Plan Einstein Academy

Warsaw, Poland
1,9 million inhabitants

Challenge

Warsaw has become a significant centre for migration and refugees in recent years. An initial increase of arrivals followed the disputed presidential election in Belarus in August 2020. Since the start of the war in 2022, over 1.5 million Ukrainian refugees have sought asylum in Poland, with Warsaw hosting a substantial proportion.

Local heroes

The Multicultural Centre has been an active partner in the implementation of Plan Einstein activities in Warsaw, contributing its expertise, networks, and practical experience to the co-creation and testing process. Its involvement has strengthened cooperation between public institutions, NGOs, community initiatives, and local residents, reflecting the cross-sector approach promoted by the project.

As a recognised and trusted integration hub, the Centre represents not only a physical place but also the spirit of collaboration, openness, and solidarity that lies at the heart of the Warsaw Investment Plan. For these reasons, it was chosen as the most appropriate symbol and local hero of Plan Einstein in Warsaw.

Funding

The main approach is to combine (small-scale) funding from multiple sources, to enable a broad range of community actions and interventions. They include small financial allocations and in-kind contributions from the municipality, corporate sponsorships, philanthropic donations, as well as EU and national funding via national and regional programmes (e.g. European Social Fund). One ambitious idea for a new co-housing solution will likely require a dedicated (EU) funding application.

The Plan

Plan Einstein in Warsaw: Welcoming Places

A key outcome of the project was the creation of a collaborative network of five open and inclusive community spaces in Warsaw. Plans to reinforce this network now include an accessibility and usability audit to inform improvement of each location and efforts to strengthen cross-sector collaboration.
The Plan also foresees socio-cultural, leisure and personal development activities across the locations to bring people together as equals regardless of their background.
Warsaw aims to raise visibility and awareness of the spaces and activities taking place. Already, users can find up-to-date information through a QR code leading to a shared online platform.



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Warszawa

Plan Einstein Academy

Zagreb, Croatia
770 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Zagreb has been a stopover for many migrants seeking to flee conflict in the Middle East towards destinations in Western Europe. At the same time, the increasing arrival of foreign workers from countries such as Ukraine, Bosnia, Nepal and the Philippines – often working in low-wage sectors – has created new challenges for the city.

Local heroes

The Cultural Centre Travno is using its existing role at the heart of the local community to drive an enhanced response to social challenges in the target neighbourhood.
They are not only providing a key hub for activities, but are helping to increase collaboration and coherence with other community actors including NGOs and the local library.



Funding

The main efforts to adapt and prepare physical spaces will be funded from existing resources of hosting organisations, supported by municipal funding and the potential to attract investment funding from the ESF+, ERDF and national social inclusion programmes.
Local activities will mainly be funded through city budgets, grants and sponsorship, with co-financing from the organising bodies, often through project calls.

The Plan

Plan Einstein Investment Plan

Zagreb initially sought a city-wide transfer of Plan Einstein. However, the project journey highlighted the benefits of a neighbourhood-based approach in cooperation with diverse actors already engaged in the community.
Travno was selected as the pilot neighbourhood – being the location of a major refugee shelter – and key partnerships developed with the local Cultural Centre and Library.
The Investment Plan includes establishment of more inclusive, welcoming spaces, and diverse socio-cultural and personal development activities for meaningful encounters.
However, the most important element is building the ongoing collaboration between community actors to reinforce their collective impact on local social cohesion.



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Plan Einstein Academy

Coimbra Region, Portugal
460 000 inhabitants

Challenge

In the context of local labour shortages and the significant increase in the number and diversity of migrants arriving in the region, it was essential to promote improved reception and integration of migrants – as well as meeting the needs of longstanding residents and ensuring cohesion between all members of the local community.

Local heroes

Through the project, we discovered that the Municipality of Arganil had already been implementing initiatives closely aligned with the Plan Einstein approach long before joining the network. Its work on intercultural dialogue, community participation and migrant inclusion has inspired other municipalities and demonstrated the power of local action.



Funding

AMIF funds have been mobilised to support the Integration Plans across Coimbra Region. Many actions included in the Social Investment Plan can be delivered through a combination of municipal budgets, local partnerships and community-led initiatives. Additional funding opportunities (national, ESF+) have been identified, particularly for employment and skills development initiatieves, community participation, cultural inclusion and the Community Orchestra and Children's Community Choir.

The Plan

Social Investment Plan

Rather than multiplying new standalone projects, the Plan aims to connect existing initiatives, strengthen policy coherence and embed learning into formal policy. It focuses on strengthening the conditions that make social inclusion possible.

