

A group of children are gathered in a greenhouse, engaged in a gardening activity. They are wearing winter jackets and are focused on planting small green seedlings into a raised garden bed. The children are holding blue shovels and some are holding pots of soil. The greenhouse has a green mesh covering. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor or covered outdoor environment.

drift for transition

Urban Living Labs

Learning spaces for urban transformation?

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Wien, March 1st 2018

Erasmus



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



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

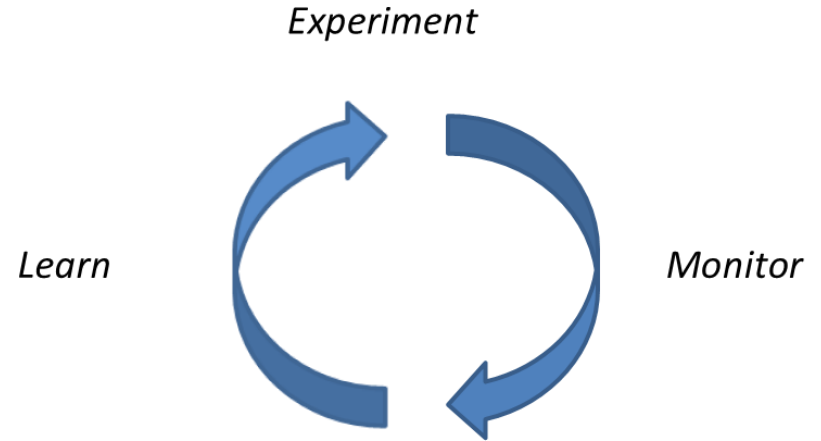
“An institutionally bounded environment (...) to make material **interventions in the city and learn** from them.’

Evans & Karvonen 2014

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

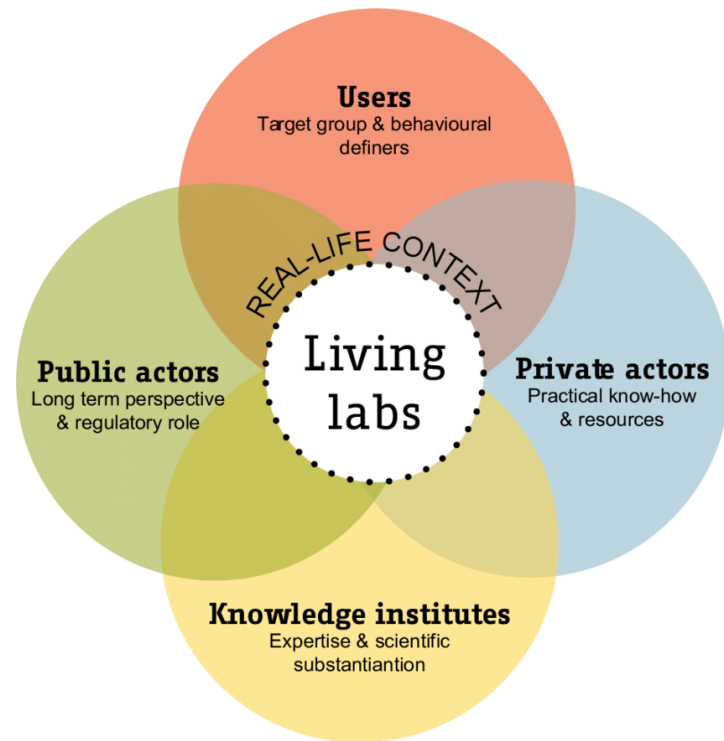


Actionable knowledge: “how to intervene to move towards *possible* sustainability solutions”

