

Connecting cities
Building successes



creative **Clusters**
in low density urban areas

The space of the creative class

Urban facilities and strategies for creative entrepreneurs

URBACT CREATIVE CLUSTERS - Thematic Workshop

Hódmezovásárhely, Hungary, October 10-11, 2010



Barnsley Óbidos Reggio Emilia Hódmezővásárhely Mizil INTELI Enguera Jyväskylä Viareggio

Reporting note

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Few urban issues deal so deeply with both space [physical dimension] and economy as creative industries. That is why quite a number of cities are creating a sort of meta-projects or “local creative ecosystems” which deal with people (creative class), the economy (creative industries and entrepreneurs) and places (creative quarters or the very idea of the creative city). The third thematic workshop of the URBACT network on Creative Clusters [2008-2011] was mainly devoted to such a **physical dimension of the local creative ecosystem**, namely: the role of the space and consequently on the role of urban planning in promoting a local creative cluster. In addition, the meeting was also open to discuss **place branding** practices as well as **supporting tools to creative entrepreneurs** at local level.

Thematic workshops are the cornerstone in the way URBACT Creative Clusters is undertaking its shared learning process. Previous workshops were: “Creative clusters: diversifying local economic base & opportunities to young people”, Ploiesti-Mizil, October 2009; and “Creative education: incubating future talent”, Reggio Emilia, May 2010. A last workshop is scheduled in Barnsley, UK, on March 2011 with “The creative ecosystem: events and cultural agenda as catalysts” as main theme.

Here in Hódmezővásárhely, a medium-sized town near Szeged, in the Hungarian southern great plain, and partner of URBACT Creative Clusters, nine case study presentations were allocated in three working sessions, each of them with their corresponding discussion time. Two sessions were focused on the physical (working) environment of the creative class [“Building the creative space: concepts, trends, strategies”] and the other one on local strategies for attracting and retaining entrepreneurial talented people [“Boosting creative entrepreneurship: programmes and supporting measures”].

The opening session was chaired by Anikó Varga, the city official in Hódmezővásárhely in charge of Creative Clusters. Welcome words were given by István Almási, Vice-Mayor of Hódmezővásárhely, Zoltán Hegedűs, chair of the city economy committee and Ervin Schleiffer, a local creative entrepreneur and outstanding member of the URBACT local support group. Miguel Silvestre, representing the project lead partner, and Miguel Rivas as project lead expert also took the floor for making introductory notes on the workshop theme.

An integrated approach promoting the local creative ecosystem

Economy

Creative industries within a new cluster reading of the local economy

Attracting and retaining creative professionals and entrepreneurs

Space

The space of the creative class as new working environments

Culture

What kind of cultural policy for cultural entrepreneurs?

Education

Incubating future talent

Governance

Governing the local creative ecosystem

Brand

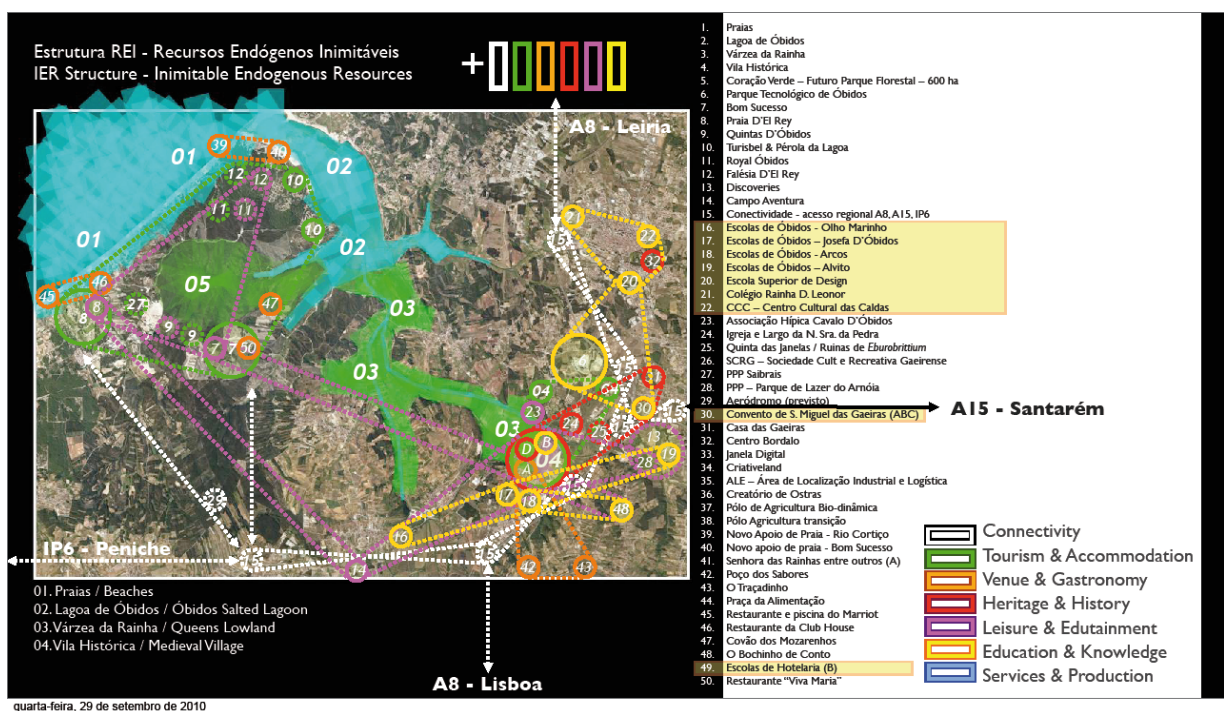
Branding and communicating the creative place

