



creative **Clusters**
in low density urban areas

Barnsley **Óbidos** Reggio Emilia Hódmezővásárhely Mizil INTELI Enguera Viareggio Jyväskylä Catanzaro

from **creative** industries to the creative place

an abstract from the URBACT project baseline report

A vision for the next ten years considers creativity as one of the engines for economic growth in cities and regions.

“Creative industries must move from the margins to the mainstream of economic and policy thinking”. *Creative Britain - New Talents for the New Economy* [2008].

The creative issue is already re-shaping many local agendas in economic development

... and increasingly creative issues in local economic development are also appearing as a functional pattern outside the context of the main urban hubs and core cities.

This is a main added value of this URBACT project.

To transfer the “creative city model” to low-density urban areas. In other words, to transfer a range of so far considered urban attributes [accessibility, cultural life, tech. facilities, competitive clusters, global networking...] to middle-sized and small towns.

This is relevant at EU level because we are going to explore the capacity of the creative issue to impulse a sort of **leapfrogging in terms of social and economic development for small and midsize towns**, as well as an excellent opportunity to re-think rural development.

In this framework “low-density urban areas” will match with: i) the OCED concept of “intermediate region”; and ii) the remoteness / proximity duality, in fact accessibility to a main urban hub.

Combining both criteria, the **intermediate regions close to a main urban hub account the 36% of population of the EU27.**

PEOPLE | *CREATIVE CLASS*

People who work on arts, music, entertainment, culture... but also in science, engineering, architecture, design... in this context, the notion of **creative entrepreneurs** is emerging.

Increasingly cities and regions are competing to **attract and retain not only companies but talents.**

Elisa Seravalli. Reggio Emilia
Free-lance artist and entrepreneur
on video design



ECONOMY | *CREATIVE INDUSTRIES*

The concept of creative industries is broader than cultural industries, embracing activities with a significant creative and innovative component: ICTs, fashion, design, video, photography, computer games, software, architecture, visual arts, advanced services, etc.

It is a kind of common field where creative individuals, managers and technologists can meet together.

This kind of clusters are a **powerful source of innovation that in most cases remains 'hidden' at the light of traditional indicators** [see NESTA, 2008, Hidden Innovation in Creative Clusters]. Creative activities usually act as a more relevant actor diffusing innovation than we think. It has important **consequences in term of spatial development**.

PLACES | *CREATIVE CITIES*

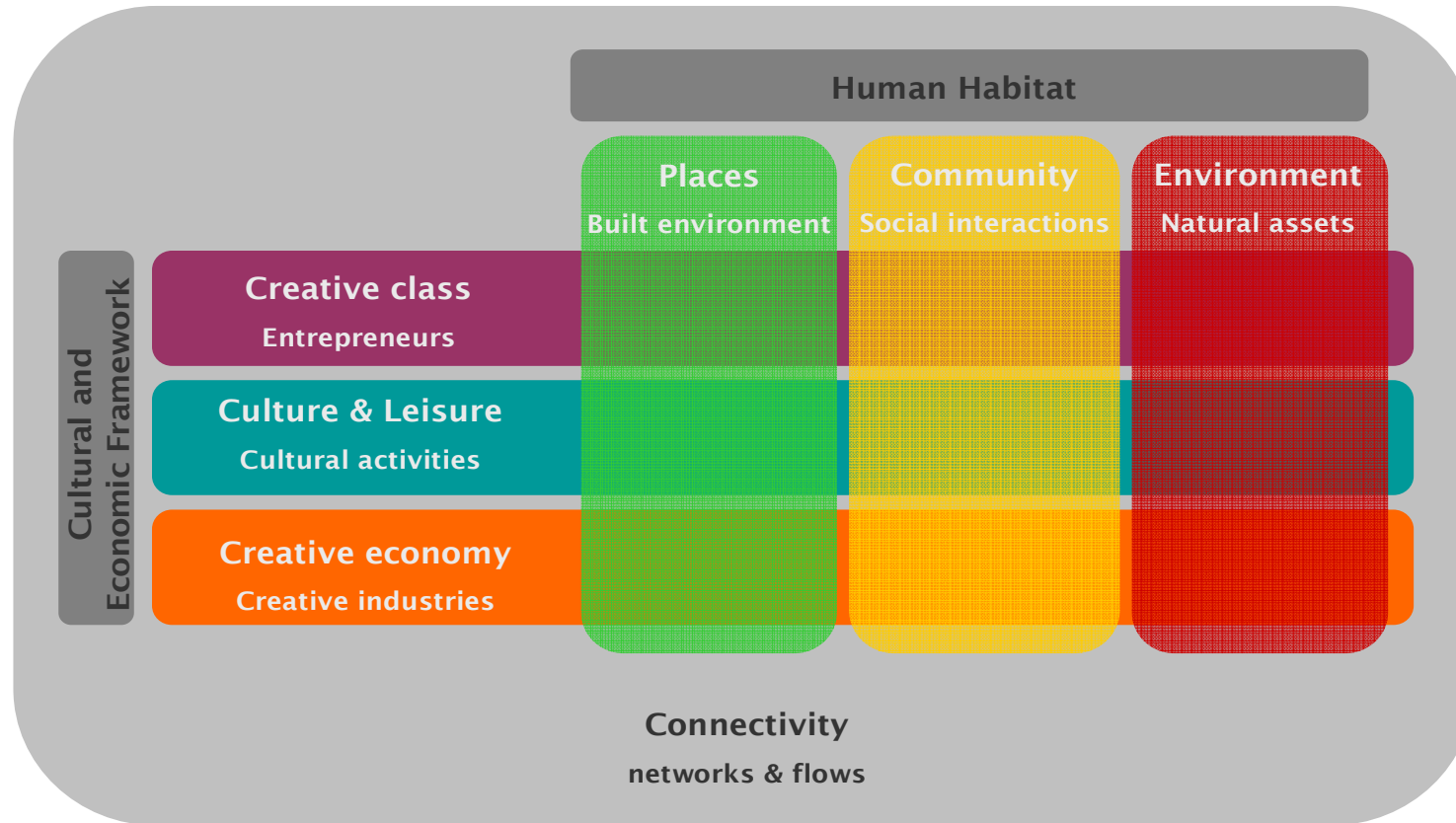
The nexus of competitive advantage shifts to those places that can generate, retain and attract the talent. This assumption, rapidly diffused due to the successful work of Richard Florida, has re-shaped many agendas in urban economic development, especially in the OECD context.