(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?**



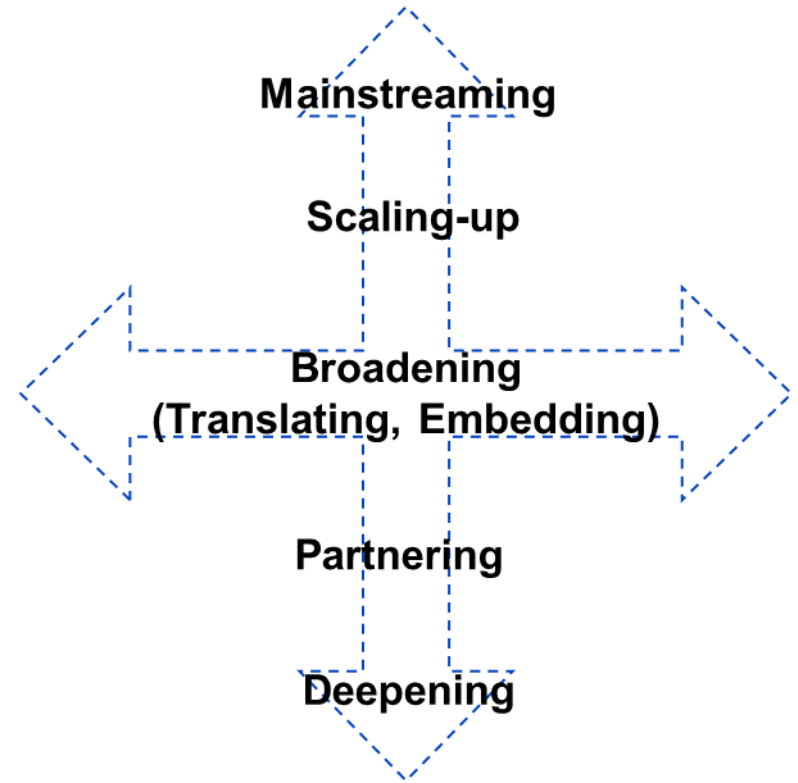
Broader impact to transform?

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

(Evans 2017)

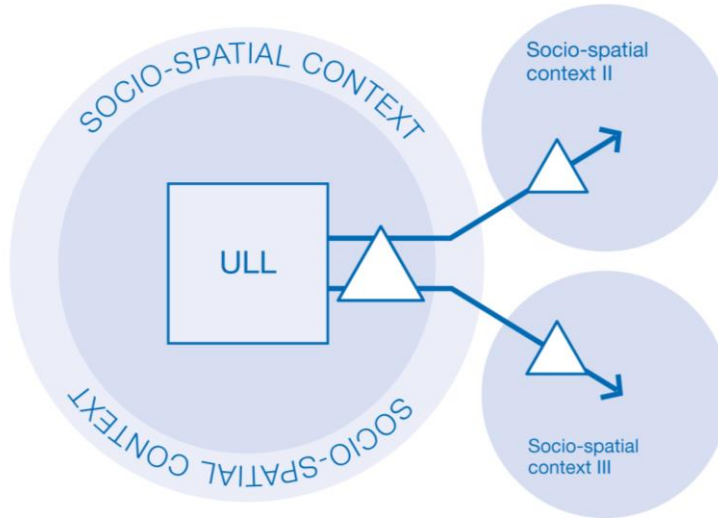
Understanding Transformation

- 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!

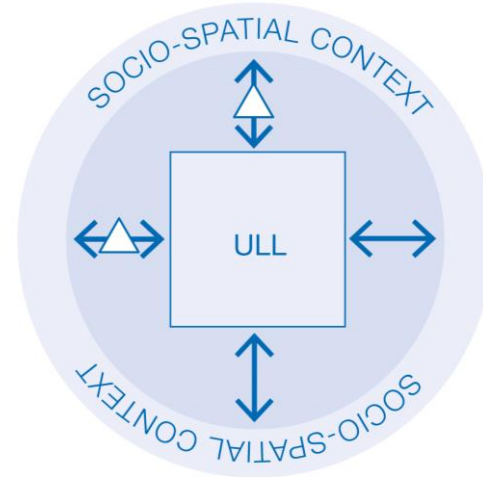


Understanding Transformation

TRANSLATING



EMBEDDING



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.”



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."

