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WISH CITIES

NETWORK JOURNAL 4

July 2026

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This third network journal covers the WISH-CITIES network journey from April to June 2026. This semester has been the network's grand finale, as we conclude WISH-CITIES activities and generate the final outputs.

This concluding period kicked off with our final webinar which took place on Thursday 4th June. This focused on Barcelona Activa's innovative approach to promoting employability for all young people.

Later that month, our partners met in person for the last time, coming together in Milan for the final event.

During this busy period, partners have been supported to produce their final Investment/Continuity Plans. We have also been busy with the final network outputs: The WISH-CITIES scrapbook, the video and the final report.

CONTENT

1. WISH-CITIES; THE BIG PICTURE
2. THE FOURTH NETWORK WEBINAR: VIENNA
3. THE FINAL NETWORK MEETING – MILAN
4. PARTNERS' INVESTMENT/CONTINUITY PLANS
5. THE WISH CITIES SCRAPBOOK
6. LEAD EXPERT REFLECTION
7. FINAL STEPS
8. STAYING IN TOUCH

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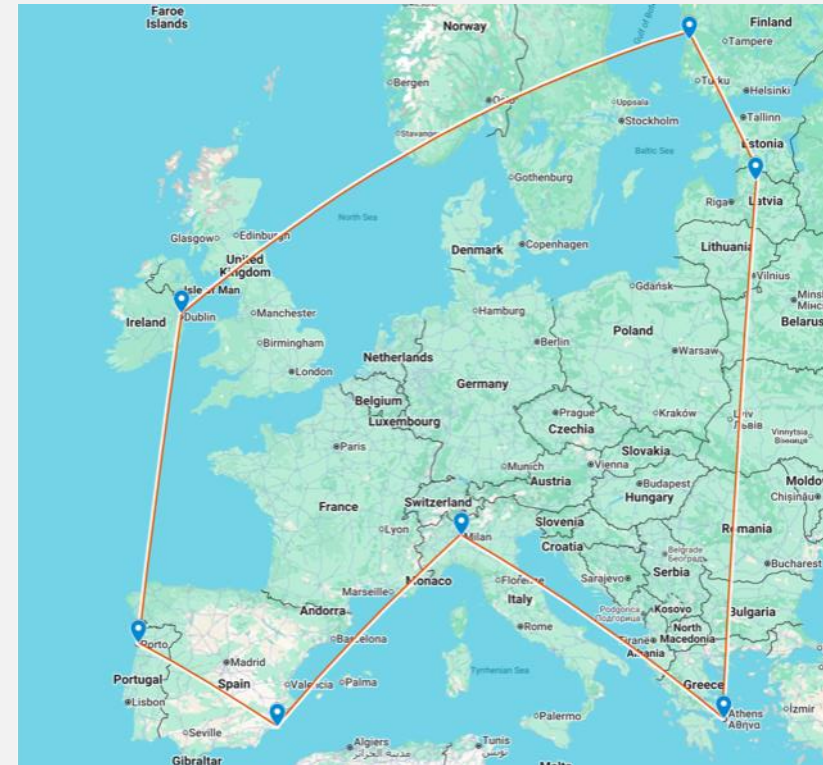


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WISH-CITIES REMINDER : THE BIG PICTURE I

The WISH-CITIES network mobilises cities of all sizes from the four corners of Europe. Although they differ in many ways, the network partners have a commitment to improving youth wellbeing and empowerment. They do this at a time when almost one quarter of children in the EU are living in poverty (Eurostat 2022) and there are growing concerns about the rising levels of mental health issues amongst the young.

Cities are in the vanguard of addressing these issues, to ensure that children and young people have the best start in life, and the opportunity to achieve happiness and their full potential.



