Re-Gen

Albacete, Spain
200,000 inhabitants

Challenge

When joining URBACT Re-Gen, Albacete faced severely underused public spaces, weak youth influence on urban planning, and rising sedentary lifestyles. Despite 18% of residents aged 10-18, key spaces showed up to 40% underutilization, revealing a structural gap in inclusive,

Local heroes

The Hackathon placed young people at the core of implementation, supported by facilitators, educators, and municipal staff. Adolescents worked in teams as planners and designers, proving that youth leadership is essential for shaping inclusive, active, and meaningful public spaces.



Lessons learnt

Start small and trust young people. Invite them to explore their city and work on real challenges. Keep the rules simple and provide support, so creativity meets pragmatism and ideas can grow into realistic projects that truly improve public spaces.

Solution

The Hackathon

In Albacete, the challenge of underused public spaces met the creativity of young people through a city-wide Hackathon. In April 2025, 18 young participants aged 12-20 gathered at the Youth Centre to reconsider abandoned urban areas using sport as a regeneration tool. Divided into five teams and working with a €2,000 budget, they explored the city, spoke with residents, and transformed ideas into concrete proposals. Two projects were later integrated into the Integrated Action Plan. The Hackathon proved that, in a city where 18% of residents are adolescents, giving youth real decision-making power can turn disengagement into ownership and public spaces into places of belonging.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Ayuntamiento de ALBACETE

ceei Centro Europeo de Empresas e Innovación Albacete

Re-Gen

Corfu, Greece
23.541 inhabitants

Challenge

Corfu faces significant urban challenges related to the degradation of public spaces, particularly those in marginalized areas. These spaces suffer from poor maintenance, vandalism, illegal parking, and limited accessibility, making them unsafe and unattractive for community

Local heroes

Our Heroes are the 580 students engaged, the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of the Ionian Islands, the Municipality of Central Corfu and the Diapontian Islands, the Hellenic Red Cross, the local police department, and numerous volunteers.



Lessons learnt

Early and meaningful involvement of young people in planning processes is key to successful urban regeneration. Partnerships with schools and local stakeholders build trust and ensure inclusive participation. Pilot actions in public spaces help test ideas, increase visibility, and foster long-term community ownership.

Solution

Two Hackathons

To ensure that ideas moved beyond paper and into practice, the organization piloted testing actions in the process. A key example was the organization of two large-scale hackathons with over 600 students and participants, held in the underused park near the correctional facilities, our pilot site for regeneration. These events served as a practical testing ground for youth engagement methodologies, collaborative design approaches, and temporary installations. Insights gathered from these hands-on experiences were instrumental in identifying real needs (sport facilities, lighting, pavements, and safety concerns), validating design concepts, and informing scalable solutions to be embedded in the final plan



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΗ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΙΑΚΗ Α.Ε
Αναπτυξιακός Οργανισμός Τοπικής Αυτοδι

Re-Gen

Daugavpils, Latvia
78.112 inhabitants

Challenge

Daugavpils comprises 25 distinct neighbourhoods. The main challenge was how to revitalize the city's public outdoor space with sports and community activities so that youth and all city residents feel involved not only in the activities themselves, but also in their planning, recognizing the needs.

Local heroes

The action was made possible through the active involvement of local youth, supported by the municipality, youth workers, urban planners and NGOs.



Lessons learnt

Start by genuinely involving young people in the planning process and give them real influence over decisions. Work in partnership with local NGOs, schools and communities to co-create solutions. Test ideas in public spaces through pilot events to build trust, visibility, and long-term engagement across generations.

Solution

Co-creating activities for urban development

On July 31 and August 1, 2025, Daugavpils hosted collaborative workshops that empowered young people aged 10–18 to shape the future of their city's public spaces. A total of 39 participants from different neighborhoods came together to share ideas on how to make parks and squares more active and welcoming. Through co-creation sessions, they designed street sports and games equipment that promotes an active lifestyle and social interaction. These ideas were brought to life during neighborhood events, demonstrating how public spaces can become vibrant places for sports, culture, and community life. The action highlights successful cooperation between the local government and NGOs, with a positive impact across generations.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

DAUGAVPILS
750

Re-Gen

Dobrich, Bulgaria
80.000 inhabitants

Challenge

When Dobrich joined URBACT, it faced youth outmigration, underused and poorly maintained green spaces, limited modern sport facilities, and weak participatory culture. Adolescents (10–18) lacked safe, attractive places for activity, expression, and civic engagement.

