

The Potential of Creativity in a Local Agenda 21 Process: Experiences from Vienna's Zentrum Favoriten

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Abstract

In scientific debates and international documents on sustainable development, creativity, art, and culture hardly play any role. Consequently, in the Local Agenda 21 framework on strengthening civil society initiatives creative forms of expression are not mentioned. In this article, we explore the process of the Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten', which successfully increased the visibility of girls in public space. For the success of this initiative, creativity was important in two ways: First, different forms of artistic expression were used, such as music, painting, dance, theatre, e.g., in a creative competition or in different festivities. Second, the exchange between members of the Agenda group, other persons involved in the process as well as people outside the Agenda process enabled forms of co-creation – such as the renaming of a Favoriten square or the decision to build a Girls' Stage. We conclude that more attention should be paid to the potential of creativity to achieve a sustainable future and that creativity, arts, and culture should be included in future versions of the Agenda 2030 framework.

Keywords

Local Agenda, creativity, co-creation, girls, public space, Vienna Favoriten

1. Introduction

In programmes and reports on sustainable development adopted at the level of the United Nations, creativity, art, and culture hardly seem to play any role for building a sustainable future. Most recently, the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) failed to add 'culture' as the eighteenth goal to the Agenda 2030 on sustainable development goals (O'Connor, 2022). The same neglect can be observed in conceptualizing societal transformation towards sustainability (Griefahn, 2002; Kroismayr, 2022; O'Connor, 2022).

In connection with sustainable urban development, this is particularly astonishing as arts and culture have played a significant role in urban renewal and planning practices

since the 1970s and 1980s in the United States and from the 1980s and the 1990s onwards in mainland Europe (Martinelletti et al., 2010; Andres, 2011). Moreover, since the end of the 1990s, creativity, art, and culture were promoted as engines of economic development and innovation under the label of 'cultural and creative industries' (Florida, 2005; Peck, 2005). While the potential of arts and culture for economic development was widely recognised, it had so far been disregarded in the field of sustainability.

In this article we will explore the role of creativity, art, and culture in sustainable urban development by undertaking an urban case study of a Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) initiative in Vienna's tenth district, Favoriten. In Vienna, citizens are encouraged to bring in their ideas for sustainable development on a district level in a rather controlled and restricted

way (Novy and Hammer, 2007; Novy et al., 2010). The LA 21 office in the district serves as a supporter and mediator between citizens, district politicians and the city administration (Binder-Zehetner and Heintel, 2018). Although the potential of cultural and art-led creativity is not mentioned in the framework of LA 21 (Kurt and Wagner, 2002), civic initiatives often make use of creative forms of expression. In this paper we use the term creativity in two different ways: First, we relate creativity to classical genres of arts and culture, such as music, painting, dance, theatre, sculpture etc., second, we relate creativity to different forms of co-creation, i.e., acts of co-production carried out by a group of people (cf. Gaspar and Heintel, 2022).

As a case study, we discuss the example of the Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten'¹, a group that has successfully advocated for its cause: to increase the visibility of girls in public spaces. We came across this interesting initiative during a project on cultural initiatives in *Zentrum Favoriten*, a quarter in Vienna's tenth district, *Favoriten*,² where we have been doing research for two years. In order to understand the process of this Agenda group in greater detail, we conducted interviews with members of the Agenda group, staff members of the Local Agenda Favoriten, and a former district politician between August and October 2022. In addition, we evaluated the documentation of the process on the LA 21 website and participated in a number of events of the Agenda group.

This article is structured in the following manner: First, we describe *Reumannplatz*, the public square where the initiative concentrated its activities, focusing on its infrastructure, demography, and image. Second, we provide an overview of the activities of the Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten'. Third, we focus on the creative practises of the process and their overall effectiveness in increasing the visibility of girls in public space. Fourth, we discuss the empirical

findings and their implications for a better understanding of the relationships between culture, urban development and sustainability.