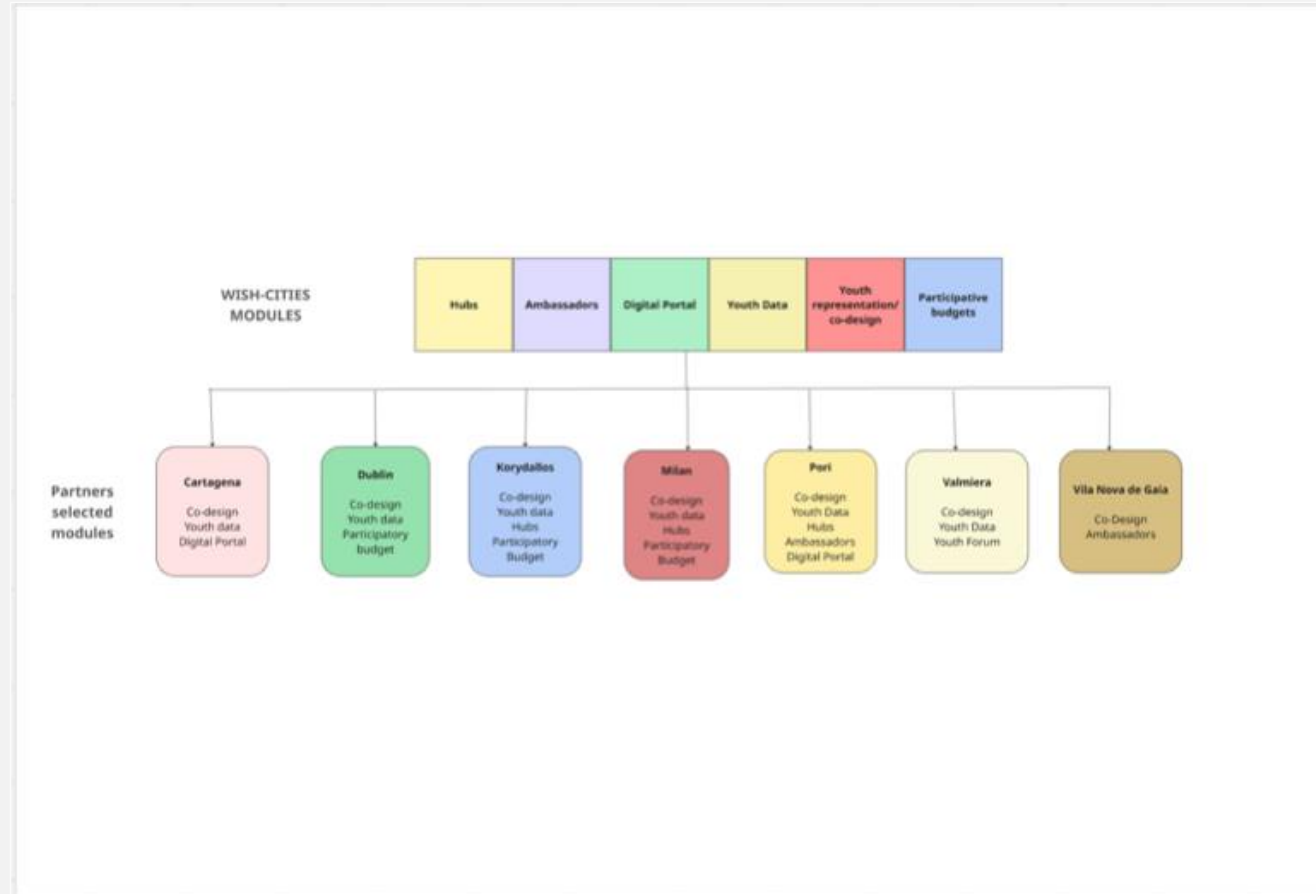
The WISH-CITIES network

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WISH-CITIES REMINDER: THE BIG PICTURE 2



Mix of modules from Milan and TPs

Partners select transfer modules

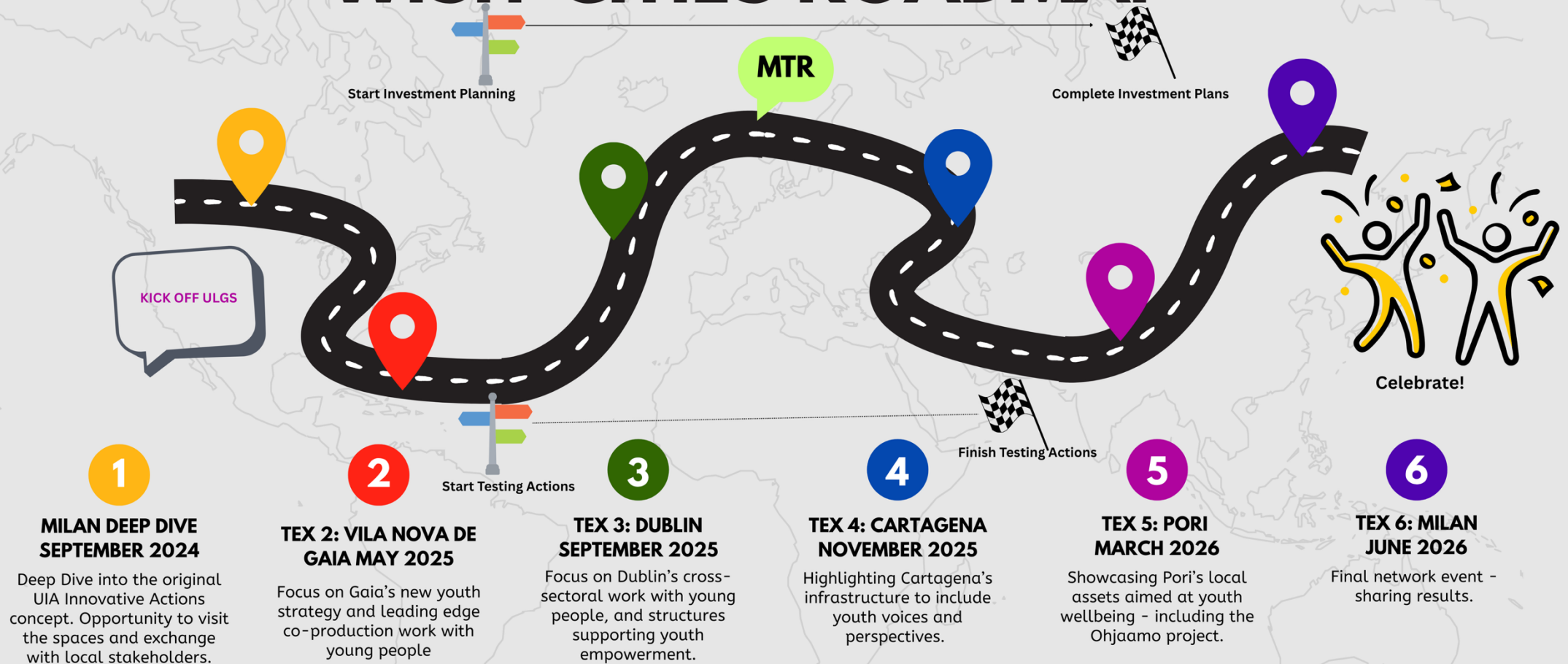
Youth co-design = compulsory shared module

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WISH-CITIES ROADMAP



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WISH-CITIES WEBINARS

The WISH-CITIES webinar series provided an opportunity to widen the network scope and involve cities conducting leading edge work with children and young people. The series focused on *Lighthouse Cities* that are pioneering new, innovative and effective ways of promoting youth wellbeing.

The webinar series ran through June 2025 until spring 2026 as open invitation, interactive online events that provided space to examine and discuss successful city approaches to working with young people.

