TechDiversity

Amarante, Portugal
52.116 inhabitants

Challenge

Amarante faced a significant tech gender gap, a 5.7% unemployment rate, and talent "brain drain." Local skills often mismatched the needs of the emerging tech sector, while rural areas struggled with limited digital access.

Local heroes

Driven by the Municipality, the Tâmega Business Institute (IET) with vital academic support from local schools (EPALC, ESA), UTAD, and IPP-ESTG.



Lessons learnt

Start with small-scale tests to build community trust. Early involvement of local companies ensures training meets market demand. Role models are the most effective tool for inspiring underrepresented groups.

Solution

Amarante Makerspace Network (Community Digital Labs)

We are decentralizing digital policy by moving it into schools and local hubs. By providing open access to 3D printing and specialized software, we transform passive users into active creators. Our pilot showed that with role models, 60% of participants felt empowered to pursue ICT careers.



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AMARANTE

TechDiversity

Arezzo, Italy
96.527 inhabitants

Challenge

In 2022, Arezzo province recorded an upper secondary school dropout rate of about 17%, with young NEETs (15-29) at 12.9%. In 2024, local employment decreased by 1.6%. 2024 featured 2,453 youth enterprises (7% of total businesses) and 8,361 women-owned businesses (23.8% of total).

Local heroes

As part of TechDiversity, a matchmaking pilot event was co-planned by Arezzo's ULG members and held on March 12, 2025. The mid-scale event successfully brought together representatives from both groups to explore this methodology: This would not have happened without the implication of the ULG members and local companies.



Lessons learnt

Create a wide and valuable network of stakeholders to support your initiatives' planning and sustainability.

Best practices emerged in companies involvement, NEETs engagement, and networking management.

Solution

Develop in Arezzo an inclusive tech & digital ecosystem and economy

The broader ambition of the City of Arezzo is to establish a strong and long-lasting citywide network of governance bodies, businesses, and representative organizations that can provide real hope and job and entrepreneurship prospects to the underepresentented communities. Arezzo ULG group developed an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) with concrete actions aimed at facilitating the access of young NEET women and young NEET people with disabilities to job offers and entrepreneurship opportunities in the technological and digital sectors.



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Comune di Arezzo

TechDiversity

Bielsko-Biała, Poland
164.318 inhabitants

Challenge

Facilitation of improvement of presence & position of women in tech sector and business environment – from employment and entrepreneurship perspective

Local heroes

This would not happened without the engagment of private sector and local leaders who belived in it.
Thanks to it, it was truly botom-up and tailored to the real needs of the sector.



Lessons learnt

When cooperating with the private sector you need to be focused and precise.
To empower women - do not organize women only events – rather find a way how to put them in a spotlight and integrate in the community
To engage participants – find trendy topics, choose different formats (workshops, plenary sessions, panel discussions) and gather feedback – it's essential for improvements and allignment with the needs.

Solution

HerStory in IT: Empowerment through connection and learning

At the beginning of TechDiversity, the IT sector in Bielsko-Biała was already well connected with a flagship initiative of BBDays4.IT festival. HerStory in IT was a missing piece. By organizing events showing female perspective and advocating for competency-first mindset, we added a layer of diversity and inclusion to the ecosystem.
As a result, we created an active community around HerStory in IT. We strengthened the existing connections and created new ones. More than 300 people participated in the HerStory in IT events! And we are not stoping with the initiative!

HerStory in IT

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TechDiversity

Bucharest D6, Romania
325.759 inhabitants

Challenge

When joining the URBACT network, Bucharest District 6 faced a strong skills mismatch between education and labour market needs. Vulnerable students were overrepresented in technical colleges, with limited access to counselling, extracurricular learning and adequate infrastructure for tech careers.

Local heroes

This action would not have been possible without the active involvement of Bucharest District 6 City Hall and its URBACT Local Group. Public authorities, universities, technical colleges, NGOs and business representatives worked together, sharing expertise, data and mentoring support,



Lessons learnt

Start with small testing actions before scaling up. Involve schools, universities and employers from the beginning, and co-design solutions with vulnerable groups. Align education with labour market needs and invest equally in technical and soft skills.

Solution

Tech Career Readiness Pilot for Youth

In April 2025, Bucharest District 6 tested a pilot action to help young people enter the IT&C labour market. Despite having technical skills, many students struggled with CV writing, interviews and understanding recruitment processes. In partnership with Polytechnics University, technical high schools and the RBL Foundation, a one-day mentoring event was organised, involving private sector professionals. The pilot confirmed strong demand for targeted career support and directly shaped larger IAP actions on counselling and digital career platforms.



