



CCI Repository Handbook

Tools and methods to create and strengthen foundations and framework conditions of CCI in small-and medium-sized cities
D.C.3.2



Publications from the Interreg Central Europe StimulART project

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Introduction

Introduction to the CCI Repository for Small and Medium Sized Cities

The EU Interreg Central Europe project “StimulART: Stimulating CCI in mid-sized urban centres to boost competitiveness” had three main goals according to the original project documents. 1.) It aimed at upgrading the financial and organisational frameworks of the CCI macro-environment in mid-size CE cities. 2.) Its second target was to turn cultural heritage assets into creative products and services in mid-size cities through developing local culture-based creativity and improving entrepreneurial and individual skills. 3.) It targeted the revitalization of abandoned and underutilised infrastructure and urban spaces to be reintroduced as venues hosting or incubating CCI activities. All these three targets are from the playbook of more encompassing cultural-led urban development programs such as the Creative City (Charles Landry, Richard Florida) vision first developed for global cities and metropolitan regions in which the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) had a central role. In other words, the StimulART project aimed at the activation of the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI) in the five partner cities Amberg (Germany), Jászberény (Hungary), Kamnik (Slovenia), Naumburg (Germany), and Vittorio Veneto (Italy) while the CCI sector was supposed to utilize, commercialize, and monetarize the partner cities’ site-specific cultural resources to start an urban development process driven by creativity and culture at the same time. Thus, the project explored the mutually reinforcing relationship between the development of supporting conditions for the CCI sector in Small- and Medium Sized Cities (SMSC) and the development of site-specific cultural resources by the local CCI sector for an urban development process. In this vein, the StimulART project tried to see cultural-led urban development programs and CCI sector strategies as an overall smart specialization strategy that was supposed to increase the partner cities’ attractiveness, not least for the young generation of CCI entrepreneurs.

One of the challenges for the StimulART project was to translate and adapt the script of cultural-led urban development programs written for metropolitan cities to the city size-dependent conditions of SMSC and to the specific conditions found in each of the partner cities. At the same time, SMSC do also face different developmental challenges compared with metropolitan cities. For example, the urban and economic developmental potentials especially for peripheral SMSC in Central Europe are gradually eroding by the loss of the young generation and the ‘flight of the creative class’ endangering the successful realization of important EU-policies such as territorial cohesion. Since the context for the StimulART project is built by conditions and challenges specific for SMSC, the project had to be both explorative in adapting solutions to the specific challenges of SMSC as a size-dependent city-type and wary regarding assumptions about CCI sector strategies and cultural-led urban development programs that are valid for global cities only and rather don’t apply in SMSC.

This CCI repository presents some of the results of the StimulART project in the form of tried and tested Good Practices that belong to a toolbox of actionable case studies for a cultural-led urban development program for SMSC adapted to their city-size-dependent specific challenges and conditions such as a brain drain of the creative workforce and the increasing loss of the young generation. It is directed at CCI stakeholders and decision makers in cultural policy, urban development, and economic development from SMSC, and at policy makers in regional, economic, and urban development at regional, national, and the EU-level across the whole EU territory. The Good Practices selected for this handbook are intended to inspire and orient decision makers who are looking for solutions to revive SMSC and their hinterlands, to make them more adaptive and resilient to current and future challenges, to rise their attractiveness for the creative class as well as for the young generation by creating better conditions for the development of the CCI sector, and by setting impulses for the efficient utilization of the local cultural and creative resources in SMSC.



The selected Good Practices focus on the development of endogenous resources and the well-being of the SMSC' citizens and the citizens of their hinterlands rather than on the cosmopolitan elite of the creative class. It is directed to everyone interested in the fate of and the development in SMSC who is looking for guidance and case studies about how to make sure that cities of this particular size can keep up with the challenges of the globalized and networked knowledge intensive society countering their strong centripetal forces that result in further peripheralization and marginalization of (peripheral) SMSC and an increasing polarization of the society between urban centers and the periphery. This CCI repository is very much hands-on and practical in character. It tries to provide actionable how-to-do knowledge that is easily implementable. It presents these actionable tried and tested Good Practices as case studies at the following levels:

- The StimulART project is itself a Good Practice of how to set up and implement a cultural led urban development program in SMSC directed at activating the local CCI sector by creating local CCI strategies and action plans that are integrated with the general urban development strategy already in place in the cities. The StimulART project will be described as such a wholistic Good Practice for strategy-making in this introduction chapter. It will offer a methodological account of the project that describes more formal success factors and requirements of project management for the sustainability of such a project.

- One of the central aspects of the StimulART project was the development and implementation of a pilot project in each partner city within the context of the strategy-making framework. The fourth chapter of the CCI Repository is devoted to describe each Pilot Project as a Good Practice in much detail in an easily readable and accessible case study.

- Creativity is a resource that does not wait until a strategy-making process comes into effect before it will unfold itself, especially not in the contemporary society that is priming creativity. Therefore, we could find Good Practices in each StimulART partner city which already existed before the StimulART project started. During the StimulART project some of those Local Good Practices were identified and described in each partner city with the help of a Local Good Practice template as well as documented in the partner cities' CCI mapping documents. These Local Good Practices can be considered success stories that can demonstrate in each partner city that much creativity is already at work in them which is adapted to the specific conditions and challenges found in SMSC. The fifth chapter of the CCI Repository describes two of those Local Good Practices for each partner cities in tangible case studies. While these 10 case studies will be presented in the same narrative way and structure such as the 5 Pilot Studies in the second chapter, their narrative accounts are slightly shorter and less detailed.

- Right at the beginning of the StimulART project, one of the shared tasks for all project partners was to look for Good Practices in their respective national SMSC which - already adapted to the specific conditions and challenges of SMSC - can serve as tangible inspiration for the local strategies and action plans in the partner cities. The so-called National Good Practices were collected and published in an "International Good Practice Report" relatively early in the project. For publication in this CCI Repository, the project partnership has reviewed those Good Practices from SMSC in the national home countries with hindsight on the basis of the experiences made during the StimulART project and selected those that are both most inspirational and best adapted to SMSC specific conditions and challenges. Our selection of case studies from SMSC in Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Slovenia will be presented in the sixth chapter of this CCI repository. Again, these accounts of altogether 9 case studies use the same narrative way and structure as for the previous types of case studies to tell tangible stories but shorter and with less detail.

The Conclusions of this CCI Repository will look back at the StimulART project's achievements and look forward to some future challenges for the CCI sector and for cultural-led urban development programs in SMSC identified during the project.

The remainder of this introduction will give a short introduction in the StimulART project itself. While each of the Pilot Studies in the project will be presented as case studies in the second chapter using a narrative structure to make them an enjoyable and easy read, the StimulART project as such will be introduced in a different way: We will shortly describe the project methodology that takes into account more formal success factors and requirements of project management for the sustainable success of cultural-led urban development programs in SMSC as identified for and confirmed during the StimulART project.

The StimulART project as a Good Practice for cultural-led urban development programs in SMSC

Cultural-led urban development programs such as the ‘Creative City’ vision have been engineered for big, metropolitan cities. Ironically, while big and global cities may be called ‘Creative Cities’ quite naturally because we can find there the conditions for creativity rather easily, SMSC need to become developed as a ‘Creative City’ much more urgently. When no intervening suitable counter measures are established the conditions for creativity will increasingly erode in SMSC due to strong centripetal forces of clustering and polarization in the globally networked knowledge intensive society in general and in the CCI sector in particular. In order to keep the creative and smart resources in SMSC that make them adaptable, flexible, and resilient vis-à-vis current and future challenges, SMSC need to become a ‘Creative City’ much, much more urgently than big, metropolitan cities. However, how can we adapt the vision of the ‘Creative City’ to the specific conditions and challenges of SMSC in order to avoid to overtake explicit and implicit assumptions only valid for bigger cities and, thus, to avoid unrealistic expectations and misguided strategies and action plans? In a sense, the StimulART project strived to find answers to this particular question.

In what follows, the experiences made and the results accomplished during the StimulART project in finding answers to the question of how SMSC can become creative cities will be described in order to make them accessible for replication in other European SMSC. This short account wants to present the way how to set up a cultural-led urban development program in SMSC in an actionable way that can be repeated and adapted in other SMSC contexts as well using our experiences as orientation and inspiration. During the StimulART project many more insights were created as well as joint project methodologies for a step-by-step implementation. Such a joint project methodology can not only secure comparability between the partner cities during the project implementation but also replicability in other contexts. These information and joint methodologies give a deeper and more detailed account of the project’s experiences, insights, toolbox, and results and can be accessed at the StimulART project’s website.

See more <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/STIMULART.html>

While this CCI Repository provides the best overview about the StimulART project in terms of an implementation methodology of a cultural smart specialization strategy for SMSC, the “StimulART Project Level GAP Analyses Synthesis Report” presents the scientific insights and results of the exploratory multi-case study about the specific conditions, challenges, potentials, and limits for a cultural-led urban development program we could find in the five StimulART partner cities. The Synthesis Report tries to systematize the project insights beyond the project scope and to generalize some insights for SMSC as a specific city type.



Now, let's turn to the overall StimulART project methodology that takes into account more formal success factors and requirements of project management for the sustainable success of cultural-led urban development programs in SMSC:

As a taken-for-granted, every cultural-led urban development program should be based on a strategy-making and project management methodology. Most importantly, the strategy-making methodology should make sure that the strategic objectives of a cultural-led urban development are closely integrated with general urban development strategies. In the StimulART partnership most of the partner cities could already establish Integrated Urban Development Plans to which new dimensions such as strategic objectives for the cultural economy could be added. The "Strategy Building Methodology for Cultural led Development of Small and Medium Sized Cities" describes the framework applied in the StimulART project which suggests a participatory, open and flexible strategic control circuit that consists of the following seven distinctive steps:

1. Establishment of an Information Base
2. Determining Strategic Objectives for a Local CCI Profile and Vision
3. Determining Operational Project Objectives: Intervention Fields, Measures, Indicators
4. Determining Action Programs
5. Determining and Implementing Pilot Projects
6. Monitoring of the Results
7. Evaluation of the Results and Feedback of the Evaluation in the Control Circuit.



Illustration: Strategic control circuit in urban development planning and management

The establishment of the Information Base about a SMSC's challenges and developmental potentials for a cultural-led urban development as well as about its CCI and cultural sector is particularly challenging. In the StimulART project, this process step started with a GAP analysis for each partner city which provided a rough overview over the partner cities' potentials based on their local cultural resources and existing CCI sector. For this purpose, the project's Horizontal Knowledge Provider - the Regensburg University (HKP-RUNI) - designed a questionnaire template to guide the self-assessment of the partner cities using qualitative and subjective methods. At the same time, the expert from the HKP-RUNI conducted field research during study visits in each partner city and gained first-hand experience there to become able to judge, put in context, and evaluate the results of the cities' GAP analyses reports. In this way, we balanced the self-assessment of partner cities by an outsider expert view to challenge entrenched normative views hold by the insiders and to discover potentials that insiders cannot easily percept since they are immersed in the local culture as a taken-for-granted reality. The local GAP analyses provided input to the next step in the strategy-making process, the determination of strategic objectives. At the same time, they introduced a new language to the local CCI and municipality stakeholders, sensitized these groups for the unfamiliar subject of the CCI sector and its promotion, and made the local CCI sector more visible.



However, the GAP analyses were validated in their conclusions by the results of the next document for the information base, the CCI mapping report specific for each partner city. Again, a joint project methodology was provided by the HKP-RUNI in form of a template for collecting and presenting the necessary data. Especially when mapping the CCI sector and the cultural resources of the partner cities, it became clear that blueprints from larger cities cannot be copied for this purpose, but that a methodology has to be developed that takes into account the specificities of SMSC. Most importantly, SMSC need to conduct their own empirical survey since statistical data for the CCI sector is rarely available at this regional level of aggregation.

However, the StimulART project methodology for mapping the CCI sector provides a template that is already adapted to the problem of data availability in SMSC and to other conditions specific to this city type. SMSC should actualize the information base in the strategy-making control circuit after each run by actualizing both methodologies and keeping them up to date.

An empirical survey of the CCI sector can be easily done in SMSC because the size of the sector is manageable. While conducting such an empirical survey, the StimulART partner cities learned about the CCI sector, started to build networks, and encountered many surprises: They discovered not only the richness and heterogeneity of the existing stock of CCI stakeholders and firms in their cities but also many companies which were somehow hidden before.

- An important success factor for cultural-led urban development programs is the participatory approach to strategy making, implementation, and project management which includes the CCI stakeholders right from the start within the project. One of the ongoing tasks during the project was to identify CCI stakeholders, to actively involve them in the project and to promote networking within the CCI sector across all its sub-sectors. Especially for the CCI sector, it is advisable to closely involve the CCI stakeholder in all phases of the strategy-making process who have a strong capability for designing and visioning the future including the design of new spaces, facilities, and services for the CCI sector such as cultural houses, maker spaces, creative quarters and hubs, events, festivals etc.

The StimulART partner cities attended to the participatory approach right from the start and engaged many CCI stakeholders in the empirical survey already.

- Making all stakeholders in the project step by step familiar with the unfamiliar topic of the CCI sector and its promotion in communal policies by providing a suitable vocabulary with the help of joint project methodologies, kick of workshops, and presentations is only one dimension of building up actor capabilities for the CCI sector. Even more important in this context is the training of municipality employees to develop new skills, values, and a new mindset for the administrative support of the local CCI sector at the one hand and the training of CCI stakeholder for a higher level of entrepreneurship that can better complement their creative skill set at the other hand. The StimulART project provided training materials about local CCI sector cluster management and about the development of entrepreneurial skills adapted to the CCI sector and SMSC.

The partner city of Vittorio Veneto became so much convinced about the meaningfulness of a CCI sector cluster manager about which it learned during a workshop that it decided to set up a second pilot project during the StimulART project and to implement such a measure in the municipality to better support its local CCI sector.

- The promotion of the CCI sector and the implementation of cultural-led urban development programs beyond the traditional local cultural policies is often not only a new and unfamiliar subject for the municipalities in SMSC but may also exceed their resources, knowledge, and capabilities at the beginning. The StimulART project took this starting condition into account by involving external experts while overcoming it by implementing a train-the-trainer program following the principle of help for self-help. Especially for the municipalities, it is important to build up local endogenous resources and capabilities for the management of the CCI sector step by step while this process can be supported by external experts and implementation methodologies which provide field specific expertise at the beginning.

See more

5 <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/STIMULART/RUNI-Mapping-Analysis-Methodology-for-STIMULART-final.pdf>

6 <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/STIMULART/D.T1.4.7-STIMULART-Coordination-THGs-Intitial-guidelines-fin.pdf>

<https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/STIMULART/DT1.2.1-GUIDELINES-FOR-STAKEHOLDERS-FINAL.pdf>

7 <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/STIMULART/O.T1.1-Practical-Training-for-members-of-the-2-Thematic-Grou.zip>



The StimulART partner cities Jászberény and Kamnik were already in contact with external CCI sector experts when the project started. However, the cities of Amberg, Naumburg, and Vittorio Veneto contracted external experts only after the project were launched, thereby accessing the network of the partnership. Today, these cities are still in close contact with the external experts with whom they could build a lasting and trustful relationship during the project that might even extend to new projects and new topics.

————— Even more important than to tell success stories such as National and Local Good Practices to get a strategy going is the successful implementation of pilot projects that can catalyse and fill the strategy-making process with life, motivation, and tangible results. Much work in the StimulART project was devoted to plan and implement pilot projects together with the creation of templates for joint pilot project methodologies and accounting which oriented and guided the related activities in the partner cities. 8

The pilot projects in the StimulART project were already determined and described in the project application. However, the partner cities Amberg and Vittorio Veneto got inspired for additional pilot projects during the project. Amberg not only realized an IT based platform for the CCI sector, it organized three innovation laboratories at three different spots in the city that demonstrated the potential of the CCI to come up with innovative usage concepts for hitherto unused spaces. In the same vein, Vittorio Veneto realized the original pilot project - a workspace and innovation lab for digital prototypes -, and in addition it implemented a local CCI sector cluster manager which is a new role in regional economic development management about which the project partners could learn during the project. Thanks to the flexibility of the strategy-making methodology and the Interreg CE Joint Secretary who approved of the additional pilot projects, these two cities can even tell two success stories that will outlast the project.

————— One important success factor for becoming a ‘Creative City’ is a city’s ability to be open for external developments, to view external experiences of other cities as inspiration, and to learn from other cities by adapting inspirations to the specific conditions. Accordingly, the StimulART project supported elements that encouraged learning from and getting inspired by experiences of other partner cities and SMSC such as study visits, peer-review visits, knowledge exchange workshops, and experience-based learning formats. For the StimulART partner cities it is important to continue with this journey and to set up a monitoring system that makes the observation of other SMSC and Good Practices in CCI sector management and cultural-led urban development programs to a permanent institution.

The whole StimulART project constituted a learning journey for all stakeholders involved. Interestingly, the partner cities learned not only from SMSC and their projects external to the partnership and from external experts. More importantly, they learned much more from each other. At first, the partner cities surprised themselves when they discovered the many Good Practices already in place in their cities. But immediately afterwards the other partner cities could learn from these Good Practices such as from the Kikstarter start-up incubator in Kamnik. The interest for each other’s experiences between the project partners soon exceeded the project topic and was extended to many more pressing challenges SMSC have currently to deal with. Indeed, one of the most sustainable project results is the increased curiosity the partner cities developed for external experiences and inspiration.

Far from constituting a complete list of success factors for the implementation and sustainable anchoring of a ‘Creative City’ vision in SMSC, the just named aspects rather constitute minimal requirements that should be met when a SMSC tries to replicate the StimulART project.

In the next three chapters 4-6, case studies will provide a more tangible and actionable account of specific tools, measures, and methods in the toolbox of making SMSC more attractive through a smart specialization strategy that focusses on the local CCI sector and cultural resources. The following info graphic provides an illustrative overview about the main intervention fields and topics in the StimulART project.

However, before we narrate these case studies, we now turn first to the executive summary before we will introduce the StimulART partner cities in more detail in the third chapter. This summary will give the reader a rough overview about the new insights the StimulART project could gain about the specifics of the relationship between SMSC and the CCI and cultural-led urban development programs by way of a comparative multi-case study.

See more

8 <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/STIMULART/D.T3.2.1-3.3.1-Detailed-Pilot-Concept-Template-STIMULART-LP-.pdf>
<https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/STIMULART/D.T3.2.5-3.3.4-Mid-term-Pilot-evaluation-Template-STIMULART-.pdf>
<https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/STIMULART/D.T3.2.6-3.3.5-FINAL-Pilot-evaluation-Template-STIMULART-LP-.pdf>

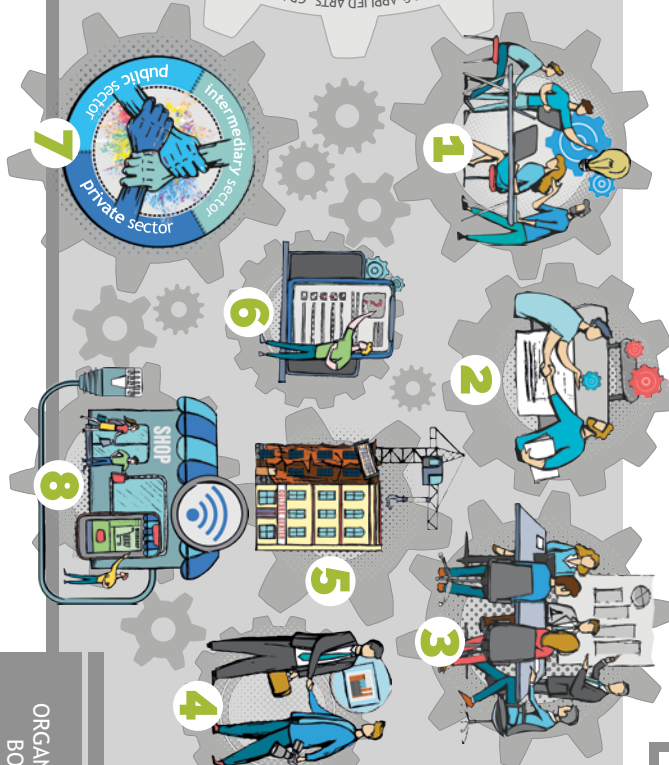




HOW TO WORK IN CCI



CULTURAL and CREATIVE INDUSTRIES are versatile and colourful, always showing distinctive local flavour. CCI includes cultural activities like performing arts, visual arts, cultural heritage, film, video games, media, music, books and the like. Meanwhile creative industries such as architecture and design, graphic design, fashion design or advertising use culture as inspiration and the outputs are mainly practical.



The main ambition of Stimulart is to enhance CCI in mid-size cities. The partners aim to achieve higher added value production and blooming CCI services as well as to create new opportunities for qualified professionals. The improved capacities of stakeholders such as local governments, cultural organizations and CCI entrepreneurs contribute to the socially and economically successful and sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources.

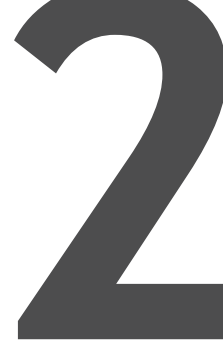
- WAYS TO BOOST CCI IN MID-SIZE CITIES**
- 1 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS FOR NETWORKING TO IMPROVE SECTORAL COHESION
 - 2 CO-WORKING SPACES FOR CCI ACTORS TO FACILITATE COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION
 - 3 TRAININGS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING TO EXTEND THE COMPETENCES OF CCI ACTORS & MUNICIPALITIES
 - 4 COOPERATION OF TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES AND CCI ENTREPRENEURS TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL CCI MARKETS
 - 5 TRANSFORMING OLD INDUSTRIAL SITES AND VASTLANDS WITH THE HELP OF CCI ACTORS AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TO REVIVE URBAN ENVIRONMENT
 - 6 INTENSE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP TO MAXIMIZE THE CCI CONSUMER EXPERIENCE
 - 7 IMPROVE NETWORKING AND COOPERATION AMONG THE PRIVATE CCI, THE PUBLIC CULTURAL AND THE INTERMEDIATE SECTOR
 - 8 AVAILABILITY OF BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS AS A PRECONDITION FOR FIRMS MARKETING STRATEGIES (E-MARKETING & E-COMMERCE IN CCI)

ORGANIZATIONS, PROFESSIONAL BODIES FACILITATING CCI
(local and national governments, knowledge providers, sectoral NGOs etc.)

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Executive Project Summary:

The relationship between SMSC and the CCI and cultural-led urban development programs in the light of the StimulART project results



Cultural-led urban development strategies in which CCI sector strategies play a central role have been originally engineered for metropolitan cities. The mainstream discourse about the Creative City (Charles Landry) and the Creative Class (Richard Florida) holds that a critical mass of at least 100.000 inhabitants and the presence of a university as an indispensable institution of the globally networked knowledge society constitute minimal requirements to get clustering processes started in knowledge intensive industries that are aligned with the new logic of an urban economy. When SMSC are lacking those minimal requirements, are they excluded from the perspective to participate in the new urban economy?

A look at the rare data about the geography of creativity shows for the UK and Germany that the total and relative numbers of the CCI for peripheral regions and smaller cities are decreasing while the total and relative numbers of the CCI for already existing CCI hub cities are increasing with growth rates as a function of city size. Regional CCI centers rather stagnate or grow only with rates more moderate than seen in global cities, national capitals or federal state capitals. SMSC below the size of 100.000 inhabitants that don't are a location for institutions of the knowledge society like universities rather witness a secular decrease in absolute and relative numbers for their CCI sector on average.

On balance, when we take together the expert opinions about minimal requirements for CCI sector strategies and the available data which shows a strong and dynamic centralization and clustering process of the CCI and the creative class members in national capitals and metropolitan cities, we come to the conclusion that SMSC constitute a rather adverse environment for the clustering of CCI. While the classical clusters in manufacturing Michael Porter has emphasized could be also found in SMSC, the CCI tend to cluster, too, but not in SMSC any longer. Rather, their clustering seems to be bound to bigger cities of the knowledge society from a certain size onwards.

