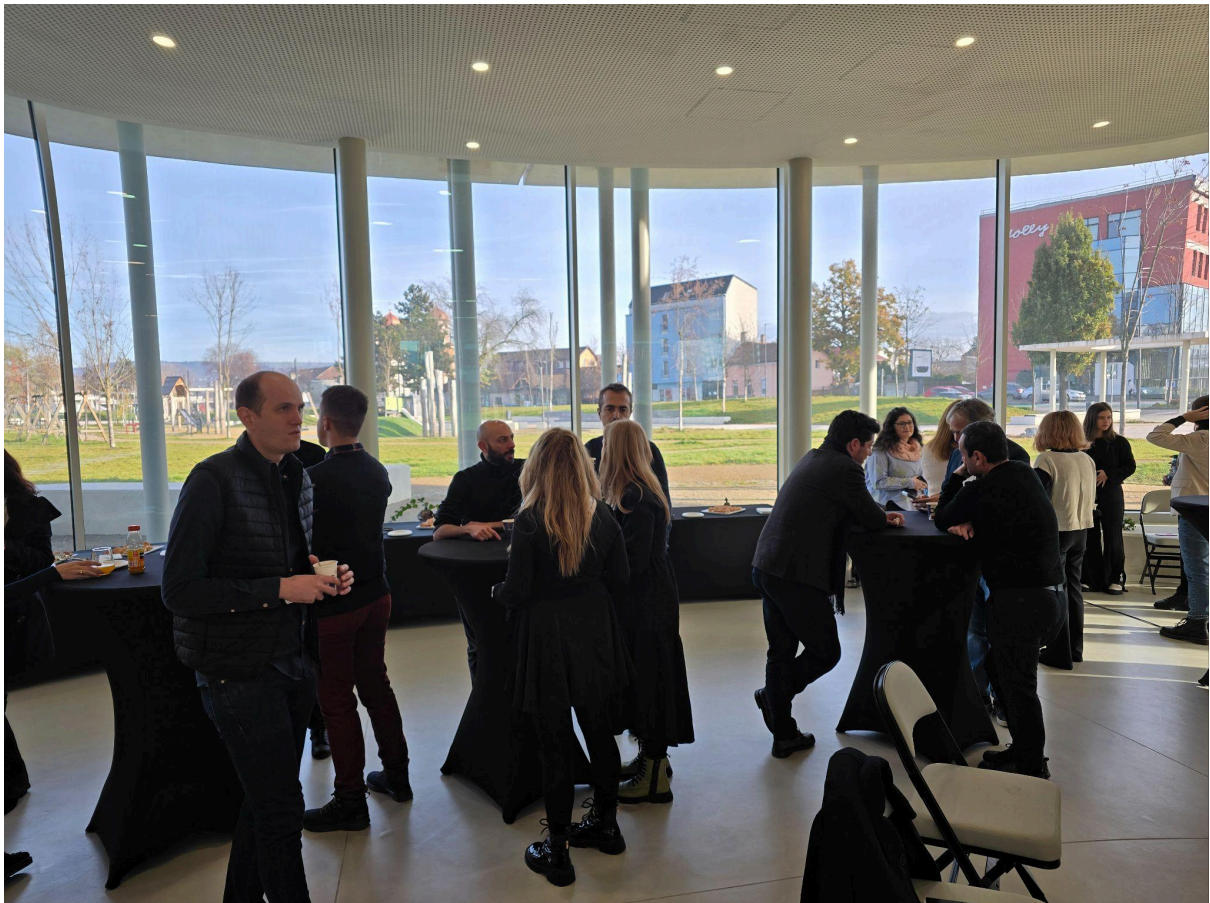


2Nite Journal #3

October - February 2026

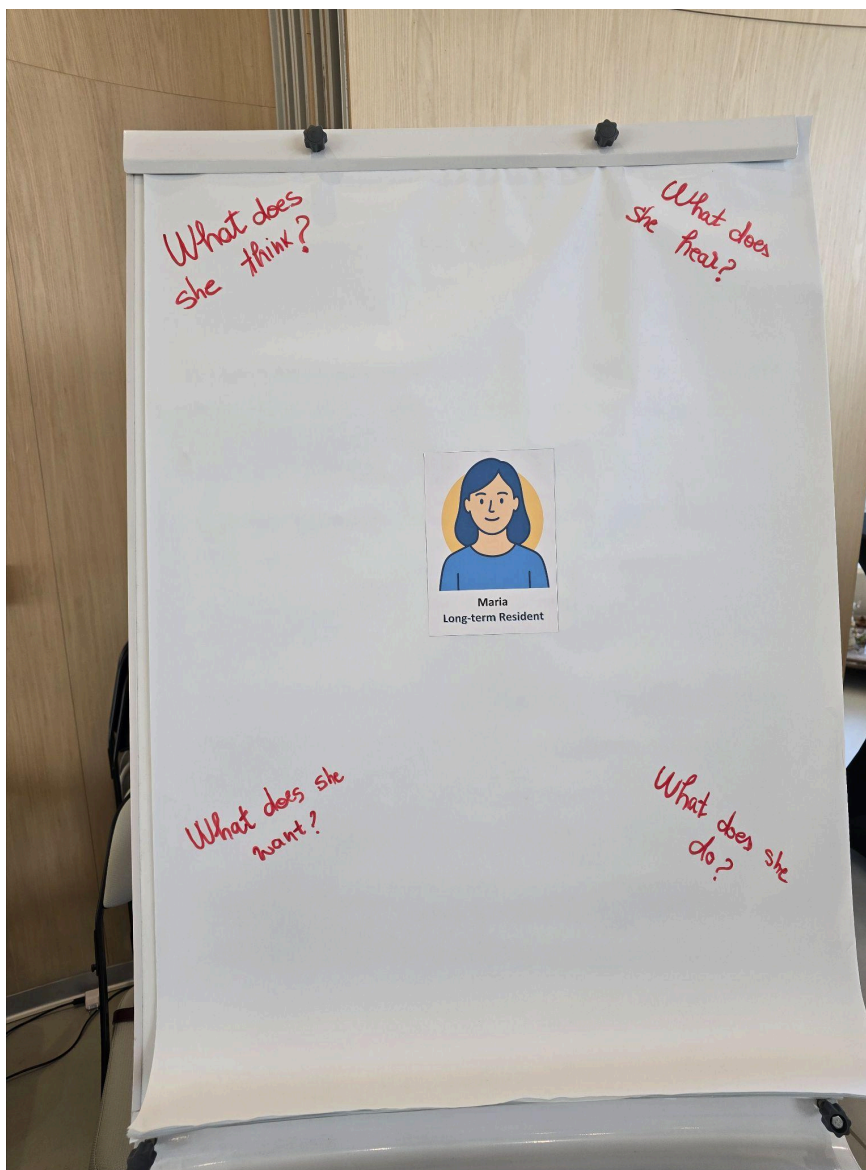


Report developed by Daniela Patti, URBACT Expert

Introduction

The 2Nite network gathered in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, for its second Transnational Meeting, and various webinars, amongst which public space activation and storytelling. Hosted by the Municipality of Cluj-Napoca, the two-day event brought together project partners, local stakeholders, and community representatives.

The meeting served as a vital mid-term touchpoint to explore how European cities can better understand, measure, and improve public space liveability and safety perceptions, particularly within urban neighborhoods undergoing rapid demographic and spatial change. Through interactive workshops, on-the-ground field exploration, and strategic planning sessions, partners collaborated to shape the next phase of their Integrated Action Plans.



