WISH CITIES

Pori, Finland
80 000 inhabitants

Challenge

We can't afford to lose young people to exclusion or other cities. Pori needs a systemic approach based on wellbeing, where institutions and local actors truly work together to help young people study, work and build their future here.

Local heroes

Local actors consist of our city staff as well as different stakeholders all the way from associations to Social and Welfare County of Satakunta, educational institutions, undertakings and local residents.

Funding

The main effort comes from our internal work and changing the working culture. This demands strong leadership and a consistent attitude. Other resources needed are for example projects that help us improve, spread and implement existing practices or test new ones. Projects can be related either to the actors and their involvement and training or directly to the action on the field among young people, as well as connecting them with the elderly and different population groups, including young people from different backgrounds.

The Plan

Connected Communities, Thriving Youth

Pori is developing community hubs across the city to strengthen local connections, wellbeing and resilience. These spaces support safer, more connected neighbourhoods and help people feel rooted in their communities. For young people, they offer safe environments to grow, reduce loneliness, build trust in the future and find their place in society across generations.



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PORI

WISH CITIES

Korydallos, Greece
60 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Korydallos faces a structural "opportunity gap" for youth. Challenges include limited access to innovation networks, a lack of dedicated creative spaces and a persistent detachment of young residents from municipal decision-making.

Local heroes

A diverse partnership ecosystem will support the Hub, coordinated by a dedicated Municipal team. Key actors include the URBACT Local Group (ULG), featuring volunteers, social scientists and cultural associations. Collaboration extends to local schools, Universities, NGOs and the private sector, while a future Youth Advisory Council will institutionalise youth-led governance.

Funding

The refurbishment of "The NEST" infrastructure is secured through the Green Fund. Potential funding sources for the implementation of its operational activities include the Attica Regional Operational Programme (ROP Attica 2021-2027, Strategic Objective 4), strategic synergies with the Western Athens Development Association (ASDA) and the Municipal Regular Budget.

The Plan

THE NEST, Innovation Hub

The Municipality is creating “The NEST,” an Innovation Hub transforming fragmented youth services into one integrated ecosystem. Supported by the URBACT COPE project, the restored former school building will host co-working spaces, digital labs and workshops focused on youth wellbeing, participation and innovation. The Hub will empower young people to co-design local policies and strengthen connections between education, community and the labour market.



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WISH CITIES

Milan, Italy
1,4 millions inhabitants

Challenge

Milan's challenge is to reduce territorial inequalities affecting young people's wellbeing and opportunities, by building a more integrated, participatory and proximity-based youth ecosystem across the city.

Local heroes

Milano has developed a two-level ULG model.

The core ULG brings together municipal staff and key strategic partners, ensuring coordination, decision-making and continuity of the process.

The extended ULG includes young people, local organizations, schools, community actors and project partners. It serves as a space for dialogue, co-creation and testing ideas.

This structure helps connect policy and practice while ensuring that diverse youth perspectives inform local action.

Funding

The plan is supported through a combination of municipal, national, European and private funding sources. By integrating different resources within a shared strategic framework, Milan aims to strengthen the long-term sustainability of its youth wellbeing ecosystem.

The Plan

Milan Youth Futures

To address this challenge, Milan is developing an integrated and proximity-based youth ecosystem combining community hubs, street outreach, youth participation and access to wellbeing opportunities.

Through initiatives such as Open Casello, 100 IDEE and Milano Street Lab, the city aims to strengthen youth protagonism, local connections and equal access to culture, sport and mental wellbeing support.



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Comune di Milano

WISH CITIES

Cartagena, Spain
220 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Cartagena joined the network to address the gap in youth participation after age 18, when young people age out of the CLIA system and lose a formal channel to influence local decisions, access opportunities and remain civically engaged.

Local heroes

The initiative involves Cartagena City Council's Social Services and Youth/Participation departments, the Interdepartmental Commission, the Social Entities Commission, the Municipal Council for Children and Adolescents (CLIA), the new 18–35 youth group, municipal Communications and IT teams, and local education and community organisations linked through the URBACT Local Group.

Funding

The main funding source is the project budget, which will finance the communication, visibility and launch actions for the new Youth Group, including the minisite and the first public presentation. This will be complemented by Cartagena City Council's in-kind contribution through staff time from the Youth/Participation and Social Services teams, covering coordination, facilitation, documentation and follow-up.

