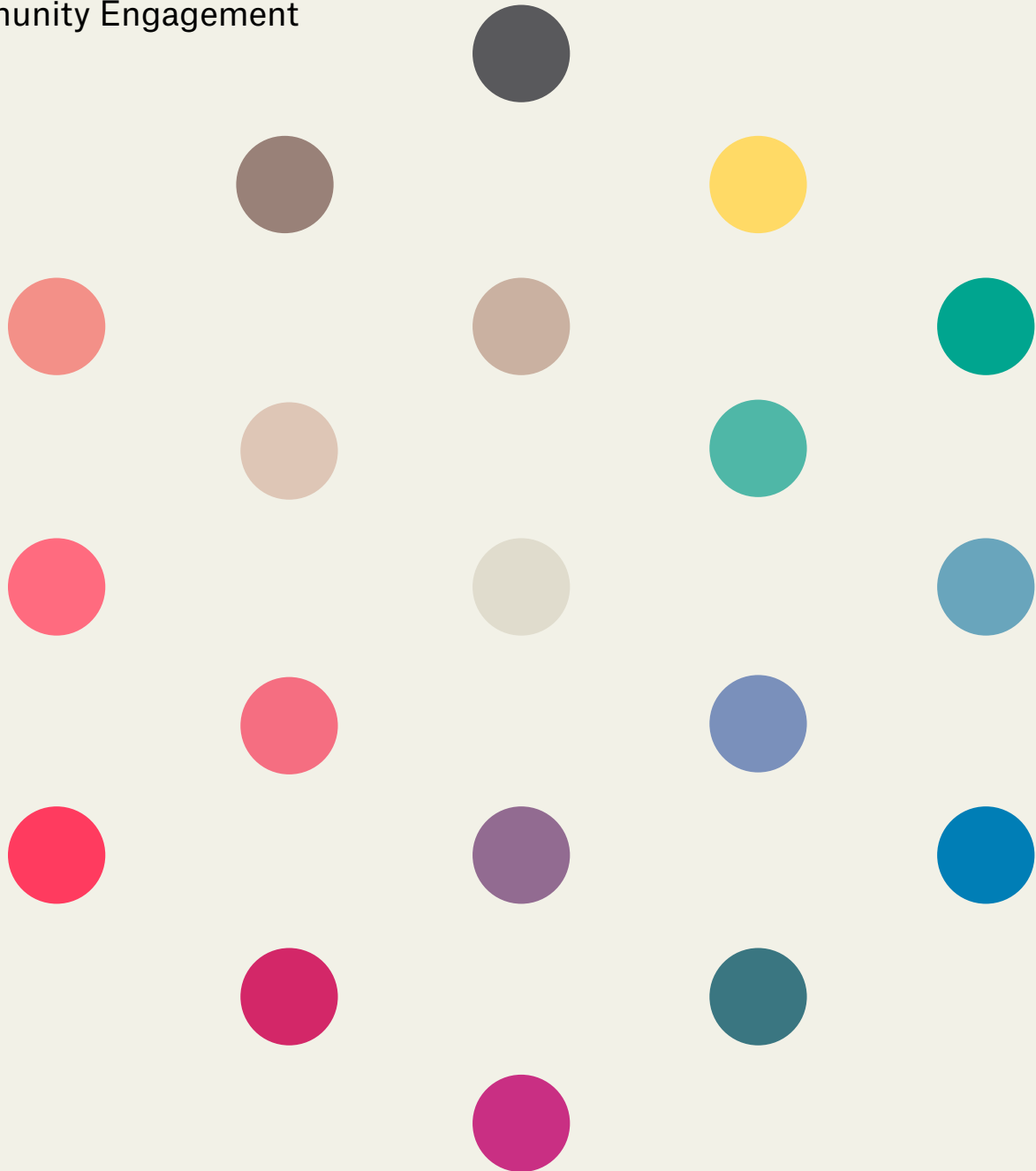# City
Learning Circle
Welcome Packet

A prototype experience
for Social Listening &
Community Engagement

Contents

[1] References to Kosovo in this document shall be understood
to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244
(1999).

