

Project REPLAY – 4th Press Release

Children and experts redesigning playgrounds in the Western Balkans together

An innovative approach in redesigning the current playscapes



Co-creative workshop in Belgrade, Summer School – School Laboratory 005 on Ledine was dedicated to research of play through a play-together with the children of Ledine, Belgrade.

Belgrade, 26th of May 2022 – Through the Creative Europe programme, the European Union finances project RE:PLAY and the promotion of natural play, co-creation and integration of natural elements in the redesign of children's playscapes in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro and Albania.

[RE:PLAY](#) (*Redesigning playscapes with children in Western Balkans*) is a project funded by the European Union, which aims to redesign playgrounds, with children as the main initiators of the project.

Last week, the partners gathered in Belgrade exactly in the middle of the project that started in January 2021. So far, the partners have realized a series of co-creative workshops and regional exchanges. The aim of the workshops is to test new design models through which children and young people are included as equal members in decision-making when designing a play space. The goal of this approach is to change the established design practice *designing for children* into **designing with children**.

The results of this approach so far have strengthened children and young people, encouraged their imagination and independence in work and life, but also empowered in exercising the right to public spaces and, more importantly, safe and authentic play.



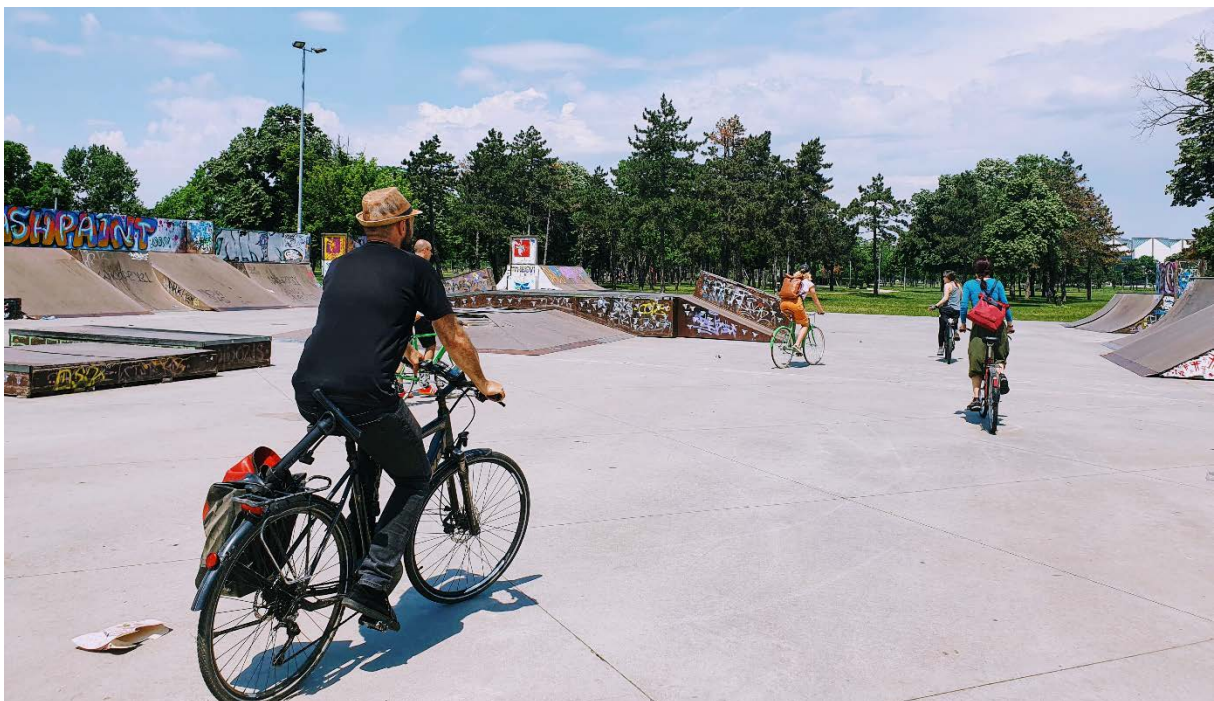
Reflective talk – ‘The game begins when we show up!’ was held as part of the program *Conversations between the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade*.

As part of the regular meeting of partner organizations held in Belgrade, a public event called **"Play begins when we appear!"** where experts, individuals and representatives of organizations from the field of social sciences, humanities and spatial (technical) sciences met. Within the three-hour interactive program, guests had a unique opportunity to meet and talk from different professional and experiential positions about the theme of the game, its role in the development of our unique personalities, society and cultures. Looking at the social circumstances of the Western Balkans, the participants talked about possible ways to nurture it through life and manifest it through the space and infrastructure of cities that encourage the most important development aspects and exercise the **right to play** as one of the project's leading goals.

The conversation was stimulated by the introductory speech of Professor Ana Marjanović-Šejn, who has been defining parameters for quality play spaces for several decades through her work and practice. This public exchange was an opportunity for the local professional public to get acquainted with the project and get involved in thinking about the state of play in the wider social context of the Western Balkans. It was emphasized once again that **nature is the ultimate**

playground that encourages curiosity and imagination and within which all generations can find and create their own space for play.

