

PREREQUISITES FOR CREATIVITY DRIVEN PROCESSES IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS



SUMMARY

Not only for industrial enterprises but also for municipal or regional governments it is crucial to integrate creativity and the creative industries in their processes. For a successful implementation a number of prerequisites are needed, e.g. a clear vision, a smart strategy, a responsible person or team and overall – to enable all this – an annual budget. Only then the creation and implementation of ideas to improve urban revitalisation will be sustainable and successful.

In municipalities anything is possible through creativity and the right prerequisites!



According to UNESCO cities are today home to more than half the world's population and three quarters of its economic activity, including a large share of the creative economy.

They continuously need to respond and react to major challenges like the economic crisis, environmental impacts, demographic growth and social tensions or negative impacts e.g. by the pandemic. At the same time urban areas are breeding grounds for the development of new strategies, policies and initiatives. They aim at making culture and creativity a driving force for sustainable development and urban regeneration, through the stimulation of innovation as well as the promotion of social cohesion, citizen well-being and inter-cultural dialogue. It is at a local level that culture and creativity are lived and practised on a daily basis. It is therefore crucial to stimulate cultural industries, support creation, promote citizen and cultural participation and approach the public sphere with a new perspective. Public authorities, in cooperation with the creative industries, the private sector and civil society, need to make the difference and support a more sustainable urban development suited to the practical needs of the local population.

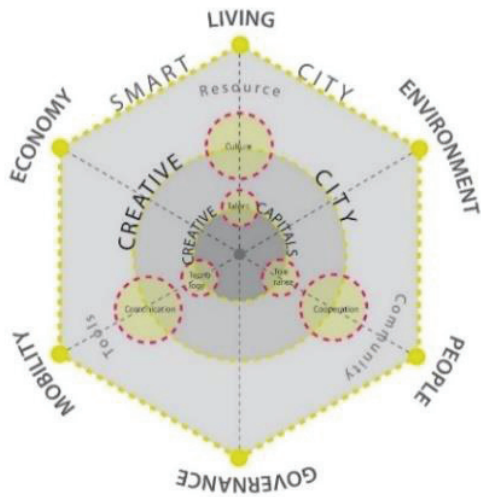
Hence, the importance of creativity as competence has to be seen in broader sense – the tools and methods to implement creativity are provided by the creative industries but are applicable to all institutions and organisations, all industries and processes. The need and trends towards the democratization of the access to culture and creativity and the changed sense of culture for all has the need to directly involve local authorities and the citizens. According to Charles Landry “the great city has a clarity of purpose and it knows where it is going. It is a blend of hardware (its physical fabric like streets buildings and parks), software (its activity base like its enterprise, its cultural life or its shopping experiences), and ‘orgware’ (how it is organized, managed and governed).«

Source: <https://charleslandry.com/themes/making-great-cities/>

What are the »creative industries«?

The „creative industries“ (CI) also referred to as the „creative and cultural industries“ or the „creative and digital industries“ are “comprised of all sectors whose activities are based on cultural values, or other artistic individual or collective creative expressions.” (EU Commission)

On EU level, the CI is divided into nine industry fields: architecture, books & publishing, design, advertising, film, music, radio & TV, software & games, performing arts (EU Creative Industries Technology Strategy 2009-2012).



The United Nations state that «while national policy interventions to enable culture and creativity often get much of the attention, the transformative impact of CCI will not be fully realized without policies and enabling environments at the local level, complemented by partnerships across levels of government and a range of stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, and local communities.»

In this context the aim of the CINEMA project has been to foster urban development, especially in small and medium sized cities with the help of the creative industries. Throughout the project's lifetime all eight partner regions implemented different instruments and approaches to revive inner cities and to connect or support the local creative players. In all the so-called pilot locations it has been crucial to involve relevant partners i.e. local municipalities or the regional governments.

Source: "Cities, Culture, Creativity", by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and The World Bank

CHAMAELEON SPACES IN HERRENBERG/GERMANY

In the pilot location of Herrenberg the hybrid concept »Chamaeleon Spaces« was temporarily realized in two empty floorspaces with a combination of event, popup stores and coworking spaces. The budget for these activities came mainly from the funding project however the City of Herrenberg as well as the regional partners contributed with e.g. lower rent or support in communication other services. Without having one dedicated employee of the city's economic development department who has shown great initiative in supporting the project team, the realisation of this concept would not have been successful. This shows that the actual local institutions are the ones to realize ideas in their own locations and need the responsible units (e.g. mayor) to head the initiatives, alongside the citizenship through a strategic participation process. After the end of the funding project in order to establish the concept on a long term basis, there is the need for an additional municipal budget for at least two years to realize the concept in different locations.



