



# NextGen Youthwork An URBACT APN Network

Quarterly Network Report 2 – July 2024

# NextGen YouthWork

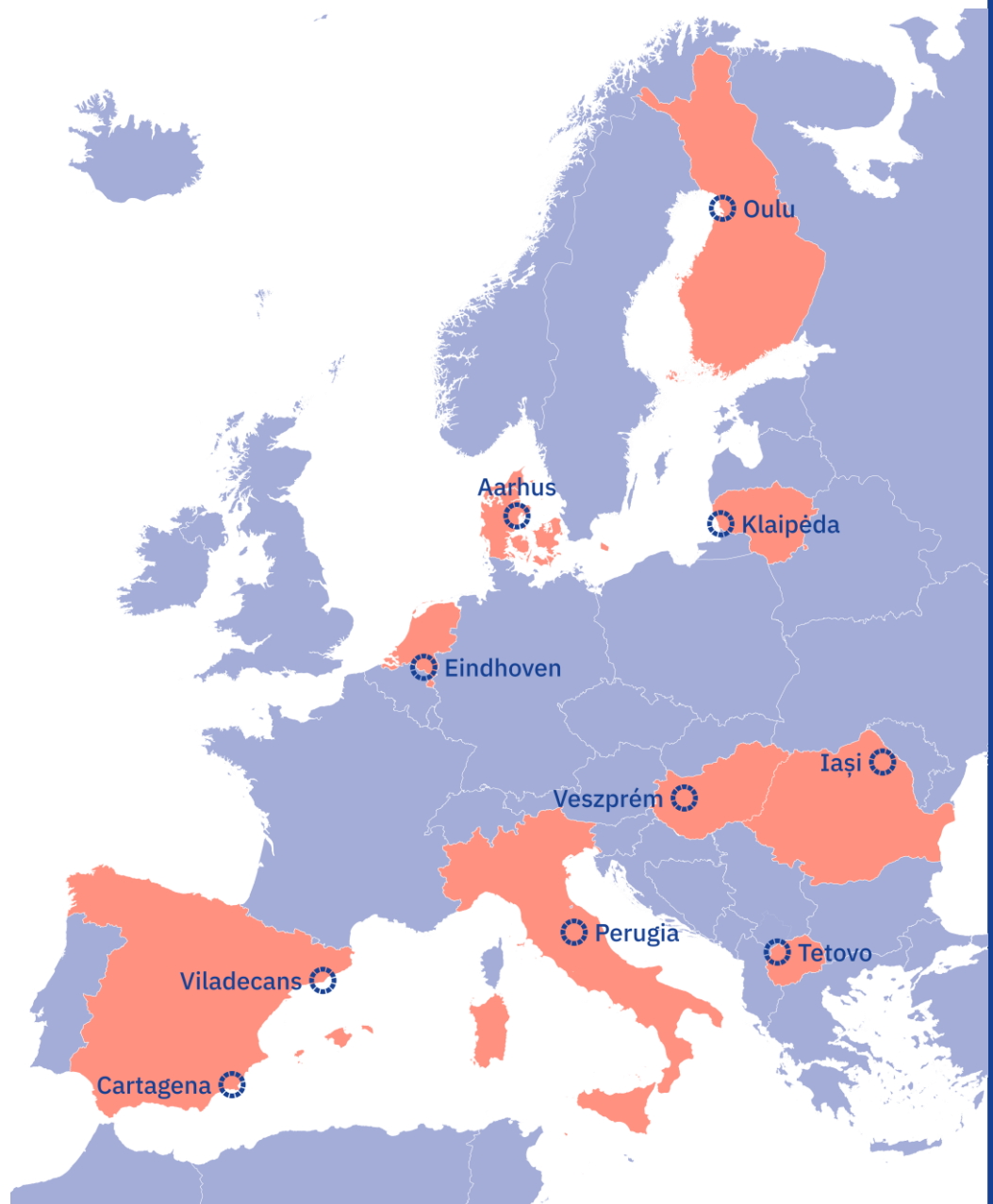
## About the Network

With the rise of digitalisation, European youth spend more time online and less in physical public spaces. Youth work starts where youth are; therefore, youth workers need to acquire the skills to use key (social media and gaming) platforms to be accessible and interact with young people.