1. Welcome & Acknowledgements

• Welcome

It is wonderful to have you join us! Together with four city teams, we're beginning a learning journey that will reach well beyond our core circle. Typically, it's the distant experts creating trainings and manuals for practitioners. **City Learning Circle** *is different. It's practitioners co-designing tools for other practitioners of urban transformation across the region. We are grateful for your willingness to devote your time, mindspace and energy on creating a toolkit for your fellow municipal staff and urban changemakers. We are hoping that this process will bring you learning and relationships that will help you further grow your impact and make your work even more relevant. Now, make yourself comfortable and dive into this welcome packet –already including inputs from all four teams.*

The host team of **UNDP** *and* **ALC**[K] *are very glad to have you join us in this first prototype* **City Learning Circle**!

1. Welcome & Acknowledgements

• Acknowledgements

City Learning Circle is a learning series co-designed and organized jointly by Agirre Lehendakaria Center (**ALCᴷ**) and **UNDP** Regional Center for Europe and Central Asia (RBEC). It has been created as part of Mayors for Economic Growth Facility (M4EG)—a joint initiative of the EU & UNDP. **City Learning Circle** taps into the work of selected cities participating in the **City Experiment Fund** —initiative under the Slovak Transformation Fund, implemented in partnership with the Slovak Ministry of Finance.

This learning circle is created to engage **UNDP** *Country Offices and Municipalities in the* **RBEC** *region in testing out tools for social listening practices for community engagement.*

2. Context & Introduction to City Learning Circle

• What is social listening for community engagement and why does it matter now?

Societies around the world are caught in vicious cycles of distrust which are fueled by governments and media. In many ways and for many reasons that relate in part to shifts in political landscapes, social media incentives, and other parts of information ecologies, it is difficult for communities and societies to listen well to one another, to dialogue, and to understand perspectives of people who have different backgrounds and views and who are navigating the world with polarized assumptions about what is happening and what is true. Societal mistrust is contributing to societal breakdown that shows up in all sorts of ways–from political polarization, to social isolation, to increases in violence and war.

Building cultures of trust and understanding between people and governments begins at the local level and can only be effective when it involves deepening understanding of shifting cultural narratives and alongside commitments to co-creating robust systems of community engagement.

Social listening involves building understanding of collective narratives that are operating in a city or region. The listening is designed to glean patterns of lived experience of people and how it is shaped by underlying values and behaviors, as well as emerging needs, challenges, and opportunities. The understanding enables the interconnection of existing actions and better decision making by governments so that their initiatives can connect within co-created portfolios that address systemic challenges in ways that align with citizens' perceptions and lived experiences. Social Listening processes are designed to be ongoing and iterative processes that create a culture of social innovation and inclusion and thereby better outcomes for the future.
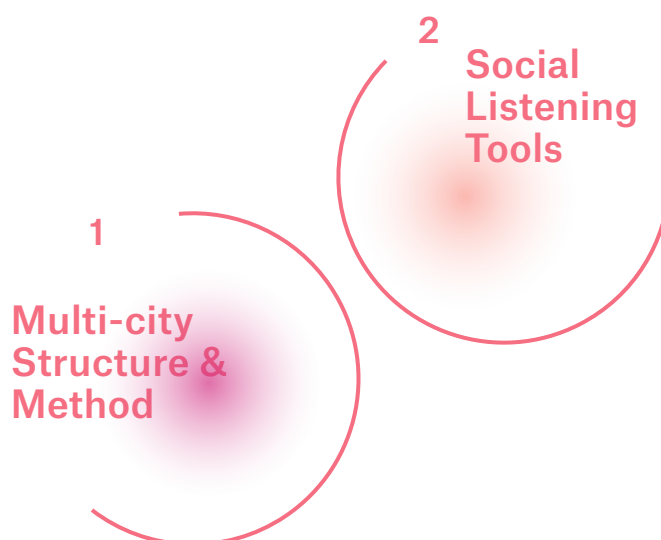
2. Context & Introduction to City Learning Circle

• **What do we want to test with the City Learning Circle?**

There are **two core elements** that we're testing with this prototype:

1. Can the structure and method of a multi-city, transnational **City Learning Circle** provide an effective way to engender peer-to-peer learning and stronger relationships between cities?

2. How can the social listening tools created by **ALCᴷ** be improved and adapted to assist cities in Eastern Europe who want to learn these practices as part of a community engagement system that helps build a culture of trust and social innovation?