2. Reumannplatz

Reumannplatz in *Zentrum Favoriten* is situated in a former working-class quarter and *Gründerzeit* neighbourhood with many buildings constructed before 1945. With its 27,000 sqm, *Reumannplatz* is the largest square in the district, which highlights its significance in the wider context of Vienna's urban space. Due to its size, it is not apparent that *Reumannplatz* is a central public transport hub with an underground station, several regional coach-line termini, and an underground parking facility. Rather, its dominant feature is its design as a park with trees and benches. On the eastern side of the square lies *Amalienbad*, a big public bath, which was built in the 1920s – at that time the most modern public bath in Europe. On the western edge of the square several well-established shops are located such as *Tichy*, a well-known ice cream parlour. Adjacent to it there are a pharmacy, a hairdresser's shop, and a jewellery store, which have been in business for many years.

Reumannplatz is used by heterogeneous groups of people, who spend time there – families, youth groups, retirees, unemployed persons, homeless people etc. Since the turn of the millennium many migrants moved into the area and, therefore, the share of inhabitants with Austrian citizenship dropped below 50 percent within the last two decades. Residents in this area often have limited financial resources and their net income is the third lowest in Vienna, while the unemployment rate is above average.³ Population density around *Reumannplatz* is five times higher than the average in the entire tenth district (Gruber and Jauschneg, 2016). Due to these conditions, *Reumannplatz* is of enormous importance for residents fleeing constrained private housing situations, which makes it an intensively used square.

1 <https://www.agendafavoriten.at/projekte-detail/maedchen-gestalten-den-reumannplatz-p.html>

2 The research project was funded by the Jubilee Fund of the City of Vienna for the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (WU).

3 The statistical figures are based on data from MA 23 (Municipal Department for Business, Labour, and Statistics) and on the authors' own calculations.

The area in general, as well as *Reumannplatz* in particular, is struggling with a bad reputation. Poverty, the high share of Turkish migrants and recurring media reports about criminal incidents spurred negative outside perception. For several reasons this is likely to change in the coming years: First, there are two adjacent urban development areas, one already largely completed (*Sonnwendviertel*) and the other in the final planning phase (*Neues Landgut*), which are attracting residents with higher income. Second, in the immediate vicinity, the pilot project *Supergrätzl* is currently being implemented, which is inspired by the now famous superblocks of Barcelona. Third, *Reumannplatz* itself was redesigned between 2019 and 2020, with additional flowers, trees, and seating facilities. On this occasion, forth, an open-air stage was built, which was named 'Girls' Stage'. In our view, the stage has the potential to attract attention beyond the confines of *Favoriten* and could serve as an event location, where, amongst others, women initiatives from all over Vienna would be able to organise events. The construction of the stage is largely owed to the Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten', which is the topic of the next chapter.

3. The LA 21 Process of the Initiative 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten'

At the end of 2013, Favoriten was Vienna's sixth district starting a LA 21 process, with citizens joining together in so-called Agenda groups and pursuing projects promoting sustainable development in the district. The opening event took place in the festive hall of Favoriten's administrative centre, where first proposals for projects were collected and organised according to their general topic. The issue of better visibility of girls in public spaces was brought forward by a teacher from a school in *Zentrum Favoriten*. She became aware of the subject through a survey conducted by a class she taught in mathematics and gymnastics. In a project that combined the two subjects, pupils took notes in the adjacent park at different times, on who used it and when. In principle, this was supposed to be a mathematical exercise. An analysis of this simple statistical inquiry finally showed that after four o'clock in the afternoon the boys came to the park in larger numbers and claimed the football pitch for themselves, while mothers with kids and older girls with their younger siblings left the area. These results led to some discussions in the

class. The teacher reported the outcome of this small study to the headmistress of the school, and when they were informed about the opening event of the Local Agenda in the district, they both saw an opportunity to bring the issue to the table. And indeed, at the meeting the deputy district mayor picked up the issue and spoke in favour of the proposal.