Framed as a 'Social Investment Plan', it marks a shift from fragmented actions towards a more integrated, community-based approach to reception and inclusion in the region. (Inter)Municipal Integration Plans aim to ensure strategic coherence.

Interventions focus on strengthening migrants' access to employment through guidance, skills recognition and employer engagement; activating and improving inclusive spaces; creating regular opportunities for social interaction; and inclusive communication.



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Plan Einstein Academy

Suceava, Romania
84 300 inhabitants

Challenge

Suceava was a major entry point for Ukrainian refugees in 2022, requiring an emergency local response for which the municipality was under-prepared. The experience highlighted the need for a more developed approach to migrant reception, and a more welcoming culture for foreign workers needed in key sectors of the local economy.

Local heroes

The 'Association Institute for Social Partnership Bucovina' was a pioneer in responding to the original influx of refugees from Ukraine in 2022. They have now entered into a formal partnership with Suceava Municipality to facilitate the Plan Einstein approach in the role of 'connector' and 'impact facilitator'. A first key action was an intra-community development event, using the shared cultural heritage of the Vyshyvanka traditional embroidered shirt as an instrument of social cohesion.

Funding

Suceava hopes to attract European investment funding to complement local authority budgets for developing welcoming spaces and the creation of a new Welcome Desk and other migrant reception services in Suceava.
The municipality also aspires to develop public-private partnerships and to attract local public and corporate donations to support a diverse range of inclusive socio-cultural and personal development activities across the city.