2
Social Listening Tools

1
Multi-city Structure & Method

2. Context & Introduction to City Learning Circle

• **What do we want to test with the City Learning Circle?**

The **learning objectives** for **the City Learning Circle** are to:

a. Understand how **Social Listening** with communities can enable more effective co-creation of **People-Powered Portfolios**.

b. Test tools and templates for **Social Listening** with communities.

c. Begin to articulate a **Community Engagement** system or strategy for your city.

d. Help co-create a **Social Listening for Community Engagement** toolkit that can be used by your city and other cities in the region.

a

b

Understanding

Testing

Articulating

Co-creating

c

d
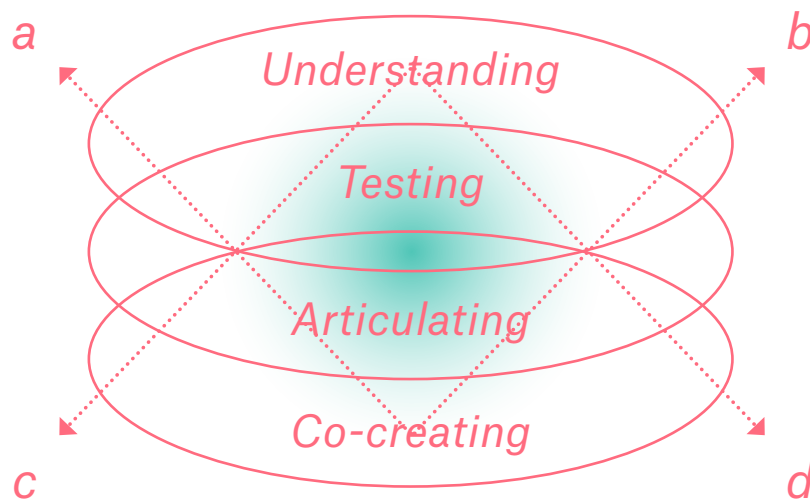
3. Arc of the City Learning Circle: Session Aims, Agendas & Coaching

• Overview of City Learning Circle sessions

Session 1		
6 Oct. 2022	**Intro to Social Listening & Community Engagement**	**Aim:** To learn core concepts of the whole Community Engagement system and specific techniques of Ecosystem Mapping and first level Social Listening and how they can be implemented.

• In between Sessions 1 & 2:
Tool testing & exercises: Ecosystem Mapping & Social Listening (part 1)
Coaching with **ALC**ᴷ

Session 2		
3 Nov. 2022	**Social Listening & Sensemaking**	**Aims: (1)** To deepen learning about Social Listening with tools and techniques as part of designing a Portfolio Approach; and **(2)** To understand how to analyze and carry out Sensemaking of what is heard in listening processes.

• In between Sessions 2 & 3:
Tool testing & exercises: Social Listening (part 2) & Sensemaking (Metanarratives, personas & icebergs)
Coaching with **ALC**ᴷ

Session 3		
1 Dec. 2022	**Co-Creation and Portfolio Design & Management**	**Aims: (1)** To understand Co-Creation as a collective and creative ideation process for design of People-Powered Portfolios and prototyping of new responses to complex challenges; and **(2)** To share the basics of portfolio management.

3. Arc of the City Learning Circle: Session Aims, Agendas & Coaching

Community Engagement

Community Engagement consists of processes and enabling systems in which residents are involved in sharing, working and learning together to create visions and initiatives that lead to better, more inclusive futures. Community Engagement that embeds a social listening system has the potential to increase social cohesion and community resilience to strengthen relationships between residents to make everyday life better, and so that people are more equipped to work together in times of crisis. Community engagement systems (sometimes called social innovation platforms) provide collaborative spaces for creation of new tools to understand social dynamics and perceptions in greater depth. Community engagement has the power to build legitimacy, collective intelligence, and ideally, collective wisdom with transformation capabilities.

Ecosystem Mapping

(Ecosystem) Mapping is the compilation of information on key initiatives and agents operating in the territory. That is, knowledge about the general ecosystem of the municipality and also about the strengths and weaknesses of the current connection of existing projects. The ultimate goal is to frame them in a structured portfolio that establishes a common system for innovation activities in all sectors. Ecosystem Mapping sometimes has a focus on a particular topic or challenge/possibility area, e.g. food systems, mobility, public space, housing, or immigration.

3. Arc of the City Learning Circle: Session Aims, Agendas & Coaching

• Definitions

Social Listening

Social Listening involves a set of qualitative tools that, when complemented with quantitative data, can unravel a community's narratives and reveal in-depth needs, challenges and opportunities. As well as identifying the community's narratives, the listening process also gives potential ideas for dealing with these needs and opportunities. It is precisely these discoveries that connect the listening process to co-creation and prototyping. Through the Listening process we identify a diverse range of narratives, which are patterns of subjective perceptions and experiences that people and communities have about their own lives. These narratives decisively influence what is believed to be possible or can or cannot be achieved, and can even determine the success or failure of the socio-economic initiatives put in place for the transformation of the territory.