This opening event was also attended by an art therapist, who became aware of the event because she lived in the street, where the office of the Local Agenda Favoriten was located and had seen the announcement in the window display while passing by. She had been active in autonomous women's groups for a long time and had gained international experience in feminist projects, for example in Sweden. The empowerment of girls and the creation of opportunities for them to participate in public space was very important to her. When a second event was held to substantiate the ideas for the project and get real commitment, she joined the group. Nine Agenda groups emerged from this event. The Agenda groups were afterwards invited individually to the office of Local Agenda Favoriten in order to further concretise their projects. At that point a headmistress of a primary school in *Zentrum Favoriten* joined the group. She was informed about the formation of the Agenda group by the mathematics/gym teacher, who knew how important this cause was to her. Finally, the Agenda group was made up of four women: a teacher, two headmistresses and an art therapist.

In 2014, they met several times, developing a concept in cooperation with the staff of the Local Agenda Favoriten. In this phase they received the information that *Reumannplatz* would be redesigned after the extension of the U1 metro in 2017. This opened a window of opportunity. Ideas about activities went in two different directions. On the one hand, the question of safety was addressed as a crucial concern: How can girls feel safer at *Reumannplatz*? On the other hand, the members of the Agenda group were convinced that girls should have a voice in redesigning the square.

To promote safety in the public sphere, a Safety Party at *Reumannplatz* was organized in January 2015. The organisation of this party and other subsequent events was based on a certain division of tasks: the headmistresses advertised the

party in their schools and in the headmasters' meetings of the tenth district. The Local Agenda Favoriten invited organisations, which suited the Agenda groups' intentions to empower girls in public space. There was a continuous exchange between Agenda group, Local Agenda Favoriten, and district politicians in the so-called steering group, where each party is represented by a delegate. Support was also provided by district politicians whenever necessary. In case of the Safety Party, the local police and Vienna's public transport operator, Wiener Linien, were both contacted by the deputy district mayor. Both provided tours at the square and discussed with participating girls, how to behave, when they felt unsafe or threatened. The local head of the Favoriten police department also conducted a survey with the girls, asking them, in which places they felt uncomfortable and why? Consequently, the district organised a trimming of bushes, so that it was easier for the girls to see what was behind them. Furthermore, additional lights were installed.

To give girls a voice in the redesign of the square, a competition, calling for creative input and ideas, was launched in different schools in the district. Schoolgirls were asked to create drawings, collages, and sculptures of what *Reumannplatz* should look like, so that they would feel comfortable and enjoy being there. More than hundred schoolgirls between the ages of six and fifteen took part in the competition and submitted seventy proposals for redesigning *Reumannplatz*. Numerous submissions were shown in an exhibition in *Volkshochschule Favoriten*, the local adult education institution, which was ceremoniously opened by the district mayor. From September onwards, the drawings, collages and sculptures were also exhibited at Favoriten's administrative centre.

Two days earlier, the first Girls' Party took place at *Reumannplatz*. While the Safety Party was exclusively reserved for girls, this time also boys were allowed to participate, as the Girls' Party had stirred the boys' curiosity and their desire for participation. At this event, several organisations from the district participated and offered information, food, and learning games. However, the schoolgirls also came up with their own activities. With two hundred fifty pupils from five schools, this festival was very well attended.