This conclusion must worry anyone who has a sense of political responsibility that SMSC and their hinterlands must not be left behind in the dynamics of post-industrial processes of polarization and marginalization within the context of the city vs. rural divide. SMSC face big challenges for their future development which become bigger the more peripheral the cities are located. SMSC must become creative cities in order to stand the proof of the times to come. They must become adaptive, fast learning, and agile cities to remain able to find solutions to new problems and challenges. But, for this, they can't just take over the recipes of the urban development vision of the 'Creative City' which has been engineered with metropolitan cities in mind. The discourse of the creative city is pervaded with many unquestioned taken-for-granted assumptions that hold only true for metropolitan cities. Therefore, when we talk about the urgent need of SMSC to become creative cities, we run the risk to take over those big city assumptions unconsciously, even when we try to come up with strategies and action plans that are adapted to the conditions of SMSC. So the most important and urgent task must first be to uncover the taken-for-granted assumptions about the conditions and challenges of big cities in the mainstream discourse about the creative city. Only when we are aware about those assumptions, we are able to appreciate the city-size dependent conditions and challenges of SMSC in the process of becoming creative cities. Otherwise, we would develop overexaggerated expectations about the CCI sector in the context of cultural-led urban development strategies in SMSC and subsequently misguided strategies and action plans that lead to high hopes and deep disappointments, unsustainable results, and self-deception that may finally contribute to an increasing loss in trust in the capabilities of SMSC to self-government and in local politics. Before this background, the focus of the following summary is twofold.

- It tries to uncover some of the taken-for-granted assumptions in the mainstream creative city discourse about conditions, requirements, and challenges that only hold true for metropolitan cities and that realistically cannot be replicated in SMSC.
- By way of a comparative multi-case study, the StimulART project has managed to establish more realistic expectations about conditions, requirements, and challenges for the future development of the size-specific city type of SMSC between 20 and 50 thousand inhabitants in the context of creativity and innovativeness. On this basis, the summary tries to point to some policy implications for local CCI sector strategies and cultural-led urban development strategies that are better aligned with what SMSC's conditions, requirements, and challenges are.

The StimulART project used its resources also to search for new tried and tested good practices for setting up CCI sector and urban renewal strategies in SMSC that make best use of their underutilized cultural local resources. Those good practices will be described in much detail in the following chapters while this summary will only briefly point to them when they can illustrate more general insights.



The StimulART partner cities compared

When we compare the StimulART project partner cities with each other as social entities with regard to the project aim which is their cultural-led urban development, some important structural features can be identified that differentiate those cities from each other.

- Each city is in the process of a purposeful identity change with different triggers that initiated this process of identity formation beside the wish to adapt to the general societal change towards a globalized, networked knowledge society. With Jászberény, Kamnik, and Naumburg, we have three cities in our sample that are post-socialist transition cities. Naumburg has experienced territorial reforms recently. Vittorio Veneto's identity is partly shaped by central government's interventions and partly by historical events with importance for the Italian national building process as such reaching back to the beginning of the 20th century. Amberg's identity change has been driven by a city marketing project searching for a new Unique Selling Point.
- Regarding the settlement structure type the StimulART partner cities belong to, we can distinguish between Kamnik and Naumburg at the one hand which are located at the periphery of metropolitan centers and have thus a sub-urban location in relation to the cities of Ljubljana and Halle/Leipzig respectively, and Jászberény, Vittorio Veneto, and Amberg at the other hand which have a rather peripheral location and build urban centers in the periphery for their rural hinterlands. With respect to their territorial embeddedness in terms of the functional roles SMSC can typically play in the urban hierarchy as developed by the EU ESPON project (ÖIR et al. 2006, Servillo et al. 2014), Kamnik and Naumburg belong to type of agglomerated cities, while Amberg, Jászberény, and Vittorio Veneto rather belong to the type of autonomous cities.
- Corresponding with the post-socialist transition status of Jászberény, Kamnik, and Naumburg, we have to conclude a discontinuity of entrepreneurship and local self-government in those cities that conveys on Amberg and Vittorio Veneto a comparative advantage based on the continuity of their experiences in liberal capitalism and political subsidiarity.
- With respect to the history of industrialization, we can state important differences between the StimulART partner cities, too. Jászberény, Amberg, and Vittorio Veneto have been experiencing a continuity in economic activities in the secondary, the industrial, economic sector resulting in a high industry density today. Kamnik had experienced a strong and rapid industrialization after World War II in Ex-Yugoslavia before it has been made experiences of a strong de-industrialization during the last three decades after the iron curtain fell in 1989. Naumburg stands in a harsh contrast to both developments, since it has pursued an urban development approach of a residence city which was changed only little during the socialist period between 1945 and 1989 and which has actively been revived since 1991 resulting in very low industry density today.

9 This summary will briefly sketch the results of the comparative multi-case study under the StimulART project leaving out much detail as well as the scientific reasoning and empirical evidence leading to those results and new insights. However, for those who are interested in the scientific reasoning, methodology, and empirical evidence of the comparative multi-case study in more detail, we can refer to the "Project Level Gap Analysis Synthesis Report" of the StimulART project published on the project's website.

Peculiarities of a cultural-led urban development and CCI sector strategy for SMSC

CCI sector strategies in the context of cultural-led urban development programs have been designed for metropolitan cities in mind. We can identify at least two types of big city biases in the mainstream discourse. The first big city bias type in the creative city and the creative class discourse is to take certain conditions for granted one can only find in metropolitan cities such as New York, Tokyo, London, Paris, and Berlin. Among them is the important assumption that each metropolitan city has a big enough potential to become a location for a cluster of a certain CCI sub-sector with unlimited growth potentials, or to become even a location to host clusters in every single one of the CCI sub-sectors. However, to apply this assumption to SMSC is rather misled because it ignores the requirement of a critical mass of CCI stakeholders necessary for clustering, while the existence of such a critical mass depends on the size of the local demand for cultural products and services. Even in Amberg and Vittorio Veneto, the StimulART partner cities with the biggest local markets for CCI products and services as defined by the overall local economic potency, we can't find clusters or seeds for clusters in the CCI sector, let alone CCI subsectors. Rather we find there on the local market level an oligopolistic market structure with strong competition in all local CCI sub-markets that are small and rather stagnating and saturated. This metropolitan bias type points to assumptions about developmental potentials like the clustering potential of the CCI sub-sectors that take certain preconditions for granted that are given in metropolitan cities but cannot be replicated in SMSC. A naïve application of the assumption that every city has cluster potential for the CCI sector irrespective size would set up wrong expectations for SMSC about related developmental potential and, in turn, would lead to wrong guided policy measures.

A second type of metropolitan city biases can be identified in developmental challenges faced specifically by SMSC that are not discussed or visible in the mainstream discourse about metropolitan or bigger cities such as a lack of youth culture and the educational migration of the young generation. The metropolitan and big city bias of the creative city agenda treats youth culture as taken-for-granted because a critical mass and high density of the members of the younger generations seem to be always present in those cities. This second metropolitan bias type points to overlooked potentials for SMSC because the phenomenon in question is already highly developed in metropolitan cities, though based on conditions that cannot become replicated in SMSC.

On balance, the high expectations usually connected to a CCI sector support program and a cultural-led urban development concept in metropolitan cities - the sheer endless growth possibilities unleashed by the unlimited resource of creativity - may not become fulfilled in SMSC. Rather, the risks are high that SMSC will fail and waste scarce resources when trying to live up to those high expectations. We need to better understand how the CCI sector works in SMSC to avoid establishing high hopes and exaggerated expectations that lead in turn to inappropriate strategies and action plans. Therefore, what we need is to cool down the exaggerated expectations about the adaptation of the creative city concept to SMSC while, at the same time, acknowledging the pressing need to make SMSC more flexible, adaptable, and agile in a world-society that changes at accelerated pace. In what follows, we list the generalized insights of the manifold heterogeneous StimulART project experiences with an emphasis on adaptations of the creative city concept to the special conditions of SMSC. In this way, the StimulART project wants to contribute to the establishment of more realistic expectations about the developmental potentials, limits, and challenges for a cultural-led urban development and a CCI sector strategy in SMSC.



Place as key attractor and productive factor in the CCI sector of SMSC

Richard Florida has rightly established the view that the Creative Class does often not follow jobs when they make residential decisions but rather look to certain amenities such as a creative atmosphere based on openness, tolerance, and technological buzz, a strong cultural life, major sport events, a 24/7 always on service orientation, etc. Obviously, there is a big city bias at work here again. However, when the existence of a strong labour market is not a precondition for the creative class members' location decisions any longer, does the argument also hold for SMSC? And if so, what are the amenities that make SMSC attractive in the eyes of the creative class rendering the attractive attributes and amenities of a particular place into a production factor for its economic and urban rejuvenation? The StimulART experiences have shown that there is a high share of CCI stakeholders in the partner cities who have consciously chosen their respective locations with regard to certain criteria specific of either their particular cities or the size of the city (SMSC as a size defined city type). The following reasons for their location decisions could be identified:

- Affective relationships with particular places: Family traditions and ties as well as supportive friends' networks connected to the territory, family property, emotional attachment to the territory of their upbringing and their ancestors, including its specific regional culture, nature, and landscape.
- Advantages of SMSC: Quality of life and potential for a good work-life balance, especially for families, closeness to nature, human scale, short distances, social peace, low criminality, and community spirit.
- CCI related advantages of SMSC: Potential of good working conditions as a creative mind, favourable conditions for freedom and autonomy in self-expression, better conditions for contemplation or inspiration, retreat from the buzz and competition of metropolitan cities, to avoid pressures to economic growth looking more sustainable and slow artistic practices.
- Prerequisites SMSC should have: Good international accessibility (digitally and physically) as a precondition for a regional, national, or international audience and for staying connected to the art world including easy travelling options to major world art society events and exhibitions for information, inspiration, and networking.

- Pragmatic reasons: availability of space for reasonable costs; relatively low costs of living; displacement in bigger cities by gentrification while the new location in a SMSC is still relatively close to the previous metropolitan area so it is easy to access for existing and potential customers and cooperation partners living in this area such as in Kamnik and Naumburg; family support for younger CCI stakeholders who try to establish themselves as professionals; partner's job position and career with the partner being the family's bread winner while the creative can contribute additional income only.

Thus, the CCI stakeholder's motives to locate in SMSC differ from those found in metropolitan or bigger cities, therefore SMSC have their own specific amenities compared with metropolitan cities seen through the creative class members' eyes. SMSC should find cultural-led urban development strategies adapted to and aligned with what creative class members find attractive about their cities.

SMSC as locations for CCI actors and firms, creating jobs and wealth

In all StimulART partner cities there are healthy firms and freelancing CCI businesses existing. Surprisingly, there are market activities detectable in almost each of the CCI sub-sectors almost in each city. The heterogeneous set of CCI stakeholders is highly adapted to the respective local CCI sub-market niches based on local demand and the residential economy. Most CCI stakeholders in the StimulART partner cities sell their products and services to locals, tourists, small local businesses, and local public or non-profit organizations. Most of their products and services have rather low degrees of cultural content and aesthetic newness and fulfil aesthetic needs and desires on a rather basic level only.

The size of the local market for CCI products and services seems to depend on the cities' industrial and economic activity level at the one hand and the level of tourism at the other hand. Since the level of tourism is rather low in all StimulART partner cities, we find a stronger developed CCI sector in Amberg and Vittorio Veneto only. In Amberg, we can even find artists from the 'Core Creative Expressions' who report that they can make a living from their sales on the local market without having to earn additional money in second jobs while we find no such artists in the other StimulART partner cities. However, even in Amberg, the city with the biggest local markets for CCI products and services as defined by their overall economic potency, we see an oligopolistic market structure with strong competition in all local CCI sub-markets that are stagnating and saturated. Relatively small local market niches mean that there are only a few, mostly small companies and freelancers with a viable, mostly traditional, business model operating in each sub-market if at all. However, we can find some exceptions to the general pattern of CCI firms and freelancers adapted to the rather small and conservative residential economy: firms with specialized business models that follow a product differentiating and qualitative strategy catering for regional, national, or international markets.

But even when we take the specialized firms into account, we cannot find any signs of clusters specialized in CCI sub-markets that could serve as a potential basis for a CCI-led economic growth process. The CCI sector strategies of SMSC should not aim at building clusters in specific CCI sub-sectors as a specialization strategy. Rather they should aim at stabilizing the whole CCI sector which is in danger of bleeding out and at gaining moderate growth.

Sustainable business models of CCI firms and actors in SMSC

Local producers of cultural products and services in the StimulART partner cities cope with small local markets for locally produced cultural products and services and with their prevailing conservative tastes by adapting their business models to the demand patterns in their local market niches. These business models are traditional in character rather than geared towards growth and business model innovation. We also find many examples of precarious business models build around marginal self-employment. The mostly low levels of cultural content and aesthetic newness in the cultural products and services offered enable craftsmen, but also hobby-producer, to successfully enter the local market for cultural products and services without a formal (tertiary) education in CCI occupations. In this context, it is most interesting that the pilot project in Jászberény takes aim at upgrading a folklorist craftsmanship movement by educating craftsmen and accommodating their offers to today's less conservative consumer expectations.



Local CCI as a dynamic force in the local economies of SMSC, driving growth, and adding high-value jobs in the knowledge economy?

One powerful and persuasive argument for the political support of the CCI in the mainstream discourse is that the CCI sector has above average growth rates, provides high-value jobs in the knowledge economy, and acts as growth drivers for the rest of the economy due to its high dynamic based on high levels of innovativeness. While this may well be the case for advanced national economies or metropolitan cities, we cannot observe this relationship for the StimulART partner cities. Here, the relationship between the traditional economy and the CCI is rather characterized by the classical pattern that the size as well as the growth rate of the local CCI markets are a function of the growth and the size of the local economy, or the regional economy respectively. As we can deduct from a direct comparison between Amberg and Naumburg, the stronger the local or regional economy the stronger is the demand for locally produced cultural products and services. At the same time, we couldn't find any evidence for a tendency where a growth in the CCI sector could spur growth in the traditional sectors of the local economy. So, it seems to be the case among the StimulART partner cities that the growth of the local CCI sector is dependent on the growth of the local or regional traditional economy. Likewise, many jobs in the CCI sectors in the StimulART partner cities are of a precarious kind throwing doubt on the assumption that the CCI sector can provide for a substantial or disproportionately larger share of high value-added jobs in SMSC. Even when CCI firms cater for the non-local markets with a quality and product differentiating strategy for which they source input from the CCI to refine their products and services, they do so mostly by sourcing those inputs from CCI firms and freelancers not located in SMSC but rather in metropolises. For example, the design firms in Vittorio Veneto cooperate with nationally and internationally renowned designers who do not come from the territory.

The questions a local development strategy for the CCI sector in SMSC should ask therefore are about the stabilization of the sector: can the local CCI stakeholders become supported in their capacity to fully exploit the market niche size defined by the size of the local or regional economy and to proportionally benefit from the growth of the local or regional economy. The stabilization of the CCI sector is important since a high proportion of the CCI actors are SME which are highly rooted in the territory in terms of both traditions and networks. In parallel with securing the stabilization of the CCI sector, the local CCI stakeholders should be supported by measures that aim at improving their professional levels and at specializing their business models so that they become more independent from the local market by catering to regional, national, or even international market levels, thus, finding ways for growth independently from the growth rates of the local and regional economy. A specific strategy directed to the general growth of the economic sector in SMSC is to support the tourism sector since more tourists will enlarge the local market by bringing additional discretionary income to the city, from which locally produced cultural products and services may profit disproportionately.

Successful internationalization strategies of CCI firms in SMSC are possible provided certain national preconditions are in place such as a national design culture and educational infrastructure which then can become leveraged. To support local CCI companies in internationalizing their business models to make them more independent from the limits of the local market, to boost their growth, and to enhance the viability of their businesses requires a cooperation between the local economic development agencies with regional or national level economic development agencies.

Important parts of the CCI sector in SMSC are made up of companies built on business models for the consumption infrastructure of cultural goods and services. This cultural consumption infrastructure is important for SMSC although the people employed here don't belong to the core creative class because it plays an important role for the cultural participation of its citizens. Besides, it can serve as an indicator to what extent and on what level cultural consumption is existent in SMSC in general.

Can the local CCI sector change the innovation systems in SMSC and their hinterlands, leading to renewal and modernization?

Another important argument for supporting the CCI sector in national level industrial policies is the assumption that it changes the national innovation systems making them more innovative, disruptive, and agile by spin-off effects such as the diffusion of the Design Thinking innovation method. Industrial development policy aimed at the CCI, so the argument goes, can then be equated with innovation policy. Can the same argument be applied to the partner cities in the StimulART project?

In the StimulART partner cities Amberg and Vittorio Veneto we find quite a few hidden champions which operate in the secondary economic sector and which are successfully adapting to globalization, knowledge intensive production, and digitization. For example, in Amberg, beside many other knowledge intensive production sites in automotive supply and automatization, there is a SIEMENS factory manufacturing electronic control technology as world market leader. At the same time the factory itself is setting the standard in Industry 4.0 production technology in the EU being a benchmark for similar factories. Likewise, in Vittorio Veneto, there is a cluster of world leading key and lock manufacturers (Keyline, Silca), and the headquarter of one of the world leading specialists for glass facades for skyscrapers (Permaste Elisa Group). In both partner cities, thus, we find a high level of technological creativity and innovation which is in Amberg additionally furthered by the presence of a University of Applied Sciences. However, we couldn't find any signs of local innovation patterns with co-operations between the CCI sector and the traditional economic sector or spin-offs of changed innovation patterns diffusing from the local CCI sector into the local economy.

Regarding change in innovation patterns and cross-sector innovation in the StimulART partner cities, we find that the pace, methods, and patterns of change are set in the knowledge intensive industries sector with the CCI sector profiting from the growth of the local economy brought about by technological innovations. Typically, the knowledge intensive firms (hidden champions) located in SMSC are customers of highly reputable CCI firms which position themselves at national and international market levels and which are being located mostly in metropolises where the CCI cluster. Thus, the hidden champions in the StimulART partner cities neither procure their demand for cultural products and services at the local market nor do they learn from them new or different innovation methods. However, the value of the presence of a stabilized local CCI sector in SMSC, even if it does not contribute to a higher local innovation dynamic, lies beyond purely economic reasons.

SMSC as context for CCI sector strategies

CCI sector strategies as the core of cultural-led urban development programs show a 'big city' bias with many unquestioned assumptions based on metropolitan city case studies while SMSC are in their blind spot. When we apply these concepts to SMSC without critically questioning these assumptions we may set up the same expectations for the development of SMSC as for the metropolises, thereby exaggerating the CCI sector's developmental and growth potentials for SMSC.

- One of the first and most important actions should be to make the CCI sector visible, to foster a sense of belonging to a unified CCI sector among its heterogeneous stakeholders from the different sub-sectors, and above all, to promote networking among the sector. One way to realize these aims together is to make the CCI sector visible in the city by setting up a physical CCI hub, for example by establishing a co-working space that utilizes the lower rents in SMSC as a locational advantage compared with metropolitan cities. With the Roomli pilot project, the StimulART partner city Jászberény has developed such a physical hub for its CCI sector in general and the Jász folk culture ecosystem in particular. Networking activities with national and international professional CCI sub-sector networks should be supported, too, to up professionalization, quality, and specialization for national and international market access.
- Municipalities should rise their awareness for the CCI sector and its specific needs and requirements. They should carefully deploy their own procurement behaviour for cultural products and services to support their local CCI sector, valorizing their offers by consuming them and, thus, highlighting their visibility and symbolizing their value.



- One of the biggest potentials lies probably with networking initiatives between the traditional industrial sector and the CCI sector that could produce a stronger visibility for the locally produced cultural products and services for the local economy. Such networking measures could utilize a comparative advantage of SMSC - their tightly knit multi-functional networks between decision makers from different fields, the potential for short cuts in information channels, and the short distances to political and economic decision makers. The StimulART partner city Kamnik could successfully establish such a network in the context of the KIKštarter start-up incubator.
- SMSC municipalities should create new positions and work roles for the CCI sector within the local administration such as a CCI cluster manager which can accommodate for the CCI sector's special needs, requirements, logics, and mindsets and nurture mutual understanding and trust between administrative and artistic mindsets. Such a cluster management for the CCI sector should also include specialized coaching and mentoring facilities. A cluster management should become established only together with networking structures within the CCI sector that can provide interfaces and spokespersons of the different CCI sub-sectors to the municipality. In this sense, there has been established a CCI sector association by CCI stakeholder in the StimulART partner city Amberg even before the project started. SMSC should consider to work together with other neighbouring SMSC in intercommunal cooperation to share their resources for such a cluster management program and to pool their local CCI firms and stakeholders as the program's addressees and beneficiaries, thus, building up a critical mass. The StimulART partner city Vittorio Veneto is experimenting with such a cluster manager at the local level after learning about such an institution in Regensburg during the project.

SMSC as context for cultural-led urban development programs

Concepts of a cultural-led urban development strategy have been developed for the increasing competition for attention and reputation between global and metropolitan cities in order to attract talents, investors, and tourists on a worldwide scale. The leading assumption seems to be that a city's cultural resources are place-specific, unique, sticky and hard to copy, and can therefore be used for building a unique and attractive city identity that serves in turn as a USP in city marketing initiatives. When applying this script to SMSC we see at least two limitations in the StimulART partner cities. While their cultural resources are surprisingly rich, even when compared to bigger cities, they seem to be still too weak to constitute a competitive critical mass of cultural amenities that could possibly draw the attention of external observers to SMSC, away from bigger cities that set the standard. At the same time, the resources of the StimulART partner cities are already too weak to fully exploit and develop their rich cultural resources.

To transfer city identity marketing approaches based on cultural resources from global cities down the urban hierarchy to middle centers and SMSC is especially tempting on the EU territory, given the rich urban history, cultural heritage, and cultural differences specifically embodied in the European SMSC. Accordingly, we can already find city marketing driven programs to strategically shape city identities in Amberg and Naumburg. In doing so, especially Amberg has drawn on its cultural resource of the "Luftmuseum" (Aerial Museum) and is marketing itself under the moniker "Luftkunstort Amberg" (Place for Aerial Art, playing with the German term "Luftkurort" meaning health resort).

When SMSC copy marketing driven city identity programs directed at external observers from the rulebook for cultural-led urban development written for global cities they invest scarce resources in a competition where they are structurally disadvantaged. Moreover, they run the risk of overstressing their resources by trying to realize an unrealistic or even unobtainable goal set by the global city agenda. Instead of maximizing attention for external observers, SMSC should emphasize and strategically develop those aspects of their city identity that matter for their inhabitants and for the cities' endogenous development such as the importance of cultural heritage for the identity of the city's inhabitants and for building a sense of community around this identity such as around the folklorist Jász movement in Jászberény. Besides, SMSC should target those outside observers who already have a certain bond to the city and the region or know about them already.

City identities cannot become easily changed nor can their components become artificially designed easily. Rather, a city identity plays the role of a framework for processes of change that itself changes only slowly on the basis of collective experiences anchored in collective memory. We could identify the following aspects that are partly constituting the city identities of SMSC:

- their economic history,
- their history of communal self-government,
- their spatial location relative to the economic centers of the global economy,
- and their position relative to the national urban hierarchy.

Those aspects of a city identity influence particularly the development potentials of the private economic sector by establishing collective expectations about economic change, adaptation, and entrepreneurship. Thus, an important aspect for a cultural-led urban development strategy drawing on cultural resources and the CCI sector is the type of economic and entrepreneurial culture that already exists in the cities. CCI sector strategies and action programs should take those aspects of a city identity into account, thereby making the necessary adaptations to potential path dependencies and rather mid- and long-term change perspectives.

In order to compete with bigger cities for attention and reputation, SMSC try sometimes to implement a strategy that makes them a part in a regional touristic destination which is thought to assemble a competitive critical mass such as the Prosecco Region and Vittorio Veneto and the Stone and Wine Region and Naumburg. Again, while SMSC are already too weak to fully develop the cultural resources within the city they run the risk of overstressing their resources when following the destination building logic and extending their reach beyond city boundaries. However, one potential way to overcome this problem of overstretched resources when trying to build a touristic destination can be seen in inter-communal cooperation either with villages and small cities in SMSC's hinterland or more regionally with neighbouring SMSC. Then, organizational capabilities of municipalities for inter-communal cooperation become a critical resource for the establishment and execution of a cultural-led urban development strategy.

SMSC face almost the same challenges and tasks bigger cities face, however, they have comparably smaller municipalities measured in administrative positions and, thus, a lower level of specialization. As a consequence, SMSC municipalities tend to develop generalist mindsets and practices resulting in difficulties to adapt to unfamiliar challenges which require highly specialized expertise as is the case with CCI sector support and its integration in a cultural-led urban developmental strategy. A solution can be found in regional or supra-regional agencies set up by regional or national authorities that can provide expertise and resources for cultural-led urban developmental projects and local CCI sector support strategies. However, when SMSC want to develop and implement cultural-led urban development agendas they must modernize their administrative mindsets, practices, and methods to become capable of inter-communal, trans-organisational, and cross-organisational project-wise teamwork. Accordingly, the StimulART project included many different capacity building measures to train their partner cities' municipalities.

