

How might we integrate Neapolis into the local community?

CONTENT

* publicity, fame (branding)
* attract people to here: activities, events (parents of kids)

relationships with city and other associations

OPEN LABS
LAB THAT HAS DECENT EQUIPMENT (for on going with advanced computers, 3D printer)
THIS LAB WOULD BE OPEN FOR ALL CITIZENS FOR FREE

Lab Site

Mentorship Programme

Pub Ho

Venue

ical areas

"ours" of

Wilmouva
use potential of building to attract

Neapolis say for youles
- MARKS
- ZOOPTICS FOR KIDS
- TENNIS
- GAMING

LAB FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND CITY'S ASSOCIATION (open-mindedly)

Intergenerational events

IT AS + OF EVENTS

open Cafe for everyone
rooms for specific target groups

open the venue during events/festivals etc

By opening & using its we can connect only within the also with the brand venue

Quarterly Network Report 2

April - June 2024

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Introduction

Welcome to the second issue of the Quarterly Network Report (QNR) of C4TALENT URBACT Action Planning Network! If you want to know more about how small- and medium sized towns across Europe can deal with brain-drain by building a great entrepreneurial ecosystem, you are at the right place.

This regular (quarterly) information bulletin gives an insider view of how our network - and our 10 partner cities - make progress on their URBACT journey and tackle the common policy challenge.

In this second issue you'll:

- ➔ Find highlights from transnational activities - re-live with us the best moments of our 2nd Core Network Meeting, get a sneak peek of our study visit to Tecnocampus Mataró and Norrskén House Barcelona.
- ➔ Read about the 2 webinars organised in this period - both focusing on specific aspects of the URBACT method.
- ➔ Learn about the progress our partners are making in their URBACT journey, the local activities that have been implemented.

- ➔ Understand the key ingredients of a successful entrepreneurial ecosystem. (This chapter has been developed based on the masterclass designed by our trainers, Alison Partridge and Tracey Johnson.)
- ➔ Read the story and insights of 3 talented young people, who - instead of building their career elsewhere - returned to their hometown to create value there. Meet Máté from Nyíregyháza, Karolis from Alytus and Leila from Centar Sarajevo.
- ➔ And, finally, get a teaser of what's next for the C4TALENT URBACT Action Planning Network!



Project Progress

NETWORK & LOCAL LEVEL

2024

2025

2026

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
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PROJECT STAGES

STAGE 2: Planning actions

STAGE 3: Preparing implementation

STAGE 4: Finale

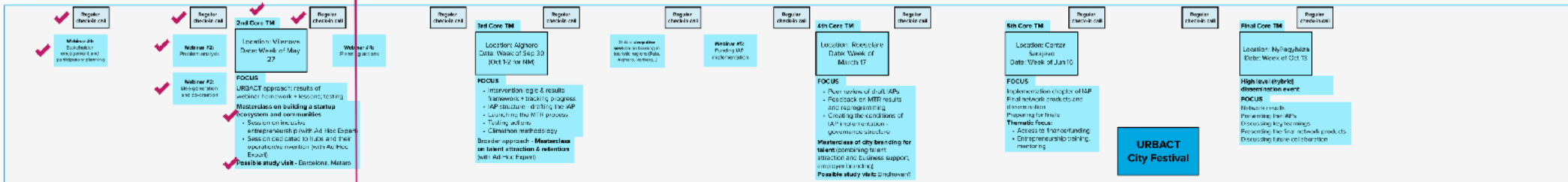
NETWORK ADMIN

Milestones, outputs and activities related to network management



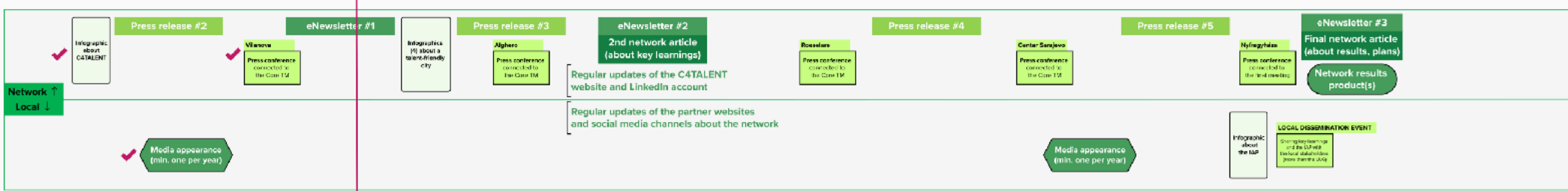
NETWORK LEVEL

Network level initiatives, outputs, and activities



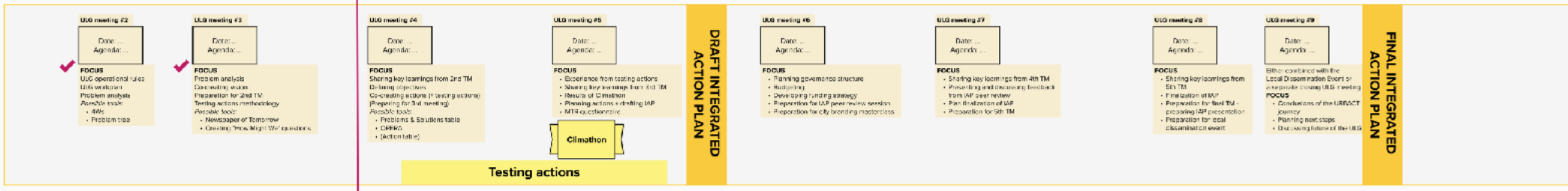
C&D

Communication & dissemination initiatives, outputs, and activities on network and local level



LOCAL LEVEL

Local level milestones, outputs, and activities



DRAFT INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

FINAL INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

Testing actions

Climation

Highlights from transnational activities

Webinar 2 - Problem Analysis (23/04/2024)

We quickly realized that the learning content exceeds the capacity of our relatively short in-person transnational meetings. Therefore, we have organized webinars to take place between these meetings. These webinars are relatively short online learning events dedicated to specific topics, either related to the network themes (subthemes) or the building blocks of the URBACT method.

After learning about engaging stakeholders, the second C4TALENT webinar focused on the practicalities of analyzing problems. The main purpose was to equip partners with both an overall approach and specific tools and methods to thoroughly investigate and better understand their policy challenges and their main causes.