**NextGen YouthWork**  
aims to create a long-term vision and strategy  
for a hybrid and sustainable youth work  
that effectively meets the needs of young people.

NextGen YouthWork is a URBACT Action Planning Network consisting of ten European cities: Eindhoven (the Netherlands), Aarhus (Denmark), Cartagena (Spain), Iași (Romania), Klaipėda (Lithuania), Oulu (Finland), Perugia (Italy), Tetovo (Republic of North Macedonia), Veszprém (Hungary) and Viladecans (Spain).

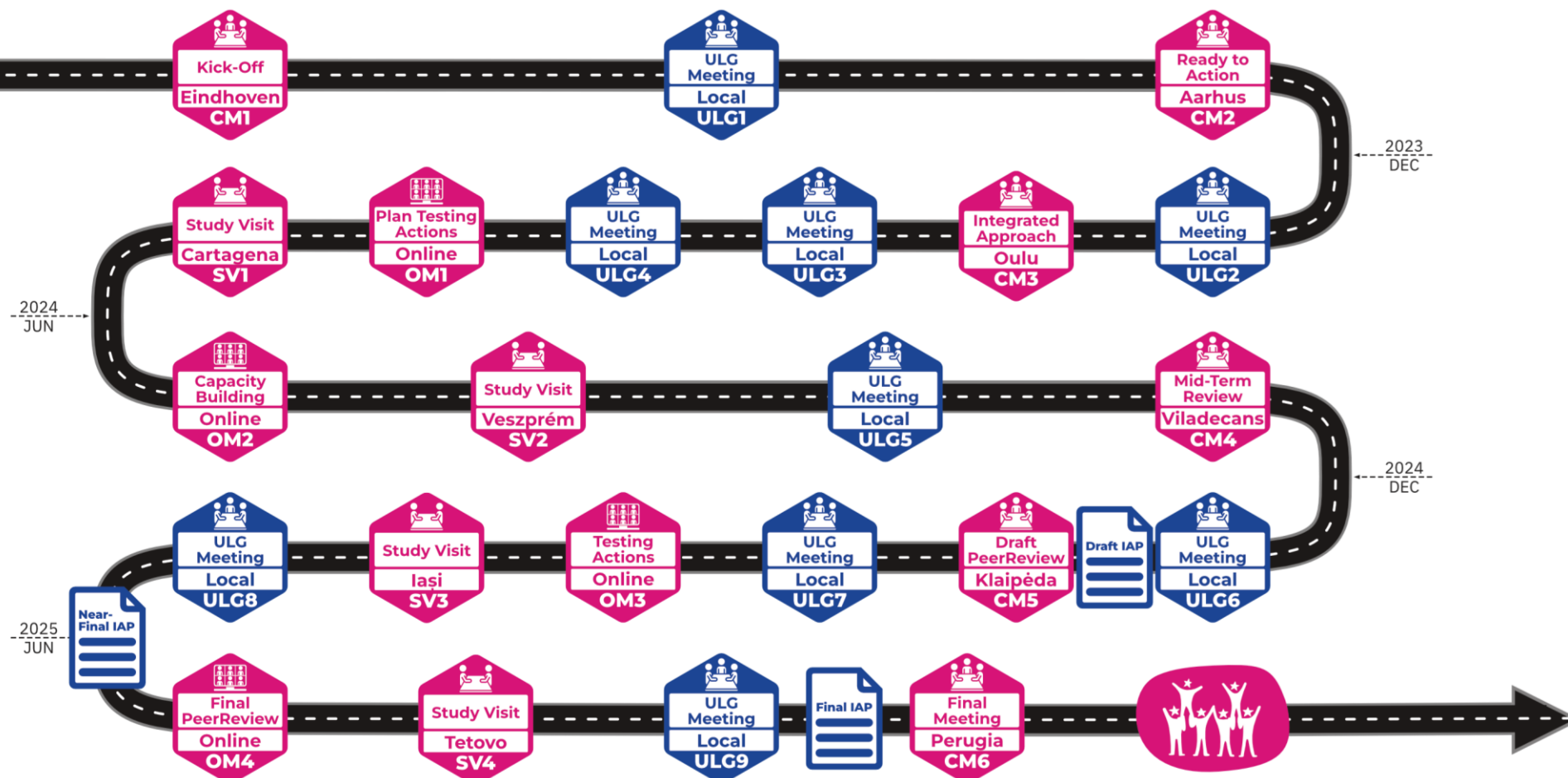
More information on the NextGen YouthWork project is available at the [URBACT mini-site](#).