BUILDING THE CREATIVE SPACE: CONCEPTS, TRENDS, STRATEGIES

“Spaces for creative people: concepts, trends and the European kaleidoscope” was the title presented by Catarina Selada, head of policy research at INTELI-Intelligence in Innovation, a think tank on innovative spatial development based in Lisbon. A starting point for Catarina was the specific **location factors** of both the creative industries and the highly mobile creative people in western countries. Then, she was navigating through a range of emerging urban facilities across Europe dealing with creative issues, such as: artist residencies like *O espaço do tempo* in Montemor o Novo; alternative and low-cost cultural spaces for cultural purposes; Fab-Labs; co-working spaces and community offices for self-employees and micro-businesses like LX Factory in Alcantara district, in Lisbon; or incubators focused on creative industries. According to Catarina, experimentation, flexibility and affordability are key attributes for this kind of emerging urban facilities.

The second contribution also came from Portugal. José Martins dos Santos, project director of Wilhelm & Co-Portugal, and a very active member of the URBACT local support group in Óbidos, made an excellent presentation entitled “**Revealing spatial structures in supporting creative-based strategies: a case from low density urban area**”. José mapped

systematically all the creative assets and projects in Óbidos and then discovered or created relations between them, resulting in several clusters within a creative-based strategy (tourism and accommodation; education and knowledge; venue and gastronomy...). He also connected such as creative assets to the structural features of the territory: historical village, lagoon, seashore, countryside, highway, Caldas da Rainha as central place, etc. Consequently a devoted spatial strategy was revealed. A strategy not constraint to the historical village, but also actively based on other spatial assets and narrowly aligned to the vision of Óbidos as a creative space.



Revealing spatial structures in supporting creative-based strategies. The case of Óbidos

Saverio Serri, in charge of the economic development department in Reggio Emilia (Italy), introduced a large planning process they are currently undertaking over the northern part of the municipality, an area between the historic downtown limit and the new railway station designed by Santiago Calatrava. It is the so-called “Reggio Territorio Esteso” strategic plan. Saverio, along with several colleagues from Reggio Emilia, told about how they are considering a range of creative-based issues when addressing the land-uses programming in such an in-between area. And also how they are dealing with some open innovations methods in developing this planning exercise.

Tamás Egedy, from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, introduced the presentation “Creative entrepreneurs in space: the case of Budapest”. Tamas was in charge of the Budapest report within **ACRE** (Accommodating Creative Knowledge–Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions), a remarkable 6^o Framework Programme’s project about the location pattern of creative entrepreneurs in 13 European big metropolis. To some extent, the ACRE report dismantles the validity of the Florida’s three T model (technology, talent, tolerance) for the European case, where the geographical mobility of the creative class are not marked as in the United States indeed; and where therefore amenities are not crucial at all to attract the creative classes. On the contrary they are more influenced by what the report calls "personal trajectories." The ACRE report also makes a distinction between hard and soft location factors.