Afterwards, the Girls' Party was repeated every year, except 2020 and 2021, when the pandemic prevented it from being held at *Reumannplatz*. As Table 1 shows, both the number of participating schoolgirls and -boys, as well as the number of cooperative organisations and partners increased steadily with a peak in 2018 of more than five hundred pupils. This was the first time a leased stage was set up at the Girls' Party and a fashion show was organised with clothes donated from a nearby clothing company. The large number of participants almost exceeded the available space at the square. Therefore, in the next year the party returned to a more manageable size, this time focusing on dance and theatre. In addition to the Girls' Parties, other events were organised, such as a Winter Party to make girls visible in public space also during the cold season. All activities of the Agenda group finally resulted in the construction of a Girls' Stage in 2020, when *Reumannplatz* was finally redesigned. The next section is dedicated to the various creative activities that turned a small "Mickey Mouse Project" with the modest aim of "wanting to do a little something" into the very first Girls' Stage in Vienna, as the elementary school headmistress summarised the whole process.

4. Analysis of the Creative Practises in the LA 21 Process

In this chapter we reflect on two sets of creative practises, which played a significant role in the process at different times. As we will present them in chronological order, we have to switch back and forth: Traditional forms of creative expression such as drawing, theatre, dance etc. were important components of the Girls' Party and other organised events (see 4.2) and in workshops which took place on various occasions during the LA 21 process (see 4.2 and 4.5), while communication among the members of Agenda group and other persons involved in the process as well as people from outside stimulated ideas opening up new perspectives within the project. In this respect we analyse the 'level of diversity' within the Agenda group (4.1), the circumstances, which triggered the idea to rename *Reumannplatz* (4.3) and the decision-making process to build a Girls' Stage (4.4).

Date	Actions of the Agenda group	N° of participants	Cooperation partners	Types of creative-artistic activities
01-2014	Formation of the Agenda group			Designing a logo
12-2014	Start of the creative competition	100		Drawing, handicrafts
01-2015	Safety Party	280	Police, Samariterbund, Wiener Linien	
06-2015	First Girls' Party	250	Food X, Community Cooking, Police, Samariterbund, Volkshochschule (VHS), Wanderklasse	Theatre play, dance workshop
06-2015	Exhibition of the creative competition	100	VHS	Drawings, collages, sculptures
05-2016	Painting activities at the district Agenda office	35		Painting of benches and tables for Reumannplatz
06-2016	Second Girls' Party	350	Community Cooking, Fair Play, MA 48, Mobility Agency, Police, Samariterbund, Tanz die Toleranz, VHS, Wanderklasse, Vienna Youth Centres, Wiener Linien	Presentation of painted benches and tables, opening of <i>ReuMÄDCHEN-platz</i> , dance workshop
12-2016	Winter Party	250	Community Cooking, Samariterbund	Wishes written down and attached to a string
06-2017	Third Girls' Party	400	Community Cooking, Goshin Jitsu Wien, LYMA, Mobility Agency, Open Bookshelf, Samariterbund, Tanz die Toleranz, VHS, Wanderklasse, Wiener Linien.	Circus and dance workshops
09-2017	Rail Poem	120	Tilia	Phrases written on rails
06-2018	Fourth Girls' Party	500	C&A, Community Cooking, Goshin Jitsu Wien, MA 48, Mobility Agency, Police, spacelab_girls, Offene Burg, FK Austria Wien, VHS, WiG, Wanderklasse u.a.	Fashion show, creative workshop, theatre workshop
10-2018	Workshop with girls on designing the Girls' Stage	25		Inserting decorative elements into the graphical draft of the stage
06-2019	Fifth Girls' Party	250	European Theatre	Theatre and dance workshops
10-2019	Flashmob for World Girls' Day	50		
2020	Construction of the Girls' Stage			
2020-21	Ongoing events, partly digital			
2022	Ongoing events of the Agenda group.			

Table 1. Overview of the Agenda group activities.

