REinventing Culture in Urban Places

Mancomunitat l'Horta Nord, Spain
92 000 inhabitants

Challenge

The Mancomunitat is composed of 10 municipalities, each of which had its own cultural agenda and separate information pages. As a result, cultural events were disorganized and often overlapped, preventing people from attending them and making it difficult to obtain all the relevant information.

Local heroes

<u>The main actors who participated in this</u> investment action were:

- **Town cultural councillors: the main representatives of the different municipalities with competencies in cultural matters. They constitute the political decision-making body.**
- **Cultural technicians: experts in the field who advise cultural councillors in order to adopt best practices in culture.**

<u>Local actors who will be necessary:</u>

- **Cultural associations and organizations: key actors in cultural events. They are associations representing different cultural activities across the municipalities, responsible for planning and organizing these activities.**

Funding

Nowadays, the platform is funded by the project. However, once the project is completed, a new budget from the Mancomunitat has been created to cover all the expenses required to maintain the platform. This includes funding for improvements and for additional communication methods aimed at being more inclusive of those who cannot use the internet.

The Plan

La Cultura l'Horta Nord

Due to the challenges we were facing, one of the solutions we developed was the creation of a Joint Cultural Agenda called "La Cultura l'Horta Nord," a platform that brings together all cultural events and relevant information taking place within the Mancomunitat's territory.
It consists of a comprehensive cultural agenda for the whole area, involving different cultural actors such as municipal cultural councillors and cultural technicians. We are also working on incorporating cultural associations and groups. The platform serves as an organizational tool where all activities and related information are included, helping to avoid disorganization, misinformation, and overlapping cultural events.



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Mancomunitat l'Horta Nord

REinventing Culture in Urban Places

Sandyford Business District - Dublin, Ireland
6 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Sandyford Business District (SBD) is blessed with a richness of ethnic and cultural diversity (51% born outside the EU) and a young population (58% aged 25–44). The challenge, however, is that without interventions to promote social integration and cohesion, the increasing diversity could lead to social fragmentation and the rise of parallel societies.

Local heroes

The following people were an integral part of the process:
Wessel Badenhorst - Urban Mode (Consultant); Traci Conroy – SBD; Vincent Murray – SBD; Councillor Lettie McCarthy – Labour Party; Councillor Pierce Dargan – Fine Gael; Karl Murphy - Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA); Michelle Duffy – Leopardtsown Racecourse (local stakeholder); John Somers – Naomh Olaf GAA Club (local stakeholder); Leo Mc Bride – Digital X (local stakeholder); Simone Sav - Network Manager, DLR Public Participation Network (PPN); Lorraine Kelly - DLR Area Community Officer; Yanett Alberto – Local volunteer; Markus Koch – Local volunteer; Ksenija Brajkovic – Local volunteer; Tea Connolly – Local volunteer

Funding

The activity is funded through local, corporate, national, and EU sources. Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council supports governance setup and community activities, while local businesses provide sponsorship. EU funds (AMIF, CERV, Erasmus+) support inclusion and training initiatives. The group will also seek council capital funding and apply jointly for national funds, including the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, to develop community infrastructure.

The Plan

A central hub (community centre) for cultural activities

We are establishing a voluntary community group to coordinate and promote social and cultural activities in the area. The group will develop a shared local events calendar, contribute to the design of a new community centre, and advocate for its funding. It brings together local councillors, Sandyford Business District staff, business stakeholders, and volunteers. What makes this initiative meaningful is its co-created governance structure, shaped collaboratively by community members. By strengthening communication and participation, the group will foster greater connection and inclusion. Ultimately, it will help build a strong sense of belonging while supporting the development of a vibrant community centre for long-term local benefit.



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SANDYFORD BUSINESS DISTRICT

REinventing Culture in Urban Places

Dubrovnik, Croatia
41 562 inhabitants

Challenge

Dubrovnik allocates €450,000 for cultural programmes, yet cultural activities remain concentrated in the historic centre. With over 4.2 million overnight stays annually and fewer than 1,000 residents still living in the Old City, many neighbourhoods lack accessible, year-round cultural spaces.

Local heroes

- City of Dubrovnik Department for Culture, Heritage and Tourism
- City of Dubrovnik Department for Communal Activities, Traffic, Sea and Local Self-Government
- Members of Dubrovnik neighbourhood councils
- URBACT Local Group (ULG) members

Funding

The activity is supported by the City of Dubrovnik, donations and public-private partnerships, helping finance cultural programmes, participatory activities and the activation of alternative community spaces. This action will also encourage corporate social responsibility initiatives involving major businesses in Dubrovnik.

The Plan

Mapping of Alternative Cultural and Community Spaces

As part of the RECUP project, DURA is mapping alternative cultural and community spaces across Dubrovnik's neighbourhoods, outside the historic centre. Through stakeholder meetings and collaboration with cultural organisations and institutions, the action identifies underused parks, school yards and venues suitable for year-round programmes, supporting the decentralisation of cultural life. The goal is to develop the "Venue Menu" online platform, which will offer institutions, NGOs and citizens clear information on available spaces, contacts and supporting infrastructure to organise community and cultural activities.