However, we should take care about approaching the Florida ideas in a simplistic way. Nobody can take the “three T model” as a truly urban theory, but as an inspiring idea to refresh urban policy.

Warning:

dealing with creativity as a cross cutting approach is much more than a label

Creative clusters in low density urban areas | The model



PROMOTING LOCAL CREATIVE ENVIRONMENTS IN LOW DENSITY URBAN AREAS

Source: adapted from INTELI, 2008

01 CREATIVE CLUSTERS: DIVERSIFYING LOCAL ECONOMIC BASE & OPPORTUNITIES TO YOUNG PEOPLE

A new cluster reading of the local economy to: i) identify and impulse **new emergent realities** [eg. Reggio Emilia and Barnsley on new media clusters]; ii) and/or activate **new growth potential for existing mature industries** [eg. Mizil, Enguera in eco-tourism or Hódmezővásárhely in ceramics].

02 EVENTS AND CULTURAL AGENDAS AS CATALYSTS

To blur the limits between the cultural and the economic development policies at the urban scale.

Keep pressure on the improvement of the cultural life and agenda.

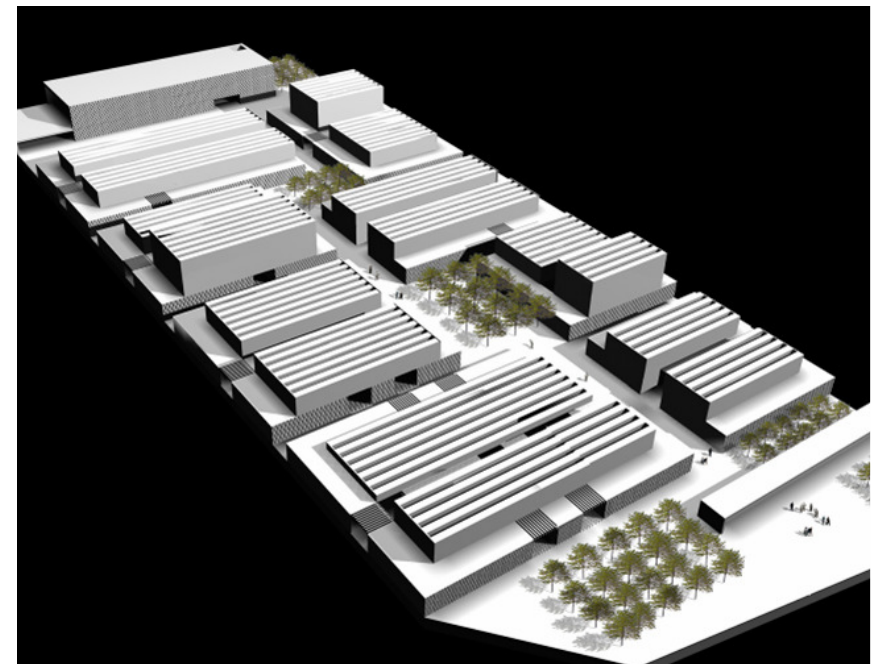
Sometimes a strategy is the promotion of a creative event, with high credibility, that quickly expands through the word-of-mouth.

03 PROMOTING THE CREATIVE CITY: A NEW RANGE OF FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURES

The enhancing of cultural life and the emergence of new creative clusters demands **a new generation of business and city facilities**, even a new kind of urban public spaces:

Facilities to creative businesses and entrepreneurs: art incubators, artists' residencies, business centres in “inspiring sites” [old industrial buildings]...

Approaching city centres or deprived central areas as creative hubs or cultural districts. The mix of land-uses is crucial as opposite to past zoning schemes.



