



drift for transition

# Urban Living Labs

## Learning spaces for urban transformation?

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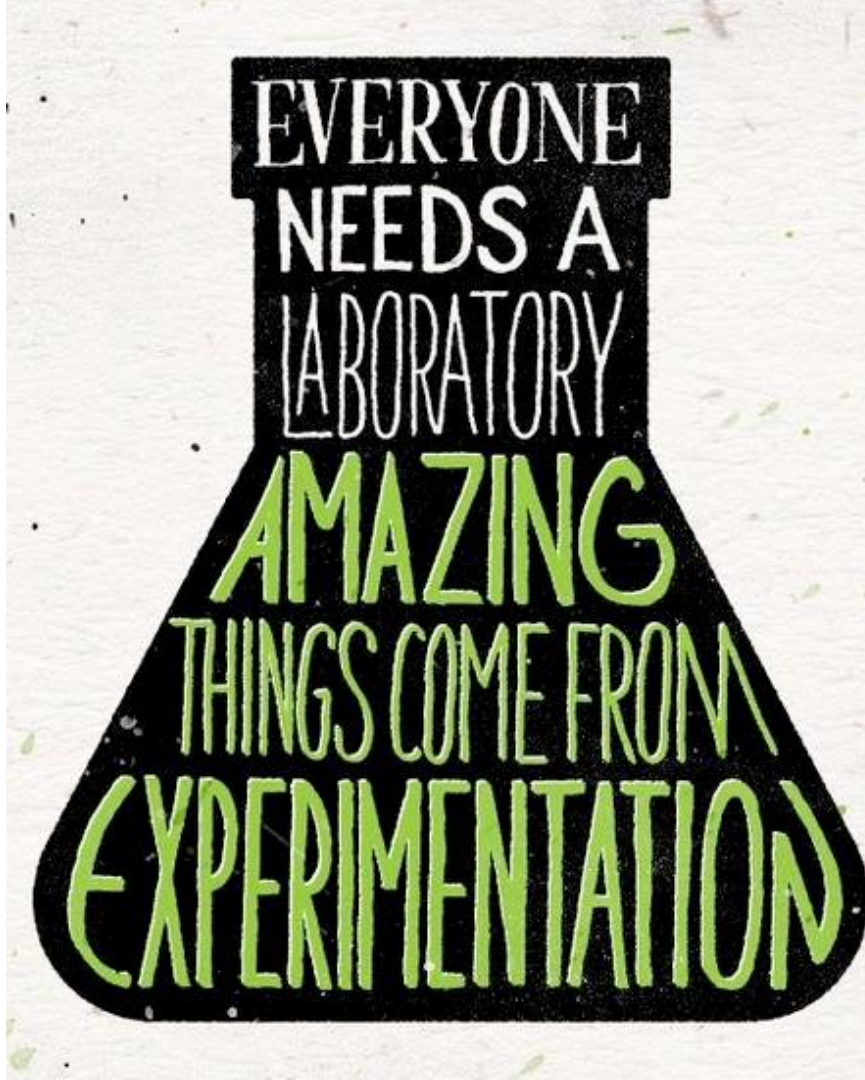
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## Overview

- The promise of Urban Living Labs (ULL).
- Strategies & Processes to transform.
- ULL: a critical outlook.