The role of the public cultural sector and of the civil society cultural sector for a cultural-led development in SMSC

In SMSC, cultural products and services are produced not only by the private economic sector (the CCI sector), but above all and foremost by the public cultural sector, and by the intermediate cultural sector which is made up to a significant share by non-profit cultural associations. All StimulART partner cities figure as important peripheral centers in their national urban hierarchies with important supply functions for their respective hinterlands, including a responsibility for basic cultural supply functions. However, we don't see major public cultural institutions in their cities such as theatres, opera houses, concert halls, dance companies, big galleries etc., which can only be found in bigger cities higher up the national urban hierarchy. The StimulART partner cities try to provide publicly funded high culture by way of festivals or guest ensembles in different arts fields instead. Meanwhile, most of the demand for high culture coming from the StimulART partner cities' inhabitants is satisfied in metropolitan and bigger cities.

Regarding the relationship between the three sectors of cultural production, we can observe the following pattern: The higher up a city is in the national urban hierarchy the higher is its inventory and activity level of public cultural institutions. Since the level of publicly funded culture is relatively low in SMSC, its impulses for the CCI sector and the intermediate civil society sector are weak. Hence, the CCI inventory and activity level depend on the position of the city in the urban hierarchy, too: The lower a city's position in the urban hierarchy, the less public cultural institutions we can find, and the less CCI actors we find, particularly in the 'Central Cultural Expressions' (literature, music, performing and visual arts).

¹⁰ However, as notable exceptions in the StimulART partnership, Naumburg's municipality funds a small public city theatre, and there exists the internationally renowned Jászság Folk Company dance company in Jászberény run by a cultural association.



Since the CCI sector in SMSC is rather small compared to metropolitan cities and tends to be a function of the size and dynamic of the local economy as well as of the public cultural sector, the degree to which it can complement and enlarge the local cultural supply is rather limited. The local demand for cultural products and services is oftentimes too low in SMSC to provide a market opportunity big enough for sustainable local businesses, especially for products and services in the ‘Core Cultural Expressions’ with a high degree of artistic value (and avant-gardist content). Although additional cultural offers provided by the CCI sector can be found in SMSC, there is not enough potential at all that it could substitute public culture - nor, based on normative grounds, should it. When SMSC would stop to fund the public cultural sector, this would rather mean the end of the provision of a local offer in the ‘Core Cultural Expressions’ (with a high qualitative standard) to the SMSC’ inhabitants and the loss of the basic cultural supply functions.

The relationships between the three sectors of cultural production differs in SMSC compared to metropolitan cities also in another dimension: The share of the cultural production provided by the intermediate cultural sector in SMSC is larger than in metropolitan cities. In all of of the StimulART partner cities, many cultural offers depend on the functioning of non-profit associations and therefore depend on volunteers who support these associations based mostly or partly on their intrinsic motivations.

When we look at the relationship between the CCI sector and the non-commercial civil society sector of cultural production, we can recognize that there is hardly any business case for substituting cultural products and services provided by non-profit associations of the intermediate sector with commercial ones in SMSC. The expectation to turn non-for-profit associations of the intermediate sector of cultural production into business models rather puts at risk the whole set of cultural offers provided by them because the volunteers’ intrinsic motivation base becomes most certainly damaged or destroyed by commercialization and monetarization. A commercialization of the intermediate sector of cultural production, therefore, would leave the cities not with a more diverse cultural offer, but rather with a less and worse cultural live.

In SMSC, it is often the intermediate cultural sector of cultural production that sets impulses for the CCI sector development rather than the public sector. Therefore, public funding of the intermediate cultural sector equals indirectly an economic policy instrument for the CCI sector: It is highly rational to support institutions of the intermediate cultural sector in SMSC, for example socio-cultural centers, even when seen from a purely economic point of view. CCI sector strategies and action programs should ask, where public money can become excellently utilized when spent on the intermediary cultural sector measured against the criteria of high leveraging and high dividend for creativity.

SMSC as context for creativity enabling environments

In a sense, each metropolitan city is a creativity enabling environment by default due to its density of social interactions and heterogeneity of people, milieus, cultures, organizations, and firms created by sheer population size and density. While the discourse about the creative city tend to disregard SMSC it might be just more important to create a creativity enabling environment in SMSC exactly because of their lack of a ‘critical mass’, high density, and urban ‘buzz’. The StimulART project identified at least three important dimensions of a creativity enabling environment in SMSC, namely

- institutions of arts education and tertiary education,
- entrepreneurial culture, and
- youth culture.

To promote the creativity enabling environment by education in arts and creativity is a double-edged sword. The good performance of an advanced educational system particularly in arts education is a precondition for a city’s attractiveness as a location for families. In addition, the (public) education in arts and creativity not only initiates the valuation of cultural products and services, it establishes a local market for private education in arts disciplines, too. However, the better the creative enabling environment in arts education becomes in SMSC the less attractive SMSC become for core creative minds. This contradiction is true for the production side: The young generation becomes inspired and qualified to pursue a career in the professions of the CCI sector by a high quality arts education. But when they try to learn such a profession, they normally will have to leave the city for tertiary education. Thus, when SMSC successfully ameliorate the creativity enabling environment of the local educational system the likelihood raises that the young people will leave the city for tertiary education and a professional career for good. The same contradiction holds true for the consumption side: When SMSC succeed in building a creativity enabling environment by arts education in general, then aesthetic tastes become more and more refined. More refined aesthetic tastes lead to a greater demand for ‘high culture’ experiences in the ‘Core Cultural Expressions’ which, however, can’t become fulfilled at the local market in SMSC.

For establishing an entrepreneurial culture in a SMSC, one important success factor seems to be the establishment of a formalized mentoring network that connects founders with entrepreneurs and managers from established local companies, preferably including hidden champions that operate on national and international markets. These networks can provide founders with access to expertise and regional, national, and international professional networks while they draw on a community sense that is rooted in both a sense of professional community and an emotional attachment to the territory. Ideally, such a ‘glocal’ mentoring network is embedded in a start-up incubator such as KIKšstarter start-up incubator in Kamnik.

The (visible) presence of the young generation and of a youth culture in cities of all sizes are symbols of their future developmental potentials. The young are more willing to take risks and face uncertainty in the ‘rush hours’ of their lives in order to challenge established ideas, and they create the new, and change values and meanings as entrants to the professional life. They are also the generational cohort most open to experimentation in consumption, thus, early adopters of innovations. Surprisingly, youth culture does not figure prominently in creative city agendas because it is taken-for-granted there. The precariousness of youth culture as well as its potential as a creativity enabling environment become rather visible in SMSC because these are often faced with ageing and shrinking populations and brain drain of the young generation. One of the most pressing challenges for SMSC is how they can develop specific attractors for the elusive and highly mobile young generation that rather tends to be attracted by metropolitan cities, at least in their more aspirational and creative sub-groups. Even though a policy that caters for the young generation should be made a priority in SMSC, we often find policies that rather prioritize the interests of the older voter groups in SMSC. Hence, we find policies that aim at making the city more attractive for families including the educational offers and classical measures of cultural policy. Providing space for youth (sub-)cultures and their self-organisation is only rarely found in SMSC, even though important potentials for the development of CCI and entrepreneurship are existing in this policy field. Most interestingly, the StimulART partner city Kamnik has even aligned the CCI sector strategy with the youth strategy and, together with the youth club ‘Kotlonica’, developed a strong reputation for a forward looking youth policy.



The role of sports in cultural-led urban development programs in SMSC

Sports, sport culture, and the culture of leading an active live play an important role in the everyday life of SMSC inhabitants and have an associated developmental potential for their cultural-led urban development. Although the relationship between sport and culture is characterized by competition for the inhabitants' attention, time and resources, and by competition for support by public money or for sponsorship by local firms, we can sometimes find a mutually reinforcing relationship. See for an example the emergence of a new subculture around a certain new sport, oftentimes embedded within a youth culture which also emits (sub-) cultural products and services like in the HipHop culture (skating, rap music, graffiti) or the Surf Culture. A vivid sport scene and active live culture may become an amenity in SMSC that, when coupled with a sub-culture, may make the city especially attractive to the young generation, such as climbing in Kamnik, horse riding in Jászberény, canoeing in Naumburg, cycling in Amberg, or triathlon in Vittorio Veneto. When one considers particularly outdoor sports, SMSC may have comparative advantages when surrounded by an attractive natural landscape. Thus, a certain potential for a cultural-led urban development of SMSC lies in the specific opportunity to take advantage of their ambiguous character of neither being a big city nor belonging to the countryside. SMSC can actively strike the balance between the right amount of urban life close to culture and rural life close to nature when offering cultural amenities in close relationship with amenities bound to nature (which may lend themselves more easily for sports and the culture of an active live).

Conclusions

The most important insight to take away from the StimulART project may possibly lay in the conclusion, that we should develop realistic expectations about the development potentials of the CCI sector in the context of a cultural-led urban development program in SMSC by uncovering and breaking free of the taken-for-granted assumptions of the mainstream discourse of the creative class and the creative city aimed at metropolises. One of the most important realistic expectation for SMSC based on the the StimulART project experiences is to say good bye to overexaggerated expectations of economic growth, dynamisation, and innovation often connected to the Creative City and Creative Class rhetoric. For SMSC more often than not the main task in CCI sector strategies will be to find solutions to stop the bleeding out of their CCI, to rather stabilize the CCI, and to find ways how to provide the context for their - moderate - growth. For example, it becomes questionable if a cluster strategy will work at all in SMSC even when the whole CCI sector is defined as a cluster. Instead, it might be better to develop regional CCI sector strategies in order to become able to address a critical mass of CCI stakeholders as their beneficiaries. Thus, while the project establishes that the need for SMSC to become creative cities is even bigger than it is for metropolitan cities, it must conclude that the CCI sector may not play as big a role in this development in SMSC as it can play in metropolitan cities. Rather, it becomes even more important for SMSC that the vision of the creative city must be realized by a more wholistic approach that not only includes cultural resources more generally such as the nurturing of an entrepreneurial culture but that also includes developmental potentials specific to SMSC as a size-dependent city size such as the emotional relationship with the territory among the CCI stakeholders or the cultivation of their ambiguous character of neither being a big city nor belonging to the countryside and the related amenities. To adapt the Creative City script to the specific conditions of SMSC does not only mean to identify the place-specific cultural resources of any particular SMSC. It means most of all that we should become aware of SMSCs' size-dependent specific conditions, potentials and challenges for urban renewal and that we should write a different script rather than adapting the existing one.

Introduction of partner cities

3

Jászberény, Hungary

Jászberény is the „capital city” of the Jászság micro-region with 18 settlements glued by the Jász identity and other bonds. Situated 80 km from Budapest just on the north-western rim of the Hungarian Great Plain, with the remote skyline of the Mátra Mountains. The city of Jászberény (cca. 27 000 inhabitants) is the administrative centre for its district as well as an economic and service hub for the wider area. The Upper-Jászság with industrial traditions dating back to socialist times has become the “engine” of economic growth in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County by now and is also nationally recognized as an area of great economic potentials. Though regional economy is predominated by manufacturing (electronic, plastic, machine etc.) it is becoming increasingly less labour intensive. Companies, local SMEs (Jászplasztik Ltd.) and global investors alike are intensely adapting and developing innovative products as well as automated (AI) technologies. Yet, issues of entrepreneurial culture and economic structure deeply affecting competitiveness are high on the urban development agenda these days... The city relying on its natural and cultural potentials randomly has become predetermined to seek and find alternative ways to prosperity recently. This way seeking led to the initiation of the CCI-focused StimulArt project.

The city is boasting some 19th century historical buildings, but its heritage-based intangible treasures rooted in Jász identity is much richer. The Jász is a folk which settled in the historical Hungary in the 12th century. While having lost their own language and territorial integrity centuries ago they have successfully kept their cultural heritage and revived the Jász traditions in the past decades. The folkdance traditions, costumes, craftsmanship, and the even nationally recognised relics such as the Jász Horn are core identity builders and unique CCI potentials. Happy with the saved traditions the new generations need more. The craftsmanship movement as a think tank of renewal is ready to near their activity model to the CCI logic to professionally combine traditions with new age expectations of the fundamentally transformed market environment. The CCI strategy of Jászberény and the pilot project - Roomli the Creative Hub - as local products of StimulArt, all manifest this ambition and are just the first steps on the way...

Kamnik, Slovenia

Kamnik is a town in northern Slovenia, that is the centre of the Municipality of the same name. Situated about 30 km north of the capital Ljubljana, it is an administrative, cultural, industrial and touristic centre on the southern edges of the Kamnik Alps. The town developed at the edge of the basin, where the Kamniška Bistrica river flows out of the narrow valley. The municipality boasts just under 30.000 inhabitants, of which City of Kamnik and its closest suburbs can count for approximately one-half of the inhabitants. It's rich historical and cultural heritage, along with wonderful natural mountainous surroundings makes it a popular tourist destination.

In medieval times it was a flourishing trading town, where the counts of Andechs from Bavaria had their seat. At that time, Kamnik was the capital of Carniola. It was an important trading stop on the road from Celje to Ljubljana. There was a period of decline in the 17th century, when the road through the Tuhinj Valley was abandoned, and the town was damaged in an earthquake and fires. The revival of the town began during the Napoleonic wars, when several crafts were introduced (metal foundries, leather tanners, pottery, masonry, etc.). The second half of 19th century was very important for Kamnik as the industry began developing. Most importantly the gunpowder factory that was established in 1853. For the needs of the industry a railway line from Ljubljana was constructed.

During the interwar years and in Yugoslavia the industry continued to develop but after the independence in 1991 it started to stagnate, and some of the biggest factories were closed. This led to several derelict abandoned industrial sites. This presents a great opportunity for the development of CCI in the city, as there is currently a lack of space where young creatives would meet, develop their ideas, and establish themselves. This is where STIMULART comes in with incentives to promote CCI and a pilot project aimed at revitalising a derelict building in the old gunpowder factory and make it a CCI hub.



Vittorio Veneto, Italy

Vittorio Veneto is a medium sized Italian city with a population of 27.479 (2020) located in the northern part of Veneto Region, midway between Venice and the Dolomites, in Treviso Province. Internationally known for the “last battle” of the First World War (the battle of Vittorio Veneto), the city is also very rich in terms of natural and cultural heritage. Part of the recently awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site of Prosecco Hills, Vittorio Veneto has a Roman as well as a Venetian background, witnessed by several archeological sites (ie: the Roman “Castrum”) as well as by the presence of typical Venetian architecture (ie: Piazza Flaminio in Serravalle). This tangible heritage, together with the huge intangible heritage, is valorized by a high number of non-profit cultural organizations and associations, generally of small and micro size: if this situation can be interpreted as a signal of an uncommon dynamism for such a peripheral area, on the other hand it drives to a structural lack of ability of the cultural and creative system to “grow” and to produce sound and sustainable business models, especially on a larger scale. The same dynamic seems to affect the industrial environment: the actors operating in the cultural and creative sectors are mostly micro-craft enterprises, limited to very traditional sectors, such as textiles and wood, with very few medium or large sized companies and a lack of players operating in the digital and technological market. The historic low level of intensity in the cooperation between the small associations and the industrial sector in the framework of cultural and creative environment contributed, and contributes, to the growing of the “untapped potential” of the city.

The StimulART project represented a great occasion to solve these problems and to invert the trend.

The project enabled the Municipality of Vittorio Veneto to activate a structured dialogue with both cultural associations and enterprises of the area, with the aim to increase the skills and the ability to do business in the cultural field. High level training courses for cultural and creative actors, exchange and circulation of information, knowledge and skills through the new portal vittoriovenetocreativa.it, participated thematic workshops and webinars with stakeholders, all these actions contributed to assess the interest of the industrial and handicraft sector of the Vittorio Veneto area towards possible collaborations with other innovative sectors (cultural, artistic and creative sector) in order to develop new opportunities and added value for the local productive sector as a whole. Moreover, the Municipality of Vittorio Veneto, together with BClever Srls (partner of StimulART project), regenerated a building in the very city center to create an innovative “service centre” for the deployment of advanced digital solutions - user testing technologies with virtual reality and digital prototyping - for creative professionals and enterprises. “The StimulART project - declares Antonio Miatto, Mayor of the City of Vittorio Veneto - has been therefore an opportunity to rethink the city from a cultural point of view, focusing on its identity and tradition, promoting the theme of Vittorio Veneto as a city of art and music, and rethinking the role of the cultural sector, now perceived as a system able to stimulate economic development”. A number of leading creative sectors also emerged, such as street art and design. “Art, craftsmanship and creativity-led enterprises are therefore a huge capital for our territory - affirms Ms. Antonella Caldart, Councillor for International Relations of the Municipality of Vittorio Veneto - and thanks to the StimulART project they have been able to improve their synergies, becoming a pillar of the local development policies of the Municipality and of the area as a whole”.

Amberg, Germany

The city of Amberg offers a modern infrastructure, a business-friendly climate and a high recreational value. As a regional centre, Amberg has a very high supply function for the rural surrounding area and is the shopping city of the region. Amberg is one of three independent cities in the district Oberpfalz.

For modern, innovative and technology-oriented business enterprises, the availability, performance and qualifications of the workforce are just as crucial as access to the latest research results. The Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule (OTH, which is a technical university) is an important stimulus for the economy in Amberg. Amberg is on its way to becoming a Smart City.

The main industries contain metal and mechanical engineering, electronics technology, automation technology, environmental and energy technology and printing industry. Central location, well-trained skilled workers and an intact local recreation area - the Amberg economic area has many locational advantages to offer. The CCI in Amberg is well positioned and well networked. Many of the CCI's industries are represented in Amberg. Therefore, it was interesting to have the StimulART project in Amberg, to evaluate the situation in Amberg and to find out what needs exist. StimulART was a valuable tool to recapitulate the development, to analyze the CCI in Amberg, to take stock and to react in a supportive way.

Naumburg, Germany

The city of Naumburg is located in an attractive landscape: in Europe's northernmost wine-growing region Saale-Unstrut in the Burgenland district between the cities of Leipzig, Halle (Saale), Jena and Erfurt. Wine culture, tourism and cultural heritage are important reference points for the Cultural and Creative Industries. According to the city of Naumburg, 33,314 people lived here in 2018 in an area of 130 km². The historic city center with the Naumburg Cathedral, which was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2018, is characteristic. Another tourist highlight is the Hildebrandt organ with the Hildebrandt Days in St. Wenzel, which take place biennially. Naumburg is considered a highly desirable town to reside in, even for the older population. The city has been known and promoted for its charm since the late 19th century Wilhelminian era or the so-called "Gründerzeit". This is one of the reasons why Naumburg is occasionally referred to as "Pensionopolis". Although 40 years of authoritarian socialism have left their mark on the city. The structural redevelopment of the core city since reunification can be considered a success story. More than 100 million € of public funds from the federal government have been invested in the expansion of the city center. In part, the municipality was able to architecturally coordinate the restoration work in individual streets by purchasing dilapidated houses and plots of land, in part combining them with modern architecture in a targeted manner, thus contributing to an overall appealing city image . Occasionally, isolated buildings can be found where restoration could not be financed yet. These high restoration costs are a result of the strict legal regulations on any historical monument or building.



4

Pilot projects

Jászberény Pilot Project: Roomli - the creative hub

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people, as well as investors

The establishment of a creative marketplace for folk art products and a venue for related events in Jászberény exemplifies how new products and services can evolve in medium-sized cities. Creatives benefit from training in entrepreneurial skills and opportunities to strengthen their network. And finally, the creative hub creates a new attraction for the city.

The initial situation

Jászberény is the center of the Jászság microregion, a town of about 27,000 inhabitants, 80 km east of Budapest. With the exception of a few tech companies, most of the industries are labor-intensive. Cultural and creative industries made up only 1.7% of business tax in 2018. The municipality does not have a cultural manager to strategically coordinate the cultural and tourism sectors. Cultural life is organized by the Jászkerület Non-Profit Ltd.

Cultural heritage, such as folk dancing, traditional trades and crafts, as well as contemporary art are preserved and passed down to the next generation. There are amateur and trained craftsmen as well as some handicraft enterprises in Jászberény, mainly family businesses. In addition, there are two community institutions with rooms and workshops for creative activities.

Since 2016, synergies have been created in two inspiring work environments from the Jászság Folk Art Workshop Association and the Future Creators Association.

There is great potential in traditional trades and crafts, as well as in contemporary art. Professionalizing these activities through marketing and better coordination is still lacking.

The selection of the project

While folk dancing has been very successful and enjoys national prestige, traditional arts and crafts, including contemporary applied arts, have not received similar recognition from the general public or the community.

The two directors of the above-mentioned associations, who are also full-time employees of Jászkerület Non-Profit Ltd., have been trying to change this situation for a longer time.

During the pilot project, these efforts are to be strengthened and expanded: “We want to do something to turn art and craft traditions into new business opportunities and a new attraction for the city” says Beáta Gál-Dobos, president of the Folk Art Workshop Association.

The following concrete goals are therefore formulated:

- Improve business opportunities for heritage-based arts and crafts in Jászberény and the Jászság region.
- Strengthen the network of creatives in Jászberény and the Jászság region.
- Heighten the prestige of the revived arts and crafts traditions.
- Raise Jászberény and the Jászság region's reputation for these folk arts and crafts.
- Create a new visitor attraction in the region.



The first idea to achieve these goals is to set up a store focused on folk art products .

At first, the strategy is to set up the shop in a planned cultural and event center called “The Mill”. However, this project fails. New premises have to be found quickly. The municipality offers a space in a large 2-story building from the late 19th century, which was originally a hotel. During the socialist times and in the past 30 years, the building served as a cultural venue, with a large hall on the first floor and shops for rent on the ground floor. Luckily, the creative hub called Roomli can set up shop here. It is an excellent location, easy to find in the city center and its entrance is at the city’s main square.

After Stimulart partner cities visit Jászberény and offer some new impulses, the original concept is expanded. Instead of a regular shop, the creative hub will now become a creative showroom, displaying folkart products and offering events, workshops, exhibitions and regular meetings of the creative community.

The idea is not fundamentally new, but it is definitely a novelty in this region and in this complexity.

The name “Roomli - the creative hub” is quickly agreed upon because it best reflects the new concept. Roomli translates as chaos, confusion. A place for creative chaos, where new things can emerge.

The concrete steps to implementation

The following concrete steps have already been completed within the set time frame:

1. Prepare a business and marketing plan for the creative center.
2. Renovate and design Roomli’s interior by a renowned local architect, as well as with input from local creatives.
3. Conceive and design a corporate identity by a graphic designer.
4. Select 16 creative professionals by a panel of experts. These applicants respond to a public call for submissions. They are mostly small entrepreneurs and are referred to as suppliers.
5. Train selected suppliers in entrepreneurial skills through a series of workshops.
6. Finish the interior renovation in time for the official opening of Roomli.
7. Open its doors in a public ceremony on September 10, 2021 as part of the Roomli Festival.
8. Publish website with corresponding digital app.
9. Market and promote Roomli. (in progress)
10. Monitor and evaluate Roomli’s operations. (in progress)

Stakeholders involved in the implementation

The owner of Roomli is the Municipality of Jászberény , administrator is Jászkerület Non-profit Ltd, which is 100% owned by the municipality.

Other stakeholders are the Jászság Folk Art Workshop Association and Future Creators Association.

In addition, there are still local companies (including two banks) as strategic partners and discussions are being held with possible institutional partners (Jász Museum, Hamza Museum, Jászberény Zoo, Jászság Folk Dance Company)

The results

In just a few months, a beautifully-renovated space with loving details that reminisce of traditional material and techniques, showcases folk art products and hosts various kinds of events. From creative people, who were formerly only loosely in contact, there is now a more cohesive network and healthy exchange.

Other creative people, who are previously unknown to Roomli’s management, are appearing out of the woodwork to inquire about participation. The number of suppliers has grown to 30.

The various pottery offers are quickly sold-out. One of the potters produces in a traditional style, while the other potter is quite progressive and incorporates Scandinavian elements in the work.

Three permanent employees work at Roomli. One is responsible for sales, while two cultural managers (the two association presidents) organize events. A marketing expert, who assists with marketing strategy and related activities, is contracted externally.