Sensemaking

Sensemaking can be described as a collective interpretation of the information generated by the systems mapping and the social listening process. The Municipality, UNDP, public institutions, corporates and civil society organizations take part in the process, and it materializes in sessions (repeated over time) where to bring the results obtained through the listening process: narratives, metanarratives and profiles, so it can be legitimized and completed collectively.

3. Arc of the City Learning Circle: Session Aims, Agendas & Coaching

• Definitions

Co-Creation

Co-creation is a process by which ideas, solutions, and responses to challenges are developed collaboratively. Within the Community Engagement framework, co-creation is the mechanism to identify interconnected initiatives and potential prototypes, which usually fit into one of the five areas of impact: Community actions, Entrepreneurship actions, Large-scale actions, Public service actions or New regulation. Achieving an impact at all levels requires working on co-creation of the greatest number of solutions and the largest number and widest variety of stakeholders possible. The creation and strengthening of relational and organizational networks or, in other words, connecting people from the community with one another and with other stakeholders, is also a desirable and important result of the co-creation process.

People-Powered Portfolios / Portfolio Approach

The iterative elements in the process enable municipalities to move from traditional and linear innovation logics to complex systems change logics with a portfolio of interconnected initiatives, co-created communities. The portfolio approach of interconnected solutions and initiatives allows us to build a strategy of sustainability of the proposed solutions that demonstrate positive results, as it connects existing investments and will attract existing or new players interested in experimenting with integrated approaches.

3. Arc of the City Learning Circle: Session Aims, Agendas & Coaching

• Session Agendas

City Learning Circle sessions on October 6, November 3, and December 1

Each of the three **City Learning Circle** sessions on **October 6, November 3, and December 1** will be held via Zoom and will be 2 hours and 45 minutes long, and will include time for two 15-minute breaks. Sessions will have formats of brief presentations in plenary, sharing of practical experience from cities that have carried out Social Listening, Prishtina and Stepanavan, and breakout rooms for small group discussions. Following are the high-level agendas for each session, as well as tools, exercises and resources. The tools and exercises will be explained during the sessions, and **ALC**[K] team members will be available for coaching in between sessions as cities work on testing the tools in their local contexts.

3. Arc of the City Learning Circle: Session Aims, Agendas & Coaching

• Session Agendas

Session 1: October 6, 13h-16h CET
Introduction to Social Listening & Community Engagement

A. Welcome, introductions, overview presentation: why are we here?

B. Why, what and how of Ecosystem Mapping; city teams choose a challenge or topic of focus.

C. What is the value of Social Listening and how to get started?

Tools:

1. Ecosystem mapping

2. ALC's Angélica's templates (Adobe Illustrator)

3. Other tools

4. Guide for quick chats

5. Kumu (an online software tool)

Mapping Exercise for in between sessions

Quick chat Exercise for in between sessions

Readings

3. Arc of the City Learning Circle: Session Aims, Agendas & Coaching

• Session Agendas

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Session 2: November 3, 13h - 16h CET
Social Listening & Sensemaking

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A. How did the tool testing go? Recap and assess.

B. What are the various Social Listening tools and approaches? Which are best-suited to our city's challenge or topic of focus?

C. What is the value of Collective Sensemaking? How to analyze listening data to understand community narratives? Explanation of pattern finding, personas, and icebergs.

Tools:

1. Icebergs and personas
2. Observation tools

Exercises for in between sessions
Readings

3. Arc of the City Learning Circle: Session Aims, Agendas & Coaching

• Session Agendas

Session 3: December 1, 13h - 16h CET
Co-Creation and Portfolio Design & Management

A. How did the tool testing go? Recap and assess.
B. Prishtina & Stepanavan: group work on Sensemaking and Co-Creation; Ivano-Frankivsk & Kamianets-Podilskyi: group work on narrative patterns, ice-bergs and personas
C. The what, why, and how of Co-Creation and Portfolio Design & Management

Tools

The last session will close with an explanation of next steps, including how cities can further their Social Listening practices with assistance of the Toolkit, to be completed early 2023.