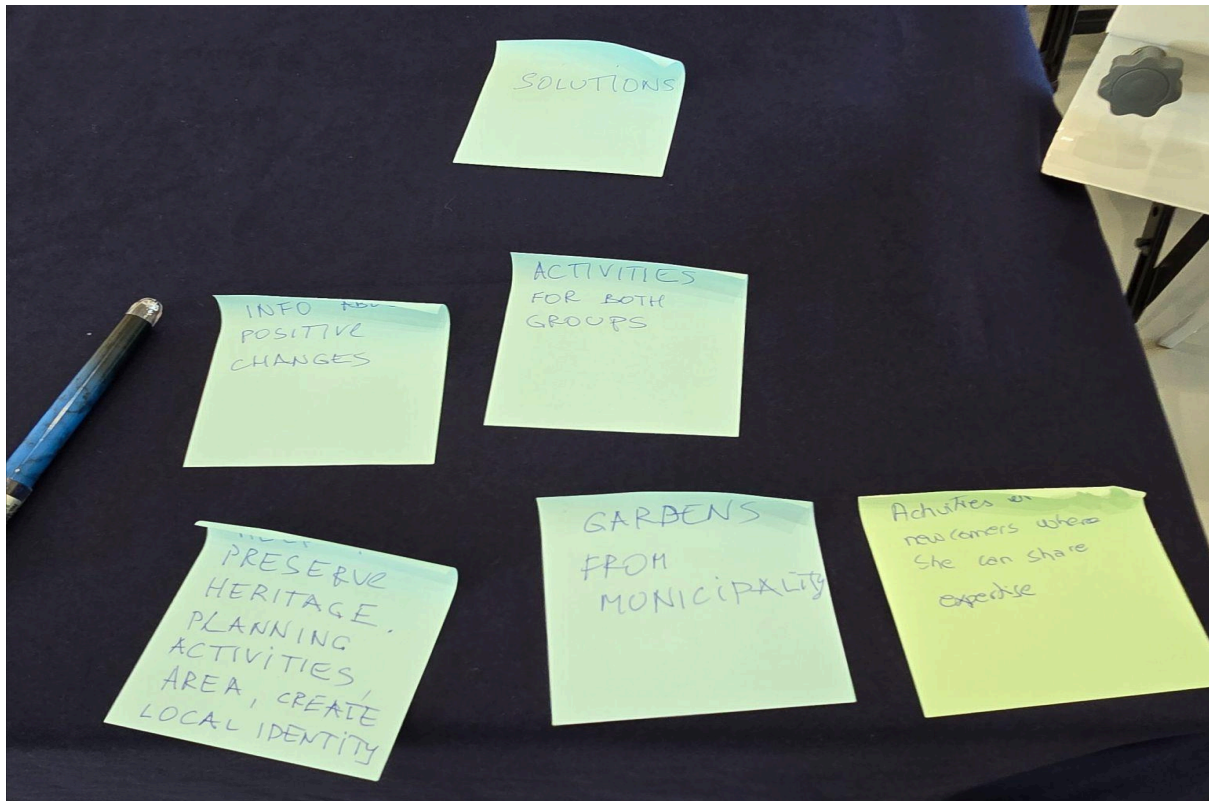
Core themes: liveability and the perception of safety

The meeting moved beyond raw crime statistics to focus on human-centered, co-produced urban safety. Key discussions centered around the qualitative nuances of how different demographics experience public spaces after dark:

- **Gender-Differentiated Realities:** Preliminary results from data tracking highlighted substantial variations in safety perceptions. Women frequently report higher levels of vulnerability and emotional anxiety at night, whereas men focus their feedback primarily on infrastructure gaps and spatial organization.
- **The Empathy Gap (Old vs. New):** A participatory exercise utilizing "empathy maps" forced partners to view neighborhoods through two fictional residents: a long-term inhabitant (Maria) and a newcomer (Alex). The workshop proved that long-term residents evaluate safety through decades of lived experience and emotional ties, while newcomers judge it strictly via immediate connectivity, lighting, and urban coherence.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Partners emphasized utilizing online questionnaires, narrative mapping, and clear data visualization to map safety challenges and guide municipal funding effectively.



Host city focus on urban regeneration in Cluj-Napoca



Cluj-Napoca utilized the transnational platform to showcase its local testing actions and strategic long-term vision, centered around the Iris neighborhood—a historically heavy industrial zone shifting rapidly into a dense residential community.

Partners conducted field visits to key sites demonstrating Cluj's urban transformation:

- Feroviarilor Park & Armatura Park: Reclaiming previously neglected green spaces by implementing upgraded pathways, modern recreational infrastructure, and nature-based features.
- The Youth Pavilion: A freshly inaugurated venue adjacent to the park functioning as a neighborhood focal point. Partners observed how active evening cultural programming in this pavilion helps alter nighttime safety perceptions and mitigates anti-social behaviors.

The local project in Cluj does not operate in isolation. It actively leverages overlapping international and private initiatives to maximize its local footprint:

- Climagen (Horizon Europe): Directly supports the enlargement of vital green spaces within the Iris district.
- SoilTribes (Horizon Europe): Drives green education and raises soil literacy awareness among residents.
- Rivus: A substantial private-sector urban regeneration development reinforcing local transformations.

Partner Updates and mid-term reflections



During the Mid-Term Review sessions, partner cities shared operational progress, methodological tools, and systemic hurdles.