In addition to the exhibition and sale of the products, the following services are offered: art camps, creative camps for professional artists, events for the exchange of methodological knowledge, free and paid workshops.

“Our workshops for children, which we call ‘Class Roomli’ are really special.” In an interactive and lively atmosphere, local artists introduce the school groups to their work. For example, more than 200 school children took part in a course given by one of our painters. The children were thrilled to learn how to make their own logo designs”, says Beáta Gál-Dobos proudly.

The city now has a venue and presenter serving its local community, as well as a new attraction to interest tourists and business people alike.



The remaining challenges

The project is young and there are still some challenges to overcome.

To keep customers and visitors' interest and bring them back, the Roomli team has to program worthwhile and regular events.

Rapid adaptation to consumer demand is necessary, as is rapid circulation of inventory with regular novelties. Efficient marketing, with a constant presence on social media should be expanded to increase the market for the products. Strategic partnerships with local businesses and other local attractions such as the Jász Museum and the Jászberény ZOO could also be further developed.

Conclusion

This pilot project successfully coordinated the existing creatives so that all three benefited: the creative community, the city, and the micro-region. It also enhanced the visibility of creatives as a group of value-creating agents.

Right in the heart of Jászberény, the city can now boast of this beautifully restored and designed space as a showcase for its local creatives and a venue for interesting events for locals and tourists. Now regional artists can better promote and sell their products, exchange ideas with colleagues, and improve their business savvy with training.

It is essential to point out that Roomli is creatively adapting and inventing new products partly based on traditional techniques, materials and other influences. Their focus is to transport traditional handicrafts into meaningful products for today's market. These works are not just to display on a shelf, but are designed to be both aesthetic and suitable for everyday use.

Their purpose is clearly formulated:

“Our mission is to support artists and businesses by realizing and using all available opportunities to bring their products to the market. As everything else in art, these listed factors depend on the creator and the recipient at the same time. Let's make our great co-creation! Join us and let's create another attraction together in Jászság!”

References and contact:

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Kamnik Pilot Project: Creative Quarter Barutana

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people

This project is a good example of how creative artists and architects can revitalize an industrial wasteland. Through their own initiative and worthwhile concepts, they persuade the city to both acquire the site and support their cultural project.

The background and initial situation

In the former Yugoslavia, Kamnik was one of the major industrial centers. After the 1990s, many of its companies did not survive. For example, a gunpowder factory that was built in 1850 to meet the needs of the Austro-Hungarian army and later served to supply gunpowder to the newly-formed Yugoslavian state. At its height, it employed more than a thousand people and expanded to an area encompassing 300,000 square meters.

After Slovenia's independence, the factory started to decline and went bankrupt in the mid-2000s and the remaining explosives were removed. The abandoned buildings, hidden behind a protective wall, were soon overgrown by weeds. Located on the other side of this wall is the cultural association, which also organizes Kamfest, a large cultural festival held in Kamnik every summer, the youth center, the house of culture and Kikstarter (see LGP2).

The Kamfest organizers have their eye on the gunpowder factory on the other side of the wall for some time. Because in addition to the castle and the market square as the festival's main venues, the presenter strives to include other less-known places as unusual venues in the program every year.

In 2020, the Kamfest team ventures to the other side of the wall for the first time. In cooperation with a university project of six architecture students, led by professor Sinan Mihelčič, they begin cleaning up the area. In exchange, the owner allows them to use the premises for a festival. At that time, the area is an overgrown garbage dump. An area of 400 square meters is cleaned and secured; a stage is erected.

Despite any disadvantages caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the festival is a great success. In addition to the festival, Sinan Mihelčič conducts a summer school for architecture. The faculty includes international professors and colleagues who participate via Zoom.

The event receives extensive press and media coverage.

Visitors are downright shocked at the building and surrounding area's transformation. Within just a short amount of time the Kamfest team, the architecture students, the youth center, as well as all the helpers, achieved impressive results. Local politicians who toured the site begin to think to themselves: this could be an excellent location for a future youth, cultural, and event center for Kamnik.

Subsequently, there is a discussion about what to do with the entire area of 60,000 square meters. After long negotiations, the municipality acquires the area for 3.5 million euros (with an annual budget of 20 million).

The selection of the project

Based on the results of the test phase of 2020, the city council decided to continue the transformation of the area as a pilot project.



The concrete steps for implementation

1. Implement measures to secure the buildings and improve the infrastructure.
2. Conceive and execute a landscape design for the site to improve the outdoor areas.
3. Installation of a bar/refreshment stand
4. Plan the finances
5. Assemble a team for program and organization coordination
6. Create a program for Kamfest festival
7. Promote and market the festival's program

Key players involved in the implementation

Moving forward into the next phase, the cultural association that presents Kamfest, the group of architecture majors led by Professor Sinan Mihelčič, the youth center and the responsible city employees and the public institute for culture will work together to coordinate the above-mentioned steps.

The results and achievements

The entire team, which is reinforced by many enthusiastic friends, voluntarily clean up the site without any payment.

The Kamfest presenting fifteen cultural events takes place successfully, despite the Corona pandemic.

During the summer, other cultural events such as exhibitions and concerts are held.

Multiple educational events for schools take place.

Press and media coverage includes local, national and an in-depth article in an industry magazine reporting on spatial development.

A partner from Ljubljana foresees great potential and has already pledged 10,000 Euros for next year's events.

One of the former architect students will carry out a project on the site, his first paid assignment as an architect.

What are the challenges?

All initiatives operate in a gray area. According to the zoning plan, the area is only approved for commercial or residential use. A new master plan has yet to be created. Negotiations with the bureaucracy still have to be conducted.

With the experience from this project, as well as other factors, all six of the original architecture students involved have found employment abroad after graduation. This is both an obstacle and opportunity because this loss will be replaced with new students, who are eager to gain similar experiences.

The majority of the buildings are in extremely poor condition. It is critical that the roof repairs are financed and executed.

The biggest challenge is the sheer size of the site. Instead of the initially prepared premises of a few hundred square meters, 60,000 square meters now have to be designed.

Initial plans are already in place, but it will take many years and will require extensive, thorough planning.

Conclusion

The pilot project is an excellent example of how an abandoned former industrial site can be filled with life within a short time through the initiative of cultural workers supported by professional architects and architecture majors.

The Creative Quarter Barutana has achieved widespread attention and can serve as a model for the whole of Slovenia and beyond.

The exemplary project is also a call to action for city and municipality officials everywhere:

“Give young creative people space, let them try something. They can get something rolling and the result can be amazing!” (Sinan Mihelčič, architect)

References and contact:

Sinan Mihelčič, sinan.mihelcic@fa.uni-lj.si

<https://www.kotlovnica.si/sl/kontakt>

<https://barutana.si/>



Vittorio Veneto Pilot Project: Implementation of the CCI incubation model at Vittorio Veneto Lab

An example for municipalities, educational institutions, creatives, trade associations, and investors.

This pilot project exemplifies how to create a place for small and medium enterprises and the creative scene to meet and learn how to use new virtual reality technologies for themselves to improve their position in the market. At the same time, disused and underutilized infrastructure and urban space are revitalized to create an interesting attraction for the entire area.

Starting point

Vittorio Veneto is a city of about 28,000 inhabitants, located in northern Italy in the Veneto region. Its strong industrial environment is unattractive to young people, leading to a continuous decline in population. In particular, creative and higher-educated people who do live here, seek work outside the city.

The use of VR technology is growing exponentially worldwide, but in Vittorio Veneto there is a lack of facilities to make these technologies accessible to small and medium enterprises and to all creative people, so that they can improve their market position.

The selection of the project

One of the nine partners of the Stimulart project is the private Italian company Bclever srls. In addition to assisting the Municipality of Vittorio Veneto in developing synergies between the public and private sectors, Bclever is given the leading role to develop the pilot project in Vittorio Veneto.

BClever srls is a startup that develops highly innovative products, such as the Spider, the first printer in the world that can print images of any size and Smart Domotic, an innovative home automation system for buildings. The company is also active in the management of research and innovation projects.

First, BClever conducts a needs analysis after contacting local creative professionals and companies from its network. Then the following pilot project is proposed:

To establish an incubation model for the cultural and creative industries by focusing on fast prototyping.

The Lab Innovation Center in Vittorio Veneto is chosen for the project's location. The city-owned building is on loan agreement with BClever, which in turn offers rent-free space to start-ups, freelancers, and small businesses. The users pay only the operational costs and are responsible to renovate and furnish the premises themselves. BClever readies the space and make it available for coworkers at extremely competitive costs.

The Lab, coordinated by Bclever since 2016, offers excellent synergy effects.

This is because it is simultaneously a coworking space, a business incubator, an innovation center and a place where individuals and companies have access to equipment, processes and people capable of transforming ideas into prototypes and products. The Lab is effectively a laboratory open to the public, equipped with digital manufacturing machines.

The Lab is now to be joined by the soon-to-created incubation center, where creatives and young people will have the opportunity to learn about innovative virtual technologies, such as the use of 360-degree cameras, VR goggles, drones and turn them into business models.



The concrete steps for implementation

Based on this concept, the following steps are defined:

1. Define the needs of the local CCI market by involving local stakeholder groups and external experts.
2. Develop the city strategy in cooperation with city administration, using the market analysis results.
3. Plan the premises where the “virtual center hub” will be established together with the local authority.
4. Define which equipment will be part of the virtual center hub.
5. Determine the process for material purchases necessary to bring the virtual center hub in full operation.
6. Prepare the virtual center hub.
7. Kick-off the PR campaign and publicize the virtual center hub’s services.
8. Begin collaboration with local CCIs for the creation of products or services through the use of virtual reality (VR).
9. Design training courses to provide new professional skills related to the use of VR, as well as advanced training courses.
10. Create a network of CCI professionals in the VR field to support local businesses, with the Lab Innovation Center as the network’s center.

Stakeholders involved in the implementation

- The team of Bclever with Ludovico Domini and Alessio Omassi as external consultants.
- The City of Vittorio Veneto.
- Business associations and selected companies, who help design a needs analysis for the pilot project development.
- Local CCIs who are presented the potential of VR to help strengthen their product/service offers.
- The local employment office and school officials who contribute their specific needs for the training courses that are being developed.

Results to date

Due to Corona and related supply bottlenecks in the chip industry, there are delays of several months in implementation. Prices for the VR goggles and other technology products increase. Two workstations, two projectors, two screens, drones and software are purchased, but slightly fewer VR glasses than planned.

The first project is realized. Eight young people, under the age of 30, learn videography with 360 degree cameras in a workshop. They create 360-degree films of everyday situations in the city for a nursing home. Two of them appear as virtual granddaughter and virtual grandson, inviting people to look around with them.

These virtual reality shots are shown to nursing home residents, who have not left their individual rooms for almost 2 years due to the COVID19 pandemic. The VR glasses are put on them, they can look around “in the market”, “in the park” and other places. For most of the elderly, these are familiar places to them and they are overwhelmed and emotionally moved from the experience. It is a memorable exchange for both the old and the young.

“Of course, it’s still best to experience something yourself on site, but if that’s not possible, the next best option is the virtual experience. It’s really magical!” says Ludovico Domini.

Similar projects with a social focus are to be planned with the community.

Likewise, contact will be made with a local private school focused on science to teach students how to pilot drones to create 3D models by photogrammetry process images.

Individual artists can create personal projects when they apply for the 3+3 program. Selected applicants receive a rent-free workspace for three months in the Lab, as well as three individual coaching hours every month.

The design and furnishing of the space can only take place in January 2022. For this purpose, furniture will be made from a local wood supplier. Because the nearby forest area was destroyed in a storm, this wood purchase will support the local forestry.

After the space is made ready for use, a PR campaign will spread the news about the center’s programming as well as its mission to bring businesses and creatives together.

What are the other challenges?

How to communicate the benefits of new technology to a region where it is largely unknown? The planned solution is to bring both the stakeholders and the public together in a series of events where they can have “hands-on” opportunities to experiment with this new technology.

Activities and courses in schools are also important to reach many young people (and indirectly their families).

When the virtual center hub team makes a more convincing presentation, they can be a better intermediary between creators and companies for which these services are targeted.

Conclusion

This pilot project is an exciting, forward-looking model. It is still in the start-up phase, but the foundation for successful development has been laid. The necessary hardware has been acquired, the premises will soon be ready, and when the pandemic subsides, the planned courses, workshops, training sessions can be implemented.

“If I wasn’t convinced that this incubation model would run successfully for many years to come, I wouldn’t continue my activity,” Ludovico says. “We have a great team that is always very supportive.”

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<http://www.fablabvittorioveneto.it/>

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Amberg Pilot Project: KUK MAL - Dreiklang

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people, as well as investors

An example of how a series of events can unite creatives of all stripes to become visible together and bring culture to the people.

The initial situation

The cultural and creative industries are among the fastest-growing sectors of the global economy. It combines traditional economic sectors with new technologies and comprises twelve sub-sectors: music, book and film markets, as well as software and gaming, visual and performing arts, design, architecture, press, advertising, broadcasting and other.

But the culture and creative industries are also vulnerable. As a result, hardly any sector of the economy has been so severely constrained by the Covid-19 crisis as the cultural scene. While the architecture, press and software and games submarkets proved largely resistant, the performing and visual arts, as well as the film and events industries, among others, suffered enormous setbacks.

It is now all the more important to promote the cultural and creative industries in Amberg and make them visible.

The selection of the project

As part of the Stimulart program, the cultural department of the city of Amberg plans to initially establish a digital cooperation platform for partners in the cultural and creative industries as a pilot project. However, since a similar project is already being implemented for all economic sectors in Amberg, a separate platform for the cultural and creative sector is not necessary.

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it seems more important to find a solution on how to support the cultural and creative industries in Amberg.

After the months of restrictions and withdrawal in Corona times, the cultural scene should become publicly visible again.

The following questions need to be answered:

How can all sub-sectors of the cultural and creative scene be presented? How can they find public awareness? And how to obtain these goals, without competition, in mutual recognition, in mutual respect and as a joint appearance?

Where can this best be implemented? How can several places in the city be culturally enlivened in the process?

What name suits the event? The name “Dreiklang” (Triad) is mentioned and quickly meets with approval. It has a positive connotation and events will take place at three venues on three consecutive Thursdays.

The concrete steps for implementation

- 1) Select the venues
- 2) Select the artists
- 3) Compile the program
- 4) Plan the finances
- 5) Promote the program through public relations
- 6) Support cooperation among the artists
- 7) Evaluate the visitor survey campaign

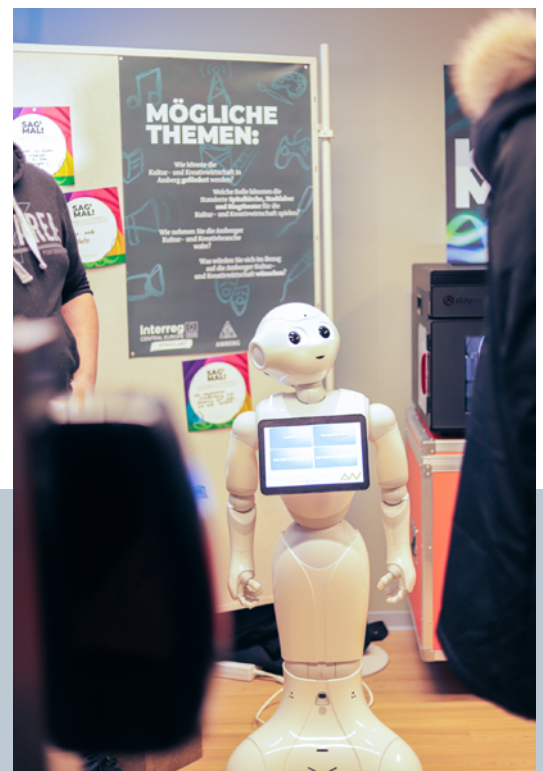
Stakeholders involved in the implementation

The cultural department of Amberg, with the project manager Florian Gröninger and the project assistant Denise Sennewald-Dundek, is responsible for planning Triad. Stakeholders from the cultural and creative industries are participating with a wide variety of programs.

The concert and event agency TNT Productions is responsible for organizing the event.

A young creative agency called MOVIAQ is responsible for marketing and social media.

The local university “OTH Amberg-Weiden” supports the project with films, a small workshop and participation in the discussion. The local TV station OBERPFALZ TV televises reports from the events.



The results

On Thursday, November 11, the Triad begins with a vernissage “12x Creative Culture” in the deconsecrated Spital Church. The multimedia exhibition consists of 12 printed figures, each portraying an Amberg member of the 12 branches of culture and creative industries. Using audio recordings, the figures tell visitors about their industry and explain their work.

At the same time, the SAG’ MAL campaign is launched. Visitors are asked how they would like to see the three locations used in the future.

On November 18, the young cultural and creative industries of the city and the surrounding area present themselves at the three locations of the Triad. Starting in the late afternoon in the Spital Church, young musicians and writers take hold of the proverbial latch. Musical contributions by Simon Braun, Felix Gleixner and the new band Eggplant Circus alternate with texts by Tobias Sichelstiel and Jörg Fischer.

At the same time, workshops are held in the Stadtlabor (City Lab), where it is possible to witness professionals from the cultural and creative industries at work as well as to participate themselves.

In the Ringtheater, a former cinema is transformed into a cultural venue, which shows the work of regional filmmakers in the evening.

On November 25, at 6 p.m., the exhibition “Wieder am Zug” (On The Move Again) from the Amberger Art Symposium 2021 by Hanna Regina Uber opens in the Spital Church. The Amberg Art Symposium sees itself as a platform that enables artists to deepen their expression through cooperation, discourse, as well as mutual inspiration and also to expand it experimentally. The exhibition shows the works created during the 2021 symposium. After the exhibition opening, a “Making Of” film showing how the artworks were created, is planned at 7 pm. in the Ringtheater.

The event concludes with an open discussion exploring the topic of “Cultural and Creative Industries in Amberg” and what significance the locations of the triad - Ringtheater, Spitalkirche (Spital Church), Stadtlabor (City Lab) - can have in this context.

The challenges

The biggest challenge was to put together an appealing program in the shortest possible time, made even more difficult by the Covid-19 pandemic, which required constant adjustments to the series of events. Measures were tightened from week to week and at the last event visitors needed 2G plus (vaccinated, recovered plus daily Covid19 test).

Conclusion

Despite difficult circumstances (Covid19 regulations), the pilot project can be considered a success. The attendance and feedback was good, the visibility and awareness of the cultural and creative industries could be significantly increased.

There is a great interest in using the three Triad locations: Spital Church, Stadtlabor (City Lab) and Ringtheater regularly in the future.

The experiences from the Triad pilot also offer valuable insights into a sensible distribution of responsibilities in the city administration between the Department of Economic Development Commercial Construction on the one hand and the Department of Culture on the other.

Local creatives from the various sectors were able to get to know each other better. However, the development of a network still needs time and sensitive support.

A lot could be proven with this budget of 22,850 euros and once life returns to normal, the intention is to repeat such events.



References and contact:

Project manager: Florian Gröninger
Project assistant: Denise Sennewald - Dundek
<https://www.amberg.de/stimulart>



Naumburg (Saale) Pilot Project: Pop-Up Festival 17.-26.09.2021

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people, as well as investors

This pilot project converts a vacant building into a public showcase for the region's rich cultural scene, breathes life into the network of cultural and creative professionals, as well as lays down a foundation for a new creative center.

The initial situation

The work of local artists lacks visibility with the local population because there is no central place in Naumburg where artists can exhibit their work. The artists have expressed they want more attention, appreciation and supportive municipal structures. In addition, the degree of networking among the artists could be much better. There is vacant space that could be used for the creative scene.

The selection of the project

As part of the Stimulart program, Naumburg City Council decides to remedy the above-mentioned problems with a pilot project.

Many questions arise: Is it possible to finance a center for cultural and creative activities? Will such a building initiative be accepted by the creatives and locals? Should a trial event take place first before the decision of a creative center. And then the winning idea:

Why not let such a culture center "pop up" for a period of 10 days?

The city council approves the idea, convinced they will be breaking new ground: "We are organizing an event that has never been done before in Naumburg", according to Naumburg's mayor Armin Müller and Stimulart project manager Eva Großblotekamp.

The step-by-step plan and its implementation

The cultural department of Amberg, with the project manager Florian Gröninger and the project assistant Denise Sennewald-Dundek, is responsible for planning Triad. Stakeholders from the cultural and creative industries are participating with a wide variety of programs.

The concert and event agency TNT Productions is responsible for organizing the event.

A young creative agency called MOVIAQ is responsible for marketing and social media.

The local university "OTH Amberg-Weiden" supports the project with films, a small workshop and participation in the discussion. The local TV station OBERPFALZ TV televises reports from the events.



Stakeholders involved in the implementation

Katja Berger is selected as the project's festival manager. Ms. Berger organizes events and productions on a freelance basis and in 2018, has already been artistic production manager for the Street Theater Days in Naumburg. The festival manager will be assisted by two interns.

Cultural and creative professionals (musicians, visual artists) will be approached and involved in the program planning and implementation. Cooperation partners such as theaters, the Design Academy Saaleck and local NGOs will be recruited for partner event formats.

A cooperation agreement is signed with the "Master's Program in Applied Cultural and Media Studies at Merseburg University of Applied Sciences".

City employees assist with administrative tasks, organization and press relations. Some volunteers also join in. A two-week use of the former youth center is agreed on with GWG Wohnungsgesellschaft Naumburg mbH.

The results

A festival aimed at all Naumburgers interested in culture takes place from September 17th to 26th, 2021. "Thirty events in ten days. We have spread out in a nice way. I'm looking forward to a great festival," says festival manager Katja Berger at the opening. The 30 events provide insights into Naumburg's diverse art and culture scene.

The former children and youth center "Freizi" is once bubbling with life. Sixteen artists present their works here, allowing visitors to look over their shoulders while they create.

One of the participating artists Sabine Ebert-Hoyer says, "Every visitor who comes here is wonderful," says the Naumburg artist, "We work hard, we network and struggle for every visitor." For her, the exhibition is a replacement for all the canceled events of the past months.

The exhibitions on two floors show an impressive variety of styles, forms and techniques and provide an occasion for conversations between artists and art lovers.

In the inner courtyard, there is a dance floor with live music. As night falls, the building is colorfully illuminated by visual artists using projectors under the motto "Evolution and How Everything Changes".

The festival stretches beyond the venue at Stephanplatz. The city becomes a stage with the addition of numerous other venues for example, the city theater and library, the Turbinenhaus, the Vereinigte Domstifter, the "Architecture and Environment Center" and Café Zille are all involved. Event series such as the "culture booth" on the market square or the international reading festival "Interlese " are also on the festival program.

The seven creative events organized by thirty students from the Merseburg University of Applied Sciences, such as their scavenger hunt through Naumburg's creative and cultural scene, a speed dating event for creative artists and cultural entrepreneurs to exchange ideas in a relaxed atmosphere, and a participatory 24-hour event for young people in the city park, are very popular. Some musical highlights include concerts from Naumburg bands held in the Cathedral Garden and "Improvisation in Sound and Color" featuring local musicians and painters improvising together to create a fusion of sound and color.



The challenges

The first challenge was to find a suitable, centrally located building that offered the necessary infrastructure. A solution was found due to effective cooperation with the city administration.

The biggest challenge to tackle were the COVID19 restrictions. The general concept had to be conceived and continuously adapted as well as the individual hygiene concepts for each festival venue. The need for a professional media campaign was underestimated in order to reach more potential visitors.

The organization team was not big enough, sometimes the capacities were exhausted.

Conclusion

The Pop-Up Festival Naumburg is a successful example of an event concept that creatively adapts to all challenges.

Despite difficult conditions, a 10-day festival with 30 events at various locations in the city was successfully organized and executed. The artists were motivated and committed to make the exhibition a success. The experience strengthened the relationships among the artists.

The worthwhile cooperation with external partners deserves special mention. In particular the creative projects contributed by the university students attracted audiences of both young and old. Since the university students were coming from the outside, they could approach the artists in an unconcerned manner and break down rigidities in communication between the administration and the artists.

The experience with the Pop-Up Festival is a good one to build on. The festival could become a regular event in the future. The option to establish a new creative center should be considered. This requires the creation of an association. For this purpose, a permanent circle of artists has been formed, who meet regularly to work on it.