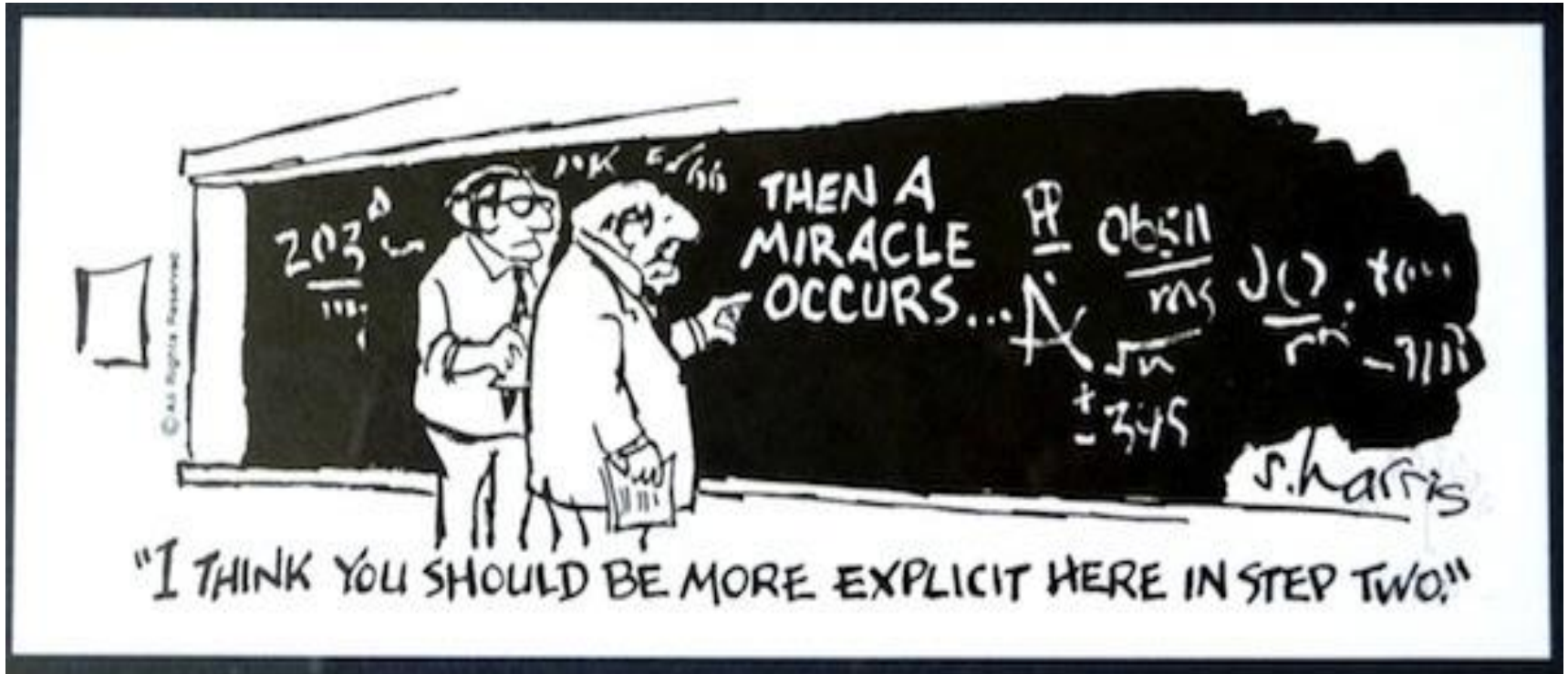
# 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable





## The challenge to create change in cities



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## Urban Living Labs?

“**Sites in cities** devised to **design, test and learn** from social and technical innovation in real world settings.”

Voytenko et al. 2016

“An institutionally bounded environment (...) to make material **interventions in the city and learn** from them.”