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PRIMĂRIA SECTORULUI 6

TechDiversity

Idrija, Slovenia
11.673 inhabitants

Challenge

The lack of economic diversity due to city's dependence on two flagship companies and almost full employment. This brings vulnerability to its local economy and to specific population groups. The city will address the opportunities for diversity and inclusion in knowledge-based digital, and creative local ecosystems.

Local heroes

This would not have happened without the implication of the Idrija ULG members and their contribution to the project.



Lessons learnt

When considering new measures, activities or projects, we strongly advise implementing testing actions, which will form the basis for future initiatives. This will enable you to test, discuss, evaluate and upgrade the planned actions in order to maximise their implementation and fulfilment of the planned goals.

Solution

Kajzer Creative Centre

Idrija will establish a creative centre in the premises of an abandoned mercury mine area called Kajzer, dedicated to creative and digital industry and designed especially for young people. There will be at least 3 labs established: FabLab, Textile and Lace Lab, and Art&Craft Lab. Kajzer Creative Centre will be a space for learning and using both traditional and modern digital technologies. Here, the users will engage in concrete and tangible challenges – from repairing various objects to improving and creating new, innovative, and socially beneficial products.



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TechDiversity

Larnaka, Cyprus
84.900 inhabitants

Challenge

When Larnaka joined the URBACT network, the city faced a growing digital skills gap and low participation of young people, women and foreign residents in the tech sector, despite strong progress in R&D, blue technologies and the transition to a digital and green city.

Local heroes

This action would not have been possible without the strong engagement of Larnaka's local stakeholders. The Municipality, CMMI, universities, the Chamber of Commerce, Youth Maker Space, cultural and youth organisations, and local development agencies.



Lessons learnt

Start with a solid understanding of local skill needs before designing actions. Engage stakeholders early and continuously. Test ideas through pilot actions before scaling. Link training directly to labour market demand and keep programmes flexible, practical and inclusive to ensure long-term impact.

Solution

Marine Technology Skills Training

To address youth unemployment and the mismatch between market needs and available skills, Larnaka piloted a Blue Tech Skills Lab in partnership with the CMMI Centre of Excellence. Through two intensive training courses, young people gained hands-on experience in marine technologies, robotics, data analysis and digital tools. Using real offshore data, VR/AR applications and applied learning, participants developed market-relevant skills aligned with marine, maritime and blue economy sectors, strengthening employability and local innovation capacity.



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ΔΗΜΟΣ ΛΑΡΝΑΚΑΣ

TechDiversity

Psachna (NKUA), Greece
5.721 inhabitants

Challenge

Psachna faces a significant lack of digital and technological activity despite the presence of university premises. NKUA aims to encourage tech and digital diversity and facilitate initiatives related to this issue, addressing the challenge of creating job opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship for all.

Local heroes

This action cannot be realised without the implication of the Archimedes Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship which will support the remote Digital Innovation Hub.



Lessons learnt

Co-design with a local ULG early and pick one quick pilot (e.g., a micro-hackathon) to test demand. Anchor the hub in an existing institution, aim to reuse ongoing projects, spaces, and mentors, keep roles clear, and build a follow-up pipeline (incubation, funding, internships) with local firms.

Solution

Psachna Digital Innovation Hub (Remote Support)

Building on the Entrepreneurship Micro-Hackathon Testing Action, NKUA designed the Psachna Digital Innovation Hub to enhance entrepreneurial & employment opportunities in the digital & technology sectors or diverse groups of Psachna graduates. By linking the university know-how, innovation initiatives and the local business community, it strengthens the pathway of Psachna city towards becoming a diverse centre of innovation and digital technology.



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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
EST. 1837

TechDiversity

Trikala, Greece
61.608 inhabitants

Challenge

Trikala faced low participation of under-represented groups in digital education, tech entrepreneurship and decision-making. Youth unemployment, limited digital access and persistent gender stereotypes constrained inclusive innovation and reduced the city's capacity for social cohesion and growth.

Local heroes

This action would not have been possible without the Chamber of Commerce of Trikala, leading coordination and business mentoring, the Municipality of Trikala, e-Trikala, and the GiSeMi Hub, mobilising the local innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem.



