

Living Labs Case Studies

MAO: Museum in the Community

Table of contents:

<u>1. An introduction to your organisation</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>2. Why become a RECHARGE NEXT Living Lab?</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>3. Data collection</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>4. Your Living Lab activity</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>5. Output(s) and impact</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>6. Reflection and conclusions</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>7. Appendices</u>	<u>5</u>

1. An introduction to your organisation

- In this introductory paragraph, please include a description of your institution in the context of place, type of institution and number of staff including volunteers. Please describe any past experiences your organisation had with participatory practices prior to starting the RECHARGE NEXT journey.

Founded in 1972 as the Architectural Museum Ljubljana, thus making it one of Europe's oldest museums of architecture and design, MAO is today an example of the transformation of a museum into a dynamic institution with new functionalities. MAO is located in the outskirts of Ljubljana in a neighbourhood of Fužine.

MAO is the caretaker and promoter of the world's most comprehensive collection of Slovenian architectural and design heritage. MAO brings together curators, editors, and producers who take great care in collecting national heritage and designing contemporary programmes. MAO is a destination for professionals, students, and visitors interested in the principles and advantages of good architecture and design. It specifically addresses and is a source of inspiration to all those who are new to architecture, design and photography, helping them recognize the importance of preserved heritage for people's lives, contemporary creative production, and future development. We are a national and international centre and hub for the transfer of knowledge in the fields of heritage and creativity, featuring innovative programme formats dedicated to the preservation of heritage and supporting emerging creatives.

PAST EXPERIENCES

Our programme Museum in the Community started almost 2 years before we joined the Recharge Living Lab programme. The process that was happening in those 2 years was crucial for our project.

The first thing about the Museum in the Community is: we are doing the project outside, because we use the space (MAO Park), to connect people and bring them together. MAO Park thus is the heart of the project. As an open, porous, public space, it connects the museum with the neighbourhood. But people usually use just the main axis leading through the park, other parts were mainly empty-but empty public space is like no public space. This was our first mission, we wanted to know, why is not the whole park used? The next question was about how the park functions and so on. We had different inspirational talks about the park, about the public space, and its importance. It all led to our first physical projects in the park.

The first project was in 2023, where we mended the benches and did a natural playground for kids. It was our starting point of bringing the community together and making something together, using a participatory approach. We asked residents of the community, what they wanted, we gave them the opportunity to make it and the opportunity to learn about different aspects of the theme with different experts. In exchange they gave us their ideas, their time and effort.

In 2023, there were 2 trees fallen down, because of the storm in the park. Together with kids and youngsters from CONA (daily center for kids and youngsters in Fužine) and active retired people (Center for Activity Fužine), we first cleaned the park. Together. We mended the benches, cleaned the leaves, moved the fallen trees...

During the process, we decided to make a natural playground from these 2 trees. This was our first **CO-IDEATION** moment. In Fužine we already have 10 other, modern, playgrounds, but the kids wanted to have their "own" playground. One that is flexible, changeable, one that does not prescribe how to use its elements. There was also the idea that everything must stay in the park - even the fallen trees - but we can make something new from it. This is what makes our park special and alive, not just for people, but also for the animals, and vegetation.

Kids and youngsters from CONA also came up with the idea that we need something moveable within the park. We made 3 movable tables, plateaus, with table games on them. People can use them on a regular sunny day to play a game outside, when we have an event we can move them around, kids can stack them, so they can reach for the swing...They are very flexible in their use.

Another thing, that is usually present, when we talk about the park, is vandalism. In MAO Park there is really not much of it, because people feel that the park is theirs, they created it, so they take care of it. There are still some cases of vandalism, we said we won't bother with them, we just fix things, each time. That is our way of fighting against it.

2024

In 2024 we did another project. This time we were asking ourselves, who uses the public space (MAO Park)? We did this project together with the Birdwatcher association (they are very strongly represented here in Fužine). We were talking about non-human users and how they affect the life of the park. Do we manage the park according to human "needs" or do we include

animals and vegetation in this thinkin? Do we mow the lawn in every corner of the park, why don't we put the lights in the park... We came to the conclusion that we need certain parts of the park untouched, to leave them to other users. The park is an alive space.

Based on those observations, we began to make projects in the park again. We made a questionnaire, where you have answers hidden in the park, and you have to find them-they are written on movable logs. There are questions like: Why is the park important? How many birds live in a park? These questions were developed within the project, and were meant to educate and warn in a fun way. One man from the Birdwatcher association was so invested, that after the project was already finished, he did another set of questions and answers on the logs, and put them in the park. That really shows how much of an impact the project has on people, how invested they get, when we involve them as an equal, through participatory approach.

Within this project there were also andragogy, sociology and fine arts students involved. Another project was a movable cart with different tools, people from the community can borrow it.