Evans & Karvonen 2014

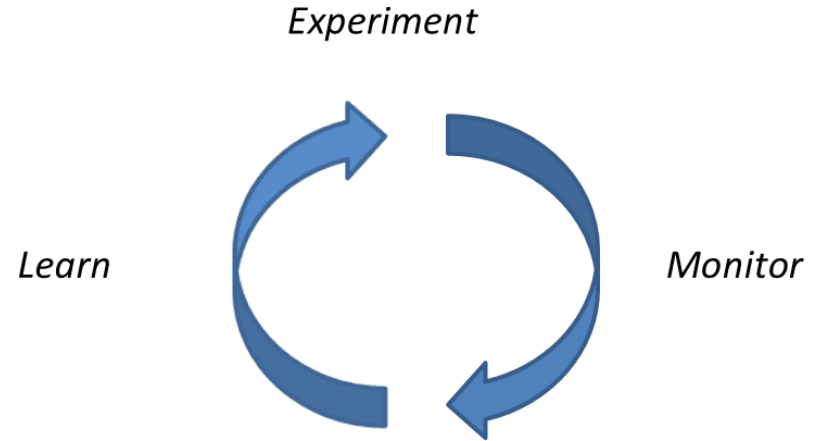


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## The Living Lab idea

**New arenas to collaborate, trial, and demonstrate** more sustainable practices.

**Living Lab evolution:** from user driven technology optimization to social transformation

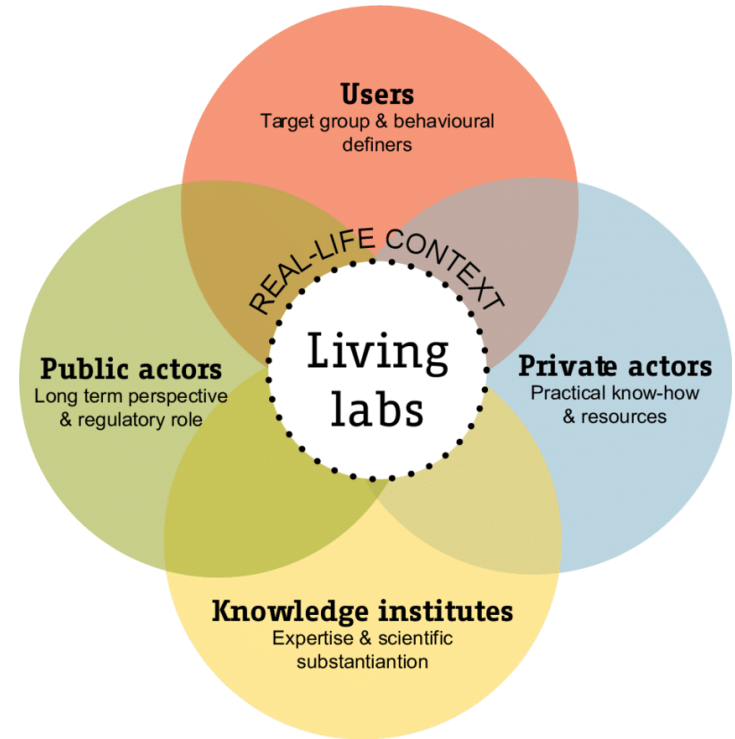


**Actionable knowledge:** “how to intervene to move towards *possible* sustainability solutions”

(Wiek et al., 2012)

## ULLs promising characteristics

- Geographically embedded / real world setting
- A shared (sustainability) vision
- Early involvement of users and other actors
- Co-creation of knowledge and outcomes
- Transparent mechanisms for project selection
- **Transformative impact?**



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## Broader impact to transform?

*“Transformative potentials  
of Urban Living Labs will  
be realized by applying  
their lessons to places,  
organizations and  
policies.”*

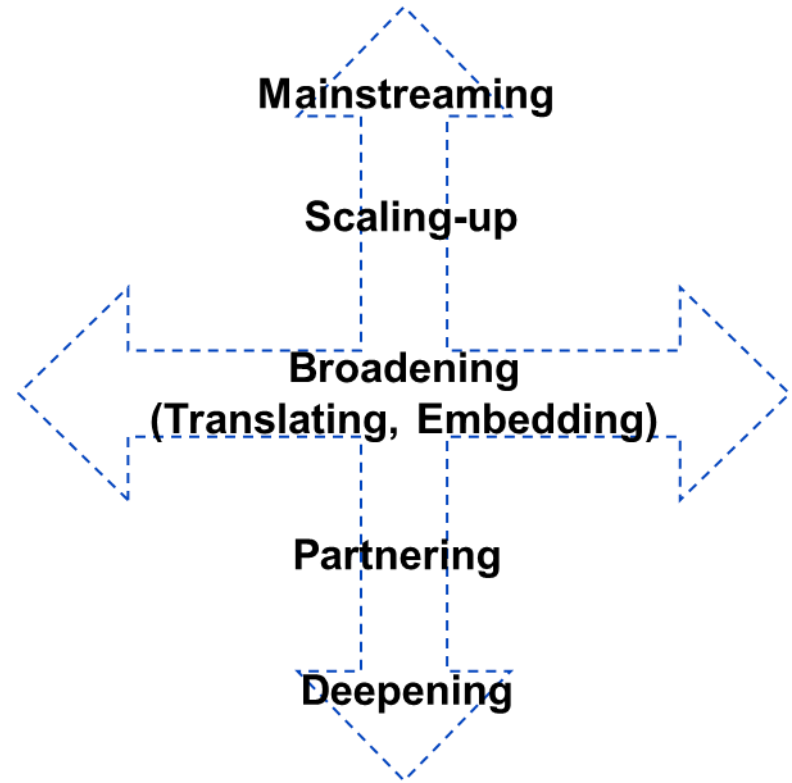
(Evans 2017)