“The pop-up festival has shown how diverse the local creative scene is, what potential it has and how important art and culture are for our quality of life. It is important to perpetuate this. The founding of an association to promote a multifaceted art center is therefore to be welcomed. An art center would be a pleasing result of the “Stimulart” project, especially if it is a sustainable enrichment for the city.”

(Constanze Matthes, Naumburger Tageblatt, 11/25-21)

References and contact:

<https://www.kreative-in-naumburg.de/>

Festival manager:
Katja Berger; katja.berger@posteo.de



5

Local Good Practices

Jászberény LGP 1: Revival of traditional craftsmanship

An example for local authorities, creatives, and investors

The Association for Folk Art Workshops in the Jászság Region is a good example of how to revive traditional craft skills and transform traditional cultural assets into creative products and services and to enhance identity.

The initial situation

The Jászság region has always been known for its handicrafts and many craftsmen have been able to make a living from this activity. Furriers, shoemakers, coopers, blue dyers, tailors and others.

Unfortunately, this ongoing tradition was interrupted during the socialist period, due to collectivization and industrial mass production, which led to a decrease in demand for products. Masters of their trade stopped passing on their knowledge.

After the socialist period, a return to traditional skills began, and over the years a “revival movement” emerged.

The stakeholders

The Association of Folk Art Workshops in Jászság emerges from this movement in 2016. With the mission to create and preserve object-oriented folk from Hungarian and the neighboring homeland of the Carpathian Basin traditions. The vision is to make these traditional crafts once again an integral part of the town's community life.

Although local creative craftspeople create and run the association, they open it up to include other traditions such as live storytelling, folk music and folk dance.



The implementation

The target audience is virtually the entire population of the city. Therefore a range of training programs is quickly designed and offered for every skill and age level.

In addition, there are theme days, creative days and camps, craft demonstrations and folk art programs. Ethnographic knowledge is taught and customs are presented.

Most of the full-time artisans are vocational instructors, so the transmission of craft skills is also ensured.

Because many of the instructors manage folk playhouses and workshops, they are skillful at sharing their practical knowledge and using their usual methodological tools.

The activities of the association are carried out mainly in two locations. The first is the “Handicraft Gate”, a recently renovated farmhouse which is under monument protection. The second is the craft room and warehouse in the so-called Phoenix Nest Workshop.

Actors and stakeholders

The performers are usually the Association of Jászág Folk Art Workshops and its members, such as the confectioner, the potter and director of the Folk Playhouse, the cloth maker, the felt maker, the headdress and jewelry maker, the costume designer and director of the Playhouse, the blacksmith, the paper spinner.

The professional leadership is held by the president of the association, Beáta Gál-Dobos.

She is an ethnographer, museologist, cultural expert, young master of folk art, dancer of the Eternal Gold.

The municipality provides the premises free of charge through the Jászkerület Non-Profit Ltd.

Results and achievements

In the year before the Corona Pandemic, about 600 children take part in the courses (workshops), about 100 people (young and middle-aged women, mainly mothers) take part in the courses for adults, and hundreds of people visit craft exhibitions and so-called “family playhouses” (programs for families).

Through the programs and the professional activities of the association, more and more people learn about handicraft items that they like to buy for their own use or as gifts. In most cases, these objects bear local motifs and thus play an identity-forming role, but also an important role in raising awareness of craftsmanship.

When a person comes into direct contact with the material or becomes part of a working process or creates an object with their own hands, it is a special experience.

Over the years, many instruments, equipment and tools can be acquired.

Stores from artisans demonstrating their skills in workshops, such as the Pottery Folk Art Store have an increase in sales. Crafts and artisans become better known, leading to an increase in demand for handmade items and related services.

However, the Association of Folk Art Workshops in Jászág produces more than just articles. They research authentic resources and designs to find innovative ways to develop new markets. A good example of this is the production of costumes and traditional costumes.

Jász costumes are reconstructed by experts from the Jász Museum. Afterwards a collection of knitting patterns is created, followed by a sewing workshop. The seamstresses learn how to make these costumes. They acquire their skills on their own by trial and error because there are no longer people with the skill to pass on to the next generation. With time, they become more and more skilled, even in the use of sophisticated patterns and techniques.

The result is an “explosion” of costume making in Jászberény and this extends to seventeen small “production workshops” in Jász settlements located in the surrounding countryside.

Soon there is at least one garment from the “portfolio” of Jász costumes in the closets of the town’s leaders. Folk singers, members of folk bands and folk dance groups are also among the customers. At larger, mainly traditional municipal events, people like to wear the Jász costume again.

The fashion industry is also (re)discovering the “Jász” patterns and costumes.

Negotiations are taking place between the costume designers and a Hungarian fashion design workshop. The license to use the patterns has been granted, and the design process will begin soon.

Challenges

Along with all the successes, challenges remain.

There is still no elaborated business model or overall strategy for the artisanal activities. Craftspeople generally respond to individual orders or to situations where there is a very high demand.

Demand is not determined in advance and there is no financial planning. In many cases, therefore, the handmade items cannot be sold at their actual value.

Many craftspeople are unaware of the benefits from retrospective, evaluation, and customer surveys.

The success so far can be tracked by the increasing numbers of participants in the offered programs, the trainings that are quickly fully-booked, and the lively Facebook page.

In order to run programs for the public, the organization has to keep seeking grants and other resources.

Similarly, there is still no direct financial support from the community, although a public education agreement is in place. Just as much persuasion is still needed here.

The local municipality must be persuaded to give this area the same priority as heritage preservation at the Jász Museum and folk dancing.

A professional coordinator and an organizational assistant are needed for continuous and efficient operation.

Conclusion

The Association for Folk Art Workshops in the Jászság region is an excellent example for other cities and regions in Europe of how a revival of traditional knowledge and crafts can succeed. Not only that, but also how the sense of regional identity and community can be strengthened.

An association has initiated this revival and driven it forward through sheer commitment. After 5 years, there are many successes to show, but still also many challenges to overcome. What would be possible if extensive community support were added?



References and contact:

www.jnme.hu
facebook.com/jaszaginemuvészetiimuhely
Gál-Dobos Beáta galdobos@gmail.co

Jászberény, LGP 2: Folk dance and music in an ecosystem

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people

This local good practice builds a complex ecosystem under the umbrella of a foundation. In addition to its performing activities, this foundation has a clear mission to also preserve cultural tradition and educate through quality training. Stakeholders use local cultural resources to organize a festival with growing success. The greater folk dance community is empowered and involved in participatory processes at the local level.

The initial situation

There has always been a strong sense of identity and belonging in Jászberény and the region, the Jász identity. The Jász trace their origins to Alans who migrated to Hungary in the 13th century, presumably from the steppe foothills of the North Caucasus. The descendants of the Jász live in the Jászság region, the northwestern part of today's Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County, the center of which is the town of Jászberény. A Jász Múzeum has existed in Jászberény since 1874. Since the end of the socialist period, several Jász traditional associations were formed.

The first initiatives

The Jászság Folk Dance Ensemble was founded in Jászberény in 1971. This amateur folk dance group's mission is to research, preserve and develop their cultural heritage. The traditional knowledge is to be captured in all its depth and passed on from generation to generation.

In 1977, the young Gábor Szűcs joins one of the ensemble's youth groups and falls in love with folk dancing. Five years later, he becomes both a member and the director of the Jászság Folk Dance Ensemble. From the start, he organizes an annual International Dance Center and Music Camp, which continues until today with Mr. Szűcs also teaching young people.

With the political change in 1990, new opportunities arise. The Jászság Folk Ensemble travels to Moldavia for the first time, where a smaller ethnic minority of Hungarians called the Moldava Csángó live. Here ensemble members research older forms of Hungarian folk dance that the Moldava Csángó still preserve and practice.

Gábor Szűcs is so inspired by his time there, he initiates the Csángó Festival.

The aim of the Csángó Festival is to raise awareness and educate the public about Hungarian history which left them isolated from their homeland for centuries. In the early nineties, the Csángó Festival is the first gateway to present Hungarian minority culture from neighboring countries.

Whereas the first and second pillars of this ecosystem are performance and research, the third pillar focuses on education. Students at the Viganó Primary School of Art Jaszbereny have four to six hours per week in practical and theoretical classes. They learn mastery in dance techniques from Hungarian-speaking areas, as well as Hungarian folklore, kinetography, and dance history. All three offers are closely interwoven and are operated and maintained by the Folklore Cultural Foundation established by the City of Jászberény.



The stakeholders involved in the implementation

The organizations Viganó School, Jászság Folk Ensemble, and Folklore Cultural Public Foundation employ a total of 11-12 people full time, including dance teachers, organizers, a managing director, a costumer, and a technical assistant.

The Csángó Fesztivál's team of 30-35 people also includes external professionals and entrepreneurs. In addition, there are about 50-100 volunteers.

Many folk musicians and dancers, amateurs and professionals, participate in the creation of stage productions - from the first rehearsal to the performance.

The local folk dance groups also perform regularly at public events in Jászberény and at national and city festivals.

The results

As a result of these interwoven activities: education, research, and performances, choreographic productions are staged regularly and receive an enthusiastic response. Audiences enjoy the harmonious interplay of music, dance, costumes, scenery and visual effects.

The Jászság Folk Dance Ensemble rehearses several times a week and for decades has achieved nationally-acclaimed success and awards.

The ensemble has performed internationally, some highlights include the Mexican Folklore Olympics for Folk Arts in 2016 and the Macau International Dance Festival in 2019.

Folk dancing has become widespread among all generations in Jászberény. More than 600 people are actively engaged in folk dancing in the town, from age seven to seniors in age appropriate groups. As a result, many families and local businesses feel a personal connection to folk dance.

The International Dance Center and Music Camp offers ten days of dance and instrumental lessons for groups from beginners to advanced.

Numerous national awards, as well as international recognitions testify to the professional quality of the performance work and educational training.

The Csángó Festival is the most well-known regional festival and the city's biggest event of the year. The program features shows with dance, music, and song on various small and larger stages, as well as events for children, exhibitions, dance carnivals and late night concerts. The hospitality and gastronomy industries benefit from the festival.

The dance ensembles of all ages have re-popularized the Jasz costume and the Jasz folk motifs. This has led to an extensive infrastructure for the costume production. (cf. LGP 1)

Awareness of traditional culture is particularly important, strengthening social cohesion in the community and individuals' sense of identity.



The challenges

The main challenge is to secure funding for the festivals and events from year to year.

The main problem is the lack of professional marketing. Investments to improve the quality of services and the overall impression of the festival have not been made.

The total budget of the Csángó Festival is about 110,000 euros.

Municipal support accounts for about 20-25% of the total budget of the Csángó Festival, and the same percentage of revenue comes from event income. Sponsorship contributes to about 10-12%. In addition, the festival is supported by grants (EU and state) and government subsidies. But it is not until May that it is known which funds are available. This makes longer-term planning impossible.

A great deal of personal initiative, personal sacrifice, and volunteer work is necessary to keep the programs going.

Due to the lack of suitable event areas, the main street has to be closed for the duration of the festival which is a displeasure for local residents and businesses. Parking and traffic congestion is still an unresolved issue. Lack of sufficient accommodation facilities in the town prevents visitors from staying for more than one day. These obstacles hinder the festival's future expansion.

Conclusion

Folk art and traditional dance have been continuously researched and cultivated in Jászbereny for 50 years now. Although there are a number of other initiatives, folk groups etc. none of them are as interwoven and interdependent as this ecosystem. Based on these three pillars: the Jászság Folk Ensemble, the Viganó Primary School of Art and the Csángó Fesztivál their impulses radiate far beyond the city and the region, making Jászbereny known.

“The dancers of the Jászság Folk Ensemble explore the roots of Hungarian live folk dance, one of the formative parts of Hungarian national culture. It is important that all people know their own values. At the same time, they do not forget the dances and culture of neighboring people.” (Gábor Szűcs, Artistic Director)

References and contact:

Official website: <http://www.jne.hu/>
 interviews with Gábor Szűcs (October 2019; February 2020)



Kamnik - LGP 1: Alprem Industrial Brownfield

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

The former Alprem factory is a good example of how a neglected industrial site, in the heart of a city, can be reanimated for Cultural and Creative Industries. This site has transformed into a vibrant place for creativity and sports. And it also attests to the power of private initiative fueled by local young people from the subculture.

The initial situation

The medium-sized city of Kamnik is located only 24 km from Ljubljana, the cultural, educational, economic, political and administrative center of Slovenia. Since 2000, the city of Kamnik has been investing more in housing construction than in commercial or urban infrastructure. Coupled with its good transport links, Kamnik has become a “commuter town,” with most residents working in other cities. Young locals also travel to the capital for fun and leisure because Kamnik lacks attractive leisure activities. The quiet, deserted streets in the historical city center are evidence of this exodus. Former university student Domen Stražar said, “It’s a beautiful place to grow up because of the surrounding nature. But once I turned 13 years old, Kamnik became for me “a sleepy town.”

The idea for the project

Domen and his friends are regularly on the road with their skateboards. Every time they pass the Alprem brownfield, he points to abandoned buildings, “Wouldn’t this be a great place for a skater park!” As an architecture major, he can already imagine the renovated buildings. Domen’s social engagement led him to architecture because he wants to improve the building environments for people, such as social housing projects. In 2012, his professor Sinan Mihelčič encourages him, “Go ahead and propose your idea to the owner of the Alprem area?” and he puts his student and the owner in contact.

Alprem is an aluminum product manufacturer and moved to a more modern plant in 1978, leaving its former factory behind. An investor bought the site speculating on a profitable resale. The economic crisis of 2008, dashed those hopes and left him with old buildings that no one wanted to buy or rent. The owner is amused by Domen’s proposition and agrees to let the young skaters use one of his halls rent-free.



The players involved in the implementation

The young skaters get to work. Domen, a yearlong avid skater, uses his newly learned architecture skills to design the indoor skatepark with a skate bowl and a miniramp. The skaters are faced with their first obstacle: how to raise the 10,000 euros for construction materials?

They present their youth-centered concept to the responsible city officials and they are faced with the next dilemma: according to the zoning law for that area, only commercial or residential construction is permitted. A youth center is neither of these. If the municipality would give support to the youth center and help renovate the building, they would be adding value to the privately owned site, which is illegal. But the municipality has no plans to purchase the property.

In the end, the city provides about 1000 euros towards the material costs. To raise the rest of the money, the skaters actively publicize their project on social media channels, and they hold fundraising events including music concerts and art auctions. A local company donates wood supplies.

After their regular jobs or studies, the core of 6 skaters work late into the night and weekends. Each of them brings a necessary skill and they teach each other new skills. For example, Aljaz Bajde is learning to be a welder. Matej Mali comes from a carpenter's family. He brings the necessary tools and pays attention to the careful execution, calling out to his team, "it's gotta be super nice guys!".

The results

And it turns out really nice. Two years later, Slovenia's largest indoor skatepark built out of wood is completed. It begins to attract skaters and young people from Kamnik, as well as the surrounding towns. Kamnik acquires a hip, urban meeting point.

As word spreads, more interested parties take over other rooms and buildings on the site. A non-profit Balkan dance and social club moves into the lower floor. In the building across the street, a for-profit climbing park opens. A guitar maker and a potter open workshops, and two fashion designers move their business to the site. After that, a youth club moves into one space, and a safe playroom is created for children from troubled families.

As the weather warms, the skaters head outside the building. Domen designs an outdoor skatepark using street/flow typology. "Street" refers to the type of skate obstacles inspired by the street. And "flow" stands for obstacles that are organic shapes and are used to gain speed on them. The young owner of a local concrete factory is enthusiastic about the project, which uses a new pouring technique similarly used for American swimming pools, and he donates the dry concrete. Everything develops organically. There are no written agreements. Domen says, "it was successful because we shared skills, we shared dreams, and we supported each other."



The challenges

One year after the skating facility's completion, the rent-free days end. A new law has been passed that requires property owners in Slovenia to pay property tax. The owner passes this cost onto the skaters, who now have to come up with 100 euros a month.

Domen and the rest of the group decide the venture should continue as a social project for all without any entrance fee. A box is set up and donations are collected on a voluntary basis. The system works, older members give a bit more and they regularly collect their rent cost.

Many buildings are in very poor structural condition, for example, the plumbing is outdated, there is no heat insulation. The whole area looks uninviting from the outside. But the owner still plans to sell the entire site or individual buildings and is only willing to invest in the most necessary repairs.

As for Domen, the project's initiator, he has an even bigger vision. For his master's thesis, he has developed a model to transform the entire site into a cultural, residential, and business complex. He is using the Alprem brownfield as a model for architecture that can make a social impact through transforming ruins into revitalized centers. Domen is still a student and lacks the network, lobbying experience and knowledge to implement such large projects. Although the local press printed photos of Domen with the proud-looking mayor touring the site during Pestro Mesto "City of Youth" festival, the mayor nor the owner are persuaded to take any action.

Domen and all the skaters ask themselves: How long can we stay here for 100 euros rent? Although the future is unclear, the entire site is no longer up for sale. One hall has been bought by a brewery, which is drawing good business. And the young fashion designer Lara Bernot is so successful that she is able to buy a building and convert it into a loft with exhibition areas.

Conclusion

The Alprem area in Kamnik is a good example of how industrial brownfields can be transformed into lively places by private initiatives of young creative people, even from the subculture, through an enormous amount of individual initiative - if they are allowed to do so. It would be good to make sure that they do not become the victim of their success. They have made the area known and upgraded it. This should not lead to the fact that they can no longer stay there.

Domen can only contribute to this from afar. After an internship at a Finnish company that mainly designs skateparks, he has been working in Sweden for 4 years.

He continues to follow his passion, planning a skatepark in Botswana, Africa and has not forgotten his dream: "I still like to make my dream a reality, to design and build a skatepark in Slovenia!"



Kamnik - LGP 2: Kikšstarter Startup Center Kamnik

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people

How an initiative in the creative scene and the youth sector can become a successful startup center.

The initial situation

The municipality of Kamnik is located in the north of central Slovenia and covers a large part of the Kamnik-Savnijske Alpe with its 265.6 km². The town center is only about 24 kilometers away from the center of the capital Ljubljana and has good transport connections.

Recently, Kamnik has become popular as a convenient residence for people working in Ljubljana. As a result, construction sites are increasing as well as traffic congestion from all the new commuters.

In the former Yugoslavia, Kamnik was one of the 10 largest industrial centers. But many of these industries did not survive after the 1990s. As a result, there are numerous industrial wastelands with vacant buildings. The municipality's limited resources cannot reach the many areas, which need its support. Therefore, private and passionate initiative is key. And luckily for Kamnik, it possesses many young, well-educated people with energy and vision.

The idea for the project

In the past, the local youth center was an important meeting place for young creatives to exchange ideas. Many worthwhile ideas were born here, like the Kamfest. But the youth center lacked space for collaborations.

Out of this need for space, a coworking space was created in Kamnik right next door to the youth club. Photographers, designers, and other creative people came to work together in this collaborative atmosphere.

The stakeholders involved in the implementation

In order to have a legal basis, a cooperative is formed by those who want to invest in the project. The activities are supported by the local business club, which acquires the building.

The results

Through this support, a co-working space is created with 8 tables in the common room, 13 offices, conference room, 1 laboratory, 1 reading corner equipped with specialized literature, 1 meeting room, kitchenette, space for socializing, auditorium, which extends over 680 m² and also has to offer a garden with outdoor coworking. In the first five years of operation, the places are always well-occupied, with the obvious exception for the Corona pandemic period.

As the name Kikšstarter suggests, the space has branched out further than its original intention. It now offers a business incubator with training, business and legal advice, and the promotion of start-ups.

The incubator thus contributes to the development and growth of several local small businesses. For example, a food industry start-up, which develops vegan products is successfully created within the framework of a European tender.

Branching out even further, they develop courses for schools to teach young people about an entrepreneurial mindset and spirit.



The challenges

As the Kikstarter programming and agenda started to shift towards a stronger economic orientation, it triggered reflection among the center's founding members: is financial success becoming more important than creativity?

For example, the above-mentioned European tender for the development of start-ups in the food industry leads to an immediate change in the landscape and focus of the organization. Also some users from the creative field move in this direction because they receive financial support money from the EU tender.

For other creatives, Kikstarter becomes too "capitalistic" and they turn away from the center. The CCI sector is falling into the minority with currently only about 10% of users.

The challenge now is to mediate between two opposing viewpoints:

For those with strongly held beliefs that creativity and profit cannot co-exist, can they make a shift in thinking? The knowledge and training Kikstarter offers can help creatives become entrepreneurs and make a profit. Profit and financial self-sufficiency does not disqualify the value of creative work.

And on the other side, how to convince business-oriented people, whose processes tend to be more planned and rigid, to take more risk by letting go? For business to continue to evolve and innovate, creativity is key. And creativity flourishes when it has space to explore without the pressure of results.

These two opposing mindsets are both capable of change. Conflict that resolves can lead to new insights, new products, and a creative ecosystem that benefits from its diversity rather than its division.

The current situation creative people face is that there is no public funding to subsidize non-profitable work. Therefore, creative enterprises are dependent on free market philosophy.

There is a certain hesitancy among both younger and older founders to present their ideas to the Kikstarter's incubator. Fear of failing is a universally-known inhibitor. Consequently, it is important to approach these founders and encourage them to share their ideas.

Because the space is limited, as soon as one of the companies starts to grow, it is forced to leave Kikstarter in search of a bigger location.

Another danger that always exists is that skilled workers will migrate to the capital Ljubljana.

Conclusion

Kikstarter Startup Center Kamnik is a good example of how a center with co-working space and business incubator can emerge from an initiative in the creative scene. Kikstarter has developed successfully in its first five years. Perhaps not all creatives from the first hour would agree, but such a project can develop in many directions.

Startups have been successfully created and jobs have been created.

Municipalities can consider how they might promote such initiatives. Either in promoting projects directly, or by providing a place and leaving room for development.



References and contact:

<https://kikstarter.si/>



Vittorio Veneto - LGP 1: Emo-Design

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people

This LGP shows how strong attachment to one's hometown and local identity can positively influence the business prospects of small CCI companies by bringing personal visions, approaches and techniques that ensure stable competitiveness in the market. The example also illustrates the potential of "start-ups" to bring new skills and competencies to a small town by forming an international team.

Idea and founder

In 2008, Lukasz Bertoli, a talented designer, who studied industrial design at the Polytechnic in Milan and worked in Vienna, and his school friend Francesco want to start their own design studio, but do not know exactly where and how. They are competent in their field of design, but lack someone with business expertise.

They ask Carlo, a friend of Francesco. He agrees to give up his secure job to embark on the adventure and takes over the management and marketing.

Carlo has something else to offer, a quaint house in Fregona, a small town in the foothills of the Trevesio Alps. In a short time everything is ready, Lukasz and Francesco move there from Vienna, the three of them have their first own studio, 9 square meters in size.

In 2010, they moved their design studio to Vittorio Veneto, 10 minutes away by car. An old spinning mill building that has been transformed by the city council into a place for new projects and start-ups.

In their second headquarters, they have a little more space and begin to collaborate with other people.

Project Development and the Stakeholders

The studio called Emo Design is specialized in industrial design and consultancy with a strong innovative approach and an international portfolio inspired by the models existing in more industrialized and urban areas. The main focus is on kitchen appliances bathrooms, heating&cooling, professional, machinery and transportation.

The company gains access to a network of high-level organizations, companies and research centers at an international level, such as the Philips Design Department and other innovation centers. This condition enables the company to transfer advanced knowledge to the local market and contribute to the development of an innovation network of successful creative products at the local level.

In need of more space, Emo Design acquires and moved to an old factory within Vittorio Veneto. New professionals from abroad are recruited and the team grows to about 15 people, including eight industrial designers, a transportation designer, three graphic/UX designers, a business manager a creative director and a position responsible for communications and bureaucracy. As a result of a cooperation agreement with Iuav University of Venice (which specializes in Architecture, Urban Planning, Fashion, Arts, and Design) there are also some students as well as foreign interns on the Emo Design team. Finally, there is a staff member focused solely on the Chinese market, which is a growing business for them.



Results and successes

Over the years, Ciciliot and Bertoli receive countless awards such as the Red Dot Design Award, the IF Product Design Award and the ADI Index. Large industrial groups such as Philips, Samsung and De Longhi are among their clients. Medium-sized companies are also among their customers.

The company acquires a former artisan factory, located on the Meschio River. One of the typical industrial buildings built along the river Meschio in the 19th century to produce paper and silk. The old 19th-century building is renovated and refurbished to create an open space, the ideal environment for creative work. “It’s a very cozy place that fits our casual, but professional attitude,” Carlo says in an interview.