Local heroes

The transformation relied on motivated adolescents and students, local schools, youth NGOs, sport clubs, municipal departments, and active residents of the neighborhood. Teachers, volunteers, and community leaders acted as bridges between institutions and young people, ensuring long-term stewardship.



Lessons learnt

Start with youth voices and existing local identity.

Combine small physical improvements with strong participation processes.

Build partnerships across schools, NGOs, and municipalities, and support youth-led initiatives financially and digitally to ensure long-term impact and ownership.

Solution

THE APPLE PARK WHERE SPORT MEETS NATURE

The Apple Park regeneration turned a neglected green area into a nature-based Urban Sport Hub co-created with young people. Through workshops, school activities, and volunteering, adolescents designed sport and leisure spaces that matched their needs. New informal sport facilities, green paths, and community areas revitalised the park, while youth-led cultural and sport events brought it to life. Digital participation tools and a Youth Center strengthened engagement beyond the park. As a result, the Apple Park became an example of an urban sports hub built with youth participation and volunteerism, a symbol of community responsibility, intergenerational interaction, and sustainable urban renewal.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Re-Gen

Lezha, Albania
118.000 inhabitants

Challenge

When joining the URBACT network, Lezhë faced fragmented legal frameworks and heavy public bureaucracy, slowing the reuse of public spaces and limiting youth access to suitable areas for community-led regeneration initiatives.

Local heroes

The action relies on close cooperation between the URBACT Local Group, local schools and the public youth center. Together, they coordinate activities, engage young people, provide spaces and ensure that youth voices are included in planning and decision-making processes.



Lessons learnt

Focus on people before places. Involve young citizens from the very beginning, turn underused spaces into pilot sports areas, and observe how they are used. Simple activities, clear data collection and strong local partnerships can quickly reveal real needs and help cities design inclusive, sustainable public sports spaces.

Solution

Testing Actions

In autumn 2025, Lezha turned forgotten schoolyards into lively meeting points through a series of test sports activities. More than 130 children and young people from five schools took part in volleyball, football, basketball and traditional games, transforming unused public spaces into places full of energy and teamwork. What started as simple, improvised games became a powerful listening exercise: 100% of participants supported the idea of turning these areas into permanent sports facilities. The initiative showed that sport is not just play, but a tool for health, confidence and community building, with the potential to benefit hundreds of young people every year.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

BASHKIA LEZHË

Re-Gen

Milan, Italy, 1.400.000,00 inhabitants

Challenge

San Siro, with 26,600 residents, is one of Milan's youngest and most diverse districts: 35.8% are under 35 and 37% are foreign residents. Despite this, the area faces educational poverty, underused and unsafe public spaces, and social fragmentation, reinforcing marginalisation and negative perceptions.

Local heroes

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) is the backbone of the action: Municipality of Milan departments, Municipio 7, CSI, Equa Cooperativa, Comunità Nuova, Galilei and Negri schools, youth groups and other local associations.

Their collaboration can ensure co-design, implementation and long-term integration into city policies.

Lessons learnt

Urban regeneration works better when public space, youth policies and sport are planned together. Creative practices help young people engage with urban issues in deeper ways: combining storytelling with concrete tools like hackathons turns expression into action. When youth insights are clearly linked to planning decisions, participation becomes credible and regeneration gains long-term legitimacy.