Coaching sessions with ALC^K:
Was anything unclear in the group Sessions? Need help with tools testing and exercises? City team members can sign up for coaching sessions with **ALC^K** in between sessions for mentoring and tailored assistance with tools testing and exercises. We have used the Calendly scheduler for teams to sign up for coaching times. Please follow this link to sign up for coaching in between Sessions 1 & 2, and in between Sessions 2 & 3. If those times do not work for you or if you have trouble scheduling, please contact Laura (**laura@agirrecenter.eus**) or Jayne (**jayne.engle@mcgill.ca**).

4. Co-creating a Social Listening & Community Engagement Toolkit

At the completion of the **City Learning Circle**, based on experiences, learnings, challenges, testing and iteration with participant teams, we will produce the **Social Listening Toolkit**, which will be designed as a living guide that can be adapted over time. The aim is to develop a deep community engagement framework and deep listening toolkit for the wider group of municipalities for a continuous community engagement and integration of the engagement tools in their daily work. The prototype of the Toolkit will generate the community listening and sensemaking infrastructure that will allow **UNDP** intervention to incorporate an integrated platform and portfolio approach in the region. It will take up on the listening work that **ALC**[K] conducted both in Armenia and Kosovo under CEF II and continue with this layer on the **City Learning Circle**.

The toolkit will include the co-designed deep community engagement framework and tools for ecosystem mapping, social listening, sensemaking, co-creation and their applicability to urban contexts in the Europe and Central Asia region. It will also include step-by-step guidelines, a menu of tools to process information at different levels of depth, a series of listening criteria, as well as case studies (long and short versions) among other resources. All based on the curriculum from **City Learning Circle** and the codesign along the process and informed by **ALC**[K] learning and testing in other contexts with communities around the world.
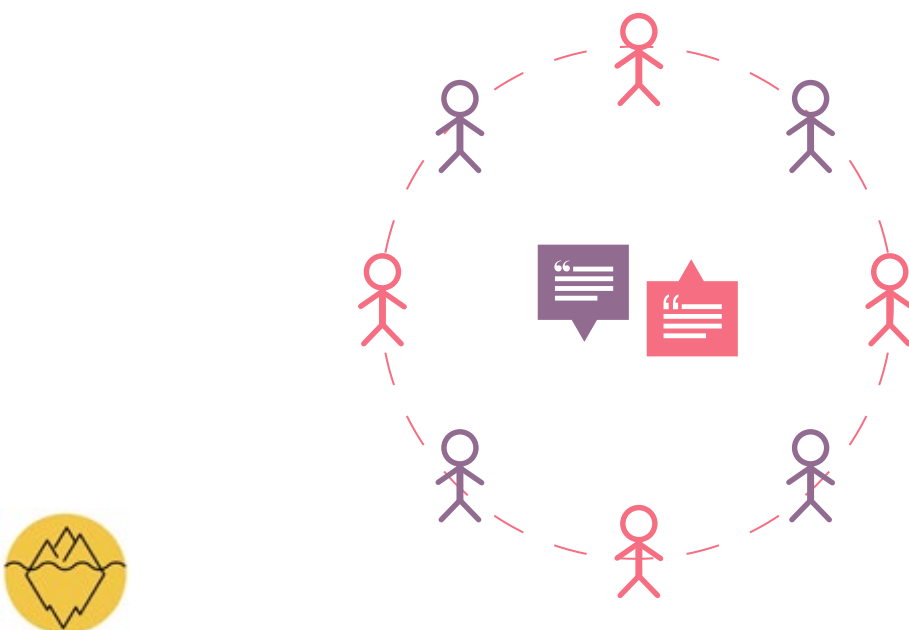
5. Meet the Participants and Their Cities

Curious about the other teams taking part in the **City Learning Circle** and the contexts they're working in? Read on! The following pages provide introductions to the participants and cities of this first **City Learning Circle**. The information came from participants themselves via the google form survey, and in some cases the hosts have edited to provide more consistent information across the cities. Please note that many responses are based more on personal perspectives of participants and do not necessarily represent an official position of a municipality.

Concerning some of the opinion-based survey questions, below are some quotes from participants (not attributed to individuals) and some patterns across responses.

What are your motivations and hopes for taking part in the City Learning Circle?

