

August 23, 2022

Dear Denise Cahill,

*Abstract ID#9*

We are pleased to inform you that your abstract below has been accepted for the 2022 Annual Business Meeting and Technical Conference! Your abstract will be presented during the parallel sessions as well as included in the Conference Book of Abstracts.

The 2022 Annual Business Meeting and Technical Conference will be a hybrid conference, although we encourage presenters to attend in person if possible. The registration for the conference will open on 1 September 2022 and in your registration, you can indicate how you will participate in the conference – in person in UN City or Online.

Please note that each city and national network in the Healthy Cities Network has a limit to the size of their delegation attending. If you are not a Network Coordinator, we encourage you to contact your Healthy City or National Network Coordinator to share your abstract acceptance and confirm a seat in the delegation.

As we get closer to the conference, we will contact you and ask you to re-submit your final abstract (500 words or less) to be included in the 2022 Book of Abstracts. We will also share the provisional programme, so that you know when your presentation will take place. Please note that you will have a 40 minute workshop/presentation to share your abstract.

Please contact the Healthy Cities Secretariat at [eurohealthycities@who.int](mailto:eurohealthycities@who.int) if you have any questions regarding the 2022 Annual Business Meeting and Technical Conference.

Warm regards,

WHO Healthy Cities Secretariat

**Accepted Abstract:**

- (1) Title: Playful Placemaking as a lever for Healthy Urban Planning
- (2) Context: issue or a problem + policy and organizational context

Through EU funded programme URBACT ('driving change for better cities') Cork became a partner in the Playful Paradigm network led by fellow WHO Healthy City Udine. The Italian city's good practice utilised play as an instrument to facilitate all aspects of sustainable urban development. Both cities had an existing relationship through the WHO Healthy Cities network.

(3) Rationale: reasons for taking the initiative

Cork embraced Udine's example of using the idea of 'play' as a mechanism to stimulate dialogue and collaboration in the city. This began with an open event, focused around the question: "If Cork was playful, what would it look like?" The success of this event was due to effective mobilisation of key stakeholders already engaged with Healthy Cities action in cork City. The novelty of theme of play, combined with the EU dimension, attracted huge interest in the work.

(3) Description: of the case study including methods used, processes, politics and time-frame

Following the piloting of play as a placemaking approach in the city, training was developed during 2020 in an online format to adapt to the remote working environment of the time. Stakeholders across all sectors engaged in play attended 5 sessions over 5 weeks of action based learning for playful placemaking along the River Lee in Cork city. The training sessions stimulated the team to develop a series of actions in 4 locations along the river with a series of events and activities drawing large numbers as well as attention from local politicians, media and national outlets.

(5) Achievements: impact at strategic/operational level, critical success factors and challenges, lessons learnt

Pop Up Play events which focussed on Opening Streets for Play (and closing them to traffic) ultimately led to the permanent pedestrianisation of a 2.5km stretch on the Marina area of the city. Playful placemaking continues to date with national health funding secured to provide play equipment available to borrow from all libraries across the city, Play Leaders to attend community based events and Play in All Festivals incorporated into the broad programme of activities in the city.

The success of approaches in Cork City ultimately led to the development of an Irish Network of Playful Cities and Towns to model the good practice in Cork City at a national level.

(6) Conclusion

Playful placemaking is a great example of an integrated approach, effectively engaging partners across policy areas, whilst at the same time connecting with national health policies and resources.

Cork has successfully engaged stakeholders across policy areas, effectively leveraged resources and found innovative ways to optimise the recent and ongoing effects of the pandemic.

Playful placemaking has helped forge a momentum and energy between the stakeholders that has now led to a national momentum around play in Ireland