# NextGen YouthWork

## The Network Roadmap

The Network Roadmap summarises the main steps to exchange knowledge and experience between cities. Throughout this journey, cities learn from each other through international meetings, such as face-to-face Core Meetings (CM), Study Visits (SV), and Online Meetings (OM). In parallel, they work jointly with the local stakeholders in their URBACT Local Groups (ULGs). By linking the international and local scenes, cities will develop their Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) by December 2025.





# Core Meeting 3

## Oulu, Finland

Integrated Approach Meeting, 20-21 Feb 2024

The third Core Meeting of the NextGen YouthWork project took place in Oulu, Finland. The event offered insights into Oulu's youth work strategies and emphasised preventive youth work, integrated services, and digital engagement.

The event began with a welcome from Marjut Nurmivuori. It was followed by a presentation on Oulu's youth work, highlighting preventive support and community-based initiatives. The Youth Workshop visit showcased employment support for youth aged 17-29, offering coaching and guidance.

The second day started with a session on the Integration Assessment Grid. Participants later explored the Byström One-Stop Guidance Centre, offering multi-service youth support. The afternoon featured insights into Kanuuna's youth work, digital youth engagement via Discord, and street-based youth outreach. The Ankkuri and Nurri teams showcased multi-professional interventions supporting at-risk youth.

The key takeaways from CM3 were:

- Holistic youth support is vital, as early intervention and continuous support.
- The one-stop model provides integrated services in one location.
- Digital and street-based outreach are effective ways to engage youth.
- Multi-professional collaboration as featured in Ankkuri and Nurri teams' crime prevention and youth supporting activities.





# Study Visit 1

## Cartagena, Spain

Ready for Action Meeting, 4 June 2024

The Study Visit to Cartagena provided an insightful exploration of the city's youth services and innovative engagement programs. The day began with a warm welcome, setting the stage for an in-depth look at the city's youth initiatives. Participants then visited the Youth Services Department, where they were introduced to the city's various youth programs. These programs showcase best practices in supporting young people in employment, housing, health, education, social care, and citizen rights. This comprehensive overview gave us a thorough understanding of Cartagena's youth services.

The group then walked to Isaac Peral High School to learn about the Youth Correspondents program. This peer-to-peer initiative empowers students to share information and promotes youth participation. The visit continued with a walk to the Polytechnic University of Cartagena, where a deep-dive session allowed for a more detailed discussion on youth engagement.

After lunch, participants proceeded to the National Museum of Underwater Archaeology Library to explore the Mandarache Award. This initiative, which fosters youth participation through literature and new forms of communication, provided valuable insights. These insights into how innovative cultural projects can enhance youth engagement were truly enlightening. The day concluded with reflections on new methods of youth involvement and interactive communication, offering a comprehensive overview of Cartagena's commitment to youth participation.



# Online Meeting 1

21-22 May 2024

Online Meeting 1 included presentations from several cities about their URBACT Local Group (ULG) meetings and their proposed Testing Actions, which would be carried out throughout the upcoming months.

Cartagena intends to expand its digital activities by creating a WhatsApp channel, which will be disseminated through youth correspondents in educational centres.

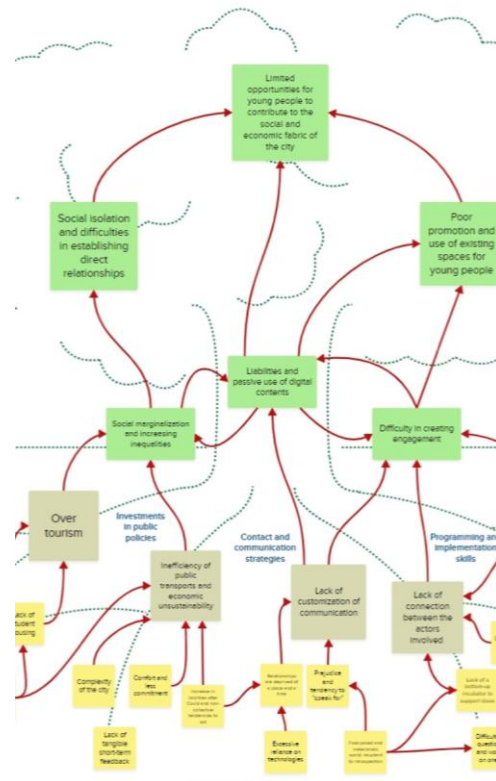
Klaipėda and Perugia both focus on training. Klaipėda trains youth workers on digital tools, while Perugia trains youth in communication and graphics, event organisation, social media, and AI.