A sampling of individual responses:

—*"I have an urban planning and development role in the municipality and have both a professional and moral obligation to prioritize improving public space with people. This is also my personal conviction based on educational and lived experience in the city."*

—*"To understand what kind of paradigms other cities have used or will apply to improve quality of life for their residents, and to learn about different mindsets and cultural contexts for carrying out this work."*

—*"I attach great importance to the dynamic development of our community, and with additional knowledge I can be useful to that process."*

—*"As a representative of the non-state sector and an active citizen, I am interested in community development programs."*

5. Meet the Participants and Their Cities

—"In the processes of social development (and in general), in the processes of solving community problems at the local level, I highly value participatory decision-making and the involvement of citizens."
—"I am also interested in non-formal education: education is a continuous process, and in the context of geopolitical developments, it is necessary to be constantly educated in order to face modern challenges and solve existing problems."
—"Move towards our vision of a small city with big opportunities."
—"My work involves active communication with people and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in decision making process.
—"Acquired skills will help me carry out my daily work more effectively."
—"I am convinced that this training will help me to acquire knowledge to successfully cooperate with key stakeholders and jointly elaborate necessary initiatives for the further development of our wonderful city."

What are your motivations and hopes for taking part in the City Learning Circle?

Patterns across multiple responses:
—To learn more clearly what are perceptions and experiences of local communities and stakeholders.
—To strengthen trust with city residents.
—To learn about, share, and discuss social listening experiences of other cities, including internationally, as well as new approaches for communicating what is heard.

5. Meet the Participants and Their Cities

—To get specific tasks, implement them in the community for testing purposes, present to those with expertise and experience, talk about lessons learned, get professional advice.

—To learn how to use new tools, increase my and our team's capabilities, and improve more targeted services in my daily work.

—To support the development of civil society in our community and solving problems at the local level.

—To learn from guest speakers and those with experience and expertise who can best represent and give practical advice to participants, as well as provide a source of motivation.

—To learn new methods and skills that will help increase my cognitive and emotional intelligence.

—To create an effective model of social listening for our community that can then be implemented.

Do you have any concerns?

Patterns across multiple responses:

—I am fairly new to the municipality and young in my profession so have a lot to learn and may be more of a listener.

—Time commitment: I am concerned I won't be able to attend all meetings.

—I have zoom fatigue and can get easily distracted in online meetings.

—I'm concerned I won't have an opportunity to apply what I've learned.

5. Meet the Participants and Their Cities

For you what is meant by 'social listening'?

One response that encapsulates well the essence of what several people expressed:
—*"In my opinion social listening is the organization of a proper communicative process in which representatives of different parts of the population, civil institutions, business representatives, etc. can participate in order to implement an effective response mechanism and build an appropriate development strategy."*

The following pages introduce you to the City Learning Circle participants and their contexts.

✸ Prishtina, Kosovo

✸ Stepanavan, Armenia

✸ Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

✸ Kamianets-Podilskyi, Ukraine

6. Communications

• **Communicating with hosts and other teams between sessions**

The first point of contact for each city team is their **UNDP** Country Office.

If city teams would like to contact **ALCᴷ** directly in between sessions regarding coaching, they can contact **laura@agirrecenter.eus**. The core team of **UNDP** and **ALCᴷ** will communicate primarily via Teams chat.

• **Communicating on social media**

Throughout the **City Learning Circle** program, feel free to share your insights, key takeaways, and other highlights from the journey on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok and any other platforms. You can include the following social media handles: **Please see overview of handles to be used here:**

https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOzNwIqc=/?moveToWidget=3458764525829501149&cot=14

7. What Happens Next?

Based on testing of tools and learning during the **City Learning Circle**, we will finalize the Social Listening Toolkit, which will provide resources for participant cities and others to use. The tools will be open source and accessible on **ALC**'s new web site, and will be ready early 2023. We will be glad to credit city teams for their contributions to tool testing and learning!

Here is what's ahead for M4EG:

> Urban Learning Center (ULC, 2023) - space for learning for all members of the Mayors for Economic Growth Network. The ULC will be launched at the end of 2022. The Community Engagement Framework and Social Listening Toolkit will be made available under the ULC and translated as needed to relevant languages.

> Peer2Peer support: the participating cities/towns under the City Learning Circle, if interested, may be asked to help roll-out a training of trainers or other activities to support sister municipalities who are interested in testing the Toolkit.

> 2023 Open Calls for participation in funding and learning opportunities, in particular in complexity-based approaches (more info will follow in early 2023).

> The Social Listening Toolkit will form an integral part of other ongoing programmes under the M4EG, including the Portfolio Journey, EU Response & Renewal Programme for Moldova and Ukrainian local authorities, and the new generation Local Economic Development Plans (LEDP), called SYNCH.