Hódmezovásárhely thematic workshop

Then Péter Gauder, architect and director of Studio Metropolitana –Budapest- and Miguel Rivas, project lead expert, conducted a long and fruitful debate about the spatiality of the creative industries and creative businesses. They agreed that there can be no effective creative-based strategy in local development without a related spatial framework. Moreover, different scales should be considered: from city and district planning to the architectural design of new emergent creative-based facilities.

At spatial planning level, creative issues can be a driver for city centre revitalization, and that is the focus for the “Re-making Barnsley” strategy or the “Tornyai János” cultural city rehabilitation plan in Hódmezovásárhely. Other strategies can be the development of new central places –as we saw in the Lutakko area in Jyväskylä- or a better articulation city-

countryside – as it happens in “Óbidos beyond the historical village” or the master plan “Reggio Territorio Esteso” presented here by the representatives of Reggio Emilia,

When addressing such as spatial strategies some drivers have to be considered, namely: i) the continuum private and work life/space in creative professionals; ii) and balanced mix of retail/leisure/work/housing land uses. In this sense, the continuum “place of production-place of consumption” is incubating the notion of “**extended workplace**”. Also in the perspective of concrete delivery of spatial-based strategies and place marketing initiatives, several cases from URBACT Creative Clusters network underlines that coordination with the supra-local scale of administration is a crucial but complex aspect.

On the other hand, **a new generation of creative-based facilities is emerging** as Catarina Selada has showed in her presentation. Examples include incubators for creative-based teams -Digital Media Centre in Barnsley or ABC business centre in Óbidos; thematic business parks for creative activities like the Parco della Citadella in Viareggio, for carnival artisans; spaces for co-working –LX Factory in Lisbon or Aivia handicraft centre in Jyväskylä; fab-labs; creative programmes in conventional business centres; artist residences; culturally outstanding facilities such as the Casa da Musica in Porto - in an impossible design by Rem Koolhaas or the Dream house in Aalborg (Denmark); “low-cost” alternative cultural spaces at the other side, etc.

Nevertheless, rather than establish a new taxonomy on creative spaces, it is much more interesting to recognize a number of distinctive features aligned to the **spatiality of the creative industries** and creative-based business models. Distinctive features like hybridation, flexibility, interaction, experimentation, affordability for start-ups and free lances and international scope.

Linking heritage to the contemporary is another highly demanded value for those seeking some differentiation, thus giving full meaning to Jane Jacobs’ opinion that “old ideas can sometimes use new buildings but new ideas must use old buildings”. Such kinds of “recall the past to inform the future” strategies are increasingly informing the design of many creative-based urban facilities: LX factory in Lisbon, ABC incubator in Óbidos, The Civic and Elsecar Heritage Centre in Barnsley, etc. It is also a good remedy to avoid a new urban iconography too much homogenous and globalized, due to the success of creative-based programmes worldwide

Finally, during the discussion was raised the question of a smooth integration of this new generation or urban facilities within the existing city fabric, avoiding the risk of elitism. So, rather than creating isolated *avant-garde* urban hotspots [for new minorities], the aim should be to promote an integrated local creative ecosystem, where the hotspot becomes a functional tool, a coherent piece, in the framework of a city meta-project. Avoiding elitism is

to make different visions and interests over the creative-based facility, and in general to perform an active stakeholder management at local level. For instance, using local project-based micro-agreements (see the text-box on the Dortmund case). Moreover, there is a common recognition on the relevance of running new formats in promoting and managing the creative-based facility, involving the private sector, like in the case of Buda Centre in Kortrijk or CAOS in Terni.

Creative.Quarters in Ruhr Metropolis: a new concept in building the creative city

Bernd Fesel, Director of ECCE – European Centre for Creative Economy, in Dortmund (Germany) was invited to participate in this URBACT thematic workshop in order to talk about the “Creative-Quarters” project in Dortmund, in the Ruhr basin. Finally, he could not attend due to last minutes changes, but he kindly sent information about the experience which we are going here to intend to reproduce.

“Creative.Quarters” has been developed to encourage the process of urban renewal in the Ruhr region. To that aim 10 cities have set up, separately, a round table comprising all relevant local authority departments and representatives of the local creative industry. Communal areas are being defined in these bodies that are suitable for development as “Creative.Quarters”. And empty premises are to be made accessible for use by artists and other creative talents without “lengthy bureaucratic delays”.