Iași is developing a youth centre in a neighbourhood and initiates community activities.

Oulu is taking an innovative approach by testing Zekki, a knowledge management tool that measures young adults' well-being. This will help them analyse and improve their services.

Viladecans's testing action is focused on strengthening the role of the youth street worker, using a WhatsApp channel for communication, based on the experience learned in Cartagena.

Veszprém's testing actions include developing a Youth App with the active involvement of youth. The process would consist of educational modules, app building, evaluation, and testing. Veszprém's second action involves accommodating a new youth community space in one of the neighbourhoods and engaging the youth through digital channels.





# Cities in Focus

## Oulu, Finland

With a population of 210,000, Oulu is known as the "capital" of Northern Finland. The city has a significant youth demographic—38% of its residents are under 27. The city strongly emphasises youth work, ensuring accessibility and engagement. Youth services in Oulu are diverse, encompassing outreach programs, peer support, mobile spaces, and digital platforms.

One of the city's key challenges is ensuring equal access to local services, particularly for young people facing socio-economic inequalities. To address these, Oulu is developing a national online youth space, collaborating with 10 municipalities and Kanuuna. Additionally, the city offers educational programs in digital youth work and opportunities in the gaming industry to foster digital skills.

With Smart City Oulu set to launch in 2024, the city is investing significantly in AI-driven service development, youth e-services, and digital education initiatives. This promises a future of online elections, information portals, and virtual communities.

Through the URBACT Integrated Action Plan, Oulu is committed to empowering youth and continuous improvement. The city seeks to learn best practices in digital youth work, privacy management, and innovative engagement methods. This commitment ensures that Oulu's digital services for young people will always be accessible and of the highest quality.





# Cities in Focus

## Cartagena, Spain

Cartagena, Spain, is a coastal city on the Mediterranean with a population of around 220,000. About 22% of its residents are aged 15-34, and the city faces a significant issue with youth unemployment. This problem is particularly pronounced in marginalised neighbourhoods, leading to low youth engagement.

Cartagena has developed a youth strategy to address these challenges and integrate young people into various municipal policies. The Municipal Plan for Children and Adolescents focuses on key areas such as education, well-being, and youth participation. Additionally, the Municipal Addictions Plan aims to prevent drug and behavioural addictions, while a Disability Plan and an Equality Plan promote inclusion and equity.

The city is committed to empowering its youth through several strategies. These strategies aim to increase civic participation, enhance skills development, foster social inclusion, and promote environmental sustainability and digitalisation. The IAP reflects this commitment, focusing on creating a resilient youth community by strengthening engagement strategies, improving interventions with youth workers, and measuring the impact of initiatives.

Cartagena is also actively collaborating with other cities in the NextGen YouthWork initiative to improve digital skills, participatory processes, and communication strategies. The city hopes to strengthen youth involvement in decision-making and community development by incorporating digital tools and open governance methods.





# Good Practices

## Oulu, Finland

Oulu provides essential support for young people through various initiatives, building on the support and involvement of community members, local government officials, and organisations focused on youth services, demonstrating its commitment to youth well-being and inclusion.

[Byström One-Stop Guidance Centre](#) is a low-threshold service hub for youth aged 16-29, offering assistance with employment, education, and everyday life. It provides face-to-face and online counselling, group activities, and events on work, health, relationships, housing, and substance abuse. Since 2011, Byström has grown into one of Finland's most prominent centres of its kind and significantly impacted the community. It employs nearly 50 professionals from multiple sectors and serves as a beacon for the youth.

[Youth Bysis](#) is a central youth gaming and media space where youth aged 12-25 can engage in leisure activities, band practice, and gaming. Open three to four nights weekly, it hosts gaming tournaments, workshops, and creative events shaped by youth input.