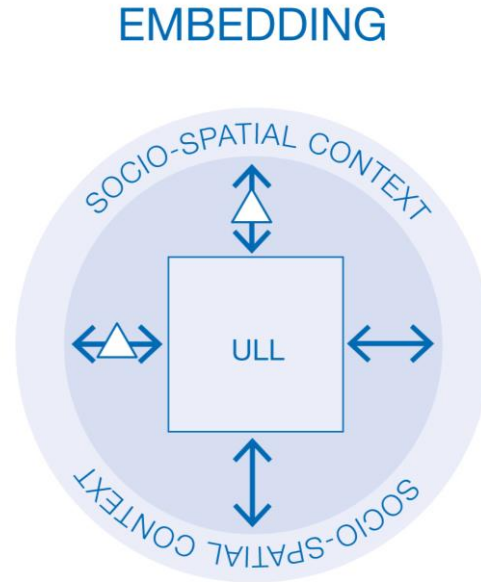
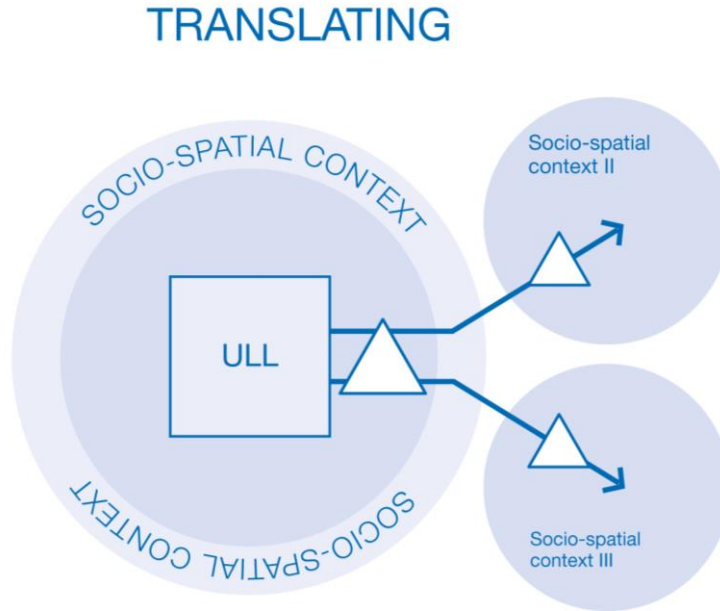


## Understanding Transformation

- Diffusion to other actors
- Diffusion to other locations
- Changing professional norms
- Changing societal norms
- Change in rules and regulations
- Change in public procurement
- ... and others!



# Understanding Transformation



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## Strategies of Living Labs to transform (“Translating”)

- Integrating lab based education into the curricula of local knowledge institutions.
- Training of coordinators to replicate the lab itself or one of the lab innovations as a spin-off in other contexts

*“First, second, third and fourth year students are every year engaged in this project. I think there is a very beautiful and successful curriculum design now.”*

*“The impact on education was good, for instance, in all our University of Applied Science programs on building technologies, it is now a regular part of the bachelor curriculum. “*





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## Strategies of Living Labs to transform (“Embedding”)

- Establishing ULL as part of a new place identity, labs as symbolic sites of change in the city.
- Creating visibility and narratives of sustainability and innovation in an iconic building.