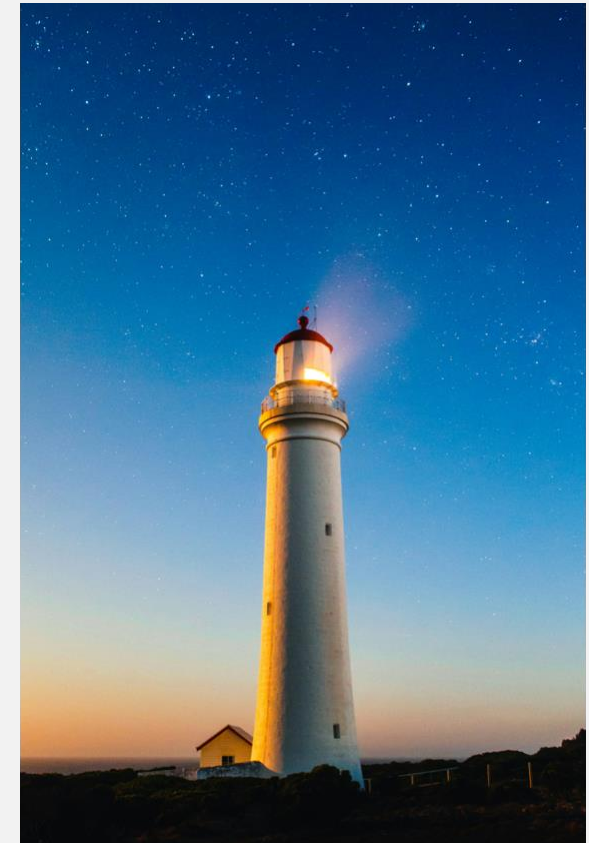


Photo by [Joshua Hibbert](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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WEBINAR 4 : BARCELONA'S EMPLOYABILITY MODEL

An important aspect of youth wellbeing is supporting young people to make a successful transition to adult life. Nurturing talent and helping young people to understand their strengths is an important element of this. So too is providing career guidance and enabling them to understand the world of work.

This is an increasingly complex task in a dynamic, fast-changing labour market, where globalisation and the impact of technology are transforming the workplace.

Our fourth and final webinar showcased Barcelona Activa's pioneering work which focuses on promoting youth employability and successful transitions to employment.



Image: Courtesy of Barcelona Activa

OVERVIEW OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN BARCELONA

In 2025 Barcelona had a youth unemployment rate of 19.31% (7,827 people) which was double the city average*

Key features were:

- Early school leaving
- Delayed labour market access
- Overqualification
- Job insecurity
- Variable impact by gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status

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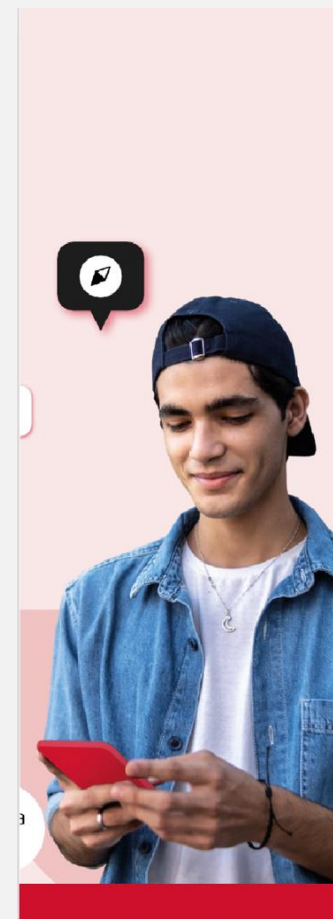


Image: Courtesy of Barcelona Activa

BARCELONA ACTIVA INTERVENTIONS: THE CONVENT

- Aims
 - Reference point for young people (hub function)
 - Comprehensive personalized service
 - Ecosystem of organisations and resources (one stop shop)
- Service Features
 - Information, careers guidance & job coaching
 - Short term activities and sectoral upskilling
 - Digital skills and language training
- Headline results
 - 56% young participants found employment within six months

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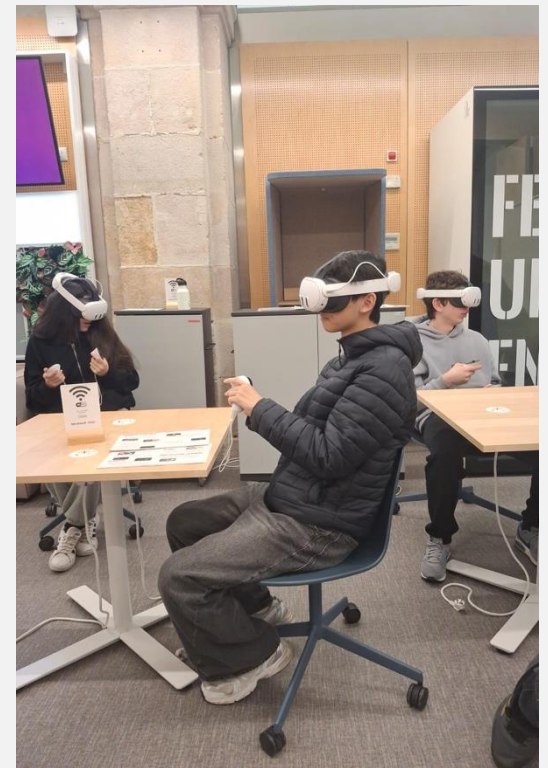