[Outreach Youth Work](#) supports youth aged 15-29 who are not in education or employment. They provide voluntary assistance, helping young people navigate services and opportunities while ensuring safe, confidential interactions.

[Yökoris](#) is a community-focused initiative to foster inclusion and social engagement among individuals aged 15-35. It provides safe spaces for young people from diverse backgrounds to connect and participate, strengthening Oulu's social fabric.





# Good Practices

## Cartagena, Spain

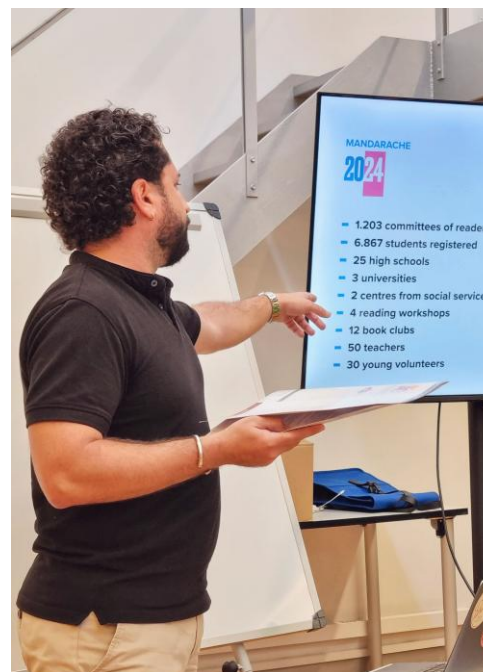
Cartagena implements several innovative initiatives to engage youth aged 12-35, providing resources and fostering participation across various sectors.

[Youth Space \(Informajoven\)](#) is a public service that addresses youth needs in employment, housing, health, education, and social care. It promotes leisure as a non-formal educational space where young people develop skills, values, and healthy habits. Facilities include a youth hostel, camping areas, rehearsal spaces, and rooms with internet access.

The [Youth Associations Fair](#) is an annual event that brings together 1,200 young people from various associations. It serves as a platform for them to showcase their activities, foster collaboration, promote social awareness by sharing best practices, and strengthen civic engagement.

[Mandarache Awards](#) is a large-scale reading promotion initiative that annually engages around 7,000 youth in discussing and debating topics relevant to them. Additional components besides the two literary awards include creative writing workshops, a podcast network, and various events each school year.

[Youth Correspondents](#) play a crucial role in their high schools and universities. They serve as a peer-led information network, effectively bridging the gap between Informajoven and their classmates by managing social media, sharing information, and providing direct peer support.





# Tools and Methodologies Used in Meetings

## Integration Assessment Grid

Integration is not just a concept but a core principle of the URBACT method. In today's urban landscape, projects and policies must be designed and implemented in the most integrated way to ensure sustainability. As part of the URBACT journey, cities are advised to evaluate and improve their project's integration level over time.

The [Integration Assessment Grid](#) is a powerful tool that can help cities cover all types of integration, assess the potential for progress, and develop solutions for a more integrated, sustainable future. By using this grid, city practitioners and stakeholders can positively impact the integration of their plans. The Integration Assessment Grid can be used for self-assessment, peer-reviewing, or in a workshop with ULG members.

When using the Integration Assessment Grid, start by reflecting on your plans and scoring their current level of integration. Consider whether this level is relevant to your project. For each dimension of integration, indicate the current level and potential areas for improvement. Then, debrief and brainstorm how these changes can enhance your plans' integration.

The Integration Assessment Grid was presented and tested at the recent CM3 meeting in Oulu. However, it has been updated based on insights from the IAP Study 2023, ensuring it contained mandatory and optional elements to encourage cities to go beyond the usual level of integration.

