

MAL Grójecka 109



1. OVERVIEW

Title of the Practice:	MAL Grójecka 109
Location:	Warsaw
Country:	<input type="checkbox"/> Poland
Scale:	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbourhood level
Website / Contact:	https://www.facebook.com/MALGrojecka109/?locale=pl_PL
Status (as of 2026):	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

Context:
MAL Grójecka 109 is a local activity center in Warsaw's Ochota district, providing a community space for residents to meet, organize workshops, events, and work on local initiatives.

Fundamental rights and freedoms addressed: (from the EU Charter)

Relevant families of fundamental rights and freedoms (max 3):	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-discrimination
	<input type="checkbox"/> Equality between women and men
	<input type="checkbox"/> Freedom of assembly and association

Keywords:

Typologies of participation (max 3):

- PARTICIPATION: Community empowerment**
- PARTICIPATION: Collective cultural expression**
- PARTICIPATION: Inclusive**

Details: The center's program is primarily shaped by its community members, offering a wide array of free, inclusive activities aimed at fostering neighborly integration across all generations. Specific offerings often include creative workshops, cultural events like book clubs and intercultural evenings, and physical activities including (ex. open dance practices).

Governance model (max 1):

- GOVERNANCE: Public management**

Details: The organizational structure of the Grójecka 109 MAL does not function as an independent entity. It operates as a branch (filia) of the Ośrodek Kultury Ochoty (OKO), which is its primary, overarching managing body. The OKO is a larger cultural institution for the Ochota district located at Grójecka 75. Operationally, the specific site at 109 is managed by a dedicated Team of animators and staff responsible for daily activities, event coordination, and community engagement. The working model itself emphasizes openness and shared responsibility, actively encouraging residents to act as co-creators and co-hosts of the space, which promotes a flat management approach rather than a rigid, top-down hierarchy.

Field(s) of activity (max 3):

- ACTIVITY: Arts and culture**
- ACTIVITY: Education (non formal or informal)**
- ACTIVITY: Sports**

Details:

- * Community Integration & Socializing: This covers efforts to connect neighbors by organising intercultural evenings, specific language clubs, all aimed at building local bonds.
- * Creative & Manual Workshops: The center regularly hosts hands-on sessions focused on arts, crafts, and practical skills, appealing to all age groups.
- * Culture & Education: Educational initiatives include book clubs, study support sessions for students, and various knowledge-sharing events.
- * Physical Activity & Wellbeing: The space provides opportunities for movement, notably open dance practices (such as tango) and general wellness sessions.

Typology of space (max 3):

- TYPE: Physical space**
- TYPE: Reused/repurposed building**
- TYPE: Permanent**

Details: The MAL Grójecka 109 is situated in a distinctive, standalone pavilion located in an open urban square known locally as "Plac pod Skrzydłami" (Square Under the Wings). The building itself is relatively small, which contributes to its cozy, intimate atmosphere. The interior is characterized by its flexible, multi-functional design, easily adaptable to host a diverse range of activities, from quiet book clubs and workshops to dance practices and community meals. This design choice fosters an open, accessible environment intended to encourage local residents to drop in and utilize the space freely.

Network of participating actors:

Promoter(s) or initiator(s):	Coordinators, Residents, OKO employees
Target group(s):	All residents of Warsaw's Ochota district

Contributor(s)...

Role(s)	Details
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributors (adding content/value/resources)	MAL coordinators,
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributors (adding content/value/resources)	Institution managers
<input type="checkbox"/> Active users (living the civic space actively)	Citizens initiating activities, neighbors
<input type="checkbox"/> Active users (living the civic space actively)	Citizens wishing to participate in activities

Funding entity(ies)...	
Nature/features	Details
<input type="checkbox"/> Public	Budget of the Ochota District of Warsaw: This is the main source of funding. The operations of the MAL are implemented within the budget of the Ośrodek Kultury Ochoty (OKO), which is an organizational unit subordinate to the district self-government. These funds cover the costs of building maintenance, staff salaries, utilities, and basic program implementation.
<input type="checkbox"/> Public	Subsidies and Grants: OKO (or partners operating within the MAL) may obtain additional funds from external sources, such as: The City of Warsaw Office (e.g., from the Integrated Revitalization Program). European funds (within specific projects). The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (as part of grant competitions). Other foundations or institutions supporting the development of local communities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Private/citizens	Donations on the occasion of events
2. NARRATIVE	
Why / How it started	The establishment of MAL Grójecka 109 was a direct result of a participatory community process in the Ochota district of Warsaw. The initiative began with social consultations where residents expressed a need for an open, accessible space for local activities and integration. The city government and the Ośrodek Kultury Ochoty (OKO) responded by allocating the previously existing pavilion on Plac pod Skrzydłami for this purpose. The space was officially opened as a Local Activity Center on December 16, 2017, marking the start of its mission to foster neighborly relations and provide a free, flexible venue for residents to realize their own ideas and initiatives.
How it is managed	The MAL Grójecka 109 is not a legally independent organization; its management structure is integrated within a larger municipal cultural institution. The center is managed and operated as a branch (filia) of the Ośrodek Kultury Ochoty (OKO), which is the main cultural body for the Ochota district of Warsaw. The OKO provides the administrative, legal, and core financial structure. Operational Team: The day-to-day operations are run by a dedicated, on-site team of coordinators and community animators. This small team is responsible for scheduling, facilitating activities, coordinating with residents who want to host events, and maintaining the space. Community Co-Management: The management philosophy is highly collaborative and non-hierarchical. A core aspect of the MAL model is shared ownership; residents are actively encouraged to become "co-hosts" and "co-creators." Management focuses on enabling community initiatives rather than just top-down programming. They primarily facilitate residents using the space freely to realize their own ideas and projects.
Links to Civic Space Dimensions	Freedom of Assembly & Association: The MAL fundamentally is a physical space dedicated to the right of assembly. Its core purpose is to provide a neutral "third place" where residents can spontaneously associate, meet, organize, and pursue common interests (e.g., forming a parents' club, a tango practice group, or local action groups) without needing a formal permission process. The city provides the infrastructure so that association can happen freely. Non-discrimination and Inclusivity: The target audience is all residents, explicitly focusing on intergenerational integration and inclusivity. This directly embodies the principle of non-discrimination, ensuring that marginalized or less powerful groups have equal access to civic life and expression in their neighborhood.
Other information:	MAL Grójecka 109 is a model example of urban infrastructure that supports social capital, trust, and civic activity in Warsaw.
3. REFERENCES	
Media profiles of the Practice:	https://www.facebook.com/MALGrojecka109/?locale=pl_PL https://oko.com.pl/filia/mal-grojecka-109
Publications, articles, media posts about the Practice:	https://www.spoldzielnia.waw.pl/organization/organization_profile/121 https://wiesci.waw.pl/mal-grojecka-109-osrodek-kultury-ochoty/ https://waw4free.pl/wydarzenie-129380-gwiazdka-sasiedzka