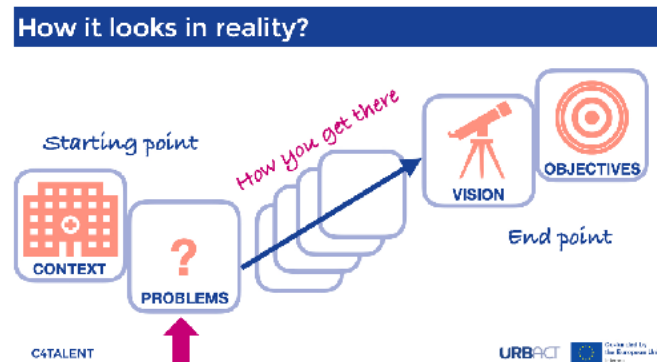
In delivering the webinar, we used a hybrid approach that combined individual work and preparation with an interactive online session.

We asked partners to:

- Watch the relevant video recording from the URBACT e-University prior to the webinar
- Fill in a short online survey to provide feedback and information on their progress regarding problem analysis

This structure ensured that every partner joined the call with a good understanding and definition of their core problem.

During the call, we started with a short presentation on context, explaining how problem analysis fits into the action planning process. We also reviewed the results and main conclusions from the online survey. This was followed by an interactive session where partners worked in smaller groups (in breakout rooms) to design a core problem statement, identify the necessary evidence, and outline the main steps in the problem analysis process. They recorded their thoughts in a shared Google Doc file.



2nd Core Network Meeting - Vilanova i la Geltrú

The C4TALENT network organised its 2nd core network meeting in Vilanova i la Geltrú, Spain, on 28-29-30 May. The network meeting was combined with the first Masterclass of the network and 2 study visits.

During Day 1 and Day 2 of the meeting, activities were broken down into 3 main blocks:

- ➔ **Block 1 (Day 1, in the morning):** following the official welcome and a light icebreaking exercise, the hosts presented the local context and the main challenges the city faces. This was followed by a guided tour in Neàpolis, the city's enterprise hub. After the tour partners formed mixed groups and worked on the specific challenges provided by the hosts. As a result of the group work, the hosts were provided by a range of possible solutions, creative ideas to "reinvent" Neàpolis.
- ➔ **Block 2 (Day 1, in the afternoon):** the 2nd Block focused on the action planning journey of the partners. Prior to the meeting all partners were asked to fill in the action planning canvas. During the meeting they worked in city pairs, mutually "peer reviewing" each other's IAP canvas from a critical friend's perspective. After the peer review and discussion, each partner presented its peer's IAP canvas.

Still in this block, following a short presentation on testing actions partners worked in city groups to do the initial design of their testing action (using the "Testing Action Canvas" developed by Liat Rogel).

- ➔ **Block 3 (Day 2, in the morning)** involved the delivery of the 1st Masterclass on "Entrepreneurial Ecosystems" (see more details in separate section on P 11).
- ➔ **Block 4 (Day 2, in the afternoon):** at the beginning of this block a short presentation and a discussion took place, covering the practical application of the integrated approach during the IAP journey. This was followed by a session focusing on project administration and management, and another one on communication.



[Click here for meeting video](#)



2nd Core Network Meeting - Vilanova i la Geltrú



Masterclass 1 - Entrepreneurial ecosystem

In the Baseline Study, masterclasses have been envisaged as important methodological tools to support partners in addressing their policy challenge. “Masterclasses are longer sessions providing partners with deeper knowledge and more details”. In Vilanova i la Geltrú, the first such event has been organised, focusing on entrepreneurial ecosystems.

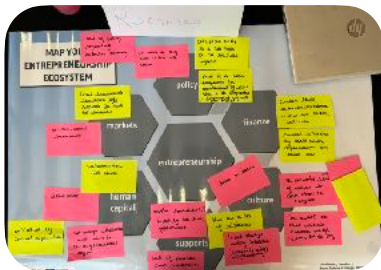
The main objectives of this masterclass have been:

- To understand what is meant by an entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- To understand what elements are generally found in an entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- To start to map your city's entrepreneurial ecosystem, the stakeholders within it & a user's

journey around it

- To consider your key assets and blockers and how to optimise your chances of attracting entrepreneurs.

The masterclass combined theoretical knowledge with practical exercises, allowing partners to unpick their own local ecosystem and identify the most important weaknesses. It even involved a Fireside chat moderated by Alison Partridge (ad-hoc expert), discussing the practical implications of ecosystem building with Tracey Johnson (Project Director, TECH SY) and Adrià Caballero, IT entrepreneur in Vilanova I la Geltrú).



Study Visit - Tecnocampus, Mataró

Organizing study tours is the best way not only to obtain knowledge, but also to better understand more complex issues, see specific tools, methods, concepts in action and, above all, be inspired and motivated. To that end, our in the Baseline Study we have envisaged integrating study visits in transnational meetings.

The TN meeting in Vilanova I la Geltrú has been combined with 2 study visits, the first one leading the partnership to Tecnocampus Mataró. Mataró is a city of 130.000 inhabitants, located near Barcelona. The Tecnocampus “brings together

academia and business in a single space, devoted to innovation and entrepreneurship, with the aim to become a powerful driver of regional economic and social transformation.”

The university defines itself as an “Entrepreneurial Campus”, relying on 4 main pillars: Innovation, Impact, Community and Internationalization. It offers all of its 4000+ students entrepreneurial education, encouraging and supporting them to start their own business. Tecnocampus has a business incubator, co-working space, business park and a convention centre, currently hosting 121 companies (including 31 startups).



Study Visit - Norrsken House, Barcelona

Norrsken is a non-profit foundation, building a global ecosystem focusing on (mainly technological) solutions addressing the world's most pressing challenges.

Norrsken Fund invests in the world's most promising impact startups, while Norrsken Houses (currently in Stockholm, Kigali, and in Barcelona) are workspaces with everything an impact startup may need to succeed. With Norrsken, impact entrepreneurs can find the capital, global network and state-of-the-art knowledge they need.

Norrsken House Barcelona is a new facility with excellent seafront location, a centre of tech and impact innovation. It is a shared workspace offering high quality and attractive facilities (offices, event spaces, meeting rooms, spaces for social activities), as well as a range of professional events and social activities.

It is a home 800+ impact entrepreneurs, rapidly expanding its local partnership.



OUR MISSION

WELCOME TO NORRSKEN HOUSE BARCELONA

We are building Europe's biggest hub for tech and impact startups. A 10,000 sq. m. hub unlike any other.

Norrsken House Barcelona will bring together Europe's most impactful startups, investors, talent and business leaders, to create a pan-European hub for impact entrepreneurship.



WE HELP ENTREPRENEURS SOLVE THE WORLD'S GREATEST CHALLENGES.

Startups leveraging scalable technology are the key to solving some of the world's greatest challenges.