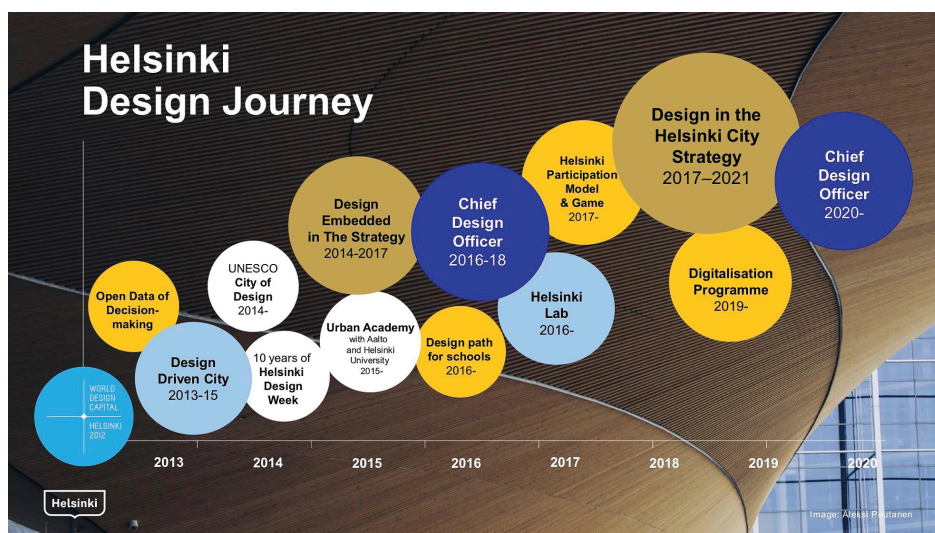
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Definition and implementation of a clear vision and long-term strategy by the municipal government on the integration of the creative industries to help their institution and hence the city to become more creative and more flexible to adapt to external influences. This is preceded by a clear commitment of the city's government and mayor towards these changes within the municipal processes and openness for necessary changes. This also includes e.g. close reporting structures and frequent meetings.
2. Dedicated annual budget for the implementation of creative processes and the employment of at least one responsible person - or ideally a whole team - in a government/city council. This person is responsible for 1) the creative industries: building a network, providing support and space, enabling cooperation between the CCI and local industry or urban development. At the same time, it is his/her responsibility to 2) implement creative methods and approaches in all major (urban development) processes and thus ensure more innovative and progressive ways of thinking and decision-making towards the best interests of the citizens.



E HALA MINDA IN RESITA/ROMANIA

In the municipality of Resita the CINEMA project initiated and implemented under the coordination of the Municipality the revitalisation of an old steel industry hall, the “Hala Minda”. The city administration went through the process of defining the project team, with new and specific individual competencies and organizational capacities, related to the Creative Industries. During the first year of the implementation the need for a driving force of the local government for supporting the innovation in each sector of the economy was crucial, including the traditional domain of metal industry. Furthermore, the pilot experience now is considered a replicable example for the urban regeneration program, dedicated to identified empty, unused spaces. At the same time, the complex process demonstrated the urgent need of supporting systemic cooperation between creative industries and traditional ones, for which the Hala Minda project is an excellent example - including the components of technical cooperation, budget planning and execution and competitiveness of the partnership at the global market. This pilot action in Romania was covered by an annual budget of 120.000 €, plus the fees for the part-time employees. This amount was covered both by municipal and European funding.



An excellent way to strategically integrate the creative industries in municipalities are e.g. seen in Helsinki/Finland: The city government created the role of a “Chief Design Officer” (CDO) to allow e.g. methods like design thinking to guide both policy development and civic programmes, creating new platforms for systemic change. As part of their design strategy, Helsinki has focused on three main aspects

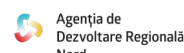
- making the city and its services more functional, gaining a better understanding of citizens’ needs and tackling wicked societal problems. In addition to overseeing this mandate, the CDO Hanna Harris has taken on the role of both a “connector and spokesperson.” She sees the Chief Design Officer position as a way to ensure that the “work that takes place across different divisions of the city is made visible, shared and strategically connected to city leadership and top management.” Working directly with the mayor’s office, key government departments and civil servants, the Chief Design Officer intersects political and social lines, engaging with educators, professionals, community groups and citizens to carve out the most appropriate path forward for their city.

Source: <https://wdo.org/are-chief-design-officers-the-key-to-better-cities/>

This policy brief has been prepared by the partners of the CINEMA project in November 2022.



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The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme.