

NEIGHBOURHOOD SPORT AS A TOOL OF URBAN REGENERATION

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Sport and regeneration

- There are many connections between sport and urban regeneration
- **3 main conditions** for the appearance of the **link between sport and the process of urban revitalization** can be noted:
 - 1. Organization of the sporting mega-events** (Olympic Games, world or European football championships)
 - **The aim: to enhance the city's image and its international competitiveness**
 - 2. Local sporting events for the inhabitants organized by the local governments and institutions** accompanying the process of revitalization
 - **The aim: to integrate the local community and to stimulate the active recreation habits**
 - 3. Bottom-up local initiatives** being the element of the regeneration process
 - **The aim: integration and social inclusion of the inhabitants, promoting physical activity**



Bottom-up local initiatives

- Completely **opposite** approach to the regeneration process than the top-down imposed mega-events organization
- **They are born out of the needs of the residents**
- **The main goals of physical activities:**
 - Caring for health
 - Improving fitness
 - Practising hobbies
 - Achieving social integration
- **Achieving these goals leads to the enhancement of the life's quality**
 - The level of the quality of life in a city is also attested by the quality of surrounding space
 - That is why the revitalization is one of the most important elements in thinking about a city

Urban regeneration

- The definition of revitalization in Polish legislation:
 - "process of bringing run-down areas from a crisis state, conducted in a complex and integrated manner, through integrated actions aimed to benefit the local community, space, and economy, concentrated in terms of area, and conducted by parties interested in revitalization on the basis of a district program of revitalization".
- Revitalization aims at **social integration** and **improvement in the quality of life**.
- It is supposed to serve the local community, to be closely linked with its needs and grass-roots initiatives that emerge from these needs.



„Our Sports Field” Initiative



- An example of a grass-roots sporting initiative, that can be considered as a part of a process of revitalization, is **the project implemented in Warsaw by the Our Sports Field Initiative** (*Inicjatywa Nasze Boisko*).
- The Initiative was established in the central Warsaw district of Powiśle by enthusiasts and long-term organizers of team sports.
- The main purpose:
 - **integration of the local community through shared involvement in sport in the form of three team sports: basketball, volleyball, and football**



Neighbourhood sport

- To define this phenomenon, the creators of the initiative developed the concept of “**neighbourhood sport**”. Its source is the concept of **Sport for All**, a slogan recognized and implemented throughout the world and by all sports institutions, including the International Olympic Committee.
- **Sport for All** is every mobile activity, in which representatives of **all social groups** should be involved, **irrespective of age or level of physical ability**.
 - Its aim: **not to attain a professional level; to achieve the pleasure** itself that results from movement, being with others, and to encourage care for one’s own health and feeling good.
- **Neighbourhood Sport**, while identifying itself with the above ideas, concentrates principally on the **integration of neighbourhood groups** gathered round a **common sports field** that is directly located near to their dwelling places.



Our Sports Field

The main assumptions of the project:

- **Regular, weekly meetings**, on the same day and time (Sunday 6 pm)
- **Accessible public space** in the **immediate vicinity** of where people live (public or school sports field)
- Sports field divided into **three zones to play volleyball, basketball, and football** simultaneously
- Sports field accompanied by a **play area** to assure children safe and attractive way of **spending time in the open air**
- **No outside institutions** are involved in organizing games on the sports field
- **All who are willing are included in a game**, irrespective of sex, age, sporting ability, and social and economic status.
- **Exclusion of any element of rivalry**, and the replacement by the pleasure that derives from the very fact of playing and cooperating with others on the field.
- **Participation** in meetings is completely **free of charge**. It is not necessary to reserve places or to sign-up.



Our Sports Field

The first pilot version of the program, implemented in 2015, took place on a school sports field, accessible to the local community.

- The program **fully met the needs of the local community**.
- Above all, **social and spatial effects** of the program were noted.
- Over **250 persons** took part in it.
- The creation of **local links** was observed, which have gone beyond the field, and at present take the shape of very varied **"neighbourhood networking"**.
- A **Forum of Neighbourhood Sports Leaders** was formed. It is a communication platform and a means of seeking out further local leaders who would be willing to become involved in the project and to organize meetings on other fields.
- There was a **growth in the use** of the field as a public space **from 3% to 22%**.
- A greater **concern for the quality of common urban space** has been observed: participants repaired broken equipment; they took care not to litter, not to smoke, and not to drink alcohol during sports events.



Neighbourhood sport as a part of regeneration process

- Thus, the observed **social and spatial effects** of the program can be readily seen as **tending toward revitalization**.
- The Our Sports Field Initiative, employing an already **existing system of fields attached to housing developments or schools**, shows that it is not always necessary to build new sports facilities. Much more important is the encouragement of local people to leave their homes and integrate themselves in an **already constructed space**. And, in turn, this can lead to **raising the quality of that space**, especially in the context of its “**familiarization**” and “**domestication**”.
- The results and conclusions of the first version of the project undertaken by the Our Field Initiative show that **the idea of neighbourhood sport fits perfectly** in with the **process of urban regeneration**. Therefore, neighbourhood sport can be considered as one of the tools of the revitalisation process.



The second version

- The success of the first version of the program encouraged the organizers to expand the project.
- The second version is taking place under the title “Happy Sports Field”, it started April 3, 2016, at 6 pm. **The program is taking place simultaneously in several districts, in total on 24 sports fields.**





Thank you for your attention