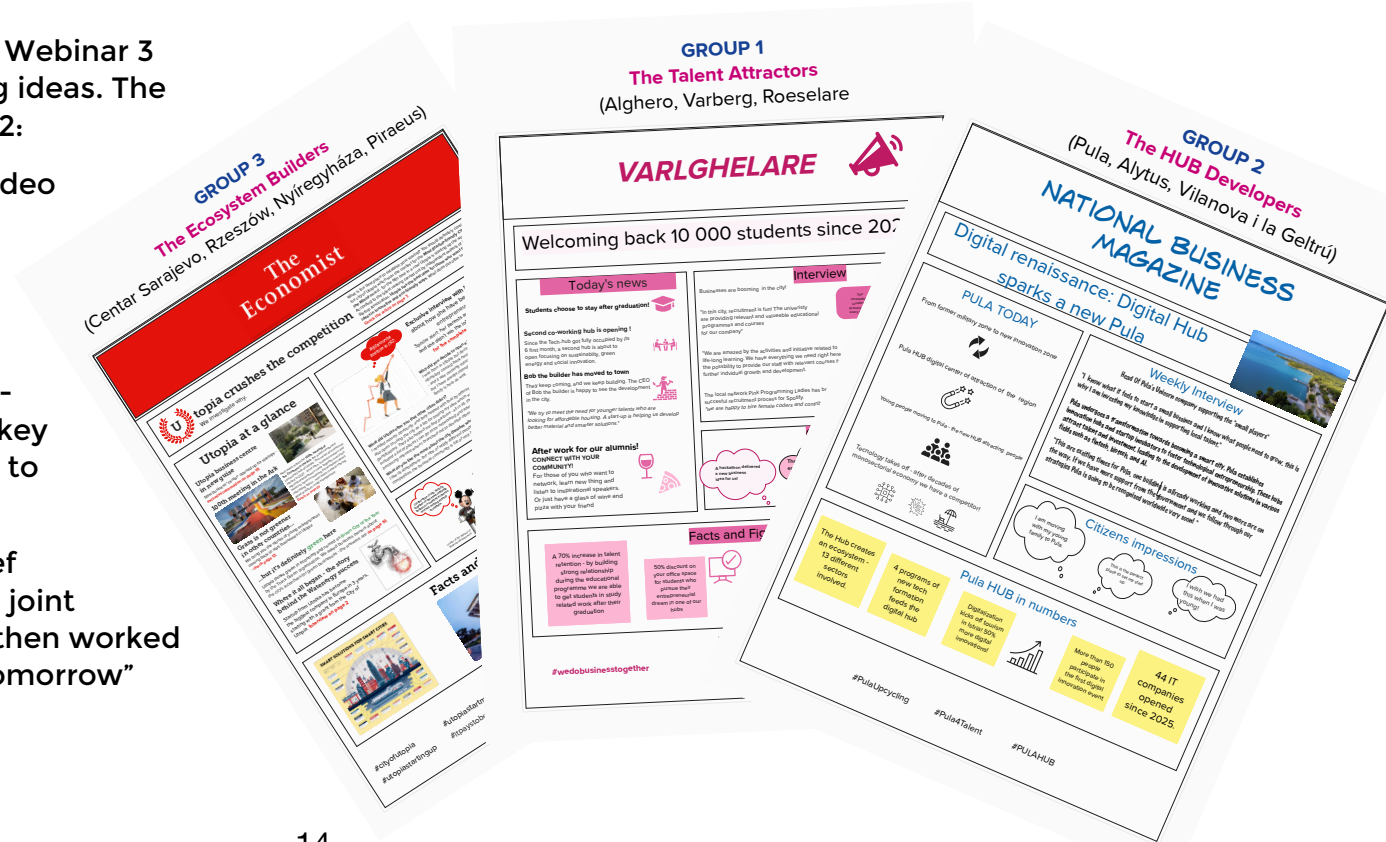
Norrsken is a non-profit impact ecosystem connecting founders with the capital, knowledge and network they need to make saving the world their business.

<norrsken>

Webinar 3 - Vision, Ideation (07/05/2024)

Building on the momentum from Webinar 2, Webinar 3 focused on creating a vision and generating ideas. The overall structure was similar to that of Webinar 2:

- ➔ Preparation: Partners were asked to watch video recordings of two URBACT e-University sessions – "Planning Actions 1" and "Generating and Co-creating Ideas" – before the webinar.
- ➔ Pre-Webinar Activity: Participants used a pre-defined Mural workspace to document their key learnings and the specific methods they plan to apply in their city.
- ➔ Webinar Activities: During the webinar, a brief presentation provided context, followed by a joint review of the Mural workspace. Participants then worked in mixed groups to test the "Newspaper of Tomorrow" method.



C4Talent Partners Corner

"A VISION is more than a few general statements about the future."

"Great inspiration from the Tecnocampus in Mataró. Hearing the work they do in relations to intra/ entrepreneurship. We have been hesitant in branding our campus towards this "theme" since it feels a little abstract and might scare some people off. We were very inspired by the fact that this campus is really branding itself as an entre/intrapreneurial campus and made it one of their USP. Something I think we should do as well"

"The importance of formulating a good and clear core problem, this is very challenging and it has been very helpful to bounce ideas and perspectives with other partners. It's obvious to us that formulating a precise core problem in 90% of the work since it helps us navigate the work ahead, invite relevant stakeholders and formulate an IAP."

"Maintaining a healthy business ecosystem is about "curating chaos" – the municipality must know its role: when to step in with support and when to step back."

"A business community does not always need a physical hub. Think good before you start building a physical hub because the building itself is not the challenge but the vibe/community building is."

"Cities can live without a hub – creating a community and providing soft support is where the magic's at."

"Do not immediately assume there is a problem unless you have evidence to prove"

"How to map the entrepreneurial ecosystem and to understand how different actors contribute to its success. It made us realize that we are still missing some parts in the entrepreneurial journey, primarily for young "wannapreneurs".

"We managed to better activate some ULG members (City Council, high schools and entrepreneurial agents) as a result of the Transnational Meeting (We consider this collateral benefit of organising a TN meeting.)"

Local Activities and Progress

Alghero

Over the past four months, the Urbact Local Group (ULG), supported by Fondazione Alghero and external experts from Avanzi, has been learning how to use an integrated action plan methodology.

In April, the second ULG meeting focused on explaining this approach, defining the main problems, and identifying needs and resources using the Problem Tree tool. Key issues raised included housing and the lack of social spaces, which are important to both younger and older participants.

The third ULG meeting in May worked on defining the group's vision and mission, starting from the highlights of the Problem Tree. A socially active community and the lack of services emerged as recurring themes. With the help of external experts, we are also forming a control group to monitor ULG activities. This group includes people who have permanently left Alghero, those who have returned, and those at risk of leaving.

At the fourth ULG meeting in June, we used the "Newspaper of Tomorrow" tool to envision the potential impact of our vision. The ideal city we imagined is inclusive and active year-round,

where young people want to study, return after studying abroad, live, and work remotely, with the community engaged in every activity.

In June, Fondazione Alghero participated in the second edition of the **Ripopoliamo festival**. This Sardinian event gathers those who have returned and those still living elsewhere, providing insights into regional talent attraction and retention efforts.



Alytus

During the reporting period, Alytus City Municipality made several attempts to complete public procurement procedures to acquire design services for the Alytus Hub. Unfortunately, no applicants showed up for the first two attempts. At the end of June, the procurement process was relaunched, and we expect to have a winner by August.

On April 25, 2024, ULG members met for the third time. In addition to the ULG members, the meeting also involved representatives from Alytus City Municipality and youth representatives. The goal was to refine the core problem using the **Problem Tree method**. Young people actively participated, discussing why they are leaving the city and the consequences of this exodus. They pointed out issues like limited job opportunities, lack of social spaces, and inadequate support for startups.

After completing the exercise, we reviewed observations from the first ULG meeting to identify what pushes young people and talents out of the city and what attracts them. It was concluded that the causes identified using different methods were similar,

including a need for better job prospects, enhanced social infrastructure, and more vibrant community



Centar Sarajevo

After overcoming initial issues, the Centar team quickly began implementing activities. An ULG coordinator has been appointed and **three ULG meetings were organised in this period**. The team also participated in the second partnership meeting in Vilanova i La Geltrú.



In April, we held the second and third ULG meetings, followed by the fourth meeting in May. During the second ULG meeting, the coordinator guided the group through the **Problem Tree exercise**. The diverse group, which included representatives from government institutions, companies of all sizes, educational institutions, and

startups supported by Centar Municipality, had a productive discussion and identified many potential problems.

The third ULG meeting, held the following week, focused on maintaining the positive momentum. The group worked on

creating potential solutions for the problems identified, using URBACT's "Brainstorming" and "5W and 1H" approaches, resulting in a wide range of creative and innovative ideas.

The fourth ULG meeting in May applied the SMART methodology to evaluate all proposed solutions. This led to the development of potential solutions for the IAP draft.

In the forthcoming period, we'll focus on creating the IAP draft based on the four ULG meetings. After producing the initial pre-draft, we'll hold another ULG meeting to summarize it before presenting it at the partnership level.



Additionally, Centar Municipality published a new public call for start-up support in three categories: young people, women, and the long-term unemployed.

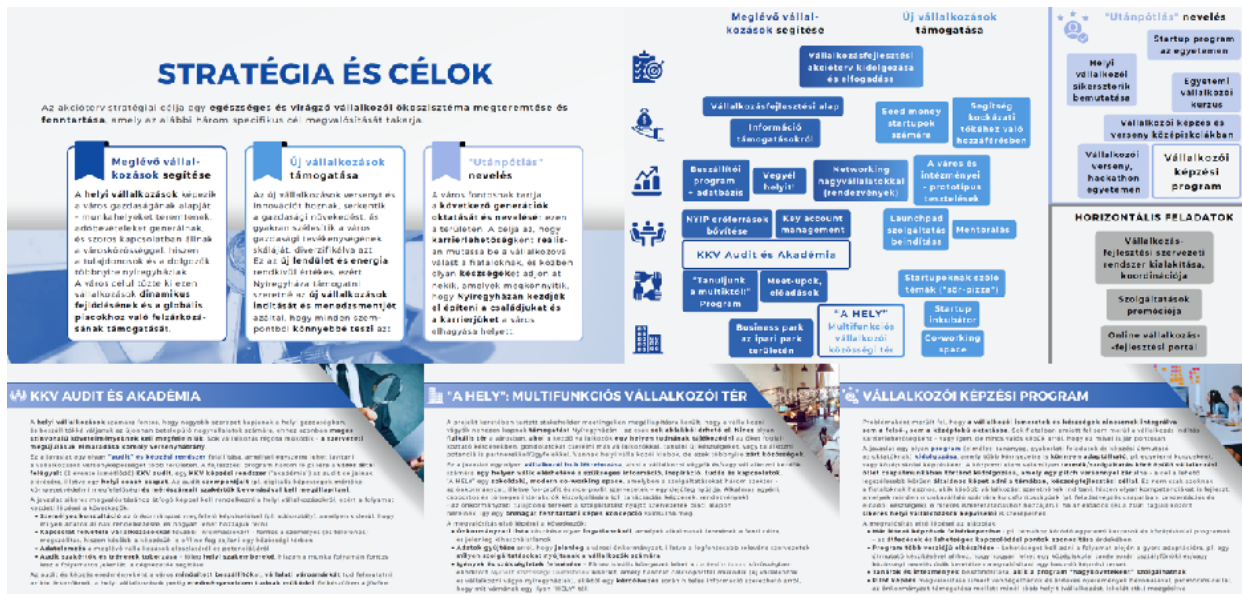
Nyíregyháza

Following a fast-paced period in Q1 (including 3 ULG meetings close after each other), the ULG coordinator had a lot of information to collate and structure into a “pre-draft” IAP.

This preliminary document was close to finished after the transnational meeting in Vilanova i la Geltrú in May, incorporating some (but not all) of the learnings from the partner meeting and the study visits. Before concluding this first step of the IAP delivery, these learnings must be shared with the ULG as well – the meeting dedicated to this purpose is scheduled to be on July 3, and the document is expected to be finalized after it.

It was designed to be as visually pleasing and easy-to-read as possible – it will be used to secure the support of decision-makers for a smoother implementation process later. Beside the second network meeting, the pre-IAP content and structure was also affected

by two network level learning events – one about problem analysis on April 23, and another about creating a vision and ideation on May 7.



Piraeus

The second **ULG (URBACT Local Group) meeting** - organised by the Development Organization of Piraeus as part of the URBACT C4TALENT Action Planning Network - has been successfully completed. This project is aimed at attracting, retaining and supporting talented young professionals and entrepreneurs.

The meeting was integrated into a training program for students from various universities across the Attica region. These students are participating in courses focusing on 3D printing (all of which are being delivered at the “Bluelab” facility).

During the ULG meeting, we took the opportunity to inform the students about the C4TALENT project. We shared our exciting plans to transform **Bluelab into a vibrant hub hosting new businesses**. This new initiative aims to provide a



supportive and protected environment where new entrepreneurs can start and grow their business. They will only need to cover the rent, making it easier for them focus on the crucial aspects of developing their business.



Pula

At the 2nd ULG meeting in April, the participants “interrogated” the problems identified at the previous meeting, and continued working on the problem tree. Each group defined the core problem (“Young people see no future in the city”;

Conservative thinking about entrepreneurship oriented towards tourism and service industries”; “Unsustainable Monosectoral Economy”).