The goal of all the projects was the development of social innovations. The most important part of this project were the relationships we developed inside the community, which gave us a base for continuing the project.

- Please link the final version of your [Canvas](#) here.
- Any other relevant background information.

As stated before, our programme Museum in the Community started before we joined the Recharge programme. That is why our journey was a bit different, than prescribed in the playbook. The steps weren't that organised in the beginning, the whole project evolved quite naturally. We find, that one of the most important factors in the participatory approach is TIME. It would be impossible to build a project as big as our Museum in the Community in 1 year, or in a few months, in which Recharge Next Living Lab took place, since the main component of participatory approach are relationships with different people, stakeholders. It takes a lot of time and effort to build trustworthy, personal relationships, it doesn't just happen after one meeting or a phone call.

2. Why become a RECHARGE NEXT Living Lab?

- Describe why you wanted to adopt a participatory practice to solve your challenge.

Our vision is to establish MAO as a connecting centre of the community, a place for knowledge exchange and co-creation, and an environment where everyone is welcome, where one can think openly, ask questions, test ideas, experiment and debate. The innovative model of our project will show how, with cooperation of organisations and individuals, museums can expand their programmes, fulfil their public role and face social challenges better, and make public goods more accessible.

Architecture and design are disciplines that create in the present for the future. They are inevitably connected to our everyday life and directly respond to changes in society. That is why the topics we discuss in the museum offer a broad, but also concrete reflection on the world in which we live. Within the project, the architecture and design, as reflected in everyday life, are excellent entry points for connecting the community.

- [List the objectives you identified for your Living Lab and describe how you have achieved them, using this table:](#)

Objective	How you have achieved the objective
AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • many residents of the museum neighbourhood never enter the castle walls where MAO is located • neighbourhood people don't feel entitled to enter the museum 	COLLABORATION WITH ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE ACTIVE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-sharing existing networks to reach wider audience and increase visibility
DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE ORIENTED PROGRAMMES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-creative shared platforms that foster community engagement and meaning-making 	CO-CREATED AND CO-SHARED PROGRAMMES WITH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS ACTIVE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-term personal relationships between organisations, their communities and users
SECURING MEANS FOR NEW, FUTURE ORIENTED PROGRAMMES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable community business model 	SYSTEM OF SHARING PHYSICAL, HUMAN AND INTELLECTUAL ASSETS

3. Data collection

- Please add any outstanding data to your KPI documents ([Tailored KPIs](#) and [Shared KPIs](#))

4. Your Living Lab activity

Continue the story of your lab since first reporting in October 2024 - with any further co-creation or co-ideation workshops, prototyping and testing workshops or sessions:

Co-ideation

Date - Workshop (1.3.2025)

Where: MAO

With whom: Architectural Studio KK, CONA leaders

Main goals:

- setting the base for the co-creation workshop
- discussing the best way to approach kids and youngsters with our task

Activities:

- presentation of the concept from Architectural Studio KK
- discussing and improving the concept for the community

Tools (including digital):

- architectural models
- architectural plans

Outputs:

- idea for the workshop

Co-creation

Date - Workshop (19.3.2025)

Where: MAO (park)

With whom: CONA (day center for kids and youngsters), Architectural Studio KK

Main goals:

- connecting the community to the museum
- promoting spending quality free time to children and youngsters
- promoting quality architecture and urban planning, especially the importance of environment and environmental changes and how it influences the designed spaces
- encouraging people to take participatory approach in their community

Activities:

15.00: assembly in MAO park, division in 5 groups

15.00-15.15: noticing MAO park, the components, animals, playground...

15.15-16.30: each group designs their own space with the help of tools we presented before

16.30-17.00: each group presents their model and its function in the park

Tools (including digital):

- a thematic workshop; tansegrity
- integration of organisations, that are based in the neighbourhood, into museum
- inclusion of kids and youngsters from the community into the project of building something in MAO Park
- architectural models and plans

Outputs:

- collaborating across disciplines, between organisations and generations
- new ideas for the installation in MAO Park, discovering different structures with the help of architectural models
- timeline of constructing the real installation

Prototype: WORKSHOP IN EXPERIMENTING WITH NEW MATERIALS

Date - Workshop (29.1.2025)

Where: Tourism Fair Ljubljana

With whom: general public

Main goals:

- promoting the museum
- experimenting with material and hand-crafting
- tactile workshop - bringing material (design) knowledge and relaxation together

Activities:

10.00-19.00: a quick experimental workshop with wax for people to stop by the stand

Tools (including digital):

- experimental use of wax

Outputs:

- collaborating across disciplines, between organisations and generations
- getting people to understand the museum differently
- promoting social interactions between diverse groups of people in the community

Prototype: WORKSHOP IN EXPERIMENTING WITH NEW MATERIALS 2

Date - Workshop (14.3.2025)