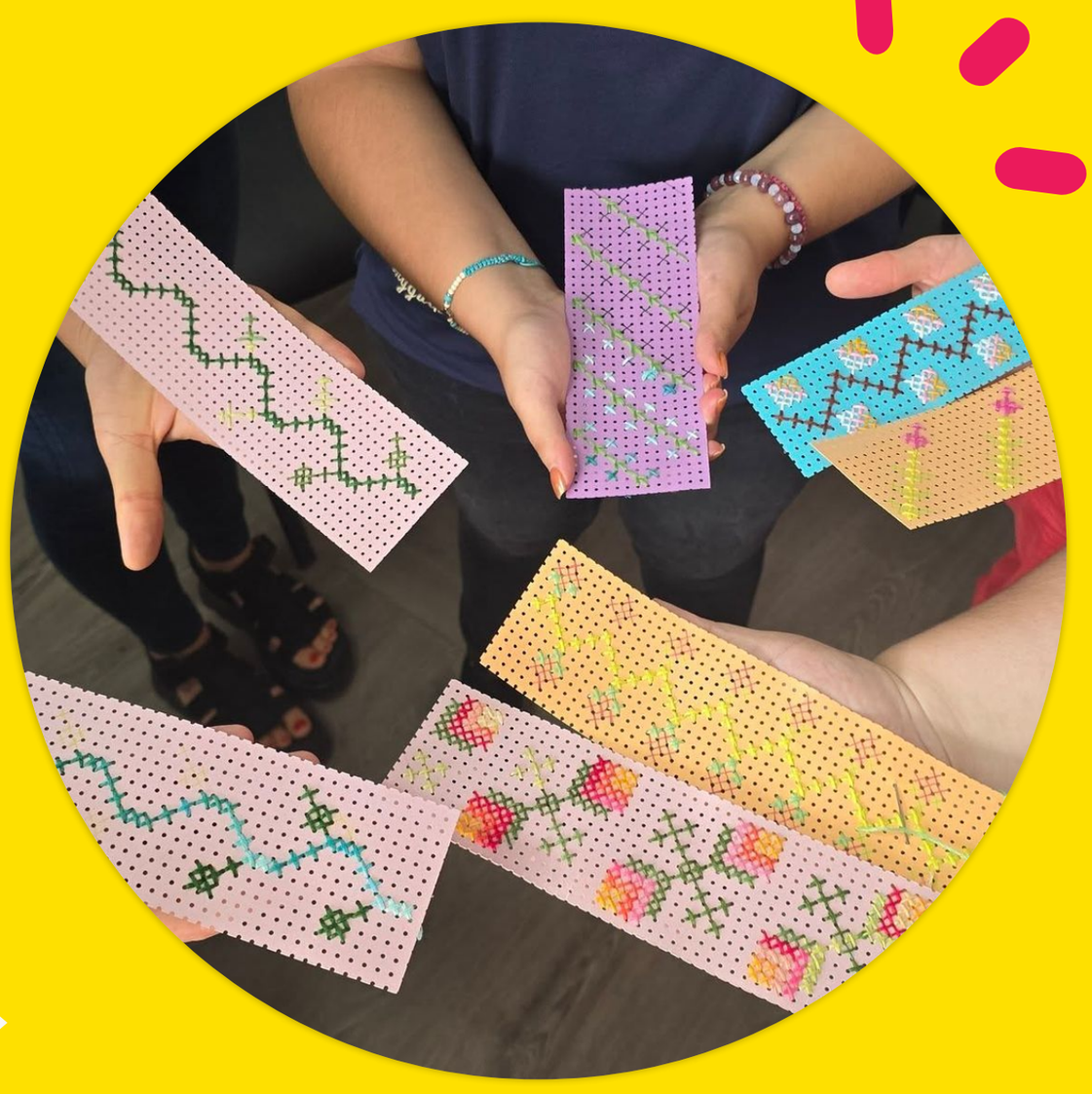
The Plan

Plan Einstein Transfer Plan

A key focus of transferring Plan Einstein to Suceava has been to plan new open and welcoming spaces for meaningful encounters in the city.

As well as creating a totally new inclusive space in an unused location in the city centre, the Plan foresees repurposing part of an under-utilised Community Centre to create an inclusive welcoming space in the neighbourhood of Itcani.

To bring these spaces to life and create more opportunities for meaningful encounters involving newcomers across the city, the plan also contains diverse cultural, leisure and personal development activities – organised with local partners including schools, NGOs, public bodies and sports associations.



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Suceava

Plan Einstein Academy

Thessaloniki, Greece
320 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Thessaloniki faced significant challenges in migrant and refugee inclusion: limited access to affordable housing, integration hindered by language barriers, fragmented support services and precarious employment conditions. Community-level initiatives promoting social cohesion existed but lacked sufficient scale, continuity and funding.

Local heroes

The multicultural school in the Giannitson neighbourhood became the local hero of Thessaloniki's Plan Einstein journey. It hosted the first community gardening testing action, bringing together students, families and residents, and demonstrating how a shared space can strengthen inclusion and social cohesion. The school will remain a key anchor for future actions.



Funding

The plan is designed around low-cost, community-based actions that build on existing local resources and partnerships. Potential funding sources include municipal budgets for social policy, education, and public space improvements, alongside EU programmes ESF+, ERDF, AMIF and CERV. Additional support may come from local businesses, in-kind contributions, community fundraising, and partnerships with civil society organisations active in the neighbourhood.

The Plan

Shared Spaces, Shared Future

Building on the principles of Plan Einstein, Thessaloniki aims to transform the Giannitson neighbourhood into a local Living Lab for inclusion and social cohesion.
The Neighbourhood Inclusion plan focuses on activating shared spaces, strengthening the role of a multicultural school as community anchor, and creating opportunities for meaningful encounters between newcomers and long-term residents.
Through community-led (intergenerational) actions and the exploration of a pilot co-housing model, the city seeks to address both social isolation and housing insecurity.
By investing in local partnerships, neighbourhood participation, and existing community assets, Thessaloniki aims to create a transferable model of inclusive neighbourhood development that can be replicated in other areas of the city.



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Plan Einstein Academy

Utrecht, The Netherlands
360 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Utrecht developed the Plan Einstein approach to increase social cohesion including youngsters and newcomers in neighbourhoods through an EU-funded Urban Innovative Action, 2016-2019. This became city policy in 2019, but the city keeps exploring how Plan Einstein principles can be implemented in new neighbourhoods and cities.

Local heroes

This plan relies on a strong collaboration between key partners: the Municipality of Utrecht, Utrecht Center for Entrepreneurship, Dutch Council for Refugees, Social Impact Factory, Community College Utrecht, Temporary Living Foundation, and Welcome in Utrecht. Each contributed complementary expertise, while the active involvement of youth, asylum seekers, and local residents was essential to ensure social cohesion, personal and professional development.



Funding

The Plan Einstein programme in Utrecht mobilises municipal funds and critical co-funding from the national reception agency (COA) in the Netherlands. A new agreement with COA has allocated funding to all the existing and new reception centres in the city, from 2025 to 2029. The city provides financing to support the open welcoming spaces as well as co-finance for inclusive activities across the locations, often working in partnership with stakeholders in the ecosystem.

The Plan

Plan Einstein Continuity Plan

Utrecht's continuity plan has seen the city build on the initial successes of the original Plan Einstein pilot location. Now incorporated into city policy, all new migrant reception facilities must be developed respecting Plan Einstein principles.

The Continuity Plan foresees the ongoing functioning of key Plan Einstein locations at Pahud, Haydnlaan and Herculesplein as well as the creation of three new Plan Einstein locations.

The plan also reinforces the ecosystem approach to delivering more impactful activities, with increased focus on supporting access to the labour market and how to monitor the long-term impact of neighbourhood-based social interventions.



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