Solution

Activating public space through sound, sport and co-design

Suoni di Sport engaged adolescents in soundwalks, audio recording and storytelling to reinterpret public spaces through the sounds of sport activities, movement and everyday life. This was followed by a youth-led Hackathon on accessibility and safety, where young people mapped issues, proposed solutions and co-designed small-scale improvements. The action produced creative outputs, informed participatory mapping, and directly shaped priorities for future micro-interventions. It strengthened youth skills, visibility and ownership, while providing concrete evidence to guide the IAP's public space actions and long-term regeneration strategy.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Comune di Milano

Re-Gen

City of Pula, Croatia, 57.460 inhabitants

Challenge

Through URBACT, we faced the challenge of converting underused urban spaces into inclusive hubs for youth, particularly marginalized groups, aiming to boost participation, reduce social exclusion, and expand access to recreational and community activities.

Local heroes

The action relied on collaboration between the municipality, schools, sports clubs, disability organizations, youth groups, volunteers, and coaches, ensuring inclusive programming, smooth logistics, safe delivery, and strong engagement of children from diverse backgrounds.



Lessons learnt

Young people value functional, flexible, and accessible spaces that combine sports, socializing, and culture. Ensure clear communication and visibility of available sports opportunities. A participatory approach increases motivation and encourages more frequent use of these spaces, fostering active and engaged urban life.

Solution

"Small Sports for Big Achievements"

On May 12, 2025, over 220 students in Pula transformed underused urban spaces into a lively playground during "Small Sports for Big Achievements." The event featured nine obstacle challenges, archery, kendo, and breakdancing, engaging children physically and mentally while promoting teamwork and healthy lifestyles. Special attention was given to inclusion, with students of diverse abilities opening the event and participating alongside members of the Spektar Pula Athletics Club. By actively involving marginalized youth, the initiative fostered social inclusion, strengthened community ties, and encouraged ongoing participation in sports, aiming to increase regular physical activity among participants.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

GRAD PULA CITTÀ DI POLA

Re-Gen

Verona, Italy
257.592 inhabitants

Challenge

Verona faced challenges related to the underuse of public spaces in peripheral neighborhoods, limited provision of safe and inclusive areas for informal sport, and insufficient youth involvement in integrated and participatory urban governance processes.

Local heroes

The action involved the Municipality of Verona, local youth, residents, schools, and cultural and sports associations. City departments coordinated and managed permits, while associations and young people co-designed activities, supported by community groups and the Sport & the City Festival.

Lessons learnt

Start small and test before investing. Use temporary, low-cost interventions to explore new uses of public space, and involve young people from the beginning as co-designers. Build partnerships across sectors, collect feedback on site, and use evidence from testing actions to inform long-term urban strategies.

Solution

Tactical Urbanism

Dominated by parked cars and underused space, Brodolini square was temporarily transformed through tactical urbanism into a place for encounter, dialogue, and shared imagination. Low-cost, reversible interventions—urban graphics, temporary furniture, and open layouts—helped residents experience the square differently. The process culminated in an "Aperitivo Sociale", a public event designed to tell the story of the Re-Gen project and bring together residents, young people, and local institutions. Through music, shared moments, and the presentation of a song created by local youth, the event opened a constructive dialogue on the future of the square and demonstrated how tactical actions can activate community engagement and inform long-term regeneration strategies.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Comune di Verona

Re-Gen

Vila do Conde, Portugal
80.825 inhabitants

Challenge

Vila do Conde aimed to be an intergenerationally inclusive city that returned urban spaces to its citizens, building an environment where teenagers could actively participate and enjoy safe, accessible, and innovative spaces for their development.

Local heroes

An entire community of engaged young people, encouraged and involved by the local authority, supported by network-based collaboration and the innovative approach of the Transformers.



Lessons learnt

Whenever public consultations are conducted with the aim of regenerating public spaces, there should be effective practical implementation to foster a sense of belonging and appreciation for those spaces within the community.

Solution

Sport that moves cities, places that regenerate lives

On 5th April 2025, the Hackathon engaged young people in developing innovative proposals to regenerate an urban space through sports, based on prior community consultations. It involved 24 youths, experts, youth associations, municipal representatives, and the Transformers. Ideas were informed by local residents and young people through in-person and online consultations. Mentored by specialists in social innovation and sports, the event was evaluated by a jury and supported by city council members. Outcomes and data were shared with construction and urban planning experts to ensure community input in the final regeneration process.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

CÂMARA MUNICIPAL
VILA DO CONDE