Creative.Quarters is a dialogue between all involved stakeholders, from city council to the creative industries, from public authorities to private real estate investors, from the established culture to the free cultural scene. Integration of different interests is the basis for a common and therefore sustained strategic development of these urban spaces. The result is therefore not only a concept for planning and development, but also the background for urgent social and urban questions:

This initiative was framed within RUHR.2010 and then has taken impulse from the European Centre for Creative Economy (ECCE), which is as a central component behind the flagship initiative called Dortmunder U.

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Flagship projects in some Creative Clusters partners, re-using former big factories for a creative-based programme, are handling specific formats for combining different visions and interests over the new facility: citizen and neighbourhood visions (neighbours); functionality as work space for creative activities (creative entrepreneurs); commercial feasibility

(investors); coherence within urban planning frameworks (public authorities), etc. These are the cases of Kangas - a former paper mill in Jyväskylä- and the former ceramics factory of Majolica in Hódmezővásárhely.

BOOSTING CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: PROGRAMMES AND SUPPORTING MEASURES

Chaired by Saverio Serri, of Reggio Emilia municipality, the third working session was dedicated to local strategies and toolkits to support creative industries and creative entrepreneurs. Cases from Hungary, England and Finland were presented.

Bence Ságvári, from the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, reviewed his own recent work on the creative industries in **Budapest**. Although the Hungarian capital is a magnet for creative people in the Country, he drew a black panorama due to lack of trust, cooperation and skilled young workforce.

From a theoretical position, Péter Gauder, director of Studio Metropolitana, also in Budapest, addressed the question on how a town can help in order that creativity becomes the nest of the town. For him **city attractiveness** needs to be viewed in a more holistic way (the artificial-physical environment is not sufficient, its functionality also needs to be taken into account). In this sense, widespread lifestyle indexes, such as the BAC-Basel life quality index, are more convincing than the "creative class" ones or those related to professional people.

Tracey Johnson, creative and digital industries sector specialist from Barnsley (UK), a Creative Clusters partner, presented the contribution "Bringing a sector to life: attracting and retaining creative talent". From a "desperate need for growth and focus" and "new ways of doing things", Barnsley is mapping the local sector of the creative industries and looking for opportunities in other related local value chains. For them, it is a starting point to open up a **dialogue with the private sector**, using web 2.0 tools. Tracey talked about a "bigger conversation", a honest dialogue with the creative voice, using digital tools. Of course, animation is also a key word in such a dialogue, embracing networking, events and cultural agenda. **"Attract with animation, retain with infrastructure"**, was a Tracey's key statement: "we are aiming to attract creatives with the animation of our spaces, and our openness to ideas, and retain them with a strong, supportive infrastructure and a sense of ownership. The sector is encouraged to have its own voice, be confident and connected, get on everyone's radar and be a friend to many. It isn't about just throwing money at the sector – providing an ecosystem to encourage creativity is fundamental".

Raija Partanen, manager on culture and creative economy in the Regional Council of Central Finland, commented several tools over the creative sector like PROMOTO, a national scale incubating facility, HUB Jyväskylä and a centre for co-working in printmaking in downtown Jyväskylä, as well as several trans-national projects funded by the EU.

Then, a general discussion was opened up by José Martins dos Santos, project director of Wilhelm & Co-Portugal and member of the Óbidos URBACT local support group. There were a consensus about many regional and national business support schemes have little impact on the creative industries because commonly such as schemes are not well adapted to both the nature of the micro-enterprise and the specificity of the service sector (more room for intangibles than investment in fixed assets, etc). Even the creative entrepreneur hardly recognizes him/herself as a businessman.

But also, there is a role to play by local governments, of course in alliance with regional strategies, in packaging support measures specifically adapted to the nature of creative entrepreneurs, combining **financial, logistics and advisory support**. Those may include tax reductions, like the “Tax free Óbidos” system, incubation and real estate facilities (subsidized renting spaces), financial tools covering intangible assets, venture capital systems or effective linkages to business angel networks, or **crowd-funding** local platforms. The latter is strongly inspired by both the social and the digital driver and it is spreading in USA and the EU. Basically it is about financing projects by individuals using social networks. The way of financing can take the form of donation, micro-credit, loans and risk capital for SMEs. Some examples of crowdfunding platforms in the creative sector are: www.mymajorcompany.com (France), www.CKIE.com in the USA or <http://www.danielschipper.nl/projects/100x100/> in the Netherlands.