In the past decades we witnessed the increasing urbanization of cities across the region, where cars and the growing construction index have priority in contrast to investments in increasing quality public spaces in line with the needs of local communities and fostering of green infrastructure that would make cities more resilient to climate change and create healthy child and adult development environments. With this project, the partner organizations are trying to point out this issue that affects all spheres of society and its development, and the playscapes created for present and future generations are significantly affected by this fact.



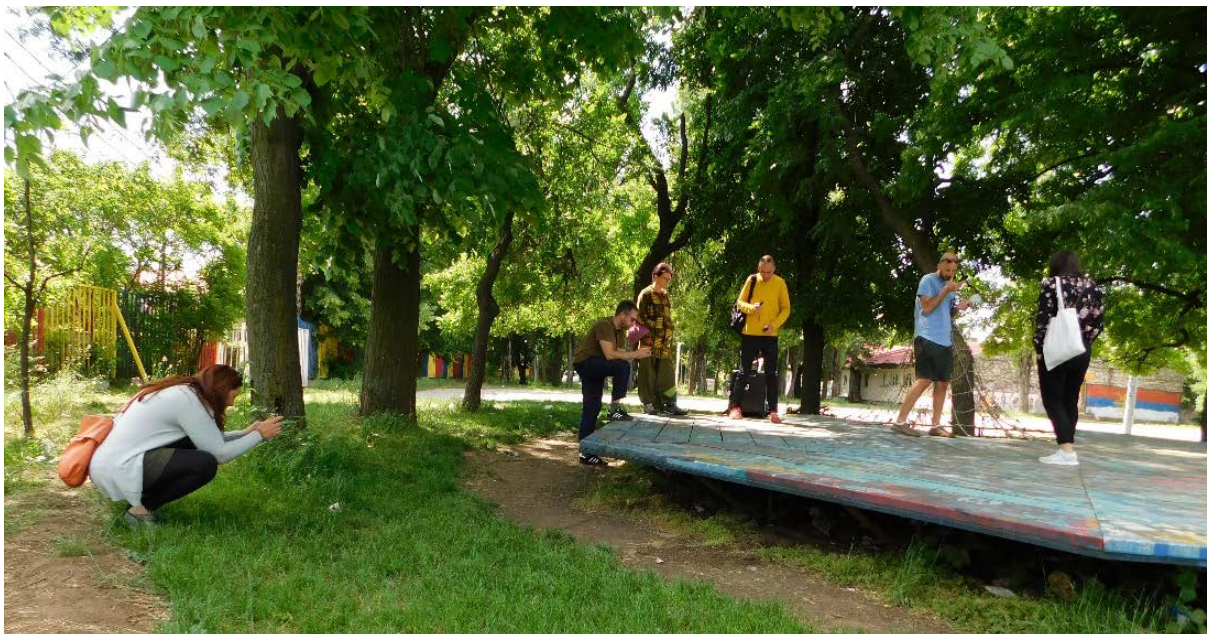
Bicycle tour of partners from the region with the support of the Association Streets for cyclists in search of playscapes throughout Belgrade.

Partners from the region, with the support and guidance of the Association Streets for cyclists, rode bicycles through the city streets in search of play. Although in the last few years, Belgrade has received several innovatively designed and interactive spaces and content for games at various locations, especially along rivers, it has been noticed that these spaces are mostly without players. We concluded that the planning practice in Belgrade obviously does not include enough elements of nature and the formation of shade with tree canopy or in other ways that would allow the use of content on hot days such as the day of this unique tour.

By the end of 2023, in Belgrade, Zagreb, Bar, Ljubljana and Tirana, partner organizations together with local partners, children and young people will create

five redesigned play areas, and a handbook will be prepared for the professional public, illustrating different work methodologies.

For the last five years, the [Škograd](#) collective from Belgrade has been actively working on illuminating the social problems on the outskirts of Belgrade, on the example of the Ledine settlement in New Belgrade. Together with the elementary school Vlada Obradović Kameni, neighbors and children of this place, the team is working on improving public spaces with the goal of strengthening the local community and reducing the trend of social segregation that is present in this settlement. Through the **RE:PLAY** project and the format of the summer school - Schoo laboratory, the team continues to work on the long-term goal of empowering children and youth in creating quality and solidary common spaces.



Partners visiting the multifunctional circle - Infrastructure of Hope on Ledine, built through the Creative Europe project Shared Cites.

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Find out more about RE:PLAY partner organizations:

- Društvo Pazi!park (LP, Slovenia): <http://www.pazipark.si/en/home/>,
- Kreativni krajobrazi (Croatia): <https://kreativnikrajobrazi.hr/en/>,
- Udruženje Škogled (Serbia): <http://skograd.org/en/home-en/>,
- Qendra Marrëdhënie (Albania): <http://qendra-m.org/>,
- Gradionica (Montenegro): <https://gradionica.me/>

Contact person:

Društvo Pazi!park, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Lead partner - Gaja Trbižan, pazipark@gmail.com, +386 31889210