City / Partner	Ambition & Local Project Focus	Key Methods & Innovations Demonstrated	Shared Challenges & Barriers
Cluj-Napoca	Forge a renewed, cohesive identity for the transforming Iris neighborhood.	Adapting Turin's storytelling approach to empower residents through neighborhood narratives.	Navigating municipal bureaucracy and coordinating cross-sector plans.
Sant Boi de Llobregat	Co-create a healthy nighttime ecosystem for youth that builds community bonds beyond mere alcohol consumption.	Utilizing artistic entities and foundations to build a "Youth Table" via short-term testing activities.	Overcoming urban space disconnections and formal/informal governance silos.
Riga	Make Soviet-era blockhouse	Explanatory walks with targeted groups	Engaging linguistically diverse

City / Partner	Ambition & Local Project Focus	Key Methods & Innovations Demonstrated	Shared Challenges & Barriers
	neighborhoods (Purvciems) feel organically like home.	(women, seniors); "Archive of Cosiness" jam exchanges; British Council-backed activist hackathons.	groups and converting passive residents into active co-creators.
Pentagono Urbano (Braga/Famalicão)	Revitalize highly vulnerable neighborhoods and tackle deep social infrastructure challenges.	Implementing a LEGO-based methodology to shift citizen mindsets from demanding services to co-creating them.	Budgeting for high-cost, long-term spatial investments.
Turin	Construct a unified, cross-cutting framework for public space animation and care.	Merging the 2Nite approach with existing local programs like <i>ImpatTO</i> (NGO grants) and the <i>Youth Climate Action Fund</i> .	Establishing standard data indicators to measure actual impact across different independent projects.

Ecosystems of innovation in Cluj-Napoca

A hallmark of the second Transnational Meeting was the deep exploration of Cluj-Napoca's local innovation ecosystem on Day 2, highlighting how sustainable urban safety and liveability rely on deeply integrated institutional networks rather than isolated municipal actions. Transnational partners conducted an immersive site visit to the City Science and Innovation Center (CISO), which serves as a vital physical and digital nexus for local governance, research, and community action.

The C-EDU Framework and Institutional Triad

The operational spine of Cluj's ecosystem is the Education Cluster Association (C-EDU). Founded in 2020, this association bridges the systemic gap between municipal governance, youth development, and actual urban transformation. The structure operates through a calculated partnership that unites three distinct sectors at the heart of Transylvania:

- The Academic Sector: Championed by the state university to infuse urban planning with data-driven methodologies and research expertise.
- The Public Education System: Rooted in the active involvement of the local school inspectorate to systematically reach and engage the city's youth population.
- The Civic/Private Foundation Ecosystem: Propelled by the Transylvania Foundation to secure agility, non-governmental expertise, and community trust.

By acting as a centralized hub for cross-sector expertise, C-EDU systematically channels resources from NGOs, private enterprises, and academic bodies into concrete urban programs, creating formalized pathways for student employment, collaborative research, and local mentorship.

The CISO Platform and Digital Prototyping Tools

The physical headquarters of CISO is structurally optimized to function as a collaborative "safe space". The facility offers flexible spatial assets—ranging from formal conference areas to a dedicated well-being room and communal kitchen infrastructure—designed to host international knowledge exchanges, URBACT Local Group (ULG) workshops, and civil society strategy sessions.

Digital transformation within this ecosystem is driven by the CISO Platform. This digital tool operates as an interactive skills-repository and matching engine, mapping localized competencies and pairing youth talents directly with urban experts. During the site visit, partners reviewed how this platform functions as a critical resource for launching tactical local initiatives, such as the city's specialized digital safety camp.

Community-Driven Scalability: Pilot Initiatives

The presentation by Alida Cunneen from C-EDU demonstrated how this innovation ecosystem translates abstract governance strategies into active, community-led pilots:

- Problemathon (Cod Uman): A hackathon-style participatory instrument that explicitly amplifies youth voices, tasking young citizens to collaboratively dissect and solve urgent urban vulnerabilities.
- Healthy Wave: A multi-layered health and wellness project targeted at changing nutritional habits and lifestyle choices among the city's younger demographic baseline.

- The Rural Urban Hub: A specialized strategic planning platform designed to bridge regional socio-spatial disparities, ensuring that innovation methodologies scale effectively beyond the dense urban center into surrounding territorial boundaries.

For the 2Nite network, Cluj-Napoca's innovation ecosystem proves that managing the nighttime city requires more than physical urban design; it demands a resilient social infrastructure capable of transforming youth from passive subjects of urban change into active co-creators of neighborhood security.