4.1. The Composition of the Agenda Group

The Agenda group was relatively small as it initially consisted of only four women. It was just large enough to be called a group at all, as one group member remarked. The background of the members, however, was interesting: Three women had been working in compulsory schools for many years, two of them in leadership positions. They were used to applying an institutional logic in the form of rules and regulations. This contrasted with the experience of the fourth group member, who had spent many years of her life in autonomous women's groups. She referred to this in the interview by pointing out that the atmosphere within the Agenda group was new to her and described it as 'less utopian', compared to the autonomous women's groups. From an external perspective, however, it could have been precisely this confluence of different worlds that significantly contributed to the success of the Agenda group. The teacher and the headmistresses successfully managed to provide direct access to the schoolgirls and, with the permission of the superior school authorities, they were able to combine activities of the Agenda group with daily school routine. One headmistress had the permission to report on activities such as the creative competition, the Girls' Party etc. at the headmasters' meetings of the tenth district and ask them to think about, which teachers from their schools would be interested in joining the project. This way they were able to involve a large number of girls, which generally is an important objective of the LA 21 process (Schnepf and Groeben, 2019). In contrast, the art therapist was used to working with girls on a direct and individual level and was very critical towards the whole societal system. For her, it was normal to question institutional frameworks. These different approaches complemented each other in an ideal way and contributed to the success of the Agenda project.

4.2. Forms of Creative Expression

The Agenda group's activities started with a creative competition, in which girls were expected to portray their visions of a redesigned *Reumannplatz*. The decision to launch a creative competition also aimed at reaching as many girls as possible. Painting, drawing, or collages are creative forms of expression that can be applied by all age groups. This allowed all classes from the compulsory school segment to take part in the competition. Moreover, it was not necessary for the

schoolgirls to know *Reumannplatz* very well, as they could portray any square of their imagination they would like to hang out at. However, it can be assumed that most children knew *Reumannplatz*, because of the very popular ice cream parlour *Tichy*. Overall, three primary schools, three secondary schools, and a polytechnic school submitted 'creative contributions'.

The Agenda group's art therapist supported the competition by holding a number of workshops in the office of Local Agenda Favoriten with girls from a nearby after-school club. For her, it was very stimulating to work with the girls. The objects created by them were very colourful, sometimes several metres high and made on a scale of one to ten, mostly out of clay or paper-mâché – among them a snail-shaped construction into which girls also built a cave to retreat to or to hang out in with friends. Other girls worked on other objects such as the creation of a fountain.

Creative forms of expression also played a major role in the events at *Reumannplatz*. The girls themselves prepared programme items by staging small plays or showing dance performances. The association *Tanz die Toleranz*, which positions itself at the interface of art and social concerns, worked with the girls on forms of dance expression, regardless of their talents and experiences. *Spacelab_girls*, an institution of the Vienna Youth Centres, held workshops, where the girls could try out their handicraft skills. On one occasion, the *Offene Burg*, a department of *Burgtheater*, one of the oldest and most prestigious public theatres in Austria, was present at the Girls' Party and offered theatre workshops.

In addition, smaller events took place, also making use of creative elements, for example at the Winter Party, when the girls were asked to write down their wishes, which were then attached to a string. Another creative activity was the Rail Poem, which was organised within the framework of a citizen participation process. Before the rails of the tram were removed, the girls wrote down wishes and messages on them (see Figure 1).

4.3. A Second Name for the Square

When the square was built in 1872, it was originally called *Bürgerplatz* (German for 'citizen square'). It was renamed *Reu-*

mannplatz in 1925, the year when Jakob Reumann died – the first social democratic mayor and the first mayor of Vienna elected by universal suffrage. He governed from 1919 to 1923 and hailed from Favoriten. The second syllable of his name, ‘-mann’ means ‘man’ in German. A project, in which girls were at centre stage and actively altered the square, e.g., by painting the benches and tables, prompted the art therapist to reflect on the name of the square: “I thought to myself: we can't name everything with ‘Mann’ now”. She spoke about this with friends, including a colleague at work, who expressed the opinion that the syllable ‘Reu’ should also be gotten rid of. In the end, however, ‘Reu-’ was kept, and ‘-mann’ was replaced by ‘Mädchen’, meaning ‘girls’ in German. When the deputy district mayor heard of the idea, he was immediately enthusiastic about it: “We'll do it right away”. And in June 2016, the *ReuMÄDCHENplatz* was opened by the district mayor at the location (see Figure 2), where the coloured banks and tables had been placed. The right-wing party (FPÖ), which had gained many seats in the district council since the last election in 2015, protested against the decision and tried to ridicule the initiative by accusing the governing Social Democrats of ‘gendering’ the square. However, it was a play on words that was meant to illustrate the visibility of girls on a symbolic level. The square kept its name and only the site of the Girls’ Party was renamed. However, this creative and at the same time humorous idea, developed by the art therapist in discussions with friends, has, in any case, generated much publicity for the project, as not only the district mayor and her deputy attended the opening, but also Vienna’s city director for education joined the event.