Through a joint discussion, it was determined that the local economy's heavy reliance on tourism generates positive short-term economic indicators but impedes sustainable and resilient growth over the long term. This dependency on tourism creates a central problem: it fosters a limited and demotivating environment for other economic sectors and overall development. Based on this discussion, the central issue proposed by one of the groups–“Unsustainable Monosectoral



Economy” –was confirmed as the primary problem and placed at the center of the problem tree.

In June, during the third ULG meeting participants ideated using the “Newspaper of Tomorrow.” exercise. They crafted headlines for a 2034 article about the Pula Innovation Centre, highlighting the project's greatest achievements. Some of the notable headlines generated by the groups included: “Vallelunga – A Green Oasis for Innovative Young Experts,” “Innovation Centre Vallelunga – Regional Transformation and Growth,” and “From Military Zone to Tech Hub: The Vallelunga Story.”

As a second step, participants shared a positive and optimistic vision for the Vallelunga area, describing it as a major driver of regional development, innovation, and transformation. “Vallelunga is a hub of entrepreneurial development, featuring innovation labs that collaborate with both local and international sectors. The area boasts laboratories for marine research, hospitality venues, and a range of educational programs based on lifelong learning principles. The interdisciplinary entrepreneurial park is a place where various sectors work together to address global issues sustainably, establishing Vallelunga as a recognized innovation hub.”

Roeselare

April 15, 2024: The Belgian national URBACT Point organised an **APN-day for all the involved Belgian cities**. This edition took place in Genk, where we had multiple working sessions in the morning, focusing on challenges in the action planning process. In the afternoon there was a field visit at OpenLab and Waterschei.

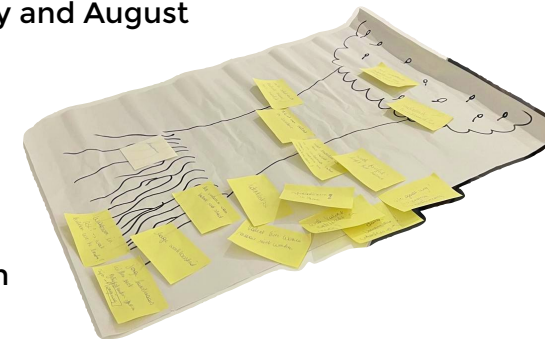
May 16, 2024: The third URBACT Local Group meeting took place with seven attendees. After giving an update about the project, this session mainly focused on the problem tree. The ULG was rather critical and wanted to see more tangible progress. We explained the action planning process and the importance of doing the problem analysis first, before immediately developing solutions. During the problem analysis the ULG concluded **the importance of data** - not available at that point. One of the ULG-members stated the following: “we are always discussing the brain-drain in Roeselare but right now we are not even 100% sure that there IS a braindrain; to be certain, we need more specific data”



June 20, 2024: We held a **meeting with the local project team** to provide an update following the transnational meeting in Vilanova I la Geltrú and to discuss feedback from the study visit in Barcelona. During this meeting, we decided to focus our action plan on the labor market rather than on supporting entrepreneurs. We also identified the need for additional data.

In addition to these formal meetings, there have been numerous **informal discussions**

between ULG members and project team members about the project’s scope. In July and August 2024, we plan to determine the specific data we need so that we can collect it over the coming months. This will enable us to conduct a thorough, evidence-based problem analysis and develop an effective action plan.



Rzeszów

In the second quarter of 2024, our focus was primarily on preparing the **general outline for the Integrated Action Plan**. Both the Project Team meetings and the third meeting of the URBACT Local Group were dedicated to this task. During these meetings, we worked with the Group members to define the key elements of the Integrated Action Plan, including the starting point, end goal, and potential actions to bridge the two.

The June meeting of the URBACT Local Group was distinguished by the presence of Mr. Krzysztof Stańko, Deputy Mayor of the City of Rzeszów and Aldo Vargas from National URBACT Point, who moderated the working session.

With Mr. Stańko's appointment as Deputy Mayor, there was a change in the Project Team: we lost our ULG Coordinator. As of early June, Ms. Mariola Tabin from the Center for Urban Innovation - Urban Lab took

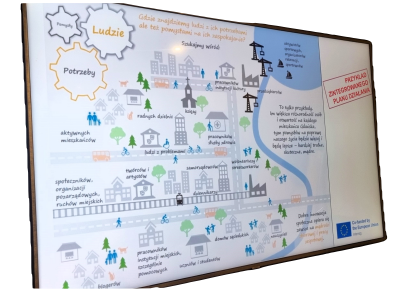


over this position. (However, we also gained a C4TALENT ambassador in the leadership team).

Alongside developing the initial version of the Integrated Action Plan, the **Project Team also began designing testing actions**. This involves generating ideas, planning, implementing/testing, monitoring, and

evaluating their impact in relation to the city's challenges.

At the end of the second quarter and the beginning of the third, the Project Team met with representatives from the Student Forum of the Business Center Club Rzeszów. They are planning an event called "Entrepreneurship Manufacture," aimed at creating a collaborative space for young people, local authorities, and businesses to work together on the city's development.



Varberg

During this period, the city of Varberg visited Vilanova i la Geltrú for the partner meeting. **The study visits to Norrsken and Technocampus in Mataró during the TN meeting provided great inspiration for our local open space - TechArena Varberg.** The study visits not only offered valuable insights but also sparked numerous ideas that we aim to implement in our local initiatives. By observing best practices and innovative solutions from our partners and visits in Vilanova i la Geltrú, we are **better equipped to enhance our own tech environment.**

At the beginning of June, we hosted our third ULG meeting, led by two individuals (Göran and Markus) who are deeply involved in building our tech community in Varberg. At the ULG meeting, we emphasized collaboration and long-term planning. Our discussions centered around defining clear objectives,



identifying resources and important stakeholders, and setting milestones to ensure steady progress towards our goals. We discussed how to continue growing the community in Varberg, focusing on the vision and the critical building blocks necessary for Varberg to achieve this vision. The contributions and insights from all participants were invaluable in starting to shape a robust strategy for the future.

As we move forward, our focus will be on nurturing an inclusive and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem within tech in Varberg, ensuring that we provide opportunities for innovation, growth, and community engagement. By building on the inspiration and knowledge gained from our partners and the collaborative spirit of our ULG meetings, we are confident in our ability to realize our vision for Techarena Varberg.