### Obligatory aspects of integrated approaches

Aspects of integration	Description	What is the current situation?	To what extent can progress be made?
Stakeholder involvement in planning	The full range of stakeholders (considered horizontally and vertically) are engaged in identifying priorities and potential solutions		
Coherence with existing strategies	Actions and objectives are aligned and complementary to existing strategies in place at city, regional, national or European levels		
Sustainable urban development	Actions address all three pillars of sustainable development in terms of economic, social and environmental objectives		
Integration over time	Planning relevant actions in the short, medium and longer terms and considering any necessary order in implementing actions		
Stakeholder involvement in implementation	The full range of relevant stakeholders (horizontally and vertically) are engaged in implementing planned actions		

### Optional aspects of more integrated approaches

Aspects of integration	Description	What is the current situation?	To what extent can progress be made?
Sectoral integration	Addressing the full range of policies/sectors of activity, including infrastructure, transport, employment, education, green spaces, housing, culture...		
Spatial integration	Coherence of actions at different spatial levels from site-specific, through neighbourhoods and city-wide		
Territorial integration	Coherence and complementarity of actions and policies implemented by neighbouring municipalities		
Multi-level governance	Actions are planned coherently at different levels of governance, covering local (district, city), regional and national levels		
Integration of cross-cutting thematic aspects	Including gender, digitalisation, climate change and procurement		
Complementary types of investment	Balancing the need for both 'hard' (physical infrastructure) and 'soft' (human capital) investments		
Mobilising all available funding	Seeking to use the full range of funds available to support the implementation of planned actions, from EU funds to private local sources		

# Tools and Methodologies Used in Meetings

## Impact Navigator

The Impact Navigator is a tool that can help cities brainstorm ideas, assess their potential impact and attractiveness, and focus on ideas that contribute to achieving their vision.

The Impact Navigator, a tool presented by the URBACT Secretariat at the Summer e-University 2020, is designed to foster collaboration. City practitioners and stakeholders can work together to identify a set of actions that align with their shared vision and turn it into an actionable plan.

Participants are encouraged to generate as many ideas as possible during the first step to achieve their vision. This 10-minute-long brainstorming session focuses on quantity over quality while deferring judgment, encouraging wild ideas, and building on each other's contributions.

In the second step, participants evaluate the ideas' attractiveness based on their potential for impact and the challenges of implementing them.

Finally, the participants drag and drop the ideas from the attractiveness map onto the dart board, grouping them based on which ideas should be focused on, which should be kept open for further development, and which could be restored for further pursuit later.

The Impact Navigator was presented in Online Meeting 1. Then, the Lead Expert prepared a paper version of the tool and made it available to all cities.

## 2 Impact Navigator Assessment



### Instructions



Consider an 'attractive option' as one that offers a high potential for impact and a relatively low challenge in implementation.

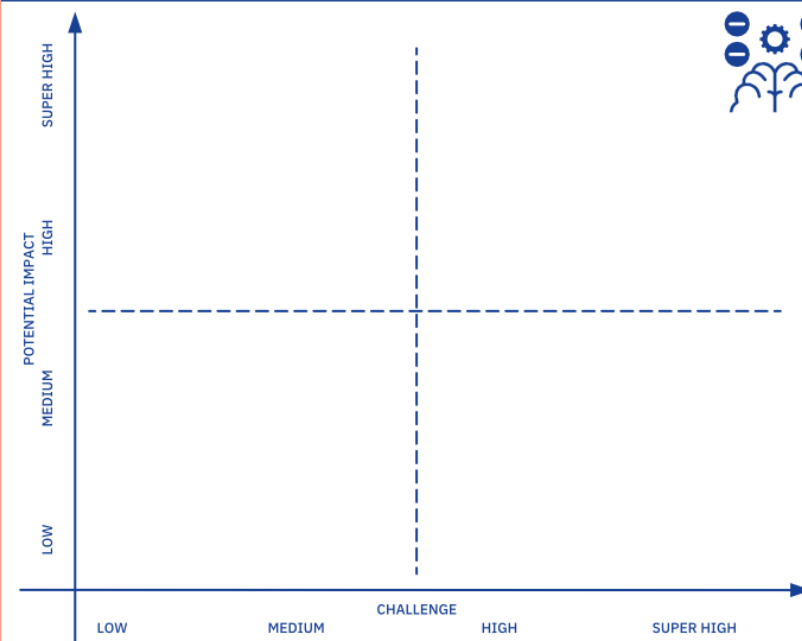
Evaluate the attractiveness of the ideas in the brainstorming canvas based on their potential for impact and how challenging they will be to implement.



**Potential:** Does the idea address a real unmet need? Will it provide an effective solution - better than current solutions? How many people will it impact? Are these risks high? Medium? Low?

**Challenge:** How difficult will it be to implement or fund the idea? Are there any other obstacles? Risks? How dependent is it on other players or actions?

### Attractiveness Map







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