04 CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS AND TALENTED PEOPLE: ATTRACTION AND RETAINING

A+R of talent is a key issue not just in business management but also in urban development

- Attract smart companies who attract talented people.
- Attract creative entrepreneurs.

Specific support measures to creative entrepreneurs [there is a role to play by the local level]

- Tax reductions, real estate facilities and other measures organized in “welcome packages”.
- Financial tools covering intangible assets.
- Support to networking activities and the creation of economies of scope.
- Support to the recruitment of skilled labor force in the companies.
- Venture capital systems or effective linkages to business angels.

Branding the creative place: a link within a creativity-based local strategy not a mere label.

Branding should be aimed at the production of a new visibility of the city, a sort of re-thinking the local identity.

05 SETTING THE BASIS: CREATIVE EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS AT LOCAL LEVELS

A finding from the Development phase:

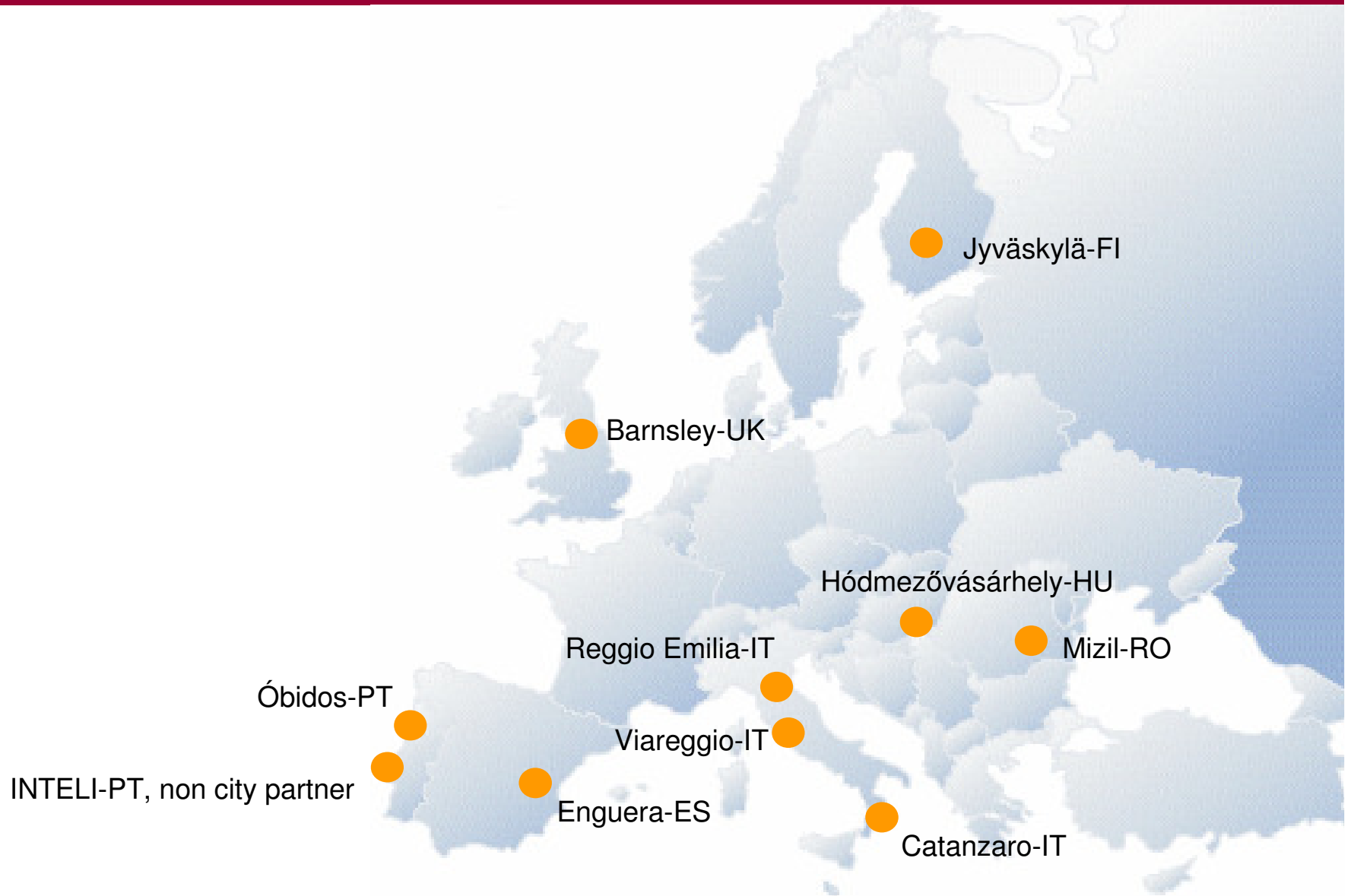
Cities approaching seriously the creative paradigm are displaying innovative and creative local education systems in primary and secondary levels. They are **incubating the local talented people of the future.**

Reggio Emilia is a benchmark at World level, but also Óbidos or Barnsley are active introducing advanced methods in public education.

It is relevant to diffuse these practices to the whole URBACT community.



Creative clusters in low density urban areas | The network





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