Some of the supporting schemes commented during the debate were: the Kreativ Coaching Center (KCC), a dedicated team in Berlin who offers coaching to start-ups in the creative sector; ABC and the Digital Media Centre located in Óbidos and Barnsley respectively; and proyecto LUNAR with the aim at pumping entrepreneurship spirit to creative people in Southern Spain.

Finally, the concept of “alliances”, a recent innovation of the European industrial policy-DG Enterprise and Industry, was mentioned as a useful approach in dealing with emerging and strong clustered productive realities like the creative industries. The “**alliance concept**” basically means a more open and horizontal way of doing things in order to establish closer and focused links between innovation, financing and cooperation.

A sample of this is “the creative archipelago”, a supporting scheme to preserve Milan vitality in design. Milan is a creative global capital with about a quarter of its workforce working in the creative sector, in particular in fashion, design, new media and advertisement. Between 2004

and 2008, the province has arranged this scheme consisting in an Internet site for the local creative community, the ‘mind lab’, a research tool for the design sector, and debates with international experts.

FINAL REMARK: BRANDING THE CREATIVE PLACE

Miguel Silvestre, deputy Mayor of Óbidos, and Rita Zina, Town councillor for heritage and urban development, focused their presentation about the “creative Óbidos” experience in the communication aspect. Definitively, in branding the creative place, Óbidos is a benchmark.

Communication has been revealed as a fundamental element, since creative-based strategies have to be properly diffused, inside and outside the city. In this sense, place branding should be a link in the chain of a creativity-based local strategy not the starting point, or just a mere matter of labelling. **Cities identities can be re-built around creative-based narratives linking local backgrounds with the contemporary.** Within the URBACT Creative Clusters partnership, Óbidos (“Óbidos Criativa”), Jyväskylä (“the human technology city”) and Barnsley in the UK (“re-making Barnsley”) are perfect illustrations of innovative branding rooted in local backgrounds. And particularly in the case of Óbidos a successful attempt to link heritage to the contemporary.

Those cities have addressed an internal debate on what should mean creativity and the creative driver for them. As a

guideline, just to mention that a trend in the practice of city branding nowadays is to mix into the same communication strategy two dimensions, a unique urban experience along with a functional business place. But always rooted into local background and potential.



A last communication device – Barcelona airport

Finally, the local team in charge of the workshop organization, chaired by Anikó Varga, kindly organized a programme of visits to some creative-based local landmarks, namely:

- The Vásárhely autumn exhibition and the artisan fair. The Vásárhely Autumn Exhibition is a renowned painting event at Country level. Its first edition is dated in 1954.
- Emlékpont. Emlékpont (“remembrance point”) is an *avant-garde* museum dedicated to the period between 1945 and 1990. That is Hungary under the soviet influence. It shows how and who are that people who lives this half a century in Hódmezővásárhely. Emlékpont uses the most up-to-date exhibiting techniques and museum teaching opportunities. As a result the facility is much more than a museum.



Right: Emlékpont. Left: ceramics tradition in the city

- Hódfó social employment centre. This centre links to the Hódmezővásárhely tradition in embroidery. The centre produces different kind of traditional and modern products like embroidery, leather products, decorations, ornaments, bags... for both Hungarian and European markets.

- Downtown Pottery House [Mr. Sándor Ambrus, potter, folk-artist]. At the end of the 19th century, Hódmezővásárhely was the citadel of pottery. The representative of this past is Sándor Ambrus, who established the Pottery House in 1989. His own style was developed from the shapes and patterns of 19th century folk-ceramics.
- Tile-stove workshop [Mr. Ferenc Török, tile-stove maker]. In 2004, Ferenc Török, potter, started a family business of stove building, providing complete services to the market. The former master potter extended the range of products with the inclusion of stove tiles of traditional folk techniques and motifs. He also builds special Hungarian traditional types of stoves and ovens.



[Creative Clusters: 3rd thematic workshop collection of papers presented](#)