*"The spread would be through both the building and also the economic idea. The space itself, it's part of the transformation."*

*"Part of the concept is that we do everything in this iconic building. That helped these companies to be on the radar, which also helps them finding investors and clients."*







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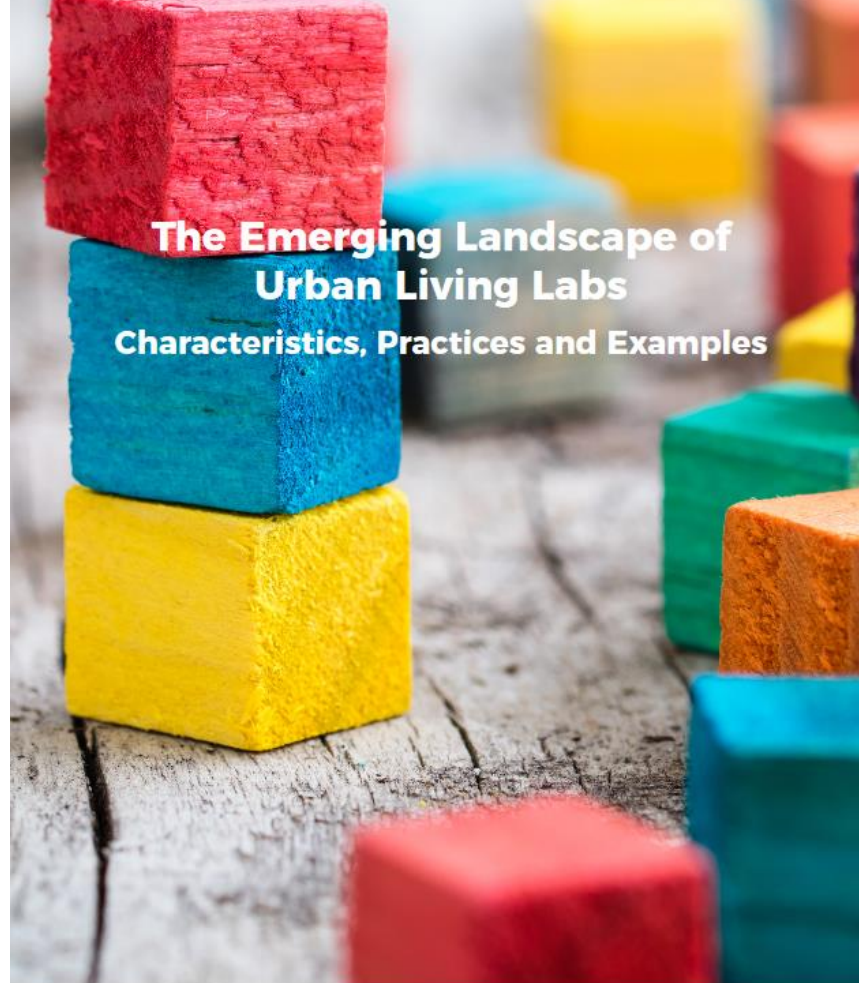
## ULL – Essentials

Envision radically

Embed locally

Experiment collaboratively

Exchange intensively



### The Emerging Landscape of Urban Living Labs Characteristics, Practices and Examples

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## A critical outlook



ULL: the new panacea of  
urban sustainability  
governance?

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## Processes of diffusion out of ULL

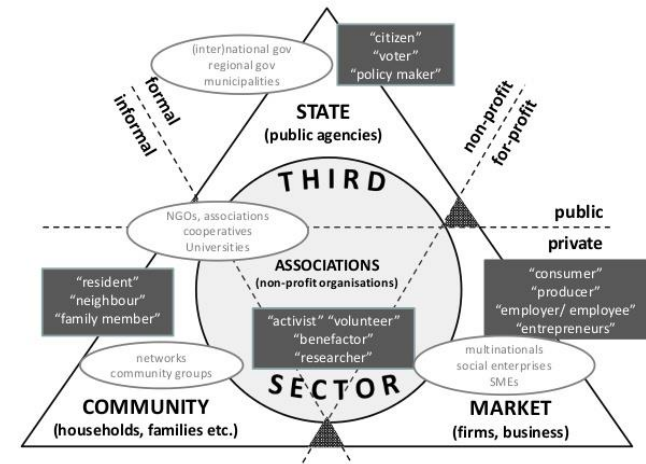
- Acknowledging different socio-spatial contexts
- Be aware of naïve replication across places.