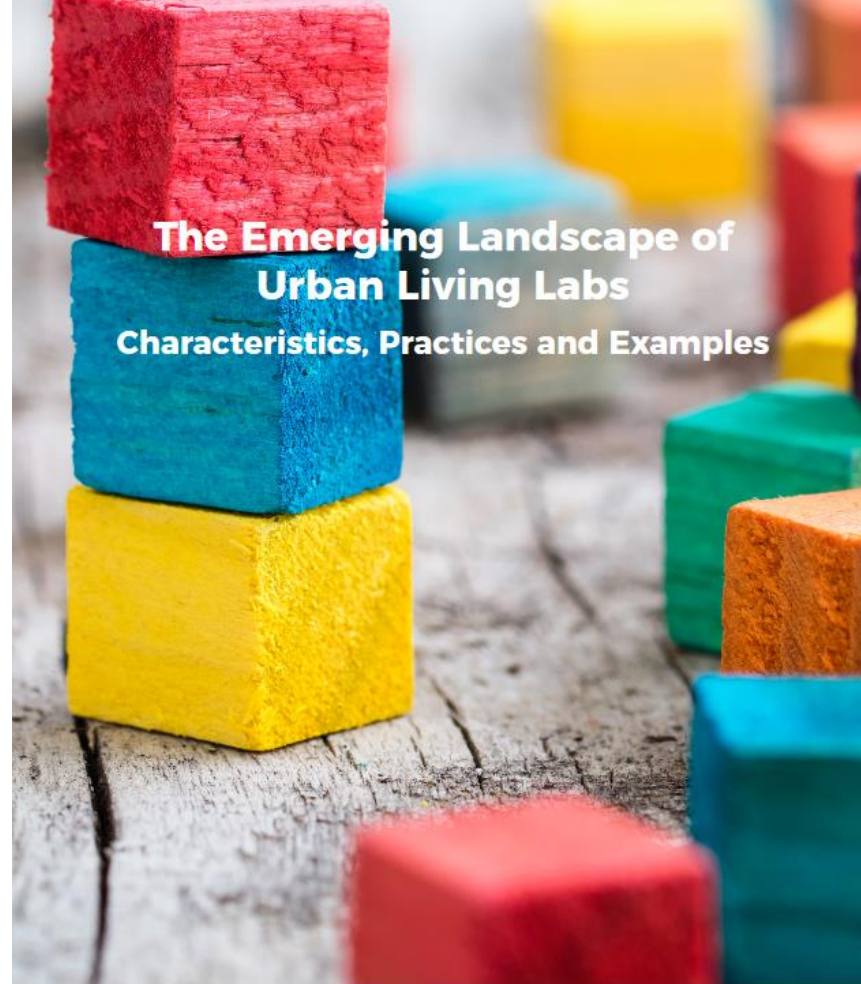
ULL – Essentials

Envision radically

Embed locally

Experiment collaboratively

Exchange intensively



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

A critical outlook

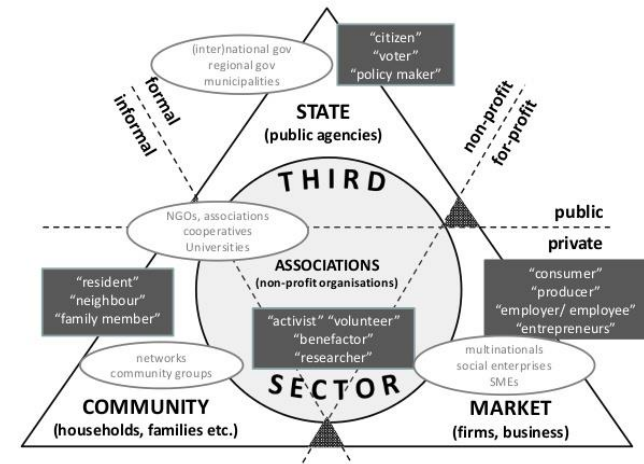
ULL: the new panacea of
urban sustainability
governance?

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

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.

Contact



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