Vilanova i la Geltrú

- **Facilitation Experts join C4Talent:** Our local network has expanded with the addition of two external facilitation experts. They provided valuable contribution during our meetings.
- **ULG Meeting on 25/04/2024:** This meeting focused on discussing the project roadmap, defining the central problem, and drafting initial test actions. The members were actively engaged.
- **Young Entrepreneur Students Visit Neàpolis on 6/05/2023:** Initiated by a ULG member, entrepreneurship students visited Neàpolis to explore the ecosystem and interact with real entrepreneurs.
- **Neàpolis at the Vilanova University Campus:** Through the initiative of a ULG member, Neàpolis representatives visited UPC to discuss local innovation with university students.
- **Vilanova i la Geltrú City Coordination:** During the transnational meeting, the city



was presented to our partners. This motivated coordinated efforts within city municipality departments to create a comprehensive city overview presentation.

- **ULG Meeting on 23/05/2024:** This meeting focused on reviewing the core problem and the test actions executed. Participants also brainstormed new testing actions.
- **Transnational Meeting on 28-30/05/2024:** The active participation of some ULG members was crucial in building stronger connections within the group.

- **Vilanova i la Geltrú City Coordination 2: The Entrepreneurial Journey:** Following the identification of key aspects in the Integrated Action Plan and insights from the transnational meeting, the need for better coordination of entrepreneurial initiatives was recognized. A first meeting was held with the Projection and Enterprise City Council Department and Neàpolis (Innovation) to define the Entrepreneurial Journey.

Knowledge and Inspirations

Building an entrepreneurial ecosystem

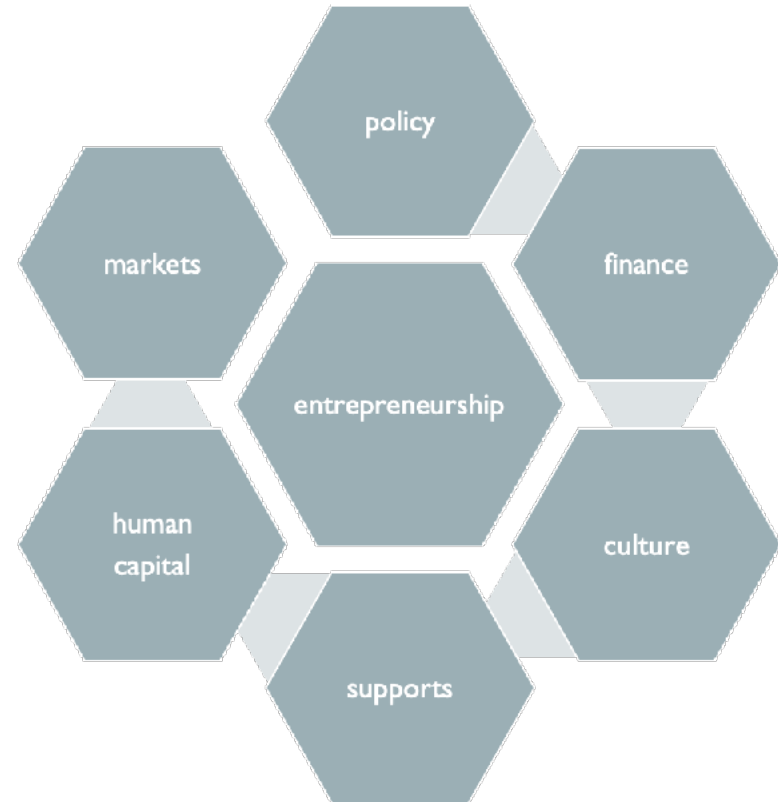
What is an entrepreneurial ecosystem?

There are various definitions of entrepreneurial ecosystems. According to Mason & Brown (2014), an entrepreneurial ecosystem is “a set of interconnected entrepreneurial actors, entrepreneurial organizations, institutions and entrepreneurial processes which formally and informally coalesce to connect, mediate, and govern the performance within the local entrepreneurial environment.”

According to Isenberg (2010), it “... consists of a set of individual elements that combine in complex ways. In isolation, each is conducive to entrepreneurship but insufficient to sustain it. Together, however, these elements turbocharge venture creation and growth.”

When it comes to the main components of entrepreneurial ecosystems, there are lots of different frameworks. In C4TALENT, we worked with the framework developed by Professor D J Isenberg from Babson College, Boston.

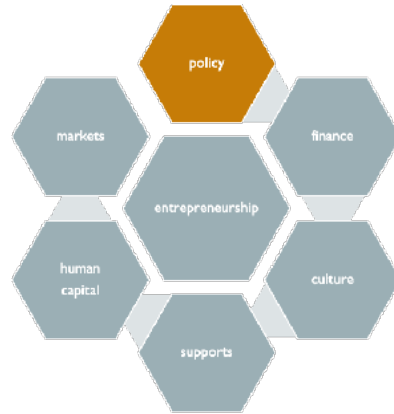
Isenberg’s model identifies 6 separate - but strongly interrelated - elements of entrepreneurial ecosystems.



Building an entrepreneurial ecosystem

Policy

There are clear local policies and programmes in place which help to create the conditions in which entrepreneurs can flourish. Thought leaders from all sectors are engaged in driving future policy.

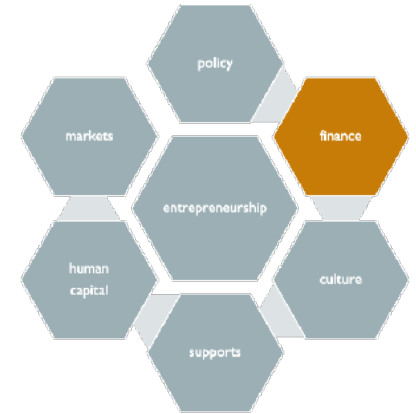


What does that mean in practice?

For instance, the local council has a clear and public commitment to entrepreneurship. There are policy development forums which engage different entrepreneurship stakeholders (government, education & research, business & civil society).

Finance

Aspiring entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs, startups and scale ups can find and access a wide range of finance opportunities including angel investment, equity-investment, debt, grant finance, crowdfunding.



What does that mean in practice?

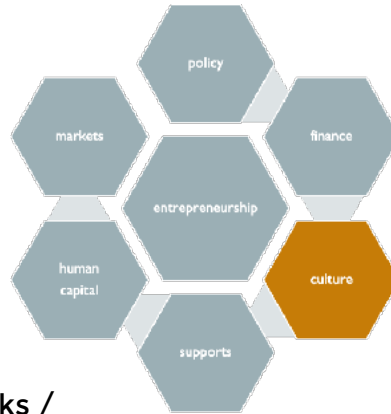
For instance, the council has its own business support grant programme, soft landing grants and (co)-investment vehicle.

Businesses are well signposted to other potential funding routes either locally, nationally or internationally.

