as a starting point from where to begin the conversation about liveability in our administration and the whole community. The charter combines design principles such as curiosity and empathy with core values of democratic societies such as trust, transparency and collaboration. We propose Public Interest Design (PID) as a guiding principle to enhance urban liveability, a core aspect in our Liveability Design Approach (LDA). Our motivation is to foster the liveability characteristics such as emotional well-being, green, blue and healthy infrastructure as well as creativity and participation so that our cities and its inhabitants may thrive.

1 Design principles for the public good

Design principles are essential for fostering creativity and innovation in public administration. Employees need time, space, and resources to apply these concepts. Design steps are: deep understanding of challenges, empathizing with users, generating and testing ideas, and promoting team diversity for effective solutions. These principles enhance functionality, usability, and relevance in our work.

2 Integrated and holistic planning

We recognize the value of diverse perspectives in addressing current and future city challenges. We engage local inhabitants and institutions in city planning, acknowledging them as experts on their needs. Our approach is integrated, considering various viewpoints and leveraging the strengths of public administration to develop solutions that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable for the whole city.

3 Sustainable strategic city management

We want to build a feeling of shared ownership for our cities' development. We see it as helpful to identify the authentic identity of our cities – our city's DNA. We aim to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement (historically, socially, culturally, environmentally, and economically) in our city. Based on that city identity, a coherent vision for our city can be developed. We want the vision to be actively communicated to staff and citizens. We identify and circulate knowledge about innovative and creative best practices within the public administration.

4 Strengthen trust, transparency, communication and collaboration

We aim to make diverse collaboration a core principle in public administration. To foster innovation, staff need mental and physical space for collaboration and experimentation. As municipalities, we welcome experimentation and unorthodox solutions and believe that diverse teams can solve complex problems effectively. We value different perspectives and commit to sharing skills and knowledge openly to learn from each other, all in pursuit of creating a liveable city.

5 Co-design with citizens

We acknowledge the importance of involving those affected by our decisions and aim to empower inhabitants and encourage their input to actively shape the city for the common good. We promote diverse participation formats to ensure community voices are integrated into city planning. We value artistic, aesthetic, and socio-cultural actions for revealing new perspectives and consider the diverse needs of citizens in designing participatory processes. Acknowledging our responsibility, we strive to create accessible, transparent mechanisms for collaboration. People need places where they can come together, get to know one another and form resilient neighbourhoods. We specifically want to strengthen inhabitants who want to take responsibility and create value for their neighbourhood.

6 Become a learning city/municipality

We believe the journey toward liveability is a learning process and aim to foster an organizational culture that encourages people to learn and thrive. We promote an error-friendly organisational culture where staff can safely develop and test new solutions on a small scale with actual users. Failures are seen as learning opportunities, guiding us to better meet inhabitants' needs. We actively collaborate with national and international partners to gain fresh perspectives, enrich our practices, and challenge current path dependencies and existing norms. Working together with inhabitants and across departments changes our perspective on the known and can open our eyes to possibly inconceivable solutions and ideas.

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RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES Liveability

* This is a shortened version of the Charter for Designing the Liveable City. The current full version you can find on the Interreg website: <https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/liveability/>



A Practice guide

- **Guidance** on how to start your journey towards liveability
- **Reflections** from Partner cities on how to use PID principles in practice in neighbourhoods
- **Orientation** on how to design processes and find the right tools
- helps you develop, plan or implemen a **pilot project** aimed at making your city, community and neighbourhoods more liveable.

PRACTICE GUIDE

FOR PUBLIC INTEREST DESIGN



The Training Programme

Educational space:

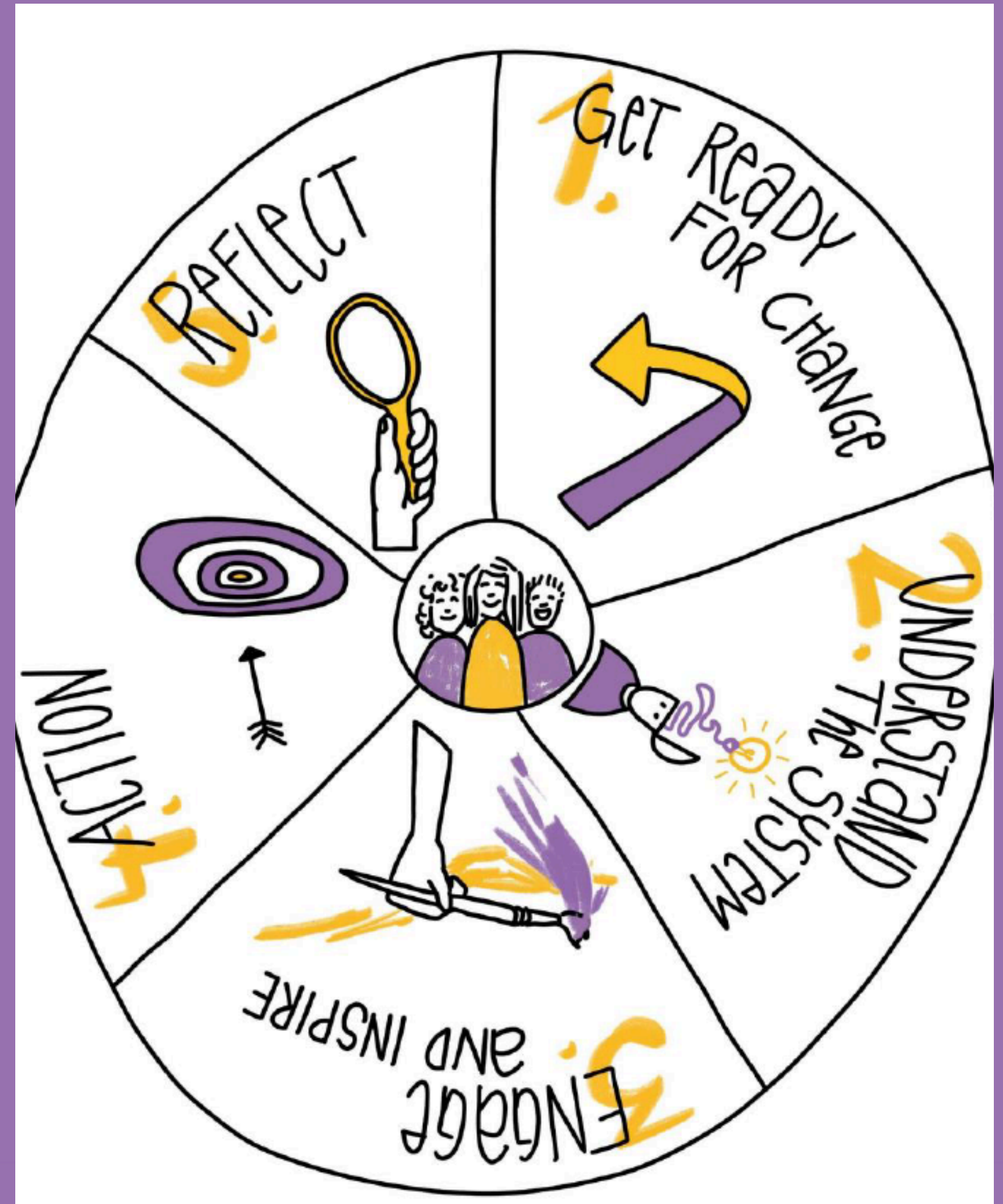
- a safe space to learn
- a safe space to apply
- a safe space for experiments
- a safe space to fail

Educational material:

- Microlectures about specific tool and methods
- Inspirational Talks

Mentoring / peer-learning opportunities

Local learning days guided by PID experts

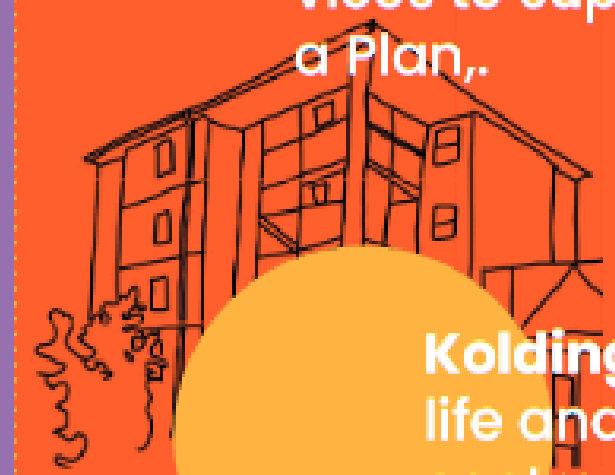


On the Journey towards Liveability

Our pilot projects



Kiel, DE – Develop the adult education centre as a space for interaction and education that is inviting and empowering for all.



Guldborgsund, DK – Empower citizens with providing holistic services to support them: One Citizen, a Plan,.

Kolding, DK – Strengthen urban life and promote retail in the city centre.



Gdynia, PL – Socio-cultural integration of new citizens and existing residents in community centres.



Riga, LA – Support neighbourhood associations to create more inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven approaches and strategy.



Pori, FI – Bring life back to the city centre by revitalising vacant spaces.