Where: Retirement Home Fužine

With whom: elderly people from the community

Main goals:

- connecting the community to all of its residents (including the people in retirement homes)
- promoting importance of inclusiveness of people with dementia into the society
- experimenting with material and hand-crafting
- tactile workshop - bringing material (design) knowledge and relaxation together

Activities:

10.00: assembly in the Retirement home Fužine

10.00-10.15: learning about the material

10.15-11.45: participants experimenting with material (tactile workshop)

11.45-12.00: a small exhibition of finished work

Tools (including digital):

- experimental use of wool

Outputs:

- collaborating across disciplines, between organisations and generations
- the start of building long-term relationships between organisations and users
- promoting social interactions between diverse groups of people in the community

Testing: WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGES

Date - Workshop (19.2.2025)

Where: MAO

With whom: CONA (day center for kids and youngsters)

Main goals:

- connecting the community to the museum
- promoting spending quality free time to children and youngsters
- promoting quality architecture and urban planning, especially the importance of environment and environmental changes and how it influences the designed spaces
- encouraging people to take participatory approach in their community

Activities:

15.00: assembly in MAO, division in 5 groups

15.00-15.15: presentation of the theme

15.15-16.30: each group designs their own environment and thinks about the main characteristics

16.30-17.00: each group presents their model

Tools (including digital):

- a thematic workshop; building an environment with Lego, educating them about main components and characteristics
- integration of organisations, that are based in the neighbourhood, into museum

Outputs:

- collaborating across disciplines, between organisations and generations
- the start of building long-term relationships between organisations and users
- promoting sustainability and the effect the urban planning has on it

Testing: COMMUNITY EVENT ON CLOTHING

Date - Workshop (31.3.2025)

Where: High School of Tourism and Gastronomy

With whom: Cona Fužine, Cona Korak, MAO, High School for Gastronomy and Tourism Ljubljana, general public

Main goals:

- connecting the community
- promoting sustainability
- encouraging people to take participatory approach in their community

Activities:

14.00-17.00: event, people were coming and going, free choice of clothing
(there was organised collecting of clothes in the weeks prior to the event)

Tools (including digital):

- connecting the community through an event

Outputs:

- collaborating across disciplines, between organisations and generations
- the start of building long-term relationships between organisations and users
- promoting environment friendly clothing

Testing: COMMUNITY EVENT: COMMUNITY GARDEN

Date - Workshop (4.4.2025)

Where: MAO Community Garden

With whom: Cona Fužine, Cona Korak, MAO, general public

Main goals:

- connecting the community
- promoting sustainability
- encouraging people to take participatory approach in their community

Activities:

14.00-17.00: cleaning up the garden, planting herbs and flowers

Tools (including digital):

-connecting the community through an event

Outputs:

-collaborating across disciplines, between organisations and generations

-the start of building long-term relationships between organisations and users

- How did you identify your stakeholders? Do you think the living Lab methodology assisted you in developing meaningful relationships with stakeholders? Describe how you maintain these relationships.

At first we identified our stakeholder as members of the neighbourhood community, where MAO is located. We already knew some organisations, that function in the neighbourhood, so we connected with them. So the first step was; RECOGNISING EXISTING ORGANISATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY, to whom we proposed a collaboration. Slowly, through our programmes with these organisations, we got to know even more organisations and individuals, who were willing to participate, so our network inside the community was growing.

Living Lab methodology was helpful to organise our process, but our connections were largely developed even before we joined the Living Lab programme, so it is hard to define, whether the playbook was helpful or not.

The process was very natural, because it was based on human connection and relationships.

The most important part, of making this kind of programmes work, is maintaining the relationships. Our programme is divided into two phases. One is **production phase**, where we actually produce something in the community (for example the interventions in MAO park), with the help of our stakeholders. Around this phase we organise community events, where all the institutions contribute. This phase takes place outside, mostly in MAO park, our community garden or in the neighbourhood, that is why it is organised in spring-fall.

After that comes a phase of nurturing the connections, where we work towards maintaining the relationships. We organise different workshops, again, with different institutions, where we nurture our relationships and prepare for the next production phase.

- **Describe any unforeseen challenges that have occurred in your living Lab activities. How did you solve these?**

It was hard to report certain parts of the project and its progress (during the Living Lab phase, but also in general in our museum), because all the reports are still fixated on the numeric progress, which is really not your focus, when you try to connect the community and base the success of your project on human relationships.

Otherwise our project didn't have major unforeseen challenges. We were trying to build together and we were lucky to find partners, who had similar wishes. We were searching for synergies between us. Not all connections were fruitful, of course, but the ones that were, were even better than we could imagine, so it all worked out. The general interest was very good and beyond our expectations.