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City of Dubrovnik Development Agency

REinventing Culture in Urban Places

BIELSKO-BIAŁA, Poland
170 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Bielsko-Biała faced growing loneliness and weakening social bonds. Although over 65% of residents valued the city's cultural offer, public spaces increasingly lost their community function. RECUP responds by rebuilding belonging and residents' agency through co-created cultural activities, local partnerships and actions in public space.

Local heroes

RECUP's local heroes are Point 11, a cultural hub, the Bielsko-Biała Cultural Centre, City Hall departments, NGOs, schools, artists and activists working together to rebuild social connections through culture. Youth co-design urban games, residents lead neighbourhood activities, create digital content for the SplotBB platform and co-produce public-space interventions, turning culture into a practical tool for participation, inclusion and wellbeing.

Funding

Key funding sources include the City of Bielsko-Biała, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the National Centre for Culture, the National Freedom Institute, the European Social Fund Plus, the European Regional Development Fund, Interreg and Creative Europe. NGOs, local businesses and community partners provide mentoring, venues, volunteering and in-kind support.

The Plan

Weaving Wellbeing – Reconnecting the City Through Culture

What if culture could weave wellbeing into everyday community life? Inspired by Újbuda's transfer model, RECUP turns culture into a practical city tool to rebuild belonging through co-created public activities, youth-led urban games, participatory street art, and artistic-ecological actions. Led by Point 11, it establishes a permanent, scalable city mechanism based on prototyping and testing—not one-off events. Residents, NGOs, schools, and cultural institutions co-design activities that activate neighbourhoods and public spaces. Early pilots already show impact: a SplotBB urban game engaged 96 users across 130 sessions, turning transit spaces into places of connection and creativity.



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City of Bielsko-Biała

REinventing Culture in Urban Places

Amersfoort, Netherlands
160 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Around half of the population experiences loneliness, with 30% facing severe problems. It can affect anyone, especially those dealing with loss, migration, disability, or digital isolation.
This is driven by growing rootlessness—a loss of belonging caused by individualization, digitalization, and globalization. Our focus is on strengthening social connections, and reinforcing local democracy.

Local heroes

The success of this plan depends on a balanced ecosystem of policy, execution, and community trust, requiring a broad group of actors. The Department of Social Domain and Culture connects policy with social goals, while Social Wolfpack and Kosmik engage hard-to-reach groups through creative interventions. Wijkcentrum Het Klokhuis, together with Maatjesfoort and local residents, provides the essential community base and trust. Impact033 ensures coordination and turns cultural innovation into measurable social impact, while City Marketing helps scale Wij Amersfoort into a city-wide movement of connection.

Funding

- Programme Management – CERV
- Maatjefoort – Oranjefonds
- Wij Amersfoort – Municipality
- Legends of the Roof – Cultuurfonds
- Remi – Cultuurfonds
- Faces of Loneliness (book) – Municipality and DVU Uitgevers

The Plan

Reach out, make a difference

Through Reach033, we bridge social gaps using cultural innovation. Key activities include the book Faces of Loneliness (DVU Uitgevers), the Wij Amersfoort campaign (City Marketing), youth-focused dance film Legends of the Roof and workshops (Kosmik) and Maatjefoort (Het Klokhuis). Central to our outreach is Remi the Giant and Social Wolfpack's outdoor theater. Managed by Impact033 in collaboration with the municipality, the program unites stakeholders and partners. This project is innovative for its cross-departmental synergy and artistic outreach. Locally, this will foster deeper neighbourhood connections, leaving residents with positive experiences as active contributors to social cohesion.



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Amersfoort

REinventing Culture in Urban Places

Újbuda - Budapest, Hungary
150 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Gazdagrét, a residential neighbourhood in Újbuda, faces low and homogeneous cultural participation, weak cultural networks, and limited opportunities for residents to actively shape local cultural life. Many activities do not reflect local needs, and residents often feel their voices are not sufficiently included. The lack of community-driven initiatives further reduces engagement and social cohesion.

Local heroes

The micro-grant programme is delivered through strong local partnerships.
The Municipality of Újbuda provides strategic direction, governance and financial support, while KözPont Ltd. ensures implementation through its expertise in cultural and community development. Key actors include residents, grassroots groups, small businesses, and institutions participating in the Gazdagrét Roundtable. These stakeholders co-design the programme, apply for grants, and collaborate on projects. Local partners (such as community centres and businesses) also contribute spaces, knowledge and resources, ensuring long-term sustainability and shared ownership.

Funding

The micro-grant programme is primarily financed through municipal resources and the operational capacity of the Municipality of Újbuda and KözPont Ltd. Core staff, coordination and implementation are ensured through existing human resources and community centre structures. Additional support may come from complementary funding sources, such as URBACT, the European Urban Initiative, and Creative Europe. The micro-grant budget is further strengthened by shared resources and in-kind contributions from local partners.

The Plan

Micro-Grant & Mentorship Programme

The plan introduces a local micro-granting scheme to empower residents, communities and grassroots initiatives to co-create cultural activities in Gazdagrét. The programme provides small-scale funding combined with mentorship, allowing participants to develop, implement and evaluate their own ideas in collaboration with local stakeholders. The process includes open calls, community events for idea development, and continuous support (brainstorming, planning, communication, and evaluation). The goal is to lower participation barriers, activate local communities and build partnerships between residents, institutions and businesses. By funding projects with equipment and mentoring, the programme strengthens local identity and community ownership.



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