Building an entrepreneurial ecosystem

Culture

- Different ecosystem stakeholders cluster around a particular geographic location within the city.
- Public and private spaces and places are conducive to chance meetings.
- There is a 'pay it forward' mentality in the entrepreneurship community with natural champions.
- There are formal and informal networks / meetups and grassroots support for entrepreneurship.

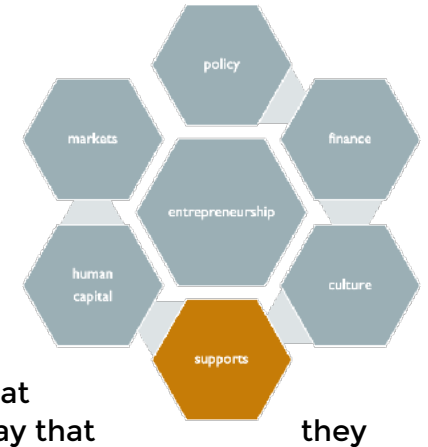


What does that mean in practice?

For instance, the council owns or funds a physical hub which brings entrepreneurs together (beware the 'build it & they will come' challenge). The council understands its role and when it is best left to others. The council is well networked with entrepreneurship stakeholders elsewhere - regionally, nationally, internationally.

Supports

There are affordable (open) workspaces such as incubators, accelerators, makers-spaces, fab-labs and co-working spaces which are rooted in the place and have a strong community offer. Entrepreneurs and startups can access the support that they need at the time that they need it in the way that they want it.



There is a pool of local mentors and peer support networks.

What does that mean in practice?

The council owns or funds workspace provision. It delivers or partners with others to deliver extensive business support programmes. It actively signposts local entrepreneurs around the ecosystem.

Building an entrepreneurial ecosystem

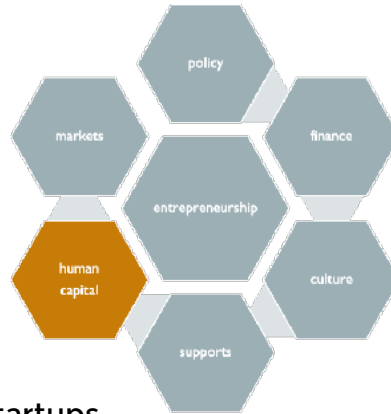
Human capital

There is a pool of local talent / skilled labour able to respond to the ever-changing needs of startups. Education and training providers are flexible and responsive to business need and embed entrepreneurship into their core offer.

There are opportunities for paid internships and apprenticeships within startups, scale-ups & corporates. Graduates from local or nearby universities stay in the city/region.

What does that mean in practice?

The council funds or delivers entrepreneurship education and training programmes e.g. bootcamps, hackathons. It uses or offers public space for entrepreneurial education or support programmes. It celebrates local successes to help local people see themselves in the entrepreneurship world. It prioritises inclusion and diversity in entrepreneurship.



Markets

Startups have easy access to local, regional and international markets.

There are early adopters which are prepared to take a risk of purchasing a novel product or service.

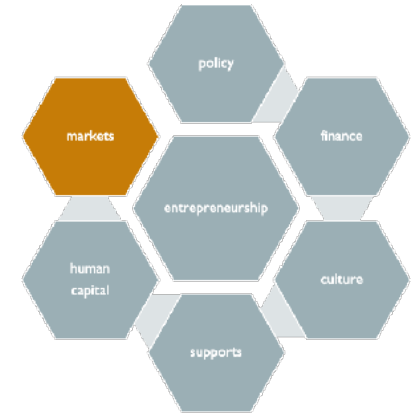
What does that mean in practice?

Where procurement allows, the council includes local businesses in its local support chain.

The council provides a testbed for innovations of local startups.

The council helps local businesses find good export advice services.

City leaders, local politicians help entrepreneurs by giving access to their local networks, making introductions.



People and insights - the “Talent Perspective”

Building the best pasta bar in Hungary

Please introduce yourself. Who are you and what do you do for a living?

I'm Máté Gabulya, the manager of Cvekedli, a pasta restaurant. Me and my brother opened the place in the summer of 2021 in Nyíregyháza - he is the chef.

Tell us about your professional journey. How did you become an entrepreneur?

We left Hungary - first my brother, and then me in 2017 - with a plan to open our own fine-dining restaurant one day. That is why our goal was to gain experience - we worked in places where the chef was also the manager of the restaurant, so we saw how things work when the one in control is not an external investor but someone who's in the thick of everyday operations. When we finally decided to come home and start our own place, hard work awaited us: after "catching up" with the current - and



local - Hungarian conditions in the hospitality business, we knew that fine-dining was still only a distant goal, so at first, we strived to be able to work with high-quality local ingredients which meant that we had to get to know the suppliers while the renovation of the selected building was taking place. Since we started this completely on our own, it was important to have a well-thought-out concept which we can implement quickly and successfully - we didn't have time to wait years for

Why did you decide to return and build a career here?

Actually, it wasn't clear from the beginning that we want to do this here, in Nyíregyháza. We tried to come up with a concept that could work anywhere in the world - in London, New York, or Budapest. Nevertheless, it was clear that Nyíregyháza is familiar to us, it is still our home, so sentimentality played an important role in our decision. In addition, we saw a market gap here based on our familiarity with the city - the local gastronomic palette is not too colourful: there is a shortage of places where you can enjoy home-made, high-quality food from local ingredients in a "casual" environment. I'm not saying

that we did a thorough market research, but we had enough insight into the city to start our restaurant with relative confidence. We were in a hurry to avoid anyone thinking of the same idea. :-) Last but not least, the setup costs here are significantly lower than, say, in Debrecen (40 km from Nyíregyháza), or in Budapest.

What do you love most about your city?

The fact that we are from Nyíregyháza makes it so much easier for us to build relationships with our guests – they appreciate that we have come back here to start our business, you can truly feel the camaraderie. Although I would be lying if I said that this is the place where I enjoyed living the most in my life, I feel this city is mine, more than any other, which is only enhanced by the fact that we started our business here.

From another – less business-related – perspective, I consider Nyíregyháza a liveable city in many ways. There are factors that don't mean much to me now because I don't have my own family yet, but my friends agree that it's a great place to raise children. Personally, I like how green it is and love the Sóstó area nearby.

Is there anything that's missing for you from Nyíregyháza?

It's sad to see that the cultural offer of the city isn't diverse enough – events are usually organized to appeal to a large number of people, while smaller, more focused programmes are rarer. In addition, the city quickly empties out in the



evenings, especially on weekdays: it lacks the vibrant atmosphere that characterizes so many cities abroad (and not only the big ones).

After returning here, it has also become apparent – and this is actually true for the whole country, not just Nyíregyháza – that it's harder to find a supportive environment here. We learned a lot from our bosses abroad, never feeling that they hide their knowledge from us because they are afraid that we might suddenly learn "everything", leave, and become their competitors. Here, people – entrepreneurs – protect their knowledge more jealously, and there are fewer opportunities for an employee to acquire higher-level knowledge than what their position requires.