The company is entirely financed and organized by Emo Design, and no funding from the city government is required. At the same time, Emo Design contributes to the long-term cultural and economic development of the area. Emo Design organizes its own cultural events to revitalize the former industrial area along the river. There is also good cooperation experience with other companies in the area, such as ABS Group (see LGP 2).

Challenges

The area where the company is located is a high-tech desert, being one of the few local companies using digital advances. Because of this digital divide between the company and the locals, it is not possible to find new employees in the area.

To keep their market share and continue to grow, Emo Design needs to work continually and interact at a high level and with high quality standards, in close collaboration with the innovation and research department of large companies. They also require excellent coordination because the work process is chaotic and needs to involve the whole team.

The founders describe the project process as follows:

“Once we receive a briefing, Carlo gives us the relevant information about the company, the goals and the values; from these premises, the research phase begins, which consists of exchanging ideas and manual drawing. We also brainstorm and decide on a direction, we make 3D models, prepare renderings and finally, we arrive at the final presentation. Although it may look simple, it’s actually quite chaotic.

We are all involved in this process because we believe that everyone can bring a different point of view to the project. Anyway, the duration is never the same, it depends on the complexity of the project; in general, we are pretty fast and develop about forty projects a year.”

Conclusion

Emo Design exemplifies a fine synthesis between traditional identity and innovative approach. Modern design is born in an old factory.

Young generations can develop creative solutions that work even in medium-sized and small cities, while succeeding at a very high international level and setting high professional standards.

The founders of the company feel connected to their hometown and are proud to be born in this region. They see themselves as an integral part of the local community. The Meschio River in particular creates an emotional bond that is also transmitted to the employees who have joined the company from other areas and countries. The city is also conveniently located and offers good logistical international connections.

The Emo Design team is fulfilled by its work:

“We feel the satisfaction of the customers, our products and solutions work perfectly and usually bring good economic results. This is a really strong motivation and fulfills us a lot.

We design new stories!”

References and contact:

<http://www.emo-design.it/en/>



Vittorio Veneto - LGP 2: ABS Group is a case history in urban regeneration and CCI networking for Vittorio Veneto

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people

This LGP shows how individual CCIs can increase their business by collaboration and innovative products can open new markets and benefit from partnerships with local artists, and also contribute to the revitalization of abandoned urban spaces.

Idea and founder

Francesca Posocco is a native of Vittorio Veneto, growing up surrounded by her family's entrepreneurship spirit and activities. Already at an early age, she decides to become an entrepreneur herself. In 2003, she graduates with a degree in Public Relations and Advertising from the IULM Free University of Languages and Communication in Feltre. Ms. Posocco spends the following three years in the press and communication sector working for a public institution. In addition to her job, she founds a studio for communication and graphic design called Kora Comunicazione in 2005. Three years later, she graduates from the University of Trieste with a degree in Psychology and acquires the ABS Group, a company near Venice with 3 employees specializing in printing fabrics. Her husband works in a multinational printing company and together they develop the idea to create a full service design & printing offer.

The development of the company

Francesca Posocco sets an ambitious goal with her company: to revolutionize the world of furnishings. She sets her focus on the exhibition market, where plastic materials predominate. The ABS Group begins to offer a flexible, versatile and more ecological alternative to plastic furnishings: fabrics.

In 2014, she moves the company to her hometown of Vittorio Veneto and all 15 employees join her there. ABS Group decides against building any new company buildings, instead they take over and refurbish empty buildings located close to the city center. New printing presses are purchased, additional employees are hired, including seamstresses, designers, 3-D experts. By 2019, they have over 30 employees.

What sets the ABS Group apart from competitors is their priority to be environmentally sustainable. To achieve this, their fabrics are printed using the sublimation printing method. This printing process uses special water-based inks without azo dyes, which are fixed by printing at high temperature. The absence of solvents in printing and the use of fabrics made of recyclable polyester yarns with Oeko-tex® Standard 100 certification, free of harmful substances, make ABS Group products safe and environmentally friendly.



By combining the fabric medium with various aluminum profiles that can be used multiple times, it is possible to create different support structures that can be backlit, equipped or used as decorative elements. This enables the ABS Group to offer customized complete solutions for the design of exhibitions, museums, trade fairs and business spaces with a flowing and creative layout.

The development is carried out in close cooperation with Kora Comunicazione. The latter designs the exhibition areas, while ABS Group implements them.

In addition, another company is established as a start-up in 2018: Absolutex produces banners, backdrops, fabric prints, etc. which are digitized and customized.

Their ecological vision and full service offer proves profitable: sales boom in double digits, the ABS Group reports ca. 4 million euro turnover, and Kora Comunicazione is bringing in 500,000 euros.

In 2020, ABS Group will become the exclusive partner of the Belgian company beMatrix, active in exhibition construction.

The results

ABS Group is proud to be “the first company in Italy to reinvent the use of fabrics in the exhibition sector”.

The investment in new machinery is successful, which also allows large format fabrics to be printed. The company is unrivaled in Italy, especially for the quality of its products.

The company is continually awarded prizes for its exhibition areas at trade fairs and expands its customer base. For example, Fedon stores in Madrid and Barcelona airports are designed with fabrics, while other clients include fashion companies such as Benetton.

New products, such as light boxes, soundproofing installations, pop-up stores, movable walls, textile furniture are developed.

The collaboration with local (Maurizio Armellin), as well as national artists (Vera Angelico, Patricia Urquoa, Stefano Boeri) allows a constant improvement of the product quality and a stronger market positioning for “branding and uniqueness”.

A small local company with 3 employees has become an internationally renowned company with a wide range of innovative and ecological products.

The challenges

ABS Group has difficulties finding qualified employees. For example, seamstresses are usually older women, who can sew clothes or other wearable products according to certain patterns. ABS Group requires a new set of sewing skills that need to be learned. Because there are no vocational schools for acquiring skills in graphics, printing, or design in Vittorio Veneto, it is a challenge to find well-trained creatives on the local level with the necessary technical skills. However, when tenders are invited nationwide, ABS Group mostly receives offers from the region and not from other parts of Italy.

Kora Comunicazione has less difficulties finding new talent because there is a local arts high school. Francesca Posocco also finds designers through personal contacts and networks.

So far, there has been no public funding for either the companies’ development or for the purchase and renovation of the abandoned factory. This makes rapid expansion limited. Bureaucracy is more of an obstacle than a support, Posocco describes the fight against bureaucracy as a major challenge.

The unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic, which crushed the fair, exhibition and cultural event industries has been hard on the three companies.

Conclusion

This three-company network in the creative sector, complement each other, develop innovative products that open up national and international markets. Attractive job opportunities for artists and creative people are created locally. Courage to invest in machinery and also local unused commercial areas leads to steady growth.

This business case is fully aligned to the Veneto Region’s objectives: to emphasize the creation of business networks for innovation, as well as strengthen the creative skills and innovation capacity of companies, also in collaboration with artists.

This GP demonstrates that stakeholders in the CCI often choose SMSC (Small and Medium Size Cities) due to an emotional attachment to the region where they spent their childhood, as well as pragmatic reasons such as availability of space for reasonable costs.

“We want to do something for the region.” (Francesca Posocco, 2019)



References:

<https://www.absgroupsrl.it/>
<https://www.koracomunicazione.com/>
<https://absolutex.com/>



Amberg - LGP 1: Luftkunstort (Aerial Art City Amberg)

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people

The “Luftkunstort”^{*} Amberg exemplifies how local stakeholders creatively use local cultural resources and how subsequent support from local authorities can create a unique selling point for the city.

“There are many ‘Luftkurorte’, but only one ‘Luftkunstort’.

* This is a word play referring to “Luftkurort”, which are state-approved German cities qualified to offer climatic spas due to their good air quality. The artist played with the words “Kur” (spa) and “Kunst” (art). Literally translated “Air-Spa-Site” vs. “Air-Art-Site”.

Origin of the project

Wilhelm Koch, born in 1960 and growing up in Etsdorf (a small village 10 km east of Amberg), spends ten years in college. First, he studies communication design in Würzburg from 1981-1986 and then at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich until 1989. He studies art for another 2 years at the Städelschule in Frankfurt until 1991.

Already during his college studies, Wilhelm Koch is fascinated as an artist with rubber material and the subject of air. And this obsession does not leave after his graduation. Air is invisible, immaterial, but at the same time one of the primary substances of life - without air there would be no life.

Since 1994, Koch directs a design office in Amberg with partners. In addition, he presents his air objects as an artist from 1995-2005 in two temporary show depots called Gummeum.

In 2005, he has to look for new rooms. By an absolute stroke of luck, he finds a building from the 14th century, the “Engelsburg” (Angel Castle), situated on the most beautiful square in Amberg. The building had already been used as a museum before and offers unique showrooms on three floors with 650 square meters of exhibition space, including an old house chapel.

At first, his idea of setting up an air museum is met with skepticism and incomprehension from both community representatives and citizens. No one can really imagine what an air museum could possibly be.

After all, the concept is unique in the world: to exhibit air in ever new ways, from ever different perspectives and make it accessible. Air becomes visible, audible, tangible and comprehensible. Art, architecture, design, technology and everyday art are combined to offer something suitable for every viewer.

But Koch is persistent, and in 2006 the world’s first air museum opens. Koch runs the museum as director on a voluntary basis and is supported by the non-profit association Luftmuseum e.V, of which he is the first chairman. The whole undertaking is financed by membership fees, admission proceeds, sponsors and finally the city of Amberg also supports the project.



The development of the Luftkurort project and the stakeholders

The visionary Koch is always developing new ideas. In 2009, he puts up a modified place-name sign with the inscription “Luftkurort Amberg” in front of the Air Museum.

The Stadtmarketing Amberg e.V. recognizes the potential, has the designation protected as a word mark and encourages Amberg citizens and groups to breathe life into the Luftkurort and actively participate in it.

A “Luftkurort” website is created while associated events are conceived and take place.

The results

The name “Luftkurort” is a unique selling point for the city of Amberg, making the city known and attracting visitors.

In the meantime, the overall concept has several mainstays.

First of all, of course, there is the Air Museum. It has a permanent exhibition on three floors and is supplemented by special exhibitions, which change every three months. Since its founding, the Air Museum has presented international artists, architects and designers from Amsterdam, Vienna, Munich, London, Toronto, Japan, Finland and many other places. The first floor hosts temporary exhibitions on design, architecture, art, technology and everyday art. In addition to exhibitions, there are lectures, readings, guided tours and concerts, and an educational program for school children.

While attendance at the City Museum is stagnant, it is rising at the Air Museum. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the annual number was 10,000 visitors, two-thirds of them from out of town. Many visitors return more often.

In addition to many volunteers, there are about 30 paid employees for the ticket office, guided tours, to set up and take down installations, among others.

The Air Museum also organizes events outside the museum. For example, every year in June, the so-called “airboat meeting” is presented, where everyone who has an inflatable floating device can participate and sail on the river Vils to the museum festival. The winner is the one who arrives last, because he is the most comfortable on the way.

The museum offers school groups the “Flying Classroom” where young people can creatively explore the multifaceted themes around “LUFT” (air).

The Amberg-Sulzbach district association of the North Bavarian Music Association organizes the biyearly “Luftklangmeile im Amberger Stadtgraben” (Air-Sound-Mile in Amberg’s Town Moat) in cooperation with the Amberg city marketing association. Positioned around the historic town center, fifteen regional bands perform with ca. 500 musicians.

Naumburgs highlight event is the “LUFTNACHT” (Night of Air), which has been organized every two years since 2010 by the Amberg City Marketing Association and was awarded the Bavarian City Marketing Prize in 2012. During this “Night of Air” temporary aerial action art can be experienced in a multifaceted way and is attended by around 30,000 visitors. And yes, And yes again, it was an idea from Wilhelm Koch and he is part of the team in the six-month preparation.

All in all, the cooperation of the different local stakeholders of the CCI is promoted and supported by local companies. The aerial events are getting bigger and more spectacular.



The challenges

With the establishment of an air museum in Amberg, local artist Wilhelm Koch has started a project with such great potential that many other stakeholders need to be involved to reach its full potential for Amberg. Although only a few other local artists integrate the topic “air” into their work so far.

Quality control is always a sensitive issue that requires a lot of communication.

The Air Museum has been run by a private association with many volunteers since 2006.

“The museum’s financing and management has been carried out by the association since the beginning. The question arises if this is the optimal model for the future to manage a museum with such a wide scope. A transformation into a municipal museum could be a good option,” says Wilhelm Koch.

Conclusion

Thanks to the private initiative of local artist, creative and visionary Wilhem Koch, a unique museum has been created in Amberg. The city administration has recognized the potential, together they have developed a unique selling point and increased the attractiveness of the city with further events.

Wilhelm Koch is constantly pursuing further visionary ideas*:

“This is an inner passion. Either you like doing it and then you do it and put up with a lot for it, or you just don’t do it all.” (Wilhelm Koch)

* Another major project of his for 16 years is the Glyphotek Etsdorf, the construction of a columned hall in the open countryside near Amberg, a “think about it” (monument) for 2,500 years of democracy. The financing still has to be secured, but the renowned architect Peter Haimerl (see NGP Concert Hall) has already created the design free of charge.

References:

<http://www.luftkunstort.de>
<https://www.luftmuseum.de/startseite>



Amberg - LGP 2: Regional Network KUK-MO (Cultural and Creative Industries Middle Upper Palatinate e.V.)

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

The association “Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft Mittlere Oberpfalz e.V.” (aka KUK-MO) in English - the non-profit association of Culture and Creative Industries Middle Upper Palatinate) is an example of how representatives of different cultural and creative sectors meet regularly, found an association to jointly expand networks, explore their common interests and represent these to the outside world as far as possible.

The initial situation

The concept of “cultural and creative industries” (KUK) was introduced in Germany only recently in 2009. Consequently, those active in the cultural and creative industries had little to no awareness of their membership in a more broadly defined professional group. With that membership, many opportunities for networking, partnership and representation were available to them. This low awareness of KUK benefits was also persistent in local, social, political and administrative stakeholders.

In Amberg, all 12 submarkets qualified for KUK representation. In the past, there were only associations in submarkets, such as for artists. That was to change in 2020.

The development of the project and the stakeholders

In 2015, some creatives begin to meet regularly to share their work, goals and aspirations. These meetings are important to establish the first communication channels, build trust and explore common interests.

Participants include a master goldsmith, two photographers, three artists, an event manager, representatives of the regional television station, a video production company, and the owner of the Ring Theater. Over time the initial group grows to ten people and realize the need for a more formalized organization. An association would offer legal, financial and representative advantages. This leads to the association which is formed in 2019/2020 with 11 founding members, including individuals and businesses.

The association’s mission is to be a network of the cultural and creative industries in the central Upper Palatinate and the first point of contact for the local interest groups.

In terms of content, there are overlaps with other cultural and art associations, such as the A.K.T. Kunstverein Amberg (Art Association) with about 135 members. Its president, the artist Marcus Trepesch, is also one of the initiators and a founding member of the association.

The exhibition space for the A.K.T. Association is the Ringtheater, a former cinema that is to be converted into a cultural center. Its owner and operator, Andreas Wörz, is also a founding member of KUK-MO.

The association KUK-MO is a member of the Bavarian State Association of the Cultural and Creative Industries, which was also recently founded on Sept. 22, 2019 and is also the contact point for the association.



The stakeholders have set themselves these goals:

- Define the KUK participants.
- Formulate their concerns as part of a large economic sector.
- Raise public awareness about the value and capabilities of the local cultural and creative industries.
- Represent the interests of the cultural and creative industries.
- Promote all members of the KUK.
- Improve the economic situation of its members (e.g. tax law, business organization, insurance).
- Lobby to strengthen copyright law.



The results

One success is certainly that, through persistence and perseverance, it has been possible to bring together representatives from a wide variety of sectors of the cultural and creative scene.

As already described, the members include long-established artists and a master goldsmith. On the other hand, there is also a young start-up, Tymclyps. Young in the truest sense of the word. Tim Hemzal founded it in 2017 at the age of just 16, having already gained experience in creating videos during his school years through various internships and his own YouTube channel. He collected his first orders even before founding the company. Today, the GmbH has 5 employees and works with a large team of freelancers. Intensive networking via social media and existing networks is a matter of course for the young people. They are represented in the KUK-MO association and have also already created some videos on behalf of members.

The KUK-MO association strengthens the exchange and networking of KUK. As a rule (if there is no restriction due to Covid19 regulations), weekly meetings are held to which external participants are also invited. In addition to interested parties from the KUK area, representatives from administration, politics and business also attend the association meetings.

In addition, a regular networking event (EDoMo = every first Thursday of the month) is offered, to which a growing number of people are invited each month. Membership has grown from the original 11 to 19 members by the end of 2021.

It has been possible to make the KUK better known to the public. Public awareness about the association's existence and work has spread quickly in Amberg. The association members attend numerous political and social events and speak about their topics. Among other things, this work has led to a growing understanding of the importance of the KUK in local politics and administration. The participation of the city of Amberg in the EU project StimulART has also contributed significantly to this.

The challenges

Stakeholders in the cultural and creative industries are still not wholly convinced of the value and meaning of networking. This association is an umbrella for a multitude of sub sectors within the industry, therefore it also has a multitude of different concerns and needs to serve. The best strategy to change attitudes and counter skepticism has been success stories from its members.

How to change fixed perspectives? The association can be a connecting element of existing networks and not viewed as competition. One danger for the association is the redundancy of its activities because a business development agency has a similar and already established impact. Moreover, especially in Amberg, the artists are already well-networked among themselves. And another challenge is to represent the 12 industries, especially since some already feel well represented by, for example, the Chamber of Architects or visual artists by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

The association, only recently founded, is still in the process of positioning itself. This is being done step by step and according to capacity. Only time will tell whether it will actually succeed in implementing its own demands and goals in order to be able to act as a representation of interests and a lobbying association for all creatives.

Conclusion

Even before the association was founded, 50 meetings had already taken place. Even though it is not always easy to bring together people from the many different areas that are counted as part of the cultural and creative industries, it is possible to work out common objectives and represent them publicly. The task in the future will be to define the goals of the association precisely and to put together a concept that makes the whole thing tangible and attractive. It also needs a clear demarcation from existing structures. But with the commitment shown so far by the "Kultur- und Kreativverein Mittlere Oberpfalz e.V." this will succeed in the future.

The association pursues the following vision:

"We want to expand the Middle Upper Palatinate as a location for cultural and creative industries and make it known."

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Naumburg - LGP 1 : Turbine House Artwork

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

The Turbine House Artwork is a good example of how a dilapidated listed building threatened with demolition can be transformed by private initiative into a place for culture and creativity. It also shows how local actors creatively use local cultural resources to establish a functioning event organization.

The initial situation

The Naumburg steam tramway, founded in 1892, is to be electrified and for this purpose a turbine house with generators is built by the end of 1906.

The use of the turbine house ends in the 1950s with the expansion of the general power grid. From then on, the building remains unused, becomes dilapidated and increasingly decays. Although it is a listed building, there is a demolition notice for the industrial monument in 2014.

The idea of the project

The couple Michaela and Thomas Burkhardt, who run their joint medical practice nearby, hear about it. “We absolutely cannot allow this!” they immediately agree.

Overnight, they work out a utilization concept. Since they are artistically active and culturally active in addition to their profession as doctors, they know that the city of Naumburg lacks an art house, a meeting place for creative people and a venue for events. There is no town hall or municipal event center with a wide-ranging, regular program, a “culture for everyone”.

Their vision of buying the property on their own initiative and turning it into a cultural center seems downright insane, considering the condition of the building. But they dare to take the step and find supporters right from the start. Already at the beginning of 2015, a support association is founded with 7 members, soon joined by more helpers.

The stakeholders involved in the implementation

The members of the association support Michaela and Thomas Burkhardt with advice and suggestions for use, as well as in convincing representatives of the authorities and employees of banks of the chances of the project to make the purchase possible.

Subsequently, they actively help in the construction phase on their own initiative and organize events to draw attention to the project.

This finds within Naumburg strong Fürspruch, a part of the Naumburger citizenry participates again and again with gifts. Many regional and national companies participate in the construction. For some companies, the contract becomes a real project of the heart.

The sponsoring association proves to be just as important in generating donations and sponsors.

In 2015, financial support is provided by the city, and in

2016 by the energy supply company RWE with its Companius project, which supports non-profit projects from the cultural sector, among others.

The Burkhardts also received a grant of nearly 45,000 euros from the president of the state administration office for the design of the outdoor facilities.

Results and successes

Two years later, the Burkhardt couple can proudly announce the completion of the renovation and conversion work, which was carried out with a great deal of love for the property and must have cost 1.5 million euros.

“It took us hector liters of sweat, but it was positive sweat, every drop showed a success,” says Thomas Burkhardt.

In addition to the renovation of the exterior, which is true to the monument, a gallery was added, underfloor heating was installed, and the kitchen and gastro area were built to the most modern standards. Numerous details refer to the history of the building and exude a unique industrial charm - be it the old switches and switch boxes, which once again fulfill their function with a modern interior, or the historic ceiling lamps.



The result is an event location for the arts of all kinds. Here, artists and private individuals have the opportunity to use and adapt a hall for individual purposes, e.g. as a gallery, for concerts, cabarets and book readings, for theater performances, New Year's receptions of political parties or associations, weddings and private celebrations. The marketing and public relations will be taken over completely. The in-house catering, in the form of kitchen, bar and café, provides all guests with inexpensive catering.

With success, in the following years there are about 100 events per year.

The disco Nachtschicht, a dance event for the over-30s and 40s, Rudelsingen, a Germany-wide sing-along format, and cabaret events on the theme of men and women are the best-performing financially.

The Turbinenhaus is able to employ 3 full-time employees, a part-time colleague, 2 people as 450,- €- workers as well as a freelance technician who is booked as needed.

The owners, the doctor couple, have an ideal benefit so far. They have realized their vision, their dream, made many new contacts and friendships and can look back on numerous successful events.

Thomas Burkhardt has an exhibition venue for his 50 pictures painted since 2015.

The people of Naumburg, as well as people from the region have a new cultural center with a variety of events, which was missing in the years before. There is a wide range of cultural activities for everyone and the surrounding localities are better frequented after events.

Challenges

The new cultural center is immediately well received by Naumburg residents.

“It’s a seamless transition from construction phase to operator phase.” The Burkhardts agree: “It wasn’t the renovation that was difficult; operating and maintaining the house is far more labor-intensive.”

As a new venue, the Turbinenhaus first has to establish itself. Events with only 30 visitors don’t even pay the artists’ fees.

Different event formats have to be tried out first, and a lot of patience is needed to develop artistically demanding niche programs.

The average age of the audience tends to be higher, so a surprising number of visitors come through print media coverage.

On the other hand, program items added later, which can only be advertised online, are often not noticed.

Younger audiences still need to be won over.

And then, of course, there’s Corona. Without the well-run medical practice in the background, it would be difficult for the Turbine House to survive in the Corona years.

The main goal is still for the Turbinenhaus to be financially self-sustaining as a venue. Before Corona, they were on a good path there, much further than the Burkhardt couple had previously expected. Everyone hopes that things will continue this way after the pandemic, so that the operators can live up to their motto:

“We make art and culture tangible and generate moments of happiness.”

Conclusion

The Turbine House can serve as a great example and model for many cities in Europe that have a similar number of inhabitants.

In many communities there is a lack of venues for culture and creativity and at the same time there are unused buildings that are also worth preserving.

When one’s own initiative meets the support of the community, such a project can succeed.



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Naumburg - LGP 2: The Naumburg Tramway

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

The Naumburg Tramway is a good example of how citizen engagement can preserve cultural heritage and continue to put it to practical use, improve urban infrastructure and enrich the city, provide stakeholders in the arts and creative industries with another venue.

The initial situation

On September 15, 1892, a steam-powered tram with a 1-meter gauge track starts operating to better connect Naumburg Central Train Station which is far from the city center. The light track superstructure causes the cars to sway strongly - as a result, the people of Naumburg call their streetcar “Wilde Zicke” (literally translated “Wild Bitch”).

In 1906, the railroad was electrified (see LGP 1 Turbine House) and extended to a ring line with a total length of 5.3 km by 1914. During the East Germany period, the ring line is interrupted and part of the line is converted into a pedestrian zone. In 1986, the railroad operation is suspended for 18 months to make only the most necessary repairs.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, passenger numbers decline, and continued operation is only possible with a major overhaul.