4.4. The Decision for a Girls’ Stage

In the creative competition launched in schools in 2014, the most frequent proposal for redesigning the square was a girls’ centre or a kind of café, exclusively reserved for girls. This was inspired by the vacancy of an adequate locality, the *Expedit*, which was owned by Wiener Linien, Vienna’s public transport operator, and had served as a changing and common room for their employees. There were talks to move this building to the edge of the square. However, this plan came to nothing and a relocation of the *Expedit* was rejected for financial reasons. By the end of 2017, Local Agenda Favoriten compiled a documentation report about the activities of

the Agenda group and the outcomes of the creative competition. On the first page the following motto was proclaimed: ‘Vienna/Favoriten gives girls a stage!’ (Local Agenda 21, n.d.). And below: ‘*ReuMÄDCHENplatz* as a stage (And of course also usable for all others!)’ (ibid.). On page 9 the proposals of the girls for the redesign of the square were ranked according to how often certain ideas were brought up. A stage for girls topped the list, although none of the drawings and collages showed a stage as such. However, many of the girls’ proposals described activities that classically take place on a stage, such as music, dancing, theatre, or cinema.

In the preparation phase of each Girls’ Party with its many artistic-creative parts in the programme, the desire for a stage was repeatedly expressed by the Agenda group and the staff of the Local Agenda Favoriten. Moreover, the elementary school headmistress’s partner, who was a radio moderator, also got involved in the LA 21 process. Moderation as a form of presentation, which he brought into the LA 21 process as a topic, might have further solidified the idea of a stage. In the end, the dynamics of the process itself as well as the cancellation of the plans to turn the *Expedit* into a girls’ café gave rise to the decision that a ‘Girls’ Stage’ should be erected at *ReuMÄDCHENplatz*. Support for the idea of a Girls’ Stage on behalf of the Local Agenda Favoriten, the will of the district council to increase the visibility of girls in public space, as well as the financial feasibility of its implementation finally led to the construction of Vienna’s first Girls’ Stage.

4.5. The Involvement of the Girls in Designing the Stage

In October 2018, the Agenda group organised a workshop in cooperation with an architect and a project manager from MA 49, in which more than twenty-five girls took part to share their ideas about the design of the stage and its usage. The latter was described by the ten- to fourteen-year-olds unanimously: there should be singing and dancing taking place on the stage. Concerning stage design, they came up with ideas such as messages and slogans to be written on the stairs, advocating the empowerment of girls, as well as a clear signboard above the stage. The girls worked in groups and visually depicted their ideas in a basic construction sketch for the architect (see Figure 3). All the girls’ proposals and ideas were discussed with the architect and the project manager,



Figure 1. Girls writing on rails. Source: Local Agenda Favoriten.



Figure 2. Opening of ReuMÄDCHENplatz. Source: Local Agenda Favoriten.

both impressed by the creativity of the girls. Some of these ideas were adopted. For example, the name 'Mädchenbühne' (Girls' Stage) was visibly anchored in the skirting board of the stage. Also, the wish to cover the stage with a tarpaulin was realised in construction. Unfortunately, the tarpaulin was so badly damaged after just one season that it had to be removed. All in all, girls were part of a collective decision-making process, which was taking their ideas into account and contributed to the final design of the stage.