Image: Courtesy of Barcelona Activa



BARCELONA ACTIVA INTERVENTIONS: A PROP JOVE (NEARBY YOUTH) PROGRAMME

- Aims
 - Promote employability of young people (16-35) with psychological and/or emotional support issues
- Service Features
 - Personalised mentoring
 - Individual and group activities
 - Liaison with business sector
 - Multi-professional support
- Headline results
 - 123 (48%) secured employment
 - 15 (6%) completed formal training
 - 185 (62%) in employment, training or both



Image: Courtesy of Barcelona Activa

BARCELONA ACTIVA INTERVENTIONS: ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGNS (BELIEVE AND LITERAL)

- Aims
 - Develop and test innovative digital campaigns to reach young people
- Service Features
 - Combined online and offline campaigns
 - Offline activity – 1,227 units around the Convent site
 - Online presence – utilizing Tiktok, Insta, Twitter (X), Twitch, Linked-In & Youtube
- Headline results
 - 50.57% new visits
 - 71% new digital users



Image: Courtesy of Barcelona Activa

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WISH-CITIES FINAL EVENT: MILAN, ITALY

17TH AND 18TH JUNE 2026

WISH-CITIES kicked off their network journey with an initial deep dive event in Milan in September 2024. Eighteen months later we completed our shared mission in a two-day final event hosted by the Lead Partner.



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WISH-CITIES FINAL EVENT: MILAN, ITALY

PROGRAMME FOCUS

The programme majored on:

- Investment/Continuity Plans peer review
- Network and Programme review
- Focus on final outputs
- 'The ideal city' – video workshop



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REVIEW: 5 HEADLINES

Memorable moments

- Youth as a target group needs special approach
- Working on the testing actions
- Children's event in Cartagena
- The in-person meetings
- Sharing challenges with peers

Learning Points

- Value of integrated data
- Importance of youth co-design
- Embedding the youth voice
- Act our way into new thinking
- Value of peer reviews

Surprises

- Similarity of EU youth challenges
- Openess of structures to change
- The URBACT approach
- Innovative ways to gather data (Pori)
- Enthusiasm of young participants

Things to Improve

- Streamline and simplify administration
- Earlier focus on Investment Plans
- Visit all network cities
- More focus on sharing testing actions
- Share good examples of monitoring and evaluation

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NETWORK OUTPUTS: THE INVESTMENT PLAN JOURNEY



Network partners started with a commitment to improving youth wellbeing. The network provided a menu of transfer modules from both Lead and Transfer Partners. Each city elected its own priority modules to adapt, which were the centre of the testing actions. The results of these have contributed to the Continuity and Investment Plans.

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FROM TESTING ACTIONS TO INVESTMENT PLANS



WISH CITIES MIRO board summary of the testing actions

SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT PLAN THEMES

Governance

- Focus on youth empowerment
- Youth Assemblies & mechanisms
 - Inspired by Gaia & Cartagena
 - Dublin, Valmiera & Cartagena

Finance

- Finance as empowerment tool
 - Participatory budgets
- Inspired by Gaia & Cartagena
 - Korydallos & Dublin