But before it is closed down, the people of Naumburg get ready to fight for their beloved tram. An initiative group to save the tram is founded, signatures are collected, circular letters are written and sent to draw attention to the problem.

Initially, the city council decides in favor of preserving the streetcar. But since the allocated money for this tram overhaul is not dispensed within the required time, the construction work on the tram tracks which has already begun, cannot be completed.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary in 1992, a trolley commutes once again on a small section of track. After that, large sections of track are buried under asphalt, tram cars are scrapped and the electrified catenary wire is generously dismantled.

The realization of the project

The tram enthusiasts try to save what can still be saved. First, they found the “Naumburger Straßenbahn GmbH” (Naumburg Tram Ltd). Then in 1994, they lease the remaining line for 20 years with support from the non-profit association “Nahverkehrsfreunde Naumburg - Jena e.V.” (Friends of Local Transport Naumburg - Jena).

For the first few years, the active parties are able to operate on a daily basis on a 250-meter-long remaining section of the line, with the depot as the starting point. The relationship between the city and the company is initially very tense. The city renews the tracks in some places and removes them in others.

At the end of 1998, a new contract is negotiated and signed with the city. As part of the state’s “Urban 21” initiative, the city renews or repairs large sections of the remaining tracks. The Naumburg Tram Ltd receives a permanent contract for regular service starting in 2000, but in return waives the right to have the entire original loop line restored.

The streetcar is used gradually over the years, initially once a month and on special occasions. Naumburg Tram Ltd sorts out the remaining fleet of tram cars. No longer usable cars are replaced by preowned, bi-directional cars procured from the city of Jena.

In 2007, the Naumburger Tram Ltd. begins daily operations on its own initiative. It is a risky venture because any uncovered costs will have to be covered by private funds.

The Naumburger Tram Ltd. can better enjoy their opening day when the Minister of Transport of the state of Saxony-Anhalt announces additional financial support. The financial means for the trial operation are secured for the next 4 years.

The number of passengers increases steadily. In December 2010, the Magdeburg state parliament amends the law which allows the tram to be integrated into Saxony-Anhalt’s public transportation system. As a result, the tram is eligible for special subsidies. In 2012, the municipal council of the city of Naumburg also unanimously decides to assume a share of the uncovered costs. Further improvements to the route, the tram stops and the vehicle fleet can be made over the years.



The results

From the original 250 meters, the line has grown again to 2.9 kilometers and further sections are planned. The Naumburg Tram has been in daily operation since 2008. Passenger numbers are on the rise, with 134,000 in 2014 and nearly 186,000 three years later.

Even though the operation is marketed under the name Naumburger TouristenBahn, the project of a tram only for tourists has turned into a tram operation for everyone. The tram is once again an integral part of Naumburg's public transport system. The tram runs every half hour between the main train station and Salztor from 5:37 a.m. to 8:44 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8:37 a.m. to 8:44 p.m. on weekends. During events in and around Naumburg, the timetable is sometimes extended into the night hours.

The vehicle fleet was expanded. Before the Naumburger Tram Ltd. took over operations, there was already a large variety of former GDR tramcars. Through procurement of additional tramcars, the city can now boast at having just about every available GDR tramcar with a 1-meter gauge. In addition, there is a horse-drawn tramcar made by SIG in 1894 and a freight trolley built by Gottfried Lindner AG in 1929.

Artists perform, for example, at the Tramcar Festival or in events such as the "Night of Crime".

Of course, the railroad also attracts many tourists to the city and is an attractive destination for rail enthusiasts from all over the world who want to experience Germany's smallest tramcar operation with historic trains.

The challenges

Without support from the city and county, the tram cannot be operated economically. It also depends on fund-raising activities and the voluntary commitment of club members, whether it is work assignments, in depot tours or as conductors and drivers.

Public transport regulations must be observed and coordinated with local and regional authorities.

The line still in operation today runs from the main station to the northwestern corner of the historic old town. Unfortunately, it bypasses the city's main tourist attractions.

The non-profit association and Ltd.'s goal is to secure the future of the Naumburg Tramway (as a ring line!) and to preserve the historic tramcar fleet in Naumburg and Jena. In 2020, the Burgen County administrative district commissioned a study from the Technical University of Braunschweig. The study examined three variants to upgrade and create a ring tramway once again. The results are currently being discussed in the city's various committees.

Conclusion

The tramway project in Naumburg is an impressive example of how strong civic commitment can revive a cultural heritage and put it to practical use. At the beginning, this was even done against the resistance of the municipality.

In the end, it was possible to preserve a part of the city that shapes its character and to realize a unique selling point (Germany's smallest streetcar operation with historic trains).

The project also has a positive effect on the Namburgers' identity:

"If you ask the people of Naumburg what they are particularly proud of, you will get two answers: "Cathedral and wild bitch." "Wild bitch?" Then they explain, "Well, our Ille, the streetcar!" (from the book "Discover Saale-Unstrut 99 times!" by Helga Heilig)

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6

National Good Practices

Germany - NGP 1: ZWICKL: Schwandorf Documentary Film Festival

An example for local authorities, creatives, and investors

This good practice is an excellent example of how a representative of the CCI can create a film festival on their own initiative in just a few years and gain the support (organizational, communicative and financial) of the municipality.

The initial situation

Schwandorf with 29,000 inhabitants is a town on the river Naab in the Upper Palatinate, Bavaria, Germany, which is the seat of the Schwandorf district. The district and the sub-region of Upper Palatinate are not known as centers of the film industry in Bavaria. There is only one local cinema in Schwandorf left.

The idea for the festival

Anne Madelene Schleicher is 22, a young woman from Schwandorf who is studying theater, film and media studies in Vienna. One day, a friend invites her to watch the film “Plastic Planet”. Since she has been interested in documentaries since her childhood, she immediately agrees. The film is about the history of plastic, and how we have produced so much of it, we could wrap the earth in plastic eight times.

At that time, the topic was not yet as present in the media as it is today. Anne Schleicher is deeply affected and shocked. She changes her lifestyle from one day to the next to use less plastic.

She tells friends and family about her new findings and remembers:

“My enthusiasm is not catching on to others. If they had seen this film, they would be as convinced as I am right now. So how do I get as many people as possible to watch this film?”

The idea of organizing her own documentary film festival is born.

The realization

Anne Schleicher immediately starts to implement her idea and a year later, in 2012, “ZWICKL” is held for the first time at the local Union Kino. Ten documentary films are shown.

“Zwickl” is what people used to call the two-mark coin in Bavarian dialect. Here, Zwickl refers to the price of admission; visitors pay only two euros per film.

“People should feel that it is a festival made for everyone. And everyone knows that with a 2 euro entrance fee, no one makes a profit and that no one wants anything from them,” says Anne Schleicher.

During the 5-day film festival, 1,300 visitors attend. This success motivates Anne Schleicher and her team of volunteers to plan the next festival for the following year. The city of Schwandorf, which was already the main sponsor in the first year, decides to become the official festival presenter with Anne Schleicher as the organizer.



The results

Thanks to the steady rise in attendance, the volunteers (about 30 per year) as well as many local and regional sponsors, the festival continues to take place (almost) annually. Even drawing the Bavarian film industry's attention. The low entrance fee allows people from the city and the district to experience "culture for all".

The festival promotes community cohesion, which is constantly growing because the Zwickl volunteers are very committed and extremely active in promoting the event and the cultural community around it. The festival's audience reach is large with some guests traveling as far as Nuremberg (91 km) or Regensburg (45 km) which results in a positive impact on the city and region of Schwandorf (hotels, restaurants, etc.).

Through the concept of the "traveling cinema", public spaces that are either empty or hardly used (e.g. a flower shop, old cinemas or a church) become sudden film venues that "pop up" temporarily for the festival.

The festival has become a source of income for the founder and there is growth potential for the entire festival as well as with possible new collaborators.

The challenges

Unexpected problems arise on a regular basis. For example, in 2014, the Union Cinema drops out as a venue at short notice. The "Flower Shop Heinz", which runs its business in one of the three former Schwandorf cinemas, becomes the replacement venue. The cinema interior design is unchanged and includes the original projection room. With an enthusiastic crew of volunteers, they transform a flower store into a professional film venue with screen and modern technology in just 5 days.

And Flower Shop Heinz becomes a regular festival venue again in 2015 and 2016.

The fact that such events are not possible without the initiators and organizers is shown in 2018. Anne Schleicher has her first child and the festival is canceled for the first time.

The Covid-19 pandemic also prevents a festival in 2020. In 2021, they adapt to the situation and try out a new concept: a road show, the ZWICKL tours through the Upper Palatinate and beyond.

Conclusion

The ZWICKL is an excellent example of how, thanks to private initiative supported by the municipality, an annual cultural event can be established and grow through a lot of creativity and commitment.

"The ZWICKL is simply a gift to the people who live here or come here from further afield and want to watch films here in this special atmosphere. That's also what I like so much about the ZWICKL and what drives me and my team." (Anne M. Schleicher)

References:

Anne M. Schleicher
 (artistic direction and organization / Maximilianstraße
 8, 92421 Schwandorf / +49 157 - 34 04 76 06 / festival
 phone: +49 173 - 86 42 88 0 / mail@2wickl.de)

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 kultur@schwandorf.de).

<https://www.2wickl.de>
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Germany - NGP 2: The Blaibach Concert Hall

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

This NGP shows how, through private initiative and with the support of the municipality, unused urban spaces and infrastructures can be revitalized as cultural venues and a lighthouse project with international appeal can be created.

The initial situation

Many small and micro communities in Bavaria have been struggling for many years with population decline, out-migration, unused urban spaces or a general desolation of traditional village, market or town squares. And the tourists are staying away.

The question “What now?” is also being asked in Blaibach, a village with 2,000 inhabitants in the Bavarian Forest. It applies for funding from the Bavarian Ministry of Construction as part of the urban development model project “Ort schafft Mitte” and is selected as one of 10 communities. In 2012, the community center of Blaibach is renovated.

And local people developed a much bigger vision.

The idea

Thomas Bauer, baritone and opera singer, and his wife Uta Hielscher, concert pianist, have been organizing the “Kulturwald Music Festival” in the Bavarian Forest with great success since 2008, with classical music at various locations. The aim is to bring guests from far and wide together with the people of Lower Bavaria. Several thousand visitors come to the week-long event. Performances also take place in Blaibach.

The two artists develop the vision for a concert hall as the central venue for their festival. They want to create something lasting. They inspire the renowned Munich architect Peter Haimerl: “We want to create a perfect space for chamber music that meets all the requirements, including bringing the best musicians in the world here. We want to build the best concert venue in the world, architecturally, acoustically, and it should also fit into the location. As small as it can be, and as big as it can be, so that it has a certain charisma.”

The implementation

Over time, more supporters are found, according to Karl Landgraf, a retired building designer. D.: “It started with a letter to the editor. My first, which I wrote to a newspaper at the age of 70. In it, I professed my support for the concert hall in Blaibach. For me, there was only one answer to the much-discussed question of whether it should be built or not: Yes! However: Who says yes, must also commit himself. So I traded in my existence as a retired construction engineer for retirement, became active for the concert hall, and was finally catapulted into the middle of an exciting project process.

A sponsoring association is founded and donations are successfully collected.



The results

The 200-seat concert hall is built by 2014 and even stays on time and on budget. Of the 1.6 million construction costs, the municipality bears 400,000 euros, the rest is financed by government grants and the sponsoring association.

Since Blaibach stands for a stonemasonry tradition, the building will have a facade made of granite stones. The concert hall has fantastic acoustics, both in the auditorium and on the musicians' stage, and has won several architectural awards (German Architecture Prize 2015, Bavarian State Foundation Culture Prize 2015 ...) It is even considered one of the 10 best concert halls in the world.

Each year, Bauer and Hielscher organize about 50 concerts, almost all of which are sold out early. Star performers of the classical scene are "magically" attracted.

"They like to come, the great artists from all over the world. The musicians who have been here, they all want to come back. And so does the audience." (Ute Hielscher)

In addition, Thomas E. Bauer and Uta Hielscher purchased a historic Waidlerhaus in the center of Blaibach, renovated it with historic preservation funds and turned it into an artists' quarter with a cultural office. The 560 square meter building offers space for classical concerts, cultural events and exhibitions.

Blaibach has a center again. Through its annual program, the concert hall has led to the creation of new jobs and to the establishment and further expansion of profitable ancillary businesses (hotels, restaurants, tourism, etc.). A support association and the commitment of numerous donors and sponsors (local and regional) ensure the financial sustainability of the concert hall.

The challenges

The mayor and the community representatives, impressed by the success of "Kulturwald", supported the project from the beginning. Only among the citizens did strong resistance initially arise. More than 400 signatures were collected against the project, but a citizens' petition failed due to formal errors.

Uta Hielscher: "Bold architecture is not everyone's cup of tea, you can understand that, but the local council was actually enthusiastic right from the start. We had a bit of a problem with the population. We did a lot of workshops and talked to the citizens and in the end we had the approval."

Conclusion

Even in smaller places, great things can be created. All it takes is visionaries who are convinced of their project and willing to invest: "We fought, put in an insane amount of time, energy and also money," says Uta Hierlscher.

If the support of the community and the residents is added to this, it can succeed. Even with international appeal.



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Germany - NGP 3: Kunsthaus (Art Center) / Co-Working-Space Zeitz

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

This national good practice exemplifies how unused urban spaces and infrastructures are revitalized as cultural venues through private initiative and municipality's support.

The initial situation

Zeitz, not far from Naumburg and Leipzig, has been a focal point of industrialization in the region since the 19th century. After German reunification, the city lost large parts of its industry and has been shrinking ever since. To this day, a great many industrial and public buildings stand empty and in decay. There is a lack of jobs and prospects, and young people are migrating out of the city.

However, the city's abandoned buildings offer a lot of unused, cheap space for temporary projects or for permanent occupation. An increasing number of creatives can be found who want to use these spaces.

An idea is born

Thomas Haberkorn, a native of Zeitz, is a cultural manager in Leipzig. Every now and then he considers returning to his hometown. In 2013, the opportunity arises to lease an old monastery on the outskirts of Zeitz. With a handful of young enthusiasts (10 adults with 6 children), he founds the non-profit association "Kultur- und Bildungsstätte Kloster-Posa e. V." (Cultural and Educational Center Monastery-Posa) and they begin to revive the former monastery, combining work and shared living. The new community is united by the idea to create meeting opportunities for people from the city and region through cultural and educational events, to give their own creative impulses and finally, to make Posa a nationwide event and seminar location.

In 2015, they are included in the Robert Bosch Foundation's "Neulandgewinner" (New Land Winner) program, which supports people who take unconventional approaches to improve the quality of life in villages and small towns, thereby strengthening social cohesion.

The Kloster Posa association is successful and becomes a small institution in Zeitz.

In 2017, they expand their scope to the city center of Zeitz.

The implementation

From 2017-2019, the association organizes the cultural festival "OPEN SPACE ZEITZ". The historic library in the city center, built in 1907 and abandoned for 25 years, is chosen as the venue.

Within the framework of OPEN SPACE ZEITZ there are exhibitions, seminars and other cultural events as temporary use concepts in empty buildings and wastelands of the city. The former library temporarily becomes the project headquarters in the city center and is transformed into a shared workspace and studio center, providing the creative scene with space for collective work. OPEN SPACE ZEITZ invites young creatives to develop impulses and visions that reflect Zeitz and its potentials and allow a positive view into the future. Financed by the Federal Cultural Foundation from the "Fonds Neue Länder", this project aims to open up the inner city space and its vacancy for cultural use.

In 2018, the old library is transformed into "Kunsthaus Zeitz," (Art Center Zeitz) a co-working space for creatives with offices and studios. The space has not been renovated, but is in good condition.



The results

The “Kunsthau Zeitz” is now home to studios for 15 artists (as of the end of 2019), and there are also studio requests from musicians.

Exhibitions, readings, concerts, discussions and other events are held there regularly.

Zeitz has become better known in the creative scene and beyond; in the meantime, more creatives are moving into the city, acquiring and renovating buildings there. A spirit of optimism can now be found in Zeitz.

The challenges

More people are needed who have the interest to be active and on site. There are vacant rooms to rent. It is still a vision to attract people from different areas of the CCI, so that the center reaches its fullest potential. The members of the Kloster Posa association do everything on a volunteer basis, in addition to their regular jobs. As a result, they lack the time necessary to work actively on the project everyday. Therefore, it would be important to create opportunities to earn money during the project’s implementation.

Conclusion

The Kunsthaus / Co-Working-Space Zeitz is a good example of how empty buildings can be used and transformed by creatives and set an example of how potentials can be used. They are supported by the municipality, which is happy about anyone who gets involved.

“There is not so much free space in other cities like Göttingen or Leipzig. Here there is potential at every other door, you just have to be able or willing to do it.” (Martin Zeigner, artist)

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Hungary - NGP 1: Hungarian National Film History Theme Park and Digital Power-plant in Ózd - brownfield development

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

This NGP is an example of how local, regional and national authorities, inspired by local creatives, can revitalize old industrial sites and transform them into venues for CCI activities.

The initial situation

Ózd is a town of 32,000 inhabitants in northern Hungary with a long industrial history centered on metal products. At the end of the 1980s, there were four large smelting furnaces, nine open furnaces and a steel foundry.

The peculiarity of the town is that it was built around the factory. The factory was the heart of the town, closely interwoven with daily life.

Steel production was completely stopped in 1992 due to uneconomical production and the loss of Eastern European markets. The period following the shutdown brought unemployment and migration, turning the city into a crisis area. Many buildings and facilities were demolished.

The idea

Györgyi Csontos, a young local architect, made an early effort to preserve the industrial heritage. However, her efforts against the demolition of the characteristic row of chimneys, an important identity-forming element of Ózd, were unsuccessful.

As a university lecturer at the Ybl Miklós Faculty of Architecture in Budapest, she continues to campaign with colleagues for the preservation of the industrial complex and organizes several excursions for architecture students to her hometown so that Ózd becomes known in architectural circles.

It is thanks to her that in 2005, the monument protection authorities granted monument status to several objects representing the history of Ózd's industrial culture and designated an extensive conservation area. A redevelopment plan is developed, but initially remains only a vision.

In 2009, retired engineers establish the "Circle of Friends to Defend the Industrial Heritage of Ózd." The heritage is to be preserved and maintained and the city is to become an important stop on the "Central European Industrial Culture / Iron Culture Route" and thus part of international cultural tourism.

The implementation

From 2010 onwards, the municipality actively deals with the topic and looks for financing possibilities. In 2011, it is decided to revive parts of the former ironworks through a functional transformation. The project is funded by the national government. In parallel, the local government is able to attract the Hungarian National Digital Archive (MaNDA) as a user.

Györgyi Csontos with her office wins the tenders and becomes lead architect for the projects including the design of the outdoor area. The implementation is based on environmentally friendly principles.

In the years 2014-2016, the former wind machine machine house and the old power plant are renovated and equipped with new functionalities. Financing is provided by the EU Structural Fund and by the national government with a total of HUF 2.5 billion (7.8 million euros). The industrial park is operated by Forum Hungaricum Not for Profit Ltd



The results

In July 2016, the Ózd Digital Power Plant and the National Film History Experience Park are officially open with attendance from the State Secretary for Culture, who announces that the government will provide 250 million forints per year for the operation of the two newly opened facilities.

The Wind Turbine House houses the film history archive where more than 200,000 film reels are kept, a theme park for national film history, an adventure park featuring the longest greenbox in Hungary. Relics of film production / business (such as posters), costumes and film sets are on display. The facility's business model includes services such as family programs, team building and school lessons which all take place on the various film sets.

The Digital Power Plant houses exhibitions that are constantly evolving. The first floor can be used as an event center, while the second floor houses an education center with classrooms and studios.

The two facilities complement the major tourist destinations nearby, Bükk and Aggtelek National Parks, and increase the tourist appeal of Ózd.

The project wins several national and international awards for the successful implementation of the project.

The challenges

The biggest challenges at the beginning were financing and bureaucratic obstacles. If the historical value of the plant had been recognized earlier, more of the industrial heritage could have been preserved.

New jobs have been created, but the exodus from Ózd has not yet been decisively halted.

Conclusion

The use of industrial wastelands of metallurgy is more often seen in Europe, but the way of using and implementing the project can be called innovative. It increases the attractiveness of the remote and still crisis-ridden area.

The "Ózd Culture Factory" has grown beyond my plans. I am perhaps proudest of the fact that - also thanks to the hard work of my colleagues - some high-quality and valuable industrial buildings have been saved from ruin, that they have since provided work and inspiration to the people of Ózd, and that they have been able to improve the mostly undeservedly negative image of the town. (Györgyi Csontos, 2021)

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Hungary - NGP 2: Zemplén Festival: Classical music thrives in a remote corner of Hungary

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

The Zemplén Festival of Classical Music exemplifies how cultural programming can revitalize areas remote from urbans. It also demonstrates the mutual benefit of cooperation among cultural and creative industry players. Even medium-sized cities can benefit when there is cooperation with surrounding settlements, all focused on the revival of one geographical area.

The initial situation

With its spectacular geographical landscapes, Zemplén and the surrounding area are in a remote area bordering Slovakia and Ukraine. Administratively the narrower region of Zemplén is part of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County. The same county's western part used to be the heart of heavy industry in the socialist era, later hit by deprivation and social distress. This Zemplén area, which is detached even from this industrial zone nearer to the eastern borders the Tokaj wine region and the Zemplén mountains with their hidden potentials regarding cultural heritage, natural beauty and its vineyards, was left forgotten for decades. Although it is famous for its wine-growing region Tokaj, Zemplén and the surrounding area suffered from a slow economy and limited cultural services even into the 1990s.

The key players for this GP development

In 1963, former graduates of the Liszt Ferenc College of Music in Budapest found the Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra. The orchestra soon makes a name for itself and becomes an integral part of the international classical music elite.

Extensive tours follow, especially after Europe begins to open its borders. With its director János Rolla, the orchestra takes part in many European classical music festivals. And while performing at one of these many classical music festivals, they begin to ask themselves: Why don't we create a similar festival in Hungary?

And in 1992, the first festival is held in the Zemplén region with support from the radio and television broadcaster Antenna Hungária. The idea behind this location choice is to bring classical music to a remote region of Hungary full of potential attractions, which is isolated from cultural life.

The key players for this GP implementation

For the next 12 years, János Rolla and his original team organize the festival, until Rolla resigns from the festival management in 2003.

With the festival's future unclear, Miklós Turjányi who has been involved in the organization for 5 years takes action to ensure the beloved festival continues.

With Miklós Turjányi's initiative, Interkultur Hungaria Közhasznú Nonprofit Ltd. in Budapest takes the organization of the Zemplén Festival under its wing. Consequently, changes have been happening since 2004. The festival now takes place on a much larger scale. At past festivals, only chamber music performances were offered. Now audiences are offered a wider range of performances from large symphony concerts and operas, to choral oratorios with many hundreds of participants and other productions.

In addition to the classical music offerings, there are now jazz concerts, dance performances, exhibitions, as well as children's and family programs.

The current festival's artistic director Gábor Hollerung says. "At the Zemplén Festival, there should be something for everyone." The key players also are the 27 municipalities in the region.



The results

The Zemplen Festival can now look proudly back on its 30 years of success. It has become one of Hungary's most important summer cultural festivals. The programming has evolved and ventures into other cultural, touristic, viticultural and gastronomic offerings. Many of the venues are churches, castle courtyards, castles and wineries creatively transformed into performance spaces for 10 days.

Keeping its tradition, the festival always takes place in August with performances in 40 venues spread out into nearby towns and villages.

Therefore these surrounding 27 municipalities are motivated to come together and work towards a common target. As a result, regional cohesion has been noticeably enhanced.

In addition to the outstanding choirs and orchestras from Hungary, guest ensembles and soloists from abroad also perform, and the series of events offers young artists the opportunity to make their debut here.

The heart of the festival is in historic Sárospatak, a town of 13,000 people, located in the Tokaj wine region and a unique festival area has been built in the small wine town of Tokaj (about 4,500 inhabitants), which can accommodate 2,500 visitors. Although the management office is in Budapest, the festival can rely on the enthusiastic commitment of numerous local co-organizers.

The festival coupled with additional developments makes the remote region more attractive. Tourism, which is of great importance to the area, is promoted.

The challenges

The biggest challenge every year is budget planning. Several main sponsors are crucial for its existence. Likewise, without the financial support from government and local communities, the festival could not take place.

As there are ca. 60 events in 10 days not all of the surrounding municipalities can host an event every year. They consider such cases as loss of prestige temporarily.