5. Conclusion

The Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten' has initiated a project that can be considered a great success. Within the framework of the LA 21, this is rather the exception than the rule. As the Local Agenda in the district is financed by the city of Vienna and the district government, oftentimes only those projects are supported that are of direct use to local politicians. In principle, this is in line with democratic rules and the prerogatives of representatives in liberal democracies. However, research shows that bottom-up social innovations, like the LA 21 process, often focus on niche topics that are environmentally and socially acceptable, are restricted to symbolic politics and, hence, often remain in the localist trap (Frings and Kunz, 2006; Kazepov et al., 2019; Novy et al., 2009). Furthermore, many LA 21 processes sparked rather small-scale projects that could be implemented successfully without the participation of local authorities (Gehrlein, 2004; Wolf, 2005).

In our case study the ambition of the Agenda group to increase the visibility of girls in public space has received the full support of district politicians. Fortunately, the Agenda group was formed at a time when the most important square of the district, *Reumannplatz*, was to be redesigned in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the Agenda group was able to focus its activities on a specific place and specific actions: In this context, artistic-creative elements have been playing a prominent role. First, a creative competition was launched in schools and around one hundred girls between six and fifteen years showed in seventy 'art works', what they would like to happen in the redesign of *Reumannplatz*. Festivities were organised at *Reumannplatz*, such as an annual Girls Party, and other events, celebrating creative forms of expression such as dance, theatre, painting, writing, and handicrafts.

In addition, the LA 21 process itself was characterised by creativity-friendly (pre)conditions. The composition of the Agenda group proved to be very 'creativity-enhancing', as the members brought different strengths to the table: Access to schools opened the LA 21 process to a wider audience and addressed the pupils as active participants. The witty idea of renaming the square *ReuMÄDCHENplatz*, inspired by a distinct feminist perspective, contributed to the project's publicity. The parties and events at the square finally directed the plans of the Agenda group, the Local Agenda Favoriten, and the district council towards the idea of establishing a Girls' Stage, which was in line with the Agenda group's intention to increase the visibility of girls in public space.

The lively exchange within the group as well as with persons from outside contributed to fresh ideas and generated important impulses for the project. This process of co-creation, which implies that decisions are made collectively, also guided the workshop, in which the girls brought in their ideas about the final look of the stage. They were directly involved in the decision-making process as their drawings provided the basis for discussions, which resulted in a collectively negotiated decision on how the stage should look and, hence, an empowering experience for the girls.

The question remains, how the stage will be used in the future to increase the visibility of girls and young women in public space. First, the Agenda group, with the support of the Local Agenda Favoriten, will continue its activities, organising the annual Girls' Party. Apart from that, the schools in the district will also have the possibility to use the stage for their own activities, at least once a month. From now on, the continuation of activities strongly depends on the initiative of teachers. It is unclear, to which extent schools will take advantage of this opportunity. Therefore, support by a professional would be helpful, coordinating in-school and extra-school activities, including those by feminist groups from all over Vienna, for further empowering girls and young women. Currently, no such supporting activities are planned, which might endanger the long-term viability of this social innovation project.