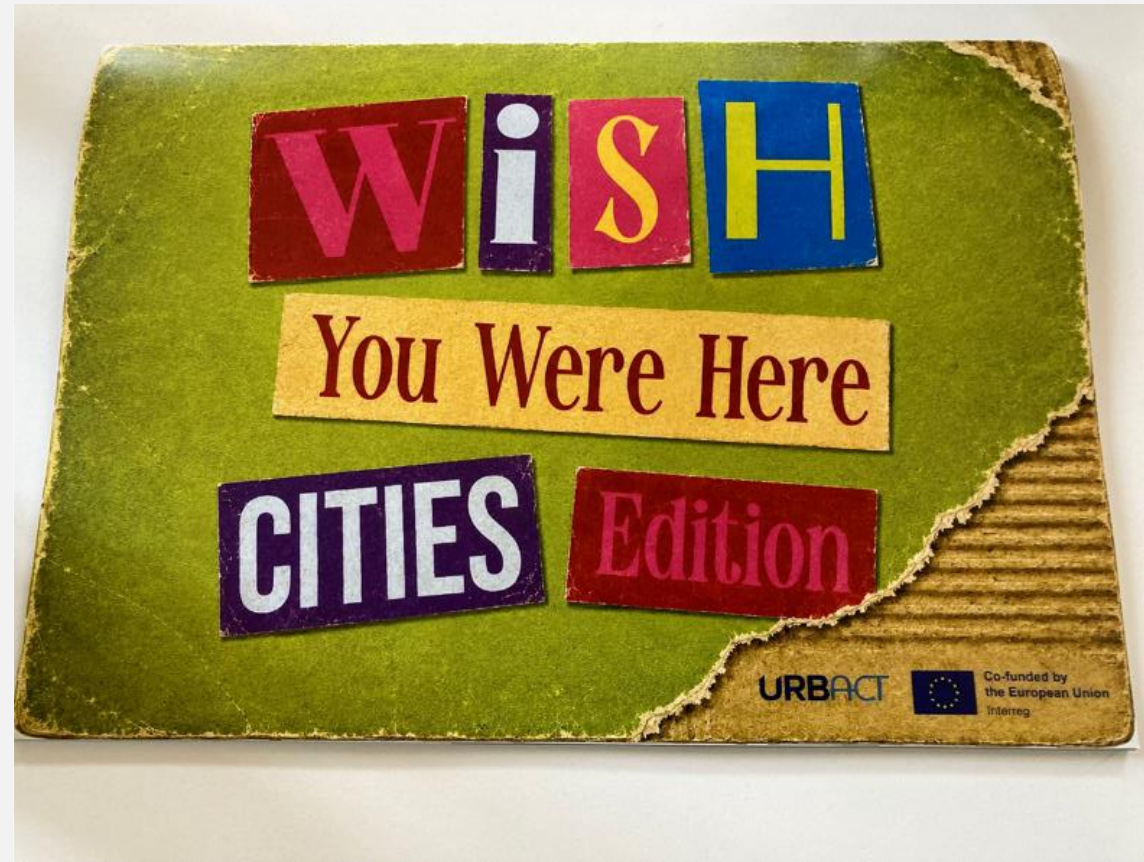
Spaces & Places

- Places focused on youth
- Hubs & youth-owned spaces
- Inspired by Milan & Pori
- Gaia, Pori, Milan & Korydallos

Ambassadors

- Network of youth champions
 - Cross-sectoral network
 - Inspired by Milan
 - Pori and Dublin

FINAL OUTPUTS: WISH-CITIES SCRAPBOOK



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SCRAPBOOK OBJECTIVES

- Tell the network story
- Use a 'youth friendly' approachable style
- Format utilizing images and text
- Content that links the local and transnational dimensions
- Focus on each partner's distinctive journey



A digital version of the Scrapbook can be accessed [here](#).

THE SUITE OF FINAL OUTPUTS

- WISH-CITIES video showcasing local partner activity & final network collaboration in Milan
- Final network report



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LEAD EXPERT REFLECTIONS



“ It is highly satisfying to see the energy and enthusiasm amongst partners as our network activity concludes.

Each partner has embraced the concept of youth wellbeing and committed to empowering young people and creating stronger co-design mechanisms.

The coherence between cities’ starting points – summarized in the Transferability Plan – and their eventual outputs is impressive. Their analysis, exchange with peers, testing actions and eventual Investment Plans provide a *fil rouge* which makes sense.

Their momentum and sense of unfinished business suggests that this trusted collaboration will outlast the network period, generating further spin off activity”

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WHAT'S UP NEXT?



As we reach the end of the line as an URBACT network, there are final outputs to tie up, which will bring our story to a conclusion.

The suite of final products (Scrapbook, video and final report) will remain on the WISH-CITIES URBACT network page.

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STAYING IN TOUCH

If you're interested in our work and want to follow our journey, you can do this in several ways. First, there's our website which you can find at <https://urbact.eu/networks/wish-cities>. We also have a Linked In page which you can access [here](#).

Looking forward to seeing you somewhere on the road!

Eddy Adams
WISH-CITIES Lead Expert
July 2026



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