5. Output(s) and impact

- Describe your Living Labs' output(s) here. E.g. Services, products, visitor experiences, exhibitions etc. Please upload photographs and videos [here](#) naming them like this: "HUNT_Cocreation_17.06.23"

Our Living Lab managed to develop 3 new on-demand programmes. We created them together with our stakeholders. The programmes are meant to educate about space, as well as strengthening the community, by participating in these programmes. With different workshops, that were leading towards the new programmes, we managed to connect different organisations and individuals from the community. However, the outputs of our Living Lab are not just the new programmes, but also the newly founded connections and relationships, which will help to improve and strengthen the community even further.

- Please write a brief description of the value that your Living Lab created for your organisation and community.

The value our Living Lab created is hard to put into numbers, because the biggest impact is connecting the community and the museum. We managed to make the museum more recognizable in the neighbourhood, more people from the neighbourhood feel entitled to come to our events, we are building

strong relationships with community organisations, with whom we can develop our programmes even further.

- Living Lab self-assessment and level of satisfaction on its achievements.

Objectives	Result description	Achievement level (scale of 1-5)	Sustainability level (1-5)	Internal Impact level (organization) (1-5)	External Impact level (community) (1-5)
AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT	we managed to get new audience	4	5	4	5
DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE ORIENTED PROGRAMMES	with our stakeholders we developed 3 new on-demand programmes	5	5	4	5
SECURING MEANS FOR NEW, FUTURE ORIENTED PROGRAMMES	asset sharing with our stakeholders	4	4	3	4

Achievement Level: Where 1 is Poor: The objective was not met. The outcomes fell significantly short of expectations, with minimal or no progress made.

And 5 is Excellent: The objective was fully met or exceeded. All expected outcomes were achieved with high quality and effectiveness.

Sustainability: where 1 is Low: The result has minimal potential to continue. It is unlikely to be sustained or evolved beyond the first iteration without substantial changes or support.

And 5 is Very High: The result has very high potential to continue. It is likely to be sustained and adapted for future iterations with little to no additional support required.

Internal Impact : where 1 is Low: The result had minimal or no impact. It did not significantly affect the system of the organization, its procedures, activities and approaches.

And 5 is Very High: The result had a transformative impact on the organization. It profoundly affected the system of the organization, its procedures, activities and approaches.

External Impact : where 1 is Low: The result had minimal or no impact. It did not significantly affect the intended community..

And 5 is Very High: The result had a transformative impact. It profoundly affected the intended community, creating significant positive change.

6. Reflection and conclusions

Please describe the added value of participatory practices according to your Living Lab experience

Participatory practices enabled us to get assets (not just physical, but also intellectual, human...) a lot easier. With participation each of the stakeholder or individuals brings something unique, whether that being knowledge or just

their time. Because of the mixture of so many different stakeholders and individuals it is sometimes also hard. Because it is hard to combine your imagined results, and process, with so many different people, professions and so on.

Please summarise your Key Findings

- participatory approach takes a lot of time and effort, mostly for developing the relationships, even before the “project” even starts
- we can build, connect, communities with simple workshops
- we can derive great workshops with very little physical assets
- one of the benefits of participatory approach is sharing assets between the stakeholders

Inputs for future directions and new cycles (what will you do differently? What was the main lesson learned that you will not do again!)

We will continue to try to build the connections inside the community, but we think it is important that we don't forget to keep getting new audiences from the community, and not just nourish the existing ones.

Describe how you see the Long-term sustainability of your project and possibilities for scaling Up

We believe our project has a great foundation to become one of the main connecting actors in the community. Organising workshops with different organisations, people of different ages and backgrounds, outside and inside the walls of the museum... Each workshop is a step closer to a more connected community and museum's fulfillment of its public role. Goals of our programme can sometimes be hard to define, because they are not measurable, since our process is never ending. It is a way of connecting the community-you need to sustain these relationships at all times.

What recommendations would you give another similar organisation for potential replication of the Living Lab methodology?

The steps described in the playbook are great to guide you through the process, but you need to find your own way, but you should use them as guides to find your own way of implementing participatory approach, since it's different in each case. Goals or programmes based on participation are always changing, because you always find new perspectives from different people or stakeholders.

7. Appendices

- Please upload the signed Informed Consent Forms [here](#), labeling them as follow: "HUNT_ICF_Cocreation_17.06.23"
- Please upload the Participant Lists [here](#), labeling them as follow: "HUNT_PL_Cocreation_17.06.23"
- Supplementary data sources

Name of the document	Content	Link
MAO	pictures from the events from February-April	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uWjdRyNYwzrR7POdv_gW8CgBqt_m0Rlc?usp=drive_link
Recharge Reports	separate reports and pictures for all the events we had	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JaD_CRZdU9e-eo4FQ0PiEHjoqfVRwRFR?usp=sharing

- Supplementary Material