Next steps and road ahead

As the 2Nite network transitions into the second half of its timeline, a rigorous roadmap of digital and physical milestones has been locked in:

Digital Workstreams & Capacity Building (Winter 2025–2026)

- December 12, 2025: Deadline for all partner cities to submit their comprehensive Mid-Term Review Questionnaires.
- December 19, 2025: Transnational webinar dedicated to Funding and Resourcing Strategy.
- January 2026: Public Space Animation Webinar.
- February 2026: Gender Equality and Public Space Safety Webinar.

Physical Transnational Assemblies (2026)

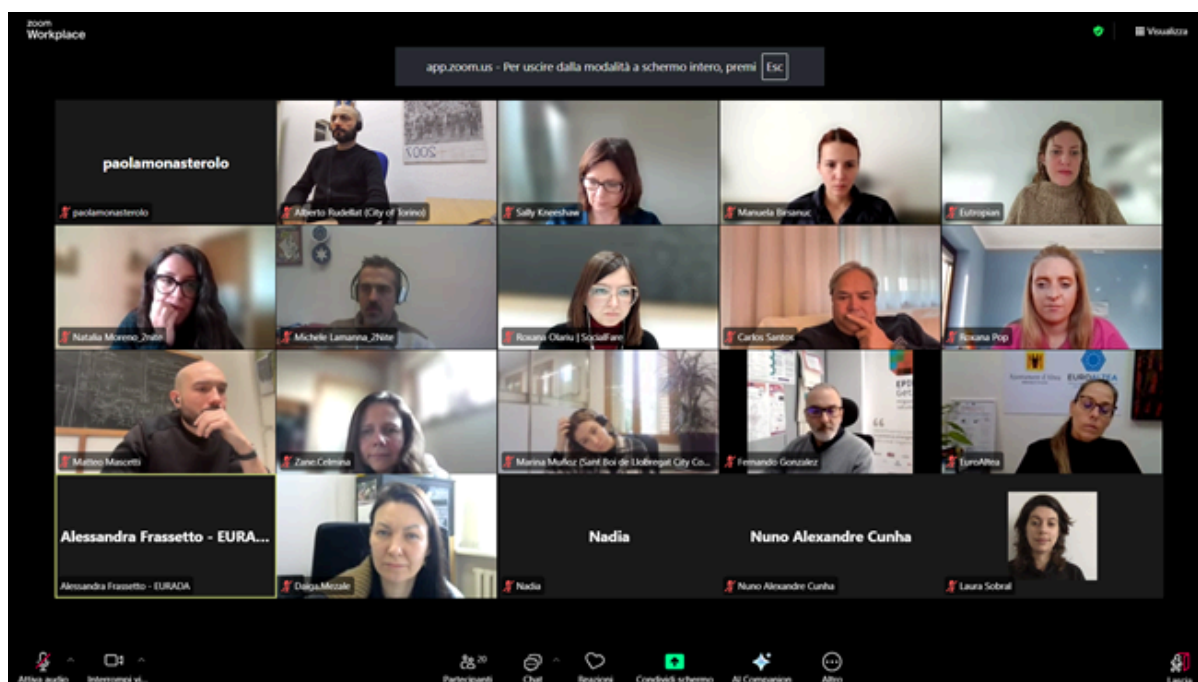
- Early February 2026: Mid-Term Network Meeting in Paris, France.
- April 2026: Transnational Meeting in Portugal (hosted by Pentagono Urbano), aligned with the URBACT City Festival.
- Spring 2026: Submission of the first official drafts for local Investment Plans and Continuity Plans.
- July 2026: Final Network Event and wrap-up assembly in Riga, Latvia.



Webinar on public space activation and storytelling

As European cities navigate rapid demographic transitions and shifting urban dynamics, the co-production of inclusive public spaces demands a structural departure from traditional municipal workflows. To equip project partners with the necessary methodologies for their upcoming Integrated Action Plans, the 2Nite network executed a series of capacity-building webinars focusing on the intersections of community self-organization, financial sustainability, and innovative narrative tools.

This section synthesizes the operational insights and strategic frameworks established during these sessions, with a particular focus on the case studies and methodologies explored on January 19, 2026, and the associated financial webinars.



Transforming Urban Spaces Through Collaborative Economy: The Afrikaanderwijk Cooperative Model

A major focal point of the network's exploration into public space activation centered on the Afrikaanderwijk Cooperative, an institutional framework operating within South Rotterdam's Feijenoord area. Originally evolving from a localized art initiative spearheaded by the Freehouse Foundation, the cooperative presents a highly operational paradigm for pooling neighborhood resources to reclaim public spaces through economic self-determination.