When starting our restaurant, we really lacked information at the beginning. We didn't know where to turn with our questions, and if we finally got to somewhere where they could help, they either sent us somewhere else with some of our questions, or they couldn't even tell us where to go next – we were the "hot potato" in everyone's hands. Even when we've managed to accomplish something, it was difficult – the administrative wheels turned very slowly, which might be because in certain matters, there's only one person in the city who is able to help. The setup would have gone much faster, if we had the option to go to a place where they tell us everything and point the way regarding matters in which they cannot help there. It would be a good start if all information and contacts could be found in one place, at least online.



Alytus - the ideal place to live

Please introduce yourself. Who are you and what do you do for a living?

My name is Karolis Aleknavičius. I live in Alytus City, Lithuania. I'm IT developer, working with ERP systems. Currently I'm a CEO and Co-Founder of few international companies.

Tell us about your professional journey. How did you become an entrepreneur?

After finishing the IT program at Alytus College, I had a clear goal: to work abroad but eventually return to live in Alytus, Lithuania, and possibly start my own business. In 2007, I moved to Finland to work as an ERP system (Microsoft Dynamics AX) developer in the IT sector. Two years later, in 2009, I moved to Austria for a similar role in the finance sector. In 2012, I relocated to Belgium, continuing my work as an ERP developer, this time in the utilities sector.

That same year, I took the leap and established my first company, starting my journey as a freelance developer. By 2015, I found myself back in Austria, returning to the same



company I worked for in 2009, but this time as an ERP system team lead, architect, and project manager in the finance sector.

In 2017, I finally returned home to Alytus and founded my second company, ERP Mechanics Baltic JSC, teaming up with other freelancers from Vilnius. Our aim was to unite freelancers into a highly experienced technical team to support projects and customers abroad. As demand grew, so did our team. Today, we have over 25 employees and generated €2,000,000 in revenue last year.

Why did you decide to return and build a career here?

Alytus is a fantastic city where my wife and I grew up. It's green, compact, and well-situated, making it an ideal place to live.

It's great because it has everything you need for daily life. The city is filled with parks and playgrounds, creating a beautiful, green environment right in the center. Its compact size means you can reach kindergartens, schools, extracurricular activities, and various sports facilities within five minutes.

Alytus is also perfectly situated, with Kaunas (and its airport) just 60 km away, Vilnius 100 km away, and Druskininkai,

known for its wellness and spa facilities, only 50 km away. The only downside is the lack of a train connection, so you'll need a car to get anywhere outside the city.

What do you love most about your city?

Alytus is great for families raising kids, working, and enjoying an active lifestyle. There are plenty of opportunities to become an active community member and influence the city's development, such as joining the Rotary Club.

Is there anything that you miss in Alytus?

Imagine having a train connection to Kaunas and Vilnius, making travel super convenient. Alytus could also introduce new eco-living apartments and business offices that blend seamlessly into the city's parks and natural surroundings. It would be perfect for those who love nature and want to enjoy a green, sustainable lifestyle while still being close to everything.

Actively shaping Sarajevo's future

Please introduce yourself. Who are you and what do you do for a living?

My name Lejla Brckalija - I live in Centar Sarajevo. I am the owner of Business Excellence - a company offering Tailored Business English Training and Translation Services.

Tell us about your professional journey. How did you become an entrepreneur?

I graduated with a degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Sarajevo in 2005, subsequently dedicating over 15 years to roles within sports development, tourism promotion, and infrastructure investment. This diverse experience cultivated a robust skill set encompassing project management, tourism development, communication, translation and interpretation, and strategic planning.

Throughout my career, I have successfully bridged

language and cultural divides, fostering economic growth and empowering individuals through effective communication. My journey culminated in establishing Business Excellence in 2020, where I now directly help clients achieve their business goals through strong language

Why did you decide to stay in Sarajevo and build a career here?

Inspired by the saying "You are not a tree, if you don't like where you are, move," I am committed to actively shaping Sarajevo's future. While I acknowledge the city's undeniable charm, I also recognize its untapped potential. Contributing to its progress while pursuing my professional goals is a challenge that I gladly accept.



What do you love most about your city?

There are countless positive aspects to Sarajevo, and I truly believe this city was meant for me. While I don't subscribe to the idea of borders, I am certain that my birth here was no coincidence. Thus, I continue to be a part of Sarajevo's ongoing transformation.

Is there anything that you miss in Sarajevo?

- A more robust infrastructure, including efficient public transportation, reliable utilities, and modern roads.
- A stronger ecosystem of support services for businesses, such as access to finance, mentorship, and specialized training, as crucial for fostering entrepreneurship and innovation; streamlined regulations and incentives for businesses.
- Integration of STEM and PBL in early education which I believe to be vital to build a competitive workforce and drive progress and innovation. These should also include building resilience and a positive mindset which can foster a business environment.
- A more accessible and efficient healthcare system.

- Urban planning focused on environmental protection and sustainable development that is not only necessary to preserve the city's natural beauty but also to preserve a healthy environment.

There are many positive aspects and a few more that Sarajevo misses. However, I believe the ones above would bring better outlooks.



Upcoming Activities

Upcoming Activities (2024 Q3)

Two out of 3 months of Q3 - July and August - are summer months and fall into the holiday season. As a result, activities seem to slow down a bit, both on local and on transnational level. (That does not mean that partners do not work “under the hood” to prepare for a quick start in September). From the beginning of September the partnership will work hard to draft high-quality IAPs, using all the knowledge and inspirations collected in the first 3 quarters.

Regular Check-in Call 3

Date: 2 July,, 14:00 - 16:00 CET

Theme: Last joint session before the holiday season; Reviewing network level progress, local progress, the status of IAP preparation and testing action design, teaser of the consecutive TN meeting in Alghero.

Regular check-in call 4

Date: September 3, 14:00 - 16:00 CET

Theme: IAP progress, preparation and homework for the next TN meeting, detailed workplan for Q4.

Webinar 4

Dates: early to mid September- TBC

Theme: Originally planned for June, Webinar 4 has been postponed to September. The webinar will focus on planning actions and use the same hybrid approach as Webinar 2 and 3.

3rd Core Network Meeting - Alghero

Dates: October 1-3

Theme: IAP Peer Review, Host city Session, Mid Term Reflection Session. This TN meeting (similarly to the previous one) will also be combined with a Masterclass - this time focusing on Talent Attraction and Retention.



The Vilanova I la Geltrú hosts hand over the TN meeting organiser flag to the representatives of Alghero.

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