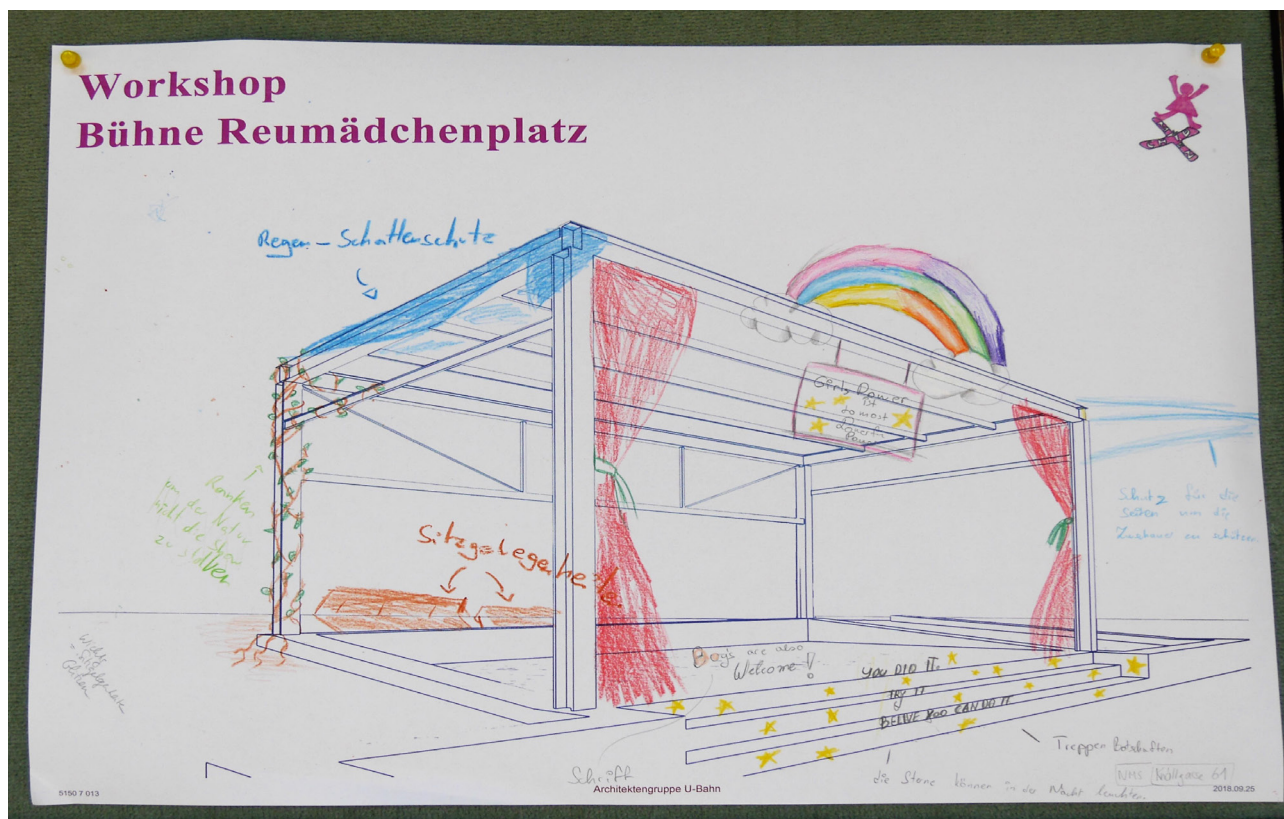


Figure 3. Proposal by the girls for the design of the stage. Source: Local Agenda Favoriten.

However, the district has decided to fund a regular music programme on the stage during the warmer seasons. For that reason, a new association was founded in 2022 with the aim of featuring music groups from various musical genres (funky-jazz, Klezmer, Austropop, Viennese songs, wind music etc.) on the stage. Two to three times per week bands will play one hour after the shops have closed. Keeping up with the idea of female visibility in public space, preference will be given to female artists, who can serve as role models for other girls, aspiring to transform traditional gender roles.

These free concerts in public space also enable residents and passers-by with low financial resources to participate in the cultural life of the city. Consequently, cultural needs of persons, who do not have access to mainstream cultural institutions, are addressed. Through regular music events, trust can be gradually built between the residents and the district government. This way, arts and culture can unfold their potential

for social integration and strengthen social cohesion – the social dimension in the concept of sustainable development. As a result, it would be justifiable to include artistic and cultural forms of expression explicitly as an eighteenth sustainable development goal in future agendas of the international community.

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Conflicts of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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