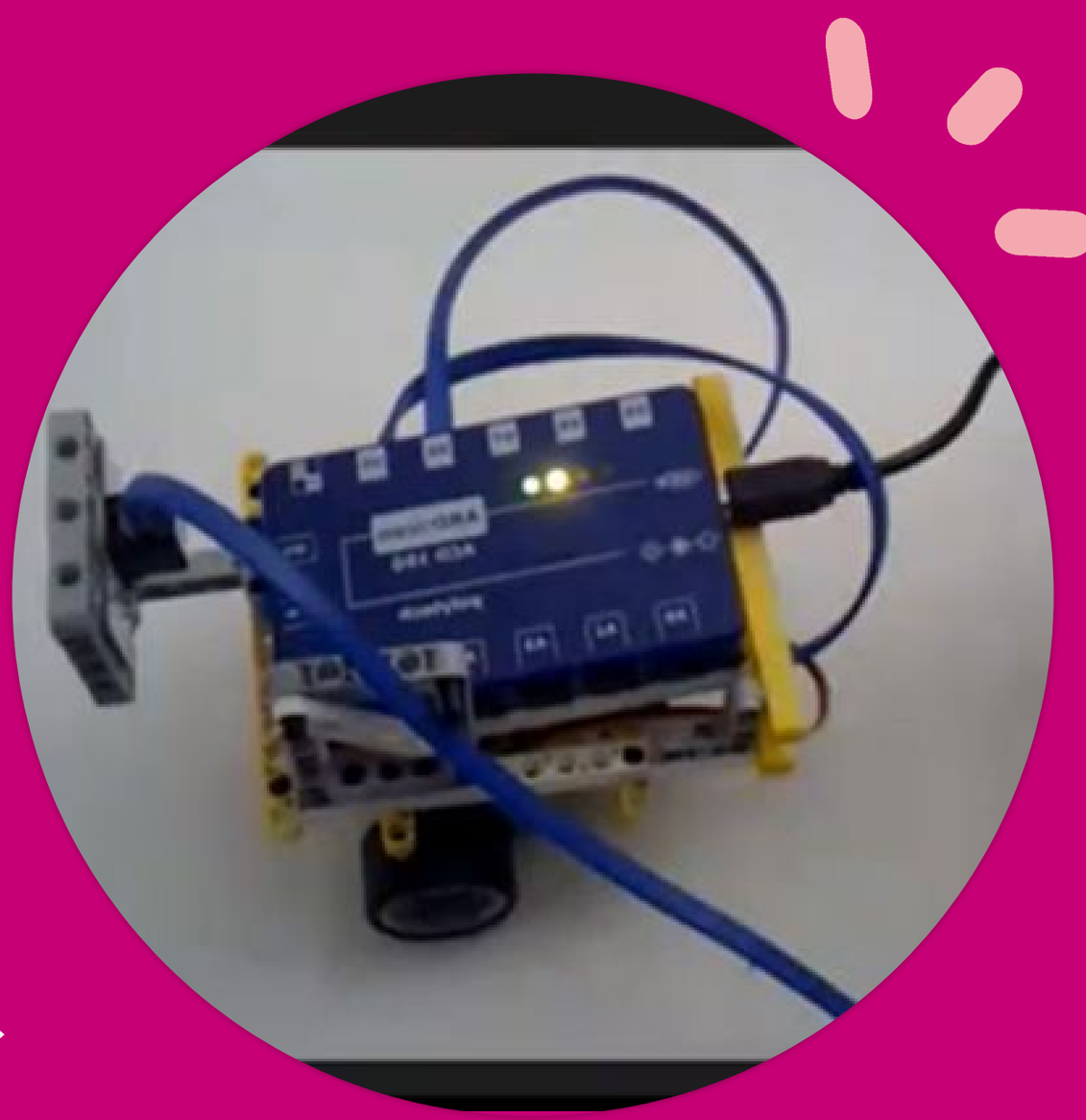
Lessons learnt

Start early with awareness-building to engage underrepresented groups and reduce hesitation. Combine skills training with real market exposure through mentors and businesses. Keep governance simple, use existing hubs, and secure long-term funding to ensure sustainability and impact.

Solution

Entrepreneurship Support Lab

Building on the STEM Education for Teachers Testing Action, Trikala designed the Entrepreneurship Support Lab (SPOROS Business LAB) to turn digital skills into inclusive entrepreneurship. The Lab operates as a diversity-oriented incubator and accelerator, supporting women, young people, migrants and early-stage innovators through mentoring, training, networking and legal/financial guidance. By linking education, innovation hubs and the local business community, it strengthens Trikala's pathway towards becoming a diverse centre of innovation and technology.



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