The methodology implemented in Rotterdam addresses structural urban challenges that closely mirror those faced by 2Nite partner cities. The Feijenoord district presents a complex socio-demographic matrix:

- A dense community of 94,000 inhabitants, characterized by an 85% migrant background.
- High socioeconomic vulnerability, with 56% of the population relying on social

security and 37% living below the poverty index.

- An urban landscape dominated by institutional infrastructure, featuring 84% rent social housing and a young demographic baseline where 37% of residents are under 23 years of age.

Rather than approaching the neighborhood through the lens of deficit and urban blight, the cooperative initiated its intervention by systematically mapping the unrecognized skills and competencies of local residents. In an area historically suffering from low formal education, endemic unemployment, and a marginalized reputation, this asset-mapping formed the baseline for civic re-activation.

By clustering these fragmented local capabilities, the cooperative established a decentralized network of self-managed micro-enterprises. These entities were formalized into structural neighborhood assets, including:

- A Neighborhood Kitchen and Catering Company, turning traditional culinary skills into institutional event-servicing mechanisms.
- A Textile and Sewing Cooperative, providing design, production, and tailoring capabilities.
- A localized Cleaning Company and Market Services Hub, capable of bidding

The structural innovation of the Rotterdam case lies in its circular financial model, designed to capture and retain capital within the immediate geography. Under the governance of a centralized Board, Daily Organization, and Advisory Board, the umbrella cooperative coordinates specialized divisions including a Work Co-Op, Certification Co-Op, Service Co-Op, and Youth Co-Op, seamlessly integrating residents, local shops, and non-profit organizations as active members.

Financially, the model operates on a strictly structured cost-and-profit distribution sequence:

1. Income Generation: Revenue is secured via services delivered to external clients or through municipal procurement tenders.
2. Cost Coverage: Funds are first allocated toward direct service delivery costs, indirect administrative overhead, and mandatory member fees.
3. Net Profit Allocation: The remaining surplus is legally partitioned to ensure long-term community resilience:
 - 50% is distributed directly among the participating community members, driving local wealth accumulation.
 - 25% is reinvested into the Cooperative's capital reserves for organizational scaling.
 - 25% is funneled directly into dedicated cultural and public space activation initiatives, providing a self-sustaining funding source for local urban interventions.



Narrative urbanism: storytelling essentials for public space perception

The second core module of the webinar curriculum addressed the intangible layer of urban design: perception, narrative, and social imagination. Led by global ad hoc experts, the session established that urban safety cannot be achieved purely through spatial modification or physical surveillance; it requires a systematic reshaping of the neighborhood's shared story.

The webinar decoupled storytelling from superficial public relations, framing it instead as a rigorous, emotional narrative technique designed to shift cognitive behaviors, build institutional trust, and make complex policy actions legible to marginalized communities. Within the 2Nite framework, storytelling serves four operational purposes:

- De-escalating Securitarian Rhetoric: Allowing municipalities to address nighttime public safety constructively without generating fear or paranoia.
- Reframing Complexities: Transitioning the public discourse from problem-oriented paralysis to human-centered, collaborative asset development.
- Lived Architecture: Acknowledging that places possess deeply rooted identities across streets, squares, parks, and markets that must be leveraged to spark meaningful citizen engagement.
- Transnational Synthesis: Creating a shared European narrative by exchanging cross-border methodologies between partner cities.

Strategic Takeaways for the Integrated Action Plans

The webinar series established a clear blueprint for the 2Nite partner cities as they advance toward their mid-term project goals. By linking the rigorous, self-sustaining financial models of the Rotterdam neighborhood cooperative with the experiential, trust-building techniques of narrative urbanism, partner cities are equipped to move beyond superficial improvements.

The core lesson remains: long-term, sustainable nighttime urban security cannot be achieved by imposing top-down regulations. It relies on a city's capacity to empower local

communities to take active ownership of their neighborhoods, turning shared public spaces into lively, inclusive community assets

Case study 2

Happy Groene Hilledijk (Rotterdam)

Storytelling through space and transformation

Groene Hilledijk was a street dominated by cars and residual urban space. The project introduced temporary interventions to imagine a different future: greener, slower, more social.

The story is told *through change, not explanation.*



Matteo Mascetti

Marina Muñoz (Saint Bol...)

Alberto Rudellat (City of ...)

Edu -Manresa CI...

Edu -Manresa CITISENSE

Roxana Pop

Roxana Pop

Mandela Birsañuc

Nadia

Nadia

Ana Mon

Ana Monte