Seminar programme

How do cities apply the Liveability Design Approach?

- **Working with the charter in Riga**
Mārtiņš Eņģelis, Riga City Council, Latvia
- **Working practically with design principles to improve public services**
Interview with Frede Danborg, Guldborgsund municipality

How can cities start their own journey towards liveability – a practical exercise

How have partner cities and twin cities benefitted from transnational exchange?

Dorota Kamrowska-Załuska and Magdalena Rembeza, Gdansk University of Technology,
Krystyna Wróblewska, Baltic Sea Cultural Centre

A call for participation in the network of liveable cities

Call for Participation



The Liveable City Label

- To receive the label, a city does not have to **be** liveable, it has to demonstrate a credible effort to **become** liveable.
- The label brings to light the efforts and achievements of (especially small and medium-sized) cities to be attractive and desirable places for residents and businesses.

The Network of Liveable Cities

- **A forum for cooperation** of cities with similar goals
- A **community of practice** for forward-thinking representatives of local public administration and civil society
- A source of inspiration for **innovative practices and participatory practices** in city decision-making across the Baltic Sea region.

The Liveable Cities Network – Membership

- Membership is open to all cities in the Baltic Sea Region, there will be no membership fee (at least initially).
- Small and medium-sized cities are especially encouraged to join the network
- New member cities are paired with a more experienced city for onboarding and mentoring



Benefits

- use of the “liveable city” label in communication
- thematic exchanges and webinars
- access to a peer and expert community
- Opportunities for developing joint projects with other cities

Responsibilities

- naming a liaison person for the network
- participating in regular online meetings
- setting goals and reporting on goal achievement to the network

Join us and get involved!



1. Become a candidate city

**2. Get to know the
Liveability Design
Approach**

**3. Exchange with other cities in
the BSR on how to put public
interest design into practice**

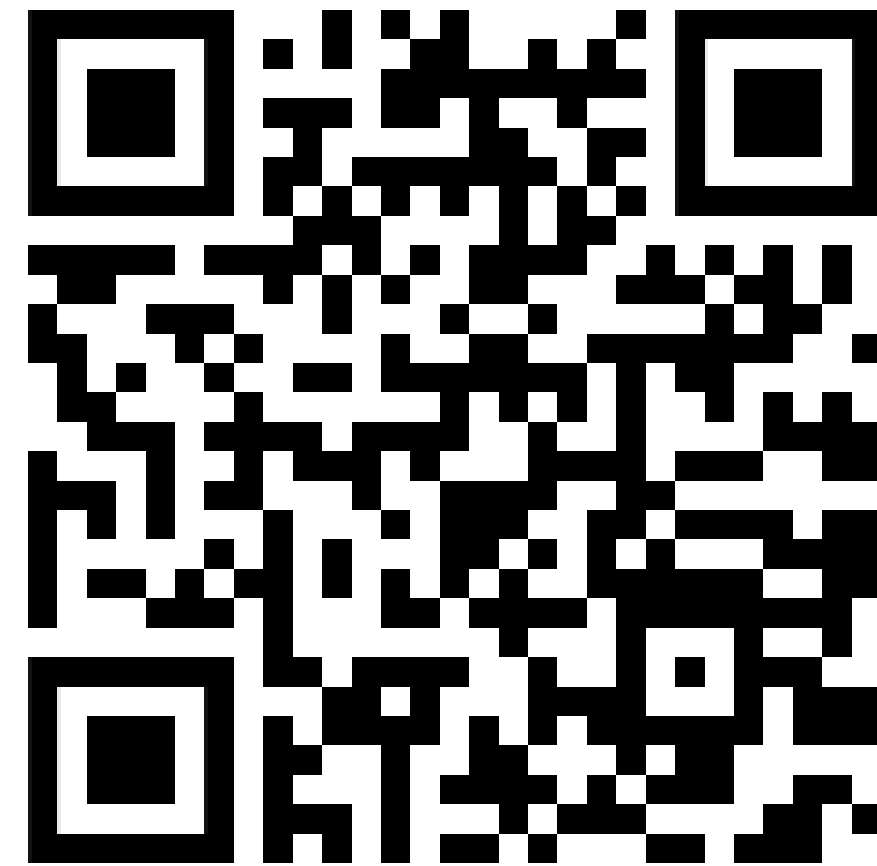
**4. Start your own journey towards
liveability with a local pilot project**

6. Receive the “Liveable City” label

**5. Become a (founding) member of
the “liveable cities network”**



Join us and get involved!



**For more information about the project:
Download our brochure**

“The Journey Towards Liveability”



The Liveability project is co-funded by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund) under the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021–2027.

Contact us:
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