## ULL and urban governance

- ULL promise to leverage participation and inclusive decision-making through collaboration, yet
- **Risk:** experimental governance arrangements bear risk of “*organized irresponsibility*” (Beck, 1998).
- Who is in and who is out of the ULL? Open questions of Agency, Legitimacy, Accountability, Power, Exclusivity
- Linking ULL to top-down decision making, formalized planning and broader urban strategies.

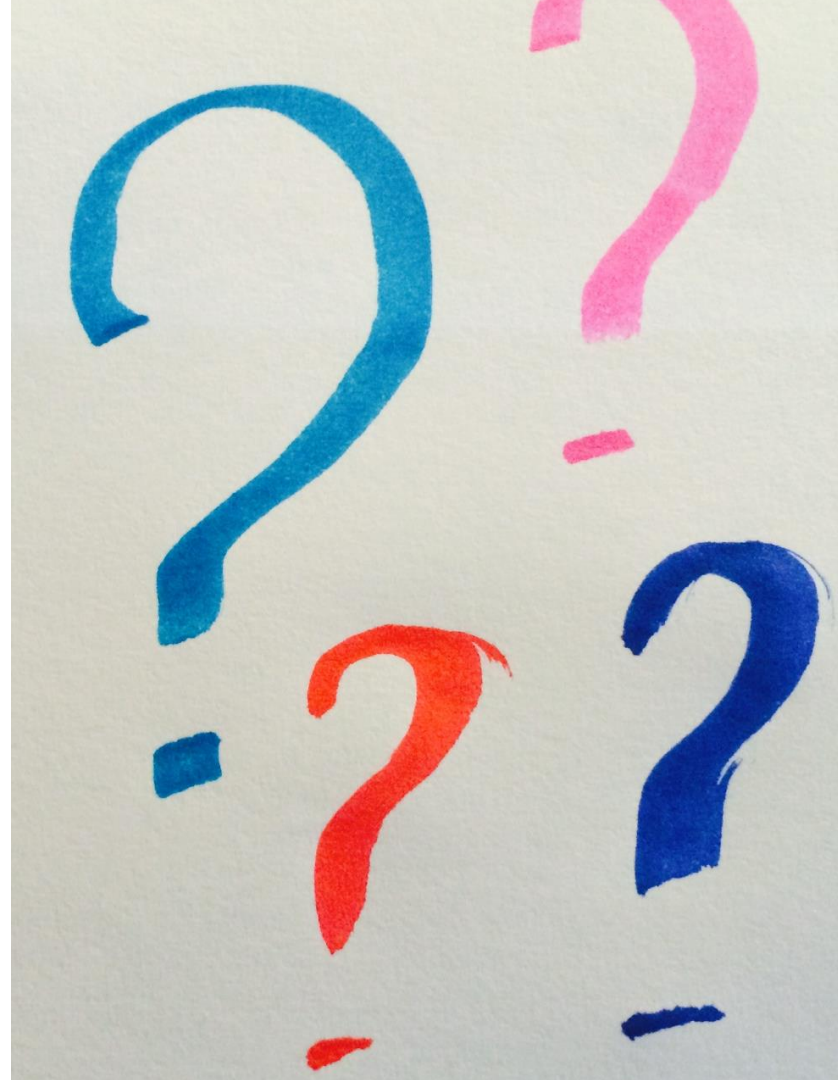


Avelino & Wittmayer 2014, Based on Evers & Laville 2004, Pestoff 1992

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## ULL – Outlook and open questions

- ULL potential for place-making and urban regeneration?
- Capabilities and limitations as an instrument for urban governance.
- Evaluating learning in ULL:  
implications for informal and institutionalized capacity building.



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## Contact



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