Conclusion

The idea for the festival was very innovative in the early 1990s during the turbulent post-socialist period. Due to its flexible approach and change in management, the festival has now existed for 30 years. Starting as a smaller event with mainly chamber music, it has become a 10-day festival with an extensive mixed program. By Hungarian standards, it is still unusual for more than 20 municipalities to cooperate and share the risk of success; making the Zemplen Festival exemplary for Jászberény and the Jászság in Hungary, as well as for other remote European regions.

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Slovenia - NGP 1: Local market and iron work museum in an old abandoned factory in Jesenice

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

This NGP is an example of how local authorities can revitalize old industrial sites and transform them into venues for CCI activities and tourism.

The initial situation

Jesenice is a small town in Upper Carniola in Slovenia near the border with Austria with a population of about 20,000. The town is known for its ironworks and metalworking industry.

As early as the 16th century, an ironworks called Stara Sava was established in Jesenice on the banks of the Sava Dolinka River. It is one of several ironworks along the river in this area.

Along with the ironworks, a number of buildings were built, which have been preserved to this day: the Bucellini-Ruard mansion was built in 1538 and expanded in 1831, the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Assumption and the Church of St. Roch, a workers barracks, a residential building for the workers' families. Also the remains of a historic ironworks are still present, including an intact blast furnace, its chimney, a mill and part of the concrete mill trench.

The ironworks Stara Sava operated until 1897, when the blast furnace was shut down and the entire area was more or less abandoned. Enclosed by larger facilities of the newly established modern ironworks, the Stara Sava is cut off from the rest of Jesenice.

The old manor house is used as a museum starting in 1954.

After 1990, there is a collapse of heavy industry, combined with an economic and social crisis. This is followed by the demolition of many obsolete factories and a period of urban renewal. The Stara Sava ironworks is uncovered again and a new urban plan for the center of Jesenice is created, which reintegrates the historical quarter into the city. The entire settlement is declared a technical monument.

The transformation of the industrial heritage

In 1992, the Bucellini-Ruard mansion becomes the main location of the Upper Sava Regional Museum Jesenice (Slovenian: Gornjesavski muzej Jesenice). The name of the museum refers to the area it documents, namely the Upper Sava Dolinka Valley. Its holdings include two restored historic farmhouses, the KID company archives, and exhibition rooms in the two preserved "ironworks castles" (of the original four) built in the 16th and early 17th centuries by the owners of the local ironworks. The museum concept is expanded over the years and begins to add multimedia elements in 2021.

At the same time, starting in 1999, activists begin to work for the preservation of other evidence from the iron industry history. The project's aim is to create a public space that preserves and enhances the city identity as well as offers a higher level of urban lifestyle. A city market is to be the centerpiece of the entire area. Implementation begins in 2010.



The results

The results

The municipality invests 4.75 million euros (including 3.3 million in grants), and a new covered city market is built in an old factory building and an open-air museum. Pedestrian walkways and squares are redesigned between the buildings. The industrial aesthetics and the buildings' original appearance is preserved and the old substance is supplemented with new prefabricated metal elements.

The new market and the redesigned museum of ironworks history with its cultural offerings complement each other and form a strong point of attraction. Multiplier effects result:

The area has become a new local center that continues to grow, possibly supported by further public programs; The number of tourists is increasing and local merchants are benefiting.

Conclusion

Jesenice is home to the best preserved ironworks settlement in Central Europe. With the transformation of the old buildings into history museums about the site's origins, combined with the redevelopment and revitalization of old industrial sites, a new local center and point of attraction has emerged.

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Slovenia - NGP 2: Cooperative work center Kovačnica in Kranj

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

Kranj's Kovačnica demonstrates how a local initiative of young creatives can build a coworking space with the support of the municipality and the regional business support center.

The idea

Spring 2015, the economic situation in Slovenia is not optimistic and youth unemployment is high. A group of young creatives from the smaller Slovenian town of Kranj (population about 38,000) want to take control of their futures and not passively wait and see if the situation will improve. They realize their strength is in their network and mutual support. Looking at global trends, they decide to set up a coworking center in their town. They approach the Kranj municipality and present their idea there.

The municipality supports the young entrepreneurs by providing rooms for a co-working space in an empty former industrial school. At the same time, contacts are established with the regional development agency Gorenjska, the BSC Kranj, (Business Support Center in Kranj). The BSC Kranj takes on the task of procuring EU funds to find and hire staff for the co-working space.

The implementation

In countless meetings the implementation is discussed, the renovation work is carried out and in November 2015 the Kovačnica, which means forge, opens its doors.

Since this is the first coworking space in the Gorenjska region the concept is unfamiliar to most people. At the beginning there is a lack of people interested in the workstations and the seminars that are offered. Sometimes only 2 participants come. But the dedicated team does not lose hope and continues to offer high-quality events. And eventually, momentum picks up and just after one year, it is already necessary to expand the space and purchase additional tables, desks, and other office equipment.

The results

The biggest success factor is the steady growth over the last 5 years. Coworking started on an area of only 75 m² and now occupies the entire first floor of the building with 450 m². The number of coworkers is growing and all available spaces are regularly occupied.

Architects and designers are numerous among the users, but there are also photographers, software developers, database masters, web developers and an outdoor self-named "guru".

About 75 workshops and other educational activities are held each year, which are booked out in advance because capacity is limited to about 20 participants per offering.

In addition, up to 15 entrepreneurs per day are supported through counseling, mentoring and registration activities, and there is a four-month entrepreneurship development project for which interested parties can apply.

Since 2020, in addition to the Co Working Space, the Forge has a second area, a Business Incubator, which provides support for the implementation of innovative business ideas and the establishment of companies.



The challenges

The biggest challenge in the initial phase was to offer people in the Gorenjska region the coworking approach, which was a completely new idea at the time. Another challenge is funding, especially securing funding for equipment and investments, which is usually not possible through EU funds.

The following amounts are roughly needed per year: 20,000€ for workshops and educational activities, 20,000€ for mentoring activities, 20,000€ for equipment, office costs and renovation, and 15,000€ for rent.

Conclusion

The Forge is a good practical example of how to set up, develop and operate a coworking center outside of larger metropolitan areas, even in smaller cities. The trend toward telecommuting and digital nomads will move toward smaller coworking spaces that are also located in more rural areas.

“Kovačnica is not just a table and chair they can rent. The Forge is a family that grows together and motivates to do more. Our goal is to create an environment and climate where they can focus on the most important things: themselves and their business.”



References:

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Italy - NGP 1: Citadellarte - Pistoletto Foundation

A national good practice for public institutions, CCI entrepreneurs, municipalities, other CCI organizations, and creatives.

This extraordinary NGP illustrates how private initiative can revitalize unused urban space and in addition, create an entire ecosystem for the cultural and creative scene.

The initial situation

Biella is a city of about 43,000 inhabitants in the Piedmont region of northwestern Italy. The city is home to the Italian wool industry, as well as the cotton, hat, paper and furniture industries.

Painter and sculptor Michelangelo Pistoletto, born in Biella in 1933, is considered one of the most important living Italian artists. Celebrated early on as an icon of postmodernism, his works and writings continue to influence Italian and international art policy discourse to this day.

At 14, Michelangelo Pistoletto begins working in his father's restoration workshop. Later, he attends Armando Testa's famous Turin advertising school. There the young Pistoletto comes into contact with contemporary art.

Besides his day job in his friend's advertising agency, he starts painting figurative works and self-portraits. After successfully participating in the Biennale di San Marino and having his first solo exhibition, his work finds positive resonance and clients. By the start of the 1960s, he is working exclusively as an artist.

The idea

In 1991, the 58-year old Michelangelo Pistoletto is back in his hometown Biella for an exhibition opening of his work. He happens to spot a white building, which is an abandoned wool spinning factory and purchases the property.

In 1994 he publishes a manifesto, "Progetto Arte", with which Pistoletto proposes a new role for the artist: to bring art into direct interaction with all areas of human activity that make up society. He envisions his newly acquired site as a place to put his theory into real-life practice.

The realization

From 1991-1997, he has the former factory restored, so that the first events and meetings can take place in Biella. In 1998, he establishes the Pistoletto Foundation with the mission to create a place where artists, scientists, activists, entrepreneurs and representatives of the institutional world can come together and use art as an instrument for responsible social change.

Subsequently, hundreds of projects are implemented. There are eight different legally and/or financially-independent initiatives, as well as non-profit cultural and social promotion associations based at the Biella site. A few examples are: a food supply chain, a solidarity economy with more than 25 member associations, an association for the social promotion of interculturality, and a cultural project for young people. At the site, there is also a residency program, a research laboratory and a narrative laboratory.



The results

For over twenty years, Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto has accomplished much: it is a transformation of an abandoned, decayed factory into an aesthetically beautiful, restored site; it is a visionary idea as well as a concrete concept that has given birth to numerous projects, communities; it has built up a global network of cultural and social innovators, who are catalysts for change in their communities.

Pistoletto's work, from the 1960s to the present, acts as a driving force for Cittadellarte's communities.

The relationship between people and projects is based on a shared vision, rooted in the accumulative process of thought and practice developed by a wide range of thinkers, managers and innovators from all sectors. Cittadellarte is divided into different areas (work, education, communication, art, food, politics, spirituality and business) that interact with each other in an intermedia network. It offers different forms of use and contact, ranging from a simple guided tour to continuous, active participation.

As a result of all its bold initiatives, Cittadellarte now has an extensive network of collaborations with institutions (various UN agencies, ministries, universities and educational institutions), global companies and local businesses, civil society collectives, organizations and individuals from all sectors.

Conclusion

The Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto is an innovative model of artistic and cultural institution that brings art into direct interaction with different sectors of society. A place where ideas and projects, creativity and entrepreneurship, education and production, ecology and architecture, politics and spirituality come together.

"For me, being an artist means being free, free to think and free to act, not being afraid of anyone in society. I think that society is also a changeable material. That's why I'm so happy to be an artist, because I feel free and responsible. And the greater the freedom, the greater the responsibility becomes," says Michelangelo Pistoletto.

References:

<http://www.cittadellarte.it>

Italy - NGP 2: Serinnovation and D'Orica Srl

An example for municipalities, artists and creative people as well as investors

Serinnovation and D'Orica Srl show how the interaction of two traditional industrial and craft cultures can be used as a new business model with innovative products in the CCI.

The initial situation

Silk production and silk weaving has been a Chinese secret for centuries. In the 6th century the knowledge also reaches Europe. At the latest from the 12th century, Italy becomes Europe's leading silk producer.

In the middle of the 19th century, Italian silk production suffers a severe setback; the so-called stain disease destroys silkworms throughout Europe. In the 20th century, silkworm farming in Italy is only practiced on a small scale and threatens to disappear altogether in the 1990s due to the use of an insecticide applied to orchards that drifts onto the mulberry leaves and prevents the silkworms from growing.

Just like her father, Silvia Cappellozzas also becomes fascinated with the silkworm world. She turns her passion into a career and is now the director of the Padua office of the CREA-API Research Unit for Api-Bachiculture (silkworm breeding).

In the 90s, in response to the above-mentioned danger, Cappellozzas develops a patented artificial feed with which silkworms can be bred without mulberry leaves. She begins to turn her attention to the biomedical field to see if the application can be used there. After the ban of the pesticide, she recognizes the opportunity to revive silkworm breeding in Italy. She tries to involve the last remaining silkworm breeders in Veneto in a program to produce cocoons for cosmetic-pharmaceutical purposes.

The realization

Shortly after, she is approached by designer Daniela Raccanello, of D'Orica Srl, who wants to produce silk and gold jewelry. This gives rise to the project entitled "The Rebirth of the Silk Road in Veneto". The project is supported by the Veneto Region and the European Fund for Rural Development is also supporting the project with 633,000 euros.

This so-called Serinnovation involves 11 partners, including farmers, researchers, institutions and the Italian Ministry of Agriculture.

The project's main objective is to ensure the economic and environmentally sustainable development of mulberry cultivation. The entire production process of high-quality silk should be traceable and become a trademark.

Regular training courses are offered to interested farmers, and new production methods and applications are researched.



The results

A network has been created that brings attention and new market opportunities to the silk production sector, which was in decline. The growing interest in environmental protection, in natural materials produced in a sustainable way, provides a healthy environment for growth.

What is particularly interesting is that two traditions are being combined to create innovative products. This is demonstrated by the collaboration with D'Orica srl. The company has restored a small silk machine (Filandina) from the 60s, the only working machine of its kind in Europe.

A milestone was the Milan Fashion Week (2018-2019) when D'Orica presented a new dress made of gold and 100% Italian & ethical silk, which attracted a lot of attention.

The challenges

There are still only about twenty active silkworm breeders in Italy, mainly in the Veneto region, but interest is growing exponentially. The project is complex and it is not yet possible to assess conclusively how successful it will be and whether mulberry cultivation and silk production will be economical.

Conclusion

Silk is a fascinating fabric that still cannot be completely imitated industrially. The product of the silkworm is natural and sustainable and can be used in many areas, in textile production, as well as in biomedical or creative fields.

The Serinnovation project shows how the cultural and industrial heritage of the Veneto region has been revived to create new innovative products and new jobs.

Brought to realization by government and EU funding, the project has the best prospects of successfully developing further and becoming an example for other regions in Europe.

“I don't believe in large-scale projects that are financed exclusively with public money. But I do believe in a reasonable and steady increase in professionalism and the applications, supported by the gradual development of technologies that are currently lacking, as well as in a strong interest from industry and farmers.” (Silvia Cappellozza, March 2021)

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<https://serinnovation.it/>
<https://www.setaetica.it/>
<https://dorica.com>

Conclusions



Quite naturally for a CCI Repository for SMSC, we have talked much about the Cultural and Creative Industries in Small and Medium Sized Cities, how we can develop a local CCI sector strategy in order to boost its development, and how an improved CCI sector strategy can increase the attractiveness of SMSC and, in turn, boost their urban development, stop brain drain and an ageing population process and so forth. In doing so, we transpose a specific aspect of the script of the Creative City vision developed for global cities and metropolises to SMSC. We focus on the CCI sector as the main intervention field under the assumption that it plays the most important role in the script of how to become a Creative City as proposed by the mainstream discourse. In this context, for the StimulART project it was rather obvious to attempt to adapt measures for boosting the CCI sector taken from global cities to the specific city-size-dependent conditions found in SMSC. Many of the Good Practices selected for this CCI Repository reflect these attempts to find solutions best suited for SMSC. Also, the executive summary has already discussed many of the taken-for-granted assumptions of the mainstream Creative City discourse that don't hold true for the specific conditions of SMSC and has suggested some adaptations to make for the related intervention measures in SMSC in order to build up realistic expectations and to avoid misguided strategies and action plans. In this concluding chapter, we won't repeat either the adapted Good Practices nor the taken-for-granted assumptions from the mainstream Creative City discourse unsuitable for SMSC. Rather, we will ask what the limits of the StimulART project were. We will ask: What if the assumption does not hold true for SMSC that underlies the StimulART project itself, namely that the CCI sector can play a central role in SMSC at all for them to become a Creative City.

While the CCI sector plays most certainly an important role in rejuvenating global cities and metropolises and has the potential to become a central pillar for their Creative City vision and strategies there, one of the central insights from the StimulART project is, that the CCI sector in SMSC cannot become the main driver and central pillar for dynamizing the local economy and urban development due to strong clustering forces for the CCI in global cities, metropolises, and metropolitan regions, drawing CCI resources from the periphery at the one hand and due to the complementary centripetal forces and a lack of a critical mass in the CCI sector in (peripheral) SMSC at the other hand. This insight does not mean that it would be meaningless to set up CCI sector strategies for SMSC and to integrate them into integrated urban planning strategies. Quite the contrary. It is of utmost importance for regional and urban developmental processes to keep and to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic and symbolic creativity and the design thinking capabilities in SMSC and their hinterlands. This insight points rather to two different conclusions: 1.) Cultural-led urban development strategies such as the Creative City visions for SMSC have to cope with a rather weak CCI sector and look for functional equivalents or substitutes who can take over the role this sector has played quite naturally in Creative City visions and strategies in global cities and metropolises. 2.) CCI sector strategies for SMSC should be set up at a regional level where a critical mass of this sector can be met by aggregation of cultural production, the civic society, and the CCI sector - contribute in an interdependent local network to the overall aim to keep SMSC adaptable, flexible, and agile.

1.) The StimulART project discovered that the CCI sector cannot play the same role in cultural-led urban development strategies in SMSC that it had played in metropolitan cities because of a lack of a critical mass of CCI stakeholders and firms which is a precondition for clustering forces. This obstacle will not be overcome even with the best strategies and the best of support. Does the lack of a critical mass of the CCI sector mean that cultural-led urban development strategies are not suited for SMSC generally provided that the CCI sector plays the central role in such strategies in global cities and metropolises? And given that the Smart City vision has already gradually replaced its predecessor - the Creative City vision - in global cities today, would it not be advisable to invest scarce resources in urban development in the Smart City vision rather than in cultural-led urban development programmes whose success seems to depend on pre-conditions that are not realizable in SMSC? We have to answer these questions first in order to establish the relevance of looking for functional equivalents that could potentially play the role of the CCI sector in cultural-led urban development programmes in SMSC.



Cultural-led urban developmental programs such as the Creative City vision are very broad and wholistic approaches that prioritize soft factors over hard factors such as infrastructure in urban and regional development for the first time. The CCI sector is such a soft factor and an important pillar for this concept. However, there are many more pillars as important for a Creative City which also draw on soft factors in urban development, such as human capital, knowledge base, city identity, the aesthetical appeal of a city, entrepreneurial culture, and organizational capabilities. On a more conceptual level, the Creative City vision emphasizes the adaptability, flexibility, and agility of cities in today's fast-changing global VUCA environment (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) which depend on these soft factors. In this sense the Creative City vision formulates requirements for any city. A Creative City agenda may be even more important for SMSC today than it has been for metropolitan and bigger cities in the past. The latter city type is already a creative city in a certain sense by definition while the creativity enabling conditions that can be found in metropolitan and bigger cities quite naturally have to be artificially produced and reproduced in SMSC first. When we speak of development potentials of SMSC, then the biggest potential of all lies probably with a cultural-led urban development program that is adapted to the cities' size-type while drawing on the site specific cultural, but also territorial and social potentials of each particular SMSC. To apply the Creative City agenda to SMSC does not come too late because its agenda is still up to date. However, emphasizing the urgency and importance of culture-led urban development strategies for SMSC to remain adaptive, flexible, and agile does not answer the question of how such a strategy can be implemented when its natural primary driver, namely the CCI sector, of all things, does not function in the same way as it does in global cities. Fortunately, the StimulART project were able to also make some discoveries that can point us in the direction of potential answers to this question.

The StimulART project discovered that the local models of cultural production in SMSC have different characteristics than in global cities. The lively and rich cultural life in SMSC is not so much produced by public cultural institutions or the CCI sector but rather by the intermediate sector of cultural production and the civic society, by cultural associations, informal cultural networks, sub-cultures and the local youth. Often, the cultural activities in the intermediate sector are started and organized by CCI actors, or they serve as seedbeds for emerging CCI actors, emphasizing the importance of the CCI sector for SMSC. Similarly, many bottom-up urban development projects in the StimulART partner cities originated with CCI stakeholders who were motivated to develop their home cities' atmosphere and aesthetic appearance out of their aesthetic sensibility and professional values. However, to stay adaptable, flexible, and agile, a SMSC does not only need creativity in the cultural realm but rather a broader based creativity including also creativity in entrepreneurship and the administration. When other important drivers and pillars in a cultural-led urban development strategy have to step in in SMSC and play the role the CCI sector has in global cities and metropolises, then we can point to these additional four different sources of creativity: the intermediate sector of cultural production, bottom-up urban development projects spontaneously originating from the civic society, entrepreneurship in the traditional economy, and the local administration itself. Besides, the CCI sector can still make important and irreplaceable contributions to a Creative City agenda in SMSC even if it is not the driving machine.

We believe that the CCI Repository holds many Good Practices that can illustrate how these five forces of a wholistic cultural-led urban development strategy - the municipality, the network of local entrepreneurs, the intermediate sector of cultural production, the civic society, and the CCI sector - contribute in an interdependent local network to the overall aim to keep SMSC adaptable, flexible, and agile.

2.) A second important discovery in the StimulART project worth to be highlighted in the conclusions of a CCI Repository for SMSC is the insight that CCI sector strategies for SMSC should be set up at a regional level where a critical mass of this specific sector can be found. Undoubtedly, the CCI sector plays an important and specific role for urban and regional development in SMSC and their hinterlands, even when there is a lack of a critical mass for developing clustering forces. To publicly invest in the CCI sector equals a regional economic and industrial development and innovation policy in particular and a regional development policy for peripheral regions in general. However, to specifically support the CCI sector requires the investment of functionally specified resources such as in the establishment of a CCI sector cluster manager. In order that these investments are not underutilized they must be addressed to a sufficiently large clientele of potential addressees and beneficiaries which can only be found on a regional level, possibly aggregating the CCI actors and companies of several SMSC and counties. Similarly, a CCI cluster management facility requires a complementary formal structure on the side of the self-organisation of the CCI sector such as the CCI association in Amberg, assembling all CCI-sub sectors and providing formally appointed spokes persons for each CCI-sub-sector to the cluster management. Again, the CCI sector in SMSC may be too small for such a formalized self-organisation of the CCI-sector to emerge, be it because not every sub-sector is represented by interested professionals or be it that a formalization of the informal CCI sector networks does not appear to be plausible for the CCI actors and companies. Both obstacles can be overcome at a regional level: Formalized network structures appear more plausible for a region in which a critical mass of CCI actors and companies aggregate. However, for both sides, the municipalities as well as the self-organisation of CCI sector networks, a regional cluster management for the CCI sector would mean increased demands for inter-organisational cooperation.

Before this background, this CCI Repository concludes with the two most important lessons learned in the StimulART project:

1.) CCI sector strategies that are alone-standing in SMSC will not be sufficient to create a dynamic that leads to a sustainable cultural-led urban development process. Thus, CCI sector strategies need to be encapsulated in broader and more wholistic cultural-led urban development strategies such as the Creative City vision which is even more necessary for today's SMSC than it was for global cities in the past. Rather than just relying on the CCI sector, such a cultural-led urban development strategy should be built on at least four more forces in SMSC which are the municipalities, the entrepreneurship community, the intermediate sector of cultural production, and the civic society at large.

2.) For CCI sector strategies to become sustainable in a SMSC context, they have to become formulated and implemented at a regional rather than at city level at which a critical mass of CCI stakeholders and companies is existing which can be addressed as beneficiaries of these strategies and which can act as drivers and contributors of an urban and regional development process based on aesthetic, cultural, and symbolic creativity and design thinking capabilities. What exactly constitutes a regional level at which a critical mass of CCI stakeholders and companies is existing will be an empirical question and does not have to be identical with the regional administration boundaries already existing which may be too small or too big in terms of a necessary critical mass. However, in any case, the need to organize and manage the political support and self-organisation of the CCI sector at a regional level points to new frontiers in the governance of the CCI sector such as inter-communal or inter-regional cooperation worth to become tested and explored in future Interreg B programmes in Central Europe and beyond.

We have started this CCI Repository by saying that we should develop realistic expectations about the development potentials of the CCI sector in the context of a cultural-led urban development program in SMSC by uncovering and breaking free of the taken-for-granted assumptions of the mainstream discourse of the creative class and the creative city aimed at metropolises. In this context, we have said good bye to overexaggerated expectations of economic growth, dynamisation, and innovation often connected to the Creative City and Creative Class rhetoric. For SMSC more often than not the main task in CCI sector strategies will be to find solutions to stop the bleeding out of their CCI, to rather stabilize the CCI, and to find ways how to provide the context for their - moderate - growth. Also, it becomes even more important for SMSC that the vision of the creative city must be realized by a more wholistic approach that not only includes cultural resources more generally such as the nurturing of an entrepreneurial culture but that also includes developmental potentials specific to SMSC as a size-dependent city size such as the emotional relationship with the territory among the CCI stakeholders or the cultivation of their ambiguous character of neither being a big city nor belonging to the countryside and the related amenities. To adapt the Creative City script to the specific conditions of SMSC does not only mean to identify the place-specific cultural resources of any particular SMSC. It means most of all that we should become aware of SMSCs' size-dependent specific conditions, potentials and challenges for urban and regional renewal and that we should write a different script for them of how to become a creative city rather than adapting the existing one.



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