The Plan

Youth Voice and Participation Strategy

Cartagena's planned investment focuses on consolidating a formal 18–35 Youth Council as a stable continuation of the city's strong youth participation ecosystem. The investment will support the council's first communication and visibility package, including its identity, basic branding materials and a minisite with information and participation opportunities. It will also fund the first formal council session and a youth-led public launch event, while preparing a neighbourhood baseline on youth wellbeing and participation and a roadmap for a future youth participatory budget.



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WISH CITIES

Valmiera, Latvia
23 797 inhabitants

Challenge

When joining the network, Valmiera faced fragmented youth work and the lack of a unified approach across the municipality. There was an urgent need to streamline services and strategically coordinate support for young people.

Local heroes

The driving force behind the initiative is a diverse local group. It actively involves local young people, youth workers, and NGO representatives co-designing the activities. Crucial support and guidance are provided by municipal decision-makers, educational institutions, and local policy experts, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the new structure.

Funding

The planned investments will be financed through a combined funding model. Primary financial support comes from the Valmiera Municipality budget. This is complemented by Latvian state budget programmes and targeted European Union funds, alongside external project grants specifically dedicated to regional youth policy implementation and infrastructure development.

The Plan

Youth Development Programme

To address this, Valmiera developed the Youth Policy Development Programme 2026–2031 and structurally reorganized its youth sector using a co-design approach. The key planned investment focuses on bringing this strategy to life by establishing a modern, well-equipped youth center and creating accessible digital and physical spaces for youth initiatives. Funding will secure permanent youth worker positions across the municipality, implement new mobile youth work tools for rural areas, and launch an institutional system that ensures continuous, high-quality support, empowering local youth and bridging the gap between young citizens and municipal governance.



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VALMIERAS NOVADA JAUNIEŠI

WISH CITIES

Dublin, Ireland
592 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Dublin joined the URBACT WISH Cities network one year after other partner cities, creating challenges in catching up with established learning and delivery timelines. The city sought to embed a meaningful youth-centred governance approach without compromising relationship-building, co-design, or quality engagement.

Local heroes

The project is led by Dublin City Council's Sláintecare Local Development Officer in collaboration with the Dublin City Council Community Development Team, local youth service delivery partners, Garda Youth Diversion Projects, community stakeholders, and young people from Cherry Orchard/Ballyfermot. The approach is supported through local governance structures and cross-sector partnership working.

Funding

The project is supported through a combination of URBACT funding, Dublin City Council resources, Sláintecare Healthy Communities funding, Healthy Ireland funding streams, and potential cross-government collaboration through departments linked to health, youth participation, community development, and local government innovation initiatives.

The Plan

Youth-centred governance model

Dublin's planned investment focuses on embedding a sustainable youth-centred governance model within local authority structures in Cherry Orchard/Ballyfermot, Dublin 10. The investment includes the development of a Youth Advisory Panel, a youth-led participatory budgeting pilot, and staff training in youth participation and relational practice. The project aims to strengthen youth voice in decision-making, improve wellbeing outcomes, and build long-term civic participation pathways for young adults aged 18–24 who are often excluded from existing youth structures. Using a Human Learning Systems approach, the initiative combines storytelling, systems learning, reflective practice, and cross-sector collaboration to create a scalable model for wider implementation across Dublin City.



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Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

WISH CITIES

Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal
304 000 inhabitants

Challenge

The city of Vila Nova de Gaia aimed to strengthen integrated youth policies addressing wellbeing, inclusion, education, and inequalities, while enhancing participation in urban development and improving quality of life through coordinated, multi-level approaches aligned with its strategic youth plan.

Local heroes

Municipality of Vila Nova de Gaia Services
Youth Department
Youth Associations and NGOs
Gaia Youth Council
Youth Ambassadors
Local Schools and Universities
Vocational Training Centres

Funding

Vila Nova de Gaia plans to continue investing European, national and local resources in initiatives that support young people's wellbeing, participation, employability and active citizenship over the coming years.

The Plan

A vibrant hub for youth engagement

This Investment Plan aims to transform Casa da Juventude (Youth House) of the Municipality of Gaia into a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable hub for youth engagement. Building on the success of the Testing Action "Inspired Talks", the plan combines physical improvements, innovative programming, and participatory governance. It aligns with local, national, and European strategies to foster creativity, resilience, and active citizenship.



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